



Catalina Mountains Patriot

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Of the Military Order of the World Wars

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Interim Editor
Marlon Ruiz

PREAMBLE

*"To acquire and preserve records of
individual services;"*



Commander:

Jean Nelson, HPM



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Treasurer:

CWO4 Robert Ozier



Asst. Treasurer:

COL Pedro Najera



Chaplain:

Jean Nelson, HPM



Judge Advocate:

COL Pedro Najera

Commander's Comments:

Last week I read an opinion piece in the Arizona Daily Star written by a member of the Dallas Morning News editorial board. The headline is "Can you pass a citizenship test? Many Americans cannot." The third ideal of our preamble is "To promote and further patriotic education in our Nation." The main point of the article is that we probably know less about the Constitution and American History than immigrants who have to take the test to become citizens. I will quote extensively from this article because I think the ideas put forth are important.

"A nation is bound together by a common understanding of citizenship and civic responsibility. This is why we are excited that Educating for American Democracy--the brainchild of the Education Department and the National Endowment for the Humanities--is proposing a new road map for teaching social studies, history, and civics.

The project's goal is to thoughtfully invest in teacher training and curriculum to inspire K-12 students to be constructively involved in their communities, embrace compromise, promote civic honesty, and patriotism as guiding principles, and teach history and civics through timelines and themes of our history."

Distrust of our government runs high today and the time is right to make this investment in ourselves. Almost 40 years ago a report titled "A National Risk" brought about an overdue refocusing on math, science, English, and foreign languages that came at the expense of civics, history, and social studies. When I talked to my grandchildren about this they said they had very few classes on these important subjects. I was dismayed at their lack of knowledge.

"Refocusing educational time on civics reinforces the importance of engaged citizens in our system of government.

We can't protect our fragile freedoms if we are ill-equipped to honor our responsibilities to each other, our institutions, and ourselves. A republic that has enough self-respect to teach itself civics is a republic that will long endure."

Commander Jean



Chaplain's Corner

Psalm 91:14-16

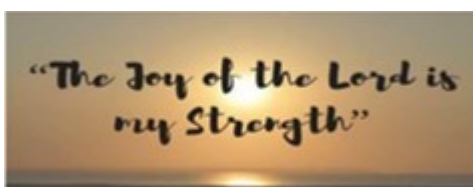
Those who love me, I will deliver; I will protect those who know my name.

When they call to me I will answer them; I will be with them in trouble, I will rescue them and honor them. With long life I will satisfy them, and show them my salvation.

With the coming of spring and the promise of new life, I am reminded of the promise of eternal life given to us by God's grace in our risen Christ. Jesus came to reconcile us to God and to show us God's love and mercy. God's love for all humankind is so deep and so strong that we can never be separated from him. The only thing that is required of us is to love and accept the Lord.

He is risen indeed!

Chaplain Jean



OBSERVING MINORITY HEALTH MONTH



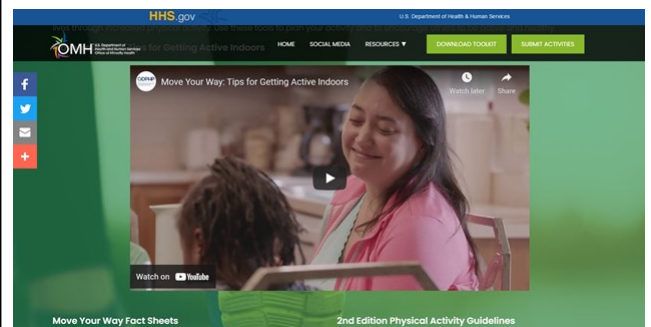
[PLACE THE MOUSE POINTER ON THE BANNER AND LEFT CLICK FOR MORE CONTENT](#)

In April we acknowledge @MinorityHealth and other partners who promote #ActiveandHealthy ways to stay active and support physical, mental and emotional wellness during National Minority Health Month.

More than half of adults do not meet the physical activity guidelines. Test your knowledge and take the @MinorityHealth #ActiveandHealthy challenge to find out what you can do to better your physical and mental health! minorityhealth.hhs.gov/nmhm #NMHM2020

How are you staying #ActiveandHealthy in and around your home? This National Minority Health Month share with @MinorityHealth the steps you are taking to support your physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. minorityhealth.hhs.gov/nmhm #NMHM2020

Commander Jean



[TO VIEW ONLINE VIDEO CONTENT ACTIVATE THE IMAGE WITH YOUR MOUSE POINTER & LEFT CLICK](#)



CHAPTER MARCH 2021 MEETING MINUTES REPORT

Catalina Chapter MOWW Meeting, 6 Mar 2021

Next meeting: 10 April, 1300

Commander Jean opened the meeting with an invocation.

- Rich Nelson led the Pledge of Allegiance.

- Bob Ozier read the Preamble.

Jean is working to track down all members and update contact information.

Bob sent awards information to various JROTC units in Southern AZ. He's planning on the awards ceremonies being remote right now.

Jean will connect with Girl Scouts about awards.

MOC is being planned for Nov 7th for 2021.

Marlon reported on national and regional actions. Region 13 is looking at putting in place a region-wide speaker program. Marlon reported: "Region XIII website www.MOWWSCV.com welcomes its first out-of-state "hub & spoke" contributor from within the Regional 9 Chapter community. Website expansion efforts are currently underway to prepare for added Chapter contributors in the coming months."

Ann Hollis was the guest speaker. She presented on her work with the AZ Memorial Veteran Cemetery Foundation.

The organization provides services and work for efforts that aren't covered by tax payer funds, such as beautification projects and covers things like landscaping, plants and decorative rocks.

The foundation also provides flag cases for families to purchase for memorial flags. They also hold ceremonies throughout the year, including Wreaths Across America wreath laying and Memorial Day.

Jean thanked Ann for her presentation.

Jean closed the meeting with the benediction.

6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion

by
Companion Joe Harris

It was the only African-American Women's Army Corps (WAC) battalion to deploy overseas during WWII. Beginning in Birmingham, England, warehouses containing a colossal amount of letters and packages had to be sorted for delivery. One skeptical officer gave the unit commander six months to bring the situation under control. She accomplished the mission in half that time.

Nicknamed the Six Triple Eight, the battalion consisted of 31 officers and 824 enlisted. An Elkin, North Carolina native, Elizabeth Barker Johnson, was one of those enlisted members. Elizabeth quit work as a housekeeper and enlisted in the Army in 1943 and was eventually assigned to the Six Triple Eight. She had read a recruiting pamphlet and the cover said, "Uncle Sam, I Want You," and then she said, "Well, maybe you just got me."

Johnson went through basic training at Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, and then began working as a truck driver. This was unusual as black women were generally not given truck driving assignments. Opportunities to serve overseas were almost unheard of especially for a black female. When General Dwight Eisenhower announced a plan to send black members of the WAC to England to drive cars and work as secretaries, Elizabeth Johnson was selected to serve with the postal directory battalion as a driver.



Members of the Six Triple Eight trained at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, jumping trenches in gas masks, marching with field gear, and learning to identify enemy ships and aircraft. On February 3, 1945, the first contingent sailed on to England. The second group followed two months later. In Birmingham, Elizabeth and her cohorts sorted mail that had been stored in warehouses. The women of the unit

worked around the clock, in three eight-hour shifts. Their motto became, “No mail, low morale.”

Once the mail backlog was finished, the Six Triple Eight was carried to Rouen, France where it again got the mail moving in half the time to the soldiers fighting the Germans. At wars end, the Six Triple Eight returned to the US, and the women were mustered out of service. The women returned home satisfied they had done their part.

Army veteran Elizabeth Barker Johnson waisted no time getting on with her life. She was the first woman of color to enroll in Winston-Salem State University on the GI Bill.

Graduating in 1949 with a degree in education, she went on to spend the next thirty years teaching as a public school teacher in North Carolina and Virginia.

Elizabeth Barker Johnson was 100 years old when she passed away on August 23, 2020.



This April, we continue our efforts to spread awareness, promote acceptance, and ignite change. The Autism Society of America, the nation's oldest leading grassroots autism organization, is proud to celebrate Autism Acceptance Month in **April 2021** with the its "Celebrate Differences" campaign.

[PLACE THE MOUSE POINTER ON THIS GRAPHIC OR LINK BELOW AND LEFT CLICK FOR MORE ONLINE CONTENT](#)

Autism Acceptance Month - Autism Society ✓

 www.autism-society.org/get-involved/national-autism-awareness-month/

As Women are at Higher Risk for Eye Disease, Prevent Blindness Declares April as Women's Eye Health and Safety Month

Two out of every three people living with blindness or vision problems are women, according to the National Eye Institute. And, data from The Future of Vision: Forecasting the Prevalence and Costs of ...

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March is Workplace Eye Wellness Month at Prevent Blindness

the nation's oldest eye health and safety nonprofit organization, has declared March as Workplace Eye Wellness Month. Because one of the many negative effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is ...

Yahoo Finance · 1mon

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Calendar of health awareness months

How to get involved: A series of awareness events take place in March, with numerous other campaigns, fundraising drives, and acts of recognition of women's stories and volunteer efforts.

Medical News Today · 26d

[Health awareness months: Calendar list \(medicalnewstoday.com\)](http://medicalnewstoday.com)

Ted's Page

Heroes of our Time



At this pandemic time, heroes are everywhere. In stores, stocking shelves, running cash registers; in hospitals or urgent care centers, taking care of the sick; in trucks, bringing food or medical supplies; in other also vital jobs; and now, even more important to us and the world, the creators and administrators of the Corona-19 vaccines. These heroes don't become well-known. Being well-known depends some-

what on the era. I am thinking now of WWII when your opportunity to become well-known arose more often, and of a USAAF airman from my hometown, Caro, Michigan. Newspapers printed images of this hero, Staff Sergeant Maynard Smith.



From that small, farm town, he went suddenly to violent war, a gunner whose fighting position was in the ball turret of a B-17. The turret was attached to and under the fuselage, the worst place. If there were to be a crash and its hatch couldn't be opened, the ball-turret's gunner would be in a horrible trap.



At that time in the Army, those already settled into the military routine worked hard at finding a nickname for each new recruit, often making a connection to some noted personality. The more undignified and comical the connection to the recruit's real name, the better. It was natural, almost certain, that when Maynard Smith entered the USAAF he

had to be called "Snuffy" after a rascally character, Snuffy Smith, of the Barney Google comic strip. Maynard was in his 30s, his AAF associates in their early 20s or younger. I got the impression that the disparity in age would have contributed to their thinking his day-to-day behavior odd; and to him that nickname, Snuffy, coming from those he would see as youngsters, must have rankled and could have fostered negative feelings. But on a flight back from St. Nazaire, France, Smith instead showed empathy, a father-like feeling.



It was on his first mission, May 1, 1943. Upon bombing the German submarine base at St. Nazaire, his B-17 of 306th Bomb Group, based at Thurleigh, England, was attacked by flak and FW-190 (FW: Focke Wulf) German fighter planes. The B-17's hydraulic system was shot away. Smith tried the turret's hand

crank. It worked. As he emerged, there was fire in the radio room, in the wheels' cavity and in the tail section. The radio operator and right waist gunner parachuted. The left waist gunner's chute straps snagged, leaving him hanging half out the plane. S/Sgt Smith pulled him in. Giving the embarrassed and want-to-be chutist a plausible excuse for being scared, he asked if the heat (from the fires) was too much for him. Freed from the snag, that gunner also bailed. The tail gunner was badly wounded. Smith laid him sidewise to keep blood from draining into a lung and injected him with morphine. While all this was going on, he alternately manned the two waist guns, making the FW-190 pilots think the B-17 was still capable of fighting, giving them no safe angle of attack. In the few minutes available to him before the burning B-17 would no longer be flyable, he wrapped a sweater around his face, entered the smoke, and with an extinguisher fought the fire, even beating it with his arms and legs until his clothes smoked. For more freedom of action, he removed his chute, seeing in it an embedded .50 caliber round. He threw out burning objects, including ammunition, through burned-out fuselage holes, lessening the crippled ship's load. Time became irrelevant. It would have seemed the briefest of seconds or an eternity until, miraculously, with its fuselage almost separated into two parts, the B-17 dropped onto the first English field the pilot saw.

A few weeks later, Andy Rooney, then a front-line-war reporter for the Army's *Stars and Stripes* and much later a well-known TV personality, was sent to Thurleigh to cover a Medal of Honor event. S/Sgt. Smith's time to become well known had arrived. Rooney wrote it up. "One of the best stories I ever had to write," Rooney later said, "was about a hero named Maynard Smith."



Because Maynard had lived in town and I a few miles from it, I didn't get to know him personally. But Walter Setla, who lived on the farm next to ours and later was also in the USAAF, did know him. Walter was the fastest pitcher in the area's fast-pitch softball league and was well-known in Caro. When I referred to Smith as "Snuffy" Walter quickly said that was not his nickname. In town, Walter said, Maynard was known as "Hokie" implying unpredictability. Walter knew of the often-told story: Maynard had ridden his pony into the town drugstore.

News of S/Sgt. Maynard Smith's award got to us through newspapers. I first read the details of his boyhood and heroic war-time action in a newspaper while also looking at people drinking chocolate milk shakes at the drugstore soda-fountain counter. I was holding the *Detroit News* while my father stood in line to pay for it. The *News*, trucked 100 miles to Caro, from Detroit, published USAAF photos of the event. In a photo with Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson placing the Medal of Honor ribbon around S/Sgt. Smith's neck, Maynard looked as if he didn't want to be there. In his book, *My War*, Rooney wrote: "He had an undistinguished personality and no one thought there was anything at all heroic about Snuffy until the day he saved the lives of six of the men on board his B-17 after it was hit by German fighter planes."

As dignitaries assembled to present the Medal of Honor at Thurleigh, Maynard Smith was hard to find, unpredictable again. Just as on that B-17 flight when he stayed with the plane instead of doing the logical thing – bailing out – Maynard Smith again didn't fit the norm. For breach of a rule, he was on KP (kitchen police) duty. Rooney, both a buck sergeant and a reporter, knew Army life as well as what truly was heroic. He noted Smith's differences but also wrote: "What he did on board the B-17 that day was great."

S/Sgt. Maynard Smith was the first enlisted man awarded the Medal of Honor in the Army Air Force. The citation stated he was "an inspiration to U.S. Armed Forces;" he also was an inspiration to the people of Caro, that typical, patriotic, farm-town, and particularly to my brother Bill. A gifted designer and builder, Bill could not walk away from any challenge and would seek one if none appeared otherwise. He once made full-scale models of a major auto manufacturer's new car ideas, *in clay*. As a hobby, he made a small, 15-inch-wingspan model (not in clay) of the gull-wing Navy Corsair for which he designed its complicated landing gear retraction mechanism. More of Bill's challenges would arise after I retired from the Army and Marie and I were building a home near Oscoda AFB (later named Wurtsmith) where, in the early 1950s as Base Weather's forecaster and station chief, I fell in love with the Oscoda area.



On a day in April, 1971, Bill walked up just when my new saw, halfway through a 2X10, died. Marie and I, without blueprints, were hurriedly sawing and hammering wood into what would be a hexagon-shaped house. It would be a hexagon in order to provide desired floor space while not cutting any of the surrounding, majestic, spruce trees; and it had to be finished during my summer off from teaching. Bill, and Pat, our dear sister-in-law, had driven 200 miles from their home to see what crazy thing this brother was doing. Bill quickly noted I had connected the saw to a temporary power pole with 220 instead of the required 110 volts. Looking at my burned-up, basket-case saw, he said: "I'll fix it." He fixed it and they stayed for a while with Bill suggesting solutions to and helping implement my growing ideas of the hexagon houses' design. Marie and I were becoming concerned about being able to finish it before the winter snow and greatly appreciated Bill's volunteering. Thereafter, on short visits Bill and Pat returned several times with Bill helping to solve ever more frequently arising complexities of building a two-and-a-half-story house having many non-ninety-degree corners. It was a dawn to dusk operation. The only breaks from the project had been stoppings for lunch which Marie and Pat would bring. Bill and I shared having once been in the Air Force, and during the lunch breaks we talked airplane talk. We ate lunch while sitting within the skeletal, soon-to-be walls. I knew we could do it, yet, on an unforgettable day in July I was perhaps forgivably proud of seeing the house now had a roof.

One day, while we worked, a B-17, heading to an air show held at the old airbase, passed overhead at low level. I mentioned that, in the WWII era, I had hopped home in a B-17. I don't know if our conversations had anything to do with Bill's next challenge, but I'm guessing it did: He built a flyable 6.5-foot-wingspan model of S/Sgt. Maynard Smith's B-17. In the photo directly above, Bill (left) and his son-in-law Joe Joseph pose with it. Perfect in every detail, Bill named it "The Spirit of Caro" in tribute also to Lindbergh's plane. The 306th Bomb Group insignia, Smith's unit, is on the vertical stabilizer. Caro's paper, the *Tuscola County Advertiser*, wrote up Bill's challenge. The flying B-17 photo at article top is of Bill's B-17.



Before the first snow, Marie and I moved into our hexagon. Now 50 years past, it still stands.

Notes: *S/Sgt. Smith's information is from the Detroit News and other newspaper stories at the time of the Medal of Honor event, the recently read great Andy Rooney book: My War, and my book: Forecaster! Battling the Weather Odds in Peace and War.*

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

YOU CAN EITHER CALL IN BY PHONE OR LOGIN USING YOUR COMPUTER BY JUST PLACING YOUR COMPUTER MOUSE POINTER OVER THE BLUE LINK PROVIDED BELOW AND “LEFT CLICK” ONCE

Jean Nelson is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: MOWW Catalina Mountains Chapter April 2021 Meeting

Time: Apr 10, 2021 01:00 PM Arizona

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89380019951?pwd=YzNLWGd6NzdScjhyc2tlbzBYS3Zxdz09>

Meeting ID: 893 8001 9951

Passcode: 437473

One tap mobile

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Passcode: 437473

Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kVO7C5IVk>