

Robert Earl Baker
Dad, WWII Veteran, Aviator,
Politician, Entrepreneur
Nickname: Precision Pete



Born
January 1, 1924
Indianapolis, IN



Simple Beginnings

- Bob's mother Sarah E. Pollard was born in 1902 in Lancaster Kentucky. She was one of 7 children in the long traditional of large families at the time. Her father was a police officer and was lured by a gang to an area called "The Shoot" in Lancaster and was killed. She and her siblings were all very young so they were divided up and sent to various orphanages in Kentucky.

Charles Howard Baker

- Bob's father, Charles Howard Baker, was born in West Newton south of Indianapolis in 1902. He was one six children. He ended up in the service early on as a cook that started a long career as a chef preparing meals all over the country. He met and married Sarah and they lived early on in West Newton. He traveled extensively for his job and worked for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway guarding the timer in the Pagoda in the 1911/12's and later became a personal chef to dignitaries in the infield including Tony Hulman in the 1950's. This started a long very connected history with the Indianapolis 500 as you will find out.

Robert E. Baker



- Bob was born in West Newton (Indianapolis) on New Years Day in 1924. He spent his early years in West Newton with a very austere upbringing managed mostly by his mother. He had two younger brothers Art and Steve.
- The family moved to the south side of Indianapolis to Illinois Street later moving to Kansas Street and Livingston Avenue near the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Bob spent his early years being entrepreneurial selling newspapers, apples and working as a Pharmacist assistant. Bob dreamed big about success money, cars and travel. He was an excellent student at Manual High School earning top honors and a perfect attendance record. He was a charter member of the Manual Roines Society a scholastic Honorary Club.
- Bob ended up getting into Purdue University pursuing a degree in Business Finance, Accounting and Economics. He was exposed to Military Training while at Purdue and got certified in Field Artillery.
- The war was already in progress and Bob was drafted into the Army Air Corp
- A bus trip to Colorado after induction led him to a testing regimen given to all inductees
- His test scores were off the chart compared to other draftees. The military recognized his potential and asked him to choose from three disciplines. Meteorology, Communication/Signal Corp and/or a new top secret program involving the Norden Bombsight. Due to the technical and top secret nature of the Bombsight that made the choice simple.
- Bob' reflection on the bombsight training.

Early Years Cont.



Roines Club

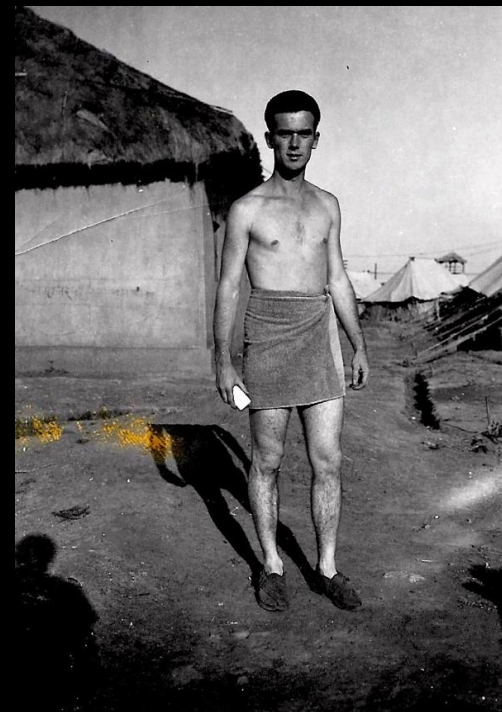
Co-sponsored by Miss Arda M. Knox and Miss Bertha J. Ebbert, the Roines, senior boys' honorary society, fetes Manual's athletic teams at luncheons with red roses and Miss Knox's jelly. Sponsor of school activities and skating parties, the club is directed by Harold Bretz, president; Joseph O'Nan, vice president; Elmer Eisenbarth, secretary, and Donald Blettner, treasurer.



Kharagpur Air Base and B-29's

- After Norden Training Bob preceded the delivery of B-29's to Kharagpur Air Base in India, 100 miles from Calcutta.
- Bob arrived months before the B-29's and had no real commanding officer on base being in the Top Secret Norden Program
- Bob can comment about his arrival and the freedom he experienced traveling around the area
- Talking points: Poker, Fripo's, British Army shirt acquisition, Photography and shenanigans.

Life on B-29 Base In India



Misc. Photos



Life In China

- Bob Flew a variety of mission over Japan and to the construction of a forward base in China.
- Bob talking about China, Poker, base construction and mission over Japan.



B-29's Crashes

- The B-29 was a problematic aircraft from the beginning with inexperienced pilots and navigators, bad engines etc.
- Bob can recall his experience crashing in a 29

B-29 Losses were prevalent



29's to Tinian

- The B-29 groups were moved to Tinian from India due to the closer proximity to Japan and less logistical challenges for support.
- Tinian was the launch point for the Nuclear attack on Japan with Pilot Paul Tibbetts and the Enola Gay B-29.
- Bob can recount his meeting with Tibbetts and the tight security on base around the Nuclear Program.
- Bob still had a darkroom in Tinian and developed some historic photos.

Photographs/Water Colors



Career choices

- The military offered Bob the opportunity to enter the 90 Day Wonder Program promising General status in 6-8 years. He had met my mom Bea at that point and her first husband had been killed in action. She was not a big fan of a military career so Bob declined.

Bob Post War

- Bob went to work for the Department of Natural Resources after the war, measuring rivers throughout the Midwest. He discovered the next level of income depended on a college degree. Bob Can talk about this.
- Bob decided on Butler to complete his education and business degrees
- He was asked to start the ROTC program at Butler and he was the first Lieutenant Colonel
- Bob was asked during his term at Butler to host Clark Gable for the day. He spent the day with him at IMS while Clark filmed To “Please a Lady”
- Bob can talk about his experiences with Clark.

Clark Gable and Bob



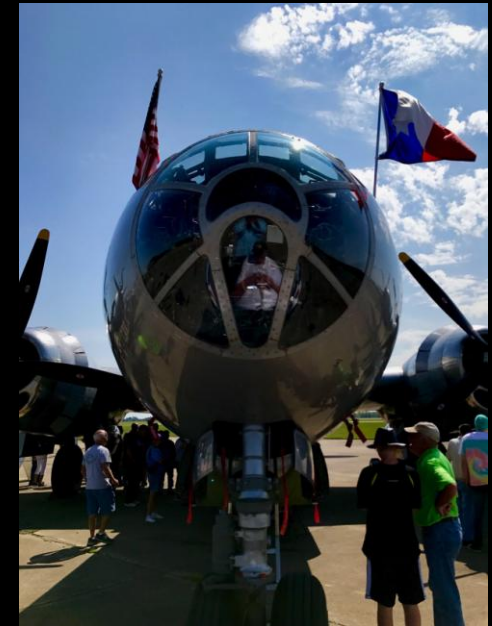
Life after Butler

- Bob was determined to start his own company after college but required seed money. He took a job at Detroit Diesel Allison as a Tank Transmission specialist and troubleshooter.
- He traveled extensively evaluating, driving and overseeing the repair of Military Tanks.
- Bob left Allison to get into technical sales that led to him starting his own company Baker Machinery Inc.
- Bob can talk about this.

Revisiting the B-29



B-29 at Mt. Comfort
Bob climbs the ladder
Into the cockpit and fills us in.



Field Artillery Certificate



Military Training Certificate

RESERVE OFFICERS' TRAINING CORPS

This is to certify that ROBERT EARL BAKER

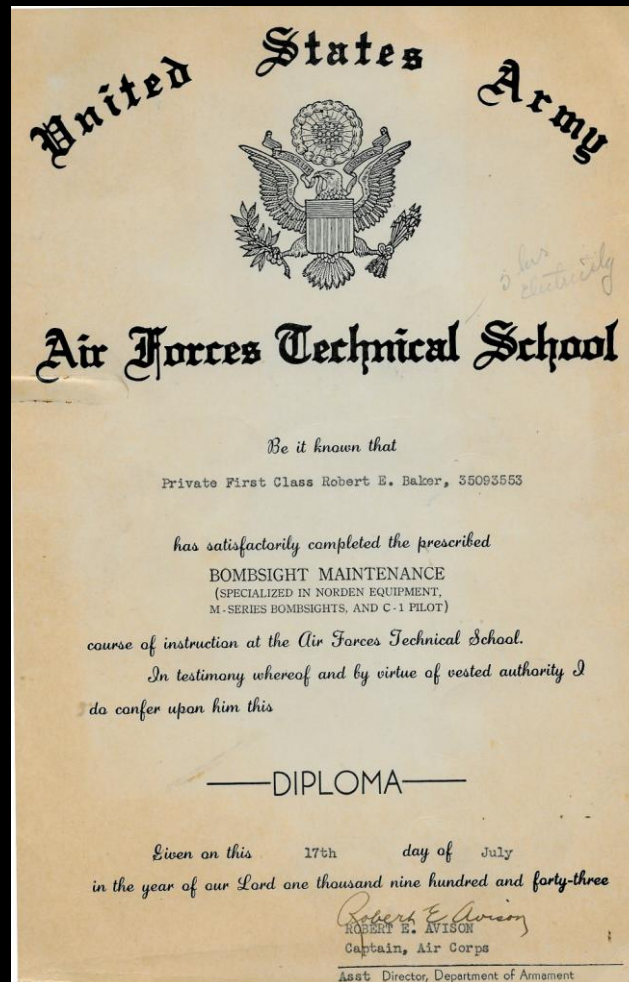
has successfully completed the prescribed course of instruction in the first half, first year basic
course, FIELD ARTILLERY, SENIOR Division, Reserve Officers' Training Corps,
in which he was enrolled from SEPTEMBER 2, 1942, to DECEMBER 22, 1942, and
that he is qualified to perform the duties of a PRIVATE in the Organized Reserves.

Given at PURDUE UNIVERSITY, this 13th day of FEBRUARY
(Name of institution)
in the year of Our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and FORTY-THREE

Remarks: RECOMMENDED FOR FIELD ARTILLERY
(Enter all subjects in prescribed course not successfully completed)

M. J. Bean

Norden Certification



Captain Commission

Reserve Officers' Training Corps



BUTLER UNIVERSITY

(Institution)

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

(Place)

To all who shall see these presents, greeting:

Know ye, that reposing special trust and confidence in the fidelity and abilities of

ROBERT EARL BAKER

I do hereby appoint him a Cadet
CAPTAIN in the AIR FORCE Unit of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps
to rank as such from the 24TH day of MARCH one thousand nine hundred and FORTY-NINE
He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of Cadet CAPTAIN
by doing and performing all manner of things pertaining thereto. And he is to observe and follow such orders and
directions from time to time, as he shall receive from those officers set over him, according to the rules and discipline
of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps.

This PROMOTION to continue during the pleasure of the Professor of Military Science and Tactics.

GIVEN under my hand at

BUTLER UNIVERSITY

(Institution)

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

this TWENTY-FOUR

day of MARCH

(Place)

in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and FORTY-NINE

Official:

EDMOND M. HALEY

1st Lt., USAF


Adjutant

JEROME TARTER, Lt Colonel, USAF

Professor of Military Science and Tactics.

Lieutenant Colonel Commission

Reserve Officers' Training Corps



BUTLER UNIVERSITY
(Institution)

INDIANAPOLIS INDIANA
(Place)

To all who shall see these presents, greeting:

Know ye, that reposing special trust and confidence in the fidelity and abilities of

Cadet **ROBERT E BAKER** _____, I do hereby appoint him a Cadet

LIEUTENANT COLONEL _____ in the _____ **AIR** _____
Unit of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps
to rank as such from the **Eleventh** _____ day of **August** _____ one thousand nine hundred and **Forty nine**
He is therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of Cadet **LIEUTENANT COLONEL**
by doing and performing all manner of things pertaining thereto. And he is to observe and follow such orders and
directions from time to time, as he shall receive from those officers set over him, according to the rules and discipline
of the Reserve Officers' Training Corps.


This appointment _____ to continue during the pleasure of the Professor of Military Science and Tactics.

Given under my hand at _____ **BUTLER UNIVERSITY** _____
(Institution)

Indianapolis, Indiana _____
(Place) this **Eleventh** _____ day of **August** _____
in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and **Forty nine**

Official: _____
EDMOND M. HALEY
1st Lt USAF
Adjutant

JEROME TARTER, Lt Col USAF
PAS&T
Professor of Military Science and Tactics.



W. D., A. G. O. Form No. 128—December 1, 1938

16-51867-1

Truman Letter to all Vets



ROBERT E BAKER

To you who answered the call of your country and served in its Armed Forces to bring about the total defeat of the enemy, I extend the heartfelt thanks of a grateful Nation. As one of the Nation's finest, you undertook the most severe task one can be called upon to perform. Because you demonstrated the fortitude, resourcefulness and calm judgment necessary to carry out that task, we now look to you for leadership and example in further exalting our country in peace.

Harry S. Truman

THE WHITE HOUSE