

December 2013



# 8TH AF NEWS

Volume 14 Number 4 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

A black and white photograph of a soldier smiling from behind a barbed wire fence. To the right of the soldier is a large, decorated Christmas tree with various ornaments and lights. The scene is set outdoors, possibly in a military camp or prison.

Christmas  
behind the wire





December 2013

# 8TH AF NEWS

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"



## OFFICERS

### President

Darrel Lowell (Becky) 2014  
39 Peregrine Crossing  
Savannah, GA 31411  
Tel. (912) 598-7334  
ddl333@bellsouth.net

### Vice President

Dr. Nancy J. Toombs 2014  
5213 North Cedar Street  
North Little Rock, AR 72116  
Tel. (501) 681-3126  
chase221@swbell.net

### Secretary

Joe Garber (Joan) 2015  
46 Coquina Ridge Way  
Ormond Beach, FL 32174  
Tel: (386) 672-5359.  
paljoe2@aol.com

### Treasurer

David Nowack (Lois) 2017  
4878 College View Court  
Schnecksville, PA 18078  
Tel. (610) 799-4640  
DLNowack@ptd.net

## 8TH AFHS NATIONAL OFFICE

**Membership Manager** Debra Kujawa

PO Box 956  
Pooler, GA 31322  
(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

## MIGHTY EIGHTH AF MUSEUM STORE

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

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Donald E. Casey (Alice) 2016  
5555 N. Sheridan Road #811  
Chicago, IL 60640  
(773) 878-0870  
ARCDEC@aol.com

Robert "Bob" Moses 2015  
413 North Washington Street  
Brownsville, TN 38012-2064  
(731) 772-3333  
bobcheryl87@yahoo.com

COL Edward "Ed" Wexler 2017  
8 E Back St.  
Savannah, GA 31419-3343  
912-308-2940  
EWexler06@comcast.net

## CHAPTER/UNIT LIAISON

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

## DIRECTORS EMERITUS

Richard Baynes.....Earl Wassom  
Thomas S. Parsons .....John Pearson .  
Ivan McKinney

## EDITOR

Debra Kujawa (Joseph)  
29 Posey Street  
Savannah, GA 31406  
912-748-8884  
News@8thAFHS.org

## BEHIND THE SCENES

Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines  
2090 Cairo Bend Road  
Lebanon, TN 37087  
615-418-1200  
News@8thAFHS.org

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Courtesy of the National Museum of  
the Mighty Eighth Air Force

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# Notes From the President's Pen



**Darrel D. Lowell**  
**President**

It has been almost 4 months since our 39th Reunion came to a close here in Savannah. For those members who were unable to join us for that historic event, we trust that you have enjoyed the September magazine along with all the articles and photos. Our turnout for the Reunion was terrific and the support we received for this reunion was outstanding.

As reported in the magazine during the closing Board Meeting, I was elected President of the Society to serve for 2013/14. This is obviously a great honor and I look forward to serving the Society in this important capacity. You may recall the question I proposed in my initial President's comments was **"...and where do we go from here?"** I have given this query serious consideration and have decided that, at this point in the Society's history, we are faced with multiple challenges. In this regard I would like to list a few of the issues which I feel need to be addressed during the coming year.

## **As a bit of background:**

While I was too young to serve during WWII, I proudly served 4 years in the United States Air Force as a B-47 Stratojet pilot during the Cold War years—post Korea. I have been

actively involved with the *8th Air Force Historical Society* and the *National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force* for nearly 20 plus years. During the last seven years I have served on the Historical Society Board of Director—six of those years as your Treasurer. One might easily conclude from all of this experience that I have developed a great deal of insight into the overall mission and operation of both organizations. At this point in time, I feel we have three areas where we need to focus our attention during the next fiscal year:

## **Review Relationship with National Museum**

While the Society has played an important role in the establishment, growth, and development of the *National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force* during the past 20 years we need to improve on this relationship. Even though our mission is virtually identical to theirs, **"To honor and preserve the memories of our 8th Air Force service men and women who have served and continue to serve for all generations..."** at times we seem to be working in competing areas and opposite directions. I feel strongly that we need to work more closely as a team, which I believe would enable us to be more productive in our efforts to accomplish positive results. We are meeting with the Museum leadership to determine if such a combined effort might be both positive and possible.

## **Explore selling sponsorship space in the AF News magazine**

Many times during the past years as Directors we have discussed and debated the possibility of selling Corporate Sponsorships in the *AF News magazine*. As a result of our declining membership and the resulting loss of revenue, the time has now come to finish exploring this issue and make

a commitment to such a program. Therefore the Society, on a limited basis will offer, starting with the March 2014 issue of the *8th AF News*, the opportunity for large fortune 400 Companies, who have had serious and meaningful relationships with the US military and particularly the 8th Air Force, sponsorship space in the magazine. Should this effort be successful we anticipate the generation of meaningful revenue which will help defray a large portion of the production cost of the *8th AF News*.

## **Committees have been appointed to study the following areas:**

- ☐ Develop a 5 year business plan as to areas we need to address during the next 5 years
- ☐ Recommend ways the Society can increase membership
- ☐ Review ways we can improve our method and ability to support information/research requests from our members
- ☐ Develop an out-reach program to support the existing Chapters, Wings and Bomb Groups still operating within the Society network.

We expect that these issues will be discussed in some detail at the Society's Directors meeting being held in Nashville, TN February 28, 2014.

While it seems impossible that another year has slipped by, on behalf of all of the Board of Directors of the Historical Society, I would like to wish all of you a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous Holiday Season!

**Darrel D. Lowell**  
**President 8th AFHS**

# Editor's Message

## GO FOWARD

“Where do we go from here?” Only six words, but they pose a pretty powerful question from Darrel Lowell, our new Society president about the future of this organization. The answer isn’t all that complicated, really. I think it natural to do what the 8th Air Force has done since the very beginning: **go forward**. Now, I realize that...“your saying so don’t make it so” as Mark Twain put so eloquently, but I also know that getting your mind set to the proper, **positive** coordinates does. So, let’s start with some facts, add in some solutions, and develop a plan to support our efforts!

## FOCUS OF THE MAGAZINE...

From the time the 8th A F News was just a few pages during the early days of the Society, to the powerful, full-color publication we have today, this magazine has been foundational in keeping the stories of the men and women of the 8th Air Force alive. Each issue contains pivotal moments of history—mostly written as first person narratives by veterans describing not just facts, but sharing raw feelings and emotions with others, sometimes for the very first time since the experience. These stories are what make the A F News unique—“soul-stirring” someone once told me and I totally agree. In this issue which we call, “Christmas: behind the wire,” we’ve published a trio of stories from men who spent Christmas 1944 as POWs in three different Stalags. Each story is unique and powerful, I know they will move you. What we have come to realize is, these powerful stories and first person narratives have continued to be experienced and written *since* WWII and need a voice to be heard. The 8th A F News is *still* that voice.

The 8th Air Force was born in war but it was never defeated. The 8th Air Force has persistently engaged in combat missions as well as support missions on a global scale in Korea, Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm and now, under Air Force Global Strike Command since February 2010, the 8th Air Force has continued to control strategic bomber [B-2 Spirit and B-52 Stratofortress] assets throughout the United States and overseas.

Fact: The stories of the 8th are still being written. They need to be told and we will tell them!

## WHAT’S COMING...

As part of my commitment to the 8th Air Force Historical Society and the 8th A F News magazine, I have reached out to the command staff at Global Strike Command at Barksdale AFB—current home of the 8th Air Force. In this issue, we are introducing the new commanding general of the 8th Air Force, Major General Scott A. Vander Hamm. In the March 2014 issue, we will begin running the first in a four-part series of stories about the 8th Air Force’s involvement in Vietnam with Operation Arc Light culminating in the December 2014 issue with Operation Linebacker II. Again, these are powerful stories which we will tell along with the amazing stories from WWII that everyone has come to expect from this publication.

For the first 40 years of the Historical Society, our support has come primarily from the veterans of WWII. But, as I am reminded daily by the continuing stream of calls and emails, time marches on for many of our WWII veterans and members. While I am deeply saddened and grieve each and every loss, I know that they can’t live forever—no matter how badly we wish they could. Their spirit, that unconquerable force within each of them will never die as long as we share their stories with the world...and as long as the 8th continues to globally defend this nation from harm, new and amazing stories will continue to emerge. And we will tell them.

I hope all of you are ready to “go forward.” Because, as my buddy, Mark Twain said, “Now you said you’d do it, now let’s see you do it.”

I wish all of you a very, Merry Christmas or Happy Hanukkah and a most Prosperous and Happy New Year!

**Debra D. Kujawa**  
Editor



**Debra Kujawa**



# TH AF NEWS

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, a 501(c)3. The 8th AF NEWS is distributed to members of the Society and is not for public sale.

The home office is located at:

29 Posey Street, Savannah, GA 31406 or P O Box 956, Pooler, GA 31322-0956



# Membership Minute

## Just ONE!

Wow! Where did 2013 go? It seems like yesterday we were just getting acquainted and now another year is just about over. With a new year comes opportunity and for the Society, that means an opportunity to renew your membership by either dropping a check into the blue envelope in the center of this issue or, if you prefer to pay by credit card, simply fill out the additional information on the envelope; seal it and drop it in the mail. (Please don't forget the stamp!) You can also join or renew online or by phone with a credit card. Please consider giving Society memberships as gifts to friends and family members this year! It's a truly unique gift which no one would ever want to return.

I'm sure all of you have noticed the steady increase in the number of death notifications we've been publishing in the Taps section. With each passing moment, we lose another WWII veteran and/or Society member. As our membership rolls are reduced, our income is reduced as well. That's why we encourage everyone to pay their dues as soon as possible so that we can plan and budget responsibly.

I urge every one of you to help us grow our membership! If each of you brings just ONE person into the Society, we will DOUBLE our membership! I'll bet everyone knows a teacher, an attorney, a doctor, a pastor or rabbi—someone who would appreciate learning and reading about the incredible 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force and the men and women who are or have been a part of it. Just one more member can mean a world of difference.

A special word of thanks to all of the friends and family members who have named the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society as the recipient for memorial donations when a loved one has passed. It has been heart warming to receive notes from those who wanted to help create a lasting memorial through a financial contribution to the Society.

Again, 2014 will be full of promise and opportunity, but only with your support.

**Thank you!**

**Debra D. Kujawa**  
Membership Manager  
8th Air Force Historical Society



**Debra Kujawa**

• 29 Posey Street • Savannah, GA 31406 • 912.748.8884 •  
• [membershipmanager@8thafhs.org](mailto:membershipmanager@8thafhs.org) • [News@8thAFHS.org](mailto:News@8thAFHS.org) •

## Behind the Scenes



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

**I**t's the most wonderful time of the year!! The crisp air and changing leaves stir up the holiday spirit in all of us. No matter what kind of year you had, there is always plenty to be "thankful" for.

This mother/daughter team is very "thankful" that we have had the opportunity to help publish and share your stories through 56 issues of this national 8<sup>th</sup> AF News magazine and we are excited about 2014!

Nashville is the place to be in 2014. Mark your calendars for Oct 9-13, 2014. Detailed reunion information will be in the March magazine.

**Santa Claus is coming to town**  
**in just a few weeks!!**

*Dear Santa,*  
*"Is it too late to be good?"*

### PLEASE NOTE:

We welcome all stories and photos that you would like to share with our readers. PLEASE do NOT send original documents or photos as we cannot guarantee their return. We encourage you to send digital images when possible.

**Merry Christmas & Happy New Year**  
**Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines**



**NEW EMAIL & CONTACTS**  
**[News@8thAFHS.org](mailto:News@8thAFHS.org)**

**Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines**

2090 Cairo Bend Road  
Lebanon, TN 37087

**[News@8thAFHS.org](mailto:News@8thAFHS.org)**

**and/or**

**Debra Kujawa**

29 Posey Street  
Savannah, GA 31406  
912-748-8884

**[News@8thAFHS.org](mailto:News@8thAFHS.org)**

**MATERIAL DEADLINE**

**Jan 15th, 2013**  
**for the upcoming 2014**  
**March 8th AF News**

# SAVED BY THE BALL

Dennis Werth



*Capt Berton Werth, standing far right, and his B-24 crew.*

**B**erton Melvin Werth was a baseball player. He had always played the game, and was so good at it that he planned to try out for a Cleveland Indians farm club, the Flint (Michigan) Arrows. Then history threw him a curve: the Pearl Harbor attack.

At age 18 in 1942, Werth hung up his glove, left home in Unionville, Michigan, and became an Army Air Corps Cadet. Training at Davis-Monthan Field in Tucson, Arizona, and at Alamogordo, New Mexico, he earned his wings and flew to Britain as a bombardier and navigator on a B-24 Liberator bomber.

Werth flew 65 missions with the 801st/492d Bombardment Group over Germany and France, including some for the French Underground. In February 1945, four months shy of his 22nd

birthday, he became the youngest captain in the Eighth Air Force at that time. He ended the war wearing a Distinguished Flying Cross, an Air Medal, and a French Croix de Guerre with Palm. When asked for the story behind his Distinguished Flying Cross, Werth dodged the question: "I saved a woman. One night I was out with two women and I saved one 'til the next night."

Once the shooting stopped in Europe, Werth's thoughts turned back to baseball. There was time for organized games at Harrington Airfield, Northamptonshire, England, where he was stationed. One day, Werth's crew was scheduled for a practice flight to determine how much fuel it would take to fly home over the Atlantic. But it was Werth's turn to pitch. So, his colonel told him to play; he would add Werth's

approximate weight to the fuel calculation by slide rule.

The ball field was right next to the runway. As soon as the plane took off, Werth saw it was in trouble. The number 4 engine went bad and the crew had to cut it, but the copilot may have cut the number 3 engine instead. With two engines out on one side, the plane went down.

After all those combat missions, a baseball game saved Werth's life.

Capt Berton M. Werth, 90 passed away on September 27, 2013.  
He completed 65 missions.



# Celebrating Milestones

**Col Ed Wexler, USAF, Ret.**

American Legion Post 135 in Savannah, GA is planning a series of commemorative events in 2014 to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the building where the 8th Air Force was activated on January 28, 1942. At that time, Col. Asa Duncan was appointed as Commanding Officer of the 8th Bomber Command. The building was used as a temporary headquarters by Army Air Corps officers who were charged with the responsibility of planning the daylight bombing campaign over Europe. The building was erected as an armory by the Chatham Artillery, at the time a unit of the Georgia militia, later known as the Georgia National Guard, in 1914. The Chatham Artillery still exists as a component of the 118th Field Artillery, Georgia National Guard. The

building was purchase by American Legion Post 135 in 1945. It has been used continuously by the American Legion since that time. Several previous 8th AF events have been held in the building by the Georgia Chapter, 8th Air Force Historical Society. Additionally, WWII memorabilia is displayed in the post restaurant named "Betty Bombers." The building is located in historic downtown Savannah at 1108 Bull Street and is open everyday except Sunday.



**Aviation cadets at the preflight training center near Santa Ana decorate a Christmas tree in a photograph published Dec. 24, 1942. From left, Peter Kaldare, David T. Gunn, Edward Kahill and Loren Gale.**



# HOW MONOPOLY BOARDS

## got second world war prisoners out of jail free

by Martin Hickes

**M**onopoly boards were used by fake charities during the second world war to send maps and messages to prison camps in Nazi-occupied Europe, writes Martin Hickes

That longtime product of Leeds, Monopoly, continues to be a perennial favourite – but during Britain's darkest hour, it was far from just a game.

A wartime plan hatched between the government and John Waddington's, who then manufactured the boards and players' tokens in Wakefield Road, Stourton, saw secret escape maps produced by the company for Allied prisoners of war.

In an especially cunning plan, Monopoly boards were used by fake charities to send the maps and related messages to prison camps in Nazi-occupied Europe. Equipped with the information, numbers of shot-down pilots and other captured servicemen managed to break out and some made their way to neutral countries



and back home.

The system was set in place by MI9, a secret government department responsible for helping prisoners of war and liaising with resistance movements in continental Europe. Section Nine of the British Directorate of Military Intelligence in the War Office, to give it its full name, carried out trials of maps printed by Waddingtons on silk, rayon and tissue paper as early as 1940.

Hiding places included cigarette packets and the hollow heels of flying boots, where the flimsy maps did not rustle suspiciously and in the case of those printed on cloth or mulberry leaf paper, could survive wear and tear and even immersion in water if an aircraft 'ditched' in the sea.

Debbie Hall, formerly of the British Library and now at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, has studied the secret history of the silk maps, and the involvement of the famous Yorkshire firm. She says:

**“In December 1939, MI9, the branch of the secret service responsible for escape and evasion, was set up. It was made clear that it was the duty of all those captured to escape if possible. One man who was behind many of MI9's most ingenious plans, including the Waddington project, was Christopher Clayton Hutton.”**

Waddingtons already had the technology to print on cloth and made a variety of board games, packs of







*A collection of escape aids and gadgets typically supplied via covertly to MI9 to POWs during WWII (courtesy of Royal Air Force Museum, Hendon).*

cards and the like that could be sent to the camps. They began by printing silk maps for supply to air crews, British and later American, and went on to conceal maps inside Monopoly boards, chess sets and packs of cards which could be sent into the prison camps.

Prisoners of war were allowed

to receive parcels from their families and from relief organisations such as the Red Cross. The spooks did not want to compromise the latter and so set up a range of fictitious charitable organisations, often based at fake addresses or bombed buildings, to send games, warm clothing and other small comforts to the prisoners.

One of the major problems of captivity was boredom and games and entertainments were permitted as the guards recognised that if the prisoners were allowed some diversions they would be less troublesome. Once several Monopoly boards had got safely through, MI9 and Waddingtons developed a code to show which map was hidden in the set.

A special code was even used to indicate to the ministry which map was concealed inside a particular game so that it would be sent to a prisoner of war camp in the appropriate area. Hall says:

**“A full stop after Marylebone Station, for instance, meant Italy; a stop after Mayfair meant Norway, Sweden and Germany, and one after Free Parking meant Northern France, Germany and its frontiers. “Straight” boards were marked “Patent applied for” with a full stop.”**

Present day North Yorkshire county councillor John Watson, from Wetherby, whose father Norman Watson was instrumental in turning Waddingtons into a household name, says:

**“My father was fond of telling tales about Waddingtons part in the war effort. The silk maps were a major feature of such recollections. As I remember it, some of them were used as part of airmen’s uniforms. I also know that the silk had to be specially treated so that it wouldn’t distort through environmental pressures or through time. The Monopoly ones were laminated within the boards.**

He also said that several Monopoly sets were sent out containing tokens made of pure gold to be used by prisoners to pay for assistance with their escapes. One other tale was that, once it was discovered the German guards were not searching the Monopoly sets themselves, real German currency was included in some of the packs of Monopoly banknotes.

These things may just have been exaggerations on my father’s part but I doubt it. He was genuinely





*Continued from page 9*

proud of the company's role during the war and I don't think that he would have needed to embroider the truth."

Another researcher into the subject is Barbara Bond, a graduate of Leeds University and former civilian researcher at the Ministry of Defence who is now pro-chancellor of Plymouth University and past president of the British Cartographic Society. She says:

"MI9's philosophy of "escape-mindedness" was instilled into the members of all three services and the practical application of that philosophy was seen in the production of escape kits and aids to escape such as maps.

Initially the escape kits were in the form of small cigarette tins which contained concentrated food, tape, thread, tiny saws and compasses. The methods of getting the maps through to the prisoners of war were very ingenious. They were hidden in playing cards, pens, pencils, gramophone records, and game boards.

It was a cardinal rule in MI9 that they never used Red Cross parcels. Instead they set up their own cover organisations such as the "Prisoners' Leisure Hours Fund" and the "Licensed Victuallers' Sports Association". These dispatched both ordinary parcels containing clothes and the special ones containing escape aids."

You can read more in the excellent *The Waddingtons Story* by Victor Watson, John Watson's brother and former head of the firm who famously saw off a predatory corporate raid by Robert Maxwell. It is published by Jeremy Mills Publishing.



**Martin Hickes**

The author, Martin Hickes, is an independent journalist and publicist in Yorkshire, United Kingdom, and may be reached at [martin.hickes@talktalk.net](mailto:martin.hickes@talktalk.net)

## CONTINUING THE 8th AF Legacy

Greetings, my fellow 8th Air Force Historical Society members!

My wife Andrea and I want to wish everyone Happy Holidays and Season's Greetings and a quickly approaching 2014, Happy New Year!

This past year has been an interesting one for the Society. We saw the first lady president, Dr. Nancy Toombs, who recently handed the reins over to Darrel Lowell during the Board Meeting in July.

The 39th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion held in Savannah as well as the 100th and 390th Bomb Group reunions were very well attended.

Col Edward "Ed" Wexler was elected to the 8th AFHS Board of Directors.

Sadly, a couple of the Chapters disbanded, but we saw the creation of a Wing in Southern Ontario, Canada. We have also seen where some of our State Wings have continued even though their individual Chapters have disbanded.

We have continued to see a growing interest in the 8th Air Force within the UK and throughout Europe which is very encouraging.

I have been approached by several folks interested in the 8th Air Force and its history. They ask why they should be affiliated with the Society. My reply has always been: "The Society has been in existence for over 38 years...working to keep the memories alive. We are a strong organization committed to supporting this initiative." As a Society, we are constantly exploring ways to promote and strengthen this initiative well into the future--and that is perhaps our biggest challenge.

Everyone is welcome to join with us on this mission. I thank each and every one of you who have contacted me with updates, newsletters, inquiries, events, and the like. We are updating the Society's website regularly with current contacts and information on what is happening within our groups. I will also be updating the Society's YouTube with current events plus!

We want to make sure this country never forgets how its citizens have served and sacrificed since WWII to keep her safe and strong.

Remember to stop and thank a veteran for their service and support the USO.

Cheers,  
Pat Keeley



**Pat Keeley**



## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

Ann Vaughn.....President  
Traci Calvert.....Vice-President  
Bill Varnedoe.....Secretary/Treasurer

The October program was a short video and talk by Howard Polan, our meteorologist from the 352nd FG, 8th AAF. He spoke of his Group's 13th Final Reunion. Howard always said he could just look at a girl and tell weather.

Guest, Jennifer McKinney a teacher, told us of a plan to make a permanent Hall of Heroes display at Sparkman High School with pictures of veterans. She was soliciting pictures and input.

The Chapter Board decided to collect past and present member photographs, pay the entry fee, and make an entry in the Chapter's name. We collected 33 veteran's photos and submitted them along with the information of each as requested. The fee came to \$660.00, more than our Treasury has! We wrote a personal check to cover the deficit.

In preparing the Sparkman High School entry, we noted that we had more veterans from the 100th Bomb Group than from any other one Group in the 8th Air Force! This seemed to defy odds since there were 52 different BG's in the 8th. Everyone "knew" that the 100th had a bad luck reputation, hence its name "The Bloody 100th." Maybe this bigger than normal turn-over came from a story, that was well-known by all 8th AF veterans. The following account, as written by Bill Dixon, a 100BG veteran and a former member of the Chapter, will explain it to some of you non-8th AF folks who haven't heard the details:

"It was at the Camp where we were assigned to our 8th Air Force Group. We had apparently been designated for the 95th Bomb Group because our mail all went there and was then forwarded to the 100th Bomb Group for about the first month. When others at the Camp heard that we were going to the 100th, we heard for the first time about the reputation of the Bloody Hundredth. It was supposed to be the hard luck outfit of the 8th AF.

The oft-told story was that on a mission one of the planes of the 100th had lowered its wheels, a sign of surrender similar to waving a white flag, and, when German fighters came up to

lead the B-17 to a landing, the gunners had shot the fighters down!

The story goes that that B-17 had been shot up and could no longer fly in formation or far with wounded aboard. Its damage included the hydraulic system. This had caused the wheels to lower, unbeknownst to the gunners. After that, the story continues, the Luftwaffe sought out the 100th in revenge on every mission! [The 100BG could be identified by a big Square D painted on the tail.-Ed.] We later learned that the story was apocryphal although it is still brought up every once in a while by someone who served in another Group and at every reunion. But, at least one German Luftwaffe General has said that if he had ever heard of one of his pilots picking out a particular Group, he would have shot him down himself because they didn't have time to waste looking for specific targets....any old U.S. bomber would do!" [Truth was, as shown by post-war statistics, the casualty rate for the 100BG was usual for any Group in the 8thAF, bad! - Ed.] We held a great luncheon meeting on Friday, November 1st at the Sunny Street Café (corner of Slaughter and University Drive). Based on the deficit occurred by the Chapter for the Hall of Heroes submittal, we "passed the hat" in order to bail out the officers and provide a small cushion in the treasury to cover mailing the newsletter and to purchase a wreath for Memorial Day. We also had a lively discussion of the veterans' week activities and the parade on November 11th.

## OREGON CHAPTER

Frank LaSage spoke to our group on August 10, 2013. He served on a PT boat in the Mediterranean for a year and a half during WWII from the end of 1943 through 1944. He later retired from *The Oregonian* with 40 years at various jobs in the newspaper business calling himself a "Jack of all trades and master of none". He also spoke about the restoration of PT-658. This speech is aircraft related since three inline aircraft engines were converted to marine use to power the PT boats. [This information was obtained from the newsletters of Tom Philo and Jerry Ritter.]

Receiving his PT boat training in



*Frank LaSage - Oregon Chapter  
Photo by Tom Philo*

Higgins boats at New Orleans on Lake Pontchartrain, Frank LaSage said, "When they'd turn a boat over to the Navy, our crew had to show the Navy that the boat could go from zero to 42 knots in twenty seconds" or the Navy wouldn't take the boat.

Frank LaSage served as a gunners mate second class on a PT Boat named "The Rambling Wreck" in the Mediterranean where his "first base was Oran and then switched over to what's present-day Libya. Then we were in Sicily. We were involved in the invasion of some parts of Italy. My last base was in Corsica at the port of Bastia."

When asked how his experience compared with the TV show "McHale's Navy", he said, "Well, there were some similarities...but our skipper was twenty-one years old. The average age on my boat was eighteen and a half, so we were just kids. We used to race one another coming back into port to see who'd get back first so we could get the first beer. And quite often—you can't stop a PT boat like you stop a car, obviously—and there are three 'motor macks' [motor machinists mate] below operating these levers to turn the engines to throw the engines into reverse. Sometimes, those levers wouldn't work,

so they'd either hit the pier or have to veer off. The security man was really uptight about that sort of thing going on, but we were all kids."

He said, "A lot of the armament we had onboard was stuff that we would liberate from another branch of the service that was just standing handily by. My boss, the publisher of The Oregonian, was a Marine and Al McCready was another buddy of mine that worked on the paper and he was another PT-boater and we'd come and talk to him about something and he'd say, 'Stop right there you two pirates. I don't want to know what you're going to do. Just do it and keep my fanny out of a sling.' Then when we came to the base here in Portland [Oregon], the skipper told all of his crew, 'Give them what they want. Otherwise, they'll steal it anyway.'

They were able to get within 1500 yards of an enemy ship and then he said they'd drop their "fish" [torpedo] and then "get the heck out of there". For their size the PT boats were "the most heavily-armed craft in the United States Navy". Asked how the torpedo was aimed, he said, "The boat itself aims the torpedo. Initially, those boats had tubes on them and every time you fired a torpedo, there'd be a flash that came out and it was a dead give away to the enemy especially at night. So, true story, two officers sitting in a bar sketched out a device that looks similar to the kind that they used to release a depth charge. The Navy bought the idea. They got rid of the tubes and now you armed the torpedo first and when you released it you pulled this lever and the jaws opened out and the torpedo fell into the water. There's a gyroscope inside of it and two counter operating props. The active range was roughly 2000 yards. The first torpedoes were poor and inaccurate, but they finally got a much better aircraft-style torpedo. Towards the end of the war, we rarely ever used torpedoes. We became more like gunships, especially in the Philippines, and rocket launchers were added." He said overall his service was "marked by long moments of boredom and a few moments of sheer terror".

Frank LeSage is currently a member of "Save the PT Boat Inc" involved

in the renovation, restoration, and maintenance of PT Boat 658.

<http://www.savetheptboatinc.com/>

Submitted by Joan E. Hamilton

## BIRTHPLACE CHAPTER

The 100th BG group reunion held in Savannah, GA October 18 – 19 was an exciting and emotional experience for those of us with close ties to Al Pela, volunteer at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, Birthplace Chapter board member, and his wife, Louise. The reunion group included over 300 people, WWII veterans, their families, Next Gen members, and long-time friends. Upon arrival at the Mighty Eighth, the groups were shown the 100th BG plaque in Division 3, their banner

[square "D" in the Rotunda]; and the 100th BG exhibit in the "Honoring the 8th" area. We also highlighted the picture donated by pilot, Wolff, on the wall over the 17 August 1943, mission to Regensburg, Schweinfurt display and, of course, the impressive 100th BG stained glass window in the Chapel of the Fallen Eagles in the Museum's Memorial Gardens. Following lunch on Friday, all in the Museum went outside to the front of the building to witness Liberty Foundation's B-17 (movie) "Memphis Belle" make three low, but legal passes, overhead. Cheers, applause, and some tears were in evidence by those witnessing the event.

Playtone—the production company owned by Tom Hanks and Steven



The crowd shot shows the veterans eagerly watching for the flyover of the (movie) Memphis Belle B-17 at the National Museum of the Eighth Air Force.

—Photo Courtesy Matt Mabe



Exhibit case for the 100th BG at the Museum.

—Photo Courtesy Matt Mabe



Spielberg—Don Miller [Masters of the Air author], and others, were present, taking pictures and conducting interviews with 100th BG veterans in preparation for the planned HBO ten part series on the Mighty 8th during their stay.

Jan Zdiarsky, a founder and director/volunteer of the Museum of Air Battle Over the Ore Mountains, Kovarska, Czech Republic, on September 11th, 1944, gave a very detailed, informative, and extremely interesting review of that day. About 55 of us, including vets of that mission, and family members on mission 623, witnessed this presentation. Bombers, 1131 of them, plus 440 fighters, were intercepted by an estimated 350 Luftwaffe fighters on their way to ten targets, including Ruhland, on the Czech border.

Twelve B-17s, 100th BG, 350 BS, including the lead aircraft piloted by Cpt. Giles, which included Al Pelas's father, a tail gunner, were all shot down in a little over five minutes when attacked by an estimated 50 fighters—half being ME109s and the other half FW190s. Pela's father's plane was badly damaged with engines out, causing the crew to hit the silk, but miraculously, all survived becoming POWs until the end of the war.

The German ME109 pilots were instructed to keep our fighters occupied while the FW190s were attacking the 350th BS, which was the low squadron in the formation. The FW190 pilots, carrying 30mm shells, were instructed when attacking the tail of a B-17, to hold their fire until 30 meters (100 ft.) from the aircraft, or when "...you see the whites of the tail gunner's eyes." This was reported by German pilots. Interestingly, during this 100th reunion, and during the presentation by Jan, Al Pela met the wife and son of Norbert DePauw, the ball turret gunner, who was just feet away from Al's father, the tail gunner on this aircraft. Very emotional moment. Another emotional event occurred when Zdiarsky presented the Pelas with five burned, melted, corroded parts from his dad's aircraft which were excavated from the crash site in the Ore Mountains.

This Museum, which Jan Zdiarsky has been so instrumental in establishing, is

very unique. They have the benefit of finding crash sites of both "sides" in a small area and interviewing crew members from both "sides." The Germans lost many aircraft as well as pilots due to lack of experience; in many cases, it was their first mission.

Very little was accomplished toward this Museum until after the Cold War ended. However, now many more crash sites have been located, with many artifacts recovered and identified by aircraft and crew members. Jan and his associates have done an outstanding job for both "sides"—German and US families through all of this memorable work and research. It is an unusual opportunity

for enemies, or families of enemies, to meet and become friends.

The Birthplace Chapter congratulates our Museum staff and the restoration crew for the great job in preparing for the "Bloody 100th", just as they did for the 39th Annual Reunion of the 8th Air Force Historical Society in July. We wish to thank Teri Bell (Miss Sophie's) and her staff, and Susan Eiseman from the Mighty Eighth Museum, for helping us provide refreshments and a place to sit for the reunion group.

Bob Buck, President  
Birthplace Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society  
Savannah, GA



*Members from the Georgia Chapter gather around the historical marker in downtown Savannah which indicates the "Birthplace of the Eighth Air Force"*  
—Photo Courtesy Clifford Martin



*From l to r: Col. Ed Wexler, Becky Lowell, Darrel Lowell, Jack Rude (493rd BG), Prilly Taylor, Richard Taylor (both from England), Debra Kujawa, and Henry Hughey*  
—Photo Courtesy Clifford Martin



## 392ND BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

The annual meeting opened with a display of close-order drill by the veterans present, aided by British Army Color Sergeant John Gilbert and current USAF Reservist Ben Jones. President Jim Goar, once a drill instructor, still remembers how to put airmen through their paces and the veterans ably responded.

Welcoming remarks by Jim Goar were followed by the 2AD Fanfare, Pledge of Allegiance, and recitation of the 392nd BG Prayer by chaplain Tom Perry.

### PRESIDENT'S AWARDS

Jim Goar presented the President's Award for "extraordinarily meritorious achievement" to Tom and Jill Scott, Trustees of the Wendling Memorial and longtime caretakers of the grounds; Toni Weed, who was our interface with Beeston School in the early days; Henriette Thomason, who was PX Coordinator for many years; and Teddy Egan, who helped get the organization started and was long-time chairman of the Membership Committee. Jim noted that at its peak, the 392nd BGMA had about 1,300 members thanks in large part to Teddy's efforts. Plaques will be mailed to the recipients. Statistics. Joe Ortiz (576th Sqdn tail gunner, POW 13 Nov 1943) recently asked about the 392nd's original crews. I used copies of the military orders that sent crews from the 576th, 578th and 579th Sqdns overseas, plus a roster for the 577th when it was in Topeka, Kansas, before going overseas to define who the "original crews" were. I then went through my records and determined as best I could what happened to those 350 men. Their fates:

- 38% were killed in action
  - 28% completed their combat tours
  - 16% became POWs
  - 9% were transferred out of the 392nd, fates unknown
  - 3% did not finish their combat tours with the 392nd due to hospitalization
  - 3% were interned in a neutral country
  - 2% did not finish their combat tours for unknown reasons
- Disregarding those who were transferred out, less than one third of the 392nd's original

350 airmen completed their combat tours. The early crews did indeed pay a heavy price.

### CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

by Tom Perry, 576th Sqdn Armorer

But we...shall be remember'd;  
The creation of the world is recorded for us in The Holy Bible in the book of Genesis, Chapter 1, which starts with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Gospel According to John in the New Testament, Chapter 1, says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." Verse 14 continues, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us ...full of grace and truth. He came to give us Eternal Life through His death, paying the penalty for our individual sin on The Cross."

I look forward to meeting you in the air when Jesus returns for us!

## OHIO CHAPTER

Met on November 2nd at the Ramada Plaza Hotel in Columbus, Ohio.

The guest speaker was Mike J. Pohorilla who served in 385th Bomb Group as a navigator. His plane was shot down on his 18th mission, and was able to return to base where he went on to complete 35 missions.

Pohorilla highlighted statistics and some history of the 8th Air Force along with some of his war experiences. He also discussed who is a hero. He said a hero involves patriotism, discipline, spirituality, and sense of humor.

The Chapter will meet again in May.

Chris Weber

Secretary, Ohio Chapter

## WISCONSIN CHAPTER

This year the Wisconsin Chapter's annual Fly For Freedom encompassed two major events: a flight for WWII veterans aboard B-24 and B-17 bombers and a bus trip, museum tour, honorary dinner and big band dance for all of our members.

With thunderstorms, high winds and rain falling steadily, dashing any hopes of our fly boys experiencing once again their dream of flying aboard their B-17 or B-24, our boys made the best of it gathering in the small airport lounge. They exchanged war stories of times gone by, a time to reminisce, a time to share and reflect on missions and life thereafter. It became apparent after a long day of waiting for the sky to clear, that our mission would be delayed another day-- Yet they did not give up--as it would have been the case back in World War II. The mission was aborted and was rescheduled Saturday morning-- the troops headed homeward to again arise at crack of dawn on Saturday to newly attempt their mission.

As the B-17 started up her engine, one half of our boys hurried to the bomb bay and clambered inside, strapped in and prepared for take off and taxied to the end of the runway.

Then the B-24 crew entered the the rear, bending underneath through the small belly hatch. Many onlookers watched the determination of these men 87-93 years of age clambering into the hatch of which the average 20 year old would find difficult -- truly breath taking... one step at a time the pilots helped with arms from inside and Eighth Air Force Historical Society members and family assisted from the outside lifting each leg up the small steel steps. Then it was take off...George Michel, (Air Force 392nd Bomb Group, Radio Operator





Gunner) sat at the radio. One could see him pondering the days of old as he closed his eyes prior to take off and then a focused forward much as he did during his service.

Once in flight I made my way back to the rear of the plane via the small catwalk, leaving the catwalk would surely lead to a fall through the belly of the plane to the ground below. Once reaching the belly rear of the craft I found John Rosenberg, (Air Force, 392 Bomb Group, B-24, tail gunner), and Sebastian (Pat) Corriere, (Air Force carpet bagger), each peering out the machine gun laden open windows with fierce winds blowing through--- both with grins a mile wide as they envisioned their times as tail gunner and waist gunner. I then clambered with all my strength to the tail gunner position of the plane (John's spot during the war)... WOW! What these men must have went through as I used all my strength to pull my self into the small area. For the first time I truly understood the awe and thrill of what these boys went through!

Traveling back through the cat walk to the nose of the plane, crawling on my hands and knees to get to the nose. Then the bell sounded and I returned to my

seat in the radio room behind the pilot... Kudos to Jim Harley, the Collings Foundation chief B-24 pilot, the plane landed smoother then most jet airliners.

Upon landing, George Michel turned to Jim the pilot, stating "Sir that is the smoothest landing I have ever experienced in all my years on board a B-24" Jim replied, "Sir, coming from you, that is truly an honor!"

After exiting the plane, the boys took pictures with all their respective crew and the boarded their limo for the ride back to Milwaukee...Grinning from ear to ear because for a moment they were again 17-20 years saving their country.

### NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

The New Mexico Chapter of the 8th AFHS held the annual Fall General Membership Meeting/Luncheon at the Marriott Hotel in Albuquerque October 26, 2013.

Larry Stebleton, President (Lt. Col. Ret. USAF) was unable to attend and conduct the meeting. However he chose a wonderful replacement, Lori White wife of Van White (303 BG).

Lori White opened the meeting at 12:00 pm, with a moment of silence

in remembrance of departed members followed by the "Pledge Of Allegiance". She then introduced the guest speaker, Dr. Barron Oder PhD.

Dr. Oder earned his doctorate in history at University of New Mexico, and is presently chief of Test and Evaluation Centers History Office, Kirkland AFB, New Mexico. He advises the Commander and Staff on all history matters, and oversees efforts to collect, maintain, and interpret operational test data, records, historical information and related material.

During his fascinating speech, Dr. Oder spoke of the development and the evolution of the bomb sights from 1909 thru 1939. The crude bomb sights used during WWI, dropping bombs from early airplanes and balloons as well; the progression and improvement of bombers over time, and how bomb dropping evolved into Tactical and Strategic bombing. He spoke of the crucial development during WWII, by the Germans, of the 88 MM anti-aircraft gun. Special thanks to Lori White.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Aelred (Al) Schwery  
Secretary, 8th AFHS NM Chapter

## Christmas on the WWII Home Front: A COLLECTION OF FUN YULETIDE FACTS

- During World War II Christmas trees were in short supply because of a lack of manpower (to cut the trees down) and a shortage of railroad space to ship the trees to market. Americans rushed to buy American-made Visca artificial trees.
- In 1941, a five-foot Christmas tree could be purchased for 75 cents.
- The shortage of materials—like aluminum and tin—used to produce ornaments led many people to make their own ornaments at home. Magazines contained patterns for ornaments made out of non-priority war materials, like paper, string, and natural objects, such as pinecones or nuts.
- Electric bubble lights were created during the 1940s and remain popular even today.
- To give their Christmas tree a snow-covered effect, people mixed a box of Lux soap powder with two cups of water and brushed the concoction on the branches of their tree.
- Fewer men at home resulted in fewer men available to dress up and play Santa Claus. Women served as substitute Santas at Saks Fifth Avenue in New York City and at other department stores throughout the United States.
- "I'll Be Home For Christmas" and "White Christmas" were both written during the 1940s and quickly gained popularity with the war-weary, but optimistic, population.
- Travel during the holidays was limited for most families due to the rationing of tires and gasoline. Americans saved up their food ration stamps to provide extra food for a fine holiday meal.
- Many Americans threw their German blown-glass ornaments and exotic Japanese ornaments in the trash as soon as the war began. Shortly after the war, Corning Glass Company in New York began mass-producing Christmas tree balls using machines designed to produce light bulbs. Corning could make more ornaments in a single minute than a German cottage glass blower could make in a whole day.

# NEWS FROM *Across the Pond*

**Dear Friends & Veterans**

## **Sunday November 3rd A Small Village field near Towcester England**

The colors of the fall have now descended upon us turning our countryside into Gods painted canvas of beauty. The gold, yellows and reds of the leaves shone in the early morning sun and soon they will be falling. The month of November is very important to us especially *across the Pond* as we remember those that have sacrificed their lives through two world wars also conflicts since. Across the British Isles you will see small groups of people in villages and towns also in isolated fields where a lone aircraft or two crashed. At these isolated memorials standing midst the falling leaves gently laying a carpet around the monuments to servicemen lost in action. The leaves covering their names as if a blanket to keep them warm and to remind us to remember those that paid the ultimate sacrifice and on this special day of 11th November that they are not forgotten. They are remembered by local people from these small villages, hamlets and towns and to pay their respects for those that died so far from home. One service that I attended was in a small village in Northamptonshire, this memorial was erected by the villagers and nearby residents at their own cost and hard work. The memorial was erected in memory of the crews of two B-17s that collided above the village on October 11th 1944. The memorial marks the fields where 1st/ Lt N. Jorgenson & his crew of B-17G 42-31053 338th BG perished. The Pilot Lt Jack Core of B-17G 42-3510 bailed out but 4 members of his crew perished. The generosity, kindness, respect and memory for these men who died so far from home is honored by such people in a village in England who did not even know these brave young men, but we will not forget their sacrifice thanks to Roma Adams & villagers also other people involved of Woodend England The I.D. bracelets worn by 1st/ Lt Jorgenson & T/S Paul Worthington R.O. were found in 2011 and returned to their families

## **Sunday 10th November Airfield Memorial 384th B.G Grafton Underwood England**

Here on a quiet Sunday afternoon the local village people and friends stand before the 384th B.G. Memorial to remember those airmen that lost their lives in the fight for freedom. We stand, bow our heads and say a prayer, the wreaths of Flanders Poppy rest at the memorial step, the bugler plays The Last Post, and Taps a minutes silence is observed. Across the country scenes like this are taking place, the sacrifice of these warriors of the sky are not forgotten by the people of the land they came to help keep free.



*384th B.G.  
Grafton Underwood*



*384th B.G.  
Grafton  
Underwood*





### Saturday November 9th A Field, Newton Bromswold Nr. Chelveston England

On this Autumnal afternoon in a small field alongside a country road a lone figure with his dog stops and looks across the fields towards the 305th B.G.s old base. His head turns towards the hedgerow and ponders awhile deep in thought. He takes from his bag a stake and drives it into the earth upon the stake he hangs a wreath of red Flanders poppies with a small note in thanks and remembrance to the two crews who perished in the B17's 42-29953 Wolfess and 42-30666 Daisy May the of day 09/18/43. There is no marker only a hedgerow with spaces in between and now a wreath pays tribute given by a passing man and his dog, when asked his name and why he has paid tribute, the reply is Respect, Remembrance and Courage for what they gave.

Thanks to Tony and his dog Millie

### Monday November 11th 11:00 hrs American Cemetery Madingley Cambridge England

As many service men, service women, also just ordinary people from all walks of life gathered in front of the Portland stone wall displaying the many names of those that paid the highest sacrifice and sadly no resting place also behind us the many crosses also bearing the names of those placed there to rest in England green pastures. The day was dark and the rain fell upon those that gathered to pay their respects to the fallen. Many people attending did not know those whose names are written upon the wall or on the crosses but the respect is there, for they were some ones husband, father, son, brother or loved one that paid the price for our freedom. We thank them and remember them and the tributes are given with thanks and gratitude from us *across the Pond*.

December 2013 (13-4)

To those who survived and who lost a loved one, a comrade or a friend. we *across the Pond* pay tribute on your behalf.

So From Across the Pond

Have a Merry Christmas and we look forward to 2014 and another update *From Across The Pond*

On behalf of Gordon & myself we wish to thank all those wonderful people for their kindness and generosity in making our trip to Savannah such a most memorable event, words can not be enough. Thank you to the new friends and the bonds that have been forged between us.

Brian Francis



Gordon presenting the 8th AFHS wreath at Madingley





# Eighth Air Force 379th BG Veteran Receives the **FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR MEDAL**



**O**n Sept 13, 2013, Vincent J. "Bill" Purple, 89, a resident of Petersham, MA, joined the prestigious ranks of U.S. WWII Veterans recognized for their service in WWII to defend France when he was awarded the French *Legion d'honneur*, or "Legion of Honor" Medal.

This award is an order of distinction first established by Napoleon Bonaparte in May of 1802. The Legion of Honor is the highest decoration bestowed in France, initially intended to recognize service in the French military. Following the two World Wars, the Legion of Honor criteria was expanded to recognize a wider variety of disciplines and service, including U.S. Veterans who risked their lives during WWII to defend French territory.

Bill joined the Army Air Corp at the young age of 17 in 1942 and served until his discharge in 1946. During that

time, he was with the Eighth Air Force 379th Bomb Group based in Kimbolton, England. Bill defended France from the air as a B-17 Pilot in the battle of Ardennes, one of the 4 main campaigns of the Liberation of France. In total, Bill flew 35 missions and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with 4 Oak Leaf Clusters, which are also some of the criteria to receive the Legion of Honor Medal.

Bill learned about the fact that he qualified for this Medal when talking with a friend and fellow WWII Veteran, Don Casey of Chicago. In July of 2012, Don submitted Bill's name to the French Consulate suggesting that Bill should also receive the Medal. Bill then followed up by submitting the required documentation to the local French Consulate in Boston.

It took many months of approvals, including approval by the President

of France, but in July, the letter arrived stating that "by decree of President Hollande (of France), you have been appointed a "Chevalier" of the Legion of Honor". Naturally, that led to the question, what would be the venue for the award?

It just so happened that Bill and a small committee were the organizers bringing the Collings Foundation "Wings of Freedom Tour" to the nearby Orange (MA) Municipal Airport for a 3-day visit in September. The tour consisted of a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, a Consolidated B-24 Liberator, and a North American P-51 Mustang, so what better place to receive the Legion of Honor Medal than with one of the last few remaining B-17 Flying Fortresses as a stunning backdrop to the occasion.

The French Consul General Fabian Fieschi of Boston, was delighted when he heard the plans for the award



ceremony, and was even more excited when he learned that he would join Bill, MA Congressman James McGovern, and several other dignitaries on a B-17 flight from Orange, MA to Worcester, MA.

The day arrived and it was a beautiful September morning in New England as a crowd of 100-plus friends, family and the general public gathered to watch a ceremony honoring a local Veteran for his acts of heroism so long ago.

The ceremony kicked off with the singing of the National Anthem and La Marseillaise (sung in French!), by Mark Ellis, a close friend of Bill's. Opening remarks were made by Hunter Chaney, Director of Marketing from the Collings Foundation. He was followed by Congressman McGovern who presented Bill with an American Flag. MA State Senator Steve Brewer and MA State Senator Stanley Rosenberg presented Bill with a Citation from the Massachusetts Senate and MA State Representative Denise Andrews presented Bill with a Citation from the Massachusetts House of Representatives, all acknowledging Bill's service to his country from WWII through today.

Then the pièce de résistance, Consul General Fieschi presented Bill with the Legion of Honor Medal and pinned it on his bomber jacket. Bill then spoke to the crowd and told a few "war stories". He later described the moment when the medal was pinned on him as "extraordinary". It was an incredibly proud moment for Bill and his family as he was recognized for when he bravely lead squadrons of bombers containing hundreds of men over France at the young age of 20.

The ceremony closed with Mark singing the Air Force Anthem, and as the song goes...*"Off we go into the wild blue yonder"*....that's just what they did. Collings Foundation personnel assisted Bill in boarding the B-17 and off they flew to Worcester with Bill sitting in the radio compartment reminiscing about his days as a pilot.



## How to request being awarded the French Legion of Honor

The Legion of Honor is France's most distinguished decoration and it can be bestowed to recognize the special contribution and act of bravery while fighting for the liberation of our country during WWII. The decision to honor World War II combatants applies only to living veterans who served on French territory and in French territorial waters and airspace from 1944-1945.

The medal will not be awarded posthumously  
In order to study your request you must provide the following documents:

1. Proposal Memory Form - Attach the form completed in block letters and print legibly (with a detailed personal narrative related to your campaigns in France in which you participated, indicating the dates and locations where you fought, the divisions or units you belonged to and your functions).
2. Honorable Discharge Papers – Attach a copy (do not send originals) of both sides of your showing proof of service in France between June 6, 1944 and May 8, 1945.
3. A copy of any of the following decorations you or your unit may have been awarded is also required: Bronze Star, Silver Star, Purple Heart, Congressional medal, French Croix de Guerre/French Fourragere.
4. All information (newspaper articles, books, etc) describing your actions in France during WWII.
5. Mail to one of the French Consulates on the list.

Please note that upon receipt of these documents your file will be submitted to our Embassy in Washington DC, and then to the Grand Chancellery of the Legion of Honor in Paris, France, for a final decision after a close study of the veteran's record by a committee. The review of application for the Legion of Honor may take over a year. Please don't call; applicants will be contacted directly if any questions or problems arise.

If your request is accepted you will have to go to one of the French Consulates to receive the medal.

### FRENCH CONSULATES IN THE U.S.

Consulat Général de France  
The Lenox Building  
3399 Peachtree Rd NE, Ste 500  
Atlanta, GA 30326

Consulat Général de France  
Park Square Building, Suite 750  
31, Saint James Avenue  
Boston MA 02116

Consulat Général de France  
205 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 3700  
Chicago, IL, 60601

Consulat Général de France  
777 Post Oak Boulevard, Suite 600  
Houston, TX 77056

Consulat Général de France  
10390 Santa Monica Blvd, Suite 410  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Consulat Général de France  
Espirito Santo Plaza, Suite 1050,  
1395 Brickell Avenue  
Miami FL 33131

Consulat Général de France  
1340 Poydras Street- Suite 1710  
New Orleans LA 70112

Consulat Général de France  
934 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Consulat Général de France  
88 Kearny St, Suite 600  
San Francisco, CA 94108

Consulat Général de France  
4101 Reservoir Road  
Washington DC 20007

# PROUD TO BE A "HELL'S ANGEL"



## Howard Dahleen Crew

*(Back L-R) 1Lt Howard S. Dahleen (P), 1Lt Russell S. Klingensmith (N),  
2Lt Raymond E. Gauthier (B), 2Lt John T. Austin (CP)*

*(Front L-R) T/Sgt Clifford E. Swanson (R), Pvt Harding W. Smith (RWG), S/Sgt Edward M. Hirn (BTG),  
S/Sgt William E. Titworth (LWG), S/Sgt Charles G. Covington (TG), T/Sgt Orrick M. Malcolm (E)*

C-60995 A

This is a very small story that was a part of the fabled story of the 303rd "Hell's Angels" Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force during WWII. Six replacement crews joined the 359th Bomb Squadron in late 1943 to carve their places in history. These were led by Howard Dahleen, Billy Goolsby, Art Hybert, Vern Moncur, Noel Newell, and Don Stoullil. These six crews flew many missions together, including the January 11, 1944 mission to Oscherleben, Germany, earning the group's Presidential Unit Citation, and the March 6, 1944 mission to Berlin. All completed their combat tours with only a few injuries.

Billy Goolsby went on to lead the group's missions, flying with then Captain Mel Schulstad and also with then Lt.Col. Richard Cole. In addition, Don Stoullil, flying a PFF [Pathfinder Force] aircraft, led missions with among others, then Major Lew Lyle

and our Colonel Kermit Stevens. Don's combat tour was extended due to his leading many missions in the PFF plane. His regular navigator was Hal Susskind, remembered as Editor of the 303rd Newsletter.

The Vern Moncur crew has been immortalized in the "Thunderbird," painted [by Keith Ferris] on the wall in the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

During the same time, Edgar "Ed" Miller of the 360th BS flew several missions with our six crews. Ed was well known in the 303rd Association. Ed and Vern were quoted many times as they described the action in mission reports.

Recent deaths of those involved include Walter Hein, last remaining member of the Moncur crew, Mel Schulstad, Hal Susskind, and Ed Miller.

I flew most missions as the original navigator on the Dahleen crew and

was privileged to fly missions with the Goolsby, Hybert, and Newell crews. In addition, I would certainly have flown with the Moncur and Stoullil crews if scheduled to do so.

**Respectfully submitted,  
Russell S. Klingensmith**





# A LIFE WELL LIVED

**Terence Robert St. Louis - October 8, 1921 – September 27, 2013**

Terence, almost certainly the last surviving Air Force historian who served throughout World War II joined those from the greatest generation who preceded him in death on September 27th, 2013. Terry enlisted shortly after graduating from high school in upstate New York. His first assignment was in the Canal Zone as part of the lend lease or Destroyers for Bases swap with the United Kingdom at the beginning of World War II in which American



Destroyers were sent to England in exchange for long term leases of British holdings.

His second assignment also under the destroyer swap wasn't too unpleasant either as he was stationed on the British West Indies island of Trinidad, a place he often recounted as one of the most beautiful in the world. Eventually Terry won a transfer to the Army Air Corp and began pilot training in April of 1944 at Sheppard Field Texas. Terry, along with 36,000 other young pilots, were reassigned shortly after the Japanese surrender and in July of 1944, thanks to his compact stature he entered gunnery school in Kingman Arizona before moving on to B-17 flight training and finally being assigned to the 601st Bomb Squad 398th Bomb Group stationed in Nuthamstead, England as a ball turret gunner. On 25 April 1945 Terry flew his final of 24 combat missions with the Eighth Air Force, as part of a bombing raid on the Skoda armament works at Pilsen, Czechoslovakia as part of the liberation of Czechoslovakia.

Terry met his future wife, Lydia Noyes of Poquonock Bridge, Connecticut in 1946 when his brother Bud and his family were stationed at the submarine base in New London. While Lydia was only 14 at the time the Noyes families and the St. Louis families formed a close bond. Although Terry left Connecticut to pursue college in Syracuse in New York  
*December 2013 (13-4)*

and to travel some he returned in 1948 to reenlist in New London to serve as part of the Berlin Air Lift and in he and Lydia were married in 1951

Following the war he was briefly a public affairs officer before becoming an enlisted historian. Terry retired from active military service in 1963 but would continue his profession as an historian for twenty years as a civil servant. During the course of his career Terry finished a Bachelor's degree in History from the University of Maryland and a Masters in International Relations from the University of Arkansas while serving at Headquarters Eurcom in Wiesbaden, Germany. Terry's final assignment was as the historian for the Air Force Operational Test and Evaluation Center at Kirtland Air Force Base, Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1975 until his retirement in 1986.

Terry remained active with many organizations in his retirement, the one that meant the most to him was the 8th Air Force 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association. A particular highlight of his retirement was in summer 2008 when Terry and his wife Lydia, traveled to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia on a tour sponsored by the Eighth Air Force Historical

Society. The visiting Americans were hosted as dignitaries by Czech civil and military officials who even flew Terry and others over what had long ago been their target. Terry was the lone survivor from the original mission and when asked what he thought of seeing the targets he commented "it was the first time I've actually seen them there was too much smoke and flack that day."

Terry is survived by his wife of 62 years, Lydia,

their three children Terence Robert II, Morrell St. Louis Eggert and her husband Francis and The Rev. Leslie M. St. Louis and four grandchildren Stuart St. Louis, Morgan Eggert, Lydia Eggert and Avery Eggert, a sister Joanne Stahl and her husband Don.

Terry was a consummate story teller and believed the telling of our history to be one of our most important tasks. He was often heard quoting Winston Churchill, "those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." Terry was one who lived history, taught history and with his life left a great legacy for those who follow. Terence Robert II, Morrell St. Louis Eggert and her husband Francis and The Rev. Leslie M. St. Louis



*Terence's 90th birthday in 2011*

*Terence with his wife Lydia  
Back: Terence Robert II, Morrell St. Louis Eggert  
and The Rev. Leslie M. St. Louis,*



# REUNIONS CHAPTER MEETINGS



PLEASE SEND ALL REUNION UPDATES TO:  
[News@8thafhs.org](mailto:News@8thafhs.org)

## Ohio Chapter

Spring meeting  
Saturday May 3, 2014  
Ramada Plaza Hotel  
4900 Sinclair Road  
Columbus, OH 43229  
Time: 12:30 PM

## RAF Burtonwood Association

Warrington England  
May 12 - 18, 2014  
Gulliver's Hotel, Camp Road, Warrington

Contact: Aldon Ferguson  
[aldonpf@aol.com](mailto:aldonpf@aol.com)  
<http://www.rafburtonwoodbase.org/>

## 398th Bomb Group

Rapid City, S. Dakota  
September 3-6, 2014  
Grand Gateway Hotel  
Contact: Ken Howard  
[KenHoward@Hotmail.com](mailto:KenHoward@Hotmail.com)  
309-742-8546

## 306th Bomb Group

September 11 - 14, 2014  
Colorado Springs, CO  
Embassy Suites Colorado Springs  
Contact: Barbara Neal  
435.655-1500 (  
leave message for return call)  
[barb306neal@gmail.com](mailto:barb306neal@gmail.com)  
website: [306bg.org](http://306bg.org)

FULL DETAILS COMING IN  
THE MARCH ISSUE!

Put on your boots! Nashville is the heart and soul of the country music industry, and people here are proud of it. Get in the downhome spirit by visiting the Country Music Hall of Fame and stomping your feet at the Grand Ole Opry.

SAVE THE DATE FOR NASHVILLE!!!

40TH ANNUAL 8TH AFHS REUNION  
SHERATON - MUSIC CITY NASHVILLE, TN  
OCT. 9 - 13, 2014



# A Ghost of Christmas Past: Stalag Luft IV

Joseph R Garber, 96th BG

We were on our way to Regensburg July 21, 1944 when our B-17 was hit by heavy flak and we were forced to bail just east of Schwaebisch, Germany in an area of the Heubach Forest. We were captured almost immediately, but even though the fall had broken my ankle, the German soldiers took us for several days of interrogation rather than medical care. Eventually, a doctor set my broken bones and a large group of us were then crammed into railway cars for the journey to Stalag Luft IV.

Stalag Luft IV, as we would soon realize, was bad even for a POW camp. Our barrack hut—one of 40—was wooden, drafty and cold [although ours did have a pot bellied stove, most of the other huts did not]. When we first arrived at the camp, I claimed one of the few sleeping shelves in our hut. The shelf was made of wooden slats fashioned to hold a mattress off the floor. Our ‘mattresses’ were paper bags filled with straw and/or sawdust. After one night on the ‘shelf’ I opted for

one since. Medical care was a mystery. Far too often guys would be removed from the camp for ‘medical care’ and would never return. I often wondered what happened to them.

Located less than 40 miles from the North Sea in northern Poland, winter came early and it was bitter cold. Being from Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, I was used to snow and ice and cold, but not in thread-bare uniforms without a warm coat, gloves...well, you get the picture.

We were a mix of faiths and beliefs and I remember there was a Catholic chaplain in our camp—Rev. Thomas Lynch—who would often be allowed to say Mass on Sundays. Being Catholic, that was a huge lifeline for me, but I was always terrified that if the guards found out any of our guys were Jewish...well, it would have been a death sentence.

I had been a ‘guest’ of the Germans for over five months by the time Christmas came in 1944. We were exhausted. Starving. But never without hope. The guards constantly taunted us, telling us the Germans were winning the war and bombing the major cities in the US. We had a small radio which we diligently hid from the guards and circulated among the other prisoners via some clever hiding spots, such as inside a fellow prisoner’s wooden leg or bandaged extremity. But we rarely had ‘real’ news. We were allowed 1 post card and 1 letter per month—when we were lucky. We looked forward to the Red Cross packages when they came, but we had to share one box per two prisoners. The meager items didn’t go very far.

Christmas. Most of us reached down deep to draw on memories of Christmas’s past. We pictured fresh pines and firs with home made ornaments. Strings of popcorn. Lots of popcorn (remember, we were hungry)! My vision had a huge, roaring fire in the fireplace, but none of us dreamt of colorfully wrapped packages. The ONLY present we wanted was to be home. Safe. Holding our loved ones. It’s all any of us wanted. Family is what pulled us through. In the dark, silence of

Christmas Eve, we had no candles, we tried a few carols, and we prayed. We prayed for freedom.

Our “Christmas” came in May 1945. We awoke one morning and realized we hadn’t been summoned to morning muster. The door to our hut was still locked, but when one of the guys looked out a window he shouted there were no guards in the tower. We kicked the door open, ran out in the yard and realized all of the guards had vacated the camp sometime during the night. We were free!

Word spread quickly and the yard filled with POWs. Soon, some Russian soldiers came into the camp. One of them, a rather stocky female in uniform got out of a jeep drinking from a large cup. For whatever reason she saw me, asked if I was thirsty, and offered me her beverage. Thinking it was fresh water, I gulped it down. It wasn’t water. It was 120 proof Russian vodka. I gagged and choked while she laughed hysterically! Oh, well. It was Liberation Day and it was the best Christmas present ever.



sleeping on the floor—bugs and all.

Most mornings started out early with muster and roll call in the yard. On good days we got a serving of an oatmeal-gruel that was awful, but we ate it and even got pretty good at hiding bits and pieces of food whenever we could. We never knew from day to day when or if we’d eat again. Apparently turnip roots were a bumper crop in Poland that year, because it seemed that in the absence of any ‘real’ food, we would get a bite or two of turnips. I haven’t eaten



**Joe Garber**  
**8th AFHS Secretary**

*Joe Garber was 154 lbs when he entered Stalag Luft IV. Nearly 10 months later he was down to 89 lbs. He currently serves as the secretary for the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society and is the president of the 96<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association. He and his wife, Joan live in Florida where Joe gives numerous talks to school children about the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force and shares his personal stories with them.*



# THE PRISON CAMP VIOLIN

**HE CARVED IT OF ROUGH-HEWN BED SLATS WITH A PENKNIFE TRADED FOR RED CROSS RATIONS.  
BUT WOULD IT PLAY?**

**By Clair Cline, 448th Bomb Group, Stalag Luft I Prisoner of War**

**I**n February 1944, I was a U.S. Air Corps pilot flying a B-24 bomber over Germany when anti-aircraft fire hit our tail section and we lost all controls. We bailed out and on landing I found myself in a field in occupied Holland, just across the border from Germany. We were surrounded by villagers asking for chocolate and cigarettes. Then an elderly uniformed German with a pistol in an unsteady hand marched me to an interrogation center. From there I and other prisoners were shipped to Stalag Luft I, a prison camp for captured Allied airmen.

The camp was a dismal place. We lived in rough wooden barracks, sleeping on bunks with straw-filled burlap sacks on wooden slats. Rations were meager; if it hadn't been for the Red Cross care packages, we would have starved. But the worst affliction was our uncertainty. Not knowing when the war would end or what would happen (we had heard rumors of prisoners being killed) left

us with a constant gnawing worry. And since the Geneva Convention ruled that officers were not allowed to be used for labor, we had little to keep us occupied. What resulted was a wearying combination of apprehension and boredom. Men coped in various ways: Some played bridge all day, others dug escape tunnels (to no avail), some read tattered paperbacks. I wrote letters to my wife and carved models of B-24s.

The long dreary months dragged on. One day early in the fall of 1944, I found myself unable to stand airplane carving any longer. I tossed aside a half-finished model, looked out a barracks window at a leaden sky and prayed in desperation, "Oh, Lord, please help me find something constructive to do."

There seemed to be no answer as I slumped amid the dull slap of playing cards and the mutter of conversation. Then someone started whistling "Red Wing" and my heart lifted. Once again I was seven years old in rural Minnesota

listening to a fiddler sweep out the old melody. As a child I loved the violin and when a grizzled uncle handed his to me I couldn't believe it. "It's yours, Red," he said, smiling. "I never could play the thing, but maybe you can make music with it." There were no music teachers around our parts, but some of the old-timers who played at local dances in homes and barns patiently gave me tips. Soon I accompanied them while heavy-booted farmers and their long-gowned wives whirled and stomped to schottisches and polkas.

I thought how wonderful it would be to hold a violin again. But finding one in this place would be impossible. Just then I glanced at my cast-aside model, and a thought came to me: I can make one! Why not? I had done a little woodworking before I was in the service. But with what? And how? Where could I find the wood? The tools? I shook my head. I was about to forget the whole preposterous idea when



something caught me. You can do it. The words hung there, almost as if someone had challenged me. I grew up on a farm during the Depression, and had learned about resourcefulness. I remembered my father doggedly repairing hopelessly broken farm equipment. "You can make something out of nothing, Son," he said, looking up from the frayed harness he was riveting. "All you've got to do is find a way . . . and there always is one."

I looked around our barracks. The bunks. They had slats! Each was about four inches wide, three-quarters of an inch thick and 30 inches long. A few wouldn't be missed. Just maybe, I thought, just maybe I could. I already had a penknife gained by trading care-package tobacco rations with camp guards who delighted in amerikanische Zigaretten. Glue? It was essential. But glue was practically nonexistent in a war-ravaged country. "There's always a way," echoed Dad's words.

One day I happened to feel small, hard droplets around the rungs of my chair. Dried carpenter's glue! I carefully scraped off the brown residue from a few chairs, ground it to powder, mixed it with water and heated it on a stove. It would work. I cut the beech bed slats to the length of a violin body and glued them together. Then I began shaping the back panel. A sharp piece of broken glass came in handy for carving. Other men watched with interest, and some helped scrape glue from chairs for me.

Weeks went by in a flash. I shaped the curved sides of the body by bending water-soaked thin wood and heating it over the stove. My humdrum existence became exciting. I woke up every morning and could hardly wait to get back to work. When I needed tools, I improvised, even grinding an old kitchen knife on a rock to form a chisel. Slowly the instrument took shape. I glued several bed slats together to form the instrument's neck.

In three months the body was finished, including the delicate f-shaped holes on the violin's front. After carefully sanding the wood, I varnished the instrument (that cost me more cigarettes) and polished it with pumice and paraffin oil until it shone with a golden glow.



A guard came up with some catgut for the strings, and one day I was astonished to be handed a real violin bow. American cigarettes were valuable currency, and I was glad I hadn't smoked mine.

Finally there came the day I lifted the finished instrument to my chin. Would it really play? Or would it be a croaking catastrophe? I drew the bow across the strings and my heart leaped as a pure resonant sound echoed through the air.

My fellow prisoners banished me to the latrine until I had regained my old skills. But from then on they clapped, sang, and even danced as I played "Red Wing," "Home on the Range" and "Red River Valley."

My most memorable moment was Christmas Eve. As my buddies brooded about home and families, I began playing "Silent Night." As the notes drifted through the barracks a voice chimed in, then others. Amid the harmony I heard a different language. "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht, alles schläft, Einsam wacht . . ." An elderly white-haired guard stood in the shadows, his eyes wet with tears.

The following May we were liberated by U.S. troops. Through the years, the violin hung proudly in a display cabinet at home. As my four children and six grandchildren grew, it became an

object lesson for escaping the narcosis of boredom.

"Find something you love to do," I urged, "and you'll find your work a gift from God." I'm happy to say all of them did. In the fall of 1995 I was invited to contribute the violin to the World War II museum aboard the aircraft carrier Intrepid in New York. I sent it hoping it would become an object lesson for others. But I was not prepared for the surprise that followed. I was told the concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic would play it at the museum's opening. Afterward he called me. "I expected a jalopy of a violin," said maestro Dicterow, "and instead it was something looking very good and sounding quite wonderful. It was an amazing achievement."

Not really, I thought. More like a gift from God.

Since CLAIR CLINE returned from World War II, The Prison Camp Violin he made has been heard in concert halls across the United States. Most recently it was played by Glenn Dicterow of the New York Philharmonic during a ceremony at the Intrepid Sea-Air-Space Museum in New York City. "Violins have to be used if they are going to remain effective," says Clair. "I believe I need to stay active too." Now that he has retired from cabinetmaking and construction work, Clair and his wife, Anne, stay busy growing fruit, flowers and vegetables in their garden. The couple recently celebrated their 57th wedding anniversary, and their four children and six grandchildren are the joy of their lives. Music has remained important, and oldest son Roger, granddaughter Jennifer, and grandson Daniel, play in the Chicago, National, and Arkansas symphony orchestras, respectively.

As their children grew up, the violin rested in a display case in the Clines' home. Each child was told the violin's story as a lesson in resourcefulness. But its value goes far beyond that.

Clair Cline passed away on September 19, 2010—just 10 days short of his 93rd birthday.

# The Great Escape Camp: Christmas 1944

Donald E. Casey, 379th BG

Photo courtesy of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force.



December 1944. The long awaited winter of 1944-45 is on. 10,000 downed Allied RAF and USAAF officers watch anxiously from behind the high barbed wire enclosures at Stalag Luft III, Sagan, Poland. Hope is in the air that this is the anticipated advance that will bring their ultimate liberation

December 16, 1944, Germany's Panzer offensive makes its move, possibly re-take Antwerp and divide and stop the allied forces before they can reach and cross the Rhine River. Could this be Hitler's counter-attack? The "BATTLE OF THE BULGE" is on. The Allies are under attack now.

Inside the barbed wire enclosure of Stalag Luft III emotions are intensifying. Do the prisoners put their hopes for early liberation on the line again only to be smashed by the vagaries of war? Does this mean serious setback of the date of their liberation of perhaps as much as another six months of captivity?

In the crowded make-shift theater inside the barbed wire enclosure tension is running high. On stage a brand new set has been created for the evening.

A single "easy-chair" is in full view occupied by one of the actors. The curtain on the west side of the stage is made up to look like a map of the United States with large Christmas Star in the center. From the star radio-like waves are projecting as though sounding of music.

The performer seems to be listening intently for the as-yet-to-be audible sounds of the Yule-tide. The audience is supposed to be thinking of Christmas at home if it can attain the necessary mood. Feelings are mixed to say the least. Fears tug in one direction while hope surges in the other. The outcome of what looks like a monstrous looming battle could mean euphoria or despair depending on which side of the barbed wire one is on.

Inside the prison camp, preparations for evacuation have been on the minds of the jailed for weeks. It's inescapable. The confined people continue to busy themselves sewing, patching and reworking the clothes they have available to better adapt to whatever the weather may import. Take the prisoner's denim shirt. Figure out a way, if needed, to stitch the tails to make pouches front and back to hold chunks

of Nazi black bread. Its ingredients include "wood-flour", a euphemism for sawdust which is phantom nourishment supposedly to respond to the demands of human appetites.

If you were a lucky prisoner, you may have received a package from 'the States' containing the clothing you wrote for - a scarf, a pair of gloves, warm socks, a hooded jacket. How about a pair of fleece-lined slippers, the kind you would expect to wear around the house at home while sitting around a cozy fire-place. When are you going to need stuff like that?

What about the advancing Russian Armies in the East? Hopes are high for being overrun. What if that's all that's left in terms of options for the Germans or for the Americans for that matter. How many will die in that case?

Emotions were different for all of us during that Christmas of '44. We missed our families; we longed to be under the tree together on Christmas morning... we couldn't dwell on the uncertainties of events to come. We had to focus on the realities, but for a time, we allowed ourselves to imagine 'normal,' just for awhile.

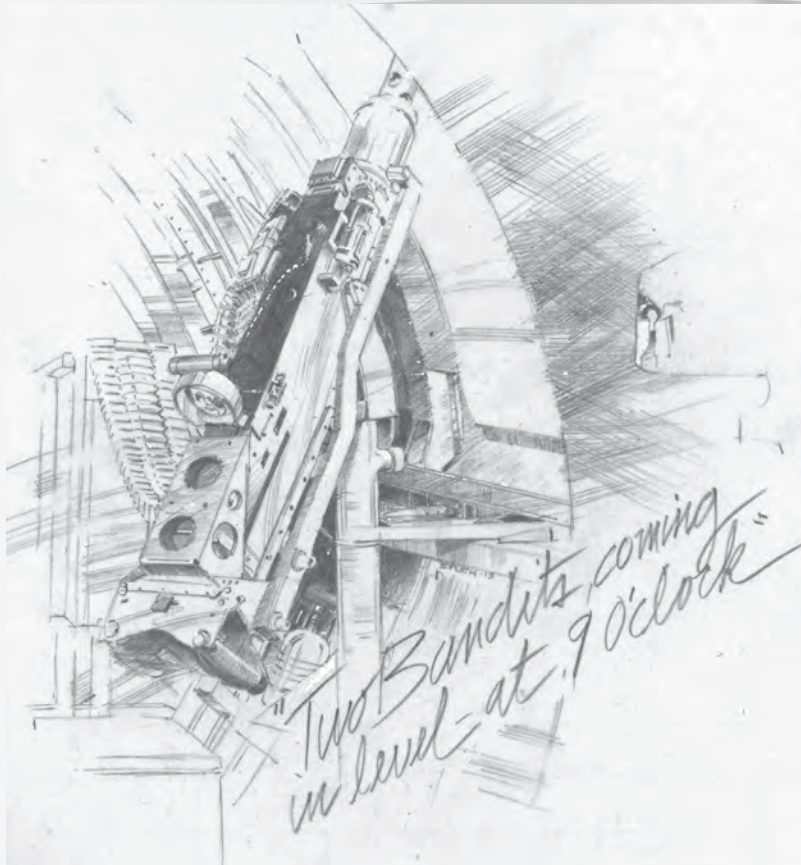


**Donald Casey**  
**8th AFHS BOD**

*As things turned out, Christmas of 1944 came and went without event and the huge POW camp was evacuated on January 27, 1945 without the loss of a single man. Don Casey serves on the Board of Directors of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. He and his wife Alice, live in Chicago.*



# ROGER W. STUCH



The four Illustrations above are courtesy of Roger W. Stuch, 12706 Dyess Place, Bellevue, NE 68123

Roger W. Stuch attended Kendall College of Design in Grand Rapids, MI, where he majored in Fine Arts & Illustration. His Illustrations are published in national magazines, including Air Progress, Road & Track, Cycle World and our 8th AF News magazine. The 8th AF NEWS staff would like to thank Roger for his years of contributions!



*Gen. C. Robert Kehler, commander of U.S. Strategic Command; Lt. Gen. Jim Kowalski, commander of Air Force Global Strike Command; Maj. Gen. Stephen Wilson, outgoing Eighth Air Force commander, Joint Functional Component Commander for Global Strike, and Task Force 204 commander; and Brig. Gen. Scott Vander Hamm, render a salute during a promotion and change of command ceremony at Barksdale Air Force Base, La.,. During the ceremony Vander Hamm was promoted to the rank of major general and took command from Wilson. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Joseph A. Pagán Jr.)*

## Maj. Gen. Vander Hamm takes helm of Mighty Eighth

by Airman 1st Class Benjamin Raughton  
2nd Bomb Wing Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Scott Vander Hamm took command of Eighth Air Force Oct. 23 in a ceremony at Barksdale AFB presided over by U.S. Strategic Command commander Gen. C. Robert Kehler.

Vander Hamm, who was also promoted to the rank of major general during the ceremony, replaces Maj. Gen. Stephen Wilson.

"I want you to know what a privilege it is to serve as your commander," Vander Hamm said. "I pledge my allegiance to you, the men and women serving to create an environment where you can train and fight, and provide you with the resources to accomplish your mission. It's onward and upward for the Eighth Air Force."

Kehler expressed confidence in Vander Hamm's and Eighth Air Force's abilities to deter adversaries and assure allies.

"There is no other air force on the face of the planet that can do the kinds of operations that are routinely performed by

the Mighty Eighth," Kehler said. "This is no longer 'one size fits all' deterrence and assurance. This is tailored deterrence that is shaped specifically for an adversary; that is shaped specifically for a target audience and done with tools that include our long-range strike capabilities and those capabilities that we have come to rely on for all these years."

Eighth Air Force has a storied past as being the greatest air armada in American history. At one point, the command was able to dispatch more than 2,000 bombers and 1,000 fighters and had an end-strength of more than 200,000 Airmen, earning it the nickname, "Mighty Eighth."

Vander Hamm has picked up a legacy built by Generals Ira Eaker and Jimmy Doolittle, who also commanded the numbered Air Force, to safeguard America's interests through deterrence and global combat power.

Today, Eighth Air Force accomplishes this with the B-52 Stratofortress fleet based at the 2nd Bomb Wing here and the





*Barksdale Honor Guard Airmen present Maj. Gen. Scott Vander Hamm, the new Eighth Air Force commander, with his general officer flag during his promotion ceremony at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., Oct. 23, 2013. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Micaiah Anthony)*



*Commander of U.S. Strategic Command Gen. C. Robert Kehler presents a guidon to Maj. Gen. Scott Vander Hamm, the new Joint Functional Component Commander for Global Strike, and Task Force 204 commander, during a promotion and change of command ceremony at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., Oct. 23, 2013. (U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Joseph A. Pagán Jr.)*

5th Bomb Wing at Minot AFB, N. D., and the B-2 Spirit of the 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman AFB, Mo.

Eighth Air Force total force assets also include the 307th and 131st Bomb Wings.

In addition to the Eighth Air Force, Vander Hamm will also command Task Force 204, which presents worldwide strategic bomber and reconnaissance capabilities to USSTRATCOM and actively monitors force generation for bomber and reconnaissance assets, weapons stockpiles and nuclear force training. Other partner units include the 102nd Air Operations Group and 102nd Air Intelligence Wing at Otis Air National Guard Base, Mass.

Vander Hamm previously served as the director of plans, programs, requirements and assessments at Headquarters Air Education and Training Command at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, Texas.

Vander Hamm was commissioned in 1986 and is a command pilot with more than 4,500 flight hours spanning four aircraft, including the B-52.



# FORTRESS'S FINAL SLICE OF FORTUNE

BY RICHARD BATSON



Lucky Strike's luck was running out as the wartime bomber limped home from a mission on its last dribble of fuel.

But the American Flying Fortress had one more slice of fortune in its armoury - as it just missed a Norfolk church tower and belly-flopped into a field.

Two of its young crew died as the B-17 broke its back, but eight survived.

One of them - the last still living - returned to the crash site yesterday for an emotional unveiling of a memorial to his brave fellow airmen.

It stands just outside Cawston church, whose tower the bomber buzzed as it braced itself for a crash landing during a hail-lashed afternoon on January 4, 1944.

Flight engineer Jack Sasson was greeted by villagers who remembered the crash, helped at the scene, and had souvenir pieces of Lucky Strike.

He recalled the plane's mission to bomb submarine pens at Kiel, when it had to jettison jammed bombs - plus the spare fuel tank.

"We did not think we had enough gas to get home, and were preparing to ditch in the sea when we saw the coastline. I shall never forget seeing those cliffs - it was wonderful," explained Jack, now 74.

But with the Fortress still losing altitude and on its last splutterings of fuel it was clear the aircraft would not make it back to its base at Ridgewell in Suffolk.

Most of the crew were heads down in the crash position in the center of the plane when it skimmed Cawston church, and the pilot was flying blind through frozen up windows.

"I was pretty scared," said the veteran, who was 21 at the time. "But when you are youngsters you don't think anything serious is going to happen to you."

Jack broke both legs and was knocked unconscious in the crash, 400 yards from the church, which put him in the hospital for months.

But yesterday he met 92-year-old Edward Cox, who was one of the first people on the scene, and helped carry



the injured away on stretchers.

"They had a man missing, but I saw something moving, and we found him buried and still alive," remembered the former farmworker.

David Oakes, who was harvesting beets with other schoolboys nearby

added: "It was going to hit the church."

Brian Turner handed Jack a control cable pulley wheel he had kept as a souvenir when watching the plane being salvaged.

The brick memorial was dedicated by the Rector the Rev Michael King, while Ian Colman played the last post. Mr. Sasson and parish council chairman Paul Soanes laid wreaths. Lt. Col. Tim Moore, an assistant air attache from the American embassy was also present, and Mr. Sasson arrived in a wartime American Jeep.

A stars and stripes flag flying from a miniature mast will be flown again on every armistice day and anniversary of the crash.

The memorial was the idea of Richard Howard, whose parents befriended Jack Sasson in the hospital.

The crewmen remembered are: Pilot Rowland Evans, co-pilot Everett Scarborough, navigator Marion Harkness, bombardier Irving Kraut (killed in the crash), flight engineer John Sasson, radio operator/gunner Melvin Samuels, asst engineer/gunner Delbert Rasey, armourer/gunner Julius Vargo, tailgunner Hoyt Burckhalter, and ball turret gunner Julius Rivera (killed in crash).

Lucky Strike was an older replacement plane for the crew's regular, and newer, aircraft which had to be pulled out of the raid at the last moment when the fueling truck ran into its nose turret.



TRAGEDY: The American Flying Fortress after it crashed, narrowly missing the tower of Cawston church, in 1944 with the death of two crew members and, inset, veteran Jack Sasson at the memorial.



# WE ARE TAKING OUR SHOW ON THE ROAD

Dr. Nancy Toombs



**Dr. Nancy Toombs**  
**President**

In the September issue of the “News” we introduced an idea that the Historical Society hopes will serve as both an educational program and a preservation effort. We are going to collect and display uniforms, wings, pins and “all things Mighty Eighth related” at our 8th Air Force Reunions. For several years veterans have given me many WWII items: mostly uniforms—jackets and patches. I have used these locally for displays

to educate the younger generation on the sacrifices of the 8th and as a way to honor the veterans. People are always attracted to the beauty of the various uniforms, which invariably leads to questions and that opens the door to invitations to join the Historical Society.

For this program to succeed we are calling upon the veteran membership and or friends and families of our veterans, to **PLEASE** look in your closets, attics, basements, and storage buildings and help us find the items we need to “keep our show on the road!” Don’t

let these items slip away and be lost to history—let us keep them secure, display them with pride, and insure that your name is always associated with your gift. In each issue of the “News” we will list items that we need for our display.

I would like to send out a huge “**THANK YOU**” to Mr. Bill Jenks of Lakeland, Florida, who is a true friend of the 8th Air Force. Mr. Jenks has been an 8th Air Force memorabilia collector for many years and saw my September article and plea for help. He has most generously donated uniforms, wings, belts, home front items, and other collectibles too numerous to list. His donations have gotten us off to a grand start, but we still need **YOUR HELP**.

Once again, this can only happen with your help! Please ask your fellow veterans if they are willing to give new life to these treasures from the past...



## ITEMS NEEDED:

- ☐ Any type of Tunic/Coat/Jacket worn by 8th AF veteran
- ☐ Bombardier Wings--(all wings are needed)
- ☐ Any Wings made of Bullion
- ☐ Officers Dress Hats
- ☐ Officers Dress Tunic/Coat with Bullion rank and lapel insignia
- ☐ Any uniform that has been professionally altered by overseas tailors.
- ☐ Any A-2 Jacket
- ☐ Patches and sleeve insignia of any type
- ☐ Any item related to Cadet training



*Winged  
Boot*



*Sea Squatters Pin*



*Order  
of the  
Guppy*



*Caterpillar Club Pins*

Any and all items will be appreciated. Call Nancy Toombs: 501-681-3126 to discuss details and answer questions.



## THE QUEEN AND THE TAIL GUNNER

The letter from the Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies read like this --

"Thank you for the notebook filled with copies of letters from Mr. Allen Ostrom of the 398th Bomb Group to Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II and other members of the Royal Family.

Hertford, 30 miles north of London and the county seat for Nuthampstead, has long been recipient of 398th history and memorabilia as it was the only four-engine bomber base in Hertfordshire.

Ostrom, for 27 years the editor of FLAK NEWS, began sending the Queen copies of the newsletter many years ago and has been pleasantly surprised at receiving responses, signed by



"Ladies in Waiting" or other members of the Queen's secretarial staff.

"The Queen has commanded me to write and thank you for..." was typical of the responses. Letters from Her Majesty came from Buckingham Palace, Windsor Castle, St. James Palace, Clarence House, Windsor Castle, Balmoral Castle, and Kensington Palace.

There were also letters from Prince Charles, Prince Adrew, Duke of Gloucester and Viscount Richard Long.

The initial relationship between the 398th and the Hertford Archives was established by Bill Comstock, the group's first Association president.

Ostrom, who did his 35 missions as a tail gunner in the 603rd Squadron, has been, understandably, overjoyed at the Queen's responses.

**Allen Ostrom**  
**398th BG**

## September 8th AF News

The 8th AF News September Issue is terrific! When I saw the 48 page magazine, I knew there would be a Savannah reunion section! The reunion pictures and articles are all great!

In talking to my grandson David the other day he mentioned Donna Neely

and the nice write ups you gave me in the September Issue!

Somehow in the moving to this Senior Citizen place and getting adjusted to new surroundings - I entirely missed your "Behind the Scenes" article - very sad indeed.

How nice of you to go out of your way to make sure we got a wonderful visit in my hotel room in Savannah!

The story by Laura Edge and the Journey to the 96th Bomb Group is so well done I can easily see why that story needs to be written. Would you give me her address as I wish to pay tribute to that devoted daughter. By the way I found a picture of "The Saint Crew" which you may find little better than what you have now. Hopefully the the "ARSTY" story will be in line for the December Issue?"

Please excuse this written effort for I am working on a story which will mark the 70th Anniversary of the Big B Mission on March 6, 1944.

It will be concise (short) but very specific about that special mission.

The Ethell???? and Price book (TARGET BERLIN) - Mission 250 6 March 1944. Makes that mission a critical one for the 8th AF and preparation for D-day June 6.

The best news of all is that the 40th Annual Reunion and you will be there! I love that picture of mother and daughter - they are a special pair that is for sure.

**Best Regards,**  
**Stan Peterson**  
**311 S Flagler Dr. Apt 808**  
**West Palm Beach, FL 33401-5644**

## Prize winning 8th Air Force News

How sweet it is.

In October I will be sweet 98. I use a walker and a wheel chair when going to the doctor.

When I finally get to the hereafter they will ask me what took me so long. I asked a girl if she believed in the hereafter and she said she did so I told her that's what I'm hereafter. The Dr. told me that I can still chase women but they have to be older women. Wishing all of the 8th AF all the best. Keep a smile on your face and a song in your heart. Unforgettable that's what



you are.

**Mucho amour & best wishes,  
Walt Mysliwczyk  
Garfield Hts., OH**

### Parachutes Descending

Perhaps the following tale may be of some interest to your readers.

In 1944, I was an 11 year-old school-boy living in Rickling, a small village in the county of Essex, England. Our part of the country was home to many units of the U.S. 8th and 9th Air Forces. The morning of the 12th June was much as usual with many aircraft overhead getting into formation before setting off on bombing raids over Europe.

The sound of engines was suddenly interrupted by a loud explosion followed by a column of black smoke a few miles off the North. We then saw parachutes descending. Two of which seemed to be heading in our direction. So my friend and I set off to locate the landing point.

We soon found one of the parachutes laying in a field and he seemed to be in some distress. He explained that he was the captain of the crashed B-24 and had lost one of his flying boots on the way down which resulted in injury to his leg on landing.

He told us that his biggest regret was that his pet dog had gone down with the doomed aircraft. Apparently the dog had been an unofficial "crew member" on previous flights.

We informed the local authorities of the location and that the injured airman would need medical attention. This was later provided by a medical team from a nearby USAF base. The Captain presented us with his life jacket and his one

remaining boot as souvenirs but then the local village policeman arrived on the scene and ordered us to hand them back. In those days small boys did as they were told!

We never did know the identity of the airman we met on that June morning until recently when we found a brief account of the crash giving names of crew members in a book. This suggests that the man we spoke to was Lt. Irwin H. Fruchter.

We have often talked about the incident and hoped that he and his crew made it safely back to the U.S.A.

Incidentally, the missing boot was found some years later in remote woodland by a forestry worker.

**Sincerely,  
John Fordham**

### Norwich, England

The Heritage League will be leading a 'trip back' to Norwich, England, over the week of Memorial Day, 2014. They want to welcome any interested others. The focus will be on the 8th Air Force's Second Air Division heavy bomb bases, as they are descendants of the men who maintained and flew B-24s from 14 fields in Norfolk.

The program will be bracketed with Evensong celebrations, first at the 1196 AD Norman cathedral in Norwich, on Sunday, May 25th, and the last on Friday evening following, at the American Chapel within St. Paul's Cathedral London. Monday will see them first at the Cambridge American Cemetery for solemn wreath laying, then at the Duxford American Aviation museum. The following days will have them at various bases, with expert local histori-



an-gudes, on a boat tour or the famous Norfolk Broads, revisiting the wonderful 2nd Air Division Memorial Library in the modern Forum in the heart of this ancient city, and immersing themselves in the, pubs, and cultural attractions of East Anglia, with local friends who are still grateful for American help defeating fascism 70 years ago.

The trip is designed with two kinds of travelers in mind: the veteran who is up to it still, and the 'newbie' who has held out for a well guided, economical value, to let them connect with their veteran's service, in the places he was in 1943-45. This is the time to do it, for both!

Any interested parties should check out the latest info at <http://www.heritageleague.org/reunions.htm> or immediately contact coordinator Marybeth Dyer at [smbdyer@sbcglobal.net](mailto:smbdyer@sbcglobal.net). All parties must be fully committed by April first, to be included in this lifetime opportunity.

Submitted by:

**Chris Clark** [clarkhistory@aol.com](mailto:clarkhistory@aol.com)

**MERRY CHRISTMAS  
FROM YOUR 8TH AF  
NEWS TEAM**



# GEYER CREW

**B-17 was shot down by a German fighter plane  
Five members of the crew and three people in one house were killed  
after it crashed on two houses.**

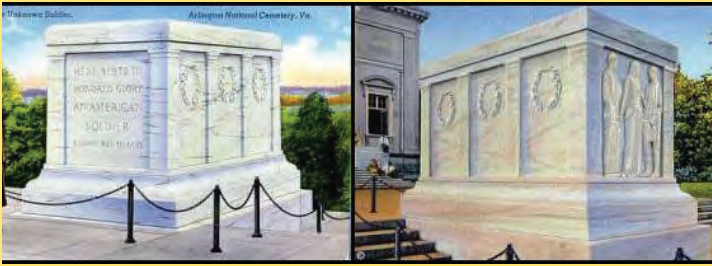
Submitted by: Jacobus de Swart



This modern memorial commemorates the crash of an American B-17 bomber, on 20 October 1943. Each year on October 20 since the erection of the memorial in 2003, flowers are placed at the Monument for the five USAAF Airmen of the 'Geyer-Crew', KIA in the crash of their B-17 42-3439-/96thBG/413BS on Oct. 20-1943 in De Bilt, Holland. Their names immortalized on the turnable cube of this Monument at the former crash site.



# TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN SOLDIER



## 1. How many steps does the guard take during his walk across the tomb of the Unknowns and why?

21 steps. It alludes to the twenty-one gun salute, which is the highest honor given any military or foreign dignitary.

## 2. How long does he hesitate after his about face to begin his return walk and why?

21 seconds for the same reason as answer number 1

## 3. Why are his gloves wet?

His gloves are moistened to prevent his losing his grip on the rifle.

## 4. Does he carry his rifle on the same shoulder all the time and if not, why not?

He carries the rifle on the shoulder away from the tomb. After his march across the path, he executes an about face and moves the rifle to the outside shoulder.

## 5. How often are the guards changed?

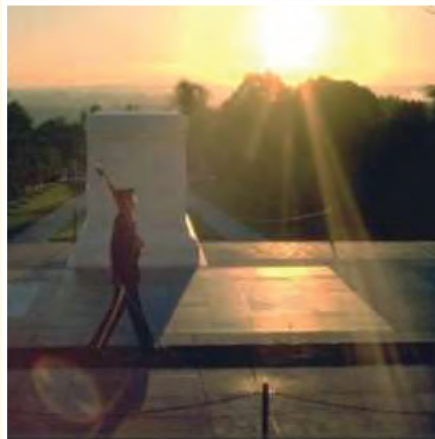
Guards are changed every thirty minutes, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year.

## 6. What are the physical traits of the guard limited to?

For a person to apply for guard duty at the tomb, he must be between 5' 10" and 6' 2" tall and his waist size cannot exceed 30." Other requirements of the Guard: They must commit 2 years of life

to guard the tomb, live in a barracks under the tomb, and cannot drink any alcohol on or off duty for the rest of their lives. They cannot swear in public for the rest of their lives and cannot disgrace the uniform {fighting} or the tomb in any way. After two years, the guard is

given a wreath pin that is worn on their lapel signifying they served as guard of the tomb. There are only 400 presently



worn. The guard must obey these rules for the rest of their lives or give up the wreath pin. The shoes are specially made with very thick soles to keep the heat and cold from their feet. There are metal heel plates that extend to the top of the shoe in order to make the loud click as they come to a halt.

There are no wrinkles, folds or lint on the uniform. Guards dress for duty in front of a full-length mirror.

The first six months of duty a guard cannot talk to anyone,

nor watch TV. All off duty time is spent studying the 175 notable people laid to rest in Arlington National Cemetery . A guard must memorize who they are and where they are interred. Among the notables are: President Taft, Joe E. Lewis {the boxer} and Medal of Honor winner Audie Murphy, {the most decorated soldier of WWII} of Hollywood fame.

Every guard spends five hours a day getting his uniforms ready for guard duty.

## ETERNAL REST GRANT THEM O LORD, AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON THEM.

In 2003 as Hurricane Isabelle was approaching Washington , DC , our US Senate/House took 2 days off with anticipation of the storm. On the ABC evening news, it was reported that because of the dangers from the hurricane, the military members assigned the duty of guarding the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier were given permission to suspend the assignment. They respectfully declined the offer, "No way, Sir!" Soaked to the skin, marching in the pelting rain of a tropical storm, they said that guarding the Tomb was not just an assignment, it was the highest honor that can be afforded to a serviceperson. The tomb has been patrolled continuously, 24/7, since 1930.



**Adams, Lt. Col. Paul**, of Greenville, S.C., passed away June 30, 2013. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps as one of the Tuskegee Airmen. He flew with the 332nd Fighter Group, an African-American unit, also known as the "Red Tail" group for their distinctive aircraft paint scheme. He was the recipient of many awards and commendations. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Alda, 3 children, grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild.

**Arendt, John L.**, age 88, passed away at his home. On October 19, 1947, John married Elaine H. Brusko. John was a very proud W.W. II Veteran. During his time in the service he served in the 303rd BG. He was also an original member of the "Hell's Angels", where he flew B-17's and successfully completed 43 combat missions. John also received the Distinguished Flying Cross. Survivors include his wife of 65 years Elaine.

**Bachman, Lawrence W.**, 90 years old 392nd Bomb Group

August 20, 1923 -- September 22, 2013

**Barnes, S/Sgt Glen W.** age 100 passed away Nov. 2, 2013 in Belvidere, IL at his home. Glen was a top turret gunner on "You Never Know" a B-17 in the 457th BG based at Glatton, England and completed 31 missions in 1944. He received the DFC and remained a staunch "Mighty Eighth" supporter all his life.

**Berry, Tuskegee Airman Ben "Flaps"** was born on February 17, 1925 and passed away on September 30, 2013. He was trained as a Tuskegee Airman B-25 bomber pilot. His unit Tuskegee Airmen Class 45-H was in training to become additional B-25 Bomber Pilots for the 477th Medium Bombardment Group who was in combat training at Selfridge Field, Michigan for the invasion of Japan when WWII ended. Tuskegee Airman Ben "Flaps" Berry is a recipient of the United States of America Congressional Gold Medal of Honor and the author of three books, including *Tuskegee Airmen -- To the Moon, Mars and Beyond: (Secrets Revealed)*, and three screen plays. He earned a BS in Mechanical Engineering and Aerospace Engineering at the USC and conducted Post-Graduate Studies in Real Estate Project Development at UCLA. Mr. Berry was the CEO of ITAC, a World



**John Arendt**



**Richard Carter**



**Ben "Flaps" Berry**



**Micheal Dascoli**



**Robert Cribley**

Trade company, and a Consulting Engineer in Africa and Saudi Arabia. As an Aerospace Engineer, he was a member of the technical staffs of the Apollo, Space Shuttle, and Space Station programs and a designer of the first computerized Fly-by-Wire Flight Control System, a standard for military and commercial aircraft worldwide today. He was also the first proposer for the use of satellites to transmit radio signals which evolved into the Satellite-Communications Industry.

**Bland, Robert O.**, 88, of De Land, FL, passed away May 27, 2012. He entered the U.S. Service March 1944 and was in the 361st Fighter Wing of the 8th Air Force in England as a crew chief during WWII. He returned to active duty in 1948 as a Sgt.. He is survived by wife of 65 years, Ethel, he met after 3 days home from the war.

**Boatright, T. E. "Pete"**, of Dyersburg, TN, passed away September 7th, 2013. He was an assistant crew chief in the 566th BS, 389th BG from July 1943 to the end of the war. Two of his assigned B-24's were "Touch of Texas" and "Princess Konocti"

**Bullard, William L.**, 89, of Wetump-

ka, AL., passed away July 1, 2013. He served as Engineer on a B-24 during WWII. He was a member of the 8th Air Force, the 448th Bomb Group. He is preceded in death by his wife of 54 years, Margaret. He is survived by his God Child and 2 God Children.

**Carter, Richard "Dick" Neil**, of Trenton, MI; age 90; died May 20, 2013 after a brief illness. Dick was a World War II veteran, and proud of it. He was a member of the 388th BG (H), having served in the 860th Squadron as an airplane instrument mechanic from 1942 to 1945. He was also an active member of Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7310, Grosse Ile, MI, and American Legion Post 217, Wyandotte, MI, volunteering in many capacities in both organizations. These places were his home and these men were his family.

**Casaday, Marvin R.**, passed away March 22, 2013. Marvin flew 25 missions with the 335th Sq. 95th Bomb Group as waist gunner on Lt. V. W. Fords Crew 1943-44. Marvin was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 3 oak leaf clusters, the Presidential Unit Citation and other appropriate Medals. He is survived by wife, Dorothy.

**Corbin, Odis Olin**, 92, of Greenville and widower of Thelma Moore Corbin, died June 28, 2013. He served in the Army Air Corps with the 376th Heavy Bombardment Group. He participated in the Ploesti Air Raids on Romanian oil fields.

**Cribley, Robert (Bob) Lt. Col (Ret.)**, 89, of Valdosta, died on Tuesday, Oct. 15, 2013, at his residence. Bob was a navigator on a B-17 and was stationed at Molesworth Cambridgeshire, England — 303rd Bombardment Group (H) "Hell's Angels" Combat Team, 360th BS. He became a pilot in 1948. That year, the U.S. Army Air Corp became the U.S. Air Force, a separate branch of the service. After pilot training, he flew many different Bomber aircraft including B-24s, B-25s and B-27s as well as others. During the Korean Conflict, Bob flew the Airlift, taking troops over and bringing wounded back until 1953. When the Conflict was over, he qualified for the B-47s, which he flew from 1955 to 1960. In 1961, Bob qualified to fly the B-52s and in 1963, he was deployed to Homestead AFB in South Florida dur-



Joy Howard Dunlap's Crew



ing the Cuba Missile Crisis. Bob's last aircraft was the B-52s. He flew the B-52 out of Loring AFB during the Cold War with Russia. Bob retired in 1965, from the U.S. Air Force after 22 years of service. After Bob's retirement from the Air Force, he became an education specialist for the U.S. Naval Training Device Center in Orlando, Fla. He received several superior and outstanding awards during this time and worked with the United Nations overseas. From 1976 until 1988, Bob was the chairman of the Air Force Academy Selection Committee for FLS 11th Congressional District. He first worked with Congressman Bill Frey and then Congressman Bill Nelson. Bob retired from the Navy in January 1988, after 21 years of service. Survived by his wife of 67 years, Roselle Bartlett Cribley of Valdosta.

**Dascoli, Micheal. H. Jr.**, Hamden CT 305th BG/365 Sq Chelveston England Bomb/Nav 35 missions 44/45 Bischof Crew then 55 missions Korea

**Dunlap, Joy Howard**, age 90, 385th BG, of Alabaster, AL passed away 24th September 2013. Joy was a member and past president of the Alabama Chapter of the 8th AFHS and a member of the 385th BG. Joy was the pilot of his crew and flew his combat tour of missions from Great Ashfield, Suffolk, England in WW II. Joy manifested a great deal of care for his wife, Maria Jackie Dunlap

**Ellis, Roddey S., Jr.**, 91, of Due West,

SC., passed away on April 14, 2013. He was a member of the 513th Fighter Pilot Squadron and fought in the WWII European Theatre, including D-Day Normandy invasion. Following his tour of duty, he served as a test pilot at Dover Air Force Base. He is survived by his second wife, Armena.

**Fogarty, Richard (Buddy) Thomas**, 91, a native of Savannah Georgia passed away on 17 Oct., 2013. He was born in Savannah Georgia to the late Richard and Ruth Fogarty on 5 Dec., 1921.

Richard graduated from Benedictine Military School in 1940 and enlisted in the US Army following graduation. He was a crewmember on B 17s, flying out of Molesworth England as a member of the famous 303rd Bomb Group, the "Hells Angels". His bomber was shot down over Czechoslovakia on his 35th mission in March of 1945 and he spent the remainder of the war as a POW in Germany (<http://www.303rdbg.com/missionreports/362.pdf>.)



John Jenkins

Cornelius Kelleher

He returned home to Savannah and married the love of his life, Frances Mary Clemence on 16 JUN, 1945.

He was employed by the US Army Corps of Engineers and after 30 years of outstanding service retired in 1974. In 1979.

**Hardin, Thomas H. Jr. Major, USAF** (Ret.) 92, of Spring Hill, FL, died Sept. 27, 2013. Tom was a B-17 Pilot. He was one of the original "Hells Angels" in the 303rd BG. He married MaeBelle Bryant of Birmingham, AL in 1946. They met when they were both stationed in San Antonio, TX, Randolph Field where she was a control tower operator in the WAC. His USAF career took him to many places in the world, with his devoted wife following. Major Hardin was proud of the many medals awarded him, including The Distinguished Flying Cross (Pilot, 35 missions into Germany), Air Medal w/one silver and one bronze oak leaf cluster, American Defense Service Medal, American Campaign Medal w/one bronze battle star, European-African-Middle Eastern Medal w/three bronze battle stars, WWII Victory Medal, Army of Occupation Medal/Japan, National Defense Service Medal w/one bronze star, Korean Service Medal w/four bronze battle stars, Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon w/four bronze oak leaf clusters, Armed Forces Reserve Medal, United Nations Service Medal, Republic of Korea War Service Medal, and Republic of Korea Presidential Unit Citation. Following his Air Force career they settled in St. Petersburg where he became a corporate pilot.

**Jayroe, Jack B.**, 88 years old, of Shreveport LA, passed away Feb. 28, 2012 at NW LA World War Veterans Home. He was drafted into the AAF Feb., 1943. Jack was armorer/waistgunner on a B17 96BG 337BS, completing 27 missions, and was discharged Nov. 1945. He is survived by his wife Pat of 66 years.

**Jehle, Harry Walter**, 90, of Montgomery, AL., died June 21, 2013. Harry served as a pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps during WWII. He was preceded in death by his wife of 54 years, Velma, and his wife of 2 years, Jean.

**Jenkins, John Innes**, passed away Oct. 16, 2013 following a brief illness. He had lived in Alamogordo since he was

transferred from the 509th Bomb Wing at Walker Air Force Base to the Missile Development Center at Holloman AFB in 1958. After graduating from high school in Waterloo, he began his life long interest in aviation while taking flight lessons in Taylorcraft in the Civilian Pilot Training Program. John flew 35 combat missions as a B-17 navigator with the 303rd BG. The worst mission he could recall was the bombing of the Leuna oil refinery at Merseburg, Germany, in November 1944 where many allied aircraft were lost. He also participated in bombing which supported allied ground forces during the Battle of the Bulge.

He was recalled to active duty in 1950 for pilot training with the U.S. Air Force during the Korean conflict. It was during pilot training that he married Twyla Stammer in Sherman, Texas. John's service included tours at bases throughout the United States, Canada and overseas. John would ultimately fly many aircraft, including the B-29, B-50, B-47 and B-58. He retired from the Air Force in 1967 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. A Scottish toast to John: "Here's tae us. Wha's like us? Gey few, and they're a' deid. Mair's the pity!"

**Kelleher, Cornelius Hayes (Neil)**, 91, of South Hadley, MA died on October 13, 2013. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Margaret (Sutton) Kelleher of South Hadley, originally from Norwich, England. He trained as a radio operator and aerial gunner. After 30 combat missions over Germany as a T/Sgt, 388th BG B-17s, he volunteered for advanced radio school. After graduating and awaiting assignment to the Pacific, the war ended. An honorable discharge followed in Oct. 1945. A year later he reenlisted in the Air Force. For over 9 1/2 years he served on select crews in Strategic Air Command B-29, B-50, and B-36 aircraft attaining a superintendent rating as radio operator and electronic counter-measure operator. Another 32 months were spent patrolling the North Atlantic Ocean in RC-121 radar reconnaissance aircraft. His next assignment required attending two weather observer schools. Following graduations and qualifying as a chief weather observer he earned his second superintendent rating, eventually becoming the chief weather



**Norman Landberg Russell Rossman**

observer superintendent for the 8th Air Force when the 8th was headquartered at Westover AFB in Chicopee, MA. He retired there as a Senior Master Sergeant in Nov. 1965. Thereafter he belonged to the Air Force Reserve until honorably discharged in Mar. 1974. He was very proud to be a lifetime member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society.

**Ketner, Will L.**, 91, of Harrisburg and formerly of Roaring Spring and Altoona, PA, passed away peacefully in his home, July 22, 2013. Will entered WWII as a Lieutenant in the Army Air Force, graduating from pilot school at Moody Field, GA and proudly serving his country as a B-17 pilot with the 303rd BG.

**Lamme, Edwin**, former Eureka resident, passed away April 9, 2013 at his home in Santa Rosa. He was 92. Ed was born and raised in Santa Fe, NM. It was there that he met his first love, the trumpet. After graduating high school, Ed attended various colleges in New Mexico and later in southern California, supporting himself by playing in dance bands. In early 1942, Ed joined the military. He served in the US 8th Air Force as a bombardier in B-17s, surviving 27 missions. He served the remainder of World War II in various training positions. In 1942, while stationed in Spokane, WA, Ed met the next love of his life, June. Two weeks after they met they married, remaining together until June's death in 1999.

**Landberg, Norman**, age 93, 36th BS Radar Counter Measure Unit pilot has gone to join that heroic band of airmen who had gone before on Aug. 28, 2013. Norman flew over 50 missions with the Gremlin 36th and endured a take-off crash that killed two airmen of his crew. In November 2009 Norman and his tail gunner George Eberwine returned to

Ivinghoe, England to dedicate a memorial honoring his crew (See 8AF News Mar 2010). Being blessed to survive the war Norman returned to the states, married his beloved Elizabeth.

**Lewis, Roy Hunter**, 90, of Maringouin, La., passed away June 21, 2013. Veteran of the U.S. Army Air Force, he served as an engineer and top turret gunner in the Cabin in the Sky B-17 bomber in the Frantic II mission. His group - the 8th AF, 96th BG, 337th Bomb Squadron - participated in the bombardment of the Ruhland oil refineries en route to Russia. He received the Declaration Air Medal, Good Conduct Medal, European-African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, African Campaign Medal, Veteran's Honor Medal by Governor Jinal in 2009 and the 50th Anniversary of the Victory - Great Patriotic War Medal on behalf of Russian President Boris Yeltsin. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Elizabeth, 4 children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. submitted by Harry Tanner

**Lucier, Ralph Arthur**, passed away Sept. 8, 2013. Ralph spent his early years in Chicago, Ill. He was a fighter and B-17 pilot. He proudly flew 37 combat missions over Germany as a member of "Hell's Angels" 303rd BG in the 360th squadron. Ralph was preceded in death by his loving wife of 58 years, Margaret.

**Lukomski, Edward**, 90, of Seminole, FL, passed away Nov. 27, 2012. A B-17 pilot with the 447th BG stationed in Rattlesden, England. He received the DFC and Air Medal. Survived by wife, Daphne of 68 years.

**Morris, Jim**, 91, passed away on 12 June, 13. Jim was a Toggallier on the John Sutton's Crew with the 336th Bomb Sqdn., 5th Bomb Group. Flew 26 missions plus one Chow Mission to the Netherlands. Survived by wife, Carol.

**Monroe, David O.**, 89, 8th AF M. Sgt. retired, passed away April 5, 2013. He was a waist gunner on a B-17 in World War II.

**Moseley, John Raymond**, 94, passed away February 11, 2013. He served as a bomber pilot. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Doris Gordon Moseley.

**Nagel, David A. DFC.**, Clifton NJ. 305th B.G. 422nd Sq Chelveston England TT/Eng 35 missions 44/45 Maluy Crew



**Neurauter, Otto Paul**, October 20, 2013. age 96, of Oro Valley, AZ, formerly of Naperville, IL. Beloved husband for 70 years of the late Beatrice E. Neurauter. Otto was a lead-navigator with the 784th Squadron, 466th BG.

**Osborne, Earl W.**, 90, of Charlotte, NC., died Sept. 10, 2013. He was in the 8th Air Force, 385th Bomb Group, 550th BS and became a POW. He was a flight engineer and top turret gunner. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Billie, children, 7 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

**Pollitt, Francis L. "Bud"**, 87, passed away April 9, 2013. He served in the US Army Air Corp during WWII as a navigator on a B-26 in France.

**Reid, Hollis Eugene**, 92, of Cornelius, NC., died May 20, 2013. He was a WWII U.S. Air Force 1st Bombardment Division 94th Combat Bombardment Wing stationed at Glatton Air Force Base in England, as well as, the 351st Bombardment Group (Heavy) 1061st Military Police Company at Polebrook Air Force Base in England. He is survived by 2 daughter, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**Rossman, Col. Russell J.**, 89, 388th BG, passed away, September 16, 2013. On Nov. 9, 1946, he was united in marriage to Phyllis E. Brungart. He was co-pilot of the B-17 "Star Dust", flying 35 missions in World War II. He flew another 7 missions in the Korean War. Russell proudly served his country for 31 years in the U.S. Air Force, retiring in 1973 as a Colonel.

**Scheer, Major Harold**, 95, died on June 1, 2013 Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. Major Scheer served as a B-17 Navigator with the 359th Bomber Squadron of the famous 303rd BG "The Hells Angels" and was a decorated (Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Air Medal)

WWII veteran. While on his 11th bombing mission over Germany, his aircraft was shot down on November, 1944 and he spent the next 7 months as a POW in Luft Stalag I in Bath, Germany, until the



**Bill Seitz**

wars end, when his camp was liberated by Russian soldiers. Major Scheer continued his service to his country in the active Air Force Reserves until 1977. Mr. Scheer is survived by his wife Alice. **Shaughnessy, Judge William J.**, passed into Eternal Life, September 23, 2013 in Baraboo, WI. He served as a B-17 pilot, 303rd BG.

**Shelton, Lt. Luther Conway "Skip", Jr.**, USAAC, died June 1, 2003. Husband of Shirley Langley Shelton. He joined the US Army Air Corps in 1942. While in the service of our nation he graduated flight school and attained the rank of Lieutenant and served in the 8th Air Force out of England flying bombing missions over France and Germany as a bomber pilot, flying a total of 17 missions.

**Seitz, Captain William "Bill"**, pilot, 344th Bomb Squadron, 98th BG, 15th Air Force passed away on October 1, 2013. He was the youngest pilot to step into a B-24 cockpit and went overseas in August of 1943. On November 2, 1943, he was involved in the raid on Weiner Neustadt, Austria bombing a factory that made Me-109s. During that raid, an Me-109 attacked his bomber and shredded part of one of the twin tails. Luckily, a P-38 fighter escort arrived to chase away the Germans. Captain Seitz was awarded the DFC for his action on November 2, 1943

**Stenger, John J. Jr.** 89 of Clifton passed away on August 2, 2013. John was a member of Quentin Roosevelt American Legion Post # 8, Clifton, and was and WW II Army-Airforce Veteran. John received a Distinguished Service Award from the 303rd BG(H), "Hell's Angels" Combat Team, while serving 1942-1945. Beloved husband of the late Helen (Lewis) who died in 2011.



**Robert Wertz**



**Richard Sykora**

**Stewart, S/Sgt. Roland James**, Ball & Waist Gunner, 787 Bomb Squadron, 466 Bomb Group passed away October 23, 2013. Roland James Stewart was born on April 4, 1923 and passed away October 23, 2013. He flew 35 missions as a B-24 waist gunner. Roland Stewart married Velna Williams in 1945. He attended Seattle Pacific University and Asbury Theological Seminary and followed his father into full-time service to the Free Methodist Church of Oregon retiring in 1988 after thirty-four years. In 2000, he became 8th Air Force Historical Society, Oregon Chapter chaplain. A kind and compassionate man, he will be sincerely missed by the Oregon Chapter of the 8th AFHS.

**Stockham, John**, of Crown Point, age 89, passed away Wednesday, March 6, 2013. He is survived by his wife, Joanne John served in WWII in the 8th AF as a B-17 Lead Navigator for the 447th BG. He was awarded the Air Medal with five OLC, The Purple Heart and The ETO Campaign Ribbon with three battle stars.

**Sykora, Richard Henry**

June 25, 1923 - 90, passed away September 9th in Peoria, Arizona. He was born in Vinita, Oklahoma. Dick was proud to be a first generation American. His specialty was servicing the radar equipment on the bombers that flew over Europe. Three days after returning from the war to Omaha in December, 1945, he met his future wife, Marian Leonard, while ice-skating.

**Walters, James E.**, 93, of Balkan, KY., passed away on December 31, 2012. He was in the 8th Air Force, 447th BG stationed in Rattlesden, England where he played baritone sax in the Blockbuster Army Air Corps Band. He was assigned to the Finance Division in England and served from 1941 to 1945. He is preceded in death by his wife, Ruth.

**Wertz, Robert "Bob" Maxwell Sr.**, age 93 formerly of Alexandria, passed away May 16, 2013 in Baton Rouge, LA. He is preceded in death by his loving wife of 60 years Margaret Hill Wertz. When the war broke out in WWII his brother joined the Navy and Bob joined the Army Air Corp. After completing pilot training in the Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress, Bob came to Alexandria as the 1st instructor pilot of the B-17. His assignment to Alexandria is how he met his wife

Margaret Hill. After training many flight crews for the European Theater he was transferred to Molesworth, England. He was on the 24th mission and one more before he was going home, when he was shot down; Bob and his crew became POW in Germany. For this last mission he and his crew were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1992 at the opening ceremony for the 8th Air Force Museum in Savannah, GA. In 2013 Bob was honored as a special guest at the Houston Air Show of the Former Blue Angels Team Members and Top Gun Aviator Instructors, to thank him for his service in WWII. Being able to meet many wounded warriors from the current conflicts he was told that it was an honor to meet a warrior from the "Greatest

Generation"; in turn he brought tears to their eyes when he told them "No, you are the greatest generation of warriors, because you all are volunteers."

**Wolff, Harry**, Central Park NY. 305th B.G. 422nd Sq Chelveston England Ball Turret Gunner 44/45.

**Werth, Berton M.**, Age 90, passed away on September 27, 2013. Berton was with the 492nd BG,

Bert was a Captain in the Air Force during World War II and flew 65 missions.

**Williams, James E.**, 94, of Troy, AL., passed away on January 29, 2013. He served as a pilot and operations officer with the 155th Photo Reconnaissance Squadron, flying low-level nighttime reconnaissance missions to document the location, strength, and movement of

German troops, equipment and transport. He was also a pilot during the Korean Conflict, served as the Air Force Advisor to the Alabama National Guard and taught at the Air Force Command and Staff College. He is preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Adelene. He is survived by his daughter and grandson.

**Wunnenberg, Chris A. Jr.**, 90, passed away on January 26, 2013. He was a B-17 pilot and last surviving member of "The Character" Crew. He had the unofficial record of having completed his 28 missions over Germany in the shortest time. Survived by his wife of 69 years, Verna.



## A Note About Taps

*Please make sure to include the following information:*

- Name of the individual
- When they passed away
- Age at the time of their death
- Bomb or Fighter Group association (if applicable)
- Crew position (if known and applicable)
- Any special or unique achievements, recognitions, or awards

*Because of the sheer number of notifications we are receiving, we regret we can no longer accommodate multiple photographs or lengthy obituaries.*

**Information may be emailed to:**  
**News@8thAFHS.org**

**Mailed:**

**P O Box 956**  
**Pooler, GA 31322-0956**  
**Phone: 912-748-8884**







## 8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY STATE CHAPTERS



**Alabama:** Chuck Bowman  
1903 Blackjack Road, Trussville, AL  
35173 205-467-6517 Michael Mitchell  
e-mail: msmith@uab.edu

**North Alabama:** Ann F. Vaughn  
367 Jeff Road Huntsville, AL 35806  
(256)837-0289 e-mail: Vaughnfarm@  
knology.net

**Arizona:** DISBANDED

**Arkansas:** DISBANDED

**California-North (Doolittle):** DIS-  
BANDED

**California-South (LeMay):** DIS-  
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**Colorado:** Jay Meshko  
1255 Carr St. Lakewood, Colorado 80214  
720-274-1302  
e-mail: jaymeshko@comcast.net

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**Louisiana:** DISBANDED

**Massachusetts:** Alfred E. Dusey 18  
Algonquin Ave. Andover, MA 01810  
(978)475-8832

**Michigan:** DISBANDED

**Minnesota:** Steve Marks  
5121 Gorgas Ave., Edina, MN 55424  
email: stever.61@gmail.com

**Mississippi:** Dalton Miller 662-773-  
4722 emial: dmiller@ra.msstate.edu

**Missouri:** DISBANDED

**Nebraska:** DISBANDED

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**New Mexico:** Lawrence Stebleton,  
8903 Rio Grande Blvd. NW, Albuquer-  
que, NM 87114 505-898-5437  
e-mail: larrysteb@msn.com

**New York (Central):** Louis Lupi  
2343 Curry Road, Schenectady, NY  
12303 518-229-5613

**New York (South):** Joseph Patrick  
Keeley 1335 Belmont Ave. North Hale-  
don, NJ 07508 973-495-3404  
email: fxe84@optonline.net

**New York (West):** Rick Devita 180  
Audubon Dr. Amherst, NY 14226 716-  
839-3040

**North Carolina Metrolina  
Wing:** TBA

**North Carolina Western Wing:**  
Larry Goldstein email: larr914@gmail.  
com

**Ohio:** Richard Gustke 940 Great View  
Circle Dayton, Ohio 45459  
937-356-2564  
e-mail: mrtimely8641@hotmail.com

**Oregon:** Bert Campbell  
e-mail: anorak@bctonline.com

**Pennsylvania:** John C. Raiser 140 East  
Linn St. Bellefonte, PA 16823 814-574-  
9622 email: jcrper@enr.psu.edu

**Rhode Island:** DISBANDED

**Savannah (Birthplace):** Chapter  
President Bob Buck, www.mighty8th-  
birthplace.org

**The Southern Ontario Wing:**  
Commander Jonathan Levin – Turner  
35 Lionshead Lookout, Brampton,  
Ontario, Canada L6S3X2  
416-568-3780  
email: USAF6680@gmail.com

**Tennessee:** DISBANDED

**Texas (Central) DISBANDED:**

**Texas (Rio Grande):** DISBANDED

**Texas (North):** Dick Atkins  
1304 Cochise Drive,  
Arlington, TX 76012  
817-261-3007  
email: dick8af@flash.net

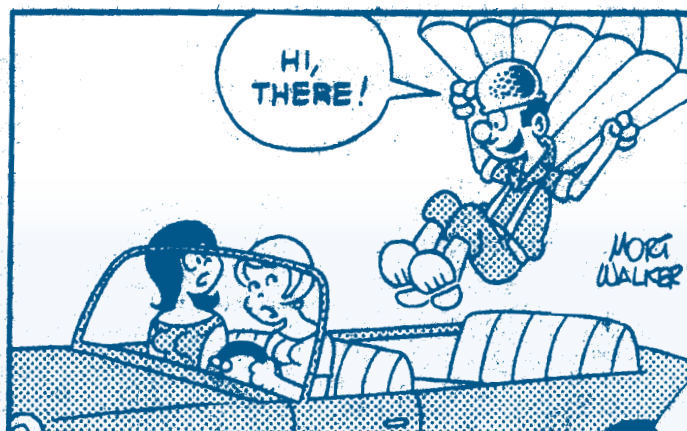
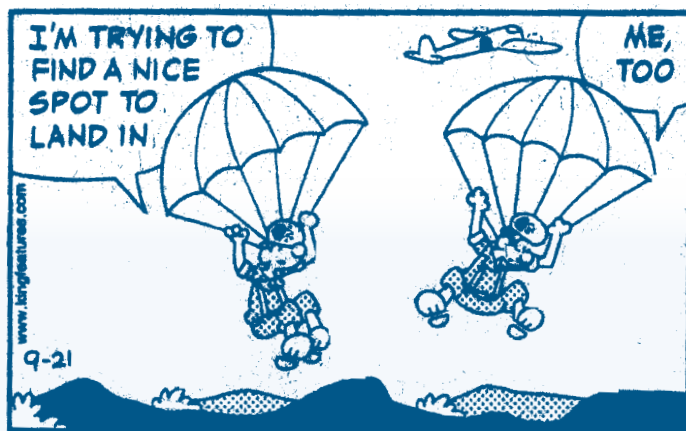
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(703)631-0510

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Davidson 2638 Lakeview Drive, St.  
Albans, WV 25177 304-727-7724

**Wisconsin:** Cindy Drehmel  
PO Box 370765 Milwaukee, WI 53237  
(414)573-8520



# JAMES P. OLMSTED (“JOHNNY”)

100th Bomb Group, 351st squadron

**Achieved rank of Captain at time of discharge.**

**He was a 2nd Lieutenant while at Thorpe Abbots.**

**Arrived at Thorpe Abbots on July 4, 1944  
Trained as a pilot.**

**Cadet training Washington State  
College-Pullman, WA**

**Pre flight school-Santa Ana, CA**

**Primary flight training- Hemet, CA**

**Advanced flight training-Stockton, CA**

**Transferred to Yuma, AZ**

**(better weather conditions)**

**Combat flight training-AAF Ardmore, OK**

**H**e became a co-pilot and when the crew was squadron lead on numerous missions he was typically responsible for establishing and assuring accurate squadron formation on final target bomb runs. Ernst's crew was often tapped as lead for missions.

He was wounded on January 10, 1945 on the bomb mission over Cologne, Germany and spent nearly two years in the hospital for reconstructive surgery on his left hand before being discharged. Flak was removed from his left temple that passed through his hand. He threw his hands up to protect his face when he knew the burst was near the fuselage. He was on his 25th mission. His aircraft took flak, on the incoming bomb run, and he was the only crewmember injured. He crawled up the gangway near the front of the ship and was attended to by the other crewmembers. Bombs were discharged at target and the plane turned out of formation and returned to base as quickly as possible.

The Ernst crew was shot down later over Berlin on their 30th mission while dad was recuperating in the military hospital. Some of his crew lost their lives on that mission at the hands of the Nazi's. Others parachuted behind enemy lines and survived POW status, or made contact with the under-

ground and found their way back to safe harbor. My dad considered himself lucky after learning of this unfortunate outcome for his crew.

He was the recipient of the Purple Heart, Distinguished Flying Cross, World War II Victory Medal, European Theatre Ribbon with 4 Bronze Stars, and the Air Medal with 3 Oak Clusters, as well as the American Theater Ribbon.

He attended 100th Bomb Group Reunions at Colorado Springs, Long Beach, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Omaha (2001). There were many great stories shared at these Reunions among attending crewmembers.

In 1997, my dad and I took a trip to Diss, England and went to Thorpe Abbots. It was an incredible trip. We were not on a tour, just traveling on our own. When we were at the museum, the curator put word out that we were walking about the grounds and out on the field previously used as the hardstands and landing strip. Two grown men rode up to “meet” one of the crewmembers that was “a soldier on a B17 bomber.” They were kids living on a nearby farm (in 1944-45) and remembered the airmen, the planes, and the sky filled with B17 bombers circling awaiting complete formation for departure over Western Europe, and later, Germany. A lot of tears were shed over that half hour with descriptions

of the thunderous sounds, returning maimed planes, crash landings, etc. But most impressive were the handshakes and the overwhelming gratitude for what those airmen, like my dad, had done for the short time they were at Thorpe Abbots and the astounding job that they performed for England and all of Europe. They felt so indebted and appreciative. I'll never forget the look on their faces for as long as I live. Dad

never thought of himself as a hero, but understanding the views of those two Englishmen, I would never deny it.

All of those stories and the brave storytellers, including my dad, will be sorely missed.



*The control tower would have been the most welcome sight--short of being back home--for air crews coming home especially after difficult missions. This is Thorpe Abbots--now a museum.*





**Christmas Party 1943**



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SILENT AUCTION

MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE MARCH 2014



December 2013 (13-4)









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this old pot-bellied stove



B-24 pilot, Jimmy Stewart playing the  
piano at a 2nd combat wing HQ  
Christmas Party in December 1944

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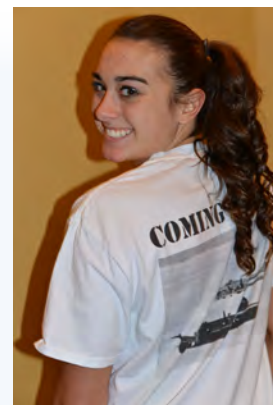
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# COMING HOME

**Coming Home was the theme of the mid-July 2013, 39th Annual Reunion of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society.** Savannah, the home of the Birth-Place Chapter and the National Museum of the Eighth Air Force was the appropriate place to hold this gathering. It was here that the Eighth was organized in 1942 and from here, thousands of crews and aircraft were dispatched to go to Europe and fight the Nazi war machine. Sixty-eight years later, 300 registered. Over 60 of them were Veterans. Some of these Vets were engaged early in the war and others came later flying as replacement crews. I was one of the typical replacement crews. It was in April of 1945 that my crew and I had flown 35 missions over German occupied territory as well as 7 gas hauls into France to support General Patton's troops. When we were finished with our tour, we were going home. Home had not been far from our thoughts in the nine months we had spent in East Anglia. Sometimes after a particularly rough mission, we wondered if we would even see home again.

Without exception, the theme of every conversation among military men included 'when we finish our assignments and go home'. That was the dream, going home! There was always great anticipation but we also knew that things would be different when we got there. The human spirit is restless. Returning Veterans were no exception. There were wives and sweethearts whose affections strayed and had written 'dear John' letters to disappointed, betrayed and lonely husbands and boy-friends who were 'over there'. Not all of the guys faced this dilemma but many did. To them, the anticipation of going home was not nearly as attractive as it had been before. These millions of service-men 'going home' were faced with a national financial crisis. All of them would be looking

for jobs that were in short supply. The Great Depression had engulfed most of them when they were in their youth and if they were fortunate enough to have a job, it was menial and low-paying without much of a future. Many former bosses had saved their old job for them. These were some of the negative factors, but many Veterans returned to loving wives, some with babies born while they were away. There were the sweethearts who became adoring wives and idealistic mothers for their children. Where there were no opportunities for them, these rugged individuals created their own. They were a unique breed. Because of their resilience, they educated themselves and became living examples possessing a strong 'work ethic'. They created opportunities, were innovators, and earned for themselves a better life. Because of their diligence and creativity, they were called 'The Greatest Generation.' This was a title bestowed upon them, not a cliché they gloated in. They were Americans, they embraced its ideals and honored the God who had given them a place to go home to.

I have been a part of this generation, watching the generations passing in review, the swash-backing youth in their zeal and now this generation living in the last season of their life. There is encouragement coming from God's Word written in 3 John 2 (NKJ)

***"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the truth."***

And we have prospered. Although most are 90 years of age or more, their work is not finished. I say to the Vets: *"You were created that you might make a difference and even now you have within you the power to change the world! Everything you do matters and your spirit, your thoughts, feelings, your ability to reason and actions belong to you and you alone."*

*You are being monitored by your own peers as well as the generations*



**Earl Wassom**

*following and I somehow believe those who have gone ahead are watching.*

*The great apostle said; "since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith" Hebrews 12:1-2 (NKJ).*

Many our friends, loved-ones, comrades-in-arms have already gone home. They have finished the course and are witnesses, watching us as we complete our race. They are 'over there' having a great home-coming. The negatives that troubled the WW II Veterans coming home are non-existent in this celestial home coming; We can only say in our hearts and soul to them, we aren't finished yet, but we are on our way. We will 'see you later!'

May our Heavenly Father bless your 'home coming'. Amen!

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







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