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TH AF NEWS

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2000



AF News

December 2009

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

Seasons Greetings and Happy Hanukkah to one and all! On behalf of your Eighth Air Force Historical Society Board of Directors, I would like to wish all of you a very joyous Holiday Season.

Many exciting things are happening with the Society these days. Our financial future is well on course, thanks to the stern and knowledgeable foresight of our Treasurer, Darrel Lowell. Darrel has done a tremendous job overseeing our finances and protecting the integrity of our fiscal future.

We also have some exciting news regarding a very special air show event the Eighth Air Force Historical Society will be heavily involved with late this summer. The Society will be special VIP guests of the "Thunder Over Michigan" air show in Detroit this coming August. They are planning on having ten flyable B-17s, two flyable B-24s along with all the fighter aircraft all in one place at one time! This has never been attempted and will surely be an unprecedented event! Stayed tuned for further details!

The previous administration and staff, after five intensive months of daily efforts of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia finally made a dream become a reality. Earlier this year they managed to obtain a Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress. Many of you followed the progress of its journey from the storage facility in Maryland to the Museum in Georgia. The aircraft was disassembled and trucked in pieces to the Museum where it was once again reassembled inside the main "Combat Gallery" where it stands proudly today. To pay the expenses of moving the bomber they obtained a \$100,000 Foundation grant.

I first saw the aircraft last February just a few weeks after its delivery. The Fortress is in remarkable condition. Having been converted to a fire-bomber, many of the external and internal components of the aircraft were removed to increase the payload capability of water or flame retardant. Things such as turrets, bomb racks, machine guns and dozens of internal components were removed during its fire-bomber conversion. Now those components have to be replaced as the Museum's restoration staff begins the

painstaking process of restoring the Fortress to her WWII configuration.

I recently made a trip to Savannah and viewed the progress thus far with the restoration. I was simply blown away! The progress is staggering!

Many of you, like me, consider the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum our permanent home. It is where the story of the Eighth Air Force is told each and every day. Thousands of visitors go through the Museum each year and learn about the courage and endeavor of the "Mighty Eighth." The Museum does a superb job in educating the public about the legacy of the 8th Air Force.

From the Museum's professional displays to the "Mission Experience," people from throughout the world come and experience something very unique. Now, the Museum has their sights on doing something very special. Their vision is to restore the B-17G Flying Fortress to its WWII configuration and allow the public to gain full unrestricted access to the airplane, once completed. No other Museum in the world gives the public this opportunity.

Imagine hundreds of school children climbing through the B-17 each year. Their sensory perception will be immediately stimulated as they touch and feel their way through the aircraft. One cannot fully appreciate, until you climb inside one of these special airplanes, what it was like to fly in a bomber during WWII. You can't feel how cramped, confined and claustrophobic it was until you see it for yourself. The Museum's goal is to give the public that opportunity.

At our 2009 Reunion in Cincinnati, Henry Skipper the Museum's CEO, gave our Reunion attendees a very detailed history of the B-17. He also gave a very professional presentation to our Board about the projected costs of the restoration. At that point, we all unanimously agreed the Eighth Air Force Historical Society Board should conduct a fund raising campaign to aid in the restoration of the Museum's B-17.

This fund raising campaign is different than the others we have done over the years, given there is total accountability for project. The Museum has budgeted and analyzed a detailed restoration plan



**Mark Copeland
President**

that is very realistic and thought out. However, with any WWII aircraft restoration, it takes funds to make it happen.

The B-17 Flying Fortress, the "City of Savannah," is not only the Museum's aircraft; it is our aircraft as well. Visitors to the Museum will have the opportunity to experience something very special and we all must be responsible for making it a better place.

In the centerfold of this issue you will find more information and a special return envelope where you and your family can make a donation towards the restoration effort of this very special airplane. Give yourself a Christmas present by donating whatever you can to fund this effort. Make a donation in memory of your fellow crewmembers or the ground personnel that kept you in the air. Most importantly, give for those who are not here to make a donation.

Your tax deductible donation will go directly to the restoration of the "City of Savannah."

It is my ardent hope this fundraising effort will be the Eighth Air Force Historical Society's "finest hour."

In conclusion, I would like to take the opportunity to wish you and your family a safe and memorable Holiday Season. May the year 2010 be one of peace and joy for all of us. Thanks you for your continued support and we are very glad to have you as a member!

Respectively in your service,
Mark S. Copeland. President

MISSION BRIEFING



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

It took me about two years to learn what Society members desired to see in their newsmagazine, the 8th AF News. That was twelve years ago and since then our valued publisher Donna Neely and I have attempted to maintain the status of what has been called "the best veterans' newsmagazine in the country."

The Board of Directors in 1998 had to make a few changes in the operations of the News. It seems that the previous editor, Jim Hill, had been receiving

pressure from influential leaders and members controlling what he could and could not put into print. Accordingly, the Board passed a Bylaw of the Society stating that in the future the Board will choose the editor and publisher, but the editor will have total control, without outside influence, of what goes into each issue. This is exactly how we have maintained for the last twelve years.

I usually read that directive at the General Assembly meeting at the annual reunion, but failed to do that in Cincinnati this year. I will state that the magazine's success has depended on contributions of articles and photographs sent to me from the troops. Every now and then I get a grumbly letter or two, from both sides of the pond and even the Continent, wanting to know why I haven't published their material. Let me assure you that all articles are read and put into my files for consideration. In this current issue, there are several articles that I have retained for a couple of years or so. All contributions will eventually wind up in the 8th AF Research files at the Mighty Eighth Museum. Please send me your articles and photos, so that we may keep the magazine on target!

One other point to make. Based on many discussions at the Cincy reunion with Society supporters of the Museum,

I realize I have neglected to relate the circumstances as President/CEO of the Museum since taking office in 2005. I was relieved of all Museum duties and responsibilities on April first of this year – a decision made by the Executive Committee of the Museum Board of Trustees. This was a total surprise to me. I will state emphatically that there was no mishandling of museum funds – every dollar contributed is scheduled to go to certain areas and exhibit production as you desired. In addition, although I have been treated for two years for a skin cancer, I am in great health, asymptomatic and proud to never have missed a day's work in both of my careers due to illness.

To save all of you some trouble and perhaps embarrassment, please contact me at my home addresses, found on the inside front cover of each newsmagazine. I look forward to complying with the directives of the HS Board and continue to serve as editor, alongside our Donna Neely.

Sincerely,
Cheers and Good Luck,
Walter Brown, Editor

BEHIND THE SCENES



*Happy Holidays
to all our 8th Air
Force family &
friends.*

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Despite disagreements over how best to defeat the Axis powers, U.S. president Franklin Delano Roosevelt and British prime minister Winston Churchill forged a successful coalition effort that ensured an Allied victory during World War II



From the 8th Air Force Historical Society Office



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Greetings Members,

Thank you all for the timely mailing of your dues. I've processed about a quarter of them thus far. I wish you all a safe and happy holiday season. –Catherine Rice

2010 8TH AIR FORCE ANNUAL REUNION

Make your plans now to attend the 8th Air Force Historical Society's 36th annual reunion to be held in **Tucson, Arizona, July 20 thru July 23.**

Our host hotel will be the Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites, Palo Verde (airport north). We have a room rate of \$88 per night (plus taxes) for a traditional room and \$108 per night for a 2 room parlor Suite. Reservations can be made directly with the Hotel by calling 1-520-746-1161; be sure to mention that you are with the Group **8th Air Force** to receive this preferred room rate.

Tour options will include visits to the Pima Air Museum, the Bone Yard, the Nike Missile Silo, Old Tucson (where all the old westerns were filmed), as well as a visit to the lovely Sonora Desert Museum. And golfers, don't forget to bring

your clubs as we expect to have an organized outing Thursday morning.

Because of higher afternoon temperatures, all of our tour activities will take place in the morning when the temperature is more comfortable, and our afternoons will be occupied with activities back inside the Hotel.

More details and complete registration will follow in the next issue.



ON OUR FRONT AND BACK COVER

THE DITCHING

Artist Gil Cohen is perhaps at his best when painting the men and aircraft of the Mighty Eighth. Here he depicts one of the most feared events of combat. Ditching an airplane in the sea - one that was not going to make it back home was at best an unpredictable experience. Cohen captures the elements of the cold waters of the North Sea and English Channel and the efforts of the aircrew to survive in this impressive action painting. The crippled B-17 has been ditched and its crew has just a few vital moments to leave the aircraft and get into life rafts if possible, to

await rescue by Air/Sea Units from the coast.

This painting is reproduced in Gil Cohen's new book: Gil Cohen, Aviation Artist, just released and reviewed in the Book Reviews section of this issue 8th AF News.



SWEET PEA RETURNS TO ITALY

I was in the 97th Bomb Group of the 15th Air Force. We had bombed the Debreczen target that day and I was swabbing out the top turret gun barrels when someone pointed to the south. There was a plane making wide swings about five miles away, obviously trying to line up with our runways. We couldn't see much from that distance, but were curious because of the odd maneuvering and the distress flares being fired.

The B-17, "Sweet Pea," was from the 2nd Bomb Group. It passed us and landed about 100 yards away. We all yelled in surprise as we saw the huge hole in the waist. Four of us jumped in a Jeep and drove over to where it stopped. The tail had collapsed about half way down the runway, causing it to stop on the ball turret.

We arrived at the plane just as the crew was getting out. Somebody yelled that the ball turret gunner was still in the ball. A couple of guys and I opened the turret and pulled the gunner out. He was in pretty bad shape emotionally. He had not been able to move the ball or communicate with the crew. The photo shows the hatch cover laying on the ground where it fell when we opened it.

That was the finest feat of flying I have ever witnessed, since there were no controls for the tail surfaces.

My wife and I visited Amendola in 1990. It's now an Italian air base and is laid out much as it was back then.

Jack Botts, Radio Operator, 414th Squadron, 97th Bomb Group, in Wisconsin Chapter Badger News



B17 G "Sweet Pea" returned to Amendola air base in Foggia, Italy and immediately upon landing, came to a stop and collapsed as you see it here. This was following a direct hit from an 88mm flak shell which exploded in the aircraft's middle section.

CHAPTER/UNIT/GROUP LIAISON REPORT



Greetings my fellow Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society members. I am writing this article on Veteran's Day and here in New York City there was a grand parade honoring our

Veterans. There were tens of thousands that lined 5th Avenue to watch the parade on the 90th Anniversary of Veteran's Day. And to add to this the newly commissioned USS New York containing 7.5 tons of steel salvaged from the World Trade Center was in

harbor here also.

I would like to thank the Chapters & Bomb Groups that have been sending me your Newsletters which I post some of the contents on the Society's website under the Events tab. It is encouraging to read how many of the Chapters/Groups are moving forward and how they are accomplishing this endeavor. I am also in continuous contact with members and others in the U.K. and Europe and want to let you 8th AF Veterans know there are many of us 'Keeping Your Memories Alive'. Your generation will not be forgotten! We do need to update our contact listings though and I would appreciate if you could contact me with this info. On a sad note Dr. Herbert Solomon President of the Illinois Chapter passed

away in September. Herb was a Lead Navigator on B17's completing 27 missions with the 305th BG, 364th Sqdn. Also Charlie Macgill of the 486th BG who passed away on October 21st. I mention these two gentlemen because of their exceptional work on preserving the 8th Air Force and we honor them and all like them especially today on Veteran's Day. We need your thoughts & ideas please on moving forward. 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.

Keep Their Memories Alive
Pat Keeley
Please support the USO.

THE ROYAL AIR FORCE PRESENTATIONAL SWORD DELIVERED IN STYLE

The Royal Air Force Museum is proud to announce the delivery of the Royal Air Force American Foundation Presentation Sword.

The Royal Air Force Officer's Sword was commissioned by the Royal Air Force Museum American Foundation and kindly donated by one of its board members, Tim Manna of Kennet Aviation.

It is to be presented annually to the Royal Air Force Officer on exchange with the United States Air Force who has made the most significant contribution in that year to Anglo/American relations.

This year it was presented on October 28th at a closed ceremony in Washington, D.C., at the home of the British ambassador.

The sword itself was transported to the United States of America on board 'Grumpy', the B-25D Mitchell which made it historic return journey to the US after 25 years in the UK. The journey followed the route taken by aircraft travelling to the UK during the war and represented and honoured the flight crews who were unable to complete their missions.

The aircraft was piloted by John Sessions who started the commemorative journey from Duxford, England and ended at the Historic Flight Foundation's collection at Paine Field in Everett, Washington. The flight took five days, with a flight plan that included Ireland, Iceland, Greenland and the Baffin and Hudson Bays.

The Royal Air Force Museum American Foundation supports the work of the RAF Museum and promotes ties of friendship between Britain and America.

The Royal Air Force sends a number of officers to embed with the USAF each year. They share best practice and promote interoperability between the Services which is vital when on the front line.

The Presentation Sword was created by British company Pooley Swords which makes the ceremonial swords for all three Services, hand-finished at their base in Shoreham, Hants. The inscription on the sword comes from the famous American anthem The Star-Spangled Banner and reads "Oh, thus be it ever when free men shall stand."



GENERAL CARL SPAATZ

Carl Spaatz was the first Chief of Staff of the Air Force as a separate military service. He was an officer of extraordinary effectiveness and ability and was said to be the only person that Hap Arnold trusted completely. Eisenhower said that Omar Bradley and Spaatz were the two officers most responsible for victory in Europe.

He was born "Spatz" but added the second "a" in 1937 in hopes that his name would be pronounced correctly, as "Spots rather than "Spats." His friends called him "Tooey," after a West Point upperclassman he resembled.

He was commissioned in the infantry but became a pilot in 1916 and flew with Benny Foulois and the 1st Aero Division in pursuit of Pancho Villa in Mexico. He was in combat for the last three weeks of World War I, time enough for him to shoot down three German airplanes. In 1929, he was commander of *Question Mark*, a Fokker C-2A, when it set an airborne endurance record. *Question Mark*, refueling from a hose extending from another airplane, remained in the air for more than 150 hours.

At the beginning of World War II, Brigadier General Spaatz was the chief planner for the Air Corps. He advanced through a series of combat commands in Europe and North Africa and in 1944 became commander of US Strategic Air Forces in Europe. As the war in Europe ended in 1945, Spaatz got his fourth star and was named commander of US Strategic Air Forces in the Pacific. In that capacity, he oversaw the conclusion of the air campaign against Japan, including the atomic bomb missions against Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He was present at the surrender of both Germany and Japan.

When Arnold retired in 1946, Spaatz became the last Commanding General of the Army Air Forces. In 1947, he was named the first Chief of Staff of the US Air Force and saw the new service through its first formative year before retiring in 1948. His retirement activities included a tour as Chairman of the Board of the Air Force Association in 1950-51. Spaatz died in 1974.



IN FLANDERS FIELDS

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.

John McCrae

REPLY TO IN FLANDERS FIELDS

Oh! Sleep in peace where poppies grow;
The torch your falling hands let go
Was caught by us, again held high,
A beacon light in Flanders sky
That dims the stars to those below.
You are our dead, you held the foe,
And ere the poppies cease to blow,
We'll prove our faith in you who lie
In Flanders Fields.



LOST AND FOUND

Looking for a copy (reproduction) of a recording made by a Glee Club at Scott Field near Bellville Illinois, late 1943 or early '44. Record was made in the studio of Radio station KMOX in St. Louis.

Contact: John P. Capp
600Schnebly Rd.
Sedona, AZ 86336
Thank you much!



1944 England Secret CS 93 JD

REDLINE

We are prepared to execute Thunderclap, within our limitations, immediately upon receipt of your signal but desire to indicate the following points in connection with the plan: number one we cannot put two zero zero zero heavy bombers over target without several days prior notification and preparation, number two to accurately bomb and adequately cover the designated area visual bombing conditions are necessary, number three the general target area is protected by over three zero zero heavy antiaircraft guns and to bomb the specific area indicated it will be necessary to pass within range of a major part of these, our losses particularly with the lower flying baker two fours will be extremely high under visual conditions, number four there are no basically important strictly military targets in the designated area, number five enemy casualties will not be of the order indicated as ample warning will be given and air raid shelter will be taken, in this connection of the reactions of the people of Berlin who have been bombed consistently will be very different from the people of London who have not experienced a heavy raid in years. Number six terror is induced by the unknown. The chances of terrorizing into submission, by merely an increased concentration of bombing, a people who have been subjected to intense bombing for four years is extremely remote. Number seven we will, in what may be one of our last and best remembered operations regardless of its effectiveness, violate the basic American principle of precision bombing

of targets of strictly military significance for which our tactics were developed and our crews trained and indoctrinated. It is therefore (Charlie Sugar Nine Three Jig Dog Doolittle to Spaatz) recommended that the area bombing of this target be accomplished by the RAF who are trained and indoctrinated in this type of attack and, in our part of Thunderclap, that we be permitted to select precision targets of military significance and thus assure the effectiveness of our operations and the minimization of our losses.

General Jimmy Doolittle
Commander, 8th AF



Jimmy Doolittle (center) with (l-r) Lt General Carl Spaatz, Lt General George Patton, Maj General Hoyt Vandenberg and Brig General O.P. Weyland.

MY EIGHTH AIR FORCE RECOLLECTIONS...

by Edward Garvin, 486th BG

I was a student at Savannah High School and a member of the ROTC band in Savannah, Georgia in 1942.

On January 27, 1942, our band director, Mr. Henry J. Applewhite, gave instructions that we should come to school the following day in our ROTC uniforms, as we would be going to play for a special event. He told us to "be on time" as the school buses would be leaving at 10:00 AM sharp.

The next day, Wednesday, January 28, 1942, we arrived at the building which is known today as American Legion Post number 135 located at 1108 Bull Street, downtown Savannah, Georgia. The building has quite a long military history having been built in 1786 when it was known as the Chatham Artillery Armory. It was sold in 1936 to the American Legion Post 135 and is still owned by that organization to this day.

Mr. Applewhite instructed the band members-dressed in our clean and pressed ROTC uniforms to take our instruments and music and proceed to the second floor of the building where we would find an area set aside for our performance. I remember it was early set up with chairs and music stands. The band assembled and we played several marches and familiar tunes.

As I recall, there were about 25 or so uniformed Army officers upstairs. Around 11:00 AM, one of the officers stepped up to a podium, proceeded to read a document, and then gave a brief speech. I don't really remember what he said. I remember that we didn't play any more music after the closing statement, but were simply told to gather our music and instruments and get back on the buses that would return us to



school. This momentous event made absolutely NO impression on me. Let's call it youth.

At the time I did not know about the Eighth Air Force. It wasn't until several months later when I read that the Eighth Air Force was started in Savannah on January 28, 1942 at Hunter Field. It all began to click in my brain that I was actually present for that historical event and that I had played my French horn with the rest of my high school band dressed in my ROTC uniform-and it didn't happen at Hunter Field, named for an Ace of WW I, Frank O'D Hunter. General Hunter was the commanding officer of the 8th Army Air Force fighters.

Later that same year I volunteered for the Army Air Corps. It was December 10, 1942 and my serial number was 14142714. I really wanted to be a pilot but I failed the eye depth perception

test. I attended several schools and training centers and became an engine and airplane mechanic.

On March 23, 1943 I became a member of the Eighth Air Force. I spent sixteen months in England, stationed at Great Walding Field in Sudbury, Suffolk. My primary job was to work on B-24s and later B-17s, the great bombers of the Eighth. I made many pre-flights on the planes in England when we would install a new or rebuilt engine. We had to constantly remind the pilots to reduce the speed of the new engine and gradually increase the RPMs, "breaking in" the engine so it would last a little longer.

During the months I was in England, I volunteered as the base chapel organist. After missing a chapel service because of working on the line 24 hours straight, the chaplain requested from headquarters that I become his assistant. His request was approved, and I began to play for all chapel services and worked in his office and drove a vehicle for him to all necessary functions.

I participated in Air Offensive Europe, as well as campaigns in Normandy, Rhineland, Ardennes, Central Europe, and northern France. On October 10, 1945, I received an honorable discharge from active duty with the Eighth Air Force.

It is my understanding that I am the only living person (as of this date) who was at the activation ceremony of the Eighth Air Force in Savannah and who later proudly served as a member of the Eighth Air Force - two years, ten months, and twenty-two days.

**Edward Garvin, 486th BG
Savannah, GA**

REUNION

8th Air Force Historical Society's 36th annual reunion to be held in **Tucson, Arizona, July 20 thru July 23.**

* Then there is the joke of 42-97280 named "Haybag" Annie. Once, an aircraft was transferred to us with *Haybag* already painted on the nose. Annie Hayward was an English Red Cross worker on our field who was a very talented artist. She painted many of our nose art pictures. We talked Annie into adding Annie to this label. She did and painted a self portrait as well. It was in good fun as a play on her name and the Fortress *Haybag* Annie served the 385th BG well through VE Day. But I often wonder if the fellow from the other Group who originally named it just "Haybag" ever saw its new nose art.

submitted by Bill Varnedoe, 385th BG.O



THE MIGHTY EIGHTH TAKES BACK CAPTURED FACTORIES

Following the invasion of France by the Germans in the early months of the war, Nazi industrialists took over many of the factories that were operating in the occupied countries. One typical target for our bombing missions was the Renault factory near Paris.

These strike photos are from the Jake Fredericks files at 3rd Air Division Headquarters in Elveden and are typical of the bombing damage to these German-operated factories.



"Holding Pattern"

Ho! Ho! Ho!
Merry.... OOPS!



Aviation artist, Jim Balleto, Warner Robins, GA



ELECTION NOTICE

Nominations of candidates for election to the Board of Directors of the Eighth Air Force Historical must be in the hands of the Secretary no later than May 15, 2010. The following information must be included.



- Full name and address of person being nominated.
- Nominee's 8th AFHS membership number.
- 8th Air Force unit in which nominee served if applicable.
- Brief resume of nominee.
- Nominating member's full name and address.
- Nominator's 8th AFHS membership number and, if applicable, his unit.

The Secretary will relay all nominations to the Nominating committee. Nominations received by the Secretary after May 15, 2010 or any nomination without complete information will not be considered.

Send all nominations to:

David Nowack • 4878 College View Court • Schnecksville, PA 18078 • Tel. (610) 799-4640 • DLNowack@ptd.net

AMERICA'S WORLD WAR II

Total U.S. military personnel, men and women, reached a maximum of approximately 12,500,000 with 8,300,000 men. 100,000 WACs and 45,500 nurses and other women in the Army: 3,300,000 men, 82,000 WAVES and 11,000 nurses in the Navy: 161,500 men and 10,000 SPARS in the Coast Guard: 458,000 men and 18,400 women in the Marines.

World War II put more than 75,000,000 persons under arms. Here are estimated figures on the maximum armed forces of the main belligerents: United States, 12,500,000: British Empire, 9,500,000: Russia, 20,000,000 to 27,000,000: France, 3,500,000: China, 5,000,000: Germany, 8,500,000: Japan, 4,000,000: Italy, 1,300,000.

Government estimates of war costs, civilian and military, made at the end of the war, included: \$87,860,000,000 in France. \$4,452,660,775 in Belgium. \$3,019,200,000 in Holland. \$2,488,034,000 in Norway and \$2,000,000,000 in Denmark. Certain costs were still rising and others were so intangible as to be impossible to esti-

mate in cash, government officials stated.

Americans paid \$119,346,229,000 in taxes during war time. ... a peak of 10,300,000 workers was reached for the U.S. munitions industry alone - approximately one munitions - maker for every man in the Army or Navy. ... American soldiers fired more than a billion rounds of small arms ammunition. ... U.S. blood donors gave a total of 13,300,000 pints for the armed forces. ... The nation's railroads handled some 32,000,000 Army troops in organized movements.



Historic Barksdale gate to be demolished

By John Andrew Prime • jprime@gannett.com • October 26, 2009



The historic West Gate at Barksdale Air Force Base, unused for several years now, is being torn down in the name of progress. (Photo courtesy Barksdale Air Force Base)

The historic West Gate of Barksdale Air Force Base soon will be no more.

According to a release posted on the facility's Web site, the structure that was in place even before the base opened in February 1933 will come down over the next week, a victim of progress.

When plans to demolish it as part of security and efficiency remodeling were announced more than a year ago, efforts were taken to try to move it or save it for use elsewhere, since it is one of the structures listed among historic structures for the base's protected district, but to no avail.

A newer West Gate, set about 200 yards into the facility, was built for post 9-11 force protection, increasing the distance from the highway to the base.

The original West Gate, used until 2006, was built from August 1931 to August 1932 by the Electric Contracting and Engineering Company of New Orleans, at a cost of \$74,639. The cost to tear it down will be \$51,322. The original structure was extensively remodeled over the years as the base became less open to the public, with a round defensive guard house for ground troops which was closed off as Barksdale's first line of defense during World War II.

The Barksdale museum will retain such items as shingles from its roof, the roof vent finial, gutters and downspouts. A pair of fleur-de-lis decorations, the symbols of 2nd Bomb Wing due to its association with France stemming from World War I, also will be saved.

submitted by Brenda Elmgren

Barksdale was the home of B-24 training, starting in February 1942. Ed.





S/SGT PAUL FECZKO
B17 TAIL GUNNER

Dear Sir,

Enclosed is a copy of myself as a 23 year-old tail-gunner on a B-17. The plane indicates the name of our plane "Fighting Yank" with the letter "P" in the square to identify our group "487th Bomb Group."

Also enclosed is a copy of a photograph of my flight jacket showing the "Fighting Yank" logo that I copied from a Disney cartoon and I painted on my jacket and the jackets of my crew members.

I was with the original contingent of troops that formed the original group for the 487th Bomb Group that arrived from Davis Monthan Field to Alama-gordo, New Mexico.

The group we formed originally consisted of B-24's and were changed to B-17's midway through my tour of duty.

The first mission in combat for the 487th Bomb Group was May 7, 1944. My first mission was the group's 6th mission, on May 23, 1944. My 34th and last mission was on September 1, 1944.

We were slated to fly 35 missions, but the flight surgeon grounded our crew, saying we had had enough.

The pilot for our plane was Lt. Koczinski. I learned at a reunion that he had returned for a second tour of duty and was subsequently reported missing.

Members of our crew besides myself that I remember were:

James Cunningham

Providence, R.I. - Engineer

James Davis

Charleroli, Penn. - Co-Pilot

Robert Frederick

Middleton, Conn.
Ball Turret Gunner

Henry Gassman

New Hyde Park, L.I., N.Y.,
Radio Operator

Ralph Misiasik

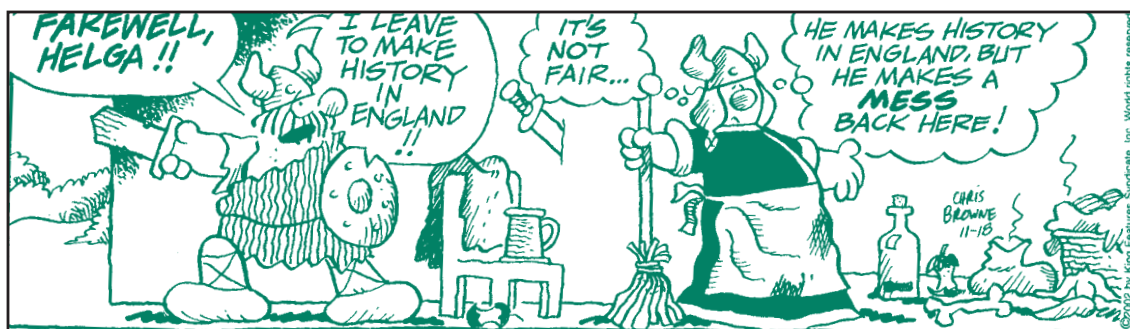
Yorkville, Oneida, N.Y.
Waist Gunner

Carl Reed

Rochester, N.Y. - Waist Gunner



Sincerely,
Paul Feczko, 487th BG
Crown Point, IN



BOMBER BASE IN ENGLAND

by Adrian Poletti, C.P., Chaplain

Danger never made a saint. Nor does a war ever make the Quartermaster Corps issue G.I. halos. Any chaplain can tell you that. It's his business to know. But I say this for the record: more men attend church here than back home. More men here count God in on their plans than is true back in the States. It may be war brings men closer to God. But this is certain: many a man here is asking himself, what's the real purpose of life?

I am Chaplain of a USAAF Bomber Station in England. Day after day I see my men take off on their bombing missions over Europe. Day after day I wait for them to return. Counting the planes. Counting the men. Some days they don't all come back.

Somewhere in the skies Taps sounded for them - eternal taps. But they were ready. It's good to be able to write to a widow or a mother, "He was ready."

Sundays - Unless there happens to be a bombing mission on Sunday morning, every man on the post is free to attend services. We are fortunate to have a permanent chapel. It is well furnished and accommodates four hundred. Since it is conveniently located in the community site, any odd hour you may drop in you will find at least one or two kneeling there, praying, thinking. In

all, over seven hundred men attend church on Sunday. The Jewish services are conducted on Saturday morning.

After dinner on Sunday, I return to the office for about three hours. Some of the men find it difficult to get around during the week, so there is always a number of callers.

I am awakened at four and laconically told, "Briefing at five." The Chaplain of a Bomber Group has for his first concern the welfare of the combat crews. For that reason he attends every briefing - that is where the crews are told what their target for the day is, are shown maps and pictures of it, and receive information and instructions for the raid. It may come at any time, but is usually early in the morning. The men like to see the Chaplain there. Even though some never go to church themselves, they feel his prayers will help see them through.

Following the briefing I see the Catholic men, hear the confessions of any who wish to go, and give them all Communion. If anything does happen they are prepared to meet

their God, and thus they set out all the better equipped to do the job; they fear nothing, have free and easy minds, and can give their undivided attention to the work at hand.

After Communion the men go out to their ships to check the guns, bombs, instruments, and motors. Fifteen minutes before take-off they taxi out of the dispersal areas and line up at the end of the main runway. Zero hour and the first ship

opens its throttles, darts down the ramp and up into the morning sky. At thirty-second intervals the rest follow; huge four-engined birds weighing twenty-five tons, carrying a crew of ten, tons of bombs, and bristling with guns. As each plane thunders by, the Chaplain waves "good luck" to the crew and gives them conditional absolution. They gain altitude, fall into formation, and come back over the field in a final salute. With their noses pointed toward Germany they are off to annihilate another part of the Nazi war machine. I return to the chapel to say the seven o'clock Mass, remembering especially those who are off fighting in the skies to protect our freedom of religion.

The planes will be gone anywhere from four to eight hours, during which time you say an occasional prayer that they will all be back; the men call this

time "sweating out the ships." About fifteen minutes before they are due back, the ground crews, fire trucks, ambulances, and trucks to pick up the crews, gather at the edge of the field. All eyes scan the horizon, some even have binoculars. Right on the minute the formation appears, grows larger until the individual planes can be counted. The one question is "Are there any missing?"

We are up at three thirty: breakfast, and then briefing at four-thirty. All is in readiness for the take-off when the mission is "scrubbed" at seven because of the weather. All the hours of preparation go for nothing. This is one of the most trying things for the crews, namely, the many times they get up and put in several hours' preparation and tension only to have it scrubbed at the last minute. This morning most of the combat men go back to bed. The ordinance men who were out "bombing-up" from twelve to four and have been in bed only a few hours are now called out again to unload.



The planes are never left standing with live bombs. I return to the chapel to say Mass, at which attendance on weekdays averages fifteen.

Later in the morning I visit the hospital and spend some time with the men there. There are thirty-two today.

In the afternoon I answered several letters from anxious parents inquiring about their sons who have been reported missing. Usually nothing can be added to what they already know, but sympathy is expressed, and very often some personal information concerning the soldier when he was at this field can be given that helps alleviate the burden of waiting for definite news.

This evening we had our weekly Religious Discussion Group. This is a rather new venture here. In the several weeks of its existence the interest manifested and the questions asked point to a revival of a religious attitude of mind. The topic of discussion was "The English Reformation." Next week it will be "Religion in Germany."

Wednesday - The weather had closed in so there will be no flying today; the men will have ground school. I visited the line this morning, also several of the shops. The men are always glad to see you and pass the time of day. Some take the opportunity to ask about some personal problem or to make an appointment to see you privately. I gave two instructions in the afternoon to men preparing for Baptism; also had several other callers. Concerning personal interviews, they average about six a day here.

What do the men see the Chaplain about? Here are some of the typical examples: some want to make arrangements to get married; others wish to discuss the advisability of entering the married state at this particular time (4 percent of this group have married since coming to England).

Combat men often bring around a letter or some personal effect with the request that if anything should happen to them, it be sent to their folks. Officers often ask the Chaplain's opinion about an individual or the morale of the men or to give a talk to their men. Again, the men worry more about their families back home than they do about themselves.

Thursday - One of the planes trying to return to the field because of engine trouble cracked up in the fog. Two of the crew were miraculously thrown clear, the other eight killed instantly. Three of the men were Catholics. I gave them conditional absolution and Extreme Unction. Then I helped prepare the bodies for burial. It was not a pleasant sight to see the burnt and mutilated remains of men I had been with such a little while before. But the thought of their folks

back home kept me there. Their personal effects were put in envelopes to be forwarded to the next of kin. However, some also carried prayerbooks, medals, or rosaries, and these, at the request of the C.O., I took to send directly to their folks.

I said the Requiem Mass this morning for those killed in Thursday's accident. Many of the Squadron attended. We left for the funeral in Cambridge American Military Cemetery. The caskets were draped with an American flag and placed in a straight row over the individual graves. My co-worker, the Protestant Chaplain, conducted the service for the men of his Faith, after which I read the burial service for the Catholic men and blessed the graves. While an officer called out the names of those who had given their all for their country, a soldier saluted each casket in turn. A volley was fired and Taps sounded, while the large number who had come to the funeral stood with bowed heads and said a final prayer - "May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen." As they had lived and fought side by side, so we left them on that beautiful green hilltop overlooking the peaceful English countryside. What a glorious thought it is that young Americans gladly make even the supreme sacrifice in the defense of the truth and freedom. Even in sorrow, their parents, wives, and children, can't fail to be justly proud.

Fortunate is the man called to be an American Army Chaplain. While receiving every help and encouragement from Commanding Officers, he is living and working with the grandest group of men in the world - the American soldier. The Chaplain is the Liaison Officer between God and His creatures, as well as between the men and their families back home. While all around him is destruction, his is a life of helping, advising, encouraging, loving his brother man. And the genuine gratitude of the men in return is almost enough to repay his efforts without the hope of an eternal reward.

submitted by Theodore Hood, 306th Bomb Group
Little Rock, AR





GIL COHEN

We are pleased to once again feature Aviation Artist Gil Cohen's painting on the cover of this issue of the newsmagazine. This coincides with his recently published volume (See Book Reviews) and lets talk some about his 50-year career in art.

Gil grew up during the war in Philadelphia and spent two years in the army. He was a professor in art for 20 years at the Philadelphia College of Art (now the University of the Arts), from which he graduated in 1953.

His career is that of a freelance illustrator and painter of histori-



cal subjects. A special interest is in depicting events of the 8th Air Force. He is especially adept at depicting accurate details of aircraft and of those airmen who flew them, with emphasis on the human element. An example is his painting of special friend and 4th Fighter Group commander Don Blakeslee in the cockpit of his RAF Spitfire after flying four combat missions on one day supporting Operation Jubilee.

During his career Gil has provided drawings and paintings for a number of action-adventure magazines, especially in the 1950s



and 60s, and for a number of book covers. He has won a number of Best in Show awards in world-wide juried art exhibitions and has served as an officer of the American Society of Aviation Artists. His works are primarily in private collections and in those of Corporations and Museums throughout the country. For several years he oversaw the Government Services Program which was responsible for the Air Force Art Program and traveled around the world in that regard.

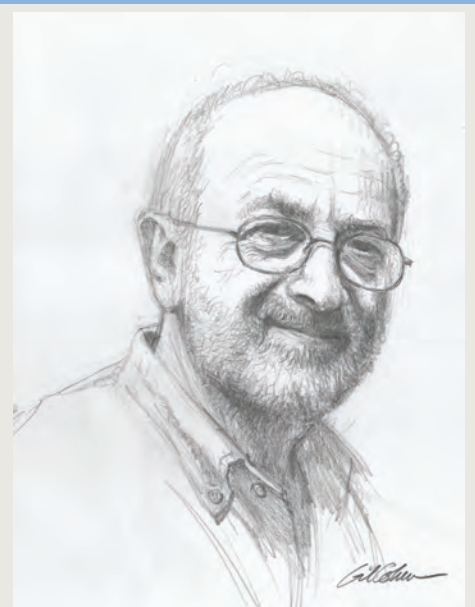
Gil's thoughts about each of his paintings and drawings are fascinating to read, and may be found in his new book, *Gil Cohen, Aviation Artist*. His explanations add life and further depth to each of his paintings. In 1998 he presented to the



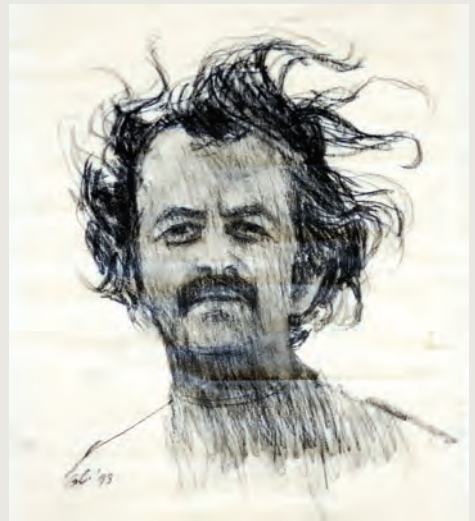
8th AF Crewman

Mighty Eighth Museum an impressive drawing of an 8th AF crewman in full combat dress as he was about to board an airplane on a mission over Germany. That drawing is now the official logo of the Museum. Gil has maintained close relationships with many 8th veterans and members of the 8th Air Force Historical Society.

Gil has his studio and home in historic Doylestown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania where he resides with wife Alice.



Self portrait, 2007



Self portrait, 1971



Eyes of the Eighth



TRANSITIONS

After WWII Fort Worth, Army Air Field, transitioned through the B-24 program, the B-32 program, and the B-29 program and into the B-36 program. Their next change was into the B-52 program. A short time later the 43rd Bomb Wing was formed and the B-58 was assigned. This gave what was then Carswell Air Force Base two operational wings, under the 8AF, and S.A.C.

In the 40's, prior to the B-24 program, Tarrant Field, as it was known then had either B-25's or B-26's assigned. For a short time between Fort Worth Army Air Base, the base was named Griffiss Air Force Base. Just a few days as I remember.

I was assigned as a flight crew member on both the B-29's and B-36's, as electrician gunner 492nd Bomb Squadron, 7th Bombardment Wing, 8th Air Force, SAC. 1947-1950.

I had arrived at the base in January, 1945, from a tour with the Mighty Eighth Air Force in England, 423rd Bomb Squadron (H), 306th Bomb Group (H). Theodore C. Hood, 306th Bomb Group Little Rock, AR

B-36B, 1946-1959

Total built 383

Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Co. Ft. Worth, Texas

Engines: 6-4, 360 cubic inch, 28 cylinders, 5,200 # thrust each, 3,500 HP.

Crew: 15

Dimensions: Wing span 230', Length 162', Height 46', Wing area 4,772 sq. ft.

Weight: Empty 140,640 pounds. Maximum 410,000 pounds.

Fuel: 33,010 gallons, 108/135 octane, Aviation gasoline.

Top Speed: 411 mph at 36,400 feet.

Top Ceiling: 42,500 feet.

Armament: 12 20mm cannons.

Bomb Load: Maximum 86,000 pounds.

Climb: 1,500' per minute.

Range: 10,000 bomb load 8,175 miles. Empty 8,770 miles.

Two General Electric J47 Jets were installed on each outer wing section adding 24,000 pounds thrust overall, using JP-4 jet fuel.

Original plans for the B-36 were started in 1941.

The B-29 was replaced by the B-36 and the B-36 was replaced by the B-52 which is the main-stay of the United States Air Force today.

THE TYBEE BOMB

Walt:

I have sent a package of information to Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price to be filed away in the records of the 8th AFHS, if anyone in the future would want to research the Mid-Air Collision of the F-86 and the B-47 which happened 50 years ago on 4 & 5 February 1958. As a result of the accident a MK-15 Nuclear Weapon was released off the shore of Tybee Island. The bomb did not have the capsule inserted or on board. It had to have this device to cause a Nuclear explosion as you well know. I included a copy of the receipt that I signed on 4 Feb. 1958.

Sincerely,
Howard Richardson, 385th BG

JAM SESSION

Dear Sirs:

Thought you might want to hear my story of the days following our liberation from Stalag VIIA in late April 1945. As a member of the 91st and shot down on the Merseberg raid 2 Nov 44, I ended up in Stalag Luft III and found an unexpected surprise.

They had a big jazz-type band there, and, incidentally needed a piano player. So I ended up joining the band. Months later we ended up in Stalag VIIA which was a mess after Stalag III. But on 29 April 45 we were liberated - but told to stay in the camp a few days until they could find transportation for us. Someone pulled some strings enabling some of us former band members to get out for a few hours and go to a house in Moosburg where they had instruments including a piano, and we could have a "jam session". We just had a ball playing and drinking beer.

When they said we had to return to the camp, it was a chilly rainy muddy night. Outside the house were 3 or 4 captured SS officers. They asked us if we wanted to "work them over" - but nobody did - we were pretty soused by that time, and just wanted to get back to our straw mattresses.

John Bunch, 91st BG(H)
New York, NY

WILLIAM PATTON

Dear Mr. Brown,

Boy this is a long reach - but I think I'm one of few survivors of The Aphrodite Project and when I read the story of William Patton I felt Margaret would like a little bit about him from me.

Please do what you can to get my note to her. I tried looking for Dick Atkins - no luck.

I did a double take when I read the story on page 18.

Thank you,
John Lansing

TEQUILA DAISY CHRONICLES

"TEQUILA DAISY" INFO SOUGHT. They have a piece of the right side of a B-24 Liberator at the Swiss Air Force Museum at Dubendorf. On this piece there is a painting of a pretty girl with the red letters, "Tequila Daisy."

This plane came from the 392nd BG, and was crashlanded in Switzerland by Lt. John C. Tracey. An 18 year old, Reto Renfer, Solothurn Str. 53, 2543 Lengnau, Switzerland, has seen the plane and has written for any information on the crew and plane. Hope someone can help him.
Bill Clarey - 492ndBG Secretary

TEQUILA DAISY FOUND. What a surprise to hear you were looking for information on my old ship (11-1/17). The Harold D. Stanhope crew officers, in Apr. 44, on the way overseas, hired an artist to dress up our already beautiful silver B-24. One of the Petty Girl calendars was chosen and the replica was a work of art. We named her, "Tequila Daisy," in remembrance of a wild night the crew had in Jarrez, Mexico, drinking drinks of that name. We flew her on a number of missions, when the ship was given to another crew. We were transferred to the 44th BG for special lead missions.

In mid-June of 1944 (I think) we were leading the 492BG. One of the ships in our formation became disabled and headed for Switzerland. It was "Tequila Daisy."

Ed Petelle - 492BG & 44BG

RELIEF

Dear Walter,

While reading the June 2008 issue of "8th AF-News", my attention was drawn to the Illinois Chapter news item on page 33. This article sparked my memory back to 1943-1944. Lt. James Lovell was the pilot of our crew. We were assigned to the 545th Bomb



Squadron of the 384th Bomb Group, stationed at Grafton Underwood during the latter part of 1943. I was the ball turret gunner on that crew.

Due to the fact that the relief tube did not provide adequate toilet facilities, especially when flying at high altitude, our crew decided that a disposable port-a-potty would satisfy our needs, so a metal-lined ammunition box became our port-a-potty.

After being used by crew members, and prior to bombs away, our radio operator would fasten the cover on the same box. Immediately after bombs away, our radio operator would toss out our port-a-potty through the open bomb bay. I don't know if any of the boxes hit the target, but fortunately none of them hit the ball turret. Keep up the good work on this excel-



lent publication.

"Keep the show on the road."

Sincerely,

Warren D. Tessmer, 384th BG

Wausau, WI

Plane Facts

Dear Dr. Brown,

I have been working on warbird parts and restorations for many years. I have come across a resource that has been wonderful. During WWII, the Air Material Command put out a 5x7 magazine called *Plane Facts*. These magazines have been wonderful resources for restoration information. I have only been able to obtain a couple of them. If any readers can help me come up with more editions, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.
Donald L. Keller

Walt Sir:

Thanks so very much for the projection photos. I too am proud. Like the man said: Those that do, Do! those that don't - talk about it!

Will reciprocate with a donation to help a little for putting the Museum's Biggass Bird back together. Surely there should be 250 others that can make the 250 grand a happening! Thanks for many things you've done for the 8th - One that stands out in this 90 year mind of mine - You straightened out the mess that was going on in 8th AFHS National. Their Pres. told Charley Beard what he and the sec/treas. did with the Society's funds was nobody else's dam' business.

That about killed Charley. He never got over it.

Vaya con Dios & Best regards to you.
Red Harper, 100th Bomb Group
Birmingham, AL

AFEEs

Mr. Grauerholz,

I have attached a copy of our bill to honor Air Force Escapees, which is officially referred to as H. Res. 925. We worked with Congressman Stearns' office on the bill, making it the bipartisan DeFazio/Stearns resolution. Below is the list of members on the armed services subcommittee on personnel.

Feel free to let me know if you need any further information.

Susan Davis (already a cosponsor),
Vic Snyder, Loretta Sanchez, Madeline Bordallo (already a cosponsor), Patrick Murphy, Hank Johnson, Carol Shea-Porter, David Loebsack, Niki Tsongas, Joe Wilson, Walter Jones, Kohn Kline, Thomas Rooney, Mary Fallin, John Flemming
Best regards,
Michael Hayes

WALL OF HONOR SCROLLS

Dear Sir:

As you are aware, there is a "Wall of Honor" (WOH) scroll now located in the Hall of Honor Hall in the IWM's American Air Museum in Britain at the WWII Duxford Air Base complex near Cambridge.

This scroll, honoring the men, women and units of the WWII "Mighty Eighth" and placed there by caring comrades and loved ones will be in this world class museum for perpetuity for the millions of people to see who come to visit there. Personally, and I for one feel strongly, this kind of memorial recognition within this British hallmark facility of the Imperial War Museum's top notch venues is focused most appropriately for - England is where the 392nd fought the war.

Previously and up to the recent present, a Charitable Gift of \$10M was being asked by the AMIB to place an inscription on the WOH. However, at the Trustee meeting I attended recently in England, my recommendation was tendered and approved by the AAMIB BOD to lower this gift overture to the sum of \$5,000, which is now the case. I felt that many of our WWII 8AF units and others, certainly those groups having any remaining funds in their 'coffers', would find this reduced donation sum far more attractive should they elect to pay this tribute to one of their own.

Accordingly. I respectfully wish to make a recommendation/Motion that we of the 392nd make a Charitable Gift of \$5,000 to the AAMIB in placing an appropriate inscription on the WOH at Duxford which pays tribute to the

memory of our most highly respected and revered Commander, Colonel Lawrence G. Gilbert, Jr.

The inscription should not be in excess of (20) words. And, if approved I can provide the data to you on how this donation and worded inscription should be handled in the mailing to the proper office of the AAMIB.

Warmest Regards,

Bob Vickers, Director 392nd BGMA BOD

WAS THAT YOU?

After a particularly long bomb-run, while circulating our base preparatory to landing, we ran out of fuel.

Our engineer was frantically pumping the last of the vapor into the four engines with one engine, then another "conking out".

Our pilot had no choice but to peel out of the formation and land the plane half-on, half-off the last half of a nearby fighter runway. As we screamed through the grass toward a thicket, our right wing taking out a shack along the way, the right tire blew and we ground-looped like a top.

We were reminiscing at one of our PA Chapter, Western Wing luncheons a few years ago. Two seats to my right sat a fellow-member who widened eyes and mouth agape, blurted... "WAS THAT YOU?! you damned near killed me. I was standing in front of that shack."

So said Tony Chardella, some sixty years later.

Tony "folded his wings" on 30 July 2009.

Editors Comment - Tony was the first member, of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Hail and Farewell. He was very proud of that fact.

from Hap Nicholas, Pennsylvania Chapter

"When you fly a plane in combat, you're the one who makes the decisions," says Maj. "Tiger" Joe Thompson Jr. "That's independence - though it's a hazardous independence. And when you have been through this kind of stress together, you are all of the same mind."

A "Troublemaker" Passes On

Robert W. Harrington, pilot of the B-24H "Troublemaker" of the 466th Bomb Group in 1944, died on October 9, 2009 at his home in San Francisco, California.

In August 1944, Bob was shot down in a Luftwaffe attack over the Netherlands, successfully evading capture with the assistance of the Dutch underground, and finally making it back to the U.S. eight months later. In the 1990s, he served as president of the James H. Doolittle Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society.

He joined the Army Air Corps following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, and trained as a pilot. In early 1944, Bob was commissioned as a second lieutenant and given command of a B-24 crew formed in Salt Lake City. Shortly thereafter, he and the crew of "Troublemaker" were deployed to the war in Europe, joining the 466th Bomb Group in Attlebridge, England.

Troublemaker began its combat missions in late June 1944, hitting targets such as Hamburg, Ghent, Rostock, Strasbourg, and Ludwigshaven. Some missions were milk runs; in others, Harrington and his crew dodged weather, flak and unwelcome attention from German fighters, but returned relatively unscathed. After ten missions with his Troublemaker crew, on the morning of August 15, 1944 Harrington was mustered to fly a different B-24, the "Rambling Wreck," due to the absence of another pilot. The mission involved bombing an Me-260 base near the town of Vechta, Germany. Due to the crew mix-up, they were late getting to the aircraft and were "Tail-End Charlie" in the formation that morning.

With his unfamiliar crew, Harrington successfully took out the runway at the Luftwaffe base, and headed home in clear weather. But shortly after crossing into Dutch territory, the back of the formation was jumped by a swarm of German Me-109s and FW-190s. Four B-24s were shot down in a matter of minutes, including the Rambling Wreck; the tail gunner and engineer on Harrington's crippled plane were killed, but the rest of the crew managed to bail out safely. All but Harrington and one other crewman were quickly rounded up by German soldiers. Harrington landed in a muddy canal near the market town of Steenwijk. He hid in a thorny hedgerow, pistol at the ready, while German soldiers searched the hedge with bayonets. After they left, he was approached by members of the Dutch underground. They gave him new clothes and transported him by bicycle to the town of Steenwijk, where he could more easily blend into the population.

Over the next eight months, as Allied armies fought their way toward Germany, Bob was moved from house to house in Steenwijk, avoiding the

ever-present German patrols and assisting in Dutch resistance activities. In April 1945, when Canadian forces liberated Steenwijk, Bob hitched a ride to Paris with a French cadet pilot. After a few fun-filled days in liberated Paris, American authorities collared him and assigned him to accompany a group of POWs from North Africa back to the U.S. by ship. He arrived safely in New Jersey on the eve of the German surrender.

He kept in touch with his Troublemaker crew and some of his Dutch helpers, who occasionally visited him in the U.S.

For many years he was active in the 8th Air Force Historical Society, often speaking of his adventures in the European theatre.

In 2004, on the 60th anniversary of being shot down, Bob recounted his story in a non-commercial DVD documentary entitled, "Troublemaker – a Pilot's Story of World War II." It resides in various WWII oral history collections, including the Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, GA; the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich, England; the Imperial War Museum, and a number of university collections in the U.S. Copies of the 80-minute documentary are available by contacting troublemakerdvd@yahoo.com.



Bob Harrington - 1944



The Troublemaker crew, spring 1944

DOUBLE EXPOSURE

SUBMITTED BY CLIFFORD SHIRLEY 22ND BOMB SQUADRON



**Clifford Shirley, 1943
22nd Bomb Sqdn.**

Dear Mr. Brown,

Just received the March issue of the 8th AF News. I feel that everyone should have their day of remembrance. I am Clifford R. Shirley, formerly Staff Sergeant, joined the Army Air Corps in early May 1942. Was working in the Bona Allen Bldg at the corner of Lucky and Spring Streets in Atlanta. During lunch break from work, I walked up the street to the recruiting office. The sergeant in charge gave me a dime, and told me to catch a trolley to Fort McPherson. I walked to Rich's Department store, caught the bus and got off at the main gate. The guard asked me what I wanted - said I wanted to join the Air Corps. He called for a jeep; was taken to a barracks for a holding stage. The next morning myself and a couple of more guys were taken to a headquarters building.

We were all stripped and

checked over - shortly thereafter we were sworn in - issued bedding and G.I. clothes. Boot camp for a few days - "If it don't move, pick it up."

Was taken by a 6 by to Atlanta Terminal Station. One among us had orders. We went by train to Esler Field, Alexandria, LA. Assigned to the 109th Observation Squadron (A Minnesota National Guard Unit - recently activated). A bunch of real old timers and I was 19 at the time. The first sergeant looked to be sixty - he was tough. We had six-man tents, GI cots, good chow.

The 109th was all packed and ready to go to POE with C47's and B52's. The squadron sent six of us to Harlingen Army Gunnery School in Texas.

Gunnery school - 30's and 50's, disassemble, reassemble, morse code, skeet shooting, .30 cal. training.

Air to air firing - AT6's, sergeant stripes. Back at Esler, the 109th had gone to POE, I trained Pennsylvania recruits with basic training (because of my sergeant stripes). Transferred across field to 22nd Tactical Recon Bomb Sqdn. - A20; DB7's. Immediately went to Mojave Desert, Desert Center AAB.

Trained for one year as MOS939, Photographer - gunner. The 22nd flew low level over Patton's tanks - we dropped flour sacks as bombs. We maneuvered over California and Nevada for one year. Rommel was caught - the squadrons disbanded at Morris field, Charlotte, NC.

We went to MacDill Field in Tampa, FL 488th Bomb Group, crew 126, tail gunner. Just short of going to POE, and to Europe, six MOS939's were transferred to the 3rd Photo Recon. Sqdn at McDill. The 3rd had just returned from the CBI. We moved to Smoky Hill AAB, Salinas, KS - started training in B29's. I flew left blister as photographer - gunner.

Our B-29's were taken to Denver, CO and transformed into F13's. Gas tanks in the bomb bay, aerial cameras mounted in the radar room and elsewhere. We trained night and day to get used to the new planes. I flew ATC to Saipan - Isley Field.

Flew a number of photographic missions from Saipan over Honshu, Kyushu and Hokkaido - our squadron made an aerial map of all three islands of Japan.

Curtis Lemay would assign our Col. McCarthy a target, i.e. Tokyo, Nagaya,



3rd Photo Group B-29

etc. We flew single plane, no escort, fifteen hour missions from Darpan (later Guam) to targets over Japan.

Our squadron developed the aerial film from K17's, K18's, K24's, sent the prints to Curtis Lemay. After bomb runs, our squadron would go for post strike photos for damage assessments.

After the war I reviewed the hundreds of photos I had brought home - joined the Atlanta Chapter of the 8th AF. Mr. Kaye advised me of a 20th AF Assn.

in California. I went to one reunion in California years back - found no 3rd photo folks. Few months following, got a letter from one of my squadron members that had seen my registration there - that got me in touch with my old first sergeant.

The 3rd Photo Recon. Sqdn., 311th Photo Wing, 21st Bomber Command, 20th AF has had a number of reunions. We have a plaque at the AF Academy.

I attend monthly meetings in Atlanta

with the 8th AF Historical Society. Have been a member since the early eighties.

You probably won't find this of interest. Just an old flyer mouthing off. Cliff Shirley, 20th Air Force Stockbridge, GA

A typical tale of what our USAAF troops went through to get ready for combat.

-Ed.

Clifford Shirley's Group, Smokey Hill AAB!
Clifford: 4th from left, middle row



NEXT GENERATION

CONTINUING THE 8TH AF LEGACY

by Norma Chesser

Two pilots met for the first time at the Savannah reunion during the 355th FG presentation.

The raid we were on was an Escort mission to "Ruhrland" on January 16, 1945. Since we were escort, we, were obviously escorting Bob Vicker's bomb group. We never were briefed on their bomb group numbers, just the tail insignia for identification as we went up the bomber stream. Naturally, I can't remember the exact particulars, but after the bomb run our Sq. CO would normally assign two or more of our fighters to escort any wounded big friends out. That was obviously the case here, as I must have been assigned, with my wing man, to this B-24 with two engines smoking and out. For your info, the German fighters were also up there with the agenda of shooting down any wounded bombers after they left the target area. Once we were assigned to escort a "crippled" big friend out, we stuck with him as long as we could, and could not engage enemy fighters unless they attacked us. It should be noted that they seldom did attack, if they saw escort P-51s nearby.

On this escort, we took Vicker's bomber into friendly territory, and then apparently had to leave him because of fuel. The P-51 had a max of 7.5 hrs of fuel, including our external tanks. We had dropped our external tanks and my mission log shows we had 6:30 hrs. on the mission itself----so we were running dry, so to speak, still having almost an hour to get home. This may have been one of those missions where we almost had to land on fumes. I had several of those.

Bob Vickers told me that after we left him, he lost a third engine, and bailed out his entire crew, although 2 were injured in landing they all survived the war, and I also met his navigator there in Savannah, who told me also how comforting they felt when they saw our 2 P-51s nearby. Vickers told me they saw the letters O S S on the fuselage of my aircraft, and have been looking for me ever since. This was my first attendance at an Eighth Air Force Historical reunion.

Bob Garlich, 355th FG, P-51 pilot

SUN CITY CENTER RESIDENT ELECTED AS PRESIDENT 385th BGA

The 385th BGA elected Tom Gagnon, of Kings Point as president of the Association. Tom is what we refer to as the Next Generation. His father was a pilot in the bomb group and also lived in KP. The Next Generation gradually will be taking over the running of the Group as the original members fade away. It is the hope that this will enable the group to be remembered in the future.

The reunion was sponsored by the 8th Air Force Historical Society (8th AFHS). If you have an interest in aviation history, and have not visited the 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah it is a must. The main speaker at the annual banquet was noted aviation artist Gil Cohen who spoke on his art work procedures and had a slide show presentation of his work. You can see some of his detailed work on the web site.

www.aviationarthangar.com/avarthaalhob

There were a total of 371 people at the reunion including spouses and Next Generation attendees. During the four days in Cincinnati, there were tours of Wright Patterson AFB Museum, Cincinnati sites, etc.

The 385th BGA had the third largest group of members attending the 8th AFHS reunion. During the entire reunion, the 385th BGA had a Hospitality Suite open for its members and guests. The Suite was sponsored by a Next Generation member, and our Association Treasurer, Chuck Smith.

Burton Gelbman, 385th BG

"Posterity! You will never know how much it cost the present generation to preserve your Freedom! I hope you will make good use of it. If you do not, I shall repent in Heaven, that I ever took half the pains to preserve it."
— John Adams



"A PAIR OF QUEENS"

by Elwyn Warfle, 447th BG Assn

Granted, "a pair of Queens" probably would not buy you a pot of gold in a poker game, but one "pair of Queens" proved to be a "winning hand" in what may well be remembered as the greatest conflict in recorded history. I have reference to the *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*, then modern-day troop carrying titantics of World War II. Both ships are remembered well by many 8th Air Force veteran flight crews and ground personnel who were transported by them from America to the British Isles during World War II.

Although designed by the British Cunard Line in the early thirties as replacement ships for the aging passenger liners, *Mauretania*, *Aquitania*, and *Berengaria*, the two Queens were quickly pressed into troop transport service. Together, they transported more than 1.8 million Allied troops, German and Italian prisoners of war, and war brides across the oceans of the world during and after that great struggle. Winston Churchill, traveling under the code name, Colonel Warden, crossed the North Atlantic six times on the *Queen Mary* to attend the Quebec Conferences, once sharing ship-space with 4,000 German POWs.

In February 1942, the *Queen Mary* began to carry US troops. The ship was fitted with more berths in order to carry 10,000 to 12,000 men on a regular basis. In early 1944, in anticipation of the "D-Day" Invasion, full divisions (15,000 men) were packed in and carried over. While the US paid for the provisions and supplies needed by the men, the ship's crew were under the command of Cunard officers, who were assisted by a permanent on-board staff of US military officers who handled the movement, housing, and feeding of the troops enroute. Meals were served twice daily. I remember be-

ing served ham with all the trimmings on Thanksgiving day, 1943 while on the Atlantic. Typically, 40 tons of food were consumed daily.

The *Queen Elizabeth* was designed and built to work with the *Queen Mary* to provide weekly Cunard transatlantic sailings, and would have begun transatlantic service in 1940. Instead, because of the war, she made a dash across the Atlantic to New York in March of 1940, and soon went into service under much the same arrangement as the *Queen Mary*. This explains why we members of the 447th Bomb Group remember seeing little of her intended luxury during our crossing in November, 1943. Indeed, every available space on board was put to use. Tiered bunks, also called standee bunks, were installed from bow to stern and from the ship's swimming pools to libraries. Even 3rd class and crew accommodations were completely gutted and the space refitted with bunks. Still, once underway, we always found space for "crap shoots" and "poker games" which seemed endless. Our surroundings could be likened to a floating Las Vegas.

When crossing between New York to Gourlock, Scotland, the Queens were capable of making two voyages per month (four crossings), averaging between 12,000 and 15,000 troops per

crossing. The ship's crew comprised another thousand. Strangely, neither of the Queens reported being fired upon during the war. However, post war interrogations of former German U-boat Captains revealed that one Captain reported firing a torpedo at the *Queen Elizabeth*, but the ship was approaching much too fast and the shot missed. It was reported that Adolph Hitler offered the Iron Cross and the equivalent of \$250,000 to any U-boat Captain who sank one of the Queens. Fortunately, for most of us 8th Air Force airmen who rode one of the Queens to Scotland late in 1943 and in 1944, most of the German U-boats had been sunk or withdrawn from the North Atlantic war zone by then. Airborne radar had proven too deadly for them to continue their marauding wolf pack tactics.

After the war, both ships reentered Cunard transatlantic service in early 1946. The *Queen Elizabeth* made many runs transporting emigrants from Europe to Australia. That same year, the *Queen Mary* completed eleven Atlantic crossings carrying more than 22,000 war brides and children of American and Canadian soldiers.

The Cunard Line announced in 1967 that the pair of Queens were for sale. The *Queen Mary* was purchased by the City of Long Beach, California, where it became a popular floating hotel and restaurant. The *Queen Elizabeth* was retired in 1968, and sold to Hong Kong ship owner, C.Y. Tung, for conversion into a sea-going university. She became a victim of a fire (probably arson) which broke out while undergoing major refit at Hong Kong, January, 1972, and was totally destroyed. She was replaced by the *Queen Elizabeth II*, still sailing for the Cunard Line. In 2003/4, a new *Queen Mary II* (QM2) will join QE2, thus fulfilling the plan which was to have become a reality 63 years earlier, in 1940.



FUND DRIVE STARTED FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE B-17 CITY OF SAVANNAH

Museum founder Lew Lyle accumulated several thick files of correspondence from 8th veterans around the country, most of them addressing the need to obtain a B-17 for the Museum. Last year contacts were made and, as reported in previous issues of the 8th Air Force News, after half a year of efforts in 2008, the beautiful Flying Fortress arrived into the Combat Gallery of the Mighty Eighth.

Restoration of the bomber began immediately, especially the clean-up activities as the aircraft had been in hangar storage in Washington for 25 years. Our devoted Museum volunteer squads have worked to complete the restoration which will take at least 18 more months, and is expensive. The 401st Bomb Group Association, Board member Arthur Seder President, generously donated \$50,000 to begin the restoration. The project will need



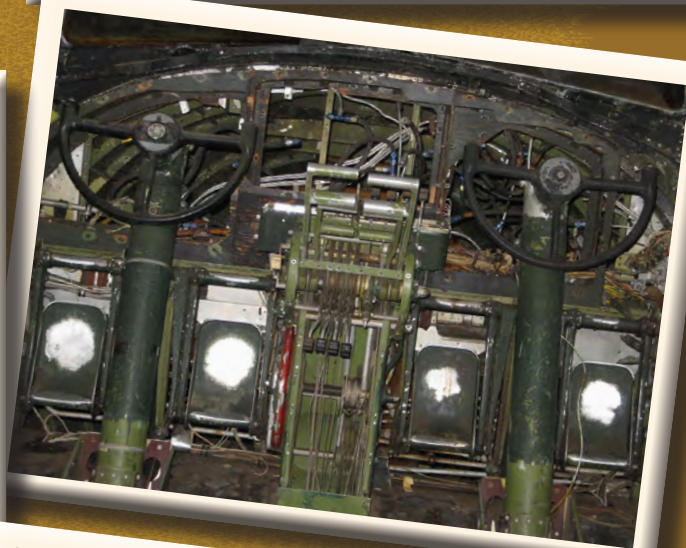
approximately \$200,000 more to outfit the aircraft to its WWII state with original equipment – turrets, radio and navigational items, and the like.

In this issue 8th AF News you will find

an envelope enclosed – a mail-in to the Society's office - that will hold a check nicely. Be assured that all tax-deductible funds contributed will be used for the B-17 restoration. It was decided last year that the airplane will be used to further our education programs teaching younger generations. It has been the intent all along to let our school visitors go through the aircraft and experience first-hand what our Mighty Eighth airmen experienced on their combat missions to wartime German targets.

For those active in Combat Group Associations, please ask the Boards to contribute following the example of the 401st BG. Likewise, the state Chapters of the national Historical Society. Each future issue of the 8th AF News will update you on the progress of then Restoration Fund Drive as well as the details of the restoration itself.





OREGON CHAPTER

Our 8 August 09 quarterly meeting saw a good turnout of members and guests, including several attendees who came as a result of a story about our Chapter in a local newspaper. The Beaverton Elks Lodge provided a cool mid-day oasis, while also offering a good lunch. First on the agenda, President Bert Campbell called on our "corporate memory" Joe Conroy and Treasurer Sharon Campbell for their reports. Sharon said that we had enough money to stay in business...always good news...and Joe, with more good news, was happy to report that we had not lost any of our veteran members over the preceding quarter. Secretary Tom Philo handles much of the Chapter's publicity effort and his news releases to local media have resulted in increasing meeting attendance, as well as in signing up several new members. Tom is also a collector of military aviation memorabilia and at this meeting, he displayed two recently acquired and rare pieces of WW2 equipment: a K20 hand-held aerial camera, and a radio altimeter capable of displaying an airplane's altitude from 40 to 400 feet in bad weather or at night.

Chapter member Roland Fisher presented a talk on his WW2 service as a night fighter pilot in the RAF, six months prior to the United States' entrance into the war.

He could not qualify for either the Army Air Corps or the Navy for flight training because of age or education requirements, so he learned to fly on his own, at an airfield near his work place in California. He earned his pilot's license and, right after Pearl Harbor, he went to England, volunteered and was accepted as a Pilot Officer in the Royal Air Force Reserve. He was 20 years old. After training to qualify in night fighters Fisher was assigned to a squadron based in Northern Scotland. At that time the RAF first line night fighter was the Bristol Beaufighter, powered by two Bristol Hercules engines, rated at 1,670



Pilot Officer Roland Fisher

horsepower each. The "Beau" was a fast, heavily armed, agile airplane which Fisher described as a great aircraft, "once you got it in the air." One big factor of doing that successfully was correcting on takeoff for the torque caused by the props on the Beau's two big engines. The props turned opposite to that of American planes...which created heavy torque to the "wrong" side of the run-

way. So, just getting down the runway in a straight line took a combination of throttle, brakes, and rudder. Fisher said "once you got the tail up, the rudder became usable, and you could get the plane into the air." In this experience, the Beau was "just a different airplane, and you flew it right from start of takeoff to landing. He emphasized the point by saying: "You never quit flying it. If you did, you usually died!"

"There was nothing romantic or thrilling about night fighting...none of the dash experienced by the day fighters." Fisher continued. "You sat in a black box with a bunch of instruments in front of you, with your headphones glued to your ears, and you just meticulously did everything you were told to do by the ground control intercept station and your own radar operator. When you got close enough, you might see a dim shape, and you would fire. Immediately, you had a big flash from all 12 of your guns going off at once, and he would disappear in the glare."

In December of 1942, soon after the United States entered the war, Fisher was told that his application to transfer from the RAF to the US Army Air Corps had come through, and was asked by the CO of his unit: "Is there anything you would like to do upon leaving? We appreciate your service." Fisher responded: "I've always wanted to fly a Spitfire. Could I get checked out in one?" Yes, he could, and thanks to the support of the CO, he was sent to a Spitfire operational training unit, not just to check out, but to go through the

whole training process, an experience Fisher described as the thrill of his life.

That was the end of Fisher's career in the RAF, but not the end of his war service. That included a lead role in actions of the famous B-24 "Snooper" squadron which sank many thousands of tons of Japanese shipping during night attacks in the Pacific theater.

Lt. Col Roland Fisher (USAF Ret.) is a long-time member of our Chapter, and the accounts of his military flying career are always well received. We look forward to the next opportunity.

Clint Gruber, 93rd BG

Billy Graham's Prayer For Our Country

Heavenly Father, we come before you today to ask your forgiveness and seek direction and guidance. We know Your Word says, 'Woe to those who call evil good', but that is exactly what we have done. We have lost our spiritual equilibrium and reversed our values. We have exploited the poor and called it the lottery. We have rewarded laziness and called it welfare. We have killed our unborn and called it choice. We have shot abortionists and called it justifiable. We have neglected to discipline our children and called it building self esteem. We have abused power and called it politics. We have coveted our neighbors' possessions and called it ambition. We have polluted the air with profanity and pornography and called it freedom of expression. We have ridiculed the time-honored values of our forefathers and called it enlightened. Search us, Oh God, and know our hearts today; cleanse us from every sin and set us free. Amen.

VIRGINIA CHAPTER

In late October the Chapter members played an important role in activities held at Warrenton/Fauquier airport. The Collings Foundation B-17, B-24, and a P-51 Mustang were featured guests as well. Chapter members were invited to give talks to guests relating their experiences and those of the Mighty Eighth, all of which were well-received by the crowds. Families of all ages attended that day's activities.

Wells Fargo and its representative David Fields reserved a special hangar for the Chapter presentations.

Chapter President Lew Burke states that the Chapter's new website is now in operation: www.8thAF-Virginia.org.

On December 3rd, Our Chapter plans a Christmas luncheon and meeting at the Stonehenge Country Club in Richmond. Past President Bob Noziglia will show the film "All The Fine Young Men" and David Fields will fill us all in on the details of the Fly-In.

Chapter President Lew Burke wishes all a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year, and "Let's Keep 'em Flyin'!"
Submitted by Lewis E. Burke
5287 Ellicott Drive
Centreville, VA 20120

MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER

The Chapter's Annual Fall Fling featured M/Sgt Christopher Spann as guest speaker. Sgt Spann is commander of the Communications Division, 653rd Electronics Systems Wing, Hanscom AFB. He spoke on the activities of close air-support from the view of ground controllers. He has served in multiple levels of ground attack controller with tours in Operation Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

A number of Chapter members attended the national 8th AF Historical Society reunion in Cincinnati in August, connecting with other members of the Mighty Eighth, especially in visits to bomb group's Hospitality Rooms.

SAVANNAH BIRTHPLACE CHAPTER

President Scott Stovall introduced an unusual guest at the Chapter's dinner

meeting in October. The Chapter over the years has been noted for its excellent presentations by selected after-dinner speakers. This time the hour-long film, Pistol Packin' Mama – the story of a bomber crew with the 390th Bomb Group at Framlingham – was presented. A fascinating story, well-received by the attendees.

Chapter members took part in the recognition program on Veterans Day. Other recent activities included a special program presented by Paul Grassey, B-24 pilot, who led a group of veterans to Washington as part of the Honor Flight Program, the Savannah area's initial flight as part of this national project.

ILLINOIS CHAPTER

The October Chapter meeting was held at the Legion Civic center in Morton Grove on 14 October, the anniversary of the second Schweinfurt Mission during the 8th Air Force's Black Week, 1943. The guest speaker was Rev. Ray Hinsch who not only presented some stories of his experiences in Viet Nam, but also from his service as an Air Force Chaplain at RAF- Lakenheath.

GENERAL JAMES H. DOOLITTLE CHAPTER CALIFORNIA

Chapter President Daniel Frietas conducted the recent luncheon meeting as well as the meeting of the Board of Directors. At that special meeting, the Chapter Board, after extensive discussion, voted to discontinue Chapter activities, based on decreasing attendance and member participation.

It is known that, much like the situation in Tennessee, California is a big state and driving long distances for meetings is often very difficult. Chapter members will still take an active role in national Historical Society meetings and in contributions to be published in the 8th AF News, in support of the Society.

PENNSYLVANIA WESTERN WING

The Chapter Wing had a good turnout for their recent meeting and luncheon in Monroeville. At

the affair, Author Adam Lynch presented the Wing with an original framed silk escape map given to him by one of the members.

In July, the Wing had more than 80 members out for a summer picnic at the slippery rock site Of Hap and Olga Nicholas. Chaplain Hugh Crawford gave the meeting invocation and read a special prayer by Rev. Billy Graham. For additional information about the Chapter or its Squadron Luncheons, you may get in touch with President Ralph Nicholas, 514 North Main St., Butler PA 16001 tel# 724-287-7733

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

The New Mexico Chapter of the 8th AFHS held it's annual Fall General Membership Meeting and Luncheon at the Sheraton Uptown Hotel, Sept. 19th,



Dr. Kirk Hackett and President Larry Stebleton



Vice President, Carl Albright 446th BG receiving an award for his services

CHAPTER NEWS

2009.

President, Larry Stebleton opened the meeting at 12:20 pm., with a moment of silence in remembrance of departed members, followed by The Pledge Of Allegiance.

President, Stebleton presented an award to Vice President, Carl Albright (Lt. Col. Ret.) 446th BG. for his exemplary services in various positions through out the years for this Chapter.

The speaker for this meeting was Kirk E. Hackett, PhD. Dr. Hackett is a High Power Microwave Tech Adviser, High Power Microwave Division, Directed Energy Directorate, Air Force Research Laboratory, Kirtland AFB, NM. He spoke on the subjects of Cyberspace, space vehicles, directed energy dominance, sodium lasers, high frequency microwave energy and airborne laser laboratory.

The next 8th AFHS NM Chapter Meet-

ing will be held on Jan. 23, 2010, at the Sheraton Uptown Hotel in Albuquerque, NM.

Submitted by: Al Schwery, Secretary

ST. LOUIS CHAPTER

June 4, 2009 the St. Louis Wing held a luncheon and meeting on a sunny day at the 42 acre "Wine Country Gardens" in a beautiful pavilion overlooking the Missouri River Valley.

Clarence Cherry opened the meeting with the invocation followed by the pledge of allegiance. After a delightful luncheon on their pavilion, Wing president Ralph Covinsky, presided over the meeting and introduced the speaker Mr. Raymond Wood. Mr. Wood a member of the St. Louis Wing and former professor of anthropology at the University of Missouri. Mr. Wood's brother Lt. Elbert Wood flew as a navigator with the 306th

Bomb Group and was shot down over Schweinfurt, Germany on October 14th 1943. Mr. Wood's speech to the group explained how years later he delved into Army Records and with help of a German Gentleman researched his brother's crash and found that Lt. Wood was buried in the town of Geiselbachand where a monument had been erected in memory of a German Farmer, a little girl (who had been killed in the crash) and Lt. Elbert Wood. Mr. Wood was astonished that these people would memorialize his brother.

The plaque on the monument reads "On October 14, 1943 an American Air Force B-17 fell here." Geiselbrachand resident Heninrich Rienecker, Thekia Peter and Lt. Elbert S. Wood lost their lives here. Mr. Wood traveled to Germany in 1988 to reconstruct that flight and met eye witnesses to the crash.



MITCHELL HULL LAYS THE WREATH

On Memorial day 2009, 9 year old Mitchell Hull, lays the wreath at the 8th AFHS Memorial Day ceremonies at the American Cemetery at Madingley. Pictured with Connie Richards, Suffolk, England 8th AFHS United Kingdom

WWII 8th Air Force

P-51 Mustangs – 359th Fighter Group – 369th Fighter Squadron

359th Fighter Group flew 364 missions

241-1/2 destroyed + 33 probable + 69 damaged

122 destroyed + 107 probable Aircraft on the ground

27 Aces in the 359th Fighter Group

P-51D IV-N 44-13390

Col. Niven K. Cranfill – 133 Total Missions 500+ hours

Ace with 6 Destroyed in the air

"Deviless the 3rd"

– IV-N –

Cranfill: "Plopped two delayed-action bombs into the mouth of a railway tunnel west of Paris, for a better than direct hit!"

The two bombs were set and timed by Anthony Chardella and this was verified by Col. Cranfill.

"Deviless the 3rd" nose art was also painted by Anthony Chardella: "I painted this nude girl on the plane, right after I did this, the fellows came looking for me to tell me that the Col. wanted to see me. Boy, I guessed I was going to get a lot of hell for doing this. But all the Col. said to me was: "Chardella, I named that plane after my wife, please put a "G" string on her!" This I did, plus a bra.

The History of Veterans Day

A Brief History of Veterans Day

Veterans Day, formerly known as Armistice Day, was originally set as a U.S. legal holiday to honor the end of World War I, which officially took place on November 11, 1918. In legislation that was passed in 1938, November 11 was "dedicated to the cause of world peace and to be hereafter celebrated and known as 'Armistice Day.'" As such, this new legal holiday honored World War I veterans.

In 1954, after having been through both World War II and the Korean War, the 83rd U.S. Congress -- at the urging of the veterans service organizations -- amended the Act of 1938 by striking out the word "Armistice" and inserting the word "Veterans." With the approval of this legislation on June 1, 1954, Nov. 11 became a day to honor American veterans of all wars.

Celebrating the Veterans Day Holiday

If the Nov. 11 holi-

day falls on a non-workday — Saturday or Sunday — the holiday is observed by the federal government on Monday (if the holiday falls on Sunday) or Friday (if the holiday falls on Saturday). Federal government closings are established by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management — a complete schedule can be found here. State and local government closings are determined locally, and non-government businesses can close or remain open as they see fit, regard-

less of federal, state or local government operation determinations.

United States Senate Resolution 143, which was passed on Aug. 4, 2001, designated the week of Nov. 11 through Nov. 17, 2001, as "National Veterans Awareness Week." The resolution calls for educational efforts directed at elementary and secondary school students concerning the contributions and sacrifices of veterans.

The difference between Veterans Day and Memorial Day

Memorial Day honors servicemembers who died in service to their country or as a result of injuries incurred during battle. Deceased veterans are also remembered on Veterans Day but the day is set aside to thank and honor living veterans who served honorably in the military - in wartime or peacetime.



President Eisenhower's letter to Harvey V. Higley, Administrator of Veterans' Affairs, designating him Chairman, Veterans Day National Committee

September 2009 Back Cover

Reference photo on back cover of Sept 09 issue, I am pleased to be able to identify my 362FS (357FG) fellow pilot (on wing) as Lloyd Mitchel of California. Photo was obviously taken after D-Day in June 1944 as per visible black & white painted invasion stripes on the wing of the P-51B. I completed my 300 combat hour tour (75 missions) during the first week of Aug 44. Sorry I can not identify any of the members of his ground crew.

James E. Roughgarden
Col. USAFR Ret.





JOHN H. ROBINSON TENNESSEE CHAPTER

The Tennessee Chapter Board of Directors has voted to close Chapter operations. A falling attendance at meetings was the impetus for this decision, made evident by the fact that the state of Tennessee is over 400 miles long. Travel to gatherings proved difficult for many members.

The Chapter was founded in the 1980s, initially by 8th vets Glenn Taylor and Walter Baker, with support by Robbie Robinson, John Bacon, James Bass, Hank Barker, and a host of wives who jumped in to take part. During the years membership reached nearly 200 members and meetings were held at fascinating venues across the state. During those years the dues and finances were professionally ramrodded by Harold Robinson, 445th Bomb Group, who also was responsible for publishing the Chapter newsletter, The Flyover.

As one final look, the Tennessee Chapter officers have arranged to print, in this magazine, some photos of fond memories of various Chapter weekends spent together. These photographic pages were formatted by our Chapter member and publisher Donna Neely. This two page spread and special section has been paid for from the Chapter treasury.

Its very special to relive the good times and see old friends again, many of whom are no longer with us.





HOW I BECAME A NIGHTFIGHTER AND WHAT I THINK TO-DAY ABOUT THIS TIME by Peter Spoden, Luftwaffe night fighter pilot

I was still in high-school in early 1940 when a few RAF-aircraft bombed the surroundings of my home-town Essen in the industrial Ruhr-district. So far I remember no German bomb had fallen on England yet in those days, the German bomber-attacks on areas in England happened September 1940 as an answer to RAF bombings of Berlin. My parents, sisters and relatives were living in Essen and as a young man of 18 years I had to become a soldier anyhow. My father, a former soldier and wounded in 1914-1918, was against the NS-party and any militarism and told me "Don't go to the infantry, you have no chance." So I decided to volunteer for the Luftwaffe, to become a Nightfighter hoping to protect my hometown. Like many young men I was impressed by the strong army and the Luftwaffe. After Hitler took over 1933 the 6 million workless people disappeared, the economy was growing. Finally, the shameful treaty of Versailles 1919 was deleted (we called this "Dictate of Versailles"). The Saar-district, Austria, 3.5 million Germans from 'Tschechoslowakia' and Memelland came back to a Greater Germany like it was 1914. Still we were separated from Königsberg and East Prussia and we thought Danzig was a German town for centuries. The French said when retreating 1940 "Pourquoi mourir pour Danzig?", Why to die for Danzig? Today I know these facts do not justify to start a war against Poland. There should have been negotiations and giving in by both sides. But how many aggressive wars have started after 1945 because of the same or less reasons? The government under Hitler was brutal, against many human rights and had lost the mind after the successes before. In October 1940 my application for the Luftwaffe was accepted, also because I was a glider pilot in the time before the war. The training for a nightfighter pilot lasted 27 months including blind-flying and radar exercises on many aircraft like the FW 158, Ju 52, He 111, Me 109 and mostly Me 110. The training was excellent and helped me very much after the war when becoming an airline pilot. Early summer 1943 (21 years old) after having finished the nightfighter training I joined the Nachtjagdgruppe II/NJG 5 in Parchim, Mecklenburg for protection of Berlin. Hauptmann Rudolf Schoenert was my Gruppenkommandeur. My hometown Essen was already heavily bombed by the RAF, our house damaged, my mother, two little sisters and grandma evacuated to South Germany. Rudi Schoenert, later Major and highly decorated, was one of the fine officers you can find in every airforce. They still thought that there should be a certain kind of chivalry among fighting flyers like in the time of Richthofen 1914-18. So he told us young nightfighters when we came into his group: "Shoot the four-engine planes between the two engines, there are the fuel tanks, they burn easy and the boys have a chance to parachute!" Schoenert had been a sailor on British ships before the war. "Maybe my former friends are on board!" he told us.

Schoenert became a Canadian citizen and bush-pilot after the war and had 64 claims. One of my first missions was the Hamburg attack 25th of July 1943 by 791 RAF-bombers. It was a complete disaster for the German Nachtjagd. The RAF dropped for the first time 92 million of aluminum strips ("window") and blinded the whole radar-equipment of the nightfighters, anti-aircraft guns and ground-organization. We nightfighters were kept close to radio-beacons instead of flying to the burning objects where we could see the four-engined planes. Only 12 or 1.5% of the attacking bombers were downed. Terrible firestorms destroyed Hamburg. According to the British historian Martin Middlebrook in his book "The Battle of Hamburg", 45,400 citizens lost their life in the attacks, of which 50% were women, 38% men and 5,400 children. Middlebrook continues by saying that in Great Britain during the whole war a total of 51,509 civilians lost their life as a result of German attacks, including those by the V1 and V2 so called "retaliation weapons".

I could not see the television pictures anymore in 2004/5, as an old man I always get tears in my eyes. We young nightfighters had feelings which are best described by another historian Peter Hinchliffe, a former Navigator of the RAF in WWII, in his book "The Other Battle" as follows: "They saw the Pathfinders' markers going down on their cities, and they saw their cities burning, erupting, seething beneath them. They knew that their folk were dying down there, often in indescribable agony. They had been through air raids themselves, and many of them had lost members of their family. They knew that every bomber that they shot down was one less that could drop its explosives and its incendiaries on their country and their people, and such knowledge lent strength to their resolve. But they knew, too, that death awaited them every time their wheels lifted from the ground on an operational take-off. Losses among German night fighter aircrew were very high, particularly among the novices. Apart from the defensive armament of the bombers that they attacked, the crews faced the hazards of operating in bad weather, and, increasingly as the war went on, the terrible retribution meted out by the marauding Beaufighter and Mosquito intruders of the Royal Air Force that would appear, apparently from nowhere, and rake their aircraft with a lethal mixture of armour-piercing, explosive and incendiary cannon shells."

And what did we think about the RAF crews?

The mental and physical burdens experienced on a long range flight of eight hours or more are unimaginable. The British crewmen often saw comrades flying nearby go down in flames. The fighters were faster and more manoeuvrable. The German two-centimetre cannon shells were more lethal than the machine-gun bullets of the RAF. On rare occasions when our cannon jammed a single two-centimetre shell in a

fuel tank was enough to shoot the bomber down. The British navigators, flight engineers and air gunners had to move around in very restricted space in their heavy flying suits, in aircraft without pressurised cabins and without heating. Unlike our practice, their parachute was not worn all the time but had to be clipped on when an emergency occurred. Just like us, they also had their idealism and love for their country. They had volunteered for the RAF out of the spirit of adventure and they enjoyed flying. Only comparatively few RAF aircrew reached their statutory thirty missions. Bomber losses often amounted to five percent per operation, which statistic implies that to survive more than twenty sorties was a matter of chance. For us German aircrew there was no limit set to the number of night-time operations. A hundred or two hundred operations against the enemy, repeated wounds, four or more descents by parachute, were not a rarity in the German night-fighter force. The crew and our comrades in the Squadron in England or in the Staffel in Germany were like a secret society, and we stuck together through thick and thin. Flying for hours through the darkness, the ever-present fear of sudden attacks out of the blackness of the night, the searchlights groping for us fliers like the fingers of a corpse, the turbulence, the weather with its icing and its thunderstorms, injured or wounded comrades in the aircraft - all this welded us together. And then, suddenly, they were no longer there, they would never return. Missing, nowhere to be found, mutilated, burnt to death. What monsters we human beings are! At many occasions the RAF crews impressed us nightfighters very much. In the night at 23rd August 1943 there was a terrible turmoil over Berlin where the Bomber Command lost 62 four engine aircraft. It was one of these nights you never forget your whole life. On the ground in the "Great City" fierce fires were blazing: first of all the high-explosive bombs and then the phosphorous incendiary dropped into the shattered ruins of the buildings. It was an inferno without equal. Hundred of searchlights rose up towards us, sweeping the heavens like the fingers or corpses and the hands of ghosts, dazzling friend and foe alike. The anti-aircraft guns fired a furious barrage up to ten thousand

feet, and above that were the Wild Boars (single engine a/c) and the Tame Boars (twins). At times I could see between thirty and forty aircraft at once milling around. Tracer cannon and bullets, cascades of flares of every colour, night fighters' recognition signals when the flak had fired in one of them. Huge clouds of smoke, garishly illuminated, rising into the sky. White condensation trails everywhere, and down below fearful explosions. A Lancaster attempting to escape from a cone of searchlights did a full loop. I got the impression that everyone was firing at everyone else. And I was in the very middle of it all. It was hell - Dante's Inferno!

At the end of the war the RAF crews received a lot of respect by us when they were flying the "corkscrew", a kind of aerobatics. As a nightfighter you had to get away immediately otherwise you were crashing with that big plane. My good friend Gerd Friedrich, just married a few days ago, collided with a Lancaster on the night of 16th March 1945 near Stuttgart....friend and enemy united in death. Not a single case.

All this happened 60 years ago. I am a happy grandfather now like many of my former counterparts from RAF and think about the 55,000 young men of the Bomber Command who did not return from Germany and I think about the other many, many young men in Europe, the best of the nations, who perished. Did we learn? Was it worthwhile?

Peter Spoden has written about his experiences as a Night Fighter pilot in the book "Enemy in the Dark, The story of Luftwaffe Night Fighter Pilot". Published in English by Cerberus Publishing Limited. ISBN 1 84145 0324 www.nachtjaegerspoden.de from Bomber Command Association Newsletter



Thomas M. O'Donnell, 88, passed away Aug. 23, 2009. He entered the U.S. Air Force in 1943 where he was commissioned and then assigned to the 303rd Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force stationed in England. During World War II he was a B-17 pilot and participated in 35



Thomas M. O'Donnell

combat missions over enemy territory. The plane he piloted, The Thunderbird, is now depicted in a mural on display in the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. submitted by Gary L. Moncur 303rd Bomb Group Historian

Christopher Balzano Sr

served with the 8th with the 303rd BG, 358th Sqdrn as a radio operator/gunner receiving credit for 30+ missions, holder of the DFC and Air Medal with 3 oak leaves (circa 1943/44/45).

Chris Balzano, Jr
Winter Springs, FL.

Walter C. Hopper, 445th BG. He was a nose gunner on a B-24, the Shady Sadie. He flew 35 missions and was stationed at Bungay. His rank was SSgt and from Barbourville, KY.

Roland Harry Schultz, 305th BG Chelveston England of Camarillo CA passed away at the Park Place Village care home.

He served with the 305th as a top Turret Gunner on B17 Miss Dee Day completing 35 missions.

From his friends across the Pond Brian & Sue Francis U.K. Members

Father A. Henry Stange

A native of Saint Mark Parish, Altoona, he attended Saint Mark School. Following graduation from Altoona High School, Father Stange enlisted with the Army Air Force during World War II, and flew 52 missions with the 15th Air Force.

Father Stange did post-graduate work at American University in Washington DC, the University of Pittsburgh, the

University of Maryland in College Park MD, and at Peabody University in Baltimore MD.

He completed his studies for the priesthood at Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell CT, and received a master of divinity degree.

George Menzel, 401st Bomb Group bombardier and navigator, passed away on November 2, 2009 in Savannah, GA. Mr. Menzel was a life-time member of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum and the Eighth Air Force Historical Society. He was also a member of the Birthplace Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Mr. Menzel was a longtime supporter of the Museum and was instrumental in securing funding for the move of the B-17 that now rests in the Museum's Combat Gallery.

There was a memorial service for Mr. Menzel on Sunday, November 8, 2009 at 2:00 PM, in the Museum's Chapel of the Fallen Eagles.

Dear Dr. Brown,
Attached please find a short article/obituary for my uncle and godfather, **Bob Harrington**, who was formerly President of the Doolittle Chapter of the 8th AF Historical Association. Bob passed on a few weeks ago at his home in San Francisco.

Bob very much enjoyed his involve-



Roland Harry Schultz

ment with the 8th AFHS and keeping in touch with his B-24 crew over the years. He had a very interesting wartime experience which I was fortunate to be able to capture on DVD a few years ago, in order to preserve his memories for my family and for researchers and WWII buffs around the world.

Clark Beyer
London, England

Jim Cooper, bombardier on B-17 "Shack Bunny" 385th BG. At age 88, he still spoke fondly of the comradeship he found in the 385th. After his combat tour he was a bombardier instructor at Big Spring AAF in Texas before leaving the Air Corps in 1944. For the remainder of his days he spoke of his time at Great Ashfield as the most meaningful of his life.

submitted by J Duncan Cooper (son)
Russell R. Kalessa, pilot, 357th Fighter Group, November 7, Indiatlantic FL.

Richard Connor, South Hadley, 88, a resident of South Hadley. Born in Holyoke on July 1, 1921. He served in the Army Air Corps for 3 years during WWII. He was a corporal with the 13th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron and did photo reconnaissance at Normandy, Northern France, the Rhineland, the Ardennes and also at the Nuremburg Trials following the war.



Richard Connor

Gary Rogers Kelly, Sr., was a resident of Colonels Island and a graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology. He was a retired Major of the United States Air Force, distinguished as an outstanding pilot and flight instructor.

Klaus Gerlach, was born September 15, 1923 in Koenigsberg, East Prussia, Germany. He served as a flight instructor and fighter pilot in the German Air Force (Luftwaffe) from 1942 through the end of WWII when he crash-landed



Gary R. Kelly, Sr.

an FW 190 at a German airfield in the southern Germany. He awoke from his coma to discover the Military Hospital was under US Occupation forces. Klaus often said, "Thank God for General Patton." The return to his Homeland after the war was not possible due to the Russian occupation.



Klaus Gerlach

Robert L. Kleyla, Washington, DC., 91st Bomb Group, submitted by his son Van.

Lester P. Thorne, 378th FS, 362nd FG, Crew Chief for G-8-Q, submitted by his son Jeff.

Lloyd Zachariae, Omaha, NE, 357th FG, pilot.

Stanley M. Turel, Toronto, OH, 493rd BG.

Mathias J. Kremer, New Brighton, MN, 358th BS, 303rd BG in Molesworth, England, POW in Meiningen, Germany.

Clayton A. Guedel, Dover, OH, 303rd BG and 554th Military Police Escort Guard.

Russell Arthur Strong, Charlotte, NC, 306th BG, navigator, wrote *First over Germany: A History of the 306th Bombardment Group*.

Kenneth F. Riggs, Torrington, CT, 93rd BG, B-24 Crew Chief of "The Marion", member of "Ted's Flying Circus."

Donald W. Pregent, Glen Burnie, MD, 730th BS, 452nd BG, pilot.

Stephen M. Koziel, Sr., Springfield, MA, Medical Detachment 303rd Station Hospital

Stanley J. Backiel, Wantagh, NY, 303rd BG, Top Turret Gunner on B-17, POW at Stalag 17B.

Frank P. Weil, Sacramento, CA, Lead Radar Bombardier for B-17, retired after 22 years in Air Force.

Bernard "Budd" Greenberg, The Bronx, NY, Ball-turret Gunner in B-17, survived by Elayne and four children.

Carl A. Mongrue, Birmingham, AL, 381st BG, was in the documentary "All the Fine Young Men."

Claude "Mack" McKnight Williams, Cookeville, TN, 91st BG, B-17 Pilot, POW

Carl Wilson, Ocean Springs, MS, 398th BG, Bombardier on a B-17, flew 35 missions.

Joe E. Harrelson, Palmetto, GA, 381st BG, Crew Chief on B-17

James H. Sayes, Tallahassee, FL, 466th BG, submitted by his son Robert

J. Richard Gulick, Perkasio, PA, 336th BS, 95th BG, submitted by his wife Martha

Hoyt Childress, Sun City, AZ, 466th BG, Navigator Bombardier

Joseph A. Intermor, flew with the Mighty 8th Air Force, 2nd AD, B-24's - 453rd BG, 732

B.S. He participated as a tail gunner in 35 air missions over Europe, was shot down over Belgium, rescued and continued on other missions. He and his combat crew flew 35 missions from July 7th 1944 through December 24th 1944. His B-24 bombers included My Achin Back, Lucky 13, Hard to Get, and Humpshot.



Joseph A. Intermor

Henry J. Gardner, West Palm Beach, FL. He was a tail gunner on a B-17 94th Bomb Group 392nd Squadron.

Roger P. Swaine, passed Friday, July 3rd. Served in WWII with the 8th Air Force in England.

Joseph Capraro, Placentia, CA. Waist gunner on the Ken Larson crew in the 561st Sqdn., he flew 31 missions between Nov. 144 and May 1945 in the planes *I'll Get By* and *O'! Faithful*.

John Everette Riley, 381st Bomber Group, 535th Sqdn. He completed 35 combat missions and flew on the following B-17's: Los Angeles City Limits; Ice Col' Katy; Hells Angel and Phyllis.

George H. Speaker, Sun City West, Arizona, 729th Sqdn., 452nd Bomb Group. Evan Mecham, Phoenix, AZ; 7 PRG fighter pilot, POW.

Edward Hoffman, Tarpon Springs, FL; 7 PRG flight engineer, Florida Aviation Hall of Fame inductee.

William E. Bellows, Rochester, NY, was a WWII veteran who had been

Edward Watson Roberts

In January 1944, completed 18 missions in southern Italy, followed by the completion of 35 missions in England in



October 1944. Roberts received the Air Force Medal with three oak leaf clusters, DFC and ETO campaign ribbons with six Battle Stars. Roberts attended the University of Georgia in classes at Hunter Army Field in Savannah and in 1948 transferred to Auburn University, graduating in 1951 with a degree in Aeronautical Engineering. Still a member of the Air Force Reserve, he was recalled to active duty March 1951. He completed Navigation and was assigned to the B-47 Program. He decided not to make a career in the Air Force and worked for Pratt & Whitney Aircraft, followed by 15 years at Lycoming Turbine, engine division. He retired in 1984 to a farm just five miles from his birthplace.

He and his wife, Betty, traveled in a recreational vehicle to many places in the United States, Canada, and Alaska and took their grandchildren to the beach every year. He volunteered for 14 years at the 8th Air Force Museum, beginning a year before it opened in 1996, and was a member of the Birthplace Chapter.



Edward & Betty

stationed at Mount Farm in England with the 7th Photo Recon Group from 1943 to 1945. He was a Life Member of both the 7th and the 8th! He also has a brick bearing his name on the Memory Wall in the Garden at the Heritage Museum in Savannah, GA.

James E. Trask, Williamsburg, VA, passed away July 12, 2009. Past President of the Virginia Chapter. He is buried in Arlington.

Dr. Herbert Solomon, Glencoe, IL, born June 7, 1923, passed away on August 30, 2009. Served in Eighth Air Force in World War II June 1944 - May 1945.

Carl E. Hayes, Binghamton, NY, joined the Army Air Corps, became a P-47 pilot and was shipped to England in 1943. He was stationed at Halesworth flying his beloved P-47 as part of Zemke's Wolfpack, the 56th Fighter Group; he was assigned to the 61st Squadron. He was active in the current 56th Fighter Group Association until his death.

Raymond Comer, Houston, TX; 8th Air Force B-17 bombardier, POW.

Lester P. Thorne, crew chief 378 F.S., 362 F.G., plane B-8-Q. His pilot was Carl "Stony" E. Haering (KIA).

Howell K. Fesq

War II veteran who worked in aerospace engineering, and on the Apollo Space Mission, and spent much of his adult life on Long Island and in Huntington, died July 4 in Augusta, ME. He was 90.

During World War II, Fesq served as a B-29 flight engineer on 11 of the 13 special fire missions flying from Saipan to the Japanese islands. He was also a member of the Caterpillar Society of Air Corps personnel who bailed out of planes during battle. He survived in a Mae West life jacket without a raft in shark-infested waters until the Navy



William E. Bellows

rescued him.

After the war, he enjoyed a long career in aerospace engineering management, directing the Apollo Guidance and Navigation System Project for the Kollsman Instrument Corporation and Lunar Excursion Module simulator program at the Link Division of General Precision.

Dr. Carl J. Fyler, 303rd BG, Topeka KS, a former prisoner of war and a longtime Topeka dentist, died on Veterans Day. He died in the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11 month of the year. He spent more than 500 days in a German

Nazi POW camp. He was a successful dentist for more than 40 years in Topeka.

Major Fyler was captured by the Germans in November 1943 when the B-17 bomber he was piloting was shot down over Europe. It was his 25th mission as a pilot in the 8th Air Force. He described his war memories in his 144-page book, "Staying Alive."



Carl Hayes

Ralph C. Brehl, Jr. 303rd BG, Oakland, CA. He passed away peacefully on Veteran's Day 2009.

Edwin M. Canner

2nd Lt. Edwin M. Canner was piloting a B-24 back to England one night in 1945 after dropping leaflets over Cologne, when a red light flashed on the instrument panel. A German plane equipped with radar had

locked onto the bomber, and Canner knew his options were few.

"Ed headed for the clouds, and we got a night fighter on our tail," said Reuben Hill of Forest Lake, Minn., who was one of two waist gunners onboard. "He went into evasive action, and he couldn't shake this night fighter and went into one hell of a dive. The plane had rivets pop out of the wings, but he pulled it out. He was a first class pilot."

Dropping steeply that March night,

Mr. Canner wrestled with the controls as the B-24's speed topped 350 miles per hour and then banked out of the dive at an angle of 70 degrees or more. He and his copilot were able to nurse the plane back to their airfield, Cheddington. The bomber was repaired, though not completely, it turned out.

Two days later the crew and their B-24 were being transferred to another air base in England. The flight from Cheddington to Harrington began in brilliant daylight on March 14, 1945. "It was a beautiful day," Hill recalled.

Moments into the flight, no one was paying attention to the weather. The B-24 had barely risen to 1,000 feet when problems began to develop, apparently related to the damage incurred during the steep dive and sharp bank two days earlier. Canner kept the bomber aloft, but when he reached the air base, the landing gear on one side didn't lock and collapsed as he touched down. Breaking into pieces, the B-24 splintered across the Harrington airfield, but of the 10 men onboard, only the navigator was killed.

"The pilot compartment broke off, and the wings broke off and we barrel-rolled," Hill said.

ELEGY

Appearing in the dusk
As we return to England
Moving stones

Mysteries rise in trees
And branches
As the murmur of the moon

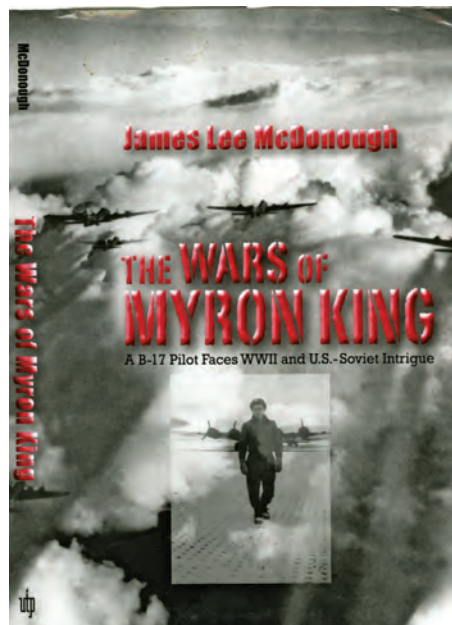
Counting the wounded
Walking back and forth
Left and right.

The missing comrades
Fly alongside us,
All the days of our lives...

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

BOOK REVIEWS

These reviews chronicle recent 8th-related and WWII-oriented book releases and are presented for the enjoyment of the membership of the Historical Society. They will make great winter reading sitting by the fire.



THE WARS OF MYRON KING

by James Lee McDonough

Just released, this book relates the story of an unusual and little-known aspect of the 8th AF war and illustrates the unpredictability of every bombing mission flown over enemy territory.

Author McDonough has researched the final flight of the 401st Bomb Group B-17, Maiden U.S.A., a mission flown by pilot Myron King and his crew. Hit by flak and with two engines on fire, the crew chose to fly on across the Russian front and thus avoid capture by the Germans. They landed successfully and then their troubles worsened.

King was arrested by the Russians as a spy and had to stand trial in a Russian court. As events unfurled, they finally received legal help from American authorities including the higher ups at the Pentagon, who desired to downplay the possible effects of such a trial – the first indications of what the United States could expect from Russian authorities during the next 30 years of The Cold War. The story of the King crew's trial and of their escape and flight back to friendly territory is documented by the author and is a fascinating aspect of the Myron King, and his crew, experience. It is an indication of the creativity and resilience of 8th Air Force airmen during the war.

The Wars of Myron King is in hardback, 246pp, with b&w period photos. There are maps of the European War. The book may be obtained at usual book outlets or from contacting the University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville TN. Author McDonough's contact info is to tel # 931-359-5713.

FLYING FOR HER COUNTRY

The American and Soviet Women Military Pilots of World War II
by Amy Goodpaster Strebe

Author and historian Strebe's history as related in this volume is that of the history of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP) before and during WWII. It is significant in that it also presents her research into women pilots of Russia and their experiences in combat, a factor not experienced by our WASP units, even though 38 American female pilots lost their lives during the war.

After undergoing training just as their male counterparts in the air, WASP airwomen flew all of the combat planes to airfields to be flown into combat by the airmen of all services. These units freed up men to enable them to go into combat, especially when American production lines were turning out airplanes at a fast clip. Their specific program was underway in 1943 and received much

military and Congressional support during 1944.

The Russian women faced a different scenario. They were pressed into service as combat pilots, most often flying against superior German Luftwaffe forces. Russia became the first country – in 1917 – to proclaim equality for women and the Soviet training schools took women in for pilot's training. Even today, women in the Russian Air Force experience long-standing limitations – only 2.9 percent of women are commissioned officers.

Strebe writes, "The largely forgotten achievements of the Soviet women veterans in World War II is an example of what has been called 'cultural amnesia' concerning women's military service in Russia today. . . . Once the fighting is over or the personnel shortage has passed and a sense of normality returns, women are hastily demobilized."

The book relates a wealth of information about the differences in America and Russia's experience with women in each Air Force and their service to their countries.

This softback book, with photographs, is 188pp and includes a thorough appendix of footnotes by chapters. Available from Potomac Books, Inc., 22841 Quicksilver Drive, Dulles VA 20166.



B-17 COMBAT MISSIONS

Fighters, Flak, and Forts: First-hand accounts of Mighty 8th Operations Over Germany
by Martin Bowman

This large format volume details the position and responsibilities of each crew position in a B-17 Flying Fortress. The articles are accompanied by color photographs and fleshed out with extensive interviews of 8th crewmen who flew in each crew position. Much information concerning the crew members is thus imparted in a most effective style. Larry Goldstein flew as a radio operator/gunner on pilot B.J. Keirsted's 388th BG, B-17 crew. He recalls, "Our 25 missions were not simple – each one was worse than the last. B. J. Keirsted kept repeating that



'we will make it, you can mark it down.'

The chapters include the conflict with attacking German fighters and the problems encountered with flak, the weather, purple hearts, and crash landings of crippled bombers. The format and photographic quality are especially well done – all 156 pages presented on high-quality paper.

The Foreword is by Major Gen. Lew Lyle, commander of the top combat group during the war. He flew more missions than any other 8th Air Force Lead pilot during the war and relates his thoughts and feelings and his concept of a Heavy bomber crew and their responsibilities on combat missions.

British historian Bowman has written dozens of books on WWII-related subjects, focusing primarily on the 8th Air Force wartime experience. Bowman's experience as an author comes through in this fine volume.

Available from Elephant Book Company Limited, 14 Dryden Court, London SE11 4NH, UK, or contact: Metro Books, 122 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10011

GIL COHEN

AVIATION ARTIST

by Gil Cohen with Dan Patterson

This long-awaited volume is a very special publication. Written in first person style, the career of artist Gil Cohen unfolds, illus-

trated with large-format presentations of many of his paintings and drawings, many focused on missions of the Mighty Eighth. He personally relates the backgrounds of each painting – the story behind it and what aspects of the subject he feels were important to depict.

The paintings are displayed as double-page layouts in beautiful colors and tones. The presentations include a number of 8th Air Force wartime subjects – photo recon, the famed Russian Shuttle, B-17 and B-24 mission paintings, interior depictions of flight crews on missions, fighter pilots – some of which have been printed in previous editions of the 8th AF News. There is a wide variety of subjects. Paintings and some pencil drawings present the Korean War, Vietnam, Somalia flights, scenes of the War Between the States, and even the feelings of weightless experienced by astronauts in the Space Shuttle missions.

Also included are some of Cohen's early works as a men's magazine cover artist and as book covers for various volumes. All are detailed and are excellent.

This volume is of the highest quality in its format and does justice to the unique artwork of one of the nation's premier aviation artists. Photographer Dan Patterson lends his expertise in the photography of the Cohen art, art pieces that are found not only in international museums but in private art collections as well.

A beautiful book presentation; a perfect gift for the holidays. Published by the Boston Mills Press it is available from Firefly Books Inc., PO Box 1338, Elllicott Station, Buffalo NY 14025 tel # 416-499-8412 www.fireflybooks.com

SURVIVING VICTORY

World War II Pilot, Actor, Sculptor, Writer

by Philip Vickers with Barbara Vickers

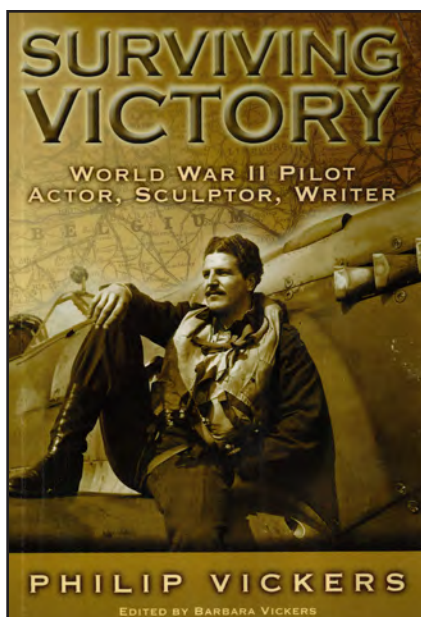
This is a rare autobiography written by a Royal Air Force Spitfire pilot that gives an intimate view of the war of fighter pilots. Notably well-written, Vickers relates the personal interactions among the British flyers as well as vivid descriptions of combat missions.

Vickers was shot down and crash landed his fighter on a particularly memorable mission, receiving fractures and related injuries. After time in a hospital undergoing treatment for his wounds, he eventually returned to his squadron.

"Fighter pilots had it made. It took fewer cannon shells to blow up a single engine fighter, but since we were usually closer to home – over the Channel in France, Belgium or Holland, we had a better chance of getting back to England. If not, well it was at least daylight and we could see the ground coming up. If we had to bale out, the Maquis of the French Underground could often smuggle us through



BOOK REVIEWS



Spain, Gibraltar, and back to our Squadrons in England."

Phil Vickers had a full post-war

career. He became a noted sculptor and artist as well as a London actor. He married Barbara and continued his love of flying, traveling in his private airplane. He died just as this book was being completed and according to her promise to him, she completed the volume, formatted it, and published it. An unusually captivating war experience – now available. In softback, 248 pp with b&w period photographs, available from Vibrant Books, Barbara Vickers Publisher, 6549 Navahopi Road, Sedona AZ 86336. tel # 928-282-4163 www.PhillipVickers.com "Surviving Victory" and Phil's "RCAF Pilot's Flight Log Book" are both now available at Amazon.com.

Book Review email Correction RETURN ENGAGEMENT

by James M. Morrow Jr.

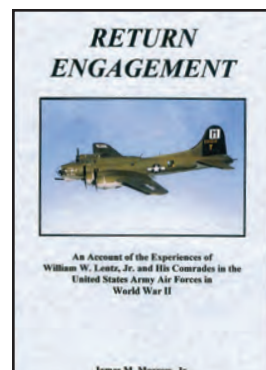
The book is large-format softback, 182pp and can be obtained by contacting:

James Morrow Jr., 333 Wedgewood Drive, Mooresville NC 28115 – 2747, tel # 704-664-3486

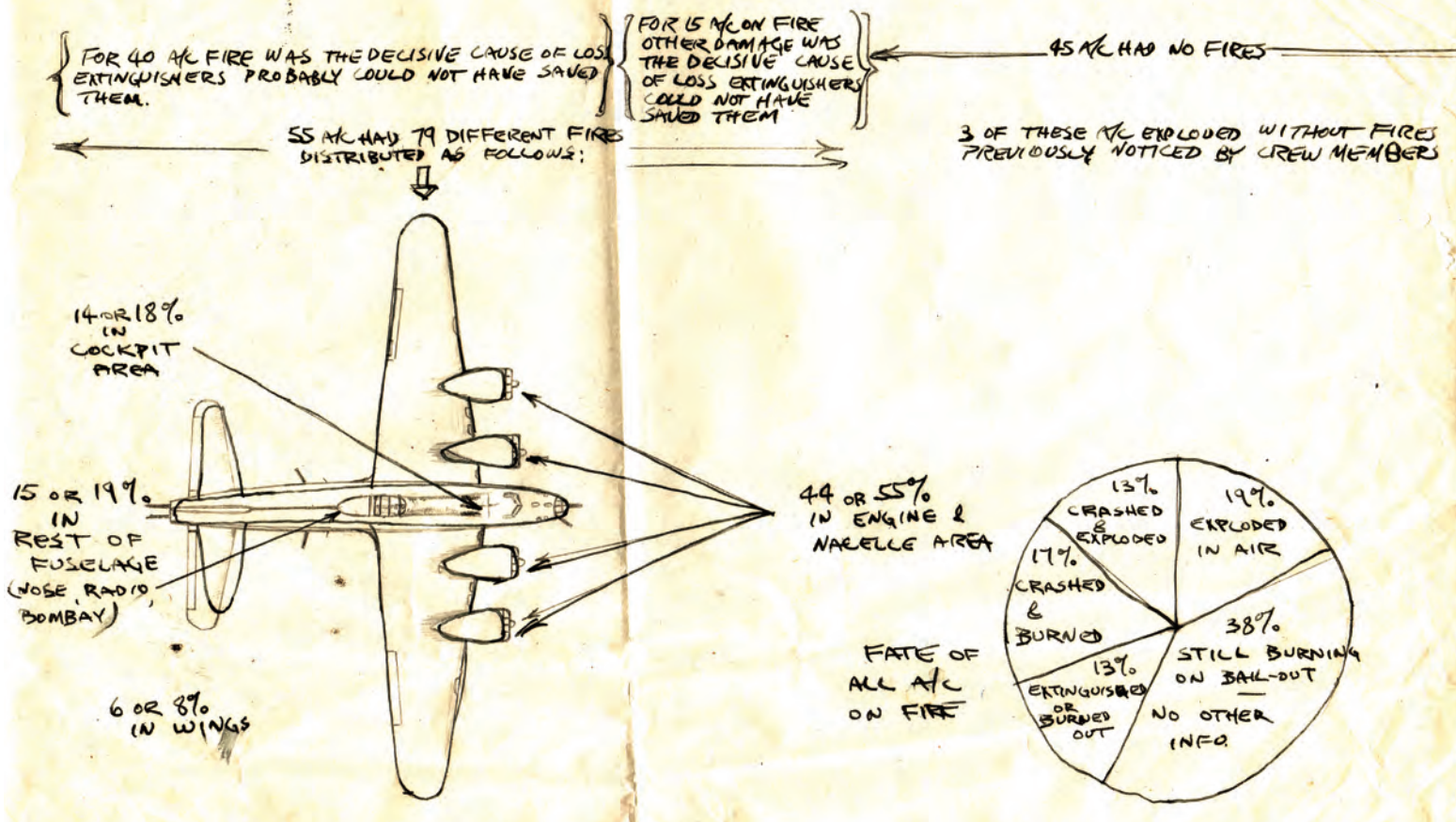
email: jmmj@mi-connection.com

Author

Morrow plans to donate sales proceeds to the 388th Bomb Group Association and the restoration of the B-17 *City of Savannah* now underway at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia. The original *City of Savannah* left Savannah to fly in the 388th BG at Knettishall.



ANALYSIS OF FIRES IN 100 LOST AIRCRAFT



This original document comes from the Jake Fredericks historical files.

JOHN SCHLOSSBERG II...

The orders assigning five of us to the 357th Fighter Group @ AAF STA 373 was dated June 1, 1944 and my first combat mission was over the invasion beachhead. We took off before daybreak, one at a time in the pitch blackness so that we would not lose two planes with one mishap. We were briefed to assemble at altitude over a designated check point. It was assumed that as the sun came up that we would be able to see each other but it did not work out that way. I never found any 357th planes so I joined up with some P-51s from another group as we provided top cover for the bombers hitting the gun entrenchment's guarding the invasion beaches.

On my 15th mission June 21st I celebrated my 20th birthday by releasing a package of my calling cards over Berlin. On July 30th I almost got blanked out. We were on a fighter sweep under radar control and we had switched to the auxiliary wing tanks after take off so as to preserve our internal gas. When we were directed into a flight of ME-109s just south of Paris we switched back to internal tanks, dropped our wing tanks and attacked. I was flying #2 man in my flight tight to my #1 man who had picked out a target and when I checked our rear I thought our #3 man was still with us when I realized that our #3 man didn't have a cannon hole in his prop spinner. I hit the intercom, told my #1 man that we had a ME-109 on our ass and that I would break hard right. I figured that if the ME-109 followed me that my #1 man would swing right behind him or if he followed my #1 man that I could swing in behind him.

The thinking was not bad as the ME-109 followed me but my #1 man didn't swing in behind him and I had tracers passing me on my left. Nothing to do but pull as tight a turn as I could in an effort to get to an aggressive position. That is when my partly full fuselage gas tank - the one without baffle plates - did me in. I hit a high speed stall, snapped and ended up spinning out of the clouds right over Paris and became a target for ground fire. I straightened the plane out and dove for the deck on

a 280 degree compass heading. I was flying a C model P-51 that day and I had a tough time keeping it in trim on the way home. I advised the crew chief to check it over carefully because I had done my very best to make a pretzel out of it. Needless to say he wasn't too happy to learn that I had mistreated his baby. (It turned out O.K. because the plane was pulled from service and he got a new P-51D to care for). During interrogation my #1 man explained that my call to him was so cool and calm that he didn't think that I was in trouble so he pursued the plane he had in sight. He never got any hits on his target but one of my other comrades got credit for the ME-109 that was chasing me.

That was when I learned that the theory re: flights, elements and wingmen in the USAAF was not quite the same as the Boy Scouts buddy system. J.B. Schlossberg II, 357th Fighter Group Tamarack, FL

FRITZ MEIJLER...

Back to April 29, 1944, at an empty airport somewhere in mid-England. It is about 4 a.m., and still dark. Frank V. Cotner from Columbus, Ohio, pilot and commander of B-24 Liberator bomber "Playboy", serial number 41-29399, wakes up his crew as there will be a mission today. In fact it should have been their day off, because they have only just completed their 11th flight to Germany. That is why one member of the crew is absent and must be replaced by 20-year-old Robert J. Falk, who is fresh from New York and has never been on a mission before. Frank Cotner's airplane belongs to the 784th Squadron of the 466th Bomber Group of the 8th Air Force. Without even breakfasting, the group of ten join in the squadron briefing room, where they receive their orders. Today's target is Berlin; "Playboy" is assigned the railway station at the Friedrichstrasse.

At about 6 a.m. the bombers take off from several airfields in England and by 7 AM they are flying in formation, ready to cross the North Sea. On their way to Berlin, they are already under fire of 88 mm anti-aircraft guns in Holland, and

soon the first German fighters appear in the sky. These hold back, however, as the bombers are accompanied and protected by American fighters such as the P-47 Thunderbolt, the P-38 Lightning and P-51 Mustang.

The formations that we hear and see flying over Weert's farm that morning cross the Dutch-German border reasonably unharmed. But as they get farther away from home, the Thunderbolts and Mustangs disappear on by one as they run out of fuel, and the bombers have to proceed unprotected. Over Germany, anti-aircraft gunfire gets more and more intense, and well before Berlin one of the four engines of our friends' bomber hit. They succeed in staying in formation however, and in dropping their four bombs of 1,000 kgs each on or near (as the official report reads) the Friedrichstrasse station. As they proceed, the formation suffers great losses through the ever increasing anti-aircraft gunfire. Some bombers go down burning or explode in the air. Amidst all this violence one has to keep flying and navigating and preferably hit some targets as well.

Hell in Heaven

The men go through hell, the plane is hit once again and cannot keep up the speed and height of the undamaged bombers. Soon they fall behind and that is when the German fighters see fit to attack the damaged Liberator. Forty Focke Wulf-190 fighters take part in the hunt, and "Playboy" cannot escape them. The bomber is heavily attacked and is literally riddled with bullets. Young Robert Falk, on his first flight over enemy territory, is shot through the head and dies instantly. The gunner in the tail turret gets seriously injured, but manages to reach the cabin. While all this is going on, Frank Cotner and his men succeed in shooting down three German fighters, but their own plane loses gasoline and has only one engine to keep them in the air. It is becoming quite clear that they will never reach England, although they can relax a little when they come into air space controlled by their own fighters. The American Thunderbolts make

a quick work with the Focke Wulfs, but Liberator 41-29399 cannot be saved. Pilot Frank Cotner tries everything in his power to keep his plane airborne until they reach the skies over Holland, realizing that their chances of escape are greater there. One should not stay up too long, however, for Holland is a small country and before you know it,

you and your bomber will splash into the ice-cold water of the North Sea; nor is the IJsselmeer an attractive landing place for people performing their first parachute jump. Imagine standing in the door opening of a lame airplane which may go down any minute, having to jump from it without previous training, and ending up in a country

that you know nothing about, with people whose language you do not speak.

It is strange that one crew member is afraid to jump, and has literally to be shoved out of the airplane by his friends.

Fritz Meijler

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

The "Alert Noncom" awoke us on the cool, dank morning of May 29, 1944 to fly our third mission. Following a breakfast of fresh eggs and bacon, a breakfast we always were served before a "rough mission", we assembled in the briefing room to learn of our day's target, flak, fighter escort, route to - and from - target and the host of other details, germane to our mission.

As the curtain was drawn, divulging "Big B" as our target area, a loud groan arose from those assembled. Berlin was well known as one of the worst targets in Germany and was heavily defended by both flak and fighters. Actually, our target was Tutow, a few miles north of the center of Berlin, but no less hazardous. We were to bomb a fighter assembly plant.

We of the 466th Bomb Group dropped our bombs on the target with some flak interference but no major damage to our flight. Leaving the target area, we flew north to the Baltic Sea and unfortunately, unknowingly, flew over Peenemunde, the rocket development center of the German war effort. (V-1 and V-2 rockets had not yet begun to fall on England.) As the saying goes, "All hell broke loose!" Flak was intense and accurate and bounced our B-24 all over the sky. In the meanwhile, I had been throwing out chaff from the aft section of our aircraft, when suddenly a large hole developed over the top of the waist gunner's station. Upon investigating the cause, I found a very hot piece of flak on the floor directly behind where I had been standing! I thought I had been hit and shock had not yet begun! Actually, when the piece of flak, about the size of a man's index finger, entered it hit a bulkhead of the aircraft and ricocheted to the floor. I still have the piece of flak as a memento of my third mission.

Fast forwarding in time, perhaps twenty five years later - give or take - I met a very pleasant gentleman with Dr. Von Braun's rocket team, then domiciled at the Redstone Arsenal in Huntsville, Alabama. His name was Walter Weisman and he was the Public Relations Director of the "Rocket Team". We became good friends, and I later invited him to come to Birmingham to address our local Kiwanis Club, which he readily accepted. Following a most interesting program in which he outlined the moon mission along with other facts and figures pertaining to the rocket program, I invited him up to the "The Club" for "refreshments" while we awaited his flight back to Huntsville.

As was natural, our conversation gravitated back in time to our time in service during World War II. Having learned of his war background and the fact that he was in the rocket program, I told him about my trip over Peenemunde and my piece of flak. He allowed as how he was stationed there at that time in May 1944.

Suddenly, it dawned on the two of us that here we were, two ex-sergeants, who fought on opposite sides and had tried to kill each other - by whatever means - had become such good friends. We remained friends as long as Walt lived. It is a small world, isn't it?

Glenn Taylor, 466th Bomb Group Birmingham, AL

VETERANS MEMORIAL MONUMENT DEDICATED

The long awaited Veterans Memorial Monument to the fallen heroes of the Mullens, WV area was dedicated on Veterans Day, November 11, 2008 following a noon lunch sponsored by the American Legion Post #106. Legion Post Commander Garry Dixon was the master of ceremonies, former Major John P. Tice, a highly decorated veteran of WWII cut the ribbon, Linda Williams Nuckols, a Viet Nam veteran nurse, read the name of the fallen heroes killed in service from WWI, WWII, Korea, Viet Nam and Desert Storm. Jack Feller, Post Adjutant & past president of the 493rd Bomb Group Memorial Association delivered the dedication oration.

For the dedication, Feller wore his WWII uniform Ike Jacket and service cap. In the dedication oration Feller said in part, By the names on the memorial we remember our sons, our brothers, our cousins, our uncles, our fathers, our school classmates and the young men of the Mullens area. For them we dedicate this monument. In our minds' eye they shall never grow old. "They gave the last full measure of devotion" to their country. With a closing prayer Feller said, "We dream this a fitting time to pay our respects to our fallen comrades."

The ceremony was attended by a large number of citizens, including active duty military in uniform from the town with a current population of 1,625.

AID AND ATTENDANCE

From a note from Robbie Robinson comes: Aid and Attendance is an under-utilized program of monthly governmental benefits offered to assist veterans and surviving spouses who require in-home care or nursing homes. The veteran had to have served at least 90 days in military service to qualify for the benefits. Payments can be retroactive and most veterans can qualify.

The amount is a benefit to the veteran of \$18,234 annually; increases to \$21,615 if there is one dependent. The surviving spouse living alone is \$11,715 annually.

For information call 1-800-827-1000 or online at www.va.gov or hit Aid and Attendance in the search block. Or contact your local Veterans Administration office.

Apply online at: <http://vabenfits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/main.asp>

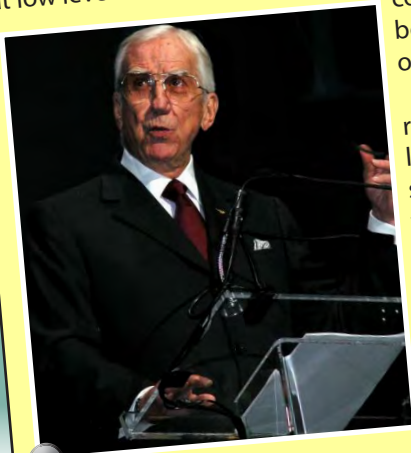
ED MCMAHON, WAR HERO

Ed McMahon is perhaps best known as the sidekick to Johnny Carson on his late night television program. Less known is his military career when he was called to re-enter the service as a Marine pilot during Korea. Early on, he was reprimanded for flying "training missions" over his girlfriend's house. Prior to deploying to Korea, he had a memorable visit meeting Marilyn Monroe, who quietly told him that she was not wearing anything under her dress! Marines have tough tours.

Trained to fly in F4U Corsairs during WWII, in Korea Ed flew 85 missions in a Cessna 01E Bird Dog, spotting targets at low levels for the ground troops. He served as a forward controller for fighter/bombers flying missions overhead.

On his missions he took enemy fire – the casualty rate for Bird Dog spotters in Korea exceeded 50% losses. He earned a number of medals for his combat service, but during his television career just shrugged them off. "If you flew enough missions, they just gave them to you."

Ed McMahon remained active with the Marines and Corps veterans throughout his life. He retired as a full Colonel in 1966, and stayed on the Johnny Carson Show till the show closed.



Robert Polich, Sr. World War II Pilot

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loZHeXHDiRI>

The Story of Robert Polich, Sr. - Red Leader on Fire has now been placed on YouTube. Robert, of Deerwood Minnesota tells the story about his experiences in World War II with the 8th Air Force, 305 (H) Bomb Group, 365th Squadron.

Later as a POW with in Stalag Luft III then Stalag VIIA inside Germany.

Now the world can continue to enjoy this story. The film is still being circulated by the Minnesota Historical Society - Greatest Generations Project.

MUSEUM TRIES MOBILE PHONE AUDIO TOURS

The Royal Air Force Museum is the second visitor attraction in the UK to employ mobile phone audio tours.

The Museum is trying audio tours at the London site, beginning in the Bomber Hall. The tours are delivered via the visitor's mobile phone: he or she calls a number and then presses a sequence of keys for an exhibit. There is an introduction to the Bomber Hall and an entry for each aircraft.

Visitors can also key in a number and leave feedback. It is hoped that this will encourage visitors who have an insight into the aircraft to share it. This could be a veteran who has experience with the aircraft or younger people who are studying about the history of the Royal Air Force.

The tour recordings are also available on the Museum's website so users can download them to their mobile device before the visit if they don't want to use their call minutes for audio tours, but do want to hear them.

The Museum views the device as having a huge potential to increase the visitor experience. There can be several recordings for each exhibit which can be 'layered' and pitched at different levels. Therefore it can act as an introduction for the newcomer, add fresh insights to a student or an in depth view for the enthusiast.

This is an experiment which could be expanded based on the mobile phone method or developed on to dedicated audio devices



PREDDY MEMORIAL



There are a number of memorials and recognitions in museums and hangars around the country placed in tribute to two brothers who flew fighters in the 8th Air Force. Both were shot down and killed near the end of the war. Joe Noah has been a driving force for the Preddy Memorial Foundation, which is dedicated to preserving and presenting the legacy of the two Preddy brothers, George and Bill, who grew up in Greensboro, NC. Both were shot down on missions, one inadvertently by friendly fire from ground troops. Van Noah, M.D. is the current President of the Foundation.

Over the past two decades, a widespread support group has helped fund the activities of the Foundation, and a newsletter keeps them all up-to-date on events. There is in Greensboro, a Preddy Boulevard so designated and the Foundation continues its active program to place commemorations in WWII-related and aviation museums. There is an active website www.PreddyFoundation.org. Also on www.guidestar.org

The Preddy Memorial Foundation is now actively seeking funds to continue their work with the fighter history of the Mighty Eighth. Donations are tax deductible and if your check is made out to Joe Noah of the Foundation, the amount you send will be matched – doubled. Mail to: The Preddy Memorial Foundation, 86 Goat Island Court, Clarksville VA 23927.

TOUR OF ENGLAND PLANNED FOR SUMMER JUNE 2010

Dr. Vernon Williams has spent ten years working on film projects featuring East Anglia and has planned a very special trip to the wartime 8th AF area for summer 2010. The East Anglia Project focuses also on the preservation of the 306th Bomb Group Archives at the 306th student interns at Abilene Christian University. Proceeds from the tour will help fund their ongoing historical research. Additionally, the project is looking for donations of original artifacts to be included in their 306th BG Historical Collection.

The tour is nine days and not only covers airfields in East Anglia, but also a number of other locales such as Churchill's Estate and sites at Bedford.

For details you may contact Dr. Vernon Williams at tel #325-280-3399 or at ACU Box 28203, Abilene TX 79699.

HONOR FLIGHT FLIES 100 VETERANS TO WASHINGTON

Recently more than 100 veterans, most from the World War Two era, were honored with a flight from Nashville, Tennessee to visit Washington DC and be honored at the site of the WWII Memorial there. The veterans all said that it was an unforgettable tribute. This flight was part of the ongoing activities of the Honor Flight Network which flies veterans without charge to them to our capital city.

The Charter Flight cost \$47,000 all of which was donated to the memorable project. Paul Fleenor of Franklin, a Korean War veteran, organized the entire flight. Other Honor Flight Units around the nation are currently

active in organizing similar trips in their localities.



FLYING THE PLANET'S FIRST JET



The ME 262 is the world's first jet fighter. Developed by the Germans in the early 1940's and used against the Allies in the latter part of the war. Fortunately for

the Allies it was too little too late. About 1433 Me 262's were built by the Germans; only about 300 were flown in combat.

The Americans were naturally very interested in this new type of fighter and formed a team to get some of the 262's out of German into Allied hands. The team was lead by an Army Air Force General named Watson. The words below are from Lt. Robert C. Strobell, a member of Watson's Whizzers, and the first American to fly a jet fighter aircraft. The 262 was flown from a German airfield, Lechfeld, in southern Germany that had recently been captured by George Patton's 3rd Army. Strobell recalls the details of this flight:

The first Me 262 restored was an Me 262A-1. This was the Me 262 that Baur (a German test pilot) flew into Lechfeld on May 16th from unchen-Reim near Frankfurt. It was found in fully operational condition, requiring the least amount of hangar/crew chief attention.

The first few days of June 1945 this airplane was undergoing a complete check, and I was aware that it would be the first out of the hangar. At the time, I was still a bit leery of the entire Messerschmitt crew as a whole, feeling that it took only one bad apple in the lot to spoil our plans. So I went to the shop superintendent, Mr. Caroli, and told him that Baur would make the test flight. My thinking was that if this was generally known by the crew there would likely not be an attempt to sabotage it... it's called finesse."

When the airplane rolled out of the hangar it was refueled with a limited load. I asked Baur to make the test flight, which he did. He was up about fifteen minutes and landed. When he touched down on the runway, I was sitting at the approach end of the runway to catch him. We met him just as he was about to U-turn to taxi back. I asked him to step out of the jet, and he did. I climbed in and taxied back to the hangar where we refueled it with a full load. Then I taxied out to the runway.

My first solo flight in the Me 262 started with a pilot error on takeoff. Somewhere in the back of my mind I got the impression that swept wings required a higher angle of attitude on takeoff. It must have come from watching Baur make his takeoff. About halfway down the runway, all was going well, except that I noticed that I was gaining flight speed slowly, if at all! Everything was roaring along just fine, except the airspeed was not up to takeoff, and didn't appear to be increasing as rapidly as expected.

At this point I lowered the nose and put the nose wheel on runway. I was doing something like 70 or 80 miles per hour, and up came the airspeed...I found myself at the end of the runway, and I simply hauled it off of the ground, feeling that I had used all 6,000 feet of a 5,000 foot runway. One is not likely to forget such an adventure, and I still think about that rough trip down that runway as they watched the end approach...both mine and the runway's.

The next surprise came when I was climbing out, reaching for altitude. The wing slats started blinking in and out. I thought that they would stay out or snap shut closed. They didn't. They would close momentarily with a bit of air turbulence and then open again. This continued for a brief period, like a minute or so, until the airspeed increased and the air pressure kept them closed.

The next thing I noticed was the speed. Raw speed, exhilarating speed. Smooth speed. Unbelievable speed. It seemed effortless. My flight was held to low altitude, so I had the ground as a reference. This was something I had never experienced in the P-47 Thunderbolt, and it was impressive. But with the speed came another surprise. Air turbulence at the cruising speed of the Me 262 affects the airplane in ways that I had never felt before. An updraft became a "butt thumper," more like a jolt...it was the same with a downdraft, so that on a hot summer day, at low altitude, you literally bumped and thumped your way across the country. I thought those toe straps on the rudder pedals were humorous until I found out why they were there...those sharp bumps would lift your feet off of the pedals. A P-47 just lumbered and rolled with turbulence, and rarely did a bump or a thump.

When it came time to return to Lechfeld to make a landing, I committed my second pilot error. I made a normal "P-47 approach" to the landing by entering the downwind leg. I was planning for a quick left turn onto base and then final, but I never got out of the downwind leg! Normally, with a Thunderbolt, you would pull the throttle back on the downwind leg, drop the gear, and make a U-turn back toward the runway controlling speed with the throttle while descending to touchdown. In the Me 262, I pulled the throttle back and nothing happened. I mean that there was no apparent reaction from the airplane. It simply continued to fly at the same speed, and I recall thinking that I had discovered "perpetual speed."

By the time I figured out that I wasn't on a normal jet approach, I was five miles beyond the airfield, and still headed outbound at high speed. The airport had long since disappeared from sight! We had been cautioned not to reduce the turbine below 6000 RPM in the traffic pattern, but it seemed that this only encouraged the jet to continue to fly at cruising speed. I finally turned back toward the airport and again entered the downwind leg at 500 feet. But this time I had figured things out, or so I thought.

I pulled the RPM back to 6000 and pointed the nose up in a climb attitude. The airspeed dropped to 250 MPH, at which point the landing gear could be lowered safely. I managed all of this with my head inside the cockpit, so you can imagine my surprise when I discovered I was at 2,500 feet and again several miles from the airport. I continued around for a third and final approach, and landed without incident.

After landing, I taxied back to the hangar area and climbed out of the jet. I related all of these experiences to the other pilots, and they capped my day with a real class act event: Ken Holt and Bob Anspach walked over to me, and without hesitation removed my Army Air Corps insignia. They broke off the propellers and stuck the wings back on my collar while advising me that I "no longer needed the propellers," since I was now a jet pilot.

It was perfectly timed and precisely appropriate for the moment. It remains an indelible event in my memory. This later became a squadron custom. After each man completed his first flight in the jet, the propellers would be removed from his AAF insignia. For the rest of the mission, all of the men wore the non-regulation collar brass everywhere they went.

Robert Strobell

8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY PX AT THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM STORE

QTY	8TH AFHS PX ORDER FORM DESCRIPTION	PRICE	OPTIONS	TOTAL
	Golf shirt w/8 th AFHS logo, Circle size and color choice	\$29.99	S, M, L, XL, 2X Red, White, Navy	
	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 ¾" pin w/clutch back	\$3.50	Member, Life Member	
	8 th AFHS bumper sticker	\$.90	NA	
	8 th AFHS 4" round sticker	\$.75	NA	
	8 th AFHS plastic license plate	\$3.95	NA	
	8 th AF logo silk tie	\$27.99	Red	
	8 th AF 3" patch	\$3.98	NA	
	8 th AF ¾" pin w/clutch back	\$3.50	NA	
	8 th AF logo white T-shirt	\$10.99	S, M, L, XL	
		\$12.99	2X	
	8 th AF logo grey T-shirt	\$12.99	S, M, L, XL	
		\$14.99	2X	
	"City of Savannah" B-17 T-Shirt	\$15.99	S, M, L, XL,	
	8 th Air Force Explorer Jacket	\$39.99	Blue/White S, M, L, XL, 2X	
	8 th Zip Front Zipper; Hooded Fleece Jacket	\$44.99	Ash Grey/Dark Grey S, M, L, XL, 2X	
	"City of Savannah" B-17 Shot Glass (Clear)	\$3.99	N/A	
	A-2 Jacket	\$299.99	40, 42, 44, 46, 48	
	Military Logo Tervis Tumbler Mug	\$11.99	Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine, 8 th Logo	
	Military Wall Clock	\$29.99	Air Force, Marine, Army	
	Jimmy Stewart Bomber Pilot (Paper Back)	\$14.95	NA	
	Masters of the Air	\$35.00	NA	
	Air Force Cookbook	\$16.95	NA	
	Military Garden Stones	\$24.99	Air Force, Marine, Army	
	Military Logo Christmas Ornaments w/stand	\$21.99	Air Force, Army, Marines, Navy	

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Military Logo Tervis Tumbler



8th Air Force Explorer Jacket



**Ornament
(comes with stand)**

LET'S CHAT

by Lalli Coppinger

Christmas with the G.I.'s

Christmas has always been England's favorite, and most festively celebrated holiday, but by 1942 the War had decimated all the Yuletide luxuries and left many chairs at the table empty by absent British soldiers. It was a time of homesickness for the Americans. For many it was their first Christmas ever away from home. The song, "I'll be home for Christmas - if only in my dreams" accentuated their longing for home. As many men as possible were given the day off, or replaced by volunteer Jewish soldiers. Army cooks prepared a traditional Christmas dinner for those who stayed in camp.

It is on record that at Christmas 1942 a great number of invitations were extended to Americans by local British families as the word got around that those men who accepted invitations were supplied with extra ration packages to take with them. This may be the reason why there were about 50 invitations for every one GI available. A plea went out for more men to accept!

The Brits were not normally inhospitable people, but the meager food rations had previously kept many local families from inviting Americans to their homes. After all, 3 oz. of cheese a week, 2 oz. of butter, grey National bread, with little or no jam or fruit, was not the kind of fare one could easily offer a well fed American who, not understanding, would expect more. But when the rationing situation was clarified and understood, it was quickly corrected by the generous Yanks, who, from then on, never visited a home without bringing food gifts of some kind. They were repaid by a growing affection from grateful Brits who opened their homes to them with heartfelt hospitality and in many cases forming lifelong friendships.

Adults weren't the only ones to benefit from the Americans' big heartedness. One thing was very obvious. The GI's loved kids! Many of them not much older than kids themselves they went "all out" in their kindness to children. Scores of WWII's young English "gum-chummers" are among today's greatest admirers and supporters of the Mighty Eighth!

Onwards from 1942 Christmas was a very special time in and near the air bases. It was then that the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack were hung together with tinsel and paper decorations, and there was always "Father Christmas" or one of his helpers arriving to give out toys and treats to the eagerly waiting kids. These children were mostly evacuated from bombed out homes in London, some orphans; others were local children from nearby towns and villages, but all growing up without experiencing the traditional joys of a child's Christmas. Many would have had a very slim holiday had it not have been for the kindness and fun provided by the Americans. Perhaps the best thing was that they seemed to enjoy it all as much as the kids. At the vari-

ous air bases they had spent weeks preparing for the parties and festivities they provided. They sent home for small toys that couldn't be found in austere English shops, they saved up their sweet rations, and collected money towards parties they planned. They saved immense amounts of treat foods and provided "thrill" arrivals of "Father Christmas," usually by jeep, but at Shipdham in Norfolk he arrived in a Piper Cub plane straight from the North Pole.

At Rougham Air Base a B-17 brought him in with a sackful of toys for 145 war orphans from Dr. Barnardo's National Childrens' Home. They were greeted personally by Colonel Castle and provided with Christmas dinner and entertainment, all put on by the men of the 94th.

An orphan's fund was started by the American Red Cross and the *Stars and Stripes*. Every unit that collected 100 pounds (cash) could adopt an orphan. There were 600 children who qualified and who were sent clothes and toys, and entertained by their benefactor unit. The 306th Bomb Group adopted a little three year old girl whom they nicknamed "Sweet Pea." She was lifted up and "christened" a bomber after dipping her hand in red paint and planting her palm on the fuselage. I wonder what became of that little girl?

Local newspapers of the various communities reported the Americans' thoughtfulness and generosity. Quite apart from their official military aid and reason for being in England, there are many people in America today, especially the younger generation, who do not realize how much the USAAF in Britain contributed to the well-being and morale of the British people at large, and the children in particular. But, the British themselves will never forget that wonderful human touch of the Americans of WWII!

A peaceful and healthy Holiday Season to all!





LIBERATORS ON WINGS

by Frits L. Meijler, M.D.

Battles in the sky

Now and again there are skirmishes between Germans and American fighters. When the American bombers return from their mission, some of them occasionally dip low, and there are often stragglers who are harassed by German planes. We can hear the guns rattle, high up in the air, and fear for the lives of our American friends. Now and again a plane crashes with a shrieking, piercing sound. Sometimes we can clearly see it coming down, and recognize it for a friend or an enemy. A loud explosion and a column of black smoke in the distance tell us the fate of the aircraft, and often of its crew. Sometimes the crew manage to leave the plane in time, after which the machine dives down like an unguided missile, a threat to the neighborhood it will hit. Fortunately, the northeastern part of Overijssel is thinly populated, and I don't know of any plane crashing into a house or a farm.

The area between Coevorden and Almelo seems to be the preferred approach route for American bombers. In April 1944, about six weeks before the invasion in Normandy, the Germans still put up a stubborn defense against the growing pressure from the air. The "Heimat" must be protected,

although it seems only right that the "Herrenvolk" is being paid back for Warsaw, Rotterdam and Coventry. A taste of their own medicine, so to speak. Little by little Germany is bombed to ruins, but on April 29, 1944, we do not know (yet) what is happening. A show is performed before our eyes that we cannot fully comprehend. Many years later we will begin to surmise what was actually going on above our heads. A battle of titans who do now know, who never see nor ever will see each other.

The "8th AF"

The airplanes belonged to the American 8th Air Force, based in England. Aside from aircraft fleet and its flying personnel, the "8th AF", as the 8th American Air Force was called, employed many thousands of people in supporting jobs. The total number of military in the 8th AF in those days amounted from 200 to 300 thousand.

Editorial Note: Dr. Frits Meijler is Professor and Chairman of the Interuniversity Cardiology Institute of the Netherlands and an internationally known research cardiologist. Like many Jewish children and teenagers, he was saved from the Nazis in World War II by the humane and courageous intervention of many Dutch citizens. One of those was farmer Weerts who save Fritz Meijler by pretending that he was a nephew from Amsterdam.

THE SAGA OF B-17G TAIL NO. 164

By David Lustig, 384th BG



January 20, 1945, Meeks Field, Keflavik, Iceland. About 1000 hours:

After a much delayed take-off, B-17G, Tail No. 164 was finally coaxed into the frigid dark Icelandic sky by pilots Larry Drew and Jim Rotherham. It was the start of the last leg of a seventeen day ferrying odyssey from Lincoln, Nebraska to our destination, Valley, Wales. 112 days before, the nine of us greenhorns, just out of training schools, took our first combat crew training flight together at Dyersburg Army Air Base, Tennessee. Besides the pilots, our crew consisted of Bill Keyser, navigator, Kenny Seymour, togglier/gunner, Ted Lanham, flight engineer/gunner, Paul Snider, ball turret gunner, Doug Lillico, tail gunner, Bill Winsby, right waist gunner, and myself, Dave Lustig, radio operator/gunner.

Delay was a phenomenon to which we were getting accustomed: Three days of processing at Grenier Field, Manchester, New Hampshire, our Port of Aerial Embarkation, then eleven days grounded by thirty degree below zero blizzards to Goose Bay, Labrador, and, finally, a three day delay at Meeks Field, Keflavik,

Iceland awaiting repairs to a damaged wing vent on our "red-lined" No. 164. The repairs were necessitated due to the wing vent having been kicked out as Snider and Lustig, the "short straw" losers in the refueling lottery, were refueling No. 164.

Regulations at Goose Bay required all incoming B-17s to station two crew members on the right wing to handle the fuel hoses while filling the wing tanks for the over-water flight to Iceland. Huddling around the ball turret, the six of us non-coms decided to draw straws (six shredded newspaper strips) with the two shortest "straws" determining who would win the tortuous task. A personnel carrier whisked the other seven crew members off through the drifting snow while Snider and I, still in the wind-protecting deep freezer that was our B-17, awaited the fuel truck. It was then that Paul and I mused about the pile of U.S. Mail bags starting their third week en route by "air mail" to anxious GIs in Europe and laughed about our supply of emergency water in gallon GI cans - every seam split wide open from their

frozen contents.

It proved to be almost impossible to keep one's footing on those slick freezing metal wing surfaces with smooth stiff soled boots in that blasting frost-biting wind and, as Snider braked for a sure slide off the wing, his toe found a hasty anchorage through the vulnerable wing vent. Apparently no technician braved the elements to inspect our plane at Goose Bay; however, with the slightly milder January temperatures of Iceland, one eager-beaver mechanic found our damaged vent, red-lined the plane, and further delayed our ferry trip to Wales. The capricious finger of fate being what it is, who knows, the delay may have saved our lives. After three days of waiting, in winds that blew that bottom coastal end of Iceland bare of snow, and anything that wasn't anchored, maintenance was still unable to find a replacement vent. With the safety of the aircraft obviously not compromised by the damaged vent, the decision was made to clear No. 164 for take-off.

It was about 0800 hours in the frigid darkness that, with the help of preheat-

ers, the Curtis-Wrights were coaxed into life. One after another they sputtered, wheezed, smoked, vibrated, and, finally, roared assuringly. We had been rumbling along the taxi strips for many minutes and, as we paused at the end of the runway, the tower cleared us for take-off. Suddenly Kenny's voice rang out over the interphone: "Togglier to Pilot, over!" Drew: "Pilot to Togglier, over!" Kenny: "Sorry, sir, but I must have left my '45' under the mattress in our hut!" Drew: "(Expletive!) - I'll call the tower for instructions!" Drew then taxied No. 164 off of the runway and on to a side strip where a jeep pulled up to our plane and whisked Kenny off into the darkness. There we sat for what seemed like an eternity in the bone chilling darkness of our plane until Kenny was finally delivered, his wayward Colt 45 strapped securely to his waist. Drew and Rotherham taxied No. 164 back on to the runway and, with our four roaring engines spitting jets of bright orange flame from their manifolds, we were hurtled westward into the cold dark Icelandic sky.

January in Iceland offers very little daylight and, as our heading was being altered with a slow climbing left bank out over the frigid north Atlantic, a late morning fire-ball sun was just peeping over the eastern horizon. Suddenly the emergency alarm pierced the comforting drone of the engines! Drill after drill had taught us that three short rings meant an emergency - one long continuous ring! I jumped out of my seat toward the right side of the radio room where Doug Lillico lay wrapped up in a blanket sleeping. As I glanced out the window just above him, the high right wing was reflecting red off the engine nacelles - fire for sure I thought, as the dreaded ringing continued! I grabbed the edge of Doug's blanket with a mighty yank! Doug flew out of the blanket in excited confusion - grabbing his 'chute harness and mae west and yelling over the din for me to help him. Struggling with my own harness and mae west, I wasn't in a very helpful frame of mind! Back in the waist, I

caught a glimpse of Paul Snider and Bill Winsby - one was wearing his harness and 'chute and the other his Mae West - and both were frantically arguing the merits of their decision. Prior to leaving Goose Bay, we were briefed that getting dunked in the icy north Atlantic meant a few brief minutes of survival and, wet in life raft didn't afford you many minutes more. Thus the urgency!

As suddenly as the ringing began, it stopped! Only the steady throbbing of the engines could be heard as we continued our slow banking left turn out over the choppy north Atlantic. Flopping in my seat, I quickly plugged in my headset. At that instant Drew's slow drawling voice came over the interphone: "Sorry fellas - Rotherham had the controls and I must have dozed off with my knee pressing up against the alarm button!" (The physical strain of manipulating the manual controls of a B-17 resulted in roughly fifteen minute alternating stints between the pilot and co-pilot). Despite his calm reassuring statement and the comical vision of his six foot plus frame slumped spread-eagled in the pilot's seat with his knee braced against the panic button, we failed to find it very humorous at the time. "Don't worry" he added "it won't happen again!" The heart stopping red glare on the nacelles was merely the bright rising sun reflecting off the shiny new aluminum.

About an hour or so later, the inter-

phone came alive again: "Navigator to Pilot - over!" pause, "Navigator to Pilot - over!" Finally: "This is the pilot - over!" "Hey, Drew, what's your heading?" Drew then read his compass reading to Bill Keyser. "According to my calculations," said Bill, "we're heading west back over the north Atlantic!" "I'll be darned," or something like that, said Drew, "I must have dozed off!" And so it was with that big likable laid-back guy. Nothing seemed to ruffle him and, what he may have lacked in attentiveness, he made up in luck. We flew into Valley, Wales without further incidents and went on to fly many combat missions with the 547th Squadron of the 384th Bomb Group out of Grafton-Underwood, England. All of us made it safely back to the States after war's end.

Our aircraft, Boeing B-17G, Tail No. 164, wasn't so lucky. By a strange coincidence, out of the multitude of 8th Air Force bases in England that needed replacement aircraft, No. 164 seemed to have followed us to the 384th Bomb Group and was assigned to the 545th Squadron. April 6, 1945, on the bomb run of our mission to the railroad station in the center of the Leipzig, it collided with another plane in the 545th formation and both planes were lost!

David C. Lustig's recollections with input and confirmation by Paul Snider, Bill Keyser, and Ted Lanham.





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CAUTION BRINGS NO REGRETS

Sad Sack, a popular military cartoon character of the past, was not a typical G.I. soldier. But he was the one who was always finding himself in real-life army situations. He was not a bright-looking character, was always naïve and not very polished. He was a challenge to his superiors. But Sad Sack brings a real truth to his audience in a very subtle way. He is sitting on a chair in a darkened room. He is in a required session which is dealing with Sex Education. The beam of light from a movie projector shines past him and onto an unseen screen. He is nonchalantly watching. Suddenly, his facial expression changes and his attention becomes fixed on the subject matter. He is alert!! The film continues. Sad Sack is becoming intensely interested. Then his face reflects a troubled, fearful but inquiring emotion. His posture changes dramatically. He is squirming in his seat. He is big eyed. What he is seeing causes him to break out in a cold sweat. His eyes are open in wonderment, he is gasping. His hands go to his mouth and his body language is saying, "Is this the way it really is?" The session ends. Later, the saga continues. Sad Sack is pictured out on the street where he meets a G.I. soldier buddy. His friend is introducing him to a voluptuous female whom he has picked-up. Sad Sack cautiously acknowledges her, and wisely and deliberately puts on a rubber glove and stretches out confidently to shake her hand. His lesson took! Caution brings no regrets.

Caution comes as a result of careful consideration and thoughtful pursuit. One can do the boldest things with caution. Those who use caution are not 'chicken' or 'cowards' but are emboldened by the challenges presented to them. They do not throw caution to the wind. During WW II, the concept of splitting the atom was conceived. Harnessing and releasing the power of the atom for war-time advantage received top secret priority. The scientists were probing the unknown. A mistake could mean the end of civilization. They had to tackle the task and take the boldest measures but throughout the project, caution was exercised. They were successful. Breaking the sonic barrier, travelling faster than the speed of sound was thought to be foolish and impossible. This was another challenge but aeronautical engineers and airmen attacked the problem with relish but exercised caution. Today, supersonic flight is not uncommon. But to get there, extreme caution was exercised. A man on the moon? Ridiculous, impossible, foolish was the general consensus. It took years of research, planning, and daring before it was accomplished. Even today, there is ex-

treme caution exercised when there is a launch into space.

What is our source of inspiration, our hope, our trust? Much of it comes through some sort of revelation received through instruction in the same way Sad Sack received his. Whatever the source, it will come to us. Be challenged to do bold things, using caution in what you choose to follow and then count what it will cost when you do follow. We live in a perverse world, a condition that is not new to us. It has been that way throughout history. Exercise boldness in this time of crisis. Stand alone in this world even when those around you are sitting down. Across history, millions of men and women have gallantly and assertively stepped forward and said, "I can make a difference." Wars to end tyranny have been waged by these individuals. They aggressively advanced but they did not abandon country, home, or lifestyle just to make a contribution. Each person—regardless of age or status—will at various times encounter situations when they must choose whether to step forward and make a difference or shrink from duty and be a 'spectator'.

The more we endeavor to inspire those who follow to accept their responsibility, as opportunity presents itself, the greater will be our own contribution. We are not to follow the masses just for the sake of conformity, each of us has been endowed with God-given principles and we must not be influenced or moved by anything contrary to these values. We are warned and cautioned by our society to always do the politically correct thing. The politically correct way is not always the right way, so use wisdom and caution and wear your rubber glove. Solomon explained wisdom clearly: "When wisdom enters your heart, and knowledge is pleasant to your soul, then you will understand righteousness and justice, equity and every good path. Discretion will preserve you. Understanding will keep you." (Proverbs 2:9-11 NKJ)

**Earl Wassom, 466th BG
Chaplain, 8th AFHS**



Earl Wassom



An Eighth Air Force veteran (fighter pilot) was having trouble with his vision and made an appointment with an Optimist. The optimist told him, "Don't you worry. You'll be alright."

HAPPY HOLIDAYS





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