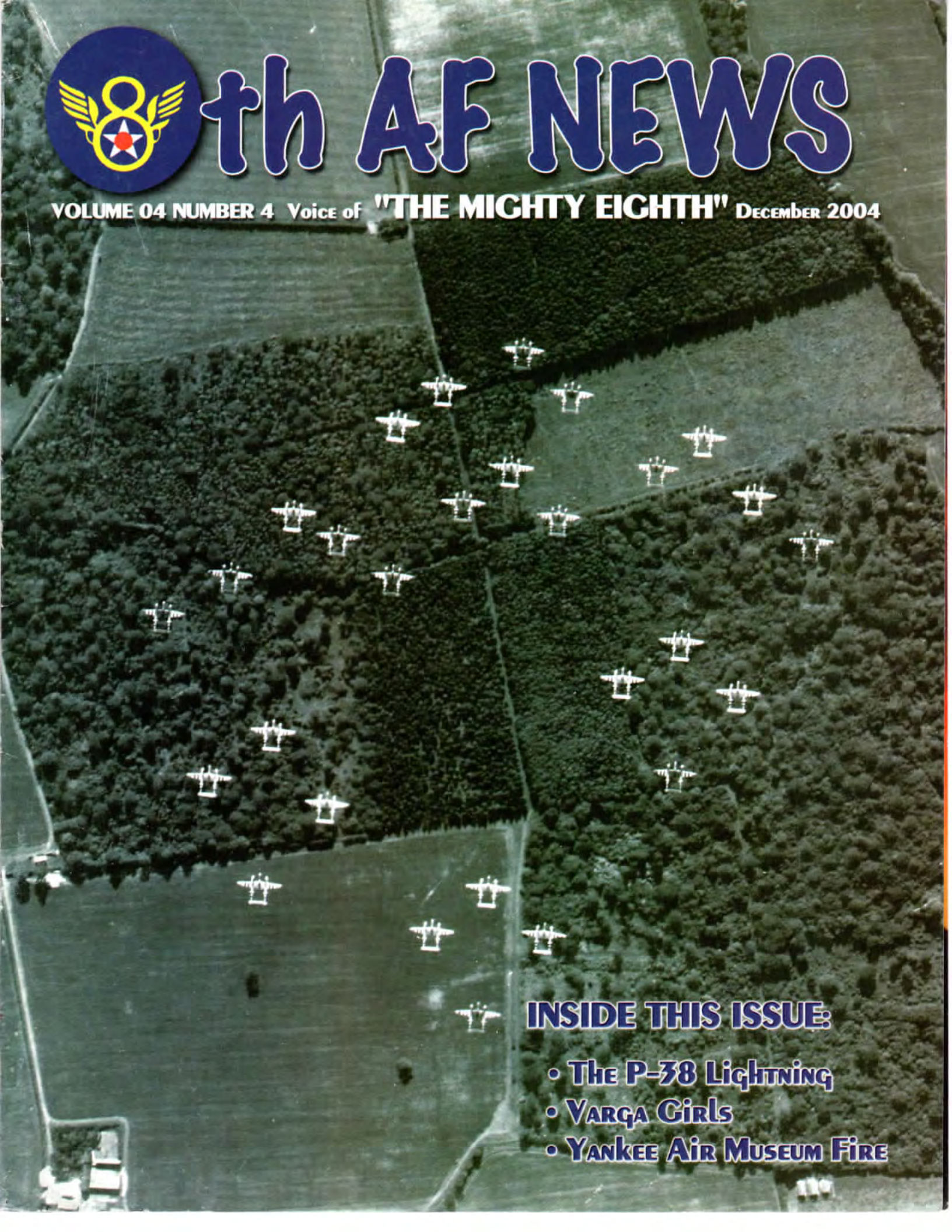




8th AF NEWS

VOLUME 04 NUMBER 4 Voice of "THE MIGHTY EIGHTH" DECEMBER 2004



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- The P-38 Lightning
- VARGA GIRLS
- YANKEE AIR MUSEUM FIRE



AF NEWS

Magazine of

December 2004

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

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. The 8th AF NEWS is sent to members of the Society and is not for public sale. The home office is at 175 Bourne St., Pooler GA. 31322 - P.O. Box 1787, Savannah, GA. 31402.

OFFICERS

President William C. Rawson 2005
1417 Currant Way
Flower Mound, TX 75028-5108
Tel: (214) 513-1788
FAX: (214) 513-1688
wcrawson@aol.com

Vice President Lawrence Goldstein (Rose) 2005
707 Continental Circle Apt. 1521
Mountain View, CA 94040-3315
Tel. (650) 938-2474
lgoldie01@aol.com

Secretary John S. Pearson 2007
1900 Lauderdale Dr. C-315
Richmond, VA 23238
Tel. (804)740-2635
jonpearson@att.net

Treasurer Ivan L. McKinney (Mary) 2008
331 Greenacres Blvd.
Bossier City, LA 71111
Tel. (318)742-0895
ivanmckinney@direcway.com

STAFF

Finance Manager Jeffrey R. Tucker, CPA
400 Mall Blvd, Suite K
Savannah, GA 31406
Tel. (912)354-6321
FAX (912)351-0226
jeff@cpa-ht.com

8TH AFHS NATIONAL OFFICE

Membership Records Manager Connie Metts
PO Box 1787
Savannah, GA 31402
Tel. (912)748-8884
eafhs@hotmail.com

8TH AFHS UNITED KINGDOM CONTACTS

Gordon & Connie Richards
U.K. Office 14 Pavenham Road
Oakley, Bedford
MK43 7SY, England
01234 823357

8TH AFHS PX

Carlita Carter, Director PX
175 Bourne St.
P.O. Box 1992

Savannah, GA 31402
912-748-8888 store@mightyeighth.org

8TH AFHS HISTORIAN

Roger A. Freeman
Mays Barn
Dedham Colchester
Essex CO76EW England

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Walter E. Brown, MD (Alice) 2005
EDITOR 8TH AF NEWS
Ewell Farm, 2340 Sugar Ridge Road
Spring Hill, TN 37174
Tel. (931)486-2968
FAX (931)486-9974
olddocbrown@msn.com

Mark S. Copeland (Monica) 2006
20681 Hazelwood Trail
Lakeville, MN 55044
Tel. (952) 469-2633
moke388@isd.net

C. Craig Harris 2006
2701 Pickett Road Apt. 2035
Durham, NC 27705-5649
Tel. (919)489-5685
FAX (919)419-1705
charris4@nc.rr.com

Gerald J. Miller 2007
360 Burroughs Drive
Amherst, NY 14226-3909
Tel. 716-839-3472

Harry Tanner (Lorene) 2008
2923 Roy Bunch Road,
Sulphur, LA 70663-0762
Tel. (337) 527-0322
dougntanner@xspedium.net

Earl E. Wassom (Cynthia) 2007
CHAPLAIN 8TH AFHS
548 Brentmoor Drive
Bowling Green KY 42101-3772
Tel. and Fax: (270) 842-0412
email: e.wassom@att.net

Belton C. Wolf (Mary Anne) 2006
4032 Twyla Lane
Campbell, CA 95008-3721
Tel. (408)374-4723
belmaw_49@hotmail.com
bel49maw@attn.net

DIRECTORS EMERITUS

Aida Kaye Sherman Small
Robert Vickers Richard Baynes

CHAPTER/UNIT DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Jim Erskine (Joe Ann)
568 Colima Drive
Toledo, OH 43609
Tel. (419)382-8595
Fax (419)382-4242
jimjake2@juno.com



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THE LOCKHEED P-38 LIGHTNING

During its development and production in the early 1940's, Lockheed Aviation's P-38 Lightning was the fastest single-seat twin-engine fighter aircraft in the world. Its introduction into the 8th Air Force's war emphasized its distinctive design – twin Allison V-1710 engines with their counter-rotating props, twin tail boom empenages, a bubble canopy, and a unique tricycle landing gear. The aircraft was perfect for the hot pilots of the Eighth. Newly developed drop tanks, copied from early RAF designs, allowed the fighters to be flown over the North Atlantic and to also take part in deep bombing penetrations to enemy targets.

The aircraft was assigned to several 8th AF fighter groups including the 1st FG, 14th FG, 20th FG, 55th FG, 364th FG, and the 479th FG. The P-38 was the mainstay of Photo Reconnaissance Groups such as the 3rd Photo Group and the 7th Photo Recon Group, that flew vital photographic missions in unarmed airplanes completing 4,247 sorties, with 53 aircraft losses during the war. With two cameras mounted in the nose in place of armament, the lighter aircraft could fly at its optimum altitude of 25,000 feet at speeds of 400 mph. After-strike photographs taken on these flights played a vital role in Headquarters Photo Interpretation and Targeting sections.

P-38s were successfully flown in Operation TORCH - the North African campaign - and the 12th and 15th Air Forces benefited by their presence. Weather operations – the 18th Weather Squadron – also utilized P-38 capabilities.

Although during missions, Heavy bomber gunners appreciated the easy-to-identify twin tail boom configuration of the P-38, German fighter pilots were not happy to see the "forked tail devils." In combat, P-38 dive speeds were very fast but not without their problems. Col. Cass Hough, who after the war would develop the Daisy BB gun, and Lt Col.

Benjamin Kelsey at their Technical Operations Unit at Bovington, worked on the problems of compressibility, solving the issue through the development of "dive flaps" that could be installed to employ when the fighter's control mechanisms became unpredictable in high-speed dives from the thin air at high altitudes. As they had done in developing external fuel drop tanks for the aircraft, they arranged a hurry-up fabri-



Lockheed P-38J-15-LO

cation order of 200 dive flap units to be sent in from the States. Regrettably, the transport aircraft carrying this life-saving equipment was shot down by an RAF fighter pilot who mistakenly identified the airplane as a German Condor.

The lore of the P-38 is as distinctive as its appearance. ~ Lt Col. Jack Jenkins bagged the VIII Fighter Command's first enemy kill with his P-38 *Texas Ranger*. ~It was said that the P-38 was used for low-level sorties on D-Day because it was easily identified as a Little



At Nuthampstead, Lt. Col. Jack S. Jenkins demonstrates a tactic to Lt. Russell Gustke. *Texas Ranger* was a P-38H.



Photo Recon F-5B-1-LOs flew their missions alone and were rarely seen in formation.

Friend.

-A documented event of a P-38 landing intact at a sandy airstrip in North Africa with its pilot dead from gunfire wounds to the head expands the P-38 stories to all theaters of the war.

-The top American fighter ace of the war was Richard Bong, who flew his P-38 *Marge* in air battles in the Pacific Theater, bagging a total of 40 Jap airplanes.

-The RAF accepted only three P-38s from the U. S. early in the war because of a reported "tail flutter" buffeting problem.

- Gen. Jimmy Doolittle, 8th AF Commander, hearing tales that the P-38 was very difficult to fly on just one engine, showed one airbase outfit that that particular tale was not accurate. Flying a P-38 with only one engine operating, Doolittle flew just above the length of the runway with his P-38 upside down – on just one engine.

- "I began to see holes forming in the ship all around the waist window. I watched the bullets in slow motion come through the skin of the ship. There were only three B-24s in the formation left out of the nine that were with us before the fighters struck. It would be only a matter of time now. The German fighters were just using us for target practice. There was nothing to do now but to wait for the German fighters to shoot us down.

"Cook, in the top turret, called out on the intercom, 'Look at 2 o'clock!' I turned toward Tyler's waist window and he was pointing up. 'Look! Look!' he was saying in a strange voice. As I looked over Tyler's shoulder at 2 o'clock, I felt a cold chill run through my body at what I was seeing. In a bright clearing in the clouds, there was the shape of a cross and it was glowing around the edges. From the center of the cross came first one, then another, and with more following, gleaming P-38s. They came slanting out of the sun's rays, heading for the German Me 109s.

"This was the most beautiful sight I had ever seen. God was surely standing beside me. Words could not express my feeling. Everyone became quiet. Tears were coming from my eyes and freezing on my mask and goggles. The P-38s were on the tails of the Me109s and in seconds, German fighters were going down through the clouds everywhere that you could look. They were like match sticks lighting in front of the P-38s."

- from *A Reason To Live*, autobiography of John Harold "Robbie" Robinson, 445th Bomb Group.

The P-38 was a flexible aircraft and very adaptable; it



Cockpit layout of a Photo Recon P-38 F-4-1-LO

served many diverse purposes during the war. Of the 10,038 P-38s assembled, 904 of them received modifications at the Dallas Modification Center. Many others were modified for specific duties at Base Air Depots and on the airbases themselves. Only a few examples of the P-38 Lightning survive today.

Ben Kelsey was once quoted as saying, with respect, about the P-38, "This comfortable old clunk will fly like hell, fight like a wasp upstairs and land like a butterfly. As a fighting ship, it's just like a big girl you have to take on your lap and manhandle. It's an extremely honest airplane; it doesn't bite and doesn't do dishonest things."

Walter Brown, Editor



**M. C. "Chris" Pennell, 55th FS
at Wittering England.**



**Photo Reconnaissance aircraft
P-38 accompanied by a Spitfire.**

HARRY GOBRECHT RECEIVES PRESTIGIOUS AWARD AT REUNION BANQUET

The Lt. General E. G. Shuler, Jr. Award was presented to Harry Gobrecht of the 303rd Bomb Group in a special ceremony at this year's Gala Banquet. The award, named in honor of Lt. Gen. Buck Shuler, Jr. is given to a person who has shown outstanding continuous support of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah. General "Buck" Shuler flew combat missions in Viet Nam and was commander of the 8th Air Force during the Persian Gulf War. He served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Heritage Museum for over a decade and directed the construction and development of the museum during this time.

Harry Gobrecht has been a member of the museum's Board of Directors for many years, heading up support and recognition programs during that time.

He was instrumental in obtaining support from the American Memorial Association in St. Nazaire, France and in developing their exhibit in the Museum. He, as historian of the 303rd Bomb Group Association for over fifteen years, has researched and organized extensive files and catalogues of documents, photographs, correspondence and artifacts, preserving all aspects of how an 8th Air Force bomb group operated and what it accomplished in WWII. His 975-page book, *Might In Flight*, chronicles the history of the 303rd. He has donated his extensive collection to the Heritage Museum

for future use by researchers, historians, educators, and 8th AF families. This Harry D. Gobrecht/303rd Bomb Group special collection has been donated in its entirety to the Heritage Museum archival collections, along with funding from the Gobrecht family for technology to make the material readily available.

The previous Lt. Gen. E. G. Shuler, Jr. Award was presented in 2003 to Ken and Ethelda Nail, Mississippi Chapter organizer and President, and Treasurer of the 8th AF Historical Society.

Presentation of the award at the banquet followed an introduction by Walter Brown and the award, in the form of a large descriptive medal, was presented by the 303rd Bomb Group's wartime commander, Major General Lew Lyle.



Major General Lew Lyle presents the Lt. General E.G. Shuler Jr. Award to Harry Gobrecht, with his wife Barbara Gobrecht.

Give me ambiguity or give me something else.
Clyde White, 390th BG

Rest and peace are good things, are great blessings, but only if they come honourably, and it is those who fearlessly turn away from them, when they have not been earned, who in the long run deserve the best of their country . . . The men who have made our national greatness are those who faced danger and overcame it, who met difficulties and surmounted them, not those whose lives were cast in such pleasant places that toil and dread were ever far from them.

Theodore Roosevelt (1900)



PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

The 30th Reunion of the 8AFHS is history, and it was a grand one. All indicators suggest that members attending had a great time. I certainly enjoyed the entire week among my comrades of so long ago. Nearly 700 members were registered and more than 700 attended the Gala Banquet on Saturday night. I believe this represents the largest turn-out since the mid-1990s. I'm most grateful to Past President Craig Harris for making this Reunion such a success. Craig spent the entire year planning, organizing and directing the team that brought us this fine event. Also, Donna Lee and her staff from Armed Forces Reunion gave Craig splendid support in carrying out our Reunion plans.

Highlights of the annual Membership Meeting included the reelection of Ivan McKinney to a second full term on the board of Directors and the election of Harry D. Tanner, President of the Louisiana Chapter of the 8AFHS, to fill the position vacated by retiring two-term Board member Dick Baynes. Past-President Bob Vickers presented "Achievement Awards" to Past Presidents John Greenwood and Charles Dye for their years of dedicated service to our Historical Society. Following this award ceremony, the Officers of the Society gave brief reports on the healthy sta-

tus of our Historical Society. These reports will be in the Minutes of our meeting.

During our Gala Banquet, I had the pleasure of meeting and congratulating the men of today's 8th Air Force for their outstanding achievements in the service of their country. It is most gratifying to recognize that today's airmen are extending the noble heritage of the Mighty Eighty that began with our service during WWII. We can be proud of these men. Our Awards went to airmen who were selected from throughout the Eighth Air Force by Headquarters Eighth Air Force. The awards were presented by Colonel Christopher D. Miller, Commander of the 509th Bomb Wing of the Eighth Air Force.

Following the Awards ceremony Colonel Miller, our guest speaker, gave us a marvelous talk on the Eighth's Stealth bomber force. Colonel Miller gave an intimate view of the incredible B-2, the flying wing Stealth bomber flown by the 509th Bomb Wing. Manned by a crew of two, flying out of Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri, one B-2 carries more destructive power to an enemy anywhere in the world, than an entire Group of B-17s or B-24s. Colonel Miller's talk was quite an eye-opener for each of us present.

The Gala Banquet concluded with a Testimonial from the Board of

Directors honoring Richard C. (Dick) Baynes. Dick's second four year-term on the Board came to a close at this Reunion. As a Director, Dick served with distinction for eight consecutive years, including two years as Secretary of the Society and two years as President. Dick is a true gifted leader and totally dedicated to the objectives of the 8AFHS. We look forward to Dick's continued service to our Society as Director Emeritus.

The Gala Banquet came to a close with a reading of Gregory Overcash's poem "Angels of the Eighth."



**William Rawson
President**

William Rawson, President



A German Transport Train - cars loaded heading for the coast with huge V-2 rockets



American cartoonist Thomas Nast, was the first to illustrate Santa Claus as the roly-poly man known and loved today.

MISSION BRIEFING



Walter Brown, Editor
Ewell Farm
2340 Sugar Ridge Road
Spring Hill, TN 37174

Many of us are still winding down from the great annual reunion in Kansas City. Great appreciation to Craig Harris, reunion Chairman, for his many months of hard work and for Donna Lee of Armed Forces Reunions for her attention to all of the many details before and during the entire event. A special thanks to Ralph Lynn for his excellent photographic skills, supplying dozens of photos for the Reunion Section in this issue. And a tip of the hat to the 8th AF Heritage Museum staff for their well-stocked PX every day of the reunion. A great week!

You will see a photo of our Commander in Chief in this issue. In spite of three letters received griping about the "political slant" of the Sept 04 8th AF News, as Editor I feel that it is important to our troops who are deployed throughout the world, some in combat, to see positive support in the print media for what they are doing for our freedom and for our country's liberty. World War II servicemen realize how important support from the home-front can be.

The "From the Editor" editorial in that issue stated facts as history has recorded them – facts are not a political statement. Read it again if you perceive a problem there. The letter from Lt. General Tom Keck, 8th AF Commander, stating the events of President Bush's 9/11 stopover at 8th Air Force Headquarters at Barksdale AFB are also facts, even though a case could be made that Gen. Keck wrote that letter in response to certain politicians who were misrepresenting our Commander in Chief's actions that day of the World Trade Center destruction. It is my pleasure, as Editor, to try and set it straight whenever the undermining of our fighting troops by unpatriotic individuals rears its head. This is not a "political" stance. This is an American veteran's duty.

We all remember that our Commanders in Chief during World War II were President Franklin D. Roosevelt and President Harry S Truman. Some people were opposed to the dropping of atomic bombs on Japan, ending WW II – that's their prerogative. Harry Truman made that decision. He was in command.

Be assured that I would have reported that particular wartime mission, and supported it, if I had been a news-magazine editor at that time.

Sincerely,
Walt Brown

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM YOUR 8th AF NEWS STAFF



Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines

Working Behind the Scenes

Seven years have come and gone and we are still having a joyous experience through you and the *8th Air Force News*. We feel very fortunate to be a part of this wonderful history and enjoy reading and (yes) typing the articles. We find ourselves searching for books and material on bombers, fighters and even pin-up "Varga Girls" for our future issues.

We work very closely with Walt Brown throughout the year to create and finalize each issue. Our daily routine is to either meet with Walt, download emails from Walt or talk by phone. We would like to help lessen his work load by offering to receive e-mails and mail to our location.

Every article and image continues to be closely approved and critiqued

by "Old Doc Brown".

We would like to express our thanks to everyone, for all your input in this magazine and for sharing your heroic experiences with us. Please keep the articles and pictures coming!

Feel free to send information to us by email, fax or mail. We will return all your valuable photographs and articles.

Best wishes to you and your family throughout the Holiday Season!

Sincerely,
Donna Neely &
Telisha Gaines

Pre-Press/Layout/Design Team
Alpha Graphic Consultants
2090 Cairo Bend Road
Lebanon, TN 37087
donna_neely@msn.com
Phone: 615.418.1200
Fax: 615.453.2343

MASSIVE FIRE DESTROYS YANKEE AIR MUSEUM

On October 9th, an inferno enveloped the huge hangar which housed the Yankee Air Museum at Willow Run airport near Ypsilanti, Michigan.

The repository of American aviation and war history was destroyed. Scott Smith, 388th Bomb Group lead pilot and long-time supporter of the museum, broke the news to the 8th AFHS members attending the final day of our reunion in Kansas City. Scott, who has traveled around the country to shows and exhibitions in the B-17 *Yankee Lady* for a number of years, forwards information and striking photographs of the blaze.

The entire 50,000 square-foot building and its contents of thousands of rare historical aviation artifacts and two airplanes burned to the ground about 6:30pm.

Several volunteers, including Alan Running and Ken Chio, helped rescue the museum's B-17, its C-46, and the B-25 *Yankee Warrior*, pulling them out of range of the fire. Six area fire stations responded to the fire. Static displays of twenty aircraft in front of the museum, including the B-52 bomber, remained undamaged. The cause of the fire is not yet known.

The Yankee Air Museum had been in existence for twenty-three years, receiving over 100,000 visitors annually. The hangar itself was built in 1941 by Henry Ford as part of the facility building B-24 Liberators, many of which were destined to fly from 8th Air Force bases in East Anglia. Willow Run was the largest war production plant in the world, producing 8,685 B-24 bombers during the war. The museum receives no state funds and maintains its 1.3 million budget through admissions, memberships, donations and offering flights in the *Yankee Lady* at airshows. There is only one paid

employee, the Curator, and there is a force of about forty volunteers, many of them veterans of World War II.

The reaction of those who maintain the museum was immediate. Plans to rebuild the museum are underway, and \$15,000 in donations poured in the first few days.

Donations have come from aviation enthusiasts in countries around the world. Pueblo Air Museum in Colorado has offered a donation of 500 to 1000 duplicate books from their collection. Much more is needed.

Brian Higgins, Marketing Director of the Yankee Air Museum, says, "The reaction of the museum members out here is that we're sad but we'll come back - better than ever."

Museum President Jon Stevens said that the organization does have some insurance and has never been cited for code

violations, even though it had not been updated with a fire protection sprinkler system.

Donations of cash contributions may be sent to the Michigan Aerospace Foundation, Yankee Air Museum Recovery Fund, PO Box 8282, Ann Arbor MI 48107-8282. The museum hotline is tel 734-483-4030. Plans to accept artifacts and papers will be released soon.

Along with Scott Smith, a number of

8th Air Force veterans across the country support the Yankee Air Museum, many of them serving as volun-

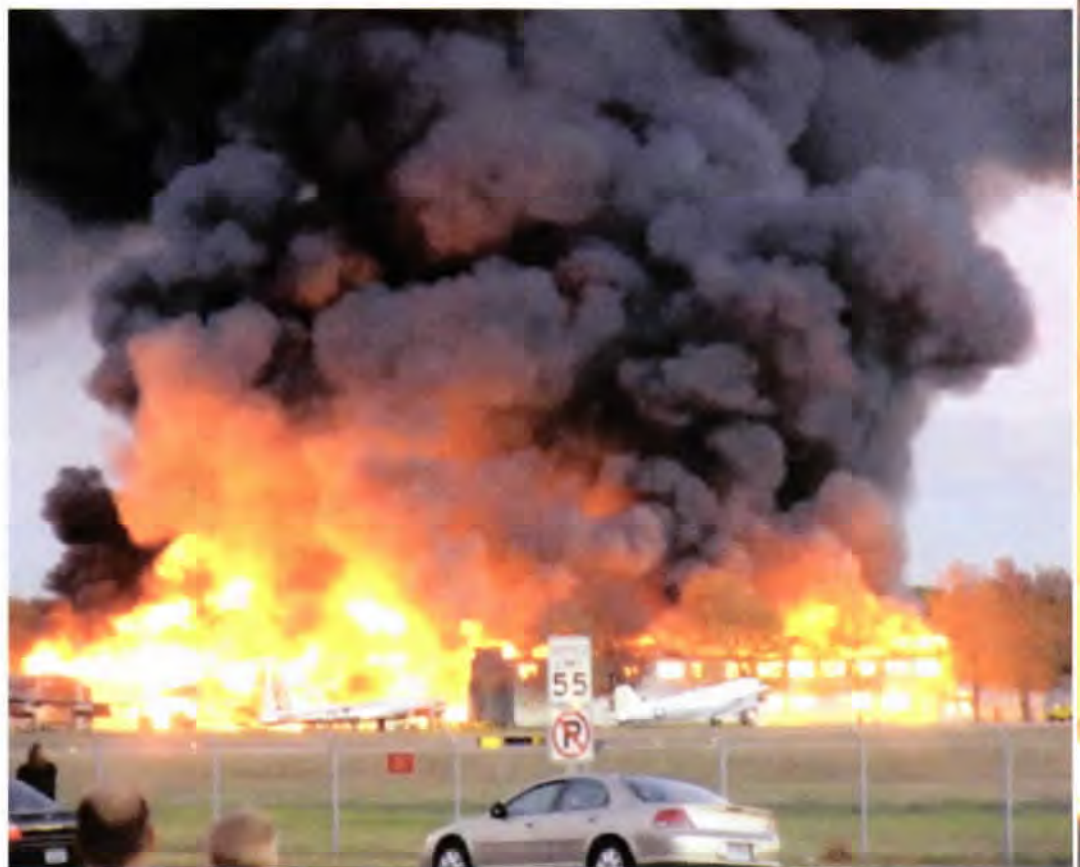
teers at the museum. They ask for support and donations of their Mighty Eighth companions in their efforts to rebuild the museum into a world-class facility, to preserve the history for younger generations of Americans.

To use credit card or Pay-Pal, view photo and updates: Foundation website <http://www.michiganareospace.org>

The repository of American aviation and war history was destroyed

Plans to rebuild the museum are underway, and \$15,000 in donations poured in the first few days

The Yankee Air Museum had been in existence for twenty-three years



Massive fire destroys Yankee Air Museum



A B-52 bomber is silhouetted by the fire that engulfed the Yankee Air Force Museum at the Willow Run Airport night. The bomber and numerous other planes on display outside the hangar were not damaged, but two pil displays inside the hangar were destroyed.

No cause identified; artifacts, 2 airplanes

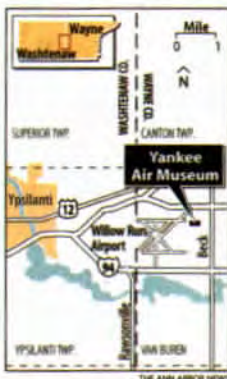
BY EMMA JACKSON AND TRACY DAVIS
News Staff Reporters

The Yankee Air Museum, a popular air history attraction at the Willow Run Airport near Ypsilanti, burned to the ground Saturday evening when a fast-moving fire swept through the building, destroying priceless aviation artifacts and two airplanes.

Three of the museum's most prized aircraft — a C-47, B-25D and B-17G restored to flying condition — were saved because the crew of the B-25 had just returned from a flight and was able to move the planes out of the burning hangar.

The fire was reported at about 6:30 p.m. and soon had engulfed the 50,000-square-foot hangar, which was built in 1941 by Henry Ford for the production of B-24 Liberator bombers. No one was injured and no cause had been determined Saturday night.

Jon Stevens, president of the Yankee Air Museum, said the hangar and its contents were a total loss. He estimated the loss at \$5 million to \$7 million, but said that was a preliminary



estimate.

Smoke from the fire could be seen for at least 10 miles and soon traffic on nearby Ecorse Road slowed to a crawl as spectators gathered to watch. Fire departments from Van Buren Township and six other departments responded but could do nothing to stop the blaze. By 8 p.m. only the concrete slab and a few burning pillars remained of the hangar.

An outdoor display of about 20 historic planes next to the hangar was not damaged by the fire.

The 23-year-old museum, which hosted about 100,000 visitors a year, was filled with historic aviation displays, including uniforms, equipment and medals from World War I and World War II, along with a library and displays on Korea, Vietnam, Women in Aviation, and the B-24 Liberator Bomber.

One of the planes destroyed in the hangar fire was on loan from a Dayton, Ohio, air museum; the other was a rare "Bronco" airplane that was days away from being fully restored.

Brian Higgins, marketing director and board member of the Yankee Air Museum, was celebrating his birthday in Plymouth when he got the call about the fire.

"I've aged a little bit more tonight," said Higgins from the site at mid-evening. "The reaction of the (museum) members out here is that we're sad but we'll come back, better than ever."

He said the museum was in the midst of a \$55 million capi-

tal can dozen new hangar and original 1940s housed the Yankee Air Museum, organized by volunteers from the area. The museum members country, at site, and devote hours from restore, maintain aircraft, and business of the facilities. The museum has a periodic conduct fund and give music according to the site.

Stevens, the president, was attending an event in Auburn when he got a call from one of the air crew. The hangar was first reaction was, "God!"

"In some ways over, but starting lot more than ti

SEE AIR MUSEUM, A

A14 | FROM THE FRONT PAGE

AIR MUSEUM FROM A1

Traffic stalled to a near halt on Ecorse Road

founders," said Stevens. "I have too much sweat equity in that place, as do a lot of other good people. We'll figure a way to rebuild it."

Stevens said the crew of the B-25 had just returned from an aerial fuel tour early Saturday evening when they caught a whiff of smoke. Their quick actions to pull the three functioning planes out of the hangar saved the aircraft, which are flown around the country to air shows during the year and as a fund-raiser by selling rides to the public.

"God bless the people who helped get those air crafts out," said Higgins. "They are heroes."

In addition to Van Buren, firefighters from Belleville, Romulus, Pittsfield Township, Ypsilanti Township, Sumpter Township and the airport fought the fire.

At dusk, the hangar was still fully engulfed in flames, which lighted the black, billowing clouds from beneath with an orange glow.

The skeletal frame of the hangar stood for a while before finally collapsing by 7:45 p.m. and the ghostly outline of vintage World War II planes parked near the hangar stood out against the fire.

"We were out in the yard mulling around, and my husband said 'Oh my God, Kim, look up at the sky,'" said Kim Ison, who lives on Ecorse Road a three houses away from the airport property. She and her son Matt stood in a neighbor's yard and watched the fire burn as the sky grew darker.

The spectacle slowed traffic to a near-halt on Ecorse and other nearby roads. Motorists pulled off on the shoulder to point and stare. Some fished cameras and video cameras from their cars and others talked on cell phones, pointing



The Yankee Air Museum hangar is seen from the cockpit of a B-17 bomber in this July 30, 2003 photo.



Mechanic Irc Kaminzki closes the engine compartment of the Yankee Air Museum's B-17 in the museum's hangar in preparation for an air show on August 1, 2000.

and staring. Police lit flares to help guide the crawling traffic.

Sam Pfeiffer of Farmington Hills got a unique view of the fire, as he flew in to the airport from a visit in Traverse City. He was able to land safely around 7 p.m., but said the air space was closed after he landed.

Tanina Foster of Riverview

shook her head as she watched the fire.

"The museum," she said.

"That's what's heartbreaking."

Staff reporter Emma Jackson can be reached at ejackson@annarbornews.com (734) 480-4701. Tracy Davis can be reached at tdavis@annarbornews.com or 994-6856.



Heavy spray water on the remains of the Yankee Air Force Museum at Willow Run.

Yankee Air Museum Hangar



North East corner of Willow Run airport



After the fire



DECEMBER 2004 (04-4)

Commander-In-Chief



President George W. Bush



Air Force One at Nashville International Airport

photos by Geri Eaves

War was then, though spreading wide and far,
A state of peace to what has since been war;
'Twas then some dubious claim at sea or land,
That placed a weapon in a warrior's hand
But in these times the causes of our strife
Are hearth and altar, liberty and life.

George Crabbe

CHRISTMAS DAY MISSION

Our 24 December 1944 mission - I well remember it as it was my 35th and last combat mission.

Col. Raper (Rader) brought a new pilot down to fly with my crew Christmas Day. I told him NO. They had sweat-ed out one new pilot and didn't deserve to sweat out another one. He said, "I have no choice Rencher. I must put up every plane we have and I have no other pilot." I said I will fly my 36th with them. I don't want them flying with a new pilot. He said, "Don't be a damn fool Rencher You have finished your tour. You will be shot down just as sure as hell and it will be on my conscience." I said, "Colonel, I am not near as likely to get shot down as a new pilot and if they get shot down it would be on my conscience the rest of my life and I worry about my conscience more than I do yours." He said, "All right Rencher, but you are going to get shot down just as sure as hell." All night long as I lay in my English bunk; I couldn't sleep. This is the first mission I ever had any real fear about going. I couldn't get his prophesy out of my mind even though, other than the weather, the mission looked like it would be a milk run.

The next morning 25 December 1944 we were sitting on the end of the runway, engines running and ready to take off when I

thought "That damn Colonel - I am going to prove him wrong", but I was not sure I believed me. Over the radio came a message. The Germans are retreating. The crisis of The Battle of the Bulge is over. The weather is so bad we are going to cancel the mission.

Col. Raper promised me if I would go home he would put an old experienced pilot with my crew to finish their missions. He did, so I did. Off to the ATC I went and lived happily ever after.

Best Wishes,
Jack Rencher, 303rd BG



"Ya sure there's no liquor in there, Mac?"—Sgt. Frank Brandt.



An animal has more provision for emergency than a machine. The machine is less versatile; its range of action is narrow; its strength and accuracy in its own sphere are superhuman, but it shows badly in a dilemma; sometimes when its normal action is disturbed, it will lose its head, and go from bad to worse like a lunatic in a raging frenzy.

Samuel Butler
Erewhon

FLAK

Bombay doors open on the bomb run, heavily defended by German flak batteries

Aryan Agrivator

Enclosed is a picture of the crew of the *Aryan Agrivator* - a B-17. I am William Dean and our crew made 27 missions in this aircraft in 1944, the last two missions to drop supplies (medical, food, etc.) to the Free French. We were in the 8th Air Force 447 Bomb Group, 710 Bomb Squadron - stationed at Rattlesden Air Field in Bury St. Edmunds, England. Germany and France were our targets.

Naturally I remember our many missions, but one of the most memorable was on D-Day. As we crossed the English Channel there were so many Allied ships in the Channel below us that it appeared you could walk from one ship to another.



Front row L to R: S/Sgt. Don E. Montgomery, AEG; Sgt. Franklin S. Naugen, AROG; Sgt. Norman (NMN) Klein, AG; Sgt. William R. Dean, Jr., AEG; S/Sgt. Jacob Schwartz, ROG **Back row L to R:** 2nd Lt. Alan D. Briggs, CP; Cpt. Robert P. Loughney, Pilot; Lt. Earl P. Hoffman, Bombardier; Lt. Russell Bolejanck, Navigator

JUST ANOTHER MISSION by Charles "Chuck" Halpher

Having been advised that I would stand down the next day, I stayed up reading and writing letters until 3 a.m. Two hours after I had turned out my light the C.Q. - Charge of Quarters - awakened me and said that Operations had changed their mind and I was to fly #7 position in the Lead squadron. After cold water and hot coffee I was ready for briefing at 6 a.m. General Castle was to lead the 8th Air Force in the most gigantic air raid ever to hit Germany. We would be joined by units of the R.A.F., the 9th and 15th Air Forces, as well as the Russians. Perhaps more than four thousand aircraft in all. Once over the bomb release line, I had the copilot fly the aircraft so that I might observe the action in the sky around us. Hot Shot Able called to say he had been hit by enemy fighters approaching our formations from the 12 o'clock position. What appeared to be flares at about ten thousand feet were actually exploding fighter aircraft. Those striking the ground made an orange flash and then a big black mark in the snow. I saw six ships hit the ground when my

attention was drawn to an FW-190 passing from 1 o'clock high to 10 o'clock low with two P-51's on his tail. The Mustang leader left his wingman and on an inside turn cut off the FW-190. A fairly short burst from the P-51 and the exploding FW-190 threw debris all over the sky. Perhaps another German pilot had seen what happened because with a P-51 on his tail, I watched him roll over, jettison the canopy and bail out of a perfectly good airplane. Perhaps he had decided that for him the war was over. Almost every attempt by the German fighters to penetrate our escort and get to the bombers was thwarted by our P-51's and P-47's. What a comforting sight they were. However, some bomber losses were never avoided.

From my vantage point I saw three bombers go down. Two from the ever-present mid-air collision, the other from poor judgement of another sort. I watched as General Castle vacated his lead position and his Deputy Leader replaced him. Leaving the formation with mechanical problems, he flew well outside the bomber stream and headed back to England without fighter cover. German fighters shot him down before an escort could get him.

That day's mission reminded me once again of how different it was to watch a fighter plane go down compared to a bomber. Fighters were flitting about the sky all the time any way so that when it was in an unusual attitude one was not inclined to pay it much attention, and the pilot was usually able to bail out of his crippled plane as well. The bomber, flying along so majestically straight and level, was an awesome sight when it lost a tail or wing and slipped into its deadly spin, made more so by the realization that there were men inside her fighting to get out.

As we returned to base and circled the field awaiting our turn to land, I saw a great purple cloud in the gathering darkness which had formed a backdrop for an incoming bomb group. Along with the red and green navigation lights they had also put on their landing lights. The result produced the spectacle of a giant Christmas tree in the sky.

A beautiful sight which was shortly followed by the sobering thought that the General was gone, hundreds of men had lost their lives on this mission today, and it was Christmas Eve.

**Charles "Chuck" Halpher,
487th BG Lakewood CA**

GLAD GATHERING IN KANSAS CITY

8TH AF HISTORICAL SOCIETY REUNION 2004 WAS A GREAT TIME

It turned out better than anyone could have imagined. About 700 people attended the Kansas City Annual Reunion of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and there was a lot of stuff going on. This was the largest reunion in recent years and attendees enjoyed the hospitality of the Missouri Chapter, whose members manned the hospitality desk and helped with daily events throughout the entire week.

A visit to the New Theater Restaurant with a great buffet dinner and a live play, *Driving Miss Daisy*, kicked the week off. There were trips to the Truman Museum, the Steamboat Arabia – a fully-loaded excavated steamship that sank in the Missouri River in 1856, a day at the Old West Fort Leavenworth, and enjoyable excursions to nearby Stephenson's Apple Farm. An entertaining program presented by reenactors President and Mrs. Harry S Truman was part of the Thursday night dinner.

Rendezvous dinners were the time for the Bomb and Fighter Groups that were having their annual reunions in conjunction with the 8th AFHS to dine with old buddies of their unit. A special note was made that the 96th Bomb Group turned out with the largest number of attendees, the 96th being the oldest Group meeting with the national Society.

An afternoon symposium commemorating the 60th anniversary of the ill-fated Kassel mission on 24 September, 1944 was a special event of the reunion. The 445th Bomb Group lost 25 of their 26 B-24s to fighter attacks that day, the largest loss of any bomb group on a single mission during the war. Organized by Mark Copeland, the seminar highlights included an hour-long video (soon to be available) documenting the Kassel mission and a panel discussion of a number of the survivors of that day.



Col. Christopher Miller, Commander, 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman AFB, MO, with his family

The annual Gala Banquet was packed with attendees and their guests. Hosted by President Bill Rawson, the guest speaker was Colonel Christopher Miller, Commander of the 509th Bomb Wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri. Presentation of awards honoring airmen of the active duty 8th Air Force, hosted by Robert Vickers, was a very special event. Other presentations were a plaque award to Past-president Richard Baynes for his service to the Society and The Lt. Gen. E. G. Shuler, Jr. Award to Harry Gobrecht, 303rd BG, for his years of contributions and service to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum.

Kansas City steaks are hard to beat, but Washington will give its best shot at that during next year's reunion September 27 – October 2, 2005 at the Sheraton National hotel in Arlington. See you there!



8th AFHS President William Rawson



Robert Vickers presents an Appreciation Plaque to John Greenwood, 351st BG, for his service with the 8th AF MMF and 8th AFHS



President Rawson presents a Plaque Of Appreciation for service to the 8th AFHS to Richard Baynes, seen with his daughter Beverly Tomb.

HOSPITALITY SUITES WERE THE PLACE TO BE AT THE REUNION!

They lasted late into the night with no sounds of "Time Gentlemen, Please."

A number of Groups utilized the option of having a Hospitality Room in the hotel to serve as the center of their off-duty activities, which pretty much was the entire reunion. Libations, food and camaraderie were the mainstays

in these homes away from home. Guests were always welcome and the ever-present donation jars on the bars were filled.

Old and new friends gathered, caught up on news since they had last gotten together, told stories, met family members, and relaxed among in the company of buddies.

The 353rd fighter Group suite served as the home base for all the fighter troops who attended the reunion. Scrapbooks, photos and histories were found on tables in every suite.

353rd FG Hospitality Room



Late evening at the Suite, 466th BG Hospitality
L to R: Bill Campbell, Molly Loevsky, Win Hart, Earl Wassom, Lou Loevsky, John Gerrity



Jeff Converse in the memorabilia room



Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society members left to right, Denver M. Canaday, Scotty David (membership), Wilmont "Bill" Grodi, O. Vernon Roskey, and Clayton C. David

MEMORIAL CANDLE-LIGHTING CEREMONY

Gil Gilbert, Aircraft Crew Chief, 493rd BG. Represented the 8th AF Ground Crews.

Lou Loevsky, Navigator, 466th BG, plane downed on first mission. Represented the Bomb Crews.

Bill McGarry, P-47 Pilot, 352nd Ftr Sq, 353rd Ftr G. Represented the "Little Friend" fighter planes.

Erlyn Jensen, her first reunion. Chosen because she represented a lost airman; her brother, Major Don McCoy, Lead Pilot, 445th BG, whose plane was downed over Kassel, Germany, 1944.

Edith Morrow, representing Britain's Royal Air Force Fighter and Bomber organizations.

Bill Cupp, 493rd BG, who was a Prisoner of War. Represented POWs.

General Lew Lyle, acted in remembrance of all those who made the ultimate sacrifice.



The Kassel Mission Seminar participants



Joseph Dzenowagis flew with the 467th Bomb Group - spent over a decade filming the story of The Kassel Mission and has produced movies including "Pride of a Nation". Joe Junior did the audio. Bill Dewey was on the panel.



Joseph Dzenowagis



AWARDS PRESENTED TO ACTIVE DUTY AIRMEN

One of the anticipated events of the annual reunion has been recognition of active duty 8th Air Force servicemen at the Gala Banquet. This year's General Ira C. Eaker Outstanding Airmanship Trophy went to crewmembers assigned to the 5th Bomb Wing at Minot AFB, North Dakota. Recipients were Lt. Col. Robert Hyde, Captain Joshua Holmes, Major Alexander Wylie, Captain Mark Dmytryszyn and Major Phillip Hacker.

The Pursuit of Excellence (Maintenance) Award was presented to Master Sgt. Rufino Gonzalez, Supervisor, 2nd Maintenance Squadron, 2nd Bomb Wing, Barksdale AFB Louisiana.

Director Emeritus Robert Vickers organized and hosted the receptions and Awards presentations, as he has done for many previous occasions.



Lt. Col. Robert Hyde, a recipient of the General Ira C. Eaker Outstanding Airmanship Trophy



Pursuit of Excellence Award presented to M/Sgt. Rufino Gonzales at the Gala Banquet

General Ira Eaker and Pursuit of Excellence Award Recipients



USAF Honor Guard
Whiteman Air Force Base



The 8th AFHS PX Crew from the Heritage Museum: from left, Carlita Carter, Director with associates Peggy Harden and Jean Moore

REUNION SECTION

Invocation by
Earl Wassom, Chaplain
The Head Table - Gala Banquet
from left: Larry Goldstein, John
Pearson, Craig Harris, Pres. Bill
Rawson, Chaplain Earl Wassom,
Col. Miller and wife, Mary and
Ivan McKinney



Henry Heidtbrink, 466th BG with
Connie Metts, 8th AFHS Office
Manager



Clifford Manlove, at his Stars and Stripes
Museum Seminar

A busy week for Donna
Lee of Armed Forces
Reunions



8th AFHS PX - Carlita Carter with Clayton David, 303rd BG



A new section of Memorabilia
The Ploesti Mission



Harry Tanner in his huge Memorabilia Room



Audience at "Hangar Flying with Lew Lyle"



8th AFHS Dinner Program
 "Bess and Harry Truman" by Claudette Walker
 of Kansas City, MO and Niel Johnson of
 Independence, MO



Ladies of the 466th BGA
 L to R: Mary Ellen Lynn, Irene Horan, Cynthia Wassom



After banquet, Col. Miller talking with Stanley
 Zybort, 392nd BG



Ralph Lynn, 466th BG; photographer, with wife
 Mary Ellen



Before the "Pearls" Medical Seminar

**8TH AF HISTORICAL
 SOCIETY REUNION - 2004**

Registration by groups

96th BG	.88
445th BG	.72
801st/492nd BG	.64
493rd BG	.63
447th BG	.59
385th BG	.51
94th BG	.49
392nd BG	.37
353rd BG	.19
Total for groups	.502

Jim and
 Joe Ann Erskine





Scotty and Clayton David



Lew Lyle and Betty



Molly and Lou Loevsky



Dick Baynes and Connie Metts



Alice and Walt Brown



Ken Hawes with his lovely wife



F-22 RAPTOR NEAR OPERATIONAL

TYNDALL AIR FORCE BASE, Fla. - With air dominance training under way here, the Air Force's newest asset, the F/A-22 Raptor, is providing its worth every day as it nears initial operational capability.

The Raptor will eventually replace the F-15 Eagle, an aircraft with an undefeated 104-0 combat record.

While the Eagle's record speaks for itself, 30-year-old technology can only extend that record so much farther, said Col. Timothy Merrell, the 325th Operations Group commander and a new F/A-22 pilot.

Some foreign fighters currently match or exceed U.S. fighter capabilities, and today's F-15s and F-16 Fighting Falcons cannot penetrate the newest surface-to-air missile threat environment without losses, Colonel Merrell said.

"Adversaries are not standing still and weapons continue to evolve and improve, as does the quality of pilots being produced by other nations," he said.

Even the most seasoned Eagle pilot will tell you that despite its impressive track record, the technological gap has closed, and the need for the Raptor is critical."



An F/A-22 Raptor (top) and an F-15 Eagle fly over Virginia.

"The Raptor brings on the next generation of applying technology to war fighting, putting our aircraft two generations ahead of any threat and removing us from our current status of weapons system parity," the General said. "Raptor technology combined with realistic training will provide air dominance, under which all other military actions become possible."

NEW PLAN WILL PRODUCE MORE CAPABLE AIR FORCE

WASHINGTON - The major worldwide troop movement unveiled in August by the President will result in a service that is better able to meet the needs of warfighting commanders, said Air Force planning officials at the Pentagon.

While most of the 70,000 servicemembers who return from overseas to the United States will be soldiers, the Air Force has played a major role in the integrated global presence and basing strategy, said Lt. Col. Keith Cunningham, former Deputy Chief of the Air Force Strategy and Integration Division.

"This basing strategy will strengthen the Air Force's ability to respond rapidly with agility, precision and lethality," Colonel Cunningham said.

"We used to measure capability in sheer numbers of troops," he said. "We (now) measure it in a lot of different ways. We're very capability-focused. We probably have more capability in some areas of the world than we ever had, but we have less troops there."

Major Air Force installations in Germany would be untouched by the reduction plans, said Gen. Charles F. Wald, deputy commander of U.S. European Command. While the plan is specifically designed to increase capability and flexibility, Colonel Cunningham said individual members would see quality-of-life improvements as well.



HERITAGE MUSEUM ACTIVITIES

Trustees of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum April 2004



Row 1: Maj. Gen. Lewis E. Lyle, Charles E. Glover, and Judge Benjamin Smith, Jr. • Row 2: C.J. Roberts, Richard M. Kennedy, Maj. Gen. William P. Bland, Jr., Lt. Gen. E.G. "Buck" Shuler, Jr., F.C. "Hap" Chandler, Craig Harris, and L. Scott Martens • Row 3: William C. Rawson, Dr. Walter E. Brown, Frank C. DeCicco, Alan S. Gaynor, David Hooper, Col. Edward I. Wexler and Jimmy W. Hayes (from left to right).

HERITAGE MUSEUM CHAIRMANSHIP PASSES ON

The newly-inaugurated Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum is Major General William "Bill" Bland. Change-of-command ceremonies took place at a recent Board meeting at the museum. Leaving office after a tenure of over ten years as Board Chairman was Lt. Gen. E. G. "Buck" Shuler, Jr., who will move up and serve as advisory Past-Chairman, assuring continuity of museum programs and activities. Gen. Shuler states, "Bill Bland is an old friend and supporter of the Heritage Museum. He is the ideal choice to serve as our leader as we continue our plans for a very successful future at the museum. We are fortunate to have Bill and his talents on board in this capacity."

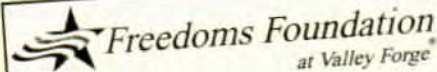
Bill Bland is a Savannah native and retired as Commander of the Georgia Air National Guard. He has been a Board member and on the Executive Committee

at the museum for several years, working closely with museum staff in a number of areas. He is very enthusiastic about the future growth of museum programs and expansion of the facility and its exhibitions. His selection and induction as Chairman was by an enthusiastic unanimous vote of the Executive Committee and of the Board.



Buck Shuler, left with incoming Board Chairman Bill Bland

8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY SELECTED FOR HONOR AWARD



To 8th AFHS members:

A friend of mine encouraged me to submit the Eighth Air Force Historical Society for a medal from the Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge. This was done through the Los Angeles Chapter of the Freedom Foundation.

I submitted our *Student's Guide to the Eighth Air Force in WW II* as well as background information on the Society for consideration, and recently received the enclosed letter indicating that the Society has been awarded the George Washington Honor Medal.

Since I used my Eighth Air Force Historical Society letterhead to submit our entry, it looks like the medal will be presented here in Southern California.

Regards,

R.C. "Dick" Baynes, 466th BG
Irvine CA

August 13, 2004

Eighth Air Force Historical Society
19191 Harvard Avenue
Apt. 234
Irvine, CA 92612

Dear Sirs,

Congratulations! Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge is pleased to inform you that you have been chosen to receive the George Washington Honor Medal for your entry in this year's Freedoms Foundation National Awards Program. Your program exemplified the essence of the National Awards by promoting an understanding and appreciation for our country's rich heritage and unique freedoms.

Since 1949 Freedoms Foundation's National Awards Program has honored exceptional work. Through a selection process based on quality and content, recipients are chosen to become part of an historically prestigious group of American citizens that advance the American ideal.

Your George Washington Honor Medal will be presented to you at an awards ceremony to be arranged by the Freedoms Foundation Volunteer Chapter closest to your area. An invitation will be extended to you to attend and receive your award at a ceremony conducted this fall/winter, or the award will be mailed to you if you are unable to attend the awards ceremony.

Best wishes in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Aaron Siegel
President and CEO



2004 UNIT REBATES

The following Units had 10 or more people attending the 2004 Historical Society reunion in Kansas City, MO and therefore received \$5.00 per person rebate.

Jim Erskine

353 FG	\$90.00
385 BG	230.00
392 BG	165.00
445 BG	340.00
447 BG	255.00
466 BG	135.00
493 BG	275.00
801/492 BG	300.00
94 BG	225.00
96 BG	390.00

Total	\$2405.00
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We ought to have a due sense of the magnitude of the danger with which we are threatened; we ought to meet it in that temper of mind which produces just confidence, which neither despises nor dreads the enemy; and while on the one side we accurately estimate the danger with which we are threatened at this awful crisis, we must recollect on the other hand what it is we have at stake, what is we have to contend for.

It is for our property, it is for our liberty, it is for our independence, nay, for our existence as a nation; it is for our very name as Englishmen, it is for everything dear and valuable to man on this side of the grave.

William Pitt (1803)

MAIL CALL

THE LEFT SEAT

Dear Walt:

The caption on the June cover is right, after all. You certainly can maintain, correctly, that the "left side" applies to the portside navigator because there are starboard side navigators: The PFF/Mickey navigators were located opposite the radio operator, starboard.

Cordially,

John C. Wilson

Navigator: 306th BG

PFF/Mickey: 305th BG

Well done John! And thanks for your input. -Editor

8TH AF NEWS

Dear Sir,

I am a veteran of WWII. I read my friend's magazines all the time. Since I was an aviation engineer on the bases of the 8th Air Force could I get a magazine when you send them out? Hope to hear from you.

John J. Manocchio

Actoona PA, 16602

WWII veteran of the greatest of all wars.

John - the 8th AF News is on the way to your mailbox. Those interested in any back issues may contact Connie Metts at the HS office - address inside front cover. -Editor

AUXILIARY TERRITORIAL SERVICE

Dear Dr. Brown,

As usual I read the 8th AF News from cover to cover, before passing it on to interested friends. Today I am taking the liberty to respond to your "FROM THE EDITOR" article Sept. 04. May I add a thing or two? You state that Hitler killed hundreds of thousands. But actually the number of his victims range in the millions. I should know, for among the six million Jews he exterminated were my parents, brother, grandmother, aunts, uncles, cousins, and many more members of my extended family and friends.

The Lord be praised that today, in this country, we do not speak German, Russian or Japanese. No doubt the heroes of the "Mighty

Eighth" played a large part in that accomplishment. Long live the story of the "Eighth", and that great language of freedom -- English! I had the privilege of observing the Eighth Air Force in person during World War II. I served in the "Auxiliary Territorial Service" (the Women's Branch of the British Army) for 4 1/2 years. We were stationed at Bury St. Edmunds, East Anglia, right in the midst of the US Air Force bases.

Sincerely,

Frances Nunnally

Richmond VA

VETERANS DAY

Dear Walter,

In England this day, there will be reflections and grateful remembrances of all who gave their lives for the cause of freedom. Church bells will chime, factories sound off, and at many monuments there will be a prayerful ceremony followed by a laying of a wreath. In all these years, England has kept this tradition. Here in America many years ago, this was also done. The church bells, factory whistles, even in schools, the children would pause in a silent prayerful manner. Veteran organizations, I'm sure, will hold their traditional ceremonies. Those who lost a loved one will never forget. But I'm afraid for the most of us, the day will pass as any other day.

This day for me will not pass without remembering two of my childhood grade school friends. One was hit on the beach in Anzio, Italy; the other somewhere in France. But there is someone who will have my special prayer, and a few moments of silence. His name is S/Sgt. Leonard Klein. It was a very cold winter day when our B-17's took off from Kimbolton, England, one of the almost daily daytime bombing raids of the 8th AAF on German war industry. It was Feb. 20, 1944. The target was an aircraft factory and marshalling yard at Bernberg, Germany. Leonard Klein flew the tail gunner's position on the Lt. Leo Miller crew.

Luck would have it - he had just switched places with the waist gunner S/Sgt. Earl Hill and got hit in both thighs with a 20 mm. shell while over the target. The whole crew helped to try to ease his pain and shock, even the Navigator Lt. Vince Scamell and Co-pilot John Kagmo - but Klein lost too much blood to last more than a couple of days. He was buried in Madingly near Cambridge, England. On Veteran's Day there will be some church bells ringing - some factory whistles, and hardly any prayers or remembrances for those who gave their lives for our freedom. I hope that the thousands and thousands of Kleins all over the U.S. will not be forgotten.

Joseph E. D'Angelo, 379th BG
Philadelphia PA

MANY THANKS

Dear Walt:

This morning our postman staggered up the path carrying the largest envelope I've ever seen. The mammoth card inside touched my heart when I saw all those messages of goodwill. I have never been so humbled and am truly lost for words to express my thanks. I've always known that those young men of the Mighty Eighth were from the best generation your great nation has ever had. As all those signatures show, they may have grown old in body but they are still the same, honourable, generous and caring souls.

I'll always treasure that card -- and I promise to make DC next year.
Roger Freeman, 8th AFHS Historian
Mays Barn
England

TO: 8TH AIR FORCE NEWS RE: 8TH AIR FORCE WEEK 2004

It may be of some interest to relate how the wonderful cooperation of the City of South Milwaukee has enabled the Wisconsin Chapter to receive an 8th Air Force Week proclamation each year of its observance since it started in 1998. Likewise, we have been offered opportunities to present

displays to promote interest in 8th AF WEEK, utilizing the display cabinet in the lobby of City Hall in South Milwaukee.

We indeed thank 8th AF NEWS for how much the magazine has contributed to making these displays interesting and worthwhile. By the way, we also used a generous supply of your magazines in 2002.

We concur wholeheartedly with those readers who have indicated to you how much they look forward to and appreciate every issue of 8th AF NEWS. You might say that here in South Milwaukee, as in many, many other places, the 8th AIR FORCE NEWS "passes in review".

Thanks again, and best wishes to you and your staff,
Donald W. Almon

P.S. I have tried to get information from Savannah on the cost of a subscription for 8AF NEWS for the South Milwaukee Public Library, but have not received any reply. I also need to know where I should send my check. Can you help?

The 8th AFHS Library Subscription Program details can be obtained from Office Manager Connie Metts: tel 912-748-8884. -Editor

WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

Dear Mr. Brown,
It was wonderful to spend four days in Washington D.C. when they stopped to honor the memory of all of us World War II Veterans. My only wish is that every single veteran could of had the experience that I and so many enjoyed while being in D.C. for the dedication. On May 27, 2004, I was at the Memorial and with the help of the Library of Congress personnel tried to get each of these Veterans on record at the Memorial. I can say with thanksgiving that I was able to get all of our local veterans registered.

Yes, I was one of the 300,000 veterans who was there and I agree with you about the feelings for the World War II veterans over those four days and can attest to the fact. With my wife of 58 years on my left arm, I was hugged and kissed on the cheek by

many, in thanks for being a veteran. My only identity of being a veteran was my B-17 baseball hat with the plane on the front of the crown and a couple of pins designating WW II.

On Saturday at the dedication ceremony, I had been seated about 30 minutes, when I was approached by a younger man who wanted my autograph for his book of memories.

Yes, I am a combat veteran, having flown 24 missions in B-17s as a radar armorer gunner with the 750th Sq., 457th Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force from December 1944 until May 8, 1945.

In leaving the city that gave the Greatest Generation such a great tribute, we flew home from BWI airport, leaving out of Gate Number 17. What an enjoyment it was to be there and I am grateful to everyone who made it possible.

Sincerely,
James R. "Bob" Day, 457th BG
Carlyle, IL

IDENTS

Dear Dr. Brown,
As usual, a very nice edition of the Eighth Air Force News. There is always something in the magazine that brings back fond, or not so fond memories. I do have one complaint. For some reason, whenever pictures of my former group, the 452nd, are shown, they are either identified as belonging to another group, or simply not identified.

As an example, note that on the Sept 04 rear cover, the formation "heading out" is called the "447 Bomb Group". That's fine even though no markings are visible.

Now turn to page 6 and note the caption. "B-17's with Little Friend at nine o'clock low." The tail markings are clearly shown and the letter L in a square is the 452nd identification. The photo appears to be the low element and, since most of my missions were as low element lead, I could almost put myself in the picture. In particular, I remember using the call to base, "This is Pinetree C-charlie." Lo and behold, the element lead has a clear C on the tail.

I have just returned from the 452nd annual reunion in Savannah and, as usual, the attendance was very good. All seven surviving members of my crew were present, which of course was especially great.

Keep up the good work, and please remember the "L" in the black square.

Dr. Harry Duccilli
Amelia Island, FL
A point well-said, Harry! It will be done. -Editor

FIGHTIN' SAM

Dear "Doc",
Thank you for the kind words concerning my artwork in your article in the September '04 issue. I have spent many days on photo safari in Africa, Asia and South America trying to get it right.

The September issue held another pleasant surprise! Those pictures of "Fightin' Sam" - A/C # B-24D 42-40506R, on page 8. My first combat mission, with my crew, was flown on the night of June 3/4, 1944 in "Fightin' Sam".

If I remember it correctly, it was the only plane in our Group that had not been re-painted jet black. The ball turret was removed, leaving the hole to drop Agents and supplies out of; the guns in the nose were removed so that the bombardier could help with the precise navigating needed to find the small underground target, and also give him a better view to drop the twelve parachuted containers. The drops were made from 400 feet.

I have enclosed a sheet containing a few words about that first mission, sent to me by Tom Ensminger, author of several histories of the 801/492 Group.

Wow! Sixty years! Sure flew by fast! Thanks again,
J.J. Oling, 801st./492nd BG
Torrance, CA

P.S. I painted the "Little Warrior" nose art on myself (Artist Ego!)

JUN 3/4 1944

VENTRILOQUIST 6A

Oling, flying "Fightin' Sam", entered this DZ 26 minutes past 1am finding C-type lights flashing "P". On a ground reception described by the pilot as "too small for a reception" part of the 12C/6P load fell in the woods. Departing after 13 minutes in the DZ, the plane turned toward Docques, Chauvigny, Nogent, Chatellou and Cambreur to dump 24,000 leaflets on the roofs, yards, and streets of those cities before landing without difficulty at Harrington at 0425 hours. While they had received fire from three of four guns at 48 degrees 55' N 00 degrees 13' E going in, there were no bursts and no damage was incurred.

401ST BOMB GROUP LEGACY

Dear Walter:

I want to express my appreciation for your inclusion of my "Long Way Home" article in the most recent 8AF News (Sept. 04). My wife and I attended the 401st reunion in August. You may be interested in knowing that the group's leaders are making a real effort to continue our legacy. The best example is the formation of a committee of younger generation members to devise ways to do this. One of our sons joined the effort. They will report back on or before the date of our 2006 reunion. Interesting panels included "The Way It Was" by 401st members and wives on the homefront. Also, new DVD's were shown and sold including many scenes from our base plus combat footage. Our President Art Seder and George Menzel, our Secretary-Treasurer can provide more details. Sincerely,
Bill Harty, 401st BG
Morristown, NJ
P.S. 8AF News is getting better each issue. Thanks!

BLITHE SPIRIT

Dear Walt,
I am speechless! Can hardly

express the feeling this issue of the AF NEWS brings to my heart! On behalf of my amazing crew of "Blithe Spirit", a thousand, thousand thanks to you, and your crew.

As you know, Gus Neal, our pilot, has invited us all (the incredible fact is that we are all still alive) to a reunion at Wright-Patterson Field, Dayton, Ohio this coming Armistice Day. Soon I will send you a copy of the film I made at the 447th Air Base, when I returned for a visit in June, 1962. It is called "The Journey". I understand that they will be showing it at the Kansas City event this October.

How can we all thank you enough, Walt? This issue of the AF NEWS brings together all the things that my crew hasn't been able to say to each other in words these many years. With more appreciation than I can express, Marvin Silbersher, 447th BG
Lake Hopatcong, NY

THE 452ND BG

Dear Walt,
Another (Sept 04) great issue of 8th AF NEWS - and you really made points with me on page 6 with "B-17's with Little Friends at nine o'clock low" - they are four of 452nd Bomb Group's Flying Forts!
Warmest regards,
Al Lea,
34th Regiment Polish Home Army
452nd BG
Houston, TX



MERRY CHRISTMAS

Dear Yank:

I'd like to say a very special "Thank you" to all those boys in the ETO who are taking T/5 Max Schrier's suggestion to heart, and so helping to give thousands of our youngsters a good time this Christmas.

As nurse in charge of a ward of crippled children, you can take it from me that your generosity is greatly appreciated.

And the kids love the Americans just as much as they love their candy, so I hope those of you who want to will get around to a spot of visiting, too. A very happy Christmas to every one of you, and God bless you.

Yank December 1944

D.E.S.

Britain

GLENN MILLER

Ladies and Gentlemen,



In the Issue of March 2004, page 25, I read my name, concerning Major Glenn Miller, who disappeared December 15, 1944 on a flight from Twinwood Farm to Paris, never to be seen again. Thank you for help in contacting with still living persons. Every year in August, there is a Memorial and event on the wartime base of Glenn Miller, and I send you a brochure of that event. Perhaps there is still an interest or a feeling of that what happen on that cold and foggy day on

December 15, 1944.

Thank you.

With best regards,
Dr. Otto Buttron
Germany

RAYS HELL

I am contacting you with hope that you may be able to assist me to find the men that my father Bernard

MAIL CALL

Brooks flew with in W.W.II in the 8th, 388th Bomb Group. *Rays Hell* was the plane. The pilot was Ray Campbell. My father died when I was little girl and I have always wanted to speak with the men that he bravely flew with. Years ago I know that Christmas cards and letters were exchanged by the men.

Their names are: Riggs M. Tucker - co-pilot; Roy M. Uhlinger - navigator; William Crab - bombardier; Anthony O. Kawalec - engineer; McIntyre - radio operator; Audrey R. Stanton - assistant radio operator; John Marr - gunner; John Assistant - gunner; Gerald R. Reed - gunner; John A. Myles - gunner.

My father was in the "Lucky Bastards Club." I am hoping that you may be able to assist me in my lifelong dream to find these brave men that my father flew and protected the nation with. Thanking you in advance.

Sincerely, Linda Brooks, daughter of Bernard Brooks
Brooks422@aol.com

CHEYENNE TURRET

Dear Walt,

As you know I am rebuilding the rear Cheyenne turret from the B-17 516. I have most of it made, I just have to put it all together. Loads of riveting to be done. I intend to put two of the original .50 caliber Brownings back into this turret where they originally came from, but I am needing the E13 gun cradles which house these guns as they mounted inside. Also I have one of the waist guns which belonged to waist gunner Joe Trexler. This too is needing a gun cradle to finish the display and complement the restoration work. I don't have a computer so I am unable to find them. There are not any in England. There must of been thousands that went back to the U.S.A. All I need is three. Please can you point me in the right direction, I would be truly grateful.

Also just to let you know I have now found a wing, which belongs to one of three P-51Bs, which crashed in the river Stour not far from the B-17.

It could be one of the wings that came off or the whole thing could be there. It too is in soft mud and tidals and at present I have no plans for its recovery but if you no somebody who might, please let me know.

Best Regards,
Shaun Riley
Knowl Green
Belchamp St Paul
Sudbury Suffolk CO10 7 B2
England

Shaun Riley headed up the excavation of Col. Earle Aber's B-17 Tondelayo, that crashed in the river Stour after a leaflet mission.

DIGS

Hi Doc Brown,

I was an aviation engineer with the 861st EAB, one year in the 8th before being transferred to the IX Engr Command in October 1943. Returning in Sept 1979 in a nostalgic visit to my old airfield at Boreham, Essex U.S. 161, I got involved with two British "dig" groups who recover WWII aircraft and for the following 17 years joined them summers in their plane recoveries.

We have maintained contact with many fighter and bomb groups on the results of our various recovery items of their respective crashes, however, our correspondence and email addresses are out of date. Is it possible to obtain an up to date list of such addresses? The 8th AF News used to occasionally publish these but I can't find one of recent date.

WWII is still of highest interest in the UK with the Imperial War Museum at Duxford and the Royal Air Force Museums at Hendon and Cosford, drawing several hundred thousand visitors annually.

Our groups still believe the Miller Norseman UC64 is down somewhere in the Chiltern Hills in Bedfordshire - not in the channel by a Lancaster III bomb drop - an old story going back to 1987! - as the female air controller told the pilot, F/O John Morgan, who reported a sticky altimeter, to check with her before crossing the channel. The new 8AF News is excellent in

appearance and content.
Best Regards,
Ed Twohig
Malden, MA

HOLLAND

Dear Doctor Brown,
Recently I received a copy of "8th Air Force News" of Dec 2003 from a local 8th AF pilot of WWII, Roy Brockman. He sent it to me after a breakfast meeting with the Rochester Geriatric Association to which I was invited by William McGarry, a fighter pilot during WWII. I am from Eindhoven, the Netherlands and immigrated to the USA in 1948 with two brothers and the rest of my family came a year later. All together I have eleven siblings, of who five of us brothers served in the US armed forces, and four sisters. None of us ever got hurt during the war and our liberation on September 18th, 1944, D-Day plus 60, is exactly this month. It is a day we never forget.

There are four stories in this issue that I would like to see that a copy be sent to the 101st Air Borne Association in Holland. My buddy, Gerard Fonteyn would appreciate a copy of that. It has four stories in it about Holland, including a story about food drops in the hunger winter of '44-'45 and a story "The Policeman and the Watch." There is a third story of a book "Stepping Stones in Freedom", and then a P.O.W. address of Clayton David in Hannibal, Missouri, who I recently wrote before I saw this in the 8th Air Force News.

Thank you kindly and All Our Liberators for our "Freedom; the greatest gift anyone could have."
Marcel E. Blaakman
Rochester, NY

AIDA

Hi Dr. Brown:

Some of you good members in the "early days" remember Aida Hildebran I am sure. She, along with the other wives, were a great help when we organized The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

back in early 1975. Aida and I lived not too far from John Woolnough. I still have Issue Number One of the 8th AF NEWS dated January 1975, which he edited.

If you remember, our first Reunion was held on October 10-12, 1975 at the Marco Polo Hotel on Miami Beach. As they say, "We've come along way" since. I do not have the dates handy, but we also formed the Florida Chapter at about the same time. With the help of the ladies! My Aida enjoyed the Reunions that we attended after that 1975 opener. We met alot of great people during all those years. I am sure Col. Robert Vickers remembers some of Aida's stories.

After moving to Oklahoma in 1981 our attendance to later Reunions has been slack, sorry to say. But with the great 8th AF NEWS we always knew what was happening.

Just twelve days after her 81st birthday and three months before our 60th anniversary, my Aida was taken to Heaven. But I was certainly blessed by the manner in which she left me. Aida was becoming VERY tired. We were going to our hospital that morning to see what the trouble was. She was sitting in her chair. As I went to get our car I asked her if



Aida and John Hildebran
White Sands National Monument

she was ok. She replied, "Oh, I'm fine." Less than 2 minutes later, I came in to get her....and she was gone. A great lady who is being missed by friends all the way from Pennsylvania, Florida, Texas and Oklahoma, as well as England.

Who knows. She may be back with John Woolnough, Cliff Peterson, the Fesslers, Fred and Minette, and many of those other great 8th AF men and women.

John Hildebran
Moyers, OK
email:
johnaida@mailstation.com

PARACHUTE

Dear Dr. Brown,
We were recently given a dress made of parachute silk. The parachutes - 201 of them - were given to a farmer at Great Staughton and his wife, a dressmaker, made the dress. The airmen were based at Kimbolton, 379th BG, and the dress was made for Mavis Goddard nee Green who wa the dressmaker's niece, Mavis is now in her 80's.

Are those or the Airmen still out there somewhere? We would like to know. Can you help?

Yours sincerely,
Connie Richards
AFHS contact in England
14 Pavenham Road
Oakley, Bedford
MK43 7SY England
tel: 01234 823357

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

These sovereign tombs of solemn majesty,
Made sacred by the dust of whom they keep,
Loom through the lowering shadows silently
Where noble sons and sires of England sleep,
Whose names are grown immortal. Here the while
Sage, soldier, prince and poet lie alone,
The royal soul of this imperial Isle
Journeys among these monuments of stone.

Here in a single epitaph, an age;
Or in a carven name, a history --
A reign of peace, an era's muted rage
Inscribed in sculpted immortality --
As were the tombs of Troy and Babylon,
And Ozymandias crouching by the dawn.

James Facos
Montpelier, VT



Santa is portrayed wearing black on this late 1800s American advertising card

CLARENCE BROWER...

The camp rules were read to us at the first evening roll call (body count) and particular emphasis was placed on "don't climb out of or in windows, don't touch the warning rail or you would be shot." We had numerous roll calls every day. During the daytime, half a dozen or so German guards would go through the barracks to check out everything. They would show up most anytime and hang around looking through everything. They acted as if they didn't understand English, but we thought they could.

There was one building in each compound that was used for the Red Cross Room and kitchen. The food we got was taken to the kitchen and cooked, then one man from each room went down to the kitchen with the room-bucket and got our portion. Then it would be brought back to the room and rationed out. The food for the morning meal would usually be a small hunk of black bread, a cup of Ersatz coffee and if we still had any, some synthetic jam and margarine. Our evening meal would be a soup made of potatoes and dehydrated vegetables with a small amount of horsemeat. The more horsemeat, the better it tasted. We would eat most anything. Our compound voted to put the corned beef and spam into the soup whenever we got any Red Cross packages. We usually got one loaf of black bread for every eight or nine men per day. They were small loaves.

At Christmas time, we got what was called the Christmas parcel and it was a larger box than we usually received. We got one of those for each two men. It contained corned beef, butter, jam, a chocolate bar, mixed nuts, a fig bar, honey, tea, cheese, Vienna sausage, bouillon cubes, deck of cards, pipe, tobacco, cigarettes and gum. What a swell Christmas Feed we all had! The German guards always opened all of the parcels before they came into the compound and punched holes in the cans so we wouldn't hoard them to

use for an escape attempt. This made it bad because we had to eat all the things that would spoil right away. Several got sick from eating too much.

Clarence Brower
96th Bomb Group
POW Stalag Luft IV
-The Rabadue Crew

JOE WEINSTOCK...

"We were all given different targets - our squadron had an airfield target that day. I was flying as a bombardier. We reached our check points on time and started the bomb run. Flak was heavy and we saw Nazi aircraft. Halfway through the run, my pilot called.

"Pilot to bombardier, 'Why are you releasing the bombs so early?'

"Bombardier - 'Who's dropping bombs?'

"Pilot - 'The whole right side just left the ship.'

"Bombardier - 'That's funny! I haven't touched any switches yet. Probably a malfunction somewhere. Well, I'll save the others for the target.'

"We reached the target and I was synchronized smack on the money, so I hit the switches to send the bombs on their way.

"Engineer - 'The bombs are still here. Three on top have fallen on the others and there's a little wheel spinning on all three.' After a spinner makes about 250 revolutions, the bomb becomes armed.

"I told the engineer to kick the bombs out and headed back to him. When I reached the bomb bays, the armed bombs had already left the ship and the engineer and I put the pins back in the six bombs that were still hanging. Their racks were bent, and it was impossible to release them.

"I told the pilot it wasn't safe to land with all that weight hanging. By this time we were in safe territory and I suggested we ditch the bombs in the English Channel. The pilot called for the squadron leader's permission and he agreed.

"When we reached the Channel, the

engineer and I cut the wires and carried the bombs to the radio room, where we dropped them out of the camera hatch one at a time.

"Now that was over and we had to reach England. Our field was socked in, so we had to land at another air-drome. With poor visibility, the pilot finally brought the ship down safely. We were almost 100 miles from our own air base, so we had to spend the night sleeping in the planes. This field was unable to accommodate the hundreds of flyers that weathered in for the night. It was cold and very uncomfortable, but the boys kept singing Christmas carols while others talked about Christmases past.

"Me? Sure I told them about the wonderful sunshine in Hollywood just one year ago. But why complain? We were safe and alive."

Joe Weinstock, 91st BG
Miami, FL

GALE JOHNSON...

We had plenty of help, so when one of the men asked me if I would object to his cutting a Christmas tree, I saw nothing wrong with the request. The trees were quite high and he went back in the woods, climbed near the top and brought out a beautiful tree top. We covered it up with canvas and brought it back to the tower. The tower contained the weather station and visiting pilots' room on the first floor, and two rooms used as officers quarters, plus the larger operation room on the top floor. It was decided that my quarters, along with the other officers', would be the ideal place for this tree. It was a punishable offense to damage Her Majesty's property, but my quarters were seldom inspected so into my room went the tree. The Control Tower Organization consisted of a medical team, armament crews, electrical crews, and radio maintenance crews, truck drivers and cleat track operators. Once in my room, everyone agreed it needed decorations and a stand. American GI's were resourceful. One of the armament men dashed out to the bomb dump and soon a bomb was

missing its tail fin which we needed for a stand. Snow was no problem - the medics had lots of cotton. Tinsel - an ample supply was found in the chaff radar deflection packages. The lights took some thinking, until someone remembered the emergency landing lights - red, yellow, green were all battery operated. We could take the sockets and the bulbs out for a while and wire them together. We needed an extra airplane battery - it was found. What a beautiful tree! A

small gift exchange was agreed upon and a time set for a grand party around the tree. I'm not sure but what an eggnog concoction was made.

Word got around. It took some acting on my part to keep from smiling at the similarity of the requests that came in from the different crews and their captains hardened by war. It would go like this: "Say, Captain Johnson, I would like to ask a favor of you. You see, I have a pretty

young crew and they are a bit homesick, it being Christmas and all. Now, you see it isn't for me, but for the kids. I wonder if we could use your tree on Christmas Day just for a short while." I scheduled my room at half-hour intervals for much of the day. I guess it just goes to show you that Christmas is for the kids, but fortunately most of us never stop being kids.

Gale Johnson, 491st BG
Control Tower Officer

"FILL'ER UP AND CHECK THE TIRES..." "THAT WILL BE \$12 MILLION, CASH OR CHARGE?"

A LITTLE EXCITEMENT AT McCARRAN AIRPORT LAS VEGAS. THE WORLD'S LARGEST AIRCRAFT, A RUSSIAN ANTONOV 225, WAS HERE TO DELIVER A VERY LARGE POWER TRANSFORMER THAT WAS BUILT IN TURKEY, FOR NEVADA POWER.

submitted by DONALD "SPEC" CAMPEN, 303rd BG
RICHMOND VA

RUSSIAN ANTONOV 225 World's Largest Airplane



MARK BROWN



"Perhaps the best photo interpreter in the 8th Air Force Mark Brown, here at his desk at Headquarters, 3rd Air Division, Elveden Hall. A constant source of honesty and strength. He went back to Iowa and wrote several books on the Indians of the West." - Jake Fredericks, 303 BG; 3rd ADHQ



Photo Interpretation - Mark Brown at left; Dr. Angus Taylor in middle and Unidentified right



Elveden Hall 3rd Air Division Headquarters

- Form may be reproduced -



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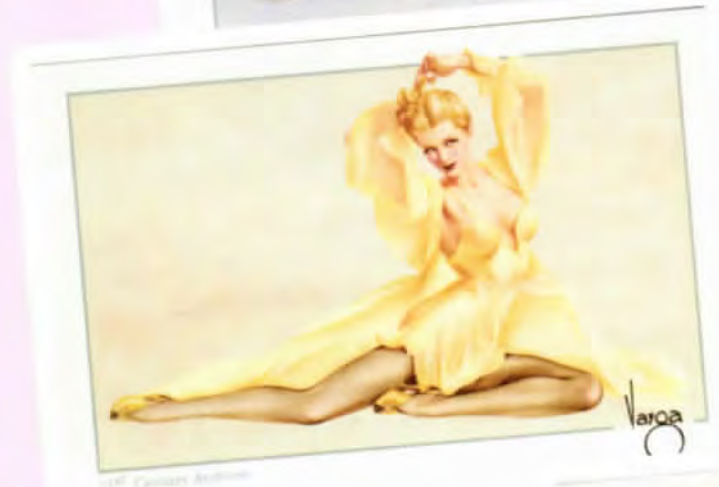
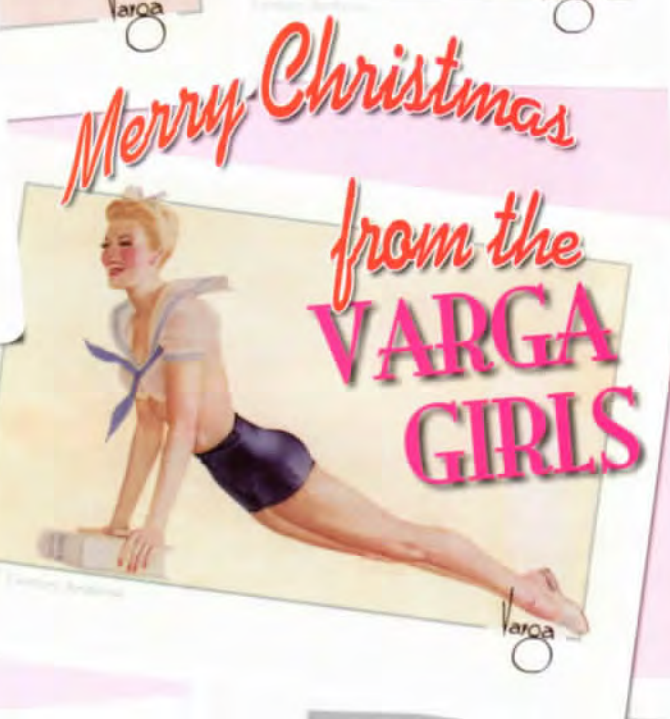
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A distraught young man went in for an appointment with his Psychiatrist. On the couch, he said, " Doc, you've got to help me! My wife is driving me crazy. She dresses up and goes out on the town carousing around every evening and doesn't come back until all hours of the night. And just last night, she didn't come home until four o'clock in the morning! What should I do?"

The Psychiatrist replied, "It was two-thirty!"

Ah Those Birsith - This is intriguing:

Aoccdnrig to rscheearch at an Elingsh uinervtisy, it deosn't mtttaer in waht oredr the lttters in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht the frist and lsat lttter are in the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit a porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae we do not raed ervey lteter by itslef but the wrod as a wlohe and the biran fguiers it out aynawy.

from Ralph E. Gies
in the Colorado Chapter Newsletter

8TH AFHS BY LAWS AMENDMENT PASSED

The June 2004 issue of the 8th AF NEWS carried a ballot for voting on a proposed amendment to the Society By-laws. The proposal was designed to foster broader participation by voting members in By-laws amendments. The By-laws had required that voting on amendments be done by mail ballot; however, only a few ballots were being sent in.

In placing the proposal before the membership, the Board of Directors felt that a change to voting in person would result in a large number of votes as well as the ability to

have discussion of the issues before the ballots are cast. For this proposed amendment, there were 38 ballots received. Of the total, there were 35 votes for the amendment and one against. Two ballots were not properly filled out and could not be counted.

Under the approved amendment, proposed changes to the By-laws are to be voted on at a general membership meeting. A statement of the position of the Board of Directors must be published in the 8th AF NEWS just prior to a meeting where voting will occur. It further provides that a copy of the Board's position be handed out with each ballot at the meeting.

John Pearson, Secretary

DECEMBER 2004 (04-4)

The following was published in **Time, June 12, 1944**. I thought each of you might find it interesting.

D For Day, H For Hour means the undetermined (or secret) day and hour for the start of a military operation. Their use permits the entire timetable for the operation to be scheduled in detail and its various steps prepared by subordinate commanders long before a definite day and time for the attack have been set. When the day and time have been fixed, subordinates are so informed.

So far as the Army can determine, the first use of D for Day, H for Hour was in Field Order No. 8, of The First Army, A.E.F. (American Expeditionary Forces), issued on **Sept. 7, 1918**, which read, 'The First Army will attack at H-Hour on D-Day with the object of forcing the evacuation of the St. Mihiel salient.'

A bit of interesting history.

Ted Hood, Sr., 306th BG; SAC
Little Rock, AR



"It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better.

The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming, but who does actually strive to do the

deeds, who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions, who spends himself in a worthy cause, who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat."

Theodore Roosevelt
President, United States of America



Headquarters personnel
94th Combat Wing

IOWA CHAPTER NEWS

The 21st annual reunion of the Iowa Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society was held at the Quality Inn, Ames, Iowa on August 18, 2004.

After our annual meeting and election of officers was held we took a tour of the Iowa Heritage Museum at Ankeny, Iowa a distance of

some thirty miles. Our President's son, Charles Taylor, is painting a mural on one wall showing the History of Aviation. What he has done so far is wonderful. He thinks it will take him two more years to finish. All enjoyed the trip.

Our PX was again run by Duff Coleman and his son Joel. Business was great. Our membership also enjoyed eight tables of displays. That evening, our memorial Service was held in the Banquet Hall. The beautiful service was done by our able member Robert Suchow and his wife Shirley at the Piano. Eighty people attended the Banquet and enjoyed a great buffet meal. The chef surprised us with a barbequed whole pig, chicken and roast beef. We honored with a "Plaque" a former Board Member of many years, Rudy Nelson, and our present Secretary, Barry Johnson. Long over-due we honored six wives who have helped us over the years. They were Anne Person, Millie Nelson, Lorraine Reeves, Margaret Picht, Jane Taylor and Vera Mehring. They each received a \$25.00 certificate. Our entertainment was called "The Holy Ground." Three musicians played and sang Irish songs. The singing of "Danny Boy" was exceptional. Our speaker was a native of Iowa, Gaylen Kittleson, an Alamo Scout, Special Forces. He performed more P.O.W. raids behind enemy lines than any other American during WWII in the Pacific and the Vietnam War. He was highly decorated. A great ending for our 21st Iowa Reunion.

Leon G. Mehring, Treasurer



Visitors at the Glenn Miller Festival



Iowa Chapter Displays

MINNESOTA CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING

President Clyde Thompson called the meeting to order. The minutes were accepted as read. Treasurer Al Anderson reported as of September 30, 2004, a balance of \$12,833.94 in the two accounts. As of September 30, 2004, total income exceeded total expenses by \$2,174.63 for 9 months of 2004.

Discussion on changing to 501C3 from 501C19 was presented by President Thompson and Treasurer Al Anderson. The PX reduction was addressed by Don Zupan. The inventory is being reduced. At the Christmas Party a few items will be shown that are appropriate for gifts. Education was stressed as the PX is reduced. New membership pins were discussed - cost not known. Officers and Directors were elected unanimously:

President Dick Kaminski (457th BG), **Vice President** Don Kent (401st BG), **Secretary** Bob Clemens (15AF 463rd BG), **Treasurer** Al Anderson (WPAFB).

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Clemens, Scty

NORTH TEXAS CHAPTER

Chapter still growing with several new members this year.



North Texas Chapter members

Lots of walking wounded but we are doing pretty well overall. Members Bob Bily and Bruce Kilmer made a presentation to High Schoolers in Georgetown, Texas and wowed 'em. Seems history teacher was an ex-USAF Navigator who collects Sextants. Bought one with Bily's name on it and traced him down and invited Bob to speak to his students. Another great "small world" story and another group of students who know about the un-revised version of the Big War!

August meeting featured Marine Colonel Hawkins, Commanding MAG-41, JRB Fort Worth, who just returned from 7 months in Iraq. How great it was to hear the truth about what is really going on over there. Just wish the troops could report the news rather than the Rathers! Our 2004-2005 President is Colonel Worth Speed.

submitted by Dick Atkins

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

We are number six, and counting! Shown in the enclosed photo are seven members of the Wisconsin Chapter, who were present at City Hall for presentation of the 8th Air Force Week proclamation by Acting-Mayor Tom Zepecki. We are honored to have the proclamation, which is mounted beautifully on a dark walnut wooden plaque. We are proud, as well, of the response by the City of South Milwaukee, which has continued since the first 8th Air Force Week in 1998.

Another photo shows the display that was developed by Chapter President Bill Bergner and Don Almon. It will remain in the display-cabinet at City Hall through the month of October. Note the use of cover-pages and other pictures extracted from issues of 8th Air Force



Wisconsin Chapter Troops

News. By the way, we also used issues of the 8th Air Force News as part of our display in 2002. It's obvious that we, like so many others, really do look forward to receiving each issue of 8th Air Force News, not only for its readability and enjoyment, but also its important place in what we can display to promote 8th Air Force Week, as well as this great organization, The Eighth Air Force Historical Society. Respectfully submitted, Donald W. Almon

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

The 8th AFHS NM Chapter held the Fall General Membership meeting 16 Oct. 04; members and guests totaled 101.

The highlight of the Fall meeting was the speaker Capt. Vincente Garcia, USN. The seventh of fourteen children,

was raised in a small southern, New Mexico town. A 1978 graduate of NMSU, he received a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering with Honors, and a minor in music and mathematics. Vincente joined the Navy, and after being interviewed by Admiral Rickover ("Father of the Nuclear Navy"), Vincente was granted a direct commission as Ensign and invited to join the Nuclear Navy. He also became a

Special Duty Officer for Cryptology, known affectionately as "spooks". In 1992, Vincente was promoted to the rank of Commander and named the NCS's Adjunct Faculty of the Year, 1993, awarded by the NSA. Al Schwery, Scty P.S. The New Mexico Chapter winter meeting and luncheon will be held on Feb. 12, 2005 at the Petroleum Club.



Vincente Garcia, Captain, USNR, receiving Chapter's Proclamation of Appreciation for the speaker's presentation. The presenter is Carl Albright, 446th BG., Chapter V.P. and past President.

MICHIGAN CHAPTER

Honoring The American Past is the theme of 35 Curriculum Guides distributed to Michigan High Schools and libraries by the Michigan Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society.

A state-wide theme writing contest "What Honoring the American Past Means To Me" is being conducted during the school year 2004-2005. Essay winners will be awarded cash prizes, a family membership to the Kalamazoo Air Zoo, and tickets to Western Michigan University football and basketball games.

History teachers at three experimental high schools, Brighton, Kalamazoo Hackett, and Parchment, have reported enthusiastic response of students to Michigan Chapter members who donated the Curriculum Guide consisting of a 30-minute video, text book, and transparencies published by Prentice Hall in cooperation with the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia.

Teachers desiring a free Curriculum Guide contact Chapter President Suds Sumney, 1595 West Centre, Suite 108, Portage, MI 49024, Telephone 269-598-3144 or E-Mail suds@sumney.com

CHAPTER NEWS

The Curriculum Guide is available to the public at the Kalamazoo & Portage Public Libraries.

Curriculum Guides distribution by The Michigan Chapter, has been arranged for high schools in Brighton, Comstock, Dearborn Heights, Hickory Corners, Lansing, Roscommon, Schoolcraft, Sturgis, Sault St. Marie, St. Joseph, Vicksburg, Westland, & Williamston.

GENERAL JAMES H. DOOLITTLE CHAPTER NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

The Doolittle Chapter Board of Directors met in its quarterly meeting during July 2004. Discussion and recommendations were made on ways for Chapter members to promulgate the history of the 8th Air Force to younger generations.

The Doolittle Chapter held its Annual General Meeting August 10, 2004 in San Mateo, California. Introductions and program activities were presented by President Paul Wallace. He then called upon individual members to introduce themselves and guests and each related a brief anecdote of an experience while they were members of the 8th Air Force during World War II. As an aside, President Wallace remarked, "Once you get these old veterans behind a microphone, the stories go on and on." Also in evidence was art work and posters, and books written by members.

A livelier subject concerned discussion by members who have been active in lecturing in the school classrooms on 8th AF History. Many members voiced how they approached the task, and how their efforts were received by students. It appeared many in the audience wanted the microphone to bring forth their ideas on the "how to" in carrying out this important part of our preservation program. Most members who have been in classrooms used teaching methods similar to programs accomplished in other Chapters and Units. That is, they supplemented their own experiences with the prepared program materials published by the 8th AF Museum in Savannah.

The Chapter's officers are: Paul Wallace, President, USAAF; Larry Goldstein, Vice President, 388th BGp; Tom Mooney, Secretary, 466th BGp; William Getz, Treasurer, 491st BGp; Ed Joyner, Past Treasurer, 445th BGp; Dave Bergman, Director, USAAF Living History Programs; Albert Freitas, 100th BGp, Director of the General Doolittle display at the Western Air Museum, Oaklan Airport; Belton C. Wolf, 305th BGp and 406th BSq (Night Leaflet Sq); Sol

Wyner, Editor of the Chapter's AIR POWER Newsletter. Speaker at the Doolittle Chapter General Meeting was Sarabel Wardle, who was a veteran of the Women Air Force Service Pilot organization. She said her thrill to be a pilot in early 1940s, was due to her uncle, who had been a pilot in the 1930s and '40s. She worked at a job, making little money, but it was enough to pay for light lessons. She trained at a nearby airport, and was awarded a private pilot's license. Having this pre-requisite she joined the WASP and was awarded her wings in late 1943. She trained in Stearman P-17s, with navigational training in Vultee B-13s; and final training in Texan AT-6s. She ferried many types of aircraft, including multi-engine bombers. Because she entered WASP training later than others, she was separated from the service near the end of 1944. Regardless, she is just as proud today, as she was in 1943-44 of her duties. She felt her contribution freed up male pilots to fight the enemy over foreign shores.

NOTE: The Doolittle Chapter now has a post office address: General James H. Doolittle Chapter, P.O. Box 503, Mountain View, CA 94042-0503.

submitted by: Belton Wolf

MISSOURI CHAPTER - ST. LOUIS WING

Our 32nd Social Event and quarterly meeting September 22nd began at the "Helen Fitzgerald Irish Grill" in a private room named the "Board Room."

After a delicious luncheon the group moved to a theatre "Stages" to attend the musical stage show Camelot. It was the shattering tale of King Arthur and the tragic passion between Queen Guenevere and her bravest knight Lancelot. It was a magnificent musical and it is considered one of the finest examples of musicals from the golden age of Broadway.

In the last scene when they sang the beloved title tune "One brief shining moment that was known as Camelot." The cast received a standing ovation. Needless to say we all had a grand time. Al Villagran said that it wouldn't surprise him that at the next board meeting, they would



St. Louis Wing in front of the Helen Fitzgerald Irish Grill

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vote to make the theatre an annual event. Cameras were not allowed in the theatre, so we only have one picture. Al also states that meetings such as this being published in the 8th Air Force News and the Missouri Chapter Newsletter, The Rally Point has created an interest in the St. Louis Wing.
Joe Jameson

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The Fall business meeting was held Nov. 13 in Statesville, attended by officers, directors and guests. We were able to make changes to enable the Chapter to run more smoothly. Judy Walker, Executive Director of the Mighty Eighth Foundation, and Craig Harris, each spoke about the benefits of remembering the Mighty Eighth Foundation in our estate planning. There are many ways to do this; wills, bequests and codicils, and Charitable Gift Annuities to name a few. Please contact them if you're interested. The EASTERN WING held a meeting on Veteran's Day, Nov. 11, at Abbottswood in Raleigh. The program was three women sailors speaking about their experiences. Norma Schrader, WWII WAVE, told us how that service came into being; Betty Plotkin spoke about how the Triangle Seagals got organized; and Jo Flack told us about her regular Navy service as Chief Petty Officer in a more recent war. We enjoyed these wonderful stories



North Carolina members conducting Chapter business

from these women.

The METROLINA WING held their December meeting at the Red Rocks Cafe in Charlotte on Dec. 7. No speaker was scheduled as traditionally, members and guests enjoy fellowship at the Christmas meeting.

The WESTERN WING October meeting heard speaker Dave Sloane. B-26 pilot talk about getting into combat and some of his early missions. At the Nov. meeting, Bob Grosso spoke about an incident he experienced as the navigator on a B-24 with the 448th BG.

HOLIDAY INN VERSUS NURSING HOME

No Nursing Home for me! I am checking into the closest Holiday Inn!

With the average cost for a nursing home per day reaching \$188.00, there is a better way when we get old and feeble. I have already checked on reservations at the Holiday Inn.

For a combined long term stay discount and senior discount, it's \$49.23 per night. That leaves \$138.77 a day for: Breakfast, lunch and dinner in any restaurant I want, or room service; laundry, gratuities and special TV movies.

Plus, they provide a swimming pool, a workout room, a lounge, washer and dryer. Most have free toothpaste and razors, and all have free shampoo and soap. They treat you like a customer, not a patient. \$5 worth of tips a day will have the entire staff scrambling to help you. There is a city bus stop out front, and seniors ride free. The handicap bus will also pick you up, if you fake a decent limp. To meet other nice people call a church bus on Sundays.

For a change of scenery, take the airport shuttle bus and eat at one of the nice restaurants there. While you're at the airport, fly somewhere. Otherwise, the cash

keeps building up.

It takes months to get into decent nursing homes. Holiday Inn will take your reservation *today*. And you are not stuck in one place forever. You can move from Inn to Inn, or even from city to city. Want to see Hawaii? They have a Holiday Inn there too. TV broken? Light bulbs need changing? Need a mattress replaced? No problem. They fix everything, and apologize for the inconvenience.

The Inn has a night security person and daily room service. The maid checks to see if you are OK. If not, they will call the undertaker or an ambulance. If you fall and break a hip, Medicare will pay for the hip, and Holiday Inn will upgrade you to a Suite for the rest of your life.

And no worries about visits from family. They will always be glad to find you, and probably check in for a few days mini-vacation. The grandkids can use the pool. What more can you ask for?

So, when I reach the golden age, I'll face it with a grin. Just forward all my email to: me@holiday.inn

submitted by Lee Bennett, 96th BG

Little Lambsey Divey

Dear Sir,

This letter will give you more information about the picture on page 14 in the June 2004 issue of 8th AF News. The picture was taken after we crash-landed our B-24 "Little Lambsey Divey." I was the flight engineer and top turret gunner on the B-24. A G.I. stationed on the airbase at Florennes, Belgium took this picture on Dec. 31, 1944. The person standing by the nose turret is myself, Alfred Ebbing of the 458 BG and member of Bob Burman crew.

Our crew consisted of Bob Burman, pilot; Harvey Putman, navigator; Alfred Ebbing, flight engineer; Junior Clark, radio operator; Enrico Ciotti, waist gunner; Eugene Gaby, waist gunner; Stanley Sargut, nose gunner; Robert Groh, tail gunner.

On New Year's Eve, we were sent on mission #4, back to Koblenz, Germany to wipe out a railroad bridge. Before we left our airbase at Horsham St. Faith, the ground crew told me that one bomb might hang up in the bomb rack. With that information, we went through the emergency procedure to release the bombs. The bomb thought to have a problem released without any malfunctions. Unfortunately, on the missions another one of our four bombs ended up stuck in the bomb rack and I was unable to release it. I put the safety pin back in the bomb.

On this mission we encountered heavy flack and a lot of enemy fighters. The pilot had to feather the #2 and #4 engines as we were losing oil and fuel out of both engines. We had also taken flack in the hydraulics to the nose gear as well as the back up emergency hand procedure. I was unable to lower the nose gear.

While in flight returning to our base, I proceed to inspect the nose gear and found it totally inoperable. I started up to remind the pilot of the bomb and tell him we had no nose gear. While doing so, I looked down and saw the ground coming up very quickly through the open bomb bay door and assumed a crash position.

When we hit the runway with no nose gear and two engines feathered the pilot had little control of the plane causing us to leave the runway hitting bumpy ground making for one very rough landing. As we came to a stop, the rough terrain shook the bomb loose, dropping it to the ground causing the plane to drop on the nose turret nearly breaking it off. Fortunately everyone walked away from the plane unhurt.

After this ordeal of crash landing on another base in Belgium, it took us four days to reach our base back in England, as we had to wait our turn to fly back in a cargo plane. Our next mission wasn't until January 13, 1945.

While stationed in England, our crew made 28 missions over Germany. On our 28th mission April 10, 1945 we went back to Lechfeld Germany. Our two waist gunners



were killed and the tail gunner seriously hurt when we took a direct hit in the camera hatch. I was able to move Robert Groh to a better place in the rear of the plane to administer first aid. I told the pilot we needed to find an airbase, as they needed medical attention. Our pilot found a fighter base to take us down.

After landing and learning the severity of the situation, the pilot asked me why I didn't tell him our waist gunners had been killed. I told him, "There was nothing you could do for them, and I wanted the rest of the crew to land safely."

After 28 missions over German territory, that was the end of our combat missions. We were then assigned to fly supply missions in England.

Yours truly,

Alfred J. Ebbing, 458th BG
Quincy, IL



CHRISTMAS CAROLS TAKE TULLAHOMA WWII VETERAN BACK IN TIME

Christmas carols are like time machines to Howell Peebles, a retired mechanical engineer at Arnold Engineering Development Center.

At this time of year, he only has to hear the familiar melodies of *Silent Night* or *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear* to be transported back to a December 57 years ago, to a night he can't forget. The year was 1944, late in the second war to end all wars, but there was much fighting still to be done. Hitler's forces were being systematically pushed out of France, and that's where Pvt. Peebles of Greenwood, Miss., found himself late that year on the front lines with the 114th infantry of the 44th Division.

"We were 11 miles from Germany and were meeting with a lot of action," he recalled.

On Dec. 7, about six weeks after arriving in Europe, he and other soldiers from his unit were advancing on an enemy position. There was nothing fancy to their plan, just broken-field running. Run a while, fall into a bomb crater and fire their M-1s toward the enemy, then take off running again.

"It was a day about like today," Peebles said, noting the outside sky of mottled gray. "But it was cold, with snow falling."

About 10 o'clock that morning, a mortar shell landed nearby, hurling man-cutting shrapnel in every direction. Peebles was struck in the chest and leg.

"I got hit, and I couldn't get up. That was the beginning of my long way home," he recalled. The wounded soldier would lie in that field until late in the afternoon, when medics evacuated him to a hospital for surgery to repair a punctured lung, diaphragm and stomach. A few days later he was transferred to an Army hospital in Mirecourt, 40 miles from the front lines. As Allied forces pushed the Nazis out, enemy wounded were brought to the same hospital, as were a number of German nurses. The nurses, who were civilians, had been assigned to a

German field hospital that had been overtaken by Allied forces. They were given the choice of remaining with the German wounded or leaving.

"They could have returned to their homes, but decided to remain on duty rather than go home," he said.

"So there we were. American wounded on one side of the ward and German wounded on the other. We had been shooting at each other for weeks so no one was happy about having the other around."

But as Christmas approached, the mood in the hospital shifted. There was a relaxing of tension, enabled by the compassionate care of the German nurses, who tended to both groups of soldiers. Knowing a little German from his prewar studies at the University of the South, Peebles became the unofficial interpreter between the Allied doctors and the nurses, who spoke no English.

"I got to know some of them well. One of them showed me the photograph of her husband who was on the front lines. She hadn't heard from him in six weeks. I understood that many German families were suffering, too. It also made me realize that what the privates of this world have to do with policy is zero. 'We just fight the battles that others plan,' he said. "On Christmas Eve, one of the nurses asked me if I could secure permission for her and the others to sing carols for the soldiers.

"Shortly after sundown, the lights in the ward dimmed, unusual because the only lights to be seen at night in the war zone were those proclaiming the sanctuary of the hospital," Peebles recalled. At the end of the hall, the nurses entered in their gray and white uniforms, each carrying a lighted candle and a sprig of holly. As they came closer to the wounded their soprano voices filled the rooms with carols.

It Came Upon a Midnight Clear O Little Town of Bethlehem

The soldiers sang, as Peebles noted, "each in his own language and each according to his state of health and musical ability.

"It was a beautiful moment. When the lights came back up, enemies had shared the spirit of Christmas. I can never forget that moment, nor the voices of those nurses."

by Leon Alligood

RUDOLPH

It is the time of year for good cheer. Everyone knows about Santa Claus and his team which pulls his sleigh. Even in Red Square, in the old Soviet Union, when Russia was communist ... they remembered Santa and his team. In Moscow, there was a noted Russian Weatherman, named Rudolph, who appeared on the Soviet TV daily. For some quirk, he always predicted rain, whether it occurred or not. Sometimes, of course, he was right.

One night, when leaving for the TV station, his wife chided him and asked, "My dear husband, Rudolph, are you going to predict rain again for the morrow?"

Rudolph looked at his wife, and said, "Of course, Svetlana, for as you know ... Rudolph, the Red, knows rain, dear!"



submitted by Bill Heller, 303rd BG Las Vegas NV

Book reviews included in this section are those of particular interest to members of the 8th AFHS and that are newly released, in print. Each entry contains information as to how the volume may be obtained. All reviews are by the Editor unless otherwise noted.

TO WAR WITH THE YOXFORD BOYS

The Complete Story of The 357th Fighter Group
by Merle C. Olmsted
Review by Roger A. Freeman

In reviewing this book I must first confess a bias. Merle Olmsted was the very first Eighth Air Force veteran to answer my request, published in Air Force Magazine in the early post-WW2 years, for help in compiling what became

Eighth. Author Olmsted served as an assistant crew chief throughout the group's combat days. While the pilots who built the war record came and went, the ground men stayed for 'the duration' and were the on-going entity that was the group. Like Merle, many of the ground personnel have been key figures in the various Group Associations, keeping the memories bright and seeing the efforts of brave men are permanently acknowledged.

This is a book that should grace the bookshelves of all who have an interest in the fighter operations of World War II.

Roger A Freeman,
8th AF Historical Society Historian
Published by Eagle editions Ltd.,
Post Office Box 580, Hamilton, MT 59840
email: www.eagleeditions.com

EIGHTH AIR FORCE BOMBER STORIES

A New Selection
by Ian McLachlan

Aviation author Ian McLachlan has published several notable books relating the history of 8th Air Force fliers, including Final Flights and USAAF Fighter Stories. His latest volume, Eighth Air Force Bomber Stories, follows his tradition of presenting thoroughly researched documentations of subjects of unusual interest.

Each chapter details a particular crew and aircraft and their unique experiences in the war. A number include recovery of crashes that were part of the mission story. All are tales not found in other war history volumes, and the author has selected them for their unusual content. There are personal histories of the crews that flew each aircraft. For instance,



Hustlin Hussy's crew was one who, after capture, experienced the hell of Buchenwald Concentration camp, and details of the camp are included. Recovery of a number of 8th bombers are chronicled and presented with full photo layouts.

Chapter titles of interest are Haybag Annie, the story of an English farmer's daughter who artistically decorated the A-2 jackets and the noses of their bomber aircraft, one 385th BG B-17 being named after her. Skipper 'an' the Kids, and God Save Me! God Save Me! are other stories with emotional impact. Each story is a book with itself.

This 213-page hardback slick volume is a necessary addition to an enthusiast's collection of Ian McLachlan aviation books. Contact Sutton Publishing at www.suttonpublishing.co.uk, Suffolk England, or through your local bookstore order service.

WOLFPACK WARRIORS The Story of World War II's Most Successful Fighter Outfit

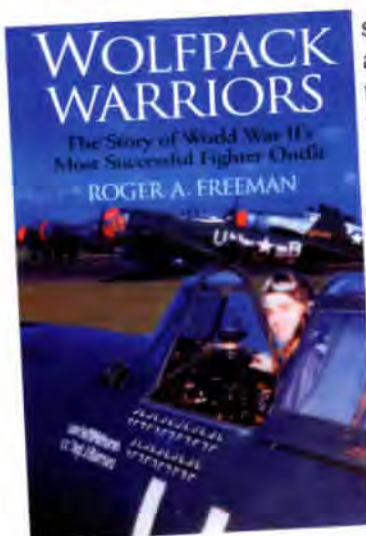
by Roger A. Freeman

The tremendous bombing effort on the German enemy was carried out by the 8th Air Force and the RAF for more than two years before the ground troops arrived on the continent. These air forces were the main element of opposition to German forces on the continent. It was the fighter groups that allowed the bombers to escalate their attacks and successfully go deep into Germany's heart, eventually depleting their oil



The Mighty Eighth. We have been friends ever since. However, that will not prevent me giving an honest opinion of his latest venture into the history of the group with which he served in those long gone days of the trouble with Hitler. Is so happens that this is a truly gorgeous book. Beautifully produced and with a wealth of insight into the men who made the 357th Fighter Group such a successful organization. It is undoubtedly one of the most attractive books ever produced on the history of a fighter outfit.

The 357th started out assigned to the Ninth Air Force and was the second combat group in the USAAF to receive the Merlin engine Mustang. It was transferred to the Eighth in exchange for a P-47 outfit and became the first with P-51s to go into combat. Moreover, the 357th not only had the fastest rate of victories over the Luftwaffe opposition during the following months, it ultimately was credited with shooting down more enemy aircraft than any other Mustang-equipped group in the



supplies and effectively curtailing their ability to wage war.

This book tells the story, in the words of those who fought,

of the 8th AF's most successful fighter group. Historian Roger Freeman spent fourteen years compiling the volume and interviewed over 150 veterans who served in the 56th fighter Group, known as "Zemke's Wolfpack," after their aggressive and determined leader Hub Zemke. The early days of the group are traced effectively and are recalled by several of the early fliers. Freeman details combat experiences in his fascinating style, as he has effectively done in a number of his many previous volumes on WW II. He tells the story of the group's P-47 Thunderbolts and the reaction of 56th pilots to the aircraft. Fighter activity increased markedly after January 1944 when Gen. Jimmy Doolittle took the reins of the Eighth. Deep escorts and ground strafing pounded the enemy in preparation for the D-Day landings and battle across the continent.

Here you will find the stories of many recognizable names of Boxed and Halesworth. In addition to Zemke, serving in the group were top aces Robert Johnson, Gerry Johnson and Gabby Gabreski. Dave Schilling, Walker "Bud" Mahurin, John McClure, Harold Comstock, Group Intelligence Officer Dave Robinson, Adjutant Virgil Durrance, Clifford Tichenor, the group's first flight surgeon and the group's first weather officer, Lawrence Albrecht. In the photo section, you will see "Buddy",

the 61st FS's English bulldog mascot who was the Walt Disney caricature for the squadron emblem.

Roger Freeman's 258 pp hardback latest is available from Grub Street, 4 Rainham Close, London SW11 6SS email: milhis@grubstreet.co.uk website: www.grubstreet.co.uk
USA Distributors, contact: Casemate, 2114 Darby Road Havertown, PA 19083
Tel: (610) 853-9131
Fax: (610) 853-9146
Email: casemate@casematepublishing.com

THE HISTORY OF THE 487TH BOMB GROUP (H)

by Ivo De Jong

Author Ivo de Jong has done it once again. The author of two previous "mission volumes" previously reviewed in this section has now published his latest – a splendid large-format

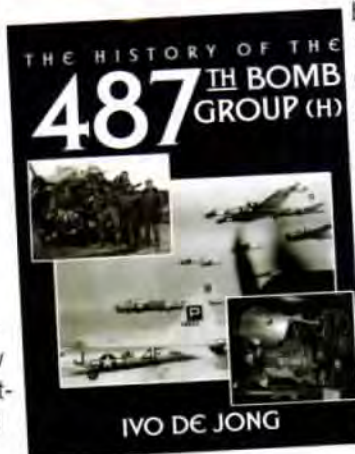
book chronicling the history of the 487th BG, Lavenham.

Years in research, de Jong tells the story of the men of the 487th in personal interviews, official archives, and a large number of period photographs.

Lt. Gen. William Martin, wartime Group Commander pays appropriate tribute to the author in his Foreword.

"I wish to commend and thank our Dutch friend Ivo de Jong for dedicating his time and effort to write this history. He made sure that the efforts of the men of the 487th Bomb Group, who contributed so greatly to the war effort and the future of the world, are not forgotten."

All 185 missions flown by the group, which flew both Heavy bombers during the war, are detailed.



This impressive volume is an excellent history of what an 8th Air Force bomb group accomplished and what it endured during the war. Hardback, complete with Appendices, the volume can be obtained from Turner Publishing Company, tel 270-443-0121 or online at www.turnerpublishing.com.

For U. S. contact for information: Dr. Bob Jacobs, 1 White Birch Road, New Fairfield CT 06812.

RETURN TO BASE MEMOIRS OF A B-17 COPILOT

by Jesse Richard Pitts

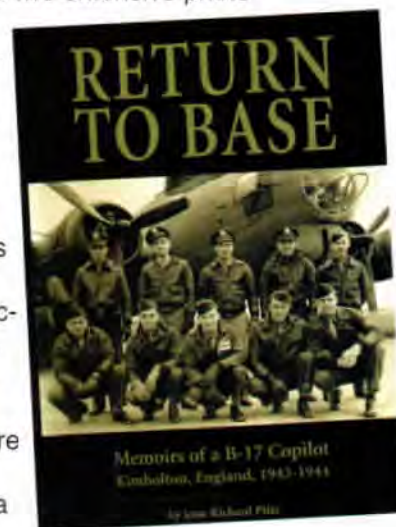
Jesse Pitts went over early on, arriving at the 379th Bomb Group base at Kimbolton in November 1943. His story includes events experienced by bomb crews and bomb groups that were not part of airmen's lives late in the war. His 379th Bomb Group, commanded by Maurice "Mo" Preston, started off with the reputation as a rebellious group, having little chance at a successful outcome among 8th bomb groups. As the war went on, the 379th became the top bomb group in most statistical categories recorded

by the 8th AF higher headquarters.

Author Pitts gives a good bit of attention to the interactions of his crew of the B-17 Penny Ante and there are two extensive photo-

graph sections in the volume. As the crew's copilot, he writes with the introspection of a combat leader.

The entire volume reflects a



writing style of an academic educator. Pitts' post-war career was one of advanced teaching, research and writing, both in the United States and in French political science colleges. His recall of events of the war are approached in this most interesting and thoughtful style – that close consideration of a Sociologist and Professor.

All of this leads to the reader's fascination with the author's description of combat missions and of life on a WWII airbase. Pitts understands and discusses the expertise of the ground crews, and regarding aircrews concludes, "Our own skill was elsewhere. It was in the intimate and instantaneous coordination of hands and feet responding to our eyes and to our inner feeling of position. It was in the immediate solution of a tridimensional problem of space, speed, and time, and with this was also the feeling, never far from the consciousness, that we were moving in a dangerous game. Like flying off the face of a cliff, it was exhilarating, but once in a while it took you by the throat, and that's when you had to show your mettle. You missed a collision by half a foot; through display of super quick reaction time and shrewd crossing of the controls, you side-slipped out of the reach of a friend's wing."

Jesse Pitts' volume is 280 pp hardback. Contact Howell Press, Inc, 1713-2D Allied Lane, Charlottesville VA 22903; tel 434-977-4006; online: www.howellpress.com

MAXIMUM EFFORT **In The Air War Over Europe** by Richard R. Bender

As a B-17 pilot serving at Rattlesden air station with the 447th Bomb Group, Richard Bender had followed the training course of many



young airmen of the 8th Air Force. He writes his story from his perspective and tells his story in a personal and factual style, with special details of the interactions and closeness of his crew.

His shutdown returning from a mission to a German airfield in Luxembourg was

a result of flying over a flak field at the low altitude of 18,000 feet. A flak burst hit the wing of his Fort right behind engine #2, rupturing the gas tank and knocking out the battery and electrical system to the aircraft. The final half of the volume is descriptive of his capture and his time as a POW in a German Stalag. Several drawings of the Stalag are included and are especially well-done.

The author credits much to his wife-to-be, Teresa "Pat" Walsh, who sent him many letters and packages during the time he was a prisoner.

The book is 152 pp softback, and information for obtaining it may be had by contacting Eagle Landing Publishers, PO Box 1025, Lake Alfred FL 33850-1025. Tel 863-293-2829. Fax: 863-295-7755 or email at: eagleslandingpubs@yahoo.com

D-DAY BOMBERS: **THE VETERANS' STORY** **RAF Bomber Command and** **the US Eighth Air Force Support** **to the Normandy Invasion 1944** by Stephen Darlow

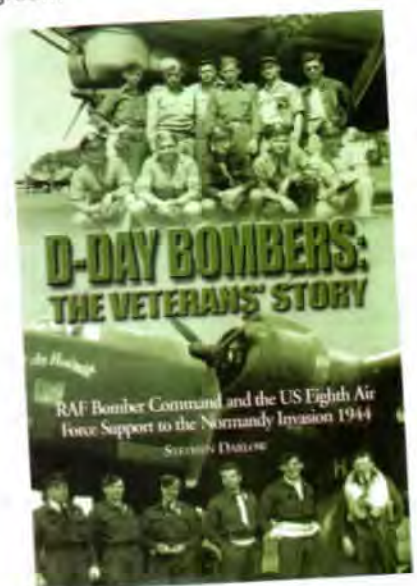
D-Day Bombers is a book that records the history both of the 8th Air Force and the Royal Air Force, and takes the reader up to the D-Day landings in Normandy, setting the stages of America and England in this pivotal event.

Written in English – that is, Britsspeak – the refreshing approach of tales of RAF crews during the 1944

campaign interspersed with new stories of the 8th AF bomber crews opens new thoughts of what was experienced by airmen from both countries during the war – a very nice contrast of things in common and different approaches to the problems and challenges of the air war.

As in his two previous books, Darlow's stories are rich in detail. The first-hand comments of those who flew are authentic, as would be expected in a historical volume such as this. For those who thought they knew the story of the lead-up to D-Day, this book greatly expands the picture. Within, there are B-17s and B-24s and also Stirlings, Halifaxes and Lancasters, with their bomb-aimers and mid-upper gunners. Especially interesting are chapters on Arming the Resistance and Tooley Spaatz's Oil Plan. The history of two countries' airwar unfolds here.

The 290-page book, hardback with period photos and maps may be obtained from Grub Street Publishing, 4 Rainham Close, London SW 11 6SS. Tel 0207 924 3966 or Fax 0207 738 1009. email: milhis@grubstreet.co.uk
USA Distributors, contact: Casemate, 2114 Darby Road Havertown, PA 19083
Tel: (610) 853-9131
Fax: (610) 853-9146
Email: casemate@casematepublishing.com





Any veteran who was involved in the D-Day landings on Normandy or in Operation Overlord between 6 June and 15 September, 1944 is eligible for the Jubilee of Liberty medal, first present by the Governor of Normandy. For information call your local congressional office or you may contact Congressman Northcutt, Spokane Washinton. Tel 509-353-2374.

A great internet site for 8th info in the UK is that run by Peter Randell in Stratford London. Website: <http://www.littlefriends.co.uk>

Aviation Nation 2004, the great Las Vegas Airshow, was dedicated to all veterans of World War II, our nation's greatest Generation. Nellis Air Force Base rolled out the red carpet the weekend of November 13 – 14. The show featured the homecoming of the USAF Thunderbirds and also Las Vegas Air Racing.

Through the efforts of 8th AFHS Past-president Dick Baynes, the United States Air Force Academy will have a collection of all 8th AF News magazines and is set up to receive all future issues of our publication.

The Overseas Cemeteries Photograph Project is now 100% complete. The 303rd Bomb Group has photographs on their website of every grave and Wall of the Missing entries of 303rd airmen killed in action or missing in action.

Under the direction of webmaster Gary Moncur, volunteer photographers from around the world took photographs of the headstones at each gravesite, a total of 469 graves. The individual gravesites may be vis-

ited by family and friends of those who did not return at <http://www.303rdbga.com/cem-photographers.html>.

This extensive undertaking is perhaps the only complete documentation of graves of an 8th Air Force Bomb Group. The 303rd group web is: <http://www.303rdBGA.com>. For an alphabetical listing of all of the 303rd KIA's, the list is found at: <http://www.303rdbga.com/cem-names.html>

The Vietnam Veterans Memorial will stand in the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum's Memorial Garden on a courtyard of engraved bricks, honoring the service personnel who served and sacrificed in the Vietnam war. The Memorial will be seen by thousands of visitors each year.

Contributions may be made to the Heritage Museum to help complete this project and 200 Memorial Bricks are being offered for supporters: forty-two letters/numbers can be engraved for your \$100 charitable donation. Call the museum at 912-748-8888, ext 103. The museum's address is PO Box 1992, Savannah GA, 31402-1992.

Pocket-size military Bibles for presentation to our troops in the service are sometimes hard to find. 8th AFHS member Brian Bohlman, founder of the So Help Me God project is a good reliable source for this and other related items. Check him out at email: info@sohelpmegod.org or website: <http://www.sohelpmegod.org>.

The curriculum guide, Honoring America's Past, available from the Mighty Eighth AF Heritage Museum gift shop, is getting around. On their return home from the Kansas City reunion, Dick and Rita Giesing, Michigan Chapter, stopped by Oshkosh and donated a set of the educational curriculum guides to the EAA – Experimental Aircraft

Association – Museum.

Aviation Artist Keith Hill notes that there is a new website with several new 8th AF pictures on it. Website: www.aviation-artist.com

The Spartanburg Warbirds 15th Annual Award of "Warbird of the Year" will be presented to the 8th Air Force's Major General Lewis E. Lyle at a Reception and Banquet to be held at the University of South Carolina campus, January 22nd, 2005. Previous recipients of the award include Gen. Paul Tibbetts, Gen. Joe Foss, Col. Robert Morgan, and the 56th Fighter Group's John Truluck. For complete information on the event and reservations, call Dave Fudge at 864-576-1166.

Mark Brotherton of Warner Robins, Georgia, Retired USAF, was stationed in England for 14 years. He has taken photographs of practically every WWII airbase in East Anglia. Thousands of his photos can be found at website: www.8thcontrails.com (photo galleries section)

Airman magazine is now available in print and online at <http://www.af.mil/news/airman/>.



BULLETIN BOARD



B-24 LIBERATOR CALENDAR 2005

George Welsh, long-time Editor of the B-24 newsmagazine Briefing, now is expanding his talents to the new Bomber Legends organization, with a slick new magazine covering all types of Bombers.

The new B-24 Liberator Bomber Legends Calendar 2005 is hot off the press. It is large and on slick paper full-color format, with each day of each month featuring significant WW II events that happened on that day. Excellent period photographs are part of the entire package. The calendar may be ordered from Bomber Legends, 1672 Main St. Ste, E-124, Raamona CA 92065-5257. Tel. 760-788-3624. email: info@bomberlegends.com web: www.bomberlegends.com. Enclose a \$12 check.

Note: George Welsh will refund \$1.00 from each purchase to the 8th AF Historical Society – tell him you're a member!



RAF MUSEUM SECURES FUNDING FROM HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND

The Royal Air Force Museum Cosford is set for a new 11.2 million expansion which will enable it to help regenerate the local area and protect its uncovered aircraft.

Following on from the successful expansion of the London site, the Museum is now ready to redevelop its site at Cosford in the West Midlands. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has awarded the Museum 4.9 million providing a huge boost towards the total cost of 11.2 million to build a huge new landmark exhibition hall at Cosford.

The new exhibition is called "**Divided World - Connected World, The Story of the Cold War**", and is set to open in 2006. The breathtaking new exhibition hall will be purpose built to present the complete story of the **Cold War**, with a dramatic display of aircraft, interactives, living history areas, three dimensional exhibits and teaching facilities. As well as telling the story from an RAF perspective, the exhibition will also highlight the political, social and cultural events of the era.

Royal Air Force Museum Director, Dr. Michael A. Fropp states: "The approval by the Heritage Lottery Fund of the Royal Air Force Museum Cosford development is great news for the Museum, the West Midlands and the whole Country. The Museum has the finest collection of its type in Europe and is in a unique position to create this country's first and most comprehensive Cold War exhibition."

For further information:

Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, Shifnal, Shropshire, TF11 8UP or contact: Ajay Srivastava on: 020 8358 6410 or ajay@rafmuseum.org

LT. WILLIAM W. PATTON 3RD SCOUTING FORCE KIA 1-15-45 - FOUND 2-22-01

I am in the final stages of the Patton biography and have a few blank spots. I need to contact anyone who served with him in the:

- 94th Bomb Group / 331st Squadron April thru August 1944
- The 388th Bomb Group "Project Aphrodite" Detachment at Fersfield, England in September/October 1944

Specifically I am looking for his 94BG/331BS crew consisting of:

Co-Pilot - R.L. Stiles
Navigator - A.L. Hall
Bombardier - K.J. Nefzger
Top turret Gunner - J.E. Conger
Ball turret Gunner - J.M. Binda
Tail Gunner - R.A. Mickley
Right Waist Gunner - R.J. Poll
Left Waist Gunner - D. Gilbert

And: 94th Bomb Group / 331st Bomb Squadron Pilots on June 1944 missions.

Would sure appreciate help in locating any of these folks plus Russell Betts of the Aphrodite Project and the 3rd Scouting Force.

Cheers,

Dick Atkins Secretary-Treasurer (again)
1304 Cochise Drive Arlington, TX 76012
817-261-3007 dick8AF@flash.net

BULLETIN BOARD



PRESS RELEASE -- Secretary of the Air Force,
Directorate of Public Affairs
Release No. 1004043 Oct 4, 2004

Memphis Belle to find new home at Air Force's National Museum

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Air Force officials announced plans to relocate the World War II B-17 *Memphis Belle* to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force near Dayton, Ohio today. The move is expected to occur before the end of the year in conjunction with activities planned to observe the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.

"We are grateful to the Memphis Belle Memorial Association for its preservation and restoration of the *Memphis Belle*" said Maj. Gen. (Ret) Charles Metcalf, director of the NMUSAF. "We have enjoyed the partnership over the years and look forward to the continued collaboration as we make this transition," he added.

The aircraft has been located in the Memphis, Tenn. area since 1946. It was on loan from the Air Force to volunteers and aviation enthusiasts until the 1980's when the MBMA became its leaseholder. "The *Memphis Belle* is a prominent and famous part of the Air Force's historic collection," said Mr. Dick Anderegg,

Director of Air Force History. "As such, it is only appropriate that it be displayed at the service's national museum where it can be viewed by millions and exhibited in a manner consistent with its proud legacy."

The museum's restoration team, which maintains all of the nearly 350 aircraft and aerospace vehicles in the museum's collection, will continue the restoration on-site. The effort will begin immediately upon the aircraft's arrival and is expected to take several years to complete. Museum officials plan to exhibit the aircraft as the centerpiece of its considerable WWII aircraft collection once restoration is complete. "We will give it a level of care and public visibility befitting its legacy to ensure its continued preservation for future generations to learn about the heroism and bravery of its crew," said Gen. Metcalf.

The *Memphis Belle* is a national and cultural icon with a name recognition comparable to that of the B-29 *Enola Gay* on display at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum. In 2003, nearly 1.35 million people visited the world's largest and oldest military aviation museum.

RESEARCH REQUESTS BARTH PHOTOS

Dear Sir,

I am interested in the history of the German WWII Airfield at Barth in Northern Germany. This airfield saw the liberation of some 9000 allied P.O.W.s by B-17s on May 12-14, 1945 from STALAG Luft I. Meanwhile, I have been informed by one of the ex-POW's that two 91st Bomb Group navigators took aerial shots of the Barth Airfield and also a number of ground shots at that time.

I would be very glad if I could obtain these photographs. The only problem is: where to find these two navigators after nearly 60 years? Perhaps you can put my request in your "Air Force News Letter"?

Thanks for your kind assistance.

Sincerely,
Heinz G. Guelzow, Markt 31
41460 NEUSS
Germany

RETURN FOR MEMORIAL DAY SERVICES

One of the most impressive annual events in England is the Memorial Day Service at American Cemetery in Madingly, Cambridge.

There is a tour offered for 8th Veterans and their families by experienced travel operator Dick D'Amato. The dates are May 25, 2005 till June 2, 2005. A special celebration will be that of the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II in England. Eight Air Force veterans will be guests of honor at the Madingly ceremonies. Plans call for four days of activity in Cambridge and three days in London town.

All expenses are included except your airfare. Dick states that local airbase contacts will be available, if possible, to escort you back to your wartime base.

For information you can reach Dick at 1-888-486-9922, the telephone number of his Tamarac Travel.



The Missing Man

Schwartz, Lee, Savannah GA; 487th BG; pianist, boat pilot
Montgomery, Charles (Monty), Nashville TN; 490th BG; 35 missions
Nowak, Anthony, Rockaway NJ; 482nd BG
Joye, Ralph, Wesley Chapel FL; 385th BG
Kissell, Bernard, Memphis TN; navigator; the last of his crew; also flew 55 missions in Korea, from his wife Patricia
George, John, Las Cruces NM; 92nd BG;

supporter of the Mighty Eighth AF Heritage Museum, from his son Leland
Telthorst, Harold, Topeka KS; 379th BG, from his wife of 56 years Virginia
Park, Ralph, Jacksonville FL; 55th FG, from his wife Lucille
Nichols, Bert, Florissant MO; 55th FG; Ordinance
Larsen, Peder, Venice FL; 96th BG pilot; from his friend George Wolfe, 338th Sq OPS NCO
Malone, Linwood "Bodie", Crystal Springs MS; 467th BG, from his niece Adrian Caldwell
Elliott, Benjamin, Houston TX; 357th FG, from his wife Dorothy
Bailey, Thomas "Tomcat", Milwaukee WI; fighter pilot with 91 missions; flew in Korea; Commander of Wisconsin Air National Guard for 20 years and inducted into Hall of Fame
Branson, James, Greensboro NC; B-24 top turret gunner with 33 missions and five enemy planes credited, from his wife Nancy
O'Hara, Richard, Austell GA
Mineo, William, Charleston IL; 381st BG bombardier with 30 missions, from crewmate John Ryan
Pratt, John, Hinckley NY; 384th BG radio operator/gunner with 32 missions; as a child spent a year being treated for polio at Warm Springs GA, where he met Franklin D. Roosevelt, who later would become his Commander-in-Chief, from friend Joseph Micksch
Lenocker, Winfred; 388th BG pilot; form crewmate Louis Rotella: "a terrific pilot and a great leader. When we bailed out through the nose hatch, he made sure everyone was out before he jumped."
McIntosh, Frederick, Leesburg VA; 56th FG pilot; flew missions in Korea; found over 700 wells dowsing in Virginia and surroundings; on Register of Recognition of American Society of Dowsers, from his wife Elizabeth
Mahfood, Joseph, St. Petersburg FL; aka Joseph Abraham in the service; 452nd BG bombardier on the

Thomas Mowery crew; often wore a Chaplain's cross insignia on his collar, offering consolations in the Briefing Room, from his crewmate Al Lea
Grevas, James; 466th BG; flew on B-24 *Slick Chick*, the 8th's luckiest plane since it survived 117 missions, from his son John
Rodgers, Fred, Philadelphia PA, from his wife Florence
Washburn, William; 446th BG engineer/gunner; served in the 10th Mountain Division; Oregon Chapter
Mullen, David, 486th BG; also flew B-29s and later B-47s in the Strategic Air Command
Bristmaster, Robert "Briz", Oshkosh WI; 325th Recon Wing, 8th Photo Tech Sq; Korea, from friend Eric Hawkinson
Smith, Gorman "Smitty", Houston TX; 801/492BG Carpetbaggers tailgunner; 30 missions on *Dark Angel*; set out to contact all of his crewmembers – mission accomplished, one week before his death on 28 May, from his wife Lois and daughter Julie and from crewmate James Gladden
Harper, Jonas, Loves Park IL; 390th BG
Goetz, Leon, Danbury CT; 306th BG
Denson, Vernon, Cameron Tx; 8th AF Headquarters
Samborski, Louis, Lyons NY; 447th BG
Perekins, Guy, Fort Worth TX; 398th BG
Durbin, Thomas, Connellsville PA; 100th BG
Birdsong, George, Pleasanton FL; 91st BG pilot; completed 25 missions in 1942-early 1943 in *The Delta Rebel*; flew missions in Korea, the Cold War, and Vietnam; career USAF

TERRY CARLSON

Terrance Jay "Terry" Carlson died suddenly in September as a result being struck by a service vehicle at the North Carolina State Fairgrounds while attending an N. C. State football game.

Terry was from Chicago and served with Charlie Company as commander, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment in Vietnam. He retired after 28 years as a Lt. Colonel. He was Founding President of the Illinois Chapter and for years edited the Chapter newsletter. His programs were always a source of enjoyment for Chapter members and his many friends. Terry regretted having to relinquish those activities when he was transferred to North Carolina with his company, Allstate Insurance Company.



Terry and Trish Carlson

TAPS

Pullen, Rayford, Greenville TX; 303rd BG engineer with 35 missions, from his wife Mary

Phinney, Roderick, Sarasota FL; from his wife Rachel

Gunderson, Brian, Alexandria VA; 305th BG

Burton, Dudley, Palm Desert CA; 306th BG pilot

Rueschhoff, Phil, Lawrence KS; 306th BG radio operator

Hildebran, Aida, Moyers OK, from her husband John

Elliott, Wilson, 306th BG gunner; POW; served in Korea

Goldsmith, Richard "Dick," Houston TX; 91st BG lead pilot; 30 missions; career with Texaco, Inc.

Levy, Joseph, Houston TX; 25th BG 8th AF; career as chemical engineer, from Al Lea

Kenney, Paul, Decatur GA; 384th BG; Shot down over France, evaded with help of the French Resistance for 81 days; arrested by a Nazi spy and spent a year in Stalag Luft III; educator; Treasurer of AFEES; Silver Wings; Ex-Prisoners of War

Fritchman, Chauncey, Bethlehem Township PA; 361st FG; 41 year career with Bethlehem Steel, Mining foreman

Klees, Paul, Tonawanda NY; 361st FG pilot, from his son Kevin

Greenwood, Rex, Orem UT; 361st FG, from his wife Lu Rae

Morse, Frank; 7th Photo Recon Group; Treasurer of Ohio Chapter

Surdez, Robert "Bud," Castro Valley CA; B-17 shot down and crashed in De Bilt Holland; POW; visited for 10 days by historian Co de Swart in reseach of his 8th AF experiences

Oakes, Curtis Jr., Riverside CA; 306th BG, 8th AF; 7th AF as R/O; SAC; career in USAF

Nelson, Rudy, Cedar Rapids IA; 95th BG pilot; Past -president Iowa Chapter, from his good friend Leon Mehring

Wesner, Frank, Wyndmoss PA; 306th BG; POW Stalag 17B, from his wife Pearl

Szumski, Thaddeus "Ted", New Britain; from his sister Helen

Brienza, Mike, Caldwell OH; 491st BG pilot, from his wife Margaret

Saydek, John, Southampton PA; 91st BG

Solomon, Leonard, Lyndhurst OH; 20th FG pilot, from his son Evan

Breson, Howard, Dubuque IA; 96th BG Crew Chief of B-17 Kipling's Error III; first 8th AF aircraft to complete 50 missions without a mechanical abort; lost a leg after being hit by a .50 caliber round accidentally discharged by a gunner who was clearing his gun after a mission; from his brother Carl, who was also a B-17 Crew Chief with Howard at Snetterton Heath

Birdsong, George, Pleasanton CA; 91st BG; author of two books on his wartime experiences in the airwar: *Stormy Weather* and *Away We Go*

Wilson, Kennerd, 452nd BG ball turret gunner, with 35 missions; also with the 483rd BG in Italy; Served in

Korea; Missouri Chapter.

Ken was a strong supporter of the 8th AFHS and frequent contributor to the 8th AFG News.

Sadly, did not get to attend the 2004 annual reunion in his home state. from Joe Jameson



The Missing Man

RICHARD SWITLIK SR.

Richard Switlik was President of Switlik Parachute Co., a manufacturing company founded in the 1920s by his father Stanley Switlik. Switlik parachutes saved the lives of thousands of airmen in World War II. In 1934, Switlik, with Amelia Earhart's husband, built a 115-foot tower on his Ocean County farm to train fliers in parachute jumping. To make sure it was safe, Richard Switlik was the first to jump from the tower.

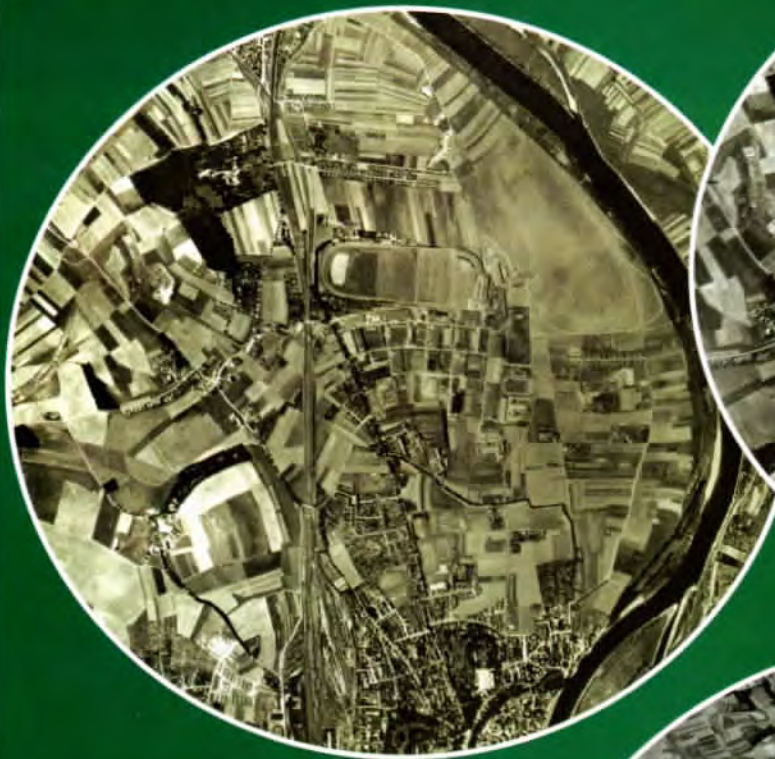
Mr. Switlik served in the Army Air Corps during the war. His company also produced life vests, life rafts, and various other survival gear. The Caterpillar Club, made up of members who parachuted from a stricken airplane, was sponsored by the Switlik Parachute Company for a number of years. Services were held in his hometown, Trenton, New Jersey.

Barr, Herbert, Sherman Oaks CA, aka Herbert Eisenberg; 100th BG shot down at Oberursel, POW 8 months; career as aerospace engineer with Hughes Aircraft, worked on Apollo Space Program; volunteer leader in community causes, from his daughter Robin



Herbert Barr

Regensburg, Germany



REUNIONS

492ND BOMB GROUP (H)
May 18-22, 2005 Tucson, AZ
Radisson City Center Hotel
Contact: Bill and Norma Beasley, 1525 So. Garfield St.,
Denver, CO 80210-3022
Tel: 303-756-4766 FAX: 303-759-3684
Email: WHBNMB492NPICK@prodigy.net

8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ANNUAL REUNION 2005
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA
SEPTEMBER 27 – OCTOBER 2, 2005

Mark it down! – Plan to be there!

THE 8TH AF VISITS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Many 8th veterans visit schools and let the younger generations learn about their war time experiences first-hand. Ken Powell was a Prisoner of War and has an impressive presentation.

I begin by saying, "Please close your eyes. I want to take you back to the year 1944." I turn around quickly and then turn back around facing the class wearing my Eisenhower jacket and my officer's hat. I introduce myself giving my name, rank and my position as a co-pilot on a B-17 bomber which was an airplane assigned to the 8th Air Force during World War II.

I explain my flight training experiences and the flight to a bomber base in England. I tell them my time in England was limited. I flew only three missions. On my third mission my plane was shot down by flak and German fighter planes during a mission over Munich, Germany. I explain the closeness of the men on the crew and their concern for each other during training and flight missions and their safety after they were shot down. I include some of my experiences during the ten months that I spent in Stalag One, which was a prison camp of British and American crews who were captured after being shot down. Being in an officer's camp, we were confined but not forced to do any work because the German military had respect for the rank of officers.

I spent my time during my stay in the camp making useful items that could make the preparation of our food easier. I used the tin from the milk cans that came in Red Cross parcels, barbed wire, wood from bed slats and a sharpened table knife with the back edge made into a saw for a tool to make things like an oven, pans to eat

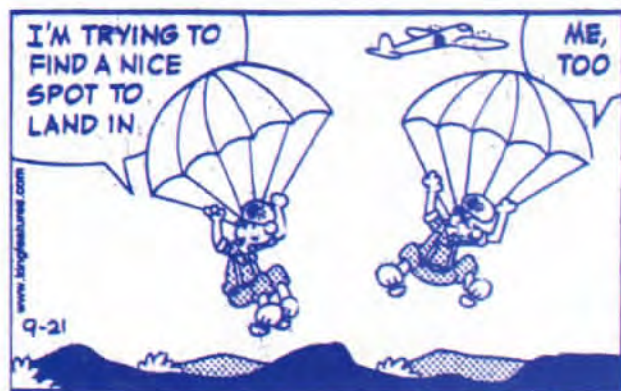


Ken Powell demonstrates for the children at school

out of, an egg beater for mixing powdered milk with water, a bellows to make the stove fire burn hotter and even a clock. The bellows and clock gears were made the same way. I showed the class the egg beater, photos of the oven and the bellows. I demonstrated how to make the pans and I let each student have a small piece of fudge we made on Christmas day, using the pits from prunes (for flavor which tastes like almonds), the chocolate "D" bars from the Red Cross parcels and powdered milk.

I describe my release from prison, returning home on a crowded ship and surprising my family who were not expecting me. I conclude by telling of my trip to the grocery store and buying cream and butter and the foods that I had missed during the months in the prison camp. I shared the medals I had received and let them hold the egg beater, a parachute ripcord and other items from my collection. I always allow the students to ask questions at the conclusion.

Ken Powell, Nashville TN



with Thanks to the Swilik Parachute Company

SEARCH FOR FAMILIES OF B-17 CREW SUCCESSFUL

Crash witness researches crew members of 96th Bomb Group Bomber

The village of deBilt in the Netherlands was shaken by a crash of a stricken B-17 Flying Fortress, destroying two houses and killing five U. S. airmen and three civilians. Co de Swart was a seven year-old boy at the time, and witnessed the disaster. The aircraft was a 96th Bomb Group bomber 42-3439 returning from a mission to Duren, Germany. It had lost an engine to flak and in dropping out of formation was attacked by German fighters.

Five crew members bailed out; four were captured and sent to Stalag I. The remainder still on board were dead or wounded. D. O. Mills was able to escape back to England. In the late 1990s a few Dutchmen began to research the crash, looking for survivors and families of the crew. Co de Swart was able to contact the Luftwaffe fighter pilot who was involved in the shoot-down, Erich Burkert. He began his search for the families, traveling extensively to meet each family personally. He established a memorial for the crew and held dedication ceremonies at the site of the crash. Among the notables at the service were U. S. Ambassador to the Netherlands, Clifford Sobel, along with the German Defense attaché and members of the German Fighter Association. The Royal Dutch Air Force took part and presented a flyover at the ceremony.

This day was very special because for the first time since the war, German officials were invited to take part in Memorial Day services in Holland.

Over several years, de Swart had journeyed to the homes of the B-17s crew. Included were families of pilot Charles Geyer (POW), copilot Paul Surdez (POW), bombardier Donald Mills (escapee), navigator William Doherty (POW), gunner Alex Guillianelli (KIA), tailgunner Frank Killarney (POW), gunner Leslie Lantron (KIA), gunner Charles Randel (KIA), gunner James Parker (KIA), and radio operator Aaron Becker (KIA).

The families who de Swart has been in touch with are



Co de Swart and Louise and flowers at the Memorial in DeBilt

appreciative and excited about the research he and his Dutch friends have done. Six sisters of Charles Randell are planning a trip, with some of the children of other crewmembers to Holland to visit the gravesites of those buried in Maargraten Cemetery near Maastricht, and will visit the de Swarts and the memorial in DeBilt, Holland.

MERRY CHRISTMAS



HAPPY NEW YEAR



The 8th AF Historical Society Board of Directors held two days of productive Board meetings during Reunion Week 2004 in Kansas City. Treasurer Ivan McKinney submitted the Society's Annual Financial Report.

Eighth Air Force Historical Society Financial Report, Year Ended 31 Aug 04

ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

ASSETS	
Cash in Banks & Money Mkt Funds	\$ 178,553
Life Member Funds	242,321
Furniture & Equipment	1,508
Total Assets	\$ 422,382
LIABILITIES	
Life Member Fund	\$ 242,321
General Fund	178,553
Website Development Fund	550
Other	958
Total Liabilities	\$ 422,382

REVENUES AND EXPENSES

REVENUES	
Annual Member Dues	\$ 153,685
Life Member Dues	26,960
Foreign Dues	3,373
Reunion Revenue	10,364
Museum Contributions	27,706
General Contributions	2,684
Interest	331
Life Member Fund Account Receivable	18,622
Magazine Revenue	600
Total Revenues	\$ 244,325

EXPENSES	
Museum Donations	\$ 23,998
Museum Account Payable	3,458
Board of Directors	10,052
Finance Manager & Audit	9,101
Contributions	500
Computer Services	1,979
Chapter Rebate	4,547
Liability Insurance	1,980
Office Supplies	974
Postage & Printing, Including Dues Postage	10,273
All Membership Office Labor	28,808
Telephone	2,221
Health Ins, Travel, Membership Mgr	3,270
Reunion Expense & Reunion Rebate	4,599
8th AF Reunion Symposium	6,710
Membership Office Rent	11,070
Employer's FICA	2,204
Magazine Expenses Total	99,504
Awards, Unit Devel & Membership Solicitation	1,552
Educational Materials	96
Membership Brochure Printing	2,075
President & Treasurer	1,963
Life Membership Fund Account Payable	23,926
Other	831
Total Expenses	\$ 255,691

Pilot to Navigator:

"Course Correction Please"

Beneath these cold stones lie the mouldering bones
Of my Love and my closest kin.
After lives intertwined they left me behind
Depleted and somber within.

I sensed no real purpose, just drifting the surface,
Life's zest and enjoyment all gone.
I'd lost my direction; it needed correction;
Whatever my heading was wrong.

So I went to our gravesite and I told her my plight;
Then I heard her dear voice loud and clear:
"Live full this last measure; don't sorrow; seek pleasure.
When your mission's accomplished, I'm here."

John Grunow, 448th BG

TO MEET DEATH - FLYING

They flew away in the early morn,
Through mists that rose from the sea;
Flying in search of the unknown thing
With hearts that were light and free.

We never knew how far they flew,
The time nor even the place.
But we know that when they reached the land,
They met God face to face.

Perhaps someday when shadows creep
About us, and we know
That death is waiting silently
The time when we must go -

We'll wish we had a ship to sail
Over an unknown sea.
That we might go as they have gone
To meet death fearlessly.

To fly on and on past the edge of the world,
Meeting the winds that blow,
And find death there in the great unknown,
With only God to know.

Helen Parkinson Neal - mother of Alan Neal, KIA
in *The Scroll*

How the wind rises over World's End
In green hawks diving to Burnt House Farm
How the bombers sing in the undertow
Walking toward the farmers in the roads

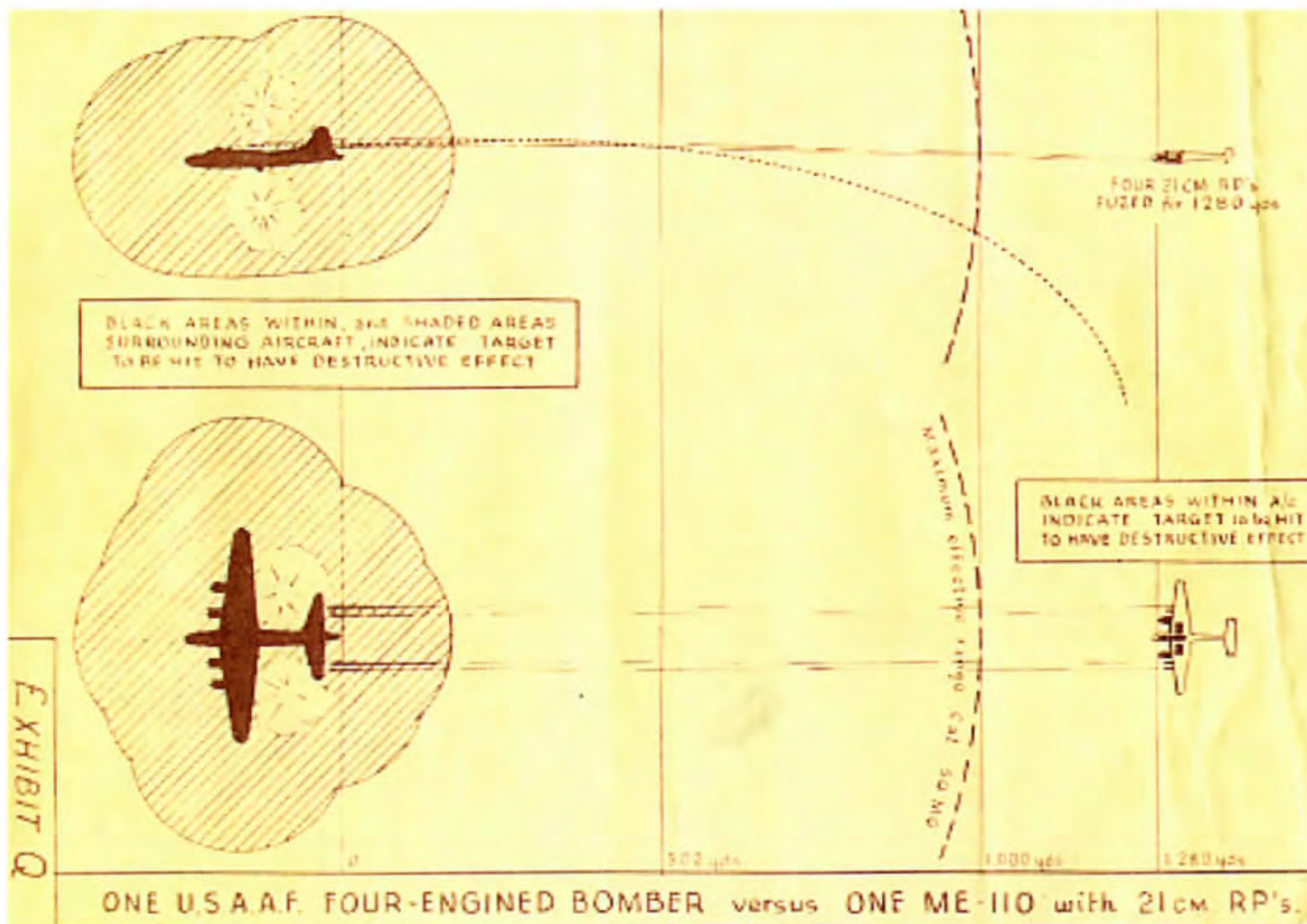
Over the floating bridge of heaven
In the dark-blue sky
Dusk gliding past the bomber stream
To return past closing-time

We've lost you in the clouds,
Ted and Jimmy and Lou,
Throwing smoke from number 3 engine
All the way from Hanover
It's growing dark,

We cannot find you
We're over France
Sea and sky are one

Maybe you'll
Beat us
To
England

**Marvin Silbersher, 447th BG
Lake Hopatcong, NJ**



Rocket bursts fired from German Me-110's seen in lower left and lower right. Also note smoke puffs from rockets.

Margraten Memorial Ceremony in Holland

HERE WE AND ALL WHO SHALL
HEREAFTER LIVE IN FREEDOM
WILL BE REMINDED THAT
TO THESE MEN AND THEIR COMRADES
WE OWE A DEBT TO BE PAID
WITH GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE
OF THEIR SACRIFICE
AND WITH THE HIGH RESOLVE
THAT THE CAUSE
FOR WHICH THEY DIED SHALL LIVE

Leonard L. Spivey, navigator 381st BG,
Ridgewell. Shot down over Holland, mission
85, 19 August, 1943.
Target: Gilze-Rijen-Woensdrecht. Landed by
parachute in Schiedam and became a POW.



The veterans of the 101st Airborne Division "Screaming Eagles-Band of Brothers", arrives at the Cemetery.
60th Commemoration of "Market Garden"



The firing party is from the 52nd MUNSS, Kleine-Brogel AB, Belgium.

LICENSE PLATES

Jim Young, Bridgeville, Pennsylvania, has had his 8th AF tags since 1980 – the first ones being yellow backgrounds, now white. At the 50th Anniversary celebration of the B-17 in Seattle, he met his old SAC boss, Gen. Curtis LeMay. Jim may hold the record for having 8th license plates the longest number of years.



Robert Cohn, 452nd BG, Highland Park IL, sports unusual tags on the front and rear of his automobile. He relates one inquiry he had from a young teenager. When asked if he flew a B-17, Bob responded, "Yes." The teenager asked, "What war?" Bob states he just gave up.



As a real conversation come-on, Michael Lasprogato, 490th BG, Barefoot Bay FL, has found the right source. His tag states that he was a waist gunner on a B-17, and he fields inquiries about his service and talks with people who have seen B-17s at airshows. Recently, a young man thanked him for his service in WW II.



8th AIR FORCE PX ORDER FORM

To order by phone, please call 912-748 8888 ext. 116. To order by mail, complete this form (see detailed instructions below.) Please print all information clearly.

QTY	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	SIZE	TOTAL
	4" Jacket patch w/ 8th AFHS emblem	\$3.95	NA	
	3" 8th Air Force patch	\$3.00	NA	
	1" 8th Air Force pin	\$3.50	NA	
	1-1/2" 8th Air Force pin	\$4.00	NA	
	Small 8th Air Force shield	\$3.50	NA	
	8th Air Force cuff links	\$8.99	NA	
	8th Air Force money clip	\$4.00	NA	
	8th Air Force leather and metal key fob	\$4.00	NA	
	Navy cap w/ 8th AF screened emblem & pocket	\$10.00	NA	
	Red cap w/ 8th AFHS embroidered emblem	\$12.95	NA	
	White cap w/ 8th AFHS embroidered emblem	\$12.95	NA	
	Blue cap w/ 8th AFHS embroidered emblem (not shown)	\$12.95	NA	
	Red golf shirt w/ 8th AFHS logo, pocket (S,M,L,XL,2X)	\$29.99		
	Blue golf shirt w/ 8th AFHS logo, pocket (S,M,L,XL,2X)	\$29.99		
	White golf shirt w/ 8th AFHS logo, pocket (S,M,L,XL,2X)	\$29.99		
	Red silk tie features navy bomber design	\$34.99	NA	
	8th AFHS bumper sticker	\$.90	NA	
	8th AFHS 4" round sticker	\$.75	NA	
	8th AFHS plastic license plate	\$3.95	NA	
	8th AF metal license plate	\$7.99	NA	
	Airshow Backpack Playset w/ four planes, flag, playmate and more	\$10.99	NA	
	8th AFHS metal license plate frame	\$14.99	NA	
	Kidd Hofer—Last of the Screwball Aces by Troy White 199 pg PB	\$25.00	NA	
	Aces of the Mighty 8th by Scutts & Stanaway 286 pg PB	\$29.95	NA	
	Last Raid by Robert Hand, Sr. 85 pg PB	24.99	NA	
	A Measure of Life by Herman Cranman, 280 pg PB	18.95	NA	

SUBTOTAL

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Tanika loves to have the shopping pros visit the PX! She knows their motto: "Grandchildren can never have too many Eighth Air Force toys!"



Kids love the see-through Air Show Backpack Playset w/ four planes, flag, signs, playmate and more!

MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM



PK!

Join shopping pros Jean and Jean to ... shop the



Above, license plates proudly announce your support of the Historical Society and the 8th Air Force!



"Cute pilots!" notes Jean...and Jean agrees. Book make terrific gifts for friends...and for yourself!



Above, bumper stickers...one size fits all!

"Perfect" declare Jean and Jean as they examine cuff links, decals, key fobs, pins and more featuring 8th AF logos. Are they thinking gifts for their many 8th AF friends...?



MEMORIAL FOR GROUND CREWMAN AT DEBACH

Dear Dr. Brown;

Kenneth Blair was killed on the taxi strip at the end of the driveway to the Debach control tower. He was riding a bike and ran into the #4 propeller of a B-24 that was taxiing out for a mission. His duty was with the 18th Weather Squadron attached to the 493rd Bomb Group with their office on the ground floor of the control tower.

When the accident happened the pilot called the tower and said, "Whitewash, send an ambulance to the tower, I believe I just killed a man." I was on duty in the tower that day of July 8, 1944. I looked out of the control tower window to see what happened. I will never forget the scene. Bill Rawson was the co-pilot and Gordon Weir was a waist gunner in the B-24 from the 861st Squadron. Their plane was scrubbed from the mission after the accident.

Cpl. Blair completed two years of college before being called to the service of his country. He scored high on the IQ test and had a high rating from the Air Force weather training school. Cpl. Blair made application to attend the U.S. Army Military Academy at West Point, New York before he left the States. On the morning of July 8, 1944, Cpl. Blair was on duty in the control tower weather station as a mission was taxiing to the

runway for takeoff. He received a telephone call from Headquarters that his appointment to West Point had been approved. He was told to report to Headquarters at once to pack up to go back the U.S.A.

Cpl. Kenneth Blair was only 19 years and 7 months old.

Ground personnel with the 493rd Bomb Group also lost their lives serving their country.

I knew Kenny as we were in the same 330th Station Complement living quarters area. We would occasionally ride our bikes to the tower together. They made coffee in the weather office and we welcomed it when on our all night shift.

A framed Memorial was placed in the Weather Office of the Debach control tower when I returned there on June 19, 2004.

Cpl. Kenneth E. Blair is buried at the U.S. Military Cemetery, Cambridge, England, Plot C, Row 3, Grave 29.

Sincerely,

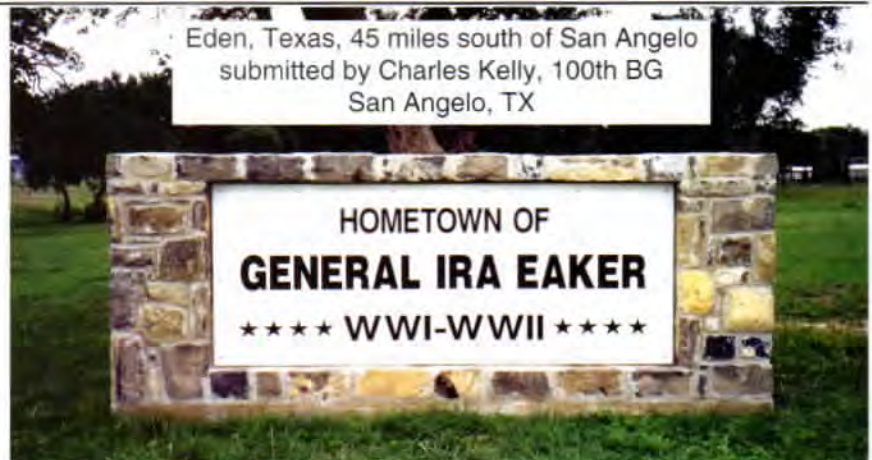


Kenneth E. Blair

**Jack Feller, 493rd BG
Mullens WV**

The morning comes not, yet the night
Wanes, and men's eyes win strength to see
Where twilight is, where light shall be
When conquered wrong and conquering right
Acclaim a world set free.

A.C. Swinburne
The Commonwealth



THE FIX

Dear Dr. Brown,
Please be advised of an error in the Sept 04 "Taps" listings. The photo listed as Joe Schmidt is actually Charles Shinault. Charlie and his wife Bettie became my dear friends in the years we have been acquainted. I compiled some of the stories Charlie told me over the years and wrote a short WWII bio for him. I was proud to know that the Minister, when writing Charlie's eulogy, used parts of my story. I miss Charlie very much.

**Chip Dobson, Scty
South Alabama Wing**

Gremlins and some serious Snafu's entered the September issue, 8th AF News. Slipups that were not picked up on the final proofs before printing that issue, caused by several factors, but which were the editor's responsibility.

Two weeks before printing the newsmagazine and nearing the final proof stage, I decided to change our publishing company. After seven years of a great relationship with Ambrose Printing Inc. in Nashville, the sudden change was necessary

and unavoidable. In transferring print files, re-formatting material, and setting up the issue with McQuiddy Printing, some unedited material found its way into the edition, an occurrence which rarely happens and one which I did not notice until post-press. The quality of color and print was as good as ever, the cost savings were there, but the editing left things to be desired. I will, with hat in hand, state that all efforts will be made to keep the 8th AF News on tract to becoming the best veterans newsmagazine in the country.

Walt Brown, Editor

Enemy aircraft trailing smoke after rolling through a somewhat loose B-17 formation.





Recognize Anyone?

Dear Sir,

This crew picture was sent to me from an old friend in England. As I don't know where to forward it, maybe you can put a copy of it in the 8th AF News magazine. One of the young men might enjoy having it.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely, Melvin E. Schwieder
482nd BG Amboy, MN



MIGHTY EIGHTH PUB OPEN!

The construction dust has settled and the paint is dry...best of all, the pub grub's ready to serve!

The pub, designed by museum Curator Shasta Ireland, seats 40 – 50 people comfortably. The focal point of the space is the spectacular Victorian mahogany bar. The bar, and the pub's tables and chairs, are period English imports that Ireland found in a Savannah antique shop.

Ireland explains her choice of the Victorian-era décor, "This décor is in keeping with what U.S. servicemen and women would've seen in 1940s London pubs."

Savannah favorite Paul Kennedy Catering provides on-site food service for the pub, with a menu featuring bangers-and-mash, shepherd's pie, fish and chips, sand-

wiches, salads and more.

The pub is open Monday through Saturday, 11 a.m. till 2 p.m. This unique space is available for parties, dinners and meetings. For rental information call 912-748-8888 ext. 102.



A view from the front door of the Mighty Eighth AF Heritage Museum



Top left: Romantic, sentimental cards were available in the late 1920s.

Left: When the Depression hit, cards remained popular as an inexpensive way to remember friends and family.

Top right: In the mid-1930s, comic relief was in order. Mickey Mouse and other cartoon characters were published on cards by Hallmark.

Right: Patriotism and thoughts of home were incorporated in cards made during World War II.



As long as I have memory, they will remain the truest of friends I will ever know.

Dennis Manion

U.S. Marine Corps Khe Sanh Vietnam



HOW ABOUT IT?

A noted psychiatrist was addressing a group of aged World War II Veterans on the subject of mental deficiencies. Following his address and during the question and answer period which followed, one veteran stood up and asked, "Doc, how do you detect a problem like this in an individual?" "Well," the doctor responded, "he should be able to answer a simple question. If he hesitates, that could be a sign that he has a problem. For example, a question such as: 'Captain Cook made three trips around the world, and died during one of them. Which one?' The veteran, after a short silence, replied with a nervous laugh, "My memory fails me when it comes to history. Could you give me another example?"

This is a memory problem. Memory is a living diary of everything we experience in a life time. It is the recorded accumulation of everything we have learned from birth to death and is a by-product of our five senses. Something we smell or feel or see brings instant recall of experiences we have had. Memory is what defines our lives. Life without memory is no life at all. Our memory is our connection with the past that also connects us with the realities of today. Memory is our reason, our feeling, even our action for everyday living. Without it, we are lost.

Shakespeare in his play, "As you Like It," describes the world as a stage with the men and women merely players. He said, "*They have their exits and their entrances; and one man in his time plays many parts.*" He describes seven ages starting with infancy and passing through life, the last being those in their second childhood. Old age is perceived in many different ways but whenever that time comes, God gives us memory so that we can have roses in December. I have been privileged to live a long time and as a consequence, know many others as old or older than I am. It is interesting to see how veterans react to their memories. When the memories of some are reverted to the past, films and stories that recall the horrors of battle repulse them. The smell of gunpowder or the sight of a wound and blood drives them away. They are trying to blot out events not of their own choosing and the memories these events bring. Memories linger. We must deal with them.

Our perspective on life must reach beyond ourselves. Our lives and the experiences we have had should not be about the past but about the future. Memories about us, even by our families, will fade but the benefits resulting from our lives will live on and on. The legacy left behind is not to draw attention to our collective

memories, but to point to the blessings available to everyone in future generations.

The Psalmist in speaking about a good man declared in Psalms, "Good will come to him who is generous and lends freely, who conducts his affairs with justice. Surely he will never be shaken, a righteous man will be remembered forever. He will have no fear of bad news, his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is secure, he will have no fear, in the end he will look in triumph on his foes...his righteousness endures forever." (Psalms 112:5-8, NIV)



Earl Wassom

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



P-38 making a low pass over the 466th Bomb Group base at Attlebridge





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