

DECEMBER 2010



8TH AF NEWS

Volume 10 Number 4 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

MAJOR JAMES H. HOWARD
354th FG

**THE MAN WHO SAVED
THE 401ST BOMB GROUP**



AF News

December 2010

Magazine of

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

The Eighth Air Force News is dedicated to Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough, founder of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and editor for sixteen years. It is published quarterly and is the official news magazine 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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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Presidents Message	3
From the Editor	4
Behind the Scenes	4
From the 8th AFHS Office	5
Chapter/Unit/Group Liaison Report	5
Cover Story	6-12
The Man Who Saved the 401st BG	
Mail Call	26-28
Next Generation.....	30-31
Chapter News.....	33-36
Book Reviews	37-38
An Act of Human Kindness....	39-41
Taps	42-43
Bulletin Board	45
8th AFHS PX Store	46
How About It?	47

PRESIDENTS ADDRESS – DECEMBER 2010

It is hard to believe the days of 2010 are numbered. As this year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on past events. My heart is heavy when I consider close friends and members our Society has lost during the past months. Their dedication and love for the *Mighty Eighth* should be an inspiration to all of us to carry on and not surrender. I also find myself filled with excitement and anticipation as a new year approaches. I believe the challenges that await our Society will only prove us to be stronger and more diligent to our goal than ever before.

As President, I will update you on several matters.

1. Vets have been speaking loudly in favor of returning to Fall dates for the annual reunion. Your Board of Directors has heard your voices and we are going to **St. Louis, Mo. October 11th thru 15th.**
2. Board Director Bruce Sundlun submitted his resignation due to health reasons. We will miss Bruce's input and advice. Our prayers are with him and his family for healthier and stronger days.
3. Membership Director Catherine Rice submitted her resignation effective the end of 2010. She and her husband are relocating out of state. We will all miss Catherine and the effectiveness she brought to her position. We offer Catherine and her husband our best wishes.
4. Samantha Litton Reid has been hired as the new Membership Director. She will shortly begin training alongside Catherine during this transitional period. I met and interviewed Samantha at the Museum in October. She brings a double major in Fine Arts/Graphic Design, a minor in Business/Marketing, as well as experience in project management.

Last month, I had the opportunity to attend the joint reunion of the 96th and the 385th Bomb Groups in Charleston, South Carolina. This beautiful setting provided three fun-filled days with a very friendly bunch of Vets, their families, and their friends. I always enjoy spending time with these groups and leave with determination to keep the memories strong and alive.



**Harry Tanner
President**

Members of the *Mighty Eighth*, you are to be commended for your support of the B-17 "City of Savannah" at the Museum in Pooler. I had the chance to see the plane while there last month. Restoration is not complete so your commitment is still needed and appreciated to see this project through.

The issue of membership continues to be of great importance to our Society. I challenge all members to sign up one new person to the Society in 2011.

I look forward to working for **You** as President in 2011. As I said before, I want communication from you. I want to know your feelings and opinions about our Society and the directions we are going. Your Board of Directors will be gathering in February for the mid-term meeting. Let me know if there is something I need to bring to the table for you.

As the holiday seasons approach, Lorene and I wish each of you and your family safe, healthy, and happy days and celebrations. God Bless the "Mighty Eighth."

Sincerely, Harry Tanner – President 8th AFHS

MEMBERSHIP OFFICE CHANGE

As many of our members already know Catherine Rice our Membership Manager will resign her position on December 1, 2010. Catherine joined the Society 2 ½ years ago and has managed the affairs of the Membership office in a very professional manner and is highly respected by the many members of the Society with whom she has worked. While we hate to see Catherine leave the Society she advises us that as her husband Matt returned from his third tour in IRAQ they will be reassigned to a duty station located in Washington State in January 2011. Catherine plans to carry on her studies of Art History at their new duty station. Samantha Reid has taken over the Membership duties and has been working with Catherine for the last two weeks to familiarize her with the duties of that position. We welcome Samantha to the Society team and we wish Catherine and Matt the very best luck and success in their assignment. We plan to keep Catherine up to date with her old organization by sending future copies of the 8th AF News.

Catherine wanted to thank all the members for their support and remind them not to forget to pay their dues.

MARK YOUR 2011 CALENDARS FOR THE 37TH ANNUAL 2011 8TH AFHS REUNION ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI OCTOBER 11 - 15TH, 2011

FROM THE EDITOR



Mark Copeland
Historian/8th AF News Editor

Happy Holidays Everyone! It has been truly an honor to serve as your 8th Air

Force News editor for the past year. I look back on what our Society has accomplished in 2010 with great pride. On behalf of Donna and Telisha, I want thank President Tanner and the fine members on our Board of Directors for supporting our efforts in producing the 8th Air Force News to the standard and quality that we all enjoy.

We look forward to hearing from our members and ask for your continued support in 2011 by forwarding on potential articles for future publication. My goal as your Editor is to tell not only the about history, but more so, to tell the stories of the courage and bravery of those who flew in the "Mighty Eighth."

Please sit back, relax and enjoy this issue of 8th Air Force News. From your 8th Air Force News editorial team, we wish you all the joys of the Holiday Season.

Respectively in your service,
Mark S. Copeland
Historian/Editor - 8th Air Force News



BEHIND THE SCENES



Mother/Daughter - 8th AF News Team
Telisha Gaines & Donna Neely

Telisha and I want to thank you for allowing us to dig deep into your past to publish and share your war stories. We absolutely enjoy each and every article we read and photos that we receive. You are our true heros. Please keep the articles and photos coming to my address on this page. You can send your articles and pictures



through my email or my mailing address. I will try to always reply to your email and let you know that I have received your submission.

The Christmas season has always been our favorite time of the year! We want to wish each and every member of the 8th AFHS the very best Holiday season. Take the time to really enjoy your family get

togethers and Christmas parties with family & friends. Cherish the memories!

Sincerely,
Behind the Scenes Team
Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines

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Dear Members,

Happy Holidays to everyone. I hope this December issue finds you well and gearing up to enjoy your holidays with friends and family. I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. I am Samantha Reid, an Army wife to a loving husband and a mother to a wonderful six-year-old son.

While we have lived in the Savannah area for twelve years, we are from Virginia and Alabama originally. We love the area and one of our favorite Savannah attractions is the *Mighty 8th Air Force Museum*. We are aware of the prestige of the 8th Air Force as well as their legacy. I am so proud to become part of this organization. I have a background in marketing and graphic design and am happy to be at your service.

I would like to say "thank you" to Catherine Rice for help-

ing me get secure in the job and training. It has been a very busy few weeks thus far but I am enjoying the job and looking forward to meeting all of you at our annual events.

My office hours will be Tuesday - Friday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Keep the dues coming in and please encourage others to join.

**Happy Holidays,
Samantha Reid
Membership Records Manager
8th Air Force Historical Society**



Samantha Litton Reid

CHAPTER/UNIT/GROUP LIAISON REPORT

SEASONS GREETINGS

The Holiday Season is upon us and on behalf of the Board of Directors of the Society I would like to wish everyone a safe, healthy and joyous Holiday Season.

I have been in contact with many of you and one common issue, besides membership declining, is Board of Directors replacements. As Bill Bergner, the Wisconsin Chapter President, stated they have a good membership and many NexGen but are constantly trying to get our guys to step forward, but have had no luck. Tom from the Florida Chapter explained they are also experiencing this issue.

In order for **US** to continue we need **YOU**, as Uncle Sam declared back in the 40's, to 'Step Forward' and continue their Legacy. For those who have stepped forward I thank you, as I also was recently elected a Chapter President, and can assist in answering questions or help with those interested in running as a Board of Director. My Board consists of a Treasurer, Membership Officer and Editor all being non-veterans. We also have 5 veterans on the Board. We are finding it an exciting and challenging project confronting the Chapter's future. As Liaison and a Chapter President I would like to formulate a Group/Chapter forum that could be used for membership ideas, events and common issues. Thoughts?

Thanks to Board Member Mike Faley the 8th AFHS now is on **Facebook** which is an excellent media for Chapters & Groups and other related organizations to post their Newsletters and activities. Mike is also addressing a **YouTube** page for the Society. Our webmaster Bob Books has added Research Help with useful research websites and Government research resources and also 8th AF Links listing Bomb Groups and associations websites. If your website is not listed please contact me.

As mentioned in my last article was the idea of starting an "Editors Forum" where newsletter editors can be in contact

with each other. This Forum can be posted on the Society's website and also in the 8th News Magazine. This is a great way of promoting membership and ideas and also upcoming events. I now receive 16 Newsletters and think this is a great idea and want to hear from you Editors with your ideas and thoughts. If interested in this please contact myself or Jim Haseman, 466th BGA editor of the **Attlebridge Notes**.

I have been taking inquiries as to where and how individuals, Groups and Squadrons can donate their 8th AF memorabilia that they have been holding on to. One answer I have is if you wish to denote your Group/Squadron patches we are fortunate to have on the BOD of the Society Dr. Nancy Toombs of the 493BG. One of Nancy's passions is her collection of 8th AF Bomb Group patches and Squadrons patches for each of the 48 groups that flew with the 8th.

I can assure you that Nancy's collection is to be used to honor the 8th and also used for educational purposes and not for any profit or commercial use. Nancy's contact info can be found on the back of the front cover page. Please consider this.

As always please contact me if any Group/Chapter contact changes. 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**



Pat Keeley



The Man Who Saved the 401st Bomb Group

An Amazing Story of Major James H. Howard on January 11, 1944

By Mark S. Copeland



Portrait of Major James Howell Howard (MOH) - 354th FG Commanding Officer

"I wouldn't have believed what he did if I hadn't seen it with my own eyes," described Major Edwin W. Brown of the 613th Bomb Squadron, 401st Bomb Group following the mission of January 11, 1944. Major Brown was one of many who were flying that day and witnessed one of the most amazing feats of courage and bravery in United States Air Force history.

Through his feats of airmanship and his dedication to sworn duty, Major James Howell Howard, a P-51 Mustang fighter pilot in the 356th Fighter Squadron, 354th Fighter Group - 9th Air Force, unquestionably saved the entire element of the 401st Bomb Group from total destruction. However, this truly extraordinary act of heroism was not accomplished by

an entire squadron of American fighters. It was achieved by one man, in a single airplane, alone in the sky.

James H. Howard was born on April 13, 1913 in Canton, China, the son of an ophthalmologist who was teaching eye surgery to the Chinese, at the time. The Howard family returned to the United States in 1927, where they settled in St. Louis, Missouri. Young Jim Howard attended the **John Burroughs School** in St. Louis where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. He went on to enroll at **Pomona College** in Claremont, California where he intended to follow in his father's footsteps and pursue a career in medicine. However, shortly before graduation he decided the life of a U.S. Naval Aviator was more appealing



Navy Aviation Cadet James H. Howard proudly sits in the cockpit of his F4B4 fighter.



Howard standing next to Madame Chiang Kai-shek, wife of Chinese leader Chiang Kai-shek, Tainan, China 1941.

than six years of medical school he was about to face. Howard promptly enlisted in the United States Navy as an aviation cadet, earning his Navy wings of gold in January 1939. Howard's first assignment was aboard the USS Enterprise (CV-6) based in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

World events intervened and Howard seized an opportunity and joined the **American Volunteer Group (AVG)**, better known as the *Flying Tigers* and sailed off for China. Under the brilliant command of General Claire Chennault, Howard excelled in combat bringing down six Japanese aircraft in 56 missions. Following the disbandment of the **American Volunteer Group**, Howard returned to the United States and was commissioned as a Captain in the U.S. Army Air Corps.

Major Howard's first assignment was Squadron Commander of the newly formed 354th Fighter Group. They eventually moved to England and consequently set-up operations at Boxted Airfield near Dedham, England. The 354th Fighter Group trained in the Bell P-39 Airacobra back in the United States, however a new American fighter aircraft had just entered production and it was destined for England. The new North American P-51B Mustang entered service in late 1943 and the 354th Fighter Group was the first to receive the revolutionary fighter for operational duty. The 354th Fighter Group flew their first

mission on December 1st, 1944 under the command of Colonel Donald J.M. Blakeslee of the Fourth Fighter Group. Early successes came slow for the 354th Fighter Group; however on January 11, 1944, it all changed.

On January 11, 1944, heavy bombers of the United States Eighth Air Force were assigned to strike targets near Halberstadt and Oshersleben, Germany.



Photo taken of James Howard while serving with the American Volunteer Group (AVG). Howard shot down six Japanese aircraft during his tenure flying in China.

The 354th Fighter Group, flying their new Mustangs, were assigned to provide fighter escort. Led by Major Howard, the 354th Fighter Group took on the German Luftwaffe. Major Howard stated at the morning briefing, *"Each bomber is manned by ten loyal Americans who are solely dependent upon us to ward off enemy fighters. If we fail at that, we will be condemning men who could have been saved if we had been more steadfast in our purpose. Our job is to reach the bomber stream with our whole group intact."*

Shortly after "bombs away" the 401st Bomb Group was viciously attacked by 30 to 40 enemy fighters with unrelenting vengeance and determination. Howard already gave orders to his other Squadrons to break off and defend other points within the bomber stream. Now hearing the plea for help from the 401st Bomb Group, Howard flew to the area where the Deenethorpe bombers were being attacked. Major James Howard now faced an overwhelming force of over 30 German fighters, alone.

First Lt. Chris Fuller from the 615th Bomb Squadron, 401st Bomb Group described the scene. *"First saw this P-51 coming in from about 11 o'clock and he attacked a Me-110 which blew up immediately. This occurred at 1204. Then he came around formation and went out of my range of vision toward our tail. The next time I saw him was when he*

attacked another enemy aircraft which was queuing up at 11 o'clock high and he also shot that fighter down. From that time on he was all over our formation like a preverbal circus tent. He was with us for about a half an hour."

Major Allison C. Brooks, 401st Bomb Group Operations Officer further describes, *"On the mission of January 11, 1944, our Wing received cover from one lone P-51 over the target area. His display of skill and courage in the face of 40 to 1 odds was magnificent. He was over our Wing, across it and around it. My gunners definitely told me that he shot down two enemy fighters and it is reported by other crews that he accounted for one and possibly two more. I believe this individual action undoubtedly saved ships in my Wing."*

Sgt. Morris W. Johnson was a Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner in one of the 401st B.G. B-17s that day, *"The P-51 was all over the skies. I'm sure thankful for what he did. I feel he saved our crew. He ran off two or three other attacks and it's my opinion that he deserves whatever we can give him."*

Future 401st Bomb Group Commander, Major William T. Seawell further illustrates the scene, *"The feature that impressed me the most was the way the Mustang pilot protected our formation. Time and time again he drove enemy fighters away from out Fortresses. There were at least 35 enemy fighters around our formation and it was a sight I'll never forget..... one lone American fighter against all those Jerries. The first concern of us all, upon landing was to determine if he got back and second, to learn his identity. If he ever visits us, he can have the key to our field, planes, hangers and all."*

Acting alone, Major James Howard fought off the German Luftwaffe fighters from mounting a formidable attack against the 401st Bomb Group for over 30 minutes. He describes his own actions in the formal mission report:

(Report is on page 10 & 11 of this issue)

Howard returned to Boxted and modestly claimed two enemy fighters destroyed, two probably destroyed and two damaged to his score that day. The 354th Fighter Group had their best day to date, claiming numerous enemy fighters



Supreme Allied Commander General Dwight D. Eisenhower makes a special visit to Boxted to meet with Major Howard.

destroyed.

After the 401st Bomb Group returned to their base at Deenethorpe, England, Group Commander, Colonel Howard W. Bowman, set out on a quest to find out the identity of the brave Mustang pilot. Through the identification of the Squadron letters on the side of his aircraft, the grateful 401st Bomb Group Commander finally tracked down Major James H. Howard.

Colonel Bowman wrote this letter of appreciation to Major Howard on behalf of the men of the 401st Bomb Group. *(Letter is on page 12 of this issue)*

For his actions that day, Major James Howell Howard was awarded the United

States of America's highest award for bravery and valor, the Medal of Honor. It was to be the only Medal of Honor awarded to a fighter pilot in the entire European air war campaign during World War II.

After the war, Major Howard stayed in the United States Air Force. He never bragged about winning the Medal of Honor, choosing always to modestly wear it in honor of all those who gave the supreme sacrifice. Later in life, James Howard became a successful businessman and airport manager in Clearwater, Florida. He retired as a Brigadier General in the United States Air Force.

James Howard could often be caught

in conversation not boasting about his accomplishments, but about the courage and endeavors of others. Modest to the end, James Howard passed away on March 18, 1995. His remains were buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C. with full military honors.

It is difficult to put into perspective the reasons why Major James Howard decided to put himself into such peril. Sometimes heroes don't have the opportunity to analyze the risks or dangers in a situation, they just simply react.

Perhaps Major Howard said it best when asked by a war press correspondent, why he flew into such an impossible and outmatched situation. Major James Howell Howard merely replied to the reporter's question by abruptly saying, *"I saw my duty and I done it."*

This article is respectfully dedicated

to Mr. William N. Hess, former Secretary and Chief Historian of the **American Fighter Aces Association**. Bill has authored dozens of books about WWII aviation history and the 8th Air Force. Without his assistance, this article would not have been possible.

This author is proud to call Mr. Hess his mentor, his hero, but most of all, his friend.



Major Howard's famed North American P-51B "Ding Hao."
Despite some historian's conclusions, Major Howard definitely flew AJ-A "Ding Hao" on the January 11th mission.



General Carl "Tooe" Spaatz offers sincere congratulations to Major James H. Howard during his official Medal of Honor Award ceremony. London - June 1944.

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HEADQUARTERS
354TH FIGHTER GROUP ARMY AIR FORCES
APO #638, U. S. ARMY

14 JANUARY 1944

SUBJECT: REPORT OF MISSION #14, F.O. #216, BY MAJOR HOWARD.

TO : COMMANDING OFFICER, 70TH FIGHTER WING, APO #638, U.S.ARMY

OUR GROUP WAS ASSIGNED TO THE FIRST BOXES OF BOMBERS, TO PROVIDE TARGET SUPPORT. WHEN WE RENDEZVOUSED WITH THE BOMBERS FROM THE REAR, BEING UNABLE TO DETERMINE WHERE THE FIRST BOX WAS I DISPATCHED TWO SQUADRONS TO COVER THE REAR BOXES. AT THIS TIME I RECEIVED CALL FROM GOLDSMITH 12 OF ATTACKS ON FORWARD BOXES. STARSTUD SQUADRON WAS SENT TO THE FORWARD BOX ARRIVING ABOUT 1130. I LATER DISCOVERED THAT THIS WAS WHERE ALL THE ACTIVITY WAS CENTERED, BUT AT THE TIME WAS UNABLE TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT EXCEPT USE WHAT WE HAD TO BEST ADVANTAGE. THE BOMBERS PASSED OVER TARGET, BOMBED, AND IT WAS THEN 1150 AND WE MET OUR FIRST E/A. FLIGHTS OF STARSTUD WERE DISPATCHED TO DEAL WITH VARIOUS ATTACKING E/A, AND I ALSO, WITH MY FLIGHT BEGAN ATTACKING. ON THE FIRST ENCOUNTER WHICH TURNED INTO A MELEE, MY FLIGHT LOST ME. WHEN I REGAINED BOMBER ALTITUDE, I DISCOVERED THAT I WAS ALONE AND IN THE VICINITY OF GOLDSMITH 12 AND GOLDSMITH 15. IT WAS HERE THAT I SPENT APPROXIMATELY A HALF HOUR, CHASING AND SCARING AWAY ATTACKING ENEMY AIRCRAFT FROM 21,000 TO 15,000 FEET. THERE WAS ONE BOX OF B-17'S IN PARTICULAR THAT SEEMED TO BE UNDER PRESSED ATTACK, BY SINGLE ENGINE AND TWIN ENGINE ENEMY AIRCRAFT. THERE WERE ABOUT 20 SOME ODD BOMBERS IN A VERY COMPACT FORMATION. THE ATTACKING E/A WERE WORKING INDIVIDUALLY. I COULD SEE FROM MY POSITION THAT EACH BOX WAS BEING HARASSED BY ATTACKERS, BUT THE MAJORITY OF THEM WERE OUT OF RANGE FOR ME. I HAD TO CHOOSE THE MOST OPPORTUNE TARGET AND DIVE ON HIM BEFORE HE WAS ABLE TO GET WITHIN RANGE OF THE BOMBERS. I HAD FIVE COMBAT ENCOUNTERS WITHIN THIS PERIOD OF HALF AN HOUR. EACH TIME I WOULD CLIMB BACK UP TO BOMBER LEVEL ONLY TO FIND ANOTHER E/A TOOLING UP FOR AN ATTACK. I WAS QUITE BUSY IN A CONSTANT MERRY-GO-ROUND OF CLIMBING AND DIVING ON ATTACKERS, SOMETIMES NOT FIRING MY GUNS BUT PRESENTING A GOOD ENOUGH BLUFF FOR THEM TO BREAK OFF AND DIVE AWAY. FOR THE FIRST ENCOUNTERS AND COMBAT, ALL FOUR GUNS FIRED. ON THE THIRD I HAD TWO GUNS AND ON THE FOURTH AND FIFTH ENCOUNTER ONLY ONE GUN. WHEN I GOT DOWN TO ONE GUN, I WAS STILL ENGAGED IN THIS DIVE, ATTACK AND CLIMB GAME FOR ANOTHER TWO OR THREE ATTACKS. THE E/A SEEMED RELUCTANT TO STAY AND FIGHT AND WOULD DIVE OUT. THE REASON FOR NO OTHER FRIENDLY A/C BEING IN THE VICINITY OR WITH ME, WAS THAT THE STARSTUD SQUADRON HAD BEEN SENT OFF TO DEAL WITH ATTACKERS, AND THE

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REMAINING TWO SQUADRONS WERE ENGAGED COVERING THE BOXES IN THE REAR. I WOULD SAY THAT THERE WERE ABOUT 100 PLUS ATTACKING ENEMY AIRCRAFT THROUGHOUT ALL THE BOXES DURING THIS PERIOD.

IT'S HARD TO ESTIMATE THE NUMBER OF ENEMY AIRCRAFT PRESENT DURING THE MAJOR PORTION OF THIS RUNNING FIGHT, BUT ALL BOXES I COULD SEE HAD SOME ACTIVITY AROUND THEM.

WE WERE SUPPOSED TO BE WITH THE BOMBERS FOR ABOUT AN HOUR, AND HAD ALREADY GONE OVER THAT TIME. HAD THE RELIEVING FORCE OF FRIENDLY FIGHTERS ARRIVED AND MADE RENDEZVOUS ON TIME, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE TO BAG MANY MORE. THERE JUST WEREN'T A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF PROTECTION FIGHTERS TO GO ROUND. BUT, USING WHAT WE HAD ON HAND TO A GOOD ADVANTAGE, I BELIEVE WE CAME OUT ON TOP WITH A VERY IMPRESSIONABLE SCORE.

JAMES H. HOWARD,
MAJOR, AIR CORPS.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY:

/S/ FREDERIC S. BURKHARDT,
2ND LT., AIR CORPS.



James H. Howard gives his all to the camera during a press photo session.



Major James H. Howard standing before a large briefing map at Boxted, England. Outlined on the map is a flight path to the German capital of Berlin.

OFFICE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICER
AAF STATION #128
APO #634 US ARMY

16 January 1944

SUBJECT: Mission to Oeschersleben, 11 January 1944.

TO: Major James H. Howard, Squadron Commander.

In the full knowledge that words cannot be found which will adequately express our feelings, I wish to convey on behalf of our Group, the heartfelt appreciation which we feel as a result of the unbelievable courage and heroism you displayed on the recent Oeschersleben mission.

Your unprecedented action in flying your P-51 alone and unaided into a swarm of German fighter planes, estimated between 30 and 40, in an effort to protect our Fortresses in the target area, is a feat deserving of the highest commendation and praise. The fact that the odds were overwhelmingly against you, and that you had no hope of receiving assistance in your unequal struggle, did not deter you in your determination to engage the enemy. As one officer so aptly put it, "It was a case of one lone American taking on the entire Luftwaffe."

The magnificent fight which you put up in the ensuing struggle was one which has elicited the praise and admiration of every one of the Fortress fliers who witnessed your actions. Members of this Group, returning from the operation, were lavish in their descriptions of the way you shot down enemy planes and, in particular, spoke in glowing terms of the attempts you made to protect the Combat Wing against enemy attacks.

Coming, as it did, when our formation was nearing the target, and at a time when we vitally needed protection, your loyalty in engaging the opposition was all the more praiseworthy. We realized we were in for trouble when we saw the Germans approaching at a time when yours was the only American fighter aircraft in our vicinity. The invaluable assistance you rendered in warding off their attacks, was for this reason doubly appreciated by every man in the Group who went on the mission.

I personally feel that your exploits that day evidenced the spirit of team work which is the sine qua non of successful military operations. It is only through the application of this principle, that victory against the Axis will be ours.

In closing, let me assure you that should you ever have occasion to visit this station, your welcome will be a warm one. There is not a man in our Group who hasn't sung your praises since hearing about your gallant actions.

SINCERELY

Harold W. Bowman
HAROLD W. BOWMAN
Colonel, Air Corps
Commanding Officer

GOD BLESS THE PEOPLE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

submitted by, Jim Gintner

Have you ever wondered if anyone in Europe remembers America's sacrifice in World War II? There is an answer in a small town in the Czech Republic. The town called Pilsen (Plzen). Every five years Pilsen conducts the **Liberation Celebration of the City of Pilsen** in the Czech Republic. May 6th, 2010 marked the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Pilsen by General George Patton's 3rd Army. Pilsen is the town that every American should visit, because they love America and American soldiers. Even 65 years later, by the thousands, the citizens of Pilsen come to say thank you by lining the streets for miles.



This is the crash site of Lt. Virgil P. Kirkham, the last recorded American USAAF pilot killed in Europe during WWII. It was Lt. Kirkham's 82nd mission and one that he volunteered to go on. At the time this 20 year old pilot's P-47 Thunderbolt plane was shot down, a young 14 year old Czech girl, Zdenka Sladkova, was so moved by his sacrifice she made a vow to care for him and his memory.



For 65 years, Zdenka (now 79 years old) took on the responsibility to care for Virgil's crash site and memorial near her home. On May 4th, 2010 she was recognized by the Mayor of Zdenka's home town of Trhanova, Czech Republic, for her sacrifice and extraordinary effort to honor this American hero.

Another chapter in this important story, the Czech people are teaching their children about America's sacrifice for their freedom. So please join this amazing journey. Come visit Pilsen in the Czech Republic during the first part of May 2011, it may also be a life changing experience for you.

ONE NIGHT IN LONDON

It was a night in December of the winter of '44-'45. England was at war, and it was the worst and coldest winter to hit England in fifty-five years.

Woody, my co-pilot, and I were given a three day pass from flying combat bomber missions over the war-torn skies of Germany; so we decided to go to London and watch the world go by. On this night we were slowly strolling along the crowded, completely blacked out streets of London. It was a quiet night and snow flakes were softly floating down from the skies. There seemed to be a stillness in the air, a stillness you could almost hear. We weren't talking, just sort of ambling along dodging dark shadows passing the other way.

Then I heard it. "Did you hear that?" I asked Woody. It sounded like someone way off in the far distance was playing a piano. The captivating notes came and went in short waves like a remote, soft, hollow echo. Where was this seductive music coming from? As if it were a magnet, it drew us along until we heard it more distinctly coming from one end of the streets on our right. Turning down the block we saw a dim light far down on the other end; and as we approached it, we saw a small knot of people huddled together in the cold, peering over each other's shoulders at something. Woody and I moved to the periphery of the group and we too looked over their shoulders to see what they were looking at.

What we saw was a wagon or cart

large enough to hold a small stand-up piano in front of which was a hunched over figure sitting on a little stool. This figure was a rather old man wearing an overcoat with turned up collar around his ears, and what looked like



Copyright by Michael Poliza

large moth-eaten holes at the elbows. Whisps of white hair peeped out from under the edges of his tightly pulled down woolen cap and shoulders. The dim lamp on top of the piano cast a soft glow on the circle of faces closest to the old man.

The music! Yes, the music! I was transfixed listening to every note. Such music I'd never heard before. The old man's fingers moved across the keyboard so lightly it seemed they never touched the keys. The most moving sounds rose from the old piano. They touched me deeply.

There was a girl standing in front of me to one side clutching the arm of her soldier friend. I leaned over and quietly asked, "What's he playing, do you know?" She turned and looked at me and answered in a soft, English accent, "That's Chopin's Polonaise."

Soon the notes were offering a different feeling which also stirred me very much. "What's that?" I again asked the girl. She whispered, "Beethoven's fifty symphony." It sounded out the four heavy notes: dah-dah-dah-daahh, which I immediately recognized as the Morse Code synonym for the letter "V" for victory.

Finishing this piece the old man sat back for a short respite. A little boy with a small bucket weaved through the crowd as people dropped a shilling or two in to it. No one talked or said anything. They just waited. Soon the old piano player touched the keyboard again and the air was filled with the stirring

notes of Tchaikofsky's piano concerto #1. This time, without my asking, the girl volunteered the name.

"Who is this fellow?" I asked. "He's well known here in England," she whispered. He used to play for the BBC Symphony Orchestra years ago.

Eventually the little group of listeners broke up and each went his way. The snow flakes continued to drift down. The magic moment melted away and was gone forever. That magic moment of an old pianist playing the world's most moving and beautiful music on a dark, snowy night in London at war will, forever, live in my most cherished memories.

Submitted by: Richard T. Sanborn
B-17 Pilot, 94th BG/410th Squadron
Venice, FL



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The Norden Bombsight and the U.S. Naval Proving Ground

Robert V. Gates



Engineer Carl Norden, poses next to an automatic pilot installed in the midsection of an aircraft.

Credit: Naval Historical Center

The Norden Bombsight and the Army Air Force are forever linked in public memory. Less well remembered, however, is the fact that the bombsight was developed by Carl Norden for the U.S. Navy.

Prior to World War I, military theorists thought of aircraft, when they thought of them at all, in scout or reconnaissance roles. More thought was given to their utility as bombers during the war. Bombing missions were attempted from low altitudes by aircraft carrying only small loads of bombs. Bombs were dropped by the pilot or observer without the benefit of an aiming device, or bombsight. Needless to say, bombing was hit or miss – mostly miss.

Later in the war more attention was given to the development of aircraft that were capable of carrying larger bomb loads. The British began experimenting with bombsights in 1916. The most promising, developed by Lt. Cdr. Harry E. Wimperis of the Royal Naval Service's Imperial College of Science, was described as "little more than a board fitted with a bubble level and two adjustable rifle sights." Predetermined bombing tables and levers to adjust for altitude and speed were used to achieve an accuracy of "hundreds of feet." A primary source of inaccuracy was the random pitch and roll of the aircraft during the bombing run.

The U.S. Navy considered ships to be the primary targets of its bombardment missions. In its search for an effective means of accomplishing this mission it considered level bombing, dive bombing, glide bombing, and aerial torpedo attack. In June and July of 1921 Army airmen and Navy aviators dropped bombs on a variety of targets including the anchored German battleship *Ostfriesland*. The Navy pilots dropped bombs from an altitude of less than 2500 feet and achieved hits with only 19 percent of them. Brig. Gen. Billy Mitchell's Army pilots did somewhat better – 30 percent of their bombs hit the *Ostfriesland*.

A 1924 report for the Secretary of the Navy concluded that "it is absurd to think that either the aerial bomb or the submarine torpedo have furnished the effectual answer to the capital ship." The Army came to the same conclusion.

The Navy's Bureau of Ordnance (BuOrd) had the responsibility for developing bombsights for the Navy. In January 1920 BuOrd contracted with Carl L. Norden to improve the Navy Mark III bombsight, a modified Wimperis device.

Norden, born in Semarang, Java to Dutch parents, studied mechanical engineering at the Federal Polytechnic Institute in Zurich and immigrated to the United States in 1904. He worked for Elmer Sperry for two years developing ship gyro-stabilizers. Their relationship was a rocky one – Sperry disliked Norden's appetite for "vile black cigars" and Norden resented Sperry's proposal

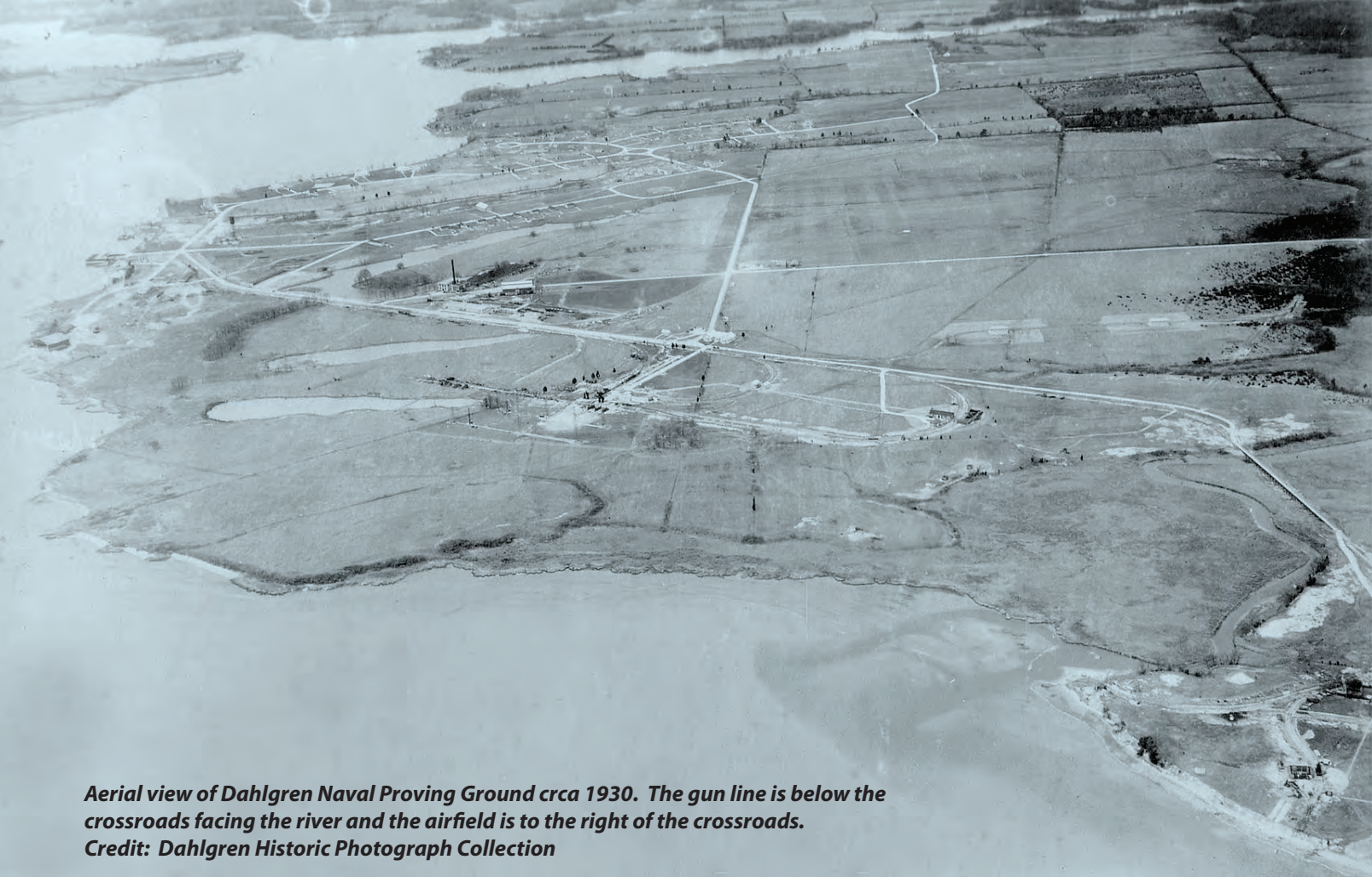
that Norden sign over his future gyro-stabilizer patents to the Sperry Gyroscope Company. They parted ways in 1913 although they worked together on various projects during World War I.

Norden's first efforts included adding gyro-stabilization to the bombsight along with a telescope to better sight the target and a means for providing flight directions to the pilot. When the results were unsatisfactory, Norden used Navy funding for three pilot direction indicators (PDI) for the Mark III bombsight and family funds to continue work on a better bombsight. In June 1922, impressed with his progress, the Navy contracted with him for three experimental bombsights designated the Mark XI.

A year later the Navy was concerned that the project was too big for one man, especially the man they knew as "Old Man Dynamite" because he was so difficult to work with due to his generally unsociable and reclusive nature. They sent him a collaborator, Theodore Barth, who was known as a practical engineer and a man who could get things done. This successful relationship lasted until both men retired after World War II.

Norden worked out of his home and Barth's apartment, and, using the equipment and skilled labor of the Witteman-Lewis Aircraft Company delivered the three PDIs and three experimental Mark XI bombsights – all handmade – to the Navy in the winter of 1923 and spring of 1924. Bench and flight testing of the Mark XI was conducted at the U.S. Naval Proving Ground in Dahlgren, Virginia in 1924. Neither Norden nor the Navy was pleased with the performance of the bombsights as test bombs fell with "alarming irregularity." The Navy also believed that the sight was too complicated.

Many changes were identified during the initial testing and BuOrd contracted with Norden for modifications to two of the Mark XI bombsights. The modified bombsights were delivered to Dahlgren for flight testing in 1925. Tests during the summer and fall of 1925 showed that the changes were worthwhile. The eighteen bombs that were dropped from an altitude of 3000 feet in the final test



Aerial view of Dahlgren Naval Proving Ground circa 1930. The gun line is below the crossroads facing the river and the airfield is to the right of the crossroads.
Credit: Dahlgren Historic Photograph Collection

achieved a mean impact point that was nine feet short in range but 187 feet to the right of the flight path.

The Navy test bombardier was impressed but reported that the sight was too complex and required “both hands, both feet, and the teeth” to operate. In an open cockpit, the wind and cold made fine adjustments to the sight nearly impossible. Norden viewed the basic design as good and the problems correctable. He left Barth in New York to consult with the Navy and went to Zurich for a year to work on design changes.

The Navy completed testing of the Mark XI in October 1927 and, despite continuing problems with leveling, vibration, and the PDI, began negotiations with Norden and Barth for the purchase of eight Mark XI bombsights and PDIs. Norden and Barth balked at the proposal because they considered themselves consulting engineers not production contractors. In 1928, after additional encouragement from the Navy and some unwritten agreements, they agreed to form Carl L. Norden, Incorporated. They agreed to produce and deliver eighty Mark XI sights with spare parts and toolkits for

\$384,000. They also agreed to transfer all patents, models, and designs to the government two years later. Norden said he was paid \$1 for these rights although Navy records show he was paid \$250. A very low price in either case.

Bureau of Ordnance testing related to the development of the Mark XI bombsight at the Naval Proving Ground in Dahlgren, Virginia began in 1922. In the five and a half year period leading up to the production contract, Norden and Barth visited Dahlgren 51 times. The bench and flight testing at Dahlgren are credited with uncovering numerous design and performance issues. Dahlgren was also the site of the first school to teach mechanics how to maintain the Mark XI bombsight.

Production of the Mark XI began slowly and Norden and the Navy tested and improved each sight as it was produced. Norden shipped the first three Mark XI bombsights to Dahlgren for testing in early 1929. The bombsights were essentially handmade and production continued at three units per month. With all of its shortcomings and complexity, the Mark XI represented a sig-

nificant improvement over other bombsights. However, it did not resolve the limitations of high altitude horizontal bombing.

After signing the contract with the Navy Norden went to his mother’s Zurich home to work on his next design, the Mark XV. This was the bombsight (known as the M-series by the Army Air Force) that was used by both the Army and the Navy during World War II. Two prototypes of the Mark XV, a timing sight and a synchronous sight, were delivered to Dahlgren in February 1931 for evaluation.

Bombsights are of two types: timing and synchronous. A timing sight uses a telescope and a timer to measure the movement of a point on the ground relative to the aircraft. The time and aircraft altitude are used with a ballistics table to determine the angle at which the telescope should be set. If the pilot keeps the aircraft at the same altitude and speed, then the bombs should be released when the target appears in the telescope. Variations in aircraft altitude and speed, as well as wind, are the major causes of inaccuracy. The Mark XI was perhaps

the best of the timing bombsights.

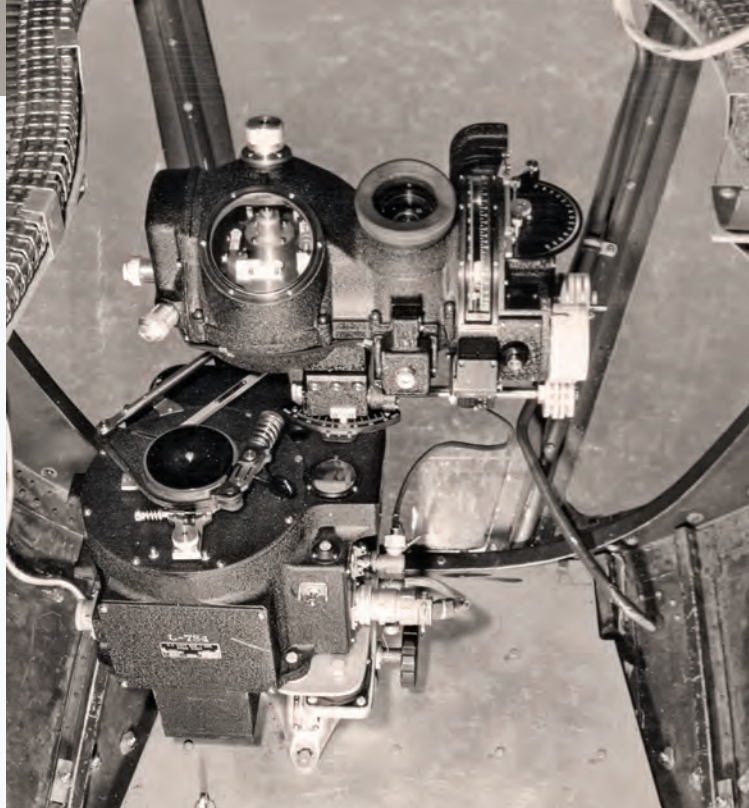
In synchronous bombsights, the bombardier adjusted the speed of a wheel or gear in the bombsight mechanism to match the movement of the aircraft over a point on the ground. This synchronized the bombsight with the aircraft's ground speed. Norden described his Mark XV sight as being able to provide ground speed, angles of drift, and true air speed. It could also hold a true compass course and compensate for earth rotation.

The timing method required a long bombing run at a fixed speed and altitude. Conversely, the synchronous sight precluded a long bombing run since ground speed was computed as an instantaneous rate. Navy bombardiers at Dahlgren found that they could adjust the Mark XV sight in 6 seconds compared to 50 seconds for the Mark XI.

Testing at Dahlgren was intended to identify deficiencies in a new concept not as acceptance tests. For this reason, the Naval Proving Ground conducted extensive bench tests of the components of the sight as well as intensive flight testing. Dahlgren provided a final report to BuOrd containing 33 pages of deficiencies and suggested corrective actions. Flight tests showed that the Mark XV was twice as accurate as the Mark XI (i.e., the percentage of hits was twice as high). Testing ended in August 1931 when BuOrd issued a production contract for the Mark XV bombsight.

The Mark XV was given more tests than any other sight ever developed by BuOrd. Life tests of various components and analytical studies continued into 1932. On April 18, 1932 the first order for the new sight was placed – thirty-two for the Navy and twenty-three for the Army. The Navy received its first production unit in September 1932 and the Army received its in April 1933. The sights continued to be nearly handmade and every unit went to Dahlgren for calibration and acceptance testing.

The Naval Proving Ground



Carl Norden's Mark 15 bombsight, developed and tested at Dahlgren, was an early analog computer and contributed significantly to the Allied victory in World War II.

Credit: National Archives and Records Administration

received Norden's next improvement – the Stabilized Bombing Approach Equipment (SBAE) – in February 1935. The SBAE, an automatic flight control system, transferred adjustments of the bombsight's controls through mechanical linkages to the azimuth gyro and allowed the bombardier to fly the aircraft in roll and yaw. Testing revealed both the strengths and weaknesses of the prototype. Flight tests showed a 30 percent improvement in Mark XV accuracy in smooth air and 39 percent improvement in rough air. The first production models were available in late 1936 and production began in June 1937 at the rate of seven to ten per month.

The Army Air Corps had long worked with the Sperry Corporation to equip its aircraft with autopilots. Carl Norden, who continued to compete with Sperry, preferred to work with the Navy rather than the Army. (He once told an Army Colonel "No man can serve the Lord and the Devil at the same time – and I work for the Navy.") He argued that it was a duplication of effort for the Army to equip its aircraft with both Sperry autopilots and Norden SBAEs.

The tests at Dahlgren compared the Norden SBAE with the Sperry autopilot

and concluded that the SBAE "... is at least the equal of if not superior to the Sperry gyro-pilot." The Army continued to try to connect the Norden bombsight and the Sperry A-2 autopilot – without success.

When the Air Corps continued to pursue an SBAE replacement, the Navy responded by developing an adapter that allowed the Norden bombsight to be connected to the Sperry A-3 autopilot. Dahlgren completed tests of the adapter in August 1941 and forty units were produced between September and December.

The Army Air Force asked Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator to develop new automatic flight control

equipment (AFCE) with electronic parts to link the A-3 autopilot and the Norden bombsight without the Navy's adapter. This system (designated the C-1), ordered into production in October 1941, was the standard autopilot/AFCE/SBAE for the remainder of World War II.

Procurement became a major headache because the Navy refused to share production with the Army. Between 1932 and 1938, the Norden Company produced only 121 bombsights per year. Even after Norden added additional production sources to meet Army Air Force needs, shortages of materials, specialized machine tools, and skilled labor kept production below required levels. There was a major shortage of bombsights that extended to late 1943.

All bombsights continued to go to Dahlgren for bench and flight testing. It was estimated that this process delayed delivery for four to five weeks. Although BuOrd refused to eliminate the Dahlgren testing, they did make some concessions – one bombsight of every ten produced would be sent to Dahlgren for testing. They also agreed that bench testing would be completed on the day that the sight was received. Further, Dahlgren would



**Naval Proving Ground Air Detail circa 1942.
Credit: Dahlgren Historic Photograph Collection**

only flight test the number of sights that could be completed within 15 days of bench testing.

As the war went on, it became clear that Army Air Force performance requirements exceeded those of the Navy and that the Navy had little interest in modifying the sight since it had chosen dive bombing as its preferred means of attacking moving targets. Thus, improvements to the bombsight were motivated by the Army and, by late in the war, were being developed by someone other than the Norden Company.

Between 1932 and the end of World War II, nearly 90,000 Mark XV (or M-9) bombsights – 81,537 for the Army Air Force and 8,353 for the Navy – were produced at a total cost of \$1.1 billion. Production began to catch up with demand by late 1943, but mass production techniques also led to declining quality. The Norden Company was not interested in helping to solve the problem and in late 1944, 75 to 80 percent of all sights produced failed to meet specifications.

The accuracy achieved at Dahlgren was never duplicated in combat. The Navy specification was for 2.5 mils (or 2.5 feet mean miss for every 1000 feet of altitude). The inherent accuracy of the 1944 Norden sights was 14 mils. By some reports, the accuracy achieved in combat was more

than 50 mils.

While some used the discrepancy between design and operational accuracy to question the effectiveness of high altitude bombing, the performance of the Eighth Air Force in Europe refutes this. In the end, seven and a half million bombs were dropped from an average altitude of 21,000 feet with 31.8 percent of them falling within 1,000 feet of the aiming point. While this did not meet prewar expectations for precision, it did stop German oil production and destroyed 20 percent of German war production in

the last 16 months of the conflict.

This article began by noting that the Navy's role in the development of the Norden bombsight is less well known than is its use by the Army Air Force in World War II. Even less known is the role that the Naval Proving Ground in Dahlgren, Virginia played in the development, testing, and acceptance of the Norden bombsights beginning soon after World War I. It's clear that both deserve credit for their significant contributions to the breakthrough capability represented by the Norden bombsight.

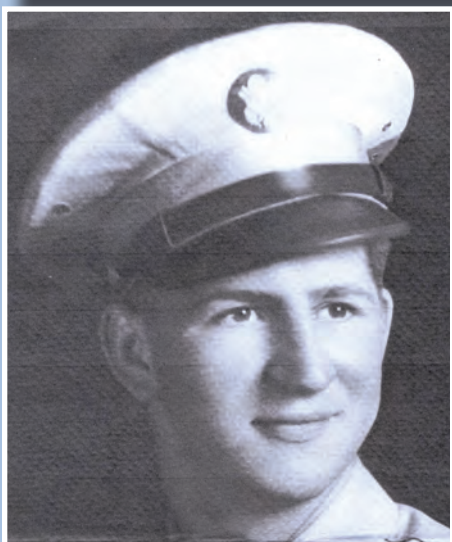


B-17G Bombardier Position with Norden Bomb Sight

CHRISTMAS EVE PRESENT FOR THE NAZIS

Frank A. Kaye, 1944

564th Bomb Squadron/389th Bomb Group



*Portrait photo of author,
Sgt. Frank Kaye.*

Flying bombing missions 23,000 feet over the Bulge was somewhat different than fighting the war, hip deep in snow on the ground. Nevertheless, it was on Christmas Eve and again on Christmas Day while flying over the Ardennes, better known as "The Battle of the Bulge" that I was feeling sorry for myself. I was thinking of all the festivities I would normally be celebrating back home on this most festive of all Holidays. Not thinking at the moment that I was about to be part of the greatest battle ever, so fiercely fought by the U.S., in the greatest war ever fought. The surprise German counter attack began on December 16th, creating a huge bulge in the Allied front line, giving the ensuing battle its

famous name.

Due to the inclement weather and fog that blanketed most of the continent, there was a lull on all flying activities, giving the Germans an advantage on their ground operations. However, the weather finally cleared and we were able to deliver our "Christmas present" to the Nazis on Christmas Eve by a combined aerial armada of more than 2000 Consolidated B-24 & Boeing B-17 heavy bombers, escorted by over 900 P-51 Mustangs, P-47 Thunderbolts & P-38 Lightning fighters. This mission is presently inscribed on the historic plaque erected in front of the old National Guard Building on Bull Street, Savannah, GA., where the Eighth Air Force was born in 1942 - now the home



*Enlisted Crew photo in
front of their 389th Bomb
Group B-24 Liberator,
"THE OLD VETERAN."
Frank Kaye is located in
the middle bottom row.*

for The American Legion Post #135.

This mission, the first of its kind to utilize such a mass force of bombers on a single raid, was designed to pound the hell out of all communication lines supplying and reinforcing the German armies, thus stalling their counteroffensive drive.

The December 24th mission took off for Germany in the dusky early morning. The first bombers were approaching their German targets as the tail of the large column were still taking off from our bases in England. Never before had anyone seen such a mass formation of aircraft assembled in the sky at any one time. During the three-day weekend of flying, the Eighth Air Force knocked out 218 enemy planes while we lost 38 heavy bombers and 40 fighter planes. Ironically, this was my crew's 24th and 25th mission, on this the 24th day of December.

These missions were always outstanding in my mind, yet, they are not the most memorable ones. We were told midweek that there would be no missions scheduled for New Years Day and many of us made plans. There was one hell of a New Year's Eve party going on at the NCO club when about 3 A.M. there was an abrupt halt to all activities with a special announcement. The band was silenced and the voice came loud and clear. Due to the extreme reversal of condition at the Bulge, there will be a special mission this morning.

There was no time for rest or sleep. After a fast goodbye to your dancing partner there was a quick change into flight gear and a grumbling trip to the briefing room. Gripping could be heard throughout the base. However, after the briefing, tensions were somewhat eased when we learned that due to the extreme conditions on the ground, created by surprise German counteroffensive, compounded by heavy snow, bitter cold, and a lack of supplies all adding to the troop's misery.



Moral support was desperately needed.

This put a different light on the situation and the angry mood was quickly changed. Upon leaving the room, we were like a bunch of college kids returning to the second half of a close football game. *Gung Ho* for victory, ready for whatever.

Anxious to get going to raise some hell, I recall our nose gunner who in the process of checking his nose turret guns, accidentally fired a short burst from his twin .50s across the flight line, almost hitting the Engineering Officer who was sitting in his shack a couple hundred yards away. Scared half to death, he tried for days to find the culprit who cut loose that burst and I'll bet he is still talking about it today.

It was customary for Catholic crewmen to receive Holy Communion before leaving the briefing room but there was no time on this day. Father Beck, the Catholic Chaplain from Ohio, rolled from plane to plane looking for Catholics. He knew the crews very well, so when he pulled up to *C-Charlie*, our B-24, he shouted "come and get it Polak." I being the only Polish Catholic on the crew received mine under the wing. Before he drove off, I asked where he got the Jeep he was driving as I never saw him on anything but a bicycle? He grinned, saying God left it for him at the Chapel. Can you picture a Catholic Priest swiping Jeeps? Later, before take off, our waist gunner, Travis West, a wise cracker from Texas, jokingly asked what it was I had for breakfast?

Knowing that food supplies were lean

on the ground, we made a slight change from our regular routine in preparing for this mission. In addition to the bombs, we loaded up with extra crates of K-Rations, in the event we were downed. K-Rations were kept in a heavily sealed wax container about the size of a Cracker Jack box that contained some chewing gum, hard candy, sticks of cheese, a couple of bullion cubes and a few cigarettes.

Not exactly Christmas tur-

key, but sure nice to have around when nothing else is available. The alternative plan was to jettison most of it, if we had a successful mission, hoping they got to the right people. Which we ultimately did.

Breezing through another seven missions after the memorable one on New Years Day, we returned back to the States where I had the occasion to meet up with Hank Altyn. He was a good family friend with a pitching arm destined for the "big show," if not interrupted by the war. We often played catch together and I had no idea Hank was one of the guys hip deep in snow that cold January. He spoke of finding some of the K-Rations we tossed overboard. He talked about the tremendous boost in moral to all of the troops after seeing thousands of American bombers overhead, at a time when things were looking so bleak. At the time having no idea that I was up there tossing them out, nor I knowing he was below. Hank's recollection made my war worthwhile.

It was a regular routine for crews returning from a mission to excitedly describe the actions encountered on that particular mission, to the crews who were not flying that day. However, after a few hours and maybe a few beers, the stories became so boring, that the common response was, "Yea, Yea, tell it to your grandkids." The following day, the situation would be reversed. Now, it is reality. And for some, we are telling it to our Great-Grandkids... and some are actually listening.

The *"City of Savannah"* is undergoing a complete restoration and is on display now in the Combat Gallery at the *Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum*.

GULFSTREAM EMPLOYEES PAINT INTERIOR OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH B-17

September 22, 2010, Gulfstream employees painted the interior of the B-17 *"City of Savannah"* back to its original color. They donated their time and expertise to paint the interior of the aircraft using Gulfstream's equipment.

This is an invaluable donation and service to the museum's restoration project. Gulfstream Aerospace has been instrumental in restoring this piece of the community's history.

The museum's B-17 *"City of Savannah"* is on display inside the Combat Gallery while it is undergoing a complete restoration. The aircraft is in Phase 3 of its restoration where crews are focusing on the interior of the, *"City of Savannah"*.

SKIP SHELTON PAINTS NOSE ART FOR THE B-17 "CITY OF SAVANNAH"

November 10, 2010, World War II Veteran, Skip Shelton, painted the nose art on the *Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum's* B-17, *"City of Savannah"*. The 86-year-old veteran from Greenwood, South Carolina was a member of the 448th Bomb Group during World War II.

Shelton painted the nose art on the Museum's B-17 to duplicate the original B-17, *"City of Savannah"* which was the 5000th airplane to have been processed through Hunter Army Airfield during World War II.

This is a historic milestone in the restoration of the Museum's B-17 as she will begin to receive her combat profile. In addition to the B-17's nose art, the aircraft will receive her stars and bars on the fuselage.

Shelton's artistic ability often kept him busy in addition to being a B-24 bomber pilot during the War. He would often be kept back from missions to paint nose art on the aircraft. After World War II he became a commercial artist at home in South Carolina.



448th BG veteran & artist Skip Shelton, proudly applies the Noseart to *"City of Savannah"*.



Completed Noseart – *"City of Savannah"*.



Volunteer Gulf Stream employee sprays the interior of the *"City of Savannah"*.

MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM – B-17G

"City of Savannah" **Restoration Update**

We are very pleased to report the restoration project on the B-17G Flying Fortress – "*City of Savannah*" at the **Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum** has progressed significantly during the last few months. Museum President and CEO, Henry Skipper sent us a very positive and encouraging progress update. "*The generous contributions by the members of the **Eighth Air Force Historical Society** are truly making a difference with our restoration efforts,*" reports President Skipper.

As of November 1, 2010, the fund-raising efforts of the **Eighth Air Force Historical Society** have raised over \$21,000.00. *To those Society members that have already contributed to this worthy effort, we thank you for your generosity.*

Our fund-raising campaign is far from over. If you wish to make a contribution to help in restoring this proud airplane of the "**Mighty Eighth**," we urge you to use the Donation Coupon below to help with the effort. The **Eighth Air Force Historical Society** is making a real difference towards the final restoration of this beautiful aircraft. Generations to come will have the opportunity to walk through this mighty Fortress and feel for themselves, what it must have been like to fly in combat over the skies of Fortress Europe during World War II.

Help make the difference! Together, we can help perpetuate the sacrifice and legacy of the Eighth Air Force for years to come!



"City of Savannah" **Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum** **Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress Restoration Fundraising Project**



Over 300 of our Eighth Air Force Historical Society members have graciously donated to our fundraising effort for the "City Of Savannah" Boeing B-17G Flying Fortress Restoration Project. As of November 1st, 2010, our membership has raised over \$21,000.00

Thank you to all who have donated to this worthy cause. Your donations go directly towards the restoration of the airplane. Your generosity will ensure that this airplane will tell the story of the Eighth Air Force for future generations.

If you have not made your donation, it is not too late!!

Please send your tax-deductable contribution to the following address:

City Of Savannah Fundraiser

Eighth Air Force Historical Society • P. O. BOX 956 • Pooler, Georgia • 31322

Wonders "DO" occur even after 67 years...

A Family's love for their father, Lt. Colonel Henry "Hank" Sarnow



**Hank & Regina Sarnow - 1943
just prior to overseas deployment**

Henry Sarnow was born in 1920 and raised in Chicago, Ill. As a young man in 1942 he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He married his sweetheart, Regina, soon after being promoted to 2nd Lieutenant. Then, like many other young men of his day, he was shipped off to Europe



Hiding place for the three evaders Minnich, Sarnow and White in these waters and the then bushes on the banks, after parachuting down. The water is a parallel running sidearm of the Canal Liege-Anvers, locally called the 'Canal Bocholt-Herenthals'



**Hank Sarnow in training on
Norden Bombsight**

to fight in WWII. Stationed in England with the Army 8th Air Corps, Hank (as he was called by family & friends) was assigned to the 95th Bomb Group flying a B-17 Bomber named "Our Bay Bee." He was the plane's bombardier. The air war over Europe was intense and many planes were lost and young men made the ultimate sacrifice. On the morning of August 17, 1943, Hank was flying on his eleventh mission when their bomber was hit by ground fire over German-occupied Belgium. They didn't make it to their Regensburg target in Germany. "Our Bay Bee," after being hit and losing engine power, dropped helplessly out of formation. Hank's plane became an easy target for the German fighter planes. Two German fighters quickly attacked and set "Our Bay Bee" on fire. With the front of the aircraft burning out of control, the pilot gave the order to bail out! All ten of the crewman made it out of the

burning aircraft and parachuted to the ground, seven were quickly captured by German troops.

Hank and the badly burned Co-Pilot, Marty Minnich, hit the ground near the small town of Mol, Belgium. Soon after landing in this wooded area, they were approached by a young boy, Emiel Joris. He was only 15 years old. At some point, Hank Sarnow gave the boy his dog tag. We assume that it was in an effort to get word to Hank's family that their son was alive. The dog tag had Hank's name, that of his mother, Mary Sarnow, and the family address in Chicago. Hank and Marty were directed to a canal and told to swim to other side and hide among the bushes growing at the water's edge. They both hid in the canal for over nine hours, breathing through grassy reeds, while the German patrols and their dogs frantically searched for the downed flyers.



Julien and Anne Brusselman (left), were reunited with Maj. Henry "Hank" Sarnow. Hank stayed with the Brusselmans' for a month to avoid capture by the Germans in World War II. The three appeared on "This is Your Life" in 1957, which was hosted by Eamon Andrews.

Hank Sarnow presenting his young twin-daughters Robbie and Regina to the Brusselmans postwar visiting the US. Escapeline helps 'The Brusselmans,' organizers and safehouse for Allied evaders in Brussels. Anne Brusselmans saved more than a hundred Allied airmen.

Later that day, with the help of a local Belgium man by the name of Gus Fruythof, Hank and Marty were taken to a nearby farmhouse. The Fruythof family gave them a change of clothing and nursed Marty's severe burns. Eventually, both men were moved to Brussels, where they were hidden from the Germans and cared for by Anne Brusselsman and her husband, Julian. Like the many other Belgium patriots, Anne Brusselsman risked her own life, as well as the lives of her husband and two young children. (Altogether, over a hundred airmen, shot down by German forces, were aided by Anne and they returned safely to their families). It took over two months to get Hank and Marty back to Allied lines.

During their time of hiding in numerous safe houses, a young nurse, who had smuggled medicine for the treatment of Marty's burns, was discovered by the German military authorities. She was put to death in front of a firing squad. She never gave up the information about Anne's hidden airmen! Hank never forgot the kindness and sacrifices made by Anne Brusselsman and her family. He remained eternally grateful, and stayed in close contact throughout his life. Many of the efforts to save these Allied airmen were orchestrated by a brave group of people who were part of the Comete'

Line, a very effective resistance group in WWII.

Hank lived to come home safely to his beautiful bride, Regina. He enjoyed a long career in the United States Air Force and lived & traveled all over the world. He retired at the rank of Lt. Colonel in 1965. He & Regina raised twin daughters, Roberta & Regina. He was extraordinarily generous and always willing to help his children and grandchildren. He is deeply loved and will always be missed. Hank died at the age of seventy-eight in 1999.

October 2010 we received an email from a Dutch Historian, Co de Swart. He had recently been contacted by the young Belgium boy's family and told that Roberta and Regina's Dad's dog tag

was found in Belgium, after 67 years!!!

The young boy Emiel Joris, now in his eighties and in poor health, had held on to Hank's dog tag all these years. It had apparently been given to the boy in an effort to get word to the Sarnow family in Chicago that their son was alive. After all these years, the boy's daughter, Julienne, found it among her father's things. She and her brother, Rene' contacted Co de Swart, and later contacted the Sarnow twins, Roberta and Regina. The dog tag was returned to the Sarnow family. It arrived on October 27, 2010, 67 years after that fateful morning of the War. Regina and Roberta are truly grateful to the Joris Family, and to everyone that brought their Dad home safely.

**Submitted by Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price
Research Center Director
Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum**



Note: The dog tags, which is now hooked onto a silver necklace, is being shared by the twin sisters – alternating each month – until they attend an April reunion in Texas with the airmen and the Europeans who helped them.

The Sarnow family will be donating the dog tags to the **Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum** in Savannah, Ga.

To All 8AFHS Veterans and Families:

There will be a final memorial ceremony and celebration honoring the airmen of the 8th Air Force's 36th Bomb Squadron Radar Counter Measure Unit in England on May 7, 2011. At that time a memorial shall be dedicated in the village of Long Marston remembering the service and sacrifice of airmen Fred Becker, Howard Haley, and Carl Lindquist of the Lt. Louis McCarthy crew that perished in the take-off crash of the B24 Liberator nicknamed *Beast of Bourbon*. John "Des" Howarth, the crew navigator will be in attendance along with his son Brian plus other British and American military representatives and veterans.

Our good English friend Chas Jellis, who established a memorial there in England last November honoring those of the 36th Squadron is again my point man and organizer for this final squadron event. For the ceremony a flypast shall be requested by the air force. Tentative plans also include a visit to Station 113



Pam Hutton stands before the large stone from Station 113 Cheddington, England that will make up the base for the memorial plaque honoring those of the 36th Squadron lost in the take-off crash of the B-24 nicknamed, *Beast of Bourbon* on Feb. 19, 1945.

Cheddington, the old airbase of the 36th Squadron "Gremlins" along with a trip to the American War Memorial Cemetery at Cambridge, and a tour of the American Air Museum at Duxford.

Please let me know if you would like to attend this final memorial occasion so I can provide further details. Although in the past we have made memorials honoring the airmen of the 36th Squadron anyone interested in attending or wishing to contribute to this final memorial honoring those of the Mighty Eighth Air Force please contact me at 919-772-8413, email: smhutton@36rcm.com or Chas at email: chas_jellis@yahoo.com.

Most sincerely,
Stephen Hutton
8th Air Force Historical Society
Unit Contact 36th Bomb
Squadron RCM
Author- *Squadron of Deception*
Web site: www.36rcm.com



Santa art by Haddon Sundblom of Sweden. He portrayed Santa as a portly white man in a red suit bringing joy to families and friends simply with a bottle of Coke. It's this version that we now see in shopping malls, greeting cards, commercials and Salvation Army booths around the country. The Santa on right is from 1943, in the depths of WWII (note the war bonds). Santa and Coca Cola were goodwill ambassadors wherever they went, and they really did and do make good partners.



NexGen Newbie

I am a recently recruited NexGen by the persuasion of my neighbor Kentuckian, Earl Wassom. When I met Earl not quite two years ago at a local aviation event, I knew this was going to be a special friendship. Little did I know !!! The **Thunder over Michigan** event was my first, and it was wonderful to share it with Earl and his son Reg. Also along for the journey was my youngest godson, Capt. Sean Siddiqui, XO of the 96th Bomb Squadron, and B-52 A/C commander, 8th AF, Barksdale AFB, LA.

I was very excited to anticipate the joy of seeing multiple 8th AF bombers and fighters in the same sky, a once in a lifetime moment which was truly wonderful. As I was there, I realized that as great as the machines were to behold, the most unforgettable stories of this event came from the men who were there all of those years ago, and to see them with their families of generations sharing the moments with their veteran. I was amazed to see in the latest 8th AF News a picture of me with my father's WWII "short snorter" with Mr. Jack Rude. Please allow me to share a short background of why I had the "snorter" with me.

Dad 'went west' in 1988. I was a docent at an aviation museum in Miami, FL, and had a small display with some of Dad's mementos. I was overwhelmed by the appreciation people of all walks of life enjoyed hearing about what it was, and what it represented. Some month's later, Paul Tibbetts and Tom Ferebee came to our museum, and they honored the memory of my father with their signatures. Since then when I attend military events, I ask those who have put the flag before themselves to honor not only the memory of my father, but also the memory of all veterans. Dad joined the AAC in 1940, and became a Sgt. co pilot in a C-46 Curtiss Commando in early 1943. He flew "The Hump" until the end of the war. After the war, he stayed in as ground maintenance, and retired in April 1968 as line chief for KC-135's at Homestead AFB, FL. Ironically, Homestead AAC field was his first assignment in 1940. The last 11 years of his career



Joe Lawrence & Earl Wassom



Jack Rude 493rd BG veteran signing Joe Lawrence's "short snorter".

was as a part of LeMay's SAC.

On Thursday morning of registration at the hotel, Earl and Reg arrived to register. Earl saw me, and reached into his coat pocket. With a warm smile, he gave to me a ten shilling note he had picked up in Norwich, England, during 1944. He asked me to make it his contribution to Dad's "short snorter" from India and China. We taped it on. Now, there is no room on either side for another signature....it was signed by many of you 8th veterans who were in attendance.

There are uncounted memories of those four days. However, there are two that are burned into my soul. Saturday evening after the dinner, two veterans signed Dad's Snorter. Many others did as well. But these two gentleman were

surrounded by their generations of families, and as they were signing their names to many others, the children, the grandchildren, and in one veterans case, his great grandchildren were there with their cameras, sharing this special moment. This was the family of Sgt. Frank Buschmeier. My father's great grandchildren will never know of such a moment. They will never know what his touch was like. However, sometime in the future they will be able to touch a part of him, for his "short snorter" will be his, and my, legacy to them. As they touch that part of him, they will also be touching each and every one of you who were kind enough to add your name. My sincere appreciation goes to each of you for allowing me to have these memories of a lifetime, as well as for the part you played in making events such as this possible, not only as the ambassadors you are today, but as the young patriots you once were. Until the next time.... Happy Landings.

Joe G. Lawrence
NexGen

B-17 "City of Savannah"

I am a combat vet or 34 Missions over Germany in WWII flying in a B-17 as a ball turret gunner and I am happy to see the restoration of a B-17 for the Savannah Museum. I believe you received this B-17 from the Smithsonian in Washington. If this is true I know the persons that gave this B-17 to Washington. Their name is Arnold & Florence Kolb (he is not a WWII Vet) but they do deserve a special invitation to the dedication of the Plane when it is fully



B-17 "City of Savannah" in Phase 3 of restoration



MAIL CALL

restored to the World War II combat readiness.

Arnold lives in Alamogordo, NM during the winter at 1809 Juniper with a PO Box 1828, Alamogordo, NM 88310 or 306 Canyon View Lane Mailing: P.O. Box 670 Spearfish SD 57783-0670. When he took the B-17 to the Smithsonian he and his son flew the plane to Washington and made a circle around the field on three engines and then they trucked to plane to Savannah. Arnold couldn't believe that. Anyhow I understand from his daughter that you all knew he gave it. She directed to your Web site.

Thank you for what you are doing,
Don L. Forsman

Follow-up on the death of Harry Crosby

Dear Mark:

It was with sadness that I saw the obituary of Harry Crosby, 100th Bomb Group, in the last Taps column. My sadness was mixed with astonishment as I saw the accompanying photo of him. I say this because I took that photo of Harry 27 years ago on June 11, 1983, when he was in Milwaukee for the reunion of the Don Oakes crew (100th BG). In the photo, Harry is holding Ed Jablonski's 1968 book, *Flying Fortress*. It is opened to page 179 where a WWII



Harry Crosby - 1983



Harry Crosby - 1943

photo of him appears. I had asked Harry that day if I could take a photo of him exactly as he is shown in the book. Harry graciously consented to my request, no small favor for a Associate Life Member who he had just met and who possessed limited photography skills. I quickly donned him in the flight gear you see in the picture and took two photos. The first was the recreation of the photo in the Jablonski book. The second one is the one shown in the Taps column; a photo "within" a photo. Copies of the pictures were sent to Harry.

I still have my photos and treasure them. Twenty-seven years later, I'm honored to learn that Harry and his family still enjoy their copies today.

Sincerely,
Tim Staats

AVOG Crash Museum

The AVOG "Crash Museum" in Lievelede, Holland, contains a large collection of WWII aircraft pieces and parts that have been recovered over several years throughout the Dutch countryside. Many of these crash recoveries have also revealed the remains of several Allied and Axis airmen. A worthy effort and a fascinating look back in time.

**Submitted by, Member Frits Forrer,
of Gulf Breeze, Florida**

EXPOSITIE

Luchtoorlog 1940-1945

AVOG Crash Museum

Europaweg 34 - 7137 HN Lievelede - The Netherlands

Air War Exhibition 1940-1945

GB During World War II some 7,500 airplanes crashed in the Netherlands. About 400 came down in the Achterhoek area. The Commonwealth Air Forces, the United States Army Air Forces and the German Luftwaffe had numerous different types of airplanes in active service above Dutch territory such as Lancasters, B-17s, Wellingtons, Mustangs, Mosquitos, Messerschmitts and Focke-Wulfs of which the crash sites of many of them as well as the whereabouts of their crews are still unknown. AVOG did find and recover several planes and crews over since its foundation in 1972.

Some pieces of the missing list puzzle are still being recovered.

AVOG's aim is not only to help reducing these lists but also preserving the Achterhoek region's history for posterity and therefore the Crash Museum has been opened in May 1981. Aircraft parts together with its story of crashed planes are on show in this museum. As silent evidence of a fierce battle that took many lives of common people who were entangled in a hero's part resulting to participate in a true society nowadays.

Need More History

Dear Mark and Donna

My name is Chris Chandler an Associate Member of the 8th AFHS in the UK. I have enclosed some photos of three items I have in my collection of 8th AAF memorabilia. I would be very grateful if someone could recognize any of these items?

Like a lot of items in my collection, I wish they could talk! The bomb shaped lighter is marked 388th Bomb Group and the name inscribed is Ed Gillispie.

The basic cigarette case is marked 351st Bomb Group and has some engravings of "gals" on the inside and





a fountain.

The silver case with the badges on front was taken by a German guard from an American airman that was shot down and made a P.O.W. When the Berlin wall came down, the former German guard sold the case to me. Sadly, there is no name on the case but

it does have sapphires and an Irish four - leaf clover on the front.

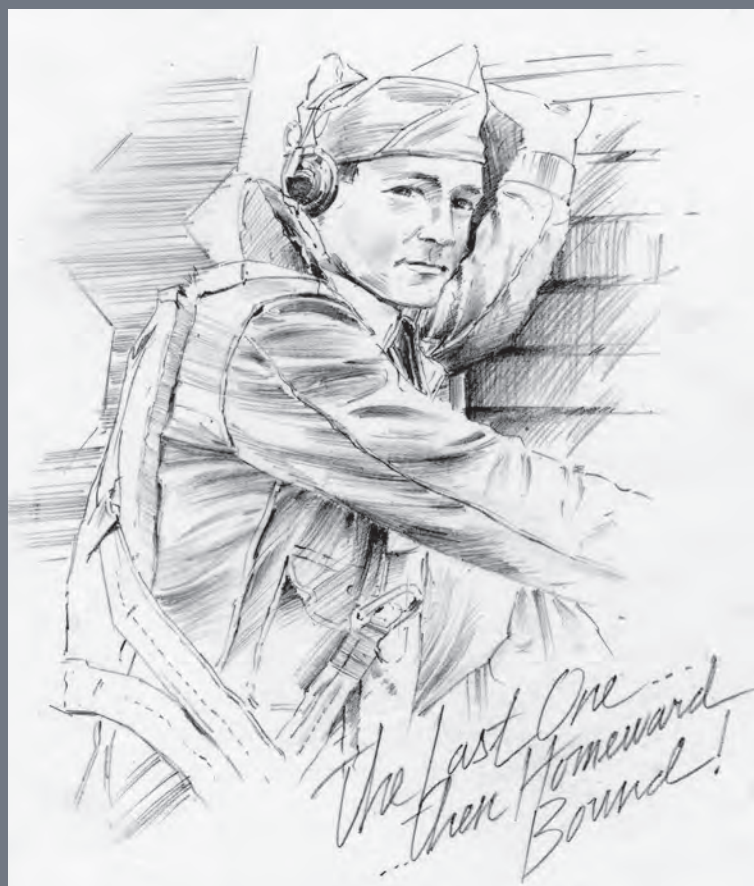
Although I know the location of the two items with the Bomb Group details, I have no other clues about the former owners. I know its a slim chance, but maybe somebody may recognize these items from the past.

Any help would be grateful! I would like to take this opportunity to thank all 8th AF vets for what you did all those years ago

Regards
Chris Chandler

LICENSE PLATE

Thomas D. Thompson was a T/SGT Engineer on B-17's and B-24's during WW2. He flew out of England with the 406 BS Carpetbaggers Air wing of the O.S.S. 45 missions.



Submitted by Artist Roger Stuch - Wayland, MI

NEXT GENERATION

"CONTINUING THE 8TH AF LEGACY" - by Norma Chesser

Please send me comments and suggestions that help increase membership in the 8th AFHS, and to involve the Next Generations in meaningful activities that will preserve the history and legacy of the Mighty Eighth. npchesser@yahoo.com For more information on this **Next Generation Initiative**, go to the "Events" tab on the main website <http://www.8thafhs.org>.

Michael Faley, 8th AFHS Board Member recently sent a letter to the NexGen Membership

Dear 8AFHS,

Besides the wonderful updates Bob Books has been doing for our website <http://www.8thafhs.org/>, we have also started a Face Book page located at <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=116287021754170>.

We started in August and already have over **400 people** interested and participating in the history of the *Mighty Eighth*. This has been a great tool to reach out to potential "Next Gen" members. We hope you will take advantage of this forum and share your stories, but more importantly, share upcoming events: Chapter meetings, Group Reunions, museum events, etc. This is **YOUR** site, use it in conjunction with our main website and more people will be exposed to the History and Legacy of the 8th Air Force.

Our next project will be a **YOUTUBE** page that will connect to our website and **Face Book** pages. We need a volunteer to set this up and watch over it. Anyone interested should contact me, Michael Faley, at MPFaley@aol.com, 818-749-7790. If you are interested in handing out 8th AFHS membership flyers and brochures, at the tour stops made by The Collings Foundation and other aircraft organizations, email me at MPFaley@gmail.com and include your name, address, city, state, telephone number and email address.

Note: These are two of the items included.
Email me if you would like a copy of the full letter.
npchesser@yahoo.com.

As a follow up to a Next Generation article asking for ideas for projects, **John Seeberger** proposed a project for the Communications Group of the **Next Generation Initiative**... which is the equivalent of a radio-like, interactive talk show over the computer, about the 8th AAF in WWII. John's suggestion was based on a weekly live "sports talk show", with a different topic each week, run by some computer savvy friends. He suggested that a similar format might be implemented for the 8th AFHS to provide a new type of forum - audio, visual and interactive - for the members to communicate, educate, entertain, and share other thoughts and resource materials. Another advantage is reaching a wide audience. The program could range from one topic to several segments. It could include discussion, oral histories, questions and answers, or even something in the form of a "web lecture" on a particular topic, if the technology is available to incorporate both audio and video. John adds that implementing the idea would

require people with extensive computer background to create the system to support this; also individual(s) to moderate it and develop format and content for the program. People from the Education & Research groups could contribute to this part.

Note: Although something of this scope and the planning required isn't being implemented for now, it's a subject for further research. Contact me for John's more in-depth details. npchesser@yahoo.com John's suggestion inspired another idea for a Full-On You Tube page for the 8th Air Force/ WWII, which is in the startup stage. See Michael Faley's notice above about this as well as the Face Book page for the 8th AFHS.

Following a Next Generation meeting at the 8th AFHS reunion in Cincinnati, **Laura Edge** volunteered to be part of the committee to work on curricula to be used when visiting schools. She has done presentations at seniors' events and in high school and middle school classrooms. Laura gives her presentations from the perspective of a daughter sharing how she researched her father's story, that of T/Sgt. Lawrence L. Witt and his experiences in WWII and as a POW.

The students were very interested in her Power Point presentation. Her premise is that by taking an in-depth look at one person's story, you can learn about a time and place in history. A story from an interested relative comes closest to having the veteran himself tell the story. Because this is research based, it could be done in an English class as well as a history class, and Laura incorporates the Michigan State learning goals. Laura has contributed the full text and outline of her presentation in case the format could serve as a model for other presenters. It is a Part III component- Classroom Resources - to the Guest Speaker Project started two years ago.

Note: If anyone would like a copy of this, or to contribute to this project, please contact me npchesser@yahoo.com . Also available are Part I, the Guidelines for Guest Speakers, and Part II, Suggestions for Developing Class Resources, Aids & Artifacts.

Sue Moyer, Educational director for Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association, suggested An idea for Education in locations where aircraft make scheduled stops for public display of A/C. "My brother and I were fortunate to be able to travel to Michigan for the "Last Great Gathering of Warbirds" at the Thunder Over Michigan Air Show. As I was driving home from Michigan I thought it would be great if a NEXGEN

initiative could be developed around the Collings schedule. We could concentrate stops in various areas of the country. NEXGEN folks could volunteer at their stops to have presentations at local libraries, schools, civic groups, etc a week or so in advance of their arrival. We would be able to speak about the historical part and encourage folks to attend. If money were no object, wouldn't it be great to have a traveling van or some kind of vehicle, to be able to attend Air Shows and the like around the country. The folks in Georgia area are so lucky to have outreach programs from the Mighty 8th in schools and so forth, but I think about all those folks who would benefit from some kind of "traveling" display. It would be nice to have a "windfall" of money or educational grant to the 8th AFHS or Museum earmarked for this purpose. Perhaps some funding for this latter idea could be explored.

Note: In the meantime, individuals could do WWII/8thAF presentations on their own in their own localities. Or to head up a project for sharing ideas, or to share ideas, please contact me at npchesser@yahoo.com .

Following the 8th AFHS Reunion in Tucson, some Recruitment Suggestions were made by **Christopher Ames** to increase membership in the 8thAFHS: "During the 8th AFHS reunion in Tucson, it was an honor to be among inspiring role models and patriotic heroes.

I have researched my father's service, 2LT Jay W. Ames, in the 8th Air Force with the 447th BG. But during the course of the

reunion week, I learned new historical aspects of the group, which dramatically changed my perspective: I learned that my father's crew was assigned to the 447th just 11 days following some heavy losses, 11 of 29 aircraft, during a mission to Berlin on 29 April 1944. It was the group's worst loss of the war. It must have been a solemn experience for those replacement crews to fill the voids. On a personal note, my birthday is 29 April. I will never again think of it without remembering the 447th. I share this not just as a story, but to provide the foundation for a recruiting suggestion. I am going to use my new perspective on the 447th BG to inspire my brothers, sister, sons, daughters, nieces, and nephews to join the 8th AFHS. I trust that every current member of the 8th AFHS has similar opportunities." Another idea came to mind from Christopher's service with the 944th Fighter Wing. The first unit in that group, the 302nd FS, was one of the famed Tuskegee Airmen squadrons, and the airmen of today have developed a close relationship with several surviving Tuskegee Airmen. Christopher encourages reaching out to other units to embrace the Mighty Eighth's Heritage and join the 8th AFHS.

Note: Some of the 8th AFHS board members regularly attend several of the 8th AF group-reunions during the year, to encourage 8th AFHS membership and attending the national reunions. Several groups now hold their own reunions at the national reunions. Quite a few members also come from different branches of the military, and many have served in the wars fought after WWII.

"LIBERTY RUN" – 453RD BOMB GROUP – OLD BUCKENHAM

One of the most memorable Christmas events of the winter of 1944 was held at Old Buckenham, home of the 453rd Bomb Group. Over 1200 local English children and London Blitz orphans gathered for a special party on Christmas Eve. The British children made special toys that were to be donated to 300 French children. The presents were loaded aboard the 453rd Bomb Group Consolidated B-24J - 42-110078 and christened by a local eleven-year-old English girl with a cup of coffee, who officially bestowed a fitting name of "Liberty Run."

The B-24 was flown by a French speaking crew and was destined to fly to France on Christmas morning. Unfortunately, plans for a Christmas Day delivery failed when the Liberator accidentally slipped off the runway and split a tire. The special Christmas "mission" was finally completed the following day.

English children gather around a makeshift stage in front of 453rd Bomb Group, B-24J Liberator – "Liberty Run." Making a special appearance during the program was none other than Santa Claus himself!



491st Bomb Group Association Honors Two Special Volunteers

It seems that every individual Eighth Air Force Bomb Group or Fighter Group Association has a base of special individuals that volunteer their time and energy to preserve the legacy of their organization.

The **491st Bomb Group Association** recently honored two individuals that have played a key role to the ongoing success of their group. Joe and June Flagler were recently honored with a special plaque that was placed in the Memorial Garden at the **Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum**.

During WWII, Joe Flagler left a specialized industrial engineering job that was deemed so important he was not subject to the military draft. Nevertheless, he quit his job and enlisted in the Army Air Corps. A graduate of **Penn State University**, he was selected for specialized training on the Norden bombsight program. Joe was eventually assigned to the Bomb Sight Maintenance Facility of the 491st Bomb Group at North Pickenham.

When the **491st Bomb Group Association** was formed in 1989, Joe and wife, June Flagler were invaluable volunteers to the success of the orga-

nization right from the start. Their service to the 491st BG *Ringmasters* never faltered for over two decades.

Recently Joe and June Flagler were honored for their dedicated service to the preservation of the 491st Bomb Group, the Second Air Division and the Eighth Air Force with this special plaque.

The **Eighth Air Force Historical Society** wishes to salute the Flaglers for their tireless dedication. Congratulations Joe and June!!

Submitted by F.C. "Hap" Chandler
491st Bomb Group Association

IN APPRECIATION OF
JOE AND JUNE FLAGLER
"THE FLYBOYS FRIENDS"
491ST BOMB GROUP
THE RINGMASTERS



Christmas 1944 at Martlesham Heath, 356th Fighter Group

Sgt Mullins and other 356th Fighter Group personnel entertain local English children during a special Christmas dinner held in their honor.



New York State Southern Wing

The New York State Southern Wing Chapter held its Luncheon October 16th, at the Thayer Hotel West Point NY. The Luncheon was presided over by President Pat Keeley and acting Vice-President Gus Nathan (486BG) with Chapter Secretary Nicolas Plackis (390BG) leading the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Gus Nathan gave the Invocation and also conducted the Candle Lighting Ceremony.

Upon completion of the Candle Lighting Ceremony a stand up introduction of each table was conducted. Lunch was served followed by a 20th Anniversary Cake. Following this President Pat Keeley awarded the Chapter's past Presidents Larry Goldstein (388 BG) and Gus Nathan with Honorary Plaques.



President Pat Keeley awarding past founding President Larry Goldstein with honorary plaque



President Pat Keeley awarding past President Gus Nathan with honorary plaque



Aviation artist Charles R. Taylor unveiled an original painting of Wiley's plane making a one-wheeled landing at the Iowa Chapter annual reunion.

Our Guest speakers were Larry Goldstein who gave us a Chapter history break down and followed by Gus Nathan as to where he continued on with the Chapter. Also guest speaker Wayne Clarke of the NYS Military and Veterans Research Center, who was there conducting taped interviews of the Chapter's Veterans, discussed this Program and past interviews including WWI interviews.

Although the attendance could have been better a good time was had by all. The Chapter's next meeting/luncheon will be in the Spring of 2011. To check-out pictures of the Luncheon please check the Chapter's website, <http://blogs.ny8thswcafhs.org>.

Please **Support Our Troops** especially at this time of year.

Cheers,
Pat Keeley

IOWA CHAPTER

The Iowa Chapter of the 8th AFHS held it's 27th annual reunion at the Galen Wiley Field Boone Municipal Airport, on August 14th, 2010. Our President, Charles Taylor, and Dave Morgan (Boone Airport Manager) spent many hours putting together, "Military Appreciation Day."

Just a week before over 3000 National Guard members left Iowa to go to Afghanistan. Only a hand full from the Boone Army National Guard remained and attended the day.

Activities started at 9:00 a.m. with the P-51 Mustang the first plane to fly, followed by two Stearman aircraft; A T-6 Texan; a PT-19; L-3 and L-4 observation

planes and a Marines VT-1 Trainer; and several other private aircraft. Our efforts to get a fly-by of F-16 fighters from The Air National Guard in Des Moines Iowa did not happen, but they sent Brigadier General Schwab to spend the day with us. General Schwab gave the opening address. Publicity in the area accounted for close to 1000 men, women and children to help celebrate "Military Appreciation Day." The star of the show was a Boone, Iowa native Lt. Galen M. Wiley, age 93. He was a pilot with the 305th Squadron, at Chelveston. He flew 36 missions and on October 6th 1944 he landed his B-17-G "Liberty Run" on one wheel. Military re-enactors and collectors of historic weapons and vehicles did attend to include a half-track and at least two jeeps. Weapons primarily rifles of German, Russian, English and American origin and many other weapons beyond my ability to describe. Displays for public viewing included aviation art, by **American Association of Aviation Artists** member, Charles R. Taylor of Ames, Iowa, and the Boone Army National Guard along with a working Norden Bombsight

Aforementioned aviation artist Charles R. Taylor unveiled an original painting of Wiley's plane making a one-wheeled landing on return from a 6 Oct 44 mission to his 305th Bomb Group base at Chelveston, England. The day concluded with an Eighth Air Force catered banquet in the National Guard Armory at Boone.

In addition to flyers to all manned air-

ports in Iowa, ninety-one flyers will be sent to American Legions and VFWs in a nine country area. Press releases will be sent to twenty-three area newspapers which should give heavy coverage to the surrounding area as well as one major paper covering the state of Iowa. Press releases will be sent to four radio and three TV stations, one of which has a reporter who built his own helicopter at Boone airport. Ongoing publicity will be afforded by the local radio station at Boone as a constant reminder of the event.

Sixty-five people attended the banquet, twenty-one 8th AF veterans, the rest family and associate members. submitted by:

**Leon G. Mehring, Treasurer
Iowa Chapter 8th AFHS**

*Charles Taylor the Associate President of The Iowa Chapter 8th A.F.H.S. is the father of artist Charles R. Taylor.
Father Taylor is not a bad artist himself.*

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

The New Mexico Chapter of the 8th AFHS held their annual Spring General Membership Meeting and Luncheon at the Sheraton Uptown Hotel September 11, 2010.

President, Larry Stebleton (8th AF) opened the meeting at 12:20 pm., with a moment of silence in remembrance of Sept. 11, 2001 and departed members, followed by The Pledge Of Allegiance.

The entertainment was provided by



**New Mexico speaker
Lt. Col Raul Garcia**

our speaker, Lt. Col Raul Garcia a graduate of U.S. Air Force Academy. During his Air Force career he as a navigator with the 60th Bombardment Sqdn, Anderson AFB, Guam; the 20th Bomb Squadron Carswell AFB. Where he deployed for Desert Storm. Subsequently serving at K.L. Sawyer AFB, Michigan; RAF Millennial United Kingdom and Kirkland AFB, New Mexico.

The next 8th AFHS New Mexico Chapter Luncheon will be held on December 11, 2010 at the Uptown Sheraton Hotel, Albuquerque, NM.
submitted by:

Al Schwery, Secretary

MINNESOTA CHAPTER

A meeting of the Board of Directors was held September 8, 2010, in Bloomington, Minnesota. President Al Anderson presided and Bob Clemens, Secretary, was present.

Announcement was made that Col Wofford died September 3, 2010.

Members attending were Al Anderson, Larry Bachman, Pete Backlund, Gary Bircham, Walter Bohrn, Robert Clemens, Dick Hill, Earl Joswick, Don Kent, Vince Parker, Ray Peterson, James Rasmussen and Larry Sagstetter.

Treasurer Gary Bircham presented the Treasurer's Report. Motion to appoint Larry Sagstetter and Glenn Froberg to replace Larry Bachman and Don Kent for the Board of Directors for the balance of 2010.

Annual meeting is December 8, 2010. Christmas Party on December 5, 2010 at Macini's.

Motion made and seconded to contribute \$500.00 to USO and \$500.00 to Serviceman's Center at Twin Cities International Airport. .

**Bob Clemens
Secretary**

North Alabama Chapter

The October meeting began with a video documentary of a crew flying on Project Manna/Chowhound. It was put together by George Smythe from several sources, u-tube videos, an 8mm movie made during the project,



This is a clip from the video showing the starving people waving at the 8th Air Force B-17s bringing them food.



This is a medal issued by the Netherlands on the 40th anniversary of Project Chowhound. The motto reads, approximately, "Bless those who winged-into-being the Sermon on the Mount (in which Jesus called out) to help the weak and poor."

and email inputs from several people. It is NOT copyrighted and is now public property and available for anyone. It depicts the history leading up to the Germans opening the Dutch dykes, and blocking food to the civilian population of the Netherlands as punishment for the Dutch helping the Allies at the battle of A Bridge Too Far. As a result the people were literally starving to death! The Chowhound Project was several missions flown by the 8th Air Force and the RAF to drop food to the people on some very low level missions. The documentary showed all aspects of the proj-

ect including: Loading the B-17's, flying over the flooded fields, the Hollanders waving at the B-17's flying overhead, (views both from the B-17s and from the ground) and the view of the people from the B-17, the actual dropping of the food packages, a shot of damage to one B-17 because the Germans didn't fully comply with the supposed truce, even a shot of some Dutch children enjoying the food. It included the fly-back to England, and concluded with a picture of the certificate issued by Prince Bernhardt of the Netherlands to those who participated and a picture of the monument to the 8th Air Force that the Netherlands have erected..

After a brief question and answer period, the formal meeting was opened by President Ann Vaughn. Chaplain Harold McMurrin led us with Grace and the Pledge.

It was good to have Bill and Rosemary Burke back after their absence. Bob and Doris Jones were visitors and expressed a desire to join. The Calverts: Katherine, Trent and Ben attended again and all three joined the Chapter. We were glad to have Keith and Kimberly Brown from California as guests of member Russell Kerl.

The next meeting program will be the story of the Halifax Explosion of WWI (Yes that's WW one.) It was the largest, non-nuclear explosion ever. Jesse Bradley will give us the low-down from his detailed research. Please come join us

Ann Vaughn, President

OREGON CHAPTER

Robert "Bob" Zafran was our November speaker with his excellent PowerPoint "Project Muddy Hill" presentation. Bob spoke about his involvement in Project Muddy Hill {1966-1968},



Oregon Chapter speaker Robert Zafran with his "Project Muddy Hill" PowerPoint presentation.

a highly classified, CIA-USN OpEval project assigned to the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River MD, that was the initiating portion of the overall TRIM {Trail Road Interdiction Multi-sensor} program during the beginning stage of the Vietnam conflict.

The biggest problem in 1965-1966 involved the supplies that were delivered to the Viet Cong and later on the North Vietnamese Army via the Ho Chi Minh Trail system that extended from western North Vietnam through Laos to South Vietnam. USAF & USN attack aircraft made every effort to interdict foot and vehicle passage on the Ho Chi Minh Trails, but little actual damage to North Vietnamese transport vehicles and personnel actually occurred. The Laos portion of the Ho Chi Minh Trail system was in its beginning stages of supplying goods and weapons to the Viet Cong and later to the North Vietnamese Army fighting in South Vietnam.

In June 1966, after eight years service as a Naval Aircrewman and the completion of Naval Aviation Cadet flight training, Bob received his commission as an Ensign and Naval Aviation Observer designation. Ens Robert Zafran then reported to the {WST} Weapons Systems Test Division, Naval Air Test Center at Patuxent River, MD, was assigned responsibility for the development and eventual Southeast Asia deployment of Project Muddy Hill. After brief systems

factory and university training in the basics of infrared technology, terrain following radar, low-light television, and airborne scanning systems, Bob joined the Muddy Hill contingent at the LTV Electro-Systems plant in Greenville, TX as the Muddy Hill Electro-Optical/Avionics Officer. LTV Electro-Systems was known for its 'Black Operations' modifications of aircraft operated by both the military and CIA agencies.

Muddy Hill was a joint CIA-REWSON {Reconnaissance Electronic Warfare Special Operations, Navy} Research, Development and Operational Evaluation project. Operating from the Air America compound at Udorn Royal Thai Air Force base in northeast Thailand, as CINPACFLT Task Group 50.8, Muddy Hill employed a highly modified NP-2H (P2V-7) Neptune aircraft, Navy Bureau #135582, equipped with unique, state of the art Electro-Optical systems: Forward Looking {FLIR} and Downward Looking, Stereo {DLIR} Infrared, Low Light Level Television (L³TV), Terrain Following Radar {TFR}, high resolution reconnaissance cameras, and Active Magnetic Anomaly Detection (AMAD) systems. The NP-2H was repainted with 'Black Widow Black' paint, created by DuPont during WWII and used on the P-61 Black Widow night fighter aircraft. This unique paint scheme provides a virtual image on the aircraft's skin that disperses impinging light making the

CHAPTER NEWS

aircraft nearly impossible to detect during nighttime operations. Additionally, the NP-2H's bladder cell wet wings were modified by installing poly-reticulated foam to stabilize fuel sloshing and minimize wing fires from small-arms fire.

The Muddy Hill aircraft and a military-civilian support/flight crew team composed of 33 USN, USAF, USMC, Civil Service, & Factory Systems Engineers, deployed to Udorn Royal Thai Air Force base in northeast Thailand during July-December 1967.

Muddy Hill flight operations included low-level {500 ft absolute}, combat scenario, electro-optical based reconnaissance in central and southern Laos. The primary mission was for the Muddy Hill

flight crew to use their electro-optical detection systems on night missions to locate camouflaged trucks, truck parks, and anti-aircraft weapons emplacements along the Ho Chi Minh trails within the Laotian Plaine des Jarres and mark them for other Navy and Air Force aircraft to destroy. Post mission still and video based infrared and standard photographic imagery was reviewed by Muddy Hill photo-interpretative personnel, 'targets of interest' identified, and further analyzed at CINCPACFLT facilities in Hawaii.

Maintained and flown by a very small cadre of personnel, the Project Muddy Hill NP-2H aircraft completed 14 operational missions in the highly mountain-

ous area of central Laos under combat conditions. Information on the usage and the capabilities of the unique electro-optical onboard systems served to design, develop, and implement future such nighttime, Electro-Optical reconnaissance systems that are fundamental to both ground and airborne military operations today.

Bob also talked about his use of the Muddy Hill NP-2H at the Naval Air test center after Project Muddy Hill concluded {1968}. Several test scenario missions were conducted to determine the capability of the Muddy Hill IR Systems to detect submarines and small, coastal freighters.

Joan E. Hamilton



EIGHTH AIR FORCE

Reading from the **Book Of Life**,
Something whispered at the edge
Of a clearing, who will explain the
Lightning...that would not stop?

Word after word, page after page,
Something behind us we could not
See, Pearl Harbor, Bataan, Iwo Jima,
Rising over the Channel...at dawn.

Targets like drops of rain spilling
Across Europe in thunder roaring
Past the earth into the sky, what did
We read there...chapter and verse?

Left behind beneath our feet, left for
The Book Of Life, written on the wind,
Were the murmurs of our presence,
Where we walked... where we flew.

Marvin Silbersher, 447th BG
Lake Hopatcong, NJ

THUNDERBOLT!

Memoirs of a World War II

Fighter Pilot

By Marvin Bledsoe

Van Norstrand Reinhold Publishers

Hardcover - 289 pages - 6" x 9" 1982

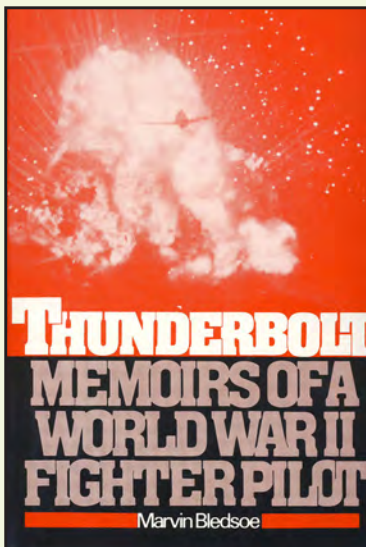
ISBN - 0-442-21355-7

After the war was over, Marvin Bledsoe returned home to the world he left behind. Flying as a P-47 Thunderbolt fighter pilot in the 350th Fighter Squadron, 353rd Fighter Group at Raydon, England, Captain Bledsoe lived through dozens of harrowing experiences, 70 combat missions and the pain of losing several of his comrades.

In order to "make sense" of the situation, Bledsoe began to write about his experiences, the basis of this well written and extremely insightful memoir. The author has done superb job describing his experiences as an 8th Air Force combat fighter pilot.

His first person writing technique keeps the reader entertained and gives a vivid realization into the author's life during those stressful and exciting days. The reader will understand and appreciate the honesty the prevails throughout the book.

This book was first published in 1982 and has been long out of print. In fact, hardcover copies of the book have become very difficult to find and have become quite a collector's item.



The author, Marvin Bledsoe passed away many years ago. Recently, your editor was contacted by Harriett Bledsoe, the widow of Marvin Bledsoe, regarding some extra copies she had come across. Mrs. Bledsoe is offering the books to our membership at a special price. I highly recommend this fascinating memoir and encourage you to get this collectable book before they are all gone!

Further inquiries can be made by contacting Mrs. Bledsoe at:

Mrs. Harriett Bledsoe
2166 Grandview Street
Oceanside, CA 92054-5620
(760) 757-0133

BLUENOSER TALES

War Stories from the 352nd

Fighter Group

"Blue Nosed Bastards of Bodney"

Editors - Robert H. "Punchy" Powell,

Marc Hamel and Sam Sox

Softcover Edition - 2010

371 pages - Profusely illustrated

ISBN - 978-1-934216-35-4

One of the pillars in the success of Eighth Air Force Fighter Command during World War II was the 352nd Fighter Group. Affectionately known as the "Blue Nosed Bastards of Bodney," the 352nd Fighter Group achieved a remarkable combat record in the skies over Fortress Europe. Producing such aces as George Preddy, John C. Meyer, Ed Heller, Jack Thornell and Raymond Littge, the 352nd Fighter Group flew both the Republic P-47 Thunderbolt and the North American P-51 Mustang during the European air campaign.

The **352nd Fighter Group Association**, led by ever inspiring Robert "Punchy" Powell, wanted to initiate a group effort to forever document the history of this famed 8th Air Force Fighter Group. Rather than documenting a "dry as dust" unit history, the Association reached out to its membership and requested them to submit "their" reflections and real stories. Thus, began the journey of compiling this fine collection of extremely compelling 352nd Fighter Group war stories.



Contribution from such esteemed authors such as Marc Hamel, Tom Ivie, Joe Noah (cousin of George Preddy) and Robert Powell truly make this awesome publication. To add more appeal to the book, a very generous collection of photographs, digitized by the very talented, Sam Sox, gives a visual flavor to each of the more 40+ short stories making up this incredible and grand publication.

Without question, BLUENOSER TALES, rates as one the finest anthology collections of any 8th Air Force Bomb Group or Fighter Group. The hardcover edition of this book was published in 2007 and sold out almost immediately. This softbound edition is the same publication and is offered for a much more reasonable price. Don't miss out on adding this to your 8th Air Force bookshelf.

Congratulations are certainly in order to the members of the **352nd Fighter Group Association** and Chief Editor, Robert "Punchy" Powell for having the foresight to not only gather these precious stories, but for masterminding the creation of this first class publication that shall forever serve as a permanent testament to the courage and sacrifice of all that served as a part of the "Blue Nosed Bastards of Bodney."

Copies may be purchased and further inquiries can be obtained by contacting the Editor directly:

BOOK REVIEWS

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bluenoserbob@352ndfightergroup.com

ELEVEN TWO

One WWII Airman's Story of Capture, Survival and Freedom

By Frank A. Kravetz

Silverbear Graphics

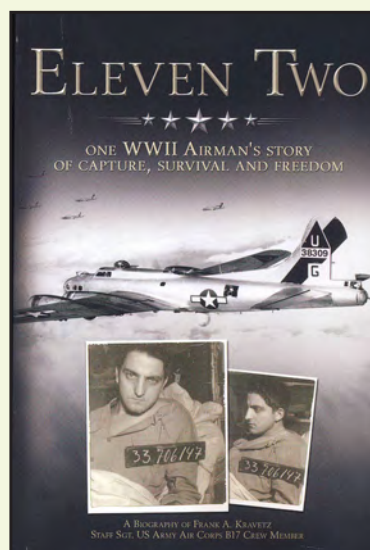
www.silverbeargraphics.com

Softbound - 306 pages - Illustrated 2010

ISBN - 9780982716144

Recently, we have received and reviewed several books that tell the amazing accounts of the survival and sacrifice of WWII 8th Air Force Prisoners of War. **Eleven Two** is yet another soul-stirring account of another one these very special "Mighty Eighth" veterans. Sgt. Frank A. Kravetz was Tail Gunner in the "Fireball Outfit," the famed 457th Bomb Group. On November 2, 1944, four days after celebrating his 21st birthday in London, Sgt. Kravetz was shot down over Meresburg, Germany.

Wounded in the leg after an overpowering onslaught of German fighters,



Sgt. Kravetz bailed out of his burning Fortress and was subsequently captured, interrogated and put into Obermassfeld Allied Prisoner Hospital where he recuperated from his wounds. He finally was sent to Stalag Luft 13D before being moved on the forced march to Moosberg. The author gives a heart wrenching account of those difficult days where he, along with thousands of other Allied airmen, were forced to march in the dead of winter with no proper clothing or adequate rations.

It is one of the finest accounts of the forced Moosberg March this reviewer has ever had the pleasure of reading.

One special chapter that brings Frank Kravetz's amazing story into a different and welcome light is the chapter written by his wife, Anne Kravetz. Mrs. Kravetz honestly tells of her love and devotion to Frank for so many years. It gives the reader an insight to a very special relationship and the courage and support Anne has given to Frank for well over 60 years.

I found the book very thought provoking and moving. It is another fantastic 8th AF POW account that deserves a special place in any 8th Air Force library. I know the reader of this fine publication will find the memoir very uplifting and inspirational.

The highest of recommendations.

For further information and to obtain a copy of **Eleven Two** please contact the author at:

www.eleventeothebook.com

or

www.silverbeargraphics.com/frank-kravetz

Christmas 1944 at Martlesham Heath, 356th Fighter Group



356th Fighter Group Deputy Group Commander, Donald Baccus holds an exciting English child for the camera.



Sgt. Mullins and his new English friend during a special Christmas party held for the local English children at Martlesham Heath, home of the 356th Fighter Group.



*The "Our Gal Sal" Crew upon completion of their final mission, May 1, 1944
taken at their hardstand at Thorpe Abbots, England.*

An Act of Human Kindness

By Mark S. Copeland

March 6th, 1944 will forever go down in the annals of World War II Eighth Air Force history as one of the worst and most costly days of the entire Allied air campaign. The target for Eighth Air Force Bomber Command was Berlin, the first major strike on the German capital. On that fateful day, the United States Army Air Corps - Eighth Air Force lost more aircraft than any other mission during World War II; a staggering loss of 69 heavy bombers and 14 fighters. The 100th Bomb Group alone lost 15 of their

Boeing B-17 Flying Fortresses.

One of the fortunate 100th Bomb Group crews which survived this fateful mission was the Robert Shoens Crew. Flying in their trusty Fortress, named "Our Gal Sal," the Shoens Crew was the only bomber to make it back from the B Group - Lead Squadron to their base at Thorpe Abbots. The rest of their element had been annihilated. The March 6th mission was number seventeen for the Shoens Crew. Finally, on May 1st, 1944, the Shoens Crew completed their final mission and all the members returned back to the United States.

Throughout the years, the members of the Shoens Crew have kept in contact and reunite as often as possible, mostly at 100th Bomb Group Reunions.

Unique friendships that were forged together forever during the horrors of combat flying, so long ago. For over 65 years, the members of Robert Shoens' crew gather to reminisce, share memories and enjoy one another's friendship. All these occasions have been special, but the recent **2010 Thunder over Michigan** Air Show in Detroit, Michigan was something unforgettable.

The **8th Air Force Historical Society** was asked by the organizers of the **Thunder over Michigan** Air Show to help with a special project. Two local Detroit residents, sisters Margaret and Susan Seger, wanted to sponsor three individual rides on one of the participating B-17 Flying Fortresses. However, it came with a special request by the



*Radio Operator - Gunner
Donald Hammond*



*Ball Turret Gunner
Ed Stone*



*"Our Gal Sal" - 1st Pilot
Robert Shoens*



The crew of "Our Gal Sal" and their new friends, Susan and Martha Seger. (L-R) Susan Seger, Ed Stone (Ball Turret Gunner), Robert Shoens (1st Pilot), Don Hammond (Radio Operator/Gunner) and Martha Seger.

Seeger sisters. The rides were only to be given to three WWII Eighth Air Force veterans. The three veterans selected would fly on the B-17, free of charge. Margaret and Susan Seeger agreed to pay for the flight, at \$425.00 a seat. They wanted to give something back to three airmen that fought for our Nation's freedom during World War II.

The three remaining "Our Gal Sal" crewmembers, 1st Pilot -Robert Shoens, Ball Turret Gunner, Ed Stone and Radio Operator/Gunner Donald Hammond were selected to go on the Fortress. After 66 years, they would now once again re-unite and take to the skies in a B-17 Flying Fortress.

None of the aforementioned gentlemen had ever met Margaret or Susan Seeger. Complete strangers meeting complete strangers for the first time. After meeting one another on the tarmac at Willow Run Airport, friendships were instantaneous.

Perhaps the three gentlemen didn't board the B-17 with as much grace or "spring in their step" as they did some 66 years ago, but once aboard it was evident this was something very special, you could see the excitement beaming from each of their eyes.

One could not imagine the memories each respective gentleman must have recalled, as the roar of the engines began to move the bomber down the runway. After all, the last time they all were together in a B-17 was at a time of war, not a time of peace.

Upon landing back at Willow Run Airport, the three veterans emerged from the B-17 and were promptly greeted to thunderous cheers and applause by the now growing crowd that wanted to bear witness to this special event. Their faces were gleaming with overwhelming joy.

For Margaret and Susan Seeger, the sponsors of the ride, their emotions were those of humble respect and satisfaction. The two sisters knew they had just made something special happen for these three veterans, for their families and for all of us.

All because they wanted to make a difference, they just wanted to give something back.

Witnessing the smiles on the faces of Robert Shoens, Don Hammond and Ed Stone on that beautiful August morning certainly is a simple reminder of the amazing effect an act of human kindness can truly be.



"Our Gal Sal" Ball Turret Gunner, Ed Stone being helped from the Yankee Air Force B-17, "Yankee Lady."

(Photo Credits – Robert Shoens Jr.)



"Yankee Lady" starting engines.

Lester "Les" Bergman

passed away peacefully October 21, 2010 in Lakewood, Colorado. In 1940 he was accepted into the Pennsylvania Maritime Academy for officer training. In April of 1942 after the United States entry into WW II and while still a cadet he was deployed from the Academy to the SS Santa Elena. Shortly after, the ship sailed for Scotland for convoy service. Upon arrival she loaded a contingent of Field Marshall Montgomery's troops for the trip around the Cape of Good Hope to Alexandria, Egypt. When the Santa Elena returned to the States Les enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps. In October of 1944 after completion of pilot's training he flew a new B-17 with his crew to England for assignment with the 452nd Bombardment Group, 8th AF. Upon landing the crew learned they had been reassigned to the 94th Bombardment Group, 331st Bombardment Squadron at Bury St. Edmunds due to recent losses the Group had sustained. When he completed his 35 combat missions he returned to the States in June of 1945. In August of 1945 while training in B-24's for the Pacific Theater at George AFB near Victorville, California he met Louise Haggerty. After his discharge from the service in November 1945 he reentered the Merchant Marine until March of 1947 when he married Louise Haggerty in Philadelphia. Submitted by his son, David Bergman



Lester "Les" Bergman



Samuel E. Lyke



Donald Purcell

S/Sgt James Popp, Gunner with the 448th BG(H) /712th BS stationed at Seething, England. He passed away the first week of August 2010, and was interned at Bridgeville Veteran's Cemetery. Bridgeville, PA

Charles K. Price, 8th AFHS Member #2227, an 8th AF veteran, died on Nov 10th, 2010. My father was 86 when he passed away in Dowagiac, Michigan. He was a Tailgunner in the 385th BG/548th BS, and was awarded the DFC and the Air Medal. He also served in North Africa and Italy, and was recalled for service in the Korean War. Submitted by, his son Doug Price

Samuel E. Lyke
Former President of the 385th B.G.A. Bartlesville, Oklahoma, passed away on August 19, 2010. Married his young sweetheart, lifelong partner and best friend, Mary Catherine Cooper on December 28, 1940. Entered military service August 2, 1943, proudly serving as a waist gunner on a B-17 with the Eighth Air Force, 385th Bomb Group, 551st Bomb Squadron.

He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross "for heroism while participating in aerial flight". A memorial

fund has been established in Dad's name with the 385th BGA. All donations are designated to be used for the restoration of the B-17 Flying Fortress, "City of Savannah" at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum.

Donald E. Purcell, 89, of Marietta, GA, passed away on September 24, 2010. He was a B-24 pilot in the 8th AF assigned to the 466th Bomb Group stationed at Attlebridge, England. After the war he flew

for Eastern Airlines for 35 years. He is survived by Dot, his wife of 65 years and four children. Submitted by his friend, Jim Vandiver.

Howard Newman, 93, of Centerville, passed away August 29, 2010. He entered pilot training for the Army Air Corps. He became an instructor pilot in the AT-6 and then P-40 fighter plane, before transitioning to the P-39 and then P-51 fighter squadrons in Florida. He supported the post war effort by flying surveillance missions over Japan in 1946 and later transferred to the Air Force Reserve in Sacramento, California.

Ralph Bilotto, 89, passed away September 18, 2010. He joined the United States Army Air Corp in August of 1940, served two years in England during WWII as a B-17 mechanic then was honorably discharged in October of 1945, obtaining the position of Crew Chief. He retired from office jobs at WPAFB in 1978.

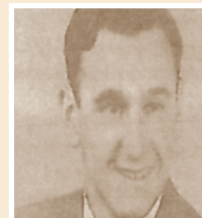
Charles Elmer Williams, passed away July 31, 2010. He was a WWII POW member of the 8th AF Society.

Robert E. Bowen, 86, of Kentwood, MI/Winter Haven, FL passed away peacefully at his home on 5 September 2010. He was a highly decorated WWII veteran. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942.

He flew 35 combat missions with the 8th Air Force, 351st Bomb Group, 509th Bomb Squadron, on a B-17 Flying Fortress as a ball turret gunner.



Howard Newman



Robert Bilotto



Robert Bowen

TAPS

Terrance S. O'Toole, 88, of St. Paul, passed away April 10, 2010. He served in the Army Air Corps during World War II.

Rudolph "Rudy" Charney, 90, of St. Louis Park, MN died March 29, 2010. He was a Master Sergeant serving in the Army Air Force as a mission control specialist in England during WWII.

Elmer J. "Lefty" Vanderah, of West St. Paul, MN died August 20, 2009. He served in WWII as a gunner on a B-17.

George P. Solomos passed away at his home in Catford, London, SE 6 UK on



Elmer Vanderah

November 8, 2010.

He served as a radioman with the 385th BG/550th BS at Great Ashfield, Suffolk on the crew of Lt. Francis Pavich.



Herbert Garelick

Herbert Joseph (Joe) Garelick, 85, died December 8th, 2009. He served with the 8th Air Force in Europe as a B-24 gunner with the 852nd Bomb Squadron, 491st Bombardment Group. His crew flew 34 successful missions over Germany.

Col. Donald Hamaker, Riverside, CA passed away on Nov.7, 2010. He was a 452nd BG Pilot. After World WarII, Col. Hamaker flew during the Berlin Air Lift, the Korean War, and Vietnam.

356th Fighter Group Christmas Pictures - 1944



Happy children eat a special meal provided by the kindness of 8th A.F. personnel from the 356th Fighter Group.



Local children are treated to a special Christmas party at Martlesham Heath airfield, home of the 356th Fighter Group.



Members of the 356th Fighter Group gather at Kesgrave Hall for a Christmas party.



356th Fighter Group personnel making the best of it, during the Christmas of 1944, a long way from home.



History of the Mighty Eighth Air Force



The Eighth Bomber Command (Re-designated 8th AF in February 1944) was activated as part of the United States Army Air Forces January 28, 1942, at Hunter Field in Savannah, Georgia. Brigadier General Ira C. Eaker took the headquarters to England the next month to prepare for its mission of conducting aerial bombardment missions against Nazi-occupied Europe. During World War II, under the leadership of such Generals as Eaker and Jimmy Doolittle, the 8th AF became the greatest air armada in history. By mid-1944, the 8th AF had reached a total strength of more than 200,000 people (it is estimated that more than 350,000 Americans served in 8th AF during the war in Europe). At its peak, the 8th AF could dispatch more than 2,000 four-engine bombers and 1,000 fighters on a single mission. For these reasons, the 8th AF became known as the "Mighty Eighth".

The Mighty Eighth compiled an impressive record in the war. This achievement, however, carried a high price. The 8th AF suffered one-half of the U.S. Army Air Forces' casualties in World War II (47,000-plus casualties with more than 26,000 deaths). The Eighth's personnel also earned 17 Medals of Honor, 220 Distinguished Service Crosses, 850 Silver Stars, 7,000 Purple Hearts 46,000 Air Medals. Many more uncounted awards were presented to the 8th AF veterans after the war. There were 261 fighter aces and 305 gun-

ner aces in the Eighth in World War II; 31 of those fighter aces had more than 15 or more aircraft kills.

After the war in Europe, in July 1945, the 8th AF headquarters moved to Okinawa, where it trained new bomber groups for combat against Japan. The Japanese, however, surrendered before the 8th AF saw action in the Pacific Theater. In June 1946, the headquarters moved to McDill Field, Florida, to become part of the newly established Strategic Air Command. Four years later; November 1950, the 8th AF headquarters transferred to Fort Worth Army Field (later Carswell Air Force Base) in Texas.

During the Korean War, several 8th AF units deployed to Japan to fly combat missions. Following, the Eighth spent its next few years building its strategic capabilities. On June 13, 1955, the 8th AF moved to Westover, Massachusetts, where it guided the transition of its units into the jet age with the B-47 and the KC-97 aircraft. The Air Force phased out those aircraft in the early 1960s for newer B-58 and B-52 bombers, and KC-135 tankers.

Additionally, the Eighth acquired Atlas and Titan intercontinental ballistic missiles. In 1965, the 8th AF started performing combat operations in support of the Southeast Asian Conflict.

At first, stateside-based 8th AF wings deployed periodically to operating bases in Guam, Okinawa, and Thailand, but then in April 1970,

the headquarters moved to Anderson AFB, Guam, to take over the direction of all strategic operations. The intensive bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong during 11 days in December 1972, known as LINEBACKER 2 or the "Christmas Day Bombing Campaign," was but one highlight of that period. Those missions influenced the North Vietnamese government to return to the negotiating table. After the hostilities ended in Southeast Asia, the 8th AF moved to Barksdale on January 1, 1975.

Eighth AF units played a key role in Desert Storm by spreading the Gulf War air campaign. Launched from Barksdale AFB, Louisiana, B-52s conducted effective conventional airlaunched cruise missile strikes on numerous Iraqi targets to open the war. Numbered air force bomber units in the theater and at nearby locations also attacked Iraq's Republican Guard and other important strategic targets, while air refueling units provided most of the support to Coalition aircraft. Other assets provided tactical reconnaissance.

After Desert Storm, the Mighty Eighth reorganized to become a general-purpose numbered air force with a war fighting mission to support the U.S. Strategic Command. The Eighth currently demonstrates that role in yearly large-scale exercises. In 1996, the Eighth also directed the highly successful Desert Strike mission against Iraq.

BULLETIN BOARD



My Love for my Wonderful Father.... Hank Sarnow....my Daddy! (1920-1999)

When I was a little girl,
my Daddy was so many wonderful things to me:
He was the Dad that loved me with all of his heart
He was the teacher that taught me so many useful things
He was the person that always made me feel special
He was the comforter that wiped away my tears
when I was sad.

When I grew up and became a young woman:
He encouraged me to be myself
He inspired me to embrace life with enthusiasm
He always made me feel secure
He accepted my husband like his own son.

When I had children of my own:
He was the happiest Grandpa alive
He was a wonderful teacher (again)
He loved so generously
He left us a legacy like no other.

And before all of this, he was an American hero.
But, we only knew him as our loving Father...

I send each of you my love and prayers,
knowing that your Fathers are special too!

Regina Sarnow Brand

Sy Seyster would like to purchase
the following books by John H.
Woolnough:

- #1) The 8th Air Force Album
- #2) The 8th Air Force Yearbook
- #3) Stories of The Eighth

Email: jcns1954@gmail.com
Cell: 714-756-1002

Life member of the 8th AFHS and the
457th Bomb Group Association.

Thank you! Sy Seyster



One of the famous vocal
trios "McGuire Sisters," was
spotted at the 2010 8th
AFHS reunion in Tucson,
Arizona. Dorothy (McGuire)
Williamson is still just as
beautiful in 2010 and she
was back in the 40's!



This compact disc contains programs transferred from analog tape and therefore
may contain some tape hiss and other anomalies that exist with analog recordings.

MCA RECORDS

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MCAD-31341

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	
	8 th AFHS Embroidered Logo; Mesh Baseball Cap	\$6.00	Red, White, Blue	
	8 th AFHS 4" jacket Patch	\$3.95	NA	
	8 th AFHS 3/4" pin w/clutch back	\$3.50	N/A	
	8 th AFHS bumper sticker	\$.90	NA	
	8 th AFHS 4" round sticker	\$.75	NA	
	8 th AFHS plastic license plate	\$3.95	NA	
	8 th AF logo silk tie	\$27.99	Red	
	8 th AF 3" patch	\$3.98	NA	
	8 th AF 3/4" pin w/clutch back	\$3.50	NA	
	8 th AF logo grey T-shirt	\$12.99 \$14.99	S, M, L, XL 2X	
	8 th AF logo white T-shirt	\$10.99 \$12.99	S, M, L, XL 2X	
	"City of Savannah" B-17 T-Shirt	\$15.99	S, M, L, XL,	
	A-2 Jacket	\$299.99	40, 42, 44, 46, 48	
	Flyboys (Paper Back)	\$7.99	N/A	
	The Mighty 8 th (Paper Back)	\$7.99	N/A	
	Bomber Legends 2011, B-17 or B-24 Calendars	\$12.99	B-17, B-24	
	8 th Logo Tervis Tumbler Mug	\$19.99	N/A	
	Airplane Clock (Pictured)	\$59.99	N/A	
	Airplane Globe (Pictured)	\$74.99	N/A	
	Executive Compass (Pictured)	\$29.99	N/A	
	Military Dominoes (Pictured)	\$29.99	Air Force, Marine, Army	
	Globe Paper Weights (Pictured)	\$49.99	Lapis, Mother of Pearl, Onyx, Aqua Marine	
SUBTOTAL				
7% SALES TAX-GEORGIA RESIDENTS ONLY				
SHIPPING FROM CHART BELOW				
TOTAL ORDER				

Shipping and handling charges:
 \$3.00 for orders under \$5.00
 \$7.00 for orders \$5.01-\$20.00
 \$10.00 for orders \$20.01-\$40.00
 \$12.00 for orders \$40.01-\$100

Alaska, Hawaii & International Orders Add \$20.00 to normal shipping charges

Order by mail or phone at 912-748-8888 ext. 116. Shipping and handling is added to all orders.

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 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone Number (_____) _____

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 Stelljes PO BOX 1992 • Savannah, GA 31402

HOW ABOUT IT?

DREAMS AND VISIONS

We constantly have times when an event, a phone call, a picture, a word, a name, a song, a scent, will trigger our memory. These events occur when least expected. Our minds are put in motion and our emotions are stirred, our hearts beat a little faster, our spirits are moved, our memory is rejuvenated. A prophet who lived thousands of years ago described this condition very well when he said **"Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions"** (Joel 2:28 KJV). Dreams, visions, what are they? How do they come about? Dreams deal with memories while visions look to the future but after a little while, they too will become dreams. A number of years ago, I viewed a large painting in Wootaroc Museum, Bartlesville, Oklahoma rendered by western artist William R. Leigh that illustrates this idea of having our memory recaptured by an event of the past.

The painting depicts an elderly Indian, his skin parched by exposure to many years of labor in his desert environment. His hands are resting on the wooden handles of a turning plow. In front are two horses standing idle at the drivers command. One horse is erect, the other is looking back and downward staring quizzically at the object just uncovered by the plow. Exposed and dust laden, lies the skull of a buffalo whitened by years of exposure to the elements.

This moment in time triggers the memory of the aged warrior. As this object from the past is unearthed.... he stops in his tracks. He stands transfixed as he looks into the distant clouds hanging on the horizon. There, he sees more than floating white billowy masses of vapor hanging in the blue sky. The clouds he is seeing unfold and reveal a story, a scene depicting an adventure spreading across the entire horizon: a portrayal of an unforgettable moment

of his youth, a battle and a victory. Indian braves are decked in full battle array mounted on their pinto ponies, armed with their weapons and charging full-speed in pursuit of the fleeing buffalo herd before them. He is old and dreaming a dream of his past.

In the Summer of 2010, there was a reenactment that was a much greater spectacle than the mighty buffalo hunt created by clouds formed in the sky. Thunder Over Michigan Air Show attracted thousands of spectators to participate in what was called "The Last Great Gathering of Fortresses and Legends." Among the tens of thousands present, there were over 500 who were associated with the Eighth Air Force. It is an undeniable fact that because of their age, the time is drawing near for the Veterans of WWII "to taxi to the ramp and cut the engines and install the chocks." At this event, the Veterans and their families gathered in a front-row tent located near the tarmac where dozens and dozens of vintage as well as modern military aircraft were parked.

Over sixty WWII Veterans gathered together to have a group portrait taken. Behind them were parked two B-17's, the weapons of war in which they flew. The highlight of the day was a fly-by, a loose knit formation of eight Boeing B-17's, (a four engine Flying Fortresses), one four engine B-24 Consolidated Liberator and several P-51 Mustang fighters in escort. This was an awe inspiring sight to the masses of spectators to see that many WWII heavy bombers and fighter escorts in the air at one time. It was exciting to the Veterans but to them, this was 'small stuff'. Over fifty-five years ago, they had their dreams and today they now visualized the skies over England and the continent of Europe as it was then. Thousands of bombers and fighters just like these had formed into a mighty bomber stream, all were air born and heading eastward. Each bomber was manned by ten very young men, headed for an uncertain future into the cruel skies over enemy

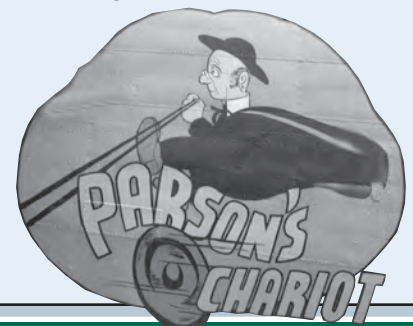


Earl Wassom

territory. They were young, they had their own visions, the anticipation of having 'a milk run' an easy mission, hoping to return safely to base. Their youthful vision had them completing their assignment and returning home and then, these visions would become dreams. They were reliving their youthful dreams that August day in Detroit.

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived said, **"...there is nothing new under the sun."** (Ecclesiastes 1:9 NIV). Nothing new? No, for he lists a long array of events, none of which will ever be eliminated from anyone's life. These things are universal: **"life and death, planting and harvesting, laughing and crying, mourning and dancing, keeping and giving away, love and hate, war and peace"** (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8). The day to day experiences are where we really live. Relish each one for they are a gift of God.

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



MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM YOUR 8th AF NEWS TEAM!!



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The Eighth Air Force Historical Society
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Fourth Mission of the Day
A Tribute to the American Eagle Squadrons of WWII



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