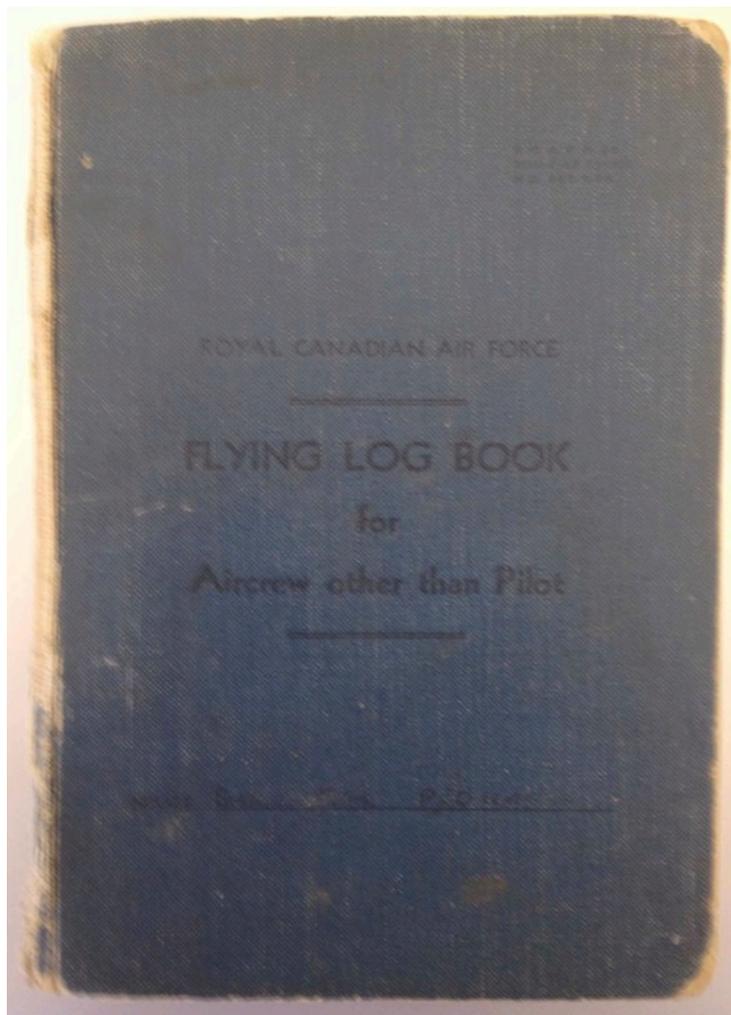


SUITTS FAMILY RAF LOGBOOK DONATION



The Fred Shaw RAF Flying Log Book

An Important Artifact

In January 2014 the family of William “Bill” Suits (1923-2013), longtime American Music Research Center advisory board member, donor, philanthropist and Colorado business leader, donated the logbook of Royal Air Force Flight Officer and navigator T. Fredrick Shaw of South Africa to the Glenn Miller Archive.

The Shaw logbook is an important artifact related to the disappearance of Major Glenn Miller December 15, 1944 over the English Channel. Forty years after the event, Mr. Shaw shared with South African broadcasting personality Henry Holloway and the South African Glenn Miller Society a startling recollection.

The Bomb Jettison Incident

Flight Officer Shaw was navigator aboard Avro Lancaster NF973, an aircraft assigned to RAF 149 Squadron based at Methwold, England. Pilot Officer Victor Gregory commanded the aircraft. 149 Squadron was part of the No.3 RAF Bomber Command Group. December 15, 1944, No. 3 Group was conducting a daylight radar-bombing mission attacking the railway marshaling yards at Seigen, Germany, in coordination with United States Eighth Air Force missions attacking targets in the nearby cities of Hannover and Kassel. The bombers were delayed in takeoff due to weather conditions at their aerodromes. Enroute to Seigen, the bombers were recalled at 12:30 p.m. because their RAF fighter escorts had been grounded due to poor weather. The ten squadrons and 138 aircraft turned around and headed home by several routes over the North Sea or the English Channel. On their way home, large 4,000lb bombs nicknamed “cookies” had to be jettisoned so the aircraft could safely land. Their navigational charts showed them coordinates where jettisons could be conducted safely without endangering friendly navy ships and fishing boats. Enroute home via their planned return route over the North Sea was the Southern Jettison Area offshore Clacton and the Thames Estuary. There were two safe areas for North Sea jettisons. The Northern Jettison Area was offshore “The Wash.” Another safe area was located in the English Channel. Most of the bombers were over or near the English Channel when recalled so they chose that area. Surviving RAF records detail plane-by-plane where many but not all of the bombers made their jettisons



NF973 Aircrew

(Pilot P/O Victor Gregory, center; Navigator F/O Fred Shaw, to Gregory's right)

Fred Shaw recalled when his aircraft made their jettison he had time to look out of the Lancaster to see a small aircraft he described as a C-64 "Norseman" utility aircraft pass underneath just as the bomb aimer released the "cookie" and other smaller bombs. Shaw remembered seeing the small plane flip over due to the concussions of the bombs from his plane and others reaching the water. The small plane disappeared. Shaw and his crew mates thought it had crashed into the sea. It was apparent to Shaw and others the plane matched the description of the aircraft with Major Glenn Miller aboard the same afternoon and in the same vicinity. There then ensued much lively public discussion and publicity about Shaw's claim. With the scrutiny of British aviation expert the late Roy Nesbit, it was concluded by many the bomb jettison was the cause of the plane crash that took Miller's life.

Date	Hour	AIRCRAFT TYPE AND No.	PILOT	DUTY	REMARKS (Including results of bombing, gunnery, exercises, etc.)	TIME CARRIED FORWARD	
						12A-50	70-45
						FLYING TIMES	
						DAY	NIGHT
14-12-44	1500	N.F. 973 LANCASTER	F/O GREGORY	NAVIGATOR	AIR TEST	1.15	
15-12-44	1200	N.F. 973 LANCASTER	F/O GREGORY	NAVIGATOR	OPS. SIEGEN. CANCELLED. JETTISON SOUTHERN AREA	2.45	
17-12-44	1300	H.K. 652 LANCASTER	F/O GREGORY	NAVIGATOR	BULLSEYE LONDON.		3.15
18-12-44	1500	H.K. 645 LANCASTER	F/O GREGORY	NAVIGATOR	G.H., ELY, AV. ERROR 316 YDS.	1.40	
19-12-44	1100	N.G. 355 LANCASTER	F/O GREGORY	NAVIGATOR	OPS. TRIER, LANDED MANSTON ELEVATORS HOLED, LANDED F/O.	4.50	
20-12-44	1100	N.G. 355 LANCASTER	F/O GREGORY	NAVIGATOR	MANSTON - BASE	0.35	
24-12-44	1700	LANCASTER	F/O GREGORY	NAVIGATOR	OPS. BONNE-HANGELAR AIRFIELD (FIGHTER ATTACK OVER ▲)		5.25
28-12-44	1400	H.K. 652 LANCASTER	F/O GREGORY	NAVIGATOR	G.H. FRIDAY BRIDGE, G.H. U/S	1.05	
29-12-44	1200	H.K. 699 LANCASTER	F/O GREGORY	NAVIGATOR	OPS. KOBLENTZ, FLAK HITS LANDED MANSTON (TANK HOLED)	4.55	
31-12-44	1430	H.K. 699 LANCASTER	F/O GREGORY	NAVIGATOR	MANSTON - BASE	0.35	
TOTAL TIME...						142.30	79.25

The Logbook Notation For December 15, 1944

Enter Bill Suitts

Time went on and Fred Shaw passed away. His family decided to auction his logbook and military memorabilia at Sotheby's. Here is where Glenn Miller Archive Curator Alan Cass picks up the story: "In the spring of 1999, news that the auction of an interesting artifact possibly related to the disappearance of Major Glenn Miller would take place at Sotheby's in England. Steve Miller (1943-2012), the late son of Glenn and Helen Miller, and I conferred regarding the potential historic value of the Fred Shaw Log Book which purported to add a new twist to the mystery of what happened to the plane that carried Steve's father on 15 December, 1944. We agreed that I, serving as a surrogate for the Miller family, would attempt to bid on the log book. On the day of the auction, April 13, 1999, I arranged for an international connection to Sotheby's and was instructed on how to participate in the bidding process. Steve and I had agreed previously what our highest bid would be. Within minutes, the proffer exceeded what we were willing to offer and I dejectedly hung up. A few hours later, I received an excited call from my wife Sue. "Have your heard, she said?" The Denver TV stations were announcing a man living in Boulder, Colorado had purchased the Fred Shaw Log Book! My first thought was: what have I done? A quick inspection of the situation revealed that the new owner of the Fred Shaw Log Book was Bill Suitts who, on a sentimental whim, had echoed my precise actions that morning with the exception that his persistence took the prize."



Bill Suitts and Henry Holloway

The prominent Boulder and Denver executive Bill Suitts had been a U. S. Army Air Forces radar navigator during World War II, serving with the Fifteenth Air Force in Italy. He had a shared interest in aviation history and Glenn Miller. Bill had indeed purchased the logbook and then became internationally famous for doing so. For many years, Bill was asked questions about the logbook and its connection with Major Glenn Miller's disappearance. Over time, Bill became closely acquainted with Alan Cass, Steve Miller, other AMRC board members, friends of the GMA and numerous fellow Glenn Miller fans. One of his closest friends was Dr. Paul Tanner, a fellow GMA donor, scholar and member of Glenn Miller's legendary civilian band of 1938-1942. While preparing the forthcoming book "Resolved" dealing with Glenn Miller's military career, author and AMRC advisory board member Dennis M. Spragg discovered many details regarding the logbook and circumstances of December 15, 1944 he was able to privately share with Bill before he passed. Upon learning the information, Bill adamantly urged Dennis to "get it published!" Because of what Spragg terms "the key evidence the logbook presents" the purchase by Bill Suitts of the artifact was a major contribution to Glenn Miller history by saving the logbook for preservation, accurate historic presentation and presentation of facts rather than conjecture. In this way, Bill Suitts, who was devoted to the legacy of Glenn Miller, was able to uniquely honor the famous bandleader and namesake of the archive Bill helped to develop.

More information about the logbook and circumstances of December 15, 1944 will be published in the forthcoming book "Resolved."