NOTES ON THE MEDAL OF FREEDOM


MR. GRANT F. WOLFKILL, NBC CAMERMAN FROM SHELTON, WASHINGTON, WAS PRESENTED THE MEDAL OF FREEDOM FOR HIS HEROISM AND SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES DURING THE 15 MONTHS HE WAS A PRISONER OF COMMUNIST PATHET LAO FORCES IN LAOS.


WOLFKILL'S CITATION READ AS FOLLOWS:

"MR. GRANT F. WOLFKILL, NEWS CAMERAN FOR THE NATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF BY MERITORIOUS SERVICE WHILE A PRISONER OF HOSTILE FORCES IN LAOS FROM MAY, 1961, TO AUGUST, 1962. THROUGHOUT THIS PERIOD MR. WOLFKILL DEMONSTRATED A DEVOTION TO THE HIGH STANDARDS OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT THAT WAS IN KEEPING WITH THE FINEST TRADITIONS OF OUR NATION. HIS ACTIONS, CARACTERIZED BY BOLDNESS, TENACITY, AND COURAGE IN THE FACE OF PROBABLE EXECUTION WERE EVIDENCED DAILY AS HE LED AMERICAN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN PRISONERS IN A BRILLIANTLY SUCCESSFUL EFFORT TO SURVIVE THE BRUTALITIES OF THE HOSTILE FORCES AND TO RESIST THEIR NEVER-ENDING EFFORTS AT BRAINWASHING. HIS UNQUENCHABLE SPIRIT ELEVATED THE MORALE OF HIS FELLOW PRISONERS AND TEMPERED THEIR WILL TO RESIST UNTIL THIS WILL BECAME INVULNERABLE. HIS SELFLESS DEDICATION TO THE PRINCIPLES FOR WHICH HIS GOVERNMENT STANDS AND HIS CONSUMMATE COURAGE AND COOLNESS UNDER PRESSURES AND THREATS DID MUCH TO PREVENT THE HOSTILE FORCES FROM MAKING PROPAGANDA CAPITAL AT THE EXPENSE OF THE UNITED STATES. HIS MERITORIOUS SERVICE TO THE NATION WAS COMPLEMENTED BY HIS PERSONAL VALOR THAT WAS GENUINELY INSPIRING. HIS DEVOTION TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN THE FACE OF THE THREAT OF DEATH, Peerless INTREPIDITY, AND UNSHAKABLE DEDICATION TO THE CAUSE OF HIS GOVERNMENT MARKS HIM AS A GALLANT AMERICAN PATRIOT. MR. WOLFKILL'S FATHFUL AND EXEMPLARY CONDUCT WHILE A PRISONER OF HOSTILE FORCES REFLECTS GREAT CREDIT UPON HIMSELF, THE UNITED STATES, AND THE FREE WORLD."

(R. A. W., NOVEMBER, 1962)
AVIATION MEDAL OF MERIT
AWARDED BY AERO CLUB OF AMERICA

Obverse: Shows an eagle, flying in the sun’s rays shining on a portion of a world globe emerging from clouds, and the words "AERO CLUB OF AMERICA".

Reverse: Contains the engraving "AWARDED TO CAPTAIN HOWARD T. DOUGLAS FOR THE MERITORIOUS FLIGHT MINEOLA-ALASKA 9000 MILES 1920."

The medal has a small loop at the top which is attached by a ring and ribbon to a pin-back shield bearing the phrase "AVIATION MEDAL OF MERIT".

The medal is 34 mm in diameter; the pin-back shield has a maximum width of 47 mm and a maximum height of 22 mm.

The ribbon is dark red and is 38 mm wide.

Captain Douglas was the Advance Officer who prepared landing fields and made other necessary arrangements for the United States Army Air Force’s four-plane round trip flight from New York to Nome, Alaska. The flight commenced at Mitchell Field, New York on July 15, 1920, arrived at Nome on August 25, left Nome on August 29 and arrived back at Mitchell Field on October 20, 1920. The planes used were Haviland two-place DH 4-Bs. Captain Douglas flew back to New York in place of the mechanic in one of them.

I have been informed that only 172 of these medals were awarded: 92 to nationals of the United States; 65 to those of France; 7 to those of Great Britain; 6 to Italians; and 2 to Belgians.

In addition to the described medal which I own, one was awarded to Willie Coppens, the World War I Belgian Ace, and one to Major J. Botterill for training aviators in the United States during World War I.

If any reader knows of any other recipients of this medal, I will be grateful to know about them.

Arthur L. Newman, 125 East 72nd St., New York 21, N.Y.

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THE AUSTRIAN GOLD JUBILEE MEDALS, 1848-1898 - On the opposite page are the two medals discussed in the article on page 7 & 8 of the Sept. '62 issue. At that time these photos were not available. Since then, Mr. Bernard Leidl has provided us with the illustrations you see here.