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TH AF NEWS

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December 2016

8TH AF NEWS



Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

OFFICERS

President/Treasurer

David Nowack (Lois) 2017
4878 College View Court
Schnecksville, PA 18078
Tel. (610) 799-4640
DLNowack@ptd.net

Vice President

Dr. Nancy J. Toombs 2018
5213 North Cedar Street
North Little Rock, AR 72116
Tel. (501) 681-3126
chase221@swbell.net

Secretary

Benjamin J. Jones (Krista) 2019
15115 E Jones Beach Dr.
Kent, NY 14477-9780
(585) 682-4737
LimeyBJ@gmail.com

DIRECTORS

COL Edward "Ed" Wexler
USAF, (Ret) 2017
8 E Back St.
Savannah, GA 31419-3343
(912) 308-2940
EWexler06@comcast.net

CHAPTER/UNIT LIAISON

Joseph P "Pat" Keeley (Andrea)
1335 Belmont Ave.
North Haledon, NJ 07508
(973) 423-4854
Fxe84@optonline.net

8TH AFHS NATIONAL OFFICE

Managing Director Editor, 8th AF News

Debra Kujawa (Joseph)
68 Kimberlys Way
Jasper, GA 30143
(912) 748-8884
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org
www.8thafhs.org

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

UNITED KINGDOM

Jeff Hawley
44 Belle Isle Crescent
Brampton Cam
PE28 4SJ
United Kingdom
011 4414804 13503
Yankee2100@btinternet.com

Paul Bellamy
21-22 Warkton Village
Kettering Northants
NN16 9XF
United Kingdom
011 4478660 84743
Paulbellamy1939@hotmail.com

John P Gilbert
Glen Ann
42 Chapel Street
Norwich Norfolk
NR10 4BG
United Kingdom
011 4416038 71124
Adrian@gilbertafreeserve.co.uk

BELGIUM

Edouard Renière
Dieweg 296
1180 Brussels Belgium
Riiren.belsuo@skynet.be

FRANCE

Jean-Paul Favrais
La Haye-Ouisais No. 85
35310 Breal
France
Jeanpaulfavrais1@orange.fr

CHIEF OF VETERANS AFFAIRS & EDUCATION

Joe Garber (Joan)
46 Coquina Ridge Way
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
(386) 672-5359.
paljoe2@aol.com

MIGHTY EIGHTH AF MUSEUM STORE

Museum Store Director
Felice Stelljes
175 Bourne St.
Pooler, GA 31328
P.O. Box 1992
Savannah, GA 31402
912-748-8888
store@mightyeighth.org

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From the President's Pen



David Nowack
President

I trust those who attended the reunion in St. Louis enjoyed themselves. I sure did. I was very gratified by the turnout, one of the highest in several years. We had about 380 attendees with about 60 veterans. I think the opportunity to hear Don Miller was a drawing card. He certainly lived up to the expectations we had of him. The tours we offered were sold out. The hotel was maxed out. We had a fighter group with us for the first time in my memory. All in all, it was a successful reunion. Later in

this issue you can see some photos that were taken there.

In this column, I am also correcting an oversight on my part. In an earlier issue this year I should have presented the financial results of the Society for calendar year 2015. These are now shown on the right. The results for 2016 will be included in one of the early issues of 2017. As you can see below, the net loss was almost entirely caused by the investment results. The last six months of 2015 were very bad for the stock market and we were not immune to that. This is primarily a paper loss and will be recovered when the market improves. The downslide continued early into 2016 but since then has recovered a great deal. You will also notice a large amount in bequests, which helped to keep our finances in check.

Wishing all of you a great holiday and New Year! Hope to see you all in New Orleans for our 2017 Reunion.

Dave

Eighth Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2015

ASSETS

Checking & Savings Accounts	\$27,524
Investments	422,057
Other Current Assets	<u>2,715</u>
Total Assets	<u>\$ 452,296</u>

LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable	\$10,974
Payroll & Payroll Taxes	<u>4,743</u>
Total Liabilities	<u>15,717</u>

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted Net Assets	<u>436,579</u>
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	<u>\$452,296</u>

Eighth Air Force Historical Society Statement of Activities For the year ended December 31, 2015

REVENUE

Dues & Donations	\$ 71,792
Bequests	42,930
Net Reunion Revenue	5,151
Investment results	<u>(23,736)</u>
Total Revenue & Investment Loss	<u>96,137</u>

EXPENSES

National Administration	19,310
8 th Air Force News	51,000
Savannah Office	<u>50,267</u>
Total Expense	<u>120,577</u>

NET LOSS	<u>\$(24,440)</u>
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Editor's Message

If there is one thing I have learned during my journey with the 8th Air Force Historical Society, it would be this: NEVER underestimate the determination of a veteran. And I do mean EVER!!!!

This time last year when Nancy Toombs [reunion chair] and I agreed to organize and plan the 2016 reunion in St. Louis, we, along with the Board of Directors, had come to the conclusion that declining attendance during the previous reunions would continue for upcoming reunions—including 2016. In fact, most of us were comfortable in predicting a turnout of 250+/- attendees, of which we guestimated there would be around 30 WWII veterans.

Holy Cow, Batman, were we ever WRONG!!!!

The numbers are in: we had over 400 attendees, including 63 WWII veterans and by all accounts, everyone had a fabulous time.

As Nancy and I racked our brains during our post reunion briefing—attempting to pinpoint and identify the factors that contributed to the success of this year's event—we considered a lot of things:

- St Louis is geographically centrally located which enabled many attendees to arrive by car, and those who came via airlines, were able to do so with minimal flight time and plane changes
- Our reunion hotel was absolutely perfectly suited for our group and our needs...
- The staff could not have been more attentive or professional and friendly
- Having ALL of the hospitality suites centrally located encouraged and enabled everyone to visit freely for the entire reunion
- ALL of the reunion activities which took place at the hotel were easily accessible by elevator—a key factor in allowing anyone with limited mobility to move freely about
- We selected programs we hoped would be both interesting and timely, scheduled them carefully, and offered tour options that didn't conflict with reunion activities so everyone—especially families—could enjoy them together
- But the ONE factor that we totally agreed was THE reason for this year's success? Pure determination and the indomitable spirit of YOU, the Veterans.

One of the most powerful statements I read over and over again in articles about the 8th refers to the fact that NO mission of the 8th ever ended in retreat from the enemy. While weather and/or mechanical issues may have forced a mission to abort, the enemy NEVER did. In every single conversation with veterans through the years, I've heard the same feelings expressed time and again: they were ALL afraid on nearly every mission, but they chose to push past the fear because they had been tasked with a mission that was far bigger than that fear—putting an end to the evil of Hitler and the Axis powers.

THIS is the spirit of our reunions. THIS is why there is an Historical Society. THIS is why we breathe free today.

Finally, let us not forget the immortal words of one of the legends of the silver screen, John Wayne who said, "Courage is being scared to death and saddling up anyway."

God bless all of you as this year comes to a close... May your holidays be filled with wonderful memories and traditions.

Hope to see you ALL in New Orleans in 2017 for our 43rd Annual Reunion!

Always, Deb



*Debra Kujawa
Managing Director/Editor*



L-R Murray "Big Shorty" Codman 447th BG; Dr. Donald Miller; Robert "Bob" Schuh 398th BG. Sadly, Murray passed away on Oct 31st, a few days after this photo was taken.

Merry Christmas



Continuing the Legacy with your 8th Air Force News Magazine Staff L-R: - Debra Kujawa, Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines



CONTACT INFORMATION

Managing Director/Editor 8th A F News
 8th Air Force Historical Society
 68 Kimberlys Way
 Jasper, GA 30143
 (912) 748-8884
 ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org



MATERIAL DEADLINE

February 1, 2017 for the March 2017

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Silent Night



Col. William Howard "Hank" Stovall

The wind blew down the street like razors. Dec 24, 1944: London was not a place you would want to be. Colonel William Howard Stovall had made his way to the bank in time to get the bills and coins he would need for the Christmas party. He stepped out of the bank and looked down the street. The decorations were all like something out of Dickens' Christmas Carol. The snow coming down added to the season's atmosphere. "Ah," he thought to himself, "the Christmas

CHRISTMAS STORY: Silent Night, London 1944

Michael Webster

season is here, and all of mankind is trying to destroy the world and each other."

He had heard from his son Howard that he might not make the Christmas party that the Colonel was planning for him. "Well, if you have to do your duty, I understand," he told his son. "You're an Element Leader now." The Colonel -- "Hank" to the staff and group leaders, and later, his grandchildren -- hid his disappointment from his son. No sense in putting unwanted pressure on the boy.

"Daddy, I would love to come down to London and spend Christmas Eve and Day with you, but you know if we have to deploy on a mission, I have to go."

"I know, Son. I love you."

"I love you too, Daddy."

Hanging up the phone, Colonel Stovall wondered how in the world his son had grown up so fast. Only

3 years ago he had finished high school at Lawrenceville with honors. "Something I never accomplished." Colonel Stovall thought to himself. "Hell, I was lucky to graduate and get into Yale with the record I made at Lawrenceville."

He was immensely proud of his son, who had accomplished everything he set out to do, and more, in his young life. At Lawrenceville, he had been President of Cromwell House; editor in chief of the "Recorder"; holder of the Council Cup for Woodhull House; a varsity wrestler; editor in chief of "Olla Podrida"; secretary-treasurer of Press Club; member of Pipe and Quill Club and XX Club; president of Cum Laude, and Valedictorian. When he had started at Princeton, he had wanted to get into the Army Air Corps or the Royal Canadian Air Force. He had worried about the stigmatism in his eyes, and had failed his first eye exam. After

that, to help his eye sight, Howard had taken it upon himself to eat carrots every time he went out on a date with Georgia Gilliland to the movies. As she told Howard's nephew, years later, "You know, your uncle took a grocery sack of carrots every time we went to the movies after he failed his first eye exam. When he went back for his second exam, he passed with flying colors".

The Colonel himself had been back in military service since re-enlisting right after Pearl Harbor. He was familiar with war. It was his second time around, and he felt that this longer war was unfinished business from World War I. In that war, he had flown with the 2nd Pursuit Group, 13th Pursuit Squadron. He had flown 56 missions and had become an "Ace."

In the first war, he had made the acquaintance of Monk Hunter and Carl Spaatz, and he had maintained those friendships between the wars. They had both stayed in as career military officers, while he went back to farm in Stovall, Mississippi. He had re-enlisted within days of Pearl Harbor, on December 12, 1941 to be exact. He had gotten back in with the rank of Major, and was assigned to serve with his old friends Hunter and Spaatz, both now generals, in the 8th Army Air Force. In the early part of the war, he had helped to gather and get the first 180 planes of the 8th AAF over to England in the "Bolero Movement"; helped organize the staff in personnel for Fighter Command, and, as AC/S, A/1 section head, it had been his duty to assign the young pilots to their units; helped with the formation of the 12th AAF, and worked his way up in rank to Colonel. In March of 1944, he went

to work for Gen Spaatz as his Deputy Chief of Staff in the USTAAFE, leaving his job in Fighter Command to assume the new position.

Colonel Stovall made his way back to the hotel, thinking, "Well, I guess I'll have another Christmas without family." When he left to go overseas in February 1942, his wife, Eleanor, had seen him off on the tarmac of the airport in Memphis. He had not spent Christmas with her and their family since. "That was a long time ago," thought the Colonel to himself. And London was a dismal sight. Hitler's missiles had wreaked havoc on the city.

All the more reason to make sure his guests would have as good a Christmas as he could manage, because they were all without their families. His friends Graham Short, Ed Lawler, and Son Pittman were going to show up. King Douglass and General Kessler would also come. "It won't be so bad. I had the French Chef cook up the turkey and pheasants, and the sweet potatoes will be great." He thought about those who were in much different circumstances, and realized, "I was in this same thing in the last war. I guess it doesn't change for those facing life and death in combat."

He knew that he was very fortunate to be able to spend Christmas having a party while others were in harm's way. He had heard through channels that the Germans were turning around and starting a winter offensive near Bastogne and his thoughts were focused on those who were on the ground in France and in the air.

"With this cloud cover and winter storm moving in, those guys in France on the ground won't have it

easy. We won't be able to give them any air cover for operations or support." He knew for a fact that many would not make it through the day or night. "God, bless them tonight, Oh Lord," he thought. "I've written so many letters to families whose sons would not make it back home." He made his way up the street to the hotel. He wrapped the overcoat around him to help deflect the snow. "God, it's cold."

When he got back to the hotel room, some of the guests were already there. The food was all in order, and the Christmas tree looked great. The five married girls who were there had helped to decorate the tree with lipsticks, compacts, nail polish bottles, and anything else that would glitter and add a festive Christmas touch to the party. "The only thing missing is Little Howard," thought the Colonel, heaving a sigh and wondering if he would be able to get into the mood. He decided to go out front of the hotel for a few seconds before the party got into full swing.

As he stepped outside, the cold air of London felt sharp and crisp. "Merry Christmas" he thought to himself. After all, they were blessed and they were warm. It was going on 6:00 p.m., and just as he was about to go back in, an army jeep pulled up. The Colonel was stunned: there in the jeep were Howard and Col. Dave Schilling, CO of the 62nd Fighter Squadron, 56th Fighter Group, both of them still wearing their combat gear.

"Well Colonel Stovall, you look as though you have seen a ghost," said Colonel Schilling, "Merry Christmas."

Father and son embraced each other in a bear-hug grasp.



Lt. William Howard Stovall, Jr

"I thought you guys were not going to make it," said the Colonel.

Schilling replied, "The weather turned really nasty with this cloud cover and storm, and of course, Howard and I couldn't resist getting here since the mission was scrubbed. So we took it upon ourselves to come down from Boxted and join the party."

"God, you really do answer prayers," thought Colonel Stovall, "This is the best Christmas present that I have ever gotten."

"Merry Christmas, Daddy."

"Merry Christmas to you, Bud," Colonel Stovall said, using a favorite nickname for his son. "Well, come on upstairs and let's have some fun. It is Christmas Eve after all."

The Colonel turned to Dave Schilling and said, "Dave, you've made my Christmas the best one I've ever had."

"Heck Colonel, you've been the most supportive person I know of in Fighter Command. I just felt that if I could get Howard here, it would be

great for both of you."

The Colonel thought that if ever there ever a young man he would claim as a son, other than the three he already had, Dave Schilling was that person. He had the greatest respect for him, and had also grown quite fond of the young man since his arrival in 1943. Dave's parents were dead and it must have been a good feeling to have someone like the Colonel to be a father figure, and the Colonel felt as though he had adopted Dave Schilling into his own family. He was so much like Howard in many ways. The three men went upstairs. Hank was so very happy.

The party was a huge success. The food was great and there was plenty of wine. Hank's aunt by marriage, Gertrude Gavin, had sent him about 140 bottles of wine, and not just any wine, but wine you just couldn't get anywhere in England unless you had your own cellar.

"Son, I've got a gift for you," said Hank.

"Daddy, you really shouldn't have," said Howard, "because I don't have anything to give you."

"Yes you do, Son. You have made me so very happy for being here. I couldn't have asked for a better Christmas gift."

Ripping away at the wrapping and ribbon, Howard was stunned to find a custom made combat battle jacket and trousers, with a gold embroidered insignia on the jacket. Howard thought, "Wow, the old man really went out of his way to get this." Quietly, Hank watched the expression on his son's face. It pleased him so much to see how much his son liked the gear. As he slipped on the jacket, Howard turned to his father, his expression beaming.

"Thanks so much Daddy, Merry Christmas."

In the ambiance and camaraderie of the room, with all the different smells -- turkey, pheasant, cranberries, and the smell of the tree -- it felt just like home. It was as if everyone could be there in the moment, as if there was no war so close at hand.

After a while, Hank asked his son if he wanted to go back down to the street to hear the English children sing carols at the entrance of the hotel. "I have some goodies for the kids that I'd like to dole out to them." Howard knew that his father loved Christmas and making little children happy. He had done it for him and his sister and brothers when they had been at home before the war.

"Daddy that would be great."

The Colonel grabbed all the things he had put together. Virginia and Percy Parker had sent him a care package from Memphis, Tennessee and it was a beauty: candy bars, fresh oranges, spam, cigarettes, and more. And he had the six-pence coins from his trip to the bank that he could dole out. Howard looked at the delighted grin on his father's face and wondered just exactly who the kid was and who the adult was.

Despite the cold weather, standing at the hotel entrance, Hank was in a great mood. Groups of English children came by about every 30 minutes or so serenading the two men and several other guests with carols.

Hank passed out the money, candy and fruit, and the children were elated with the gifts. There was a soft glow out on the street from the low illumination of the lighting from the hotel.

Not once did the sound of artillery

explosions or V-1's disturb the quiet street. The children's harmonies on "Silent Night" floated on the chilly night air, angelic, lifting and liling. The lyrics so moved him that Hank Stovall had tears in his eyes. Here he was: a long way from home, war raging in Europe, and yet he sat listening to Christmas carols with his beloved oldest child, and they were together on Christmas Eve. They had done this very thing at home every Christmas. Tonight the song took on more meaning than Hank had ever heard in it before. Surely we will have "Peace on Earth and goodwill towards men" again one of these days he thought. After they passed out the last of the gifts, father and son went back upstairs and turned in for the night. It had been a great day.

The next day, they rose late. They had breakfast together - no duties, no war, just the company of family and friends. Hank, Howard and Dave went calling on some of the Colonel's English friends, who offered warm English hospitality and great Christmas cheer. It was all the men could ask for, given the circumstances. Later that afternoon they ambled their way over to Son Pittman's flat with the Navy crowd and proceeded to give the word "Merry" in Christmas its real meaning. The evening found the three men back at the Colonel's flat and more people showed up to help finish off the rest of the Christmas feast. The Americans got a real show down poker game going, with Howard winning all the stakes. Christmas day of 1944 was a good one.

December 26 came too soon for Colonel Stovall. Howard and Dave both got up early so they could

report back to Boxted Airbase. The three men had breakfast together in relative silence, the conversation punctuated with inquiries from Howard about his Mother, brothers and sister. Hank filled in the details with everything he knew of the recent news from home.

As father and son parted that morning, they both knew that they might not see each other again for some time. Hank was getting ready to move over to the continent, going to France with the 8th Air Force Command, and even though the Colonel knew he would be within flying distance when he got to France - it was only about an hour's flying time back to his son's base at Boxted - it would be sometime before he would get to see Howard again. "God go with you both," he called after them as Howard and Dave Schilling drove away in the jeep. The Colonel knew he would write to his wife about the Christmas party and his reunion with their son. The fact that they were together would make her very happy.

Dec 31st, 1944 the 62nd went on a mission to Hanover with the Bomber Boys. Lt. Howard Stovall was flying as an element leader in "B" flight. On the way back, when they were some-where between Ankam and Berensbruck, 20 miles Northwest of Osnabruck, there was a dogfight at about 12:15 PM. Their altitude was about 3500 to 4000 feet. Howard's wing man had motor trouble and had to turn back home so that left Howard with a one plane element.

Soon after meeting with the bombers, MEW control notified Fairbanks of "bogies" near Quackenbruck and the 62nd, led by Captain Felix "Willie" Williamson,

was sent to investigate. They were vectored to a low-flying mixed formation which appeared to be two ME 109's and seven FW 190's. Although they had the initial advantage the interception developed into a confused dogfight. They had spied the 10 or so enemy aircraft and pushed in for the attack.

As "A" flight went down to press the attack, 10 more enemy fighters who were acting as top cover, came into the picture. "B" flight, led by Capt. Nolan, in which Howard was leading the second element, turned to engage those enemy fighters. Capt. Nolan picked a target and headed to it, closely followed by his wing man. Howard, acting as element leader, picked out his target. Just as the pilots of "B" flight were becoming well engaged, "C" flight came down from the top and entered the melee. Second Lieutenant Donald Armstrong was on his eighth mission. Lt Armstrong, of "C" flight, picked out a target and fired a short burst from about 250 yards. Just as Lt. Armstrong was pulling the trigger, Howard's plane came in between him and his ME 109 target. Lt Armstrong had all 8 guns going, but immediately let up on the trigger and pulled up and away from the close quarter engagement.

"There were three of us shooting at an ME 109. One P-47 from the right coming in, one coming in from the left, and I was directly behind the ME 109. Stovall's plane came up from below me and flew between us just as I started to shoot. Thinking I may have hit him I broke off pursuit of the enemy aircraft and watched Stovall pull up, roll over, and go straight to the ground and explode near a farmhouse."

“Stovall did not say anything on the radio and that led me to think he might have been dead before he hit the ground.” Howard had critically damaged the ME 109 and it crashed on the ground. He immediately swung around and engaged seven more enemy planes, which were the FW 190's. By this time, Howard had travelled over 50 miles engaging these enemy planes by himself and was separated from his group. Again he selected a target, got up behind it, and brought down the FW190.

By that time an enemy fighter had come around to engage Howard from behind and the strikes were taking their toll on his plane, so Howard dove his plane down hard. Despite the fact that he had an enemy aircraft on his tail, Lt. Stovall had pushed the attack against the enemy plane. But with his plane critically damaged, he realized that he would have to bail out and hit the silk. When he jumped, he was low to the ground and the chute did not deploy all the way. The rest of the squadron had rejoined the whole group, and did not know what had happened to Howard. Lt. Armstrong was certain that he had shot up Howard's plane, “It was a long flight back to base for me because I thought I had shot down a friend” and that is how it was reported by Capt. Nolan in the MACR. Downed by ‘friendly fire’.”

Col. Dave Schilling called Colonel Stovall after the group returned to base from the mission and the Colonel went to Boxted on Jan 1st, 1945 to see if he could get some details on young Howard. He did not know if his son was dead or not. He was listed as just MIA, and the Colonel hoped and prayed that was the case. He could not be sure

where his son had gone down, but from all the air combat reports, the Colonel could form a good rough idea of where to look. He hoped that Howard had made it to Holland with the crippled P-47 and had managed to belly in. That thought gave him some hope that Howard was alive and would make it back to England and his squadron. Harold “Bunny” Comstock related the tragedy this way:

“When I came into the Wheelhouse to get a drink of water or whatever, here sat Col. Stovall, young Stovall's father. The Colonel had been a First World War “Ace” and was now on General Spaatz' staff. Prior to that he had been at AJAX and we had got to know him. He had flown over from Paris to see in the New Year with his son. I knew his son had gone down as there was a lot of chatter about it. His first question was, ‘How did the mission go Bunny?’

“I said, ‘We lost a few Colonel.’ I sort of got panicky. How was I gonna tell this man that his son was one of them?”

“I went out and jumped into a jeep, went back and got hold of Dave Schilling. His remark upon learning the Colonel was on base was, ‘Oh shit!’ He rounded up the other squadron commanders and we all went back to the Wheelhouse and Dave finally broke the news to him that it was his son. The father sat there and tears rolled down his cheek. He asked if he could talk to the young lieutenant who did the shooting and Dave sent for him. Lieutenant Armstrong related the details to the Colonel.”

While talking to Lt. Armstrong, Hank realized the young pilot felt that he had killed his son with friendly

fire. It had been Armstrong's eighth mission and his first time in combat that close to the enemy. Hank set out to prove that this man was not responsible for his son's death. Hank went to his plane and had the gun camera film processed. When the film was developed, they could see that Armstrong had only fired for a 1/10th of a second, only 45 rounds, and at an angle of deflection for his guns that was low and to the left. “My gun camera film was developed and plotted on a graph. I was told that I did not hit Lieutenant Stovall.”

What Armstrong had seen as his own strikes on Howard's plane were actually the guns in Howard's left wing blazing away on the tail assembly of the enemy fighter. Even in his worry about his own son's whereabouts Hank was able to console the young pilot that there was no way he could have been responsible for what happened to Howard's plane. Col. Stovall did not want the young man to go through life with that on his conscience. He knew from his own experience in World War I what that could do to a person. He had seen his best friend vaporized by an artillery shell while they were on patrol, and it haunted him still. “We eventually left the Colonel and Dave alone. He stayed there that night and the next day we flew him back to Paris in the C-78.”

With no official confirmation that Howard had been killed, the Colonel continued to hope that his son might still be alive. It was going to be his monumental chore to inform Eleanor that their son was missing in action. He did not relish that, but he had to do it. “I have to let her know before the War Department sends her the telegram,” he thought.



Col Stovall received numerous awards as a WWI Ace and served as Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel for the 8th AAF in Britain during WWII.

Lt. Stovall served heroically during WWII.

On Feb 5th, 1945, Colonel Stovall made his way to Switzerland looking for any information he could find concerning Howard. He was talking to Mr. James of the International Red Cross and the American Air Attaché in Bern, but did not have much hope of finding out anything at all. On Feb 28th, the War Department sent the telegram that Hank had hoped Eleanor would not receive. His frustration was immense.

He had to console his wife from thousands of miles away, while still trying to track down some hard information about what had happened to Howard. He could not be certain of what to believe as he had not received any information from any source at all. He had cabled Mr. James again and there had been no information that had passed through his office either.

Hank decided that he would go in Germany to see what he could find out there. He would have his own jeep and that would aid him in his search. By now, Hank was coming to terms with the sad reality that his son might be dead, and

he wanted to find his final resting place. It was a daunting task. In late April, 1945 he received information from G/2 Military Intelligence that some documents with Howard's name had been located in German files in Bergsteinfurt Police Station. Colonel Odom, a friend of his in G/2 Military Intelligence, was on his way to Meningtn, Germany where the dispositions of the burial places of the dead American airman were on file. On May 7th 1945, Col. Stovall wrote to Eleanor and told her he was going back into Germany to search again for Howards' remains and resting place. The Colonel was ready to come home but not until his one final mission was accomplished.

On May the 23rd, he wrote his wife Eleanor: "Darling Pud," he began, using her lifelong nickname and giving her some of the details of his expected return to the States before giving her the heartbreaking confirmation that their son was dead: "I have found our boy. He is buried at the Evangelist cemetery at Bergsteinfurt. If you look on the map, you will see that it is about 10

miles northwest of Munster."

He then went on to give her all the information he had gathered about Howard's last mission, and, like the soldier he was, he expressed his pride in his beloved son:

"I talked with the local police and the farmers in the neighborhood who witnessed the aerial combat. Howard was alone with six or seven German planes, one of which he set on fire, forcing the pilot to bail out. According to the witnesses, immediately afterward, Howard bailed out himself but was too low and his chute didn't open. I talked with the groundskeeper who prepared his body for burial and none of his bones were broken so he died without suffering.

He certainly accredited himself well in an uneven combat. He also shot down the enemy fighter who was in front of him in the picture I sent you. Evidently he had been in a running combat with a superior force for fifteen minutes between 12:30pm and 12:45pm over a 50 mile distance from Quackenbruck to Burgsteinfurt. The official records in the Burgsteinfurt city hall state

GENERAL CARL A. SPAATZ USAF RET.
5 GRAFTON STREET
CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20015

May 19, 1970.

Dear Eleanor:

I am sitting at my desk looking at a picture taken at Joe's last year. Hank's smiling face brings back memories of him from the 13th Squadron in World War I and all the intervening years. His contribution in World War II was typical, a combination of sound judgment, boldness and a wonderful personality.

For many years he has been for me a close, wonderful friend. You have been a wonderful wife for him, and the hospitality of the Stovalls will be cherished by all of us.

The sight of all the children and grandchildren insure that Hank and yourself will endure forever. God bless you and all of the family.

Love

Tooney

IRA C. EAKER
1815 K STREET, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20006
STANDARD 3-2886

May 13, 1970

Dear Eleanor:

Ruth and I regret very much that we could not accompany Ruth and Tooney Spaatz to pay our last sad rites and respects to your gallant husband. We do want you to know, however, that we are thinking of you in this time of sorrow and hopeful that you will let us know if there is anything we can do to ease your burden in any way at any time.

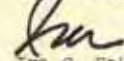
Tooney and I were talking only last week about our next date at the King & Queen Rod and Gun Club and the fact that we must consult Hank to see if he would and could come up to join us. It is amazing how often the two of us talk about him, and, upon reflection, it flows, of course, from the unequalled personality of his and the rare gift he had for friendship.

You, of course, have the only consolation one can have in such times and that is the certain knowledge that you were the greatest source of your husband's happiness, encouragement and support throughout your long life together.

You and the children also have the comfort which comes from the realization that your husband and their father was a distinguished citizen whose example has provided and benefited all who knew him and which will continue to influence all of us for the better.

Ruth joins me in love.

Sincerely,



Ira C. Eaker
Lt. Gen., USAF (Ret.)

Mrs. Hank Stovall
Stovall
Mississippi

Personal condolences from Tooney Spaatz and Ira Eaker upon Col. Stovall's death in 1970.

that he was shot down at 12:45pm.

I have passed on the various affidavits which I secured from witnesses to his group and the two enemy planes will officially be confirmed in his name. The group commanding officer, Lt Col Lucian Dade also told me he was recommending him for the Silver Star for gallantry in action. The boys of his squadron are preparing a cross which will be put on his grave. He will probably be moved at some future date to an international cemetery which we will establish in France or in Belgium.

As General Anderson wrote us,

there are few people who are privileged to die with honor. Our boy had that privilege. He was fine and he was unafraid. He was a member of a great Air Force, whose bombers have never been turned away from their target by enemy anti-aircraft fire or by enemy fighter opposition. He was a member of a fighter group that has never refused combat even though they were vastly outnumbered or at a tactical disadvantage. I am extremely proud that he personally lived up in every sense of the word to this tradition."

Hank went on to write about the

bond he forged with all the pilots of Fighter Command.

"Every day some of the boys from Fighter Command call me and pay me a visit. Most of them are the old timers or boys released from prison camp. It touches me and makes me feel good. Gen. Kepner was over yesterday and told me that he considered me the best A/1 he had ever seen because I command the respect and love and esteem of every youngster in the command. They certainly seem to remember me and always thank me for the help and guidance I gave them. It makes me feel that

my tour of duty has not been wasted. I got in to help them.”

Colonel William Howard Stovall, Hank to all, was my grandfather. I believe that Gen. Jimmy Doolittle summed it up best when he signed the picture of himself that he gave to my grandfather, “To Col. “Hank” Stovall, who will always be one of the boys.”

I know that single task of finding his son in the closing days of World War II was the most difficult thing my grandfather ever had to do – searching for him in a country that he did not know and that had been bombed into oblivion. But he succeeded. Lt William Howard Stovall IV’s final resting place is in the American Military Cemetery, in Margraten, the Netherlands, Plot A, Row 12, Grave 19. My grandfather felt that rather than bring Howard’s remains home, he should leave him overseas, lest we forget. Howard was awarded the Legion of Merit, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal w/Oak Leaf Cluster, and the Purple Heart.

The Colonel came back home to Mississippi and the farm in the summer of 1945. He had been gone for 3 years, 8 months, 16 days. For his service in the two World Wars he earned the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Victory Medal w/3 Battle Clasps, French Croix de Guerre w/Palm, French Legion of Honor, Legion of Merit w/Oak Leaf Cluster, Bronze Star, American Theater Ribbon, European, Middle Eastern, African Campaign Ribbon w/5 Bronze Stars, D Day Medal, Victory Medal, and

the Good Conduct Medal. He earned the Bronze Star for his work in helping to repatriate 1600 airman who had been held captive. He had been involved in helping to plan the Air Offensive in Tunisia, Central France, Germany, and Normandy. In 1947 he was made an “Honorary Officer of the Military Division of the most excellent Order of the British Empire.”

But after World War II, at every Christmas, as we gathered together at my grandparents’ home in Stovall, Mississippi, my grandfather would remember what he had to leave behind and what he lost in that war. When “Silent Night” played, his tears would flow and he would weep at the bittersweet memory of the last time he had been with his son. For all those awards he won, he would have given them all back, and more, to have his son.

On Christmas in 2003, Howard’s youngest brother, Robert Lewis Stovall – always “Bobby” -- wrote me a letter about Howard. It was a most compelling sentiment:

“Mike, some time ago, Elizabeth and I had an opportunity to go to

Margraten, Holland to see the Netherlands American Military Cemetery, where your Uncle Howard is buried. I’m sure that Elizabeth would join me in trying to relay to you exactly how awe inspiring this place is.

It is a sad fact of life that those of us who knew Howard are fewer and fewer. He has been gone now almost three times longer than he lived. Much is changed in this world since he made the supreme sacrifice oh so many years ago. Our intentions, as a nation, are questioned. Our morality is derided in large areas of the world. Other people grow suspicious of our motives. Friends become scarce.

In this new and hostile arena, it is uplifting to find that there are those in the world who still remember that we gave of our blood and treasure without asking anything in return. The enclosed is such a testament. It shows the monument in a great light. It also reflects the morals and courage that your uncle lived by and represented.

Maybe, after viewing, you’ll put on a little “Silent Night” and we’ll all have a telepathic toast to your uncle; your grandparents, aunts, uncles, and parents.”

It has been a reminder to me at Christmas every year when I hear “Silent Night” what someone else sacrificed for me and all of us in this country that we might be able to say “Merry Christmas and every wish for a Happy New Year.” I for one remember and I do shed tears because it has never been the same and I will always remember the sacrifice.



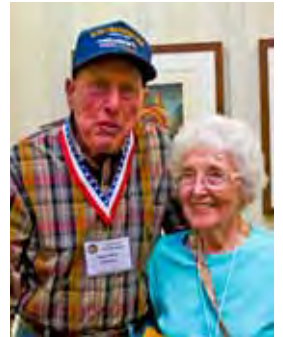
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Reunion "THANK YOU"

Inevitably, when you try and thank a large group of individuals and organizations for their help and participation in an event, someone almost always gets left off the list. But I would be horribly remiss if I didn't at least try to recognize those who, through their efforts, truly helped make our 42nd Annual Reunion a resounding success. If anyone is accidentally not recognized here, please accept my apologies and let me know so you/they can be recognized in the March 2017 issue!



Reunion photographers Craig Dubishar (top) and Michael Carr (pictured with Murray "Big Shorty" Codman).



JennLauren Thomas, Anne Marek, and Richard Shandor [not pictured] who manned the registration desk from dawn to dusk each day of the reunion.



Reunion chair, Dr. Nancy Toombs.



Pictured are the IL-20083 Cadet Squadron of the Air Force Junior ROTC program at Mascoutah High School IL and Col Randall Lanning, their commander. A total of 132 cadets are enrolled and have been active since July, 2008. The unit has been named a "Distinguished Unit" every year the group has been in existence, and twice named "Distinguished Unit with Merit" during years they have been inspected by the Air Force. They comprise just over 12% of the entire school, and are the largest student organization on campus.



Beverly Tomb arranged for several ladies of the Missouri State Society of the DAR to personally welcome all of our attendees upon their arrival during the reunion.

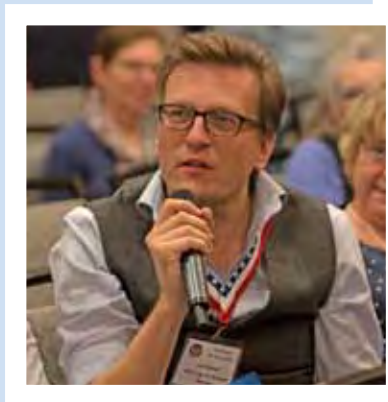
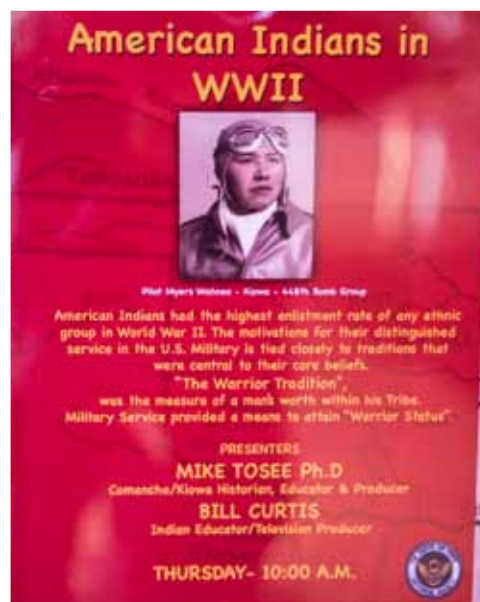
Reunion “THANK YOU’S” (Continued)



Dr. Donald Miller—no one has more passion for the 8th and WWII—shared stirring stories as well as insight into the upcoming HBO mini-series based on *Masters of the Air*.

During the Reunion Gala, the cadets presented all of the WWII vets a specially designed challenge coin.

Lucy May Maxwell and Carl Warner from the American Air Museum at Duxford gave a “brilliant” presentation.



Dr. Mike Tosee and Bill Curtis who presented an amazing program on American Indians during WWII to a packed room!

Reunion "THANK YOU" (Continued)

The staff of the Lakeside Chalet hotel were the penultimate hosts and professional under the direction of Nancy Master-son and Jordan Berlind. This beautiful ice sculpture was a total surprise during the gala!



Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price updated everyone on research and activities at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, GA.



Destination St. Louis arranged fantastic tours for our group during the reunion.



Thanks to the city of St. Louis for rolling out the red carpet for everyone!



A special thanks to the WWII vets who participated in so many of the activities, including the immensely popular WWII Q & A. [pictured l-r: Joe Reus, Albert Audette, Johnny Wearing, Teddy Kirkpatrick, Oliver "Mo" Morris, John Hildebran, and Bill Tombs]

Without all of you, none of this would have been possible.

8th Air Force Control Tower Planned at MID-ATLANTIC AIR MUSEUM

by Mark Chapin Col USAF ret. - January 10, 1945 AAF Station 130:

The morning mist was just clearing from the tiny village of Conington in Huntingdonshire. The inhabitants had once again been awakened to the roar of dozens of Cyclone engines simultaneously coming to life next-door at RAF Glatton. The B-17 squadron was a late addition to the mission and the crews hurried their preflights, their flight suits damp with sweat in spite of the cold. Gunners scrambled to check equipment and stow loose gear as jeeps and fuel trucks scurried away from the 749th's dispersal area.

"Slow but Good" would lead the squadron and her pilot was anxious to start taxiing. He checked the engines and awaited permission from the two-story, flat roofed building with the "greenhouse" on top. The RAF called it the Watch Office; the Americans would know it as the Control Tower.

The RAF and AAF had built 140 airfields in England since 1942 for the bombers of the 8th AF, fighters of the 9th AF, and transports of the Air Transport Command. As the AAF presence expanded in 1943/44 some airfields became depots, air-crew replacement stations, and photo reconnaissance bases. Each looked nearly alike, built to standardized plans approved by both countries, and the brick Control Tower was the operations nerve center.

Soon the sleek Flying Fortresses were taxiing; their tall, vertical stabilizers with the "Triangle U" moving along the perim-



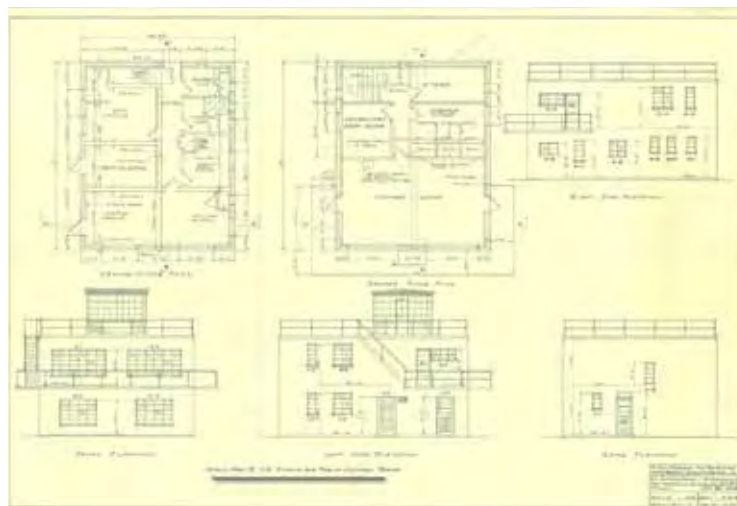
eter track that would lead them to the runway. The nose-to-tail parade was routine by now, but as the planes rumbled past the old farm house standing within the triangle of concrete runways, it still looked surreal and out of place. The US Army Aviation Engineering Battalion had simply built the airfield around it.

On every airfield the Control Tower was the key to all aircraft movement on the ground and within the airspace; every mission, every sortie. And, that same familiar brick tower

was a welcomed sight to a weary pilot nursing back home a damaged airplane, often with wounded flyers aboard. Men waited anxiously for hours on the rooftop...generals and lieutenants, airmen and sergeants; ready to respond, counting the losses. The AAF Control Tower would become the most lasting and iconic symbol of America's commitment, sacrifice, and victory in the air war against Germany. Over the decades most of those historic Control Towers in the U.K. have crumbled into ruin and are rapidly disappearing from the landscape. Soon the memories may be lost unless something is done to preserve the legacy.

The Mid-Atlantic Air Museum (MAAM), a 501(c)3 education charity located at General Spaatz Airfield (aka Reading, PA airport), wants to help keep the memory alive, by educating everyone on the history of the AAF and 8th Air Force. That includes building an authentic WWII Control Tower as part of the Museum's living-history commemoration of WWII airpower and aviators.

Each year on the anniversary of D-Day, through the tireless efforts of the Museum's President, Russ Strine, and hundreds of dedicated volunteers, Spaatz Airfield is returned to an authentic WWII airbase hosting over 80 Warbirds, hundreds of original WWII vehicles and armor, thousands of international WWII re-enactors complete with encampments, and tens of thousands of enthusiastic



visitors. A recent USA Today survey rated WWII Weekend as one of the top ten airshows in the country. The 27th annual WWII Weekend is scheduled for June 2-4, 2017.

Spaatz Airfield was a staging base for B-24's headed to join 8th Air Force in England and the layout has changed little over the years, even retaining some original structures including the Museum's main hangar. The site has all the elements of a WWII AAF environment except for one important piece...an authentic AAF Control Tower. Inspired by the 8th AFHS Control Tower, built at the USAF Museum in Dayton, OH, the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum plans to build the same at Spaatz Airfield.

This particular Control Tower will play a very unique, educational role at the Museum. Spaatz Airfield will be the only place in the nation where thousands will experience an operational 8th Air Force Control Tower with controllers directing the live, air operations of WWII bombers, fighters and trainers, on an authentic WWII Army Airfield.

The new addition to Spaatz Airfield will also house a display of original Control Tower history, floor plans and pictures provided by the RAF Museum, as well as authentic equipment, instrumentation, and select collections of AAF militaria. The rooms and rooftop will be available for special events, airshow viewing, receptions, guest speakers, reunions, and more.

The US Air Force Museum has provided the modern construction drawings for the new Control Tower which will be identical to the original structures: 28' wide across the front (not counting the balcony), 33' along the sides, and just over 18' from the concrete ground slab to the pre-formed concrete roof. Interestingly, each original structure required nearly 25,000 English bricks which are 4 1/2" x 9" compared with American bricks, 8"

December 2016 (16-4)



x 4". The unique pattern of "English Bond" brick laying resulted in walls that were 14" thick.

To raise construction funds the Museum is accepting donations online at www.maam.org for "Victory Bricks". These engraved pavers bear the names of veterans, military units, or businesses and corporations who wish to donate. Each brick will be placed along "Victory Road", shown in red on the grounds of the museum. The bricks may also include other logos and graphics.

In addition to the sale of Victory Bricks, the Museum is accepting individual donations, grants, endowments, as well as tax-deductible corporate sponsorship or in-kind contributions.

Pending availability of resources, the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum plans to start construction in 2017. The new Control Tower at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum will become a permanent, year-round memorial to American WWII air power where visitors may learn the history and honor the sacrifice, and help keep alive the legacy of all who served.

For more information on how you can participate in this project:



- To order "Victory Brick Pavers" www.maam.org
- To order by phone or for questions: (610) 372-7333 ~ 9am-5pm EST
- Contributions may be mailed directly to: Mid-Atlantic Air Museum 11 Museum Dr. Reading, PA 19605 Please indicate "Control Tower" with donation
- Contact: Mark Chapin MAAM Control Tower Project Officer (703) 901-0732

New Life for a VINTAGE RADIO



Frank Youngquist, of the 466th BG made a donation to the Wings of Freedom Museum in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. Frank had radio that came from B-17 and it needed a forever home. Frank contacted Nancy Toombs and she found the perfect place for the radio. Nancy picked up the radio in St Louis during the reunion and dropped it off at the Museum on her way home to Little Rock. Pictured is the museum, which was a Basic Flying school during WWII which has now been converted to a wonderful WWII aviation museum. Harold Johnson (pictured with the radio) is the museum CEO and he was honored that his museum was selected to receive such a wonderful gift. Thanks Frank, you are helping keep the memories alive!!!!



Frank Youngquist [left] chatting with Elmo Maiden during the reunion.



Wings of Honor Museum CEO, Harold Johnson.



8th AFHS VIDEOS

1. (New) American Indians in WWII - The Warrior Tradition
2016 Reunion Seminar
2. (New) Donald L. Miller Seminar Author- "Masters of the Air"
2016 Reunion Seminar
3. "Start Engines + Fifty Years"
4. "Behind the Wire" - the story of American POW's
5. Jonna Doolittle Hoppes -Granddaughter of Jimmy Doolittle
2007 Reunion Seminar
6. "Return to Attlebridge" Three veterans return to their old
airbase and meet with locals who were children during WWII

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Save the Date!

43rd Annual Reunion

Sept 27 ~ Oct 1, 2017

New Orleans, LA

Laissez les bon temps rouler!

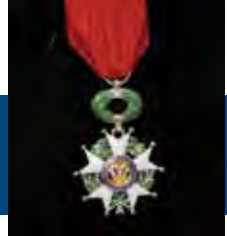
Details in March 2017 8th A F News



FRENCH LEGI

Manny Abrams	392nd BG	Jack F Disney	94th BG	John R Hildebran	453rd BG
Stewart Ackerman	303rd BG	Donald A D'Lugos	466th BG	Robert H Hitchcock	303rd BG
J R Akin	95th BG	Jack Dodson	398th BG	Bill Holden	1st B RNR
Jay D Allen	94th BG	John H Doyle	94th BG	Don Holmes	458th BG
Andy Anderson	100th BG	Norman R Dunphe	448th BG	Dewey A Holst	448th BG
Ed Anderson	453rd BG	George Durgin	493rd BG	Theodore C "Ted" Hood	306th BG
Richard Andrews	379th BG	Peter Durso	493rd BG	James Howell	447th BG
Albert Arreola	100th BG	Alfred Dusey	447th BG	Jake Howland	Unknown
Albert Audette	385th BG	Harold Dwyer	34th BG	Jack C Hubbard	306th BG
George W Bachmann, Jr	306th BG	Don Echols	458th BG	David Huckabay	489th BG
Orville Baker	445th BG	Stanley Edelman	351st BG	Blaine Hufnagle	94th BG
Willis Barney	379th BG	William "Bill" Eisenhart	303rd BG	Melvin Hurwitz	493rd BG
William Becker	492nd BG	James H Eshelman	385th BG	Albion Kenneth Hutcherson	95th BG
Richard L "Dick" Bedford	353rd FG	Dr. James Facos	388th BG	Joseph O Ingram, Jr	96th BG
Sheldon Beigel	306th BG	Joseph Fischer	94th BG	Gustave W Jacobson	94th BG
Caesar J Benigno	452nd BG	Clifford A Foss	29th Troop Carrier SQ	Bennie L Jefferies	306th BG
Nelson Berger	100th BG	Donald M Frank	389th BG	Arthur Jenkins	390th BG
Tony Bezer	490th BG	Herbert Friedlander	351st BG	David Johnson	1st B RNR
Leo S Bielinski	44th BG	Joel Friedman	34th BG	Martin Jordan	351st BG
William D Bodiford	487th BG	James E Frokking	479th FG	Jay Karpin	493rd BG
August C Bolino	388th BG	Frank Gaccione	7th Photo Recon	John Katsaros	401st BG
Bob Bowen	398th BG	Joseph Garber	96th BG	Samuel Katz	389th BG
James M Bond	385th BG	Ted Gary	493rd BG	George H Keating	452nd BG
Gordon Breeding	34th BG	William Gerecitano	388th BG	Victor Keech	1st B RNR
Carl F Brown, Jr	4th FG	Albert Gese	20th FG	Perry Kerr	466th BG
Dudley Brown	94th BG	Dr. C W "Bill" Getz	491st BG/2AD SF	John Ketzner	92nd BG
Joe Burdis	388th BG	Reuben Glazer	445th BG	Michael D Kindya	385th BG
Ed Burnham	95th BG	Dallas Godsey	351st BG	James King	1st B RNR
Donald Casey	379th BG	Stanley Goldstein	466th BG	Russell A Knudson	303rd BG
Clarence F Cherry	100th BG	Hewitt B Gomez	492nd BG	Carroll F Knutson	447th BG
John Chopelas	452nd BG	Marvin Graham	392nd BG	Donald L Koons	401st BG
Samuel Christiano	18th Weather SQ	Sidney Grant	493rd BG	Donald F Kremper	94th BG
John A Clark	100th BG	Charles J Greenough	379th BG	Ralph J Kurka	93rd BG
James O Clemons	484th BG	Robert Gross	34th BG	Herbert J Kwart	381st BG
Grayson Cocharo	492nd BG	Joseph "Joe" Gualano	493rd BG	Dean C Larson	401st BG
Murray Codman	447th BG	Rudolph "Rudy" Guerrero	493rd BG	William G Lathrop	94th BG
Myron Cohen	91st BG	Milton R Gunther	487th BG	George A Lawson	7 PRG
Paul J Collins	447th BG	Carl Gustafson	453rd BG	John Lemons	445th BG
Joseph Connaughton	319th BG	Russell W Gustafson	452nd BG	Mathias J Leupold	385th BG
Marbury L Councell, Jr	96th BG	Paul C Haedike	452nd BG	Donald D Levine	453rd BG
Thomas L Creekmore	305th BG	Percival L Hanson	305th BG	Richard B "Dick" Lewis	493rd BG
Howard Croner	452nd BG	Haas M Hargrave	493rd BG	George R Leyva	351st BG
Robert Culp	100th BG	Alfred B Harris	390th BG	Robert M Littlefield	55th FG
John F Curcio	458th BG	Robert B Hastie	95th BG	James L Livingston	44th BG
Wayne Davis	452nd BG	Robert Haynes	493rd BG	Robert "Bob" Livingston	351st BG
Steve de Pyssler	VIII Bomber Command	Robert Hecker	401st BG	Stan Loftsgard	493rd BG
Eddie Deerfield	303rd BG	Walter Hendricks	452nd BG	Malcolm J Magid	303rd BG
Harold L Dietz	466th BG	Lewis E Herron	100th BG	Ken Mason	1st B RNR

ON OF HONOR



Ellis McClintick	390th BG	Wilmer "Will" Plate	489th BG	Robert W Smothers	452nd BG
Robert McCormack	389th BG	Michael H Prestia	452ndBG	Christopher Spagnola	44th BG
Elmer "Lucky" McGinty	95th BG	Vincent J "Bill" Purple	379th BG	Colin D Storey	94th BG
Hugh McGinty	379th BG	Walter "Mike" Quering	487th BG	William E Stovall	390th BG
Jay McIntosh	94th BG	Albert Rapvano	466th BG	Herman Stroupe	390th BG
B/GEN Seth McKee	370th FG	Lauri Rautio	447th BG	Walter Sturdivan	34th BG
Russell Madsen	100th BG	Joseph H Reus	445th BG	John S Swarts	351st BG
Elmo Maiden	466th BG	James A Rich, Jr	96th BG	John Roger Swihart	388th BG
David Marshall	381st BG	George Roberts	306th BG	Henry E Tessien	96th BG
William Massey	401st BG	William L "Bill" Roche	452nd BG	William Thacker, Jr	457th BG
Walter M "Boots" Mayberry	388th BG	J Warren Roundhill	379th BG	William M "Bill" Thorns	96th BG
Seward M Meintsma	466th BG	Jack Rude	493rd BG	William C "Bill" Toombs, Sr	493rd BG
Julius M Micek	381st BG	Peter "Rupy" Ruplenas	486th BG	William "Bill" Varnedoe	385th BG
James Mikusi	447th BG	Al Sadowsky	34th BG	Rudolph Villalobos	96th BG
Charles Mills	492nd BG	Bradford Saivetz	305th BG	Jay Walker	384th BG
Rex Mills	453rd BG	Jesse Sandlin	447th BG	James H Walston, Jr	466th BG
E E "Mitch" Mischler	94th BG	Frank N Schaeffer	44th BG	Douglas J Ward	305th BG
Lloyd Mitchell	96th BG	Walter Schattel	489th BG	Charles Warren	351st BG
Kenneth Moulden	448th BG	Carmen Schiavoni	447th BG	Earl E Wassom	466th BG
Clayton A Nattier	306th BG	Robert Schuberg	306th BG	Billy D Welch	361st FG
William J "Bill" Nevitt	353rd FG	Bob Schuh	398th BG	Charles Wheelwright	392nd BG
John W Newman	94th BG	Horace Seyster	457th BG	John M Williams	448th BG
William J O'Leary	384th BG	Horace Shankwiler	445th BG	Paul Willson	305th BG
Allen G Ostrom	398th BG	Marvin Silbersher	447th BG	Frank A Wiswall	96th BG
Frank D Perez	401st BG	Taffe Simon	445th BG	Lawrence Wolfson	493rd BG
LaVerne Peters	389th BG	Harold W Smith	448th BG	Richard P Woodson, III	96th BG
Stanley Peterson	96th BG	Heber H Smith	94th BG	James Zographos	388th BG
Anthony W Pircio	7th PRG	Samuel W Smith	303rd BG		

* List current as of press time...



If you or someone you know has received the French Legion of Honor, but is not on this list, or if you would like information, please contact:

Dr. Nancy Toombs
(501) 681-3126 or
Chase221@SWBell.net

Application information is also available on our website: 8thAFHS.org



1st Lt. Tom Moore

[Photograph courtesy of Tom Philo]

Oregon Chapter

7 May 2016

Edited by Joan E. Hamilton

"I completed Advanced Pilot Training at Luke Field, Arizona in February of 1944 where I was in Cadet Class 44B. I was eighteen when got my wings and bars and was the youngest pilot in our fighter squadron. We traveled overseas in July 1944 unescorted on the Aquitania and they'd make a 45 degree turn every five minutes so that submarines couldn't get a line on it. Spike Jones and the City Slickers were also onboard the Aquitania.

"In late August, 1944, I was assigned to the 361st Fighter Group, 374th Squadron, 8th Army Air Force starting at Bottisham just east of Cambridge and then Little Walden until late December when the group moved to a base in France during the Battle of the Bulge and then to a base in Belgium until the end of the war and back to Little Walden. I returned to the US in November of 1944. I had gone overseas as a P-38 pilot but with advanced training at Goxhill in England, I switched to the P-51.

"On some of our missions flying

bomber escort we had interaction with the Messerschmitt 262. If you were going to intercept a Me-262 you almost had to be at the rear of the bomb group because they attacked from the rear and were fast. They had firepower in the nose and usually they'd get one or more bombers down with one pass. Our squadron had four flights of four each and for maximum effort they would put up an additional flight of two planes which we called our black flight. I liked that because I'd just go with my wingman cruising around looking for trouble. On one particular occasion, I spotted what I thought was another P-51 with wing tanks coming at me at the same altitude about 11 o'clock. He came closer and I thought, "What? This is a Me-262."

"I switched my internal tank, dropped my external tanks, and got the guns switch on him. He spotted me when I did that and poured the coal to it. I saw the smoke coming out of his jets and I rolled over to get a shot at him. He looked up at me and I looked down at him. We were so close with 30 to 50 yards distance between us. I got a line on him, but he was going so fast I probably only got some hits on him.

"One of our more interesting missions occurred on September 18, 1944. This was one day after we flew cover for the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions for the air invasion into Holland and a portion of Belgium. The next day at briefing, we were assigned to escort a B-17 group to Poland. We flew over the North Sea, Denmark, the Baltic Sea, and then to Warsaw, Poland. The goal was to drop supplies to the Polish partisans in Warsaw that were rising up against the Germans. The Soviet army was steamrolling toward Warsaw and the Polish partisans believed that the Russians would continue and drive the Germans from Warsaw. Instead, the Russian army stopped and the Polish partisans were eliminated. The airdrop was not

successful in that only a portion of supplies ended up in the hands of the partisans. We did not escort the B-17 group all the way to Russian territory.

The 355th Fighter Group departed later from England and flew directly to Warsaw and took over escort of the bombers to Russian territory. They landed at a Russian air base. This was the longest mission of the 361st Fighter Group at seven and one-half hours in the air, a long time to be in the cockpit of a P-51."

Oregon Chapter

13 August 2016

Edited by Joan E. Hamilton



Capt. Fred Massaro

458th BG, 753rd SQ, Eighth Army Air Force
Served during WWII and the Korean War

B-24 Bombardier, Navigator

[Photo courtesy of Tom Philo]

Our original speaker, WWII B-17 pilot, Jim Street, was not able to attend; however, we were shown a video interview of Jim Street in the cockpit of EAA's B-17 bomber, Aluminum Overcast, at McNary Field in Salem, Oregon. Pat Keating and his father, T/Sgt. George Keating, ground crew chief with the 452nd Bomb Group, 731 Squadron, displayed T/Sgt. Keating's French Legion of Honor medal at our meeting. Our Chaplain, Sophia Kennedy, presented Capt.

Fred Massaro with a beautiful Quilt of Valor created by Pam McKeen. Sophia read, "This Quilt of Valor was made especially for you with appreciation and sincere gratitude for your unwavering service and sacrifice in the name our country's freedom". Many of our Veterans have now been presented with these quilts which are heartfelt expressions of appreciation.

Capt. Massaro graciously agreed to give us the following details of his WWII experiences, "I'm going to tell you a story that I've never told before. My brother, Ralph was a year and a half older than I. We were both working in the Kaiser Shipyards in Richmond, California and had permanent deferments, but in 1943 we went into the military. I was twenty-two and Ralph was twenty-four and married with a beautiful little daughter. We all lived in Oakland, California when one day, Ralph called me and said, "Fred, they've opened up the Aviation Cadet Training Program for married people. Let's go take the test."

"It was to be held in San Francisco and believe me I can still remember where: 444 Fourth Street on the fourth floor. So we went, both passed the test, and then passed our physicals at Hamilton Field.

"Ralph was called about a week before me. He went down to Texas for basic training, was assigned down in Arizona, and qualified as a navigator. I was sent with a group of aviation cadets up to a Kearns, Utah for basic training and sent down to March Field and classified. I qualified as a bombardier, was assigned to a B-24 crew at March Field in early 1944, and went overseas to Horsham St. Faith in England right outside of Norwich where I served with the 458th Bomb Group, 753rd Squadron, 8th Army Air Force.

"Because of his high marks, Ralph qualified as a lead navigator. He went December 2016 (16-4)

into B-29s and went over to Guam where he flew twenty-six missions to Japan, missions which averaged sixteen hours over water. Before his last mission, Ralph called my family to tell them he would meet his wife at the Naval Air Station in Alameda two days after that mission. This is the tough part. They were deputy lead on their twenty-sixth mission flying over Kobe, Japan when his plane was shot down. There were no survivors. My family missed my brother very much.

"I flew thirty-one missions out of Horsham St. Faith. I flew ten missions as a bombardier. Then, the bombardier position was eliminated and the nose gunner jettisoned the bombs. I had finished number two in my cadet class in navigation. So I was selected to be a DR, dead reckoning navigator. With dead reckoning you fly mostly by vision of the ground. Can you imagine us flying at 30,000 feet and me navigating? I couldn't see anything down below. But I did take the ship home twice.

"I came home and went into the California Air National Guard. I was trained at Camp Gordon, Georgia as a military police officer and in 1949 assigned to Tyndall Air Force Base in Panama City, Florida. They were training there on the new conversion from the Army Air Force to the U.S. Air Force. So that's what I went there to be trained in. At the hospital on base I met a nurse, First Lieutenant Sarah Alice Hooks [RN], took her to a couple of dances at the club, and we got married on the base a year later. So that's the story. It's a hard story to tell losing my brother like that. We'd been so close."

New York State Southern Wing

Joseph "Pat" Keeley

The Chapter had a Luncheon/



Ray O'Connor author of "She Called Him Raymond".

Meeting last May 2016 in Long Island NY and had a good turnout including British and French War Veterans and Ray O'Connor author of "She Called Him Raymond".

The Fall 2016 get-together has been postponed and rescheduled for May 2017 again to be held in Long Island NY.

Please check the Chapter's site, <http://blogs.ny8thswcafhs.org/>, for updates, times, and location. Please 'Support Our Troops' & the USO Cheers, Pat Keeley

Georgia Chapter

Jennifer George

Photo Credit: Jon M Berry

September was a busy month for the Georgia Chapter members of the Mighty 8th! Our chapter hosted a BBQ fundraiser, held a very special monthly luncheon that included a birthday and a surprise award, and participated in the Commemorative Air Force's Atlanta Warbird Weekend.

Our month kicked off early when we held a BBQ fundraiser at the 57th Fighter Group Restaurant located at PDK Airport in Atlanta, GA. Serving up plated BBQ sandwiches and "fix-ins", the chapter brought in additional money for our multiple trips to the museum in Pooler, GA. We also took

the time that day to preemptively celebrate member Albert McMahan's 96th birthday. Albert, a member of the 306th Bomb Group, was a tail gunner and ball turret gunner on the B-17 Wahoo. As part of the birthday cel-



ebration, our chapter president, Travis Reynolds, arranged for Albert to have a surprise flight in a T-6 Texan.

Our guest speaker for our monthly luncheon, was Michael Mullaney of the FAA. The meeting, led by Colonel Brent Bracewell, featured yet another surprise. Major Bill Leach, a Korean



War and Vietnam War pilot and member of our chapter, was presented with the prestigious Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award. The award, presented by Mr. Mullaney, recognized Major Leach for his 50+ years of piloting aircraft with accident free and incident free flying. Major Leach, along with his wife Mary, were given distinctive gold pins in recognition of the award. We had a record number of guests in attendance for this meeting, including Major Leach's family and friends as well as the family and friends of Albert McMahan who attended in celebration of his birthday.

Closing out our month, we participated in the annual Atlanta Warbird Weekend hosted by the Commemorative Air Force's "Dixie Wing". For the 3rd year in a row, our chapter's veterans took a place of

honor at this event. Our chapter provides the BBQ each year for the crowd and the accommodations for our veterans. The theme of the event this year was in honor of the 75th anniversary of the AVG Flying Tigers and Hump Pilots featuring five P-40 Warhawks, a C-46 and a C-47. Members of the 8th AF in attendance were our chapter's former president and "Godfather", Henry Hughey and Roger Mackenzie. Also in attendance were our members from the 9th AF, pilots Dick Bailey and Dave Andrews. Lieutenant Colonel Dick Cole, of the Doolittle Raiders was our guest.

Our speaker in October was Colonel Richard J. Greenwood. Colonel Greenwood is the Commander of the Georgia Wing, Civil Air Patrol. The Georgia Chapter's monthly meeting is held the 2nd Saturday of every month at Clairmont Place, across the street from the VA Hospital in Decatur, GA. On average, we usually have two 8th AF veterans in attendance, several 9th AF veterans, as well as Korean and Vietnam veterans. Everyone is welcome!

On Veterans Day, a group of about 40 Atlanta members of the Georgia Chapter of the 8th AF Historical Society caravanned down to the Mighty Eighth Museum and participated in Savannah's Veterans Day parade and celebration. Col Ed Wexler and Henry Hughey collaborated in organizing the event and other members of the Atlanta Chapter built the float and transported the vets and their families. It was a wonderful weekend for all involved.

Wisconsin Chapter
Cindy Drehmel

September 13 the Wisconsin Chapter met in the Saijan Building of the 128th Air Refueling Wing Air Force Base at Mitchell Air Field for our quarterly meeting. Featured speaker December 2016 (16-4)

was our own Merle Hayden. Merle gave a detailed account of his time in the Pacific Theater during WWII, island hopping preparing 50 caliber machine guns for Thunderbolts.

His slide presentation was fantastic and featured over 100 photos showing day to day activities at each island location. Merle, who is now 96, is a strong and vibrant member of our chapter.

Wisconsin Chapter 8th AFHS flying at the speed of sound:

Three of our WWII vets accompanied Cindy Drehmel, president to the national reunion in St. Louis in October. WWII vets in attendance included 8th gunner, toggler, Sgt Bob Schuh, Cpl Merle Hayden, 348 FG, 5th AF, and Cpl Don O'Reilly, 8th AF MP. Also in attendance were Wisconsin member Bill McCutcheon and Don O'Reilly's



Corporal Merle Hayden, 348 Fighter Group on Colonel Rowland's P47. Wakde Air Field, Dutch East Indies, 1944.



Merle speaking to our group Sept. 2016



WI delegation at reunion.

grandson. We met many wonderful 2nd generation Wisconsin and Illinois folks as well as one fun-loving WWII Californian top turret gunner, Murray "Big Shorty" Codman.

Special thanks to all who donated in helping get our group to this fantastic event. Additional thanks to WWII vets Lt. Colonel Ralph Anderson Sgt Bob Schuh and Corp. Merle Hayden who participated in our CBS, NBC, Fox and newspaper interviews to help raise funds for the event.

Additional thanks to large donors Laura Adler, Joanne Serdyski, Dick Laske, and Ralph Windler, as well as many who donated anonymously on our Go Fund Me page and through CRG. A special 'thank you' to Tina Spritka for the set up of our GMF page and CRG for accepting funds on our behalf. Without you all this could not have happened!

Personal notes...
Cindy, special thanks to you as well as all others who made the [reunion] trip possible for Bob and I. Had you asked me ahead of time I probably

would have declined!! Going down memory lane was a treat, but I was also able to make some good contacts with some who were looking ahead as well as behind. Merle Hayden

Hi Cindy, I decided to call you on Veterans' Day to thank you and the Wisconsin Chapter for making this vet's dream a reality. I really enjoyed the reunion and meeting all the people. Memories were made that will never be forgotten. I know it was a lot of hard work so please thank everyone at the Wisconsin Chapter for making this possible! Bob Schuh

Our last quarterly meeting of the year and Christmas party was held Tuesday, December 6, at the 128th ARW and included Christmas door prizes, 1940s Christmas music and dancing. Everyone brought new stuffed animals for a needy children. It was another great event!

Paula Theisen will be stepping down as secretary of the Wisconsin Chapter at the end of this year. The Wisconsin Chapter is grateful for all Paula's hard work. It will be tough to

replace her.

Thank you Paula we appreciate you greatly!



Paula hard at work.

Mark your calendars for our spring quarterly meeting which has been moved from blizzard-ridden March to Tuesday, April 4 to be held at the 128th Air Refueling Wing at Mitchell Air Field, Milwaukee. As our meetings take place on an active Air Force base, it is important that all register at least one week in advance.

Adams, Douglas J., 91, passed away August 20, 2016. Doug was born in Snyder, Nebraska and has lived in Fremont, NE, Uehling, NE, Milton-Freewater, OR, Eugene, OR, Tucson, AZ, and Green Valley, AZ. Doug served in the 8th Air Force, 447th BG, 1943 - 1945, as a tail gunner in a B-17. He married Margaret Ann (Hickman) Adams in 1946. She and their two children, Tim of Green Valley, AZ and Janet (Lloyd) of Escondido, CA; their grandchildren, Rob Adams, Trav Stoddard, Kristi Stoddard, Nikki Adams and their families, and one sister, Phyllis Herweg, of Covina, CA survive. His brother, Roland pre-deceased him. Doug taught students in grades 7-12 and administered in Nebraska, Oregon and Tucson, Arizona. When he retired from school he co-counseled with Margaret Ann at Adams and Adams Counseling Associates.



Douglas J. Adams

Barr, Thomas J., 91, passed away November 6, 2016, in Asheville, NC. At 17, Tom skipped his senior year of high school to enroll in the University of Florida and enlisted as a Private in the Air Corps Enlisted Reserve. He was insulted when the Recruiting Officer said 'Let's swear this kid in' after all he was a man going to defend our country! He was called to active duty on June 8, 1943 and completed Basic Training as an aviation student. Tom and his friend, Charles Anderson, received their pilot's wings and commission as a 2nd Lieutenant on August 4, 1944. For 72



Thomas J. Barr

years, on the anniversary of getting their wings, Col. Anderson and Col. Barr were in a race to see who could call the other one first on August 4th to commemorate that day. They were both selected for B-17 training (The Flying Fortress), both became pilots and they remained friends for life. The last call was August 4, 2016.

On December 6, 1944, Tom was assigned his flight crew and they served together until the end of WWII. They took the troop train from Lincoln, Nebraska to New York City and boarded the Queen Mary with 20,000 other soldiers headed to England. On March 27, 1945, they arrived at the 303rd Bomb Group (Hell's Angels) at Molesworth to serve in the 427th Bomb Squadron. Lt. Barr, only 19 years old, flew 11 bombing missions in 19 days taking out German airfields, railroad marshalling yards, weapons factories and concrete aircraft hangers hiding German fighter planes. The final mission involved more than 300 B-17 aircraft on a raid to bomb the Skoda armament works and airfield in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia.

The Colonel retired from the U. S. Air Force in 1974. During his career he flew a total of 5,225 hours: 104 combat hours in the WWII B-17 and 198 combat hours in Vietnam. He earned the American Campaign Medal; the Air Medal; the European, Africa, Middle East Campaign Medal with Battle Star Central European Campaign; the World War II Victory Medal; the Army of Occupation Medal; the National Defense Medal; the Air Force Commendation Medal; the Vietnam Serv.

'The Colonel', as he was affectionately called by family and friends, was an officer and a gentleman. He was our hero, our friend, our mentor, our cheerleader, our storyteller & comedian, our rock and strength 'a force that will never be replaced but will always be with us. The Colonel was

interred at Arlington with full military honors where his wife, Peggy, is buried.

Gauthier, Gerard Arthur, 94, passed away September 2, 2016. He was born in Montreal, Canada and became a US Citizen. Gerry was a proud Veteran who served in the United States Army and United States Air Force during WWII and was a member of the 839th Sq of the 487th Bomb Group and participated in the 24Dec46 mission, the largest in history. His plane, piloted by John Edwards, assumed the lead when Gen. Frederick Castle's plane was downed. He flew 30 missions including the "Battle of the Bulge".



Gerard Arthur, Gauthier

After the war he served in the Air Force Reserves and became a Lieutenant Colonel, retiring after 25 years of service.

Gerard married Helen Fecay and resided in Michigan raising their 5 children together. She predeceased him in 2000. He retired as an Engineer from Peerless Cement Company.

Gerard is survived by his wife Diane Gauthier, his children; Roger Gauthier, Richard Gauthier, Ronald Gauthier, Robert Gauthier and Michelle Basil, Also his many grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Richard B. "Dick" Lewis, LTC USAF (Ret), 94, of Jacksonville, FL passed away Nov 12, 2016.

He was born in Arkansas City, Kansas Apr 2, 1922 to Benjamin Lewis and Eula (Day) and worked for his dad who owned the Western Auto Store in Farmington, MO



Richard B. "Dick" Lewis

TAPS

while completing two years of college. After marrying Margie D. (Pogue) with whom he was married almost 72 years he joined the Army Air Corp July 18, 1942. Dick completed bomber pilot training and flew 35 combat missions with the 493rd BG in B17s and B-24s over Germany, France, and Belgian. Just before leaving the US his maternal grandmother was dying. After arriving overseas he received a letter from his mother saying that the night his grandmother died she appeared in a dream telling his mother to relay to Dick that she would be on his wing keeping him safe. His plane was shot up many times and seldom returned with all engines running. Once all four engines were damaged and quit after a bomb run, however he and his crew got the engines started again and they made it home. Another time they lost the third engine before they crossed the English Channel and he relayed to his crew to prepare to jump (parachute); his crew told him they would rather not jump that they trusted him to get them to England which he did...but barely.

He completed his 35 missions with no injuries to any of his crew in spite of being badly shot up many times. He returned to Farmington after the war and worked for his father while also in the USAF Reserve.

He was called back into service during the Korean Conflict and flew transport missions until it ended.

When he returned home he learned that the nearby town (Fredericktown) near Farmington, MO needed a Western Auto Store. He was able to secure a loan and start a business that was very successful. He stayed in the USAF Reserve, retiring as a LT Col. with 30 years of service.

In 1964 he sold the Western Auto store and moved to Florida where he worked at several businesses while buying and selling/renting property. At

one time he owned over 30 homes. In 2009 after some prompting by a good friend Jim Sharpe and daughter Pam, he wrote a book about his 35 combat missions during WWII. He named the book, "Angel on My Wing" because he (and his entire crew) believed his grandmother was out there protecting them. After he wrote his book he began speaking at colleges, radio stations, air shows and attended many book signings. He really loved people and was a very good speaker.

Dick awakened in the morning whistling or singing and went to bed the same way; he was a handyman like no other and loved to help anyone he could. He was known to always have a last comment to ponder over in his Sunday School class, dearly loved to dance even at 94, had a passion for Gospel music, Willie Nelson, flowers and gardening, dearly loved his hats-taking after his father, was a wonderful story teller, enjoyed taking the elderly to church, was a caretaker when needed and even raised many birds in the 70's. There are too many children/grandchildren to list that he and his wife Margie welcomed into their home.

He leaves behind his loving wife Evelyn who shared his love of life and adventure to the very end, her daughter Rachel (Orlando, FL) grandsons Jose and Louis, Dick's three children, Richard (Gladys) Lewis, Locust Grove AR, Pam Berlin (Jacksonville, FL) and Teresa Lewis (Conway AR), Grandchildren- Richard Eric Lewis, (Sebastian FL), Susan (Don) Wasilewski (Lakeland FL), Kerry (Mary) Lewis (Lakeland, FL), Ronald (Lynette) Berlin, Middleburg, FL, Doug (Wendy) Rau Tallahassee, FL, Tasha (Kevin) Hovis, Fredericktown MO, Kelli (Bill) Gay, Puyallup WA, Shawn (Michelle) Harris, Clarksville, TN, April Harris, Conway AR, Amber Harris, London KY, Aimie Harris (deceased), Ayla and Abby Harris and

Annie Price (Altamonte Springs, FL), Ashley, Lovelle, and Aleah Harris, Sioux City, SD, 31 great grandchildren and 5 great, great grandchildren.

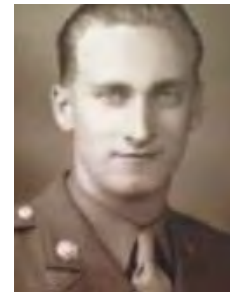
Nevitt, William J., 98, passed away November 6, 2016. "Bill" entered service with the "Mighty Eighth" in early 1942.

After completing basic training, communications, camouflage and gunnery schools, he deployed to the European theater in 1943, stationed at Goxhill, England, June 1943; Metfield, England, August, 1943 and Raydon, England April 1944 with the 353rd F/G, 350th F/S. He served as ground personnel/communications/radio technician for the group's P-47 and P-51 fighter aircraft, achieving the rank of SSGT. Bill received an Honorable Discharge in October 1945.

He was proud of the achievements of the 353rd, highlighted by the group receiving the Distinguished Unit Citation for its actions during Operation Market Garden, Holland, 17-23 Sept 1944. Bill was nominated for and was awarded the French Legion of Honor medal in August, 2015, for his role in helping liberate France.

Bill married his sweetheart, Bette, in 1945 and they enjoyed 69 very happy years together. They resided in Bedminster, NJ from 1947-1980, Bill being employed by the L. Bamberger & Co / Macy's Department Store Group from 1947 until his retirement in 1980. He served his community as a long-time member of the Bedminster-Far Hills Lions Club, serving two terms as President. He also served as a baseball coach for the Far Hills Little League for many years.

Bill served as the primary contact



William J. Nevitt

person for the 353rd F/G following his retirement, organizing many reunions of 353rd veterans and their spouses, prior to the group attending the larger 8th AF reunions. Bill had many fond reunion memories. Two which stood out were a "Return to Raydon" in 1995 commemorating the 50th anniversary of V-E Day, where the 353rd vets were greeted by hundreds of residents who lined the streets waiving American flags, cheering and shouting "Thank you"; the other being the 2003 8th AF reunion in Washington, DC, which was attended by all three of his children and one grandchild, with whom he was able to share his first visit to the National WW II memorial.

His experience in the military was extremely important to him and he consequently became a "walking history book" for local citizens, answering countless numbers of questions in general conversation and frequently serving as a guest speaker for history students at local high schools. He was interviewed by a local radio station in Flemington, NJ in 2016 to discuss his life experiences, both pre-war and WW II.

SSGT Nevitt was the true embodiment of General Douglas MacArthur's classic descriptor: "Duty...Honor...Country"

Putman, John W., 92, of Rushsylvania, PA, passed away October 24, 2016. He was born December 8, 1923 in Toledo, Ohio, son of David and Florence (Krock) Putman. He married Betty Jeanne Wilson on January 26, 1948 at the Wilson home.

John enlisted in the U.S. Army in March of 1942. In May he saw a notice on the company bulletin board for volunteers for the Army Air Corp. He raised his



John W. Putman

December 2016 (16-4)

hand and headed to gunnery training school in Las Vegas, Nevada. He completed 42 bombing missions over Europe as a B-17 tail gunner with the 96th Bomb Group. In 1945 he was released from active duty and headed to Detroit, MI to work. In August of 1946 he re-enlisted in the Air Force where he remained until 1966. John was honorably discharged with the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart among other medals. He loved his time of service and often talked about all the places he had been. John also dedicated 20 years of service at Siemens Electric in both Marysville and Bellefontaine and retired from there in 1986.

He was a member of the Rushsylvania Lions Club, served on the County School board and was an active member of the Rushsylvania United Methodist Church where he taught Sunday school for many years. He never got over his love of flying and enjoyed opportunities to fly privately with friends. He always enjoyed traveling and he and Jeanne did much of it during their retirement years.

Survivors include a daughter, Jo Anne (Jerry) Harshbarger of Tennessee and Mark (Lori) Putman of Pennsylvania, 8 grandchildren: Lori Stahler, Chris Carey of Ohio, Jennifer (Darby) Beck of Pennsylvania, Jessica Putman-Villalba (Eddie) of Colorado, John (Damaris) Putman of Texas, Carrie Morda, Aimee (Kevin) Maziarz, Matt (Krissa) Putman of Pennsylvania; many great grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Betty Jeanne (Wilson) Putman in 2001.

James B. "Jim" Taylor

Long time Los Altos resident Jim Taylor passed peacefully away in Chico, CA on September 20, 2016 with his two daughters Susan and Edith by his side He was 94 years old.

Jim was born on January 22, 1922, the youngest of five children, in the small coal mining town of Thurmond, West Virginia, along the Kanawha



James B. "Jim" Taylor

River. His parents, Seth and Pearl Taylor, worked as an engineer for the railroad and a hotel cook respectively. The family grew up poor but happy. Perhaps it was there that his perpetually positive outlook was instilled. He would say, "Life is but a mirror reflecting what you do. Face it with a smile and it will smile back at you." And he did.

He said he was always interested in "what was over the mountain" thus his flying career began in 1939 on the Kanawha River piloting private seaplanes. College was interrupted for Dad when movie star Dorothy Lamour stopped by on a recruiting and war bond rally and "almost every able-bodied male signed up!" In 1942 he was sent to Molesworth, England to join the newly formed 8th Army Air Force and assigned to the renowned 303rd Bomb Group known as the Hell's Angels.

In 1944 Dad was promoted to Captain and assigned as a squadron commander. Despite being awarded two Distinguished Flying Crosses, both a Bronze Star and Silver Star, along with a Presidential Unit Citation, Dad was most proud of the fact that in all his missions he never lost a crew member at a time when the chances for a flyer's survival were 1 in 3.

After the war his continuing desire to see "what was over the mountain" led to a west coast assignment with United Air Lines where he met his wife Evelyn, then a DC3 stewardess. He worked for United for 37 years as a Captain and then Flight Manager

TAPS

finishing his career flying B-747s to Hawaii and always felt lucky doing what he loved.

The Taylor family moved to Los Altos in 1949 and built just the 2nd house on the street. Dad became an excellent landscaper there and enjoyed landscaping his cabin on the Truckee River (which he helped build in the late 60's) as well as helping friends, school and church (Santa Rita and Los Altos Presbyterian) and his children in that capacity. Dad became a talented fly fisherman and loved nothing better than to spend time with his son Jimmy on fishing trips. He was also a huge fan of Stanford football and baseball especially when his 2nd daughter Martha worked for their renowned baseball coach.

Jim was sadly preceded in death by his son James (Jimmy) in March of this year, his daughter Martha, and his wife Evelyn. He is survived by his daughter Susan Taylor of Chico, CA and his daughter Edith Jobe and her husband Glenn of Sierraville, CA.

Waters, Kenneth Theodore, age 93, of Mount Airy, NC died Sunday, January 31, 2016, at his home. Ken was born in Philadelphia, PA and served in WWII with the 96th BG as a B17 Bomber Pilot and participated in operation Aphrodite. He was an avid sailor and played tennis.

He retired from Boeing's Helicopter Division as an engineer. Ken was a very loving father and grandfather and was devoted to his wife, Dorothy, who pre-deceased him. His sister, Barbara Waters-Noble passed away recently. Surviving is a



Kenneth Theodore Waters

daughter, Amy C. Johnson; a son, Eric G. Waters; grandchildren, Corinne J. Hassey, Christian Johnson and Rylin Johnson; great-granddaughter, Penelope; a brother, David Waters and wife Patricia; and brother-in-law, Eugene Holley.

Scharmen, Merrill Edward, (Col. USAF, Ret.) Merrill Edward Scharmen, beloved husband, father, grandfather and friend, passed away peacefully on May 28, 2016 at the age of 92, after a distinguished 32-year career in the United States Air Force, and contented retirement.



Merrill Edward Scharmen

Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, Merrill graduated from Detroit's Cass Technical High School in 1942 with a focus in Mechanic Arts. Upon graduation, he joined the Army Air Corp and completed the multi-engine advanced flying school at Altus Army Airfield, Oklahoma in 1943, Class 43-I.

On April 28, 1944, just 20 years old, he and his crew flew an assembly-line-new B-24 from Topeka, KS, to Wharton Field, England. The trip took 60 hours in 11 days with 6 stops via Florida, Trinidad, Brazil, Senegal and Morocco.

On June 17, 1944, 10 days after D-Day - he embarked on the first of 35 missions as pilot of B-17s and B-24s in the 8th Air Force, 487th BG, European Theatre of Operations. He wrote in his combat diary of his bomber crew #BJ103: "The enlisted men are my pride and joy, best bunch of boys out." Through 1945, he continued flying special missions and VIP transport with the Air Transport Command 6th Ferrying Group, wrapping up the first stage of his military career.

Merrill was recalled to active duty with the U.S. Air Force in 1951. In the interim, he had married Audrey Yvonne Frost, of Topeka, KS, and fathered two sons, Kim and Thomas, while serving as a police officer in his hometown of Detroit. Assigned to the Strategic Air Command 15th Air Force SAC, he flew B-36 and B-52 bombers out of Carswell AFB, Texas, Walker AFB, New Mexico and March AFB, California. Two daughters, Deborah and Margaret, joined the family during these years.

In 1968, Merrill went once again to war as the Chief of Bomber Division for the Strategic Air Command in South Vietnam. The last years of his career were served at the Pentagon, as Deputy Director for Support and Services with the Defense Intelligence Agency. He continued to fly up until his retirement in 1979.

Settling in Lusby, MD, Merrill volunteered with the Coast Guard Auxiliary, teaching navigation and boating safety classes and conducting weekend rescue patrols around the Chesapeake Bay. He was also an active member of the Drum Point Club during its formative years.

To their great joy, Merrill and Audrey have been blessed with 13 grandchildren and one great-granddaughter: John, Fred, Frank, Adria, Pablo, Selah, Becky, Lisa, Hank, Sarah, Becca, Will, Marta and Leah.

Despite the demands of his military career, Merrill always made time for his family and friends, devoting his talent, love and support to the community around him. With the patience of a saint, his temperament was always gracious, kind, humble and witty right up to his last days on earth. There is no doubt that 'the Colonel' was an outstanding member of 'The Greatest Generation'.

A MEMORIAL TO AN ASHTABULA COUNTY BOY:

who served honorably in WWII and honorably served family and friends

By David Waters



Ken Waters on the history channel.

This article is a memorial to Kenneth T. (Ken) Waters, of Windsor, my oldest brother, who was born on June 18, 1922 and died on January 31, 2016. As the youngest of five children, I was inspired by Ken in many ways throughout his life until his passing from this earth. Although Ken was out of our home in Windsor and about his life when I was born in 1940, I desired to be like him in many ways, including my career path as an Engineer, my choice of college (The Ohio State University) and the desire to not retire until I was older than Ken when he retired!

Ken was born in Bala Cynwyd, PA, where our father was a herdsman on a gentleman's farm raising purebred cattle. The family soon returned to Ohio, due to

an illness in our mother's family, and then went back to Bala Cynwyd for another two years. They finally returned to the East Orwell - Colebrook, Ohio area for good in 1925. Ken was educated at Colebrook and later Windsor elementary schools and at Windsor and Orwell high schools, graduating from Orwell High School in the class of 1940.

Towards the end of October 1940, our dad got an invitation for Ken to drive a Wayne, Ohio farmer to Pasadena, California, to visit his two sons. Ken bought a 1935 Ford V-8 four-door sedan with a seized engine for \$20, got a replacement engine from a Cleveland junk yard, and a few days later left for California with the farmer and a school friend from Windsor, Bud Holley, driving a used car with a used engine on the southern route to California in order to avoid bad weather. An ice storm between Dallas and El Paso, TX, made them wonder about their choice of routes!

After 6 days and more than 2500 miles on the road, they finally arrived in Pasadena and planned to stay for awhile, but had very little money. After a few odd-

job experiences, both Ken and Bud got jobs as short-order cooks at a Pasadena hamburger stand and roomed with the head cook, Frenchy Le Blanc. While working at the stand on New Year's Day in 1941, they saw glimpses of the Rose Bowl parade which passed by the hamburger stand while they were working "like dogs" (Ken's words). In March 1941, they were ready to return to Windsor, and Frenchy and his cocker spaniel invited themselves along. They had enough funds to keep gas and oil in the car until Kentucky, when Frenchy had his mother wire enough money to get them home to Windsor (Ken reported he had 12 cents left in his pocket upon his homecoming).

Ken met his wife, Dorothy Anne Ransome, while they were working at Weatherhead Company in Cleveland, and they were married August 17, 1942 (Dorothy preceded Ken in death on December 30, 2015). In October 1942 Ken was drafted into the Army as one of a select group of officer candidates based on testing, but he refused the Officer Candidate School (OCS) opportunity and insisted on being sent to the Army Air Corps Cadet Training program (Ken had begun taking flight lessons at Warren, Ohio in June 1940 and soloed in July 1941, so he wanted to be a pilot and not an officer or certainly not a foot soldier).

His training program as an Aviation Cadet started in San Antonio, TX, continued at Pine Bluff, AR, Coffeerville, KS, and Altus, OK until he was transferred to Salt Lake City for assignment. In May 1944 he and his crew flew a new B-17 bomber to Scotland and later were transferred to the 338th Squadron of the 96th Bomb Group (BG) at Snetterton Heath, England, where they flew their first combat mission as a crew on June 8, 1944.

After flying 14 missions he volunteered for the "Aphrodite" Project as a jump co-pilot on detached service from the 338th squadron. The project was designed to take war-weary B-17s (and also Navy PB4Ys), turn them into radar-controlled drones controlled by a chase plane, load them with 20,000 pounds



Ken Waters, Barbara Waters-Noble (sister) and Dave Waters

of high explosive (Torpex), and bomb German V1 and V2 rocket launching sites, submarine pens and heavy industries in France, Netherlands and Germany. His job a co-pilot was to assist in take-off and setting up the auto-pilot controls for the drone and then parachute out over England along with the pilot after the chase plane was in control (there were 19 total Aphrodite missions and four fatalities, two of them being Navy pilot Joe Kennedy and his co-pilot when his PB4Y blew up in mid-air over England before they could bail out). Ken flew his Aphrodite mission December 5, 1944, and received the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) along with a credit of 5 missions towards the total requirement of 30 missions (later increased to 35 missions in early 1945).

After Aphrodite, he was transferred back to the 413th Squadron of the 96th BG as a pilot, and completed his missions on April 21, 1945. In addition to the DFC, he was also awarded the Air Medal with 4 oak leaf clusters for his combat missions.

He shipped back to the US on the Ile de France and was honorably discharged on September 7, 1945. Although he resumed his pre-war job at Weatherhead,



Ken and Dorothy attending the 1947 Military Ball
his wife convinced him to enroll at The Ohio State University (OSU) under the GI bill, where he received his BA in Aeronautical Engineering degree in March 1950. While at OSU, Ken and Dorothy's son Eric was born in 1949. Daughter Amy was born January 31, 1955.

After graduation from OSU he was employed in the helicopter industry by Piasecki and later Boeing Vertol, in the Philadelphia, PA area, as a Project Engineer on Research and Development and Testing projects for 40 years until his retirement in 1990. He was then employed part-time for 14 years as an Engineering Consultant on New Product Development with EATON Aerospace division (which manufactured aircraft diagnostic sensors and systems). In the mid-2000s, Ken and Dorothy moved to a retirement community in Mount Airy, NC, near daughter Amy and her family.

I remember talking with Ken after he moved to Mount Airy and he was describing his project to educate local high school science students on the principles of aerodynamics. His demonstration equipment was simple – cut the bottom out of a plastic 32-gallon trash can, mount a circular fan in the hole in the bottom, hang simple models of airplanes, sail boats, etc. at the other end of the homemade wind tunnel and explain lift, drag, and other aerodynamic principles to the students. He would usually leave the wind tunnel behind for teachers to use over the years. My brother was quite a guy!



Craig Dubishar presenting a Sweetheart Pillow to Mark L. Trout Founder and Executive Director Missouri Civil War Museum The pillow belonged to Spylios Nick Nikitas

FROM ACROSS *the Pond*

Bottisham Airfield Museum

THE STORY SO FAR...

Jason Webb - Chairman of the Trustees



In 1995 I was fortunate enough to meet the veterans of the 361st Fighter Group during their last reunion in England. Immediately I was struck by their humility and bravery but more importantly how little there was to mark their part in the conflict that had affected so many. Many local people weren't aware there was an airfield in Bottisham and had no idea the sacrifices that had been made right on their doorstep.

A website www.361fg.com soon followed and its popularity soon had us thinking that more was needed. However little happened until 2009 when a chance meeting with a historian, Dr. Howard Tuck, who had taken offices for his business in buildings that once belonged to the airfield in Tunbridge Lane, Bottisham. The idea of a small museum was soon mooted and between us we persuaded the landlord to rent us a small room as a museum. Just over two happy years followed and we were able to hold a number of successful small scale events.

Sadly we were asked to leave the site as the owner wanted to demolish our buildings and sell the land for hous-

ing. All was not lost as the Royal British Legion in Bottisham stepped in and gave us another small room to house our ever growing collection of artefacts. During our second event at the venue another chance meeting with a local philanthropist, David Rayner, led to the expansion of the museum. David remembered seeing the bombers and fighters of the 8th AF flying over the village as a child and wanted to do something to help the museum. At the time the last remaining buildings on the airfield were for sale (a whole squadron dispersal site). David immediately suggested going to view them and within minutes of arriving had shaken hands on a deal to buy them in an un-paralleled act of generosity. A charity was formed and David gifted the land and buildings to the charity thus saving for future generations.

Within 3 weeks of us formally taking ownership we held a very successful open day attracting hundreds of people to the site. Work began immediately to return the site to its original configuration and remove the myriad of extensions and fridges that had been added during its time as a Smokery. After a year of hard work,

working on Sundays with a dedicated crew of volunteers and members of the USAF we were confident the site was as close as possible to how it had looked in 1944. However it was apparent that a considerable amount of money would be required to restore the original buildings to being habitable as a museum.

The only option open to us was to approach the Heritage Lottery Fund for money to restore the buildings but for this large sum of money it would take 2/3 years to put a successful bid together. We decided it was not an option to do nothing with the site for this time and instead decided to build a Nissen hut on the site where was one originally located in 1944 and use it as a 'lifeboat' for the museum whilst we were waiting for our funding for the other original buildings.

Unfortunately we hit a number of days with the local authorities, especially in regards to planning and rather than work starting in spring and finishing in autumn, we ended up starting the build in the autumn of 2016. A dedicated team of volunteers carried on the work during one of the wettest and windiest winters in recent memory, working every weekend to ensure progress.



One of volunteers, Pete Dyer had been a founder member of the 8th AF Wall Art Conservation Society that had saved a number of murals from Bottisham in the 1980's and the idea was quickly mooted of incorporating one of the original wartime murals in our Nissen hut. The 100th BG museum at Thorpe Abbots had been the custodian of one of our most famous pieces of wall art the 'flying tractor' and Ron and

Carol Batley showed incredible generosity in allowing it to come back to Bottisham. Thus with great care the mural was collected and mounted in one of the end walls of the Nissen hut as a focal point for the museum.

Work carried on a pace throughout the spring and summer of 2016 and after a huge push we just managed to get it ready in time for our grand opening weekend in September 2016. A fantastic video of the making of the hut (funded by Eighth in the East) can be found at <https://vimeo.com/168414117>



1200 people attended our Open weekend in a fantastic shot in the arm for the museum. These numbers were no doubt bolstered by an amazing display by Maurice Hammond in his magnificent P-51 Janie - sadly a week later Maurice was badly injured when Janie crashed and we wish him well in his recovery.

What now for the museum? We are trying to get the museum open as often as possible and we already have a Christmas event planned for early December but perhaps more importantly we have to progress our bid for funding so that we can restore and save the last original buildings on the site.

This will take time and money and lots of support. Time we have as we have lots of support from volunteers and organizations such as Eighth in the East. Money is more difficult - we will need more than £500,000 to restore and kit out the buildings.

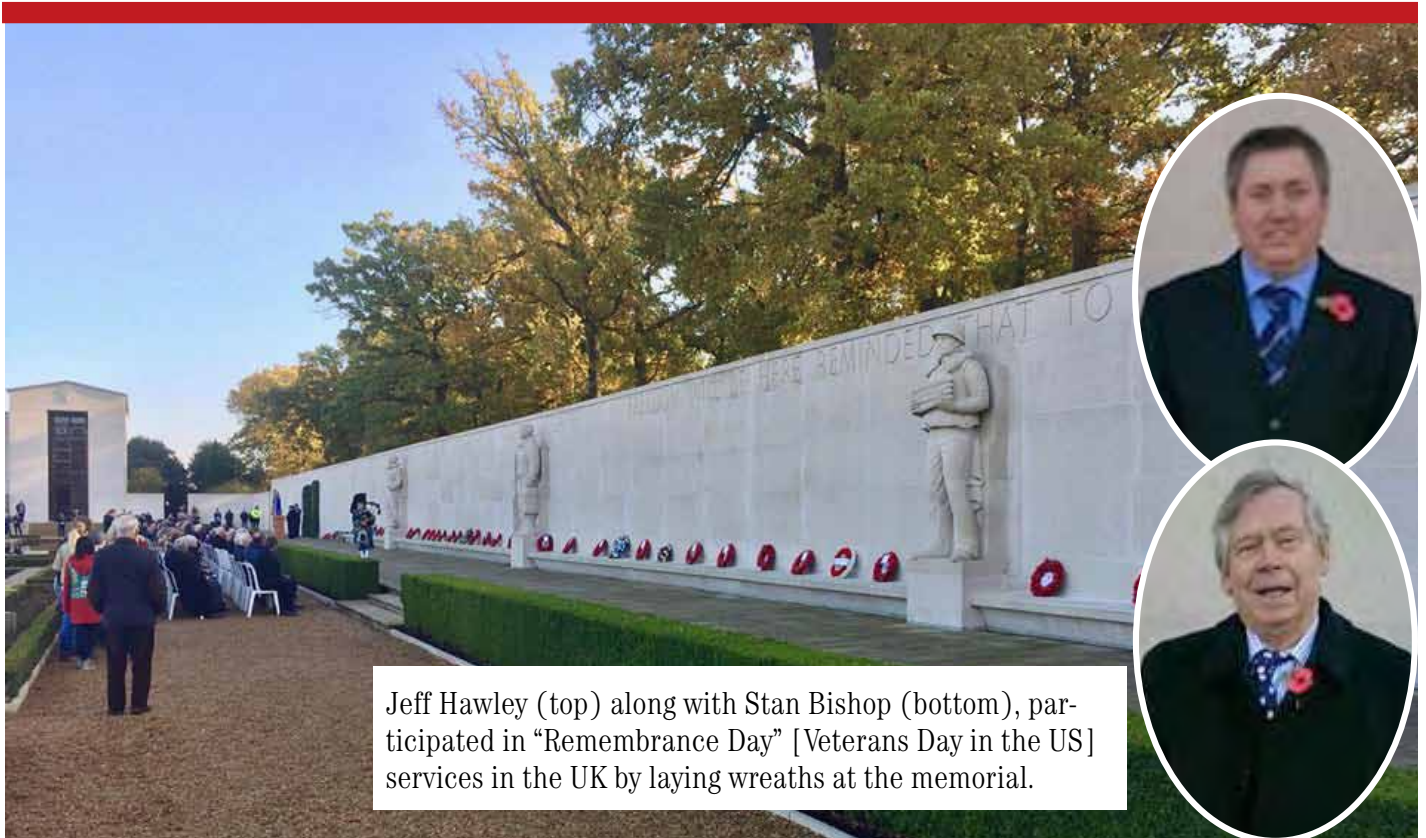
The Heritage Lottery Fund will pay a maximum of 95% of this and a figure of 75% would give us a much better chance of success. So this means we need to raise between £25,000 and £125,000 plus we will need to fund various professional fees such as architects in the early stages of the bid. Details of how you can support the museum can be found on our website www.bottishamairfieldmuseum.org.uk

As part of the bid we also need support. The Heritage Lottery Fund are skeptical of the need for another airfield museum in East Anglia and we will have to get lots of support to evidence the need for such a museum. We feel we have a unique opportunity to build a museum that

does not just appeal to enthusiasts but that also appeals to families and children by using modern technologies and that goes some way to creating an experience that takes people back in time to 1944. We need to gather lots of support for the need for such a museum and we are asking as many people as is humanely possible to fill in our online consultation form, the more respondents we have the stronger case that we will have. Links to our consultation document can be found on our website, our Facebook page or at: - <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/bottishamairfieldmuseum>

We remain committed to building a fitting tribute to the brave men of the 361st Fighter Group and we hope you can join us on this journey.

Jason Webb - Chairman of the Trustees



Jeff Hawley (top) along with Stan Bishop (bottom), participated in "Remembrance Day" [Veterans Day in the US] services in the UK by laying wreaths at the memorial.

Who Was to Blame? Dad or Me?

Like thousands of children of the Greatest Generation, I have lost my father, and with his passing I have lost the opportunity and the value that could have been gained by better knowing and understanding his World War II story.

Who was to blame? Dad or me? For all of us of the next generation, knowledge of this period in their family's history varies. For some, whom I regard as the Lucky Ones, their father shared with them their valuable stories. But for my four siblings and me, we were not to be the Lucky Ones. From rare conversations around the dinner table we knew some things about our dad's war years: He was a pilot or maybe it was a co-pilot? He was definitely in a B-24 and at Hethel Air Base in England. But with London's major airport being Heathrow, we found Hethel to be a little confusing. And there were other tidbits that we picked up along the way. But to know with certainty that he was in the 389th Bomb Group, the 565th Squadron, that he flew 26 missions (December 4, 1944 through April 20, 1945) and many other details, a conversation about his life in the 8th Air Force would have made my quest a lot easier. But would he have talked about his missions, his fears, and his ambitions? Sadly, I will never know the answer to that question.

As members of the American community of sons and daughters of WWII veterans, we all have our own stories. The reason for not having possession of these stories could broadly be categorized as: we asked but they didn't or emotionally couldn't tell, they told but we didn't listen, or no one thought to ask until it was too late. And for the lucky ones telling, listening to, and recording the stories enriched their family's heritage.

I am discovering my father's WWII history the hard way:

volunteering for Honor Flight, driving 15-hours to Tulsa, Oklahoma to visit one of dad's B-24 pilots, driving 14 hours to visit the 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah, Georgia, reviewing 500 letters that were found in the attic after my parents' passing, and doing much self-study and reflection. What do I hope to be the deliverable in doing this? Let me digress 175 years. My great-great grandfather was born in 1841. He was 20 when the Civil War broke out. What was his experience while our nation was at war? Without some research, I don't know. But when my dad's great-great grandchildren ask the question, "My great-great grandfather was born in

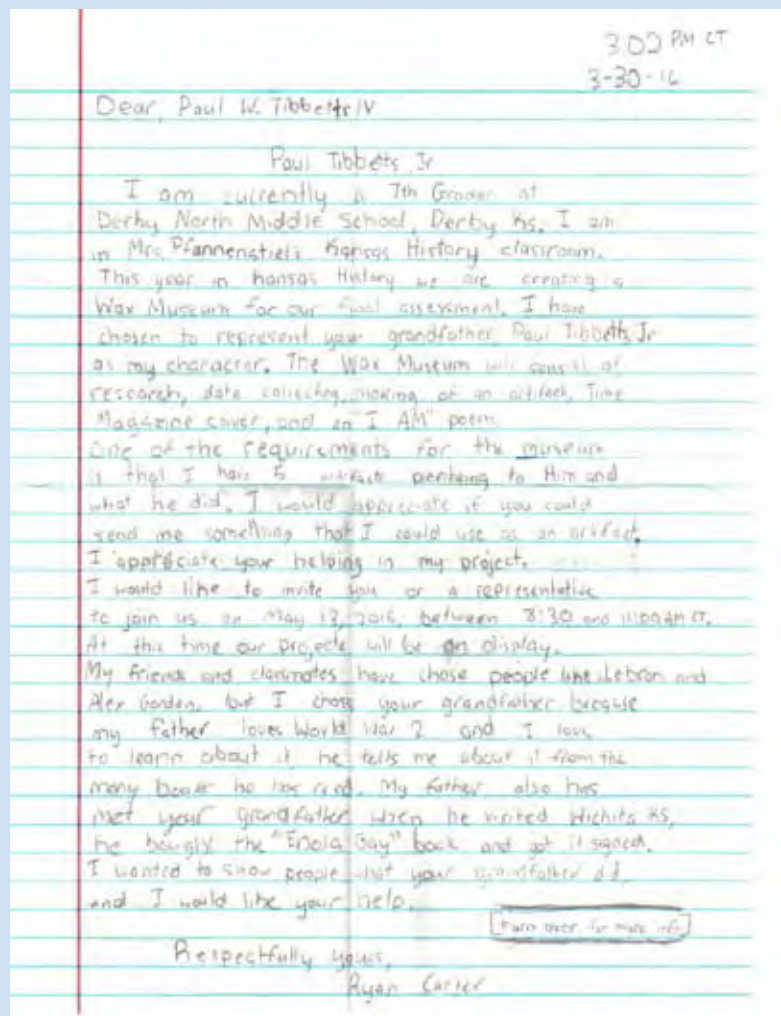
1924, what did he do during WWII?" They will find the answer through my research...just the hard facts stripped of the intimacies that might have been gained if Dad and I would have had those personal conversations.

So why I am writing this piece? I hope that my journey will be a reminder to those fortunate few who have a living veteran in their lives to ask the questions and to seek out their veteran's story.

And finally, who was to blame? Dad or me? I think we both were.

Travis Chapin, son of 2nd Lt Robert F. Chapin, 389th BG

From A Young Reader



Editor's note: We forwarded Ryan's letter to B/Gen Paul Tibbets, IV who eagerly assisted him in his project!



QUESTION FROM THE WEBSITE?

Hopefully you can help or maybe some of the veterans can. I'm a retired disabled Air Force veteran (1980-2000) and have enjoyed the stories that I have read in what WW II newsletters and magazines I could find dealing with units or even overall 8th Air Force newsletters. If there is anyone out there who would be able to send me any of their old monthly newsletters from past to present I would be very grateful. The personal stories told in them are fantastic and as time goes on

we have lost many of these personal stories. So please, please let me know if you can help or get this out to the vets and their families. This would greatly be appreciated.

Thank You

Dwain Dennis Christian

retiredbigd2000@yahoo.com

1536 Burning Sage Ln, Casselberry, Florida 32707

407-219-0811

STAY FOCUSED

What on earth are you doing? If you are reading this, you are still among the 'land of the living.' You are blessed. You are still alive. You are constantly creating a legacy for those who follow. This is not true for all of our heroes listed in the section of our newsletter called TAPS. In the last issue, one who had passed on was 83. All of the rest were 91 through 97 years of age when they died. Their story has reached its conclusion. We who are still living often ponder the question, "what is life all about?" What have I accomplished? Will any of it have a lasting effect? Paul the Apostle's words give insight when he spoke to the folks of the city of Colossae "...asking that they be filled with the knowledge of His (God's) will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that they walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Colossians 1:9-10). Paul clearly points out that this kind of life produces a lasting result.

The purpose of life far exceeds our goals, our achievements, our family, our career, our ambitions, our security. The search for purpose has been the quest of humankind for centuries. The problem lies in the fact that we evaluate our successes based on 'the me factor', my comfort, my well-being, my goals, my ambitions, my ego, my status. But, focusing on ourselves will never reveal our life's purpose. In fact, "In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind" (Job 12-10 NIV). Books on library shelves and bookstore displays suggest many "self-help" approaches...all of which move toward a self-centered viewpoint. These resources all offer the same advice to discover your life's reason to exist, to realize your dreams, values and goals. What are your talents and strengths? What are your goals? Believe in yourself. Never

give up! These are great ideas and often lead to some success! But one may become a success by the world's standard and still miss the purpose for which God created you. Someone has said that self-help is no help at all. Jesus speaking to his disciples declared, "For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it." (Matt.16:25). He also describes the process, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Matt.16:24 NIV). These quotes from the Bible do not suggest finding the right career plan for your life or your dreams or how to cram more worthy activities into your schedule but rather focusing on what matters most. That is becoming what God intended you to be. Life will not be without its traumas. The old prophet expressed his feelings when he said "I have labored to no purpose; I have spent my strength in vain and for nothing. Yet what is due me is in the Lord's hand, and my reward is in the Lord's hand." (Isa.49:4 NIV). We must come to recognize that God is not only the starting point of our life, He is the source of it! Paul the Apostle clearly expressed this truth: "In Him we were also chosen.....to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will..... to hope in Christ ...for the praise of His glory." (Eph. 1:11) NIV).

How do we fit into God's scheme of events? We must, through seeking for his purpose in our life, (1) discover Jesus and have a personal relationship with Him, (2) realize that His purpose for your life pre-dates your conception, before you even existed and without any input from you and (3) life is more than for here and now, life is destined for eternity.

It is amusing to me that many self-serving individuals spend their lives trying to create a lasting legacy on earth to be remembered by men when they are gone. It is hard for people to realize that earthly achievements are soon forgotten, reputations fade, titles



Earl Wassom

are gone, and tributes become ancient history. Living to create a legacy is at best, a short-term goal. Instead use your time to create an eternal and lasting legacy. To do so, we must acknowledge that we all will face accountability, an audit, a final evaluation, a final test for our lives spent here on earth. Paul the Apostle reinforced this truth when he said: "For we all stand before God's judgment seat...each will give an account of himself to God." (Ro. 14:11...12 NIV). He wants all of us to pass His test. He asks us two simple but profound questions: (1) what did you do with my Son, Jesus Christ? and (2) what did you do with what I gave you?

Rev. Billy Graham has made this observation: "When wealth is lost, nothing is lost. When health is lost, something is lost. When character is lost, all is lost." Embodying these concepts will produce an eternal legacy.

Earl Wassom
466th Bomb Group
Chaplain, 8th AFHS





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