

POW / MIA PROFILES

The purpose of the State POW/MIA Committee is to “provide increased awareness of POW / MIAs, to organize the Department and Posts’ POW / MIA activities and to provide education to the public”. To realize this duty, a profile of a WI Veteran who is or has been classified as POW / MIA will be presented each month for your reflection. It is with great respect that we present this month’s Profile.

Robert (Bob) St. Mary graduated from Campbellsport High School in 1951 where he had an exceptional athletic career earning two letters in football, two in basketball, and four in baseball. In the fall of 1951, he joined the United States Air Force. The Korean War had started the year before in Jun 1950. After completing basic training in Texas, he went to aerial gunnery school in Colorado and flight training in Virginia. Before being assigned overseas, Bob completed Escape & Evasion training in Nevada.

His overseas tour took him to the 17th Bomb Wing of the 37th Bomb Squadron operating out of Pusan Air Force Base, South Korea. His aircraft of assignment was the B-26 bomber and he had the position of gunner. The B-26 was a small two engine bomber used for low-level front line support.

On February 23, 1953 Airman St. Mary volunteered to fly as gunner on Dutchboy 94, his 11th mission. During the mission, Dutchboy 94 spotted a train with ten box cars. Also operating in the area was a C-47, callsign Newport 52. Dutchboy 94 made several passes on the train without dropping ordinance. Newport 52 received a radio call from the pilot Lt. King that they were having trouble releasing their bombs. Dutchboy 94 also made two strafing runs on the train.

After some time, Newport 52 attempted to contact Dutchboy 94 without any results. Several more attempts on all common frequencies yielded negative results. They considered the possibility having of a crash by Dutchboy 94 but they had been observing the target area closely and saw nothing to indicate this. Newport 52 assumed there was radio trouble and returned to base.

The following night, having learned that Dutchboy 94 had failed to return to base, Newport 52 searched the target area again without success. Air-Sea rescue located nothing after a full day search. Navy vessels working in the area reported no Mayday distress signals or parachutes. The crew was reported as Missing in Action and a year later declared Killed in Action. To date, there are still over 8000 personnel still missing from the Korean War.

The Committee wishes to thank Mr. Wallace Dagget, PUFL American Legion, of Kewaskum, WI for submitting this story on Robert St. Mary, his wife Joan's uncle. **The Committee welcomes any information that any Legionnaire may have on one of our WI Veterans who are or have been POW/MIA from any conflict. Please contact Tom Ingram, Chairman, State POW/MIA Committee at tingram5@wi.rr.com or Robert Miller, Vice Chairman at bmillerplake@charter.net, 262-279-6429 if you have any information to help our endeavor. Thank you !**