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One of the great stories to come out of World War II is that of a Minnesota native, Fred Hargesheimer, piloting a P-38 Lightning on a photo reconnaissance run, who was shot down by the Japanese over New Guinea. After 31 days of subsistence in the jungle, he encountered a group of friendly natives who rescued him from starvation, nursed him through illness, and hid him from the enemy at great danger to themselves. After the war his great debt of gratitude to his rescuers and his efforts to repay them are an inspirational example the reader will not soon forget.

Fred's remarkable and uplifting story is particularly relevant to our company's Legacy Initiative, for a couple of reasons: the plane Fred flew was a Lockheed P-38, and Fred, as it happened, came to work for Engineering Research Associates (ERA) after the war. This brief summary is based largely on Fred's own writings, The School that Fell from the Sky and "I had to Go Back," as well as other sources and personal correspondence relating to the early history of our company. (Sources cited in parentheses refer to the Bibliography at the end of this article.)

Fred Hargesheimer was born on May 7, 1916, in the Rochester, Minnesota, home of Oscar and Lucy Durkee Hargesheimer and was the third of five children. He grew up in Rochester and had a normal active childhood. Fred spent much of his spare time when he was 13 to 17 playing and practicing the piano, an interest that lasted for his entire life. When he was 17 years old, Fred fell in love with flying, and that also became a lifetime interest. During the 1933-1934 school years Fred attended a junior college, studying chemistry and participating in sports. Then during the 1934-1935 school years, he attended the University of Minnesota, pursuing a chemical engineering degree and then a music career. During the 1935-1936 school years he attended the Sioux Falls, South Dakota College and was on the football team as the holder for kick-offs. In the fall of 1936 he entered Iowa State College in Ames, Iowa, and graduated from there in 1940 with a BS degree in Electrical Engineering. After graduation he moved to Alpine, New Jersey, to work for Major Edwin H. Armstrong, the father of FM radio. He spent most of his time testing antennas including working on the station's 400-foot high antenna. He also worked the night shift on the broadcast transmitter which included being the engineer, announcer, disc jockey, and program director. (1. pp. 1-26.)

Fred was inducted into the Army on March 17, 1941. He applied for aviation cadet training, was accepted, and was sent to Parks Air College in Sikeston, Missouri. There he received training in a Stearman biplane with a 250-horsepower radial engine and an open cockpit. This airplane was Fred's all-time favorite airplane. From there the class went to Randolph Field for further training in a BT-9, a low-wing monoplane with a fixed landing gear and a variable-pitch prop. After graduation and December 7, 1941, the class was split into two groups - Fred's group was sent to Brooks Field for more advanced training in the AT-6 aircraft. (Ibid., pp. 29-32.)

After receiving their gold second lieutenant bars the "elite" from the class, including Fred, remained at Brooks and continued training in the Curtiss O-52 aircraft. They spent several weeks chauffeuring newly commissioned second lieutenants from West Point. These lieutenants took aerial pictures and sighted artillery exercises from the back seats of the O-52s. On completing training at Brooks, they went by rail to Riverside, California, to join Lieutenant Colonel Frank Dunn and the "B" flight of the 8th Photo Squadron. The "A" flight of the 8th Photo Squadron had already departed for Australia en route to New Guinea. (Ibid., p. 33.)

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In Riverside they were introduced to the F-4, a photo version of the Lockheed P-38 Lightning (see Figure 1). Transitioning from the O-52 to the twin-engine P-38 was an all-or-nothing experience, since the F-4s were not outfitted for dual instruction. The twin-engine Curtiss, which was supposed to give the single-engine pilots some multi-engine experience, was more difficult to fly than the P-38. Colonel Dunn told Fred and the others that they could fly the Curtiss trainer after they checked out in the P-38 Lightning. So Fred checked out, with no one else in the plane, in the P-38 Lightning. (Ibid., pp. 34-35.)



Figure 1. P-38 F-4, Similar to Hargesheimer's Plane

The P-38 was originally designed to be a high-speed, long-range fighter aircraft. Its two turbo-charged, liquid-cooled engines gave it a top speed of over 400 miles per hour at a service ceiling of 40,000 feet and a maximum range of almost 2,300 miles. These capabilities made it ideal for use as a photo-reconnaissance aircraft. Since it was a one-person aircraft, the pilot also was navigator, radio operator, and cameraman. (Ibid., p 34.)

With about 10 hours of solo time under Fred's belt, his CO assigned him the task of ferrying one of the planes to the Lockheed Mod-Center at Dallas for camera equipment installation. Included in this modification was the removal of all guns and the installation of camera equipment in place of guns in the nose of the aircraft. On his trip he had the experience of the prop going into flat pitch (a not-uncommon problem with the Curtiss Electric props). By the time he landed at Love Field in Dallas he considered himself a fully certified P-38 pilot. Back in March Field, Riverside, California, a week later, rumors began to circulate that they would soon be getting orders to ship overseas. They then took a train ride to Oakland. They were put on orders to be ready to sail at any moment. (Ibid., pp. 36-37.)

On the morning of June 15, 1942, Fred and the others hoisted their duffle bags over their shoulders, marched down to the wharf, and boarded the Matsonia, the flagship of the Matson line. Two tugboats towed the Marsonia into the harbor, and the ship zigzagged across the Pacific for three days and was then joined by three other ships on the fourth day. This small convoy continued on their zigzag path until joined by the USN Indianapolis at Auckland, New Zealand. The Indianapolis shepherded the convoy through Japanese sub-infested waters to Melbourne, Australia. It had taken 28 days to go from San Francisco to Melbourne. (Ibid., pp. 39-40.)

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After being billeted in the 100,000 person Melbourne Cricket Grounds stadium for a couple weeks, they boarded a train for Townsville, Australia, about 2,000 miles to the north. At mealtimes the train stopped at some primitive depot and they were served the usual fare of Aussie sausages, hard rolls, and chicory coffee. When they reached Albury on the border between Victoria and New South Wales, there was a change in rail gauge, which meant a change in trains. All of the equipment, including heavy spare aircraft engines, had to be transferred onto another flatcar. This task was repeated a few days later when they crossed from New South Wales into Queensland. Fred and the others reached Garbutt Field and joined up with the “A” flight of the 8th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron under the command of Colonel Karl Polifka. (Ibid., pp. 40-41.)

Until the airstrip was completed at Schwimmer airdrome, about 14 miles from Port Moresby, Townsville was the squadron’s home base. During those six weeks they flew their photo missions from the main field at Port Moresby. After Townsville, their home for the next several months was Fourteen-Mile airdrome at Port Moresby. They called it Laloki in honor of the river that flowed across the northwest end of the airstrip. The runway was laid down with pierced steel planking, a technology that made it possible to complete an airstrip in only a few days. An engineering battalion of black soldiers who really knew what they were doing built the Laloki airstrip in record time. (Ibid., pp. 41-42.)

One of the priority missions of the photo squadron was taking pictures for maps. (Very few useful maps existed during the early part of the New Guinea campaign. The German admiralty charts showed only the coastlines and a few miles inland.) The photo squadron used the trimetrogon system of aerial photography that was composed of three cameras. One camera pointed straight down, while the other two were offset at 60-degree angles. At an altitude of 20,000 feet, strips of pictures were taken that covered an area 40 miles wide. An electronic intervalometer clicked off the pictures at a rate determined by the altitude and speed of the plane. The pilot had to maintain a near-constant altitude. (Ibid., p. 43.)

The New Guinea climate is not very favorable for aerial photography. Each morning they had a window of about an hour. Before 9:00 the light was insufficient, and after 10:00 the sky was often covered by a layer of cumulus clouds. (Ibid., pp. 43-44.)

Staff Sergeant Glen Bowers was in charge of survival equipment, including the very important parachutes. It wasn’t just a matter of packing them in their canvas cases. Because of the high humidity, it was necessary to inspect and often dry out the nylon. A damp chute could grow mold at a surprising rate. If a pilot had to bail out, his life depended on the chute. Glen’s meticulous attention to every detail impressed Fred. (Ibid., p. 44.)

The Air Task Force needed some photo aircraft for a special assignment. At noon on Thursday June 3, 1943, Fred climbed into F-5A Lightning “Eager Beaver,” Serial Number 42-13073, and pointed her nose up north across the 12,000-foot peaks of the Owen Stanley Mountains, which divide central Papua. She got her name of Eager Beaver because you had to be eager to go out looking for trouble without guns. An hour later the wheels touched down on the steel matting of a new airstrip at Dobodura on the north coast. Fred met with a group of officers by a map of New Britain and discussed the next day’s mission. It seemed that the Japanese were running supplies by barge from Rabaul along the north coast of New Britain to reinforce their troops at Cape Gloucester. Cape Gloucester is at the western tip of New Britain’s north coast. It was important to shut off this supply line because American forces were scheduled to make a landing

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there before the end of the year. The task was to patrol up and down the north coast of New Britain, investigate any suspicious activities, and report any sightings by radio to “medium” bombers on standby alert. They all felt this would be a welcome change from the routine photo-reconnaissance activities. (Ibid., pp. 49-50.)

On the first day out (June 3rd) Fred failed to see anything. On the third day (June 5, 1943) he took off from Dobodura, which is located on Empress Augusta Bay of Bouganville Island. Bouganville Island is part of Papua New Guinea and is located about 900 miles east of the main island. He was searching for Japanese barges and taking pictures of a Japanese airdrome, circling Rook Island twice, the Cape Gloucester Airfield, and Lolobau Island. Lolobau Island is located 6.5 km off the coast of New Britain Island. The weather worsened. He decided to climb over the weather. At 8,000 feet the air was smoother, he leveled the plane off and altered the course to 90 degrees to upset any plot the enemy, using their radar, might have for targeting him. When the clouds began to break up, he spotted Lolobau Island. This was supposed to be one of Japan’s favorite places to hide barges during the daylight hours. He eased back a bit on the throttles and circled the island twice in a fruitless attempt to find signs of enemy activity. (Ibid., pp. 50-51.)

Eight thousand feet was not a safe height to be flying in a clear sky over enemy territory. Turning back to the coast, he started a gradual climb. Off to the right he spotted what looked like the construction of a new airfield. He leveled off and circled the area for a better look. He carefully lined up for a low-altitude pass over what looked like a runway and set the camera intervalometer for a series of overlapping pictures. (Ibid., p. 52.)

After taking a couple of pictures of this Japanese airdrome, a Japanese fighter (13th Sentai Ki-45 Nick) sighted him and attacked him from the rear. The pilot fired at him, setting one engine of his plane on fire.

Fred describes the encounter in The School that Fell from the Sky:

The cameras were rolling when I was startled by a series of sharp staccato sounds. Suddenly a long jagged tear appeared in the port-engine cowling. An instant later a puff of black smoke shot out from the hole, followed by a burst of flame. Instinctively I sent *Eager Beaver* into a screaming dive...Only then did I dare sneak a glance at the rearview mirror... I found myself looking straight into the flaming snout of a twin-engine enemy fighter.

I felt the plane shudder as a burst of lead ricocheted off the armor plate behind me. For a second I was able to side-slip out of the line of fire. Cutting off the left engine – it was now spitting red flames – I tried to get Beaver under control. She was losing altitude fast! I cast a hopeful eye toward a bank of low clouds on the south, wondering if I could hide in them. The right engine died with a loud burp and so did any hope of seeking cloud cover. The needle on the fuel pressure gauge began to waver and plopped down to zero.

My vision blurred and I swiped my hand across my forehead. It came away bloody and I realized I'd been hit . . . (Ibid., pp. 53-54.) (23, 24)

Fred received a Purple Heart decoration for being wounded when his aircraft was shot down. (22)

The plane headed for the ground and Fred parachuted down into the dense jungle near the Pandi River and Nakunai Mountains in the Bialla District of New Britain Island. The Japanese pilot

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saw him descend but did not shoot at him. Years later, Fred traced the Japanese pilot to his home in Japan. He learned that the Japanese pilot could never bring himself to shoot down helpless pilots as they parachuted from their planes. (Ibid., p. 162.)

Once on the ground and under the cover of the dense tropical rain forest that provided the canopy he needed to remain in hiding, Fred packed up his parachute and headed for the jungle. His head was injured and he was bleeding profusely. For the next 31 days his parachute was his head bandage, tent and blanket. With an emergency kit and two chocolate bars to eat, Fred survived for 31 days alone in the jungle. Every day he recited Psalm 23. The two candy bars lasted three days instead of the 10 days stated in the booklet in his survival kit. For the remaining 28 days he ate fresh-water roasted snails, bamboo shoots, and one day a fish. He stunned the fish with a pistol shot and caught the fish in the shallow water before he could recover. On July 6, the 31st day in the jungle, he was found by a group of natives from Ae Ae village who were paddling up the Pandi River. Ae Ae is now known as Nantambu. This was the jungle territory of the Nakanai people. As told by Fred, when he found he had run out of matches he said; “There I was with my electrical engineering degree, and I couldn’t do a thing. My fire had gone out—it was stone cold when they found me. I watched this man make a fire with stones” (5).

The group led by Joseph Gabu took him to their village and for five months they fed, clothed, and nursed him back to health from near death. He had dysentery that he got from eating roasted pig, and also malaria. He was severely weakened, and was nursed back to health by breast milk. A young mother named Aida (Ida) Togogo, who was breastfeeding her baby, would squeeze some of her breast milk into a cup and daily bring the cup to Fred at his hiding place. The Japanese soldiers who were camped less than eight miles away at the Ula Mona mission made frequent patrols through the village. Each time a patrol approached the village, a conch shell was sounded and Fred was rushed away to his hiding place (6). Children would also follow him to erase his footprints on the ground as he moved around. (1, pp. 70-81; 2, pp. 9-13; 5; 23; 24)

After five months with the villagers, Fred met Captain Ian Skinner of the Australian Infantry and then was taken inland by the natives, where he met Matt Foley and two other “coastwatchers.” Coastwatchers were a special Australian force (“Z” Special Unit) established in World War II to work behind enemy lines in South Pacific areas such as Papua, New Guinea. Two other airmen, David McClymont and William Townsend, who had been shot down over New Britain and had been hiding in the jungle, also met the coastwatchers. The coastwatchers radioed the U.S. base in Port Moresby for instructions. Port Moresby is located on the southeast shore of the main Papua, New Guinea Island. The group stayed together for three months and then the coastwatchers took the three airmen to a beach near Nantambu to meet the submarine USS Gato SS 212. The trip to the beach was tough, dangerous, and took the help of natives to be successful. The submarine surfaced in Open Bay, near the village of Matanakunai, took them to the Motor Patrol Boat Tender USS. Portunus, AGP-4 anchored in Dreger Harbor in Papua, New Guinea. After the eight rescued pilots and air crew men disembarked at the Dreger Harbor they went by jeep to the airstrip at Finschhafen and flew by C-47 to Brisbane, Australia. While in Brisbane Fred learned he had been promoted to captain while behind enemy lines. He also received nine months of back pay, including flight pay, even though he had not flown. (1, pp. 83-104; 2, pp. 14-15; 3; 5; 23)

Fred then flew to Sydney and from there to the United States in a C-24 air transport. He was debriefed at the headquarters of the Allied Air Forces, Southwest Pacific in Australia and again at the air force headquarters in the Pentagon. Fred was then granted a 10-day leave in Rochester,

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Minnesota, and then two weeks in California. He met his future wife, Dorothy Sheldon of Ashtabula, Ohio, at an Eastern Airlines ticket counter at the Washington National Airport. Fred and Dorothy were married on December 16, 1944, at the Congregational church in Ashtabula. On the same day Fred was promoted to major. (1, pp. 119-123; 23)

Fred received the following military decorations for his wartime duty in the South Pacific area:

- Purple Heart
- Silver Star
- Distinguished Flying Cross
- Air Medal
- Asiatic-Pacific Campaign.

He again stated in this telephone call that: “I did not deserve to get the medals.” (19)

The free encyclopedia Wikipedia has detailed descriptions of these five decorations which are briefly described as follows:

- Purple Heart – Awarded in the name of the President to those who have been wounded or killed while serving with the U.S. military.
- Silver Star – Awarded for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States.
- Distinguished Flying Cross – Awarded for heroism or extraordinary achievement while participating in an aerial flight.
- Air Medal – Awarded for distinguished and meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight.
- Asiatic-Pacific Campaign – Awarded to members of land and naval forces of the United States serving in the area between December 7, 1941, and March 2, 1946. (21)

Fred and Dorothy set up housekeeping near Fort Meyers and were there when their first child, Dick, was born on August 16, 1945. Fred then decided to leave the military and return to civilian life. He received an offer from Major Armstrong, his former boss before his military service and he accepted the offer as a research engineer at a FM station in Alpine, New Jersey. Then on September 24, 1946, their second son, Eric, was born and on December 29, 1947, their daughter Carol was born (see Figure 2). (1, pp. 124-125.)

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Figure 2. Carol, Fred, Dick, Eric, and Dorothy, 1959

In 1951 Bill Butler, an old Iowa State College classmate of Fred, was instrumental in getting Fred a job with Engineering Research Associates (ERA) in St. Paul, Minnesota, as a sales engineer. One of Fred's first assignments after he joined ERA was in airlines marketing where he sold "honey wagons" and later, antenna couplers. The honey wagon was a special purpose device based on a "stripped-down" Crosley automobile chassis and used to move waste from aircraft to the disposal site. (1, p. 127; 8.)

In 1953, at the time the first generation antenna coupler was entering production, the engineering staff at that time was small and headed by Fran Biltz under the ERA Communications Group directed by Carl Swanson. Other staff engineers included Leon Sabine, Robert Einfeldt, Marc Shoquist, Bruce Sifford, Manny Block, Howard Peterson and two technicians, Morris "Pappy" Pappenfuss and Oscar Haymen. Carl Hiatt, a development engineer, had transferred to manufacturing to assist in the transition of the Coupler into production. Don Blattie did the contracting. Al Meuller led Customer service, which included the training and entertaining of the supervisors and technicians of the foreign airlines maintenance shops. (9.)

When Fred arrived at the ERA plant on West Minnehaha Avenue in St. Paul in 1951, he knew absolutely nothing about digital computers, so he spent the first six weeks attending in-house computer classes. In the meantime, ERA was awarded a government contract to design an antenna coupler for airborne use. Because of his previous experience with radio frequency equipment, he was asked to work on this new project. ERA received a contract from the Boeing Airplane Company to develop a similar device for their 707 commercial jet. Since the ERA sales personnel knew nothing about radio, Fred was given responsibility for marketing the antenna coupler. (1, p. 127.)

ERA took on many study contracts from the government during its early years and one of the most successful was the Antenna Coupler program that resulted in the production of over 12,000 units for military and commercial aircraft during the 1953 to 1970 time period, after which the

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program was transferred to Sperry-Marine Systems. Antenna Couplers was the largest production program ERA had in the mid 1950's and during the 1953 to 1956 time period represented over 25% of the sales and most of the profits for the division. During the 1953 to 1970 time period, there were three generations of antenna couplers developed. The initial model used vacuum tubes. An all-solid-state components unit for the Boeing Jet aircraft (707 & KC-135) was developed in 1955, and finally a high tuning speed unit for the General Dynamics B-58 Hustler Bomber developed in 1958. By the time the B-58 Coupler contract was won in 1958, the engineering staff, which then included drafting, had grown to 70 people. Engineers who were added for the Boeing 707 aircraft project development included John Moe, Charles Class, Allen Anderson, Mick Alsop, Al Sorenson, Paul Richardson, Howard Chen, and Bob Rife. By this time, the division had become recognized as a specialist in the development of antenna couplers. When Hughes won the contract for the development of the new ARC-68 HF Communication system, they selected ERA as the coupler supplier rather than develop it themselves. (9.)

The coupler consisted of a variable vacuum capacitor and inductor coil driven by servo motors that automatically matched the antenna impedance to the coaxial transmission cable impedance. The tuning elements were controlled by a discriminator that sensed the resistance and phase at the termination of the coaxial cable to the antenna. The coupler tuned wire, probe and tail cap antennas in the HF 2-30 MHz range. The Boeing 707 aircraft used a probe antenna mounted on top of the tail fin so the coupler was exposed to the outside environment where temperatures were frequently below – 65 degrees F. Moreover, after being in a cold soak at this temperature the coupler had to start up and complete the tuning within 10 seconds, no easy task. In addition, the probe antenna impedance was so mismatched at low frequencies that the coupling voltage to the antenna was over 20,000 volts. The early units were pressurized with dry nitrogen and sealed with a soldered seal. Later a Teflon-coated O-ring seal was developed which was able to hold a vacuum over a long period, which simplified maintenance of the unit. Fred sold hundreds of antenna couplers to Boeing and other aircraft companies. St Paul management kept trying to shut down the antenna coupler line while Fred kept bringing in new orders. (9;10.)

Fred returned to Papua, New Guinea in 1960 to visit his saviors and repay his debt to the natives. Out of this trip was borne the idea for the Airmen's Memorial Foundation of Papua New Guinea (PNG), dedicated to the education, health, and welfare of the West New Britain people. (1, p. 141; 24; 23)

After this trip, Fred started telling his story to us in the U.S. Many people gave generously to the Foundation, and a total of US\$15,000 was raised by this fund drive to build a school. (1, p. 142; 4.) Many company employees and customers made donations of money and time to the Foundation. (11.) When Fred was visiting customers the first topic was always a request for a donation to the Airmen's school. (10.) After the material for the school was acquired, Fred and his 18-year-old son Richard went to Ewasse to help clear the land and build the classrooms. (1, p. 143; 23)

The school was built at Ewasse, 50 km west of Nantambu. The location of the Airmen's Memorial School at Ewasse was the result of Fred's discussions with Wesley Lutton, the United Church pastor for Central Nakanai at that time. There were only a handful of children at Nantambu in 1960 and a limited amount of suitable land (see Figure 3). Ewasse was the center of five nearby villages, and the church had several acres of freehold land that they made available for the school. In the early 60s, the wharf at Bialla made it easy to receive supplies shipped in by barge. (13; 4.)

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The school, called the Airmen's Memorial School, was opened in March 1964 with four classrooms, four native teachers, an Australian headmaster named Jim Bye, and 40 students. (1, p. 155.)



Figure 3. The Children of Nantambu Village

An ERA colleague of Fred's, Marc Shoquist, has stated that he had interesting experiences with Fred as a two-man team in developing new coupler business, and there were many such trips. As an electrical engineer and a "ham" radio operator, Fred was immediately respected by the engineering organizations of his customers because he was a salesman who knew his product. But his World War II experiences as a P-38 pilot in the South Pacific, who had been shot down in New Guinea and been nursed back to health by the natives, preceded him wherever he visited. As an Army Air Force pilot, he had been assigned to Lockheed to test the P-38s at their Burbank facility, so when ERA won the P-3C contract in 1967, Lockheed hosted a "Fred Hargesheimer Returns to Lockheed Day" with company executives there to greet him. They had published a story in advance in the company paper. Then, in raising money for his New Guinea school, he had appeared on the Jack Paar show that further enhanced his reputation. Paar, a veteran himself, was quoted as saying, "The story of Fred Hargesheimer is to me one of the great stories of the Pacific War." Following this show and on a routine visit to the Warner Robins Air Force Base in Georgia, shortly after he met the customer, his secretary interrupted to say the Base Commanding General was on the phone. The customer, feeling surprised and apprehensive, returned to say that somehow the General knew that Fred was on the base and wanted to meet him, so he was invited to have lunch with the General at the Officers Club. On his New York trips to visit the largest commercial customer, Pan American Airlines, he frequently took time to have lunch at the United Nations where Fred promoted his School with delegates from the South Pacific nations. By that time, ERA had been purchased by Remington Rand and the company's name changed to Remington Rand Univac (RRU) and Fred became known by many as the "Type Writer Salesman with a story to tell." (9.)

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Fred's next assignment was in Avionics marketing, selling airborne computers for classified programs to several prime contractors including General Dynamics of Fort Worth, Texas, LTV, Boeing, and Lockheed. At this period his title was Special Products Marketing Manager with the Military Division of Remington Rand Univac. (2; 11.)

Fred's remarkable life and accomplishments are best expressed in his own words:

"It is 10,000 miles and a world away from White Bear Lake, where I live with my wife, my two sons, 14 and 13, my 12-year-old daughter. But, for 16 years, something kept reaching out to me from the native village of Nantambu, in New Britain. It was an obligation I felt to these people who had saved my life, had hidden me in the tropical wilderness from the Japanese who had shot my plane out of the sky. How could I thank the woman called Ida, whose mother's milk was the only food my desperately ill body would accept? I had to go back and repay my debt of gratitude." (2, p. 17.)

"They found me and took care of me, they hid me from the Japanese, it's because of what they did that I had to come back. It's why I keep coming back," (12.)

"Every man, woman and child in Nantabu put their lives on the line to save me. They saved my life, shared their food and guarded me from the enemy. Who can ever repay such a debt?" (12.)

"The best part of my life began here. What happened to me so many years ago, on this amazing island, was the birth of a greater gratitude" (12.)

"Here over 60 years ago I learned that a meal can become a feast, a thatched hut can become a home, a stranger can become a life long friend." (12.)

While the initial coupler business was with the Air Force and Boeing, in 1967 ERA was successful in displacing Collins Radio as the supplier of the antenna coupler on the Lockheed P-3C Patrol aircraft for the Navy. Winning this contract was a milestone in extending the airborne coupler business to other services. (9.)

During his trip back to Papua New Guinea in 1969, Fred and his wife Dorothy ended up staying for four years to help administer the school. During this time Dorothy was a volunteer teacher at the Airmen's Memorial School. In the Fall 1973 newsletter from Fred and Dorothy they reported on their progress:

- "We've finished the wing to the health center. Everybody is quite pleased with the results. The patients moved in while the students were putting the finishing touches on the windows and the roof boards.
- "We have 240 children in the school now. We will graduate 40 students, but there is only room for 10 students to go on to more education. Our goal must be to help most of them live more meaningful lives here in the villages.
- "We are happy to report that of the 1,300 grade six pupils in our area, five of the 30 top students were from the Airmen's Memorial School (see Figure 4). The second highest was Dori Huvi from our school. These results in the national examinations are due to a great extent to the work done by Linda Parfrey, and Jerry and Ann Parks.
- "The big challenge is how to have the school program realize its full potential. The Airmen's Memorial School has the best facilities, library, equipment, teachers, residences, and

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classrooms of any primary school in the rural area of New Guinea. We must get the most out of these fine facilities that you people back home have so generously given.

- “To sum up our program for 1974: We hope to invest our time in people, rather than in bricks and mortar. We have just about all the bricks and mortar we need except for some equipment for the vocational program that we are going to start in February of 1974. Maintenance requirements will naturally continue.
- “In the meantime, we think of you often, we appreciate everyone’s help, encouragement and prayers. Without the support of so many people such as yourselves, the children here in this area would not have an opportunity for any schooling. As the months go by here we realize more than ever that education is the answer to a better life.” (14.)

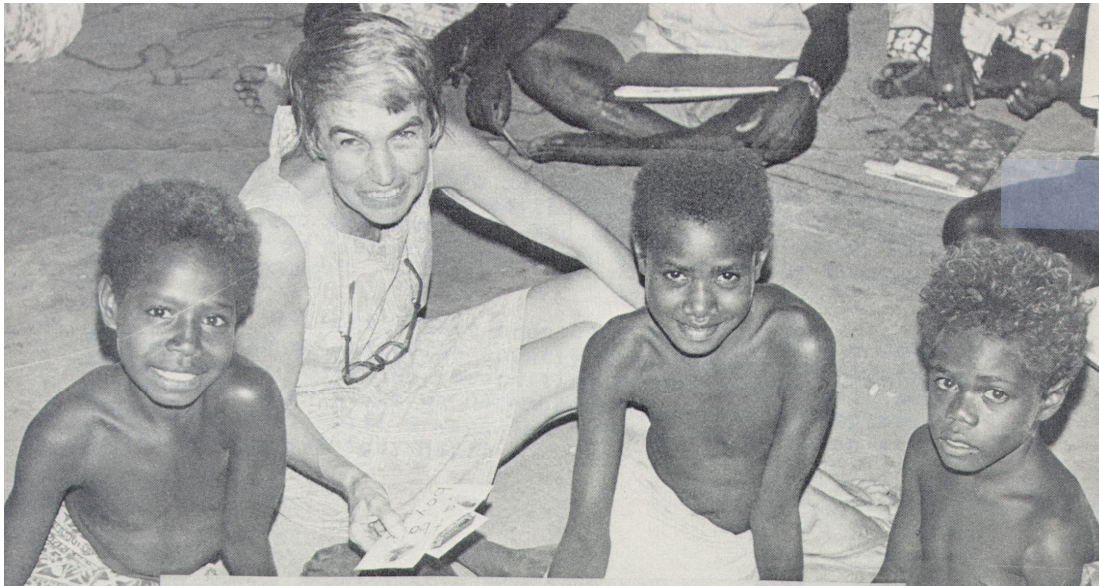


Figure 4. Dorothy with Three Students at the Airmen's Memorial School

In 1978 Fred retired from Sperry Univac and Fred and Dorothy moved to Grass Valley, California. In 1981 they joined with his sister Mary Louise to run a five-acre vineyard. In 1995 they sold the vineyard and this provided more time for Fred to do volunteer work. He volunteered for several non-profit agencies including his favorite employment as a mentor to elementary school children. (15.)

On one of his return trips to New Guinea, Fred received a singular honor, as described in the Papua New Guinea “National Weekender” of October 13, 2000, and correspondence from Fred, titled “The Chief Warrior”:

May 8, 2000 is another day that will stay forever in Mr. Hargesheimer's mind. It was the day he was crowned “Chief Warrior” or Suara Auru by the people in the Nakanai area of West New Britain. The occasion was held at Ewasse village and witnessed by people from Matililiu, Mataururu, Gomu, Apulpul, Baikakea, and Bubu villages, and delegation from Nantabu village. Today this American airman is proud of his new title as Major Fred Hargesheimer-Suara Auru. “I will add this latest title to my business card,” he quipped after his coronation.

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The title of Suara Auru is normally restricted to men with high status or enormous community standing. To the people of Nakanai, Mr. Hargesheimer had the qualities of a chief warrior and has met the necessary requirements to be bestowed the title of Suara Auru.

The occasion was celebrated with a traditional dance called 'piako' performed by young boys from Ewasse village, creative dances, hymns and speeches. As part of the ceremony, Mr. Hargesheimer's hands and feet were decorated with arm bands and bracelets, his face was painted in regal color, a headdress was placed on his head, and he was presented a spear and a shield by Elias Paraide, a leader from Matililiu village. The honor was an expression of appreciation from the people for the Ewasse Airmen's Memorial and the Noau Primary schools which Mr. Hargesheimer built to thank the people for saving him during the Second World War. The chiefly title was also a very special birthday present for his 84th birthday.

During the ceremony, Garua Pani, a pioneer of Airmen's Memorial School hailed Mr. Hargesheimer as a true soldier who "conquered in the air when he successfully ejected to safety, he conquered on the ground when he escaped pursuing Japanese troops, he conquered spiritually as a result of reciting Psalm 23 daily before he was rescued by the Nakanai villagers who were singing 'Onward Christian Soldiers'. And he continued to conquer when he was nursed to health after the bouts of malaria and dysentery." (13.)

In 2004, when Fred was 88, he was in Papua, New Guinea, for the 12th time and to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the start of the Airmen's Memorial Primary School. The attendance at the school in 2004 was 400 students. (4.)

On Fred's 14th visit, when he was 90, he dedicated a new library at the Noau Primary school to the Ea Ea people and handed over the chair of the foundation to an early graduate from the Airmen's Memorial School of Ewasse. On this trip he also met Mathew Male, the only survivor of the group of men who found and rescued him in 1943. (12.)

In July 2006 Fred returned to Papua New Guinea for the 15th time to view the wreckage of the P-38 he was in when he bailed out over New Britain Island. The local people from Masuari village in the Kol area of East Nakanai, where the plane crashed, cleared a landing site area for the helicopter. Fred was flown to the crash site on July 17, 2006, by the helicopter owner and pilot, Jurgan Ruh, who is based in Rabaul, New Britain. Then he was carried on a plastic chair with the aid of two long poles, from the helipad to the crash site some 500 meters into the jungle. Fred was able to identify the airplane parts at the crash site. At this time the school attendance was 500 students. Financial support comes from an Australian foundation and a nearby oil palm plantation. (16.)

A feature length documentary film is currently in production that is based on Fred's book. (17.) Fred, now 91 years old in 2007, lives in Grass Valley, California, and is still in communication with co-workers from Lockheed Martin's legacy companies, ERA and Univac.

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Postscript

Fred Hargesheimer's remarkable story has had many repercussions. Just as he will always be remembered for the school he helped establish, so his name will also be associated with a geologic feature of New Guinea—a lake.

The squadron Fred was a part of took photos of New Britain Island, and when they were developing the maps from the photos while in Melbourne, Australia, they found no name for a particular lake. The lake in question is in the area where Fred was shot down. One of the members of the map developing crew said, “This is the area where Fred was shot down in so let’s name it Lake Hargy.” (19)

Location of Lake Hargy: If one looks up 5 21'37.70”S 151 07'24.08”E in Google Earth one can see exactly where the lake and volcano are located on West New Britain, Papua, New Guinea. (20)

Geologic background of Lake Hargy and volcano: This little-known volcano is one of several major calderas on the island of New Britain (note: a caldera is a deep cavity on the summit of an extinct volcano (21)). The 10 x 12 km Hargy caldera, whose floor is 150 m above sea level, contains an inner caldera with a steep west-facing wall. A caldera lake on the SW side drains through a narrow gap in the northern caldera wall. The latest caldera-forming eruption of Hargy volcano took place about 11,000 years ago. The Galloseulo lava cone rises above and partially overtops the western rim of the caldera. A double crater occupies a larger 700-m-wide crater. Regular small eruptions have taken place at Galloseulo over the past 7,000 years, the last occurring about 1,000 years ago. Galloseulo is located within the west rim of a roughly 12-km-diameter caldera, partly filled by Lake Hargy. The 700-m-diameter main crater contains a secondary, more recent crater. (20)

Historic activity of Lake Hargy and volcano: The volcano has had no known eruptions during historic time. (20)

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