



Draft

An American in Escadrille Spa 73

This is a report about a group of artifacts related to a single individual serving in the French army's *Aéronautique Militaire*, including a uniform jacket and trousers, three photographs, a postcard, two medals and a metal wing.



The uniform is a well-made, tailored tunic or “service coat,” single-breasted, with five buttons, and matching pair of trousers in *horizon bleu*, both worn and moth-eaten. The buttons are of the heavy, silver-plated domed type. The top button is not seen because the relaxed collar folds over it. The upper pockets are pleated while the lower pockets are patch pockets. On each cuff is a single gold fabric chevron which denotes either a *Sergent*, *Sergent-Major*, or *Maréchal de Logis*. The inseam is 27” which by various tables equates to a man of short stature standing 5’4” to 5’7” tall. The waist is 30” but can be adjusted in the back to cinch as narrow as 27”.

For those familiar with my article *Uniforms of the Lafayette Escadrille and Lafayette Flying Corps* in Volume 37, Number 2, Summer 2022 of the journal, *Over the Front*, this service coat is the same design as that worn by Edwin C. “Ted” Parsons of Escadrille N. 124.

The *Pattes De Collet* or color badges are correct for the French air service¹ and are of a very specific type as described in *Bartlett*.



¹ Figure 17, page 345, and description, Figure 17, page 360, [Les Insignes de l'Aéronautique Militaire Française jusque'en 1918](#), Philippe Bartlett, Aero-Club De France, Indo Éditions, 2002

The jacket has a tailor's label of *Old England Pau-Biarritz-Luchon*. Old England was a renowned tailor – their shop on Boulevard Capucines in Paris only closed for good in 2012 – and they outfitted many officers during the war.



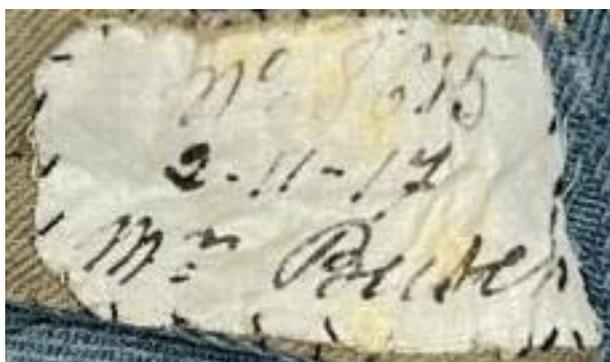
This is a weekly ad from the 7-October-1917 issue of the Pau newspaper *Le Patriote de Pyrenees* for *Old England's* local shop in Pau on Place Royale.



There is only one pocket on the back of the trousers. It has a button which reads “Old England Biarritz.Pau.”



Of course, Pau was one of the major training grounds for French aviators and it seems likely that this uniform was purchased in Pau by an aviator who had passed his training there. The jacket has a sewn-in label "No. 8613 2-11-17 M.~ Busch" and the trousers have a similar label "No. 8615 2-11-17 M.~ Busch."



The numbers are most likely numbers from the tailor's order book. The "M." is the short form for Monsieur.

The only aviatorsⁱ by the name *Bush* or *Busch* in the French air service during the First World War listed on the French government website *Mémoire des Hommes* are:

- the *French* aviator Roger Auguste Achille **Busch** who served in Escadrille Spa 94 and
- the *American* aviator Philip Nelson **Bush** who served in Escadrille Spa 73.

There were also two ground staff with the name Busch and they are discussed in the endnote at the back of this report.

Roger Auguste Achille Busch

Busch flew in Escadrille Spa 94 from 11-February-1918 to 12-April-1918 when he was shot down flying a Spad VII, no. 3191, and made a prisoner-of-war. This image of Busch is from Denis Albin's webpage for Escadrille Spa 94; there are no other evident images of him. He appears to be fairly typical in height, neither particularly tall nor particularly short, based on the relationship between his head and the top of the aircraft's fuselage directly behind his head.



Philip Nelson Bush

On his 22nd birthday in December, 1916, Philip Nelson Bush applied at the local courthouse in Schenectady, New York, for a U.S. passport to travel abroad. His file includes a letter dated the preceding day from the Wall Street office of the *American Ambulance Hospital in Paris* affirming that he had been “engaged as a volunteer ambulance driver” and would be leaving in January “to take up his work in France.” Five months later on 21-May-1917 he would leave the Ambulance Service and join the 1st regiment or *1er Régiment étranger* of the French Foreign Legion and begin training as a pilot in the French Air Service schools at Avord and then Pau, graduating just over five months later on 2-November-1917. Below is his French military service card.

Ministère des armées - MÉMOIRE DES HOMMES		Ministère des armées - MÉMOIRE DES HOMMES	
Ord. Mec.	<i>Bush</i>	Arm. Aux.	
Nom	<i>Bush</i>	Adresse de la personne à aviser:	<i>Arthur R. Bush, General Electric, c/o Schenectady, New York, U.S.A.</i>
Prénoms	<i>Phillip Nelson</i>		
Grade	<i>15.10.17</i>		
Recrutement	<i>25.5.17</i>	N° M ^e au Recrutement	<i>2.12.17</i>
Classe	<i>1918</i>	N° M ^e au 2 ^e Groupe d'Aviation	
Engage	<i>21.5.17</i>	au 1 ^{er} Squadron	
Appela	<i>21.5.17</i>		
Passé à l'Aviation le	<i>21.5.17</i>	en qualité de	<i>chef pilote</i>
Emploi à l'Aviation	<i>15.10.17</i>	Division	<i>1^{re}</i>
Venu de	<i>France</i>	le	<i>20.11.17</i>
Né le	<i>12.1894</i>	à	<i>Northam, Pa.</i>
A	<i>Northam, Pa.</i>	fil(s) de	<i>John, Mary</i>
Célibataire, marié, veuf, divorcé, père de		garçons et	filles
Profession avant la mobilisation	<i>S. P.</i>		
Mobilisé le	<i>21.5.17</i>	au	<i>1^{er} Squadron</i>
Obtenu:	<i>Pau</i>		
Decorations	Chevalier, Officier, Légion d'honneur, Médaille Militaire, Croix de guerre, Coloniale.		
Citations	Livret matricule		
Signature:	<i>Phillip R. Bush</i>	Arrivé, le	<i>2.12.17</i>
		Parti, le	<i>15.12.17</i>
		A	<i>6/6/18</i>

The history of the U.S. Air Service in the First World War is told in great detail in a report known colloquially as the *Gorrell Report*.² It includes a list of American volunteers who flew in combat for France before America entered the war in a report titled "*Ecole D'Aviation Militaire Pau: List of Americans in French Foreign Legion Trained at Pau Aviation School during World War.*"³ The bottom of the third page is shown below and lists Phil Bush as one of these volunteers in this way:

- "*Busch, Phillip,*" the same spelling of the last name that is on the uniform labels and
- "*Nov. 2, 1917,*" as his graduation date from Pau, the same date on the uniform labels

Busch, Phillip	Nov. 2, 1917
Tucker, Darley	Nov. 2, 1917
Stickney, Henry	Nov. 2, 1917
Johnson, Harry	Nov. 2, 1917

n° 8613
2-11-17
M. Busch

n° 8615
2-11-17
M. Busch

The American report presumably was transcribed from French records of the names of those Americans the French had trained at Pau. While we do not have Pau's original records to compare with the American transcription, it appears that Phil Bush's name was recorded as *Busch* in the French records at Pau.

² *Gorrell's History of the American Expeditionary Forces Air Service 1917-19*, National Archives and Records Administration, General Services Administration, 1975

³ *Gorrell Volume 10, Series J, Training*, Page 51

Height

According to both of his U.S. Passport applications,⁴ Phil Bush was 5'6". The inseam on the trousers in this uniform group is 27". Based on conversion tables used by tailors and dressmakers, a man of Bush's height would be expected to have an inseam of about 27" so these trousers are the size of trousers that Bush, a man standing 5'6" tall, would have worn. This uniform is modelled on the cover page by a person who is 5'4" tall and wearing 2" high boots thus reaching about the same height as Bush, 5'6" in stocking feet.

Friends and Family

I am particularly interested in Phil Bush because he was a friend of my grandmother, Frances Dey Carpenter. They circulated in the same social circles in Schenectady, NY. Newspapers in those days included *society columns* which would detail the activities of members of the local fashionable society. The examples below refer to parties held at my great grandparents' house, *Breezy Brow*, in Altamont, NY, which included their daughter, Frances Carpenter, and Phil Bush. In the second article, Bush's mother and sister are mentioned, as well. Typical for the time, Phil Bush was thought of as an *eligible* young man.

Albany Guests.
E. H. Herzog and Phillip Bush of Albany will be among guests at a dinner to be given tonight by Mr. and Mrs. Frank B. Carpenter in their home in Altamont in honor of Lieutenant S. S. Holmes of the U. S. S. New Jersey, Lieutenant Gately of the U. S. S. New Jersey and Robert Campbell of Princeton, who will be their week end guests. Other guests will be Miss Frances Carpenter, Miss Rosalie Doxey, of Charlotte, N. C., and Mrs. D. A. Dryer of New York.

The Argus, Albany, NY
11-October-1919, page 5, Albany Guests

—Mrs. Frank B. Carpenter entertained a number of guests at her home last Thursday evening, the occasion being her birthday. Dancing, singing and cards were enjoyed, and a buffet luncheon was served. The guests present were: Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Mayer, Mr. and Mrs. B. Hagadorn, Mr. and Mrs. Henry MacIvor, Mr. and Mrs. H. MacMaster, Mr. and Mrs. Grenville Kimbre, Henry Guy, Alonzo Page, Mead Brunette, S. Wolford, Peter Van Valzah, of Albany; Mrs. Arthur Bush, Miss Marion Bush, Miss Miriam Hoy of Schenectady; Philip Bush of Schenectady, Neddie Wheeler, Randall McDonald, Jack Tracy and Philip Tracy of Albany; Dudley Childs of Troy; Mrs. Susie Stevenson, Mrs. Charles Mitchell and Mrs. E. J. Dryer of New York city; Miss Rosalie Doxey of Charlotte, N. C., and Miss Frances Carpenter.

The Enterprise, Altamont, NY
30-July-1920, page 5, Village Notes

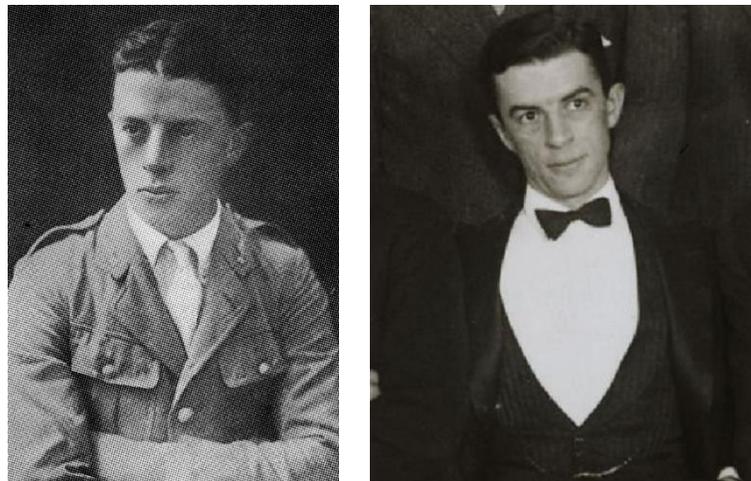
Phil's father was an executive at General Electric where he was the manager of the Power and Mining Department, and Philip began working for General Electric, as well, shortly after his return from the war. Phil arrived at the docks in New York by troop transport on 5-January-1919 and left with his father a month later on 4-February-1919 for a six month trip through France and Italy, working as his father's interpreter and secretary, according to his second passport application. His 1916 and 1919 passport photos are shown below as they appear on microfilm at the National Archives.

⁴ December 21, 1916, and January 25, 1919



In 1921, Phil lived at 9 North Church Street within *The Stockade*, the old and fashionable part of Schenectady. In 1923 my grandmother married Henry V. Erben, the son of one of the founders of General Electric. The young couple moved to 45 Washington Street, also in *The Stockade*, which was a block away from where Phil Bush lived.⁵ It was a small world.

My grandmother apparently met Phil Bush in Paris shortly after the war when she was travelling for six months with her mother; they departed New York for France 7 September 1920 and returned from England 12 March 1921; I have not found a matching travel record for Phil Bush indicating that he returned to Europe after his trip with his father in 1919 but available passenger manifests are far from complete.



The photo above on the left is the only published photo of Bush in French uniform;⁶ he is wearing a simpler tunic than the one made by *Old England* which had more elaborate, rounded pocket flaps as well as other refinements. This is likely an *earlier* uniform as he is not wearing the coveted *brevet* on his right chest, the silver wing which denoted a pilot who had graduated from flight school. Note the white tie as opposed to the typical darker color. Nordhoff and Hall in their work *Lafayette Flying Corps, Volume 1*, page 153, wrote about Bush:

“Unlike those of us who imitated the *poilu* in dress and manner, Bush strove to live up to the *midinette's* idea of an aviator; none of his contemporaries at Avord will forget his spotless and natty uniforms, his superb boots — his general air of military

⁵ Philip Bush was listed in the Schenectady City Directory in 1921 as “Philip N, GE, b 9 N Church.” Henry V. Erben was listed as “Erben, Henry V., emp GE, h 45 Washington” in the 1924 City Directory

⁶ *The Lafayette Flying Corps*, Volume 1, Charles Nordhoff, Edgar G. Hamilton, James Norman Hall, Houghton Mifflin, 1920, page 153 and *The Lafayette Flying Corps*, Dennis Gordon, Schiffer Military History, Atglen, PA, 2000, page 82.

smartness. We often suspected that his presence in our ranks saved us from many a menial task; it was unthinkable that one with the presence of a small field-marshal should pick up stones, build gasoline tanks, or push tired Blériots back to their roosting-places. Despite his air of casual elegance, Bush piloted a Blériot with the best - his landings were faultless; he had an easy, daring style which showed the natural flyer. At Pau, too, he went through the acrobatics as though he had done them all his life, and without outward sign of the slight preliminary trepidations usual on such occasions..."

This passage clarifies that he was, indeed, small in stature as in "a small field marshal" and that he had more than one uniform and prided himself in their quality as in "spotless and natty uniforms..." The photo on the right above is from a reunion of Lafayette Flying Corps pilots taken some years later.

Rank

Bush graduated as a Mechanical Engineer in the class of 1919 from The Towne Scientific School - the name of the Mechanical and Engineering Department at the time - of the University of Pennsylvania. Their alumni directory listed him in the excerpt below as a "Sergt" or Sergeant.

PHILIP NELSON BUSH, b. Dec. 21, 1894; Phi Kappa Sigma; Engineer; mem. Am. Ambulance Corps, 1916; French Army (La Fayette Flying Corps), Sergt., 1917-18; Am. Aviation, France, Aug., 1918-Jan., 1919; promoted 1st Lieut.; author "L'homme Connu"; mem. Aero Club of France and Mohawk. Dixie Construction Co., Verbena, Ala., and 9 N. Church St., Schenectady, N. Y.

His fraternity, Phi Kappa Sigma, listed him, as a *maréchal de logis*. The rank insignia on the cuff of Bush's uniform represents either rank, *Sergent* or *maréchal de logis*.

Philip Nelson Bush, Schenectady, N. Y.

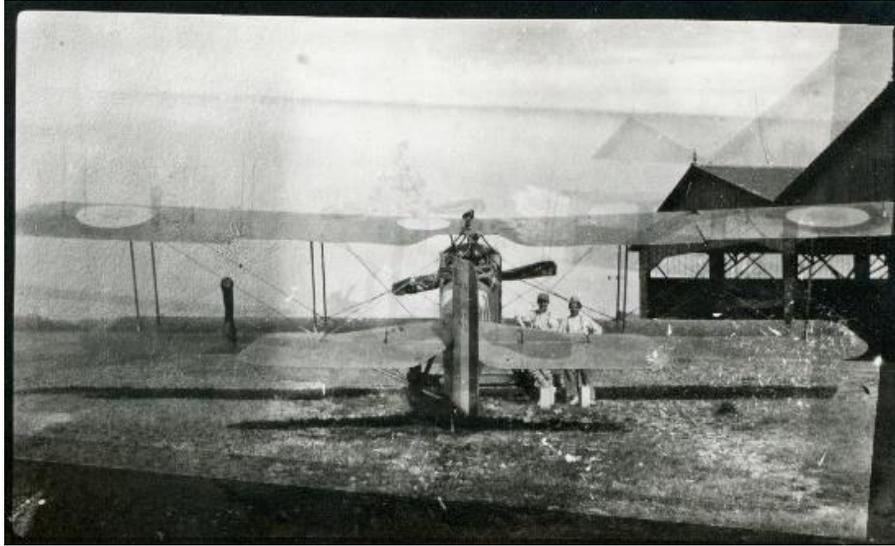
9 North Church Street.

Born at Roxbury, Mass., December 21, 1894. Son of Arthur Richmond and Mary Elizabeth (Cule) Bush. Member of American Ambulance, December, 1916, to February, 1917; *maréchal de logis* of La Fayette Flying Corps, February, 1917, to May, 1918; First Lieutenant American Aviation, May, 1918, to February, 1919.

The First of Three Photos

One of the three photos in the group is shown below. Alan Toelle identified the aircraft for me as a Breguet Type 14.A2 and he believes that the photo was most likely taken in early 1918. Greg VanWyngarden noticed the small round circle left of center on the top wing and next to that the number "18." At high resolution, the squadron insignia on the fuselage reveals that this aircraft is from **Escadrille Br. 117**. Greg found lots of photos of "18" taken at Linthelles at the end of July, 1918. Greg also pointed out that an 14.A2 in this escadrille was unusual as they are known for having flown the Breguet Type 14.B2; the 14.A2 was the reconnaissance version while the 14.B2 was the bomber version. Steve Suddaby noted that, according to his database of Allied Western Front bomb raids, there were "a number of times when the French day bombers, including GB5, were taking aerial photos during their bomb raids in February and March 1918... presumably for

bomb damage assessment purposes. It would explain why BR.117 would have one Breguet 14A2 among its regular 14B2s.” The serial number is probably number 2006.



I have not identified the aerodrome yet but have asked the members of the French group, *anciens-aerodromes*, to try to do so. The wood hangar design is used in several French aerodromes. The front of the peak of the roof has an ornamental post, most likely metal, which possibly acted as a lightning rod. I haven't been able to find this specific detail on any French hangar in early 1918 but continue to look. It is possible that it was re-purposed as a flagpole.



The best man at Bush's wedding in 1937 – apparently his third marriage⁷ - was another member of the Lafayette Flying Corps, Charles Wayne “Chuck” Kerwood, who served as a Breguet pilot in Escadrille Br. 117, the escadrille that the Breguet in the photo belonged to. Bush married Betty Taylor Sutton at the Salisbury Hotel in New York City on April 2nd, 1937. To quote from the New York Times announcement below, “*Colonel and Mrs. Charles Wayne Kerwood of Great Neck, L.I. were the only attendants.*” Of course, the Kerwoods were not the only *people* at the wedding – a reception followed – but they were the only *official* attendants and that would make Chuck Kerwood the attendant or *best man* to Phil Bush - a singular honor - and indicating that their friendship was very important to Bush. The wedding announcement is shown on the left below and Kerwood is seen on the right.

⁷ 19-Oct-1925 to Lillian Lanier in St. Louis, Missouri; 30-Jan-1932 to Daisy Violet Killa in Shanghai, China

**MRS. SUTTON WED
TO MAJOR P. N. BUSH**

*She Is the Daughter of Lieut.
Commander and Mrs. R. R.
Yates of Portsmouth, Va.*

Mrs. Margaret Elizabeth Taylor Sutton, daughter of Lieut. Commander Robert Raleigh Yates, U.S.N., and Mrs. Yates of Portsmouth, Va., was married yesterday afternoon here at the Salisbury to Major Philip Nelson Bush, Air Corps Reserve, by the Rev. Frank Peer Beal.

Colonel and Mrs. Charles Wayne Kerwood of Great Neck, L. I., were the only attendants. A reception followed the ceremony.

After a wedding trip Major and Mrs. Bush will reside in Schenectady, N. Y.

The bride is a granddaughter of the late Dr. B. W. Rogers-Taylor. Major Bush, who is active in the Air Service Post of the American Legion, served with the Lafayette Escadrille Corps during the World War and later in China.



The Lindberghs couldn't make it to the wedding because they were in Burma at the time but sent a congratulatory telegram signed "Slim Lindbergh" to the wedding location at the Salisbury Hotel, as seen below.

T. A. 49

COMPAGNIE RADIO-MARITIME
 SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME AU CAPITAL DE 7.000.000 DE FRANCS
 79, BOULEVARD HAUSSMANN (VIII^e)
 REGISTRE DU COMMERCE SEINE N° 44.881
 PARIS

ADRESSE TÉLÉGRAPHIQUE : EXPLORADEC-123-PARIS
 TÉLÉPHONE : GUTENBERG 10-45

RADIOTÉLÉGRAMME

De bord (1) Rayer la mention inutile.
 Côtier
 Câble
 Accessoires

TAXES

Transmis via (1) } Station côtière BURMA
 } Station de bord

TOTAL Le heure

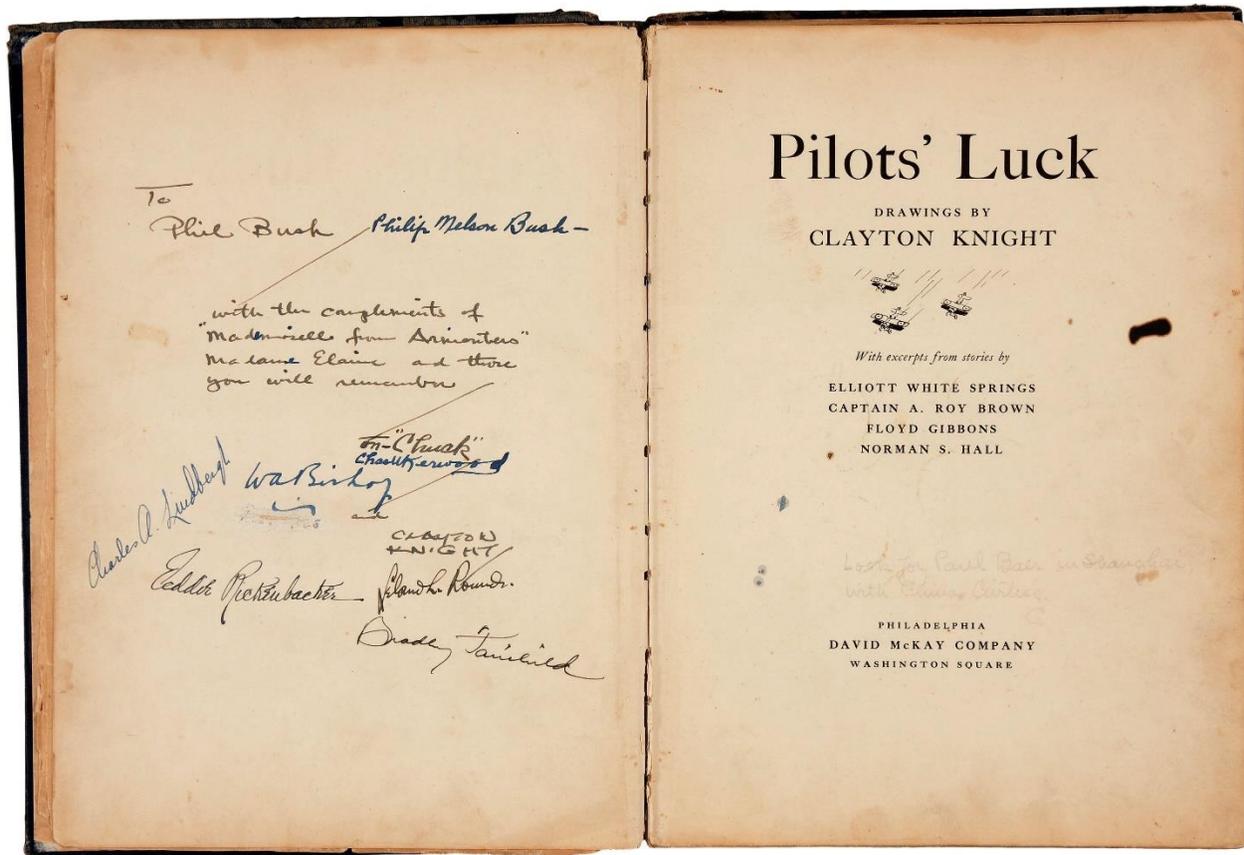
NATURE DU TÉLÉGRAMME	ORIGINE	NUMERO	NOMBRE DE MOTS	DATE DE DÉPÔT	HEURE DE DÉPÔT	VOIE EMPLOYÉE

Adresse : MAJOR AND MRS. PHILIP NELSON BUSH,
 Texte : HOTEL SALISBURY, 123 WEST 57TH STREET NEW YORK CITY

ANNE JOINS IN OUR SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS AND EVERY WISH
 FOR HAPPINESS

SLIM LINDBERGH

As a gift, Phil Bush received a first edition of the 1929 book Pilots' Luck seen below.



We don't know if it was actually a wedding present but it seems likely. It was signed with a dedication written by "Chuck" Kerwood *'To Phil Bush with the compliments of 'Mademoiselle from Armentiers' Madame Elaine and those you will remember'* and signed as well by

- Clayton Knight, American, RFC – the book's illustrator
- W.A. "Billy" Bishop, Canadian, RFC
- Leland L. Rounds, American, Escadrille Spa. 112
- Bradley Fairchild, American, Escadrille Spa. 159
- Eddie Rickenbacker, American, 94th Aero Squadron
- Charles A. Lindbergh

While the telegram and book are not part of the Bush Group, per se, I am including them here to emphasize the importance that these men held for each other – all pilots and, with the exception of Lindbergh who was born too late to participate in the First World War – all combat pilots. Understanding their significance and, specifically, *their significance to Bush*, will help us to understand the significance of the photos that Bush kept with his uniform and medals.

Relationship of Spa 73 and Br 117

Bush and Kerwood had not just been fellow members of the 269-member *Lafayette Flying Corps*⁸ during the First World War. Bush had been a pilot of a single-seat French *avion de chasse* Spad

⁸ An appellation given to Americans who served with the French air force during the First World War, as opposed to the smaller Lafayette Escadrille which was a specific unit within the French air force at the time. The total number is based on data provided in The Lafayette Flying Corps, Dennis Gordon, Schiffer Military History, Atglen, PA, 2000.

and Kerwood was the pilot of a two-seat Breguet bomber and likely, at times, the one Breguet reconnaissance aircraft in the escadrille. They crossed paths during the war when Bush's escadrille was assigned to escort the Breguet bombers of Kerwood's escadrille.

Both escadrilles were part of *Groupement Menard* when it was created 7 March 1918. Spa 73 was part of Groupe De Combat 19 which was a part of Escadre de Combat No. 1. Br 117 was part of Groupe de Bombardement 5 which was part of Escadre de Bombardement No. 12. This relationship is shown in the table below.⁹

Groupement Menard

Escadre de Combat No.1

GC 15

GC 18

GC 19

Spa 73 (Bush)

Escadre de Bombardement No. 12

GB 5

Br 117 (Kerwood)

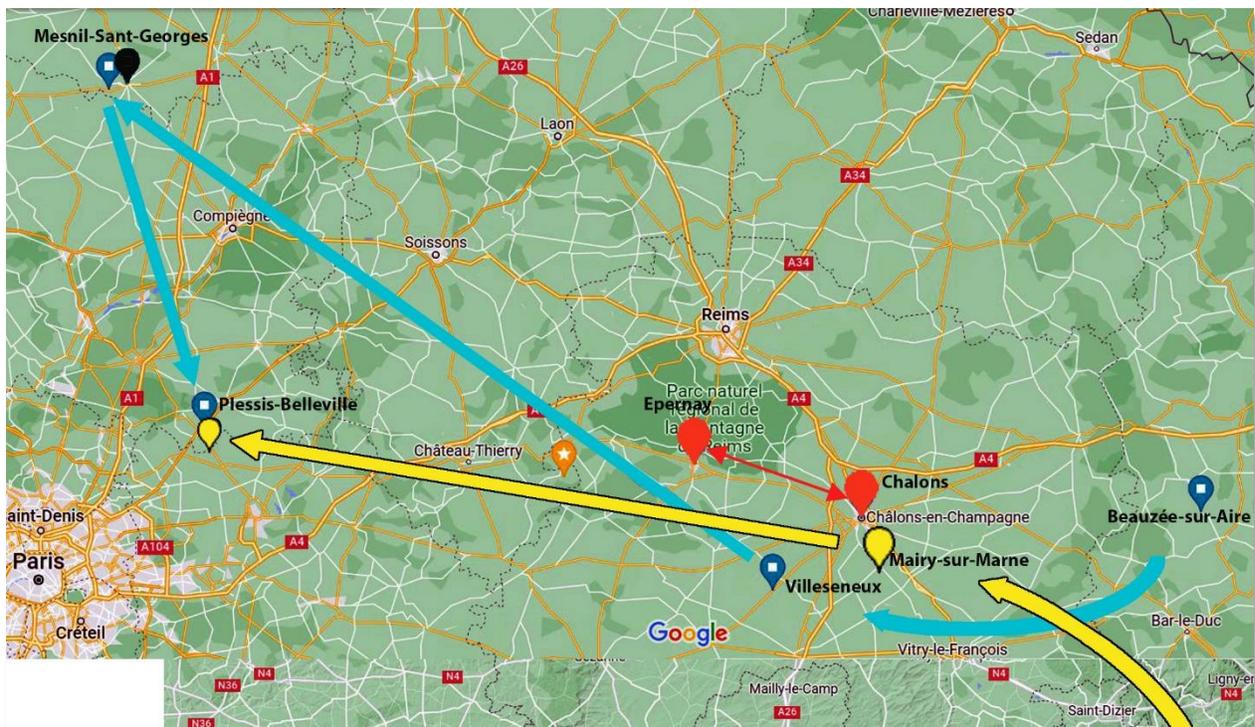
GB 6

French escadrilles maintained a *Journal des Marches et des Opérations* (JMO) during the First World War which recorded their *stationnements*, or landing grounds, and *opérations*, their operational activities. Some squadron-level log books exist to this day and are made available digitally by the French government on the French government website, *Mémoire des Hommes*, however, the squadron log book for Spa 73 is not, nor is the JMO for GC 19, to which Spa 73 belonged in 1918.

There is some summarized information in the JMO of the 1ère Division Aérienne but these reports are very broad and, when they record individual engagements, these are almost exclusively bombardment sorties, not the efforts of the scout squadrons carrying-out their *other* duties, such as interdicting enemy aircraft trying to get across the Marne to attack allied airfields. The reports of the bombardment sorties are almost always divided into two sections, *Matin* for the daytime and *Soir*, for nighttime. The activity recorded for Spa 73 – again, not all of its activity but only that activity in support of the Breguet bombers – it is almost exclusively in the nighttime.

The map below illustrates the movement of these two escadrilles – Bush's Spa 73 and Kerwood's Br 117 - over 10 weeks in the run-up to the German Spring offensive known as *Operation Michael* as the French army prepares to repulse the anticipated German attack. Bush's unit moves west into position to defend the airfields south of the Marne and Kerwood's unit moves north into position just next to Bush's unit, assigned to cut-off the bridges over the Marne. Bush's unit's role is then expanded to escort the bombers, as well.

⁹ See Albin Denis's web pages at http://albindenis.free.fr/Site_escadrille/Div_aerienne_01.htm



📍 Escadrille Spa 73 aerodromes
 📍 Escadrille Br 117 aerodromes
 📍 Kerwood shot down

Please read the map from right to left as you look at these dates.

- January 19: Bush arrives at Spa 73's aerodrome at Beauzée-sur-Aire. On February 8 the escadrille joins Groupe de Combat N° 19.
- February 14: Spa 73 moves west into position at Villeseneux
- February 20: Br 117 moves 70 miles or 112 km northwest from their aerodrome at Neufchâteau, below the map area, to Mairy-sur-Marne
- February 26: Spa 73 is hastily incorporated into l'escadre de combat N° 1 along with three other escadrilles and ordered to protect allied airfields **behind a line 20 miles from Épernay to Châlons** and not let German aircraft cross the Marne.
- March 28: Spa 73 moves to Mesnil-Sant-Georges as Br 117 Moves to Plessis-Belleville.¹⁰ It is not clear when Br 117 moved but it appears likely that it moved at about the same time.
- March 31: Kerwood is shot-down and taken prisoner with his gunner; some accounts suggest that they were flying Breguet 14.B2 N° 1346 but this is not confirmed.

Understanding the military relationship between Spa 73 and Br 117 helps to explain why a pilot in one unit would be carrying a photo of an aircraft in another unit, especially when we realize that the pilot in Br 117 was such a good friend of the pilot in Spa 73 that 19 years later he would ask

¹⁰Les escadrilles de l'aéronautique militaire française : Symbolique et histoire 1912-1920, page 184, indicates that Spa. 73 moved from Villeseneux to Mesnil-St-George on 25-March-1918 and then 3 days later to Plessis-Belleville

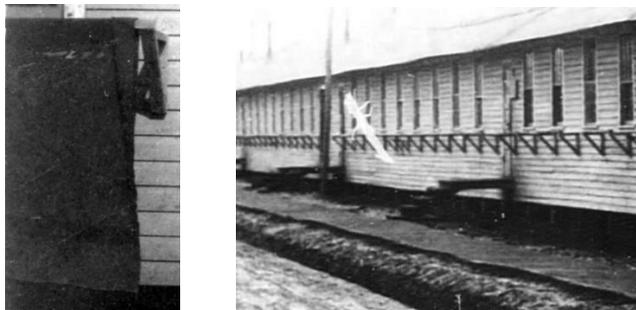
the other to be his *best man*. Why this *specific* Breguet is probably because it was the aircraft that Chuck Kerwood most often flew.

The Second of Three Photos

Another photo in the Bush group is seen below on the left and enlarged on the right. The aviator is in a typical flightsuit of the period.



The racks behind the standing pilot are shown enlarged on the left below. They are for airing-out blankets and are identical to the racks in front of the barracks in the photo on the right below of the 3rd Air Instruction Center at Issoudun. In addition, in both photos there are mud boards in front of the barracks, the number of steps up to the door are four and the number of horizontal wood boards from the bottom of the siding to the top step are four. Barracks on French aerodromes do not appear to be designed in this exact way so it is likely that the unidentified pilot is standing in front of barracks at an instruction center built later for training American pilots.



Two pilots in Br 117 look somewhat similar to the unidentified pilot – Kerwood, seen second from left below, as well as Charles McIlvaine Kinsolving, third from left; other photos of Kinsolving, however, do not look like the pilot standing in front of the barracks. Leland Russell Rounds on the right was one of the friends of Bush who signed the book, Pilot's Luck. He flew with Escadrille Spa 112 from 3-Aug-1917 to 22-Dec-1917 and then was commissioned as a 1st Lieutenant in the US Air Service and trained pilots at the 4th Aviation Instruction Center at Tours until 1-May-1918. Rounds wears a metal wing on his garrison cap similar in style to the metal wing in the Bush Group.



The Third of Three Photos

The next photo shows two Spad XIII's.¹¹ The aerodrome is a typical design and has not yet been identified.



Here are the Spads in close-up. Presumably these are Spads of Spa 73, possibly one of which is the Spad that Bush most often flew. It isn't possible to tell if they have Spa 73's insignia because the lower wing of the plane in the foreground blocks the area of the fuselage where we would expect to see the insignia.



The Postcard

The postcard is shown below. It's a commercially-produced postcard from the period. Some versions include a caption which states "Engl. Flugzeug abgeschossen am 11/8 bei Annay." The aircraft may have been a Sopwith Strutter and most likely belonged to an RFC squadron.¹² There is no obvious connection between this postcard and Bush. The French flew the Sopwith Strutter,

¹¹ Alan Toelle identifies this type as Spad XIII's.

¹² Possibly Sopwith Strutter A8294 of No 43 Squadron seen going down in flames east of Lens on 15 August 1917, 2nd Lieut. CG Moore and 2 Lieut. JB Smith.

as well, and the possibility exists that this was a French aircraft and that the casualty in the photo is a French pilot.



The Medals and Wing



The medals in the Bush Group are the *Médaille militaire* and a *Croix de guerre 1914-1918 avec une étoile de bronze* or bronze star. The CDG was awarded to individuals who distinguish themselves by acts of heroism involving combat with enemy forces. When such heroism was mentioned by a commanding officer in a dispatch from the field – these mentions were then published – a palm or star was added to the ribbon for what the French referred to as a *Citations à l'ordre de l'armée* - similar to the British military's *Mention in Dispatches*. A bronze star was added for those who had been mentioned or cited at the regiment or brigade level. I have not been able to find the citation but French records from the First World War are incomplete. According

to Nordhoff and Hall,¹³ Bush was awarded the CDG with *palm* which would indicate the mention was at the *army* level whereas the star indicates mention at the *brigade* or *regiment* level. Further research will hopefully identify the specific action which resulted in Bush receiving the CDG with Bronze Star and the text of the Citation.

The wing might be something that the wearer received on graduating flight school but that's just speculation, it's not an actual service wing but similar to the non-service wing that Rounds wore on his garrison cap shown on page 14. Some aviators in the American air service wore their air service's wing and prop badge on their garrison caps, but the uniform that Rounds was wearing in the photo is a French uniform and the wing and prop badge on his garrison cap was likely of French origin. The unofficial wing in the Bush Group was likely worn in similar fashion.

Other Photos of Bush

The only photo of Bush in uniform during the war is the one published in Nordhoff & Hall as well as Dennis Gordon's book on the Lafayette Flying Corps and shown on page 6 of this report. The photo below was taken at a Lafayette Flying Corps reunion some years later. Kerwood and Kinsolving from Br. 117 are in the back row, fourth and sixth from left, and Bush is in the front row, fifth from left.



The caption when this photo was published stated the following but see the footnote for corrections made: "From left to right: M. L. Holden, A. I. Ferguson, Herman Whitmore, Capitan Cholet, Philip Bush, Clarence Shoninger, H. Forster. Middle row: (L-R) H. Kenyon, C. Basset, C. Faith, C. Malone, Donald Eldridge, J. McMillen, A.B. Crehore. Rear row, (L-R): J.C. Brown, H. Bachelor, G. Def. Lerner, C. Kerwood, G. Dock, C. Kinsolving, T. Buffum."¹⁴

¹³ The Lafayette Flying Corps, Volume 1, Charles Nordhoff, Edgar G. Hamilton, James Norman Hall, Houghton Mifflin, 1920, page 153.

¹⁴ Dennis Gordon kindly reviewed this report and noted that "D. Eldrid" in the middle row should be Donald Eldridge and that "Clarence S. Honinger" in the bottom row should be Clarence Shoninger.

Death

At 6 a.m. on the morning of Wednesday, October 28, 1942, Army Air Corps Lieutenant-Colonel Philip N. Bush was found dead in his office at Bolling Field with a 45-caliber bullet wound to the abdomen; a board of officers was named to investigate the cause of death. On October 30th it was reported that the cause had been declared accidental; Bush was buried in Arlington National Cemetery and his grave is shown in the photo below on the right.

A United Feature Syndicate Press Release on November 11, 1942, by Drew Pearson is shown below and suggests that Bush's death was not an accident; few newspapers decided to carry the story.

DON'T TELL THE ENEMY

Washington newspapers the other day carried a story about the death of Lt. Col. Philip N. Bush, an air corps officer, who died "in line of duty" while cleaning a .45 caliber automatic. However, here is the real story behind Col. Bush's death.

Col. Bush was in the Yale Club in New York where he had a drink at the bar with one or two casual acquaintances. During the course of the conversation he expressed enthusiasm over the fact that he was leaving shortly for Africa, giving the date of his departure. Friends say that while he was indiscreet he did not reveal any military secrets.

At any rate, his conversation was reported to the Army by those who believed he had been indiscreet. Col. Bush was ordered confined to quarters at Bolling Field, Washington. The next morning he was found dead, shot through the abdomen.

Note: Col. Bush came from an old, distinguished family. He had served with distinction in the last war, was a member of the famed Lafayette Escadrille.



Summary

These are the reasons in favor of this uniform belonging to Philip Nelson Bush:

- Bush was of the height and proportions of this uniform
- Bush was known for wearing an expensive, tailored uniform, which this is
- Bush is listed as “Busch” in the Gorrell report, the same spelling used on the uniform labels, probably because that was how his name was spelled in the registers at Pau
- Bush graduated from Pau, which is where this uniform was made, based on the tailor’s label.
- Bush graduated on November 2, 1917, the same date on the uniform’s labels
- Bush was a *Maréchal de Logis* or *Sergent* which matches the uniform’s cuff rank insignia
- Bush’s CDG with Palm is very similar to a CDG with Bronze Star
- Bush’s *best man* served in Esc. Br. 117 which explains why Bush had a photo of an aircraft from that unit.

A case could be made that the uniform, photos, medals and pin belonged to the French pilot, Roger Busch, of Escadrille 94. We don't know if he would fit into it - it is very small. Nor do we know why Roger Busch would purchase a French uniform from a tailor named *Old England* rather than from a French tailor. Or why both labels are dated 2-November-1917. Or why a French pilot would be carrying the photo of an American pilot standing in front of what were clearly American training barracks.

In either case, one or the other of these two men wore this uniform – after an exhaustive search, there simply is no record anywhere of another pilot by the same name or names in the French air service during the First World War. It seems more than likely that this uniform and these artifacts belonged to Phil Bush.

Endnotes

ⁱ The French government's website, [Mémoire des Hommes](#), lists four people within its category [Base des Personnels de l'aéronautique militaire](#) named Busch but the first two names are the same - André Busch – and are, indeed, the same person and we can tell this because they have the same next of kin. The third name is Joseph Charles Busch and he, like André Busch, are ground personnel, not aviators, and neither reached the rank of Sergeant; they were:

- Joseph Charles Busch, born 25-1-1890, whose Grade was 2d, he was a mécanicien in Escadrille 28; he would not have worn a tailored uniform with aviation collar tabs and Sergeant stripes
- Andre Busch, listed twice, Grade 3d and Grade 3, both listings with the same date of birth, 17-3-1897. He was a mécanicien-avions before the war. The back of his card seems to confuse him with his colleague in Escadrille 28 because it says that he left Parc 3 on 19-August 1917 for Escadrille C. 28 and then comes to Escadrille Salm. 28 on 25-March-1918 and then leaves Parc 2 29-March-1918 for Sal 28.

Roger Auguste Achille Busch is the third person listed and is one of our two candidates and is discussed earlier in our report.

In addition, an Ernest-Jean (Français) Busch is mentioned in L'Aerophile for 15-November-1912 as receiving Brevet 1092 but he isn't found elsewhere at all.