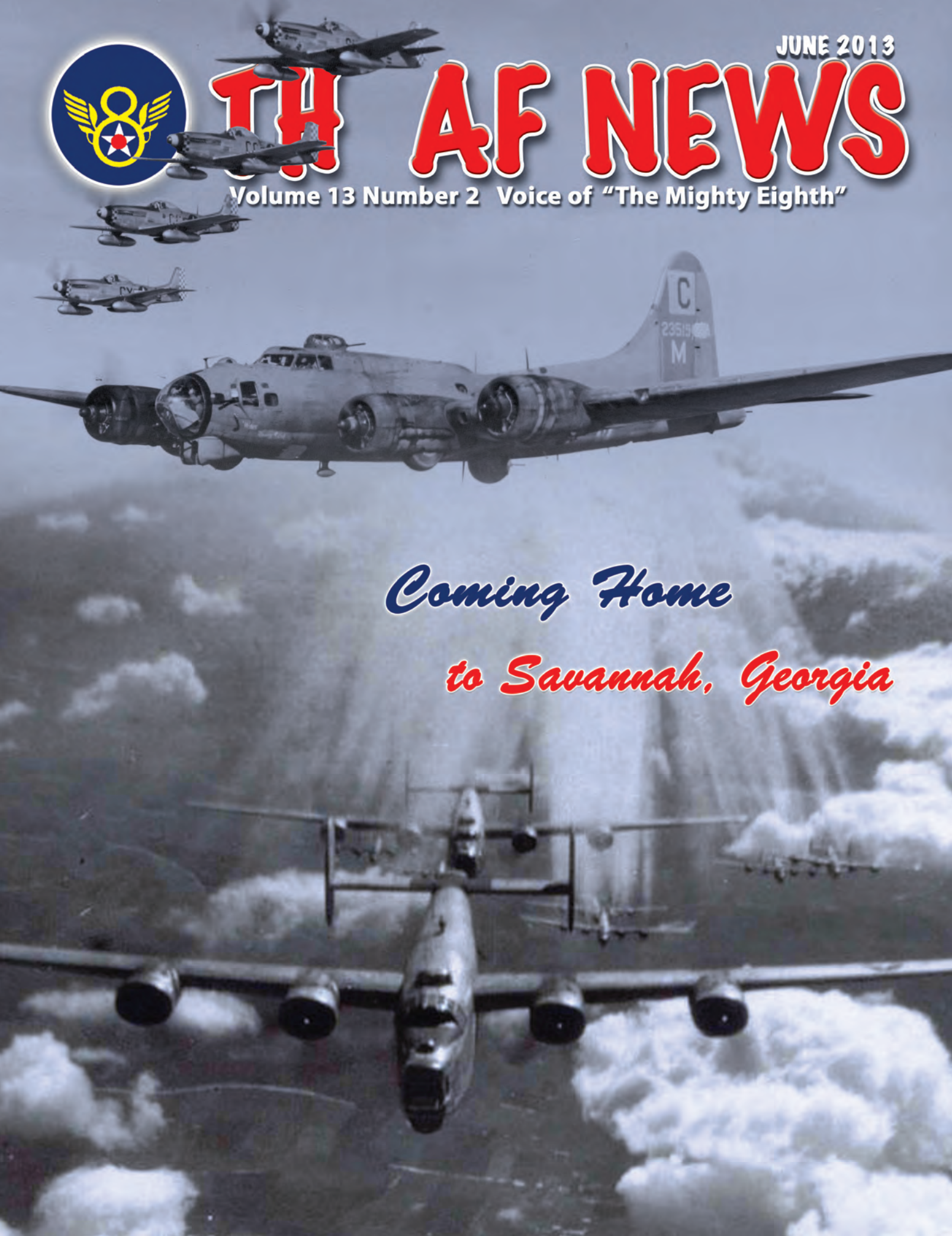


JUNE 2013



# 8th AF NEWS

Volume 13 Number 2 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"



*Coming Home*

*to Savannah, Georgia*



# AF News

Magazine of

## The Eighth Air Force Historical Society

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

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# President's Message



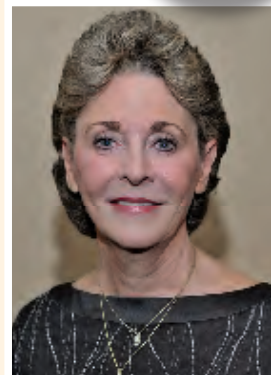
Greetings to all! I hope that spring has finally arrived to everyone around the country in spite of our challenging weather these past several months. We experienced multiple storms that tore through our towns and communities causing a great deal of damage and destruction. I hope that you have weathered these events unharmed and, like all of us, look forward to blue skies ahead.

Blue skies are in the forecast for the upcoming **39th Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion** in Savannah, Georgia. We are excited about returning to Savannah and feel that this will be a very special reunion, as we are again, **“coming home”** to the birthplace of the 8th Air Force. Events include nationally known speakers, researchers, archivists, and the opportunity to welcome the B-17 “City of Savannah” to her new home at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighty Air Force.

The Historical Society Board has focused our efforts on this **“coming home”** theme as a tribute to all who served the Mighty Eighth with honor and distinction: our heroes. During the reunion our speakers will share even more amazing stories of the sacrifice and courage that has so distinguished the Eighth. We will pay our respects to the B-17 and the other great war birds that took wing to victory and much, much more.

This Savannah reunion may very well be the last reunion of this magnitude, as our ranks grow thinner, so we

will move to a reunion style that will better fit a smaller membership. 2013 is the year to pull out all the stops and to let each of you know not only how much you are appreciated, but to renew with each and every one of you, our stewardship of keeping the memories alive and carrying forth your legacy to future generations.



**Dr. Nancy Toombs**  
*President*

So for now, we are **coming home**. We look forward to seeing old friends, renewing friendships and meeting new members of the 8th Air Force family. Mark your calendars and make plans to attend! This will be one reunion you will *not* want to miss. If you have not attended a reunion in the last few years or never attended at all—this is your chance to be a part of a very special “family” homecoming.

Blessings to each of you and God Bless  
“The Mighty Eighth.”

*Respectfully,*  
**Nancy J. Toombs**  
*President 8th AFHS*



## THE BIRTHPLACE CHAPTER OF SAVANNAH, GEORGIA

**Serves as host during the 39th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion**

**Hosting the "WELCOME RECEPTION" on Monday, July 22 and the "HOSPITALITY ROOM" off the lobby of the hotel for coffee and doughnuts on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday AM.**



All eight chapter board members, as well as most members of the Birthplace Chapter are active volunteers at the [National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force](#) as Docents, Mission Experience, Greeters and B-17 Restoration. They are all very dedicated to keeping alive the history and memory of the 8th AF during those war years.

If you haven't visited the Museum recently, you will be pleasantly surprised at the additions and changes. The restoration of the B-17 is amazing, and the team of volunteers, led by "Houdini", Jerry McLaughlin, are doing an outstanding job. The citizens of the Savannah area raised the funds with a “War Bond Rally” to pay for a B-17 which was named “The City of Savannah”. They hope to make this the absolutely best static display anywhere. With the contribution of a power system, they will be able to operate all systems in the aircraft: turrets, lights, bomb bay doors, etc., at one time.

***The Birthplace Chapter looks forward to seeing all of you in Savannah.***  
***Bob Buck, President, Birthplace Chapter***

# Interim Editors



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

The clock is ticking for you to sign up for the 39th Annual 8th AFHS Annual Reunion held in Savannah, Georgia.

Donna Lee with Armed Forces Reunion states, "The room block at the Savannah, Marriott is filling up quickly. **OVER** half of the rooms were booked as of May 15th. If you haven't confirmed your plans to attend the Savannah Reunion, please do so very soon. It's shaping up to be a great reunion".

The number one phone request that I receive is "who do I call for information about the reunion, magazine submissions, dues payments, etc., We know it gets confusing, so we've decide to include all three ladies contact information to help with your daily request (The

"3-D's" - Donna Lee, Donna Neely & Debra Kujawa). This page includes all "3-D's" contact information for general office, general 8th Air Force reunion and who to send obituaries/articles for upcoming magazine submissions

*Sincerely,*  
**Interim Editors**  
**Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines**  
[donnajneely@gmail.com](mailto:donnajneely@gmail.com)

*WHO do I mail or email photos/articles/obituaries to be included in the next 8th AF News magazine?*

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MATERIAL DEADLINE

**July 25th, 2013**  
**for the upcoming 2013  
September 8th AF News**

**All Obituaries to be included in this magazine can be emailed or mailed to the above address in Lebanon, TN.**

**PLEASE NOTE: I need all articles to be 1-2 pages (max) of text material (unless approved by the editor). Don't forget to send plenty of photo options**

### *WHO do I contact about the 8th AF Annual Reunion?* **Annual Reunion Info.**

- **Reunion Dates: July 22-26, 2013**
- **To reserve your hotel:**  
Savannah Marriott Riverfront  
Savannah, Georgia  
(912)-233-7722 or (800) 285-0398  
Group Code: EAFEFAFA  
Rate: \$109 plus tax
- **Registration for Tours and Meals**  
Donna Lee  
Attn: 8th AFHS  
Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.

322 Madison Mews  
Norfolk, VA 23510

You may register online at:  
[www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2013](http://www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2013)

*Additional detailed information & registration forms were included in the March 2013 8th AF News.*

**Reunion schedule on page 9 of this issue.**



**Donna Lee**

*WHO do I contact about my dues payment, change of address or general 8th Air Force information?*

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# From the Treasurer - Coming Home

**“Coming home.”** For anyone who has ever served in the military or been part of a military family, these two words are both powerful and full of emotion. Whether it was returning from a mission or resuming civilian life at the end of the war, the phrase **“coming home”** has represented a feeling of personal peace and security that is unique to each of us. That is why we have chosen **“Coming Home”** as the theme of the 39th Annual Air Force Historical Society reunion which is being held July 22-26 in beautiful Savannah, Georgia, the birthplace of the Mighty Eighth.

During the early days of the Historical Society, talk began of constructing a facility to house not only the artifacts and objects associated with the 8th Air Force, but of building a living memorial that would honor the memories and stories of the men who served. The vision of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force was born. The Society played an integral role in providing the original seed money of around \$150,000 in addition to arranging for the site location from Chatham County to make the vision a reality. During the last 15 years the Society has continued its effort to support the Museum by raising more than \$600,000 which has helped create many of the exhibits including the beautiful *Chapel of the Fallen Eagles*, making this museum one of the finest in the world.

So, we are “coming home.”

This is will be our third reunion held in Savannah during the past 15 years. Due to our rapidly declining membership we acknowledge this could possibly be the last reunion to be held in Savannah. With this in mind the Society Board has made a financial commitment to make this one of the finest events

in the history of our organization. We owe this to our members who have through their service made such major contributions to the freedoms that we all enjoy today. We have several outstanding events planned and have brought in speakers from around the world to make this reunion truly memorable. Please make plans to attend if you can. Details are in this issue as well as the March 2013 A F News magazine and on our Website.



**Darrel Lowell**  
Treasurer

Finally, I want to use another phrase, **“turning the corner,”** as far as matching the Society’s revenues against expenses. Dues for the current fiscal year (2013) from both Annual and Life members were brisk during the 1st quarter. However, income during the 2nd quarter has slowed dramatically. A review of collections indicates that to date we have received approximately 30% of dues (renewals). Please, if you have not sent in your dues for 2013, we would appreciate your continued financial support as soon as possible. Remittance envelopes may be found in the centerfold of the December 2012 issue of the 8th A F News or you can simply mail us a check or renew/contribute online through our Website.

**“Come home.”** We hope to see you in Savannah.

*Darrel Lowell - Treasurer*

## Note From Membership

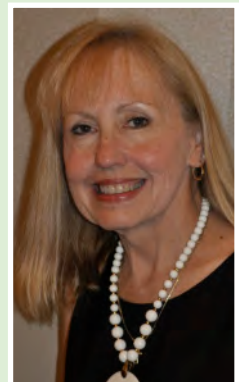
We are well into 2013 and I wanted to update you on our membership and dues collection:

Our current [at press time] membership is 4405. To put this in perspective, at one time, we had over 21,000 members. That’s a loss of nearly 17,000 individuals--realistically, painfully, this figure represents those who have died. While a handful of new members are joining the Society every week, dozens more are passing away.

Of our 4405 members: we have received 2013 dues and/or donations from 1349. Unfortunately, that means that nearly 70% of our membership has not responded. Realistically, of the 3000+ members we have not heard from we can surmise that:

- Many are now deceased
- Some have moved without notifying us of a new address
- Members have relocated to assisted living or nursing facilities
- Fixed incomes and medical expenses have overburdened members making it difficult or impossible to support the Society financially

As the Membership Manager for the Society, I am privileged to be able to interact with so many of you either by phone or email, I feel very close to you. We all recognize that the heart of the Society is within the stories of courage, heartache, valor, and sacrifice, as told by many of you who served in the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force through this publication. I want to reassure you that the Society will do everything possible to not only preserve these treasures, but make sure you continue to receive the 8<sup>th</sup> A F News magazine for as long as possible.



**Debra Kujawa**

Though we may never meet in person, know that you continually enrich my life with your stories, your conversations, your time. These are precious memories I will hold dear, forever. Please know that my life is blessed because of you.

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

# Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress



**12,700 planes produced, entered service 1939**

**B-17F specs: top speed 295 MPH, 17,600 lb. bombload, twelve .50 caliber machine guns**

In 1934, the Army issued specs for a "multi" engine bomber, which Boeing interpreted as four engines. While the Martin B-10 bomber seemed adequate at the time to defend the continental United States, with great foresight Boeing designed an altogether heavier, faster, higher-flying, and longer-range bomber, which proved to be invaluable in the strategic air battles over Germany.

Boeing started design work on its Model 299 in June, 1934; just over a year later the first flight of the prototype took place at Boeing Field, July 28, 1935. A month later, the shiny silvery aircraft flew to Wright Field, Ohio in record time, but crashed disastrously at its USAAC evaluation flight in October. Despite this accident, which was traced to human error - not a design flaw, the Air Corps recognized the potential of the Model 299 (aka XB-17), and ordered thirteen service-test models (Y1B-17) for evaluation. Among the notable changes incorporated into the Y1B-17, 930-hp Wright Cyclones replaced the original 750-hp Pratt & Whitneys (a change which lost

70,000 engine orders for the East Hartford company).

In the 1930's, the nation's military leaders debated bomber doctrine strenuously. Among the most influential views were those of Billy Mitchell and his bomber advocates. For them, the B-17 was a godsend - the manufactured, tangible embodiment of a "Flying Fortress."

As early as 1937, the 2nd Bombardment Group was equipped with B-17s, using them to perfect techniques of high-altitude, long-distance bombing. Since the

only foreseeable use of such a capability was the defense of the nation's shores from enemy fleets, the U.S. Navy fiercely opposed the Army's development of the four-engine bomber. By way of a compromise the Army ordered 39 more B-17B's. The Air Corps' air doctrine envisioned large formations of fast, high-flying B-17 bombers, defending themselves against enemy fighters with their own massed machine-gun fire. Fighter escort was considered impractical, and even undesirable by the bomber advocates. In a way, any admission that fighter escort was necessary would imply that enemy fighters posed a real threat and that the Flying Fortresses were not invulnerable.

More improvements followed in the B-17C: more machine guns, self-sealing fuel tanks, more armor plating, up-rated engines, etc.. Even though all these increased the weight of the "C" model to 49,650 pounds, the installation of the 1,200 Wright Cyclones made the "C" capable of 320 MPH, the fastest of all B-17 variants.



# Consolidated B-24 Liberator



18,188 planes produced, entered service 1940

B-24D specs: top speed 303 MPH, 11 machine guns, max. bomb load 8,000 lbs.

August 1, 1943 - Over Ploesti, Romania, German-occupied Europe:

The Vagabond King, B-24 Liberator #42-40787, shook from the flak concussions, from bullets smashing its windows, and from the roaring rumbling of its four Pratt & Whitney R-1830 fourteen-cylinder radial engines. 1st Lt. John McCormick cursed as the gunner in the top turret opened up with his twin fifties. He was ruining the bomb run! And McCormick wanted to hit this target, the Steaua Romana oil refinery outside Ploesti. General Brereton had told them this raid could shorten the war by six months.

McCormick barked out orders to his crew, just as he had done so often in the past two weeks, when the 389th Bomb Group practiced for Operation "Tidal Wave" over the godforsaken Libyan desert outside Benghazi.

"Mosco, bomb bay doors open," to the bombardier, 1st Lt. Marvin Mosco.

"Start the camera, Van," to the radioman, enlisted man Martin Van Buren.

He steadied the stick as the big Liberator sped along the deck at 225 mile per hour, staying close to Hitler's Hearse, Captain R.C. Mooney's plane immediately ahead, so that Mooney's bombs, with 45 second delay fuses, didn't blow up in Vagabond King's nose. Down at chimney height, as black smoke from the bombs and sooty burning hydrocarbons boiled up all around them, suddenly "Bombs away!" and Vagabond jumped up, 4,000 pounds lighter. At that instant, the Hearse, grimly lived up to its name, as it took several direct hits, killing the Capt. Mooney. As more bullets tore into his own bomber, McCormick hoped those workers at Consolidated's San Diego plant had been

paying attention when they built his plane. The Vagabond had taken a lot of punishment; one anti-aircraft shell had hit Van and he was a bloody mess.

Paul Miller, the gunner in the A-6 power tail turret, reported that their particular target, the boiler house, had been flattened and was burning fiercely. McCormick hugged the deck as he made his getaway, figuring that the German fighters couldn't dive on them down that low.

The Vagabond King headed south, desperate to get medical attention for the badly wounded Van. They flew over Turkey and touched down at Nicosia airfield, Cyprus as it was getting dark, fourteen hours after they had taken off. They were one of the lucky ones; of 178 B-24's that took off that morning, 54 didn't come back.

More B-24's were built than any other American airplane. It edged out the B-17 on most performance criteria (speed, range, bombload). It's crewmen claimed 2,600 enemy aircraft shot down. With it's great range, it performed anti-sub work in the Atlantic and heavy bomber support in the Pacific.



# Chapter/Unit Liason

Greetings my fellow Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society members.

I would like to announce that I am once again taking on the Chapters & Groups Liaison Officers post for the Society.

There is much to do as I intend on beginning a campaign to promote membership in the Chapters and Bomb Groups and Fighters Groups. To accomplish this I also have taken on my old position as the Society's Next Generation's Chairman.

I will be combining the Chapters & Groups and Next Generation initiatives as one entity to begin encouraging our members, young and old, to join their local State Chapters and Bomb/Fighter Groups.

As we all realize our numbers are dwindling at an accelerated rate and I believe becoming members in your local 8th organizations with frequent get-together's, via meetings onsite or online, is not only a way to continue to preserve the 8th's legacy but also is a good time.

Example: I am the President of the New York State Southern Wing Chapter and on June 9th we are having a Luncheon in Rhinebeck NY, watching the WWI biplanes perform dogfights at the old Aerodrome in Rhinebeck. <http://www.olderhinebeck.org/>

On July 14th we will have another luncheon, held in Garden City Long Island NY. I still have four WWII 8th veterans and proud to say four active next generation on the BOD-s.

Whether a WWII 8th veteran, post WWII 8th veteran, Historian or relative of a veteran or just enjoy this and wish to honor our Veterans, past and current, please check it out if you have not already.

If you need help with finding such 8th organizations or info on them please contact me and check out the Society's website. [www.8thafhs.org](http://www.8thafhs.org).

The 39th Annual Reunion, held this year in beautiful and historic Savannah GA, is around the corner. I hope you have registered already for what is going to be a great program and exciting Reunion. If you have not registered you still can.

Finally I need an update on the status of the Society's State Chapters. Please contact me regarding your Chapter's status as I will remove the Chapter from the Society's Roster if I cannot contact or hear from you. As I am aware there are twenty-nine active Chapters and these are listed on the Society's website. Regarding Bomb Groups and Fighter Groups; these are also listed on the Society's website. Please update me with a status on your groups. My contact info is located on the back of the cover page.

The 8th Air Force will never be forgotten. Please checkout my Next Generation article in this edition for further information/ideas regarding this combined initiative. This will be the last Liaison Officer's report. The September edition will have the combined initiatives article. Please continue to support the Society in its mission to honor and preserve the Mighty Eighth Air Force.

'Keep The Memories Alive'  
Pat Keeley

Please support the USO.  
from Pat Kneely



**Pat Keeley**

## *National Musuem of the Mighty Eighth Air Force is hosting "Wine & Cheese Reception"*



*during the 39th  
8th AFHS Annual  
Reunion.*

*"Wine & Cheese  
Reception"  
will follow the  
Museum tour on  
Tuesday  
July 23, 2013,*



# 39TH 8TH AFHS ANNUAL REUNION

## JULY 22 – 26, 2013

### MONDAY, JULY 22

1:00pm	-	6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
2:00pm	-		Memorabilia / Gathering Room open
2:00pm	-		8AFHS Board Meeting
5:00pm	-	6:00pm	Welcome Reception (hosted by the Birthplace Chapter)

### TUESDAY, JULY 23

7:30am	-	8:30am	Full Breakfast Buffet
8:00am	-	10:00am	Reunion Registration open
9:00am	-	10:00am	Unit Advisory and Chapter & Unit Dev. Meeting
9:00am	-	12:00pm	CITY TOUR
12:30pm	-	6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
1:30pm	-	5:30pm	MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM/ B-17 COMMEMORATION CEREMONY
6:30pm	-	7:00pm	8AFHS Cash Bar Reception at the Savannah Marriott
7:00pm	-	9:00pm	Dinner Buffet at the Savannah Marriott

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 24

7:30am	-	8:30am	Full Breakfast Buffet
8:00am	-	10:00am	Reunion Registration open
8:30am	-	10:00am	Individual Group Meetings
10:30am	-	12:00pm	Next Generation Meeting
1:00pm	-	6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
2:00pm	-	3:30pm	Prof. Larry Foley's Presentation: The Lost Squadron
4:00pm	-	5:30pm	WWII Q&A Session
6:30pm	-	7:00pm	8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm	-	9:30pm	Rendezvous Dinners

### THURSDAY, JULY 25

7:30am	-	8:30am	Full Breakfast Buffet
8:30am	-	10:00am	General Membership Meeting
11:00pm	-	4:00pm	8AFHS Board Meeting
1:00pm	-	4:30pm	MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE MUSEUM
1:30pm	-	4:30pm	ISLAND, TYBEE BEACH, AND FORT TOUR
5:00pm	-	5:30pm	Reunion Registration open
6:00pm	-	7:00pm	8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm	-		Banquet Dinner, followed by guest speaker, Scott Reda.

### FRIDAY, JULY 26

7:00am	-	8:30am	Full Breakfast Buffet
			Farewells until October, 2014 – Nashville, Tennessee!

*Driver and guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.  
Please be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.  
All buses for tours and trips will be air-conditioned.*

# The Lockheed P-38 Lightning



*Photo Recon F-5B-1-LOs flew their missions alone and were rarely seen in formation.*

**10,037 planes produced during WW II - 1941-45**  
**Max Speed 414 MPH, Cruise Speed 290 MPH**

During its development and production in the early 1940's, Lockheed Aviation's P-38 Lightning was the fastest single-seat twin-engine fighter aircraft in the world. Its introduction into the 8th Air Force's war emphasized its distinctive design – twin Allison V-1710 engines with their counter-rotating props, twin tail boom empennages, a bubble canopy, and a unique tricycle landing gear. The aircraft was perfect for the hot pilots of the Eighth. Newly developed drop tanks, copied from early RAF designs, allowed the fighters to be flown over the North Atlantic and to also take part in deep bombing penetrations to enemy targets.

The aircraft was assigned to several 8th AF fighter groups including the 1st FG, 14th FG, 20th FG, 55th FG, 364th FG, and the 479th FG. The P-38 was the mainstay of Photo Reconnaissance Groups such as the 3rd Photo Group and the 7th Photo Recon Group, that flew vital photographic missions in unarmed airplanes completing 4,247 sorties, with 53 aircraft losses during the war. With two cameras mounted in the nose in place of armament, the lighter aircraft could fly at its optimum altitude of 25,000 feet at speeds of 400 mph. After-strike photographs taken on these flights

played a vital role in Headquarters Photo Interpretation and Targeting sections.

P-38s were successfully flown in Operation TORCH - the North African campaign - and the 12th and 15th Air Forces benefited by their presence. Weather operations – the 18th Weather Squadron – also utilized P-38 capabilities. Although during missions, Heavy bomber gunners appreciated the easy-to-

identify twin tail boom configuration of the P-38, German fighter pilots were not happy to see the “forked tail devils.” In combat, P-38 dive speeds were very fast but not without their problems. Col. Cass Hough, who after the war would develop the Daisy BB gun, and Lt Col. Benjamin Kelsey at their Technical Operations Unit at Bovington, worked on the problems of compressibility, solving the issue through the development of “dive



*At Nuthampstead, Lt. Col. Jack S. Jenkins demonstrates a tactic to Lt. Russell Gustke. Texas Ranger was a P-38H.*



*P-38 making a low pass over the 466th Bomb Group base at Attlebridge*

flaps” that could be installed to employ when the fighter’s control mechanisms became unpredictable in high-speed dives from the thin air at high altitudes. As they had done in developing external fuel drop tanks for the aircraft, they arranged a hurry-up fabrication order of 200 dive flap units to be sent in from the States. Regrettably, the transport aircraft carrying this life-saving equipment was shot down by an RAF fighter pilot who mistakenly identified the airplane as a German Condor.

The lore of the P-38 is as distinctive as its appearance.

- Lt Col. Jack Jenkins bagged the VIII Fighter Command’s first enemy kill with his P-38 Texas Ranger.
- It was said that the P-38 was used for low-level sorties on D-Day because it was easily identified as a Little Friend.

- A documented event of a P-38 landing intact at a sandy airstrip in North Africa with its pilot dead from gunfire wounds to the head expands the P-38 stories to all theaters of the war.

- The top American fighter ace of the war was Richard Bong, who flew his P-38 Marge in air battles in the Pacific Theater, bagging a total of 40 Jap airplanes.

- The RAF accepted only three P-38s from the U. S. early in the war because of a reported “tail flutter” buffeting problem.

- Gen. Jimmy Doolittle, 8th AF Commander, hearing tales that the P-38 was very difficult to fly on just one engine, showed one airbase outfit that that particular tale was not accurate. Flying a P-38 with only one engine operating, Doolittle flew just above the length of the runway with his P-38 upside down – on just one

engine.

The P-38 was a flexible aircraft and very adaptable; it served many diverse purposes during the war. Of the 10,038 P-38s assembled, 904 of them received modifications at the Dallas Modification Center. Many others were modified for specific duties at Base Air Depots and on the airbases themselves. Only a few examples of the P-38 Lightning survive today.

Ben Kelsey was once quoted as saying, with respect, about the P-38, “This comfortable old clunk will fly like hell, fight like a wasp upstairs and land like a butterfly. As a fighting ship, it’s just like a big girl you have to take on your lap and manhandle. It’s an extremely honest airplane; it doesn’t bite and doesn’t do dishonest things.”

# ANOTHER BOMBER JACKET IS REUNITED

**\$17 and 60 years later, chance encounter sends WWII bomber jacket home**  
**Submitted by: Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society & Jennifer Hlad/Stars and Stripes**



John Dodds, a military history buff, wears a leather jacket he and his daughter found in a Washington, D.C., Goodwill store. Dodds is sending the jacket back to its original owner, World War II pilot Robert Arand.

The leather bomber jacket once owned by World War II pilot Robert Arand will soon be winging its way back to Arand.

Pentagon employee and military history buff John Dodds bought the jacket for \$17 at a Washington, D.C., Goodwill store, and researched the name sewn on it.

Robert Arand enlisted in the Army Air Forces in 1942 as an aviation cadet. He went to training in 1943 and by February 1945, he was headed to the Pacific, sleeping on the deck of a trawler for a month-long journey from San Francisco to New Guinea.

Arand had flown B-25s in the United States, but flew more than 40 missions in B-24s overseas — from New Guinea, the Philippines and Okinawa. He flew the 22nd Bomb Group's final bombing attack, a strike on the Kiangwan Airdrome in China. His last mission was a reconnaissance flight from Okinawa to Tokyo and back on Sept. 2, 1945, the day the Japanese signed the surrender in Tokyo Bay.

The last time he remembers wearing his leather bomber jacket was in San Francisco when he returned from the war in November 1945. He thinks his wife, a meticulous housekeeper, must have donated it to a charity organiza-

tion in Cincinnati about 1950.

"I remember my wife asking if I was ever going to wear it again, and I said I didn't think I would, except for a veterans' parade," he said.

More than 60 years later, John Dodds was at a Goodwill store in Washington

with his daughter, a freshman at James Madison University in Virginia, when she called him over.

"Oh, Dad, I want to show you something," she said.

It was a leather bomber jacket from World War II.

*The last time Robert Arand remembers wearing his leather bomber jacket was in San Francisco when he returned from the war in November 1945.*

Dodds, assistant general counsel for the Air Force and a military history buff, has a replica. But this was the real deal. The leather was a little stiff, but the jacket was still in good shape. On the back was a bearded, red-headed man with a winged helmet, along with the words "Red Raiders" and "22nd Bomb Group." The label inside



*Leather name tag displayed on the front of the Bomber Jacket*

had the model and order number. The lieutenant bars were in place on the shoulders.

The jacket even had a leather name tag sewed on the front: Robert G. Arand.

Dodds is an Air Force brat. He went through the Army ROTC program in college, served as an Army judge advocate general for four years and later served in the Air Force reserve long enough to retire. He also knows a thing or two about finding information about veterans: One of his pet projects is doing research on Austin Straubel, the WWII bomber pilot for whom the Green Bay, Wis., airport is named. He also helped a friend with research on the friend's brother, who was shot down during the Vietnam War.

Dodds paid \$17 for the jacket and emailed a friend. Within 24 hours, Dodds was on the phone with Arand.

The 90-year-old veteran told him about his time in the 22nd Bombardment Group — described on their webpage as “a hell-bent-for-leather organization of men.” The unit was the predecessor of today's 22nd Operations Group at McConnell Air Force Base in Kansas.

Arand remembered a commander with red hair, Col. Richard Robinson, whom the group was nicknamed after. He told Dodds about his five children, eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He told him he was born Dec. 7, 1922, and lives next door to one of his six brothers.

And Dodds decided that while he originally had hoped to keep the jacket, he knew he had to send it back to its original owner.



*WWII leather bomber jacket found in Washington, D.C. thrift shop had a red-bearded man in a winged helmet, the words “Red Raiders” and “22nd Bomb Group” emblazoned above and below. The jacket had lieutenant bars, a pricetag of \$17 and a pretty big clue as to its original owner.*

Arand told Stars and Stripes he isn't sure how the jacket made its way to that Goodwill store in Washington, but he “would love to know.”

“I couldn't figure out why anyone would want the jacket after all these years,” he said.

Arand gave his blue Air Force uniform to his grandson, who put it into a case. But he said he probably could

fit into it today.

“I'm the same height and weight as I was in the service,” he said.

After the war, Arand said he stayed in the Air Force reserve and retired in 1982 as a major.

He had been going through his mili-

tary records, putting them into a book for his grandchildren. He wrote to his congressman to get new medals, to replace ones lost during a long-ago “show and tell,” he said. His awards include the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal, the WWII victory medal, and an Air Medal with an oak leaf cluster.

Dodds said he was amazed to find a bomber jacket in such great shape and was delighted to be able to connect with Arand.

“I just could not believe it,” he said. “It's all working out pretty well.”

And while Arand is looking forward to seeing if it still fits, he's most interested in sharing it with his family.

“My children and grandchildren are anxious to see it.”

*Dodds originally had hoped to keep the jacket, he knew he had to send it back to its original owner.*

# FORTY-FIVE EQUALS FORTY PLUS

BY JOSEPH S. NEMETH

Mixed emotions of excitement, anxiety and fear gripped the hearts and minds of the 730th Squadron crew as they lifted off Deopham Green's runway. The crew members were: Lts. John Kurrack, pilot; Gerald Miller, co-pilot; John Brand, navigator; Ken Nienkirchen, bombardier; and Randy Childress. It was the crew's thirteenth mission! The target for the 452nd Bomb Group (H) was Handorf Air Field.

The mission's purpose was to destroy Handorf's runways, service and dispersal areas, and aircraft on the ground; the intent was to destroy the Luftwaffe's capacity and will to disrupt the Rhine River crossing by our troops. The 452nd was at full strength, thirty-eight big, beautiful B-17's.

The date was Wednesday, March 21, 1945. Group and Wing assembly over England were routine, as was the flight to the target. Nearing the target, the 452nd encountered moderate, accurate and tracking flak. As the 730th crew began its bomb run, the black, ugly puffs of flak became more numerous and intense. Suddenly, the crew's waist gunner felt a stinging slap, almost like that of a baseball bat, strike his right elbow.... I was that gunner! Quickly glancing down, I saw bleeding, shredded flesh. Flak shrapnel had penetrated the B-17's floor, inches from my right foot, striking my right elbow, and then exited through the roof leaving a gaping hole. I soon slipped into unconsciousness due to anoxia and blood loss. I remember "coming to" as the radio gunner, Cecil MacDonald, was administering oxygen and applying a tourniquet. My crew completed its thirteenth mission with no further bad luck and we landed safely at Deopham Green.

On that Handorf mission, twenty-one of the 452nd's thirty-eight B-17's were hit by flak causing minor damage. Additionally, four more aircraft received



*Joe Nemeth (left) and Ken Nienkirchen examine the forty-five..*

major damage: one 730th Squadron aircraft, #977, took a direct flak hit in the waist after "bombs away" was last seen over the enemy coast; another aircraft, #179, was hit in one engine, flew back to base and after landing, burned savagely before the fire could be extinguished (it was salvageable).

After a 30 day hospital convalescence, I was returned to duty. As I was leaving the hospital, my combat forty-five pistol and holster were returned. However, due to a snafu, no one at Deopham Green ordered me to return the gun. Therefore, I

hid it under my bunk's mattress.

Shortly after returning to duty, I was medically "Z-Ied". Fearing that I would be court-martialed if I were caught smuggling the forty-five into the States, I traded my "pride and joy" for a G.I. issue wristwatch. The trade was made with Lt. Nienkirchen, the bombardier of my crew. Soon thereafter, I returned to the States via the Queen Mary and was discharged in November, 1945. From that time on, I lost contact with the Mighty Eighth, the 452nd, the 730th, and my crew members.

Forty plus years later, I not only established contact with the Mighty Eighth and the 452nd, but also with some of my crew members, including my bombardier and the forty-five. Here's how it happened.

While following a car in Toledo, Ohio, I noticed an 8th AFHS bumper sticker. I followed that car, obtained the "poop" and became an 8th AFHS life member. From the *8th Air Force News* I got the address of the 452nd Bomb Group Association, communicated with its efficient Secretary-Treasurer, Rom Blaylock, and also became a life member of that group. I considered myself lucky to become a found "lost soul". Using the 452nd's Deopham Green Directory, I was able to establish contact with my co-pilot, navigator and bombardier and my forty-five!

I was both pleased and surprised to learn that Ken Nienkirchen, my bombardier, was a fellow "Buckeye" and that my "lost" forty-five had been successfully smuggled into the States. Nienkirchen had flown back with the 452nd on Operation "Home Run", which landed at Westover Field, Mass. He luckily "passed" a shakedown inspection by hiding the forty-five beneath the belt of his trousers. Although the inspecting officer ordered him to remove his flight suit, somehow the officer failed to notice the hidden, but bulging, forty-five!

I arranged to meet Nienkirchen to renew our friendship and to relive the good times. On December 10, 1986, the forty-five was graciously returned to me.



# Reunions



Please send all REUNION updates to:  
 Donna Neely • 2090 Cairo Bend Road • Lebanon, TN • 37087  
 email • donnajneely@gmail.com.  
 Additional contact information on page 4.

## 492ND BOMB GROUP

467th Bomb Group  
 San Antonio, TX  
 June 27-29, 2013  
 El Tropicana Riverwalk  
 Contact: Fran Gramburg  
 708-670-8084

## 447TH BOMB GROUP

(England Reunion)  
 July 18-24, 2013  
 Contact: Melanie Bussel  
 914-528-7147  
 bussel@verizon.net

## 381ST BOMB GROUP

San Antonio, TX  
 August 7-11  
 Holiday Inn Riverwalk  
 Contact: Kevin Wilson PhD  
 wilsonkvn@aol.com  
 336-993-3571

## 401ST BOMB GROUP

August 15 - 18, 2013  
 Dayton, Ohio.  
 contact person Josie Navarro  
 253-988-0966  
 josiegn@hotmail.com

## 398TH BOMB GROUP

September, 2013  
 in Sacramento, California  
 Contact: Sharon Krause  
 734-416-5993  
 tink73146@gmail.com

## 379TH BOMB GROUP

Dayton, Ohio  
 Sept. 4-9, 2013  
 Crowne Plaza Dayton  
 Contact: Mike Hart,  
 mike@379thbga.org  
 PH: 469-633-0689

## 306TH BOMB GROUP

October 2-6, 2013  
 New Orleans, LA  
 Embassy Suites New Orleans

Contact: Barbara Neal, 306th  
 435.655.1500 (leave message)  
 barb306neal@gmail.com  
 website: 306bg.org

## 447TH BOMB GROUP

Charleston, SC  
 October 1-6, 2013  
 Airport Crowne Plaza  
 Contact: George Hoidra  
 301-953-2813  
 ghoidra@yahoo.com

## SECOND SCHWEINFURT MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

(Overseas reunion)  
 Schweinfurt, Germany  
 October 2013  
 Contact: Rob Klint  
 robklint@marketsolutionsinc.com  
 or 73 Harbour Point Circle,  
 Ft. Worth, TX 76179

## SECOND SCHWEINFURT MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

(Stateside Reunion)  
 Charleston, SC  
 October 1-6, 2013  
 Airport Crowne Plaza  
 Contact: Sue Moyer  
 814-237-9054  
 ssm43@gmail.com

## 388TH BOMB GROUP

Oklahoma City, OK  
 October 2-6, 2013  
 Crowne Plaza Oklahoma City  
 Contact: Jennifer Wammack  
 reunion@388thbg.org  
 928-210-1392

## 384TH BOMB GROUP NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

October 9-13  
 Sheraton Norfolk Waterside Hotel  
 Details at: 384thBombGroup.com  
 Or contact: Webmaster@384thBombGroup.com  
 "KEEP THE SHOW ON THE ROAD"

## 95TH BOMB GROUP

Orlando, FL  
 October 10-14, 2013  
 Sheraton Lake Buena Vista  
 Contact: Vanna Walker  
 reunions@95thbg.org

## 486TH & 487TH BG

San Antonio, TX  
 October 16-20, 2013  
 El Tropicana Riverwalk  
 Contact: Kay Aielli  
 512-791-4589  
 kielli@austinrr.com  
 5203 Turnabout Lane  
 Austin, TX 78731

## 100TH BOMB GROUP

Savannah, Georgia  
 October 17-20, 2013  
 Embassy Suites Savannah Airport  
 Contact: Nancy Putnam  
 nputnam51@gmail.com  
 414-339-2818

## 385TH BOMB GROUP

Fall 2013 (TBA)  
 Nashville, TN  
 Gaylord Opryland Hotel  
 Contact: Chuck Smith  
 385th BGA Treasurer  
 404-683-2896  
 chucksmith@smithindustrialsales.com

2013 39th Annual  
 8th AFHS Reunion

Savannah Marriott  
 Riverfront  
 Savannah, GA  
 July 22-26, 2013



*Rebel Gal - A tribute to Southerners from the War of Northern Aggression*



*That is a "Purty Baby"*



*This ground crew serviceman keeps good company*

**Nose Art B-24 Style**

The late 8th AFHS Historian Roger Freeman had stated that over 90% of 8th AF aircraft names and nose art included themes of women back home.



*Not quite the "Tinker Bell" of your childhood*



*B-26s get their share as well*

*"What's cookin' Doc?" B-24 nose-wheel still intact*





# A WARTIME ROMANCE

by Charles Halper,  
Lakewood CA

I didn't have to go. As a construction worker for the Dupont Corporation I had a yen to be an airplane pilot, so I took the Aviation Cadet Examination and was accepted. I planned to fly the P-38 Lockheed Lightning fighter but instead, they sent me to Bomber School.

My first look at the B-17 Flying Fortress I was assigned to fly made me feel like throwing up right there on the Tarmac. There it sat, tail dragging on the ground, nose pointed in the air like a hound dog on the scent, olive drab paint, studded tires, and no guns or turrets. After dreaming about the P-38, now this thing.

After two months learning to fly this wreck, they gave me a new silver B-17 and nine men to train with. When we finished up we flew over to England, put some Girlie Art on the nose of the plane and named her "Maiden America".

She and I began to go steady and we started to fly bombing raids into Germany. We dreamed up a safe way to get home in bad weather and avoid those all too often, mid-air collisions. We learned the railroad routes to our field and flew the tracks back to base. The Maiden and I thought this was great sport.

She let me do partial stalls to dump alti-



tude on the final approach and wingovers for priority landings. Whatever the antics, she was always patient with me and never complained.

When, on occasion, the Germans again proved they didn't know how to treat a Lady, they slapped her around and wounded two of her crew with anti-aircraft fire, but she simply turned away and brought us all home safely to an English emergency field.

By the time the Maiden had carried us in and out of Germany the required 35 times, all thoughts of the P-38 had vanished. I parked her on her hardstand for the last time, patted her chin turret and said "Goodbye."

Back in the States I flew everything from the B-29 Superfort to sailplanes, but

there never was a competitor. I had long before lost my heart to the B-17.

Years later I saw her once again at the airport in Long Beach, California. She was surrounded by her admirers and looked as young and beautiful as I had always remembered her. Of course she would never recognize me. How could she imagine that the Old Man standing apart from the crowd and gazing at her so wistfully was that young pilot who once courted her so passionately?

I'll take one more look and then I'll be ready to go.

Hey, wait a minute! Did you see that? She remembered! She just winked at me with her Landing Light!

—Charles Halper





**Pat Keeley**  
**8th AFHS BOD**

**CONTINUING THE  
8TH AF LEGACY**

As I have mentioned in my Chapters/Groups Liaison article I am combining the Chapters/Groups Liaison initiative with the Next Generation initiative and taking the Chairman's post over this combined entity.

The two should be wielded together to help secure the Society moving forward. As I mentioned in my Liaison article the New York Southern Wing Chapter will have two luncheons held this summer. The attendance for each will be nowhere near what it was in the past but you know that doesn't matter as it is always a good time.

I want to drive a campaign to get those not involved with your local chapters and Bomb/Fighter Groups involved.

If you are reading this you are already a member of the Society, but that is not enough. For example: To be locally involved with your state chapter, brings many benefits with several get - togethers and programs to educate those who are unaware what our past and present 8th Air Force Veterans have endured.

In my September article, I will have an update on the Chapters/Groups

and also programs I want to launch online and onsite for the chapters and all the groups whether they are part of the Society or not.

I was once told by a next generation of the 392nd BG, "Even if we are meeting in my backyard for a barbecue, we will still honor and continue the 8th AF Legacy."

I find this fitting to name my report of these combined initiatives 'Continuing the 8th Legacy'

Looking forward to meeting you all in Savannah and excited about the combined Chapters/Groups and Next Generation meeting held at 10:30 Wednesday morning on July 24th during the 39th Annual Reunion.

Remember to stop and thank a veteran for their service

**Cheers,**  
**Pat Keeley**

- Form may be reproduced -



**JOIN THE 8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY!**

*(Dues notices will be mailed INSIDE the December issue annually)*



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*"Give the gift that shares the legacy"*

*"Give the gift that shares the legacy"*



## 8th AFHS Board Of Directors Nominees



### COL. ED WEXLER, USAF (RETIRED)



Col. Wexler served over 25 years in the Air Force beginning as a Munitions Maintenance Officer serving in Colorado and Taiwan from 1968-1972.

Following a brief stint with the Georgia Department of Labor, he rejoined the Air Force in the 165th Airlift Wing. He served as Air Intelligence Officer, and later as Squadron Maintenance Officer for the C130E/H aircraft.

Beginning in 1992, Col. Wexler was Commander of the 165th Maintenance Squadron. From 1993-1995, this squadron was part of the Eighth Air Force.

In 2000 he became the Wing Vice-Commander. During his career Col. Wexler has deployed to many overseas locations in Europe, Middle East, and Far East. His decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal with two oak leaf clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal, Air Force Achievement Medal with one oak leaf cluster, and the Georgia Distinctive Service Medal.

Col. Wexler is a long-time member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and is a life member of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force where he is a member of the Board of Trustees (Emeritus). He is Chairman of Honor Flight Savannah, which takes veterans to Washington DC to view war memorials built in their honor.

Membership Number 38484  
Nominated by Darrel Lowell  
Membership Number 33567

### DAVID J. NOWACK



Dave is a former Secretary of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and currently serves as Vice President. He is a retired financial professional with over 20 years of experience with not-for-profit entities. Dave plans to use his financial experience to help the Society move into the future.

The study of the history of the 8th Air Force caused Dave to join the Society and become a member of its Board of Directors. He feels it is very important that the legacy of the "Mighty Eighth" is preserved and presented to future generations. A key project of his is a presentation on the life of a B-17 pilot. This presentation has been given to high school, college and community audiences.

Dave further promotes education about the 8th by his membership in several museums including the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, the National World War II Museum, the Yankee Air Museum, the Mid Atlantic Air Museum, and the American Air Museum in Britain.

Membership Number 36652  
Nominated by Dr. Nancy Toombs  
Membership Number 762550

**Voting for the 8th AFHS Board of Directors positions will take place at the General Membership Meeting during the 39th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion in Savannah, Georgia.**

### BOMBS AWAY

#### FINAL NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2013

Change has come to the 490th Bomb Group. The Reunion held in Omaha, Nebraska, October 2012 was our official final reunion. Only 39 attendees including 10 veterans came to the reunion. Our membership has been diminishing for years. The board made the decision to disband.

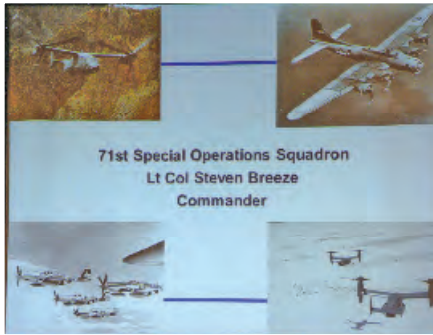
The treasury funds will be distributed as follows: \$10,000 will be donated to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, Pooler, GA. The remaining funds will be donated to our Historian Eric Swain for use at his discretion.

Eric will maintain the 490th Bomb Group's historical database and place a 490th Bomb Group Memorial Wreath each year

at the Cemetery in Cambridge, England. When Eric Swain decides to retire as Historian, his historical database will be donated to the Mighty Eighty Air Force Museum's archival department. Eric's contact information is [eric.490thbg@btinternet.com](mailto:eric.490thbg@btinternet.com).

The Museum will honor our generous donation to support their mission with a frosted glass "storyboard" of the 490th Bomb Group. The Research Center Director will work with the Museum to design a display that highlights the 490th. It will be placed in the "Honoring the 8th Hallway".

**Les Reekers**  
**President 490th Bomb Group (H)**  
**8thafnavigator@gmail.com, 805-493-1746**



**New Mexico Chapter - Speaker  
Lt. Col. Steven Breeze**

## **NEW MEXICO CHAPTER**

The New Mexico Chapter of the 8th AFHS held the annual Spring General Membership Meeting/Luncheon at the Marriott Hotel in Albuquerque April 20, 2013.

Larry Stebleton, President (Lt. Col. Ret. USAF) opened the meeting at 12:00 pm., with a invocation and a moment of silence in remembrance of departed members followed by the "Pledge of Allegiance."

Ray Pohl, Treasurer (Maj. Ret. USAF) gave a report on the financial status of the New Mexico Chapter.

The Speaker for this meeting was the distinguished Lt. Col. Steven Breeze, an Air Force Academy graduate and presently the Commanding Officer of the 71st Special Operations Squadron Kirtland AFB., Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Lt. Col. Breeze gave an extraordinary presentation about the Bell/Boeing CV-

22 Osprey aircraft and it's mission with the 71st Special Operations Squadron. Some missions include a landing and takeoff in zero/zero (visibility/ceiling) conditions, the result of extreme dust, weather conditions or total darkness. This truly amazing, quick and agile flying machine is designed to fly like a helicopter, (vertical takeoff and landing), or like a conventional aircraft. Carry up to 25 troops with combat gear at speeds up to 250 knots (288 mph), for a radius of 1050 miles. It can operate from aircraft carriers be refueled while airborne by C-130 aircraft, fly low level missions in all terrain with visibility totally obscured by weather conditions or darkness.

The CV-22 Osprey, when parked requires only minimal space since the wings and huge propellers fold close to the fuselage for storage. All said and done, the mission of the 71st Special Operations Squadron is quickly getting combat troops into a specific area, do their job and quickly gets these troops out to safety. Special thanks to Lt. Col. Breeze, the men and women of his squadron and the CV-22 Osprey.

President Larry Stebleton closed the meeting leading the attending members singing "God Bless America."

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

## **SOUTHERN WING NY CHAPTER**

I hope this letter reaches you in good health.

This to let you know that the Southern N.Y. Wing Chapter of the 8th AF Historical Society is having a luncheon/meeting on a Sunday at the end of June or July. The International Buffee is located at 1100 Stewart Ave., Garden City, on the Mitchel Field Grounds. It is located just off the Meadowbrook Parkway. (noon to 4pm).

A speaker from the Cradle of Aviation Museum will talk about Long Island's Aviation contributions in winning the war in Europe during WWII for a V.E. Day tribute. Alan Kidder, a 491st B.G. Veteran, will speak about the legacy of the 8th AF and passing it onto the younger generations. Adam Sackowitz, a col-

lege student, will talk about his efforts to get Local, State and Federal protection for Long Island aviation historical locations. After the meeting there will be a tour of WWII era Mitchel Field. Much is still intact. Also, there will be a tour of The Cradle of Aviation Museum \$22 for luncheon/meeting and Airfield tour, Museum fee for the optional museum visit.

For information and to RSVP contact: Tony Capobianco 510-584-6678, acapobia2@nynshs.edu.

Also, the chapter will have a luncheon/meeting Sunday, June 9th at the Beekman Arms Hotel in Rhinebeck, NY. 11am to 2pm for a D-Day tribute, veterans will speak about their experiences on that day. After the meeting there is an optional group visit to the Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome Airshow. \$25.00 for the luncheon/meeting, extra for the airshow. For information and to RSVP contact:

Susan Nowmark 845-342-3148, susy18@8hvc.rr.com.

We wish Chapter President, Pat Keeley and wife Andrea a speedy and full recovery from their illness.

Thanks

David Levitt

8th AFHS member

## **NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER WESTERN WING**

Larry Goldstein Commander

This Chapter has installed a program called "Magazines & Books to Veterans". With the help of local library system the members of the Chapter have been delivering magazines and books to the Asheville Veterans Center and the Veteran's Restoration Center (a home for homeless and rehabbing veterans).

This program has been well received by the VA Center over the past year 2012. During the past year more than three dozen boxes of books and magazines have been delivered. The members of the Chapter/Wing have joined in with contributions. As WWII veterans we know that wounded and homeless veterans should not be forgotten.



**Oregon Chapter - Speaker**  
**Tuskegee Airman Ben "Flaps" Berry [Photo by Tom Philo]**

## OREGON CHAPTER

<http://www.8thafhsoregon.com/>  
 Joan E. Hamilton  
 JHami828@aol.com via mx.aol.com

Our February speaker was Tuskegee Airman Ben "Flaps" Berry who 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 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.

Here are edited excerpts from his speech. "I am fortunate enough to have been a part of a group that has been highly recognized: the Tuskegee Airmen. The day an airplane landed at the lake on my family's land and they allowed me to get inside the airplane and pretend I was flying it, that's when I knew I was going to be a pilot.

When I finished high school in Kansas City, I was drafted straight into the Army Air Corps. They wanted me to go into the Submarine Corps, but I was 6'3 and I said, 'I'm going to be a pilot one day.' So they let me go into the Air Corps and I was sent to Jefferson Barrack. It was just a wooded area where we were walking around with Air Corps uniforms on with organizations called flights and groups, but there were no airplanes anywhere to be seen. So I took airplane-mechanics training on the B-25 bomber aircraft. As an airplane-mechanics trainee, we were required to taxi bomber aircraft

on the ground. I found myself taxiing so fast until I nearly took the plane off. So I said, 'I better find a way to learn to fly these things before I get myself in trouble here.'

I passed an aptitude test and was stationed at Sheppard Field, Texas and then Keesler Field in Biloxi, Mississippi where there were about 1000 young men like myself who'd passed this aptitude test with an IQ of 120 or above.

They sent us to a place called Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. It was founded by a man named Booker T. Washington. We were there to get the academics that the Air Corps required. We couldn't train with the civilians because everything we did was so accelerated. We would take one subject (Algebra, Physics) every day eight hours a day until we finished that whole book and took a final examination over the entire book.

After that, we moved on to the flying field nearby. My flight instructor knew my girlfriend and I thought he'd look out for me, but I found out that he wanted me to fail because he was interested in my girlfriend too.

As graduating students from our primary flight training class, we put on an air show for the new guys coming in. I recognized the number on the plane I was given to demonstrate stalls and spins. I had a problem coming out of spins flying that same airplane. I said, 'Let me get some altitude.' I wanted to be as high as possible so I could have as much time as I could get to come out of the spin. I went up so high there was a commercial airline flying lower than me. So I said, 'I'm going to have fun. Those people on the plane are going to think somebody's out of control. They're going to think that somebody is about to crash.'

I went down in a spin. I tried to come out of it when I got down where the commercial airliner was, but I could not bring that thing out of the spin. Somebody was about to crash and that somebody was me. I heard somebody in my ear say, "If you can't come out of a spin, open your throttle."

Open my throttle? That's like somebody's speeding down a highway and somebody saying, 'If you're going too fast, open your accelerator.'

I said, 'If I don't open it, I'm going

to be dead in three minutes. If I do open it, I'm going to be dead in two minutes. What the heck!'

So I went ahead and opened the throttle and the plane snapped out of the spin. I was so low when I came across the field that I was below the roofs of the hangars. Everybody said, 'That was great!' They thought it was part of the show, but it was not.

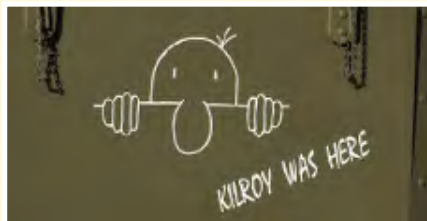
Most of the first early flights of the Tuskegee Airmen started with about 1000 people and ended up with about 25 graduates. The Tuskegee Airmen of the first group did not get a chance to go into the war for months, so they'd practice shooting each other down every day. When they finally were allowed to go overseas, they were told to shoot trucks and the trains on the ground and not go up against the Germans. But one day, a group of Tuskegee Airmen flying P-40s finished their job and were heading back to the base when they ran into a flight of German FW-190s. The Tuskegee Airmen shot the Germans down. After that, the Tuskegee Airmen flew bomber escort in silver P-51s with the tails painted red and got the nickname 'Red Tails'.

The war was kind of winding down, but in the States we were just getting a brand new Army Air Force up, the 477 Medium Bombardment Group (flying B-25s). We had been trained to take off of aircraft carriers and we were getting ready for the invasion of Japan when the atom bombs were dropped. We were told not to come to the flight line if we didn't plan on staying in the post-war Air Corps which required a twenty-year commitment. There was a meeting that lasted almost all night long and everybody was allowed to talk about what they planned to do. My roommate, George Brown, said he was going to become the first African-American governor of a state. He became Lieutenant Governor of the state of Colorado. John Whitehead said he was going to be a test pilot and John became the Chief Test Pilot for Northrop Aviation.

Test pilots are my favorite people. When I worked for North American Aviation, I had a test pilot named Scott Crossfield. He always wanted to be the fastest man in the world and he worked

right alongside of us as we developed the fastest airplane in the world, the X-15 Research Airplane which was going to fly at MACH 6. Scott Crossfield said he accidentally flew the X-15 into the vacuum of space. Since he was not an astronaut by NASA standards, NASA did not want to recognize this, but they finally did. After that, we went about reorganizing the physics and mathematics that we knew at that time, making Newtonian Physics king of what we could and couldn't do. We called that system Mass-Inertia Mathematics.

### Kilroy's Comments NORTH ALABAMA



The Eighth Air Force Historical Society  
367 Jeff Road, NW – Huntsville, AL  
35806-1509

Ann Vaughn .....President  
Traci Calvert ..... Vice President  
Bill Varnedoe .... Secretary/Treasurer  
Chaplain ..... George McGuinness  
<http://navfoc.org>

The April Meeting was opened by Ann Vaughn with the Invocation by Chaplin George McGuinness, followed by Harold McMurrin leading in the Pledge of Allegiance.

George Ferrrell gave his usual timely concert featuring: *April Showers, Yankee Doodle, Take me Out to the Ballgame, El Paso, Waltzing Mathilda, Annie Laurie, Theme from Dr. Zhivago, Juanita and as always Dixie,*

A program was given by Harold McMurrin: a true story, kept top secret until recently, of an incident that happened during WW II in preparing for D-Day.

Our long-time member, Dorothy (Dottie) Cutts, went to be with the Lord 27th March 2013. Our deepest sympathy

go to Dottie's children and grandchildren. Sixteen Chapter members attended her funeral at Calvary Bible Church.

Dottie was born in 1918 in Newburg, NY. For twelve years she and her family lived in a two room apartment, no bathroom, no running water and no electricity. School was 3 miles away and she walked, regardless of the weather. The depression hit the family hard and in 1930 they moved to Philadelphia, PA. Dottie said those days were tough and would take a book to tell.. She attended Bible School and after graduating in 1940 she did missionary work. There was only one time in her life when she said she wished she was a man. That was on Sunday, December 7, 1941 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. All the men enlisted so Dottie went to work in defense plants. But that was not the Army! When the WAAC (Women's Army Auxiliary Corps) was established, Dottie was one of the early ones to join. After basic training, Dottie joined the Medical Corps and took medical training for nurse-like duties. She was assigned to a hospital and gained experience working with a doctor and other nurses. At this time the Cadet Nurse Corps was established to provide the Army with more Registered Nurses.

On graduation, her dreams of being in the Army were finally realized! Her duties were at Walter Reed hospital and Tripler hospital in Honolulu. She looked back on her WAAC and nurse days as very important in shaping her future life. She was very proud to have served.

### 392ND BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION NEWS

#### Reunion: Savannah in July

The 392nd BGMA will join the 8th Air Force Historical Society and the Heritage League in Savannah, Georgia, from July 22-26, 2013. We hope Crusaders of all ages will make an effort to attend, see old friends (and make new ones), and visit the National Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum.

President .....Jim Goar

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Frankfort, IN 46061  
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**Vice-President..... Bob Books**  
books@b24.net

**Chairman, 392nd BG Memorial**  
.....**Carroll W. Cheek**

**Secretary/Treasurer .....Annette Tison**  
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**PX Chairman.....Bill McCutcheon**  
20620 Milton Ct.  
Brookfield, WI 53045  
billm@b24.net • (262) 784-5606

## **BIRTHPLACE CHAPTER**

President..... Bob Buck  
Vice-President.....Fred Pye  
Treasurer ..... Mort Glick  
Secretary .....Bill Murdock  
**www.mighty8thbirthplace.org**

Recent speakers during the Birthplace Chapter's monthly dinner meetings have largely been from the Navy and the Marines. They include retired Lt. Col. John Scanlan, a Marine aviator and author who has published several books and magazine articles on his life at Annapolis and deployments during the Cold War, Desert Storm, and the Bosnian conflict; Capt. Lena Jones, Navy Nurse Corps, of the Naval hospital in Beaufort, SC, whose previous assignments include major Naval medical centers, a hospital ship, and Afghanistan; and Marine Col. Lex Brown, an F/A-18 pilot and veteran of several combat deployments who is currently Command Inspector at the Marine Corps Recruiting Depot, Parris Island, SC.

Sandwiched in between those speakers was Richard Carl Roth, who has done extensive studies on Germany from the end of World War I through World War II, and has written a meticulously researched historical novel, *Endangered Eagle*, about a fictitious plot to assassinate Charles Lindbergh during his actual



**2013 BIRTHPLACE CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS**  
*Left to Right, Mort Glick, Bill Murdock Sonny Koski, Bob Buck, Al Pela, Fred Pye, John Garnjost, and Not Pictured: Charles Sitrin*

visit to Berlin in 1936.

### **MONTHLY MEETINGS:**

The Birthplace Chapter meets on the third Tuesday of every month at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, at 175 Bourne Avenue in Pooler, GA. Take exit 102 on I-95 toward Garden City. Turn toward Garden City at the bottom of the ramp on Highway 80 and then make a left turn at the first light after the Interstate ramps.

These evenings begin at 5:30 pm with a social hour and cash bar. At 7 pm we convene the monthly meeting with a brief ceremony featuring the lighting of candles in memory of our fallen comrades and serve a buffet dinner (\$15 per person.)

This is followed at 8 pm by the introduction of a guest speaker or other featured event. Our monthly meetings normally end by 9 pm.

Reservations are required. For reservations, please call Betty Smith at

(912) 920-2956 before 5 PM on the Sunday before the Tuesday Dinner Meeting.

***THE BIRTHPLACE CHAPTER IS HOSTING the "Welcome Reception" on Monday, July 22 and the "Hospitality Room" off the lobby of the hotel for coffee and doughnuts on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning.***

### **NEW WEB SITE FOR THE 452ND:**

[www.452ndbombgroupassociation-deophamgreen.org](http://www.452ndbombgroupassociation-deophamgreen.org)

*Any questions please contact:*

*Carolyn 'Cally' Boatwright  
452nd Secretary/Editor  
1-800-452-9099*

[carolyncallyboat@hotmail.com](mailto:carolyncallyboat@hotmail.com)

# The Original "City of Savannah"

## A Tail of Two "Cities"

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum welcomed the B-17, serial number 44-83814, to Savannah on Jan. 15, 2009. Today, the airplane occupies a place of honor in the museum's Combat Gallery. It also has a new name—the City of Savannah. The story of how the airplane arrived at its permanent home in the gallery, and how it got its name is really two stories.

## The Original City of Savannah

The first story starts in late 1944, at the height of World War II, when the residents of Chatham County, Georgia, the home of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, raised \$500,000 to pay for the production of one B-17 bomber and the training of the 10 men who would make up its crew. In late November 1944, new B-17s and recently graduated air crews were brought together at Hunter Field in Savannah, Ga., and then sent to overseas units. Shortly after Thanksgiving, the U.S. Army Air Corps matched the crew piloted by Lt. Ralph Kittle with a B-17 bomber, serial number 43-39049, which happened to be the 5,000th airplane to be processed through Hunter Field destined to support Al-







lied forces in Europe. The airplane was painted with the name City of Savannah to honor the Chatham County fundraisers. Lt. Kittle and his crew were photographed with the airplane. The citizens of Chatham County were honored for their generosity and support at a ceremony, and a special blessing was bestowed on the crew for its safety. And then the crew and the airplane departed for England.

Not long after they arrived in England, Lt. Kittle and his crew were separated from the City of Savannah. They were assigned to the 388th Bomb Group, and were shot down by anti-aircraft fire on March 5, 1945 while on their 13th mission – to the city of Plauen, in Germany. They were flying an older “F” model B-17 with the Tail Number 42-97642. One crew member, tail gunner Robert H. Warren was killed.

The remaining crewmen became prisoners of war until they were repatriated in May of 1945. The B-17 bomber they flew to England, S/N 43-39049, the original City of Savannah returned to the United States in July 1945 and was eventually scrapped.

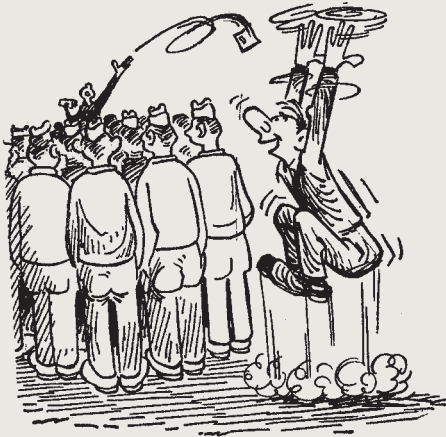
## *Today's City of Savannah*

Story number two begins 64 years later. Historians conducting research on the present B-17 City of Savannah discovered that S/N 44-83814 was produced in May 1945 at an aircraft-assembly plant in Long Beach, Calif. Unfortunately, it was built too late to take part in the war. By the time it rolled out of the hangar, the war in Europe was drawing to a close, so the Army Air Force simply

dropped the airplane from its rolls.

S/N 44-83814 managed to avoid the scrap yards after the war. It passed through a series of civilian owners who used it to perform a variety of tasks. It spent 20 years taking photographs around the world for a mapmaking company in Canada. Part of its duties involved charting the Distant Early Warning Line. The DEW Line was a series of radar stations situated primarily in the far northern reaches of the Canadian Arctic. They were established to provide advanced notice of an airborne or land-based invasion by Soviet aircraft or troops during the Cold War. Later, from 1974 to 1984, the airplane served as a slurry bomber fighting forest fires. It operated out of a base in Arizona.

In 1984, the airplane was traded to the Smithsonian Institution and placed in long-term storage. It remained in storage until the Smithsonian presented it to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in 2009.



**B-24 OR B-25 FLY OVER**

Last month, just before sunset, I thought I heard, a lone B-24 fly over the downtown Dayton area. I was working outside in the yard & heard it. There it was, off in the distance, over Dayton.

I thought it was a B-24 – it had the twin tail boom & it was big. It had that low, distinctive rumble across the sky. It might have been a B-24, and then earlier this week, the announcement that the last Doolittle reunion was held in Eglin AFB in Florida. One of the former Doolittle Raider pilots, Richard E. Cole from Dayton Ohio had the opportunity to fly and then land “Panchito”, a restored B-25 around the Ft. Walton Beach area during the final reunion. The report stated that Lt. Cole flew accurately & landed safely – at 97. Congrats to him, that is really something!

Best regards,  
HENRY G. WULBECK AIA  
RUETSCHLE  
ruetschle.com



North American  
B-25 Mitchell



"All American"  
February 1, 1943

**SEPTEMBER 2012 ISSUE,  
"ALL AMERICAN"**

Donna, I am a lifetime member of the 8th AF, due to my assignment to Westover AFB, Mass from July 1957-July 1963, when 8th AF HQ was at Westover AFB. (I was assigned to the 99th BW (B-52) The September 2012 issue of the 8th AF News has an article about the 97th BG B-17 "All American"..that has some falsehoods.

The 97th BG along with the 301st BG were transferred to the MTO and assigned to the 12th AF, in October 1942, as part of the heavy bomber section of the 12th AF...and joined the 98th BG and 376thBG both B-24 BGs.

The 97th B-17 "All American" was assigned a mission to the Docks at Tunis, Tunisia, while based at Biskra, Algeria on 1 February 1943.

There was an article about "All American" in your September 2012 issue, that has several falsehoods....one is that the aircraft was returning to England, escorted by two P-51s (this is false), as the aircraft was flying its missions in North Africa and the P-51 was not in service at that time period.

For verification of the actual story, the 97th BG History Book VENIT HORA THE HOUR HAS COME, has the actual true event documented on pp 79-80, and there is no mention of a return to England.

I am assuming that your magazine resources has this book and it should be no problem for someone to verify the falsehood of the published article in the September 2012 issue.

In my opinion, a retraction, or rather a correction should be published in your magazine. The 8th AF News.

Sincerely,

James S. Peters Sr.  
j.peters140@comcast.net  
M/SGT USAF (Retired)

*Editors Note: Mr. Peters your knowledge is very much appreciated and worthy of publishing. Thank you for setting the 8th AF News article "All American," record straight.*

**WWII WILLYS JEEP**

My name is Mark Pelka. I have been a member of the 8th AFHS for several years. I am also a member of the Military Vehicle Preservation Association and the local chapter, Empire State West. Some of us are reenactors and some like myself enjoy living history. My reason for writing is this, I own a WWII Willys Jeep that is marked in the livery of the 398th Bomb Group. I do not know if the markings are correct or not. I have not been able to locate any photos of any 398th ground equipment. My Jeep is marked as 398th BG, 601BS, Commanding Officers Vehicle. My question, to be put to the panel is this. Should the bumper numbers be white on a green or green on a white bumper? This may seem trivial but I would like to be as accurate as possible. If anybody out there can help, I would be grateful. My jeep has been displayed along with several B-17's when they visit the local airport and I try to make an appearance at the annual air show near me. I'm always glad to talk about my jeep and the 8TH Air Force. The jeep is more affordable than a B-17. By the way I always look forward to the 8TH AF NEWS. Good work!!

Mark Pelka  
m.a.pelka@roadrunner.com  
56 Federal Ave, Cheektowaga, N.Y.  
14225.



*Leading Lady*

*Below Photo: 364th BS, 305th BG, at Chelveston, England.*

**364TH, 305TH BG PIC P.45  
MARCH 2013 ISSUE**

The picture lower right p. 45 was my father's unit in which he flew 30 missions on that plane, "Leading Lady", I don't see him in the picture, it looks like the enlisted members, only 2 officers far left and right standing, only guessing. Would like to know if any of these people are still alive. The plane was the lead bomber and my father Kenn Riordan Sr., the lead aviator as bombardier on the mission of 2000 planes which attacked Stargard, Poland (Prussia) and the German jet factory there on Oct 6th, 1944 according to my dad's records. This is believed to be the largest number of planes in history on a single mission. The COL who commanded the mission was in my father's plane and upon return was promoted to BG. My father also said that they weren't sure if they had enough fuel to fly both ways, contingent on winds which were favorable that day, and that they lost fighter cover about 1/2 way in. Not sure of the losses but believe they were substantial.

I trust this will be found of interest. I would like to see all in Savannah! Thank you for your contributions to these extraordinary people of the Greatest Generation!

Make Every Day Your Best!  
Kenn Riordan Jr.  
lordstrider@earthlink.net

**BRITISH WAR BRIDE STUDY  
2013 8TH AF NEWS**

This is in reference to your study mentioned in the latest issue of the 8th AF News. I was with the 8th Air Force in England 1943-1945. as part of the 18th Weather Squadron, on detached service to the 390th Bomb Group at Framlingham in Suffolk County. The base was more often referred to as the Parham base since it was in close proximity to that village. Early in 1945 I met my bride-to-be, Doris (nee White) who lived in Aldeburgh, a seaside town on the North Sea. We met under very unusual circumstances which were narrated in the Dallas Morning News on November 9, 2012. Our story was also told in the Aldeburgh Gazette in England on January 11, 2013. Also in January this year the story (with pictures) was told in the Pew News, pages 7 and 8, published by the Aldeburgh Parish Church where we were married. The vicar of the church sent me a link to access that publication. By separate e-mail I will send you a copy of that communication so that you

can view the story if you are interested. Please note that under the wedding picture it mentions that to the right was the best man, a Scottish soldier. It should read to the left.

If you would like to have any further information you can reach me at rancker@sbcglobal.net

My wife and I now live in Frisco, Texas, were married November 15, 1945, over 67 years ago.

Ronald Ancker  
rancker@sbcglobal.net

**RUBY'S RAIDERS**

Regarding the photo in Vol. 13, No. 1 "Voice of the Mighty Eighth":

The photo is of Frank Blackwell's crew of Ruby's Raiders taken with Ruby Newell (sp?), who after being chosen the Prettiest Wac in the ETO had a B-17 named after her. Frank Blackwell is the officer with the peaked cap on Ruby's left. Ruby's Raiders was lost over Germany in the winter/spring of 1945 being flown by another crew after Blackwell's had completed their tour. Frank was a captain and a "maverick" having been in the air corps as an enlisted man before going into flight training. He boasted that Ruby's Raiders



*Above photo: 549th BS, 385th BG, at Great Ashfield, England, in 1944.*

had real Wrights for engines instead of Studebaker Wrights.

I was in the Nissen hut with Frank and his officers from Jan. 1945. I was the navigator in Gene Gerke's crew.

Sincerely,

Mathias Leupold

matleup@comcast.net

### NEW PUBLICATION ON 8TH AF IN ENGLAND

In 1994 the 100th Bomb Group published a map/guide to all the 8th Air Bases, along with directions to find them, for the 50th Anniversary of D-Day. These are long out of print. Now, however, *Fly Past* magazine has created a new publication that does a base by base reference guide along with many other features via <http://shop.keypublishing.com/> website as a special *Fly Past* publication: <http://shop.keypublishing.com/product/View/productCode/MIGHT8/Mighty-Eighth>

#### Features include:

- All operational airfields, detailing the units and aircraft that flew from them
- Profiles of the major combat aircraft of World War Two
- Fighter 'aces' and leading personalities
- Colour schemes, unit markings and camouflage
- Traces of history: discovering former airfields and the clues left behind
- Museums large and small, memorials and other visitor attractions

### GRANDADDYS MEMORABILIA

Hi Donna,

My name is Renee. I am member of the 8th A.F. Historical Society.

I grew up in a USAF home - my dad, Chuck was in the USAF for 21 years (1953-1974). What a wonderful life! While in Greenville, SC (Donaldson AFB) my Dad met my mom, Gloria, from Greer, SC. They married in Sept. 1955. Then I came along in Feb. 1958 while Dad and Mom were at Boling AFB in Washington D.C. I had always known my Granddaddy

SEPTEMBER 21, 1944 —ONE DAY NEARER TO VICTORY

### GREER BOY FINDS COOKING AN ART



An Eighth Air Force Bomber Station, England. — Cooking is an art and especially in a zone of operations where substitute ingredients often must be used.

With no fresh milk available, Corporal Herbert L. Stokes (left) of Greer, S. C., is stacking a load of canned milk into the arms of Sergeant Jesse D. Fretwell (right) of Lewiston, Idaho, for use in the noon meal at officers' mess where the two soldiers rae cooks at this Eighth Air Force B-17 Flying Fortress station.

Cpl. Stokes, 32, is a former textile worker at Victor Monaghan Company. His wife, Mrs. Fannie Stokes, lives at Arlington Rural Station, Greer, S. C. He enlisted in September, 1942, and received training at Fort Jackson, S. C.

The two cooks are members of the group cited by the President for its historic bombing of the Muhlembau aircraft assembly plant in Brunswick, Germany. This group also participated in the 3rd Bombardment Division England-Africa shuttle bombing attack on Messerschmitt aircraft assembly plants in Regensburg, Germany, in August, 1943, for which a second Presidential citation was awarded.

*Col. Herbert L. Stokes (AKA Grandaddy) and Sergeant Jesse D. Fretwell.*

(Mom's Dad), he was in England during WWII in the Air Corps - but it was after my Mom's passing, in 2008 (my Dad passed in 1984 - at the young age of 49) that I "found" Granddaddy's pix and things he had kept. Granddaddy, Herbert Stokes, had passed in 1973

(age 60). His "keep sakes" were in my Mom's belongings. It was 2011 when I first discovered, The Mighty 8th Museum, WOW! What an experience! Of all the places we travelled to or lived, this is one of the best museums ever!!

I knew I had to donate Granddaddy's things to the Museum (as I am the only remaining family member). My Granddaddy was not drafted during WWII, as he was already 30 years old. He joined up. He joined in Sept. 1942 and stayed until the wars' end. He was a Cpl. and a cook! He was with both the 487 BG and 94 BG. Since donating his things last year I have also joined the Historical Society. I have added Granddaddy to the "Wall of Valor" at the Museum. I wish that my grandparents and my parents could have seen the Museum. I feel like it's a sacred place dedicated to "Our Greatest Generation." I am always on the "look out" for the 8th AF "fly boys." Hope you have a blessed year!  
 Renee Swangler  
 Greer, SC

**BURY ST. EDMUNDS**

Dear Mrs. Neely and Mrs. Gaines,  
 Days are special when the *8th AF News* magazine arrives at my house. Seven decades melt away and everyone is young



*The American War Memorial in Bury St. Edmunds, East Anglia*

again.  
 In those long ago days of World War II I served in the British Army and was stationed at Bury St. Edmunds, right in the midst of the U.S. Air Bases that dotted the countryside. The 94th Bomb Group was right next door!  
 Each morning those brave young men risked their lives as in the Fortresses,

they roared toward targets deep in Europe's enemy territory.  
 As for us girls, we were fighting the war deep in the kitchens of Gibraltar Barracks, a huge training center for British troops. We cooked and served many hundreds of meals, scrubbed scores of messhall tables and coped with oceans of dirty dishes.  
 Yes, there was an ancient dishwashing contraption that we called "Old Bertha." But pots and pans had to be washed by hand, making the skin on our fingers peel off in shreds.  
 However, life was not all danger and drudgery. At night, downtown Bury St. Edmunds buzzed, as large trucks unloaded GIs from nearby bases. Movie theaters and pubs were filled to capacity. Every Tuesday night there was a dance at the local corn exchange. That venerable building fairly shook as couples jitterbugged to the tunes of the time.  
 Thank you for sending me *8th Air Force News*. Whenever I have finished reading, I drop it off in my doctor or dentist's waiting room. That way others too will learn about the Eighth Air Force's illustrious past!  
 Sincerely,  
 Frances Nunnally

**VIEW FROM THE LEFT SEAT**



Flying Fortresses of the 3rd air Division are seen on one of their daily missions into danger.  
 The cockpit view out along the left wing presented an impressive view of two Wright 1200 hp engines mounted on a B-17, that had a gross weight of over 30 tons. The aircraft is part of the 487th Bomb Group, based at Lavenham Air Station.  
 The aircraft's pilot usually occupied the left seat on the flight deck. Occasionally this place was taken by a visiting pilot - a dignitary from higher headquarters flying a mission with the group. Pilots sometimes elected to fly a particular mission in the right seat of the cockpit if their aircraft was assigned a position on the left side of the formation. A better view of the entire formation was an advantage under these circumstances.

# So who the heck was KILROY?



Anyone born from 1913 to about 1950, is familiar with Kilroy. No one knew why he was so well known but everybody got into it, This image was everywhere during WW II. I even remember seeing him around public places in the late 60s.

In 1946 the American Transit Association, through its radio program, "Speak to America," sponsored a nationwide contest to find the real Kilroy, offering a prize of a real trolley car to the person who could prove himself to be the genuine article. Almost 40 men stepped forward to make that claim, but only James Kilroy from Halifax, Massachusetts, had evidence of his identity.

'Kilroy' was a 46-year old shipyard worker during the war who worked as a checker at the Fore River Shipyard in Quincy. His job was to go around

and check on the number of rivets completed. Riveters were on piecework and got paid by the rivet. He would count a block of rivets and put a check mark in semi-waxed lumber chalk, so the rivets wouldn't be counted twice. When Kilroy went off duty, the riveters would erase the mark.

Later on, an off-shift inspector would come through and count the rivets a second time, resulting in double pay for the riveters. One day Kilroy's boss called him into his office. The foreman was upset about all the wages being paid to riveters, and asked him to investigate. It was then he realized what had been going on. The tight spaces he had to crawl in to check the rivets didn't lend themselves to lugging around a paint can and brush, so Kilroy decided to stick with the waxy chalk. He continued to put his check mark on each job he inspected, but added 'KILROY WAS HERE' in king-sized letters next to the check, and eventually added the sketch of the chap with the long nose peering over the fence and that became part of the Kilroy message. Once he did that, the riveters stopped trying to wipe away his marks. Ordinarily the rivets and chalk marks would have been covered up with paint. With the war on, however, ships were leaving the Quincy Yard so fast that there wasn't time to paint them.



As a result, Kilroy's inspection "trademark" was seen by thousands of servicemen who boarded the troopships the yard produced. His message apparently rang a bell with the servicemen, because they picked it up and spread it all over Europe and the South Pacific.

Before war's end, "Kilroy" had been here, there, and everywhere on the long hauls to Berlin and Tokyo. To the troops outbound in those ships, however, he was a complete mystery; all they knew for sure was that someone named Kilroy had "been there first." As a joke, U.S. Servicemen began placing the graffiti wherever they landed, claiming it was already there when they arrived. Kilroy became the U.S. Super-GI who had always "already been" wherever GIs went. It became a challenge to place the logo in the most unlikely places imaginable (it is said to be atop Mt. Everest, the Statue of Liberty, the underside of the Arc de Triomphe, and even scrawled in the dust on the moon. He is engraved in stone in the National





War Memorial in Washington, DC- back in a small alcove where very few people have seen it. For the WWII generation, this will bring back memories. For you younger folks, it's a bit of trivia that is a part of our American history.

As the war went on, the legend grew. Underwater demolition teams routinely sneaked ashore on Japanese-held islands in the Pacific to map the terrain for coming invasions by U.S. Troops (and thus, presumably, were the first GI's there). On one occasion,

however, they reported seeing enemy troops painting over the Kilroy logo! In 1945, an outhouse was built for the exclusive use of Roosevelt, Stalin, and Churchill at the Potsdam conference. Its' first occupant was Stalin, who emerged and asked his aide (in Russian), "Who is Kilroy?"

To help prove his authenticity in 1946, James Kilroy brought along officials from the shipyard and some of the riveters. He won the trolley car, which he gave to his nine children as a Christmas

gift and set it up as a playhouse in the Kilroy yard in Halifax, Massachusetts.

And the tradition continues... The hair varies, the eyes vary, but all have an overhanging nose and two hands of fingers over the fence. The North Alabama Chapter's Newsletter is called Kilroy's Comments, and includes the image.

Submitted by  
 Bill Varnedoe - 385th BG  
 North Alabama Chapter -  
 Secretary/Treasurer



**Kilroy Was Here, Claims Trolley Car**

James J. Kilroy, a Bethlehem Steel Co. employe from Halifax, supervises the loading, in Chemical Lane, Everett, today, of the 44-foot-long trolley car he won by writing the winning letter in a "Kilroy Was Here" contest sponsored by the American Transit Ass'n. The car, being hoisted aboard a trailer truck, will be taken over the road to Halifax to be used to house six of Kilroy's nine children.

# Book Reviews

## **AIR WAR D-DAY ASSAULTS FROM THE SKY VOLUME 2**

By Martin Bowman

**NEW BOOK RELEASE**

**RRP: \$19.99**

**ISBN: 9781781591161**

**PUBLISHED: MARCH 2013**

**PEN & SWORD AVIATION**

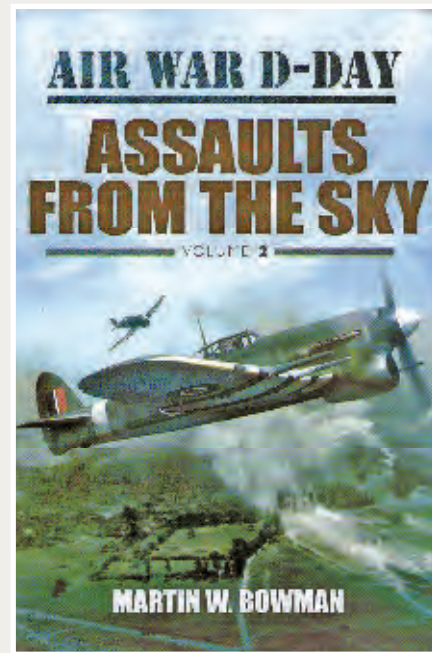
This is the second volume of a comprehensive five part work on D-Day that includes a multitude of personal military accounts from both allied and German Aviation personnel 'who were there'.

Overlord began with an assault by more than 23,000 airborne troops, 15,500 of them American, behind enemy lines to soften up the German troops and to secure key objectives. 6,600 paratroopers of the US 101st, 'Screaming Eagles', Division and 6,396 paratroopers of the US 82nd 'All American' Division were dropped over the neck of the Cotentin peninsula.

By the end of the operation, the list of casualties was extensive. But 101st Airborne Division linked up with the US 4th Infantry Division beach landings at Pouppeville, the most southerly exit off 'Utah' Beach and the 82nd secured the area north of Ste-Mere-Eglise after fierce fighting and drove the enemy north, considerably delaying the German 243rd Infantry Division from contacting the Allied beach assault force. This important episode within the wider history of D-Day is enlivened in classic Bowman fashion, featuring both extensive historical notes as well as deeply personal accounts of endurance and individual gallantry.

Martin Bowman is one of Britain's leading aviation authors and has written a multitude of books on World War II and other conflicts since. Among the many titles that he has written, Pen and Sword have published *The Men Who Flew The Mosquito*, *Duxford and the Big Wings*; several guides to World War two airfields in the 'Aviation Heritage Series', *The Mighty Eighth At War*; *Legend of the Lancasters*; *Mosquito Mayhem*, *Bomber Command*;

*Reflections of War and Air War D-Day; The First Steps To Victory*. He lives in Norwich in Norfolk and is a former member of the 6th Battalion, The Royal Anglian Regiment (TAVR).



## **Texas Raiders B-17 Bomber**

Rumors are . . . that we may have a surprise B-17 visit, during the 39th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion in Savannah, Georgia.



**Borbee, Dr. Donald B.**, passed away peacefully on February 14, 2013. Dr. Borbee was predeceased in June of 2012 by his wife of 65 years Kathleen R. Borbee. Both had been residents of Rochester, NY for the last 22 years. Dr. Borbee was with the 452nd BG, 731st Sq. from 1942 - 1945.



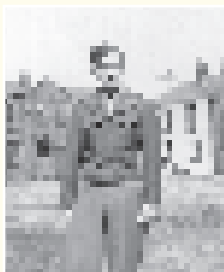
**Donald Borbee**

**Bridwell, Perry G.**, passed away 4 April 2013, in Greer, SC. He was a Sgt. in the 8th AF, stationed in England during WWII. He was an airplane hydraulic mechanic.



**Warren Caldwell**

**Buletti, Edgardo**, born in St Antonino, Switzerland and immigrated to the US in 1926. Ed proudly served in the 8th AF for 3 years. He passed away, at 94 years old, on March 15, 2013



**Samual Goldberg**

**Caldwell, Sgt. Warren G.**, passed away in Portland, Oregon on 17 Mar 2013. Warren served as an engineer/top-turret gunner on a B-17 in the 306th BG, 423rd BS. He was active in Veterans' organizations such as the 8th AFHS and was also a Mason.



**Benny Gorchesky**

**Carroll, James Bruce**, of Mobile, AL, passed away February, 2013. He was a Ball Turret Gunner on the Dunlap Crew, 385th BG.



**Dorothy Cutts**

**Cutts, Dorothy 'Dottie'**, 94, of Huntsville, passed away. Mrs. Cutts was born in Newburgh, NY, and was a WWII and Korean Conflict Army nurse. She moved to Huntsville in 1958 from Pennsylvania. She was a member of Huntsville Veteran's Museum, the 8th AF Historical Society and a descendent of George Washington's Army at Valley Forge. Her husband, Merritt Cutts, preceded her in death in August 2000. 14 members of the North Alabama Chapter attended her funeral!!

**Downs, Bernard Gregory**, of Jackson-

ville, FL., died February 10, 2013. 96th Squadron, 413th Bomb Group. He was a member of Bookout's Crew.

**Farrah, Albert Louis, Sr.** 95, of Gerrish Island, Kittery Pt., ME, joined his beloved wife of 65 years, Jeanne Farrah who passed away in his arms on March 8, 2013. A retired WWII Army Air Corp Captain, he became a prisoner of war on Dec. 20, 1943 when his B-17 was shot down on a bombing mission over Bremen, Germany. He was awarded the Purple Heart for injuries sustained on that mission.



**Albert Farrah**

**Goggin, Edward F.**, 88, of New Hartford, died April 14, 2013. He was an aerial gunner on a B-17 heavy bomber. He married Joyce Eileen Wood on August of 53 years until her death on May 2, 2005.



**William Herndon**

**Goldberg, Samuel Aaron**, 89, of Pittsburgh, PA., passed away December 15, 2012. He trained as a mechanic for the Air Corp. He eventually assigned to do general repairs on fighters and bombers.

**Gorchesky, Benny J.**, a long-time Johnstown resident, died March 20, 2013, in Sedona, Ariz. Benny is survived by wife, Ethel Gorchesky (Voytko). He was a highly decorated World War II veteran and a member of the famed 303rd "Hell's Angel's" BG. Benny flew 35 missions over enemy occupied Europe in a B-17.

**Griffith, Elwood**, 90, of Alva, FL passed away on April 6, 2013. He was born in Sullivan County, IN. "Woody" served with the 303rd BG. He was honorably discharged with a Purple Heart after being injured on his crew's

30th bombing mission over Germany. He and his wife "Ellie" were also Safe Place transporters for many years taking at-risk children to a safe environment.

**Hendon, William G. "Bill"**, was reunited with his beloved Lucy on April 12, 2013. He was a ball turret gunner on a B-17 in the 303rd BG and was stationed with 357th Squadron in Molesworth, England. He flew 32 missions over Germany in Hell's Angels, earning three Gold Stars. They were briefed after one of their missions and told they had just witnessed the first German Jet Fighter. Upon his return from the war, he married Mary Lucille Machen in 1948 and they remained sweethearts for 65 years until her death on March 11, 2013.

**Hilborn, Ervin**, (October 21, 1921 - March 29, 2013) age 91, went to be with his family Friday, March 29, 2013. Ervin served with th 303rd BG. He flew 23 missions and shot down 3 German fighters. Ervin received the Purple Heart, Presidential Unit Citation and the E.A.M.E. Theatre Ribbon with 2 battle stars. Ervin is survived by his loving wife of 66 years, Mary.



**Ervin Hilborn**

**Holcombe Jr., William**, 87, of Vestavia, AL., passed away November 11, 2012. He served as Flight Engineer on a B-17 with the 305th BG.

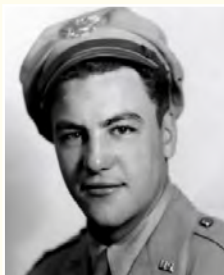
**Humphries, Wayne**, age 88, of Shelley, Idaho passed away in Idaho Falls, Idaho on March 6, 2012. Wayne received machinist training at a vocational school in Weiser,



**Wayne Humphries**

Idaho, then worked for Boeing Aircraft in Seattle, Washington building B-17 bombers until he entered the Army Air Corps on January 19, 1943. He served in World War II as a tail gunner in B-17 Flying Fortresses in the 8th Air Force, then was transferred to the 9th Air Force where he flew in the A-20 Marauders.

**Jacobs, Dallas Luke, Jr.**, 306th BG (H), 89, passed away 7 March 2013 in Orlando, Florida. A native of Shelbyville, Tennessee, he earned his wings with class 43C, was commissioned a lieutenant, and sailed to England aboard the Queen Mary as a new Flying Fortress pilot. He was assigned to the 367th Clay Pigeons Squadron and was a veteran of Black Thursday (Second Schweinfurt), Big Week, and First Over Berlin missions. He was promoted to captain upon completion of his first combat tour in March 1944 and awarded his first of two Distinguished Flying Crosses. Tennessee's Governor however appointed him Colonel, Governor's Staff in recognition of his service – the state's highest official honor. He returned to Europe in 1945 and commanded the 414th Wing and a Prayer Squadron with the 15th AF in Italy where he led bombing missions until the German surrender. With the formation of the Air Force, Major Jacobs returned to active duty in 1948 and flew F-82 Twin Mustang night fighters with the 68th Lightning Lancers Fighter Squadron (AW) early in the Korean War. However he was reassigned as the Air Liaison to the Army's 2nd Infantry Indianhead Division where he earned two Bronze Star medals with Combat Valor Devices for his bold actions during ground assaults. Lt. Col. Jacobs' last flight in the Air Force Reserve was piloting an F-104 Starfighter in 1959. He worked to restore the B-17 Liberty Belle to flying condition and served as co-chair of the 306th BG reunion in 1997.



**Dallas Jacobs**

**Lipstate Jr., Philip H.**, 93, of Naples, FL. passed away April 4, 2013. During WWII, Phil was in the 8th Air Force, as a Captain.



**Louis Loevsky with his wife, Molly.**

**Loevsky, Louis**, passed away peacefully, in his North Caldwell, N.J., home on Feb. 24, 2013, at the age of 92. In 1943 he took a commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Air Corps and served in the 866th BG as a navigator aboard a B-24. In 1944, his plane was shot down over Berlin, Germany. He parachuted into Berlin and was held 14 months in a Luftwaffe Prison Camp. Liberated by General Patton in May 1945, Lou returned to the U.S., married Faye Bilmes and moved to Fair Lawn, N.J., where they lived and raised their three children. After his first marriage ended in divorce, in 1974 he married his second wife, Molly Solomon, moved to North Caldwell, N.J., where he retired and enjoyed traveling the world and being with family. During his retirement years Lou became very active in reuniting many 8th Air Force Veterans. He worked closely with the secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jesse Brown, President Bill Clinton, and many others to advance the support of U.S. veterans. He frequently spoke publicly to veterans organizations and schools about his war and POW experiences, usually highlighting the experiences of other veterans. In 1999, 55 years after the war, Lou was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his actions to save another crewman aboard his ill-fated B-24. He was a devoted husband to his surviving wife, Molly, for 38 years

**Loring, Warren (Bud) E.**, passed away on 1 April 2013 in Wareham. He was the husband of Thelma Rowe Loring and the late Helen Elaine Loring, to whom he was married for 47 years. He was com-



**Warren Loring**

missioned as a twin-engine fighter pilot, 2nd Lt., Dec 1942. On his 5th mission, he was shot down over enemy occupied France June 1944 and escaped and evaded the enemy with the help of the French Resistance after spending 2 months being hid by various families; awarded the Purple Heart Medal for injuries received. Served on active duty with the US Army, Air Defense Artillery; and retired as a Lt. Colonel in 1968, after 26 years of service, which included World War II, and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts. He was a life member of the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society, serving on the Board of Directors as the Recording Secretary for 12 years. He was also a life member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and its MA Chapter, The Military Officers Association of America, the P-38 National Assn., Bourne High School Alumni Assn.; and belonged to The 55th Fighter Group, 343rd Squadron; Veterans of Foreign Wars, Post 5988, Bourne; and the Bourne Society for Historic Preservation.

**Lowell, Bill Norman**, age 83, died Sat., April 6, 2013 at his home in Concordia, KS. He entered the U.S. Air Force on Jan. 1, 1951 and served in Fairford, England for 3 years. He married Loretta Hood on Aug. 2, 1957 in Fairbury, NE. Brother of Darrel "D.D." Lowell, 8th AFHS BOD.



**Bill Lowell**

**McKenzie, John Willis**, of Paragould, Arkansas passed away April 18, 2012 at age 89. A proud member of the 8th Air Force, 3rd Division, 96th BG, 339 Squadron which was created to bomb targets in Germany and German-occupied Europe by day, while the Royal Air Force attacked by night. Mr. McKenzie served his crew as a bombardier on his B-17. He flew 30 missions and earned a number of decorations including 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses. He and his crew crashed in the North Sea on one mission and were only rescued because a British Coast Guard ship happened to be looking for another plane that had gone down. He and his wife Jane were married 69 years.

**McLawnhorn, William E.**, 93, of Ashburn, Virginia passed away March 18, 2013. He was a 1st Lieutenant in the 509th BS, 351st BG. He served as a pilot of B-17s. He was awarded the Army Air Force Medal, the Three Oaks Leaf Clusters Medal and the Distinguished Flyers Cross.



**William McLawnhorn**

**Muka, John J.**, of Harwood Heights, IL died April 20, 2013. After extensive training in the states as a bombardier and gunner he was assigned to the 392nd BG, 377th BS, Wendling, England. On January 28, 1945, his B-24 Lady Eve was downed by flak damage incurred during a raid near Dortmund. Eve fell upon the craft immediately below it in formation resulting in the loss of all crew members in both planes except John and his fellow waistgunner.



**Harry Patterson**

John suffered compound fractures of both legs and severe frostbite upon his ejection from the aircraft but managed to regain consciousness and parachute to the German countryside. He was dragged on snow skis by a young local girl to a hospital where he was operated on by German surgeons.



**Stuart Peace**

Despite repeated attempts by the gestapo to transfer him to a stalag, his doctors insisted he was too badly injured to be moved. He remained a hospitalized POW until his liberation.



**John Priestley**

Like many of his fellow airmen, John suffered from post traumatic stress syndrome and survivor remorse for the remainder of his life. He could never understand why he was spared and so many other brave young men were not.



**Gerald Robins**

He is survived by his wife June of 65 years His grandson 2nd Lt. Jacek Muka is a 2011 graduate of the Air Force Academy at Colorado Springs and

currently serves on active duty in Texas.

**Patterson, Harry L.**, 94, of Lake Mary, Florida went home to be with our Lord on February 7, 2013. Harry married and was devoted to Anne Burroughs Patterson for thirty years. Harry Patterson served as a waist gunner in the 303rd BG of the 360th BS, he participated in 32 flying missions in the Normandy, Northern France and Rhineland battle campaigns. He received the following decorations and citations: Distinguished Flying Cross Air Medal with 3 Oak Leaf Clusters, Good Conduct Medal, Presidential Unit Citation and European African Middle Eastern Service Medal with 3 bronze stars.

**Peace, Stuart M. Jr.**, Lt. Colonel (Ret. USAF 20 yrs, Ret. FAA 20 yrs.) died May 9, 2013 at age 91, in Sacramento, CA. Born in Chattanooga, TN 11/4/1921, he resided in Elk Grove, CA for the past 13 years, with Sara F. Peace, beloved wife of 71 years. As a B-24 pilot in the 466th BG, 787th Sq., he completed 35 missions, and was awarded multiple medals throughout his service, including the Distinguished Flying Cross. Following VE Day, Stuart stayed afterwards to fly twenty men back to the states in "Operation Home Run."

**Priestley, John Jr.**, who was a first Lieutenant B-17 pilot in the 8th Air Force and flew all 35 missions over Europe, passed away recently at age 88. He was so proud of his Air Force service, which was one of the highlights of his life. He was a dedicated reader of the 8th AF News.

**Robins, Lt. Col. Gerald B.**, 86, Kingsville, TX, passed away November 23,

2012. He served as a Combat Navigator on a B-17 with the 381st BG stationed in Ridgewell, England. He was awarded the Air Medal. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Fay.

**Rockwell, Robert G. Sr.**, age 88 of Danbury died on May 13th. He was preceded in death by his wives Grace Rockwell and Ruth Williams. Robert proudly served in WWII, serving 33 missions, 306th BG, 367th BS in Thurleigh, England. His passion with the 306th brought him to many reunions, and he served as president of the BG.



**Robert Rockwell**

**Schmidt, John W.**, 87, passed away on January 28, 2012. He was with the 835th BS, 486th BG. He received the Purple Heart for wounds received when his plane was shot down. He was a Tail Gunner. He had attained the rank of Sgt. before being discharged.



**John Schmidt**

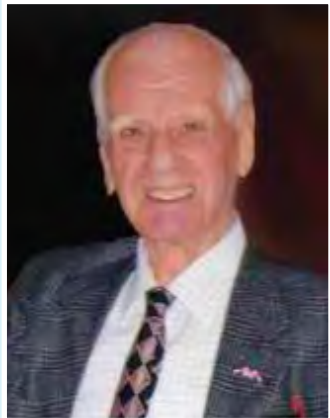
**Stearns, Paul Howard**, 89 went to be with the Lord on Sunday April 7, 2013. He served as a fighter pilot where he flew P-51 Mustangs. Paul was a retired engineer from the *Muskegon Piston Ring*. Paul married Doris Buck in 1946 and they enjoyed 66 years of marriage.



**Paul Stearns**

**Swjantek, Charles**, 93, of Herminie, PA, No. 2, died Wednesday, April 17, 2013, in Greensburg. Charlie was a member of the 398th BG.

**Thomas L. Thomas Sr.**, age 95, a resident of Wheaton, IL, died April 23, 2013, in Winfield. After being orphaned in 1924, Thomas and his brothers lived at the Bensenville Home. At the onset of WWII he joined the Army Air Corps and eagerly learned to fly. He enjoyed flying and was disappointed when he was assigned as a navigator. Just before shipping out he married his sweetheart, Marie Grych. He served as a navigator on a B-17 and on his 13th mission in May of 1943 was shot down. He spent the next year as a P.O.W. at Stalag Luft III and survived the winter death march.



His loyal military service continued as he served in the USAF Reserves from 1946 until 1967 and retired as a Major. He did not forget his Air Force friends and served as Secretary/Treasurer for the 96th Bomb Group Assn., President of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and for many years was president of the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation. He also was president of The Retired Officers Association in West Suburban Chicago.

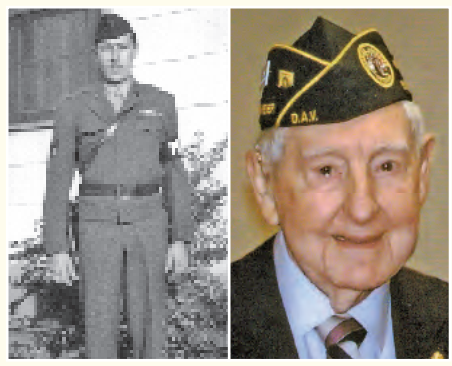
*His biography, titled "Never Give Up" was written in 2004.*

**Zilske, Albert F.**, 87, of Elmwood Park, Illinois passed away January 31, 2013. World War II, U.S. Army veteran, 8th Air Force, 92nd Bomb Group having flown 25 missions as a ball turret.



**Albert Zilske**

**Tabak, John** - 91, of Stratford CT, passed away September 12th, 2012. He served in WWII as a B-17 Fighter Engineer with 457th BG. John is survived by his wife and children.



**John Tabak**

**Wedlund, Arnold A.**, 89, of Ashland, WI, passed away May 13, 2009.

He was an airplane and engine mechanic in the US Air Force. He is survived by his wife, Florence and daughter.



**Arnold Wedlund**

**Wunnenberg, Jr. Chris**, 90, of Cincinnati, Ohio passed away January 26, 2013. He was a B-17 pilot stationed at Sneatherton Heath, England. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal and Four Oak Leaf Clusters. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Verna.

**"OVER GERMANY...1944"**

Holding on with both hands  
Leaning on the sky  
You remember Icarus  
Who flew too close to the sun

The heaven has bounds  
Over the target below  
Leaning on the I. P. (initial point)  
Rolling to the R. P. (rall point)

Black with anti-aircraft bursts  
The chatter of the songs  
Sing booming blasts of fire  
Leaping from lightning tongues

I might perish today  
Or live to be an old man,  
Holding on with both hands  
Leaning of the sky

**Marvin Silbersher**  
**447th Bomb Group**  
**711th Squadron**  
**Lake Hopatcong, NJ**

**PLEASE SEND ALL OBITS AND PHOTOS TO:**  
  
**Donna Neely • 2090 Cairo Bend Road**  
**Lebanon, TN • 37087**  
**or**  
**donnajneely@gmail.com**

## “The Little Girl” & The “Special G.I.” In Her Life.

I was a young school girl of 12 years and my father was a Master Grocer and supplied food to the canteen at Honington USAF Base 364 Fighter Base I would ride along in the van with my dad on school holidays to help carry any goods!

December 1945, my father & mother took me along to the Children’s Christmas Party being held in the Hanger.

I was so excited, my mum fit me in a new dress and did my hair. These G.I.’s were waiting at the big open doors to pick the child they most wanted to share Christmas with. I was one of the oldest at 12 years old. I thought nobody would be choosing me and that I would have to go back home with my parents.

Then suddenly this young G.I. approached my mum and dad and handed a photo to them, then he took my hand and led me over to the table, loaded down with food of all sorts and decorated with balloons.

All these G.I.s had contributed to this table for the British kids. At the end “Father Christmas” had a huge sack full of presents to give to each child to take home. We were all so spoiled on that night. It was a child’s dream.



*Father Christmas Arrives  
at Christmas Party, 1945.*

It must have been a kinda special evening for Jimmy, as I know it was for me. On taking me back to my parents he asked, “Could he bring me to a special dinner Christmas Day at the Sgt. Mess?” Once again my parents came up with a “yes.”

Jimmy had a Command Vehicle sent with Arthur Timmis to fetch me and eventually bring me home.

I remember meeting Joe Scalise and Austin Risner, who gave me a dollar bill - that I still have in my WW II Memory Book. Also, I have the Christmas menu written out by “Jimmy” (James Thomas Ainsworth).

Being the only child there, I was so thoroughly spoiled once again, I came home with boxes full with tins of turkey, fruit, sweets of all sorts and Oh Henry Bars of Chocolate with nuts, which became my favorite chocolates. I don’t remember sharing these!

Jimmy went back to Marshall, Texas, and married Melba August 10th, 1946. Melba wrote me until 1952 and then our correspondence dropped off. Her life became very busy with four children.

Years later in the 70’s, I got to thinking and the memories flooded back to me so I tried to trace Jimmy and family off and on for 7 years, but always drew a blank. I didn’t know his serial number or what outfit he was in. It was a big blockage.

Then I came to America to our special American Tenant’s the Cherry Family for their daughter Karen’s wedding in Abaline, Texas. I was speaking to a guest Mary Bell and saying it was my biggest wish in life to be able to meet up with Jimmy & Melba Ainsworth. I wanted to “thank” Jimmy and to let him know that he would never be forgotten and that this now elder age woman, still loved her first - American boyfriend. Amazingly she said “I work in the Sheriff’s Office and I’ll find Jimmy,” and she did.

Finally on August 23rd, 2004 I planned on visiting dear old time friends and wrote and asked if it would be possible for me to visit?

Walking down the stairs at Midland Airport, there he stood with his granddaughter, Cara, to greet me. We recognized each other immediately. (Sadly Melba wasn’t there, she had a heart attack the previous Christmas).

Now, Jimmy really knows, he had never been “Forgotten” nor had his family. I visited them in Texas three more times. We have had such treasured and happy memories.

Sadly James “Jimmy” Thomas Ainsworth passed away May 10, 2012.

**Dorene Nice  
Brickyard Cottage,  
Culford, Suffolk  
England  
1P28-6UD**



**James Thomas “Jimmy” Ainsworth** was born a very proud World War II veteran serving in the U S Army Air Force. After the war, he returned to Marshall, Texas where he married the love of his life, Melba Lee Watson, in 1946. Jimmy was a faithful Christian and spent his retirement years serving First Assembly of God Church in Midland, as Head Usher. He loved his children, lived for his grandchildren, and worshiped his great-grand- children.

# COMRADES

Looking for a place to sit down, with my mess hall lunch-tray, someone on my left, was tapping the wooden table-top with what looked like a foot-long screwdriver (with no handle), "What's that?" I asked. "This," he replied "is a genuine 100% piece of Kraut flak! I dug it out of my radio-receiver over Berlin yesterday." (So, he was a fellow radio-operator and I thought how it was astonishing that we radio-operators always seemed to find each other like homing pigeons). The piece of metal was ice-cold. Astonishingly heavy, jagged and terrifying to behold. My bomber crew was approaching our very first mission. Combat seemed to be a world with which we had very little actual knowledge.

"I'm Jim Foster" he said extending his hand... "Marv Silbersher" I replied. So it began, a friendship which was to endure for many years, past the war. Jimmy was in the 708th squadron while I was in the 711th. We would sit together at Briefing before we began to fly combat. When we weren't flying, Jimmy dragged me to the piano in the Aero Club, to perform every tune known to man. Alongside me, at the piano, were two local kids, David and Frederick Lea, whose only tune they wanted to hear was, "Paper Doll." The two became very dear to Jim and me, even though we had to endure twenty repeats of "Paper Doll". At 9pm, Mrs. Lea, the boys' mother, would come in and apologize to me, for the continual presence of the kids. Although, I assured Mrs. Lea that we loved the boys' company, she grabbed each one by the ear and dragged them out of the Club, back home for the next day of school.

Thursday, November 2nd 1944, was the date that was truly unforgettable. Jim sat with me, waiting for the Briefing Officer to arrive, there was a murmur that arose, wondering where the target would be. As the curtain opened, revealing the map

of northern Europe... we saw a pink ribbon running from our base in Rattlesden, east across the Channel, to the Dutch coast, into Germany... arriving at Merseburg! The Briefing Officer described the importance of knocking out the Leuna synthetic oil plant at Merseburg, keeping the German war-machine going... "As you approach the target" he said "you'll



T/Sgt. Marvin Silbersher  
T/Sgt. James Foster  
Cambridge, England, 1945

be facing five hundred flak guns, 155's ect., bombing altitude will be 27,500 feet." When the word "Merseburg" was announced, as gasp arose in the Briefing Hall, the 447th had been there before, with the Eighth Air Force and had suffered severe losses.

Jimmy and I changed into our flying vests, picked up our parachutes and were taken by trucks out to our separate aircrafts. The plane we were flying that day, was called "Round-Trip." I waved to Jimmy in the distance as he boarded his aircraft. This was our second combat mission. The first one had been at Harburg, the suburb of Hamburg. That

mission was fairly uneventful. Much different from November 2nd, 1944. As it happened, Jimmy's crew was flying lead in the high squadron. We were flying deputy-lead, behind them. As we approached Merseburg, the sky turned black with anti-aircraft fire. We were all taking hits from the flak. Suddenly, I saw Jimmy's plane throwing smoke, sliding past my port window, dropping out of formation. (I couldn't catch my breath, seeing him disappear.) At straight up on the hour, the Third Division ground transmitter was calling, and I, like all the other radio operators in the Group, was throwing out chaff, Christmas tinsel, to deflect the enemy radar. As I heard the signal from England, I swung my chair from Chaff-chute, to my radio-receiver, to record the message. At that very instant, a piece of flak, the size of a tennis ball, slammed through the fuselage where I had just been sitting! Our engineer, Rex Shearer was in the top turret, took a piece of flak in his chest-chute, which saved his life. Our co-pilot, Fred Beach, had the goggles knocked off his helmet, grazed by flak. We landed on two engines, counting 110 holes in the aircraft. At Debriefing, on the board, it listed, "five crews lost" - "several missing," including the ship Jimmy was flying on. For over a week, there was no news of the whereabouts of Jimmy's crew. I was in the chow line in the mess hall when

a truck rode up, stopped, the tail-gate went down, and Foster jumped out with his crew, alive! As we saw each other, he got into the chow-line with me. I murmured. "You son-of-a-bitch! You gave me some kind of a scare!" As we reached the door to the mess hall, the corporal, seeing that Foster had no mess-kit, refused to let him inside. "Corporal!" Jimmy thundered, "we were shot down over the Continent. We barely got back alive! Of course I have no mess-kit." "You can't get in here without your mess-kit. I don't care who you are!" As the corporal seemed immovable, Jimmy ran around to fetch his pilot, from the officer's side, brought him back, Captain Tietjen, was telling the corporal to fetch

the mess-officer. When he arrived, (they were both of the same rank). Tietjen invited the mess officer to step outside and discuss the matter. I thought I heard an altercation, at the end of which the mess-officer, shaken, instructed the corporal to allow Jimmy and his crew into the mess hall without their mess-kits. As I sat with Foster, he began to tell me what had happened after they dropped out of formation. "Teitjen did a remarkable job of slipping into one cloud-bank after another, to avoid the Luft-waffe! Now we're on two engines, losing altitude over Holland, our navigator told us that there was an air-strip just below us. We had no choice. The field could have been held by the Krauts....

and we very well could have become prisoners-of-war. We had no choice. Teitjen set her down and as we touched the runway. I saw the RAF marking on a plane that was parked alongside. So we were safe! You would think so, but the Dutch police took us all into custody, into a windowless room, interrogating us as if we were all krauts. Everyone on our crew was blonde and blue-eyed, they growled at us in German, and we all began laughing hysterically. Teitjen, who knew some Dutch words, yelled 'We are all 100% Americans!' ... and so they released us into the broad daylight, parking us in a great hotel with a great restaurant, which we were all grateful for. So by the time a C-47 came to pick us up, we had an intermezzo from the air-war! Jimmy's crew, who were seated beside him, were laughing like crazy, they were reliving the visit to Holland.

On the 48-hour pass to London, we checked into the hotel that Jimmy had visited and stayed at. At the night-club, he seized the microphone and introduced me as a world famous pianist. As the applause subsided, I sat down, and played "Malaguena," a very flashy dramatic piece by Ernesto Lecouena. There was



**Very shortly after our return from our 13th combat mission.  
England: 8th Air Force Station 128 ("Sylvester"), Deenethorpe  
Note our flak jackets piled up in foreground and my navigator's briefcase  
circled near left margin of photo.**

a standing-ovation after I finished. I had not touched the keys in two years, and we were on a roll. Next I played Chopin's Polonaise in A-Flat Major. Again, the standing ovation and stomping their feet. Jimmy reminded me, that once, he had been the stage-manager at an upscale night-club in Chicago, called Chez-Paree, so he was back in his element in London!

We flew four missions, returning safely. Jimmy suggested that we go to Cambridge on our next leave, because he had a girlfriend there. As we walked down the main thoroughfare, Trumpington, we were about to pass a piano store when Jimmy dragged me inside to give a performance. I repeated my triumph with Chopin's Polonaise in A-Flat Major, greeted by applause and two people who became very important in our lives. Dr. Charles Celtman, Nobel Prize Winner in Archaeology and his assistant, Jacquelyn Chittenden. They invited us to dinner and we became frequent guests in their house whenever we were on leave in Cambridge.

Jimmy, (whose full name was James Wilford Sheridan Foster) finished his missions before I did, and flew home to become an instructor at Stewart's Field at Newburgh, New York. We wrote to each other quite frequently and as the war ended, he came to my house in Millburn, New Jersey for a joyful reunion. It happened that a young lady, who had a phenomenal singing voice, had become a friend of mine, and I introduced her to Jimmy, and they became husband and wife. There were many more years of our association. Jim became an outstanding silversmith and had many commissions to make things for a wide clientele.

I am sad to say that we lost him, but Connie, his wife survives, as do all my memories of my comrade, James Wilford Sheridan Foster.

**Marvin Silbersher  
447th Bomb Group  
711th Squadron  
Lake Hopatcong, NJ**

# DEFENDING FREEDOM

## *Patriot Receives Highest Medal of Military Distinction from French Government*



**Jack Hubbard displaying his medal for The French Legion of Honor.**

Drawn to the call of duty at just 18 years of age, Jack Hubbard traded his youth for the chance to fight for freedom. In turn, Jack lives each day knowing that he contributed to the legacy of a free America. In honor of his courage, bravery, and dedicated service, he was inducted as Knight into the French Legion of Honor on May 11, 2012.

Jack was rejected for enlistment into the U.S. Army due to flat feet. So, with an interest in becoming a pilot, he went to Canada to join the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF).

In order to meet the minimum age requirement, Jack told them he was 21. Unfortunately, the RCAF was not taking any more volunteers, so Jack looked for a unit in the Canadian Army that would soon be going overseas. He joined the Three Rivers Regiment, because he believed a tank unit would be the first to see combat action because of the recent success of the German Blitzkrieg using tanks.

### **In the Army**

Jack went to England with the Three Rivers Regiment on June 21, 1941. Accompanied by ten U.S. Land Lease destroyers, Jack boarded his ship in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and finally landed in Scotland.

On December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese and the U.S. went to war. In early 1942, Jack submitted paperwork requesting a transfer to the U.S. Army. That transfer finally came in September, almost two years to the day he first enlisted in the Canadian Army. Unfortunately, the transfer proved to be, as Jack saw it, "being shanghaied into the Military Police" in downtown London. After months of transfer requests to the 8th Air Force, Jack was finally transferred on January 12 to 306th Bomb Group near Bedford, England.

Jack flew 24 combat missions and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross along with four Air Medals, two Presidential Unit citations, two Battle Stars, and two Air Force Commendation medals - just to name a few.

Jack recorded his memoirs of his military career in Patriots

Will: Surviving the Great Depression and World War II Combat. Dedicating his book to those who served the 8th Air Force during World War II, Jack says, "I called my book Patriots Will because patriots will defend our country at all costs so their will and legacy will always be a free America.

### **Meaningful Recognition**

On March 4, 2012, a letter from the Consul General of France, Gael de Maisonneuve, extended congratulations on behalf of the French Republic to Jack for his recent nomination and induction into the French Legion of Honor. Those heart-felt congratulations expressed France's deep appreciation for Jack's service to their country during World War II. The letter further stated, "Your decision to fight for freedom during World War II was an admirable act, demonstrating your courage and selflessness. The solidarity you lent our country and people as a soldier will never be forgotten. Please be assured that we are eternally grateful... Without your bravery, and that of those who fought alongside you, France and Europe might have never been liberated from the barbarity of Nazi occupation. Your efforts are both admirable and an example to follow and it is our pleasure to award you France's highest military distinction.

On May 11, 2012, the medal was conferred by the French Consul General at a ceremony held by the American Legion in the city of Pinellas Park, Florida. Jack said "I am honored and humbled to receive this distinctive award and accept it on behalf of my fallen comrades who are the real heroes."

In addition to other World War II veterans, Jack joins the ranks of well-known honorees who have received this medal, including Charles Lindbergh, Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, Clint Eastwood, and recent Best Film of the Year producer Harvey Weinstein. Jack is quick to encourage other World War II veterans who have served in France to apply for the Legion of Honor award for they may well be eligible, and France is pleased to learn of such veterans.



**Jack Hubbard was designated a Knight in the Order in the Legion Of Honor. He received the medal from French Consul General Gael de Maisonneuve (L) and Rear Admiral Patrick Martin, French Navy (R).**



## Locals receive Legion of Honor Medal for World War II service

*Joe Garber was among a handful of Ormond Beach residents who received The Legion of Honor Medal, France's highest distinction.*

Joe Garber took his seat on the stage, having just received the Legion of Honor Medal. And tears began to fill his eyes.

But he wasn't about to apologize for crying, he told the crowd. He's seen and done a lot in his 90 years, including thirteen B-17 bombing missions during World War II, and so he feels OK showing his emotions from time to time.

Garber and nearly fifteen other veterans were awarded the Legion of Honor Medal May 10, 2013 in a ceremony at the Daytona Beach Museum of Arts and Sciences. The medal, presented by members of the French consulate from Miami, is France's highest distinction and is awarded for exceptional service to the country.

It's been awarded to Americans like Thomas Edison, Gen. Douglas MacArthur and Colin Powell. France awards the medal today to all United States military veterans who fought on French soil during WWII.

But Garber actually fought above, not on, French soil, as a radio operator and a togglier, the soldier who arms and drops bombs. He did his duty in the invasion of Normandy and about six weeks after that mission, his plane was shot down and he spent time in two German prisoner-of-war camps. He was liberated by Russian troops in late May 1945.

"I'll be honest with you," Garber said, "when it first came out, I didn't think I was eligible for the simple reason that they wanted it for the liberation of their cities."

Standing in the reception after the ceremony, with a glass of champagne in his hand, Garber was approached by another veteran, Joseph Reus, who also flew in a bomber during the war.

Reus and Garber, as it turned out, were at the same POW camp, Stalag 1, at the same time, and were even liberated



*8th AFHS Board of Director, Joe Garber during the ceremony for The Legion of Honor Medal (Photo by Matt Mencarini).*

together. They had never met until last this ceremony. Garber received his medal just four days after his 90th birthday.

"When I first found out that I was going to get the medal, I didn't think anything of it," he said. "As it got closer, and I found out what it meant, and how important it was — how big it was — I said, 'Holy hell, what did I do to get that?'"

But there's something Garber treasures even more than his award.

"That I'm alive," he said. "To (have been through) what I went through and still be walking and talking — somebody up there likes you."

### LOCAL HEROES

Names of all of the Ormond Beach residents honored at the May 10 Legion of Honor ceremony are listed as follows.

**Jerome Burnstine**  
**John Harrington**  
**James Miller**  
**Willis Olds**  
**Crawford Shearer**  
**Joe Garber**

# A KNIGHT'S TALE

## Receiving The French Legion of Honor Award



WWII veteran Charles Greenough holds his uniform Thursday, which has been stored away since the end of the war, at home in Delta Township. At top, Greenough's mission log and photo.

Charles Greenough has experienced many wondrous things in his life. The Delta Township man never expected to see a sky filled with thousands of aircraft as he flew a B-17 bomber into combat during the D-Day invasion of France in June 1944.

He never thought he would hurl himself out of a burning plane at 10,000 feet, parachuting slowly to a picturesque French countryside, wondering whether he would land in enemy hands.

And Greenough certainly never expected to become a French "knight." But the former soldier, now 90, recently was notified by letter by the French government that he will receive the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor - one of France's highest honors - for his efforts to liberate the nation as an American Army pilot during World War II.

"Chevalier" is the French word for "knight." Noureddine Tayazime, a communications officer for the Consulate General of France in Chicago, said Greenough is among about 100 Americans in the Mid-west who receive the honor annually.

This knight's honor won't involve a French minister tapping Greenough on his shoulders with a sword, though. Greenough will receive the medal in the mail within the next few weeks.

"It's all new to me," said Greenough, a grandfather and retired Campbell Soup sales representative. "I feel quite honored."

Receiving medals is not entirely new for Greenough. Decades ago, he received the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal from the U.S. government for his military service, which included flying 33 bombing missions over enemy territory in France in the first several weeks of the Allied invasion of Europe.

But the French honor offers a new reminder of the adventures he had in the skies over Europe before he settled down with his wife, June, in south Lansing and raised four children.

On Thursday, Greenough retrieved his neatly folded WWII



Charles Greenough holds his WWII lucky charm, a "short snorter" bearing the signatures of people he flew with, that he credits with keeping him out of harm's way.

Army uniform from a trunk - a keepsake that hadn't seen the light of day in decades. And he unearthed a \$1 bill from the deep folds of his wallet - his WWII "lucky charm" that he credits with keeping him out of harm's way. He's carried it ever since.

"I'm very proud. He's a good man," said Greenough's son, David of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., who applied for the French honor for his father. "To be a young person and do all that, I give him a lot of credit."

## PILOT TRAINING

A Dansville High School graduate, Charles Greenough was a 21-year-old courting the woman he would later marry - June - when he enlisted in the U.S. Army in June 1942. He chose to enter a pilot training program over infantry service because he thought it would be easier.

That's open to debate. Flight training was a very rigorous program lasting several months that washed out many candidates. When he began flying sorties over France, the real hardship began.

Part of a nine-man flight crew aboard a B-17 bomber named "Suffrin," 1st Lt. Charles Greenough flew his first mission on June 5, 1944, facing enemy fire as his crew bombed gun positions along the French coast. Greenough had no idea the next day would be D-Day - a turning point for the Allies in World War II.

That began a series of grueling, almost daily, bombing runs targeting enemy bridges, gun positions, V2 rocket launch pads and factories as the war entered a crucial phase. On every run, Greenough said, the plane faced enemy fire, including shell debris from mortars that exploded mid-air.

Despite a high casualty rate among other B-17 and Allied flight crews, Greenough said he dealt with the anxiety by focusing on the mission and trying to keep a clear head. That focus helped him once pull off a tricky "one-wheel" landing following one mission after his landing gear didn't fully open.

Like many young men, he also had a feeling of invincibility. "When you go into combat," he said, "you figure nothing will happen to you."

## BAILING OUT

His big adventure came on his last scheduled bombing mission roughly two months after D-Day. His plane took heavy enemy fire south of Caen, France, causing his plane's right wing to catch fire.

His training told him the crew had as little as 30 seconds before the plane exploded. Greenough and other crew members quickly bailed out of the plane with parachutes. He recalls hearing the roar of the engine in his ears as he jumped, and then, just as quickly, quiet and calm as he floated down toward an uncertain fate.

He landed alone moments later in "no man's land," a zone between Allied and Axis territory that neither side controlled. That meant he was just as likely to face an enemy bayonet as a fellow soldier.

Thinking quickly, Greenough concealed his parachute and hid in a nearby bush-covered ditch, in case any enemy soldiers came along.

Shortly later, he heard footsteps and English voices speaking about someone they had just seen in the area, wondering if he was German.

## SAFELY HOME

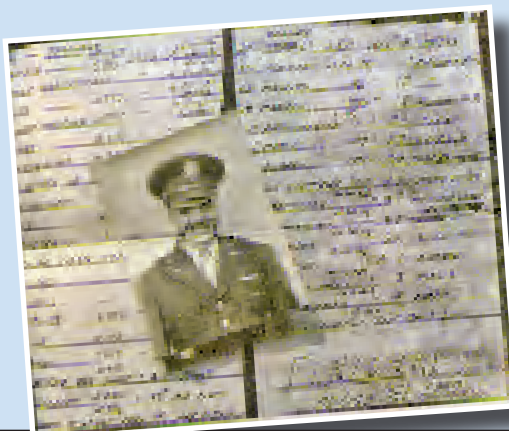
Relieved, Greenough showed himself. The British soldiers helped him as he found his fellow crew members - who also had landed safely - and eventually returned to an Allied base.

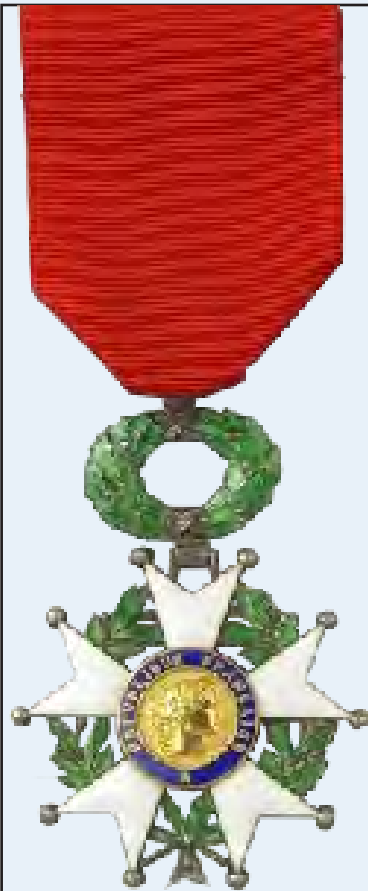
That ended his combat duty during the war, and Greenough still counts himself lucky to have survived. Within a year or so, he was discharged from service, and he began a new life as a family man and salesman in Lansing.

David Greenough said his father never spoke of his military service while he and his siblings were growing up, and he only began prying information out of his father a few years ago after David Greenough's interest was sparked by a tour of a B-17 bomber.



A scrapbook picture shows WWII Army Air Corps B-17 bomber pilot Charles Greenough. Greenough, a veteran of 33 bombing missions, was shot down on his last scheduled run.





## **THE LEGION D'HONNEUR FOR US VETERANS**

Upon presentation of their military file as detailed hereunder, US veterans who risked their life during World War II to fight on French territory, may be awarded this distinction. Those selected are appointed to the rank of Knight of the Legion of Honor. The Legion of Honor medal is not awarded posthumously.

**Created to honor extraordinary contributions to the country,  
the Legion of Honor is France's highest distinction.**

**TO BE ELIGIBLE TO THIS OUTSTANDING AWARD,  
THE VETERAN HAS TO FIT STRICT CRITERIA :**

- Interested veterans of all the different armed forces must have fought in at least one of the 4 main campaigns of the Liberation of France : Normandy, Provence, Ardennes or Northern France. Actions having taken place in Belgium, Germany, Italy or any other neighboring European country are not taken into consideration.
- The file presented must contain the military separation record (honorable discharge), a chronological resume about one typewritten page in length and a copy of a current identity document with a picture. If possible , it must also contain copies of citations for all the decorations already received in France or in the United States indicating meritorious action during wartime operations.

This is particularly important for decorations that were not shown in the discharge document at the time of separation. To be considered, these citations must have been issued during WWII or the close aftermath, and must relate to events (outstanding actions, wounds, having been made prisoner, evasions, having taken action with the resistance, etc.) that took place on the French territory only which includes ground, airspace and coastal waters.

Since only a small number of Legion of Honor medals are awarded each year in the United States, care is taken to nominate only those with the most distinguished records. It is important to have such decorations as the Bronze Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Purple Heart, Silver Star and higher, earned in French territory in order to have a competitive record.

If the veteran lives in Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont he or she must send the file with the request for consideration for the French Legion of Honor to the

**Consulate General of France  
31 Saint James Avenue, Suite 750  
Boston, MA 02116**

If the file meets the criteria, it is sent to The Legion of Honor committee in Paris, through the French Embassy in Washington and the French Foreign Affairs ministry. The Legion of Honor committee approves or rejects the candidate presented after appropriate review of his file. Please note that this program does not involve an application. Other than receiving an acknowledgement of your records submittal, you will not receive further word unless you are ultimately selected for the honor. This process can take several months.

**Espirito Santo Plaza, suite 1050,  
1395 Brickell Avenue, Miami Fl 33131  
Tél : 305 403 4150**

## GOING HOME (AFTER "V-E DAY," 1945)

Twice the same war twice the same songs,  
Twice Europe broken to bits lying in ruin.

(At last) "Germany Surrenders May 7th, 1945!"  
(Who could count the mouthless dead? no one)

"It's a Long Way to Tipperary. It's a Long Way To Go!"

Like a steam-engine in the heart 15,000 of us  
Marched abroad the troop-ship Queen Elizabeth,  
Singing "GOOD-BYE TO PICCADILLY!"  
"FAREWELL LEICESTER SQUARE!"

(We were as men whose skin had been removed.

Were we still alive?) Whistles blowing band playing,  
RAF planes streaking overhead in an "adieu" salute.

The sky, crystal blue we departed Southampton  
At the Atlantic, the sky grew dark the waves rose  
And twisted us like a roller-coaster Noah's Flood  
Met us head-on Oh, it rained, it poured non-stop.

(On the fan-tail lay the infantry in the raging storm,  
They didn't say a mumbling word didn't budge).

At dawn, one morning, a voice called out: "NEWYORK!!"  
In the distance shrouded in the mist like a diadem,  
Was the magic city 15,000 of us jammed on deck,  
The shining gossamer ahead... past Ambrose Light,  
"The Lady With The Torch" (invisible in the fog).  
We glided to our berth up the Hudson

(can you go Home with no skin?)

Suddenly as the sun rose  
And burned off the mist Manhattan appeared like a  
Fairy-Tale! There went up a shout from 15,000 voices  
... that shook the heaven and the earth!

(Men whose skin had been removed wept and  
Thundered  
"WE ARE HOME!")

**Marvin Silbersher**  
**447th Bomb Group**  
**711th Squadron**  
**Lake Hopatcong, NJ**

## B-17 Bomber



It's claim to fame: One of the most heavily used bombers during the World War II. It dropped 640,036 tons of bombs on European targets during the war, second only to the Liberator bomber plane. The B-17 was introduced in 1935.

- Length of plane: 74 feet
- Typical crew: 10 members, including a pilot, co-pilot, waist gunners, tail gunner and navigator. Immediately after the D-Day invasion, many B-17s flew with nine-man crews because of the high casualty rate among crew members.
- Wingspan: 103 feet
- Weight (without crew or bombs): 36,135 pounds
- Maximum speed: 287 mph
- Bomb payload for short-range missions: 8,000 pounds

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## START ENGINES - 50 YEARS LATER

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

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

This film narrative is packed with remarkable interviews of more than three dozen 8th AF Veterans. Some of these airmen are legendary leaders and icons of the Mighty Eighth. They share their insight and recollections of the most significant experi-

ences of their lives. The accounts are interspersed with vintage photographs and sometimes frightening

film footage that graphically illustrates the savagery of aerial combat.

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



**\$20 donation for Start Engines 50 Years Later DVD**  
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**Pooler, GA 31322**  
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 A historical analysis of the air raids over Berlin in early 1944.

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

**2008 – SYMPOSIUM:**  
 “Keep them flying”  
 The story of the 8th Air Force ground operations during WWII.  
 Keynote Speaker: Maj. Gen. F Dexter Tutor, Assistant to the Commander Air

Mobility Command Air National Guard.

**2009 – SYMPOSIUM: POW’s**  
 A discussion of treatment of airmen interned in Germany.  
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**2010 – THUNDER OVER MICHIGAN AIR SHOW**  
 Seminar: “Target Berlin” with Mark Copeland.

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**Lawrence, KS 66049**

## BE A MIRACLE MAN

I know that you have seen the war-time picture of a sailor getting off a boat and the first thing he did was find an unsuspecting female standing in the crowd (this one is a nurse in her white uniform,) and gives her a rather passionate kiss. Both are surrounded by countless other sailors who are being greeted by cheering and grateful Americans standing on the shore welcoming them home. Their ship had docked after months at sea in perilous situations. This sailor was venting his pent-up emotions upon this unsuspecting young lady, the moment he had perhaps visualized time and time again during his lonely hours aboard a pitching ship at sea. Is this unusual?

This was not solely a Navy situation at all. It happened in the air-war over Germany as well but in a different setting. In the thick of the battle, enemy fighter aircraft zooming in for a kill on an American bomber formation, something happened in the heart of the flier who was on the receiving end of this German air attack. He prayed, probably out of desperation but with intense hope. He was not alone, really a lot of other flyers were praying through such a traumatic event. The Chaplain was heard to say, "I just imagine that God heard a lot of strange voices today!" Some of those who prayed did something else....once out of the aircraft, they got down on their hands and knees and kissed Mother Earth! Why did they do this?

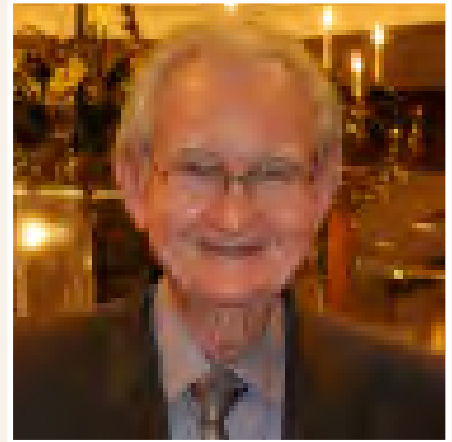
One answer might be, they were thanking God for surviving the events of the day ...acknowledging and recognizing the miracle of being delivered! The skeptic will say, "I don't believe in miracles!" I will respond to that frivolous statement by saying, "You will when you need one!" What is a miracle? A miracle

is a mind thing, the result of a strong belief of some power beyond our self. David, the great king and warrior declared in

**Psalms 62:5 "Wait thou only, for my expectation is from Him"**

If we expect great things from God, we will receive great things from God. This expectation could be called a miracle principal. And people who live by this principle will experience miracles popping up in their lives all of the time. Can we go around expecting miracles to happen all of the time? Certainly! To do so, one must have a tremendous and deep faith that is so positively strong that it will rise above doubt. Doubt is a miracle killer. Doubt will get in the way of faith. If you train and allow yourself to have faith, it will release an astonishing power in your life enabling you to enjoy and produce miracles. This action transforms an individual into what we call a believer. A believer has the power of God within himself that allows it to sweep away everything negative in real life experiences with confidence and authority.

In dealing with a difficult situation, just remember, miracles take just a little longer and they are solely led by the deep faith we have in God. Are you having trouble with this idea of miracles? You may ask, "is there really substance in this idea of miracles?" Strengthen up your faith and you will start seeing miracles begin to happen. Remember, God never makes a mistake but He has eyes that reach beyond us into an eternity that we see only through faith. Seek a right relationship with God. Trust Him in his omnipotence and the miracle you receive may be a personal transformation. One thing is sure, wrongness can never produce rightness. When you become right within yourself, you will find yourself turning on miracles. They will begin to happen one after the other.



**Earl Wassom**

You don't have to get down on your knees and kiss the soil (it is alright if you want to) to acknowledge them. Just look around, for miracles are happening all the time.

Some of the miracles I have experienced are: (1) Friendship...they come through for us when least expected, (2) Laughter..what a healing experience, (3) Physical healing..the strength for another day, (4) Loved ones..as I have invested love in others, it has been returned to me multiple times, (5) Communion with God..what a powerful blessing that God should care to have a conversation with me, a mere man.

Homework assignment. Count your many miracles, name them one by one. You will be surprised at how many there are and they will keep multiplying. Vow to become A MIRACLE MAN.

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





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**AT THE PEAK OF B-17 PRODUCTION  
DURING WORLD WAR II, 34,000 BOEING WORKERS  
PRODUCE A FLYING FORTRESS EVERY 1.3 HOURS.  
BOEING EMPLOYEES CELEBRATE THE COMPLETION  
OF THE 5,000TH B-17 - 1944.**