

Pubmobile

With fuel rationed and trucks in short supply, bicycles became the chief mode of transport on and off the bases. As the war progressed, bikes became a hot item as there were not enough to go around.

Station 146 Seething used to publish a news publication called Seething Digest. It would have news articles about the men of the 448th Bomb Group. Quoting its headline, it had the “World’s Smallest Circulation – 2 copies – Published Weekly by Public Relations Office”. The men would bring clippings, that were sent to them from home, in order to be republished in the Seething Digest and a copy would be displayed in the Officers’ and Aero Clubs. An article from one of the issues caught my attention. It had a photo of three men riding a customised bike or as they called it “Pubmobile”.



Pubmobile was constructed from a bike and the salvaged parts of many other bikes. There is nothing better than a bit of upcycling. Being based in the middle of the East Anglian countryside, the men of the 448th were surrounded by fields and had to travel to get to the nearby small villages etc. So the idea of building Pubmobile was perfect in order to overcome the transportation difficulties for when they wanted to go to the local pubs. They use to visit such places as the Mermaid at Hedenham, known as the swinging t*ts, and other drinking establishments, or even just peddled around the airfield especially the mess hall – nothing like beating the queue.

So who were these cheeky chappies? Donald C Moon, William E Weaver and James F. Ingelsby were aircraft armourers and maintained and repaired the B-24 Liberator guns.



Sgt Donald Charles Moon was born on the 10th October 1921 in Lincoln Township, Monona County, Iowa to Arthur Francis and Gladys Minnie Moon and he had a sister Jayna Frances (b1920).

Donald's father Arthur was born on the 7th March 1900 in Lake Monona, Iowa. Minnie was born on the 6th August 1901, also in Lake Monona, Iowa. They got married on the 21st September 1918 in Onawa, Monona, Iowa.

In the 1920 census Arthur and Gladys were living in Lake Monona, Iowa with Arthur's brother Dale (aged 21) and sister Verna (aged 16). Arthur was working as a farmer. At some point Donald's parents moved and Jana was born on the 21st October 1920 in Lincoln Township.

In the 1930 census the family was living in West Fork, Monona, Iowa. They had two lodgers living with them, Carl L Riley (aged 20) and Paul H Godsey (aged 19) who were both farmers.

By the 1940 census the family was living in Sioux Township, Monona, Iowa. Arthur was still a farmer, Jayna was working in an office and Donald was also working but his occupation on the census was illegible.

Jayna married Vearl Blackwell on the 16th March 1941 in Whiting and had a daughter, Catherine.

Donald was drafted on the 16th February 1942. Basic training was at Oroville, California then he was stationed at army bases in Hobbes, N. M and Deming. Donald attended armour school at Buckley field in Colorado before being assigned to overseas duty. He flew over to Station 146 Seething as a passenger with crew #27 (with 2nd Lt. Jack L. Barak as the pilot).

He was Honourably Discharged on the 9th October 1945. When he returned he married Janna Marie Deen (b1925) on the 6th May 1946 and moved to Washougal where his parents and sister were now living. They had two daughters Pat and Donna.

Donald's father, Arthur passed away on the July 1963 and Gladys remarried to Severt Johnson (b1883) on the 12th June 1963. Gladys passed away on the 25th October 1976.

After working for Crown Zellerbach paper mill for 30 years Donald retired and moved to Long Beach, Washington. Unfortunately, Donald and Janna divorce on the 3rd May 1991 in Washington. Donald continued to live in Washington and eventually returned back to Washougal.

Donald died on the 5th January 2009 in Portland, Multnomah, Oregon and is buried in Long Beach Pacific, Washington. Jana passed away on the 9th September 2016 and is buried in Bullhead City, Mohave, Arizona.



S/Sgt William Earl Weaver (16030171) was born on the 10th April 1920 in Casey, Illinois to John F (b1883) and Ethel Izetta Applegate (b1890) Weaver. He had two sisters Virginia Rose (b1923-2011) and Crystal Inez (b1908-1925) and a brother John Lewis (b1916-1917).

John died on the 28th February 1930 aged 46. In the 1940 census Ethel was noted as divorced and working as a house-worker in a private house. It is possible that she married again before 1940, but we have not found any evidence of that yet. William was working as a labourer.

Ethel remarried sometime after 1943 to Jesse Ervin Gross (b1888). Jess passed away on the 5th July 1966 and Ethel then married his brother Walter Lee Gross (b1882). Ethel passed away on the 6th August 1976 and Walter passed away in 1981.

William married Jean T. Dadson in 1944 in Norwich. Jean was born on the 20th November 1923 in Battle, Sussex, England. As for the reason why Jean was in Norwich and how she met William is a mystery. We can only speculate that she may have been a land-girl or with the WAAF and met William at a dance maybe on the base or in Norwich.



William was discharged from Camp Grant on the 2nd November 1945 and Jean was able to come over from London on the 1st March 1946, sailing on The Ericsson to New York. They had a son William Dadson Weaver on the 29th December 1948 in Paris, Illinois. William Jr served in the United States Army during the Vietnam era. He married Terri Ann Carpenter on the 21st October 1974 and unfortunately passed away on the 19th July 2001.

William passed away on the 5th May 1994 in Port Orchard, Washington and is buried in Clark County, Illinois.

M/Sgt James Francis Ingelsby (11037040) was born on the 6th January 1922 in Rhode Island to Fredrick John (b1889) and Catherine Helena (b1890). He had a brother Frederick J (b1919)

In the 1930 census his father was a fireman and by the 1940 census his father was working as a Captain in the Fire Department. His brother Frederick was working as a compounder in Rubber works.

James enlisted on the 30th December 1941 at Rhode Island and his occupation was noted as a Clerk.

After he was discharged, James decided to re-enlist again on the 15th October 1945. On his draft card his occupation was noted as unemployed discharged veteran.



He married Ellen L. McIntyre (b1919) on the 10th October 1947 in Orange, California and moved to Los Angeles, California.

By March 1951, James was a 2nd Lieutenant and had graduated from the Associate Company Officer Course at the Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. The course was designed to produce company officers well-grounded in the fundamentals and technique of all infantry units. He became a First Lieutenant (0962691) and was part of the National Guard in the US Army and fought in the Korean War serving with the 224th Infantry Regiment, 40th Infantry Division. He was a Field Communications Chief.

The division moved to Korea in January 1952. After additional training, the division moved north in February 1952, where it relieved the 24th Infantry Division on the battle line.

James was killed in action on the 18th February 1952 in Kumsong – Chwapae-Ri Sector, Kumhwa, South Korea.

In November 1952 James' widow, Ellen received the Silver Star for valour in action which was awarded posthumously for James.

James was also awarded the Purple Heart, the combat Infantryman's Badge, the Korean Service Medal, the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Presidential Unit Citation and the Republic of Korea War service Medal.

He is buried at Fairhaven Memorial Park, Santa Ana, California.

These three friends came up with this ingenious invention but the members of the 1916th Ordnance Ammunition Company based at Earsham piped them to the post with their five man bicycle.

