



### Special points of interest:

- A series of new documentaries scheduled for completion in 2026
- A new book, *Little America*, is underway, to be based in large part on 23 years of oral interviews.
- How you can be a part of the work of the Foundation

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# Newsletter

Supporting 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

## Important new preservation efforts for 23 years of oral history interviews

by Vernon L. Williams

In 2002, I organized the East Anglia Air War Project (EAAWP) and began a twenty-three-year journey of oral history interviewing, archival research, and archaeological site surveys at British airfield locations and the nearby villages and towns. The oral history interviews were completed in rural Britain and across the United States (including four interviews in Schweinfurt, Germany).

These voices, whether American airmen or British family members, speak of the life lived in the villages and towns in wartime England.

These interviews have never been available to any other author, nor have they seen the light of day. During the interview phase, I was determined to complete as many interviews as possible before the window closed, and the interviewees were gone forever. My interview schedule and my access to this generation of voices have now closed. Only now am I beginning the process of digitizing the video tape recordings and creating a digital archive to preserve these

voices for the future.

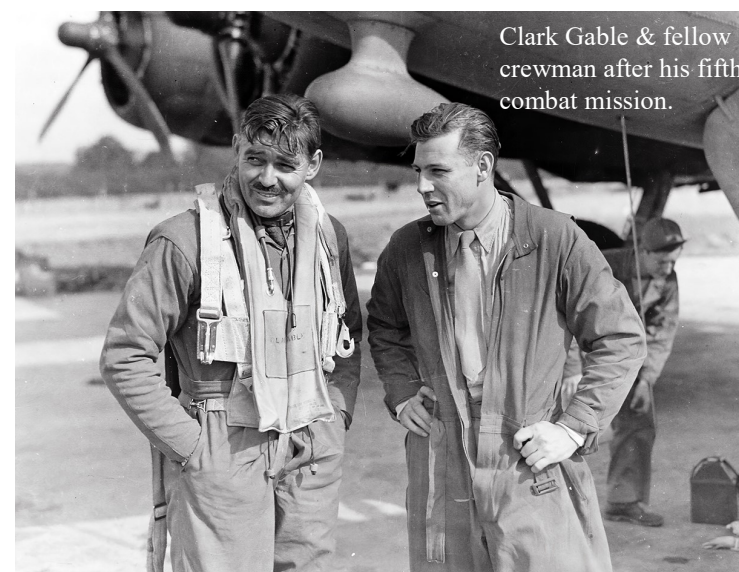
In addition to the video recordings, I have copied over 150,000 wartime images from archives and personal collections, many of which have never been seen before. The preservation process will include upscaling each image, restoring each photograph in digital form, and creating a high resolution and a low resolution set of the entire collection so that these photographs will last long into the future.

So the twenty-three-year interview journey is now complete. The interviews are now safely stored in my studio. The massive photograph collection has taken its place

with the interviews and the first books are underway.

So how can those who want to have a part in ensuring that the interviews and the massive photograph collection are digitized, restored, and preserved for the future?

The giving goal for the *Preserve the East Anglia Air War Archival Collection* is \$150,000. It will take all sizes of donations to complete the mission. Small, medium, and large donations are all needed. No gift is too small, and no gift is too large. Please go to page 4 and click on the QR code to join our mission.



Clark Gable & fellow crewman after his fifth combat mission.

## New Documentary *Target Japan* to be released next year



Andrew L. Williams, 509th Composite Group, Wendover, Utah, 1944

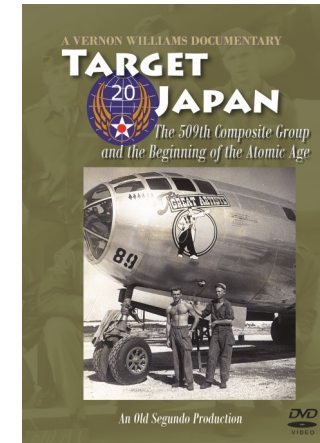
“From Kentucky to the prairies of Texas, the 12th Armored Division later crossed the Atlantic and joined the fight across France and into Germany and Austria during those dark days on the combat trail as the deperate quest for victory unfolded. “



Final research, scriptwriting, and initial production operations are underway for a new documentary film on the 509th Composite Group and the atomic missions to Japan. This new film will add much to what we know about the atomic project, especially the ordinary people who worked behind the scenes

to end the war in the Pacific. Dr. Vernon L. Williams will write, produce, and direct the new film. “This documentary film will bring to life the stories of a unique group of Americans who gathered at Wendover, Utah in the 509th Composite Group to try to do the impossible.” said Williams. From mechanics and airframe technicians to flight

crews and the leadership who helped end the Pacific war, this film will follow the story of ordinary Americans doing extraordinary things.

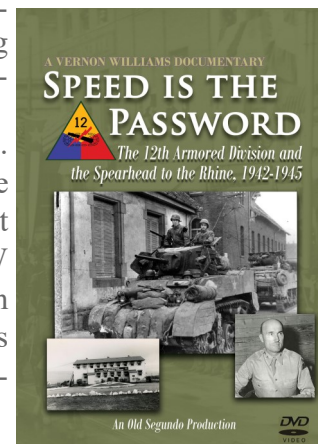


## New 12th Armored Division Film Coming in 2026

*Speed is the Password* traces the story of the 12th Armored Division from its activation in 1942 at Campbell, Kentucky and later training at Camp Barkeley in Abilene, Texas. By September 1944, the Division was on the move overseas, landing at Liverpool, England on October 2nd. After several weeks receiving new armor at Tidworth Barracks, the Division crossed the English Channel, joined Patch’s Seventh Army, and moved against the Maginot Line, firing their first shots on December 5th.

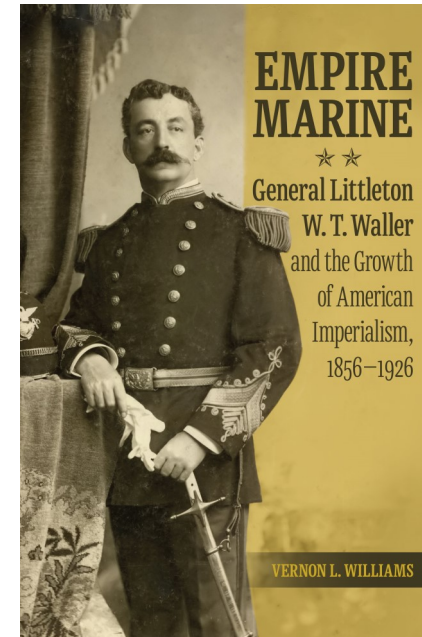
Swift victories followed, but the Division suffered a devastating defeat in January at Herrlisheim. After receiving massive replacements and three companies of African-American infantry, the 12th went on the offensive once again. Sealing the Comar Pocket and moving in a lightning drive, the 12th ended the German resistance in the Vosges Mountains.

Later the Division was attached to General George S. Patton’s Third Army and spearheaded the drive to the Rhine River. This film covers their five-month combat story in detail as they liberated concentration and POW camps along the way. Watch as the story unfolds as 12th Armored Division veterans remembers those dark days on the combat trail as the desperate quest for victory unfolded.



## TCU University Press Releases Williams' New Biography on Marine Corps Legend

*Empire Marine* examines the role that Littleton W. T. Waller played in the development and growth of the Marine Corps within the emerging empire of turn-of-the-century America. The grandson of the governor of Virginia, Littleton W.T. Waller grew up during the post-Civil War years when his widowed mother struggled to provide for her sons. Unable to attend university or a professional military school, Waller secured a commission in the Marine Corps in 1880 and began a long and successful military career. Waller's service corresponded with the growth of the Marine Corps and the exportation of American imperialism in the 1890s and beyond. Particularly significant were the episodes of U.S. political and military expansion in South America, the Philippines, China, Panama, Cuba, and Haiti. Waller's experiences reflected the new emerging role that marines would play in the execution of American policy across the globe.



## Based on the East Anglia Air War Project, a New Book, *Little America*, is Underway

After over two decades of research and interviewing, Dr. Vernon L. Williams is writing the first volume to draw on the historical materials developed by the East Anglia Air War Project. The volume is tentatively titled: *Little America: The Air War and the American Invasion In World War II England*. This book will explore the World II experiences of American ground and air crews in wartime England, and the British rural families who lived in the villages and towns in and around the American airfields. The project will explore the sense of community that held them together from 1942 to 1945. The volume will be the first such study to incorporate an extensive new oral history interview collection relating to the joint Anglo/American communities that stretched across East Anglia and west into the Midlands in rural England. Williams has conducted a series of archaeological site surveys of base sites, in context with neighboring villages and towns that will answer questions about the built environment, the sense of place and the living patterns that existed during the wartime years. Together, with newly found manuscripts and other collateral materials that accompany the oral history collection, the volume will provide new insights on the social history of the air war in England and the European Theater of Operations before 1945. The manuscript is expected to be finished in 2026 and submitted to the publisher. *Little America* will be organized with a preface and nine chapters. A discussion of the focus of each chapter can be found at: <https://www.ophfoundation.org/eastanglia/>.

### Expected Book Organization

- Preface
- Chapter 1. Little America, A Sense of Place
- Chapter 2. The Red Cross and the Aero Clubs
- Chapter 3. Race: The Shifting Landscape
- Chapter 4. Big Bands and the Jitterbug
- Chapter 5. The Moral Dilemma
- Chapter 6. Glamour and Hollywood
- Chapter 7. War Brides
- Chapter 8. Bonds that are Never Broken
- Chapter 9. Epilogue



*Ground crew of the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, Idiot's Delight, waiting for the mission to return, 94th Bomb Group at Rougham, England. East Anglia Air War Project Archives, Abilene, Texas.*



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*Supporting 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 mission of the Old Primero Historical Foundation (OPHF) is to produce 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 oversees documentary film production, scholarly writing projects, and cooperates with other institutions to develop conferences and other scholarly opportunities for scholars engaged in military history and related subjects of interest to the OPHF.

OPHF funding comes from individual donors, business, 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 OPHF is an operating foundation and does not give grants to other foundations or institutions.

No Foundation officer receives a salary. All are volunteers. All proceeds go toward preservation work and the creation of new historical works.

***You can help save the history of ordinary Americans who did extraordinary things.***

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All donations to the Old Primero Historical Foundation are tax deductible. Your donations will help make it possible to digitize and preserve interview and archival collections associated with Army Air Force veterans stationed in wartime England, and British families members who lived in the villages around the bases in East Anglia. Your tax-deductible contribution will help save these precious memories for generations of Americans and Brits who are not yet born. Help them stay connected to the World War II generation. Send in your check or donate online using the link or QR code below.

Donate online at:

[www.ophfoundation.org/donate](http://www.ophfoundation.org/donate)

or use this QR code:



*The Old Primero Historical Foundation is a 501 (c) 3 organization.*