



Captain Theodore (Ted) Grover Royer

194x-13 Sept, 1952 (KIA)

Korean War



Ted Royer is a Nephew of Robert and Mina Cape, the son of Hazel Mauer

Military Service: 13 Sep 1952

Purple Heart



Air Medal



National Defense Service Medal



Korean Service Medal



Korean Presidential Unit Citation



United Nations Service Medal



Republic of Korea War Service Medal



On-Line:

<http://www.ourpast.org/genealogy2/getperson.php?personID=I2373&tree=Cape>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Korean_War

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/307th_Strategic_Wing



Ted Royer's Unit:

307th Strategic Wing, 371st Bomb Squadron

On September 13, 1952, an attack was conducted by twenty-five B-29s on the generator building at the huge Sui-ho Hydroelectric Plant in North Korea. Air Force B-26s and US Navy planes bombarded the area before and during the raid with low level fragmentation bombs in order to suppress enemy searchlights. They were able to knock out only eight of approximately thirty in operation. Meanwhile four B-29s were orbiting to the east with the mission of jamming the enemy radar. The overall operation was successful in destroying the power plant and rendering it unserviceable.

During the raid the enemy retaliated with massive anti-aircraft fire and fighter planes. Only one American plane was lost that night. It was a B-29, tail number 44-86343, Ted Royer's plane. It was reported to have been hit by fire from an enemy fighter jet and exploded in mid-air over the hydroelectric plant. The plane carried a crew of twelve men and all but one perished in the crash. That man, Fred Parker, was later returned in a prisoner for prisoner exchange in September of 1953 called the 'Big Switch'. One year and almost five months after his plane was shot down, Ted Royer was declared dead while missing on February 28, 1954.

From the N. Korean Records:

Operational Summary No.00257 for the 64th IAK in Andung for September 13, 1952, reported, "From 2235 till 0106, the 87th anti-aircraft artillery division fired on 35 B-29's at altitudes ranging from 6800 meters to 7500 meters. Two B-29's were shot down and two B-29's were damaged. Part of one downed B-29 and 5 bodies were found. The search continues."



Back: Left to Right
Fred Parker, Jr. Right Gun.
Jimmy K. Moaday, Tail Gun.
James W. Kelly, Left Gun.
Nelson H. Brown, Flight Engineer.
James O. (Jim) Troscian, Radio.
James R. (Jim) LeBaron, Top Gun.

Front: Left to Right
Henry B. (Brad) Kelly, Radar.
Gordon Howell, Pilot.
Theodore (Ted) G. Royer, Aircraft Commander.
Fred E. Bloesch, Navigator.
William K. (Bill) Phillips, Bombardier.



Ted Grover Royer

*Houston, TX
Born September 6, 1920*

*US Air Force
Captain
AO536808*

*Killed in Action
September 13, 1952*

Captain Royer was a crew member of a B-29A Superfortress Bomber with the 371st Bomber Squadron, 307th Bomber Wing based at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. On September 13, 1952, while making a bomb run on the Suiho Hydroelectric Plant, his aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire. He was listed as Missing in Action and was presumed dead on February 28, 1954.

Captain Royer was awarded the Air Medal, the Purple Heart, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal and the National Defense Service Medal.

THE KOREAN WAR VETERANS HONOR ROLL

June 13, 2000

Russian Archives Aid Hunt For MIAs From Korean War

By ALAN S. CULLISON

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

PODOLSK, Russia --

One night nearly 50 years ago, Capt. Ted G. Royer climbed into the cockpit of a B-29 bomber at a U.S. air base on Okinawa and flew off to destroy a dam in North Korea.

En route, Capt. Royer and his 11-man crew lost radio contact with their base. They were never heard from again.

"We had no [funeral] service for my Dad," says Capt. Royer's son, Ronald. "My Mom was holding out some hope that he was still alive."

After the end of the Korean War, which claimed 37,000 U.S. lives, North Korea cut itself off from much of the world. Channels to Pyongyang through Moscow or Beijing were largely blocked by the Cold War. As years stretched into decades, the prospect of discovering the fate of Capt. Royer and many other missing U.S. airmen grew only more remote.

Then packages began arriving two years ago at Ronald Royer's home in Boerne, Texas. They came from the U.S. Air Force Casualties

Office and contained copies of

records kept in musty military archives outside Moscow. The documents told how Capt. Royer's B-29 bomber was shot down by a Soviet air-force captain flying a MiG-15 fighter jet.



The hundreds of files stored in the military archives are another sort of peace dividend following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. They present the most detailed evidence yet in a search for Korean War MIAs that has spanned the past eight years and much of Russia. And they shed light not only on the fate of many U.S. airmen, but also on the role played by the Soviet Union in the three-year Korean conflict—a role much larger than previously assumed. The archives show that Soviet pilots ran the air war over North Korea against the U.S. and inflicted 70% of the casualties in that part of the 1950-53 conflict.

U.S. researchers say the Russian archives also might clarify the fate of American airmen still listed as MIAs from the Vietnam War era. Since 1992, the U.S. has been pressing the Russian government for help in learning the fate of 1,086 airmen missing in Vietnam, and 8,200 missing in Korea, most of them infantrymen. Some speculate that servicemen from both wars were brought back to Soviet soil to be interrogated and eventually shot. The Russian government denies it.

A Long Process

The flow of information from the archives has been slowed by snags in Russian-American relations. Last year, for instance, U.S. researchers were kicked out of the archives for three months after allied forces under the North Atlantic Treaty Organization began bombing the former Yugoslavia.

"It's been a long, herky-jerky process, but we have gotten our foot in the door, and gotten people in the archives on a routine basis," says Roland Lajoie, a retired U.S. Army major general who is now co-chairman of the U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on POW-MIA Affairs. And now, he adds, "we're getting pieces of paper that form a better mosaic showing what happened."

During the war, the Soviet Union gave pilots a big cash bonus when they shot down American planes. To confirm a kill, search crews were sent to comb the North Korean countryside for wreckage. Snapshots were placed in the files as proof, as well as photos taken by the gun cameras of the Soviet jets.



In the report on Capt. Royer's plane, Lt. Yuri Dobrovichin described how he had been ordered to scramble his fighter jet on the evening of Sept. 12, 1952, to pursue a U.S. bomber. As he approached the dam, he spotted a slow-moving B-29 nearly nine miles away, illuminated clearly against the night sky by a ground searchlight.

When Lt. Dobrovichin was within about 600 yards of the plane, he opened fire with the MiG's three cannons. The bomber kept flying. The Soviet pilot closed the gap to 250 yards, fired again and saw the bomber begin to fall. As he circled his MiG around it, he saw the bomber's port engine was on fire. He was coming up from behind again when the B-29 exploded.

Afterward, a joint Russian-Korean search crew found the downed B-29 about 2 1/2 miles north of the town of Deansanlin, North Korea. It had cut a wide swath up a forested hillside, and members of the search crew photographed the wreckage. They also found five mangled corpses in American aviator jumpsuits and spent fire extinguishers, indicating that the crew was trying to save the plane on its way down. The photos were inserted in the file. Lt. Dobrovichin got a bonus of 1,500 rubles (about \$53 today) for shooting down the aircraft.



The U.S. always suspected that Soviet pilots were at the controls of many planes above North Korea, but both sides played down the possibility to avoid exacerbating Cold War friction. Even within the Soviet Union, the pilots' participation in the Korean War was a secret. Retired Gen.-Maj. Sergei Kramerenko recalls that he and 50 other fighter pilots who volunteered to fight the Americans in October 1950 donned civilian clothes before they boarded a special closed train that chugged from Moscow to Manchuria. When they arrived, they dressed in Chinese uniforms.

Mr. Kramerenko flew a swept-wing MiG-15 fighter jet. The Americans, he says, were easy prey in their

slow-moving bombers, armed with machine guns that had a far shorter range than the MiG's cannons. Within six months, he says, he shot down 13 enemy fighters, and later he was awarded his country's highest medal, Hero of the Soviet Union. He wasn't allowed to tell his family that the medal was for bravery in combat, says Mr. Kramerenko, 77, who now lives in Moscow.

After the Soviet Union imploded in 1991, Russian officials slowly opened up on the subject of MIAs. In 1997, the U.S. invited a few Soviet pilots who fought in North Korea to Washington, where they chatted over coffee with U.S. pilots who flew against them. "Some of our guys were a little shocked at the level of participation that the Soviets had in that war," says Larry Greer, spokesman for the Defense Department's POW-MIA office in Washington.

Pushing for Access

Getting into the archives regularly was tougher. In the euphoria right after the Soviet collapse, Russia released an initial raft of documents from the Ministry of Defense archives in Podolsk -- and then said there was nothing more of interest. But U.S. officials got wind that there was more when a British independent television producer named Paul Lashmar got into the archives and videotaped a staffer flipping through the files, showing pictures of wrecked American planes shot down over North Korea. In 1997, U.S. researchers invited some top Russian officials to a meeting in Washington and rolled the videotape. "We rubbed their nose in it, and after that, they admitted to some things," says Danz Blasser, a former Air Force master sergeant who has been working in Russia for three years. "Access has been fair since then."

Now, eight days a month, Mr. Blasser pores over boxes of dusty documents in a spartan reading room in the archives' main administration building, in the city of Podolsk not far from Moscow. Mr. Blasser says Russian archivists themselves have little idea what documents have been bundled away in the crumbling brick buildings of the Podolsk campus, a former Soviet artillery academy.

So far, the archives have clarified the deaths of 140 U.S. airmen who were listed as missing in the war. Finding their bodies will be harder: The files don't say where the fallen airmen were buried. Unfortunately, it's the recovery of bodies that relatives are most concerned about.

Leads and Loose Ends

James Connell, a retired naval officer with a Ph.D. in Russian literature, has spent the past eight years scouring Russia for clues to the whereabouts of fallen airmen. He began by running advertisements in newspapers and on television, asking Russians for help. In response, there has been a trickle of calls and letters with leads that have trailed off into a tangle of loose ends. A retired military driver reported seeing an American prisoner "robust and taller than average" in an Arctic mining camp in 1970. Another said he knew an American soldier in a logging camp near the Finnish border.

A Russian sailor says he helped recover the body of Maj. Eugene Posa, whose corpse was found by a fishing trawler after his plane was shot down over the Barents Sea in 1960. Mr. Connell interviewed a Russian sailor who described the truck that was seen carrying Mr. Posa's body away, but he still hasn't found the driver.

In fact, researchers have found only one body so far in Russia. A retired sailor in far eastern Russia named Vasili Saiko saw a television advertisement asking for help from the U.S.-Russian Joint Commission on POW-MIA Affairs. Mr. Saiko called the U.S. Embassy in Moscow and said he knew

where to find Capt. John R. Dunham, whose B-29 reconnaissance plane he saw shot down near the Kuril Islands by two Soviet fighters in 1952.

Mr. Saiko drove his boat to the floating wreckage and found Mr. Dunham's body entangled in an opened parachute. Mr. Dunham, he said, had tried to bail out before the crash but apparently was struck and killed by the falling plane. Mr. Saiko and his crewmates took the body to a small island and buried it there in a sturdy coffin on a windswept plateau. He led U.S. investigators to the grave site, and also produced Mr. Dunham's Naval Academy ring which he had kept over the years.

'A Tremendous Difference'

The ring and Mr. Dunham's body were brought home to his daughter and former wife Mary Dunham Nichols, who 13 years after his disappearance had remarried. Mr. Dunham was buried at Arlington National Cemetery outside Washington with full military honors.

"It does make a tremendous difference to finally know what happened," says Ms. Nichols, 74, who lives in Baltimore. "I don't like the word closure, because one never does stop caring. But it is very important to bury the dead." The other six crew members aboard his plane were never found.

Vladimir Trotsenko, a retired Russian paratrooper, said he saw four American airmen in Military Hospital 404 during the Korean War in the Soviet far east in 1951. He said the four were apparently injured while bailing out of their plane, and were kept in a hospital corridor together. Mr. Trotsenko said he was ordered to guard them from time to time, and one of the airmen would try to explain they were American and slowly repeat, "America -- San Francisco, Cleveland, America." Another airmen was in a body cast, and had to be fed through a tube.

Russian military officials say they know of no U.S. fliers staying in the hospital, located near a Soviet air base in the village of Novosyoyevka. Three doctors who worked there also know nothing of such patients. So U.S. researchers at the military archives in Podolsk are going through the hospital's duty log, trying to find other staff to interview.

"We pursue all kinds of crazy leads just to see what's at the end of them," Mr. Blasser says "But this seems like a credible one."

The Man of the Family

Photos Mr. Blasser found in the Podolsk archive told Terry Asla how his father died. Maj. Felix Asla's fighter plane was last seen by comrades careening earthward after having its wing shot off in a dogfight above North Korea in 1952.

Terry Asla was seven years old when he saw his father for the last time, as he left for flight training in California. "It was in the small hours of the night and drizzling rain. His Air Force raincoat was buttoned up against the cold and damp," says Mr. Asla, who lives in Kansas. He adds: "I remember him telling me that I had to be the man of the family now. It was not something I wanted to hear at that age."

Mr. Asla's mother never remarried. Mr. Asla said the family long hoped his father bailed out of the plane, and been taken prisoner. U.S. authorities thought that was a possibility. In a letter to the Russian government in 1993, U.S. authorities said they thought Mr. Asla was one of 37 pilots who may have

been transferred to the Soviet Union to be interrogated after they were taken prisoner in North Korea.

But the archives held photographs of a body and of the tail of Maj. Asla's aircraft, decorated with nine stars for planes he had shot down. Nikolai Ivanov, the pilot who shot down Mr. Asla, is still living in the provincial city of Yaroslavl, north of Moscow.

Like Mr. Asla, Mr. Ivanov was a major and a decorated fighter ace. That day, he recalls, there were dozens of planes in a confused dogfight, and he had lost control of his own aircraft while trying to get a U.S. fighter off his tail. "When my plane stopped spinning, I all of a sudden saw this other plane in front of me and I fired," he says. "Then the plane was in flames." Mr. Ivanov, now 77, thinks Mr. Asla was killed instantly, because he opened fire with all three of his MiG's cannons "when he was very close."

Today, sitting in his two-room apartment that he shared with his wife before she died four years ago, Mr. Ivanov still looks much like the fighter pilot in Korea that he was 50 years ago. His face bears the burn scars from when his own plane was shot down and a fire swept through the cockpit. "It was always our hope that the American planes would just turn the other way when they saw us coming," he says. "Anyone who tells you they were never afraid in battle is lying. I was very much afraid of dying, and I was never proud of hurting anyone."

Radio Operator James Trosclair:

Reprinted from *The Lion Still Roars*
McKinney Ex-Students Association Newsletter

Long, Lost War Hero's Story Comes Home

Robert Hankins. Reprinted with permission from The Orange Leader.

It would have been his last mission before going home. But it was just his last mission.

The mother of McKinney native, James Trosclair, crewman of a B-29 bomber called Razorback, never lived to know what happened to him over "MIG Alley" in Korea. Until a few weeks ago, all Bob Couser, of Orange, Texas, knew, was that Trosclair, his childhood friend, had been missing for 50 years. But he recently learned that someone had survived to tell the story of the mission that killed Trosclair and 10 other crewmen.

It's time the memory of this Texan comes home," says Bruce Lockett, Assistant Orange County Veteran's Service Officer.

The Razorback crashed about 12:30 a.m. Sept. 13, 1952, on a mission to bomb a hydroelectric plant at Shiho, near the Yalu River. Trosclair's crew made many such missions over the Yalu, where the USS Orleck, now docked at a downtown park in Orange, frequently patrolled. Trosclair was the radioman that night, a job he had been trained for at Keesler Air Force Base. Had he survived, he would have moved to Orange, where his mother worked at the state welfare office.

"The plane was hit by ground fire," Lockett says. "It took a direct hit in the belly and just literally exploded."

The only man who survived is Fred Parker Jr., originally from Hall County, Texas, and now of Nashville, Arkansas. He was sitting across from Trosclair when it happened.

"We were tracing down a radar beam when we were caught in the spotlight," says Parker, a gunner that night. "It was really bright. They had us lit up like daylight. The flak was so close, I felt like I could reach out of the window and grab a piece."

A fire broke out and the crew hit it with extinguishers. Parker believes it must have burned out a cable and the plane went spiraling. "It was like a leaf falling from a tree," he says.

Parker was knocked unconscious, and when he came to, he was hanging out of the plane by his feet. He pulled himself loose, jumped, counted to 10, and pulled his ripcord. He lived in the mountains 11 days before being captured by civilians, who turned him over to a prison camp. He was released later in a trade-off dubbed "The Big Switch."

Lockett and Couser discovered that Chinese and Russian authorities had found the aircraft in 1992 with five unidentified bodies in the nose section, probably the flight crew.

Parker will visit Orange Nov. 9 to receive the Heritage Freedom Award from the Veteran's Service Office. Trosclair will receive one as well, to be accepted by either a family member or Couser. Parker will also accept an award on behalf of the entire crew.

Couser grew up with Trosclair in McKinney, attended Boyd High with him and later, North Texas State University. "He was a very popular guy, especially with the girls, with his looks," Couser says.

"Everybody liked him."

When the war came along, Couser and friends Bob Allen and Lynn Scott, also from McKinney, joined the Marines. Lois Trosclair, thinking her son faced certain death as a Marine, convinced him to join the Air Force. Although Trosclair was an only child, it was before the rule that gave only children a combat option. "In May of 1952, we were already out (of the service), getting ready to go back to college, and he was home on leave," Couser says. "We had dinner at his house and he made the statement to Lois, 'See mom, if you'd let me go in the Marines, I'd be out by now.' And the next thing we heard on him, he was missing."

Couser later spoke to another McKinney friend, Rodrick Parr, who was stationed with Trosclair and talked to him the day before the fatal mission. Trosclair showed Parr aerial photographs of the "MIG Alley" area in which he would eventually be killed.

Couser graduated in 1955 and moved to Southeast Texas. By then, Lois Trosclair was living in Orange. "She lived at No. 4 Bruce Lane," he says. "I used to come over and visit with her; and she really took his death hard—she moved to Jennings (La.) in 1964 and died before knowing what we know now. Parker says that after he returned home, he remembered that Trosclair had been from McKinney. But Lois had moved by then, and the Trosclairs he called in the phone book weren't related.

Couser recently located a Trosclair cousin, Gerry Shannon of Lakewood, Colorado, who said Lois was still alive when James was awarded the Purple Heart.

Before his death, Trosclair had earned other honors including the Air Medal and Korean Combat Ribbon. He told Parr he had been shot down once before, bailed out over China and made it to friendly forces on Okinawa. That could be verified if Shannon, the only known relative, requests his military records.

A mystery remains as to why the Air Force, knowing of Parker's survival, didn't fill Lois Trosclair in on the story.

"Maybe they tried and couldn't find her," Couser says. "Bob Allen, now of San Antonio, has been working with us on this and was told by one general that a fire in St. Louis destroyed a lot of military

records, but we know that not to be true. Another general told him that the information was probably classified, which it very well may have been until the plane wreckage was found in 1992."

Couser still has some letters to remember his friend by. In one, dated simply "Thur. nite," Sgt. Trosclair wrote to Couser's parents upon learning Couser had been wounded. "I have been thinking of you both, and of Bob, since I received word," he wrote. "I know, of course, that you both are waiting and praying, as are many, many other friends of Bob. And I know also that God has heard our word. He just wouldn't let someone like Bob be seriously hurt."

When he signed the words, "Until later, James," he never knew the "later" would be 50 years, Lockett says.

"I feel like I have closure now," Couser says. "I know he didn't go to a prison camp. We just never knew that one guy escaped."