

PREDDY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION



Tom Patten & *Sweetie Face*



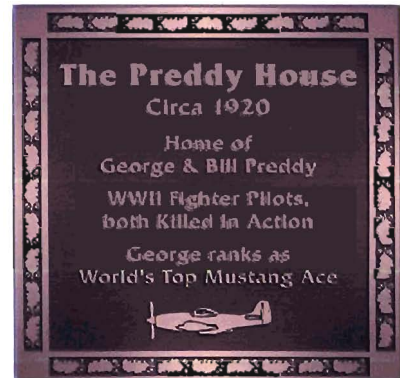
Troy White's *Darwin's Few*



& *Incident at Humpty Doo*



Patten-Reese Heritage Flight



Plaque for 605 Park Avenue



Cripes, Sweetie Face & Moonbeam

**ANNUAL REPORT
SEPTEMBER 2006**

Preddy Memorial Foundation

September 2006 Annual Report



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Board Meetings

PMF President Bill Moore and VFW Commander Greg Woodard arranged for a re-dedication of Preddy Boulevard in connection with the PMF Board meeting. The meeting was held at the **Major George Preddy VFW Post 2087** now located at 2605 S. Elm-Eugene Street on November 10, 2005. Our guest speaker was The Honorable Horace Kornegay who also spoke at the first dedication in 1968. The re-dedication was marked by a fly-over of a P-51 Mustang owned and flown by Tom Patten of Nashville, TN. Tom has been a Friend of the 352nd Fighter Group and a member of the PMF for years, and has his Mustang painted in the Blue Nosed markings of *Sweetie Face*, flown by Lt. Sheldon Heyer who was in White Flight the day George shot down six Me 109s.

Bob Reese brought Bob & Betty Powell to the meeting in one of his Cessna Citation jets used in his new charter business. The jet flew in formation with the Mustang on the flyover, but the FAA would not allow them to fly as low as was permitted in 1968. The photo on the cover page shows the formation; Tom provided us with photos of *Sweetie Face* in a formation of three, also shown.

Our spring meeting was held on May 10, 2006 in the Painted Plate Restaurant, Bill Moore presiding. Bill Black and Bill Moore had arranged for the board to hear from representatives of UNC at Greensboro about their Women Veterans Historical Collection. We were convinced that the project warranted PMF support, and voted to donate \$5,000. Also at this meeting we elected a new president, Tim Key, and a new board member, Steve Parker.

American Fighter Aces Album

The photo of George Preddy that appears in the second and most recent AFAA Album is not of George; it's of Lt. Deems Taylor who served with George in Darwin, Australia. Cheryl Dart had new stick-on photos of George (like the smiling photo above) made to correct the error. For a copy of the correct photo, please write Cheryl Dart, Museum of Flight, 9404 East Marginal Way, Seattle, WA 9810 or email her at cdart@museumofflight.org. She does not know who bought the Album.

Halls of Fame

George Preddy remains on the list of nominees for the National Aviation Hall of Fame (NAHF); we have high hopes

Preddy will be selected in 2007. This year the PMF bought four seats to the Induction Ceremony. George Nunemacher and his wife, Virginia, attended again this year on behalf of the PMF. They were joined by two friends of the PMF and 352nd Fighter Group Association, Ritva Williamson and Dr. Milton Nathan. We thank those Ohions for attending on behalf of the PMF. The NC Aviation Hall of Fame (NCAHoF) announced their first induction ceremony, one planned for 2006, but had to cancel it. The PMF's nomination of George Preddy for the NCAHoF still stands, and PMF Board Member Craig Harris nominated another Tarheel, the late Lt Gen Frank Armstrong of *12 O'Clock High* fame. We have suggested that PMF Board Member Susan Dusenbury nominate the late Tom Davis who started and presided over Piedmont Airlines.

George Preddy Bust

The PMF was asked to provide a bust of George Preddy to the 8th Air Force Museum at Barksdale AFB, LA. We tried to have the *Air & Space Museum* in San Diego de-access theirs if not in use. We were pleased to learn that it is on display, so we decided to provide the Barksdale Museum with a model of Cripes A'Mighty 3rd, a print of Russell Smith's *Sixth on the Sixth*, and a print of Troy White's portrait of George. We will have them there in time for the 8th Air Force Reunion which will be attended in October this year by the 352nd Fighter Group.

Bill Preddy

This quote is taken from the most recent 339th Newsletter written by Steve Ananian: "The members of the 339th Fighter Group owe German Paratrooper Hans Carl Wilhelm Gerlach and his comrade our undying gratitude for their display of compassion and human kindness. We are indebted to them and wish to take this opportunity to thank them on behalf of the Preddy family as well as ourselves, his comrades. We thank you so very much!"

"The 339th Fighter Group flew its last major strafing mission of the war on April 17th 1945. That day the Eighth Air Force destroyed 286 enemy aircraft. Our Group destroyed 67 enemy aircraft on the ground and one ME 262 in the air; thus we became the Top Scorer for the day! Four planes of the 503rd FS were hit by Anti-Aircraft fire. Capt. Ray Reuter and Lt. Bill Preddy were shot down near Ceske Budejovice, Czechoslovakia by Anti-Aircraft fire, about 100 miles south of Prague, while strafing an airfield. The third aircraft hit by Anti-Aircraft fire returned safely to the UK and the damage to the fourth was insignificant.

"We know of the heroic effort by a local resident to save 1/Lt. William Preddy's life. Bill Preddy, alive but mortally wounded, was care-

fully removed from his aircraft and taken by Jan Smejkal, a witness, in his horse-drawn cart for 5 Km to a medical aid station. Then another 10 Km. further to the nearest hospital for medical assistance. Raymond Reuter's aircraft exploded and he was killed instantly. They are both memorialized in the Czech Republic as liberators. Thanks to Joe Noah of the Preddy Memorial Foundation, I just received a letter written by the son of a German paratrooper, Hans Gerlach, who with a comrade, nursed 503rd pilot, Bill Preddy during those final hours in their attempt to save his life. Hans Junior tried to find out more about the US Pilot who in 1945 was also a patient where his wounded dad was being treated in the hospital at Ceske Budejovice. Finally, last month through the internet he succeeded while he was surfing the Internet to learn about the Preddy Memorial Foundation site."

Hans said of his Dad, "He was seriously injured by a Russian "Chatiousha" (rocket launcher) with shrapnel throughout his legs and ear (the shrapnel in his ear is still there!). After this hit he was lucky to be carried out of fire by comrades. The seriously wounded were just put on Trucks and transported back towards Czechoslovakia. They were transported over country roads with dust and potholes and under constant fire of Russian and US planes, to a hospital in Ceske Budejovice. Most of them didn't make it! My dad was one of the lucky guys that made it to the hospital and a chance to survive this disaster."



On the afternoon of the 18th the nurses asked around the other wounded soldiers in the ward for help caring for 'Leutenant Preddy.' Hans volunteered to help the nurses with Bill and later said that the nurses did all they could under the circumstances."

Remember, Bill was listed as Missing in Action in April 1945. It wasn't until October 1945 that he was declared Killed in Action. But the War Department still had no idea what happened to him or Captain Reuter. The War Department never told us; we learned in 1991 from an article written by Manuel Van Eyck that Bill and Ray had been shot down over the airfield near Ceske Budejovice. Van Eyck had interviewed Jan Smejkal and had his facts right in his article.

NC Transportation Museum

The Preddy Memorial Foundation contributed two P-51 Mustang models to the North Carolina Transportation Museum for an exhibit, *At the Controls*. This Smithsonian traveling exhibit consisted of 20 large-format color photographs of historically significant cockpits, including one of a P-51 Mustang. To enhance the exhibit, the museum added several aircraft models. The Foundation's 1:18 scale model of *Cripes A'Mighty 3rd* hung from the ceiling of the exhibit. A 1:35 scale die-cast model was displayed in an exhibit case with other models.



"These P-51 models reminded visitors of the outstanding World War II record of ace George Preddy," said museum historian Walter Turner.

Fantasy of Flight

Kim Long has prepared an exhibit on George Preddy to go along with Kermit Weeks' restored Mustang painted in the markings of *Cripes A'Mighty 3rd* for Fantasy of Flight in Polk City, Florida.. The PMF has loaned them a bust of Preddy, and a print of *American Patrol*. We donated two prints of *White Flight*, a book, a DVD and other items that may be helpful to their exhibit. Kim sent me a beautiful photo of the exhibit, but am unable to insert it here.



Troy White, Artist

Troy and Susan White are now living in Australia. One of his latest works is called *Darwin's Few*, shown on the cover. As you may recall, George's initial station was in Darwin. And that is where George was involved in a mid-air collision; Lt, Sauber mis-judged his "attack" on George and clipped his tail off. George was able to bail out of his P-40, but Sauber was not. A history of the 49th Fighter Group got this story wrong; they say that George collided with Sauber. We have set the record straight in several places, but decided to commission Troy to depict the scene described to him by Capt. I. B. Jack Donalson who was in the flight of four and saw what happened. The resultant painting is also shown on the cover, *Incident at Humpty Doo*.

The Preddy Home

The Preddy home at 605 Park Avenue in Greensboro has been bought by a couple both of whom teach at UNCG. They are restoring the home. We discussed the possibility of having the home placed on the National Historic Register. The couple is not opposed to the idea. However, there is a NC Historical Marker located a block away that calls attention to the home and to Preddy as NC's leading ace. The PMF Board decided that we should provide a marker for the home so that those seeing the Historical Marker can identify the home. The bronze plaque depicted on the cover will be dedicated at our fall 2006 meeting.



PMF Finances

As of 4 September 2006, the PMF has \$2290 in it's checking account, and \$49,458 in mutual funds. We have current liabilities of \$780.



KEEPING THE MEMORY ALIVE!