

December 2011



8TH AF NEWS

Volume 11 Number 4 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE - 2011 Photo Album
37th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion**



**"70" 8th AIR FORCE WWII VETERANS
ATTENDED THE 37th ANNUAL 8TH AFHS REUNION**



AF News

December 2011



Magazine of

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

The Eighth Air Force News is dedicated to the memory of 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.

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

OFFICERS

President

Harry Tanner (Lorene) 2012
2923 Roy Bunch Road
Sulphur, LA 70663
Tel. (337) 527-0322
Cell: (337)-302-6239
hdtanner@netcommander.com

Vice President

Joseph P. Keeley (Andrea) 2014
1335 Belmont Ave.
North Haledon, NJ 07508
Tel. (973) 423-4854
fxe84@optonline.net

Secretary

David Nowack (Lois) 2013
4878 College View Court
Schnecksville, PA 18078
Tel. (610) 799-4640
DLNowack@ptd.net

Treasurer

Darrel Lowell (Becky) 2014
39 Peregrine Crossing
Savannah, GA 31411
Tel. (912) 598-7334
darrellowell@bellsouth.net

Public Relations

George Hoidra (Betsy) 2013
6504 Old Sandy Springs Road
Laurel, MD 20707-2954
Tel. (301) 953-2813
ghoidra@yahoo.com

8TH AFHS NATIONAL OFFICE

Membership Manager

Samantha Reid
PO Box 956
Pooler, GA 31322
Tel. (912) 748-8884

Email address:

membershipmanager@8thafhs.org

Website address: www.8thafhs.org

8TH AFHS UNITED KINGDOM CONTACTS

Gordon Richards - U.K. Office
The Croft 26
Chapelwent Rd. Haverhill, Suffolk
CB9 9SD, England
011 44 1440 704014

8TH AFHS PX

Felice Stelljes, **Director PX**
175 Bourne St. Pooler, GA 31328
or
P.O. Box 1992
Savannah, GA 31402
912-748-8888
store@mightyeighth.org

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael P. Faley 2014
12400 Ventura Blvd. #113
Studio City, CA 91604
Tel. (818) 980-9349
mpfaley@aol.com

Joe Garber (Joan) 2015
46 Coquina Ridge Way
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
paljoe2@aol.com

Chapter/Unit Liaison

Joseph P. Keeley (Andrea) 2014
1335 Belmont Ave.
North Haledon, NJ 07508
Tel. (973) 423-4854
fxe84@optonline.net

Robert "Bob" Moses 2011
413 North Washington Street
Brownsville, TN 38012-2064
Tel. (731) 772-3333
bobcheryl@bellsouth.net

Dr. Nancy J. Toombs 2014
5213 North Cedar Street
North Little Rock, AR 72116

Tel. (501) 681-3126
chase221@swbell.net

DIRECTORS EMERITUS

Aida Kaye.....Sherman Small
Richard Baynes.....Walter E. Brown, MD
Thomas S. ParsonsJohn Greenwood
John Pearson.....Ivan McKinney

INTERIM 8TH AF NEWS EDITORS

Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines
2090 Cairo Bend Road
Lebanon, TN 37087
Tel: 615-418-1200
Fax: 615-453-2343
donna@neely@gmail.com

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President's Address

Meet Me in St. Louis. I think I speak for all (about 270 total) who met for the October reunion in St. Louis when I say, "A good time was had by all!" The Fall weather was a perfect compliment to the event which reflected thorough planning and organization by the the Board of Directors and Donna Lee with Armed Forces Reunions.

I was voted by the Board to continue as President of the Society for another year with Pat Keeley serving as Vice President. Bob Moses was re-elected for another term, and Earl Wasson, who concluded his term on the Board of Directors was replaced by Joe Garber. I trust this Board of diverse personalities and talents will work together to support and preserve the Society.

With the conclusion of one reunion comes the planning of the next. Be sure to mark the first week of October on your 2012 calendar for the 38th Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion to be held in San Antonio, Texas. Details

will be forthcoming in the future magazines. I plan to incorporate additional informative sessions, in this reunion schedule and will be soliciting your ideas and assistance with this.

As the holiday season approaches and 2011 draws to a close, Lorene and I wish all of you and your family safe, healthy, and happy days and celebrations. God Bless the "Mighty Eighth".



Sincerely,
Harry Tanner
President 8th AFHS

Harry Tanner
President



IMPORTANT NOTICE

Dues Change Status 2012/2013



Darrel Lowell
Treasurer

As we reported to our membership during the General Membership Meeting in St Louis, our society has been witnessing serious financial difficulties during the last few years. The reason for our problem is the result of our dwindling membership resulting in our annual income falling drastically short of covering our annual operating expense.

During our Board meeting in St Louis we discussed this situation at great length and considered a variety of possible solutions. The decision made by the Board was, that in order to ensure the liquidity of the Society on a long term basis, starting in 2013, we must require our Life Members to pay annual dues.

This was a difficult decision to make but due to the serious nature of our current financial circumstances it was the only responsible action to take to extend the life of the Organization. Basically as of today's date we have approximately 4000 total members, 2000 regular dues paying and 2000 Life members' non-paying dues.

Dues are the main source of revenue for the Society and we felt it un-fair to require about one half of our membership to carry the full financial burden of operating the organization. It was determined that a change in Life Membership status would require a modification to our existing by-laws. This change will appear in the March/June 2012 issue of the

8th AFNews. We encourage our members to read this revision, as the membership will vote on approving this revision at the San Antonio, Texas, reunion in October 2012.

The change in our By-Laws will require Life Members along with Regular Members to pay annual dues. If approved, this adjustment will be reflected in our Dues insert invoice which will appear in the September 2012 issue of the *AF News* magazine and will cover the calendar year 2013.

In order to meet our immediate financial needs, the Board passed a resolution to increase our annual dues from \$30.00 to \$40.00, during our St Louis Board meeting. This dues increase will be covered in our dues insert invoice appearing in this December 2011 issue of the *8th AFNews* and will cover the period of calendar year 2012. In the same insert we are asking all "Life Members" to contribute at least \$40.00 during 2012 to help the Society address our immediate cash flow problems.

We hope that this adjustment in our dues format is not too confusing and should you have any questions, or require clarification, please contact either our Membership Manager at our Pooler office, myself, any Society Officer or Director. Your support for the Society and the Mission that we have undertaken of perpetration the memory of our military personnel is deeply appreciated.

Darrel Lowell
Treasurer 8th Air force Historical Society

Behind the Scenes



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

Telisha and I have stepped in as your "Interim Editors" and would like to request everything be sent to us via email or to our address listed on this page.

We are trying to request that ALL material be sent to us, one month before each magazine is ready for print.

So please notice the **DEADLINE DATES**. **FEBRUARY 1, 2012** will be the deadline for the 2012 March 8th AF News Magazine

We are honored to publish your 8th Air Force News National Magazine. We will do everything in our power, to NOT let you down.

I want to thank everyone who stepped up to the plate and helped us with additional material for this issue!! You have been a lifesaver.

Below is a sneak peek of what you will find in this 2011 December issue

★ Darrel Lowell has some very important DUES change notice on page 3.

★ Bob Books has some great 8th AFHS Christmas gift Ideas on page 6

★ Earl Wassom's REFLECTIONS of the Candle Lighting Ceremony during the 2011 37th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion on page 7 and photos of the reunion in the following pages.

★ A nice Christmas story on page 16.

★ A Journey to Rattleston on page 22

★ A nice history of the Memphis Belle on page 26.

Merry Christmas and safe holidays!

**Sincerely,
Behind the Scenes Team
Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines**



**SEND ALL MAIL
AND/OR
EMAIL TO:**

Interim Editors

Donna Neely

Telisha Gaines

2090 Cairo Bend Road

Lebanon, TN 37087

Tel: (615) 418-1200

Fax: (615) 453-2343

donnajneely@gmail.com

★ **2012 March DEADLINE** ★

★ **February 1st, 2012** ★

**for the upcoming 2012 March
8th AF News**



38TH ANNUAL 8TH AFHS REUNION IS SET SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS - October 3-7, 2012

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. was happy to be involved in the planning of the 2011 Annual 8th

AFHS Reunion, and I especially, was happy to be with you in St. Louis. Plans are already underway for the 2012 reunion in San Antonio. Official dates are October 3-7, and the reunion will be held at the Crowne Plaza Riverwalk. I hope to see you there! See future issues for more details. Best wishes for happy and healthy holiday season!



**Donna Lee
Armed Forces
Reunions, Inc.**





Samantha Reid • 8th AFHS • Box 956 • Pooler, GA 31322

Call: 912.748.8884

Email: membershipmanager@8thafhs.org



My first reunion was a great trip. I was able to connect with members that I speak with over the phone on a weekly basis, and meet their loved ones. This part of the job is so fulfilling to me. It's not only amazing to see the camaraderie between the veterans but to witness them talking about their glory days is truly heart-warming. I'm so thrilled and honored to be part of this organization to serve those who have accomplished so much for our country. You have paved the way for servicemen like my husband who choose to serve and carry the legacy that you so bravely forged.

As I write this article today, it is Veterans' Day 2011. I'm feeling a bit nostalgic and thankful for my freedom. Today I witnessed a seven year old boy and his grandpa in my office to ask for a magazine. I gave him a copy of every issue for the past year. He was so proud to be at the museum to spend the day with his grandpa. His plan is to make a collage of all the air-

plane photos from the magazines to decorate his room. Grandpa was beaming with joy. Here's our Next Generation!

This December issue includes the 2012 DUES NOTICE insert. Please take the time to fill this out, mail back to me and keep your membership going. Also remember that the 8TH AF NEWS is a great holiday gift that helps keep the legacy alive.



Samantha Litton Reid

Here's to a wonderful holiday season to all.

**Samantha Reid - Membership Records Manager
8th Air Force Historical Society**

Chapter/Unit/Group Liaison Report



Pat Keeley

Greetings my fellow **Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society** members. I hope this finds everyone well. The 37th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion was held this past October 11 – 16 in St. Louis with over 70 WWII 8th Veterans attending and a strong NexGen turnout. It was good meeting everyone there. Several bomb groups and chapters were represented and "YES" we had a representative of the 78th FG.

The Unit Advisory and Chapter & Unit Dev. meeting was Thursday, October 13 from 8:30 – 10:00 am. we had 18 attending from various groups and chapters. It was encouraging to have first time chapters & groups represented.

Some of what was discussed was:

- a)** The Society's By-Laws that state 'No person may be a chapter member who is not a paid-up member of the 8AFHS' from Article X111-Chapter Paragraph A.
- b)** The notification to new society members that if their state does have an active chapter they are updated with a contact info and also the same pertaining to Bomb & Fighter Groups.
- c)** A National website that allows each chapter/group to post information about their local chapter happenings. I am the contact person regarding this and feel free to post this information on the Society's website under the "Events Tab".
- d)** The Society does have a YouTube page of which I am the point of contact.
- e)** A POC where we can send press releases, about our chapters that can in turn pass them onto national press contacts, so we can get more publicity/news about our organization.

This is a great idea and requires suggestions and work. If anyone has ideas to help implement this, please contact me

f) The Society's facebook page which currently has 827 members was launched by Mike Failey BOD.

g) Matching chapter rosters with the Society's State roster

h) A DVD about the 8th, the 8th AF Historical Society and it's Chapters/Groups.

i) Utilizing Skype so the Society can host quarterly chapters/groups meetings to update and promote each other. After this is implemented, I will contact the chapters/groups that I have listed on the Society's website. If interested, please contact me.

Again, I want to thank the NexGen members who are the Society's strongest assets in moving forward and "Keep the Memories Alive". I am happy to report that I have seen quite a few new NexGen and renewed members continuing to come onboard. I compel them to also join their local chapters and/or their fathers/uncles bomb groups.

Question:

Do you know of any crew members or their relatives from the 385th BG B-17 "Star Dust"? If so, please contact me

The 8th Air Force will never be forgotten.

If you have any comments or ideas on how the **Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society** can improve and move forward my contact information is posted on the inside front cover of this 2011 December magazine.

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

3 GREAT CHRISTMAS IDEAS

DID YOU MISS ONE OF THE LAST REUNIONS?

Get the symposium and keynote speaker on DVDs from the 8thAFHS. \$30 each year contains 2 DVDs. Price includes shipping and handling

2007 – SYMPOSIUM: “The Big B” A historical analysis of the air raids over Berlin in early 1944.

Keynote Speaker: Jonna Doolittle Hoppes, Granddaughter of General Jimmy Doolittle, Commander, 8th AF 1944 – 1945

2008 – SYMPOSIUM: “Keep them flying” The story of the 8th Air Force ground operations during WWII.

Keynote Speaker: Maj. Gen. F Dexter Tutor, Assistant to the Commander Air Mobility Command Air National Guard.

2009 – SYMPOSIUM: POW’s - A discussion of treatment of airmen interned in Germany.

Keynote Speaker: Gil Cohen, Aviation Artist

2010 – THUNDER OVER MICHIGAN AIR SHOW

Seminar: “Target Berlin” with Mark Copeland.



8thAFHS,
P.O. Box 956,
Pooler, GA 31322
615.912.748.8884
www.8thafhs.org



Th 8th AF NEWS on CD's

ORDER your 2005 – 2011 of 8TH AF NEWS past issues of the 8thAF News on CD's.

Each CD contains one year, four issues in high resolution PDF format. Only \$20 each year includes shipping and handling.

START ENGINES - 50 YEARS LATER

Review By: Chip Dobson, Wing Commander, South Alabama Wing and Vice President, Alabama.

This DVD, originally produced in 1991 by the Society, is an overview of the history and operations of the 8th Air Force during World War II.

This film narrative is packed with remarkable interviews of more than three dozen 8th AF Veterans. Some of these airmen are legendary leaders and icons of the Mighty Eighth.



They share their insight and recollections of the most significant experiences of their lives. The accounts are interspersed with vintage photographs and sometimes frightening film footage that graphically illustrates the savagery of aerial combat.

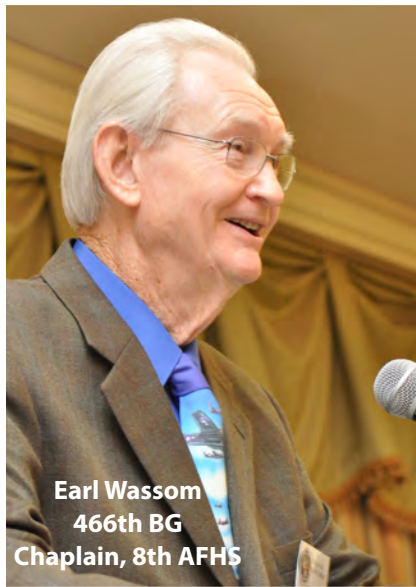
Their vivid and dramatic testimony will evoke the trepidation of the viewer, as if vicariously accompanying the aircrews on those dangerous missions over enemy territory. \$20 Includes shipping and handling



8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 37TH ANNUAL REUNION - PHOTO ALBUM



REFLECTIONS



Earl Wassom
466th BG
Chaplain, 8th AFHS

During the final reunion event, the 8th AFHS Gala Banquet held in St. Louis, over two hundred seventy Veterans, their families, and visitors gathered to

celebrate the 37th Annual Reunion. The colors were presented by a fine cadre of Junior ROTC Cadets, this colorful ceremony was immediately followed by the traditional candle-lighting ceremony. Those present responded to the genuinely solemn occasion which was also laced at times with a bit of humor. This piece is directed to the hundreds of Veterans, their children and grandchildren, visitors and friends from abroad who were unable to attend. It is our desire that the thoughts and spirit of this occasion can be passed on and shared with this audience.

The men born in the 1920 's who were called upon by their country have been identified as the **Children of the Recession, the Dust Bowl Kids**, and later, **the Greatest Generation**. These are titles bestowed by others and not of ourselves. We who are here were destined to be a part of the Eighth Air Force. In January of 1942, this fledgling organi-

zation began in Savannah, Georgia with only a hand-full of men. On May of that same year, 39 officers and 384 enlisted men went to England as the first contingent. They had no air bases, no aircraft, no intelligence operations, meteorological or communicational support or logistical team yet this was the beginning of its existence. In 40 months, the Mighty Eighth emerged. There were 129 airfields, 350,000 airmen and support troops, and thousands of aircraft. There was also a tremendous cost involved. The candles lighted represent those who took part in this great liberation endeavor.

PURPLE CANDLE:

THOSE WHO DIED IN BATTLE. 28,000 men of the 8th Air Force have paid the supreme sacrifice and have grave stones or their names inscribed at the Memorial in Madingley in England, also those interred at memorials located in the



Front L-R: Bob Books, Darrel Lowell, Dr. Nancy Toombs, Bill Toombs, LTC Warren Griggs.
Back center: Earl Wassom

Nancy and her father, Bill Toombs



Darrel Lowell



LTC Warren Griggs



Ardennes, Brittany, Epinal, Henri-Chappell, Lorraine, Netherlands, (all on the European Continent) and North African Cemeteries. *Lighting the candle was Bob Books, Gold Star Son of 392nd Bomb Group pilot Dallas Books, KIA March 18, 1944.*

WHITE CANDLE:

VETERANS WHO HAVE DIED SINCE THE END OF THE WAR .

Once the 8th AFHS numbered 25,000 members, now our figures are much lower. This group has organized, built libraries, museums and memorials but as the poet has expressed, "the pruning knife of time" has been dwindling our ranks. There are vacant seats here tonight. Friends we saw last year are gone and we miss them. *Lighting the candle was Darrel Lowell, a 'Cold War' veteran pilot who flew a B-47 loaded with an A Bomb with a predetermined target to attack if called upon.*

BLUE CANDLE:

OUR ALLIES. The continent of Europe had been overrun with Nazi military forces, the Battle of Britain was raging, the Battle for control of the Atlantic Ocean was in full swing, Britain was on its knees, "Winnie" Sir. Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister, rallied and united the Brits, the Poles, the Dutch, the Belgium, the French, into a fighting coalition and England held on. A candle was lighted to honor and respect our intrepid allies. *Lighting the candle was Dr. Nancy Toombs, daughter of a Veteran of the 493rd Bomb Group and a member of the Board of Directors of the 8th AFHS.*

IVORY CANDLE:

OUR VETERANS NOW LIVING. Over 75 veterans were present, many others couldn't come, health being one deterrent, but they were here in Spirit. One expressed his gratitude to God when he said, "I still have my eyesight and my mind but the rest of my body is not working very well so I probably will not be making any more reunions." What a great attitude! A good formula to follow, "This is the day the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it." *Lighting the candle was Bill Toombs, flight engineer in the 493rd Bomb Group, flew 28 missions, was shot down over enemy lines, all evaded, every crew member survived.*

RED CANDLE:

MEN & WOMEN NOW SERVING IN THE MILITARY. One percent of our country is serving our nation in the armed forces. Every American enjoys freedom because of their sacrifice. Wars are never ending but fortunately, our young and bright youth step forward to volunteer and serve. They are called to serve in "harm's way" and do so without question. *This candle was lighted in respect, gratitude and honor by LTC Warren Griggs, active duty in the Army for 24 years, has recently been deployed in Operation Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom.*

The ceremony ended. There were lots of affection and 'bear hugs' demonstrated. Even the lovable "Winnie the Pooh" got recognized!



Brad Chase with his dad, Russ



Donna Lee at 8th AFHS registration desk



466th BG buddies, Elmo Maiden and Ralph Lynn.



Tom Marr & author, Charles Hamlin



8th AFHS Vice-President, Pat Keeley & 8th AFHS President, Harry Tanner



David Nowack, Beverly Tomb, Frank Youngquist & George Hoidra



Nancy Toombs and her Dad, Bill Toombs



St. Louis Strutters

8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Gus Nathan
with Andrea
& Pat Keeley



Mike Faley, George Hoidra, and others
taking a break.

2011 8th Air Force Reunion Activities



Honor Guard



Em Christianson &
Gus Nathan



Russell Chase, Josie Navarro & Lee Faulkner

37TH ANNUAL REUNION - PHOTO ALBUM



**8th AFHS President
Harry Tanner**



Tom Gagnon



**Back - Joe Lawrence,
Front - Al Sadowsky, 8th
AFHS Membership Man-
ager - Samantha Reid &
Larry Goldstein**



**Bill Curtis interviewing
Veteran, Russ Chase**



Viewing DVD's

8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY Meetings and Fellowship



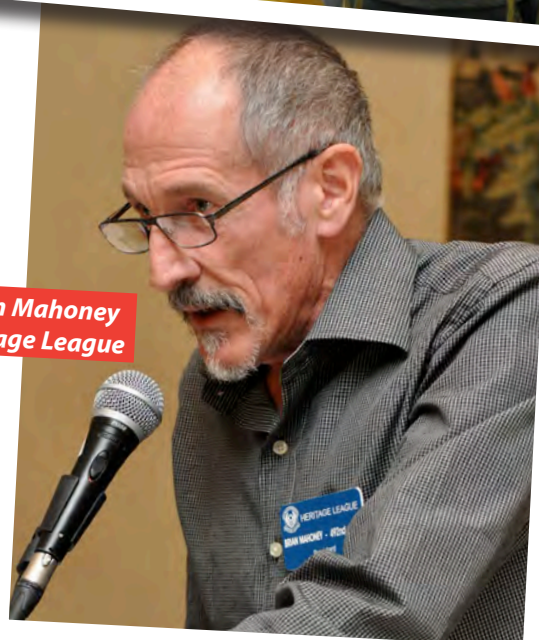
The King Family



Heritage League



*Brian Mahoney
Heritage League*





The 8th AFHS Board of Directors
Harry Tanner, Bob Moses, Dr. Nancy Toombs, Darrel Lowell, Joe Garber (newly elected), David Nowack, Joseph (Pat) Keeley. Pictured below: Michael Faley and George Hoidra



**Photographer
 Ralph Lynn, capturing
 the moment**



**Harold & Nancy
 Davis**

8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



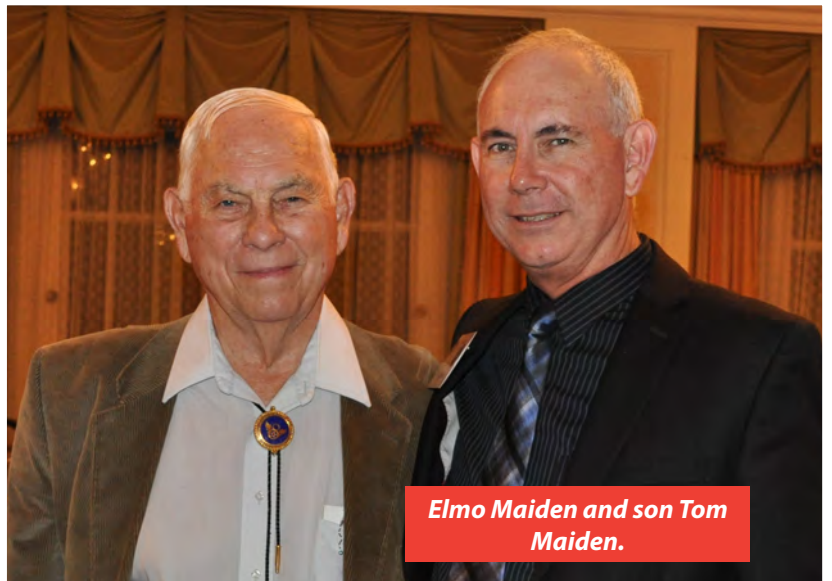
2011 8th Air Force Reunion Fellowship with Family & Friends



**Joseph Roundhill
addressing the Board**



**Tom Perry & Harry
Tanner 392nd BG**



**Elmo Maiden and son Tom
Maiden.**

37TH ANNUAL REUNION - PHOTO ALBUM



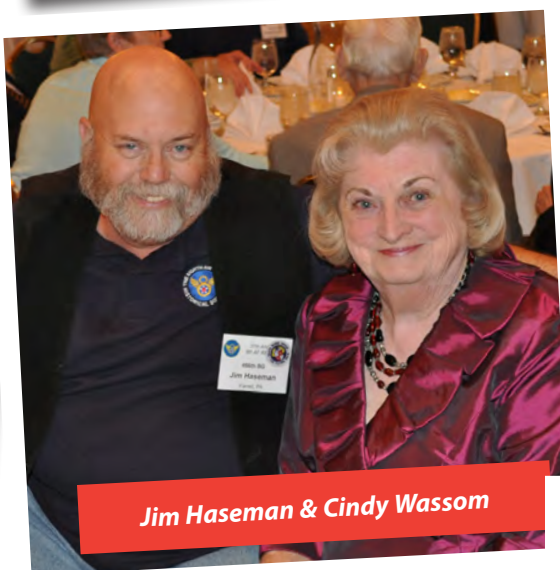
**Mr. & Mrs. Manner Ferguson,
daughter of Bucky Walters.**



Marlene & Arnold Kushner



Lorene & Harry Tanner



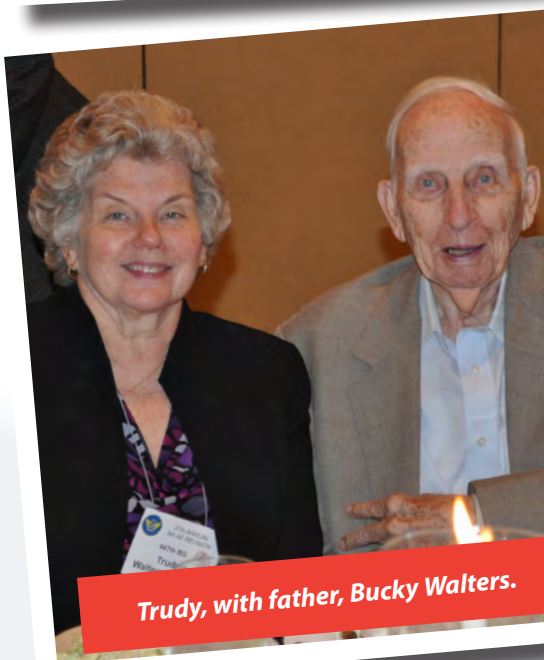
Jim Haseman & Cindy Wassom



Fred & Margie Davis



Frank & Barbara Youngquist



Trudy, with father, Bucky Walters.



**Bill Campbell & Leslie
Shamrock**



Rhoda and Herb Leopold.

A CHRISTMAS NOTE HIGH OVER THE SKIES OF GERMANY

Submitted by, T/Sgt Daniel D. Freitas

Radio Operator - 401 Bombardment Group/615 Bombardment Squadron - Deenethrope, England



T/Sgt Daniel D. Freitas

My most memorable mission was on December 24, 1944, Christmas Eve. Northern Europe and Britain were experiencing the worst winter in decades. The 8th AF put over 2000 bombers and over 800 fighters. The largest air armada in the history of aviation. We were sweeping snow off the wings of our B-17's and taking off from ice coated runways.

The Germans had made a last ditch effort to turn the tide of the war and to sue for more reasonable surrender terms.

Rumstedt opened a counter-offensive on Belgium and Luxembourg fronts in the Ardennes. Bastogne was under siege we were to bomb the area around Bastogne known as the Bulge. Many of you know it as the "Battle of the Bulge".

Our target was an airfield in Koblenz, Germany. We were loaded with 2,780 gallons of aviation fuel and we carried 12,500 lb. incendiary bombs. We used maximum power and all of the runway for sustained lift off.

This was to be a maximum effort and our group had 48 aircraft airborne. The 401st furnished a complete 36 aircraft group for the 94th "B" formation lead by 1st Lt. M. J. Christensen. I was taking part in the making of history.

Hundreds of aircraft stretched over the skies for hundreds of miles as far as the eye could see. This mighty air fleet was in strike contrast to the 12 bombers which attacked Rousen, France on 17 Aug 42 on the first mission of the Eighth.

Little did I know that an Air Force airfield in my home state of Atwater, California would be named after General Frederick W. Castle the Air Leader of this large air armada. It was his heroic action to take control of his stricken Fortress to give his crew a chance to parachute to safety (bail out) that would earn him posthumously, our country's highest honor for bravery.

We climbed through overcast to the group assembly area over our assigned designated Bucher (splasher beacon). We located the colored flares of our squadron and positioned ourselves to our assigned position within the squadron until the squadron and group was formed and then flew to our 94th combat wing assembly point.

We made our usual oxygen mask checks and at 10 miles off the English coast switched off the IFF unit (identification Friend of Foe). In mid-Channel, our gunners test fired their guns.

I settled into my routine as radio operator as we reached the Division stream. We were on our way to our assigned target and I was monitoring the assigned radio frequencies given to me at the radio operator's briefing. As I mentioned earlier, there was always static on the Liason receiver and it took my full attention and concentration to monitor and copy radio Morse code from these frequencies.

As we approached the flak areas I put on my flak helmet and vest over my Mae West life preserver vest. I made sure my parachute which was on the floor next to my chair, was attached to the parachute location strap and fastened to my parachute harness. I kept extra flak vests on the floor for additional protection.

Our intercom was working intermittently but I could hear some talk about engine problems. I was too busy monitoring my frequencies to be aware that two of our engines were running very rough. As we approached the IP point,

Sweeping snow off the wings of a B-17



when the Bombardier takes control of the aircraft, our pilot 2nd Lt. John D. Gerber, feathered engine number one.

As we began the bomb run we were engaged for about 27 minutes with moderate but accurate flak. This caused battle damage to 22 aircraft and wounded two crew members of our Bomb Group. We observed 6 to 8 Luftwaffe jet aircraft identified as ME-262 and called the Schwalbe, which circled our formation.

When we reached the IP point, I turned on the bomb strike camera. I began the task of discharging silver colored chaff into the special chaff paper dispensing chute in the room. Chaff is tin foil paper strips that reflect radar beams and reduce the accuracy of radar data used by the flak gunners when discharged and dispersed by the slip stream of the aircraft. I had several boxes of chaff to discharge.

I had to be careful working because of the heavy flak suit and because the oxygen mask I had on had a tendency to pull away from my face if the oxygen hose was stretched too far. The lack of oxygen would cause one to become unconscious in a few minutes and death in as little as 20 minutes.

I could hear, over the intercom, the concerns of the crew about the flak and the jet fighters. I was scared but kept on opening boxes of chaff and discharging the chaff bundles down the special chaff paper dispensing chute I could hear the noise of the flak bursting around our aircraft and I was saying my usual prayers on the bomb run.

While opening one of the boxes of chaff I found a large piece of silver chaff paper with a hand written note on the back side of the paper. Among the silver chaff, it was like a note inside of a Christmas card.

Time seemed like an eternity as I read the note on the chaff paper. The noise of the flak and my fears seemed to disappear completely as I read over each word. This note was meant for me.

*If you've no Girl Friend to care where you roam
And if you've no Wife sitting waiting at home
If you'd care for a pen friend, then now is the time
To sit down and write Joy and Winnie a line*

*Miss Win Bevan
106 Eversly Ave.
Barnehurst
Kent, England*

*Miss Joy Chaplin
26 Hurst Rd.
Erith
Kent, England*

I was thinking about these girls as I resumed my task of sliding the silver chaff bundles into the special dispensing chute. However, I was beginning to wonder if I was going to be able to write Win or Joy a line. We had dropped our bombs, were losing altitude and our B-17G, Flying Fortress, was moving down and away from the formation.

We were flying alone and losing altitude. Our pilot, 2nd Lt. John D. Gerber, ordered use to jettison all the loose equipment. We jettisoned all the loose equipment from the waste and radio room.

Our radar equipment, Gee Box, was inoperative and our intercom was working intermittently. We were flying on three engines with one engine running on a prayer. We had the utmost confidence in our pilots and we knew our navigator could plot a course to our base at Deenethrope or to an emergency landing in England, but we were still worried.

As we approached the North Sea I was able to contact Air Sea Rescue by Morse code. We were tracked across the North Sea by ASR without having to ditch in the Sea and our IFF unit indicated that we were a friendly aircraft.

We were low on gasoline. Hundreds of aircraft were returning from their missions and many were trying to find airfields to land on.

The inclement weather and poor visibility, "due to fog," made a landing very hazardous. Would we have an air collision or crash on the ground was one of my thoughts.

Over the Wash area of England about ten miles from the coast we finally made an emergency landing at a Royal Air

Force Base. We landed at Great Massingham with little or no gasoline. We really sweated out this 9 1/2 hour mission but we were happy to be on the ground safely.

We were met by RAF ground crew of the 169 Squadron which flew the famous Mosquito fighter airplanes. We were taken to briefing, assigned places to billet in crowded conditions and shared English chow with our RAF partners.

We spent Christmas Eve and Christmas with the RAF and WAAF's, the women's branch of the RAF. They gladly shared their candy and cigarettes with us. We had a lot of fun learning about each others ways over mild and bitters, singing and dancing. I learned that the British have a wonderful way of celebrating Christmas.

We took a six hour ride in the back of a truck to Deenethrope. When I got back to our base I wrote Win and Joy a letter. My letters were so badly censored the girls thought I was stationed in Italy. We were never able to arrange a meeting.

I still have that chaff note from Win and Joy. The three of us never met but I still have the memory of the time two English girls made the fierce air war momentarily stop for me one Christmas Eve high over the skies of Germany.



Daniel D. Freitas

Former 8th Air Force Fighter Pilot Flying Again 40 Years Later (89)

Submitted by WWII Fighter Pilot - Victor M. Hernandez
352nd Fighter Squadron/353rd Fighter Group



Victor Hernandez strapped his 6-year-old great granddaughter, Emma Kate, into his small aircraft, lifted off under clear skies from Rockledge Airpark and soared over central Brevard County recently. Great granddaughter Christian Grace, 8, followed, as have other relatives since.

At 89 - an age at which some people would consider giving up driving - Hernandez, a retired Air Force pilot, bought a light sports aircraft, took a refresher course and began flying again after retiring from the military more than 40 years

ago. He hadn't flown in as many years.

"I fly about twice a week," said Hernandez, who served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. "I fly for pleasure, so I only fly when the weather is good."

Emma Kate and Christian Grace's father, Mike Brady, said that he and his wife, Anne, were a little apprehensive about their girls flying for the first time with their great grandfather. But in time, they had all flown with him. After the first flight, the children were ready to go up again. "It was fun," Christian said. Said Emma: "Everything looked so tiny."

Hernandez nicknamed his small aircraft "Boliche," a term from his native Puerto Rico referring to the small pieces that are cut off the ends of a cigar after they are hand-rolled.

Commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1942, Hernandez has extensive flying experience. He flew the P-47 Thunderbolt, escorting B-17 bombers in Europe during World War II. Later he flew the longer-range P-51 fighter. He was flying the P-51 when the plane lost coolant, forcing him to parachute. He was captured and held prisoner by the Germans for five and a half months before being liberated.

He returned from war in 1945 and went back to Louisiana State University. A few years later, he returned to flying when he was recalled to the military and sent to the Korean War. He also went on to serve in Vietnam. Hernandez retired in 1970 as a colonel from the Air Force after 27 1/2 years of service.

Hernandez said he was surprised and happy that his children support his return to flying. He said he studied and was checked out thoroughly by a flight instructor before flying his new plane.

"You have to plan ahead of time for any emergencies," he said. "When I'm fly-



ing, I'm always thinking, if this airplane quit, where am I going to land." Hernandez said he is thrilled to be back in the air.

"When I get up there, I just look and admire the scenery," he said. "If it is bumpy, I come back and land. I just do it for fun."

Victor M. Hernandez
352nd Fighter Squadron,
353rd Fighter Group
1474 Goldrush Avenue
Melbourne, FL 32940
321-757-3903



Book Reviews

NEBRASKA'S FATAL AIR CRASHES OF WWII

By JERRY PENRY

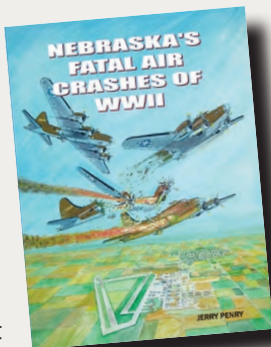
Hardcover, 320 pages

\$42.95 \$34.36 + \$4.00 shipping

This book details the 60 WWII fatal air crash sites in Nebraska that claimed the lives of 243 airmen. Aviation author Jerry Penry of Milford, Nebraska, spent years compiling this detailed information. Each site was researched from the military accident reports, archived newspaper articles, interviewing eyewitnesses, and by visiting each crash site. The author traveled thousands of miles to interview nearly 300 people to compile this information. Many eyewitnesses to these crash sites have passed away since being interviewed, making this research invaluable. Their first-hand stories were compiled before they were lost to time.

This large book is hardbound with 320 pages. There are 132 photos, 57 maps, and 14 other diagrams or illustrations. This work is complete with individual maps showing the exact location of each crash, the locations of Nebraska's army airfields, and the locations of the practice bombing and gunnery ranges as they existed during WWII. The book includes an appendix listing the names and hometowns of all 243 airmen who were killed, statistical information about the crashes, reference sources, and an index.

Now in 2nd and final printing.



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Bells of Hell - Poems

By Marvin Silbersher

8 1/2 x 11 Full Color

114 pages 85 Photos 31 Poems

In the words of Mrs. Anna Lewis, Marvin's grammar school teacher, "Poetry tells a story, where truth and beauty join in a garment indivisible."

Marvin's book was inspired by our past Editor Walter E. Brown "In Memoriam", I wish to express my profound gratitude to the late beloved editor of the 8th Air Force News, Dr. Walter E. Brown. It was Walt's suggestion to me that there should be a book of poems in the works. I've been submitting poetry to the 8th Air Force News magazine for years and now... here it is Dr. Walter Brown.



Marvin Silbersher
Crew #80 ("Blithe Spirit")
Radio-Operator-Gunner
711th Squadron
447th Bomb Group
3rd Division
8th Air Force

For more information

Contact:

Marvin Silbersher

973-663-2445

P.O. Box 703,

Lake Hopatcong, NJ

07849

marvinsilbersher@

yahoo.com

or

Donna Neely

2090 Cairo Bend Road

Lebanon, TN 37087

donnajneely@gmail.com

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\$25.00 includes shipping and handling.

Hell Above Earth

by Stephen Frater

The Incredible True Story of an American WWII Bomber Commander and the Copilot Ordered to Kill Him

Hardcover: 320 pages

St. Martin's Press (March 13, 2012)

ISBN-10: 0312617925

ISBN-13: 978-0312617929

Available on iPhone, iPad or iPod touch.

Hell Above Earth tells an unforgettable story of two World War II American bomber pilots who forged an unexpected but enduring bond in the flak-filled skies over Nazi Germany. But there's a twist: one of them was related to the head of the Luftwaffe, Reich Marshal Herman Goering, and the other had secret orders from FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, to kill him if anything went wrong during their missions. A heart-wrenching Greatest Generation buddy story, an adrenaline-filled account of aerial combat and a work of popular history, *Hell Above Earth* centers around the author's discovery of a half-century old secret that has far-reaching and deeply personal repercussions for the pilots, and profound consequences for the FBI and the "Mighty" Eighth Air Force.



"They left the Old World, and went to the New,
Came to a town where the river ran through,
Farms and fields and trees, past troubled seas,
A place like the Garden of Eden, they said,
By the labor of your hands, you earned your daily bread.
Between the Watchung Hill and the South Mountain,
Waters flowed as a crystal fountain, and Washington saw
The patriots of the Revolutionary War, turn back the British...
Where...now...stands...this...very...schoolhouse..door."

By Marvin Silbersher

Back From Combat A World War II Bombardier Faces His Military Future By Charles N. Stevens

AuthorHouse

ISBN 9781463442675

264 pages



His combat tour over, a survivor of thirty-four bombing missions as an 8th Air Force bombardier, Charles "Norm" Stevens wonders what he will do next. He would have his 30-day furlough, but that will pass quickly. What then? Having endured the hell of his bombing missions, he has no desire to sign up for another tour. Even though the Allies are gaining on all fronts, the war still rages, and he is still on active duty in the Army Air Corps. He is a trained bombardier who will continue his military service. But in what capacity? Turning down the

option of being an instructor, he volunteers for training as a radar bombardier. But where would this lead him? He sees himself slowly being drawn into the Pacific War as a radar bombardier on a B-29 Superfortress. It is a gamble. Would the war end or would he find himself again in hostile skies? Stevens previously wrote about his cadet and crew training in *The Innocent Cadet* and his combat experiences in *An Innocent at Polebrook: Memoir of an 8th Air Force Bombardier*. This volume completes his military experience.

Charles N. Stevens, or Norm as his friends call him, grew up in Inglewood, California. At 18 he joined the Army Air Corps. He entered in 1943 and was discharged after the war in October 1945. He served as a bombardier on a B-17 in the 8th Air Force, 351st Bomb Group, at Polebrook, England during the summer and early fall of 1944. He finished his tour of duty, completing 34 bombing missions over Germany and occupied France, Belgium and Holland. He wrote extensively about his combat experiences in his previous book, *An Innocent*

at Polebrook: A Memoir of an 8th Air Force Bombardier published in 2004. His second book was a prequel detailing his year of training before going overseas, *The Innocent Cadet: Becoming a World War II Bombardier*, published in 2008. After returning from overseas he trained as a radar bombardier at Langley Field, Virginia and Williams Field, Arizona. He was to be assigned to a B-29 crew for duty in the Pacific when the war ended. Following the war he enrolled at the University of California at Los Angeles, graduating with a BA in psychology. After a series of graduate courses he earned his teaching credential. Over a span of 32 years he taught science and mathematics in junior high schools and English and American Literature in high school. While teaching he earned a master's degree in English at California State College at Los Angeles. He retired in 1984 and has lived a life of reading, writing, traveling and being a grandfather. He lives with his wife, Dolores Seidman, in Monterey Park, California where they have resided for 40 years.

Hap Chandler's Love for Scotland



On December 24, 1944, I returned to the 491st BG at North Pickenham from flak leave in Scotland. I must have been the only air crew member on the ground as every flyable airplane (sixty) was in the air heading for close support to our beleaguered ground troops in the "Bulge". The sky was (for England) usually clear. In fact, I recall that it was completely clear when the bombers began to take off and form.

By the time the Mighty Eighth had assembled and begun its flight to targets in support of the ground troops, the sky was completely overcast. This was the result of the contrails from the 2,000 bombers dispatched that day.

The mission was successful except for the lead ship, which was attacked by German jets and shot down.

The heroic actions of General Fred Castle earned him the "Medal of Honor", but he died in the crash of his B-17, the last "Medal of Honor" awarded to an 8th AF crew member.

As for the 491st BG, its planes returned without a loss and reported hits on their targets.

History records, that on this day, the German offensive stalled and the defeat

of Germany became inevitable. As for me, I was but a bystander at the mightiest effort of the 8th. However, I had enjoyed my respite from combat, after 21 missions and came to love Scotland. In fact, I would return in March after completing 35 missions and find the girl that I came to love and later marry. She left us a number of years ago with a legacy of devotion and service. We miss her as we miss all those fine young men who gave their lives in the Air War over Germany.

Farish "HAP" Chandler
489/491 BG Navigator
farishchandler@me.com

*A Proud Trustee of the
Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum*

"City of Savannah"

Birthplace Chapter monthly dinner meeting, October 18, 2011, attended by 96 people, heard Jerry McLaughlin, our B-17 Restoration Project Manager, review progress of the task. Jerry's service at the Museum started in 2005 as an archivist, after retirement from the CIA. He authored a book, "D-Day + 60 Years", the story of his 20 years of research to discover the circumstances of his uncle's death in Normandy on D-Day.

Jerry, with little knowledge of what was ahead, was appointed as Project Manager in January 2009 before the aircraft arrived at the Museum from Washington after being in storage for 25 years. After reassembly, cleaning the outside started immediately, followed by polishing, then cleaning and painting the interior.

The fact that the aircraft, City of Savannah, was inside the Museum made the procedures difficult because of needed venting and protection for other exhibits and visitors. Volunteers with expertise from Gulf Stream and LNI Corp., and many others, came forward with suggestions and performed



many of the tasks. The outpouring of volunteers was, and continues to be, amazing.

The restoration project has had great cooperation from the National Museum of the USAF, and from the National B-17 Co-op, including Tommy Garcia, one of their leaders ("Every flying B-17 has Garcia's DNA in it"). The national markings (a donation), and nose art (City of Savannah), gave the B-17 its own personality. Artist Skip Shelton who, as a 19 year old painted aircraft for the 8th in England, was also a B-24 pilot, and now, some 67 years later, painted the nose art on the "City of Savannah". The wood-working that is being accomplished in the Museum, ammo boxes, radio room,

chin turret, ball and tail turrets, has added character to the aircraft. The radio room, restored with WWII equipment, transmits all over the US and worldwide. The first broadcast was to the B-17 at Barksdale.

The balance of the year will see the B-17 Co-op meeting here, a 4th visit by Tommy Garcia, and our second "Flying Fortress 5K Race", benefitting the restoration, organized by Jane Harper, and the official starter, Bud Porter. 2012 and 2013 will see complete nose and tail turret construction, cockpit construction, window installation, crew station equipment installation, as well as extended term maintenance program.

The goal of all the hard working volunteers is to have the aircraft in combat configuration by 3 December, 2013, the 69th anniversary of the day the original B-17 "City of Savannah" departed Hunter Army Airfield for England. We all thank the continuing donors, and the tireless volunteer workers, for their support.

**Submitted by Bob Buck,
Secretary, Birthplace Chapter**



Reunions



The Birthplace Chapter

Savannah, Georgia
Meets 3rd Tuesday at 5:30pm at the
Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum
Pooler, Georgia
www.mighty8thbirthplace.org

446th Bomb Group

May 2-6, 2012
Washington D.C.
Crowne Plaza Tysons Corner
Contact: Beverly Tucker
919-280-1249
b.t@mindspring.com

446th BG 2- Scheduled Reunions

May 2-6, 2012
Washington D.C. Area
Contact: Beverly Turner
Tel. 919-280-1249
May 15-20, 2013
Tucson, AZ
Contact: Bill Davenport,

388th Bomb Group

Savannah, Georgia
August 29-Sept 1
Embassy Suites, Pooler GA

8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 38th ANNUAL REUNION

**San Antonio, Texas.
Details will be in the
next 2012 issues**

351st Bomb Group

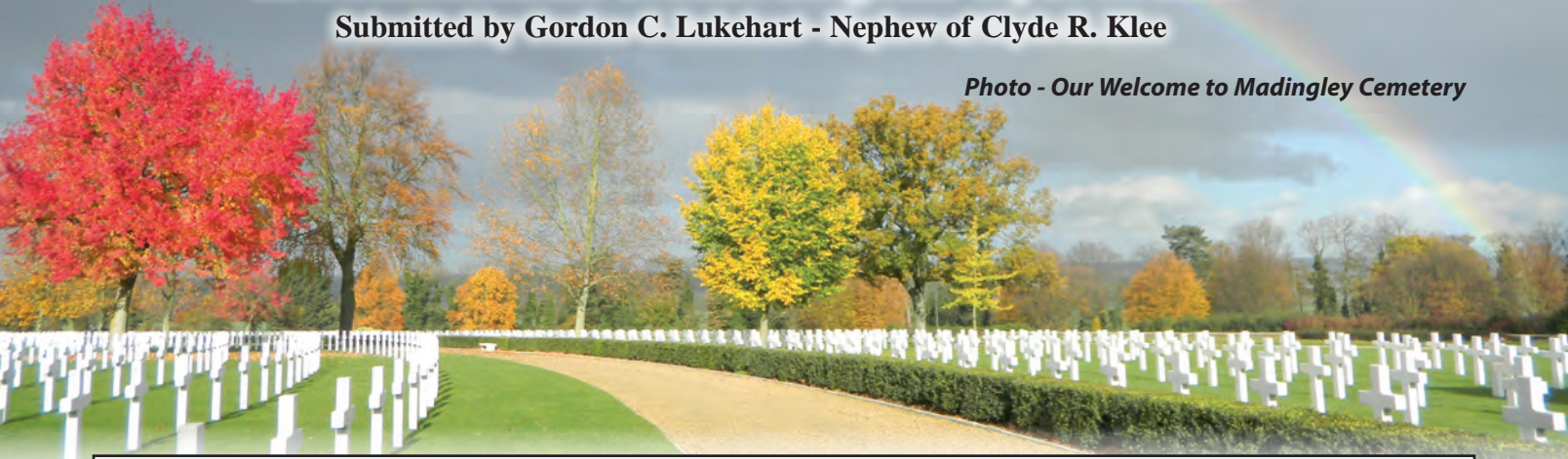
June 14-17, 2012
Holiday Inn Cincinnati Airport
Erlerang, Kentucky

JOURNEY TO RATTLEDSDEN

In Remembrance of Staff Sergeant Clyde R. Klee

Submitted by Gordon C. Lukehart - Nephew of Clyde R. Klee

Photo - Our Welcome to Madingley Cemetery



The seed for this journey was planted in the year 2008. It was then that I learned that my Uncle Clyde Klee had been killed in a WWII mid-air collision involving two United States Army Air Force aircraft. Prior to this time our family had believed that Clyde had been killed in an air battle over the Netherlands while returning to England from a combat mission over Nazi Germany. I learned of the midair collision in a book entitled "One Lucky Bastard" by Lieutenant Colonel Elwyn Warfle. Clyde was a 22 year old radio operator and waist gunner on a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress. The accident took place in the skies near Rattlesden, England on October 2, 1944.



Clyde R. Klee
B-17 Waist gunner/Radio Operator

On the morning of the above date the USAAF Mighty 8th Air Force was assembling several hundred bomber aircraft above England. They were preparing for an assault on an enemy truck factory in Kassel, Germany. As they maneuvered into their designated combat formations they were flying east towards Germany, with the rising sun in their faces. During the difficult, intricate formation maneuvers, two of the bomb-laden and heavily armed Flying Fortresses collided and fell to earth. The aircraft were from the 447th Bombardment Group stationed at Rattlesden Air Field not too distant from Bury Saint Edmunds.

Each of the B-17 Flying Fortresses was manned by 9 crewmen. On this morning, B-17 Serial Number 44-6460, was piloted by 2nd Lieutenant William Wilder from Mississippi. Eight of the crew from this aircraft was killed in the collision. One of the crew, the Bombardier 2nd Lieutenant Elliot Michler from Long Island, New York managed to escape from the stricken aircraft and parachute to safety. The second Flying Fortress, Serial Number 43-43245, was piloted by Captain Clifford Leach from Florida. All 9 of this crew, including my Uncle Clyde, perished in the aftermath of the collision.

During my ensuing investigation I learned of the UK 447th Bombardment Group Association. It was formed in the mid 1980's. The UK 447th Bombardment Group Association is comprised of English gentlemen who were children

living near USAAF airfields during WWII. In their childhood they had befriended American airmen stationed at the USAAF airfields; establishing lifelong bonds. Two of these gentlemen, now in their seventies, are Ernest Osborne and Robin Ransome. As boys on their way to school on the morning of 2 October 1944, they were watching the Flying Fortresses circling and assembling in the sky overhead. Both witnessed the collision of the two 447th Bombardment Group aircraft.

In communications with Ernest and Robin, I learned that members of the UK 447th Bombardment Group Association visit Madingley Cemetery twice a year. Madingley is an American military cemetery near Cambridge. On Memorial Day in May they place a wreath against the wall where the names of American WWII Missing in Action are engraved in stone. The wreath contains red, yellow, white and blue flowers. These are the individual colors of the four squadrons of the 447th Bombardment Group. On Veteran's Day in November, called Remembrance Day in the UK, they return to Madingley Cemetery to honor the 22 airmen from the 447th Bombardment Group who are buried there. My Uncle Clyde Klee and 6 other airmen who perished in the 2 October 1944 accident are included among these 22 young men. At each grave the English gentlemen pause to recite a brief remembrance. A carnation is placed on each grave.

The primary purpose of our journey

was to join the English gentlemen in paying tribute to the young men from the 447th Bombardment Group who are buried at Madingley Cemetery.

Whenever a relative visits Madingley Cemetery, an employee comes to the grave with a jar of sand. The sand is from Omaha Beach in Normandy. The sand is rubbed into the inscriptions on the cross and the excess wiped away with a wet sponge. This enhances the inscriptions for photographs. An American and a British flag are also placed at the grave.



Gordy & Sandy Lukehart with son, Gordon Lukehart III and his son, Brendan Lukehart



Sandy and Gordy Lukehart
We were accompanied on the trip by our son Gordon Lukehart III and his son Brendan Lukehart



UK 447TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP ASSOCIATION

L-R: David Lee, Fred Lee, Roger Watts, Dave Emery, Charles Pryke, George Emmett, Norman Knock, Ernest Osborne. and Robin Ransome.



1943 RATTLEDEN CHRISTMAS PARTY

The American G.I.s put on many functions for the children during the war. Ernest Osborne (UK 447th BG) appears in this photo, lower right.

Note: Ernest Osborne is not an original member of the UK 447th Bombardment Group Association, over the years he has become the mover and shaker of the Group. Ernest schedules the Remembrance Day trips to Maddingley and purchases the carnations. He also schedules the Memorial Day journey to Maddingley and arranges for the placement of a wreath at the MIA Wall.

Ernest also provides all the coordination effort for the veteran reunions at Rattlesden. He also maintains all the records that maintain the group's non-profit status. Robin Ransome is the most active member in providing assistance in all the planning and implementation of the Association's activities.

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Next Generation

Continuing The 8th AF Legacy - by Michael P. Faley

I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all our great veterans, family members, historians, history buffs etc who attended our reunion in St Louis. Your involvement and attendance at the reunion provided many special moments. Those of you who were at the Next Gen meeting on Friday gave us many immediate workable ideas that we could implement as we move forward. Would also like to thank Pat Keeley for chairing the beginning of the meeting while I was on my way from the airport, he is an ace. Now for our updates and suggestions from the NextGen meeting for our general membership:

- We are going to get the contact rosters for both the 34th and 44th Bomb Groups and reach out to the members about coming to future 8th AFHS reunions. Hopefully, they will like this idea and become more involved with the Society. The 34th no longer has reunions and the 44th held their last one this year.

- Pat Keeley talked about educational packages to the Schools. The materials needed to accomplish this still need to be addressed but instead of sending them packages, we should make all the tools available for FREE on our website so a teacher can access the data immediately vs waiting for mail.

- Al Sedowski from the 34th BG asked about Vets going to local High Schools to speak and how this can be accomplished more. Nancy Toombs was very helpful pointing out many schools want you to sign up for possible speaking engagements in your district and others are more open. Suggest anyone interested in doing this; reach out to your local school board.

- Our new Facebook page is currently at 842 members and growing. This has become our new forum and along with our incredible website, helps spread the story of the Mighty Eighth. <http://www.facebook.com/groups/8THAFHS/>

- Frank Youngquest took the opportunity to thank Earl Wassom for starting the NextGen movement. Norma Chesser was also recognized for all the hard work and efforts she has put into the Society and the NextGen.

- Our B-17 brochure initiative is going to continue for 2012. We have added another B-17 to hand out our membership brochure at tour Stops. The Yankee Lady from the Yankee Air Museum in Detroit has graciously agreed to be part of this membership promotion. Also onboard for a 2nd year is The Collings Foundations B-17 Nine-O-Nine, B-24 Witchcraft and P-51. They have requested that we have at least one B-24 and B-17 Vet out at every stop whenever possible to teach people about the Air War. As their tour in 2012 approaches, we will be reaching out to you. The Commemorative Air Forces B-17 Sentimental Journey has included handing out our brochure in all the

classes they conduct on tour guide orientation for their B-17. Finally, The movie "MEMPHIS BELLE" will continue to support our efforts during tour stops and display. Do your part and support these planes when they come through your area.

- Fred Preller (noted historian and webmaster of the Mighty 8th Cross Reference website <http://mighty8thaf.preller.us/>) wanted to know why we do not have one big hospitality room vs all the separate rooms? He feels it would build more camaraderie and open up discussions about events on missions that we have not heard before. I tend to agree. Maybe, we should have a centralized 8thAFHS hospitality room for everyone in conjunction with the individual rooms. Sooner or later, everyone will drift in and the stories would be magic.

- Martha Curtis suggested that when we are out at events we wear something with the 8th AFHS on it. That is free advertising and people tend to come up and ask questions. We can ALL do this! This is free advertising for the Society and your legacy. Wear your hats, shirts, etc proudly.

- Josie Navarro from the 401st BG wanted to know why we did not have Women's sized items in the PX. Good Question! She asked about selling some Women's item shirts at the next reunion.

- Brian Mahoney, Heritage League of the 2nd Air Division President, was joining us for the first time with members of the Heritage League and he encouraged more solidarity between all the B-17 and B-24 Bomb Groups. We should all applaud this sentiment. Brian is passionate about his work and we were honored to have him and his members be a part of our Reunion. We hope he will continue to attend future reunions and help us forge that solidarity. Brian, I am counting on your support!

- We also discussed eliminating the "have to be a member of the Society" to attend next year's reunion. This may encourage more Family members and those interested in the 8th Air Force to attend our reunion. If they have a good time, chances are good they will become members. It may not seem like much, but a \$40 membership fee on top of the costs, matters when you make a decision to attend an event.

This was a very productive meeting with dialogue between Vets, Widows, Family members and Historians alike. It was encouraging to see this exchange of ideas for our Future. Thanks everyone.

Michael P. Faley
Eighth Air Force Historical Society Board of Director

History of The Memphis Belle



The B-17 Flying Fortress "The Memphis Belle" is shown on her way back to the United States June 9, 1943, after successfully completing 25 missions from an airbase in England.

The *Memphis Belle*, a Boeing B-17F Flying Fortress, was one of 12,731 B-17s (heavy bombers) built under the direction of the Boeing Aircraft Company. With a crew of ten, the aircraft was among the first B-17s to retire from active service in the European Theater of Operations. After 25 officially-credited missions, the crew and their lucky mascot, a Scottie dog called Stuka, returned home without major injuries.

The Army Air Force assigned a crew to the aircraft in Bangor, Maine, in September 1942, which they flew to Memphis on a shakedown flight, where it was christened the *Memphis Belle* in honor of the pilot's wartime sweetheart, Miss Margaret Polk. From there they flew to their combat base in Basingstourn, England, north of London.

The aircraft flew in combat from November 7, 1942 to May 19, 1943. Upon completion of these missions, they flew home first to Washington and then to Memphis to visit the real *Memphis Belle*, Margaret Polk. The *Memphis Belle* then toured the country on a 32 city War Bond tour visiting Army Air Force bases, aircraft manufacturers and equipment suppliers to raise public awareness and support.

Margaret Polk was a Memphis resident and a graduate of The Hutchinson School. While a student at Southwestern at Memphis, she dated Robert Morgan prior to his deployment overseas. Bob named his B-17F *Memphis Belle*, in honor of the girl he left behind. For the rest of her life, she lent her presence and her support as the "real" *Memphis belle*.

On May 17, 1987, 44 years after she flew her 25th mission, the *Memphis Belle* Pavilion was dedicated. Nearly 25,000 attended. Seven B-17's, the largest formation since WW II, flew overhead in salute and "bombed" the pavilion with thousands of rose pedals. Margaret Polk and the Belle crew looked on as the crowd cheered thunderously. A fitting tribute to the grandest lady of the sky! The Air Force has declared the Belle a national historic treasure. She will never be flown again! On August 29, 1992 Robert Morgan completed his 27th mission. He married his present wife, Linda, in front of the Belle. Gen. Paul Tibbets, pilot of *Enola Gay*, gave the bride away!

THE 25 COMBAT MISSIONS OF THE B-17 MEMPHIS BELLE

When America entered the war in Europe flying sorties from English bases, the losses were as high as 82%. The war Department set 25 missions as an incentive for a crewman to go home. On 17 May 43 the B-17 *Memphis Belle* and her crew made military history as the first WWII bomber to complete 25 combat missions & return to the United States. They flew the Belle home in June 1943 and for three months flew her to 32 American cities to thank the American people for supporting the war effort.

1942

1. Nov. 7 - Brest, France
2. Nov. 9 - St. Nazaire, France
3. Nov. 17 - St. Nazaire, France
4. Dec. 6 - Lille, France
5. Dec. 20 - Rommily-Sur-Seine

1943

6. Jan. 3 - St. Nazaire, France
7. Jan. 13 - Lille, France
8. Jan. 23 - Lorient, France
9. Feb. 4 - Emden, Germany
10. Feb. 14 - Hamm, Germany
11. Feb. 16 - St. Nazaire, France
12. Feb. 26 - Wilhelmshaven, Germany
13. Feb. 27 - Brest, France
14. Mar. 6 - Lorient, France
15. Mar. 12 - Rouen, France
16. Mar. 13 - Abbeville, France
17. Mar. 22 - Wilhelmshaven, Germany
18. Mar. 28 - Rouen, France
19. Apr. 5 - Antwerp, Belgium
20. Apr. 16 - Lorient, France
21. Apr. 17 - Bremen, Germany
22. May 1 - St. Nazaire, France
23. May 4 - Antwerp, Belgium
24. May 15 - Wilhelmshaven, Germany
25. May 17 - Lorient, France

The Robert K. Morgan Crew



The crew of the B-17 Flying Fortress "Memphis Belle" is shown at an air base in England after completing 25 missions over enemy territory on June 7, 1943.

They are, left to right:

*Tech. Sgt. Harold P. Loch of Green Bay, Wis., top turret gunner;
Staff Sgt. Cecil H. Scott of Altoona, Penn., ball turret gunner;
Tech. Sgt. Robert J. Hanson of Walla Walla, Wash., radio operator;
Capt. James A. Verinis, New Haven, Conn., co-pilot;
Capt. Robert K. Morgan of Ashville, N. C., pilot;
Capt. Charles B. Leighton of Lansing, Mich., navigator;
Staff Sgt. John P. Quinlan of Yonkers, N. Y., tail gunner;
Staff Sgt. Casimer A. Nastal of Detroit, Mich., waist gunner;
Capt. Vincent B. Evans of Henderson, Texas, bombardier;*

Not pictured:

*Staff Sgt. Clarence E. Wichell of Oak Park, Ill., waist gunner.
Joe Giambrone - Crew Chief (Died 1992) - Who replaced 9 engines,
both wings, two tails, and both main landing gear
Ms. Margaret Polk - The Memphis Belle (Died 1990)
Scotty Dog "Stuka" - Mascot*

Submitted by Bob Moses
8th AFHS Board of Directors





392nd BG Crew - Interred into Arlington National Cemetery

By Annette Tison

Note: Annette is a researcher with the 392nd Bomb Group. On October 26, 2011, she attended ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery to inter a 392nd BG crew who were killed in action on April 29, 1944. The story of their last mission, location and identification of their remains and final military honors.

The caisson carried the group remains. It was preceded to the gravesite by an Army band and rifle platoon and followed by family members who walked behind or followed in cars.

On October 26, 2011, 2nd/Lt Robert R. Bishop and crew, 392nd Bomb Group, were laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery.

On April 29, 1944, they had departed Wendling, England, for a bombing mission to Berlin. They never got there.

While passing north of Hannover, Germany, the 392nd was attacked by 24 German fighters in a good formation, coming in at 11 o'clock. Bishop's B-24 was seen pulling away from the formation with its right elevator badly shot up. No chutes were seen. The plane impacted in a horse pasture; about an hour later, one or more bombs exploded.

Germans recovered the bodies of bombardier 2nd/Lt Thomas Digman and engineer Sgt James T. Blong from the wreckage. Names of the other eight crewmen were later listed on the Tablets of the Missing at the Netherlands American Cemetery.

In 2003, German researcher Enrico Schwartz, began a careful investigation

of the crash site. He located an engine data plate that matched an engine on Bishop's plane. He uncovered the leather name patch from ball turret gunner Sgt John P. Bonnassiolle's flight jacket. Most important of all, he found human remains, "enough to hold in two hands."

The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command conducted its own investigations in 2005 - 2007 and found additional remains. DNA analysis later identified remains belonging to Pilot 2nd/Lt Bishop, Sgt Bonnassiolle, Waist Gunner Sgt Michael A. Chiodo, and Tail Gunner S/Sgt Ralph L. McDonald. They were interred in their home towns in late 2010 and early 2011 with full military honors.

The October ceremony, was to inter the identified remains of Navigator 2nd/Lt Donald W. Hess and Radio Operator S/Sgt Joseph J. Karaso in individual caskets. A third casket would be buried with the remains of Copilot 2/Lt Arthur W. Luce and all other remains that could not be individually identified.

Over 80 relatives of the men traveled to Virginia for the event. At the funeral home visitation, Mr. Kenneth J. Washington, Director of Human Resources at Ft Myer, VA, honored the crew for their military service and their selfless sacrifice. He said they represented the very best of their generation and the best our nation has to offer. Furthermore, according to Washington, they

lived and died as examples of Gen. Douglas MacArthur's creed: "Duty. Honor. Country."

At the Ft. Myer chapel service the following day, Army chaplains Captain Regino Hernandez and Captain John Gabriel reminded the families that the ten men trained together, laughed together, lived together, and went into combat together. They were together in Eng-

Folding Flags





land, in Germany, and now, in America.

Soldiers from the 3rd US Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) simultaneously folded the three American flags that had draped the caskets. The families of 2nd/Lt Hess and S/Sgt Karaso were presented the flag that had covered their loved one; the families of 2nd/Lt Luce and Waist Gunner Sgt John J. Harringer Jr. were also presented folded American flags.

The flag that draped the casket with the group remains will be archived as directed by the Secretary of the Army since it represents the entire crew.

On April 29, 1944, the 8th Air Force dispatched 679 bombers to bomb the Friedrichstrasse Railroad Station in Berlin. Over 800 fighters provided protection. However, equipment failures in the Pathfinder aircraft for the 385th and 447th Bomb Groups caused them to veer off course. Unescorted, they were hit hard for over 30 minutes by about 125 enemy aircraft.

Due to an unexpected wind shift, the B-24s were behind schedule and therefore

The Bishop crew. Left to right: Sgt John P. Bonnassiolle, S/Sgt Joseph J. Karaso, Sgt Michael A. Chiodo, S/Sgt Orus Baxter (KIA 11 July 1944), 2/Lt Robert Bishop, Sgt John Harringer Jr., 2/Lt Thomas Digman, 2/Lt Arthur Luce, and 2/Lt Donald Hess. Top right photo--Sgt James Blong; bottom right photo--S/Sgt Ralph McDonald.

also unescorted from just west of Berlin on the route in and for more than 200 miles on the withdrawal. Many fell prey to 60-80 enemy aircraft near the Initial Point and to 100 German fighters on the return route.

In its Tactical Mission Report, the 8th AF

noted that "This operation was marked by the skillful manner in which the [German Air Force] controller handled the forces at his disposal, particularly in the exploitation of temporary advantages."

Eighth AF losses were 26 Liberators, 38 Fortresses and 14 fighters. In the 392nd, eight planes crashed, 44 men were killed in action, and 27 were taken prisoner. Simply put, 71 of the 181 men who left Wendling that morning did not return that afternoon.

It took 67 years, but 2nd/Lt Robert R. Bishop's crew is no longer missing in action.

Submitted by Annette Tison



James Blong



Sgt McDonald



2011 REUNION STORY 486-487 BG SAVANNAH



**Happy Veteran
Ray McGowen.**

120 complimentary rides were taken by the 487th and 486th veterans, family, and friends. Departing from the Savannah airport they got a bird's eye view of the city and coast. The flights brought memories for the vets and shared stories for their guests.

Also staying at the Marriott Riverfront was a small reunion of the 490th Bomb Group stationed in Eye, England. Plane rides were also arranged for the 20 Veteran members of that group.

The 487th, 486th, and 490th BG reunion attendees all deeply appreciate the generosity of Bill Sheriff and his wife Janet. Bringing these planes to Savannah as a special remembrance to all WWII Veterans, made this reunion very memorable.

**Submitted by Ann Imhof Kulp
2nd generation member 487th BG**

The 487th Bomb Group stationed in Lavenham, England held their 44nd annual Reunion in Savannah, GA, Oct. 26-30, 2011.

For the past 3 years the group has been joined by the 486th Bomb Group, of neighboring Sudbury, England. Veterans, family members and guests in attendance totaled more than 230, an enthusiastic response that required adding room space at a neighboring hotel.

The four day reunion featured a visit to the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum in Pooler GA and included a special focus on the newly restored B-17, "The City of Savannah," and the recently dedicated monument to those members of the 487th who gave their lives in the war.

The highlight of the event was the Collings Foundation's B-24 "Witchcraft", B-17 "Nine-O-Nine", P-51 "Betty Jane", along with the Yankee Air Museum's B-17 "Yankee Lady". The gathering of these four beautiful vintage planes was sponsored by Bill and Janet Sheriff. Pilot Barney Nolan, who last flew in a P-51 in 1947 said "being up again in this wonderful aircraft is one of the most memorable events of my life."

Bill's late father, Cyril Bert Sheriff was a navigator assigned to the crew of William R. Christiansen in the 487th, 836 sqdn. Joe Hoerres, gunner, and the last living member of the Christensen Crew also attended the reunion and he was treated to a ride on the "Nine-O-Nine".

The weather was perfect for flying and over



4 planes brought to reunion compliments of Bill and Janet Sheriff.



L to R English visitors Owen Flint, Dennis Duffy, Beth Scott, "Witchcraft" Pilot, Sunny and Barney Nolan, Bill Sheriff, Paul Webber

B-24 PAINTING

Hi Donna or Telisha

Attached is a copy of a painting of a B-24 plane that I did recently. I was a radio operator/gunner in the Dave Allen Crew on a B-24 based in the 706th Bomb Squadron, in the 8th Air Force, in Bungay, England.

These days, I'm just an old veteran who started doing some paintings a few years ago, after retiring. I'll be 87, this December. The inspiration for this picture was during one of our 21 combat missions. We had some problems and we had to jettison our M-17 bombs over enemy territory because of a runaway No1 propeller and No. 2 engine was leaking oil, while No. 4 engine was smoking. We had to hightail it out of the formation, and return to our base at a lower altitude and alone, leaving us as easy pray for enemy fighter planes. We flew over the channel at a low altitude, which left us in danger of the British shooting us down. We couldn't make it to our base so we landed in an RAF base (Royal Air Force Base) and as we landed, our last engine No. 3, conked out, and we barely made it.

Well, anyway, I hadn't ever painted an airplane, so decided to do one and of



course, knowing the B-24 intimately, I decided that was the one to paint. They are very true to the original and suitable for framing, at a very low price. Any sales made will result in some of the monies being donated to the VFW. The painting is done in beautiful full color Acrylics, and is 16 X 20 inches in size. Thanks for your consideration of this request.

Hal Roth
86 Mirage Blvd., Barnegat, NJ
08005
609-660-0459
Jerseyman1125@comcast.net

DAVID RUDITZ

Hey Donna,

My friend Dave just stopped by grinning from ear to ear. He said "look on page 41 in the September 2011 issue, they published it". I can't thank you enough Donna. You made him very happy. He told me that now he had something to pass on to his grandchildren. It's one thing to have it on a sheet of paper and quite another to see his account of that day in such a wonderful publication. You did an excellent job with his photos and his short story. My compliments and deep thanks to you and everyone on the staff of the 8TH AF NEWS.

Would it be possible to get a couple more copies of that volume for which I would be more than happy to make a contribution? My kids know Dave and I

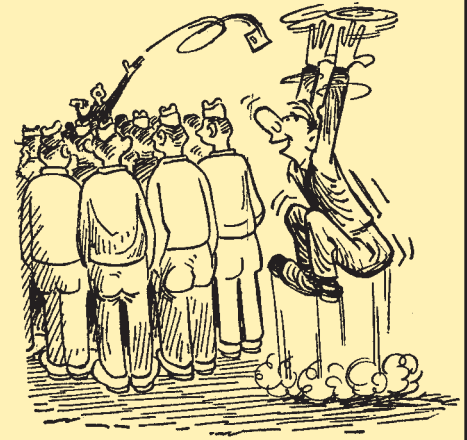
want to show them and Also give Dave an extra copy. (I need a 8th AF News donation address)

Fred D Steeb
3480 NE Candice Av
Jensen Beach, FL 34957

Ed Note: We are very happy to share your friends story with all of his 8th AF family and friends. Fred, feel free to make any donations or join the 8th Air Force Historical Society (Annual Dues \$40) and receive this magazine 4 times each year. Look on page 24 of this magazine for "8th Air Force Historical Society membership information."

SEPTEMBER 2011 ISSUE ERROR ON PAGE 23

In the September 2011 issue (11-3) of



8th AF News, there appears (on Page's. 22-23) an article by Robt. H. Doolan, 92nd BG, 327th BSqdn, RE: Flying in the Boeing YB-40 ...". The caption above the downed B-17F (in the sub-article on Page 23) identifies this B-17 "42-29884, JW-D of the 327th Bomb Squadron - 92nd Bomb Group ... Pilot Hans C. Johnson (that) "bellied-in on 12Aug1943..."; this has to be a typo-error.

B-17 markings of the 327th were UX-, while those of the 326th were JW- and, furthermore, "1st Lt Hans C. Johnson was assigned to the 326th" on 12 Aug 43 when he flew "Group Mission #25" to a "nearby target of opportunity at Bochum", since "the primary (Gelsenkirchen) and secondary targets were obscured"; Lt Johnson was reported MIA on this mission, as was the articles author, Robert Doolan.

"Lt. Col Brousseau was Air Commander on this mission and flew with 1st Lt John O. Booker, 327th, leading the Group" - while my Co-pilot father (2nd Lt James A. McAvoy) was in the tail gun position to observe/report group integrity to Col Brousseau.

NOTE: "Reference information" comes from the book Fame's Favored Few, authored by Robert E. Elliott, published by Turner Publishing Co., 1996, 1997.

Best Regards,
 Ron Neil, Member #25905
 8th USAF, Vietnam
 USAFR Retired

Westminster Towers #216
1330 India Hook Road
Rockhill, S.C. 29732-2412

OPERATION MANNA

My September issue just arrived this week! Thus I just saw the article on Operation Manna on page 18.

I have a great deal of information on the Food Drops. I flew 6 of these missions as Co-Pilot.

I have detailed mission sheets. Considerable info on the tonnage of food and the numbers on which groups flew and when. Also info on the British planes and their drops.

Much of this from a friend in Holland. I have 2 neighbors (girls) who were about 12 and lived in Holland at that time.

If you are interested, I will try to put it together for a later edition. Tell me what kind of format you prefer.

Attached is just a sample of what I have.

Tom "Pinky" Funderburk Major

Ed Note: Mr. Tom "PINKY" Funderburk, I would love to receive more information about the Food Drops.

Feel free to send me as much information as you are willing to share (any photos would be great)!

Thank you for sharing the attached "Mission Sheets".

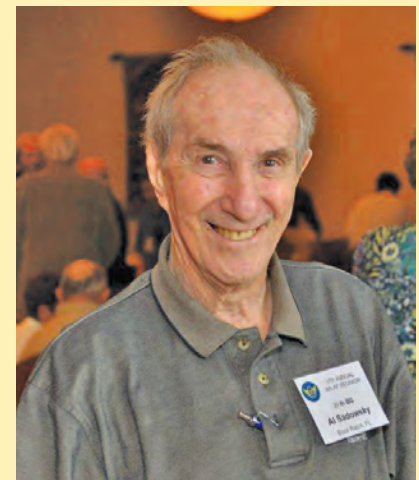
34TH BOMB GROUP – WHERE ARE YOU?

BY AL SADOWSKI

I wanted to write this letter to tell all of my fellow bomb group members about my experience at the 2011 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion in St. Louis. This past October, I had the time of my life. The only thing that would have made it better would have been the presence of my fellow bomb group members. I was the only one there that represented the 34th. Although very proud to be the only member of the 34th, I looked around the room and wondered where all of those wonderful guys were that I shared a very special part of my life with.

The 34th Bomb Group remains an important part of my life. I also credit the 34th with helping me become the man that I am today. At the ripe old age of 19, I volunteered for the Army Air Corps and weighed 103 pounds. In high school I guess I felt inferior because all of my friends were great big guys who weighed 170 and 180 pounds. However, upon entering the Air Corps all of that changed. When you are assigned to a heavy bomber you learn quickly that it takes 10 men to fly missions and you place your life in each others hands.

We flew many missions, heavy into the



Al Sadowski

Fooddroppings Western Holland April/May 1945. (Operation Manna)

First day was on April 29, 1945

That Sunday 242 Lancasters and 16 Mosquito's came to Holland with 503 tons food. The Mosquito's ("Mossies") were the markers for the dropping-zones at Rotterdam (Waalhaven), Duindigt near The Hague, Ypenburg and Valkenburg (near Leiden).



Next day April 30, 1945, again an RAF-operation from Bomber Command planes (Lancasters):

- Duindigt Lancasters (89) 176,1 ton;
- Ypenburg Lancasters (90) 199,4 ton;
- Valkenburg Lancasters (90) 195,3 ton;
- Kralingse Plas Lancasters (187) 403,8 ton;

Totally 974,6 tons with a total of 456 Lancasters (RAF). By this operation no less than 42 Mossies were markers and also some Lancasters from the Group.

May 1, 1945...

On this Day the USAAF (United States Army Air Force) came also in action. It were planes (B-17s) from the Third Air Division. The USAAF sent that day 10 Groups (396 planes) to the dropping-zones in Holland. Scouting on that operation were 4 Flying Fortresses and 1 P-51 Mustang.

Valkenburg	390 Bomb Group	40 planes	3413 containers food;
	100 Bomb Group	38 planes	3218 containers food;
Duindigt	95 Bomb Group	40 planes	3487 containers food;
	452 Bomb Group	39 planes	3318 containers food;
Ypenburg	96 Bomb Group	40 planes	3554 containers food;
	388 Bomb Group	41 planes	3600 containers food;
Rotterdam	34 Bomb Group	36 planes	3240 containers food;
(Kr.plas)	385 Bomb Group	41 planes	3690 containers food;
	490 Bomb Group	40 planes	3600 containers food;
	493 Bomb Group	38 planes	3414 containers food;

The first B-17 came in at 0854 hours, the last one at 10.50 hours.

That day RAF Bomber Command sent almost 500 Lancasters to Valkenburg, Duindigt, Ypenburg and Kralingse Plas.

May 2, 1945...

USAAF sent 401 B-17s to Holland. The first one came in at 0921 hours and the last one at 1352 hours. This time dropping-zones at: Schiphol, Vogelenzang, Bergen, Hilversum and Utrecht. In total 767,1 tons was dropped. Most of it dropped (491 tons) at Schiphol. RAF Bomber Command sent in 478 planes with a total of 1.029 tons to zones at Ypenburg, Gouda, Kralingse Plas, Duindigt and Valkenburg.

i n c i d e n t....

Nearby Hilversum a group of 7 B-17s of No. 385 Bomb Group 'met' 20 mm Flak. Three planes were damaged.

May 3, 1945---

That day 399 B-17s flew to dropping zones; again RAF-Lancasters came in with 383 and 20 Mosquito's.

May 4, 1945...

USAAF did not fly, but the RAF sent 204 Lancasters and dropped 412 tons of food.

interior of Germany, fighting off flak and fighters our way back home. When we crawled out of that flak-ridden airplane, every man was the same size, the same weight, and the same height. Every man was the same, it did not matter where you were from, north or south; it did not matter if your family came from Italy or Poland, every man on that airplane was equal. When I returned from missions, I could look any man in the eye. I gained confidence, I was proud and fearless.

The memory that stands most in my mind was the day after D-Day, on June 7th, a German fighter broke through our radar and shot down three B-24s that were helpless in their landing pattern. After these crews were shot down, the fighter went on to destroy our supply barracks which held our ammunition, parachutes, and other supplies. On June 8th, our crew was scheduled to fly a mission and since the supply barracks had been nearly destroyed, they had gone out and sifted through the wreckage to see what was left. We had 9 men to fly on our crew, and they were able to scramble together 8 parachutes. I was the ball turret gunner and I told them I would be the one that would fly without a parachute. One of my buddies was a tail gunner and I told him "if we get hit and we get ready to go down, I'm going to jump on you and hang on with you on your parachute." He told me "don't worry, he would take care of me and everything would be alright." I crawled in the B-24 as we rumbled down the airfield, we took off and I felt confident. I felt confident because I knew that I would be taken care of by my brothers.

These experiences have stayed with me all of my life and have helped me become what I feel is the person that I am today, and this is what I want to share with all of the 34th Bomb Group. I want all the guys to read this, to come and be a part of what happens with the Historical Society, to be a part of the fellowship and most of all to be part of the brotherhood. Come and join us and let's talk about the days of our youth, let's talk about our times together and let's reunite ourselves in that blind faith

and that camaraderie that we had during those ugly, but defining war years.

(Al flew as the ball turret gunner on fifteen missions in a B-24, sixteen missions in a B-17; he flew with an intact crew on all thirty-one missions and all safely returned).

MISSING 8TH AFHS REUNIONS

I have not received my 8th Air Force News and am a Life Member of the 8th AFHS. December 2010 was my last issue. As I am on oxygen or a breathing machine 24/7. I'm not able to check with the new person at 8th AFHS Headquarters.

Also enclosed is a poem I wrote to thank all members of the Legacy. We appreciate all of you who help our post in the 8th Air Force.

I am in assisted living now and can't make the reunions. The one I remember best was in Houston in 1983 when we toured NASA.

**Yours truly,
Ed Morrison
Ball Turret Gunner B-17
336 Sqdn 95 BG 8th AF**

Ed Note:

Mr. Morrison, you should have received your 4 magazines for 2011 by the time this 2011 December magazine goes to print. Hopefully you are reading this 2011 December issue. Thank you for submitting this wonderful poem.

SUBJECT OPERATION FOOD DROPS:

In May 1945 I was pilot on two food drops to the Netherlands. My log shows I flew 446136 "Stork Club"??? on 19 of my 35 missions which I finished

In the 1940's as a ball turret gunner, I flew
And performed my duties as a member of a crew

Through flak, bombs and fighters we flew
Stuttgart, Merseburg, Hamm and Frankfurt we
knew

And Bremen and Hamburg on the Baltic Sea
Were all places we bombed whether or not we
could see

Three Presidential citations our group awarded
The first planes to strike Berlin were recorded

Normandy, D-Day and Battle of the Bulge memo-
ries too

POW's, Evaders and some died who we knew
Scared, but prayers seemed to bring some of us
through

We finished our tour of thirty-five
At the end of the war we came home alive

At reunions we met friends old and new
Each year we looked forward to them too

Never missed a reunion until 2003
Airport restrictions and physical problems
made it impossible for me

My gratitude goes out to members of the Legacy
as they help preserve my memory

So thanks to all you younger people who care
With you all my memories I share

**Ed Morrison
Ball Turret Gunner
336 Sqdn 8th Air Force**

on 15 April 45. Another crew flew the airplane on the drop shown with damage in the Oct News.

Enclosed is a copy of my combat reports and a letter our crew received from the Netherlands. The airplane was reported to have been damaged or lost while being flown back to the U.S.

There is an interesting book by Dutch youth and later U.S. Navy trained Pilot Frits Forrer. He was 14 and helped pick up food parcels.

Thru A Childs Eyes. fforrer@worldnet.att.net
ISBN 0-9714490-0-7
Lib of Congress Card #2002401772

OUR DOG BINGO

During World War II, our air crew went over to England on the Queen Elizabeth. We were sent to Cheddington, England and stationed at a smaller air field owned by the RAF. We were a replacement crew, and one of only two squadrons on the field. Ours was the 406th of 492nd BG, the other was the 36th squadron from another group.

We flew night missions for the OSS, Office of Strategic Services, dropping leaflets to German citizens and German Troops. General Doolittle called us carpetbaggers. Although this airfield had been a farm before the war, English people still lived near, continuing to farm some of the land unoccupied by the airfield.

A dog from one of these houses decided to move into our barracks and live with our squadron. It was a Wirehaired Fox Terrier. The guys named him Bingo. We fixed him a box to sleep in and of course, fed him table scraps from the mess hall. Bingo would follow us everywhere, even to our B-24. He liked to go along with us.

We had to do a lot of training before we started a night mission, with most of the missions at low altitude. The briefing for our night mission was held shortly after noon lunch. A guard was posted at the door of the briefing room to allow, only those on the mission to come in, but Bingo made it in too. There were planks laid across cement block for the men to sit on during the briefing and Bingo sat there with us. At the end of the briefing, the chaplain would read a scripture and say a prayer. At the same time Bingo would let out low ooooo. The chaplain said "That dog has to go!". Everyone refused, saying "no, no, no, he is praying for us too."

Our squadron was transferred to Harrington Airbase, so we sadly sent Bingo back to his English home.

**Sgt. Reuben Hill, 406 BS 492 BG
Forest Lake, MN**

2011 June 8th AF News

In the June issue of the *8th AF News*, I enjoyed the story about 2nd Lt. Ira P. Weinstein. It reminded me of a promotional film that I saw when I enlisted in 1951.

It was about a Pilot Instructor of B-17's. He was called "Shorty" and I remember distinctly that they had to re-arrange the cock-pit to accommodate him. I was wondering if any of the former Pilots that are still alive remember him.

Thank you,
**Sgt. Gory Hough
1951-1955
Wilmington, NC**

DAY WITH THE ACES

I was interested to see the fine color spread you gave the 357th Fighter Group (*8th AF News, September, 2011*) as I had a memorable visit to their airfield at Leiston, Suffolk, on March 3, 1945, when the 8th met fierce Luftwaffe jet opposition.

I was then 16 and like my friend, the late Roger Freeman, who was to become the British historian of the 8th, ever watchful of the air activity around us in East Anglia.

In 2005, when I put together over 90 of my published articles covering some 50 years in Little Chapters in the Making (ISBN 0-9550969-0-1), I included an account of that visit to the 357th.

So the nose art of Capt. Charles E. Weaver's P-51, which you spread so widely, reminded me that he was among the pilots that day that gave their signatures. Within a short time, however, two of the listed pilots had been killed, one on land and the other over the North Sea. As for their leading ace, Capt. Lee K. Carson, whom I met resting in the base hospital, I wonder if he is still alive? Also, what became of my host, Capt. Emil Moldea?

Finally, with regard to the P-51 'Berlin Express' of the 357th, which you also depicted, I was making a visit to the 489th Bomb Group at Halesworth, Suffolk, on the evening of August 2, 1944, when a late evening strike at V-1 flying bomb sites and depots was returning in dense fog, when some P-51s came in

with the B-24 Liberators. One, I noted, was named 'Berlin Express' and in the fading light I saw the nose bore some red. I wonder: could it have been the one from the Leiston outfit? My host that evening was Lt. Walter J. Mucher who, I believe, was an engineering officer.

Yours sincerely,
**Christopher R. Elliott
Flat 4
77 South Park Road
Wimbledon London
SW19 8RT England**

D -DAY MISSION

I just have "to get in my 2 cents worth" on that D-Day mission that took Bob Doell and his crew--all but one. His navigator, Bob Gross had a cold that day. Bob Gross finished his tour with another crew. He attended many reunions and wrote notes for several Memories--has a couple of sons that did very well.

Sgt Helget was buried with others of the Doell crew at Cambridge Cemetery and later moved to Minnesota as requested by the family. I had some telephone conversations with his sister when I lived in Minneapolis (for five years in the 1990s,)

That early morning mission on June 6 was the most difficult one physically for me. As I remember it was the mission that after our debriefing I slept for almost 20 hours--then it was "up and at em" for the late afternoon mission on June 7. The reason it was such a long mission (we were all worried about getting back to base without running out of gasoline!) was the plan started us with a 3am or so takeoff. Getting the Squadrons in formation was done, in the dark, on radio bunchers way up in the northwest corner of Scotland. It was very dark. The bunchers were being "jammed" by the Germans so they were on for a minute or so, then off--on and off. It was very hard to fly the race course pattern to a buncher when it was going off the air so much. As a result there was much jockeying to get our squadrons formed. And the jockeying with the full bomb load did burn up the

gas. (I do not know of any other 34th Group missions that attempted getting the squadrons in formation in the dark! We often took off and climbed individually in the dark reaching the formation altitude just as daylight was breaking.)

Then when we were in formation and daylight came we still flew delaying patterns to join the bomber stream for us to reach the target at Caen right on the dot at 7am. Of course it was a huge disappointment when at the target it was 10/10 undercast and we could not bomb. Then it was a longer return than usual back to our bases in England by going west and north to avoid flying over the invasion troops in the channel.

And Doell was just a few miles from making his emergency landing at an air base on the south coast of England. As I remember later studies indicated only one of their bombs exploded but the crater was there to be found again by kids some 40 years later. I think Bob Gross visited the crater and Cambridge Cemetery sometime in the 80s or 90s.

We were really discouraged by not having bombed the rail yards at Caen to help with the invasion. I did not know until many years later that none of the heavy bombers dropped bombs that morning. The medium bombers, B-25s and B-26s, did bomb their targets as they flew at the lower altitudes under the clouds. My school days chum, from 1st grade into college, Ervin Wursten's crew, did drop their B-26 bombs that day. He is still alive, I think, living in Colo. Springs.

Then as you know, came the very sad mission late the next day, June 7. But from then on there were many "good" missions when we did get our bombs on the targets and our morale picked up. Then came the really disastrous mission on August 24. Our 4th Sq. morale hit bottom again.

Submitted by Al Israelsen

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS

'Twas the night before Christmas all over the place,
When we were confronted by an old flying ace.

There was icing reported and turbulent air,
He said, "File me a flight plan, I gotta get there".

Outside sat his aircraft all ready to run,
And the old man walked out to that P-51.

"Bad weather's no problem," he silently mumbled,
The prop came to life...that big Merlin rumbled.

He eased in the throttle, the roar shook the ground,
He taxied on out and turned it around.

He went through the run-up and seemed satisfied,
Then he said to himself, "I'm in for a ride."

So he lined it up straight as he poured on the coal,
The tailwheel came up as he started to roll.

Up off the runway, he sucked up the gear,
And that mighty V-12 was all you could hear.

He screamed overhead with a deafening crack,
The blue flames were flying from each little stack.

He pulled up the nose and started to climb,
No ice on that airframe, it didn't have time.

On top of the weather with the levers all set,
He looked up above him and saw a Learjet.

"With jet fuel and turbines there just ain't no class,
Gimmee pistons, and props and lots of avgas!"

Now he was approaching where he wanted to go.
But the weather had covered the runway with snow.

How will he land it?
We just have to guess, because the only way in
was a full I-L-S.

Over the outer marker, he started his run,
The ceiling was zero, visibility...none.

Going three hundred he still felt the need,
For an overhead break to diminish his speed.

Over the numbers he zoomed like a flash,
He started to break, we just knew he would crash.

Oh, why does he do it on these kinds of nights??
Then over the threshold, we saw landing lights.

I'm on a short final with three in the green,
And I see enough runway to land this machine.

Then he tied down that Mustang,
and they all heard him say..
"Next year, I'm stickin' with my reindeer and sleigh.."

Chapter News

NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

The New Mexico Chapter of the 8th AFHS held its annual Fall General Membership Meeting and Luncheon at the Marriott Hotel Oct 8th, 2011.

President Larry Stebleton (8th AF) opened the meeting at 12:00 pm with a moment of silence in remembrance of departed members followed by the "Pledge of Allegiance".

The speaker for this meeting was President Larry Stebleton (Lt. Col. Ret. USAF), who is extremely knowledgeable in military history. He gave an impressive speech about United States Army Air Service involvement during WWI along with a wonderful display of the USAS collectable items, such as Helmet, Vickers .30 cal. Cartridge case, a model of Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker Spad. Plaques, Posters and much more followed by a questions and answer session.

Lt. Col. Stebleton, a graduate of West Point Military Academy, a career officer in the USAF; who served on many interesting assignment, a veteran of the Viet Nam War flying as navigator aboard the C-130, other aircraft as well during his distinguished career.

Respectfully submitted by:

Al Schwery
Secretary

PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER

President's Message
"John Raiser"

My connection to the 8th is through my father, 1st Lt. Jack Raiser, a B-24 pilot (that's right, the box that the other famous bomber came in) with the 732nd Squadron, 453rd Bomb Group out of Old Buckenham. I have been involved with 8th history for about 25 years, and have made many friends through my association with this Chapter, the 2nd Air Division, the Heritage league, and the National 8th Air Force Historical Society. I did a bit of re-enacting in my younger years (mostly at the World War II Weekend in Reading, PA), and I have a large collection of 8th enlisted and officer uniforms, AAF flight suits/gear, and wing badges that I like to display to get new folks interested in 8th history. I have worked informally with the 8th Air Force

Archives at Penn State (officially known at the "World War II's Eighth Air Force Libraries Endowment") for several years.

I am the first "next generation" President of the Chapter, and I want to take a minute to acknowledge the fact that I am picking up the baton from a gentleman whose shoes would be tough to fill - our late President, Ralph A. "Hap" Nicholas Jr., a navigator, 448th Bomb Group. Hap did a wonderful job promoting this chapter, and led by example with a style and open, friendly manner that I can only hope to emulate. Hap was not only the consummate example of a leader to me; he was someone who treated me as a friend. You are sorely missed, but the legacy will live on.

THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY THE BIRTHPLACE CHAPTER

Board of Directors - Executive Board
Gene Buttle, President
Fred Pye, Vice-President
Mort Glick, Treasurer
Bob Buck, Secretary

Our November speaker was Veronica Hoffman. Veronica is a Holocaust survivor. In March 1944 the Germans seized her home in the historic district of Szeged, Hungary, along with all the family belongings and moved the family to a Jewish ghetto. There she shared a room with 8-10 people. At the end of April 1944, her family was forced into cattle cars with 100 other people for a 3 day trip to Strashoff, Austria. There they were divided into groups and her family was sent to the slave labor camp at Alt Nagelberg. There she toiled for 12-14 hours a day in the Stolze glass factory. Veronica's mother was a wonderful pianist and received a little food each night for playing the piano for the Germans. She secretly shared it with Veronica which helped her keep up her strength. In April of 1945, the family was placed on a death march. Anyone not able to keep up was shot. They eventually reached Terezin where they were liberated. Veronica was accompanied by her husband Joseph. Joseph lost his entire family during the Holocaust.

OREGON CHAPTER

Motoya Nakamura, our November speaker and a staff photographer with The Oregonian newspaper, has documented oral histories and photographs of Veterans of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The 442nd RCT fought in eight campaigns in Italy, France, and Germany during WWII and was the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in the history of the U.S. military with its members earning 9486 Purple Hearts, 21 Medals of Honor, and 8 Presidential Unit Citations. Mr. Nakamura spoke of the motto of the 442nd RCT, "Go for Broke", which he described as a gambling term meaning to risk everything to win big. Composed of the Nisei, American-born sons of Japanese immigrants, members of the 442nd fought two wars: the Germans in Europe during WWII and prejudice in America.

According to Mr. Nakamura, "The attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 changed the lives of the Japanese-Americans completely, both in Hawaii and on the mainland. The Army at that time discharged all of the Japanese-Americans in ROTC and changed their draft status to 4C, 'enemy alien'. When they received that status, they couldn't fight for the country despite their eagerness to do so. On February 19, 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 to authorize the intern-



**Oregon Chapter Speaker
Motoya Nakamura**

Chapter News

ment of more than 110,000 persons of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast.

However, gradually recognizing the loyalty of the Nisei to our country, the government formed the U.S. Army 442nd Regimental Combat Team, as a segregated unit, in February of 1943. One of their famous accomplishments was the rescue of the lost battalion, 211 soldiers of the Texas 141st Regiment of the 36th Infantry, the 'Alamo' Regiment which cost them many more men than were rescued. The 442nd also helped to liberate prisoners of Dachau Concentration Camp."

In 2004, Motoya Nakamura's 5 portraits of 442nd Veterans were published in The Oregonian: John Murakami, Roy Maeda, Joe Onchi, Kazuo Fujii, and Arthur Iwasaki. He also photographed and recorded the oral histories of other 442nd members including Kenny Namba, Tex Yoshio Irinaga, Harry Hisashi Inukai, and Leke Nakashimada. In 2008, the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center displayed his exhibition, "The Images of the 442nd". Mr. Nakamura encourages all Veterans to leave the legacy of their stories behind for future generations. Submitted by, Joan E. Hamilton

NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

The November 2011 meeting was opened by President Ann Vaughn. Grace was given by Bill Varnedoe. The November 2011 speaker was, Robert Jaques, who gave an interesting talk

about the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Bob has done some intensive research, including interviews with many of the principals involved, both American and Japanese.

He carried us through the attack, minute by minute following this time-line:

0539: Japan launches their scout float planes.

0600: Six Japanese carriers launched 183 aircraft

0702: U.S. Army radar operator picks up a large fleet of aircraft approaching, but assumed they were a squadron of American B-17s due at that time.

0715: Japan launches a second wave of 170 aircraft.

0753: Japanese lead pilot radios, "Tora, Tora, Tora"

0805: USS Arizona is hit and sunk

0810: Roosevelt is advised of the attack

0820: The anticipated B-17s arrive from California.

1215: All (except 28 that were shot down) Japanese planes return to their carriers.

1300: The Japanese fleet leaves Hawaiian waters.

Bob, our speaker, displayed an autograph of Mitsuo Fuchida, the Japanese pilot who gave the signal, "Tora, Tora, Tora," which meant, "Surprise achieved." An American Army radar operator named John Lochard, sighted the approaching Japanese, but because a fleet of B-17s were due at that exact time, his supervisor assumed that was what John saw.

The attack went unreported although John was skeptical because of the size of the radar return.

Bob also interviewed one of the B-17 arriving pilots. These B-17F's were armed with guns, but carried no ammunition. He, the pilot, was quoted as, at first, thinking the Japanese had landed and were occupying the base, but on sighting the Stars and Stripes still flying, he knew he could land. Many of our defending fighter aircraft on the island could not get airborne, because they were parked nose to nose and they were strafed, being out in the open. One of our fighter pilots was Lt. Lew Sanders from Lillian, Alabama, who did manage to take off and shoot down the first Japanese plane in WW II. Bob visited the new museum at Pearl Harbor, now a National Park, and saw a torpedo that was found just 10 years ago on the harbor bottom. It was still "live" and was taken out to sea and detonated!

Thank you Bob for giving us this inside story of the war's beginning!!

The next meeting will be December 2nd at 10:45, Luncheon, at Ryan's once more. The speaker/program will be Shirley Mohler giving a Civil War presentation about "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day." Apparently this hymn was written during that time.

Ann Vaughn	President
Doug Garner	Vice-President
Bill Varnedoe	Secretary/Treasurer



The Generations - A Family Affair Attended the 2011 37th Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion

STEPHEN KING

Mr. King entered the Air Corps in October of 1942, having joined the Army after leaving his job with the telephone company in Akron, Ohio. He entered the cadets, finished his pilot training, and was assigned to the 379th Bomb Group at Kimbolton. Colonel King flew on D-Day and was shot down on his 25th mission in June of 1944. He was held at Stalag Luft III and was also on the 500 mile march from Sagan to Merseburg. He, as well as Dr. Alexander, was liberated by Patton's 14th Armored Division. Colonel King remained in the military and retired as a full Colonel in May of 1974. He returned to California and flew with Catalina Airways before retiring.

DR. V. GAYLE ALEXANDER

Dr. Alexander was a college student when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in December of 1941. He enlisted in the Air Corps and that was a logical choice as he had been flying airplanes since the age of 13 and his older brother was already an Officer in the Air Corps. Dr. Alexander was the part of the initial group in McCook, Nebraska that formed the 493rd Bomb Group. He flew 7 missions



STEPHEN KING FAMILY FROM L TO R

Front row: Kirk Bolduc, April Bolduc - grand-daughter, Madeline King - daughter, Cathy Decenzo - daughter, Amanda King - grand-daughter, Stephen King, Maureen Downey - daughter, Katy Kelly grand-daughter, Michael Robison, family friend.
Back Row A.J. Deceazo - grand son, Patrick Kelly - grand-son, Patrick King - son, Alexander King - grand-son.



GALE ALEXANDER FAMILY FROM L TO R

Cyrus Alexander, Jr. - grand-son, Cyrus Alexander - son, Dr. Alexander, Wesley Alexander - grand-son, Ben Alexander - Grand-son, Dana Alexander - daughter-in-law, Maureen Downey - daughter Katy Kelly - grand-daughter, Michael Robison - family friend.
Back Row: A.J. Deceazo - grand-son, Patrick Kelly - grand-son, Patrick King - son, Alexander King - grand-son.

on a B-24 and flew on D-Day. He transitioned to be B-17s and was shot down on his 20th mission to Merseburg. He was taken Prisoner of War on November 2, 1944, and was liberated on April 29, 1945, by Patton's 14th Armored Division. He was held in Stalag Luft III and was part of the 500 mile march in which prisoners were moved from Sagan, Germany (Czechoslovakia) to Merseburg. Dr. Alexander shared that on the first day he walked at least 2 days and 3 nights without a break and believed that over 1500 POWs were lost on the first week of the march. He also shared that on April 13, 1945, two weeks before he was liberated, that the POWs were allowed three minutes of silence when they were told of the death of President Franklin Roosevelt. After liberation, he returned to the United States. He left the military and attended Ohio State University College of Veterinarian Medicine where he went on to practice veterinarian medicine for 20+ years.

GLENN A. HARRISON

Mr. Harrison was attending college at Oklahoma A&M when he joined the Air Corps in September of 1941. He applied and was



GLENN HARRISON FAMILY FROM L TO R

Standing: Alison Harrison - daughter, Stephen Harrison - grand-son,
Seated: Mr Glenn A. Harrison, Glenn A. Harrison, Jr. - son.

accepted for cadet training, completed his training, and was assigned to the 96th Bomb Group, 339th Squadron. He flew on D-Day and on his 17th mission was shot down on June 20, 1944. He was taken to Stalag Luft III where Dr. Alexander and Colonel King were also held. He also was part of the march from Sagan to Merseburg and was liberated on April 29, 1945, by Patton's 14th Armored Division. He left the military after World War II and returned to work as an engineer with McDonald Douglas and then joined the National Guard in 1950. He was called up during the Korean Conflict and was assigned to anti-aircraft artillery and served as



WILLIAM THORNS FAMILY FROM L TO R

Courtney Perkins - grand-daughter, Baby - Macy Perkins - great grand-daughter, Bill Thorns - son, Mr. Thorns, Charlie Conroy - son-in-law, Sarah Conroy - daughter, Dorothy Thorns - Bill's wife, Cathy Stam - daughter, Dan Thorns - son.

the Battery Commander. After the conflict, he was discharged from the military and returned to work in the aircraft industry from 1957 until he retired in 1983. I commented to Mr. Harrison that he was the first veteran that I had interviewed that served our country as wings in the air and boots on the ground!

WILLIAM THORNS

Bill Thorns volunteered for the Air Corps in December of 1941. He was in the initial group of men that became the 96th Bomb Group. Bill served as flight engineer and top turret gunner. On October 14, 1943, he was flying on the Schweinfurt Mission; the 96th Bomb

Group was leading the 3rd Air Division on this mission. Also on board his aircraft was Colonel Old who was the commander of this mission. There were over 154 aircraft from the 3rd Air Division alone. Carnage abound many aircraft were lost and many crews perished. Bill's crew managed to drop their bombs even though they

had been struck viciously by very accurate flak. On their return to England, they received a serious hit to their aircraft and two engines were on fire. They had serious doubts as to whether or not they would be able to make it to England. Luckily, they were able to locate an RAF Air Base located at Graves End and were able to land their crippled B-17. Three crew had to be hospitalized. They lost one of their officers during the ordeal. Bill's son, Dan, shared with me the above information and also shared that his father shot down two Me-210s during the battle back to England.

Submitted by Nancy Toombs



*MERRY CHRISTMAS
FROM THE
8TH AF NEWS STAFF*

Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines





SLIGHTLY DANGEROUS

When I first came across in a troop carrier ship, a converted cruise ship, with 12,000 other soldiers, we disembarked in Scotland then by troop truck to England, with Jim Higbee, age 25, my first pilot. I did 6 to 8 missions with him. Then he was grounded, with combat fatigue and sent home. I was now an orphan, meaning I was available to substitute with other crews and did so as ordered. I was then assigned to first pilot McSporlan's crew and was navigator for him from October through midnight December

23rd, 1944. In October, we, the 452nd Bomber Group, are en route to bomb industrial sites in Germany. We are just about at our initial point when a B-17 directly above us accidentally dropped a 'dumb' bomb, and the bomb went right through the waist of our B-17. The dumb bomb did not go off as the propeller on the bomb did not build up enough revolutions to cause it to explode. After the mission and back at base, I find out that the 'bombing B-17' plane's navigator is from Jeanette and the bombardier is from Pittsburgh. Me, I am from Connellsville.

December 24, 1944. It is around three o'clock in the morning and it is cold and wet here in Deopham Green, England. I am getting dressed in my flying clothes, will have some breakfast, then go to the briefing room where the commanding officer will enter, and we will stand at attention, salute, and the CO goes to the big map, and gives us our targets for the day. We are going to bomb Germany again. Our main targets are the railroad marshaling yards oil refineries, ball bearing plants and if we don't find them, then bomb targets

of opportunity. The CO informs today will be EME (extreme maximum effort), which means, today, the United States Army Air Force will launch 2,000 bombers and 800 fighter planes. We are departing at 0600 hours.

The main objective of our mission is to support our ground troops in The Battle of the Bulge.

"The main objective of our mission is to support our ground troops in The Battle of the Bulge"

I am a first lieutenant and navigator on B-17 G bombers, and one of four officers in a crew of nine. Our B-17 carries five to six thousand pounds

of bombs and has 13 machine guns in various positions. I have reviewed my maps, and am ready as is the crew.

We are underway, headed to Germany, the British RAF are returning from their EME over Germany. The Brits like to bomb at night and prefer to 'area bomb', that is, pick a city and bomb the entire city center and demoralize the citizens.

Our bombers are in groups of 36 planes. Real early this morning the ground crews painted yellow strips on our planes. The reason is for identity. You see there are hundreds of crashed B-17's on the ground, and the resourceful Germans take them and rebuild them and fly them up into our formations and shoot us down, from B17s with a German crew!

WE'RE HIT! A German FW 190 aircraft 20 MM cannon shells has gone through our port wing and exploded a hole the size a couple of men could fall through.

Our plane is shaking like crazy, our speed is reduced, we have to zig in and zag out, to navigate by cut corner to corner to keep up and not get shot down. We are approaching target, the I.P., the initial point, our aircraft is exposed, we must hold steady, the lead B-17 commences to drop her bombs and we also release our bombs. Not get to R.P., the recovery point, where we can turn and return to base in Deopham Green.

First pilot McSporlan and his crew are flying a war weary, B-17 and are in front of us. McSporlan is on his final leg, about fifty feet from the ground when another B-17 cut in front of him, and McSporlan gunned his engines to gain altitude. Too late. They crashed. Six of the nine - dead - KIA - killed in action. It was their navigator's first mission - KIA. For a couple of months I was the navigator of this crew, but at 0400 hours this morning December 24, 1944, I was transferred to M C Johnson's crew.

M C Johnson landed our B-17 and we taxied to our position. I got out and looked at the port wing and looked at 'Slightly Dangerous', the name of my B-17, and I am thinking, I am only 21 years old. The USAAF told me that if I flew 35 missions I would be done. They

also told me that the life expectancy was 15 missions. I think this is my eighteenth mission. From my first mission till now, the USAAF increased the required number to

30 missions then tacked on another 5 missions for sake of good order. 25 + 5 = 35

Fatigue sets in. We are young. Age 17 to 26 years. We are tired. Many

***"Fatigue sets in.
We are young.
Age 17 to 26 years.
We are tired"***



have never been in an airplane before. Many are afraid of flying, and all of us are afraid to die. Afraid to die this morning. To help matters, we get leave and go into London and wander around. London is heavily bombed. We go to the movies, and best of all we go to dance halls under supervision with only the best girls, and, OK, some 'doubtful girls' and some in-between.

February 14, 1945, it's Valentine's Day, I wake up and there is the same routine for the next mission, but this one is different from the rest. This is my 35th mission and when I get back I am done. After my tour of 35 missions, the USAAF presented me my certificate into 'The Lucky Bastard' club.

I returned home by troop carrier. Disembarked in Boston. The Army Air Force sent me to Florida for two weeks R n' R, then to Texas for 'advanced' navigation; the 'advanced' training was for the invasion of Japan! Then there was a notice on the bulletin board 'Secret Mission - No Combat - go to India.' I signed up, but was shipped off to Wales to fly C-47 troop carriers back to the states. I land in New England. The

"Many are afraid of flying, and all of us are afraid to die"

C-47s, trucks, tanks, and all sorts of good military equipment are being loaded on barges and towed to sea and dumped! The government does not want surplus. The USA has to create jobs and markets for more trucks, planes, machinery.

"AND THAT'S HOW YOU FIGHT A WAR!"

I am Michael Prestia better known as 'Mike.' I was born and raised in Connellsville, and graduated from Connellsville High School with the Class of 1940. I enrolled at the University of Pittsburgh majoring in mechanical engineering and after two years, I volunteered to

serve my country, and along the way earned many medals, and after my discharge, I returned to the University of Pittsburgh and received my degree in engineering, BSME.

I will be 87 years old this April 15, 2012. I still volunteer for any activity that is for the good of my community, and just recently, on February 23rd, The Greater Connellsville Chamber of Commerce presented to me the 'Community Service Award - Individual - 2010 - Outstanding Service.' I am fortunate my mind is sharp and I am in good physical shape, and I have friends.

**Submitted By, Michael Prestia
730th Squadron/452nd BG
1323 Chestnut St.
Cornerville, PA 15425**



ANDERSON, CARL G., Age 88 of Crystal went to be with the Lord on July 8, 2011. Carl was a loving husband, father, grandfather, and will be dearly missed. He will be remembered for his adventurous spirit, wonderful sense of humor, and unforgettable laugh.

BACH, HAROLD JOSEPH D.D.S., age 87, died peacefully September 9, 2011. Loving husband of Frances for 66 years. In WWII Hal flew over 30 missions as a co-pilot in the 303rd Bomb Group.

BARKER, HENRY "HANK" MCKINNEY, January 7, 1925 – September 16, 2011 of Knoxville, TN. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, he resolved to enter the war effort as a pilot. He joined the US Army Air Corps, receiving his silver pilot's wings at Moody Field, Valdosta, GA. As a member of the Second Air Division, 453rd Bomb Group, US 8th Air Force, he flew missions out of Old Buckenham, England. He was co-pilot for the B-24 "Liberator," Wandering Wanda.

BARKER, VINCENT ZANAS, March 24, 1924 – May 31, 2011 Chattanooga, TN. He grew up in NYC, member of the Air Corps WWII, Drury College, retired TWA, great father and role model, a lifelong "volunteer"; always willing to lead or to help out.

BASS, JULIUS E. (SAM), of Merritt Island, Florida died quietly, Oct. 11, 2011. He was a B-17 pilot in the 358 Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group. Sam survived being shot down over Bricey, France and resulting imprisonment. Julius also received the Purple Heart. One of his surviving crew members still clearly and loudly states today "He is my Captain...my Captain....he will always be my Captain!"

BEISER, THEODORE RALPH "BUDDY", a native and lifelong resident of Fairhope, AL, died

August 25, 2011. He was 90 years old. He was among the many courageous young men who served in WWII. He was a B-17 bomber pilot with the 427th Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group (Hell's Angels), Eighth Air Force, Army Air Corps stationed in Molesworth, England. He flew 37 successful bombing missions during the war and also served as a pilot instructor and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oakleaf Cluster and Airforce Medal with 3 Oakleaf Clusters. After the war, Buddy worked in Fairhope, at Brookley Air Force Base, and as a quality control inspector for NASA in Florida during the height of the race to the moon.



Harold Joseph Bach D.D.S.,



Henry "Hank" McKinney, Barker



Julius E. (Sam) Bass



Theodore Ralph "Buddy", Beiser

BOYER, DOLPH D., June 5, 1924 - May 1, 2011, of the 91st BG, 323 BS, 8th AF, radio maintenance SCS 151, Blind Lndg. Equip.

COLEMAN, GEORGE "BOB", age 87, of Minneapolis on July 30, 2011. Born in St. James, Minnesota on June 6, 1924 and moved to Minneapolis as a young boy. He served with the US Army 8th Air Force during WWII and spent 17 months as a P.O.W. in Stalag 17 after his plane was shot down over Germany.

CLAUSEN, PAUL WILLIAM, age 93, died peacefully on July 6, 2011. Born in Iowa in 1918. He was a member of the Greatest Generation, enlisting in the Cavalry in 1936 and servicing through WWII as a flight engineer in the Army Air Corps.

DUNKEL, KENNETH F. SR., Age 89 of Minneapolis, born Jan. 1, 1922 in St. Paul passed away July 3, 2011. He flew B-17s in the US Army Air Corp during WWII, was a 1st Sgt. 934 Cam Squadron, member of Minnehaha Lodge #165 AF&AM, Past Commander Zuhrah Temple Legion of Honor, Past Commander Voiture #45, Lifetime

member VFW Post #5555, Past Commander of American Legion Courthouse Post #310, retired letter carrier & member of branch #9 NALC.

FITZPATRICK, JOHN T., Age 91 of MN, passed away on Memorial Day. John was a veteran of WWII and a POW.

GALLAGHER, WARREN P. "BUD", 92, Edina, MN passed away on May 22, 2011. Experiencing a Depression Era childhood, Bud was born and raised in MN. Worked hard providing for his family. He proudly served in WWII in the Army Air Force as a B-17 aerial gunner.

GRANLUND, JEROME D., age 86, passed away May 27, 2011. Survived by his loving wife of 53 years. Was a proud WWII Veteran of the US Air Force. He was a POW in Germany for 338 days. He will be forever missed by his friends and family

HANSEN, HEBER "DEAN", passed away, September 10, 2011 in Salt Lake City. Born November 9, 1921. He enlisted in the army June 1940, eventually becoming a First Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps, serving as Navigator on a B-17 with the 358th Squadron, 303rd BG (Hell's Angels) stationed in England. He was shot down 30 Mar 1945 near the German border, becoming a POW for about 3 months in Stalag-Luft #1.



Heber "Dean" Hansen

KLYM, MICHAEL "MIKE", 89, of Mattydale, passed away peacefully Oct. 9, 2011. He was born in Syracuse. He resided in Mattydale for 63 years, summered on Sixth Lake, Inlet, NY. During WWII, he served in the Army Air Forces in the European Theater of Operations. A Tech Sergeant and top turret gunner on a B-17, he flew 33 missions with the 303rd bomber squadron. Surviving are his wife of 65 years, the former Jean I. Congdon. --



KUHL, ROBERT EARL, May 11, 1924

Michael "Mike" Klym

Helluva Pilot

IMMEL, JOHN A., formerly a captain in the 385th Bomb Group, passed away quietly on April 9, 2011 in Peoria, Illinois. Dad was a certified "Lucky Bastard", a veteran of 30 plus missions of H.E. Goodwill to the fuhrer and his cohorts. He started flying combat just before D Day. He became a 385th lead pilot. I remember him pointing out an article in the Hardlife Herald where someone mentioned an unnamed lead pilot on a mission who was a "helluva pilot". Dad had a little smile on his face when he told me, he was that pilot.

He told me of a great sinking feeling he got when he touched down after a long mission only to discover he had no hydraulics, no brakes. The bomber ended up in a farmer's field after jumping a ditch. A bridge had to be built over the ditch to get the plane back to the base.

I remember him telling me about a flak hit on the propeller hub resulting in the prop falling away when they finally touched down. There were so many "double takes" as taxied in that he never forgot it.

Dad was lucky but he made his own luck. He always brought his crew back even in planes so badly shot up, they were junked. He was beloved of his three children and is sorely missed.

**Submitted by his son
Richard Immel**

– July 25, 2011. Born in Waseca, MN. He was a graduate of the University of Minnesota and served in WWII with the 491st Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. He was a long time educator and retired in 1988. Bob loved flying, earning his pilot's license in Waseca. Bob will be remembered for his wonderful sense of humor and greatly missed by family and friends who were lucky to have known him. He is survived by his wife of 64 years Marjorie D. (Haag) Kuhl.

LONDON, JOHN R. "JACK", Age 90 of

Blaine, MN passed away on May 27, 2011. Born 1920 in Glenwood, Iowa. He was an Air Corps Pilot, Captain in WWII. He worked for Northwestern Bell Telephone Company for 38 years. Enjoyed wood working and playing golf. He loved his country and his family.

MCALLISTER, RICHARD ELAYER, was born June 3, 1922, Wayne County, Mo. He died June 13, 2011. He entered the U.S. Army Reserve in 1940 and joined the Army Air Corps in February 1942. Richard was involved in the Air Offensive European Campaigns as a medic for the 303rd Bomb Group, 359 Medical Group. For this service he was awarded the Bronze Star.

MCHUGH, THOMAS F., June 8 1920 – June 27 – 2011. The leader of a large family was loved by his wife of 62 years and his seven children. Born in NJ, he graduated from Seton Hall Prep School and attended Seton Hall College. He served in the Army Air Corp as a second lieutenant during WWII.

MCCULLOCH, OLIVER "MAC", July 11, 1929 – July 26, 2011. Proud member of the Air Force.

MCHUGH, THOMAS F., June 8 1920 – June 27 – 2011. The leader of a large family was loved by his wife of 62 years and his seven children. Born in NJ, he graduated from Seton Hall Prep School and attended Seton Hall College. He served in the Army Air Corp as a second lieutenant during WWII.

MEE, WILLIAM W., 88, passed away August 27, 2011. He was a former New Canaan resident, from Hastings on Hudson, N.Y., Mr. Mee was a captain in the United States Army Air Corps, where he flew a B-17 Bomber in the 385th BG and was decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross.

MOHR, STANLEY J., Age 83

Born: April 22, 1925, Bellvue, Kentucky, Passed away November 20, 2011, Fort Thomas, Kentucky. He was married 60 years to JoAnn Fischer. A waist gunner with the 466th BG, 785 Squadron, he flew 27 combat missions from 31 January 1945 - 21 April, 1945.

MURPHY, JAMES F., Engineer/Top Turret Gunner on the Streimer Crew, 385th BG, died 28 September 2011.

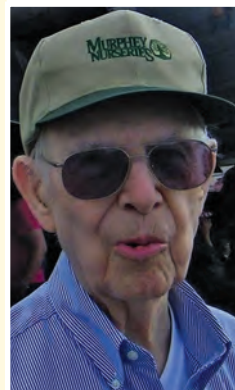
NELSON, ARTHUR JOSEPH, Dec 28, 1930 - June 15, 2011. Born in Pequot Lakes, MN. After graduation from high school, Art served in the United States Air Force. Retired after 30 plus years at Honeywell. Preceded in death by his wife, Edie. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, and was much loved by his family.

NUSSBAUM, CEDRIC, passed away on 9/10/11. Member of the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, (AFEES). "May his memory be eternal" John Katsaros, President, Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, Remembering the Crew of "Our Bay Bee" 95thBG/335BS

PEED, PHILIP ARCHIE, 89, lifelong resident of Roswell, passed away. Philip was born November 8, 192. He trained as a pilot; however, he was unable to complete his pilot training and was certified as a bombardier on B-17 aircraft. Sent to Germany as part of the 8th Air Force/303rd Bombardment Wing, Philip flew 6 missions against the Nazi regime until his plane was shot down on 'Black Thursday' – Oct. 14, 1943 – in the infamous raid



**Richard Elayer,
McAllister**



James F. Murphy



Philip Archie Peed

on the ball bearing factories of Schweinfurt. He was captured by the Germans and spent 18 months as a POW until liberated by forces under the command of Gen. George Patton. During his internment, Philip took classes taught by fellow inmates in accounting and bookkeeping, which became his vocation for the rest of his life.

PRESTIDGE, HOWARD A., Age 92, died June 6, 2011 in McAllen, TX. He was a WWII Veteran, service in the Army Air Corps. Retired from Koch Refinery.

PRETTI, CHARLES "CHUCK" H., 92, of Milton, Massachusetts, passed away on September 27, 2011. He served as a B-17 Aero Repairs Mechanic with the 8th Air Force, 91st BG (H), BAD No. 1 Burtonwood, Mary Ann Site, Hanger 5, from 1943-1946. He was a life member of The Burtonwood Association and The Eighth Air Force Historical Society.

PYLES, MAX, 20th Fighter Group, 79th Fighter Squadron, Kingscliffe, 8th AF, USAA, Flt. Ch/ Crew Chief

RASMUSSEN, MARVIN R., (March 16, 1925- May 27, 2011) of the 381st BG, 533 BS 8th AF Pilot

RICHARDSON, R. PAUL, Dec 21, 1920 – Sept 26, 2011

A Father's Prayer
Mender of toys
Leader of boys
Changer of fuses
Kisser of bruises
Bless him, dear Lord.

Mover of couches
Soothe of ouches
Pounder of nails
Teller of tales
Bless him, dear Lord.

Hanger of screens
Counselor of teens
Fixer of bikes
Embracer of tykes



Pretti, Charles
"Chuck" H.



Sadler, James K.



Swierczynski,
Edward



George Weaver

Help him, O Lord

Raker of leaves
Cleaner of eaves
Dryer of dishes
Fulfiller of wishes
Bless Him, O Lord.

SADLER, JAMES K., 91, of Gatesville passed away October 1, 2011 in Gatesville.

SADLER, JAMES K., was born in Killeen, Texas on October 6, 1919. James was with the 8th Air Force, 358 Bomber Squadron where he was a gunner flying on B-17 bombers. James was wounded in combat, decorated with the Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart and Air Medal.

James had established his home in Venezuela so he stayed and worked with the Venezuelan Oil Company until his retirement in 1992. James service to the Venezuelan Oil Company was recognized when he was awarded the highest honor given by the Venezuelan Government. James married his wife, Magali in Venezuela

SEXTON, FRANK C. passed away August 24, 2011, born in Cleveland, Ohio. He was a gunner on a B17 that was shot down on April 11th, 1944. He spent the next 13 months as a POW in Stalag XVIIIB and was liberated by General Patton's 3rd Army. In June 1947 Frank married Margaret Devney and they had three children.

SOLBERG, JOHN Q., Age 72, of Chanhassen, passed away on July 3, 2011. Born on March 4, 1939 in Lanesboro, MN. John grew up in Lanesboro

and was the fourth generation of Solberg's Food Market and Lockers. He enjoyed sharing fond memories of his days in the grocery business. He joined the Air National Guard as a reservist and as a full-time civilian employee until his retirement in 1996. He ended his career as a Chief Master Sergeant and Senior Enlisted Advisor to Adjutant General Gene Andreotti. Even after retirement, John was very devoted to his country and to the military.

SWIERCZYNSKI, EDWARD, of Harrison, MI passed away on September 15, 2011. Born June 1, 1922 in Nanticoke, PA. He served in the 303rd BG "Hells Angels" during World War II serving 2 1/2 years in the European Theater as a Corporal.

SWINBURNE, BERNARD "BERNIE" H., 89, passed away March 25, 2011.

In World War II he was a bombardier in the 8th Air Force. He was a POW in France, held by the Germans for 12 months, and was awarded the Purple Heart. He was a Life Member of the 91st Bombardment Group and Life Member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society.

W E A V E R , GEORGE, 389th BG, from Dayton, Ohio passed away September 21, 2011. George was a B-24 pilot, completing 20 missions. He happily spent his retirement as a volunteer for the National Museum of the US Air Force.

WEIR, GORDON WHITNEY, passed away October 5, 2011. Born Oct. 9, 1922 in Massachusetts, he moved to Southern California in his teens. Gordon served as a lead navigator in B-24s and B-17s in the 861st Squadron, 493rd Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, 1944-45. During one of his 30 missions, of the 12 planes in his squadron that took for Germany, only two returned. One of those carried Gordon back to his base in England.

WILLIAM, LEE CUPP, - age 87, of Northfield, died March 2, 2011. William joined



Bernard "Bernie" H.
Swinburne

the Army Air Corps in 1942.

He became a ball turret gunner on a B-24 which was shot down in Belgium on June 14, 1944. For 11 weeks he was hidden and fed by Belgian and French farmers with whom he developed lasting friendships. After being captured by the Germans in August 1944, he as a German prisoner in Poland until the end of the war in Europe. Years later he wrote the book people had been urging him to write: "A Wartime Journey: Bailing Out Over Belgium." He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Penny, and his two children.

WHEATON, STANLEY R., Age 96 of Elk River, MN passed away on July 30, 2011. Stanley was the CEO of First National Bank of Elk River, past-president of the MN Bankers ASSN, Grand Master of the Elk River Masonic Lodge and a Captain in the US Army Air Corps during WWII.

ANDY ROONEY

WWII war correspondent, died 5 Nov 11 from surgery complications. He was over 90 years old.

Andy flew at least one mission with the 385th BG as a waist gunner on the Cerrone crew in B-17 serial No. 42-5902, named Lady Liz. He describes this mission in his book, Air Gunner, where he introduces us to several members of this crew.

Andy Rooney continued as a well known broadcaster on TV. Many of us awaited his comments on CBS's 60 minutes. He expressed a philosophy that we WW II, 8th AF veterans could very well relate to and endorse!



Andy Rooney

JUST A COMMON SOLDIER

He was getting old and paunchy, his hair falling out fast,
He sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.
It was of a war in which he fought, of the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies, THEY were the heroes....every one.
Though to his neighbors his tales had become a joke, his Legion friends
Listened, for they knew of where he spoke.
We shall hear his tales no longer, for Old Bill has passed away,
The world is a bit poorer, for a soldier died today.
He will not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
You see, Old Bill lived quite an ordinary and uneventful life.
He held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own way,
The world will not take note of his passing, although a soldier died today.

If we are not able to do him honor while he is here with us to accept the
Praise, at the very least may we give to him
homage after the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a simple headline in our town's paper would pay,
Our country is in mourning
A Soldier Died Today

Author Unknown

Submitted by Joe G. Lawrence

Thank you Gary L. Moncur (303rd Bomb Group "Hell's Angels" Historian & "The Molesworth Pilot" Editor) for submitting some of the Obits for the Taps in this 8th Air Force News Magazine

Enclosed are names of 466 BG, 785 Sq. crew #565, members that have passed away, please list them in Taps:

JOHN C. WELSH - Pilot - Ohio
HAROLD K. JORDAN - Co-Pilot - Florida
EDWARD W. WINER - Navigator - Florida
VINCE E. PALMER - Flt. Engineer - Minnesota
DONALD DOWDELL - Radio Operator - New York
HERMAN BURNELL YOUNG - Armor Gunner - Louisiana, all completed 30 missions.

See page 259 - Attebridge Arsenal.
 I do not know about the other crew members.

Yours truly, Harold Dietz

Surviving Crew Member, maybe the last?
 I also flew with crew #545 - John Geority -P and finished 26 missions with crew #574 Bernard J. Smolka - P.
 Pages 104 and 229 - Attenbridge Arsenal.

Impaled on the Horns of a Dilemma

While waiting in the pilot's seat for our crew members to arrive and take their stations, in our B-17, I noticed Wally, our waist gunner, was a little late and turned up slightly disheveled. Anyhow they all checked in, and we taxied out to the runway, got the green light from the control tower and took off with a full gas load and bomb load.

Unbeknownst to any of the crew, Wally had fallen into a slit trench while running down to the flight line and unknowingly shorted out his electrically heated flight suit. Anyhow, everything seemed to be going along OK as we reached altitude, slid into our place in the formation of thirty-six B-17s and headed out across the English Channel with other groups in bomber-stream formation.

Heading southeast, we crossed the Belgian border at Ostend, cut across the top of Luxembourg, then headed east to enter Germany through the Frankfurt flak-free corridor. This was soon after, the Battle of the Bulge in December 1944 and winter was still with us as one of the fiercest and coldest in fifty-five years.

I forgot our target for this day, but it wasn't too far inside Germany. Probably the marshaling yards at Mannheim. The allies had yet to reach and cross the Rhine River. We had not penetrated too far into Germany when I got a call on the intercom from the radio man saying that our waist gunner's oxygen mask and chest were covered with ice and he was shivering badly.

I called the waist and asked, "How are you doing back there, Wally?" All he said was, "I'm cold." I looked at the outside temperature and it read 65 degrees below zero.

"Do you think you can make it to the target?" I asked.

"I don't know." was all he said.

All of a sudden I realized we had a problem here, and were faced with a dilemma. Should we continue on to the target and take a chance of coming out on the other side of the flak barrage all in one piece in which case we would certainly be going back to England with a frozen, dead waist gunner in the fuselage? The chances of our coming out on the other side of that flak barrage was problematical anyhow. We'd be clay pigeons and if we made it, it would only be due to the luck of the draw. If we went down it would be the loss of nine men unless some of us got to bail out.

If we aborted the mission and tried to get back to England alone, the chances of being attacked by enemy aircraft was more than likely. The Luftwaffe would love to catch a lone B-17 in the skies over Germany! They could chew us up like chopped liver. But there would be one thing in our favor. We could fight back! We had thirteen fifty caliber machine guns on board and a full crew including Wally. There was another option to consider, however. We could hook a parachute on to Wally's parachute harness and let him bail out and hope the Germans



would take care of him. But that was risky because farmers or the Nazi youth could pitch-fork him or beat him up. We were certainly impaled on the horns of a dilemma! A decision had to be made and made quickly before penetrating too far into Germany.

I got on the intercom and called the crew. Certainly they knew the situation by now. "Pilot to crew, what do you think?" On other situations I had asked the crew the same question. The ball turret gunner was apparently the

spokesman for the crew and he came back with the same answer he had on other occasions, "It's up to you chief!"

This was the correct answer and it could not have been any other. As Harry Truman said when he became president, "The buck stops here and certainly the decision was up to me, the pilot! The buck stopped with me! My mind was numb struggling for a decision. Do we keep going or do we abort the mission?"

Before I knew it, I banked the plane off to the left leaving the formation, almost doing a split-S. We lost altitude fast and got as close to tree-top level as we could so Wally could thaw out and we could dodge enemy aircraft if attacked. We worked our way back through the flak-free corridor of Frankfurt and crossed Luxembourg, Belgium and the Channel to good old England, thankful that we had not been attacked. Strangely enough I forgot all about the bombs and landed with a full bomb load! My friends said they didn't think that was too good a thing to do. At least we saved the tax payers some money, and Wally survived to fly with us throughout our combat tour. Unfortunately, after explanations made to Lt. Colonel of our group, we did not get credit for that mission even though we had been inside enemy territory for some time.

For a long time I felt very uneasy about having left the formation and aborting the mission. Maybe a psychologist could figure out why and come up with an explanation. But a number of years later, I read somewhere that another pilot had a very similar situation, and he too aborted the mission to save his freezing crewman. After reading about his experience, I felt a lot better knowing I wasn't the only one to have done the same thing.

About 1975, I received a phone call from Wally's wife. She told me that Wally had been on a business trip in Indiana and had stayed over night at a motel. He woke up one morning with a swollen face. Two days later he was dead. He was bitten on the face by a Recluse Spider, known to be a very poisonous spider.

**Submitted by Dick Sanborn
Author of *One Night in London*
94th BG 410th Squadron**

How About It?

WHY WORRY?

I read somewhere the statement that *"worry is pain about the present.... it is like sitting in a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but it doesn't get you anywhere."* There is no doubt that all of us spends a lot of our life-time in the rocking chair. Why is this? Well, in the first place, we are human beings and we live in an environment of uncertainty. Life is faced with many challenges and we make many choices. The outcome of the decisions we make often come back to haunt us and then we want to blame God or someone else while we worry about the results. We do worry. We meet friends and the standard greeting is, *"Hi, how are you doing?"* We often glibly respond, *"I'm great and how about you?"* We answer a question with a question. We should respond by *"... How am I doing???? in comparison to what?"*

Every day is a challenge and when each day comes to a close, like it or not, we have lived by faith, even if we don't give any credit to it. Events happening daily are unique to each one of us and those events are a constant concern. This raises the question raised by Jesus about our life, ***"Do not worry, saying what shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear?" (Matt.6:31b NIV).*** God knows what you need, so why worry? He declares that we must seek him first and all of the needs of our life will be supplied. He tells us, ***"Therefore, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own."*** (Matt.6:34 NIV).

It was on November 5, 1944, the 466th Bomb Group was briefed to bomb a concrete fortress near Metz, France, the secondary target was the marshalling yards in Karlsruhe, Germany. There was heavy cloud cover

which obscured the primary target. The secondary target was selected and attacked. Upon returning, one crew reported in the debriefing session that the flak was intense but they received little or no damage. The bombardier reported that *"they clobbered the target"*. The pilot said *"Nothing happened"*, the crew laughed and they were off to the chow hall, chalking up another mission completed. To them it was an 'uneventful day.' A second crew on the same mission drew flak at the initial point, lost airspeed and altitude when an engine was damaged and the prop could not be 'feathered'. They fell behind, made a 180 degree U turn to try to reach friendly territory. They passed over enemy lines at a low altitude, took a near burst of flak which ruptured the gas tanks filling the bomb bay with fumes. A liberated Luftwaffe base in France was within flying range, they landed with the left landing gear strut shot away, the tire was in shreds, the plane was demolished but all of the crew was safe. A third aircraft of the same Group that day was severely damaged but they were able to cross the channel, heading back to Halesworth where they crashed in a field due to engine failure. Three crewmen dead and the rest were severely wounded. The same mission but different results.

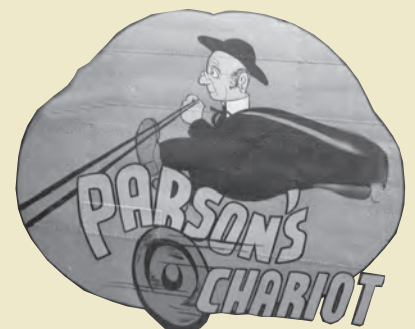
God has given each of us another day to experience. It won't be exactly like the other fellows but don't spend your time in a rocking chair going nowhere. Your journey today will be different from mine but we are told ***"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it". (Psalms 118:24 KJV).*** How? Thank Him for each single day that He gives you! Praise Him and sing, you don't need to be an accomplished opera star to do this. Praise Him for your health (if it is good or not so good) for he will strengthen you. Praise Him for enjoyment and the fun-things in life. God has a sense of humor



Earl Wassom

over our antics, why can't we laugh? Praise Him for friends, not everyone will like you and there are those you don't like, but enjoy those whom God puts in your path. Praise Him for the tears he gives you once in awhile, they will refresh you and then you can move on. Praise Him for the material gifts He bestows upon you, list them one-by-one. Praise Him for the songs that come in the night! Praise Him, greet Him every day for He is always anxious to have a conversation with you. Why would He be interested in you and me? This is beyond my comprehension but His Word assured us that he is always concerned and desires to be involved in our lives. Try Him and see how he reveals Himself to you.

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





8th AF News

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

P.O. Box 956, Pooler, GA 31322



**Merry Christmas to all!
and to all..
A Good Flight!!**

