

PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE AIR WAR IN WORLD WAR II

One important part of the Foundation's work is preserving the history of the air war in World War II.

- ◆ Archives
- ◆ Museums
- ◆ Film
- ◆ Oral History
- ◆ Archaeology
- ◆ Music
- ◆ Scholarship



NOMINATIONS

Do you know an individual or an organization that has made a significant contribution to preserving the history of the air war in World War II? It could be archives, museum collections and exhibits, oral history programs, documentary films, or writing the scholarship that reaches the public.



If you do, write a letter of nomination and send it to the Foundation. Include in your letter why you think your nominee qualifies for the Bledsoe Award. Include as much detail as possible. It is helpful to give internet urls for any collections or historical materials that are available online. If not, tell the Bledsoe Committee where researchers can find the work or where evidence of the preservation activity can be found. If the work is film, books, or other publications, include the citation for those. Send your letter of nomination to: Old Primero Historical Foundation, Attn. Bledsoe Award, P.O. Box 2782, Abilene, Texas 79604. Online nominations can be sent to: info@ophfoundation.org.



MAKE A DONATION TODAY

Consider making a donation today to the Old Primero Historical Foundation. The Foundation is a 501(c)3 and all donations are fully tax deductible. Your contributions go 100% to the preservation efforts and projects of OPHF. All officers of the Foundation are volunteers and no salaries are paid.

You can make donations by mail or online. For checks, please mail to: Old Primero Historical Foundation, P.O. Box 2782, Abilene, TX 79604.

To make a donation online, using your credit card, go to <http://www.ophfoundation.org> and click on the donation button.



THE BLEDSOE AWARD

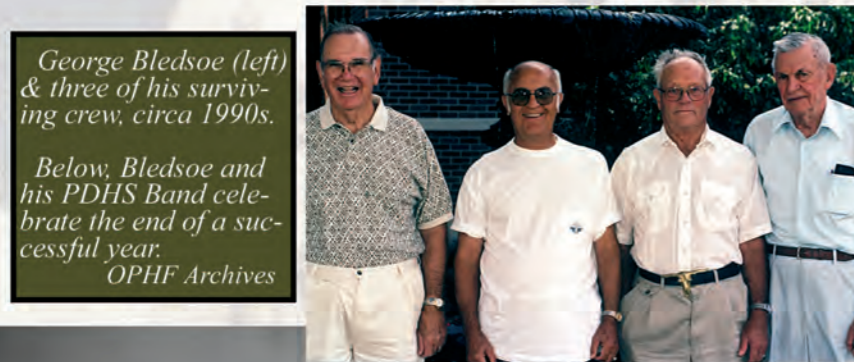
For Significant Contributions to the Preservation of the History of the Air War in World War II

BLED SOE BIOGRAPHY

George Bledsoe was born in San Antonio on August 24, 1922. After graduating from Brackenridge High School, he attended Baylor University for one year, and then enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps and went through pilot training. He served as first pilot on B-24 heavy bombers with the Eighth Air Force in Europe during World War II. During that time, he flew 32 combat missions and was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross twice and the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters. Upon completing his service, Captain Bledsoe returned to his education and graduated from the University of Texas in Austin with the Bachelor of Music degree, Cum Laude in 1951.

He played with the San Antonio Symphony for three seasons as a member of the trumpet section. After further graduate work at the University of Texas, he began a 31-year career as a band and orchestra director in public schools in Texas and California.

He was the guest of honor at a special tribute hosted by his former students from the Palo Duro High School Band and Orchestra in November, 2005. Generations of former students gathered to celebrate his career and give special honors to a teacher who made a difference in their lives. After a number of years in retirement, Bledsoe died at the age of 83 in February 2006.



George Bledsoe (left) & three of his surviving crew, circa 1990s.

Below, Bledsoe and his PDHS Band celebrate the end of a successful year.
OPHF Archives



Unloading wounded, circa 1943

THE BLED SOE AWARD

The George Bledsoe Award is presented to those who make significant contributions to the preservation of the history of the air war in World War II. This award is named in honor George Bledsoe who devoted his lifetime to service to mankind, first as a B-24 Liberator pilot flying dangerous low level night missions with the Carpetbagger operations in England and Scotland during World War II. Later as a teacher to thousands of students, Bledsoe became a role model for living life with integrity and a commitment to excellence. His legacy and his memory continues to live on in the lives of his students where Bledsoe made a lasting impact.



OLD PRIMERO HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

The mission of the Old Primero Historical Foundation (OPHF) is to support historical scholarship and film in the area of military history, American culture and history, and global crisis where the United States and its people played a role. The OPHF supports documentary film production, scholarly writing projects, and cooperates with other institutions to develop conferences and other opportunities for scholars engaged in military history and related subjects of interest to the OPHF. Foundation funding comes from individual donors, businesses, and institutions who support the Foundation's mission. The OPHF is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and all donations are tax-deductible under IRS guidelines. The Foundation is an operating foundation and does not give grants to other foundations or institutions.

The Foundation instituted the Bledsoe Award in 2008 to recognize individuals and organizations who make significant contributions to the preservation of the air war in World War II. Since 2008 the Foundation has recognized seminal projects that have contributed important new material to the literature of air war history. Other individuals have added noteworthy projects that benefit the public and encourage the expansion of knowledge about events and the people who made a difference in wartime aviation history.



Bledsoe Crew, circa 1944