



TH AF NEWS

**VOLUME 07 NUMBER 4 VOICE of
"The Mighty Eighth" DECEMBER 2007**

Christmas 1944 - 56th Fighter Group





AF News

Magazine of

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 956, Pooler, GA 31322.



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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Time is rolling along toward our 34th Annual Reunion, to be held at the Mariott Riverfront Hotel, in Savannah, Georgia, **4 – 7 August 2008**. We were there, in this same hotel, 10 years ago, and we paid \$109 plus tax for a night at the hotel. Well, believe it or not, we were able to get this same \$109 rate 10 years later! **THEY LIKE US!!** Ten years ago, we had lunch on the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum grounds, under a tent – when the Museum was young and struggling to develop. The Museum is now a more mature and absolutely first-rate attraction, and Walt Brown promises us enjoyable visits as we view the many additions – including brand new ones still under development.

Our Society is experiencing the disbanding of several Bomb and Fighter Groups, and with that, the desire of joining us at our Annual Reunions. I believe that we can expect this trend to accelerate, and we welcome their former members. If your Group is contemplating disbanding, please let our Chapter/Unit Liaison Officer know as soon as possible, so that we

may coordinate attendance figures for our Reunions and make room for the expected increased attendance.

If you have not made a contribution to the Museum Ground Crew Exhibit, please do so soon. I believe that honoring our ground crew members is long, long overdue. They worked long hours to provide aircraft that were able to get you to the target and also to get you back. We need to finally give them special recognition. And if you are a former ground crew or depot support man, please do not hesitate to honor yourself by making a contribution! Of course, if you are the son, grandson, daughter, granddaughter, or a friend of a former ground crew man, please take this opportunity to honor him by making a contribution in his name.

The March 8th AF News will display all the Reunion information, so please read it carefully and send in your Reservation Forms ASAP. We were only able to contract for a maximum of 320 rooms, and with the 303rd BG joining us for the first time, we surely don't want our "steady, yearly attendees" to



**Ivan McKinney
President**

delay to the point where there is "no room at the inn!"

I'm looking forward to a Great Reunion!" Thank you for staying aboard!

**Ivan L. McKinney
President 8th AFHS**

**B-24 pilot, Jimmy Stewart
playing the piano at a
2nd combat wing HQ
Christmas Party
in December 1944**



MISSION BRIEFING



My buddy Craig Harris

Craig Harris and I go back a long way with the 8th AF Historical Society serving eight years together on the Board of Directors, he with two terms as President. Craig went even further back, flying as a pilot with the 457th Bomb Group in Glatton. He and I not only made trips around the country during our years on the Board, we talked almost daily about 8th-related historical projects and Mighty Eighth Museum activities and publications, both also serving on the Board of Trustees of the Museum in Pooler, Georgia.

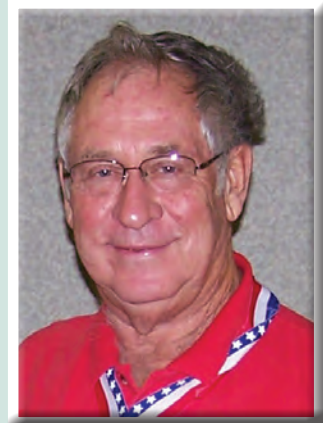
Craig was a writer, especially adept at letters and missiles sent out to friends and to organizations of which he was an active member. He helped write the three-volume history of the 457th BG, Fiat Accompli, and he and I served as a couple of editors for the Museum's 124-page publication, *Honoring America's Past*. We edited the Museum's *Student's Guide to the Eighth Air Force* together, a four-pager that is handed out to schoolchildren across the nation. I was editing the quarterly 8th AF News during our years of friendship. All those years, we took special pride and joy in "catching" each other with misspelled words and misplaced phrases in our text materials and often my phone would ring in the late evening hours. It would invariably be Craig with his latest find, my latest Snafu, laughing and getting great pleasure out of informing me of a typo or misprint in some of my written articles. He never missed a chance to keep me in my place, nor did I miss the opportunity to keep him in his. His replies to my "corrections" of his written material almost always

were along the Craig-like lines of "You old s-- of a b----!" followed by one of Craig's Aphorisms such as "Well, like the man who wore a belt and suspenders at the same time, you may look stupid but at least your pants don't fall off." I think finding each other's errors in published text became somewhat of an obsession between us, and Craig and I both enjoyed the fun of the special relationship.

My phone doesn't ring anymore at night. I attended Craig's funeral in Durham a few months ago. I saved composing his entry into our Taps pages of the Sept 07 8th AF News till the very last, because it was especially hard to write. As a note of appreciation for his contributions as past-President of our Society, I included his photograph – a head and neck shot with his name in the cutline beneath. And it had to be one of those uncontrollable "God-things" – his name inadvertently got misspelled, appearing in Taps as Craid Harris.

There is no question in my mind that Craig is up there right now with his unique laugh aimed at me, he having gotten in the last shot in our years of editor's corrections. I will miss my friend.

Walter Brown, Editor



Walter Brown, Editor
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BEHIND THE SCENES

8TH AIR FORCE NEWS & MIGHTY EIGHTH MUSEUM NEWS BECOME ONE

Look for your new and improved 8th AF News Magazine to be arriving in 2008. You will receive two magazines in one, which will include an additional 8-16 pages of the latest news, press-releases and updates from the Mighty Eighth Museum in Pooler, GA.

Our quarterly 8th AF News magazine will also be distributed to the Mighty Eighth Museum members, which will give us an opportunity to offer Museum News members an invitation to join the 8th AF Historical Society.

Our staff will remain the same, so please continue to send your emails and mail to me or Walt Brown.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to all!



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CHAPTER/UNIT LIAISON REPORT



I would like to start by thanking all of the Chapters/Units/Groups and related organizations for their support in 'Keeping the Memories Alive'. This has always been a factor but not as much as it currently is for all of us.

I recently was in Portland Oregon on business and had a meeting with the Oregon Chapter President, Tom Davis. Tom and I discussed issues that I believe we all are experiencing which is the ever so quickly advancing years of our 8th Veterans, new membership and what they are doing regarding this and also how to keep the Chapter financially going. I commend the Oregon Chapter and their research resources and general fellowship. The

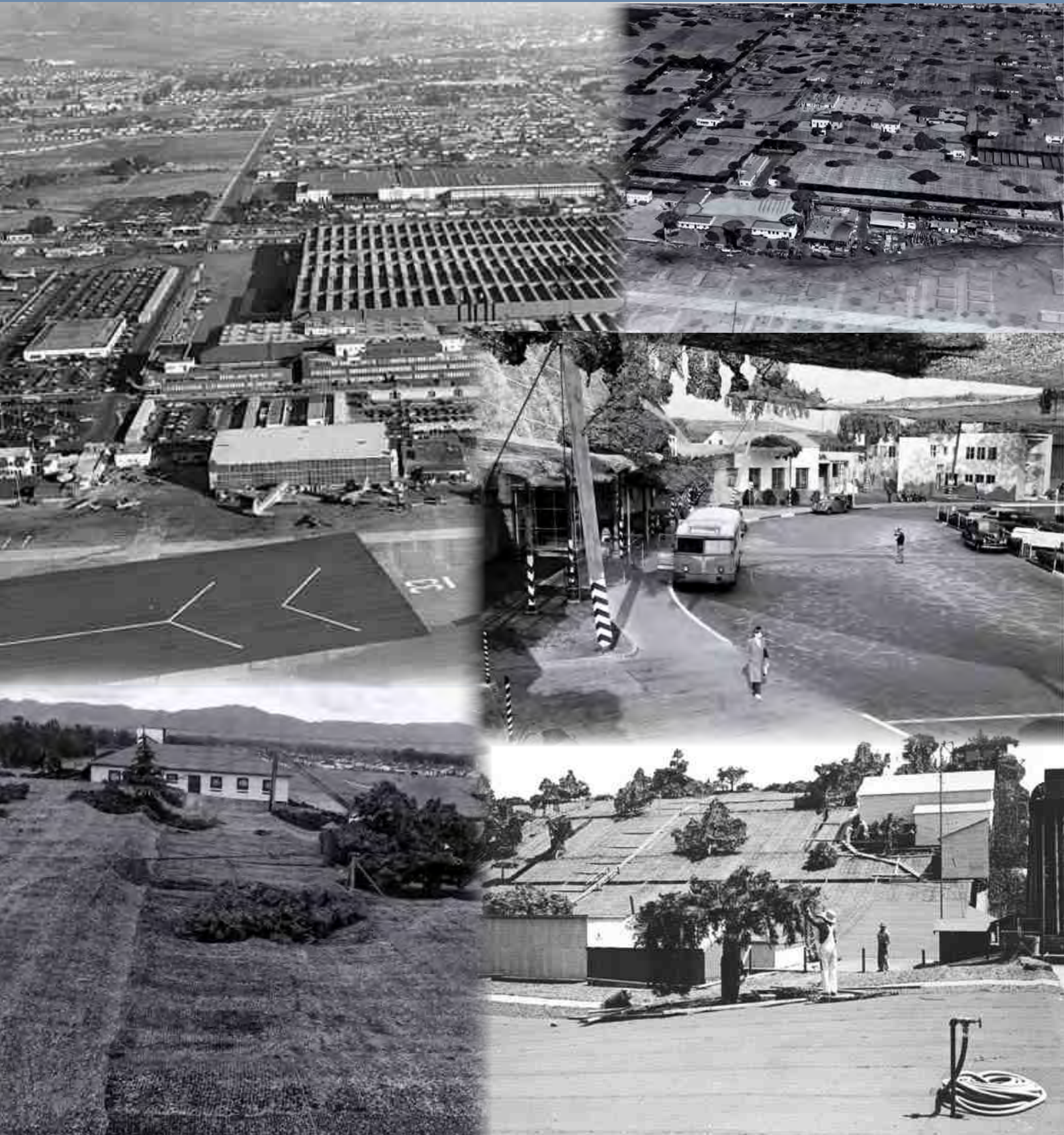
Oregon Chapter is just one of our fellow organizations that are active and becoming more so with upcoming NexGen coming into the ranks. I have started receiving Chapter and related newsletters and would like to thank you all for them. It was good to read how the Washington Chapter during September and October got involved with the local television station and the airing of Ken Burns 'The War'. Cheers to Greg Pierce and the Washington Chapter.

I want to start promoting the very positive movements that are in place via the Chapters/Units/Groups organizations. If you have any comments or ideas on how we can move forward my address is posted on the back of the front cover page and my email address is fxe84@optonline.net.

***'Keep The Memories Alive'
Committee Chairman
Pat Keeley**

CALIFORNIA CAMOUFLAGE

The Lockheed Burbank manufacturing plant was successfully protected from Japanese air attack during World War II by hiding it with camouflage netting and landscaping by the Army Corps of Engineers.





Major General Lewis Lyle Honored



Major General Lewis Lyle and his wife Betty were honored recently in a special ceremony at the Garland County Library near their home in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

An extensive set of books compiled by Retired USAF Colonel Ed Miller was presented to the library in Gen. Lyle's name.

The volumes represent a 20-year project compiling information on every airman who served in the 303rd Bomb Group in Molesworth, England during the war, a collection of the personal histories of 7,218 men. Miller and his wife Jill have presented a similar collection to the Research Center at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia. A third set now resides in the Lyle Room at the JAC Center at Molesworth. Miller served in the 303rd BG during the war and has been an officer in the 303rd Bomb Group Association.

General Lyle commanded the 303rd BG during World War II and is the Founder of the Mighty Eighth Museum. The Lyles are shown here with Ms. Kathy White of the Garland County Library who is holding one of the Miller compilation's volumes.

Christmas 1943 by Bob Seney, Crew Chief, 388th BG

I well remember the first Christmas, December 25, 1943. We had been at the base almost six months. In this short period our spirits were not too high. We had lost many planes and many young men had been lost in combat. It was not easy for us on the ground to wait for our crew to return, only to realize it would not happen.

For the flight crews it would be much harder because after returning from a mission to the same barracks shared by friends who were now gone; they knew that tomorrow they would return to the sky and face the possibility that their bed may be the one unoccupied tomorrow night.

Christmas Eve was a stand-down as weather was bad.

The base had a Tannoy public address system which allowed the central area to communicate with everyone. Speakers were located by each revetment around the base and in the squadron centers. It had been snowing that day, and in the evening a light coating of snow covered the base.

It was a beautiful sight. Our ground crew was in the tent and we were having our own personal thoughts about where we would rather be at this time of year.

Someone thought it would be a nice idea to play Christmas songs over the Tannoy system. They were beautiful, but I really don't think it cheered us up. I had never heard it so quiet. Not one plane was running up their engines. I think the CO realized what our feelings were, and the carols were shortly stopped.

It did make an impression on everyone on the base, I think.

So much for our first Christmas in England.

Christmas 1944 by Joe Capraro, Waist Gunner, 388th BG

The 388th was going to bomb German columns in support of ground troops trapped in Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge.

I knew my brother was in that approximate area. He was with the 101st Airborne and had also been at Omaha Beach on D-Day. But the weather in England was ferocious. It was just terrible. We couldn't see the ends of our own wings. You couldn't see anything at all, so you couldn't take off.

That was on the 16th of December. We went down to the revetments to go bomb, to help out the troops who were involved in the Bulge, and we couldn't take off. I knew my brother was there. Maybe not right at the Bulge, but in that general area. So what happened was, each morning we went out and we got ready to fly, but the weather stayed bad and they called off the missions.

Finally on the 24th of December we got the signal to go.

We successfully dropped our bombs to help, and that was Christmas Eve. So then we came back and we went to church. And the choir was singing *Adeste Fideles*. Come All Ye Faithful.

You know, I sat there in church and wondered - we went out and killed all those people and here we are singing about goodwill and peace toward men.

But, that's the way it was.

I was never really able to sing that song again.

Christmas Eve 1944

I was a radio operator on a B-17 Flying Fortress with just three bombing missions under my belt and this was not the Christmas Season I would have chosen. But I was only one of thousands of teenagers fighting in our armed forces sixty two years ago.

I'll never forget that Christmas Eve of 1944 in Jolly Old England, but things weren't so jolly that year. *The Stars and Stripes* reported that twenty- four divisions of German troops, including ten Panzer Tiger Tank divisions, had made a surprise counter-attack the week before. They had broken through American forces, created a "bulge" in our battle lines and surrounded our troops at Bastogne, Belgium. The Battle of the Bulge was raging and Allied fighters and bombers could not fly due to snow and poor visibility. Bad weather kept our planes grounded for a week. It was very frustrating to "stand down" when the ground troops needed our air support so badly.

Clear skies were predicted for December 24th and the Allied Command ordered an all out air attack. The largest air armada to attack Germany to date was in the air on Christmas Eve. Every air-worthy bomber and crew in the Eighth Air Corps flew that day. On a normal mission, our 490th Bomb Group sent out 36 Flying Fortresses. That day we sent up all four squadrons, 55 planes, to bomb a Luftwaffe fighter base at Frankfurt, Germany. We flew at 25,000 feet with a bomb-bay full of hundred pound bombs and caught the German planes on the ground before they could get air-borne. We destroyed a hornets nest before they could "sting" us, and those bombers headed for more distant targets.

More than 2,000 Eighth Air Corps B-17 Flying Fortresses and B-24 Liberators flew that day. They were escorted and protected by more than 900 fighters as they carried out their "bombs away" missions. Targets included airfields, bridges, oil storage, communications centers, and railroad yards to prevent the German armies in the Ardennes from receiving fuel, ammunition and military supplies.

This air raid was so big that planes were still taking off from England when the first groups were bombing their targets in Germany! I remember the releasing of our bomb-load over Berlin, sending my "strike report" back to base, and heading for home. We were passing other Bomb Groups heading into Germany. In addition to our heavy bomber raids, the Ninth Air Corps tactical fighters and medium bombers were flying at low altitudes. Their missions were to strafe and bomb tanks, trains and enemy troops.

Mark Twain once said, "Thunder is good, thunder is impressive, but it's the lightning that does the work." Our bombers made lots of "thunder" over England that day, but we saved our "lightning" for the German war machine.

The 1944 Christmas Eve bombing raids helped our ground forces drive back the last German attack. It was the beginning of the end of World War II in Europe. The cost in American lives on the ground and in the air was very high in World War II. Down through the years, many men have given their lives to protect our freedoms and our country. **FREEDOM IS NOT FREE — IT MUST BE PROTECTED**

COMBAT FLIGHT EQUIPMENT

Some collectors brought military collected items and I displayed them over my civilian clothing as seen in photo.

The photo is a display of the majority of my over 125 lbs. of protective uniform and equipment that I wore on every bombing flight mission over Europe: back pack parachute, chest pack parachute, long john underwear, electric heated suit, military green fatigue pants and shirt, heavy leather lined exterior wool fleeced zipper jacket, suspender supported similarly fashioned trousers, silk hose, electrically connected nylon hose, within large bulky heavily fur lined leather boots. leather furlined flight cap, oxygen mask and tubing, may west inflatable life jacket, goggles, flack helmet, heavy thick leather fur lined gloves, flack jacket weighing 70 or more pounds, first aid kit, 45cal. pistol in shoulder holster. at times there were other items necessary to hang upon my person in mission duties in flight.

by Spec Campen
303rd Bomb Group
Association Reunion in July 2007
Washington, DC



TARGET BRUNSWICK AGAIN

by C.B. "Red" Harper



Red Harper

On the 15th of March, 1944, the Third Air Division was put on mission alert. We were awakened with the usual fanfare of noise and confusion. Lt. Herbert Devore and the other three of his crew officers dressed out in full class "A" uniform - pinks, blouse, tie - brass the whole works just as though they were headed out to a danc. We joked with them about it and Herb said, "This is our last tour mission and we're going to finish up in style." At that time 25 missions constituted a tour of duty and that was to be their 25th.

We were briefed that morning to hit a Messerschmitt plane factory at Brunswick, Germany. The Waggum aircraft plant nearby was introduced as a secondary target in case we were weathered out of the primary target. Secondary targets were designed to keep us from making the trip for naught.

Our Group formation for this mission consisted of 21 aircraft. Six ship lead - nine ship high and six low elements - stacked into the sun. Departure was at 06:40 hours. Our 100th Group made assembly at 2400 feet over the base at 07:00 hours. We flew the low Group position that morning in the 13th combat wing with the 390th in the wing lead position and the 95th in the high Group position.

Herb Devore was flying Group lead pilot with Captain Roland Knight as command pilot in the right seat and the crew's regular copilot Martin Tashjian was in tail gun position as formation

observer. I was flying on Herb's left wing and Frank Malooly was on his right wing. We had climbed to an altitude of 24,000 feet which was about 2000 feet above an overcast of clouds.

We had good fighter support. Our little friends were thick as fleas on a dog, thank goodness. We reached the target IP at 11:54 hours and the flak was intense in the target area.

I was flying in close to the lead ship as we approached the target to insure a good bomb pattern. Our bomb load for the mission consisted of 10-100 pound GP bombs and 23-100 pound magnesium incendiary bombs. Our bomb bay doors were open and we were about 10 seconds from bombs away when I suddenly saw the entire cockpit area of Herb's plane fill with red smoke and fire and I saw his body slump over against the control column.

The plane nosed down slightly as it started down. I had my copilot take over so I could watch our Group lead plane going down. The plane started burning and pieces of the smoking number 3 engine cowling started to fly loose as the bomber went into a flat spin about a 1000 feet above the cloud layer. Just as they reached the undercast, the aircraft exploded and the fiery mass disappeared into the clouds below. I saw no parachutes before the explosion.

Devore had apparently received a direct flak hit that set off his flares and incendiaries and the plane really just melted down. This one has stayed with me for over 60 years now.

Now, let's move ahead 51 years. The Bloody Hundredth Bomb Group Foundation made up of 100th BG veterans and their families was having an annual reunion celebration at Ft. Worth, Texas in 1995.

On a bus town south of DFW airport I was in conversation with one of only two of my crew members still living who was sitting ahead of me. I was conscious of a gentleman sitting next

to me who was staring at me. I turned and looked at him and he said, "Are you Red Harper?" He introduced himself and he was Burton Joseph who had been Herb Devore's Navigator. He said he had been wanting to talk to me for years. His first remark startled me. He said, "Red, were you in a position to see what happened to us at Brunswick that day?" I related what little I was able to see in the few minutes just before their plane exploded into the clouds.

Burton then related his story to me.

The following is Burton Joseph's story as he related it to me and I recorded it on a small hand held recorder I always try to have available at meetings:

Red, just past the IP, we took a direct hit from what I believe to have been an 88 mm "flak" shell which was what started all the red fire and smoke you spoke about.

The shell exploded in the hatchway directly below the cockpit and probably ruptured the oxygen tanks and ignited the fuel transfer system. There was a blinding flash of flame behind me and I knew we were "done."

After a moment's hesitation, I ripped off my flak vest, which in turn pulled off my oxygen mask. I then hooked my parachute to the chest harness I was wearing, turned and dived out the already open escape hatch. I was immediately behind Harry "Shorty" Longhi, out top turret gunner/flight engineer. Captain Bob Peel, who was flying with us just for that mission as lead bombardier, exited behind me. The other seven members of the crew, including the command pilot, perished.

I delayed pulling the ripcord until I was fairly close to the solid undercast, figuring that the cloud height would allow sufficient time for the chute to open before landing. This prevented my passing out for lack of oxygen at the higher altitude, and possibly saved me from becoming the object of further German target practice. I guess that I probably fell free for 20,000 feet. The chute opened just as I broke through

the cloud cover, perhaps 2000 feet above the ground.

Beneath me stretched a vast sea of flames. Our incendiary raid on the target city of Braunschweig was highly successful! However to my dismay, I had left a burning plane only to land in the still smoldering ruins of a burned-out house! I had been burned about the face and hit by shrapnel while still in the plane. Now, I was burned again, about the hands and head, upon landing.

On leaving the burned out house, I was confronted with a new situation. An angry group of German civilians was moving toward me. You can well imagine their feelings with many of their

homes destroyed by "Luftgangsters" such as myself.

Fortunately, Wehrmacht sentry stationed at a nearby air raid shelter got to me before the mob of civilians. He had to hold them off with his rifle, and in so doing, undoubtedly saved my life. This mob would most certainly have torn me apart had they gotten to me first.

After his recuperation, Burt was sent to Stalag Luft III, near Sagan in what is now Poland. There followed the usual POW camp experiences of starvation, forced march evacuations, liberation, and eventual return home to a successful civilian career.

Nearly fifty years later, he was awarded the Purple Heart. A POW camp is a

strange place to expand your knowledge of humanity.

Neither the severe burns Burton sustained in the aircraft nor the surgeries in POW camp dimmed his great zest for life.

Burton M. Joseph, Navigator, 350th Squadron, 100th Bomb Group died on October 10, 1996, in Evanston, IL, from a lingering illness.

-abstracted from The Alabama Chapter *Propwash*



"Easy Does It"

Easy Does It

Getting the General Purpose 100-pounders ready for a trip across the Channel

by Roger Stuch

SEPTEMBER 8AF NEWS - PAUL GRASSEY'S STORY

Dear Dr. Brown,
The September issue was great. I especially liked Paul Grassey's story about seven young men and one older one. I was at Grafton Underwood several times on TDY, and after VE-Day was assigned to the 384th for the Green Project in France. I knew Pop Dolan was a revered figure in the group, but had never heard the story of his background. I don't know if the quality of the attached photos is good enough for publication, (that goes for the accompanying written material as well), but if they aren't, perhaps you can pass them on to a 457th BG member who has a connection to the plane.

EL LOBO II 114TH MISSION

When our aircraft recovery team arrived at the landing site near Sens to dismantle *El Lobo II*, we were so impressed by the mission record painted on its nose, we took turns being photographed alongside it. Had the landing occurred a year or two earlier in England, the plane would have been considered repairable, or at least a source for much needed parts. But at that stage of the war, we knew it was destined for a French smelter. We briefly considered saving the skin from that section of the nose, but decided it was too large, so settled for just *El Lobo* himself. The leering wolf's head was carefully excised and then attached to the front of the truck, a 6x6 that have been converted to a primitive motor home.

He led the way as we worked our way north and east, eventually crossing the Rhine into Germany and on to an air strip near Wesel where we disassembled another B-17. After one more job back in Holland, it was VE-Day. Our unit almost immediately got orders to return to England, but the truck with *El Lobo* still affixed had to be left behind. I suppose it would be a stretch to count our low altitude foray as an additional combat mission for *El Lobo II*, but I must cite one bit of evidence that should be considered. After VJ-Day when the discharge points were calculated. I discovered that I had five more points than friends who had the same time in service and overseas time as I. Investigating, I was surprised to learn that crossing the Rhine before a specified date had made me a participant in "Campaign Germany" and I had been awarded a battle star.

Joe Kendrick, 5th SAD



Bill Dolan

EIGHTH AIR FORCE COMPARATIVE STATISTICS

The Eighth Air Force was activated at Savannah, Georgia, 28 January 1942. In February a small detachment of officers arrived in England to make initial arrangement for the housing and basing of groups to follow, and by June 1942, aircraft, crews, and ground personnel had begun to arrive in the United Kingdom. On 17 August 1942, the first operational mission in its own aircraft was carried out by the Eighth Air Force -- the first of 459 days on which heavy bombers struck at enemy targets.

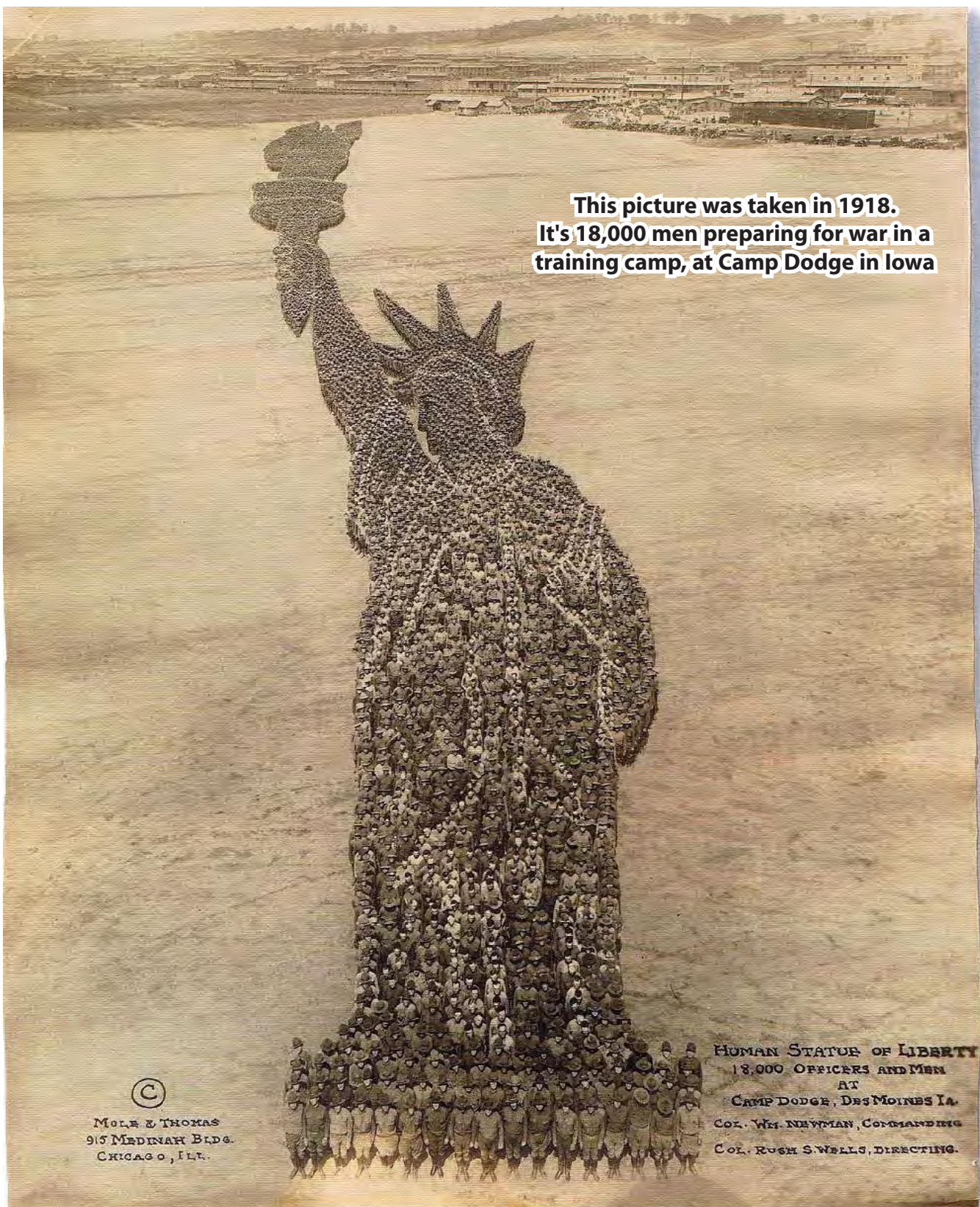
At peak personnel strength, the Eighth Air Force numbered more than 200,000 officers and men. At peak operating strength, it numbered 40 1/2 Heavy Bomb Groups, 15 Fighter Groups, and 2 Photo/Recon Groups operating from bases in the United Kingdom. At this strength, a typical mission consisted of 1,400 heavy bombers escorted by 800 fighters, consuming 3,500,000 gallons of aviation gasoline, expending 250,000 rounds of .50 cal ammunition, destroying 25 German aircraft in the air and on the ground for the loss of 4 United

States fighters and five bombers, and dropping 3,300 tons of bombs on enemy targets of which on visual missions, 40% fell within one thousand feet of assigned Mean Point of Impacts and 75% within two thousand feet.



Behind these figures are the combat crews and fighter pilots who fought in the skies -- 46,456 of whom became casualties; the maintenance/ground personnel who kept the airplanes flying -- repaired 59,644 battle damaged aircraft, loaded the 732,231 tons of bombs expended, and linked and loaded the 99,256,341 rounds of ammunition; and the planners who directed the missions and guided the team.

There were 14 Medals of Honor, 220 Distinguished Service Crosses, 11 Distinguished Service Medals, 207 Legions of Merit, 817 Silver Stars, 41,497 Distinguished Flying Crosses, 478 Soldier's Medals, 6,845 Purple Hearts, 122,705 Air Medals, 2,972 Bronze Stars, 28,000 POW Medals, and 27 Unit Citations made to members of the Eighth Air Force.



2008 Dues Notice 8th AFHS

In the interest of economy we have elected to send our 2008 membership dues notice and envelope inserted in our last issue (September issue) AFNews Magazine.

If you have filed your dues disregard this notice.

If you have not, please send your \$30.00 check or credit card payment for 2008 Annual dues to Mamie Kent at the Savannah office.

PO Box 956 • Pooler, GA • 31322

WWII Vets Visit B-17

On August 24, 2007 two WWII vets met while touring the Collins Foundation B-17 "Nine O Nine" at the Westchester County Airport. Manny "Sperry" Belmont from White Plains, New York served as a ball turret gunner from 1942-45. He and his crew flew a B-17 named "Ten Aces and the Queen." Don McWilliams from Essex Falls, New Jersey, was pilot of Crew #29 of the 837th BS, part of the 487th Bomb Group, and flew 25 missions in several B-17s including "Lecherous Lou."

A crowd gathered around these two heroes to ask about their experiences and learn from their expertise. Sperry Belmont shared photos of his days with the 15th Air Force in Italy.

Don McWilliams, who was wearing his original set of wings pinned to his jacket, answered questions on the finer points of piloting the Flying Fortress. When asked if he had ever been shot down, he calmly replied "Yes". This news clipping, from The Caldwell Progress 5/11/45, describes that day. Don has never forgotten the friendly farmers who found the crew after their emergency landing in a field and got them to safety. His biggest surprise came when he returned to the barracks, tired and relieved, and found his foot locker had been looted! When it was reported their B-17 had gone down, those in the barracks didn't want Don's things to go to waste! A kind Red Cross volunteer contacted Don's dad who wired him some spending money.

**-submitted by Cynthia Holck McWilliams
(daughter-in-law of Don Holck)**

Lt. McWilliams Gets Plane Back Safely

Although cannon fire from two Jerry jet-propelled fighters had knocked out one engine of his B-17 Flying Fortress, punctured the fuel tanks, and ripped open the bomb-bay, exposing the live bombs, Second Lieutenant Donald M. McWilliams, 22, Eighth Air Force co-pilot of Denville, formerly West Caldwell, dropped his bombs in the target area and then brought his bomber to a safe landing in Belgium.

As Lieutenant McWilliams approached the target, a Nazi airdrome at Briest, on the outskirts of Berlin, two Messerschmitt 262's attacked his big bomber from the rear. Every gun in the Fortress cut loose on the two Hunns, but several bursts from the Jerrys found their mark. One engine was knocked out, gas tanks were hit, and the bomb-bay was torn open exposing the live bombs to enemy fire. Keeping on course, Lieutenant McWilliams dropped his bombs in the target area and then set a lone course for home, escorted by friendly P-51 Mustangs. Nursing the Fortress back across enemy territory, the New Jerseyite fought with the controls as an emergency life raft had blown out of the plane and hung on to the left stabilizer. Over Belgium the gasoline supply began to run out. Picking an emergency landing field, Lieutenant McWilliams brought the big bomber in with all hands safe.

Lieutenant McWilliams is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Alex McWilliams of Edgewood drive, Denville. His wife, the former Miss Jane M. Carlon, lives at 159 Midland avenue, Montclair. Prior to his entry into the AAF in February, 1943, he attended Lehigh University.



Manny "Sperry" Belmont (left)
Donald M. McWilliams (right)

"The older I get, the better I was."

- Major General Lewis Lyle, 303rd and 379th Bomb Groups

BRITISH CHILDREN'S MEMORIES

James Cagney visited the Podington Base and opened the Airmen's Bar. It became known as "Cagney's Cellar", Glenn Miller also played during his visit. Many celebrities visited these bases, Bob Hope being one of those visitors. James Stewart was based at Chelveston.

Christmas parties at the base were the highlights of the year. We were picked up in the trucks and taken to the airfield where we would have our party, entertainment, a bag of sweets (candy), fruit, chewing gum and a present to take home. On Saturday evenings at the Village Hall Dances, the Americans, who came regularly and whom we came to know so well, would give us gum and candy. These were exciting times for us as kids.

The ending of the war in Europe saw the 92nd Bomb Group leave Podington, and going on what was called "The Green Project," to Istris, France, eventually returning to the United States of America.

As time passed, we came to realize how dreadful those years really had been. The American Cemetery at Madingley, Cambridgeshire, reminds us of the terrible loss of life. Almost 3,000 Airmen died while serving in the 40th Combat

Wing. We recall all those young Americans who had become such good friends, where were they now and what had become of them.

I have often wondered, did these young men who gallantly made the ultimate sacrifice, give their lives in vain. My answer is that, not only did they give their lives for their friends, (the greatest sacrifice one can make), but for their enemies also. For their enemies too, because of their sacrifice, now enjoy freedom and democracy as we do today, such freedom they would never have had under the tyranny of Naziism. It is to those men who survived and those who gave their lives, that we owe our very salvation. Out of the evil and terror of war, has come so much goodness, love and friendship. Whether it be the 306th, the 305th or 92nd Bomb Group, may we never forget what they did for us, that we may live in the peace and democracy that we now enjoy. Long may this wonderful friendship continue. Let us live by the example set for us of by not only those who gave their lives, but also by those who survived horrors of war.

-A British NexGen and friend of the 8th

MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM ACTIVITIES

New Art Installation Opens At Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia

"Scars" is designed by Cindy Fear who is a senior graphic design major at Savannah College of Art and Design. This art installation is suspended from light posts lining the reflecting pool in the Memorial Gardens at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. Exhibition runs from November 26, 2007 – December 28, 2007.

Fluttering in the breeze, twelve red panels are suspended from the light posts on either side of the reflecting pool in the Memorial Gardens at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. All are part of "Scars," an art installation dedicated to soldiers, their families, and all individuals who have been touched by war. Designed by Savannah College of Art and Design senior, Cindy Fear, "Scars" forms an exercise in prayers and hope for decades of healing. Each red panel has a Chinese character reflecting an area of life and a white strip of cloth with its English translation.

The concept for this installation is taken from the "Red Strings Cure," a Chinese tradition based on the ancient art of Feng Shui. "Feng" meaning water, and "Shui" meaning wind, is the art of spatial placement to improve the flow of life energy, or chi. The "Red Strings Cure" is performed when a person has problems that seem insurmountable. The red panels here represent a connection from earth to heaven and symbolize prayers for blessings in certain areas of life for those affected by war and for healing of the scars they carry with them. The panels represent prayers for life, love, joy, emotion, harmony, intimacy, center, wholeness, protection, destiny, hope and mankind. As Cindy Fear explained, "Soldiers, their families, and many others sacrifice for all of us. I am grateful for their honor and courage, which have allowed me to live in a country where I am free to express myself creatively."





99TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOSTS REUNION AT THE MUSEUM

The men and their ladies of the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society had an enjoyable and successful Group reunion in Savannah for four days in October. After several days of tours and sight-seeing, more than 100 members and guests had their Gala Banquet in the beautiful Rotunda at the Mighty Eighth.

The 99th Bomb Group, known as the "Diamondbacks" went over early in the war. It was activated at Gowen Field in Boise, Idaho in September 1942. The group flew 395 combat missions against German targets, first out of North African airfields in Algeria and Tunisia with Jimmy Doolittle's 12th Air Force and then as part of the 15th AF in Italy. The missions from North Africa were under the command of the Group's first CO, Col. Fay Upthegrove.

One of the notable missions of the 99th was flown out of Foggia, Italy on 2 June 1944 to Poltava, Russia to

bomb targets in Romania and Hungary in order to dilute German forces that would oppose the D-Day landings in Normandy four days afterwards. This effective operation was known as "Operation Frantic Joe."

The 99th BGHS holds its meetings in various locations around the country and may be contacted through their website at <http://www.99bombgroup.org> or to their VP Gary Staffo, email Gstaffo@verizon.net.

VETERANS DAY 2007 A DAY OF ACTIVITY AT THE MUSEUM

Veterans Day weekend was replete with activities at the Mighty Eighth!

Activities included a tribute to Jimmy Stewart with a major presentation by the U.S. Postal Service of a special Jimmy Stewart Cache envelope and the 41-cent stamp honoring him for his wartime service as a B-24 pilot with the 8th Air Force. Associated was a "Stamp Camp" event in the High Wycombe meeting room, during which kids of all ages worked with Postal Service employees to learn about the utilization of

stamps as tributes and recognition.

Throughout the day, Jimmy Stewart movies, *Harvey* and *The Glenn Miller Story*, were shown in the DeCicco Education Theater, complete with movie popcorn and cokes – The Holiday Matinee at the Museum.

American Legion Post 322 selected the Museum as the location for a national Flag Retirement Ceremony – a formal event in which an American flag was ceremoniously burned according to proper flag protocol and appropriate tributes given to each state and to the American people who have served our country. This and the other events of the Veterans Day weekend were well-attended by troops of Boy and Girls Scouts and, of course, many area veterans and visitors to the Museum.

Museum volunteers and staff, some in period uniforms, also took part in the Veterans Day parade that wound through old Savannah.



99th BGHS ready for a tour of the Museum



99th Bomb Group members get a briefing at The Museum's "Mission Experience"

AN UPDATE ON THE MUSEUM COLUMBARIUM...

by Brenda Elmgren, Chief Administrative Officer Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum

A beautiful seashore, high atop a majestic mountain, overlooking America's amber waves of grain - places that we would like to call "home," places to stay forever. There is actually a beautiful place that you can call home forever - The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum Columbarium. It seems only fitting that the living home of all things related to the Mighty Eighth should also be the final home and resting place of "our guys," their families, friends, and the supporters of this great Museum.

In the last issue of the 8th AF News, we announced that the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum had undertaken the mission to establish a columbarium on the Museum grounds, in the peaceful surroundings of the Museum's Memorial Garden. It's a fitting site for a final home and resting place, constructed adjacent to the Chapel of the Fallen Eagles and bordered by the beautiful and loving memorials placed in the Garden by friends and family of those we have known as heroes. The long-awaited floor section from the former Hunter Field (now Hunter Army Air Base), bearing the star of the Air Force insignia and a compass rose, has been moved to the Museum and will become a focal point for the columbarium. This floor, from the building that housed the original Mighty Eighth Air Force operations

in early 1942, and across which so many of our men passed on their way to the war in the skies around the world, will provide the memorable path to this final resting place.

The columbarium process has been long and slow. However, preparing a final resting place befitting our veterans, friends, and families, is one of the most important tasks the Museum has ever undertaken, and it has been of utmost importance to make sure every detail is covered and nothing has been left undone. The Museum administration has researched all areas of the cremation process, examined the niches and urns which will hold the ashes (called "cremains" when cremation has taken place), and we have had in-depth consultations with experts who are sensitive to the bereavement and inurnment processes. Finally, we have received permission from the Museum's attorneys to publish the prices and regulations. Some of you may have already received a copy. The long journey is almost at an end and a "forever" kind of place is now ready for our troops.

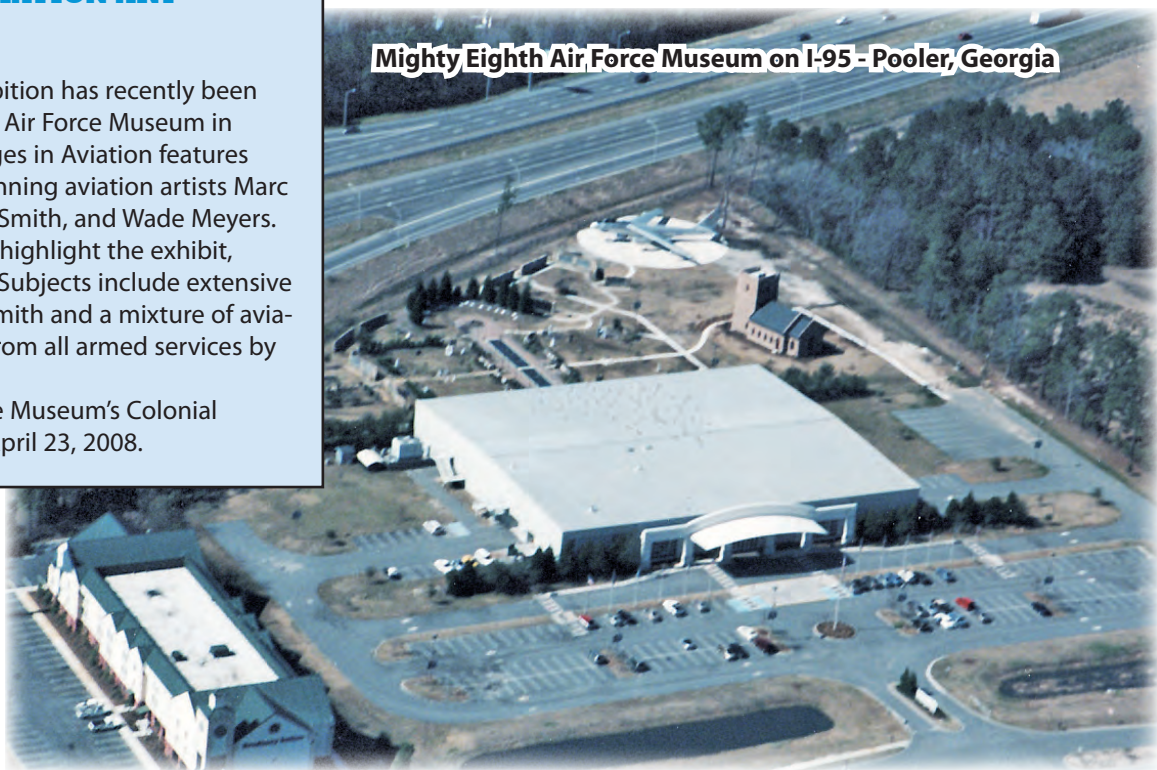
If you are interested in this wonderful project and you would like more information, please email me at admin@mightyeighth.org, or call me at 912-748-8888 x165.

SOUTHERN WINGS AVIATION ART EXHIBITION OPENS

An excellent new art exhibition has recently been opened at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler. Southern Wings: Images in Aviation features major art works by award-winning aviation artists Marc Stewart, Jim Balletto, Russell Smith, and Wade Meyers. More than 75 original pieces highlight the exhibit, which is open to the public. Subjects include extensive World War I works by artist Smith and a mixture of aviation art and interpretations from all armed services by all of the artists.

The exhibit will hang at the Museum's Colonial Group, Inc. Art Gallery until April 23, 2008.

Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum on I-95 - Pooler, Georgia



MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM ACTIVITIES



A PICTORIAL SALUTE TO THE MIGHTY EIGHTH



The artist, Douglas Edwards, now a naturalized American citizen, was born in England and raised amid the turmoil of the Second World War. It was during this time that he encountered his first Americans - troops preparing for their role in the D-Day invasion. The majority of those youthful and boisterous Americans were soldiers who would make a lasting impression on the young boy with their

stories of America. But his main interest lay in the big bombers piloted by men of the U.S. Army Air Force.

Determined one day to live in the America those soldiers had etched in his young mind and dedicated to a life in art, Douglas Edwards eventually immigrated to the United States, haunted by memories of those poignant images of yesteryear.

After many years spent developing his craft, the artist finally considered himself worthy of honoring those men of the elite 8th Air Force with the mural you see - a pictorial salute to the mightiest air force the world has ever seen.

Doug has generously donated this mural to be displayed at The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia to honor those airmen who served.



Douglas Edwards was born in England and studied at the Chester School of Art from where he graduated with diplomas in advertising design and fine art.

He later emigrated to the United States and for a number of years was employed as an art director with several Washington, D.C. advertising agencies.

His need to create more work resulted in him moving from advertising to freelance illustration. In this capacity

he has rendered captivating editorial art for such organizations as the National Geographic Society, the National Wildlife Federation, the Association of American Railroads and the Smithsonian's *Air and Space* magazine. His work has also been exhibited at the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

A naturalized US citizen, Douglas Edwards now devotes himself solely to creating works of fine art.



On July 25, 2007 the US Senate passed a bill which will make it appropriate for Veterans and military service men not in uniform to salute the Flag at times when it is displayed at public ceremonies. Formerly citizens not in uniform rendered a salute by holding the right hand above one's heart.

The venerable Civil Air Patrol Junior Cadet Program kicked off its national start-up in Boaz, Alabama this past October. The Junior Cadet Program featured a CAP aircraft fly-in, an ANG F-16 fly-over, the parachute entry of Cappy - the Junior Cadet mascot, and other related events. Boaz primary and intermediate schools are among ten Alabama schools to initiate this program, to expand to incorporate 300 teachers and 7,000 students in the southeast during 2007, and then to be expanded to all elementary schools in 2008. This program will provide students with an introduction to aerospace, leadership opportunities and physical fitness. Other activities will be included at later dates.

A 44 year-old C-130 Hercules has flown its final mission. Aircraft #63-7865, assigned to the 86th Airlift Wing at Ramstein Air Base, Germany flew its last combat sortie on 13 Nov 2007 from Southeast Asia. After its 29,500 flying hours, this honored airplane will find its resting place in the Boneyard at Davis-Monthan AFB, Arizona. A number of aircrews flew 7865 over the decades of service, this

last mission being piloted by Col. Brian O'Conner, the 386th AEW Vice Commander. This aircraft received the Honorary Purple Heart Award after one particular rough mission during which it received more than 100 hits by enemy fire.

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum is one of a number of historical venues that depend on their volunteers to get their Museum's mission and vision across to visitors. Those who participate in Volunteer programs may well receive benefits in addition to the satisfaction of presenting and preserving the history. There are now studies that indicate those who participate in volunteer programs experience lower rates of depression, achieve longer life expectancy, exhibit a faster recovery from illness, and in general have a greater sense of purpose.

The Cerignola Connection, Craig Ward editor, has announced that the Fifteenth Air Force has a new website, with links to the 455th Bomb Group Association. Check it out at www.15thaf.org.

There are still 1,766 U. S. military personnel listed by the Department of Defense as missing and unaccounted from from the Vietnam War. As of this date, there have been 817 servicemen returned since the end of the war. JPAC recovery operations continue researching WWII incidents with operations underway in Netherlands, Hungary, Austria, France, Corsica, Luxembourg, Italy, and Germany. Info may be found at websites www.POWMIA-League.org or www.pow-miafamilies.org.

In Amsterdam, after more than 60 years, a vast warehouse full of Nazi documents were recently unsealed for the first time, to be used by Holocaust historians and researchers and to explore the extent of the wartime Nazi persecutions and crimes. The files have been entrusted to the international Tracing

Service, and arm of the International Committee of the Red Cross, to be used for locating missing persons and to document atrocities. ITS director Reto Meister said, "We are there. The doors are now open."

The Wings of Freedom Warbirds Tour will be in Ocala, Florida on February 8-10, 2008. The Collings Foundation will fly in with their B-17, B-24, and B-25 as part of their 240-city 2008 tour. Lenny Balducci, whose dad flew with the 390th Bomb Group in WWII, is the Ocala contact for the affair. Lennyb17@embarqmail.com

The Gathering of Mustangs and Legends billed as "The Final Roundup" was held at Rickenbacker Field at Columbus, Ohio in September. It was the largest gathering of P-51 Mustangs since World War II. Planned as a tribute to airmen of WWII, the audience was estimated at 200,000. There were 77 P-51s, two P-38 Lightnings, two P-47 Thunderbolts, two B-17 Flying Fortresses, a rare P-63, and a British Avro Lancaster bomber also in attendance. Airshows and static displays along with training sessions filled the days. The Warbirds filled the skies.

A fix from the Sept 07 8th AF News involves the name and location of The P-38 National Association Hangar, which is actually located at March Air Reserve Base as related in an informative note from Gil Cefaratt.

The recent discovery of a WWII P-38 Lightning in Wales is the result of the unusual weather of the season, but certainly not Global Warming. The 8th Air Force combat aircraft apparently ran out of petrol during a wartime flight on 27 September 1942 and landed on a Welsh beach. The pilot is listed as Lt. R. Frederick Elliott. It soon was swallowed up by the tides. The aircraft was assigned to the 49th Squadron, 14th Fighter Group. Several British aviation museums are interested in the airplane.



MELODY BAR

Dear Walt,
When I received the June 07 issue, the cover page looked familiar to me, but not until I recently was looking at it again I realized that I had photos of the lady sitting at the bar. This has to be the American Melody Bar in London that we often visited when on leave. Above are photos taken in London while on leave at the American Melody Bar, and a copy of the cover page. The top photo includes myself on the left, the lady from the cover, and our waist gunner from Lubbock, Texas, H.G. Flagle, on the right. The picture below includes 1st Pilot M.W. Oakland; G.W. Ford, copilot, who just recently passed away, and Paul Compensation, the

navigator. Seeing the cover brought back many old memories and I thank you for that. We were all fortunate to survive 35 sorties, most on *Ohio Sliver*. I was the nose gunner with the best view.

Sincerely,
Meyer (Mike) Slott
453rd BG-732nd BS

CHRISTMAS EVE 1944

Dear Donna and Telisha:
I was very pleased to learn that you are working behind the scenes helping "Doc" Brown to produce our wonderful 8th AF News. Keep up your excellent work! The eloquent article by Chuck Halper in the Dec issue about the Christmas Eve 1944 mission brought back many memories and thoughts. I also flew that mission and have written about it in my WWII Memoir, "An Eighth Air Force Combat Diary" (2001). My observations were virtually identical to Chuck's. For your information I have abstracted a section from my book that describes what I saw when we returned to base in England in the twilight hours of Christmas Eve, 1944. I shall include it here as an Attachment should you wish to read it. Thank you for your fine contributions to the 8AFHS.

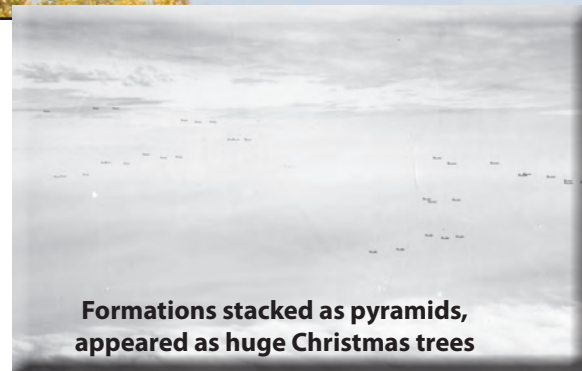
John A. Clark, Life Member 8AFHS
CP, 100th Bomb Group

The Christmas Eve Mission of the Eighth Air Force

December 24, 1944

by John Clark, 100th Bomb Group
"The Eighth Air Force paid another high price on this mission with the death of the Eighth Air Force Airborne Commander, Brigadier General Fredrick W. Castle in the crash of his Fortress near Brussels, Belgium. General Castle was Commander of the 4th Combat Wing and had volunteered to fly this mission, his 31st. Today he led the entire Eighth Air Force. His aircraft was attacked by German ME-109 fighters and set on fire. In a heroic act of selfless bravery he took over the flying of the Fortress and ordered its crew to bail out. At 12,000 feet the aircraft exploded and spun to earth killing both General Castle and the pilot instantly.

When we returned to England our squadron split away from the 390th



**Formations stacked as pyramids,
appeared as huge Christmas trees**

Bomb Group shortly after we crossed the coast. This put us at Thorpe Abbotts ahead of the rest of the 100th Bomb Group. We peeled-off one-by-one in a normal squadron landing pattern and were on the ground early, about 5:30 PM. By this time the sun had set and a winter's twilight was descending on East Anglia. The sky became a deep bluish-purple and in the glow of the setting sun the western horizon had turned a light orange. The earth below was dark. Off to the east we could see the lights of the 100th and other Groups returning to their bases nearby and soon the muffled roar of their engines could be heard. As the squadrons came closer they formed a beautiful and unforgettable sight. Drifting through the air, their stately formations were stacked as pyramids. With their red and green navigation lights and their white tail lights on, as well as their landing lights, they now appeared as huge Christmas trees floating majestically across the landscape outlined against the now darkening sky. As they symbolically announced the occasion, I imagined I could hear the voice of the Angel saying, "Glory to God in the Highest and, on Earth, Peace, Goodwill towards Men." But, of course, on this day even though it was Christmas Eve there seemed to be little Peace and Goodwill in the World except, possibly, in the hearts of ordinary men on both sides. Soon it would be Christmas 1944."

DONATION

Dear Walter,
Just finished the September Issue of 8th AF News. I thought it was excellent. I am a lifetime member of the 8th AFHS. Enclosed is my donation tribute to Ground Crews. Only wish it could be more.
We kept the ground crews busy, mostly

flak damage. I was a bombardier in the 447th Bomb Group 709th Squadron stationed in Rattlesden, England. Our crew has a plaque in the 8th Air Force Museum. At this time my wife Carol and myself plan on attending the 2008 Reunion in Savannah, Georgia. Will try to get members of our crew there also. Walter, the 8th Air Force Magazine is very good. I enjoy reading every page. Sincerely,
Don Clark, 447th BG
Menomonee Falls, WI



September 2007 issue of
8th AF NEWS Vol. 7 #3

Ground Crews

Dear Walter Brown, Editor;
The cover picture on the September 2007 issue of 8th AF NEWS brought back many fond memories. While I was too young to serve in WWII, I had the privilege of training B29 crews and maintenance personnel using this concept in Japan and Okinawa during the Korean Conflict. This concept of maintenance personnel receiving training in the field with the use of systems mock-up trainers in the open air, maintenance hangars, and in make-shift classrooms is still in use throughout the Air Force and is carried out by the Field Training Wing located at Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls, Texas. Mock-ups have gotten more sophisticated and expensive but they are still built inside shipping containers similar to the ones pictured in this issue and travel from base to

base in cargo aircraft along with highly skilled personnel. Like the build-up in England during WWII this capability allows rapid combat readiness, especially when a unit received a new model aircraft or weapons system. Thanks for the memories.

George Cain. Maj. USAF (Retired) and
Mighty 8th AF Museum Volunteer

MERSEBERG

Dear Walter:

I just recently read the 8th AF News magazine of Sept. 2007. I was startled, to say the least, when reading the article "The German Oil Industry". The two pictures of a B17 in flames (pages 28 and 30) are shots of my plane going down on Nov. 30, 1944. I have the matching photograph, given to me after my return to the States. We had just seconds earlier dropped our bombs on the oil refinery at Merseberg when we were hit by flak. We were in the 836th Bomb Squadron, attached to the 487th Bomb Group.

I am now the only surviving member of the crew. Seven members of the crew, including pilot Lloyd Kersten, were killed when the plane went down. The bombardier and I escaped through the front hatch by parachuting. I was the navigator. Suffering a broken leg on landing, I was taken into a farm house by the inhabitants, then turned over to German military. I was a POW for four months until rescued by Patton's tank force.

If there are any left-over copies of the Sept. 2007 magazine, I would really appreciate three copies.

Sincerely,
James Hyland, 487th BG
Maumee, OH

MISSION TO BERLIN

Dear Mr. Brown,
I have been a subscriber to the Eighth Air Force News I believe since shortly after WWII ended, or at least whenever I received the first invitation to subscribe. But none of the other members of my crew seem to have subscribed, and I do not know why.

I particularly enjoy reading many stories from Chaplain Earl Wassom, and intend to use the message of his in the September 2007 issue as a Lenten

message for my Kiwanis Club here in Greenville.

My main point in writing to you now is to see if I can make contact with a former crewmate of mine, Lt. Alan Koeckler, who was copilot of our B-17 crew all through training, but as assigned to another crew on our first mission, flying out of the Deenthorpe Base in England for a mission to bomb Berlin. Alan was copilot of the plane off our left wing in the formation, and signaled to us that we had a fire in our left wing before we really knew what damage we had incurred. With that information, we knew we should drop out of the formation lest we explode and cause other fatalities.

Those of us who survived were held as Prisoners of war at Stalag Luft #1 at Barth, Germany for forty days after which we were released by the Russian troops as they moved west.

I have never been able to find a way to contact Alan again, until I read your September 2007 issue of The News, where I noticed an article on page 7, Medal of Honor, written by Bob Brinsmaid of the 384th BG. And Bob's address was Cincinnati, Ohio.

Of course I am aware that many years have gone by, and I am fortunate to have survived 86 total, but I would appreciate it if you could send me Mr. Brinsmaid's full address, so that I may write to him and see if he can give me information to enable me to contact Alan Koeckler.

Sincerely,
John Maxwell
Greenville, PA

John, privacy rights prevent us from forwarding addresses without prior permission, but I will send your info to Alan if possible. -Ed.

SILVER DOLLAR

8th AF News,
Just to write about the September issue.

See page 33. That is about my crew. I was on that mission.

It mentions my pilot Murry Johnson, Ball turret Clyde Forrester, co-pilot Don Rolfs and written by my tail gunner Richard Thormahlen.

I was top turret. 100th Bomb Group "Silver Dollar."

That day we had a photographer along sitting on the floor of the radio room. A small hole in the bottom of the plane just for that.

There was the seniority system. No one wanted to be tail-end Charlie. On that mission there was a lead squadron of 12, above them and back a little, high squadron of 12, and then low and back a little the low squadron of 12. Enemy fighters just about took out the low 12 and then started in on us. We were in the back end of the lead squadron.

Glad to get the magazine. I will be 84 in just a few days.

Merton Wilch, 100th BG

NORDEN

Gentlemen:

I'm sure you will hear from many other bombardiers about the story on page 20 of your September issue regarding the naming of the Norden Bombsight. As any bombardier could tell you, the Norden Bombsight was created by one Carl Norden, hence it's name. I am one of those bombardiers and am in awe of the genius of the man. The incredibly accurate instrument was created by him back in the 1930's, before there was such a thing as a computer so all of the ideas that made it work so astoundingly accurate came out of that brilliant brain.

Former B-17 Bombardier with the 384th Bomb Group in the 8th Air Force.

Vern Arnold, 384th BG
Yakima, WA

BOVINGDON

Visiting an old friend of mine who lives in Hemel Hempsted, a town 25 miles North West of London. One day I decided to go over to see my fathers old 8th Airforce Base 112 at Bovingdon in Hertfordshire. Looking around the airfield I could only see the old runways and the woods where the bomb site used to be, but could not see the control tower.

After climbing a long steep bank along side the main runway I could see the roof of an old building. As I got closer the old control tower came into view. It was in a very derelict state as you can see from the pictures. Someone has put a large earth bank in front of it. I



**The old control tower Bovingdon Base
112 8th AF England**



**The back of the control tower at
Bovingdon 8th AF Base England**

don't know how much longer it will last. Maybe someone out there remembers this airfield. There has been talk of them building houses on the base. As some of the members know this control tower has been seen in lots of war films like (The War Lover) made in the 1960's.

Yours sincerely,
Patrick J. Boyle
Taunton Somerset England

WALL ART

Hi Walt,

I was pleased to receive the latest issue of 8th AF News and see a picture of 'paintings' done on the wall of our Nissen hut by me (Mustangs) and good friend Tom Beemer (girl). We produced them by taking a sharp knife and peeling away strips of the outer layer of the heavy cardboard.

Unfortunately, not long after Tom finished his drawing he was chasing a 109 too close to a group of B-17s and was shot down in a hail of B-17 gunfire. He survived the bailout with badly damaged legs and a tour of German prison camps. He recently passed away. Silly me, I thought I could keep our

groups kill record on the painting (it was early in the war) not expecting our 357th FG to amass a kill record second only to a group in combat longer than ours. Late in the war, after many of Germany's top pilots were victims, our group scored something like 54 kills on one mission, a record unmatched by any group, any where, any time.

Sincerely,
Harvey Mace, 357th FG

CLARK GABLE

Hello Walt,

I was on the original crew of the 351st Bomb Group in 1942, Spokane Washington. We moved to Biggs Field, El Paso, Texas in Jan. 42. We started to build up the group. On Jan. 28, Col. Hatcher our group C.O. flew to California to pick up Clark Gable and two or three MGM cameramen.

In February we started to have training for ground mechanics. I was a Buck Sgt. replacing a crew chief who was on leave.

Col. Hatcher and Gable were going to fly my plane to Pueblo Airbase. I started to walk from the plane area to turn in the leading list. I heard sirens, fire trucks and alot of noise. I turned around, and the plane did not lift off. It went off the runway and out into the sand. My knees were knocking, and I was scared.

After a half hour or so, Cleo tracks, dragged the plane back on the runway. It taxied back to where I was standing. Gable dropped out of the nose hatch and came up to me. I asked him what happened. He said, I don't know, you'll have to ask the old man. Col. Hatcher came out and told me No. 1 ran away on take off. I said, "Give me time, and I'll change the governor." He said, "Don't worry, we'll go tomorrow."

Another time, I came through the bomb bay and under the top turret, and bumped into a pair of legs pretty hard. Yes, it was Clark.

Another time, going through the operations office, I bumped into Clark at a doorway. He said, Sgt., you and I ought to get our sights straight. My memories.

Sincerely,
Frank A. Markut, 352nd BG
Ottawa, IL

GROUND CREWS

Dear Walter Brown, Editor:

The cover picture on the September 2007 issue of the 8th AF NEWS brought back many fond memories. While I was too young to serve in WWII, I had the privilege of training B29 crews and maintenance personnel using this concept in Japan and Okinawa during the Korean Conflict. This concept of maintenance personnel receiving training in the field with the use of systems mock-up trainers in the open air, maintenance hangers, and in make shift classrooms is still in use throughout the Air Force and is carried out by the Field Training Wing located at Sheppard AFB, Wichita Falls, Texas.

Mock-ups have gotten more sophisticated and expensive but they are still built inside shipping container similar to the ones pictured in this issue and travel from base to base in cargo aircraft along with highly skilled personnel. Like the build-up in England during WWII this capability allows rapid combat readiness especially when a unit received a new model aircraft or weapons system. Thanks for the memories.

George Cain
Savannah, Georgia
Mighty 8th AF Museum Volunteer

CLUBS

Dear Walter,
Hoping this finds you in good health? I recently became a member of the 8th AFHS and must say how much I enjoyed the contents and photographs in the June edition of the 8th AF News. I'm hoping you can kindly print the following.

Fellow Members, I am planning to visit Cambridge, Cambridgeshire, England next year to see the buildings used as clubs by members of the USAAF and to photograph them. According to a book I have by author Mark???Bowman, there were five for enlisted men and one for officers. Unfortunately he does not list them or their locations.

I was thus wondering if any 8th AF enlisted men or officers have any memories of such clubs in Cambridge during their time here.

I am looking for details on these clubs,

where they were, their addresses, any names these held, photographs taken at such venues of yourselves, friends or sweethearts and the building themselves please. I only know so far of The American Red Cross Club in the Bull Hotel, Trumpigtor?? Street, Cambridge. Again, I need details of this venue. I hope you can urgently supply this fellow member with the above requests. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best Wishes,
Wayne L. Gillett
God Bless America
22 Arthur Moody Drive
Newport
Isle of Wight
PO30 5JR
England

GERMAN OIL INDUSTRY

Good day to you Doc,
As always receiving my copy of the 8th AF News was very welcomed. Thank you for the continuing wonderful work! The article on "The German Oil Industry" caught my attention, but not for the good coverage of the subject, although that was very good! On page 28, and on page 30, there are photos of a B-17G of the 487th Bomb Group with it's right wing in flames. Further, in the photo on page 28, it appears the plane is from the 836th squadron of the 487th. Now the reason for my interest is personal. This could very well be my fathers plane which was shot down on 10-Apr-45, and I am very interested in seeing if there is better identification than I can make out on the photos in the article. I have photos of my dad's plane at a time that would have been minutes (?) before these were taken, assuming these are the same craft. One of the photos I have is on the 487th Web site and can be found at <http://www.487thbg.org/Photos/ForeverAmber.shtml>

If you compare the photos in the article and the one on our web site, the available identification along with the position of the flames on the right wing make me very curious. If the photo in your article are the same airplane, I believe your photos may have been taken by a squadron or group trailing my dad's squadron and I believe at

the time these photos were taken the plane in question would have been mostly empty of crew. The tail-gunner was killed in the attack on 10-Apr-45 with all others parachuted to safety. Is there any chance a high quality scan of one or both of the photos in your article might be available for identification? Could I receive copies of such photos?

Best regards,
Lee Hauenstein
Nashua, NH 03062-2518

Hi Y'all,

Well it is over a week since we arrived back home and the holiday is now memories.

We made really good friends with Alan and Joyce Senior and have been in touch with them since we got home. Hopefully they are going to make a visit to the UK in the near future and they will be staying with us for a few days.

John and I would just like to say once again, "Thank you so much for your lovely welcome and the hospitality that you all showed us and making us feel so much at home. We really did appreciate this.

We had a good holiday and I know that John really did enjoy looking round the museum and found it extremely interesting.

We were sorry we didn't see Brenda before we left but perhaps you could pass on our good wishes and thanks for what she did for us.

We have spoken about returning next year and God willing (and money) you may see us again.

Once again, many thanks for your hospitality.

Best wishes,
John and Wendy Green
Barnt Green
Birmingham England

Contributions

Enclosed please find my donation to help with the ground crew exhibit. These men are the unsung heroes who got us to the target and brought us back.

I flew most of my missions on a B-17 named "Lil Audrey" and the crew chief was John DeBug. He was crew chief

first on Rural Wiekerts plane, the "Mary Pat" which was Rural's wife's name. John DeBug was a great crew chief and both of his planes flew 200 missions or more. This was the 385th BG, 551 Sqd. John deserves to be remembered. Sincerely,
James M. Bond, 385th BG

95th BOMB GROUP

Dear Sir:

H. Griff Mumford was the command pilot on the ship "I'll Be Around" with pilot Al Brown on the first B-17's over Berlin. Being three quarters of the way to the target, he said that he didn't hear the mission recall and as long as we had fighter escort went on to the target. The rest of the 8th turned back to England and bombed targets of opportunity. Two days later the whole 8th Air Force went to Berlin. Griff lived in Tiburon, CO. As the 100th Bomb Group didn't have enough planes to form a group, they sent up six available that flew with our group.

Enjoyed your lead article of the seven boys from New Jersey. One was in our 95th group - Walt Hayes. I didn't know him but I knew the places they frequented during the time before the war. Between Caldwell and Ridgewood on Pompton Turnpike was Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook where all the Big Bands played - Miller, Dorsey, Goodman on Coast to Coast radio hook-up. We went there often. Also on route 39 was Paul's cabin where Alvino Rey and the Kingsmen played which were near the field that those in your story about Paul Grassy and his friends frequented.

Yours truly,
Ed Morrison, 95th BG
Ball turret gunner

THE FIX

I have really enjoyed the June 2007 issue of the 8th AF News. There are so many pictures of "the way we were." However, I especially liked the picture at the top of page 12 that shows a flight from my outfit, the 384th. However, if my memory hasn't failed me I detect an error in the caption. It reads, "B-17s of the 447th BG supplies to French Partisans, July 1944." If I'm not mistaken this was my squad-

ron but it was the 547th, not 447th. The 384th BG consisted of the 544th, 545th, 546th and 547th Squadrons. Thanks for a great publication. Bob Honeyman, 384th BG
Bob, you are correct sir. This editor seems to be getting a little old! -Ed

351st BG LEAD NAVIGATOR

Dear Editor:

This is to inform you of the death of my father, Flight Officer/Navigator Paul A. Walker. Unfortunately, I did not become interested in his Air Corps career until shortly before his death on April 27, 2006, or I would have talked to him more about it then instead of trying to find out so much from other sources. I tried to interview him once a couple of months before his death, but he wasn't feeling up to it and never got any better. I was able to gather some information by going through the materials in the records jacket he kept, from pictures he had saved, and from a few things he had told my mother. He did not voluntarily speak of his experiences, but if anyone could have gotten him to talk it would have been me. Once I got through the teen years, we were not only father and son, but also best friends.

Dad arrived in Polebrook to join the 351st Bomb Group in November, 1944 and stayed there through the end of World War II. I believe he was originally with the 510th squadron, but later was reassigned to the 511th squadron. Information in his file indicated that he was a lead navigator, and he once mentioned that he was the navigator on the lead plane for the biggest bombing run in Berlin. Among his pictures were a couple of photos of the B-17 named "Trade Winds." His packet contained a recommendation for promotion to 2nd Lieutenant, and among his things were several sets of gold bars. Dad was discharged in August, 1945; I was born in May, 1946. He and my mom, Helen, had been married for over 63 years at his death. They had six children: Charles, Robert, Janice, David, Pamela, and Karen; eleven grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren. He loved playing cards with his children and grandchildren, and they would all tell you that he

was very competitive. He took up the game of golf at the age of 50 and soon developed a passion for the game. I would like to talk with anybody who served with Dad during his Air Corps years to find out more about his career. If you knew him, please call me or write to me and I will call you.

Sincerely,
Charles A. Walker
P.O. Box 1500
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-576-0671 (Office)
515-573-1045 (Home)
Email: wlo@frontiernet.net

Hub Zemke

Doctor Brown,

In regards to Charles William's Letter: On October 30, 1944 Hubert Zemke was Leading his Group, the 479th FG, on a B - 24 Escort Mission when they flew into bad weather. His P - 51 went into a violent spin and while he was trying to recover, the P - 51 disintegrated and he was thrown from the cockpit. He was captured and sent to the Dulag in Frankfurt where he was held for quite some time and questioned by the Luftwaffe's Master Interrogator, Hans Scharff. Eventually he was transferred to Stalag Luft I on December 16, 1944.

Michael Howell - Member

351st BG LEAD NAVIGATOR

Doctor Brown,

In regards to Charles William's Letter: On October 30, 1944 Hubert Zemke was Leading his Group, the 479th FG, on a B-24 Escort Mission when they flew into bad weather. His P-51 went into a violent spin and while he was trying to recover, the P-51 disintegrated and he was thrown from the Cockpit.

He was Captured and sent to the Dulag in Frankfurt where he was held for quite some time and questioned by the Luftwaffe's Master Interrogator, Hans Scharff.

Eventually, he was transferred to Stalag Luft I on December 16, 1944.

Michael Howell
Member

CHRISTMAS EVE IN 'FORTY-FOUR'

BY PATRICK MUSE (COPYRIGHT)

THIS POEM IS DEDICATED TO LTS. WALTER ULLREY AND WILLIAM O'BRIEN, OUR CREW'S PILOTS, WHOSE FLYING SKILLS AND COOLNESS UNDER FIRE SAVED US FOR THE JOYS OF OLD AGE, GRANDCHILDREN, AND MEMORIES.

*Riddled by the mice of time,
Elbowed back by current woe,
His memory, a persistent chime,
Kept asking, "Is it really so?"
Was it so that English ground,
Trembled under watcher's feet,
From the swelling organ sound,
Of our lifting bomber fleet?*

*Was it true our bombers thundered
Blindly up through Winter night,
Spaced apart in seconds numbered,
Tensely keyed in crowded fight?
Then breaking through to dawn's domain,
Above a sea of rumpled snow,
Pierced by scattered rising planes,
Escaping from the night below?*

*To gather in a lifting tide,
And enter with a long chandelle,
The buncher circle ten miles wide,
A stately clockwise carousel.
Circling slow the group was formed
As planes slid into charted place.
Fifty bombers strong it swarmed
In gleaming, undulating grace.*

*East-southeast the group then flew
To join up with an endless flow,
Two thousand bombers plus a few
To strike the Reich a heavy blow.
High above and on its flanks,
One thousand escort fighters flew
To guard the monstrous droning ranks,
Against the heavies' deepest dread.*

*In this vast extended column
O'er nineteen thousand airmen flew,
Miles above the snow of Belgium
Where Von Rundstedt's tanks broke through.
Tethered each to battle stations
By oxygen umbilical,
Guarding fatal disconnection
With roll calls at close interval.*

*Electric heated gloves and socks,
Kept hands and feet from gangrene freeze.
At four miles high the readings dropped,
To minus fifty-five degrees below.
Above the Cyclones' four-part roar,
Earphones warned of airborne Huns,*

*Of Messerschmitts, a score or more,
Engaging with our Fifty-Ones.*

*As one, without a need for talk,
Formations tightened, wing to waist,
As gunners searched around the clock
For other Staffels to be faced.
A ramming, falling, flaming Hell,
At two o'clock the battle raged,
Too far to tell who's fighters fell,
Or know what this melee presaged.*

*For it then some One-O-Nines,
Those distant, diving, darting gleams,
Had arrowed through our fighter lines,
To shoot down thirteen "Seventeens."
The German planes then dove for cover,
Those still left alive to fly.
Our Fifty-Ones returned to hover,
Aloft in contrail-ribboned sky.*

*So it was, that Christmas Eve,
Above Liege in "Forty-Four,"
That bombers fell like burning leaves,
From group behind and group before.
4th Combat Wing the Eighth had led,
And paid the toll of leading,
General Castle among its dead,
The torn, the burned, the bleeding.*

*The bloodied bomb groups made amends,
As wingmen pulled ahead to lead.
In time they'd mourn their fallen friends,
But now they marched at cruising speed.
On, the mammoth bomber strike,
Into snow-clad Germany.
Dividing then and spreading like
The branches of a deadly tree.*

*Each branch of combat wing to hunt,
Its marshalling yard below,
With shells and ammo for the front
Inside the boxcars, row on row.
The gods of war, in recompense,
Gave Babenhausen to the Fourth,
A small town on the river Gunz,
A Danube feeder flowing north.*

*From Splendor in The Skies
-B-17 Flying Fortress Association*

A BOMBER'S STORY

by Del Routh

NEXGEN – Wilmington, NC

There are many stories that can be told of countless military personnel from the Revolutionary War to the present-day Iraq situation. But this one is one of our own which happened a long time ago. The names are forgotten and may not be known to everyone now, but the story can stir the emotions and heartbeat of those who read it, and possibly relate to it.

One day while I was browsing the Internet, I stumbled across a Web page about bombers, B-24 Liberators, the ones that were used in World War II. As I was looking over the page I opened a link to MACR (Missing Air Crew Report). Next to each crew listed was the pilot's name, which the crew was named after. I opened the one named RUDD. As I read the page that referred to everything about the RUDD crew and its history I found where this crew had been shot down while on its 14th mission, and the plane on its 44th to bomb Hanover, Germany.

What interested me in this particular crew was that the bombardier, 2nd Lieutenant William 'Bill' Spencer, was a native of New Hanover County. He attended the University of North Carolina and later went into the Army Air Corps, attending bombardier school. He was married while in bombardier school out in Carlsbad, New Mexico, October 16th, 1943. His parents and sister as well as his bride's parents attended his wedding, along with his older brother who was also in the military. Just a solemn, very meaningful marriage with few attendees. After graduating from school he was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant and was assigned to the 392nd Bomb Group, 578th Squadron out of Wendling, England, 8 July of 1944.

Lt. Spencer was among the many very young officers and enlisted men who were crews on these airplanes. Many of the pilots, navigators, and bombardiers were as young as 20 years of age, and given the task of flying these big machines

hundreds of miles and bombing a selected target numerous times a month, and returning to base. What courage it must have taken to get into one of these planes, and know you might not come back this mission! But many of them did, and many did not. The United States didn't have a foothold across the English Channel until the D-Day invasion, 6 June 1944. We only had the bombers flying out of England and Italy that were destroying the German war machine. If it had not been for these courageous young airmen, doing this each day, week after week and month after month, D-Day may never have taken place.

On the early morning of 11 September 1944, Lt. Spencer along with his crew boarded their B-24 Liberator nicknamed "Ford's Folly" on its 44th mission. Somewhere during the mission the bomb group came under heavy attack by the Luftwaffe and as observed by eyewitness accounts, the aircraft was hit in the number three engine and fully engulfed by fire, rolling over, falling, and smashing into the ground, near the town of Winnen, Germany. No parachutes were seen, but two crew members bailed out and later were captured. The eight crewmen were initially buried in a German cemetery, and then moved to a U.S. military cemetery in Belgium after the war. In 1950, Lt. Spencer, the pilot, and co-pilot were reburied together in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in Missouri. In all, of the 10 crew members of "Ford's Folly," eight died and two lived. Lt. Spencer was only stationed in England two months before his death, and was only married for eleven months.

Then, as today, many young men and women go out and do what is asked of them, and do not always return. Many thanks to all of the men and women in our armed forces for every conflict we have fought and to those who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

REUNIONS

490th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION.

September 4-7, 2008

Crowne Plaze Hotel

San Diego, CA

Contact: Howard Johnston

858-578-4528 email:

HOJOGUAVA@aol.com or Tony Bezer

619-296-2904 email: oliversue@aol.com

8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

34TH ANNUAL REUNION

August 4-7, 2008

Savannah, Georgia

ROYAL AIR FORCE MUSEUM

The Royal Air Force Museum is proud to announce the launch of its new online print store.

www.rafmuseumphotos.com

This new facility includes a wide range of aviation subjects, including the Royal Air Force, Civil Aircraft, Fleet Air Arm, Research Aircraft and World War Two. The selection of pictures available is constantly being updated and expanded.

The aerial shots capture classic aircraft from every era of aviation history, from bi-planes of yesteryear.

As well as ordering high quality prints for display use, the site also offers a fantastic range of gift ideas. Users have a choice of transferring their favorite picture into a canvas print, a T-shirt, mug or framed picture. At the click of a mouse, they will be delivered to your door.



Avro Tutor



Spitfire Vb

AIR RAID IN THE STALAGS

I was a POW in Stalag Luft I (Barth) and was the navigator on "Gl Jane" B-17 from the 388th Bomb Group 560 Bomb Sq.

I was shot down on Sept 28 1944 over Koblenz Germany. Our target was Merseberg on that day. We had engine fires plus other "good stuff" trying to get back to French safe areas.

My reason for writing this letter is in regard to the AF News Sept 2007 issue p.22 in reference to Camp Commander. Attached is a copy of Colonel Hubert Zemke's Memo of 19 Jan 1945 which would be of interest to readers (AF News).

Camp C.O. Col. Zemke
North I Lt. Col. Greening
North II Lt. Col. Wilson
North III Lt. Col. Gabreski
South Col. Malstrom
....Always Happy Landings...
Edward Stachyra, 388th BG
Palos Hills, IL

HEADQUARTERS, PROVISIONAL WING
X, U.S. AAF

Stalag Luft 1, /Barth, Germany/
19 January 1945

Memorandum

1. With regard to my protect against the German Camp Order No. 1 it is requested that the following supplementary information be given to all personnel within your respective Compounds:

Air Raid Alerts

1. The German guards will give each respective compound leader warning of an air raid by coming within the area and blowing their whistles and from the guards in the towers. In the cases where men are assembled in Church, at the theatre and at work in the mess-halls, a German guard will enter the building and announce to them the fact that an air raid alert is being sounded. After the hours of official daylight and until lock-up time German guards will go into each barracks and notify the occupants of an air raid.

2. When the air raid occurs the respec-

tive German Compound /lager/guards will enter the compound and notify the compound by calling out in German.

"Alarm verbel", or All Clear. With regard to Church, the theatre or the Mess halls, these will be informed by a German guard entering the building and announcing in German to the personnel, "Alarm vebel" or All Clear. After the hours of official daylight and until lock-up time each barracks will be notified by a German guard that it is all clear.

Barracks Guards

I would recommend still further that each respective barracks guard we have be given the task of notifying his barracks when an air raid is sounded and when the all clear is given.

3. Yesterday, I was informed by the Germans that an air raid horn is being asked for to take the place of the present system.

Hubert Zemke
Colonel, USAAF
Commanding

Chapter News

NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER

The Chapter held its Fall business meeting October 13 in Statesville. It was decided to have only one meeting a year due to low attendance at the usual two meetings. The Reunion meeting will be held in the Spring. The three Wings continue to meet on their own schedules.

The Eastern Wing met October 25 in Raleigh. The program was a slide show of the Alfred May Collection from the North Carolina Museum of History presented by Tom Belton, Military Curator. May was a Private in the Confederacy from Eastern North Carolina who survived and returned to his family home. The Collection includes uniform items and equipment such as a typical pup tent, Union pistol with bullets in the chamber, and his rifle. Tom told a number of facts about North Carolina's history of the War Between The States and answered questions from the audience.

The Metrolina Wing met October 16 at the Red Rocks Cafe in Charlotte. The speaker was Dewey Dorsett, a B-17 co-pilot of 14 Feb 44, in the 303rd Bomb Group. He spoke about the Dresden Mission. Their next meeting will be December 18 at the Red Rocks Cafe.

The Western Wing continues to meet monthly at Bay Breeze Seafood Restaurant in Hendersonville. In September our speaker was Ken MacNichol, past President of the Florida Chapter, who spends his summers in Hendersonville. The November speaker was Ed Logan, a B-17 pilot and author of JUMP DAMN IT JUMP! He is a frequent speaker in our

area and the East Coast. The highlight in recent months was a presentation of a set of flags for the Western Wing by local Cub Scout Pack 615. The veterans and their families in attendance were deeply touched by the boys' patriotic gesture. They each read letters they had written to honor the WWII veterans in recognition of their heroic service to our country and the cause of freedom. They did a great job.

Marion Morel, Secretary

NORTH EAST IOWA WING

The North East Wing, of our Iowa Chapter, met at the Elks Lodge in Waterloo on Friday Oct. 26, 2007 for a noon luncheon. Thirty-three people attended the meeting.

The meeting began with the singing of "America" followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the invocation under the very able leadership of Syd Thomas. Leon Mehring gave the Treasurer's report and served as cashier for the meeting with the very able assistance of his wife, Vera. Leon also reported to us of his 305th Bomb Group reunion the week before, and what a good turnout they had. It was well-planned and was a highlight of the season. Our congratulations to Leon who was elected President of his 305th Bomb Group Memorial Association.

Our program was a presentation by Harold Brock, telling of his experiences with the Ford Motor Co. as an Engineer during the time the Ford Motor Co. was producing B-24s for the war effort during WWII.

Harold knew Henry Ford and Thomas Edison personally as he worked with them in designing and engineering for about 26 years.

Harold also told us of his experiences as a founder of Hawkeye Institute of Technology -- now Hawkeye Community College -- and of the many advantages of this community college to our young people and

the community.

It was a very interesting presentation, which captured and held the attention of everyone present.

Robert C. Reeves

N.E. Iowa Wing Commander

OREGON CHAPTER

It was a good turnout for our November '07 quarterly meeting. Sixty plus members and guests gathered to meet, greet, and eat at the Beaverton Elks Lodge.

After the call to order by President Tom Davis and the Pledge to the Flag, our chaplain, Roland Stewart (466th BG) offered the opening prayer. As is custom for the November meeting, Roland read the names and obituaries for the nine veteran members of our Chapter who passed away during the past year, and who remain honored in our memory. Among reports of Chapter officers, our keeper of membership records, Past President Joe Conroy (306th BG), reported that we now have a total of 164 members: 99 veterans and 65 non-vets. Nominated, and elected unanimously were Tom Davis, President; Charles Gallagher (95th BG); Tom Philo, Secretary re-elected (forever); and H. Albert Campbell, Treasurer. There were also three open Board of Directors slots for the coming year. Elected to those positions were Wally Groce (56th FG), Don Millar (379th BG), and Clint Gruber (93rd BG).

Before lunch, President Davis called on Wally Groce to talk about some of his experiences as a P-47 pilot in the famed 56th Fighter Group, "Zemke's Wolf-pack". Groce flew 73 bomber escort and bombing and strafing missions for a total of over 300 combat hours. He vividly described one mission in which he became one of a very special and limited number of fighter pilots who had shot down a German ME 262 jet fighter!

Following the lunch break, President Davis introduced the program speaker, Lt. Col Jim Boyle, USAF (Ret). Col Boyle had a very interesting and varied 30-year career in the Air Force, beginning in 1943.

During Vietnam he was flying re-supply to several outposts, including one



L-R: The North Carolina Cub Scouts, Den Mother, three boys from Cub Scout Pack 615, Scoutmaster Jim Motes and recently deceased Western Wing Commander, Vic Brown.

Chapter News

where two other ships arrived at almost the same time. The traffic controller on the ground was faced with the problem of which airplane to land first on the short, dusty strip. In deciding, he called each one to ask, "What is your cargo?" The first pilot answered "Ammo". The second answered "Food". Boyle, in number three position, answered "Beer!" Loud and clear came the reply, "Number three, you are clear to land!" Prompted to tell his most harrowing story, Boyle told of his action in the rescue of several Green Berets, totally surrounded by the enemy and in imminent danger of death or capture. Landing his aircraft under intense fire, Boyle managed to take off again with all the soldiers safely aboard and back to base. For this heroic and dangerous action, Boyle was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. Following his duty in Vietnam, Boyle was reassigned, this time again to an education slot as Commandant of the highly rated AFROTC program at the

University of Portland. In 1973 Lt. Col Jim Boyle retired after 30 years extensive and productive service to our country and settled with his family in Portland.
submitted by
Clint Gruber

MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER

The Chapter members enjoyed a very active year, with frequent gatherings for special activities by the members, June and July being the busiest of the months in 2007. They Chapter spent a day at the WWII Museum in Natick and also in June had a day trip to the battleship U.S.S. Massachusetts in Fall River.

On July 17th the troops had their biggest day of the year. Members took part in the 51st annual Veteran's Day fishing trip sponsored in part by Harvey's Saltwater Fishing Club. More than 170 veterans, a number coming from area VA Hospitals boarded 20 fishing boats for a day in Boston

Harbor. Several of our 8th guys caught fish. October saw the Chapter meeting at Hanscom Air Force Base for their Fall Luncheon. Of special note was the election of long-time Chapter member Al Audette as the President of the 385th Bomb Group Association during the Group's annual reunion held in conjunction with the annual 8th AF Historical Society reunion in Kalamazoo.

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

Chapter members heard Otha "Skeets" Vaughn speak on his effort to locate one of the aircraft that he had taken his training instruction in, finding the airplane 56 years after the event. On November 4th, Veterans and Chapter members took part in the premier of the documentary, *Alabama Remembers*, a tribute to those who served.

OHIO CHAPTER

The Ohio Chapter met for a three-day weekend annual reunion at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton,

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER



Bill Varnedoe, at right, with members of the North Alabama Chapter before their participation in the Veterans Day parade.

Chapter News

Ohio. The Hope hotel, on the base, was the central hotel. Business meetings were conducted the first day of the reunion and the rest of the time was spent primarily in the bacchanalia of the Chapter's Hospitality Room. A banquet dinner was held at the Wright-Patterson facility, with Sunday morning Good-byes until next time. During the weekend, tributes were given to three members who recently passed away: Clark Yokum, William Alexis, and Sam Weaver.

Special notice was given to Jim Erskine, who died in 2005.

TENNESSEE CHAPTER

We enjoyed a great 357th Fighter Group reunion in Linton, Indiana, August 30 - September 1, 2007.

I suggest that merging the 357th FG and Tennessee Chapter for 2008 in Lebanon will cause a fine celebration. You have met many of the 357th at one time or another.

The highlight of the Linton mini was a flight in the host's Ultra Light aircraft.

Best wishes,

John Bacon, 357th FG

Palm Harbor, FL

The combined reunion of the 357th FG and Tennessee Chapter 8th AFHS is now planned. -Ed.

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

The summary of activities for 2007 in the Washington Chapter includes a March presentation by Korean War pilot General Dick Rainsworth who flew F4U Corsairs. In April Chapter members visited the Museum of Flight in Seattle with a panel discussion by five P-51 pilots. In May the Chapter was represented at the annual reunion of the American Fighter Aces Association in Seattle. Representation by Chapter members was also at the annual Gathering of Warbirds at the Olympic Flight Museum in Olympia.

Monthly meetings featured a wide variety of guest speakers and presentations throughout the year, continuing the Chapter's close association and support of area air-history Museums. In addition, the Washington State Chapter may be reached on the web at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eighthafpierce/>.

ILLINOIS CHAPTER

The Illinois Chapter paid special tribute to those servicemen from Illinois who were Prisoners of War or Missing in Action during our Nation's wars. Their families were recognized by the Chapter as well.

A special thanks was given to Chapter Members Chip Buerger and George Bruckert who are members of the

Living History Group in Illinois. Both proudly wore their uniforms and set up displays for the enjoyment of Historical Society members attending the 2007 national reunion in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

The New Mexico Chapter of the 8th AFHS held its annual Fall General Membership Meeting and Luncheon at the Sheraton Uptown Hotel, on Saturday, 20 October 2007.

President Hal Goetsch opened the meeting at 12:00 pm with the election of officers and Board Members. They are: Larry Stebleton - President, Carl



Passing the gavel

After ten years of exemplary managing and directing the NM Chapter of the 8th AFHS, President Hal Goetsch retired Oct. 20, 2007. Hal says it's time to pass the gavel and enjoy his remaining years.

Hal, as president, has achieved tremendous accomplishments. Under his leadership membership doubled. Hal was instrumental in the conception of the stone and bronze 8th Air Force memorial that is placed in the NM Veteran's Park. Mr. Hal Goetsch a combat veteran of the Mighty Eighth, was a tail gunner of the B-17 with the 385th Bomb Group and was shot down on his 16th mission, after a bombing run over Merseburg, Germany to destroy a synthetic oil manufacturing plant. He was held captive in P.O.W. camps from Nov. 1944 until May 1945. He spent 262 days as a prisoner.

A special thanks to you, Hal.



357th Fighter Group Will Meet with Tennessee Chapter 2008

Front L to R - Ray LePore, Joe Cannon, Jesse Frey. Back L to R - John Bacon, Lloyd Lukkommen; Walter Baker, Guy Bender, Gray Berg

Chapter News

Albright - Vice President, Bill Petynia - 2nd Vice President, Ray Pohl - Treasurer, Samantha Blauwkamp - Membership Chairperson, and Al Schwery - Secretary. President, Larry Stebleton, USAF (Lt. Col., Ret) is a West Point graduate and a veteran of the 8th Air Force. Larry, a former president of the NM Chapter agreed to serve once again as President.

Bill Petynia, aeronautical engineer, was the featured speaker. A World War II B-24 navigator, Mr. Petynia, is a graduate of the University of Florida. Mr. Petynia talked about his work with NASA, and the space vehicles he help design. He retired in 1981 after 32 years, of which nine were spent with NACA, National Advisory Commission for Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Mr. Petynia was chief preliminary designer of the Columbia Spacecraft. His works also included design, development and flight testing of the Mercury, Apollo and Shuttle. In the course of his projects he had occasion to interface with many of the Astronauts.

Submitted by:
Al Schwery, Secretary



**Speaker Bill Petynia,
Aeronautical Engineer**

Make sure you stay in contact with those who mean something to you, and you will be surprised how much you mean to them.

**Chaplain Billy Jones,
Mississippi Chapter 8th AFHS**

CONTINUING THE 8TH AF LEGACY #13 Joseph Patrick Keeley

Greeting fellow members of the Mighty Eighth.

I have recently been asked to give an 8th AFHS definition of exactly

'What does NexGen mean?'

The main goal is simple. To 'Keep the Memories Alive' of those of our Country's Greatest Generation. The goal is simple but the task is challenging. Our first goal is to get members both in local organizations and the National Society. We need to get the NexGens more involved with local 8th AF organizations and the National Historical Society. We are accomplishing this in a number of ways.

- Online at the Mighty Eighth's website, www.8thafhs.org, one can become a member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society as one can on any launched Chapter/Units website.
- Publishing in local newspapers 8th Air Force organizations reunions and meetings.

• Speaking at local schools and circulating the 8th AF Magazine and other related material in the waiting rooms of doctors, dentists and other such places, local libraries etc. Getting the word out and promoting our goal to "Keep the Memories Alive".

I believe that this defines the NexGen movement. We are always open for suggestions and welcome them.

Please keep in mind that the 34th 8th AFHS Annual Reunion will be held in Savannah, Georgia, in early August and should prove to be one the Society's best having the Mighty Eighth Museum located in Pooler, Georgia.

Remember we recommend two great websites for those doing research. www.8thafhs.org & www.b24.net

I would like to thank those who have contacted me and I welcome it. My

next article will give an updated membership initiative report as this continues to be impressive. I welcome our new members and thank you.

If you have any comments or idea's regarding the Society's NexGen Initiatives my address is posted on the back of the front cover page and my email address is fxe84@optonline.net. Please remember to "Support Our Troops"

**Pat Keeley
Board of Directors 8AFHS**



8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PX

at the Mighty Eighth Museum Store

QTY	8TH AFHS PX ORDER FORM DESCRIPTION	PRICE	OPTIONS	TOTAL
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	Baseball Cap w/8 th AFHS logo embroidered	\$12.95	Red, White, Blue	
	8 th AFHS 4" jacket Patch	\$3.95	NA	
	8 th AFHS 3/4" pin w/clutch back	\$3.50	Member, Life Member	
	8 th AFHS bumper sticker	\$.90	NA	
	8 th AFHS 4" round sticker	\$.75	NA	
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	8 th AF logo silk tie	\$27.99	Red, Navy	
	8 th AF 3" patch	\$3.98	NA	
	8 th AF 1" pin w/clutch back	\$3.50	NA	
	8 th AF logo white T-shirt	\$10.99	S, M, L, XL	
	8 th AF logo gray T-shirt	\$12.99	2X	
		\$14.99	S, M, L, XL	
			2X	
	Puppy Power T-Shirt	\$15.99	2T, 3T, 4T	
	8 th Logo watch	\$79.99	Men, Ladies	
	Gold Mighty 8 th Challenge Coin	\$8.95	NA	
	Embroidered Baseball Caps	\$19.99	P38, P51, B17, B24	
	Mahogany Replica Plane	\$49.99	B17, B24, P38, P51	
	A-2 Jacket	\$299.99	40, 42, 44, 46, 48	
	Extreme Sports Mighty 8 th Jacket	\$49.99	M, L, XL, XXL	
	Sheila's Collectible Mighty 8 th Museum World War II Monument Armed Service Tribute	\$29.99, \$24.99, \$23.99	NA	
	Jimmy Stewart Bomber Pilot (Book)	\$21.95	NA	
	Masters of the Air (Book)	\$35.00	NA	
	Flags of Our Fathers (Book)	\$8.95	NA	
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#1



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#2



FOREWORD.

Embodied in these pages are battle-tested fundamentals in the exercise of command and employment of Air Power, adherence to which has contributed to the success of two of this War's outstanding commanders.

It is my express desire that these precepts be known to every officer in the Army Air Forces. Let them serve as his inspiration in the accomplishment of the task that lies ahead.


H. H. ARNOLD
General, U. S. Army
Commanding General, Army Air Forces

AIR POWER IN THE LAND BATTLE

INTRODUCTION.

The principles in the following paragraphs are not just "staff doctrine." They are the outcome of the practical experience of two of our most successful Commanders, General Montgomery and Air Marshal Coningham.

I commend them for study by all officers of the Royal Air Force who aspire to the command of air forces taking part in warfare on land.


Chief of the Air Staff.

AIR MINISTRY,
May 1943.

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Officers in possession of a copy of this pamphlet will be responsible for its safe custody. It must NOT fall into enemy hands.

AIR POWER IN THE LAND BATTLE

A NOTE BY THE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF

FOR DISTRIBUTION TO EACH ARMY AIR FORCES OFFICER

AIR MINISTRY
REPRINTED
June 1943

R. & R. DAYTON—7.12.43—200M

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COMMAND.

1. The system of command which has proved so successful is exemplified in the following statements by General Montgomery and Air Marshal Coningham:—"The commander of an Army in the field should have an air headquarters with him which will have direct control and command of such squadrons as may be allotted for operations in support of his Army. Such air resources will be in support of his Army and not under his command."—General Montgomery.

"The soldier commands the land forces, the airman the air forces; both commanders work together and operate their respective forces in accordance with a combined Army/Air plan, the whole operations being directed by the Army commander."—Air Marshal Coningham.

In this technical age it needs a life of study for a soldier or an airman to learn his own profession. Hence it is wrong for either to command the other's forces. Nevertheless, both soldiers and airmen need a thorough knowledge of the capabilities and limitations of each other's Service, for this knowledge is the foundation of mutual confidence and understanding. In the words of General Montgomery: "All that is required is that the two staffs, Army and Air, should work together at the same headquarters in complete harmony and with complete mutual understanding and confidence."

CONCENTRATION.

2. "Nothing could be more fatal to successful results than to dissipate the air resources into small packets placed under the command of Army formation commanders with each packet working on its own plan. The soldier must not expect or wish to exercise direct command over air striking forces."—General Montgomery.

Even when air supremacy has been gained and the whole weight of air power is focussed on battlefield

3

targets, forward Army formations must not always expect targets which appear good to them, and which they have reported, to be attacked. Neither must troops in the front line always expect to see the results of air action. In the words of Air Marshal Coningham: "A front formation reports a concentration of 200 M.T. and accompanying arms. Its request for air attack is turned down. 15 or 20 miles away, however, there is a concentration of 2,000 or more, indicating an Armoured Division or even larger forces. This concentration we know from experience will probably affect the whole battle area perhaps 10, 18 or 24 hours later. It is this concentration which is receiving all the weight of air attack and that is why the comparatively little target on the front is ignored. The smaller formations of the Army must understand that penny packets of air times and that judgment on the question of targets is the result of agreement between the Army and Air commanders."

FLEXIBILITY.

3. "The greatest asset of air power is its flexibility and this enables it to be switched quickly from one objective to another in the theatre of operations. So long as this is realised then the whole weight of the available air power can be used in selected areas in turn; this winning factor of the air striking force, is a battle-Montgomery.

Thus before the last great battle air forces were first ports and

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the advance, when numbers of lorries, tanks and guns are found abandoned through lack of fuel.

CENTRALISED CONTROL.

4. "The Army fights on a front that may be divided into sectors such as a brigade, division, corps or an Army front. The air front is indivisible. An Army has one battle to fight, the land battle. The air has two. It has first of all to beat the enemy air so that it may go into the land battle against the enemy land forces with the maximum possible hitting power."—Air Marshal Coningham.

The fighter governs the front and this fact alone forces the centralisation of air control into the hands of one commander operating on that front, since the action of all other aircraft must be co-ordinated with that of fighters. This is confirmed by General Montgomery, who says "Control of the available air power must be exercised through R.A.F. channels."

CAPTURE AND SECURITY OF LANDING GROUNDS.

5. "We cannot fight successfully on land without the closest co-operation of the R.A.F. We cannot get this co-operation in full measure and without interruption unless we are active in securing aerodromes and landing grounds, and unless we ensure that these are at all times adequately protected against ground or air attack. Therefore, this factor must be kept to the fore in our planning."—General Montgomery.

During the advance through Tripoli there were some notable examples of this "air co-operation" by the Army, who fully realised that the capture and clearing of landing grounds was of mutual benefit to both Services and therefore did it wholeheartedly.

One example of this was at Hamreit when the New Zealanders detailed 2,000 fighting-men to pick stones and make a landing ground. On other occasions a whole brigade was detailed unhesitatingly for this duty, even

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though the use of fighting troops in this way meant the postponement of operations. Perhaps the best example is that of Sedada, which is a place almost midway between Tripoli from the fighter aerodromes south of Tamet. Air Marshal Coningham recalls that a possible site was selected in this area before the attack began. He says "In this battle the advanced forces of the spearhead of the 7th Armoured Division took with them a landing ground party and one or two specialist personnel. They reached the area at dusk and on breaking camp next morning threw off the aerodrome party, 18 to 24 prizes Bofors, M.T. and the Ambulance Holding Unit. By 9 o'clock word was received that a landing strip was ready. Two squadrons of fighters, escorting a transport plane with the necessary R.D.F. and immediate requirements, landed. They flew on their auxiliary tanks, which were immediately dropped, and they were then at readiness. Two other squadrons flew on a further 80 miles to within 40 miles of Tripoli where they bombed and landed back at Sedada. By this time air transports were coming in with fuel, ammunition and personnel. By that evening the Bofors guns and M.T., which had been loaned, and the same aerodrome specialists had rejoined the divisional advanced forces 30 miles further on and already the fighters were operating a further 70 miles beyond. By the following morning two more landing grounds 40 miles ahead of Sedada had been sited and work commenced, and the whole fighter force was operating a further 80 miles than it had done the previous day. It was on this day that the Army commander moved 100 miles forward with his armoured brigade, so you can judge the importance of this machinery of fighter advance in such highly mobile warfare. It was made possible by careful planning, preparation and complete mutual adjustment of work and resources between the Army and air forces concerned."

SHE'S A HONEY

by Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price
Curator - Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum

Pilot George C. "Charley" Kuhl, co-pilot Bob Law, bombardier John Stanley, navigator Fred Tate, radio operator Paul McConahey, flight engineer and top turret gunner John Jenkins, ball turret gunner Nick Paradiso, tail gunner Don Seeley, and waist gunner Dale Remaly all arrived in England in December 1944 and were assigned to the 305th Bomb Group. They flew 35 missions between that December and April 1945. The B-17 Flying Fortress that they christened "She's a Honey" had been assigned to the 305th Bomb Group on 11 February 1944. This heavy bomber continued to fly missions until V-E Day and then flew back to the United States on 3 July 1945. Kuhl named this B-17 for his mother Virginia Kuhl whose nickname was "Honey". Bombardier John Stanley designed and sketched the nose art depicting a honey bee dressed in G.I. shoes walking on clouds with a six-shooter in each hand and a radio antenna for a stinger. Meanwhile, open bomb bay doors on the bee's abdomen have dropped a bomb. The crew all helped paint the design of the aircraft.

As a member of the 8th Air Force, Dale Remaly saw his military service as a way to "counter a great evil rearing its head in the world," and simultaneously as an "opportunity to see America and other countries." With V-E Day and the end of World War II in Europe, Remaly wrote of his impressions while taking members of the ground crew on a Trolley Tour.

WE TOUR THE BATTLEFIELD

by Dale Remaly, 305th BG

Today I had the greatest thrill of a lifetime. In a feeble way I'm going to describe what I observed from very low altitude on an eight-hour observation mission over Belgium, France and Germany.

We took along with us eleven ground crew members who for two and a half years have been faithful mechanics who kept our planes in the air through tough going and easy sailing. Today we gave them a chance to see the fruits of their faithful service with which they provided the combat crews.

When you look down on what used to be a thriving, busy city like Cologne and find only heaps of rubble, it is a horrible, terrible sadistic sight which one will never forget. Not just one city, town, or village but at all points where enemy resistance was met there is nothing but bleached bones and huge crater graves of ghost towns and cities; mute, desolate, barren, devoid of any living thing.

We took off from base and flew eastward over the beautiful English country side, dressed this time of the year in a green velvet coat of spring. Passing over the English coast, the mouth of the Thames was alive with ships sailing to and fro. The Belgium coast is only a few minutes away and we all eagerly awaited for it to come in view.

The beaches along the Belgium coast line were strewn with anti-landing obstacles such as railroad ties and barbed wire; some shaped in the form of huge "jacks" in depth.



World War II photograph used by Dale Remaly for his painting - *She's A Honey*

Across Belgium and France the population was celebrating V-E Day. From every house and building flew the flags of the respective country. Farmers in the fields stopped their cultivating and raised their arms to form V's as we passed overhead.

Over one French village two small children threw themselves flat in a ditch beside their home, active testimony that the horrors of war still register indelibly on their young minds. The mother appeared in the doorway and waved to us.

We passed over the Ruhr, the "Happy Valley," the "Flak Happy Valley" as we call it. It always took its toll of planes. The world's heaviest concentration of flak over a wide area was used to protect the Reich's main industries. Today it lies in



**From left, standing: Law, Kuhl, Tate.
Second row: McConahey, Stanley, Jenkins, Remaly. Front row: Paradiso, Seeley**

ruins.

We observed Aachen, Essen, Gelsenkirchen, Dortmund, Munster, Dusseldorf, Bonn, Koblenz, Frankfurt and Cologne. It was the same in every case. In Aachen there are four walls, or should I say parts of walls, standing in the town. The large church in the center is still standing, but gutted. The surrounding urban area has been flattened and pulverized. In



**Dale Remaly, *She's a Honey*, 1952;
Oil on Canvas; 22 x 28 inches**

places there weren't even piles of rubble, just flat expanses of nothing mingled with huge craters filled with stagnant water. Street patterns were gone; no living thing moved.

Even the combat flying personnel, the pilots, navigators, toggliers, engineers, and gunners looked down on the frightful destruction and shook their heads without comment. Words were futile.

Towns and cities of death passed beneath our wings, ghost cities, pale, ghostly, in the morning ground haze. They could well be called grave yards of war. They were now skeletons, rubble, ashes, earth, and clay.

As we circled Cologne, the center of the city for at least one square mile in area was blasted to bits. In the center, still erect, but somewhat battered, stood the Cologne Cathedral. Not one house in Cologne has escaped damage. No walls of any building are standing around the center of the city except the Cathedral. Nothing moved below us. There were no signs of life.

The bridges over the Rhine are twisted pretzels in crazy patterns, sticking half in, half out of the water as if a giant hand had used them for toys. The Remagen Bridge at Cologne, a twisted mass of girders, rested half submerged in its watery grave.

Not only cities but small villages and hamlets were lev-

eled, revealing nothing alive. Strong points such as bunkers, pill boxes, and the "dragon teeth" in the Siegfried Line were burned out and reduced to ashes.

Let no one say that the German people are not thoroughly beaten. There is no remote doubt that every man, woman and child in Germany knows that he is utterly conquered and utterly defeated. The German people chose their way to destruction. They tolerated and allowed Nazism to guide them to their ultimate and complete cataclysm.

Dale E. Remaly, 305th BG
15 March 1945

After World War II, Remaly returned to teaching high school social studies but never forgot his service with the Eighth Air Force. In 1952 he completed an oil on canvas board painting of a photograph he had of the B-17 "She's a Honey." This painting is now in the collection of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum and was recently included in the exhibition, A Brush with Destiny, that featured art by members of the 8th Air Force and provided visual expression of the importance each veteran places on his military service.

RIBBONS WE WILL WEAR

The sun, though mindful of the cloud
Whose shadow earth has crowned
And lost from view by those below,
Ne'er falters in her round.

How many deeds burn bright as suns,
Undimmed by clouded boast,
This one shone through the haze of war
Far off the German coast.

A burning Fortress nosing down
Into the cold North Sea,
A swarm of flashing fighters
Her bitter company.

I saw the bursts of cannon shells
Like tinsel in the sky,
I saw the wispy evidence,
The breath of guns reply.

And as I marked the hopelessness,
The fateful trail of smoke,
I marveled that, so near the end,
Her turret guns still spoke.

Aboard that ship they had one chance,
Some were alive to know,
Control enough seemed left to ditch
And seconds left to go.

Seconds left to struggle free
Of parachutes and gear.
To brace against the coming shock
And get the life rafts clear.

And yet those stubborn turret guns,
As though of their own will,
Were pounding out the evidence
Of mad defiance still.

And as I watched the angry seas
Arose to check their glide,
Then built a shaft of ivory foam
Her crippled catch to hide.

And then again their ship appeared,
I had one backward glance
Of smoke-ringed tracers streaking up
From where the white caps danced.

Of white caps dancing crisp and cold
Upon an empty sea.
Of German fighters fading East
In heavens canopy.

Now we will all have ribbons bright
To pin beneath our wings
And fellow men will know that we
Were in the thick of things.

These tokens we'll be proud to wear,
But others are more prized
And in our hearts, are worn for men
Who died unrecognized.

J.B. Boyle, POW #1356
Sagan, Germany
Dec. 1943

"Young man," said the Judge, looking at Murphy, the town drunk and defendant. "It's alcohol and alcohol alone that's responsible for your present sorry state!"

"I'm so glad to hear you say that, Judge" replied Murphy, with a sigh of relief. "Everybody keeps blaming me!"

-from 3rd Strategic Air Depot Association Newsletter

An article of interest plagiarized from Red Harper's Alabama Chapter *Propwash* considers the accidents and losses of the WWII Army Air Force, derived from the Army Air Force Statistical Digest WWII published in 1945. These figures represent a little-known side of the war, intimately related to the individual stories of those airmen who had a job to do during the war, and they did it. These statistics, as related by 100th BG control tower personnel member Bill Hooks, do not separate the accidental losses from combat losses. They are impressive.

In the continental U. S. 1942-45 there were 131 fatal P-51 Mustang accidents with the loss of 358 aircraft. P-47 pilots wrecked 1125 fighters and 455 fatalities were recorded.

Total fatalities, mostly in training accidents, were 13,624 fatalities with 12,506 aircraft wrecked. Overseas statistics escalated. Also of interest is the fact that there were 909 aircraft lost en route to the combat theater.

Hooks records a number of additional facts of interest. From 1942-45 9,707,109 gallons of gas were used; 459,750,000 rounds of ammo were expended and from 1943-45 7,952,000 bombs were dropped. There were 2,362,800 combat sorties from Dec 41-45. 799,972 propellers were delivered and 40,259 enemy a/c were destroyed.

- Bill Hooks, 100 BG

THE CASTLE COMBE GROUP AND CHARLES JONES

General Ira Eaker, when he was Commander of the 8th Air Force in England, promoted camaraderie among his men and often invited them over to his home in East Anglia. The original group of nine officers were known as the Castle Combe Group. Eaker ordered eight silver cups for his officers and a silver punch bowl and ladle for himself. After the war, the group dispersed, but often brought their cups to 8th reunions.

The punch bowl and four of the cups have re-sided at the home of the 8th at Barksdale AFB. Recently the son of Charles "Red" Jones found his father's cup that was engraved with his name. The senior Jones was one of the original officers under Eaker. Recently General Robert

Elder, current commander of the 8th Air Force went to Lake Martin, Alabama to accept the cup from the Jones family and return it to its place with the silver bowl. The meeting was under the auspices of Lt. General E. G. "Buck" Shuler, who is a family friend. Gen. Elder states "The only time we move this special bowl and cups is to an annual event at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, an event of three- and four-star generals who each bring with them a piece of heraldic history representative of their organization."

The remainder of the Jones memorabilia has been donated to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum research archives in Pooler, Georgia. Donated to the Charles A. Jones Collection are 782 original photographs, manuscripts, letters, documents and Jones's ribbons and medals. One of the items of interest found in the collection is the following document, offering some interesting and prophetic statistics and dates for the reader's evaluation and thoughts.

Found in Charles Jones's artifact Collection:

	Churchill	Hitler	Roosevelt	IL Duce	Stalin	Tojo
Year born	1879	1889	1880	1882	1884	1887
Age	65	55	64	62	60	57
Years in office	4	11	11	20	22	6
Year took office	1940	1933	1933	1924	1922	1938
	3888	3888	3888	3888	3888	3888

1/2 of 3888 is 1944 year war will and 1/2 of 1944 is 9-7-2 on Sept 7 at 2 o'clock. Note first letters of names - Christ!

The Village Hall at Molesworth, Cambridgeshire England is undergoing full restoration and already sports its new roof. The Molesworth Village Hall Committee plans to honor personnel who have served on the nearby airbase and are looking for donations to complete the project.

Frances and Mandy can be contacted at email countryside@tinyonline.co.uk



Molesworth Village Hall, Cambridgeshire, England

Book Reviews

All books are reviewed by the editor and are 8th-related books-in-print, here presented for the information and enjoyment of the Historical Society membership. Great books for Holiday gifts and reading!

LOSSES OF THE US 8TH AND 9TH AIR FORCES

VOLUME 2

ETO AREA – JANUARY 1944 – MARCH 1944

by Stan D Bishop and John A Hey

This long-awaited Second Volume of *LOSSES* is now available. As in Volume One, this publication continues in the presentation of the men and their aircraft in the early months of 1944 – 8th and 9th Air Forces.

The book itself is an amazing historical document, 493 pages in large-format and includes details of every aircraft lost on missions from East Anglian American airbases. Photographs and histories, along with complete crew lists, disposition of KIAs, and burial site details accompany each entry. Organizational Charts of the Ninth Air Force precede the listings of 9th a/c, with each month's combat activities reviewed at the beginning of each month's shoot-downs. Appendices enumerate the listings by Groups and Units. A final Appendix contains additions to Volume One of *Losses*.

The authors have spent years in research of this vital wartime information, a one-of-a-kind publication in this format. The histories of the 8th AF and the 9th AF live in this volume, history that is not distorted by author input nor embellished in its telling. The immensity of the effort and the sacrifices of the U. S. Army Air Corps to defeat the German

enemy are found here in its starkness and frankness. This three-month period of fascinating history represents the toll taken by the war in such a short time period. An impressive book with most impressive primary source material presented within.

Hardback, from Bishop Book Productions, The Sycamores, Middle Green, Higham, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP 28 6NY
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DAVID & the MIGHTY EIGHTH

by Marjorie Hodgson Parker

There are few authentic novels written about children during the war and this volume will appeal to children and adults alike. Author Marjorie Parker tells the tale of David Freeman who grew up in the shadows of 8th Air Force airbases in East Anglia during World War II. Modeled after historian Roger A. Freeman and David Hastings, the novel's principle youngster, David, develops an interest in the activities and airmen of a B-24 Liberator bomber base in Norwich.

Keeping track of named airplanes, such as *Pugnacious Patty*, David follows in the footsteps of 8th AF historian Roger Freeman, who actually grew up near 8th bases and wrote down names of 8th aircraft that flew combat missions against Germany. The book ends with activities as seen through

David's eyes during the joyous VE Day celebrations in England.

With a foreword by Former Eighth Air Force Commander Lt. Gen. E. G. Shuler, and an Epilogue and appendices by the author, this fine book gives the reader a close-up of a wartime British family and its relationship to the Mighty Eighth.

The volume is hardback, 177pp, with drawings by Mark Postlethwaite. Bright Sky Press, Box 416, Albany TX 76430 or Ms. M. Parker, 2491 Parker Rd., Byers TX 76357.

FACETS

**Short Stories Poems and Songs
by Mary Faye Craft, Ph.D.**

Facets is a book of beautiful poetry, dedicated to the brave men and women who serve our country and to the spouses, families and friends who support the troops. The first section is composed of poems related to military themes with titles such as *The Retired Colonel*, *God Bless the Troops*, *Thoughts of a Cadet*, and *The New General*.

Other entries include considerations and thoughts related to worldly travels by the author, and of other personal relationships with people and the sea. Mary Faye Craft has published thirteen books of poetry and has founded several successful businesses in Washington DC and is a member of numerous civic and literary organizations. Her experienced talent for interpreting and presenting a wide range of poetic subjects is evi-



Book Reviews

dent in this fine volume. Her range of subjects maintains the interest of the reader until the final pages.

225 pp; softback; available from the author at P.O. Box 10777, Savannah GA 31412 tel# 912-654-1239 fax# 912-654-0136.

F-15 EAGLE ENGAGED

The World's Most Successful Jet Fighter

by Steve Davies and Doug Dildy

From Osprey Publishing comes a volume that is the definitive history of the F-15 Eagle jet fighter – the first functionally high-tech fighter system to be used in America's air warfare inventory. In service since 1976, it has been the mainstay of the U. S. Air Force for the last thirty years.

Carrying a full payload of armament, the F-15 utilizes an advanced radar attack system to allow it to maintain air superiority in combat situations.

The authors relate in detail the design competition and early testing of the Eagle, beginning with the F-1 in 1972. The politics of the program are examined and every aspect of the aircraft and its engine are broken out into chapter presentations. The book moves into its role in combat theaters of operations in Desert Storm and in Iraq. Updates to the airplane's technology flow through these years of mid-eastern turmoil and war, to the current date.

Other countries fly the F-15 Eagle including Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Japan. Appendices in this book address current Units operating with the Eagle, a complete itemization of Eagle mishaps, production statistics and variants. The entire volume is thoroughly researched and presented in high-quality glossy large format with detailed but easily

readable double-column paragraphing interspersed with extensive color photography on most of its 290 pages.

Authors Davies and Dildy have produced a book that illustrates the offensive and defensive capabilities of America's Air Forces, using the top jet fighter aircraft in air history as its centerpiece. You may obtain a volume from Osprey Publishing, 443 Park Avenue South, Ste. 806, New York NY 10016 tel# 212-685-5560 www.ospreypublishing.com

THREE MORE FROM OSPREY PUBLISHING:

Many 8th AF Historical Society members have followed the Osprey releases of Combat Aircraft for many years. Three new additions are now available: #62- US Navy PBY Catalina Units of the Pacific War, #65 - US Navy PBY Catalina Units of the Atlantic War, and #80 in the series - American Spitfire Aces of World War 2 by Andrew Thomas. This last volume features the stories of early WWII Eagle Squadron pilots, but also includes fighter aces from other theaters of the war who flew the Spitfire.

The PBY volumes consider the role of this famed amphibious aircraft in both the Atlantic and Pacific Theaters, as a submarine hunter and its vital role in the rescue of downed Allied flyers and Naval seamen. The Pacific War book is edited by Louis Dorny and the Atlantic War volume by Ragnar J Ragnarsson. All three volumes are softback 96pp and include period photographs and in-color drawings of various aircraft with accurate configurations and markings - ideal for researchers and modelers. They each include the wartime history of the wartime theaters in which the aircraft participated.

These three books will take a good bit of time to absorb - they are each packed full of war history and combat stories of the airmen who flew the airplanes. They are required additions to the readers who have been collecting the volumes in this excellent series. They stand alone in their presentation but each adds its story to the aviation history of WWII.

For info contact Osprey at

tel# 212-685-5560 or heatherfeinstein@ospreypublishing.com



GOXHILL AIRFIELD

in Memories and Photographs by Ron Parker with assistance of Kim Parker

Easy to read, easy to pick up over and over, and full of fascinating period photographs and text material centering on the stories of the airmen of the 8th, the Parkers have produced a very entertaining volume. This is real history at its best: period photos with explanatory cutlines for each, Goxhill Airfield includes representation of everything that went on at the base



Book Reviews

during the war. Well, maybe not everything, but close. This book will bring back many great memories to all who served in East Anglia.

Ron Parker has been the Keeper of the Flame at Goxhill, sometimes affectionately referred to as, "Goathill", for many years. Originally assigned to the Royal Air Force, during the war there were as many as 2000 U.S. servicemen stationed there and over 80 aircraft during the late 1944 period. The softback large format b&w volume number 190 pages and may be obtained by contacting Ron Parker, The Bungalow, Church Side, Goxhill, NthLincs. DN19 7HY

WARBIRD RECOVERY

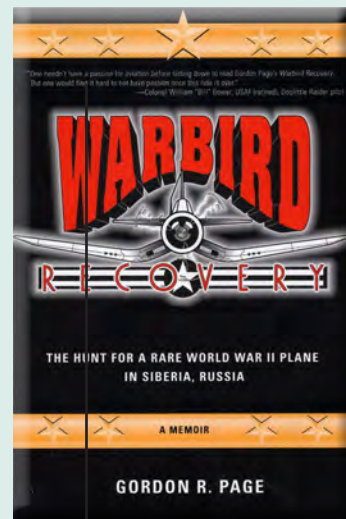
by Gordon R. Page

This book tells of a life-long dream and the journey to complete it by the

author, Gordon Page. A connection with Russian diplomats was finally a success, and a German Bf,Äi 109 Messerschmitt fighter flown by Luftwaffe Major Horst Carganico during the war, was made available. It was thought that the aircraft was an E model Me109 that had crashed in a lake during an air battle in 1944.

This neat volume is the personal story of the author, those involved with the aircraft recovery, and their contacts that they made in Russia. The aircraft was brought to America and now rests in U. S. Aviation Museums. Softback, 190pp with photos, the volume also tells of crash sites in other wartime countries. Warbird Recovery may be seen at www.warbirdrecovery.com. Info to order may be obtained from - Universe, 2021 Pine Lake Road, Ste. 100 Lincoln

NE 68512 tel # 1-800-288-4677 www.iuniverse.com



**THE ELECTION OF Officers
and Board members
will be deadlined on
15 May 2008**



Christmas Packages await Mail Call!

8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FINANCIAL REPORT FISCAL 2007

As noted from the attached balance sheet, in the fiscal year 2007 our Society registered a \$19,000 operating loss. This loss is of vital concern to your Board and positive steps have been taken during the last 12 months to reverse this trend, hopefully returning the organization to an operating profit.

Losses during the year were generated from unexpected expenses not planned for in our 2007 budget. These expenses were primarily the result of uncontrolled overtime expense in the Savannah office, plus an ex-employee law suit against the Society. Changes have been made in the Savannah Membership Office that will address and control these items during fiscal year 2008.

A few of the operating and income items that will help correct this loss during fiscal 2008 will be addressed by 1) an increase of \$5.00 in our annual dues 2) offering our Life Time Members, strictly on a volunteer basis, the opportunity of making contributions to the Society's operating budget. These two items alone will result in

increasing our revenues by more than \$20,000.

On the expense side, we plan to reduce our expenses substantially by 1) Eliminating unnecessary overtime 2) Discontinuing the out-sourcing of our accounting function by moving this function in-house 3) Arranging to collect annual dues by sending notices via the 8th AF News magazine. These changes should reduce our operating expenses by about \$17,000 dollars.

We are optimistic with the actions taken above and the continued support of our members, the Society will operate in a more fiscally responsible manner, thus generating a profit during fiscal 2008.

Any questions concerning our financial status should be addressed to Ivan McKinney 318-742-0895, or Darrel Lowell 912-598-7334.

Darrel Lowell
Treasurer 8th AFHS

THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

PROFIT & LOSS

September 2006 through August 2007

Income	Item	Sep 06-Aug 07
4020.....	Contribution/Donations	\$2,129.00
4050.....	Interest/Dividends/Income.....	\$27,688.42
4000.....	Income Dues/other	\$219,973.24
Total Income.....		\$249,790.66
Expense.....	Item	Sep 06-Aug 07
6000.....	Other Expense	\$2,546.74
6013.....	Member Printing/Postage.....	\$8,710.80
6015.....	Legal Expense-W/C.....	\$19,589.95
5300.....	Savannah Office Expense	\$62,266.72
5100.....	NationalAdministrative Exp.....	\$75,182.00
5200.....	8th AFNews Magazine Expense	\$100,490.71
.....	Total Expense	\$268,786.92
Net Income/Loss.....		\$(18,996.26)

BULLETIN BOARD



This famous photo confirms that General Patton did indeed carry out his own directive while leading his troops across Europe to the German homeland. The 8th Air Force had taken the war to Germany for 2 1/2 years prior to the time this photograph was taken.

PACIFIC AVIATION MUSEUM PEARL HARBOR HAWAII

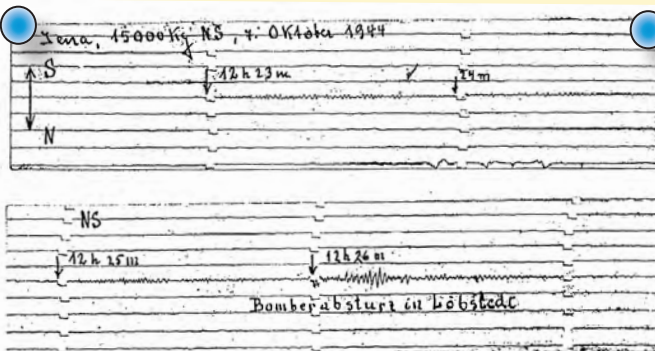
PACIFIC AVIATION MUSEUM PROGRAMS REVVING UP

Located at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, the new Pacific Aviation Museum is reaching out with a number of interesting and active programs, several aimed at showing off their pristine museum facility. The Navy air demonstration team, The Blue Angels, participated in Blues on the Bay, a mid-October airshow. To celebrate the first anniversary of the museum on December 6th the presence of Gen. Jimmy Doolittle's copilot, Lt. Col. Dick Cole, gave seminars and held book signings, along with Jonna Doolittle Hoppes, Doolittle's granddaughter. Recent acquisitions and exhibits are now on display at the museum. A donation of a WWII Stinson L-5 liaison airplane that was stationed on Ford Island in June 1945 was made by an island resident. Two original aircraft engines, an Allison in line water cooled engine and a Pratt & Whitney radial engine, are on display. Events on the museum's recent calendar are Scout Saturdays, during which Girl and Boy Scouts experience unique interactive program on aviation history and the Science of Flight. A benefit for the museum of the historical documentary, Prophecy & Honor - The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell this fall. A DVD of that show is available. The Pacific Aviation Museum has an active membership and support campaign underway and has plans for, future expansion. Info is available at www.pacificaviationmuseum.org

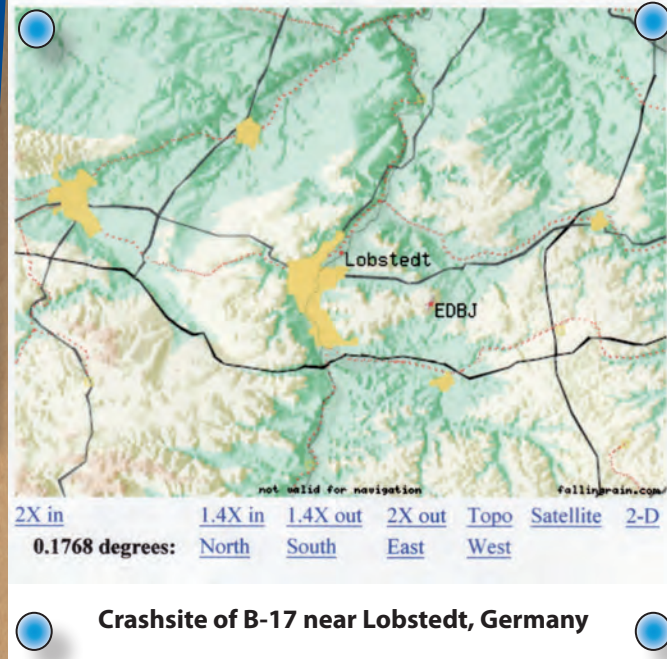
MILITIN BOARD



The 379th BGA Contrails recently prohibited this unusual photo of The Triangle K's B-17 Birmingham Blitzkrieg sometimes referred to as The "Barber Pole." Please let us know if you have information or recall this aircraft, or if other 1st or 3rd Air Division Groups had B-17 Formation ships such as this one.



German Seismograph recording indicating shock waves caused by the o/c crash near Lobstedt



Crashsite of B-17 near Lobstedt, Germany



The non-profit organization Brats Without Borders has a new film saluting the service of military families entitled BRATS: Our Journey Home. The film, with its introduction by Kris Kristofferson, won the 2007 Southern Lens Award and may be previewed at www.bratsfilm.com. The documentary is about the generations of Americans who grew up military.

TAPS



Furlong, Harold "Pat"; 93rd BG; flight engineer Bakewell's crew –from crew-mate Chester Bruzinski

Herman, Rubin, Shawnee OK; 8th AF Crypto operator, retired USAF –from his wife Constance

King, Richard "Dick"; Canton OH; 467th BG, radio operator on Reab's crew – a "Well Done, brother" from his brother Jack

Burnell, William "Bill"; 34th BG ball turret gunner – Washington Chapter

Bush, Carl, Seattle WA; 379th BG pilot
Jerger, Richard "Dick"; St. Petersburg FL; 96th BG; flew as pilot on 96th's first mission –from his wife Evelyn

White, Zane Woodrow "Pogo"; Fulton MS; pilot 8th AF, 33 year career in USAF

Jorgensen, George, Wilmington NC; 34th BG navigator; career as mechanical engineer for IBM

Tallichet, Dave, Orange CA; 100th BG pilot; owner and restorer of WWII aircraft including two B-17s; owner of Specialty Restaurants

Sayago, Sergio; Easton PA; 447th BG 8th AF and

301st BG 15th AF; bombardier on Milk Wagon –from crewmate Augie Altese

Roeder, Floyd, Pine Grove; 492nd

Air Service Group WWII; active in American Legion

Oakes, Harlan G.

(Col. Retired) passed away August 22, 2007 at his home in Lompoc, California. He was 97 years of age. He served as an S-2 Officer with the 466th Bomb Group stationed at Attlebridge, England. He had a formal Military funeral and is buried at Riverside National Cemetery. He is survived by a son, Howard F. Oakes, and a daughter, Debbie Moffett.



Sergio Sayago

Cooke, William Donald, Ithaca NY; Staff of Gen.

D. Eisenhower as Meteorologist; provided weather information for the D-Day

landings on Normandy; career on faculty at Cornell University; life-long interest in poker and founded the Cayuga Poker Society – from his daughter Ann

Jones, John Paul, Macon GA; 388th BG Flight Surgeon; career in Pediatrics and active in educational endeavors

Johansen, Alfred; 306th BG B-17 pilot of Steady Hedy –from his son John

Cade, J. Robert, Jacksonville FL; inventor of the sports drink Gatorade used to replenish electrolytes and fluids in sports figures; No sweat.

Abalos, Arnold, Reno NV; 55th FG

Eagleson, William, Natick MA; 453rd BG; involved with 2nd Air Division activities and with the Collings

Foundation restoration project of the B-24 All American –from Stuart Wright, London

Mosier, Arlett, Troy NY; 8th AF fighter pilot; career in USAF –from his daughter Janell

Senstrom, Odo "Mike," West Columbia; 398th BG cryptographer Aggreton, "Agee", 8th AF pilot with 15 missions –from his wife Linda

Kern, Bentley, 389th BG Lead crew –from crewmate Roy Duffy

Holcombe, Malcolm; 389th BG tail-gunner –from crewmate Roy Duffy

Chandler, Jean, Denver CO; wife of Lloyd Reed who was lead pilot of the 24 Dec 44 mission on which Gen. Fred Castle was killed –from crewmates Fred Dumler and James Bradford

Kruty, Samuel, Chicago IL; 390th BG bombardier, 35 missions – from Jack White

Greenamyre, Vernie "Doc"; Leavenworth KS; 55th FG Medical Administrative officer; pilot

Walker, Paul, Eagle Grove IA; 351st BG lead navigator –from his son Charles

Keenan, Joseph; 100th BG ballturret



William Cooke

gunner on Andy's Dandies –from his daughter Susan Falvo

Uhlinger, Roy; 388th BG PFF navigator on Campbell's crew at Snetterton Heath

Mumford, H. Griff, Tiburon Co; 100th BG

Aproculus, George, Jackson NJ; 95th BG bombardier –from his crewmate Ed Morrison

Heike, William, Savannah GA; 8th AF pilot; volunteer Mighty Eighth AF Museum

Woods, Carrol, Montgomery AL; Tuskegee Airman

Rudd, Vernon, Red Cloud NE; 55th FG crew chief for Bob Littlefield

Heiserman, Robert "Bob"; Richmond Hill GA; 5th Fighter Squadron

Hayes, Carl, Binghamton NY; 56th FG pilot

Nesbitt, Archie, Overland Park KS; 306th BG B-17 pilot –from sons David, Dennis and Keith

Brigadier General Paul Tibbets

Paul Tibbets flew the first mission of the 8th Air Force on 17 August 1942 as a pilot and commander of the 97th Bomb Group bombing marshalling yards in Rouen, France. He flew 25 combat missions in B-17s, a number based out of North Africa. He piloted the B-29 Enola Gay in the Pacific Theater dropping the first atomic bomb on Japan at Hiroshima. In his later career, he flew B-47s with the Strategic Air Command.

Gen. Tibbets always felt that his missions went a long way to ending World War II and saved hundreds of thousands of lives, shortening the war with Japan. He directed that his ashes be distributed over the English channel by his family.



Paul Tibbets

TAPS



Doolittle Raiders

Herndon, Nolan, Edgefield SC; bombardier and navigator on B-25 that flew with Jimmy Doolittle to bomb Japan in 1942; Doolittle's Raiders

Ourada, Allen, Fort Worth TX; 55th FG
Burlas, Regis Eugene, Latrobe PA; 447th BG B-17 ball turret gunner –from Michael Prestia

De Jongh, Countess Andree, Brussels Belgium; Helper aiding 118 downed Allied airmen to escape and evade capture by the German forces; nurse; helped found the Comet Line escape route over the Pyrenees; arrested by Nazis in 1943 and survived Concentration camp imprisonment
Burke, Earl, Sacramento CA; 384th BG gunner; featured in TV documentary of The War; two purple hearts; enlisted after his older brother was killed on a training mission

Hall, Ralph, New Bedford MA; 398th
Pete Petrillo, Elyria OH, flew 35 missions with the 447th BG as a gunner. His later career was with the Prudential Insurance Agency. Pete was an 8-year member of the 8th AF Historical Society Board of Directors and active in Development committee activities and was a strong supporter of the Mighty Eighth Museum. –from Joanna Butler

Lundy, Will; 44th BG –from his friend Luc Dewez

Molzhan, Richard; 385th BG missions in Rum Dum

Jorgensen, George, 34th BG –from

his daughter Linda Cassell

Cartwright, Robert, Nashville TN; 379th BG pilot of "Lady Anna" – from crewmate Cliff Lopp
Sullivan, Robert, Tybee Island GA; flew 50 missions in B-17s, 15th AF; friend of the Mighty Eighth Museum –from his son

Michael

Boring, Wallace, Maryville TN; 306th BG Group bombardier –from Paul Billings

DeHart, Thomas "Ted", Green Valley AZ; 95th BG tailgunner on Roarin' Bill – from Jackie DeHart

Sauers, Dr. Paul, 385th BG pilot
Valentine, Colin, Maryville TN; 306th BG

Jerger, Richard, Treasure Island FL; 96th BG; flew first 96th BG mission
Patterson, Alvin; 451st BG –from his son Mike

Sapper, Herbert, inventor of the Hurricane Classification system; now

achieved Level 5

Curry, Gene, Statesboro GA; 389th BG ground crew

Hill, Gen. David "Tex", San Antonio TX; original member of AVG Flying Tigers

Starks, Richard, Midway KY; 384th BG of B-17 Johnny Reb –from his granddaughter Katherine Walden

Fanelli, John "Jack", Shenandoah; 8th AF B-24 pilot, shot down and landed in Switzerland

THE FIX

Several readers have noted that the Taps entry for **General Robins Olds** stated that he was Commandant at West Point. He was in charge of the U. S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

Dear Mamie Kent,

This is to inform you of the Passing on Oct. 5th 2007 of Life Member #29734 Margaret M. Weisl.

Margaret served in The British women's army the A.T.S. during WWII. She was a radar operator and gave the coordinates of the incoming Enemy planes to Central Station who in turn called the R.A.F. and the Anti Aircraft guns in the proper area. After D-Day she was transferred to office type duty, but first was stationed at a replacement station in a town called Brigstock, which was just five miles away from the U.S. Air Base at Grafton Underwood where the 384th Bomb Group was stationed. In September of 1944 we met in a Pub called the Three 'C' and became good friends. Only I married her best friend. But in 1980 my wife died and so did her husband. Then in 1982 we met again and were married in '83.

Yours Truly,

**Ken Weisl, husband of Margaret Weisl
Schenectady, NY**



Margaret Weisl



"Ground Crew"

A sincere tribute by Navigator Henry Pearce, Metairie, LA placed as a tribute in The Memorial Gardens of The Mighty Eighth Museum.

A guy is 76 years old and loved to fish. He was sitting in his boat the other day when he heard a voice say, "Pick me up." He looked around and could not see any one. He thought he was dreaming when he heard the voice again, "Pick me up." He looked in the water and there floating on the top was a frog.

The man said, "Are you talking to me?"

The frog said, "Yes, I'm talking to you. Pick me up. Then, kiss me and I'll turn into the most beautiful woman you have ever seen. I'll then give you more sexual pleasure that you have ever dreamed of."

The man looked at the frog for a short time, reached over, picked it up carefully, and placed it in his front breast pocket. Then the frog said, "What are you, nuts? Didn't you hear what I said? I said kiss me and I will give you sexual pleasures like you have never had."

The fisherman opened his pocket, looked at the frog and said, "Naah, at my age I'd rather have a talking frog."

ATTENTION 486th Bomb Group Veterans

You may not realize that the 486th Bomb Group is still alive and kicking. We have an organization which meets yearly to rehash old wartime adventures, renew old friendships, tell stories and have a glorious time. The reunion lasts 3-4 days and meets all over the USA. Lately, we have met in Florida, Washington, DC, Kansas City, Fort Worth and Indiana. We want you to join us!!! The cost is minimal - only \$20 per year. For that we receive frequent newsletters regarding

happenings of old comrades, stories of wartime adventures, a complete listing including address and phone numbers of all members and friends of the 486th BG in our organization. We welcome veterans, their spouses, kids and friends. All are welcome.

For information please contact:

Ray Garrett
PO Box 602
Providence, Utah 84332
Phone: 435-792-7955
email: raypgar@nsn.com



- Form may be reproduced -

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DEBRIEFING

MARION HOFFMAN...

On the return flight back to our airfield in England our First Air Division was in a bomber stream of our own. Our group was coming in over England complete dense cloud cover. We had been diverted to this other airfield at Bury St. Edmunds and when it was time to descend through the clouds. It was described as a Storm Cloud Frontal Approach. Our aircraft was flying in three plane elements, each element descended together through the dense clouds with landing lights on, because it was getting dark the time was about 1630 hours. It was one of those scary situations in flying, descending aircraft through clouds. It was a mid-air collision in the making. After the descent we leveled off at about 500 feet right below the clouds. With all aircraft landing lights on and hundreds of B-17's circling this airfield waiting for their turn to land it was another of the most awesome sights a human could ever witness. The circling maneuver continued for twenty minutes to half hour each plane given its turn to land. There were other aircraft calling to the tower for priority landing, because they were running out of gas. Finally, we got down landing safely but were ordered to stay in our aircraft. A tractor with tail hook grabbed our aircraft and pulled it off the end of runway into a safe place so more aircraft could land on the active runway. Finally, we as a crew were given permission to leave our plane. There was nobody waiting like usual in truck to take us for debriefing. We walked over toward a Quonset Hut beside an aircraft storage hanger where our officers placed us as they reported a safe landing and accounting to the airfield commander. The night of the 24th weathered on with no report as to how we would get back to our airbase. The next morning Christmas Day for breakfast we went out to our aircraft to get some K Rations. Finally, at 1100 hours we received a report trucks were being sent over to haul from our base to haul us back to our home 91st Bomb Group base. The trucks arrived about 1300 hours and as slow moving as they were got

us back to our equipment shack about 1600 hours.

After we got back to our barrack dormitory a good shower was first on order and word went out, welcome back home your Christmas Dinner will be served beginning at 1800 hours. With this day, our 23rd mission ending like this I am sure it aged us considerably. But with a bountiful meal as was served this day and giving thanks for a safe mission and return we can say this was one of the most memorable days of our lives.

Then our last one on January 6, 1945, it was on our 25th mission; we were shot down. Descending into an uncertainty an unknown situation, which we will never forget a memory of happenings we take to the grave.

This Christmas season we will always remember Christmas 1944 will always stand out as the most memorable day in my life.

Marion Hoffman, 91st BG
Miamisburg, OH

ROY JILLSON...

On April 10, 1945, we flew our 15th mission with Lt. Muchow as our pilot and Lt. Kokus as our co-pilot. Kokus was flying his 35th and final mission to close out his tour of duty. Once again, we were on board "*Rum Dum*." She was one of the most famous B-17's in the Eighth Air Force, for she had already completed 105 missions without an abort. Our base commanding officer and her ground crew were out to capture the all time record for the 385th Bomb Group. As we took off, little did we know that this was to be *Rum Dum*'s last mission.

Our target for the day was a jet fighter base in the vicinity of Berlin. I was at the right waist gun position as we began the bomb run. Buck Krouse was manning his left waist gun. We were on the lookout for German fighters. It was a beautiful sunny day just right for a fighter attack.

We crossed over the airbase. General Doolittle had us bombing at 15,000 feet rather than the usual 25,000 so we were able to note severe damage that had already been inflicted on the air-

base by the bombers ahead of us. Our bombs exploded in a hangar and on a row of brick barracks.

About fifteen minutes after bombs away, Buck and I pulled the canvas cords that released our flak suits. We had been briefed on some uncharted flak, but we had no idea that any would come up from the looks of things. Our flak suits had no sooner hit the floor at our feet than the guys up in the front of the plane called out, "Flak at 12 o'clock level!" We were flying right into the shells that were exploding.

Then Buck and I saw the bursts through the windows in the waist. Big, black, coughing, puffing bursts. Not many at all, but right up there with us. It was a bit late to think of getting back into our flak suits.

We heard three distinct slams against the plane within the next minute and we heard pieces of flak tearing through the ship. A fragment of a shell had made a hole about two inches in diameter on the outside of the plane and peeled back the armor plating inside to carve out a hole about the size of a man's head. Splinters of wood and metal sprayed all through the nose section and set fire to two A-3 bags filled with clothing.

Another direct burst caught #1 engine. Muchow tried to feather the prop; to no avail. The engine started smoking and throwing oil while its prop windmilled and ran away with itself. By this time, Muck realized that we were pretty badly damaged. Shells continued to explode around us. We had to drop out of formation and called for fighter support. We all checked the battered plane for further damage. There were near identical holes about two feet from the fuselage in each of the tail's horizontal stabilizers. Other hits were all around the tail gunner's position. He called the pilot to tell him that there was excessive vibration all through the tail section.

Buck and I looked at one another as we noted quite a good-sized flak hole right beside the place we were standing. We also noted a number of new holes out on both the left and right wings. Muchow checked with all of us to make

DEBRIEFING

sure that we were not injured. We came down below 10,000 feet so that we could remove our oxygen masks. We were still well within enemy territory. Shearman had excellent maps detailing the area ahead of us. He plotted a course to the nearest friendly landing strip. *Rum Dum* was a tired old veteran even before we had taken off. Now she was a rambling wreck. We all had faith in the B-17's. We knew that they were known to take punishment. For that reason, to a man we decided to ride her down rather than to bail out.

By that time, we had three P-51's barreling around us in search of German fighter planes hungry to take on a straggler like us.

Shearman gave me the code name of the landing strip where we proposed to land.

We were coming down fast now. There was just barely room for seven guys to curl up and jam up against one another on the floor of the radio room for the much-needed landing.

Muck did not know how the plane would hold up after touchdown on the runway. However, he greased us in. All of us had a kindred feeling about *Rum Dum*. She was a such a famous plane that we didn't want to lose her. For that reason, we acted foolishly in concert by using all available fire extinguishers to try to put out the fire in engine #1. We rather ignored the fact that an explosion could well be expected. Fortunately, a British fire truck arrived on the scene. Within a matter of minutes, the fire had been doused. We had come down on a Typhoon fighter bomber strip commanded by the British. The pilots were English, Canadian, and South African. We had interrupted their day for they were all flying short range bombing and strafing sorties from their strip. We learned from them that this part of Germany had been taken over by allied forces just three to four weeks prior to our touchdown.

Roy Jillson, 385th BG
Radio Operator of *Rum Dum*

VINCE KAMINSKI...

Vince Kaminski and his squadron went to Deenethorpe, England. In December 1943, he flew his first bombing mission over Germany. He completed 26 successful missions, bombing aircraft factories, industrial factories - important wartime targets. He flew over Berlin and Dessau, exceptionally dangerous areas.

The other pilot's crew, from the same squadron as Kaminski's, needed a substitute pilot; Kaminski volunteered. It was his last flight.

A synthetic petroleum factory outside of Dessau was the target for mission number 77 for the 401st Bomb Group. Five or six hundred planes headed out. Kaminski and his newly-adopted crew were flying in the "low box" position in their formation. They carried the typical B-17 load of 13 .50-caliber guns. Kaminski's co-pilot was Robert Enstad. Their navigator's name was Campbell. All 21 aircraft in the 401st Bomb Group were in the air. In Dutch airspace, they picked up a shadow aircraft. Shortly thereafter, they saw in front of them a huge ball, a black sky of airplanes coming right at them. In the Low Box position in the 94th Combat Wing, Kaminski's group was chosen as the focus of attack by approximately 200 enemy fighters. The Luftwaffe Command was desperate to take the American planes out of the sky, and they threw everything they had at the Americans. The attacks lasted for 40 minutes. As many as 60 enemy aircraft attacked the formation. Seven of Kaminski's bomb group aircraft went down. On the first pass, Kaminski's plane lost an engine. It fell out of formation. A straggler from the German onslaught made three more passes. On the second and third passes, they got closer and closer. On the fourth pass, 20mm exploding shells blew up behind the copilot's (Enstad's) seat, sending him into the instrument panel. Enstad dropped to the lower compartment where the navigator and bombardier were. Hydraulic fluid and oxygen tanks vaporized and the cockpit exploded. The plane rolled over and blew up.

Enstad was in the air - just him and parts of the airplane. His parachute was full of holes from the explosion, with some lines broken, so he tumbled quite a bit. He landed in a plowed field, the impact knocking him out. This was the first flight using new parachutes which could be worn during flight. With the old 'chutes - Enstad would not have had a chance to strap one on.

When Enstad regained consciousness, Lt. Campbell, the flight's navigator, was standing over him. Behind Campbell, he saw German guards. It was May 28, 1944.

The German guards walked Enstad and Campbell to a small-town church graveyard, where Polish slave workers were digging a mass grave to bury all the Americans who had just been shot down. Rather than have the Poles or Germans bury their dead, Enstad and Campbell, badly injured and probably beat as well, stripped to the waist and dug the graves for their own crewmembers, including their substitute pilot, 1st Lt. Kaminski. Kaminski was probably 22 years old.

James Rea

from Vince Kaminski's brother, Richard

BEIRNE LAY...

A sudden burst of enemy flak knocks out an engine; a control column is shivered by a twenty-millimeter shell fired from an enemy fighter not expected to be in a certain vicinity; a parachute fails to open; a bomber explodes; a fighter starts a dive - and never pulls out; a few of the unexpected, uncertain moments of aerial combat for which there can be no "briefing." "Briefing" is an Air Corps term. It denotes the period of pre-operational information-giving for the men participating in an aerial combat mission. With all the means at its disposal Air Force Intelligence accumulates all the significant data pertinent to the operation. Details concerning the target, the weather, the enemy air and anti-aircraft defenses, these and much more are given to the engaging personnel to minimize the danger and to guarantee the success of the mission.

DEBRIEFING

But there occurs very often an event no human intelligence can anticipate. It will happen a thousand different ways and have as many varied results. A man can train to meet some of these situations and be equal to them; others are disastrously sudden and invincible. He can hope and pray only that he will be ready when they spring upon him -

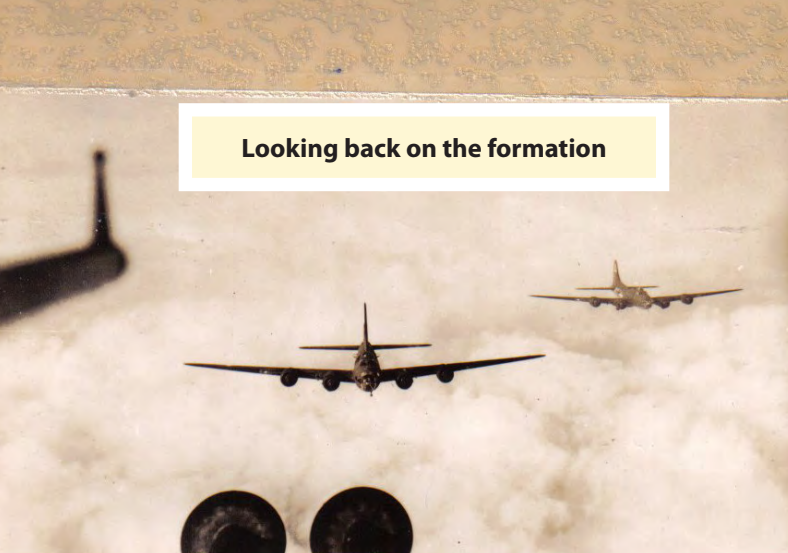
not as briefed. It is this unforeseen X, the unknown quantity, which supplies the dramatic element in any war. Combat is spontaneous in its eruption, particularly aerial combat wherein battle occurs at a souped up speed; an enemy fighter makes a pass at a bomber and their resultant speed is over six hundred miles

an hour! What happens as a result of their meeting is interesting - even to a casual stranger who has not shared the experience. It is of more interest to the man who has lived it.


Bierne Lay, 8th AF,
Author *Twelve O'Clock High*

Aerial photo of Hamburg, showing extensive damage after a bomb raid.







Looking back on the formation



GERMANY - COMBAT
FORMATION - JULY 43
Taken by W. D. Brittain
from tail gun position
on raid to Germany



COMBAT FORMATION - Aug 43
Taken on the way to target
(Schweinfurt) over North Sea



View from the left seat of a
B-17 flight deck - March 43



THE ROSE OF YORK



Three 8th airmen sit in their quarters in front of their hanging uniforms and their 'pin-up' girls. Photos on the wall include Rita Hayworth and Lauren Bacall.



Four airmen of the 355th Fighter Group repairing old-style British bicycles near a runway/hardstand.



TWO B-17s IN FORMATION ABOVE THE CLOUDS

Lt. Col. Edgar C. "Ed" Miller, USAF, Reg. Donated His History

**by Vivian Rogers-Price
Research Center Director, Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum**

Edgar Miller recently donated his completed "World War II History of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H), during 1942-1945" to the Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. This culminates for Miller over twenty years of research and includes information about every member of the 303rd Bomb Group during World War II. In 1985 Miller decided to build this database of all the men who served at Molesworth during World War II. In this project he was assisted by Harry D. Gobrecht and Gary L. Moncur. Thus all 7,336 of his comrades are included together with as much supporting information as this research team could compile.

Miller's history is divided into four categories. The first division entitled, "A Group of Heroic 8th Air Force Comrades," is arranged alphabetically by last name with as much additional information as possible. The second division, "Personnel Casualties of Triangle C: A Summary of the 364 Missions with Comrade Casualties – by Mission," includes personal comments by the men who flew the mission as well as other pertinent facts while always mentioning those men who were killed or wounded. Each man who was KIA or WIA can also be found in Miller's third division of his history, "Members of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H), 8th Air Force, Who Were Wounded (WIA) or Killed in Action (KIA) 1942-1945." Miller forwarded this information to the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor at Vail's Gate, New York. The

fourth division details the Original Flying contingent of the 303rd Bomb Group and is arranged by pilot identification.

Edgar "Ed" Miller's "World War II History of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) During World War II" provides a valuable addition to the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) Association Archives that were donated to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in 2004. These two valuable collections enhance the Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center and make the 303rd Bomb Group the most thoroughly documented group at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum.

The Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center encompasses the archival manuscript and photographic collection, the artifact collection, the Harry D. Gobrecht Family 303rd Bombardment Group (H) Research Center, and the John H. Woolnough Library with a reading room sponsored by the 361st Fighter Group Association.

Archival highlights include original diaries and letters as well as over 22,000 previously unpublished photographs. The oral history collection begun by Major General Lewis E. Lyle, the founder of this museum, continues to expand and has been described as the premier collection of oral histories of Eighth Air Force veterans. The museum is a partner archive with the Veterans' History Project at the Library of Congress. Highlights of the Artifact Collection

include over 70 hand-painted leather flight jackets and Medals of Honor awarded to William R. Lawley, Jr., and Forrest L. Vosler.

The John H. Woolnough Library now has over 8,000 volumes. Of special interest is the collection of 8th Air Force volumes, including all the published group histories and numerous personal accounts written by 8th Air Force veterans.

Since a complete roster of World War II Eighth Air Force veterans has never existed, the research center is compiling its own database listing with the help of veterans and their families.

The Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center is dedicated to promoting research on Eighth Air Force history and to expanding this priceless collection.

The Research Center is open Monday through Friday 9-12 and 1-4.

Please contact:

**Mrs. Jean Prescott
Reference Specialist**

**Telephone: 912.748.8888 ext. 110
Email: registrar@mightyeighth.org**

Or

**Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price
Research Center Director
Telephone: 912-748-8888 ext. 108
Email: oralhistories@mightyeighth.org**

Christmas Party 1943





Christmas 1944 - 392nd BG

Fourteen members of the photo crew at Christmas Dinner, 1944, are eating in the photo lab. Silver stars and a silver "Merry Christmas" banner stretch across the table.



Maureen 'Sweet Pea' – Squadron Mascot
Her father, a Limey was killed during the 'Blitz' in London. 306th BG financed her keep in an orphanage.



**Christmas Chow around
this old pot-bellied stove**



**We do have snow you know!
Playing a dirty trick on Sanders by
Tommy and Boettcher.**

8th AIR FORCE LICENSES

Enclosed is a photo of my late husband Leo F. Battista next to his license plate honoring his beloved P-47. The photo was taken while we were living in the state of Maine and his license plate always caused a lot of attention when we traveled in state and out of state.

Leo was a pilot in the 56th Fighter Group 62nd Squadron - part of Zemke's Wolfpack flying out of Boxted, England. Leo was also President of the 56th FG and passed in 2003 during the 56th reunion in Connecticut we had organized. As you can see he is wearing his A-2 jacket. I donated this jacket along with other items of interest to The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum. Vivian kindly placed Leo's jacket on display at the Museum for the 56th reunion I attended this year in Savannah - it was good to see it again.

My best to you and all others who keep up the memory of WWII.

Sincerely,
Patricia Battista
Ellenton, FL



Leo F. Battista



An unusual 8th Air Force plate is that of Bill Toombs, North Little Rock, Arkansas, who flew in the 493rd Bomb Group and was awarded The Distinguished Flying Cross.



Bill Clark, Wallingford, CT served in East Anglia with the 458th Bomb Group. An especially nice license plate featuring our country's flag.



Gray Berg



The 44th Bomb Group at Shipdam is well represented in New York. Jim Heller of Sherrill New York was a control tower operator from 1943-1945, taking the crews home in 1945 on the Queen Mary.

A MISSION TO REMEMBER

FDR Potato Peeler Kids was the personalized name given by the aircrew for this airplane in which they flew in honor of President Roosevelt

14 May 1943, Jack Snell, Waist Gunner on FDR engaged in a serious conversation with Francis Ryan, Aircrew Member on the Knock out Dropper. "Francis, I'll not be coming back today. I've known it all night long. I want you to know, I've enjoyed every minute shared with you, my friend. Just remember all the good times." "Jack, don't talk that way! We will celebrate again my dear friend."

Ross Bales, Pilot of FDR before entering the plane takes out a key from his trousers and places it in the hands of Martin Yanica, Crew Chief of the FDR. "Martin, if I don't come back, take this key, and unlock my locker. Take the currency and take the crew to London Town and enjoy yourselves."

Walter Dooley, Co-Pilot on FDR in a ritual practiced before every mission gives Alvin Morton a dime. The same repetitious words spoken. "Al, keep this dime for me, and give it back." "Yes Sir, Good Luck." - I often wonder, "Why Me?"

Upon returning from Mission - Kiel, Germany - Submarine Pens and Yard, The FDR slowly fell behind the formation, and without reach of the fortress gunners for protection. Two enemy fighters arrived on the scene and simultaneously made one pass at the FDR guns blazing. The Fortress went into a slow spiral and suddenly plunged nose first down into the frigid North Sea.

The Prophecy Francis Ryan never got over it.
A Key Martin Yanica did what the Captain ordered.
A Dime Alvin Morton never got over his son's death.
The dime signifying ten crew members. In God We Trust.

Potato Peeler Kids were unswerving in devotion to principles of Faith, Dedication, Reverence; Strong character molded Courage, Commitment, Compassion, Courtesy, and diligent in pursuit of our nation's great goals in the mutual love and respect for all peoples.

FOUNDATIONS

It has been an honor to be embassaries sharing our stories, insights, and personal feelings to past dramatic history, patriotism, and bravery to local community groups and educational institutions to enlighten a greater understanding of our 303rd Bomb Squadron has been an excellent participant at many of our sixty presentations.

We were invited to address the Junior Class students on Thursday, May 24, 2007 at Mt. Lebanon High School, Pittsburgh, PA for the seventh straight year. It was a fantastic

experience to have the students join in singing God Bless America at last years presentation May 26, 2006. I have been impressed with the students and faculties' politeness, attentiveness and appreciation of our commitment to excellence.

Today our 303rd Bomb Group comradery are dwindling down to a precious few. We have been characterized The Greatest Generation. We were strong in our faith, strong in spirit to venture and dare with enthusiasm and dedication in meeting challenges of war and peace. We were embedded with the spirit of those four concepts from the Declaration of Independence:

Reverence for God
Love of country
Devotion to family
Deep belief in freedom

It is for each generation to preserve our heritage of ages past and protect our freedoms to centuries to come. Our generation was the one who fought and won the war, came home to develop America as the world's economic powerhouse, and forged strong families.

In the spirit of Robert Frost:

"But I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep,
and miles to go before I sleep."

I will continue on this mission molding the future foundations in today's youth whenever an invitation is extended.

Alvin L. Morton
Pittsburg, PA

The names of FDR Potato Peeler Kids are engraved on the Wall of Missing at American Memorials Military Cemeteries. Their names have been enshrined in the American Memorial Chapel in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, England. Each name inscribed in this book shall live eternally:

Bales, R.C. Capt	Margraten, Netherlands
Dooley, W.C. 1st Lt.	Cambridge, England
McColl, D.A. 1st Lt.	Cambridge, England
Mathis, Jr. R.M. 1st Lt.	Margraten, Netherlands
Winter, Jr. R.R. II. Sgt.	Margraten, Netherlands
Kilgore, R.H. II. Sgt.	Margraten, Netherlands
Zsampar, J.G.S. Sgt.	Cambridge, England
Snell, J.D.S. Sgt.	Margraten, Netherlands
O'Reilly, F.M.S. Sgt.	Arkansas, USA
Van Ravenstein, C.S. Sgt.	Margraten, Netherlands

"For the love of honor alone is ever young."
Pericles

In 2006 Merle Olmsted gave the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum the 357th Fighter Group archives and photographs. The entire collection is available for research, including these photographs of the six top aces of this group.



Also well known throughout the 357th Fighter Group, Donald Bochkay received credit for destroying 13.75 aircraft.



John England is credited with 17.5 victories.



Leonard K. "Kit" Carson had the highest number of kills for the group with 18.5 enemy aircraft.



Clarence Anderson shot down 16.25 Luftwaffe aircraft.



Richard Peterson had 15.5 kills.



Robert Foy is in this elite group with 15 kills.

Photographs from the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum's Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center Ground Crews in a Typical English Winter



Ground personnel work to scrape snow off this B-17 prior to mission take-off. This photo is part of the Theodore B. Webb Collection. Webb worked as a Public Relations Photographer.



This snow-covered B-24 is from the Webster Raemy Collection at the museum. Raemy commanded the 38th SCS.



Assigned to the 8th Air Force in November 1943, the 445th Bomb Group continued to fly missions until V-E Day. This photograph is part of the James Richard Carter Collection. An ace in the 56th Fighter Group, Carter had 6 kills.



On 25 February 1945 the 446th Bomb Group flew to Afschaffenburg to destroy the Siebert tank assembly plant. Here the bomb bay doors have just opened to reveal the bombs soon to be released. Edwin Reed began his 8th Air Force service with the 392nd Bomb Group and then transferred to 2nd Air Division Headquarters. This photograph is from the Edwin Reed Collection.



Included in the John E. Burrige Collection, this photograph documents the flight of a B-24 from the 489th Bomb Group on the 25 October 1944 mission to Munster.



A waist gunner in the 93rd Bomb Group, John McCay appreciated this photograph of a single B-24 from his group. It is now in the John McCay Collection.

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE EIGHTH AF NEWS STAFF



GERMAN OIL INDUSTRY

I read with great interest your coverage of the German Synthetic Oil Industry and the evaluation of the effectiveness of our bombing in vol. 7 #3. It was fitting that you also published the poem by Marvin Silbersher describing his mission to Merseburg on Nov. 2, 1944 and the letter from Richard Thormahlen describing his mission to Ruhland (the correct spelling) on Sept. 11, 1944. While the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey describes the damage done to the German war effort, the Silbersher and Thormahlen letters were essential to remind us that the impressive bombing results required great human sacrifices by our air crews.

The Leuna works at Merseburg were said to be the most heavily defended place on earth. Truly, the flak barrage was so intense that it did almost seem that you could walk on it. Our crew's Nov. 25, 1944 mission to Merseburg was 23 days after Silbersher's. As his poem predicted. "We'd have to come back." Our B-17 was riddled with flak holes, but no one on our crew was injured. We did not actually bomb Ruhland, as Thormahlen did, but on March 2, 1944 the 8th had to go back again. Ruhland was our primary target but it was only to be bombed under visual conditions. The primary was socked in, so we proceeded to our secondary, Dresden, which is 30 or so miles SSW of Ruhland.

At Dresden we for the first time encountered German jets, Me 26s, that pulled away from our P-51 escorts as though the latter were WWI planes. Still, we were hit by Me-109s

and I lined one up that was attacking us head on and let go a stream of bullets from the navigator's "cheek gun" but saw no evidence and I had hit him. Our left waist gunner, Fred Reo was more successful. I observed a 109 going down in smoke from his fire but he was only awarded "a probable." Again, our crew was one of the lucky ones and suffered no casualties.

The strategic decisions by both sides are fascinating and proved decisive. Although some of the 8ths' target selections were questionable, the decision to make the synthetic oil industry the top priority target in the latter part of 1944 and early 1945 was right on. As always in war, the victors owe a lot to their opponents' mistakes. Goering and Milch had campaigned for large-scale production of the early jets. We had no operational jet aircraft at the time. But Hitler vetoed it in favor of a "revenge weapon" capable of carrying a bomb load all the way to England. This proved beyond the ability of German industry to produce in 1943. The early jets we saw over Dresden could only stay aloft for 15 minutes. Our fighter planes could not take them on in even aerial combat, but were able to shoot them as they were landing. Had the Germans ramped up their jet fighter production starting in 1943, there would have been no D-Day, much less a successful attack on their synthetic oil industry.

**Robert Steiner, 34th BG Navigator
Washington, D.C.**

"In the first place, we should insist that if the immigrant who comes here in good faith becomes an American and assimilates himself to us, he shall be treated on an exact equality with everyone else, for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed, or birthplace, or origin. But this is predicted upon the person's becoming in every facet an America, and nothing but an American...There can be no divided allegiance here. Any man who says he is

an American, but something else also, isn't an American at all. We have room for but one flag, the American flag...We have room for but one language here, and this is the English language...and we have room for but one sole loyalty and that is a loyalty to the American people."
Theodore Roosevelt 1907

Quick visit with an old girlfriend

A few weeks ago, I learned that an old girlfriend would be visiting in Bloomington for a few days.

She and I first met quite a few years ago in a small oil town in southeast New Mexico. It was love at first sight. For the next few months, as we wandered around the country, we were almost inseparable.

We went many places, day and night, even when the weather was not the best. We cruised down the Mississippi and over the Gulf of Mexico and toured a lot of the central United States.

In the middle of our first year, the two of us took a trip, paid for by my employer, to England. En route, we saw more of the United States as well as parts of Labrador and Iceland.

In England, we were inseparable, practically living together. We continued flying around, including a number of day trips not only around England but also around Germany, France, Belgium, Holland and a bit of the English Channel and the North Sea. However, by March of the next year, I had my fill of these day trips. Fortunately, at the same time, my employer, probably concluding that I had done as much damage as I could, decided to send me back to the U.S. He insisted, however, that I leave without my girl friend.

That same year, when I had been back in the U.S. for a few months, we ran into each other in California. We had a few dates. After which, we split up when I took another job. Several years ago, we met again and had a brief fling for a couple of days.

About a month ago, I heard, by the grapevine, that she was going to be in Bloomington for three days. I just could not resist the desire to renew our relationship.

When I told Ruth, my wife, that I was planning to see my old girlfriend over in Bloomington for three days, the reaction was a "You-are-going-to-do-what?" look. The look quickly evaporated when I explained that my old "girlfriend" was the B-17 Flying Fortress, a World War II heavy bomber.

If I had to speculate as to why men, in particular, refer to airplanes, as if they are a member of the female gender, I believe this is the reason.

Bond develops

A bond, akin to marriage, develops between the man and the machine when the machine is first class in every respect.

The B-17, compared to today's bomber aircraft, is much slower, has a shorter range and can carry only a fraction of

what today's aircraft can. However, in the eyes of those who flew it, these are not shortcomings. The B-17 is first class in every respect. The Experimental Aircraft Association's B-17 Flying Fortress arrived at the Bloomington airport on the 10th of this month. So did I.

On reaching the airport, I looked in all directions to confirm the presence of THE AIRPLANE. It was not until after I had parked the van, walked through the terminal building and onto the ramp, did I see her. There is no mistaking the graceful profile of the B-17.

As I walked around the aircraft, subconsciously performing a pre-flight inspection, one of the Bloomington EAA members asked, "John, do you want to go on the next flight?" Before I could utter "Yes," my ear-to-ear grin gave him the answer.

Glenn Hill, the B-17 flight engineer, approached and said, "Since you were a pilot, you can ride on the flight deck behind the copilot." I almost ran over him to get on board and in place. No point in taking a chance someone would beat me to "my" spot. Big radial engines, such as those on the B-17, have a personality. When started and, as they idle, they clank, rattle and stumble. This collection of noises makes one wonder if it is safe to go flying with such pieces of machinery. However, once at full throttle and working, they settle down to issue a most beautiful (to some) sound.

Settle down they did, as we headed down the runway. With the potential of 4,800 hundred horses, we were in the air in short order.

We spent about three-quarters of an hour sightseeing over Bloomington and Lake Monroe from 2,000 feet. During the flight, memories came flooding back.

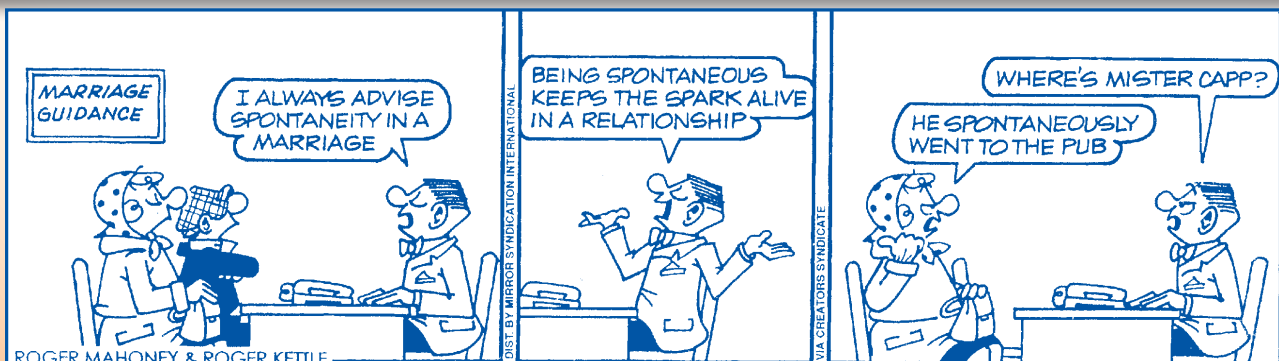
It was a short 45 minutes. The chirp of the main landing gear wheel tires, as they touched the runway, announced flight's end. It now was time to again to say goodbye to my old girl friend and return to my best girl.



John Walter
Community Columnist

John Walter, a Cummins Inc retiree, is a member of a panel of community writers whose opinions appear weekly in The Republic.

He can be reached by e-mail at columnists@there-public.com.





Col. Robert Steele, Commander USAF Alconbury is seen with Connie Richards, 8th AFHS British Liaison



The recent plaque installation at Milton Ernest Station 506 Service Command

November 2, 1944

Years later drop by drop
You weep without stopping
Advancing and retreating until
You fly over Merseburg

Childhood gone
Hard to breathe
Over the Leuna Synthetic Oil Plant
500 guns defending the enemy target.

The whole thing behaves
Like a cartoon
Giddy before breakfast
Five miles in the sky

Marvin Silbersher, 447th BG
Lake Hopatcong, NJ

THE ENGLISH GIRL'S LAMENT
Dear old England's not the same
We dreaded Invasion - well, it came
But, no, it's not the beastly Hun,
The God-damned Yankee Army's come!

You see them in the train, the bus
There isn't room for both of us,
We walk the streets to save our seats,
Then get run over by their jeeps

They moan about our luke warm beer,
Say, "Beer's like water over here,"
But after drinking three or four
You see them lying on the floor.

And then you see them try to dance
They grab a partner, start to prance
When you're half-dead, they say and smile,
"Now how 'bout that, my honey-chile?"

We see them try to Jitterbug
They twist and turn and pull and hug
It's enough to make an Indian jealous
Yet Yank's are civilized, they tell us.

Yank officers - they cause us smiles
Their pink pants can be seen for miles
We wonder if they're mice of men
Decide they're wolves - avoid their den.

We speak to them, but they look hazey
They think we're nuts, they think we're crazy
Yet they're our allies, we must be nice
They love us - yes, like cats love mice.

They laugh at us for drinking tea
Yet a funnier sight you'll never see
Than a gum-chewing Yank with a dumb looking face
Why, he'd raise a laugh almost any place.

They say that they can shoot and fight
It's true, they can - yes, when they're tight
I must admit their shootings fine
They sure can shoot a darned good line

They say that you have teeth like pearls
They like your hair, the way it curls
You're eyes would dim the brightest star
You'd even rival Miss Lamaar.

You are their life, their love, their all
For no other could they fall
They'll love you dearly, 'till death do part,
If you leave them, you'll break their heart.

And then they leave you broken hearted,
The camp has gone, your love departed
You wait for mail that doesn't come
The realize you're awfully dumb.

A different town, a different place
A different girl, a different face
"I love you darling, please be mine"
Same old Yank - same old line.

Anonymous

How About It?

Debriefing

Hundreds of American four engine bombers, high in the skies over Germany, were heading eastward. We were the unannounced, unwelcome, and uninvited guests of this warring enemy. Our destination was a synthetic oil refinery. The Allied strategy was to target its transportation system and its petroleum producing capabilities. By destroying these, the mobility of their military would be hampered and the end of the war would be hastened. Below, hundreds of flak gunners were determined to stop us. They were firing their cannons desperately into the air and having some degree of success. Our aircraft were being hit. Some were targeted and destroyed while others were receiving damage. Airmen attempting to survive were leaving their crippled aircraft. White parachutes billowed out and floated down in a sky filled with black, greasy, and flashing shell bursts. Many of the chutes were open but some had men who were hanging helplessly beneath a tangled mess of straps and chords. Some were burning. They were our friends and buddies. Looking downward, we saw the results of our bombing, hundreds of vivid flashes of bomb bursts mixed with dirt and the twisted metal structures of a seriously destroyed oil refinery. Shooting upward were oily and billowing black clouds mingled with leaping flames. There was utter confusion – nothing but chaos and destruction. Our damaged formation of planes droned on and on. It seemed to us like an eternity before we were finally back home and safe on the ground. All of our crew was still alive; our aircraft was damaged but was still intact. Some of the aircraft and men were not as fortunate! At our revetment, the engines were shut down, we deplaned, and our usual brief critique with our faithful ground crew was completed. We got on board the waiting GI truck and headed to the headquarters building. Returning crews, somber, fatigued and anxious, filled the large smoke-filled room. Coffee, donuts and sandwiches were available for the men. There was a long wait before a table became available, ten chairs for the crew, another for the intelligence officer. An enlisted man brought a tray of ten small glasses full of booze, the pilot signed for it and it was quickly consumed. The debriefing began. What happened? When? Where? What did you see? On and on the interrogation proceeded until the officer was certain he had gleaned everything he could about the mission experience from the tired men. They were

dismissed to turn in their flight gear and head for the chow hall. The reports were sent off to Headquarters. The debriefing information was vital to the men who would fly tomorrow's mission. What information about the mission flown today would help in the missions to be flown in the future? What could be learned? What could they expect in the future? This was the procedure used sixty years ago by the men of World War II. We are now a rapidly vanishing generation. What useful information have we learned which, if passed on, would be useful for those following us? Living these years, we have been shaped and influenced by everything we have experienced. We have mingled with all kinds of people. When those beliefs and values are like ours, we have harmony; but when there is a differing of opinions, goals and objectives and how to achieve them, there is conflict. How we handle conflict shows the kind of person we really are. Our society is full of individuals whose situations we often shun or ignore. Thinking about them brings us emotional conflict. But these people are in need of a godly and compassionate touch. Our own character is revealed by how we deal with these everyday conflicts. Someone has wisely said that character is that quality of our life that we have when we are in a dark and solitary place when no one is looking. It is that characteristic that is hidden but is eventually revealed and seen by the eyes of the public. Tom Landry, an 8th Air Force World War II B-17 pilot, demonstrated a high profile example of character in his civilian life. During his war time years, he was a member of the 493rd BG known as Helton's Hellcats and flew thirty-five bombing missions in the European Theatre of Operations. As a civilian, he became the legendary and much loved coach of the Dallas Cowboys and served them for twenty-nine years. The team changed ownership, a new coach was named and immediately Tom Landry, much to the disbelief and dismay of his admiring public, was fired. His true character came out. Joe Gibbs, former coach of the Washington Redskins and one of his colleagues said: "It wasn't his wins or losses, but rather the kind of person he was. Tom was a great moral person and led a lot of people to Christ." In his leadership role, there were many crises but he was a man of moral courage and undeniable character. To what then do we attribute the building of character? Why do some generations seem to have more of it than others do?

Could it be that the lap of luxury or ease of living or lack of convictions or a lack of purpose in living do not foster strong character? As exercise contributes to muscle development, conflict and stress strengthens one's character.



Earl Wassom

"Grow up or fold up" was the philosophy of our generation when we were young. Face life as it is dealt you. Don't run away! Stand up for what is right. We stood strong. Character and courage were fostered. They are every day living events. We are not given a lifetime supply of courage to draw upon. We are always expending it. Life and living has taught us that there is a source of replenishing and we must tap into it! The writer of Psalms gave us the secret, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he will strengthen our heart": (Psalms 27:14 KJV)

A physician had, across the years of his practice, been privileged to share the most profound time in the lives of his patients, including their feelings during their final moments on earth. He observed that in those moments, the dying do not think about the degrees they earned in college, what positions they held, or how much wealth they had accumulated. At the end, he declares, what really matters is whom you loved and who loved you. He concluded this to be a good measure of the success of ones life. St. Paul the Apostle faced many crises throughout his life, the greatest when he was awaiting his own execution. He declared, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have the faith." (II Timothy 4:7 KJV). Likewise, when we face our final moments, we can sit down and chat with the Great Interrogator. Hopefully He will say, "You did well. Come on in.

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8th AF News
The Eighth Air Force Historical Society
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