

CA Member Suzie Pitman To Represent MOPHA at Memorial Ceremony In Germany

The following is an email I received from Suzie Pittman, Department of California Senior Vice President. Thank you Suzie for representing MOPHA at the Kassel Mission Memorial Ceremony.

Please be informed that Jerry and myself will be going to Germany on the 16th of September, returning on 14 October. The main reason for our trip is a 75th anniversary ceremony in commemoration of an air battle that took place on the 27th of September in the skies above my hometown Bad Hersfeld in which 117 U.S. airmen perished along with 18 German pilots. The operation is known as "Kassel Mission" as the American bombers flying out of Tibenham, England, were supposed to bomb the city of Kassel. The bombers had lost their way in the fog and were without fighter protection. When the Germans detected them, their fighters attacked and within 6 minutes shot down 35 American bombers.

To make a long story short, after the war, in 1990, through efforts from both sides, a memorial site was established, honoring both, the U.S. and German fallen airmen. It is the only monument in Germany (perhaps even the world) honoring both sides. Of the survivors, former foes have become friends and every year on the 27th of September a memorial celebration takes place at the site. This year, being the 75th anniversary, we have a party of 35 Americans traveling to partake in the ceremony. All are all descendants of the U.S. airmen, their sons, daughters, grandchildren and even great grandchildren. Only two of the original survivors are still living, both 95+ years old and cannot travel anymore.

Jerry and I will be participating in the ceremony. He has been asked by the Anniversary Committee to speak on behalf of the MOPH (as he did before in 2014 at the 70th anniversary) and I am asking your permission to represent the MOPHA. We will place a floral arrangement for the MOPH/MOPHA at the site at our own cost and, hopefully, take plenty of photos for our newsletters.



The German and American Airmen's Memorial was erected by participants of the Kassel Mission air battle in honor of the men on both sides who died that day, 27 September 1944. It was the first memorial to be co-created by former enemies.

“Any man who fought in that battle would carry it with him for the rest of his life, if he survived.

This memorial, and the dedication on 1 August 1990 and subsequent pilgrimages to it, has rendered healing to those airmen and their families. In moments just after unveiling the monuments containing the names of the 136 brave men who died in the battle, their compatriots join hands with their former enemies in a symbolic gesture of victor over war.”

From the “Kassel Mission Historical Society” website <https://www.kasselmission.org/>