

# UNCOVERING

## Merrick man traces grandfather's

BY MARTIN C. EVANS  
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**S**eth Meyerowitz never knew his World War II veteran grandfather, a turret gunner who survived the crash of a B-24 Liberator in France in 1943 and who evaded capture by the Gestapo because of the kindness of strangers.

But prodded by plans to travel last month near the French region where his grandfather's plane went down, the Web entrepreneur decided to use the Internet to learn more about the crash and the survival of his grandfather Arthur Meyerowitz.

With a few keystrokes on a laptop in the bedroom of his Merrick home, Meyerowitz began uncovering clues to his grandfather's past that had remained hidden for decades.

And within weeks of beginning his search, Meyerowitz was standing in a French nursing home, talking to an elderly, former French Resistance fighter who 68 years ago helped spirit Arthur Meyerowitz from hiding place to hiding place, one step ahead of the Gestapo, on his way to safety in Spain.

"Before this, all I knew was that he had been shot down during the war," Meyerowitz, 27, said of his grandfather, who died in 1971, before Meyerowitz was born. "I began to wonder what had happened to him in France. It kind of snowballed from there."

### How grandson did it

Each new discovery electrified him further. "He would be upstairs on his computer, and every so often I would hear him yell," said Meyerowitz's father, Mark Meyerowitz, who is Arthur's son. "And I knew he had found another clue."

Internet tools and Web-based archives have allowed people to embark on research projects that could hardly be imagined little more than a decade ago, said Rolf Swensen,



Arthur Meyerowitz served in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II.

Seth Meyerowitz used letters and other documents to trace his grandfather's air crash and escape from occupied France.



PHOTO BY HOWARD SCHNAPP



### Objects of Oppression

From shackles to KKK robes, a museum in Massapequa tracks the trials of African-Americans. Virginia Huie reports.

**WATCH IT TODAY**

### STERNO BURNS GIRL

A toddler was hospitalized with burns yesterday after she spilled hot water from a Sterno food-warming tray on herself during a Selden house party, Suffolk County police said.

The 16-month-old girl was taken to Stony Brook University Medical Center and listed in stable condition last night, police said. Police would not detail the extent of her burns but said her injuries were not life-threatening.

The toddler pulled on the Sterno tray, a metal container that keeps food warm over water heated from beneath with portable canisters of cooking fuel, and splashed the hot water on herself, police said. No charges have been filed, they said. — EMILY NGO

### COPS: DRIVER FOUGHT

A Queens motorist was arrested on assault and driving while intoxicated charges after he fought with officers who had pulled him over in Roslyn Heights for unsafe driving, Nassau police said.

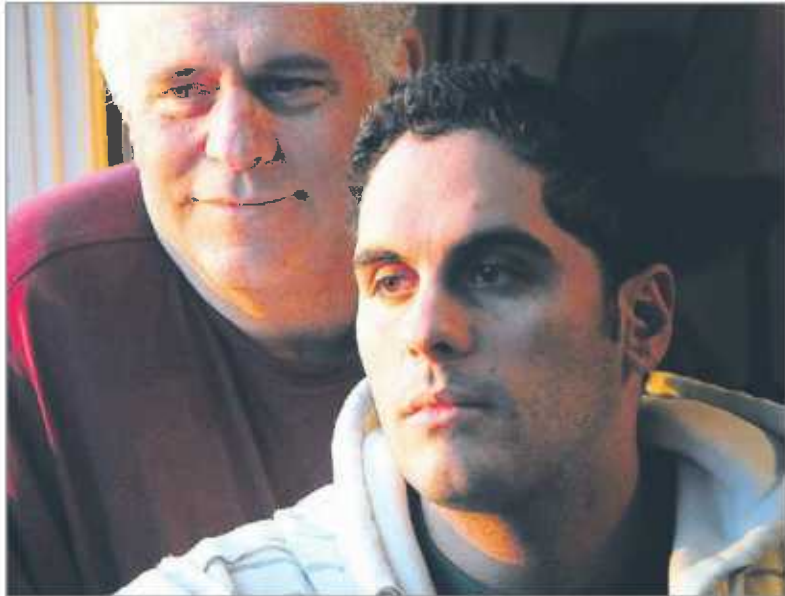
Nabhan Khondker, 29, of 8618 Sutro St., Hollis, repeatedly refused to get out of his vehicle, police said, then became violent and started fighting with the officers. One suffered bruising on her face and injuries to her knees and right hand; she was treated at a hospital and released, police said.

Khondker was charged with second-degree assault, unlawful flight from a police officer, resisting arrest and DWI, police said.

— JENNIFER BARRIOS

# A WWII LEGACY

journey from downed gunner to his rescue by French Resistance



Seth Meyerowitz, with dad, Mark, met with Frenchman who helped his grandfather return home.

who teaches research techniques at Queens College.

Paid services such as Ancestry.com, open sources like FamilySearch.org and government repositories, including the National Archives and the Library of Congress, allow anyone with a computer and an Internet connection to search family histories, declassified military documents, land records, and even the scanned pages of books and magazines.

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## NOW ONLINE

Find a transcript of Arthur Meyerowitz's military debriefing, as well as letters from his personnel file. [newsday.com/li](http://newsday.com/li)

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"By the end of the first day I found a man who had written a book about his father, a

leader of one of the French Resistance groups which apparently had helped my grandfather," he said. "By the end of the third day, I had my grandfather's entire government debriefing file from the day he was found in Gibraltar, almost six months after he was shot down."

## A 68-year connection

On Dec. 31, 1943, Staff Sgt. Arthur Meyerowitz, 25, was on his second mission with the Britain-based 715th Bomb Squadron, 448th Bomb Group, when a fire broke out in one of the plane's engines near Queyrac, 50 miles north-west of occupied Bordeaux.

He bailed out at 18,000 feet, hid overnight, and sought help at a farmhouse. The family helped him get in touch with members of the French Resistance, who gave him civilian clothes and fake identification papers, hid his Star of David necklace and taught him to avoid revealing his outsider sta-

tus by acting deaf and mute.

Resistance leaders eventually helped him flee over the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain, and from there he was able to make his way to Allied forces in Gibraltar in June 1944.

Arthur Meyerowitz's family was at a New York beach when a telegram announcing that he had been found arrived at their Bronx home. A downstairs neighbor with phone service called a merchant near the beach, who agreed to close his shop and walk the beach with a sign addressed to Meyerowitz's parents, saying their downed son was alive.

Safe, Meyerowitz returned home, married a childhood friend and started a family. He got a job driving a milk truck and moved to Bellmore in 1959.

After discovering the book on the French Resistance, Seth Meyerowitz contacted the author, who encouraged Meyerowitz to visit him in France to see for himself where his grandfather had been hidden.

Meyerowitz, who had planned a trip to Spain, persuaded his father to go with him to the French region where Arthur Meyerowitz hid.

There, in a nursing home, Mark and Seth Meyerowitz met Pierre Delude, 93, who as a 25-year-old Resistance member helped spirit Arthur Meyerowitz from safe house to safe house, and eventually over the Pyrenees.

"He looked up at me, and his eyes welled up, as did mine," said Mark Meyerowitz.

"I cried a lot," he added. "This was a guy who had hung out with my father when he was being chased by the Gestapo. My whole family would not have existed had it not been for him."

Seth Meyerowitz said being able to connect his father to the man who helped save their turret-gunner ancestor meant a lot to him.

"My father is not an emotional man," Seth Meyerowitz said. "This is one of the most meaningful things I could have done for him."

## Jury pick to start in bribery case

BY EMILY DOOLEY

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Jury selection is expected to begin today in the corruption trial of four men, including two former Nassau County legislators, accused of steering New Cassel revitalization work to a developer in exchange for \$400,000 in bribes.

The trial before acting Nassau County Supreme Court Justice Alan Honorof is expected to last months.

Former legislators Patrick Williams, 63, of Uniondale, and Roger Corbin, 65, of Westbury; North Hempstead's former Community Development Agency director Neville Mullings, 70, of Westbury and the town's former building and planning commissioner, David Wasserman, 53, of Roslyn Heights, were arrested in July 2010 after a three-year investigation by District Attorney Kathleen Rice.

They were charged with grand larceny and falsifying business records. Charges of defrauding the government, conspiracy, official misconduct and receiving bribes were also leveled against some of the men.

"These defendants put portions of the New Cassel community up for sale for their own financial gain," a release announcing the arrests said. The district attorney's office did not return calls for information about the case.

Mullings' attorney, Frederick Brewington of Hempstead, declined to comment, as did Wasserman's attorney, Joel Weiss, of Uniondale. Attorneys for the other two men could not be reached.

Rice at the time said the quartet eased the way for developer Ranjan Batheja through the bidding process to win work as part of the \$80 million New Cassel Revitalization Project. In turn, the men demanded kickbacks from Batheja. Five months before the four were indicted, Batheja was arrested and charged with bribery. It is unclear how his case is proceeding.

## Web search reveals story of WWII survival

February 5, 2012 by MARTIN C. EVANS / [martin.evans@newsday.com](mailto:martin.evans@newsday.com)



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A transcript of Arthur Meyerowitz's military debriefing, as well as letters included in his personnel file, can be found by searching his name on the National Archives website at <http://media.nara.gov/nw/305270/EE-758.pdf>.

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