

Albert F. Boyhan

Today, January 26, 2017 I visited the Collings Foundation "Wings of Freedom Tour" in Pompano Beach Florida. I was drawn to this event because the foundation had on display the last airworthy U.S. Army Air Corp B-24 Liberator.

My Uncle, 1st Lt. Albert F. Boyhan, U.S. Army Air Force, was a pilot of that exact airship and was killed on February 7th, 1945 returning from a successful bombing mission over Vienna Austria.

As per the official Army Air Corp record goes Uncle Albert's Liberator had taken flak from Germany anti-aircraft batteries causing massive damage. The damage was so sever Lt Boyhan lost all controls of the ship. Ironically at the same time, the infamous "Calamity Jane" Liberator, also sustained massive damage for ground flak. As fate would have it both airships out of control collided in mid-air over Belgium and were destroyed. There were 2 survivors, 1 from each ship who were captured and sent to a German Stalag as POW's. I never met my Uncle, who was affectionately known as "Red" because I was born 10 years after his ultimate sacrifice. My Mother, his older sister told me of his heroic act ad how much she, my Uncles (John, Jim & Chris[Joe]) and his Mother Nellie loved him dearly. I researched Uncle Red's military records and found his remains were recovered and interred in the Ardennes American Cemetery Neupre, Belgium, Plot D Row 4 Grave 29.

When I found out the Wings of Freedom tour was 4 miles from my home I decided to printout all of the reports and photos I had acquired over the years and take them to the Collings Foundation to donate them to their air museum. When I told the operators the story of Uncle Red they were humbled beyond belief and I made a donation to the foundation

As I walked on the airfield where the Liberator was sitting I felt a cold chill come over me. I was overwhelmed with emotions to see what the same airship Uncle Red died in up close and personal. I felt an incredible closeness to a man I never knew as I walked around that ship and actually went up inside and saw the cockpit where Uncle Red would have been sitting when he died.

As I left I felt a sense of serenity come over me...hoping it was Uncle Red watching over me walking away.

Joe Johnson