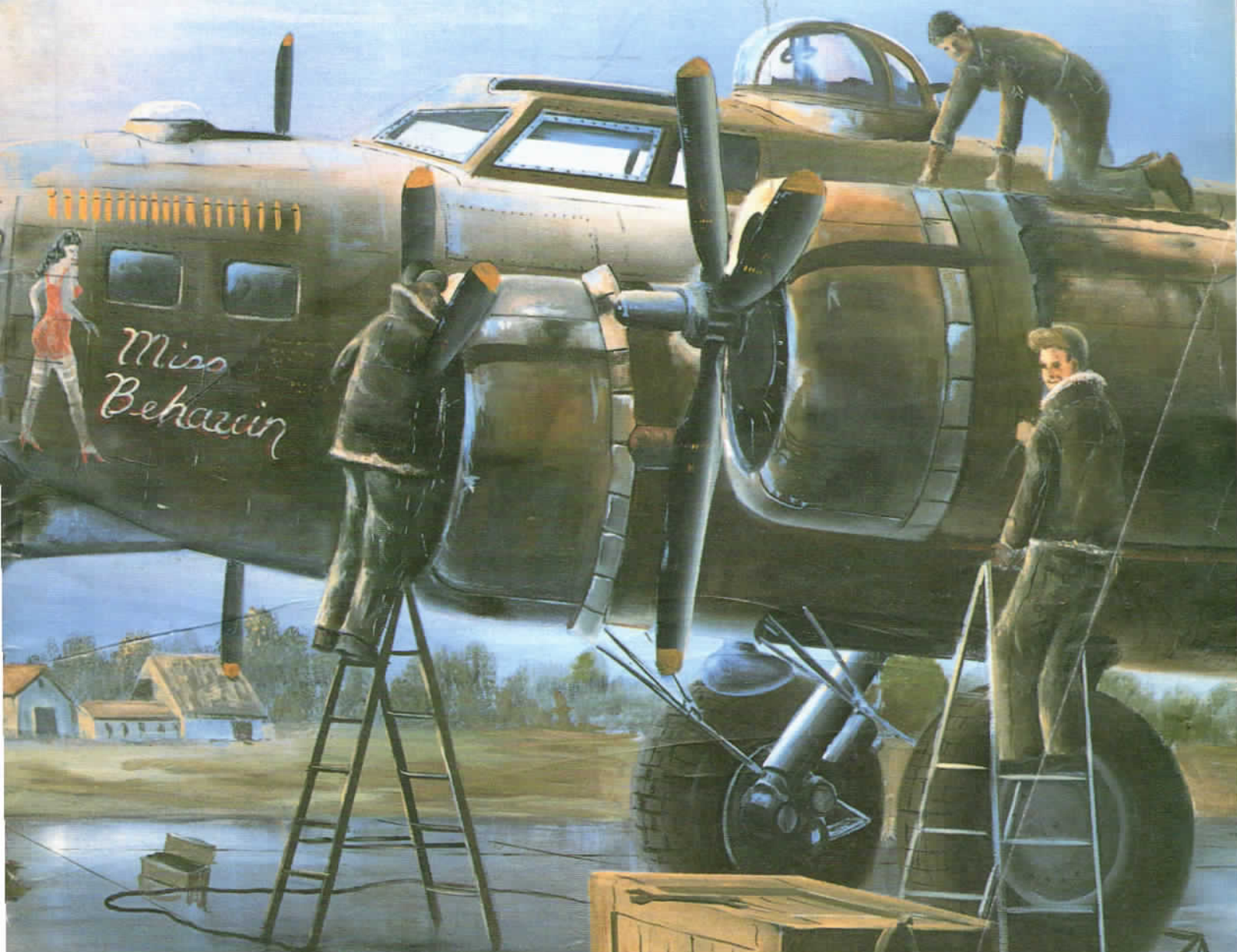




8th AF NEWS



VOLUME 99 NUMBER 1 Voice of "THE MIGHTY EIGHTH" MARCH 1999



'TURNING A BLIND EYE'

By Keith Hill

15 MAY 1945



25TH ANNIVERSARY

AF NEWS

Magazine of The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

Walter E. Brown, Editor

The Eighth Air Force News is dedicated to Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough, founder of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and editor for sixteen years. It is published quarterly and is the official newsmagazine of the Society. Submissions of Eighth Air Force related material are welcome and encouraged, but we cannot be responsible for its return. All material will be permanently preserved in the 8th Air Force archives. The 8th AFHS does not endorse or guarantee the products of its advertisers.

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Mission Briefing

The new year is already full of activity in many of the Chapters of the Historical Society, with Chapter meetings and events, dinners, plans for tours, airshows, and the Silver Anniversary celebration of the national Society in Savannah in the forefront.



This past year was an enjoyable one for me made more so by the many kind thoughts and words of encouragement offered by many of our members. As your Editor I will listen attentively to your suggestions for the 8th AF NEWS and strive to incorporate your ideas into each issue. My sincere thanks to all who contributed their stories and material to the magazine during this past year.

I will tell you that each contribution has played a part in developing the themes of the magazine issues and in assuring that the NEWS presents articles which you think are important in telling the story of the Eighth Air Force and of the Historical Society itself.

Speaking of the issues, the recent December Christmas issue was the cause of some concern. Not the issue itself, but the infernal interminable delay in getting it to Historical Society members. Mailed the first week of December, the magazine got caught up in the "Christmas mail rush" and many copies were not received until the end of the holiday season, causing jimjams in a number of our members as well as to yours truly. That problem will not occur again this coming year; live and learn. I have learned.

The mid-year meeting of the Board of Directors will be a productive one, addressing many of the progressive programs for the Society's upcoming years, and continuing to look at our standing projects and at our finances. Meeting in Savannah in March, the Board will also set up details for a very special 25th Anniversary annual reunion next October.

Please keep in touch with me, with your ideas and with your contributions to the NEWS.

Walt Brown, Editor
Ewell Farm
2340 Sugar Ridge Rd.
Spring Hill, TN 37174

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TURNING A BLIND EYE

by Keith Hill

It is autumn in wartime England as the ground crew of a B-17 Flying Fortress work out in the cold to repair their aircraft. The airplane had returned with battle damage from a particularly rough mission earlier in the day. Their group had lost four Heavy bombers on the raid. They will work long into the night to get their Miss Behavin back into flying trim - it will be needed tomorrow.

Amongst the toil and sweat of the American ground crew, life in the English countryside carries on, for none more so than that stalwart of the East Anglican countryside - the "Village Bobby". He has a problem! Some of "His Lordship's" pheasants have gone missing. The local poachers have been questioned, to no avail.

And so the slightly comical policeman pays a visit to the young American airmen working out on the hardstand, and from the corner of his eye he notices that his suspicions are correct. Our village policeman though, is an old soldier who fought in the First World War with the County Regiment on the Somme, at Ypres and in Flanders fields. He knows the hardships of soldiers in wartime.

After a brief look around the area, the friendly Bobby turns to the crew chief. He says simply, "I dare say you're right lad;

must've been that ol' fox 'ad His Lordship's pheasants!" He then mounts his push bike and pedals off down the lane for his afternoon tea. (Look closer at the Bobby's bicycle saddle bag!).



Appreciation to Keith Hill for his contribution of this print. Limited Edition of 250 copies signed and numbered by artist Keith Hill, full size print with certificate of authenticity available for 60 pounds including mailing costs. Visa and Mastercard also accepted. Keith Hill Studios 24th St - Peters Ave. Rushden; Northants; NN10-6XW; England. Phone/Fax + 4401933-350283

EDITOR/STAFF REQUEST TO CONTRIBUTORS

Many contributors to the newsmagazine are sending in articles, reports, and items originating on their computers or word processors. The 8th AF NEWS will be much obliged if you would include a 3 1/2" Floppy disk with the info on it whenever possible.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This year will be a banner year for the Eighth Air Force Historical society, as we will celebrate our 25th Anniversary at Savannah, Georgia. Our base of operations will be the Marriott Hotel with side trips to the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum and sightseeing tours as arranged by Armed Forces Reunions Services. Now is the time to start making plans to attend our gala celebration October 27-31, 1999. Walter Brown, reunion chairman and his committee of Tom Parsons, Larry Goldstein, Craig Harris and Stanley Peterson are working hard to make our 25th Anniversary one of our most successful reunions.

Membership is one of our problem areas. During WW II there were 350,000 members in the 8th Army Air Force in England and we are still looking for a segment that has not been informed of our existence. Notices will be placed in magazines that are likely to be read by veterans. Remember, we are seeking all 8th Air Force personnel, ground crews, headquarters, nurses, WACs and support people. If you have ideas about how to reach former 8th Air Force Members, please contact any member of our membership committee - Walter

Brown, Ken Nail, Lawrence Goldstein, Stanley Peterson, Clayton Ridge or Harold Rutka. We hope to have a membership table set up in the Marriott hotel for possible walkons.

It is in the best interest of all members of the 8th Air Force Historical Society that we work together now as we worked together when we were stationed in England. It is my sincere wish that we return to the days when we referred to the groups as "we," not "us" and "them". Together we can build the 8th Air Force Historical Society, but when it becomes "them" and "us" we only tear up the Society. Copies of our Articles of Incorporation, By-laws, minutes of meetings and financial reports are available to members. Don't hesitate to contact any of our board members or staff that are included on page 2 of the 8th Air Force News.



Harold C. Rutka President

FROM THE OFFICERS AND STAFF

COMMITTEE REPORT UNIT AND CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Many Chapters and Units have complied with the request of not only this Committee but also the 8th AF News Editor that your news releases be sent in in news release form. As stated before, it is too time consuming to read your newsletters for the purpose of getting information for the Chapter News Column. Unit and Chapter Reunion notices are starting to come to the Committee but more are needed and requested. As stated in the last Newsletter get your reunion and meeting notices in as soon as they are finalized so they can be put in before and not after the fact. The Chapter Presidents list is as complete as the Committee has at this time. If there are any additions, deletions or corrections please let the Committee know so they can be put in the next Newsletter. At the end of the list are two names of State Contacts for states that do not have Chapters at this time. If members in these states would like to start a Chapter

you can coordinate with the Contact and this Committee. The Committee will give as much assistance as is possible. A list of Unit Contacts will be in the next issue of the Newsletter, but at this time the Committee is missing many names. **It is therefore requested that all organized Units please send the name of their Contact for publication in the next issue.**

There are many people out there trying to contact Units, not only former members but other interested persons. We would like to help but cannot because of a lack of information. Units can keep half of the first year's membership dues of new members that they recruit. This benefit applies also to Chapters at this time. If there are any changes it will be published in this column.

Jim Erskine, Chairman



ELECTION NOTICE

Nomination for candidates for election to the Board of Directors of the 8th Air Force Historical Society must be in the hands of the Secretary no later than April 15, 1999. The following information must be included with the nomination:

- *Full name of person being nominated
 - *8th AFHS membership number
 - *Nominee's complete address
 - *8th Air Force unit nominee served in
 - *Short resume of nominee
 - *Full name and address of nominator
 - *Nominator's membership number and unit, if applicable
- The Secretary will send all nominations to the Nominating Committee. Nominations received by the Secretary after April 15, 1999, or any nominations without complete information will not be considered.

Send all nominations to:

Richard C. Baynes, Secretary, 8th AFHS
71 Nighthawk; Irvine, CA 92604-3683

HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REUNION 1999 - OUR SILVER ANNIVERSARY

Plans are well underway for the gala annual reunion in Savannah. Celebrate the 25th Anniversary of your Historical Society October 26 - 31, 1999. The next issue of the 8th AF NEWS will have all the plans laid out and registration forms included. This will be a very special one! The Marriott Savannah will be the headquarters hotel; make your plans.

THE FIX

The article on the B-17, "Kipling's Error" printed in the Dec 98 issue was written and submitted by Lloyd Mitchell, navigator and original 96th Bomb Group crew. Apologies to Lloyd for the inadvertent omission.

FROM THE INFORMATION MANAGER



As I enter my ninth year on the job, some things have changed. We now have E-Mail - edkuepp8th@AOL.com - and our Web pages are being revised. The December 8AF NEWS listed various 8th AF bomb groups and fighter groups, along with other related web sites which are well done.

Please note:

Our area code for our Fax has been changed to 651-222-7781. Our office is open 9 - 4, Monday through Friday. Our toll free telephone, 1-800-833-1942 still gets a lot of action.

If I am not on the phone, live people answer it. Many people

still like that personal touch. If I am on the phone, voice mail clicks in and I usually get back to you the same day. At an average use of 20 hours per month, it is still the best source for communication. By the way, the 1-800 number appears on our poster and many other places throughout the world. The mail for 1998 averaged 4 pieces per day, with half coming from overseas. New member totals for 1998 was down substantially and we will address that situation at our mid-year Board meeting. I know that there are still some WW II 8th vets out there that are not members. A special appeal to associate membership will be strongly encouraged. At an annual cost of \$10.00, it's a deal and a half.

Ed Kueppers

RESPONSE OF THE FIGHTERS

by Lt. General Gerald W. Johnson

This is my response as a P-47 pilot during World War II to General Lew Lyle's story in the December issue of *8th Air Force NEWS* entitled "Bombers are Bait."

Using the term "Bombers are Bait" seems to me to discredit the mighty effort the crews of the 8th Bomber Command put forth toward destroying Hitler's war machine, including his Luftwaffe, by daylight bombing raids which exposed them to both anti-aircraft fire and concentrated fighter attacks by the best pilots in the German Air Force.

I arrived in England in early January 1943 with the 56th Fighter Group which was the first group equipped with the new Republic P-47. We acquired our first combat experience by flying sweeps along the western part of Europe. German fighters came up to engage us but not in great numbers, and I expect it was to find out if the inexperienced American pilots and a new airplane that was very large and heavy for a fighter was any real threat. Two outfits that were extremely aggressive and whose pilots had four years combat experience frequently chased us half way across the North Sea on the way home. We called the FW-190 GP "Goring's Yellow-Nosed Bastards" and the ME-109 GP "the Abbeville Kids." Both Groups, in early '43 were based very near the west coast of Europe.

There were very few aircraft in the 8th Air Force in the Winter of 42 - 43. About four B-17 groups and a few B-24 Liberators, a P-38 outfit arrived in December '42, the 56th GP in Jan '43, and the 4th Ftr. GP, formerly equipped with Spitfires and part of the RAF was being equipped with P-47s. In these early days it was generally believed that heavily armed Forts and Liberators could successively fight off the German fighters without need of fighter escort. This was soon proven to be a wrong assumption and all available 8th AF fighters were performing escort missions known as "Ramrods."

On my first Ramrod in April '43 I learned the Luftwaffe target priorities. They approached the bombers in large formations and attempted to get past the escort fighters to down the bombers. We were not their targets except in self defense. To stop the bombers before they reached their target was their mission. The bomber and fighter aircraft build-up in England was quite rapid in 1943. The 9th Air Force, which was to support ground forces after D-day, was getting P-47's in late '43. These, also, were temporarily added to the 8th AF bomber escort forces. Bomber losses were extremely heavy during '43, particularly on missions such as Regensburg 17 Aug and Schweinfurt 14 Oct 43.

The limiting factor with the P-47 was range. We could not escort the bombers to their targets. It was a terrible experience to be approaching our turn-back point due to fuel shortage and observe the large formations of enemy fighters high and in front of the bombers just waiting for our departure before making their attack. We almost always stayed longer than planned, and many 8th Air Force aircraft were forced on their return to land at the closest base in England.

Despite the policy of not leaving the bombers many of us, when engaged in a fight, stayed with until the enemy aircraft was destroyed and then returned to the bombers.

Even with our limited range and numbers of aircraft the P-47's

took a heavy toll of Germany's best pilots and aircraft during 1943 and forced the enemy units to move further back into Germany.

In the late Fall of '43 P-51's started

arriving and with their range the bombers had escort to the target and return, and the P-51s could still roam over wide areas of Germany in search of anything to shoot; i.e. aircraft, air fields, trains, truck convoys, flak towers and so forth. With the increase in aircrafts - both bombers and fighters - Gen. Doolittle's change in policy in Jan '44, and big week in February, the Mighty 8th AF demonstrated total command of the skies and was finally postured to complete their mission of total destruction of Germany.

The short time remaining before June was adequate to permit General Eisenhower to tell the invading troops on 6 June, without reservation, that if any aircraft were seen in the sky above the Normandy beaches, they would be friendly - and he was right.

Following is my experience with General Doolittle's policy change in Jan '44:

During nine months of combat in '43 I shot down nine German aircraft. During two months of combat after January '44, I shot down another nine aircraft. On 29 Feb at 26,000 ft I spotted a single aircraft low and headed North. I left the bombers and went down to 4,000 ft to shoot down a JU-52 and then returned to the bombers. This was the only aircraft seen by the entire 8th Air Force on that day and it had been destroyed.

In March, 1944 I was shot down by anti-aircraft fire while strafing.

Finally, I will have to say I never thought of the bombers as bait to lure or entice the German fighters to come-up. Rather, the bombers threatened the survival of Germany and the enemy fighters came up in defense of their country.

Gerald W. Johnson Lt. Gen. USAF (Ret.) Past Commander, 8th Air Force



Gerald Johnson and ground crew. P-47D bought with bonds by the people in Jackson County.



Generals Gerry Johnson and Lew Lyle, authors of the response articles to "Bombers are Bait," talk it over in front a formation of B-17 F series at the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum.

MEMBERS RESPOND TO "BOMBERS AS BAIT"

by Maj General Lewis E. Lyle USAF (Ret.)

I have received some great responses to my "Bombers as Bait" article in the Dec 98 8th AF NEWS. Thanks to each of you who wrote. Here are some of the ideas and opinions regarding the bomber-fighter relationship which were received, along with some explanations based on the situation as I knew it at the time.

It is important to state that with the invasion of Normandy only six months away when Jimmy Doolittle took command of the 8th Air Force in January 1944, everyone in Washington was nervous about the invasion's chances of success. All were aware that without complete control and denying enemy aircraft access to the invasion area, failure was likely. Ralph Holmes, 96th Bomb Group, writes, "The priority of the Eighth Air Force was to destroy the German Air Force, their airfields, and bomb their aircraft factories."

The tremendous pressure put on General Hap Arnold to meet this objective led him to look at every General in the Air Force for leadership. He went into the field and personally talked to them and concluded that General Jimmy Doolittle was the best man for the job. One of the primary reasons for Arnold's choice was that he believed Doolittle would do whatever was necessary, regardless of the losses, to completely wipe out the Luftwaffe by invasion time. The 8th AF and the future of air power, as well as a separate Air Force service, was on the line. Doolittle never let anyone misunderstand his position and was very straightforward about his intentions.

Michael Howell, whose father flew P-51s with the 357th FG, suggests that using the term "bait" to describe the bombers seems to give the impression that they were expendable and may actually be denigrating what the 8th AF achieved. C.W. "Bill" Getz, a B-24 pilot in the 491st BG, counters with the fact that the 8th AF bombers were bait right from the start. Bill says, "They attracted German fighters on every mission. General Doolittle's comments may have referred to some additional perspective. Toward the end, the fighters would come

up in gaggles of 100 or more. The Luftwaffe would use a few fighters as bait themselves to draw off our escorts, and then the main body would pounce on the bombers." Irv Day of Lake Placid, Florida adds an additional thought. Irv states that his bomb group was under the impression "that Doolittle intended to identify the intended targets in advance, if that would flush the Luftwaffe from hiding. The enemy was not stupid; why

commit German fighters to a job easily performed by flak?" This is echoed by Robert Egan, pilot with the 392nd BG: "I wasn't enthralled at the prospect of being used as bait so our fighters could hit their fighters. As you are aware, when Generals

Spaatz and Eaker were in command, they planned for the bombers to go in to targets by a circuitous route so that German fighters that hit us on the way in could not get us on the way out. I remember on two missions in March, 1944, the Luftwaffe was made aware that we would go on a bee line from East Anglia over the Zuider Zee to Berlin, and would return on the same route. Our advantage at that time was that we had fighter cover the entire way. In the long run, I am sure General Doolittle made a wise decision of how to end the war sooner."

Eddie Deerfield, 303rd BG, offers some opinions "from a radio operator." He says, "I flew half of my missions after General Doolittle's visit to the 1st Air Division in January 1944 where he confirmed his 'bombers as bait' strategy. Not passing that particular message to



Contrails were not often considered friendly. Crews perceived them as pinpointing the aircraft for enemy flak batteries. On some occasions Luftwaffe fighters would use them as cover in attacks from six o'clock.

the 303rd troops at Molesworth was a sensitive command decision. Hearing the "bait" strategy articulated would have been harmful to Group morale, telling us, in a sense, that our destiny was to be the sacrificial lamb to lure the Nazi tiger. The concept of using bombers as bait was not so much a military strategy as it was an inevitable fringe benefit of sending us into the skies over enemy territory. Bomber Command's primary goal was to destroy enemy targets on the ground. Germany's goal was to defend those targets. It is inconceivable that "bait" was foremost in the minds of bomber crews or Luftwaffe fighter pilots as they set off on their missions. The ultimate goal was to achieve victory in World War II."

Regardless of the losses, the mission had to be accomplished before the invasion

Regardless of the losses, the mission had to be accomplished before the invasion. There could not be any air opposition on the invasion beaches. General Arnold picked the guy who he knew could accomplish that. The availability of men and material replacements had a definite effect on the ability to be successful. When Doolittle assumed command he was aware that he had inexhaustible resources to get the job done - as had not been the situation in the early

The 8th AF and the future of air power was on the line

years of the war. Whatever the price to be paid was to be, come hell or high water we would be able to sustain the attacks. I got over my shock right away when Doolittle's policy got immediate results. Our bomber losses from enemy fighters actually started downwards and our fighter losses went up when they really got into the fight. Doolittle was the man with guts and the knowledge to do the job.

Jack Lambert, a military aviation historian at Phalanx Publishing Co., asks the question why the Fifteenth Air Force based in Italy did not follow the same policy that Doolittle instituted. Fighters escorting the 15th AF bombers were oblig-

**Doolittle was the man
with guts and the knowledge
to do the job**

ed to stay with the bombers. The fact is that Doolittle's policy was not critical to the 15th Air Force's mission. They received a lot of opposition from the Luftwaffe and had a major impact on the outcome of the war, but it was up to the Mighty Eighth to ensure that the invasion would succeed. In closing, let me properly recognize the activities of the Ninth Air Force, which was instrumental in the success of our mission with constant pre-invasion attacks and especially with their tactical activities in support of the ground troops after D-Day and beyond.

**Lew Lyle, 207 Ridge One Circle
Hot Springs, AR 71901**

DUXFORD

The Imperial War Museum at Duxford ranks in the top ten aviation museums in the world. They have recently opened the new American Air Museum which is an exciting addition to the many exhibitions already on show.

The American Air Museum was opened last August by Her Majesty the Queen. This magnificent new exhibition is a tribute to the 30,000 American airmen who lost their lives flying from British bases during Second World War.



WELCOME TO LEGENDARY DUXFORD - 1999 AIR SHOW DATES

2 May - Spring Air Show

Featuring a 55th Anniversary celebration of aircraft that took part on D-Day

10/11 July - Flying Legends

Exciting 2 Day International Warbird Show

12 September Duxford '99 - A Century of Air Power

17 October - Autumn Show

The last chance to see a major air show of historic aircraft this millennium!

The Imperial War Museum Duxford Airfield Cambs CB2 4QR
England Tel: 44 1223 835000 ext 264
email 106250.1736@compuserve.com

A recent guest of honor to the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah was Ted Inman, Director of the Imperial War Museum in Duxford, England. Shown here with Lt. Gen. E.G. 'Buck' Shuler, chairman of the Heritage Museum Board of Trustees. Ted interacts frequently concerning activities and goals common to both museums and also entertains many of the 8th AF Veterans who journey back to England for return visits.



On a visit to the US last year I had the chance to tour the The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center in Savannah at the kind invitation of Buck Shuler. During a tidy up I came across some photographs from that visit and knowing that 8th Air Force Historical Society members have always taken a great interest both in The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum and in Duxford and the American Air Museum, I thought they might like to be reassured about the very cordial relations between our two organizations, which the enclosed photograph illustrates.

I wondered if you might like to publish it, with a suitable caption.

Yours Sincerely **Ted Inman**

UNIQUE BATTLE OF BRITAIN AIRCRAFT ARRIVES AT DUXFORD

A unique Battle of Britain-vintage Messerschmitt Bf 109E aircraft has been acquired by the Imperial War Museum Duxford, near Cambridge. The Messerschmitt is the only surviving example that was forced down during the Battle of Britain. It will undergo a two year restoration and eventually be displayed at Duxford in a reconstructed scene of its crash-landing in 1940.

STUDENTS HONOR VETERANS AND VETERANS DAY

I am an 8th grade Humanities teacher in Escondido, CA. This was the second year that I have taught the unit on WWII as an Oral History project. My desire was for my students to experience history from those who lived it, for them to understand the meaning of patriotism, to preserve the stories of those who lived this history, as well as to honor on Veterans Day those men and women who served during this time of national pride. This project met all those expectations and more. I had no idea of the impact upon the community, nor of the affective learning that would also take place with my students. We studied the material extensively, and in a variety of ways.

The program was held in October. The assembly began when Col. Lewis Millet, MOH DSC, a past National Commander of the Legion of Valor, was introduced as one of the most highly decorated soldiers. He spoke to both students and veterans, inspiring both. He reminded students, "they had a heritage to live up to." At the conclusion of the speech, students armed with their questions, tape recorders, pens and paper, and veterans armed with their medals and photos, met each other and

went to assigned rooms where the interviews were conducted. Veterans shared their personal stories, and students asked questions, such as, "What does patriotism mean to you?"

The "U.S.O." show was held on Nov. 9th as close to Veterans Day as I could arrange. The veterans returned, many with guests, to be entertained by the same students who conducted the interviews. The show included skits and music of the war years. Uncle Sam provided the historical narration, and F. D. Roosevelt gave his "Day of Infamy" speech. Bob Hope entertained the "troops", along with Gracie and George. The Andrew sisters sang and danced. A jazz band played. Students made a living statue of the Marines at Iwo Jima, while another student played taps. The chorus sang numerous numbers, including the various service songs.

The project was a big undertaking, but one well worth the effort. It was an incredible experience to talk with men and women who directly influenced history. My students have such a different and deeper understanding of what freedom, patriotism and sacrifice mean. They have

a greater respect for their elders. Their attitude and behavior has changed. They have some understanding of the horrors of the Holocaust. They have a greater respect for the American flag. They also view their country with a feeling of pride. They have even told me they now like history; that it's not as boring as they had previously thought. In other words, it became real to them. My students refer to the men and women they interviewed as "my vet."

The veterans have told me what a positive experience this was for them. They view young people differently. They are more confident about our public schools. They felt honored to be remembered and to share their experiences.

In conclusion, this project has been the highlight of my teaching career. My students met real-life heroes. The affective and cognitive learning that took place surpassed my expectations. As one of my students said "I now know a real hero isn't a sports figure."

Linda L. McAllister
Escondido, CA 92026
L. R. Green School



SANTA SOLDIER

Dear Editor,
Re: Volume 98
Number 4 your
Cover "Santa
Soldier", where did
you get the cartoon?
I drew for "Yank"
during the war. "I
think it's mine! Is
it? I'm almost sure
of it! I was delighted
to see it!"
Sincerely,



Tom Flannery, Baltimore, MD

This unique drawing was found, uncredited, in Jim Hill's files, forwarded by his wife Marjorie. Altered slightly to update the 1998 Christmas issue cover, the drawing has drawn a number of favorable comments. A 55-year belated "Thank you" to Tom Flannery. - Editor

LOOKING FOR 'GASHOUSE GUS'

Dear Walter,

I recently received a letter from Mr. Peter Loncke in Belgium, who is researching the history of a 392nd Bomb Group B-24 which crashed near his home after completing its mission to Wesel, Germany on March 24, 1945. The ship was "Gashouse Gus", in which our crew from the 576th sqdn. piloted by Lt. Robert Harcus, flew several missions. We were not on the Wesel missions. We would like to receive any and all information about the ship and crew, including before and after the mission. The "Gashouse Gus" history seems to be at least as important to him as is that of the crew members. According to Bob Vicker's the *Liberators from Wendling*, the only plane lost that day by the 392nd was #709 from the 576th, piloted by a Lt. Hummell. "Gashouse Gus" must have been #709. Contact Researcher: Peter Lance, Sint-Franciscusstraat 54, B-33920 Lommel, Belgium
Sincerely,

John Rosenberg, Brookfield, WI

RAF CHEDDINGTON

Dear Sirs,

I am carrying out some research into the use by the United States Army Eighth Air Force of an airfield at RAF Cheddington, Buckinghamshire, England from 1943 to 1945, I wonder if you have any information that you may be able to provide to me to help me in my research. Many

March 1999 (99-1)

thanks for your assistance.

Yours Sincerely,

**R. Heasman, 1 Buckland Road,
Buckland Wharf, Aston Clinton, Nr
Aylesbury, Bucks. HP22 5LL England**

OPERATION LUSTY

I am researching Air Technical Intelligence (ATI) and Operation Lusty, the retrieval of Luftwaffe scientific research and technology. The Air Disarmament Groups and Squadrons assisted ATI recover German jet and rocket aircraft, engines, missiles and equipment for shipment to Wright Field. I wish to interview by telephone veterans involved directly or indirectly with these organizations, or who assisted with retrieving German aircraft.

**Norman Malayney, 519 Semple Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-4315
(412) 683-0169**

A DEADLY GAME

Dear Sir,

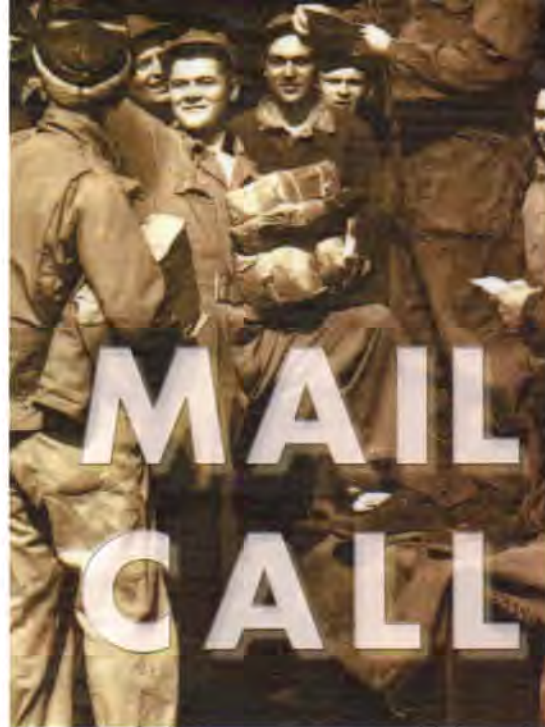
In December 98 "Debriefing" from Bill Varnedoe on "the flak gap at the Zuider Zee in Holland:" Yes, this was "an old arrangement" as he wrote, and it was called the "Egmond Flak Corridor" near the Dutch coastline village of Egmond. When outbound eastward, the 8th AF would encounter flak on some mornings and not on others. Similarly, flak would be encountered on the return trip on some afternoons and not others. It was sort of a "game" between the 8th AF and the Nazi flak unit, which mounted their dual-purpose Flak 43 88-mm guns on flat cars and ran them up and down the coast at their discretion. This oddball situation forced 8th AF crew members to be alert and ready for the possibility of flak whenever in or near that corridor. Incidentally, that route from Egmond Eastward to Dummer Lake and Beyond was called "U.S. Highway No. 1"

R.H. Hodges, 486th BG Pelham, NY

THE 388TH BOMB GROUP COLLECTION

Dear Sir,

I read with interest Donald Wilson's article about his visit to Knettishall, England, home of the 388th Bomb Group (H). What a shame Dr. Wilson and his students were unable to visit the 388th Collection at Hillside Farm in nearby Market Weston! This privately-owned museum is



open regularly to the public, and with a little advance notice, special arrangements will be made to accommodate American visitors regardless of the timing of their visit or their relationship to the 388th, as well as aircraft and armament components. Admission is free. If anyone is planning a visit, I strongly recommend they drop a line to curator David Sarson at Dovedale, Church Road, Market Weston, Diss Norfolk IP2 22NX; or call him at 011 44 1359 221147.

Sincerely,

**Janet Pack, 388th Associate
Monrovia, CA**

PAINTINGS

Martin George of Guildford, England. Two paintings, four years in the creation, haven been given to John Watson. The works are by Martin George. One painting depicts "My Princess," the B-17 bomber former technical sergeant Watson flew in, and the other is an impression of John in uniform with a background of B-17's. Mr. George, 60 years old Watchmaker, saw an ad in Mail Call five years ago, that John placed for a replacement case for his WWII wristwatch and since then there have been many letters and phone calls from the grateful Englishman. As a child living off and on in frightening and dangerous London he, like most of his generation, has not forgotten the protection of the U.S. Airmen.
John Watson, 351st BG., Southold, NY

A PATH, A TREE, A LIVING RUNWAY...

Dear Walt,

Thank you so very much for printing my article "A Path a Tree, a 'Living Runway'...and a Friend." In the December issue of the *8th Air Force NEWS*. It was well done and I have received numerous letters from Eighth Air Force Veterans and a couple of widows who enjoyed a nostalgic trip back to East Anglia. I just returned with a Samford University class who toured World War II Britain and of course included bases in East Anglia, specifically Thorpe Abbots. They were very moved by the visits and accounts from our British "friends" who were more than happy to show them around. Also while I was in East Anglia I looked up George Stebbings, the subject of the article, and he was extremely pleased to see the article. He said this was a very pleasant Christmas present. George is one of those British "friends" who almost single-handedly keeps the memories of a now derelict base alive. It is very fitting that we could give him some recognition. With this letter I am sending you a copy of Historical Travel Guide I have prepared for classes such as the one I took to Britain in January and for local tour groups that are interested in touring World War II Britain. It worked very well with my students in that they were prepared historically for each visit we made. The book will be stocked by the Samford University Bookstore, 800 Lakeshore Drive Birmingham Alabama, 35229. Cost is \$13.35 plus \$2.00 shipping. Alabama residents must also pay eight-percent sales tax. Again, thanks for your article.

Sincerely,

**Donald E. Wilson, PhD; Professor,
Department of History, Samford
University; Birmingham, AL**

RAF BASES IN THE USA

Dear Sir,

Last November/December, my wife and I spent a most enjoyable two weeks holiday in the historic town of St. Augustine in N.E. Florida. As arranged, we rented a car for two days to visit Savannah for an overnight stay. For the past 2 1/2 years or so, I've been researching the bases in the U.S. where the R.A.F. trained in World War II. The August 1996 issue of the Newsletter prompted me to write to the

person responsible, Robert M. Drake of Albany, Georgia. Bob has helped me a lot, sending photographs, accounts and friendly letters. Albany was one of eleven places in the U.S. where training of British pilots took place under the Arnold Scheme. In fact, the R.A.F. Committee in Albany likes to think of themselves as, "The U.S. capital for the R.A.F. Memorials". There are four in the city and one in the airport building. The three of us met at the 8th A.F. Heritage Museum. What a good job he made of it too. We maximized the comparatively brief but memorable time together. It was really good to meet someone who had previously been a voice at the other end of the telephone and an author of interesting letters. Southern hospitality at its best!

Yours sincerely,

Walter Townsend, Leeds, England

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

Dear Walt,

I followed Dick Baynes' suggestion in the August issue of the 8th AF News; contacted the Mayor of my town, Baldwin Park, and she happily put the proclamation of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Week on the council agenda for October 7th. The city's proclamation was presented to me that night, and I am enclosing a copy of it. I was very pleased with the city's cooperation. The City's annual parade was held last November, and they honored me by asking me to be the reviewing officer, which I did, wearing my class A pinks and greens. About a week later the city also honored me with a plaque at the annual Veterans Day Program. Not that I am all that much of an outstanding hero (32 missions as co-pilot in a B-17; no one in our crew injured), but I seem to be the only one in this general area that can still wear the original uniform! In any case, I do all I can to perpetuate our history. The other enclosure is a copy of a cachet-maker newsletter. I had met Florence at a Veterans Day Program a year ago at the nearby West



Covina Post Office. She was impressed by one of my photos, and as the 50th Anniversary of the Air Force approached, she asked if she could use the picture in making a first day cover. I was well pleased with her work, but had no idea she would win first prize with it! (The newsletter managed to add my last name before the word "pilot", Giving me a little undeserved glory). Thanks for your work in helping put out a first class news-magazine for all of us.

Sincerely,

Roy Test, 398th BG

RABBITS AND RATTLERS

Dear Walt,

I was a member of a Cadre Formed in Salt Lake, sent to Casper, Wyoming, bare bones site. No planes. Plenty of "Rattlers and Rabbits" as big as some men (at least it seemed like that to a city kid). Our outfit, 351st base HQ. Sq., did those little things that readied the base for the training of B-17 crews. We had a private named Charley Runyon. He was a mistake. Charley came from West Virginia. As sweet a man as ever was. Charley was over 40 and got drafted. He became part of our alert crew at Casper. One of our many duties involved patrolling the runways, am and pm, for any problems such as lights or trash or dead animals. Charley loved this duty. He would go out in the Jeep each morning and run over the rattler snakes sunning on the runways. Then he removed their rattles and in his spare time (lots) made bracelets and necklaces, took them to Casper and sold them. Some days after the inspection was done and the de-rattling completed, we would take off cross country chasing the big Rabbits; never caught one, but it was great fun. Just before we shipped out for England, suddenly Charley disappeared. He was found out and got an honorable discharge. Charley if you're still around, I have not found a superior checker player than you. Thanks for making my life a little easier to bear while I was away from home. Other guys & gals must have met "Charlies;" why don't we challenge them for the most unusual or funniest story? Sincerely,

Al Singer, 389 B.G. San Diego CA

WHERE'S EDDIE?

Editor,

Does anyone remember a pilot in the 493rd named Eddie Hill? A good-looking guy, but weren't we all. His navigator was named Anderson. His co-pilot name forgotten, a tall lanky hotshot type, hated being a co-pilot. After his tour he became a fighter pilot. But it cost him: he was killed. Co-pilot received a letter from a girl he'd courted in L.A. She said he left something behind, and it was growing bigger her tummy every week. Eddie said, "Now there's a mission he should have aborted." Though Eddie and I were but two hundred miles apart, I in Seattle and he Portland, I've never heard or seen hide nor hair since those days.

What ever became of Eddie Hill?

Stanley P. Friedman 1450 Croton Lake Rd. Yorktown Heights, N.Y. 10598 914-962-9394 Email stanpf@aol.com

BEFORE BLACK THURSDAY

Dear Walt,

A friend of mine was talking about the 8th Air Force organizations. I was a member but it was for a short time. We came over to Scotland when we were celebrating the 4th of July. We were a replacement crew. We were a part of the 384th Bomb Group. Our first mission when we bombed Kassel was exciting. The smoke from what we hit rose above us and we were flying at 26,000 feet. The second mission was our downfall. We were in coffin corner and we had a run-away prop so we straggled. Four Focke-Wulf 190's hit us and the pilot said one word: "jump." I knew what he meant and I did. I was the tail gunner. We lost not only the rudder but the whole vertical stabilizer. All I can say was, I was lucky to survive! Two of us were killed. The bombardier was shot in his parachute. The date was August 12, 1943. Our target was Gelsenkirchen.

I don't know how close we came because I didn't see much and the only planes that I saw that day since leaving England were those fighters. I spent lots of my time in Stalag 17. Our pilot was William Bigelow and we were in the 547th Squadron. I haven't been able to locate him since we came back to the USA. I have been going to the VA and have had good luck with them. I never smoked, so I don't have any real major problems. I have only 12 teeth left. If I lose one

more, I'll probably get dentures. Yours truly,

Martin L. Parisot Moline, IL 61265

RADIOS

Dear Sir:

I have been trying to find out if anybody has any knowledge of a Royal Air Force base that had a school or training center for studying the VHF radio used in the B-17 and other allied aircraft. Bomber Groups sent radio maintenance men to this R.A.F. base to further their knowledge on this piece of equipment. The radio set SCR-522-A was installed in the B-17 under the floor of the radio room and controlled by the pilot.

Christ M. Christoff 876 W 73rd Ave Murrillville, IN 46410-3812

DICK BASTIEN

Dear Walt,

Just a short note to tell you the latest issue of the 8th AF News is another winner, which I have set aside for a third reading. The layout is great, the color photos are marvelous and the stories can't be beat. In other words, another normal issue. I also want to thank you for inserting my inquiry about Black Flak and for answers about several wartime organizations whose acronyms I could recall but not the meanings behind them. To date I have received four letters and one phone call from London. All extremely helpful. The NEWS has marvelous circulation and great readership.

Thanks for everything.

Dick Bastien Woodbury, MN

GHOST SQUADRON

On April 19, 1945, mission number 733, I was a radio operator with the 365th sqdn., 305th BG, on what turned out to be the last mission flown by the 305th (came close to being my last day). Let me begin this story with the report of our Major Cook on return from this mission. "At 7:44 am, at 5,000 ft over St. Albans, the 365th (lead sqdn of group and 40 CBW 'B'lead) was on collision course with 91st BG Bassingbourn. Scattered 365th twelve plane formation, squadron re-assemble and catch up with high and low squadron. At Clacton on English coast - 6 minutes late. Over the years, all of my investigations of this matter have concluded that the 91st BG, was non-operational on April 19, 1945. So, what

"GHOST" Sqdn or group did we fly into? Perhaps there is an airman somewhere that was involved in this incident and we can give this "Ghost" Sqdn or group a number. **Tom Creekmore, 121 Hatton Drive Severna Pk, MD 21146-4445 410-647-1555**

THANKS, PETE HARDEMAN

Dear Sir,

I would like to thank Captain Pete Hardeman for his tribute to the ground crews. The ground crews have never received the praise they deserve in your magazine; it's

just the pilots. My husband was a crew chief with the ground crews in England until April 1945. He was Staff Sergeant James Herchell Mileham. He received a medical discharge April 1945. He always wished he could have finished with his crew. He had bad health for many years, before he passed away Feb. 29, 1984. I enjoy your magazine very much. I had one son who served in Vietnam as an air controller. He now lives in Colorado. Thanks again to Capt. Pete Hardeman. Best Wishes **Dorothy Mileham**



KNETTISHALL MEMORIAL

Dear Walter,

I read the article "A Path, A Tree, A 'Living Runway' ...and a Friend" "With great interest. I am a member of The Mighty Eighth and a life member of the 388th Bomb Group Assn. who had their 1997 reunion banquet at the museum. In 1985 in Seattle, we instigated B-17 BG Assns. participations in the Boeing celebration of the 50th anniversary of the roll-out of the first B-17. A member of our 388th, Don Sacks, was the project manager for the event and I was the incoming Assn. president. As I remember it 28 AF Bomb Groups were represented in the over 8000 attendees. With the air show, the barbecue, the hangar dance, the museum, Gen. LeMay & Medal of Honor winners it was the best wingding ever held. The 389th had over 550 attendees. At the end of the celebration, the NBC television producer asked Don and me if we could

go over to our old base in England, Knettishall, to complete their documentary. This was the first indication that the TV coverage was going to be more than a few minutes on a news show. In fact, the documentary "The Last Mission" turned out to be an hour-long, prime time presentation that was aired twice in the fall of '85. I subsequently submitted a 388th monument design, which was approved by the board and sent to George Stebbings at our old airbase. George lined up an artisan, Keith Rackham, to do the job, obtained a cost estimate, and we approved the expenditure. In mid-May 1986, 47 388th veterans and 45 wives, sons, daughters, & guests flew to England to dedicate the memorial. The interest in the 388th Bomb Group grew from the visit of the TV crew in 1985. These were, by far, the most exciting things that had happened in this remote rural area of England in the past 40 years. Later the local people had a large celebration for the 388th visitors for the 50th anniversary of WWII, and a museum was formed. I would venture to say that none of these 8th AF memorials, here or in England, would exist if it were not for the various associations who provide the incentive and the money and, most of all, the spirit that goes into each and every display. Were it not for the 388th Assn., the memorial would not exist; Knettishall would be forgotten. The USAF Crews who lived and died there would die again. They will live through the efforts of both the British friends and through the 388th Bomb Group Association.

Sincerely,

Pat Ryan Melbourne, FL 388th BG

THE SPIRIT OF CHICAGO

Dear Walter,

In March of 1944, I was assigned to the 31st Station Complement Squadron at the 385th BG, great Ashfield. Whenever I got the chance I would go to operations and find a pilot who was going to slow time a B-17 and go flying with him. In 1993 I read the following in Roger A. Freeman's book, *B-17 Flying Fortress at War*: "But pilots still took a risk to cock a snoot and sometimes got away with it, as in the following incident recorded April 20th 1944 in the flying control log of the B-24 base at Hethel." I have seen a lot of buzz jobs in my time, but today I saw a buzz job that took the cake. A B-17 was

approaching the field from the northeast; the flying controller had his head out the porthole of the caravan, but not for long. The fort came down so low over the caravan that he had to pull his head in for fear of being hit by the belly turret after he passed; he went still lower heading south-east. He was no more than six feet above the ground where he passed the control tower and they thought he was going to land. He passed on, not knowing all the suspense he caused and we still don't know what he was doing or why he did it. Upon reading this I checked my diary and found the following entry for April 20: "Today I was flying in the tail gunner's position in The Spirit of Chicago. We flew over a field at tree top level as we went down the runway. Workers who had been working on it were laying down and shaking their fists at us." I'm sure it was our plane that buzzed Hethel. Very truly yours, **Robert Ralph Hartman Alexandria KY 453rd Bomb Group**

453RD BOMB GROUP

Dear Editor,

I was glad to see the picture of the three members of my brother's BG in the Dec. 98 issue who attended the reunion in Cherry Hill, N.J. I also attended, but did not meet anyone in the memorabilia room from the 453rd. My brother, 2nd Lt. Fred Gordon, from Leominster, Mass., was a Navigator on a B-24 stationed at old Buckenham Airfield, 734 Bomber Squadron, 453rd Bomber Group. He and his crew members were declared "missing in-action" in their last bombing mission over Berlin, April 29, 1944. I have visited the American Military Cemetery in England, and the American Air Museum in Britain. I have also been close to the families of the crew members. I recently found The 8th A.F. Historical Society and met the N.J. Chapter.

Sincerely,

Edythe Gordon Fein, Whiting N.J.,

JUST LOOKING

Would appreciate any information you have about the "93rd MRU" or "72nd Statistical Control Units." I was part of the 8th Air Force Headquarters command, stationed at Bushy Park (25 + miles s/w of London) from September 1942, through August 1944, when we were shipped over to St. Germain Enley in France for about a year. My outfit was

shipped to Weisbaden, Germany on the same day in 1945 and then I was shipped back to the 8th Fighter command at Bury St. Edmunds, England. If you have any information about any buddies in this outfit please contact me!

Sincerely, **Sgt Joseph E. Morgan 6929 Fairfield Drive Santa Rosa, CA 95409 (707) 538-9450**

P.S. We went over to England on 8-19-42 on the SS Brazil to Bristol.

A FAIR COMPARISON

Dear Sir:

In the December 1998 8th AF News there appears an article "357th Fighter Group" It states: "On January 14, 1945, the 357th Fighter Group set an Eighth Air Force record by shooting down 55.5 German fighters during a dog fight over the Schleswig-Holstein area." The last sentence of this article refers to this incident as "the biggest Turkey shoot of the war." In the 390th Veterans Association Foundation Newsletter, winter 1986; an article researched and written by the undersigned states that on 10 October 1943 the 390th Bomb Group (H) was credited with destruction of 62 E/A. After searching relevant records, this total is found to be the highest kill rate in one day of the war for any bomber or fighter group in the 8th Air Force.

Respectfully,

John S. Warner Tucson, AZ 390th BG Historian

Editors Note: Historian Warner makes a most valid point. Both totals are correct, with the 390th BG downing the most E/A of any BG on a single mission. The 357th FG figure represented primarily fighter action.

MEMBER AT WATTON

Dear Sir:

I served in England from 1943-45 and was stationed at Bovington, with Base Air Depot 2 at Watton, and at Alconbury with



Goldie, Vince Baronowski, Charles Ripple Watton - December 1944

the 652nd Bomb Squadron Weather Recon. I was in ground and tech Supply. I remember a few others - Vince Baranowski from Detroit, Vinny Cervo of Brooklyn and Leroy DeSaint from somewhere in Vermont. I wonder if any of the guys are still around. I am an avid reader of the 8th AF NEWS and would like to hear from anybody in our group.

Sincerely,

**Charles Ripple, Sr. 111 Montleao Ave
Salisbury MD 21804 410-742-3607**

ARMENIAN SOLDIER

Dear Editor:

A P-51 pilot made an emergency landing on our farm in Angeren, Holland about the last part of October 1944. Our town was evacuated for eight months, and we found the plane untouched in May 1945. Through an Armenian soldier I learned that he took the pilot prisoner. When the American pilot tried to escape, he was shot to death. I was present when he was re-buried in 1945. I am now writing my memoirs and do not have his name. I have contacted several other sources without success. There is quite a story connected to his death, and I would appreciate any assistance you may give me in finding out who this pilot may have been. My sincere thanks in advance,

**G. J. van Beek 504 Alaska Ave.
Caldwell, ID 83605**

CHOWHOUND - 1945

Dear Sir:

I was thrilled with the article, "Operation Chowhound - 1945" in the December issue. It brought many memories. I was a ground crewman in the 349th Squadron 100 BG since its inception in Walla Walla, Washington. I flew in the B-17 G-Georgeon one of the food flights.

At the hardstand the Captain asked me if I wanted to come along. Yes Sir!... I grabbed a spare chute and climbed aboard the aircraft. We flew low over the North Sea to the drop zone. I could even read the railroad station signs as we passed over Amsterdam. We encountered another group of B-17s heading back to England in a very spread out formation! Our pilot carefully picked his way through as the bombardier called out the approaching mass of aircraft. We made our drop and buzzed the town and countryside. The people, and even the German soldiers waved at us as we passed low over a

German coastal AA battery heading back to Thorpe - Abbots. The war was over...a great day.

Sincerely, **Gerson Kelman Seaford, NY
100th BG**

A CALL TO HELP DUXFORD'S SALLY B

Dear Editor,

Those of us who have been to the Imperial War Museum at Duxford are familiar with Sally B. - the only B-17 in Great Britain in flying condition. At this point she is unable to fly. A series of engine failures have grounded the aircraft on the Island of Guernsey in the Channel Islands. At the beginning of the 1998 tour season she was newly painted and equipped with a new engine. This engine failed on a final run and two subsequent replacement engines also have proved inadequate. Flying her back to Duxford on three engines was ruled out. After many phone calls an engine was found in Texas. It seems that a Wright Cyclone 1820 hp engine cannot be bought off the shelf! This engine also conked out. Les Gordon, an RAF veteran and a member of the Sally B support group, is asking for donations to keep this valuable aircraft flying. To help get the Sally B in the air again, send your contributions to: **B-17 Preservation, Ltd P. O. Box 92, Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk IP28 8RR, United Kingdom.**

FUTURE READERS

Dear Walt,

Thanks for taking time to send me the Eighth AF NEWS. I appreciate it. Except for the first five years, I have all of the copies from 1980 till now. When my children and grandson get to read them someday, they will know what the 8th AF was all about. Thanks again,
"Pat" Silvio Pettinelli Charlton, MA

ACHMER AIRFIELD

Dear Sir,

I am researching the history of Achmer Airfield near Osnabruck, especially the bomber crew members on the Allied side. You must know that a lot of American and English crew members who were killed in action in the vicinity of Osnabruck were initially buried at the POW Cemetery of Achmer Airfield. It must have been more than 150 men. I desire to find out the stories behind

these men and I would appreciate any readers who can supply me with names and addresses. I am also looking for a pilot, Lt. Bernard T. Kuhlmeier, who crash landed his injured B-17 at a save base in England after taking part in an Achmer raid. Also any of his crew members. You will make me glad when I can complete this story. With warm regards from Bramsche-Achmer.

**Dieter Przygode, Associate member
Westerkappeiner Str. 8 D-49565
Bramsche Germany**

LIBRARIAN SEARCHES

Dear Sir:

I am seeking information for a young man, our local librarian, who wishes to learn about the WW II experience of his father, Ralph Maurice Odogard who served as a navigator aboard a B-17. He knows no serial number; there are no other family members. Any assistance from the members of the Historical Society will be greatly appreciated. Sincerely yours, **Walter M. Mayberry
405 Huntington Pl Harrison AR 72601**

"WHAT THIS COUNTRY NEEDS IS A GOOD CIGAR!"

Dear Sir:

War stories in my memory all take a back seat to an event that happened during a train ride from London to Bedford in 1944: As a joke, I had purchased a package of perfumed cigarettes from a tobacconist near Picadilly, and as I lit one of them up in the vestibule between cars, a tall, proper British major looked at me and exclaimed, "Oh I say! Here, Yank... would you like to try one of these?" At that, he reached inside his tunic and pulled out a beautiful long cigar which he bade me take. It was the best cigar I had ever tasted or have ever had since. For the past half century I have smoked every brand imaginable trying to find that same cigar, but to no avail. The closest I have come is a premium Churchill from the Finck Cigar factory in San Antonio, Texas the oldest cigar company in the U.S.A. But it doesn't compare with the 1944 stogie; I'm still looking. I will never forget that wonderful cigar, and the generosity of that tall British major toward a young Yank lieutenant. Sincerely, **Carroll
Lewis 379th BG Pilot 524, 526 Sqd.**

AS I REMEMBER

MISSION DAY FOR A GROUND CREW AIRMAN

by Larry Briggs



B-17's at Framlingham, 390th Bomb Group lined up for take-off.

From November 1942 until three years later, I served with the Army Air Force. These were the most memorable years of my life. This is about a typical day in the life of an airplane mechanic. I Remember Cpl. Quick, the C.Q. coming into the hut long before daylight, with a flashlight in one hand and a list in the other. He would check each nameplate carefully as to not awaken the wrong man. I remember groping around in the darkness of the hut for my clothes. When dressed, I'd join Marcel (Frenchy) Grimm, my crew chief, and then out into the cold air. We walked past the sick bay and onto the street leading to the road. If we turned left we would go to the mess hall, but that would not be open for two more hours. So we turned right for about 100 yards till we came to the intersection. There we would wait for the personnel carrier that took us out to the line. Upon arrival each of us grabbed a prop blade and pulled them through, to clear the bottom cylinders of oil to prevent bending valve rods on start up. The sharp trailing edges would cut into our already frozen hands. I Remember crawling into the copilot's seat as Frenchy got in the pilot's set and Cpl. Rudegaire, the third member of our crew, stationed himself on the ground, standing fire guard. After a few quick checks and switch settings, Frenchy would give the order to "Energize one." As I pushed the #1 toggle switch up, I could hear the Bendix spring to life and start to gain RPM, while I pumped fuel into the cylinders with the primer pump located on my right against the wall. When the starter reached a high pitch whine, I was told to start #1. I pushed the same switch downward to mesh and I could hear the solenoid slam the dogs against the crankshaft of the engine. At first

there was a loud pulsating scream, until one cylinder fired, as smoke

came bellowing past the trailing edge of the wing. This was the most critical time for Carl standing fireguard. Then as each one fired up and the engine gained speed, the smoke disappeared and only a blue flame from the exhaust could be seen. This we repeated till all four engines were running. I Remember the sound of four Curtiss Wright Cyclone 1800 engines singing in perfect harmony across the East Anglia countryside in the early

**Then it came, two green flares;
the mission was "Go"**

morning hours. It is a sound that will remain with me the rest of my life. What a beautiful sound. We went through pre-flight procedures, checking RPM for plug failure and prop governors, checking instruments for correct readings. When preflight was over, we would light up our second cigarette; what an awful taste before breakfast. We then called for the trucks to top off the tanks and bring oil levels up to capacity. Far across the field, we could see headlights turning onto the perimeter. This would be the trucks bringing the flight crews to their planes for today's mission. I remember how the crews went about their tasks of installing the guns and making sure they were functional. The bombardier was installing the Norden bombsight as the pilot, copilot and navigator went about their chores. When everything was done, we all watched the sky over the control tower for red or green flares. Then it came, two green flares; the mission was "Go." By then the first rays of dawn was beginning to appear on the horizon. Frenchy and I guided them out of the 729th

**At first there was a
loud pulsating scream**

hardstand to the perimeter. I remember how each plane parked at an angle for last minute checks so as to not cause prop wash to the ship behind. It was only then that the ground crews could think of going to breakfast. It was two hours after wake-up and we walked to the end of the main runway and watched as the ships came lumbering down the runway. They were laboring very hard to overcome the weight of a full load of fuel, bombs and ammo. We wondered if the pilots could take-off on the runway or would they bounce the tires in the dirt beyond the perimeter. In mid-afternoon the ground crews returned to the line to catch up on duties of fixing flat tires or repairing equipment. Sometimes we had to do home repairs on our bomb crate shacks! By late afternoon we would be scanning the skies for our ships to return. Then all of a sudden the sky would be filled with the returning planes. Some trailing smoke and some shooting red flares; there were wounded in those planes. We wondered how badly they were hit, or worse if they were still alive. And then reality set in, did OUR ship make back; did any of the 452nd fail to come back? Then I could make out the nose art that I had painted myself, *C'est La Guerre* was home safely! I remember how happy the guys were as they came out of the ship. It was a happy moment for all of us, but not all missions ended on such a happy note. I Remember the ambulance pulling up to the plane one evening. The pilot had taken a piece of flak in his wrist. Worst of all I saw them take the limp body of the waist gunner from the rear door. He had taken a piece of flak in the jugular vein and bled to death before he got home. I remember removing the catwalk in the fuselage to clean up the blood between the bulkheads. Blood that had flowed through the body of a young boy that I knew personally. These are the things I Remember.

**Larry Briggs, Conroe, TX
452nd BG**

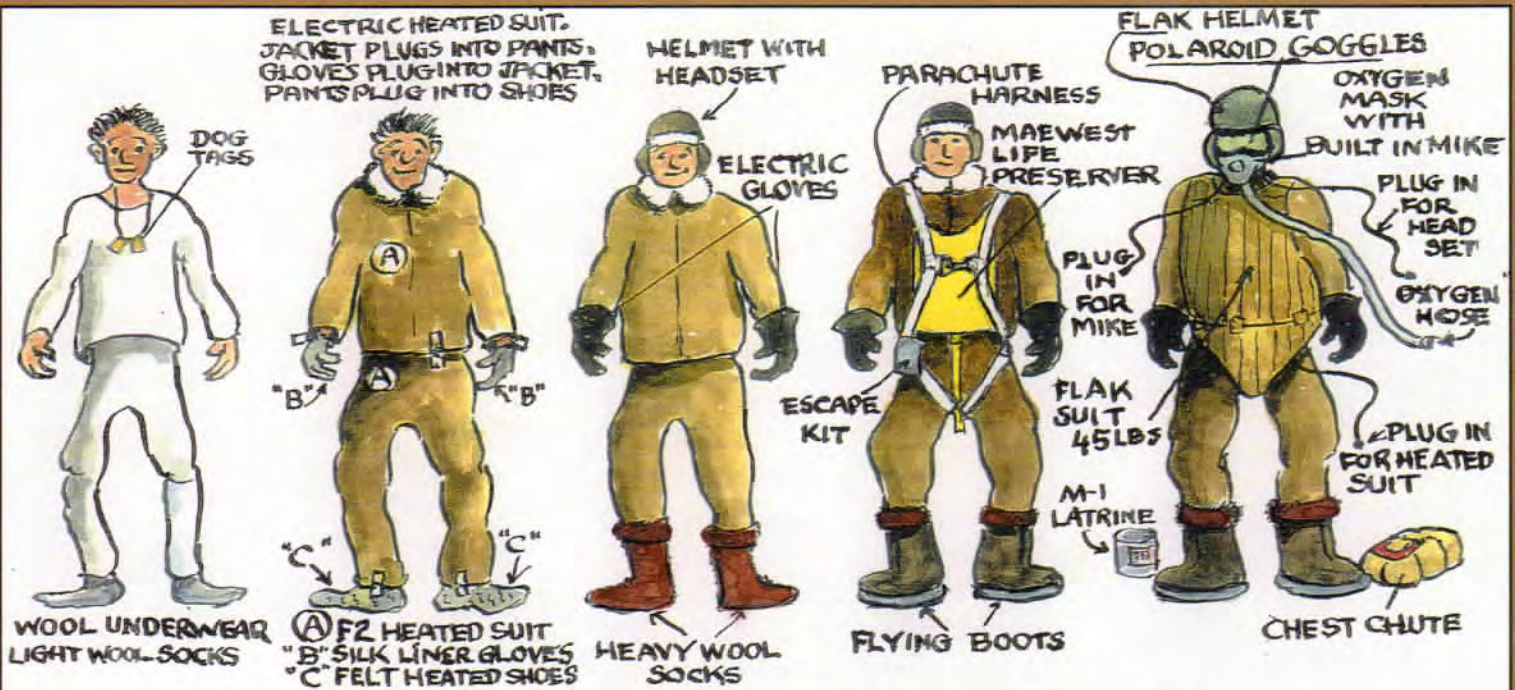


The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS

	<u>FOR THE YEAR</u>	
	<u>ENDED AUGUST 31</u>	
	1998	1997
NET ASSETS SEPTEMBER 1	\$150,233	\$173,495
RECEIPTS:		
REGULAR DUES PAYMENTS	\$105,447	\$112,344
DUES PAID IN FOR MMF	22,654	24,235
TRANSFERRED TO MMF	(22,654)	(24,235)
LIFE MEMBER FEES	15,230	23,700
PAID TO LIFE MEMBER FUND	(15,275)	(23,700)
LIFE MEMBER REBATES:		
MEMBERSHIP (NEWSLETTER)	29,245	29,485
GENERAL FUND (ADMIN)	16,717	17,691
DONATIONS RECEIVED	24,296	22,543
REUNION INCOME	8,647	11,138
INTEREST INCOME	8,755	8,019
ADVERTISING INCOME	3,430	4,960
WRITE OFF OUTSTANDING CHECKS	125	195
PX NET PROFIT	1,071	2,554
 TOTAL NET RECEIPTS	 <u>\$197,688</u>	 <u>\$208,929</u>
DISBURSEMENTS:		
MEMBERSHIP	112,316	105,214
ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL	50,543	110,389
MEMORIAL FUND	102,537	28,136
	<u>265,396</u>	<u>243,739</u>
 NET ASSETS AUGUST 31	 <u>\$ 82,525</u>	 <u>\$138,685</u>
PETTY CASH	\$ 300	\$ 300
CASH ON HAND	7089	--
CHECKING ACCOUNT	5081	21,543
SAVINGS ACCOUNT	37,762	18,172
H.S. TREASURY NOTE	--	99,026
ACCOUNTS & INTEREST RECEIVABLE	693	2,340
PX INVENTORY	33,632	31,317
PREPAYMENTS	4,745	(12,965)
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE	(6,777)	(9,500)
 NET ASSETS AUGUST 31	 <u>\$ 82,525</u>	 <u>\$150,233</u>

"The Mighty Eighth"



EQUIPMENT WORN BY 8TH A.F. BOMBER CREWS ON HIGH ALTITUDE MISSIONS
WINTER OF 1944-45

Thanks to Frank McKinley for another one of his fine contributions to the 8th AF NEWS



Frank McKinley

Many aircrew carried other items on their missions. Harold Robinson, 445th BG, says he carried an extra morphine pack and all the K-rations he could stuff in his pants, in case he was shot down. Write to the NEWS if you have interesting additions you took on missions. - Editor



Home from a mission - the lockers for combat crewmen.





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James Holloway...

February 14, 1945 - Mission #3. We started for Dresden on a raid, 7/10 cloud coverage, 25,000 feet, 6 hours. There are times when every thing "goes to hell in a hand basket" and this mission was one of those times. We had one engine knocked out over Munster. Not being able to keep up with the group on three engines, we were told to abort and head for home. We opened the bombay doors and dropped our bombs, not caring where they landed - probably on some pig farmer. We were given one P-51 fighter as escort. Gave a man a friendly feeling to see that little plane sitting out there off the wing tip. We had a great navigator, a red headed Captain from Provo or Ogden, Utah. He couldn't find his rear end with both hands. During briefing that morning they told us that the Essen manufacturing complex on the Rhine river had about 400 anti aircraft guns guarding it. Our good navigator guided us right into it. Needless to say, the air turned black with flack bursts. Our little P-51 flipped over and dove away, the last we saw of him. The Pilot turned the old B-17 up on one wing, poured the coal to it and we got the hell out of there. No damage done except to our nerves. After circling to the north to clear the complex we continued on towards (we hoped) an emergency field at Merville, France. By this time the navigator didn't seem to know where we were. The radio man got a radio fix to give us our position, but to find the field took more than that. A fighter showed up at about 8 o'clock level off the tail and came in on a pursuit curve. I trained my guns on him and was about to fire after seeing the sun reflect off the leading edge of his wing, thinking he was firing at us. About then he raised his wing enough that I identified it as a British Spitfire. He told the pilot he would lead us into Merville. We landed at Merville and the plane was grounded for repairs. After trying several planes that the pilot refused to fly - one broke through the taxi strip and got stuck we got airborne for England on February 19, 1945.

James Holloway, 398th BG Santa Clara, CA

Mike Falcone...

Joe Falcone was with the 8th Air Force, stationed in England, loading and servicing B-17s and B-24s, when he first set eyes on Iris Leighton. "Mom was a WREN," Mike Falcone explained, referring to the Women's Royal English Navy.

"They met at a fish & chips shop, fell in love, got married over there and when the war ended, Dad bought a three-decker in Roslindale. I'm so lucky I got to work with my father every day. So did my brother Steve. There was something about men like him, men of that generation, you couldn't help noticing. They did things right, carried themselves a certain way, and their values were always obvious. And I just wish, while there's still time, this whole country would say to his generation what I was thinking as I looked at him that day: "Thank you so much for all you have given us."

Mike Falcone, son of Joe Falcone, 457th BG Walpole, MA



Joe Falcone

Virgil Thompson...

The one and only vacation I ever had was during World War Two, when I boarded the troop ship Queen Mary, the grand lady of the sea serving the allied forces and man-kind over the world. The Atlantic Ocean was hostile with German U-Boats looking for prey of the allied troop ships and merchant ships. Fortunately the Germans had no success with the Queen Mary. The voyage across was six days and it was a beautiful October day when the Mary anchored in the Firth of Clyde near Scotland and Northern Ireland. On this clear day I could see the distant green of Ireland, my heart had lift that I would dis-embark to the land in which my heritage was so deeply rooted. But this was the nearest my heart and body would ever come to be, only a look to the land I came to love so well, my vacation is only a journey of the imagination of the heart. Yet I thank God for the experience I encountered and lived through, I being a dreamer, the vacation has a favorable termination of a venture that lives in my heart forever.

Virgil Francis Thompson 5th Emergency Rescue Squadron Lima, Ohio

Ray Zuker...

The United States was indeed the "arsenal of democracy." That could not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of our civilian forces. The production of guns, airplanes, ships, tanks and materials related to the war was unprecedented; victory was theirs also. There are differences to this day in attitudes toward war between countries who had to endure German bombing raids that left many English cities in ruin. Our contemporaries in Britain share a bond between veterans of the Army and Army Air Force who saw at first hand the devastation caused by indiscriminate bombing of cities by the Luftwaffe. Fortunately no one in this country had to spend their nights in air raid shelters or in subways. It is a fact that our civilians objected most strenuously to having American cities blacked out during the war. German U-Boats took advantage of this and they were able to sink many of our naval vessels against the back drop of lights in our East coast cities. The Axis Manifesto between Japan and Germany made it clear that, after the war, Germany would consider Eastern United States as their province. The area west of the Mississippi would be under Japanese control. All of our apologists and revisionists choose to ignore this historical fact. If this had come to pass, our way of life in this twentieth century would bear little resemblance to the present.

Ray Zuker 486th BG Knoxville, TN

Robert Clay...

This was to be my 17th mission, but I was not worried about it because the 8th AF crew loss ratio of 1 in 25 missions flown when I had arrived in 1943 had decreased to 1 in 30 and was approaching 1 loss in every 35 missions flown. In addition, I had survived several potentially disastrous predicaments with luck and good management and, like everyone who faces danger continuously, I was resigned to my fate with little apprehension to interfere

with my ability to cope with any situation. Theoretically, every crew would complete 25 missions and not return, but in reality about one-fourth of the crews were lost on their first few missions, principally because of flying "Tail End Charley" and lack of experience; another 1/4 were lost during the remainder of 25 missions and about 1/2 of the crews finished up and went home. A word about "Tail End Charlie" (TEC). The very first mission I flew in the Fall of '43 was with my own crew, except for a substitute co-pilot. Each new crew started flying missions in the last and outside position of the formation and gradually worked toward the lead ship as it gained experience and seniority. Custom assigned me to a TEC position as we toured the Ruhr Valley. My substitute co-pilot could not fly formation for over one minute before he became completely out of position, so I flew the entire mission. When I landed, my plane was riddled (the right wing had to be replaced). I was so overcome with exhaustion I could hardly walk, and I knew I would never last even five missions.

Back to Tail-End Charlie. The high and low Squadron leaders fly on the Group leader, the second flight leader flies on the Squadron leader, and TEC flies on the second flight leader on the outside of the 18-plane formation. Many factors - throttle change, turbulence, anxiety, and so forth - produce an accordion effort on the formation with Tail-end Charlie coping with the whiplash effect of being in last place. It can be compared to the stop and go on an overcrowded freeway, except you can't stop.

Here is a typical oscillation: As TEC, I am closing in on my flight leader, so I ease back the throttles - I'm still gaining so I pull the throttles all the way back - I'm still gaining because he had dethrottled before I did, so I pull the nose up - I'm still gaining so there is nothing to do but pull the nose up until I can no longer see my flight leader - as the nose starts to mush down, my flight leader comes into view 100 yards ahead and accelerating away - so: full throttle. This sequence can happen over and over every few minutes. The only way to break the chain is to drop back and smooth out the oscillations - maybe that's why many new replacement crews survived their first few missions. At that time I vowed that if I ever became a leader, I would not be a "throttle jockey."

Robert Clay with daughter Karen Bountiful, UT

Fain H. Pool...

In June, 1944, England was being bombed indiscriminately by the V-1 "Buzz" bombs and the V-2 missiles, which were being launched from sites near the coast of France. The new sites being built for the new V-3 missiles were fortresses having walls that were 12 to 14 feet thick, and had huge steel doors. The Royal Air Force bombers were dropping their largest bombs on the sites at night, and the United States 8th Air Force bombers were doing the same in daylight. The resulting damage was unsatisfactory due to the unusual strength of the construction of the sites. American aeronautical engineers and scientists and Air Force planners developed a plan. They decided to use war-weary B-17 bombers and modify them to become Radio-controlled flying bombs, and to fly them by remote control into the doors of the launch sites. The project was code-named "Project

Aphrodite" and was classified Top Secret. The B-17s were chosen from those which were considered no longer suitable for combat.

Everything inside the aircraft was removed except the pilot seat, and all of the gun turrets were removed.



Lt. Fain H. Pool

The first man to fly an Aphrodite mission.

New tires and re-conditioned engines were installed to increase the chance of success, since the load of 22,000# of RDX Nitrostarach was about 5,000 pounds over the designed gross weight. The Nitrostarach was the most potent explosive developed prior to the atomic bomb. A radio receiver was installed in the nose and was connected to the automatic pilot, to make it possible for the aircraft to be controlled by radio signals from another "mother" aircraft through the autopilot. A radio altimeter was also installed to control the altitude of the aircraft through the elevator control of the autopilot, to maintain an altitude of 200 to 400 feet above the ground or water all the way to the target, where it would be dived into the target. July 1, 1944, ten pilots and ten autopilot technicians were selected from the various bomb groups of the 3rd Bomb Division of the 8th Air Force to volunteer to fly the ten aircraft which had been modified. Each aircraft had one pilot and one autopilot technician. The two crew members had to enter and exit the aircraft through the navigator's escape hatch, which was the only entrance which wasn't sealed and locked. The explosives were loaded in relatively small wooden boxes which were about one foot by two feet by three feet, and they were wrapped in dynamite cord. The cord was then connected to an electrical tumbler switch, to insure that the whole load would explode simultaneously on impact. There were also about 14 impact fuses strategically placed throughout the load to further insure simultaneous detonation. During the month of July the crews were flying missions testing the systems and developing procedures to improve the chances of success, while waiting for the perfect weather conditions which were required. The explosive-laden "baby" ship was to fly between 200 and 400 feet altitude, while the "mother" ship was to fly at 20,000 feet, and had to maintain visual contact with the baby in order to control it to the target.

**Fain H. Pool, Lt Col (Ret) 385th BG
University Place, WA**

BILL VARNEDOE...

The red tape on the briefing map showed that the route lead in over the flack gap at the Zuider Zee in Holland. This gap in the flack coverage might have been left open so that the Germans could be reasonably sure that would be where we would go—and indeed we usually did, an odd arrangement that both sides found helpful. The return leg was further south and lead out near Ostend. We were told that we would be flying over fighter fields of the German Air Force. If weather were bad, it would keep the Luftwaffe away from the ground fighting, then the fighters might be expected to attack the bombers. The weather turned out to be bad. On the bomb run, I noticed what I thought was unusual flack bursts close by. Normal flack was a black smoke, elongated vertically. These were light gray, rather small, and elongated horizontally. I had just started to describe them in the log when someone started firing his guns and I realized that there was an attack by fighters. By then, numerous gunners were firing, but no one had ever called out, "bandits," on the intercom. Neil Duell in Vaadi's crew also reported none in his crew had called out bandits either. Those "odd flack" bursts were actually 20 mm cannon shells fired by the fighters and fuse-timed to go off in the formation.

Bill Varnedoe, Navigator 385th BG Huntsville, AL

LESLIE B. HULL...

Mission #8. Target: Merseburg, Germany. Bombing Altitude, ft: 25,500 (P.F.F.). Mission/O2 time: 8:00/3:00. Lost #2 engine 20 minutes before target; salvoed bombs to stay in formation near Brunswick. Lost #1 engine 10 minutes before target; had to turn back at 25,000 ft. Flew return course at 120 mph, descending at 200-300 ft/minute. After two hours, reached enemy coast of Holland at 8,500 feet. Able to maintain 7,500 feet at 120 mph over Channel until 40 miles from England, when engine #3 spouted oil and ran away. Feathered/ unfeathered for 10 minutes. Began losing altitude real fast, so threw out all ammo, flak suits, helmets, excess radio equipment, and waist guns. Managed to level off at 6,000 feet until #3 ran away again. Oil pressure dropped to zero. Feathered #3 over beach of England at 5,000 feet. Sighted emergency field just inland. Circled for landing making downwind leg at 1,500 feet. Made safe landing at Eccles RAF Air-Sea Rescue field on #4 engine only. All four engines had to be replaced. On return, saw flak over Hanover to right of course. Had two P-51 escorts for half an hour. Flew #3 low-low in lead squadron. No battle damage Weather. 7-8/10 cover.

Leslie B. Hull, 832nd BS, 486th BG

- submitted by David F. Plummer, Bellevue WA

Peanuts



EIGHTH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OFFICE IS BUSY!

Membership Records Manager Kathy McCurry is experiencing her "busy season", at a time when most Society members are holed up against the cold winter weather. For the past few months she has been processing dues payments, contributions to the Historical Society's successful Chapel Fund Drive, and tending to dozens of other daily duties associated with membership records. New members records and cards, mailouts, inquiries, and deletions are just a few of her responsibilities; she keeps close touch with the Society EXCOM and staff. Kathy's computer at the office is running full speed!



Connie Metts is a new addition and a valuable asset in the office and allows our office to be "manned" for a good part of every day, with hopes to have it open for contacts and telephones all day in the near future. Kathy requests that all widows of 8th veterans who wish to receive the 8th AF NEWS be sure to let her know. There is a free one year's membership available to them. Also a note to Units: If Unit individuals join the Historical Society through the unit group, please forward \$5.00 of the \$10.00 dues amount to the Records office. If anyone has questions about membership status or related areas, write or telephone and you will get a response from the office crew.

466TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION,

April 14th - 17th 1999.

Savannah, GA Contact: Russell McNair; Polynesian, 1011 S. Ocean Blvd Myrtle Beach SC

THE YEAR OF THE B-24 SECOND AIR DIVISION ASSOCIATION

52nd annual Reunion

May 29 - June 1, 1999

Austin, Texas Hyatt-Regency Contact: 215-632-3992

352ND FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION

Return to England **24 May - 2 June, 1999**

Annual Reunion **30 Sept - 3 Oct, 1999** Nashville TN ; Contact - Dick DeBruin 234 N. 74th Street; Milwaukee, WI 53213-3629 Phone (414) 771-0744

351ST BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION REUNION

June 2 - 6, 1999, Quality Inn Suites near Savannah, GA, Contact Clint Hammond PO Box 281; Mechanicsburg, PA 17055 Phone:(717)766-1489

398TH BG ASSOCIATION REUNION

August 25 - 28, 1999 Oklahoma City

388TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

50th Reunion: **September 2-6** in Seattle, WA at the Marriott Sea-Tac. Contact: Bittner Snead, 2449 SW 328th St., Federal Way, WA 98023-2565

346TH FIGHTER GROUP (WWII)

358th , 360th, 361st, Headquarters and Support Squadrons **Sept. 11-15, 1999** Best Western Merry Manor Inn Portland, ME Contact: Ken Male 8282 NW 47th St. Ocala, FL 34482 (352) 622-9976 P51MALE@AOL.COM

NINTH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION

Omaha, Nebraska **September 16 - 18, 1999** Contact: Bob Hogg, RR 2, Box 80, Mead NE 68041-9652

1st STRATEGIC AIR DEPOT ASSOCIATION

Cincinnati, Ohio **September 23 - 26, 1999** Welcome to all 8th AF vets stationed at Honington-Troston, England Contact: Herb Kaster 720 Society Hill, Cherry Hill NJ 08003 609-751-1763

452nd BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION - 25TH REUNION

Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 & 2, 1999 Nashville, TN at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Contact: Hank North, 901 Poling Dr. Columbus, OH Ph. 1-800-452-9099

94th BOMB GROUP

Members of the 94th BG, 8th Air Force - The big square A - will hold their Last and Final Reunion, **October 4 - 10 1999**, at the Doubletree in Seattle, Washington. Former members and lost souls may need to contact: Wilbur Richardson; 1850 Fairway Drive #98; Chino Hills, CA 91709-2268 Phone (909) 597-4474

303RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

(Molesworth, England, WWII) **October 8-11, 1999**, at the Marriott Hotel in Oklahoma City, OK. Contact: Ed Miller, 422 S. Walnut Ave., Temple, OK 73568-0219, Tel.1 (949) 342-5119. (edmiller@pldi.net)

7TH PHOTO RECON GROUP—

Eighth Air Force, England, **October 8-10, 1999** Menger Hotel, San Antonio, TX. Includes 325th Wg., Mount Farm & Chalgrove people. Contact George Lawson, 4390 14th St. NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33703 Tel: 727-526-8480

20TH FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION

and support Units Reunion and dedication of the 20th FG Display at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum **October 24 - 26, 1999**, Savannah Marriott Riverfront Hotel, Savannah, GA. Contact Chris Pannell, 7111 Rotherwood Dr., Knoxville, TN 37919 phone 423-588-0153

KEFLAVIK UNIT NAMED EAKER AWARD RECIPIENT

by Tech. Sgt. Rick DelaHaya

BARKSDALE AIR FORCE BASE, LA—An Eighth Air Force rescue unit, stationed at Keflavik Naval Air Station, Iceland, has earned the Lt. Gen. Ira C. Eaker Outstanding Airmanship Award for 1998.

Air Force Rescue Crew 206 was honored Oct. 17 during the annual reunion of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, held this year in Cherry Hill, N.J. Brigadier Gen. Regner C. Rider, 8th Air Force Vice Commander, presented the Eaker Award, which is sponsored by the Historical Society.

The Eaker Award is presented annually for an outstanding feat of military airmanship within Eighth Air Force by an individual crew member or aircrew.

Crew members from Air Force Rescue 206 were Capts. Kenneth Brenneman, Scott Swanson and Shannon Beardsley, Staff Sgt. William Payne, and Senior Airmen Jonah Biddick and Scott Duffman.

The crew of Air Force Rescue 206 was credited with one life saved for their heroic efforts. The outstanding coordination and team effort demonstrated by the crew resulted in the successful completion of this internationally acclaimed rescue mission, proving once again just how far rescue forces will go "so that others may live!"

During the presentation, the Historical Society awarded a traveling trophy to the 85th Group. The trophy is held by the recipient's unit annually.

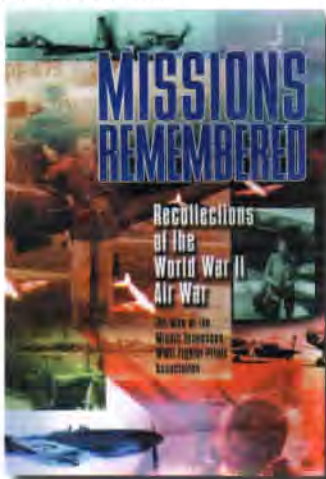
BOOK REVIEWS

MISSIONS REMEMBERED

Recollections of the World War II Air War

by The Men of the Middle Tennessee Fighter Pilots Association

They meet together every month for lunch and have been doing so for a number of years. Their organization is rather restricted. To become a member



one has to meet three requirements: he must have been a fighter pilot; he had to have participated in World War II; and he must have had actual combat experience. The airmen of the Middle Tennessee Fighter Pilots Association come from all walks of life and regularly enjoy each others company. This book lets you in on some of the experiences they all share in common.

Here there are over 85 chapters, each dealing with the events of fighter combat in the war and with the personal reactions and feelings of the individual pilots. The stories collectively cover all aspects of the fighter war from pilot training days through D-Day and Okinawa to Hiroshima. All theaters of the conflict are included, in that the Association members were participants in the European, Pacific, Italian and African theaters of operation. Come fly the P-51s, the Hellcats, the PT-17s, The P-47s, P-40s and Corsairs with these pilots. Training flights, bomber escort missions, fighter sweeps and strafing assignments, turkey shoots, dive bombing, and aircraft carrier landings are all here.

Enoch B. Stephenson flew with the 339th Fighter Group and relates a description of his D-Day missions and the unusual nature of those sorties. Joe Thompson, Jr. tells the June, 1944 combat experience from the view of a Tactical Reconnaissance pilot and photographer. Other stories offer vignettes which hit home with their message, such as that of

Ernest C. Perry, who lost his wingman over Monte Cassino after being mistaken as German fighters by a flight of allied Spitfires. A unique concept - fascinating and very real stories from pilots in every American service, often emotional and frequently showing their humorous side which helped ease the immense stresses of combat.

These tales are told "as it was," at the time, in the language of American servicemen who were fighting foreign aggressors for freedom and peace. This reviewer has noted a recent review of this book published in the Smithsonian Air and Space magazine which openly took odds with the writing styles and language of some of the stories within, thereby following the well-established pattern of political correctness and presentism which has prevailed at the Smithsonian in past and recent years. If you want to read stories of WW II combat told factually and honestly, get a copy of this book. You will finish the reading feeling proud to have been included in some of the personal experiences of these fliers' lives. You also will have an idea of the significance of what was accomplished by American combat airmen during the war years as well as their personal thoughts on war and combat, recorded in one volume. And for those who were part of the combat experience, you will have revived many of your own experiences which seem as if they happened only yesterday. Published by McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 320 pp hardbound. Available from McGraw-Hill or from the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum gift shop at 912-748-8888.

SOMEWHERE IN THE MIDLANDS

A History of USAAF Station 522 Smethwick

by Fran and Martin Collins

The story of the main Air Force Signal Supply Depot in Smethwick in the Midlands is documented in this small volume of 115 pages just off the press. Station 522 was established in August 1943 under the command of Base Air Depot 1 at Burtonwood and charged with the function to store, supply, maintain, and repair signal equipment used by the US Air Forces in England. Included were radios and radio parts, teletype and

telecommunications equipment, telephone supplies, and even ichaff used to foil enemy radar operations.

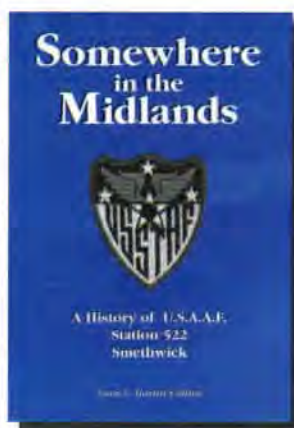
The story of the Beakes Road Depot, established for reasons of security by moving into existing British factories in an area well away from the air bases, relates the experiences of the men and their duties vital in supplying all of the combat units of the Mighty Eighth. Ten Duty sections are outlined in the book and personal stories and incidents round the story out effectively. Using then-and-now photographs and interspersing written history from the Station's historian, the authors Collins present a most interesting tale of life at an Air Depot during World War II. Fine layouts, high quality pages, and a beautiful Air Force blue cover make this a jewel of a volume. You may obtain a copy for your collection by sending \$10 (cash preferred) USA or 6.95 British Pounds to: Mrs. F.D. Collins 3 Ipswich Cresent; Great Barr; Birmingham B 42 ILY England - [envelope postage stamp to England is 80 cents]

FLYING SCHOOL: COMBAT HELL

by Ellis M. Woodward

Author Ellis Woodward offers a "like it just happened yesterday" look at his experiences in flight training and combat missions with the 493rd Bomb Group stationed at Debach.

Punctuated throughout with personal stories focusing on his interactions with his flight instructors and later with his 493rd combat crew insights and levity



FLYING SCHOOL: COMBAT HELL



ELLIS M. WOODWARD
30 Wings Lead Crew Pilot - 493 USAF - World War II

BOOK REVIEWS

among the crew members are related in a most entertaining and informative manner. Day to day life on the base interspersed with many asides which relate to the story and the history of the war at the time make the volume easy to read and hard to put down.

A notable feature is the discussion of the activities of the special Luftwaffe Storm Group - a specially equipped Fighter Group of the German Luftwaffe II. Sturm/JG4 which decimated many of the 8th AF Bomber formations including those taking part in the September 12, 1944 raid on Magdeburg. The 493rd BG lost 10 B-17s on that mission, Woodard's ship crash landing at an emergency airfield in Woodbridge. The pilots of the Storm Group, all volunteers, flew specially armored FW 190s fitted out with sophisticated armament. They employed tactics of attack designed to quickly shoot down most of the airplanes in a bomb group formation and were instructed to ram the American bombers if necessary.

A supplement written by Hauptmann Werner Vorberg about the Storm Group, which began activities in August, 1944 and about which little was known until after the war, is included. Artist Keith Ferris has produced several paintings depicting the tactics of this particular Luftwaffe group and their attacks on 8th AF formations; this volume is among the few which present that story in print. A forward by Lt Gen. E.G. Shuler and correspondence with actor Jimmy Stewart are several of the special features of this book as well. 198 pp softcover.

Available from **American Literary Press, Inc 8019 Belair Road, Suite 10; Baltimore, MD 21236.**

THE US 8th AIR FORCE AT WARTON 1942 - 1945

THE WORLD'S GREATEST AIR DEPOT

by Harry Holmes

Maintenance, repair, overhaul and modification of the thousands of aircraft flown in to England for use by the Eighth Air Force combat units were essential to flight operations and vital to carrying out the 8th AF's mission in the European Theater of Operations. Base Air Depot 2 had its



beginnings in 1942 to fill this need, eventually utilizing the talents of over 10,000 people working on every type of aircraft flown in the war over Europe.

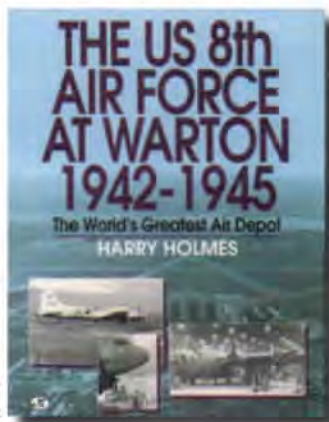
Harry Holmes grew up near Warton and is a well-known aviation author, meticulously researching his subject and writing in an authoritative style but using vignettes throughout in order to impart a sense of what was accomplished at BAD 2. He



Base Air Depot 2 at Warton, jam-packed with USAAF aircraft of all types.

covers the duties of the various repair departments at the base but also writes of incidents such as the first all-American wedding at Warton. During the wedding ceremonies three airplanes at the base were involved in accidents within fifteen minutes of each other. A combination of a settled dip in the runway and strong crosswinds caused a B-24, an A-20, and a P-51, which were attempting landings, to become airborne briefly after hitting the low spot and all three ran out of runway, digging in at the grassy area on the perimeter of the field and thus adding to the load of repair work base service men already had before them.

The volume is profuse with pictures and personalities. There are sections covering the tragic crash of a B-24 into a British schoolyard and pub in the village of Freckleton and its aftermath, and the press for the buildup for the invasion in June, 1944. Most of the



aircraft flown by the 8th Air Force passed through BAD 2 at some time during the war. Harry Holmes' book covers every aspect of base activities and enthusiastically adds a further dimension to the combat experience of those who flew with the Mighty Eighth. Note is made that Warton is still very active today as a center for British aviation and aerospace technology. large format 160pp Available from: **Dick McClune 527 Quarterfield Road Newport News, VA 23602 957-877-3826**

THE SPARTAN STORY

by Chet Peek with George Goodhead

Chet Peek, Aviation Historian, served with the 95th Bomb Group during the war and in 1992 began his research of the Spartan Aircraft Company and the Spartan School of Aeronautics in Oklahoma.

He covers all of the models built by the company, from biwing aircraft in the 1920s to the successful Spartan Executive of the

1930s and 40s. In 1939 the Spartan Company converted to aviation training and developing training aircraft for the war effort.

A highlight of the volume is the story of the British Aviation Cadets who came over for flight school and their experiences at Spartan. Airplanes flown were the PT-19 Fairchild, the BT-13 Vultee in Basic, and the AT-6 Harvard in Advanced. The book is illustrated with fascinating period photos and drawings, ending with the conversion of the aircraft plant to mobile home production after the war. Produced in 8 1/2 by 11 format with high quality pages and photos, The Spartan Story will bring back many memories to those who passed through the Spartan aviation school or similar training schools of the time. 150 pp Write to: **Three Peaks Publishing PO Box 720961 Norman, OK 73070 \$22.95 +\$3.00 S&H**



BOOK REVIEWS

THE 55th FIGHTER GROUP vs THE LUFTWAFFE

by John M. Gray

This is a unique book. The story of the 55th Fighter Group, which began operations in England in October 1943 as only the seventh fighter group assigned to the 8th



AF, is told with extensive use of actual combat experiences of the Group and the individual airmen who served with the 8th Air Force. The 55th FG was the first group to fly P-38s in the ETO, changing over to P-51 Mustangs in July, 1944. The reader flies into combat with an assortment of 55th fighter pilot personalities who present missions from a fascinating variety of viewpoints.

A highlight of the volume is the time and space devoted to Luftwaffe pilots who fought the 8th AF fighters on specific missions. Interviews with and stories by the German pilots offer a contrast to those of the American fliers and add a real-life perspective to the story. With chapters entitled Escorts and Rodeos, Adventures at Low Level, The Chattanooga Choo Choo, Luftwaffe Tactics and Attrition, and

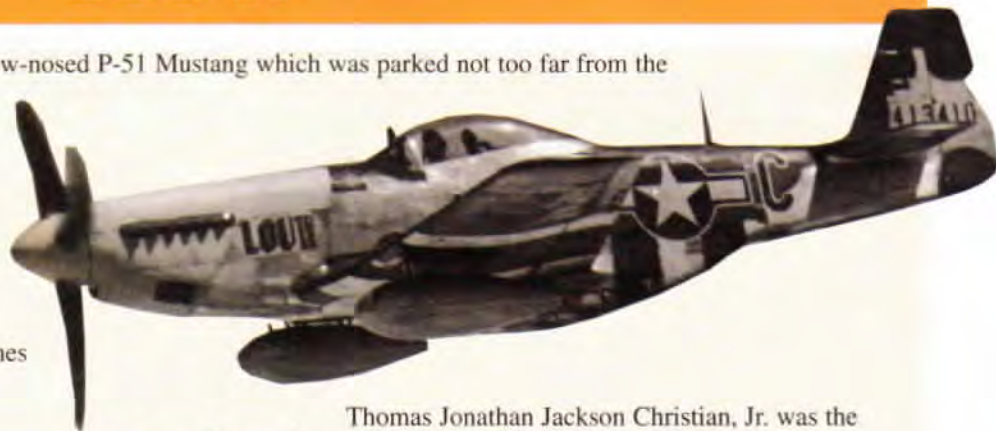
Merseberg: A Hot Target, an indication of the life of combat fighter pilots and action on both sides is evident. The appendix pages documenting the individuals and history of the 55th Fighter Group are especially interesting. large format 150pp hardbound Call Specialty Press at 800-895-4585 or 651-583-3239 to order.

All book reviews by Editor 8th AF NEWS.

LOU IV

"My interest that day was in a beautiful yellow-nosed P-51 Mustang which was parked not too far from the fence. The note in my book shows it having the name 'Louis', but I found out years later that it was actually called *Lou IV* and was the personal aircraft of Colonel Thomas J. J. Christian Jr., who was the Commander of the 361st Fighter Group. He was to lose his life in this machine when it was shot down over Germany less than two weeks later."

- Harry Holmes



Thomas Jonathan Jackson Christian, Jr. was the great-grandson and namesake of Thomas Jonathan "Stonewall" Jackson, famed Confederate General in the War Between the States, who was wounded near Chancellorsville and subsequently died of sepsis incurred by his injuries. Col. Christian's airplane, named after his wife, was hit by flak in a strafing attack with his wingman Captain Urban L. Drew on the railyards at Metz, France on August 22nd, 1944.

- suggested by Hap Chandler



Always mystify, mislead, and surprise the enemy if possible, and when you strike and overcome him, never give up the pursuit as long as your men have strength to follow; for an army routed, if hotly pursued, becomes panic-stricken, and can then be destroyed by half their number. The other rule is, never fight against heavy odds, if by any possible maneuvering you can hurl your own force on only a part, and that the weakest part, of your enemy and crush it... To move swiftly, strike vigorously, and secure all fruits of victory, is the secret of successful war.

- Stonewall Jackson in An Outline of the Principles of War

Eighth Air Force Historical Society PX News

March 1999

Greetings to everyone from the "Frozen Tundra." Due to printing schedules and subsequent distribution we unfortunately did not get our last Newsletter out until the middle of December. Many of you missed the opportunity to use the 8th AFHS PX for you Holiday shopping needs. We will do better next year! But, we are having a terrific beginning to 1999. Thank you very much for your support.

Spring is coming soon! For those anxiously waiting for the beginning of the golf season we have a wonderful new item for you. The 8th Air Force Historical Society Golf Towel! Item (M-7). This beautiful silver-gray velour towel has an embroidered 8th AFHS emblem. A very smart looking golf accessory and priced right at \$13.50! Don't be caught on the course without it!

We are very pleased to announce a new item that is long overdue, a section dedicated to children! "The KID'S HANGER" will now be a regular feature in our PX AD. To begin this line we are now featuring a T-shirt line especially designed for grandchildren (or great grandchildren). Dress your grandkids in the colors of the Mighty Eighth!!! These Hanes 100% cotton T-shirts are fully washable and are measured in "Youth" sizes. We recommend ordering your respective size a little large if you are not certain of the size. Kids will always grow into them! Pass the Heritage to the next generation and get a

great picture with grandpa and grandma!

We have some very exciting new titles in our book section. Item (B8) P-47 Thunderbolt Aces of the 8th Air Force by Jerry Scutts is our first new book item. This softcover book covers the history of 8th A.F. "Jug" Aces. All 8th Air Force P-47 Groups are represented, with a heavy emphasis on the 56th FG. Great photos and outstanding color profiles! Only \$15.95.

With a heavy heart we regretfully must announce the death of legendary 8th Air Force Ace, Lt. Col. Robert S. Johnson of the 56th Fighter Group. We have managed to secure a small inventory of his reprinted book "Thunderbolt," Item (B19). Lt. Colonel Johnson was kind enough to autograph these editions especially for the PX. We have a small stock remaining. A steal at \$19.95. Robert S. Johnson's story is remarkable, don't miss out! He was a true gentleman and we will miss him very much!

Mission 85 - The Milk Run Turned Sour by Ivo de jong. Item (B-26). A vivid account of the mission flown by the First Air Division on August 19, 1943. Meticulously researched and superbly formatted. Reviewed in the December 1998 issue of the 8th AFHS Journal. Highly recommended! Only \$22.95!

Monica and I look forward to

hearing from you very soon. May God Bless you and yours and we look forward to seeing all of our Second Air Division friends in Austin, Texas! Cheers!



**Mark and Monica
Copeland
8th Air Force Historical
Society PX Managers**

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___	M7 8th AF Golf Towel - Embroidered 8thAFHS logo, w/ grommet \$ 13.50	___

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QTY		TOTAL
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	The latest edition from 8th AF historian Freeman. Examines the colors, markings and heraldry of every 8th AF unit. A must have book!	
___	B2 Mighty Eighth War Diary , Roger Freeman, 1990 (revised). Hdbd, 8 1/2 x 11, 300+ pages. \$ 49.95	___
	2nd book in the trilogy of Freeman 8th AF histories. Day-by-day accounts of 8th AF activities, missions and losses. A great history!	
	Please note this book is now out of print- order now to avoid disappointment.	
___	B3 Claims to Fame: The B-17 Flying Fortress , Freeman & Birdsall, 1993. Sttbd, 6 1/4 x 9 1/2. Study of the most famous B-17s of \$ 16.95	___
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___	B4 Mighty Eighth in Art , Roger Freeman, 1996. Hdbd, 11 1/4 x 9, 160pp. Remarkable collection of aviation art relating to the 8th AF. \$ 39.95	___
	Beautiful book! Highly recommended!	
___	B5 Raiding the Reich: The Allied Strategic Bombing Offensive in Europe , Roger Freeman, 1996. Hdbd, 8 3/4 x 11 1/4, 160 pp, \$ 29.95	___
	260 b/w photos. Study of the 'Round the Clock' bombing theory. Another Freeman classic!	
___	B6 Airfields of the Eighth, Then & Now , Roger Freeman, 1987. Hdbd. Each 8th AF base is presented in this 'must-have' book. \$ 35.00	___
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—	B8	Thunderbolt Aces of the 8th Air Force , Jerry Scutts, 1998. Stbd., 7 1/4" x 10", 96 pp., 110 b/w photos, 65 color profile paintings. History of P-47 Thunderbolt aces of the 8th AF. Covers all 'Jug' units and respective aces. Heavy emphasis 58th Fighter Group.	\$ 15.95	_____
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—	B29	Called to Command - The Life of General Gerald Johnson , Johnson, 1996. Hdbd., photos. Remarkable story of 56th FG ace Gerald Johnson. Courage, dedication to duty, commitment and luck describe this wonderful look at his incredible life.	\$ 29.95	_____
—	B30	America's Aces in a Day , Hess, 6" x 9", 192pp., 50 photos. William Hess brilliantly chronicles the combat records of American pilots that achieved the status of 'Ace in a day'. Covers USAAF, Navy, Marines - 1941-45.	\$ 19.95	_____



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—	B34 Over Here- The Americans in Norfolk during WWII, Snelling, 1994. Hdbd. Well-illustrated. For a limited time only, we are offering this now out-of-print book. Mainly detailing the 2nd Air Division, this book chronicles the life of crewmen at bases around the Norwich area. \$ 34.95	_____
—	B35 Glenn Miller in England, Then & Now- After the Battle Publications. All of us love his music... now learn about the travels of the Glenn Miller Orchestra as they travelled through England playing at 8th Air Force bases. Illustrated with "then & now" photographs. \$ 39.95	_____

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Sale prices good through 1 May 1999

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—	S3 SALE BOOK The Friendly Invasion , Roger Freeman, 1992, Stbd. A fine book detailing life in war-time England. Well written. Superb reading. Was \$21.95, now only \$10.00 while supplies last! This book is now out-of-print! \$ 10.00	_____
—	S4 SALE BOOK Fighter Aces of the Mighty Eighth , Hess and Ivie, 1990, 264 pp. Well illustrated, fascinating look at the Fighter Aces of the Eighth Air Force. Gripping accounts and well-researched facts. Great reading! Was \$39.95 -- now just \$19.95! \$ 19.95	_____

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VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT



I. What irony! That the highest flights of lyric adventure might come of the most horrendous military devastation in man's experience. Yet there are early signs of just that happening.

Furthermore, your Planning Committee eagerly abets it:

Tennyson's . . . *Light Brigade* will be memorized and eulogized still another 144 years. In fact, we may forever

"Honor the charge they made! Honor the Light Brigade, (those) Noble six hundred!" So why shouldn't John Gillespie Magee's *High Flight* be similarly cherished through future aeons? Or Ray Ward's epic Ploesti poem, *Those Brave Crews*? Or David Westheimer's multi-media works? Or classics yet unwritten - given substance, source and inspiration, certainly, by Roger Freeman's encyclopedic *Mighty Eighth* series?

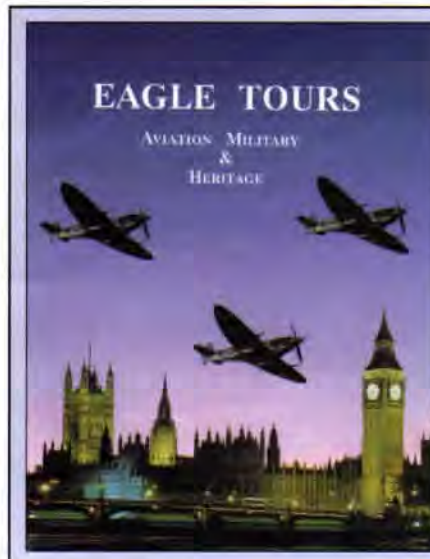
We think they will. They need to be. We need them to be. So, consequently, we recommend that Norfolk 1942-45 plus Berlin, Bernberg, Bremen, Kiel, Ploesti, Politz, Regensburg, etc., be dramatized, historicized and poeticized - never to be forgotten - through the instrument of an incentive grant program sponsored and administered by our Society.

II. It has come to the attention of your Planning Committee from many sources that our national treasure, the B-17 *Memphis Belle*, may soon be removed from its current site on Mud Island, Memphis. It is therefore an obvious concern of the Historical Society and its Planning Committee that any feasible possibility of the 8th Air Force Historical Society receiving custody of the *Belle* - presumably on behalf of her conveyance to the Mighty 8th Heritage Museum for permanent display and promotion - be made as a resolution from our Board of Directors, with appropriate support action to follow.

III. By now we all know of Arlo Bartsch as the innovator of the permanent in-perpetuity database project which at least can guarantee all of us our places forever in history - ready to be eulogized as suggested in Section I., above. The database includes the 379th B.G. in toto, much of the 44th, and awaits the rest of us.

Scott Gray has become C.E.O. of its National Foundation for Military Heritage Data. At our last Board of Directors' meeting in Cherry Hill, N.J., we approved the concept of this project. The degree and method of financial and tactical support was left to be decided during our 1999 midyear meeting in Savannah. That hour is now upon us.

Tom Parsons, Vice President and Chairman Planning Committee



MAY 9TH THRU MAY 17TH - 1999 EAST ANGLICA

Wonderful Roger Freeman escorted Tour of Various World War II 8th AF Base sites which also includes admissions to numerous British Air Museums and the premier RAF Airshow this year. Hotels, most meals and transportation except air, which can be easily arranged by Stacey or Terri at **1-800-421-1659**.

This is one well-planned tour for all 8th AFers and friends. In association with exclusive Eagle Tours of Great Britain, professional, reasonably priced; a unique opportunity to tour East Anglica with the Mighty Eighth Historian - Call for pricing info and many attractive details to above number.

MEMORIES FROM...



Cecelia Tripp and Iris Falcone



Frank Carter and Jeanette Bevill



Fred and Virginia Honold



Bob Doherty, Geoffrey Ward, Phyllis Williams, Sara Stillwell, Ed Depreter



Helen Deese, Gloria Rundquist, Aida Kaye, Beverly Acosta, Rose Lancaster



Three old friends - O. A. "Pete" Petrillo, Bob Kuhnert, Lew Lyle



Edward Klama, Col. Mark Wells, Roger A. Freeman, Dr. Herbert Allen, and Lt Col. Carl Baker

CHERRY HILL REUNION!



Marcia and Marty Kestenbaum, Molly Loevsky, and John Greenwood



Louis DelGuidice pointing to his B-24 "On the Ball" in the Liberator Album. Louis was shot down over France on 1/7/44.



Anthony and Marion Zotollo, Virginia and Joseph Berardi
351st BG



Wayne Corbett and Tom Reto



Sarah D. (Sally) Kauffman 392 BG with Birdie Schmidt Larrick - American Red Cross 392nd BG Aeroclub 1943-45 (Wendling). The 392nd Commanding Officer named a B-24 bomber "The Birdie Schmidt-ARC" in a ceremony that honored her service to the Wendling Air Base. From February to November 1945, Birdie managed an ARC Showmobile putting on entertainment shows for the troops in France. She also starred as a performer in the shows.



Robert Harrington and Murray Codman attending the Medical Seminar



Gil Gilbert, ground crew of "The Shack" 493rd BG



Bob Schottelkorb and Vernon Skrabanek

Sincere thanks to Tom Lawler 351st BG for his fine photography and contribution of the reunion pictures on these pages.

Luftwaffe Ace 28 May 1944 Mission over Magdeberg

The following story was related by Luftwaffe Ace Horst Petzschler, who flew an ME 109 on this mission. That day he shot down a P-51 and was shot down by a P-51. He later landed by parachute near a B-17 that had gone down, all from the 8th Air Force. He would like to know the identity of the two P-51 pilots involved and any of the crew of the B-17. Here is his story as told in Feb 1996:

May 28th was Ascension Day, disappointed we had to fly, but the 8th AF was flying too. I think the target was mainly Kassel, the armor factories south of Magdeberg toward Kassel. I was with JG-3, "Udet", with about 80 ME 109s and FW 190s including the Storm Group. Cpt Moritz attacked in the vicinity of Magdeberg the endless bomber stream. My Squadron was High Altitude cover for the Storm Group Oscar Boesch flew in. The weather was no clouds, and we were at 30,000 feet. The first Squadron of P-51s jumped us from behind as they came in to protect the bombers. I was concentrating on the below-flying Storm Group and saw them attacking the nearest B-17 box. That caused the first fatality, my wing man, Corporal Herdy from Potsdam who went straight down. My action was against a Mustang that had too much speed and overshot our formation. I got a good burst out of my guns and he produced a heavy white trail from I believe his cooling system. I was hit at the same time by another P-51 and lost part of my wing tip that got me into a downward spin. My cabin iced up, my instruments went wild and uncontrollable so I prepared for a bail

out. Knowing it was too cold up there I decided to wait a bit. I started to recover out of the spin but went into a reserve spin losing all hope of recovery. My canopy iced shut but I could see barrage balloons which

usually were at 1800 feet over the ship locks on the Elbe River per our preflight briefing. I got out of the plane and pulled my rip cord. When coming down I got close to the impact point of a B-17 that came down shortly before me. A Flak Lieutenant and his men rounded up some of the B-17 crew, a couple of which had been in the Elbe River. I had to convince the Flak man that I was not part of the B-17 crew but a sole ME 109 pilot. The young Flak Lt. wanted to interrogate some of the B-17 crew but was having a hard time - no cooperation. I spoke English so he engaged me into their conversation. My approach loosened the B-17 crew up as they realized I was an aviator like them. There were about 6 of the crewmen there. The Navigator was from Chicago and told me to tell the Flak Lt, that they speak American, not English. The Chicago man said exactly: "Tell that Asshole Lt. that we speak American and that, no, the Flak did not hit us; it was an FW 190 that brought us down." I was quickly picked up by my people and did not have a chance to talk further with

the Americans. It appeared to me that 6 or 7 of the crew had bailed out and the rest went

down with their aircraft. I had to get ready to fly a new plane the next day. Fourteen missions over Germany from Apr 14, 1944 to the week before D-Day and that was enough. I was ready to go back to the Russian Front, and happy about it. Flying in Russia was like having Life Insurance compared to the Western Front. Horst would like to contact anyone involved in the P-51 he shot down, the one who shot him down or any of the B-17 crew he met that day but for a short time. He can be contacted through Lt Col Terry Carlson, PO Box 250, Round Lake, IL 60073 who is also the President of the Illinois Chapter, 8th AFHS. Horst was a Sgt pilot flying missions mainly in Russia, from Nov 1943 to Apr 1945. He is credited with 26 victories in the air. He was later interned in Sweden, then sent to the Soviet Union in prison and he finally got home in 1949.



HAGAR



Blonde Bomber II

Even though this isn't a B-24 (everyone couldn't fly the best), I came across this at the Chicago reunion while speaking with a group of 447th Bomb Group guys.

Personally, I think this is one of the more unusual photos of WWII. It was taken by tail gunner Joe Clements (447th) on Nov. 2, 1944 when about to bomb an oil refinery at Merseberg, Germany. Joe said his plane was 80 feet below.

Name of the B-17 in the photo is "Blonde Bomber II". Ball gunner's name in Blonde Bomber II was Maury Dillman. Both Joe Clements and Maury Dillman were at the Chicago reunion. The title these guys have hung on this photo is "A DAY AT THE OFFICE".

For my own war room of some 60 large paintings of photos, I enlarged "A Day at the Office" to 16 x 20". The larger the photo the more scary it becomes.

submitted by **Fred Breuninger 446th BG**



Roger Freeman has included this in his history, The Mighty Eighth War Manual

THE FRIAR'S TALE...

Glancing to my right I saw a B-17 sliding directly towards our Fortress. The bomb-bay doors of all the bombers were open at this time and we were all carrying a full load of twelve five hundred pound bombs. Lt. Little was intently piloting our B-17 at this time and never saw the Fortress cutting from the right, across our flight path. Co-pilot Lt. Lou Tilley was occupied at the time with leaning back and stretching out our fuel. Suddenly out of the corner of his eyes Lou saw the B-17 cutting through the formation, wing low and apparently out of control, milliseconds from hitting our Fortress dead on. Lou's instant shock reflex took over and he pushed the controls violently downward which dropped our bomber about fifty feet. He saw the B-17 wing flash overhead and with a similar yank leveled our Fortress off so our aircraft would not throw off our wing man. Lt. Little looked over to Lou in shocked disapproval. It was strictly forbidden for either pilot to touch the controls while the other pilot was flying formation. All Lou could do was to shrug his shoulders and make a hand signal to George as to what had just occurred.

When our B-17 was put into this life-saving maneuver by Lt. Tilley, I looked up to be greeted with a view of ominous huge black five-hundred pound bombs precariously hanging in their bomb shackles inside the gaping open bomb-bay. I could see the propellers situated in the nose of those bombs slowly turning. The B-17 passed over our heads so closely that it seemed that I could have reached up and touched it. Our Lord saw our impending disaster and sent His wisdom for Lou Tilley to put his exemplary flying skills to their utmost supreme test. If Lou had not instantly taken over the controls and put our Fortress into that dive, twenty humans would have become fatalities in a twisted mass of flaming wreckage, falling 23,000 feet to the ground. I am certain that all members of our crew would have emasculated that B-17 pilot if we could have gotten our hands on him; his identity was never discovered. I can honestly say that this near-fatal incident was the most terrifying experience I encountered during my combat flying.

What a way to finish your tour of combat missions.

submitted by

Reverend Melvin F. Larson

Lynnwood, WA

The Board of Directors of the 8th AF Historical Society has confirmed the annual reunion sites and dates for 1999 & 2000.

Unit and Chapter meetings may be planned around these dates

1999 - Savannah, Georgia Marriott Riverfront Hotel October 26-31.

2000 - Salt Lake City Hilton Hotel, October 15-22

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 1992

Savannah, Georgia 31402-1992

Address: 175 Bourne Ave. Pooler, GA 31322

912-748-8888

website: <http://www.mighty8thmuseum.com>



MISSION 61 - B-17 Up and at Them...

Lieutenant Colonel Maurice "Mo" Preston's 379th Bomb Group flew its maiden combat mission on May 29, 1943. Due to heavy cloud cover there were several stop-go orders and it was 1:45 p.m. when the 24 B-17's began to take off from Kimbolton. Each aircraft carried two 2000 pound heavy explosive bombs. Three of them were forced to turn for home at the English coast because of mechanical failures. For its debut the 379th had been put in what was considered to be the safest position in the Saint-Nazaire force: the high group position in the last formation. On the way to Saint-Nazaire some flak from Guernsey Island was experienced. The 21 remaining aircraft of the 379th bombed the target with results considered fair, the flak was intense and accurate. German fighters began to attack just before the initial point and continued over Saint-Nazaire and out to the French coast.

CRASH of B-17 Up and at Them...

It was about 1700 hrs on Saturday May 29, 1943 when a formation of B-17's flew over Auray on a westerly heading. One of the Forts was in trouble and had three German fighters on her tail. The bomber was seen making circles over Auray.

The badly damaged bomber was seen coming from the south-west, at this moment five crew members bailed out. Meanwhile, the doomed Fort was diving towards the hamlet of Kerdauid at Crac'h. The B-17 chopped off the top of several trees, smashed through a hedgerow, was diverted by some tree stumps, drove into a wheat field, slammed into a big ash tree and burst into flames. Two engines were catapulted on impact, one of them struck the roof of a barn and put it on fire; the other one tore in through the roof of a farm shed. Burning pieces thrown from the wreckage fell on a haystack, setting it ablaze. Luckily, there were no



Willard S. Thomas and 2nd Lt. Eve Douglas unveil the commemorative monument to the 379th BG B-17 "Up and at Them" in Crac'h May 3, 1997.

civilian casualties. The plane burned for 24 hours; ammunition exploded, sending stray bullets across the area. The day after German soldiers removed five charred bodies from the remains of B-17 Up and at them. The bodies were put in crates and a farmer was ordered to take them to the Auray road in his cart. Then, the remains of the five flyers were taken to the Guidel cemetery to be buried. A couple of days after, a German recovery team cleared the crash site, what was left of the bomber was hauled away in several carriages. *from eyewitnesses Mr and Mrs Moisan and Mr. Jean Le Guennec*

Willard S. Thomas...

We dropped the bombs on the sub pens and turned at 45 degree for one minute and then back on the original course to photograph the results. That is when our plane was hit by flak. It blew a large hole in the plane where the waist guns were so I had no control. The plane was bucking, diving and climbing. Five men were killed in the plane and five bailed out. Of the five that bailed out one was killed. As I floated down under my parachute I saw two German fighter planes, when I descended to their altitude I figured they would shoot me. The planes drew close but instead of firing the pilots waved and smiled. It seemed like hours that I was floating down. People saw me coming and left their fields running to where I

was going down. I landed by a road and a river, about 100 French people were waiting but three German soldiers stepped out of the crowd with sub-machine guns and I was captured. They took me to jail in Vannes. Then, for two weeks I was at the Dulag Luft, near Frankfurt being interrogated. From there they took me to Statlag Luft III, Sagan on June 13, 1943. The next day British prisoners made a birthday cake for me from cracker

crumbs and saccharine and found a candle to stick on the top. I'll never forget that. **by Willard S. Thomas Pilot of B-17 Up and at Them**

William J. Koves...

Meanwhile, at least two ME 109's were firing into the tail of the ship. We did have fire power in front but none in the rear. When we reached the coast Captain Hall ordered abandon ship. I went out of the forward hatch which failed to eject so I

squeezed out and air suction helped to pull me out. The left bomb bay door was hanging from the flak hit and my steel helmet hit it. The next thing I



Monument

remember was floating down in the parachute. Our plane was on fire and suddenly it flipped over and dove straight down into a grove of trees that appeared to have a farm house in the center. The plane exploded and set the trees on fire. I prayed that no innocent people were hurt. Meanwhile I was drifting south towards the sea. Suddenly, I started to drop very fast. I landed in a coastal village, in a cobblestone plaza where the German garrison were having their afternoon retreat parade. A German officer ordered two soldiers to pick me up. As I was stood up there were French people who had watched my descent. They clapped their hands and smiled, I smiled back and felt like a hero. A French lady came out of the crowd and patted me on the back. She was immediately arrested. I shall never forget the bravery of these people. **William J. Koves, 379th BG Navigator of B-17 Up and at Them**

THE RETURN - May 3, 1997...

Willard S. Thomas, his sons and Mike Bradford were greeted by the Mayor and members of the local council at the town hall. A crowd of local people were waiting in front of the town hall to welcome them. Several people who had witnessed the crash of B-17 *Up and at Them* or Willard S. Thomas' capture were genuinely delighted to see him.

Wreaths of flowers were laid by the Mayor and 2nd Lt Douglas on behalf of the people of Crac'h and the American Embassy respectively. The monument

will show that the people of Crac'h have not forgotten those who died on May 29, 1943 and how much they are grateful to them. It also will be a lasting tribute of the sacrifices of their forebears to future generations.

Willards S. Thomas said how much he appreciated the kindness and interest shown by the people of Crac'h; he had never thought that one day he would attend so impressive and moving a ceremony. Afterwards they drove to Kerdavid hamlet, near Crac'h, to visit the crash site of B-17 *Up and at Them*. We were greeted by a dozen of the local inhabitants, all farming people, and were made most wel-

come. Some of them were there when the bomber crashed and all are keenly interested in the history of the events. We went to the field where the Fort hit the ground, bits and pieces from the aircraft can still be found on the spot.

Actually, Francois Cadic picked up a couple of small relics during our visit and gave them to Willards S. Thomas. He enjoyed seeing the crash site and meeting witnesses. He appreciated their feelings very much.

Claude Helias, Plomelelin, France & Francois Cadic

Quemenevan, France Conservatoire Aeronautique De Cornouaille

RETURN TO BARTH

Earl Wassom's story "The Bet at Barth" December 98 calls for a sequel. This tale tells how my crew split up over Berlin and how we reunited on the recovery of Barth POW's on May 13, 1945.

Our crew flew on the Berlin raid of March 18, 1945, and after an engine failure continued on solo. That turned out to be a bad idea. Just as we released bombs, an ME262 attacked from six o'clock level. Emil Sabol, co-pilot, and Alex Archibald, engineer, were captured and sent to Stalag Luft I at Barth. The rest of the crew jumped behind Russian lines, and after seven weeks of hitch-hiking

returned to England by way of Russia, Italy, and France. After reporting to the Escape and Evasion Office in London, I returned to my 305th Bomb Group. That was just about VE Day. On May 13, 1945, I flew one of our B-17s back to Germany, but this time it was a major effort by the 8th A.F. to recover POW's from Barth. We were issued special instructions for this mission called "Plan Revival". One of them was to dust ourselves and our aircraft with insecticide powder probably DDT. Given the problem with dry cleaning, I made the dusting optional with the crew. Dealer's choice; insecticide, or bugs. When we arrived at Barth all twenty aircraft taxied to a perimeter track and stopped in a long column. With engines still running, each aircraft loaded 25 ex-POW's who had all been lined up at designated locations - what a thrilling sight. We then taxied to take-off positions while another Group landed to continue the operation. Emil Sabol remembers that the 8th Air Force had promised that they would airlift the POW's out of Barth as soon as the Nazis left. He recalls, "Most of us felt that it was a longshot, but we had faith that the outfit would deliver. Adjacent to the POW camp there was a FLAK school which had an airfield, so this made the plan sound feasible. It's a joy to remember the day that the 8th Air Force Groups began arriving. While we were waiting for our "turn" I recognized the 398th Bomb Group, the 92nd aircrafts, and others which came. And then I saw the green Triangle G of the 305th Bomb Group.



Barracks at Barth - Stalag Luft I

The planes were fitted with plywood floors to accommodate the 'CARGO'. As soon as I got on the plane I made my way to the flight deck to see what was going on. When I mentioned to the crew that I was a pilot with the 305th they invited me to take the controls, which I did with enthusiasm. While reading the 'FLIM-SY' on the control pedestal, I was amazed to see that one of the

pilots was McCaldin. Until this moment I was certain he was dead and gone, because every day at Stalag Luft #1 I went to the bulletin board in the hope that I would find his name and the rest of the crew listed as new arrivals. None of their names showed up." When we landed in France our Group spent an hour or so on the ground due to air traffic congestion.

Then the best of all possible things happened. Sabol and Archibald came walking up. This was our first meeting since parting by parachute near Berlin, and each thought the other guys were dead. Archibald had been wounded in our shoot-down but was doing well. Sabol had a sore leg due to malnutrition boils diagnosed by an RAF doctor at the POW camp but otherwise looked ok. There followed lots of hugging and back slapping and exchanges of news. Sabol and Archibald stayed in France, at Camp Lucky Strike, for processing and passage home. I flew back to England that evening and sent my mother a V-Mail letter with the news. She was the communicator for our crew and on receipt of my letter,

called Sabol's and Archibald's families to say their boys were on their way home.
submitted by **Roy O. McCaldin, Pilot, 305th BG, Tucson, AZ**
Emil M. Sabol, CoPilot 305th BG, Wilsonville, OR



Roy McCaldin, 305th BG pilot and Emil Sabol, 305th BG co-pilot, at a recent reunion.

2000 CHALLENGE

The Georgia State Chapter members have gone on record at their recent annual reunion challenging all other Chapters and Units to meet their pledge of \$2000 to go to support the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah. Noting that there are over 150 Eighth AF organizations, a show of support as one unified Mighty Eighth would be a significant contribution to help preserve our heritage. The Georgia Chapter has already met their pledge according to Saul Kupferman, who promoted the idea and headed up the drive. "A piece of cake" reports Saul. He proposes that the 8th veterans adopt the support slogan: "WE SUPPORT OUR MUSEUM 2000%" as we head into the next millennium. The Georgia Chapter is the host Chapter for the 25th Anniversary reunion of the Historical Society this Fall, and sets a great example of leadership for Society projects and fund drives. They encourage all Society Chapters and 8th Units to join them in this Heritage Museum pledge goal of \$2000.

YOUNG AMERICA

The youngest person to serve in the USAAF in WWII was Sgt. DeSales Glover. He enlisted at age 14. He flew 6 missions and was grounded at age 16.

Youngest person in service in WWII - Calvin Graham - Texas 12 years old, born 1929 - joined U.S. Navy served on the battleship South Dakota, earned a Bronze Star and Purple Heart. When his age was learned he was put in the brig and they took away his medals. In 1978 he got his honorable discharge.

submitted by Ed Smith 466th BG Gloucester Point, VA

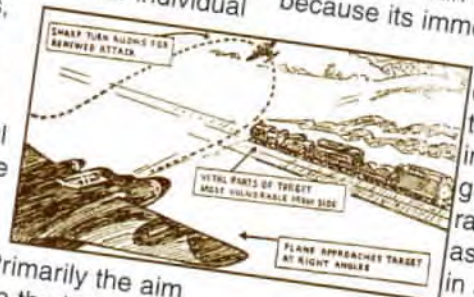
ORDER OF DAEDALIANS MAKE CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Colonel Clement E. Bellion, editor of the Daedalus Flyer, has donated a significant number of past issues to the archives of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, to be used for research and contributions in the 8th AF NEWS. The Order of the Daedalians is a large organization, founded in 1934, consisting of selected members who are commissioned as pilots of heavier-than-air aircraft. The original membership was made up solely of pre-World War I pilots. Its purpose is to perpetuate the spirit of patriotism, the love of country and high ideals of sacrifice which place service to nation above personal safety or position.

The Order is supported by the Daedalian Foundation, with its Scholarship program and support of regular meetings, the publication, recognition awards, and national conventions of the Order. Many thanks to Clem Bellion for his kind donation to the Historical Society. Daedalian offices may be reached at the Order of Daedalians, Inc., P. O. Box 249, Randolph AFB, TX 78148-0249. Telephone 210-945-2111. Fax 210-945-2112.

Train-busters

Royal Air Force pilots who have long been active in attacking railway trains along the French coast are naturally silent about their individual methods, but it is said that the most successful attacks are rarely carried out head-on. Primarily the aim is to blow up the boiler of the engine, secondarily to give the engine an all-over wrecking dose which, if it does not produce a total casualty, will give the repair shops weeks or months of work. Another advantage of attacking from the side is that it gives the French engine driver a chance to see the attacker coming and fall out on the off-side, leaving a stopped engine as a sitting target. Out of consideration for the lives of French citizens, freight trains are ever attacked. The Mosquito has been a successful train-buster because its immense speed makes it difficult for the defending train gunners to range on it as it comes in at a low level, and the plane being highly maneuverable, the pilot is able to bank out of the way of the exploding boiler at the end of the attack. Then, if necessary, he makes a tight turn and comes in again. One crew, deserting trains in favor of a power station, found they were able to make four attacks in this way in six minutes.



from **Military Review**
Vol. XXIII
October 1943

THE 446TH REVISITED - REVISITED

Published in the Dec 98 issue was a notice of the release of the third edition of the 446th Bomb Group Association history of the wartime experiences at Bungay. Several inquiries have been received on how to obtain a copy. Write: 446th BG Association 13382 Wheeler Pl Santa Ana, CA 92705-1934 \$45. + \$8. s&h



THE BLUE HEN CHICK

In 1943 Ralph Minker joined the Army Air Corps and became a B-17 pilot, flying 38 missions into Germany. He named his Flying Fortress the "Blue Hen Chick". His extensive correspondence about his experiences and his wartime memorabilia, as well as the story of his family's side of the wartime experience is presented in an exhibit at the Historical Society of Delaware. Titled "Remembering the Blue Hen Chick: A Delaware Flyer in World War II," the display reflects a pilot's courage in returning from missions again and again. The exhibit will remain on display through April 30, 1999 at the Delaware History Center, 5th and Market, in Wilmington, Delaware. Call 302-655-7161.

Looking for us Air Corps men who trained in Miami Beach, FL 1942-44, for a reunion in Dec. 1999 at Miami, FL. Officers or enlisted men who had OCS or Basic Training. Contact B24vet@aol.com or Forrest S. Clark 703 Duffer Lane, Kissimmee, FL 34759



**Command Scientific Support Branch
HEADQUARTERS PERSONNEL
AND TRAINING COMMAND**
Royal Air Force Innsworth, Gloucester. GL3 1EZ



**STUDY OF HISTORICAL CHEMICAL WEAPON HOLDINGS
AT USAAF SITES WITHIN THE UNITED KINGDOM
DURING WORLD WAR TWO**

From British historical records, we have ascertained that a large number of RAF airfields and bases were given to the USAAF on a reserved "lend-lease" basis. We have found that after the bases/airfields were handed over, very little is known about airfield activities and any potential chemical weapons holdings. Reference is made to documents such as "8th AF Chemical History & Chemical Warfare Conference, 1943", "History of the Chemical Section Eight AF VII AFSC" and "CWS Service of Supply History". I would be grateful for any help you could provide in finding these documents. We want to ascertain if the USAAF airfields had any form of CW holding and in addition how these were maintained. Ultimately, we want to try and establish where these weapons ended up after the war, were they burnt, shipped back to the US or returned to the RAF? I would be grateful for any help and assistance you could give me.

Graham Hyndman

The work of Michael Dobrzelecki on the newly dedicated "Polish Air Force - Little Friends" exhibit at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah was understated in the Dec 98 8th AF NEWS. It turns out that Michael contributed a major part of the research and assistance in the acquisition of exhibit materials for the final exhibit; especially on the 8th AF resupply mission flown on September 18, 1944 in support of the Warsaw uprising. Collaborating with Dr. Jan Koniarek, Curator of the Polish Military Museum in America, Steve Rasiej, President of the Polish Air Force Veterans Association, and the Exhibit directors at the Heritage Museum, the Polish exhibit is a fine tribute to all Polish airmen who served.

OLD LIBERATORS NEVER DIE

Our Liberator bomber wears the name: THE TEXAS DUDE; she's a mean four engine war machine, who has an attitude. Crouched inside of her ball turret, rides a man before his time; at four foot eight and age sixteen, he weighs just ninety nine. He's suspended down beneath the plane, and calls it outer-space; it's his office during business trips, and the Luftwaffe calls him Ace. Our twin window gunners, age eighteen, are John and Tommy Klyne; they've each scored quadruple kills with us - all M.E. One-O-Nines. Our tail gunner needs but one more kill, and he'll be a double Ace; as he sits there riding backwards, he's in an advantageous place. He sure boogered-up two Fokkers on our last trip, going in; they have armor-plated bellies, Mates, and their pilots play to win. He gets mean as hell in combat; men who've challenged him are dead; when engaging him and Shorty, Luftwaffe pilots fear to tread. They have served as our protectors, and today's their final bout; we have never lost in combat, 'cause they've whipped the Krauts.

H. L. Watkins 44th BG San Benito TX

**MUSTANG O.P.S. AND 12 AVIATION LEGENDS
TEAM UP FOR THE GATHERING OF
MUSTANGS AND LEGENDS**

Twelve legendary US Air Force aviators, all of whom flew the P-51 Mustang, will be in attendance at The 1999 Gathering of Mustangs and Legends, a major event presented by the Mustang Operations and Preservation Society. The Gathering, which will be held in Kissimmee, Florida, April 7-10, 1999, will be the largest meeting of P-51 Mustangs since the Korean conflict. The event is expected to draw approximately 80 P-51's, and many more pilots and crews from across North America. "The Gathering of Mustangs and Legends will be a celebration of the rich heritage of this unique aircraft, and the premier educational venue for owners and operators of P-51s." The Gathering will open its doors to the public Saturday, April 10 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Proceeds from Mustang O.P.S. sponsored events will benefit the American Fighter Aces Association and the Experimental Aircraft Association's Young Eagles Program.

**Angela West, Events Coordinator Mustang O.P.S. 3951
Merlin Drive Kissimmee, FL 34741 P: (407) 846-4051 F:
(407) 846-0414**

**FIELD SERVICE MANUAL * B-17G
THERE WAS NO BELL IN THE TAIL!**

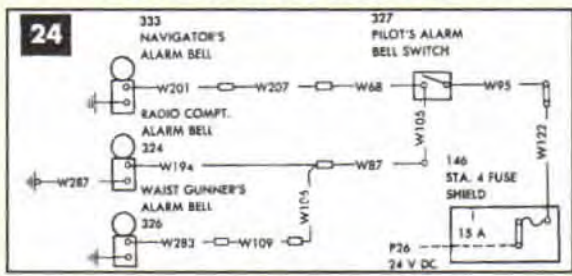


FIGURE 16 - ALARM BELL CIRCUIT

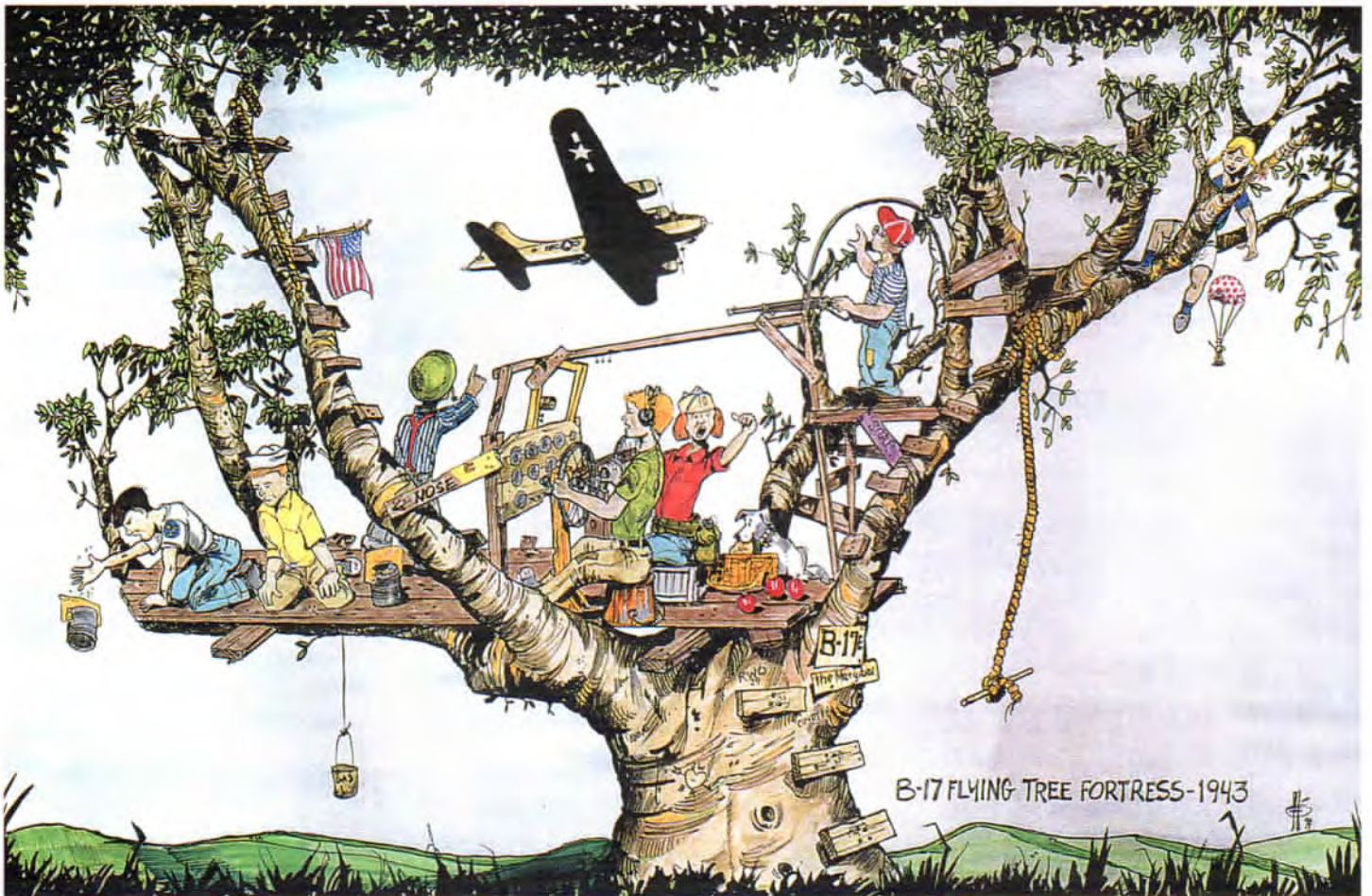
For all these years since April 25, 1945, Charles Rawlings has wondered why he never got any warning of the impending demise of his B-17. It was over Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, and his pilot, Paul Coville of the 398th Bomb Group, had just made a 360 over the Skoda munitions target. The next thing he knew he was floating towards earth and he had just enough time to pull the D-ring. If his navigator, Neil Bartimus, had enough time to return to his table and retrieve his favorite yellow pencil why did he get no warning back in the tail? This question haunted him for 53 years until he happened to mention it to a fishing buddy who just happened to have been an electrical engineer working on B-17's during the war. "Of course you didn't get a warning" said the buddy, "There was no bail-out bell in the tail." Later, the buddy produced a copy of the Alarm Bell Circuit (see above); Pilot's Alarm Bell Switch, Navigator's Alarm Bell, Waist Gunners Alarm Bell. But no alarm bell in the tail. Now Rawlings - and other tail gunners who had similar near-misses - can sit back and say— "Now I know."

from **FLAK NEWS 398th BGA**

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WEATHER STAFF 352ND F. G.

Standing in front of a 352nd Fighter Group P-51 are members of the weather staff at Bodney Aerodrome - England 1943-45. Standing L - R: Ralph Armentrout, Raphael, Howard Pierson, Karl Kadzielki, David Farr, Howard Polin, Ken Bailey, Ed Willis, and Hector Perneti Kneeling L - R: Ray Johnson, William Matson, Capt. Jack Gysbers, Al Reifman, Ben Siegel, and Carl Leyse. submitted by **Howard Polin** Huntsville, Alabama



By Bob O'Hara Georgetown, CA EAA Submitted by Abraham "Hap" Galfunt



1999 8TH AF HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHAPTER PRESIDENTS



- Alabama** Henry S. Arnold 4724 Southlake Pkwy. Birmingham, AL 35244
- Arizona** Iris McCoy 10401 N.Cave Creek Rd. Lot #42 Phoenix, AZ 85020 602-906-9578
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ALABAMA CHAPTER

1998 was a very good year during which we added 22 new members. 1999 should be another good one; 6 members were added in Jan. The Annual General Membership Business Meeting was held Jan. 15th electing Henry Arnold, 94 BG, Pres.; Frank G. Brewer, Jr, 323 BG, First Vice Pres.; Amy Arnold, Assoc., Sec./Treas. Directors for Class of 2000 are James E. Berry, 448 BG; Clyde H. Bush, 448 BG; C.B. (Red) Harper, 100 BG; William E. Massey, 401 BG; and Glenn E. Taylor, 466 BG. The Central Ala. Wing met Jan. 29th in Troy with 31 members and guests. Wayne Collett gave an interesting talk on the 801 BG Carpetbaggers which dropped supplies and agents for the French underground. Supplies included bicycle tires, radios, clothing, weapons and food. Detailed maps were used to spot church steeples, trees and even traffic lights for pin-pointing drops while flying with half-flaps at 120 m.p.h. and 200 feet above ground. On one mission, his B-24 was hit and on fire; all bailed out. One crew member's chute was on fire so he held on to another's back and the two landed safely with only one broken ankle. The North Ala. Wing met Feb. 5th with a large turnout including a local Professor and three students. The students were full of questions about WWII and the members full of war stories which used all available time leaving none for the planned program. This again proves the need to educate the younger generation with the history of The Greatest Generation. The South Ala. Wing met Feb. 12th in Mobile and finalized plans for the Mar. 12-14 Gulf Shores Luau. A British red double decker bus will provide transportation from the hotel to the cruise ship to view the dolphins in the Gulf. Major Gen. Lew Lyle will be our Fri. BBQ dinner speaker with Lt. Gen. Buck Shuler as our guest. These activities show that our Wings are all having interesting and informative programs with the veterans, families and friends enjoying the fellowship. Amy Arnold, Sec./Treas.

CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER

The year ended with a Chapter meeting on December 29th. Guest speaker was General Stan Hemstreet (Ret.) who spoke to the members on the history of the

109th Air National Guard - its 50th anniversary. The Chapter also played an active role in obtaining a Proclamation recognizing Mighty Eighth Air Force week, October 1998, in Schenectady, NY. A drive is on seeking new members for the Chapter.

GENERAL CURTIS E. LEMAY CHAPTER

The Curtis LeMay Chapter in Southern California held a very successful General Membership Meeting on Nov. 14, 1998, at the Officers Club, El Toro Marine Base, in Orange County, CA. There were 123 members and guests present for the buffet luncheon. Ret. Lt. Col. George Epperson gave a very interesting and informative biographical sketch of General Curtis LeMay's daughter, Jane Lodge, was introduced as the honor guest of the meeting. Our Chapter continues to be active and hopes to have four General Meetings this year. We recently had a Board of Directors meeting in January of 1999 at the Proud Bird Restaurant near the Los Angeles Airport. Some members were treated to an "inside" tour of the Airport after the meeting. This tour was personally conducted by the C.E.O. of Mercury Air Group, Inc. whose company provides fuel to the airplanes and handles cargo for the airplanes. Our next General Meeting will be held at the Santa Monica Museum of Flying in March. We hope to have a representative of Boeing Co. as our main speaker." by Dick Hawes

GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Georgia Chapter continues to roll right along with weekly and monthly activities, details and updates on members birthdates, anniversaries and other activities faithfully recorded in the *Tall Tales* newsletter, superbly composed and edited for many years by Saul Kupferman. The Chapter's Christmas luncheon at the Petite Auberge Restaurant was attended by 110 members and featured Santa Claus (Edgar Wilson) playing tunes of the season on the piano and passing out gifts to attendees. Singing, raffles, and Christmas stories were an enjoyable part of the festivities. Georgia H. S. members are looking forward to being the host Chapter for the annual reunion in October and plan to roll out the red carpet in Savannah. Coordinating their activi-

ties with plans of the Board of Directors, they want everyone who attends to have a very special welcome and a great time at the reunion. Congratulations to Albert McMahan for being elected President of the Chapter for 1999!

ILLINOIS CHAPTER

The January meeting of the Illinois Chapter was held in Park Ridge, and featured free pizza and drinks courtesy of Florence and Charlie Richards' daughter, Peggy, and courtesy of Domino's Pizza. The guest speaker was Paul Swope who was an 8th AF Meteorologist in World War II with the 4th Fighter Group. He later spent some time in Korea. It is not recorded how the weather was the day of the meeting. The February meeting is scheduled to feature a WW II Navy dive bomber pilot who was credited with the sinking of the Japanese carrier Akagi at the battle of Midway, and assisting in the sinking of the Soryu. Member Harry Volkman is to be thanked for his efforts in contacting the speakers and arranging these fine programs.

KENTUCKY CHAPTER

The February Chapter meeting at the Old Stone Inn in Simpsonville featured Ms. Jeanette Beville of the Oklahoma Chapter who spoke on the "Battle of Britain". The members had been briefed on the history of The Old Stone Inn at the November meeting by Mary David Myles at the University Club at the University of Louisville. The Chapter meeting centered on upcoming events 1999. President Ed Myles noted that the next gathering will be at the Wickliff Estate in Bardstown where 8th Air Force memorabilia will be on display for the Kentucky Colonels. The next regular meeting will be on May 8th at a location to be announced. The Kentucky Chapter will host the raiders from Tennessee on July 8-10, at the first joint meeting of the two neighbors, to be held in Bardstown. Both Chapters are looking forward to that big event.

MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER

On November 5, 1998 members of the Massachusetts Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society were visitors to Otis Air National Guard base in Barnstable, Massachusetts. The visit was

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arranged by Gerry Coletta with Clifford McDonald, Public Relations Officer. Slides and a film were shown representing the activities as a first line of detection and defense of the eastern section of the United States. The members were addressed by Colonel Sam Shiver, Wing Commander of the base. The Colonel gave the visitors a history of the Air National Guard and its responsibility. It was a most informative hour followed by questions and answers. We were told that should any emergency arise on a shuttle launch, Otis Air Base is one of the available landing areas. At the conclusion of the Colonel's talk he introduced Captain Gary Carricutt who escorted the group to the flight line and allowed each member to visit with him at the cockpit of an F-15 fighter jet. The Captain explained how all the electronic equipment operates and all aspects in flying the F-15 jet. We then retired to a small Museum with historic memorabilia maintained by volunteers on the base. It is opened only by appointment, so we were very fortunate to be guests and allowed to visit.

The Massachusetts Chapter has been very active in this third quarter of 1998. Our "Fall Rendevous" was well attended with ninety eight people enjoying a meal of London Broil or Baked scrod. Election of Officers and Directors was also conducted; all agreed to stay on for another year, which was very gratifying. Yours in comradeship, Albert E. Audette, Pres. Mass. Chapter 8th AFHS.

MISSISSIPPI CHAPTER

Mississippians who are members of the Mighty Eighth are just now recovering from their trip this past Fall to Branson, Missouri, having been wined and dined and almost over-entertained on their very successful Chapter excursion to that musical city. It was a perfect way to spend Veterans Day week. Now, it's back to Lake Tiak O'khata in April to take up where they left off in Branson. The ninth annual Mississippi Chapter reunion will be April 23 - 25, 1999 at the lake near Louisville MS. All members and friends who want to take part should get in touch with Ethelda Nail, 214 North Madison, Tupelo 38801. Two noteworthy items regarding the Mississippi Chapter: Raffles which are held at the reunions are for a good cause; all proceeds are donated to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage

Museum. Also, Chapter Chaplain Billy J. Jones has donated an organ originally in the chapel at Anderson AFB in Guam to the Heritage Museum where it will find a home in the Memorial Chapel.

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

The New Jersey Chapter boasts a membership of over 700 members, many of whom took part in the fine welcome given as Host Chapter of the national annual reunion in Cherry Hill, NJ last October. Upcoming meetings are on April 17th at the McGuire AFB Officers Club, and on July 24th at Fort Monmouth, Gibbs Hall. Chapter officers recently elected are Irv Pliskin, Pres.; Joseph Sanford, VP and Arthur Belkowski, Treasurer. Editor of the *N. J. News* is Marvin Speidel.

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The North Carolina Chapter Board of Directors recently met in Fletcher, NC. President James Phillips addressed several of the issues which have come before the Chapter Board. A call for candidates to serve on the BOD was requested for the three wings in the state. The Western Wing has stopped charging dues in that their treasury is adequate for current demands. The next Board meeting will also serve as the annual reunion and will be held on April 10, 1999 in Charlotte.

NORTH TEXAS WING

A Chapter luncheon held on February 17 at the Los Colinas Country Club in Irving, Texas featured Harry Spencer as principal speaker. Harry was a civilian pilot in the Air Transport Command early in World War II. His first ferry flight turned into a memorable adventure on the Greenland ice cap. His program was well-received by all who attended. Meetings and speakers are set up through June of this year, under the direction of President Doyles Shields. Finances and an examination of methods by which to increase Chapter rolls were topics at the January meeting.

PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER

The Pennsylvania Chapter welcomes all members of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society to attend the 1999 annual Pennsylvania Chapter (8AFHS) reunion, with headquarters at the Holiday

Inn in Morgantown, PA, located just off the Pennsylvania Turnpike at Exit 22. The reunion dates of Friday, June 4th through Monday, June 7th coincide with the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum World War II Commemorative Weekend and Reading Air Show which will be the anchor events for the 1999 Chapter Reunion.

Commercial buses will provide frequent shuttle service between the hotel and the Air show on Saturday and Sunday. The Air Show will feature many World War II aircraft, including two B-17 Flying Fortresses, two B-25 Mitchell bombers, a P-51 Mustang and others. Also, over 300 living history re-enactors and performers will join together to recreate the sights, sounds and "feel" of a World War II airfield, as well as an infantry battle re-enactment between German and Allied troops. The Saturday evening program includes a chicken barbecue, a hangar party featuring a USO style dance and big band music. On Sunday, after church services and a memorial service, more events will be taking place at the Air Show with shuttles running back and forth. The annual banquet with special entertainment is scheduled for Sunday evening at the Holiday Inn in Morgantown. A special room rate is \$65 (single or double) per day, and the registration fee is \$110 per adult and a special registration fee is only \$50 for children and grandchildren (under 18 years). These registration fees include three breakfasts, two dinners, shuttle bus transportation, admission to the Air Show and encampment, hospitality tent and all taxes and gratuities! Reunion registration packages are available by contacting the Reunion Chairmen, Art and Carolyn Swanson, PACHAP, 8AFHS, P.O. Box 56, Pine Grove, PA 17963-0058 (telephone 570-345-4512; FAX 570-345-4456).

submitted by Maj. Gen. Frank H. Smoker
President, Pennsylvania Chapter

SAVANNAH WING - GEORGIA CHAPTER

The Savannah Wing has been in existence for thirteen years and celebrated Christmas with the largest turnout for a Christmas party in their history. Officers elected for 1999 are Paul Grasse, Wing Commander; James (Del) Lamb, Vice Wing Commander; Marge Langston, Scety; and Sharon Johnson, Treasurer.

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The Wing is actively planning for a great time at the Chapter's Gala Salute to Glenn Miller on April 3, 1999 in the Heritage Museum rotunda. Only 400 tickets will be sold so make plans early if you want to attend. You will enjoy the music of Gene Fox and his big band, featuring popular vocalist Penny Dawson. Other events coming up include participation in the Savannah St. Patrick's Day parade, the Stand Up for America parade on April 24th, and the third anniversary of the Heritage Museum in May. This active Chapter invites all Society members to join them in their meetings and activities when they are in the vicinity.

TENNESSEE CHAPTER

The Tennessee Chapter joined with eight other Veterans/Military organizations in a Gathering of Great Warriors in Memphis

on January 22nd and 23rd. Highlights of the meeting included visits to the "Memphis Belle", which provided the opportunity to wander through the fighting machine from nose to tail, the Danny Thomas Museum, Beale Street, viewing the Russian World War II exhibit - which was making its showing outside the Soviet Republic - and concluded with the Great Warriors Banquet. A warm greeting from Memphis and Shelby County was extended by the Mayor of Memphis, Jim Rout. Brent Perkins, President of the Memphis Belle Association, gave an update on the "Belle". Keynote speaker was Shelby County Historian Edward F. Williams, III, who gave insight into the careers of some distinguished Tennesseans, including Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forest, III, who was killed in 8thAF action on June 13, 1943 on a mission to Kiel, Germany. Dinner music, featuring renditions of the WWII era, was provided by Jim Mahannah. Chapter Secretary-Treasurer John Harold Robinson organized and coordinated the arrangements for the Gathering and a good time was had by all. The Chapter's next meeting is scheduled for July 8, 9 and 10 in Bardstown, Kentucky in a joint meeting with the Kentucky Chapter.

- James Bass

VIRGINIA CHAPTER

The annual meeting of the West Virginia Chapter was held in Newark with Denver and Vivian Guthrie as hosts. A great din-

ner topped off with homemade ice cream was a special treat, as well as an inspection of a fully restored 1948 Lustrum and a Piper Cub. The Chapter meeting was held and it was moved and passed that the Chapter would collect donations for a memorial plaque to be dedicated by the West Virginia Chapter in the Memorial Gardens at the 8th AF Heritage Museum in Savannah. New Chapter officers for the coming year are: Clement Dowler, Pres.; Jack Kings, VP; Angelo DeCarlo, Treas.; and Jack Feller, Secretary. Board members are James Davidson, Denver Guthrie, Harry Huster, and Tom Garten.

WESTERN NEW YORK STATE CHAPTER

The Western New York State Chapter recently voted to use the proceeds of its split-club to improve and expand its exhibit at the Niagara Aerospace Museum in Niagara Falls. This new facility is expanding rapidly, providing the throng of Falls tourists an aeronautical attraction. Chapter members think the Honeymoon Capital of the World will be a fine place to instruct Generation X on the contributions made by The Eighth to the winning of World War II. Election of officers was held in December. Gerry Miller remains as President, Jim Kiernan will serve as Vice President/Secretary and Paul Hintermeier was elected Treasurer; Irv Hornung has been elected to the Board of Directors.

COMPUTERS AND SEX

At the San Diego Naval Base a Captain noticed that people in his command often referred to their computers as gender specific. Some called their computers "he" and some "she". In rigorous military fashion, the Captain sent out a memo, asking each computer operator his or her rationale for their preferred computer pronoun. The response was as expected, along gender lines. The women thought of their computers as "he". Their reasons:

- 1) In order to get their attention, you had to turn them on.
- 2) They have lots of data, but are still clueless.
- 3) They are supposed to help you solve problems, but half the time they are the problem.
- 4) As soon as you commit to one, you realize that if you had waited a little longer, you could have had a better model.

Their male counterparts responded that their computers were more like females because:

- 1) No one but the Creator understands their internal logic.
- 2) The native language they use to communicate with other computers is incomprehensible to everyone else.
- 3) Even your smallest mistakes are stored in long-term memory for later instant retrieval.
- 4) As soon as you commit to one, you find yourself spending half your paycheck on accessories for it.

-submitted by Rich Milinovitch



HERITAGE MUSEUM REPORT



The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum has had a very rewarding 1998, and is excited about 1999. This past year saw an attendance increase by 30%, school tours were up by 75%, and visitors came from all fifty states; forty-eight nations were also represented by attendees. New exhibitry is being added monthly, and superb shows by top artists are featured in the Museum Art Gallery. We are also looking forward this year to the construction of the Chapel

in the Memorial Gardens.

One note of special pride is the fact that more than 100



Come take part in the Third Anniversary Celebration at the Mighty Eighth AF Heritage Museum

men and women have donated over 14,500 hours of their time in service as volunteers at the Mighty Eighth. The volunteers play a vital part in our daily programs and activities and are one of the highlights of the museum experience by our visitors.

Upcoming this May is the great Third Anniversary Celebration of the Heritage Museum to be held the weekend of May 1st and 2nd, 1999, featuring two days of events and activities to honor the 8th veterans and showcase the latest features in the Museum. Plan to come for a stay and enjoy the company and celebration of this significant anniversary of the Home of the Mighty Eighth! For details call **912-748-8888**.

Barry Buxton, CEO



A planning meeting of the Volunteer Captains at the Heritage Museum

VISION AWARD HONORS TO BE PRESENTED BY LEADERSHIP TOURISM COUNCIL

The Savannah Area Leadership Tourism Council has chosen Lt. Gen. E. G. "Buck" Shuler, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, as the first recipient of its Vision Award. The Award is given for General

Shuler's outstanding work in organizing, developing, and bringing the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum to fruition. The formal presentation will be made by the Council at its annual dinner at the Hyatt Regency Savannah on May 6th, 1999.

When we build, let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight nor for present use alone. Let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for; and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say, as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them, "See! This our father did for us."

—John Ruskin

The New Boy

by Ervin E. Nowicki 384th Bomb Group 1946

The dull camouflaged barrack looked comfortable to Lieutenant Ed Quinlan in the cold of the evening. There was a sound of stove grates being shaken as he lugged his heavy bags toward the barrack. A momentary lighting of the sky and chimney by sparks originating in a shaken stove sent a shiver through Quinlan. Being so close to warmth, he admitted his coldness. All day he had been jostled by the army truck as it delivered him to his first combat group. Six days ago he had been in New York, two days ago in Scotland, and now in the Midlands. "The army can be efficient, damned efficient, when it wants to be," he mused. The army's efficiency had brought Quinlan from the States to combat in record time, but it had cost him many hours of sleep he should have had. The swift travel, lack of sleep, and the damp English air all contributed to his coldness and weariness. He entered the barracks and walked down the hall to the second door. It was from behind this door that the sound of stove-shaking came. A large homemade sign commanded him to knock before entering. He put down one of his bags and knocked. The sound of the shaking grates inside had apparently blotted out his sound, for there was no answer. He waited for the sound to stop, then knocked again. This time the grinding sound of coal being poured into the stove drowned out his rapping. Quinlan was anxious to be inside. He opened the door slightly, picked up his bags, and pushed the door open with them as he advanced into the room. "Hello, new-boy," the figure with the coal bucket said. "Hi," Quinlan returned. He couldn't see momentarily. The relative brightness of the electric light in contrast to the dimly lit hall and the searing heat from the over-heated stove caused him to squint. "Can't you read signs?" the figure spoke again. "I knocked, but I guess you didn't hear. This is barracks C, room two, isn't it?" "Yeah. Come on in and close that door. We don't get a large ration of coke." Quinlan dropped his bags. As the door closed he saw that it was adorned with closely packed photographs of women in varying degrees of nudity. "My name's Howard Onley, Texas," stated the fire tender. "That's Clyde Asip, Illinois." He jerked his thumb in the direction of the double bunks to the left of Quinlan. Asip lay on the top bunk. He had been reading a book, but now he was surveying Quinlan. "Ed Quinlan, Wisconsin. Glad to meet you." He stepped forward and shook Onley's hand. He turned to Asip who had slid off the bed. "You from Chicago?" asked Quinlan as he shook Asip's hand. "No, Carbondale." "I thought we might've been neighbors. I'm from Milwaukee." "No, Carbondale." "You the only fel-

"Hello, new-boy," the figure with the coal bucket said

"The last three guys who slept in that bunk had some bad luck"

lows in this room?" Quinlan asked both of them. "Yeah," answered Onley. "You can have either of those bunks." On the opposite side of the room was another double bunk. Both the upper and lower sacks were empty. To the left of the bed was a desk; to the right was a clothes rack. There was a window at the head of the bunk with tightly drawn curtains. The stove was in the middle of the room. Quinlan walked over and threw his coat on the top bunk. "The 'blood' bed," came from Onley. Quinlan turned. "I should've have warned you not to take that bunk," continued Onley. "The last three guys who slept in that bunk had some bad luck. They're all dead. Flak got them. Say, what's your job?" "Navigator," Quinlan was thinking about the jinx. "One of them was a navigator. The other two were bombardiers. I'm glad we don't have to sit up in that unprotected nose. Clyde and I are pilots," he explained. Quinlan was not superstitious, but he wished he could change bunks. He noticed that the closer he got to combat, the more apt he was not to take chances with superstitions; but he couldn't change bunks now. He started to undress. "New boy," it was Clyde addressing him "Can you draw?" Quinlan laughed at his new name. "Yeah. I do quite a lot of it," answered Quinlan. "Why?" "Howard and I want to start a wall just for flak pictures. Maybe you can help us. Come on over. I'll show you what I mean." Quinlan wanted to sleep. He had decided not to wash or unpack but to get into bed as soon as possible. He reluctantly walked over to Clyde's bed. Onley, too, was coming over. Clyde handed four sheets of paper upon which were some rather skillful pencil renderings. Clyde and Onley looked over his shoulder. "You probably won't appreciate these until you get into combat new boy" Onley put in, but that will come soon enough." The first picture was of a helmet, a flak helmet, from the bottom of which a pair of shoes was protruding. "That's probably what you'll try to do when that flak starts bursting around you," explained Clyde. "I think my last navigator got his helmet down over his shoulders. He was plenty scared. If he would have lasted, I think he finally would have pulled it



down to his ankles. Hi's the guy we were talking about a little while ago. He slept in you bed." Quinlan flipped through the pictures. The last three drawings were of the heads of various fliers who apparently had been hit by flak. The pictures were covered with gore, brains, loose eyeballs, and shrapnel. At the bottom of each drawing was the work "flak-happy." "When you're flak-happy you either look like one of these pictures, or you just have a bad case of the heeby-jeebies," Clyde answered to Quinlan's questioning glance. "Sometimes if you've got the heeby-jeebies bad enough they send you to a flak home where everything is just relaxation, women, and whiskey." Quinlan nodded. He promised Asip and Onley that he would help them in their little drawings project if he could. Quinlan had been in bed for quite some time but he couldn't fall asleep. He couldn't help thinking about the three who had slept there before him. Why did they have to tell him about this bed—this "blood bed," and show him those pictures? Ugh! He turned to look at his roommates. Clyde was still reading a book; Onley was writing a letter. Suddenly, Onley dropped his pen and gave a cry of pain. Quinlan and Clyde both looked at Onley. "That leg bothering you, Howard?" asked Clyde. "Yeah." "Don't worry, new boy."

Clyde consoled Quinlan. Quinlan had sat up in his bed at the cry of pain. "It's an old flak wound. I guess he still must have a piece of shrapnel in his leg." Onley seemed all right now. Quinlan sank down into his bed. "This flak must be pretty bad," he thought. He seemed more tense than ever. There was a knock at the door. No one answered. Quinlan looked at Onley and Clyde. Both had their fingers to their mouths and were shaking their heads negatively. Another knock! Quinlan looked quizzically at the two. Onley lifted up his pant leg to reveal not a flak scarred leg, but one that was healthy and smooth. "Why you-," began Quinlan, then smiled and relaxed into his bed. The door opened, and a lieutenant walked in carrying a bag. "Hello. I did knock. I guess you didn't hear." "Come on in an close that door. We don't get much coke around here. Too bad you didn't get here earlier. That other guy beat you to a good bed. I guess you get the "blood bed'." Quinlan didn't hear, he was fast asleep.

Lieutenant Edward T. Quinlan was killed on his first mission, a bombing run over Munich, on February 7, 1945.

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 Leibensperger, William P., Sodona, AZ
 Little, A. Patterson III, Savannah, GA Associate member, 82nd
 Airborne; SAMS; HM - Friend of the Mighty Eighth
 Maresh, Lewis A., Cleveland, TX
 Manos, M.(Menelaus) John, Erie PA, Architect in Chicago, 398th BG
 Nuthampstead
 McMillen, Richard H., Mansfield, OH
 McNicholas, Martin J., Somerdale, NJ 446th BG
 Martin, Somerdale NJ 446th BG
 Miller, James Lloyd, Missouri 356th Fighter Group
 McLaughlin, Alfred R.
 Mulhollem, Paul B., Anderson, IN
 Muller, Leslie A., Greenville TX Texas Chapter
 Marshall, Willis "Will" Wood, Spring Lake NC Flight Engineer
 389th BG
 O'Hara, William J. Vestal NY New York Chapter
 Parker, Edward B., Indian Lake/Lehigh Acres FL, Flight Engineer
 446th BG
 Powers, Cyril J., Waterloo, Iowa 91st BG 401st Bomb Sqd
 Stitz, Thomas J., Phoenix AZ Past-President Arizona Chapter 398th BG
 Sharon, Robert, Irvington NJ
 Airborne; SAMS; HM - Friend of the Mighty Eighth
 Schoennagel, Ernest W. Phoenix AZ, 086T
 Spaw, Elmer S., Cottonwood AZ, 398th BG
 Stimmel, Ralph L., Virginia Chapter 445th BG
 Shanley, Ty 44th BG
 Snyder, Eugene P.
 Smith, Lloyd C., Oakland, MS 379th BG
 Schumacher, Milford, Mesa, AZ
 Swensen, Raymond W., Albuquerque, NM 467th BG
 Scorey, George, Fairfield AL 93rd BG Alabama Chapter
 Stasny, Peter J, Ozark AL 482nd Service Alabama Chapter
 Unger, Harlan R., Greenfield WI Pilot B-17
 Wade, Bennie, Mobile, AL
 Winslow, Kenelm C., El Prado, NM
 Weston, Thomas F., Oberlin, OH 384th BG

PEACOCK

Lawrence A. Peacock was a spell-binding raconteur who knew all of the characters who colored an early Miami. He was the grandson of "Jolly Jack" Peacock who arrived from England in 1943. After the war he settled near his brother Charles' Peacock Inn on the bay in Coconut Grove. His Peacock Lumber Co. supplied much of the materials for notable early Miami structures, including the elegant Biltmore Hotel. Larry was a navigator with the 303rd BG and a life member of the 303rd BGA "Hell's Angels".

ROBERT S. JOHNSON



A distinguished member of the 61st Fighter Squadron, 56th Fighter Group at Boxted, Robert Johnson died at age 78 in Tulsa, Oklahoma. He was the second highest-scoring fighter ace of the 8th Air Force having scored 28 victories and was the fourth leading ace in all United States services. Arriving in England in January, 1943, most of his victories came while flying his P-47 "Lucky". His flying experiences are recorded in his autobiography "Thunderbolt".

He was remembered at his funeral in Lake Wylie, S.C. as a patriot and lover of freedom and a leader of men. He was a loving husband to his wife, Barbara, who had passed away three years previously. A leader in his church activities and a loyal friend to many, Robert Johnson enjoyed spending time teaching students of all generations about the values of freedom and the exploits of war. On a bitterly cold rainy day this past December, he was buried in his River Hills Community Church cemetery with a 21-gun salute by the Honor Guard from Shaw Air Force Base. A missing man formation of F-16 fighter planes flew over in tribute to an Eighth Air Force legend and loyal American.

from information submitted by Tom Thomas, 96th BG



Members of the 466th Bomb Group and locals enjoying Thanksgiving Day 1944 at the Shamrock Tavern in Attlebridge, England. Note blackout curtain and warm pints. photo by T/Sgt Thomas S. Morin, R/O 466th BG



Foam extinguishers are used to cope with fuel fires in one of the engines after "Hey Mabel" belly-landed following a Berlin raid. 9 March 1944. photos submitted by Leonard Alston, London

The Second Eagle Squadron consisted of Americans early in the war, who flew under British squadron leader R.D.R. Powell D.F.C. Shown are Intelligence Officer Sir Michael Duff-Assinoton-Smith with pilots Sq. Leader R. Powell, P/o William James Daley of Amarillo TX, P/o Kennard, P/o Le Roy Arnold Skinner of Webb City MO, and P/o Clarence Martin of Lititz PA. P/o R.F. Patterson is in the cockpit.



Two beautiful fighters on display at the Pima Air Museum in Tucson, near the 390th BG museum, the 446th Bungay Buckaroos B-24, and the 95th Bomb Group memorial exhibit. At the top is a Republic F-84 C Thunderjet, successor to the F-80 Shooting Star, circa 1948. At right is a North American F-86 H Sabrejet, 1951 - 1968. Both models were flown in combat in Korea by a number of original 8th AF fighter pilots, as well as other members of the 27th Fighter Escort Wing.

March 1999 (99-1)

TRAGIC DEATH of Eighth AF Commander ASA DUNCAN



Lt. Ed Weathers, 97th Bomb Group, carries the then top-secret Norden bomb sight, under armed guard, to The Berlin Sleeper prior to a mission in 1944

Dear Editor,
Enclosed is a detailed account of the tragic death of General Duncan and ten crew members. An excerpt from the 97th Bomb Group history book and a letter from an eye witness, Lt. Neff, is included.
Sincerely Yours,
Tom Gulley

SOMEWHERE IN ENGLAND 1944

Dear Mrs. Knox,

I was on the flight to Gibraltar when Major Knox went down. I was trailing him, slightly to the right. He had some General also on board, I'm not sure of his name, and we were flying at a couple hundred feet to avoid enemy detection. It started first by puffs of smoke, black as I remember it, from his right hand inboard engine. Soon there was a steady smoke and the engine was "feathered." Interest was keen, but with no alarm. Then, almost immediately, the propeller came unfeathered - oh, I didn't mention that the smoke stopped when the prop was feathered - soon after it started wind-milling again, it began to burn furiously. We had to pull up to avoid pieces of some sort falling off. The fire never seemed to spread at all to me - always #3 engine. Very soon then the whole engine, nacelle and all fell off in a huge chunk into the water in a big splash. The ship had then began to turn slowly to the right and climbing very slightly. (Turning into a dead engine is bad policy, generally, but no trouble at all seemed to come of that). By this time I was excited and sobered no end - quite a bit worried. Then my fear passed - all the flame and smoke was gone and I figured he'd turn and go back to England. But, shortly he assumed a glide as if he was going to be forced to ditch. I couldn't rightly figure that as the fire appeared to be out, but I still didn't have too much fear for that.

All of this in spite of very numerous tragic scenes I've witnessed, both in the army and out, was to me the most horrifying thing I have ever watched - mainly since I knew them all so well, they were so very close to us - we could watch it all, but were completely unable to help in the slightest. Also we were all in for the same thing together - "same boat" feeling. You seem so insistant on knowing all the details - I'll tell all of them I know.

He seemed to be making a nice approach when all of a sudden he entered an abrupt dive into the water - from about a hundred feet, or less. Immediately on striking it burst into a huge fire and sank quickly - leaving burning oil in large patches. The whole flight circled quite awhile dropping all we could over the spot - rafts, rations, etc. One ship got its raft hung on the stablizer and almost went down itself, but it made it back to England.

There was only one survivor of the crash - a man everyone seemed to think was the General, but for no good reason as he couldn't be recognized in flying clothes in a one man raft, at that speed.

There they learned that the ships had already lost the raft - it was dark by then and you must make a wide circle to stay near a spot in a fast plane, especially at night.

I'm quite sure no one got out of it alive although I don't know details about what happened after that night. Much more detail than this I'm rather hazy remembering, but if there are any questions you might yet have please let me know and I'll be glad to try to answer them.

I wish that there was some way that I could assure you that all of us flyers wish it that our wives could soon forget about us and start anew when anything happens to us - we all fear the effects of our leaving ones close to us far more than our fear of the enemy, or the odds of flying.

Most Sincerely,

Lt. Ed Neff, Jr

LT TAYLOR

Disaster comes in many forms and oftentimes remains a mystery to those who witness both its beginning and its endings. The morning of 17 November, eight Fords of the 341st Squadron, each carried a high ranking officer, including Gen. Spaatz, commanding the American Air Force in Europe, and Brig. Gen. Asa N. Duncan, chief of staff for the 8th Air Force. Leading the flight was Major J. M. Knox, the squadron commander.

"We were approximately 90 miles west of Brest, flying at 400 feet in loose formation when I saw fire coming from one of the right wing engines of Maj. Knox's aircraft. It was difficult to determine if it was the inboard or outboard engine. Something which I think might have been a wing tank dropped away from the aircraft, blazing fiercely. The entire right wing was in flames and one of the propellers was feathered as Maj. Knox lost altitude. We saw the fire extinguisher on one of the right engines in operation. He struck the sea about two miles from where we saw the plane catch fire. When it struck the water a sheet of flames enveloped it and it sank immediately, leaving an oil and gasoline slick which burned for about an hour and a half afterwards. I saw one person in an individual life raft and five or six others in the water wearing Mae Wests. We threw out to them nine individual dinghies, one emergency radio, six cans of rations and six cans of water, one we saw picked up by the man in the dinghy.

We circled for six and one-quarter hours, keeping above the oil slick. The persons in the Mae Wests were drifting apart and when we left we could count only one in addition to the person on the raft. Two Lockheed Hudsons appeared on the raft. Two Lockheed Hudsons appeared we started back to Predannack after getting a recognition flare from them.

Lost that afternoon were Maj. J.M. Knox; Lt. C.M. Garber Jr.; Lt. J. Kaplan; Lt. J.A. Roysden; Lt. L.S. Birelson; Sgt. A.B. Spell; Sgt. L.L. Haddox; Sgt. R.J. Arendt; Sgt. W.L. Talbot; Sgt. P.W. Padgett and Brig. Gen. Asa N. Duncan.

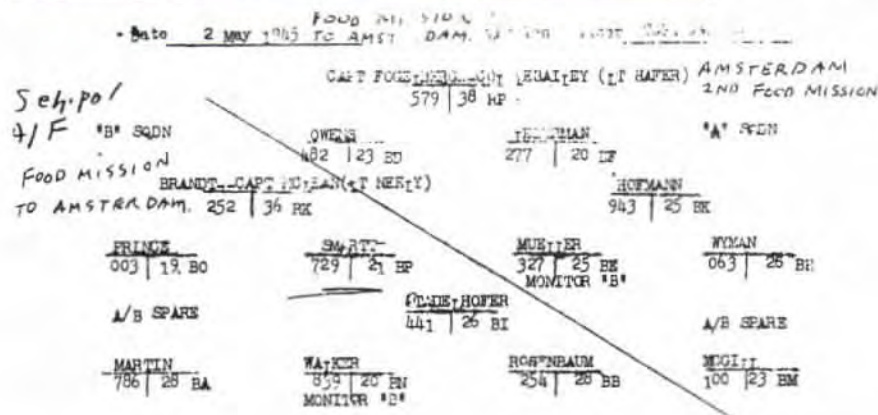
by **Lt. T.K. Taylor**
97th BG History

March 1999 (99-1)

THE CHOWHOUND



Dear Walter,
I received my latest 8th AF News (Dec. 98) and read the article on the "Chowhound" missions.



Enclosed are a couple of things you may find of interest and relate to that story. First is a picture of the "Thank You Boys" cut into the field taken from a 490th BG plane plus a formation chart for one of the food drops by the 490th at the end of the war. There is a letter sent to a member of the group from a person who has since moved to the States on what it was like in those days.

I am a historian of the 490th BG, hence the 490th BG items.
Yours faithfully, Eric Swain Upper Norwood England

My name is Alida Vander Meer. I want to give a short account of what I remember about the food drops by the Eighth Air Force in the Netherlands, and the events that happened before. The Germans invaded The Netherlands on May 9, 1940. They wanted access to the North Sea in order to invade England. Germany was rationing their food supply since 1938 - this in order to fight a war.

When the Germans invaded The Netherlands they found an abundance of food and other goods. Of course, they fed their armies and were sending food back to Germany.

The Netherlands were depending on imports of grains, meat and other products from overseas. These imports stopped. The Germans also inundated valuable farm land. They managed to deplete the country in no time flat. The worst off were people in the big cities such as Rotterdam and Amsterdam. People could not obtain food. The rations the Germans imposed were too small and not nutritional. They ate boiled tulip bulbs and other things. Protein in meat, beans and other sources were not provided. Families would trade clothes, toys or jewelry for food. Some walked ten or more miles and stayed in barns overnight to try to get food.

The worst time for The Netherlands was the winter of 1944-45. Thousands of people died from malnutrition. In May of 1945, the Swedish Red Cross started to drop white casino bread and tea from their planes. Liberation was not far away! The Germans capitulated on the eve of May 5th, 1945. The Allied troops came in to liberate the people. The Dutch population was so thankful! The food drops by the Eighth Air Force were like a gift from Heaven!!

I remember a German soldier who tried to shoot at the low flying planes. People overpowered him. I was too young to remember what was exactly in the 10-1 rations, but what was really good was the chocolate, the crackers, and the Spam.

The food came in big tins. The contents were distributed by the grocery store. This was the only merchandise that was on the shelves! We celebrated our freedom by dancing in the streets and having big parades.

Further help was provided by the Marshall Plan. The people of The Netherlands will always appreciate the American soldiers who fought for their freedom and gave their lives so others could live in peace.

Thank you on behalf of all the Dutch people.

Mrs. Alida Vander Meer
Aurora, Missouri 65605
(A Native of the Netherlands)

Editors Note: Mr. and Mrs. Vander Meer immigrated to The United States in 1956 under the Refugee Relief Act enacted by President Dwight Eisenhower. Mr. Vander Meer was a District Conservationist. Alida taught school for 27 years.

VETERANS DAY CEREMONIES AT CAMBRIDGE



At 11:00 hours on November, 1998 a special ceremony was held at the American Cemetery at Cambridge in memory of those American servicemen who gave their lives for freedom. After the posting of colors by a multi-service color guard, an invocation was given by Chaplain Major

Decorations ceremonies, laying the Historical Society's wreath at the monument. The memorial tribute closed with a VFW prayer by Mr. Dick Good and a benediction by Chaplain Captain Glover.

Richard Dunn of the 423rd Air Base Squadron, RAF Molesworth. Col. Frances M. Early, Commander of the Joint Analysis Center RAF Molesworth presented the President's Proclamation. Gordon and Connie Richards, UK contacts and UK Membership Managers for the 8th AF Historical Society, represented the Society and took part in the

Presentation of Floral



Tom Mullin, 34 BG, with Madison, AL Mayor Chuck Yancura signing the Proclamation designating 8th AF Week

8th AFHS Website: <http://members.the.globe.com/>

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED! HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHAPEL FUND DRIVE MEETS ITS GOAL

Add one more mission credit to all of the members of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society. The Mighty Eighth has yet to be turned back! Through the individual and group donations of the membership we have reached our goal of \$350,000 for the construction of the Memorial Chapel at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah. Congratulations on a superb effort to all who have taken part. The Board of Directors will have this successful project on their agenda at the Mid-term meeting of the Board in March and will approve initial plans for the edifice.

The chapel will stand as a permanent tribute to the Historical Society and as a proud memorial to all who served in the Eighth

Air Force. Plans are being made for a very special dedication ceremony as a part of our 25th Anniversary annual reunion in Savannah this October. A special book will be inscribed with the names of all donors to the Memorial Chapel and will be kept on permanent display at the Heritage Museum. Interior features of the chapel, stained glass windows, Chapel Garden features, and memorial plaques are planned and will be available to those who wish to place a memorial as a special tribute. Appreciation goes out to all who have donated, and for those who have not yet contributed and want to be a supporter of the Chapel building, it is not too late! Please send in the coupon below with your check.



AF HS MEMORIAL CHAPEL FUND DRIVE

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GROUP OR
UNIT _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please send this form & make check/money order payable to: 8AFHS Chapel Drive
Send your contribution to: Historical Society Fund Drive P.O. Box 1787 Savannah, GA 31402

ROBERT DOLE...

World War II is one of those rare events of history that look even larger from a distance. For those of us who served, we did not see the big picture; we saw the small struggles. We did not hear the call of history; we heard the voices of friends. Voices that still haunt and comfort the memory of the war's veterans. Those voices were confident and they were fearful and all too frequently they ended in a moment, in a place far from home. Like all veterans of that time I can hear these voices as if it were yesterday, frozen in time by the intensity of the experience we shared. But it was not yesterday; it was half a century ago. And in another 50 years, on another Veterans Day Anniversary, there will be no one left who heard those voices. It is important that we remember the voices and deeds of those young men and women who liberated whole continents from tyranny and who willingly died for a future they would never see.

submitted by **Senator Robert Dole, Russell, Kansas**

For I dipt into the future, far as human eye could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that
would be:

Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of
magic sails,

Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with
costly bales;

Heard the heaven fill with shouting, and there rained
a ghastly dew

From the nations airy navies grappling in the central
blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind
rushing warm,

With the standards of the peoples plunging through
the thunderstorm;

Till the war-drum throbbed no longer, and the battle-
flags were furled

In the parliament of man, the Federation of the
World.

from "Locksley Hall" by Lord Alfred Tennyson
-published 1842, 100 years before World War II

submitted by **John K. Breast**

"Those who receive the mantle of a rich and noble heritage
are expected to perpetuate it.

"For those who wear such a mantle and give it no sustenance
it becomes but an empty echo out of the past."

Walter L. Shepard

- submitted by **A. Bleakley Chandler, M.D.**

HOW ABOUT IT?

Curled and wadded up in their turrets or standing at the waist window for hours with an arctic wind blasting away at them, gunners on a heavy bomber were indispensable. Without caution, frost bite was almost certain. As their aircraft jostled for position in the formation, as the drone of the engines changed, as violent maneuvers occurred unexpectedly, the constant swaying of the aircraft always left them wondering what was going on up front. Were these sudden changes normal or was disaster just waiting to happen? They were always alert, watching the engines for tell-tale signs of smoke or fire, oil and fuel leaks, or damage to the aircraft. They watched out for each other's safety. Their eyes scanned blinding white skies for enemy aircraft and when an attack was certain, only then did they break intercom silence. They watched as black bursts of flak followed them along in the sky and flinched as the "crump, crump crump" of bursting shells and the odor of cordite filled their compartments. They watched as holes appeared in the aircraft and when a buddy was wounded, they became Florence Nightingales, nurses of the air. Their assignment was demanding and very lonely. How did they stand up to the pressure? Somewhere in their up-bringing, these airmen learned courage and obedience. Their early military discipline of mastering without question three basic statements, ie. "Yes sir, No sir, and No excuse sir" were tools which strengthened their determination to survive. A war-time commander summed it up best in five words, "training and discipline pays off." The wonderful thing about gunners is that they were human. They lost their tempers and became angry, they got cold and hungry, scolded God, were egotistical or testy, impatient, made mistakes and regretted them, admitted their fear and didn't try to hide it. Still they went on, doggedly blundering toward heaven.

By **Earl Wassom**
Chaplain, Tennessee
Chapter
466th Bomb Group



"Cheers 8th AFHS
on your 25th Anniversary!"



8th AF News

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

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