Newsletter Issue 23, April 2014

Captain Eddie V. Rickenbacker

Captain Eddie V. Rickenbacker was born in Columbus, Ohio. Even, after a difficult childhood, he landed a job in the nascent auto industry. There he raced in the first Indianapolis 500 in 1911. He went pro from 1912 to 1916 with the nickname "Fast Eddie." Rickenbacker enlisted when war was first declared, arriving in France on June 26th, 1917 as a Sergeant First Class. He served as General Pershing's driver, and was assigned as a mechanic to 3rd Aviation Instruction Center at Issoudun, where he taught himself to fly in his free time. Rickenbacker then joined the 94th "Hat-in-the-Ring" Aero Squadron, in which he earned the French Croix de Guerre. Later, as a captain, he commanded the squadron. On September 25th, he fought in an air battle that resulted in his Medal of Honor in 1931. His confirmed total came up to thirteen Fokker D.VIIs, four miscellaneous fighters, five observation balloons, and four Haberstadts. His 26 kills and 300 flight hours were the most of any US pilot in WWI. He had a brush with death on February 26th, 1941, when he was in a Douglas DC-3 airliner that crashed near Atlanta, Georgia. Despite being gravely wounded, he tended to other passengers until help arrived, but was assumed dead on arrival at the hospital. In October 1942, Rickenbacker's B-17 strayed hundreds of miles off course and ditched near some Japanese islands. He and his crew drifted in a raft on the Pacific for thousands of miles over the next 24 days. Once again, Rickenbacker was erroneously pronounced dead. He owned and ran the Indianapolis Motor Speedway for years, as well as Eastern Airlines. He finally passed away on July 23, 1973 in Zürich, Switzerland and is buried in his hometown of Columbus. Today, a commemorative marker outside the French Conde-en-Barrois airfield honors this remarkable American hero.

In Memory of Medal of Honor Recipient, Staff Sergeant Day G. Turner

Staff Sergeant Day G. Turner, of the 319th Infantry Regiment, 80th Infantry Division, joined the Army from Luzerne County, Pennsylvania in September 1943. He was awarded both a Medal of Honor and a Purple Heart. On January 8th, 1945 Sergeant Turner commanded a nine-man squad defending a critical flank position during the Battle of the Bulge. An overwhelming enemy force attacked the squad with heavy artillery, mortar, and rocket fire. Seeking cover in a nearby house, the squad prepared to defend to the death. The enemy continually attacked, but were set back with heavy losses. Eventually, through direct tank fire, the enemy gained entrance. Even with many causalities, Sergeant Turner refused to surrender. Instead, he bravely threw a can of flaming oil at his attackers. The squad engaged in intense hand-to-hand combat throughout the house. Sergeant Turner flung numerous hand grenades, he bayoneted two Germans who rushed the doorway he was defending, and he fought with the enemy's ammunition when his own was exhausted. Hours later, the enemy surrendered, having lost 11 KIA's and 25 POW's, as well as many wounded. Today, Sergeant Turner's heroic deeds are immortalized by a memorial in Dahl, Luxembourg.

Intern Alert

Hello, AMWO community! My name is Ellen Blyth and I'm the summer intern. I'm from Ellicott City, Maryland. However, most of the year I'm studying in Columbia, SC at the University of South Carolina. I'm a rising junior earning a degree in international business. Here's to a fun and informative summer!

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