



Our members continue to share their remembrances of Captain Harry Watson and they are posted below, plus an excerpt from a soon to be published book containing some of Harry`s wartime exploits.

Shaun Ryan:

I started with Continental in 1966 and flew many times with Harry on the 707 and agree with all the other comments - he was a true gentleman and a consummate professional who helped shape my idea of what a captain should be. Continental and those of us that got to fly with him were fortunate to have him in the cockpit.

Don Gentry:

Sorry to hear of Harry`s passing. I flew second for Harry in our MAC operation. From his quiz sessions in flt to the four mile runs after landing and of course the 25 cent happy hour s at Clark. He was a special guy!! Set a great example for us New Hires. Gods Speed Harry.

Lee Meyners:

I first met and flew with Harry on Feb 8th. 1960. It was a DC-3 flight from Dallas Love Field thru Waco, Temple , College Station and Houston Hobby. IAH didn't exist. I was a probationary co-pilot and he was "God", the Capt. I was in awe. I had never in my life been around someone with all the energy and vitality as this guy. I tried to keep up with him but, no way. The enthusiasm he had for absolutely everything was remarkable..

After a couple of flights, he invited me to a Pop Warner football game. It seems he was the coach of one of the teams, "The Farmers Branch Bombers", I think was the name. I found out they were beating everyone they played and ended up champions. As I watched Harry coach, I saw all that enthusiasm, and vitality rub off on all those (boys), young men. Harry was teaching these kids plays right out of the NFL play books. I can only imagine the positive effect Harry's coaching, had on all those kids for the rest of their lives. There is no greater gift. I know he affected mine,

He will be missed. Soar with the Eagles Harry. We'll miss you. The kids that you coached I'm sure, all thank you for the positive attitude toward life, that you instilled in all of them..

The following is an excerpt from a soon to be released book, "Midnight Flight to Nuremberg" which describes events concerning Captain Harry Watson in his early years.

The true story of First Lieutenant/Flight Instructor, veteran of twenty seven combat missions, recipient of three air medals, seven battle stars and Market Garden veteran, Harry E. Watson, USAAF

MIDNIGHT FLIGHT TO NUREMBERG

Marcus A. Nannini

Coming in late 2019

Ten year old Harry Watson was stuck, head-first, between a pile of fallen rocks and the top of an abandoned Pennsylvania coal mine. His mom, fighting a blinding snow storm, slipped several times as she struggled to the top of the rock pile, pushed Harry through the narrow opening and down into the mine shaft where he would gather enough coal to carry the family through the Christmas holiday.

After graduating high school and facing the prospect of working in the coal mines the rest of his life he sat down with his mom in an effort to find a way out. She told him: "Harry, there ain't but one way out of here and that's the military!"

Harry joined the U.S. Army Air Corps and when it was time for his first solo flight he nearly killed himself, along with everyone in the airfield's Control Tower. He was barely able to get his plane into the air, with less than a moment to spare. When he returned an hour later his commander pulled him over and said: "Watson, you've got nerves of steel, but someday they're going to send you home in a pine box." And they nearly did.

From that point forward Harry excelled and eventually became the youngest Flight Instructor at

Bergstrom Army Airfield. Along the way he turned down a nomination to attend the U. S. Military Academy at West Point because the war would have passed him by.

Harry and Golden Lang became fast friends. One night Lang confided he planned to bring his fiancé from Salt Lake City to California where they would be married immediately following their graduation ceremony and sworn in as Second Lieutenants. Harry did some soul searching and immediately following their graduation both Lang and Harry married their respective girl friends.

While Lang was sent to England as the pilot of a B-24 Liberator, Harry found himself locked into teaching new pilots how to fly multi-engine aircraft. He also became qualified as a glider pilot and earned his Parachute School Diploma. He even managed to make the time to become an expert at flying strictly by instruments. Harry finally arrived in England as the Battle of Normandy was reaching a crescendo.

An affirmed risk taker Harry ignored an order to abort an emergency medical supply mission and flew his plane loaded with two tons of whole blood, and nurses, into zero-zero visibility conditions. After initially landing at the wrong airport he successfully delivered his invaluable cargo to Orly airfield the day after the liberation of Paris. His was the only plane out of more than 200 planes to complete the mission.

Later in the war he got caught on the ground while on an urgent fuel resupply mission for a platoon of Patton's tanks. He had to dig a foxhole during a torrential rainstorm and stay overnight as he waited for the weather to clear. The following morning he came face-to-face with a German Mark IV tank, part of a group of about 800 German infantry and mechanized units seeking a way back to their lines.

He flew every Market Garden mission, losing his close friend to German anti-aircraft fire while taking some hits to his own plane. Thereafter he led a flight of five transports on a desperate mission to evacuate a mobile field hospital that was about to be over-run by the "SS." Only four planes of his five plane squadron made it back as they came under direct fire just before they could take-off with scores of casualties and medical personnel crammed aboard each plane.

Around midnight, in early April, 1945, he was sent on a secret mission to fly to a point near Nuremberg, Germany, which was behind enemy lines. He was ordered to bring back an important Nazi who had just been captured by a covert action team. Harry had to locate an empty meadow in the dark, land and take-off without being able to ascertain the conditions of the meadow, or even being certain it was the correct location, yet he pulled it off.

Golden Lang once confessed to Harry he had a feeling he wouldn't survive the war and with only 15 days remaining before VE Day he was shot down and killed. Harry had other friends die and was a first-hand witness to various air-disasters. He managed to survive the war despite his penchant for taking risks.

Though he earned enough Battle Points to be sent home in May, 1945, he volunteered to stay on a

couple of months. Eventually he would fly a plane-load of fighter pilots to the USA via Africa, South America and Puerto Rico. A few years later he would realize his long-time dream of becoming the Captain of a commercial airliner for Continental Airlines.



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