



PREDDY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

ANNUAL  
REPORT

SEPTEMBER 1997



## PREDDY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

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Joseph W. Noah, President

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Raleigh, NC

### Third Annual Meeting

#### General Joe Kruzel Speaks

He fought with George Preddy from a jungle airstrip near Darwin, Australia. Graduating from flying school about one year ahead of George, he was in the Philippine Islands flying P-40s when Pearl Harbor was attacked. In February 1942, Kruzel shot down three Japanese aircraft. He became George's flight commander in the 9th Pursuit Squadron, and George recorded this statement in his diary on June 8, 1942: "Had another squadron flight this morning. The more I fly with Kruzel the better I like him as a flight leader. Not only a good pilot, but a good leader and a good man to have nearby in combat."

Kruzel rotated home in November 1942, and went to England in 1944 where he joined the 361st Fighter Group. He shot down 3 1/2 more enemy aircraft and finished his tour as the Group Commander. Major General Joseph J. Kruzel retired from the Air Force in 1970. In 1995, his son was serving as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Affairs when he was sent to Bosnia on a diplomatic mission. His son and two other diplomats were killed when their armored vehicle slipped off the side of the road on Mount Igman, just outside of Sarajevo, fell 400 yards down a ravine and exploded.

General Kruzel spoke highly of George's ability to fly. He said he was surprised to learn that George had flown as a barnstormer before the war. He also spoke highly of George's abilities to play volley ball and to perform on a horizontal bar. George excelled at both.

#### Mr. Ray Mitchell, 328<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron Pilot, Speaks

Ray Mitchell flew on that fateful Christmas Day 1944 when George was shot down by Allied ground troops. The 328<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron was involved in a wild dog fight involving many aircraft: Ray was separated from George just before the accident. Ray claimed one victory on this day, and George two. Then George and two other pilots, Gordon Cartee and James Bouchier, pursued an enemy aircraft (FW-190) flying low over the Hurtgen Forest. One of our AA groups opened fire on the enemy aircraft as it appeared over the trees: they missed the enemy but hit all three Mustangs. Preddy was killed, Bouchier had to bail out and Cartee took a tracer bullet in his cockpit. It was a sad Christmas, indeed!

#### Mr. Will Plentl Speaks

The Director of Aviation for the NC Department of Transportation, Will Plentl, spoke to us briefly about their plans and goals for promoting interest in and sponsorship of air shows around the state. Mr. Plentl praised the Foundation for its work and interest in promoting memories of WWII aviation and offered the assistance of himself and his department, as appropriate.

#### Dedications & Donations

Bob Powell, on behalf of the 352<sup>nd</sup> Fighter Group Association, presented a painting of George's last Cripes A'Mighty to the Foundation. It was signed by many members of the 352<sup>nd</sup>. The painting will be among those exhibited in our case at the PTIA Terminal Building. Bob has also arranged to have an artist donate two more paintings to the Foundation at the 352<sup>nd</sup> Reunion to be held in Savannah in October. Troy White, artist, will present a portrait of George and a painting of Cripes A'Mighty 3rd.

The painting donated by Fred Baumann last year has been framed and was to be displayed at this meeting. Unfortunately, the Baumann's were unable to attend this meeting. Harold McCollum, who planned to bring the newly framed painting, had to cancel his plans at the last minute. He has now delivered the painting to the Greensboro Historical Museum.

### **North Carolina Air Museum and Aviation Halls of Fame**

Morton Lester reported on the project to encourage North Carolina to have an Aviation Hall of Fame. Morton and Will Plentl are good friends; Morton knows Will's father who served as Director of Aviation for the Commonwealth of Virginia for many years. Morton served on the Virginia Aviation Board while Will's father was Director. The PMF is interested in seeing NC develop an aviation hall of fame because we think George Preddy should be among the first inductees. Morton suggested that the Raleigh-Durham Airport would be an excellent site for the hall. Van and Michaux Noah have been looking into the desirability of having the NC Museum of History set up the aviation hall of fame in a manner similar to the Sports Hall of Fame they now have. Van reported that, given the list of exhibits scheduled for the next five years, aviation does not seem to be a high priority with them. Van said that a proposal needs to be formulated if we are to move the concept of an aviation hall of fame ahead. Van agreed to begin work on the proposal. Joe Noah joined the National Aviation Hall of Fame and nominated George Preddy as a candidate for enshrinement.

### **The Incorporation of PMF**

Horace Kornegay prepared a set of bylaws for PMF Incorporated. He held the organizational meeting in Greensboro and the bylaws were adopted. Joe Noah applied for and received exemption status, granted by letter dated April 21, 1997 from the IRS. Our Employer Identification Number is 56-1996893. We now have a Board of Directors rather than a Board of Trustees. Please note that some of our Trustees elected not to serve as Directors. The slate of Officers and Directors, as shown on the sidebar, was elected at the May meeting held at the Carolina Country Club in Raleigh. Our hosts were Dr. and Mrs. Van Noah; the facility, service and luncheon were excellent.

### **The PTIA Exhibit**

David Hayes, Jeff Foley's partner, brought to our meeting a model of the Mustang much like the one Jeff is building for the PTIA exhibit. Jeff plans to have our model hung in the Terminal Building before our November meeting. Sam Sox brought a copy of the 26 photos he has reproduced for the exhibit. He lent them to Bob Reese who took them to the Cannes Film Festival. The PTIA Exhibit Committee met on July 24, 1997, and decisions were made that should permit us to have the exhibit case ready in time for the November board meeting. Bill Moore and Don Henderson of the Museum, and Sam Sox and Joe Noah attended the meeting held at the GHM.

### **Summary of Other Important Information**

Bob Powell announced that the 352<sup>nd</sup> Reunion will be held in the Marriott Riverfront in Savannah, GA, October 9-12. He invited anyone interested in attending to let him know so he could get the info to them. The main event of the Reunion will be a visit to the new 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Heritage Museum near the Savannah Airport. Artist Troy White plans to attend and present two paintings to the PMF. One of the paintings is a six-foot tall portrait of George. Jeff Grosse reported on his research of George's crash site. Joe Noah noted that the PMF now owns the rights to the Video and both books on George Preddy. Bob Reese reported on the screenplay, *The Last Enemy*, which he has finished in draft form. His visit to Cannes was successful in that it turned up some interest, but nothing firm as of now.

We discussed the grandson of a member of the 352<sup>nd</sup>, Steven Howard. Steven has entered an essay-type competition on the subject of "Triumph and Tragedy." He selected George Preddy's story to tell, and we hope he will be in Savannah to present it to us. He won the competition in his school, in Northern Virginia, and was second in Virginia. He was among the top twelve in the Nationals. John Faircloth made a motion to recognize his contribution to memorializing George. The secret motion was passed unanimously! (A secret from Steven until October)

### **Finances**

As of August 1, 1997, PMF's net worth is \$47,791. We have \$1,588 in our checking account. The credit with the Greensboro Historical Museum has been reduced to \$650 after paying for photo reproduction for the exhibit. Other assets include the model P-51 valued at \$1,000, and several paintings valued at \$2,250. Our investments now amount to \$37,484. We have liabilities in the form of a commitment to GHM of \$8,000 for the PTIA exhibit, and we owe \$3,047 for the rights to the video tape bought from Sam Sox and John Lambeth.

*The Preddy Memorial Foundation was established to ensure that the Preddy brothers and their comrades-in-arms will continue to be honored for their significant contributions to victory during World War II.*

**PREDDY MEMORIAL FOUNDATION DONORS**  
December 1993 - June 1997

**Ace's Club \$1-\$99**

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Earle W. Briggs  
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**Founders Club \$10,000 - \$14,999**

Joe & Betty Noah

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