

\_Villa St. Jean International School\_  
\_\_\_\_ Creed: "The Whole Man" \_\_\_\_  
"And now here is my secret ... it is only  
with the heart that one can see rightly,  
what is essential is invisible to the eye."  
– Saint Ex.



## The Villa St. Jean blog project

... an unsanctioned production of the Bossuet Material Support Committee



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### The Villa during the war....

Posted on [09/22/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

Via our colleague **Jean Remy** and his associate **René de Miscalut de Takashi Moriama** comes this priceless photo of a Villa instructor and students during the w



[The villa in wartime...](#)

From the note sent to our offices..

—  
"Voici une photo qui va eclipser toutes celles que tu m'as envoyees. Je ne sais pas pourquoi Guy n'est pas sur la photo. Par contre Reinach est bien la: c'est celui qui est assis a ma droite.

Le professeur est l'abbe Tisserand, je crois.

A toutes fins utiles, voici les noms des petits bonshommes qui y figurent:

Premier rang (de gauche a droite): Gerard Bunge, Gilles de Reinach, ton devoue serviteur, l'Abbe Tisserand, Jean Köver, Bonhote, (nom ne me revient pas)

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#### Villa Links

- [Saint-Exupéry](#)

Deuxieme rang (de gauche a droite): Andre van Hoof (son frere Raymond ayant redouble, ne figure pas dans cette photo!) , Regis Lallemand, Jean-Pierre Lallemand, Rieser (je crois, il est suedois), Niox, les 2 freres Philippossian.

Comme je te l'ai ecrit hier, Guy brille par sa presence. Avait il une grippe ce jour la ?

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## Guillermo Villa Fort (vsj '68) ties the knot...

Posted on [09/11/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

Our spies at the Vox Villa St Jean blog team found this interesting piece of evidence at [Classmates.com](#), suggesting Mr. Villa Fort has married.

We are in the hunt for additional information — facts and even gossip accepted. Send your tips to [villastjean@gmail.com](mailto:villastjean@gmail.com). Isn't she awfully good-looking for a Villa graduate?

The evidence:



[Villaforte](#)

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## Lawler, titan from class of '68, races the Alps....

Posted on [09/04/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

Putting all his former classmates to shame, Brian Lawler, vsj class of 1968, has temporarily abandoned his Seattle law practice to race the Alps.

He's participating in the TransAlps run, which covers 180 miles and some 52,000 feet of elevation gain in eight days.

We, at the vsj blog, are unable to say why, but we commend Brian nonetheless.

Follow every creaky/heroic step at his web site [here](#) with his personal account [here](#).



[Brian Lawler](#)

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Oddly, he's done this before (last year).

Finally, [this photo](#) shows Brian with a dark frothy 'training beverage' in what appears to be a large beer stein.



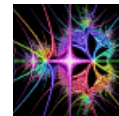
[LawlerTeam](#)

Update, Fri, Sept. 5: The latest from team Lawler with pictures [here](#).

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## VSJ alumni tour the American West...

Posted on [08/06/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

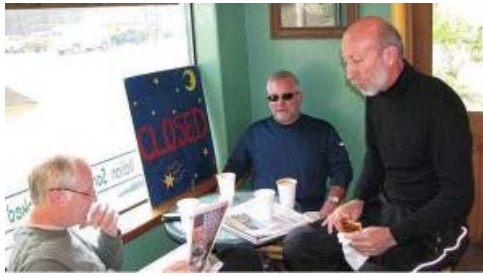
The elite of the Villa class of '68 — **Ralph Petty, Eric Harrison, Al Fuller and Steve MacIntyre** — gather 40 years after graduation for a motorcycle ride through much of the American West..

You should have been there.. more [here](#).

– the editors



[Three amigos...](#)



[Graying, elegantly...](#)



[A contemplative MacIntyre ...](#)

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## Dorrance elected to Hall of Fame

Posted on [07/16/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

[The news](#) is relayed to us via Mr. MacIntyre, VSJ, class of '68, who adds:

Mac writes: *"Mike Bachman '68 ran into Anson Dorrance '69 last summer at the Masters Nationals in Bellingham, WA. They both play in the 55+ bracket.*

*Mike noted about Anson, "He looked pretty fit for an old guy." One expects the same might be said about Mike himself.*

*"Funny how a tiny school such as VSJ should prove a hotbed of soccer notables: In addition to the obvious (Anson), there's Mike who's still playing at the national level. Brian Lawler is coaching a team in Washington state. Malcolm Lawrence, if I recall correctly, coached a team of 12-and-unders who won a national championship. And Alan Balladur coached an award-winning team in the U.K., if memory serves. I'm probably forgetting some, but that list alone is damned impressive."*

:



[Dorrance](#)

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## Mr. Di Palma's curious business in China

Posted on [05/23/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

Kevin writes:

*See note and photos from Kitty Lai. Kitty is a Business English Major. I taught her class last term, and the students invited me this evening to their English activity, one focused (surprisingly) on the Beijing Olympics.*

*I was required to sing, and I did – a rather artistic rendition of "I've Been Working on the Railroad. China remains a lesson in deviating from the customary.*

–

We can think of little to add to that. The photos speak for themselves.

What's more, here's



[Melanie Xie talks to the Foreign Teacher](#)

of Kevin with his students.



[Di Palma2](#)



[Di Palma](#)

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## VSJ web-master wanted!

Posted on [05/07/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

All:

For more than a decade, Kevin Di Palma has managed the maintenance of the [www.villastjean.com](http://www.villastjean.com) site, which was the spark for the great Villa renaissance in the '90s.

As you may know, that site is now mirrored at [www.villastjean.org](http://www.villastjean.org).

With Kevin now teaching in rural China, he's ready to hand over control of the [www.villastjean.org](http://www.villastjean.org)



[WebMaster](#)

site to someone else. As you might imagine, operating such a site from his current location is just not tenable.

So here's what we're looking for:

***Is there anyone in the VSJ family who is web-savvy and willing to take over the baton and maintain and operate that site?***

(To be clear, this does not entail this vox blog, which will continue to be operated by the Material Support Committee)

The committee stands ready to help finance the relatively modest web-hosting charges.

Interested? Let me know via

<mailto:villastjean@gmail.com>

And please pass the word to anyone else who might be interested and available.

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## New York Times on the Saint-Exupéry mystery..

Posted on [04/15/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

**The Times is following the European press with a [prominent account](#) of the latest developments in the disappearance of the villa's most famous graduate.**

*(Obscure journalistic note: The Times writer, John Tagliabue, is the brother of the former NFL commissioner, Paul Tagliabue.)*

April 11, 2008

Marseille Journal

Clues to the Mystery of a Writer Pilot Who Disappeared

By JOHN TAGLIABUE

MARSEILLE, France — After the disappearance of Amelia Earhart, the demise of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry on a reconnaissance mission in World War II has long ranked as one of aviation's great mysteries. Now, thanks to the tenacity and luck of two amateur archaeologists, the final pieces of the puzzle seem to have been filled in.

The story that emerged about the disappearance of Saint-Exupéry, the French aviator, author and émigré from Vichy France, proved to contain several narratives, a complexity that would likely have pleased the author of several adventure books on flying and the charming tale "The Little Prince," about a little interstellar traveler, which was also a profound statement of faith.

On July 31, 1944, Saint-Exupéry took off from the island of Corsica in a Lockheed Lightning P-38 reconnaissance plane, one of numerous French pilots who assisted the Allied war effort. Saint-Exupéry never returned, and over the years numerous theories arose: that he had been shot down, lost control of his plane, even that he committed suicide.

The first clue surfaced in September 1998, when fishermen off this Mediterranean port city dragged up a silver bracelet with their nets. It bore the names of Saint-Exupéry and his New York publisher. Further searches by divers turned up the badly damaged remains of his plane, though the body of the pilot was never found.



[NewYorkTimesExupery](#)

"I had just seen 'Titanic' and after a few glasses of pastis I reflected, 'We'll make a movie, and the dollars will rain,' " said Jean-Claude Bianco, 63, on whose boat the bracelet was discovered.

The film, was never made but news of the bracelet prompted Luc Vanrell, 48, a diving coach and marine archaeologist, to inspect more closely some marine wreckage he had noticed years before, buried in sand in 170 feet of water near the remains of Saint-Exupéry's plane. An engine block serial number and a Skoda symbol, for the Czech company that was an unwilling German supplier, proved it to be a Daimler-Benz V-12 aircraft engine.

In 2005, after enduring numerous bureaucratic delays, Mr. Vanrell and another diver, Lino von Gartzten, lifted the motor and shipped it to Munich for study by German experts. It turned out to be part of a series produced in early 1941 — the oldest sparkplug was from March 1941. It had been modified in 1943 with the addition of a Bosch fuel injection pump.

The researchers deduced it had powered a Messerschmitt fighter plane, part of a training unit stationed in southern France from 1942 to 1944. It had been flown by Prince Alexis von Bentheim und Steinfurt, a 22-year-old who was shot down by American planes in late 1943, on his first and last solo flight. The tale might have ended there, with the death of the prince and of the Little Prince's author. Yet Mr. von Gartzen was not content. Consulting archives and with the help of the staff of the Jägerblatt, a magazine for Luftwaffe veterans, he tracked down veterans who had flown in Prince von Bentheim's unit, the Jagdgruppe 200. He contacted hundreds of former pilots, most now in their 80s; hundreds more had already died.

Then in July 2006, he telephoned a former pilot in Wiesbaden, Horst Rippert, explaining that he sought information about Saint-Exupéry. Without hesitating, Mr. Rippert replied, "You can stop searching. I shot down Saint-Exupéry."

Mr. Rippert, who will be 86 in May, worked as a television sports reporter after the war. It was only days after he had shot down a P-38 with French colors near Marseille that he learned of Saint-Exupéry's disappearance.

He was convinced he had shot him down, though he confided his conviction only to a diary. In 2003, when he learned that Saint-Exupéry's plane had been located, his suspicion was confirmed. But still, he said nothing publicly.

Over the years, the thought that he might have killed Saint-Exupéry had troubled Mr. Rippert. As a youth in the 1930s, he had idolized the aviator-turned-author and had devoured his books, beginning with "Southern Mail," in 1929, an adventure tale written while Saint-Exupéry was flying the Casablanca to Dakar route.

When Mr. Rippert's identity was finally made public in March, the storm of interview requests and efforts to contact him was such that he withdrew from sight. "The last days have been terrible, with phone calls and doorbells ringing all hours of the day and night," said his wife, by telephone, before hanging up.

Evidence to support Mr. Rippert's claim is lacking because documents, like flight logs, were destroyed in the war. But Mr. Rippert described in detail to Mr. von Gartzen how in the summer of 1944 German radar had alerted his fighter squadron at Marignane, near Marseille, to a group of Allied reconnaissance planes over the Mediterranean. Mr. Rippert, who was then 22, found a P-38 with French colors and shot it down.

He described the odd, evasive loops flown by Saint-Exupéry, who at the time was 44, overweight and in pain from fractures sustained in numerous flying accidents. Several days later, when German radio intercepted American reports of a search for Saint-Exupéry, he suspected he might have shot down his idol. When Mr. Rippert told him of learning that Saint-Exupéry was missing, "he had tears in his eyes," Mr. von Gartzen said.

The lack of evidence, beyond circumstances, has prompted some to express mild disbelief, Mr. von Gartzen among them. "It's beyond the normal principles of probability," he said, adding: "It nonetheless remains a hypothesis that is well founded."

In Paris, Saint-Exupéry's grandnephew, Olivier d'Agay, who is a spokesman for the



family, said that Mr. Rippert's version of the events was credible. "All he said was that he hit and brought down a P-38 in that region on July 31 — he never said he shot down Saint-Exupéry," Mr. d'Agay said. "Of course, he asked himself if it were true, though he kept it to himself.

"Rippert said he often felt desperate," he said. "If he had known what he was doing, he never would have done it."

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## À la recherche du temps perdu ...

Posted on [04/05/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

*With apologies to Mr. Proust, this photo of Fribourg ([found at Flickr](#)) shows a portion of the city relatively unchanged since our time there..*

– **the editors**



[Fribourg remembered...](#)

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## New revelations on the disappearance of Saint-Exupéry!

Posted on [03/29/2008](#) by [villastjean](#)

*A story that continues to astonish the staff here at the Villa St. Jean blog at [vox.com](#). Imagine, 64 years after the Villa St. Jean graduate Sant-Exupery disappeared, new details still emerge!*

*The latest from our associates..*

## **Révélations sur la disparition d'Antoine de Saint-Exupéry**

**Jacques Pradel et Luc Vanrell affirment avoir retrouvé le pilote allemand qui aurait abattu l'avion de l'écrivain, le 31 juillet 1944**

**SCHWARTZ Arnaud**

**Paru dans la Croix page 21, le: jeudi 20/03/2008 Horst Rippert, 88 ans, ancien chef du service des sports de la deuxième chaîne de télévision allemande dans les années 1970 et frère aîné du chanteur Ivan Rebroff (récemment décédé), est-il le pilote allemand qui, à l'été 1944, abattit en vol Antoine de Saint-Exupéry ? C'est ce qu'affirment l'animateur d'Europe 1 Jacques Pradel et le plongeur Luc Vanrell dans un livre Saint-Exupéry, l'ultime secret (1)**

**Longtemps, le mystère est resté entier. Parti le 31 juillet 1944 peu après 8 heures de l'aérodrome de Bastia-Borgo pour une mission de reconnaissance au-dessus d'Annecy et Grenoble, à bord d'un P-38 Lightning, le commandant Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, 44 ans, n'est jamais revenu. La disparition de l'écrivain-aviateur, auteur de Terre des hommes et du Petit Prince, a donné lieu à toutes sortes de supputations et théories. Le héros s'était transformé en archange.**

**Le 7 septembre 1998, un patron pêcheur de la région de Marseille, Jean-Claude Bianco, remonte dans ses filets, par un hasard confinant au miracle, la gourmette du pilote disparu, reconnue comme authentique après bien des péripéties. Les recherches s'intensifièrent pour retrouver l'épave de l'avion, avec un fort goût de chasse au trésor. Luc Vanrell, spécialiste de la plongée en condition extrême, féru de photographie et d'archéologie, découvrit et déclara (en 2000) certains vestiges du P-38 F-5B n° 223 que pilotait Saint-Ex. Authentifiées, des pièces de l'épave, qui gisaient par 87 mètres de fond, furent relevées en 2003 et confiées au Musée de l'air et de l'espace du Bourget.**

**Luc Vanrell a poursuivi ses recherches, avec Philippe Castellano, président de l'association Aéro-Re.L.I.C., œuvrant à la recherche et à l'identification de crashes, et Lino von Gartzten, fondateur en Allemagne d'une association de recherche d'avions perdus au cours de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. De fausses pistes en impasses, leur enquête les aurait menés jusqu'à Horst Rippert, un ancien pilote de Messerschmitt, affecté en 1944 au groupe de chasse JGr 200. Après soixante-quatre ans de silence, l'ancien pilote de guerre, crédité de plus de vingt victoires, déclare aujourd'hui avoir abattu un P38 Lightning, louvoyant assez bas près de Marseille, tard dans la matinée du 31 juillet 1944. S'il dit vrai, cet avion ne pouvait être que celui de Saint-Exupéry.**

**Aveu tardif et finalement libérateur ? Le dossier invite à la prudence. Ce livre « scoop », cosigné par l'ancien présentateur des émissions « Perdu de vue » et « Témoin n° 1 » sur TF1, mal écrit et manquant parfois de clarté, appelle un véritable travail de recoupement. « L'affaire semble plausible, mais nous**

**attendons les preuves, confie Olivier d'Agay, en charge de la succession Saint-Exupéry-d'Agay. Lino von Gartzzen et Luc Vanrell, avec qui nous sommes en contact, sont sérieux. Nous accordons à cette histoire un a priori de crédibilité, mais nous aurons besoin de quelques mois pour vérifier », précise-t-il, notant que la famille oscille entre « émotion » et « agacement ».**

**« On veut bien croire Horst Rippert, mais nous n'avons pas encore de preuves », remarque Alain Vircondelet qui, après avoir consacré plusieurs ouvrages à Saint-Ex, s'avoue « perplexe ». Circonspection aussi chez l'historien de l'aéronautique Bernard Marck qui, après Mermoz et Lindbergh, travaille à une biographie de l'aviateur-écrivain. « Le témoignage d'Horst Rippert recoupe des faits dont il n'avait pas connaissance. Et rien ne nous a permis d'invalider ses propos », affirme Luc Vanrell qui concède, avec honnêteté, que l'élément irréfutable qui mettrait fin au débat manque encore.**

**(1) Éd. du Rocher, 190 p., 19,90 €. Samedi, à 15 heures, Jacques Pradel et Luc Vanrell présenteront leur livre au Musée de l'air et de l'espace, au Bourget, en présence d'Olivier d'Agay.**

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