

MISSION 115Z

“GOING HOME”

OUTPOSTS OF THE TINY UK PARK WITH THE MIGHTY HEART



THANKSGIVING FIELD



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BEHIND THE BARN AT TALLY HO FARM, CROUCH LANE, WINKFIELD, BERKSHIRE SL4 4RZ UK
Co-ordinator: Hugh Gibbons, 75 Qualitas, Roman Hill, Bracknell RG12 7QG
E-mail hughgibbons@just1.org.uk Tel (0)1344 451847 www.thanksgivingfield.org

MISSION 115Z “GOING HOME”



A UNIQUE GALLERY with a sense of humanity and humour – in outposts scattered far and wide. That’s the happy function of Mission 115Z – as part of the story of the tiny UK park with a mighty heart.

These pages show some unusual conversation pieces, with some commentary.

Its origin? As part of the liberation of Europe, on 14 October 1943 the USAAF Eighth Air Force in England’s East Anglia staged Mission 115.

This became remembered as the historic Second Schweinfurt Raid *aka* Black Thursday. Mission 115 involved the greatest ever air battle; over 70 American aircraft and 600 crew lost; heroism and compassion in the air and on the ground on both sides; and poignant aftermaths.

One B17F that took part was #3351Z, of the 92nd Bomb Group based at Podington. Its crew endured what has been described as one of the most remarkable sagas of WW2. Z battled its way to and from Schweinfurt, didn’t manage to drop its bombs, limped back to the UK and, out of fuel, was one of the last down. At 6.24pm, Z crashlanded and burned up in a field at Tally Ho Farm in Winkfield, Berkshire – witnessed by local schoolchildren, now senior citizens. All the crew were safe, and most returned to long and happy lives back in the USA. The wreckage was salvaged within a few days, and the field reverted to peaceful pasture.

Until, by chance, on 20 October 2013 a few .50inch cartridges and burnt fragments of the plane were unearthed by Hugh Gibbons on a dig with the Berkshire Metal Detectorists

Club. Thanks to the cartridge TW43 markings, the tiny Tally Ho Hoard was unusual in having both a provenience and a provenance. In the following months, Hugh undertook on-line and local research into the plane, the people and places involved – then and now.

The stories that emerged were linked by a common spirit of humanity and generosity. They sparked the creation in June 2014 of a small fenced-off area of what was now named Thanksgiving Field at Tally Ho – not as another sombre war memorial but a tiny park dedicated to all those hidden heroes who help lives and hope recover whenever and wherever conflict is over.

The concept has been much praised locally, in the USA and in Germany. The Field itself is stocked with Giving Thanks and Thinksgiving Seats, a solar guardian angel, apple trees planted in soil brought from Podington, Germany and the USA, and some cheery plaques for visitors to enjoy. In May 2015, Corners were dedicated to two humanitarians: “Unbroken” US airman Louis Zamperini and Henri Dunant, inspirer of the International Red Cross. Everywoman’s Corner pays tribute to the hidden heroines in families – the ones who so often pick up the pieces after war.

Hugh’s intention was always to distribute the items in the hoard to people and places connected with Thanksgiving Field. In July 2015, Lily Hill Park in Bracknell Forest Council provided some oak from a 20+-year-old tree that had been skimmed by Z just before touchdown. This has meant the fragments have been transformed into these modest works of art and conversation pieces for their new homes and families.

Each has to be an interesting piece of art in its own right, regardless of the back story – fun for the eyes, mind and soul.

And that’s the spirit of Mission 115Z.

THANKSGIVING FIELD



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HUGH GIBBONS says welcome to a glimpse of some of fragments of stories behind Thanksgiving Field in the UK – a tiny park with a big heart and VGSOH.

You should find much to surprise and delight you – and get you thinking, giving thanks, and enjoying our Park – as many people like those below have done.



FAMILY-FRIENDLY. Bob and Colleen Disher from Denver CO visit the Field in May 2106. Bob's uncle Jack was the ballgunner on B17F 3351Z which made a happy crashlanding in the middle distance on 14th October 1943 –“ Black Thursday”. Seventy years later, the debris field yielded two handfuls on burnt duralumin and spent cartridges for metal detectorist Hugh Gibbons – inspiring the creation of Thanksgiving Field not as a war memorial but one that pays tribute to hidden heroes after any conflict.

BUCKETSFUL OF HISTORY.

At the opening of the Field in June 2014, the first person in was Hilda, nigh on 100, one of several witnesses to the B17 come tumbling into Tally Ho in 1943. She was led in by a local 5-year and a 9-year-old from Ohio. We planted trees in soil brought from a church and memorial garden in Schweinfurt, Podington, and (illegally) the USA. And we all got the first enjoyment of the bottled breathing space provided by pupils at Sidcot Quaker school down in Somerset – the silence they've been getting for 300 years.



LOCAL FRIENDS gather on the Thinksgiving Seat on 8 May 2105 at the dedication of Corners to Henri Dunant, inspirer of the International Red Cross; Louis Zamperini, for his great example of courage and compassion; and Everywoman – as so often it's women who have to piece together lives and hope after conflict. The informal ceremony included readings from The Forgiveness Project by the remarkable Marina Cantacuzino – to help underline the spirit of the Field which has as its theme Henri Dunant's definition of Civilisation: helping each other – people to people, nation to nation.



CAMPERS try the Giving Thanks Seat in summer 2016. They sat and thought about who to give thanks for (dads and mums came easily to mind), and enjoyed a tour of the tiny park, watching bees and birds and butterflies. Then they were the slightly amused and bemused audience for a brief concert of the Whiffenpoof Song with which the crew would have been familiar.

And they finished by joining in our anthem Be Kind To Your Webfooted Friends – music by JP Sensate children include the Adkins twins from the Tally Ho Farm family – who'll be Wardens of the Field for the rest of the 21st century.

There's now a tradition that these children are filmed each year when they gather for Chris Adkin's Tally Hoot. And they have a bench specially made for them.

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SPECIAL ENVOYS



Mission 115Z could have happened all by mail.

But a happy feature of Mission has been good sports volunteering to help escort some of the conversation pieces to their new homes.



JAMES PUXLEY Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire

James is the representative of HM The Queen in the county where Z ended its days. So it seemed appropriate to sound him out on taking responsibility for National Treasures, the piece of art made for Elizabeth Windsor's 90th birthday – and her her and the people of the UK. (It happens that she's near-neighbour of Thanksgiving Field.

James kindly accepted Treasures in May 2016. The suggestion is that he can make a home for Treasures anywhere that seems fit – in his office, in a museum, schools, or wherever. But he said that he'd have a word with the Queens's Private Secretary. So it may settle down in Windsor Castle,

amusing corgis.



MAEV KENNEDY Art & Archaeologist national journalist SAMUEL KENNEDY History Student

Maev works on The Guardian newspaper, and is a prolific author and broadcaster. It happens that in 2015-16 her son Samuel was at the University of Minnesota, just a few miles from where .5" cartridges were made at the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant in 1943. Maev was the envoy of Image of Peace as it headed for the Ramsey County

CAAP Regeneration team, with the intention of one home being the Ramsey County Historical Society. Like #3351Z, Image is having quite a saga. Sam brought it back to the UK, and it was collected in May 2017 by Heather Worthington, Deputy Manager of Ramsey County.



BOB DISHER Mailman, Denver CO

Bob is the nephew of the ballgunner on #3351Z, and has been a great encourager of the spirit of the Field. So it was appropriate that in May 2016 he and his wife Colleen took time out from their vacation in London to visit the Field. Bob took personal charge of Jack's Eye View back for Disher family duties back home. He presented Field co-ordinator Hugh Gibbons with a 48-star & stripes flag believed to date

from the 1940s, and plaques for the fence from the family and from the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association. In a nearby pub later, Colleen and Bob were made members of the Happy Landings Club.

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“GIVEN IN THANKS”

This was the first of new homes for bits of Z – the chapel of the US Air Force Academy.

In September 2014, the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association held its annual reunion at Colorado Springs. As part of the program they visited the Academy.

SSMA Secretary Sue Fox Moyer presented a slice of duralumin from Z to one of the Air Force chaplains in the Cadet Chapel, together with a citation.



“HAPPY LANDINGS”

With the Gibbons family on Christmas Day 2014, family friend and US

citizen Sarah Nikkel was given a little extra present - a duralumin brooch to take back from her temporary location by Windsor Great Park to her resumed home in New Haven CN. Sarah played a key part in the opening ceremony of the Field – serving the drinks and sharing smiles. In front of the Field, daughter Anja is seen modelling the RAF flying helmet whose ear plug is on the Presidents' Pinboard and microphone connection is on Rich In History.



“DETECTORISTS”

In March 2015, a duralumin brooch and citation was presented to Kelly LeDvon, secretary of the Berkshire Metal Detectorists Club, under whose aegis Hugh Gibbons found the Thanksgiving Field Hoard at Tally Ho Farm.

THANKSGIVING FIELD



AT THE US EMBASSY LONDON 2015



On 25 August 2015, Defense Attaché Brigadier General Dieter Barheis and members of his team welcomed Anne and Hugh Gibbons who came with a formation of 115Z gifts and goodies.

The Embassy were also made members of the Happy Landings Club, giving them the day off on the anniversary of the birth of Clara Barton, founder of the American Red Cross.

Ambassador Matthew Barzun then invited Anne and Hugh to join the celebrations at his residence on the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII. Hugh offered to make a gift for POTUS.

“RETURNED WITH THANKS”

a gift for the people of the USA in handing back their Government property

- TW43 cartridge made in Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant, St Paul MN
- Fragments of solid burnt B17 duralumin – 10mm cylindrical (maybe a control rod)
- Fragment of B17 duralumin tubing about 15mm diameter, function unknown
- Finger-operated 25mm diameter wheel with fine cross-grooving - possibly from oxygen kit
- Black Thursday pin from the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association
- UK/USA friendship badge, and 1943 threepenny bit from the Gibbons' family treasures - as thanks, and to pay for the celebratory beer; wherever



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“LUCKY BASTARD BULLET”

Made as gift for General Dieter Bareihs, US Embassy London Defense Attaché



Unused 0.5 inch bullet supported by B17 duralumin slices. Over half a million similar bullets were fired during the air battles on Black Thursday, but this was one not fired. The title is a reference to the cheery certificate given to 8th Air Force aircrew who completed their required number of operational missions.

“VERÄNDERUNG”



Made as a gift from USA to the people of Germany via their London Embassies

- Unused and pristine 0.5 inch bullet placed head down as symbol of burying past conflicts USA and Germany, with a friendship badge.
- The hollow end suggests it was a tracer bullet (er, the damp fine powder found inside the cavity had been disposed of...)
- Veranderung is German for Change

“A SPECIAL SLICE OF HISTORY”

Made for as a gift for Matthew Barzun, US Ambassador London



This slice of B17 duralumin and the UK/USA friendship badge aim to echo the “special relationship”.

The 1943 halfpenny piece from the Gibbons’ family vaults is in case of personal hardship or national emergency.

“THANKSGIVING ROSIE BROOCH”



Made as a gift for or Barbara Brown, Executive Assistant USDAO London Embassy

This slice of burnt duralumin from our B17 made at Long Beach is superglued to a pin, making it a wearable item as well as one for the family showcase.

The pin rests on two rivets sent from the C17 production line at Boeing Long Beach in 2014 – like the duralumin, perhaps touched by the legendary 1942 Rosie the Riveter Elinor Otto still riveting in 2014!

THANKSGIVING FIELD



“THANKSGIVING ROSIE”

Made as a gift for the Long Beach Rosie the Riveter Foundation



This is a delightful use for a lump of burnt duralumin from our B17F 42-3351 -it's number when it was made in the Douglas factory in Long Beach in early 1943.

Exactly as dug up, she shows the classic muscle of the many Rosies across the USA. The rivets are from the Boeing C17 line just before it closed down. It's possible that they were touched by the legendary Elinor Otto, a Rosie in 1942 and still working as riveter on C17 wings! Rosie was couriered to California by Culver City businessman Aaron Sholok to hand to Gerrie Schipske in Long Beach. Gerrie is well-known as a historian of the city, and as a councilwoman played a leading role in the establishment of the Rosie the Riveter Foundation Memorial Park.

“THE GLADSOME RIVETER”

Made as a gift to the uplifting Gladys Saunders

During WWII Gladys was a riveter of Wellington bombers, and by way of irony got blown up by a Flying Bomb.

At the opening of the Field in 2104, Glad led the singing of “Coming In on a Wing and a Prayer”. A member of the Warfield Library Reminiscence Group, some whose members witnessed the final moments of our B17, Glad has been a warm-hearted and enthusiastic supporter of the idea of Thanksgiving Field. She's commemorated in Everywoman's Corner.



The pot of earth is very gladsome. It's a mix gathered from churches in Schweinfurt, the plane's base at Podington, and Tally Ho Farm. It's said to include soil from Central Park in New York, from a thimbleful gathered by Gladys on her 90th birthday and smuggled into the UK. But as that's illegal, it's unlikely that Glad would have countenanced it.

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“IMAGE OF PEACE”

Made as a gift for the people of Ramsey County MN and its Historical Society



The cartridge has the backstamp TW43, showing that it was made in the vast Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant in Arden Hills. It seemed apt for a cartridge to come home, but as a tiny, different and portable addition to the stock of art and historical items in the county.

So it's a tiny complement – and compliment – to their 65-ton Vision of Peace, and in the same spirit of common humanity and shared history.

Image of Peace was handed over in the Park on 26 May 2017 to Heather Worthington - a Deputy Manager of Ramsey County, over here on holiday

from the USA. She has been a great friend of the Field, and helped arrange news coverage in the Minnesota media. Her County role includes supervising the regeneration of the TCAAP site, and is also responsible for community and economic development. She's well known for being someone with a great heart and generosity of spirit. She also has a fine singing voice, so in the Park Heather and friends sang Going Home and the Field Anthem: Be Kind to Your Web-footed Friends... Horses galloped in delight.



Hugh also presented Heather with a personal gift called Happy Landings to share with churches, schools and other communities in St Paul. This features a cartridge case stamped TW43, a fragment of the B17F, and rivets from the Long Beach factory - possibly touched by one of the Rosies who helped build it in 1943

She also unveiled an Uplifters Fence plaque to DR CHARLES ALEXANDER EASTMAN Born HAKADAH and later named OHIYE S'A

“We give thanks here for the uplifting spirit of this Native American physician; educated at Boston University; writer, national lecturer; and reformer. Of Santee Dakota, English and French ancestry, as a doctor on reservations he cared for Indians after the Wounded Knee Massacre. He became active in politics and issues on Native American rights, and 1911 represented the American Indian at the Universal Races Congress in London, and in 1933 won the first Indian Achievement Award. In his speeches and teachings, he emphasized peace and living in harmony with nature. This plaque also celebrates the ethos of Gibbs Farm and Ramsey County Historical Society in Minnesota (linked in spirit with Tally Ho) and the visitors from there come here on 26 May 2017.”



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“DOWN IN FLAME. HEY!”

Made as a gift to the National Museum of the United States Air Force



This item was for the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association to give to the USAF Museum at Dayton OH – during their 2016 Reunion.

The picture below shows SSMA Education Director Sue Fox Moyer presenting Hey! to Jane Leach, their liaison officer on 16 September.

The fragments of charred duralumin are from B17 #3351Z which – according to an eyewitness age 10 – may have been on fire when it tumbled into what is now Thanksgiving Field and burned up with fireworks. The left one may suggest a descent in flames; and the right, an exclamation mark! (The rivet is from

the Boeing C17 line in 2014.)

The title comes from the official USAF Song, written (as you might guess) in 1938 by Robert MacArthur Crawford (July 27, 1899–March 12, 1961) who tried to become a WW1 pilot in the US Army Air Service but was found to be underage (cf the RAF's Thomas Dobney flying bombers at age 16...) *Off we go into the wild blue yonder/ Climbing high into the sun/ Here they come zooming to meet our thunder/ At 'em boys, Give 'er the gun! /Down we dive, spouting our flame from under/ Off with one helluva roar! /We live in fame or go down in flame. Hey!/ Nothing can stop the U.S. Air Force!*



“ON A WING AND A PRAYER”

Made as a gift for USAF communities in the UK



At its height, there were nearly 8th Air Force airfields in the UK, clustered on East Anglia - many of them with classically quaint and ancient English place names. Now only a handful are left, mostly with ground rather than flying duties. This is a gift for them today, bearing in mind that Z passed through RAF Alconbury in summer 1943 as part of the 92nd Bomb Group.

The piece is 15” wide but little more than 1/4” deep – and has an aerofoil shape. The grain of the 200-year-old oak on the front and back may suggest a scene – or downdraughts! The scrap of duralumin is actually a piece of slightly crushed tubing about 3/4” in diameter from an unidentified part of our B17F.

The title is a reference to the popular WWII song – which we sang at the opening of the Field in 2014.

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“JACK’S EYE VIEW”

Made as a gift for the family of Staff Sergeant Jack Disher



Jack Disher was the ballgunner on our B17. Positioned underneath the plane, he had an unusual view of the European Theater of Operations. During Mission 115, he was wounded in the foot and after the crashlanding was taken to hospital in Oxford. He later shared his experiences of the aerial battle in a 1944 BBC broadcast.

Jack had quite a telling war beyond Black Thursday, flying 41 missions and winning a DFC and Cluster. In September 1943, he survived a ditching in the English Channel in September 1943, joining the Goldfish Club. After completing his first tour of duty he returned to the USA, but then – unusually -re-volunteered to come back to help the liberation of Europe. Jack was killed on 18 March 1945, just a few weeks before VE Day, and is buried at Margraten Cemetery in the Netherlands.



His nephew Bob in Denver CO surfaced through Facebook, and proved to be a great enthusiast for the of the Field. Jack’s Eye View was made in 2015, and in May 2016 Bob and his wife Colleen came over on holiday to Britain and diverted out of London for a poignant hand-over.



They also brought gifts – plaques from family and the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association; and a 48-star flag believed to date from the early ‘40s.



Bob is seen with Chris Adkins, manager of Tally Ho, and Hugh Gibbons, creator of Thanksgiving Field.

In May 2022, the flag – carefully folded – was presented to St Mary’s Church in Winkfield which our B17F skimmed in its final moments, after a long day in which the tailgunner got a final view of St Mary’s Church in Podington, the plane’s base.



And there was a Lucky Bastard’s sort of find for Bob. Coming out of the far field which contains the debris site, Bob spotted a lump of metal in the hedgerow. This turned out to be a chunk of B17 duralumin – found not by a metal detector but a sharp eye and prepared mind!

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“RICH IN HISTORY”

Made as a gift for the family of Lt Richard Lyng

Stork Visits Home Of Veteran of 22 Bombing Missions

Brother Is Born Sept. 18;
Wife Gives Birth to
Daughter Nov. 21.

Lt. Richard Lyng, 23 years old,
7521 Wabash ave., flying fortress
pilot, has had to contend with two



LT. RICHARD
LYNG

winged forces
in the past three
months — the
German Luft-
waffe and the
stork. The lat-
ter delivered a
baby brother
on September
18 and re-
turned to the
Lyng home on
November 21 to
deliver a
daughter to his
wife, the for-
mer Rita Cook.
The brother's name is Patrick
Lyng and the daughter has been
named Patricia Margaret.

Lieutenant Lyng, who has been
stationed in England as pilot of a
flying fortress since March, 1943,
recently completed his 22nd suc-
cessful mission over Nazi-held
Europe. During this mission the
crew was unable to drop their
bombs on the target—Schwein-
furt, Germany—because the bomb
control release was frozen. This
meant that the crew had to work
against time to release the ex-
plosive load before landing at
their home base. They finally
dropped the explosives over
France and none too soon, for the
plane hit an embankment and
caught fire while landing at the
home base.

Lieutenant Lyng enlisted in the
air corps a year ago last April.
A graduate of De LaSalle insti-
tute, he received his wings and
officer's bars in February, 1943.
On September 9 he was promoted
to the rank of first lieutenant.
He has been awarded the DFC
and two oak leaf clusters.

Having completed 22 missions,
the young lieutenant expects to
get leave soon so he can go home
and meet the two new members
of his family.



MADE FOR THE FAMILY OF RICHARD LYNG, pilot of B17 42-3351Z, Rich in History is even more unusual than the other conversation pieces by Hugh Gibbons.

Unearthed in the small B17 debris field at Tally Ho Farm, the front item is some form of control wheel, possibly from an oxygen supply. The plug on the left is a sort of VGSOH. In contrast to Rich's headset as a daytime bomber pilot, this is from the helmet of RAF pilot Reg Keep who trained in the USA and later flew Mosquito night-fighters - but never fired a round in anger. Reg later lived in Bracknell and gave Hugh his wartime relics, including the helmet and fascinating logbook.

The Chicago newspaper cutting has the news that Rich became a father just a month after his Schweinfurt experience — around the time he was crashlanding another B17!

Like many 8th Air Force veterans — including James Stewart who also flew many missions as a bomber pilot — Rich spoke little of his experiences. The wife of his great nephew recalled in 2015: “He was a quiet force when he entered a room -tall, lanky, charming smile. Very humble man. I did not realize his war heroics until the eloquent tribute that was paid to him when he died several years ago.”



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THREE MUSKETEERS!

In July 2016, three more families of the crew of #3351Z surfaced – to great delight all round.

The three crew were the tail and two waist gunners in the rear part of our B17F #3351Z. They're seen in this 1943 photo at their Podington airbase: "Jack" Radney; Nick Barbato and Clarence Hultquist. Hugh Gibbons used three of the tools of their trade unearthed at Thanksgiving Field as art. The TW43-stamped cartridges were among the half million fired by B17 gunners on Black Thursday.

- **"HOKEY POKEY"** in the centre is made as a gift for Clarence Hultquist's son Chris, in Phoenix AZ – an echo of You Put Your Left Gun In, Your Left Gun Out – now a Thanksgiving Field song for gatherings! Presentation of Hokey Pokey was made during a lunch for USAF Honorary Commanders – of which Chris is one – at Luke AFB in Arizona in November 2016.
- **"6-24-o-CLOCK LOW"** on the right is a gift for the Radney family in general but especially Jack's daughter-in-law Elaine in Colorado Springs. The title is a reference not only to the tailgunner's location and the fine 1949 film 12-o-Clock High, but also to the officially logged time at debriefing of #3351Z's arrival time at Winkfield: 6.24pm on the sunny evening there of 14 October 1943. Handover will take place in early 2017 at the USAF Academy, thanks to a community relations team there.
- **"ARRIVEDERCI!"** On the left (above) was made as a gift for the Barbato family in Erie PA – with Italian in their blood! Arrival in its new home happened in early October 2016 – carried by special envoy Sue Fox Moyer of the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association. Seen here are grandson Corey, and son Nick and wife Lisa. Sue spoke of laughter and tears at this historic occasion.



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OVER THERE!

THESE FIRST TWO CONVERSATION PIECES were made in October 2016 to add a little extra fun and thoughts to the handover of the Hultquist family cartridge at Luke Air Force Base in Arizona.



“People’s Service Medal”

This was made as a gift for Major Elizabeth Magnusson, of the Public Affairs team at Luke representing all those who willingly turn to help other people in need.

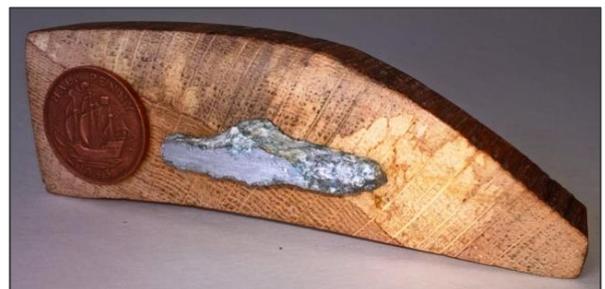
Before her time in the USAF, Elizabeth was a volunteer at a school in Tisovec in the Czech Republic and an NGO in Windhoek.

The medal is in the form of a pin, and is held in place by two rivets from the 2014 Boeing C17 line in Long Beach – where our B17 was made in 1943.

“Every Cloud Has One”

This item was made as a gift for 944 Wing USAF, to enjoy with eye or touch, mind or soul, and smiles. It’s a small tribute to all who volunteer to give help, courage and hope to others in need. The 1943 halfpenny goes with the fragment of out 1943 plane and event. It’s to help pay for the celebratory beer. (In those days, it would have gone a long way to that!)

The Wing is a reserve unit with its many civilians.



“VENIT HORA” & Public Service Medal

on the left is a personal gift made for the Superintendent of the US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs - to enjoy, cite, handle, share, reflect on, and occasionally dust. It’s a thank you for service, integrity, respect, vision and example.

The title – The Hour Has Come - was the motto of the 97th Bombardment Group, in 1942 the first B17 unit to fly operations in the liberation of Europe. Hence the 1942 threepenny piece, from the Gibbons family relics. Today’s 97th Operations Group is 97 re-born. The rivet is from the

C17 line at Long Beach in 2014, possibly touched by the renowned Rosie Elinor Otto.

The Public Service medal was made for made for the Community Relations team at the United States Air Force Academy It’s as a little thank-you for all their work – and in particular being Good Sports in volunteering to arrange the handover of 6.24-o-Clock Low to the Radney family.

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THE SCHWEINFURT 2016 GALLERY

Made for communities in the city of Schweinfurt

THESE CONVERSATION PIECES were made by Hugh Gibbons in 2016 by for the enjoyment of communities in the city of Schweinfurt. They are meant to be a contribution to the common humanity, courage and kindness shown by peoples after conflict of any sort anywhere. All of them feature fragments from the USAAF B17 #3351Z, which crashlanded at what is now Thanksgiving Field on its return from Schweinfurt on 14 October 1943. The pieces were sent in late 2016 to Michael Pfrang in St Josef's Parish as a special envoy.



“HEBRAER 13:2”

has been made for the parish of St Joseph, and all Catholic communities of the city in thanks for their compassion and kindness. The original church was destroyed on 14 October 1943 – but not by our B17 42-3351Z, as its bomb release mechanism froze. The Angel is a fragment of

burnt duralumin, which suggested a body and head. The wings are made of slices of other fragments. The title comes from a passage in the letter to the Hebrews in the Bible that says: *Do not forget to show*

hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

“PHENIX”

has been made for all the city and people of Schweinfurt. Like the Angel, the wings of the phoenix – if that is what they are – are made from burnt duralumin. The fact that these fragments can be made into even a tiny work of art is another example of rebuilding after conflict.



“JESAGA 2:4”

is a gift for Pastor Dieter Schorn and the Lutheran churches of the city. The title is a reference to in Isaiah: “swords into ploughshares”, and humanity at work rebuilding lives and hope after conflict of any sort. Jesaga is a companion to Dialog made for the HD Centre for Humanitarian Dialog in Geneva, and to Image of Peace, made for Ramsey County in Minnesota, where the bullet was made in 1943. The title also echoes the fine sculpture in the United Nations Art Collection.



HEIMKEHR

is a piece made for FAG, the ballbearings manufacturer in Schweinfurt. The fragment of burnt aluminium may suggest a human figure. Deliberately, the metal pieces are not fixed.



ART TROUVÉ

is an educational gift for schools, colleges, museums, associations and other communities in the city. The burnt duralumin fragment – which may suggest a person - is not fixed in place, so that different arrangements may be tried. The bright metal underneath the scarred skin suggests a reference to the British saying of hope that “every cloud has a silver lining.”



THANKSGIVING FIELD



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“THE EMPATHY PINBOARD”

where US Presidents can leave a memento of understanding

THIS SIMPLE AND UNIQUE little item was made by Hugh Gibbons in Bracknell UK as a gift to the office of the President of the USA. Empathy has been defined as “the ability to step into the shoes of another person, understand their feelings and perspectives, and – crucially- to use that understanding to guide our actions”. Presidents can use the Pinboard to fix some small memento of empathy during their time in office.

The Pinboard was delivered to the US Embassy in London in April 2016.

THE WOOD IS ENGLISH OAK salvaged from a fallen tree in Lily Hill Park in Bracknell. It's believed to be at least 200 years old – and perhaps from an acorn planted when the United States was just a twinkle in the eye. The tree was overflown by B17 42-3351Z of the USAAF just before it tumbled into the tiny RAF Winkfield at the end of the Second Schweinfurt Raid on “Black Thursday” 14 October 1943 – burning up in what is now Thanksgiving Field at Tally Ho.

THE BULLET was found there 70 years later – together with fragments of duralumin. It was made in 1943 at the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant in Ramsey County MN. It's intended as a symbol of the need for empathy between all sides after conflict – hence is placed point down. NB The bullet is deliberately loose, and needs wedging in place from time to time.

THE SHOE HORN is a reminder of the importance of the key element in empathy – walking in other people's shoes. So it's there to help any POTUS do just that, or help others. The horn is believed to be one of the few items that survived the air raid in Birmingham in 1940 through which baby Hugh slept while the house lost its whole front and most possessions.

THE SOCKET PLUG is a reminder of a key factor in Empathy – the value of listening. For pilots and presidents alike. It comes from the ear phone connection on the helmet issued to RAF pilot Reg Keep, who trained in the USA before before serving 1943-5 as a night fighter pilot (though he never fired his guns in anger.) He later became a policeman in Reading and resident of Bracknell.

ON THE END are some examples of empathy in action chosen by Hugh to get things started.

THE BLACK THURSDAY PIN was given by the US-based Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association. One of their actions has been a memorial garden in the city as a collaboration between the flyers and the flak gunners on the ground that day. It says: “Dedicated by some who witnessed the tragedy of war, now united in friendship and the hope for lasting peace among all people”.

THE REMEMBER BADGE comes from Sandhurst School in Bracknell Forest, a memento of when they started their Reaching Rwanda – a very fine example of empathy backed by action. The project lets the school provide practical support with feet on the ground by students sent out to help communities there – contributing to the hope and unity rebuilt after conflict.

THE HORSESHOE has three purposes. It's about the need for empathy and understanding with things other than human beings - exemplified by helping horses walk on their own four feet. It's a reminder that Thanksgiving Field happened because of the generosity and empathy of the Tally Ho Farm family. And it echoes Benjamin Franklin: “Diligence is the mother of good luck”.

THE FLY2 HELP BADGE exemplifies the empathy of all those who give their time and resources to help others. It's from a small UK charity, much of whose work helps those with disability, illness, bereavement and isolation, by letting them experience the wonder of flight.

THE FAIRTRADE BADGE symbolises the action and empathy with social justice in countries as means of countering poverty and inequality

THE US RED CROSS BADGE from the time of WWII is in tribute to all international organisations with empathy at their heart – particularly during and after conflicts. It's also a reminder of Red Cross inspirer Henri Dunant, first to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize: “Civilisation is helping each other; people to people, nation to nation.”

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THE SHOE HORN'S PROVENANCE



ON THE EMPATHY PINBOARD is a shoe-horn – there for any POTUS to help anyone putting on someone’s else’s shoes – especially when they’re a tight fit. The shoe horn has its own history as a survivor. Founder of Thanksgiving Field Hugh Gibbons has a first-hand account – and why he has an affinity with the people of Schweinfurt and anywhere else experiencing bombing from the air.

The shoe horn was one of the few Gibbons family possessions to survive our house in Birmingham being rearranged by an aerial mine on the night of 19/20 November 1940. Sheltering in the cellar were me age 2, mother Ilma, sister Bunny, and brother Paul. Dad was away that night – otherwise he’d have been stationed at the top window as a volunteer fire watcher.

When the raid was over, Mum – unaware of events – said let’s have a cup of tea. So we went up into the untouched kitchen at the back of the house. Then in walked two air raid wardens. Mum said I locked the front door - how did you get in? They looked at each other and said in classic Brummagen: Yow’d better come and see this, missus.

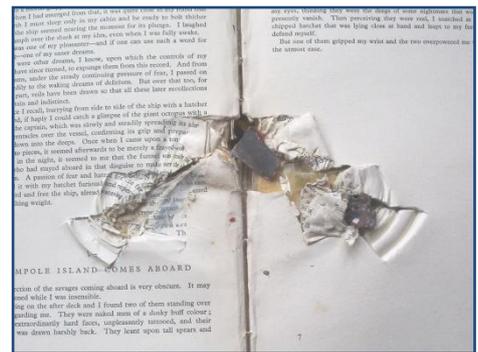
The house was in a residential area, Moseley. This was under the flight path for Luftwaffe bombers up from Brittany and aiming for the industrial area of the city. They used radio beams to signal release, and in RV Jones Secret War there’s evidence that the RAF were deceiving them by sending out false signals. The effect was to release early, so homes took the hit.

Nearly everything was lost, as most of the house was unsafe to enter. So whatever was available – including the shoe horn – went into bags as we went to a place of greater safety.

But two other items are family heirlooms seventy years on. One is a novel by HG Wells, one of a set in the room on the left. It has a small puncture hole in the back. Inside, the pages are scrunched up by tiny fragments from the bomb – indicating the force of arrival. The book includes a note on the story of that night.



And in the room on the right of the house is an upturned bergere cane chair – part of a three-piece suite bought earlier in the year. Two of the chairs survived, to wander as refugees in Old Bilton, Rugby, Birmingham again, Somerset, Leicestershire, Surrey and Bracknell. They’re now alive and well in living with our son Matthew in Warfield - just a couple of miles from Thanksgiving Field.



So you can see there are good reasons why the shoe horn fits well on The Empathy Pinboard – and why I have understanding and respect for families suffering bombs. And tea-makers!

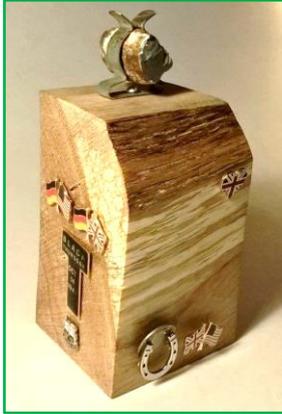
NB If you want the surprising story of the house then now, go to www.just1.org.uk/moseley and look for the PDF Reconstructing No 71 – and the poignant Who Is/Was My Neighbour.

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“NATIONAL TREASURES”



THIS unusual piece is a work of art with its sleeves rolled up.

It was made by Hugh Gibbons for Mission 115Z – the distribution of fragments to new homes in the UK, USA and Germany. And it shows a treasure to cherish: VGSOH.

In part, it's an unusual 90th birthday gift to leading National Treasure Elizabeth Windsor, representing the thanks and admiration from people in the UK, USA and Germany. She's better known as Queen Elizabeth II.

But it's also meant to as a reminder that national treasures come in many forms.

THE FRAGMENT OF BURNT DURALUMIN at the top is a reminder that even the humblest of items has a hinterland – and is part of the national treasure.

THE WOOD symbolises nature and a sense of taking the long view as national treasures. It's from an oak tree in Bracknell Forest Council's Lily Hill Park – which the B17 may have skimmed just before touchdown – and is believed to be at least two hundred years old.

THE HEARTSHAPED UNION JACK is to suggest the national treasures: all the people, as individuals and communities.

THE HORSESHOE symbolises the national treasures in flora and fauna – and the sense to appreciate good luck in life.

THE COIN is a George V 1925 halfpenny, to suggest that nations should treasure leaders with a sense of duty. (It's also in case the Queen ever wants a flutter on the Ascot Gold Cup.)

THE T-BADGE represents reconciliation as a national treasure. It's a gift from the USA's Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association, in which the opposing USAAF airmen and young flakhelfers founded a small memorial park in the city with a beautiful artwork "*Dedicated by some who witnessed the tragedy of war, now united in friendship and the hope for lasting peace among all people*".

THE THREE FRIENDSHIP BADGES represent the national treasures of empathy, understanding and forgiveness.



The Queen's representative in Berkshire, Lord Lieutenant James Puxley accepting Treasures in 2016, with instructions to find any home for it that he thinks fit.

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INFORMATION RELATED TO “NATIONAL TREASURES”: TWO GEORGES, TWO ELIZABETHS, ONE JIMMIE

George Roberts, Radio Operator, 367th Bomb Squadron 306th Bomb Group, USAAF, on record in 2005. He's seen in the crew line-up below on the left at Thurleigh in 1944.

As of May 2017, George was alive and well in Mississippi, and a fan of Thanksgiving Field on Facebook!



The weather then turned bad and we stood down until October 14th when we flew to Schweinfurt, Germany to attack the ball bearing plants. This was an extremely tough mission and German fighters had a field day. Our plane was the only one from the 367th to reach the target and get back. Our group lost 10 bombers and the five that returned all had dead and/or wounded aboard. Out of a force of 241 attacking planes, the 8th Air Force had 60 bombers shot down and an additional 5 crashed landed in the UK. In my first four missions, the 8th AF lost a total of 148 bombers. About this time I figured we could never completed a 25 mission tour.

Following the Schweinfurt mission, there were insufficient crews and planes to conduct missions and we stood down until October 20th on a mission to Duren, Germany. We were hit in one engine and since the pilot could not feather the propeller, it began to vibrate and shake the plane. We reduced air speed to the minimum and descended to 1000 feet. We were given a choice to bail out or try to ride the plane down. We all chose to stay with the plane. After 15 minutes the engine fell off and the vibration ceased. We returned to base alone with no further problems. All of our original officers were killed while flying with other crews. Our right waist gunner and myself were the only ones to stay together and complete the tour of combat.



We flew many different planes thereafter until March of 1944 when we received a new G model named "Princess". After one mission we renamed it "Princess Elizabeth" in honor of the daughter of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth of England. While the Royal family was encouraged by the name, the Lord Mayors of London and Bedford thought it would be a bad omen should the plane be shot down. Accordingly, we changed the name to "Rose of York", and a white rose, symbol of the house of York was painted on the front of the airplane.

The King, Queen and Princess Elizabeth and General Jimmie Doolittle came to our base on July 6, 1944 to christen the aircraft. My final 16 missions were flown as the radio operator on this plane.

I completed my combat tour a few days later, and was returned to the States.