

**Ernest E. Dutcher, Jr.**

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### **Summary, Part 1**

Ernest Dutcher, a military liberator, was born on May 16, 1920 in Antigo, Wisconsin where he lived on a farm with his parents, Amanda and Ernest E. Dulcher, Sr., two older sisters and two younger brothers. They mostly grew potatoes and corn for their own family and only sold a little as lived in the woods far from the market. When he was 16, they moved to a larger farm in Rhinelander, and sold maple syrup. After graduation, Ernest worked in logging. In 1942, he worked for Montgomery Ward's furniture and radio departments. He had been in the National Guard and when Pearl Harbor was bombed, he signed up for the Army. He was processed in Illinois and sent to Jefferson Barracks in Missouri but did not get into pilot training as desired as he developed high blood pressure. Instead he chose radio training and started out as an instructor and took courses at Valley Forge until he was sent to Yale for the Radio Officer's Cadet School. At night Ernest went ice skating where he met his future wife, Beatrice Jane, who followed him to Boca Raton where he had radar training after graduation and they married April 5, 1943. Subsequently they had a son, Ernest E., III and a daughter, Beverly. The children were raised Catholic like his wife though he was Mormon. Upon graduation, he was sent to Fort Wayne, Indiana and then to Sedalia, Missouri for flight training. He became a Radar Officer in charge of radar technicians who checked the radar of the airplanes. Then he was stationed at a base near Salisbury, England. He invented a system using the plane's equipment to assist landing in bad weather. In August 1944 Ernest was assigned to Lt. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. where they did top secret work in the Mediterranean which was classified until Vietnam War. Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.'s goal was to mislead the Germans as to where the allies were landing in Southern France by using loudspeakers and dropping tinfoil. Ernest realized that some of the defeats and accidents were not communicated to the American public as might lower their morale. Since he is the last survivor to know of various wartime secrets, he is writing a book disclosing these secrets. The 90th troop carrier command would fly with gas or medical supplies to the continent and pick up the wounded who were sent to hospitals. In May and June 1945 they picked up survivors of the concentration camps and work camps in Halle, East Germany, and brought them to Amiens, France and then to hospitals. They also carried Russian POWs to the Russian border, Czechs to the Czechoslovakian border, and French from slave labor camps to Paris where they got a red carpet and received by an Honor Guard. These air carrier facts are not known as only land activities were communicated to the public. In August 1945 the war ended and Ernest took a Liberty Ship back to Boston where he was met by his wife and her parents. They drove to Connecticut and decided to use the money he had saved during his time in the service to buy a car and drive to California. The pair stayed with his Uncle Callie, a painter in Santa Monica so Ernest earned some money painting. Then he spent a year working with the USAF at Douglas Air Force Field. In 1949 Ernest opened a radio/television business, Dolly Video, working with stars including Clark Gable and John Wayne. Next, he opened B & D Electronics that sold parts

for televisions. In '65 he designed an anti-collision device using the same radar equipment he had used during the war. Thinking it would prevent collisions like one over Grand Canyon, he met with FAA but they were not interested as it was only 95% successful and Congress requires 100% success to accept a device. Ernest made Cathode Ray tubes and designed tiny tubes for helicopters to find oil sites which solved Bechtel's problem. He did not think the movie, "Band of Brothers" was accurate as the paratroopers were not dropped at correct sites and were not interviewed.

## Part 2

Operation Market Basket was the biggest event but he felt it was diverted by General Patton's tanks which could have shortened the war if they continued to Germany. When Ernest brought supplies to Coventry, England, he witnessed many civilians killed by the bombs. He feels that seeing the movie, "Band of Brothers" made non-Jews feel more sympathetic toward Jews but may wonder why they did not commit suicide. Ernest spoke to first graders about the war. He believes that high school history classes should have such lectures.