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Press Release

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The East Anglia Air War Project and the Old Primero Historical Foundation Updates News about the 2020 Bledsoe Awards

The East Anglia Air War Project and the Old Primero Historical Foundation announced earlier this year that the three 2020 honorees for the Bledsoe Medal would be presented in 2020, one in the United States and two in England. The British honorees are Dave Osborne (posthumous) and Roger Freeman (posthumous). In the United States, Gary Moncur will receive the Bledsoe Medal. The original presentations, scheduled in May and June in Houston and in England, were postponed due to the Coronavirus Pandemic. Dr. Vernon L. Williams announced today that "until there is a vaccine, it will not be possible to announce presentation dates. It is expected that the presentations, one in the United States, and two in England, will take place sometime in 2021."

The George Bledsoe Award is presented to those who make significant contributions to the preservation of the history of the air war in World War II. This award is named in honor George Bledsoe who devoted his lifetime to service to mankind, first as a B-24 Liberator pilot flying dangerous low level night missions with the Carpetbagger operations in England and Scotland during World War II. Later as a teacher to thousands of students, Bledsoe became a role model for living life with integrity and a commitment to excellence. His legacy and his memory continues to live on in the lives of his students to whom Bledsoe made a lasting impact.

The 2020 Bledsoe awards will be

presented in 2021 when the pandemic has closed.



Dave Osborne

For his work building an impressive research archive of 381st Bomb Group materials over the course of a lifetime.



Gary Moncur

For his work in developing and maintaining a comprehensive research website on the 303rd Bomb Group in World War Two.



Roger Freeman

For a lifetime of scholarship, his 60 books on the air war and his massive historical collections now in museums and archives across the globe.

Press releases coming later in the summer for two fall presentations in England and one in the United States

The Old Primero Historical Foundation has announced that three Bledsoe awards will be presented in Fall 2020, one in the United States and two in England.

Dave Osborne (posthumous)

Dave Osborne played a major role in preserving the history of the 381st Bomb Group: transcribing microfilm, collecting archival materials, and publishing books on the air war based in England.

Dave Osborne grew up in Halstead, 8 miles from the Ridgewell airdrome. His interest in the B-17 began when making models for his son Corin. His son outgrew the passion but Dave's interest and involvement in the 381st Bomb Group led to many years of service dedicated to preserving the history of that group and men who served at Ridgewell.

By the time of his death in 2016, Dave Osborne had contributed a significant amount of historical documents to a 381st research website that quickly became a significant resource for scholars and students alike. Osborne spent thousands of tedious hours transcribing microfilm and other documents to make them accessible to a vast group of researchers who will be forever in his debt.

Gary Moncur

Gary Moncur's father, Vern L. Moncur, was a first pilot in the 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth, England during World War II. He remembers the impact of his father's experience on the family, "I saw how his experiences changed his life and ours. I grew up in a home without a driveway . . . it was the 'runway.' The patch of cement next to the runway where we played basketball was the 'ramp.' I was an adult before I knew "ramp" was an aviation term. Almost all our family rides were to the airport, a tradition that has carried on to my family."

Throughout much of his adult life, Gary Moncur has dedicated much of his time to developing a comprehensive website to preserve the history of his father's war service and the bomb group in which he served. The 303rd Bomb Group website is his brainchild, building it into one of the most wide-ranging research sites available. Any scholar or student looking at the history of the air war must spend time in Moncur's digital archives. As with any website archival endeavor, the beauty of it is in the access that is available to anyone doing research, regardless of where the researcher is. The archives is never closed, it is open 24/7.

Although the 303rd Bomb Group Association has closed its operations, Gary Moncur continues to update and maintain the website. He continues to honor those who have passed into history and

continues to build new data so that it is a living, breathing place.

Roger Freeman (posthumous)

Freeman, who grew up on a farm in East Anglia, had a boyhood obsession with aircraft which developed into a historical interest in the airmen and operations of the Eighth Air Force, a force with some 3,500 bombers and almost 1,000 fighters occupying some 60 airfields in the area.

Roger Freeman died in 2005 at the age of 77, but during his lifetime he became one of the world's foremost military aviation historians while making his living as a farmer. He specialized in the history of the USAAF Eighth Air Force, the largest air striking force ever committed to battle. He eventually produced more than 60 books and countless articles dealing with the USAAF and RAF air offensive over Europe. He was in great demand on both sides of the Atlantic as a lecturer, and he made many visits to America to meet the veterans.

The Roger Freeman Collection of 15,000 photographs is the foundation of his personal research. That is now a part of the Imperial War Museum's online footprint and is an important part of the educational program available via the web to researchers and students across the globe.

The George Bledsoe Medal

The Old Primero Historical Foundation continues its work to keep the memory of George Bledsoe alive in the minds of the American people by honoring those across the world who have made significant contributions to the preservation of American military aviation history.

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Keep pace with the Bledsoe Award news by regular visits
to the Old Primero Historical Foundation website.

Please consider a donation to the Old Primero Historical Foundation.
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