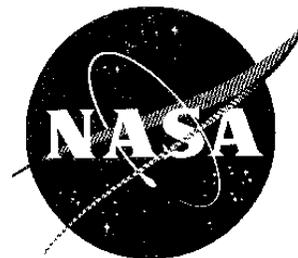


NewsRelease



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Auburn Scholar Sheds Light on Rickenbacker Mystery

The disappearance of Eddie Rickenbacker and his crew, and their rescue in 1942, became one of the major news stories on the home front during World War II, promoting human courage and strengthening morale during one of the most trying years of that conflict. They survived three weeks without food or water while drifting on a raft in the shark-infested Pacific Ocean, after their Boeing B-17D plane got lost, ran out of fuel and was ditched at sea.

Dr. W. David Lewis will present "Pacific Saga: The Disappearance and Rescue of Eddie Rickenbacker" at a colloquium at 2 p.m. Tuesday, May 4, at NASA Langley's H.J.E Reid Conference Center.

Media briefing

A media briefing will be held at 1:15 p.m. in the Wythe Room of the Reid Conference Center, 14 Langley Blvd. in Hampton. Media who wish to attend the briefing should contact Kimberly W. Land at (757) 864-9885.

During the past several years, while doing research for a biography of Rickenbacker, Lewis discovered material about the raft episode not yet investigated, which led to an article, "The Rescue of Eddie Rickenbacker," published in the September 1998 issue of *Air & Space Smithsonian*.

Lewis will discuss the research involved in writing Rickenbacker's biography, which included a three-hour interview with John Bartek, a survivor of the ordeal. Since that interview, he has received more information from others associated with Bartek. Lewis plans to write a separate book about the raft episode itself.

Lewis, the Distinguished University Professor of History at Auburn University, received his bachelor's and master's degrees in history at Pennsylvania State University in 1952 and 1954 and his doctorate in American social and intellectual history at Cornell University in 1961. He has taught at Auburn since his appointment in 1971 as Hudson Professor of History and Engineering.

The general public is invited to the Sigma Series lecture at the Virginia Air and Space Center that evening at 7:30.

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