



8TH AF NEWS

VOLUME 09 NUMBER 1 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth" MARCH 2009



The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum Has a New Arrival...

B-17 "City of Savannah"





AF News

March 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. Officers and Board of Directors below are Eighth Air Force Historical Society Officers and Board Members.

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Greetings Fellow Members!! Your 8th Air Force Historical Society Board of Directors recently met in Cincinnati for our Mid-Year Business meeting. I am pleased to report the state our Historical Society is terrific! Despite numerous challenges, our Society is moving in a very positive direction.

I have attended and participated in scores of Board meetings over the years. I am fortunate to work with a very cohesive, team-oriented and dedicated Board. We are truly blessed to have such fine people serving this fraternity.

Our 2009 Reunion is scheduled for **August 18-23, 2009**. The site of this years gathering will be Cincinnati, Ohio at the beautiful Millennium Hotel. You will be very pleased with the beautiful accommodations. The Millennium Hotel is a first class establishment with an excellent staff.

The main focal point of this year's Reunion will be a visit to the Museum of the United States Air Force (formally

the United States Air Force Museum) located in Dayton, Ohio.

The Museum staff has bent over backwards to accommodate our requests. They have granted us special permission to see the Restoration Facility which is normally not seen by the general public. If you have never been to the Air Force Museum, this is your chance to really enjoy this world class venue. Their aircraft and artifact collection is second to none. There are many other special events and tours that we are planning for the Reunion as well. I can assure you that Cincinnati will be one of our best Reunions ever!

We are also very pleased to announce a very special event in conjunction with the Spring airshow at Andrews AFB. Check it out on the EVENTS page at your website: www.8thafhs.org.

Join us this August in Cincinnati, come and be a part of your Eighth Air Force family! We will look forward to seeing you there!

In closing, I want to thank you for



**Mark Copeland
President**

your continued encouragement and support. We are proud to have you as a member!

Respectfully in your service,

**Mark Copeland
President – Eighth Air Force
Historical Society**

On Our Front Cover

It took three full weeks for our professional moving team, All Coast Aircraft Recovery Inc., to disassemble, transport and reassemble the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum's newly-acquired B-17 Flying Fortress. The aircraft took its last mission from its hangar at Dulles International Airport in Washington to its final home in the Combat Gallery at the Mighty Eighth.

It took fourteen years for that move to become a reality. The Museum has been searching for a B-17 to honor those of the 8th Air Force who flew it during three and a half years in World War II to use in the extensive education and visitor programs ongoing each day at the Museum. The airplane takes the name the City of Savannah after the 5000th aircraft that flew out of Hunter Field during the war, departing the field on 3 December 1944. That crew, Ralph Kittle pilot, flew the plane from Hunter Field to Knetishall airbase in England to fly missions with the 388th Bomb Group. The crew was shot down on its 15th mission.

Our cover shows the eight-man crew of the Recovery outfit working to replace every rivet and every cable that were necessary to be removed in order to load the parts onto five lowboy semi-trailers for their winter trip to the Pooler Museum. The aircraft is now open for visitors to enjoy and is a warbird restoration exhibit in progress. The full restoration will take up to 12 months to accomplish and the projects needs active help from our 8th Historical Society Members. Turrets, plexiglass fuselage windows, armament, and interior fixtures must be obtained. The call is out to complete this final mission - please send your Contributions for Restoration (tax deductible) of the Flying Fortress City of Savannah to the Mighty Eighth B-17 Restoration Account, P.O. Box 1992, Savannah GA 31402.

All contributors of any sized donation will be recorded in the airplane's permanent Donor Recognition Book at the Mighty Eighth Museum. Plan your trip now for a very special visit to the permanent home of the Mighty Eighth!



**Ralph Kittle crew
3 Dec 1944**



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

These past couple of months have been exciting ones. Note our front cover and cover story on this March 09 issue 8th AF News. So many of our Society members have been helping for years to get their heavy bombers featured at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah – Mission Accomplished! The B-17 G Flying Fortress arrived in January. And not to be outdone, the B-24 Liberator of the Second Air Division is being highlighted at the Museum as well. The Museum is dedicating a major permanent exhibit of the B-24, its men and their wartime deeds, right alongside the B-17 in the main combat gallery of the Museum. That completed exhibit will be reported in the June 09 magazine issue. And we have our eye on a crashed B-24 in the Aleutians.

I want to comment on the status of your 8th AF News. As many of you know, I became editor eleven years ago and with professional guidance of Donna Neely of AlphaGraphics we expanded the magazine from 32 pages to 48 page issues, with special editions of 64 pages at Christmas. We print it on quality paper in full-four color. Previously the magazine was published in black and white. Our original 8th AF guys deserved to have the very best newsletter of any veteran's organization. Roger Freeman, our long-time Historian, insisted on many occasions before he died that the magazine was the life-blood of the national Historical Society and should maintain its quality at all costs. As editor, I certainly have attempted to do that and just as important, to have the content of each edition serve as a communications vehicle for our members to contribute their own items of interest and of their wartime experiences to present and preserve the legacy of the Mighty Eighth.

I want to tell each of you that it is rewarding to me to get to correspond with and to have become friends with so many of you over the past decade. I will state that my health is just fine and all my test reports look great. Donna and I enjoy the close interaction we have for the eight weeks prior to signing off a final proof for each quarterly issue. Your magazine is printed and mailed every 90 days, give or take a few days each issue. We are aware of cost factors and have cut expenses and lowered the budgets as we have moved ahead. We will continue to do just that. Send me your items as you have always done – I'll see you in Cincinnati.

Cheers and Good Luck,
 Walter Brown, Editor



Telisha Gaines and Donna Neely

Our 2009 March 8th AF News includes six pages of reunion events, highlights, hotel & activity reservation forms. With that being said, we were limited on pages for additional material planned for this issue.

We have more than enough material submitted to completely fill up March and June 8th AF News magazines. If we were not able to squeeze your article in this March issue, look for your entry in the June magazine to be delivered in May.

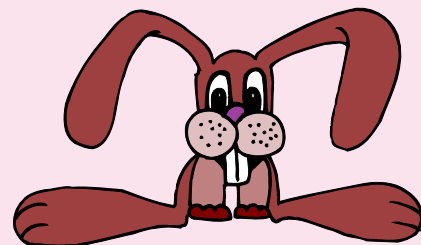
Your submissions can be sent to my email, fax or mailed to the address and information listed below, or send them to Walt Brown's email or address printed on the inside front cover of this magazine. All material and photos that are submitted for future issues are in folders and will be presented to editor Walt Brown, for final edits.

Thank you all so very much for sharing your World War II stories, please keep them coming!

Looking forward to seeing all of you in Cincinnati!
Please note in your calendar: Cut-off deadline for submission to our early June magazine is May 4, 2009.

Donna and Telisha

Happy Easter To Everyone!!



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From the 8th Air Force Historical Society Office



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Hello Members,

Thank you
Annual members
for sending
in your mem-
bership dues.
We have 50%
of our Annual
member-
ship dues paid.

If you have not sent in
your dues for 2009 please send

in your dues by April 15th.

**SEND
YOUR "DUES"
by April 15th**

Thank you Life members for responding
swiftly regarding your LM Surveys. If you have
not sent in your responses please do so at
your earliest convenience.
Attention all Chapter and Bomb Group
Leaders!! I am trying to update our database
and the website. Please send me updated
information regarding the leadership and
contact information.

Sincerely, Catherine Mayne

WORLD WAR II MIAs RECOVERED IN GERMANY

by 2nd Lt. Kathleen Polesnak
52nd Fighter Wing

HENRI-CHAPELLE, Belgium - A line in the Airman's Creed states, "I will never leave an airman behind." For the McMurray Crew 801 with the 492nd Bombardment Group, that promise was fulfilled, albeit 60-plus years after their B-24 bomber went down during World War II.

An international crowd gathered February 20th at the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery and Memorial in Belgium to honor the McMurray Crew's nine members who were listed as missing in action. Their remains were recovered in a field of Berlin in 2002.

At the ceremony, nine rosettes -- small flower-shaped pendants -- were placed next to each crew member's engraved name on a memorial to signify they are no longer missing. Finding the remains of missing military members, especially from World Wars I and II, is rare. And the story of how the airmen with the McMurray Crew were found is even rarer. Enrico Schwartz, a German native who works for an IBM company, has been part of the Allied Aircrew Research Team since 1998. During the past decade, he's helped recover the remains of American servicemembers, including the nine with the McMurray crew. It took four years of researching and interviewing witnesses to find the nine men's remains. "It started as a favor, and when I learned how much impact this has, I carried on," Mr. Schwartz said.

From the years of personal time and expenses Mr. Schwartz spent, to the number of Belgians, Germans and other non-Americans present, it was clear these nine American airmen had an impact beyond their graves.

"I'm glad I'm here today to pay respects to those who secured our freedom," said Rick Vissers, a Belgian native who works on infrastructure at the NATO Programming Centre.

"Two words: Thank you."

Mr. Vissers spoke of the long-time friendship between Belgians and Americans that stems from their support for one another during the war.

Ralf Klodt, a German photojournalist at the ceremony, echoed Mr. Visser's gratitude toward American troops as the 78th infantry division liberated his hometown, Konigswinter, during World War II.

"It's about the human aspect of war; what have they experienced," he said. "It's the German side, the Allied side, the civilian side. It's important to keep it alive and to tell the right stories."

A thick fog and steady rain didn't deter the patriotic group of onlookers at the ceremony. A row of Belgian children waved small American flags as a group of older Belgian men clutched their full-sized Belgian flags.

Also present were local mayors, and military representatives from Greece, Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Turkey and Slovakia. For each of the nine fallen airmen, someone from their home state placed a rosette next to their names.

Air Force leaders at the ceremony reminded today's generation that we can never leave airmen behind.

"I think it's an attribute that should stick with all our airmen. No matter when, there's always people looking for those who are lost," said Maj. Gen. Thomas B. Wright, the SHAPE deputy chief of staff of operations.

"I think that the crew is an example of so many of the Army Air Corps that took an extraordinary request and made it common place. It's amazing what we asked of airmen in World War II. It was typical. We asked things of airmen that are inconceivable today."

submitted by Dana Saucier



HOW H2X "MICKEY" GOT ITS NAME

by John J. O'Neil II and John J. O'Neil III



Aviation cadet Fred Rabo in training at Stockton just prior to graduating as a Pilot-Second Lieutenant.

This is the story of Fred Rabo and "Mickey Mouse." My later father wrote most of the following article in 2002 after many years of research and personal meetings with Fred. My father was an 8th Air Force combat veteran and B-17 crewman assigned to the 482nd Bomb Group. With my father's passing in 2006 I had always wanted to have this article published for him, Fred Rabo, "Mickey" and all those 8th Air Force "Mickey Operators" of WWII.

"Mickey" was the name that became synonymous

with USAAF "H2X" radar platform. "Mickey" was developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Radiation Laboratory in Cambridge, Mass. This was the "TOP SECRET" U.S. project that involved America's first development and deployment of aircraft equipped with Air to Ground Radar. One of the greatest claims of the Eighth Air Force is that neither enemy fighters nor enemy flak ever turned back a single mission. The same could not be said of European weather. Many missions were scrubbed, aborted or recalled because of the poor weather conditions in route or over the target area. In late 1943, "Mickey" was about to change that. The man who coined the name "Mickey" was the late Lt. Col Fred Rabo, Squadron Commander and

one of the key figures in the deployment of the 482nd Pathfinder Bomb Group. This is their story.

In 1942 and 1943 it became evident that a major problem in completing 8th Bomber Command missions to Europe successfully was the poor weather conditions existing over England and Europe, especially in the winter months. Before WWII, Gen. Hap Arnold had stated that the U.S. Army Air Corps needed a way to carry out bombing missions in bad weather conditions. Gen. Ira Eaker, CO of the Eighth, also recognized this need and was undoubtedly influenced by RAF leaders with whom he was working closely on the aerial war against Germany and who earlier on had faced the same weather problems. The RAF had developed radio beam and radar as navigational aids in overcoming these problems. One member of the original 8th Bomber Command cadre that accompanied Gen. Eaker to England and who took up the challenge of finding an answer to the weather problem was Lt. Col. William Cowart who in mid-1943 journeyed to Washington, D.C. and laid out his plans for a new USAAF Pathfinder group to be established in England. The top brass of the USAAF approved Col. Cowart's plan, and the 482nd Bomb Group (Pathfinder) was established at Station 102, Alconbury, England on 20 August 1943 with the objective of leading bombardment missions of the Eighth Bomber Command to

Europe by the use of radio beam and radar equipment. The 482nd was the only bomb group in the Eighth Air Force to be formed outside of the U.S. in WWII.

Fred Rabo was transferred to assist Col. Cowart in his efforts to establish a Pathfinder group. The M.I.T. radar was known as H2X (AN/APS-15 for the production model). When Fred first saw the B-17's equipped with the hand-built retractable



Three generations visit Cavanaugh Flight Museum during 8th Air Force Reunion at Irving, Texas (L to R - John O'Neil, member; Monica, daughter, associate member; John Thomas, grandson, associate member to be)



A Pathfinder B-17 with its distinctive radar dome located beneath the nose.

H2X units under the nose of the aircraft at Grenier Field, New Hampshire, he was simply heard to say "that radar dome looks 'Mickey Mouse.'" The nickname stuck and subsequently, it was shortened to "Mickey". Throughout the rest of WWII H2X radar units were commonly referred to as "Mickey" units. H2X operators were referred to as "Mickey Operators." The Eighth Command was able to plan a program of bombing through overcast using both British and U.S. equipment to be available by September 1943. The first mission led by the 482nd Pathfinders was on Sept. 27, 1943 to Emden, Germany.

Fred's immediate task was to oversee the testing of 12 B-17 Gs which were equipped with Mickey radar sets that were hand-built by scientists at the M.I.T. Radiation Laboratory. Fred and his crews flew the 12 B-17s that were so eagerly awaited by General Eaker and staff to England, arriving at Alconbury in early October 1943. Col. Cowart complimented Fred on a job well-done, and told him he was the new Commanding Officer of the 812th Bomb Squadron, 482nd Bomb Group.

On November 3, 1943, Fred and crews of the 812th Bomb Squadron flew their first operational mission as Mickey Pathfinders to Wilhelmshaven, Germany. The Mickey B-17s led the combat wings of the 1st and 3rd Air Divisions, and the 2nd Air Division, which followed, also dropped on the Pathfinder target marker flares. A total of 11 Pathfinder aircraft were dispatched and all attacked the primary target and returned.

The target was the dock area of Wilhelmshaven, which eight previous visual raids had missed. Holes in the clouds directly over the target showed the attack was suc-

cessful. Reconnaissance photos taken later confirmed that the concentration of bombs around the aiming point was good and that considerable damage had been done. Enemy opposition from flak and fighters was meager, although some attacks were made.

The encouraging performance of the H2X Mickey Pathfinders in November and December 1943 was achieved largely by a small force commanded by Major Rabo. The original 12 B-17s had led the 8th Air Force in approximately 90% of its blind-bombing missions; a few H2S Pathfinders accounted for the remainder. General Spaatz wrote General Arnold:

"The few Pathfinders of the 482nd Group have made an outstanding contribution to our war against Germany. By their mastery of bombing through overcast, the 8th Air Force has been able to operate many times during the last few months under weather conditions which heretofore have grounded the force."

It was characteristic of Fred that he would lead a division on what became the first maximum effort mission to Berlin on March 6, 1944. The 482nd BG lost one Mickey Pathfinder B-17G (42-3491), and that B-17 was piloted by Major Fred Rabo. Major Rabo's co-pilot was Lt. John "Red" Morgan, who had received the Medal of Honor for heroism on a mission before joining the 482nd BG. Major Rabo had a crew of 12 on this mission, which included Gen. Russ Wilson as Division Commander, and a radar navigator, as well as a regular navigator. The briefed target was in southeast Berlin, and Major Rabo was leading the 4th Combat Wing of the 3rd Air Division. On the bomb run, the



A group of Pathfinder leaders at Alconbury, 1944. Second from left, Col. William S. Cowart, Jr., who was a pioneer in adapting radar in 8th Air Force bombers. Fifth from left, Col. Clement W. Bird, CO of 482nd Bomb Group during period of radar school.

Pathfinder B-17 was hit with three bursts of flak from guns of the Heavy Flak Ableilungen 126 and 307 over Berlin at 1:26 PM. The number three engine caught fire and other parts of the plane were hit and also were burning. Suddenly, the B-17 exploded and Major Rabo, Lt. Morgan and S/Sgts. William F. Westcott and Steve B. Keaton, waist gunners, were able to pull their ripcords and survive. The other eight crew members were killed. Lt. Morgan was just able to get his parachute buckled and opened in time before hitting the ground. Major Rabo landed in Lake Harvel and was captured soon after.

Major Rabo spent 18 days in a hospital in Berlin recuperating from his injuries. After being interrogated by the Luftwaffe, he was sent to the prisoner-of-war Stalag I at Barth in Pomerania, which was in north-east Germany by the Baltic Sea. At the time of liberation, Major Rabo was given the job of making the airport at Barth flyable so B-17s could land and pick up the POWs.

After returning to the States Lt. Col. Rabo was stationed for a time at Luke Field, Arizona and flew P-51s. Soon thereafter he left active military service but remained in the USAF Reserve until the 1960s.

Fred was successful and active in farming and ranching in the Chico, California area right up until his passing on July 1, 2000. For a number of years, Fred owned and operated a gun club that included hunting pheasant and skeet shooting. Fred and Col. Hub Zemke, best known as Commanding Officer of the 56th Fighter Group and Ace in WWII, enjoyed many hours shooting and occasionally reminiscing about missions to Europe and the months they were both POWs in Stalag at Barth.

Another important visitor to Fred's Gun Club was Roger Freeman, Eighth Air Force Historian. On one visit Fred was explaining the various shooting options to Roger when Roger replied, "I don't want to shoot. I just want to drive the tractor."

If one studies the history of the Eighth Air Force Pathfinders, it is clear that Lt. Col. Fred A. Rabo belongs with the Eighth Air Force Pathfinder Pioneers and Radar Pioneers, including Col. William Cowart, Gen. Ira Eaker, and David Griggs, Special Assistant to the Secretary of War.

Fred Rabo will also always be remembered as the person who named the United States Army Air Force's first Air to Ground Radar unit H2X - "Mickey."

John O'Neil II, 482nd BG
John O'Neil III, Atlanta, GA



Major Fred Rabo (right) and Lt. John "Red" Morgan (left) at Alconbury in a happy mood. Lt. Morgan (Medal of Honor) was co-pilot for Major Rabo.

WEIGHT GAIN

As a tall skinny 18 year-old, the one thing I really wanted to do was to be an Army Aviation Cadet. With a brother already in the army for about a year and already a sergeant, my folks would be a hard sell to get them to sign papers for me. If accepted, it would be worth it. Unknown to my parents I went to the Chicago Post Office and took all the mental and physical tests. The physical tests were simple except I was 12 pounds under the army and every other service requirements minimum weight.

The powers to be gave me three weeks to put these pounds on my skinny body. I did my best but in two weeks I gained not one pound. With only one week left I happened to meet a grammar school friend who was waiting to be shipped out for Air Corps training. In the meantime they put him to work at the Old Post Office. After telling him my story, he invited me to come down to where he was working and he would show me around. The next Saturday, which was only two days away, was picked as the day. After meeting him he gave me the cook's tour of the offices, then we went into a private office which happened to have a weight scale. I noticed my friend carried a file folder and in a few seconds I gained 13 pounds. I was now a legal Aviation Cadet Candidate. The funny part is that I was never questioned about my weight during my three years of service. I'm sure it was because I did everything everyone else did. Instead of being 4F classification and working in a defense plant, I was crazy enough to fly with the 8th AAF as part of a lead crew (lead Bombardier) and was lucky to come home in one piece.

To add a little humor, when I was let out of service a young doctor gave me a 15 minute physical. He then said to me "Lieutenant, how the hell did you get into the army?" Of course I thought about the twelve pounds, but was astonished when he told me that I had a slight curvature of the spine, and said it was curved enough to keep me out of any service. I didn't want to spoil his day so I didn't tell him I was going through pilot training and just started flying AT6 advanced trainers when the war ended.

The Army Air Corps will always have a big place in my heart.

Frank Bernd
Naperville, IL

Nazi Bunkers Uncovered In Denmark

Three Nazi bunkers on a beach have been uncovered by violent storms off the Danish coast, providing a store of material for history buffs and military archaeologists. The bunkers were found in practically the same condition as they were on the day the last Nazi soldiers left them, down to the tobacco in one trooper's pipe and a half-finished bottle of schnapps. This bunker was entombed under the sand dunes until a violent storm swept away the sands three months ago.

The bunkers had not been touched since the war.

The bunkers were three of 7,000 built by the Germans as part of Hitler's 'Atlantic Wall' from Norway to the south of France. But while the vast majority were almost immediately looted or destroyed, these three were entombed under the sand dunes of a remote beach near the town of Houvig since 1945. They were uncovered only because recent storms sent giant waves cascading over them, sweeping away the sand and exposing glimpses of the cement and iron structures.

Stamps of the German Eagle of Adolf Hitler and the Swastika were also retrieved.

They were located by two nine-year-old boys on holiday with their parents, who then informed the authorities. Archaeologists were able to carefully force sand away, and were astounded at what they found. 'What's so fantastic is that we found them completely furnished with beds, chairs, tables, communication systems and the personal effects of the soldiers who lived inside,' says Jens Andersen, the curator of the Hanstholm museum.

And a third expert, Tommy Cassoe, enthused: 'It was like entering the heart of a pyramid with mummies all around. What I saw blew me away: it was as if the German soldiers had left only yesterday.' The team working with Cassoe emptied the structures within a few days of boots, undergarments, socks, military stripes, mustard and aquavit bottles, books, inkpots, stamps featuring Hitler, medicines, soda bottles, keys, hammers and other objects. All of the objects from the shelters have been taken to the conservation centre at Oelgod museum, some 20 miles from the beach, to be examined.

The centre's German curator, Gert Nebrich, judged the find 'very interesting because it is so rare. We don't expect contemporary objects like these to be so well preserved. Maybe it's because they were kept for 60 years in the cold and dark like in a big vacuum,' he says, carefully showing four stamps featuring Hitler's image and the German eagle, found in one bunker. The Germans left the bunkers in May, 1945 after the Nazi surrender.

Historical records show that Gerhard Saalfed was a 17-year-old soldier with the German army when he arrived at the bun-

Tommy Cassoe stand in front of bunkers uncovered by violent storms. The bunkers had not been touched since the war.



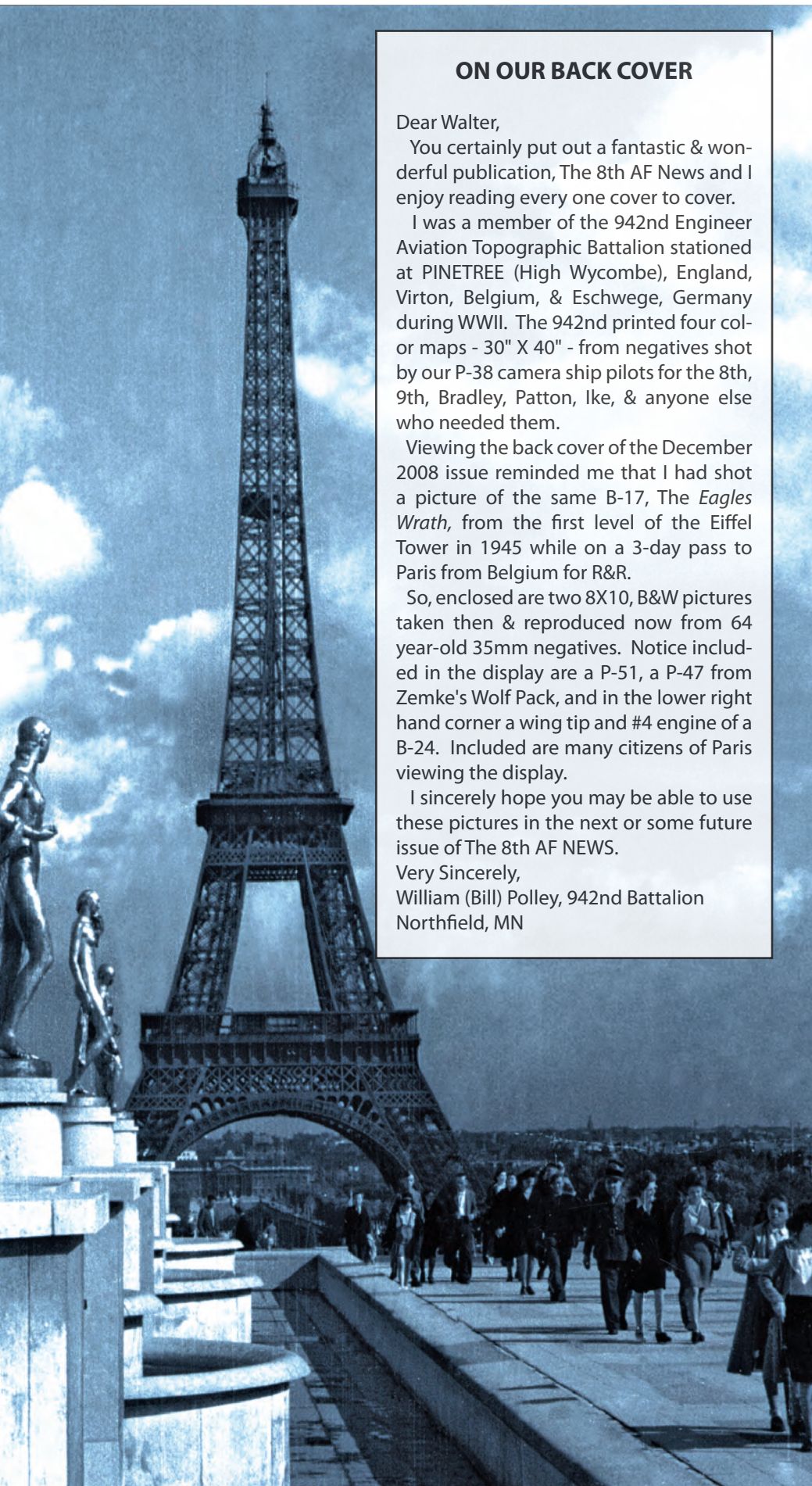
ker in January 1945. Germany surrendered on May 8 1945, but it wasn't until two days later that he and his fellow soldiers left their remote station. They shut the steel doors of the bunker behind them on their remote beach and went to the nearest town ten miles away to surrender.

"The remote location of the bunkers and the drifting sands that covered them saved them from being ransacked," said Cassoe.

submitted by Buck Shuler



Kim Clausen, curator of the Ringkoebing-Skjern museum views a heater retrieved from the bunker.



ON OUR BACK COVER

Dear Walter,

You certainly put out a fantastic & wonderful publication, The 8th AF News and I enjoy reading every one cover to cover.

I was a member of the 942nd Engineer Aviation Topographic Battalion stationed at PINETREE (High Wycombe), England, Virton, Belgium, & Eschwege, Germany during WWII. The 942nd printed four color maps - 30" X 40" - from negatives shot by our P-38 camera ship pilots for the 8th, 9th, Bradley, Patton, Ike, & anyone else who needed them.

Viewing the back cover of the December 2008 issue reminded me that I had shot a picture of the same B-17, *The Eagles Wrath*, from the first level of the Eiffel Tower in 1945 while on a 3-day pass to Paris from Belgium for R&R.

So, enclosed are two 8X10, B&W pictures taken then & reproduced now from 64 year-old 35mm negatives. Notice included in the display are a P-51, a P-47 from Zemke's Wolf Pack, and in the lower right hand corner a wing tip and #4 engine of a B-24. Included are many citizens of Paris viewing the display.

I sincerely hope you may be able to use these pictures in the next or some future issue of The 8th AF NEWS.

Very Sincerely,
William (Bill) Polley, 942nd Battalion
Northfield, MN

GOTHA - NURNBURG

Notes From personal diary of Gen. James Hodges, now in Archives of Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum.

Gen. Hodge's Note: Feb 24, Gotha -- 33 loss, Target Destroyed, (Just beautiful example of precision bombing, not one bomb missed, entire target mass of flames. 445th was good).

Gen. Hodge's Note: Feb 25, -- Nurnburg, Target Destroyed, Mission worked like clockworks, Led by Dexter Hodge, Photos show largest explosion ever seen. Entire building area covered by heavy concentration.

I flew on both missions:

Feb 24, 44

Gotha - No words to describe this one. We all just stood there looking at each other after we landed at base! Lost two engines one burning, fell 25000 feet with two ME 109s on our tail shooting at us. Pulled out in the clouds at 500 feet above ground. Logged 10 hours flying time. 5600# Fragmentation Bombs.

Feb 25, 44

Nurnburg (Furth) WOW!

One hell of a mission. Destroyed over 100 Nazi Fighter planes lined up on the ground some trying to take off. Saturated the airfield with bomb bursts.

Watched every one of our bombs spatter down the rows of ME 109s on the ground. Saw 16 ME 109s jump formation of B-17s coming in behind us.

I lost count of the B-17s going down. Two B-24s were going down behind us.

We brought back too many holes to count over our A/C Flew 41-28562, logged nine hours flying time. 4800# Fragmentation bombs.

Above notes from my daily Diary of 1943/44.

Robbie

Submitted by
John Harold Robinson, 445th BG
Collierville, TN



**8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REUNION
THE MILLENNIUM HOTEL – CINCINNATI, OHIO
AUGUST 18-23, 2009**



The time is here: Start making plans to attend the 35th annual reunion. Secure your reservations early, as rooms may be limited, as well as some of the tours.

MEALS / EVENTS CHOICES

CHOICE #1

TOTAL PACKAGE \$132

Package includes 6 hotel food functions starting with breakfast on Thursday.

Tours are separate.

CHOICE #2

PARTIAL PACKAGE \$122

Package includes 5 hotel food functions starting with breakfast on Friday.

Tours are separate.

Breakfast menus: The continental breakfasts on Thursday, Friday, and Sunday include juice, breakfast breads, cereal, yogurt, fruit, coffee, and tea. The breakfast buffet on Saturday includes juice, assorted breakfast breads, eggs, bacon, sausage, potatoes, French toast, coffee, and tea.

CHOICE #3

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Friday Rendezvous Dinner at \$39 and Saturday Banquet at \$46 can be purchased separately, but are included in both packages above.

TOUR OPTIONS

Tours and trips are described on the Reunion Highlights Pages. Prices are listed on the registration form. Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

See choices below and complete the Registration Form noting your event choices and personal information. By "WWII GROUP," we're asking for the group or unit in which you served (specific Bomb Group, Fighter Group, PRG, HQ, etc.). We use this information for tallying totals for each group, nametags, and seating arrangements. If you prefer to sit with a different group, please give us that information too. Remit by mail with check or money order payable to Armed Forces Reunions by July 16, 2009. You may also register and pay with credit card online at

www.afr-reg.com/8afhs. A \$6 convenience fee will be added to online credit card reservations. Forms received after July 16 will be accepted on a space available basis only. Hotel reservations should also be made by July 16, 2009.

ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. CANCELLATION POLICY

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less a \$5 per person processing fee. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$5 processing fee. Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Time, excluding holidays. Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation doesn't cancel your reunion activities.

**8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REUNION
THE MILLENNIUM HOTEL – CINCINNATI, OHIO
AUGUST 18-23, 2009**

Tuesday, August 18

2:00pm - 6:00pm **Early Bird Registration open**

Wednesday, August 19

8:00am - 10:00am **Reunion Registration open**
 9:00am Memorabilia/Gathering Room & PX opens
 10:45am - 2:30pm LUNCH CRUISE (description follows)
 1:00pm - 8AFHS Board Meeting
 2:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**

Thursday, August 20

7:00am - 8:30am Continental Breakfast
 8:00am - 10:00am **Reunion Registration open**
 9:00am - 10:30am Unit Advisory and Chapter & Unit Development Meeting
 12:30pm - 10:30pm U.S. AIR FORCE MUSEUM & DINNER (description follows)
 3:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**

Friday, August 21

7:00am - 8:30am Continental Breakfast
 8:00am - 9:30am **Reunion Registration open**
 8:00am - 9:30am Individual Group Meetings
 9:45am - 3:45pm WRIGHT PATTERSON / U.S. AIR FORCE MUSEUM (description follows)
 10:15am - 3:15pm MUSEUM CENTER / NEWPORT ON THE LEVEE (description follows)
 1:00pm - 3:30pm WWII POW Roundtable
 3:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**
 4:00pm - 5:30pm Next Generation Meeting
 6:00pm - 7:00pm 8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
 7:00pm - Rendezvous Dinners and 'Hangar Flying'

Saturday, August 22

7:00am - 8:30am Full Breakfast Buffet
 9:00am - 11:00am General Membership Meeting
 11:15am - 12:00pm Medical Advisory Seminar: *Pearls*, by Dr. Walt Brown
 1:00pm - 4:00pm CITY TOUR (description follows)
 1:00pm - 3:30pm Roger A. Freeman Symposium: *"COURAGE OVER FORTRESS EUROPE"*
 5:30pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration open**
 6:00pm - 7:00pm 8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
 7:00pm - 8AFHS Gala Banquet

Sunday, August 23

7:00am - 8:30am Continental Breakfast
 8:00am - 8:45am Worship Service
 9:00am - 8AFHS Annual Board Meeting

THE MILLENNIUM HOTEL CINCINNATI – CINCINNATI, OHIO
(800) 876-2100 • (513) 352-2100

The Millennium Hotel Cincinnati is located at 150 West Fifth St., Cincinnati, OH 45202. The Hotel is located in a prime downtown location, within walking distance to the Paul Brown Stadium, Great American Ball Park, and the US Bank Arena. The hotel is just 12 miles from the Northern Kentucky/Greater Cincinnati Airport. Contact the hotel for accurate driving directions.

The Millennium Hotel Cincinnati has 872 newly renovated guestrooms and suites. Handicapped and non-smoking rooms are subject to availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your hotel reservations. Each room features a TV with cable channels, coffee maker, hair dryer, radio alarm clock, iron and ironing board. Guest may also enjoy access to the outdoor pool, sundeck (seasonal), and 24-hour fitness center. Parking at the hotel for registered guests will be \$10 per day. Check-in is at 4:00pm and check-out is at 12 noon.

The hotel has very few suites, so meeting rooms will be used for hospitality purposes. In an effort to encourage attendance the Society is off-setting part of the rental costs. Rates for the hospitality rooms will be \$125 per day for Wed-Sat. Rates will be at full price of \$250 per day for Tuesday. A list will be kept and actual room assignments will be made after the cut-off date when total counts per group are known. To reserve a hospitality room, please email Donna at DonnaLee@afri.com.

The Bistro on Elm Restaurant and Bar serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. Vivid color and contemporary furnishings create a relaxed atmosphere to savor the restaurants American Cuisine. Room service is also available.

Transportation from the airport is provided by Executive Transportation. Current rates are as follows and are subject to change: One way is \$17 per person; Round trip is \$28. Call (800) 990-8841 or (513) 352-2135 prior to your arrival or departure to reserve your transportation. Same-day reservations can also be accommodated.

The Millennium Hotel Cincinnati does not have parking for guests staying at the hotel with RV's. Should hookups be required, please call Hidden Valley RV Park at (513) 733-5330. The park is located at 9797 Reading Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45215, which is approximately 14 miles away from the hotel.

Should you need to rent a wheelchair for the reunion, ScootAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Please call their toll-free number at (888) 441-7575.

Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.

-----CUT HERE AND MAIL TO THE HOTEL-----

8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY–HOTEL RESERVATIONS
REUNION: AUGUST 18-23, 2009

NAME _____ SHARING ROOM W/ _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

TEL. NUMBER (_____) _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____ APPROX. TIME _____ DEP. DATE _____

_____ # OF ROOMS NEEDED _____ # OF PEOPLE IN ROOM _____ HANDICAP ACCESS

_____ SMOKING _____ NON-SMOKING _____ KING BED _____ 2 DOUBLE BEDS

In the event room type requested is not available, nearest room type will be assigned.

RATE: \$109 + tax (currently 17%) Rate will be offered 3 days before and after reunion dates, based on availability.

CUT OFF DATE: 07/16/09. Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Deposit is refundable if reservation is cancelled 72 hours prior to your date of arrival.

GUARANTEE: All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit, enclosed.

_____ AMEX _____ DINERS _____ VISA _____ MASTER CARD _____ DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) _____

MAIL TO: MILLENNIUM HOTEL, 150 WEST FIFTH ST., CINCINNATI, OH 45202 ATTN: RESERVATIONS

2009 REUNION HIGHLIGHTS

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AFB, Ohio – The sun rising in the background provides the perfect backdrop for a C-5 Galaxy being prepped for a mission early one winter morning.



LUNCH CRUISE

Wednesday, August 19

Break up the day and sail away. Climb aboard for a two-hour cruise featuring games, entertainment, and a delicious buffet. Enjoy all of the sights of the Ohio River while relaxing with friends.

**10:45am board bus,
2:30pm back at hotel
\$65/Person includes bus,
escort, and lunch cruise.**

U.S. AIR FORCE MUSEUM & DINNER

Thursday, August 20

What a day it's going to be! Our destination is Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. We have special permission not only to tour the Presidential Hanger where former Presidential Aircraft reside, but also the rarely seen Restoration Center. *The Memphis Belle* and *Swoose* are currently here being restored, and we'll get a sneak peak. Then we'll head to the United States Air Force Museum, "where the eagles rest." This museum is adjacent to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, and is the oldest and largest military aviation

museum in the world. First, we'll gather in the auditorium for a brief service. Exhibits, including approximately 200 aircraft and missiles, tell the story of aviation development from the days of the Wright brothers to the Space Age. This will be a special evening, as the museum will be closed to the public. Rails will be down on a P-51 and P-47; you'll have platform ramps going up to a B-17 and B-24. You'll get up close and personal with these familiar aircraft. A cash bar will be available before dinner. General Metcalf will speak and the Band of Flight will perform. After dinner, you may reboard a bus heading back to the hotel, or spend a few more minutes in the museum. Last bus reboards at 9pm. **Notes:** This is a long day with a lot of walking. Please be casual and comfortable. A photo ID is required for this tour, and non-US citizens must provide their passport number and birth date with event registration. Children must be at least 12 years old to take part in the restoration tour. The restoration and Presidential Hangar tour are limited to the first 300 people registered.

**12:30pm board bus,
10:30pm back at
hotel**

**\$75/Person includes
bus, escort, dinner,
and facility charges.**

WRIGHT PATTERSON AFB - U.S. AIR FORCE MUSEUM

Friday, August 21

For those who couldn't make it yesterday – or for the history buffs that need more time, the buses are headed back up to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio for a 'no-frills' tour. You'll have free time to tour the United States Air Force Museum, "where the eagles rest." This museum is the oldest and largest military aviation museum in the world. Once inside, exhibits, including approximately 200 aircraft and missiles, tell the story of aviation development from the days of the Wright brothers to the Space Age. There is a cafeteria for lunch on your own.

**9:45am board bus, 3:45pm
back at hotel**

**\$45/Person includes bus and
escort. Lunch and IMAX on
your own.**

****OR****

MUSEUM CENTER / NEWPORT ON THE LEVEE

Friday, August 21

Board bus for the Museum Center, located at Union Terminal, and tour the Cincinnati History Museum. It traces the growth of the Queen City and other cities in general since the late 18th century. The Omnimax Theater takes movies to new heights, depths, and widths. Through special technology, the Omnimax gives you the feeling of being in the picture, so

2009 REUNION HIGHLIGHTS

you can experience every scene, every motion, with eye-opening clarity. Featured film: TBA. On your own, and for a nominal fee, you may also visit the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History. After the museum, continue on for lunch on your own at Newport on the Levee. Choose between eateries and several full-service restaurants at this waterfront entertainment and dining complex.

**10:15am board bus, 3:15pm
back at hotel**
**\$46/Person includes bus,
guide, and admissions.**
Lunch on your own.

WWII P.O.W. ROUNDTABLE A HISTORICAL ROUNDTABLE AND DISCUSSION FOCUSING ON THE ALLIED P.O.W. EXPERIENCE DURING WWII

Friday, August 21

This special roundtable discussion will highlight the experiences of Allied airmen that were held as Prisoners of War in Germany during World War II. Several notable P.O.W. historians, researchers and filmmakers will be part of the distinguished discussion panel. This is a once in a lifetime gathering not to be missed.

1:00pm – 3:30pm at the hotel
**Admission is included in Reunion
Registration Fee**

RENDEZVOUS DINNERS

Friday, August 21

Gather in your respective banquet rooms with your individual groups for dinner featuring Chicken Piccata. Units (BGs, FGs, etc.) with approximately fifty or more people in attendance will have a private room. Smaller groups will be combined with others. Think of this as your "reunion within the reunion."

**6:00pm Cash Bar Reception,
7:00pm Dinner.**
**Cost is included in both meal
packages or \$39 separately.**

Retired Maj. Gen. Charles D. Metcalf officially opens the Warrior Airmen exhibit Jan. 12 at the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio.



CITY TOUR

Saturday, August 22

Board bus for a guided tour of the "City of Seven Hills," and learn the history of this river city. Drive by the Taft Museum, Riverfront Stadium, and more. See the diverse downtown architecture of Fountain Square and the Procter & Gamble Headquarters. Continue through Eden Park and Mt. Adams, from which you are offered great views of the city's skyline. Drive by the Krohn Conservatory, one of one of the largest public greenhouses in the country.

**1:00pm board bus, 4:00 pm
back at hotel**
**\$36/Person includes bus
and guide.**

ROGER A. FREEMAN MEMORIAL SYMPOSIUM: "COURAGE OVER FORTRESS EUROPE" COMBAT FLYING IN THE "MIGHTY EIGHTH" DURING WORLD WAR II

Saturday, August 22

The 2009 Roger A. Freeman Memorial Symposium will be a historical examination of combat flying in the Eighth Air Force during World War II. Several "Mighty Eighth" veterans will take the stage and share their amazing wartime experiences

with the audience. These annual Symposiums have become a traditional highlight of our Reunions and this year's subject shall be no different. It will be a memorable and emotional experience for one and all.

1:00pm – 3:30pm at the hotel
**Admission is included in Reunion
Registration Fee**

8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL BANQUET

Saturday, August 22

Assemble in the ballroom for the Posting of the Colors and Memorial Service. Dinner will be a choice of Prime Rib or Salmon and the usual accompaniments. After dinner, we'll proceed with the awards ceremony and guest speaker.

**6:00pm Cash Bar Reception,
7:00pm Banquet.**
**Cost is included in both meal
packages or \$46 separately.**

Driver and guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices. Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.

All tours must have a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.

8TH AFHS ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

8th AFHS ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/8afhs. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before July 16, 2009. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.

322 Madison Mews

Norfolk, VA 23510

ATTN: 8th AFHS

OFFICE USE ONLY

Check # _____ Date Received _____
Inputted _____ Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 7/16/09

	Price Per	# of People	Total
<u>REGISTRATION FEE</u>			
Includes meeting expenses, Eaker Award expenses, and other reunion expenses.	\$60		
Reg. Fee for children ages 10-17 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel	\$30		
<u>DUES</u>			
The principal attendee must be a member of the 8AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are not a member, please pay your yearly dues here.	\$30		\$
<u>MEAL PACKAGES</u>			
Choice #1 includes 6 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Thursday.			
Choice #2 includes 5 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Friday.			
Choice #1	\$132		\$
Choice #2	\$122		\$
Please select your entrée choice(s) for the Banquet:			
Prime Rib of Beef		#	
Salmon		#	
<u>SEPARATELY PRICED MEALS (if not purchasing a package)</u>			
Friday: Rendezvous Dinner (chicken)	\$39		\$
Saturday: Banquet (please select your entrée)			
Prime Rib of Beef	\$46		\$
Salmon	\$46		\$
<u>TOURS</u>			
Wednesday: Lunch Cruise	\$65		\$
Thursday: US AF Museum & Dinner	\$75		\$
<i>Please choose one of the following two tours:</i>			
Friday: US AF Museum	\$45		\$
Friday: Museum Center / Newport on the Levee	\$46		\$
Saturday: City Tour	\$36		\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

MEMBER NAME (for nametag) _____ ☐ VETERAN ☐ NEXT GEN ☐ OTHER

8AFHS MEMBER # _____ WWII GROUP (for seating purposes) _____

You must be a member of 8AFHS in order to register. If not a member, please pay your dues above.

SPOUSE/GUEST NAMES _____ ☐ NEXT GEN ☐ OTHER

PHONE # (____) _____ - _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____ @ _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

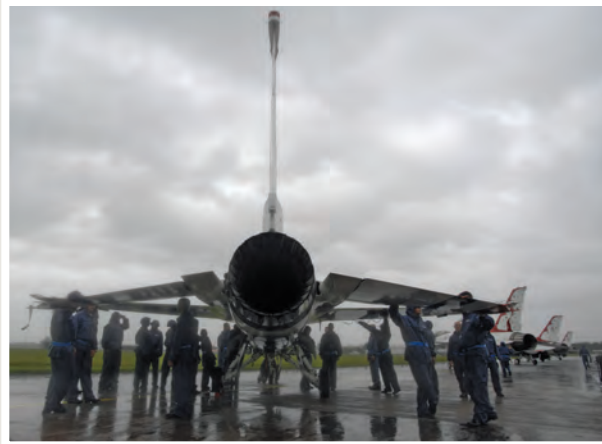
MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? ☐ YES ☐ NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

The Andrews AF Base Airshow 2009

We are proud to announce that we will be inviting our National 8th Air Force Historical Society members to attend the 2009 Andrews Air Force Base Air Show, Friday, May 15, 2009. This undiscovered Air Show is, without a doubt, the largest and most spectacular military air show presentation in the world. While there are acres of static aircraft on display, with many available for "walk thrus" including some vintage warbirds, there are several modern day military aircraft exhibiting their extreme "in flight" airpower all day long, as well as several other private aerobatic aircraft displaying their extreme radical abilities. And at the end of the day the star of the show is the Air Force Thunderbirds providing an absolutely awesome climax to the day's events.

This Air Show is attended by the general public on Saturday and Sunday with attendance numbers well in excess of 250,000 people each day. However, we have access to the Distinguished Visitors Presentation on Friday, and you are invited to attend. The DV



Presentation is by Invitation Only, and is attended by only 12,000 people. Not a crowd at all. But due to security restrictions, we will only be allowed to bring 55 national attendees, as a group, onto the base in 2009, so please know that our first year event **"HAS EXTREMELY LIMITED PARTICIPATION"** (Local NCAC members will still have their usual access).

For more information on the web, please visit our website: www.8thafhs.org and click on "Special Event"

To guarantee your spot for our reunion, you can book your room at the Crowne Plaza by calling 703-416-1600; just say that you are booking with the 8th Air Force.

Additional info and further registration forms will be available on our web site, but if you don't have computer access, just call

George Hoidra at 301-953-2813, and leave a message if no one answers.

George Hoidra

8TH AIR FORCE CREWMEN WOUNDED ON COMBAT MISSIONS



CLAIRE PHILLIPS - AN AMERICAN SPY

Submitted by Clint Gruber

Oregon Chapter 8th AFHS (93rdBG)

One of America's true heroes of World War II, was a woman born in Portland, Oregon in 1908. She attended Franklin High School, then dropped out to join a circus and begin a career as a stage actress and singer. Just before the outbreak of WWII, she went to The Philippines to work as an actress and singer in a Manila nightclub.

Her story, sadly, is almost unremembered and unknown, even to long time residents of her hometown, Oregon.

It is the story of Claire Phillips who, while living and working in Manila during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, carried on a double life as an American spy. Using forged papers, she was known as Clara Fuentes, an Italian citizen born in the Philippines. Claire and a partner Fely Corcuera, managed the "Tsubaki Club", catering mostly to top Japanese Army and Navy officers.

Here she organized and managed an extensive spy ring, harvesting important intelligence information from conversations of the club's visiting high ranking Japanese officers. In the beginning of her mission, her main interest was in aiding the guerrilla movement and smuggling badly needed food and medicines to American prisoners in the infamous Cabanatuan POW camp. Here,



Claire Phillips arriving at the airport for presentation of her Presidential Medal of Freedom award. She is being warmly greeted by Major Kenneth Boggs, a survivor of the Bataan Death March who had benefited by the great work of Phillips for POWs of the Japanese during the war.

because of her technique of hiding those supplies in her brassiere, she became known to the grateful prisoners as "High Pockets". Her effort originally was intended mostly to aid the Philippine resistance fighters as well as the POWs, but much of the information she gathered on the movements of Japanese Army, Navy, and Air units was also effectively utilized by American forces in the Pacific

Eventually Claire's luck ran out when one of her messengers was captured by the Japanese, tortured, interrogated and finally killed. Claire was arrested and taken to prison where she also was brutally tortured for information, but managed to hold out without condemning others in her espionage group. She was then held in solitary

confinement for half a year, scheduled to be executed for spying. Luckily, however, she was liberated by the invading Americans before the execution could be carried out.

Returning to Portland after the liberation, Claire wrote the story of her wartime experiences, *"Manila Espionage"*. The book became a best seller, and was made into a movie *"I Was An American Spy"*, with actress Ann Dvorak as Claire.

In 1951, endorsed by General Douglas MacArthur, Claire Phillips received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. In May, 1961, having suffered physically and emotionally

from her treatment by the Japanese in prison, she died at age 52.

Sig Unander, an Oregon writer and filmmaker, who presented this riveting story, is on a mission to not let the heroic service of Claire Phillips be forgotten. Apparently, there is only one formal memorial to her, that one in the Philippines. Unander is now working on the production of a book and a documentary movie, plus a memorial dedicated to "our" hero, Claire Phillips.

B-17 TAILGUNNER

The Collins Foundation brings planes into the Pasco airport once a year or so. Last year - 2008 - my wife and I went to the exhibition. We wore the T-shirts my daughters had made for us to wear to the 34th Bomb Group reunions, which have my picture, in uniform, and that of the crew on the front and back.



Floyd Richmond (Rich) Tail gunner - B-17 1944 - 34th BG

This attracted attention and conversation. One young mother, with a couple of youngsters in tow, turned to them and said, "Here's a real live person who flew in these planes." That "made my day."

Floyd Richmond, 34th BG
Pasco, WA



Mendlesham

Back row L to R:

Abe Firestone, Jim Sain, Hugh Goerner, Don Stufflebeam, Tony Scimica

Front row:

Floyd Shilke, Ed Durbin, Floyd Richmond, Harry Hoffman
Jim Sain's crew #13 - 4th Sqdn.

It is good for a man to be brought once, at least, in his life, face to face with the fact, ultimate fact, however horrible it may be; and have to confess to himself, shuddering, what things are possible on God's earth.

Charles Kingsley

A LEGACY OF SERVICE

The Ivan L. McKinney family continues the legacy of military service begun by Ivan's father, who served in France during WWI as an Infantryman. Ivan is a retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Colonel, having served for 27 years as an enlisted man and as an officer. He was an air traffic controller and a navigator who accumulated more than 4,000 hours in aerial refueling aircraft (KC-97 and KC-135) and was an officer in various fields. The McKinney's son, Blaine is a Boeing 757 Captain for Northwest Airlines. He retired as a Major from the Air Force Reserve after 15 year's service, accumulating over 2,000 hours as a pilot of aerial refueling aircraft (KC-135 and KC-10). Blaine's eldest son, Austin, is a junior at the Air Force Academy and is currently ranked #1 in his class of 1,000 cadets. Another son, Connor, is a high school senior who will be entering West Point this summer as a freshman cadet.

Ivan says that he is very proud of the fact that five of his six sons have served our country in the military, with two of the five serving until retirement. Ivan's last Assignment was as a staff officer at 8th Air Force Headquarters, from which he retired almost 33 years ago. He and his wife of almost 55 years, Mary, have made Bossier City, LA, their home. Most readers of the 8th AF News will remember him as Treasurer of the 8th Air Force Historical Society for five years and as President for the last three years.



Pictured (L-R) Ivan McKinney, Blaine McKinney, Air Force Academy Cadet Second Class Austin McKinney, and to-be West Point Cadet Class of 2013, Connor McKinney

For it is a disease that somehow inheres in tyranny to have no faith in friends.

Aeschylus, Prom. 226



Mauthausen

Dear Editor,

The December issue of the 8th AF News is great as we have come to expect! I don't know how you do it.

Here is a question that probably has no answer--The picture of bodies on page 14 has one fully clothed victim that does not appear to be starved as the rest are. Is there an explanation?

I was still in England at the end of the war and tried to get to the prison camps. Although I participated in several French prisoner evacuation flights I was never able to visit any of the camps.

Thanks for doing a great job.

Bob Culp in Bellevue, WA

We may assume that the well-fed body was perhaps one of the German administrators or sympathizers brought to justice by newly freed prisoners. -Ed.

Real Live "17"

Dear Doc. Brown,

As an old, retired, reporter intensely interested in the 8th and the museum, it gave me enormous delight to learn you are about to have a real live "17" in the house. Congratulations!

Now of course, the "24" boys will be on your back as you well know. Here at the Western PA Wing there are always a few verbal jabs back and forth on "that" subject.

I also find satisfaction in knowing I was able to help in the creation of the new Escape & Evasion section. I have not been down there for a couple of years but hope to make it soon.

The style, quality and excitement of

the 8th AF News magazine continues to be a thrill to all.

I am starting work on a new article I hope to "sell" this year. It's a subject that has been written about a thousand times but I think I see an angle to be explored. I'll keep you posted.

Thank you for your generous and skillful work. The many letters to the editor are proof of the level of excellence therein.

Sincerely, Adam Lynch

ERKLAERUNG_HISTORIKERKOMMISSION

Dear Dr. Brown,

On page 21 of the December issue of the 8 AF News Mr. Steiner mentions findings of a German Commission about the number of victims in the Dresden raids. Although there exists not yet an English version of the text, I send you the link for the text. Perhaps you have someone in your staff understanding German language.

In this year, the commission will publish a final report about the results of its work; this will be published also in English in the internet.

I think this will be an interesting information for you and the 8 AF News.

Best wishes

Helmut Schnatz

Associated member 6677

Herr Schnatz -- Excellent! And many thanks to you. I can read some German from my years in Wiesbaden. I'll give it my best shot. Please keep me in touch. Cheers. Walt B.

DEC 08 ISSUE

Dear Dr. Brown, Editor 8th AF News,

Your correspondent, George Dennis, long term LTM - previously Navigator - Blog's crew - 381st Bomb Group - 532nd Bomb Squadron - 16 missions over occupied Europe (5 to Big B) shot down on #16 over Big B - spent 344 days in Sagan Kriegsgefangenenlager Luft III (and subsequently in Nuremberg Stalag XIII-D and then on to Moosburg Stalag VII-B) - avid reader of your quarterly publication. Gobbled up the

December issue last night and came up with a thought for you to consider....

I'm a member of an AXPOW Chapter here on Long Island and at our annual POW/MIA affair we show a video entitled "The Way We Were" - there's a photo shot of some young guy wearing a uniform and words flow "George Dennis - Navigator - 381st Bomb Group" or a similar picture followed by another name..... It reminds us of our youth and in some cases, members who now qualify for your pages headed "Taps". My thought - how about supplementing your pages with a picture of a still living member (current or both then and now) with a dozen words or so similar to those that appear on the Taps pages? The 8th may go on with NEXGEN members, but gradually the WWII crowd is disappearing from the scene. Maybe some of us will see guys we trained with or otherwise associated with.

One other matter - please, not a criticism --- The name of the Medal of Honor is not preceded by "Congressional" - although such designation is regularly used in publications. Thanks for doing all you do to "Keep the Memories Alive..."

George Dennis, 381st Bomb Group

George - Thanks for the great transmit. Started my New Year in fine fashion! The 381st was one of my "special" groups, in part because I spent some time at a reunion with Chaplain James G. Brown (no direct kin) at a Nashville 381st reunion and have read his book. Great idea for the photo presentation: send me yours. By the way, we do great and often emotional presentations to Bomb Groups with our Moosburg Flag - the original town hall swastika flag removed and signed by 100 kriegies on 29 April 1945, thanks to George Patton and Company. -Ed

DEC 08 ISSUE

Dear Doc,

Terrific article on the Air War on Germany and Japan and the end of WW III! I came across an excellent book by Donald Miller entitled *Masters of the Air* in which he uses interesting material from the post war Strategic Bombing

Survey.

I was also interested to note the letter from Michael Howell re Operation Chowhound and the loss of the B-17. And, that reminds me of one of the topics you love to hear about: I'm wondering if you are planning to run the Chowhound/Manna story, perhaps in the Spring issue? Looking back in my records, I think I sent you some material back in late January of '08 on the subject. With the very best of everything as we move into 2009.

I am sincerely yours,
Ray McCool

VA BENEFITS

Dear Walter:

Another great issue of 8th AF News! I have just talked with George Menzel of the 401st BG, of which I am a member, and he tells me what a great job you are doing for the Museum as well as the Society. With this letter I'm enclosing a check to help with the B-17 restoration project.

I think it would be helpful to some of our 8th AF members if you would include the following in the next issue of 8th AF News, especially since the September 23, 2008, approval of ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) as a service-connected presumptive for not only POWs, but for all veterans. I am Outreach Chairman for American Ex-Prisoners of War, and already we are finding widows of POWs who died in past years of ALS; one died in 1963, and that South Carolina widow will get VA compensation of over \$1,100 a month, finally. I hope we can reach those who are unaware of the possible VA benefit for them.

Many former POWs or their surviving spouses are receiving VA compensation benefits, because of the twenty-plus presumptive conditions that Congress has determined go back to our POW experiences. These benefits are significant, and in many cases make the difference between poverty and comfort.

Now, as of September 23, 2008, a new service-connected presumptive cause of death has been promulgated, for ALL VETERANS, not just former POWs. It is ALS, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

If you know of any surviving spouse of a veteran, please contact a knowledgeable veterans service officer for help in presenting your claim to the VA. As a National Service Officer of American Ex-Prisoners of War, as well as Outreach Chairman, I would be glad to help you, or refer you to one of our NSOs in your vicinity. You may contact me at: 3312 Chatterton Dr., San Angelo, TX 76904, (325) 944-4002, or fredrev@webtv.net

Thank you for your good work and spirit through all things.

God Bless you with a good year,
Fred Campbell, NSO
American Ex-Prisoners of War
8th AF, 401st BG

TSGT. HAROLD SCHROTTER, 8th AF

Dear Sir:

His airplane's name: "Bristol Hook." My grandfather passed away in 2006 and was interred in Arlington due to his having been a POW at Stalag IV, of the infamous Death March. When I finally, *finally* got him to speak about his experiences it was when I was in my twenties and he and I were sitting together over a bottle of scotch. I was amazed and also appalled at the stories he told me, he hating that he was reciting it but encouraged by my persistent questioning.

I am composing a book on the subject, beginning the story with his final mission, hitting a ball bearing factory in Germany. He was radio operator aboard the *Bristol Hook* - an older B-17. She was knocked out of the sky, the BF 109s hitting the plane amidships and blowing out two engines, sending the plane to earth as a tremendous internal fire consumed it. My grandfather saw that the navigator and bombardier had been killed and that the pilot and co-pilot had parachuted from the plane with the crew desperately trying to escape. He threw the remaining three survivors out of the bomb bay doors and then jumped out himself, jumping late and too low, breaking his ankle upon landing. After being nearly killed by the townspeople who arrested him, my grandfather was sent to Stalag IV.

We all know the events that sur-

rounded that camp; I need not speak of them. However, the story of these men has, I feel, been largely overlooked. These were members of an amazing generation, a generation of young men that did nothing less than help save the world. It is time we said thank you, before they are all gone. My grandfather died and there was so much more I wanted to ask him, so much more of him I wanted to know. I think about him every single day and I miss him very much. It helps that he was a hero and made a marked difference.

Thank you,
Dan Schrotter

LEW & P-47 BACK-SEAT

Walt Sir:

Some, or probably all, of the Group COs, were able to get P-47s that had been trainers with rumble seats. My CO in the 100th had one and he used to follow the formation all the way to the channel raising hell with someone about something. I can still hear his voice on radio "Harper, get your ass in that gap and close it up, dammit!" Lew Lyle would bump a tail gunner and secretly ride tail gun every now and again.

You and Vivian should get Crosby's WING & A PRAYER and look at Pgs - 152-53, 155, 166, 170, 231-33, 258-59 & 301.

Are you interested in Cowboy Roan's message to the tower that "I think I have a frozen ass story about the donkey they brought home from North Africa and all the hell they had with the Royal Health Authorities about it?"

I think it was the 95th or 96th donkey that died eating tin cans. They dropped him with their bomb load on a mission.

This thing You and Vivian are doing should be classic!

Hope you always have good tail winds - but not the social error type.

Sincerely,
Red Harper, 100th BG
Birmingham, AL

B-25 PILOT

Dear Walt,

What a nice surprise! On page 13 of the December 2008 issue of the 8th AF NEWS there were three photos and a

bit of information on the Twenty Five and yr hmb1 svrnt. A bit of clarification, the Twenty Five had only one 75mm cannon. These were on the G and H models.

It was my honor and privilege to know Gen. Lyle for several years. He was regular member of the Hot Springs National Rotary Club for many years. We would sit together and visit as well as socially with our wives.

One thing Lew would deny was ever being scared on bombing missions. The first time I mentioned being scared when the anti-aircraft fire got close or fighters coming in, Lew said, "I loved every minute of it." Many times I have asked, "Not once weren't you a little concerned?" "No, I knew I wasn't going to get killed." I didn't know that so I was scared.

Lew owned an airplane before he owned a car. As a youth he would work at any job to earn money for his airplane. He had to hitch-hike to the airport to fly his plane. After the war Lew returned to Pine Bluff for a visit. Upon entering the Simmons Bank in Pine Bluff Lew saw Betty for the first time. He decided then and there he was going to marry her. After two weeks they were engaged. Marriage followed soon after.

My wife and I visited the Mighty Eighth Museum in Savannah last summer. Walking into the rotunda and seeing Lew looking at us was a real thrill. Also we were ushered into the theater for the simulated bomb run and the noise and flashes were quite realistic. It had me looking for my flak helmet and vest. A very well done job! Make as many (safe) landings as you do takeoffs, Pancho Rowe, 41st BG, 7th AF Hot Springs, AR

PLOESTI

Dear Sir,

I am writing this letter to the 8th Air



Lady Be Good, un-named and pictured in December 8AF 2009 issue on page 45.

Force magazine and to the Editor.

I am John Manocchio and I would like to make an apology for making a mistake in my story I sent you and was put in the 8th AF News dated Dec. 2008.

The story was correct except one line I wrote I stated that John Petrocelli was on the Ploesti Mission on the Rumania oil fields in his plane, "The Fightin Sam." John informed me that his group was on the raid but not himself. This was my mistake and I took it for granted he was one of them.

So please accept my apology for this matter. And I also apologized to John. Thank you for the good job you are doing.

Yours truly,
John Manocchio
Altoona, PA

LADY BE GOOD

Dear Dr. Brown,

I am writing to you with a follow-up on a photo that appears in the December 2008 issue of 8th AF News on page 45 with no caption. On page 21 of Volume 99, Number 22 of the June issue, Dr. H. Ducilli, Jr. identified a photo printed in the March 1999 issue on page 29 as the B17 "Lady Be Good" and not the "Blonde Bomber."

The original photo was taken on September 21, 1944 over Ludwigshafen. The photo appears in "A History of the 452nd Bombardment Group (H) 728th, 729th, 730th and 731st Bombardment

Squadrons," Third Edition, 1980 on page 93. To verify the photo and event, I was the waist gunner on "Lady Be Good" on this mission. Along with the waist gunner from the other plane in the 28th squadron who took the photo, I was issued a K-20 camera and took hundreds of photos also. Being a friend of the photographer, I was given a copy of the photo.

Flack was heavy on the bomb run and shattered the bullet-proof glass of Sgt. DeBrosse's ball turret. I was hit in the foot by spent flak, however I

was not injured. Members of the crew were as follows: Hubert Gay, pilot; Billy Carr, co-pilot; James Graham, navigator; Donald Sherlock, engineer; Ralph Wittaker, radio operator; DeBrosse, ball turret; Stanley Lantz, waist gunner; Michael Bonner, tail gunner; and William Blake, bombardier.

Sincerely,

Dr. Stanley Lantz, 452nd Bomb Group Butler, PA

"Wally" Cowan's Crew

Dear Sir,

I hate to be critical of a fine publication like the 8th Air Force News but on Page number 41 of the June 2008 issue Volume 08 Number 2 the information on "Wally" Cowan's Crew #72 all is ok except the group number 481st Bomb Group, Lavenham England - Lavenham. England Air Group was the 487th Bomb Group Heavy.

This air crew would have been a replacement crew and came over with the Boeing B17's Flying Fortress replacements on July 24, 1944. I was one of the original/cadre members of the 487th Bomb Group, arrived in April of 1944 and our air crew completed our combat tour completing 31 combat missions and was home by August of 1944 - I flew one mission on "D" Day June 6th. We completed our tour without any casualties, in the Consolidated B-24 Liberator. Our group came over

to England via South America, Africa, Ireland and England at that time our group was commanded by Beirne Lay Jr., author of "Twelve O'Clock High." Our air crew flew the mission that Lt. Col. Lay was shot down. Our crew was with the low squadron and watched Col. Lay's B-24 make a right hand turn with smoke trailing out of his left wing, crew members bailing out as the Col. tried to hold and control his airship and it seemed like moments after the Col. bailed out that his B-24 went into a tight spin and crashed. We lost three additional B-24's on that raid.

Was only going to send in the correction but got a little winded about the 487th Bomb Group Heavy.

Sincerely,
Donald Frantz Partain, 487th BG
Bossier City, LA

The Beirne Lay personal wartime collection now resides in the Research Center, Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum.—Ed.

Hitzacker

Dear Dr. Brown,

Thanks to the good offices of an American friend who had visited me in Hitzacker a few years ago, I received the December 2008 issue of 8th AF News. In your article a picture called "Hitzacker Oil" is reproduced on p.6. As I grew up in Hitzacker and still have a house there, I realised at once that it is an aerial view of the hidden oil depots a few miles away from Hitzacker. (I was six when they were bombed on March 25 and April 7, 1945, and I remember the air raids.) They were built with forced labor to store fuels and lubricants in underground tanks and in barrels, and our local museum in Hitzacker has made every effort to document it.

Would it be possible to obtain a copy of the original photograph for our Hitzacker Museum? Are there any other records still extant? On the web pages of the 8th AF Historical Society I discovered that missions 913 and 931 were ordered to hit the Hitzacker oil depot.

I am sorry to trouble you with this enquiry, but perhaps you could advise me which archive I should write to for further information. The Hitzacker Museum would be most grateful for an

opportunity to enlarge their collection of source material on this subject.

With best wishes,
Dr Margret Schuchard
Neckarhamm 33
69123 Heidelberg, Germany

St. Paul's

Greetings,

I was online reading news and found a news article in regards to the Annual Thanksgiving service at St. Paul's Cathedral in London this year. I have interest in this as my mother is from London. My father and my mother met while he was stationed with the 8th Air Force in England during World War II with Eisenhower. He was part of office staff at the time when they were planning the D Day invasion. My mother said she recalls him going around trying to get certain items that they did not have available for invasion.

Anyway, I was reading the article about the St. Paul's service and read about the Memorial Chapel dedicated to Americans who died during World War II trying to liberate Europe. And there was another link. That link was to this website for the 8th Air Force Historical Society. I was ecstatic! My father did not say much until his dying day about what he did. He was one to live up to his oath and he never revealed much of anything, even to my mother, about what he did when he was on duty. Only bits and pieces of some things. Like this search for materials needed for the invasion. He was in England when the war ended. My father stayed in the service and was in for 20 years until he retired. After the war, he served with SAC and NORAD. He always spoke of those days in England. He served proudly and loyally. He helped veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam before his death 10 years ago.

I am most enthused about your website and your organization. I never knew you even existed. I have read some on the website and I

think it is wonderful that the memories of these brave people are remembered as I remember and honor my father and his memory. The debt we owe to brave men and women as you represent is beyond words. And I am so glad that memory is not lost. Now I can add what I know to my family history for my grandchildren and generations to come. Thank you for establishing this website and this historical society.

Sincerely,
Rosemary Paxton
Daughter of Melvin Paxton

THE MICEK BROTHERS

Dear Sir,

I am writing this in regard to my brother, John Micek who went down in the North Sea. On a mission to Bremen on Nov. 26, 1943 on the B-17 *Mr. Five By Five* I was also in the 8th AF with the 381st Bomb Group as a tail gunner on the B-17 "Los Angeles City Limits." I arrived in the U.K. in Dec. 1943. So you see I just missed him. The only info I got was that his bombardier's body was washed up on the Frisian Islands in Feb. 1944.

There was an article on page 41 of the Sept. 2008 issue of the 8th AF News about Molesworth Veterans Return Home. It had the World War II records of all 7,336 who served in the 303rd BG. I am enclosing a photo of myself just to let you know I served and am his brother and also am sending a casualty report on John and his crew. I hope maybe by now they may have something new from German records.

Thank you,
Julius Micek, 381st BG
Center Line, MI



Julius Micek

In January 1945, Third Reich leaders marched prisoners from Stalags towards a central location, many thousands to the camp at Moosburg. The POWs were to be used as "bargaining chips" in peace negotiations with the Allies. Gen. George Patton's troops weren't going to let that happen. -Editor

Historians have always walked figuratively in others' footsteps, but for the sons and daughters of prisoners of war of Stalag Luft III, they recently had the chance to literally walk in very meaningful historic footsteps. The self-proclaimed "Kriegie Kids," now all in their fifties and sixties, marched to honor the loved ones of whom they were so proud. Still-

living POWs who had originally made that march south from Stalag Luft III six decades ago, for the most part, were a bit puzzled as to why this group would want to make the trek. The pain and misery those men endured was still frozen into their collective psyches. To the Kriegie Kids, there was no question. It did not even have to be discussed. We all knew why we were there. It was something we had to do.

Growing up and being raised by the former POWs of the camp in Upper Silesia, we had all heard the same stories. Some fathers talked more than others. We heard the same Kriegie terms, knew the wartime songs and learned the lessons of wasting nothing from men who had been so deprived during their captivity. We eagerly shared with each other even the most minute detail that had been related to us that perhaps another son or daughter had not heard. We researched the march route, knew the times spent on the road and the distances to where the men stopped, and we knew what await-

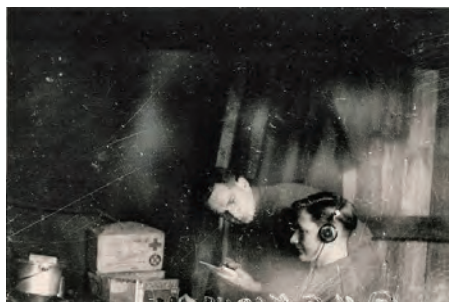
THE ROAD FROM SAGAN

by Marilyn Walton



Families, Marchers and the Mayor of Lipna (woman in gray jacket)

ed them in the box cars in Spremberg. Some of us had already lost our dads. Some were lucky enough to still have theirs. Regardless, we all wanted to



Secret photo of POW clandestine radio



POW's on the march from Stalag III

walk on the same cobblestones they had, pass the same tall snow-frosted pines that lined the route and get a feel for the sheer distance they had walked under the most trying circumstances.

Our group represented the same cross-section of America that populated the camp so long ago. Only a few of us had previously met, but from the minute we all flew into Berlin from every corners of the U.S., we shared

an instantaneous bond.

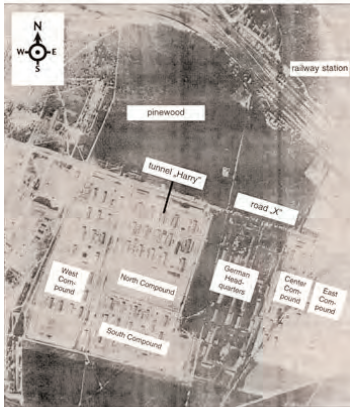
After a stay in Berlin, we next moved into Poland to Stalag Luft III where we spent two days at the camp. We walked among the broken bits of brick and porcelain and sought out the individual compounds where our fathers had lived. When we identified that small patch of sacred ground--the very spot where "our" barrack had stood, we paused to quietly remember. After pictures were taken, we scoured the ground there to pick up small rocks, broken pieces of crockery and shards of foundation that we could bring home. All these pieces marked a significant chapter in our fathers' lives. Broken bricks that would be worthless to anyone else were the gold we had come for.

At North Compound where Lt. Gen. A.P. Clark, Senior American Officer, had lived with Roger Bushell, the mastermind of the Great Escape, the area was the best preserved of all. We could see the foundation of that barrack where the notable men had lived.

The sight of the fire pool in South

Stalag Luft III Walking the Circuit

Allied air-reconnaissance photograph of Stalag Luft III (1944 ?)



Tunnel 'Harry' is the tunnel of 'The Great Escape'.

Stalag Luft III

Compound took me back to the raucous 4th of July celebration sixty-six years before. Rowdy American POWs who had been moved into South Compound, partly due to the German suspicion they were helping the RAF POWs in North with tunneling, invaded North to have some fun with their British counterparts. Announcing, "Arise, arise, the British are coming," POW Jerry Sage had awakened Roger Bushell that day. What followed was an all-day celebration, fueled by Kriegie "home brew," created for the occasion with stored up raisins from Red Cross parcels. The Germans could not fully understand the significance of the revelry. On that day, many a Senior British Officer and Senior American Officer were tossed unceremoniously into the fire pools in the camp.

We examined the crumbling foundations of the compound theatres where we knew our fathers had passed many hours sitting upon wooden Red Cross parcel seats watching amateur POW productions that were surprisingly professional. Our fathers had spent lonely Christmases here in the company of other lonely men and lonely German guards, all forced to remain apart from their families at such a holy time of the year. True to the American spirit, we knew our fathers' voices rang out with hearty carols they brought with them in memories from home. The Messiah had been beautifully performed here. It was here, too, in January, 1945, where many got the announcement that their departure was imminent. Col. Charles

Goodrich from South Compound had clomped down the center aisle wearing wooden shoes. He interrupted a production of "You Can't Take it With You," so ironically named, to send the audience back to their barracks to prepare to evacuate the camp upon Hitler's immediate order, signaling the start of the Forced March. Although the men suspected such an order was coming, they had constantly discussed the departure among themselves, asking in hushed tones, "They'd never move us at night -- would they?"

But they did move at night in a line stretching for twenty miles - into the freezing snow that swirled around them, and over the course of several days, dressed in mismatched Kriegie attire, underfed and in varying states of health, they continued for fifty-two miles to board the fetid boxcars in Spremberg. For three days and four nights their limits were tested in over-crowded cars. Some men went to Nurnberg before eventually ending up

in Moosburg where other compounds of Stalag Luft III had already arrived. That camp, originally constructed for 10,000 men, held 100,000 by the time liberation day, April 29th, 1945, arrived, thanks to Gen. Patton's Third Army.



Hockey game



Block 104 barracks burned by POW's the night of The Forced March in retribution for The Fifty. The glow could be seen by POW's for miles on The March.



POW's lined up to get water. One man is carrying the metal "keinrinkwasser" pitcher which meant "don't drink the water."

Carrying our memories and thoughts of our fathers and strapping on brilliant headlamps, it was soon our turn to start the trek. Some in our group wore military greatcoats and Army issue caps and blankets. On January 27th, the sixty-fourth anniversary of the snowy and frigid night that the prisoners were evacuated from the camp, our group of fifteen left at 11 p.m., just as South Compound had done. We huddled together in the cold clear night for a prayer, asking that God walk with us and protect us as He had our fathers. Each one mentioned the loved one he or she was marching to remember, and then the group set off down the same icy road out of the camp where our fathers had departed. The ground was still frozen in the woods, and a few inches of residual snow slowed our eager steps.

Just as our fathers had done, we broke into a rousing chorus of *Off We Go into the Wild Blue Yonder*, which then led to the Australian marching song that the RAF had taught our fathers, *I've Got Sixpence*. It had been a long time since those lyrics had floated on the night air that drifted through the stately pine forests our fathers had marched through,

but we sang with the same enthusiasm and gusto that they had, as they thrilled to the fact they were finally on the other side of barbed wire. Out of the camp proper, the air was cold, but the road was fairly clear.

South Compound's first stop had been on an overpass that crossed over the autobahn. That was nine-and-a-half miles from Stalag Luft III. For the POWs, the wind picked up as they approached that overpass, and treasured letters, diaries and logs were burned there to keep warm. It was the



**The Fathers
POWs at Stalag III**

coldest place South Compound had stopped. Many a cherished letter from home went up in smoke so desperate was their cold. For us, our hotel sat just beyond that overpass, and we all arrived at 2:00 a.m. with bright red cheeks from the cold but a warm appreciation for that haven they never had.

One of the stops along the way for the Kriegie Kids was the barns in Grosselten where our fathers had stumbled in order to sleep for a few hours. The German farm had been owned by a wealthy count and his wife, and they gave the men hot water



Camp Allied Commanders; Lt. Col. Mel McNickle, Col. Goodrich, Lt. Col. Clark & Gen. Dick Klocko

from the now abandoned manor house. We toured what had been cow barns there, and we stood before the barns for a picture as we gathered behind a big American flag.

Out on the road again, we found that word had traveled through the Polish country side that we were on our way. At a Polish school, we were ushered in as the first Americans to ever visit that school. The graciousness and hospitable nature of the Polish people we met along the way will be long remembered.

A stop in Ilowa, which during the war was Halbau, found us at the Catholic Church where Center Compound had sought refuge. The tired men were crammed into the church, school, cemetery, and crypt upon arriving late in the afternoon. Some found no shelter at all and rested leaning on the side of the small church.

The pace of our march varied. The stronger, more-seasoned marchers led the way. Some of us straggled along behind, and gaps often allowed each of us to walk with another person on the trek for long stretches, virtually alone, through the winding roads and small villages of Poland and Germany. Many



Route of Tunnel Harry - the Great Escape



50-mile hike route to boxcars at Spremberg

on the march went the full fifty-two miles. For some stretches we were the modern-day Pied Pipers of Poland with dogs and kids following along.

Finally, the marchers arrived in Spremberg where champagne and apple juice toasts at dinner celebrated the conclusion of the march. We met a German man outside our hotel the next day who later met us at the train station where our fathers had boarded the 40 & 8 box cars. Our German friend, who was eleven at the time, remembered the thousands of men there who stood out in the cold waiting to be forced in the cars. He told us many had no gloves and blew on their hands to give some warmth.

Our next stop was Dresden, a place where the box cars had passed, and then we moved on to Nurnberg. Those whose fathers had been confined in West Compound made a stop as we were leaving Nurnberg to find any remains of the camp there where there fathers had been held. Then we continued on to Stalag VIIA in Moosburg, Germany.

Our group walked in St. Kastulus Catholic Church which sat on the edge of the camp. The church's ancient twin steeples were always in sight of the prisoners, and at one time bright red flags emblazoned with the black swastika flew from the steeples. SS troops had held out there in the final skirmish of the war before the camp was taken by U.S. troops. A P51 pilot on liberation day was more than happy to shoot the flags off the steeples the men had come to know. The church was also the first stop for many a thankful liberated POW who finally took comfort within its walls.

Our fathers' memories of the now-modern places we visited were far different than ours. They saw the bombed-out buildings and broken glass. They heard the screaming air raid sirens while they were locked in box cars, and they knew the abject fear of being strafed by fighter planes. They knew the danger of being in close proximity to angry German civilians who were anxious to attack them, and they would have remembered their thirst, hunger, filthy conditions and fear of the unknown as they were moved deeper into the Third

Reich. Their lives depended on the arrival of the Russian and American troops, and that day finally came.

We can never completely duplicate our father's experiences. We can, however, more fully understand the distance they walked as they were hurriedly evacuated. We had the advantage of hotels along the way, a bus if we needed it for back up and decent meals each night. Where the men had carried Spam, raisins, sugar cubes, margarine and German brown bread, the Kriegie Kids depended on band-aids, bottled water and changes of socks and shoes. The POWs traded cigarettes from Red Cross parcels along the way, and we traded smiles with the Polish and German citizens we met. More importantly, we knew where we were going and what would be there when we arrived. The POWs did not.

We will all have special memories of our odyssey in Upper Silesia -- snapshots in our minds that will last a lifetime. I will remember the Allied POW School in Poland, named in memory of our fathers. I'll remember the pictures of the POWs, some on the march, permanently on display so that the students never forget. They let us take over their school and enjoyed the uproar our visit created. I will remember my fellow marchers, and I marvel at the thought that our frost-bitten fathers could never have imagined sixty-four years ago that their children would meet as a group and return to that



Memorial to the fifty tunnel escapees captured and murdered by the Nazis. Tunnel Harry was built by RAF POWs in 1944-45.

place and time they knew so well and do it in their honor.

History is not just dates in a book or places on a map. Neither is it simply a dry chronology marking epochs of time. History is about the people who lived it, and in our case, those who loved them.

Marilyn Jeffers Walton

Author of Rhapsody in Junk - A Daughter's Return to Germany to Finish Her Father's Story

Father: Thomas Jeffers
458th Bomb Group bombardier
Shot down, Kiel, Germany 18 June 1944



Author Marilyn Walton with the two sons of Hanns Scharff, the Master Interrogator at Dulag Luft at Oberursel.

The Enchanters



NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

The New Mexico Chapter of the 8th AFHS held its annual Winter General Membership Meeting & Luncheon at the Best Western Rio Grande Inn, January 17, 2009.

President Larry Stebleton opened the meeting at 12:30 pm with a moment of silence in remembrance of departed members and The Pledge Of Allegiance.

The entertainment was provided by "THE ENCHANTERS," a professional singing group of twenty talented men and women who presented a program of wonderfully selected classic songs. New Mexico Chapter President Larry Stebleton is a member of this singing group. Next General Membership meeting will be held May 16, 2009.

Submitted by:
Al Schwery
Secretary

FLORIDA CHAPTER

The Florida Chapter of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society convened in early November in Boca Raton. We were again in high spirits to be at the Double Tree Suites in Boca because they treat us very well and they are always inviting us back. Our meeting rooms as well as the food service are excellent, and the location is convenient to many of the members. The reunion began with the usual Board of Directors meeting on Saturday and hangar flying into the night at the hospitality suite to welcome the early arrivals.

On Sunday, after our complimentary breakfast, President Tom Gagnon loaded everyone in the bus to go to the port of Palm Beach for a day long cruise on a gaming ship. Those who did not take the boat trip dropped by the hospitality suite throughout the after-

noon for conversation and story sharing. On Sunday night we were welcomed to the dinner buffet meeting by Board member and past President Jim Hart. After the welcome by Jim, we said the Pledge of Allegiance and Jim introduced the Officers and the

Board of Directors. Treasurer Connie Galus, Secretary John Guinn, and Board members Shelly Green, Mike Drake, Bob Groen, Bill Uphoff, and Ken Sweet were welcomed and recognized by the membership. Once again, Tom Gagnon, our President, compiled a challenging round of trivia with prizes to the top scholars after dinner.

Monday morning found us at the general membership meeting shortly after breakfast. After a welcome by Tom, who facilitated the meeting, we sang the Army Air Corps song and may have woken up a few late risers at the hotel. Secretary John Guinn read the minutes from the Spring Meeting and they were accepted, after which Treasurer Connie Galus gave his report. We were all very pleased to hear how sound the Chapter is financially. With a vacancy on the Board, we were also glad to have Warren Klein step up and agree to serve the Chapter. He was elected by the membership at this meeting. A motion was made to double President Gagnon's salary because of all the hard work he has been putting in and serving the chapter with such distinction. He assisted Connie Galus in putting together this fall meeting, for instance. Tom thanked the members and observed that "2 times 0 is still 0." Also at this meeting Tom announced tentative plans to have the spring meeting in the Sarasota or Venice area of the state.

Monday night's banquet was well attended by family members who live in the Boca Raton area and were able to join us for dinner and our speakers. It was heartening to see so many of the sons and daughters and even grandchildren of our members in attendance at our dinner. Our guest speakers were from the National and State Veterans

Affairs offices, who shared with us important information on services and programs for veterans. After the dinner door prizes were handed out and some welcoming gifts were also distributed.

The meeting closed, as usual, with a memorial service on Tuesday morning. Candles were lit in honor of our departed members and were carried by Bill Uphoff, Reuben Fier, John Guinn, Joe Vierra, Shelly Greene, Bob Moore, and Warren Klein. We will be finalizing plans for the spring meeting, and if your travels bring you near the southwest Florida coast area in the spring, be sure and drop by and say hello. Contact Tom Gagnon at teg00@aol.com or Ken Sweet at kstown@earthlink.net, or call Ken at 407-869-6693. Also, if you are a member of the Florida Chapter and you have not been getting your newsletter, please let Ken Sweet know at the above phone or e-mail address, or write to him at 950 Paces Circle, Apt 108, Apopka, Florida, 32703.

NORTH CAROLINA

The Metrolina Wing of the North Carolina Chapter has announced the election of Chapter officers for 2009. Listed below are the new Wing officers of the Metrolina Wing, Charlotte, NC

Ed Halliburton - Commander
Casey Howell - Vice Commander - Treasurer
Mary Wiley - Wing Co-coordinator
Bob Berly - Director
Hubert Whitlock - Director
Bob Arnold - Chaplain

MINNESOTA CHAPTER

President Bob Clemens welcomed the attendees to the Annual Meeting and Christmas Party at Mancini's Char House, St. Paul, MN. There were 135 members and guests attending.

The business meeting was conducted by President Clemens. He stated the process of getting approval to be a 501 (c)(3) organization is ongoing. The organization will be known as Eighth Air Force Historical Society of Minnesota, also known as 8th AFHS of MN. He called on Dick Kaminski to report for the Nominating Committee which con-

sisted of Past Presidents. The nominees presented to serve at the Board of Directors were Al Anderson, Larry Bachman, Pete Backlund, Gary Birchmem, Walter Bohrn, Robert Clemens, Dick Hill, Earl Joswick, Dick Kaminski and Don Kent. The majority voted affirmatively for the nominees. Following the business meeting, President Clemens introduced Stan Turner as the Emcee.

Stan Turner called on Don Kent to give the invocation and he prayed the Airman's Prayer. All joined in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. The dinner was served. The 2008 Dinner committee was Glenn Shull, Randy Penrod, Dwight Olson, Larry Bachman, Gary Hall and Mary Berg.

Following the meal, Stan Turner introduced the guest speaker, Bill Fox. Bill Fox was engineering and program manager for NASA/Lockheed/Air Force, YF-12 Blackbird, Blackbird and U2 flight programs. Mr. Fox is a veteran of the Navy, a Korean War veteran, member of Iowa Aviation Hall of Fame. Mr. Fox showed photos and commented on many of the projects and planes he had worked on.

Following the speaker, Mary Berg, Randy Penrod, Huck Finn and Stan Turner handled the drawing for door prizes of books donated by members and 6 large poinsettias provided by Larry Bachman. Larry Bachman provided beautiful cen-

terpieces to all the ladies present and sent home to those unable to attend.

OREGON CHAPTER

The February 7, '09 meeting followed the same schedule, with our members checking in with old buddies, re-telling war stories (sometimes adding "newly remembered" details), and getting acquainted with new members and guests. An annual February meeting occasion was the handing over of the gavel from immediate past President Tom Davis to our new leader, Bert Campbell. While not a WW2 vet, Bert is well grounded in history of the Eighth, having grown up with hearing his father's wartime experiences.

A long time member of the Portland Chapter, Al Campbell, now deceased, flew 29 missions as ball turret gunner while serving in B24s of both the 389th and 453rd Bomb Groups. New President Bert served in the Oregon Army National Guard,

beginning as a "cannon cocker" in a howitzer unit, and finishing his military service as a Sergeant in an elite Ranger unit.

Our program for the meeting was the story of one of America's true heroes of World War II, a woman born in Portland, Oregon in 1908. She attended Franklin High School, then dropped out to join a circus and begin a career as a stage actress and singer. Just before the outbreak of WW2, she went to the Philippines to work as an actress and singer in a Manila nightclub.

Read article about Claire Phillips in this magazine.

Submitted by Clint Gruber (93rdBG)



REUNIONS

NATIONAL ORDER OF DAEDALIANS

May 6-10, 2009 Seattle, Washington
Contact: HQ National Order of Daedalians
Phone: (210) 945-2111
Email: daedalus@daedalians.org

351st BOMB GROUP

July 23-27, 2009 Branson, Missouri
Lodge of Ozarks
Contact: Gatherings Plus
Phone: (417) 338-4048
Email: pamb@bransonmilitaryreunions.com

492nd BOMB GROUP

May 20-24, 2009 Savannah, Georgia
Hilton Garden Inn Savannah Midtown
Contact: Fran Gramberg
Phone: (708) 670-8084
Email: fgramberg@msn.com

446TH BGA REUNION

May 13-17, 2009 Nashville, Tennessee
Doubletree Hotel
Contact: Shirley Callighen
Phone: (520) 299-2991

7TH BOMB WING B-36

APRIL 23-26, 2009 Fort Worth, Texas
Radisson Hotel Fort WorthSouth
P.O. Box 330279, Ft Worth, TX
76163-0279

306 Bomb Group

October 8-12, 2009 Fort Worth, Texas
Dallas/Ft. Worth Marriott South Hotel
Contact: Dr. Vernon L. Williams
Phone: (325) 280-3399
Email: vwilliams@acu.edu

100th Bomb Group

September 10-13, 2009
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Albuquerque Marriott
Contact: Dante Martin
Email: abq2009@yahoo.com

SUNDLUN ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Bruce Sundlun
384th Bomb Group

While in Switzerland Lt. Sundlun was assigned to the American Embassy in Bern and worked as an assistant to Allen Dulles, Director of OSS. In August 1944 he returned to France to assist the American invading forces in the south of France. Subsequently he returned to the 384th Group and at the end of the war flew a crew back to the United States. He spent the balance of the war flying for the 3rd Ferry Group in the Pacific Theatre.

In succeeding years Colonel Sundlun held numerous Air Force commands as well as being awarded important military decorations such as the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart. France and Israel awarded him illustrious medals of their respective countries.

Colonel Sundlun served on many important committees and Boards as well as vital appointments by both Presidents Kennedy and Carter. Finally he was elected Governor of Rhode Island in 1990 and reelected Governor in 1992.

For Colonel, businessman and Governor, the 8th AFHS salutes its Director Bruce Sundlun as a decorated and distinguished airman as well as a Harvard educated attorney.

submitted by Bob Moses



CHAPTER/UNIT/GROUP LIAISON REPORT



The Society's Chapter/Unit/Group contact information needs updating being that we are in a new year and some Board elections have taken place. I would like to thank those that have contacted us regarding this. Please contact myself or Catherine Mayne at the National Office with updated contact information.

You can view the current listings on the Society's website, www.8thafhs.org, under the 'About Us Contacts' tabs. This listing can

also be obtained by contacting Catherine.

I would like to clear up any confusion regarding the unfortunate instance of a Chapter folding its wings and the Society's by-law stating in this circumstance the Chapter will forward it's mailing list and any remaining funds in its treasury to the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Please remember these funds and contact information is used for the preservation of the Society.

We would like to add additional content to the 8th AFHS website by having more information on the Bomb/Fighter groups. Currently we have a very brief description of each group. We would like to have mission summaries and possibly the MACRs, Missing Air Crew Reports, listed for each mission on each group. We are asking all Presidents, Editors, Historians, Webmasters, etc. for their help to build this detailed information not only for ourselves but future generations.

If you have any comments or ideas on how we can move forward my address and email is posted on the inside front cover of this magazine.

'Keep Their Memories Alive'

Pat Keeley

Please support the USO.

THE BEST THING IN LIFE

You can be thirty-three and over the hill,
Or ninety-three going on nine.
Age isn't living a number of years;
It is only a state of mind.

You're never too old to be young,
If you make love and laughter part of the plan;
For the best thing in life is to die young
As old as you possibly can.

Scott Friedman

submitted by Lydia Ramsey, wife of Hank Ramsey, 8th AF

NEXGEN CONTINUING THE 8TH AF LEGACY

Greetings fellow members of the Mighty Eighth.

The Board of Directors of the 8th Air Force Historical Society met February 28 at the Millennium Hotel in Cincinnati Ohio, the future site of the **August 18 – 23, 2009 35th Annual AFHS Reunion.**

NexGen was discussed and a program is being put into place to start to utilize our members who have shown interest in the Society's Initiatives of Membership & Recruitment, Research, Education & Website/Webmasters.

We have mailed a query to members regarding a couple of the above initiatives that showed an interest in these and received a good response. We would start asking these members to assist the Society in example membership drives or research or education.

If you have not already contacted us confirming your interests, say in Research, please contact Board Member Norma Chesser, the Coordinator of the NexGen Initiatives.

I would like to tip my hat to Walt Brown. Walt is NexGen and has done fantastic work with the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum and of course this Magazine.

If you have any comments or ideas regarding the Society's NexGen Initiatives please contact NexGen Coordinator, Norma Chesser. Norma's information is posted on the Inside front cover of this magazine.

"Support Our Troops & Keep the Memories Alive"

Pat Keeley
Board of Directors 8AFHS

FINANCIAL REPORT FISCAL 2008



Darrel Lowell

The 8th Air Force Society by-laws require that the Society's financial records be audited every 2 years. The attached Profit and Loss statement provides the audit undertaken covering the fiscal year 2007/2008. Last year in our annual report to the membership we stated that as a result of some cost cutting changes in our operations we felt the Society might report for the year a break-even or maybe even a small profit. The audit below indicates that we were wrong and the Society continued during the last fiscal year to generate losses on operations. The underlying cause for these losses during the period covered were the un-recurring expense of an employee lawsuit, which fortunately was settled in October of 2008. We were also disappointed to note that dues collections ran substantially lower than anticipated. Steps have been taken this year to increase dues collections by inserting a dues notice envelope inside the AF News magazine. This system will make dues paying much more efficient and hopefully will increase this vital revenue stream. We also continued the practice of allowing our Life Members to contribute to operations on a volunteer basis using the same return envelope.

This fiscal year we have made additional reductions in our operating budget that will hopefully put the Society back in the black. These steps include 1) a reduction of 15% in the AF News budget (this will not change the quality of the publication) 2) down-graded the Manager of Membership Records to a part-time position. These operational changes along with a more aggressive dues collection program, appear to be having a positive effect in the overall financial condition of the Society. It should be noted that Dues are the Society's main source of revenue, requiring the Society to pay close attention to this vital income stream along with renewed efforts to control expenses.

Your Officers and Board Members take very seriously our responsibilities to be good Stewards of the Society's finances. We thank you for support and should you have any suggestions or questions concerning financial matters call Catherine Mayne at 912-748-8884, or Darrel Lowell 912-598-7334. Darrel Lowell Treasurer 8th AFHS

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Profit & Loss September 2007 through August 2008

	Sep '07 - Aug 08
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
4000 · Income	124,821.41
4050 · Investment Income	14,418.39
Total Income	139,239.80
Expense	
5100 · National Administration Expense	19,582.05
5200 · Magazine Expenses	101,929.35
5300 · Savannah Office Expenses	49,474.76
5400 · General Dues Expenses & Postage	995.44
6000 · Other Expenses	150.00
6015 · Legal Expenses - W/C	17,792.78
Total Expense	189,924.38
Net Ordinary Income	-50,684.58
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
7000 · Other Income	30,000.00
Total Other Income	30,000.00
Net Other Income	30,000.00
Net Income	-20,684.58



Jefferson C. Fuller, Jr., Columbia, SC.; B-17 waist gunner.
Philip G. Fleming, 303rd BG, 360th SQ.
Bert J. Pandey, navigator and lead crew navigator, 303rd BG, 427th BS.

Bob Hand, Johnson City, TN., 303rd BG B-17 bombardier with 35 combat missions from Molesworth, England.

Alvah H. Chapman, Jr., Miami, FL., B-17 pilot with the Distinguished Flying Cross and a Presidential Citation; long time newspaperman and CEO of the Miami Herald and Knight Ridder.

John T. "Jack" Ford, Pottsville, TX; B-17 pilot, 96th BG, with the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Claude L. Chamberlin, Yakima, WA., pilot, 55th Fighter Group, 442nd Air Service Group.

Bill Beasley, Denver, CO., B-24 tail gunner, 492nd BG, 857th BS., shot down over Germany in June, 1944 and interned in Sweden until November, 1944. Married for 64 years to his wife, Norma.

Harry Kern, Keyport, NJ.; right waist gunner on the B-17 "Pride of the Yanks," 94th BG, 333rd BS, 25 missions with three over Berlin.

Keith Burk, Savannah, GA.; B-17 pilot, 457th BG. Co-pilot was the late Craig Harris.

James E. Slick, Murray, UT.; tail gunner on the B-17 "Old Fox" with the 379th BG, 515th SQ.

Alfred A. Knopf, Jr., New York, NY.; inspired by the Veronica Lake film "I Wanted Wings," joined the USAA where he flew with the 446th BG. Became a prolific and celebrated writer and publisher.

Albert P. Desrochers, Saco, ME., B-17 top turret gunner with the 306th BG.

John F. Martin, Jr., Allentown, PA., B-17 pilot, 487th BG with two missions on D-Day, and veteran of the Korean War.

Melvin Albert Durst, Woodland, CA., co-pilot with the 303rd BG, 427th BS. Became a P.O.W.

Doris Baker, wife of the

late Gene Baker, gunner with the 457th BG.

Forrest S. Clark, Bristol, TN.; tail gunner and radioman on a B-24 Liberator bomber with the 44th BG, shot down twice and interned in Switzerland, escaping into France during the Battle of the Bulge.

Mark Holmes, Hopkins, MN., Air Force Intelligence courier with 21 missions behind enemy lines in Belgium, France, Holland, Sweden, and Germany.

Betty Kelley, Sarasota, FL.; wife of J. Ford Kelley, 303rd BG, 8th Air Force.

Tom C. Sullens, tail gunner with the 303rd BG, 427th BS, Robert Sheets crew.

William C. Pickett, Kenton, OH., 351st BG.

Dr. Julius Campbell, Jr., Columbia, SC., B-17 radio operator, retiring from the US Army Reserve 3270th Field Hospital as commander.

Harrel A. Waltmire, Port Charlotte, FL., 303rd BG.

Deane L. Barnes, Kent, WA., pilot with 303rd BG, 427th BS.

Roger Hall, Savannah, GA.

Haskell Schwartz, Brevard County, FL., 398th BG.

Oliver F. Stark, Houston, TX., 401st BG.

Duane Bush, Bonita Springs, FL., 303rd BG, 444th Sub Depot at Molesworth.

Donald M. Johnston, Philmont, NY., pilot with the 303rd BG, 360th BS.

Harold Lee Scott, bombardier with the 303rd BG, 360th BS.

George Ashworth, radio operator on the Armand Burch crew, 417th BS.

Eugene L. Halonen, copilot with the 303rd BG Charles Lonski crew, 427th BS.

David K.S. Chang, Hawaii, bombardier on the original *Thunderbird* crew, 303rd BG.

Malcolm L. McKenzie, Charlotte, NC., radio operator, 303rd BG, 427th BS, Robert Krohn crew.

William S. "Bill" McLeod, Jr., Fresno, CA., B-17 pilot with the 303rd BG, 358th BS, and former president of the 303rd BG Association.

Also served as a transport pilot for the Berlin Airlift.

Pamela McGuire Gordon, Savannah, GA., born in Kent, England, and met her husband, the late Arthur Gordon, in London. Arthur wrote articles for the early Air Force magazine, the book *Target Germany*, and

extensive news articles about the 8th Air Force. Post-war, Mr. Gordon was a national magazine editor and author, and wrote his personal stories in *A Touch of Wonder*. Mrs. Gordon came to the U.S. in 1946.

Merrill Marvin, Stiver, Trinidad, 303rd BG pilot with the 360th BS.

Donald G. Stettler, Escondido, CA., 303rd BG navigator, 359th BS.

John Wallace Hall, Jr., Savannah, GA., B-24 pilot out of North Africa participating in the Ploesti Raid in Romania.

Kenneth O. Chilstrom, flew 80 missions in the North African campaign with the 27th FG. He participated in the first jet air race at the National Air Races in Cleveland, OH. Trained such famous test pilots as Pete Everest, Dick Johnson, Chuck Yeager, and Bob Hoover.

Frederick G. Mahnken, Bethpage, NY., B-24 bomb loader with the 446th BG, the *Bungay Buckeroos*.

Ernest L. Cofrances, Jr., 303rd BG, 359th BS.

Malcolm O. Colby, Gulf Breeze, FL., B-17 pilot with the 447th BG.

Howard A. Spaulding, Homasassa, FL., pilot with the 361st FG.

Leonard A. Wood, Oakton, VA., pilot with the 361st FG.

Alton Snyder, Bradenton, FL., P.O.W. and pilot with the 361st FG.

William Street, Arlington, VA., 361st FG pilot.

Wallace H. Blackwell, Jr., Rockville, MD., B-17 pilot with the 398th BG, 601st BS. Served as President of the 398th BG Memorial Association from 1996 until 2009.

Joe Thomas Elliott, Memphis, TN., 44th BG.

Robert Plummer, 303rd BG, 360th BS.

Malcom G. Pfunder, Miles City, MT., 8th Air Force 1942-1945.

Warren Douglas Kidd, Roanoke, VA., 303rd BG.

William Ernest Trees, Savannah, GA.,

Donald Stettler



Ernest Cofrances



John Martin



B-17 navigator, P.O.W. for fourteen months.

Robert A. Rosenburgh, Framingham, MA., P-38 and P-51 pilot with the 55th FG. Flew in the first group of fighter planes to fly from England to Berlin.

George Reynolds "Rinso" Marquette, Lebanon, PA.,

radio operator and gunner, 490th BG, 851st BS. Flew both B-24s and B-17s.

William O. Bolinger, Scottsdale, AZ., pilot with the 55th FG and 4th FG.

James "Joe" Pierce, 303rd BG, 358th BS.

Bernie Head, Greensboro, NC., 491st BG.

Charles L. Brown, Miami, FL., B-17 pilot, 379th BG. At age 21, on his first mission as pilot in command, his plane was badly damaged by German fighters and flack; he and six of the crew were wounded. Upon limping back to England they were intercepted by yet another enemy fighter over Germany. Recognizing their helpless state, the German pilot did not shoot them down and signaled Charlie to land, surrender, and be taken prisoner. In the face of certain death Charlie refused two such demands because his crew needed critical medical care. The German pilot, recognizing the courage of his fellow airman, escorted the crippled bomber to the coast, pointed a compass heading to England and saluted his adversary. Forty-five years later the two pilots were reunited and became as close as brothers.

James Edward Evans, Lexington, KY.

Wiley S. Noble, Baton Rouge, LA., 31st HW SQ.

Robert H. Cunliffe, Pittsburgh, PA., B-17 pilot with the 388th BG. Shot down by flak on a mission to Duisburg and wounded. Past President of the 388th BG Association.

John Long Horne, Jr., Happy Valley, OR., B-24 tail gunner with the 467th BG (H), 790th BS. Former president of the Oregon Chapter, 8th Air Force Historical Society and the 467th BG (H) Association.

Charles Quentin Mateer, Aberdeen, SD., B-24 pilot of "Custer's Last Stand." Appointed Sergeant at Arms in the South Dakota State Legislature and ran for and served



David Jones

three terms as a state representative. Inducted into the S.D. Aviation Hall of Fame. **Alvin A. Gould**, Lake Oswego, OR., B-17 bombardier 401st BG. Shot down over Brunswick and taken prisoner of war. Remained in

Stalag Luft I, Barth, Germany for 16 months.

David M. Jones, B-25 pilot who flew off the aircraft carrier "Hornet" and, as a member of the "Doolittle Raiders," participated in the first US raid on Tokyo in WW II. Later flew a B-26 over Germany, where he was shot down and spent the remainder of the war as a POW in Stalag Luft III. Became a test pilot after the war and contributed to the development of the advanced B-58 "Hustler" bomber. Inducted into the Arizona Aviation Hall of Fame.

Clarence Preston

Caldwell, Jr., Salem, MA.

Dr. Daniel Riva, Daytona Beach Shores, FL., pilot 385th BG, 551st BS.

Participated in both the occupations of Germany and Japan. Became Chief of Air Force Operations and Intelligence in the Greek civil war.

Alvin R. Monnig, flight engineer, 303rd BG, 427th BS.

Dr. Herman B. Landere, Tampa, FL., flight surgeon with the 8th Air Force during WW II.

Elizabeth Ann "Bettye" Duke

Jackson, Oxford, MS. Lost two brothers, both aviators, in WW II. Director Emeritus of the Mississippi Chapter, 8th Air Force Historical Society.

Berton A. Bordelon, B-17 pilot, 303rd BG., 360th AG.

Andrew T. Goettman, 303rd BG., 359th BS.

Charles E. Weaver, Atlanta, GA., P-51 Mustang pilot with the 357th FS. Achieved Ace status and was awarded the

Distinguished Flying Cross.

Stanley P. Richardson, Jr., Beaverton, OR., pilot 55th FG, 442nd ASG Association.

Assisted with production of the 55th FG News Magazine.

Max Mandel, Arleta, CA.

Fred C. Calabrese, Harwich, MA., B-17 navigator in the 384th BG.

Maurice Hollis Keesling, Guanajuato, Mexico, navigator.

George S. Hruska, Omaha, NE., B-17 bombardier with the 385th BG. Served with the Reserves until retirement in 1972.

Robert D. Johnston, Dana Point, CA., USAF Air Weather Services. Joined the military directly from college meteorology in 1941 and retired 30 years later.

Jennie P. Dennis, Montgomery, AL., wife of the first radio operator and gunner of the *Bonnie B.*, 303rd BG, 359th SQ.

Alfred James Lewis, Jr., Birmingham, AL., official photographer for the 8th Air Force.

Larman J. Heath, Oklahoma City, OK., 8th Army Air Force Composite Command, County Antrim, Ireland.

Ray Carrow, pilot with the 445th BG, 700th BS. Kassel Mission veteran and POW.

Chauncey Rowan, 353rd FG, 350th FS, pilot of *Jenny*, POW.

Herbert Schwartz, tail gunner, 445th BG, 700th BS. Kassel Mission veteran.

Clint E. Maiden, Canoga Park, CA., flew B-24s and B-29s with the 466th BG. Also flew B-47s and tankers for SAC during the Cold War.

Edwin W. Horton, Jr., Fort Walton Beach, FL., gunner and flight engineer with Doolittle Raiders.

Willard Hagman, Aitkin, MN., B-17 bombardier with the 385th BG, 548th BS.

Donald M. McWilliams, Essex Falls, NJ., B-17 pilot, 487th BG, 837th BS. Crash landed in Belgium but evaded and returned to England.

Fredrick (Fred) A. Boswell, Sr., Ozark, Enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps upon graduation from Big Spring, TX high school. He served in Europe in WWII. After retiring from the Air Force, he worked with the U.S. Army at Ft Rucker.

Emil E. Grob, Peoria, IL., B-17 pilot with the 303rd BG. Became a flight instructor and charter pilot.



Clarence Caldwell



John Horne



Emil Grob

NORTHROP'S NEWEST UNMANNED STEALTH AIRCRAFT

The Navy's plan for its future carrier air wing took a leap into autonomous flight with the unveiling of a stealthy, bat wing-like unmanned jet.

Dubbed Air Vehicle 1, the X-47B aircraft is the first of what will be two demonstration aircraft built by Northrop Grumman Corp. It was designed to test the idea of an autonomous airplane that would launch and recover on Nimitz-class aircraft carriers and conduct strike and other missions — without the hands-on controls of an on-board pilot.

The X-47B unmanned jet, the first to launch and recover aboard Nimitz-class aircraft carriers, would strike targets and do aerial reconnaissance, surveillance and time-sensitive targeting -- all without a pilot aboard.

Hundreds of workers joined military and company officials in a hangar at Northrop Grumman's Palmdale site for the official "unveiling" ceremony, where guests got a close-up look at an aircraft — the Unmanned Combat Air System-Demonstration, or UCAS-D — that only two months ago wasn't yet assembled.

The X-47B's bat wing shape takes a page from the Air Force's B-2 stealth bomber, which Northrop Grumman designed and built, then in secret, at this desert location north of Los Angeles.

"This will be the airplane we'll be flying next year," Scott Winship, UCAS program manager and Northrop Grumman vice president, told reporters before the ceremony.

The carrier-based aircraft will provide commanders with



PHOTO COURTESY NORTHROP GRUMMAN

an airplane that can be launched farther at sea, and without a pilot, the aircraft can fly distant missions and loiter over a target or combat zone much longer than what a human pilot and aircrew can safely do.

"This airplane is flying alone," Deppe noted.

Officials said the X-47B was designed for autonomous aerial refueling by both naval tankers, which use the probe and drogue system, and Air Force tankers, which refuel with a boom and receptacle.

The jet's twin weapons bays will hold a pair of 2,000-pound Joint Direct Attack Munitions, or guided bombs, for strike missions,

But it also will be outfitted with various systems and sensors that would expand its capabilities to include time-sensitive targeting and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance missions.

by Gidget Fuentes - Staff writer



MISSION TO MERSEBERG

by John Hyatt, 385th Bomb Group
Flagstaff, AZ

Rio Tinto 43-37919



November 25, 1944 we departed Great Ashfield, home of the 8th Air Force 385th Bomb Group, to bomb Merseberg, Germany.

Before reaching the target #4 engine on "Rio Tinto" lost oil

pressure and had to be feathered. Unable to stay with the group we dropped out of formation. The area below us was completely covered with clouds, so we salvaged our bomb load. We attempted to join another group returning from Merseberg. Before we got to them #3 engine had to be feathered also.

This put us all alone with two engines out on the starboard side and slowly losing altitude. The fuel consumption on the remaining #1 and #2 engines was very high. So the engineer attempted to transfer fuel from #3 and #4, but was unable to do so with either the electric pump or the hand pump. We crossed over the American line and were looking for an airfield to land at, but just north of Liege, Belgium both engines #1 and #2 stopped for lack of fuel. *Rio Tinto* was bellied in on a green slippery field. We were picked up by the Army with a truck, then spent the night in Liege. Next day we were trucked to Lyon, France and boarded a C-47 that took us back to Great Ashfield. I often wondered what happened to the B-17 that we left there.

This year (2008) through e-mail I made contact with Albert Demuyser of Belgium, son of Gustaaf Demuyser who was a member of the Belgian underground and a member of White Brigade and the Secret Army and he made contact with Fabrice Voisin of Belgium who was able to find the picture, which we believe was taken soon after the war in Europe was over. The people on the plane we believe to be friends of the photographer.

The crewmembers on *Rio Tinto* were:

John Hyatt - Pilot, Flagstaff, AZ
Robert Bedell - Co-Pilot
Louis Long - Navigator
Robert Sevrá - Bombardier
Gordon Williams - Top Turret
Troy Rouse - Radio Operator, Greenville, NC
Robert Manning - Ball
Earnest Helsley - Waist
William Anderson - Tail



Rio Tinto 43-37919

L to R: Dubie, Unknown, Peterson (crew chief), Unknown

HI TECH FLIGHT SIMULATOR DONATED TO MUSEUM

A new interactive Flight Simulator allows museum visitors to experience what it was like to fly a B-17. Three computer monitors arranged to reflect cockpit windows and a full complement of flight controls including a yoke, as well as rudder, elevator, trim and throttle controls contribute to the realism of an actual flight experience. Of equal importance are the sounds of the engines and the spinning of the propellers. Guided initially by the preflight checklist, visitors take off, fly, and land a B-17. While experiencing what it is like to fly a B-17, each visitor is reminded of the significance of the B-17 to the 8th Air Force during World War II, since the aircraft in this simulation is painted with 401st Bomb Group markings identical to those on the B-17 flown by pilot Arthur R. Seder, Jr.

This new museum flight simulator was conceived and donated by Arthur R. Seder, Jr., member Museum Board of Trustees. His son-in-law, Joseph Whistler engineered and built this exciting acquisition after intense work over many months.



MUSEUM ADMINISTRATION REPORT

It has been my privilege for the past three years to hold the position of President/CEO of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum – the permanent home of the Mighty Eighth. I came into that slot to iron out a number of difficulties that had been presenting themselves regarding the direction of the Museum, a facility that was established to honor those who served in the 8th Air Force and preserve their history and legacy. This Museum has always depended on the support of our valued members of the Historical Society in achieving all of its many programs. The Museum's Board of Trustees has recently been increased by the addition of eleven new and motivated members. It has taken these three years to get all of our departments up to full speed in their very professional activities and with the contract with the top Catering Chef in Georgia and the acquisition – after a search of 15 years - of a B-17 that the Museum now owns – we are finally at full speed ahead.

Some weeks ago in February the Museum executive committee informed me that I was being replaced as Museum President/CEO. Their decision surprised not only myself but our Board members and the Society's Birthplace Chapter in Savannah. My assumption is that they were concerned about the recent economic downturn in the country. I will state that Museum finances, as a 501c3 organization, are always an area of concern, but we are better than we have been over the course of the Museum existence since 1996 and the Museum has a 1.5 million dollar endowment in place that according to Georgia state law is available for our use in times of need.

I have had concerns from our Society members regarding this action that I have chosen to contact you directly with this notice, thus avoiding rumors and such that inevitably may arise. I am in good health and currently working daily on our mission with full support from the wonderful Museum staff. Our B-17, appropriately promoted, will ensure success of the Museum for years in the future. We are known throughout the Museum world and across the nation as a museum about the people, about those who served, and about those who preserved our freedoms. I would hope the Museum will continue on that track, as that is the primary reason it was founded. My seventeen years serving as Vice president of the Museum Board of Trustees has been for that purpose and my contacts during those years with our Historical Society Chapters and their members have been my distinct pleasure.

Walt Brown

No man is an island of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; and if a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of they friends or of thine own were.

John Donne

NOT ACCORDING TO THE CHECK LIST



After some rough missions, wheels-up landings - "belly landings" - were sometimes a necessity. The crews were prepared for the worst, but pilot skills frequently came through.

This successful landing by a B-17 Heavy bomber was photographed at Framlingham, Station 153, 390th Bomb Group.

**from the archives collection
Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum**

LICENSE PLATES OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

George's super cool 57 Chevy proudly displays his B-17.

George Domitrovich, 487th BG
Ex-POW Portland, Oregon



RALPH PETERS...

Then few weeks later we were given orders to load 10 extra people on board to fly home. I was assigned to a plane named "MAMM'S LIL ANGEL." Character with a bomb in hand on nose of the plane. We left Valley Wales and flew to the Azores. Spent three days there as a hurricane was blowing up the east Coast of the U.S. and so many planes were on the way home you had to wait til someone moved on up ahead. They were bringing the 8th - 9th and 15th all home at the same time.

We finally got to Newfoundland and spent three more days as could not move on. Had word there was couple of "fronts" but not to worry. They were very correct! We got into them and props iced throwing it against the plane. This got some of the ground pounders shook up. We could not go over it as did not have oxygen outlets for 20 people. We reach Bradley Field and they stacked us. Ray Larson, pilot, said we can't stay up here all day. We tried La Guardia, Westover Mass and then on to Bangor Maine. Here Audley Risley, co-pilot, was flying and found a hole in the clouds to circle in, but not large enough to stay in. We came into the opening and I was looking out the waist window and saw a hill about a quarter of mile away and we were well below it. Audley fire-walled all four engines on the B-24 and got out of there. Got word that Albany N.Y. had 500 ft ceiling. We came in over Albany just above the trees and here is small town runway, short, concrete, with a B-17 and B-24 already down. We were very concerned with the load we had about getting it stopped, but did O.K. We all got out and kissed the tarmac, lucky to get down safe and back on U.S. SOIL! The fuel was checked and found we had 130 gal left and she used 275 an hour, so our string was getting short. The LORD was looking after us!

**Ralph Peters, 447th BG
Auburn, NE**

ARTHUR WEEKS...

One memorable incident involved the "Memphis Belle". When she returned from England, she was on promotional tours in the United States. The plane was stripped of its armor and used basi-

cally as an instrument training plane. A group flying the "Belle" was on their way to Ft. Wayne, Indiana to a Notre Dame football game. The "Memphis Belle" lost an engine near Battle Creek, Michigan. They set the plane down at Kellogg Field in Battle Creek, and notified McDill Air Force Base that she would be undergoing repairs and would need a test-hop (Check-ride). Check-ride involved taking the plane up and circling the airfield within 25-30 mile radius for about 3-hours to make sure everything was performing as it should.

In about a week's time, McDill Base received word that the engine was replaced and that it was ready for the "check-ride". Arthur, his co-pilot, engineer, and radio operator took the plane up and no sooner got off the ground when the engine popped and caught fire. They were still too low to the ground to bail out and did not want to lose the "Memphis Belle". By now the tower had known they were in trouble and radioed for them to choose any runway they wished, but just bring her in. They brought her down successfully and a piece of history had been saved. Although the engine burned for four hours, it did not explode. The fueling tanks in the wings had deteriorated allowing gas which had been pumped into them to slowly leak out.

Arthur Weeks

GEORGE GANE...

The mission I remember the most was the second mission to Berlin that the group went on in February of 1944. The *Old Outhouse* was flying Group Leader, with the squadron 729th commander Archie Adre aboard. We crossed the coast line about 28 thousand feet. We were hit by flack and engine #3 was hit and they had to feather the prop. We continued on as group leader. We never had to abort a mission. We should have aborted this one.

Everything went good until we got 75 miles from Berlin. That's when we lost the power on two more engines. We dropped out of formation and started going down. We dropped the bombs. The pilot said to get rid of everything we could. Guns, ammo, flack suits and anything that we could find. The ball tur-

ret was the next thing. We tried to get it out. We pried on it with gun barrels. Did everything we could. I jumped up and down on it with some one holding on to me. It went and no one went with it.

I think we were down to three thousand feet. The power came back on the two engines, so we knew we had three working ones and we were all right.

We sweated out the return trip. It was a good thing the German fighter planes did not find us. We didn't have any guns to fight them off. We landed safely with no one hurt.

**George Gane, 452nd BG
Wyoming, MI**

ROBIN JANTON...

The pace of the air offensive was moving toward its zenith and there was little time to mourn the passing of the 492nd. Thus the beds at North Pick were hardly cold before the 491st Group moved in to fill the vacancy in the 14th wing. The 491st picked up the load on 18 August flying their 58th mission from North Pickenham after completing 57 from their previous base at Metfield. The incoming 491st crews were well aware of the misfortunes that had befallen the 492nd at the hands of the Luftwaffe fighter pilots, and they were not anxious to tempt fate by re-painting their aircraft in the tail colors of the 492nd - as they were expected to do now that they were part of the 14th Bomb Wing. Thus, until early 1945, the consistency of the 14th Wing tail codes (black and silver) was overlooked, and the 491st Liberators continued to sport the white stripe on green tail colors the Group had used while a member of the 95th Wing at Metfield. Whether or not their tail markings had anything to do with it, it can be noted that during the next three months at their new home - the same length of time the 492nd flew from North Pick - the 491st lost a total of only ten aircraft, not one of which was to fighters!

These statistics, along with the incredible 492nd losses sustained while at North Pick are a mute testimony to the brave men who went overseas in WWII to destroy the Axis forces of Hitler's "Fortress Europe."

The airdrome at North Pickenham remained the home of the 491st until the

end of the war in Europe. By that time the Field's first tenants were only a dim memory in the minds of a few old timers at North Pick. The 492nd personnel who finished the war did so as members of other organizations and thus considered themselves as veterans of those units. There was no one around to prepare and publish a souvenir album or unit history of the 492nd. The 14th Bomb Wing History, which might well have included the

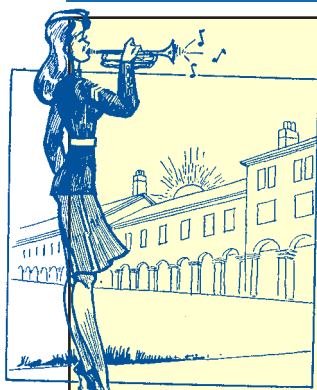
story of the Group for which they waited so long, makes only a single, seven-line reference to the 492nd!

Published Air Force records and histories - based on the criterion that unit continuity follows the official unit designation - merely reflect a transfer of station for the Group on 10 August 1944. They take no official cognizance of the fact that the 492nd organization that existed AFTER that date had any real relationship to the

group that had borne the designation up to that point. Thus, the factors of time and circumstances again worked against the 492nd...this time to deprive it of any real recognition of its brief but eventful tour as a daylight strategic bombing organization.

Robin Janton
"The Hard Luck 492nd"

TANNOY



The Yankee Air Museum at Willow Run Airport, Michigan is presenting an unusual presentation of the Glider pilots' war on March 21st.

CG-4A Waco glider pilots Franklin and Kenneth

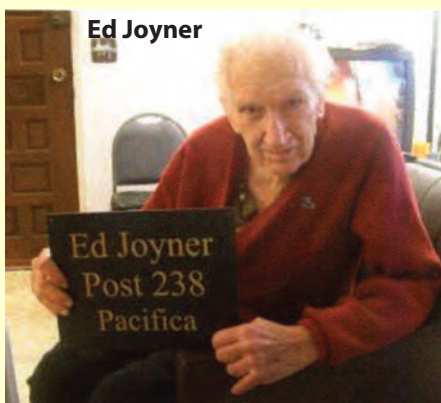
Vogelheim took home movies all through their tour including Operation Market Garden, Southern France and North Africa. The movies are professionally edited and are put to music. These rare films are not available elsewhere. Following the show, "Glider Joe" Kosek will lead visitors to the airfield's T-hangers to see the progress of the restoration on the Yankee glider. Contact: 734-483-4030 or www.yankeeairmuseum.org

Noted author James Lee McDonough, historian and writer of a number of books on the War Between the States, has turned his talents again to World War II. His new book *The Wars of Myron King* centers on the exploits of the 401st Bomb group, in particular the Myron King experience. King flew the deep mission and was shot down and subsequently was "captured" by Russians troops. After one successful 8th AF mission using Russian-held airbases, the Soviets refused categorically permission for any Allied planes from the west to land at their airfields. A fascinating story, the volume is scheduled to be released this Spring and will be reviewed in the 8th AF News Book Reviews section.

Greg Hatton will be presenting a Prisoner of War roundtable discussion on Friday 21 August at the 8th AFHS annual reunion. The principle aim is to point towards future research into WWII USAAF POW history. This conference will also be promoted to area Universities and AXPOW Chapters in the Cincinnati locale. Contact: www.gregoryhatton@earthlink.net tel# 718-836-5951h or 718-239-3038w.

Michael Prestia notes that the U.S. Senate, House of Representatives and President Bush have officially decreed that members of the Armed Services and all veterans who are out of uniform may render the military hand salute during the hoisting, lowering or passing of the United States flag.

Lawrence "Ed" Joyner was recently honored by having the Pacifica American Legion Hall Post and Auxiliary 238 Hall named after him in recognition of his contributions to the Legion and to his service as a member of the 445th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force flying missions as a flight engineer. The Hall had previously been referred to as "Ed's



Place."

John Capp is looking for a reproduction copy of a recording made by a Glee Club at Scott field near Bellville IL in late 1943 or early 1944. The recording was made in the studio of Radio station KMOX in St. Louis. Write John at 600 Schnebly Road, Sedona AZ 86336 if you remember that event and the recording.

Many of our Florida-based 8th troops with an interest in flying may want to look into the Florida Aviation Historical Society at P.O. Box 127, Indian Rocks Beach, FL 33785-0127. Their great newsletter "Happy Landings" is packed full of lots of aviation-related events and happenings. Check it out on the web at: floridahs.org or at: Flight2014.org

On Monday, May 25, 2009 the National Memorial Day Association of Georgia will host the 63rd annual Memorial Day ceremonies at the Marietta National Cemetery in Georgia. More than 2500 attendees are expected at this largest Memorial Day ceremony in the state. Patriotic music and the laying of 75 organization wreaths will be featured, along with speaker Major General Jerome Johnson, Deputy Chief of Staff, G-4, Fort McPherson, Georgia. In addition all Armed services will be honored in the formal recognition of the members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

Contact soon: Exec Scty Dawn McEachern, 402 Chinquapin Dr., Marietta GA 30064 or at: tom.dawn.mceachern@comcast.net for info.

NATIONAL AVIATION HALL OF FAME ANNOUNCES 2009 INDUCTEES



The Class of 2009 of inductees into the National Aviation Hall of Fame in Dayton, Ohio includes Eileen Collins, first female Space Shuttle commander; Russell Meyer, former CEO of Cessna Aircraft Company; Edward White, USAF test pilot and Gemini and Apollo astronaut; and of special interest to those who served in the 8th Air Force, Gen. James "Jimmy" Stewart, 8th AF B-24 pilot and commander and Academy Award-winning stage and screen actor.

Jimmy Stewart served at early training bases in the States and flew combat missions with the 445th Bomb Group at Tibenham airbase in East Anglia. He later moved to command positions in the 453rd BG and in Headquarters. He remained active in aviation affairs and retired from the USAF as a Brigadier General. His daughter will attend the annual Awards Banquet and accept the enshrinement in her father's name, the banquet to be held on 18 July 2009.

An additional presentation of the 2009 Milton Caniff "Spirit of Flight" Award will be given at the President's Dinner the evening of 17 July. The recipients will be the crews of the Apollo Astronaut program, the award marking the 40th anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. All surviving astronauts have been invited to take part.

Contact info: www.nationalaviation.org or to NAHF Director Ron Kaplan tel 937-256-0944 x16.

U.S. AIRMEN WON 1,550 LOCAL BRIDES

Cupid has been working overtime with the Americans in this District. The winning ways of the air personnel at six of our U.S. Aerodromes have won them no fewer that 1,550 English brides. The Anglo-American marriage stakes table is as follows:

Molesworth	400
Polebrook	250
Podington	205
Chelveston	175
Grafton Underwood	155
Thurleigh	148
Harrington	117
Benefield	100

Of the 155 marriages between American personnel at Grafton Underwood and English girls, Kettering provided 40 of the brides.

EAST TENNESSEE VETERANS MEMORIAL DEDICATED

More than 600 veterans and their families gathered to dedicate the impressive 2.5 million dollar Veterans Memorial sponsored by the East Tennessee Veterans Memorial Association. A decade of fund raising efforts established the memorial in the Worlds Fair Park in Knoxville. The massive memorial features 5-foot granite pylons with each name of 6126 veterans from 35 East Tennessee counties who have died in wars starting in World War I. The veterans' names are presented by their particular conflict and by the Tennessee counties they represent. Each inscribed name is with reach of family members and friends of the veteran. The memorial includes a 50-foot flag pole with the American flag flying and a 27-foot high bell tower at the rear of the memorial pillars.

A U. S. Marine Unit raised the American flag and doves of peace were released as the ceremony began. Numerous dignitaries were in attendance and special tributes were given to holders of the Purple Heart and to the 14 Medal of Honor awardees who are from Tennessee. U. S. Representative John Duncan presented a folded flag to retired four-star General Carl Stiner of LaFollette and wreaths were placed at each of the granite pillars to honor the inscribed veterans.

Congressman Duncan noted in his remarks, "This is phenomenal. It should have been done a long time ago. Very few cities even larger than Knoxville have a Memorial like this. It will inspire children to love their country more."



Dear Dr Brown,

I am writing to find out if it is too late to submit an article for the March edition of the 8th AF news.

My Father is a WWII vet of the 493rd BG and last year at the Savannah reunion I had reproduction patches made for all 493rd veterans of the 493rd BG patch. It was a real success and everyone was so appreciative and many had not see the patch since the end of the war.

What I would like to do is to make to same offer to all the Bomb Groups of the 8th AAF. If any BG would like a reproduction of their BG patch I would be more than willing to assist them in having the patch made. I have a vendor that does first rate work and reasonable prices. This is not for profit and no one makes any money except the vendor. All the BG needs to do is provide me with a good copy of the patch---if they have no copy I have a excellent reference book. I would need to know the number of patches they wanted and I will provide them with a quote. I will have them made and will bring them to the Cincinnati reunion, and see that they are distributed.

If I could get this in the March issue---I feel like some groups would be interested.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Dr Nancy J Toombs

cell: 501-681-3126

e-mail: chase221@swbell.net



303rd Bomb Group 2009 Reunion

This year we will again meet as part of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society in Cincinnati, OH August 18th-August 22nd.

A separate group dinner & hospitality suite will highlight the event. Use the Reunion Registration form found in this issue of the 8th AFHS magazine or on the 303rd Bomb Group website, www.303rdbg.com.

2009 Air Shows

Imperial War Museum – Duxford

Spring Air Show

Sunday, May 17

Flying Legends

Saturday, July 11

Sunday, July 12

American Air Day

Friday, August 21

The Duxford Air Show

Saturday, September 5

Sunday, September 6

Autumn Air Show

Sunday, October 11

For further information, please visit
www.americanairmuseum.com

JAMES SLOAN'S STORY



James Sloan

24 Dec. 1944. We at station 373, home of the 357th Fighter Group anticipated a big day, for the weather had cleared. We were stationed at the easternmost base in England, some 90 miles N.E. of London. The weather for the past 8 or 9 days had not been favorable for flying. We were airborne only twice in that time. Once we were the only fighter group escorting about 400 bombers. On the other mission, we climbed to 30,000 ft. in instrument conditions before the mission was

recalled. All flights returned intact, truly an incredible feat. The 24th proved to be not only a big day but a very historic one.

My assignment for the mission was Red 2 as wingman for the group C.O. Shortly after making landfall across the North Sea, 4 German FW 190 D9 (Longnose) were on an easterly heading crossing our heading and about 1,000 ft. above us. With a broadside view, it made for an easy I.D. When they saw us, the leader and his wingman dove on their present heading and made a run for it. The C.O. dropped tanks and took off in hot pursuit. He did not order anyone to engage the other two enemy aircraft and the entire group followed the C.O. like a pack of hounds.

I had dropped tanks and pulled slightly to the left and maintained altitude. I focused my attention on the two that had not made a run for it. A few seconds later, #3 dove on the C.O.'s tail. I called and told him to, "break right!" He didn't. #4 broke and dove to the S.E. I was to learn much later that he was shot down by a ME109. That certainly was a break for me.

By this time, I fell on the tail of #3. He then began a hard left turn. When nearly in firing position, I believe I hit his prop wash and had a high speed stall. My plane snapped to the right. I quickly retarded throttle and applied full right rudder with stick back. It was a vicious spin with practically full military load. I made a normal spin recovery and the recovery was as smooth as could be. However, my air speed was approaching 500 mph. and I gently pulled out of the dive and luck was with me. The enemy aircraft was perhaps 3,000 ft. above me making a slow climbing turn to the left. I closed on him; I don't believe he ever saw me. One long burst of my six 50 calibers and he was hit full length. His prop began to windmill immediately. He put the nose down and began a series of left turns as if he were going down a steep staircase. The turns were of such short duration that I was unable to get into firing position again. I stayed slightly above him and circled outside his descent. His speed was increasing considerably. Evidently he had lost elevator control for he hit the ground at a steep angle with a huge explosion. Just south of his crash site was a large hill where foxholes had been dug. There was no snow in this area and

the yellow sand was very prominent.

I then climbed back to altitude on a 0 degrees heading. Visibility must have been 60+ miles and bombers were still coming out of England. The bomber stream was splitting while over the North Sea. One box of bombers would continue on their original heading and the next would turn on a more easterly heading. I had climbed to about 32,000 ft. into the sun side of the bombers. As far as I could see in three directions, there were bomber formations. I had the best seat in the house to witness this "Air Armada" of 2,000+ bombers. Upon making landfall on the continent I turned back to England and stayed up in the sun. Very shortly, there were two P 51s flying back to England. They were about 5,000 ft. below me. They were rather surprised when I dropped in alongside; they just happened to be from my squadron. I signaled them to form upon me and we went back to altitude in the sun and stayed with the "big birds" until we reached the continent and then turned tail for home. By this time the last bomber formation was well over the North Sea.

At debriefing I claimed a FW190D9 "Longnose." The pilots that destroyed the other two claimed them as ME109's. The German's claimed the Longnose to be the most powerful piston fighter in the war at 1600+ hp. It still was no match for the P-51.

For me, this day was really not over until some 55 years later. Merle Olmsted, group historian for the 357th Fighter Group, and I corresponded frequently. I had mentioned to him that I had destroyed a FW 190 "Longnose." He informed me that the official record credited me with an ME109 on 24 Dec. 1944. Merle decided to check German records for that date in Werner Girbig's book, *Six Months to Oblivion*, which has a daily record of German losses. On that date, there were four FW190 "Longnoses" lost.

Merle was also corresponding with a retired German colonel of the post war German Air Force. The colonel, during the summer months, headed a search team attempting to locate some 200 German pilots from WWII still unaccounted for. One was the pilot that I shot down. I gave Merle the approximate location: 45 miles NW of Bastogne with a large hill with fox holes at the intersection of north/south, east/west roads. The German colonel investigated this area and reached the conclusion that I was correct. The following is his response to Merle concerning my information.

Summer 2001

What Mr. Sloan's air victory belongs, the following was found out: After studying most of the available reports from German sources, it is for sure that Lt. Siegfried Benz I./JG 26 must be the pilot Mr. Sloan shoot down on December 24th, 1944 in the Bastogne Area.

The German assertion Benz' aircraft was mixed up with British Typhoon and shoot down by own fighters, is not true, because on this day, British fighter-bombers were not active in the Bastogne-Malmedy Area.

James Sloan, 357th Fighter Group

BRIEFING

Walking into the map
Of Germany
In the dark
Of night

Listening to the
Briefing Officer
We knew some of us
Would not be there that evening.

Entering a clearing
Where the bomber was parked,
Was there a secret phrase,
Words that would keep

You away from harm?
Was there someone
Behind you appearing
In the wind singing a song?

Magic sounds that would spare
Your group, your crew,
Let you return to
England. Together?

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

RICHARD TOPUS, US Army Pigeoneer

A lifelong interest in racing homing pigeons, Richard Topus was one of several thousand young men who trained homing pigeons for the U.S. Army to be employed in activities by Allied spies as agents of intelligence. He learned his trade from two friends who were pigeoneers during World War I and he continued this tradition of antiquity as a means of combat communications. More than 50,000 pigeons were used by the United States in WWII. Many were shot down. Others were intercepted by falcons released by the Nazis. The British countered by releasing their falcons to attack German messenger pigeons.

Topus entered the Army Signal Corps which included the Pigeon Service. He trained at the famed Intelligence command at Camp Ritchie and at several other installations around the country where the Army raised and trained pigeons. During the training pigeoneers learned to drop pigeons with their message capsules from airplanes and to jump themselves with pigeons tucked against their chests. The Army commissioned the Maidenform Brassiere Company to design paratroopers'



Richard Topus

vests with special pigeon pockets. Mr. Torpus bred and raised pigeons for the optimal combinations of speed and endurance. Pigeons were released by combat troops to get messages regarding enemy troop movements back to the command stations and are credited with saving thousands of lives during the war. The pigeons could attain speeds of 60 miles per hour and had a range of more than a thousand miles.

The Army phased out the pigeon service in the 1950s due to the advent of electronic communications. Torpus remained in pigeon racing circles throughout his life and employed a pigeon in his family business Friendship Food Products logo.

submitted by Sharon Egan

AERIAL GUNNERY SCHOOL NO FLYING TRAINING

by Larry Goldstein, 388th Bomb Group

During the early years of World War II there were several aerial gunnery schools across the country. All of them but one required that a ride in the back seat of an AT-6 was a part of the training. The school at Wendover Utah was the odd ball; there was no flying training, no gunnery from an AT-6.

In mid-1943 this gunnery school was set up in the hills surrounding Wendover Army Air Base. The base and gunnery school were 120 miles from Salt Lake City, across the salt flats. The rumor amongst the men attending the gunnery school was that a man going AWOL for 5 days would only be charged for 3 days because he could be seen walking across the salt flats for the first two.

It was rugged living to say the least; the barracks were old C.C.C. buildings, the equipment was the product of "midnight requisition" mostly from the Union Pacific Rail Road. The salt flats of Utah were noted for very cold mornings even in the summer and being extremely hot during the day. Living conditions were rugged, latrine facilities were out-houses and the

availability of showers was on a "who is around" when the water trucks arrived. Water was trucked up to the gunnery school on a 24 hour a day schedule. To beat the heat the men were showering several times a day. These are the conditions that the men faced on a daily basis.

There was a need for Radio Operators and Flight Engineers and an eight-week course was set up. The course was intense, the instructors were knowledgeable and the gunnery training was excellent. When we graduated we were qualified aerial gunners despite the fact that we had not even seen an airplane. We received our wings, a promotion to Sergeant and immediately shipped out to become combat crew members. There were nineteen radio operators in the class; only five survived combat flying. Several became POW's.

One last item...when we arrived at Wendover we were greeted by a large sign on the side of a mountain constructed by a General:

"WAR IS HELL. KILL OR BE KILLED"



**At twenty thousand feet the world's not flat:
Boundaries, race and nation, disappear.**

Lifted above himself, air gives him armor.
To sacrifice friend and home, family and lover,
Exuberant body and omniverous mind
Pursued for wit and learning the world over;
Delighting in debate, company of kind,
And famous with children as another child -
Only in air can he find strenght enough; only
In flight can love and death be reconciled.
The altered life that follows change of heart -
Study by night; by day the work as porter
In cheap hotels to earn his flying-time,
Help buy the ship, and master every art
Useful for navigation over water -
All are done quietly, not for them, for him.
Rising from Marignan, when the time has come,
Death can be faced to tell them what he loves
More than his life.

from *The Airmen* Selden Rodman



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, 2009. 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, 2009 or any nomination without complete information will not be considered.

Send all nominations to:

Robert Moses • 413 W. Washington Ave. • Brownsville, TN 38012-2064

Mid-Air Collision

Two 379th Bomb Group

B-17s - two days
after VE Day

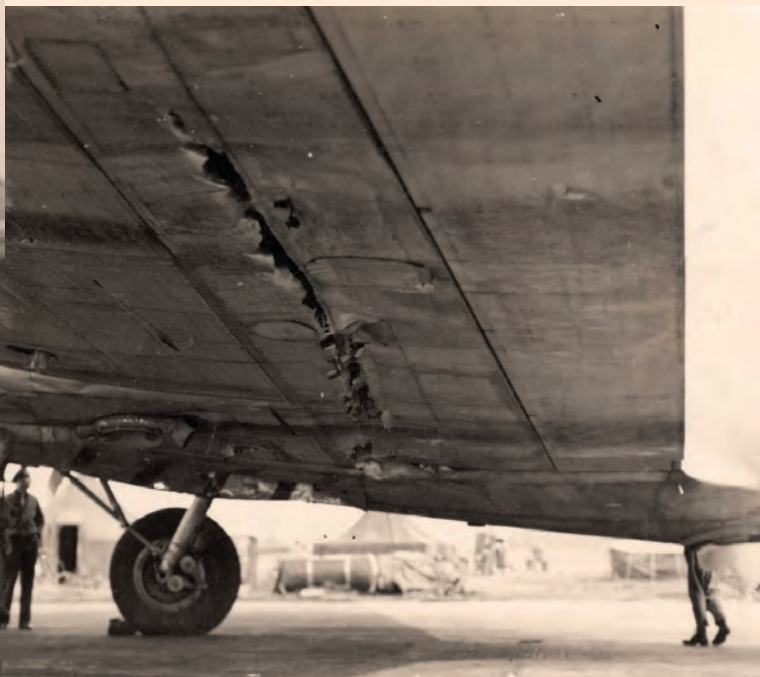
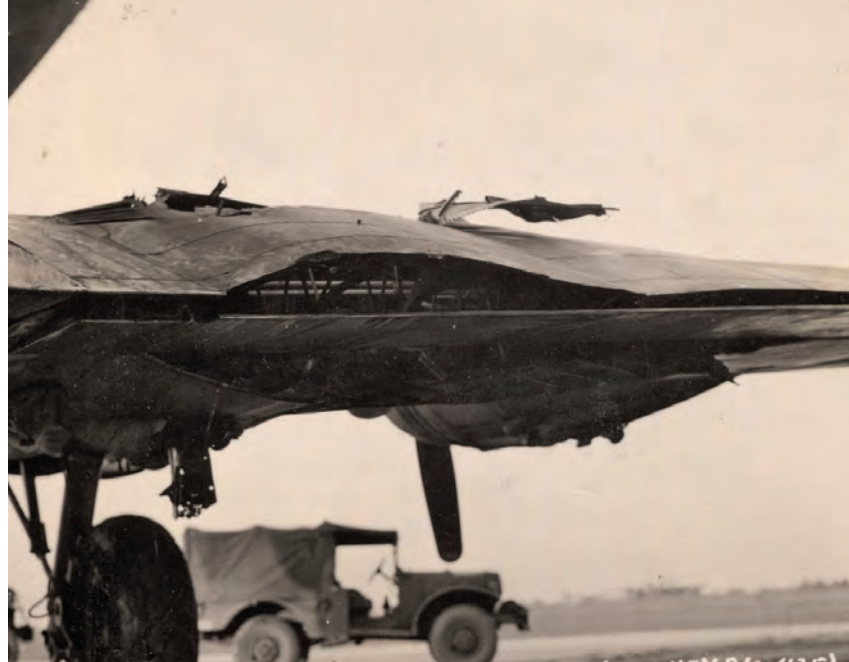




Illustration by Roger Stuch Wayland, MI

– Form may be reproduced –



JOIN THE 8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY!

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CRISIS MANGEMENT

Interesting things are going on in the United States. A lot of her citizens have been running for political office. Many of their shenanigans in the political arena have provided hilarious entertainment to those of us who watch TV. In their debates, many social issues have become political fodder. The War in Iraq was, at first, the most popular debating issue. Then universal health care came in a close second. Political rhetoric changed with the mortgage crisis when the housing bubble suddenly burst. This issue took priority in the Summer and Fall campaigns. Loans on homes were being called in. Property prices plummeted. Lending institutions were in trouble. Then, the big US automobile giants began having trouble paying their bills. Their suppliers had no orders to keep them afloat and they begin firing people. The rising price of oil factored in making transportation costs go up and the increase in goods and services were passed on to the consumer. People fearful of losing their jobs have quit spending money (if they have any) except for the bare necessities. Now, the media is really overwhelmed in spreading their reports of gloom. Crisis and uncertainty dominates the headlines. Talking faces are screaming like "chicken little" did in her story....**the sky is falling!** Upsetting things are happening. Why?

On July 4, 1776 a cherished document was adopted by the Continental Congress whose members were representatives from the 13 Colonies. One statement included in this document declares the following. *"that they (its citizens) are endowed by their Creator by certain unalienable rights....life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"*. For over two centuries, this Declaration of Independence has been effective. People have grown accustomed to its tenants and have enjoyed an abundant life style. It has been easy to enjoy these entitlements and cruise along with no thought of tomorrow, enjoying these provisions, almost unaware of the benefits so freely received. Suddenly, conditions have reversed. People are in panic. Their philosophy, "eat, drink and be merry", has suddenly changed to the words of the 1969 Hee Haw TV show, *"Gloom, despair and agony on me. If it weren't for bad luck, I'd have no luck at all."*

Now we must, as never before, seize this moment. We live in both challenging and exhilarating times. We face great obstacles, but we also have great opportunities. The recently assassinated Hamas co-founder, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin said, *"We are ready to die and nobody can win from a person willing to die."* Paul the Apostle said the same thing in a different context: *"For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."* (Philippians 1:21 KJV) Paul is speaking of one's life in the present. It is to be vibrant and exciting regardless of the future. Goethe said, *"Nothing should be prized more highly than the value of each day."* President Theodore Roosevelt declared, *"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."*

Senator John McCain, a Navy pilot during the Viet Nam

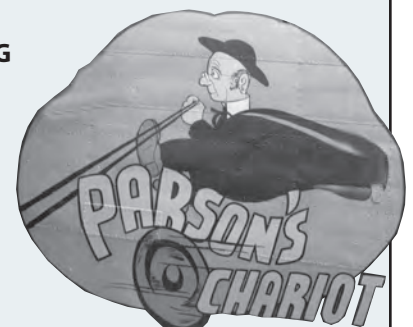
War, was shot down on a mission and became a Prisoner of War. As a prisoner, he was shuttled from one dingy, dirty, isolated cell to another in the Hanoi "Hilton" prison. After another long and brutal interrogation, he was moved once again to a dark and isolated cell and discovered, crudely scratched on one of the walls of the cell, the creed, *"I believe in God, the Father Almighty."* After over five years as a prisoner of war, he said: *"There, standing witness, was God's presence in a remote, concealed place, I was drawn closer to my faith as a stronger, better man. I felt God's love and care, more vividly than I would have felt it had I been safe among a pious congregation in the most magnificent cathedral."* He declared that before his prison experience he loved his country, America. But then, he had a simple appreciation for the comforts and privileges most Americans enjoyed and took for granted. *"It wasn't until I had lost America, that I realized how much I loved her."*

God Almighty allows seasons to come in our lives to deal with the conflicts we face while living in a world that is not ideal. He is available to the people who make up our country but not all of the rules of our country work for everybody all the time. Entitlements, in the eyes of some of the citizens, fail and they are called upon to manage their own everyday perils. Sometimes, these perils are due to their own neglect, others are the fault of the people managing the rules. Now, as never before, our rights are under attack. But, whenever we reach the 'end of our rope', only then do we realize the value of our life, our friends, our country, our God. God desires us to have peace and assurance. One phrase of our National Anthem declares *"the land of the free and the home of the brave."* Without the bravery, there is no freedom. In the midst of everything we encounter as an individual or as a nation, there will be conflict. Paul the Apostle addressed the issue when he said, *"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for He hath said, I will never leave you or forsake you."* (Hebrews 13:5 KJV).

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



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