

Dombås Memorial Park

April 21, 1990

We have assembled here today to honor the 29 brave Norwegians who lost their lives in the defense of Dovre in April 1940, to remember the suffering of the entire population of this area during the five years of German occupation, and to commemorate the death of Captain Robert Moffat Losey, the first American serviceman in the uniform of his country to die in the Second World War. Captain Losey's sacrifice was followed by the battle deaths of 292,131 Americans later in the war.

The United States has always honored the courage and sacrifices of the Norwegian people from the beginning of the war. The words of President Roosevelt as he presented a destroyer to Norway in 1942 eloquently express this: "If there are still some people who don't know why we are fighting this war, look to Norway. If there are still some people thinking that the war could have been avoided, look to Norway. And if there are still some people who have any doubts about democracy's will to win, I say again, look to Norway."

Transcription of speech by Mrs. Lorett Miller Ruppe, American Ambassador to Norway (1988-1992)
on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the German Invasion of Norway

On April 21, 1940, Captain Losey was standing inside a railway tunnel at Dombås, his car loaded on the train, as the enemy planes dropped their bombs. Captain Losey was an Army Air Attache and special aide to the American Ambassador (actually Minister in 1940) to Norway, Florence Harriman, who was leading the evacuation by land of the American diplomatic staff into Sweden. On April 19, Captain Losey had said to Ambassador Harriman: "I certainly don't want to be killed." But that did not stop him from volunteering to try to locate the Norwegian General Staff and help support the spouses and children of the American Consulate staff, who had fled Oslo for a mountain area north of Lillehammer.

Captain Losey did not have to expose himself to the danger of the bombs, but he chose to move away from the protection of the wall of the tunnel in order to observe better the enemy's tactics and weapons of war. In one instant, he was dead; a piece of shrapnel had pierced his heart.

A human heart can be pierced by shrapnel, or bullets or bombs, but the heart beat of a people can never be destroyed. The heart and the spirit of the Norwegian people and the American people survived and prevailed, and we feel that heart and spirit as we stand here today.

Just as Captain Losey is now forever linked with Dombås, the United States and Norway are forever linked in friendship and remembrance. And this simple but beautiful Memorial Park will forever link most fittingly its primary founders, American Ambassador Mark Austad and Norwegian Commanding General Sverre Hamre.

On behalf of President Bush and the American people, I join with all of you here today in honoring the heroes of April 1940.

And I close with the most fitting words of King Olav's father - uttered in this very valley 50 years ago:

King Haakon VII

"I thank all those who are today with me and the Government, and who are fighting at their posts of duty for the independence and preservation of Norway.

"I pray you all to treasure the memory of those who have already given their lives for this country.

"God protect Norway." (And, may I add, the United States of America.)

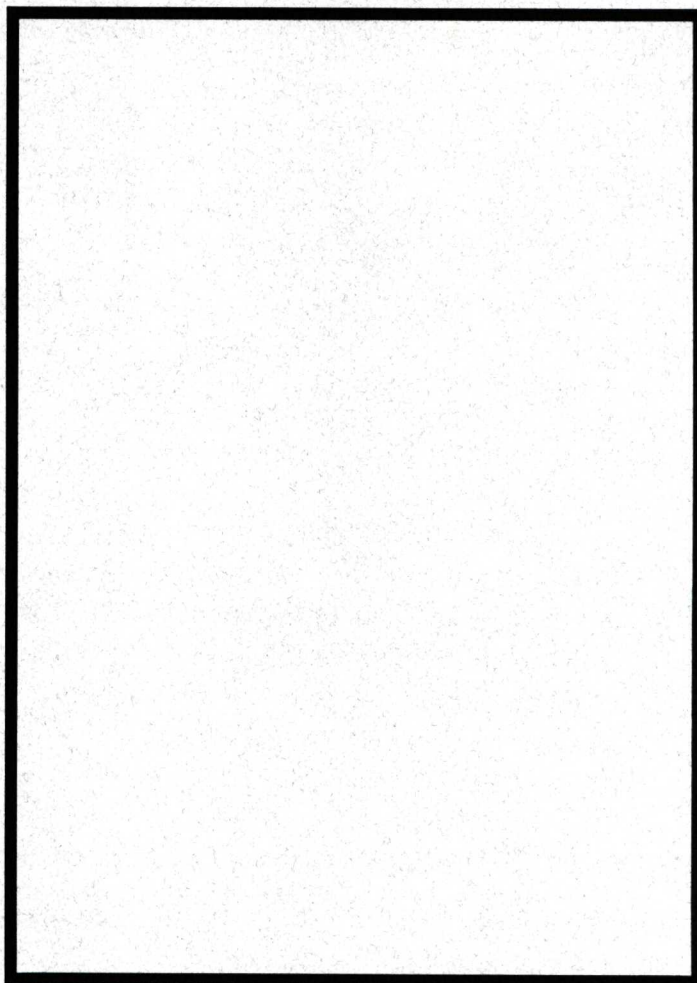
It was one of those wonderful winter-spring days that we have in Norway when everything smells good and fruitful. It smells of wet moss wherever a stone raises its head above the snow. And there was a gentle and sweet sough through the treetops — a sough that became audible each time the harsh roar of the German aircraft engines died down for a little while and there was a pause in the gunfire. This was the day the American air attaché, Captain Losey, was killed.

April 21, 1940
Sigrid Undset

Nobel Prize Laureate in Literature 1928

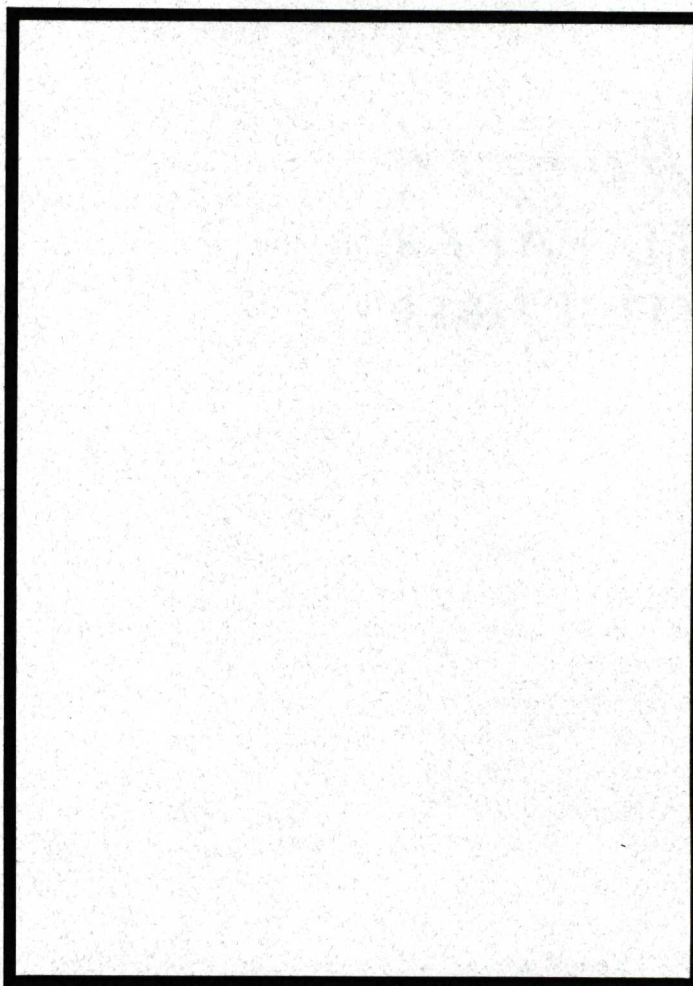
Struck in the heart by a German air bomb fragment, Captain Robert Moffat Losey, a 1929 graduate of West Point who was the assistant American Military attaché for Air, was killed instantly in Dombås, Norway when German bombers swooped down on this important railroad junction in the Dovre mountains in an effort to smash its railroad connections and stop an Allied advance toward both Trondheim and Oslo. Five hours after the German paratrooper's attack in 1940, the King of Norway, the Crown Prince and three Ministers passed through Dombås in a railway car. They were under way to Otta under top secret conditions.

The death of Captain Losey, the first American serviceman in uniform killed in World War II, was major news of the day. Stories ran in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post* and *Newsweek* detailing his unfortunate demise. His death even elicited a response from the German High Command, with Field Marshall Hermann Goering, German Minister of Air, sending his condolences through Lieut. Gen. Friedrich von Boettcher, German military and air attaché. Goering's condolences were sent to Secretary of War Harry H. Woodring, General George C. Marshall, and Captain Losey's widow.



It was not until the early 1980's, some forty years after his death, did Captain Losey receive any permanent memorial to his memory. In 1983, when then ambassador to Norway Mark Evans Austad heard for the first time that this tragedy took place in Dombås, he contacted Washington to have the facts verified. Austad quickly set the wheels in motion to create an appropriate memorial both to commemorate Losey and to recognize the major contribution by the people of Norway during the war.

On August 22, 1987, in Dombås, Norway, a World War II Norwegian-American Memorial Park was unveiled. Captain Losey's monument (noted in the February 22, 1994 issue of USA Today) was dedicated by the King of Norway, Olav V. King Olav, who as Crown Prince passed through Dombås just hours after Capt. Losey's death in 1940, emphasized the brotherly relationship between the United States and Norway and the tremendous efforts of the Norwegian people during the war. "*Enige og tro til Dovre falls*" (United and true, until Dovre falls) still rings true today.



The grave of Capt. Robert M. Losey
United States Military Academy at West Point, New York

On May 8, 1995, the kingdom of Norway will rededicate the monument to Capt. Losey during the 50th Anniversary of the Liberation of Norway. It would be most fitting for America to join in honoring the memory of its own patriot, Robert Moffat Losey. As the first American serviceman in uniform killed in World War II, a commemorative United States Postage Stamp would be a lasting tribute to a fallen hero.

Sincerely yours,

Keith G. Thienemann
Losey Genealogist
Lynchburg, Virginia
August 1994

Robert Losey Lee
Nephew of Capt. Losey
Baltimore, Maryland

Christine Albers née Bailey
Cousin of Capt. Losey
Lynchburg, Virginia

THIS PROPOSAL TO THE
CITIZENS STAMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE
FOR A UNITED STATES POSTAGE STAMP IN MEMORY OF

CAPT. ROBERT MOFFAT LOSEY

FIRST AMERICAN SERVICEMAN IN UNIFORM
KILLED IN WORLD WAR II

DOMBÅS, NORWAY
APRIL 21, 1940

IS BEING PRESENTED BY

KEITH G. THIENEMANN
LOSEY GENEALOGIST
205 CORNWALLIS DRIVE
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA 24502-2732

ROBERT LOSEY LEE
NEPHEW OF CAPTAIN ROBERT M. LOSEY
285 NORTH VALLEY ROAD
BARRINGTON, ILLINOIS 60010

CHRISTINE ALBERS NÉE BAILEY
COUSIN OF CAPTAIN ROBERT M. LOSEY
2812 LINK ROAD
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA 24503

AUTUMN 1994

ADDENDA

COPIES OF THE FOLLOWING, IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER,
ARE INCLUDED AS NOTES AND REFERENCES TO THIS PROPOSAL

- Capt. Robert M. Losey's degree from the United States Military Academy, Class of 1929
- Seventy-Second Annual Report of the Association of the United States Military Academy
at West Point, New York June 10, 1940
- Press Release on the Death of Capt. Losey issued by the U.S. War Department, April 22, 1940
- Nazis Kill U.S. Attache*, The Detroit News, April 22, 1940
- German Bomb Kills U.S. Attache During Air Raid on Norse Town*, Associated Press April 23, 1940
- Capt. Losey's Body Taken To Sweden Under Guard*, United Press April 23, 1940
- U.S. Weighs Action on Aid Killed by Nazis*, New York Daily News, April 23, 1940
- U.S. Officer, Ex-Trentonian, Killed by Bomb in Norway*, Trenton State Gazette,
Trenton, New Jersey April 23, 1940
- Affidavit by Lars M. Fröislie, Capt. Losey's chauffeur, attesting to his death, April 25, 1940
- Losey Funeral Held*, United Press April 26, 1940
- American Casualty*, Newsweek, April 29, 1940
- Daisy Harriman Outruns Bombs*, Life Magazine May 13, 1940
- Obituary of Capt. Robert Losey, May 29, 1940 (publication unknown)
- West Point Rites for American Killed by Nazi Bomb*, Daily Mirror, May 30, 1940
- Oliver F. Van Camp, New Jersey Secretary of the Senate to Mrs. Margaret Lee, Capt. Losey's sister,
June 3, 1940 informing her of a resolution adopted by the Senate of the State of New Jersey
- mourning the death of Robert Moffat Losey
- New Jersey State Senate Resolution April 29, 1940 mourning the death of Robert Moffat Losey

ADDENDA

CONTINUED

Just Like Daisy, (photo of Losey on page 25), Saturday Evening Post, June 22, 1940

Five or Six Killed With Air Attache, publication and date unknown

Killed in Norway, Associated Press Wirefoto

Woman Guarded Capt. Losey's Ashes, publication and date unknown

First American Killed in the War, Ripley's Believe it or Not, July 1944

Program from the Dedication of 1st through 11th Streets at Scott Air Force Base, Illinois
(9th Street renamed in honor of Robert M. Losey, Captain, United States Air Force) June 28, 1979

Classmates Remember First American Killed in WWII, Bucks County Courier Times,
Bucks Co., PA November 9, 1980

War Veterans Remembered, Aftenpost, Oslo, Norway August 24, 1987

Drama at Dombås, by Arthur Svennevik, The Sons of Norway December 1987

*Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Nazi Invasion of Norway
and the First United States Casualty of World War II*,
Congressional Record, Washington, D.C. April 4, 1990

Transcription of speech by Mrs. Loret Miller Ruppe,
American Ambassador to Norway (1988-1992) on the occasion of
the 50th anniversary of the German Invasion of Norway April 21, 1990

U.S. soldier honored in small town, USA Today February 22, 1994

Hero's cousin? Why, yes, I am, USA Today February 25, 1994

Itinerary of the Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Liberation Day,
May 8, 1995 in Dombås, Norway

UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY

Under authority contained in an Act of Congress, approved May 25, 1933
and upon the recommendation of the Academic Board
the United States Military Academy hereby confers on

Robert Moffat Losey

of the Class of 1929 the Degree of

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE

in recognition of his proficiency in all the branches of the Arts and
Sciences and of Literature taught at the Academy

Given under the seal of the Academy, at West Point, in the
State of New York, this twelfth day of October, in the year of our Lord
One thousand, nine hundred and thirty-four

R. L. Eckelberry

Major, A. G. D.

Secretary

W. C. Corman

Major General, U. S. Army

Superintendent and Commandant

SEVENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT

of the

Association of Graduates

of the

United States Military Academy

at

West Point, New York

June 10, 1941



Printed by
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Newburgh, N. Y.

ROBERT M. LOSEY

NO. 8598 CLASS OF 1929

Died April 21, 1940. at Dombas, Norway, aged 31 years.



ROBERT M. LOSEY was born May 27, 1908, in Andrews, Iowa. His military career began in July, 1924, with his entrance into the United States Military Academy from which he graduated in June, 1929.

Upon graduation Bob was commissioned in the Field Artillery but reported for pilot training at the Air Corps Training Center.

On October 11, 1930, Bob was awarded his wings and reported to Mather Field, California, for duty. Here he undertook the customary and varied duties of a junior officer, and in addition, it was while at Mather Field that Bob married Kay Banta, daughter of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs. William P. Banta, M. C. (Ret.), in April, 1932.

Bob's thirst for knowledge was evidenced even this early in his career by application for specialized training details, and his efficiency and demonstrated mental capabilities merited favorable consideration by his superiors.

With the abandonment of Mather Field in October, 1932, Bob accompanied his squadron, the 77th Pursuit, to Barksdale Field. Here again his desire for knowledge led to his assignment to the Advanced Navigation Training Unit at Rockwell Field. Shortly after his return from this training, at his own request, Bob was assigned to the California Institute of Technology in August, 1934, as a student in meteorology.

Bob's course of instruction at Cal Tech was more than exposure; an academic record of "marked distinction" proved an ability that stood out even in the halls of an institution noted for its brilliant products.

Following the completion of the meteorology course, Bob reported to March Field, California, for duty as meteorological officer.

He was still not satisfied with his store of technical knowledge, and, upon application, was sent in August, 1936, to the California Institute of Technology to pursue a course in Aeronautical Engineering. Again Bob's enthusiasm and ability resulted in a record of "marked distinction."

Upon completion of this course in June, 1937, Bob was ordered to Washington, D. C., as chief of the weather section in the office of the Chief of Air Corps. Here he served until he was ordered to Finland as Assistant Military Attaché for Air and, later, as Assistant Military Attaché for Air to Norway and Sweden.

On April 21, 1940, Bob was killed by a bomb fragment in Dombas, Norway, in the performance of his duty. At the time, he was assisting in the evacuation of U. S. citizens from the war areas.

On May 29, 1940, Captain Robert M. Losey, Air Corps, returned to rest at West Point, New York, where he was met by his friends and escorted with Military Honors to a place beside his mother and his brother-in-law, John Banta, Class of 1928.

Death comes as it must to all men, but sometimes those that are left are wont to wonder and to regret that a career so filled with promise and ability should be brought to an end.

Bob was more a scholar than a student, he had no "bookish" mien; quiet and unassuming, Bob still could speak a mind very definitely his own. A conscientious able worker, Bob could play as well, with sailboats as his fancy.

No lack of friends beset his course, at school, at home, at work, or in his civilian contacts; there was a lasting impression of a polished gentleman and a character that was firm.

Letters might be quoted from superiors in rank, as to his military endeavors and accomplishments, but even these count him as friend above all else. An officer, a gentleman, a scholar, and a true soldier to the end.

—N. B. H.