



# *th* AF NEWS

VOLUME 00 NUMBER 1 Voice of "THE MIGHTY EIGHTH" MARCH 2000

## CHAPEL OF THE FALLEN EAGLES



8th Air Force Heritage Museum



# 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.

**Matters concerning membership, address changes, and copy distribution should be sent to the Membership Records office.**

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## Mission Briefing

The Mid-term meeting of the 8th AF Historical Society Board of Directors was most productive and we decided to delay publication of the March issue of the 8th AF NEWS for a few days in order to include the Board actions and report. There are a lot of activities underway and it is to be noted that Society programs and interactions are on an upswing.



Of particular note is the greatly increased number of inquiries for new Historical Society membership applications from all fronts - from Units, Chapters, and from the younger generation. We are sending out spare news-magazine issues to likely sources of interest. A couple of weeks ago our office received seventy-five new member applications to process, and the office staff was preparing to send out the second mailing for re-up by previous members. As Yogi Berra once said, "There is a lot of stuff going on out there."

The December 99 issue of the NEWS was mailed out the first week of December. There have been reports of it not arriving to some homes until mid-January. We have tracked every aspect of the mailing process and it appears that the late delivery problem seems to lie at the other end of the chain. Some local post offices just tend to hold bulk mail longer than others. Ninety-five percent of the time the newsmagazine delivery is timely, but we are still working the problem from this end.

I get a few letters after each issue mails out concerning newsmagazine coverage or lack of coverage of one type of airplane or another. Please be assured that as the quarterly issues go by - they are published each March, June, September and December - all of the Mighty Eighth fighters and bombers will average out into equal coverage. There will even be future articles on non-combat aircraft such as C-47s, trainers, and the like. Check out the *Horizon* material submitted by Fred Gray in this issue. My personal feeling is that the magazine should focus on the troops and their experiences, the veterans of the Mighty Eighth who maintained and flew the armada of aircraft instead of on the airplane itself. This course seems to be justified based on the wealth of personal stories and articles which you regularly submit for each issue.

This March 00 issue includes our first Editorial in two years. Just a good time to cover some items of mutual interest. Watch for the official registration plans for our October 17, 2000 Annual Reunion in Salt Lake City in the next issue, June 2000.

Walter Brown, Editor  
Ewell Farm  
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### The Eighth Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation 2000 Board Officers

**Chairman** - John E. Greenwood, 607 State Street, Alton, IL 62002 (H-618-462-6222) (O-618-462-7869) **President** - Thomas L. Thomas, 1607 E. Willow Ave., Wheaton, IL 60187 (630-668-0215) **VP/Administration** - Richard M. Scott, 144 N. Mulberry Street, Lancaster, PA 17603 (717-299-2484) **VP/Public Relations/Special Projects** - Robert E. Vickers, 10552 Montgomery, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109-2583 (505-299-3233) **Treasurer** - Arthur E. Swanson, 505 Honeysuckle Ct., Pine Grove, PA 17963 (717-345-4521) **Secretary** - Charles E. Dye, 4949 San Pedro NE #87, Albuquerque, NM 87109-2583 (505-883-3107)

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I am returning from Salt Lake City where your Board of Directors met to plan Reunion 2000, and to conduct the business of Society. Mark your calendars right now for October 18-22, 2000 to attend our reunion in beautiful Utah. We promise to have an interesting program, and there is much to see and do in the Salt Lake City area.

As for other areas of concern, there were many upbeat reports, including an upsurge in new members. Keep up the good work by sponsoring memberships for your children, grandchildren, community leaders, schools, libraries, and others. We did pore over expense figures and despite scaling back some cost items, we will certainly be asking for the ratification

of a dues increase from the membership in October. It is amazing that we have maintained a \$10.00 per year membership fee since our founding in 1975. Inflation alone would have increased that figure to over \$30.00 per year. The proposed increase will be a compromise of these two figures.

It is a hard job to cut back on expenses, but we have combined the Information Office with our Membership Office and you will find a new 800 number for the Information Office elsewhere in this issue. Board members have agreed a cut-back on meeting expenses, and we expect the transfer of our Finance Manager's function will reduce costs.

Congratulations to some of the Chapters

that have taken on some outstanding projects to perpetuate the memory of the Eighth Air Force. Here are some that have come to my attention: The Utah Chapter, the New York Chapter, the Iowa Chapter, the Mississippi Chapter, and the Capitol District Chapter. Keep up the good work!



Dick Baynes  
President

*Dick Baynes*

## COVER STORY

### THE YEAR OF THE MEMORIAL CHAPEL

#### The Chapel of the Fallen Eagles

After a successful two-year fund drive and eighteen months of planning, the Chapel of the Fallen Eagles will be built at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah. The members of the 8th Air Force Historical Society accomplished their mission and far exceeded their initial goal - approximately \$500,000 is available from all donors for construction purposes. The final chapel design was chosen from a dozen submissions following a six-month design class project from the Savannah College of Art and Design. The proposal submitted by Jon Lucas of Savannah was selected by the Heritage Museum Executive Committee as the most representative to fulfill the usage and aesthetic purposes of the Chapel project.

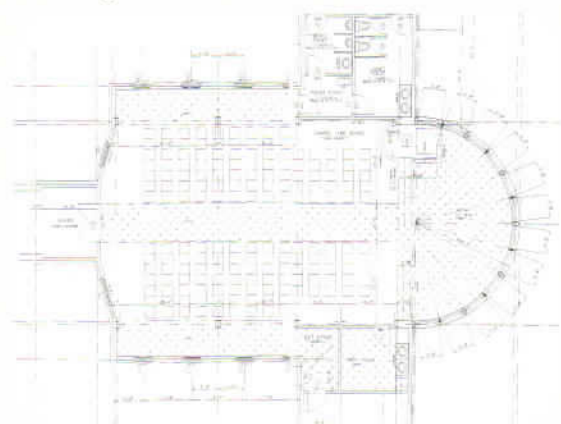
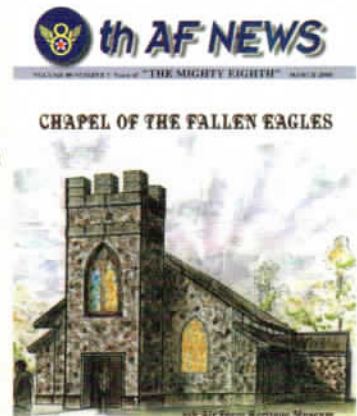
The Chapel, measuring 73 feet by 80 feet, will feature a nave with altar, twenty-four pews, an entrance hall, separate lavatories, year-round climate control, and a special room for use by participants in weddings, memorial services, and other events taking place at the facility. Construction will be of natural stone externally and stained-glass windows of honor and commemoration will be featured in front and along both sides of the building.

The Heritage Museum sponsorship program for chapel features has been very successful to date. Interest has been high and over \$220,000 has been received from individual and group sponsorships of stained-glass windows, pews, pergolas, benches and various other features of the special surrounding Chapel Gardens. This program is ongoing and information concerning it can be obtained from Judy Walker, Director of Development at the Museum. Plans are also underway for a designated burial repository site near the Memorial Chapel for cremation remains

of 8th Air Force veterans who may be interested.

At the present time construction bids are being studied and considered by the Museum staff and EXCOM. Chapel construction will begin this Spring. The construction timeline plans to have the Memorial Chapel and ready for use by December 2000, with a special memorial opening service being held at that time. A time capsule will be laid and the memorial Donor Book dedicated.

The Chapel of the Fallen Eagles will be a lasting facility to honor those who served in the Eighth Air Force. The words on its cornerstone stand as a tribute for all to see and to remember. The beautiful building will be a highlight for all who visit the Heritage Museum to learn the story of the Mighty Eighth. It is a lasting source of pride for the members of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society.



## VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Norman C. Grant Sr. Vice President

A simple "thank you" seems hardly enough recognition for the outstanding effort put forth by so many of you to establish and secure the dates of October 8th to 14th as the "Mighty Eighth Air Force Week". It is now firmly and permanently set as a week of thanks and remembrance for all who displayed Love of Country, Dedication to Duty, and Sacrifice - for many the Supreme Sacrifice - for preservation of all the things that we as Americans hold so dear.

I had hoped to give you an accurate listing of all the Governors that have joined with us and made the Proclamation for their State, but when we went to the display table to gather the proclamations, many had been taken by the members. I presume that some thought they were placed there for any one to take if they so desired, so if you did take one please if you like, make a copy and sent the original back to

our Savannah office. Our intent is to put them all on display. Then next year, when you make the request of the Governors who haven't joined us to date, you can tell them how badly you feel because your State is not represented.

When this idea was first presented to the Board of Directors there was some question whether our members would adopt the idea and participate. Well, the first year was a great surprise because of the enthusiasm and effort generated by so many, but even a greater gratification was the success in our second year. Governors, Congressmen, Mayors, and State and Country Officials, all wanted to be part of our great effort. In this area I have to give special recognition to two States in particular, New York and Pennsylvania. Each secured more than 20 proclamations from the Governors and leaders of many communities, large and small. With this effort

and the effort of all of you, do you think some day we may have a Presidential Proclamation for a National "Mighty Eighth Air Force Week"?

As I said, "Thanks are not enough", but your reward is knowing you have put forth the time and effort to bring recognition to our deceased members, to our "Mighty Eighth" and the truth of history to those who never knew or were never fully informed. Let's carry the message to America every day of our lives.



Norman C. Grant Sr

### 2000 ANNUAL REUNION 8th AFHS

It's SALT LAKE CITY! for the annual reunion of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. City of the Winter Olympics in 2002! Reunion details and registration forms will be in the next issue, June 00, of the 8th AF NEWS. The Utah Chapter is already hard at working making plans with special events for our arrival October 17 -22, 2000. The Mighty 8th Theater is back and daily Hanger Flying sessions are back! HQ hotel will be the downtown Hilton right in the midst of all activities. Mark your calendars; make your plans to attend.

### Special Events Coming Up at the Heritage Museum

**April 1st, 2000 10:00 AM** — F4 Phantom Jet Handover Ceremony

The fully restored F4 Phantom will be turned over for permanent placement in the Heritage Museum Viet Nam era exhibit by the 165th Airlift Wing of the National Guard and Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation, who have worked hard preparing the jet fighter for display. Everyone is invited!

**April 28 - 30, 2000** — FOURTH ANNIVERSARY GALA WEEK-END for the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum. Seminars, banquets, memorial ceremonies, dignitaries, 8th AFHS attendees and Military Appreciation Day, are all part of the festivities.

## FROM THE UNIT AND CHAPTER ADVISORY AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Rebate checks totaling \$1765.00 have gone out to 11 Unit Associations and rebate checks totaling \$12,564.00 have gone out to 40 Chapters.

The Unit checks of \$5.00 per attendee are for those Units that had 10 or more members in attendance at the Historical Society reunion in Savannah in 1999. These members also registered before the 30-day cut-off date. Also, there are Unit Associations that have not sent the information concerning their Unit Contact and we have no way of passing on information to interested inquirers. If you have not received a letter from this Committee in the last 6 weeks, we do not know who you are, so please send us the information. If you are not sure if we have that information, please send it to this committee.

The Chapter checks are \$1.00 for each Chapter member who paid their Historical Society dues before Dec. 31, 1999 for the year 2000 or are Life Members. There is no rebate for those who paid their dues after Dec. 31. I would like to impress on each member who pays their dues annually to do so when they receive the first dues notice. If you put it off there is a good chance that it will be forgotten and your Chapter will miss out on your rebate.

The Committee would like to welcome two new Chapters. The Michigan Chapter held its organizational meeting Nov. 11, 1999 and the Louisiana Chapter held its organizational meeting Jan. 8, 2000. There is more about these Chapters else where in this issue. You did not have to be in the Mighty Eighth to organize a new

Chapter; just be member of the Historical Society and wish to help the Society expand. You can request information and assistance from this Committee and the Historical Society will give you seed money after you are started.

**Jim Erskine,  
Chairman  
Tel.  
(419)382-8595  
Fax  
(419)382-4242**



Jim Erskine

MARCH 2000 (00-1)

## THE INTERCOM

### The Question: What one tip would you give to men going overseas?

#### Staff Sgt. Peter Van Slyck, armorer, England:

"Don't pay attention to rumors. You'll get rumors that your missions will be changed, that your bombers will do unlimited missions, that you're going on base defense until the war's over. Our supply officer got some sun tan uniforms and the rumor arose that we were going to China. Those rumors shake your morale. You don't know what to believe and what not to believe. Rumors are as bad as careless talk. Don't believe any of them and don't be a rumor monger. Just do your job and forget them. Don't believe anything until you see it - and then it ought to be countersigned by an authority."

#### Staff Sgt. Ernest Carson, crew chief:

"Hang on to your tools. When you're in a combat theatre, you can't duplicate every missing tool. If necessary, sleep with them. When I went to chow, I used to carry a two-foot screw driver in my pocket because it was the only one I had and I couldn't afford to lose it. Put a guard on your tool kits and post somebody to watch the guard. Too many planes have been grounded because the right tools weren't around to fix them. We wasted a lot of time making tools when we could have been fixing planes."

#### Capt. James Starnas, bombardier:

"Read the intelligence reports. That's the most important thing in combat. We spent two hours a day reading reports of previous raids. They tell you everything about your theatre. That goes for every crew member. You'll find information about targets and if you hit an area once you are going to hit it again. The reports

give you dope on interception. AA disposition, terrain, and topography. If you're shot down, you'll know what to expect. Escape routes taken by other men are there. The success or failure of your missions depends on reading the intelligence reports. That's how to learn to score."

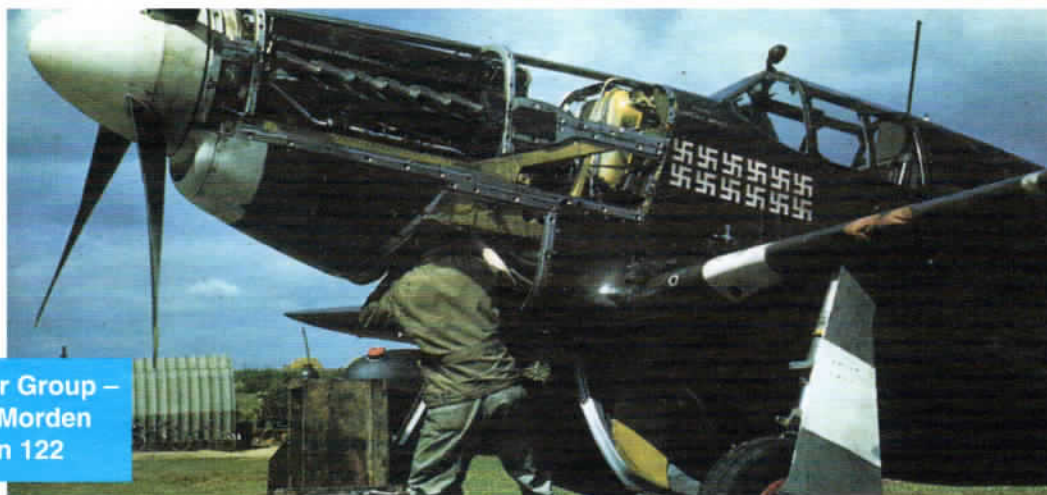
#### Capt. Robert Brown, bomber pilot, England:

"Learn to fly all the formation you can and make the co-pilot fly as well as you. Learn to fly formation for long hours because you will have to in combat. Learn to save gas. If you have 45 inches one minute and 15 inches the next, that's bad. One pilot will fly a seven-hour mission and burn 200 gallons more than another pilot flying the same mission. It is your responsibility to see that your co-pilot knows formation flying. A fair pilot and a fair co-pilot are much better than a good pilot and a poor co-pilot."

#### Lieut. Gordon Burlingame, fighter pilot, England:

"Know instrument flying. You have to know how to handle your ship smoothly on instruments. On an escort mission to Frankfurt we went into an overcast at 11,000 feet and we were still in it at 25,000. If you don't know instruments in a case like that, you're finished. Don't rely on any one instrument - it may be shot out. Use every available means and keep checking one instrument against the other. You can't horse around. I've seen men spin out of overcast and crash because they didn't know the full panel instrument system. Those instruments are on your panel for a damn good reason. Learn to use them."

-from AIR FORCE September 1944



355 Fighter Group –  
Steeple Morden  
Station 122

### 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 May 15, 2000. 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 May 15, 2000, or any nominations without complete information will not be considered.

Send all nominations to: **Craig Harris, Secretary 2910 Welcome Drive Durham, NC 27705**

## Eighth Air Force Changes Command

by Master Sgt. Rick DelaHaya 8th Air Force Public Affairs

BARKSDALE AIR-FORCE BASE, LA Leadership of the "Mighty Eighth" and the ultimate responsibilities of America's bomber force changed hands January 13 during a formal ceremony held here in Hoban Hall. Gen. Ed Eberhart, Commander of Air Combat Command, presided over the ceremony in which Lt. Gen. Thomas Keck, former Vice commander, Air Combat Command, accepted the reins from Lt. Gen. Ron Marcotte, who now moves to Air Mobility Command to assume duties as Vice commander. Prior to officially handing over the command to Keck, Marcotte reflected on his past 17 months with the "Mighty Eighth." "I came to the Eighth Air Force with knowledge of its great heritage and proud exploits," Marcotte told the hundreds of Barksdale airmen, base supporters and visiting military and civilian dignitaries attending the change of command ceremony. "The people of this command, from the headquarters to the smallest detachment, are what make it the 'Mighty Eighth.' I am proud to have been a member of your team. Ruth and I will always regard this as the highlight of our career."

Keck succeeds Marcotte as the 43rd Commander of the Eighth Air Force, and vowed to work hard to meet the challenges facing him as the new commander. His new responsibilities include the readiness of the Air Force's entire B-52 and B-2 fleets, as well as many of the B-1s and many F-15, F-16 and A-10 fighter aircraft, which are assigned to the Air National Guard and Reserve units within the Eighth Air Force. As Task Force 204 commander, he will also be responsible to U.S. Strategic Command for the day-to-day readiness of the nuclear-capable bomber fleet.

During his change-of-command address, Keck lauded the accomplishments of Marcotte and Eighth Air Force over the last 17 months. "You've had an extremely busy tenure here in the last year and a half," he said. "From



"Sir, I assume command."

Lt. Gen. Thomas J. Keck, (center) 8th Air Force Commander, assumes command of the "Mighty Eighth" from Gen. Ralph E. Eberhart (L), Commander, Air Combat Command, as outgoing Commander, Lt. Gen. Ron Marcotte (r), looks on. Keck took over command of the Numbered Air Force during a change of command ceremony held Jan 13 at Barksdale Air Force Base, La. Also pictured is outgoing 8th Air Force Command Chief Master Sergeant Elvin Pearson.



Lt. Gen. Thomas J. Keck (center), 8th Air Force Commander, receives his first salute from members of the "Mighty Eighth." Keck assumed command of the numbered Air Force during a change of command ceremony held Jan. 13 at Barksdale Air Force Base, La. Also pictured is Gen. Ralph E. Eberhart, Commander, Air Combat Command (L) and outgoing commander, Lt. Gen. Ron Marcotte.

Desert Fox to Allied Force, you have shown the world why this command is indeed called the 'Mighty Eighth.' Anyone would be both privileged and honored to head up and be a part of this team. This expanded team includes active and Guard and Reserve forces, officer, enlisted and civilian...as well as our base communities and retired population."

Keck was also impressed with the diversity and commitment to excellence of the command, supporting worldwide missions, bringing life to new concepts, and leading the way into the new century. "You can all be justifiably proud of the Eighth's accomplishments," he said.

### LIEUTENANT GENERAL THOMAS J. KECK

Lieutenant General Thomas J. Keck is Commander of the 8th Air Force, Barksdale Air Force Base, La., and also serves as an Air Force Component Commander for the United States Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, Neb. His command of the central United States and Atlantic Ocean territory is comprised of seven wings and two groups. This includes nearly 500 aircraft and about 44,000 people, including 14 gained Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units. He oversees the warfighting capability of this numbered air force's B-1, B-2, B-52, F-15, F-16, A-10 and HH-60 aircraft.

A graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1969, the general is a command pilot with more than 4,400 flying hours, including 857 combat hours. He has flown operational tours in the A-10, B-1, B-52, RC-135, U-2 and SR-71. He has commanded the 9th Reconnaissance Wing, the 55th Wing and the 4404th Wing (Provisional) in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, supporting Operation Southern Watch. His staff tours include plans assignments in Strategic Air Command and Tactical Air Command, plus duty as deputy director of plans and programs at Air Combat

Command. He served in plans and operations at Headquarters U.S. Air Force, the Pentagon; as executive assistant to the first vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and as director of Strategy, Policy and Plans (J-5), U.S. Southern Command. The general has also served as Vice commander of 12th Air Force, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., and prior to his current assignment, was Vice commander, Air Combat Command, Langley AFB, Va.

Stating that a strong, well-equipped Air Force can play a dominant role in promoting peace, Keck was quick to describe his vision for the future of the command. "As we operationalize new concepts such as the Expeditionary Aerospace Force, our Eighth Air Force team must be prepared to adapt to change," he continued. According to the general, the command must embrace visionary new ways of doing business smarter, cheaper and better. "We will move forward to greater success...recognizing how good we are when we all pull together! The future of our Eighth Air Force is extremely bright!"



Lieutenant General Thomas J. Keck  
Commander 8th Air Force

## YEAR OF THE B-24 INTERNATIONAL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Participants enjoyed two full days of programs, displays, and special events to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the B-24's maiden flight here in San Diego, CA, home of the B-24 and its variants. Four two-hour seminars were presented on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 10 and 11, 1999. They covered the full spectrum of B-24 activity from the design, testing and building of the Liberator to its deployment in each of the theaters of operation, including a seminar on special missions. Seminar Moderators, Brig. General Robert Cardenas(44th), Historian Robert Johnson, Aviation writer Robert Dorr, and Carpetbagger William Ebner did a fully professional job of organizing their speakers and eliciting interesting and varied commentary. B-24 Historian Allan Blue was on hand to provide historical perspective.

Friday night included a tour of the outstanding San Diego Aerospace

Museum, including dinner at the Museum. Saturday noon was the scheduled flight of radio controlled B-24 model (11-foot wingspan) with fighter escort. Tragically, as the B-24 was turning to enter its bomb run, the right wing folded and the plane crashed. (Reminding some of the sights they had seen of real B-24's being hit and crashing).

There was a rich variety of B-24 related displays available throughout the entire celebration, including Mark Hoage's extensive collection, Fred Johnson's impressive full scale B-24 cockpit, Jim Kiernan's Wall of Valor, the Liberator Club's Gift Shop, various booksellers, and more.

The final evening was capped off with a fine banquet, led off by Dick Baynes' welcome and remarks from George Welsh of the Liberator Club. Instead of a speaker, Jean Jordon of Albuquerque, NM put on an entertaining presentation called,

"Here's Joline" - a story of WWII thru the eyes of a Rosie the Riveter, and the USO.

The committee was chaired by Dick Baynes(466th) and included Gene Hartley(389th), Jim Kiernan(489th) AM, Herb Leopold(466th), King Schultz(448th), Jack Stevens(467th & 98th), George Welsh(Liberator Club) and Chairman of the Year of the B-24 Committee - Bud Chamberlain(489th). Public Relations was handled by a group of volunteers from San Diego: Dick Meads, Roger Conlee, Dick Knoth, and Bob Myers.

All in all, it was a fun-filled and educational celebration of which B-24 lovers could be duly proud.

-from a report by C.N. "Bud" Chamberlain



# EDITORIAL

It has been over two years now since I had the privilege of becoming editor of the 8th AF NEWS. I have yet to exercise the right, or perhaps the obligation, to present an official Editorial in the news-magazine, and so before I get too long-in-the-tooth I would like to do so in this March 2000 issue. Address a few points that need addressing, clear away some of the undercast, and answer some of your concerns about trends I receive in the mail from the members of the Historical Society.

## **HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD**

I have been in close contact with the officers of the Society elected at our October reunion in Savannah. I am amazed at the amount of time they have individually put in and the extent of work they have done carrying out their responsibilities in their respective offices. As examples, President Dick Baynes contacts members daily across the country regarding problems they have in their Chapters and coordinating the ongoing complex affairs of the Society. No small task. Ken Nail bears the Treasurer's burden of working on budgets, monitoring expenses, covering bills, and in addition works each week with our Savannah office and with the CPA helping us there. Vice President Norm Grant has single-handedly undertaken the job of contacting all the Chapters in developing the annual National Eighth Air Force Week in October, a program he initiated and got off the ground several years ago. Secretary Craig Harris not only keeps our records, prepares meeting minutes and helps with Board and Annual reunion

affairs, he carries own a daily correspondence with members around the country. A computer whiz, Craig recently spent several days to be in Savannah to assist Kathy McCurry and Connie Metts in updating our office computer files and procedures alongside John Cashman, the Society's long-time records membership records accountant.

Other members of the Board are working in their positions as Committee Chairmen to accomplish their missions for the Society. Larry Goldstein, to give one example, recently represented the Historical Society at the dedication of the 8th Air Force Arlington Memorial in Washington. All of this work is on their own time and at their own expense. It is rare that members of the Board are reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses, just as members of the Chapters are rarely compensated for their time and efforts. These officers also are active in their local State Chapters and their Bomb Groups and Units as well. You have elected an excellent Board and they will ensure that the job gets done correctly and with the professionalism inherent in their positions within the Historical Society.

## **8th AF NEWS ISSUES**

I want to address a few points about the 8th AF NEWS and my responsibility as editor. First, your tremendous support and approval of the direction in which the magazine is heading, as indicated in your correspondence and calls, is greatly appreciated. I have tried to answer all correspondence personally, and have spent a good bit of time considering your suggestions and some disturbances that occasionally pop up along the way. For example, our Unit Contact list was published after several calls for Unit input had been printed in the NEWS. All Units who sent the name of their contact person

in to Committee Chairman Jim Erskine were listed in the magazine, but Jim does not want to publish invalid names from a list that is over five years old. We will publish addenda as the Units let us have their info. No Group will be omitted.



## **HISTORICAL SOCIETY CHAPTERS**

The Chapters are the lifeblood of the organization. Chapter officers and contact names and addresses should be sent to Jim Erskine as well, so we can stay up to date. Most members enjoy reading the Chapter News section to see what other Chapters are doing of interest. Only a few Chapters regularly send me their 'News'. If I receive their Chapter newsletters, I will abstract news from that info source and hope for the best. It must be new news however, and essentially non-controversial and non-political in substance. For instance, a member of the Iowa Chapter recently took me to task for not printing their December issue Chapter news. I went back to my files and discovered that the same news they sent in for December had already been printed in the previous August 99 issue. Slipups do occur, but I do what I can to avoid them, or I'll put in a FIX in the next issue. I enjoy the interest and the interaction. Any problems? Write or call. We'll get it fixed.

## **8TH AF NEWS EXPENSE**

I have read a few grumblings from a few members about the expenses incurred





in publishing the 8th AF NEWS. A member from Minnesota erroneously wrote in his Bomb Group newsletter, of which he is editor, that the cost of the 8th AF NEWS has doubled in the past two years. Your Board of Directors is very aware of publishing costs and we will examine these costs again in detail at the March 3rd mid-term meeting of the Board. Here are the facts for all to consider:

The newsmagazine costs are up 40 - 50% over the costs of three years ago. The 8th AF NEWS however has almost *doubled* in size - twice the number of pages per issue.

We also have gone to full four-color format for every page as opposed to the eight-page color signature prevalent when Jim Hill served as editor.

In addition, we now utilize the professional services of an experienced layout and art professional who represents her

top level international printing company, Ambrose Printing. Donna Neely spends two months out of three in frequent contact with me on every aspect of each issue of the NEWS. I might add that as the months and issues have passed by, your interactions and contributions have greatly contributed to the perceived success of what we want to present as the finest veteran's publication to be found anywhere. The sheer number of articles and photos our members have been sending in precludes the reasonable possibility of returning to the previous 30-page format for the magazine. The input from our British members continues to increase. Keep the material coming and we will keep it flying.

We will continue to do all we can to hold costs down.

Here is the bottom line for all to consider: Each page of the 8th AF NEWS currently costs 1.9 cents to publish - exactly the same 1.9 cent cost per page as during the six years of 8th AF NEWS issues published by our previous editor.

Jim Hill was an old friend and I spoke with him often, the last time just a few weeks before he died in May 1997. He knew that I would succeed him in this position and he seemed very comfortable with that. We had a long conversation and Jim filled me in with a lot of facts and his philosophy about the 8th AF NEWS. I asked him what direction he thought the newsmagazine should take, and he said, 'Just make it get better and better.' With the continuing support of the Historical Society membership, we will continue to keep Jim's directive as our goal.

Walter Brown, Editor 8th AF NEWS



## The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum

Mailing Address:

P. O. Box 1992 Savannah, Georgia 31402-1992 Address: 175 Bourne Ave. Pooler, GA 31322

Telephone: 912-748-8888 website: <http://www.mighty8thmuseum.com>

# LIFE ON THE HORIZON

## The Fred Gray Story

Heavy bombers were not designed for the convenience of the ten crew members who flew them into combat.



Horizon and Fred Gray

Cold, noisy, uncomfortable, with smells of four engines ever-present, relief tubes, electric suits and the floor to sit on, 8th Air Force Liberators and Flying Fortresses offered little of the comforts of home. Not all of them, however, were that way. Enter Hanger 5.

T/Sgt John Fred Gray flew his missions in 1944 as a radio operator in the 379th Bomb group at Kimbolton. While awaiting transfer back to the States, he was approached by those connected with the top brass and asked to serve on an airplane crew flying 8th Air Force Generals around England and the European continent. This time he flew in style. After flying in C-47s during October 1944, Fred and his Engineer Larry Ware - from his combat days on the Frank Enge crew of the 379th's 'White Lightning', - were assigned to the B-17 *Horizon*, a specially outfitted G-model which had been equipped with all the amenities at Base Air Depot 2 at Burtonwood. A classified program carried out at Hanger 5 on the base redesigned the interiors, installed latest technology including radar and weather instrumentation, and outfitted certain aircraft with



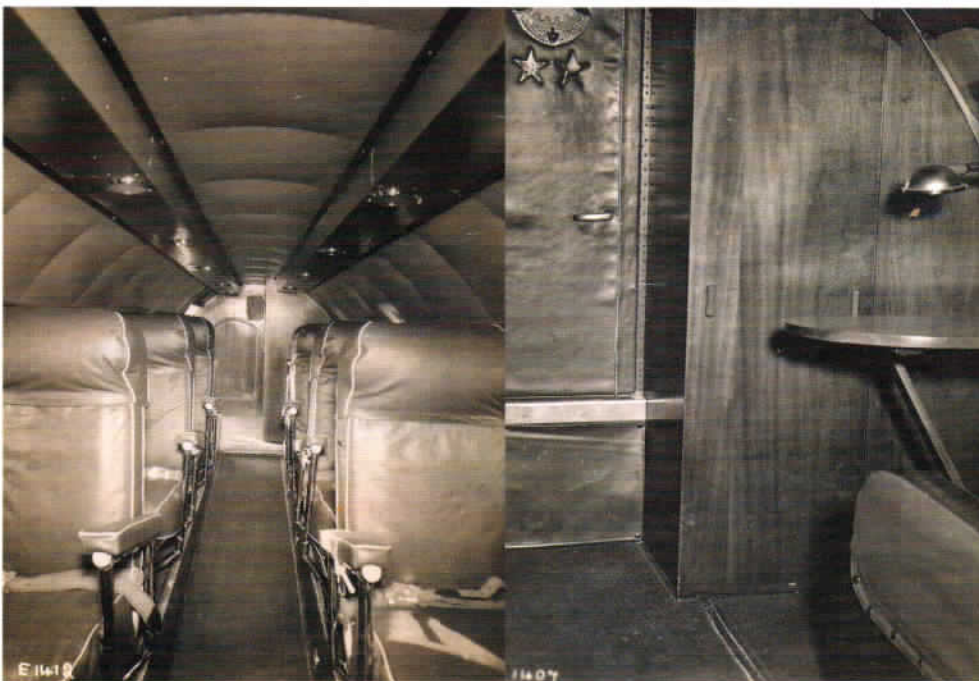
"This is the only time I have seen this insignia except on the door in *Horizon*"

precursors of what was to come decades later in commercial airliners. The *Horizon* was used to transport Flag Officers such as Major General Hugh Knerr and General Frederick Ott to assignments and various meetings during the war. Following a short break at Christmas, 1944, Fred flew dozens of trips each month in *Horizon* up until the end of the war in May 1945.

*Horizon* had been stripped and modified at Hanger 5 in Burtonwood. The top gun turret had been removed. The big side windows were replaced by three small windows on each side of the fuselage. The radio equipment was moved from the radio room to nose. The radio room was made into the General's private office. It contained an airliner type reclining blue velvet chair, a green leather couch, and a mahogany desk with swivel reading lamp. The door to the bomb bay, which was floored for use as a baggage compartment, was covered with dark blue leather - with an ATSC insignia. The waist cabin had red carpet on the floor with three green leather reclining chairs down each side. The sides and ceiling of the cabin were lined with sky-blue leather - all trimmed with



Fred Gray, daughters Pam and Johnnie with wife Sarah at the 379th BG Memorial at the Heritage Museum



Interior of *Horizon* looking to the rear through the waist. Note ceiling, overhead lighting, and floor - and the padded seats

Old radio room with BAD 2 insignia on the door to the luggage compartment



Sgt Larry Ware and Fred Gray on the B - 17 "entrance steps". The four-star insignia signage could be easily change to two or three stars as the situation demanded

mahogany -with recessed lighting - with a reostat for dimming. There was a green leather couch beside the main entrance door. The entrance door had been modified. Instead of swinging to the side, it was hinged on the bottom and swung down, with steps built-in. Opposite the door, was a mahogany enclosed hot-plate and refrigerator - pulled by a 110-volt Putt-Putt in the tail. The chin turret had chrome-plated gun barrels. The tail guns were also chrome-plated and had an aluminum cone-shaped cover which was rigged so it could be salvoed in case we needed to fire the guns.

Fred says that it was a different world flying in the converted Flying Fortress. Flying daily with the latest equipment, a kitchen facility, a baggage compartment (the Bomb Bay), a private rest room, padded walls and upholstered seats, entrance steps, and the lack of the rattle of .50 caliber guns, was a far cry from the early morning bombing missions into Germany. He was assigned to the special B-17G through August 1945 after returning to the States in June. Upon leaving the Air Force in October 1945, Fred and his bride Sarah returned to their home in Gastonia, North Carolina where he achieved a successful career in Broadcasting. - from material submitted by **J.Fred Gray 379th BG Gastonia, NC**

## RAF - NIGHT MISSIONS

An Interesting Experience of 303rd BG(H) Tower Operator Robert L. Johnson

An incident that is still quite clear in my memory was the occasion when two practice bombs hit our field one night while I was on duty. It happened - 6 July 1944 - two or three days before the visit of the King and Queen to Molesworth. In the tower we always monitored the frequency used by the RAF when they were executing their practice bombing runs at night. The bombing range was apparently 15 miles or so, northwest of our field. When the bombs were released the bombardier would transmit - "Number one bomb gone, Number two bomb gone." We were accustomed to hearing that almost every time we were on duty. On this occasion we had one of two of our aircraft doing some night flying and therefore had our runway lights on as well as our ID circle of lights directly in front of the tower. Seconds after I heard "Number one bomb gone," I heard an explosion and "Whoom." "Number two bomb gone," followed by another explosion and "Whoom." The first practice bomb had hit behind the tower and a little toward the main hangar. The second practice bomb went through the roof of the main hangar. The British bombardier had mistaken our ID lights in front of the tower as their night bombing range. I immediately called the RAF

Operations people and advised them of this rather serious "deviation from course" of their aircraft. They apologized and sent out someone to investigate the incident two days later (when the King and Queen and children were on the base). I should be thankful that the bombardier missed the tower by about 50 feet.

- by Robert Johnson 303rd BG



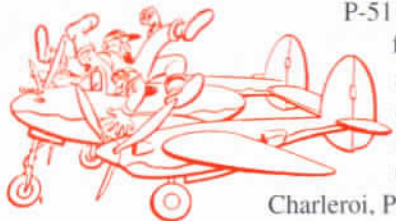
A memorial pole and plaque marks the site where the Molesworth Air Traffic Control Tower stood in the heydays of the 303rd Bomb Group.

## SHOOTING THE BREEZE

On one of the first fighter-strafting shuttle missions between Italy and the Soviet Union, Lieut.

Richard E. Willsie had both engines of his P-38 shot up and he bellied in on a Romanian meadow. Flight Officer Richard T.

Andrews went down to rescue him. He landed his P-38 on the meadow, Willsie jumped in and they flew to their Soviet base in the single cockpit. The next day the pilots were dragged out for photographs but it took them a long time to



get into the same cockpit again. After several attempts, Andrews fumed: "How the hell did we do it? Yesterday we just jumped in and it all fit the first time."

P-51 pilots walking to their planes for an escort mission over southern Germany were given a promise by pretty, blond-haired Ada Wattenmaker, Red Cross Clubmobile girl from Charleroi, Pa. "A kiss for every pilot who shoots down a German today," she said. After the P-51s returned, 13 pilots lined up outside Ada's wagon. Only one asked for coffee and doughnuts.

From a Nazi prison camp 2nd Lieut. Richard Perle, a B-17 navigator, wrote a special request to his parents on Long Island, N.Y. The parents promptly mailed a \$20 check to Col. Eugene A. Romig, commanding officer of an 8th Air Force bomber base in England. Colonel Romig presented the check for twenty bucks to Sgt. Dale Schindele of Manly, Iowa. Schindele is the guy who packed the parachute with which Perle bailed out over Germany.



## BATTLE ARMOUR

Aware that a large proportion of wounds sustained by bomber crewmen were made by low-velocity missiles, in the autumn of 1942 Brig Gen Malcolm Grow, 8th Air Force Chief Surgeon, became interested in the provision of lightweight body armour.

The Wilkinson Sword Company were asked to make one bullet proof vest. The plates were 1 3/4 inches (44mm) wide, of varying length and arranged with a 3/8 inch (9.5mm) overlap. This body armour, which came to be known as a 'flak vest' or 'flak suit', weighed 20lb (9kg). The plates were held in heavy canvas and the whole, designed to be worn over the parachute harness, was quickly removed by a

pull cord. Production of an experimental batch was authorised on 15 October 1942 and the first operational use occurred on 12 December when worn by two crews of 322nd Bomb Squadron, 91st Group. No tangible evidence of their value was acquired on this mission but on 20 December at least one crew member would have been seriously wounded if he had not been wearing a flak suit.

Thereafter combat crews showed much more interest. An investigation carried out early in 1943 established that of combat wound causes 40 per cent were flak shrapnel, 40 per cent 20 mm shrapnel, 10 per cent machine gun bullets and 10 per cent fragments of aircraft structure blasted by shell hits. Later the value of body

armour was established by the fact that two-thirds of men hit by missiles or fragments while wearing flak jackets escaped injury, and only 8.2 per cent of the remainder were killed.

Wilkinson's production was supplemented by US made flak suits late in 1943.

-from *Mighty Eighth War Manual* by Roger A. Freeman

*Many combat crewmen modified the flak suits to their own personal specifications, based on their particular safety concerns. Some sat on them on missions; one 8th navigator had a flak diaper-style device made in the metal shop.*

*Send your flak-suit stories for future discussion in the NEWS. -Editor*

## ARMORED HELMETS FOR BOMBER CREWS

Armored helmets for our bomber crews have been introduced in the 8th Air Force as added face protection against flak fragments.

Two new helmets have been designed by the clothing branch, Materiel Command, to supplement the bullet-proof vests introduced several months ago by Brig. Gen. Malcom Crow, air surgeon for the 8th Air Force. Their need was evidenced by the number of facial burns and injuries suffered by our airmen on raids over heavily concentrated anti-aircraft areas of Berlin and other Nazi cities. Also, a decrease in flak wounds since crew members began wearing the armor suits indicated that further face protection would be helpful.

Design of the helmets grew from the standard M-1 model steel helmet used by all our armed forces, a development of the Ordnance Department. The standard helmet in use, however, did not offer sufficient protection to the neck and face of

airmen. Consequently, a new design was needed and representatives of the clothing branch at Wright Field worked to get a new and better helmet which offered maximum protection.

For several months various shapes, sizes and thicknesses were tried, and resultant tests proved that the new AAF helmet could take considerable abuse. Designers also made certain that the helmet, in addition to its protective qualities, would be comfortable and provide freedom for movement.

Officially designated as the T-2 and the T-3 helmets, the protectors will fit over all standard head-dress and equipment worn by both our Army and Navy flyers.

The T-2 covers a pilot's earphones, microphone, oxygen mask, goggles and head covering. It features a "suspended design" which makes it rest firmly and comfortably high on the head so it doesn't interfere with the wearer's other equipment. An adjustable system of straps and buckles

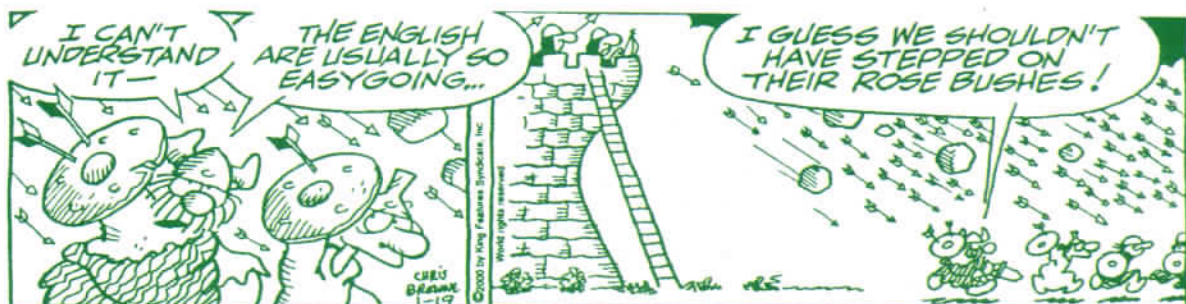
makes it easy to get a proper fit.

The T-2 is a "square design" and resembles a football player's helmet with flaps. It covers the crewman's head, forehead, neck and ears and will resist shell fragments caused by explosive flak shells.

The T-3 is more rounded and fits like a skull cap. It is used in limited-space positions in a bomber, such as top and ball turrets where it is practically impossible to wear the larger T-2 type.

The T-3 helmet weighs about two pounds, compared with an approximate three-and-one-half-pounds, weight of the T-2 design. Both helmets are exceedingly tough for their weight.

- Materiel Command, Wright Field, 1944.



## ARMOR FOR AIRMEN

by Lieutenant Robert V. Guelich  
*Air Force* September 1943.

Flak suits for combat crews are protecting the lives of hundreds of Army Air Force men who have been flying through clouds of bursting anti-aircraft shells over heavily defended enemy positions.

Because fragments of exploding ack-ack shells too often have made it necessary to hospitalize much-needed crew members, special armored vests were developed in England. Now many of our crew members are wearing infantry helmets and flexible armor suits from the neck to the hips, with a sporran (apron) protecting the thighs. This armor has proved effective in repelling ack-ack and 20-mm shell fragments—protection that had greatly reduced the number of casualties in bombing missions.

The suits have proved so successful and acceptable to combat

crews that British establishments are swamped with orders for them and American manufacturers have been called in on production contracts.

At the Armament and Equipment Laboratories of Wright Field, special steel and plastic suits of armor have been tested to determine what materials will offer maximum protection at a minimum weight. Types under study include riveted and cemented overlapping steel strips (approximately 2 1/2 by 18 inches), overlapping two-inch squares of 20-gauge manganese steel, and solid breastplates. Canvas is sewed on both front and back of each section. The complete vest is hung on the shoulders and can be dropped off in an emergency by pulling one string.

The new armored vests are adapted to crew members according to the vulnerability of the position which they occupy and according to location of armor-plate protection in the airplane. Because their backs are protected by the plane's armor, pilots and co-pilots need additional protection, mostly in front. Other crew members wear complete armored suits that give them full protection.

### Dear Walt,

In regards to artist Gil Cohen's cover story of "The Crewman" on the Sept. 99 issue, I was somewhat taken back. I was a crewman as a right waist gunner on a B-17 with the 385th Bomb Group. I recall as we neared the coast of Europe I heard the navigator on the inter phone warning us; "Four minutes from the coast; put on your flak suit." Most of the men followed his suggestion except our left waist gunner. He would stand on his. As waist gunners we had a sheet of armour plate in front of us on each side of the plane, and he felt more comfortable that way. I not only put on my flak suit but also my chest pack parachute as well. The rest of the crew admired my physical endurance, because the suit is heavy and grows heavier and more cumbersome with each hour. It must have taken super-human strength and determination for me to stand up!

Sincerely,

Myron G. Sanchez  
385th Bomb Group  
Albuquerque, NM

Myron Sanchez,  
385th Bomb Group  
in front of B-17  
*Hit Parade Jr./Joker*,  
1944.



## THE BURNS FAMILY

- by Robert Hassie 95th BG

"The music has ended but the melody lingers on..." was played by the dance bands at Covent Garden as one band migrated off stage and the new band took over. It was a September evening in 1944 with the usual lively crowd on the dance floor as I stood on the mezzanine looking down. A slender, dark haired girl on the edge of the dance floor

looked over her shoulder and up in my direction. Her large dark eyes set me in motion, and I was dancing with Gladys for the first of many times to come. We spent the rest of the evening together until closing time. As we walked home, I learned a little bit about "this happy breed".

Evacuation to Suffolk was Gladys lot during the early days of the war. Following a Christmas at home, she was in the LNER station on Liverpool Street the evening of December 29th, 1940. This was the evening the Luftwaffe had selected to incinerate East London after bombing the waterworks on the banks of the Thames. As the great raid began,

Gladys spontaneously canceled her travel plans and took to the streets. Through the East end, past St. Paul's, down Fleet Street and the Strand passing Parliament to Millbank, at last reaching Page Street and 113 Tothill House, she returned home. No longer a girl, she had

**"This was one of the first V-2s which hit the city totally unannounced."**

eyebrows, and a spark pitted cap and gown. By the time I met her she was riveting Halifax wing flaps in an unheated loft. Hitler had a formidable foe.

London was the venue for most of my 48 hour passes. It was full of life and entertainment. Occasionally the wail of sirens focused everyone's attention on the arrival of a V-1. After its explosive crash, the people in the street would speculate on its destructive location. This weapon always announced it's approach with the rattling sound of its engine which

passed her test by fire and graduated with frizzled hair, no



**The German V-1 'buzz bomb'**

would cut off moments before diving into the ground. One murky evening Gladys and I were leaning on the rail of Tothill House's inner court when the sky flashed red. I began counting "one thousand and one, one

**"Huddled in a bedroom, they heard 'the bomb'"**



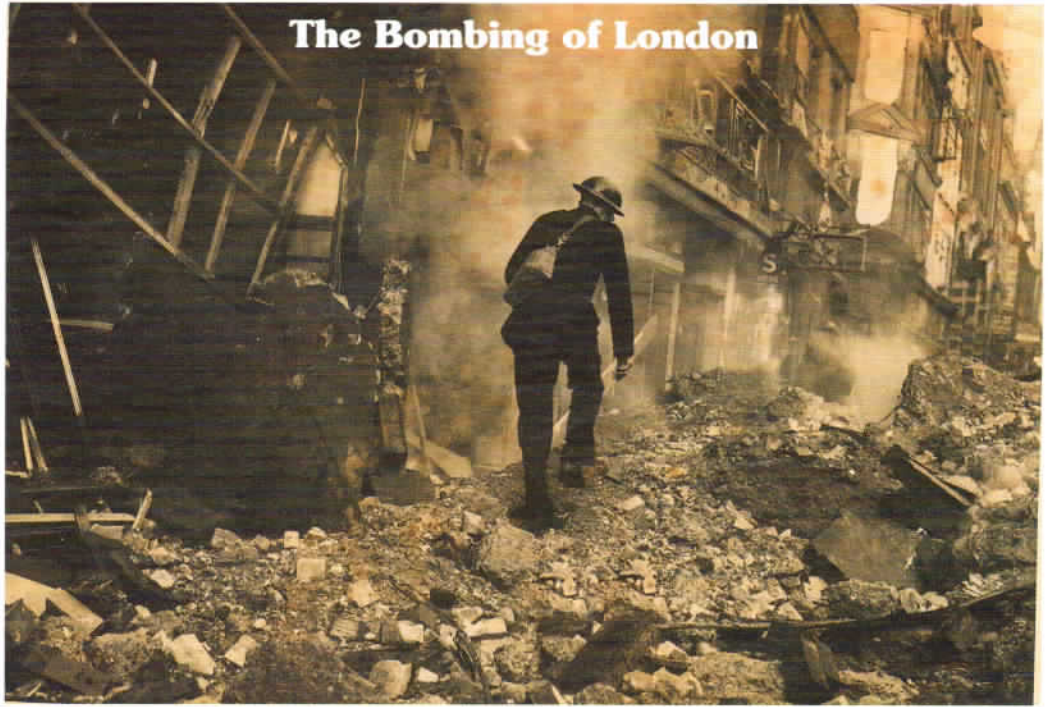
thousand and two, one thousand and three, etc.... one thousand and twenty," finally deciding that the flash was not the result of an explosion. Then the shock wave hit. This was one of the first V-2s which hit the city totally unannounced. Rocket powered and arching through the stratosphere, another link in our mutual mindless destruction had arrived.

In late October, I arrived on a two day pass and Gladys was in bed with a red nose and dark circles under her eyes suffering from a head cold. She howled when Mr. Burns invited me in. The tiny apartment served Mr. and Mrs. Burns, their older daughter, granddaughter (3 years old), Gladys and a son-in-law (Navy) when he could get leave. Mr. Burns was an air raid warden twelve hours per night, seven nights per week in a zone near their home.

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

Retrieving the furniture from the courtyard, the Burns family redecorated their apartment in what could be called rustic blitz, using odd bits of wood, and worn patches of cloth. This was the setting in which I sat as Mr. Burns skillfully kept two lumps of coal sputtering on the fireplace grate. Mr. Burns and I then visited

## The Bombing of London



the corner pub for a pint (or two, or three). When we returned, Gladys was up and incensed at her Dad for corrupting the Yank! Mrs. Burns took care of the situation by serving tea and national wheat-meal toast and we sat around the kitchen table talking about what life might someday be like. Little Katie stood pressed against my knee and let me hold a special small bundle of her sister's clothes.

Somehow, after that visit, things looked pretty tame from the cockpit of a B-17.

The music has ended, but the memory lingers on...

--by Robert B. Hassie  
95th BG, 25th Recon  
Huntington Beach, CA

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It matters not  
what goal you seek  
It's secret here reposes.  
You've got to dig  
from week to week  
To get results or roses.

- Edgar Guest



This is an unusual photo of the Bombardiers Graduating Class 43-4 of Big Spring, Texas, sent in by Samuel Young of Las Vegas. Sam says that it might be entertaining for our members to see if they recognize any of the bombardiers. Sam Young served with the 452nd BG and is found in the class photograph sitting in front and directly under the 'B' in "Big."

## PEN PALS

Dear Mr. Brown:

I apologize for troubling you but having been given a copy of your excellent publication "8th AF News" I am hoping that you might be able to assist me in my quest for a US penpal who has served in the former USAAF. Although my own background is army and I have a total of some 24 years under my belt I am very interested in WW2 aviation history. I am now 69 years old and well remember the US airmen who were stationed at the former USAAF Base at Burtonwood which is quite near where I live. As a 13 year old I used to stand in awe at the sight of the airplanes being towed on their undercarriages to Burtonwood where they were fitted-out before being flown to operational bases. It was at this time that my interest in planes developed and I soon learned to identify the various types. Although I am fortunate enough to be in correspondence with a former US soldier and a former member of the USMC, a USAAF penpal has eluded me hitherto and were you able to afford me any assistance in this regard I would be truly grateful. Apart from WW2 aviation my interests include military history with an emphasis on both World Wars, reading, mostly non-fiction and music especially the big bands and dance bands of the 30s and 40s. I appreciate that you no doubt have far better things to do but in the event that you can point somebody in my direction you will make an old soldier very happy.

Yours sincerely John D. Shaw, 52 Ivy Leigh LIVERPOOL England L13 7ER  
*Any members who served at Base Air Depot Burtonwood might wish to drop John Shaw a friendly note!* -Editor

## RESPONSE TO P-47' JUG' ARTICLE

Dear Walter:

Thanks for the nice reply to my letter. As you can guess I love controversies and start things going when I don't agree totally with an author. (Dec 99 issue - What's In a Name? by Roger Freeman). I wonder if General Johnson ever visited the Republic Aviation Plant in Farmingdale, NY. I spent eight years there after WWII. I was in the JIG and Tool Shop during my entire career there. Of course the P-47 was phasing out but we did build spare parts and I remember my first boss who had started with Seversky giving me a work order for a "JUG" modification tool. We thought JUG was just short for Juggernaut. I went into pilot training but never went beyond primary as the war ended and my wife-to-be had a previous boyfriend who went down in peace time in the Pacific. She was afraid I would be shark bait also. Her brother lives near Nashville and has for 50 years. He was a former Fortress pilot but not combat. I did have my own plane for many years, a Cessna Skylane.

Sincerely, Jay H. Karpin  
 Grafton, VT

## AFTER THE LIBERATORS

Dear Walter:

Just a note to offer my deep gratitude for your generous review of my book, "After The Liberators." I'm very happy that you genuinely seemed to enjoy reading through my story, and recognized my intentions to honor more than my father. I hope the book will be read by a cross-section of generations and that it will help

pull us together, in wonder and true thanks for our significant victory, and for a lasting meaning in American life. It was a real pleasure for the Mrs. and I to meet you and see you in Savannah, if only too briefly.

My best for the New Year, Bill McGuire  
 Larchmont, NY

*Editor's Note: Bill McGuire's excellent book honoring his father and the men of the Mighty Eighth is available at our 8th AFHS PX - see center section of this issue.*

## STRATEGIC BOMBING

Dear Sir:

I have just read the article by Harry H. Crosby in the September 99 News. As I have always maintained that it was the persistent bombing campaign by American and British formations of bombers that finally broke the shackles of Nazism, I have to agree with the writer. We have much to thank the bravery of the crews that took part in the sorties over Germany during that period. I did not serve in our Air Force, but I was a sapper with the Royal Engineers of the 44th Division, serving in France & Belgium in 1940. At the time of DUNKIRK I was captured while engaged in a rearguard action to delay the German forces, while our Divisions had to retire. I was introduced to the 8th AF NEWS when I responded to a letter published in a British newspaper and written by a former American airman and member of the 8th AF Historical Society. He very kindly contributed and arranged for me to receive a regular copy, which I did over a long period. Then suddenly all mail from my American correspondent ceased, likewise the 8th AF NEWS failed to arrive.





However, a British Chapter or distributor offered to post me a regular copy of the 8th AF NEWS gratis. I was delighted to accept this offer, so now I continue to read this prestigious magazine. During the latter part of World War II while imprisoned in a German Stalag, I used to watch the formations of American bombers passing overhead leaving their vapor trails. All the British prisoners cheered at the sight of the bombers, and I think it helped a lot to lift our morale during those dark and depressing days.

Yours Sincerely, Don Mason Chichester England

## 8TH AF IN THE PACIFIC

Dear Walt,

I enjoy your 8th Air Force Magazine very much. I saw your articles in the September issue 1999 about the Boeing B-29 Superfortress. It was quite interesting. It was the second time that I've seen anything in the magazine about B-29's. You also mentioned the 8th Air Force had some units scheduled for the Pacific Theater. I happen to be one of the three crews that were on Guam with the 8th Air Force. Our three crews went over to Guam and was in combat over Joysan. Our group was formed in Pratt, Kansas, under General Jimmie Doolittle to be stationed in Okinawa to help end the war with Japan. These three crews are the only ones that I know of. If there are any more I would like to know who they are. We were in the 346th Bomb Group(VH) and our crews were with the three Bomb Squadrons: 463rd, 462nd, 461st. Thank you for what information you have. We want to let everyone know that there were members of the 8th Air Force that were in the Pacific.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely, Paul W. Hill Durham, CA

## ONE MORE TIME

Dear Sir:

I read your Eighth Air Force News book

which I received from a Mr. Earl Rupp, a very good friend of mine Volume 99 number 3. He is a member of The Eighth Air Force Historical Society and I was very happy with what I read about some of the stories by the men who flew the missions. I was a tail gunner on the ship *Los Angeles City Limits*, 381st B.G. 535th B.S. I started 1 Feb 44 and finished my 30th on June 20th. On June 21st, they woke me up at 3:30 to go on a mission. I told them, "There must be some mistake I am all finished." The man said there has been a mishap with a tail gunner and I was the only one available. Wouldn't you know it, the mission was to the Big B! I thought this is it. I'm not even supposed to be here. We encountered a few fighters and some pretty heavy flak, but we came back in one piece. I had a brother who was a waist gunner with the 303rd B.G. - his name was John M. Micek. I don't know what ship he was usually on. He went down Nov. 26, 1943 on "Mr. Five By Five". I think he went down in the North Sea. Whether they ditched or crashed, I don't know. They were returning from a mission to Bremen. The pilot's name was Capt. Addell A. Cote. One crew member's body was washed ashore but my brother's body was never found as far as I know. Thanks again for all the stories about the missions and other things. I can associate with them and it brings back some memories, both good and bad. I am enclosing a check for \$10.00 for a membership.

Yours truly, Julius M. Micek - 381st BG Detroit, MI

P.S. I sure would appreciate it if someone would know something about my brother.

## TO THE 8TH AF HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dear Board Member,

On January 24th, 2000 the National Capitol Area Chapter dedicated a memorial to the Mighty Eighth Air Force at

Arlington cemetery. This was the last memorial allowed by Arlington authorities as their program has been terminated. I was invited to attend by the Chapter President, Byron Schlag, and it was an honor to represent the Board of Directors. This was a beautiful simple service attended by Eighth Air Force veterans, Air Force personnel from the Pentagon. The Commander of the Eighth at Barksdale was scheduled as the Guest of Honor, but could not attend. In his place, Brig. Gen. Regner Rider U.S.A.F. was the guest of honor and his address was directed to our history and was complete with facts of the air campaign. The Arlington Chaplain, Col. Brogan U.S.A.F. gave the invocation and the benediction. The program was completed with the laying of a wreath, the sound of Taps and a moment of silence. The actual memorial is a beautiful monument with the Eighth logo in full color. As veterans, we can be proud of this memorial, and we owe a vote of thanks to the National Capitol Area Chapter for their work in seeing this project through. Sincerely, Larry Goldstein, Ridgewood, NY

8th AFHS Board

## INFO SEARCH

Gentlemen,

I am seeking info on the following:

2/LT Thomas J. Stilert

1 S/LT Roger C. Counselman

2/LT Goldon Lang

While on a Berlin raid I witnessed a B 24-H crash over Dummer Lake area on 29 April 44. Would like your input on A/C and crew, especially Nav. Fred Gordon. Lt. Gordon was from the Boston area. I am also seeking info on Tail Gunner Warren G. McFadden, while on B-17 "Flak Happy" was shot down over Bremen, Germany, October 8, 1943.

Three members bailed out safely and were captured, while the remaining seven were K.I.A. and buried at the crash site. Would appreciate knowing the number of



McFaddon's group, plane number, and names of the other nine crew members. Any data which you could provide me will be appreciated.

Kenneth J. McPherson, 493rd BG  
PO Box 7354 Ocean Park, MS 04063

**APPLICATION**

Dear Eighth AF Historical Society, Please accept my application as an associate member. For me it has been a long time in coming, and I do this membership with pride in knowing that my hero was once a member of a very big Air Force at a time in history that remains all to unpleasant even to this day. I was a month from my third birthday when my uncle, S/Sgt. Narvle Lee Wykle, tailgunner of 364th B Sqd., 305th BG and twenty other men lost their lives in a mid-air crash, 15 Nov. 43 just south of their airfield #105 Chelveston - near Higham Ferris, North Antio England. My hunger for information of these folks and of the Mighty Eighth Air Force as a group, is very important to me. I enjoy what ever I can find to read and watch about what happened during this time. Thank you very much, Wm. Paul Baker 305th BG Associate Member

**ROYAL AIR FORCE BOMBER COMMAND**

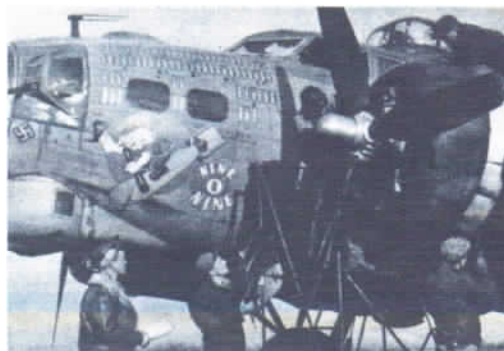
Dear Ms. Metts, Since we have now returned back home to Chicago and have got settled down again ready for the coming Christmas holidays it was time I wrote you a thank you note on behalf of my wife, myself and R.A.F. Bomber Command for your kindness and assistance during our recent visit to the Mighty Eighth A.F. Museum, which we enjoyed immensely. If you remember I wanted to find out what had happened to the picture of the R.A.F. Lancaster bomber which was presented to the 8th A.F. Society at the 1993 re-union in Chicago by a group of ex-R.A.F. aircrew who had made the trip from England

with the picture which had been signed by many R.A.F. people including myself. Since it wasn't yet framed and as I had been living here in the States for many years, I was given the job of getting the picture framed ready for presentation. This was achieved with the help of my son Andrew as part of our contribution to Bomber Command. We presented it to the Secretary Doug Radcliffe who is now a very good friend of my family. Because of your kind assistance I shall now be able to inform him that the picture is hanging in the museum, a fact which makes all of us very proud.

Thank you again on behalf of all the R.A.F. Bomber Command airmen and aircrew who flew alongside the Mighty Eighth those many years ago. Hope to see you again.  
Yours sincerely, John A. Maer  
Ex - R.A.F.

**100 MISSIONS**

Dear Sir: I have read with great interest in the June, September, and December 1999 issues about the "Call for Missions." I am surprised to see no response, as yet, from the 91st Bomb Group. Using as my primary source The Ragged Irregulars of



**Nine-O-Nine, 91st Bomb Group**

Bassingbourn by Marion H. Havelaar. I can identify six aircraft which qualify:  
serial number plane missions

4232095 Ack Ack Anne 143

4231909	"909"	140
	(without abort)	128
4231636	Outhouse Mouse	139
	(to Berlin)	12
4232116	Hi Ho Silver	130
4231333	Wee Willie	128
42107027	Hikin' for Home	125

The first four returned to the United States in June 1945. Thanks for your excellent magazine which I always look forward to.  
Robert A. McKee 91st Bomb Group  
Decatur, GA

**WHO WILL SING MY SONG?**

Dear Editor, My husband John J. Boerke (Jack) died November 11, 1999, Veterans Day. He was a First Lieutenant in the Air Corps, a Bombardier, stationed in Lavenham, England during W.W. II in the 8th Air Force. Thank you for the compassionate poem "Who Will Sing My Song?", page 37 Dec. 1999 issue of the 8th Air Force News. It brought on a flood of tears - still does. Whenever I think of him flying from my homeland Britain, doing his all to save us from the Luftwaffe and the Nazis, I shall recall this comforting poem. Cordially, Beryl Boerke, (Widow) North Bend, OR  
*-The poem was written by Chaplain Martin Loyley of Brunswick, GA. - Editor*

**MORE ON "BOMBERS AS BAIT"**

Re Herb Shanker's June 99 article concerning "Bombers As Bait". On Sept 11, 1944 the 100th BG was assigned the Ruhland oil refinery on the German/Czech border. We were not briefed that our group would be the only one to hit this target. Near Frankfurt the 100th left the main bomber stream and alone headed toward Ruhland. After leaving the stream, I noticed that we had no fighter escort and so informed pilot Murray Johnson. He



seemed concerned and ordered the crew to be especially alert for Luftwaffe fighters. At the IP the low squadron was hit by forty FW 190's and the whole squadron was wiped out in thirty seconds. The FW's then turned their attention to the remaining lead and high squadrons wounding several crewmen. The 100th Bomb Group was credited with 16 kills and an 8th Fighter Group with 15. When crew size was reduced to nine men, the ammo load was also cut. I ran out of ammo after shooting down an FW who was aflame and appeared to be on a collision course with our aircraft. We lost 109 men, 48 KIA's, 2 MIA's, and 59 POW's. Our fighters appeared after leaving the target area. If this was a part of the "Bombers As Bait" program, it was a hell of a price to pay. Aircrews were not aware of this program and I cannot believe the Luftwaffe was unaware of what was going on.

Dick Thormahlen, 100th BG Tailgunner  
Hot Springs Village, AR

**A CORRECTION**

Dear Sir:  
In the last issue of the 8th AF NEWS an article appeared (pages 30 and 31) that was submitted by our Curtis LeMay Chapter to the magazine. The article states that Bob Kerr received the Distinguished Flying Cross and was a guest at our luncheon. This is an error. It is Harry Gobrecht who received the DFC. Will you kindly acknowledge this error in your next issue as it is a great disservice to Harry who is the actual recipient of the honor. Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Cordially, Kenneth "Dick" Hawes  
Secretary/Treasurer Curtis LeMay  
Chapter, 8th AFHS Southern California

**THE ESCORTS**

Dear Walt:  
Concerning the ongoing P-38 debate (Dec issue). I recall seeing a flight of four

P-38s crossing over our group on one mission less than 1000 ft above. You usually didn't see the escorts up close excepting sometimes with "fighters in the area warnings" when you would see some P-51's racing up or down the bomber stream, again fairly close. I was a B-24 tailgunner and had a panoramic view of the action. On a mission to Dortmund in Jan '45 we had a P-51 (for some unknown reason) tuck himself under a B-24 of the adjacent squadron just before target. Over the target I watched a huge burst of flak explode just above the fighter and below the bomber. They both went down and I finally lost them in the clouds. I only saw two chutes. We lost another 24 at the same time. Back to the P-38, enclosed is an interesting article from World War Two magazine. In this interview article, German ace Johannes Steinhoff chose the P-38 as the most difficult American fighter to deal with. Considering all the publicity concerning the P-51 and P-47 (as a Lockheed retiree) I find this statement most interesting. Congratulations for putting out the finest veterans magazine there is. Keep up the good work and thank you.

J.E. Johnston 44th/491st BG Esterd, FL

**THE CREWMAN**

Dear Walt:  
I read with great interest the letter by Hugh Malcolm Hinshaw concerning the cover of the Sept. '99 issue of the 8th A.F. News featuring my drawing of "The Crewman." Yes, Mr. Hinshaw is certainly correct in stating that the parachute harness leg straps must be fastened when bailing out of a disabled aircraft and indeed, I assume that the guy in my drawing will fasten his by the time he is at his station aboard the aircraft. In doing research for this and other depictions of the 8th AF, I found out that the aircrewmembers often did not fasten their leg straps until they were about to, or after boarding their planes. As one veteran told me, "You could hear the clinking of the loose

leg strap buckles behind the men as they left the Nissen huts." One reason for this is that those straps really chafed when you walked! Also, about chest chutes and harnesses: There were two basic types (there were really more but we won't go into that here). In my drawing you see illustrated, the "red" group in which the D-rings for fastening the parachute pack can be seen (barely) on the left side of his harness near the inside of his elbow. On his right side the D-ring is obscured by the intercom plugs and extension cord. The snaps that hook on would be on the back of his parachute pack. The other type would be the "yellow" group. In this arrangement, the snaps would be on the harness and the D-rings would be located on the parachute pack ---just the opposite of the "red" group! If my drawing had been in full color you would see a red patch on the front of the 'chute pack. I hope that this helps to clear up some of the confusion about this subject.

Sincerely, Gil Cohen Doylestown, PA

**TONDELAYO**

Dear Sir:  
During March 1945 a B-17 "TONDELAYO" was returning from a mission to its base when it was hit by anti-aircraft fire. It had been mistaken for an enemy plane which was in the same area and "Tondelayo" went down into the river Stour not to far from Glarton. Aboard the B-17 were Col. Earle Aber and Lt. Maurice Haster and they stayed with the aircraft. It is believed that Col. Aber was involved at some time with HOG Sqdn assigned to 801 BG. HOG Sqdn being a Radio countermeasures unit. Local divers found the wreckage of "Tondelayo" recently and it was said to be in good condition. A U.S. Navy salvage team from Hawaii came over and inspected the wreck and reported that any bodies contained there could well be preserved in the copious amount of aviation fuel within. It is intended to raise the wreck next April and recover the bodies which will be



interred.

Yours Cordially, John Degrange  
384th B.G. White Jacket Sqdn.

## RETURN TO NORMANDY

Dear Walter,

Both John Carah, co-pilot, and myself, Paul H. McConnell, navigator, members of the 533rd Squadron, 381st Bomb Group, were shot down by FW 190's on our way to the target in Le Mans, France. It was Sunday, July 4, 1943. Both evaded capture and returned to England in March 1944. On Sunday the 4th of July 1999, 56 years after, we were invited to attend a memorial service at Belfonds, Normandy and at La Coulonche, Normandy, to honor these of our crews that did not survive the mission, as well the loyal Frenchmen and women that were taken to prison and some did not return. I am enclosing the newspaper article of the event and the translation by my wife Marie-Antoinette McConnell. My family also attended the ceremonies: Paul H. McConnell II, Thomas E. McConnell, his wife Linda, and Leo and Jeanne Glover, my son-in-law and his wife, my daughter.

It was a very touching ceremony and was capped by Paul McConnell II doing a flower drop in his 1937 Beechcraft Staggerwing at the end of the presentation. I thought you might be interested to see how much these loyal French think of the American and Allied airmen. "Many lives were shattered on that day," stated Francoise Comte. Those of the airmen, those of the men and women arrested, then set free. Those of the men and women brutally interrogated, imprisoned at Alencon and Rouen, then sent to concentration camps, but who were fortunate to return alive. Lastly, the lives of the woman and the men who never did partake of the peace for which they gave so much." Just as the resistants and other people of Belfonds had helped the parachutists who had landed in their

region, others had helped the lieutenant. "Paul had been hidden near the farm of Mr. Bouvet who had hidden his flying suit and had used his boots to jumble his tracks". He crossed the Pyrenees mountains on the road to freedom. Released from a Spanish jail, he returned, via Gibraltar, to his base in England. Paul McConnell expressed his "immense gratitude for the French people who helped our comrades. I will always keep in my thoughts those who lost their lives, just as I have kept in my heart a very special place for Normandy."

Yours truly, Paul H. McConnell, 381st  
BG San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

## "C'EST LE GUERRE"

Dear Sir:

"Base Air Depot 2" (BAD2) was located at Warton, Lancashire, in the northwest of England. It extended alongside two villages, Warton and Freckleton. The Freckleton area was mostly housing sites. A few hundred yards away was a village snackbar, frequented in the daytime by GI's on the nightshift. Also, a short distance away was the village schoolhouse. A B-24 had just taken off when it was struck by lightning and a wing torn off. The fuselage crashed into the schoolhouse and the wing fell on the snackbar. Every child between the ages of four and six that was in school that day was killed, along with their teachers, the air crew and sever-



The Base Air Depot 2 Association has established an impressive Freckleton memorial in the Memorial Gardens of the Heritage Museum.

al GI's in the snackbar. The BAD2 Association has held five reunions at the base, hosted by the townspeople and British Aerospace, which now occupies the base. At the village cemetery there is a large plot with a memorial reflecting the names of the children, teachers, air crew and Base personnel lost in the accident. At a memorial ceremony held during the 50th VE Reunion I was at the gate, about 50 yards from where the memorial ceremony was taking place, when I was joined by an Englishman about my age. To start a conversation I asked if he was here during the war. His reply was yes & no. He was in the RAF and got home on leave once. I asked if we were here after he returned and he replied, "No, and neither were any of the village lasses!"

Sincerely, Ronald M. Davis BAD 2  
Sacramento, CA

## ANSWER TO EL LOBO

Dear Editor,

To Craig Harris and others who are interested in planes with 100-plus missions: The 351st Bomb Group had three B-17s in the 509th Squadron. *Transient Belle* with 105 missions, *Buckeye Babe* with 107, and *My Gal II* with 109 missions. The 508th's *Silver Dollar* flew 121 and the 510th Squadron had *April Girl II* at 113 and *Trade Winds* at 115 missions.

I believe Eighth AF MMF Chairman John Greenwood flew on *Transient Belle*. All were tributes to the Ground Crews and Combat Crews.

Sincerely, Frank Markut, 351st BG  
Ottawa IL

## WAR VIDEOS

Dear Sir

I thought you might be interested in this news release concerning two Mighty Eighth documentary classics: "Combat America" and "The Memphis Belle." Even though I was a member of the Fabulous Fifteenth, I am pleased to say



that the various 8th Air Force documentaries my company distributes are far and away the most popular in our WAR IN THE AIR 1940-1945 collection.

Understandably, many of our orders have come from 8th AF veterans and their wives and children, reunion planners, Chapters and 8AFHS members themselves. The response from aviation museums, notably The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum Planes of Fame, the Experimental Aircraft Association and the Dover Air Force Base museum and gift shop, to name a few. We are offering "The Memphis Belle" as an Anniversary Edition, because it was on April 13, 1944 that it went into national theatrical release, achieving instant acclaim. Oscar-winning Hollywood director William Wyler, a major assigned to the 91st Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, personally flew with and filmed the crew of the Memphis Belle on several combat missions, including its 25th and final one to Wilhelmshaven, Germany. Armed with a hand-held movie camera and portable oxygen tank he roamed the bomber while it was under fighter attack and being savaged by anti-aircraft fire. This footage as well as his coverage of pre-flight preparations and crew briefings became "The Memphis Belle," the most famous of wartime documentaries. When "Combat America" with Clark Gable nar-

rating, was edited, narrated and scored at MGM, Air Force brass realized it was much more than a recruiting film, compelling as that footage was. The finished product was released as a 62-minute fea-



55th ANNIVERSARY!

ture to explain to Americans the importance of daylight precision bombing. Gable's gritty narration gives the film a special "I was there" authenticity. "The Memphis Belle" and "Combat America" are available at \$19.95 each, plus \$4.50 shipping and handling, from Antiquary Video, 12 Goodale Circle, New Brunswick, NJ, 08901. A catalog describing the nine films in The War in the Air series is also available. Toll free phone: 1-800-225-0208; Website: [www.antiquaryvideo.com](http://www.antiquaryvideo.com)

### E-RAT-ICATOR

Dear Walt,

I am enclosing some information and details on the B-17 *E-rat-icator* which flew over 120 missions with the 452nd Bomb Group. We flew over from the States on January 2nd, 1944. Our original crew (less four deceased) still maintain contact with each other. The *E-rat-icator* was the only 452nd BG bomber to survive its crews and return to the States. After the war, I tried tracing it when I got home but I am afraid it went to its final resting place in Arizona.

Sincerely, Samuel Young 452nd BG  
Las Vegas, NV

### LT. GEORGE RICHES CREW

Dear Editor:

I am following, A Mutt's Tale with great interest. Peter Hinson and I have been E-Mailing buddies for a number of years. He has been most kind and generous by sending me pictures, maps and other memorabilia about Grafton Underwood and of the 384th Bomb Group of which I was member on one of the original crews. Pete did not tell me that he was going to write this story, so you can imagine my surprise when, in the Sept. issue I read the first part of the story and to see where he mentioned my name as having told him of my military history and life as a POW. Now in the December issue he mentions,

Lt. George Riches' crew landed in Ireland to refuel. With that I have to write. I was ball turret on Lt. Riches plane and the stop in Ireland was not as simple as it sounds in Peter's story. First, the field was a former British fighter field, one runway, very short and with a road running mid-way through it. It had gates to close off the road when planes were landing, as you would find at a railroad crossing. Lt. Riches almost burned out our brakes, trying to stop on the short runway. The next problem was obtaining the necessary amount of fuel to continue our flight to Prestwick, Scotland. The field was equipped with one little tank truck that at best held less than 500 gallons of fuel and had a one lung motor to pump it with, I guess at the rate of five gals. an hour. There were two other 17's that landed there with us. To make a long story short, we were there for three days getting the required amount of fuel to continue our journey. It was a pleasant respite from our routine as the weather was fine and we got into the town of Eniskilien and out to meet some of the natives. The grass was so green and I remember that I climbed a small hill next to the mess building, laid down on the grass and went sound asleep. Had tea in the dining room of a neighbor near the field as the guest of the family that lived there. As many stories about that time in history, it did not have a happy ending. This incident was in early May 1943 and on June 25, 1943 we were shot down on the 8th AAF's first trip to Hamburg. Lt. Riches and three other members of our crew were killed. With Lt. Riches the pilot, co-pilot Lt. McCray, S/Sgt Martin, tail gunner were killed. Lt. Riches was awarded the Silver Star posthumously for staying with the plane to keep it flying so that we could get out. So that is the complete story of Lt. Riches' plane and it's stop-over for fuel in Ireland.

Sincerely,  
Ralph Lavoie, 384th BG Rindge, NH



## THUNDERBIRD

Dear Sir:

I read with great interest the letter in the Sept 99 issue from John Warner concerning the 8th AF B-17s with the highest number of missions. He cited the 390th Bomb Wing B-17 42-97093 which flew 114 missions.

I am well acquainted with the civilian crew that flies a restored B-17 "The Thunderbird" from the Lone Star Fight Museum in Galveston, TX. They have shown me a complete mission list for this airplane and it totals 116. The museum crew also told me that over 500 different crewmen had flown in this plane.

As a matter of interest, I compared the 303rd BG's *Thunderbird's* mission list with my own (I flew P-51s with the 55th FG) and find that I had escorted the *Thunderbird* on seven occasions.

The present *Thunderbird* flying the air show circuits is not the original. It was restored and painted exactly like the original *Thunderbird*.

Sincerely, Walter Konantz, 55th FG

## DANGERS OF TRAINING

Dear Walt,

Are there any "8th AF" members, men or women, who were stationed at Kingsman, Arizona, January 1944?

If so, do you have any first hand knowledge of a tragic accident when a freight train hit a "GI" bus on the way to the night firing range, killing 32 cadets.

I happened to be assigned to the base hospital as an orderly while waiting to be assigned to a gunnery class. I was asleep on a bunk at the hospital when I was awakened by loud shouting, "EMERGENCY! WARD NINE!"

I quickly ran toward nine and was on my way in an ambulance with other men to this nightmarish scene where we began recovering the severely injured men.

Upon returning to ward nine and unloading the ambulance, there was one doctor in the ward. He asked me to stay and

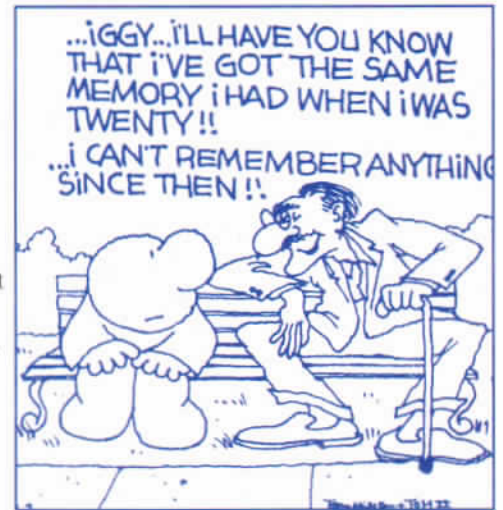
assist him. Three nurses arrived. I admired how great and professional they were.

The nightmare continued all through the night. All beds were filled. There were men on stretchers on the floor in the aisle. The doctor asked me to mop the aisle, as it was a river of blood.

I would like to hear from this doctor and the nurses who did all they could to save these men. Thirty-two of America's finest young men died that night.

Please write our editor and tell your story. Sincerely,

Frank McKinley  
Stoneham, Maine



— submitted by Frank McKinley

MARCH 2000 (00-1)

## SQUADRON OF DECEPTION

**The 36th Bomb Squadron in World War II**

by Stephen Hutton

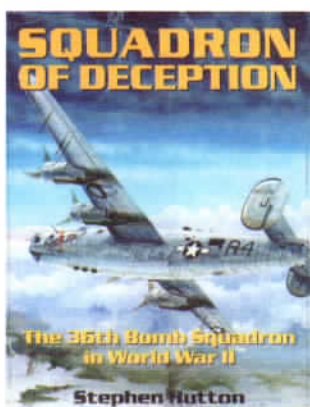
Iredell

Hutton flew most of his 54 missions in The Jig's Up, a B-24 Liberator of the 8th Air Force's 806th and 36th Bomb Squadrons. His airplane

was eventually lost on a mission with another crew aboard. Stephen Hutton, Iredell's son, researched the history of the first secret 8th Air Force Countermeasure combat unit for over eight years, interviewing members of each of the 43 aircrews assigned to the unit. He gained a very accurate picture of what this special squadron accomplished in its efforts to jam German radar and deceive and confuse the enemy. Stephen Hutton served as a Navy air traffic controller during the Vietnam war, and has enjoyed military and aviation history since his childhood; this is well reflected in this newly published volume.

Squadron of Deception is an in-detail look at the establishment and utilization of a special Unit, the 36th Bomb Squadron Radar Countermeasure (RCM) unit, whose assignment was to fly heavy bombers into enemy territory and use various methods to counteract the effectiveness of German radar on 8th Air Force Bombing missions. Early missions drew off previous experiences of their counterpart squadrons in the RAF. Window-thin strips of tinfoil, later termed Chaff by the US Air Forces, used by the RAF in early missions was first employed sparingly in 1940. Germans were aware early on of this method of radar jamming but did not want to divulge this knowledge to the British.

As the 36th Bomb Squadron became more experienced, more sophisticated electronic jamming methods came into use. Their work was heavily classified, the crews flew dangerous assignments



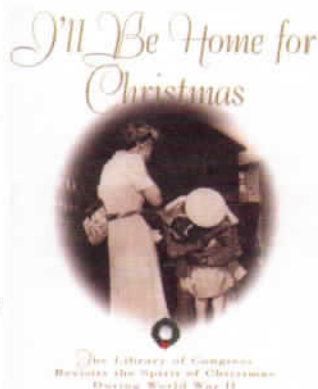
often without adequate fighter protection, and they flew in every kind of weather. Their mission's success was vital in the role the 36th Bomb Squadron played in the overall effectiveness of all three divisions the 8th Air Force. Author Hutton is meticulous in his presentation of the 36th's story. From training days to the combat losses and right on to the end of the war in Europe, he uses the personal stories of individual squadron members to augment the wealth of details and factual information in this volume. The story is complete, perhaps the only book available that tells the unique history of this secret squadron's activities with authority. There are eight detailed appendices following the 14 chapters, each chapter filled with a variety of photos, illustrations and maps which give a feeling of being a part of the 36th Bomb Squadron activities to the reader.

The volume is a high-quality presentation as are all Schiffer Publishing books - the front and back cover linerpages are marbled - and it is produced in large format 8 1/2" x 11" hardback, 216pp. Available from the 8th AFHS PX and at most bookstores, or may contact Schiffer Publishing LTD, 4880 Lower Valley Road, Atglen PA 19310-9717 telephone 610-593-1777 FAX 610-593-2002. \$39.95

## I'LL BE HOME FOR CHRISTMAS

**The Library of Congress Revisits the Spirit of Christmas During World War II**

It certainly is not too late to be giving yourself a very special Christmas gift to celebrate the millenium, and this is overwhelmingly the gift of choice. This beautiful volume is the Library of Congress compendium of personal stories and photos of personal stories from those who fought in World War II. It is organized by years beginning with



our entrance into the war in 1941, and each entry is accompanied by an explanation of the setting and circumstances on that occasion. The book offers original tales and happenings from all theaters of the war and the homefront and includes some letters, poems, and historical notes - some humorous, some thought-provoking, and all relating the feelings and mood of those who lived during the times.

This recently published volume, unique in its concept and in its variety of presentations, is a perfect gift to be presented anytime during the year and should be on the desk of every veteran and their families. From Delacorte Press; 205 pp; b & w & sepia. It can be purchased or ordered from any bookstore for around \$24.00.

## REPUBLIC P-47 THUNDERBOLT

by Frederick A. Johnson

Specialty Press continues its tradition of publishing a complete history of famous warbirds in its customary high-quality fashion

with Volume 23 of its Warbird Tech series.

The featured aircraft is the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt. The volume relates its evolution into the heaviest single-seat fighter airplane of the war, with its tremendous power and extraordinary capabilities in combat. This is the fighter which our Heavy bombers depended upon as escorts early in the war and in which many of the top fighter Aces established their distinguished records. The Thunderbolt, often called the 'Jug', is described in this soft-back large-format volume through an effective use of original photographs and a running text updating the aircraft as it flows. Many of the photos, some in full color, are unusual one-of-a-kinds. Every aspect of the Thunderbolt is covered.

Of particular interest is the development of the aircraft's canopy from the early Razorback versions through the



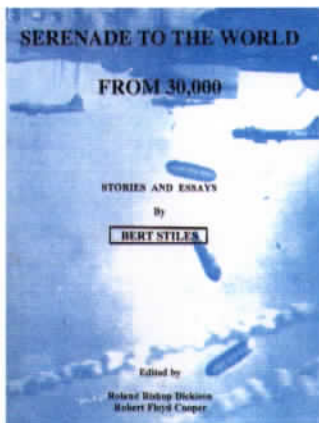
revised bubble canopy models which followed. Cutaway views of the structural aspects of the Thunderbolt are presented in detail, an exceptional example being the cutaway depictions of the P-47's gun-sights and mounts.

The Warbird Tech Series well serves its purpose of preserving the stories of our historic airplanes and does so in a very readable and educational style. The volume is available from Specialty Press: 1-800-895-4585 or 651-583-3239. 100pp w/ 160 photos; \$16.95 + \$4.50 s&h to each order (not per book).

## SERENADE TO THE WORLD FROM 30,000

Stories and Essays by Bert Stiles  
edited by Roland Dickison and Robert Cooper

Bert Stiles was a most unusual person. A lover of life and of the people who inhabited his life, a lover of war - in his own sense of war, and a romantic who knew within himself that he had the talent to become a truly great American author. He wrote short stories, and wrote many of them. This edition, compiled by his friends and editors, are part of a collection of manuscripts written before and during the war which encompass a variety of subjects close to Bert. Many of them, and most of them are war stories actually written during his tour as a co-pilot on the Samuel Newton crew of the 91st Bomb Group, are of the hard-hitting factual style found in his autobiographical work, *Serenade to the Big Bird*, which was written during a nine-month period in 1944 and is now available in reprints. Several of Bert Stiles' stories in Part I of this present volume follow the path of those presented in the previous books by the same editors, *Serenade to the Blue Lady* and *Midnight Serenade*, and trace experiences of the years up to the end of his flight training. As in the two previous compilations, Parts II and III of the book are based on Bert's



wartime experiences while in the European Theater of Operations.

"After Hamburg, they thought the flak over Berlin would be minor league. But the flak was major league all the way and it was everywhere. Nothing but black puffs from there to hell, not trailing behind, but poking up to powder our nose."

"'Godamighty, how'd we do it?' Sharpe said. His hands were shaky and the sweat was draining down his back and pooling up in his electric shoes. He turned the electricity off, and he still oozed. Lt. Newton crawled back through the bom-bays on a health inspection tour. Crone was stroking his gun kindly. Beach was moaning about his gun covers. Sharpe was still sweating."

Included are comments from several of Bert's crew who flew over twenty missions with him and who spent a year of the war with him before he signed up for a tour in P-51 fighters and was killed in combat. Notes of explanation and photos are also interspersed preceding each of the eighteen stories and an epilogue. *Serenade to the World from 30,000* is softbound, 194pp, and is available for \$17.00 - includes shipping. Send check or money order to: Robert Cooper, 30 College Park, Davis CA 95616, or call him at 530-756-4088.

Postscript: Editors Dickison and Cooper are planning to publish the only other complete book written by Bert Stiles entitled, by Bert: *One Year, One Lifetime*, this summer 2000. The material covers his experience at Colorado College in 1938-39 and includes photographs, memories and a good bit of his unique philosophy. It may be pre-purchased for \$15.00 from Bob Cooper at the above address. Proceeds from the book sales will be used to establish a Creative Writing scholarship at Colorado College.

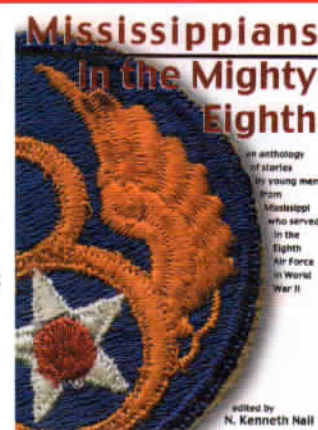
Bert Stiles' website:  
<http://www.egroups.com/group/bertstiles/>  
eMail: Bertstiles @egroups.com

## MISSISSIPPIANS IN THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

Edited by N. Kenneth Nail

The long-awaited anthology produced by members of the Mississippi Chapter of the

Historical Society has arrived and is even more impressive than anticipated. Many years of compiling stories written by Chapter members has accomplished the mission of publishing the definitive volume of works by an 8th AFHS Chapter.



*Mississippians in the Mighty Eighth* is a personal book. In large format on high quality paper, the stories included give the reader a very close look at the feelings and experiences of those who served in the Mighty Eighth. Especially impressive are the descriptions of life on the English bases as recalled and interpreted by the 8th airmen who came from varied backgrounds and walks of life. Combat experiences are featured in many of the stories as well, and the feeling of authenticity pervades the entire 308 pages. Period photos from the writers' personal memorabilia are included throughout.

Several stories are written by family members of 8th veterans; especially notable are remembrances of warbrides of the airmen. Over 80 chapters are presented with titles such as *No Parachute!!* by Wallace Crumby, *Aircraft named D'Nif* by Willard Nester, "Flak Leave" by Craig Harris, *Did you say The Infantry?* by Charles Randle, *It Was My War, Too* an offering by Ethelda Nail, *Spam What Am!* by J. Paul Duke, and *Flying the Ball* written by William "Phil" McGuire:

"Twenty-five times I pulled the pins; twenty-five times I got into the ball; twenty-five times I stayed in the ball for as many hours as the mission was long, and I never got a good shot."

Editor Ken Nail grew up in Grenada County, Mississippi and served as a navigator with the 457th Bomb Group at Glatton. He and his wife Ethelda own and operate The Cottage Bookshop in Tupelo. Ken is active in the Mississippi Chapter and publishes its newsletter, *Contrails and Propwash*. His expertise as a bibliophile



is evident throughout this beautiful anthology of 8th Air Force wartime stories. Ken states that sales of the volume have been extraordinarily good and a second printing will be released in the near future. Mississippi Chapter members are proud to note that all profits from the book sales will be donated to the Mighty

Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum to assist in continuing to preserve the heritage of the Mighty Eighth. Available from: The Mississippi Chapter 8th AFHS, 214 North Madison, Tupelo MS 38804. telephone 662-844-1553. Price: \$45. & \$3.00 s&h

*All book reviews unless otherwise bylined are by the 8th AF NEWS Editor*

## I'M HIT!! - I'M HIT!!

I was assistant Ops officer in our squadron, the 413th of the 96th Bomb Group. As such I didn't have a crew, although I was checked out as a first pilot. I managed to get my missions by flying copilot for different crews until I eventually got my own crew.

I don't really remember the mission target, but I think it was Kassel. Norman Tanner was pilot. Before takeoff I equipped myself with my survival kit, .45 Colt in a shoulder holster and my trusty hunting knife on my belt. Also extra smokes, candy bars and gum.

Everything proceeded routinely except for some close flak burst sand, of course,

the fighters. Norm and I took turns flying formation. We were low ship in our echelon which meant that I had to peer across the cockpit to see the element leader's airplane.

Some time in the melee and the terrible noise of the guns, shouts of the crew members and roaring engines, I squirmed around in my seat, trying to keep in formation when I felt a sharp pain in my gluteus-maximus. I was too busy to really be scared although the thought of being hit was really unsettling. When things calmed down a bit I reached down and my hand came back all bloody. I was also sitting in a pool of blood. Imagine the thoughts that went through my mind.

How would I explain my wound back home (if I ever got back home)? Would I have to have surgery? Would it affect my libido?

Bombs were away and we headed for home, fighting most of the way. I was so busy I almost forgot about my wound, although I was still sloshing around in the pool of blood in my seat. Back over the channel I had time to leave my seat and assess my ....rear end. It had turned out to be a superficial cut.

You can bet that I never claimed a Purple Heart.

**Robert B. Mahan, 96th BG  
Lincoln, NE**

## NEW YORK CHAPTERS DEDICATE 8TH AF PLAQUE

On Veterans Day, Thursday November 11, 1999 inside the State Capital Justice Building in Albany, New York a plaque created and designed by Gus Nathan, Marketing Director of the City of Yonkers Chamber of Commerce, was unveiled and dedicated in honor of the thousands of 8th Air Force New Yorkers who flew, fought and died in the air war against Nazi Germany during World War II.

Attending the dedication program and luncheon were leaders of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society from the Capital District, The Buffalo Area and the New

York metro area, whose members were stationed in England during the conflict as part of the US Army Air Forces. The memorial plaque was sponsored, in part, through a New York State grant to the New York State Southern Wing Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society through the leadership of New York Senator Serphin R. Maltese.

Mr. Nathan, Past

**MARCH 2000 (00-1)**

National Commander of the 486th Bomb Group Association, Vice President of the New York State Southern Wing Chapter of the 8th AFHS and still active in Veterans Affairs is a published calligrapher. When asked by the veterans organization to create a memorial plaque in order to "Keep the Memories Alive" Gus combined an honor for those who served actively, those that were prisoners of war, and for the men and women who died in the cause of freedom.

The Historical Society plaque seeks to memorialize, in perpetuity, the enormous sacrifices of

a generation of Americans who confronted and defeated the worst tyranny the world has ever known. No tribute can ever adequately pay homage to their courage but this special plaque offers a message to future generations never to ever forget what they accomplished and "TO KEEP THE MEMORIES ALIVE."

-submitted by the New York State Southern Wing Chapter



## Moments of Valor

The tumult and shouting have died away. The B-17s and B-24s will never again assemble into strike formation in the bitter cold of the embattled skies. Never again will the musical thunder of their passage cause the very earth to tremble, the source of sound lost in infinity and seeming to emanate from all things, visible and invisible. The great deep-throated engines are forever silent, replaced by the flat, toneless roar of the jets and

rockets. But, on bleak and lonely winter nights, ghosts of squadrons take off silently in the whirling mist of the North Sea from the ancient weed-choked runways and wing away towards the east, never to return. On other nights, the deserted woodlands ring with unheard laughter and gay voices of young men and women who once passed that way. Recollections of all these fade a little with each passing year until at last

there will finally remain only the indelible records of the all-seeing master of the universe to recall the deeds of valor excelled by no other nation, arm, or service. These sacred scrolls will remain forever the heritage of the free and untrampled people of this earth.

**-by Colonel Bud Peaslee, 384th Bomb Group; 1st Scouting Force in "Moments of Valor"**



385th BG B-17 Flying Fortress



448th NG B-24 Liberator

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY HONORS FOUNDER JOHN H. WOOLNOUGH

John H. Woolnough will be honored through the **2000 Charitable Endowment Fund Drive** by the members of the 8th AFHS. The Historical Society Board of Directors has announced that a special endowment to name the Library at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum after the Society's founder will be established from contributions by the membership and friends of the 8th AF Historical Society.

The Library will be named The John H. Woolnough Library in memorial ceremonies next year. Our Endowment goal is **\$250,000** and the opportunity for contributions will also be included in the member dues mailout in September 1999. A separate notice will be sent to all life members of the Historical Society. This year's fund drive is most special, centering on a permanent recognition from our Historical Society membership.

The Memorial Library is an appropriate tribute to Founder John Woolnough. He spent his post-war years preserving 8th AF

history, collecting thousands of documents and volumes of books directly related to the history of the 8th Air Force. His founding of our Historical Society provided a mechanism to establish a permanent home for the Eighth and the museum to house his personal archives to tell future generations the story of the Mighty Eighth.



Members and friends may send in their tax-deductible donations to the endowment with their dues statement return, or may use this form to participate in the Endowment Fund Drive. All donors will be listed in a Contributor's name book permanently placed in the Library. All contributors of \$500 or more will be recognized on a special plaque within the Memorial Library. We can make this year's Giving Drive a great success by supporting the 8th AFHS' **John Woolnough Memorial Library Endowment**. Please send in your check and the coupon form as soon as you can!



### 8TH AF HISTORICAL SOCIETY JOHN H. WOOLNOUGH 2000 MEMORIAL LIBRARY FUND DRIVE

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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

AMOUNT  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_

GROUP OR  
UNIT \_\_\_\_\_

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

## HISTORICAL SOCIETY INFORMATION OFFICE UP AND RUNNING

The Historical Society's Information Office is open and has a special 800 telephone number. A long time in the planning, our offices space at the Heritage Museum has been expanded to twice the original size and our full-time staff is at the ready to field inquiries and supply information to all interested in 8th AF history and activities. Through arrangements with the staff of the Museum, archival materials in the Library archives will be at our disposal to retrieve information and give answers to those

who call. A new 8th AFHS brochure and membership application form is now being printed and will be available for distribution.

Call during working hours to Connie Metts or Office Manager Kathy McCurry if you need assistance in any area of Historical Society activities.

**8TH AFHS INFORMATION OFFICE 1-800-982-1942**

### SPOTTER - JUNKERS 88



This is a comparatively small fast bomber and reconnaissance machine (similar to our "Blendheim"). It is powered with two 1,100 h.p. Jumo motors and carries a crew of three, and three machine guns. A more recent model, the Ju. 88K, is supposed to have a top speed of about 300 m.p.h. and a range of 1,300 miles, so the performance of the Ju. 88 is almost certainly quite a bit lower. Distinctive features are the short nose--shorter than is usual on German aircraft of this type, the way the engine nacelles hang below the wing, and the straight lines of the fuselage when seen from the side. The break in the trailing edge towards the tip of the wings projects slightly beyond the rudder.

### UNIT CONTACT ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

7 PRG George Lawson 4390 14th St. St. Petersburg, FL 33703

352 FG Richard J. DeBruin 234 N. 74th St. Milwaukee, WI 53213 414-771-0744

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353 FG Bob Brackstone 6106 Willow Hgwy. Grand Ledge, MI 48837 517-627-9819

392 BG Cliff Peterson 2120 Woodcrest Winter Park, FL 32792 407-647-7741

34 BG Hal Province 153 N. Hill Dr. Carriere, MS 39426

466 BG Louis Loevsky 16 Hamilton Dr. E. Noprth Caldwell, NJ 07006 973-226-4624

358 FG Abraham Ekhaus 7951 Blue Jay Ln. Indianapolis, IN 56260-2466 317-872-9452

401st Bomb Group George Menzel P. O. Box 15356, Savannah GA 31416

361st Fighter Group Arthur Trilli 906 Broad Ave. N. Belle, Vernon PA 15012

Scouting Force Assn. E. Richard Atkins 1304 Cochise Drive, Arlington, TX 76012 817-261-3007 E-Mail dick8af@flash.net

97th BG Gene Aenchbacher 432 Longford CT, Wichita KS 67206 Ph 316-682-0098 Fax: 316-682-9024

### CHAPTER PRESIDENT ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS

**Central Texas Chapter** Thomas M. Lawler 5324 Wellington Dr. Austin, TX 78723 512-926-6641

**Michigan Chapter** Maurice (Suds) Sumney P. O. Box 2527 Kalamazoo, MI 49003 616-679-4574

**Massachusetts Chapter** William Campbell 421 Wilson St. Clinton, MA 01510 978-368-8864

**Virginia Chapter** Edward C. Ewen 124 Hempstead Rd. Williamsburg, VA 23188 757-565-2625

**Louisiana Chapter** Harry (Doug) Tanner 2923 Roy Bunch Rd. Sulphur, LA 70663 318-527-0322

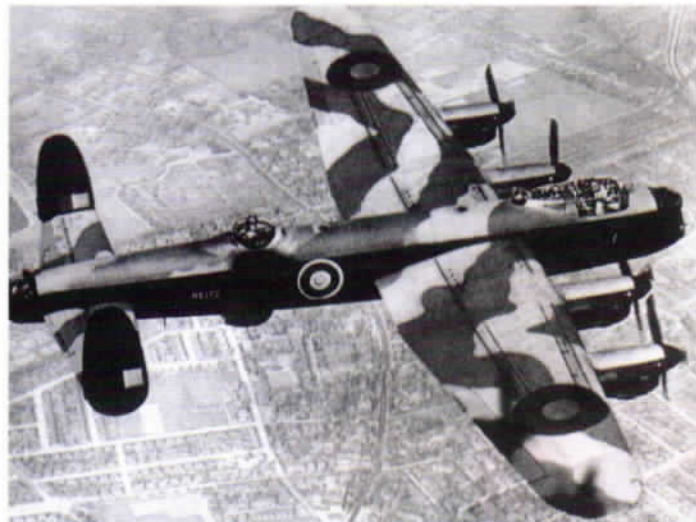
**Colorado Chapter** James Peterson, Sr. 1740 E. Jamison Pl. Littleton, CO 80122 303-794-1211

A complete list of all Chapter Presidents and all known Unit Contacts will be printed in a later issue this year. Please bring us up to date and keep us up to date so we may pass on the proper information to anyone who wishes it. If you are in doubt about our records please send your current information to the Unit and Chapter Committee. -- Jim Erskine

## LITTLE FRIENDS OF THE ROYAL AIR FORCE

Dear Sir,

Whilst reading the December 1999 issue of 8th AF News, I was very interested to read the article taken from *Stars and Stripes* for December 1944. It described the attacks on supply and communication targets used to reinforce the German ground forces in the Ardennes offensive



Avro Lancaster of the RAF 617th Bomber Squadron

and in particular the massive attacks, which took place on Sunday December 24th after weather conditions had at last dramatically improved. The article ended by noting also attacks by RAF forces over the Christmas weekend including raids on the railway marshalling yard in Cologne.

As a keen researcher of the air war at this time I would like to describe an attack which took place during this weekend by a small force of RAF aircraft. The attack also had an 8th AF connection and this is where some of your members may be able to help me in my research. The operation took place on Saturday December 23rd and involved a force of just 27 Lancaster and 3 Mosquito aircraft to attack the Gremberg Marshalling Yards in Cologne. After take-off at 1030 hours the force headed towards the coast to form up into three groups of 10 aircraft, and almost immediately tragedy struck when two Lancasters joining the forma-

tions collided, resulting in the deaths of all 14 crewmembers. The remainder of the force continued on towards Germany where weather conditions rapidly changed from the forecast complete cloud cover, ideal for the type of operation that was to be carried out using ground controlled blind bombing known as 'Oboe', to almost clear blue skies by the time the force reached the target area at approximately 1245 hours. In view of the weather conditions it was decided that each aircraft would bomb visually but for whatever reason the leading group carried on with their 'Oboe' attack which involved the Oboe leader aircraft flying straight and level for some 10 minutes and it was this group that suffered the most casualties. A combination of flak and attacks by Me 109 and FW 190 fighters which suddenly appeared accounted for the loss of six aircraft out of the leading group of

10, five Lancasters and one Mosquito. Out of a force of 30 aircraft which took off from England a total of 8 aircraft had been lost and this figure might have been even higher but for the intervention of P-51 Mustangs which suddenly appeared and which undoubtedly helped to break up the attacks by enemy fighter aircraft.

It is thought that the enemy fighters were up that day to meet a force of American bombers. It is known that there were B17's attacking Ehrang and Kaiserslautern marshalling yards, and B24's attacking targets at Junkerath, Arhweiler and Darlem on December 23rd. It is possible that the P51's were part of a force which were taking part in a fighter sweep of the Bonn area, or they might have been some of the escort fighters protecting the bomber force. If any of your members, particularly former P51 pilots, were involved in missions on December 23rd and recall any incidents which could have involved the attack by the RAF force, I would be very pleased to hear from them. As a matter of interest, three of the aircraft lost during the RAF attack were credited to one of the Luftwaffe's leading aces, Major Hackl who ended the war with a total of 192 victories making him one of the leading German fighter aces. I mentioned earlier that two B17 bombers of the 306th Bomb Group collided while returning to their base at Thurleigh the same day when they were in the landing circuit. Any details regarding this incident would be most welcome.

Can I just say how much I enjoy reading 8th AF News? It is a superb production and seems to get better all the time. Congratulations to everyone involved. Yours sincerely,

**Neil Cockburn Member Number 33114**  
22 Coombe Drive  
Dunstable Bedfordshire  
England LU6 2AE



USAAF P-51D Mustang

# Eighth Air Force Historical Society PX Notes

## Spring 2000

### Happy spring everyone!!!

The 8th AFHS PX has begun the new millennium with great success. We wish to thank everyone for all of your patronage and support. We have some fantastic new items to feature this quarter.

One of the greatest 8th Air Force fighter aces to emerge from WWII was Colonel Robert S. Johnson of the 56th Fighter Group. In the late '50s, this 28-victory ace wrote the story of his combat experiences. The book, entitled *Thunderbolt!* (B16), was co-authored by Martin Caidin. Through the good graces of the publisher, we have managed to secure a very small amount of reprinted 1997 signed editions. We are offering them at the original price of \$19.95 plus S/H. Col. Johnson passed away in 1998. We have less than 50 signed copies available. Don't hesitate! Also, we have a special offer that will appeal to all our POW veterans, especially those held at Stalag Luft I at Barth, Germany. *Zemke's Stalag* (S3) tells the incredible story



**The Crewmen**

of one of the 8th Air Force's most brilliant Commanders. Hubert Zemke's "behind the wire" experiences as Stalag Luft I senior officer are legendary. This out of print book is written by Roger Freeman. He skillfully captures the bravery, tenacity, and courage that was "Hub" Zemke. This book is not to be missed!!! The original selling price of the book was \$29.95, but for a very short time we are offering this fine piece for only \$15.95 plus P/H. That's almost a 50% savings!!!

We are very pleased to offer the fantastic compilation entitled, *Mississippians of the Mighty Eighth* edited by Kenneth Nail. Please see the excellent book review in this issue for complete details on this superb work. Only \$44.95 plus S/H.

Lastly, we are pleased to offer for the first time an open edition print. Our good friend, Gil Cohen has offered the print "The Crewman" to our members. The original charcoal and pastel drawing is now on permanent display at the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia and appeared on the cover of the September issue of the 8th AFHS Journal. "The Crewman" depicts a typical 8th Air Force bomber crewmember. By the expression in his face, one cannot tell if it is a look of determination, fear, remorse, homesickness, bravery or courage. Maybe, it is all of these expressions and emotions culminated into one look of "just being there." It is one of the most powerful works Gil has ever produced. The print measures 17" x 25"; image size 12 1/4" x 20". Each edition is personally signed by

this world renowned aviation artist.

The price is only \$75.00 and will be sent to you in a proper crush proof shipping tube. If you wish Gil to personalize your print, just let us know how you would like it signed.



Gil has been a wonderful friend to the 8th AFHS and it is an honor to include this fine piece of art to our PX inventory. This is the perfect gift for any "Crewman" of the Mighty Eighth. You won't be disappointed!!!

We wish you all good health, good wishes and hope to hear from you soon! We are always here to serve you. God Bless!  
Cheers!

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



Please use the latest PX page when ordering.

Prices listed are good through 1 May 2000.

## 8TH AIR FORCE LOGO PATCHES

QTY.		TOTAL
___	<b>P1</b> 4" Jacket Patch (Blue/White with 8th AF emblem) \$ 3.95	___
___	<b>P2</b> Special Blazer patch (Gold Bouillon thread) \$ 19.95	___
___	<b>P3</b> 8th AF Shoulder Patch (wartime patch reproduction) \$ 2.95	___
___	<b>P4</b> Deluxe 8th AF Shoulder Patch (Gold Bouillon thread) \$ 17.95	___

## JEWELRY

___	<b>J1</b> 3/4 inch 8th AFHS Lapel Pin \$ 2.95	___
___	<b>J2</b> 3/4 inch 8th AFHS Life Member Lapel Pin \$ 3.50	___
___	<b>J3</b> 8th AFHS Tie Tac (Regular) \$ 3.95	___
___	<b>J4</b> 8th AFHS Tie Tac (Life Member) \$ 4.50	___
___	<b>J5</b> B-17 Belt Buckle, (Pewter finish) \$ 13.95	___
___	<b>J6</b> B-24 Belt Buckle, (Pewter finish) \$ 13.95	___
___	<b>J7</b> 8th AF Bolo Tie \$ 17.95	___
___	___ Gold Medallion Clasp with Gold Rope \$ 17.95	___
___	<b>J8</b> Solid Pewter Tie Tacs @ \$6.95 each \$ 6.95	___
	<i>please circle your choice(s)</i>	
	B-17 B-24 P-47 P-51 P-38	
___	<b>J9</b> Key ring Tabs @ \$3.95 each \$ 3.95	___
	<i>please circle your choice(s)</i>	
	B-17 B-24 P-47 P-51 P-38	
___	<b>J10</b> 8th AF Key Ring - Metal key ring with 8th AF emblem \$ 3.95	___
___	<b>J11</b> Gold Ladies 8th AF Bow Broach Pin \$ 8.95	___
___	<b>J12</b> Ladies Gold plated Earrings, 8th AF emblem \$ 12.95	___
	(pierced ears only)	
___	<b>J13</b> Miniature Wings - lapel type \$ 4.95	___
	<i>please circle your choice</i>	
	Crew Member Pilot	

## AUTOMOTIVE ACCESSORIES

___	<b>A1</b> 8th AF Logo Metal Grille Ornament \$ 12.95	___
___	<b>A2</b> 8th AF License Plate - 6"x12" \$ 3.95	___
___	<b>A3</b> 8th AF License Plate Holder (one per order) \$ 5.95	___
___	<b>A4</b> 8th AF Bumper Stickers @ .90 each \$ .90	___
	or 3 Bumper Stickers for \$2.00 \$ 2.00	___
___	<b>A5</b> 8th AF 4" Sticker @ .75 each \$ .75	___
	or 3 Stickers for \$2.00 \$ 2.00	___
___	<b>A6</b> 8th AF 3 1/4" Inside Decals @ .75 each \$ .75	___
	or 3 Inside Decals for \$2.00 \$ 2.00	___

## CLOTHING

QTY.		TOTAL
___	<b>C1</b> 8th AF 'Better' Cap - Black w/embroidered emblem \$ 17.95	___
___	<b>C2</b> 8th AF Golf Cap - Embroidered emblem, fits all sizes \$ 12.95	___
	Red ___ White ___ Blue ___	
___	<b>C3</b> 25th Anniversary 8th AFHS Golf Cap - Embroidered emblem, Silver Gray. Limited edition. \$ 12.95	___
___	<b>C4</b> T-Shirts - 8th AF logo in full color	___
	<i>Please indicate size(s) wanted</i>	
	___ S ___ M ___ L ___ XL _____ \$ 10.95	___
	___ XXL _____ \$ 12.95	___
___	<b>C5</b> Sweatshirts - 8th AF logo in full color	___
	<i>Please indicate size(s) wanted</i>	
	___ S ___ M ___ L ___ XL _____ \$ 19.95	___
	___ XXL _____ \$ 22.95	___
___	<b>C6</b> Golf Shirts - Embroidered 8th AF logo in full color	___
	<i>Please indicate size(s) and color(s) wanted</i>	
	___ S ___ M ___ L ___ XL _____ \$ 22.00	___
	___ XXL _____ \$ 24.00	___
	___ Red ___ White ___ Blue	
___	<b>C7</b> A-2 Jacket, genuine goatskin <i>Order one size larger than your suit size</i>	___
	Indicate ___ Regular ___ Long	
	<i>Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery</i> \$190.00	___

## MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS

___	<b>M1</b> 8th AF Wall Clock \$ 19.95	___
___	<b>M2</b> 8th AF Luggage Tags \$ 4.25	___
	or 2 for \$7.95 \$ 7.95	___
___	<b>M3</b> 8th AF Zippy Letter Opener \$ 2.00	___
	or 3 for \$4.95 \$ 4.95	___
___	<b>M4</b> 8th AF Golf Towel - Embroidered 8thAFHS logo, w/ grommet \$ 13.50	___
___	<b>M5</b> 'The Sky was Never Still' - 8th AF poetry \$ 14.95	___

## 8TH AIR FORCE ART

___	<b>P1</b> <b>The Crewman</b> - Limited Edition print by renowned aviation artist Gil Cohen. Signed by the artist. Painting was the cover of the Sept. '99 8th AFHS Journal. If you wish to have your print personalized, please include your request on a separate piece of paper and enclose with order. \$ 75.00	___
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## 8TH AIR FORCE BOOKS

QTY.		TOTAL
	ROGER FREEMAN BOOKS: THE FOLLOWING POPULAR HARDCOVER BOOKS WERE WRITTEN BY NOTED 8TH AF HISTORIAN ROGER FREEMAN	
___	<b>B1</b> <b>Mighty Eighth Warpaint &amp; Heraldry</b> , Roger Freeman, 1997. Hdbd, 8 1/2 x 11, 160 pp, Color photos. The latest edition from 8th AF historian Freeman. Examines the colors, markings and heraldry of every 8th AF unit. A must have book! \$ 34.95	___
___	<b>B2</b> <b>Fight for the Sky, Allied Fighter Aircraft in Europe and North Africa 1939-1945</b> , Roger Freeman, 1999. Hdbd. Companion volume to <b>Raiding the Reich</b> (B5). Comprehensive history of the Fighter airwar over Europe and North Africa. Well written and contains over 250 superb black and white photographs. \$ 29.95	___
___	<b>B3</b> <b>Mighty Eighth in Art</b> , Roger Freeman, 1996. Hdbd, 11 1/4 x 9, 160pp. Remarkable collection of aviation art relating to the 8th AF. Beautiful book! Highly recommended! \$ 39.95	___
___	<b>B4</b> <b>Raiding the Reich: The Allied Strategic Bombing Offensive in Europe</b> , Roger Freeman, 1996. Hdbd, 8 3/4 x 11 1/4, 160 pp, 260 b/w photos. Study of the 'Round the Clock' bombing theory. Another Freeman classic! \$ 29.95	___
___	<b>B5</b> <b>Airfields of the Eighth, Then &amp; Now</b> , Roger Freeman, 1987. Hdbd. Each 8th AF base is presented in this 'must-have' book. The history of the base, and the 'then and now' photos illustrate this great work! \$ 35.00	___
___	<b>B6</b> <b>The B-17 Flying Fortress Story - Design - Production - History</b> , Freeman/Osborne, 1998. Hdbd. Chronicles evolution of the aircraft. Brief history on every B-17 that served in World War II...all 12,371 of them! A great testament to the mighty Fort. \$ 45.00	___



Please use the latest PX page when ordering.

Prices listed are good through 1 May 2000.

QTY.			TOTAL
—	<b>B7 Thunderbolt Aces of the 8th Air Force</b> , 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 56th Fighter Group.	\$ 15.95	_____
—	<b>B8 Mustang Aces of the 8th Air Force</b> , Jerry Scutts, 1994. Stbd., 7 1/4" x 10", 96 pp. 103 b/w photos, 66 color profile paintings. History of P-51 Mustang aces of the 8th AF. Covers all 8th AF Fighter Groups and respective aces.	\$ 15.95	_____
—	<b>B9 Fighter Command</b> , Ethell & Sand, 1992. Hdbd, 10" x 10", 180 pp. American fighters of WWII in color. The story of the men, airplanes, bases, and countryside, plus excellent first-person accounts from WWII fighter pilots. Illustrated with over 200 original color photos! Terrific book!	\$ 29.95	_____
—	<b>B10 Bomber Command</b> , Ethell, 1993. Hdbd, 10" x 10", 180pp. American bombers of WWII in color. Unique collection of USAAC bombers in original color photos. First hand accounts from bomber crewmen. Excellent book!	\$ 29.95	_____
—	<b>B11 Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories</b> , McLachlan, 1993. Hdbd, 6 3/4" x 9 1/2", 208 pp., 150 photos. Gripping, graphic and honest first-hand accounts from 8th Air Force bomber crew experiences. Set against previously unpublished photos, this book paints a vivid picture of life as a bomber crewman in the 8th Air Force. Great reading!	\$ 37.95	_____
—	<b>B12 The U.S. Eighth Air Force at Warton 1942-1945, The World's Greatest Air Depot</b> , Holmes. Detailed history of Base Air Depot Number 2 where over 10,000 aircraft were modified, repaired and processed. Excellent account of this amazing airfield.	\$ 24.95	_____
—	<b>B13 The Liberator Album</b> , Bailey & North, 1998. Hdbd, 8 1/2" x 11". 500+ b/w photos. Superb collection of 2nd Air Division B-24 photos. Each 2nd AD Group is represented in this outstanding book. Fine collection of color profile paintings. A must have book!	\$ 39.95	_____
—	<b>B14 Pride of Seattle: The History of the First 300 B-17Fs</b> , Birdsall, 1998. A brief history of the first 300 Boeing B-17Fs built. Detailed accounts of their respective involvement in the Pacific, Mediterranean and Europe. Aircraft of the 91st, 92nd, 303rd, 305th, and 306th BGs are examined. 8 1/2" x 11", 64 pp.	\$ 9.95	_____
—	<b>B15 8th Air Force Yearbook</b> (reprint); Hdbd., 224 pp. Pictorial. Superb photo book published especially for the 8th Air Force Historical Society members. Terrific book!	\$ 32.95	_____
—	<b>B16 Thunderbolt!</b> , Johnson/Caldin, 1997. Softbound. Epic story of Robert S. Johnson, 28-victory ace of the 56th Fighter Group. Signed copy - very limited!	\$ 19.95	_____
—	<b>B17 Raiders of the Reich: Air Battle - Western Europe 1942-1945</b> , Bowman & Boiten, 1996. Hdbd, 6" x 9". 224 pp., 32 b/w photos. Superb book giving vivid accounts from not only Allied aircrews, but Luftwaffe fighter pilots. Interesting reading and captivating stories from both sides.	\$ 29.95	_____
—	<b>B18 The Legendary Norden Bombsight</b> , Pardini. History of the famous Norden bombsight. This book covers the development and use of one of the most secret weapons of WWII. 6" x 9", 352 pp., 70 photos.	\$ 29.95	_____
—	<b>B19 US 8th Air Force in Camera - Volume 1 - Pearl harbor to Big Week 1941-1944</b> , Bowman. Hdbd, 7 3/4" x 10 1/2", 192 pp., 220 b/w photos. Fully illustrated in black and white photos, author captures a pictorial aspect of the Mighty Eighth at war!	\$ 29.95	_____
—	<b>B20 US 8th Air Force in Camera - Volume 2- 1944-45</b> , Bowman. Hdbd, 7 3/4" x 10 1/2", 192 pp., 200+ b/w photos. Companion Volume to Item B20. Superbly illustrated and captioned!	\$ 29.95	_____
—	<b>B21 The 8th Air Force Album</b> , 1978, Hdbd, 9" x 12", 224 pp. Photo essay of the 8th Air Force in WWII. 1150 photos, including 250 nose art photos. Published by the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Excellent book!	\$ 29.95	_____
—	<b>B22 Squadrons of Deception - The 36th Bomb Squadron in WWII</b> , Hutton, 8 1/2" x 11". Superb unit history of the 36th BS Radar Countermeasures Group assigned to the 8TH AF. Terrific book about a subject few know about. Highly recommended!	\$ 34.95	_____
—	<b>B23 Happy Jack's Go Buggy</b> , Ilfrey/Copeland, 1998. Hdbd, 8 1/2" x 11", 125 pp., 200+ photos. Story of eight victory fighter pilot Jack Ilfrey of the 20th Fighter group. One of the finest tales of aerial combat ever written. Hard to put down! <i>Signed by Jack Ilfrey - a great collector's item!</i>	\$ 35.00	_____
—	<b>B24 The Münster Raid: Before and After-</b> Hawkins, Hdbd, 543 pp., illustrated. Detailed account of 8th Air Force mission to Münster, Germany - October 10, 1943. Well researched! Includes numerous personal accounts from 8th AF air and ground crews. Superb updated edition!	\$ 32.00	_____
—	<b>B25 Mississippians of the Mighty Eighth</b> , Nail, 1999. Hdbd., 8 1/2" x 11". Compilation of 8th AF veterans from the state of Mississippi. Excellent reading and superbly edited by Ken Nail. A great anthology of veterans' accounts.	\$ 44.95	_____
—	<b>B26 USAAF Fighter Stories: Dramatic Accounts of American Fighter Pilots in Training and Combat Over Europe in World War 2</b> , McLachlan, 1997. Hdbd, 6 1/2" x 9", 192 pp., 180 photos. Well illustrated accounts of training, combat, bail-out dramas, POW, and evadee adventures. Stories from the 4th, 20th, 55th, 78th, 339th, 352nd, 356th, 361st, and 364th FG personnel. Aircraft archeology stories. Great book!	\$ 39.95	_____
—	<b>B27 Serenade to the Big Bird</b> , Stiles, 1947. Hdbd. A true 8th Air Force classic! Back in print for the first time in many years. Stiles flew 35 missions in the 91st Bomb Group and wrote this fine book prior to his death in November 1944. A great read for a great price!	\$ 19.95	_____
—	<b>B28 Called to Command - The Life of General Gerald Johnson</b> , 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	_____
—	<b>B29 America's Aces in a Day</b> , 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	_____
—	<b>B30 After the Liberators - A Father's Last Mission, a Son's Lifelong Journey</b> , McGuire, Stbd; photos. Story of a son's search to find the truth about his father's death. Touching reading! Superb research tool for anyone who is looking for information about an 8th AF veteran.	\$ 16.95	_____



Please use the latest PX page when ordering.

Prices listed are good through 1 May 2000.

QTY.		TOTAL
—	<b>B31</b> <b>Bombs Away! Pathfinders of the 8th Air Force</b> , Thixton/Mottat/O'Neil. 1998, hdbd., Photos. Remarkable story of the 8th Air Force Pathfinder Groups (95th and 482nd Bomb Groups). Well written and very interesting. <span style="float: right;">\$ 25.00</span>	_____
—	<b>B32</b> <b>The Interrogator</b> , The Story of Hanns Joachim Scharff, Master interrogator of the Luftwaffe. hdbd, 6" x 9", 352 pp., 150+ photos. The amazing story of the man who questioned captured 8th AF fighter and bomber crewmen during WWII. Long out of print! <span style="float: right;">\$ 29.95</span>	_____
—	<b>B33</b> <b>Over Here-</b> 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. <span style="float: right;">\$ 34.95</span>	_____
—	<b>B34</b> <b>Glenn Miller in England, Then &amp; Now-</b> 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. <span style="float: right;">\$ 39.95</span>	_____

### THE 'KIDS' HANGAR



**Children's T-Shirts** - 100% washable Cotton with 8th AF Logo in full color. Kid's size versions of our Adult T-Shirts. All sizes measured in common Youth sizes.

\_\_\_ XS (2-4) \_\_\_ S (6-8) \_\_\_ M (10-12) \_\_\_ L (14-16)

TOTAL

\$ 8.95

QTY.		TOTAL
—	<b>V1</b> <b>Pistol Packin' Mama</b> , 60 minutes. Story of the crew of the Pistol Packin' Mama B-17 crew from the 390th BG. Their story is heart-wrenching, emotional and extremely stimulating. Very highly recommended! <span style="float: right;">\$ 24.95</span>	_____
—	<b>V2</b> <b>Wing and a Prayer: The Story of Utah Man</b> , 58 minutes. August 1, 1943 - Target, Ploesti, Rumania. One of the most infamous missions in which the 8th AF participated. Emmy award winner. Absolutely wonderful! <span style="float: right;">\$ 24.95</span>	_____
—	<b>V3</b> <b>Start Engines -- Plus 50 Years</b> , 60 minutes. Excellent video covering all aspects of life in the 8th Air Force during WWII. Produced by the 8th AFHS. Highly recommended! <span style="float: right;">\$ 24.95</span>	_____
—	<b>V4</b> <b>Behind the Wire</b> , 80+ minutes. Superb documentary focusing on the German POW experience. Great first-person accounts. Don't miss this award-winning film. Produced by the 8th AFHS. <span style="float: right;">\$ 24.95</span>	_____
—	<b>V5</b> <b>Memories of the 91st BG at Bassingbourn</b> . First person accounts and wartime footage make this brilliant film a superb addition to your 8th AF video library. <span style="float: right;">\$ 24.95</span>	_____

Quantities are limited on Sale Items

### SALE ITEMS!

Sale prices good through 1 May 2000

QTY.		TOTAL
—	<b>S1</b> <b>SALE BOOK The Weathermen Let Them Fly</b> - Story of the 8th AF Weather Squadrons, Brown. Very interesting reading! Was \$13.95 -- now only \$9.50! <span style="float: right;">\$ 9.50</span>	_____
—	<b>S2</b> <b>SALE BOOK The Friendly Invasion</b> , 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! <span style="float: right;">\$ 10.00</span>	_____
—	<b>S3</b> <b>SALE BOOK Zemke's Stalag</b> , Freeman, Hardbound, B&W illustrations. A wonderful work by noted 8th AF historian Roger Freeman. POW experiences of Hubert Zemke, former Commander of the 56th FG and Senior Officer at Stalag Luft I. Out of print! Was \$29.95 - now only \$15.95! Great reading at almost 50% saving! <span style="float: right;">\$ 15.95</span>	_____

### ORDERING INFORMATION

**DIRECTIONS:** Fill in quantity ordered in first blank next to Item Number. Be sure to indicate choices (if applicable) and sizes (if applicable). Fill in the total cost of items in the last blank line next to the per-item price. Add the cost of all items ordered and write the total in the blank below.

Add Postage & Handling charge, write in the grand total, and PRINT your name and address.

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     Under \$20.00, add \$3.50 \_\_\_\_\_  
     Over \$20.00, add \$4.50 \_\_\_\_\_

Overseas orders: add additional \$5.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Grand Total , payable to 8THAFPX \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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c/o M. Copeland

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Apple valley, MN 55124

No Phone Orders Please



# THE DEATH MARCHES

During the Winter of 1944-45 the Russians and Allied armies were squeezing the Germans from the east and west. The prisoner of war camps were rife with rumors. Hitler would hold them as hostages. They would all be shot. The Germans would exterminate them as a last act of revenge. They never felt safe from the Gestapo.

The Germans were determined to hold on to the POWs as hostages. They would be a bargaining chip when the time came for negotiations for a cease-fire. The location of the camp determined whether there was a forced march or the prisoners would stay where they were until liberated.

There were three great mass movements of Americans. Twenty-five thousand moved up the Danube past Vienna. Fifteen thousand moved along the coast into areas of Hamburg, Bremen and Luebeck. A third column of 10,000 moved west in a line south of Berlin. They were herded on foot and in box cars into the interior for the final stand.

SHAEF was keeping track of the migrations, but could do nothing about them. German intentions were unclear. Before evacuating the camps, the Nazis tried to get the American and British prisoners to fight the Russians. A pamphlet entreating them to fight the Bolsheviks was distributed. There were no volunteers. The pamphlets were kept as souvenirs or used as toilet paper.

The Germans made little or no preparation to provide shelter, food or medical care for the men. At Stalag III at Sagan, the kriegies were told at eleven o'clock that they were to move out at midnight. They were ill-prepared to move. When the bugle blew assembly, they fell out to stand in a snowstorm for a considerable length of time. Finally the order came to march. As they moved through the gate, each man was handed an unopened Red Cross package. It weighed about ten

## WAR STORIES

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society  
National Capitol Area Chapter Winter 2000



pounds. It didn't seem like much, but in their condition, it seemed mighty heavy. With boots crunching on the snow, the long line marched into the teeth of a driving snowstorm. That night they marched twenty-nine kilometers.

They trudged fifty minutes out of each hour, stopping only for a ten-minute break. Some fell asleep. Upon awakening they found their clothes frozen to the ground. Their shoes were frozen stiff. They arrived in Freiwaldau where they were crowded into a jail for an hour's rest. Their packs were getting heavy and they started lightening their load. Souvenirs and extra clothes were discarded. Canned food was left by the side of the road. Some exchanged food for lumber to build sleds.

As they left Freiwaldau about dusk, someone yelled "plane strafing." They hit the ditches. The guards thinking it was a mass break, started shooting at them. With the snow of the ditches frozen on them, they continued the march. Temperature was thirteen degrees below. They slept in open fields and in barns. Men fell and died by the roadside with snow drifting over their bodies. To keep up their strength they stole frozen turnips and potatoes they found in the

fields. There were times they ate what the farmers were feeding the cows. It was almost impossible to describe how deplorable conditions were. The experience had an impact on each marcher's life -- physically and mentally.

Occasionally they were strafed in mistake by American planes. Fighter pilots were given instructions to disrupt transportation and strafe every German vehicle they saw on the roads. They were briefed about POW movements, but the situation changed so rapidly it was impossible to brief them accurately.

There was one incident when prisoners stood with naked backs spelling out in giant letters POW. They did it to save themselves from P-47 pilots who were diving and strafing under the mistaken impression they were shooting at Germans.

The men had been on a prison train the Germans were trying to move closer to Berlin. There were no markings on the train to indicate POWs were aboard. American planes pounced on it. The engineer reached the shelter of a tunnel and halted the train for thirty-six hours. The men were without food and they became ill from the stench that filled the crowded cars. The engineer decided to make a run for it, but American planes spotted it again. The German guards ran to hide. The prisoners forced open the doors, assembled in a field where they stripped to the waist and bent over until their backs formed the letters "POWs." The planes circled slowly thinking it was a Nazi trick. The men held the formation. The pilots dipped their wings in salute and flew away.

-from WAR STORIES

National Capitol Area Chapter  
*Similar stories of forced marches of POW's are found in the histories of many allied POW camps. - Editor*

### THE FIX

Bill Carlile was the flying Control Officer for two years for the 306th Bomb Group, leaving England in October 1945. He called to say that in the "Our Lady in England" article Dec 99, the tower photo is that of the RAF Twinswood control tower, not the 306th's Thurleigh base tower as stated. The Twinswood (Farm) Fighter Training field was three miles south of Thurleigh. Neil Cockburn of Bedfordshire England writes to confirm that fact as well. Both say that there was some interaction between the two bases, some official and a good bit non-official in nature. Neil states that Twinswoods Farm was the home of the RAF's 51 Operational Training Unit (OTU) and was the actual base that Glenn Miller took off from on his ill-fated flight to the continent.

**CASTLE AIR MUSEUM - MERCED, CA**  
**Fourth Annual Open Cockpit Day**  
**Sunday, May 28, 2000**

**Admission**  
**ADULTS-\$7.00**  
**SENIORS-\$5.00**  
**YOUTH 12-17-\$5.00**  
**CHILDREN 6-11-\$2.00**  
**CHILDREN 5 AND UNDER - FREE**  
**ACTIVE MILITARY WITH IDENTIFICATION - FREE**

**Some of the Aircraft we will be opening are:**

**HH-43B HELICOPTER**  
**VULCAN C-123**  
**KC-135 B-36**  
**O-2A C-46**  
**F-4 R5D**  
**FB-111 SR-71**  
**KC-97 B-52**

**CONTACT: Amy Williams P. O. Box 488 Atwater,**  
**CA 95301 FAX 209-723-0323**

## **306th BOMB GROUP MUSEUM AT THURLEIGH**

The 306th Bomb Group Museum at Thurleigh is underway and the staff is looking for memorabilia, artifacts, books and memoirs to flesh out their present collection. Other items pertaining to the wartime period will also be most welcome. The English representative of the 306th BG is Ralph Franklin, who may be contacted at : National School Lott, Mill Hill, Keysoe Bedford England MK442HP.

## **BURTONWOOD**

Richard Iwanowski, Board of Directors of the Burtonwood Association, is seeking anyone who served at or was attached to or was associated with Burtonwood AFB at Warrington, England between 1942 and 1993, please get in touch. He may be reached at 4515 W. 55th Street, Chicago IL 60632-4721. His telephone number is 773-767-1810.



## **2000 YAF AIRSHOW SCHEDULE**

**Apr 28-29 MCAS New River Airshow Jacksonville, NC**  
**Apr 30-01 Carolina Aviation Museum Dsply-FLEX Charlotte, NC**  
**May 27-28 Muskoka Air Fair Gravenhurst, ON**  
**May 29 YAF Memorial Day Open House Willow Run, MI**  
**Jun 02-04 WWII Commemorative Weekend - FLEX Reading, PA**  
**June 16-19 Aviation Hall of Fame Dsply - FLEX Teterboro, NJ**  
**Jly 22 "Project Liberty Ship" Fly-By Detroit, MI**  
**Liberty Ship John W Brown day cruise**  
**Aug 25-27 Arnold Fld Airsho '00-Dyersburg AAB Halls, TN**  
**Sep 02-04 Cleveland National Airshow Cleveland, OH**  
**Sep 09-10 Toledo Airshow Toledo, OH**  
**Sep 17 YAF Founder's Day Open House Willow Run, MI**  
**Sep 22-24 "Wings of Eagles Airshow" - NWM Elmira, NY**

## **AIR CORPS MEMORIAL DEDICATED**

**MIAMI BEACH, FL.----** A reunion of WWII flyers, some who were in the 8th Air Force, dedicated a memorial in honor of the thousands of US Air Corps trainees who took basic training in this resort city in 1942-1944.

The event was held on Pearl Harbor Day, Dec. 7, with an estimated 150 men and women in attendance at special memorial services. Most of the former Air Corps men returned to Miami Beach to re-visit the hotels where they were stationed more than 50 years ago. The city was the center for training an estimated 100,000 men quar-

tered in 200 hotels for three years of the war. The reunion featured a dinner, a parade, and tours of the nearby Weeks Air Museum of WWII aircraft. A flyover of AT-6s and a YAK-52 was given as a tribute to the airmen. Among those present were men who served in Europe, the Pacific and Alaska.

The reunion group supported a resolution for funds for the national WWII Memorial in Washington, DC and for a proposal to make Pearl Harbor Day a national holiday.

-Submitted by Forrest S. Clark 44th Bomb Group

## MOTTS MILITARY MUSEUM OPENS IN GROVEPOINT, OHIO

On June 12, 1999 Motts Military Museum, Warren Motts, Executive Director, officially opened its doors with an impressive ceremony at its new facility at 5075 South Hamilton Road in Groveport, Ohio 43125.

The Museum features exhibitry from all branches of the service and regularly sponsors seminars and educational tours to sites such as a three-day trip to the battlefield at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania in the Fall of 2000. Many 8th Air Force veterans are supporters of the Museum, including Mel Gerhold and his wife Catherine.



Mel was stationed in Savannah, Georgia before flying missions over Germany. He was shot down by the enemy and was a Prisoner of War for over a year. Motts Military Museum has an active membership program with several levels of support in Annual and Lifetime categories. John Dawson, a veteran of World War I, recently joined as a Life Member at age 102! The Museum website may be checked at [www.mottsmilitarymuseum.org](http://www.mottsmilitarymuseum.org) or by email: [mottsm@m Gateway.net](mailto:mottsm@m Gateway.net).

### REMEMBRANCES

Judy Walker, Director of Development of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum writes to convey appreciation for those who send in donations to the Heritage Museum in remembrance of deceased loved ones. Many 8th veterans and their families have sent contributions in the name of a friend or loved one in support of the museum and the perpetuity of the legacy of the Mighty Eighth. She states that the Heritage Museum is recognized by the government as a legal Charitable Organization and donations are accepted as such. This method of supporting the museum makes a noticeable difference in museum development activities, and Judy is available to answer questions at her office number 912-748-8888, Extension #123. For those who arrange their wishes for inclusion in members' local newspapers the museum address is: 8th AFHM P.O. Box 1992, Savannah GA 31402.

## FIND A GRAVE

From Harry Gobrecht in San Clemente comes a notice of an Internet website offering a rather unusual service, but one which may interest many 8th veterans who have friends scattered throughout the nation. The *Find A Grave* website may be able to give you information as to the final resting place of a person for personal or archival purposes.



As an example, the site for 8th Air Force Commander James H. Doolittle records him as a US Airman/Aviator buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington DC. There is a photo of the tombstone inscription, some research references, and a road map of the area to help you locate the gravesite.

To check it out, look in on:  
<http://www.findagrave.com/pictures/2454.html>

### CURRENT BRITISH CONTACTS SOUGHT

Our 8th AF Historical Society British representatives, Connie and Gordon Richards are assisting us in establishing and confirming an up-to-date listing of all British Base and Museum contacts to publish in a future issue of the 8th AF NEWS. Many Society members have asked for this list and will be

much obliged to be able to get in touch for planning trips back to England, as well as for Group activities in the States.

For all 8th Airbase British contacts: If you have not recently sent in your information, please forward your current UK address, telephone, and FAX numbers to: Gordon and Connie Richards, 8th AF Historical Society, 14 Pavenham Road, Oakley, BEDFORD MK43 7SY England 01234 823357.

The Yankee Air Force Library at the Yankee Air Museum in Belleville Michigan would appreciate receiving copies of Group or Squadron histories to enhance their archival collection. The Library also has a memorabilia collection to augment the Museum's fine collection of flying aircrafts.



Yankee Doodle Dandy - the Yankee Air Force's world-class C-47D

Contact: Yankee Air Museum Library P.O.Box 590, Belleville MI 48112-0590

Telephone 734-483-4030 Fax 734-483-5076

# REUNIONS

## 446TH BOMB GROUP

8th Air Force, England, WWII  
Reunion Washington, DC Area May 18 to 21, 2000 As part of the Arlington National Cemetery Beautification Program. Hotel: Hilton Arlington & Towers, Arlington, VA  
Reservations: 703-812-5111. Contact: Bill Davenport, 13382 Wheeler Place, Santa Ana, CA 92705 (714-832-2829)

## 355TH FIGHTER GROUP ASSN.

8th AF WWII. 12-15 October 2000, Irving, TX. Contact: Bob Kuhnert, 587 Pine Needles Dr., Dayton OH 45458-3323. (937) 439-1893.

## 364th FTR GP

364th FTR GP (WWII Honington, Eng, 8th AF) & Support Units Reunion, 18-21 Oct. 2000. Shreveport, LA., Ramada Inn. Contact: Dan Leftwich, 6630 Caldero Ct., Dayton, Ohio 45415. Ph: 937-890-3641.

## P-47 THUNDERBOLT PILOTS ASSOCIATION

May 14-17 2000  
Savannah Georgia Desoto Hilton @ 703-812-5111 Contact: John Hartshorn, 18 Rookery Road Savannah GA 31411 912-598-1333

## 303rd BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

September 25 - 29 2000  
San Diego CA Hanalei Hotel  
Contact: James Taylor 421 Yerba Buena Ave Los Altos CA 94022-2512

## 303rd BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

**RETURN TO MOLESWORTH**  
The 365th Mission  
May 31st - June 8th 2000 Contact: Dick D'Amato 1-800-228-9690

## BURTONWOOD ASSOCIATION USA Reunion

October 3 - 7 2000 Las Vegas NV  
Contact: Robert Johnston 101 Temple Circle Lynchburg VA 24052-2415

## BURTONWOOD ASSOCIATION United Kingdom Reunion

May 29 - June 4 2000 Park Royal Hotel  
Contact: Aldon Ferguson 18 Ridgeway Wargrave, Berkshire RG10 8AS England phone 001 44 1925 730 740

## 447TH BOMB GROUP

June 21 - 25 2000  
Colorado Springs CO Contact: George Hoidra Jr 6504 Old Sandy Spring Rd Laurel MD 20707

## 339th FIGHTER GROUP

October 18 - 22 2000  
San Antonio TX Four Points Sheraton Hotel Contact: Larry Powell 818-363-3950

## 306th BOMB GROUP

September 5 - 10 2000  
San Diego CA Sheraton Harbor Island  
Contact: John J. Endicott, Reunion Chairman

## 398th BOMB GROUP

September 20 - 23 2000  
Savannah GA for info:  
<<http://home.fuse.net/ghilliard/>>  
or Wally Blackwell phone 301-762-2213

## 398TH BOMB GROUP

**Return to England and Czech Republic**  
JUNE 7-20 2000  
Telephone 301-762-2213

## 351st BOMB GROUP

25th Annual Reunion JUNE 6 - 10 2000  
Polebrook England Contact: Clint Hammond PO Box 281 Mechanicsburg PA 17005 Telephone 717-766-1489

## SECOND SCHWEINFURT MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 9 - 13 2000  
Silver Legacy Hotel, Reno NV  
Contact: Malcolm Higgins 1143 Whitmarsh Court San Jose CA 95120 408-997-0272  
A contingent of representatives from Schweinfurt, Germany will be in attendance.

## 92nd BOMB GROUP - USAF MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 12 - 17 2000  
ST. LOUIS MO AIRPORT MARRIOTT  
Contact: Irv Baum 3935 Young Ave Napa CA 94558-2654 phone 707-258-8806 Fax 707-258-1289

## P-51 MUSTANG PILOTS ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 15 - 19 2000  
TUCSON AZ CONTACT: Bob Blackwood telephone 520-648-1933

## 436th Fighter Squadron - 479th Fighter Group

October 22 - 25 2000  
San Antonio TX  
Best Western Oak Hills 1-800-468-3507  
Contact: Travis Greenwood 4506 Navajo Path Austin TX 78745-1520 Ph: 512-442-7134

## 455th Bomb Sqd/323rd Bomb Group

(M) "White Tailed Marauder" 9th Air Force WW II Sept. 30 - Oct. 4, 2000  
Albuquerque, NM Sheraton Uptown  
Contact: Russ Hall 8711 Los Arboles NE Albuquerque, NM 87112 email ruanhall@aol.com

### THE NATIONAL ANTHEM UNITED KINGDOM

God save our gracious Queen,  
Long live our noble Queen,  
God save our Queen!  
Send her victorious,  
Happy and glorious,  
Long to reign over us;  
God save the Queen!

Thy choicest gifts in store  
On her be pleased to pour,  
Long may she reign;  
May she defend our laws  
And ever give us cause  
To sing with heart and voice  
God save the Queen!

Of many a race and birth  
From utmost ends of earth  
God save us all!  
Bid strife and hatred cease,  
Bid hope and joy increase,  
Spread universal peace  
God save us all!



# UNIT ACTIVITIES

## 398TH BOMB GROUP TO DEDICATE CHURCH WINDOW AT ANSTEY

Veterans of the 398th Bomb Group will return to their old base in England this summer to dedicate a Memorial window at the 12th century St. George's Church at nearby Anstey village. The beautiful stained glass window is by the famous British architect Patrick Reyntiens, and will be dedicated in memory of the men of the 398th who were killed while serving at Station 131 in World War II. One 398th BG B-17 crashed on takeoff into the moat alongside the Anstey Church in 1944. The Bishop of St. Albans will carry out the dedication ceremonies and many notables are invited.

After five days touring the Cambridge area, the Group will tour the Czech republic including the city of Pilsen, the target for the final mission of the 398th BG on April 25th, 1945. Two Flying Fortresses were lost on that last mission.

A marble memorial similar to the one at Nuthampstead, England will be placed in the Memorial Gardens at the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah as a highlight of the Group annual reunion September 20-23 2000. Information concerning these two special dedications may be obtained from 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association President Wally Blackwell, 2897 Balmoral Drive, Rockville MD 20850 or from Public Relations Officer and 398th BGMA *Flak News* Editor Allen Ostrum, 2200 NW 59th St, Seattle WA 98107-8508.



The 12th Century Church of St. George located at Anstey, Hertfordshire, England. Photo by Ralph Ambrose

## 398th BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION HERITAGE MEMORIAL FUND

### The Final Project Is Under Way

"We can't fail!" said Wally Blackwell, president of the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association, when announcing the fund drive for the group's "final project."

This will be a smaller version of the group's beautiful memorial at Nuthampstead, England. It will be installed at the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia, and dedicated at the 398th's reunion in September 2000.

Contributions from members have exceeded \$27,000 - enough to establish this permanent tribute to those who flew with the 398th Bomb Group.

"It is our final and fitting tribute to those of the 398th who gave their lives in the air war over Europe in World War II."

-Louis Stoffer, 398th BG

Heritage Memorial Fund Chairman



## THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE MUSEUM

### Dr. Barry Buxton to Leave



Dr. Barry M. Buxton will leave The Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum March 17th to become Vice President for Institutional Advancement at the Savannah College of Art and Design. Dr. Buxton joined

the museum staff on July 15, 1998 and has been the President/CEO establishing it as the State of Georgia's Center for Character Education and securing significant State funding for educational programs as well as various exhibits. Dr. Buxton leaves the museum on a solid

footing with respect to administration, fiscal status and staffing.

A search is underway for a new President/CEO. The officers of the Museum's Board of Trustees, the EXCOM, are serving as the search committee and will review all candidate applications. An application deadline of April 15th has been established and several applications have already been received. The EXCOM will meet at the museum to narrow the candidate field and make a final selection. An announcement of the name of the new President/CEO will follow soon thereafter.

The Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum has continued to grow into a world-class museum since the grand opening in May 1996. The museum is dedicated to educating students and the public at large, about the patriotic core values exhibited by all of the men and women who have served in The Mighty Eighth since its activation in Savannah in January 1942.

**Lt. Gen E.G. Shuler, Jr. Chairman,  
Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage  
Museum**

## ROBBIE ROBINSON...

You see things from where one sits in life. When one is thrust into hell and must trust and get along with the man next to him for survival, it makes no difference from what walk in life he came from; you depend on him and he depends on you. In many ways an enlisted man had the same problems as the Officers. To follow a plan of events that you have no control of takes a lot of belief, trust, and plain guts when one has been taught to think as an individual.

I can hear my Navigator, Lt. Robert T. Alexander, shouting over the intercom. "Where is that idiot going? Can't he read a chart? Wright, get this damn thing as far to the left as you can. They are going to fly right through heavy flak. It's marked on the chart and we will be over it in two minutes!" Then the flak would start breaking just to our right in the part of the formation that kept flying straight. Alexander always knew where we were and saved our tails many times, even in Africa! I have been lost many times in my experience as a civilian private pilot. I wonder if there ever was a pilot that didn't get lost?

The fact that we won the air war proves that planning was flexible and done as well as humanly possible with great and honorable people, and that the American soldier, Officer or Enlisted man can change and adapt to any situation.

— by Harold Robinson, 445th Bomb Group Collierville, TN

## ABEL DOLIM...

### The Souvenir Hunter

March 1945: Paris/Orly Airfield

The German bomber has French markings and has been landed gear up. It is almost as big as the B-17 the navigator has just left at the other side of the ramp. The Heinkel 177 is a four-engined aircraft with only two props. Two engines nacelles house coupled Daimler-Benz engines geared to a single large propeller. The crew compartment looks like a greenhouse from the outside. The interior arrangement is most interesting. Apparently the pilot's position is forward, affording fantastic visibility. The engine instruments are to his right. The navigator and radioman are located in the rear of the compartment. Just above their positions is a manually rotated turret with post mounting for a light machine gun. The floor is littered with small empty cartons for Luger P-38 ammo. The clock and compass are gone so the navigator removes the engine instrument panel. The individual instruments are heavier than he expects them to be. They are cased in machined aluminum housings and have spring metal clip type electrical connectors. The oil and fuel pressure gauges are coupled in one instrument case and register in kilograms per centimeter. On the body of the instrument are the words "Zweifach druckanzeiger."

— by Abel Dolim 94th Bomb Group

## RICHARD McCLUNE...

There were three major air depots located in England and Ireland. BAD #1, was located at Burtonwood, Lancashire, BAD #2 was located at Warton, Lancashire and BAD #3 was located at Langford Lodge, Ireland. There were also strategic depots located in Southern England.

Aircraft were received from the States either by direct flights

from the States or ferried from ports, such as Liverpool. The most important was the Technical Order Compliance to assure the planes were in the best mechanical condition. The planes were also modified in accordance with requests from particular combat groups. The planes were then serviced and test flown to assure they were in top condition.

In addition to the new planes received from the States, there were special modifications to other planes, such as the ones used by the "Carpetbaggers", "Flying Gas Tanks" to supply gasoline to General Patton's Army, and many other modifications.

A total aircraft of all types processed by this depot was in excess of fourteen thousand and an additional 400 gliders were assembled. Total engines overhauled was over 6300.

Warton Air Depot was given the title "World's Greatest Air Depot" by Generals Arnold and Spaatz after a visit to the Depot. When Col. Paul Jackson, Chief of Maintenance, gave the Generals a tour of the Air Depot and showed the accomplishments, it was decided the title had to be applied.

— by Richard McClune BAD 2 Newport News, VA

## JOHN McCRACKEN...

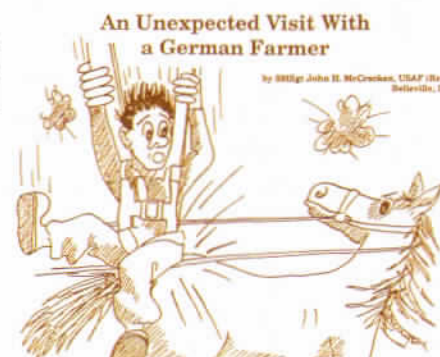
An elderly German farmer in a plowed field walked behind a harrow being pulled by a horse and oxen team. From above appeared a rapidly descending parachute - an out of control B-17 Engineer/Gunner.

I came down spinning and impacted the left side of the horse with the right side of my back. Next, in rapid sequence, my heels then my buttocks followed by the back of my head, struck the ground. My head hit the harrow, and I was knocked unconscious. When I regained consciousness I was lying on my back along side the harrow with the farmer holding my left foot and leg, about waist high, pulling and twisting it. I heard and felt a sharp pain as he did this. At this point he lowered my leg down on the ground.

Both knees were in great pain from striking the ground backwards. While laying there rubbing my knees, I noticed that my parachute and harness had been removed from me and stashed about thirty feet away. The farmer assisted me in getting up on my feet and helped me walk around to the side of the horse where I could hold onto the harness while shaking and bending my knees to help ease the pain. Since the farmer was very friendly and helping me I thought I might be in France, or at least west of the Allied battle lines.

I then retrieved the language dictionary from my Escape Kit and showed the farmer, in French, who I was and asked for help. He took the dictionary from my hands and leafed to the German section and politely informed me that "FOR YOU THE WAR IS OVER". What a shock that was. The following eight months were spent in Stalag Lufts VI and I.

— by John McCracken, 390th Bomb Group Ft. Myers, FL



## LESLIE VIET...

One Saturday night a sergeant we all liked "borrowed" a jeep to go joyriding. Unfortunately, he wrecked it. The motor pool officer said, "I won't officially know about this until Monday morning, when I report on duty. Then your head will roll." About midnight we were awakened and told of the situation, so six of us got up and dressed and went to work. We stripped the jeep to the bare frame and straightened it. Meanwhile the sheetmetal men were working on the body. The mess hall on hearing of it sent us "meals on wheels". Yes, we ate on the job. At six o'clock Monday morning the jeep was returned to the motor pool, with a fresh coat of paint, the serial numbers restenciled and looking like new. In fact, the motor pool officer accused us of stealing a new jeep and substituting the serial number. He stated that no one could have made that wreck look so good in the time we had. We had six dog tired bodies to testify otherwise.

Later on another sergeant wrecked a 6X6 and when we got the call we all turned over and went back to sleep. We let them nail his hide to the wall. When you have a position of authority, it pays to be nice to people. You may want a favor some day.

- by Leslie E. Viet

27th Air Transport Group  
Fairless Hills, PA

## ROBERT CLAY...

Now the situation was serious. With the 100-mph headwind we were almost standing still with respect to the coastline far below. Months before, the crew had voted to never ditch in the North Sea, if there was any possible alternative. With that in mind, I turned parallel to the coastline, hoping we could make it to Holland or France before going down.

At about 18,000 feet we ran into clouds so we went on instruments. Now that fighter attacks were improbable, I ordered the men to throw everything possible overboard -- flak suits, guns, ammo, etc. Lt. Arnold asked if that meant his new self-erecting Norden bomb sight. "Especially that," I said. One of the gunners asked if he could shoot his ammo. When I asked why, he answered, "We were told to shoot bursts of 5 seconds or less to prevent the guns from overheating and jamming and I'd like to see how long it takes for that to happen." So I said "OK." I could feel the familiar faint chatter of the 50-caliber for about 20 seconds before it stopped. Later, he told me that the barrel was smoking and too hot to handle before it jammed.

A few minutes later, at about 13,000 feet, in a straight-ahead slow letdown, the plane was surrounded and racked with black balls of flak. We were out of it in a few seconds with no direct hits. Later we determined that we had flown over the German-occupied island of Helgoland.

There we were at 12,000 feet, on instruments, with both inboards feathered and the right outboard windmilling. The situation was now critical. Where would we be when we broke out of the clouds? No time to worry about that, because I noticed an anomaly in the instrument readings. The tiny plane on the blind flying artificial horizon looked okay, but the airspeed was increasing at a steady rate.

For a few seconds I couldn't understand what was happening; then in a flash I understood the anomaly. Earlier in the year, I

had held a series of engineering classes for pilots and I remembered that the two inboard engines ran vacuum pumps for the pilot's gyro instruments, and now both inboards were feathered. So the airspeed indicator was right and the flight instruments were wrong.

When a plane starts to dive, the natural instinct is to pull back on the wheel, but if you are in a turn, the plane rapidly rolls over and goes into a vertical dive. Overcoming my instincts, I held the wheel as nearly as I could to a straight-ahead, wings level position. I strained my eyes into the white void ahead, hoping we would break out of the clouds in time to avoid a crash. The full view came in a flash -- ocean straight ahead. We were in a 45 degree dive with wings approximately vertical.

- by Robert Clay

351st BG

Bountiful, UT

## KENNETH McCaleb...

Each crew member had been issued a parachute. There was always the possibility that it would have to be used. Each man had an exit plan. The great fear was that a shell would hit a fuel tank, or that centrifugal force from a spin would prevent escape. The old rule was to count to 10 before pulling the rip cord. I planned to fall freely a long way in order to reach more dense air closer to the ground. I was, therefore, falling at a maximum freefall velocity and when the parachute opened, the deceleration was a shock. I was swinging violently and became airsick. About the time I started making plans to land, I hit the ground hard.

What is the mental attitude of a soldier in combat? There is a belief that he is engaged in a struggle for that which is just and right. Fellow soldiers will have died, and the battle must continue. There is no honorable alternative. There is the fundamental hope and belief that the individual will do his duty and live. There comes a time when, surrounded by the enemy, ammunition exhausted, or the aircraft so damaged it will not fly, it is necessary to surrender. Captured soldiers in Germany were reportedly greeted with the words "For you, the war is over." As the words are written 55 years later, it is recalled that two emotions were felt: relief that a combat tour was ended and grief for those who had died. And there was the fear of a Nazi prisoner-of-war camp. About a week later, I entered the South Compound of Stalag Luft III at Sagan. The South Compound had been completed and occupied September 8, 1943. There were 15 barracks in an area of about five acres. There were eight of us in a room with four double bunks. When we marched out 15 months later, there were 15 in the room--five triple bunks.

-by Kenneth McCaleb, Navigator

Huntsville, AL

from *In Search of Peace*

## PHILIP ARDERY...

We found ourselves at that moment running a gauntlet of tracers and cannon fire of all types that made me despair of ever covering those last few hundred yards to the point where we could let the bombs go. The antiaircraft defenses were literally throwing up a curtain of steel. From the target grew the column of flames,

smoke, and explosions, and we were headed straight into it. Suddenly Sergeant Wells, our small, childlike radio operator who was in the waist compartment for the moment with a camera, called out, "Lieutenant Hughes's ship is leaking gas. He's been hit hard in his left wing fuel section."

I had noticed it just about that moment. I was tired of looking out the front at those German guns firing at us. I looked out to the right for a moment and saw a sheet of raw gasoline trailing Pete's left wing. He stuck right in formation with us. He must have known he was hard hit because the gas was coming out in such volume that it blinded the waist gunners in his ship from our view. Poor Pete! Fine religious, conscientious boy with a young wife waiting for him back in Texas. He was holding his ship in formation to drop his bombs on the target, knowing if he didn't pull up he would have to fly through a solid room of fire with a tremendous stream of gasoline gushing from his ship. I flicked the switch intermittently to fire the remote-control, fixed fifty caliber machine guns specially installed for my use. I watched my tracers dig the ground. Poor Pete. How I wished he'd pull up a few hundred feet and drop from a higher altitude.

As we were going into the furnace, I said a quick prayer. During those moments I didn't think that I could possibly come out alive, and I knew Pete couldn't. Bombs were away. Everything was black for a few seconds. We must have cleared the chimneys by inches. We must have, for we kept flying--and as we passed over the boiler house another explosion kicked our tail high and our nose down. Fowble pulled back on the wheel and the Lib leveled out, almost clipping the tops off houses. We were through the impenetrable wall, but what of Pete? I looked out right. Still he was there in close formation, but he was on fire all around his left wing where it joined the fuselage.

I could feel tears come into my eyes and my throat clog up. Then I saw Pete pull up and out of formation. His bombs were laid squarely on the target along with ours. With his mission accomplished, he was making a valiant attempt to kill his excess speed and set the ship down in a little river valley south of the town before the whole business blew up. He was going about 210 miles per hour and had to slow up to about 110 to get the ship down. He was gliding without power, as it seemed, slowing up and pulling off to the right in the direction of a moderately flat valley. Pete was fighting now to save himself and his men. He was too low for any of them to jump and there was not time for the airplane to climb to a sufficient altitude to permit a chute to open. The lives of the crew were in their pilot's hands, and he gave it everything he had. Wells, in our waist gun compartment, was taking pictures of the gruesome spectacle. Slowly the ship

on our right lost speed and began to settle in a glide that looked like it might come to a reasonably good crash-landing. But flames were spreading furiously all over the left side of the ship. I could see plainly, as it was on my side. Now it would touch down--but just before it did, the left wing came off. The flames had been too much and had literally burnt the wing off. The heavy ship cartwheeled and a great flower of flame and smoke appeared just ahead of the point where last we had seen a bomber. Pete had given his life and the lives of his crew to carry out his assigned task. To the very end he gave the battle every ounce he had.

– by Philip Ardery, 389th BG Louisville, KY  
from 'Ploesti' in *Bomber Pilot*

## NORMAN MELLOW...

### Combat diary entry-

October 9, 1943- We flew across Denmark, Sweden and bombed Danzig and Gydnia. Met some fighters and flak on our way home. Le Bleu and I got a possible on JU-88. A B-17 went down.

### JU-88 ENCOUNTER

Oct. 9, 1943 - Target Gydnia - Our 4th mission.

Capt. Edwards Crew - Ford's Folly 578th Sq.  
392nd Bomb Group.

JU-88 Flying about 2,000 yards off our left wing. Same altitude, heading, and speed. I tracked him for a minute or two and estimated his distance at about 1 1/3 miles. I set my gun sight at 3 rings above and 7 rings ahead of him, and gave him one long burst; When I let go of the triggers - I had 6 tracers - which meant I had about 30 to 38 slugs headed toward him. I watched the tracers until they burned out - the arc looked like they would be close. So we just sat there and waited. All of a sudden the JU-88 stood on it's tail and fell off to his left and dove, trailing black smoke. Then he turned toward us losing altitude, but coming closer to us. Our left waist gunner Leon LeBleu opened up on him.

Leon and I got credit for a possible on the JU-88.

– by Norman Mellow, 392nd BG  
Merced, CA

Note: This encounter must have been over the Kiel Peninsula, as we were over land at the time. The rest of the time we were over water.

### Transcript from Canadian Forces ATC communication:

**Helicopter Pilot [talking to Ground]: "Roger, I'm holding at 3000 over beacon"**

### **Urgent second voice interrupts:**

**"No! You can't be doing that! I'm holding at 3000 over that beacon!"**

**[Brief pause, then first voice again]: "You idiot, you're my co-pilot."**

**-Jack Curtis, P-38s**



## A CREW CHIEF'S LAMENT

by Robert Heiliger, 303rd Bomb Group

I watched those brave men, those 10 brave men,  
As they drove up in their jeeps,  
With flying suits and parachutes  
And things they left for me to keep.  
There was no talk, just a confident walk  
To the B-17 we called "Sack Time,"  
As they gathered there in the morning air,  
With the target - Dresden - on their mind.

The captain asked "Is the Sack OK?  
Will she bring us back alive?"  
He knew I'd be sitting on an ammunition crate,  
Anxiously waiting for them to arrive.  
As they climbed so high in the morning sky,  
I felt like shouting to the clouds,  
"War is hell, we all know that,  
But Hitler left us no way out."

I worked away the hours in the English chill,  
Passing the time by any means,  
When suddenly, they began to return  
in their battered and crippled B-17s.  
I scanned the sky with my naked eye  
But "Sack Time" was not in sight;  
I kept the virgil into the evening hours  
Then gave up long into the night.

Come cry with me,  
Cause war is hell,  
It takes a deadly toll  
Today....my buddies fell.



Marv Berke, 306th Bomb Group, of Encino, California with five smiling members of his "Mighty Eighth" crew.

***Love? I don't know .... What the hell.  
Elvis Presley***

## NCAC Awards Air Force Photographer

National Capitol Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society awards Air Force combat photographer and chapter member S/Sgt Angela Stafford a recognition award for her dedication to service and outstanding support in preserving the legacy and heritage of the 8th Air Force and Air Force Veterans of World War II.



## WISCONSIN CHAPTER

The Wisconsin Chapter meeting was called to order by Vice-President William Bergner, 92nd BG, on Dec. 7, 1999. Seventy-two members and guests were in attendance. Two students from Bay Line Middle School shared their Veterans Day Essays. An announcement of a new location for future meetings of the Chapter was made and the location is the 440th Air Force Reserve Base at Milwaukee's Mitchell Field. After a noon lunch, a Life Support System was presented by Air Force Sgt. Joe Parlato, 128th Air Refueling, Wisconsin Air National Guard. Door prizes were awarded. Information concerning the move to the 440th was presented. Everyone has agreed, the 8th AF News is a quality publication, keep up the good work. --Jim Erskine

## MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The Michigan Chapter had its first meeting Veterans Day, Nov. 11, 1999 at the VFW Post 6252 in Comstock, Michigan, near Kalamazoo. The meeting was preceded by their traditional flag ceremony and band concert by the local high school band. A luncheon was served before the start of the meeting and was hosted by the Women's Auxiliary of the Post. Unit and Chapter Advisory and Development Committee Chairman Jim Erskine, was the speaker. Maurice (Suds) Sumney was elected Chapter President. In his acceptance speech President Sumney said the Chapter would grow and that the next membership meeting would be in Lansing, the state capital.

## THE WEST MICHIGAN WING MICHIGAN CHAPTER

The West Michigan Wing held its third annual dinner party for the disabled veterans of the Battle Creek Michigan Veterans Hospital on Jan. 19, 2000. They were royally treated by the Women's Auxiliary of Comstock VFW Post 6252 and then were guests at a Western Michigan basketball game.

## LOUISIANA CHAPTER

The Louisiana Chapter held its organizational meeting in January 8, 2000. The meeting was called to order at 1330 hours by Harry Tanner. About 100 persons were in attendance. The first order of business was the election of officers, they are:

President: Harry (Doug) Tanner  
Vice-President: Robert Bowen  
Secretary: Lorene Y. Tanner  
Treasurer: Ronnie Taylor

There will be a two day meeting held either in June or July. This is to be set by the President. President Tanner asked Historical Society Board of Directors member Ivan McKinney to serve as an honorary member of the Chapter Board. He accepted.

## NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER 8th AFHS  
NAMES

INTER-CHAPTER INFORMATION CHAIRMAN

In efforts to facilitate and expand communications between State Chapters, the New



Mexico Chapter has appointed Life Member Carl Albright (446 BG) as its Inter-Chapter Information contact. Mr. Albright piloted a B-24 for 35 missions from England into German-held territory from October 1944 through March 1945. He was recalled to active duty in 1949 and attended the Special Weapons School at Sandia Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Carl was a rated B-29 Aircraft Commander and served as a Special Weapons Evaluator under Headquarters SAC. With the NM Chapter 8th AFHS, Carl has served as Chapter President and Secretary/Treasurer. He currently serves as Vice-President and Inter-Chapter Information Chairman. Communications may be sent to him via E-mail at: CA1bri7752@aol.com. Fax communication is also available at: (505) 298-5988.

The Chapter held its annual elections at its regular Fall Membership luncheon and meeting in Albuquerque.

Officers are: President - Hal Goetsch (385BG) -  
Vice-President - Carl Albright (446 BG) -  
Secretary - Ray Dehner (6927 RSM) -  
Treasurer - Billy Richardson (91 BG) -  
Board Members are: Robert Furry (448 BG)  
Dean Hall (95 BG)  
Ed Kastanek (493 BG)  
Loren Klar (390 BG)  
Homer Piper (993 BG)

The Chapter's total membership currently stands at 180. This total also represents a 17% increase since the beginning of 1999.

## OREGON CHAPTER NEWS

A general meeting was held on Nov. 11, 1999 with 80 members attending. Our speaker was Jack Lansing, a B-24 pilot who described his experiences as part of the ultra secret "Aphrodite Project". A very interesting talk which included his witnessing the mid-air explosion that killed Joseph Kennedy. The Oregon Chapter meets on Thursdays of the first full week in February, May, August and November at the Beaverton Elks Lodge. For information contact President Joe Conroy @503-246-2912 <ajconroy@aol.com> or Andy Brown @503-645-3185. submitted by Anthony J. Conroy  
President Oregon Chapter

## IOWA CHAPTER

The Iowa Chapter held its annual meeting at Marshalltown, Iowa August 27th and 28th, 1999. It was held at the Best Western Regency Inn. A room full of memorabilia was on display all day long. Our noon luncheon was attended by 71 people and our speaker was our own Roy Picht from Ames, Iowa telling of his experiences as a crew chief of a B-24 bomber. After lunch the ladies attended a fashion show. At our annual meeting in the afternoon Charles D. Taylor was elected as President, Wayne G. Zeigler, Vice-President, Leon G. Mehring, Treasurer and Barry Johnson as Secretary and news letter editor. Our banquet was attended by 86 people and our guest speaker was Dr. James Bowman, from Des Moines, Iowa. Dr. Bowman was a Tuskegee Airman and he told of his experiences as a Tuskegee Airman. On Sunday morning, thirty of us went to the chapel at the Iowa Veterans home in Marshalltown and held a memorial service for our departed 8th A.F. members. A great time was had by all of

us. Governor Thomas Vilsack of Iowa signed its Executive Proclamation declaring the week of 8-14 October 1999 as Mighty Eighth Air Force Week. The Proclamation was also signed by several mayors in cities in Iowa.

Leon G. Mehring, Treasurer Iowa Chapter  
305th Bomb Group

## **NORTH EAST IOWA WING**

The North East Wing of our Iowa Chapter met at the Elks Lodge in Waterloo on Friday Oct. 15, 1999 for a noon luncheon. Sixty people attended the meeting. After signing in and getting seated, the program began with the singing of "America" followed by the pledge of allegiance and the invocation under the very able leadership of Rudy Nelson. Bob Reeves played piano for the opening ceremonies. Board members present at the meeting were: President Chuck Taylor, Vice President Wayne Ziegler Treasurer Leon Mehring, Bob Suckow, Rudy Nelson, and N.E. Iowa Wing Commander Bob Reeves. Chuck Taylor, President of our Iowa Chapter, gave the welcome and a good report of the extensive publicity he managed with the proclamations of 8th Air Force week. One of our young associate members came dressed in World War II class A Army Corps pilot's uniform -- complete with Pilot wings, battle ribbons and insignia. His uniform included the Eisenhower "Battle Jacket". It's good to see our young associates taking such an active and enthusiastic part in the history of the Mighty Eighth! Leon Mehring did double duty: First as cashier for the meeting, and then presented some very interesting information on the Air Museum he visited recently. Many thanks to Leon, our state treasurer, for an excellent job well done at our North East Iowa Wing meeting.

Our speaker Lt. Col. Bob Suckow, presented a very fine talk on "World War II operations in the European Theatre." He donned his W.W. II Air Force uniform, which still fits, and challenged us to do as well. The pictures and posters of the B-24 were excellent. His experiences during W.W. II were interesting and humorous. Many thanks, Bob, for a good presentation.

Among our guests were a number of former B-29 people who enjoy coming to our N.E. Iowa Wing meetings.  
- N. E. Iowa Wing

## **PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER**

Ninth Annual Reunion

Reunion 2000 will be held by the Pennsylvania Chapter 8AFHS at the Palace Inn, Monroeville, just east of Pittsburgh, during 23 to 26 June. Planning is in the final stages for this, the Chapter's ninth annual reunion. Although the costs are still being finalized, the Reunion Committee of the Chapter's Western Wing is giving full consideration for minimum costs for maximum enjoyment. Chapter members, associates, friends, their spouses, children and grandchildren are all welcome to attend Reunion 2000, the planning for which is designed to be of interest to all. A unique, special registration fee is being established for the grandchildren under 18 years of age. Some of the Sunday events include a tour of Pittsburgh including the Golden Triangle, a visit to the Senator John Heinz Regional History Center, lunch at the Church Brew Works and a visit to the nationally known classrooms of the University of Pittsburgh. All of this will be topped off with a dinner cruise aboard the Gateway Clipper to view the lights of

Pittsburgh from the Three Rivers perspective. The shipboard program includes entertainment, music and dancing. A memorial service is scheduled for Sunday morning, to be followed by a tour of the Beaver Air Heritage Museum. In the evening, the annual banquet including dinner and dancing will conclude the Sunday events.

The "Al Monzo's" Palace Inn is easily located, just off the Pennsylvania Turnpike, exit 6, near Routes 22 and 48, at 2775 Mosside Boulevard, Monroeville. For reservations, call (412)372-5500 or (800)545-6600. Reunion 2000 registration packets will be mailed to all Pennsylvania Chapter members in mid-April. For others interested in attending, or questions, please contact Art or Carolyn Swanson at P.O. Box 58, Pine Grove, PA 17963 or telephone (570)345-4521. Reunion 2000 promises to be a great opportunity for comradeship and a chance to meet with your fellow veterans of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. All are invited! - by Pres. Frank Smoker

## **CENTRAL NEW YORK CHAPTER**

Ken Weisl publishes a fine Chapter newsletter, the *Chit Chaff*, for the Central New York Chapter. His current honors the New York Air National Guards 109th Airlift Wing with two excellent articles about their history and their recent activities. He notes that the 109th Airlift is the only unit in the world that operates the ski-equipped LC-130 cargo airlift vital to polar region rescue missions.

The Chapter is planning their annual summer picnic meeting tentatively set for July 1st, with more details to follow. Also of note are the dates of two radio-controlled air shows, one at Kirkwood just below Binghamton on route 11 on June 23 - 25. On July 22&23 a show will be held at Oneonta just off Interstate 88. These airshow give attendees an opportunity to see scale models of all types of warbirds in flight.

## **ILLINOIS CHAPTER**

The Illinois Chapter marked the beginning of the millenium with a first of their own. The Chapter meetings guest speaker in January was in the German Navy, the Kriegsmarine, and was on the largest battleship ever built, the famous German battlewagon Bismarck, when it was sunk by the Hood. Bruno Rzonca is the only living Bismarck survivor in the United States. He was picked up in Indiana by Chapter member Scott Johnson and brought to speak to the members on his wartime experiences. He brought several books which were written by member Bob Gramberg about his life and signed copies for the Chapter. It was a fascinating Illinois Chapter meeting.

Equally interesting was the speaker for the February Chapter luncheon, Marv Allesee who served in World War I and World War II in the Navy and the Army. An accomplished artist and an educator, Marv gave a stimulating talk on his many experiences of his 98 years. The Chapter will hold its election of officers for the upcoming year at the March meeting.

## **COLORADO CHAPTER**

There were over 45 attendees who heard, at the December general meeting, one of the best guest speakers ever in Colonel Bill Bauer, one of the original Doolittle Raiders. Bill, who now lives in Boulder, said that as a child he used to watch Jimmy Doolittle

fly in the Cleveland Air Races, never imagining that their paths would ever cross again. They flew B-25s in the 1942 raid over Tokyo, which at the time was a tremendous morale booster for America following the December 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor by Japan. The February 2000 Chapter meeting was a luncheon held at RiverPointe.

David Shomper is the Colorado Chapter newsletter Editor and produces a 24-page edition full of a variety of articles and items - something of interest on every page!

## **SAVANNAH WING - GEORGIA CHAPTER**

The Savannah Wing President, Darrel Lowell, held a very effective planning meeting of the officers and Board of Directors of the Wing discussing all aspects of membership and Chapter activities. Outlines were made as to how best to approach every aspect of management to have an effective and productive year. Long-range plans were also reviewed and revised.

Most of the members are active as volunteers at the Mighty Eighth AF Heritage Museum and this bond helps to have good turnouts for the frequent special Chapter activities. Activities such as a flight with the 165th Logistic Group of the Georgia Air National Guard for a day at Moody AFB in Valdosta Ga. Side trips to Warner-Robbins Air Museum and to the National Prisoner of War Museum in Andersonville were options as part of the annual State meeting in January in Perry Ga.

The sell-out affair at the Glenn Miller Gala last Spring calls for another night of Big Band Music at the Heritage Museum this Spring - April 7th to be precise. Only 300 tickets will be sold to this dance, so those interested must get their tickets ASAP from Jay Yost at 912-352-7651. This popular event earned over \$4000 for the Wing treasury last year, and expectations are to exceed that this year.

## **GEORGIA CHAPTER**

Georgia Chapter members continue their tradition of being active in community affairs on a monthly basis. They take part in visits to school classrooms and telling younger generation school children of the history and values of those who served in the Mighty Eighth. The Chapter takes part in Veterans Day parades and regularly visits nursing home facilities to bring cheer to those shut-in and who are unable to attend special community events.

The Chapter is proud to sponsor a pew at the Mighty Eight Air Force Heritage Museum Chapel of the Fallen Eagles in Savannah. Members raised \$2500 to dedicate the pew to two members of the Chapter. The Memorial Chapter will be completed this December. The annual statewide meeting was held January 14 - 16 in Perry GA.

## **MISSISSIPPI CHAPTER**

Mississippians have been having a great time promoting their newly-published anthology, Mississippians In the Mighty Eighth. There have been numerous book-signing parties, media events, and 'shows on the road' to get the word out about the volume. As more

and more people have heard about the book, Chapter members have found themselves inundated with requests for personal appearances to discuss the book and the experiences of the 8th veterans which are included in its 80+ chapters. Most of the first printing has been sold and a second printing of the anthology has already been ordered.

There are other Chapter activities also coming up in the near future. April 21 - 23, 2000 will find the Mississippi Chapter at a return to Lake Tiak O'Khata for the traditional Spring Reunion by the lake. This event is special in that it is the Chapter's tenth anniversary. Great facilities, great southern cooking, a great program, and great folks await all who attend. You can check this out as well as info on members and numerous other subjects on the Chapter's new website:

<http://members.xoom.com/PeterVernet>.

Editor's note: The Mississippians In the Mighty Eighth volume is reviewed in this issue of the 8th AF NEWS; ordering details may be found in Book Reviews.

## **GENERAL JAMES H. DOOLITTLE CHAPTER - CALIFORNIA**

Chapter President Bob Harrington, and the General James H. Doolittle Chapter itself, was honored recently when President Harrington was named as a "Kentucky Colonel" by Kentucky Governor Paul Patton. The documents were presented in a ceremony by Vice-President Belton Wolf.

The upcoming quarterly Chapter meeting will be held at Travis Air Force Base at Fairfield, California on April 29, 2000. All meetings and Board of Directors meetings are open to all Chapter members, who are urged to participate. New officers will be elected at that meeting as will a new Board of Directors for the upcoming year. All interested members willing to serve should contact Janet Raymond, 1841 Stewart Ave., Arcata CA 95521-5022. A fund-raising raffle is being held to help defray costs of the twelve-page quarterly newsletter. Tickets are \$1.00.

## **TENNESSEE CHAPTER**

The very successful Joint Chapter meeting of the Tennessee and Kentucky Chapters last June has resulted in plans for similar festivities on April 28-30 in Clarksville TN. Bill Reeder of



Some of the Tennessee contingent at the 1999 Annual Historical Society Reunion in Savannah. From left: Tennessee Chapter President James Bass, Ned Rooks, Walter Baker and John Bacon.

Clarksville has once again offered to set up plans for this joint affair, which will include a visit to Beachhaven Vineyards and Winery, a tour of the Fort Campbell Pratt Army Airborne Museum, and a Roxy Theater presentation of the musical *Carousel* on Saturday evening of the event.

Each Chapter will conduct its business session at separate meetings on Saturday morning. Tennessee Chapter members may contact Secretary-Treasurer John Robinson at 355 Red Wolf Drive, Collierville TN 38017-6842. In his words: "End your Winter Hibernation. Spring is here. Memories are made of this. Come on out."

## NEW JERSEY CHAPTER

President Irving Pliskin has compiled an outline of suggestions for consideration by the Reunion Committee to broaden the activity base of the National Annual Reunions. This would include the addition of programs and seminars to be held at the base hotel for those who do not care to go out on daily tours. His contributions have been discussed at the National Board of Directors Mid-term meeting and several of them will be incorporated into the plans for the October Reunion in Salt Lake City.

On a lighter note, the N. J. NEWS Chapter newsletter has some rather unusual jokes in each issue. Recently, for instance: Riding in a car, a group of New Jersey men were headed out for a bear hunt. They came to a point in the road with a sign that said, "Bear Left", so they went back home.

Or perhaps we should take note of the admonition:  
Beauty is in the eye of the beer-holder.

## NORTH TEXAS CHAPTER

The members of the North Texas Chapter hold luncheon meetings six times each year, and interspersed are frequent trips to Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport, Louisiana. Their premier event is the big Christmas Gala with entertainment and lots of door prizes and raffles. Member Bill Barnett was the grand prize winner, receiving two free tickets to anywhere anytime on Southwest Airlines. The January Board meeting was held in Arlington and special tribute was given to recently departed member Doyle Shields. His years of work with the Chapter from its inception nine years ago was noted in a special ceremony. President Bruce Kilmer states that future Board meetings will be held on the second Saturday of every other month except November, beginning with March 2000.

The February general meeting was a luncheon at the Petroleum Club in Fort Worth and featured General Albert Lenskie as guest speaker. General Lenskie's Air Force career

spanned over three decades through the Viet Nam era. His team won the Air Force William Tell 70 competition for the USAF's top fighter pilots. He later served as an instructor for American Airlines and has authored a book on his Viet Nam combat experiences entitled *The Magic 100*.

## KENTUCKY CHAPTER

Wayne Tabor, Kentucky Chapter President, has developed a list of six goals to be achieved by the Chapter this year. Among those are developing an oral and written history of every man from Kentucky who served in the 8th AF; developing a statewide education program to teach youngsters about the Mighty Eighth and its values; and establish an intense membership drive to enroll new members.

The Board of Directors meet at the Highland Post American Legion 201 at 11:30 AM the first Thursday of each month. All are invited to "just come on" and take part. The annual Chapter Reunion will be held in Clarksville Tn as a joint gathering with the Tennessee Chapter on April 28 -30, 2000. Contact Treasurer Ken Payton, 8602 Claudia, Louisville KY 40219 for information and registration.

## ALABAMA CHAPTER

Alabama Chapter members continue to have Wing activities on a monthly basis. The Northern Wing has monthly luncheons and this editor is looking forward to taking Bill Varnedoe up on his invitation to attend. The South Alabama Wing held its quarterly meeting in December and Wing Commander George Grau reports that the food was just excellent! Dr. Richard Schwaiger contributed the food for the event. He is a Master Chef and has cooked for three sitting Presidents of the United States. The Wing has also instituted a petty cash fund with a minimal yearly assessment from each member, for mailing costs and beverages.

The State Chapter will miss the editorial services of its long-time editor of the State newsletter, the PROPWASH, C. B. "Red" Harper of Birmingham. He has retired. Red has published the newsletter for the past ten years and his articles and wit have been a feature of each issue. A fond farewell to General Bouregard Culpper Boltstead.



**First old veteran:** "I got sick and tired of not being able to hear as good as I used to, so I went downtown yesterday and bought myself the latest high-tech model in hearing aids."

**Friend:** "That's great. What kind is it?"

**Old veteran:** "A quarter till two."

- from Norm Grant 493rd BG

# CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

Members and wives of the Massachusetts Chapter participate each year in the annual Chinese Independence Day parade in Boston. The festivities, sponsored by the very patriotic Chinese-American Community, honor the birthday of Sun Yat Sen, the George Washington of Free China.

John Brennan, Editor of the Chapter newsletter Vapor Trails, covered the event and sends in some photos of downtown Boston.

The Massachusetts Chapter's Antique pickup truck, a familiar sight at many local parades transports a few venerable 'antiques' into Boston's City Hall Plaza during the Chinese Independence Day parade.

Massachusetts Chapter President Bill Campbell, center, Henry Oi, left, resplendent in his flight jacket and officer's cap, and retiring President Al Audette step out smartly leading the troops. At this point in the parade the pace has quickened because the marchers know a grand Chinese feast awaits them at the end of the march.



**Remember to put  
The 8th AF NEWS on your Chapter's newsletter mailing lists -  
Address is on inside front cover -Editor**

We want YOU as a member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society! Become a part of the fun and camaraderie of State and National meetings, receive the quarterly 8th AF NEWS magazine, membership cards and all privileges, and become a part of the historical legacy of the Mighty Eighth Air Force! Friends, kids, grandchildren, veterans of all services, history buffs, and patriots are all welcome to become members. The coupon below may be copied and sent in with one year's dues and start your membership right now!



## 8TH AFHS MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name

FIRST NAME

MIDDLE INITIAL

LAST NAME

Address

CITY

STATE

ZIP CODE

Where did you hear about us? \_\_\_\_\_ 8th AF Unit \_\_\_\_\_ Not in 8th - Sign Me Up \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Send application to: **8AFHS, P.O. Box 1787 Savannah, GA 31402.** Please use this form only for your initial application and for your first calendar year's dues (\$10 U.S. and \$15 non-U.S.). Your annual dues will be billed for subsequent years.

# HERITAGE MUSEUM ACTIVITIES

## HERITAGE OF PRIDE AND VALOR JANUARY 11 - JUNE 30 2000

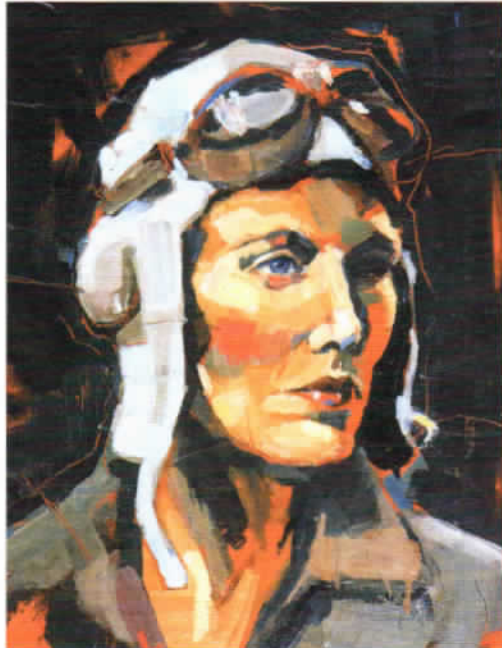
New Exhibition Opens in Colonial Industries Art Gallery

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum has opened its first juried art exhibition entitled The Heritage of Pride and Valor, featuring artworks in various media from professors and students of the Savannah College of Art and Design. The art show competition theme called for works relating to the World War II era, aviation, and to the history of the 8th Air Force in particular. Exhibiting artists spent several months at the museum and in museum archives researching period history in preparing their entries. Jury awards were presented to six artists at an opening reception held in the Art Gallery in January. The exhibition jury committee was chaired by Dr. Curtis Tarr, member of the Board of Trustees, Veteran of World War II and artist, and included Professor Joy Flynn from SCAD. Summer Orndorff organized the exhibition.

Some of the entries are of the artworks of the homefront, women in aviation and of the 8th AF experience during the Vietnam era. Titles of several pieces include *In Memory of Sam Kirby* by Hugh Gale, *Patriotism* by Kevin

Dvorscak, *Last Mission* by Shannon Tudyk, *Female Aviator* by Dan McGregor, and Richard Wilhelm's *The Missing Wing Man*. Two of the pieces are purchase awards to be donated to the Heritage Museum's permanent art collection.

The Heritage of Pride and Valor mixed media exhibition has received much favorable publicity and will be open to museum visitors for viewing until June 30, 2000.



## Heritage of Pride and Valor

January 11– June 30, 2000

The Mighty Eighth Air Force  
Heritage Museum

175 Bourne Avenue  
Pooler, Georgia 31322

Opening Reception  
January 21, 2000  
5–7 PM

Gallery Hours  
9–5:30 Daily

## MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE MUSEUM NAMED FIRST CENTER FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION IN STATE

Visitors to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah are learning not just 8th history and aviation, but about Character and how to build it. The Museum has recently been named the first official State of Georgia Center for Character Education and will serve as a statewide model for other institutions. In 1992 the Georgia state legislature passed laws which require that character education be a part of every school's curriculum. Other states across the country have followed this initiative and have instituted similar programs based on the success of the Georgia program. Vivian Price, Director of Education at the Heritage Museum uses exhibitry, interactive classes, and planned programs to teach students and school classes traits which make up the character education program.

The state-wide Character Education program includes core content which addresses 27 traits for students. Among those are courage, patriotism, citizenship, fairness, respect for others, self-respect, self-control, pride, creativity, perseverance, compassion, diligence and loyalty. There are fourteen others as part of the program. To date, over 10,000 students have participated in the education activities at the Museum.

The Heritage Museum program sets a high standard for other museums to follow. "Being designated as the first

Center for Character Education in the state is a very high honor, an honor of which every 8th veteran should be quite proud," states Chairman

Lt. General E. G. "Buck" Shuler. "It is a recognition and affirmation of the progress made in our museum educational programs and with it is a responsibility for the future, to continue to utilize the resources of the Heritage Museum to teach our younger generations the values which have been important as an integral part of the history of the Mighty Eighth."



Major General Lewis E. Lyle Rotunda - Heritage Museum

The December 99 issue featured a story of the tragic crash in Endcliffe Park, Sheffield of the B-17 *Mi Amigo*, from material submitted by Philip Levick of Sheffield England. This crew photo of the Kriegshauser crew was taken at Geiger Field, Spokane Washington on October 22nd, 1943. Perhaps some 8th veterans will remember this crew and send in a story.

**MI AMIGO CREW**

**Front row, from left:**

Lt Hernandez, (B); Lt Humphrey, (N); Lt Curtis, (CP);  
Lt John Kriegshauser (P).

**Back row:**

Sgt Estabrook (E); Sgt Robbins (TG);  
Sgt Mayfield (RO); Sgt Ambrose (WG); Sgt Tuttle (BTG);  
Sgt Williams (WG).



Three beautiful restored USSR reminders of the Korean conflict and the Cold War are on display at the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson, Arizona. From left is a Mikoyan Gurevich MIG 21 PF, NATO name Fishbed - D 1962; a Mikoyan Gurevich MIG 15 UT7 Midget Trainer 1951; and a MIG 17 PF Fresco-D all weather radar interceptor.



Brian Moffatt of Lancashire England is seen with his car sporting a 448 license plate. With him pointing to the tag is Ed Chu of upstate New York, a tailgunner with the 448th Bomb Group. The photo was made at the 448th's reunion and visit to the American Cemetery at Cambridge. Brian is a member of the Tower Association Station 146 at Seething Norfolk and is a member of the Historical Society.

**XXI**

The English love their country with a love  
Steady, and simple, wordless, dignified;  
I think it sets their patriotism above  
All others. We Americans have pride—  
We glory in our country's short romance.  
We boast of it, and love it. Frenchmen, when  
The ultimate menace came, have died for France,  
Logically as they lived. But Englishmen  
Will serve day after day, obey the law,  
And do dull tasks that keep a nation strong.  
Once I remember in London how I saw  
Pale, shabby people standing in a long  
Line in the twilight and the misty rain  
To pay their tax. I then saw England plain.  
**-Alice Duer Miller in *The White Cliffs***



## AUSTRALIAN B-24 LIBERATOR RESTORATION PROJECT PROGRESSES

Eric Clark, an ex-RAAF Wireless/Gunner (WAG) decided in 1984 that it was time to search out and restore a complete World War II B-24 Liberator. After several years of exploring the idea, his project garnered enough support to get it off the ground. The main problem was that Eric lived in Australia and while he was aware that 37 B-24 crash sites were identified in the rugged terrain of Australia, there was no fully intact aircraft amenable to bring out for restoration.

Over 20,000 Royal Australian Air Force personnel had flown missions in B-24's, and soon veterans organizations climbed aboard to assist in the project. Finally, an RAAF Liberator was found in Moe Victoria. Used for several years as a home, the aircraft had been abandoned and became overgrown with 40 years of mountainous vegetation. Much of the wing and tail structures had gone to scrap. Other crashes were explored and pieces of needed parts were eventually obtained. A USAAF B-24D of the 403rd squadron of the 43rd Bomb Group was a particular useful resource for several of the larger pieces. The parts were brought out of the mountains to Madang Harbour and then were transported to an old WW II hanger in Werribee. In 1994 about 70 volunteer members of the "FUND" began the actual restoration work. Local businesses and members of various B-24 Societies helped the process by donating time and supplies to the project. The volunteers criss-crossed Australia recovering B-24 parts and currently about 70% of the aircraft is complete. Many original crash sites were searched. Elevator and rudder parts were found at a site near Rockhampton in Queensland. A dog in Rochester Victoria was left homeless when it was discovered that his kennel was part of an engine cowling. Radar equipment was found in a cowshed near Townsville in Queensland and radio equipment was rescued from beneath a house scheduled for demolition.

Lack of interest in the early days has now turned into a strong public awareness of the restoration project and many companies have become strong supporters. Airframe completion is scheduled for August 2000 and complete fitting out will follow during the next year. David Davine is one of the project contacts in Australia. He has forwarded the photos accompanying this article and has made many friends in the Historical Society during the past 12 years of being part of the restoration proceedings.

He notes that Australia began using B-24's in 1943 when 300 aircraft were shipped to the RAAF. At the end of the war Australia had the fourth largest Air Force in the world, behind the USA, Britain, and Russia.

When completed, the finished B-24 will be one of the finest preservations in the world and will serve to honor those fliers of World War II in Australia and throughout the Liberator world.



Wheel assembly in good state of preservation



The work table



The B-24-D Liberator



The oval engine cowling, previously a dog house!



Fuselage with RAAF markings intact



## WE MADE MILLENNIUM 2000 - HERE ARE SOME PREDICTIONS MADE AT THE LAST MILLENNIUM IN 1900

**Horseless Carriage** - Those newfangled automobiles will replace all horse-drawn vehicles then known.

**Snowmobiles** - Children and adults alike will ride over snow in the winter upon "automotive sleighs."

**No Couch Potatoes** - Exercise will be so popular that anyone who doesn't walk 10 miles daily will be regarded "as a weakling."

**Fingertip Temperature** - Hot and cold air will be available inside the house, much like hot and cold water, through hand-regulated controls.

**Distant Vision** - People and events around the world will be brought into living rooms, seen and heard in real time through electronic connection of circuits and cameras.

**War Machines** - Future wars will be fought by "submarine boats" capable of wiping out whole fleets and cities and by "fleets of air-ships" raining death and destruction on "surprised foes below."

**Space Pictures** - "Flying machines" will carry powerful telescopes that will beam back to Earth photographs "as distinct and large as if taken from across the street."

**Giant Food** - Strawberries as big as apples and raspberries like baseballs will be common fare, a boon to convincing children they must eat healthy fruit.

*Source: Our Times: The Illustrated History of the 20th Century*



### THE SPIRES OF OXFORD

I saw the spires of Oxford  
As I was passing by,  
The grey spires of Oxford  
Against a pear-grey sky;  
My heart was with the Oxford men  
Who went abroad to die.

The years go fast in Oxford,  
The golden years and gay;  
The hoary colleges look down  
On careless boys at play,  
But when the bugles sounded--War!  
They put their games away.

They left the peaceful river,  
The cricket field, the quad,  
The shaven lawns of Oxford,  
To seek a bloody sod.  
They gave their merry youth away  
For country and for God.

God rest you, happy gentlemen,  
Who laid your good lives down,  
Who took the khaki and the gun  
Instead of cap and gown.  
God bring you to a fairer place  
Then even Oxford town.

*-from The Spires of Oxford*



### TAPS IS NOT ENOUGH

How can I say, "You gave the things you loved,"  
And say, "We know, because we love them too,"  
And say, "Do you remember this or that?"  
Whisper of corn along the moonlit road,  
First break of sun on the upland pasture lot,  
Jigging of fiddles on a Saturday night,  
Or hand organs singing rainy Spring  
Into gray city streets, wet and dull-gleaming,  
The trays of yellow jonquils in the dusk  
Of subway stations, and the sound of feet  
Walking the pavements till the night is gone.

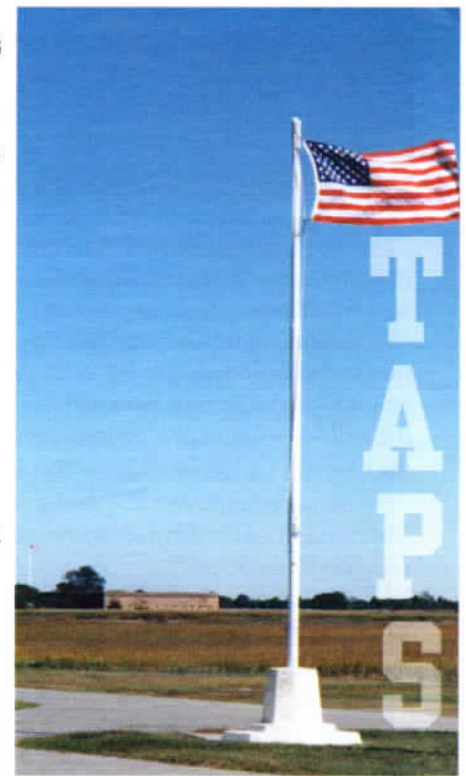
I suppose

He may have liked those things. He never said.  
He might have felt that way with a girl along.  
But I was with him up to the bloody end,  
And he talked most about the job he had,  
And big-league baseball, and of getting leave  
To back home and see his family.  
If you ask me, these were the things he gave.

*- from Taps is Not Enough*  
by Carl Cramer

**Brooks, Clinton** Corry PA. 7th PRG  
**Melillo, W. Kelly** Dayton OH. 385th BG  
**Rickert, Ralph** Dyersburg TN. 96th BG  
**Prescott, John** Scottsdale AZ. 306th BG  
**Reed, Mark** Leesburg FL. 446th BG  
**Shores, James** Camden ME. 96th BG  
**Tweed, Guy** Steubenville OH. 491st BG  
**Kelly, James** Schnectady NY. 448th BG  
**Karol, Edward** St Petersburg FL. 466th BG  
**Sparke, Ray** 357th FG  
**Williams, David** 357th BG  
**Moss, Don** 447th BG - from Al Goodwin  
**O'Bannon, Robert** Aptos CA. 91st BG, B-17 pilot, POW in Stalag Luft III and Stalag 7-A  
**Seat, William "Bill"** 388th BG Co-pilot, POW in Stalag 7-A -from crewmember Boots Mayberry  
**McGhan, Roy** Jackson CA. 96th BG -from wife Nelleen McGhan  
**Nordman, G.C. "Buck"** Marion IA. Escape and Evasion Society -from Leighton Ford  
**Hutchcroft, Harold** Middletown IA. -from wife Mary Ester  
**Moore, Milton** Tucson AZ. Pilot 447th BG and fighter pilot in Korean War -from Jerome Abrams  
**Shields, Doyle** 447th BG, North Texas Chapter, Charter member, Past-President; Thompson, Carl, pilot 306th BG, North Texas Chapter  
**Bruce, Dominic**, RAF Wellington pilot; downed in the North Sea and sent by German captors to Colditz castle prison, near Leipzig, where he made seventeen escape attempts in four years as a POW. The farthest he ever made it was 400 miles before being recaptured. Awarded British Military Cross for his escape attempts.  
**Smith, Lucius**, Sarasota FL; 94th BG, ballturret gunner on Ray Prigmore crew in *Million Dollar Baby*  
**Manina, Joe**, San Jose CA  
**Plecha, Stanley**, Colorado Springs CO

**Latta, Charles**, Durham NC: ballturret gunner 303rd BG Hells' Angels  
**Moselle, Arnold**, Newberry Park CA; B-17 pilot 303rd BG - by nephew Ray Moselle  
**Wagstaff, Shirl**, Salt Lake City UT; 492nd BG, active in Utah Chapter, -by John Moore  
**Schroeder, Norman**, 44th BG; also in Navy and in Korean conflict; active in Yankee Air Force - by Harold Sherman  
**Boerke, John (Jack)**, North Bend OR; bombardier 487th BG  
**Mitchell, John**, Midothian VA; Virginia Chapter  
**Gladu, Donald P.**, Framingham MA; 3rd Army AF Combat Camera unit, 325th Photo Wing posted in Hollywood CA and in High Wycombe HQ England  
**Nunamaker, Charles J.**, Olathe KS; 398th BG  
**Umoff, A. Paul**, Clear Lake TX; 457th BG; flew two tours; 49 missions, nine to Berlin  
**Bouvier, Albert**, Swansea MA; 92nd BG  
**Byrd, Clifford**, Mercer Island WA; 96th BG; Ret USAF. Employee of the Year with Boeing Corp.; flew first Berlin Airlift; monitored first Pacific Hydrogen Bomb test  
**Ingels, William**, 36th Bomb Squadron  
**Grey, William**, 490th BG; Central New York Chapter; flew 52 missions, many in the British DeHavill and Mosquito  
**Johnson, Cecil**, Albany GA; in aircraft collision over Belgium 1944; burial in 8th AF uniform  
**Pierson, Don**, Mayfield KY; POW; Kentucky Chapter  
**Adams, George**, Savannah GA; 1993 Grand Marshall St. Patrick's Day in Savannah  
**Sanford, Joseph**; Vice-President New Jersey Chapter



### **TOM LANDRY 1924 - 2000**

Tom Landry flew a combat tour as a Co-pilot in the 493rd Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. After the war, he became the coach of the NFL's Dallas Cowboys football team for 29 years and was the third-winningest coach in the league's history with 270 victories. His early career was with the New York Giants and as a coach with Vince Lombardi. He is a member of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Landry's innovative football tactics and his development of the Doomsday defense, the flex defense, led one sports writer to label him "fire-proof, bulletproof, and emotionproof" - traits he exhibited on combat missions over enemy territory in World War II. Tom Landry died at his home in Mission, Texas of leukemia.

### **HOLLIS LONG**

A member of the Mississippi Chapter, Hollis Long will be remembered for his music. He played stringed instruments and lovingly built over 520 dulcimers, often entertaining Chapter members at their reunions. As a Native American he loved nature and frequently painted scenes around his hometown of Golden, Mississippi. His dance band played for many Bomb and Fighter Group dances in East Anglia during the war, and were named "The Rocketeers". Hollis Long served in the 339th Fighter Group at Fowlmere as an armorer.

### **CHARLES SCHULTZ**

Charles Schultz served in the U. S. Army in World War II, fighting on the continent in the European Theater. After the war he printed his first PEANUTS comic strip on October 2nd, 1950. A favorite subect was the beagle dog Snoopy. Every year on June 6th, he drew a special *Peanuts* strip recognizing the servicemen who landed with the invasion forces on the beaches of Normandy on D-Day, 1944. Charles Schultz had recently retired and he died in February 2000, the day before his final *Peanuts* strip appeared in the newspapers around the world.



World Famous Flying Ace

### **JOHN HAROLD ROBINSON, JR**

In a police chase with criminals in Memphis, Tennessee, John Harold Robinson, Jr, age 39, was killed in the line of duty in the crash of his patrol car. He lived his life to serve people and to make his country a better place in which people might live in peace and security. John Robinson was known for his ever-present concern for the safety and well-being of other people and was always ready to help others during his seventeen years on the Memphis police force. Thousands who were helped by him and who knew him paid their respects at services held in honor of this patriotic man in blue. His wife and children survive. He was the only son of John and Elizabeth Robinson of Collierville, TN. John Harold Robinson Sr. served in the 445th Bomb Group at Tibenham and is a past-president of the Tennessee Chapter 8th AFHS.

# A MUTT'S TALE

## PART III - BAPTISM OF FIRE

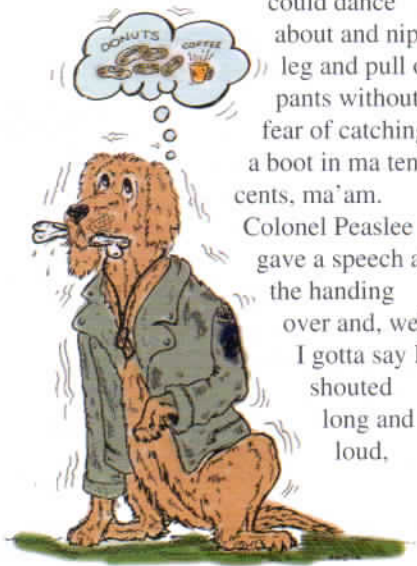
"There are a lot of bombers in the air this morning, boy, and I dare say they will be striking deep into Germany by now." Yes ma'am...those Forts are from the station and they gotta meet with other 17s and B24s from all over the midlands and the eastern counties, ma'am and then cross the Channel as high as they can fly. "It's only been a few months and it seems like you Americans have always been at Grafton Underwood." Well, I know it must be tough, ma'am, cause you natives ain't never heard much more than a sparrow fart as such an early hour but, well ma'am, I ain't gonna apologize none cause we gonna whop that Adolph Hitler.

"It isn't so long ago that it was a Royal Air Force station..." That's true ma'am but the first guys to fly a mission against the enemy for Uncle Sam, ma'am flew outta Grafton Underwood on the 17th of August 1942. They were twelve B17E's of the 97th BG, ma'am...the first ones to drop bombs in Europe, ya know.

"And then in July the RAF handed over to Colonel Peaslee, Group commander of the 384th..."

Yes, ma'am, the 5th of July and, boy that handing over of the station was just the thing to stir a mutt to patriotic tears, ma'am. All my buddies were lined up in their best kit and standing as silent as the calm before a storm. For the first time I

could dance about and nip a leg and pull on pants without fear of catching a boot in ma ten cents, ma'am. Colonel Peaslee gave a speech at the handing over and, well, I gotta say I shouted long and loud,



ma'am. And when the band played The Star Spangled Banner, I stopped callin' and shed a tear cause I remembered that by the 5th we'd already lost a lot of good guys.

"I don't suppose you remember much about the beginning of it all - do you, boy?"

Yes siree, ma'am, I remember it all like it was just an hour ago...

After we had all settled down into some routine at Grafton Underwood the boys got lots of last minute training. Really loved that, ma'am, high over that place they called The Wash to test out the bombsight and fire off rounds at towed targets and stuff.

I suppose combat action was always in the back of our minds and I know everyone was waiting for the first one.

"I wonder how those young boys felt when the first field order came through."

Uh oh, ma'am, could anybody ever be ready for that? The guys had spent nearly a month just waiting to go out and get some of that action. They's bicycled to Geddington, Bridgestock and Kettering to drink that warm English beer - which the boys say the natives keep in a hoss in the cellar. Then, when the first field-order came in, the bad weather over the targets made the action impossible. Another day of frustration - and yes, on the 22nd of June, Colonel Peaslee's GI's got their baptism of fire, ma'am...

"I suppose the first mission was a chicken chase..."

Hmm, I think you mean turkey shoot, ma'am, and no it wasn't that at all. The General Motors plant at Antwerp was the target, ma'am, and the group lost two Forts - #853 and #076 - twenty guys, to that mission.

Oblinski exploded in mid-air, ma'am, and Disney's Fort just headed down towards the sea somewhere along the Dutch coastline. Eleven of the remaining eighteen Forts returned with some combat damage, ma'am, and I guess the reality of this war set in pretty damn quick...I stood on the perimeter that day, ma'am along with every single man of the 384th ground support and counted the Forts coming home.



It was a shock to us all that the two never came home.

I met each Fort, ma'am, and stood on three, lifted ma lone paw in awe and pounded the air with ma tail when I saw them each rolling round the perimeter track. Later the whole picture started to sink in, ma'am, when I watched the orderlies clearing those boys' lockers and gathering up all their personal effects. Sat outside awhile, ma'am, and just couldn't understand why I felt so melancholy but then I thought it might have been the effects of the foot-bath of Gunk that I drunk at Sioux City...

"They are just young boys doing all this..."

Ma'am, that was just the start. By late afternoon on Friday 25th of June the 384th had lost three more Forts...#143 the 'Yankee Powerhouse', #049 'Miss Deal' and #850 over the submarine slips on the Hamburg target run.

I wandered round the barracks that evening and saw again the personal effects of another thirty crewmen being collected for sending back home...ma'am that takes some doggone thinking about and I don't suppose it made any sense but I just took to rounding up the farmer's steers.

"I suppose you must wonder if this is ever going to stop, boy?"

Ma'am the next day - that was the 26th of June - the boys set off for Villacoublay in France. By this time, ma'am, we were all

hardening veterans and, whilst returning from a clouded target with a full load of bombs, the group lost five Forts to fighter attacks over the Paris area. This time it was #188 'Miss Carriage', #048 'Flak Dancer' #031 and #058. In the first few days of combat, ma'am, there

were a total of ten Forts lost over enemy territory. That's one hundred young boys, ma'am and forty of those were from Jesse's 544th Squadron. That's something, ma'am, that's gonna live with me for the rest of ma life...

To be continued...  
Peter Hinson  
Bedford, England  
peter.hinson@ukonline.co.uk



The 384th Bomb Group returns to Grafton Underwood with special ceremonies attended by British friends, the 384th "White Jackets", and United States Air Force representatives. The beautiful memorial is at the site of the World War II airbase.

- photos by John Degrange



"Scoring on enemy aircraft"

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U. S. Army Air Force

P-47 Pursuit



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## FROM THE EDITOR ...

### TWINS - THE SEQUEL

You remember The Twins. We first met them in the December 99 issue and know them as Dan and Tom Birkbeck. They sound alike. They look alike. They both served together in the 452nd Bomb Group. They both were wondering whether they were the only set of twins to serve in the same unit together in the 8th Air Force during the war.

Historical Society members responded.

Harry Smith, of Traverse City, MI and Operations officer for the 452nd BG, sends in a photo of Dan stating that he was a real joy to be around. "I don't recall whether I knew he was a twin at the time. Perhaps they traded off working in squadron Operations. You can see that Dan hasn't changed much."

Adolph and Ralph Brocato were pilots in the 379th Bomb Group at Kimbolton. They flew missions in January 1944, often flying on the same missions but in separate aircraft. Adolph was shot down over Erange, Germany on his 23rd mission and was a Prisoner of War. His brother Ralph stayed on to fly 40 missions. Ralph now lives in Euless, TX and Adolph resides in Kentwood, LA.

The 486th Bomb Group also had a set of identical twin pilots, both serving together in the 833rd squadron. Stanley Loftsgard of Richland, MO states that Willis and Kenneth Wegner were from Minco, OK. "I don't think the Wegner twins ever flew a combat mission together in one airplane but am pretty sure they flew on the same missions, as we didn't have any spare crews. We flew B-24s initially and then when the Third Air Division changed over to all B-17s the 486th BG also changed. I lost track of the Wegner twins when my crew and five more crews were transferred to the 493rd BG to finish out our tours as Lead crews in B-24s."

There are the Cocker twins from Minnesota. Mrs. Maynard (Elaine) Cocker of Arlington Heights, IL writes that Myron and Maynard Cocker enlisted at Ft. Snelling on October 6th, 1942. After graduating from airplane mechanics school they served as Asst. Crew Chiefs at Rattlesden with the 447th Bomb Group, 709th squadron from November 1942 to July 1945. They remained in aviation after the war, both working for United Airlines.

Then there were the Blank twins who flew with the 301st Bomb Group. Ralph Ambrose, 398th BG Associate sends in their photo and asks if any our members have information on them.

An extensive but fascinating war history arrived from Peder Larsen, who went through pilot training with his twin brother Paul Larsen of Caldwell, NJ, both now living in Venice, Florida. Their complete tale will be told in a future issue of the 8th AF

NEWS, but both brothers wound up being assigned for duty in the 8th Air Force. Peder flew missions with the 96th BG at Snetterton beginning in November 1944, piloting the B-17 *Peder's Parade*. Paul initially flew combat half way around the world in the Pacific theater before his assignment to the 8th Air Force.

A unique situation existed in the 491st Bomb Group. "In my bomb squadron, the 852nd of the 491st Bomb Group, we had a crew that not only had twins, but also two other members of the same crew who were brothers! Jack Chapman was the pilot of the *Merchant of Menace* and his brother Harry Chapman was the navigator. The twins were Earl and Elmer Blake who were both gunners. So much for the Sullivan edict." Thus writes C. W. "Bill" Getz of Burlingame, CA, and in so doing deserves the prize for reporting on the most unusual crew of family members in the Mighty Eighth! The 491st BG history states that twin brothers were eligible to serve together, but non-twin brothers were not allowed to serve in the same unit. These two sets of brothers flew their missions together and survived. Bill states that, "I doubt there is any similar case to the Chapman Crew in the annals of U.S. Air Force combat history."

The Birkbecks - Tom and Dan - certainly stirred up a flurry of interest with their inquiry as to twin brothers of the Eighth - a most interesting subject that brought a variety of interesting responses from Historical Society members. This leads us to the next question: "Does anyone know of any father and son veterans who served together in the 8th AF during the war?"

WEB



Peder Larson's A-2 Jacket



Peder and Paul Larson with their new wings.



730th Squadron Operations 452nd BG  
 From left: Harry Smith, Operations Officer; Joe Kriss, Sq. Bombardier; Don Bird Sq. Navigator; Dan Birkberk, Sq Clerk; Edward Hood, Asst. OPS Officer (KIA)  
 Squad Clerk Name not available



486th Bomb Group twins, pilots Willis and Kenneth Wegener.



CHAPMAN CREW AND  
 "MERCHANT OF MENACE"

rear L - R: (G) Gus Johansen, (CP) Clyde Stokes, (B) Jackson Chapman, (P) Harry Chapman, (N) Bruce Crane, (RO) Alex Trainovich,  
 front L - R: (G) Elmer Blake, (G) Willie Milam, (G) James Croom, (G) Earl Blake.

The Pilot and bombardier were brothers and the Blake boys were twins.



The 301st BG's Blank twins



Tom and Dan Birkbeck in the 452nd BG War Room

## A TRUE STORY

By Bill Varnedoe, 385th BG  
Huntsville, AL

Events do change things; seemingly unrelated things can have far reaching consequences! This is a true story taken from the diaries of Bob Silver and Otto Schramm telling of some events as they unfolded in World War II.

One day, a kind Dutch lady, Frau Nell deWijs, took a young German soldier, Eric Schramm, her enemy, in her house to let him get warm and gave him something to eat. He wrote of this kindness to his father, Sgt. Otto Schramm, who was an anti-aircraft gunner. Sgt. Schramm had the job of supplying the shells to his battery. This battery was renowned for its accuracy and had been decorated for their skill. On the morning after he got Eric's letter, Sgt. Schramm bicycled to get his battery's ammunition for the day. On the way, he remembered the letter and reached into his pocket to see if he had it. He did. But just at that time a dog ran in front of his bicycle. With only one hand, he swerved and crashed. He was injured, not badly, but enough so that his shells were not available for the guns and they were silent that day, the 5th of March 1945. Sgt.

Schramm wrote in his diary in 1945 that he was sure, if he could have delivered the shells, they would have knocked down some of the Fortresses that flew over.

The 385th Bomb Group went on that mission and among those flying was Bob Silver. There was no flak and all returned safely. Later in April 1945, Bob and the 385th participated in the food drops to the starving population in Holland. Much, much later, in April 1995, Bob Silver was part of a group of 385th veterans visiting Holland. I will quote Bob: "As I was giving out some of the cards to the children who came to greet us, the mother of one little girl was standing behind her and handed me a note which said: 'We are so very grateful that you survived the war mainly, of course, for your sake but also for ours: If you had not survived, you could not have brought the food



At reduced air speed 385th B-17s dropped food containers on Utrecht, May 1945.

which saved our nation. My grandmother told us that the food which she received from you in 1945 kept her family from starving to death after the horrible 'hunger winter' of 1945. Her name is Nelly deWijs."

I was also on that mission of 5 March 1945, and I, too, was on the Dutch food drops. Makes you think! The kindness of Nelly deWijs may well have saved our lives. Eric wrote of her kind act. Sgt. Schramm fell because of his letter and an errant dog, causing a flak-free mission from an anti-aircraft known for its kills.



Presentation of a plaque and proclamation appointing Robert W. Harrington, President of the General James H. Doolittle Chapter, 8th Air Force Historical Society, as a KENTUCKY COLONEL. The presentation was made by Belton C. Wolf, VP of the General James H. Doolittle Chapter. Alongside President Harrington is his spouse Betty Harrington.

## A California 'Kentucky Colonel'

How did a former First Lieutenant, B-24 Liberator Pilot, with the 466th Bomb Group (H), 8th Air Force during World War II become a KENTUCKY COLONEL?

At a recent meeting of the General James H. Doolittle Chapter, 8th Air Force Historical Society, in Northern California, President Robert H. Harrington was honored by the Commonwealth of Kentucky, when Kentucky's Governor, Paul E. Patton commissioned Robert H. (Bob) Harrington into the Honorable Order of KENTUCKY COLONELS.

"The 'Honorable Order' was founded in 1932, by the then Governor Ruby Laffoon, as a charitable and goodwill organization. However, Kentucky's first Governor, Issac Shelby created the commission as a state governmental position. Bob Harrington's appointment came by way of his regional support. With his commission, Bob is in good company with past "Kentucky Colonels", among whom were: President Lyndon B. Johnson, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Senator John Glenn, who received his commission while orbiting the Earth on his first historic mission.





Wayne W Needham Dixon Ill.  
 William W. Morrison Philadelphia, Pa.  
 George S. Elliott Augusta, Ga.  
 Robert C. Miller Wittenburg Wisconsin  
 Warren H. Backelin Spring Valley, New York  
 Harold R. Leberow Amherst Ohio

### UNCLE CHARLIE

Dear Sirs,

The enclosed picture was given to me by my second cousin, Joan Andersen Liepe. Her uncle, Charles Andersen, is kneeling third from the right. Charles was also my mother's cousin. I also called him Uncle Charlie. The signatures are of his crewmates that were on the back of the photo. This picture is from the 600th squadron, 398th Bomb Group. They were transferred over to the 381st Bomb Group, 534th Squadron and flew a slightly infamous plane called the "Carolina Queen" (42-97214). The Carolina Queen made a crash landing after having its ball turret tools passed to them in mid-air (but that was with a different crew). This crew was in the Carolina Queen on 24 May 1944 when it was lost in the vicinity of Berlin, having a mid-air collision with another plane. Wardencki was pilot in the Carolina Queen and Wainwright was pilot of the other plane.

I am a member of the 8th AFHS and enjoy your magazine very much. I was only five when the War started but have many memories. My father was in the Merchant Marine for the duration and had many close calls from submarines and air strikes. He carried the troops, food, ammo, planes, tanks, trucks "Over There". Anyway....keep up the good work!!

Sincerely yours, Richard Hansen Mays Landing, NJ

*Suffering battle damage, the Carolina Queen's ball turret was jammed and could not be freed for the gunner to exit prior to the crash landing. The 381st Commander Col. Conway Hall, went up in a Group light observations plane and was able to fly above the Queen and drop the necessary tools to the stricken B-17 through an open hatch.*

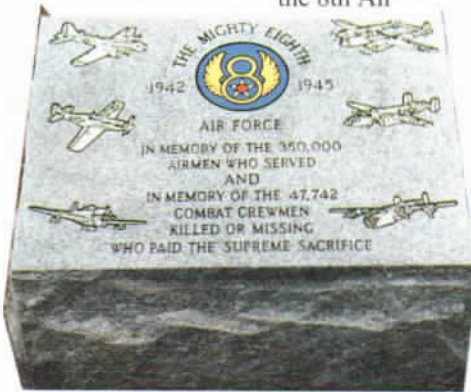
*An event which quickly made the rounds of 8th AF airbases. - Editor*

# ARLINGTON CEMETERY MEMORIAL - JANUARY 24, 2000

It was a cold day in January at Arlington National Cemetery when 100 members of the 8th Air Force Historical Society along with Air Force Representatives of the Air Force Pentagon dedicated the 8th Air Force Memorial Monument in memory of the 350,000 8th Air Force airmen of WWII and paid homage to those who paid the supreme sacrifice for the price of freedom. The ceremony was presided over by Byron Schlag, President of The National Capital Area Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society as well as the Historical Society Chapters who were instrumental in implementing and establishing the Monument for the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Present also, were Larry Goldstein, Director, representing 8th Air Force National and as a Representative of the New York Chapters, Jack Keller representing the Ohio Chapter, Barney Nolan representing the Georgia Chapter, along with officers, directors, members and guests of the NCAC.

The United States Air Force was represented by General Regner Rider, Deputy Chief of Staff, Air and Space Operations, Headquarters, The Pentagon. General Rider prior to his present duty assignment was the Vice Commander of the 8th Air Force at Barksdale Airforce Base.

General Rider spoke on the importance of the 8th Air



Force of WWII which established the base for the Air Force of today, and the sacrifice made by those to whom this memorial and monument was dedicated. Also in attendance for the Air Force was Colonel Brogan - Air Force Chaplain, an Air Force honor color team, bugler, and wreath bearer. At the completion of the ceremony all present moved to the Sheraton International hotel for a reception. In attendance also was S/Sgt. Angela Stafford, Combat Photographer SAF/PA who photographed the ceremony.

To visit the monument at Arlington National Cemetery: The Monument and tree is in section 34 on Grant Drive at Pershing Drive. The project which was an ambitious endeavor since it had to be completed by January 31st of this year, will be the last such memorial of this type to be permitted in the Arlington National Cemetery.

This program was initiated at the 8th AF Historical Society Reunion at Savannah with the unanimous support of Chairman James Erskine and Representatives of the Chapters present. At this meeting all present agreed and voted, to contribute \$200 per chapter to underwrite this project. -



General Rider addresses those in attendance for the Memorial Dedication.



Representative members attending Memorial service at Arlington.  
from left: Ralph Minker - 447th BG; Elwyn Warfel - 447th BG; Robert Beatson - Treasurer NCAC; Owen Cooper - 91st BG; Jack Keller - Ohio Chapter; Larry Goldstein - New York Chapter - Director 8th Air Force Historical Society; General Regner Rider - USAF Headquarters Pentagon; Byron Schlag - President National Capital Area Chapter; Whitmal Hill - Secretary NCAC; James Golden - National President P-47 Association; Charles Frudenthal.

submitted by Byron Schlag, President NCAC  
P.O. Box 7051  
G.M.F., Maryland 20898-7051

Wizard of Id



In 1944 at the Odeon movie house in London, I was watching the Disney picture show "Bambi" (about a deer). In one scene there is a fierce forest fire and Bambi's mother is shouting, "Bambi! Bambi! Where are you?!"

From the audience comes a cockney answer:  
"Probably out with a bloody Yank!"

- from Daniel Palmer 305th BG Flushing NY

### To the Editor:

I am a member of the AFHS and would like to submit a poem written by our waist gunner, Shelly M. Hall, many years after the war. I am hoping you might consider printing it in our magazine, the 8th AF News. We flew a B-17 with the 100th Bomb Group and flew twenty missions before we were shot down. We spent 11 1/2 months in German prison camps. I was the co-pilot.

Shelly died in 1997 after a long illness. I know he would be proud to have his poem printed in the magazine.

Yours truly,  
John M. McGrath, 100th BG White Plains, N.Y.

### WHY?

As I toss and turn in my bed at night  
My mind goes back to some war time flight.  
Lord here I am in your clear blue sky,  
Praying for clouds so too many won't die.  
I just wish those were specks, I see in my eye,  
But I know it's fighters at three o'clock high.  
As they come in, spitting fire and death,  
I pray, pull my triggers and hold my breath.  
Oh Dear God, I'm sorry, it's true,  
Some men will die in your sky so blue.

I wonder Dear God, just who's to blame,  
As I watch my friends go down in flame  
If the people at fault could see this sight,  
I wonder Dear God, could they sleep at night.  
And the other thoughts, they fill me with dread,  
As I think of the children we must have left dead.  
My heart beats fast, and my throat gets dry.  
I can feel their fear and hear their cries,  
I can even see those little eyes,  
As we send them death from here in the sky.  
They say it was war and we had to fight,  
So, please Dear God, Let me sleep tonight.

-by Shelly M. Hall  
100th Bomb Group

## HOW ABOUT IT?

At a recent military reunion, one veteran stood up and announced to his group that their average age was 79. Another spoke up: "I don't know why you have to broadcast it, one look at you doesn't require an announcement." There is a simple explanation for the continued longevity of veterans of the Eighth Air Force.....they just live to one hundred and then be very careful! The goal of one guy on his 100th birthday was to live until he was 125.....and die of a gun-shot wound inflicted by a jealous husband.

Isn't life wonderful? And good things just keep happening. Just think of the many decades in which we have lived. We have enjoyed the twentieth century and an old millennium with their history-changing experiences and now we are moving into the twenty-first century and a new millennium. But all of these important calendar events do nothing but measure time.

We are in the midst of a technological revolution. We flyers of WWII had as our commanders, mentors who were the true pioneers of flight. Pilots and crewman who trained under them were also given the challenges of pioneering. Then, we flew "by the seat of our pants"; now, modern flyers "fly by wire." Then, we flew aircraft which were "state of the art", the largest, fastest, most rugged our country could provide. Our leaders and combat experiences were constantly demanding modification. Change was required. If we didn't change, it was "goodbye world." Change is not always easy. Will Rogers stated it: "Even if you are on the right track--you can get run over if you just sit there."

Our generation produced "baby boomers" and they procreated a new generation. But our generation must keep up. Computers, fax machines, cell phones, television, VCR's, medical technology, pagers, e-mail, the web network, satellites, have dramatically changed the way things are done. The concept of old age should not be in our vocabulary. Today we aren't sure what old-age really is but it certainly does mean that we should remain current and keep in touch with the present time. Technology changes the environment in which we live but does not change who we are. We are products of our spiritual depth.

Our prayer should embody the following ideas. When we reach the end of our days, a moment or two from now, we must look backward on something more meaningful than the pursuit and achievement of wealth or the conquest and utilization of technology. Our earthly existence will have been wasted unless we have experienced a loving earnest attempt to serve the God who made us and gives fresh life each day.



Earl Wassom, 466th BG  
Chaplain, Tennessee Chapter



8th AF News

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

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The beautiful DIAMONDBACK P-51D Mustang restored and flown by Bob Jepson