

## REAMER E. "BUZZ" SEWELL, JR. DISPLAY



Reamer E. "Buzz" Sewell Born August 16, 1921 in Wilksburg, PA, Buzz was the son of Reamer E. (Ray) Sewell (a long time Goodyear/Kelly Springfield executive) and Helen B. Chambers. He graduated from Akron's Crosby elementary school in 1935 and from Allegheny High School in Cumberland, MD in 1939.

He then attended the University of Maryland in College Park from 1940 to 1942 and 1945 to 1946, where he was also a member of the Phi Delta Theta Fraternity. While at the University of Maryland, in January 1941 Buzz marched with the Pershing Rifles with his ROTC unit in Franklin Roosevelt's inauguration parade. On December 7, 1941, he and some of his Phi Delta Theta fraternity brothers hitchhiked to Washington DC to go to a Redskins game. After the game started, the loudspeakers were constantly paging admirals, generals and high-ranking government officials. At halftime it was announced that the Japanese had bombed Pearl Harbor. On December 8, Buzz and his fraternity brothers went to the U.S. Capitol to hear Roosevelt declare war; however, the general public wasn't allowed into the Capitol Building, so they heard the war declaration over the loud speakers.

Buzz enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps in January 1942 and attained

the rank of 1st Lieutenant. Buzz started his basic training at Santa Ana Army Air Base in California and graduated from Bombardier School at Deming Army Air Field in New Mexico. Then he was posted to Barksdale Field in Louisiana for combat training. He served in the European Theater of Operation as the lead navigator/bombardier on a B-26 Martin Marauder, nicknamed Angel Puss based at Stoney Cross AAF Base, England with the 558th Bomber Squadron of the 387th Bomb Group (Medium). On October 12, 1944, on his 15th mission, he earned the Silver Star for his perseverance in executing a third and successful bombing run over a heavily guarded tank assembly and repair depot near Saarbrücken, Germany. Only 4 out of 20 bombers were able to reach the target area. The others were either shot down or could not penetrate the German flak field. To make up for the 16 missing planes, he led the others around three times to make sure the target was hit. After the bombing run, their plane was severely damaged by flak, and the crew was forced to bail out. After parachuting from the plane, he landed in trees breaking his left ankle and was immediately captured by the 119th SS Panzer "Ghost" Division. After one week of solitary confinement and interrogation, he was moved to Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Germany until January 27, 1945. At that time, he and the other POWs were evacuated and forced marched for ten days, in near blizzard conditions, to Spremburg where they were finally loaded into railroad cars and taken to Stammlager VII-A in Moosburg. The only food they had on the march was what they could carry or trade for with German civilians. They were liberated by General Patton's Third Army on April 29, 1945. During his time as a POW, he kept a secret diary that he hid from the Germans in his sock.

### **October 1944 - Capture and Initial Communication**





**November 1944 - Word trickles in**



**December 1944**

**January 1945**

**March 1945**



**April 1945 - Waiting Game and Liberation**




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### May 1945 - Return to the U.S.




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He was back in the U.S. when the war ended in Europe and before his unit could be sent to the Pacific, the war ended. Buzz returned to the University of Maryland, where he met his future wife, Ruth (Martie) Dubbert. Buzz and Martie were married in September 1946, and went on to have three children, Anne, Thomas, and Douglas.

After the war Buzz worked for several companies, including Shell and Goodyear, until 1955. He then spent the next 24 years working for

Eastern Airlines at Friendship Airport in Baltimore, MD, later called Baltimore Washington International.

He especially enjoyed traveling – either by car or plane – and he had been to all 48 continental United States as well as Canada, Mexico and many European and Caribbean countries. Buzz kept many diaries chronicling his war years. It is through these and his many scrapbooks we can glimpse inside the life and times of this man.

Buzz passed away October 20, 2006 in Baltimore, MD and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.