

## Colonel Barney Oldfield Biography

If anything may be said to come naturally, that's surely true of storytelling to Col. Barney Oldfield, USAF (Ret.) He has worked in many modes in more than 60 countries on every continent, newspaperman, radio and TV scripter, magazine contributor, lecturer, international 'ghost writer' for famous personages, Hollywood publicist, regular Army and Air Force officer, and businessman.

He was the first newspaperman to become a paratrooper when the Army started that elite, special branch of service. He wrote the Table of Organization and Equipment for the "Press Camps" which followed most of the field armies across Western Europe in WW II. Many old war correspondents remember the one he ran for Ninth Army as 'the best' with more tales re-told to verify it than any other. He founded the fabulous Press Club of Berlin at war's end using the left over liquor supplies from the Big Three Conference at Potsdam as lubrication. He assembled Air Force public relations people, flew them to Korea, and installed them when that "police acton" began. He was withdrawn from the Orient to be on Order 1-1 as advance man for General Dwight D.Eisenhower's return to Europe to create a military force out of the multi-national contributions of men at arms by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's signatory powers.

His tasks have taken him to the presence of Kings, Queens, Presidents, Dictators and their retinues. He is remembered in Denmark for having returned the revered Isted Lion monument to King Christian X after it had been a war curio in captivity for more than 80 years. For Denmark, the Isted Lion is the equivalent of America's Statue of Liberty. He won the first snooker championship of Upper Egypt at Aswan by superb timing (he arrived on the same day as the snooker table and as the only one in town who knew how to chalk and use a cue). So "offbeat" was he that both Robert I. Ripley's "Believe-It-Or-Not" and John Hix's "Strange-As-It-Seems" featured him. On a recent CBS "Who's Who" TV program, commentator Charles Kuralt called him "King of the Press Agents." Variety asked him to review a Papal Audience of the late Pope John XXIII at Castle Gondolfo, and he did. (Pope John could be a droll and earthy jokester, and was that day). While traditional military figures must be safely dead to have something named for them, there is a Col. Barney Oldfield March, written by Lt. Col. M. S. Azzolina and the ex-Canadian Broadcasting Corp. music director Howard Cable, and published in 50 parts by E. B. Marks Music — and it was premiered in Carnegie Hall.

As a Warner Brothers press agent, his slate of responsibilities included such personalities as the boudoir rover boy Errol Flynn; the Iowa sports announcer for WHO radio in Des Moines, turned actor with a driving political fever, Ronald Regan; and a ravishingly beautiful youngster with a (then) engrossing interest in chipmunks, Elizabeth Taylor.

When he left uniformed life in 1962, he joined Litton Industries, Inc., in Beverly Hills, California where he still is and performs a wide variety of domestic and international assignments. When that company became the earliest industrial firm to engage in skill-training of high school dropouts under the Jobs Corp wing of the Office of Economic Opportunity, he was asked to make himself available to, and act as a counsellor of, a troubled young black giant whose fists won him designation as Mayhem, Inc. As the youngster started to find his way, this association took them to the Mexico

City Olympics where he won the heavyweight boxing gold medal, to Jamaica in 1973 and the heavyweight boxing crown, and on to Zaire - making Barney the white shadow of the great George Foreman! George was the first Litton-helped teenager, and then a Barney-befriended one.

*“Operation Narcissus”* is Col. Barney Oldfield’s third book, he being an extraordinary story teller with an even more extraordinary reservoir of people and experiences on which to draw for the characters and actions which run through his typewriter. Speaking of typewriters (he’s on his fifth), his first one reposes among the memorabilia of the Overseas Press Club of America in New York. It was once jumped in a parachute, and... but that’s part of another once-upon-a-time.

Taken from book jacket notes for *“Operation Narcissus”* by Col. Barney Oldfield, USAF (Ret.), centering on his World War II service in the European Theater, published by Pandick Press, Inc. New York City and Los Angeles in 1978. Thanks to AFPAAA member Tom Halbert for this summary.