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# TH AF NEWS

Volume 16 Number 2 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"





# 8TH AF NEWS

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

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## OUR COVER

The panoramic cover of the newly redesigned American Air Museum at Duxford is courtesy of photographer, W. Craig Dubishar. The museum reopened its doors to the public this past April after undergoing a \$4 Million+ renovation.

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# From the President's Pen



## Fulfilling Our Mission

It is probably no surprise that, due to natural attrition, our membership is decreasing. Lately, the drop has been more precipitous. It is thus critical that the Society maintain and speed up its efforts to fulfill its mission to preserve the legacy of the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup>. We are doing this in two ways:

1. Adopting policies to make sure that as many WWII veterans as possible have the opportunity to attend our annual reunions. For the upcoming reunion in St. Louis, we are:
  - a. Subsidizing the hotel room rate.
  - b. Providing a rebate of \$250 per attending veteran.
  - c. To encourage bomb groups to entice their veterans to attend, we are not charging for hospitality suites.
2. Create plans to ensure that the history of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force is presented to the public on a long-term basis. We have several projects in the works.
  - a. I have written before about the project to distribute the Roll of Honor to

museums and libraries. So far we have over 10 locations that have requested a copy to put on exhibit—completely free of charge. The locations are well distributed across the country.

- b. We are currently in the planning stages of another display piece that we will also offer to museums—also FREE.
- c. We are beginning a grant program to museums who would like to install or expand exhibits or programs about the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force. We have recently made two grants to:
  - The Wings of Honor Museum in Arkansas for an 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force display.
  - The American Air Museum in Britain for educational projects about the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force.

For more information and/or to apply for a grant, please check out: <https://8thafhs.org/grant.pdf>

- d. We are investigating updating the technology of the Society's website to ensure its long-term viability as both educational and an important source of

research.

Speaking of reunions, I encourage *all* who can make it to join us in St. Louis in October. It promises to be a memorable event. Our keynote speaker for the Friday night dinner buffet will be Dr. Donald Miller. Don is the author of the wonderful book "*Masters of the Air*" on which an upcoming HBO series will be based. We will also have our popular Q&A session with veterans. The tours will also be interesting. On the Anheuser-Busch tour you will have the chance to see the beautiful Clydesdale horses.



**David Nowack**  
President

See you in St. Louis!

*Dave*

– Form may be reproduced –



## JOIN THE 8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY!

(Dues notices will be mailed annually)



FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ MIDDLE INITIAL \_\_\_\_\_ LAST \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

8th AF Unit \_\_\_\_\_ Not in 8th \_\_\_\_\_ Educator \_\_\_\_\_

In service \_\_\_\_\_ Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Were you a former member? \_\_\_\_\_ Member # if available \_\_\_\_\_

ALL RENEWALS AND NEW MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL DUES \$40.00 ☐

Exp \_\_\_\_\_

PAYMENT: CHECK ☐ AmEx ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ VISA ☐ CARD # \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

SEND APPLICATION AND PAYMENT TO 8TH AFHS P.O. BOX 60369, SAVANNAH, GA 31420-0396 TEL: 912-748-8884

You may also apply online at: [www.8thafhs.org](http://www.8thafhs.org)



## TH AF NEWS

The Eighth Air Force News is dedicated to the memory of Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough, Founder of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and Editor for sixteen years. It is published quarterly and is the official news magazine of the Society, a 501(c)3. The 8th AF NEWS is distributed to members of the Society and is not for public sale.

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# Editor's Message

## Giving History a Future

**I**t's hard for me to imagine, but there was a time when I had never heard of the 8th Air Force. Like a lot of "kids" my age, I remember studying WWII in school—for a day or two—memorizing dates and events, and moving on down the historical time line. My father, a WWII Navy pilot, never really spoke about his service much. That was due in large part to barely surviving a terrible plane crash in the Pacific, so my mother always warned me not to ask questions...

It wasn't until I moved to the Savannah area in 1993 and noticed a large construction project underway not too far from our home that everything changed. In 1996, the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force opened its doors to the public for the first time and I thought, hmmm...8th Air Force... what happened to the other seven?

Well, it didn't take long for me to learn the story of the 8th and to know that I wanted to help share that story. So, here I am, hoping and trying to do just that.

I thought I would use this space to try and point out a particularly interesting story in this issue: one that demonstrates courage, perseverance, valor, and service. A crewman going above and beyond that invisible line of what we distinguish to be ordinary or extraordinary—offering that moment of sacrifice for the sake of his crew, but I can't do that. While each story is

truly unique, there is a commonality within each one that exemplifies all of those traits I mentioned. For me to try and choose one over another is like asking a mother to choose a favorite child. I can't do it. But I can encourage you to read all of the stories published here. They will touch you in ways that can stir your soul. And you will be the better for it.

To ALL of our veterans, *please* share your stories with your family, your friends. Get someone to help record your memories so they will never be forgotten. For those of you who have a veteran in your life or circle of friends, please ask them to share their stories with you. Don't let them be forgotten. Always remember, we must never forget those who sacrificed their own future for ours.

Be sure and plan on attending this year's reunion in St. Louis. It promises to be a great one!

See you there,

*Deb*



**Debra Kujawa**  
*Managing Director/Editor*

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



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### MATERIAL DEADLINE

**August 1, 2016** for the **Sept 2016 8th AF News**

We welcome all of your articles!!!  
Please include photos & more!!  
ALL file formats are accepted

We encourage you to send  
digital images when possible.



# The “BELLE RINGER” Remembered

By Edouard Renière

The date was March 14, 1945 and the 8th Air Force bombers were on a mission to bomb oil, rail and industrial targets in Northern Germany. By that time in the war, the Luftwaffe's operational possibilities had been severely diminished and there was no German fighter opposition. But the Flak was intense in the critical areas as the Germans, pushed back by the rapid advance of the Allied ground troops, had relocated their powerful 88 artillery guns from the occupied countries to add to the Flak defense of their homeland. On its way to the marshaling yards at Gütersloh, B-24H “Belle Ringer” Serial# 42-51195 of the 491st Bomb Group's 852nd Bomb Squadron with nine 854th Squadron men on

board was hit by Flak. One engine had to be feathered but the pilot and crew decided to go on with the mission and dropped their bomb load on the target.

On the return trip, as it was flying above the River Rhine in Germany to the South of Koblenz, another engine quit. The Liberator couldn't keep up with the formation and began rapidly losing altitude. Pilot, 2Lt Robert E. Heichel, 20, told the crew he didn't think they could fly back to England on two engines and that their fuel supply might run too low. It is not clear if there was a fuel transfer problem or not in the “Belle Ringer's” system. As they were crossing the border, Heichel asked Navigator F/O Seymour Eisenstat to try to find an airfield in Belgium

where they could make an emergency landing. Seymour remembered having noticed an airfield in the area of Namur and Heichel headed the B-24 to the Northeast in that direction.

Flying very low now, a large field – not an airfield – was chosen as a good landing place and with all three wheels out, the “Belle Ringer” banked on approach. Then big trouble struck. Bob Heichel found out that the brakes were out as well as the hydraulic system and he had trouble controlling the Liberator. Probably due to fuel transfer, the plane's left wing suddenly tilted down and hit the top of a combo farmhouse/barn. The B-24 broke down as it crashed violently. The wing and #1 and #2 engines stayed in the rubble of



the buildings while the remainder continued across the road into the vacant field. There was no fire and no civilian was hurt on the ground.

Before the approach, Navigator Eisenstat had gone behind the pilot and co-pilot's seats and had been hugging Engineer / Top Turret Gunner Sgt Kenneth S. Kingsland, aged 27, from Connecticut, happy to see their mission soon completed. Shortly thereafter, Eisenstat was suddenly hurled to the ground of the fuselage, Kingsland falling on top of him. In the ensuing disintegration of the plane, the top turret broke loose and part of it fell on top of Sgt Kingsland, crushing and severely wounding him as well as Eisenstat lying prone under him. Among the men on board, six were injured, the three others just shocked and dazed.

Local villagers helped the three fit crew members extricate the wounded from the wreckage spread over the field and in front of the farm building. Advised of the incident, Doctor Camille Bothy, who had been visiting patients in the vicinity, ran from one wounded to

the other across the field, administering morphine. Roland Harper, a member of a salvage crew who were billeted not far away and were working on the wreck of a B-17 that had crashed in the area on 9 March, related later that villagers had hurriedly contacted them a few minutes after the crash. Help was soon on the way and a US Army ambulance took the wounded away. Harper remembered that he had seen a young lady holding Engineer Kingsland's head on a cushion in her lap, telling him with so much sadness in her eyes "Il est mort"... That gentle, compassionate lady remains unidentified to this day.

Navigator Seymour Eisenstat, who always said he owed his life to Ken Kingsland, was seriously wounded. He had a fractured skull, broken ribs, his left leg shattered. He remained unconscious for 60 days and stayed in various hospitals until he was brought back to the USA. He spent almost three years in hospitals before going home to New York and was honorably discharged in January 1948. He never fully recovered from his wounds.

Radioman S/Sgt Anthony P. Turco who had just turned 25 on that day hadn't needed to operate the nose turret, his job having just been to man the radio. He was wounded in his back, left shoulder and right knee, with pilot Heichel spread across his legs and he noticed that Co-pilot 2nd Lt Thomas



*Sgt Kenneth S. Kingsland  
died of wounds.*





*l-r Anthony Turco, Thomas Alexander, Robert Heichel May 1945*

J. Alexander had been pushed some feet back in his seat, slightly wounded. Pilot Robert Heichel, who was knocked unconscious by the crash, had cuts in the head and legs. He woke up the next day in a Belgian hospital and after his recovery about a month later, was sent back to England via Brussels where he spent an evening. The four other crew members were gunners S/ Sgt Rheudolph W. Cain, Sgt Lacy C. Gilliam, S/Sgt Glen C. LeBleu and Sgt Philip E. Trimmer Jr. Seven of the eight survivors, except Navigator Eisenstat still in hospital, were back on active duty in April 1945 and flew a few missions with Pilot Heichel before V+E Day.

Fast forward to 2013. James Heichel, nephew of the pilot, with the help of Roland Harper and the recollections of S/Sgt Turco via his son, had done extensive research on the plane and its crew and had gathered a lot of information. James had photos of the crash taken by Harper who was on the scene minutes after the incident, but had never learned where exactly his Uncle's B-24 had hit the ground, knowing only that it was near the Belgian city of Ciney. So, in March 2013, he wrote a letter to the Ciney Tourist Office in the hope they could help him locate the crash place on the basis of Harper's photos.

A local historical society put an article with the photos in its early June

edition of their Newsletter. Contacts had been established earlier between James Heichel and Sgt Kenneth Kingsland's niece, Pamela Kemp, who was also doing research on the death of her Uncle. More and more details had been found in the meantime through contacts with Seymour Eisenstat, the only member of the crew still living (he passed away in March 2014), with Lacy Gilliam's son and with this writer.

On June 25, Amand Collard of the Cercle d'Histoire de Ciney, received a message from one Denis Abel, living in Ciney, who used to travel all around the region using his metal detector to try and locate crash sites. Denis thought he recognized the small chapel visible in some of the crash photos and it proved later to be indeed the one on the side of the field in the village of Florée, about 10km North of Ciney where "Belle Ringer" had crashed 68 years earlier. And then the ball started rolling. Pamela Kemp and her husband Randy flew over from the States in late September 2013 with Kenneth's sister Merle - despite her fear of flying - and her daughter Jane, Pamela's sister.

The family of Kenneth Kingsland had the opportunity to meet all the local people involved in the search and visited the crash site, meeting a few wartime witnesses who remembered having seen the debris of the crashed



*Raphaël Marchal, Marcel Lamy, Pamela and Randy Kemp, Marcel Dauwen*

Liberator. They paid their respects to Kenneth, who rests at the Ardennes American Cemetery in Neupré, near Liège Belgium, Merle's first visit to her brother's grave.

As time went by, a project of putting a plaque on the wall of the chapel was initiated by Raphaël Marchal whom Pamela Kemp and her husband met in August 2014 on a return trip to Florée. In the meantime, Raphaël and his son had introduced a request to adopt Kenneth Kingsland's grave at the cemetery. They received approval and the official adoption ceremony took place on September 18, 2014 in Neupré.

On March 12, 2016, a plaque in honor of Sgt Kingsland and the crew of the "Belle Ringer" was inaugurated on the wall of the chapel (the Chapelle de la Salette) on private land near the crash location in Florée. From the start, the local authorities had lent their support to the project and the owner of the land on which the chapel stands, Count Joseph van der Stegen, had immediately agreed when asked for permission. Marcel Dauwen, a member of the APPEL association in Assesse, who had taken all the official contacts, organized the ceremony with many other motivated volunteers. Among those, besides Raphaël Marchal, Frédéric Hermant cared for putting up panels and glass cases for an adjoining 3-day exhibition about the plane, its crew and the sad fate of Sgt Kenneth Kingsland.

With more than 200 people attending, speeches were made explaining the events of 71 years before almost to the day. The plaque was unveiled by Marcel Dauwen and Pamela Kemp who had made the trip from the United States with her husband Randy. Relatives of other crew members were



*Belle Ringer Crew Memorial Today*

not able to attend, but were present in heart and spirit at the moving ceremony. Wreaths were laid by Mr Pierre Tasiaux, Burgomaster of Assesse (an entity of seven villages, including Florée); Colonel Scott Shepard, USAF, Air Attaché, representing the United States Embassy in Brussels; Mr Michael S. Yasenchak, Superintendent of the Ardennes American Cemetery where Sgt Kingsland is buried, and Mr Raphael Dyckmans, a member of the Dutch association "Stichting Verenigde Adoptanten Amerikaanse Oorlogsgraven" which oversees the adoptions of the graves of US war dead in the Netherlands and in Belgium, together with the Belgian association "Le Briscard" and the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC).

A band played both the American and the Belgian national anthems. After the ceremony proper, many local people exchanged their recollections, some of watching the plane coming

slowly down before it crashed, others telling they had later come to the crash scene, many evoking stories about the locals scavenging parts of the plane, recuperating pieces of parachutes, etc. Marcel Lamy was there too. He was 17 at the time and remembered that some Americans had come to his parents' farm nearby to ask for a pillow, the one used for Kenneth in his dying moments. He was not allowed to go near the crash scene, but having made friends with the GIs guarding the crash area, he could later get hold of some pieces of equipment and tools which were shown in the exhibition glass cases. Jean-Marie Bothy, the son of the doctor who administered to the wounded and who was 7 at the time, was there too. A lady, Ms Vause, aged 12 in 1945 and living on a nearby farm, told how she too had seen the

crashed Liberator and proudly showed a medallion made from parts of the B-24's Plexiglass cockpit. A reception was offered by the municipality at the Salle Magimpré in Florée, a few hundred meters away from the crash location. In a friendly atmosphere, people mingled and exchanged memories and comments, visited the exhibition and could enjoy a short music show by a trio of women in vintage uniforms who performed excellent renditions of popular American wartime songs. Kenneth Kingsland and his "Belle Ringer" fellow crew members had been gratefully and respectfully remembered on that sunny afternoon in Belgium.

See the pages for "Belle Ringer" and its crew at <http://www.americanair-museum.com/aircraft/20112>



# 42nd Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion

## St. Louis, Missouri - October 19-23, 2016

WWII Vets attending the St. Louis reunion are eligible to receive a \$250 rebate to help cover registration and meals. Rebate available at reunion check-in.

### GATEWAY TO ST. LOUIS CITY TOUR

Your Destination St. Louis certified tour guide will trace the history of St. Louis beginning with the city's original settlement, Laclede's Landing. It is now a nine-block historic district filled with renovated turn-of-the-century buildings housing shops, eateries and offices. See the famous Gateway Arch, the Nation's tallest monument, which commemorates the gateway to the west for thousands of 19th century pioneers.

Enjoy a view of the Old Cathedral, the oldest



cathedral west of the Mississippi. Across the street is the Old Courthouse, the setting for cases involving slavery, the fur trade and equal rights. Of these cases, the Dred Scott Freedom Trial is the most notable. You will pass Busch Stadium, home of the 2011 World Champion St. Louis Cardinals. Continuing west on Market Street, you will pass several of St. Louis' civic buildings and plazas, as well as Citygar-



den, a unique urban oasis blending art, architecture and landscape. St. Louis Union Station, once the busiest rail terminal in the world. Today, Union Station has undergone a magnificent renovation and is home to a luxury hotel and restaurants.

Next, enjoy a stop in the Central West End for lunch on own. The Central West End is filled with century-old homes, sidewalk cafes, shops, and galleries. Cost is \$25 per person.

## **MILITARY HERITAGE TOUR**

Our Military Heritage Tour includes the Missouri Civil War Museum and a driving tour of Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery.

A boxed lunch is included.

Your first stop of the day is the Missouri Civil War Museum. Originally designed and built as an athletic and activity center for soldiers, it was later transitioned into a troop barracks for World War I and World War II. After abandonment in 1964, it took 60 years for a restoration project to transpire. Through grassroots efforts of fundraising and hard work, the Civil War museum came to fruition. Enjoy



viewing the artifacts significant to the Civil War efforts in the Missouri Area.

Enjoy your boxed lunch while driving through the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. The 4th largest cemetery in the nation, it was established after the American Civil War in an attempt to put together a formal network of military cemeteries. It started as the Jefferson Barracks Military Post Cemetery in 1826 and became a United States National Cemetery in 1866. The cemetery is administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs on the former





site of Jefferson Barracks. It covers 331 acres and the number of interments as of 2014 is approximately 188,000. The cemetery is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Cost is \$45 per person—including box lunch.

## **PERFECT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY**

### **Anheuser-Busch Brewery/Grant's Farm Tour**

Experience a visit to Grant's Farm, the 281-acre estate of the late August A. Busch, Jr., which is operated by Anheuser-Busch Companies. The adventure begins at Grant Station where you will board a tram for a tour of the grounds. The 20-minute tram ride will wind through the Deer Park – a game preserve where antelope, buffalo and other animals roam in a natural 160-acre habitat. Pass Grant's Cabin, a log home built by Ulysses S. Grant, 18th President of the United States, and former owner of the land where Grant's Farm is today.

Your tram will then stop at the Tier Garden where you may enjoy elephant and bird shows. Then stroll to the historic Bauernhof which was built in 1913. Here you will have a chance to enjoy refreshments while viewing the elegant stables and the Busch family's world-renowned carriage collection. A visit to the Clydesdale stallion barn will complete your visit.

En route to the King of Beers – the Anheuser-Busch Brewery, your Destination St. Louis tour guide will familiarize you with the rich history of the colorful Busch family. Situated in a 100-acre complex with over 70 red brick structures, the Brewery buildings are known for their unique architecture and several are National Historic Landmarks.

During the 45-minute walking tour you will see the World Famous Clydesdales, the Beech-



wood Lagering Cellar, the Brew House, and the Bevo Packaging Plant. After visiting the Bevo Packaging Plant, a trolley will take guests back up to the tour center. No visit would be complete without sampling the family of Anheuser-Busch products during the tour! Cost is \$37 per person.





# 42nd ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

## Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO

### October 19-23, 2016

#### Wednesday, October 19

1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion registration open
1:00pm — until	Memorabilia/Gathering room open throughout reunion
1:00pm — 4:00pm	8th AFHS Board Meeting
6:00pm — 7:00pm	Welcome Reception, followed by dinner on your own

#### Thursday, October 20

7:30am — 8:30am	Continental Breakfast for Package #1 participants
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion registration open
8:30am — 9:45am	Individual Group Meetings
10:00am — 11:30am	<b>American Indians in WWII</b>
11:45am — 4:00pm	<b>Our Military Heritage Tour*</b>
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion registration open
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Rendezvous Dinners

#### Friday, October 21

7:30am — 8:30am	Full Breakfast for Meal Package participants
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion registration open
9:00am — 1:00pm	<b>Gateway to St. Louis City Tour*</b>
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion registration open
2:00pm — 3:30pm	<b>Presentation on AAM Duxford</b>
3:45pm — 5:00pm	<b>Q &amp; A WWII Vets</b>
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	<b>Dinner Buffet—Donald Miller Presentation</b>

#### Saturday, October 22

7:30am — 8:30am	Continental Breakfast for Meal Package participants
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion registration open
8:45am — 10:15am	General Membership Meeting
10:30am — 11:30am	Researchers/Webmasters Meeting
12:15pm — 4:30pm	<b>Anheuser-Busch Brewery/Grant's Farm Tour*</b>
12:00pm — 4:00pm	8th AFHS Board Meeting
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion registration open
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 10:00pm	Gala Dinner and Program

#### Sunday, October 23

7:30am — 8:30am	Full Breakfast for Meal Package participants
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\*It is important that you be in the bus boarding area at least ten [10] minutes prior to the scheduled departure times. All tours require a minimum of 40 participants, unless otherwise stated. Driver and Staff gratuities **ARE** included in the tour prices.





# 42nd ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

## Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO

### October 19-23, 2016

## HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION

**314-878-1500 or 888-627-7066**

**(Reference 'CHALET' and 8th AFHS)**

### Location

The Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet is located in Westport Plaza, (191 Westport Plaza, St. Louis, MO 63146) which features 18 shops, popular restaurants, and entertainment venues like the Westport Playhouse, The Funny Bone Comedy Club, Jive and Wail Piano Bar, and Backstreet Jazz and Blues. Guests will enjoy convenient access to popular destinations and attractions. We're located just 10 minutes from historic St. Charles, 15 minutes from Forest Park, home of the Saint Louis Zoo, Science Center, Art Museum and the History Museum. We're also close to the world-famous Gateway Arch, the St. Louis Cardinals baseball stadium, Six Flags® and Missouri's Wine County.

### Shuttle Service

For those of you flying into St. Louis, there is complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport to the hotel. Go to Baggage Claim/Hotel Shuttle exits—the shuttle runs every half hour.

### Upscale Amenities

Enjoy complimentary wireless High Speed Internet in all public areas, concierge service, plus signature amenities you'll only find at Sheraton. Wake up energized after a restful night's sleep in a plush Sheraton Sweet Sleeper® Bed. Sheraton Club rooms and suites provide guests with special access to the Sheraton Club Lounge, offering complimentary breakfast, evening hors d'oeuvres, and a variety of beverage options. Stay connected at our lobby's connectivity hub, the Link@Sheraton™ experience with Microsoft®. Stay fit with a visit to our Sheraton Fitness center, programmed by Core Performance™.

### Dining Options Abound

The Terrace Restaurant and Lucerne Restaurant feature a wide variety of menu items served in a friendly, casual atmosphere. There is also a private dining area perfect for intimate gatherings. In the summer, enjoy poolside refreshments every weekend at the Tiki Bar, serving snacks, beer, wine and frozen drinks. We also offer guests the convenience and privacy of in-room dining service. Stroll through the Westport Plaza Complex and visit any one of their many casual and fine-dining options, from seafood restaurants to specialty cafés.

### RESERVATION INFORMATION

**Group Name:** 8th Air Force Historical Society

**Reunion Dates:** October 19-23, 2016

**Rate:** \$109 + tax (currently 15.363%) Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability.

**Cut off Date:** 9/15/2016

**Cancellation Policy:** All reservations have a 48 hour cancellation policy, or attendee will be charged one night room rate plus tax.

### WHEELCHAIR RENTALS

**ScootAround:** (888) 441-7575 or ScootAround.com

### HOSPITALITY SUITES

This year, the 8th AFHS is pleased to announce that we are offering **HOSPITALITY SUITES** to groups at **NO CHARGE**. The number of suites is limited, so we ask that you reserve your suite as soon as possible. Suites are located in close proximity to one another and most are large enough for two or more groups to share space.

In order to guarantee your suite,  
please call or email ASAP:

**Debra Kujawa**

**Managing Director**

**912-748-8884**

**ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org**



# REGISTRATION FORM

## 42nd ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO  
October 19-23, 2016

CUT-OFF DATE IS September 15, 2016	Price Per	# of People	TOTAL
<b>REGISTRATION FEE</b>	\$ 40	#	\$
Registration fee for children ages 8-16	\$ 25	#	\$
<b>MEAL PACKAGES</b>			
#1 Includes 7 hotel meals beginning with breakfast Thursday, Oct 20	\$ 212	#	\$
#2 Includes 5 hotel meals beginning with breakfast Friday, Oct 21	\$ 148	#	\$
<b>Please select your entrée choice for the Gala banquet Saturday, Oct 22:</b>			
Sliced London Broil with Bordelaise Sauce		#	
Pan Seared Salmon w/Balsamic Reduction		#	
<b>SEPARATELY PRICED MEALS (If not purchasing a meal package)</b>			
Thursday, Oct 20 — RENDEZVOUS DINNER Chicken Marsala	\$ 46	#	\$
Friday, Oct 21—EVENING DINNER BUFFET Roasted Pork Loin & Grilled Chicken Breast	\$ 46	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 22—GALA BANQUET (Please select entrée)			
Sliced London Broil with Bordelaise Sauce	\$ 46	#	\$
Pan Seared Salmon with Balsamic Reduction	\$ 46	#	\$
<b>TOUR OPTIONS:</b>			
Thursday, Oct 20: Military Heritage Tour— <b>INCLUDES BOX LUNCH</b>	\$ 45	#	\$
Friday, Oct 21: Gateway to St. Louis City Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 25	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 22: Anheuser-Busch Brewery/Grant's Farm Tour	\$ 37	#	\$
<b>Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS</b>			\$

MEMBER NAME (for name tag): \_\_\_\_\_

WWII Veteran \_\_\_\_\_ BG or FG Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ POW: \_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE or PERSON attending: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL GUESTS: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

DAYTIME PH #: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_ PH #: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE INDICATE ANY PHYSICAL OR DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD:

CARD #: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ *Your contact information will only be shared with attendees.*





# 42nd ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

## Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO

### October 19-23, 2016

## REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

### STOP!

#### ◇ RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM **FIRST!**

The reunion hotel has a liberal cancellation policy—in the event you are unable to attend the reunion, you will be able to cancel your reservation without penalty within 48 hours of your scheduled check-in time. However, if you wait until the last minute to book your room reservation, you may not receive the reunion rate or rooms may no longer be available at the reunion hotel. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that our vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$5 processing fee.

***Canceling your hotel reservation does NOT cancel your reunion activities.***

#### ◇ COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM

Please fill out the registration form completely.

- ⇒ Fill out your name as you wish it to be on your name tag—and for any others registering with you. If you are a WWII veteran, and/or affiliated with a bomb or fighter group, please indicate which group.
- ⇒ Meal packages include either seven [7] hotel meals [package #1] or five [5] hotel meals [package #2]. If you purchase a meal package, do NOT select separately priced meals. If you plan to attend some or all of the dinner functions, but do NOT wish to include breakfast, simply select the dinners you wish to attend in the area indicating “Separately Priced Meals.” Be sure and select your entrée if you plan on attending the Saturday evening gala.
- ⇒ There are three [3] tour options available during the reunion. Please read the information [here in this issue] on each tour and then make your selection on the form. **The Military Heritage Tour INCLUDES** a box lunch.

#### ◇ MAIL IN YOUR REGISTRATION FORM

Once you have completed your registration form, please total up the amount owed and include a check, money order, or complete the credit card information on the form, payable to the **8th AFHS** and mail to:

**8th AFHS  
P O Box 60369  
Savannah, GA 31420-0369**

ALL registration forms **MUST** be received by September 15, 2016 in order to guarantee your place. If you have any questions or problems in completing your registration, please contact:

**Debra Kujawa  
Managing Director  
8th AFHS  
912-748-8884  
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org**

**ALL reunion information and forms are available on our website: [8thAFHS.org](http://8thAFHS.org)**

# *It Takes a* **TEAM**

Hamburg: 18 June 44

Robert M Foose

*On June 18th, 1944, the Mighty Eighth had 1,378 bombers heading towards Germany with the majority targeting the various oil refineries in the Hamburg area. With the start of the 8th's oil campaign on May 12th, 1944, the German anti-aircraft batteries were being re-enforced to defend those key targets. Some of the Lead aircraft of the First Air Division would find out how good those defenses had become on this day. The Deputy Lead aircraft of the 40th "A" Combat Wing was being flown by Cpt Charles W. Hodges of the 326th Squadron, 92nd Bomb Group, whom I had the pleasure of interviewing back in 1983, as well as corresponding with several other members of his crew. This is their story of tragedy, heroism, and most of all, teamwork, in bringing their severely flak damaged aircraft back from Hamburg.*

**T**he aircraft flown by Hodges was a radar equipped B-17G (sometimes noted as a PFF or Pathfinder aircraft) with Cpt Robert Crutcher sitting in the co-pilot's seat as Command Pilot for this mission. Other members of the crew were: Bombardier Lt. Vince Gisriel, Navigator Lt. Ray Alexander, Engineer/TT Sgt. William Talbot, Radio Sgt. Bob Heare, Radar Operator Lt. Fabian, Tail Gunner Sgt. William Mogg, Waist Gunners Sgt. Bob Noble and Sgt. Earl Dahlgren. The crew's normal Co-Pilot, Lt. Gaylord Corlis had decided to tag along on the mission as an extra crewmember. Riding in the nose compartment and sitting on a box of ammo. This would prove to be a very fortuitous decision for the crew.

The mission had started off as pretty much routine with Hodge flying as Deputy Lead aircraft of the 40<sup>th</sup> CBW. Then

after passing the Initial Point, the lead aircraft's radar became inoperable and Hodge's crew took over the lead for the run to the target. Flak was noted as barrage and tracking, which normally meant the Germans were using radar to follow the targeted box of bombers. This did not bode well for Hodges or two other lead aircraft of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division that were shot down on June 18<sup>th</sup> over the Hamburg area. (42-97626 from the 398<sup>th</sup> BG 1<sup>st</sup> CBW "B" and 42-97647 from the 305<sup>th</sup> BG 40<sup>th</sup> CBW). Shortly after the bomb drop it happened, the aircraft took a direct hit. Navigator Ray Alexander recounts the scene that unfolded:

*"There was a loud report from the cockpit area at the time of the impact of the shell. I was standing, and turned and could see through the instrument panel on the Co-Pilot's side and saw Crutcher with eyes closed, head lolling from side to side and still*

*upright, with blood streaming from several facial wounds. Charlie Hodges might use the phrase "with his faced wiped away" but to me he remained recognizable, and I've often wondered whether or not he just bled to death. Whether this was possible or not, we couldn't have saved him. The windshield on Crutcher's side was blown out, as was the overhead window section. The rush of incoming air took his blood and scattered it everywhere in the cockpit. The open bomb bay doors allowed for a terrific flow of low temperature air through this section of the plane."*

In the rear section of the aircraft waist gunner Earl Dahlgren remembers:

*"The bomb bays opened, the bombs dropped, flak was breaking out all around, we began to take evasive action. Vince Gisriel (bombardier) called out on the intercom "Look out for the flak!" The plane rolled to the right and*



*the nose dropped fifteen degrees or more. The plane was in a steep wings level dive.”*

*“We had been on a southerly heading at 27,000 feet and now we had turned 60 to 90 degrees to the right, and were in a steep dive toward the coast of the North Sea, west of Hamburg. I looked out at both sides of the wings and engines, checking for fire and fuel leaks, no fire, no fuel leaks, but a steep dive. I grabbed my chute, we had quick attachable chest pack chutes, snapped it on to my harness and grabbed the emergency release handle to pull the hinge pins on the waist door. The tail gunner was by his emergency escape door, also waiting to jump.”*

Credit must be given to the rear crew members for not panicking and jumping before receiving orders to do so. In some other cases during the air war in Europe, crew members had bailed out of their aircraft before a pilot had regained control (sometimes it was a damned if you or damned if you don't situation). Alexander continues his observations of the cockpit scene:

*“After seeing Crutcher's condition, I went to the passage way between the nose and cockpit. My impression was that Talbot*



*Delivering a payload*

*was at/near the upper turret, and I looked at Hodges. He seemed O.K. and looked at me; I don't believe he had his oxygen mask on at this point. If not, we had dropped well below normal bombing altitude of 20-25,000 feet. I don't believe at that time I realized that he had lost his left foot. The shell had entered near (Hodges) and passed through the left rudder pedal assembly and through one of the window sections mentioned earlier as having been blown out. Soon after my visual check on Hodges, Corlis moved to the cockpit and relieved Hodges, who crawled into the nose. At this point, if not earlier, his condition was evident. Fortunately, there was no bleeding and a tourniquet was not required. Charlie has an explanation of how such a condition can occur with*

*a sudden loss of a limb. Besides covering the wound with a bandage and pulling one/two aluminum pieces from his leg, I gave him his first morphine shot.”*

Fortunately, the anti-aircraft shell was either a dud, possibly sabotaged by some foreign worker in a German armaments plant or fused for a higher altitude. Plus, the cold sub-zero air also aided Hodges in not bleeding to death. Dahlgren continues with the “damage control” efforts by him and other crewmembers:

*“We were at our emergency doors, the radio operator motioned the engineer, Talbot into the radio room to find out what was going on in the front of the plane. Now the plane began to level off. We had lost a lot of altitude, and we were by ourselves. We were still being shot at, and now had an electrical fire in the bomb bay, which Talbot put out. He said for someone to crank the bomb bay doors closed because they were slowing us down. I told Mogg and Noble to hold on to my chute harness, because I could not wear the chest pack chute out on the cat walk of the bomb bay and bend over to crank the doors closed. Evidently the fire had been in the motor that ran the doors up and down,*



*Flak filled skies*

*because in talking to Hodge's later he said that even though they were salvoed open, that they should have run up electrically, and believe me they did not, because I can remember very vividly looking down on either side of the catwalk at the flak shells breaking below us while I was cranking the doors closed. We had now turned and headed up to the Danish peninsula. Vince Gisreil came on the intercom to tell us we were going to try to make it to Sweden to get Hodges to a hospital, and that if we didn't feel that we were going to make it, that we had permission to jump. The plane was flying, and we were stabilized, so we elected to stay with the plane. We were still catching a lot of flak, though we didn't seem to be getting hit. There seem to be about three batteries of four guns each following us right along. This plane had a chafe chute by my waist window, and even though it was not suppose to help us, I dumped a box of chafe or "window" out of it. It helped to take my mind off of other things as we watched for German fighter aircraft."*

*"Vince Gisreil came back on the intercom again saying that they felt that if we could make*

*it into Sweden far enough to get Hodges to a big hospital, that we probably could make it back to England, and again told us if we didn't feel that the plane would make it, that we should jump now before we got out over the North Sea. We stayed with the plane, even though many of the control cables running through the waist of the plane were hanging rather slack. We got out over the North Sea, and Talbot wanted someone to hold up Lt. Crutcher, who was still in the co-pilot's seat. I went forward to the flight deck, stood between the pilot and co-pilot, and allowed the dead co-pilot to rest against the middle of my back."*

*"Sometime Vince, Ray and Talbot had gotten Hodge's down from the flight deck and Lt. Corlis was flying the airplane. The instrument panel was a shambles as you can see from the pictures. In the one of the left side of the cockpit you can see the toe of Hodges boot. The right hand side of the windshield and the top of the canopy was gone, the wind was howling through the open windshield. I took part of the flak suit and held it up to deflect the wind off of Corlis. His intercom was out, so any heading changes were called to me from the radar*

*navigator in the radio room, who was doing the navigating with his scope. I would relay the messages from him to the pilot to turn right or left. The radar navigator brought us right straight to a field on the coast of England. I had gone back to the waist sometime during the crossing of the North Sea, we took the upper hatch out of the radio room, preparing to make a wheels up landing, and the crewmen in the back of the plane assumed the ditching position. I unscrewed and jerked the cable out of the radar housing as we were making our first approach. Lt. Corlis made four approaches before finally getting the plane in on the belly on the fifth approach. Very smooth landing since the radar dome just squished down. After some of the passes we heard that Chuck was going to go up and land the plane; however Corlis did land the plane very nicely. We slowed rather rapidly, and the plane finally turned sideways and out we went. We went around to the front of the plane to help Talbot. He was breaking the Plexiglas nose out of the plane in order to remove Hodges."*

*The airfield where the aircraft had belly landed was a British*



Typhoon base near the coast. Hodges was taken to a hospital and had flown his last mission with the 92nd. The navigator, Ray Alexander had a slight case of frostbite due to trying to plug the hole in the windshield with part of a flak jacket.

During the flight back to England, Cpt Hodge's, though severely wounded, tried to crawl back up to the flight deck to assist in flying the plane but

was restrained by Alexander and Gisriel. Due to his efforts in keeping the aircraft under control after the near fatal hit and his determination to continue to assist in the return flight and landing, Hodge's was notified in October, 1945 that he was being awarded the Distinguished Service Cross. When interviewing Charles Hodges back in 1983, he stated he was put in for the Medal of Honor but it was nixed by higher

headquarters due to the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group already having a Medal of Honor winner (John C. Morgan). Lt. Corlis was awarded the Silver Star for his actions on this mission. The crew as a whole showed much bravery and determination in bringing their aircraft home and in assisting their seriously wounded pilot. This is a great example of what can be accomplished under trying circumstances when working as a team.







# \$1.98

## Was All He Needed...

By Martin H Johnson

**M**y father was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt Henry A. Johnson from Park Ridge, Illinois. He flew a combat tour in the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force out of Debach, England as a B-17G pilot in the 493<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group, 860<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.

He never really spoke about his war experiences as I was growing up until I was a graduate student and he and one of his best friends – a B-24 pilot who flew on the first Ploesti mission out of Libya, Africa - bought a Cessna 172 together. This gave me the opportunity to get my private pilot's license and a chance to fly with my Dad. Taking many flights together in that plane opened up the opportunity for him to share his experiences in the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force with me.

He told me many stories about the dangers, physical hardships and exhaustion he experienced while flying long deep penetration missions into

Germany attacking their oil refineries.

What surprised me, however, was the importance he placed on his 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force experience as it related to his return to civilian life and his business career in the catalog industry.

In 1942 my father was working in the merchandising division of Montgomery Ward Catalog Company. He aspired to become an assistant buyer and arranged a meeting with his division merchandise manager to determine what his chances were for promotion.

He was told that Wards had a policy that all Assistant Buyers, as well as Buyers, had to have a college education. Having been raised by a single mother, enrolling in college had never been an option for him.

Upon enlisting in the Army Air Corps, this same manager wished him well and assured him his job would be waiting for him upon his return.

The Army Air Corps did not care that Dad did not have a college education. They took a young man, who had never been in an airplane, and after 18 months of training he was flying his B-17, which he named the "\$1.98", over the skies of Germany.

At the end of the war thousands of veterans were returning to the U.S. being discharged and starting the search for jobs. My father contacted





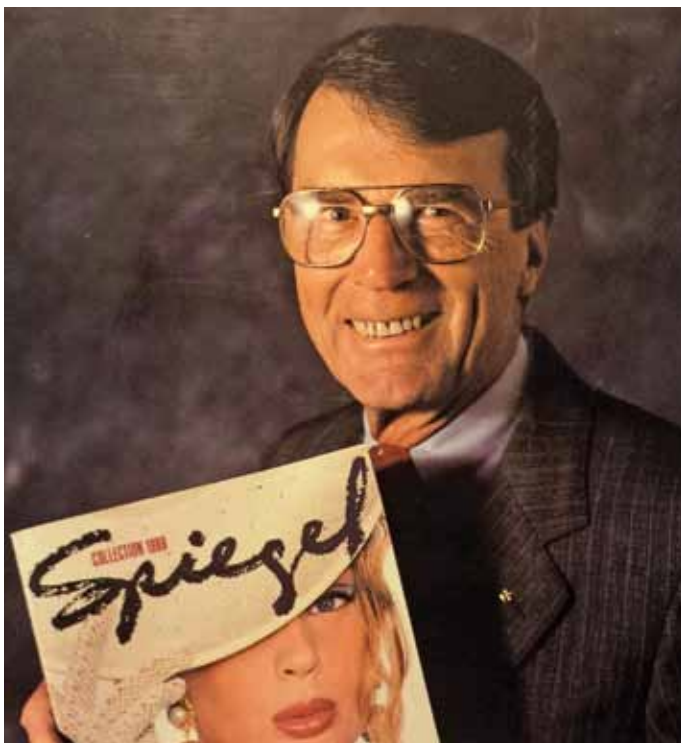
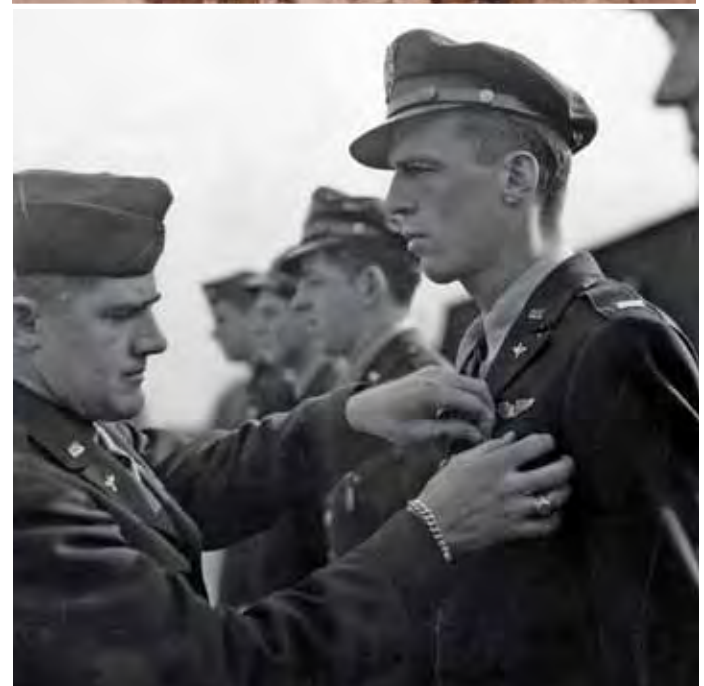
his former manager about securing his old job at Wards. He arranged a meeting and decided to wear his officer's uniform for the interview.

He described the impressed and respectful look on his manager's face when he walked into the meeting with his 1<sup>st</sup> lieutenant bars on his shoulders, his silver pilot's wings, his combat decorations and the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force patch on his left sleeve. The public back home knew of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force and what they had done defeating the Luftwaffe.

During the interview, my father told him that he had been trained to fly the four engine B-17, one of the most complex airplanes in the world, and had been in charge of a 10-man crew leading them on a combat tour over Germany.

As a result of this meeting, my father became the first Assistant Buyer in Montgomery Ward's history who did not have a college education. This was the start of a successful catalog career that ultimately led him to becoming President and CEO of Spiegel catalog. Under his guidance Spiegel became a billion dollar company known as a "department store in print" catering to the busy modern woman.

My father was very proud and grateful for the opportunities that the Army Air Corps and the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force gave him. He was a great Dad to six children and a wonderful grandfather to nine grandsons and is missed and remembered everyday.



# RED LETTER DAY: 17 January 1945

Robert "Bob" Wilcox, 452<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group



**T**oday proved to be probably the most momentous day of my life. They woke me at 0330 for briefing. This was to be my first combat mission, in which every new first pilot had to fly as copilot with an experienced crew before being permitted to fly his own crew into combat.

I flew with a Lt. Smith and

his crew. He and some of the rest of his crew were flying their last mission. That day, my navigator, Norman Hartung, flew with a Lt. Betts. I discovered later that three other members of my crew flew with Lt. Betts that day, as well. And he was also flying his last mission.

As we were being driven to the plane, Smitty said, "Wilcox, you're

a first pilot, aren't you?" I said I was, so he then asked me what seat I'd be most comfortable flying. I told him I'd never flown anything but left seat, so, naturally, I'd be most comfortable there.

"OK," he said, "you fly left seat, and I'll fly right seat. I just made first pilot, and I've never flown anything but right seat." So, although he was airplane commander, he flew from the right seat.

It was a fine, clear day, and I got a great charge out of seeing the hundreds of ships strung out in our division column.

I formed up and flew pretty good formation all the way across the channel to the coast, where we hit the IP (the initial point at which you then flew in a straight line with no deviation until you got to the target). When we hit the coast, Smitty took over, and we put on our Flak helmets and jackets.

Smitty then said to me, "Keep your head in the cockpit. Watch the oil pressure and the other gauges. I'll do the flying from here."

I started watching the instruments very closely, primarily to look for a drop in oil pressure, so we could get a prop feathered promptly, should that become necessary.

We were on our way to bomb the sub pens at Hamburg and were flying southeast over the waterway leading to the city. In what seemed a very short time, the Flak started bursting all around us, and we were over our target---the U-boat pens at Hamburg. The Flak felt like someone was hitting the wings with a sledge hammer.

As it grew in intensity, I finally



couldn't resist taking a quick look over the side, down at Hamburg through all the Flak bursts. I glanced down at our target for just a moment, and when I looked back, the oil pressure on #3 engine was down to zero. I yelled, "Feathering 3" and feathered it.

As we turned off the target, we were getting tracking Flak, and everyone was "calling Flak." The tail gunner called, "Flak, 6 o'clock level. (Pause) Flak, 6 o'clock level. (Pause) FLAK, 6 O'CLOCK LEVEL." Each time he said it, his voice got louder and rose in pitch. By the last time, he was shouting it as if the Flak was bursting beside him. At which point, Smitty said, "F--- this noise!" and pulled back sharply on the wheel. We rose a few hundred feet or so above the formation and took a hit that set our #2 engine on fire. Smitty pointed the nose down and barreled down through the formation, finally putting the fire out.

But when Smitty then said to feather #2, I tried to, but it wouldn't feather. After about three minutes of trying, it did, though, and we could breathe again.

Smitty then asked me to take over the controls again, and I remember wondering if trimming the airplane might adversely affect its performance even if ever so little. I thought of the trim tabs sticking out into the air stream and just felt it better not to do that, so I put my feet up on the dash and got the yoke behind my knees and flew that way from then on.

Smitty was pulling about half power on #1, because it was smoking like a sky writer. He had already given orders to drop the ball turret, and they were working on that. We were losing about 500 feet a minute, but Smitty thought we might be able to maintain altitude after we dropped the ball. They finally got the ball loose and

dropped it. We were following the bomber stream east, then north. But, of course, it was going faster than we were, so we kept falling further and further back.

We had already thrown overboard everything we could get our hands on, including the Flak jackets and helmets. I remember the pregnant pause that came after the engineer tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Your Flak jacket, sir." We also threw out all the guns, except for the chin turrets in the nose that couldn't be moved; and our rate of descent dropped to only 200 or 300 feet per minute. But at Lubeck, where the bomber stream turned west to return to England, the last of the bombers flew by us, and we were alone. We were holding minimum airspeed, of course, in an effort to minimize loss of altitude.

At Lübeck, two interesting things happened. First, Smitty said, "Well, guys, I have no idea whether we can get back to England, so let's hear from you...what do you think?"

Nobody said anything for a minute. Then the engineer said quietly, "Whatever you say goes, Smitty. If you think you can get her there, I'm with you all the way, old boy." Then, of course, everybody chimed in, and we turned toward England. It was wonderful, and it sent chills running up my spine.

The second interesting thing was when Smitty called for fighter support. Even though we hadn't seen any fighters, we could expect that we might soon have them. Fighter support 'rogered' and asked, "Where are you in relation to point Peter?" Smitty scratched his head briefly, then answered, "I don't know where the f--- point Peter is, but I'm right over Lübeck." At which point nobody wanted to see anybody.

When we turned west, Lübeck was on the leading edge of our

wing. At the end of 20 minutes, it was on the trailing edge. We had an 80 mph headwind that day, and we were holding 120 mph indicated, so we were going only 40 mph over the ground. I then called the navigator and asked him where we were going to hit the ground.

He said, "Oh, yeah"...and in a couple of minutes, he called to say "Hey, Smitty, we're going to hit the ground halfway to the front lines!!!"

Smitty immediately said, "That's all she wrote" and told me to make a turn in the general direction of Sweden. Where our groundspeed had been about 40 mph, it was now near 200 mph. The navigator steered us around all the Flak areas on our Flak map of Germany, and, as luck would have it, we met no enemy fighters.

It wasn't long before we drew close to the undercast that was now below us. I'd been wondering what to do about that, since we had lost our two inboards and thus our vacuum pumps. So we had no gyros. I asked the engineer to get me a length of wire and something heavy I could tie to it. He came back with a piece of wire and the biggest goddam nut I had ever seen. We tied it to the end of the wire and tied the other end of the wire to the top of the cockpit. My idea was that, when we went through the undercast, if I made an uncoordinated turn (and that would be the only kind we would make if we turned at all), the wire would be displaced and would tell me we were turning.

When we got to the undercast, I put the nose down to get through it as quickly as I could. And it turned out to be very thin. So, when we broke out, I pulled the nose up again and sacrificed air speed for altitude. And we didn't really need the wire after all.

Shortly after that, we crossed the coast and headed out over the

Baltic Sea. The water we were flying over had islands. Most of them I guess were Danish...and thus manned by Germans. But we realized that, when we got to the Swedish coast, we really wouldn't know it, because, with the bad visibility as we approached the coast, it wouldn't look any different than any of the islands we were flying over. Also, we had no map of the area, so we were just flying on...and hoping for the best.

When we got really low and it seemed clear that we weren't going to make it, Smitty decided to try starting #3 engine. There was a remote chance that the line might simply have been severed by flack, and the problem might be only in the instrument. The downside, of course, was that if our oil pressure was the problem and we were able to get the engine *unfeathered*, we might never be able to feather it again, and it would windmill, canceling out one good engine. But, at that point, we really had no choice, because we weren't going to make it without that engine. Everybody held his breath while Smitty tried it, and damned if it didn't roar to life. Now we had two and a half engines, but we were still losing altitude.

There was what appeared to be coastline ahead of us though, so Smitty asked if anybody knew anything about entering Sweden. Somebody said they thought you were supposed to have your gear down. And somebody else said he thought you weren't supposed to be any higher than 3,000 ft. Well the latter wouldn't be a problem, because we were well under that. What we learned later was that we were also supposed to be firing flares, which, of course, we didn't do. There was a little town ahead of us (which we later learned was Trelleborg, Sweden). So, we lowered the gear. But as we flew over the coast, they nailed us with

small arms fire. It was something for me to see the tracers coming up at us.

We did a sharp turn away and got out of range. Pretty soon, two fighters came directly at us in a head-on attack. Our navigator still had his chin turret guns, because they couldn't be moved. And, just as he was about to give them a burst, the planes broke up and over us in a big Immelman, and one of them sat close-in on our left wing. I saw three crowns on the tail...and breathed again. I didn't know what the three crowns meant, but I knew it wasn't a swastika. The blond, blue-eyed guy flying the plane grinned at me and waved for me to follow him. I banked to do that, and Smitty said, "Where ya going?" I said, "I'm following that guy." He led us right to the airfield at Malmo which was only a short distance away, although we hadn't been able to see it because of the lousy visibility. I learned later that it was Bulltofta Airfield.

By the time we got there, we were right at traffic pattern altitude. Smitty said, "You take the throttles, and I'll take the wheel." It was a grass field and looked very wet. What we didn't see until we were low on final was a grass bunker at the end of the runway. Smitty hauled back on the wheel, and we hopped over it, only to come down with a jarring thud on the grass beyond it, because the ground was all frozen solid. That had been ice we saw, not water. We bounced on down the runway, just being glad that we were on the ground in Sweden...and not in Germany.

We taxied over to the edge of the field and could then see that there were many other B-17s and B-24s with various amounts of war damage (some standing on their nose, others obviously bellied in, etc.). By the time we shut down the engines, the Swedes had come out in a six-by and had surrounded the airplane, with

their tommy guns cradled in their arms.

I went back through the airplane and opened the rear door. There was a young Swedish lieutenant there who popped me a brisk salute and said, "You are now in Sweden. Leave all your weapons in the airplane and come with me."

I asked him if the other pilot and I could examine the airplane, and he agreed we could. So we did, while the rest of the crew went inside with him. There was plenty of Flak damage, and there were lots of holes from the small stuff they hit us with over the coast.

When we got inside, they were feeding the crew sandwiches and real milk. That was a special treat for the crew, who hadn't had real milk in a long, long time. Pretty soon, a Swedish officer drifted near me, and I said, "Sir, could I ask you a question?" "Certainly," he said, in perfect English. I then told him about the Swedes firing on us, when we were below 3,000 feet, with our gear down, one engine feathered, and another engine trailing smoke. "They did?" he said, looking surprised. Then, obviously concerned, he asked, "And did they hit you?" "They sure did," I replied. "Well," he said, wagging his head slowly, "That's very unusual. (Pause) They often fire. But they very seldom ever hit anything."

That evening, they loaded us on a sleeper train, and, when we woke in the morning, we were deep in the center of Sweden, with snow everywhere. We soon arrived in Falun, where it snowed for the next two weeks.

For a while, they made weekly repatriation flights back to England at night in a B-24 from England, painted black. But I guess our brass figured that was too risky, since the plane had to overfly occupied Norway, and since the war was coming so close to the



end. So they stopped those flights soon after we arrived in Falun.

After a couple of months, they moved us to Vasteras, a town to which they had trucked in parts of American bombers for many months. They had thus kept American crews busy repairing the aircraft and trying to get some flyable planes. The repairs that those flight crews made without proper tools and equipment were amazing. The pilots test-flew them, and it wasn't unusual to find one control doing what another should have done.

We were so casual that I remember taking Bill and Margit Dahl up in a B-17 one day. They came down from Falun to take advantage of the opportunity. Bill had lived in the U.S. for a lot of

years. He worked in the Falun court house, and he and Margit made a fetish out of inviting the internees to visit with them in their apartment.

I was in Sweden for four months before the war ended, and I then flew four of those patched up B-17s back to England. I had three forced landings out of the four trips. Luckily, none of them happened over the English Channel. On one flight, we flew low over northern German cities. The devastation was simply unbelievable. It's beyond comprehension how people could have lived through it.

On the boat going home from England, I remember being with a guy who flew recon missions and never saw a shot fired in anger. Yet he had bronze and silver clusters on

his air medal, while I didn't even earn the medal itself.

Which reminds me, we had Americans on the ground at Malmo who went over every arriving airplane with a fine tooth comb, meticulously filling out a multi-page report on each airplane's physical status. A couple of months after we arrived, one of those guys visited us where we were interned in Falun. I got talking with him, and he asked me what plane I had flown in. When I told him 602, he asked me what seat I was flying. When I told him left seat, he said, "Boy, are you a lucky man! We took a huge chunk of Flak out of that plane. It had been lodged about three inches below your butt."

**DECLASSIFIED**

Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

11728

Classified by: 11728  
by: A. A. B. (S), Lt. Col., AG  
by: F. (S), Capt., AG

WAR DEPARTMENT  
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. AIR FORCES  
WASHINGTON

**MISSING AIR CREW REPORT**

IMPORTANT: This report will be compiled in triplicate by each Army Air Forces organization within 48 hours of the time an air crew member is officially reported missing.

1. ORGANIZATION: Location, by Name Station 12 Command or Air Forces, 8th AF
2. SPECIFY: Place of Departure Station 12; Type of Mission Bombing
3. WEATHER CONDITIONS AND VISIBILITY: Clouds OF Clouds OR Weather at Port of Departure
4. GIVE: (a) Day 17 Month Jan Year 1945; Time Unknown; and Location Unknown  
(b) Specify whether aircraft was last sighted ( ) ; Last contacted by radio ( ) ; Forced down ( ) ; Seen to crash ( ) ; or Information not available (X).
5. AIRCRAFT WAS LOST, OR IS BELIEVED TO HAVE BEEN LOST, AS A RESULT OF: (Check one only) Enemy Aircraft ( ) ; Enemy Anti-Aircraft (X) ; Other Circumstances as follows: \_\_\_\_\_
6. AIRCRAFT: Type, Model and Serial B-17G; A/F Serial Number 44-3602
7. NAME OF AIRCRAFT, If Any B-17G-97; A/F Serial Number 44-3602
8. ENGINE: Type, Model and Serial SW-28166; (c) SW-28109; (d) SW-28109
9. INSTALLED WEAPONS (Furnish below Make, Type and Serial Number):  
(a) 1138906; (b) 1138906; (c) 1138906; (d) 1138906  
(e) 130918; (f) 130918; (g) 1541667; (h) 1321339 Buffalo  
(i) 1308698; (j) 1541791; (k) 1308698 Prig  
(l) \_\_\_\_\_; (m) \_\_\_\_\_; (n) \_\_\_\_\_
10. THE PERSONS LISTED BELOW WERE REPORTED AS: (a) Battle Casualty \_\_\_\_\_  
or (b) Non Battle Casualty \_\_\_\_\_
11. NUMBER OF PERSONS ON BOARD AIRCRAFT: Crew 9; Passengers 0; Total 9  
(Starting with Pilot, furnish the following particulars: If more than 11 persons were aboard aircraft, list similar particulars on separate sheet and attach original to this form.)

Crew Position	Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number	Current Status
1. Pilot	Smith, Ira E.	1st Lt.	0-24378	MTA
2. CP	Wilcox, Robert D.	2nd Lt.	0-24378	MTA
3. N	Nicholson, William D.	7/Sgt	12200342	MTA
4. TWS	Wagon, Harold F.	7/Sgt	1541667	MTA
5. T	Wagon, Harold F.	3/Sgt	1541667	MTA
6. BT	Wagon, Harold F.	3/Sgt	1541667	MTA
7. B	Wagon, Harold F.	3/Sgt	1541667	MTA
8. BT	Wagon, Harold F.	3/Sgt	1541667	MTA
9. BT	Wagon, Harold F.	3/Sgt	1541667	MTA
10. BT	Wagon, Harold F.	3/Sgt	1541667	MTA

12. IDENTIFY BELOW THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE LAST KNOWLEDGE OF AIRCRAFT, AND CHECK APPROPRIATE COLUMNS TO INDICATE STATUS FOR SEARCH.

Name in Full (Last Name First)	Rank	Serial Number	Contacted by	Last Seen	Forced Landing
1. Middleton, William P. Major	O-426706	X			
2. _____					
3. _____					

**DECLASSIFIED**

Authority: NND 735001

By: NARA NARA Date: 1973

AFPPA-11

**INDIVIDUAL CASUALTY QUESTIONNAIRE**

File # 11728

Name of crew member: WILCOX, Robert D.  
Rank: 2nd Lt.  
Serial number: 0-24378  
Position: Crew (Bomber) and Co-Pilot

Did he bail out? No.

Where? No.

If not, why not? We rode the ship down.

Last contact or conversation just prior to or at time of loss of plane: He was flying co-pilot position at time of emergency landing.

Was he injured? No.

Where was he when last seen? London, England on July, 4, 1945 awaiting transportation to U.S.A.

Any hearsay information: I received letter February, 7, 1946 from:

1st Lt. R. D. Wilcox

Box 1166

Columbus Army Air Field

Columbus, Mississippi

Source: Direct letter from him

Any explanation of his fate based in part or wholly on supposition: He may be reached at 99 Carr Street, Providence, Rhode Island

Total number of missions of above crew member: One

Dates and destinations if possible: Hamburg, Germany, January, 17, 1945  
and was interned in Sweden for approximately 6 months.

*Mr. Harold Huffman  
2133 North Woodford St.  
Quincy, Illinois*

8-3861, AF



# Crossing Paths with History:

## Johnny Wearing and the B-17 – “5 Grand”

by Derek J. Reynolds LTC, U.S. Army (Retired)



Photo credit - copyright Boeing

I first met Johnny Wearing in New Orleans at the National World War II Museum, where we were both waiting for the annual history conference to begin. Johnny was sitting with his friends,



Rick and Don. As I sat down and we exchanged pleasantries, they were quick to point out that Johnny was a World War II Veteran who had flown 35 combat missions with the Eighth Air Force.

Talking with Johnny, I studied him carefully to understand how this man, who looked in his 70's, could be a seasoned combat veteran. As he began to share his story, this 91 year-old drew me deeper into the tales of his crew, their 35 missions and a B-17G named “5 Grand.”

Johnny Wearing's journey began in his hometown of Detroit, Michigan. Graduating from high

school in June 1943 he found himself drafted in August. He was shipped off to basic infantry training at Jefferson Barracks, on the outskirts of Saint Louis, Missouri. With a smile and a wink he said, “I was eighteen and they took me away from my mommy and daddy.”

On August 1st, 1943 the U.S. Army Air Force (USAAF) attacked nine oil factories at Ploesti, Romania. Referred to as Black Sunday, the raid was one of the costliest for the USAAF in the European Theater, losing 53 aircraft and over 600 airmen. Ploesti placed the European Theater critically short

of aircrews.

Shortly after the raid, while Johnny was standing morning formation, a call went out for volunteers for the Army Air Force to replace the losses from Black Sunday. Violating the first rule of the military, “never volunteer,” Johnny raised his hand. He passed the aircrew test and found himself on his way to Las Vegas Army Airfield for Aerial Gunnery School.

Johnny had a number of firsts in gunnery school to include flying. “I threw up on my first flight,” he said, “but after that “I was “hooked.” With five weeks of intensive training in air-to-air gunnery, he graduat-

ed and moved on to MacDill Army Airfield in Tampa, Florida, for crew assignment and integration training. It was there that Johnny got his first flight in a B-17. Assigned to a crew captained by 1st Lieutenant Roy Brockman, they would fly together completing 35 combat missions in the European Theatre. It was here that Johnny was assigned to “fly the tail.”

From Tampa the crew traveled to England. Johnny made the trip on the troop ship Billy Mitchel, “dodging submarines” in the North Atlantic. They disembarked in Liverpool, England, making their way to the Eighth Air Force’s 96th

Bomb Group/338th Squadron at Snetterton-Heath.

The Boeing B-17 is an icon of American air power. Upon seeing the plane for the first time, the Seattle Times reporter Richard Williams said, “It’s a flying fortress.” Often referred to as the “Forte,” at the peak of war, the B-17 was built at three different manufacturing plants throughout the United States. Collectively these facilities produced 12,731 B-17’s, each requiring a crew of ten, manning thirteen machine guns, and delivering up to an 8,000-pound bomb load to an enemy 2,000 miles away.

Boeing management was con-



Photo credit - copyright Boeing



stantly looking for ways to celebrate production goals and improve worker moral. They identified the aircraft, serial number 40-37716, at the Boeing Seattle Plant, as the 5000th Boeing B-17 produced since the attack on Pearl Harbor. They highlighted the aircraft as it moved down the production line, and invited all those who had worked on it to sign the aircraft. Employees and component subcontractors put 35,000 signatures on and in this B-17.

Life Magazine highlighted this special Forte with a two-page centerfold spread in the May 29th, 1944, issue. Delivered to the USAAF in May 1944, this B-17 was pushed out of the plant by all the employees whose signatures were on the plane. They named the aircraft the 5 Grand before it ever left

the Renton manufacturing facility in Seattle, Washington.

Peak production during the war years found Boeing and its subsidiaries producing nearly 400 B-17's a month. To maintain production numbers, aircraft modifications on the factory line were kept to a minimum. Upon completion, each aircraft would travel to a Modification Center to complete its preparation for combat.

The honor of ferrying 5 Grand to the upgrade facility at the Kearney AAF Depot in Nebraska went to Nancy Love and Betty (Huyler) Gillies, the first two women qualified to fly the B-17. One important modification to the 5 Grand was the upgrade to the "Cheyenne" Tail Turret. The Cheyenne Turret took the tail gunner off his knees, placing him on a

bicycle seat. It provided for a wider field of fire for the twin .50-caliber machine at this firing station. As fate would have it, this would be Johnny Wearing's home for the last four months of 1944.

In a hail of publicity, the USAAF selected the 5 Grand's initial crew from the Puget Sound area. Edward C. Unger of Seattle was chosen as the aircraft's first pilot/commander. The crew, selected by Unger himself, all hailed from the same area. Unger and his crew connected with the 5 Grand in Kearney for the shuttle flight to England. On route they discovered that, with the additional weight of those 35,000 signatures and the roughness to the outer skin, the aircraft consumed more fuel than a standard B-17. They landed the 5 Grand in Ireland just as each of the four



Photo credit - copyright Boeing

engines ran out of fuel.

The Unger crew never flew the 5 Grand in combat. Upon their arrival in England they were split up and assigned to different crews. Consensus is that the USAAF could not afford to lose a geographically concentrated crew that was brought together with such great fanfare and publicity.

The 5 Grand was initially assigned to the 333rd Bomber Squadron. It is reported that on a local flight she suffered an electrical failure that required a belly landing. She was repaired and re-assigned to 96th Bomb Group's, 388th Squadron located at the Snetterton-Heath airfield.

During their time at Snetterton, Johnny and the crew were assigned to fly a number of different "Forte's", the most memorable for them being the 5 Grand. Over a four-month period, beginning on August 4th, they flew 35 missions over occupied Europe, 26% of them in the "5 Grand." During this time the 96th Bomb Group attacked industrial centers in Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Norway, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia. Targets included shipyards, harbors, railroad yards, oil refineries, aircraft, and vehicle factories.

The crew arrived in England short a waist gunner. They flew 35 missions with only a single waist gunner. When asked how that worked, Johnny reminded me "by the time we began our missions in

August 1944, the allies had air superiority." The major danger to crews at this point in the war was flak. When an enemy aircraft attack was imminent, the waist gunner would go back and forth between the two guns.

Johnny kept a detailed mission log, which we verified using the 8th Air Force Combat Chronology. The crew's initiation to aerial combat was on August 4th, 1944. On that day the Eighth Air Force flew three missions, sending 1,307 bombers against strategic targets in Germany. They were part of a 50- bomber formation that hit oil refineries in Bremen, Germany. Fifteen bombers were lost that day and Johnny's plane came home with three large holes in the fuselage from flak.

Friday, September 1st, 1944 found the crew flying their eighth mission targeting tank factories near Frankfurt. Intense flak took out the two port engines. Johnny stated, "Anyone who tells you a Forte won't fly on two engines is wrong." They "limped" back to England, landing safely at Snetterton.

Johnny tells the story of being at the "tail-end of the formation" one day when he sighted three aircraft bearing down on him, guns forward, at his altitude. They "looked to me like German Stuka's," making things all that more confusing since Stuka's were ground attack aircraft. He reported them to the flight deck where the initial command was to "fire 'em up." After some further

chatter from up front, the pilot, Roy Brockman said, "let's hold off on that last order, we haven't heard any enemy aircraft reports from the rest of the formation. Fire a burst off to the side and see how they respond." Johnny did just that and the aircraft turned so that he could see their profile. They weren't German; they were Allied P-38's with their wing tanks still in place. Returning to England after the mission, Johnny found himself catching grief from the fighter crews for being "that trigger happy kid in the back of the plane."

On mission 13, September 10th, 1944, the Eighth Air Force sent 385 B-17's to bomb industrial targets in southern Germany. Johnny and the crew were in a 173-plane flight that attacked a tank factory in Nuremburg. Intense flak damaged 147 aircraft and three aircraft were lost. The crew nicknamed this area "Happy Valley" because of the intense flak. This would not be their only time in the "Valley."

Mission fourteen found the crew participating in a unique mission that routed them from England to Russia then Italy and home. Operation Frontier was a strategy that came out of the Tehran Conference to extend the range of the bombing missions while reducing the exposure of the bomber fleet over occupied Europe. In a series of seven shuttle operations, select Eighth Air Force units would attack Germany, and then fly on to Russia to re-arm and refuel. They



would leave Russia to bomb either Hungary or Poland landing in Italy to recharge. Finally, leaving Italy to attack Germany once more, they returned home to England. The overall goal was to extend mission ranges and further complicate the ability of Germany to defend critical targets.

Johnny and crew began their Operation Frontier mission on September 11th, 1944 when the Eighth Air Force dispatched 1,131 bombers over central Germany. They were part of a 75 aircraft raid on a factory in Chemnitz. Targets of opportunity included another run for them through the flak at Happy Valley. From there, with all 75 aircraft, they continued on to land at Allied airfields in Russia.

Their second leg of the operation had them departing Russia on September 13th, 1944, to bomb steel and armament plants at Diósgyőr, Hungary. Losing two aircraft, 73 bombers continued on to 15th Air Force Bases in Italy.

The final leg of the mission was flown on September 25th, 1944. Departing airfields in Italy they were part of a 534 aircraft flight that hit an oil plant at Ludwigshafen, Germany. After another “target of opportunity” run found them once again at Happy Valley, Johnny notes in his log: “I don’t want to go back there again.” The 5 Grand flew to its home base at Snetterton after this final leg of the raid, completing

their part of the shuttle operation.

Johnny and his crew flew a very intense 35 missions over four short months. Their heaviest mission month was September 1944, where they flew twelve missions. The lightest was December 1944 at four.

The enlisted crew lived in a Quonset huts on Snetterton-Heath with two other B-17 Crews. Johnny witnessed one of those crews, on its fourth mission; take a direct flak hit to their aircraft’s bomb bay. As the aircraft broke up in the air he counted only four crew parachutes as it descended through the clouds. He said “this had an effect on me, after which I kept my distance from all the other crews. It was a lot for a nineteen year old to absorb.”

As we reviewed the 96th Bomb Group’s mission record together, Johnny admitted to being surprised at the high number of bombers that were lost on each mission. The 96th Bomb Group Association reports

that the “96th Bomb Group had the second highest number of aircraft missing in action by any group in the Eighth Air Force – 189.”

Johnny revealed, “They never told us about the losses. They kept us in a bubble.”

Their 35th and final mission was flown in the 5 Grand on December 24th, 1944. On that day, the Eighth Air Force flew the largest air strike in World War II. It put 2,034 bombers in the air to attack targets in Darmstadt, Frankfurt, Biblis, Babbenhausen, Zellhausen, and Gross Ostheim. As he watched the carpet of planes cross the channel Johnny thought: “our Christmas gift to Adolf.”

They had done it. By December 25th, 1944, the crew had successfully completed 35 combat missions over Europe. They were eligible to head home. The 5 Grand remained behind though, and successfully completed a total of 78 combat mis-



Derek Reynolds is a retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel. He received his commission through the ROTC program at the University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh and holds a Masters Degree in Education and Systems Management from the University of Southern California. He is a graduate of the United States Army Command and General Staff College, the U.S. Army Armor Basic and Advanced courses and is a U.S. Army Aviator. Serving a total of 24 years combined active and reserve time, he currently writes and lectures on World War II Military History. He resides in Georgia.



Johnny, the crew and the 5 Grand are memorialized on a plaque in the garden of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, Georgia. They are:

Pilot:	1st Lt. Roy E. Brockman
Co-Pilot:	1st Lt. Harry V. Weise
Navigator:	1st Lt. Benny E. Wade
Bombardier:	1st Lt. James H. Lenahan
Engineer/Top Turret:	T/Sgt. Elmo V. Allen
Radio/Gunner:	T/Sgt. Earl F. Taylor
Ball Turret Gunner:	S/Sgt. Leonard J. Hruska
Waist Gunner:	S/Sgt. Glen N. Philby
Tail Gunner:	S/Sgt. John H. Wearing, Jr.

sions before returning to the U.S.

In World War II, release from active duty after successfully completing all required combat missions was based on a point system. Johnny lacked sufficient points for release so he was sent back to the United States and assigned to Fort Lewis, Washington. There he was tasked to the U.S Forest Service to help fight forest fires. Being a man of many talents, Johnny's ability to type got him assigned first as a clerk and then as the unit supply sergeant where he was responsible for issuing firefighting equipment to all the soldiers. The majority of those assigned to this unit were waiting out their time until discharge.

Discharged in October 1945, Johnny returned to Detroit, Michigan. There he did what

many of The Greatest Generation did, picking up where he left off. Johnny returned to work, running a sorting machine for Berry Brothers Paints and Varnishes. Johnny will tell you that he has "lived a full life." He married a beautiful woman, and they had three children together. He is now retired, living in Detroit with his son Rick. Ninety-two years young, he remains active by singing in a local barber-shop quartet, hanging out with his friends, and humoring guys like me who want to hear his story.

The 5 Grand finally made it home on June 14th, 1945. After 78 missions she was returned to Boeing Field in Seattle for refurbish and preparation for a War Bond Tour. Employees were still able to find their signatures on and inside her.

The Seattle paper reported that Seattle City Councilman Bob Jones introduced a resolution "requesting action from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the state's congressional delegation to have the 5 Grand donated to the city." It would be used as the cornerstone for a memorial to Seattle's war effort.

Citing costs to build and maintain a memorial, officials in Seattle eventually declined to accept the aircraft from the government. The 5 Grand was transferred to Kingman Army Airfield, Arizona, where it was dismembered and melted down for scrap. With just two years from rollout to war-surplus, this Forte's memorable stories were lost to history but not to the memories of the men who flew her.



# Vowing Never to Forget: **THE ROLL OF HONOR**



Inside St Paul's Cathedral, sits the American Memorial Chapel - a space rebuilt after being destroyed in the Blitz and dedicated in its entirety to the American dead of the Second World War. At the heart of the chapel sits a huge, 500-page, leather-bound book; a roll of honour to the 28,000 Americans - from Aaberg to Zingale - stationed in the UK who gave their lives throughout the War. The book opens: "Defending freedom from the fierce assault of tyranny they shared the honor and the sacrifice. Though they died before the dawn of victory their names and deed will long be remembered where ever free men live."

President Dwight D Eisenhower visited the Chapel and the roll of honour in 1959. As the soldier who commanded the Allied troops on D-Day, he wrote: "Each name inscribed in this book is a story of personal tragedy and a grieving family; a story repeated endlessly in white crosses girdling the globe. The Americans, whose names here appear, were part of the price that free men have been forced a second time to pay in this century to defend human liberty and rights. Fittingly, this roll of honor has been enshrined by the Mother Country of all English-speaking democracies in this special chapel of St Paul's, once a target of barbaric attack. Here, we and all who shall hereafter live in freedom will be reminded that to these men and their comrades of all the Allies we owe a debt to be paid with grateful remembrance of their sacrifice and with the high resolve that the cause for which they died shall live eternally."

The leadership of the 8th Air Force Historical Society chose to reproduce the Roll of Honor, containing the names of all of those 8th Air Force members who gave their lives during WWII, and distribute it to museums throughout the US. There is just one caveat: that it be displayed in a

inert location befitting the solemnity and commanding the respect that each of the 26,000+ names deserve.

Bob Books, former Society board member and current webmaster agreed to manage the entire project, overseeing not only the printing of the book but the design and construction of the lectern as well. The result has been a beautifully hand-crafted piece which is now being proudly showcased throughout the country.

If you know of a museum wishing to proudly display the Roll of Honor, please have them contact:

**Bob Books**

**ROH@8thafhs.org**

**(912) 748-8884 ~ 8th AFHS main office**

## **Many skilled craftsmen participate in the construction of the ROH exhibit:**

**Stand:** Marv-O-Les Cabinets of Atmore, Alabama

**Laser engraved Plaque:** Pensacola Teen Challenge

**Plastic Cover:** Pensacola Creative Acrylics & Plastic

**Book:** Pensacola Evergreen Printing

**Book Cover:** Jeff Neely, Allied Binders Nashville



Marvin Beachy & Lester Huber  
are the craftsmen who build each  
stand photo Mike Strehlow



Glenn Abernathy Pensacola  
Teen Challenge



*Combat Air Museum, Topeka, KS*



*Pueblo Weisbrod Museum, Pueblo, CO*



*Planes of Fame Museum, Williams, AZ*

The Roll of Honor is proudly on exhibit with the following museums. If you are visiting in these areas, please stop in and show your appreciation for their hard work and dedication in helping preserve the legacy of the men and women of the 8th! This list continues to grow...

#### **Veterans Museum Education Center**

John A Brinkley  
30 South Saint Andrews Dr.  
Ormond Beach, FL 32174

#### **Walnut Ridge Army Flying School Museum, Inc.**

Harold Johnson  
DBA Wings of Honor Museum  
70 South Beacon Road  
Walnut Ridge, AR 72476

#### **Great Plains Wing**

Jeff Hutcheson  
CAF (Commemorative Air Force) Hangar  
Council Bluffs Airport  
101 McCandless Lane  
Council Bluffs, IA 51503

#### **Minter Field Air Museum**

M/Gen James Whitehead  
7501 Calle Nobleza  
Bakersfield, CA 93309

#### **Pueblo Weisbrod Aircraft Museum**

Shawn Kirscht  
31001 Magnuson Ave.  
Pueblo, CO 81001

#### **Combat Air Museum**

Gene Howerter  
7016 SE Forbes Avenue  
Topeka, Kansas 66619

#### **Planes of Fame Air Museum**

Karen Hinton  
7000 Merrill Avenue, #17  
Chino, CA 91710

#### **Planes of Fame Air Museum**

Bob Reed and LeeAnna Fish  
755 Mustang Way  
Williams, AZ. 86046

#### **American Airpower Museum**

Lawrence Starr  
Republic Airport (KFRG)  
1230 New Highway  
Farmingdale, NY 11735

#### **WWII Flight Training Museum**

Jim Rimes  
402 S. Peterson Ave  
Douglas, GA 31533

#### **Malmstrom Air Force Base Museum and Airpark**

Robert E Turnbow, CIV, DAF  
90 Whitehall Dr., Bldg. 102  
Malmstrom AFB, MT 59402-7538



# The Last Mission: “Powell’s Prowler”

Kristof de Geyter

It was the second mission for Pilot Perry Powell and his men.



On October 17, 1944, 1,338 Bombers and 811 fighter planes from the American 8th Air Force carry out Mission 681. The targets for this Mission are multiple marshalling yards in and around Cologne and a chemical factory in Leverkusen. A couple of hours later, the crew of one of the B-17 bombers that had dropped their bombs over Berlin would stay at the castle in Wieze.

**Back row L to R:** Thomas A. L'Estrange, Waist gunner; Clarence H. Harper, Engineer and Top Turret Gunner; Albert Aleksyn, Ball Turret Gunner; Robert H. Colgan, Radio Operator and Waist gunner; Marvin Y. Luckie, Togglier and Nose gunner. **Front row L to R:** Lt. Samuel T. Walker; Co-Pilot; Lt. Bruce E. Phelps, Bombardier; Lt. John K. Hancock, Navigator; Lt. Perry E. Powell, Pilot. **Not in this picture:** Tail gunner Leroy K. Bayless. picture: [www.398th.org](http://www.398th.org)

Their plane, “Powell’s Prowler”, named after its pilot, was damaged during their first mission, and their tail gunner, 19-year old Leroy K. Bayless, died of anoxia, lonely in his position in the back of the plane. “Powell’s Prowler” wasn’t repaired yet when they would fly their second mission on October 17. The “Betsy Ross” would be the replacement plane. This B-17 had already been on 45 missions. The 46th mission would become her last one.

At 06:33 they left their base in Nuthampstead, England, and flew in the direction of Cologne.

They were hit by German Anti-Aircraft Guns (FLAK) over Cologne. Engine number 2 was on fire and debris was flying around.

Metal parts were flying into the cockpit and into engine number 1. The instrument panel and Powell were hit. Because of this, Powell’s parachute was damaged and unusable.

In an attempt to put out the fire, Powell left the formation and dove downwards. The fire was under control, and the crew started throwing out everything that wasn’t attached to the plane. However, the plane kept losing altitude and because of the propeller rotating out of balance, it looked like the left wing would break of any moment. As soon as he was sure that they were not over enemy territory any longer, he ordered his crew to jump out of the plane with their parachutes. Powell and Samuel Walker, the co-pilot, would try to

land the plane. They were now flying over Belgium.

The crew members, who had jumped, drifted with the wind and landed somewhere between Gijzegem and Wieze. Here they were picked up and brought to the castle in Wieze. At this time, the castle was occupied by Canadian soldiers. A couple of months earlier it was being occupied by the Black Brigade. We can say for sure that the Americans wouldn’t have had a hearty welcome if the Black Brigade had still occupied the castle in October 1944.

Meanwhile, Powell and Walker were looking for a good spot to land the plane. They thought they had found one on the left bank of the river Schelde, somewhere



between Wichelen and Berlare. What looked like a nice green piece of land was in reality very marshy ground.

After a few meters, the wheels sunk in the ground and the mud flew up in the air. The Ball turret also disappeared in the mud. The airplane continued to glide this way until the nose came down and the tail went up. The plane came to a halt, and, with a big bang, the tail came down again.

Two American Mustangs, fighter planes which escorted the bombers, circled around the B-17.

When Powell and Walker crawled from the cockpit on top of the plane, they waved to the Mustangs to signal that everything was OK. The Mustangs tipped their wings and disappeared over Kalken, in the direction of England.

Marcel Janssens from Berlare remembers very well what happened that day:

“We were still in class when we heard the heavy noise of a bomber. We were already used to it but this time it sounded different. The school gates just opened when we heard that it was an American airplane that was trying to find a landing spot. When we arrived at the church, we could leave the rows of students. Somebody yelled that the plane had landed at the “Hugen Berg.” We all knew where that was, so everybody started running there. Everyone tried to find the shortest route, but it was about 2 km’s and because I was walking on wooden shoes I had to give up.”

Marcel would see the plane the day after and would spend many hours and days playing in it.

After their emergency landing, Powell and Walker were picked up and transported to the castle of Wieze, where the rest of the



*This is probably the first picture taken of the plane. Note the British soldier standing on the tail of the plane to guard it. - Picture: Marcel Janssens*

crew was already staying.

Ms. Tony Van Roy was one of the villagers of Wieze who met the men from Powell’s crew. Her father Raymond was Mayor of Wieze and Tony was working for the Red Cross in that period. She had studied in England and spoke the language fluently, so she could communicate with the Americans without any problem.

Every day she would bring them bread, milk, meat and of course a couple of beers.

The crew would spend 3 days in the castle of Wieze before they were transported back to the base of the 398th Bomber Group in Nuthampstead.

Marcel Janssens was still fascinated by the air war and Powell’s crew years after the emergency landing. It was thanks to him that in the 90’s Tony Van Roy came in contact with Gwendolyn Luckie, the sister of Marvin Luckie. Marvin was the toggler and nose gunner of Powell’s plane. In a postcard that Tony sent to Gwendolyn she called Marvin “A Luckie boy falling from the sky.”

When the crew was back at their base in Nuthampstead, Powell wrote a letter to his father in which he said: “We really plowed a farmer’s field in Belgium! I have a lot to tell when I am back home.”

Sadly enough, Powell and his men would never see their homes again.

In the meantime, “Powell’s Prowler” was repaired and the crew would fly their

own plane again. On February 3, 1945, they would fly their 22nd mission. By that time, Powell was already decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters.

John K. Hancock would be very lucky because he wouldn’t be a part of the crew on this mission.

No less than 1,437 bombers and 948 fighter planes would set course direction to Berlin. They expected heavy flak and a lot of enemy fighters.

Around 10:30 AM, about an hour before they would reach their target, fate would



*Once the plane wasn’t guarded anymore it became a playground for a lot of children. Picture: Marcel Janssens*



*In 1945 the plane was already largely looted. - Picture: Marcel Janssens*





Part of the crew and Canadian soldiers on the stairs of the castle in Wieze. The man in the middle of the picture is Thomas L'Estrange, one of the waist gunners.

**Picture:** Marcel Janssens



**Back row:** Albert Aleskyn - Robert Colgan - Marvin Luckie

**Front row:** Thomas L'Estrange - Clarence Harper

**Picture:** Marcel Janssens via Paul Crawford



Part of the crew standing on the stairs of the castle, together with a Canadian soldier. Powell is the man who is closest to the camera. **Picture:** Marcel Janssens via Paul Crawford

strike.

Prop wash from the airplanes flying too close to each other caused Powell's plane to collide with Lt. John McCormick's plane. Crewmembers of other bombers flying in their formation would later report that they didn't see any parachutes when the planes fell and disappeared in the clouds. From Powell's crew, only tail gunner Dave Bancroft would survive. Bancroft was one of the many replacements for Leroy Bayless, who was killed during Powell's first mission.

The story of his close encounter with death is gruesome. Powell's plane was broken in 2 but still hanging together with a few connections. Bancroft was alone in the rear part of the plane when he suddenly saw a pair of hands sticking up through a hole. These were probably the hands of one of the waist gunners. Bancroft tried to pull him up but the hole was too small. At that point, both parts of the plane broke off completely and the hands disappeared.

The tail section was going down in free fall and Bancroft tried to open the escape hatch. For some reason, the hatch was jammed and he started to pull, pound and slam on it. Just when he was about to give up, the hatch opened and he could jump out with his parachute.

Powell, Walker, Luckie, Phelps, L'Est range, Harper, Colgan and Aleskyn were killed. According to the MACR all of them, except for Powell, were buried by the Germans in the cemetery of Lehmke, a small village not so far from the place where their plane crashed.

Bancroft, together with John McCormick and William G. Logan, the only two survivors from the other plane, were transferred to the hospital of Luneburg. When they were healthy enough to be put on transport, they were sent to the POW camp in Oberursel.

When the Allies gained terrain and the front came closer, the POW camps were evacuated.

First, airmen were transported on trains, but Allied fighter pilots—thinking that the box cars were used to transport

German troops—attacked them. The train was bombed and many allied POWs were killed. When they continued on foot, Bancroft had another close encounter with death.

Once again, Allied fighter pilots mistook the marching POWs for German troops and attacked them. During one of the strafings, William Logan, who was walking just next to Bancroft, was killed by one of the fighter planes that used to protect him during his missions.

After the war, the remains of the men of Powell's crew were repatriated to the US and buried in their hometowns. Only Powell and Phelps are interred in Belgium where they rest at the Ardennes American Cemetery and Memorial in Neupré, close to Liege.

Bancroft would die in 1992. He never fully recovered from the injuries sustained in 1945.



Perry Powell and his wife Ellen just before he was sent to England.

**Picture:** Carol Powell Mohr

## SOURCES:

Marcel Janssens  
Rik Vermeir  
Carol Powell Mohr  
Paul Crawford  
«40-45 Boven Schelde,  
Dender en Durme»  
by Cynrick De Decker  
[www.8thafhs.com](http://www.8thafhs.com)  
[www.398th.org](http://www.398th.org)

## NYS Southern Wing Chapter

The New York State Southern Wing Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society held its Spring 2016 Luncheon/Meeting on Sunday, May 22nd, at the Holiday Inn in Plainview, Long Island, NY. It was very well attended as we welcomed several WWII veterans from all branches of the military as well as post WWII veterans and their families from several countries.

Mission 361 [May 22, 1944] as well as the missions leading up to D-Day [June 6, 1944] was the main theme, but as usual, lively discussions ensued on a variety of topics!

Ray O'Connor, author of "She Called Him Raymond," gave an emotional and dynamic presentation on his book based on his personal journey to find the truth about his namesake.

For further information on the NYS Southern Wing Chapter, and to learn how you can participate with us, please email [fxe84@optonline.net](mailto:fxe84@optonline.net) or call me, Joseph "Pat" Keeley, (973)495-3404 and always check the Chapter's website: <http://blogs.ny8thswcafhs.org/> for upcoming events and activities!

## Wisconsin Chapter

Cindy Drehmel, president Tuesday, March 1, 2016, thirty-two brave souls braved the Wisconsin snows to hear Army MSgt Ray Grabowski speak at the Eimeren-Kolonka American Legion Post 2. MSgt Grabowski served in the US Army 1971-2011. He served in the infantry 12 years, as a paratrooper for four years and moved to the Chemical Corps as a reconnaissance specialist in 1985. Later he became department head of the Incident Response Training Dept (IRTD) training DOD first responders for WMD (weapons of mass destruction).

Our group voted to change our March meeting to April starting in 2017 due

to our past experience with blizzard conditions! We hope anyone in the Wisconsin area will join with us next April, 2017 on the first Tuesday for what always promises to be a great event!

Our June 7th meeting—held at press time for this edition of the 8th A F News—promised to be an important meeting to determine the possible change or partial change of our quarterly meeting location from the 128th Air Refueling Wing in Milwaukee, to Wauwatosa Post 449. Be sure and check back in the September 2016 edition of this magazine or contact me at PO Box 370765, Milwaukee, WI 53237 to see where we will be gathering as well as join us!



*TOP: MSgt Grabowski is also the Commander of Post 27 of whom graciously opened their doors for our quarterly meetings while the 128th ARW mess/medical building was under reconstruction. We owe Commander Grabowski a great deal of gratitude. Thank you, Commander!*

*Wisconsin Chapter member, Sgt Robert "Bob" Schuh of Chilton, WI received the prestigious French Legion of Honor recently. Sgt Schuh was a member of the 398th Bomb Group, 600th Bomb Squadron and flew 35 missions as an aerial gunner, armorer gunner, toggler, waist gunner, and tail gunner in the ETO during WWII.*

*The 128th Air Refueling Wing has finished its construction of the mess hall and medical facilities where we previously held our meetings and we were the first community group invited back to the base since renovations were completed the end of February, 2016.*



# Airplanes Don't Tell Stories: The Reimagining of the American Air Museum, Duxford

By Nancy Toombs



1. Duke of Kent with Phil Mundell 306th BG and Bill Toombs 493rd BG
2. Listening to stories first hand
3. Educational outreach is highly regarded in the UK
4. Executive VP Phil Reed receives Society donation from Nancy Toombs



On March 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of this year, the American Air Museum in Duxford, part of the Imperial War Museum in the UK reopened its doors to unveil a phenomenal five year and five million dollar renovation, and I was one of the lucky ones there to experience it.

I have been very fortunate to have traveled to the UK many times over the past 10 years including two trips to Duxford. On past trips, I have enjoyed going to the American Air Museum and seeing the wonderful aircraft that are on display. Although they had several pieces of memorabilia on exhibit, for the most part, it was just another aircraft museum. When Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach and Prince Edward, the Duke of Kent unveiled the plaque to rededicate the museum, Sir Peach, in one sentence, explained why this herculean effort was undertaken. He stated “*Airplanes don't tell stories, people tell stories.*” The goal of the restoration was to not only further strengthen the relationship between the US Army Air Corp and the Royal Air Force, but to develop a plan to better tell the story of what is often referred to as “the friendly invasion.”

In 1997, the American Air Museum opened to the public to pay homage to the many airmen that sacrificed their lives over the angry skies of Europe during World War II and also ensure that those memories would always be well preserved regarding the crucial role that our airmen had played. But even immediately after it's opening, those involved in the museum were constantly thinking of ways to make improvements.

The culmination of those years of brainstorming on how to improve upon something that was already remarkable and breathtaking was partly the brainchild of Jenny Cousins (selected to be the project manager) and her crew of museum magicians. Jenny contacted the Historical Society in 2013 and explained to Debra, our managing director, that the museum was going to be adding displays to the many airplanes that were already within the museum. She had a goal that AAM would tell the story of airpower beginning in World War I all through and including the present day and needed to locate individuals and

artifacts that would help tell that story with a more personal impact. Debra encouraged her to get in touch with me as I am a collector of most all things World War II and have contact with many of the veterans who have artifacts themselves. Jenny flew to Arkansas in 2013 and met with me spending a full day going through my collection. She selected multiple items she wanted to place in the museum. I then provided her with a list of veterans whom I knew she could interview—men whom I felt had stories that were unique and would help better amplify the role of the Eighth Air Force in particular.

When Jenny came to Arkansas, she interviewed my father (William “Bill” Toombs, Sr) and also Bill McGinley as Bill had been an evadee during World War II and had the unusual history of being declared dead while hiding with the Belgium Underground. She also traveled to Kentucky and interviewed Gayle Alexander, who spent seven months as a POW; interned for two months and spent five months on the forced march to Sagan-Nurnberg-Moosburg. She also interviewed J.W. Roundhill [379<sup>th</sup> BG] and several other veterans whom I knew from my years in the Society. Little did I know that later *all* of these men would be honored by having their personal artifacts exhibited and their oral histories made available for the public to enjoy.

Dad and I, along with Debra Kujawa, Craig Dubishar and Mike Carr, all flew to the UK to be a part of the grand opening ceremonies. This was by far the most personal trip that I had ever made to the UK and also one of the proudest moments since I have been a member of the Historical Society. It is nearly indescribable to walk into the museum, see the wonderful displays, see so many familiar faces, and be able to hear their stories. The Duke of Kent, Sir Peach, and Ross Perot, Jr. greeted us with an opening ceremony where they dedicated a bronze statue of an American Color Guard to the grounds of the museum. This is the only statue of an American Color Guard that stands outside of the United States. We then went to the back of the museum where Sir Peach and the Duke of Kent unveiled the new plaque dedicating the museum and we enjoyed a flyover by current day aircraft as







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well as a 15 minute ballet by a P-51 Mustang.

This was the start of three days of renewing old friendships, enjoying great food and British hospitality, and experiencing the enormous personal feeling of pride seeing my father's name engraved on the wall of the museum and seeing his uniform on display inside a case depicting a B17 combat crew. As I looked inside the case that held the memories of those ten men, I realized that three of those men were from Arkansas, two were from the 493<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group (which is my dad's bomb group) and approximately forty percent of the contents of the case were items that at one time had been living in my home. It was an incredible moment knowing that I had kept my promise, had found a home for all the items that had been left in my safekeeping, and could once again see the faces of those veterans, many of whom have now passed away. These men...heroes all—whom I spent so many years talking with and listening to their stories—would now be forever remembered. Now, thousands of people would not just see their artifacts but hear their stories, too.

Debra lit the candle during the remembrance part of the program in honor of the Eight Air Force Historical Society. Craig and Michael took hundreds of still photographs and untold hours of video to record the events of these three days. There are 18 aircraft on display: fighters, bombers, trainers and transports. There are 850 artifacts that have never been on display previously. There are 85 individuals honored in the beautiful display cases from World War I to the present day conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Of the 85 displays, 29 Eighth Air Force men are honored in 22 separate displays.

What the American Air Museum has done is nothing less than phenomenal and is a true testament to their passion and love for

the Mighty Eighth. A huge thank you goes out to Jenny Cousins, Lucy May Maxwell, Emily Charles, Carl Weiner—the list of talented team members is lengthy—and to the leadership of the Imperial War Museum, who had the foresight to undertake this magnificent reimagining of historic preservation.

On Memorial Day, I will certainly be going through my pictures once again, to view and look at them more closely. Each time I look at the images, I see something that I missed before. Much like when you visit, it all cannot be seen in one day. You need a full day to simply enjoy the airplanes, another day to experience the exhibits and all the memorabilia, and a third day to actually listen to the oral histories—the stories, many of which are told by the individuals who are being honored. You could spend five days there and I am not sure you could see it all.

We have just passed our 71<sup>st</sup> anniversary marking the end of World War II and the opening of this grand museum certainly sets the tone for this 71<sup>st</sup> year. On June 6<sup>th</sup>, we will be marking the 72<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of D-Day. Again, what a trip it would be to spend June 6<sup>th</sup> inside this marvel of achievement. So, as you are reading this, Memorial Day will have come and gone, but rest assured that all the memories, sacrifices and contributions to freedom are in very good hands. Inside the American Air Museum in Duxford, within the safety of its doors, resides some of the most precious moments in our history. They have grandly displayed the pride of America. Some 300,600 young men served on the soil of the UK in the Mighty Eighth during World War II, 135,000 of those, flew in combat. The American Air Museum has carefully and thoughtfully selected 29 stories that I believe reflect the accomplishments, the pride, and the sacrifices of the very best that America had to give.



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5. Debra representing the Society during a moving candlelighting ceremony

6. Q & A Cold War panel

7. Jean Freeman, widow of Roger Freeman

8. L to R: Craig Dubishar, Nancy and Bill Toombs, and Michael Carr

9. Ross Perot Jr and local Councilman

10. Old and young gathered for ceremonies and celebrations

11. Sir Stuart Peach, HRH Duke of Kent, and Ross Perot, Jr. dedicating the US Color Guard Statue

*Photos by Craig Dubishar and Michael Carr*



# TAPS

**Applegate, Marvin Lenza Sr., 90**, entered the Army Air Force a few months after turning 18 years old. While in the Army Air Force he completed aircraft armament school and gunnery school. While stationed in Chelveston with the 305th Bombardment Group he completed 25 missions over Germany and occupied France in a Boeing B-17 bomber as a toggler. Marvin was awarded the Air Medal and four Oak Leaf clusters and attained the rank of Staff Sergeant. Marvin also had one year of active service with the Air Force during the Korean War, but did not see any foreign service. After the end of World War II he attended Hutchinson, KS Junior college and Kansas State College at Manhattan, KS and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from K-State in 1950. Marvin is survived by his wife, Mona.

**Casey, Donald E. Sr., 91**, a Chicago lawyer and frequent volunteer at Chicago's Pritzker Military Museum & Library, was also an author who in 2009 documented his experiences as a prisoner of war in Nazi Germany during World War II. "Don enjoyed talking to people as they came into the museum and was just this living representative of his experience during the war and the ideals of the museum and library," said Ken Clarke, the museum's president and CEO. Born in Oak Park, Don grew up in River Forest and was the son of Chicago investment banker J. Douglas Casey. He went to high school at Campion Jesuit High School, a now-closed boarding school for boys in Prairie du Chien, WI, and then attended Purdue University. While at Purdue, he enlisted in the Army Air Forces' Aviation Cadet Program during World War II. Called for active duty in February 1943,



**Marvin Lenza Applegate, Sr.,**

Don completed aerial navigation school that following October and became a navigator on B-17 Flying Fortress bombers with the 379th Bomb Group. While flying on his 28th mission in June 1944, German anti-aircraft fire shot down his plane. All nine crew members survived a parachute jump from 23,000 feet, but four were killed by civilians in Hamburg, Germany, according to Casey's book, "To Fight for My Country, Sir!" Don and the other four were cap-

tured by the Nazis and transported under armed guard to prisoner-of-war camps in Poland and then Bavaria. He and fellow prisoners were liberated by Gen. George Patton's Third Army in April 1945. After the war, Don received an undergraduate degree in economics from Dartmouth College in 1948. He worked in investment banking in New York and Denver before returning to Chicago, where he worked for three years for an insurance company. During that time, Don attended the Loyola University School of Law in the evenings, earning a law degree in 1957. Don went into private law practice, focusing on litigation, transactional work and insurance defense.

Don became active in meetings with veterans from around the country and began editing a newsletter for veterans of the 379th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force. "It was phenomenal to everybody around him that Don would take the bus or get a ride downtown in his late 80s and into his 90s and treat his volunteer post like a real job," Clarke said. "His family would say, 'Let's go do this,' and he'd say, 'No, I have my shift at the Pritzker.' He just took it so seriously." Casey was a member of the Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton from 1951 until his death and had served as the club's president from 1972 until 1973. He also had been very involved in the club's 100th anniversary celebration in 1992; served as the president of the Chicago Athletic Association and as the director of the Western Golf Association. Don was a long time member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and was serving on the Board of Directors when he passed away.

**Campbell, William A., 91**, volun-

teered for military service at 18 years old and served with distinction as a Gunner in the European Theater of World War II. It was during a mission with the 8th Army Air Corps aboard a B-24 Liberator that Bill was wounded by enemy anti-aircraft fire on 12 October 1944. In addition to seeing combat action in the European Theater with the 458th and 466th Bomb Groups, Bill was also stationed in Florida, Utah, and Kansas. After receiving an honorable discharge, Bill returned to Massachusetts and worked as a jet engine developer with General Electric. Bill enjoyed time with his wife, collectibles, and traveling the world. Bill also returned to England many times, always making it a point to get some fish and chips. Bill was an avid member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and a staunch supporter of the Massachusetts Chapter of the Disabled American Veterans organization. Cowen, James L., 90, survived by his wife, Muriel. James was born in Boston, proudly served in the 493rd BG, 8th Army Air Force during WWII and was a Harvard graduate. He was Chief Actuary for the Railroad Retirement Board and ultimately received a presidential appointment to be the Chairman of the Board.

**Darby, Capt. Samuel A.**, passed away peacefully 10 days before his 93rd birthday on March 5, 2016. Former 8th AFHS,



**Samuel A. Darby**

Oregon Chapter member. He was with the 452nd BG, 729th & 730th SQ & HQ and served as a B-17 navigator/bombardier flying 40 missions over Europe. He wore many hats during his lifetime including pilot, cancer survivor, veteran, teacher, coach, farmer, world traveler, father and grandfather. Sam grew up in San Antonio, the fourth of five children. While his family did not have a lot of money, there

was much love. Enlisting in the Army Air Corps during World War II, he wanted to be a pilot, but heard that he could get into a plane much faster as a navigator. He eventually served as the lead navigator/bombardier in his squadron of B-17s, and flew 40 missions over Europe. Sam stayed in the service after the war and eventually did get to pilot training after the war, flying B-52s. He was stationed at Castle Air Force Base on temporary duty for six months in 1952, and stayed for 40 years. In 1957, doctors gave Sam six months to live due to testicular cancer. He was forced to retire from the

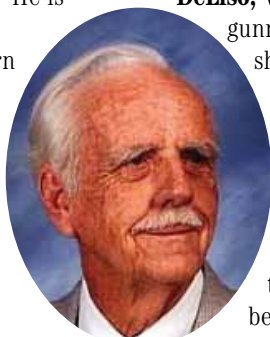


**Donald E. Casey Sr.**

Air Force, so he enrolled at UC Berkeley and earned a teaching credential. Starting in 1958, Sam taught algebra and counseled students for more than 25 years at Atwater High School, and coached football for many seasons. In the summer, he farmed a small almond orchard. Sam also gave his time to the First Methodist Church in Atwater where he volunteered in a number of positions, and he helped start the Castle Air Museum. He was very proud of the fact that he could still wear his World War II flight jacket after more than 50 years. He is survived by his wife, Carolyn.

**Dubose, Carl L. Jr., 93**, was born in Gonzales, TX. Carl graduated from Gonzales High School in 1939 at age 16 and with money from a job making \$1/day, he enrolled at Southwest Texas State Teacher's College. After a year, he ran out of money and followed a traveling beekeeper to Red Wing, MN and worked tending bees for a year. He returned to college and earned his Bachelors of Science and later a Master's in Education. Wanting desperately to be a pilot, Carl enlisted in the Army Air Corps in June 1942. He was called to active duty in 1943 and piloted B-17 aircraft during World War II. He flew 36 missions over Germany with the 303rd BG and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, ETO Ribbon with three bronze stars, Victory Medal, and EAME Medal. In 1947, Carl married the love of his life, Angele, and the two of them moved to Bloomington where he taught math and science, coached various sports and became principal of Bloomington High School. He attended many reunions and his former students and loved and admired him. In 1964, the family moved to Victoria, where Carl took a position at Victoria College, teaching chemistry and math. He eventually became dean of the Night School and Vocational Programs. He was instrumental in helping the nursing program grow and expand at the college. A true nature lover, Carl loved tending his small herd of cattle, growing an impressive garden and keeping his mind acute with crossword puzzles, dominoes and bridge. He was a member of the Victoria Northside Rotary Club, serv-

ing as president and treasurer for many years. He was a fixture backstage for over 25 years at all of the Victoria Ballet productions, working with the crew and his friend Bill Busby. Carl was also a Freemason and a member of First Methodist Church. He continued in the Air Force Reserves, retiring in 1983 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He and his wife later became active in the 303rd bomb group reunions and he served as president of the group for a year. He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Angele.



**Carl L. Dubose Jr.**



**Vincent DeLiso**

**DeLiso, Vincent A., 92**, was the tail gunner on a B-17 bomber that was shot down Nov. 26, 1944. Three crewmen died immediately when the plane was hit, and the pilot gave orders for the others to jump out. DeLiso and ball turret gunner Ray Leal jumped, but not before telling the captain that they'd been through worse and probably could wing it to safety, according to Herald archives. DeLiso was separated from Leal during their descent. He ended up in a tree and was taken captive by the Gestapo, who beat him with their rifle butts and forced him to walk for miles. DeLiso and Leal were reunited after being herded by German soldiers into a boxcar for Allied prisoners. They were shuffled together from one prisoner-of-war camp to another over the next several months. DeLiso was imprisoned for eight months, losing

65 pounds. He was marched for 87 days across the Baltic coast of Germany through a record-cold winter by SS officers trying to flee advancing Russian forces. They eventually were rescued by Canadians, and DeLiso received two Purple Hearts. DeLiso and Leal remained friends until Leal died in 2011. He returned to Europe in 1993 for a 50-year reunion of the 427th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group. The visit led to a reunion with members of the Green family, whom DeLiso had befriended in Wigan, England, during the war. The next year, four of the five sisters came to the United States, where DeLiso and his wife, Claudine, led them on a five-week tour of the western United States and Canada.

**Durso, Peter S. 93, "Pete"** joined his loving wife in heaven just six days after his 93rd birthday. There will be a Celebration

of Life service at his earthly house of worship, Southern Hills Baptist Church, 8601 S. Pennsylvania Avenue, Oklahoma City, OK 73159 on May the 28th at 2:00pm. Friends and family are invited. Pete was born in Brooklyn, NY to immigrant parents Salvatore and Natalina Durso. He joined the US Army Air Corps in 1943 and fought with bravery in WWII. He received a Certificate of Recognition in 2002 from then Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld for his service to the USA during the Cold War (1945-1991). He flew several mercy missions as WWII was ending which lead to his being awarded the French Legion of Honor Medal in September of 2015 by the French Ambassador. Pete retired as a Major from the US Air Force in 1983 after serving 40 years. It was during his early Air Force training that he was stationed in Ada, Oklahoma and there he met Doris J. Jones who would become his bride. They were 2 months shy of their 69th anniversary when Doris passed away in 2014. Pete and Doris owned their own business in Pauls Valley, OK, where they were agents for Atlas Van Lines, Inc. for 31 years. Pete was a graduate of Long Island University, with a BA in Business Administration. Pete served his country and community through numerous service organizations. He was a member of the International Order of the Odd Fellows (55 years). He served as a Pauls Valley City Councilman for 16 years. He also held many positions in civic service: he was a member of the Southern Oklahoma Development Association (SODA), Pauls Valley and Garvin County Civil Defense Manager and received a Governors Commendation for 20 years of service. He was the Garvin County Emergency Management Director for over 20 years and achieved professional certification as an Oklahoma Emergency Manager. In 2009 the Durso's retired to Oklahoma City. Pete is survived by his four children: Carole (Forrest) LaRue of Choctaw, OK, Sal (Diane) Durso of Phoenix, AZ, Cathy (Steve) Howerton of Huntington, WV, and Andrea (Johnny) Riddle of Keller, TX. His grandchildren include Laura LaRue of Edmond, OK, Lance (Carrie) LaRue of Choctaw, OK, David and Elizabeth Durso of Phoenix, AZ, Jesse, Seth, and William Howerton of Huntington, WV, and great-grandchildren Sierra Brown of Edmond and Jacob and Lauryn LaRue of Choctaw. He is also survived by his sister Anna Mastellone of Long Island, NY, and nephews James Mastellone and Tom



(Carol) Mastellone and one niece Jean Pappaeliou all of New York.

**Firestone, Abraham Joseph Zeeland**, passed on April 9, 2016. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, "the love of my life," Ernestine. He grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y. After joining the Army Air Corp, Abe came to Newport News as a flight officer, assigned to Langley AFB, in preparation for duty in England during WWII While assigned to Langley Field, during the Jewish Holidays, William Morgenstern, the father of Ernestine Morgenstern (Firestone), invited the young officer to come to Rodef Sholom Temple to participate in holiday services. Here, he met his future bride, Ernestine. At the end of the war, Abe returned to Newport News, where he married Ernestine. Abe was the recipient of multiple medals, including two Distinguished Flying Crosses (B-17 Bomber, 34th Bomb Group, Lead Pathfinder aircraft), husband, father, mentor, benefactor and successful businessman.

**Fitzhugh, Richard E.**, 93, proudly served in the Army Air Corps and United States Air Force during a 30 year career as a B-17 Flying Fortress pilot, 457th BG, in World War II and B-52 pilot and commander during the Viet Nam war. He had the distinct honor and privilege of being Sir Winston Churchill's pilot following World War II. He was married to Alice.

**Gates, Edmund Jr.**, 96, graduated from the eighth grade at Woodland School (located in the Big Bend) and completed high school at Burbank High School in 1938. Less than two weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Edmund enlisted in the Army Air Corps. Beginning in November of 1942, Edmund flew 25 combat missions into occupied Europe with the 8th Air Force, serving as a top turret gunner and flight engineer on a B17. The first half of these missions was flown without fighter escort relying only on high altitude



**Abraham Firestone**



**James W. Hyland, Jr.**



**Richard E. Fitzhugh**



**Edmund Gates, Jr.**

and close formation for protection. He flew those missions with the 305th Bomb Group and the 92nd Bomb Group. Then under the leadership of Major Fred A. Rabo, the pilot with whom he flew most of his 25 missions, Edmund became a part of the 482nd Bomb Group, dubbed "Pathfinder." He was awarded three Oak Leaf Clusters and the

Distinguished Flying Cross, achieving the rank of technical sergeant. "Okie Over Europe,"

Edmund's World War II experiences, written in collaboration with his daughter, Bernadean, was published three months prior to his death. He married Bernyce Smith on March 4, 1948, in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

**Hyland, James W. Jr.**, 92, of Maumee, a decorated World War II Army Air Corps veteran and German prisoner of war who had a successful career as

a chemical engineer. Mr. Hyland was a navigator on a B-17 that was shot down in 1944 while on his 30th combat mission from England over Merseburg, Germany. He was a second lieutenant assigned to the 8th Air Force's 487th Bomb Group. Of the nine crew members, only

Mr. Hyland and the bombardier survived. Mr. Hyland spoke German with the farmer who found him and credited his captor for interceding with soldiers who wanted to shoot him because he had a broken leg. He was held near Leipzig, Germany, until he was liberated in April, 1945. He was awarded the Air Medal with five clusters, Purple Heart, Presidential Citation, and the POW Medal. Born Aug. 8, 1923, to James W. and Helen

Hyland, Mr. Hyland returned to his Cleveland home after the war, then graduated from the University of Iowa in 1948 with a degree in chemical engineering. Mr. Hyland and his wife of 67 years, Marian, organized a chapter of the American Field Service

at Maumee High School to facilitate the exchange of foreign students and to send students abroad for studies.

**Johnson, Richard Riley**, 94, joined the Army Air Force in 1942. He was a B-17 pilot during World War II, flying 32 missions over Germany with two of those missions on D-Day. After the war he was a flight instructor for the Army Air Force but returned to civilian life after the war ended where he moved first to Norfolk, Virginia then to Deale, Maryland in 1946. He was a contract painter in the Annapolis area for over 50 years working on many of the historic homes in Annapolis such as The Hammond Harwood House and The Paca House. He continued his interest and involvement in Aviation and was an officer in the Maryland Wing of the Civil Air Patrol in the 60s and 70s. He served in several capacities of the 303rd Bomb Group Association before becoming President and he and his wife, Marjorie, traveled year-after-year to the group's annual reunions. His book entitled "Twenty-five Milk Runs" chronicles his life as the son of migrant farm workers, his time during the war, and his family life in and around Deale. He leaves behind his wife of 61 years, Marjorie.

**MacVicar, 1st Lt. William "Bill"**, 91, enlisted in the Aviation Cadet Program of the Army Air Corps on his eighteenth birthday and was trained as a pilot. In 1944, he joined the 390th Bomb Group (Heavy), 569th Bomb Squadron of the 8th Army Air Corps in Framlingham, England and flew 16 missions as a B-17 copilot. He earned a Purple Heart after becoming seriously wounded during his second mission. He proudly participated in Operation Chow Hound when food was dropped to the Dutch at the end of the war. After his discharge, he attended Harvard and graduated with a degree in economics in 1949. In 1987, he became active in the 390th Bomb Group Veterans Association serving as its president from 2004 to its dissolution in

2012. He was both a board member and a supporter of the 390th Memorial Museum in Tucson, Arizona. He is survived by his wife, Kathy.

**Miller, Richard (Dick)**

**Charles**, 92, served as a B-17 ball-turret gunner with the 303rd Bomb Group, 8th US Army Air Corps during WWII. He was shot down near Schweinfurt Germany and spent 15 months in four German



**Richard Miller**

POW camps. He was liberated May 1945, sent to an army hospital in France for several weeks and flown home in June 1945. Dick was honorably discharged as a Master Sergeant and was always very proud of his country. August 7, 1945, after serving his country, Dick married his high school sweetheart, Betty (Schumacher), in Bremen Indiana. His life was enriched with many friends who will remember him for his humor and generosity.

**Peterson, Stanley Arnold**, 96, enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1941 and served as a Lieutenant in 96th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force as a navigator on a B-17, successfully completing his 25 missions. He thankfully survived his B-17 being shot up on a 1943 New Year's Eve bombing run to Paris, and the first daylight bombing run to Berlin. He was awarded several commendations for his service, including The Distinguished Flying Cross and The French Legion of Honor. He returned home to finish his college career in 1945 at St. Olaf College, where he met Lois (Evensen) Peterson, with whom he shared 61 years of marriage, until her passing in 2009. Lois and Stan lived in the Chicago area for 30 years, where Stan was a stock broker. They then moved to Wellington in 1982 to be near their daughters, where Stan resided until moving to McKeen Towers in 2012. Stan was a member of The Old Guard Society of Golfers, The Beach Club, Mayacoo Lakes Country Club, and The Union League Club of Chicago, as well as being a proud member of the VFW, Masons and a Shriner. Stan is survived by his daughters, Nancy Severson (John) and Cathy Duncan (Doug), both of West Palm Beach.

**Raymond, George K.**, 95, worked for the Burlington Northern Railroad (formerly CB&Q Railroad) for 43 years, before retiring in 1981. He was most proud of his ser-



**Melvin Rector**



**Stanley Peterson**



**George Raymond**



**Joe Sarina**

vice in the United States Army Air Corps, 457th Bomb Group in World War II as an Airplane Armorer Gunner, including the ball turret, and for which he received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Oak Leaf Clusters, and Air Medal. George volunteered for extra combat missions and flew in a total of 30 missions.

**Rector, Melvin**, 94, from Barefoot Bay, FL died after visiting the Battle of Briton bunker at the former RAF base in Uxbridge.

He was traveling with a group from the US on the Masters of the Air Tour. Melvin served with the 96th BG based out of Snetterton-Heath in Norfolk. On May 18th, a special service of remembrance was arranged, including representatives from the RAF, a guard of honour and a flag from the American Embassy.

**Sarina, Joe**, 93, was the first of five children born to Josephine and Louis Sarina, Swiss immigrants from Canton Ticino, Switzerland. After graduation, he worked at the United States Navy Ship Yard in Long Beach before being inducted into the United States Army Air Corp. He served with the 493rd Bomb Group stationed at Debach, England where he was the engineer and top turret gunner on B-17 and B-24's. He flew missions over Germany from his enlistment until the end of the war in 1945.

**Shillito, Barry J.**, 95, was a fighter and bomber pilot with the 445th BG in the 8th Army Air Corps. He was shot down in December 1943 and remained a Prisoner of War in Germany until the completion of hostilities. While a POW he was active in many unsuccessful escape activities. After WWII, Mr. Shillito went to Wright Field in Dayton where he became responsible

for all of the Air Force Fighter Fire Control Systems. In 1954 he left Wright Field to go to Hughes Aircraft (Los Angeles) as Director of Material, later Director of Sales. In the late 1950s and at the request of Noah Dietrich (principal architect of

the Hughes Empire), Shillito left Hughes Aircraft and joined Dietrich in acquiring Houston Fearless Corporation-a conglomerate in Los Angeles. He was President and CEO of Houston Fearless. In 1961 Shillito was asked to move to Washington, D.C. by the Kennedy Administration and Charles Kelstadt, Chairman of Sears and Roebuck Company to start Logistics Management Institute. Over 100 research studies on national security and government were conducted under Shillito's leadership. The company continues to be a prime logistic research company. Shillito continued to serve as a director emeritus on the board. At the height of the Vietnam conflict Shillito was asked to become Assistant Secretary of the Navy by Paul Ignatius, (Secretary) and Clark Clifford, Secretary of Defense. After the 1968 election, it was Shillito's plan to return to civilian life.

This was derailed by the incoming Nixon administration, specifically Melvin Laird (Secretary) and David Packard (Deputy Secretary). They asked Shillito to become Assistant Secretary of Defense. In this position he held defense-wide responsibility for all policy and monetary decisions related to acquisitions, installations, housing, supply, warehousing, transportation and maintenance. More importantly, since this was during the height of the Vietnam War it required Shillito to visit Vietnam regularly to ensure that the more than 480 ships and the operational/supply pipeline for our troops was maintained properly. After leaving the Department of Defense in 1973, Shillito and family moved to San Diego, to become President of the Ryan Companies, a subsidiary of Teledyne. Approximately four months after arriving in San Diego, Shillito became a close friend of Andy Borthwick, then President of the San Diego Zoo. Shortly thereafter, Borthwick insisted that the Department of Defense protect a Blue Grizzly Bear cub, that was on a military base in Kodiak Alaska. His persistence led Shillito to have a Military Reserve training plane pick up the bear and bring it to the San Diego Zoo. The Zoo eventually named the bear 'Blue Barry'. In 1977, Shillito was asked to become a Teledyne Officer and establish the company's first corporate presence to include all of its 136 companies in the Washington DC area. This led to residences in San Diego and Washington, D.C. and a life of traveling as he became involved in the Corporation's international affairs and eventually he



# TAPS

became Chairman of the Board of Teledyne International. Since leaving Teledyne in 1986, Shillito was involved in a number of startup companies and/or Board of Directors throughout the US, to include Defense Management College, Board Member of Small Business Advisory Council, National Alliance of Businessmen, San Diego Chamber of Commerce, Holiday Bowl, and United Way. He is survived by his wife, Eileen.

**Shook, Clyde Richard**, 89, was a veteran of the U.S. Army Air Force, 452nd BG, serving during WWII from 1944 to 1945 and retired from the U.S. Army Reserves in 1986 with the rank of colonel. Mr. Shook also retired from the NC Highway Patrol as first sergeant. He was charter member of the Lutheran Church of the Atonement in Wilkesboro and was an active member of Christ Lutheran Church in Jonesville. Mr. Shook was a past company commander of the VFW Post 1142 and a past board member of the Surry County Mental Health Board.

**Titus, Ross Paul**, 91, became a broadcast engineer at the radio station for the University of Illinois (the predecessor for PBS). In 1943 he entered the Army Air Corps and was trained as a radio operator. In basic training he became the squadron boxing champion. Ross was stationed with the most active bomb group, the 379th Bomb Group in Kimbolton, England, and flew 35 missions over Germany. He initially was a ball turret gunner on the B-17. Later, he was the radio operator and waist gunner. His plane was shot down on one raid, losing the bombardier. Following the war, Ross obtained a master's degree in history at the University of Illinois and majored in Russian history since the Cold War had now begun. In college, Ross met Marion Chandler and they later married, sharing over 60 years together. After a brief stint as an analyst for the CIA, Ross entered the Diplomatic Service as a Foreign Service officer. Stationed initially at St. John's, Newfoundland, Ross



**Clyde Richard Shook**



**Ross Paul Titus**



**Robert Voss**

and Marion spent the rest of his career in the Eastern Bloc countries Yugoslavia, Hungary and Poland interspersed with short stints in Washington, D.C. Ross spoke those three languages fluently as well as Russian.

**Voss, Robert H Colonel USAF [Ret.]**, 93, began his 33 year Air Force career as a B-17 Pilot. He flew out of Bury St. Edmunds with the 94th BG, 332 Sq., mostly aboard the "Dorothy V," named for his wife of 72 years, Dorothy, "Dottie," who survives him along with other family members. Robert flew 35 missions which earned him membership in The Lucky Bastards Club. Bob was awarded the Air Medal with 5 oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation and Meritorious Service medals, Air Force Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, and most recently, the French Legion of Honor. He was a steadfast guardian of all the crews in his life and truly loved the United States Air Force. In his retirement he served as President of the 94thBG Assoc. and as head of their Search and Rescue. Robert is greatly missed by his family and would want us to say farewell to all members of "the Mighty Eighth!"

**Ward, 1st Lt. Lawrence**, passed away on December 22, 2014. He was a bombardier with the 100th Bomb Group, 351st Bomb Squadron, 8th Army Air Corps. **Waymire, James Leonard**, 91, was a life member of the Oregon Chapter of the 8th AFHS and lifelong Oregonian. He attended Marysville Elementary School and later graduated from Benson Polytechnic High School in 1944. He then served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during WWII. He trained as an armor gunner, serving as a waist and tail gunner on B-17s with the 91st BG, 323 SQ while stationed at Bassingbourn Airfield north of London. Once the war was over, he returned to Portland. He married Ronnie Livengood June 28, 1946, at St. Stephen's Cathedral. Around this time, he also began his career as a home builder. He would eventually build around 300 homes in the Milwaukie and Gladstone area, includ-

ing his own home that he built in 1961 in Milwaukie. He was preceded in death by his wife; three brothers; and son, Christopher.

## RED, WHITE AND BLUE

### LaVern Peters 389th BG

A Memorial Day tribute to all Veterans and those military men and women presently serving our country

We have been named the greatest generation, the Veterans of World War II.

So many died to preserve the freedom, for the red, white and blue.

Freedom is never free,  
nor will it ever be  
But there will always be defenders,  
who serve like you and me.

There's not one among us, who doesn't  
feel the tingle when Old Glory passes by,  
And solemnly stand and salute her each  
time she's raised on high.

We pass the flag of freedom,  
to generations yet to come  
Many may not honor her, but surely,  
there will be some.

We know they will protect her, hold  
her high in tribute everyday  
As generations that came before us,  
fought to honor and protect her  
To preserve the freedom we have today.

To always fight and protect her, and  
the nation she stands for  
Though some may trample her, as  
some have done before.

May we never fail to protect our flag,  
in peace as in war  
May she always stand for freedom, as  
she has in years before.

For our flag is not a piece of cloth, to  
be trampled, defaced and burned  
Defending her and protecting her,  
should be everyone's concern.

May God forever bless our flag, the  
red, white and blue.

# FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR

Manny Abrams	392nd BG	Robert Gross	34th BG	William J O'Leary	384th BG
Stewart Ackerman	303rd BG	Joseph "Joe" Gualano	493rd BG	Allen G Ostrom	398th BG
Jay D Allen	94th BG	Rudolph "Rudy" Guerrero	493rd BG	Frank D Perez	401st BG
Ed Anderson	453rd BG	Carl Gustafson	453rd BG	LaVerne Peters	389th BG
Richard Andrews	379th BG	Russell W Gustafson	452nd BG	Stanley Peterson	96th BG
Albert Audette	385th BG	Paul C Haedike	452nd BG	Anthony W Pircio	7th PRG
George W Bachmann, Jr	306th BG	Percival L Hanson	305th BG	Wilmer "Will" Plate	489th BG
Orville Baker	445th BG	Haas M Hargrave	493rd BG	Michael H Prestia	452nd BG
Willis Barney	379th BG	Alfred B Harris	390th BG	Vincent J "Bill" Purple	379th BG
William Becker	492nd BG	Robert B Hastie	95th BG	Walter "Mike" Quering	487th BG
Richard L "Dick" Bedford	353rd FG	Robert Haynes	493rd BG	Albert Rapvano	466th BG
Sheldon Beigel	306th BG	Robert Hecker	401st BG	Joseph H Reus	445th BG
Caesar J Benigno	452nd BG	Walter Hendricks	452nd BG	George Roberts	306th BG
Nelson Berger	100th BG	John R Hildebran	453rd BG	William L "Bill" Roche	452nd BG
Tony Bezer	490th BG	Robert H Hitchcock	303rd BG	J Warren Roundhill	379th BG
Leo S Bielinski	44th BG	Bill Holden	1st B RNR	Bradford Saivetz	305th BG
William D Bodiford	487th BG	Don Holmes	458th BG	Frank N Schaeffer	44th BG
August C Bolino	388th BG	Dewey A Holst	448th BG	Carmen Schiavoni	447th BG
Gordon Breeding	34th BG	Theodore C "Ted" Hood	306th BG	Robert Schuberg	306th BG
Carl F Brown, Jr	4th FG	James Howell	447th BG	Bob Schuh	398th BG
Dudley Brown	94th BG	Jake Howland	Unknown	Horace Shankwiler	445th BG
Joe Burdis	388th BG	Jack C Hubbard	306th BG	Marvin Silbersher	447th BG
Donald Casey	379th BG	Albion Kenneth Hutcherson	95th BG	Taffe Simon	445th BG
Clarence F Cherry	100th BG	Joseph O Ingram, Jr	96th BG	Harold Smith	448th BG
John Chopelas	452nd BG	Bennie L Jefferies	306th BG	Heber H Smith	94th BG
Samuel Christiano	18th Weather SQ	Arthur Jenkins	390th BG	Samuel W Smith	303rd BG
Murray Codman	447th BG	David Johnson	1st B RNR	Christopher Spagnola	44th BG
Myron Cohen	91st BG	Martin Jordan	351st BG	Colin D Storey	94th BG
Paul J Collins	447th BG	Jay Karpin	493rd BG	William E Stovall	390th BG
Joseph Connaughton	319th BG	John Katsaros	401st BG	Herman Stroupe	390th BG
Marbury L Councell, Jr	96th BG	Samuel Katz	389th BG	Walter Sturdivan	34th BG
Thomas L Creekmore	305th BG	George H Keating	452nd BG	John S Swarts	351st BG
Howard Croner	452nd BG	Victor Keech	1st B RNR	John Roger Swihart	388th BG
Robert Culp	100th BG	Perry Kerr	466th BG	William M "Bill" Thorns	96th BG
John F Curcio	458th BG	Michael D Kindya	385th BG	William C "Bill" Toombs, Sr	493rd BG
Wayne Davis	452nd BG	James King	1st B RNR	William "Bill" Varnedoe	385th BG
Steve de Pyssler	VIII Bomber Command	Carroll F Knutson	447th BG	Jay Walker	384th B
Eddie Deerfield	303rd BG	Ralph J Kurka	93rd BG	James H Walston, Jr	466th BG
Harold L Dietz	466th BG	Herbert J Kwart	381st BG	Douglas J Ward	305th BG
Donald A D'Lugos	466th BG	Dean C Larson	401st BG	Charles Warren	351st BG
Norman R Dunphe	448th BG	Mathias J Leupold	385th BG	Earl E Wassom	466th BG
George Durgin	493rd BG	Donald D Levine	453rd BG	Billy D Welch	361st FG
Peter Durso	493rd BG	Richard B "Dick" Lewis	493rd BG	John M Williams	448th BG
Alfred Dusey	447th BG	George R Leyva	351st BG	Lawrence Wolfson	493rd BG
Harold Dwyer	34th BG	Robert M Littlefield	55th FG	Richard P Woodson, III	96th BG
Don Echols	458th BG	Robert "Bob" Livingston	351st BG	James Zographos	388th BG
Stanley Edelman	351st BG	Stan Loftsgard	493rd BG		
William "Bill" Eisenhart	303rd BG	Ken Mason	1st B RNR		
Dr. James Facos	388th BG	Hugh McGinty	379th BG		
Joseph Fischer	94th BG	Jay McIntosh	94th BG		
Joel Friedman	34th BG	Russell Madsen	100th BG		
James E Frolking	479th FG	Elmo Maiden	466th BG		
Frank Gaccione	7th Photo Recon	David Marshall	381st BG		
Joseph Garber	96th BG	William Massey	401st BG		
Ted Gary	493rd BG	Walter M "Boots" Mayberry	388th BG		
William Gerecitano	388th BG	Julius M Micek	381st BG		
Albert Gese	20th FG	James Mikusi	447th BG		
Dr. C W "Bill" Getz	491st BG/2AD SF	Charles Mills	492nd BG		
Reuben Glazer	445th BG	E E "Mitch" Mischler	94th BG		
Hewitt B Gomez	492nd BG	Kenneth Moulden	448th BG		
Sidney Grant	493rd BG	Clayton A Nattier	306th BG		
Charles J Greenough	379th BG	William J "Bill" Nevitt	353rd FG		

\* 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



## B17 FLYING FORTRESS RESTORATION

by **Jerome J. McLaughlin**  
**Publisher: Dudley Court Press**  
**(15 June 2016)**  
**Language: English**  
**ISBN-10: 1940013259**  
**ISBN-13: 978-1940013251**  
**\$24.95**

On 12/12/2008, Dr. Dik Daso, curator of the National Air and Space Museum emailed Dr. Walter Brown, then president and CEO of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. The B17 was ready. "Come and get her." That was the beginning of a six plus year extensive restoration project.

Jerry McLaughlin, the author, was a retired executive level manager in the intelligence community in the Washington D.C. area. He was chosen as project manager. Jerry had no experience in restorations and was chosen for his executive and leadership skills. Jerry went to Virginia with Marshall Brooks, a longtime friend and museum volunteer. Jimmy Grismer, assistant project manager, was due to make the trip as well but was ill. Jerry and Marshall made arrangements to bring the plane, B17G tail number 44-83814 to the 8th AF museum. The fuselage arrived on 1/15/2009.

Bob Mikash, a friend of Marshall Brooks and retired curator at the National Museum of Air and Space, had written a book on aircraft restoration. He listed four fundamentals for a successful restoration:

1. The plane needs to be inside.
2. A system of firm and stable management needs to be established from beginning to end and a chain of command needs to be put in place.
3. There must be a process to raise money.
4. Local aviation, industrial and technical resources need to be available and recruited.

With these fundamentals in mind. Jerry and his first group of volunteers started the project. Two and eventually four teams

each with a crew chief were organized. Each team had specific projects and goals.

The plane had been stored in a drafty hanger for more than 25 years. The first job was cleaning the B17. It took 40 people a full year using hard labor

and sophisticated cleaning machinery.

After this first project, Jerry details subsequent parts of the reconstruction. Each area of the project that was tackled and the problems that arose from 2009 until 2015 were discussed. The companies who provided expertise, material, and skilled technicians were described. Private individuals who helped with special problems and lent their unique talents to the restoration were also mentioned and their contributions fully discussed.

At its dedication on January 28, 2015, Jerry McLaughlin noted that during the six year restoration, 150 volunteers had served and a total of 45,000 hours were needed. The National Museum of the Eighth Air Force had arguably the best static display B17 restoration in the world. Our bird, "The City of Savannah" was the only static restoration with working flaps, turrets, bomb bay, and radio room.

I found Jerry's book to be well organized, extremely interesting, well written, and easy to follow. There were many photographs which illustrated various parts of the restoration. I especially appreciated that the volunteer or technician who worked on the plane told the story of how a part was replicated or repaired in his own words.

I recommend this excellent book to anyone interested in B17s, aircraft restoration, or World War II history.

Charles Sitrin President, Birthplace Chapter 8th AFHS.

## FLYING FORTS AND TALL DUTCH TULIPS: A YEAR AT WAR

By **Jill Bateman**  
**Paperback: 180 pages**  
**Published 2016**  
**ISBN 978-1-4951-8053-8**  
**\$15.99**

Picture a house in war-weary Netherlands... A large brick house with attic gables high above the street. A house standing stoically, quiet and still among its gardens of tall tulips.

On the black night of 29 April 1944, not a soul in the tiny village of Ellecom suspected that within the house's sturdy walls slept not only a Dutch family of four and a German army medical staff, but also three hidden Jews and an American B-17 bomber pilot on the run.

Earlier that morning... At 04:00 hours, Dien Bosman, a Dutch innkeeper, had started her day carefully tiptoeing down steep wooden steps. By candlelight, she stole coal the Germans stored in her cellar.

Spring nights were bitter, and the heating stove in the attic room where her teenaged daughters slept gobbled up coal, as did her iron cookstove.

At 0720 hours, a B-17 from the 401st BG roared into the English mist from Deenethorpe's runway 33. Pilot 2Lt. Donald Earl Butterfoss — better known as Butter — then began a dangerous dance, coiling The Saint and Ten Sinners into formation with more than 750 Flying Fortresses and Liberators. The hundred-milelong bomber stream flew east — the largest American strike on Germany so far.

By 08:00 hours, Joop Levie, a 21-year old Dutch Jood, reluctantly opened his eyes... only to find the same attic walls staring at him. They had protected him for more than a year. But they still felt like a prison. If only the Allied invasion would start!

This is the true account of how war twisted these lives together and the trials and tribulations that followed them in the last year of WWII... Death threats from traitorous Dutch SS Jood-catchers for Dien and her family.

Interrogations, Stalag Luft III's frigid Blizzard March, and hellish bombing at the Nuremberg stalag for Butter. Incarceration at SS transit camp Westerbork for the Levies

and a timely escape.

What started out as a simple family story for Butter's great-grandsons unexpectedly turned out to be an "intriguing and tense" testimony to the guts and bravery of the aircrews of the Army Air Corps, a hot bed of Dutch resistors in Holland's Gelderland Province, and Dutch Jood determined to survive the Holocaust.

The author finds it interesting that adults are claiming this book as theirs, with its "technical" descriptions of a B-17 bombing mission — while at the same time, Pennsylvania fifth-graders proudly proclaim to have read it twice and have even been caught walking blindly down school hallways with noses glued in the book.

Flying Forts is available on Amazon. But the author would be delighted to write a personal note in the book if you order it directly from Maple Avenue Press at [mapleavenuypress@gmail.com](mailto:mapleavenuypress@gmail.com) or by calling 717-898-2985.



## AN ENDURING ICON

**W**hen I was a 3rd grader in school during the Great Depression, my dad was fortunate enough to find a job....it meant pulling up stakes from our family ties and moving to the far-western part of Oklahoma, out in the panhandle area, to a little town called Vici. Abject poverty was prevalent throughout the area. Further west from Vici was another wide-spot-in-the-road, a small Texas town called Cactus (yes, it does have a USPS area code). Cactus, Texas was impoverished in the 1920's and across decades, little has changed. Population-wise, it is a very diversified town. It has a Christian Ministry that sits across the highway from an enormous meat-packing plant, the town's main employer and tucked behind it, a Family Dollar discount store.

Cactus is home to over 3,700 people with ethnicities stretching across more than 20 different countries, including Somalia, Myanmar, Guatemala and South Sudan. Fifty percent of the population are of Latino ethnicity, the remaining from a variety of places, yet they have one thing in common....most are refugees. The community resources don't reflect it to be a land of plenty. There are no after-school activities, no secondary school, no health care. It is called a 'food desert' meaning the residents can't access fresh fruits, vegetables and healthy foods. There is another thing they all have in common, they are all human beings. The Ministry Center is reaching out to everyone living there. It is directing adults through (1) English-classes, (2) parenting courses (3) U.S. citizenship classes and (4) GED experiences to help them achieve a high school equivalency diploma. By taking classes, individuals can obtain points to spend in the Ministry Center Pantry.

They are trying to help these citizens gain independence and self-reliance but many refuse to cooperate. For example, a third of Cactus population is Muslim. A number of Rohingya boys, refugees from Myanmar, were given

opportunity to participate in a program which provided coats for kids. I was bitterly cold and not one of the boys was wearing a coat. They were urged to go to the Center. They refused stating they couldn't take or wear anything with a "T" written on it! When asked to explain, one of the boys pointed to the church which displayed the Cross... an Icon forbidden by Moslem theology. They were very cold and yet they rejected getting a warm jacket and other life-saving resources available to them marked with the letter "T" just because to them, it looked like a Christian cross.

They are confused. These Moslem children had trouble with two lines crossing each-other and any clothing, words or inscriptions containing a "T" are taboo. The "T" does not remotely represent the cross. There is however, a real cross that is recognized almost world-wide. An icon that represents the life, the death and resurrection of God's gift to the human race, Jesus Christ His Son. For Christians, the Easter celebration just passed, is a momentous event and is the capstone of our belief that what happened on the cross is the cure for the ills of a nation or for an individual life, for people of affluence or of poverty.

Whatever comes up in your life matters to God because He is interested. Many believe that God is concerned about the really big things going on in the world such as death, conflict between nations, political wars, sin, global warming, disease and disaster. God does care about these things but what about smaller things? What about an unreasonable boss or a check-book that doesn't balance, or a broken shoelace when you are in a hurry, a tooth ache, or a computer with a crashed disc? Do these things matter to God?

After all, he has a universe to run, planets to keep in alignment, presidents and kings to watch over, wars to consider and hungry people over the world to be fed. Who am I to tell Him what to do? Who am I anyway? Allow me to tell you who you are. You are an heir of God, you are eternal, you are God's child. I John 3:1 proclaims



*Earl Wassom*

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God." You are really His child. Can't be!!!!!! Perhaps Mother Teresa or Billy Graham or one of the Popes...but not me! But you are really His child. I just quoted you a Bible verse....."we are really His children." As a result, if something is important to you, it is important to God. He will never turn you away. Tell him what is bothering you.

"For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all ways tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

Hebrews 4:15-16.

Does God really care about the little and mundane things in my life? Yes, He does. If it matters to you, it matters to Him.

**Earl Wassom**  
**466th Bomb Group**  
**Chaplain, 8th AFHS**







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