



SEPTEMBER 2009

THE 8TH AF NEWS

Volume 09 Number 3 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"





AF News

Magazine of
The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

September 2009

The Eighth Air Force News is dedicated to Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough, founder of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and editor for sixteen years. It is published quarterly and is the official newsmagazine of the Society. The 8th AF NEWS is sent to members of the Society and is not for public sale. The home office is at 175 Bourne St., Pooler GA. 31322 - P.O. Box 956, Pooler, GA. 31322.

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PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

Hello Fellow Members!! Our recent National Reunion in Cincinnati was one for the books! I am pleased to report our yearly gathering was a resounding success. You can call it an 8th Air Force Reunion if you wish, but I feel as if it was a more of a gathering of our 8th Air Force family.

Several of our Board of Directors and 8th AFHS members worked very hard to make our Reunion a wonder experience for all, none more so than, Board Member George Hoidra. George was this year's Reunion Coordinator and worked very hard to make this a memorable event. George's father flew from Rattlesden, England and was a B-17 crewmember with the 447th Bomb Group. George is a perfect example of the commitment that our "Next Gen" members have towards preserving the legacy of the Mighty Eighth. Thank you very much for all your dedication and hard work to this organization. You are a true asset and a great friend. George, I know your Father is very proud of his son.

One of the highlights of the 2009 Reunion was a visit to the National Museum of the United States Air Force in Dayton, Ohio. Our group made two tours to this world class Museum. The staff at the Museum was absolutely

wonderful. I cannot say enough how easy they were to work with and how amenable they were to our requests. To Major General Charles Metcalf (ret.) and Events Coordinator Jane Leach, our heartfelt thanks for making our visit to the Museum an unforgettable experience.

We begin our new fiscal year in a positive and sound financial position. Your Board of Directors has worked very hard during the 2009 to set our course in the right direction. Some of the decisions that we have had to make have been difficult to make. However, our responsibility remains to make the best decisions for the good of the Society. Our future is very bright and our pledge to preserve the legacy of the 8th Air Force has never been stronger.

Remember the October 8th through the 14th is National Eighth Air Force Week. Show your pride during our week, gang!!

Lastly, I have decided to complete my last year on the Board of Directors as your President. For almost 20 years, I have served the Society in some capacity. From my early days in with the "Mighty Eighth Theater" at our National Reunions, then as PX Manager for almost seven years to serving as your Historian since 2006. Now, 2009/2010 will end my eight years of service on



**Mark Copeland
President**

the Board of Directors. This past year has been one of many challenges, but I feel that we have accomplished many great things. I want to continue forward for one more year to make a better Society for all. I promise you all that my last year of formal service to this organization will be my best.

Thank you for all your support and encouragement. We are proud to have you as a member!!

Respectively in your service,
**Mark Copeland
President – 8th AFHS**

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Norma Peace Chesser



Robert "Bob" Moses



Bruce Sundlun



Earl E. Wassom

MISSION BRIEFING



Walter Brown, Editor
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Donna Neely and I want to extend our appreciation to the many kind comments and words of encouragement expressed by friends during the great an-

nual reunion in Cincinnati. This edition 8th AF News will reflect the good times there – especially impressive was the enthusiastic participation of the sons and daughters of our “original guys”. The 2010 meeting in Tucson should continue that significant trend.

We will continue to publish the quarterly issues as we have for the past eleven years. We encourage and deeply appreciate your sending us your stories and photographs for consideration.

A number of our Society members are aware that I have spent many years with one-on-one taped interviews from private meetings with our buddy Major Gen. Lew Lyle, now deceased. These 300 hours of tapes contain factual materials in Lew’s words not found in any other history books. Each tape has been transcribed by a devoted Museum volunteer, Jeanelle Strickland – it took her over a year of long days typing them up. She had the professional assistance and guidance of Museum Historian, Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price. Now that I am no

longer at the Museum in Savannah, I can assuredly answer the question I have often heard from many of you: “How’s Lew’s book coming along?” Let me say that it is presently spread out in the study of my Spring Hill home and is full speed ahead. If you have any artifacts or stories that involved Lew please send them on to me ASAP. As Lew was an unusually effective combat leader during the war and during the Cold War with Russia, you will be amazed, as I have been for years, at his personal story.

Reviewing new books over the years in each 8th AF News has been one of my pleasures while serving as your editor. I’m looking forward to presenting the review of Lew’s volume!

Cheers and Good Luck,
 Walter Brown, Editor

BEHIND THE SCENES

Special “Thank you” for the great photographers in Cincinnati. If you didn’t notice, Ralph Lynn Jr., Bob Books, Beverly Baynes-Tomb, Tim Bivens, and Carol Sage were busy capturing those memorable moments and those great smiles on your faces. We have also worked extra hard to include captions with each photo to help those unfortunate members that could not attend the reunion to recognize your buddies.

“Dancing with the stars” had plenty of competition with our 8th AF Members this year!! It was a joy to watch all the couples dance to the beat of The Pete Wagner Orchestra.

I am so excited and feel honored about working with Walt on Lew Lyle’s Book!!!

I must prepare myself and you to be ready to sit back and enjoy one of the best stories ever told! Walt is very

passionate about sharing Lew’s story exactly as Lew would have wanted it to be shared.

My husband Jeff and I really enjoyed the 2009 Reunion in Cincinnati. The Museum was much more than we could have ever expected. I am not so sure that the guy in the Walt Disney exhibit below wasn’t a real person??

Looking forward to seeing everyone again in Tucson.

Donna Neely



Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines

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Hello Members,

I enjoyed seeing some of you at the Reunion in Cincinnati. It was a lovely visit. Please see the "Dues Notice" in this issue and mail in your 2010 dues if you haven't already.

On a personal note, I am now Mrs. Catherine Rice. I've just married a wonderful, military

man. I will remain the Membership Manager while he is deployed in a few months.

**Sincerely, Catherine Rice
Office Manager**

NATIONAL MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE WEEK OCTOBER 8 – 14 2009

Each year the nation honors those men and women who have served admirably in the 8th Air Force. This special week of observation was selected in honor of those who flew combat missions during "Black Week" in 1943 - World War II. The Mighty Eighth incurred huge losses of men and machines and being early in the war, Higher Headquarters seriously questioned themselves on the feasibility of deep penetrations to bomb vital targets in Germany in view of the formidable defenses of the Nazi Regime. The Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association is one of the organizations that annually meet on

14 October each year – the anniversary of the Black Week raid on Schweinfurt on which more than 60 B-17s and their crews were lost to enemy fire. The members of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society have special recognitions for those who were lost or captured during those missions.

Historical Society Chapters and Units are encouraged to take special time to recognize this annual week of tribute and remembrance.

CHAPTER/UNIT/GROUP LIAISON REPORT

Greetings my fellow Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society members. The Society's 35th Annual Reunion took place on August 18 – 23 and I am told it was a great time and success. Our Chapter/Unit/Group Development Meeting was hosted by Vice President Harry Tanner. I was not able to attend the Reunion and want to thank Harry. Harry informed me that it was a good interactive meeting discussing what each Chapter/Group has been doing and ideas on their future. I have been talking to some of you or

receiving emails on this subject. The future lies in what the Society refers to as NexGen (Next Generation) to keep the Chapters and the Society intact so this Country does not forget what the Might Eighth endured by 'Keeping the Memories Alive'.

That said we also understand that getting the NexGen involved is easier said than done. This is where our current dilemma resides and where I am asking for your input and ideas. I recommended to a Chapter that was folding to do a local get-together for luncheons, which did keep the Chapter going. We need your thoughts & ideas please.

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

'Keep Their Memories Alive'
Pat Keeley
Please support the USO.



Rue du Lieutenant R.G. Quinn

On 21 May 1955 a homage was paid to the Lieutenant Russell G. Quinn pilot of the 77th FS. 20th FG in presence of its family. A Memorial was set up and a street of agglomeration carries from now on the name of "Rue du Lieutenant R.G. Quinn."

This year at the time of the 65th anniversary of died of this young pilot who gave its life for our freedom, and on the initiative of "Association for the Memory of Lt. R.G. Quinn" a ceremony was celebrate the 3 May 2009 in the presence of the Municipality, Veterans of Breal and of "Souvenir Fran-

cais". A message of recognition was read by Mr. Jean Paul Favrais President of Association. A lithography engraved on the Memorial representing Lieutenant Russell G. Quinn and its P-38 were inaugurated to summon up one's courage and the sacrifice of this pilot and all the American aviators in Europe.

Jean Paul Favrais
Life Member 34238



The Most Valuable Track and Field Competitor Award (Men)

Established in 1966, is sponsored by The 8th Air Force Historical Society in memory of Mr. Arne U. Arnesen, an accomplished track coach who dedicated 28 years of his life to the Athletics Department and the Air Force Academy.

The award was presented by Director of Awards and Protocol for the Society. Colonel Robert Vickers, USAF, retired, to Kellen J. Curry, class of 2009, Squadron 10.

Kellen J. Curry

Junior (2008): Conference runner-up during both the indoor (60 meter hurdles) and outdoor (110 meter hurdles) championships...all-conference honoree in both events...clocked a career-best time of 8.00 at the Mountain West Conference Championships...that time is ranked ninth in Academy history...won the hurdles at the Air Force Invitational...won the 110-meter hurdles at the first-ever Front Range Invitational.



DON WAS A REAL 'MAN'S SOLDIER'

War Reporter Writes Memorial Day Eulogy

by Walter Cronkite

LONDON, May 30, 1944 -- (Delayed)-(UP)

This is a pretty personal note for Mr. and Mrs. Stockton, Los Angeles, U.S.A. I don't know their initials and the last street address I had for them was 756 South Broadway. But if the editor uses this, they might see it -- and I'd like them to get this message.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Stockton: This is to apologize for not keeping my promise. You did not know of my promise. I made it only to myself--and silently to Don in a way. I promised to go out to Brookwood Cemetery and visit his grave this Memorial Day.

But the war--the one that cut that grand full life of his short at 22 years--interfered in carrying out that simple little gesture of tribute.

It interfered because I write the air war, and today as I write this between stories, the air over England is reverberating under the terrible impact of thousands of tons of bombs.

DON WOULD KNOW

I am busy writing that story now. It is a story that Don would know all about, so at least he will forgive my failure to get out there to peaceful Brookwood today.

Don was one of those keen-visioned youngsters who believed in our America's job and got into it early. When that 20 mm. cannon shell snuffed out his life over Kiel May 14, 1943, he was within a single mission of completing his operation tour of duty. One more and he would have been buying us all beer at the officer's mess--and Don would have a keg out at the enlisted men's mess, too, because that was the kind of guy he was.

Don would have been going home as one of those American boy pioneers who in the lean Winter days of 1942-1943 went out daily over Germany in a handful of Fortresses without fighter escort. They were the ones that paved the way for the mighty high-altitude precision attacks of the day.

BACK FROM RAID

I met Don in February 1943, just after

he had brought an almost tailless Fort back from a raid over France. He was sitting on a table in the briefing room, a doughnut in one hand and a coffee cup in the other. His flying cap was pushed back on his forehead. His face bore red marks where the oxygen mask had been. It was dirty and sweaty, but it was broken in the middle by one of the biggest grins I ever saw.

I thought to myself, "this bird isn't real: he is out of one of those slick magazine ads."

Don turned out to be the realest man I ever met.

He was promoted to Captain while still 21, but he might as well have been a PFC. He never pulled his rank.

Well, Mr. and Mrs. Stockton, I am telling you this--things you know better than I--because in the year that has gone by, Don still stands out as typical of all the things that are finest in our American fliers.

During World War II, Brookwood Cemetery was a temporary resting place for over 5,000 war dead. After the war they were either transferred to Cambridge American Cemetery or returned to their families in the USA. Brookwood now contains the graves of 468 American military dead and names of 563 others. Most are from World War I.

A new brochure for visitors at the Cambridge American Cemetery is now in distribution. The brochure was developed by American Battle Monuments Commission through cooperation with Cambridge American Cemetery Superintendent David Bedford, and executed by F. Clifton Berry Jr. and his team at FCB Associates LLC. The 303rd Bomb Group, 427th Bomb Squadron Captain Donald E. Stockton Crew was chosen to be highlighted on the brochure. The brochure may be viewed here: <http://www.303rdbg.com/cambridge-cemetery-brochure.pdf>



New Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial Visitor's Brochure

A Very Special 35th Annual Reunion



Robert Hughes, 466th BG & Mannie Manniella, 96th BG met for the first time at the breakfast table in Cincinnati. These two didn't come to just meet with old friends/acquaintances, these guys met for the first time to share in the camaraderie of common interest & experiences.

The mixture of attendees at the Millenium hotel the third week of August was ready to go! Each day of the annual reunion, from breakfast at seven till the closing of the last Hospitality room in the late, late hours the older and younger generations enjoyed the special programs and events arranged for the reunion.

The five-star host hotel, itself in downtown Cincinnati right across from the big mall (yes, there was a T. J. Maxx there) had excellent service, food, and facilities the entire week. Several events provided by the meeting planners, espe-

cially through the year-long guidance and arrangements of Board member George Hoidra and Donna Lee's Armed Forces Reunions crew doing their superb job both before and during the reunion, stood out during the week.

The usual enjoyable gathering events were all there. Cocktail parties and the Bomb Group rendezvous dinners were especially enjoyable as were the city bus tours. A great time for everyone to get together and catch up on all the news. Meetings of the NexGens were crowded – the four-year old NexGen movement now has more than 400 members



Pathfinder pilot Bill Owen, led the 95th BG on the first American bombing of Berlin. Bill is signing prints with 100th BG Historian, Michael Faley.

and is expanding. Board members Earl Wassom, 466th BG, and Norma Chesser have kept this movement on the front burner each year. Two extensive Board meetings got the business affairs of the Society well-in-hand and set the plans for 2009-10. New members of the Board of Directors were elected at the General Assembly meeting, with George Hoidra beginning his second three-year term and David Nowack being elected to his first.

Special highlights included an excellent Friday afternoon Forum on the Prisoner of War experience, featuring authors from around the nation and a special panel interaction of a number of POWs who were in German Stalags during the war. Expertly organized by member Greg Hatton, some of the featured presented were Marilyn Walton, Grover Swearingen, Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price, Tamara Haygood and noted author of the volume, *Stalag Luft III*, Dr. Arthur Durand. Bruce Norfleet screened the excellent piece *The Price of Freedom*. Saturday's Roger A. Freeman Symposium, *Combat Over Fortress Europe* which featured two outstanding veterans, Bob Vickers 392nd BG and Bill Thorns 96th BG. They shared their stories about flying combat in WWII and focused on the POWs with original films and presentations. Saturday also saw the eleventh annual presentation of the Society's Medical Program, *Pearls*, - things to do, and not do, to ensure your attendance at the 2010 8th AFHS reunion in Tucson in July 2010.

There were two events attended by almost all of the members. Two very special tours to Dayton hosted by the Director of the National USAF Air Force Museum, Major General Charles Metcalf. Gen. Metcalf, who was instrumental in the acquisition this year for the B-17 for the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, arranged behind-the-scenes tours of the *Memphis Belle* restoration now underway in Dayton. He also hosted an excellent evening dinner in the Hangar gallery with tables set up among some of the many airplane there on display. The Museum's staff showed our members a warm welcome to the facility. Many members got a tour of the Presidential airplane hangar

Cincinnati, Ohio 2009!



Aviation Artist - Gil Cohen



Earl Wassom 466th BG revisits an old friend.

and had a visit to volunteer Mac Parkhill's domain at the Nissen hut with its original 4th Fighter Group bar from Debden and the 8th AFHS control tower, hosted by volunteer James Poole.

Big Band Music entertained over 500 attendees at the Gala Banquet this last evening of the week, always a most memorable affair. The candle lighting ceremony was conducted by Belton Wolf, with memories of his departed wife, Mary Anne. Special honors and

awards were presented to original members Earl Wassom and to Bob Vickers for their decades of support of Society programs and their input to 8th AFHS functions and publications. A fascinating presentation by artist Gil Cohen highlighted the after-dinner program, with Gil showing the techniques of his many paintings and sketches of the 8th Air Force wartime experience.

Schedule your calendars to attend the 2010 Annual Reunion to be held in Tucson, Arizona July 19-23. We are expecting to have a number of Bomb Group Associations join us then, just as a number of them did this year in Cincinnati.



8th AFHS 35th Annual Reunion - Book Signings



**Dale VanBlair "Looking Back"
"A Tail Gunners View of WWII"**



**Earl Wassom signing his book
"Hello Darkee"**



**Earl Wassom & Donna Neely displaying
"Hello Darkee." They spent many hours
preparing Earl's book for publishing.**



Book signing



**Michael Faley & Luc Dewez
High Noon Over Haseluenne**



**Walt & Alice Brown, Cindy Wassom
admiring Gil Cohen's new book.**



Jim Goar signs a picture of his old base



Jim Goar, Vivian Rogers-Price, Bob Doolan



POW Round Table



**Two generations of Reunion attendees
enjoying one of the several displays in the
Memorabilia Room**



**Peggy Hardin & Felice Stelljes from the
Mighty Eighth AF Museum PX Store.**



**Dennis Rogers (crazy rabbit) and Jim
Marsteller**

8th AFHS 35th Annual Reunion



Catherine Mayne/Rice



Bob and Mark Vickers



Peter Ruplenas 486th BG



L-R 447th AEG/ECS Kevin Screen, Robert Wayland, Jr., Matthew Land, Julie Gerisch, Jon Andre, Todd Schug, and George Neville



NexGens



Tom Perry talks with Wally Blackburn



392nd hospitality room



Lou and Delores Stephens



**Tuskegee airman
POW Alexander Jefferson**

Lunch Cruise Down the Ohio River



September 2009 (09-3)



8th AFHS 35th Annual Reunion



Debra Wetherald at the 447th BG hospitality room



Getting fueled up with a breakfast buffet before a full day of reunion activities



Susan Estes, Ann Shaw & Alice Brown

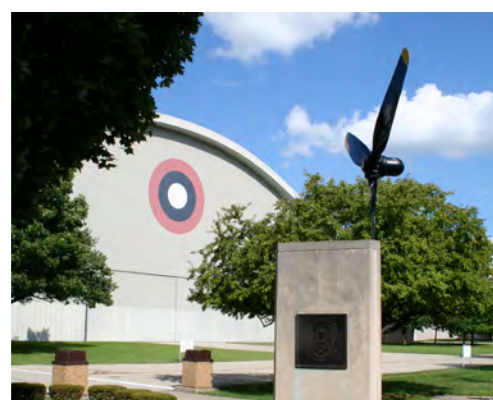


Bob Vickers 392nd BG & Luc Duwez



Fredi and Tylar Proveaux and Laurie Bedus

Wright Patterson AFB Museum



8th AFHS 35th Annual Reunion



Lee Faulkner, 303rd BG, comfortably wearing his original Hell's Angels A-2 jacket



447th BG - 466th BG Joint Operations



Wally Blackburn 392nd BG & family



Mary & Ivan McKinney



Videographer - Jeff Converse



Bob Moses & Ralph Lynn



George Hoidra, Carol & Frank Alfter and Beverly Baynes Tomb



Darrel Lowell & Gene Buttle



John Grasse & his lovely dinner date



Tim Bivens & George Bonitz 96th BG on top of the Hilton Hotel overlooking Cincinnati.



466th BG with picture of Molly & Lew

8th AFHS 35th Annual Reunion - Gala Banquet & The Candlelight Ceremony



Pete Wagner Orchestra



Chaplain Earl Wassom at Gala Banquet



Honor Guard



**The Candlelight Ceremony
presented by Belton Wolfe, 305th BG**



**Harry Tanner lighting 1st candle in
memory of 28,000 aircrew members who
gave their lives to preserve freedom.**



**Joe Gerber & Candy Brown lighting 2nd
candle in memory of 26,000 airmen who
endured being POW's.**



**Russ Chase & Debra Wetherald lighting 3rd
candle in memory of those who flew the
bombers.**



**Dave Inmann, Richard Dougan & Richard
Gustke (353rd Fighter Group) lighting 4th
candle in memory of Fighter Pilots.**



**John Grasse lighting 5th candle in
memory of the Ground Personnel.
(also included on front cover of this issue)**



**Vivian Rogers-Price lighting 6th candle in
memory of our British Friends.**



**Sergeant Robert Wayland lighting 7th
candle to salute the New Generation.**



**One single lit candle is in remembrance of
those who have left us since our last reunion.**

8th AFHS 35th Annual Reunion - Gala Banquet



Gil Cohen's after dinner presentation of his many paintings and sketches.



8th AFHS Annual Gala Banquet Dinner



Mark Copeland presents Gil Cohen with a copy of Roger Freeman's book "Mighty Eighth"



Mark Copeland presenting Earl Wassom with a Meritorious Service Award for his 16 years of devotion to the 8th AFHS



Mark Copeland presenting Robert Vickers with the President's Award for his years of service to the Society.



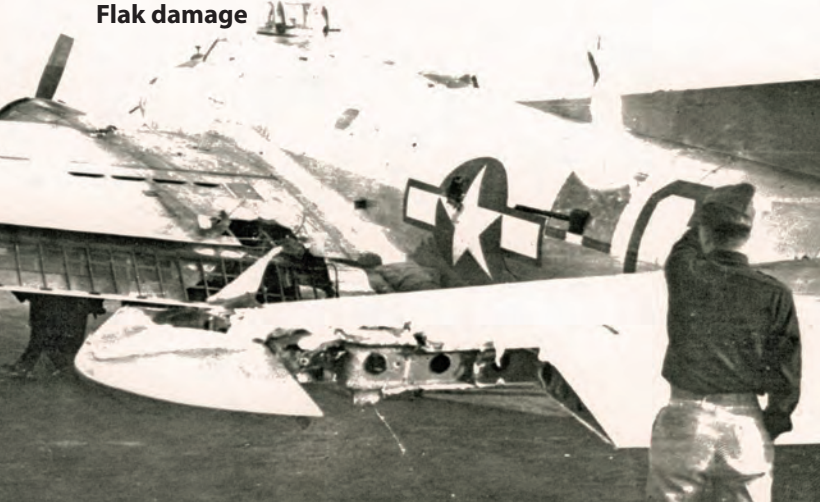
George Hoidra presenting Donna Lee (Armed Forces Reunion) with a plaque for all her hard work organizing the 8th AFHS reunions.

CONTESTANTS FOR "DANCING WITH THE STARS" Our 8th AF group never missed an opportunity to shake a leg on the dance floor!





Flak damage



THE WARTIME OF THE SCHOTTELKORB CREW





R.W. Schottelkorb
"Glamour Puss."

R.W. Schottelkorb at McCook Army Air Base April 6, 1944 prior to flying to England. Assigned to the 862nd Squadron, 493rd Bomb Group - 8th Air Force
Front Row (Left to Right) Carl M. Halteman - Nose Turret Gunner, Sam T. Owens - Tail Turret Gunner, James W. Hanwell - Radio Operator, Marion C. Rutherford - Ball Turret Gunner, Leo L. Mason - Waist Gunner
Back Row (Left to Right) Charles W. Gray - Navigator, Lt. Roy S. Walser - Co-pilot, Robert W. Schottelkorb - Pilot, Juvie J. Ortiz - Bombardier, Victor G. Anderson - Aerial Engineer & Top Turret Gunner

After all too many years I have finally decided to send some of my pictures and material covering my tour with the 8th Air Force, from May 13, 1944 until we completed our last combat mission on October 25, 1944.

I was the proud pilot of a shiny new B-24-J as our crew flew from Grenier Field, Manchester, New Hampshire to Goose Bay, Labrador, the first leg of our flight to England. Our base was Debach and was near Ipswich, England. We were members of 862nd Squadron, 493rd Bomb Group, 3rd Air Division and were the last group to join the 8th Air Force.

I do have one little aside that I want to mention. After I was home on leave in December of 1944 I had my pictures displayed as I was separating them to mail to my crew members. A young lady passing by saw my picture (#1) and made the remark "Glamour Puss." From then on my family knew it as my "Glamour Picture."

Last year, 2008, my granddaughter, Amanda Combs (then age 21) graduated from the Hillsboro, Oregon School of Aviation, as a helicopter pilot. This was her long-sought goal, and she sent me the enclosed photograph. She said "It

doesn't compare to your picture, Grandpa." I think it compares very favorably - just a different era and setting. We are all very proud of her. Amanda has now progressed from the Robinson R22 to R-44 and is a certified instrument/flight helicopter instructor at Hillsboro.

Again thank you and I know it will be quite a while before any of this can be published.

Sincerely,
 Bob Schottelkorb, 493rd BG,
 4008 Lincoln Rd., Missoula,
 MT 59802



Pilot Amanda Combs
I don't recall pilots looking this good in the war.

REUNIONS

306TH 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

351ST BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

7 November 2009
Savannah Georgia
Wreath laying at the Mighty Eighth
Museum at Noon, Saturday 7
November 2009
Contact: Bruce Nocera tel # 718-721-
0924 email: bnocera@nyc.rr.com

EIGHTH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2010 ANNUAL REUNION TUCSON, ARIZONA JULY 20-25

FARM KID in the ARMY

Dear Ma and Pa,
I am well. Hope you are. Tell Brother
Walt and Brother Elmer that the Army
beats working for old man Minch by a
mile. Tell them to join up quick before
all of the places are filled.

I was restless at first because you get
to stay in bed till nearly 6 a.m. But I am
getting so I like to sleep late. Tell Walt
and Elmer all you do before breakfast
is smooth your cot, and shine some
things. No hogs to slop, feed to pitch,
mash to mix, wood to split, fire to lay.
Practically nothing.

Men got to shave but it is not so bad,
there's warm water. Breakfast is strong
on trimmings like fruit juice, cereal,
eggs, bacon, etc., but kind of weak on
chops, potatoes, ham, steak, fried egg-
plant, pie and other regular food, but

tell Walt and Elmer you can always sit
by the two city boys that live on cof-
fee. Their food, plus yours, holds you
until noon when you get fed again. It's
no wonder these city boys can't walk
much.

We go on 'route marches,' which the
platoon sergeant says are long walks
to harden us. If he thinks so, it's not
my place to tell him different. A 'route
march' is about as far as to our mailbox
at home. Then the city guys get sore
feet and we all ride back in trucks.

The sergeant is like a school teacher.
He nags a lot. The Captain is like the
school board. Majors and Colonels
just ride around and frown. They don't
bother you none.

This next will kill Walt and Elmer with
laughing I keep getting medals for
shooting. I don't know why.. The bulls-
eye is near as big as a chipmunk head

and don't move, and it ain't shooting at
you like the Higgett boys at home. All
you got to do is lie there all comfortable
and hit it. You don't even load your own
cartridges. They come in boxes.

Then we have what they call hand-
to-hand combat training. You get to
wrestle with them city boys. I have to
be real careful though, they break real
easy. It ain't like fighting with that ole
bull at home. I'm about the best they
got in this except for that Tug Jordan
from over in Silver Lake. I only beat
him once. He joined up the same time
as me, but I'm only 5'6" and 130 pounds
and he's 6'8" and near 300 pounds dry.

Be sure to tell Walt and Elmer to hurry
and join before other fellers get onto
this setup and come stampeding in.

Your loving daughter, Alice

Then & Now



From Pharmacist to Bombardier to Pharmacist

The winter issue of The
Massachusetts College
of Pharmacy magazine
The Bulletin featured
an alumnus report from
James Zographos, '40, of
Westborough, Mass. The
magazine asked alumni to
tell about their careers and
what they are doing today.
Zographos told of how
he was drafted in 1942
expecting to go into the
Army Medical Corps and
instead being assigned as
a radio operator ("Me - a
pharmacist!"). He passed

the Army Air Corps exam and trained as
a bombardier (his instructor was also a
pharmacist). With the 8th Air Force in
England, he completed 30 missions and
volunteered for another tour, for a total
of 50 missions - a rare feat of survival.
He received a total of 20 awards and
medals for his service, including the
Distinguished Flying Cross, the Purple
Heart Medal and seven Air Medals with
six Oak Leaf Clusters.

After receiving a promotion to first
lieutenant, he returned home, married
his sweetheart, Eugenia (to whom he
was married for 53 years), and, finally,
four years later, got back to his profes-
sion. Zographos is retired but renews his
pharmacy license annually.

PICADILLY LIL

Dear Walter,

I am confused by Darrel Lowell's piece on page 7 of the July '09 edition of the 8th AF News. The Piccadilly Lil shown in the picture is a B-24 and the 94th BG flew B-17's, models F and G.

I flew as a Radio Operator/Gunner on a B-24 crew in the 713th Sqdn., 448th Bomb Group.

By the way, I enjoyed Dan Allen's nose art and the piece about the B-32 Dominator.

Our Group was designated for retraining and the Pacific Theater. We were in Sioux Falls, SD when they dropped the bomb.

Enjoy the News!

Regards, Norman Dunphe, Taunton, MA

MY VETERAN'S DAY PRAYER

Lord, when the pull of my bed
lures me to stay another hour,
please remind me of Taps
being played for the fallen,
of the tears that reach my cheek
after each name is read,
the ones I knew personally
and the ones old-timers
talk about in awe.

After the crowd stumbles through
The Pledge of Allegiance
I want to be there
and listen with all my heart
while the winner of this year's
essay contest quiets the crowd
reminding us of why
we are paying our respects.

When the closing prayer is read
I want to look around in honor
at my fellow vets,
the men and women
in their timeworn uniforms.
Let me see them as they were,
splendidly marching forward
with the courage that allows us
to have a choice of whether
we come here today or not.
submitted by
Clinton B. Campbell
Karen M. Peluso
Beaufort, SC 29902

A FAVOR, PLEASE !

Hello, Donna—I have a favor to ask:
Some months ago, there was a letter
from a reader in Oxford, Michigan and I
believe he identified himself as hav-
ing been with the 385th BG. I looked
and looked through old issues and
could not find his letter ! If your office
uses the Access Program for subscrib-
ers, I know it is possible to "Look for" a
particular set of information by using
the column for "address of town"—in
this case, Oxford. Could you maybe,
---hopefully,--- please help me find this
man. My wife grew up in Oxford and I
hope to learn if they knew one another
in their childhood years. Many thanks.
All for now. Bob
B-17 "Flying Fortress"
Bob Silver-Squadron Command Pilot
US 8th Air Force, World War II
hihosilverb17@earthlink.net

**8TH AF NEWS
AUTOMOBILE DECAL**

On page 42 of the current issue of 8th
AF News (Vol. 09 Number 2) under
license plates of the Mighty Eighth is
an automobile decal designed by Alan
Morton of the 457th Bomb Group. Is
there any way to buy these automobile
decals? I have a dear friend who was
in the 457th bomb group, station 130,
Glatton, England. He like Alan Morton
was a flight engineer. I would like to
buy one of these decals for him.
Ginger Bolton
edginger@pineland.net (478) 237-4837

CRASH SEARCH

Dear Dr. Brown,
I would request you have the following
request printed in the 8 AF News "Mail
Call" column.
Looking for information on B-24J 42-
50871 that crashed on July 15, 1944
near Asheville, NY enroute from Topeka,
KS to Port of Embarkation. Especially
like to contact surviving crewmembers
James W. Caldwell, Jr., Lewis R. Moldo-
van, Phillip J. Marks and Harold Stanley.
Ralph Larson, 10754 Stuart Road, San
Antonio, TX 78263-9698, 210-649-4512.

Thank you Dr. Brown for your assistance
in this matter, and for a wonderful

publication.

Good luck at the reunion.

Sincerely,

Ralph Larson randjranch@webtv.net

SCORCHY

Dear Dr. Brown,

My name is Russell S. Klingensmith, a
member of the 8th AF Historical Society
#948660-08-303 BG, and I can relate the
following, which may be of interest to
you. I arrived at Molesworth, England,
in November 1943 as a navigator on
the Howard Dahleen crew, to become a
part of the 303rd Bomb Group.

Our crew began flying missions in
December 1943, and I finished my
combat tour in April 1944, after which I
was transferred to Group Headquarters
as Assistant Group Navigator. Served
there until the end of March 1945 when
I was sent home.

Our Dahleen Crew was aboard
"Scorchy" heading for Frankfurt, Ger-
many on February 11, 1944. Before
we reached the target we lost two
engines and a wing fuel tank to flak.
We couldn't keep up with the formation
so we headed for home. We decided
to do something worth while with our
bomb load. Our pilot, Howard Dahl-
leen, took us over a straight stretch of
railroad. Ray Gouthier, put a string of
500 pounders along about a quarter-
mile of track, making quite a mess of it.
Our air speed, due to only two engines
and a brisk headwind, was only about
90 knots on our way to England. As we
passed over an airfield, two German
fighters came up, looked us over, and
then went back down to the airfield.

Our fuel was so low that we made
preparation to ditch in the channel.
Once we reached the coast, Howard
decided to try to make it to England.
We did, and then landed at RAF Shore-
ham with our hydraulic system shot out
and no brakes. Howard put the nose
of the plane between a building and a
gun emplacement where we crashed.
The fuselage broke through the radio
compartment, with the tail winding up
along the trailing edge of the left wing.
Our radio operator, Cliff Swanson,
landed on the ground shaken up but
unhurt. Orrick Malcolm, our engineer,

suffered the worst injury with a separated shoulder. Other injuries were minor, when you figure it was a crash none of us might not have walked away from.

On another note, we flew in the "BAD PENNY" on January 11, 1944 to Oscherleben, when our Group won its Presidential Citation!

On a further note, my dad, Ernest S. Klingensmith, was a medic in France in WW I. Also, my two younger brothers served. "Jeep" flew as a ball turret man on a B-24 out of Italy with the 449th Bomb Group as a part of the 15th Air Force, and my youngest brother, Ernest Jr., served in Korea. Our family lost my uncle Dick and my cousin Jimmie both killed in Europe during WW II. Another uncle, Ray, served in Italy also in WW II.

Finally, I compliment you on a fine publication - look forward to it every issue. Keep up the good work!

Kindest Regards,

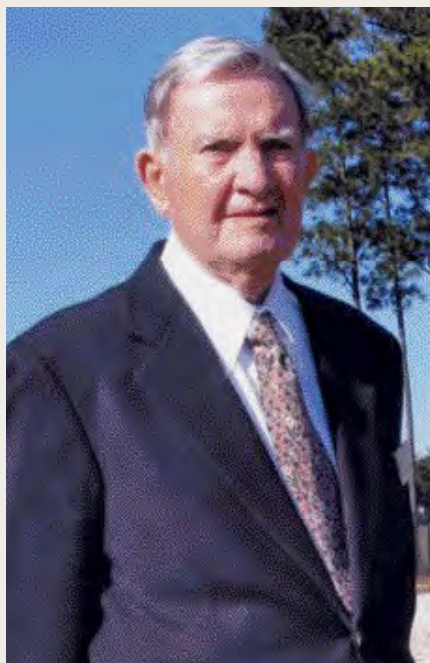
Russell S. Klingensmith

P.S. My daughter, Kim, and my son-in-law, Dr. K.C. Lewis are driving my wife, Penny and me to the Reunion, August 18-23, 2009 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

466TH BOMB GROUP

Dear Walter,

Today we are mailing our 466 BGA-2009 donation of \$500 to the Mighty 8th AF Museum which oversees the



General Lew Lyle

Woolnough Memorial Library that we have supported for many years. We understand this contribution goes to the museum general funds which covers the operating expenses of the Museum. At our 466th BGA Board of Directors meeting in Cincinnati on August 21, 2009 we agreed to make this donation in memory of our founder John Woolnough and in honor of our beloved Richard Baynes who is retiring as our president.

It was nice to see you at the reunion.

We really appreciate all you do!

With best regards,

Elmo Maiden, 466th BG

Canoga Park, CA

Editor's note: Elmo much appreciation to you and the 466th BG Association for your continued support of the 8th AF News & John Woolnough Library

MITCHELL HULL LAYS THE WREATH

Dear Walter,

Memorial day a young boy was so interested in the 8th Air Force and is a friend of ours and he wanted to lay the wreath. His name is Mitchell Hull and he is 9 years old. It's time now to let the young ones get interested in all 8th Air Force aspects. Of course I was with him, it was a moving day again. No rain thank goodness. The boy wants to show his teachers at school what he did. We made the front page of the Memorial sheet.

Regards,

Connie Richards, Suffolk, England
8th AFHS United Kingdom

BAUXITE

Dear Walt,

In the foreground is the Bauxite Historical Association and Museum building, donated by Alcoa Aluminum Company in 1986. The museum has become one of the largest private museums in the state of Arkansas. A few years ago, Gen. Lew Lyle visited the museum when the Mighty 8th Museum was being built. I personally gave him a guided tour. The six by 20-foot German Flag that hangs in your Museum, was given to Gen. Lyle from a former World War II Army veteran and an Alcoa employee.

His unit had taken over this city and he located the flag stored in a building. Somehow he got the flag back to his home in Benton. The city, Gen. Lyle had bombed a number of times before the US Army troops took it. I miss Gen. Lyle but keep in contact with his wife Betty.

Cheers,

Arnold A. Wright

Benton, AR

AIR FORCE ONE

Dear Albert and Babs,

I am hoping to get to Stansted Airport to photograph 'Air Force One' bringing in President Obama - if the security allows a close facility and of course all the other visiting delegations from the other countries.

We are now in early Spring with some chilly mornings and evenings but nice blue skies during the day. Have already been to Lakenheath and Mildenhall in Suffolk and have got good shots of USAF C17's and C5's.

In our local library I was reading an aviation magazine and read an illustrated article of a B17 being delivered to Savannah, Georgia. I am sure you are delighted to have one of these.

Hoping you are both enjoying good health and sure that you will be very active.

Illustrated in one of your 8th AF Magazines I have noticed someone with a Keith Ferris original painting - I met Keith at Farnborough Air Show a few years ago and he signed a print for me on the Boeing stand of a C-17 which has been framed.

Our very best wishes to both of you!

Anne and Gerry - England

Friends of AF, 385th BG from across the pond -Ed.

8TH INVASIONS TO JAPAN

Dear Mr. Brown

I just recently was perusing the July 2009 edition of the 8th AF News and a story on page 27 got my attention. The article was "Eighth Air Force Bombs Japan." In the 3rd paragraph it states as follows; "notably three 8th Air Force B-29 crews temporarily assigned to the 20th Air Force flew 26 combat missions from Guam starting on July

24th. "I was on the crew assigned to the 330th Bomb Group. I had previously completed a tour as a crew member - I was a Radio Operator-Gunner on a B17 bomber based in England and flying missions over Europe. I made 25 missions plus one extra from March 1944 to July 1944. I was returned to the states for R&R and I volunteered to become a crew member on B-29s. We trained in Pratt, Kansas and in Puerto Rico, before being put on temporary duty with the 20th Air Force and being sent to Guam as one of the advance crews to get combat experience before the rest of the 8th Air Forces B-29 crews arrived to be based on Okinawa. We were assigned to the 330th Bomb Group.

Our crew flew the missions listed in the July 2009 edition of the 8th AF News article, plus we made a food and supply drop to a prisoner of war camp

in Osaka; we flew patrol on the 38th parallel when our troops were being deployed to maintain peace as Korea was being divided into North Korea and South Korea. This flight lasted beyond 20 hours. Plus we flew in a show of force when the armistice was being signed on the deck of the battleship Missouri. During our bombing raids over Japan we did have to make two emergency stops to Iwo Jima - short of fuel on one stop and fuel line damage from flak on the second stop. We were grateful for the availability of Iwo Jima, and our thanks to the Marines!

Our crew consisted of:
John Dickinson - Aircraft Commander,
Earl Edge - Co-pilot, Bruce Abrams -
Radar Specialist, Paul Hill - Navigator,
John Gormley - Bombardier, Charles
Vetter - Flight Engineer, Percy Hanson
- Radio Operator, Edwin Sloan - Central

Fire Control, Lorne Keen - Waist Gunner, Nathan Fein - Waist Gunner, James Harkins - Tail Gunner

On August 14th, 1945 we made our last combat mission, dropping bombs on Kumgoya and on the way back I picked up a radio statement saying President Truman had announced that the Japanese were surrendering unconditionally. We were proud to be one of the 3 crews from the 8th Air Force who participated in the B-29s bombing of Japan and thus bringing to an end World War II.

Sincerely,
Percy Hanson, 8th Air Force
20th Air Force
Jacksonville, IL

2006 Mighty Eighth Air Force Calendar

At the last reunion of the 452nd Bomb Group, I made it a point to bring along the 2006 Mighty Eighth AF calendar with me. A while back 452nd member Wayne Davis donated his A2 jacket to the 8th AF Museum. The 2006 calendar featured beautiful colored photos of flight jackets from the museum collection, Wayne's was featured for the month of February. I cornered Wayne at our reunion in Omaha and requested his signature under the painting.

"Colonel Lib" was the 728th BS B-17 that Wayne crewed.

Bill Fraser



The Rest of the Story: The Final Chapter

Stories always need an ending, or in today's terms, "closure." The saga of the Eighth Air Force in World War II began with stories of men who bonded together under the most tragic circumstances known to man – war: nation against nation, dignity versus degradation, peace versus power. These were poignant chapters about men who fought together for the noble cause of freedom. They were about the narrow escapes, the losses, and the lessons learned. Then came the next chapters: the return from war, going separate ways, building livelihoods and families, making their way in a nation where they had earned their liberty and protected our freedom. They reunited occasionally to do some "hangar flying" and the bonds they forged during those troubling war times were to be never broken, adding more chapters to both their individual and collective chronicles.

Over the last 12 years, the parts and pieces that helped forge those inseparable bonds, the objects that preserved the memories and gave life to the chapters, have been gathered from the four corners of the globe. There are diaries that tell of brave deeds and pictures that speak thousands of words. There are small items like dog tags that once hung around warm necks coursing with life; or gloves that once protected strong but tender hands, hands that plotted a target for the day, repaired or flew an aircraft, held a gun to fend off the enemy, pulled a buddy from harm's way, or folded for a prayer of thanks at the end of a particularly tough mission.

Yet there has always been the need to finish the story, to put an ending on lives that made a difference in history, a last sentence with an exclamation point that says, "There! I gladly paid the price for your freedom!" The objects and exhibits within the Museum are wonderfully interesting and important, but the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum wanted to find an even more permanent way to reverently honor the individual men and preserve the legacy so hard won. So, the Museum began the final chapter of the story by providing the Museum's Memorial Garden, honoring



mation point that says, "There! I gladly paid the price for your freedom!" The objects and exhibits within the Museum are wonderfully interesting and important, but the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum wanted to find an even more permanent way to reverently honor the individual men and preserve the legacy so hard won. So, the Museum began the final chapter of the story by providing the Museum's Memorial Garden, honoring



both the living and the dead. Now the final chapter can draw to a close with the completion of the Garden of Folded Wings Columbarium. This final reverent resting place can permanently reunite the buddies who started the book so long ago, and bring them near the objects that meant so much to their wartime chapters. It can bring to a close the final chapter of the chronicle so sensitively told throughout the Museum.

A columbarium niche provides the exclamation point at the end of the last chapter as a permanent, reverent, and peaceful resting place for loved ones' remains in a tasteful, secure setting. The Garden of Folded Wings is beautifully complete, with benches for quiet contemplation and remembrance and lovely flowers that add an ambience of serenity and peace. The Garden of Folded Wings provides everything needed for the rest of the story.

We all have a final chapter; we all have a "rest of the story." If you would like your final chapter added to the other parts of your story, please contact Peggy Harden at the Museum. When your final chapter is written, you will be prepared to close your book and release your spirit into eternity.

If you have cremains of a loved one you would like to lay to rest in this peaceful and dignified setting, we can help you do that also. Niches are double sized, so husbands and wives can be inurned in the same space, if preferred. We invite each of you to come and see the Garden of Folded Wings. It is truly beautiful and dignified.

Mrs. Harden will be happy to give you all the information you need. Please call her at 912-748-8888, Ext. 103. You may also email her at finance@mightyeighth.org.

by Brenda Elmgren

IRON ASS

by Clint Gruber, 93rd BG

I served in the 93rd Bomb Group from June through November of 1943, and was shot down on December 1 on a mission to Solingen in the Ruhr Valley. All crew members except our tail gunner, S/Sgt Harry Byerman who was killed in his turret, bailed out safely and became POWs. While held at Stalag Luft One over the next year and a half, I wondered from time to time about the final fate of Iron Ass. It seemed likely that the airplane had burned up when it crashed. But what really happened to it, and where was the crash site? I never had a clue until August 14th of 1998 when, while checking on the Internet B24 site I found this message:

"Hello to all. Does anyone have some information about the B24D, nickname **"Iron Ass"**. Serial 42-40-769, lost the 1st of December 1943. Thank you. Phil"

Well, Yes. I had information!

"Hello Phil. I was the co-pilot on **Iron Ass**, shot down 1 December 1943. Target Solingen. What is your interest? Do you know the crash location? **Clint Gruber, Beaverton, Oregon USA**"

And so began.....

THE SEARCH FOR IRON ASS

Within a few hours after sending my message, I received an answer from Philippe Dufrasne, living in Brussels, Belgium, who described himself as an "amateur historian on the WW2 air war." "I take interest in this subject because many years ago I witnessed the recovery of a wreck in the Brussels area, and the remains of the pilot are still in the wreck 18 feet underground. Since then, I have tried to make a most complete list of the lost aircraft over Belgium in WW2. Some information gives the site of the crash of your airplane in Belgium, but some recent news gives the site of the crash in Germany (Cologne). I have a friend, Eric Mombeek, who is a specialist on the Luftwaffe,



The photo above is the last picture of my airplane, "Iron Ass." The pic was apparently taken very soon after the plane was blown up by a Luftwaffe pilot over the small town of Eicherscheid SW of Cologne on 1 December 1943. All of the crew except, sadly, tail gunner S/Sgt Harry Byerman had bailed out successfully before the plane was destroyed. What you see is a portion of the nose from the cockpit forward, with the navigator's dome and the right hand pitot tube visible. This was the largest piece of the plane which landed in and around the village.



Clint Gruber
Alamogordo AAB
April 1943

and I will ask him if he has a contact in Cologne.” Mombeek is an internationally known authority on the German Luftwaffe in WW2, and the published author of many books about its units and personnel. He readily agreed to assist in the search through his many contacts in Germany. Phil explained that his primary research is accomplished through study of documents and microfilms rather than visiting a crash site. He sometimes does so at the request of people who want to know “what was that fell in their garden”. He was turning out to be a great correspondent, with a wonderful sense of humor. Once, I complimented him on his English, and apologized for my own lack of language skills. To which he responded, “Thank you for my English. Your English is perfect. Better than mine. Don’t worried.” The best information with which Phil and Eric had to begin their research was that recorded in the Missing Air Crew Report (MACR), filed for every missing USAAF aircraft during the war. In the Iron Ass MACR, another pilot in the bomber force that morning reported that he saw us abort the formation and turn back with one engine smoking heavily. It was after that last sighting that the fighters shot us down, so the reported position, 5043N 0638E, was not much help. The probable crash site of Iron Ass would be somewhere in the large area south of Cologne. A real research challenge for Phil and Eric!

On August 17, 1998 Phil wrote, “For the crash site of Iron Ass we must wait a little bit because it’s outside of Belgium. However, I have sent all the information I have to my friend Eric. Now we must wait and hope.”

Then, in the last week of August, another update: “I have some news. Soon

I’ll get the name of the German pilot who shot you down! My friend Eric researched that and informs me that it’s in good way.”

On September 1, incredible news from Phil! “Hi Clint. We have found the pilot who shot down your aircraft! His name is Rolf Hermichen. We are sure at 99% because this day he is the only who claim victories on B24 in the area where you were at that moment. Eric Mombeek interviewed him. Hermichen does remember that your airplane left the formation and that’s why he remembers it. He is an ace with 64 victories. I join the picture.”

September 1, 1998, from Clint to Phil:

“I am absolutely astounded at the research that you and your friend have done in identifying the Luftwaffe pilot, “Your killer” as you put it, who shot down my airplane so long ago. At the moment, I am really at a loss for words, except to say “thank you” to you both. I need some time to think about this, to try and sort out my feelings.”

I also write to Eric Mombeek to express my thanks, and in his reply Eric said: “I am very pleased that I could make you this little pleasure. The Germans say “Herrauschuss” for an aircraft so damaged that it could not stay anymore withing the “box” and so have its protection. Hermichen claimed on that day such a Herrauschuss, and he is your probably adversary. He is still living (1998) and I had a few contact with him several years ago.”

Several weeks went by while Mombeek was looking for a contact in Germany who could help in locating the crash site of Iron Ass. Then, on December 7, 1998, fifty-five years later, almost to the day of the last flight of Iron Ass, came this electrifying message from Phil: “Good news! We see the end of the tunnel! We have nearly all about your “Iron Ass”. Eric has just received a letter from Germany. The crash site is near the center of the village of Eicherscheid. The correspondent said that they can provide a picture of the front of the wreck, and they know a man who have recover the wing and one of the motors! Things are on the way! The contact Eric, Wolfgang Meyer, informs us

that he will write soon with all the information we need. We had hoped to get this by 1 December for the anniversary of the crash, but we are a little late.” The very next day, December 8, Phil wrote

again: “As I promised, I send you what we have. I join translation of the letter from Mr. Meyer. “Dear Mr. Mombeek. Many thanks for your letter. I was glad to hear that the copilot, Lt. Clinton Gruber, is still alive and looks for information on this aircraft. The fact is that last year I have researched to find former crew of this plane in USA. Unfortunately, I had no

success.

Now, concerning the crash of the B24, 42-40769, on 1-12-43 in Eicherscheid. The aircraft was shot down by German fighters and exploded still in the air over the town. The only crewmember still on board was S/Sgt. Harry E. Byerman. He could not leave the plane, being hit during this German attack, and was probably dead when the aircraft exploded. This explosion completely destroyed the bomber and parts rained on the town of Eicherscheid. Most of the parts fell in the town itself, and are not anymore to find now. Nevertheless, a larger part of the aircraft including parts of wing as well as an engine, fall in a wood and I could find some pieces last year. I made for you a copy of the only existing photo of the crashed plane. This photo was taken a few hours after the crash. Signed, Wolfgang Meyer, Bad Munstereifel, Germany”

Along with an engine and portion of a wing mentioned by Wolfgang, this was the largest part of the airplane remaining after the explosion. The picture shows much of the nose section tilted on its left side, with the right side pitot tube and the remains of the navigator’s dome visible forward of the destroyed cockpit. In the original photo, it is just possible to make out a portion of the name and the white mule “Iron Ass”. The German soldier in the picture was apparently on guard until the wreckage could be salvaged.

On February 1, 1999, I received the following:

“Dear Mr. Gruber. I am very happy (because this is my first time) to have con-



Rolf Hermichen

tact to an American pilot who was shot down in my home country. I am very interested in aviation since my childhood. Since ten years I try to collect informations about crashed aircrafts that were shot down during World War 2 in my home country, which is a wooded and hilly area called "Eifel" approximately 40 km south of Cologne, Germany. In 1995 I heard the first time of the crash of an American four-engine aircraft (Iron Ass) over Eicherscheid. The people in the village told me that a part of a wing with engines went down in the woods north-east of Eicherscheid. I was lucky to find the place in the summer of 1997."

In the same letter, one sentence stood out: "I am sending a small piece of tin from Iron Ass!" Needless to say I watched for a package in each mail delivery every day and, about the middle of February, it arrived! What an experience! Here was a small piece of Iron Ass, torn apart in the violent explosion at the end. There was no way of knowing where this piece of aluminum came from on the aircraft but it was still bright on one side, and had the early wartime dark green paint of the other. But there was no doubt that it was from Iron Ass.

Proof of its identity was assured when the engine, with identification plate still attached, was discovered in the woods. A portion of the very detailed information on the MACR for missing aircraft during the war was a listing of the serial numbers for each of the plane's engines. Wolfgang enclosed a picture of the plate with the serial number plainly visible. The number matches the record for one of the engines on Iron Ass.

A few days after receiving Wolfgang's package, Phil wrote to say: "I am happy that Mr. Meyer contacted you. Now you are really in touch with your past when you feel in your hands this part of metal."

So, as the successful story of "The Search for Iron Ass" comes to a close, readers of this narrative may marvel, as I have, at the willingness of strangers in foreign lands, two Belgians and a German, to help. Wolfgang Meyer, the German, has spent much time as a hobby in researching the crash sites and histories of Allied Aircraft which were lost in WW2. He took special interest in the story of Iron Ass because the crash site was near his home, and he recognized the importance of his effort in helping me close the circle.

Eric Mombeek, a Belgian, is an internationally known historian of the Luftwaffe in WW2 and has many published books on the subject. Most are written in German, but two new books, both in English, have just been published. One, "Storming the Bombers", is of special interest to veterans of the Mighty Eighth as well as the Fifteenth AF. A big book, it is filled with many photos and the stories of pilots of the Luftwaffe's Fourth Fighter Wing, covering their war over Italy and the Continent. Mombeek says "I do not make these researches for political reasons. I will remain all my life much thankful for all the young men coming across the seas to save our liberty and our lives. If I can help you or your comrades, I do it with great pleasure, feeling also that it is my turn to do something for your generous generation."

Philippe Dufrasne, also a Belgian, was the leader of the Search, and expressed his reasons in responding to my offer to reimburse him for his out of pocket expenses. "Hey, Clint. We are friends now, don't ask again that you want to pay for something. I do it for the pleasure to help some guy whose risk is a more valuable thing...his life. Maybe you think that your job is inconsiderable, but you must know that without people like you we are still in the darkness. What we do is a very little thing compared to the risk you and your friends have take that bloody day for people you really don't know and who are most of time ungrateful to your country and for the sacrifice of a lot of young people. You do it for my granddaughter, Laetitia, and all the children who can play in the snow without fear. I never thank you enough for that. I am proud to be your friend."

Phil Dufrasne has visited my home in Oregon three times, and is a special friend. I remain in frequent email touch with him, as well as with Wolfgang and Eric. I salute them for the work they do in helping to keep alive the memory of America's wartime sacrifices, and with eternal thanks for completing the circle of my wartime memories.

**Clint Gruber, 93rd Bomb Group
Beaverton, OR**

A BUSY DAY AT POW CAMP



**Per Clint Gruber
A roommate of Lt. Early:**

Early drew himself on the left top bunk. On the bottom is Bob Reid. Middle top is Roy Braly. Bottom bunk is Bob Wilkins. Top bunk right, Dick Ketchum. And, completely sacked out (my usual posture) in the bottom bunk, is myself.



**Philippe Dufrasne, a researcher from Belgium, presents Clint with some of
twiste and torn metal from his plane that crashed 56 years ago.**

Lowell Williamson and the Memphis Belle

by Darrel Lowell



Lowell and Dorothy Williamson

It is a well known fact that we in the Savannah area are proud to host one of the finest military museums in the country. The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, now over 15 years old, was the culmination of several years of devotion. Many dedicated Air Force Veterans like General Lewis Lyle, General Buck Shuler, Dr. Walt Brown and many other 8th Air Force Veterans, along with the Eighth Air Force Historical Society had a vision and a desire to memorialize the members of the Mighty Eighth Air Force who served during World War II.

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society was founded in 1975. Through the support of its members, the Society provided the seed money of over \$150,000 to start construction on the Museum. The Society through its national membership over the last 15 years continues to be one of the strongest supporters of the facility by raising money to fund many of the Museum's important projects. These projects include The John H. Woolnough Library, The Chapel of the Fallen Eagles, the B-47 Restoration

Project, The Roll of Honor display, and the Oral History Series just to mention a few. In addition the Society through the Birthplace Chapter in Savannah has provided the majority of docents to the Volunteer Program which has been a great asset in promoting the wonderful exhibits to the visitors. The generosity and support of our Society has been phenomenal and keeps on giving to the Museum's worthwhile projects. The latest example is the decision by AFHS member Lowell Williamson and his wife Dorothy McGuire Williamson (member of the famous McGuire Sisters vocal group) to gift to the Museum the original Pilot's Control Panel from the Memphis Belle. History records that the Memphis Belle was one of the first B-17s to complete 25 missions.

The instruments on this panel were the actual dials that guided Lt Robert Morgan and his crew across Germany on those important and dangerous bombing missions. The Museum, the Society and the general public are indebted to Lowell and Dorothy for donating this important part of World War II history to the Museum collection.

It is interesting to learn a little about Lowell and how this Instrument Panel found its way to the home of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum.

Like so many young men and women during the early days of WWII Lowell Williamson answered the call to serve in the early 1940s. Lowell, a young man from Ohio enlisted in the Army Air Force with dreams of becoming a pilot. Due to poor eyesight this dream was not to be and Lowell was cross-trained to be a radio operator and top turret gunner (a position similar to the Museum Mission Experience star William Taylor). After training Lowell was transferred to England, where he was assigned to the 32nd Squadron of the 94th Bomb Group based at Rougham Air Base near Bury St. Edmunds. There he became a crew member of the *Piccadilly Lil*.

On April 23, 1943 the *Piccadilly Lil* crew waited on the runway for the green flare

that would launch then on what would be their 23rd mission. That would mean only two missions to go to reach the magic number 25, which would earn the entire crew a return ticket stateside. The crew was relaxed and in good spirits as the briefing officer that morning had described the mission, a bomb run on the railroad marshalling yards at Hof, Germany as a "cake walk". Four hours into the mission they reached the IP, initial point, and observed extremely heavy flak over the target. At that moment the crew realized that the next few minutes of this mission were going to be anything but a "cake walk". Fortunately they did complete the bomb run. Lowell, on return to his station following a successful verification that all bombs had cleared the bomb bay, felt a severe jolt on the starboard side of the plane.

The right wing was completely engulfed in flames, meaning that the 23rd mission of *Piccadilly Lil* would be its last. As the bail-out alarm sounded Lowell along with his crew members tested the parachutes that they had packed the day before. The descent was quiet and uneventful except for some small arm gun fire from the ground. On landing in a plowed field Lowell and his crew members would spend the duration of the war in Stalag 7A.

Following VE Day Lowell returned to the States to study music at Indiana University. On completing his degree in music he was offered a position in the oil industry. He accepted this position and spent the next 40 years building a successful career in the oil and gas industry both in the US and Canada.

Through the years Lowell met and became a close friend of Claire Egtvedt who during the 1930s was the President and Chairman of the Boeing Airplane Company. Claire was a draftsman and mechanical engineer and played a lead role in the engineering and design work of the B-17. During his 49 years with Boeing the company designed and produced many military aircraft including



Claire Egtvedt

the B-17, B-29, B-47 and the B-52. On his retirement from The Boeing Company he was referred to as the "Father of the B-17." Boeing presented Claire with the original Pilot's Instrument Panel from the Memphis Belle. As Claire's health began to fail he felt that the Memphis Belle instrument panel needed to be passed to a person that would have an appreciation of the panel and its historical significance. He felt that Lowell would appreciate the history of the panel and provide the care it needed. The Williamsons had the panel inlayed into a beautiful coffee table which was displayed in their Phoenix home for many years. As Lowell considered various places where

the Instrument Panel should reside he selected the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum near Savannah. As Paul Harvey used to say at the end of his radio newscast "and now you know the rest of the story."

On behalf of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, and all the future generations that are interested in the military history of this great country we are indebted to the Williamsons for this wonderful addition to the Museum Collection

I Am a Woman Hear Me Roar

While the C-5 was turning over its engines, a female crewman gave the G.I.s on board the usual information regarding seat belts, emergency exits, etc.

Finally, she said, 'Now sit back and enjoy your trip while your captain, Judith Campbell, and crew take you safely to Afghanistan '

An old MSgt. sitting in the eighth row thought to himself, 'Did I hear her right? Is the captain a woman?'

When the attendant came by he said 'Did I understand you right? Is the captain a woman?'

'Yes,' said the attendant, 'In fact, this entire crew is female.'

'My God,' he said, 'I wish I had two double scotch and sodas. I don't know what to think with only women up there in the cockpit.'

'That's another thing, Sergeant,' said the crew member, 'We no longer call it the cockpit'

'It's the box office.'



Quote of the day:

'Whatever you give a woman, she will make greater. If you give her sperm, she'll give you a baby. If you give her a house, she'll give you a home. If you give her groceries, she'll give you a meal. If you give her a smile, she'll give you her heart. She multiplies and enlarges what is given to her. So, if you give her any crap, be ready to receive a ton of crap.'

HOW FORTRESS 'TOM PAINE' FORGED A FRIENDSHIP



Robert B. (Bob) McWhite, of Wayzata, MN, now 87 and the only survivor of the crew, who, aided by his Flight Engineer, Don Winn, in the co-pilot's seat, brought TOM PAINE down at Ellough airfield, near Beccles, Suffolk, on April 11, 1944, for which he was awarded the American DFC.

What is thought to be one of the longest Anglo/American friendship links with a living member of WWII's 8th USAF was commemorated at Ellough Airfield, near Beccles, Suffolk, on April 11, 2009.

It marked the landing there some 65 years ago on that date in 1944 of the historically famous B-17F Flying Fortress named TOM PAINE - Tyranny, like Hell, is not easily Conquered! of the 388th Bomb Group, Knettishall, Suffolk, close to Thetford, Norfolk, the birthplace of Thomas Paine (1737 - 1809) of American, British and French history who wrote Rights of Man.

Involved on April 11, 1944, in a long range penetration to Posen, Poland, when, it is believed, nine other B-17s, for various reasons, made for the safety of Sweden, TOM PAINE'S captain, Lt. Robert B. McWhite, who was 22, and piloting a damaged plane with wounded aboard, including a seriously injured navigator, decided with the crew to try and make for England.

Separated from the rest of the 388th Bomb Group's formation following a head-on attack by enemy fighters, which put cannon shells through the top of the nose canopy into the back of the instrument panel, TOM PAINE cleverly made use of the cloud cover and so made ready for the lonely North Sea crossing.

With a damaged hydraulic system, Lt. McWhite, who is now 87 and lives in Wayzata, Minnesota, knew he needed to conserve pressure for a wheels-down landing as a belly landing with the weakened nose, where the navigator lay wrapped in an open parachute, would have been fatal.

Using the bomber's emergency radio trailing serial, TOM PAINE'S signals were picked up by two patrolling, P-47 Thunderbolts, and they took up positions on the crippled wing tips, hand signals being the manner of communication as the escort shepherded the bomber to Ellough airfield, which was the nearest to the German coast for planes in trouble.

On the edge of Ellough airfield, several children were inspecting the burnt-out remains, unguarded, of a 95th Bomb Group B-17G which had overshot the runway three days earlier, leaving only

its sturdy tail standing high and four half melted engines.

Watching intently as the P-47s pulled away to circle at a distance, it looked to the children as if they were going to get a grandstand view of TOM PAINE sliding in across their vision. But no. With his Flight Engineer, Don Winn, in the co-pilot's seat, Lt. McWhite, desperate to prevent a stall, suddenly dipped on to the children's runway, which caused them to run for their lives.

However, TOM PAINE, behind them, was in capable hands, and the cockpit pair put the bomber into a fierce ground-loop, on and off the runway, so that it finished up facing the direction from which it had come!

To cut a long story short, the children approached the still bomber, whose crew came tumbling out, and for some 20 minutes saw war in the raw. Then, in a terrific low level pass, the two P-47s, aware no doubt that they had shepherded to safety a famous veteran, saluted with dipped port wings.

What happened afterwards? Well, one of the youngsters who had to scatter, Christopher Elliott, then 16, of Beccles, quickly made a miniature water color

impression of TOM PAINE undergoing the ground-loop. Then, in 1946, in a school essay, he touched on the landing, and in 1962 polished up the story for publication in the Eastern Daily Press at Norwich. Seen in America, the story was reproduced in the 388th's newsletter, and so bit by bit the crew, who never flew together again after the Ellough landing, made contact with the schoolboy observer. Thus the fleeting war time meeting at Ellough Airfield forged a lasting friendship with all of TOM PAINE'S CREW of whom today only Lt. McWhite, who won the American DFC for getting his plane home on April 11, 1944, survives.

Said by 8th Air Force historian, the late Roger Freeman, to have been a survivor of the famous October 14, 1943, Sch-



weinfurst mission which cost 60 B-17s, TOM PAINE, after the Ellough landing, by then quite weary, was converted into a navigation plane for the highly secret Aphrodite project which, in the summer of 1944, set to work flying radio-controlled bombers filled with explosives into the gob-like holes in the Pas de Calais which were intended to spew "a projectile a minute on London" in succession to the V-1 flying bombs and V-2 rockets.

Interestingly, during the Aphrodite experiments, TOM PAINE was presiding over a cavalcade of planes near Blythburgh, Suffolk, on August 12, 1944, when the radio-controlled Consolidated PB-4Y (the US Navy's version of the B-24 Liberator bomber), flown by Lt. Joseph Kennedy, brother of President John F. Kennedy, blew up before they were

ready to parachute. TOM PAINE was badly blasted.

Surprisingly, after all it had been through since it was named by Professor J. Frank Dobie, visiting professor of American history at Cambridge University, in the autumn of 1943, TOM PAINE survived the war - but only just. It did, in fact, return to its homeland, America in 1945, with several other historic B-17s for preservation, but, like the bones of history's Thomas Paine, its airframe never found a resting place. It was smelted down!

One wonders: does the nose name survive in someone's collection?



A TV photographer interviewing Christopher Elliott, one of the youngsters who had to run for their lives in 1944, on the now mostly reclaimed land that once had several runways. It was on the distant horizon that TOM PAINE, put into a ferocious ground-loop in 1944, ended up.

NEXGEN CONTINUING THE 8TH AF LEGACY by Norma Chesser



Norma Chesser

"NexGen Involvement"

"As we approach the reunion in Cincinnati, the main focus of the NexGen meeting is INVOLVEMENT. Thanks to those of you providing

pictures. Please continue sending these for future issues. My address is on the inside of the front cover"

Norma Chesser



NexGen David Crow conducts a 355th FG seminar at the 8th AFHS reunion in Savannah.



During the seminar, a first-time meeting takes place between Bob Garlich, 355th fighter pilot (left) and Bob Vickers, 392nd BG pilot. The P-51 Mustang fighter plane escorted the heavily damaged B-24 out of enemy territory, returning from a mission to Dresden on January 16, 1945.



NexGen Greg Hatton, 392nd BG, is a very respected researcher into all aspects of the POW, which is posted on the 392nd BG website. Greg's father became a POW on 29 April 44.

THE JOHN H. ROBINSON TENNESSEE CHAPTER

With much trepidation and regret the Executive Board of the Tennessee Chapter 8th AFHS reports its decision to close the activities of the Chapter after its 25 years in existence. Marked decrease in member participation in and attendance at events and meetings has dictated this decision. Part of the reason for the decision to fold the Chapter centers on the fact that the state is over 400 miles in width, and members over the years have found that to be imposing and limiting. Finances were not a problem, and Treasurer John Robinson and Chapter legal advisor James Bass have approved a transfer of remaining funds of the Chapter to the National HS treasurer in Savannah.

The Chapter, founded by Walter Baker, Glenn Taylor and others featured enjoyable meetings at various locations across the state and members took an active part in historical seminars, parades, and other patriotic events throughout the years. It is resolved that the close friendships that have existed among the Chapter members remain active and intact, with support of ongoing programs of the National 8th AFHS.

BIRTHPLACE CHAPTER

Chapter President Scott Stovall conducts the monthly Chapter dinner meetings, featuring various caterers now that culinary expert Chef Matt Cohen has departed from the Museum in Pooler. Excellent guest speakers present programs at each meeting. Recent featured speakers have included Dr. George Rogers, who, along with his Jeep driver, was the point man for the breakout of the Battle of the Bulge towards the crossing of the Rhine river. In August, William Price related his 1945 experience in the Pacific, his B-29 having been rammed by a Jap kamikaze plane. He was captured and spent the rest of the war as a prisoner in Camp Omori in Tokyo, Japan.

The September address came from Major George Eyster, 82nd Airborne, who served in various commands and led missions in more than 20 countries

during his military career.

Another highlight of the Chapter dinners are special recognition given to the Member of the Month, those loyal members who have made significant contributions to the welfare of the Birthplace Chapter.

WASHINGTON STATE CHAPTER

The Chapter was well represented at the annual Model Expo in February. The theme included a focus on the Mighty Eighth with the 8th Air Force's display being prominently featured in the main gallery of the Museum. The displays attracted a lot of attention from the public who stopped by the table to discuss the 8th with Chapter members.

At the Chapter meeting in January, Greg Weber was appointed as the new newsletter editor of *Keep 'em Flying*, following Ann Brown's professional service over the past years. Guest speaker at the meeting was William Knudsen, who told of his research for more than 8 months into the death of his 448th BG father during a mission in 1944.

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

President Bill Bergner keeps the Chapter members on the ball as regards warbird aircraft. This summer saw nearby visits of the B-17 *Aluminum Overcast* at Waukesha, the B-17 *Yankee Lady* at Racine, and membership activities at Airventure 2009 in Oshkosh.

He also reports on a newly recovered navy divebomber lifted from the waters of Lake Michigan, after being submerged 355 feet deep since the war.

The reunion Chapter meeting will be held on December 1, 2009.

ILLINOIS CHAPTER

Members of the Illinois Chapter are staying active in 8th-related projects. Recently Jack VanAcker, 491st BG pilot, spoke to four Honor History Classes at Dundee Crown High School in Carpentersville IL.

Suzanne Stanits, co-founder of the Honor

Flight Chicago is accepting applications for flights to the war memorials in Washington. Check email www.honorflightchicago.org. Suzanne's address is 770 Lee Street #102, Des Plaines IL 60016.

IOWA CHAPTER

The Iowa Chapter of the 8th AFHS held its 26th annual reunion at Iowa Falls Iowa on August 15th and 16th, 2009.

Bethel Lutheran Church furnished us with their bus and Saturday morning, the bus and several loaded cars went to the Caulkins Nature and Wild Life Preserve and Amphitheatre. The 78 acre preserve includes indian relics and birds and animals from the area. What a beautiful place.

From there we went directly to the Iowa Falls Airport where our own Charles R. Taylor painted a 10 foot by 10 foot mural in the terminal building. The airplanes in the mural were all flown by Iowa veterans and citizens of Iowa Falls. It's a beautiful painting.

We paid for the PT 19 WWII trainer to fly from Ankeny Iowa's Aviation Heritage Museum and paid for one of our veterans to have a 30 minute flight in the open air two seater. Paul M. Gidel was the lucky winner. Paul was with the 492nd Bomb Group.

E. Phillip Crawford's daughter was so taken with the PT 19 that she paid for a flight for her father E. Phillip Crawford. He was with the 305th Bomb Group. Both men were smiling from ear to ear upon their return to earth.

After all this excitement many went on the Scenic Express boat ride on the Iowa River. This was a double decker



pontoon boat that provided an hour and half narrated tour through Iowa Falls and it's famous rock cliffs.

Then on to a downtown restaurant called Camp David located next to the Iowa River for our banquet and memorial service.

Chuck Taylor, our President, conducted our memorial service for those who died in the service for our great country and for the 11 members from Iowa who passed away.

66 people ate salad, roast beef and chicken breasts, baked potatoes, fresh green beans picked that day and dessert all served family style. What a feast!

Our first dinner speaker was James McInain of Waterloo Iowa. James was a navigator on a B-24 with the 389th Bomb Group. He described his Group's part on the low level raid on Ploesti (Romanian oil refineries) on August 1, 1943. He also gave us a list of the lowians who flew on that mission.

Our second speaker was Joe Gomer formerly from Iowa Falls, Iowa, now living in Duluth, Minnesota. Joe was a fighter pilot with the Tuskegee Airmen. He flew 68 missions with the 322nd Fighter Group and the 301st Fighter Group with the 15th Air Force from Italy. He flew both the P-47 and the P-51. He preferred the P-51 Mustang. Both speakers gave an excellent presentation of their experiences.

Back at the motel some of us still had enough energy to do Hangar time in the Hospitality room.

After a short night's sleep and breakfast at the motel, the bus arrived to take us on a 18 mile ride to Hampton, Iowa to see a private aviation collection this collected is valued between 10 and 12 million dollars. Mr. Doyle, the owner died recently. The family agreed to let us view it at no cost to us. This museum is not open to the public. What a shame. To really appreciate it, it would take at least two days.

Hope to see everyone next year at our annual reunion, the good Lord willing.
Sincerely,
Leon G. Mehrling, Treasurer

EIGHTH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MINNESOTA

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting Wednesday, July 1, 2009

A meeting of the Board of Directors was called to order at 1228 on Wednesday, July 1, 2009, at the Knights of Columbus Hall at 1114 American Blvd, Bloomington, Minnesota. President Al Anderson presided and Bob Clemens, secretary, was present.

Members attending were Al Anderson, Gary Bircherm, Walter Bohrn, Bob Clemens, Earl Joswick, Dick Kaminski and Don Kent.

Minutes of the April Board meeting were approved as written. Treasurer Gary Bircherm reported that as of June 30, 2009, the balance in the treasury was \$19,719.

Suggestion was made to ask Glen Froberg to audit the financial books. Membership was discussed. Randy Penrod is membership chairman. Membership should be noted in our newsletters.

Taps - Don Kent wants information on illness or death of members. Al Anderson and Dick Hill will co-chair the Christmas Party.

Dick Kaminski and Earl Joswick will work on the Next Generation Initiative. Hospitality will be emphasized.

Annual membership meeting is December 9, 2009.
Bob Clemens, Secty

MINNESOTA CHAPTER

OFFICERS AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009:

President: Al Anderson, 16220 Crystal Hills Dr., Lakeville, MN 55044, phone: 952-953-9695 email: Allandtonianderson@frontiernet.net

Vice President: Dick Hill (179th FS), 934 Woody Lane, Coon Rapids, MN 55448, phone: 763-755-3559 email: RHILLATIN-DRS@aol.com

Secretary: Bob Clemens (15th AF), 159 Canabury Ct., St. Paul, MN 55117 phone: 651-483-1196 email: Mnclemens@cs.com

Treasurer: Gary Bircherm, 28790 Ivywood Trl., Chisago City, MN 55013 phone: 651-257-1550

OHIO CHAPTER

The Ohio Chapter met on May 1st-3rd at the Midwest Hotel and Conference Center in Columbus, Ohio. On Friday evening members had dinner at the hotel and then Saturday morning members visited in the hospitality room before the meeting. On Sunday members again could meet in the hospitality room if they wished before returning home.

The guest speaker was Air Force Reserve Lieutenant Colonel Rob Young, who is the Air Force historian at the National Air and Space Intelligence Center (NASIC) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Young has spent 13 years working as a scientific and technical intelligence historian, and offers unique insight into the history of U.S. intelligence in Ohio, especially the aircraft and weapon systems brought to the U.S. for study over the past 90 years. He discussed the aircraft brought to McCook Field, Dayton after World War I, Wright Field during and after World War II and the aircraft brought to Wright-Patterson during the Cold War and in recent years. Young related stories of how the aircraft were retrieved and from those who retrieved them.

Since World War I, foreign aircraft have been brought to Dayton to study their strengths and weaknesses. Some of these aircraft formed the beginning of what became the National Museum of the United States Air Force. Towards the end of World War II, Colonel Harold Watson, a former Wright Field test pilot, was in charge of team that collected enemy aircraft and weapons across Europe for further examination in the U.S. The Army Air Force brought the aircraft to Wright Field.

During the Korean War, a North Korean MiG-15 defected. When this occurred, a team was ready to examine the aircraft. An assessment of the aircraft was compiled, which validated the methods of determining the aircraft's capabilities. This aircraft is on display at the National Museum of the United States Air Force.

The Chapter will meet again in November in Dayton.
Chris Weber, Secretary

LICENSE PLATES OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

CALIFORNIA LICENSE PLATE

In the July 2009 issue, Otis Patterson, was commenting on more B-24's. I want to kill two birds with one stone. Here is a license plate I have and it's about B-24's. This is to honor my Dad, John Yatsko. He was a Flight Engineer on a B-24, 448th Bomb Group, 715th Bomb Squadron. He was shot down during "Big Week", February 21, 1944. He was a POW until liberated on April 29, 1945. At the time of his passing in 2006, we believe he was very close to being the oldest living POW, about 2 months shy of 95 years of age.

David Yatsko

NEW YORK STATE ADOPTS 8th AF VANITY LICENSE PLATE

The New York Chapter of the 8th AFHS has successfully petitioned the State of New York to provide a vanity license plate to all those associated with the 8thAF including Society members. The photo here is POW Researcher, Greg Hatton, one of the members of the NY Chapter with his own vanity plate. Greg provided the specifications to the State for the plate.



KENTUCKY LICENSE PLATE

Earl & Cindy Wassom headed back home to Bowling Green, Kentucky after a week with friends at the 8th AFHS Reunion in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Nightmare! by Clint Gruber 93rd BG

When, ev'ry night, in my tortured dreams,
I try and try to sleep, it seems,
I hear a super natural cry,
Straight out of hell it seems to fly.

And then my muddled senses make,
A gallant effort to awake.
My trembling body - sunken deep,
In arms of Morpheus; heavenly sleep.

What is this cry? - Oh mournful note,
Some ghostly, mad musician wrote,
Responding to Satan's accolade,
I hear it now - "Parade! Parade!"

Written while a POW at Stalag Luft I



FLIGHT ENGINEERS DUTIES

Because the question is often asked, "What did the engineer do?", I am writing this list of my duties on our aircrew. Some of these varied, depending upon the wishes of the airplane commander (pilot).

1. The engineer, next to the crew chief, was expected to know all about the aircraft. The mechanics, systems, functions, and if there was any problem, how to repair it if possible, and to know all the emergency procedures. The engineer and assistant engineer were graduates of an A.M. (airplane mechanics) school, and often also of a factory school. Further, there was much training on B-24s during phase training, in my case at Pueblo, Colorado.
2. Upon arriving at the aircraft on the flight line, the engineer would review the form 1A with the crew chief to learn of any problems with that particular airplane. Then the preflight would begin, joined by the pilots upon their arrival. A walk around inspection was done checking all visible exterior parts, if necessary, propellers were pulled through several rotations, all lights checked, superchargers spun to listen for bad bearings, fuel tank caps removed, levels checked, and caps rewired closed. The pilot notified of any problems found.
3. Before start of engines, the checklist was gone through, with all switches and other controls in proper order. A control check was gone through with the engineer watching the various control surfaces as the pilots did the maneuvers, fuel report was made and the A.P.U. was started (Auxiliary Power Unit), commonly called the put-put.
4. Engines were started, with the engineer observing instruments and watching for any signals from the ground crew. Then when taxiing the engineer took his position between the pilots, and in my case kept his eye on the hydraulic pressure gauge, while one of the gunners would be positioned in the top hatch to watch wingtips for clearance. The radio operator usually closed bomb-bay doors.
5. During engine run up, the RPMs, manifold pressure, and magneto checks were done with engineer observing instruments. On takeoff, all engine instruments were watched, as well as the air speed. After takeoff, the engineer or the co-pilot would raise the landing gear. The APU would be turned off. Generators ordinarily were turned on at the start of the takeoff run. After climbing to a safe altitude, and with landing gear and flaps retracted, the engineer would go back through the bomb-bay to visually check: main landing gears and that things were in order in the waist, and also check the nose gear underneath the flight deck.
6. In flight, the engineer would monitor engine instruments, check fuel gauges periodically, and

on long flights, transfer fuel from auxilliary tanks into main tanks, and if necessary between any of the main tanks. In B-24s the fuel gauges were long vertical glass sight tubes at the back of the flight deck, not readily available to the pilots, and there were valves at the bottoms of them to switch between inboard and outboard tanks. On most B-24s the fuel transfers had to be performed on the command deck, behind the wing, and above the aft bomb bay. One Ford built B-24J, however had fuel transfer switches on the pedestal between the pilots controls. On approaching enemy territory, my position was in the Martin top turret, where I stayed manning the guns, except to leave it in order to transfer fuel, or to do damage surveys.

7. During landing preparation the engineer would observe the checklist as the co-pilot would read it off, check landing gears for being down and locked, read off air speed to the pilots on the final approach and until touchdown.

8. On the ground the engineer would turn off generators, start the put-put, and then watch the hydraulic pressure gauge while taxiing.

9. After engine shutdown, the engineer would get wheel chocks in place, fill out the forms 1 and 1A. Any damage or problems would be reported to the crew chief. After combat flights, the engineer would attend debriefing with the whole crew. Later, he would go to the armament shop and clean and oil guns.

submitted by Frank Schaeffer
44th BG Montello, WI



The KOMASINSKI CREW

L-R front: Bernard Komasinski, Winfield Gippert, Edgar Michaels, Charles Lain **L-R back:** Stanley Hulewicz Jr., Frank Lafazia, John McKee, Nelson Brott, Walter Bohenko & Frank Schaeffer



Richard K. Baer, Chicago, IL., 303rd BG tail gunner on the Moncur "Thunderbird" crew - 28 missions as the tail gunner.

Seymour T. Cohen, San Antonio, FL., B-17 radio operator and waist gunner with the 303rd BG. In retirement he volunteered at the Air Power Museum, Amityville, LI. There he befriended another volunteer, Gunther Bier, a native of Germany who became an American citizen, but whose hometown in Germany was bombed by the 8th Air Force when Gunther was a teenager.

William M. Magruder, Moultrie, GA., surgical technician with the 358th BS. Awarded six Bronze Stars.

Clayton C. David, Hannibal, MI., B-17 pilot with the 303rd BG, member of AFEES, reported MIA over Holland in January 1944.

Don L. Coffee, Jr., Dunwoody, FL., B-17 lead radar navigator with the 398th BG. After a 25 year career with the Air Force, he received a Presidential Citation from Lyndon Johnson for Fiscal Management of the B-58 and F-111 bombers.

Robert W. "Bob" Bingham, Jacksonville, TX., 447th BG, reported by

his friend Frank Bostwick of the 466th BG.

G. Fred Bostick, 89, of Thomasville, and Jacksonville Beach, Fla., He was a World War II veteran who served in the Army Air Corps and the U.S. Air Force, surviving 52 combat missions as a member of the 43rd Bomb Group, Australia, in the Pacific theater, and as a member of the 303rd Bomb Group, England, in the European theater. Fred was twice wounded and received many medals and commendations for his service to his country including the Purple Heart, Silver Star, Distinguished Service Medal, and Distinguished Flying Cross, to name but a few.

submitted by Gary L. Moncur
303rd Bomb Group Historian

Herbert Spence Sutton, Jr., Nashville, TN., navigator with the 8th Air Force during WW II and Korea.

Wilbur "Bud" Klint, Fort Worth, TX., B-17 pilot and flew the 2nd Schweinfurt mission referred to as Black Thursday. He was one of the founders of the 2nd Schweinfurt Memorial Association.

Dr. Clifton H. Harrel, Robstown, TX., B-17 tail gunner, 457th BG, participating in many of the most hazardous mission over Nazi Germany, including two raids on the ball bearing factories at Schweinfurt and six of the first daylight raids on Berlin. Also flew during "Big Week," the period in February, 1944, noted by many as the most violent aerial conflict in history. Recipient of the Silver Star.

Raymond F. Henry, Allentown, PA., radio operator with the 352nd FG, the "Blue-nosed Bastards of Bodney."

Lane R. Gebert, Upper Hanover Township, PA., B-24 radio operator and turret gunner, with 35 bombing missions over Germany and France.

Warren C. Grow, Albrightsville, PA. After service in the 8th Air Force during WW II, he became chair-

man of Bethlehem Steel Corporation for 30 years.

William "Bill" Perbetsky, Newquehoning, PA., B-24 armorer with the 376th BG.

Thomas M. Benson, Easton, PA., 8th Army Air Corps.

Edward John McElroy, Cape Coral, FL., B-17 tail gunner with the 385th BG, 551st BS stationed at Great Ashfield Airfield, England.

James "Jim" Dillard Puckett, Gainesville, GA., B-17 radio operator and mechanic with the 341st BS, 97th

BG. Retired from Delta Airlines after a 39-year career.

George W. Jones, Tigard, OR., 452nd Bomb Group.

John C. Veld, Kalamazoo, MI., 55th FG.

R. C. W. "Bill" Blessley, Signal Mountain, TN., West Point graduate, class of 1945, with wings. Became an experimental test pilot, director of the F-11 Joint Test Force, Carrier Qualified. Was a senior engineer and built an air depot for the Shah in Teheran, Iran.

Clauda V. Daugherty, Sikeston, MO., wife of the late Oliver L. "Bud" Daugherty. Together they were instrumental in established and hosting the first 8th AFHS reunion.

Loyd B. Slimp, Beurlson, TX., reported by his wife, Margaret.

Dr. Robert E. Hall, Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, NM., 401st BG (H), 615th Squadron. Served as president of his local 8th AFHS.

Paul F. Dwyer, Alexandria, VA., B-24 lead navigator, 448th BG.

Fred P. Renken, Souderton, PA., 359th FG.

Charles W. Reus, Berryville, VA., B-24 tailgunner.

Gordon L. Merritt, Cedar Grove, NJ., radioman with the 375 FS, 361st FG.

George W. Spicer, Matthew, NC., 375th FS, 361st FG.

Maurice McCall, Wichita Falls, Texas.

command pilot with 493rd BG. Maurice flew 33 missions over occupied



G. Fred Bostick



Maurice McCall

Europe.

Joseph A. Intermor, a World War II veteran recently passed away. He was a proud member of the 8th Air Force, 2nd Air Division (B-24's), 453rd Bomb Group, 732nd Bomb Squadron.

Washington Falk, "Wash" III, Atlanta, GA.

Thomas M. O'Donnell, 88, 303rd Bomb Group. During World War II he was a B-17 pilot and participated in 35 combat missions over enemy territory. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with five oak-leaf clusters, and a Unit Presidential citation. He also received the European African Middle Eastern Service Medal with three Bronze Stars. One plane he piloted, the Thunderbird, is now depicted in a mural on display in the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

David E. Bennett Jr., Lima, Peru. He completed 34 missions as co-pilot with Harold Hansen as pilot. submitted by his son, David E. Bennett III

Chauncey Rowan, 350th Fighter Squadron / 353rd Fighter Group - Pilot of "Jenny." POW - May 21, 1944.

Herbert Schwartz, Tail Gunner - 700th Bomb Squadron / 445th BG. Flew with the French Crew on the famous Kassel Mission - 9/27/1944.

Maiden, Clint E., Canoga Park, California 466th BG. He flew B-24's and B-29's. During the cold war flew B-47's and Tankers for the SAC. During his military career, he accrued over 4,000

flight hours. submitted by his brother Elmo Maiden 466th BG

John Kajmo, Sr., 379th BG, Bethlehem and formerly of Hellertown, PA. He proudly served his country in the Army Air Corps during World War II. John was stationed in Kimbolton, England and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross as a B17 Pilot. **Charles Sibray**, Odon, IN. He was the tail gunner on Bill Ringler's B-17 crew - 486th Bomb Group, 833rd Bomb Squadron. We flew out of Sudbury, England -



John Kajmo, Sr.



George C. Kuhl



Station #174. Charles was the youngest of our crew. I was the navigator and the next to the youngest.

submitted by James S. Rodgers

Joseph Korosec, Cleveland, Ohio 445th BG submitted by his wife Ann Korosec.

Walter C. Hopper, 446th BG, He was a nose gunner on a B-24, the Shady Sadie. He flew 35 missions and was stationed at Bungay. His rank was SSgt and from Barbourville, KY. submitted by Bob Moses



Clarence Franklin Booth, PA B-24 pilot for the 489th BG. submitted by his wife Shirley Booth

George Kuhl, 305th BG, author of *Wrong Place, Wrong Time*.

Christopher Balzano Sr., 303rd BG, 358th Sqdrn as a radio operator/gunner receiving credit for 30+ missions. submitted by proud son, Chris Balzano, Jr Winter Springs, FL

Albert Baumann, Fremont, OH 729th Sq & 452nd BG, gunner on a B-17 out of England - 30 missions

George Speaker, Sun City West, Arizona B-17 Engine Mechanic

John F. Dittmar, Cottekill, NY, a World War II veteran. He served with the U.S. Army Air Forces during the war. He was the radio operator on the 303rd BG,

359th BS Jack Magee's Crew. He flew seven combat missions at the end of the air war, including the final mission the 303rd Bomb Group flew on April 25, 1945. On that final mission, Pilot Magee was seriously injured and bleeding profusely. The crewmen stabilized his wounds and treated him for shock, saving his life.



John F. Dittmar

"Spring Offensive"

by Wilfred Owen

"Of them who running on that last high place
Leapt to swift unseen bullets, or went up
On the hot blast and fury of hell's upsurge,
Or plunged and fell away past this world's verge;
Some say God caught them even before they fell."

submitted by Brenda Elmgren

Walter Cronkite



On the morning of February 26, 1943, B-17s of the 303rd BG with their ten-man crews took off from Molesworth to attack submarine pens at Wilhelmshaven in Germany. The eleventh man on one of our 427th Squadron bombers was Walter Cronkite. He said at the time that he was too excited to be

afraid. Five hours later, the B-17s returned and Mr. Cronkite wrote, "American Flying Fortresses have just come back from Wilhelmshaven, an assignment to hell; a hell 26,000 feet above the earth, a hell of burning tracer bullets and bursting gunfire, of crippled fortresses and burning German fighters, of parachuting men and others not so lucky."

303rd Bomb Group veterans, in our eighties and nineties, gathered in September 2007 to celebrate a final reunion. As you'll recall, Mr. Cronkite planned to join us, but had to regret. He wrote, "For a long time I have been looking forward to being present as the 303rd meets again. Just now



Walter Cronkite with the 427th BS captain Robert W. Sheets Crew

I have learned that I cannot be with you on this important Sunday and I suffer deep disappointment. I wanted so much to see you all again—you courageous men of the 303rd group who I had the privilege of knowing and whose achievements I reported to a grateful nation during World War II. Day after day, the 303rd wrote in the skies of Europe an incredible history of valiance that assured victory for the civilized nations of the world."

Mr. Cronkite's letter was read aloud from the podium at the 303rd's farewell banquet, and our veterans rose to applaud and salute him. He was, indeed, one of us, a veteran of the 303rd Bomb Group, and now we have lost him.

Submitted by Eddie Deerfield, 303rd BG.

303rd BG Mission 172

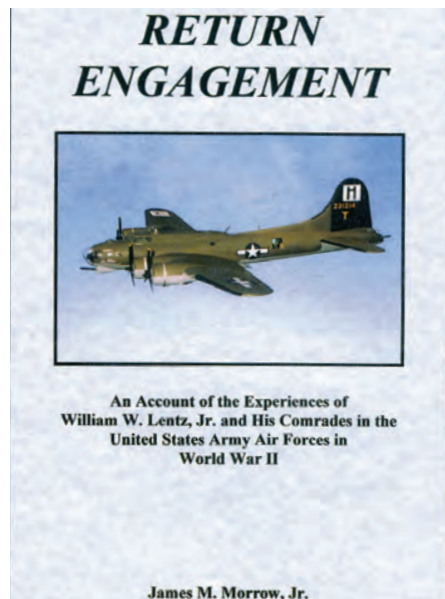
D-Day June 6, 1944 - Target: Caen, France

(L-R) F.E. Umphress, Jr., Robert W. Sheets, Walter L. Cronkite, Kenneth L. Olsen, & Darwin D. Sayers



The photo above is the only known photograph of Walter Cronkite with a 303rd Bomb Group crew. It was taken on D-Day, June 6, 1944, when Mr. Cronkite flew with the 427th BS Captain Robert W. Sheets Crew. The photograph was signed and sent to Bob Sheets. Bob Sheets passed away December 21, 2000. Walter Cronkite passed away July 17, 2009. The other members of the crew, not shown in the photo, were Francis X. Neuner, Earl J. King, Andrew G. Benevento, Tom C. Sullens, Leonard C. Smith and James F. Donnelly.

Reviews presented in this section 8th AF News are authored by the magazine's editor and are presented for the enjoyment and information of Historical Society members. Books are aviation related topics, especially that of the 8th Air Force. They are in print and of recent publication.



RETURN ENGAGEMENT

by James M. Morrow Jr.

Pilot Bill Lentz, author James Morrow's cousin, flew his last mission – number 20 – in a B-17 Flying Fortress on the 8 March 1944 raid on Berlin. His 388th Bomb Group was part of the 45th Combat Wing, and even though his crew normally flew in the B-17 *Return Engagement*, on this mission Bill flew another aircraft, a newer aircraft that was in natural silver color. There were big losses on that day and Bill's airplane was shot up and rammed by a stricken German fighter. Five of his crew bailed out and were taken prisoner. Bill did not survive. He was buried in a cemetery in Hanover and his body was identified after the war, being moved to a cemetery in Belgium.

Jim Morrow spent eight years extensively researching the details of the 388th's war, traveling around the world conducting interviews with crew members and others who flew missions with his cousin. This book is both factual and a personal account of an 8th Air Force crew and its outcome during the war, as well as a fascinating exposition of what one family did to uncover their family member's history. This present volume is an updated reprint of the first edition and is now once again available. Period photographs and color renditions

are throughout. The primary focus is of course on Bill Lentz, but also relates the history of other of his crew and his wartime acquaintances. Several chapters follow these airmen postwar.

The book is large-format softback, 182pp and can be obtained by contacting: James Morrow Jr., 333 Wedgewood Drive, Mooresville NC 28115 – 2747, tel # 704-664-3486 email: jnmj@mi-connection.com. Author Morrow plans to donate sales proceeds to the 388th Bomb Group Association and the restoration of the B-17 *City of Savannah* now underway at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia. The original *City of Savannah* left Savannah to fly in the 388th BG at Knettishall.

RITE OF PASSAGE

A Teenager's Chronicle of Combat and Captivity in Nazi Germany
by Ray Matheny

Several years ago I attended the annual reunion of the 379th Bomb Group held that year in Tucson. My buddy Lew Lyle, who had commanded the group during the war, pulled me aside and said "Come on with me – you need to hear this guy's talk." For the next two hours I was fascinated by Ray Matheny. I taped and later transcribed his entire presentation. Now Ray's story, told in his unique



style (his career was as a college professor) is available in print. Compared to some other combat stories, this one is told in great detail, great recall, of the author's wartime experiences as a B-17 flight engineer and gunner and finally as a Prisoner of War. This tale is as accurate as it gets, now sixty years post-war. Ray's writing style fits perfectly with his story materials, being both professional and personal.

Growing up in Los Angeles, he recalls the anxious implementation of defenses employed along the California coast shortly after the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. Patriotically enlisting in the Air Corps he went through the Heavy Bomber/gunner training programs and flew with his crew to the 379th airbase at Kimbolton in East Anglia, Col. Maurice "Mo" Preston commander.

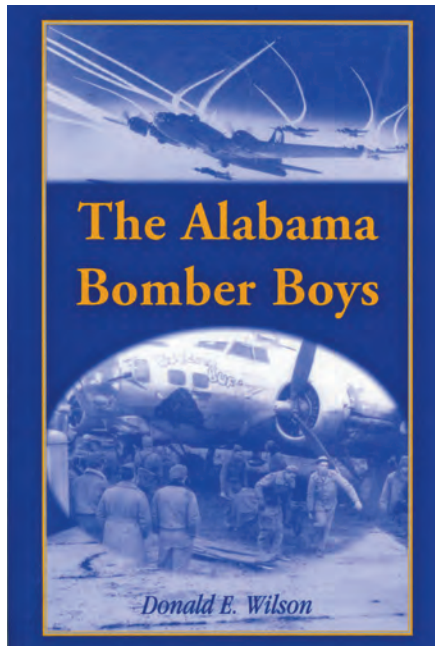
The authentic details of all aspects of the wartime and combat experiences of a young American are here, including a detailed recall of his captivity in a Nazi Stalag after the shoot down of his aircraft in early 1944. Fascinating vignettes of the author's experiences fill the volume (Ray tells of the times he and his fellow kriegies, still fighting the enemy, would throw rocks at the low-flying Luftwaffe fighters who would buzz the Stalag – almost hitting the propellers on several occasions).

First published in German, the book is just now available in an English edition. The volume is softback, 337pp, photographs b&w, with a fine foreword by German fighter pilot Gen. Johannes Steinhoff. Available through American Legacy Media, 1544 W. 1620 N, Ste. 1-A, Clearfield UT 84015-8243 www.americanlegacymedia.com or at usual book outlets.

THE ALABAMA BOMBER BOYS

by Donald E. Wilson

When the Mississippi Chapter published its extensive anthology of stories of their members Mississippians in the Mighty Eighth it was well-received and now is being reprinted by the Chapter.



Upon receiving this volume relating the experiences of many Alabama 8th AFers, I was surprised to see the format in this fine volume was different, having been deeply researched as regards the airwar itself, based on extensive interviews with the airmen themselves and presented in Chapter form. Professionally done as would be expected from a professor and scholar such as Donald Wilson whose career was in military history at Samford University, the volume took four years of research to complete.

The unfolding of the volume covers practically all aspects of the Eighth experience in that the dozens of interviews – over 50 individuals - included depict the various outlooks of those who flew. The result is that the reader is given an intimate look into the thoughts and opinions of those of the Mighty Eighth. Author Wilson's style and presentation augment the stories and experiences.

Eighth airplanes went out on missions against the enemy almost daily for three years. Alabamian Bill Varnedoe, 385th Bomb Group, notes that "The twelve B-17s lost by the 385th during my tour were just as lost as any downed earlier." Feelings of flying D-Day missions and the relief of returning safely to his home base are related by B-24 pilot Tom Winslett, 448th Bomb Group.

The book is softback, 165pp, photographs b&w. Obtain your copy by contacting Heritage Books, Inc., 100 Railroad Ave., Ste 104, Westminster MD 21157.

tel 1-800-876-6103 or email: Orders@HeritageBooks.com

A TOAST FOR YOU and ME, AMERICA'S PARTICIPATION, SACRIFICE and VICTORY

by Robert C. Valentine

This edition, Volume Two, by Dig-Cam Publishers, is truly a rare book. The author has compiled multiple stories and period photographs, mostly in color, from the early years of WWII, in addition to duplicating in original format reproductions of numerous wartime magazine advertisements and articles related to the volume. Included are previously unpublished photos and reproductions from the Pacific Theater as well as historical inputs regarding Japan and its role in the war. Completely new material, it follows a similar production released in



1994. The author has been researching historical war material since that time.

The entire volume is packed with facts, many little-known, (breakfast for the invading troops on the Japanese-held islands had to be prepared after daylight – at night the light for the fires would spot the cooks to Japanese snipers). All of the photos and reproductions are of the highest quality on quality print material, using full-color. The volume concludes with a detailed chronology and time-line of the events of the war – fascinating in itself. Descriptions of air and sea battles and combat events are presented concisely and factually, sure to bring back some long-forgotten



memories.

Information on obtaining this 300pp book may be obtained from: Dig-Cam Publishers, P.O. Box 32522, Los Angeles CA 90032

HIGH NOON OVER HASELUENNE The 100th Bombardment Group over Berlin – March 6, 1944

by Luc Dewez and Michael P. Faley

The Jun 09 8th AF News carried a notice of the long-awaited book that Luc Dewez, our Associate member in Belgium, had been compiling along with author Michael Faley. Just released, the two writers conducted a book-signing at the Cincinnati HS reunion. Luc recalls Heavy bomber streams passing over his home during the war and he has not lost interest in the history of the 8th Air Force since. It is noted that Luc's parents were deeply involved with Resistance movements against the Nazis during the war. On 6 March 1944 the 8th lost 69 aircraft to enemy fire on a maximum effort raid on Berlin. Enemy aircraft losses totaled 123 fighters. Luc has spent 8 years researching that mission and interviewing participants in the mission. The result is the excellent volume that dissects that day and evaluates its importance.

The volume is replete with descriptions of the briefing, forming up, and attack as told in the words of many of the crew members flying that day. Period



photographs accompany their stories. The book is well-written and authentic in every way. Luc, who is a fixture at the Society's annual reunions, with Faley have included more than 100 pages of fascinating detailed Appendices concerning the 100th BG and the March 6th mission, including contributions by author Paul Andrews.

From Sgt Charles Allen, gunner on B-17 Ronnie R.: "Even though I knew Kerwin did a good job installing them, I reinstalled my gun each time just to make sure. You see, if that gun failed me, it was my life! The moment we stepped into that plane and shut the door, it was all business. No fooling around, no let up."

Flying the mission in the High Squadron in Black Cat 13, Bloody Hundredth pilot C. B. "Red" Harper recalls: "They were throwing everything they had at us. A rocket hit us in the waist section after damaging the right horizontal stabilizer. Our oxygen tanks in the rear were damaged and the electrical cables were severed." Limping back to his base at Thorpe Abbots, Red went through Debriefing to report the action. Later, sitting on his sack in his hut, he opened his Bible and picked out a verse at random. That verse read, "Fear not, for I am always with you." Reading that inspiring verse, Red sent up a prayer, "Lord, I hope you will be with me on tomorrow's mission, because I almost got you killed today!" Red and

his crew flew their first four combat missions that week – rough missions to Brunswick and the next three to Berlin. They received a commendation from Headquarters for those missions – their introduction to the 8th air war.

There are numerous fascinating crew reports in this volume, giving the reader multiple looks at what happened to the various crews and what their feelings about that day were. A number of their diary pages are also included. Crew pictures and original photographs of life on Thorpe Abbots, abound throughout. The volume is another offering from Schiffer Publishing, always the highest quality. Large format, high quality print, 214pp available from: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 4880 Lower Valley Road, Atglen PA 19310 USA. Tel # 610-593-1777 Fax # 610-593-2002

LOOKING BACK A Tailgunner's View of WWII by Dale VanBlair

The distinguished veteran was sitting at a table at a table during the Cincinnati reunion. A stack of books was there and in talking with him, he presented me with a copy. This is an unusual tale of a combat crewman who flew most of his missions with the 448th and then 389th Pathfinder Bomb Groups. Author VanBlair focuses on his thoughts as his war unfolded. He presents a very personal look at this gunner's activities on his missions, his filling in on other crews who needed a tailgunner, and especially his interactions with his crew.

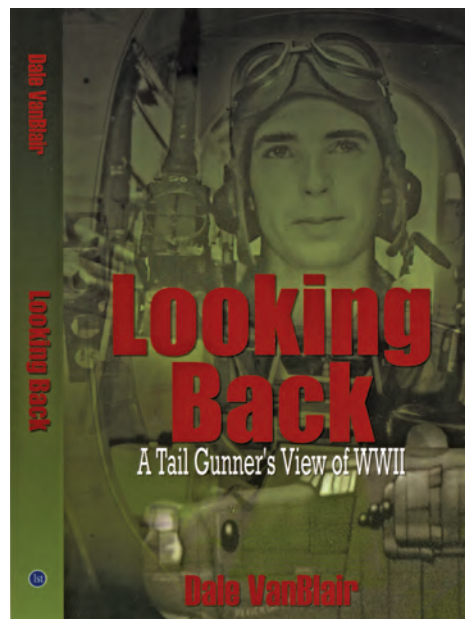
His B-24 crew flew some of the rough missions, including trips to Berlin, Gotha and they were on the mission during which another Wing's bombs fell on a town in Switzerland, and also reached their base in England when the German fighters followed them home and shot down over a dozen bombers on five different bases. VanBlair gives a detailed account of the gunner's war, and throughout refers to the officers on his crew using their rank in his discussions, an unnecessary but thoughtful and respectful technique. His descrip-

tion of the ditching of his B-24, a shaky proposition at best, along with the loss of several crew members, is memorable. He almost drowned during the ditching before rescue by a British Air/Sea boat.

Following the war he remained in touch with families and members of his crew. He corresponded with Henrietta Reed, crewman Kenneth Reed's mother and wife of a professor at Cornell University, who wrote to him inquiring about Ken's death during the ditching in the North Sea,

"And as for Ken, I understand that both John Hortenstine and Fred Self tried to keep him up. This knowledge is of superlative comfort to us. It was just one of those things Dale. And we are so grateful that seven of that splendid twelve are still here. We have looked the facts in the face from the beginning. I firmly believe that the five are all right. Why wouldn't they be, Dale? They were fine fellows, and they, with all of you that day, were doing their duty, a duty of great difficulty and a duty essential to the welfare of our fine country. Human beings are often unbelievably kind and good and brave. And so there is no doubt but what their creator is even more so."

The book comes in hardback and soft cover, 330 pp, conveniently double-spaced text, scattered b&w photographs. Contact: Dale Van Blair, 2505 Oak Park Dr., Belleville, IL. 62223-4554.



Antenna David Lustig...

Probably every squadron in the European Theater of Operations had its mascot. Usually it was a stray mongrel dog that endeared himself to combat crews and ground personnel alike. The 384th Bomb Group was no exception. A stray's favorite hangout was usually in the vicinity of the mess halls and, for them, combat mess was a gourmet delight. Flight crew rations were a cut above the regular mess food, probably based on the theory that each meal could be a crewman's last. At any rate there was a great joy in dogdom when the G.I.s exited the combat mess with an assortment of goodies left over from breakfast, dinner, or supper. Our mascot was a short sturdy all white mongrel about the size of a Beagle but shaped more like a Dachsund. His outstanding feature; however, was his tail. It seemed almost as long as his body and he carried it proudly, like a flag pole, waving it enthusiastically whenever anyone spoke words of encouragement or offered him a treat. Since all of us who patronized the mess were flyers, his tail's resemblance to a radio antenna was obvious and thus he was named "Antenna". He was a very friendly mutt and always injected a bit of cheer into our wait in the chow line.

To better understand the humorous twist to this story, I must digress and acquaint you with a vital piece of equipment that all crewmen wore on every mission - our Mae West. Although our missions were mostly over land, our routes took us across the English Channel each time and accidents happened. If it was necessary to parachute into the water or ditch a crippled B-17, the Mae West was our only hope of survival. Of course, from a rescue aircraft flying many thousands of feet above the water, a head bobbing in a rough sea was almost impossible to detect. The Army Air Corps recognized this problem and devised a very effective aid - dye markers. A dye maker was a small tube about the size of half a cigar and one was attached to each Mae West. Upon plunging into the water, an airman would first pull the handle to inflate his Mae West, an exercise we had practiced many times during training. He would then remove the cap from the tube and pour

the powdered contents into the water. Instantly the downed airman would be centered in a thirty foot diameter film of eye catching fluorescent chartreuse. The brightly colored area encircling the downed airman magnified his visibility immeasurably and greatly increased the odds for his recovery. Now back to "Antenna."

It was a typical day, English weather wise, overcast and dreary with a fine steady drizzle. A sodden "Antenna" was our only cheerful diversion as we waited in line for the mess hall door to open. It was then that some sadistic airman did the unthinkable - he opened a purloined tube of dye marker and shook its contents on "Antenna". It was instant chartreuse "Antenna"! For most of us to whom "Antenna" had endeared himself, it was an impulsive and cruel act and the thoughtless perpetrator was flirting with a lynching. But then the unexpected happened - someone guffawed as his eyes beheld the vision of a chartreuse "Antenna". "Antenna's" reaction, on the other hand, was sheer joy as he became the center of attention. It was then that spontaneous howls of unrestrained delight echoed outside the mess hall and "Antenna", reveling in his technicolor moment of triumph, wagged his antenna as he never had before.

**David Lustig, 384th BG
Walden, NY**

Donald Kremper...

Estimate enemy fighter aircraft, type FW190 and ME109s attacked our Bomb Group the 94th, about 30 minutes before our designated target which was Brunswick, Germany an aircraft manufacturing plant.

We were flying lead plane, 331st Sqdn., when FW190s made a frontal attack-line abreast-firing canon.

Hits between #3 and #4 engines caused a fire due to damaged gas and oil lines.

Action taken; Pilot, Don Anderson, dove plane out of formation ordered all bombs salvoed, and prepare to bail out.

Many enemy fighters attacked from all directions, causing a great deal of damage to our aircraft.

Smith-Mitchell-Evans and Kremper sustained wounds at this time.

Estep-Barker and Feeley bailed out.

Fire went out in wing and plane now flying at 2000-3000 ft. on three engines.

Exit doors in waist and tail section

damaged from enemy fighters and not able to use for bail out procedure.

We do discover Smith's and Kremper's parachutes have bullet holes showing in packs and no spares available.

Now down to about 1000ft. and plane taking hits from ground fire and running on two engines.

Transfer of gas from wing tanks to no avail. Believe ruptured fuel lines drained some of the tanks.

A crash landing site is chosen and procedures put into action to prepare for a crash.

All crew, except pilot and co-pilot, Al Clapie, moved to radio compartment.

Site of crash was swampy flat farm land belonging to a large dairy farm near a small town called Bentheim, Germany, not too far from Holland border.

Impact of crash caused some bruises, but no broken bones. I injured the back of my head, neck and upper back by being slammed against bulkhead. Our landing speed was 100 mph, causing plane to furrow the ground and jam the ball turret up inside the fuselage.

We evacuated the plane through upper radio compartment hatch, set fire to plane and waded through cold water to higher ground. German farmers approached us with guns and we surrendered. They brought a ladder for us to carry Smith to a large barn which was attached to their house. Language was somewhat of a problem, but we managed.

Smith was wounded badly in his lower extremities (stomach and legs). I washed his wounds with water furnished and sedated him with morphine from our first aid kit, Mitchell, Evans and myself hung in there with shrapnel wounds.

Shortly after this a few of the farmers took Mitchell, Paxton and myself to another farm close by. Anderson, who tried to escape after our crash, was captured and he was also at this farm.

While here, a local policeman came and took one of our dog-tags and had us walk into Bentheim. Mitchell had a lot of shrapnel in his legs, so Paxton and I pushed him on the policeman's bike.

When we reached Bentheim, the police locked us up together in one cell without any furnishings. We had to sit on the concrete floor. We wondered how long we would be here? That evening the military came for us, put us in a truck where they had the others from

our first barn and drove us to Lingen, where they had a POW hospital not very well equipped. The two doctors I met in the emergency room were French who spoke some English and were POWs themselves. I was allowed to wash my wounds, but no medication or dressings were forthcoming.

I gave them Smith's name, rank and serial number and this is the last time I saw him until Aug. 1945 at England General Hospital in Atlantic City, N.J.

From here they drove us to a German airfield at Quackenbruck. Luftwaffe guards locked us in a large room with double bunks. Two guards with automatic weapons sat in front of our door

all night.

During the night, more bomber crews and Allied fighter pilots shot down that day, ended up in this same room. Next day, they put us on a bus and drove to another large airfield at Oldenburg. It was here we joined up with Estep-Barker-and Feeley who had bailed out, captured as soon as they hit the ground. We were glad we were back together and wondered about Smith. Many American air crew arrived here throughout the day for the German defense.

Oldenburg must have been a staging area for downed Allied airmen. That night (Feb. 12th) we were herded on board a passenger train, under heavy

guard and traveled all night. Walking wounded given rough treatment by some of the guards.

Train stopped at Frankfurt/Main, where we got off and the guards formed us up outside of station. When we marched down the street, between guards, the civilian population yelled "Luft-gangsters" and threw stones at us. Our guards had their hands full trying to ward off the civilians.

After marching a few blocks, we boarded trolley cars which took us to Oberursel, the interrogation center for Allied airmen POWs.

David Kremper
94th Bomb Group

BRIEFING

Jerry McLaughlin made the trip to the annual reunion in Cincinnati and presented an excellent exposition on the acquisition and transfer of the B-17 City of Savannah from its hangar in Washington to the Combat Gallery at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia. Jerry is a volunteer at the Museum and along with his two cohorts, Jim Grismer and Marshall Brooks, has taken charge of the restoration of the aircraft at the Museum. Jerry's fascinating power-point presentation to the 8th AFHS general assembly was well-received and appreciated by reunion attendees.

The 491st Bomb Group's fine news-magazine, Ringmasters, has an excellent presentation of the Group's successful annual reunion recently held in Savannah. Regretably, this 60-page edition with its special photograph section, is the final issue to be published by the group's leadership. The reunion is also the last official reunion of the 491st.

Iowa Chapter President Charles Taylor and his son joined several family members of 8th AF veterans on a 12-day 40th Combat Wing tour in England, hosted by 92nd, 305th, and 306th BG contact in

England. They were escorted to bases by appreciative Brits and were treated like royalty the entire visit. Taylor's son, Charles, was honored as Mayor of the Day during the visit to Bedford and was decked out in ceremonial robes and hats.

From Mists of Time, a non-profit organization devoted to preserving history and getting patriotism into our schools, has recently had its documentary, Bomber's Moon: Girls Beneath the Bombs, aired twice on Public Television. PBS is now working with them for a future documentary presentation on their activities. They are now interviewing veterans, as they have been doing for the past seven years, in order to present their stories and have already amassed more than 300 interviews. The group is focusing now on the stories of nine recipients of the Medal of Honor. Richard Randall and Patty Spears are looking for new supporting members for their Patriot Circle, to help them in this notable project. Send donations or contact for information: From Mists of Time, 29 West Cimarron St., #4, Colorado Springs CO 80903.

Arnold Wright was featured in the Benton Courier newspaper with his presentation of a copy of the June 09 8th AF News to the local Saline County, Arkansas Library. He also presented a copy to the Bauxite, Arkansas Museum. That issue featured a story on the role Bauxite played in the manufacture of aircraft aluminum during the war. During the war over 300,000 airplanes were manufactured in the United States, utilizing more than 3 billion pounds of aluminum, 95% of which came from mines in Bauxite. Arnold has written several books, notable of which one features the list of over 2000 Stalag prisoners clandestinely kept by POW Ewell McCright and smuggled out of his Stalag at the end of the war.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Board of Directors of the national Historical Society is pleased to welcome the newly-elected members to the Board for a three-year term. Re-elected by the membership was George Hoidra for his second term on the Board, and David Nowack who begins his first term as a member of the Board. Having completed their years of Board service this year are Pat Keely and Bob Books. Board contact information is to be found on the inside front cover 8th AF News.

from: "Rhymes From The Lost Battalion"
World War I

PHANTOMS

From St. Mihiel to the Vesle,
With the night wind's mournful wail,
Goes a sound that's understood,
"Gather here in Argonne Wood."

Thru the night winds wet and dreary,
Word goes on to Chateau-Thierry,
Ghostly Phantoms hear the call,
"Gather those who gave their all."

Phantom heroes gather there,
In shell-torn land, so bleak and bare.
There, beneath the sighing tree,
They are judging you and me.

By the flitting shadow light,
By the mystic shades of night,
In the one-time shell-split air,
Phantom Souls are judging there.

So listen well unto that call
Of Phantom Souls who gave their all,
May you never droop your head,
Answering our own - our dead.

END OF WORLD WAR II HONORED AT PEARL HARBOR

Veterans gathered together aboard the Battleship Missouri to mark the 64th Anniversary of the signing of surrender documents by the Japanese, ending the Pacific War and WWII. The ship was moored just a few hundred yards from the USS Arizona.



Volunteer 8th AFHS Webmaster Needed



The 8thAFHS is in need of a volunteer webmaster to maintain their website at 8thAFHS.org. Previous HTML experience in web design is required. Knowledge of Perl, Scripting, PHP and Dreamweaver helpful but not required. If you are interested, please email your resume to: website@8thAFHS.org

LITTLE ST. MARY'S LANE: CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND, 1944

Sitting down to dinner
With the couple who
Became my family

The target was far away
In the house by the river;
(A forty-eight hour pass).

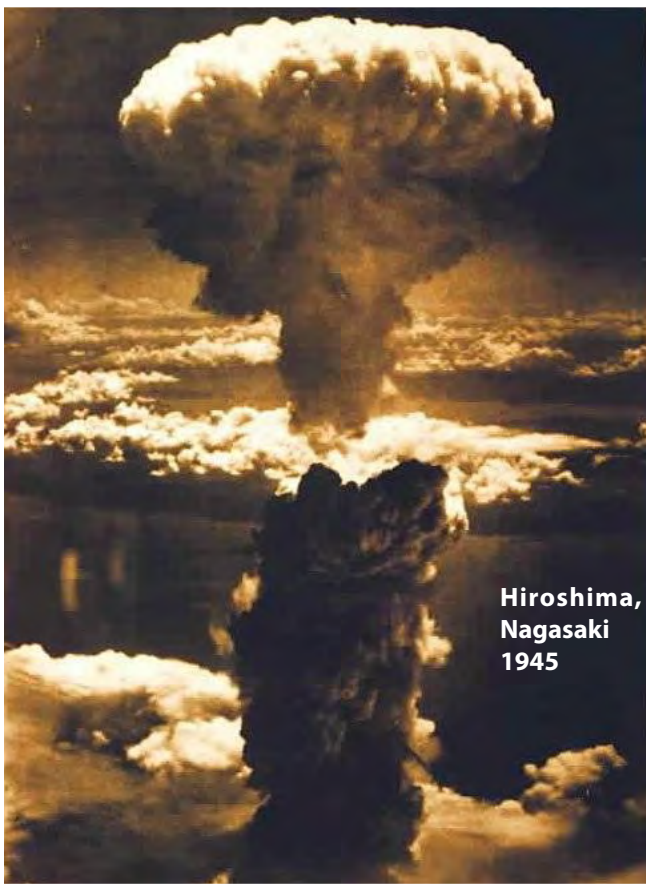
They taught philosophy,
Anthropology; music flowed
With our voices like a trio.

For two days, the war was gone,
The eternity of the Luftwaffe disappeared,
Their garden was full of roses.

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







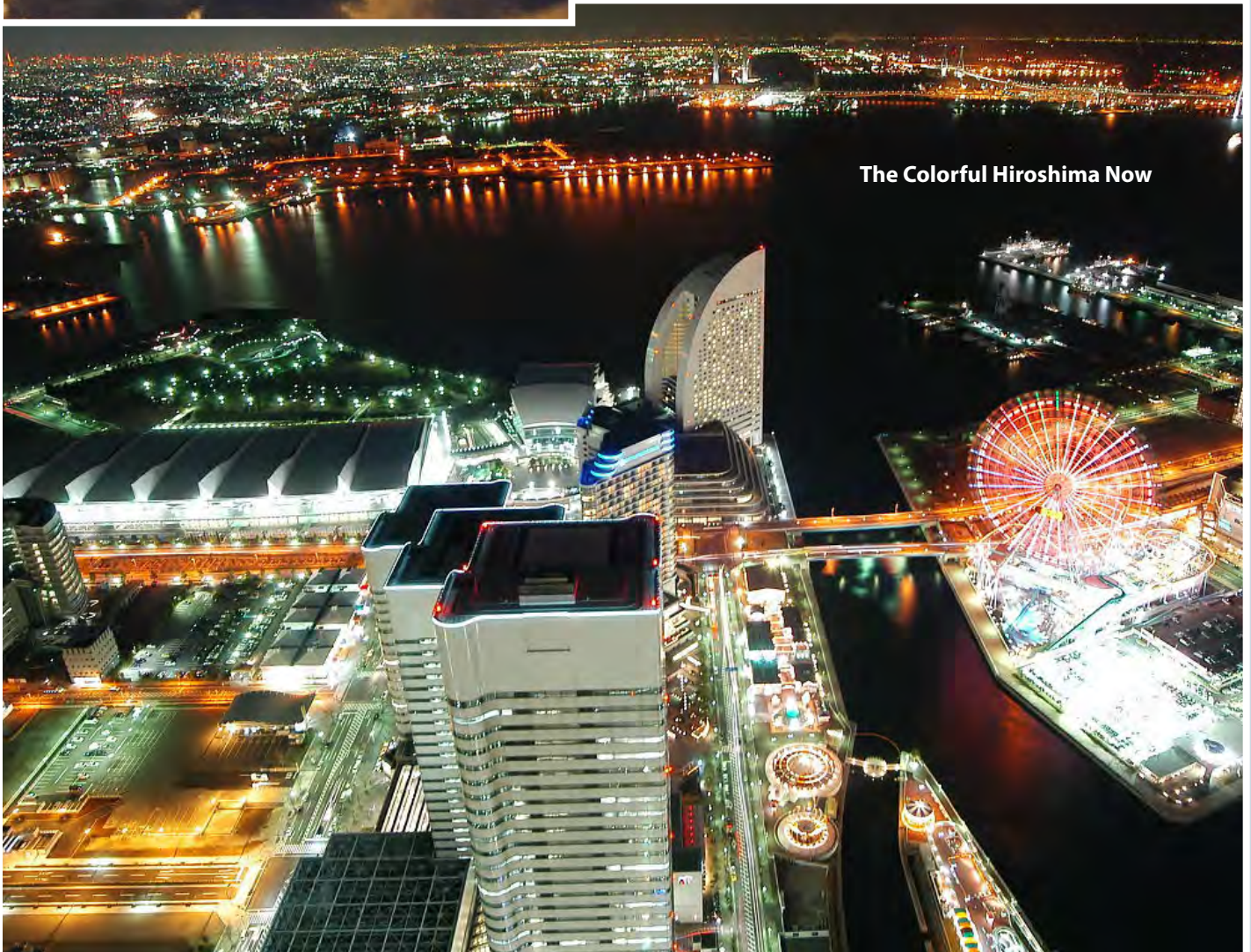
**Hiroshima,
Nagasaki
1945**



HIROSHIMA 64 YRS LATER...

We all know that Hiroshima and Nagasaki were destroyed in August 1945 after explosion of atomic bombs.

However we know little about the progress made by the people of that land during the past 62 years.



The Colorful Hiroshima Now

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

QTY	8TH AFHS PX ORDER FORM DESCRIPTION	PRICE	OPTIONS	TOTAL
	Golf shirt w/8 th AFHS logo, Circle size and color choice	\$29.99	S, M, L, XL, 2X Red, White, Navy	
	Baseball Cap w/8 th AFHS logo embroidered	\$12.95	Red, White, Blue	
	8 th AFHS 4" jacket Patch	\$3.95	NA	
	8 th AFHS 3/4" pin w/clutch back	\$3.50	Member, Life Member	
	8 th AFHS bumper sticker	\$.90	NA	
	8 th AFHS 4" round sticker	\$.75	NA	
	8 th AFHS plastic license plate	\$3.95	NA	
	8 th AF logo silk tie	\$27.99	Red, Navy	
	8 th AF 3" patch	\$3.98	NA	
	8 th AF 3/4" pin w/clutch back	\$3.50	NA	
	8 th AF logo white T-shirt	\$10.99	S, M, L, XL	
	8 th AF logo grey T-shirt	\$12.99	2X	
	"City of Savannah" B-17 T-Shirt	\$14.99	S, M, L, XL, 2X	
	8 th Logo Watch	\$15.99	S, M, L, XL	
	Not Home For Christmas	\$79.99	Men, Ladies	
	"City of Savannah" B-17 Shot Glass (Clear)	\$16.00	N/A	
	A-2 Jacket	\$3.99	N/A	
	"City of Savannah" B-17 Baseball Cap	\$299.99	40, 42, 44, 46, 48	
	Military Wall Clock	\$14.99	N/A	
	Jimmy Stewart Bomber Pilot	\$29.99	Air Force, Marine, Army	
	Masters of the Air	\$21.95	NA	
	Air Force Cookbook	\$35.00	NA	
	Military Garden Stones	\$16.95	NA	
	Stories And Recipes of The Great Depression. Choose Volumes 1, 2, or 3.	\$24.99	Air Force, Marine, Army	
		\$13.95	Vol. 1, 2, or 3	
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		7% SALES TAX-GEORGIA RESIDENTS ONLY		
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Order by mail or phone at 912-748-8888 ext. 116. Shipping and handling is added to all orders.

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To pay with credit card - complete the following:

VISA MasterCard Discover American Express

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

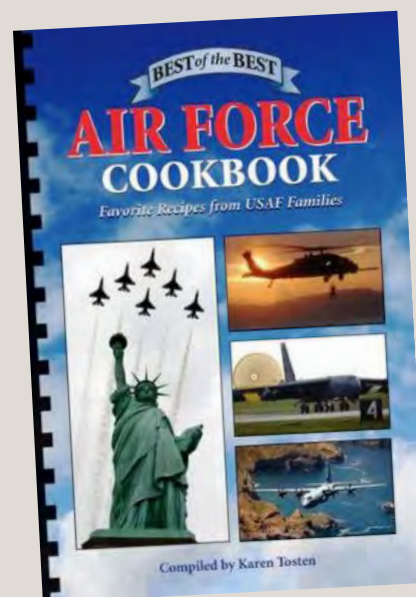
Or, Pay by check made out to the Mighty Eighth Museum Store

Send completed order and payment information to:

Mighty Eighth Museum Store, ATTN: Felice Stellies, P.O. Box 1992, Savannah, GA 31402



Military Garden Stones



Air Force Cookbook



"City of Savannah" B-17 T-Shirt



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8th AF Unit _____ Not in 8th _____ Include me as a full Associate Member _____

In service _____ Branch _____ Dates _____ to _____

Were you a former member? _____ Member # if available _____

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\$30 MEMBERS DUES NOTICES ARE MAILED ANNUALLY

Website: www.8thafhs.org

THE SAGA OF BOSSY

Bossy was a first-class, blue-ribbon, award-winning beautiful bovine. She was the joy of her owners and the cows who shared the stable with her. She was lovable, congenial, and was just a joy to be around. She produced beautiful calves and gave lots of rich milk. Folks knew about her, she was respected and admired. Really, she was the 'belle of the barn'. Given a few more years, she would become a legend and long remembered. She was certainly on her way to receive such honors. But, something happened that changed all of this. Instead of becoming a legacy, her life became a sad tale, a saga that was unbelievable. Here is what happened.

Bossy loved all of this attention she was getting. The honors she was receiving made her feel like she was really important. She felt that the ways in which she could impress folks and her actions were more important than anything else. She got arrogant, what she did was right in her own opinion regardless of how others around her felt. She developed a me-first attitude. She existed to produce milk but doing this made her feel restricted and sometimes the process of being milked brought a little discomfort and inconvenience. One day, in defiance, she lifted one of her legs and whamoo, she kicked over the bucket of milk she had just produced. The owner was a bit distraught over losing the milk but he soft-talked Bossy, patting her to calm her down. She felt rather smug about this. It got her some attention, didn't it? The next time around, she waited until the bucket was full of milk and then deliberately stuck her foot right in the pail. The owner was perturbed, to say the least and dealt a little more harshly than before. Bossy was beginning to set a pattern that was not acceptable. She was in rebellion and she brought on her own fate. "By kicking the bucket", she became a candidate for the glue factory.

America is "crying over spilt milk". What has gone wrong? We have been a country "flowing with milk and honey". We have practiced, "eat, drink and be merry." And as a nation, these practices we have enjoyed with abandon for generations. Suddenly we are experiencing gloom, despondency and despair! What are we to do? The answers will vary but for many, concerns are centered around the BIG M, money. The home mortgage crisis, the abused social security program, the exploitation of funds in financial institutions, businesses failing, growing unemployment lines, industrial giants failing, bankruptcies, inflation, job insecurity and shrinking retirement funds are of great concern. But, money is not the

panacea for all of our ills. Greed and self indulgence have brought about all of these problems. Restoring the economy could propagate more of the same. Changes are necessary but they must start with a change of attitude toward money and power.

Money was not behind the actions of the men who signed the Declaration of Independence. Many of them died as paupers, some gave their lives and for what? Freedom. The early colonists faced three powerful nations, England, France and Spain who were constant threats but they stood strong and signed on for freedom anyway. Destitute and needy people came to America from many nations. The statement on the Statue of Liberty truly reflects the heart of our Nation: "Give us your tired, your poor, your huddled masses, yearning to be free". Let us not forget that our nation was founded on the premises of freedom and equal opportunity for all. Experience is one of the greatest teachers one can have. Knowledge comes through living and observing. The ups and downs of life reveal that true living is not based on what we have accumulated. What endures is that which is not counted by what we have but by who we are. Who we are is manifested by how we treat our fellow man and what we contribute to making our world a better place. The opportunities one receives should qualify one to minister, teach and mentor those less fortunate. Look for the potential in others.

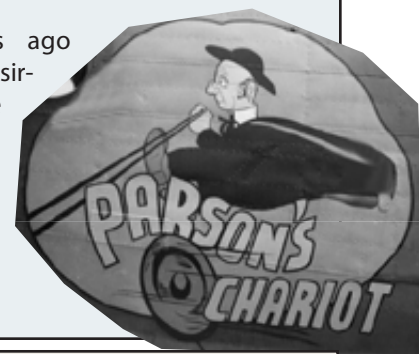
Don't miss your mark of faithfulness and usefulness by spending your time "crying over spilt milk." Let us reevaluate our behavior and attitudes in these, our remaining years. I have better aspirations for my final exit than to end up in the glue factory.

Solomon declared centuries ago that: "A good name is more desirable than great riches; to be esteemed is better than silver or gold." (Proverbs 22:1 NIV)

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



Earl Wassom



WALTER CRONKITE

Dear Eddie, 303rd BG Association

Walter reveled in the time he spent with you all and cherished his lasting memories. In many ways, the time he spent with all of you defined his career as a WWII Correspondent. He was so sad not to be able to attend your reunion, but certain that you all knew how much he admired and respected the

great men of the 303rd. He was with you in spirit.

I hope you continue to have these reunions for many years to come, and raise a glass or two to him while you're all together. Bless you all for what you have done. Though I was born after the war, I am a member of that grateful nation who will never forget your sacrifices.

With deepest gratitude,

Marlene Adler, Chief of Staff for Walter Cronkite



8th AF News
The Eighth Air Force Historical Society
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