

REACHING BEYOND THE WAVES

A Teacher's Sixth Graders' Inspirational Search
for the WW II Survivors of a Downed B-17
and the Men Who Rescued Them

Suzanne Zobrist Kelly

HELLGATE PRESS



ASHLAND, OREGON

Reaching Beyond the Waves

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Published by Hellgate Press
(An imprint of L&R Publishing, LLC)

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Hellgate Press
PO Box 3531
Ashland, OR 97520
email: info@hellgatepress.com

Editor: Harley B. Patrick
Cover Design: L. Redding

Cover photo credits: All photos Bob Kelly except: B-17 drawing, Chad Watson; Western Union telegram, Jim Reynolds; men and rafts, National Archives

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Kelly, Suzanne Zobrist.

Reaching beyond the waves : a teacher's sixth graders' inspirational search for the WWII survivors of a downed B-17 and the men who rescued them / Suzanne Zobrist Kelly. -- First edition.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-55571-812-1

1. Rickenbacker, Eddie, 1890-1973. 2. World War, 1939-1945--Search and rescue operations--Pacific Ocean. 3. Search and rescue operations--Pacific Ocean--History--20th century. 4. Aircraft accidents--Pacific Ocean--History--20th century. 5. History--Research--United States. I. Title.

D810.S45P335 2015

940.54'49730922--dc23

2015006518

Printed and bound in the United States of America
First edition 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

SPECIAL APPRECIATION

To my husband Bob and son Ryan who lived these adventures with me, providing the love and support I always needed,

To the sixth graders who were always my best teachers,

To the men who allowed us to hear echoes of history and touched our hearts,

To my parents, Edith and Herman Zobrist; my neighbors, Ruth and Randy Matson; my educational colleagues, Ruth Walker and Lee Himan; and my sixth grade teacher, Hazel Jacobson, who helped students learn,

To the many librarians, historians, and strangers who found ways to answer students' questions,

To all who met the curiosity of pre-adolescents and embraced their search,

Thank you for reaching out and teaching us that when people go beyond a fleeting wave and connect with people, it is quite an experience to take those life's unsuspected journeys together.

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To John Forssman who used his golden gift of teaching.

To Scott Erickson, and Dan and Donna Ryherd, who shared their interest in Tuvalu.

To Lynn Matson, who encouraged and listened to Update.

SPECIAL HOPE

To Charlie and Quinn, may your awesome adventures with books lead to continued learning, amazing research, and abounding joy.

CONTENTS

	<i>Preface</i>	i
<i>One</i>	Chosen Pathway.....	1
<i>Two</i>	The Course Is Charted.....	7
<i>Three</i>	The Journey Begins.....	19
<i>Four</i>	Sixth Grade Super Sleuths.....	35
<i>Five</i>	Pursue and Persevere.....	47
<i>Six</i>	The Rescue Reunion.....	61
<i>Seven</i>	People Respond.....	87
<i>Eight</i>	A Real Case Solved and More.....	99
<i>Nine</i>	Meeker and Motufoua.....	115
<i>Ten</i>	Albert and Kelly Enterprises.....	131
<i>Eleven</i>	The Journey Continues.....	143
<i>Twelve</i>	Doc Hall and the Medical Corpsmen.....	161
<i>Thirteen</i>	Fifth Defense Battalion.....	179
<i>Fourteen</i>	The Seabees.....	191
<i>Fifteen</i>	The New Zealand Coastwatchers.....	197
<i>Sixteen</i>	Navy Scouting Squadron.....	209
<i>Seventeen</i>	PT Boats and the U.S.S. <i>Hilo</i>	225
<i>Eighteen</i>	Flight OV-369.....	237
<i>Nineteen</i>	The Search.....	251
<i>Twenty</i>	The Rafts.....	263
<i>Twenty-One</i>	The Rescues.....	272
<i>Twenty-Two</i>	Good-Bye, MOB-3.....	285
<i>Twenty-Three</i>	Ripples of the Waves.....	293
	<i>References & Resources</i>	303
	<i>About the Author</i>	319
	<i>Index</i>	321

PREFACE

IN OCTOBER 1942, CAPTAIN (CAPT.) WILLIAM T. CHERRY, JR., member of the United States Army Air Corps and with the Air Transport Command, was forced to ditch a B-17 plane into the Pacific Ocean, because of faulty navigational equipment. On board were Eddie Rickenbacker, a civilian on a special mission for the War Department, and his military aide, Colonel (Col.) Hans Adamson. Eight crew members and passengers survived the emergency landing. All but one person survived for three weeks on rafts. The co-pilot, James Whittaker, wrote about his experience in a 1943 book, *We Thought We Heard the Angels Sing*.

When I was in sixth grade, my teacher, Hazel Jacobson, read the book to me, and I subsequently read it to all my sixth graders when I became a teacher. Forty-two years after the men's ordeal in the rafts, my students wanted to know what had happened to the men. Their curiosity started research that ultimately led to a reunion of the survivors and some of their rescuers. At Meeker Elementary in Ames, Iowa, this reuniting of the men was referred to as the Rescue Reunion, and the students became known as the Sixth Grade Super Sleuths.

In the decade that followed, more sixth graders continued the search to locate other men involved in the separate rescues of the three rafts. Before the technology of the Internet and Google searches, students wrote hundreds of letters to locate men from this World War II event. They found the raft builders, medical corpsmen, New Zealand coastwatchers, Navy scouting squadrons and construction battalions. They located the men who had been on the motor patrol torpedo boats, flew search planes from coded bases in the Pacific, and U.S. Marines who were on a remote

coral island. They found Toma, a young native islander, who had rescued some of the men in his outrigger canoe.

The sixth graders and I started our research with information from Whittaker's book, old copies of *LIFE* magazine, and declassified documents from the military and the National Archives. We continued to develop extensive research with assistance from public librarians, newspaper reporters, military organizations, and even the State Department. Due to national publicity of our Rescue Reunion, people who had been involved in this incident then began to contact us. Each clue they provided was used to find more people and information.

What started as a sixth grade class research project to find eight men led to thirty years of contact with survivors, rescuers, and others involved in this historic event. Through correspondence and personal visits, the men told us their stories. Sometimes they asked our help to locate former military buddies or find members of a group for an upcoming reunion. We developed friendships with them and their families.

As our research skills grew, so did our admiration for the courage and sacrifice of these veterans. *Reaching Beyond the Waves* is a chronicle of the sixth graders' search for those men of World War II and the personal stories that connected us all.

Chapter One

CHOSEN PATHWAY

LIFE'S JOURNEY IS A COMBINATION OF chosen pathways and unsuspected side trips. During World War II, a routine military flight became an unforeseen three-week ordeal of survival. This incident happened a year before I was born but impacted my life for over fifty years.

In October 1942, Captain William T. Cherry, Jr. was forced to ditch a B-17 plane into the Pacific Ocean. On board was Eddie Rickenbacker, a civilian on a special mission for the War Department. Eight crew members and passengers survived the emergency landing. All but one person survived three weeks on rafts, before each raft had a separate rescue. The plane's crew was unknown to the public, but Rickenbacker was famous around the world as the American Ace from the previous world war.

The co-pilot, James Whittaker, kept a diary of his experience and wrote *We Thought We Heard the Angels Sing*. In the mid-1950s I sat in the front row of a sixth grade classroom and listened spellbound as my teacher, Hazel Jacobson, read Whittaker's book to our class.

The book was rather an unassuming one, but the story was riveting. I marveled at the men's courage as they faced being lost because of faulty navigational equipment and then running out of fuel. I held my breath as Mrs. Jacobson read how pilot Captain Cherry ditched the plane into the Pacific with expertise that kept the four-motored land plane resting on the waves long enough for the crew to launch three small life rafts. I had tears when my teacher read about Alex dying and being buried at sea. It was hard to imagine the lack of water and food (only four scrawny oranges), the equatorial heat, threats of sharks, and towering waves.

There were many reasons why the book interested me. Growing up on a farm in Dallas County in the middle of Iowa, I was far removed from the salty Pacific Ocean. Other than frequent squabbles with my older brother Dale, usually over who could reach the mailbox first at the end of the driveway, my childhood was rather peaceful. This event from the war seemed distant and almost unreal.

I was also fascinated with flying. I often rambled around the farm, sometimes climbing to a high branch of the maple tree or on top of a small, pitched-roof hog house, and listened to planes fly over the farm to the rural airport about three miles away. I thought pilots were dashing heroes. I wondered what had happened to Captain Cherry after he was rescued.

Mostly, I was intrigued with the details of the story. Written during the war, many facts were obscured. Where were the men headed on their mission? Island X. I scanned maps in the encyclopedia and looked for clues in the public library in the small town of Adel, Iowa. But Island X, of course, was a coded location.

Although I was a shy child, who found it difficult to interact with others in a public setting, I liked people. As a youngster, I alternated between wanting to become a teacher or an even better Nancy Drew, the fictional detective character I loved to read about in the Carolyn Keene books. That sixth grade year, I was particularly intrigued with the old Lindeman Place, which was located a half-mile north of our farm. One autumn night, three friends and I, armed with notepads and flashlights, pushed open the sagging front door of the abandoned farmhouse. Entry was unsafe, but we dutifully recorded each observed detail. The memory of that adventure has remained with me. In the fall of 1955, however, I had no idea that investigative work and public communication would be integral parts of my future.

But the most auspicious thing about sixth grade was my teacher. Since I adored Mrs. Jacobson and she read that book to us, I then planned to read it to my future students. After graduating from Iowa State University, I accepted a sixth grade teaching assignment. My parents presented me with

a gift—a used book, now out-of print, and the same book Mrs. Jacobson had read to me. I had no perception how much that book would connect future pathways in my life.

This is the story of how my sixth graders researched history and how I guided their steps. Before the days of school computers, the Internet, Google, or smart phones, finding answers to questions meant reading an encyclopedia. This is an account of the World War II event, how it captured my curiosity, motivated my students, and ultimately connected my sixth graders with people around the world.

As a teacher, I soon discovered that sixth graders in my class always had particular parts of the book they found fascinating, such as how the men rationed the segments of oranges, withstood the equatorial heat, and prayed nightly to the “Old Master” for food, water, and rescue. Students listened intently to the description of the men’s painful saltwater ulcers, agonizing thirst, and their cramped endurance in the small life rafts. They thrilled at the invention of Captain Cherry’s undershirt sail attached to an oar propped against the side of the raft. They almost always touched their own noses at the account of Bill Cherry’s encounter with a ten-foot shark that broke *his* nose.

Sometimes students begged for more reading time, almost unable to withstand the suspense if I stopped in the middle of a particular spot, such as where the men were discussing using parts of their own flesh as a solution for needed bait to catch fish. An ear lobe? A piece of a little finger? But before the men reached a decision, there came what Whittaker called “a startling interruption.”

Predicted protests always came rapidly. “Mrs. Kelly, you can’t stop reading!” But I always did. Somehow, it was time to go to another class, or noon recess, or....Soon I could not resist, and I would continue reading. Students listened pensively to the author’s forthright description of possibly carving bits of themselves for bait; so desperate were they for food.

Then when I read on about a sea swallow landing on Rickenbacker’s head, students’ reactions ranged from cheers to quiet clutching of their

hands with reverent relief the men had found food. When I read about the men eating the sea swallow, or later, miniscule bites of shark or other fish, students usually sat quietly. Some years I had to add, “Do you understand that they had to eat it raw?” Then the light dawned and responses ranged from reflexive clutching of their abdomen to calm acceptance of survival necessities.

But most of the men’s ordeal dealt with thirst. Once during a rainsquall the men were able to catch a little water and store it in their inflatable life preservers, called Mae Wests—so named after the popular buxom actress of the 1940s. I had learned to grab a drink at the hall water fountain before I read those passages to my class. It was all I could do to keep my mouth from being so dry the words could not form. How could the men have survived that long without a cold glass of water?

In World War II, when the men were reported missing, searched for, and given up for lost, major media covered the events. I had read newspaper clippings and even seen an old movie about the ordeal. Eddie Rickenbacker had been famous before he was lost, but became even more so, when the men were found. He and his military aide, Colonel Hans Adamson, another passenger on the B-17, had also written books about their survival. However, it was the copy of James Whittaker’s, *We Thought We Heard the Angels Sing*, that became a fixture in my classroom. To my sixth graders it was a capitalized wonder known appropriately as “The Book.”

After almost three weeks on the rafts, the men spotted United States Navy Kingfisher planes flying dawn and dusk patrols. The planes, however, did not see the rafts. So near death, the men’s agony of hearing the planes drone on was almost unbearable. Finally, after twenty days of drifting together, the rafts separated. Cherry believed that if they spread over a larger distance, they had a better chance of being seen. Therefore, each raft had a separate rescue. Students wondered how each one occurred. Although Whittaker detailed his own rescue, not as many facts were provided about the others. Students always had questions.

I did not know when I first started reading *The Book* to sixth graders that it would be forty years after the war before some of those questions

would be answered—and that they would be answered by my sixth graders with their infinite curiosities that could reach beyond the waves.



Suzanne Kelly's 1984-85 Language Arts Class, Room 14, Meeker Elementary. *Top Row:* Mr. Himan (Principal), Niki Nilsen, Jennifer Jones, Chad Watson, Cathy Watson, Derrick Boden, Lisa Moore, and Mrs. Kelly. *Middle Row:* Nicki Moreland, Michele Mitchell, Brad Arnold, Travis Senne, Erik Smedal, and David Jurgens. *Front Row:* Amy Larson, Ben Jackson, David Abelson, Amy Murphy, Christy Scott, Amy LeMay, and Doug Haynes. (Photo Bob Kelly)

Chapter Two

THE COURSE IS CHARTED

THE SCHOOL YEAR STARTED MUCH LIKE OTHER YEARS. I now was in my nineteenth year of elementary teaching. I already knew this year's class had energy to burn, and although I appreciated their enthusiasm, I had not yet channeled it. When my husband Bob asked how my class was the first week, I had replied, "They're great, but their constant chatter is a challenge."

Although the students were always different, there was a certain rhythm to the beginning of a new school year. I had read *The Book* to the sixth graders, and they were as enthused as usual. However, this year when I finished reading, one boy asked, "Mrs. Kelly, what happened to the men?" I gave my standard answer that Rickenbacker was no longer living, but I did not know about the others. Travis Senne was insistent. "But I want to know. What happened to the men?" It was a thought-provoking question, but one to which I had no answer.

Sixth graders are a rare breed—individualistic yet social, predictable but full of surprises. Independently feisty, they crave a group to survive. Sarcastically mouthy, they melt your heart with a word or phrase. As one mother once told me, "You have to love them a lot, but don't have to like them at all." Myself? Licensed to teach from pre-school through secondary, I ended up caught in the middle, exactly where I belonged. I adored sixth graders.

Too old to be little kids and too young to be big kids, sixth graders are perpetually active. Their growing spurts are huge, and muscles beg to be used. Jumping up to touch the hallway doorframes was as much a rite of passage for pre-adolescence as discovering their first acne. "Bet you can't

do that, Mrs. Kelly,” was always accompanied with a smirky grin. The students used me, at five foot three, as a measure of how much they had grown. I always loved how smirky grins could become even smirkier.

Always wanting change and variety, sixth graders fluctuate from “This is boring!” to “How cool!” Individually, they can be naively innocent and yet concerned about the complexities of life. They can be punching a sibling while worrying about world peace.

Meeting the needs of all students at all times can be a daunting task, and an almost impossible goal, even for a dedicated teacher. But between the unique moments of daily routines and reaching lofty dreams are a few hours in a day to make a difference—a difference that can only occur if a motivation to learn is part of the student’s burning desire to “find out.”

We had been in school less than four weeks when I noticed my neck was swollen on one side. In the three days since I made a doctor’s appointment, the swelling had become noticeably larger. The doctor was forthright. He thought the tumor was benign, but it needed to be removed as soon as possible. Surgery was scheduled within the week.

A week! That was not much time. There were things I wanted to say and do with my husband Bob and our six-year-old son Ryan. Personal preparations had to be made, even facing the positive odds that confronted me.

The next day I talked to the class. Not wanting to be too dramatic about my health concern, and yet needing to prepare my students, I said, “I hope the doctor is correct and I’ll be fine. If I get to return to class soon, let’s think of a way to celebrate.”

Guessing they would choose a pizza party, I was surprised when they were adamant. “*Mrs. Kelly, we want to find the men.*” Usually eleven and twelve-year-olds are interested in books about friends, football, or science fiction—not historical biographies. To them, history was past and had very little connection to the present. At this point I was unaware it was the beginning of one of my professional unexpected side trips.

Two weeks later, I faced my sixth graders the first day back from surgery on October 15, 1984. Weak, but grateful for my health, I

remember the day clearly. I had just finished a lesson and had given an assignment. Still not having the strength to stand for long periods, I slipped into my desk chair and looked around the room.

Quietly, Travis approached my desk. “You said when you got well we could find the men.” (I actually had said *if* I got well and came back to school, but Travis had heard *when*.)

But I had been waiting for his question. “We’ll talk about it later.”

Sixth graders do not like the word *later* connected to something they want to do. They are *now* people. Later only slows them down. Sixth graders do not like to be slowed down—not when they are running in the halls, and certainly not when they have an idea of something they want to do.

Eight men had been thrust on three small life rafts. Among them were names—Cherry, Reynolds, Bartek, Whittaker, DeAngelis, Kaczmarczyk, Adamson—and one famous person, Eddie Rickenbacker. What *had* happened to the men?

The time was now. I could feel an excitement I had never felt before. That may seem strange. I do not believe it was a premonition or a vision of some kind; it was just a feeling, but deeper yet, a knowing that I did not understand. And so, I faced the class.

I explained that I had former students who also had wanted to find out what happened to the men, but they never followed through with clues. But now I was a more experienced teacher. I was more familiar with references and researching skills. I could help students organize and structure their learning around this project. The school district’s required learning objectives could be met in a variety of ways. To the class I said, “I have specific lessons that I must prepare for you to learn. The way you learn these lessons can be changed. But this is not a game. In fact, if you research this Word War II incident right, you will work harder than any sixth graders I have ever had. The choice will be yours. However, don’t make the decision lightly thinking it’s a way of getting out of work.”

I looked around the room. A few sheepish grins were covered amidst the direct glances of expectation. Most faces held the combination of innocence and total guilt that I so loved about this aged child.



Captain William T. Cherry, Jr. was the B-17 pilot from Texas.



Lieutenant James C. Whittaker, the co-pilot, was author of the book, *We Thought We Heard the Angels Sing*.



Sergeant James W. Reynolds was the radio operator from California.



Lieutenant John J. DeAngelis was the navigator.



Private John F. Bartek was the engineer from New Jersey.



Sergeant Alex Kaczmarczyk, recently released from the hospital and flying to rejoin his group, was assigned as an engineer for the flight.

“Okay,” I acknowledged. “How do you want to begin?”

“You tell us,” replied one student.

“That’s not the way this is going to work. You will be the detectives. You must plan and work together to find clues and follow up on them. You will read information and summarize it, pulling facts that need to be documented and connected with other facts. You will write letters asking questions. Then you will write more letters thanking people for the answers they gave that led to more questions. Eventually, your clues will form a pattern, and you will be hot on the trail of the case you wanted to handle. But whether you will solve it or not, I do not know. No detective ever does. If you did, it wouldn’t be a mystery.”

I paused and looked at each student. Every upturned face met mine. No one slouched in a chair. I could read their eyes. Children hear with their ears, but they really listen with their eyes. These students understood. I continued, “I will teach you research skills. You will also teach each other and me. Together we can share strategies to find the men. But it will probably take the entire school year. It will be difficult to find the answers we want. After all, the B-17 incident happened forty-two years ago.”

That fall of 1984, teaching was different than it is now. Before the “No Child Left Behind” legislation, teachers still prepared lessons, tried to meet the needs of individual students, and assessed student achievement of a prescribed curriculum. However, traditional classrooms also contained numerous workbooks and practice sheets for students to work individually at their desks. I taught in a semi-departmentalized situation, exchanging classes with two other teachers. Known as the science teacher, I taught three science classes each day, along with my homeroom language arts. These students went to other teachers for their social studies and math. We would only be able to do this research during our language arts time together.

By the end of the year, students would have covered all required skills, but in different ways. I would adapt the school district’s language arts curriculum to fit this specific research project. The reading, writing, and research skills would be learned not only by individual lessons but also by team sharing and real-world application. I started with a few fundamental guidelines.

(1) I would teach them how to problem solve. I already advocated “hands on” science learning with investigative labs. But I had never specifically incorporated problem solving into a language arts curriculum. I would guide their research, but the students would be involved in selecting and following the pathways we would attempt. Teachers help students learn to be better thinkers, but this investigative research would involve more skills than I had ever emphasized with sixth graders. Research also meant use of reference materials. We were limited to shaggy red dictionaries, outdated encyclopedias, one old world atlas, wall-hanging maps of the United States and Europe, and a rusty metal globe that sixth graders loved to spin but hated to use.

(2) All research would be shared with the class. There would be no competition between students, only energy to achieve our common goals. We would have class meetings to brainstorm ideas and time to share progress reports. We would break the over-all task of finding the men into smaller chunks, so individual students could participate in different ways. Students would need more self-discipline to stay on task in a classroom where many different lessons were being learned at the same time.

(3) We would follow all clues at once. We would not wait for answers before asking further questions. If we had multiple ways to find answers, we would explore more than one path simultaneously.

(4) We would make copies of all correspondence to have a paper trail of documentation. Notes would be kept on sources, a journal would be recorded of all activities, and information would be filed in a central location. Students would have access to what other students had discovered. We

would learn research skills by doing research, and we would tell a story with that research.

(5) I personally would absorb extra costs for the project. Schools have budgets, but they do not have money. I would provide envelopes and postage stamps for correspondence, three-ring binders and dividers for the information, and page protectors for documents. For the moment, we would not use telephone calls for various reasons. First, other than the office phones and a phone for teachers in the hallway, no telephones were available for students. Second, long distance calls were expensive. Third, with phone calls there were no paper trails. Any verbal conversation would have to be recorded as notes.

After these guidelines were explained, we started our research with a large class meeting to organize a plan of action. Students brainstormed ideas.

“I think we need to form groups. There were eight men, but Mrs. Kelly says that Eddie Rickenbacker isn’t living. So let’s form seven groups.”

“No. We need six groups. Remember Alex died at sea and wasn’t rescued.”

“I have another idea,” came a quieter voice from the midst of the hubbub. “We can’t forget about Alex. It wasn’t his fault he died.”

A louder voice chimed in, “Yeah. Remember the Alamo. Remember Alex.”

“We’re not talking about the Alamo. We’re talking about people.”

“Same thing.”

“Is not.”

“Is so.”

“Mrs. Kelly, what should we do?”

I was tired. Would my full strength and energy level ever return? Surely, using a textbook and assigning pages of written work was easier than this. I looked at the expectant faces in front of me. Some

day they would be employees applying teamwork for a business or spouses learning the give and take of marriage. Right now, however, they were sixth graders. They needed time and opportunity to learn communication skills, as well as traditional reading and writing skills. So I began, “What do you want to know?”

Travis was emphatic. “I want to know what happened to the men!”

“Yeah,” came support from across the aisle. “We want to know if they have any kids.”

Someone giggled. “First, we want to know if they got married!”

A classmate added, “Some of them were engaged. I forgot who. But some weren’t.”

Another student piped up, “I wanna know what they did. I mean, were they real people?”

“Of course they were real people.”

*“You know what I mean. In *The Book* it talked about John Bartek, the engineer, wanting to be a minister. Was he—like a real minister?”*

Finally, the students reached a conclusion. There were eight men on the rafts. Each man was important, living or not. All the students in the class would be divided into seven groups, each group to research one of the men who was rescued. In addition, all groups would work to find information on Alex, who died at sea.

The Book was our best resource. As the author, James Whittaker had written an account of the event from his point of view. For him, the rescue of the men had strengthened his belief that God had intervened to save them. This was a perfect example to help students understand an author’s purpose, which was one of our reading skills. We discussed the difference between facts and opinions, another reading skill. This was done in context of *The Book*. When I first read *We Thought We Heard the Angels Sing*, I omitted some of the passages Whittaker had quoted from John Bartek’s little New Testament. I told students they were welcome to read those parts on their own. I never wanted anyone to be uncomfortable with what I was teaching, and therefore, made a distinction between the actual event that had occurred with Whittaker and his interpretation of how it had changed his life. But the students were interested in their pursuit of the men.

Besides Eddie Rickenbacker, Col. Hans Adamson was also a passenger on the plane. He was a military aide for Rickenbacker while on this mission for the War Department. Alex Kaczmarczyk, a sergeant who had been hospitalized, was returning to his assignment in the Pacific. He was designated as an engineer for the flight, because he had more experience than Bartek. The rest of the crew consisted of pilot Bill Cherry and co-pilot James Whittaker, along with James Reynolds, the radio operator; Johnny J. DeAngelis, the navigator; and John Bartek, the flight engineer.

Thus, the seven groups of students began their research with any clues they had. For example, Whittaker wrote that the pilot Bill Cherry had lived in the Dallas-Fort Worth area before the war. Obviously, this was a starting point. My task was to help students take that clue, problem solve, and use it to gain more information.

“If you know a city where somebody lives, how do you find their address?” I asked.

“But we don’t know if Captain Cherry lives in Dallas or Fort Worth. Maybe he’s not even living,” responded one sixth grader.

“That’s right,” I agreed. “But we have to start with the clue we have. Let us assume that Captain Cherry is living, that he returned from the war, and that his home now is still in Texas. How can we find him?”

“Ask somebody,” a student suggested.

“Whom should we ask?” I prodded.

I could see the looks on their faces. To them, if you have a question, you ask it. If you have a question, someone else answers it. But there were no easy answers. Even the questions were difficult.

I backed up, trying to channel their thinking. “If I knew you lived in Ames, Iowa, how could I find where you live?” I asked, realizing the closer the big picture came to their level, the easier for them to relate.

One student’s eyes lit up. “I’d call you up on the phone.”

A student turned to look at the speaker while he pondered the idea. “But what if you didn’t know my phone number?”

The room was silent, but it was filled with energy. You could see on the faces how ideas were shaping. Phone book! Look up Captain Cherry’s

address in the telephone book! Christy Scott's group was ecstatic. They had a plan. Christy was to go to the Ames Public Library and find a Dallas-Fort Worth telephone book and copy the address for Captain Cherry. Students could hardly wait until tomorrow.

The next morning Christy appeared in the classroom doorway. "Mrs. Kelly, I don't know, but I may have found something." Quickly we organized a class meeting, so we all could hear her report.

"Last night I went to the public library and looked in the phone book. I copied the addresses for fifty-three names of Cherry, but there wasn't one that was a Bill Cherry."

Students expressed their disappointment in many ways—forlorn looks, sighs, and shakes of their heads. But Christy continued, "I still had some time before my dad picked me up, so I turned to the section in the phone book for the suburbs."

"What's a suburb?" one student wondered.

Another answered, "You know, like a smaller city connected to a bigger city, like West Des Moines is connected to Des Moines."

Students were learning, sharing, and teaching each other. Christy began again. "I found a suburb called Grapevine that is between Ft. Worth and Dallas. In that phone directory I found a listing for 'Cherry, Wm T III.'"

I explained what "the third" was and students raced to *The Book*. We had been calling the pilot "Captain Cherry" for so long, we did not know if the author had indicated anything else. We looked, and there it was. The pilot of the plane was William T. Cherry, Jr. Surely that meant that William T. Cherry, III was Captain Cherry's son.

The group helped Christy compose a letter. We had taken our first clue and followed it. Later that afternoon, while the students were at recess, I took the letter dated November 15, 1984, to the school's office. I paid for a stamp and deposited our first letter in the mail for postal pick-up at the end of the day. I remember clearly that a warm wave of anticipation swept over me. The principal, Lee Himan, came out of his office.

I am very hopeful that you might be Captain Skilliam Cherry, or his son or maybe even grandson of the veteran. I am hoping for very promising results, and am eager to receive any information or leads in our difficult search. I will be awaiting your reply!

Cordially yours,
Christy Scott
Room # 14

Christy Scott and her group composed a letter for the pilot, William T. Cherry, Jr. Later, Capt. Cherry related how much he loved Christy's beautiful handwriting.

“What’s up, Mrs. Kelly?” he asked.

“I’m not sure,” I said, “but I’ll let you know.” Our investigation had begun. I hoped our story had started to be written. But after thirty years of wondering, I felt that something was going to happen.