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Heroism in the Bulge



Eric Fisher Wood's actions during the Battle of the Bulge have become legendary for historians as well as the Belgian population in the area where the young officer waged guerilla warfare after becoming separated from his unit on December 17, 1944. In the midst of a German counter attack in the woods south of Meyerode, Belgium, the 589th Field Artillery Battalion, with whom Wood was serving, fell back in the direction of



St. Vith. After abandoning their truck and the attached artillery gun upon encountering an enemy tank, Wood's men took cover along the roadside. Perceiving their situation as hopeless, some soldiers surrendered. Wood, however, refused to do so and ran into the nearby forest where he and another American were discovered the next day by a local man looking for a Christmas tree. After a hot meal and a night of rest, Wood and the other soldier entered the surrounding forest and began a personal campaign while trying to rejoin their unit which they believed was in St. Vith. When Wood's body was discovered after the liberation of Meyerode on January 23, 1945, he was surrounded by seven dead German soldiers, a small fraction of the 200 who were found in the woods in the coming weeks. For his actions Wood was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 1947. Eric Fisher Wood is honored by a memorial on a roadside north of Eiterbach, Belgium, and is buried at the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery.

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Luckiest Man Alive?

They called them "Lucky Bastards" and they got a certificate to prove it: an informal group of WWII European bomb crew members who completed a tour of duty. Since a bomber crew member's life expectancy was about 15 missions, it truly was an accomplishment to make it to the 25 or later 35 missions required to get sent home. Peter Ferdinand was an exceptionally Lucky Bastard. On 21 November 44, he was in the B-24 44-10513 which collided with another B-24 during formation assembly over Carleton Rode, England. He was one of two crewman who got out of his plane and a total of 17 were killed. One month later, he was the radio operator of the B-24 "King Size", 42-50612, which took off from Hethel Airbase in England on a mission to bomb an industrial zone in Wahlen-Kall, Germany. After successfully dropping their bombs, the King Size was attacked by German fighters and went into a spin and started burning. This caused them to fall behind their formation, and they were attacked again and crashed. Of the crew of nine, only two survived. Ferdinand was incredibly lucky to *again* be one of two crewman who made it out of the plane. He survived the war and owned a café. He married and had three children. He is buried in the Calvary Cemetery in Drums, Pennsylvania. He and the crew of the King Size are commemorated on a monument in Manhay, Belgium.



About AWMO

In our April newsletter we featured some of the then 7000 heroes in our database in a "people" issue. Since then we have made it a priority to insure that every person commemorated on a monument also has a page in our database. Today we have over 14,800 entries...and the number is growing daily. Credit goes to Mark Esller, who has been painstakingly researching long lists of commemorated servicemembers. Some monuments have over 2000 names! Through our accounts at ancestry.com and findagrave and through the NARA enlistment records and burial cards, as well as unit associations, we try to piece together every heroes story. We are proud to keep their memory alive.