

Ely Air Lines –

From Cockpit to Town Doctor

by Mike Ely and Linda Street-Ely

Rudy Froeschle intended to become an airline pilot. Or maybe a shoe repairman. But neither career came to fruition.

He already held a pilot's license when he entered the Army Air Corps during World War II. He earned his military wings in 1943 and became a B-17 co-pilot. But his combat career lasted just two missions.

On September 6, 1943, Rudy's B-17 was hit during a mission to Stuttgart, Germany, his father's birthplace. Rudy (and the others) bailed out, but the wind was so strong that despite pulling the shroud lines, his parachute would not turn away from the high-tension line coming right at him. It caught his parachute, causing it to collapse about 40 feet above the ground, leaving him unconscious and badly injured. He awakened on the ground, German homeguards standing over him.

Rudy's parents were German immigrants, and he spoke the language fluently, so the Germans



thought he might be one of them. Until they asked what base he came from, and he named Landau, his mother's hometown.

They laughed. Landau had no such airbase. It was for gliders only. That's how Rudy became a prisoner of war for 16 months at Stalag Luft III, the camp made famous by The Great Escape.

There he taught German classes, served as a translator, sang in the chorus and played trombone in their little prisoner dance band. (The trombone wasn't always used as a musical instrument. Fellow prisoners "stole" it to use as part of an improvised liquor still, similar to a scene portrayed in The Great Escape.)

Rudy didn't participate in that famous escape. Injuries from his parachute

landing continued to trouble him. But he endured the brutal winter evacuation of Stalag Luft III and finished the war at Stalag VII-A. He weighed 168 pounds when shot down and 110 when liberated.

During captivity, he contemplated what he would do if he made it home. He didn't have enough hours logged to join an airline. Looking at the map of Hazen he'd drawn on his prison wall, he pondered the town's shoe repair shop. Maybe that's what he'd do: repair shoes.

Then a doctor who was imprisoned with him suggested another possibility: use the GI Bill to pay for an education. So after the war, he attended medical school and returned to Hazen as the town doctor. But aviation never entirely let go of him. Years later, he shared ownership of a Piper Cub, worked to improve Hazen's airport, and remained active in aviation organizations.

Rudy dreamed of a flying career but lost that possibility after 18 months as a POW. But he discovered medicine because of a doctor he met while he was imprisoned.

It reminds me of Field of Dreams. I can hear Ray Kinsella telling Doc Graham that some men would consider it a tragedy to come that close to their dream... And the good doctor's reply: "If I'd only gotten to be a doctor for five minutes... now that would've been a tragedy." *ElyAirLines.substack.com*



RUDY FROESCHLE
B-17 Co-Pilot



DR. RUDY FROESCHLE

The OLD OIL FIELD of HUMBLE and its Operation



Dr. A. G. Braddick
D. C., D. C. C. C.

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The Old Oil Field of Humble and Its Operation is a pictorial history of the oil field in Humble, Texas, which was active from 1905 to the 1940s. With photos, narratives and drawings, Dr. Braddick describes the equipment and how it was used, how wells were drilled and oil field operations. Readers interested in Texas history, engineering and oil field equipment will have a glimpse into the past that made Humble the city it is today.



Dr. A.G. Braddick

Sign up now for TVCC golf tourney, Nov. 13

DAYTON - Grab your bag and clubs and get ready to tee off at the 2026 Gulf Inland-Trinity

ADOPT, DON'T SHOP – GIVE A DOG A SECOND CHANCE!

DAYTON - The dogs and puppies at Dayton Animal Control are waiting for their forever homes and they can't wait to meet you! From playful puppies to gentle adult dogs there's a perfect match for everyone. Each dog deserves a safe, loving home and you might just find your new best friend! Call 936-258-7621 for more information on available dogs and adoption details.

Valley Chamber of Commerce Classic Golf Classic set for Fri., Nov. 13, at Eagle Pointe Golf Club. Tee time is 8 a.m. Join fellow chamber members, business leaders, and golf enthusiasts for an unforgettable day of networking, fun, and friendly competition.

Whether you're a seasoned pro or a first-time golfer, this event promises something for everyone. Sharpen your skills, showcase your talent, and connect with industry peers, while enjoying stunning views and pristine fairways.

Entry for a four-person team is \$500. A VIP team package for four is \$750

(includes fun and games add-on). Individual player (member) entry is \$150 or \$175 for non-member. Add more fun with games that can be added individually: Mulligans, \$5 each; Hole #9 Move-up, \$20; and Liquor Hole Putt, \$25 each.

There are plenty of opportunities to advertise your company by purchasing a sponsorship ranging from \$150 to \$3,000. For more information, to register or become a sponsor, visit trinityvalleycc.com or call 936-257-2393.

LIBERTY GAZETTE
936-336-6416

Good Luck

to all the exhibitors, participants and contestants at the

TVE

FAIR & RODEO

Compliments of *Toby Wilburn*



We learned exciting news from these two guys at the Dayton Police Department's National Night Out event last Tuesday evening. Larry MacNeil (right) has accepted a new role as pastor of Kenefick Southern Baptist Church and Grant Stoesser has taken on the responsibility as youth pastor for KSBC. Larry has been at Liberty Dayton Regional Medical Center for the last several years, filling many roles. Grant, along with wife Lacey and their children, recently moved back to his hometown of Dayton from Fort Worth. It's good to be back home!

Lights In Liberty to feature Chili Cook-Off this year

LIBERTY - Lights In Liberty will bring the holiday season to downtown Liberty on Sat., November 21, with a chili cook-off on the courthouse grounds. The contest is open to youth and adults. This festive event will include food, music, family

fun and more. The competition gets underway at 10 a.m. when the cooks set up and the competition begins.

Prizes will be awarded to first, second, and third place finishers in multiple categories. Youth will turn in their best efforts at 3:30

p.m. Adults will follow at 4:30 p.m. Judging will take place at 5 p.m. with the awards presentation at 6 p.m.

Start a new family tradition. To enter contact, Toby Wilburn at 281-212-7020 or Joshua Burk at 936-346-7959.

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