



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

Special points of interest:

- A new documentary on the 509th Composite Group and the end of the Pacific war will begin production in 2017
- OPHF supports three new documentary films on American military history in 2016
- How you can be a part of the supporting the preservation of history in new films in 2017

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Foundation to Provide Support for New Documentary in 2018

Target Japan: The 509th Composite Group and the Beginning of the Atomic Age

Fundraising and the preliminary research and writing 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.

Production is scheduled to begin in the spring with the film's release planned for November 2018.

Dr. Vernon L. Williams will produce and direct the new film. Williams has assembled a production team drawn from professionals from Texas. "We have some rare talent here in Texas who are committed to bringing the 509th story to life," stated 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 in extraordinary times.

See page 4 for details on how you might help bring this film to life.



From left: Cpl. John E. Keller, S/Sgt. Andrew L. Williams, August 1945, Tinian Island. Williams Family Archives.

Ordinary Americans is the Focus of 2018 *Target Japan* Film



Paul Tibbets, Jr.,
Commanding,
509th Composite
Group

“... supporting the preservation of the history of the American people as they engaged in

service that brought ultimate benefit to mankind.”



George Bledsoe,
pilot, 8th Air Force

Throughout our history, we have seen ordinary citizens step forward in times of crisis to serve our nation. In WWII the effort became a common act of service for men, women, and families where they served in various ways to meet the threat in the global war. At home and on the battlefield, the term “citizen soldier” can be applied to that generation of Americans. Who were these special people who made a difference for America and for the world?

In the 509th Composite Group, you find air crews who included many citizen

soldiers. On the ground, the mechanics, airframe repairmen, armorers, engineers—a host of ordinary people who answered the call of duty, then returned home to raise families and make new contributions to the United States in other ways.

Target Japan will follow these ordinary citizen soldiers as they joined the 509th Composite Group and embarked on a long and dangerous journey that brought to a close a protracted and costly war in the Pacific.

This new film will discover much about these ordinary Americans and

their service in the Pacific war.



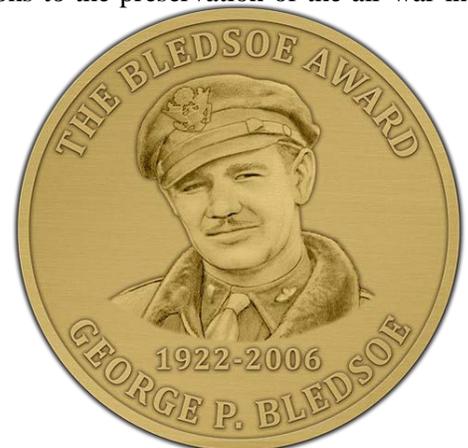
T/Sgt. George R. Caron, tail gunner on the crew of the *Enola Gay*, August 1945.

New Medal Created for the Bledsoe Award in 2017

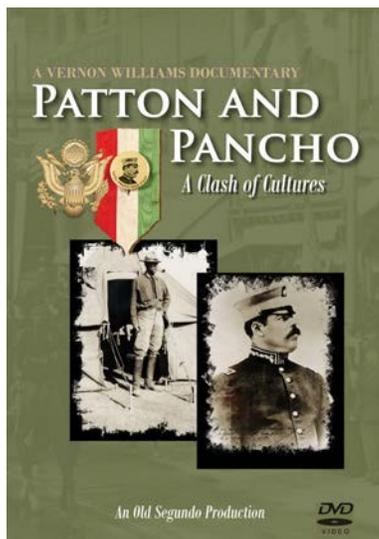
The George Bledsoe Award is presented to those who make significant contributions to the preservation of the history of the air war in World War II. This award is named in honor George Bledsoe who devoted his lifetime to service to mankind, first as a B- 24 Liberator pilot flying dangerous low level 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.

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.

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. Contact the Foundation for details on how to nominate (see page 4)



Three New Documentaries Released in 2016—A Year of Great Achievement



The Foundation participated in bringing three important new documentary films for release during 2016.

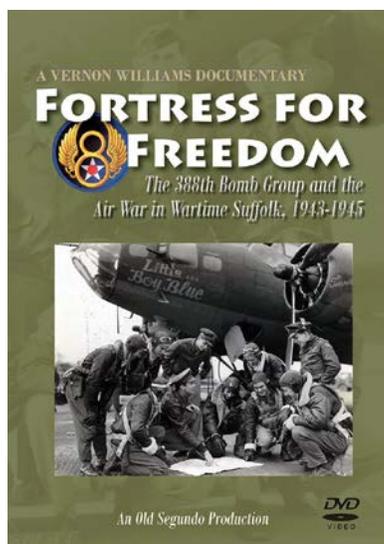
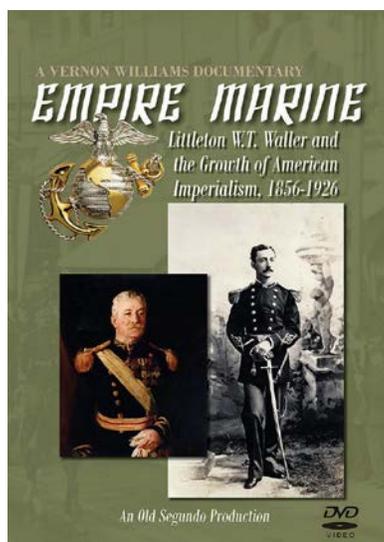
Patton and Pancho weaves the story of the young George S. Patton, Jr. into the fabric of the Punitive Expedition that provides a glimpse of the future leader who captured the imagination of a later America and embodied the offensive spirit of the Army of the United States. Patton's experiences on the Punitive Expedition reveal the changing face of the Army. Air power, mobile operations, communications, and emerging technology called for new tactics on the desert of northern Mexico. For the Mexican people, it proved to be a time of turmoil, from within and from without. Ordinary people lived on land that became a war zone as civil war armies did battle as the Mexican Revolution brought war and violence to their villages and towns. This is their story.

Empire Marine explores the life of Littleton W.T. Waller and examines the role he played in the development and growth of the Marine Corps within the context of the emerging empire of turn-of-the-century America. Waller's service (1880-1920) corresponded with the growth of the Marine Corps and the exportation of American imperialism in the 1890s and beyond. His service included episodes of U.S. political and military expansion in South America, the Philippines, China, Panama, Cuba, and Haiti. Waller's experiences reflect the new emerging role the marines would play in the execution of American policy in the world. As naval power became the accepted tool of expansion and a necessity for success as a world power, it became apparent that new tactics and expertise would be required to handle the demands of the new responsibilities of imperialism. Increasingly, the marines were called upon to spearhead that policy of expansion and as time went on, were able to demonstrate the capability to achieve tactical and often, political goals. *Empire Marine* focuses on the theme of change and transition and illustrates how Waller's career revealed those changing roles for the Marine Corps.

Fortress for Freedom traces the story of the 388th Bomb Group (H) from activation and training in the United States to combat operations in the European Theater of Operations during World War II. Based at Knettishall, east of Cambridge in wartime England, the men of the 388th took the war to Germany. Beginning on July 17, 1943, the 388th flew 314 missions during three years of active operations. During the war, the Group suffered 91 aircraft lost, 524 men killed in action, 801 taken prisoner, and 2 missing. Supported by British families in the surrounding villages and towns, these young men of the 388th made a difference in the the victory won in the skies over Europe. *Fortress for Freedom* offers a unique look at the men who spearheaded the air war against Germany and the price that they had to pay.

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These films and other documentaries are available online at: [www.oldsegundo.com/video.shtml](http://www.oldsegundo.com/video.shtml)



## 100 Years Later OPHF Supports Tucson Conference on Punitive Expedition to Mexico

In commemoration of the one hundred-year anniversary of Pancho Villa's attack on Columbus, New Mexico and the American military intervention into northern Mexico, the Old Primero Historical Foundation and the Journal of Military Aviation History co-sponsored a conference, Patton and Pancho: A Clash of Cultures.

The conference opened at the Arizona Historical Museum in Tucson on Wednesday evening, March 9th with an exhibition of photographs of the Mexican Revolution, the Punitive Expedition, and the new technology on the combat trail. Wednesday evening concluded with the premiere of a new documentary film on the Columbus raid and the subsequent American military operation in northern Mexico. The documentary, *Patton and Pancho*, is based on the analysis of both American and Mexican historians, important contemporary motion picture film footage of the times, and significant newly uncovered images taken on both sides of the combat trail.

The conference resumed the next day at the Tucson Hilton East Hotel. Click on the program link on the Foundation's website to view a copy of the final conference program: <http://www.ophfoundation.org/conf.htm>



Send your donations to:

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Abilene, TX 79604

Email: [info@ophfoundation.org](mailto:info@ophfoundation.org)

Web: [ophfoundation.org](http://ophfoundation.org)

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*Share the Past to Shape the Future*

## Help fund Old Primero Historical Work in 2018 Funding Campaign: \$100,000

All donations to the Old Primero Historical Foundation, a 501 c(3) organization, are tax deductible. Your contributions will help fund the production budgets of *Target Japan: The 509th Composite Group and the Beginning of the Atomic Age*, *The Eagle in the Sun*, and other historical preservation projects. These films will bring an important part of our national story to generations of Americans who know little about World War II, the Citizen Soldier, or the victory won in 1945 that changed the world forever. Send in your check or credit card contribution today. Please consider a donation in support of the Bledsoe Award.

*~~Xerox this form and include with your contribution.~~*

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