

DECEMBER 2017



8TH AF NEWS

Volume 17 Number 4 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"



JOHN HILDERRAN



8TH AF NEWS

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

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Inside this issue

ON OUR COVER:

John Hildebran is recognized during the reunion in New Orleans as one of the original founders of The 8th Air Force Historical Society.

His plaque reads:

"Whereas, the 8th Air Force Historical Society was founded in 1975 by a group of WWII veterans of the 8th Air Force, in order "...to provide an association to perpetuate the history of the Mighty Eighth Air Force through the establishment and/or support of unit association for all subordinate units from 1942 to date." As well as "...promote and encourage participation of aforementioned organizations and all activities related directly or indirectly to such purpose."

Be it known that, **John Hildebran** who proudly served with the 453rd Bomb Group, 732nd Bomb Squadron, participated as one of the original founding members of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, and is now recognized as the last surviving member of the original group. His continued service, support, and dedication to the organization, its membership, and its mission, is hereby recognized by all, with immense gratitude and immeasurable thanks, September 30, 2017"

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Going...Going...[TBD]

Of the eight WWII vets who conceived and gave life to the 8th Air Force Historical Society in 1975, only one remains, John Hildebran [453rd BG]. Of the 21,000+ members at the peak of the Society, we now have fewer than 1700. Hard decisions are on the table. We are a non-profit and exist on a lot of volunteer hours, and even though we have pared expenses to the bone, the reality is: we need funds in order to continue.

During the last 2 reunions the Society contributed over \$50,000 in direct subsidies to help defray expenses—especially to our WWII vets attending reunions. In both St. Louis and most recently in New Orleans, your Board approved extraordinary measures to financially intervene to keep hotel rates down, furnish transportation, and even subsidize food expenses to make it possible for many to attend who otherwise would have been financially unable. Recognizing the importance of not only 'hearing' the voices of the members, but 'listening' to them, this past year the Society distributed over \$200,000 in

direct grants and funded projects created to concretely preserve and honor the legacy and memories of the men and women of the 8th Air Force.

Without member support, however, it all ends.

If you want to continue being a part of this noble and renewed effort to preserve the stories, memories,

"He lived to bear his country's arms. He died to save its honor. He was a soldier...and he knew a soldier's duty. His sacrifice will help to keep aglow the flaming torch that lights our lives...that millions yet unborn may know the priceless joy of liberty. And we who pay homage, and revere his memory, in solemn pride rededicate ourselves to a complete fulfillment of the task for which he so gallantly has placed his life upon the altar of man's freedom."

~ H. H. "Hap" Arnold, Commanding General Army Air Forces

the legacy of the 8th, please RENEW your membership in the Society and consider giving the GIFT of membership to friends, relatives, coworkers, educators, etc. Dues are only \$40 per year and include the 8th A F News magazine delivered quarterly. It is filled with history and many first person narratives from those whom we honor. Just click on the "JOIN" tab on our website: www.8thafhs.org or copy and share the membership form below.

We need your support now, more than ever.

Thank you!

Hope to see you all in Dayton!

Deb

Debra D Kujawa
Managing Director/Editor



JOIN THE 8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY!



First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State/County: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____ Country: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ 8th AF Affiliation (optional): _____

MEMBERSHIP ANNUAL DUES: \$40 USD or £30 GBP

Payment: Check Credit Card # _____ Exp.Date: _____ Amount: _____
Visa Mastercard or American Express ONLY

PayPal: ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

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JOIN ONLINE: www.8thAFHS.org



8TH 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.

The home office is located at: **68 Kimberlys Way, Jasper, GA. 30143**

President's Message

At the very first official reunion of the 8th AFHS back in October 1975, 18 board members were elected into office, which included 6 Honorary Members. These Officers came from a variety of units from Bomb Groups, Fighter Groups, HQ and the former 8th AF Commander, Lt. Gen. William Kepner. To quote one of the Founders, "We must derive our strength from the separate unit organizations (at the airbase level), just as we did in combat. Avoiding at all costs, any competition with the unit associations. We should offer a point of contact for the person with no organized unit."

Today the Society has 5 board members who are now all either second generation family members, or those who have a passion with the 8th and its heritage. As the original veterans of the 8th from its WWII era fly their last missions, it is up to us all to continue to preserve their legacy for our future generations. Like all organizations these days, membership numbers continue to dwindle, almost to a point of irreversible viability. It is up to us to avoid this, and increase our membership, outreach programs, and encourage active participation in preserving the legacy.

I was elected President at a time when the Society needs to face some difficult decisions on viability. I cannot do that on my own, but only with full participation from you, its members. We need a fresh approach to these problems.

There are several new ideas that we, as a Board, are currently re-

viewing. One being, how can those who can't make it to the reunions have a larger say/representation on the board and to the Society overall? While it's understandable that not everyone can make a reunion, as with most organizations, voting is carried out at an annual membership meeting which in our case is held during the reunions. We will continue to work on this and many other challenges.

There are many great museums, small research groups, and individuals who have very similar goals as the Society; to honor and remember those who were part of the 8th. As I like to describe it, we're on separate trains, on different parallel tracks, heading to the same destination. Let's work together to get everyone on one train, one track, heading to the same goal. As President, I would like to help achieve that goal by partnering with the numerous museums, group associations and individuals to pool the incredible talent out there.

I encourage you as members to help us give that new direction for the Society and bring everyone into the fold. Most of us as Second Generation members, have families and friends who share the same interest, but might not be members of the Society. I challenge each of you to recruit, or give the gift of membership in your Society. This is a first step to changing the current trajectory that your Society is currently on with its dwindling membership and returning to its roots of 'deriving its strength from unit organizations at the airbase level', which today is



Benjamin J Jones
President

you.

Growing up in England surrounded by the former airfields of the 8th in East Anglia, I was fascinated by the rich history of the 8th and would explore these abandoned places. Meeting some veterans returning in the mid-1980s, I became lifelong friends with them and was invited back to the US to attend some reunions, my first being in 1989. Many years later, I eventually settled in the US, joined the Air Force and have been enjoying that for the past 20 years. I've been very fortunate to have served in units that trace their lineage back to the abandoned airfields I explored as a kid. I'm also the third generation of my family to have served in the military, all of us as aviators.

Please reach out to any of your board members with your questions, comments, and ideas for the future. We look forward to hearing from you and working in partnership.

Ben Jones
President



Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
From your 8th AFHS Staff



MADRAS MAIDEN IN MEMPHIS

Beth Graber

Madras Maiden stopped at the Olive Branch Airport just south of Memphis in Mississippi on October 15, 2017. This B-17 was named for Madras, Oregon. Although she never saw action in WWII, this plane was used for training in the United States. (See history of this plane below.)

The pilot Bob Hill and co-pilot Greg Shelton brought the plane to Memphis/Olive Branch Airport from the previous tour stop in Nashville, TN before continuing on to Ft. Worth, TX for their next tour stop. This year's tour, organized by the Liberty Foundation, began on October 7, 2017 in Louisville, KY and ends October 29 in San Antonio, TX.

In Memphis, the weather was threatening all day as a cold front moved through the Mid-South, but the enthusiasm of the crowds there to see the B-17 was not affected. Many waited patiently as the first group of riders left, but upon returning, the rest of us were informed that the weather would delay the next 2 groups...the delay turned into hours.

These hours were filled with talk and stories about time spent in the service. Veterans were quizzed about their experiences and many recalled their personal missions. Richard Eiseman of the 94th Bomb Group, spoke of his missions from Bury St. Edmonds in England over Germany and France. All of the visitors were able to walk through **Madras Maiden** and take pictures.

About 5:30pm, the skies finally cleared and **Madras Maiden** was able to once again take flight with the final two groups. Everyone agreed it was worth the wait.

The Liberty Foundation, a non-profit organization, continues to run safe and smooth tours of B-17s and other vintage aircraft in the United States. They are supported by corporate and personal contributions. The operating costs are increasing every year....for example, the cost to operate a B-17 is approximately \$4,500 per flight hour. To replace one engine costs over

\$50,000. For more information and for a schedule of flights, please go to: www.LibertyFoundation.org

Madras Maiden B-17.

Madras, Oregon was incorporated as a city in 1911. An Army Air Corps base was built nearby during World War II. This airfield now serves as City-County Airport.

"The B-17G Bomber was manufactured by Lockheed-Vega and delivered to the U.S.A.A.F. on October 16, 1944. It was modified to be a 'Pathfinder' B-17, equipped with the latest ground scanning H2X "Mickey" radar for nighttime bombing in place of the ball turret. It was used purely stateside in a training role during WWII before being dropped from the U.S.A.F. inventory in May 1959. In 1961, Albany Building Corporation purchased the B-17 and used it for hauling freight, before selling it in 1963 to Donthan Aviation Corp. who used the airplane as an agriculture sprayer. In 1979, Doc Hospers of Fort Worth, Texas purchased the airplane and restored it to flying condition. The airplane was then sold to Jerry Yagen at the Military Aviation Museum in 2009 before being purchased by Erickson in 2013. Of the B-17 'Pathfinders' that were built, the NG3701G is the only one left in existence."

From the Erickson Aircraft Collection website: <http://www.ericksoncollection.com/aircraft/#/flyingfortress/>



Richard Eiseman & B-17 Pilot Bob Hill



Charles Plesofsky & Richard Eiseman, in cockpit during flight.



Charles Plesofsky, Richard Eiseman & B-17 Co-Pilot Greg Shelton.



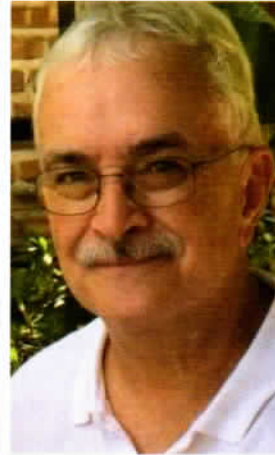
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President



Dr Nancy J Toombs
Vice President



Joseph P Keeley
Secretary & Chapter/
Unit Liaison



Anne A. Marek,
Treasurer



Dr Vivian Rogers-Price
Director

TREASURER'S REPORT THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As the new Treasurer of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, I will be including in each issue of AF News a Statement of the Society's financial position. This one is for the period ending September 30, 2017.

In campaigning in New Orleans for a position on the Board of Directors, I listened to all of you. I heard your concerns about accountability, accessibility and transparency. I plan to work with the Board in an attempt to implement changes that address your issues.

If any of you have any questions about any income or expense, please call or email me at 973-543-8832 or majorsoldsack@verizon.net. I will do my very best to answer your questions.



Anne A. Marek,
Treasurer

Respectfully submitted,
Anne

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position As of September 30, 2017

	Sep 30, 17
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1017 · Morgan Stanley	248,075.66
1040 · B of A Checking Account	10,726.32
1042 · B of A Business Savings	13,010.60
Total Checking/Savings	271,812.58
Total Current Assets	271,812.58
TOTAL ASSETS	271,812.58
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2050 · Payroll & Taxes Payable	
2051 · Payroll payable	2,777.66
2052 · FICA & withhold taxes payable	1,194.41
Total 2050 · Payroll & Taxes Payable	3,972.07
2500 · Accrued Expenses	100,890.49
Total Other Current Liabilities	104,862.56
Total Current Liabilities	104,862.56
Total Liabilities	104,862.56
Equity	
3200 · *Unrestricted Net Assets	346,716.87
Net Income	(179,766.85)
Total Equity	166,950.02
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	271,812.58



Wisconsin Chapter at National in New Orleans

Wisconsin Chapter

Cindy Drehmel

Wisconsin Chapter raised funds to take all our veterans to the annual reunion in New Orleans free of charge this year. Fourteen members attended: Cindy Drehmel (president), Jeff (treasurer) and Tina Spritka, Betty Lewis, Bill McCutcheon, and veterans Ralph Anderson, Art and wife Marnie Grisa, Scott and wife Phyl Welch and daughter Linda Welch-Haag, Don O'Reilly and grandson, and Don Hilbig.

September 12th, during our third quarterly meeting of the year we were treated to two fantastic WWII 8th Air Force speakers. Our very own Tech Sgt Bob Schuh and MP Don O'Reilly.

Bob Schuh explained he flew 12 missions as a B17 waist gunner, 12 missions as toggler, and 11 missions as tail gunner. During his first mission, Bob was told he had a 50-50 chance of survival, with flak landing on the wing tip causing a transfer of fuel. On his 3rd mission, his 398th BG flew at 5,000 feet skirting the forest, but never learned the actual reason for the target. The 6th mission his crew flew to Cologne three times, Berlin three times, and hit an oil refinery in Mersberg three times. On mission #15, a piece of flak narrowly missed him, but back at base they learned there were 78 holes in their plane. During a mission to Dresden, the plane's gas tank was hit—luckily it was a self-sealing tank and the crew made it back safely. Expecting a milk run on his final mission, # 35, they learned during the briefing they were going to Berlin. The hot zone! They lost ten planes that day then flew to Czechoslovakia. His plane badly damaged, they dropped downwind on fumes and managed to get

back to base. Bob got out and kissed the ground.

Private Don O'Reilly served as an MP with three groups in the 8th: 305th, 491st, and 44th BGs. From January of 1943, he spent 20 days traveling Greenland, Ireland, and Wales and then was quarantined for spinal meningitis. Then on to Chelveston to check chutes, touch-and-gos, then to Metfield with the 491st BG, controlling 40-50 trucks. Don's main job was protecting armament at each location.

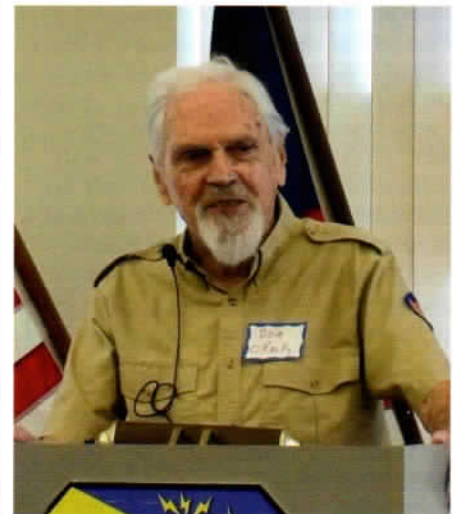
Quick correction to the WI update in the September 2017 issue of the 8th A F News: Harvin Abrahamson was assigned to the 487th BG at Lavenham, Suffolk. And Harvin wanted to make it clear that the reason his crew as well as the entire bomb group, was allowed to sleep in the next morning after an extremely difficult mission, was because their planes were too damaged to fly.

Our last meeting and Christmas get together is Tuesday, December 5, 11:00am -3:00pm, where we will have our usual meeting, a four course Christmas dinner, and speakers: WWII 8th Air Force Lt Col Ralph Anderson, B24 bombardier, and WWII Navy veteran, Al Exner, medic for both European and Pacific Theaters.

Oregon Chapter

Joan E. Hamilton

Our August speaker was Paul H. Payne, an aviation restoration volunteer whose work included the Spruce Goose which is currently being exhibited at the Evergreen Aviation & Space Museum in McMinnville, Oregon. Here are modified excerpts from his speech, "I've always had an interest in aviation. My first flight was in 1934 with Dorothy



Don O'Reilly 8th AF MP



Sgt. Robert Schuh

Hester, an aerobatic pilot who worked for Tex Rankin. During WWII, I was drafted into the Army infantry but soon signed up for the aviation cadet program and went through bombardier training. I was part of a B-24 crew set to head for the South Pacific when they dropped the

atomic bombs. After the war, I received my BS degree in chemistry.

In 1992, Paul Payne discovered that the Hughes Flying Boat was moving from Long Beach, California to McMinnville, Oregon. He said, "I signed up to as a volunteer to help with the restoration process. When I went over to Evergreen, they had the rudder and the elevators in the hangar that became our restoration room.

I was handed a pair of scissors and told, 'Get up on the scaffold and start pulling the old linen off.' That was my introduction to aircraft restoration which has been part of my life ever since.

The Hughes H-4 Hercules, also known as the Hughes Flying Boat, was nicknamed the "Spruce Goose" by the press, though this largest of all wooden airplanes to ever fly was built primarily of birch. Mr. Payne explained, "Using the Duramold construction method laminate of varying thickness was glued together and shoved into an autoclave. Under heat and pressure, they could mold any piece necessary to go onto any curved surface on any part of the aircraft. Hughes ordered a coat of wood filler on the original wood, then a layer of rice paper, Spar varnish as a sealer, and then another coat of Spar varnish with aluminum powder mixed into it which gave it a brilliant silver sheen. That's the way it was on November 2, 1947 when Howard Hughes piloted his Flying Boat just over a mile for one minute at an altitude of 70 feet. Following the flight, the plane was placed in a storage building that was so hot that Hughes had a white gloss enamel applied to all 49,000 square feet of it to reflect the heat. At one point, fire department personnel insisted that a sticky fire-retardant coating also be applied. The Hughes Flying Boat was displayed adjacent to the Queen Mary in Long Beach Harbor until it was moved to McMinnville, Oregon where the major sections of the plane arrived on a nice cold day in February of 1993.

After the decision was made to strip the plane to the wood, about two dozen of us stalwart volunteers really



Oregon Chapter, Paul H. Payne (Photo Courtesy of Joan E. Hamilton)

got started on the process. This kind of restoration was different. There was no welding or drilling. We just worked with sanders and a couple gross of sandpaper discs. As we sanded, we found hundreds of signatures of the people who had put the panels on. We had quite a thickness to remove and we did the whole hull by hand."

It took three volunteers to carry one propeller blade which was a 17-foot prop from tip to tip. The plywood-covered wing flaps are as long as wings on most aircraft. We re-covered the control surfaces—ailerons, rudder, and elevators—with new polyvinyl fabric. I crawled through a little hatch up on top of one of the large wing floats and went through two watertight bulkheads. The third watertight bulkhead was filled with red, yellow, and blue rubber beach balls probably placed there in 1951 and they were still full of air maybe in anticipation of a hard water landing.

Originally there was a life-like mannequin of Howard Hughes sitting up in the pilot's seat wearing the old tan jacket that he wore constantly and his usual brown fedora. One particularly hot day, I went up there and was shocked to see Howard's beeswax head had melted down onto his shoulders. We'd lost Howard again.

I'm currently involved in the process of restoring the Lacey Lady, a B-17 Flying Fortress in Salem, Oregon, to airworthy condition.

<http://www.b17alliance.com/>

Florida Chapter

By Kathy Sreenan
Photos by David Traill

Members and guests of the Florida Chapter 8th AFHS Society met during our Fall luncheon and meeting Saturday, October 7th, 2017 at Manero's Restaurant in Palm City, Florida.

We had 31 people in attendance, including six boy scouts from Troop 822 who presented Colors. Their troop leader, David Traill, led the Pledge of Allegiance and Sidney Katz led the singing of the Air Force Song and God Bless America. President Bill Uphoff started the meeting with a touching toast "to the west" and Shawn Reif gave a prayer before lunch. Following lunch, the Board of Directors were introduced and the minutes were read by Secretary, Esther Cheriff. Treasurer Shawn Reif gave the financial report.

George Fisher, US Army (Ret.), of Palm Beach, was guest speaker. Mr. Fisher is president of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Florida Southeast Chapter LXII. His chapter is the largest in the United States. He related experiences of that bitterly cold and horrific battle where 19,000 American soldiers were killed. It was the last major German offensive campaign in December 1944 and January 1945.

George was drafted out of college after the attack on Pearl Harbor and assigned to the 26th Infantry Division of the US Army under General George Patton. He landed on Omaha Beach 90 days after D-Day and found himself in combat three weeks later. He was wounded in the Battle of the Bulge and was hospitalized 8 months. He was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. Currently, Mr. Fisher is deeply involved with teaching the proper use, history and meaning of the flag, as well as the importance of WWII history to

students within our public schools. He also volunteers at the West Palm Beach VA Hospital. We were thrilled to have him as our speaker and to meet his lovely wife, Annette.

A very special guest at the luncheon was WWII 8th Air Force veteran, Jerome Medney, of Palm Beach Gardens, FL. Mr. Medney served in the 94th BG, as a lead navigator and bombardier in the B-17, flying 25 missions over Germany and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross.

David Traill had photos made of the B-17 and B-24 which were signed by the 8th Air Force veterans in the room. And a few items were given away as door prizes. The next Florida Chapter luncheon is planned for Spring of 2018.



Air Force Song



Bill Uphoff and Scouts



Pledge



George Fisher



44th Annual Reunion • October 10-14, 2018 • Dayton, OH • Crowne Plaza Dayton

8th Air Force Historical Society • 43rd Annual Reunion • New Orleans



8th Air Force Historical Society • 43rd Annual Reunion • New Orleans



8th Air Force Historical Society • 43rd Annual Reunion • New Orleans



8th Air Force Historical Society • 43rd Annual Reunion • New Orleans



8th Air Force Historical Society • 43rd Annual Reunion • New Orleans



8th Air Force Historical Society • 43rd Annual Reunion • New Orleans





2017 Vets Attending the 43rd Annual 8th



Air Force Annual Reunion in New Orleans

December 2017 (17-4)

www.8thafhs.org

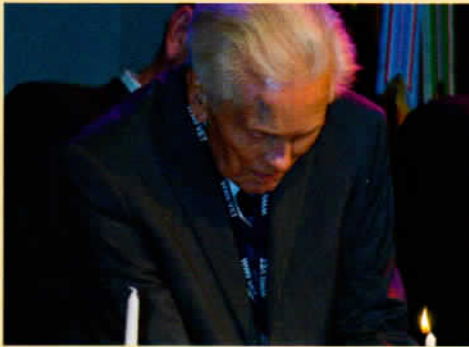
8th Air Force Historical Society • 43rd Annual Reunion • New Orleans



8th Air Force Historical Society • 43rd Annual Reunion • New Orleans



8th Air Force Historical Society • 43rd Annual Reunion • New Orleans



8th Air Force Historical Society • 43rd Annual Reunion • New Orleans





Michael Carr (event photographer)



Former Society president, Harry Tanner with Craig Dubishar (event photographer)



Belgian researcher Edouard Reniere hard at work



Beverly Tomb (Heritage League) with Perry Kerr 466th BG

Former WWII POWs in New Orleans



Humble Beginnings...

Debra Kujawa

It started out as a kind of Miami 'social club'—a small group of WWII vets hosting 'get-togethers' in each other's homes, sharing stories and a beverage or two back in the mid-70s. As John Hildebran remembers, the driving force was an inescapable connection between them, their time in the 8th during WWII.

"We were all just really good friends. A couple of folks just lived down the street from me, but we all were in the Miami area at that time."

During the 44th Annual Reunion a few months ago in New Orleans, John was presented a plaque by the Society, recognizing him as the last surviving member of the original group who helped organize and serve together at the very beginning of the 8th Air Force Historical Society.

"John Woolnough [466th BG] was the Executive Director, Arthur Selevan [398th BG] served as president, Sheldon Berlow [352nd FG], vice president, Aida Kaye [8th HQ] was our secretary/treasurer." John remembered, "She hated to be called 'Ada'...her name was eye-EE-duh," he laughed. There was also an executive committee comprised of Fred Brown [94th BG], Elmer Fessler [303rd

BG], Stanley Warren [94th BG], and of course, John [453rd BG].

Why form a group at all?

Early



'newsletters' used the word "clearinghouse" often to describe the early mission of the Society. From what I have learned, this great group of "8" individuals were determined to help other 8th Air Force WWII vets connect with members in their bomb and fighter groups. They began going through records and making lists, then visiting libraries, combing through phone books based on the home towns listed in the personnel files. And they found people. Lots of people. They contacted them to join the group. Come together. And

they did. By the droves.

Not long after those early years, at its peak nearly 21,000 Eighth Air Force veterans and their families and friends were members of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Reunions became a way to physically bring people together from all over, to once again be with others with whom they shared such a unique intimate past: war.

The numbers are much smaller now with membership just under 1700. We celebrated that over 500 people—70+ WWII vets—made the journey to New Orleans this September. We hope to see many of those same folks in Dayton this coming October. But, time will be the deciding factor once again.

Now, John is the only one left from the original band of 8. And he plans to continue their shared vision for as long as possible.

It was an awesome undertaking some 43 years ago down in Miami. John and seven friends agreed to help other vets connect with each other.

And the story continues.

Abresch, Robert C. "Bob", 95, is survived by his wife Marjorie; sons Jeff (Mary), Dave (Chris) and Rick (Deb) Abresch, and daughter, Lynn Davis; grandchildren: Daniel, Nick, Jackson, Cori and Kelly and great-grandchildren: Gabriel and Bruno. Bob graduated from Riverside High School in 1938. His first job was as a bicycle messenger for Western Union. He loved to bicycle throughout his life. Later he worked at Allis-Chalmers as a contract administrator for the Hydro-generator division, a career that lasted 40+ years. He enlisted in the US Army Air Corps where he served in the 398th Bomb Group, 600th BS, 8th Air Force stationed in England. He piloted a B-17 bomber and flew 33 combat missions in WWII. He always had a love of airplanes and was an award-winning model airplane flyer and a longtime member of the Experimental Airplane Association and the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Bob met the love of his life Marjorie Ann Schmidt at a dance at the Eagles Club in Milwaukee, and they married on October 30, 1948. They were members of a Latin dance club and became accomplished ballroom dancers. He received an award for the many blood donations he gave over the years. He volunteered 10+ years as a driver for the Elmbrook Senior Taxi Service and was a long time member and usher at Elm Grove Lutheran Church.

Brown, Jennings, 94, was born near Pritchett, Baca County CO. In 1925 his family moved to Burris Park CA near Kingsburg. Later the family moved to Indianola Ave, Fresno Ca. In 1929 his father died in their house fire along with younger sister Mary Jane. The remaining family moved to a ranch east of Kingsburg. Jennings attended Laton High School during his sophomore year, graduating 1942.

World War II broke out his senior year. He enrolled at Visalia Jr College Fall 1942. In January he reported to the Monterey Presidio for his army induction. He was sent to Camp Hood Texas for Basic Training and Advanced Training in Tank Destroying. He was retained as an instructor for a few months but later transferred to AF Gunnery School Harlingen TX. During leave in September he married his high school sweet heart Beverly Vaughn at Fresno. He joined a B-17

crew as a gunner-photographer at Lincoln NE and together they completed their training at Rapid City SD, where Bev joined him until he went overseas.

In June 1944 the crew flew a new B-17 from Kearney NE to England and joined the 303rd "Hell's Angels" BG, 8th AF, Molesworth, England. After six bombing missions over Europe the plane was shot down over Germany in September, but Jennings evaded capture for several weeks. Finally captured, he was interned at Stalag Luft IV then Stalag Luft I until liberated by advancing Russians.

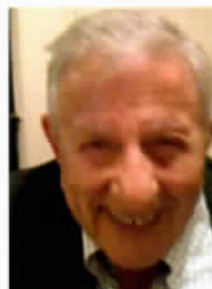
After discharge from the military Jennings graduated from Fresno State College (B.A.) and began teaching at Laton Jr High in 1947. In 1950, he received his MA degree and was appointed Vice Principal and coach at Laton High School. In 1959 he went to Antelope Valley College as Counselor and Athletic Director. In 1960 he moved to Sierra High School to teach World History and coach Football-Baseball. In 1965 he returned to Antelope Valley College as Dean of Students and finished as Vice President of Academic Affairs, retiring in 1981.

Jens and Bev enjoyed many years of working on, maintaining, and sharing the Pine Ridge "Hidden Falls" cabin they built. In retirement, he continued to improve the mountain property, farmed 40 acres of almonds, worked cattle, and golfed while living at Sanger then Reedley CA. He will be remembered for his devotion to family, students, and assistance to others. Survived by his lovely wife of 73 years, Beverly (Vaughn) Brown; four children Linda, Bradford (Jenny), Daniel (Cathy), Leslie Garst; seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Cassuto, Isadore "Ike", 92, of Spencertown, NY grew up in the Bronx. He graduated from James Monroe High School and entered CCNY before enlist-



Robert C. "Bob" Abresch



Isadore "Ike" Cassuto



Dorland Loring Crosman



Jennings Brown

ing in the Air Corps in 1943. A navigator with the 398th BG, he flew B-17 bombers in the European theater during WWII. Ike was shot down once but completed his tour in 1945. He didn't talk a lot about the war, but his service remained a source of quiet pride.

He had a long career in private practice as a tax attorney and trusts and estates lawyer in New York City and Albany. Deeply politically engaged, Ike's first presidential vote was for Henry Wallace, his last for Hillary Clinton. Both personally and as trustee of the Sidney and Beatrice Albert Foundation, he promoted such causes as civil rights, environmentalism, reproductive freedom, and the arts. An athlete from childhood, Ike enjoyed everything from stickball to skiing and tennis, and into his eighties, golf. He loved adventure, traveling by bicycle, barge, and plane all over the world. Ike shared his world and his life with his wife, Toby. Married for 61 years, they raised two sons, Lenny and David. They survive him, as do his daughters-in-law, Debra and Elizabeth, and grandchildren, Jesse and KC.

Crosman, Dorland Loring, 93, of Duxbury, MA passed away peacefully on January 8th at the Newfield House in Plymouth. Born to the late Loring and Florence (Hawkes) Crosman, he was the husband of the late Elizabeth (Trimble) Crosman and the late Dorothy (Mitchell) Crosman. He leaves behind his loving companion Eleanor

Jewett of Duxbury. He was the father of Margot Crosman Berks (David) of Alameda, CA, Robert Crosman (Betsey) of Guilford, CT, Darcy Crosman of El Sobrante, CA and Peter Crosman (Deborah) of LaCanada, CA. He also leaves his step-children; John Eastman (Brenda) of Swansea, MA, David Eastman (Andreia) of Taunton, MA, Ann Marie Blackwell Kearney (Robert) of Taunton, MA, Kathleen Goode (John) of Swanzey, NH,

and Caroline Walters (Christopher) of Arlington, MA. He was the cherished grandfather of Kyle, Katharine, Miles, Maya, Kelleigh, Katie, Kerry, Kara, Donald, Brian, Timothy, Becky, Mike, Henry, Grace, Mathew, Colleen and several Great Grandchildren. He was also the brother of the late Marshall Crosman. Dorland was educated in Maplewood, NJ and attended Haverford College in Haverford, PA where he received his BS in Engineering. He was Chief Mechanical Engineer for Lionel Trains, Mattel Toys, Remco, and most recently, Hasbro. He is a World War II veteran, who served in the Army Air Corp as 2nd Lt, piloting the B17 bomber.

He became an amateur figure skater, spent weekend afternoons flying small aircraft, spent months on engineering contests like the 'mousetrap spring driven car'-- (placing just behind the team from MIT), and made plywood boats and rafts. He pursued hang gliding, mastered cooking Great Life Dinners, loved to travel, and would engage in deep conversations and philosophical debates. His inquisitive nature and appetite for life was an inspiration and he will be greatly missed.

Dussliere, Albert L., 93, was the son of Alois and Martha (Callewaert) Dussliere. He married Lorene Seitz (his High School Sweetheart), September 18, 1946 at St. Mary's Catholic Church, East Moline, IL. He was a Staff Sargent in the 8th Army Air Corp during WWII. Al flew in the waist and tail gunner positions in a B-17 flying fortress, with the 303rd BG, accumulating 35 missions over enemy territories. On his 13th mission his plane was involved in a midair collision over Bonn Germany which forced a belly landing in Luxembourg. On the 14th mission his plane was hit by sustained flak for over 14 minutes knocking out engines 2 and 4 causing an emergency landing in Ghent, Belgium.

After he returned from the war Al worked in his father's grocery store. During that time period, he was elected East Moline council member at age 29 serving 4 years and elected Mayor from 1959 to 1965. In 1965 he was appointed Postmaster of East Moline and then promoted to Director of Customer Services at Rock Island Post Office during the 1970's overseeing 102 offices in IA and IL retiring from the post office in 1984.

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Al was the former Commander of the East Moline/Silvis Amvets, President of the East Moline/Silvis Kiwanis Club, member of the Illini Hospital Board, Founding member of the Black Hawk Chapter of Epilepsy Foundation, President of the 303rd Bomb Group Association, Eucharist Minister at St. Anne Parish, Short Hills Country Club Man of the Year, and Member of the Chamber of Commerce.

Survivors include his wife of 71 years, Lorene, children, Theresa (Dr. Daniel) Voltz, Wooster, OH, Philip (Helen) Dussliere, Rock Island, and Steve (Kayla) Dussliere, East Moline, grandchildren Andrew and Conrad Voltz, Heidi (Mitch) Forney, Talisa Dussliere (Josh) Concoran, and Justin Oden, great granddaughter Elizabeth Forney and his brother, Lorney (Hattie) Dussliere, East Moline. He was preceded in death by a grandson John Smithson and brothers Alois Jr. and Donald.

Giller, Edward Bonfoy, M/GEN USAF, ret., 99, passed away on October 1, 2017. He grew up on an Illinois farm learning the value of hard work and self-reliance. His country upbringing gave him his love of hunting and fishing. As a young man he earned a private pilot license. He loved flying, so when he learned the military would pay him to fly he joined Army Air Corps and began his long successful military career. He was an amazing, strong, generous, and wise man and will be sorely missed by all who knew him. General Giller was born in Jacksonville, Illinois, on July 8, 1918. He graduated from Kemper Military School, MO, and from the University of Illinois with a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemical Engineering in 1940. He worked for Sinclair Oil Refining Company in Houston, TX until the advent of WWII. In 1941 he began active military duty and in 1942 he earned his pilot wings and commission as second lieutenant at Lubbock, TX. During WWII he served in the ETO with the 55th FG of the 8th Air Force, and became Commander of the 343rd Fighter Squadron and later, Deputy Commander of the 55th FG. He participated in the campaigns of Air Offensive, Europe; Normandy; Northern France; Rhineland;



Edward Bonfoy Giller

Ardennes-Alsace; and Central Europe. Awards include the Distinguished Service Medal, Silver Star, Legion of Merit with one oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster, Air Medal with 17 oak leaf clusters, Purple Heart, Distinguished Unit Citation Emblem, and Croix de Guerre (France).

After WWII General Giller earned his MS and PhD degrees

in Chemical Engineering. In 1950 he moved to Washington, D.C. where he was Executive, Weapons Effects Division, and Chief, Radar Branch, of the Armed Forces Special Weapons Project (formerly the Manhattan Project) until 1954. During this time major programs in military nuclear weapons effects were started at the Nevada Testing Grounds. From June 1954 to June 1959 he was the Special Assistant Director and later the Director of the Research Directorate, Air Force Special Weapons Center, Kirkland AFB, NM.

In June 1959 General Giller was assigned as Special Assistant to the Commander, Air Force Office of Scientific Research in the Air Force Systems Command, in Washington, D.C. In January 1961 he became Special Assistant to the Commander, Office of Aerospace Research. He was transferred in May 1964 to Headquarters US Air Force in the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Research and Development, where he served as Director of Science and Technology. In June 1967 General Giller joined the Atomic Energy Commission as Director, Division of Military Application. Later that year, he assumed the duties as Assistant General Manager for Military Application. General Giller retired from active duty as a Major General in June 1972. He remained at the AEC/Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA), with additional responsibilities for nuclear non-proliferation, intelligence, military and civil nuclear safeguards and the laser fusion program. In 1977 he left ERDA to become the Joint Chiefs of Staff Representative to the Comprehensive Test Ban negotiations in Geneva, as well as a policy advisor on nuclear testing issues. During October and November of 1981 he was Deputy Commissioner, and then

Commissioner, of the Standing Consultative Commission in the fall session of the US/USSR deliberation on compliance with the SALT I, II, and the ABM Treaties. He retired from Civil Service in June 1984 to join the firm of Pacific-Sierra Research Corporation to study the various issues connected with nuclear weapons.

He is survived by his sister, Grace Nail and husband, Louis, and five children, Susan Giller and wife Paula Ferguson, Carol Gajdosik, Bruce Giller and wife Jane Prive, Penny Giller, and Paul Giller (Katy) along with seven grandchildren; Robyn Lance (Nate), Kelly Faris (Ryan), Nikki Prive, Alexandra Giller, Brookes Giller, Zoe Giller and Graham Giller and three great grandsons, Rhys Faris, Kellen Faris, and Wyatt Lance.

Gray, Alexander William

“Sandy”, 95, served as a Flight Engineer & TSGT with the 303rd BG, 359th BS, at RAF Molesworth from January to May 1945. Born in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1921, Gray grew up in Washington, D.C. During the depression, he supported his family by working two newspaper delivery routes before and after school. After Pearl Harbor, he attempted to volunteer with the US Army Air Forces, but because of his Canadian citizenship, he was referred to the RAF. The RAF had enough airman recruits, so back to the US Army he went. This time he was accepted and was fast-tracked to US citizenship in 1943. Washing out of aviation cadets in Santa Ana, California after mistaking a taxiway for the runway he was supposed to land on (a story he always told with laughs in later years), he still “wanted to see some action”, so rather than trying again to qualify as a pilot, he signed on as a B-17 flight crew member—Richeson crew—arriving in the UK at the end of 1944 with the 303rd BG, Hell’s Angels. He



Alexander William Gray



Donald Hobart Jr. Scott



Dorland Loring Crosman



Jennings Brown



Donald R. Smith

flew 31 missions, including the raids on Dresden. On one mission (313; 9 Feb 1945), his plane was hit by Flak, seriously wounding the ball-turret gunner, Jesus Ortega. Returning from another mission, his plane came within a few feet of colliding with the steeple of St. Swithin’s Church in Old Weston while trying to land in the fog. Sandy credited his survival to strong P-51 fighter support, outstanding pilots and of course the incredible ability of the flying fortress to take abuse and keep flying.

Following VE day, his crew helped Molesworth farmers plant their potato crop, before ferrying an aircraft back to the US. He met his wife, June, of NY, while on R&R in Atlantic City during the summer of 1945, and they were married in 1946. After the war, while attending Pratt Institute on the GI Bill, he began working at Mobil Oil Company in NY. He spent 39 years with Mobil in NY and Virginia, retiring in 1985. Sandy ultimately moved to California. He is survived by a sister, 3 children and 6 grandchildren. He was an enthusiastic member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, attending reunions and keeping up with his wartime buddies until time took them away.

Reekers, Lester Robert, 92, civil engineer and resident of Tulsa, passed away Sunday, September 10, 2017 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He was born April 11, 1925 to Petranella (Rozeboom) and Henry Reekers in Sheldon, Iowa. Mr. Reekers was a veteran of the 8th Air Force, 490th Bomb Group serving in World War II. He later served as president of the 490th BGA for 7 years and was awarded the French Legion of Honor medal.

Scott, Donald Hobart, Jr.,

95, of Marietta, GA. As a boy Don belonged to the Boy Scouts. There was no local Scout Troop so he participated in Scouts through correspondence passing off the steps to his father. Don graduated from Stuart High School and worked for the CCC before enrolling in Virginia Tech. He had been attending Virginia Tech for two years when Pearl Harbor was bombed. Realizing that he would soon be drafted, he enlisted in the Army Air Corp, where he was assigned as a radio operator on a B-17, 388th BG. During the 11th mission over Germany, the plane was shot down. He became a prisoner of war of the Germans and spent four months in Stalag Luft 4—three months on a forced march. He was liberated by the British Army on May 2, 1945 a day that he celebrated yearly for the rest of his life.

In 1954, Don came to Marietta to work for Lockheed as an electrical engineer and joined First Baptist Church. He joined the choir where he met his wife Martha and they were married in the chapel of First Baptist Church. Don sang in the choir for over 50 years, was a Life Deacon and was the Sunday School Secretary for 50 years. Don enjoyed hiking, flying his airplane, gardening, and blue grass music.

Don was preceded in death by two brothers, James Reginald Scott and Warren Gray Scott and a sister, Nell Scott Cornwell. Survivors include his wife, Martha (McLemore) to whom he was married 61 years; two daughters, Ann Hicks (Chuck), and Mary Ellen May (Steven); four grandchildren, Ellen Ward (Stephen), Virginia Willis, Scott May and Sam May; two step-grandchildren, Beth Hicks and Brian Hicks (Suzie); a great-grandson, Micah Ward, and three step-great grandchildren, Jameson, Graham and Mia Hicks; several nieces and nephews; special friends, including the Saturday morning Waffle House Group and 388th Bomb Group.

Smith, Donald R., LT/COL USAF ret., 95, died following a car accident on Aug. 13, 2017.

Donald grew up on a farm in rural Oxford, WI and learned the value of hard work. He attended a one room schoolhouse and graduated from Oxford High School. One day while doing farm chores he spotted an airplane on the horizon and

dreamt that he would fly a plane someday. During WWII, Donald volunteered for the military. He was commissioned and earned his aviator wings. He started in smaller single occupant aircrafts, and then progressed onto the B-17 bombers, cargo and troop carrier aircrafts, C-54s, C-124s, & C-130s. He was the maintenance-in-charge officer for the C-5s. He became a pilot in a "flying Fortress" B-17 bomber crew and was sent to Molesworth, England where he served with the famed 303rd BG (H), "Hells Angels". He flew 34 combat missions receiving the Bronze Star, Air Force Commendation, Air Medal with six oak leaf clusters, and the Meritorious Service Medal with one oak leaf cluster.

Donald returned to active duty in Korea flying C-54's in support and re-supplying missions throughout Asia. He flew C-124's during peacetime all over the world to include stateside bases, Europe, polar sites in Alaska and far Northern Canada along America's outer radar perimeter, the DEW line (Defense Early Warning) network. He also participated in large military exercises in conjunction with the US Army by flying and transporting soldiers, paratroopers and their equipment during the Bright Star/ Pine Cone #1 and #2 maneuvers. In the C-130s he flew with the 53rd Weather Reconnaissance Squadron, "the Hurricane Hunters". He retired from the Air Force after 32 years of service with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel as a war veteran of three wars (WWII, Korea, and Viet Nam).

After his retirement, Donald and Barbara moved into the Woodland Hills subdivision in Black Hawk, SD. SD Governor Bill Janklow presented him with the Jefferson Award for meritorious service to his community. Donald's hobbies included being a 2nd generation bee keeper and he was named the Delaware State Bee Inspector. He gave away jars of honey to his neighbors and friends. He was known as "Sundown" at the regular Thursday night poker gatherings. Donald is survived by sons Darrell and Steven (Sherry), two grandchildren: Michelle Smith Lipenski, and Jennifer (Joseph) Rodriguez, four great-grandchildren Madison, Mason, Austin, and Able, brothers Durwin, and John (Carol), and a cousin Dorothy Wohlfert, and other relatives.

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Speer, Harold Glenn, 91, passed away on September 20th at NHC in Oak Ridge. He was a member of Laurel Church of Christ. Preceded in death by his parents, Dr. Harold and Elizabeth Speer, and by his brother, Dr. Keith Speer. Survived by his wife of 68 years, Ruby; daughters, Becky Makla (John), Dr. Patti Speer, and Jane Flaspohler (John); sons, Dr. Harold G. Speer, Jr. (Grace) and Keith Speer; 12 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren; and sister, Lois Baird. He was born in Kentucky but reared in Grundy, Virginia. He graduated from high school in 1943 and entered WWII serving with the 453rd BG as a gunner on a B-24.

After the war he went to Centre College in Kentucky graduating in 1949. He taught school for a year then re-enlisted in the Air Force during the Korean War. He flew F-86 and F-100 jets until he left the Air Force in 1962. He then sold cars in Knoxville for 40 years.

Stubits, Lewis "Skubie" Michael, 93, was the loving husband of Mathilde Cecila (Weinhofer) for 69 years. Lewis proudly served in the U.S. Army Air Corp during the European Theater of WWII. He flew 30 missions on B-24s with the 467th BG. He was a lifetime member of the Catholic War Vets. Lewis was a hard worker who instilled a strong work ethic in his children. He worked as a butcher at Kornfiend's Meat Market for many years driving the door-to-door marketing truck visiting many homes throughout Northampton, Coplay, and North Catasauqua. He also graduated from the NY School of Photography and worked as a freelance photographer. Lewis and his wife loved polka dancing especially at the Coplay Saengerbund. Survivors: In addition to his wife, Mathilde C. (Weinhofer); son, Donald Stubits; daughters, Sylvia McBrinn (Robert) Reigrod, Elizabeth Shlom (Howard); six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren; brother, William Stubits of; sister-in-law, Susanna Stubits; and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased



Harold Glenn Speer



Lewis "Skubie" Michael Stubits



Paul Zak

by brothers, John and Alexander and sister, Anna, as well as a sister-in-law, Helen, wife of Bill and a brother-in-law, Joseph, husband of Anna.

Zak, Paul, 91, was born in Taurage, Lithuania, on July 9, 1925, the son of the late Frank and Sonia (Retuik) Zakarevich. The family moved to Kenosha in 1927, where he attended local schools and then the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Paul served in the Army Air Corps as a B-17 Ball Turret Gunner in the 100th BG during WWII. During the Korean War, he flew B-36s out of the Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth, Texas. He became a member of the Caterpillar Club after he jumped from an airplane using a parachute that saved his life.

Paul became a Kenosha Fire Fighter; retiring in 1982. He was a member of the Professional Fire Fighters, Local 414 and a member of the retired Professional Fire Fighters of Wisconsin.

International travel with his wife, Elaine; an avid walker and bird watching were activities he greatly enjoyed. In his younger

years, he enjoyed the time spent hunting and fishing. Paul was very proud to be a WWII Veteran and attended all the 100th BG reunions.

His wife Elaine, passed away after 65 years of marriage. He will be deeply missed by his children, Michael (Adele) Zak of Kenosha and Cheryl (Bruce) La Count of Pleasant Prairie; his granddaughter, Michelle (Jeff) Niedfeldt of Racine; three great-grandchildren, Wynter, Jolie and Myah; two half-brothers, Dr. Russell (Lottie) Sacco and Michael (Pat) Sacco; his sister-in-law, Olga Zak; many loving nieces, nephews and great nieces and nephews.

Paul was preceded in death by his father, Frank; his mother, Sonia; step-father, Michael Sacco, Sr. and his brother, Eugene Zak.



French Legion of Honor AND Fre

Manny Abrams**	392nd BG	Howard Croner	452nd BG	Robert Gross	34th BG
Stewart Ackerman	303rd BG	Robert Culp	100th BG	Joseph "Joe" Gualano	493rd BG
J R Akin	95th BG	John F Curcio	458th BG	Rudolph "Rudy" Guerrero	493rd BG
V G Alexander	493rd BG	Wayne Davis	452nd BG	Milton R Gunther	487th BG
Jay D Allen	94th BG	Steve de Pyssler	VIII Bomber Command	C Norman Gustafson	384th BG
Andy Anderson	100th BG	Victor DeCaria	466th BG	Carl Gustafson	453rd BG
Ed Anderson	453rd BG	Eddie Deerfield	303rd BG	Russell W Gustafson	452nd BG
William H Andrew*	493rd BG	Louis E Deutsch	446th BG	Paul C Haedike	452nd BG
Richard Andrews	379th BG	Harold L Dietz	466th BG	Percival L Hanson	305th BG
Albert Arreola**	100th BG	Richard Dinning	351st BG	Haas M Hargrave**	493rd BG
Victor G Aubry, Jr*	493rd BG	Jack F Disney	94th BG	Alfred B Harris	390th BG
Albert Audette	385th BG	Donald A D'Lugos	466th BG	Howard G Harris*	Veteran
George W Bachmann, Jr	306th BG	Jack Dodson	398th BG	Glenn A Harrison**	96th BG
Orville Baker	445th BG	John H Doyle	94th BG	Robert B Hastie	95th BG
Willis Barney	379th BG	Norman R Dunphe	448th BG	Robert Haynes	493rd BG
Oliver L Bashor	303rd BG	George Durgin	493rd BG	Robert Hecker	401st BG
William Becker	492nd BG	Peter Durso	493rd BG	Walter Hendricks	452nd BG
Richard L "Dick" Bedford	353rd FG	Alfred Dusey	447th BG	Lewis E Herron	100th BG
Sheldon Beigel	306th BG	Eugene Dworaczek*	448th BG	John R Hildebran**	453rd BG
Caesar J Benigno	452nd BG	Harold Dwyer	34th BG	Temple Hix Hill	392nd BG
Nelson Berger	100th BG	Don Echols	458th BG	Robert H Hitchcock	303rd BG
Tony Bezer	490th BG	Stanley Edelman	351st BG	Bill Holden	1st B RNR
Leo S Bielinski	44th BG	Richard J Eiseman**	94th BG	Don E Holmes**	458th BG
William D Bodiford**	487th BG	William "Bill" Eisenhart	303rd BG	David Holst*	448th BG
August C Bolino	388th BG	James H Eshelman	385th BG	Dewey A Holst**	448th BG
Bob Bowen	398th BG	Dr. James Facos	388th BG	Theodore C "Ted" Hood	306th BG
James M Bond	385th BG	George Farrer*	384th BG	William F Houlihan*	306th BG
Robert L Brandt	452nd BG	Joseph Fischer	94th BG	James Howell	447th BG
Gordon Breeding**	34th BG	Robert Fisher**	384th BG	Jake Howland	Unknown
Carl F Brown, Jr	4th FG	Clifford J Foss	29th Troop Carrier SQ	Jack C Hubbard	306th BG
Dudley Brown**	94th BG	Donald H Foulk	303rd BG	David Huckabay	489th BG
Harvey Brundage*	91st BG	Donald M Frank	389th BG	Blaine Hufnagle	94th BG
Joe Burdis	388th BG	Paul Frank*	96th BG	Melvin Hurwitz	493rd BG
Ed Burnham	95th BG	Herbert Friedlander	351st BG	Albion Kenneth Hutcherson	95th BG
Paul E Calkin	100th BG	Joel Friedman	34th BG	Joseph O Ingram, Jr	96th BG
Donald Casey	379th BG	James E Frolking**	479th FG	Gustave W Jacobson	94th BG
Frank Casey*	487th BG	Frank Gaccione	7th Photo Recon	Bennie L Jefferies	306th BG
Andrew D Caswell**	91st BG	Henry C Gagnon	385th BG	Arthur Jenkins	390th BG
F C "Hap" Chandler	491st BG	Joseph Garber	96th BG	David Johnson	1st B RNR
Clarence F Cherry	100th BG	Ted Gary	493rd BG	Martin Jordan	351st BG
John P Chopelas**	452nd BG	Robert Genesky	493rd BG	Jay Karpin**	493rd BG
Samuel A Christiano**	8th Weather SQ	Stoddard B Gerald*	55th FG	John Katsaros	401st BG
John A Clark	100th BG	William Gerecitano	388th BG	Samuel Katz	389th BG
James O Clemons	484th BG	Albert Gese	20th FG	George H Keating**	452nd BG
Grayson Cocharo	492nd BG	Dr. C W "Bill" Getz**	491st BG/2AD SF	Victor Keech	1st B RNR
Murray Codman	447th BG	Reuben Glazer	445th BG	Perry Kerr	466th BG
Myron Cohen	91st BG	Dallas Godsey	351st BG	John Ketzner	92nd BG
Paul J Collins	447th BG	Stanley Goldstein	466th BG	Michael D Kindya	385th BG
Joseph Connaughton	319th BG	Hewitt B Gomez	492nd BG	James King	1st B RNR
Marbury L Councell, Jr	96th BG	George Gorman	96th BG	Jack Kleinsorg	92nd BG
Jay Dee Cowan*	490th BG	Marvin Graham	392nd BG	Russell A Knudson	303rd BG
James D Cox*	303rd BG	Sidney Grant	493rd BG	Carroll F Knutson	447th BG
Salvatore Cracolici	96th BG	Wesley Grayer	493rd BG	Donald L Koons	401st BG
Thomas L Creekmore	305th BG	Charles J Greenough	379th BG	Donald F Kremper	94th BG

French Jubilee of Liberty Recipients*



Ralph J Kurka	93rd BG	Wilmer "Will" Plate	489th BG	William Thacker, Jr	457th BG
Herbert J Kwart	381st BG	William Podolsky*	493rd BG	William M "Bill" Thorns	96th BG
Dean C Larson	401st BG	Howard Polin**	352nd FG	William C "Bill" Toombs, Sr	**493rd BG
Paul W Latenser*	389th BG	Steven Politis	97th BG	Jimmy J Traupel*	379th BG
William G Lathrop	94th BG	Robert H Preller*	384th BG	Robert Tuchel	392nd BG
George A Lawson	7 PRG	Michael H Prestia	452nd BG	William "Bill" Varnedoe	385th BG
John Lemons	445th BG	Vincent J "Bill" Purple	379th BG	Alfred C Villagran*	306th BG
Mathias J Leupold	385th BG	Walter "Mike" Quering	487th BG	Rudolph Villalobos	96th BG
Donald D Levine	453rd BG	Albert Rapvano	466th BG	Charles F Von Der Leith*	357th Infantry
Richard B "Dick" Lewis	493rd BG	Seymour Ratner*	306th BG	Robert H Voss	94th BG
George R Leyva	351st BG	Lauri Rautio	447th BG	Jay Walker	384th BG
Robert M Littlefield	55th FG	Lester Reekers	490th BG	James H Walston, Jr	466th BG
James L Livingston**	44th BG	Edward G Reuland**	379th BG	Douglas J Ward	305th BG
Robert "Bob" Livingston**	351st BG	Joseph H Reus	445th BG	Charles Warren	351st BG
Stan Loftsgard	493rd BG	James A Rich, Jr	96th BG	Earl E Wassom	466th BG
Malcolm J Magid	303rd BG	George G Roberts**	306th BG	Mark B Weber*	389th BG
Ken Mason	1st B RNR	William L "Bill" Roche	452nd BG	Billy D Welch	361st FG
Ellis McClintick	390th BG	J Warren Roundhill	379th BG	Berton Werth	492nd BG
Robert McCormack**	389th BG	Robert Rowland**	398th BG	Charles Wheelwright	392nd BG
Elmer "Lucky" McGinty	95th BG	Jack Rude	493rd BG	Douglas C Willet	94th BG
Hugh McGinty	379th BG	John Rumancik	392nd BG	John M Williams	448th BG
Jay McIntosh	94th BG	Peter "Rupy" Ruplenas	486th BG	Paul R Wilson	305th BG
B/GEN Seth McKee	370th FG	Al Sadowsky	34th BG	Robert W Wilson*	
Russell Madsen	100th BG	Bradford Saivetz	305th BG		313th Troop Carrier Group
Elmo Maiden	466th BG	Jesse Sandlin	447th BG	Frank A Wiswall	96th BG
David Marshall	381st BG	Frank N Schaeffer	44th BG	Lawrence Wolfson	493rd BG
Richard Martin	398th BG	Walter Schattel	487th BG	Richard P Woodson, III	96th BG
William Massey	401st BG	Carmen Schiavoni	447th BG	James Zographos**	388th BG
Samuel Mastrogiacomo	445th BG	Robert F Schlack*	356th FG		
Walter M "Boots" Mayberry	388th BG	Fred Schonwetter**	55th FG		
Seward M Meintsma	466th BG	Robert Schuberg	306th BG		
Julius M Micek	381st BG	Bob Schuh	398th BG		
James Mikusi	447th BG	Donald L Seesenguth**	457th BG		
Donnell "Don" Miller	493rd BG	Horace Seyster	457th BG		
Charles Mills**	492nd BG	Horace Shankwiler	445th BG		
Rex Mills	453rd BG	Marvin Silbersher	447th BG		
E E "Mitch" Mischler	94th BG	Taffe Simon	445th BG		
Lloyd Mitchell	96th BG	Harold W Smith	448th BG		
Kenneth Moulden	448th BG	Heber H Smith	94th BG		
James Mynatt	490th BG	Samuel W Smith	303rd BG		
Clayton A Nattier	306th BG	Robert W Smothers	452nd BG		
William J "Bill" Nevitt	353rd FG	Christopher Spagnola	44th BG		
John W Newman	94th BG	Leland C Spencer*	93rd BG		
Art Nystrom	445th BG	George W Starks	92nd BG		
George M Ogle*	487th BG	Robert J Starzynski	306th BG		
William J O'Leary	384th BG	Willard Stelling	34th BG		
Allen G Ostrom	398th BG	Colin D Storey	94th BG		
William "Bill" Overstreet, Jr	357th FG	William E Stovall	390th BG		
Nels Pedersen*	44th BG	Herman Stroupe	390th BG		
Frank D Perez	401st BG	Walter Sturdivan**	34th BG		
LaVerne Peters	389th BG	John S Swarts	351st BG		
Stanley Peterson	96th BG	John Roger Swihart	388th BG		
Anthony W Pircio	7th PRG	Edward J Tatro**	100th BG		
Nicholas Plackis*	390th BG	Henry E Tessien	96th BG		

List current as of press time...

[no asterisk] French Legion of Honor

[*] French Jubilee of Liberty

[**] Has received BOTH medals

If you or someone you know has received either the French Legion of Honor, OR the French Jubilee of Liberty, 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

Cole Crew Honored During Dutch Memorial Day

Co de Swart

Each year, in the small Dutch Village of Beek, Roy Göttgens, Secretary of a Dutch Historical Society, remembers the story of Lt Vernon Cole, pilot, 306th BG/423rd BS (Fiery Phantoms) and the crew: 2LT Partridge, co-pilot; 2LT Charles Kuehn, navigator; 2LT Joseph Columbus, bombardier/gunner; TSGT Robert Folk, TT gunner/engineer; TSGT Robah Shields, Jr, radio/gunner; SSGT Donald Richardson, BT gunner; SSGT Frederick Zumpf, RW gunner; SSGT Adrien Wright, LW gunner/assist. engineer; SSGT Irving Mills, tail gunner; of their ill-fated B17, 42-29971, recounting the details of their final mission.

Black Thursday, October 14, 1943 would see many lives lost in the efforts to destroy the ball bearing factories of Schweinfurt. As the planes approach the Dutch/Belgian border, Cole's aircraft is hit by a rocket in the bomb rack at 25,000 feet altitude. Sgt. Richardson is killed by fire/fragments upon impact of the rocket. The plane is set on fire and Lt. Cole abandons the formation and orders a bail out immediately, while trying to keep the plane in the air as long as possible.

Folk passes out from lack of oxygen and is pushed out by Columbus, who together with Kuehn get out safely via the front escape hatch. They land near the small Belgian border town of Eisden, east of Hasselt. In the meantime Shields helps Wright with his chute harness inside the plane. The B-17 takes a nose-dive, but Cole is able to stabilize the aircraft, so it does not hit the nearby Dutch town of Sittard, which would have had disastrous consequences.

The left wing of the bomber flies off and the plane explodes in the air south of Sittard at the Dutch side of the border. Shields is killed by the blast. Wright, Mills and Partridge are "fortunate". They are blown out of the plane and are able to land safely in the city of Geleen, south of Sittard, although Wright was unconscious. They are arrested and become POWs. Zumpf is not able to escape the plane, as the escape hatch is blocked by the impact of the rocket. Cole is trying to get out of the pilot seat, but is blown out of the plane as well. He does not survive the blast and lands with a (partly) open chute in a tree in Geleen. An eyewitness reports that Cole was still alive briefly



and asked for a priest before he died. Due to the explosion, the bombs fall from the plane and hit the ground between Geleen and Beek. The farm house of the Stassen family is hit by one of these bombs, which pierces through the roof and the floors, but does not explode. Fortunately, the other bombs cause little to no damage.

After this second fatal explosion main parts of the plane, tail, what's left of the fuselage, wings, engines and fuel tanks land in a meadow north of Maastricht in the village called 'Beek', Limburg. Dutch civilians and Germans

witness the crash.

The airmen who were killed were first buried in Maastricht and postwar at Margraten US Military Cemetery. All survivors became POWs.

The remains of Cole and Richardson were returned to the United States after the war.

Now, 74 years after the crash during a great Dutch Memorial Day in the Village of Beek, 37 Americans, all family of the original crew, crossed the Atlantic to attend. For them, this 'trip of a lifetime' provided final closure for the families.

Photo Above: 31 of the 37 US 'Cole Crew' family members crossed the Atlantic to attend the Memorial Day for this crew in Beek, Holland. (Front row, 4th from R, Researcher Roy Göttgens with on his right Chairman of the organizing society.)

(photocredit: German Frank Zumpf, grand-nephew of crew member KIA Frederick Zumpf).

Photo Middle: Cole crew wreath
Photo Bottom: Beek Lb, Holland: Remembering Plate on former crashsite B-17- 42-29971, honoring the USAAF Cole Crew 306BG/423BS



REALITY

The hotel lobby was crowded with people standing in line to get their room assignments, others were looking for the registration desk and those who had registered earlier were acting as a reception committee for the late arrivers. Identification tags revealed not only the wearer's names but their home town. They came from the four corners of our nation along with a sprinkling of attendees from across 'the pond' as well. What's this circus all about? What's going on? Home-made signs stuck on the wall gave directions to the information desk, the hospitality rooms, meeting places, lists of people and rooms which only added to the colorful atmosphere. There was a proliferation of American flags and a display of unit flags as well. The whole arrangement could well have worn the label "made in America". And this fact was literally true. This organization was chartered by President Franklin D. Roosevelt who in 1942 gave this new organization the assignment to take the war to the very heart of Nazi Germany. This force was to be stationed in England---it was a "brand new" military unit. It had to develop its own doctrine, establish a working relationship with the existing Royal Air Force (RAF), and build an air force to be reckoned with by the Nazi's. In the beginning there was only a handful of officers, a few enlisted men, no airfields, no headquarters, no intelligence gathering apparatus. Only orders from Washington!! From this humble beginning, this military unit grew into what was later called **"The Mighty Eighth Air Force."** Within a few years, this armada grew into a force of 350,000 troops, thousands of bombers and fighter aircraft. Scores of air bases sprung up across Great Britain, which were called by the locals "Little Americas". Now, 75 years later, where do we stand? The old air bases are gone and the land has been converted to agricultural use, one I know about is a turkey farm. Most of the buildings are gone, only a few 'shells remain'. Most of the aircraft were flown back to America, other military equipment was recycled or junked for scrap, there is little evidence left to indicate the powerful force that this military unit once had. Only memories remain.

This narrative is about the men and the organizations that still exist and the legacy they are preserving. The setting is New Orleans, LA. The occasion of this historical event is the 43rd annual reunion of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society. There were over 525 participants, 75 of that number being veterans of WW II!!!! This was quite an accomplishment considering the fact that these veterans are 93 years of age or older and now, after living through 75 years of history, they are still active.

This event was well planned, there was time for the sharing of experiences with old friends, conducting business and touring local attractions. The prime attraction of the reunion was the National WW II Museum, the most comprehensive collection of WW II war memorabilia in existence. Films, exhibits, multi-media experiences of military actions taken by the United States, both in the European theatre and the Pacific war effort are here. Two visits from our hotel at the airport to the down-town campus were rewarding but the time allowed was inadequate. The vets and their families tried to take it all in.

The campus of the museum, located in the heart of down-town New Orleans is magnificent. Navigating though the campus is a challenge but experiencing the total impact of its exhibits was impossible given our time-restraints. We were impacted first by a 4D experience in which the epic story of WW II under the title *Beyond All Boundaries* presented a dramatic overview of the U.S. participation in the war. *Campaigns of Coverage* is a re-creation of military campaigns showing The Road to Berlin and The Road to Tokyo. The Eighth Air Force attendees were riveted to the war effort in Europe. This is where they had seen the action. War scenes, military equipment, dioramas, films, sounds, odors, all combined to bring to remembrance the carnage of war. The terrible loss of lives, property, and the heart-ache of the victims, the uncertainty of life came to the remembrance of the 75 veterans stationed in England living these experiences three-quarters of a century ago!

Mingled among the vets was a young couple engaged in conversation. Between them they discussed these startling questions: *"All of this action, did all of this really happen? Is this for real?"* They were sincere, yet I was shocked at their lack of knowledge. This museum experience was to them nothing more than a TV documentary, or a fictitious made-up story, or a one-of-a-kind fabrication, or a game or an out-of-the-ordinary event. Where have these young people been all of their lives? For the first time ever, they were beginning to encounter reality. Seeing the loss of dignity of the human race caused by warring nations, the unending suffering, the pain, the uncertainty, their realization that what they were seeing was human lives facing unbridled fear and hopelessness. This museum experience is a reality. It exposes to the world the worst of the world and the best of the world tackling the challenge and coming to the rescue. This behavior points out the behavior (both good and bad) of members of the human race. This world-wide event really happened. Countless millions of humans, both military and civilians lost their



Earl Wassom

lives and people around the world suffered. This war forever changed the world.

History verifies the fact that just about every generation is cursed by war. Power-hungry despots seek opportunity to seize and then strengthen their claims to their ill-gotten gains. The generation of veterans in the early 1940's were called upon to protect and defend their nation against such despots. Once trained, they were assigned to a military unit and went to war. The 75 veterans viewing the exhibits of the museum today testify to the fact that what the exhibits portray is absolutely real. These men were called upon to participate in the development of what was called 'the arsenal of democracy', i.e., the provision of manpower, goods, and services for the world. We were to be a model of patriotism, a commitment for every citizen to be an example, every citizen to be a true leader and demonstrate a loyalty to the flag of our great nation. Patriotism is a symbol of almost everything we cherish. It is the fabric of our nation and represents our peace, our security, our freedom of religious worship, our family, friends, home, our blessings of rights and privileges that make up our country. Every American should honor our flag as an emblem of our patriotism. The flag symbolizes all of our rights and like-wise, it is a symbol of our duties and responsibilities. Today we have brave young men and women who are engaged in the war of their generation.

They and their loved-ones are suffering casualties and death to preserve the freedoms we enjoy. Let us show them the respect they deserve and pray to God for them and our nation. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord." (Psalms 33.12 NIV)

Earl Wassom
466th Bomb Group
Chaplain, 8th AFHS





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BATTLE
 Richard Dowdy 15 -
 376th H.B. Group, 515 Sgd
 Armorer / Tail Gunner
 51 Missions, 1944
 Coy Buford Sgt
 457 BG 726 B2S16
 Italy 1944-1945
 Niche REID - ITALY - JAN - MAY - 1945
 BOMBARDIER
 ELMER SCOTT WELCH 1ST LT PILOT 379TH B17
 George C. Bury WG 492 BG 707 SQ
 Elmo Maiden PILOT 466 BG 786 SQ
 Sam M. Progiaroma

