

June 2014

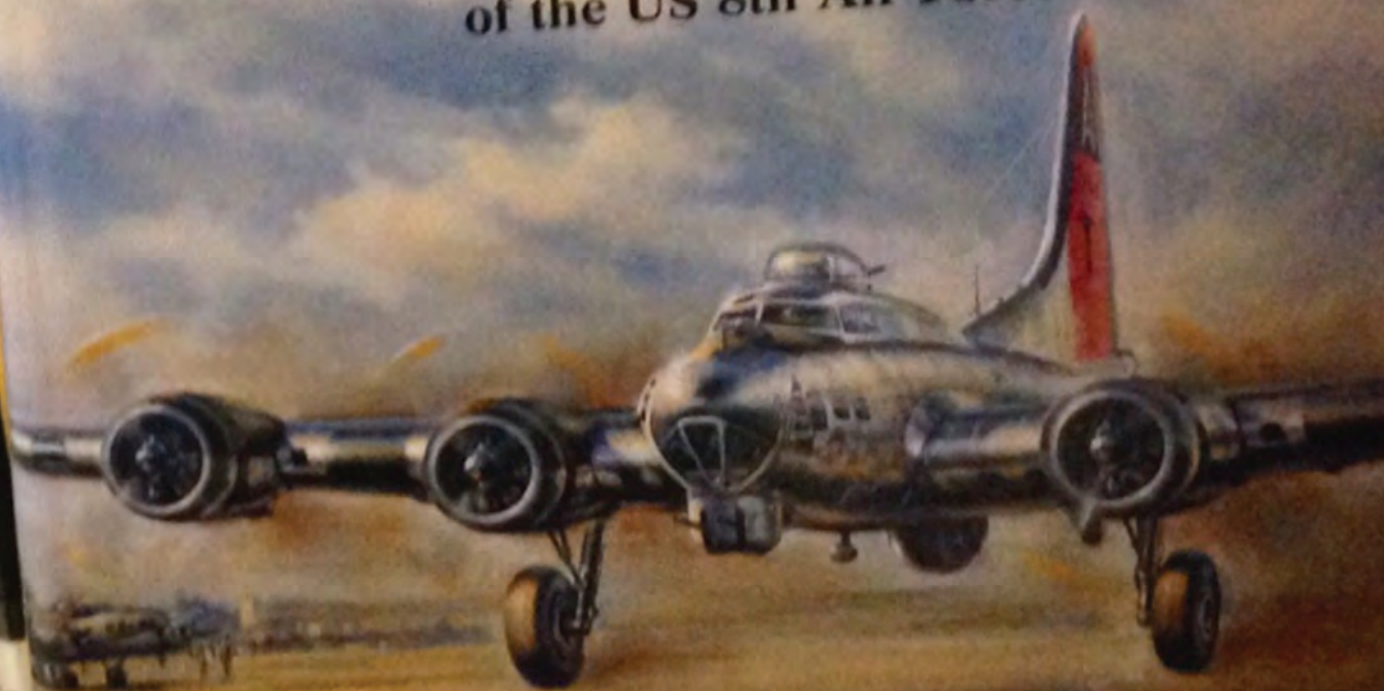


# 8TH AF NEWS

Volume 14 Number 2 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

## THE MIGHTY EIGHTH

A History of the Units, Men and Machines  
of the US 8th Air Force



ROGER A. FREEMAN

Piecing the Past Together

BATTLE COLORS: Insignia and Aircraft Markings of the US 8th Air Force



June 2014

# TH AF NEWS

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

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## Notes From the President's Pen



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

try then those trying to enter—either illegally or otherwise. Hopefully, as summer approaches it won't be as harsh as this past winter.

Society business since my last report has been normal. We continue efforts to try and develop new methods of expanding our membership which seems to have stabilized at the moment. Remember, you can really help in this effort by inviting a friend or family member to join our illustrious organization!

Our program of developing a closer relationship with the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force [Pooler, GA] continues. In this regard, we have recently relocated our offices back into the Museum complex. The facility—while cramped for space—is in the process of making adequate space available to meet our needs and we fully expect to be settled during early June. Our office is located on the second floor of the Museum inside the John H Woolnough Library and we encourage our Members to stop by and visit with Debra on your next visit to the Museum.

The Board held our normal midyear meeting in Nashville in February. During this meeting we reviewed and finalized

**A**ir Force guys by training seem to have a thing about weather. While I don't want this message to turn into a weather column, I think we would all agree this has been a fascinating year as far as weather is concerned. Large snow storms across our country in May appeared to validate Punxsutawney Phil's prediction of a long winter! If this trend continues, we may have more people leaving this country

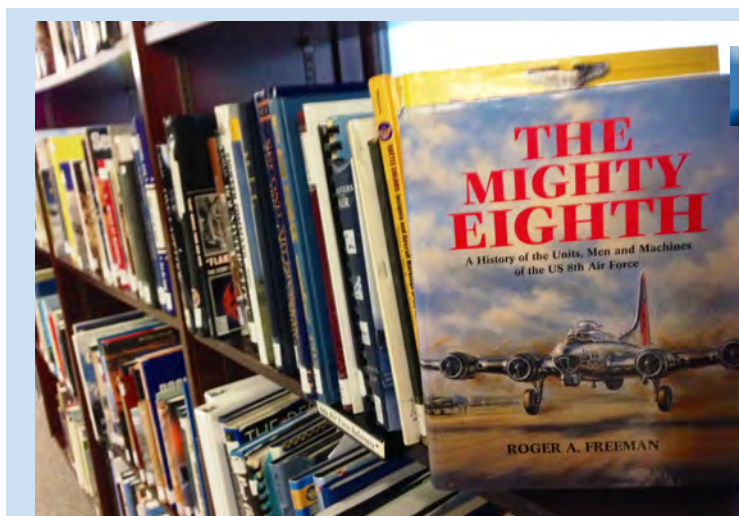
details relating to the 40th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion to be held in Nashville, October 9-13, 2014. Our theme for this reunion will be a tribute to WWII POWs and ESCAPE & EVASION. Several renowned experts and researchers will be participating and will present fascinating programs during the "Behind the Wire and Mask" symposium. Reunion registration forms, a schedule of events and hotel registration information may be found in this issue as well as on our website: [www.8thAFHS.org](http://www.8thAFHS.org) We urge all of you who plan to join us to register as soon as possible.

After considering several sites for our 2015 reunion I am pleased to share with you the Board decided the 2015 reunion will be held in Omaha, NE. This venue will allow us to highlight the role the Air Force and particularly the Strategic Air Command played in winning the Cold War. We plan to visit many SAC sites that coordinated this massive effort to protect our country during this critical and dangerous time in our history.

Finally, we would like to encourage you to take advantage of the 8th Air Force Historical Society website: [www.8thAFHS.org](http://www.8thAFHS.org) Bob Books and his team have dedicated many years in collecting and entering a massive amount of data on the site making it an invaluable tool for those interested in 8th Air Force history and research. Bob has put together some helpful hints in this issue of the AF News in how to effectively use our website whether you are just exploring or doing research. We encourage everyone to take full advantage of this tool. In closing, please make plans to join us in Nashville this October. We have jam-packed programs with something for everyone. We hope to see you there!

Cheers,

Darrel D. Lowell  
President 8th AFHS



### Our Cover

Cover photo by  
Debra Kujawa

Inside the National Museum  
of the Mighty Eighth Air  
Force, Roger A Freeman  
Eighth Air Force Research  
Center.

# Editor's Message

**M**ost of us know who we are. We know our mothers and fathers, grandparents, etc. We know who they were—or ARE if still living—and how they lived their lives. But, as I have quickly discovered from the daily barrage of requests I receive, there are a LOT of people who know little—if anything—of a relative who served in WWII, and they are desperate for answers.

We live in an age of instant answers. Have a question? Google it. The problem though: the answers have to be accessible. They have to exist somewhere in the digital universe in order for us to find them. When it comes to locating information about a loved one who served during WWII, and possibly the Mighty 8th, there isn't a comprehensive list, or website, or database you can access to get it. In fact, finding information can be a complicated maze of websites and bits and pieces of clues leading to real, verifiable facts. The process can be tedious, time consuming, and not always successful, but when you DO find answers...it is phenomenally rewarding!

This issue of the 8th AF News is full of information to help those of you who are searching for answers about the past and stories of others who have found those answers. Our own website: [www.8thAFHS.org](http://www.8thAFHS.org) has an enormous amount of information and links to additional information. Be sure and read the article by Bob Books on getting started. Jenny Cousins shares exciting news on a new website from the American Air Museum in Britain [Duxford]. Incorporating the years of research done by Roger Freeman, this website, too, will hold answers for thousands of families.

We've included a list of various sources for military records where you may want to begin your search. Once again, remember that information can be scattered. Assemble any

documents, records, obituary notices, physical items (photos, uniforms, logs, notes, etc.) because medals, patches, letters, can ALL be possible leads to more information. The fire in St. Louis in the 70s destroyed a lot of military records from WWII. You'll definitely want to read this interesting and informative article to see how it may impact your search.

Again, it is unbelievably frustrating NOT being able to answer the hundreds and hundreds of people who send inquiries looking for information on a loved one's service. We are

hoping that the information in this issue may help someone, somewhere to find that closure—that tiny piece of the puzzle that answers all of those unanswered questions. If you are able to attend the upcoming reunion this October in Nashville, you will have yet another opportunity to speak with veterans and their families—another possible clue to help you find answers. I hope you can make plans to be there!

Finally...

*"Never give up on someone. Sometimes the answers you are looking for are the same answers another person is looking for. Two people searching together are always better than one person alone." ~ Shannon L. Alder*

Debra Kujawa



Debra Kujawa



## 8TH AF NEWS

The Eighth Air Force News is dedicated to the memory of Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough, Founder of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and Editor for sixteen years. It is published quarterly and is the official news magazine of the Society, a 501(c)3. The 8th AF NEWS is distributed to members of the Society and is not for public sale.

The home office is located at:

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# Membership Minute

In most organizations—especially non-profits—working with the membership usually means dealing with names and numbers in a spread sheet. But the Historical Society isn't like that at all. It's hearing familiar voices on the phone, receiving cute emails and hand-written notes. It's hearing those same, aging voices recounting harrowing stories in vivid detail—stories of life and death, victory and disaster, day after day. It's also getting the dreaded phone call from a spouse, son, daughter, or close friend, that the familiar voice is now silenced...forever.

These past few months have been very difficult in that last regard. In fact, our membership roles have decreased by over 300 names since our last mailing. That's why it is so important to continue your support of the 8th Air Force Historical Society with your annual membership dues. If

you received a reminder card or you want to check on the status of your membership, simply look at your address label on the back cover of this issue of the 8th AF News. You should see a date above your name to the right. If you see 2014 or above, thank you! You are current in your dues. If there is NO date above your name to the right, then you are a Life Member who has not yet begun paying dues. We truly need your support now, more than ever. If you are financially able, please help us continue our mission to preserve the history and legacy—the priceless memories of the 8th Air Force. We need you...AGAIN!



**Debra Kujawa**

See you in Nashville!  
Deb

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## Behind the Scenes



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

Our 40th 8th Air Force Historical Society Annual Reunion details, hotel information and the activity registration forms are included in this issue to help prepare you for your 2014 October 9-13, Nashville Tennessee trip.

Donna Lee with Armed Forces Reunions,

Inc. states, *"The room block at the Sheraton Music City is starting to show activity. If you haven't confirmed your plans to attend the Nashville Reunion, please do so very soon. It's shaping up to be a great reunion with fun trips (Don't miss the Opry!)"*.

Please don't get discouraged if your article does not appear in this June issue. We have received some excellent material to print in upcoming 8th AF issues.

**REMEMBER TO ALWAYS** include **PHOTOS** with your articles or anything that you choose to submit for this 8th AF News magazine!!!

Telisha and I truly enjoy our journey with all of "you". We are so proud to be a part of "The Greatest Generation!! Thank you for this rewarding opportunity. We are looking forward to seeing each of you in Nashville!!

Have a safe & relaxing Summer!!

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

### PLEASE NOTE:

We welcome all of your stories!!!  
Please include photos  
& more photos!!!

ALL file formats are excepted

We encourage you to send  
digital images WHEN possible.

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**MATERIAL DEADLINE**

**August 15th, 2014**  
**for the upcoming Sept. 2014**  
**8th AF News magazine**

# INTO THE WILD BLUE YONDER

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



*Front Row L-R: Marvin Silbersher - Radio - Operator/Gunner, Ivan Holland - Tail Gunner, Vernon Burtner - Ball Turret Gunner, Byrl Wilson - Armorer/Gunner.  
Back row L-R: Fred Beach - Co Pilot, Leroy Seeds - Navigator, Earl Lumpkin - Bombardier, Gus Neal - Pilot, Rex Shearer - Engineer/Gunner.*

**W**e'd been practicing take offs and landings: "Touch-and-goes" on this beautiful September day. We took off from Hunter Army Air Field in Savannah, GA, not to return. Over the Atlantic, our crew held its breath while our pilot, Gus Neal, opened the sealed orders. After a long moment of suspense he exclaimed, "Hallelujah, boys! It's not Italy or Africa, but England and the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force!" We let out a

shout that I think rings over the water to this day.

The next stop was Manchester, NH. I asked Gus if he we could fly over my hometown in New Jersey since it was on the way up to Manchester. He instructed the navigator to follow that course and lying down in the nose over Millburn I suddenly saw the high school, Taylor Park, and even my house that was nearby. On the ground people were waving wildly towards us—it

could have been my family—I had no way of knowing. We did a 360 over Millburn and then proceeded north. At Manchester, the air was bright with stands of maple trees covered in scarlet and gold leaves.

The following morning we took off for Goose Bay, Labrador. Nothing had prepared us for the shock of seeing snow 12 feet high. We went to the mess hall, making our way through corridors cut deep in the snow. At the meal we



were served by KPs whose complexions were so pale and sallow, we thought they were POWs...God help us! Most of them had been there 2 years and they kept asking us about things back home—the World Series, etc. We were stuck there for another day, the weather was not cooperating. I could barely restrain my tears looking at the fellows in the mess hall.

Next day we took off in a bright blue sky for Iceland. The trick was, we had to cross over the endless country of Greenland—I think the longest island in the world. As it grew dark, the moon shone down on the ice cap that covered it. Only the pilot and I were awake. As I gazed down at the ice, I couldn't help reflecting that during some crew crossings, their engines had suffered malfunctions and they had gone down under the ice. There was no way back for them. I wondered if there were statistics on the number of crews that were lost...

As the sun rose at last and we approached Iceland, I called the tower at Meeks Field and we received landing instructions. There was almost the same amount of snow here as in Goose Bay. The weather had again turned foul and on the following morning, unable to fly, we were all in the day room—me at the piano singing every song known to man and other songs that we just made up.

At one point, a young woman in a Red Cross uniform, who had been serving coffee and donuts, came over and sat down next to me at the piano. She asked if I could play "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes." She was quite possibly the most beautiful girl I had ever seen. A strawberry blonde with huge blue eyes and freckles; her name was Beth Ann Lundquist.

After a moment, her left thigh was touching my right thigh and my lower region seemed to be doing something I could not control. My crew sensing that something was going on walked to the other side of the day room. And so went our first day at Meeks Field!

I could barely sleep thinking about Beth Ann. As the wind outside howled and the temp was 10 below zero the following day, again we could not fly—we were back in the day room. Once again I was at the piano and when Beth



*Marvin Silbersher - Crew #80 ("Blithe Spirit")  
Radio-Operator-Gunner*

Ann appeared, the crew drifted to the other side of the room. I must have played every Broadway melody that Beth Ann asked for when she whispered for me to follow her. We crossed the room and went into an alcove I hadn't noticed before. Outside, the storm howled and inside, Beth Ann and I began kissing as if we would never stop. I began to have all kinds of wild thoughts...I had no girlfriend back home and here was someone who seemed to really care about me. We had no idea what awaited us in combat, and I thought how nice it would be to have a girlfriend, someone who was waiting for ME—especially this gorgeous creature!

I was trying to pull my thoughts together to tell her how I felt and I began, "Beth Ann...Beth Ann, will you..." but before I could say another word, she stopped me and said, "Marvin, if we are to go any further...that will be \$50!"

WHAT! That will be \$50?! I was about to ask her to be my fiancé and she was asking for money??? This "All American Girl" who should have been on the cover of Vogue magazine; one of the most beautiful girls I'd ever seen ANYWHERE, had an alternative motive? Dressed so sharply in a Red

Cross uniform, she was obviously doing something more than serving coffee and donuts. After the war she must have gone home with a stash—guaranteeing her purchasing stock in General Motors. That night I hardly slept weeping over Beth Ann. Thankfully, we were summoned very early the next morning to fly and complete our journey.

In our haste, I realized as we took off that I had left my wallet behind on the army cot. We crossed the Irish Sea over Holy Island and soon landed in Wales.

It was a lovely day and I was struck by the odor of bread being baked by a long chain of women all smiling at us and greeting us as old friends. At the mess hall, the bread was as marvelous as the aroma. We had delivered our brand new B-17G and now were taking the train to our destination in East Suffolk. On the way, we stopped at the city of Crewe—where they made the Rolls Royce—and bumped into a wedding party on the station platform and were pelted with rice. As the train continued, for a moment in the distance, we saw a young man and woman in RAF uniforms. They were walking hand in hand on a bridge over a nearby stream. They looked like they were madly in



love, the war over, and here they were going to the Garden of Eden.

We arrived in Stowmarket and from there loaded onto trucks to take us to our base at Rattlesden: the **447<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group**. I thought to myself how narrow the English roads were wondering how in Heaven's name our trucks could even pass each other...the answer was obvious: one-at-a-time.

When we came to the field, the enlisted members of our crew were assigned to hut #10 and the officers were just across the road in permanent barracks that were built by the RAF. We were assigned to the 711<sup>th</sup> Squadron. When we returned from the mess hall that evening sometime later, the crew that had been on a mission earlier that day had landed and walked in the door. They were chalk white. We knew something terrible had happened. They almost didn't make it back, landing on only two engines. We had never been in combat. We had a stew cooking on our one cold stove in the middle of our hut. We tried serving it to the shaken crew, but they were too upset to sit down, much less eat.

We began asking them all kinds of questions about combat, about the MEs and FWs...Anything that they could tell us about combat. They answered every single question. Soon, they sat down and began playing cards without talking. At 11 o'clock that night, I looked at my watch and saw they were still playing. I fell asleep. At 4 a.m. the CQ came in and turned the lights on and called the crew to go fly again. It was three in a row for them. They rose, dressed, and I remember the last one to go out the door turned out the lights, so we could sleep.

And we never saw them again.

## HAROLD

Across a neighbor's yard  
on the far side of the stream,  
between Bury St. Edmunds and  
Rattlesden in East Anglia.

Not knowing we would meet one day back home  
behold now,  
everything on earth,  
Oh brother, comrade-in-arms

One day in the Cathedral Of St. Edmundsbury  
I saw rows of kneeling cushions,  
in honor of the 8th Air Force,  
embroidered by the women of Suffolk.

One cushion read: "447th Bombardment Group"  
(Which was my group;) next to it, was a cushion  
That said: "In honor of the 94th  
Bombardment Group"  
(Which was Harold's group)

I thought of you, Harold, how we were both so  
near to each other in England in 1944,  
and we would only meet years later  
because Shirley, my sister and Wally, my  
brother in-law were best friends  
with you and Ruthie.

How we went on the same missions over Germany  
in the 3rd Division of the 4th Combat Wing.

One day we were over the same target:

MERSEBURG

The Leuna Synthetic Oil Plant, Field Order #467

Thursday, November 2nd, 1944,  
eleven in the morning,  
deep into enemy territory, the demonic circus of the  
Messerschmidts diving at us, the flak roaring at our  
flight path, 500 - 155mm, 128 and 88mm shells

Aiming at us;  
the 8th Air Force lost 40 bombers that day,  
four hundred fliers,  
both of us came back to our quarters.

With empty bunks everywhere;  
both of us had come close  
to not returning to England  
And never meeting...

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



## HISTORY:

The vision for 8thafhs.org website that would not only showcase the Society, but also be a resource of information of the Eighth Army Air Force of WWII was that of then 2001 8thAFHS President, Craig Harris and board member Richard Baynes. Through their vision and finances, 392nd BG Gold Star Son, Bob Books, accepted the volunteer position to build and maintain the site. The site was put online in July of 2001.

The site is mammoth. We have over 13 years of data entry that has consumed over 3,000 hours of data collection and programming representing the contributions of many historians, veterans, researchers, authors and webmasters.

## FINDING INFORMATION OF LOVED ONES WHO SERVED:

Go to the blue tab across the top labeled

### Research Links

Research Help will guide you through a maze of websites which may prove invaluable in your search for information. This page also lists various agencies where records may be requested.

Under this same heading, click on tab for

### Fighter/Bomber Groups

resources on 8th Air Force Bomb Groups, Fighter Groups, and Associations on-line. On the LEFT side you will see a comprehensive listing of 8th AFHS Resource Sites.

Click on the blue Forum tab and you will

### Forums

see Bomb/Fighter group forums that contain over twenty-one thousand members, many of whom are historian/researchers

willing to help find the information you are requesting.

## OTHER CURRENT CONTENT:

- ☐ History and purpose of the Society.
- ☐ General outline of the history of the 8th AF.
- ☐ Day-by-day chronological accounts of the 8th AF from 1943 to 1945.
- ☐ Every Fighter and Bomber group has its own page of history with the image of each group's planes with its unique markings.
- ☐ Firsthand accounts of combat missions and other stories.
- ☐ Every Fighter and Bomber group has a forum where an individual can make a request to their respective group and to ask question about a mission or a person in that group. These are monitored by researchers around the world who can provide answers to the questions posted.
- ☐ Listing of all current events, contacts and leadership.
- ☐ Missions for a Specific Date by entering the date selector to research missions.
- ☐ Missions, maps, dates, planes and photographs of targets of the Eighth

Air Force WWII.

- ☐ Airfields and Bases in the US and UK
- ☐ Airfields used for training and operations in the US and UK.
- ☐ Aircraft Groups and Squadrons
- ☐ Training and Operational histories of the Bomber, Fighter, Recon and Transport groups and squadrons.
- ☐ Photographs of targets, aircraft, bases and more.
- ☐ Links Websites around the internet with related content.
- ☐ Aircraft stats and links to more information on the aircraft used by the 8th.
- ☐ Org Charts Organization of the 8th Air Force.
- ☐ Sign Guestbook / Comments or leave comments and questions.
- ☐ 8th AFHS activities/meetings/reunions both at the state and national level.
- ☐ Renew or Join the 8thAFHS online either as a vet or Second Gen member on a secured page.

At this time there is NO comprehensive, complete listing of all who served in the 8th Air Force, however, the information provided within this website may help you find out about a relative, loved one, or another hero of the Mighty 8th.

# The “Tail” of As-Cend Charlie

The desperate last mission of the Turner Crew of the 390th Bomb Group  
Bill Beigel

Hikers in the Black Mountains of Southeast Wales might come across a small monument near coordinates N51 53.955, W003 06.829, about 8 north-northwest of Abergavenny and three miles from the village of Crickhollow. It honors the crew of “Ascend Charlie,” B-17 Flying Fortress tail # 42-5903, of the 390th Bomb Group. “Ascend Charlie” is a play on “Ass-End Charlie,” the nickname for the plane at the end of the bomber stream and one likely to be attacked due to its vulnerable position.

In September of 1943, the outcome of World War 2 was still very much in doubt. The Western Allies had not yet

landed in France and were making slow progress up the Italian peninsula. On the Eastern Front, the German Wehrmacht and the Red Army were locked in a deadly stalemate. Likewise, the Battle of the Atlantic, the struggle between the German navy and Allied shipping continued unabated. The Eighth Air Force was under pressure to help in this battle against the threat of German U-Boats, and so the target for September 16, 1943, was chosen.

The objective was hundreds of miles away from Wales. It was the massive concrete submarine pen at La Pallice France. At this base, up to thirteen boats could be berthed for re-stocking,

re-fueling, and maintenance. These harbor structures were built to the strongest construction specifications of the day, with the roof alone 21 feet thick. Impervious to any other form of attack, the pens of La Rochelle/La Pallice became the target of the 390th Bomb Group. It was to be the group’s fourteenth mission.

The Third Bombardment Division, comprised of eight Bomb Groups (including the 390th), flew the B-17 “Flying Fortress.” It sent 148 heavy bombers against the submarine pens, 93 of which were able to attack the target. Their losses this day were considerable. Four B-17s from the 95th Bomb

390th BG Briefing





Group crashed in England – one due to a mid-air collision – after returning from the mission, with another downed over France. The 100th Bomb Group lost a bomber over Surgeres, France. The 385th Bomb Group lost one bomber, possibly in the mid-air collision which cost the 95th one of theirs. The 388th Bomb Group suffered the most this day, with at least three crashing in England after the mission; another was lost when it ran out of fuel over the North Sea. The 390th Bomb Group lost one B-17 on the raid.

“Ascend Charlie” of the 390th’s 571st Bomb Squadron was low on fuel and flying in near-darkness. It had left its base at Framlingham in East Anglia with the rest of the Group, but had suffered battle damage over France with two injured crewmembers on board. Captain L. W. Doland, the Squadron Operations officer, was flying alongside “Ascend Charlie” for part of the flight home. Seeing the B-17 was damaged, he ordered the whole flight of planes

to slow down and keep Ascend Charlie with them, so that it could be protected against German fighter attack. Doland, flying almost on “Ascend Charlie’s” right wingtip, saw the copilot, Lieutenant Frederick Broers, leave his seat to administer first aid to the two wounded crew members, who were Lieutenant Robert Schanen and Staff Sergeant Zetterberg. While approaching the coast of England, the pilot, Lieutenant Herbert Turner, gave Captain Doland the “thumbs-up” sign.

But over England, the weather worsened, and darkness was approaching. Lieutenant Turner sent Captain Doland a message using a small blinker lamp, but Doland was unable to decipher it. Then, Doland noticed that “Ascend Charlie” was having a difficult time staying up with the other bombers, and that two of



its engines were on fire. Finally, he saw “Ascend Charlie” enter a fog bank, and never saw the Flying Fortress again. “Ascend Charlie” was alone when it crashed into a two thousand-foot peak in the Black Hills of Wales. All ten men aboard were killed.

Most of the crew had been in the military less than 2 years. The copilot had enlisted on June 14, 1942; the navigator on January 13, 1942, and the top turret gunner on August 14, 1942. Yet considering the times, they were a veteran crew, with most of the men nearing their



### Turner Crew of Ascend Charlie

**Back row S/Sgts. (L-R)** Philip Catania, radio operator, Stanley Mason, left waist gunner, William Hoffman\*, ball turret gunner, Sherman Rambo, top turret gunner, John Peterson, right waist gunner, Alfred Monson, tail gunner

**Front row officers (L-R)** Robert Schanen, navigator, Herbert Turner, pilot, Frederick (Ted) Broers, copilot, Orval Tofte, bombardier

\*Sven Zetterberg had replaced Hoffman during the final flight of Ascend Charlie, when it crashed in the Black Hills of Wales.

tenth combat mission. They were:

1st Lieutenant Herbert I. Turner  
(Ocala, FL), Pilot  
2nd Lieutenant Frederick M. Broers  
(Gillsepie, IL), Copilot (age 22)  
2nd Lieutenant Robert L. Schanen,  
(Port Washington, WI) Navigator  
2nd Lieutenant Orval Tofte,  
(Brookings, SD) Bombardier (age 23)  
Staff Sergeant Philip Catania,  
(Hartford, CT) Radio Operator  
Staff Sergeant Stanley B. Mason  
(Renovo, PA), Left Waist Gunner (23)  
Staff Sergeant Alfred C. Monson  
(San Diego, CA), Tail Gunner  
Staff Sergeant John J. Peterson  
(Perth Amboy, NJ),  
Right Waist Gunner (26)  
Staff Sergeant Sherman E. Rambo  
(Philadelphia, PA),  
Top Turret Gunner (28)  
Staff Sergeant Swen A. Zetterberg  
(Rockford, IL),  
Ball Turret Gunner (19)

Nine days after the crash, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Tofte received the telegram that all next of kin were to receive:

***“The Secretary of War desires that I tender his deep sympathy to you in the loss of your son, Second Lieutenant Orval Tofte. Report received states that he was killed in action on September sixteenth in European theatre. Letter follows.”***

The same message was soon received by the emergency contacts of the other nine men on board.

Due to the remote location of the crash, local authorities did not arrive on the scene until the next day. They sent the following message to American military authorities:

***“Fortress crashed at a place three miles from the village of Crickhowell which is midway between Brecon and Abergavenny. Occurred on a slope at 2000 ft. above sea level. 10 men known to have been in plane; four bodies have been recovered and the remains of the six will be recovered by noon tomorrow.....inasmuch as there is no American unit near the***

***scene of the crash, and the Unit of the men is so far unknown....report called in by Flight Lt. Rollinson, phone Madley 261 Ext. 19 or 140.”***

After the remains were identified, they were sent, along with the personal belongings of the flyers not destroyed in the crash, to Tovey Brothers, an embalmer in Newport.

On September 21st, the men were buried at the Brookwood American Cemetery, 28 miles southwest of London. They were interred in Plot K, Row No. 1, and their graves were marked with temporary wooden crosses.

At the air base at Station 153, Parham Airfield, Framlingham, England, the process of collecting the personal effects and possessions of the crew for shipment home began. The personal effects of SSGT Stanley B. Mason were typical. They were listed as:

1 Knife  
1 Bath Towel  
1 Pr. Cotton drawers  
1 Photograph in Frame, Glass Broken  
1 Pr. Athletic Trunks  
1 Clothes Brush  
1 Belt  
1 Automatic Pencil  
1 Roll Film Unexposed  
1 New Testament  
1 Ditty Bag  
1 Fountain Pen  
1 Writing Portfolio w/letter, snapshot  
1 Wallet w/cards, papers, M.O.  
Receipts, snapshots  
Papers, dictionary  
1 Address Book  
1 Pipe  
1 Ring  
24 6-cent Air Mail Stamps  
1 Religious Medal and Key  
1 Short Snorter  
1 Wrist Watch  
1 Pr. Swim Trunks  
1 Pr. Shoe Laces  
1 Address Book  
1 Writing Folio w/pictures, letters and Misc. Papers

Once the items were catalogued, they were sent to the Army's Quartermaster Depot in Kansas City, for shipment to the next of kin. From there, the emergency contacts were queried to be cer-

tain that they were the right individuals to receive the airmen's personal effects. The father of Lieutenant Schanen, an attorney, responded simply to the inquiry:

“I was the father of Second Lieutenant Robert L. Schanen. He was single and left no will, and if you will kindly send the personal effects to me. Very truly yours....”

A year after the crash, in October of 1944, the family of SSGT Zetterberg (he was known as “Arnold” around his hometown of Rockford, IL) received a letter from a former POW. The POW was Technical Sergeant David G. Harrington, of St. Paul, MN. Harrington had been shot down on July 17, 1943. He was wounded in the loss of his aircraft, so was being repatriated back to the United States from his POW camp. While leaving the camp, a number of his fellow “Kriegies” (the nickname the POW's used for themselves) gave him slips of paper containing the names and addresses of their families in America. According to Harrington, one of the slips of paper came from Arnold Zetterberg, who was still alive, and a POW in Germany!

After receiving the letters, Zetterberg's parents made a long-distance phone call to Harrington, who told them how he had contacted them. Apparently, he didn't remember Arnold, but knew another repatriated flyer who might. He was Staff Sergeant Thomas Gilbert, who, like Arnold, was a native of Rockford, IL. Zetterberg's parents sent him a photo of Arnold. While SGT Gilbert didn't recognize Zetterberg either, he showed Zetterberg's photo to a couple of other repatriated flyers he knew. Two of the flyers claimed that they recognized Arnold. The family was electrified by the news.

Piecing together the various threads, Zetterberg's family concluded that his B-17 had crashed somewhere in France. The French Underground took Arnold, but then lost him when German troops entered the area. From there, Arnold was shipped to a POW camp in Germany.

There is a photo in the Rockford Register-Star of Mrs. Zetterberg taking down the “Gold Star” from her window. The “Gold Star” was a symbol used to inform anyone who saw the window that



a family member of that home had been killed in the War. The Zetterbergs were now sure that their son was alive.

A contemporary reader might notice some of the holes in this story; for example, neither Harrington nor Gilbert knew Arnold, nor did either claim that they had seen him as a POW. Also, the story of his capture by the Germans from the French Underground lacks any specifics. But the family believed.

Sadly, their hopes were unfounded. As has been discussed, "Ascend Charlie" crashed in Wales, and so the plane never went down in France. None of the crew was ever Prisoners of War. And as to how Technical Sergeant Harrington happened upon a slip of paper with Arnold's family's contact information on it, if in fact that even happened, that answer is lost in the fog of history.

On February 7, 1947, the families of "Ascend Charlie's" crew were sent identical letters:

"Inclosed herewith is a picture of the United States Military Cemetery Brookwood, England, in which your son....is buried.

"It is my sincere hope that you may gain some solace from this view of the surroundings in which your loved one rests. As you can see, this is a place of

simple dignity, neat and well cared for. Here, assured of continuous care, now rest the remains of a few of those heroic dead who fell together in the service of our country.

"This cemetery will be maintained as a temporary resting place until, in accordance with the wishes of the next of kin, all remains are either placed in permanent American cemeteries overseas or returned to the Homeland for final burial."

Three months later, on May 15, 1947, the next of kin of the crew of "Ascend Charlie" again received identical correspondence. They were being advised that they had four options regarding the disposition of the remains of their loved ones. The choices were 1) have the remains buried in a permanent American military cemetery overseas; 2) have the remains to any private cemetery in the United States; 3) returned to foreign nation for burial there; or 4) have the remains returned to a National Cemetery in the United States. No other combatant nation in World War 2 gave their next of kin the opportunity to have their dead returned home.

The parents of Staff Sergeant Stanley B. Mason, Joseph and Florence, elected to have their son permanently

interred at the Cambridge American Cemetery in England. The families of Lieutenants Turner and Tofte, and Staff Sergeants Mason, Monson, Peterson, and Zetterberg, did likewise. Lieutenant Broers was buried in the Gillespie Cemetery in Gillespie, IL. Staff Sergeant Rambo was buried at the Ivy Hill Cemetery in Germantown, PA. Lieutenant Schanen was buried at St. Mary's Cemetery in Port Washington, WI, and Staff Sergeant Philip Catania was buried at a private location in Hartford, CT.

The raid against the German submarine pens in France did not succeed. They remained in action for the duration of the war, and in fact resisted capture by the Allied armies until VE Day in May of 1945. The facility at La Pallice, although unused, exists to this day.

Bill Beigel is an American military casualty researcher, specializing in locating facts relating to Americans who died or went missing in active duty in World War II and the Korean and Vietnam Wars. Bill Beigel holds a BA in History and a Masters in Geography, both from UCLA. For more information, visit <http://ww2research.com>



## BIRTHPLACE CHAPTER

The Birthplace Chapter [Savannah, GA] had an interesting and informative presentation at our monthly dinner meeting by Sam Martin, a Reference Specialist at the Research Center in the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. Sam's father was a B-17 pilot during WWII with the 2nd BG 15th AF. He flew 19 missions, including a 2 May, '45 mission which was the last mission, and actually received an award for most accurate bombing percentage in the ETO.

In late 1943, allied leaders decided it would be necessary to have air bases in Russia that American bombers could use to hit key industrial targets in eastern Europe and hopefully keep German fighter defenses spread out as D-Day approached. In November, at a meeting in Tehran, Iran, Stalin approved the use of three airfields—all in the Ukraine—for what became known as "shuttle bombing missions."

Sam Martin is writing a book which is currently being edited and hopes to have published later this year. The forthcoming book entitled, "A Farewell to Honor: The Treatment of American Airmen Downed Behind Soviet Lines in the European Theater of Operations" originated from his father's experiences.

One such experience involved a B-17 on which his father was scheduled to fly as copilot. Minutes before takeoff, the pilot, Lt. John Pierik, recognized that Lt. Martin appeared very ill (he had a fever of 104 degrees) and had another copilot take his place for the mission. It was 22 March, 1945 and the formation was on its way to the synthetic oil refinery at Ruhland, Germany. They were attacked by eight German ME 262 jet fighters and one B-17 went down.

As they approached the target, the aircraft Sam's father was to be flying was hit with flak, blowing a large hole in the right wing and knocking out two engines. Lt. Pierik, the pilot, knew he couldn't keep up with the formation and he had no chance of returning home to the base in Italy. He elected to fly east and had his radio man signal, "Able 2-1 Starfish", indicating they were flying

for Soviet lines. Shortly after leaving the formation, Pierik encountered three more fighters. As the fighters closed on the damaged bomber, the crew recognized the Soviet Red Star insignia and fired their emergency red flare. The Soviet fighters positioned themselves on each wing and the tail giving the B-17 an escort.

As they neared the Soviet-German front lines, all three Soviet fighters suddenly peeled away. Moments later they returned with the sun at their backs and opened fire on our aircraft, and aiming for the flight deck. Lt. Pierik's crew returned fire, but it was too late: the B-17 was fatally hit. As the flames engulfed the front of the aircraft, the enlisted crew unsuccessfully attempted to rescue the four officers trapped on the flight deck in the nose. However, the flames and smoke were too intense and the six enlisted men were forced to bail out. As they descended in their parachutes, the Soviets returned for a strafing run at them. They wounded one of the crew and shot holes in several of the parachutes before the men made it to the ground and into the hands of the Germans and a POW future. The four officers are still listed as MIA and Sam continues to investigate this with authorities in Poland.

We are anxiously awaiting the publication of Sam's book to learn more on this fascinating aspect of WWII. Bob Buck, President Birthplace Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society

## NORTH ALABAMA CHAPTER

Ann Vaughn Opened the May meeting, then our Chaplin, George McGuinness gave the Invocation. Harold McMurren led in the Pledge to the Flag.

Bill Varnedoe told of the hazards of flyers ditching in the frigid North Sea or in the English Channel. This happened all too frequently when battle damage to their aircraft would not allow a complete return to England. He read several eye witness stories by those who survived, meant to give a glimpse into the dangers encountered by ditchings. The B-17 was not designed to

land on anything but a concrete runway; it is certainly neither a sea plane nor a boat as those stories exemplified!

**Three stories that time did not permit Bill to read at the meeting follow:**

### 3 February 1944

As the formation was returning just out from the enemy coast, Morse crew, pulled up suddenly. It then nosed over in a dive. As it went down an unidentified object was seen to fall from the aircraft. This aircraft hit the tail assembly of 42-39938 carrying the Heuser crew. This later B-17 was in the No. 6, or Tail End Charlie position. Morse continued his dive but at about 5000 feet he seemed to pull it out of the dive and regain control. It was last seen entering the under cast about one half hour out from the enemy coast. The stabilizer and tail gun was knocked off of Heuser's aircraft. Apparently under control it followed the Group, but fell further and further behind. When last seen it was 50 miles from England at 2000 feet. An extensive air-sea search never found either aircraft or survivors.

### 8 February 1944

42-39918, Stormy Angel, and the Schneider Crew, while still over Germany, began having engine trouble. Oil lines for nos. 2 and 3 were hit with flak and went out. Unable to keep up with the formation they dropped behind and below. On reaching the French coast, their fighter protection left and they started across the channel alone. The radio operator, Lawrence Stanley, had been in touch with Great Ashfield and the British Air-Sea Rescue Service, so they were given a course to follow to expedite rescue, if needed. As they passed out over the coast, the third engine also failed due to the pressure put upon it by the loss of the other two. Sgt. Stanley stuck by his radio key and would not leave until the other crew members had gotten out and the radio room began to flood! The advance notice had the rescue vessels promptly on the scene.

The ditching was a smooth three point landing on a rare calm water, but Stormy Angel started to quickly settle below the waves, faster than normal,



because, while still over Germany, all hatches had been jettisoned for a possible bailout. This left several gaping holes in the fuselage. The pilots climbed out of their windows, the others out of the radio room roof hatch. All were promptly rescued and none were injured.

### 13 February 1944

When Herron's ship suffered a direct flak hit, it knocked out two engines, wounded several crew members, knocked the copilot unconscious, shattered the instrument panel and incapacitated the interphone and oxygen systems. Several control cables were also disabled. Then, a third engine went out over the French coast. Capt. Herron made a ditch landing in the channel. The wounded were unable to care for themselves and Herron systematically pulled six men into a dingy after he inflated it. For 2 ½ hours he gave first aid to this crew although his own hands were also damaged by the flak. Three crewmembers were lost as the B-17 sank quickly.

As it sank, it went vertical, and the stabilizer threatened to come down on the raft. The engineer pushed it away, but got hit, himself, and got pulled underwater. But he managed to surface and get in the dingy. For his heroic action Capt. Herron received the DFC (Distinguished Flying Cross.)

Ben Carroll led us in singing before we closed.

Monday 26 May was National Memorial Day. We had our new wreath for the ceremony at Mapel Hill Cemetery. The Coalition of Veterans Organizations, have organized the formal ceremony with 28 organizations, including us, laying wreathes as part of the program. Thanks to you who contributed to our new wreath purchase!! It was a beautiful occasion with the Huntsville Symphony Orchestra providing music.

The next luncheon and meeting will be Friday, 6th June, 11:00 AM at the Sunny Street Cafe. Marion Gibson will present the program about communications during WW II and now.

Looking ahead: the meeting following that will be on the 4th of July. I can't think of a better day! And on Friday

1st August, our guest speaker will be a professional ornithologist, Jon Alquist, who will give us the story of the use of Pigeons as messenger carriers during war!

Lots of events. Mark your calendar!

## OREGON CHAPTER

### Alice Miller: "Beauty & Duty: Women in Military History"

Alice Miller is a retired nurse with an extensive collection of women's military uniforms. Her presentation included uniforms from WWI, WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War along with the histories of the women

who wore these uniforms. Here are excerpts from her speech.

"I love uniforms and vintage fashion. Keep in mind that fashion for women is reflected in the uniforms. It's 1918 and I want to introduce you to Miss Mary Stewart. She's an Army nurse with an Norfolk-style Alteen uniform made of gabardine blue wool. It's belted up high with a long skirt and boots. She was issued a blue, silk-lined, beaver-felt fedora. Her uniform has all snaps and hooks, no zippers yet; an interior girdle; and she sews on a new collar and cuffs every day. In 1918, the three-year nursing program was equivalent to a college bachelor's degree. The minute you graduated from nursing school, you went on the Red Cross roster and



*Alice Miller wearing a 1919 Army Nurse's Uniform alongside uniforms of COL Vera Jones, Marine Corps, Vietnam and COL Vonnie Carlson, Air Force [Photo courtesy of Tom Philo]*

many nurses received a letter from the Red Cross during WWI informing them that they were legally obligated to join the Army or Navy; essentially they were drafted. Not Mary, she joined the Army Nurse Corps after it was founded and went overseas with Hospital 20 where the nurses had thirty-three patients each and took care of not only wounded soldiers but those with influenza due to the Pandemic. Supplies were scarce. They had sulfa drugs and very little pain killer. In WWI, there were 22,000 Army nurses: 10,000 served overseas; 10,000 served here at home; and 1200 died of enemy attack, influenza, and/or just plain exhaustion. After they started proving themselves and serving overseas, General Pershing let the women sew Army buttons on their uniforms, but they had no rank and no benefits.

I'm wearing an Army nurse's uniform from 1919 just after WWI when women were given the right to vote and to wear rank, but were still not commissioned. My WWI garrison cap was worn until 1940.



## Yeoman (F) Uniform

In contrast to the WWI Army nurse, Congress allowed the 14,000 WWI Navy Yeoman (F) all the pay, benefits, and rank of the men.

These women even became weapons' instructors and torpedo fitters. The Navy realized how important women were when we were at war.



## Frances Piper: WWII, Coast Guard

As WWII was coming up, the military needed a lot of women and they wanted these women to be fashionable and look like movie stars. They wanted all of the women to have wonderful shoulders, little teeny tiny waists, really long legs, and little tiny feet.

The uniforms have nipping in the waist, shoulder pads, and a skirt right at the knee. The uniform I brought belongs to Frances Piper, one of the 1000 women in the Coast Guard during WWII. Francis went to OCS and became an officer.



## WWII WAC

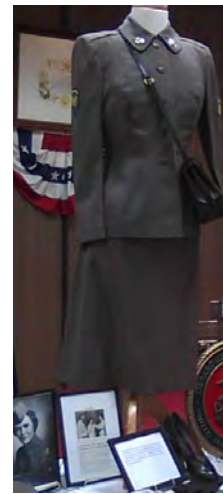
There were 160,000 WACs, Women Army Corps, that served. These women could do anything. This is your typical OD, enlisted, WWII, four-pocket uniform issued with tobacco brown Oxfords, a buffalo-hide purse, and the Hobby hat which was named after the first director of the WACs, Colonel Oveta Hobby. President Eisenhower was impressed and amazed at the skill of these WACs.



## Sgt. Dona McDonald: Korean War WAC

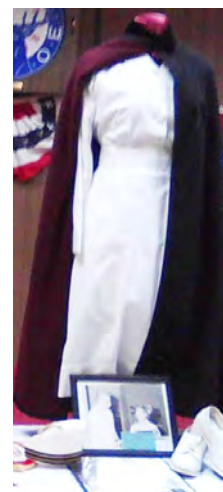
At the end of WWII, they started to demobilize the women in the military, but women really liked the opportunity of serve and when Korea came along these women wanted to come back into active duty. They were given uniforms created by Hattie Carnegie, who also designed clothing for Hollywood

stars. This rose taupe uniform belonged to Sgt. Dona McDonald. Everything matches and there's a mid-calf skirt and an overcoat with a Peter Pan collar and pleats in the back. Dona excelled in everything. She was the first WAC in her unit to receive the Army Commendation Medal. She was an accomplished athlete and one of the first women in the Army to skydive. Sadly, on her forty-seventh jump, a performance jump on Veterans Day, her chutes didn't open. She died at the age of twenty-nine. I display this uniform for her family who want to show everyone what being in the military meant to Dona.



## LTJG. Betty Brown: Navy Nurse

LTJG. Betty Brown's nurse uniform is the traditional white uniform with cape. She served in New York at the Naval Hospital for three years and she is an officer. It wasn't until 1948 that women got full-officer status. These nurses wore this cape and uniform from 1918 until 1965.



The only thing that changed was the hemline.

## Col. Vera Jones: Marine Corps, Vietnam

This is Col. Jones' Marine Corps uniform. Col. Jones actually went to college to become a teacher, but after three years of teaching high school, she decided it'd be easier to join the Marine Corps which she did in 1960. She was first in her graduating class in the



Marine Corps. Col. Jones was the first woman officer into Vietnam and she worked right alongside General Westmoreland. She became a full-bird colonel in just twenty years.

### Col. Vonnie Carlson: Air Force

I've got one more uniform. If you think you're too old to do something that you really want to do, I'll tell you you're not. When you hear this story, you're going to want to go right out and do it. This is Col. Vonnie Carlson's Air Force uniform



with a short, double-breasted "Jackie" jacket and a molded beret which they started issuing in 1969.

As a civilian, Vonnie Carlson went through a four-year medical program in only three years to become a doctor. Her husband had served in WWII in the Army Air Corps. Dr. Vonnie Carlson was the first female doctor hired by Group Health in Seattle.

At the age of fifty-six, she joined the Air Force. They needed doctors and she wanted to do something special for the Vietnam Veterans. She came out as a full-bird colonel and said, "It was just something I always wanted to do." So if there's something you want to do, you should do it, no matter what your age. Thank you.

## WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Ten of our Eighth Air Force Historical Society State of Wisconsin Chapter members participated in a historic Freedom Flight at EAA Oshkosh. They traveled via Chaffee Limo Service to take part in the event April 14.

World War II-era B-17 veterans, represented each crew position aboard the WWII B17 bomber:

**Pilot: 1st Lt. Scott Welch**

(Silver Lake, WI)

**Co-Pilot: 1st Lt. Bob Abresch**

(Wauwatosa, WI)

**Radar: Buck Sgt. Bill Bergner,**  
(Milwaukee, WI)

**Bombardier: 1st Lt. William Meier** (West Bend, WI)

**Bombardier: Maj. Robert Schneider** (Green Bay, WI)

**Flight Engineer: Sgt. Chet Gardeski** (Milwaukee, WI)

**Radio Operator: Sgt. Harvin Abrahamson** (Wauwatosa, WI)

**Ball Turret Gunner: Sgt. Fred Zurbuchen** (Waupun, WI)

**Waist Gunner: Sgt. Bob Schuh** (Chilton, WI)

**Tail Gunner: Sgt. Harry Oestreich** (Oshkosh, WI)

Please join us Tuesday Sept. 9 for our annual state-wide Fly For Freedom event in which vets and families will take part in festivities traveling from the 128th Air Refueling Wing to the Manitowoc Maritime Museum and Air Field. Sincerely,  
Cindy Drehmel,  
President 8th Air Force Historical Society, State of Wisconsin

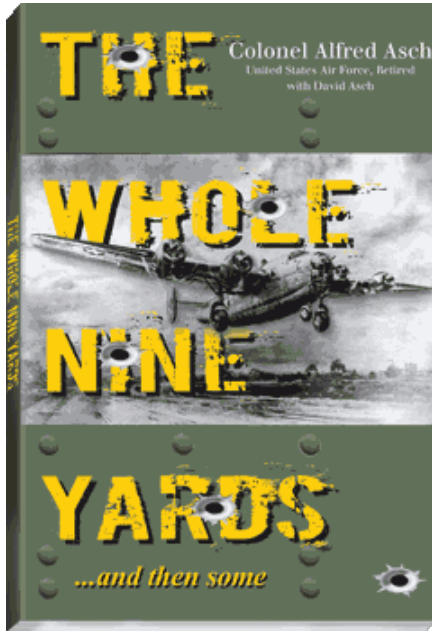


Wisconsin Chapter Veterans

# Book Reviews

## THE WHOLE NINE YARDS

Colonel Alfred Asch  
with David Asch



Climb into the cockpit of a B-24 Liberator. Feel your heart race as you sight your target and drop your bombs. Heading home, you are hit by dozens of enemy fighters and flak from ground fire. The plane shudders as cannon shells strike, smashing the tail, ripping into the bomb bay and severing the cables and gas lines, spewing fuel in all directions. Another shell explodes under the pilot's seat, rupturing the oxygen lines. Watch as your pilot and crew members lose oxygen and pass out, leaving you—a twenty-year-old co-pilot with untested skills—to take the controls, making split-second decisions that will mean the difference between life and death. And the fighters keep coming

Join Lt. Al Asch on his journey from his roots as a grandson of immigrant farmers in small-town America, to his early years of struggle in a single-parent family, helping his mother to eke out an existence during the Great Depression. From these humble beginnings, Al developed the tenacity, courage, and integrity that would take him from the farm to the battlefield in the air. Fascinated by airplanes, Al was

a natural-born pilot, receiving additional training while still in high school. When WWII erupted, he was ready to fly.

To order *The Whole Nine Yards* Premium Hard Cover Book

Over 425 pages with photos throughout.  
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rogerthat@thewholenineyards.us

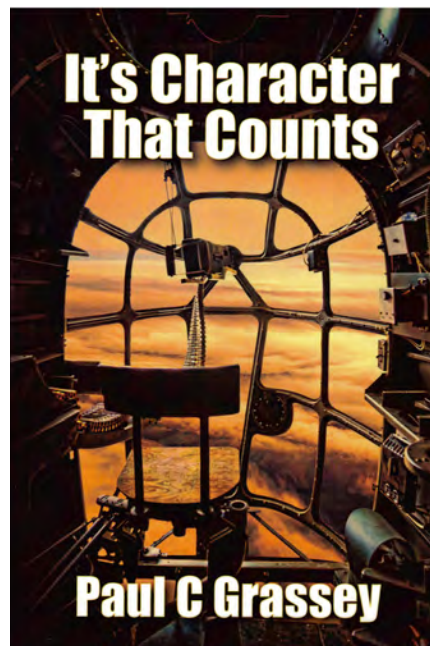
\$24.95

**Colonel Alfred Asch**, Retired USAF, age 93 of Brentwood, TN, passed away December 8, 2013.



## IT'S CHARACTER THAT COUNTS

Paul C Grassey 446th BG



The experiences of the men who formed the American Eighth Air Force during World War II are rich material for students of character. The flight crews of the Eighth had the highest casualty rates of all American forces in the war. Paul Grassey, a former bomber pilot, immerses you into that world.

He uses his own exploits and those of his high school friends to exemplify the behaviors essential to success in life. You will feel the spirit, the humor and the emotions of the ordinary young men caught up in the process of anticipating, preparing for and conducting war. The stories are not on a grand scale, but at the personal level. You become a witness to extraordinary accomplishments done without fanfare in unquestioning service to our country. While the material is of interest to students of the period, its larger impact stems from the lessons it provides for character development.

To purchase copies [\$19.99 + S/H]

[www.mightyeighth.org](http://www.mightyeighth.org)

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(912) 598-8353

## FLYING TO GLORY

Martin Bowman

The following excerpt is from Martin Bowman's book, *Flying to Glory*, regarding Chapter 8 and the 388th BG and Larry 'Goldie' Goldstein with the 563rd Squadron.

The crew flew their first mission on Friday, 26 November, 1943. Larry Goldstein began his combat log:

'It is a cold November morning, the barracks are dark. Each man was in his bed and knows there is a mission today because we had been alerted the night before. At 3:30 am the light is switched on. The CQ reads off the names of the crews for the mission and adds, the briefing is at 0600 hr. We tumble out of a warm bed, dress warmly, shave in cold water and board a GI truck in darkness to the mess halls for a breakfast we are not sure we can eat because of our nervous stomachs. Each man was wondering, "Will we make it back today?"'

'Briefing is cold and matter of fact. The target: Bremen. After the main briefing each man has his special



# Book Reviews

briefing. I went to a communications briefing where radio operators received their special codes for the day. We checked our parachutes, and the sign over the door "If it doesn't work, bring it back" was intended to lighten the tension. We dressed again in our flying clothes. First some warm underwear, some GI clothes and the famous blue heated suits. We removed all of our personal jewelry, wallets and rings, wearing only our dog tags. Then it is out to the trucks in the cold dawn for a ride to the plane. Nothing is more ominous than a B-17 standing in the early morning light, loaded with bombs, ready for its crew.'

'Finally, we board the plane for a 0800 hr take-off after each of us installed our machine-guns in their place. The metal was cold to the touch and at that time of the morning our nerves were tense and our stomachs unsettled. All in all we weren't ready for what was to come.'

'The take-off and climb to altitude



to get into formation was routine. There was much more flak and fighters always ready to knock the bombers down. The first flak I saw just after we crossed the enemy coast. Talk about awesome; that was. The burst of black smoke was terrifying. A crewman commented over

the intercom, "The ones you see are OK. It's the one's you don't see you have to worry about." A sick joke, but true.

'We saw two mid-air collisions of '17s and to a crew on its first mission it was an awesome sight. To lose an aircraft in non-combat situations seemed to be such a waster.'

'Landed okay and was quite exhausted from being on oxygen for five hours. Although there were no enemy fighters encountered, the flak was heavy over the target. It was very close and I did quite a bit of "sweating it out". Only 24 more to go.'

Copies of this book are available through various sellers on Amazon.com  
Hardcover: 225 pages  
Publisher: Patrick Stephens; First Edition edition (January 1992)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 1852603283  
ISBN-13: 978-1852603281

## Treasurer's Report

### Greetings fellow members,

It is an honor to have been chosen as Treasurer of the 8th Air Force Historical Society for this year. Below you will find summary financial statements for calendar year 2013. Thanks to two large items, we were able to finish the year in the black.

We received a very generous bequest. Also, our trust fund portfolio performed admirably.

With the inevitable passing of a large portion of our membership base, revenue from dues continues to decline. We must therefore depend more on donations and investment income in order to stay solvent. I thank those of you who have made donations in

the past. I also hope that many of you will be able to make donations in the future. Our mission is to honor the legacy of the 8th Air Force. Hopefully, we will be able to do so for many more years.

See you in Nashville!

**David Nowack**  
Treasurer, 8th Air Force Historical Society

Eighth Air Force Historical Society Statement of Activities For the year ended December 31, 2013	
<b>REVENUE</b>	
Membership Dues	\$ 67,886
Donations	2,755
Investment Income	55,880
Bequests	24,592
Other Income	1,400
Total Revenue	<u>152,513</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	
National Administration	13,526
8th Air Force News	56,758
Savannah Office	41,512
Net Reunion Expense	653
Other Expense	755
Total Expense	<u>113,204</u>
Net Income	<u>\$ 39,309</u>

Eighth Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2013	
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Bank Accounts	\$ 19,108
Investments	500,967
Total Assets	<u>\$ 520,075</u>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>	
Current Liabilities	\$ 7,841
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	
Unrestricted	512,234
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	<u>\$ 520,075</u>

## SHOW ON THE ROAD

Dr. Nancy Toombs

Hopefully, spring—and in some places, summer-- has found most of you around the country. We have had our share of horrible weather and our state was hit by a devastating tornado that ripped through 4 communities with loss of homes, property and life. We are still recovering but, with each passing day we take another step toward the rebuilding process.

It's hard to believe, but we are only 4 months away from our Nashville Reunion. We have our programs planned and we are ready for another successful gathering of the Mighty Eighth. I plan to bring my "Road Show" which has grown considerably since last year, thanks to so many of your donations. The purpose of the "Road Show" is to have a traveling museum for everyone to enjoy; to see, and touch "up close" the uniforms and personal belongings of the men who fought the war and to tell their stories.

Most of all, this display is to increase awareness of the importance of PRESERVATION. Unless we preserve these priceless pieces of history, our stories are lost as well. Please, do not take for granted that someone will "do the right thing" with your WWII memorabilia. Unless they are educated on its value to history they are more likely to donate it to Goodwill than to a museum! PLEASE locate all of your WWII items, identify them and share them with family and friends. If there is no interest in keeping them--CALL ME-- and I will find a permanent home for your items--not a home that will store them in a box never to be seen again, but a home where your

items will be displayed in a place of honor.

Recently, I received an Ike jacket from Mrs. Chris Christopher of Savannah, Ga. The jacket was in excellent condition, but was missing the ribbons. I secured a copy of the veterans DD-214 and found all the appropriate ribbons and placed them on the jacket. I had a shirt and tie from my collection that I added to the jacket, as well as a matching garrison cap. I put the uniform on a mannequin and took it to the Wings of Honor Museum in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas. This is a small, but very well maintained aviation museum on the historic Walnut Ridge Army Air Field. When presenting a gift such as a WWII uniform, that you wish to have displayed permanently, the likelihood increases significantly if your gift includes the uniform completely intact and already on a mannequin.

Small museums have no budgets for the purchase of shirts, ties, caps, and certainly not mannequins. I had done my homework and knew that this museum needed and wanted 8th Air Force items but had no money for support materials. So, with a little help, I was able to find a wonderful home for TSgt. Chris Christopher's uniform, where it will be on permanent display along with his photo, bio of his war record and the Wings of Honor Museum gains a great exhibit!

I am committed to saving our history and I hope the above story helps all of you to understand my passion for preservation.

Please call me with any questions you may have! I look forward to hearing from you.

Dr. Nancy Toombs

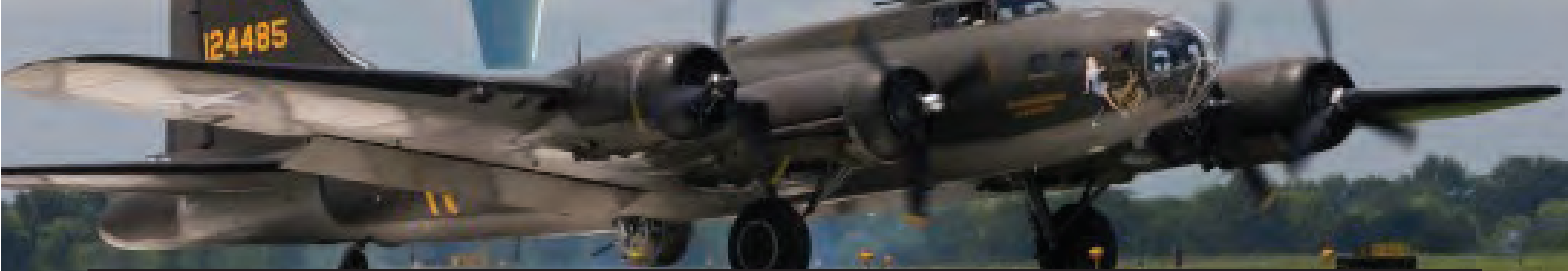
chase221@swbell.net (501) 681-3126



## STAN LOFTSGARD CREW

Here is a photo of the Loftsgard crew in front of their B-24, Stan (left) trained at this airfield as a cadet and then went on to serve with the 493rd BG as did Bill Toombs (right). They met at the museum 2 years ago and met up again this year. It's a small world, Stan crashed Bill's plane B-24 "Baby Doll" on the runway returning from a mission, the landing gear was shot up and collapsed. What's the chances of these 2 guys meeting each other 70+ years after the war and never meeting during their time in the 493rd!





## 8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY 40TH ANNUAL REUNION SHERATON MUSIC CITY OCTOBER 9 – 13, 2014



### REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

See choices below and complete the Registration Form noting your event choices and personal information. By "WWII GROUP," we're asking for the group or unit in which you served (specific Bomb Group, Fighter Group, PRG, HQ, etc.). We use this information for tallying totals for each group, nametags, and seating arrangements. If you prefer to sit with a different group, please give us that information too. We do not need your squadron. **Remit by mail with check or money order payable to Armed Forces Reunions by September 8, 2014.** You may also register and pay with credit card online at [www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014](http://www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014). A 3% convenience fee will be added to online credit card reservations. Forms received after September 8 will be accepted on a space available basis only. **Hotel reservations should also be made by September 8, 2014.**

### ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. CANCELLATION POLICY

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less a \$5 per person processing fee. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$5 processing fee. Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 4:00pm Eastern Time, excluding holidays. Please call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation doesn't cancel your reunion activities.

## MEALS/EVENTS CHOICES

### MEAL PACKAGE 1 \$212

Package includes 7 hotel food functions beginning with breakfast on Friday (4 breakfasts, 3 dinners).

### MEAL PACKAGE 2 \$148

Package includes 5 hotel food functions beginning with breakfast on Saturday (3 breakfasts, 2 dinners).

The continental breakfast buffets include juice, fruit, cereals/milk, yogurt, breakfast breads, and coffee. The full breakfast buffets include juice,

fruit, eggs, meat, potatoes, pancakes or French toast, biscuits, and coffee.

### CHOICE #3 INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Saturday Rendezvous Dinner at \$45, and Sunday Banquet at \$45 can be purchased separately, but are included in both packages above.

### TOUR OPTIONS

Tours and trips are described on the Reunion Highlights Pages. Prices are listed on the registration form. Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.



# 2014 40th ANNUAL 8th AIR FORCE REUNION

## THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9

### Memphis Belle & The Red Nose available for tours & rides

1:00pm	-	6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
2:00pm	-	6:00pm	8AFHS Board Meeting
6:00pm	-	7:00pm	Welcome Reception

## FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10

7:30am	-	8:30am	Full Breakfast for Meal Package #1 participants
Tbd	-	Tbd	Memorabilia / Gathering Room open throughout the reunion.
8:00am	-	10:00am	Reunion Registration open
9:00am	-	2:00pm	CITY TOUR
9:30am	-	12:00pm	MEMPHIS BELLE & THE RED NOSE
1:00pm	-	5:00pm	Reunion Registration open
2:30pm	-	3:30pm	Chapter/Unit Development AND Next Generation Meeting
4:00pm	-	5:30pm	Dinner Buffet (Pork BBQ and catfish as entrees) for Meal Package #1 participants. Laura Edge will speak during dinner of her father's experiences.
6:00pm	-	10:00pm	GRAND OLE OPRY

## SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11

7:30am	-	8:30am	Continental Breakfast for Meal Package participants
8:30am	-	10:00am	Reunion Registration open
8:30am	-	10:00am	Individual Group Meetings
10:30am	-	5:30pm	Symposium: Behind the Wire and Mask
2:00pm	-	6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
6:30pm	-	7:00pm	8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm	-	9:30pm	Rendezvous Dinners

## SUNDAY, OCTOBER 12

7:30am	-	8:30am	Full Breakfast for Meal Package participants
8:30am	-	10:00am	General Membership Meeting
11:00am	-	4:00pm	8AFHS Board Meeting
11:00am	-	2:30pm	NASHVILLE NIGHTLIFE LUNCH AND MATINEE
5:00pm	-	5:30pm	Reunion Registration open
6:00pm	-	7:00pm	8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm	-	10:00pm	Banquet Dinner, followed by guest speaker and dancing.

## MONDAY, OCTOBER 13

7:00am	-	8:30am	Continental Breakfast Buffet for Meal Package participants
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Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.  
All trips require a minimum of thirty-five people, unless otherwise stated.  
Driver and Guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.



# Nashville

## SHERATON MUSIC CITY – NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

### October 9 - 13, 2014

#### CITY TOUR

##### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 10

Begin a tour of Nashville with trained professional guides who will entertain your group with interesting facts, colorful legends, and amusing anecdotes of Nashville and her people. Drive through Centennial Park and view the Parthenon, a full-scale replica of the original in Greece. Visit the Ryman Auditorium, where the Grand Ole Opry got its start. Originally a church, the Ryman is now home to numerous musical productions. Stop on 2nd Avenue for lunch on your own at one of several different restaurants. Consider Market Street Brewery, Big River Grille, Hard Rock Cafe, or the Wild Horse Saloon.

**9:00am board bus, 2:00pm back at hotel**  
**\$49/Person includes bus, guide, and admission.**  
**Lunch on your own.**

**\*\* or \*\***

#### MEMPHIS BELLE & THE RED NOSE

##### Friday, October 10

The Boeing B-17F Flying Fortress, Memphis Belle and the Red Nose, P-51 Mustang will be on location at a local Nashville airport during the reunion. Today's trip is scheduled for those without transportation or wanting to go as part of a group. The planes will be available to view (and ride) at other times during the reunion as well. More details to come or elsewhere in the newsletter.

**9:30am board bus, 12:00pm back at hotel**  
**\$26/Person includes bus and escort.**

#### GRAND OLE OPRY

##### Friday, October 10

During any given Opry show, audiences can expect the best in country, bluegrass, comedy, gospel, and more by Country Music Hall of Famers, cast members who helped establish the Opry as the home of country music, revered superstars, and young artists just starting to make names for themselves. It is the longest-running live radio show in the world. Sit back and enjoy an American Institution at its entertaining best.

**6:00pm board bus, 10:00pm back at hotel**  
**\$63/Person includes bus, escort, and show.**

#### SYMPOSIUM: BEHIND THE WIRE AND MASK

##### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11

During WWII, airmen downed behind enemy lines had few options: if they survived the crash or bail out they faced almost certain capture and interment in a Stalag Luft as a POW; or they could try and get back to friendly territory with aid from the "Helpers" through an elaborate underground network of American sympathizers—Escape and Evasion. Either way, the stories of hardship, courage, sacrifice, and patriotism have been carefully researched, collected, and will be presented in a powerfully dynamic and emotionally charged symposium by renowned researchers and veterans who will share their personal experiences with you. We invite YOU to share your experiences during this interactive forum as well.

**10:30am Symposium starts, 5:30pm Adjourn**

**There is no charge for the Symposium;**  
**however, if you want a box lunch during the**  
**short lunch break, cost is \$8.**

#### NASHVILLE NIGHTLIFE LUNCH AND MATINEE

##### Sunday, October 12

Come and experience a celebration of Country Music from both the past and present. Hear songs from many of the great artists of country music history. Enjoy the music from late-greats such as Patsy Cline and Hank Williams, Sr. to the superstars of today, Sara Evans and Toby Keith. But first – be sure to bring your appetite – there is a full lunch buffet with salads, vegetables, meats, pasta, rolls, beverages, and fruit cobblers for dessert! Note: A minimum of 70 people is required for this trip.

**11:00am board bus, 2:30pm back at hotel**  
**\$65/Person includes bus, escort, and lunch**  
**cruise.**

#### 8<sup>th</sup> AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL BANQUET

##### Sunday, October 12

Assemble in the ballroom for the Posting of the Colors and Memorial Service. Dinner will be a choice of Steak or Tilapia with the usual accompaniments. The guest speaker, Yvonne Daley Brusselmans will follow, and then the music turns up a bit for some dancing if you'd like!

**6:00pm Cash Bar Reception, 7:00pm Banquet.**  
**Cost is included in meal package or \$45**  
**separately.**

# 8th AFHS Activity Registration Form October 9-13, 2014

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to **ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.** in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. You may also register online and pay by credit card at [www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014](http://www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014) (3% will be added to total). All registration forms and payments must be received on or before September 8, 2014. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee.

**Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.**  
**322 Madison Mews**  
**Norfolk, VA 23510**  
**ATTN: 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS**

## OFFICE USE ONLY

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received \_\_\_\_\_  
 Inputted \_\_\_\_\_ Nametag Completed \_\_\_\_\_

### CUT-OFF DATE IS 9/8/2014

	Price Per	# of People	Total
<b>REGISTRATION FEE</b>			
Includes meeting expenses and other reunion expenses.	\$40		\$
Reg. Fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel	\$25		\$
<b>MEAL PACKAGES</b>			
<i>Package #1 includes 7 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Friday</i>	\$212		\$
<i>Package #2 includes 5 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Saturday</i>	\$148		\$
<b>Please select your entrée choice(s) for the Banquet:</b>			
Chef's Choice Steak with Cabernet Demi Glace		#	
Tilapia with Lemon Caper Sauce		#	
<b>SEPARATELY PRICED MEALS (if not purchasing a package)</b>			
Saturday, 10/11: Rendezvous Dinner (Chicken Marsala)	\$45		\$
Sunday, 10/12: Banquet ( <b>please select your entrée</b> )			
Chef's Choice Steak with Cabernet Demi Glace	\$45		\$
Tilapia with Lemon Caper Sauce	\$45		\$
<b>SYMPOSIUM BOX LUNCH</b>			
The symposium is free to attendees. Because of the short lunch break, box lunches are available for purchase in advance.	\$8		\$
<b>TOURS</b>			
Please choose one of the following two tours:			
Friday, 10/10: City Tour	\$49		\$
Friday, 10/10: Memphis Belle & The Red Nose	\$26		\$
Friday, 10/10: Grand Ole Opry	\$63		\$
Sunday, 10/12: Nashville NightLife Lunch & Matinee	\$65		\$
Total Amount Payable to <b>Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.</b>			\$

Please Print

MEMBER NAME (for nametag) \_\_\_\_\_

☐ VET ☐ NEXT GEN ☐ OTHER WWII GROUP (please list BG, not BS) \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE NAME (if attending) \_\_\_\_\_

GUEST NAMES \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ NEXT GEN

PHONE # (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ @ \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS \_\_\_\_\_

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? ☐ YES ☐ NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

**Register Online at [www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014](http://www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014)**



# SHERATON MUSIC CITY HOTEL – NASHVILLE, TN

**(615) 885-2200**

**777 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37214**

<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/res?id=1402066861&key=30784Location>

**Located within minutes of downtown Nashville, the Sheraton offers easy access to many of Nashville's attractions. Several restaurants and stores are within a couple miles of the hotel.**

## RESERVATION INFORMATION

Call the number above and reference the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society or you can use the link below to make reservations <https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/res?id=1402066861&key=30784> . You may also click on hotel link found on the AFR registration page at [www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014](http://www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2014) .

**Group Name: Eighth Air Force Historical Society**

**Reunion Dates: October 9-13, 2014**

**Rate: \$109 + tax (currently 15.25% + \$2.50 per night). Group rate is offered 3 days before and 3 days after the reunion dates, based on group-block availability.**

**Cut-off Date: 09/8/14. Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.**

**Cancellation Policy:** Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled 48 hours prior to the day of arrival. Call 615-885-2200 should you need to cancel your room reservation. All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit, enclosed. There is an early departure fee of one night's room/tax if the reservation holder checks out of the hotel earlier than agreed upon date. If you must check out earlier than planned, please notify the front desk at the time of hotel check-in or before arrival. Family and medical emergencies are excused.

## PARKING & SHUTTLE INFORMATION

Complimentary airport shuttle service is provided to and from the Nashville International Airport. The shuttle runs from 5:00am-11:00pm. From baggage claim, proceed to the phone bank and press button #46 to request pickup. Then proceed to the pickup area which is one level down at ground transportation. The hotel also offers complimentary parking for guests staying in the hotel.

## HOSPITALITY SUITES

The hotel offers executive suites to be used for group hospitality rooms. They range in size from 450-600 square feet and each one has a terrace or balcony where people may socialize as well. Suites include restrooms and small (dorm size) refrigerators. The cost is \$125/night, payable directly to the Society. The hotel will deliver ice each day for a one-time charge of \$100 plus tax/service charge. Hospitality hosts will be pre-assigned to nearby rooms, but not necessarily connecting. **Please contact Donna with Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. at [DonnaLee@afri.com](mailto:DonnaLee@afri.com) to make arrangements.**

## WHEELCHAIR RENTAL

ScotAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Call (888) 441-7575 for details.

A vast portion of military service records were lost because there were no copies.

# THE RECORDS

"Reprinted by permission from Air Force Magazine, published by the Air Force Association."

A massive orange glow lit up the night sky just after midnight on July 12, 1973, as a devastating fire engulfed the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, Mo. It took just 4 minutes and 20 seconds after the alarm sounded for firefighters to arrive on scene. Although no one was injured in the horrific fire, it was already too late for millions of official military personnel files. The National Archives estimates that 16 million to 18 million files were destroyed in the blaze, including 75 percent

of all Air Force records for personnel discharged between Sept. 25, 1947 and Jan. 1, 1964.

*The records were not indexed so no one knows exactly how much was lost.*

Roughly 80 percent of Army records for personnel discharged between Nov. 1, 1912 and Jan. 1, 1960 also were destroyed. Workers returned to assist with the recovery effort 10 days after the fire began.

The exact number of files lost is not known because duplicate copies were never maintained and no indexes existed. In addition, millions of documents had been lent to the Department of Veterans Affairs before the fire, making it even more difficult to tally the loss, states the National Archives website.

The fire burned "out of control" for 22 hours. Firefighters were able to make it up to the sixth floor, where most of the damage occurred, but blazing

heat and extensive smoke forced them to withdraw by 3:15 a.m. For the next two days,

firefighters had no other choice but to battle the blaze from the outside, using fire hoses to drench the exterior of the building and pouring millions of gallons of water through broken windows to combat the fire still raging inside.

"During the long ordeal, firefighters faced severe problems due to insufficient water pressure. Exacerbating the situation, one of the department's pumper trucks broke down after 40 hours of continuous operations," states the website.

Finally, after two days, crews were able to re-enter the building. Still, the fire continued to smolder until July 16. The blaze was so intense local residents were told to stay inside "due to the heavy acrid smoke."

A total of 42 fire districts worked to put out the fire, but the damage was so extensive investigators never were able to determine what started it. Staff members worked to recover vital records even as the building burned, including more than 100,000 reels of morning reports for the Air Force and Army. Such records later played a critical role in reconstructing the basic service information for requestors, states the website.

## Fire and Flood

On July 23—just 10 days after the fire began—employees who previously were on administrative leave returned to work to assist in recovery efforts.

"The removal and salvage of water and fire damaged records from the building was the most important priority, and such efforts were overseen by a specially appointed project manager," states the site. "Their work led to the recovery of approximately 6.5 million burned and water damaged records."

Although the fire was declared





By Amy Mccullough, Air  
Force Magazine Editor

# FIRE

officially out after four and a half days, crews continued to spray the wreckage until late July in an effort to stop sporadic rekindling of the fire. The sixth floor was completely destroyed by the fire, but the fifth floor took the brunt of the water damage.

“In addition, broken water lines continued to flood the building until they could be capped,” states the website.

Staffers shipped water damaged records in plastic milk crates to a temporary facility at the civilian records center on Winnebago. There, “hastily constructed drying racks had been assembled from spare shelving.”

St. Louis-based McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Corp. also offered up three vacuum drying facilities as a means of drying water logged records. “The vacuum dry process took place in a chamber that had previously been utilized to simulate temperature and pressure conditions for the Mercury and Gemini space missions,” states the NPRC site. “The chamber was large enough to accommodate approximately 2,000 plastic milk cartons of water and fire damaged records.”

Once the records were safely inside, McDonnell Douglas technicians lowered the air in the chamber to freezing and then filled the room with hot dry air, “which squeezed out the water molecules.” The equivalent of nearly eight tons of water was extracted during each session—roughly eight pounds of water per container. In addition, an Ohio-based NASA facility also helped dry records.

However, because the experimental vacuum drying process had never been used for records disaster recovery, many of the files were “over-dried, resulting in a higher rate of brittle paper.”

In the months following the fire, NPRC established a new branch tasked with dealing with damaged records and reconstructing records for those requesting service information. The NPRC also



established a “B” registry file—or burned file—to index the 6.5 million records recovered from the charred remains of the sixth floor.

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## *The one-of-a-kind records were threat- ened by fire, then water, then mold.*

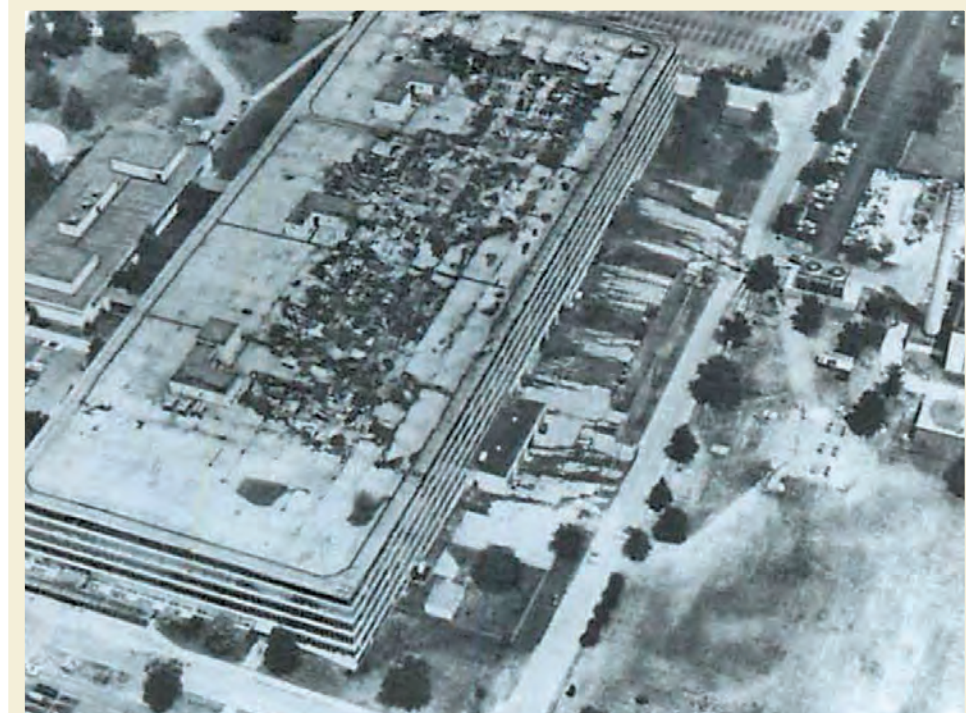
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Containing the inevitable mold was the next major challenge. St. Louis summers are hot and humid, and paper is

especially suscep-  
tible to mold.

Damaged records were placed in a temperature controlled storage area in an effort to prevent further mold growth. Today, most evidence of mold is dormant, but records still must be carefully handled because increased exposure to heat and humidity can cause mold to become active again.

“In terms of loss to the cultural heritage of our nation, the 1973 NPRC fire was an unparalleled disaster. In the aftermath of the blaze, recovery and reconstruction effort took place at an un-





precedented level,” states the NPRC site. “Thanks to such recovery efforts and the use of alternate sources to reconstruct files, today’s NPRC is able to continue its primary mission of serving our country’s military and civil servants.”

The burned file is still utilized today. In fact, as part of the NPRC preservation program, technicians continue to review, assess, and treat burned records.

Last year, NPRC opened a brand new \$115 million building in North County, Mo., where the archives are now stored. Even today archivists painstakingly work to repair what was lost, using new technology not yet available in 1973



to aid in the process. One archivist told *St. Louis Today* the process of piecing together, disinfecting, and preserving the documents can really only be compared to triage.

## Personal Histories Lost Forever

However, the fire is still taking its toll on military families, as the lost records were quite literally one of a kind and irreplaceable. It has sadly become common for military retirees and their family members to run into a dead end when attempting to research or access service records.

In just one example among thousands, Debra Griffith learned first-hand the impact the fire can still have as she tried to access her dying father’s records last year, reported *St. Louis Today*. Army Cpl. Lewis Lower was a Korean War veteran and he wanted to be buried in a military cemetery, but Griffith

couldn’t track down his files.

Although Griffith was originally told her father’s records may have been among the millions destroyed in the fire, she received a charred facsimile just 10 days after contacting the NPRC with the information she needed. Lower was buried with full military honors in February 2012.

“People just don’t know the scope of what happens when millions of records are burned,” said archivist Debbie Cribbs, who in 1973 wasn’t even born yet. “It would take more than one person’s lifetime to repair what happened, so we just do what we can.”



## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE



**Lt. General Ryan’s silver Paul Revere punch bowl with cups.**

***Lt Gen Martin J. Ryan, Jr.  
Commander May 91 – Jul 93.***

The 12 cups are individually engraved with the following 8th Air Force commands:

***410th Bomb Wing, K.I. Sawyer AFB; 97th Bomb Wing, Eaker AFB; 28th Bomb Wing, Ellsworth AFB; 319th Bomb Wing, Grand Forks AFB; 96th Bomb Wing, Dyess AFB; 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman AFB; 5th Bomb Wing, Minot AFB; 384th Bomb Wing, McConnell AFB; 2nd Bomb Wing, Barksdale AFB; 7th Bomb Wing, Carswell, AFB; 27th Fighter Wing, Cannon AFB; HQ 8AF Staff; Barksdale, AFB.***

The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force is grateful for Mrs. Ryan’s generosity and honored to provide a permanent home for Lt. General Ryan’s silver punch bowl set.

**R**ecently the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force received from Mrs. Martin J. Ryan the silver Paul Revere punch bowl set that was presented to her late husband, Lt. General Martin J. Ryan, Jr., following his service as commander of Air Combat Command’s 8th Air Force. Ryan began his Air Force career in 1959 as an aviation cadet. His service included over 800 combat hours in the UC-123 while stationed at Phan Rang Air Base, South Vietnam. Ryan com-

manded the 7th Bombardment Wing from April 1982 until he took command of the 45th Air Division of Strategic Air Command in November 1983. He commanded the 8th Air Force from May 1991 to July 1993. During his career, Ryan flew the B-1, B-52, FB-111, KC-135, T-33, T-38, T-39, UC-123 and accumulated over 6,000 flying hours. He retired in August 1993 and passed on 1 January 2005. The punch bowl is engraved with the 8th Air Force insignia and this notation:



# AFTER 7 DECADES, POW'S PRIZED GOLD RING COMES HOME

By Allen G. Breed

**R**ALEIGH, N.C. — After a year and a half behind barbed wire as a prisoner in World War II, 2nd Lt. David C. Cox had just about reached his breaking point.

Deliveries of Red Cross parcels to Stalag VII-A had all but ceased, and the U.S. Army bomber co-pilot and his fellow POWs were subsisting on scanty rations of bug-infested soup and bread. Outside the wire, Adolf Hitler's forces showed no signs of giving up.

Cold and hungry, the North Carolinian made a difficult decision. He slipped the gold aviator's ring - a gift from his parents - off his finger and passed it through a fence to an Italian POW, who handed back a couple of chocolate bars.

He would never again see the ring. But it did not disappear.

About a dozen family members and friends gathered in the living room of David C. Cox Jr.'s Raleigh home and watched as he slit open a small yellow parcel from Germany. The 67-year-old son dug through the crinkly packing material and carefully removed a little plastic box.

"And here it is," he said with a long sigh as he pulled out the ring. "Oh, my goodness. ... I never thought it would ever happen. I thought it was gone. We all thought it was gone.

"He thought it was gone," he said of his late father.

The story of how the ring made it back to the Cox family is a testament



to a former enemy's generosity, the reach of the Internet and the healing power of time.

Following the December 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the elder Cox left college and enlisted. The Army Air Corps accepted him on his second application.

He graduated from flight school on July 26, 1942. That same day, he married his high school sweetheart, Hilda Walker.

To celebrate his commission, Irvin and Connie Bell Cox presented their

middle son with a gold signet ring, the oval emblazoned with a raised propeller and wings. Engraved inside were the words, "Mother & Father to David C. Cox Greensboro, NC," and the numbers 10-4-18-42 - his birthday and the current year.

Cox was assigned to the 305th Bomb Group, 364th Squadron - part of the "Mighty Eighth" Air Force. By October, he was in England.

As a co-pilot in the B-17 "Flying Fortress," Cox flew more than a dozen bombing missions over occupied France and the German heartland. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for helping to get his burning plane back to England from a May 1943 raid that cost the lives of half his 10-man crew.

On July 28, 1943, Cox's plane was shot down over Kassel, Germany. He parachuted into a rose garden, was taken prisoner, interrogated and then shipped to Stalag Luft III, the POW





2nd Lt. David C. Cox, center, with fellow survivors from the May 17, 1943 mission where Cox was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for helping to get his burning plane back to England from a raid that cost the lives of half his 10-man crew.

camp made famous in the Steve McQueen film, "The Great Escape."

He remained there until January 1945, when he and the other Allied officers were force-marched three days through the snow, then packed into train cars for another three days before ending up at Stalag VII-A near Moosburg, northeast of Munich.

As Hitler's Third Reich collapsed upon itself, POWs from all over found their way to Moosburg. By the time Cox arrived, conditions there went from bad to what one historian described as "barely correct by the standards of the Geneva Convention."

It was at Moosburg that he traded the ring for the candy bars.

Finally, on April

28, 1945, Gen. George Patton's 14th Armored Division liberated the camp, and Cox, who was promoted to 1st lieutenant, made his way back to North Carolina. He started a tire retreading equipment company with his brother, and he and Hilda raised three children.

Cox didn't talk much about the war, except to remind his children of his privations when they refused to clean their plates. And he spoke wistfully

about his lost ring.

Upon his return from the war, one of the first things Cox did was to have an exact duplicate made of his prized ring - right down to the inscription. When he died in 1994, the replica passed to his son, David Jr., who wore it until it finally broke in the middle.

Now fast-forward to today and the tiny Bavarian village of Hohenberg, a picturesque collection of stucco and

half-timbered houses.

Mark and Mindy Turner moved there about a year ago so he could take a job as an air traffic controller at the nearby U.S. Army installation in Ansbach. Earlier this



A pair of gold aviator rings - a replica, right, of the original ring, at left, that belonged to 2nd Lt. David C. Cox



month, the couple accepted a dinner invitation from their neighbors, Martin and Regina Kiss.

A 64-year-old master church painter by trade, Martin Kiss is also a skilled artist, and after dinner he showed his visitors around his studio. Then he mentioned he had something else he'd like them to see.

Kiss disappeared into the living room and returned with a gold ring - then told a story.

The Kiss family was Hungarian - the name is pronounced "KISH" - and comes from an area in the northern part of present-day Serbia. They ran a small pub near the Danube River.

A Russian soldier on his way home after the war traded the ring to the family - presumably in exchange for room and board, Kiss' grandmother told him. His "Oma" gave it to him when he moved to Germany in 1971 - for luck, or in case he needed some quick cash.

Kiss wore it proudly on his pinkie. He realized it must have come from an American soldier, but didn't know how to trace its owner - especially in a new country that wasn't all that eager to talk about the war.

Worried it might get damaged as he worked, Kiss placed the ring in a corked glass bottle with an old coin and a gold chain.

Still, he never stopped thinking about the original owner - and now, with two computer-savvy Americans in his home, he decided it was time to try and find him.

Mark Turner went online when he got back home. Within 20 minutes, he'd hit pay dirt.

He found a 2005 master's thesis from North Carolina State University. One focus of Norwood McDowell's 219-page paper was the war diary of his wife's grandfather, David C. Cox Sr. - the name on the ring's inscription.

And there, on page 179, was the anecdote about the chocolate bars. After all those years, this epic ring cycle had ended within a two-hour drive of where it began.

"It just seemed like it couldn't be true," says Turner.

Turner emailed McDowell a photograph of the ring and its inscription.

"That's it for sure," an ecstatic David Cox replied when McDowell forwarded the picture.

"Well, praise the Lord!" Mindy

Turner wrote back. "We are so excited for your family!"

After a few more emails and phone calls, the ring was on its way to the United States.

Cradling it in his hand after opening the package Friday, the pilot's son was struck by the original's condition, compared to its replacement. His sister, Joy Wagner, walked over and took the ring in her hands.

"Gosh, it's beautiful," she said as tears welled in her eyes. "Oh, that's so special."

David Cox said holding the ring gave him goose bumps.

"I feel his presence," he said of his father. "I wish he was here."

Kiss - whose own grandfather spent several years in a Soviet camp during and after the war - said in a phone interview with The Associated Press that his only regret is that David Cox Sr. and his grandmother weren't alive to share the "happy ending."

Refusing to accept even reimbursement for the shipping, he added, "You know the old saying: 'It's better to give than to receive.'"



Martin Kiss holds a photo of his grandparents

# Dropping Tones

## *The Combat Evaluation Group and Sky Spot in Vietnam*

Submitted by Yancy Mailes

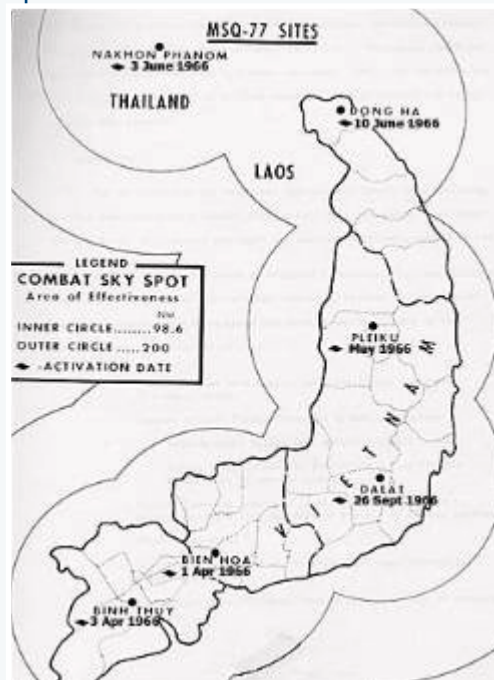
Director, History & Museum Program Air Force Global Strike Command

**A**n FB-111, tail number 67-7194, flies 50,000 feet over the target. The charted path, altitudes and target site had been planned days before, just like any other sortie. The bomber crew approaches their target, radar from below locks on to the air craft. The crew jams the signal, quickly enough to break the automatic tracking lock. With the target below, the weapons operator releases the weapon.

The bomb run described was not an attack on a hostile location, but a simulated practice bombing run against the Combat Evaluation Group (CEVG) in Northern Wyoming. The bomb they dropped was not ordinance, it was an electronic signal used to calculate how close a bomb would have come to the target. The only difference between this training sortie and a war time strike was electronic scoring. The ability to score these practice sorties made the CEVG important in training, maintaining and standardizing the way Strategic Air Command (SAC) bomber crews performed their missions from 1961 through the early 1990s.

Prior to 1961, during the formative years of SAC, bomber crews suffered from high accident rates, low bombing accuracy and lack of command standardization. Gen. Curtis LeMay in 1949, formed a new squadron to standardize and instruct aircrew bombing across SAC, he formed the 3908th Strategic Evaluation Squadron. On Aug. 1, 1961, the 3908 SES combined with 1st Radar Bomb Scoring, a World War II-activated ground based radar bomb scoring group. This combined group had a three-fold mission; to create command standardization, to provide radar bomb and electronic warfare scoring and provide contingency combat support.

With headquarters at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., the CEVG had permanent detachments in more than 10 states including; Maine, New York, Kentucky, Colorado, Idaho and Arizona to name a few. The CEVG also had locations in Korea, Guam and Germany. With all of these locations having completely different terrains, crews could train for nearly any mission, and be afforded realistic locations.



Strategic Air Command crews were not the only ones who used the training sites. Navy, Marines, National Guard, NATO and Korean Forces all used the radar scoring system to gauge the accuracy of their bomb drops. Strategic Air Command crews, in particular, practiced so regularly they became over prepared at flying against the stationary targets, so SAC took the Radar Bomb Scoring, or RBS, portion of the CEVG that detected

how close a bomb drop was to the target by using electronic signals and combined the RBS task with the mobile capability of a train, creating the RBS Express to increase the degree of bombing difficulty.

Originally using borrowed Army Hospital cars, planners designed the Express to be a self-contained facility, intended for remote locations. Lodging, maintenance and scoring equipment, SAC equipped the train cars with all the necessities to perform the RBS mission. The RBS Express began running routes in February 1961 before becoming part of the CEVG. The men on the RBS Express went on call 24 hours a day in remote duty locations for 45-day tours and serving two tours a year. The trains would be on location for months at a time before moving.

The Express crews scored the flights exactly the same the stationary sites did. The RBS transmitted S and X band radio waves at the approaching plane. This allowed the RBS to communicate directly with the incoming bombers and to score the mock bomb drop. Once the RBS crew picked up the plane on the radar screen, they begin playing the role of an enemy target. First the RBS crew locked on to the aircraft, giving the Electronic Warfare Officer on the plane, seconds to detect the lock-on and counter jam it, or in theory, the aircraft would had been scored as destroyed. The electronic warfare officer must also concurrently detect other types of electronic interference the RBS created while jamming the CEVG.

The RBS crew graded the reaction time and effectiveness in all cases graded and the total added to the overall bomb run score. Meanwhile, ground crews produced different jamming signals to block





the radar navigator's image of the target area. This technique tested the ability of the radar navigator to hit the target in adverse conditions.

The primary scoring radar was also locked on to the bomber and plotted the course of the bomber. When the bomber was a certain distance of the target the radar navigator transmitted a high pitched tone that the RBS site received. The radar tracking equipment followed the tone until the bombardier mock dropped the weapon, causing a break in the tone received by the RBS. Bomber crews often referred to these practice missions as dropping tones. Once the mock weapon was released, the tone would break and the RBS men determined mathematically the ground speed, direction and location a real bomb would have exploded.

By using the RBS system, SAC standardized bomber flying, and identify weakness in training. The CEVG did not exist just to remedy weak flyers, but identified the best flyers. Since 1961, the CEVG assumed the responsibility of scoring the Bomb Comp. By using the same methods they would have used to score any other bomb run the CEVG determined who won the prestigious Competition.

In addition to their other duties, in 1966, the men of the CEVG began fulfilling their contingency operations role in the Vietnam War. When the U.S. began using the B-52, commanders found that the crews had trouble navigating and delivering ordnances with accuracy. The thick vegetation and rolling terrain of Vietnam limited their ability to use radar. To remedy this, SAC used the

CEVG to direct aerial bombing raids, under the code name Combat Sky Spot. The CEVG personnel guided bombers along a designated routes, and signaled aircrews when to release their weapons. More than 3,000 men manned multiple Sky Spot locations, 24 hours a day, from March 1966 until August 1973 in South Vietnam, Thailand and Laos. They directed more than 300,000 USAF, Navy, and Marine sorties, including reconnaissance and rescue. They also directed 150,000 tactical air strikes, as well as 75 percent of all B-52 strikes. The men in Sky Spot also participated in many Arc Light sorties including the Linebacker II missions. Unfortunately, like many who supported Vietnam, Sky Spot suffered casualties.

Civilian surveyors and builders as well as Airmen died in building Sky Spot locations, and unfortunately once built, radar sites were vulnerable. Once located, the Sky Spot personnel became high targets, as hostile Vietnamese realized that by destroying a relatively undefended radar building that U.S. air power became inaccurate and ineffective.

Recently, some of the men and women of the CEVG held a reunion at Barksdale AFB. Many talked about the missions they were a part of, or what it was like at these secluded radar sites, but mainly they spoke about impact the CEVG had on their lives. For many, traveling on the CEVG Express allowed them to go places in the country that they would have otherwise not have seen, and to visit with people they otherwise would never come into contact. People who never had contact with the military or the Air Force before. Memories were shared about how

communities would adopt the RBS teams during the holiday season, and the events in the towns they participated in.

The 1 CEVG held a unique mission in SAC's history. Though the Air Force has nothing to compare to it today, with most ordnance being GPS or laser guided, the CEVG represented something completely SAC - a group whose main purpose was to train bomber crews to be flawless at their work. Practice and perfection is what these crew offered to the bomber community. With their unique mission, they are if nothing else an interesting part of our SAC past.

Below is as complete a list as can be formed at this time from the AFGSC History Office records of the CEVG combat casualties.

Lt. Col. Clarence F. Blanton  
Tech. Sgt. James H. Calfee  
Staff Sgt. James W. Davis  
Chief Master Sgt. Richard L. Etchberger  
Staff Sgt. Henry G. Gish  
Staff Sgt. John P. Guerin  
Staff Sgt. Willis R. Hall  
Tech. Sgt. Melvin A. Holland  
Airman 1st Class Rufus L. James  
Tech. Sgt. Bruce E. Mansfield  
Tech Sgt. Antone P. Marks  
Staff Sgt. Jerry Olds  
Staff Sgt. David S. Price  
Tech. Sgt. Patrick L. Shannon  
Tech Sgt. Lowell V. Smith  
Tech Sgt. Donald K. Springsteadah  
Staff Sgt. Ephraim Vasquez  
Staff Sgt. Don F. Worley

*Editor's note: Linebacker I, the 3rd in this series of articles, will appear in the September 2014 issue of 8th A F News.*

# A Wikipedia for the Air War

The American Air Museum in Britain gets a new website

By Jenny Cousins



## ABOUT THE AMERICAN AIR MUSEUM

*The American Air Museum in Britain is located at IWM Duxford, the former home of the USAAF's 78th Fighter Group. It opened in 1997 to tell the story of American air power and the integral relationship between the United States and the United Kingdom. It stands as a memorial to the many airmen who fought and died from Britain in defense of democracy and freedom during World War II.*

Many Eighth Air Force Historical Society members have also been supporters of the American Air Museum in Britain (AAM) over the years. We are delighted to be able to bring you an update on progress and a special preview of what the museum's new website will be like.

In 2012, the AAM acquired the photographic collection of Roger Freeman, a deeply-respected historian of the Eighth, who sadly succumbed to cancer in 2005. The collection consists of approximately 13,000 prints and slides assembled by Roger as a result of a lifetime's passion for preserving the legacy of the Eighth and Ninth Army Air Forces. The photographs cover all aspects of the air war, from troop carrier groups to military policemen.

Some of the photographs may be familiar to you, but it is possible that we may have one or two of your group that you have not seen before. Roger organized the photographs with great

care, but they often have no information on the back which identifies whom they show and where exactly they were taken. Over the past year, our team has taken copies of the pictures with us when we have visited veterans, other museums and group reunions. It is always a very exciting moment when people have recognized familiar places or – better still – their friends or themselves.



*The site is currently in development, and will be launched in early September.*

## ABOUT THE TEAM

There are lots of people working on the American Air Museum project, which also includes a major program of conservation work to ensure that the historic aircraft are passed on in good condition for future generations to enjoy.

The AAM team is led by **Jenny Cousins** who started work on the project in February 2011. She studied at Oxford University and previously worked for English Heritage, looking after historical sites ranging from Queen Victoria's home to Dover Castle.



**Carl Warner** studied at Cambridge University and has been researching and sharing the history of Duxford for 10 years. He is currently working on researching material which will go into the new exhibitions in the American Air Museum.

**Lucy May Maxwell** studied at Cambridge University and joined the museum in 2013. As Research Officer, she is primarily responsible for cataloguing the Roger Freeman Collection.

**John Delaney** is the Collections Manager at Duxford. He studied at the University of Wales and has been at the museum for over 20 years. He is responsible for collecting objects for display in the American Air Museum.



We intend to make these images available on the internet by September 2014. By going to [www.americanairmuseum.com](http://www.americanairmuseum.com) you will be able to browse them and find out what we already know about them. However, we hope that you will do more than that.

We intend to share the information and service histories through our website and we encourage you to come forward and do the same. By registering on the website with your email address, you will be able to label the photographs with any information that you know about them. You can also upload your own photographs or create your own biographical entry. We are very keen to get help from veterans and their families. However, although we will rely on those with expert knowledge or experience to help us identify the pictures, we are also targeting schoolchildren and those new to the air war, encouraging them to research a veteran or an aircraft and tell others what they have learned by creating an online biography of a person or an airplane.



We already have a lot of information which has been contributed by a range of organizations and individuals, including the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Savannah, which has shared an impressively

detailed database of airmen featuring over 225,000 names. Please help us add more information to the website, so that it becomes an online memorial to the generation who gave so much to us.



Ed Lukach with his son, grandkids, and great-grandkids proudly wearing T-shirts that proclaim:

"I'm here because a

**B-17**

**Always got [me, my Dad, Grandpa, or Great Grandpa] home."**



# Pinpointing the Past: A Promising Life Cut Short

By Samantha Misa

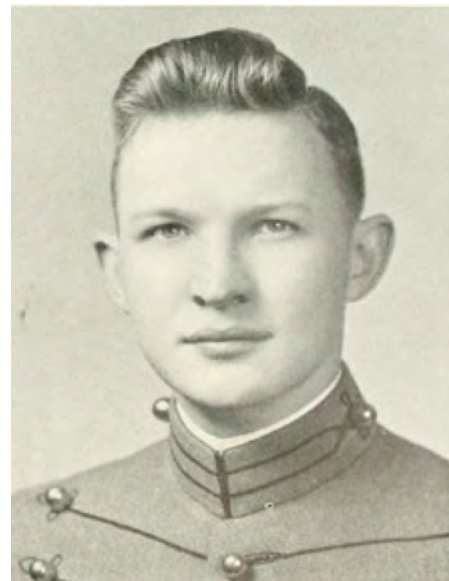
**"I would not have known any of this if it were not for the help of Bovina Town Historian Ray LaFever, who knew the intimate details of the crash and where to start looking"**

I am 18 years old, and I've always had a great interest in and love for history. I'm not quite sure where it comes from. Maybe it's because my grandfather fought in WWII. My grandfather was Edward C. Rogers, a T/Sgt and top turret engineer on the B-17 King Bee. He was part of the 100th Bomb Group during the war, and he and his crew flew 35 missions, 6 of which were to Berlin.

I learned this through research and family paperwork that I found. My grandfather, although alive for most of my life, died before I was mature enough

to develop an interest in the past and ask him myself of his experiences during this amazing, interesting, and extremely important part of history. I will never forgive myself for not having talked to him when I had the chance.

At the end of high school, after working at a museum for the summer, I was told of a WWII plane crash that had happened in 1945 a block away from my house. I live in Bovina, a small farming community in upstate New York. The Bovina town historian, Ray LaFever, works with me at the local museum, the Delaware County Historical Association.



*Robert Bragg Clark*

LaFever, along with some other locals, had made a few expeditions to the spot in town where the plane went down. The Army had been called once the crash happened, and most of the wreckage hauled away, but they went up trying to find the exact spot where it happened. No one seems to know the exact location, but it is known that the plane went down on what is called Moon Mountain.

The pilot was Robert Bragg Clark, who was flying an AT-6 Texan trainer. He had left Bolling Field, Washington and was on a training trip to Stewart Field in Newburgh. It was 9 PM on April 29, 1945, and the weather conditions were getting progressively worse. There were showers and clouds at 3,000 feet. Around midnight, Clark, who barely had an hour of experience flying on instruments, realized that he had passed his target and began to circle the area known as Moon Mountain. According to the records, Clark, who was flying below the clouds at this time, got too low and his plane's left wing struck a tree. The plane crashed into the east side of the mountain. Early the next morning, the wreckage of the plane was found. Clark had been killed instantly, and human error was ruled to be the cause of the accident.

Although the site soon was put under guard, it did not stop the townspeople from coming to see what had happened. The debris field was so large that not all of it could be watched. A 43 pound engine piece was taken as a souvenir by a local man. Even groups of school children were brought up to the mountain to gawk at the crash site.

Robert Clark was a young man who



*Samantha Misa digging for wreckage*





*An original photo of the crash*

was full of promise. He had been the class valedictorian, and was a member of the National Honor Society. Clark won state recognition for his debating talents, and had been appointed to the United States Military Academy at West Point by a Nebraska state senator. At the time of his death, Clark had almost gained enough flying hours to earn his wings. What makes his achievements all the more remarkable is that, when he was in high school, his parents divorced. They later remarried other people, but his mother would later commit suicide. To me, the saddest part of all was the war was nearing its end, and Clark would not live to see it's completion.

As I mentioned, there had been a few previous expeditions to Moon Mountain to attempt to locate the exact crash site and maybe find some debris. Treks up the mountain had so far been unsuccessful. Moon Mountain is 2,665 feet high, and the altimeter from Clark's plane read 2,460 feet at the time of the crash. Using GPS technology, the right altitude was found, but the area was still too broad to do any real searching. The debris field was estimated to be 300 feet around from the actual impact, so we had a lot of ground to cover. In an effort to make our task easier, I brought out my trusty metal detector and swept the area. Along with historian Ray LaFever, I was joined by the property owner Donald Farley and videographer Chris Ingvordsen, who was there to document our search.

It was a cold, bitter fall day when we set out. I began sweeping the entire area, letting the guys point me in any direction they thought they might be significant. The metal detector was silent. "I'd be happy with anything," I remember Chris saying, "Even one little screw or bolt to justify all of our trips up here. Anything to point us in the right direction." The landscape was peaceful and undisturbed. There had been many "ear" witnesses to the crash, people who had heard it but had not seen it. Some people remembered that they could see the wreckage from certain sides of the mountain, but these reports contradicted each other. One local claimed that he remembered playing in a cave that was on the mountain near where the crash had happened. We figured it was worth sweeping around any area that had been in these descriptions.

There was a cave on the property, and we eventually found it. I swept the area with the metal detector, and, for the first time since I had turned it on during that expedition, I got a hit. Cameras rolling, we gently moved the dead leaves and dirt away from the spot, carefully, until we unearthed something out of the ordinary: A pile of cut wires. More than 20 of them were found in the spot, all of them different lengths. Many had preformed ends, some U shaped or circular. We know that they are steel, because the smaller pieces were picked up with a powerful magnet. Many were smooth



*Close-up of some of the wires found*

and unbent, leading to the conclusion that we had found something that was not barbed wire or discarded farm refuse.

We sent photos of our findings to an aviation expert who reported back that he believed that they came from the plane. This was part of his report: "Control cables would be of steel or stainless steel. Main control cables would probably be 3/16" or 1/4". Trim tab cables would probably be 1/8" electrical wire ends that would connect crimped on the end of the wire, but with war time production, the end may have been flattened, soldered and then drilled. The "U" shaped end may just be the wire untwisted, or if drilled, could be a control cable end that would be connected to a bellcrank with a pin." At the end, he added "I would say you have pinpointed the crash site. Good work." And that made it all worth it.

Even though Robert Clark did not die in combat, he was still a young man who gave his life for his country, and anyone who has done that has not died in vain. Clark's death also embodies the sacrifices made by those on the home front, those who were not in combat but still gave so much. So maybe that's why I love history so much; it gives me the opportunity to record and preserve things like this for the people that didn't leave anyone behind to do it for them.

I would not have known any of this if it were not for the help of Bovina Town Historian Ray LaFever, who knew the intimate details of the crash and where to start looking. It's probably thanks to his efforts that material on this event are still around. We plan on making another trip to Moon Mountain this spring, I am attending college at SUNY Geneseo to get a degree in history, and I've volunteered to work at the National Warplane Museum located in the town.

**Asch, Colonel Alfred** of Brentwood, TN died at age 93 on December 8, 2013. Col. Asch was preceded in death by his wife, Naomi Idella Asch. He flew 28 missions in England with the 93rd BG. Asch flew some of the earliest missions with the B-24 bomber. His first over occupied France was particularly harrowing, trying to keep a massive airship on course through flak and anti-aircraft fire. "And when I got down, I said to myself, 'my God, if all these missions are going to be this rough, I'm not going to make it through.'" Asch's memoir *"The Whole Nine Yards"* – a reference to gunners running through a long belt of ammunition – is in our "Book Review" section of this magazine.

**Balcombe, Clayton S.** died in Oceanside, CA, on April 20, 2014, at the age of 90. Clayton was the ninth of ten children. He and his wife Donna, who preceded him in death in 2003, resided in Washington until 1955. He served in the 303rd Bomb Group (H) as Tech Sergeant. In March 1943, his B-17 collided with another aircraft over the Molesworth Air Base at Mears Ashby, England, and with the exception of he and another soldier, all perished. After recuperation, Clayton returned to active flying duties on D-Day. "I've had a great run," he said.

**Boland, Anthony Joseph** passed away January 2014 at the age of 91. He was with the 358th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group and flew 35 missions over Germany as a bombardier and navigator in a B-17. He was a full Bird Colonel. After returning to the States he became a pilot. Anthony remained in the United States Air Force Reserves, serving his country for forty



**Clayton Balcombe**



**Anthony Boland**

years. Flying was a special enjoyment of his life. Anthony is survived by his wife Nancy

**Edwards, Tom** was one of the finest pilots in the 491st BG. Tom flew his 35 missions in record time towards the end of the war. Many times his squadron was on group lead. He was proudest of his 4 missions to Berlin and used to tell me he had been living on borrowed time ever since. His time ran out at age 90 on March 28.

Tom was a big-game hunter. He pursued his hobby worldwide. Whether it was polar bears in Alaska or lions in Kenya, Tom had prevailed. When I visited him several years ago at his summer home in Waynesville, NC, I stepped into a veritable wildlife museum. Although I never visited him in Florida, I understand he was equally proficient as a deep-water fisherman. We look forward to seeing him in the Mighty Eighth pub "across the river and through the trees" (Gen. Stonewall Jackson, CSA).

PS: Donna, I will attempt to email you a picture of Tom and his prize trophy, a 14-point elk, mounted over his fireplace in his NC home.

Submitted by Farish HAP Chandler, Jr.  
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**Dorman, Frank C. Jr.** was born in 1920 in Greenwood, Mississippi.

He met Mary Virginia Thomas at UT, and was smitten. He flew 24 Mighty 8th AAC missions in B-24 Liberators over Germany, including Normandy, before Mary allowed an infamous winter of '44 wedding. Frank has been welcomed Home by Mary Virginia and daughter, Jenan, as well as one sister, Eleanor.

**Gulliver, Arthur William** 91, died on February 2013 surrounded by his family and the music he loved. A musical celebration of his life was



**Frank Dorman**

held at the Ralston United Church of Christ, Ralston, Nebraska. In 1942 he entered the US Army as a meteorology cadet and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in 1943 before joining the 18th Weather Squadron in England in 1944. He also served in the 21st Weather Squadron in Germany in 1945. After cessation of hostilities in Europe he was assigned to the HQ 9th Air Force Weather Central at Bad Kissingen, Germany. In April 1946, he was discharged from the Army and accepted a position as Senior Meteorologist with Mid-Continent Airlines, Kansas City, Missouri. In April, 1949, he accepted an appointment as a civilian meteorologist at the USAF Weather Central, Andrews AFB, Maryland, and in September, 1949, he was assigned to the First Weather Service Special Projects Section. In 1955 he was appointed project officer for the move of the Weather Central from Andrews AFB to Suitland, Maryland. There he served as Chief of the Data Processing, Integration and Analysis Branch of the Weather Central. In November, 1957, the functions of the Air Force Weather Central were moved to Offutt AFB, Bellevue, Nebraska. He served as Chief Technical Adviser to the Commander and as Assistant to the Operations Officer of the Air Force Global Weather Central until his retirement in 1987. During that time, the center grew from 65 employees to 700, becoming the largest real-time environmental data processing center in the U.S. Upon his retirement, the Arthur W. Gulliver Heritage Hall was dedicated in his honor, and is now located in the new Air Force Global Weather Agency building at Offutt Air Force Base. While serving in the Weather Service Special Projects Section, he was selected to be a supervising meteorologist in the newly formed classified "Cold War" unit. He worked on top-secret projects and became the Air Force's expert in forecasting Soviet and Arctic weather. He made the critical two-day cloud forecast of clear skies for the first U-2 reconnaissance aircraft flight over the Soviet Union on July 4, 1956. Mr. Gulliver continued his involvement in weather support for many top-secret



National programs which were assigned the highest priority by the President of the United States. Some of these were the U-2 and SR-71 reconnaissance programs, the Department of Defense Meteorological satellites, and the overhead reconnaissance satellites. His military decorations include the European Theater Ribbon with three battle stars, the WWII victory medal, the Army of Occupation Medal, the US Army Commendation Medal, the USAF Meritorious Civilian Service Medal and the AFGWC Commanders Award. Mr. Gulliver had been a member of the American Meteorological Society since 1945 and was a charter member of the National Weather Association. He sang with the Omaha Symphonic Chorus and served as a board member. He was a member of the Lions Club International, was active in Boy Scouts of America, and was a member of the Ralston United Church of Christ where he served as chancel choir director for 30 years. He was a member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, founded the 18th Weather Squadron Historical group and wrote their newsletter. He also served as the weather consultant for the WWII English Airfield control tower built by the 8th Air Force at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton, Ohio. He is survived by his wife of 69 years, Arlene McDermott, whom he married on September 9, 1943 in Merville, Iowa.

**Graham, James Elliott** died February 2014 in Frisco, Texas. He married the love of his life, Betty Weaver Graham, in Dallas, Texas. Together they had 66 wonderful years. Jim completed 35 combat missions as a B-17 copilot with the 96th Bomb Group. Jim later served with the 1st Cavalry Division in the Korean War and retired in 1970.

**Graves, Donald E.** past away April 2014. He was a member of the 96th Bomb Group and flew in the 339th Bomb Squadron as a Radion Operator and Machine Gun Mechanic. He completing 35 missions and receiving the Distinguished Flying Cross twice and the Air Medal seven times. Last surviving member of "Pappy's Boys" crew. Flew two missions on D-day, first over Normandy, second into Germany. He

was a life member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and donated several of his personal items to the Museum.

**Greene, Lt. Col. David A.** died at the Long Island State Veterans Home in Stony Brook. He was 91. Greene was born in Manhattan and had wanted to be a pilot since he was 5 years old. He was assigned to the 392nd Bomb Group and flew 30 combat missions. In 1968, he was recalled to active duty and flew missions out of Mildenhall, England, to support NATO forces in Vietnam. After his retirement, Greene was active in the 8th AFHS; the Southern Wing Chapter of the 392nd Bomb Group and many others. He was married to Renee Strum for 51 years.



**David Greene**

**Grove, Staff Sgt Ronald W.** was a tail gunner on Lt Max E Wilson's crew; they arrived at Horham on 5 April 1944, first serving under 335th BS Commanding Officer, Bob Cozens until his departure for the ZoI (Zone of the Interior - continental U.S.) on 12 April 1944. They flew their first combat mission on 18 April 1944, the target being Berlin (Brandenburg area), Germany; that mission was led by Lt Col David T McKnight, 95th

BG Air Exec, flying in the pathfinder aircraft crewed by Lt George S Hansen crew (Lt Jesse Edgar, bombardier). Lt Max E Wilson and crew were shot down on the 24 April 1944 mission to Friedrichshafen, Germany; Lt Edward G Cunningham & crew were also shot down on this same mission. The Wilson crew, in B-17G s/n 231632, r/t letter "Z", crash landed at Dubendorf, Switzerland at 12:48 hours local time. The mission was led by Capt Raymond J Abbott, 334th BS Commanding Officer, flying in Capt Robert H Leonard's B-17G (Lt William "Ed" Charles, navigator). The entire crew survived the crash landing and were interned by Swiss Armed Forces; on that particular mission, Lt George J Prokopec (bombardier) had a head cold and was replaced by S/Sgt John L Dzedzy, as togglier (Lt Prokopec went on to become a radar navigator (Mickey operator) on James M Miller's 95th BG pathfinder crew, completing his missions with the 95th BG & serving on the 13th CBW staff). Seven of the ten man Wilson crew escaped from their internment camps during the next 8 months. Dad escaped from internment on November 25, 1944 making his way via the Canadian, Polish, & French Underground to U.S. forces in southeastern France. He returned to the ZoI and began training as an aerial gunner on B-29's in early 1945 for deployment to the Pacific, until just before cessation of hostilities.



**Staff Sgt Ronald Grove with Lt Max E Wilson's crew**

**Oswald, Alois G. "Al" Jr.** passed away January 5, 2014. He flew 35 combat missions as bombardier on the 427th BS *Stewart S. Ackerman Crew*.

He regularly attended the 303rd BG Reunions and the 8th AF Reunions.

**Richardson, Billy D. - 1st Lt. USAF (Ret)**, died January 31, 2014. He was assigned to the 32 Pursuit Squadron of the 36th Pursuit Group. He worked in armament on the P-36 and the P-40. After graduating from Glider Pilot School he was promoted to Staff Sergeant. He requested farther training as a bombardier and was assigned to Bombardier Class 43-14. He completed 30 missions as a Bombardier on targets in Germany and German occupied territories. He is preceded in death by his wife of 66 years, Mary Z. Tenorio.

**Ringvall, Neal Theodore** of Quarry Heights died November 2013. He was 92 and the husband of Ethel (Martin)

Ringvall. He was a Navigator on a B-17 Bomber and flew 34 missions. He flew 2 missions on D-Day. He was a part of the 306th Bomb Group

**Sevi, Alfred** 95, of Clinton Township died February 2014. Alfred was born and raised in Nazareth, PA. During World War II he flew thirty missions as a B-17, Flying Fortress, crew member in the 388th Bomb Group. The crew of the *Patty Jo* remained close friends throughout their lives a they realized the American dream as members of the greatest generation. Alfred lived a remarkable life with Margaret, his wife of 70 years.

**Steiner, Robert L.**, age 90, passed away October 2013 in Washington, D.C., beloved husband of Christine Steiner.

**Stubbs, Erskine Horace**, 93, of Orange Park, FL passed away March 2014. Erskine was born in Lumpkin, GA. He was a Sergeant and served in

the US Air Force and was a POW.

**Theodore J. "Ted" Knauff**, 92, of Canadohta Lake, PA passed a September 2013. He served as an aircraft mechanic working on the B-17's. He was very proud of his service to his country in time of war. Ted married Katherine "Kay" Lutz on September 1, 1942 in Trenton, New Jersey.

**Vanderwall, Donald James** age 91, of Mercer Island, WA and formerly of Muskegon, MI, died February 2014, in Bellevue, WA. He was preceded in death by his wife Margaret (VanderWall) Vanderwall. Don was a 1st Lieutenant and B-24 bomber pilot. Don was an aeronautical engineer retiring in 1991 after working 43 years for the Boeing Company.

**Wakefield, J. Carroll (Toosy)** 98, passed away in Austin, Texas on February 26, 2014. When war was declared in 1941, Carroll flew 87 mis-



**Henry Willis Crew**

**Front:** Henry L. Willis (P), Raymond R. Brandstorm (CP), Clifford D. Orr (B) and Stuart Manthey (N)

**Back:** James O. Grimes (RO), Robert F. Nance (WG), Vern Allen (BT), Clayton E. Ridge (TG), and Harold L. Williamson (E)



sions and earned the Air Medal four times, the Distinguished Flying Cross three times, and the Silver Star for gallantry in action. After participation in Normandy invasion, Carroll was advanced to headquarters, where he was Combat Operations Officer for the 65th Fighter Wing. He is survived by his wife of 76 years, Margaret, **Wills, Henry (Hank)**

## Lamoine

Twin Falls ----Hank Wills, 91, passed away April 2014. He served as a B-17 Bomber pilot with the 306th BG, before taking command of his own B-17 Bomber, per procedure, he flew as a co-pilot before his first mission as a pilot. On that flight, they were shot down over France. Hank survived and made it back to England. Afterwards, as pilot, Hank and his crew flew 30 missions over Germany. Hank and his initial co-pilot, Ray Brandstrom of Stanwood Washington, became life-long friends. Hank's brothers Wes and Bob also had joined the Air Force and were pilots during World War II. Wes was killed in China in 1943. Ernie was 10 years younger than Hank and joined the Air Force later, becoming a pilot and flight instructor. An article in *People Magazine* pointed out the fact they were the only four blood brothers who served as pilots and officers in the U.S. Air Force. Oldest brother Lowell also became a pilot and the four remaining brothers continued to fly private planes for business and pleasure for years to come. On April 16th, 1949, he married Rose Alban of Gooding, Idaho.

## FALLEN COMRADES OF THE 357TH FIGHTER GROUP:

### Remembering Captain Bill Overstreet

By Pastor Jeff Clemens

He never thought he would live past age 23. On December 29th 2013, Bill Overstreet passed away at age 92 after a brief illness in Roanoke, Virginia.

His final flight is a memorable one and worthy of commemoration. Not until his later years, would Bill receive worldwide recognition as a P-51 fighter pilot. His stories are nearly unbelievable, but constantly true.

Bill's most notable action was a solitary air battle which started at 30,000 feet. Once cleared from the bombers, Bill, in his Berlin Express, engaged a German Me-109 in a running half hour dogfight over France. Each man countered the other in numerous maneuvers in this contest of death. Each second seemed like an eternity.

Trading energy for advantage, their altitudes diminished. The enemy pilot then led Bill over Paris. This was the German's most heavily defended zone, bristling with accurate anti-aircraft artillery (AAA). Perhaps this would end his problem by having his American adversary shot off his tail.

Undeterred, Bill aggressively fought his opponent. He was then assaulted by a withering barrage of anti-aircraft fire. "Flak happy," Bill continued his chase after the German pilot, over the streets of Paris, with his propeller only ten feet off the ground and at a speed well over three hundred miles per hour.

In desperation, the enemy pilot made a fateful and poor decision. Out of options, he flew under the Eiffel Tower, with Bill's Mustang hot on

his tail. Once he attempted to pull up, Bill had his shot.

There was no other place to go. A short burst from the Mustang's wings unleashed a hail of fifty-caliber machine gun rounds. The Messerschmitt fighter was finished. The enemy aircraft then pancaked into earth, in a shower of debris and fire. A smoldering ruin, which fell a scant mile from the imposing monument.



Great danger remained. The surrounding air was filled with lead. Numerous AAA gunners continued to target the lone Mustang. Bill sped his P-51 at low level to evade their wrath. Eventually he linked with another American fighter, making it safely back to Leiston, England.

Below remained the thousands of French citizens who witnessed this remarkable fight. His action was considered a "sign" elevating the weary spirits of the French for the victory to come after D-Day in 1944. This was but one day of a brutal war of attrition. However, in December of 2009, the French would remember.

Sixty-five years later, Bill would receive a much-deserved Legion of Honor award from the people of France by the hand of the French Ambassador. This ceremony occurred at the National D-Day Memorial, in Bedford, Virginia.

It was Bill's only desire that his friends who died in the war would be remembered. In 2005 a limited edition print was issued by Stan Stokes to honor "The Fallen Comrades of The 357th Fighter Group". It lists all of the men who were lost in the war and serves as a painful reminder of the cost of conflict.

Bill selected the theme for the painting. This final tribute is a symbolized by a missing man formation, signed by Colonel C.E. ("Bud") Anderson and Bill Overstreet. He personally gave a print to the French Ambassador at the conclusion of the ceremony. Bill's only request, "No kissing."

How is a man measured in the life which he led? By the legacy he leaves behind, both the physical record and those written upon the human heart.

There are a handful of interviews on YouTube where Bill speaks of the war. He is an undocumented ace pilot whose life was centered on service and charity. Unbeknownst to most, Bill is the recipient of two Silver Stars for bravery.

This meant nothing to him compared to the lives lost of his friends, including Captain Eddie Simpson, whose airplane is featured in Stokes' painting as the missing man for the 357th Fighter Group. Bill's consistent request was "All I want is for Eddie Simpson to be remembered."

More information on the 357th Fighter Group and Eddie's heroism can be found at the following website:

[www.cebudanderson.com](http://www.cebudanderson.com)

# Tips for Researching A Loved One

by Duane Giesler

**A**s anyone who has researched information for a loved one can tell you, your labors can be rewarded and fulfilling or they can just as easily be frustrating and test your patience. I would like to offer some tips that I hope will help your personal studies and searches be more successful. For the purpose of this article, suggestions and tips are aimed at the more inexperienced researcher who is looking for data pertinent to a loved one's time in the military.

In September of 2009 the Kassel Mission Historical Society developed the Search and Contact Team (SACT). Its initial mission was to locate and contact veterans of the Mighty 8th's 445th bomb group who survived the bombing raid at Kassel, Germany on September 27th, 1944. It is from our experiences in this successful endeavor that I pass along a few of what I hope will be helpful tips for your searches.

Like the first step of the oft quoted journey of a thousand miles, your search has to have a starting point. The first step in this case is to collect and document what is known. Organize the information that you do have, and begin a journal of facts that you can reference as you travel through the many websites, newspapers, courthouse records, government agencies, etc. that your journey will lead you to. Important data includes date and place of birth, military service number, social security number, military unit, etc.

If you don't already have it, take the time to acquire the veteran's service record. Type <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/> in your address bar, and click on enter. Here you will find the limitations and instructions for ordering your loved one's service record. You may make this request if you are the military veteran, the surviving spouse who has not remarried, or the father, mother, son, daughter, sister or brother. Be patient, this will probably take months to arrive.

If your soldier was on the crew of a downed aircraft, get a copy of the Missing Air Crew Report (MACR) for that incident. Type <http://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/missing-air-crew-reports.html> in your address bar, and click on enter. MACRs are also found at [www.fold3.com](http://www.fold3.com) (formerly [www.footnote.com](http://www.footnote.com)). If you don't have the MACR number you can search by crew member's name.

If your soldier was killed in action request the Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF). Write a letter and cite the Freedom of Information Act or FOIA at the beginning. Include your loved one's information such as full legal name, serial number, unit information, branch of service, and dates of birth and death, and send to:

**U.S. Army  
Human Resources Command  
Attn: AHRC-PAO (FOIA), Room 7S65  
200 Stovall Street  
Alexandria, VA 22331-0400**

**T**o search the National Archives and Records Administration/Access to Archival Databases (NARA AAD) Type <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/> in your address bar, and click enter. NARA contains millions of records. Enter the full name in the search bar and click on search.

[Www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) and other genealogy sites are also good sources of information. The military information found at [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) is also available at NARA AAD. (Ancestry.com is a pay site, NARA AAD is not.)

Type <https://www.fas.org/news/reference/lexicon/acronym.htm> in your address bar, and click on enter. This website contains a dictionary of military acronyms, initialisms, and abbreviations, and will help you with the jargon if you do not have a military background.

Be persistent and methodical with your searches. Frequently a discovery will provide an avenue to fresh leads. Utilize local libraries and newspapers. County court houses can be a treasure trove of archived data as well. People at the local level are often willing to get involved with your search. Don't forget Google. The amount of information that is available through simple Google searches is mind boggling. If you know the veteran's unit, Google it, chances are it has a web presence.

Enter your research with an open mind and avoid the pitfalls of preconceived notions. Your quest is for truth as well as knowledge.

Odds are good that there are other researchers and genealogists in your local community. Most are more than willing to give you advice and lend a helping hand. Be tenacious; if you don't know, ask. Persistence will pay off. Stay organized, stick with it, and happy hunting!

**Duane Giesler  
101 Goldfinch Court, #1  
Mankato, MN 56001  
507.351.6994**

**Lest they be forgotten  
Kassel Mission - 27 September, 1944  
[www.kasselmission.com](http://www.kasselmission.com)**



## HELP WANTED

Volunteer in the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Research Center (former Marine Corps aviator in Vietnam, retired CIA officer, and professor emeritus at Armstrong Atlantic State University) is researching material on the role of 8th Air Force Air Intelligence, 1942-1945. Looking specifically at the roles of the Air Intel officers and NCOs at all echelons, sources and methods of collecting and analyzing intelligence, accuracy of both raw and finished intelligence, and other pertinent material. If you can help, please contact Dr. William Daugherty by email at [wjid@comcast.net](mailto:wjid@comcast.net) or by mail at 260 Park Ave. #803; Pooler, GA 31322.



### The News has arrived

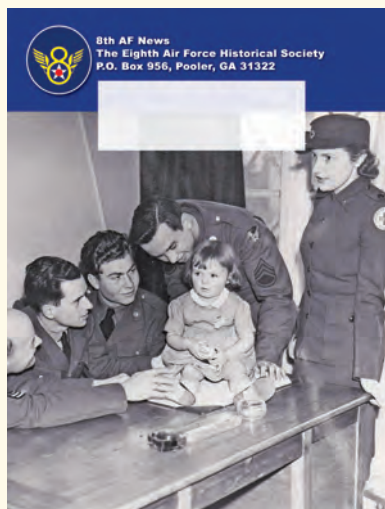
Like always, I walked to the mailbox today. There, among stacks of catalogues, ads and bills was the *8th AF News*. And, as always when it arrives at my house, I knew it was a very special day. A time when the decades rolled away, and we were young again. Historians call World War II the largest and bloodiest conflict in history. And so it was, in terms of the horrors, the losses, the heartbreaks. Yet there also linger memories of a time of courage, of cameraderie and of victory. How else can it be explained that veterans, some seven decades later, wish to remember those days? I am not an 8th AF Veteran. I served in

the British Army, stationed at Bury St. Edmunds, right in the midst of the U.S. AF bases. The roar of the Fortresses taking off at dawn for missions over the continent, was our wake-up call. At night, we girls often mingled among the U.S. Airmen who thronged the streets of Bury in search of a movie or a pint at the Pub.

I grew up in Vienna, Austria in a Jewish family. After Hitler entered Austria in 1938, the persecutions began. My concerned parents managed to send me to England, which saved my life. My mom, dad and only brother perished in the Holocaust.

The sacrifices of so many young men in those long ago days - both in British and the U.S. Forces - Kept England free and led to ultimate victory. I'd like to thank all the hard-working people who make it possible for the *8th AF News* to reach us and keep those long-ago times alive!

Sincerely,  
Frances Nunnally



### March 8th AF News

It was wonderful to go to the mailbox and be greeted by "Sweet Pea" on the cover of the new *8th AF News* yesterday. A big 306th thank you for the wonderful article. Brian, again please thank Gordon for opening his archives for this. We would love to be able to have 2 copies to share with Maureen and our current 306th London contact/neighbor of Maureen's. This is the person who took the most recent photo and keeps

her updated on 306th news. Thank you again so much  
Sue Fox Moyer  
[ssma43@gmail.com](mailto:ssma43@gmail.com)  
306th BG  
SSMA Ed. director

### Andreas Kuoni,

The photo taken by your uncle, on which he had written details on the backside, is of a 95th Bomb Group (the B inside the white square on the tail), 334th Bomb Squadron, B-17G serial number 231329, aircraft identification letter "H", flown by 1st Lieutenant James W. Reed. They were the 95th Bomb Group's lead aircraft on the Augsburg, Germany mission of 16 March 1944. The 95th BG mission commander that day was Major Noel R. Strader, who flew as co-pilot in Lt Reed's aircraft. Major Strader was also the commanding officer of the 336th Bomb Squadron of the 95th Bomb Group. As your uncle's note indicates, all 10 men survived and were interned by the Swiss authorities.



I am attaching a brief write-up about this aircraft and crew, as well as information from the Swiss Warbirds website and Mr Dani Egger, which you may wish to contact ( <http://www.warbird.ch> ). There were also some photos & information pertaining to this aircraft on Facebook, today, which I've also attached. At this time, I do not know of any surviving crew members. I'm hopeful this information will be of use to you, your family, and your uncle.



Best regards,  
Gerald Grove  
President  
95th Bomb Group Memorials  
Foundation Inc  
(p.s. the other photo included in your article, is a B-17 of the 96th Bomb Group, and a different aircraft, serial number 339018, which crashlanded in Switzerland on 25 February 1945)

*Editor's note: We had so many replies to the belly landing question posed in the March 2014 issue--we couldn't possibly print them all, but they all came to the same conclusion. Thank you everyone for your overwhelming responses! ddk*

## William Provansha

Thank you for what you all do with the 8th Air Force News Magazine. I have been a member for a few years and I sure enjoy reading the magazine. I sure appreciate history and understand the importance of the next generation knowing that history. I have a neighbor and a very good friend named William Provansha. He has asked me to search and to check a few things. I am wondering if anyone can point me in the correct direction. I am not really sure on what I am asking either but I can dial this in quickly. Bill flew with the 381st and was shot down on March 6th 1944 on a run to Berlin. He bailed and landed on a rooftop in Cologne and was then taken prisoner for nearly the remainder of the war. He was part of a group that had escaped the camp and then ran into Pattons Army and they had led him to safety. At this point, this is where I see he might want some records corrected for history. I don't think that his records were set straight from this point as he did not return to Ridgewell after this. He mentions being questioned by Stone Christopher in France on April 21st 45. He has mentioned a fire sometime that had cleaned out many records of airmen. My question to you is if there is anyone that you can put me in contact with that I can discuss some of this with? Bill has recently started asking me to do some searches on the computer for him



and look around for a few things. I have had the greatest opportunity to live next to him for 12 years. I am 37 and he is 91 now. Our houses are very close to each other and we talk nearly every day. He is a dog lover and I have two dogs. He goes like clockwork and walks my dogs every single day while I am at work. He is very proud of his service but also very modest about it too. I consider myself one of the luckiest guys ever to live right next door to him and having the ability to know him like I do. I have always had interest in B-17's and when we moved next to each other and I found what he did..... WOW !!! Again, thanks for your involvement! I sure enjoy the 8th AF News magazine. Thank you ! Mike Deye 419-244-6451

## Eddie Deerfield Story

I just read the Eddie Deerfield Story in the March 2014 issue of the 8th AF News, What jumped out at me were all the familiar place names. Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis; Salt Lake City, Blythe and Pyote. Although I doubt they ever met each other, he and my dad had their both had their training in that order. Then imagine my surprise when he told of flying "Heavenly Daze" across the Atlantic. Dad and the Baker crew flew "Heavenly Daze" on their August 15th mission to Merville, France. They also flew their plane "Our Bay-Bee" to their base in Horham.

Another similarity was that they both

were part of the Schweinfurt mission on August 17th, 1943. The Baker Crew was shot down that day, three were evaders and the rest were POW's. Two of the evaders were provided a safe house by Anne Brusselmans. Five of the POW's including my dad were held at Stalag 17 near Krems, Austria and were part of the forced march eastward at the end of the war. All of the Baker Crew survived the war and returned to the United States.

We tend to think of the individual stories which we are familiar with, but the similarities that I saw really bring home to me just how much all those great men SHARED in their war efforts, even if they did not know it at the time. It is the interconnectivness of the threads of ALL of their stories that make up the big story of that time in history. I thank Eddie for sharing his story, and I thank you for printing it.

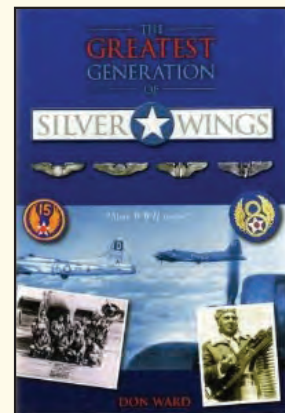
Sincerely,  
Betty Binnebose Lewis  
daughter of Staff SGT William H Binnebose, Jr. 335th SQ 95th BG  
btyjl49@aol.com

## My book?

### "THE GREATEST GENERATION OF SILVER WINGS"

As I perused my old 8th AF News mags and reading all of the book reviews, I was reminded that I had sent you a copy of my book, "The Greatest Generation of SILVER WINGS", some time ago, and being absent minded and living so far away (Thailand) [www.mpress.addr.com](http://www.mpress.addr.com) I have two other Vietnam books on this site, so you will have to click on the site where directed, to see this particular book. Please inform me about this, OK. Thank you.

Don Ward  
donward38@gmail.com  
Pattaya, Thailand





## Friend Request

Taking a shot in the dark, I wonder if you could aid or suggest to me in my attempt to locate an old friends family. We both had trained at San Marcos, Texas and once commissioned were assigned to the 34th BG (b-24s) in Blythe, Calif. Both of us flew to the UK in the early part of 44 when the 34th BG was assigned to MENDELSHAM station 156. I know that he and family had lived in the Los Angeles area. His name is Milton Gordon and his wife Bernice. Any help or advise would be greatly appreciated.

Bob Gross  
rhgross1734@att.net  
West Hartford, Ct.

## Searching for Help!

Wonder if the 8th AF newsletter can help I am an aviation historian doing a

book on the training B-17's - a overlooked field that has not been a subject to any study or books. Was wondering if the 8th AF newsletter can put out a call to its members for information (ie pictures or data) related to the training aircraft at the Florida Bases of MacDill AAF, Avon Park AAF and Drew AAF. Looking for serial number/cross-reference for these aircraft. MacDill AAF had five sections (flights) each with its own letter (individual id letter) and a flight number

For example, Memphis Belle was coded M- J5 [M being MacDill, J being the individual letter and 5 indication the 5th section).

Thank you very much  
Dave Gansz  
DaveGnz@ Hotmail.com

## License Plate

This is a color photo of my Hawaiian License plate, which I have transferred to my 4-wheel HOV cart. My daughter, Liza, added the bling like my squadron motto "Bat out of Hell!" Hope you put it in your next edition. By the way, I was a lead navigator on the Bereman Crew, 832nd Squadron, 486th Bomb Group. Regards, Robert (Bob) McCall



## Reunions Chapter Meetings



**PLEASE SEND ALL REUNION UPDATES TO:  
News@8thafhs.org and/or donnajneely@gmail.com**

### 401st Bombardment Group

August 6-9th, 2014  
Town and Country Resort  
San Diego, CA  
Reunion Details: 401bg.org  
Contact: Josie Navarro  
253-988-0966  
josie@401bg.org

### 2014 Stalag Luft III Reunion Air Force Academy

Colorado Springs, Colorado  
August 26-29, 2014  
Contact: Marilyn Walton or Mike Eberhardt  
waltonk9@gmail.com  
mikeceber@sbcglobal.net

### 398th Bomb Group

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

### 381st BG Reunion

Portland Oregon,  
Sept 3-6, 2014,  
Contact: Kevin Wilson PhD  
(336) 993-3571, Email:  
kevinwilson@381st.org

### 306th Bomb Group

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

### 384th Bomb Group

FINAL REUNION  
Dayton, Ohio  
October 16-19  
Details on Website:  
384thbombgroup.com

# REQUESTING OFFICIAL MILITARY PERSONNEL FILES

## National Personnel Records Center

1 Archives Drive St. Louis, MO 63138

<http://www.archives.gov/st-louis/archival-programs/military-personnel-archival/ompf-archival-requests.html>

Records are accessioned into the National Archives, and become archival, 62 years after the service member's separation from the military. This is a rolling date; hence, the current year, 2013, minus 62 years is 1951. Records with a discharge date of 1951 or after are non-archival and are maintained under the Federal Records Center program. Non-archival records are subject to access restrictions. If you are a veteran or next-of-kin of a deceased veteran who left service less than 62 years ago, you may use <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/index.html> to order a copy of your non-archival military records. For all others, your request is best made using a Standard Form 180 available at <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/standard-form-180.html>. Access to those records is restricted by privacy laws (see **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**).

### For Veterans Buried Overseas:

**World War II Dead** Buried in American Battle Monument Commission Cemeteries, Missing in Action, or Buried or Lost at Sea <http://abmc.gov/home.php> Also check the World War II Registry at

**Missing Air Crew Reports:** <http://www.fold3.com/>

Fold3 provides convenient access to US military records, including the MACRs and official U.S. Air Force photographs.

### Enlistment Records, POW Records, E & E Reports, and Mission Reports and Missing Air Crew Reports

The National Archives and Records Administration  
8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
<http://www.archives.gov/contact/>  
Phone: 301-837-3510

Fax: 301-837-0483

Enlistment & POW Records: <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/series-list.jsp?cat=WR26>

Escape & Evasion Reports: <http://www.archives.gov/research/search/index.html>

Mission Reports: Ask about the World War II Combat Operations Reports, 1941-1946 which are unofficially known as Mission Reports. These are arranged by category of unit (group, squadron, etc.). When you visit the National Archives the "Mission Reports" will tell date, target, loading lists for each mission that will tell you exactly who flew on that mission, and where each aircraft flew in the formation. Debriefing reports that relate events during the mission are included.

MACRs: <http://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/missing-air-crew-reports.html> allows you to order copies

For an overview of NARA resources: <http://www.archives.gov/research/military/ww2/>

### Aircraft Accident Reports, 8th AAF Daily Intops Summaries, 8th AAF Individual Squadron, Group, Wing, Division, and HQ Records, and some Mission Reports

These may be found at the Air Force Historical Research Agency (600 Chennault Circle; Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6424 tel. 334.353.3395) You must provide mission date, unit (bomb group & squadron) target and mission number if known. Information on all Bomb Groups and Bomb Squadrons that may contain aircraft assignments, maintenance records, crash reports, etc. is available although there is a fee. Some crew pictures are available if you provide squadron and unit numbers. Their informational website is <http://www.afhra.af.mil/>. Their website at <http://airforcehistoryindex.org/> allows you to search their catalog listings for 550,000 historical Air Force documents.

Contacts at AFHRA are:

Lynn Gamma  
HQ AFHRA/RSA  
600 Chennault Circle  
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6424  
334-953-2395  
email Ms. Lynn Gamma: AFHRANEWS@MAXWELL.AF.MIL

You can also write or email Archie diFante:

Archie diFante, Archivist  
HQ AFHRA/RSA  
600 Chennault Circle  
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### To Request Military Awards and Decorations

Visit <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/replace-medals.html> for instructions on how to request or replace military medals.

### Additional Resources

Website noted for its forum and research databases: <http://www.armyairforces.com/>

Website for fighter groups in the Eighth Army Air Force Fighter Command: <http://www.littlefriends.co.uk/>

Individual Bomb Group and Fighter Group Association websites

Book in digital format, **Combat Units of The Air Force WWII**, edited by Maurer Maurer, No. 140 at <http://www.afhra.af.mil/studies/numberedusaafhistoricalstudies101-150.asp>

Book in digital format, **Combat Squadrons of The Air Force WWII**, edited by Maurer Maurer, No. 82 at <http://www.afhra.af.mil/studies/numberedusaafhistoricalstudies51-100.asp>



## LIFE OR LUCK

One writer aptly used the gambling term, "Luck of the Draw" as an eye arresting title to describe the risky experiences he and thousands of other combat crewmen encountered as they flew missions against Hitler's Festung Europa (the so-called European Fortress of the Axis Powers). Judging from the statistics relating to losses and wins, the rate of survival was always in question as the relative security of an English air base was left behind when they flew the cold, hostile skies over Europe. Upon an evaluation of these four words, "luck of the draw" one would assume that the thousands of Americans involved in this game were the players in a giant scheme of survival, those with the luck, were the winners. The rest were losers. Sitting around a huge gaming table, the win or lose outcome was decided by the ways in which the cards were dealt.

Is it luck or fate that determines our destiny? The color of your skin, did you have anything to do with it? Your citizenship and nationality, any control over that? What choice did you have in the lineage of your mother and dad or the number of brothers and sisters you have? Did you choose the neighborhood where you spent your childhood, or your father's occupation or profession, or the period of time in history when you lived your life? History had provided a war for just about every generation. As an eligible participant in our war, did you have any choice in where you would fight or the kinds of weapons you would be assigned? What about the

military unit and men with whom you would serve and in what battles you would be a participant? Didn't someone else always make that decision? Am I then, just a human robot controlled by the luck of the draw?

As a member of the human race, is there anything over which I have control or choice? I might choose to be in good health, have more than enough money, enjoy a loving wife and children, have an honorable and enjoyable profession or occupation, be respected, have a reputation above reproach, and have true-blue lasting friendships. Some or all of these might be life-long goals, but let's face it, not all of them have become reality!

Military fliers are all familiar with contrails, those fluffy white lines of clouds trailing the path of high flying aircraft. When the atmospheric climate is right, the movement of the aircraft through the sky solidifies the cold moist air particles producing highly visible vapors. Aircraft, often obscure because of altitude, can suddenly become visible as contrails begin forming. Just as quickly, the contrails disappear as atmospheric conditions change. The writer of Holy Scripture said, "For what is your life? It is even a vapor which appears for a little time and then vanishes away."

(James 4:14 NKJ)

Our life is just that, a vapor  
that lasts for a brief period.  
We are here for a short time  
and then we are gone.

There are times in our life when the decisions we make have pro-



Earl Wassom

found and lasting effects on us. These moments of decision are God given opportunities for us to control and determine our eternal destiny. These are not merely luck or fate. They are God given allowing you the opportunity to take control of your life. This is not just luck, and it is controlled by your choice.

Will you pray this prayer with me? Lord, in the midst of a world filled with turmoil, hatred, conflict, unrest, and uncertainty, you give us an opportunity to know you, the Prince of Peace. I cannot in myself change a single thing for which others are responsible, therefore, my inner rest and assurance must come from you. It is not luck but faith and trust in you, that makes me a winner. Thank you for loving me! Amen.

Earl Wassom 466th Bomb Group  
Chaplain, 8th AFHS



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