



th AF NEWS

VOLUME 97, NUMBER 3

- Voice of "The Mighty Eighth" -

AUGUST 1997





th AF NEWS

Magazine of

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

Managing Editor – James W. Hill

Please address questions concerning membership, address changes, distribution, and missing copies to the Membership Records Manager listed below. (*)

This magazine is dedicated to Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough, founder of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and editor of the Eighth Air Force News for 16 years.

The Eighth Air Force News (8AFN) is published four times a year (February, May, August, November). Please submit material to the editor at least 30 days before the desired issue month. We cannot acknowledge receipt of material or be responsible for its return. All unused material will be deposited in the 8th AF Archives. For advertising rates, call editor (See below). The 8AFHS does not endorse or guarantee the products of its advertisers.

DIRECTORY

8AFHS Officers Elected September 10, 1996

President.: Hubert M. Childress, 48988 Sunny Summit Lane,
Palm Desert, CA 92260 (W- 619-341-5887)

Vice Pres.: William E. Shields, Jr., P.O. Box 1438, Azle, TX 76020-1438

Secretary: Harold C. Rutka, II Artavia St., Duluth, MN 55811 (218-724-1667)

Treasurer: Charles E. Dye, 4949 San Pedro, NE, No. 87, Albuquerque, NM 87109

8AFHS Directors

Class of 1997: Thomas Reto, Norman Grant, Richard Funk

Class of 1998: Robert E. Vickers, William E. Shields, Sherman M. Small

Class of 1999: Charles E. Dye, Thomas S. Parsons, Harold Rutka

Class of 2000: Hubert M. Childress, Richard Baynes, Kenneth Nail

8AFHS Committees

Chmn of Chapter Dev: Gene Person (612-484-3621)

(Summer) 2411 Twin Lakes Rd., Manson, IA 50563 (712-297-7749)

(Winter) Box 63 Magnolia Park, Donna, TX 78537 (210-464-7507)

8AFHS Independent Contractors

Director of Information Services: Edward A. Kueppers

Box 7215, St. Paul, MN 55107

Phone (800-833-1942) Fax (612-222-7781)

* Manager of Finance, PX, and Membership Records: Arthur E. Swanson
POB 340, Strasburg, PA 17579

Phone (717-687-6257) Fax (717-687-0910)

Managing Editor: James W. Hill, 125 Ramblewood Road,

"Blueberry Hill," Pennsylvania Furnace, PA 16865

Phone (814-234-1376) Fax (814-234-0650)

The Eighth Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation (8AFMMF)

8AFMMF Officers Elected September 9, 1996

President – John E. Greenwood, 607 State Street, Alton, IL 62002

(800-477-3808) (618-462-2500)

VP/Secretary – Thomas L. Thomas, 1607 E. Willow, Wheaton, IL 60187

Treasurer – Arthur E. Swanson, PO Box 201, Strasburg, PA 17579

8AFMMF Directors

Class of 1997: Edward J. Creeden, Clifford Peterson, Roger Freeman,

Class of 1998: Arthur E. Swanson, Thomas L. Thomas, Edward A. Kueppers,
Robert E. Vickers.

Class of 1999: John E. Greenwood, Barkev Hovsepian, William E. Shields

Class of 2000: William C. Leasure, Richard M. Scott, James W. Hill

COVER STORY: "Rose of York": the Princess with her parents in front of the American Flying Fortress she had just christened.

Mission Briefing

This issue contains the first and exclusive photos of the dedication of the new American Air Museum at Duxford.

With a vintage photo of the royal family, taken in 1944 at the dedication of the "Rose of York", which was later lost in combat over the north sea.

The next issue will include full photographic coverage of the Duxford dedication ceremonies.

We also include a personal tribute to Jimmy Stewart one of our most illustrious leaders. We also have many other goodies for your perusal. So enjoy. – JWM

Contents

President's Message	3
Information Manager's Message ..	3
By-Law Changes	3
A Moment In History	4-5
Silent Heroes	6-7
The Burns Family	8
Catch 17 and 24	9
Assembling the Mighty 8th ...	10-11
Visit to Heritage Museum	12
Mail Call	13
Board Member Nominees	14
Reunions & Events	15
Mystery Photo	16
Taps	17
Reunion Documents	18-24
Mission Accomplished	25
London off Duty	26-27
Memories Are Made	27
Ads	28-29
PX Pages	30-31

President's Message

By Hubert M. Childress

During the weekend of July 12-13, my wife and I had the pleasure of visiting the Heritage Museum in Pooler, Georgia. Said visit was in accord with a commitment made to your Board of Directors.

My "thank you" note to Gen. Shuler, as he was not present, includes the following. "My observation and reaction to the approach, philosophy and information presented by the Heritage Museum, puts it (the Museum) in a class by itself". How true!

Our vast Nation is dotted with "Air Museums" displaying WWII aircraft. Even Palm Springs has one. But, with the possible exception of Wright-Patterson, all such "Museums" pale into insignificance when compared to our Heritage Museum.

Every member of our organization, with their family, owe it to themselves to spend at least a day at the Heritage Museum.

In a few days, many of our members are flying to England for the dedication of the Duxford Air Museum near Cambridge. While hoping, in the interest of equity that I am wrong, I am confident that Duxford will not represent the contribution of the 8th Air Force to the outcome of WWII as pointedly as the displays and film-footage you will see at the Heritage Museum.

In a related matter, I recently learned that two Washington, DC, Commissions, which are involved in the construction of a National Memorial to honor all the veterans of WWII, were scheduled to meet in late July to consider and make their recommendations regarding the design and location of said Memorial.

I thereafter took the liberty, on behalf of the 8th AFHSW, of faxing letters to said Commissions asking for their timely support of both design and location of the Memorial on the Capitol Mall in Washington, D.C. I trust that all of our membership will support my action and add their individual support if the opportunity arises.

In the spirit of friendship and see you in Minnesota.

Hubert M. Childress

From the Information Manager

By Ed Kueppers (1-800-833-1942)

The last three months show mail and telephone calls slightly down, probably due to the summer season.

The opening of the American Air Museum in England has caused some controversy, as a few members have complained about the frequent mailings over the years soliciting money and the general way the whole event was handled. I tend to agree with them.

One of our members has indicated he will help us get our message out on the Internet, which gives us access to over 40 million people. It should help our membership, which now stands at 71,500. Of all, the WWII Air Force Associations, our Mighty Eighth is by far the largest.

I went to Savannah to help celebrate the first anniversary of the museum's opening. It has come a long ways since last year, with new displays, programs, etc: Take it in. You will enjoy it.

In the last several months we were contacted by both the History and Discovery cable channels looking for footage, info, etc for upcoming programs.

We promptly supplied them from the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation archives and my own collection.

The history channel showed "Mission To Berlin", which in my opinion was poorly done and the Discovery channel aired a program about the B-17. While the B-17 was generally well done, the last several minutes deviated from the B-17 and concentrated on the Dresden mission.

Whatever you think of the Dresden mission, I don't like to be misled as to what the subject matter of the program will be. Also in both cases we were promised that the credits at the end of the program would show our Society name. I didn't see any.

A few years ago, the Arts and Entertainment cable channel aired Al Zimmerman's "Start Engines plus 50" 3 or four times and gave us excellent publicity at the end of the program, which resulted in many new members.

In the future any TV, radio, press, etc. wanting to use our resources will be dealt with differently.

Members with experience in this field should contact me with their ideas. Promotional material for State Chapters is still available. Contact our office for details.

Hope to see you at the reunion.

RESULTS OF PROPOSED BY-LAW CHANGES

(Amendments Passed: two-thirds requirement of 210 ballots met.)

Total Ballots Received: 315

Article VII. Paragraph B: Ballots in favor of adoption: 305.

Directors shall be chosen for a term of four years at an annual general membership meeting designated by the board of directors. Nominees must be present at the meeting and must have been a paid-up member in good standing for the preceding twelve months. Directors may not serve more than two four-year terms.

Article XII. Paragraph 4: Ballots in favor of adoption: 278

The unit advisory committee will convene at each 8AFHS Reunion and at other times they may deem proper. To receive suggestions from the membership and/or to make recommendations to the board of directors on any matter of concern to the society.

The committee shall consists of recognized unit contact and state chapter representatives who are 8AFHS members in good standing. The president will appoint the chairman, who shall not be a member of the board of directors. The chairman, or his designee, will submit a report, either in person or in writing, at each mid-year and annual reunion board meeting. The committee shall establish operational procedures which afford clear, open access to the committee by all society members.



LAST CALL!!!

This is your last chance to share your favorite recipes for inclusion in our 8AFHS cookbook. Response has been very good, and we hope to go to press this fall. If you want to be included, please send your recipes before the closing date of

September 30, 1997 to:

Carolyn Swanson, P.O. Box 340, Strasburg, PA 17579

A Moment In History

By A. Edward (Abe) Wilen, 453rd Bomb Group, 8th Air Force

I am writing this story on July 4, 1997. Two hundred and twenty-one years ago our nation was born. During the ensuing years we have had many leaders, many heroes and many people in public life who have exemplified the character, integrity, decency and humanity that America stands for.

On July 2, 1997, we lost such a national Icon. James Maitland Stewart, Brig. Gen. USAF Ret., Movie Actor, War hero and every American's ideal passed away. If anyone could be characterized as Mr. America, it was Jimmy.



Back in early 1944 while I was flying as a combat Navigator on B-24s with the 453rd Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force we were informed that the movie star, Jimmy Stewart had joined our group as our new operations officer. His job was to brief us on our missions, help plan and , at times, to de-brief after the flights ended. We were all there to fight, win a war and stay alive. We accepted him as one of us.

One day after a mission we heard an announcement, "Anyone from Pennsylvania come to operations" being from Monessen, PA, I reported in. They had photographers and wanted to take pictures of Jimmy with other Pennsylvania airmen.

There were 4 of us and Jimmy, Keith Dibble, Roger Counselman, Joseph Fiorentino and myself, A. Edward (Abe) Wilen. We took 3 photos. One where we were looking at a map of Germany, where I was sitting at the edge of a table on the extreme right pointing to the map. I was the Navigator of the group. On another the 5 of us were walking away from the plane "Male Call" with Jimmy in the center and me at the extreme right again. The 3rd was in a Jeep with Jimmy at the wheel while I was in the back seat.

Jimmy, a Command Pilot flew 20 missions over enemy territory. A month later on May 8, 1944 on my 20th we were shot down by enemy fighters and spent the next year in 3 German Prisoner of War camps starting with Stalag Luft 3 where the "Great Escape" took place. As a result I lost touch with Jimmy Stewart.

After liberation and after the end of the war I went back to the University of Pittsburgh to get my degree and went into business in Monessen, PA.

In 1965 I read a story in the column of Kasper Monahan, the movie editor of the "Pittsburgh Press" that Jimmy Stewart was being honored in Pittsburgh by the Movie Theater owners of America. I contacted the editor. He arranged for me to get together with Jimmy prior to the banquet at the William Penn Hotel. The editor brought his photographer and I brought a friend who was my walking and golfing partner, as well as my attorney, Bernard Shire.

Jimmy and I reminisced over the 1944 photos which I brought along. The photographer took photos which I have copies of. Jimmy was just as down to earth and as regular a fellow as I remembered.

Over the passing years I kept watching his movies and following his career.

Early in 1983 I received a letter from the 2nd Air Division which consisted of the 14 B-24 Bomb Groups that flew out of England in World War II. Our presence was requested in Indiana, PA on the week-end of May 20, 1983 to celebrate the 75th birthday of Jimmy Stewart. His hometown of Indiana was honoring him with the dedication of a bronze statue, a long parade and a banquet. Once again I brought along my golfing attorney who was in the photos in 1965 and again in the photo of that week-end in Indiana, PA 18 years later.





Jimmy had been in other Bomb Groups in the 2nd Air Division before and after his stay at our 453rd so all were invited.

Those of us who had flown on missions with Jimmy reminisced at City Hall after the statue unveiling and at the banquet, Saturday night. Again we took pictures, which I have and reviewed the 1944 photos. Jimmy was a regular fellow and one of us again fighting the Air War over Germany.

Next in October 1987, Jimmy was being honored by the Radio Stations of Pennsylvania at the Vista Hotel in Pittsburgh. I was contacted by the committee from Indiana, PA whom I had met before, during Jimmy's birthday celebration. Jimmy and his wife, Gloria, were giving a reception the afternoon before the banquet in their suite at the Vista to thank the committee for their marvelous efforts during his birthday celebration. They invited me since I lived in the area and they recalled we flew together during W.W.II.

I asked if I could bring a quest? He was Andrew S. Low Major General, USAF, Ret. who was Jimmy's assistant Operations Officer and his roommate in the 453rd Bomb Group. Andy himself was shot down July 29, 1944 and was in the same 3 POW camps that I was in. They said great! I phoned Andy. He came down from Narragansett, RI. I picked him up at the Pittsburgh Airport the afternoon of the affair and we went right down to the Vista Hotel.



In their suite Jimmy and his wife, Gloria, stood at one end of the room and the people from Indiana, PA went through a receiving line shaking hands with their home town Hero and in turn being thanked for their efforts several years ago. At the end of the line was Andy Low and myself. When Jimmy saw Andy, his mouth dropped and they grabbed each other as the long lost buddies they were. By then he knew and remembered me since I had shown him the 1944 photos often enough. Again we took photos which I have and keep reviewing. The photos were of Jimmy, Andy and myself and Gloria, Andy and myself.

Jimmy was called to a press conference and Gloria, Andy and I were left in the suite since the rest of the group had left. The 3 of us spent the next hour talking about Jimmy, their family and the war. Gloria was friendly, down to earth and a devoted and understanding wife and mother.

After Jimmy returned the 4 of us spoke a few minutes then we proceeded down to the banquet. On the way down, Jimmy was continually approached by fans and admirers who wanted to speak to, to touch or just be near the man. They ignored the rest of us despite the fact that Andy Low outranked Jimmy, A 2 star General against a 1 star General.



We parted, the Stewarts to the head table and Andy and I elsewhere in the room. That was the last time I saw Gloria or Jimmy. Although he is as close to me as the movies I see of him on television and the photos of and with him from 1944, 1965, 1983 and 1987 it is no longer the same. Those of us who rubbed shoulders with, as well as the rest of the country who knew him through the screen have lost a man we looked up to, admired and can all relate to.

As I look back at my "Moment in History" when I first really met, became friendly and photographed with Jimmy Stewart on April 7, 1944 at our 453rd Bomb Group airfield in Attleborough, England and the various times our paths have crossed since, I feel that my life has been enriched by knowing and having associated with a man who on the 4th of July, 1997 best exemplifies what America stands for.

EDUCATION REPORT

BUTLER AREA

'Silent heroes' say a few words

Students interview Eighth Air Force vets for memorial book

By Maria Guzzo
TRIBUNE-REVIEW

When members of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society decided to build a memorial to honor their fallen compatriots and exhibit their efforts in World War II, they considered using typical materials — glass, stone or metal.

But when Jim Clements heard about the accomplishments and feats of the fighters, he conceived of a memorial that would commemorate their deeds forever — a book.

So for two years, the Butler Senior High School English teacher has instructed his advanced placement English students to interview and write the stories of 64 veterans, mostly from western Pennsylvania. Their 224-page endeavor has been published and will be distributed to the students and their subjects at a book launch at the high school today, one day before the 52nd anniversary of V-E Day.

V-E Day marks the day the surrender of Germany was announced, officially ending World War II in Europe.

Clements heard about the Eighth Air Force heroes through his Slippery Rock Township, Butler County, neighbor Ralph "Hap" Nicholas Jr., president of the Western Wing of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society.

"He told me he was a navigator on a B-24 bomber. He started to tell me about it and he underwent a transformation. He became 18 again. I was mesmerized," Clement said.

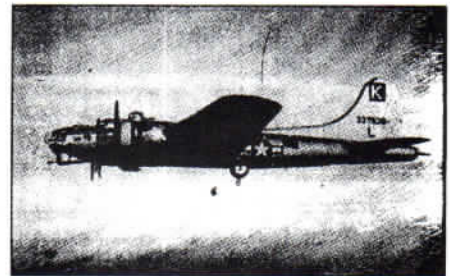
"He asked me what I thought the memorial should be and I said, 'I think you need to document what you told me.' He asked, 'Who would write that?' and I said, 'I think my students could.'"

Senior Julie Croft, 18, of Center Township, Butler County, heard about the project at the beginning of the school year.

"I was kind of excited. I've never been published before," she said. "This is better than just getting a grade on it."

Croft interviewed Rita Strobel Geibel of Chicora, Butler County, the only woman in the book, who worked in the Air Force photography lab where pictures of the action were developed.

"She has a big collection of photographs from the war. She told me stories about how bombs would go by while she was working in the lab and how it was always dark in there," Croft



A STORY TO TELL

'Silent Heroes Among Us,' a 224-page tribute to the soldiers of the Eighth Air Force who died in World War II, was written by advanced English students at Butler Senior High School. The book is a compilation of stories from soldiers such as Frank Kacinko, at right, a waist gunner for the 447th bomb group who lived to tell about his missions while flying on 'The Radar Queen,' above.

said. Croft said she was surprised to interview a woman who was so near to the action.

"I didn't know any women actually went over there then," Croft said.

"She told us about how they wore pants, that they started the slacks thing. That kind of interested me."

The class project was more than just a writing assignment.

"It's neat listening to them. Nobody ever told me stories about the war before. They have so much to tell and it's a lot better than reading history books," Croft said.

Senior Rachel Hinterlang, 17, of Butler spent four hours one Sunday at the home of Kal Shonthaler in Erie, Erie County.

"I talked to him and his wife, Evelyn, made dinner. It was real nice. He was pretty open. He seems to have only kept the good things in his mind and all the bad memories seem to have been blocked out. He was on the ground crew and the worst they would see is if a plane didn't come back they'd know a crew didn't make it."

"They were teen-agers once, too," Hinterlang said. "We may be afraid of going to college and having a lot of pressure and are worried about going on with life, but they literally faced life or death."

Clements said he was stunned by what his students carried away from their visits to the veterans. "Some of (the veterans) really opened up. Some of them said things they never told

anybody. Some were smuggled out by the French underground, some escaped over the Pyrenees mountains," Clements said.

"The students asked what should we call the book and we came up with 'Silent Heroes Among Us.' The kids couldn't believe these people were walking around and haven't said anything about their past. These are guys who put their lives on the line for this country who lived to tell about it and remain humble about it."

The high school's Golden Tornado Foundation donated \$6,000 to have the book published.

Dick Steinlechner, owner of New Horizon Publishing in New Wilmington, Lawrence County, published the book and expects to continue publishing it.

"The first run was 500 copies and I can almost guarantee you they'll be back within two weeks and they'll order many, many more," he said.

Steinlechner, who has owned his company for six years, said it normally publishes Christian books, but he was intrigued at the content and the quality of "Silent Heroes Among Us."

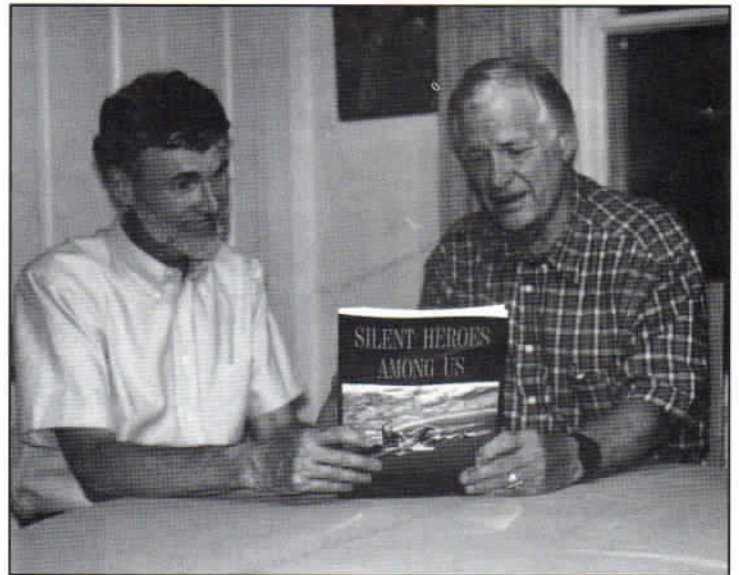
"It's better writing than I've seen from some of the professionals. It's real heartfelt type of writing," Steinlechner said.

He was so impressed with the work, he sent a copy to the U.S. Secretary of Education.

"It's phenomenal. The writing quality will shock you," he said. "I not only think it will sell well, I think you'll be shocked that high school students put this together."

"Silent Heroes Among Us" sells for \$24.95. To purchase the book, contact the school at 287-8721.





Clockwise: Some of the student authors gather at Butler High School's welcoming sign on the day of the Book Launch May 7, 1997; Emily Thomas and Glenn Rojohn unveil an enlargement of the cover of *Silent Heroes Among Us* at the climax of the ceremonies. The cover features a lithograph by California artist Gregg Thompson depicting two B-17s locked in a mid-air collision over Germany. Mr. Rojohn flew the top plane in the picture. Emily Thomas interviewed Mr. Rojohn concerning his experience; Jim Clements and "Hap" Nicholas looking at a finished copy of *Silent Heroes...*; "What a crowd! This is exciting! The last time I was this excited was the night of the day I got married." This was the opening statement by "Hap" Nicholas co-founder and president of the Western Wing of the Pennsylvania 8th Air Force Historical Society as he welcomed everyone to the launching ceremony; Featured speaker John G. Brosky, Senior Judge, Superior Court of Pennsylvania, Major general Retired requesting the autograph of former pilot Glenn Rojohn whose plane was featured on the cover of *Silent Heroes...*

The Burns Family

By R. B. Hastie, Huntington Beach, CA



Retired Maj. Gen James O. Frankosky, USAF, left and Retired Colonel Harry Grover, President, National Capital Area Chapter, 8AFHS participated in the annual Memorial Day Services at the tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery.

OUR CORRECTION NEEDS A CORRECTION OUR APOLOGIES PLEASE

In the last issue this correction was printed, however the name of the town was misspelled, it should have been Steeple Morden, not Steeple Borden, again our apologies.

CORRECTION: Robert R. Garlich, Lt. Col. USAF (ret.) and former member of the 355th FG with 6.5 E/A to his credit, wrote to Jim Hill in response to my story, "Return to Bassingbourn," in the February 1997 issue of the 8th AF News. Mr. Garlich informs me that the 355th FG, based at Steeple Morden, was never spun off from the 8th AF to join the 12th AF. He also states that six P-47s could not take off abreast from the runways at Steeple Morden. I apologize for the incorrect statements in my story. Kevin M. Pearson.

"The music has ended but the melody lingers on..." was played by the dance bands at Covent Garden as one band migrated off stage and the new band took over. It was a September evening in 1944 with the usual lively crowd on the dance floor as I stood on the mezzanine looking down. A slender, dark haired girl on the edge of the dance floor looked over her shoulder and up in my direction. Her large dark eyes set me in motion, and I was dancing with Gladys for the first of many times to come. We spent the rest of the evening together until closing time. As we walked home, I learned a little bit about "this happy breed."

Evacuation to Suffolk was Glands' lot during the early days of the war. Following a Christmas home, she was in the LNER station on Liverpool Street the evening of December 29, 1940. This was the evening the Luftwaff had selected to incinerate East London after bombing the waterworks on the banks of the Thames. As the great raid began, Gladys spontaneously canceled her travel plans and took to the streets. Through the east end, past St. Paul's, down Fleet Street and the Strand and passing Parliament to Millbank at last reaching Page Street and 113 Tothill House, she returned home. No longer a little girl, she had passed her test by fire and graduated with frizzled hair, no eyebrows, and a spark pitted cap and gown. By the time I met her she was riveting Halifax wing flaps in an unheated loft. Hitler had a formidable foe.

London was the venue for most of my 48 hour passes. It was full of life and entertainment. Occasionally the wail of sirens focused everyone's attention on the arrival of a V1. After its explosive crash, the people in the street would speculate on its destructive location. This weapon always announced its approach with the rattling sound of its engine which would cut off moments before diving into the ground. One murky evening Gladys and I were leaning on the rail of Tothill House's inner court when the sky flashed red. I began counting "one thousand and one, one thousand and two, one thousand and three, etc...one thousand and twenty," finally deciding that the flash was not the result of an explosion. Then the shock wave hit. This was one of the first V2s which hit the city totally unannounced. Rocket powered and arching through the stratosphere, another link in our mutual mindless destruction had arrived.

In late October, I arrived, and Gladys was in bed with a red nose and dark circles under her eyes suffering from a head cold. She howled when Mr. Burns invited me in. The tiny apartment served Mr. and Mrs. Burns, their older daughter, granddaughter (4 years old), Gladys, and a son-in-law (Navy) when he could get leave. Mr. Burns was an air raid warden twelve hours per night, seven nights per week in a zone near home.

On this visit I learned about earlier family events. One night during the blitz, Mrs. Burns and her daughter elected not to descend to the air raid shelter at the foot of Tothill House. Her daughter's twin babies were a little croupy and the shelter was damp. Huddled in a bedroom, they heard "the bomb" glance off the roof and destroy their assigned shelter. Everyone lost. The blast effect cleaned out the apartment through the living room windows, depositing their furniture and household goods in the courtyard three stories below. Mr. Burns hears about the hit by work of mouth but cannot leave his sector until hours later. In due course he learns of his family's survival and traces them to a hospital. To commemorate that evening they have a news clipping of their daughter.

Catch 17 and 24

by D. V. Chase, 44th BG

B-17 or B-24, which was the better heavy? Assigned from one to the other - and then back again - we endured a frustrating two-month period in the spring of '43 as the AAF played yo-yo with our bomber allegiance.

Prior to our first frustration, we ten eager airmen lined up in a hangar near Lincoln, Nebraska, and received our Pacific gear: shark repellent, machetes, netting, quinine, 45s. We were scheduled to leave Lincoln the next morning for points west - far west.

But the following morning found us again lined up in the hangar. Disheartened, we returned all the gear. Our pilot, Charles "Whit" Whitlock, had received new orders. Our B-24 summarily taken, we were sent to Salina, Kansas, for a month of transitional B-17 training. What a blow! We cursed the U.S. Army and reviled the stupid Pentagoners. Oh, how we bitched! Finally, Harold Schwab, our bombardier, had his fill of the grippers, and he said something to the effect that, "If you don't like the transfer, go home to your mommies." He stressed the word "mommies."

The transition wasn't all that bad. We adjusted okay. In fact, the 17s proved to be good ships; didn't have the speed, range, nor bomb capacity of the 24s, but they were readily maneuverable, reliable, air worthy craft. Their empennages, at least, were sturdy, a feature that some early-model 24s lacked.

Checked out - more or less - in our 17, we left Kansas for Prestwick, Scotland, with a refueling stop and weather briefing at Gander, Newfoundland, before crossing the Pond. However, reports of heavy Atlantic weather and unfavorable winds kept us grounded for about two weeks. Finally, we got the green light and headed east.

The weather program had called for altocumulus along our route, tops eight or nine thousand, with an assisting light tail wind. Some 300 miles out, however, the clouds sloped upward. We ascended lazily at first, as on a smooth-riding escalator, twelve, fifteen, seventeen thousand. Then swelling cumulus popped through the level tops. Light turbulence persuaded us to seek smoother air. To stay above the flowering cu's we nosed up through twenty-four thousand. No problem yet, even though we were heavily weighted with various supplies. But still the non-forecasted clouds continued to puff and mushroom and the 17s climbed, twenty-six, twenty-eight thousand, and the roiling cu's became cumulonimbus with accompanying moderate turbulence. It was getting rough, and higher clouds loomed ahead.

An adjacent 17 left our company, nosing downward; then another; another (we counted five of them). They disappeared into the undercast, apparently heading for the deck. We reached the point-of-no-return about the time we touched twenty-nine thousand feet above sea level. It was a time of momentous decision for Whit. Should we descend through the turbulence and embedded thunderstorms and take our chances of reaching Scotland with the other low-rovers, possibly wave-hopping while fighting unpredicted headwinds? Stay on top? Can we? Return to Gander? Whit asked the radio operator if radio silence had been broken and if any pilots had indicated they were returning to Gander. None had. "Okay, we don't either," Whit said on intercom. "We'll stay on top."

Lordy, just how high will this bird fly before her wings run out of supportive air? Oxygen: enough to get us thorough? Fuel enough? God, it's cold. We've got to make it. These and other prayerful thoughts filled our minds and further chilled our bodies, sedentary to conserve oxygen. And still our 17 strained upward.

"Pilot to crew," Whit called on intercom, "We're at thirty thousand one hundred and fifty, if our altimeter is correct. Oatmeal stick: high as she'll go...but we'll be okay."

We prayed he was right.

Ahead and to the sides, flat-topped anvils now crowned the cumulonimbus. Some towered far above as we snaked around them. To the north and south, other 17s likewise avoided the higher thunderstorm cells. The 17s looked like a disorganized flock of ducks preparing for a water landing: heads held high, out-stretched wings canted into the horizon, tails low and dragging.

Slowly the anvils dissipated. The mountainous clouds gradually relaxed and merged with the altos, allowing us to leave the tail-dragging heights for more tolerable altitudes. Our oxygen supply was depleted somewhere between twelve and ten thousand on our downward slide. Ah, but now we could breath nature's oxygen.

Little more than fumes powered the engines as we entered Scottish airspace. After landing at Prestwick we performed the half-serious, half-frivolous ritual of testing earth's solidity and affectionately patting the plane's fuselage, a natural follow-up to the end of a scary flight. Our 17 was like a giant friend incarnate: a beautiful, high-soaring, life-saving sweetheart. Confidently, we knew she'd carry us safely through our combat tour. No sir, average-weighted 24s never could have topped those clouds!

Unexpectedly, our exuberance was short-lived. The first ominous news we heard was that only one of the five low-roader 17s made it safely across the water. Apparently the other four, in their battle against turbulence and headwinds, ran out of fuel before reaching Ireland or Scotland. A second blow assaulted us when we learned of our new orders: Leave the 17 at Prestwick, proceed to a base near Shipdham and prepare to reorient ourselves with the flight characteristics of the B-24. Shafted again! Over the past two months we had gained confidence in the 17. We had rationalized her bomb-carrying and flight range limitations, coped with her all-electrical system, respected her sturdiness, and were at ease with her overall performance. 24s? They were like some long-lost dream, a pleasant but fading memory.

It was bomb aimer Harold Schwab again - God rest his soul - unflappable, wry-humored Schwab, who arrested our mutinous stirrings. "Navigator," he addressed Robert Ricks, "which way is west?" Ricks pointed. Deadpan and wordless, Schwab picked up his B4 bag and started to walk away. "Hey, where you going, Schwab?" someone asked. "Home," he answered, "I'm just not interested in this war any more." Perhaps it was the humor, sardonic or genuine, that helped us through several unpleasant incidents both in training and, for awhile, in combat.

With more reluctance than enthusiasm, we reported to the 44th BG and came full circle, back to our 24s. Unbeknown to us at the time, the Ploesti low-level mission was less than two months away and the 24s, in preparation, were hedgehopping over the English countryside. So, from recently testing the ultimate height of a 17, we soon found ourselves in the company of dozens of 24s, nestled wing to wing, skimming the greenery like speedy fighter bombers. Schwab pretty well summed up our feelings one day when he said, "This war is one hell of a puzzlement."

But after several missions from North Africa, flying pre-invasion strikes at Sicily and Italy, and especially after that historic day of 1 August 1943, our bomber allegiance truly belonged to the versatile B-24. A 17 just didn't have the range to make a Libya-Ploesti round trip. Nor could the 17 match our Lib's bombload: low-altitude speed either. And wasn't that the name of the strategic air war? Range and Payload?

And yet, for 36 years we few survivors of Whit's crew have been indebted to a gracious lady, a sleek B-17 for cradling us above thirty thousand feet over the Atlantic and to safety so that we could help in the war effort - in a B-24.

So which was the better heavy? How many other Catch-22 imponderables did W.W.II evoke?

Assembling The Mighty Eighth

By Leslie A. Lemox, 95th BG

Of all the stories that have been written, and movies that have been shown, about the 8th Air Force, very little attention has been given to what was involved in assembling 1200 B-17s and B-24s each day, to get them in formation to carry out a strike against Germany. Certainly showing bombers under attack by fighters, or encountering heavy flak, was a reality, and is interesting to watch. Also, stories about some of the rougher missions is interesting reading. But what was going on over England, each morning, could get just as scary to the crews as the time spent over some of the targets. The planning, and coordination, that had to be accomplished during the night, by the operations planners of each Group, so that the crews could be briefed, was unbelievable. If the planners had failed to do their jobs properly, the skies over England would have been a free for all among Bomb Groups. The rendezvous points, altitude, and times had to be precise, and known, by all the crews, before the Eighth Air Force could get in formation. The success of the planners, in accomplishing their mission, enabled the Eighth Air Force to become the most powerful air armada every assembled. In my view, how this was accomplished is one of the major untold stories of the war.

I was a pilot in the 95th Bomb Group and what follows is a typical mission from a crew member perspective, as I remember it:

Early in the evening, our Squadron Operations would post the names of the crews that were scheduled to fly the following day. There were two ways we could be notified, if the Group had been alerted to fly. One was by means of lights on the front of the orderly room, and the other with raising of colored flags. If a green light was on, the Group was alerted; if a red light was on we would fly; and if a white light was on, the Group would stand down. The light was monitored frequently throughout the evening to learn our status. Normally, we would know before going to bed if we would be flying the next day.

On the morning of a mission, the CQ (charge of quarters) would awaken the crews about four or five o'clock, depending on take-off time. The question we always asked was, "What is the fuel load?" and, "What is the bomb load?" If he said, "full Tokyo tanks" we knew we were going deep into Germany. Shortly after being awakened, ("6-by") trucks would start shuttling us to the mess hall. We were for-

tunate always to have all the fresh eggs we could eat, when flying a mission. After breakfast, the trucks carried us to the briefing room. All of the crew members attended the main briefing, and then the Navigators, Bombardiers and Radio operators went to a specialized briefing. At the main briefing, in addition to the target information, anti-aircraft guns, fighter escort and route in, we received a sheet showing our location in the formation, the call signs for the day and all the information we would need, to assemble our Group and get in the bomber stream.

After briefing, we got into our flight gear, drew our parachutes and loaded onto the trucks for a ride to our plane. We were now guided by the time on our daily briefing sheet. We started engines at a given time and watched for the airplane we would be flying in formation with to taxi past, then we would taxi behind him. We were following strict radio silence.

We were now parked, nose to tail, around the perimeter, on both sides of the active runway, and extremely vulnerable to a fighter strafing attack. At the designated take-off time, a green flare would be fired and take-off would begin. Every thirty seconds an airplane started take-off roll. We were lined up on the perimeter so that the 12 airplanes of the high squadron would take off first, followed by the lead and then the low squadron.

Each Group had a pattern for their airplanes to fly during climb to assembly altitude. Some would fly a triangle, some a rectangle and our Group flew a circle, using a "Buncher" (a low frequency radio station) which was located on our station. The patterns for each Group fit together like a jigsaw puzzle. Unfortunately, strong winds aloft would destroy the integrity of the patterns, and there was considerable over running of each other's pattern.

I flew during the winter of '44 and '45, and many of our take offs were made before daylight. It was not uncommon to climb through several thousand feet of cloud overcast. Also it was not uncommon to experience one or two near misses while climbing through the clouds, although you would never see the other airplane. You knew you had just had a near miss, when suddenly the airplane would shake violently as it hit the prop wash of another plane. It was a wonderful feeling to break out on top, so you could watch for other planes, to keep from running into each other. To add to the

congestion that we were creating, the Royal Air Force Lancasters, Halifaxes, and Wimpys would be returning from their night missions and flying through our formations. Needless to say pilots had to keep their heads on a swivel and eyes put of the cockpit.

After take off, the squadron lead would fire a flare, every 30 seconds, so that we could keep him located and enable us to get into formation quicker. The color of our Group flare was red-green. The first thing you would see, when breaking out of the clouds, was a sky filled with pyrotechnics. Now you had to search the sky for the Group flare, which would identify the lead airplane of your Squadron. Once you had it located, you could adjust your pattern to climb more quickly into formation with him. As each airplane pulled into formation, they would also fire a flare, with the lead plane, which then made it much easier for the following aircraft to keep him in sight. I think most crew members would probably agree that the pyrotechnic show, in the skies over England, in the morning when the Eighth was assembling, was a rare sight to behold.

The order of progression for assembling the Eighth Air Force was first to assemble the Flight elements, the Squadrons, the Groups, the Combat wings, the Divisions and, finally, the Air Force.

As soon as the four Squadron elements were formed, the high, low and second elements would take up their positions on the lead element, to form a Squadron. When the three Squadrons had completed assembly, it was necessary to get into Group formation. This was accomplished by having the three Squadrons arrive over a preselected fix at a precise time and heading. The high and low Squadrons were separated from the lead Squadron by 1000 feet and, after getting into Group formation, would maintain their positions, by following the lead Squadron.

It was now necessary to get into the Combat Wing formation. We were in the 13th Combat Wing, which consisted of three Bomb Groups: the 95th, the 100th and the 390th. Whichever Group was leading the Wing that day, would arrive over a preselected point, at a precise time and heading. Thirty seconds later, the second Group would pass that fix, followed by the third Group, thirty seconds later. We were now in Combat Wing formation. The navigators in the lead airplanes, had a tremendous responsibility, to

ensure that the rendezvous times were strictly adhered to.

There were three Divisions in the Eighth, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The 1st and 3rd consisted of B-17s only and the 2nd B-24s. The B-24s were faster than the BB-7s, but the B-17s could fly higher, therefore the two were not compatible in formation. As a result the 1st and 3rd would fly together and the 2nd would fly separately.

Now that the Groups were flying in Combat Wing formation, it was necessary to assemble the Divisions. This was usually accomplished at the "coast pit"—a city on the coast selected as the departure point fix. The Group leader in each Combat Wing knew his assigned position in the Division, and the precise time that he should arrive at the coast out departure point, to assume that position in the Division formation. The lead Group in the Division which had been selected to lead the Eighth on the mission, would be first over the departure fix. Thirty seconds after the last Group in the first Wing passed that point, the second Wing would fall in trail and so on, until all Combat Wings were flying in trail and the Division would be formed. One minute later, the lead Group in the other Division would fly over that point, and the Combat Wings in that Division would follow the same procedure to get in formation. When all of its Combat Wings were in trail, the Eighth Air Force B-17 strike force was formed and on its way to the

target. At the same time the 2nd Division B-24s were assembling in a similar manner and also departing to their target.

A major problem that presented itself on each mission was that the bomber stream was getting too stretched out. It was not uncommon for the headlines in stateside newspapers—in trying to show the strength of our Air Force—to state how the first group of bombers were bombing Berlin while the last Group was still over the English Channel. It made great headlines but it was an undesirable situation. It meant that the Groups were out of position and not keeping the proper separation. Furthermore, it was almost impossible to catch up and get back in the desired formation. This made the entire bomber stream more vulnerable to fighter attacks.

Finally, our planners figured out what we were doing wrong. When the first Group departed the coast out fix, it started its climb to what would be the bombing altitude. Then, as each succeeding Group departed that fix, it too would start climbing. The problem with this procedure was that, as soon as the first Group started its climb, its true airspeed would start to increase, and it would encounter different wind velocities. Now it would pull away from the Group in back of it, and the stretchout of the bomber stream would begin. By the time the last Group had reached the coast out, to start its climb, the first Group would be leveled off, with a true airspeed approaching 250 miles per hour, and the bomber stream would be

really stretching out.

The fix to this problem that had been frustrating the Bomber crews for so long was pretty simple. We would no longer start climbing at the coast out, but instead, at a designated time, all Groups would start climbing, irrespective of position. This meant that we all would have similar true airspeeds and be influenced by the same winds aloft. That took care of the problem. It was still possible for a Group to be out of position, because of poor timing, but the entire bomber stream wouldn't get all stretched out.

When you consider the way our Air Traffic Control system operates today, and all the facilities at their disposal to guide each individual airplane through the sky to ensure its safety, it's almost unbelievable that we were able to do what we did. To think of launching hundreds of airplanes, in a small airspace, many times in total darkness, loaded with bombs, with complete radio silence, and no control from the ground, and do it successfully day after day, by young aircrews, with minimum experience is absolutely mind boggling.

The accomplishments of the Eighth Air Force will be reviewed by historians from now on. There will never be another air armada to compare. I feel confident they will never cease to be amazed at our ability to assemble hundreds of heavy Bombers, under the conditions we were faced with, into the devastating strike force we now fondly refer to as "The Mighty Eighth."



Lacy Lackey, President of the Pennsylvania Chapter, presenting guest speaker Don Brooks with a resolution on becoming an honorary life member of the chapter. Don participated in the Greenland Expedition Society's Expedition to Greenland and showed slides of their recovery of a P-38 there. He also participated in the 50th Anniversary of D-Day when the veteran paratroopers reenacted their jump-in tribute to their fallen comrades. There were 170 attendees at the sixth annual reunion of the Pennsylvania Chapter which was held in the Reading area in conjunction with the Mid-Atlantic Air Show June 6-9, 1997. Art and Carolyn Swanson co-chaired the event.

8AF Historical Society President Visits Heritage Museum

Hubert Childress, National President of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society visited The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum on Sunday, July 13, 1997.

It was the first visit to the museum for Childress who became president of the 20,000 member society in October 1996. "This is a wonderful facility to honor all who served in The Mighty Eighth," he said. "I am very, very impressed with the Heritage Museum." Childress served in the Eighth during World War II as P-38 pilot in the 7th Photo Recon Group.

Childress and his wife, Kathleen, spent the entire day in the museum viewing exhibits depicting the 55 year history of the Eighth Air Force as well as visiting the memorial gardens, library and art gallery. Childress also met with members of the Savannah Wing of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society – Art Howe, Don Hahn, Bob Austin, Wilbur Bell, Wes Thibodaux - and with Joe Rosenbloom, president of the South Carolina Chapter of the Society.

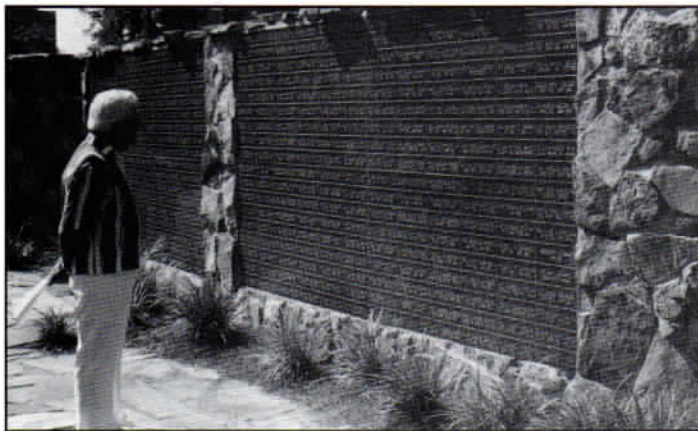
"We are very pleased that Col. and Mrs. Childress could visit the Heritage Museum and stay the entire day," said Lt.Gen. E. G. Shuler, Jr., museum CEO. "That gave them the opportunity to see the entire museum in some depth. I believe they enjoyed their visit and gained a good understanding of what the Heritage Museum is set up to do."

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society was created in 1975 to preserve the history of the Eighth and give former members an organization to stay in touch with each other. In the mid-1980s the Society appropriated the first \$120,000 seed money to get the Heritage Museum started. Although the Society and the Heritage Museum are separate legal entities with separate boards and staffs they still maintain a close relationship. In 1996 the Society sponsored a matching funds campaign that netted the Heritage Museum more than \$70,000 in contributions.

"We appreciate very much the continuing support of the Society," said Shuler. "It is vital to the long term growth of the Heritage Museum."



Top: Hubert Childress (third from right), President of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, visited The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum on July 13, 1997. Posing with him in the Museum Rotunda are (left to right): Bob Austin (Savannah Wing), Jack Prescott, Museum Volunteer Coordinator; Don Hahn (Savannah Wing); Edward Morgan (Savannah Foundation) Kathleen Childress; Joe Rosenbloom, President of the South Carolina Chapter, 8AFHS; and Art Howe, Savannah Wing; **BL:** Hubert Childress carefully examines the Wall of Valor. The Wall is made up of 4" x 12" stone plaques containing the names of individual Eighth Air Force veterans or crews; **BR:** Hubert explains to his wife, Kathleen, how he shot the first reconnaissance photos of the German ME-163 Komet while flying a reconnaissance mission with the 7th Photo Recon Group during World War II. The Komet, on loan from the National Air and Space Museum, is on display at the Heritage Museum everyday.





As a former B-26 pilot, 320th Bomb Group, 12th Air Force, Mediterranean Area, I read with interest your story about "Sexy Betsy" belonging to the 555th Bomb Squadron of the 366th Bomb Group. However, as a pilot of the 320th Bomb Group, I challenge the statistics of the 555th as being the highest of any of the 11 group of B-26s. Attached is a history of the 320th Bomb Group as developed in the publication "Saga of the 320th Bomb Group—a publication by Victor Tannehill. The record speaks for itself. The men of the 320th hold their heads high for their accomplishments! Edwin J. Pesek, 7247 Arbor Oaks Dr., Dallas, TX 75248.

B-17s. I read much about B-17's, which was my airplane, however, I don't see too much on the medium aircraft, such as B-25's, B-26's and AA20's. I'm interested in their total losses, average altitude on the IP, personnel losses, required missions and the total tonnage of bombs dropped on enemy targets in the European theater. Perhaps there is a book that would entertain these thoughts. I would be pleased to hear from anyone who could shed some light on these subjects. John Watson 2M#4040-2. P.O. Box 489, Southold, New York 11971-0489.

Re (97-2) and the cover and brief data on Lt. Jack W. Mathis of the 359th BS, 303rd BG: That 8th AF Mission No. 45 to the U-boat yard of Bremer Vulkan Schiffbau at Vegesack of 18 Mar 1943 resulted in excellent results from Mathis' Sq. and his 303rd BG. Representative are the results from the 305th BG, which scored 76% within the 1,000-ft. circle around the AP (or MPI). Such gave a CEP of 698 ft., an MRE or Circular Error of 740 ft. and a SE (Standard Error) of 592 ft. R.H. Hodges 486th BG.

ATTN: P-38 and P-47 Pilots of WW2 (ETO). Seeking contact with pilots of above planes that pulled up on wing and escorted B-17 of 457th BG on June 29, 1944 west of Liepzig. Tail of B-17 was: 748 Bomb Sq. 8th AF. 1st Division 94th Combat Wing. B-17 had 2 engines out. #2 Windmilling and #4 feathered bomb bay doors were open and we were cleaning house! Contact: Walt Creigh, 1972 Colleen Dr. Los Altos, CA 94024. Ph. 415-964-8656 or 965-8731. Thanks for your help we made it home!

Does the 388th BG Association have a video library that I might contact for information. I am searching for a video tape and thought perhaps someone in the reading audience may help. I viewed this tape several months ago and it showed the B-17 planes from England landing in Poltava, Russia during WWII. I recognized myself stepping off the plane just as a photographer was recording the event. I would like to obtain a copy of this video tape. Dillard Williams

I've been trying to find some way to contact any flier of a P-47 who just might have been flying a sortie on D-Day plus one over Utah Beach in Normandy. I would appreciate any help that anyone may have to offer. R. Keith Ostrum, 2931 Burton Avenue, Erie, PA 16504-1443.

Do you know any of these old "fly-boys"? They were a B-17 crew shot down in August 1944 in northern France and were evading the Germans when they were turned in to Gestapo agents by a collaborator. Then fate turned around in Angouleme and they were rescued by the Maquirs and F.F.I. Sept. 1, 1944. Names and home state: Lt. B. J. Lemki (OH) Lt. Bill Trimble (LA) Lt. Cordell Summers (CA) Sgt. John Schaffer (AL) T/Sgt. Ed Tracey (NY) S/Sgt. K. P. Dornil (KY) S/Sgt. P.K. Courtad (OH) S/Sgt. W.A. "Bud" Armstrong (MO) S/Sgt. Joseph Acker (AL) T/Sgt. Jack Mackey (GA). I was an evadee in the same area and was liberated near Gemozac Sept. 10. I need to get in touch with any of these old 8th Air Forcers. Robert Wilcox, RR 2, Box 205, Blue Mount, IL 62513-9557.

I wish to locate two 8th AF bomber pilots who became POW's in 1945. They are Jerry M. Roberts 0722219 and Bernard J. Boucher 0684253. Any references will be appreciated. N. Malayney, 519 Semple St., Pittsburgh, PA 15213-4315, (412) 683-0169.

Who Shot Down Theo Nau? Former Luftwaffe ME-109 pilot shot down by a USAAC P-47 on 14 Jan. 45, 1200-1215 hrs, approx. 20K north of Kaiserslautern, Germany. Eager to correspond. Contact: David C. Lustig, Jr., USAFR, 54 Oakland Ave., Walden, NY 12586-1410.

For a new book by the author of One Last Look, Little Friends, and Round The Clock, if any of you who flew fighters, or maintained them, in World War Two, the Korean War, Vietnam or the Gulf War would like to share a few of your experiences, I would be very glad to hear from you. Please contact Philip Kaplan, 49 Prestbury Road, Cheltenham, Glos., GL52 2BY, England.

You asked about how various aircrew positions were customized or modified to suit individual crew members. I seem to remember (perhaps time has dulled my memory) that the tail turret on the B24s had a little folding door or screen in back. As any tail gunner will recall in flying missions. I got into the habit of looking back over my shoulder every so often to check to see if the rest of the airplane was still with me. This got tiring after a while, so we had the doors taken off the turret. I didn't like any-

thing that would hinder me getting out of the turret in case the bailout alarm went off. I was 5ft 8 in tall and weighed 125 pounds and could hardly get into the tail turret. Forrest S. Clark

Know Captain Robert N. Moore, 357th FG, 363rd FS? Hope to contact this man, his friends or relatives. His war buddies need any information available. Contact: Bill Overstreet, 3387 Pasley Ave., Roanoke, VA 24015.

I enlisted in the Army Air Corps March 1941, and was assigned to the 25th Air Base Group at Orlando Air Base, Florida. A year later I left the group to attend aerial gunnery school. I often wondered whether this group ever became a part of the 8th AF. If any one would have this information, or was assigned to the group, I would like to hear from you. Leo W. Lorenzo, 5417 Rosedale Lane, Jacksonville, FL 32244

8th AFHS Member from England trying to locate any personnel based at Bovingdon 8th AF Base near London from 1942-1945 who may have known Hugh Denson. I was told he may have been an Sgt. Air Gunner and came from somewhere in Texas. Contact Patrick Boyle, 82, Eastwick Road Taunton Somerset England TA 2 7HF

Seeking any and all 8th Air Force veterans who served in or were attached to the 446th Bomb Group, "The Bungay Buckaroos", at Flixton, Bungay, England during World War II and who are not yet aware of the existence of the 446th Bomb Group Association, an organization that supports many 446th Bomb Group memorials, publishes a quarterly newsletter and holds annual reunions. For information contact: Marv Speidel, President at 708 Dianne Court, Rahway, NJ 07065-2612. (908) 680-0274.

Does Anyone Know? Lt. Shirley V. Casey - Co Pilot, B-17 that went down Dec. 31, 1943 in France. 8th AF, 92nd Bomb Group; and Sgt. George Jasman - Also part of same crew. I would like to communicate with their relatives or anyone who knew them. Contact Herbert Brill, 4800 Cortland Dr., Corona Del Mar, CA 92625. (714) 760-9217.

I have a collection of pictures of all of the aircraft I flew in WWII except a PT-23 by Fairchild. Perhaps some of the readers of 8th AF. News know where I can get one. Rev. C.W. Lanham, 466th, 1161 E. Main St., Unit B-10, Waterbury, CT 06705-1068

8th AF on Okinawa. Trying to locate those who served on Okinawa with the 8th or 20th AF, esp. 1st Photo Recon. Sqdn. of 8th from 8/45 to 7/46. Contact A. J. Plueddemann, 150 Chambersbridge Rd, POB 547, Brick, NJ 08723.

Seeking information as to unit, date and circumstances of last flight of two men believed to have been members of 8th AF. First is S/Sgt. Frank C. Graham, POW at Stalag Luft III in 1944. Second is 1st Lt. R. W. Hisey who is listed on the Roll of Honour at the American Memorial Chapel, St. Paul's Cathedral, London. Contact Leo E. Daub P.O. Box 507, Basye, VA 22810-0507.

BOARD MEMBER NOMINEES

Walter E. Brown, member #25223-9.

Associate member in good standing served in Air Force 1968-71. Serves on 8 AFHS Board as Medical Director. M.D. degree from Medical College of Georgia. Member of American College of Emergency Physicians. Has completed over 5 years associate membership.

Lawrence "Larry" Goldstein, life member #18590.

President of New York state Southern Wing Chapter. Member of 388th Bomb Group, and served as Radio Operator instructor with the 487th Bomb Group. Flew as an instructor for B-29 crews for 500 hours. Recalled for Korean duty in Japan for 19 months. Insurance executive 42 years.

Norman C. Grant, life member #17337.

Member of the 493rd Bomb Group. POW for 9 months. Past President of 493rd Bomb Group Association. Active in the Minnesota Chapter. Served on 8 AFHS and was treasurer for one year. Owns a successful investment firm.

Robert W. Harrington, life member #23579.

Served with 878th Squadron, 466th Bomb Group as pilot of "Troublemaker" member of 2nd Air Division. Harrington Company Construction Consultants, expert in field of construction problem solving. B.S. degree Iowa state. Professional Engineers Registration #QE 2181.

Thomas Reto, life member #17897.

Served on group crew of 466th Bomb Group from original cadre to the end. Leader in arranging and designing of 466th Memorial Monument. Member of 8 AFHS board for one term. Board member of Ohio claims association, American Legion, ITAM vets and Boy Scout leader.

William C. Leasure, life member # 18878.

Navigator 324th Squadron, 91st Bomb Group. Participated in 13 of 16 first raids in Germany with "Jack the Ripper Crew". TDY to Washington to cover tactics and opinions on "Daylight bombing". Navigator for General Armstrong on 7 missions against Japan. Civilian endeavors, cattle operations, coal mining and gas operator, and real estate.

Eugene D. Person, life member #13262.

Served with 466th Bomb Group, 787th Squadron. Served one term on 8 AFHS Board and was vice president. Started Iowa Chapter and was its first president. He served as Chapter Development Committee Chairman and has organized many of our state chapters. Involved in planning, fund raising and construction of Vets Memorial Gardens at the State capital.

Survivability

By Roger Freeman

Reference your query on one in three surviving. I have seen this in two places in the past, an official 8th AF Reference History which I looked at 30 or more years ago and it also appears in an article in Stars & Stripes. Beyond that I cannot go at the moment. However, it cannot be far off the mark. Take the four B-17 groups that came to the UK and started up in the autumn of '42. By mid-May when the first crews were completing their 25 trips. Some 40 missions had been flown during which time one group had lost 41 aircraft, another 26 and the remaining two 23 each. Each group had started with between 32 and 36 aircraft so you can see that the one in three certainly stands up, particularly as their figures take no account of the many accidents and loss of life in crashes in the UK. A further example of the attrition known to me is a squadron of the 44th BG. This unit started up in October '42 with 90 men in the combat crews. By mid-May there were only two men of the 90 who were still active in the squadron. The rest had either been lost, killed or transferred.

I found the actual notes I made from the Reference History. It gives 36 per cent finished in '43 and 68 per cent in '44. Hope this is helpful.

Reunions & Events

25th Bomb Group (Rcn) Special, Army Air Force, September 30-October. 609-751-4, 1997, Columbia Maryland. Contact: Charles F. Smith, 1830 Vincenza Dr., Eldersburg, MD 15714-1219. 410-549-5431.

486BG, Sept. 24-27, 1997, Milwaukee Hilton, Milwaukee, Wisconsin Reunion contact Robert Bee, 2064 Tuckaway Ct., Columbus, OH 43228

306 Bombardment Group (H) Association, Nov. 6-9, 1997 in the Adams Mark Hotel at The Florida Mall, 1500 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, FL. Contact Russell A. Strong, secretary, 5323 Cheval Place, Charlotte, NC 28205. 704-568-3803 or 704-568-0153.

452nd BGA, Oct. 16-19, 1997 at Savannah, GA. Contact hank North, 901 Poling Dr., Columbus, OH 43224 or call 1-800-452-9099.

491st Reunion, Marriott Hotel, St. Louis, MO. Oct. 9-11, 1997. Contact Edwin Watson, P.O. Box 966, Etowah, NC 28729-0966.

1st Strategic Air Depot Assn., (8th Air Force Honington-Troston, England 1942-46) will hold its reunion in Savannah, GA on Oct. 16-19. Contact Herb Kaster, 720 Society Hill, Cherry Hill, NJ 08003. 609-751-1763.

34th BG reunion September 26-29, 1997. Omaha Nebraska at the Red Lion Inn. Contact Harold Province, 111 Province Lane, Carriere, MS 39426. 601-798-2059.

386 Bomb Group and associated units, WWII 8th and 9th Air Forces. Annual reunion, Memphis Marriott, Memphis TN. Sept. 17-21. Contact "Skip" Young 5594 Buring Court, Ft. Myers, FL 33919. 941-482-5059. E-mail: skip386@aol.com

Burtonwood Association, October 7-

11, 1997. Nashville, TN. Contact George W. Nelson, 578 E. Limewood Drive, Battle Creek, MI 49017. 616-660-0279.

100th Bomb Group (H), WWII, Oct. 2-5, in Salt Lake City, UT. Contact Ralph Larson, 1715 E. Horne Ave., Salt Lake City, UT 84106-3733. 801-467-1674.

94th Bomb Group, Oct. 7-12 at Cherry Hill Hilton in Cherry Hill, NJ. Contact Wade C. Wilson, 1941 Harris Ave., San Jose, CA 95124-1017. 408-377-4787.

27th ATG Association (WWII), Sept. 25-27, 1997, Warner Robins, GA. Ramada Inn. Contact Fred Garcia, 11903 N. 77th Dr., Peoria, AZ 85345. 602-878-7007.

97BGA Reunion, Oct. 22-25, 1997, Tucson, AZ. Contact Tom Gulley, 8728 Pedernales Tr., Ft. Worth, TX 76118.

Bovingdon Bunch Assoc., Sept. 11-14, 1997, Ramada Plaza Hotel, Woburn, MA. Contact Ken Holt, 201 Grove St., Reading, MA 01867-1421. 617-944-8798.

7th Photo Recon Group, Eighth Air Force, England, Sept. 24-28, 1997, Little America Hotel, Salt Lake City, Utah. Includes 325th Wg., Mt. Farm and Chalgrove People. Contact George Lawson, 4390 14th St. NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33703. 813-526-8480.

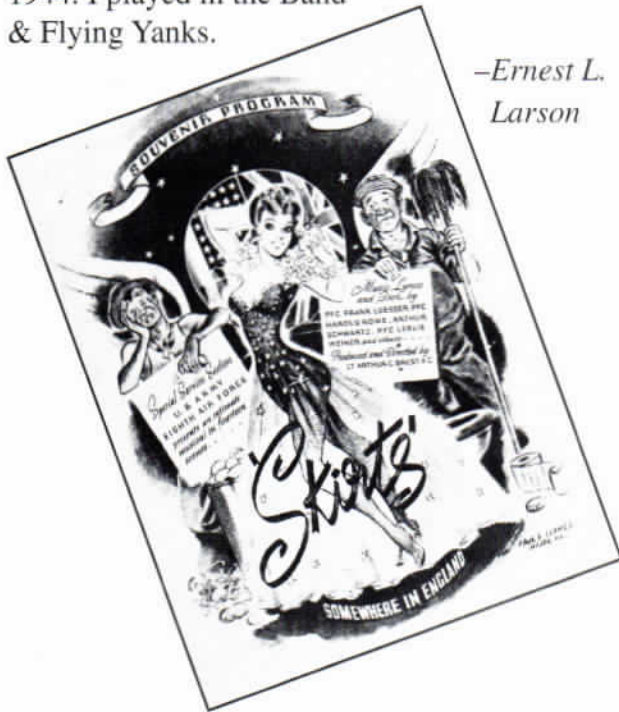
339th Fighter Group Assoc., Sept. 3-7, 1997, Milwaukee Hilton Downtown, Milwaukee, WI, Contact Richard C. Penrose, 142 SW 17th St., Bend, OR 97702. 541-389-0305.

379th Bomb Group, Sept. 19-23, 1997, Savannah, GA. Contact Jan Rumberger, Gp. Assoc. Sec., 925 Hertzler Rd, Mechanicsburg, PA 17055

Regarding the Mystery Photo page 17 in May issue of 8th Air Force News.

I have enclosed a copy of the program of "SKIRTS" & a picture of the 759th Army Air Force Band & Dance "Flying Yanks" Is one of a command performance by the Queen Mother of the entire cast of play "Skirts" that played all over England for 8th Air Force Bases & in English Theaters for everyone on July 4, 1944. I played in the Band & Flying Yanks.

—Ernest L.
Larson



Producer and Cast of "Skirts"

Top Row—Sgt. Robert E. Hastings, Huntington, W. Va. Sgt. Eugene Bain, Chicago, Ill. Pvt. Harry J. Wentzel, Shaker Hts., Ohio. Sgt. James V. Hines, Erie, Pa. Sgt. Jules Weyman, Bronx, N.Y. Pvt. Jas. R. Tudor, W. Chicago, Ill.

4th Row—Pfc. Stephen Varvass, Manhattan, N.Y. Sgt. Glenn Barton, Hollywood, Cal. Cpl. John McCutcheon, Paterson, N.J. Cpl. George Buchanan, McKeesport, Pa. Cpl. H. A. Streiford, Youngstown, O.

3rd Row—Sgt. Howe Meador, Wichita, Falls, Tex. Pfc. Peter Conze, Tampa, Fla. Sgt. Laurie Sheklow, Los Angeles, Cal. Pvt. Mark Bakarian, Boston, Mass. Cpl. Ross Lahlum, Chicago, Ill. Pfc. Joseph Grabowski, Pittsburg, Pa. Cpl. Herbert Ekenberg, Villa Park, Ill.

2nd Row—Cpl. Robert Locke, San Francisco, Cal. S/Sgt. Melville Zollicoffer, Greensboro, N.C. Pfc. Spencer Smith, Glendale, Cal. Lt. Arthur C. Bree, Producer & Director, New York, N.Y. Pfc. Noel H. Seim, Wausau, Wis. Cpl. Nathaniel Shapiro, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Bottom Row—Pvt. George F. Gregg, Chicago, Ill. Pfc. Richard Taylor, E. Middlebury, Vt. Cpl. Anthony Donadio, Jr., Baltimore, Md. Pfc. Leslie E. Weiner, Far Rockaway, N.Y. Pvt. Daniel A. Perna, Phila., Pa. Pfc. Vincent Carlson, Jr., N. Phila., Pa.

"The Wash"

By Bob Lopiano, 385th BG

"The Road to the Wash"

It all started at A.M. school at Keesler Field. Some other gunners were probably approached at radio school or armor's school.

Unsuspected and naive: a special service's officer set upon us to verbalize on the wonderful life of an aerial gunner. In six weeks, Wings-Sgt. stripes and 50% flying pay, in addition to no K.P., barracks duty or other such menial tasks. Well the consequences of these promises hit us about our second mission.

Now back to the Wash, it seems our 1st week of two at our base at Great Ashfield was orientation and practice flights; as only the officers and flight engineer and radio operator were needed the remaining gunners were herded into trucks and whisked away to the Wash.

Upon our arrival we were assigned to wooden floored tents accommodating six or eight of us. We were told to whip out our blankets and mess kits (ouch! I haven't seen mine since it was issued...where the hell is it?) We were then issued a folding cot, our home away from home. For the next week we pampered slobbers were in for a rude awakening cold, dirty and hungry for most of the week. Our lips were burned drinking boiling hot coffee or tea from our tin cups.

Our daily routine required us to correct pre-set malfunctions in the .30 and .50 cal. guns. They were lined up in rows facing the barricaded area overlooking the Wash. It was barricaded because of the land mines that were placed along the shore to repel the anticipated invasion during the early forties.

One day during this week as some of us milled around waiting for our next assignment, a staff car came into the area the local brass met a couple officers that stepped out. One of the officers was no other than Capt. Clark Gable. He spent the day checking out the facility. His visit that day kept my stay at the Wash a vivid memory.

Albert Seraydar

Albert Seraydar, the last survivor of the last American bomber shot down over Europe in WWII, died April 20, 1997 in Coconut Creek, Florida.

The next day marked the 52nd anniversary of the crash of the "Black Cat," which claimed the lives of ten of the 12-man crew of pilot Richard Farrington.

They were in the 466th Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force. Seraydar, then known as Seraydarian, was the tail gunner.

After the plane was hit by flak and started spiralling down, it broke apart near the waist. Seraydar had back-flipped out of the tail turret, but was pinned down inside the tail by the plane's spinning.

He pulled his chute's ripcord and, in what he described as a miracle, was pulled free from the plane.

With a ripped chute, the descent was fast and the landing rough; he injured a leg. He was immediately taken prisoner by German troops.

Walking into a command center, he was stabbed in the back by a Nazi woman, her red-hot poker from a fireplace piercing his leather lying suit and the flesh of his back. He carried the pain from that scar for the rest of his life, along with the sorrow from the loss of his crewmates.

In April, 1995, he and his wife Grace attended a memorial service and dedication of a commemorative shrine at the crash site near Kelheim, Germany, along with relatives of other crew members, and supportive German residents.

A retired photo-engraver and pressman, Seraydar is survived by Grace, his wife of 34 years, three sons, a brother and sister, his mother-in-law and brother-in-law, five grandchildren, six great-grandchildren, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Entombment is at Queen of Heaven Mausoleum.

His family suggests contributions to the American Cancer Society and the American Lung Association.

Major Gordon H. Wilkinson, 381BG

Past President, Washington Chapter, Died May 29, 1997

Gordon Henry Wilkinson was born on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, 1924 in Pomona, Calif. The majority of his elementary and Jr. High Schooling took place in Santa Monica. He attended Santa Monica High School, where he participated in swimming.

After moving to Venice, he attended Venice High School, where he graduated in 1942. Soon afterwards, he took his Air Force Cadet Training. He received his wings at Marfa Air Force Base. He returned home after piloting 35 combat missions in a B-17 Flying Fortress over Germany. His plane, "My Son Bob" was named for his copilot's son.

This was followed by Air-Sea Rescue flights until the signing of the Armistice. Next, Gordon served as an instructor at an air base in San Antonio, TX. He received a commendation medal for his work in San Antonio. One of his assignments was "around-the-world" missions for General Le May.

Other U.S. Air Force assignments took him to Madrid, Spain; Alaska; Little Rock, Arkansas; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Minot, North Dakota where he retired in 1964.

Gordon's Air Force career was followed by flying in the Pacific for Air Japan, Southern Air Transport, Royal Air Lo and Air America until 1975, when he returned to California, after participating in the South Vietnam evacuation.

Gordon died following quadruple heart surgery. He leaves a loving wife, Jane, in Bothell, Washington; two daughters, Lora in London, England, and Kristi in Orange, California; two stepsons, Rori in Washington, DC, Rocky in Seattle, Washington; a sister, Ruth in Provo, Utah; three nephews, Gordon, Lee and Loren; and two nieces, Arlene and Nicole.

★★★★★ TAPS ★★★★★

Robert C. Allphin, 390BG Co B-17 Copilot POW Stalag 3, Eufala, AL
Clarance G. Ashcroft, 379BG, Crew Chief, Monongahela, PA
Roy F. Baisden, 486BG, POW, Charleston
W.S. (Buddy) Benedict, Pilot, Austin, TX
Neil B. Bollong, 381BG/535BS, Armorer, Colton, CA
John W. Bornstedt, 398 BG Pilot, Salem, OR
G. Bowman, 452BG, Midway, TX
James F. Boylan, 466BG, Mass. Chapter
Wayne H. Burhmann, 389BG B-24 Navigator POW, Martell, NE
Ralph Deavan, 361FG/375FS, Radioman, Hummelstown, PA
Dale Dunn, 361FG/376FS Pilot, Omaha, NB
Clem Ehmet, 466BG, Bellvue, KY
Charles Gallagher, FOTE, Cambridge
Robert E. Gemmill, B-17 Pilot, South Kansas City
William E. Glass, 306BG/423BS Navigator, POW Bloomington, MN
George G. Grinell, 8th AF Navigator, SAC, 29 yrs Inverness
Wardlaw M. Hammond, 401BG B-17 Pilot, Rock Hill, SC
James Carl Hensley, 303 BG Radio Operator, Beaverton, OR
Louis C. Hill, 361FG/375FS, Communications, Gonzales, TX
Donald E. Janss, 93BG
James B. Keith, 330BG, Houston, TX
John Albert Landers, B-17 Top Turret, Friendswood, TX
William J. Leland, 94BG Crew Chief, Hacienda Heights

Richard G. Lincoln, 486BG Bombardier, Oswego, OR
James A. Litchfield, 466BG, Mass. Chapter
Walter C. Lutton, 384BG, Westville Lake, Alliance, OH
Harold N. Mitchamore, 91BG 3 yrs, Houston, TX
Herbert D. Myers, 445BG Flt Engr, Cleveland Heights, OH
Roger E. Moylan, 482BG Pathfinders, Downers Grove, IL
Robert A. Sarkisian, 92BG, Mass. Chapter, Wellesley, MA
Peggy Ann (Conway) Scanlan (wife of former 8AFHS Pres. Dennis Scanlan)
St. Paul,
Russell B. Smyth, 447BG, Louisville, KY
Edward F. Sofranko, B-17 Navigator Weather Recon, Brecksville
Stanley W. Page, 339 FG, Mass. Chapter
J. Bernard Palmquist, 100BG Ball Gunner Wright Crew, Red Oak, IA
Harold Sperbeck, 361FG/376FS, prop specialist, Little Falls, NY
Glenn Stockmeier, 361FG/375FS Pilot, Bradenton, FL
Frank W. Ramsey, 394BG Pilot, evader, Norman, OK
Charles J. Veida, Longview, WA
Maltby F. Watkins, 392BG/576BS, waist gunner shot down twice, Iowa City, IA
Gordon Wilkinson, 381BG, Past Prs., Washington State Chapter
Thomas J. Woodward, 447BG, Rowlette, TX
Charles Robert Younkin, M.D., 381BG/534 BS Lead Navigator, Houston, TX
Charles E. Upright, Crewchief, 375thFS/361ST FG.

8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INVITES YOU TO

REUNION '97

**MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA
SEPTEMBER 9 - 14, 1997**

The 1997 annual reunion is just around the corner. Mark your calendars now for a great time in Bloomington, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis. Being centrally located in the United States, we hope for a large turnout. With an average temperature of 71 degrees in September, the weather should be beautiful.

Bloomington, Minnesota (meaning "flowering field"), is a beautiful city with picturesque lakes, ponds, and parks combined with an exciting and healthy business and hospitality industry. In the past three decades, Bloomington has grown from a semi-rural village to its current status as Minnesota's third largest city. Most of you will recognize Bloomington's name from its recent claim to fame, the Mall of America. This mall brings new meaning to the motto, "Shop 'til you drop." Best of all, clothing purchases are free of sales tax!

You'll want to come early and stay late for this reunion. Not just for the tours and attractions, but for the camaraderie of your fellow members. Encourage your buddies to join the fun and reminiscing this year in the Minneapolis area. The Memorabilia Room will house one of our largest displays in recent years.

RADISSON HOTEL SOUTH & PLAZA TOWER

The Radisson Hotel South and Plaza Tower is located at 7800 Normandale Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55439-3145. The hotel is conveniently located at the intersections of I-495 and Highway 100. Downtown Minneapolis and downtown St. Paul are just 10 miles from the hotel. Valleyfair Amusement Park and the Minnesota Zoological Gardens are located close by. There are fabulous shopping opportunities in Southdale and the Mall of America--the nation's largest shopping and entertainment complex.

All 575 guest rooms are spacious, tastefully appointed, and soundproof. In-room amenities include complimentary HBO, CNN, and clock radios. Also, each room supplies a hairdryer, iron with ironing board, and coffee maker. A sky-lit garden atrium and pool area offer a relaxing atmosphere for guests. The hotel has a large, indoor swimming pool, whirlpool, sauna, and fully equipped exercise center. A gift shop is located within the hotel for the convenience of guests. Same day laundry service is available upon request Monday-Friday.

The group rate at the Radisson is \$85 (+tax) per night. Please use the enclosed reservation form to make your reservation. Handicapped accessible and non-smoking rooms are subject to availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your hotel reservation. Complimentary parking is provided for overnight guests. Check-in time is after 3pm; check-out is noon.

The hotel offers several types of suites and hospitality rooms. The set-ups are basically the same; the locations are different. The Cabana Suites are located around the pool (which offers extra "overflow" space). The South Tower Suites are located in the South Tower. Both of these types of suites offer a bedroom with a separate parlor equal to the size of two sleeping rooms. The parlors feature a sitting area and conference table. The Plaza Tower also has "executive suites," but they are basically an over-sized sleeping room with a sitting area. Unfortunately, none of the suites have refrigerators; however, you can rent small ones from the hotel during your stay for \$10. In addition to suites, the hotel also offers Cabana Rooms located around the pool. They do not connect to sleeping rooms, and they are equal to the size of one sleeping room.

Hospitality Prices:

- One Bedroom Cabana Suites - 4 are blocked at \$185 each per night
- One Bedroom South Tower Suites - \$250
- Executive Suites - \$150
- Cabana Rooms (no connecting sleeping room) - \$85

Dining facilities within the hotel:

- Kaffe Stuga, Scandinavian-type restaurant; open 7 days serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Hours are 6:30am-10pm weekdays; 7am-10pm Saturday/Sunday.
- Shipside, featuring fresh fish and seafood; open dinner. Hours are Monday-Saturday 5-10pm.
- Spectators, the hotel lounge, 4pm-1am weekdays; 11:30am-1am Saturday/Sunday.
- Plaza Java Coffee Bar is open from 6am-10pm everyday.
- Room service is available 6am-midnight.

TRAVEL INFORMATION

AIRPORT SHUTTLE

Airport Express is the only company authorized to provide shuttle transportation from the airport to the Radisson South and Plaza Tower. It leaves the airport on the half hour. The shuttle is available outside the baggage claim area of the airport. Look for Ground Transportation. Currently, the fare is \$8.50pp one way. If more than one, consider taking a taxi; it may be cheaper and quicker. Please give very specific instructions to the driver of the shuttle or taxi to the Radisson Hotel South in Minneapolis, not St. Paul. The day before your departure from the hotel, contact the Bell Captain to arrange the Airport Express shuttle service for you.

DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- From the North: Take Highway 100 South to 77th Street-Industrial Boulevard exit. The hotel is straight ahead at the light.
- From the South: 35W North to 494 West to Highway 100 North. Exit on 77th Street. Cross over Highway 100. At the light, take a left.
- From the East: 494 West to Highway 100 North. Exit on 77th Street. Cross over Highway 100. Take a left at the light.

NEARBY RV PARK

There is ample parking space at the hotel for RV's. However, should you desire full hookup services, call the Lebanon Hills Park & Campground, Apple Valley, MN at (612) 454-9211 for information, directions, and reservations. The campground is approximately 20 minutes from the Radisson Hotel South.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

1. See choices below and complete the Registration Form. Remit by check or money order made payable to 8AF Reunion by August 8, 1997 (no credit cards or phone reservations accepted). Forms received after this date will be accepted on a space available basis only. Please complete the entire form (Member number, WWII group, etc.).
2. Canceled check will serve as your receipt, although you are not expected to present it at registration. Confirmations will not be sent.
3. After you check into the hotel, report to our registration desk on the 1st floor to pick up your nametags, tickets, etc.
4. Full refund for cancellations received by September 5, 1997, except for the Dinner Theatre. Notification must be made by August 18 for the Dinner Theatre refund. After this date, refund amount will depend on charges made for unused portion of services. Please call 757-625-6401 (9am-5pm EST) if you need to cancel.

MEALS / EVENTS CHOICES

CHOICE #1 TOTAL PACKAGE \$158

Package includes 7 food functions starting with breakfast on Thursday. The Thursday evening dinner outing is available only in this package. Options are separate.

CHOICE #2 PARTIAL PACKAGE \$111

Package includes 5 food functions starting with breakfast on Friday. Options are separate.

CHOICE #3 INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Friday Rendezvous Dinner \$28 and Saturday Banquet \$33 can be purchased separately.

TOUR OPTIONS

Wednesday: City Tour \$24 and Dinner Theatre \$52. Thursday: Historic Stillwater \$42 or Military Museums \$25. Friday: Historic Stillwater \$42 or Mall of America Shuttle \$8. Saturday: Lunch Cruise \$29 or Abbreviated City Tour \$18.

**EIGHTH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REUNION
RADISSON HOTEL SOUTH AND PLAZA TOWER, MINNEAPOLIS**

Tuesday, 9/9

2:00pm - 7:00pm Early Bird Registration

Wednesday, 9/10

8:00am - 10:00am Reunion Registration Open
9:00am - 3:45pm (Option) City Tour
9:00am - Gathering Room Open (in conjunction with the Memorabilia Room)
9:00am - 'Mighty Eighth' Theater open through Saturday evening
9:00am - Memorabilia Room open through Saturday evening
1:00pm - 5:00pm 'PX' open (finalized times will be posted at the reunion)
1:00pm - 5:00pm Reunion registration open
5:30pm - 11:00pm (Option) Dinner Theatre

Thursday, 9/11

7:00am - 8:30am Extended Continental Breakfast
8:00am - 10:00am Reunion Registration Open
9:00am - 10:00am Unit Advisory Meeting
9:15am - 3:15pm (Option) Historic Stillwater Tour
9:30am - 4:30pm 'PX' Open
10:00am - 10:45am Presentation by Dr. Brown, "Medical Problems & Solutions While Traveling"
10:30am - 11:30am Chapter & Unit Development Meeting
12:30pm - 5:00pm (Option) Military Museum Tour
1:00pm - 5:00pm Reunion Registration Open
6:00pm - 10:00pm German Theme Dinner at the Hotel with Entertainment

Friday, 9/12

7:00am - 8:30am Extended Continental Breakfast
8:00am - 10:00am Reunion Registration Open
9:00am - 10:30am Individual Group Meetings
9:15am - 3:15pm (Option) Historic Stillwater Tour
11:00am - 4:00pm (Option) Mall of America Shuttle
10:00am - 5:00pm 'PX' Open
2:00pm - 5:30pm Reunion Registration Open
6:00pm - 7:00pm 8AF Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm - Rendezvous Dinner and 'Hangar Flying'

Saturday, 9/13

7:00am - 8:30am Full Breakfast Buffet
9:00am - 11:00am General Membership Meeting
10:00am - 4:00pm 'PX' Open
11:15am - 2:00pm (Option) Lunch Cruise
1:00pm - 4:00pm (Option) City Tour
1:00pm - 4:00pm Annual 8AFMMF Symposium
5:30pm - 6:00pm Reunion Registration Open
6:00pm - 7:00pm 8AF Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm - 11:30pm 8AF Gala Banquet

Sunday, 9/14

7:00am - 8:30am Extended Continental Breakfast
8:30am - 9:00am Catholic and Protestant Services
9:00am - 9:30am Memorial Service
9:45am - 8th AFHS Annual Board Meeting

REUNION HIGHLIGHTS

WEDNESDAY - CITY TOUR

- 9:00 Board bus for a narrated tour of the Twin Cities: St. Paul, born of whiskey, and Minneapolis, born of water power. St. Paul resembles an Eastern city, a mix of old and new buildings along angled, hilly avenues that stop and start. See the State Capitol, Cathedral of St. Paul, Rice Park, and Millionaire's Row where Great Northern Railroad builder James J. Hill and novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald once lived. Then it's on to Minneapolis where you'll see parading sleek towers of glass, stone, and steel along straightforward streets sensibly based on flat land. See the IDS Center, Nicolet Mall, and the many cultural institutions that make Minneapolis such a city on the move.
- 12:00 Arrive at the Mall of America. Before getting off the bus, your guide will give you a map of the complex. Mall of America is the nation's largest enclosed retail and entertainment complex. Enjoy lunch on your own at one of over 40 restaurants. Browse through stores such as Macy's, Bloomingdale's, or Nordstrom's. With hundreds of specialty shops, there is something for everyone. Also located in the Mall of America you'll find the first LEGO Imagination Center; Knott's Camp Snoopy, a 7-acre theme oriented amusement park with 50 attractions, venues, and rides; Golf Mountain, a two level 18 hole adventure style golf course; 14 screen General Cinema; and much more.
- 3:30 Reboard bus to return to the hotel by 3:45pm.
\$24/Person includes bus and guide. Lunch is not included.

WEDNESDAY - DINNER THEATRE

- 5:30 Board bus for Chanhassen Dinner Theatre.
- 6:00 Enjoy a served dinner of your choice from a menu featuring five entrees. Dinner includes coffee and tea, but cash bar items and desserts must be purchased separately.
- 8:00 It's curtain time! Sit back and enjoy Rogers & Hammerstein's *State Fair*, a toe-tappable, knee-slappable, good show. Two farm kids test their romantic wings, veer off course, then soar off because they grew up with the right kind of values. *State Fair* proves that wholesomeness and entertainment are not sworn enemies.
- 10:30 Reboard bus to return to hotel by 11pm.
\$52/Person includes bus, escort, and dinner show.

THURSDAY - MILITARY MUSEUMS TOUR

- 12:30 After lunch on your own, board bus for historic Fort Snelling. Tour the fort, once the last United States outpost in the "northern wilderness." Talk with soldiers, the blacksmith, the carpenter or the surgeon at the post hospital. Enjoy the film in the History Center. Fort Snelling is restored to its original appearance as it was in 1827.
- 2:00 Reboard bus for the Planes of Fame Museum, dedicated to the preservation of America's World War II aviation history. The museum includes military aviation exhibits, reproduced ship and plane models, and about two dozen of the most famous aircraft of World War II.
- 4:30 Reboard bus to return to the hotel by 5pm.
\$25/Person includes bus, escort, and admissions.

THURSDAY & FRIDAY - HISTORIC STILLWATER

- 9:15 Board bus and travel back in time to Stillwater, a quaint historical lumberjack town on the St. Croix River and the oldest town in Minnesota. Upon arrival your guide will narrate a brief driving tour of this charming town, and we will stop and tour a traditional home.
- 11:30 Enjoy lunch at the Lowell Inn featuring Chicken a la King. After lunch, free time for shopping and browsing on your own in the antique shops, art galleries, and specialty shops located in restored Victorian houses and lumber mills.
- 2:30 Reboard bus to return to the hotel by 3:15pm.
Note: This tour is limited to 90 people each day.
\$42/Person includes bus, guide, and lunch.

Driver and Guide Gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

FRIDAY - MALL OF AMERICA SHUTTLE

- 11:00 First buses depart for the Mall of America, the nation's largest enclosed retail and entertainment complex. Buses will return immediately to pick up the remaining people (approximately 11:45am). Individual departure time will be chosen at registration. Enjoy lunch on your own at one of over 40 restaurants. Browse through stores such as Macy's, Bloomingdale's, or Nordstrom's. With hundreds of specialty shops, there is something for everyone. Also located in the Mall of America you'll find the first LEGO Imagination Center; Knott's Camp Snoopy, a 7-acre theme oriented amusement park with 50 attractions, venues, and rides; Golf Mountain, a two level 18 hole adventure style golf course; 14 screen General Cinema; and much more.
- 2:00 First bus departs for the hotel. Buses will return for pick-ups at 2:45pm and 3:30pm.
\$8/Person includes bus and escort. Lunch is not included.

FRIDAY - RENDEZVOUS DINNERS

After a Cash Bar Reception, gather in your respective banquet rooms for dinner with your individual groups. Bomb Groups (FGs, PRGs, etc.) with approximately 50 or more people in attendance will have a private room. Smaller groups will be combined with others. Think of this as your "reunion within the reunion."

Cost is included in both Meal Packages (or \$28 separately)

SATURDAY - LUNCH CRUISE

- 11:15 Board bus for the Padleford Packet Boat Company.
- 12:00 Cruise the mighty Mississippi River on either the "Jonathan Padleford" or "Josiah Selling". Leave Harriet Island Park in St. Paul and experience a scenic ride past beautiful parks on your way to Fort Snelling, built in 1819 for the purpose of establishing peaceful relations with the Indians and ending British domination of the fur trade. While on board enjoy a box lunch including a turkey sandwich, chips, coleslaw, fruit, cookie, and a drink.
- 1:30 Reboard bus to return to the hotel by 2pm.
\$29/Person includes bus, escort, and lunch cruise.

SATURDAY - CITY TOUR

- 1:00 Board bus for a narrated tour of the Twin Cities: St. Paul, born of whiskey, and Minneapolis, born of water power. St. Paul resembles an Eastern city, a mix of old and new buildings along angled, hilly avenues that stop and start. See the State Capitol, Cathedral of St. Paul, Rice Park, and Millionaire's Row where Great Northern Railroad builder James J. Hill and novelist F. Scott Fitzgerald once lived. Then it's on to Minneapolis where you'll see parading sleek towers of glass, stone, and steel along straightforward streets sensibly based on flat land. See the IDS Center, Nicolet Mall, and the many cultural institutions that make Minneapolis such a city on the move.
- 4:00 Back at the hotel.

\$18/Person includes bus and guide.

SATURDAY - ANNUAL 8AFMMF SYMPOSIUM, "COMBAT AIR-SEA RESCUE"

- 1:00 The 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation once again promises the membership another widely-applauded, crowd-pleasing program in the recurring annual air-war symposium series for this year's reunion. Symposium '97 will focus on a cross-sectional overview about some of the harrowing experiences typically suffered by many air crew men who were forced to "ditch" their badly crippled aircraft in the unknowns of the sea, unable to make it to their home bases, after a long emotion-drenching combat mission over Europe. The stories of these men will be told along with those who performed the equally bone-chilling emergency missions as their "rescuers." It is a panel discussion not to be missed, and one which will be moderated by the 8th's notable historian, Roger Freeman.

SATURDAY - ANNUAL BANQUET AND DANCE

Enjoy a Cash Bar Reception and then assemble in the hotel ballroom for the Posting of the Colors and Call to Dinner. Dinner will consist of your choice of entree (beef or fish) along with the usual accompaniments. Following dinner, awards will be given to active duty members of the 8th Air Force. Lastly, enjoy a sing along of your old favorites and dance if you'd like.

Cost is included in both Meal Packages (or \$33 separately)

SUNDAY - MEMORIAL SERVICE

Please join us as we honor our departed comrades. Norm Grant, the Memorial Service Chairman, will conduct the ceremony, as Past Presidents and individual group contacts participate in the wreath and flower presentation.

ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

NAMES (for nametags) _____
 ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____
 PH. NUMBER (____) _____ 1st 8AFHS REUNION? yes or no CHECK ____ IF LIFE MEMBER
 8AFHS MEMBERSHIP # _____ WWII GROUP (for seating arrangements) _____
 DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

	PRICE PER	x	NO. OF PEOPLE	=	AMOUNT
<i>Registration Fee</i>					
Mandatory Registration Fee includes Unit Rebates, Symposium, 8AFMMF memorial plans, postage, etc.	\$31	x	_____	=	_____
<i>Meal Packages</i>					
Choice #1 Total Package (7 meals)	\$158	x	_____	=	_____
Choice #2 Partial Package (5 meals)	\$111	x	_____	=	_____
Please note Banquet Choice: Roast Prime Rib of Beef # _____ or Salmon Filet # _____					
<i>Individual Meals</i>					
Friday Rendezvous Dinner (Grilled Chicken Breast)	\$28	x	_____	=	_____
Saturday Banquet	\$33	x	_____	=	_____
Please note Banquet Choice: Roast Prime Rib of Beef # _____ or Salmon Filet # _____					
<i>Events Section (Options)</i>					
<u>Wednesday</u>					
City Tour	\$24	x	_____	=	_____
Chanhassen Dinner Theatre	\$52	x	_____	=	_____
<u>Thursday</u>					
Historic Stillwater Tour (choose one of these two)	\$42	x	_____	=	_____
Military Museums Tour	\$25	x	_____	=	_____
<u>Friday</u>					
Historic Stillwater Tour (choose one of these two)	\$42	x	_____	=	_____
Mall of America Shuttle	\$8	x	_____	=	_____
<u>Saturday</u>					
Lunch Cruise (choose one of these two)	\$29	x	_____	=	_____
Abbreviated City Tour	\$18	x	_____	=	_____
TOTAL AMOUNT PAYABLE TO 8AF REUNION					\$ _____

MAIL TO: **8AF REUNION / PO BOX 11327 / NORFOLK, VA 23517 BY AUGUST 8, 1997**
 ***** CUT HERE AND MAIL BOTTOM PORTION TO HOTEL *****

THE 8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOTEL RESERVATION FORM - SEPT. 9 - 14, 1997

NAME _____ SHARING ROOM WITH: _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____ 1 KING ____ or 2 DOUBLES ____

OF ROOMS NEEDED ____ # OF PEOPLE IN ROOM ____ SPECIAL REQUESTS _____

RATE: \$85 (up to four people in room) + tax (currently 12.5%)
CUT OFF DATE: 8/11/97 - Reservations received after the cut off date will be processed on a space available basis.
CANCELLATION POLICY: Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled by 6pm on your arrival date. Be sure to record your cancellation number. Please call the hotel at (612) 835-7800.
 Please include first night's deposit by check (payable to Radisson Hotel South & Plaza Tower) or credit card to confirm your reservation.

____ AMEX ____ DINERS ____ MASTER CARD ____ VISA ____ DISCOVER ____ CARTE BLANCHE

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) _____

MAIL TO: **RADISSON HOTEL SOUTH / 7800 NORMANDALE BLVD. / MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55439**

MEDICAL FORM - 8TH AIR FORCE REUNION - MEMBER

NAME _____ AGE _____ BIRTHDATE _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

CURRENT MEDICATION, DOSAGE _____

KNOWN ALLERGIES _____

PRIVATE PHYSICIAN _____ PHONE _____

NEXT TO KIN OR CONTACT _____ PHONE _____

PERTINENT MEDICAL HISTORY _____

MEDICAL FORM - 8TH AIR FORCE REUNION - SPOUSE/GUEST

NAME _____ AGE _____ BIRTHDATE _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____

CURRENT MEDICATION, DOSAGE _____

KNOWN ALLERGIES _____

PRIVATE PHYSICIAN _____ PHONE _____

NEXT TO KIN OR CONTACT _____ PHONE _____

PERTINENT MEDICAL HISTORY _____

I WAS 8 in the winter of 1944, and my friends Jimmy and Tommy and I had studied my *We Fly for the Navy* coloring book from cover to cover.

Our favorite radio heroes were Captain Midnight and Hop Harrigan, America's Ace of the Airwaves. At our local movie theater in Lyons, New York, we thrilled to the aerial exploits of Randolph Scott and Robert Ryan in *Bombardier*.

Our fascination with aviation continued after school, when we hurried home to my back shed to work on our B-25 bomber. It was ice cold out there, but we persevered—it was our patriotic duty.

As the plane neared completion, we christened it *Pistol Packin' Mama*. Assembled from scrap lumber, household litter and neighborhood junk, it resembled a giant pterodactyl from *Alley Oop*.

Bushel-basket engines hung from old planks nailed onto a derelict table. Sitting on surplus kitchen chairs, we steered with baby carriage wheels spiked to the table's edge. Tommy, our tail gunner, sat on a swivel piano stool with his back to us and a corn-cob pipe clenched firmly between his teeth.

Chock-Full Cockpit

In front of me and Jimmy, an orange crate sat on its side. A colorful array of bottle caps and jar lids tacked to its slats served as our instrument panel. My father's extinct crystal radio assured communications with our secret base in Scotland, and a road map of New York State (crucial to our navigation over Germany) was spread out nearby.

A luminous Big Ben alarm clock gave us Greenwich Mean Time, and a crumpled-up Wings cigarette pack added he-man ambience to the cockpit.

Jimmy, a dead ringer for Eddie Rickenbacker with freckles, wore an aviator cap lined with fleece. Meanwhile, with goggles made from canning jar rings, I thought I looked like Lucky Lindy. Tommy wore a too-large German helmet my Uncle Bill had brought back from World War I.

Right after school, we'd taxi *Pistol Packin' Mama* down the runway and

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED!

In 1944, the Back Shed Bomber Crew took to the skies of Germany—at least in the minds of these imaginative 8-year-olds.

By John Buchholz
Paoli, Pennsylvania



THE CREW. Tail gunner Tommy Clingerman, aviator Jimmy Tubbs and "Lucky Lindy" John Buchholz (right, l to r) celebrate a successful mission.

take off toward Germany. Invariably, we encountered a swarm of fighters on the way.

"Look out! Messerschmitts at 10 o'clock!" Jimmy would scream into a soup-can microphone as bullets ripped into our fuselage. Staccato gunfire rattled from our broomstick machine guns,

and soon an enemy plane would explode in midair. "We got one!" I'd holler.

Three Aces Beat a Pair

Realizing who they were pitted against, the two remaining Messerschmitts turned tail and headed for home.

"What a shot!" Jimmy bellowed over the roar of the engines. "I got it!"

Behind us, the piano stool swiveled. "No you didn't. I got it," said Tommy, his pipe bobbing up and down. Quickly, Jimmy and I turned back to the instrument panel. You didn't mess with Tommy. He had a little back-alley street fighter in him (that's what made him such a good tail gunner).


Later, after we'd dropped our bombs over Berlin, Jimmy picked up his soup can to relay word of our achievement. "*Pistol Packin' Mama* to base. Over. Roger, base. We got 'em! Mission accomplished!"

Jimmy listened for a moment. "Roger!" he replied. "Wilco!" Beaming at me, he relayed the news: "Commander says, 'Good job!'"

Then, turning his baby carriage wheel, Jimmy opened the throttle. "He says to bring her on home."

Taking turns with my father's old headset, we listened as the news of our conquest spread. North America, the British empire and the entire Atlantic Fleet cheered three brave heroes.

As the big engines droned, I lifted my soup can to relay one last message. "Co-pilot to tail gunner," I called, looking back over my shoulder. Tommy's turret spun around and his corn-cob pipe stuck out from under his helmet.

"Super shot, Tommy," I said. He nodded, smiled and raised his right thumb. 



The Flak Remedy – 48 Hours in “London off Duty”

By Russell K. Klinger, Des Moines, IA

Eight Air Force Commanders must have learned early-on that the best way to keep air crew members from becoming a.f.u. (all flaked up) was to issue 48 hour and three day passes on a frequent basis.

While rummaging through some of my war-time memorabilia recently I came across a little booklet entitled “London Off Duty,” the preface of which read “‘London Off Duty’ keeps you informed of the best movies, the best shows, the best ‘after-the-shows.’ London is about the one place they can’t dim-out (remember the black-outs) whatever they do with the lights.” And that about sums up why London was the best of the flak remedies.

For most crew members it was a time for forgetting and a time of eager anticipation from the moment you climbed into the back of a canvas-covered 6x6 truck for the ride to Diss.

The forgetting was the moment on the last raid when your Fort turned at the I.P. and you were almost hypnotized as if in some kind of a surreal world as you gazed forward through the sighting window of your ball turret and saw the Group just ahead disappearing into a box of ugly black smoke of the perfectly timed detonating flak, and knowing that in just a few minutes you will be in that same fiery black hell of tracking flak that “walked” along and exploded just off your wing tips at the same pace as the bomber stream. And then there were the sound affects—surprisingly not the crack of exploding projectiles so much, but a resounding “whoooooosh” from the concussion and almost instantly, like hail stones, jagged pieces of steel ricocheting off solid objects of metal or tearing through the paper-thin skin of a 17, seeking flesh, gas tanks, hydraulic lines or vital controls. And it seems there was sense of smell, even through your oxygen mask, as the burnt powder of the 88s and 105s permeated the air in the aircraft.

And there was not a damned thing you could do about it but fly straight and level on a ride that was now something close to that of a bucking horse in a forest fire for what seemed an eternity. But then finally there would be one of the most exhilarating feelings in a lifetime as the Fort, suddenly rid of her 6,000 pound bomb load, would leap upward in its own moment of exhilaration, and then make a steep diving turn of evasive action all the way to the R.P. Those moments were what had to be forgotten for the next 48 hours.

Now there was only anticipation of fun times on the 99 mile train ride from the platform at Diss to the cavernous East Liverpool St. Station in north London, and jumping on a car of the Central Line Underground to Piccadilly Circus, and checking in for a bunk

at the small Red Cross Club on Dover Street opposite the entrance to Green Park. If you were lucky you would just have time to make the first of the two pub times. (Pubs were required by law to be closed a certain number of hours during the day.) Even though it was not to the average G.I.’s liking you learned to tolerate the taste of warm beer and even an occasional Guinness or a pint of bitters. An exception was George & Dragons on Bond St. just off Piccadilly Circus with a tariff of “iced lager” which came as close to American beer as you could get. The public house was pretty much the center for rest, relaxation, recreation, and socializing for those on leave.

To some, London was a Mecca of sight-seeing attractions: Everything from Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum, to the Tower of London, near-by Tower Bridge and St. Paul’s Cathedral, to Westminster Abbey, and Buckingham and St. James Palaces. For the culturally minded there was Albert Hall and the London Philharmonic and Covent Garden operas. But the biggest attraction was the British Theater with all facets of entertainment from the cinemas with the most recent Hollywood releases to stage productions leaning to the interests of those in the armed services. Those listed in the aforementioned “London Off Duty” include one of my favorites - Sid Fields, known as Britain’s Bob Hope, starring in “Strike It Again” at the Prince of Wales Theater. There was a wide variety of theater from the drama-like “Old Vic Theater Company” to vaudeville and burlesque, the two best known of which were Phyllis Dixie in “Peek-a-Boo” at the Whitehall. The promotion reads “Miss Dixie not only offers the public the Naked Truth in the most attractively daring manner possible, but also gathered around her some first-class acts.” She was known as the Gypsy Rose Lee of Britain. Another of the favorites was “Revudeville” at the Windmill Theater just off Piccadilly Circus, whose claim to fame was “In our 14th year. Continuous daily 12-9:30. We never closed.” (Even through air raids.) At that time ladies could appear on stage completely nude as long as they did not move or so much as bat an eyelash. So in most scenes you have the nude ones in mannequin-like postures while on the other side of the stage a vaudeville act was being performed at the same time. Something to marvel at was the length of time these young ladies could hold a pose without the slightest movement. Leicester Square and its environs was pretty much the entertainment center of jolly old London.

For those that just wanted to “hang out” there were places like Trafalgar Square, Marble Arch, near-by Hyde Park, and St. James Park fronted by the Victoria

Monument and Buckingham Palace. But as darkness began to set in, like ants returning to the ant hill, hundreds of G.I.’s moved back into the magnetism of Piccadilly Circus where it took little experience to find your way around even in the complete black-out. One of the big attractions was Rainbow Corner where the Red Cross had taken over a several storied hotel whose first floor had a stage for U.S.O. shows and a large dance floor with sufficient numbers of young English female volunteer dance partners. Just outside its doors in the deep shadows of the black-out the largest bartering center in all of Europe was just going into operation. There were promises made for a price and some of them were eventually fulfilled, but for most it was a chance to engage in conversation with someone of the opposite sex, with no intent of striking a deal, until one of the two lost interest and moved on. It was said that many of Piccadilly’s Commandos determined their price by first fingering the sleeve to determine rank, and next the chest for wings, and instantly determine monthly pay including flight pay, and began bargaining with that figure in mind. To understand this mode of behavior, those not there would have to understand the times. Maybe it’s best explained in a couple of sentences from “Contrails—My War Record”, the history of the 100th, which this writer helped compile after VE Day. “The economic impact of much loose money in the hands of visitors from other shores, plus a low wage scale, has always caused a sharp decrease in the morals of society. War-time England was no exception.”

Dancing was one of the favorite pastimes of most G.I.s. To most the favorite was the Palais de Dance out in Hammersmith, an enormous ballroom with balconies on three sides and a revolving stage. Three bands performed each night, so that without interruption as one played its last tune the next would be all set up and revolve around to begin immediately. And there was no lacking for partners. There were few British lasses who would turn down a chance to dance the new craze here as it was at home, the jitterbug. Places like Hammersmith were where you met the nice girls. It was here I met a girl who, with her family, had come from Cardiff, Wales to celebrate their daughter’s wedding. Before we departed the family asked me to come visit them, and that’s where I spent my flak leave.

Eating in a wartime restaurant in England was a “downer.” (We were to find out in visits back to England after the war that the food and the way it’s prepared—at least to an American’s taste—is about the worst in the northern hemisphere.) Due to very strict food rationing there was no beef and very little port. Sandwiches listed in the

menu (tariff) at the Rotunda Court in the Regent Palace Hotel are "lettuce 5d, cheese 6d, tomato 6d, lettuce and cheese 7d, tomato and cheese 7d, and creamed fish 5d," (d is pence). Surely the most popular snack was fish and chips, wrapped in yesterday's newspaper available at little sidewalk take-out establishments. The one exception to a meatless menu my crew came to find was a very small Greek restaurant in an alley in the Soho District named The Athens that served steak dinners. The steak had to be either black market beef or horse meat. Most rumors were that it was the latter.

Come to think of it, maybe that's why we saw very few horses on the pastoral landscapes. We knew that hogs were kept in confinement. We found a surprising example of this on our first visit back to Thorpe Abbots in 1974. I had to fight my way through a bramble of sticker bushes to an open window of my crew's barracks (No. 5)

at the 35th Sq. Site 4. I was a little taken aback to be greeted by the grunt of a grumpy sow and the squeal of her litter of very young pigs.

But it was the abundance of wild life in all the heavily overgrown thickets and wooded areas that was so pleasantly amazing. Cottontail rabbits were scurrying around in such numbers that the ground seemed to be literally moving in areas of heavy cover. But it was the numerous pheasants whose beauty would leave an image indelibly imprinted forever. These birds were larger than their American cousins, and since it was May, and into the nesting season, in their most brilliant plumage. We would see them slinking across the old road, which was now little wider than a path, in front of us in the jungle-like mass of trees, bushes, and weeds that had almost obliterated the Headquarters site, and up past the motor pool, and into the hay field in the open area of the runway and taxi strips.

We were scared nearly out of our wits, when two cocks burst out from practically under foot with a resounding beating of wings, and a characteristic soul-rendering raucous cackle. They took off flying parallel to the few hundred years of what remained of the main runway. It was truly a thrilling sight that fostered remembrance and heartfelt reverence. With a little imagination the two could represent an element of a fly-by squadron formation of two planes and the absence of the third as the missing crew.

This was a solemn reminder of all those hundreds of valiant young men who lifted off from this same old runway in the chill of the morning's first light and would die a few hours later in the contrail filled skies over Germany. There could be no more fitting tribute to their memory than the living spirit represented by these most beautiful creatures of flight. May they fly forever over these hallowed grounds.

Memories Are Made of This

By Connie Richards, 8th AFNews, UK Rep.

The boy stood on the corner of the street. The day was cold and bleak and the winter wind was blowing. He was waiting patiently for his friend to come. What to do that he had no idea. They could stay indoors, but they had read their comics, they wanted some chocolate but their pocket money had been spent. The boy's friend eventually arrived and after a few minutes they decided to go on their bicycles to the U.S. Airfield at Thurleigh, the home of the 306th Bomb Group, where the Yanks were. Maybe they would find Francis. He was a G.I. who used to come to the boy's house. When Francis came to his house it was just like Christmas. He brought peaches and other goodies and sometimes a fruit cake that one of the cooks used to bake and also a tin of Spam. Maybe it they could find him he'd have some chocolate but if not they could watch the Bombers go out or come back.

"Damn the War," they boy said. "Why did it have to happen?" He had heard Francis telling his parents awful things about the War, so again he said "Damn the War."

Where did all these men come from? How did all those juts and those Bombers get there they thought as they propped their bikes up against the fence.

A truck was coming towards them so they shouted "Got any gum, chum? Hello Yanks. Got any Hershey Bars or gum?"

"Here, catch kids," shouted the G.I.s and threw them some.

"Bet those Yanks are going to drop bombs on Germany," the boy said, and they sat watching the war go on behind that fence in the heart of England.

Where would they be when they grew up? Would they be soldiers or would they fly one of those planes? Maybe, they would grow up and get married. They were just one boy and his friend with their bikes who were in the hum-drum of war, having to put up with it and not knowing where their lives would take them in the years to come.

At about the same time, two school girls were also planning their lives one day in a school playground in Milton Ernest.

"Wish we were old enough to marry one of those Yanks," said one.

Again two kids in the heart of Britain with the G.I.s not far away. One of the girls used to get some chewing gum by going home from school and boiling two eggs hard and taking them down to two Military Policemen on the gate at 8th Air Force H.Q., Milton Ernest Hall.

After school that day they just watched as two or three staff cars came out of the drive of the Hall. One contained The Andrew Sisters. They recognized them because they had seen them in a movie the other day. In another car was Glenn Miller. He was a dance band leader. They talked to the M.P.s as they ate their hard boiled eggs and it must have seemed like Breakfast at Tiffany's to eat real eggs. One of the little girls asked about America. Was it wonderful? If they went there could they become film stars? She would be glad when the war was over so she too could get on with her life. It seemed so unfair.

It's fully how life catches up with people and one can only be mystified at the turn of events. Many years on one of the little boys met and married one of the little girls in this story and they are now, to this day, preserving the history of the 8th Air Force and its heritage. Preserving the trappings of G.I. Joe and lecturing to the U.S. airmen of today. During a recent Project Warrior course at Chicksands Air Force Base, now obsolete, they took some of today's Air Force men around the old deserted and desolate airfields. Those young airmen wondered in awe about how the war happened and when the old fighting men returned to this country on their reunions, crews are reunited, memories stirred. If you wander onto an old airfield today, sometimes you can hear the roar of those B17s. Long gone, the strains of Glenn Miller's "Moonlight Serenade." This is nostalgia and it must never be forgotten. The history of the 8th Air Force lies here in this country, in Britain and now two of these kids who were then in the dark ages of World War II happily preserve that history for evermore. For those two kids knew what war was all about and all their G.I. Joe friends of yesterday are their heroes of today.

When Chicksands Base closed, those two kids who are now Connie and Gordon Richards, 8th Air Force Managers, U.K., Contacts for the 8th Air Force Historical Society, were presented with the flag from the Base to keep their memory forever.

"Eyes of the Eighth" By Patricia Fussell Keen, a story of the 7th Photographic Reconnaissance Group 1942-1945. Hardbound, 83/4" x 11 1/4", 378 pp, over 400 B & W photos and three full color pages. The history of the Eighth Air Force's premier photo recon unit brings to life the story of the men who flew combat missions over Nazi-occupied Europe in unarmed P-38 Lightnings and Spitfires. The narrative of the unit's operations, its contribution to Allied Intelligence, and a detailed sortie list will be of interest to historians.



Order Now!

\$49.00 + \$5.00 S&H. Slightly higher postage overseas. Send check / money order to: CAVU Publishers L.L.C. / 16810 Boswell Boulevard / Sun City, AZ 85351

8th A.F. JACKET ART

IT'S 1944 AGAIN!... Authentic reproductions of WWII 8th Air Force Jacket Art & Nose Art painted BY HAND on your A-2 leather jacket or buy one from us. Priced very reasonably. Hand painted Squadron / Group patches, wings and shoulder patches also available. (Our artwork is meant to re-create and honor the originals, not to sell hundreds of generic copies. If you never had and/or would like a painted A-2 flying jacket, we can provide you with one that will serve as a tribute to the service & sacrifice of the men of the Eighth.)

WANTED: Original Painted / Unpainted A-2 Jackets and AAF insignia

Please call or Write for information:
AIR CORPS, DEPT. 8AF
15 BAKER COURT, CLIFTON, NJ 07011-0009 / 973-478-3442

Keep them flying!

Proud Assoc. Member 8th A.F.H.S.

WANTED

(ANY CONDITION)

Authentic flight Jackets \$1000
Japanese souvenir jackets \$500

Older Hawaiian shirts \$400

Older bowling shirts \$150

Pre 70's denim jeans/jackets \$1500

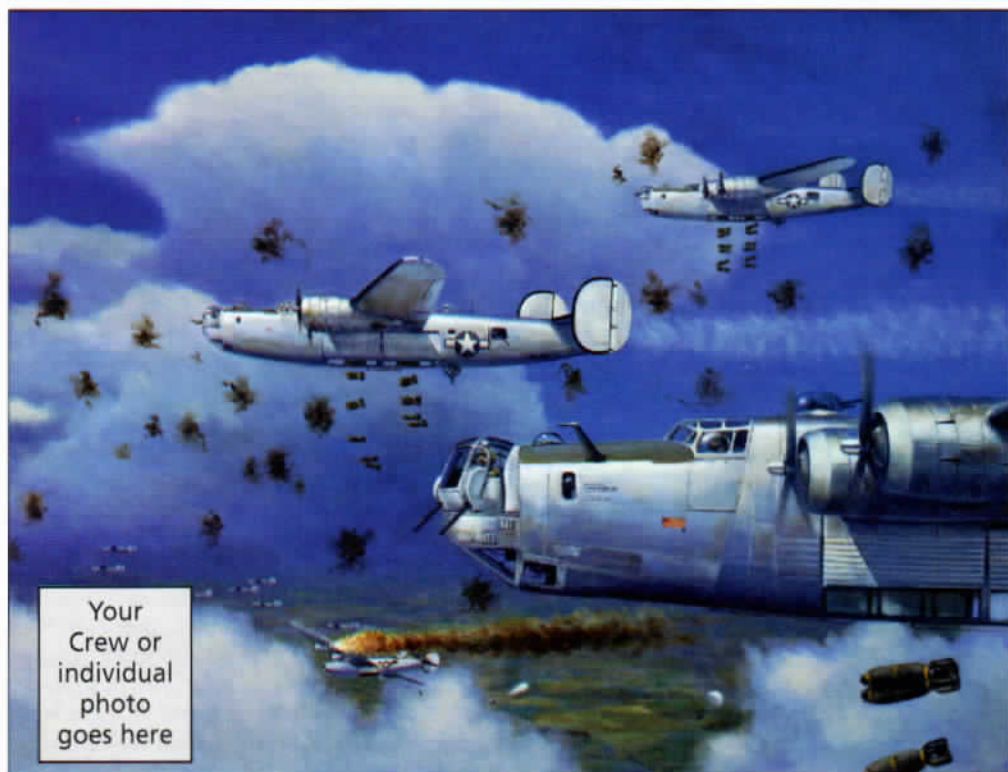
70's-80's NIKE running shoes \$150

Air Jordan basketball shoes \$500

CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION

1 (800) 509-7797

Get a Beautiful B-24 or B-17 Color Print with Personalized Markings of Your Choice.



It's a unique and inexpensive way to freeze in time a never-to-be-forgotten part of WWII. A genuine keepsake for you, your family and friends that will last for generations to come.



PRINT: \$75; TAIL MARKINGS: add \$15;
PHOTO: add \$25; NOSE ART: \$25 to \$65;
FRAMING ONLY \$65; S&H: \$10. B-24J in O.D., B-17G in O.D., B17F, B24D available.
(Send any size photo. All materials will be returned.)

100% MONEY-BACK GUARANTEED

Call Today for Easy Ordering!

1-800-774-0833

The Peters Group

2310 Highway 101 North • Minneapolis, MN 55447

MEMBER OF THE BAF HISTORICAL SOCIETY

1. Your WWII crew or individual photo
2. Your plane's nose art hand painted on the print
3. Your bomb group markings on the tail

SPECIAL FOR
MIGHTY 8th
VETERANS



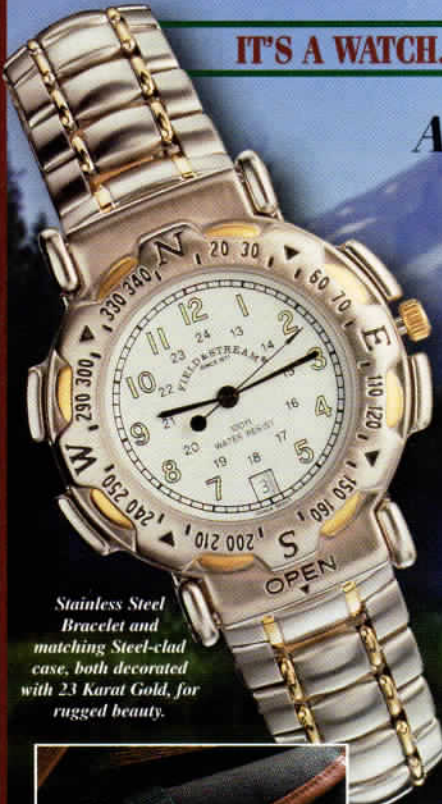
IT'S A WATCH...

AND A COMPASS!

Announcing the Official

FIELD & STREAM® MILITARY COMPASS WATCH

Now Engraved with
Mighty 8th Emblem,
Your Initials & Service Years



Stainless Steel
Bracelet and
matching Steel-clad
case, both decorated
with 23 Karat Gold, for
rugged beauty.



Watch
flips up
to reveal
hidden,
accurate, fully
calibrated
compass. Shown
with Mighty 8th
emblem and
extra Sports
Band included
FREE!



Designer hip-pouch
with belt loop
protects watch when
not in use.

FREE BONUS:
Velcro Band For
"Cushioned"
Comfort in High
Impact Activities.

YOUR Service Emblem
engraved on back of watch
with your personal initials
and service years.

24 hour military time,
luminous "Night-
Time" dial with large
numerals, and date
window.



A rugged timepiece & precision compass in one beautiful, solid stainless steel bracelet

Field & Stream, since 1871, trusted apparel and gear outfitters to millions of servicemen, hunters, fishermen and naturalists throughout the world is proud to issue its official Military Compass Watch, with some features never before found in even the finest timepieces:

- Quartz crystal watch movement with date window & sweep-second hand for accuracy within seconds per month.
- Luminous dial with 24 hour military time. Stop-second "Hack" feature allows exact synchronization of time.
- Steel-clad solid brass case water-resistant to 100 feet.
- Watch case opens to reveal easy-to-read compass, engraved with YOUR military service emblem, initials and service years.

- Both a gold plated steel dress bracelet and a velcro sport band are included.
- Satisfaction guaranteed or return within 30 days for replacement or refund—no questions asked.
- Lifetime Service Warranty on vital watch parts.

This is not a toy. It's a High-Tech watch and compass for dress or leisure outdoor use. THANK YOU priced at just \$99.*, a convenient payment plan is available with no interest charges. So, order yours today. A Lifetime Service Warranty will assure you of quality performance and reliability.

Call toll-free to Reserve Your Watch:
1-800-255-3048
Monday-Friday: 9am-5pm.
Have your credit card ready when ordering by phone.

ORDER FORM

Mail to: Field & Stream® Military Compass Watch
7453 Shipley Avenue, Hanover, MD 21076

YES! I wish to order the following Field & Stream Military Compass watch(es) engraved with my Service Emblem and Initials: (✓ Choices)

NEW The Mighty 8th Air Force

Army Navy Air Force Marine Coast Guard

My Initials _____ Service Years _____ to _____
Year Year

Enclosed is my check for \$99.* payable to "Veterans Commemoratives," as payment in full. OR

Charge four installments of \$24.75* each to my credit card:
 Visa or MasterCard Exp. Date ____/____

Credit Card# _____
Please Print Clearly

Signature _____

Daytime Phone Number (____) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

*plus \$7.95 shipping/handling and engraving
*PA residents add \$6.42 for state sales tax.

©ICM 1997

CMIWAT-BAF-8/97

Field & Stream Magazine is owned by Times Mirror Magazines, Inc. Field & Stream watches are licensed to Saunter International by Field & Stream License Company, Plymouth, NY which is owner of the Field & Stream trademark for watches.

THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE PX ORDER PAGE

Please use latest PX Page when ordering. These prices good only until 1 November 1997.

8AFHS Logo Items

	Enter Total Cost
1a. 4" Jacket Patch	\$ 3.95 _____
1b. Special Jacket Patch	\$ 19.95 _____
2. 4" Sticker \$.75 or 3/.....	\$ 2.00 _____
3. 3 1/4" Inside Decal \$.75 or 3/.....	\$ 2.00 _____
4. 1 1/4" Lapel Pin	\$ 4.95 _____
5. 3/4" Lapel Pin	\$ 2.75 _____
6. 3/4" Life Member Pin***	\$ 3.25 _____
7a. Tie Tac (Regular)	\$ 3.95 _____
7b. Tie Tac (Life Member)***	\$ 4.50 _____
8a. 8th AF Shoulder Patch, 3"	\$ 2.95 _____
8b. De Luxe Shoulder Patch	\$ 17.95 _____
9a. B-17 Belt Buckle, Pewter Finish	\$ 13.95 _____
9b. B-24 Belt Buckle, Pewter Finish	\$ 13.95 _____
9c. Special 8AF Belt Buckle, Pewter	\$ 16.95 _____
10. 8AFHS License Plate, 6" x 12"	\$ 3.95 _____
11. 8AFHS License Plate Holder	\$ 5.95 _____
12. 8AFHS Life Member Plaque, 4" x 5"****	\$ 12.95 _____
13. 8AFHS Bolo Tie	\$ 17.95 _____
14. 8AF Unit Map Tea Towel (see 9-1/12).....	\$ 5.95 _____
15. 8AFHS Bumper Sticker \$.90 or 3/.....	\$ 2.25 _____
16a. 8AF Cap-Good (fits all sizes)	\$ 8.95 _____
16b. 8AF Cap-Better (fits all sizes)	\$ 16.95 _____
16c. 8AF Cap-Best (fits all sizes)	\$ 24.95 _____
17. Solid pewter tie tacs: B-17, B-24, P-38, P-47, P-51 (\$6.95 each, be sure to circle the one(s) you want)	\$ 6.95 _____
18. Key tabs B-17, B-24, P-38, P-47, P-51 (circle the one you want).....	\$ 3.95 _____
19. 8AFHS Metal Grille ornament	\$ 12.95 _____
20. Ladies Earrings, 8th Air Force Emblem, gold plated For pierced ears only.	\$ 12.95 _____
21. "Pistol Packin' Mama" 390th Videotape.....	\$ 24.95 _____
22. 8AF Key Ring	\$ 3.95 _____
23. Miniature Wings (lapel), Pilots & Crew only (circle the one you want)	\$ 4.25 _____
24. T-Shirts - 8th Air Force Logo in full color. Indicate size wanted. S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____	\$ 9.95 _____
XXL _____	\$ 11.95 _____
25. Sweatshirts - 8th Air Force Logo in full color. Indicate size wanted. S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____	\$ 18.95 _____
XXL _____	\$ 21.95 _____
26. Golf Shirts - 8AF Logo in blue S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____	\$ 20.00 _____
XXL _____	\$ 22.00 _____
27. Grave Markers (5 7/8" Dia.) Complete with metal stake Aluminum	\$ 15.00 _____
Bronze	\$ 80.00 _____
If you prefer a flush mount for bronze marker check here. _____	
28. A-2 Jacket, genuine goatskin. Order one size larger than your regular suit size. Indicate Regular _____ or Long	\$175.00 _____
29. Bronze Coin/Medallions, 2" dia.....	\$ 6.95 _____
30. Die Cast B-17 5-1/2" WAS	\$ 5.00 _____
31. 8th AF Luggage Tags.....	\$ 4.25 _____
Two for	\$ 7.95 _____
32. 8th AF Zippy Letter Opener	\$ 2.00 _____
Three for	\$ 4.95 _____
33. Gold Lady's AF Bow Pin	\$ 8.95 _____

Roger Freeman Books The following popular hardcover books were written by 8AF historian, Roger A. Freeman.

B1. <i>The Mighty Eighth</i> , (13-1/16), 8-12 x 11, 314 pages. Basic 8AF History, unit statistics ad a/c markings. Medals of Honor, Aces, comprehensive index.....	\$ 39.95 _____
B1a. <i>The Mighty Eighth In Color</i> , by Roger A. Freeman, 1992. 400 color photos.	\$ 35.00 _____
B2. <i>Mighty Eighth War Diary</i> , 1990, Revised Edition. 2nd book in trilogy on 8AF History by Roger Freeman.....	\$ 49.95 _____
B3. <i>Mighty Eighth War Manual</i> , 1991, Revised Edition. 3rd book in trilogy on 8AF History by Roger Freeman.....	\$ 39.95 _____
B4a. <i>Experiences of War: The American in Europe</i> , by Roger A. Freeman. 192 pp., 1991. Experiences of 150 American airmen in WWII.	\$ 24.95 _____
B4b. <i>The Friendly Invasion</i> by Roger A. Freeman. 90 pp. 1992. The impact of the "friendly invasion" on the embattled island. Illustrated (reduced from \$21.95).	\$ 16.95 _____
B4c. <i>Claims to Fame, The B-17 Flying Fortress</i> by Steve Birdsall and Roger A. Freeman. 224 pages. Illustrated. records the exploits of this famous aircraft.	\$ 24.95 _____
B4d. <i>The Mighty Eighth in Art</i> by Roger A. Freeman, 160 pp. An evocative collection of images, which truly recreates the atmosphere of the air war in Europe	\$ 39.95 _____

8AFHS Books The following hardcover books are available. _____

B5. <i>The 8th AF Album</i> , 1978, 9 x 12, 224 pages. Photo essay of the 8AF in WWII. 1150 photos, including 250 nose art.	\$ 29.95 _____
B10. 8th AF Yearbook Reprint, 224 pp pictorial	\$ 32.95 _____

Directions: Write price next to each item ordered on the page, add the cost of the ordered items and place this amount on the cost line below these directions, add the postage and handling charge, write in the total, and PRINT your name and address. When ordering, please be sure to send this entire page with your check to the 8AFPX at the address below.

Cost of items ordered	\$ _____
For delivery and handling, add \$3.00, or \$4.00 if order is over \$20.00	\$ _____
Total (pay to 8AFHS).....	\$ _____

(Note: Overseas customers are asked to pay an additional \$5.00 for surface mail. Air rates on request.)

Your Name _____
Street _____
City, State, ZIP _____

Make checks payable in U.S. funds to 8AFHS and send with this order page to 8AFHS, c/o A.E. Swanson, 65 Beddington Ln, Strasburg, PA 17579. Please - No Phone Orders.

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION (Minimum charge: \$20.00)

Check One: MASTERCARD ___ VISA ___ Exp. Date _____

Card No. _____

(Signature)

ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE FROM THE 8AFHS PX

FROM SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND by D. A. Lande. The life and times of 8th AF bomber, fighter, and ground crews	\$29.95	
OVERPAID, OVERSEXED, AND OVER HERE by Juliet Gardiner, Hard cover 7 x 10" 224 pages, illustrated. About the American GI in WWII Britain. It tells it all like it was in a highly entertaining story which all can relate to. We recommend it highly.	\$19.95	
FIGHTERS OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH 1942-1945. by William N. Hess and Thomas G. Ivie, 264 pgs, ill. was \$39.95	\$19.95	
THE SKY WAS NEVER STILL: Poems of the "Mighty Eighth"	\$15.45	
THE EVADER by Harry A. Dolph A January 1994 condensed book selection for <u>Readers Digest</u> . An American Airman's eight months with the Dutch Underground.	\$18.95	
SECRET SQUADRONS OF THE EIGHTH by Pat Carty, 8 1/2" x 11", 112 pp.	Was \$24.95	NOW \$19.95
THE WEATHERMEN LET THEM FLY Story of the 8thAF Weather Squadron, By Ewing Brown	\$13.95	
BOMBING THE NAZIS Official combat manual written by the crew of "Jack the Ripper" Original issue April 1943, reprinted by 8AFMMF in July 1992	\$ 10.00	
THE QUEST FOR FREEDOM: Belgian Resistance in World War II by Yvonne de Riddler Files. A personal account of the indomitable commitment and bravery of the Belgian resistance fighters who helped many Allied airmen escape at the risk of their own lives.	\$9.95	
FIGHTER COMMAND by Jeffrey Ethell & Robert T. Sand 200 full-color illustrations, 10" x 10", 176 pp. "A Beauty Book"	Was \$29.95	NOW \$24.95
BLOODY SKIES by Melvin McGuire and Robert Hadley. An outstanding account of the air war and the 15th Air Force 448 pp, hard cover, 6" x 8-3/4"	\$22.95	
AIRFIELDS OF THE EIGHTH - Then and Now. A unique nostalgic look at the airfields used by the Eighth in the U.K. during WW II. Text by Roger A. Freeman	\$39.95	

The 8th Air Force Historical Society is tax-exempt veterans' organization under IRS Code 501 (c) (3), founded in 1975 and chartered in Florida to perpetuate history of "The Mighty Eighth." In 1976 the 8AFHS formed the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation. Contributions to either organization may be tax-deductible. Membership is open to veterans or spouses of veterans who have been assigned or attached to the 8th AF. Others may become Associate Members. Membership years begin on January 1 and dues notices for the following year are mailed from Aug 15-Nov 1. Your canceled check is your receipt. The 8th AF News is sent to paid-up Members, Associate Members, and Subscribers.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Send to: Art Swanson, POB 340, Strasburg, PA 17579

Name _____

Member # _____

Old Address _____

New Address _____

Effective Date _____

When contacting 8AFHS, please use membership number.

(For Office Use Only. Do Not Write Above These Lines.)

ACU

8th AFHS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____
First Name Middle Initial Last Name

ADDRESS: _____

8th AF Unit _____ Dates of Service _____ To _____

Not in 8th. Sign me up as Associate Member

If in Service - Dates of Service _____ To _____

Please use this form only for your first calendar year's dues (\$10.00 U.S. and \$15.00 non-U.S.). Send with your U.S. Dollar check (made out to 8AFHS) to 8AFHS Membership, POB 340, Strasburg, PA 17579. Your annual dues will be billed for subsequent years.



8th AF NEWS
The Eighth Air Force Historical Society
P.O. Box 7215, St. Paul, MN 55107

ADDRESS
CORRECTION
REQUESTED

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Williamsport, PA
Permit #201

**8AFHS Annual Reunion
and Group Reunions
September 9-14, 1997**

Radisson South, Bloomington, Minnesota

14801-6 LM 2392H
ERNEST H BARBER
5726 THOMSON HWY
LINCOLNTON GA 30817-1932

