

THE BIGGEST COVER-UP OF WW II

By Doc Chloer, 34TCJ

The fall and winter of 1944 was not a good time for the Allies. First came the failure of the Market Garden operation in September and October, with more loses than D Day. Then came the max effort of the Germans, with the Battle of The Bulge. During this time there were many days when the weather over the Continent or England was so bad that no supplies or air support could be provided for our troops. (Like Bernie Pleasant said "It is hard to separate fact from fantasy at this late date". From my files on The Glenn Miller story I will try to relive that story as it happened that day)

It had been socked in over Europe or England for the past 5 or 6 days and on the morning of the 18th of December, word came that the weather was clearing. I am sure that it must of been a max effort day for all Troop Carrier outfits to haul everything to the Continent that our troops so badly needed. After the 315th Group departed that day on the main mission, the Wing must of come down with an additional requirement for two more aircraft.

The requirement was for the 315th Group to provide two aircraft and crews for a classified mission: to pick up the Glenn Miller Band at Twinwood Farms, and fly them to Orly Field at Paris. The 34th Squadron provided aircraft #058, Pilot William M. Perkins, 34th - Co-pilot Robert L. Cloer, 34th - Crew Chief Joe Schertler, 34th. The 310th Squadron provided aircraft #733, Pilot Lawrence Tapper, 310th - Co-pilot Richard Kucklick, 34th - Crew Chief Arthur S. Plough, 310th. (We have never been able to verify who the Radio Operators were, or if there were navigators on the crews.)

The aircraft landed at Twinwood Farms at about 10:30AM and were parked way out on the back edge of the ramp. Not too long after we parked, a couple of large English Busses came across the ramp and stopped in front of our planes. The Band got off the busses and nobody seemed in a hurry to do anything. I was surprised with the lack of rank, both with the Band, and to see them off. I guess that because it was a classified move, no one was suppose to know they were going to France. 1st Lt. Don Haynes and W.O. Paul Dudley were with the Band and I think there was a Lt. from the Base.

After a while all of the instruments and equipment was loaded - still no one seemed in a hurry. I thought that we were waiting for Miller. About this time, Sgt. "Peanuts" Hucko came up and told Haynes that he had forgotten his horn back at the barracks. After a few hot words they got him a vehicle to go get his horn, which took another 20 minutes or so. When he returned, no one still seemed to be in a hurry. I was just a 2nd Lt. and no one told me anything - - I thought that we were still waiting for Miller.

We all had a long visit with the Band members while we were waiting. The Band said that part of the deal with them going to Paris, they had to record six weeks of their regular programs for AFN and BBC , so no one would know they were gone. This was all in addition to their regular daily programs, while they were putting six weeks of programs in the cans. Some of the horn blowers said they could still not un-pucker.

Finally we got off - when we landed at Orly - no one knew we were coming - no one had arranged for transportation or quarters for the Band. The third plane was an ATC plane out of Bovindon that picked up some of the members who had played in London the night before. The Pilot was Robert Whipkey, who lived in Boise Idaho, the last time I talked to him.

After waiting at Orly for a long time for some transportation to show up for the Band, we told them that we were just going to have to leave as we had to cross the channel before dark. We just unloaded the Band and their equipment and were ready to leave, when a Sgt. came up and said that he had a load of POW's for us to take back to England. We waited for quite a while and nobody showed up, we said to heck with it , and started up and to taxi out. A bus loaded with women drove along side and flaged us to stop. A Capt. Nurse came on board and said she had our load for us. Perk told her that we did not have room, as we were asked to take a load of POWs back. She smiled at Perk and told him - these are your POWs "Pregnant Outbound Women. So we dropped them off at Croyden in London before getting back to Spanhoe.

We must have done a lot of waiting that day as my form five shows that we logged 2 1/2 hours of night time.

What happened to Glenn Miller ?? I don't know - but I know what did NOT happen to him ! I hope that some day Mr Titler will find some publisher who has a literary review board with members old enough so they do not have to ask,who is Glenn Miller??

For over 20 years, Dale M. Titler, Author, Historian, Military Researcher, with the help of Lt.Col Tom Corrigan (who passed away this last year) have been gathering FACTS on what happened to Miller.

The aircraft was a C-64A, Noorduyn Norseman #470285. The Pilot was Flight Officer John S.R. Morgan. Don Haynes says in his diary, that on the 15th of December he drove Glenn Miller and Lt.Col. Norman F. Baessell out to Twinwoods after lunch. A short time later they heard the aircraft over head in the overcast. He missed the approach and a short time later they heard the aircraft again, much lower, and he broke out right over head at about 200 feet. After they loaded the baggage and Baessell's case of empty champagne bottles, they were off at about 1:45 and less than a minute were in the overcast.

If I remember right - missing aircraft or aircrews had to be reported with in 48 hours. The report on Miller was not made for 9 days, if I remember right. This gave a lot of people time to get their stories together on what the cover up would be. Some of those people are probably still alive today and it is a shame that they will not come forward and tell the real story.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE AIRCRAFT ?? Let me quote from Dale Titlers research: The Norseman in question, 44-70285, was flown to Normandy and landed in a farmer's pasture, where it was abandoned. Early in 1945 an officer with a Mobile Repair Unit in St.Germaine, was visited by a member of Army Intelligence and asked to identify the aircraft in the photo. A check of records showed it to be the Norseman in which the bandleader, Lt Col Baessell , and F/O Morgan allegedly perished in a channel crash. It had been found by a French farmer who reported it to the Americans. It was not damaged, intact, with it's parachutes still aboard.

The aircraft was recovered from the farmer's pasture, taken (probably flown and not trucked) to a nearby salvage yard, at 5SAD (Strategic Air Depot), probably around the middle of January, 1945. SAD5 was located at Merville, France, 27 miles south of the French coast and 20 miles west of Lille. It was commanded by Col. Howard Moody. It is reasonable to believe the aircraft was the one later flown at 5SAD by a Lt. Gatti, who crashed it on takeoff when it's insecure load shifted. The aircraft was then scrapped, likely cannibalized, and eventually salvaged about May 1, 1947. The Individual Aircraft Record Card (IARC) on 44-70285 shows the

aircrafts maintenance and disposition history. The Aircraft Disposition Record shows 44-70285 had been condemned earlier, in January of 1947, with 32 months total service.. It was still assigned to the Eighth Air Force at that time.

When the persons assigned to cover up the fact that the aircraft was NOT lost in a channel crash, they neglected to expunge the aircraft maintenance records.

The IARC and Aircraft Disposition Records should still be available to the public from the USAF History Branch at Maxwell AFB. Alabama or the National Archives and Records Service in D.C.

There are so many questions about this cover-up - - What happened to the military records of Miller, Baessell and Morgan ? How do Baessell and Morgan live the rest of their lives after our military said they are deceased ? How high did the cover-up go in the Military and Washington ? I would bet that there are still some high ranking Officers and Government Officials alive today who know what happened to Miller back in December of 1944.

In England and Europe, the interest still remains high on what happened to Miller. Over the years, Dave Benfield, our honorary member in England, has sent me, many books, excerpts from reports, news paper articles, and other things of interest about the Miller disappearance. Some of them are so far off base that I don't know how they got published. One of the more resent articles, I find of interest. I have always said that in many cases when we classify something ,Secret or Top Secret, the only people we are going to keep the information from - are our own !

A German journalist, Udo Ulfkotte, who writes for a Frankfurt newspaper, has been going thru the declassified secret war time files of the BND (Intelligence Service). They indicate that the BND not only knew about Millers disappearance, but also the extra ordinary effort that the Military went to in the cover-up. So much for classified moves !

I don't know about you - I would really like to hear the real Glenn Miller Story! I just hope that Dale gets it published in my life time. He has had six of his books published over the years but says there seem to be so many young people in the publishing business today that have no interest in WW II events. I guess that you need sex, crime and black marketing in a book to get it to sell - - - there just might be some of that too !! Know any publishers ??

