

THE MAZE

Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc.

274 Wilder Drive, Forsyth, GA 31029

MAZE 2012 February Edition

Submitted by Bob Middlebrooks

This MAZE is a document that is emailed to all persons who are interested in the MFA but may or may not be MFA members. While the goal of our group involves genealogy research and searching for ancestors via DNA, we also share stories and events that relate to our families that we think might be interesting to others. With this in mind, the following is an article describing the contribution of my mother to the War effort in WWII. Although she passed away a long time ago, I have never forgotten how she represented the strength of American women when faced with the challenges of war. I know that there are other families with similar stories that make us proud. In today's fast-paced world it is good to reflect on times when people really did say "What can I do for my country?"

MY MOTHER, MY ROSIE THE RIVETER

By Bob Middlebrooks

My mother was Ethel Wingo Middlebrooks.

It was in 1943, when I was seven years old, that mother filled that role. We lived only a few miles from what is now known as Warner Robins Air Force Base, located southeast of Macon, Georgia and she worked on an assembly line. Memories of sixty-nine years ago are hard to retrieve.

After Pearl Harbor, there was a frantic effort to speed up defense construction across the United States, and in 1942, construction began to create Robins Field. In October 1942, Robins Field became fully operational. This was a time when there was a tremendous outpouring of patriotism, and it was a time that brought out the best in Americans. People thought more in terms of "us" and "ours" and less in terms of "me" and "mine." This era is still remembered with a great deal of nostalgia and pride. "Keep'em Flying" was the World War II slogan that appeared on posters all over the base.

In the severe labor shortage of World War II, women were trained for, and successfully performed, jobs that had always been thought to be masculine. In the aircraft engine repair function, for example, the civilian workforce was more than sixty percent female by 1945. It was in the engine repair building No. 169 that my mother worked on a repair carburetors assembly line for the B25 bombers.

I remember that mother did not make a big deal out of it, but rather treated it as something that needed to be done. Mother never learned to drive a car, and I remember she carpooled with several other women on her shifts. I don't remember what shifts she worked, but I do remember that there were times when she was not at home on the weekends.

I was proud of what she was doing. My older brother was in the Navy and on a ship in the Pacific, so we all thought that somehow this was contributing to bringing him home sooner — and perhaps it did. This is not a very exciting recap of one woman's contribution to the war effort, but it was happening all over the nation. It is not a stretch of the imagination to feel that collectively these brave women did their part to ensure the freedom that we enjoy now.

The Wellston, now Warner Robins, had a population of forty-seven people before the war came along. By March 1945, Warner Robins depot had 23,670 people working on board – 10,686 military and 12,984 civilians. My mom was one of the civilians. After V-E Day on May 8th and V-J Day on September 2, 1945, large numbers of employees resigned and took other jobs or left the work force. It is interesting to note that there were complaints that the civilian workers were disappearing faster than the workload. My mom went back to be a housewife – she never quit being a mother.

Source: 1940s: A Foundation Laid *Museum of Aviation*, Warner Robins, Georgia.



ANCESTORS DON'T CHANGE, BUT OUR RECORDS DO

Bob Middlebrooks, DNA Project Chairman

For those of you who have developed a family tree after online research and studying records obtained from various sources, there can be surprises waiting along the way. I can tell you of my personal experience. After carefully reviewing the book written by Louis Middlebrook, I found myself very pleased with the lineage that unfolded and even cranked it into an autobiography I wrote. I could not believe how easily things fit. Then I joined the Middlebrooks Family Association and my bubble burst. Within our association, we have some very astute and experienced genealogists. I found that my family tree assumptions were incorrect and that the book by Louis had some omissions and errors – not too surprising, considering the tools at his disposal at the time. The bottom line is that my ancestor was not John born 1755 but rather Isaac born 1753. This may not seem like a big deal, but for those of us interested in documenting our lineage for our own descendants, it is very important. Some of you have children who may not seem too interested in the subject right now, but as they mature they may develop an interest. To quote a computer phrase, garbage in – garbage out, meaning that we want to pass along correct information for generations to follow. The moral of this story is, by joining the MFA, receiving the official newsletter (the MFA Quarterly), and attending reunions, you have an opportunity to validate or correct your family tree data. Join us.

2012 Annual Middlebrooks Family Association, Inc. Meeting

October 3-6, Mineral Wells, Texas

4 Oct, Thursday: AM- Registration; PM- visit to local sites in Jacksboro to include Fort Richardson, the Jack County Museum, records at the Jack County courthouse, and the genealogical section at the Jacksboro library.

5 Oct, Friday: Day long field trip to family home sites and cemeteries in and around Jacksboro.

6 Oct, Saturday: AM- speakers, PM- business meeting.

Please plan to attend, Mark your calendars.

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~midregerrata/events.htm>