



USMLM Association Newsletter

14 DECEMBER 2011

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2

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Wittstock-Biesen
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Tell us about your detention. Send in your photos and stories.

Who is it?



When we were needed – we were there

Welcome to the USMLM Association Newsletter!



From the Editor, Larry Schwab, USMLM 1974-1978 & 1984-1988

Welcome to the second issue of the USMLM Association Newsletter! From the many positive responses I received, this is definitely a necessary part of our Association and with your help we can keep this Newsletter going for a long time.

For this issue, Kevin and I have picked four articles. Tom Spencer, who, by the way, started the USMLM Association, has submitted a touching story titled, "Looking for Bill." Bill Burhans, our former Association President wrote a story titled, "Wittstock-Biesen Detention." "The Day President Kennedy was Shot" is submitted by former Chief Fred Turner and Nav Rep Larry Kelley, shares, "Tour Officer Cunning."

This is the final Newsletter for 2011. This Newsletter is being sent to all Members who are paid up at least through December 31, 2011. If you are not sure when your membership expires, please contact Marilyn or me and we will let you know what your status is. And, as usual, if you move or change Email addresses or other pertinent information, please contact Marilyn or me.

Keeping Membership Info Current

We have made progress in updating our data base of addresses and contact information for former USMLM members, but we need your help to get us across the goal line. If you know of USMLM comrades who are not receiving this newsletter, please let them know how to contact us – or us them. Please send an Email to either Marilyn or me and we will check our records and update them if necessary.

Letter from the President (page 2)

"From me and the all staff of the USMLM Association, Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and best wishes for a healthy and successful New Year."

Contact:

Newsletter Editor - Larry Schwab, lrschwab@aol.com
President – Kevin Ryan, kevin_ryan@hks.harvard.edu





Fellow Mission Members,

14 December 2011

From me and all the staff of the USMLM Association, Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and our best wishes for a healthy and successful New Year.

This season is one of hope and reflection and, we are happy if this newsletter helps you recall the amazing and wonderful things our members did during their years of service. The articles in this issue are well worth the read and, we are grateful to Tom Spencer, Bill Burhans, Fred Turner and Larry Kelley for taking the time to jot down their remembrances. We hope more members will come forth with their articles as well for future issues of the newsletter.

Because of the positive feedback we received on our inaugural newsletter we are extending this second issue again to all Mission members in our address data base – regardless of whether their membership is current. But this will be the last time we can do so, so please make sure your membership is up to date. Help us also get in touch with other Mission members who are not in our data base and therefore haven't received this newsletter. We want everyone to benefit from the friendships established so long ago.

The USMLM Association is dedicated to preserving the memory of a unique Cold War institution and the great people who served to preserve peace and prevent conflict. Your contributions on active duty will always be honored but your ideas and comments today are equally valuable. So, please send us your thoughts and comments. God bless you all.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Ryan".

BG Kevin Ryan (US Army retired)
President
USMLM Association
Kevin_Ryan@hks.harvard.edu

Photos



1950's USMLM Christmas Card



PRT Map Ludwigslust



Tour Cars of Different Eras

Articles

Looking for Bill (Corbett)

By COL Tom Spencer, USMLM 1973-1976

In the early summer of 1974, I had been at USMLM about one year when they assigned Bill Corbett to the operations section of the unit. As a new person assigned to operations it was typical at the time to acquaint new people with what the touring world was like in the Soviet Occupied Zone of East Germany. Accordingly, they trained Bill much like a tour officer, he had to learn to identify Soviet and East German military equipment and travel on a live 2-3 day tour as a 'back seater' in East Germany. Bill went out with the tour about 5:00 a.m. I believe it was with Major Ed. Corcoran, who had the nickname "Capt. Midnight" due to his penchant for midnight prowling. The tour drivers gave Ed this name, and you can imagine they didn't exactly vie to go on tours with Ed. Better to hole up in the woods, an old barn or even a haystack for the night and start fresh in the morning.

Anyway, back to Bill's first 'back seater' operation. Bill had departed on the tour and I happened (fate?) to be the duty officer for the day. Among my duty officers' responsibilities was to go and 'recover' any USMLM tours in trouble in East Germany. Trouble could be a broken down, immovable car, recovery of injured USMLM tour people, or even a search for lost Americans who strayed off the approved autobahn (high speed road) route from West Germany through East Germany to Berlin.

Shortly after Bill and his tour left, I received a summons from the USMLM mission chief, Colonel Fred Turner. He told me I had two unenviable tasks to do as duty officer that day. One, go into East Germany (about the size of Ohio) and find Bill; secondly, tell Bill his father had just died and to return immediately to Berlin. Great day to be the duty officer!

I went with a driver into East Germany, not having any idea where Bill's tour might be. For security reasons, we never had set targets or routes in the early 70s, but the flexibility to choose our own targets and pursue targets of opportunity (military convoys, military maneuvers, etc). Col. Turner had told me to return to Potsdam, our official residence and the checkout/check in point for tours, if I had not found Bill in three days. We knew he was due to return on Sunday.

Since there was only a slim chance of finding Bill, I decided to make the USMLM car conspicuous and hope that Bill's tour might instead see me. Tours sometimes situated themselves where they could observe roads and possible military movements. The mere fact that another USMLM car was in the same territory would be a signal that something was wrong and to contact it.

We turned all our car lights on to draw attention to ourselves-something we routinely avoided. Turning all lights on certainly attracted attention, since we had a total of 5-6, with half of them being strong halogen lights. Driving around East Germany in an olive drab (OD) painted 1973 State Patrol Interceptor Ford, with lights ablaze, where the average car was about Volkswagen size, definitely gets attention. Especially if you are driving near Soviet and East German military bases. Mission Restriction Signs (MRS) prohibited us from being there! Certainly don't advertise your coming, since unpleasant Soviet and East German military, Volkspolizei and East German State Security reception parties frequently chased you with anything fast, big or brawny that could stop you. Chases, road blocks, rammings and captures were not infrequent, and with my mission to find Bill, I did not want to be detained since I couldn't then look for him.

Understanding the hostile environment, you can imagine what an exciting trip I had looking for Bill under all the wrong conditions! But stress and adrenaline rushes were

routinely part of the job (and some of us even thought benefits). And I'm doing this for a guy I hardly know. Never-the-less, Bill is part of USMLM and we take care of each other, so on with the job of looking for Bill. Looking for Bill was just half my mission. Once I found him, I had the enviable task of informing him his father was dead. I missed that instruction when going through Officer training, just like the instructions on how to break up a husband-wife fight in front of their kids; settle military race riots in the 60s; keep two NCOs apart on dangerous, live ammunition military maneuver, when one has found the other messing with his wife the morning of the maneuver; or explain to a West German farmer what your two soldiers were doing in his chicken house in the middle of the night. No, none of the above refers to Bill!

I began to think about what and how I would tell Bill his father had died. After many mental rehearsals of how to be sorrowful, empathetic, consoling and supporting, I still wasn't comfortable with any of my thoughts. I tried to put myself in Bill's place and feel what he might feel, in the hope that would provide me with the appropriate attitude and words of consolation. This soul searching started the first hour and went on for three days and nights and about 1500 miles. I didn't know Bill, but a part of me reached out across East Germany and I sensed a bond with Bill's grief and pain. I sure you can relate to what I was feeling.

I was very disappointed in not finding him, for I knew he'd want the opportunity to attend his father's funeral. After three days of searching, I returned to the USMLM Potsdam house. Driving up to the house late on Sunday afternoon, I saw Colonel Turner standing on the steps obviously waiting for me, and I imagined, hoping I had found Bill. As I got out of the car to report my failure, he said to me; "Tom, I'm sorry to tell you that your father died while you were looking for Bill". Was it irony or some other reason I had been sent looking for Bill? God truly works in mysterious ways.

Well, that's my story about "looking for Bill". But it's not over! Bill had arrived earlier in the day and had already departed Berlin on his way to Frankfurt to catch a civilian flight home. Three hours later, I was lucky enough to catch a military hop out of Berlin on a medical transport just leaving the Berlin Air Show and returning to Rhein Main AFB in Frankfurt. I went straight to the Frankfurt civilian terminal across from Rhein Main and, fortunately again, got one of the last seats on the last flight that day to attend my father's funeral. I remember thinking of Bill winging his way home too. I boarded my flight with heavy heart. I had failed in my mission to get Bill back quickly and now I had to deal with my own grief. I trudged down the aisle of the plane not looking forward to this long, lonely flight and sat in my seat. It was only then that I realized how in more than one sense I had found Bill--he was sitting, by chance???, next to me! I finally got to tell Bill of my sorrow at his father's passing. We talked quietly, sharing our innermost thoughts, forgoing a warm bond in as we winged our way west into the night. Common misfortune brought us together, but it also forged a new spiritual beginning for us. We couldn't explain why these deaths had happened so coincidentally, but as we talked we experienced a kindred ship and peace that passes all understanding.

God Bless Bill Corbett - an intelligent, cultured, caring, and good man. His life and spirit touched many generations of enlisted, NCO and Officer USMLM-ers. The memory of his sage advice, willing help, droll sense of humor and friendship lives on through us. Forever, will his little smile and soft chuckle be a special part of my heart and memories. I know you are looking down on us Bill. Know that we still look up to you in so many ways.

Tom Spencer, USMLM Ground Tour and LARKSPUR Officer, 1973-76.

Wittstock-Biesen Detention

By LtCol Bill Burhans, USMLM 1971-1975 and 1979-1980

I don't remember now why the Air Team reconnaissance tour NCO was unavailable for this scheduled tour, but I was assigned an Army driver. To make things even more complex, this driver also happened to be the Potsdam House Father. Staff Sergeant Johann Schniedermeier was my driver for this trip into Area A (northern part of East Germany).

We departed the Potsdam House during darkness and headed north up Route 2. Our first task was to do an inventory check at the Wittstock-Biesen Radar Site, following which we would find a pre-OP and hope the Wittstock Airfield MiG-21 FISHBED K aircraft from the 33rd Fighter



Aviation Regiment would engage in flying operations. We made our way to Herzberg, where we turned north towards Wittstock. When we reached Lelichow, we followed field trails to Königsberg, then on to the small village of Papenbruch, continuing along field trails until we reached Jabel.

It was very early in the morning on November 22, 1972. I was not concerned when we passed through this tiny village southwest of the radar site. I thought I saw the curtains move in the window of one of the houses as we passed by, but I paid little or no attention to this. It was still dark and there was no discernible activity so we decided would stop under the cover of a large tree alongside a field trail running between the village and the main Biesen-Wittstock highway. I should point out here that Highway E55/19, the autobahn pictured above, had not been built at this time.

We did not intend to stay in the area very long. Due to the slight drizzle and fog, we could barely make out the radar site on the hill about 1 ¼ miles away, so we had ourselves a cup of coffee while we waited for sufficient light to permit us to check the radar site equipment. I imagine we were there for about 30 minutes. It was very quiet around us, the weather was pretty bad and, although there were very low clouds and a pretty stiff wind, there was no steady rain yet. Not the best conditions for flying so we thought it would probably be best to just skip the airfield pre-OP and revert to the targets on our list of alternates.

It came time to finally get on the move and head for the hard-surface road that ran past the radar site. We pulled out onto the field trail and headed for Biesen. When we were about 300 yards from the edge of Biesen, I noticed a parked Zil-130 canvas-topped cargo truck with GSF markings and vehicle registration number (VRN). This did not look right, so I told Johann to stop and begin backing up towards Jabel behind us.

When he looked over his shoulder and began to back up, Johann saw a military vehicle there as well. Not good! We were in a very bad position, because there was a single-strand wire fence encircling the potato fields, along with a shallow ditch, on each side of us. At this point, it seemed best to stop backing up and to head for Biesen again, hit the paved road and depart the area.

As we approached the town, the cargo truck started moving in the middle of the field trail right towards us. Schniedermeier asked me what he should do. I told him to keep going straight, try to give the Soviet driver a "head fake," hit the potato

field at as fast a rate of speed he could possibly attain and then make a dash around the truck.

Johann headed for the Soviet truck and then swung the vehicle left into the potato field. However, he did so before he had attained sufficient speed. So, when we hit the field, we immediately began to bog down. He was unable to extricate us so we ended up buried in the Peoples' potatoes. . .

A half-dozen armed Soviet Military Air Forces (VVS) troops immediately jumped out of the truck and surrounded the vehicle. A VVS captain pounded on the window and demanded our documents. I tried to ignore him, but he was persistent. I handed over my pass to him. As he examined my pass, I began to think this would not be too serious. However, things began to look a bit worse when he then asked for Schniedermeier's pass. He examined this document, then turned back to me to request the car pass. At this point, I knew that we would be there for a while!

This was my first detention. I had been briefed on what happened during a detention, but that information was only valid for the individual case being described. Each situation differed, because the geographical area differed. More importantly, the Soviet players differed and that introduced some wild cards. I finally got out of the vehicle and tried to chat with the young Soviet officer. It turned out he was just about as nervous and uncertain as I was. He did not want to communicate with me other than to tell me someone from the komendatura was en route to sort things out.

Finally, a Soviet jeep arrived bearing a very portly red-faced Soviet Army officer, a lieutenant colonel wearing motorized infantry insignia. He introduced himself as Bazanov, the Wittstock kommandant. He was in a very good mood and jokingly asked why we had chosen to try to plow up the Peoples' potatoes. He said we were in real trouble as we had damaged the crop, knocked down a fence, were in a restricted area, had been observing and photographing military equipment and so forth. I denied everything, of course. He said it would be necessary for us to accompany him to his office in the city of Wittstock. He added that he would be happy to have the young lads help push our car out of the potato field.

The column formed up: Lieutenant Colonel Bazanov in his jeep; our car carrying the interlopers; the right turn onto the main road into Wittstock, where we proceeded through the city. Along the way we noticed the engine of the vehicle was beginning to heat up. Apparently we had put a small hole in the radiator when we hit the potato field. When we got to the komendatura, Staff Sergeant Schniedermeier remained in the locked tour car and I accompanied Bazanov and the VVS captain into the building.

The captain and I were left in a small room containing a table and several chairs. Bazanov went to his nearby office to make the necessary phone calls. I could hear him shouting at the top of his lungs on the phone (it was long-distance call, after all!) trying to explain to someone at some headquarters what was going on. It was about 11 a.m. by this time and it was to become a long boring day.

I finally had a good chance to talk with the young captain, who turned out to be quite a pleasant guy. At first he complained a bit. He said he and his troops were en route into Wittstock to pick up rations for his unit. He, his vehicle and his troops had been requisitioned for the detention operation. The rations would not get to the radar site in time for lunch to be prepared, and he would obviously now have to become embroiled in the waiting and the detention paperwork.

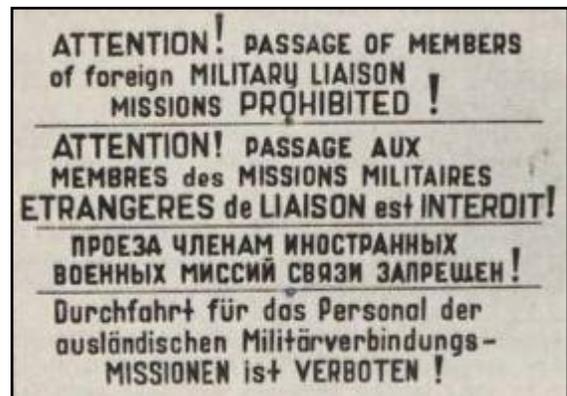
He had a multitude of questions for me about life in America, life in the US military, promotions, pay scales and all such things. He also made the interesting comment that, since the weather was so bad, the aircraft would not be flying anyway so we would not miss much. This continuing conversation did a great deal to make the long wait for Bazanov palatable.

Bazanov finally called me into his office. He had prepared the akt, or statement, which enumerated all the dastardly things this USMLM reconnaissance tour team had been doing there in his area of responsibility. He asked me to please sign the

document, which I naturally refused to do. He dutifully made a hand-written notation on this typed document: "Captain Burhans refuses to sign the akt." He then said he would call my driver in so he could sign the document. I told him Sergeant Schniedermeier also would refuse to sign. He dutifully noted that as well: "Sergeant Schniedermeier refuses to sign the akt."

I gleaned some interesting information during my few minutes in Bazanov's office. On the wall behind his desk was a map of the Wittstock area reflecting the zone of responsibility of the Wittstock komendatura. The permanently restricted area (PRA) was clearly marked in pink, but I noticed an area marked in red that ran around the edge of the PRA boundaries. The area delineated extended the PRA out some 3 kilometers and obviously represented a type of buffer zone. I surmised this was the area that was marked off by the notorious mission restriction signs (MRS) shown below. It was clear the Soviet military considered this to be a formally restricted area, which, by the way, included the location in which we were detained.

However, none of the three allied military recognized the validity of these MRS and ignored them. In 1971 and 1972, USMLM Ground Operations Officer Lieutenant Colonel Bob Von Dach even organized a campaign to tear down these signs, the locations of which were carefully plotted on a special map. Each reconnaissance tour that headed out into the zone during this campaign was tasked to bring back specific MRS designated by map coordinates. Woe be it for any tour team that dared return to Berlin without having harvested its assigned MRS!



At this point I figured this detention was over and we were about to be released. Wrong! I had neglected to consider the fact that it was still daytime, that it still was light outside. The Soviet side deemed it mandatory that we remain under detention until darkness to preclude any opportunity for observation and photography. We finally were released late in the afternoon, after Lieutenant Colonel Bazanov inquired if we would be able to find our way back to Potsdam in the dark!

We limped back to Potsdam without incident, other than periodically having to stop to fill the radiator along the way. . .

Bill Burhans served as a tour officer with the Air Team from July 1971 to June 1975. He returned in 1979 to command Detachment 16, 7113th Special Activity Squadron (the USMLM Air Team), departing in early spring 1980 following a December 1979 Soviet-originated nasty incident.



The Day President Kennedy was Shot

By Col Frederick C. Turner, Chief USMLM 1971-1974

I will never forget that day when President John F Kennedy was assassinated, just as both Pearl Harbor Day in Dec 1941 and 9/11 are indelible in my mind and memory. I was a member of the US Army Element at the Mission preparing to depart on a tour that day to the Soviet Zone of Germany (SZG) - as it was then called. I heard the news on the radio in the early afternoon at my quarters on Goldfinkweg in the housing area in Dahlem/Zehlendorf (Berlin). I was stunned (as were most Americans) that such a thing could happen and snuff out the life of our new, young, and enthusiastic Chief Executive). I already had my USMLM Staff Car ready and packed with cameras, telescopes, tape recorder, mission operational notes and other recording apparatus.

My telephone rang and the Chief of Mission. Colonel Paul G. Scowronek informed me that he had sent word to the duty officer at the Potsdam Mission House (on the lake in Potsdam) that a "Condolence Book" should be placed inside the front door at the House for any Russians, East Germans, or Allied (French /British) well-wishers who might arrive to pay their respects to our fallen leader. I was to check to make sure the condolence book was there in place as I departed on my scheduled tour to East Germany.

I departed the Berlin House and headed for Freedom Bridge and Potsdam. Along the way it became obvious that many Berliners were already aware of what had happened in Dallas. I received many salutes and friendly waves as I proceeded through West Berlin to the Glienicke Bridge.

After passing through the gate which was kept open largely for the American, French, and British Mission vehicles and personnel proceeding to and from Potsdam, I stopped my vehicle as the gate closed with a loud clang behind me, got out and started to walk to the Soviet check point and guard shack, where I was to present my credentials and wait to have them returned so I could proceed to through Potsdam to the Mission House.

As I passed the young Soviet Russian guard on my way to the guard shack, he said to me in a low voice in Russian "Mnye ochen zhall." (I'm very sorry). This was the only time I can ever remember having had a Russian soldier speak to me at the checkpoint. I replied in Russian "Mnye tozhe, spacibo" (Me too, thank you).

I then entered the Soviet guard shack where I would present my Soviet pass for entry. The window was pushed open and a Soviet Captain reached out for my packet. As he did so he said in Russian, "Ya ochen sozhaleyu" (I'm very remorseful.)" I thanked him for his sentiments and then proceeded back to my vehicle and then drove to the Mission House. As I passed through the city of Potsdam a number of East Germans saluted or gave me a "thumbs up."

When I arrived at the entrance to the Mission House I immediately noticed that the East German guard had the gate open and that there was a large number of civilians standing inside and outside of the gate. I parked and went toward the main door. Several of the Germans said, "Es tut mir/uns Leid" I'm /We are very sorry. One lady in tears cried out "Unser Berliner ist tot" (Our Berliner is dead! This obviously referred to Kennedy's speech during his visit to Berlin when he famously said "Ich bin ein Berliner. (I am a Berliner.) Outside the House there was a long line of East Germans lines up to express their dismay at the day's events (and sign the condolence book.)

Inside the house workers (cooks and maintenance men) all expressed their heartfelt feelings. My driver (I think it was either Sgt. Keezer or Sgt. Wendell) was ready and we took off on our tour. As we drove across East Germany through EG and Soviet training areas and passed military installations and troop units there were no unusual activities observed. As often occurred, the French MMFL had left word at the Mission House debriefing room to check out several of the rail sidings for incoming sophisticated electronics and missiles - and a warning to be careful as the

Soviets were wont to fire at the Allied Missions when and if there were any sensitive pieces of equipment present in the rail siding. Fortunately the modus operandi seemed to be to fire several rounds toward the Allied officers to frighten away, but not to hit, wound, kill or injure. We believed that the MMFL had a source somewhere in the EG Reischsbahn who had access to information on the incoming troop and equipment trains and could highlight those which might be of use to Allied intelligence personnel.

As we crossed each rail line, the guard on duty would generally wave at us and then immediately call in to the EG authorities the time we passed and the license plate number on the Mission vehicle. Thus, it was no secret along which route we were proceeding at that time. We were always amazed and grateful that we were operating in an area where the local population was so overwhelmingly friendly, usually helpful such as assisting us in extricating our vehicle from the mud in a tank trail before the Vopos, EGs or Soviets could arrive to detain us and take us (perhaps by dragging us at high speed behind a Soviet truck or BTR) to the local Kommandatura. It certainly made our missions of collecting intelligence easier -- and it was never better than on this day when the East Germans became aware of the sudden death of President Kennedy. It seemed that everywhere we went, the people were unusually friendly and waving.

I decided to spend the night in a small hotel in a little EG village. When the driver and I entered the small hostelry, the owner expressed his sorrow at what had happened and several EG citizens followed us into the hotel to let us know that we were welcome in the village and that most of the people in the DDR were distraught over the assassination of the American President. The next morning we completed visiting our remaining targets and I returned to start writing the tour report, the details of the tour IR (intelligence report).
FURTHER DEPONENT WRITETH NOT!!

Tour Officer Cunning (Смекалка офицера связи)

By COL Lawrence Kelley, USMLM 1983-1986

My orders to serve as NavRep brought me to the Mission in late January of 1983, representing the fulfillment of a tenaciously held, decade-long professional goal. By that time I had long since earned my spurs; it was my fourth FAO assignment, though all the others had occurred outside Central Europe. From my endless questioning of Mission veterans over the years I knew the spectrum of challenges that Potsdam entailed and savored the opportunity to confront them. No other FAO posting allowed for more intense operational activity, provided more direct contact with Soviet forces, or taxed personnel more heavily or comprehensively as this one. Ground and air operations, the regular use of Russian and German, tactical insights, interpersonal dealings, leadership, analysis, determining the nitty-gritty detail of Soviet realities, order of battle, military and political geography, relations with the population of the GDR, counter-Narking, picking GSFG's proverbial pocket while avoiding detection, if possible: All this and more lay ahead. I could hardly wait!

But motivation and preparation notwithstanding, effective performance as a Tour Officer meant the application of skill sets in different ways than my career as an attack pilot and FAO had heretofore required, and in this connection mentoring proved essential. Thus, in this short memoir I would like to pay brief tribute to my principal mentor in MLM by recounting part of what was, for the author, an unforgettable training tour. The experiences of those days demonstrated in spades the high standards expected of Tour Officers and the decision making and application for which they were rightfully respected both inside and outside the Missions.

Then-Major Clyde L. Evans, an armor officer and FAO midway through his assignment in MLM, served as sponsor, office mate, and mentor during my early days in the Mission. I could not have had better luck with this selection. In my experience, no one prepared more diligently for a tour than Clyde, gauged Soviet moves better – his sixth sense for sensing their threshold of reaction was uncanny – or demonstrated greater courage, organizational ability, or presence of mind in the field. His retiring manner and quiet competence misled many, including IMHO the Soviets, who almost certainly underestimated his effectiveness. Missionaries of the period knew of Clyde's dazzling accomplishments, but such knowledge remained restricted to his tight circle of unindicted co-conspirators. Characteristically modest and self-effacing, he wanted things that way, though his array of achievements included, inter alia: the direction and conduct of two extremely risky but wildly successful tank special exploitations and participation in another; early, revealing photography of partially untarped T-80s belonging to 9 TD/1 GTA (following a calculated surveillance and daring counter-Narking effort near the Lieberose TA); discovery and technical photography of the Dog Ear air defense radar system on an MTLB-U chassis (which, in typical fashion, the unwashed Ground horde informally christened "Wide Clyde") and the MDK-3 tracked ditching system; and an unending stream of solid mid-level operational successes.

My first and most indelible memory of Clyde came during a training tour very early in my Mission years. It was March, and GSFG was conducting a high-level exercise involving 25 GTD, a unit that had recently acquired what would soon be openly known as the T-64B tank. This main battle tank boasted a laser range-finder, barrel-fired anti-tank guided missile, and other impressive capabilities. Needless to say, all the consumers of our reporting wanted good technical photography – yesterday, if not sooner.

Receipt of a river closing notification for the Northern Elbe led Ground Ops to dispatch a tour consisting of Clyde, then-SSG Ron Blake as Tour NCO, and me to the vicinity of Sandau to cover the expected evolution. There, we intimately observed the crossing and subsequent movement of both the division and elements of 20 GA headquarters toward the Letzlinger Heide TA. As the saying goes, we placed ourselves "right in amongst them!" At one point, in the half-light of dawn, a senior but unidentified GSFG officer in a GAZ-69 nearly ran over us on a dike, never noticing our presence. At another, an assault force in Mi-8 helicopters vertically enveloped us. What an exhilarating experience! Welcome to MLM, Marine!

Once the river crossing and subsequent movement had concluded, the action subsided, and we did not anticipate seeing the players again. The units disappeared into the PRA and would certainly load onto rail cars and go home immediately after the exercise scenario. However, while concluding an extended Local two days later, our august (if fatigued) Tour performed a final, routine check of the rail siding at Wustermark and, to our astonishment, found a train fully loaded with the armored vehicles used in the exercise! Clyde assessed the situation immediately, and we positioned ourselves in an open area 500-1000 meters from the station, waiting for movement to resume. For some reason, though, an unseemly and suspicious delay ensued instead. It emerged that Reichsbahn personnel had noticed our presence and concocted an off-the-cuff countersurveillance response. Just before the kit train began to roll, the East Germans repositioned civilian freight train onto the track immediately in front of us, blocking most of our view and preventing good photography. Of course, this action aggravated us, but as the armor moved past our position, we still managed to see and identify it, albeit not as completely as we had hoped. With the tape recorder running, the three of us called out the ID and side numbers of all the vehicles discerned through gaps between the box cars.

That was not enough for Clyde, to put it mildly. The Reichsbahn maneuver had thrown down the gauntlet, and he determined that he would show the East Germans (and their Soviet Big Brothers) who was boss! Besides, we still had not acquired respectable photography of the new tanks on the train. So off we went to the races!

From intelligence reporting and side number analysis, Clyde had identified the exercise division and its garrison (25 GTD, most of whose regiments were based in Prenzlau), and he figured that we had a good chance of "ambushing" the boys during their trip home. So he directed SSG Blake barrel off to the nearby Autobahn

entrance and proceed northward at high speed around the Berliner Ring. Meanwhile, Clyde studied the map, attempting to determine an OP outside the extensive Permanent Restricted Areas surrounding Berlin that offered a proper view of the tracks. In short order he found one, and 25 minutes later we jumped off the Autobahn and positioned ourselves appropriately. We arrived 5-10 minutes before the kit train. As it rolled past, we re-inventoried and updated our record of all the vehicles aboard it. While I shot pictures, Clyde made a point of standing up through the hatch and waving gleefully to the engineer and other Reichsbahn personnel who had, no doubt, been responsible for blocking our view in Wustermark. They thought they had outwitted us; Clyde proved them wrong, and the Cheshire cat grin that he flashed made that point unmistakably! We brought back some of the Mission's earliest ground-level photography of the T-64B (then known more widely as Ob"ekt 447).

This was only one instance in which Clyde, through skilled tradecraft, was able to score a collection coup. As indicated above, many others followed. The lesson was not lost on the new Tour Officer.

Памяти подполковника танковых войск К. Л. Эванса посвящается.
1948-2010
Мир праху его.

Remember When

Following text is excerpted from the de-classified 1964 USMLM History

I. MISSION:

A. (U) Primary mission: The United States Military Liaison Mission (USMLM), established by the Huebner-Malinin Agreement of April 1947, performs liaison between the Commander in Chief of United States Army, Europe (CINC, USAREUR) and the Commander in Chief of the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (CINC, CGFG).

The duties of the USMLM, as outlined in the Huebner-Malinin Agreement are to maintain contact with the CINC, CGFG and to provide representation for the protection of the interests of US nationals in the soviet Zone of Germany (SZG). Under the Huebner-Malinin Agreement, accredited members of the mission may travel in East Germany in the performance of their duties.

B. (C) Secondary Mission: The secondary objective is to exploit USMLM liaison status and potential for the collection of intelligence information within the Soviet Zone of Germany.

II. ORGANIZATION AND TRI-SERVICE INTEGRATION:

A. (C) USMLM is a USAREUR subordinate unit accredited to CINC, GSFG. USMLM is composed of a Chief, Army who is appointed by CINC, USAREUR and an Army element of 11 officers and 19 enlisted men. A Navy element of one officer and an Air Force element of 4 officers and 4 enlisted men are attached.

B. (S) DCSI, USAREUR exercises primary staff supervision over Chief, USMLM to include the provision of policy and operational guidance, as well as levying intelligence collection requirements.

C. (S) Navy and Air Force personnel are included in USMLM as authorized by the Huebner-Malinin Agreement. CINCUSNAVEUR and CINCUSAFE exercise normal staff supervision over Navy and Air Force elements in matters involving administration, discipline and training. They levy collection requirements, assign priorities and provide special collection guidance for Navy and Air Force intelligence targets. Each element provides its own funding support.

D. (U) By terms of the Huebner-Malinin Agreement, USMLM is authorized 14 personnel accredited to Hq GSFG, without regard to service or grade. At present 14 accreditations are held as follows:

Chief, USMLM (Army Element)	1
Deputy Chief, USMLM (Army Element)	1
Liaison Officers:	
Army Element	5
Air Force Element	2
Navy Element	1
NCOIC, Potsdam Installation (Army Element)	1
Drivers:	
Army Element	2
Air Force Element	1
Total	14

POTSDAM INSTALLATION:

(From 1964 USMLM History)

Although by terms of the Huebner-Malinin Agreement the Soviets were charged with providing logistical support for the Potsdam installation, experience has shown that much of the support must be drawn from US sources. Items of food and furnishings were principal items which were supplemented from US sources during 1964. The Potsdam installation, which USMLM has occupied since 1947, was built in 1910 by a member of the



German nobility. In 1925 the estate was sold to the House of Hohenzollern and became the residence of Prince Segismund of Prussia, a nephew of Emperor Wilhelm II. His son, Prince Friedrich Karl, lived in the house until 1945. From 1945 until 1947 Soviet troops occupied the estate and raised pigs on the grounds. After cleaning and renovation, the estate, consisting of a three acre lakefront area with a large three-story mansion, two two-story houses in bad need of major repair and a garbage[sic]-stable -living quarters building was turned over to USMLM. Only the main house is habitable.

USMLM BERLIN INSTALLATION:

(From 1964 USMLM History)

The Berlin installation at 19/21 Foehrenweg is the location of the Operations Section and of all support activities such as supply, photographic laboratory, publications and reproduction section and all classified files. This building was once secret headquarters of Field Marshal Wilhelm Keitel, wartime Chief of Staff of Hitler's military supreme command. The four-story building was erected in 1936. It has three stories and an attic, each with about 10 rooms. The lower two floors are bomb proofed with steel-reinforced



USMLM Berlin Installation (II)

concrete floors two or three feet thick and walls of similar material about 18 inches wide. The ground floor contains mess facilities and there is an "L" shaped underground escape tunnel with special air funnels.

From the Editor

Beginning with subsequent newsletters, only current members of the association with email addresses on file will receive the newsletter. So, if you think your membership may have lapsed, please contact Larry Schwab (LRSCHWAB@aol.com) to update it.

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