

Author and Retired Astronaut Jan Davis Invites Readers Into the Past with Tales of Her Father, a WWII Pilot and POW

CAPE CANAVERAL, FL, UNITED STATES, December 2, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Jan Davis, a retired NASA astronaut and author of "[Air Born: Two Generations in Flight](#)," returns with a deeper look into her family's intriguing legacy in aviation in "[Air Born: Artistic Musings of a WWII Pilot and POW](#)" ([Ballast Books](#), releasing December 3, 2024). While her first book draws connections between her father's aerial combat missions and Davis's own journeys into space, her next story delves further into a lesser-known part of American history.

Jan's father, World War II (WWII) B-17 pilot Ben Smotherman, was shot down over Holland in July 1943; he was soon captured and interrogated by the Luftwaffe, the aerial warfare branch of the German military, at Dulag Luft. Upon being transferred to Stalag Luft III, a Luftwaffe-run camp, he found himself a prisoner of war (POW) held captive with countless other men who ached for their homes and their freedom.

While imprisoned, Smotherman kept his Wartime Log to chronicle his daily life with the unique inclusion of beautiful watercolor paintings and pencil drawings. He applied his talents to create PENNY, an engaging and well-loved comic strip following a female war correspondent of the same name. His comic strip not only entertained and enthralled his audience of fellow POWs with each new issue—it also gave them hope. In this book, Davis even annotated her father's Wartime Log and PENNY cartoons.

Smotherman's experiences and artistic renderings are masterfully captured in Jan Davis's "Air Born: Artistic Musings of a WWII Pilot and POW." In this companion piece to "Air Born: Two Generations in Flight," readers will get an inside look at what it felt like to be a POW during WWII.

Contact Ballast Books for an interview with the retired astronaut herself.

About the author:

Born at Patrick Air Force Base and raised in Huntsville, Alabama, Jan Davis has been surrounded by aviation and space her entire life. She obtained a biomedical engineering degree from the

Georgia Institute of Technology, a mechanical engineering degree from Auburn University, and a PhD from the University of Alabama in Huntsville. During her

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