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Skylab and its Importance to Human Settlement in Space

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Nearest Perfect Human

In terms of achievements made within society, many people rise up to the plate as historical, bright-minded individuals. From inventors of machines or programs to explorers of new areas, these types of people are fondly remembered by the public for what they contributed to the world. Yet, there exist some historical citizens who have little information known about them. As a result, their history may grow lost among society, which proves to be detrimental if they accomplished something truly remarkable. One person who falls into this category, despite having some information known for curious people, is Louis Salmon, a man who contributed quite a lot to the public. Through his devotion to his state, his generosity to the public, and his love for those around him, Louis Salmon deserves to have his history and contribution known to society.

Born on August 30, 1923, Louis Salmon grew up in Mobile, Alabama with a relatively good childhood. His father was a bookkeeper while his mother was a registered nurse. Around this time, Salmon also grew up with a younger brother, but a tragedy occurred in which he drowned in an accident. Despite this heart-breaking event, Louis would move on and receive great care from his parents, who taught him some valuable morals. Namely, they “instilled in [him] a love of learning and dedication to education, an unswerving standard of ethics and morality... and the highest sense of duty” (Who was M. Louis 1). These traits and values create the basis for the type of character Salmon was to most people: a dedicated man with a passionate

heart. With these traits, Louis would receive his high school diploma from “Murphy High School of Mobile in 1940,” soon receiving a “Bachelor of Science degree in 1943” from the “University of Alabama” (Who was M. Louis 1). Around this time, Salmon would enlist in the United States army, landing himself within the infantry section. Being “assigned to the Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning, Georgia,” where he rose up to the rank of “Second Lieutenant on May 23, 1944 and [was] assigned as Second Platoon Leader, Company I, 262nd Regiment, 66th Division at Camp Rucker, Alabama” (“Biographical Information and Obituaries”). At this point, some people may recognize his steady advancement within the military, but most would remember certain people that had advanced far more in their respective sections of the army. This fact certainly rings true for some veterans, but another factor plays a key role into Louis’ military history: the Leopoldville Disaster.

During the events of World War II, Salmon and his group were moved to England and then to Cherburg, France around December in order to participate in the Battle of the Bulge. The vessel they took for this journey was the Leopoldville, a massive aircraft capable of carrying his crew. While the journey itself seemed relatively fine, it all took a turn for the worse when they crossed the thick waters of the Channel. On Christmas Eve of 1944, “the Leopoldville was torpedoed several miles out of Cherbourg” by a German submarine (“Biographical Information and Obituaries”). Most casualties occurred within the lower decks of the ship, but Louis’ division was exactly above deck when the attack began. Unfortunately for them, the lifeboats for the ship “were taken by the Leopoldville crew, leaving Louis and his men to fend for themselves” (“Biographical Information and Obituaries”). Through quick thinking, Salmon “climbed down a rope net and jumped into the water,” enduring the icy cold atmosphere (“Survivors of the Leopoldville Disaster”). During his time in the water, Salmon once stated how he believed his

mother would have to deal with another death in the family from drowning. Thankfully, Louis “saved himself by hooking his arm in a net dangling from a passing ship,” getting pulled up in the process (“Biographical Information and Obituaries”). From that point, he eventually arrived at Cherbourg where he rested for a few days before being shipped off to combat. Salmon proved himself as a capable “leader in combat under enemy fire... across France,” represented by his advancing rank (“Biographical Information and Obituaries”). On April 1, 1945, Louis was promoted to First Lieutenant, followed by another promotion to Captain. Eventually, he was separated from duty on August 28, 1946, “decorated with the Purple Heart and the Combat Infantry Badge” (“Biographical Information and Obituaries”). The Leopold Disaster and Salmon’s actions during and following it demonstrate both his devotion to his home in addition to his bright influence among people. On one point, he once stated how “[he] still [would] tear up” upon hearing “the National Anthem sung properly” (“Biographical Information and Obituaries”). Yet, even with his military life, Louis possesses another contribution to society: his generosity.

After returning back from his time at the military, Salmon continued his education at the University of Alabama, heading towards the School of Law section. He would pursue this education until his graduation “in 1948 with the degree Bachelor of Laws, later replaced with a Juris Doctorate” (“Biographical Information and Obituaries”). From there, he and his new wife Elizabeth Echols Watts moved to Mobile until June 1, 1950, where they chose to settle in Huntsville. Many years passed by with Salmon showcasing his dedication towards the University of Alabama, specifically their law school. For instance, he devoted himself to serving “as a member and President of the Law School Foundation, President of the Law School Alumni Association and General Chairman of the Law School Completion Campaign” (“Biographical

Information and Obituaries”). This accomplishment represents Salmon’s standard of ethics and morality, especially since he himself loved the concept of law. Even with his dedication to law, Louis also demonstrates “his keen appreciation of the vital importance of education... through long service as a trustee... of the University of Alabama Huntsville Foundation” (“Biographical Information and Obituaries”).

Works Cited

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