

*Borne the Battle*

*Episode # 121*

*Terence P. Halligan – World War 2 Navigator Missing in Action*

*Hosted by Tim Lawson*

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/51181/veterans-legacy-program-terence-p-halligan-world-war-ii-navigator-missing-in-action/>

(Text Transcript Follows)

[00:00:00] Music

### **[00:00:10] OPENING MONOLOGUE:**

**Timothy Lawson (TL):** Friday November 23, 2018, this is Borne the Battle. Brought to you by the Department of Veteran Affairs. I'm your host Marine Corps Veteran Timothy Lawson. Full of pie, full of turkey, full of stuffing, had a nice, wonderful Thanksgiving here at home in the D.C. area. Hope you all got an opportunity to enjoy it, as well, wherever you are, however you decided to celebrate, if you celebrated it at all. This is an interesting episode. I know on Wednesday I said there was going to be another caregiver on Friday. I forgot about this episode that I had that I did intend on putting it out today, so I'm gonna go ahead and do that. If you remember on Wednesday I mentioned the aspiration of having a podcasting network, multiple types of podcasts coming from V.A. over different types of subjects. One of them was themed for the N.C.A.— the National Cemetery Administration. One of the three arms, one of the three administrations of the V.A., N.C.A. They have a Veterans Legacy Program, which we've talked about here before on the podcast. We've talked to Bryce Carpenter, Kenneth Holliday, we've talked to them about their goals and their efforts in the Veterans Legacy Program in a way to commemorate our Veterans to ensure that their memory never fades and that their legacy never dies. So this is going to be the first installment, sort of the first unofficial installment of what we hope to be a reoccurring program here for V.A. podcast. So, Kenneth Holliday joined me again; he told me about Lieutenant Terence Patrick Halligan. Told me about his story; this is a great audio component to what they're doing at the Veterans Legacy Program. So, here is Kenneth Holliday teaching us, telling us about Terence Halligan.

[00:02:12] Music

## **[00:02:17] PSA:**

**Man 1:** I served in Vietnam.

**Man 2:** I served in World War II.

**Woman:** I served in Afghanistan.

**Man 1:** And, V.A. serves us all.

**Man 2:** No matter when you served.

**Woman:** No matter if you saw combat or not.

**Man 1:** There are benefits for veterans of every generation.

**Woman:** See what V.A. can do for you.

**Narrator:** To learn what benefits you may be eligible for, visit [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov). That's [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov).

[00:02:43] Music

## **[00:02:48] INTERVIEW:**

**(TL):** With me today I have Kenneth Holliday from the National Cemetery Administration's Veterans' Legacy Program. There are a lot of words there sir, and it took me a while to get through it but we got there. You are going to tell us about a veteran that you have studied, that you've learned about. How do you want to—how would you phrase that?

**Kenneth Holliday (KH):** So, it's a veteran that has been highlighted in the Veterans' Legacy Program. This research on this veteran came out of a student at the University of Central Florida last year. So, we partnered with the University of Central Florida last year to do research on veterans at Florida National Cemetery during that project. One of the students found 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Halligan and created a biography for him.

**(TL):** Okay, 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Halligan.

**(KH):** Correct.

**(TL):** Okay, and what branch of the military was he in?

**(KH):** He was in the U.S. Army Air Forces...

**(TL):** Okay

**(KH):** ...during World War II.

**(TL):** Very well, and he's, which cemetery did you say?

**(KH):** Florida National Cemetery.

**(TL):** Florida National Cemetery, where is that in Florida?

**(KH):** Bushnell, Florida.

**(TL):** Okay, what stands out about this, about this Veteran; what drew, what initially drew your eye to the significance of his story?

**(KH):** Well, he's not actually interred at Florida National Cemetery; he's memorialized there. He's has a memorial marker because he is actually missing in action. He was never found after a mission in World War II.

**(TL):** Okay, so what can you tell us about it? Do we know how he entered the military?

**(KH):** Yeah, so what starts off really interesting—he was actually an Irish citizen until his teenage years. He was born in Northern Ireland in 1922. Shortly after he was born his father immigrated to the United States, leaving him and his mother in Ireland. They immigrated three years later in 1925, reunited with the father and moved to New Jersey, just outside of New York City. That's where Halligan grew up and he, after graduating high school, he worked as a dock worker in the city of New York. And, once World War II broke out he joined the U.S. Army Air Force, just a few months after Pearl Harbor happened. I think it was March 1942 he joined the U.S. Army Air Forces.

**(TL):** Vo-Voluntarily or was he drafted?

**(KH):** He enlisted.

- (TL):** That's interesting, I think. Do we have any evidence on why he was inspired to join American forces as uh, as uh...?
- (KH):** Well so, he became a naturalized citizen...
- (TL):** Oh okay.
- (KH):** ...as a teenager and so did his parents...
- (TL):** Okay.
- (KH):** So, I think, by 1940 both his parents and him were naturalized U.S. citizens.
- (TL):** Okay very cool and so what do we know about his efforts in World War II?
- (KH):** So, he became a navigator aboard a B-26 Marauder. He was part of the 12<sup>th</sup> Air Force, 320<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group, 441<sup>st</sup> Bomb Squadron. That... That group, the 320<sup>th</sup>, deployed and operated from—in the North African campaign and the Italian campaign of World War II from December 1942 until the end of the war, 1945. So, he operated out of Italy for his entire deployment in World War II.
- (TL):** Okay, and you mentioned he is M.I.A. What... Do you know much about the mission he was on when that happened?
- (KH):** His first mission was in February, February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1944. He flew a few more missions in the following weeks, and his group was operating in the area of Casino, Italy. They were bombing targets and defensive German lines supporting the Allied push up the, up the peninsula. On March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1944 that would be his last mission. They went out to the city of Aquino. They had, the Germans had gun emplacements in Aquino, Italy, which is about seven miles northwest of Casino. Their mission were to destroy those gun emplacements. During the mission, the plane was hit by anti-aircraft flak, damaged the right-side of the plane, the decision was made to bail all crew members so all of them successfully bailed out of the airplane and descended to the ground safely before the plane crashed. There's a missing crew report that the copilot specifically takes note that everyone reached the ground safely, so it's what happens afterwards that's kind of the big mystery.

**(TL):** So tell us, what happens afterwards? What makes this—where is the mystery in this?

**(KH):** So once, once he hits the ground another crew member, he was the bombardier for the airplane. They landed about 25 yards from each other, and so he saw 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Halligan land, and he specifically reported that he saw that he appeared okay and on his feet. However, shortly after they landed the German army captured both of them, within you know a matter of minutes probably. And, once they were captured the two were separated, and that was the last time anybody ever saw 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Halligan. So, where he went it's hard to tell, so some of the crew members went to prisoner camps and there are records of their interment. That their names, there's records of them being held prisoner, but there are no records of 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Halligan ever being interred in one of these prisoner camps.

**(TL):** Interesting, what, how do we... Like with the. . . It was a student with this research, right?

**(KH):** Correct

**(TL):** So like, where do they go to learn this? What, what dots are they connecting to, to—or I guess with what path are they taking to learn these things? What, like what is the first step; how deep do they have to go to learn all these things? Since we have a veteran that no one saw after he landed, you know, in after ejecting.

**(KH):** Well, I think that's one of the interesting things about doing this kind of research. There's different methodologies you can take. We know that this student relied on census data, probably first to learn about his early life, where he lived, where he came from. They have his naturalization papers, so they knew that he was born in Italy. They have military records, his enlistment records, things of that nature. And then we actually have the, the missing air crew report that was held, that the War Department had. That specifically has the copilot and bombardier trying to piece together what happened to 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Halligan. So we, so we have paper on that and that's what all this research is based upon.

**(TL):** Interesting, so, so the last record ever taken of 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Halligan was reported as landed safely after ejecting—I don't know what; do they call it ejecting from?

- (KH):** Bailing out.
- (TL):** Bailing out, from bailing out of his aircraft. They got separated and that's literally the last time anybody makes any record of his existence.
- (KH):** Yup, he disappears after that.
- (TL):** Wow, well is—is there anything else about his service, about his legacy that's of note?
- (KH):** He's memorialized in two spots in our National Cemetery Administration, or, he's memorialized at Florida National Cemetery, but he also has his name on the Tablets of Missing at the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery Memorial in Italy that's operated by the American Battle Monuments Commission.
- (TL):** Interesting, it, is it because of his heritage or. . .
- (KH):** No it's because he went missing in action in combat in Italy.
- (TL):** Oh okay, so he's memorialized there because that's where he landed. Did we issue him any medals or awards after, after the war or after the mission?
- (KH):** Yeah, he was awarded the Air Medal Award, with three oak leaf clusters, and he was also given a purple heart.
- (TL):** That's, that's really interesting. Not only the story, like I feel like there's at least a movie in there or something like that. There of the service member that just goes—I mean, I'm sure this story is probably, unfortunately, you know, I'm sure there are multiple versions of this story that apply to other service members across the wars of bailing out, landing in enemy territory, and never to be seen or heard from again. When you learn about Veterans like this, what, what are some of the things that strike you as interesting? Where, where do you find, as a veteran yourself, where, what parts do you enjoy learning about?
- (KH):** Personally, my favorite part about it is doing the research. When you walk through a national cemetery, you can pick out any one of those grave markers, and it's going to have a name on it, but it doesn't necessarily—you don't know the story. But then, being able to dig and find these stories and piece them together and then tell them that's my favorite part of any of this. So, when this student chose 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant

Halligan, the student didn't know much, if anything about this person. And, it wasn't until they started piecing it together that they find an amazing story. That, you know, that they were able to trace his adventure all the way down to landing safely after bailing out of a plane.

**(TL):** Yeah.

**(KH):** You know, I think that kind of content that you can pull is amazing.

**(TL):** Yeah, that's an incredible story. It's incredible that story can be told with as little information as there is after that point. Ken thank you for sharing this with us, and I hope to learn about another veteran the next time we highlight the Veterans' Legacy Program.

**(KH):** Absolutely, looking forward to it.

[00:13:06] Music

### **[00:13:10] PSA:**

**Man:** My grandfather served in World War II. Spending time with him were the best memories of my life. I became a physician at V.A. because of my grandfather, so I can help others like him. I can't imagine working with better doctors or a more dedicated staff. I'm fulfilling my life's mission with the help of my team and thanks to these veterans. I'm proud to be a doctor at V.A., and proud to honor my grandfather every day.

**Narrator:** Search V.A. careers to find out more.

[00:13:38] Music

### **[00:13:43] CLOSING STATEMENT:**

**(TL):** So if you enjoyed that program, if you enjoyed that form of storytelling, learning about these Veterans that maybe we wouldn't otherwise hear from—hear about, I should say, that you wouldn't otherwise hear about. The Veterans' Legacy Program publishes a lot of blogs at [blogs.va.gov](https://blogs.va.gov), just click on Veterans Legacy Program in the category list. We also have information available to you at [cem.va.gov/legacy](https://cem.va.gov/legacy) [Link to

National Cemetery Administration's website], that's c-e-m (short for cemetery) [cem.va.gov/legacy](https://cem.va.gov/legacy). If you want to learn more about the Veterans Legacy Program you can visit that URL. Thank you so much for taking the time to listen. You can follow the National Cemetery Administration on Twitter @[VANatCemeteries](https://twitter.com/VANatCemeteries) [Link to National Cemeteries Twitter page], okay, @[VANatCemeteries](https://twitter.com/VANatCemeteries). That's their handle on Twitter; you can follow them there. We will hope to not only do this again but to actually establish its own feed. So that we can produce content over there on a reoccurring basis. Hope everybody had a wonderful Thanksgiving, we will see you next week with another three episodes, coming from Borne the Battle and V.A.'s official podcast. I'm Timothy Lawson, signing off.

[00:15:11] Music out