



THE NORMANDY INSTITUTE

# D-DAY 81

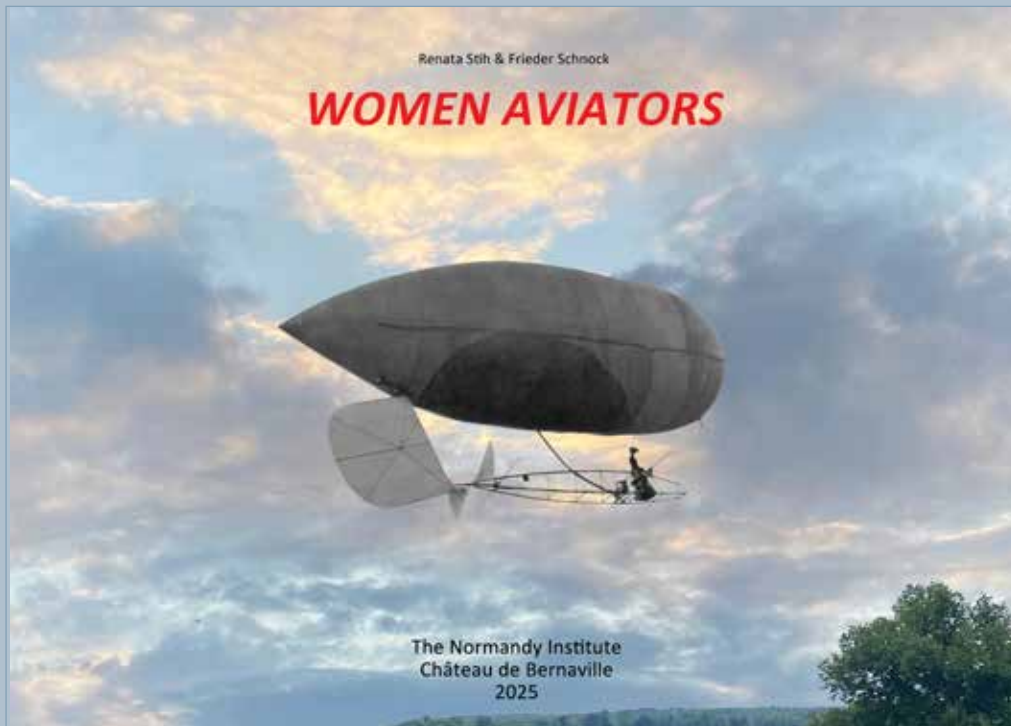
## After Action Report



June 1-6, 2025

JUNE 1, 2025

## WOMEN AVIATORS ART SHOW



Renowned Berlin-based artists Renata Stih and Frieder Schnock created an art show entitled *Women Aviators* for the newly restored conservatory building on the grounds of Château de Bernaville.



After the success of last year's show, *Rosie Won the War*, Renata and Frieder approached the subject of *Women Aviators* with their usual original flair.



## WOMEN AVIATORS ART SHOW



The left wing of the conservatory was dedicated to chapters of women in aviation history; from the first French women in the 18th century who were hot air balloon pilots and proto parachutists, to the women mathematicians who made the moon mission possible at NASA.

The right wing of the conservatory was dedicated to individual women aviators throughout history. Each story was told on six large silk wall hangings that were visible through the glass façade of the building.



Renata and Frieder were on hand to give guests a lecture about the art show. The show was accompanied by a booklet explaining the different artwork.

In the center part of the conservatory, Renata and Frieder created two large silk posters depicting sheet music from composer Gideon Klein, whose string trio musical masterpiece we chose for the *Shoah Remembrance Concert* during the Admirals and Generals dinner on June 5.

JUNE 2, 2025

## 1st DIVISION DINNER & CONFERENCE



Our annual 1st Division Dinner, the famous “Big Red One,” was hosted by its Commander, Major General Monté Rone who brought a group of 1st Division soldiers, present in Normandy.

The Normandy Institute screened the film about D-Day medic, first-wave veteran Charles Norman Shay. Charles lives in Normandy but at 101 he sadly could not participate in person. The Charles Shay episode of The Normandy Institute’s Staff Rides Films series is truly a moving and important witness account of D-Day on Omaha Beach. The episode will be soon available on The Normandy Institute’s YouTube channel.





## 1st DIVISION DINNER & CONFERENCE

After a stirring speech by MG Rone, COL (Ret.) Keith Nightingale spoke to the troops of the 1st Division about their heroic role on Omaha Beach and beyond. You could feel that the group felt deeply connected to their heritage that goes back to WWI. Keith remarked that the impressive Museum of the 1st Division at Cantigny is a must-see when visiting Chicago.



The dinner was supported by The Robert R. McCormick Foundation for which we are deeply grateful. The Normandy Institute plans to have dedicated annual dinners with the historical divisions of the Battle of Normandy as a way forward now that the veterans are leaving us in ever greater numbers. We were fortunate to have Eighth Air Force WWII veteran Lester Schrenk with us that night.



The evening closed with a concert featuring singers Jenny Teaton (Nashville star) and Laura Osnes (Broadway singer and actress), accompanied by composer and guitarist Brett Boyett who performed two moving songs to great applause.

JUNE 3, 2025

D-DAY NAVAL HISTORY SYMPOSIUM  
&  
NAVY BAND CONCERT



The Normandy Institute hosted the U.S. Navy's inaugural "D-Day Naval History Symposium and Navy Band Concert" spearheaded by Admiral Stuart B. Munsch, Commander of U.S. Naval forces Europe - Africa and Allied Joint Force Command Naples.

The aim of the conference was to study the pivotal role the maritime Allied forces played in Operation Neptune, connecting these lessons to modern naval strategy.

The Normandy Institute was honored to have been a contributing organization to this symposium alongside the U.S. Naval War College, the U.S. Naval Academy, and Kings College London.



## D-DAY NAVAL HISTORY SYMPOSIUM & NAVY BAND CONCERT



The Normandy Institute tent was set up for the morning and afternoon conference, with a pause for lunch. The symposium ended with a lively cocktail party and music performed by the renowned Navy Band.




We are looking forward to working with Admiral Munsch to make this conference an annual event during the D-Day commemoration week.





JUNE 5, 2025

## THE ALLIED CEREMONY IN BAYEUX




**THE NORMANDY INSTITUTE**  
LEADERSHIP ~ ALLIANCE ~ INSPIRATION

**D-DAY 81**

*THE IMPORTANCE OF ALLIANCES!*

*Countess Dorothea de La Houssaye*  
CHAIRMAN & FOUNDER OF THE NORMANDY INSTITUTE ANNOUNCES

**THE ALLIED CEREMONY**  
**JUNE 5, 2025 AT 0900 IN BAYEUX**



**RONDPONT EISENHOWER, BAYEUX, FRANCE**

\* \* \*

RSVP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO  
DOROTHEA@NORMANDYINSTITUTE.ORG +33 6 1290 6917

The D-Day 81 Allied Ceremony took place before the impressive statue of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, in Bayeux, France.

The Normandy Institute spearheaded the Allied Ceremony in 2019 at the request of Ms. Susan Eisenhower, who advocated strongly to remember that Operation Overlord was an Allied Operation. The ceremony has taken place each year since.

David Chapman, board member of The Normandy Institute, was Master of Ceremonies. He began with remarks prepared by Susan Eisenhower, who was unable to attend.



## THE ALLIED CEREMONY IN BAYEUX



The first speaker was the First Deputy Mayor of Bayeux, Monsieur Arnaud Tanquerel, followed by Admiral Stuart Munsch, Commander U.S. Naval Forces Europe – Africa and Allied Joint Force Command Naples. The final speaker was General Chris Donahue, Commander of U.S. Army Europe and Africa, and Allied Land Command.

The U.S. Army, the U.S. Navy, and the U.S. Air Force were all represented at the Allied Ceremony: LTG Mark Landes, Commander of First United States Army, LTG John Brennan, Deputy Commander of United States Africa Command, and LTG Charles Costanza, Commander of V Corps.

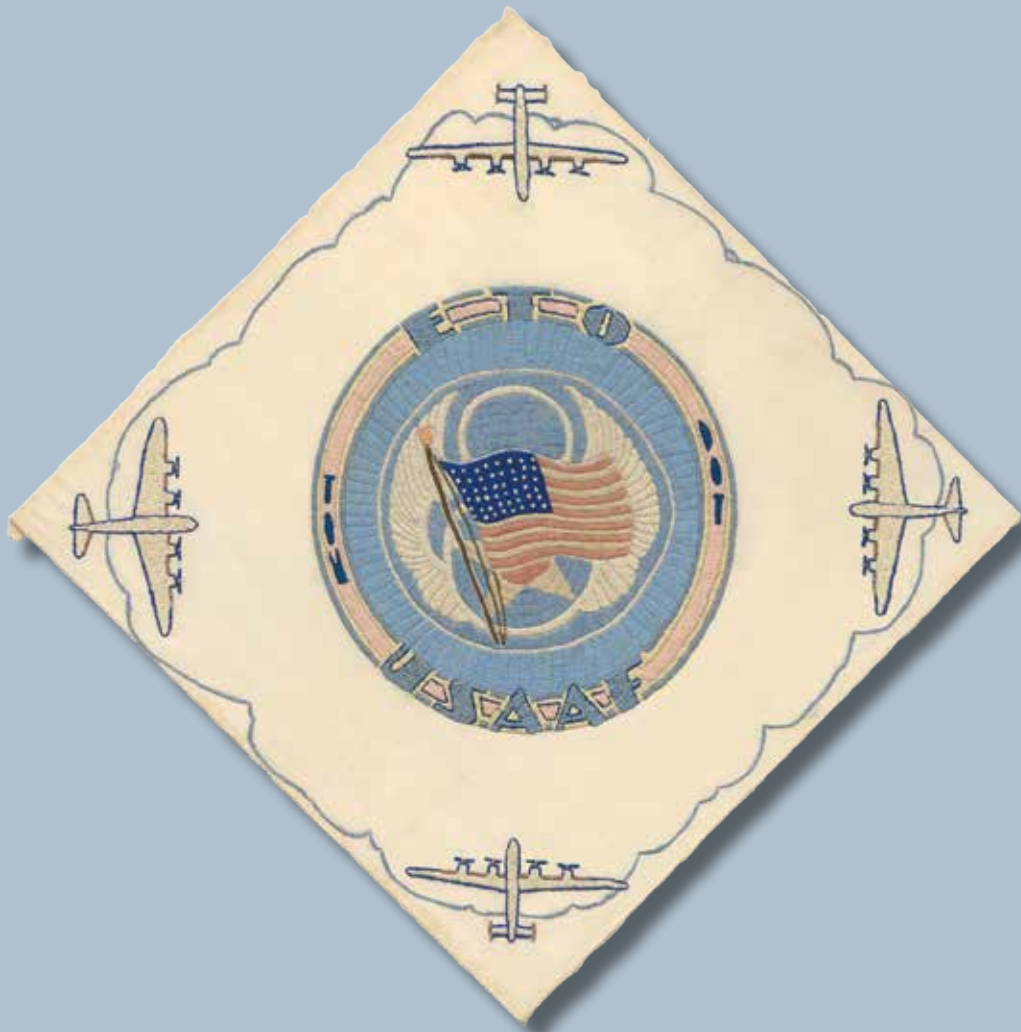




THE NORMANDY INSTITUTE

# THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE

## Monument in Normandy



D-Day 81



JUNE 5, 2025

## THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MONUMENT RECEPTION & LUNCHEON

After the Allied Ceremony in Bayeux, The Normandy Institute hosted a luncheon for 220 people at Château de Bernaville. The inclement Normandy weather did not dampen the high spirits of our guests who mingled in the Château.



The main sponsors of the monument were all represented: Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Hillwood, Pratt & Whitney/RTX, Shell USA, Caterpillar, FedEx, American Airlines, Strauss Family, OneBrief, Sierra Nevada, and GE Aerospace. Michelle Strauss sponsored ten West Point cadets to be present. Other supporters unable to attend included James Fisher; Kevin, Rosemary, and Hannah Rose McNeely; Timothy Knight; Linda Mars; Douglas and Stephanie Kahn; William Hitchcock and Louise Stephaich; Kyle and Alexandra Bass; Ann Kempner, and Chris Scarff.

The executives met with the family members of two of the soon-to-be-unveiled airmen of the monument: Jonna Doolittle, “Jimmy” Doolittle’s granddaughter, and Dan Rosenthal, son of “Rosie” Rosenthal. The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force was represented by Don Brooks and Allan Moller, and the 306 Bomb Group by Steve Snyder. Berlin-based artists, Renata Shih and Frieder Schnock, who created the *Women Aviators* art show in the conservatory building, were also in attendance.

The sculptor of the four airmen, Benjamin Victor, was present with family and friends. We owe a debt of gratitude to Ben who sculpted day-and-night to get the monument finished and shipped from Boise, Idaho, in time for the unveiling.

## THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MONUMENT RECEPTION & LUNCHEON

We gathered in the big tent for lunch with General (Ret.) Michael T. “Buzz” Moseley (18th Chief of the Air Force) as Master of Ceremonies. We recognized our guest of honor: Lester Schrenk, a WWII Eighth Air Force Ball turret gunner.



We then screened the documentary *Normandy & The Eighth Air Force* that The Normandy Institute had commissioned from Kirk Saduski (Executive and Producer at Playtone) and Mark Herzog (Emmy-award winning producer), followed by remarks from Kirk Saduski, Jonna Doolittle and Dan Rosenthal.



We were anxiously monitoring the weather due to rain and high winds, awaiting confirmation that the WWII B-17, P-51, and Spitfire would take off from England. Sadly, these “birds” were unable to fly.



JUNE 5, 2025

## THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MONUMENT UNVEILING & CEREMONY



After lunch we proceeded to the memorial site of La Fièvre, home to the 82nd Airborne Division, a grassy knoll overlooking the fields of La Fièvre Bridge and the causeway that was essential to the success of D-Day.

The Normandy Institute is grateful to Les Amis des Vétérans Américains (AVA) and the American Legion for accepting these airmen of the Mighty Eighth Air Force on their sacred land, recognizing that airmen don't have a solid battlefield.

The Master of Ceremonies, former Chief of the U.S. Air Force, Gen. (Ret.) Moseley and Dorothea de La Houssaye kicked off the ceremony as L-Birds flew over. U.S. Air Force Master Sergeant Michelle Doolittle, grand-niece of Jimmy Doolittle himself, sang the American and French national anthems, acapella! Present were Lester Schrenk, Eighth Air Force WW II veteran, Jonna Doolittle, Dan Rosenthal and his wife Paula.

Also present were Gen. Chris Donahue (Commander of US Army Europe and Africa), and executives from Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Hillwood, Pratt & Whitney/RTX, American Airlines, Strauss Family, Shell, Caterpillar, FedEx, OneBrief, Sierra Nevada, and GE Aerospace. Gen. Moseley then shared stories about each of the airmen depicted in the monument: Gen. James "Jimmy" Doolittle, Lt. Col Robert "Rosie" Rosenthal, Col. Donald "Don" Blakeslee, and Staff Sergeant Maynard "Snuffy" Smith. These airmen came to life before they were even unveiled.

## THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MONUMENT UNVEILING & CEREMONY

Gen. Hinds (Deputy Commander US Air Force Europe) then spoke, followed by Gen. Armagost (Commander Eighth Air Force), and Colonel Piubeni, (French Air and Space Force). Then the National Commander of The American Legion, James A. LaCoursiere Jr., a former Air Force veteran, spoke about the enormity of the sacrifice that is present at this site and the importance of remembering.

Lastly, Gen. Moseley invited Benjamin Victor, the sculptor, to speak. During Benjamin's speech a U.S. Air Force Stratotanker flew over: a special homage from the 100th Refueling Wing out of the UK! This plane was baptized "Rosie's Riveters," the name of Rosie Rosenthal's B-17 bomber! Lastly, we had a fly-over by a DC-3.



The ceremony was closed by a beautiful rendition of "America the Beautiful" by Broadway star Laura Osnes. Her clear and emotional voice touched us all deeply.

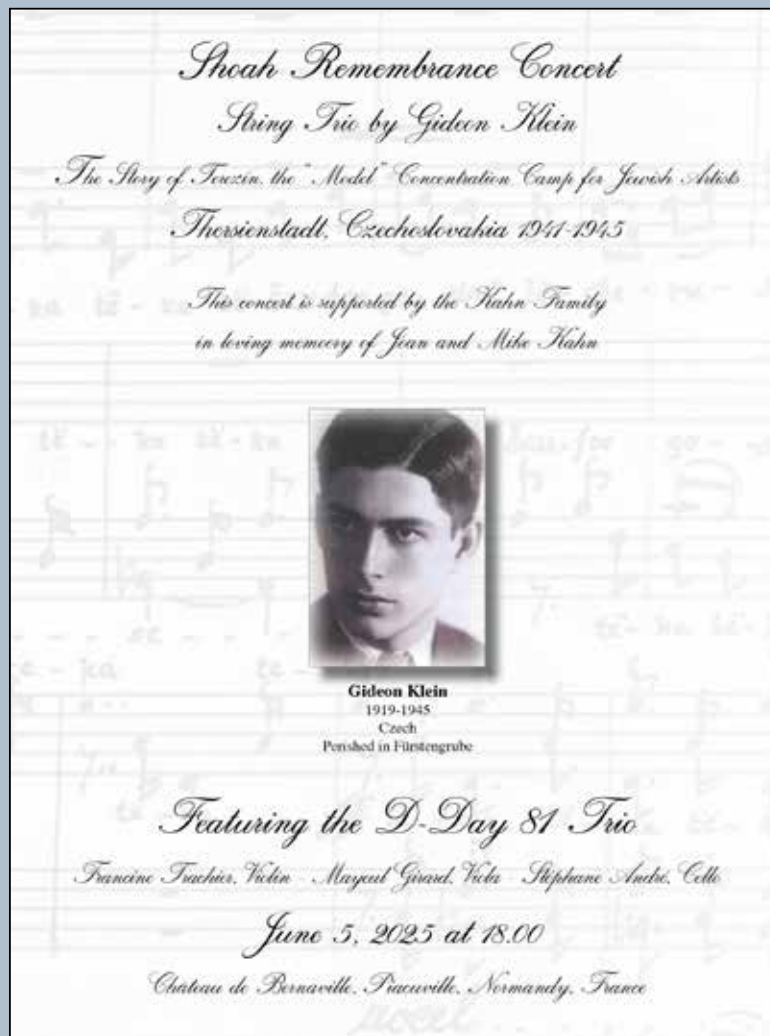


After the wreath laying, Generals Hinds and Armagost helped Dorothea to unveil the monument to a large round of applause for these magnificent statues. This concluded the ceremony.



JUNE 5, 2025

## THE SHOAH REMEMBRANCE CONCERT



To mark the 80th anniversary of the liberation of the camps by the Allied forces, a string trio composed by Gideon Klein was performed by Francine Trachier (violin), Mayeul Girard (viola), and Stephane André (cello). The three-part piece offered a moment of reflection on the tragedy of the concentration camps and the horror of the scope of the Holocaust. Every veteran we have known who participated in the liberation of one of the camps said that the memory was the worst of their war-time experience. The shock of the discoveries was deeply traumatic.

Dorothea gave a brief description of composer Gideon Klein, who perished in the Holocaust. On the dinner tables was a program with Gideon's story.

The concert was generously supported by the Kahn Family  
in memory of Joan and Mike Kahn.

## GIDEON KLEIN

Gideon Klein was born in Prerov, Moravia, on 6 December 1919. At age six, Gideon's precocious musicality became evident, and he began to study piano with the head of the local conservatory. When he was eleven, he travelled once a month to Prague for lessons with the wife of the noted piano pedagogue Professor Vilem Kurz. In the fall of 1938, he was admitted to Professor Kurz's Master School of the Prague Conservatory, registering at the same time at Charles University for courses in philosophy and musicology.

Until recently, it was assumed that except for a few sketches and juvenilia, Klein had written little music until blossoming as a composer in Terezín. Unexpectedly, however, in June 1990, the Dr. Eduard Herzog family in Prague, friends of the Kleins from before the war, found in their possession a locked suitcase that had been forgotten for over fifty years. It contained a treasure of Gideon's manuscripts, evidently placed for safekeeping with the Herzogs before Klein was sent to Terezín. This music completely altered the impression that he had suddenly begun to compose seriously only in the ghetto, for it revealed works, dating from 1939 and 1940, of astonishing craftsmanship and maturity for one then so young: songs for soprano and piano, an octet for winds, large-scale pieces for string quartet and several string duos, including one in quarter tones.

On 1 December 1941, Gideon Klein, along with thousands of other Prague Jews, was deported to Terezín. He immediately became active in the camp's cultural life, undertaking whatever was necessary to assist in the creation and maintenance of musical activities for the benefit of both musicians and their audiences. Towards the end, before the final transports to Auschwitz, Gideon started to conduct. He had all the gifts, including an accurate ear, for this art. It is difficult to say how and to what dimensions Gideon Klein would have grown under normal circumstances. One can say with certainty that he could have been among the best, achieving the perfection in the pianist in art, in composing and conducting.

Nine days after completing his string trio, fated to be his last composition, Gideon Klein was sent to Auschwitz on 1 October 1944, and from there to Fürstengrube, coal-mining labour camp for men, near Katowitz in Poland. It is not known whether he was killed there by the remaining Nazis as the liberating Red Army approached or whether he died on a forced march with those Jews made to accompany the fleeing SS.



JUNE 5, 2025

## THE ADMIRALS AND GENERALS DINNER



After the concert, The Normandy Institute dinner commenced with a large gathering of the representatives of the U.S. Military. General Cavoli, Admiral Munsch, General Donahue, Gen (Ret.) Nicholson, General Pineau (French), Lieutenant General Hinds, Lieutenant General Landes, Lieutenant General Costanza, Lieutenant General Braga, Lieutenant General Brennan, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Crutchfield, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Cox, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Dolan, Lieutenant General (Ret.) Smith, Major General Work, Major General Rone, Major General Armagost, Major General DiNonno, Major General Ryan, many accompanied by their spouses. The U.S. Charge d’Affaires, the Honorable David McCawley and his spouse joined us, with the U.S. Consul General of the West of France, Ms. Cintora. Most of our sponsors were still present too, and lively conversations took place.





## THE ADMIRALS AND GENERALS DINNER

We then screened the documentary *Normandy & the Eighth Air Force*, followed by our key-note speaker, Kirk Saduski - read his speech below. Kirk has executive produced among other series: *Band of Brothers*, *The Pacific*, and *Masters of the Air* at Playtone. We are honored that he and Mark Herzog created our documentary in collaboration with Dr. Donald Miller, the author of the book *Masters of the Air*. The documentary explains clearly the role of the Mighty Eighth Air Force to prepare for the landing in Normandy, with staggering casualties.



The dinner concluded once more with a concert with singers Jenny Teaton and Laura Osnes, accompanied by composer and guitarist Brett Boyett, who performed two patriotic songs to great applause.





THE NORMANDY INSTITUTE

# D-DAY 81 - Photo Gallery

Naval History Symposium  
& Navy Band Concert

Château de Bernaville, Normandy



June 3, 2025

NAVAL HISTORY SYMPOSIUM & NAVY BAND CONCERT







THE NORMANDY INSTITUTE

# D-DAY 81 - Photo Gallery

## ALLIED CEREMONY

Bayeux, Normandy



June 5, 2025

## ALLIED CEREMONY AT GENERAL EISENHOWER STATUE







THE NORMANDY INSTITUTE

# D-DAY 81 - Photo Gallery

Eighth Air Force Monument Luncheon  
Château de Bernaville, Normandy



June 5, 2025



THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MONUMENT RECEPTION & LUNCHEON





THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MONUNUMENT RECEPTION & LUNCHEON





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THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MONUNUMENT RECEPTION & LUNCHEON







THE NORMANDY INSTITUTE

D-DAY 81

Photo Gallery  
Unveiling Eighth Air Force Monument  
La Fièvre Bridge, Normandy



June 5, 2025



## THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MONUMENT UNVEILING & CEREMONY





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# THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MONUMENT UNVEILING & CEREMONY





THE NORMANDY INSTITUTE

D-DAY 81

Photo Gallery  
Shoah Remembrance Concert  
Admirals & Generals Dinner  
Château de Bernaville, Normandy



June 5, 2025



THE ADMIRALS & GENERALS DINNER

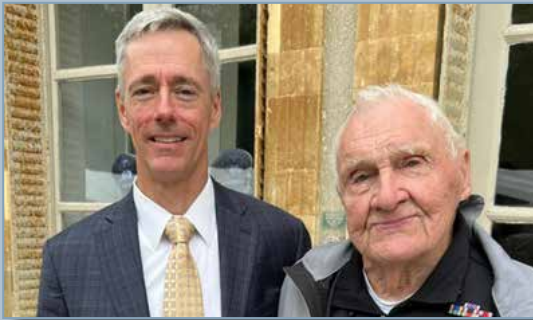


THE ADMIRALS & GENERALS DINNER





WWII B-17 BALL GUNNER VETERAN LESTER SCHRENK



## SPEECH BY KIRK SADUSKI – PRODUCER OF “MASTERS OF THE AIR”

### THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MONUMENT UNVEILING DINNER

JUNE 5, 2025 - THE NORMANDY INSTITUTE - CHÂTEAU DE BERNAVILLE

Thank you, Dorothea. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here tonight, but much more importantly, thank you for providing all of us with the reason to be here tonight. Without your dedication and devotion, this long overdue monument would not have been erected on this hallowed ground -- WHERE IT BELONGS.

Bravo Dorothea.

I also want to recognize someone who isn't IN the room tonight, but who, in many important ways, is most definitely WITH us tonight. I'm referring of course to Don Miller – the author of Masters of the Air and the man who first suggested erecting a monument to the 8th Air Force in Normandy.

When we were asked to produce another World War Two mini-series like Band of Brothers and the Pacific, we knew it should be about the Air Force. And we quickly realized that we should base it on Don's master work about the 8th Air Force – pun definitely intended.

In his book, Don puts you in the control tower of a base in East Anglia and the flight deck of a B-17 over enemy territory; on a bar stool in a British pub, and behind barbed wire in a German stalag. But most importantly, he helps you inside the minds and hearts of the men who braved the unprecedented physical, mental, and emotional challenges of combat at 25,000 feet. In other words, he handed us the blueprint for great drama.

Bravo Don.

All of this begs the question, why tell yet another story about World War Two? It's been told so many times, in so many ways. Don't we have enough?

No, we don't.

World War Two, is the largest event in human history – and as clear a case of right versus wrong as the real world allows. Because of the enormity of the event, and the depth of the evil, we will always want and need another story of how it happened, why it happened, and what was the consequence and cost, to individuals, to nations, to the world.

If you do it right, there is always a subtheme to every story you tell about WW II as well.

“What would I have done?” Would I have climbed out of the Higgins boat or back into a B-17? Would I have had the fortitude to endure Guadalcanal, or have the stamina to escort a convoy across the North Atlantic?

Great stories ask great questions, especially when the stakes are life and death.

There is also the fundamental human need, to on occasion rise above ourselves, and attach to something larger -- something of merit and measure. ---- The very definition of what was required during the Second World War – and why we continue to hunger for stories that illustrate this laudable impulse.

Dramatists draw characters and put them under pressure to reveal who they are. And there is no better crucible than combat. In Masters of the Air, you can't help but like Robert “Rosie” Rosenthal when he first appears on screen. He's confident, charming, and friendly. And he's damn handsome in his '40s era mustache. But it's when you see him in command of a B-17, over Germany, responsible for his crew as well as the success the mission, that you understand who Robert Rosenthal is, and why it's right that he be memorialized in bronze in a place forever memorialized in our hearts.

But however heroic, however courageous, Rosie wasn't unique. Both on film and in bronze, Rosie, as well as the other characters in our series and on that pedestal, represent hundreds of thousands of others, no less heroic, no less courageous.

Since Homer, and even before, we've attempted to understand ourselves through stories of conflict and combat.

In the final lines in Masters of the Air, Maj. Harry Crosby declares, “On occasion, man must confront himself. Face what we are, with who we are.”

That's precisely what Gen. Doolittle, Capt. Blakeslee, Maj. Rosenthal, and Sgt Smith, and so many others did. That's why we should, that's why we will, always tell such stories.



**LOCKHEED MARTIN** 



FISHER  
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SCARFF FAMILY  
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NATIONAL MUSEUM  
OF THE  
MIGHTY EIGHTH  
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KAHN FAMILY



LINDA A. MARS

