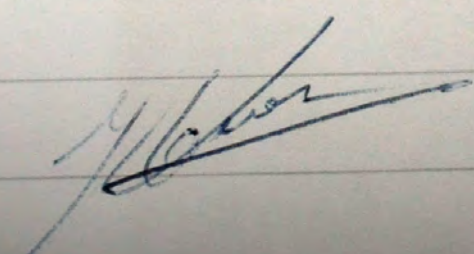


NJDMAVA HIGHLIGHTS

DECEMBER 9, 2015

habitant à quelques centaines de mètres de l'emplacement
de l'avion était tombé, mes frères et moi nous
écroulâmes sur les lieux, nous avons de suite vu que
la queue d'un avion qui avait été abattu lors du crash
nous avions regardé, le ciel était très dégagé
prochant et contournant les débris nous avons entendu
une personne frappait à l'intérieur en criant "help"
nous ne comprenions pas. Non loin de là, au village de
Bartincourt se trouvait des militaires de l'armée
nous sommes allés pour les avertir qu'il y avait
à l'intérieur du débris de l'avion quatre des militaires
allés débrayer le soldat et ils l'ont transporté à
où l'ambulance est venue le chercher. Combien
mes frères et moi, encore maintenant, nous nous posons
la question de savoir s'il était toujours



COMING FULL CIRCLE

Gaston Mean's letter describing the rescue of Airmen from a downed B-17 Flying Fortress near Aywaille, Belgium, Dec. 24, 1944. The B-17's crew included 1st Lt. Vernal Cuno Becker, the great-uncle of 177th Fighter Wing member Chief Master Sgt. James McCloskey. The story begins on page 2. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Shane S. Karp/Released)



LOVE AWARDED LEGION OF MERIT



Col. Michael Love, right, outgoing 177th Mission Support Group Commander salutes after being presented the Legion of Merit during a change of command ceremony at the 177th Fighter Wing, Atlantic City Air National Guard Base, N.J., Dec. 5, 2015. The Legion of Merit is given for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding service and achievement. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew J. Merlock Jr./Released)

Veterans Outreach Campaign

VA & State Veterans Benefits Meeting
Dec. 3
6 p.m.

Sponsored by the Disabled American Veterans – Department of N.J. Sheppard of Hills Lutheran Church
246 Woodport Road
Sparta, NJ 07871

Veterans Outreach Campaign and Medal Ceremony
Jan. 26 – 28
10 a.m. – 8 p.m.

DMAVA medal ceremony
Jan. 26
at 11 a.m. at Center Court
Quaker Bridge Mall
150 Quakerbridge Road,
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

Veterans Information and Outreach Fair
May 7
9 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Fair Lawn Health and Human Services Department
801 Fair Lawn Ave.
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410

E-mail your Highlights submissions to:
mark.olsen@dmava.nj.gov
by close of business Wednesday

Coming full circle: Chief returns to great uncle's WW II crash site

By Senior Airman Shane S. Karp, 177th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

The date is Dec. 24, 1944, in the midst of World War II, and while most Americans are at home preparing for a Christmas with their families, 1st Lt. Cuno Vernal Becker, an armament officer with the 836th Bomb Squadron, 487th Bomb Group, is boarding his B-17 Flying Fortress, about to take part in mission number 760 - the 8th Air Force's largest single-mission of the war.

Vern, as he is known by his family, was not originally meant to be part of that mission, but as the story is told, he gave one of his enlisted members the day off for Christmas Eve, and manned the tail gun, said 177th Medical Group Chief Master Sgt. James McCloskey and Vern's great nephew. Christmas Eve 1944 would be the last mission 1st Lt. Cuno Vernal Becker would be a part of.

The crew of nine was shot down that day over Aywaille, Belgium. Seven of the nine were killed in action; two survived.

Flash forward more than 70 years and the New Jersey Air National Guard's 177th Fighter Wing Medical Group is taking part in a two-week temporary duty at Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany. During some down time, part of the group explored Europe.

"When we were driving back from Amsterdam, we happened to drive



Chief Master Sgt. James McCloskey, right, listens as Frédéric Winkin, left, a local World War II museum curator, translates as Gaston Mean, center, recounts the events that took place Dec. 24, 1944, when a B-17 Flying Fortress was shot down and crashed on the Ambleve River near Aywaille Aug. 12, 2015. Mean had pulled the body of 1st Lt. Cuno Vernal Becker – McCloskey's great-uncle out of from the wreckage. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Shane S. Karp/Released)

through Belgium," said McCloskey. "As soon as we passed through Belgium, I thought about my Grandmother, who passed last year. She would always tell stories about Vern. It's hard for me to be in Germany, or anywhere in Europe, and not think about my great uncle and the pictures of the war."

McCloskey took this opportunity to dive deeper into the history of his family and he began to further research the events that unfolded on Christmas Eve, 1944.

"I immediately texted my dad to see if he could give me more info about Uncle Vern and he sent me info about him, and the town he went down in," said McCloskey. "I was able to narrow it down to the hamlet of Septroux in Aywaille, Belgium."

McCloskey did

not stop there. He took to the streets of Aywaille, asking the elder locals if they could recall anything from that day. The survey was unsuccessful.

"After we came back that day, I felt like I could have made a better effort to find out more," said McCloskey. "I decided to do some internet searching and found a tiny museum in Aywaille dedicated to World War II called, 40-45 Memories."

This led the Chief to Frédéric Winkin, a resident of Aywaille, and the curator of the museum.

"He said he knew exactly what I was talking about. Not only that but he knew the exact location by the river where the main fuselage came down, as well as an idea of where my uncle came down in the tail section. From there, we set a date to meet up," said McCloskey.

Now for most, this alone is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity already, but Winkin had something else planned for the Chief.

"A couple days later, Frédéric emailed me to say that he had one more surprise for me. He had found the man who pulled my uncle out of that plane, 70 years ago, and that he was willing to meet with me,"

Continued on page 3



An unidentified man poses in front of a downed B-17 Flying Fortress, tail number 4337569, following a dogfight Dec. 24, 1944. The aircraft's crew included 1st Lt. Vernal Cuno Becker and great-uncle of Chief Master Sgt. James McCloskey. (Courtesy photo)

COMING FULL CIRCLE

Continued from page 2

McCloskey said. “Honestly, that made me nervous. I, a great nephew of Vern, was going to represent my whole family and meet this man.”

So on Aug. 12, 2015, McCloskey, accompanied by Winkin and two 177th members, went to the exact location on the banks of the Ambleve River near Aywaille, where 1st Lt. Cuno Vernal Becker’s B-17 crashed.

Directly after, the group was taken to the home of the older Belgian who was at the crash site in 1944, Gaston Mean.

Mean invited the group inside, sat them down and pulled out a hand-written letter.

A pin drop could be heard in the living room of this long-standing Belgian home, as all eyes were focused on the older man while he precisely detailed what took place that day, in



Chief Master Sgt. James McCloskey, center, poses for a photo with Gaston Mean and his wife, in their home in Aywaille, Belgium, Aug. 12, 2015. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Senior Airman Shane S. Karp/Released)



1st Lt. Cuno Vernal Becker, right, standing, poses with his B-17 Flying Fortress crew. Becker is the great-uncle of Chief Master Sgt. James McCloskey. (Courtesy photo/Released)

classic French dialect, as Winkin translated for the group.

“Since Mr. Mean was the one who found my uncle, he obviously had an emotional bond with him. He never knew what happened to my uncle after that day. He wondered if he survived or died; he wondered if he went on to have a life in America,” said McCloskey.

McCloskey then informed Mean of something that had been unknown to him for more than 70 years. Becker tragically died two days later at an allied hospital in Belgium from injuries he sustained in the crash. At this point, it had come full circle for both Mean and McCloskey.

“I can’t put into words how much all of this meant to my family,” said McCloskey. “Everyone is fascinated and touched; I get calls from different family members all the time now who want to hear the story. I wish I could tell them more. I wish they were all in that town and that living room with me.”

McCloskey may not have been part of his great uncle’s mission number 760, but after the experience in Aywaille, Belgium, he got as close to that crew as any man today possibly could.

HOW TO HELP YOUR DIET SURVIVE THE HOLIDAYS

From Guard Your Health

For healthy eaters, the holidays can be a minefield.

Holidays dedicated to eating piles of food make for a perfect storm to pack on the pounds.

So, what's wrong with ditching your diet for a few days of the year? Besides inducing a food coma and an unattractive gut, feasting on rich food during one sitting can cause heart attacks, stroke, and gallbladder problems.

Read on for tips to help you enjoy your holiday meals without the guilt.

Don't Arrive Hungry

Arriving on an empty stomach is a bad idea for two reasons.

First, you'll be more likely to fall prey to appetite triggers, such as seeing other people eat in front of you or the desire to try every dish on the table. Second, going more than five hours without food can lower the hormone that tells your brain when you're full.

To avoid this double whammy, eat breakfast and a light lunch before dinner. Drink a glass of water or nibble on fruits and vegetables if hunger pangs set in before dinner.

Think Before Your Next Bite

We're all guilty of eating after we're full because food is nearby. You may not even realize you're still grazing.

When your spread offers lots of tempting food choices, remember that you can easily misjudge portion sizes. Serve yourself portions that leave room on the plate. Better yet, use a salad plate.

And if you catch yourself reaching for second helpings take a minute to evaluate. Are you just reacting to seeing more food or other people eating? If your stomach feels full, fight the urge to eat more. Try placing your napkin over your plate to signal to yourself that you're done.

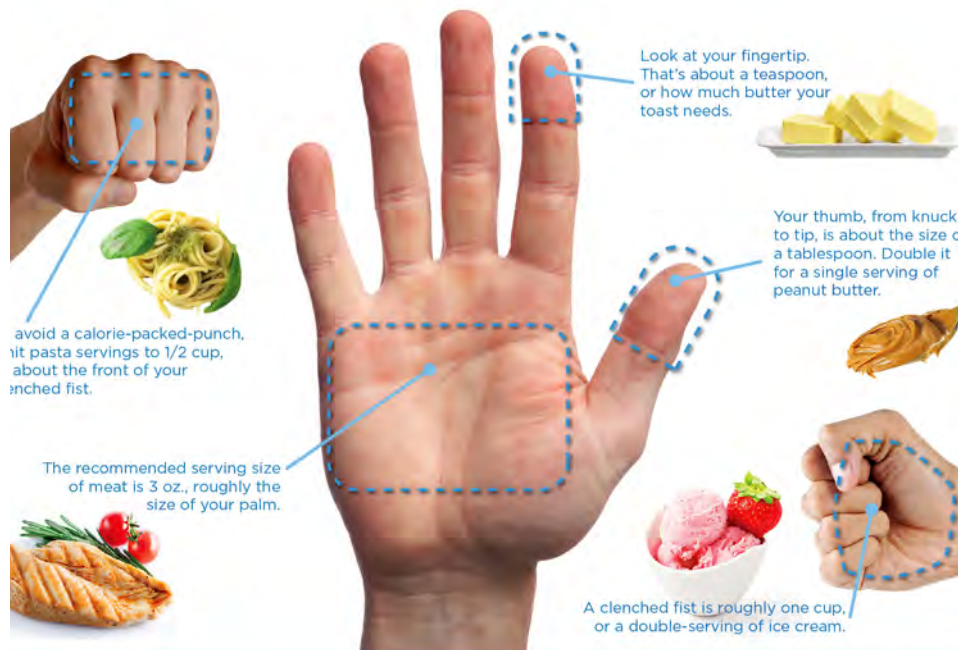
Watch the Liquid Calories

Calories in wine, beer, and soda add up quickly. Plus, alcohol can make you eat even more. Drink slowly, and for every alcoholic beverage or sugary drink, have one full glass of water.

Bonus points if you choose to drink sparkling water the whole evening.



Hand Guide to Portion Control



Sources:
<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2000/2000DGBrochureHowMuch.pdf>
<http://www.healthyarkansas.gov/programsServices/chronicDisease/Nutrition/Pages/ServingSizes.aspx>

www.GuardYourHealth.com

Tricks to Help You Resist

Get moral support: let everyone know you're working hard to keep your diet in check.

Eat slowly to give your stomach enough time to tell your brain that you're full.

Eat vegetables first. The fiber will help you feel full faster.

Wear a belt. When it gets too tight, put down the fork.

Take food home to enjoy the next day. If you're hosting, suggest guests bring take-home containers.

Distract yourself from eating by catching up with friends and family around you.

Try, Try Again

If after all your good intentions, you end up eating more than you should, don't wallow in guilt. Just get back to eating right and increase your level of physical activity the next day.

Your future beach body will thank you.



Guard Your Health (www.guardyourhealth.com) is a health and medical readiness campaign for Army National Guard Soldiers and their families sponsored by the Army National Guard Chief Surgeon's Office.

Guard Your Health provides Soldiers with information, motivation and support to overcome challenges and make healthy decisions for themselves, their families and their units.

To learn more about improving your health, visit the Guard Your Health website; like "Army National Guard Health" on Facebook and follow @ARNGHealth at twitter.com/ARNGHealth.

Freedom Awards nominations open

From the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve

Nominations for the 2016 Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Freedom Awards are open until Dec. 31, 2015.

Any Guard or Reserve service member can nominate their employer. If a service member does not have access to submit a nomination, a family member can nominate the service member's employer on their behalf.

You can nominate small, large (500+) and public employers. The employer MUST be the service member's current employer. To nominate your employer, go to <https://esgr.csd.disa.mil/fa/NominateYourEmployerView.aspx>

Click on the "Nominate" button at the top or bottom of this page. Open the form and review the questions before filling in any of the fields.

If you do not know how to answer any of the questions, print the form and gather the pertinent information before going any farther. Ask your employer or HR representative for

clarification if you need assistance answering the questions.


The form must be completed in one session, so fill out the nomination form fully and accurately. There is not an option to save your data and submit later.

For each question, please provide supporting information in the text box below each question. This is your chance to enhance your nomination by providing thorough explanations of why your employer deserves to be considered for this award. Explaining on all of the ways in which your employer supports you, your family, other service members and the military community will ensure the strongest nomination possible.

After your nomination is submitted, it will go to a review committee in your state. Once the nomination period closes, the state will select semifinalists to move forward. A



review board at HQ ESGR, a Department of Defense agency, considers all semifinalists for selection to the next round. The group of finalists goes before a National Selection Board comprised of senior Department of Defense officials, representatives from each of the seven Reserve Components, employer associations and past recipients of the Freedom Award. This selection committee makes recommendations for up to 15 recipients to the Secretary of Defense for final approval. Semifinalists are announced in early spring, and recipients are finalized by early summer.

<div><div>New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs</div><div>PO Box 340 Trenton, NJ 08625-0340</div><div>1-888-8NJ-VETS(8387) or www.state.nj.us/military</div></div>		<div></div> <div>Raymond L. Zawacki, Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs (609-530-7062) Cheryl Henderson, Executive Secretarial Assistant (609-530-7045) Chuck Robbins, Assistant to DCVA/Outreach Coordinator (609-530-6855)</div>	
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Solar carport brings Sea Girt closer to net zero

From the NJDMAVA Construction and Facilities Management Office

If you've been to the National Guard Training Center at Sea Girt, you may have noticed the large, 230 kilowatt solar carport covering the parking lot near the campus entrance.

Now, there is an even larger system located next to Building 35.

The new 611 kw carport was installed under an Army Corps of Engineers' contract and is owned and operated by the New Jersey Army National Guard. With the addition of this new carport, Sea Girt will be generating over one megawatt of free sun-produced electricity every year, which is approximately 40 percent of the total electricity use of the campus.

The new carport was installed with a new design style that only covers the vehicle parking spaces instead of the entire parking lot in order to reduce material costs and prevent vehicles from hitting the structure.

As part of the Army Corps contract, four electric vehicle charging stations were installed in order to lay the ground work for future electric fleet vehicle adoption by NJARNG. Both the existing and new carports received two charging stations that can charge two vehicles at once. A total of eight electric vehicles can now be charged



The 611 kilowatt solar carport located next to Building 35 at the National Guard Training Center at Sea Girt. (Courtesy photo)

at the same time at Sea Girt.

These initiatives will help the NJARNG become more power resilient, which is extremely important in maintaining mission assurance. The solar arrays

will reduce reliance on the grid and the electric vehicles will reduce reliance on fossil fuels, while reducing the NJARNG's impact on the environment.

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Phone: (609) 324-7025

Email: john.w.schwartz22.mail@mail.mil

A Holiday Strong Bonds for the FAMILY!

Breakfast with Santa on the Battleship!



December 12, 2015

For an unforgettable holiday treat, come have breakfast with Santa aboard the Battleship New Jersey, Saturday, December 12 at 9am! Don't miss this fun-filled event. Package includes breakfast served from the chow line, photo with Santa, prizes and a self-guided tour of the ship. Seating is limited! Tickets are \$24 for adults, and \$18 for children 12 and under and just \$10 per person for military families.

Call 856-966-1652 x107 for more information and for reservations.



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By dialing 1-844-MIL-M2M1 (1-844-645-6261) Military MOM 2 MOM helpline program a military parent will receive the following services;

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