



June 2015

8TH AF NEWS

Volume 15 Number 2 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"



D-DAY JUNE 6, 1944

YOU ARE ABOUT TO EMBARK UPON THE
GREAT CRUSADE TOWARD WHICH WE HAVE STRIVEN THESE
MANY MONTHS. THE EYES OF THE WORLD ARE UPON YOU...
I HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN YOUR COURAGE,
DEVOTION TO DUTY AND SKILL IN BATTLE.

GENERAL DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER



8TH AF NEWS

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

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BEHIND THE SCENES

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NEW

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From the President's Pen



The mission of our society is “*To perpetuate the accomplishments and heritage of the 8th Air Force for present and future generations*”. That is a lofty goal. How do we do this? One way is through this magazine. You, the reader, can help spread the word. If you do not plan to keep your magazine, rather than throw it out, donate it to a local community or high school library.

Those of you who served in the 8th, or others who have done significant research on the 8th, could make presentations to local schools or community groups. Memorial Day and Veterans Day are good times for this. Many schools have special presentations for those days. Community groups often look for speakers for their meetings. Our Secretary, Joe Garber, has been doing this routinely at schools for several years. I have been successful in doing this for local schools, colleges, and several community groups.

Our Society has undertaken several projects to help spread the word about the 8th.

- The Roll of Honor is a precious asset of the Society, listing the names of those men from the 8th who sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom. We have undertaken a project to reproduce the Roll and to place them strategically in museums and/or historical societies throughout the country.
- We are helping sponsor a project brought to our attention by Jerry McLaughlin, the former project manager of the B-17 restoration at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, GA. “*In the Footsteps of Bud Owens*” is a documentary being produced by Geert van den Bogaert and Sean Claxton. It will literally retrace the journey of Bud Owens, 381st BG, as he tried desperately to cross the Pyrenees while carrying a badly wounded fellow

crewman during WWII. Geert and Sean will be joined by four young people on this trek: two French and two Americans. We will keep you informed of this worthy project.

- We are looking into placing an exhibit for the 8th Air Force in the Walnut Ridge Museum in Arkansas.

- We helped sponsor the VE-Day celebration in Toronto, Canada, where the Society was recognized for doing so. *See the photos and write-up in this issue.*



*David Nowack
President*

We will continually be investigating other possible ways to keep the memory of the 8th Air Force alive throughout the world.

Much of what we do to accomplish our mission depends on the funds we have available. If you have not yet submitted your dues for this year, please do so as soon as possible. This is our main source of income to both run the Society and tackle these projects.

Our reunion in Omaha is fast approaching. It promises to be an exciting one. Information about the reunion can be found on our website, www.8thafhs.org, or later in this issue.

See you in Omaha!
Dave Nowack

Dave

Take NOTE & change our contact Information!

**We've
MOVED!**

TOTALLY DIFFERENT ADDRESS...

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Savannah, GA 31420-0369

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8TH AF NEWS

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The home office is located at: **8 Rose Hill Drive, Savannah, GA. 31419-3358 or P. O. Box 60369, Savannah, GA 31420-0369**

Remembering...

On May 8, 2015—just weeks ago—the skies over our nation's capital were filled with the unmistakable sounds of warbird engines, revved up for an amazing spectacle: The World War II Arsenal of Democracy Flyover. The event celebrated the 70th anniversary of VE-Day—a day which came about due in large part to the monumental efforts and sacrifices of the United States Army Air Corps—especially the 8th.

The grounds of the World War II Memorial were overflowing with Veterans from all wars, all branches of the military, their families and friends, and thousands of patriotic visitors, celebrating and remembering.

Remembering.

I am always amazed when speaking with many of you—especially those of you who served in WWII—that the memories which are most clear to you now, are the ones made during those frightful months 70+ years ago. You share stories about missions, close calls, losing crew members, surviving as POWs, escaping through enemy lines...and it's as if you relive every moment, every heartbeat, and every tear. And I am often overwhelmed with the matter-of-factness of it all. At first, I wondered how anyone could remember so much from so long ago, then I realized, it wasn't so much being able to remember everything, it was having experiences you could never forget.

Publishing unforgettable stories of courage and sacrifice has been the hallmark of the *8th A F News* from its beginnings as a simple newsletter to the publication we have today. While many of the stories you read have similar elements, each story is unique and universal at the same time. And all of you make this possible with your financial support of the Historical

Society through yearly dues and generous contributions.

If you received a little reminder card in the mail about your dues, please take a moment to drop a check in the mail to us. We really appreciate your continued support and it comes at a crucial time in our organization.

And if you simply forgot about your dues, we understand...you have a lot to remember!



Debra Kujawa
Managing Director/Editor

See you in Omaha!!!

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



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BRIEFING

Walking into the map
Of Germany
In the dark
Of night

Listening to the Briefing Officer
We knew that some of us
Would not be there
That evening

Entering a clearing
Where the bomber was parked
Was there a secret phrase, words
That would keep us safe from harm?

Was there something
Behind us appearing
In the wind,
Singing a song?

Magic sounds that would spare
Your group, your crew,
Let you return to England,
Together?

Marvin Silbersher
711th Squadron
447 Bomber Group
Lake Hopatcong,
N.J. 07849



Happy Fourth of July!!



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

BEHIND THE SCENES

Our front and back cover photos, along with our center-fold photos (page 25), were captured by photographer, William Craig Dubishar during his visit to the World War II Memorial Washington D.C. on May 8th, 2015.

One of the most diverse arrays of World War II aircraft ever assembled flew above the skies of Washington, D.C., the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe (VE) Day. The flyover included dozens of World War II aircraft flying in 15 historically sequenced warbird formations overhead. The formations represented the War's major battles, from Pearl Harbor through the final air assault on Japan, and concluding with a missing man formation to "Taps."

Thank you "Craig" for capturing these great moments in time, through your artistic eye and professional camera lens.

Summer is here and it's time to make your plans to attend the **2015 41th Annual 8th Air Force Reunion 14 - 18 for Omaha Nebraska!** This *June 8th AF News* includes six pages of Omaha reunion events, highlights, hotel & activity reservation form. Check out pages 26-31.

Looking forward to seeing all of you in Omaha
Sincerely,

Donna Neely & Telisha Gaines

PLEASE NOTE

We welcome all of your articles!!!
Please include photos & more!!
ALL file formats are accepted

We encourage you to send
digital images
WHEN possible.

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MATERIAL DEADLINE

August 1, 2015
for the September 2015 8th AF News

They Never Returned

148 Allied Aircrew lost their
lives in Bailiwick waters

*For our freedom, they gave
their lives. The average age
of the airmen was 24.*



Flight Lieutenant John Daville RCAF
(Killed in Wavelet Bay on 6th June
1944) has no known grave

Editor's note: Mr John Goodwin the Archivist to the Channel Island Occupation Society Guernsey has spent the last 30 years researching the stories of the 148 USAF and Allied aircrew who lost their lives in Bailiwick waters during the German Occupation 1940-1945.

Below are details of three incidents in which pilots were killed, one in his Spitfire, one in a Typhoon and the third in his USAF Marauder. Each of the 148 stories are poignant, particularly when one recalls that the average age of these crew was 24 and the youngest to die was merely 17 years of age.



Flying Officer Jaroslava Nováka **By John Goodwin**

On 14 May 1943 an Allied air attack took place over St Peter Port. The raid named 'Roadstead 2' was laid on as an anti-shipping strike against reported E-Boats off St Peter Port harbor. The attack took place at 20:30 hours with 23 attacking Spitfires from both 312 and 313 Squadrons approaching Guernsey at wave top height.

The Germans saw the aircraft approaching and the alarm was raised and the Flak guns defending the harbor put up a huge wall of Flak of all calibers including machine gun fire. Despite this the aircraft pushed home their attack on a convoy consisting of twelve boats, claiming four hit, with three damaged and one probably sunk, although they in fact did not sink any.

The action that evening was described by the pilots as complete hell, with flak bursting all around the aircraft making it difficult in maneuvering due to flying so close together. They could not go up any higher as the flak was bursting above them, they did not want to go any lower as they felt their propellers were already too close to the waves and so, bunched together, they were stuck flying in a very narrow corridor, banking over to make the attack. One pilot was 27 year old Flight Officer Jaroslava Nováka of 312 Czech Squadron. Novak's aircraft was a Mk Vb Spitfire, which received a hit in the starboard side of the engine and it immediately billowed with thick black smoke. His starboard wing tip was also shot off, so he turned his aircraft away from the harbor, heading south east, with three other aircraft of his flight following.

Novak radioed to say he was going to try and parachute out but he was unable to get the Spitfire to climb any higher than the 100 feet that he was at, so he decided to make an emergency crash landing on the sea. He jettisoned his canopy and just after that his engine stopped. He glided down, well away from the coast, no doubt trying to avoid the flak from the coastal batteries which had now joined in shooting at them. His comrades knew he could not avoid the crash and radioed him "Good bye Yardeskies and good luck", he replied "Good bye boys give my best wishes ..." the message was cut off.

His last words were no doubt intended to his young wife whom he had married just a few weeks earlier. He struck the water at

speed. The sea was very rough that day and he was never seen again, only the red, white and blue stripes on his tail fin could be seen by his comrades as they circled overhead, Novak no doubt was killed on impact. His body was sadly never recovered.

Flying Officer Kenneth 'Robbie' **Robinson By Steve Brew**

D-Day+1, 7th June 1944. It was an early start for 41 RAF Squadron. They were airborne at 05.30 hours with two Spitfires heading for St. Peter Port and then on to St. Malo. Two other Spitfires headed for Morlaix and Ushant. The latter aircraft found nothing of interest and returned to home base. The former two arrived over St. Peter Port at 06.10 hours and experienced intense light Flak. They sighted what they thought were at least a dozen Tank Landing Craft, then five medium class Minesweepers and a Torpedo boat heading towards St. Malo at speed. The two pilots reported their sightings and headed back to their UK base.

The reaction to this information was swift and soon an anti-shipping mission of eight Typhoon bombers with an escort of eight Spitfires were sent to engage the enemy. At the mouth of the River Rance at St. Malo they spotted a large 1,500 ton motor vessel and straddled it with bombs. They could find no other enemy shipping and returned to home base.

A second anti-shipping mission was dispatched with eight Typhoons and an escort of eight Spitfires. Coming low over St. Peter Port they attacked a group of ships to the north of St. Peter Port harbor. The pilots encountered intense light and heavy caliber Flak. Three of the Squadron's eight aircraft were hit, including the Typhoon of Flying Officer Robinson which was damaged in the radiator. Robinson pulled out of the engagement and headed north but the damage to his Typhoon was serious and he radioed that he would have to bail out.

He climbed to 10,000 feet, issued Maydays, inverted his aircraft, unstrapped himself and dropped to the sea below. Unfortunately when he bailed out his dinghy detached from his parachute and he landed in the sea with no flotation device except his Mae West. After the rest of the Squadron had disengaged from the enemy fire one pilot stayed on the scene, dropped his own dinghy and flew around Robinson

until help could arrive.

Robinson attempted to get into the dinghy but in the rough seas he was thrown out of it. Thus began a significant rescue operation over several hours when a number of dinghies were thrown to Robinson but were either down wind or too far for him to swim in the very cold and rough seas. A Supermarine Walrus landed on the sea but was unable to reach him. Finally a high speed launch reached the area and took Robinson aboard but he did not survive the eighteenth attempt to rescue him. His body was returned to Salcombe.

COLLISION OVER SARK **By Simon Hamon**

Debris from a USAF Martin B-26B Marauder found near the island of Sark reveals a fascinating episode in the history of the Channel Islands during the Second World War.

At 1340 hours on 25 August 1944, thirty-six Martin B26 Marauders took off from their airfield at Matching Green in Essex and set course for northern France. From 572nd Bomb Squadron of the 391st USAAF Bomb Group the bombers' target were coastal defences near Brest at Pont-Scorff near Roscanvel on the Crozon Peninsula. This raid was at extreme range of the B26 and fuel usage would turn out to be a critical factor.

The meteorological forecast predicted hazy but cloudless conditions over Pont-Scorff. Just over two hours after they had taken off, the bombers were over the target and the lightly-defended defences were hit by a total of 464 260lb fragmentation bombs. The USAAF formation then turned north-east for the return flight. As the formation approached the English Channel all the aircraft began to experience low fuel levels.

The lead flight of the second box of eighteen Marauders consisted of six aircraft. At the controls of the front aircraft nicknamed Ruthless, was pilot Sellars; following him was pilot Dexter, his aircraft being alongside Bun Steer, piloted by Cassidy. The third row consisted of Captain David H. Thorn at the controls of Skeeter, whilst the fourth row four was Second Lieutenant Elma Z. Rice who was flying TS Ticket.

Approximately fifteen minutes after the bombing, Thorn (Skeeter), informed his flight that due to a severe fuel short-

age he was going to leave the formation and set course for Cherbourg, his intention being to land at a forward Allied airbase in Normandy to refuel. He then dropped behind the formation and Second Lieutenant Rice (TS Ticket) pulled his 'plane up to take up a new position in row three.

Suddenly, Thorn's Marauder, which had broken formation, reappeared under the left wing of Rice's Marauder. Rice pulled his aircraft up instantly, but before he could gain any altitude there was a sickening crash as the tail of Skeeter sliced along his wing and into the port propeller blade of TS Ticket. The tail empennage of Skeeter was torn completely off and it was last seen spinning down into the cloud. Only one parachute was seen to open.

Rice immediately feathered the damaged propeller of TS Ticket, though this caused the aircraft to slip violently to the left and lose altitude rapidly. Regaining control Rice checked on the rest of his crew, all of whom reported in safe except the tail gunner, Sergeant Thomas W. Hume, who had bailed out at the moment of the crash – this was the parachute that was observed opening.

Deciding to head for an emergency airstrip in Allied-held Normandy, Rice put TS Ticket onto a heading given to him by another pilot in his flight. He followed this course down through the cloud and on emerging into the clear at 3,000 feet he found that he was heading east towards two small islands.

As he approached the islands anti-aircraft fire opened up on him and he realised that he was heading for the islands of Guernsey and Jersey. Only a few shots were required by the German guns to get his range, at which point the flak increased in accuracy and intensity. It was noted in German records that the majority of the anti-aircraft fire came from Batterie Strassburg, on the south-east of Guernsey at Jerbourg Point.

Badly-damaged by the accurate German fire, the crippled TS Ticket continued to be rocked by near misses. One burst under the 'plane killed the radio gunner. Rice commenced evasive action, but the damaged Marauder answered sluggishly, receiving another hit which knocked out the starboard engine. With both engines out, TS Ticket had nowhere to go but down.

Lieutenant Rice skillfully dived the air-

craft to avoid further anti-aircraft damage, pulling up the B26's nose just above sea level. He then slowly let the tail drop into the water, followed by the rest of the bomber. The text-book ditching of TS Ticket ensured that no further injuries were suffered by Rice's crew. All of the survivors were able to exit the B26 and swim to a safe distance before it sank south of the island of Sark. His body trapped in the sinking fuselage the radio gunner went down with his aircraft. The rest of the crew, Elma Rice, Frank Moscovic, Donald Peters and Robert Hetrick, were picked up at 17.59 hours by the US Navy destroyer USS Borum.

At this point, the position of the destroyer was reported as being just nine miles off the west coast of Jersey. The closest German artillery pieces were the four 15.5cm guns of Batterie Moltke at Les Landes. These opened fire with a salvo of one round from each gun, at which point the destroyer, its rescue work complete, made off at speed.

*

Meanwhile, there was a frenzy of activity in Skeeter. With no tail and its wheels down to increase drag and slow the aircraft's gyrations, Thorn's B26 had been sent spinning into the undercast. Lieutenant Russell J. Calvert, the navigator, had managed to struggle into his parachute, whilst the copilot, Lieutenant Arthur L. Thomas, was on his knees trying to open the wheel well doors, but these were apparently stuck. The radio gunner, Temporary Sergeant Edward J. Annette, opened the bomb bay doors and then closed them again. At about 500 feet Calvert managed to bail out through the pilot's hatch. He was the only survivor.

The B26 continued its dive, moments later plunging into the sea near the Sept-Îles.

Picked up first, Lieutenant Calvert was assisted by French fishermen to recover the bodies of Captain Thorn and Lieutenant Thomas. Two other crew members, possibly the two gunners, Staff Sergeant Roy H. Meyer and Staff Sergeant Carl E. Norland, were pulled out of the rear fuselage, but died later in the hospital at Paimpol where they had been taken.

The bodies of engineer gunner Staff Sergeant Omar L. Evans and the radio gunner, Technical Sergeant Edward J. Annette, were recovered from the sunken fuselage on the high tide on 6 September 1944. The body of the bombardier, First

Lieutenant William H. Parks, who was in the Marauder's nose, drifted to the north-east for a month before being washed up at L'Etacq, St Ouens on Jersey's west coast on 27 September – he was buried by the Germans in the War Cemetery at Howard Davis Park, St Helier, and repatriated to the USA in June 1946. Having recuperated, Calvert reported back to Matching Green before the end of the year.

*

It was during January 2013 that an oxygen cylinder from an American bomber was trawled up by a Guernsey fisherman operating in the waters around Sark. The area it was found in would confirm it as having come from Second Lieutenant Rice's B-26. Other parts of the aircraft have been found previously, including the port propeller and also the nose wheel, both of which were found in the late 1980s. However, the condition of the oxygen cylinder from inside the bomber would imply that the wreck is all but gone and that the contents of what is left are now scattered across the seabed, reminders of a tragic collision in 1944.

By the end of the Second World War, the B26, in service numerous Allied air forces, had flown more than 110,000 sorties and had dropped 150,000 tons of bombs. When B-26 production ended in 1945, a total of 5,266 had been built. (US Department of Defense)



For more information on this project:
www.aamgsy.com

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HONOR FLIGHT

Savannah Takes Veterans to WWII Memorial in D.C.

Col Ed Wexler, USAF retired, current member of the Society's Board of Directors, is a trustee and past Chairman of Honor Flight—Savannah, GA and recently accompanied an excited group of veterans to the World War II Memorial in Washington D.C.

Twenty-seven Veterans made the trip—many for the first time. All of the Veterans served in either WWII, Korea or Vietnam. Veterans travel totally free of charge.

To locate an Honor Flight in your area:

www.HonorFlight.org
Honor Flight, Inc.
300 E Auburn Ave.
Springfield, OH 45505-4703
(937) 521-2400



Daughters of the American Revolution

The American Air Museum in Britain

Article Written by Laurie Atkins, Walter Hines Page Chapter Historian

"Last week, I was able to meet with two members of the American Air Museum (AAM) in Britain (<http://www.americanair-museum.com/>) when they gave a presentation at the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library in Norwich. The AAM has been launched by the American Air Museum at the Imperial War Museum, Duxford, Cambridgeshire.

Two young women, Lucy and Emily, talked a small group of enthusiasts through the rationale of the online museum and their vision of how the 10-year project might move forward.

The site went live several months ago, with data from three major sources input by the AAM team. The records of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Georgia is one of those sources; this tremendous resource has not been available online until now.

The aim of the AAM is to "record the stories of the men and women of the US Army Air Forces (USAAF) who served their country from the UK in the Second World War. It also records the memories of the British people who befriended them." (AAM) Anyone can contribute. So, for instance, I have been able to upload the locations and photographs of the memorials I've discovered. The really interesting thing about this database, though, is that it is set up so that



The Rumburgh Plaque, Suffolk

connections can be made. As an example, I have uploaded the photograph and location of the crash memorial in North Lopham. From there, I've been able to connect that site to the aircraft that crashed, and each of the men who lost his life.

Connections can be made between people, places, aircraft, units and missions. Even now, in the early days, it is a fantastic resource for anyone interested in the Americans serving in this country. The AAM team wants to see many, many people contributing, and are now in the process of enabling video contributions. They encourage interviews of people who remember the Americans, and are delighted when a new story is posted.

Detective Work on Sgt Louis Zusser

One story I'll be posting is that of Sgt Louis H Zusser. His name is on a memorial plaque in the parish church of Rumburgh, Suffolk, along with seven other members of his crew who were killed when their aircraft crashed in the village on the 7th of June 1944.

As I was researching the crew members, I started getting a bit confused. There were conflicting accounts of the crash, and it gradually occurred to me that this man very probably did not die in the accident.

I did what research I could online, and then went to the 2nd Air Division Memorial Library to see what I could find there. The reports were still confusing, but I did locate one reliable source that listed Sgt Zusser as a survivor. I had a little, private cheer to myself when I saw that, I can tell you!"

More Answers, More Questions please?

If you look carefully at the photograph of the Rumburgh Memorial Plaque, you will see the entry for Sgt Louis H Zusser.

"But I was at a standstill. I was 95% certain that Sgt Zusser had survived. How could I get to the 100%? Being a bit of a terrier when it comes to mysteries like this, I couldn't leave it there. But what could I do? I could find the family—that's what I could do! So, going back to the internet, I did just that, and wrote to a man I thought must be related. After all, Zusser isn't a very common name, is it?

I received an answer very quickly. Sgt Zusser's grandson confirmed that he DID survive the crash, and that he went on to have a "wonderful life." He died in 2001 at the age of 79.

What a thrill that was!"

2nd Lt Robert Neumer

"However: there is a down side. Another young man, 2nd Lt Robert Neumer, did die in the accident, but is not mentioned on the memorial plaque. I will be sending my research to the 446th Bomb Group Historian. Perhaps this can be rectified in some way."



"From the activity I see on my Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/USAAFmemorials>, I know that many of you have an interest in the Americans in England during World War II. Please consider contributing any information you have to the American Air Museum in Britain. All you need to do is register, and that's easy! I know you have connections—why not connect with the AAM?"

Laurie Atkins
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*The War Memorial North Lopham,
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Riding in the 'Buff'

By Martin Bowman

Bossier City, Shreveport, Louisiana, 0630 hours, October 2003.

Oh it's early and like in an old Hollywood movie it's raining stair rods outside my motel window. Gene Kelly would definitely not venture outside in this. Tom Hanks and Paul Newman's famous shooting-in-the-rain sequence in *'Road to Perdition'* does not compare to these conditions either. According to the Barksdale Base Guide for new arrivals 'the majority of rainfall is of convective and air mass types (showery and brief) except during the winter when nearly continuous frontal rains may persist for a few days. Extremes of precipitation occur in all seasons' (!). Looks as if this is one of those extremes. Still, the monsoon from Texas should not cause any problems for an afternoon flight on the jump seat of B-52H 60-0045 *Cherokee Strip II* of the 93rd Bomb Squadron, 917th Wing, Air Force Reserve Command at Barksdale AFB ... Or so I thought!

As a key Air Combat Command base, Barksdale has a pivotal role in providing a large part of the USA's deterrent force. The "Mighty Eighth" Air Force of World War II fame is headquartered at the base, which is home to the 2nd Bomb Wing and associated units and the Air Force Reserve's 917th Wing. In December 1993 when the Wing accepted the first of eight B-52Hs, it became the first unit in AFRs history to acquire a strategic mission.

A visit to 93rd Bomb Squadron 'HQ' reveals that 'our' B-52H is off on an early morning mission. If it is still raining when it returns the follow-on mission will have to

be cancelled - the reason being that when a runway is wet regulations require that the pilots deploy their forty-four foot nylon brake chute. (There is no reverse thrust available on the T33 engines). This is to alleviate wear and tear on the hydraulic, segmented rotor-type disc brakes fitted to each of the eight main wheels. After a brake chute is used it has to be replaced and all eight engines have to be shut down while it is fitted. Unlike the tall-tailed B-52s on the 'H' the brake chute is stowed above the rear fuselage and this requires a tall working platform and several ground crew. This will take hours and the flight will be 'off'. It's like a cruel joke from *Dr. Strangelove*.

This might be a good time to visit the museum.

Barksdale is home to the Eighth Air Force Museum and one of twelve Air Force Field Museums under the USAF Museum System. The museum director reports to the 2nd Bomb Wing Commander. With more than twenty-six aircraft and vehicles and over 1,500 historical artefacts, the museum's Air Force mission is to preserve the material heritage of Strategic Bombardment. The museum's mission ensures that the material history of Barksdale AFB, the 2nd Bomb Wing and the Eighth Air Force has the ready means of preserving the past and present for the future.

With 'sho' time' fast approaching I am on tenterhooks and pacing the ops block like an expectant father. It is touch and go but by some miracle, a few minutes before *Cherokee Strip II* is due to land back at Barksdale, the rain stops - evaporated one might say. Then we are off in the crew bus to the end of the runway where during an ERCC (engine running crew change) two crew on *Cherokee Strip II* make way for twenty-four year old 1st Lieutenant Torri White and myself. Torri, a member of Public Affairs, nurtures ambitions to qualify

as a B-52H navigator.

Despite its unflattering slate grey livery the mighty bomber looms as large and imposing as the superstructure of a battleship - its striking features and ageless beauty undiminished in this era of sleek and sinister 'black' stealth and sophistication. While 52s are no longer ARC LIGHT black nor do they have the SAC nose 'sash' and insignia red, you are instantly aware of the pedigree and the aura that this elderly yet dependable bomber and its heady aroma of heavy metal engenders. Like entering a time warp your first steps up the ventral entry hatch stairs are reminiscent of a DC 9 or BAC 111 though from among the old granddaddy's only the B-52 and probably those other military geriatrics, the early Hercs, are nostalgic enough to transport us back in time.

Delightfully *Cherokee Strip II* - Call Sign *Scalp 95* - is the most 'politically incorrect' of all the 93rd Bomb Squadron B-52Hs to fly in. The Squadron badge is an Indian brave and combat mission symbols are tomahawks stencilled on the fuselage. (For the 2nd Bomb Wing read 'sabre's'). *Cherokee Strip II* was once called *Ready for Duty*, which is highly appropriate because



Crew of
Cherokee
Strip II



SAC and later ACC (Air Combat Command) are always ready at a moment's notice. B-52s remained important even after Intercontinental ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) had assumed the primary responsibility for the deterrent at home. Today the role of the Stratofortress might be far removed from the days of SAC but car stickers showing a black B-52 silhouette proclaim, *'Peace - the old fashioned way'*. To some, possibly those in B-1 Lancer squadrons, the 'Buff' might be considered 'old fashioned' too but it is certainly bang up to date and not likely to become obsolete in our lifetime. In January 2003 it was confirmed that the B-52 fleet was expected to remain in service until around 2040!

For our afternoon flight (sounds like an airline announcement doesn't it?) *Cherokee Strip II* boasted an all-pilot crew. It consisted of Major David L. Leedom, a veteran of Operations DESERT STORM and ENDURING FREEDOM, with First Lieutenant Jesse A. Hildebrand in the right hand seat and another pilot, Major Bruce G. Gootee, handling the navigation on this occasion. Bruce and Torri occupied the navigator and radar navigator seats in the bowels of the B-52 just behind and below the flight deck where there are no windows to look out of. In an in-flight emergency the navigator and radar navigator eject downward while the Electronic Warfare Officer or 'E-Dub' and the two pilots would normally eject upward. I had been told in 'egress training'



that an in-flight emergency necessitating evacuation of the aircraft was rare indeed. In flight an aircraft commander would have to lose six engines before having to consider abandoning the aircraft. In the Sixties a B-52H crew actually lost four engines in flight and lived to tell the tale.

It can feel like a Louisiana Hot Turbin climbing up the ladder rungs grasping the 'fire pole' with one hand, taking care to protect the cameras with the other and on up through the floor hatch opening into the narrow corridor to the subterranean flight deck. While on the pan for any length of time in the sub-tropical humidity the inside of a B-52 is like an incubator, the Cajun-style temperatures on a par with the dry desert heat in the B-52 bone-yards in Arizona. Nomex gloves are worn for take-off and landing because of the fire risk and without them the ladder rungs and safety pole are like burning embers. For the novice, strapping into the parachute harness in the cramped enclave behind the pilot ejection seats is very tricky. Of course the fold down jump seat, by definition, is not fitted with an ejection device. In an in-flight emergency the occupant would have to disconnect oxygen and intercom, undo the seat belt and get down into the navigators' compartment to wait until the occupants of the two downward firing seats have disappeared. Then you simply bale out through one of the holes! (At least this is what Burt, our instructor in egress training, had told us in a calm, matter-of-fact manner). Two lieutenant colonels did this during *LINEBACKER II* missions in Vietnam when SAMs exploded and brought down the B-52s they were riding in as Deputy Airborne Commander.

A good thing about the jump seat is that in a bad situation you do not have to worry about the ejection sequence not working! Burt explained that if the ejection sequence for the pilot or navigator seats fail, they could unhitch themselves, leave their seat (with the parachute pack still attached to their back!), then they too drop down into the navigator compartment and free-fall to safety through the holes left in the floor. (A navigator whose ejection seat failed after their B-52 was hit by a SAM during a *LINEBACKER II* mission saved himself in this manner). This all sounds straightforward in the classroom but in the air? In all probability, if in the age-old tradition your 'backside is on fire' you would unhook and shin down the pole faster than any fire fighter and catapult yourself out of the gaping hole in the floor like an Olympian athlete on steroids. The forty-pound PCU-10P parachute pack feels heavier. When eventually you find the straps and do them up, it's like a straitjacket. Soon you are sitting in a Jacuzzi with sweat running down your face and inside your flight suit. Though cramped and confined if you suffer from claustrophobia you would not be here. During the oxygen-breathing test in egress training prospective jump-seaters with claustrophobia brought on when they don the lightweight HGU-55P helmet and oxygen mask do not make the jump seat.

At least the flight deck is a room with a view – of sorts. Immediately evident are the two green AN/ASQ-151 Electro-optical Viewing System (EVS) monitor screens, the eight sets of engine gauges, the complex fuel panel below them and the famous eight ebony coloured 'poker



Dave Leedom

chip' throttle levers. The brake chute control, which fortunately Dave and Jes did not have to use, is just right of the throttle quadrant. Thanks to the TF33 turbojets take-off can be made at throttle settings far lower than the maximum and the ground roll (take-off run) is reduced by about 500-ft compared with the B-52G. In the mid-1960s cartridge starting on the B-52 was provided only on the No. 4 and 5 engines, which then powered up the other six pneumatically. Beginning in the mid-1970s the G's and H's began using a battery-operated 'cart start' installed on every engine to permit instantaneous ignition of all the engines. This cut reaction times dramatically. Though simultaneous engine start is possible it is rarely used, as it generates vast clouds of smoke and soot. When operating at full power the TF33 does not leave the same trail of noxious black smoke and water vapour emitted by the mineralized water-injected J57.

Buff pilots often speak of having a feeling of exhilaration like no other when taxiing a fully loaded B-52 out onto the runway, setting the brakes and pushing the throttles forward for takeoff. They say that the B-52 is easy to taxi at all gross weights, directional control during takeoff is excellent and climb-out very straightforward and smooth. Pilots however have to be aware of the TF33's stall characteristics. In crosswinds above ten knots stalls can occur while taxiing, though a stall prevention system is included to operate the compressor bleed valves,



Martin Bowman
aboard
Cherokee Strip II

stopping engine surge. On the B-52G there was a tendency for these valves to open at low altitudes, slightly reducing thrust. Dave Leedom taxied out crabbing along the tarmac to demonstrate the once secret crosswind landing gear used on the B-52. The 'quadricycle' landing gear on the B-52 consists of four wheels in front and four in the rear, which are retracted into the fuselage after take-off. The front wheels are steerable for taxi and takeoff and both front and rear can be canted on final approach to accommodate a crosswind. The pilot can then land the aircraft in a 'crabbed' position, touching down with the aircraft at an angle to the centreline of the runway, which permits the aircraft to face twenty degrees into wind on take-off or landing while the wheels are straight ahead. To the 'backseat' crew this sensation is like being in a car skidding sideways'. Being on the jump seat is like sitting behind the captain and first officer on another famous Boeing giant, the Jumbo jet, though not as spacious. Nor, after climb out from Barksdale does this 52 feel as comfortable in the air as the 747. I thought Buff pilots said climb-out is very straightforward and smooth? Radio chatter in the earphones gives the first indications why. A loud, authoritative voice, which can only be that of a colonel (or even a general?) queries whether *Scalp 95* has a problem?

'Negative,' replies Dave Leedom.

Dave explains that it is standard procedure after landing the B-52H without the brake chute to fly for twenty minutes or so with the undercarriage down to cool the brakes! Now I knew why the mighty 'Buff' was 'complaining'! It reminded me

of a historical precedent involving another famous Boeing bomber, the Y1B-17, which was on an early test flight on 7 December 1936, when problems with brakes arose. While taxiing, Captain Stanley Umstead UAAAC applied the brakes so hard that the early type disk brakes overheated. After getting airborne instead of leaving the gears down to let the brakes cool he retracted the wheels immediately so that in a very short time the brake plates had welded themselves into a solid mass. On his return to Boeing Field Umstead, unaware of the problems he had caused to the brakes, touched down and the wheels locked solid, bringing the Y1B-17 to an abrupt halt and standing the aircraft on its nose on the runway. The aircraft was repaired and was flying again by 2 January 1937. (Maximum gross weight of the YB-17 was 42,600lb. The XB-52 weighed 390,000lb).

Cherokee Strip II behaved impeccably and the flight to Monroe, a four-hour car journey away and return was perfect. I really have to take my helmet off to the 'Buff' guys and gals. A Piper Cub, Cessna 150 and the Yak-52 when wearing a parachute pack are uncomfortable and cramped aircraft (though there is more legroom in a B-52 than a Yak 52 – just!). Flying for ten-fourteen hours, barely changing seats and without a conventional toilet plus only a small bunk bed at the rear of the flight deck (and unable to turn over) must be excruciating! I can only compare conditions to flying long haul, say London-San Francisco, wearing an oxygen mask, bone dome/visor, gloves, boots and flight suit and with a forty pound parachute strapped to your back! Having said all of this, given a choice I would still

board a B-52 any day of the week to fly Trans-Atlantic or even to Australia and back!

After a beautiful fly-by at Monroe Airport and a silky smooth final 'touch and go' at Barksdale it was time to land and taxi back to the 93rd Bomb Squadron area. The Squadron's 8th Air Force forebears in the 93rd Bomb Group at Hardwick near Norwich in WW2 would have been proud, even if they did fly B-24 Liberators!

Libertatem Defendimus!

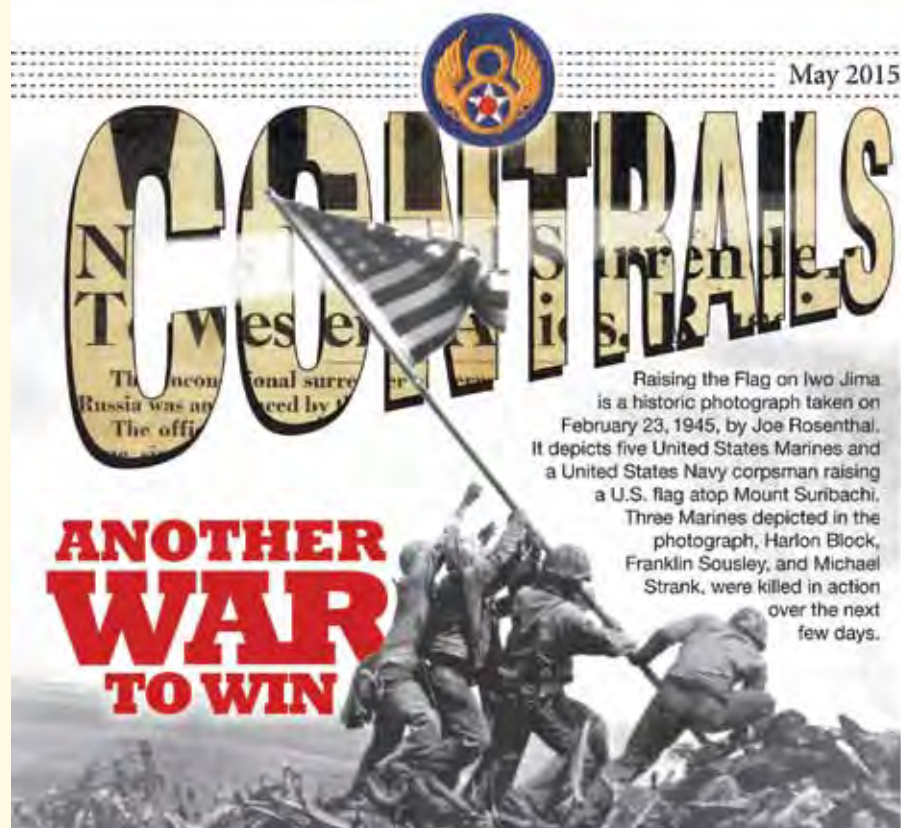
Editor's note: Martin Bowman's interest in WWII and contemporary British and US aviation was fired by the proliferation of US and RAF air bases in his native East Anglia. He is the author of over 160 books on military and commercial aviation as well as photographic books on a variety of subjects. His first book, *Fields of Little America, a history of the US 2nd Air Division*, was published in 1977. *Castles in The Air, The USAF At War, The B-24 Liberator* followed and more recently he has authored a four part series on the 8th Air Force entitled '*Wings of Eagles*'. All have been built up from many years of painstaking and fact-finding research, interviews and correspondence with contributors in America, Europe and throughout the world. His quest has taken him to all parts of the world, to 22 countries, including the USA, Africa, Australia and Russia. He has flown into the world's war zones of Mogadishu, Somalia, and Bosnia and he has participated in German and USAFE air/land and night air/drop missions aboard C-160 and C-130 Hercules aircraft. He continues to explore all matters aviation and has landed aboard (in a C-2 Greyhound) and being catapulted from, the USS *John F Kennedy* in the Mediterranean. He has flown in B-17 Flying Fortresses, the Lancaster and Liberator and with the Canadian *Snowbirds*. In 2004 he became one of the few Englishmen to fly in a B-52 Stratofortress. An accomplished aerial and landscape photographer, he has had several photographic books published including *Wild Blue Yonder; Glory Days of the 8th AF in England*. Martin lives in Norwich, Norfolk, England.



Engines from Charcoal I Hanoi



Cobalt I Hanoi



BIRTHPLACE CHAPTER

May 8th 2015 marked the 70th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day. It is difficult today to realize that in spite of this great victory, World War II was not over for us. Many experts believed that the defeat of Japan would take at least one more year. The hard fought war in the Pacific was entering it's final and potentially costly conclusion with the invasion of the Japanese home islands.

On February 19, 1945 the Marines invaded Iwo Jima. This was to prove the most difficult and deadly battle of the war for the Leathernecks. 6,800 Marines died in 45 days. 1,800 were killed in the first 18 hours. Out of 22,000 Japanese troops on the island 21,000 were killed.

On April 1, 1945 Okinawa was invaded by 170,000 Army and Marine troops. The battle for this 60 mile long island took almost three months. Over 13,000 soldiers, sailors and Marines died and over 30,000 were wounded. Of 100,000 Japanese and allied Okinawan troops only 7,400 survived. If this was how savagely the Japanese fought over these islands, how hard would they fight for Japan herself?

Operation Downfall, the invasion of the Japanese home islands was due to

begin October 1, 1945. An estimated 500,000 to 1,000,000 casualties were predicted. It is for this reason Presidents Roosevelt and Truman made many concessions to the Soviets. A Russian invasion of Manchuria and Korea would tie down hundreds of thousands of Japanese troops and it was hoped significantly reduce American losses. The atomic bomb shortened the war by at least one year and in retrospect made this strategy unnecessary.

—Charles Sitrin, President

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We are looking for help, as is Tech Sgt. Thomas Lee Creekmore, age 91, who served with the 305th BG (photo top right). His compelling story appeared in the March 2015 issue of the 8th AF News, page 46. On April 11, 12 and 13, 1945, the 42nd Infantry Division (Rainbow) captured the city of Schweinfurt and it's ball-bearing plants. The 8th AF bombed Schweinfurt 15 or 20 times, the first was 17 August '43, with the second on 14 October '43. The second mission became known as "Black Thursday" and the 305th BG lost 13 of 15 aircraft, all but one even before they got to the target.

A captured Nazi flag by the 42nd Infantry Division, which measured 15 x 8 feet, was given to Maj. Gen. Harry Collin, Commander of the 42nd, who sent that flag to Gen. Tooe Spaatz, who in turn delivered it to the Mighty 8th. The 42nd knew how many 8th AF aircraft and personnel were lost in bombing Schweinfurt. The flag was presented on 2 May '45 to the 305th BG because of their catastrophic losses in the raids on Schweinfurt. Sgt. Creekmore was present in Hanger #2 in Chelveston, home of the 305th, when the flag was presented to them. In the lower right hand corner of that flag was an inscription: "To the 8th Air Force—the Rainbow has avenged your losses at Schweinfurt" (Schweinfurt was misspelled on the flag).

At one time, the Museum in Dayton had a Schweinfurt flag, but it was not 15 x 8 feet and did not have the inscription. It was just another flag the 42nd had collected. Sgt. Creekmore, who flew 19 missions ending on 19 April '45, wants to find that flag and present it to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth. Does anyone know anything about this flag? Let's help Tom put this issue to bed. —Bob Buck
Contact Information: Bob Buck, 8th AFHS
The Birthplace Chapter — rbuck0823@aol.com



1



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Wisconsin Chapter

1. Louis Savante Christotomo - March Speaker.
2. Henry Ratenski & Stephanie Lutz.
3. R & Sam Oswald.
4. 8th AFHS-WI with Manitowoc HS AP History students.
5. Cindy and Students.
6. Capturing the moment, Fox News listening in on WWII Mickeyman Bill Bergner tell his story to the students.

WISCONSIN CHAPTER

Keeping Busy and Promoting Patriotism
By Cynthia Drehmel, President

On March 3rd, thirty-five adventurous souls braved the subzero wind chills and blizzard conditions, trekking their way to Post 27 in South Milwaukee for the Wisconsin Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society meeting. Members and guests were treated to piping hot coffee, Jan's famous ham and chicken lunch—with cheesecake for dessert—and of course, our brilliant speaker, Philippine native Louis Savante Christotomo.

At the age of 17, Louis was a spy and member of the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB). In 1943, his group formed the nucleus of the AIB in the Philippines. With direct orders from Gen. Douglas MacArthur, Louis was instrumental in the gathering and delivery of intelligence, which ultimately led to the freedom of over 3000 foreign and American prisoners of war and hostages held at the University of Santo Tomas internment camp. Amazingly, there was only one casualty during the dramatic rescue.

Twenty-five Manitowoc High Schools students once again made a trip to Milwaukee on April 18th to present their findings from interviewing our vets during the 2014-2015 school year. Seven students and one instructor reported to the group on who they interviewed:

Emily Yang: **Art Grisa**, S/Sgt, B17 gunner, 8th AF

Preston Heinzen: **Bill Bergner**, Sgt, radar operator/technician, 8th AF

Logan Swanson: **Ralph Anderson**, L/Col, B24 bombardier, 8th AF

Sam Oswald: **Al Exner**, medical corpsman, surgical tech, USN

Stephanie Lutz: **Henry Ratenski**, L/Col, B29 navigator, 20th AF

Jadian Welsing: **George Michel**, T/Sgt, radio operator/top turret gunner, 8th AF

Mark Hacker: **Raph Windler**, Private, 29th Infantry Div., Rifle squad, US Army

Teacher, Carl Sierecki: **Bill Meier**, 1Lt, lead bombardier/armory officer, 8th AF

Evan Maser: **Bob Schuh**, Sgt, gunner and togglier, 8th AF

Marissa Forster: **Harvin Abrahamson**, T/Sgt, radio operator/top turret gunner, 8th AF

All of the veterans were impressed by their presentations and truly loved educating the students in WWII history.

Upcoming events in June include presentations to our group from S/MSgt Edmond G Bates, a 28 year veteran of the AF who also served in the 8th; and M/Sgt Robert Segreti who worked with the 26th Operational Weather Squadron, including his actions on September 1, 2001—when President Bush was taken to Barksdale.

Another great June event our vets really enjoy is Take a Vet Fishing! Paired with our Wisconsin Chapter members, veterans are invited to spend a day fishing with the Take a Vet Fishing group at Lake Waubesa on June 14th. If you live greater than 60 miles from Madison, the group will also pay for a one night stay in a local hotel. Give me a call if interested: Cindy Drehmel 414.573.8520

Our annual Fly for Freedom IV is set for Tuesday, September 15, 2015. This event takes the place of our normal September meeting time. Please call Cindy (see above) or Tom Hanson: 262.691.4737 for details if interested no later than August 30th.

Back by popular demand we will again be working with high school AP history students this coming December. We are partnering with Oak Creek High School AP History students to work with our vets as part of an exciting Q & A panel. If you are interested in being a part of the panel, please call Cindy by September 30th.

FLORIDA CHAPTER

By Ken Sweet

The Florida Chapter of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society met May 2nd, for a Spring luncheon at the Atlantis Grill in Lantana, Florida (West Palm Beach). Attendance was very good with 30 people registered and 26 members and guests gathered for the occasion. Bill Uphoff, President of the Chapter hosted the meeting along with Vice President and Treasurer, Jim Hart. Secretary Esther Cheriff was there to record the proceedings. Board members in attendance were, Bernie Silverblatt, Ken Sweet, Sid Katz and Warren Klein, who were introduced. After the Pledge of Allegiance and a rousing version of the Army Air Force Song was completed, we settled down to business.





President Uphoff had a special treat for the board members. He presented the board members with 8th Air Force Historical Society ball caps in recognition of their service to the Chapter. Secretary Cheriff read the minutes of the last meeting and Jim Hart appraised the gathering of our financial status. Jim also recognized Sid Katz for his successful efforts to secure donations for the chapter from local businesses and urged all members to do the same. Ken Sweet praised board member Nic Apostle, who could not make the meeting due to pressing business matters, for his efforts to make sure all of the proper paperwork and filings had been made to ensure our tax exempt status and

Florida Chapter

1. Sean Reif.
2. Ken Sweet & Jim Hart.
3. Jim Hart & Warren Kleind.
4. Sid Katz David Trill.
5. Bill Uphoff, Jim Hart, Esther Cheriff, Sid Katz & Bernie Silverblatt.
6. 8th AFHS News magazines and other printed materials for handouts.
7. Sid Katz, Kaye Uphoff & Evie Kapp.



good standing with the state government as a veterans organization. Our guest speaker was Sean Reif, formerly of the USMC, who is compiling veteran's accounts of their experiences for a possible book. His topic is, "The Effects on American Society of Four Generations of Veterans." Mr. Reif

read excerpts from his interviews and they were quite compelling. After Reif's talk, there was more excitement when a raffle was held to give away some 8th Air Force Historical Society t-shirts and the winners were very pleased to win the shirts. To close the meeting, members were invited

to share experiences with the group and contribute what they would like to the general discussion. Members and guests were also encouraged to share their feelings on this type of meeting, a luncheon periodically, instead of a weekend long gathering around an event. Due to the attendance at this meeting it can be considered popular and a success.

OREGON CHAPTER

"Women with Wings"

Alice Miller is a retired nurse who comes from a military family background. Her dad was in the Army for 28 years. He was a Veteran of WWII, Korea, and Vietnam. Her sister is a 27-year Veteran of the Air Force and her brother-in-law is commander of a squadron at Beale AFB in California. Alice's husband's father was a



radio technician as well as a weatherman at Duxford during WWII. Alice has an extensive collection of women's military uniforms and tells the stories of the women who wore these uniforms from eras including WWI, WWII, Korean War, and the Vietnam War. Alice is also a regular volunteer at the Museum of Flight. The following are excerpts from Alice Miller's speech.



My name is Alice Miller and I collect women's military uniforms. I love them all, but the best thing about the uniforms is the history behind them. They tell so much about the women who wore them and their service and our history of our country at that time. Today, I'm doing a program called "Women with Wings", so all the uniforms up here they wear a wing except for one uniform, but that one also has to do with airplanes.

Do you like the uniform I have on? I know you all love the WASPs. Well, if it wasn't for this uniform, we probably wouldn't have the WASPs. This is an ATA Uniform, Air Transport Auxiliary, and I'm an American woman in a British uniform. I have subdued buttons on the front that say ATA on them and my rank of flight officer and I have epaulettes. In 1939, the British knew they were going to war so they organized what they called the ATA. Male pilots joined the ATA and in January of 1940 so did the first eight women and they actually helped to ferry aircraft during the Battle of Britain. By the end of the war, some of these women said they had ferried up to 70 different kinds

of aircraft. The pilots didn't get checked out in every aircraft. They'd just jumped in with a little book of pilot's notes and take off. England was a combat zone, so they flew without a radio, without heat, and often in cloudy weather with poor visibility.

When Jackie Cochran got wind of the fact that the ATA was hiring women from all different countries to fly she sent telegrams to very accomplished pilots some of whom were flying for commercial airlines. These female pilots took their check ride in Montreal, Canada and over to England they went, 25 American women who flew their hearts out and Jackie got them good benefits including pay equal to that of the men. By the end of the war over 300 women from 25 different countries had served in the ATA. Some of these original 25 women that flew for the ATA went to fly for the WASPs when they were organized in 1943.

Remaining Dates in 2015 are May 9, August 8 and November 7th

May 9, 2015 Program

Henry Bendinelli was an aerial navigator in the 9th Air Force. He flew in the C-46 Curtiss Commando transports while in the ETO. Of course transports were always armed – if you pulled out your COLT .45 and shot at enemy planes.

During Korean War he was a Navigator in Douglas A-26s. After that war he was stationed at Portland and also flew in CH-47 Chinook helicopters.

There is no cost to attend the meeting and it is open to the public Oregon Chapter Executive Board Meetings. All members can attend any Executive board meeting. The Board meets at the Elks Lodge three Saturdays before the regular membership meeting. If you can spare up to 2 hours between 10 AM and Noon you can also join the board and help make our chapter a continuing success. Send Stories and documents to be Borrowed / Archived

If you have items that you wish to share with others, they can be loaned to the Oregon Chapter, scanned and catalogued and then returned to you. You can always donate them permanently to the chapter if you wish. Contact Tom Philo to make arrangements for the documents. Items in the archive are usually be posted onto the web site (see release form on

web site) so that everyone can learn from what others have experienced.
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91ST BOMBARDMENT GROUP

President's Corner Mick Hanou
All the 70th anniversary remembrances in the European Theater of Operations come to a culmination with the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII – VE Day. There were celebrations in Washington D.C. with FAA approval for the "WWII Victory Capitol Flyover" which took place on May 8. April 12 was the 70th anniversary of Franklin Roosevelt's passing. The day after he died was when my father (Dutch laborer) was liberated by the US 3rd Army. He became a translator assisting with the thousands of displaced persons they liberated. He was then attached as an interpreter to the 404FG which was tasked with scouring Eastern Europe to find technologically-valuable assets before the Russians were given those areas. He would listen to what the German townspeople were saying and let the US lieutenant know if they were hiding anything.
There is an interest in a Rally Round in 2015. The suggested venue is the 8th AFHS reunion in Omaha, October 13-18, 2015. I have contacted them and they are keen to have us. You needn't be a member of the 8AFHS to attend. All arrangements need to be made by you. More information is on the web at www.8thafhs.org/reunion. If you plan on going, please let me know via email and I will arrange for our own "Group Venue" Hospitality Suite.
During our last Board meeting, Chris and Amy Murphy attended via Skype to give an update on the Tower Museum Bassingbourn. They wish to reassure the 91BGMA members that the collection is safe and will be kept maintained in good condition. However, the Tower itself is nearly 80 years old and in need of significant restoration of bricks / mortar and windows. The Board is looking into possible courses of action but will not

now be approaching membership for donations. We are asking that you become involved, please – if you know of any sources for significant funding or have any ideas, we'd appreciate hearing from you.

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Please send Folded Wings information to Jody Kelly.

July Ragged Irregular submissions must be received by June 15th.

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NEW YORK STATE SOUTHERN WING CHAPTER

by David Levitt

As the June issue of the 8th A F News went to press, the 8th AFHS New York State Southern Wing Chapter held a luncheon at the Holiday Inn in Plainview, Long Island (New York) on June 7th. The luncheon was in tribute of the 70th Anniversary of VE-Day. The theme was, "From D-Day to VE-Day: A multi-national and multi-military branch effort that defeated the Nazis."

Veterans from the United States, the former Soviet Union, and other former Allied veterans from air, land, and sea were invited to speak about their war experiences. Planned talks included the Eighth A F Shuttle missions to the Soviet Union and the USAAF aircraft lend-lease program to the Soviets. Also included was information on the liberation of the concentration camps by the United States, Soviet, and British troops. We also joined in on a discussion of the fate of 8th Air Force Jewish POWs in Germany.

After lunch many of us were able to visit the American Airpower Museum at Republic Airport (Home of the P-47s). We are planning another luncheon in the fall in the Long Island area of New York.

One of the possible themes being discussed is "The 70th Anniversary of VJ-Day: 8th Air Force influence on winning the war in the Pacific."

Our chapter continues to attract WWII veterans, their families, and other enthusiasts with a wide range of interesting, informative programs, while keeping the focus on the 8th Air Force.

Please feel free to join in on our luncheons if you are in the area. For more information, please contact:

Pat Keeley (973) 495-3404 or FXE84@

Optonline.net

You can also visit our website: blogs.

ny8thswcafhs.org

381ST BG MEMORIAL MUSEUM



We at the 381st Bg Memorial Museum at Ridgewell UK are asking for your help in supplying anything relating to the 381st BG for our displays. Uniforms, photos (copies will do) or any other items of interest that would help us to show the visitors how things were here in WW2. Personal items that are named would be a bonus. We are a small group that take care of the 381st Bg memorial making sure that it is kept clean and tidy at all times. I am Alan Steel the membership Secretary here and welcome any newcomers from the USA. a.steel@btinternet.com

WRIGHT PLACE – RIGHT TIME

This painting, by the well known aviation artist, Paul Rendel, of Milton, Delaware, captures a 13 year old boy, Thomas Lee Creekmore of Portsmouth, Virginia, with his family, at the recently

completed Wright Brothers' Memorial in Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina in the spring of 1937. Two of the first Y1B-17s made are shown at the Memorial. Probably, Lt. Calab V. Haynes and Lt. Barney M. Giles were the pilots and Lt. Curtis E. LeMay was one of the Navigators. The planes were from the 2nd Bombardment Group based at Langley Field, Virginia.

Eight years later, in 1945, this boy was a crew member on a G model B-17 flying missions

with the 305th Bomb Group over Germany.

Lt. Curtis E. LeMay, as a Colonel, in 1942 took the 305th Bomb Group to England and was its first Commander.

Only 13 Y1B-17s were made and delivered to the Army.

More than 12,000 B-17s followed.

The Y1B-17 had four WRIGHT R-1820 Cyclone engines



People in the picture:

Tommy, having his picture taken by his mother, Mary Elizabeth.

His brother Bill, sitting on the wall.

His sister, Jeanette, holding hands with her boyfriend, Jimmy Daughtry.

Submitted by:

Thomas Lee Creekmore
T/Sgt. 365th Sqdn.

The Role of Walnut Ridge

By Nancy Toombs

A few weeks ago, I, along with several area WWII veterans, attended a special Reunion Dinner on May 1st, 2015 at the Wings of Honor Museum in Walnut Ridge, Arkansas.

The Walnut Ridge Army Flying School Museum aka Wings of Honor Museum, was established in 1999 for the purpose of preserving the rich history of the Walnut Ridge Army Flying School, the Marine Corps Air Facility at Walnut Ridge, the War Assets Administration's Warbird Storage, Sales and Scrapping Facility, and the USAF 725th Radar Squadron; and to remember and honor those civilian and military personnel who served to maintain our freedom.

The Air Field was activated on August 15, 1942, with the arrival of the initial contingent of key military personnel. Ten days later, 100 troops arrived, but there was no housing available on the air field, so these troops were transported to and from the CCC camp, located at five-mile springs, north of Pocahontas for the first 30 days.

Even though the airfield was planned and designed as an AAFBFS, for some time it appeared it would instead become an Advanced Glider School. As late as September 1942, preparations were being made for gliders, including requests for instructional materials, gliders and tow planes.

Meanwhile the first 3 classes of Aviation Cadets programmed for Walnut

Ridge were sent to Blytheville, which was being built as an Advanced Twin Engine School. Blytheville was scarcely any better prepared than Walnut Ridge. Circus tents were utilized for operations headquarters and classrooms. The runways were not ready, so flying was done from oil-coated dirt strips.

Finally, near the end of September the Southeast Training Command at Maxwell Field clarified the situation concerning the Air Field's mission by announcing 102 Aviation Cadets and 3 Student Officers from Decatur, Alabama, and 20 Aviation Cadets from Camden, Arkansas, would be sent to Walnut Ridge for Basic Flight Training.

For reasons unknown, the Advanced Glider School was established at Stuttgart, which was being built as an Advanced Twin-Engine School.

The first Student Officers and Aviation Cadets in Class 43-B began training at Walnut Ridge at 1:00 P.M. on October 12, 1942. In just under 21 months 5,310 students entered training and 4,641 graduated. Forty-Two students, instructors and passengers were killed in training. The last class graduated on June 27, 1944.

Between January 1941 and August 1945, 312,911 Aviation Cadets and Student Officers entered the USAAF Flight Training Program. Of that number, 85,491 or 27.32%

washed out or were killed in Primary Flight Training. Another 28,474 or 9.10% washed out or were killed in Basic Flight Training, while 7,292 or 2.33% washed out or were killed in Advanced Flight Training. After winning their wings, 7,474 or 2.30% washed-out or were killed in Transition Flight Training, and 3,168 or 1.01% washed out or were killed in Flight Instructor Training.

About 3.4% of the flight students graduating from Basic Flight Schools between December 12, 1942, and June 27, 1944, received their training at the AAFBFS at Walnut Ridge.

On September 1, 1944, the WRAAF was transferred to the Department of the Navy and was known as the Marine Corps Air Facility, Walnut Ridge. The Marine Corps trained for only a brief time, using SBD-5's and FG-1D Corsair's. VMF-513 transferred

to Walnut Ridge on September 14, 1944, and then moved to Mojave, California, on December 4, 1944. Never a thriving

place, the station newspaper referred to it as "MCAF – Outpost of Charm and Seclusion." MCAF, Walnut Ridge was decommissioned March 15, 1945.

Walnut Ridge played a significant role in training WWII pilots. All personnel who worked, trained or served here can be proud of their sacrifice and service to our country.



Left to right: Stan Loftsgard (493rd BG pilot), Nelson Gatewood (paratrooper), Paul Calkin (100th BG top turret gunner), Elbert Little (95th BG flight engineer), William McGrath (375th BG CBI Theater), William "Bill" Toombs (493rd BG flight engineer), Jim Pritchett [seated] (7th Air Corps troop carrier pilot), and James Sauls (153rd Infantry Division)

June 2015 (15-2)

Reunions Chapter Meetings

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

359TH FG, 368TH, 369TH, 370TH SQUADRONS

Indianapolis, Indiana
July 16-19, 2015
Contact: Gigi Doersch Paddock
d-gpaddock@verizon.net
757.566.8856

398th BG

New Orleans
August 12-15, 2015
Westin Canal Place
Ken Howard
(309) 742-8546
KenHoward@Hotmail.com

306TH BG HISTORICAL ASSN & SECOND SCHWEINFURT

Memorial Assn
Salt Lake City, UT
Sept 17-20, 2015
Contact: Barbara Neal
(435) 655-1500
barb306neal@gmail.com
306bg.org

401ST BG

May 11-14, 2016
San Antonio, Texas.
Josie Navarro 253-988-0966
401bg.org
The 401st will be holding a mini-reunion during the 41st Annual Reunion of the 8th AFHS in Omaha, NE October 14-18, 2015. We will have a dedicated hospitality room so please make plans to join us!

447TH BG

October 8-11-2015
Crowne Plaza-Dulles Airport (IAD)
2200 Centerville Road
Herndon, VA 20170
Ph# 703-471-6700
Contact George Hoidra
301-953-2813
ghoidra@yahoo.com

384TH BG SECOND ANNUAL "FINAL"

Tucson, Arizona,

October 29, - November 1, 2015
Information at 384thBomb-Group.com

486TH & 487TH BG

September 29 to October 4,
Sacramento, CA
487thbg.org & 486thbg.org

490TH BG (H) MEMORIAL DEDICATION

Station 134 Eye. Suffolk.
England
May 28-29, 2016
Keep an eye on Facebook Pages
490th Memorial Project or
490th BG (H)
<http://www.490th.co.uk/>.
We have now raised the initial funds needed to erect the long over due memorial to the 490th Bomb Group (H) and we wish to tell anybody who is interested in it what is happening.
I am the current 490th BG (H) Historian / Archivist
eric.490thbg@btinternet.com

100THBG FOUNDATION

New Orleans, LA
Sept 24-27, 2015
Contact: Nancy Putnam
Nputnam51@gmail.com
Visit www.100thbg.com

93RD BG

October 1 thru October 5, 2015
Omaha, Nebraska
Askarben Suites
Contact: John Marx
(724) 843-3897
109clearview@verizon.net
www.93bg.com
(All Bomb Groups of the 2nd Air Division welcome to join us)

41ST 8TH AFHS ANNUAL REUNION DOUBLETREE DOWNTOWN OMAHA OCTOBER 14-18, 2015

TALL TALES AND HANGAR FLYIN' AMONG POST WWII PILOTS



L-R:

Darrel Lowell

Past president 8th AFHS, B-47 pilot

L/GEN "Buck" Shuler

USAF, Ret. Former commander 8th AF & command pilot

Joe Jones

B-47 pilot

Jarvis Latham

B-47 pilot

A letter penned in 1944 uncovers the powerful and heartfelt story of Helen Gregg, the daughter of Irish immigrant parents raised in the miseries of Hell's Kitchen during the Great Depression,



and Clarence R. Stephenson, an Army Air Corps cadet reared in the small, struggling city of Ironton, Ohio. Fate brought them together in 1942 when Helen and the aspiring aviator literally ran into each other in New York's Central

Park. From the moment their eyes met, they knew their lives would never be the same. Not caring for the name Clarence, Helen called him by his middle name, Raymond.

They were strangers and of disparate faiths, but no differences or conflicts, or so they thought, could keep them apart.

In October 1942, Raymond had left New York, but before departing, he asked Helen to marry him. She initially said no. You see, she was just 16 and forbidden to

marry until she was 18. Raymond said he'd wait until her 18th birthday or eternity, if she would just say yes.

More than a year later, September 6, 1943, became the happiest day of Helen's life, her 18th birthday and the day she married Raymond.

After their marriage, Raymond moved about the country training to pilot the B-17, America's Flying Fortress. Helen followed him by train and bus, so they could be together before he went off to war. Her journeys involved disturbing incidents of which she could have never imagined.

Raymond's greatest challenges came in combat as a highly decorated B-17 pilot.

One year after they married, on Helen's 19th birthday and first wedding anniversary, Raymond's B-17 went down in a fiery crash. Helen had given birth to a baby girl, just six weeks earlier.

61 years after that fateful day, Helen's family gathered to celebrate her 80th birthday. She pulled her son from a second marriage away from the party and asked him to read a letter to her. The postmark on the envelope was September 6, 1944. Helen's 19th birthday, her first wedding anniversary and the day her

Raymond died.

"My Dearest Darling," Raymond began, professing his love for Helen, his desire to see his daughter for the first time, and a promise to be home soon.

Helen tearfully revealed a secret about the dashing and brave young aviator who stole her heart. She shared lessons about faith and about a love that couldn't die, and she divulged a promise that she made to Raymond during the summer of 1942 that she had to keep, no matter how long or how hard it might be to fulfill.

James Bradley, #1 NY Times Best Selling Author of *Flags of Our Fathers* and *The China Mirage*, said about *She Called Him Raymond*, "Ray O'Connor abandoned his career to search for his namesake, a heroic B-17 pilot who died in World War II. What he found touches the heart and stirs the soul."

The book can be purchased online with free shipping at northshire.com. Website: SheCalledHimRaymond.com Like it on Facebook – *She Called Him Raymond* Book trailer: YouTube.com – In the search bar type, *She Called Him Raymond*.

WWII "Bomber Jackets"

By John Slemph

Recently, work began on a project that I've had in the back of my head for quite some time...that being to photograph WWII "bomber jackets". More properly known as "A2" jackets (the Navy jackets are G-1's), many have distinctive artwork on both sides, and of course are unique to their owners. As the horrors of WWII recede from memory, it seems to me that now, more than ever, is the time to document these crumbling artifacts.

While making a visual record of a jacket is pretty straightforward, photographically speaking, I am often struck at the raw power that "simple" photographs have. Is it because there is nothing to compete with the subject...or is it the single-minded lighting approach that focuses the viewer's attention like a laser? Perhaps... but I believe that by simplifying the images, they collectively gain a power that they might not otherwise have.

Fascinating to me are the wear marks

that each jacket bears...indicative of the utility they once provided the owner, and of the pride in which it was worn. The artwork too is unique to each, largely because each is hand painted, and is a moving billboard of symbols that tell a story. Bombs represent missions flown, insignia represent a unit that each man belonged to, and of course, the names.

As physical objects, they have taken on the patina of use that can only be created with something that has been worn often. Frayed sleeves, busted zippers, dirty collars, torn liners, holes in the leather all point to the unique experience each owner lived... and to the very real men that wore them. One day soon they will crumble to dust...as they must. Perhaps with this project they can live on for future generations to admire and respect... as symbols of courage and dignity at a time when it was most sorely needed.

Each jacket selected for the project will be photographed "as is", from the front and back side. The goal is to produce a book, including stories of the men who wore

them, and perhaps an exhibition too, with life-sized prints. The owners will receive prints for their efforts, and the jackets will be insured while in my possession. Return shipping will be paid for.

So far, eight jackets have been photographed, and several museums have agree to participate. Should there be questions, please feel free to call me at (404) 245-2411, or contact me via email: john@aerographs.com www.aerographs.com



Front & Back Jacket:

WWII "bomber Jacket", worn by Mr. A. B. Clement, who was a B-24 top gunner and flew 50 missions, living to tell the tale.

©2014 John Slemph

Canada Celebrates Victory Day + 70 Years...

By Jonathan Delgado-Levin-Turner



Toronto City Councillor James Pasternak joined with World War II veterans, members of the Canadian Armed Forces, representatives of the Allied countries, Toronto Mayor John Tory, and elected officials in a ceremony recognizing the 70th anniversary of World War II Victory Day.



The ceremony was a joint effort with the support of the 29th Division Association HQ Post 29, 8th Air Force Historical Society-9th Strategic Reconnaissance Squadron Wing, Jewish War Veterans of Canada, The Office of Strategic Services Society, and Canadian Association of the World War II Veterans from the Soviet Union.

Jonathan Delgado-Levin-Turner, Chapter/Unit Liaison for the 8th Air Force Historical Society, represented the Historical Society during the event.



1. Jonathan Delgado-Levin-Turner, receiving the 8th AFHS proposed proclamation signed by Toronto Mayor, John Tory.
2. Jonathan delivering speech on behalf of the 8th Air Force Historical Society with WWII Soviet Army veteran, Vechislav Volkov [to the right of Jonathan].
3. Jonathan Delgado-Levin-Turner.
4. Group photo

70TH ANNIVERSARY OF

VE-Day

Photos by William Craig Dubishar



8th AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REUNION



DOUBLETREE DOWNTOWN OMAHA
OCTOBER 14 – 18, 2015



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 11, 2015. You may also register and pay with credit card online at www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2015. A 3% convenience fee will be added to online credit card reservations. Forms received after September 11 will be accepted on a space available basis only. Hotel reservations should also be made by September 11, 2015.

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

MEALS / EVENTS CHOICES MEAL PACKAGE 1 \$212

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

MEAL PACKAGE 2 \$148

Package includes 5 hotel food functions beginning with breakfast on Friday (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, breakfast bread, and coffee.

CHOICE #3 INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

Thursday's Buffet at \$44 is included in Package 1 but can be purchased separately. Friday's Rendezvous Dinner at \$45 (individual Bomb

Group Dinners for groups of 30 or more) and Saturday's Banquet at \$45 can be purchased separately as well, 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 Staff gratuities are not included in the tour prices. All trips require a minimum of 35 people. Please be at the bus boarding area five minutes prior to the departure time.



41st 8TH AFHS ANNUAL REUNION

DOUBLETREE DOWNTOWN OMAHA

OCTOBER 14-18, 2015



Wednesday, October 14

1:00pm	-	6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
1:00pm			Memorabilia and Gathering Room open throughout the reunion.
1:00pm	-	4:00pm	8AFHS Board Meeting
6:00pm	-	7:00pm	Welcome Reception, followed by dinner on your own.

Thursday, October 15

7:30am	-	8:30am	Continental Breakfast for Package #1 participants
8:00am	-	11:00am	Reunion Registration open
9:00am	-	1:30pm	CITY TOUR / OLD MARKET
9:30am	-	12:30pm	BRIEFING AT THE BUNKER (STRATCOM HQ)
1:00pm	-	6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
2:00pm	-	3:30pm	Q&A WWII Vets
3:45pm	-	5:00pm	Q&A Cold War Vets
6:00pm	-	9:00pm	Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm	-	9:00pm	Dinner Buffet – Bill Beigel WWII Researcher and Author

Friday, October 16

7:30am	-	8:30am	Full Breakfast Buffet for Meal Package participants
8:00am	-	10:00am	Reunion Registration open
8:30am	-	10:00am	Individual Group Meetings
10:00am	-	11:20am	Chapter & Unit Development Meeting
11:30am	-	4:00pm	BUZZING AT THE BLUFFS MINI AIR SHOW
2:00pm	-	6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
6:00pm	-	9:00pm	8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm	-	9:00pm	Rendezvous Dinners

Saturday, October 17

7:30am	-	8:30am	Continental Breakfast for Meal Package participants
8:45am	-	10:15am	General Membership Meeting
11:00am	-	4:30pm	DURHAM MUSEUM / CITY TOUR
12:00pm	-	4:00pm	8AFHS Board Meeting
12:30pm	-	4:00pm	STRATEGIC AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM
5:30pm	-	6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
6:00pm	-	9:00pm	8AFHS Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm	-	10:00pm	Banquet Dinner & Entertainment

Sunday, October 18

7:00am	-	8:30am	Full 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 Staff gratuities are not included in the tour prices.

Omaha's Arts & Entertainment District



2015 41th ANNUAL 8th AIR FORCE REUNION

CITY TOUR / OLD MARKET

Thursday, October 15

Enjoy a guided driving tour of Omaha's past, present and future, with an overview of Omaha's points of interest. See Lewis & Clark Landing, the Historic Gold Coast District and Creighton University. Included sites include Billionaire's Warren Buffett's residence, 1903 Joslyn Scottish Castle, St. Cecilia's Spanish Cathedral, the Blackstone Hotel (birthplace of the Reuben Sandwich), TD Ameritrade Park (Home of the annual College World Series), Omaha Community Playhouse (where Henry Fonda started acting), and much more. Stop at Pioneer Courage Park to see life-size sculptures of an authentic pioneer wagon train traveling west across the Nebraska prairie. You'll have time for a leisurely lunch and shopping on your own at the Old Market, Omaha's most historic and entertaining neighborhood. The cobblestone streets are home to a diverse mix of shopping, galleries, and restaurants. Shuttles back to the hotel will be offered at 12:15pm and 1:15pm.

9:00am board bus, 1:30pm back at hotel
\$37/Person includes bus, guide, and guide gratuity. Lunch on your own.
OR

BRIEFING AT THE BUNKER

Thursday, October 15

STRATCOM Headquarters on Offutt AFB is home to the historic "Bunker" currently known as the Global Operations Center, the underground facility where officials from each branch of the military and civilians carry out the command's worldwide mission. In the comfort of the briefing theater inside the Headquarters building, learn the history and current missions from the men and women who play a vital role in our nation's defense, from the early crises of the Cold War

to the expanded missions including cyber security, enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

9:30am board bus, 12:30pm back at hotel
\$28/Person includes bus and escort.

BUZZING THE BLUFF MINI AIR SHOW

Friday, October 16

It's time for some real hangar flying during a private air-show at the Council Bluffs Airport. Check out Gunfighter, a beautifully restored P-51 and other fully restored war birds as well as vintage memorabilia.

Lunch will be provided! More details coming!

11:30am board bus, 4:00pm back at hotel
\$29/Person includes bus and escort.

DURHAM MUSEUM / CITY TOUR

Saturday, October 17

If you missed the city tour on Thursday, you'll have an opportunity to take one today, but first we'll stop for a quick bite at the Old Market. There are lots of restaurant choices, along with shops and galleries, but use your time wisely. Next stop: Union Station, now home to the Durham Western Heritage Museum. Affiliated with the Smithsonian, the museum is the nation's first restored Art Deco railway station, housing exhibits and memorabilia from Omaha's history. Walk through full-sized train cars, learn the history of Omaha from the Native Americans to present, and enjoy an ice cream, malt or phosphate at the old-fashioned soda fountain. Finally, embark on a two hour city tour, as described above to learn about Omaha's past and present.

11:00am board bus, 4:30pm back at hotel
\$47/Person includes bus, guide, and admission.

Lunch on your own.

OR



2015 41th ANNUAL 8th AIR FORCE REUNION

STRATEGIC AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM

Saturday, October 17

More than thirty of the world's most famous military aircraft and missiles are on display at the Strategic Air and Space Museum. This 300,000 square foot facility includes the SR-71 "Blackbird" and the B-36 "Peacemaker," as well as a B-17 and many more interesting aircraft.

A special 'Planes, Trains, and Autos' exhibit will be on display during our visit. Save time to see a film in the theater and visit the gift shop.

A limited snack bar is available, but we recommend you eat lunch before departing the hotel.

12:30pm board bus,

4:00pm back at hotel.

\$41/Person includes

bus, escort, and admission.



8th AFHS Activity Registration Form October 14-18, 2015

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each even and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2015 (3% will be added to total). If a valid email address is provided, an electronic receipt will be sent. Otherwise, your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. All registration forms and payments must be received on or before September 11, 2015. 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. Your contact information will be shared only with other reunion attendees.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.

322 Madison Mews

Norfolk, VA 23510

ATTN: 8th AFHS

OFFICE USE ONLY

Check # _____ Date Received _____

Inputted _____ Nametag Completed _____

CUT-OFF DATE IS 9/11/2015

	Price Per	# of People	Total
REGISTRATION FEE			
Includes meeting expenses and other reunion expenses.	\$40		\$
Reg. Fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel	\$25		\$
MEAL PACKAGES			
<i>Package #1 includes 7 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Thursday</i>	\$212		\$
<i>Package #2 includes 5 hotel meals beginning with breakfast on Friday</i>	\$148		\$
Please select your entrée choice(s) for the Banquet:			
10oz. Grilled NY Strip		#	
Roasted Salmon with a lemon-herb sauce		#	
SEPARATELY PRICED MEALS (if not purchasing a package)			
Thursday, 10/15: Dinner Buffet	\$44		\$
Friday, 10/16: Rendezvous Dinner (Pan Roasted Chicken)	\$45		\$
Saturday, 10/17: Banquet (please select your entrée)			
10oz. Grilled NY Strip	\$45		\$
Roasted Salmon with a lemon-herb sauce	\$45		\$
TOURS			
Please choose one of the following two tours:			
Thursday, 10/15: City Tour / Old Market	\$37		\$
Thursday, 10/15: Briefing at the Bunker	\$28		\$
Friday, 10/16: Buzzing at the Bluffs Mini Air Show	\$29		\$
Please choose one of the following two tours:			
Saturday, 10/17: Durham Museum / City Tour	\$47		\$
Saturday, 10/17: Strategic Air and Space Museum	\$41		\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

Please Print

MEMBER NAME (for nametag) _____

☐ VETERAN ☐ NEXT GEN ☐ OTHER WWII GROUP AFFILIATION (please list BG, not BS) _____

IF A VETERAN, PLEASE CIRCLE ERA: WWII POW Cold War Era Korea Vietnam Gulf War Desert Storm Iraq Other _____

SPOUSE NAME (if attending) _____

GUEST NAMES _____ ☐ NEXT GEN

PHONE # (____) _____ - _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____ @ _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ 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).

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

DOUBLETREE HOTEL OMAHA DOWNTOWN – OMAHA, NE

(800) 222-8733 or (402) 346-7600

www.doubletree3.hilton.com/en/hotels/nebraska/doubletree-by-hilton-hotel-omaha-downtown-OMAH-DT/index.html

LOCATION

1616 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE 68102

Located in the heart of downtown Omaha and just ten minutes from the Eppley Airport.

RESERVATION INFORMATION

Call the number above and reference the 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion or please visit www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2015 and click on the hotel reservation link at the top of the page to make reservations and receive the discounted group rate.

Group Name: 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion

Reunion Dates: October 14-18, 2015

Rate: \$105 + tax (currently 18.16%).

Rates are offered 3 days before and 3 days after reunion dates, based on group block availability.

Cut off Date: 09/11/15. Late reservations will be processed based on space availability at a higher rate.

Cancellation Policy: All reservations have a 48 hour cancellation policy, or the attendee will be charged one night's room rate plus tax. All early departures are subject to an early departure penalty \$25 and late check-outs are subject to a penalty of \$75.

UNIT HOSPITALITY SUITES

Hospitality Suites for individual groups will be available on the guest room floors for \$125/night, payable to the Society. This fee includes

ice service and daily housekeeping. "Suites" will be two connecting sleeping rooms (with beds removed). All suites will be located in close proximity to each other so visiting between groups will be easy! To reserve a suite, please contact Donna at DonnaLee@afri.com with your name, unit name, and nights needed for hospitality suites. These rooms follow the same check-in/out pattern as normal sleeping rooms

PARKING & SHUTTLE INFORMATION

The Doubletree Hotel is offering complimentary self parking to all overnight guests. The hotel also offers complimentary shuttle service to and from the Omaha Eppley Airfield. Upon arrival at the airport you will need to call the hotel and then proceed outside to the shared ride/taxi pickup/drop off stand outside baggage claim.

WHEELCHAIR RENTAL

ScootAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Please call (888) 441-7575 or visit www.scootaround.com for details and to make reservations.

Pinpointing the Past, Part II

Return to Moon Mountain

By Samantha Misa

It's been some time since my last trip to the top of Moon Mountain, but I have been very busy in the meantime doing research and I've found a number of interesting facts that tie in with the plane crash that occurred in April of 1945 in Bovina Center, NY that took the life of trainee pilot Robert B. Clark.



Lieutenant Ed Davidson

One interesting aspect I discovered was that the man who helped us identify the wires uncovered at the crash site has a fascinating World War II history himself. Edwin "Ed" Davidson, who confirmed our discovery as being control wires for a Texan Trainer, was a pilot of a B-17 Flying Fortress. He was also a prisoner of war.

Lieutenant Ed Davidson of Bovina Center graduated high school in 1941 and enlisted in the air force in April of 1942, receiving his commission in May of 1943. That November, he was shipped off to England.

After flying five missions over enemy territory, on January 5th, 1944, Davidson failed to return from a mission

in France and word was sent to his parents back in Bovina Center that their 20 year old son was missing in action.

A few months later, the townspeople would receive word that Lt. Davidson was a prisoner of war at Stalag Luft 1 in Germany. He managed to write to his folks back home, and the local newspaper printed an article that said Davidson had been interred with his navigator and bombardier, but *"they were moved to another part of camp and he has not seen them again, for they are not allowed to visit other parts of the camp. They are allowed to listen news and music broadcast over a loud speaker in their barracks. He was taking lessons in pencil sketching and art and had done a lot of reading. He hoped they would not be there too long."*

I also had the opportunity to stop by the Bovina Museum, which boasts an artifact collected from the site in 1945.

Although the army had cordoned off the wreckage to stop curious locals from interfering, the debris field was large and many people were able to walk off with a souvenir. A piece of one of the cylinders from the plane's Pratt Whitney radial engine is on display there. It weighs 43 pounds.

Another interesting occurrence was that of another crash that happened in the nearby town of Roxbury not too long ago. The eerie part is that the plane was none other than a WWII Texan Trainer, the same kind that crashed on Moon Mountain exactly 70 years earlier. However, the pilot in this crash wasn't killed, only slightly injured, making for a much happier ending.

I welcome anyone with any questions or comments they may have. I can be reached at slm19@geneseo.edu or through the Delaware County Historical Association at dcha@delhi.net



The Texan Trainer that crashed in Roxbury, NY in 2014. Photo courtesy of the Watershed Post.

Stalag XVII *Not Such a Big Hit for US Prisoners*

by Jina Moore



The Nazis held in Cambridge, Ohio in the 1940s ate cereal with fresh milk and scrambled eggs with margarine-covered toast at breakfast.

Ted Finck, a prisoner of war interned in Germany's infamous Stalag XVII, was lucky to get breakfast.

"There was a big tub of hot water, and instant coffee if you go a Red Cross parcel. Maybe some barley, and some bread—rye, almost black, VERY heavy. One loaf for eight or 10 men. That was it," Finck remembered.

Finck pointed to a 1943 newspaper article listing the daily diet and routine of members of Rommel's famed Afrika Korps, a group of 200 prisoners of war who spent their time in America eating in a spacious mess hall making clocks out of scrap metal

or working in the kitchen—and earning 80 cents a day. Those who didn't work got a 10 cent wage simply for idling.

The Germans' treatment contrasted sharply with the conditions Finck remembers in Stalag XVII—little food, lots of lice and fleas, and nothing to do but wait for the end of a war that seemed to go on and on.

Finck joined the Army Air Corps in 1942. Trained as a radio operator, Finck flew his first mission over enemy-occupied France, sending and receiving codes and firing a .50 caliber machine gun when the Germans began their attack.

"They were like a beehive coming at us. The fighters mowed us down and got us in further. They dropped off because they knew the flak fields were going to get us," Finck said.

The plane completed its bombing mission, but found itself under volleys of Nazi bullets on its attempted return home. After three of the four engines caught fire, pilot Delton Wheat ordered a bail-out. The plane crashed and burst into flames as the men came down in their parachutes. Finck and nine other airmen were immediately taken prisoner on June 26, 1943—a year to the day Finck joined the Army Air Corps.

The men were taken to a kind of field hospital where a piece of flak the size of a thumb was removed from Finck's leg. The German doctor wrapped his wound in a paper bandage

and shipped him off.

"My knee swelled up, and at the next camp, a doctor in the [American] infantry looked at my leg. He cussed those Germans up and down and lanced and drained my wound," Finck said.

The Nazis took their prisoner to Stalag VII-A near Moosburg, Germany, a small city about 30 kilometers from Munich. On October 12, '43, they and nearly 1,300 others were herded to Krems, Austria, traveling 60 men to a boxcar designed to hold eight horses.

The new camp—Stalag XVII-B—was one of the largest, numbering over 60,000 by the time Finck arrived. The notoriously bad conditions have been immortalized in a successful book and a popular Broadway play





Scott McCloskey/The News Register

Greatest generation

Ted Finck, left, and Lee Kelvington both of Wheeling, look over a section from a 1940's Wheeling News Register on "Those who gave their lives for Victory" a section dedicated to area men who lost their lives during the war. Both Finck and Kelvington were at Wilson lodge Wednesday afternoon helping to set-up for the Greatest Generation display.

and movie, but the men who were there have much different memories.

"That's a comedy," he said of the movie. "The book and the movie may have been a big hit, but it wasn't for us."

The filthy barracks vacated by Russian prisoners were full of lice

and fleas, Finck said. The men slept in bunks, eight men to a tier, on mattresses of straw only 1 inch thick. The mattresses were so infested that the prisoners eventually burned them, hoping they'd be replaced.

The quality of food matched the living conditions. Rotten potatoes,

dehydrated soup full of bugs and worms and some occasional barley constituted the daily cuisine. Eight to 10 prisoners split one small loaf of black bread cooked exactly to Berlin's Food Providing Ministry recipe. That recipe, reprinted in an ex-POW magazine, called for 50% bruised rye grain,

20% “tree flour” [sawdust], and 10% minced leaves and straw.

Conditions were so poor in fact, that some prisoners developed escape plans. A network of underground tunnels was found after the war, but many of the men who had attempted to use them were shot. Finck remembered hearing shots the night of May 13, 1944, when Ralph Levoie and a friend tried to tunnel under the barbed wire.

“Ralph and his buddy were going to go between two snow piles, where they couldn’t be seen, but it happened that a German sentry was walking along the barbed wire in front of them,” Finck recalled. “There were bullets flying everywhere. The barracks beside us were hit.”

Finck never thought of escape, opting rather to wait out the seemingly endless days until liberation. In the meantime, he and other soldiers attended classes at the Interned Airmen’s Institute, run by Alexander Haddon and Kenneth Kurtenbach.

Though the prisoners had little contact with the outside world, they listened to war broadcasts on home-made crystal radios and ticked off Allied advancements on a map.

“The broadcasts were in all languages—French, German, Russian. The men who understood those languages made up newscasts every evening. We had a big map with pins and a string and we’d adjust it to how the front was coming in. Sometimes the German officers would have to come down and look at our map to see what was going on. Then they’d point to a town and say, ‘Kaput.’”

Finck didn’t need a radio to hear the bombs falling all around Krems on April 8, 1945. A nearby town had already fallen to the Russians, and Finck knew the battle for Vienna was on. In a diary he began keeping that

day he wrote, “We are trying to delay the Jerries in every way possible in hopes that the Russians will capture us before the Jerries move us.”

The plan didn’t work and the Germans marched the men out of the camp that afternoon. Finck recorded the 18 day 281 mile march to Braunau, Germany. The men marched without food the first day, receiving a few potatoes and a 2 pound loaf of bread to split among 20 men the following morning. Finck remembers trying to augment the meager rations by trading and stealing from German guards and civilians—with little luck.

The men marched every day, pausing only to sleep and to rest for a 24 hour period. Weather was no deterrent to the forced journey, as the Germans led the exhausted and hungry troops through rain, sleet, and snow. They received little food, no mail, and no news—hearing from civilians the rumor that Roosevelt had died.

“We marched through towns with concentration camps. They warned us, ‘Don’t talk, don’t look. Be quiet and just go through.’ They were burning bodies and oh, what a smell,” Finck remembers.

The march eventually stopped at Braunau, where the prisoners made lean-to shelters out of pine trees, inadequate structures which Finck said “leaked like a sieve.” Five days later, the German colonel and the American Major Beaumont went to Braunau, where the Germans surrendered the camp.

“The captain came up in the white Jeep with an American flag on it and told us, ‘You are American soldiers again.’ We were free,” he said. “Boy what a happy bunch of guys.”

The happy guys helped themselves to stores of German goods,

mostly watches, rifles and pistols, before flying to France to await the trip home. From there, the men took a train to Epinol, where Finck showered and was given new clothes for the first time in nearly two years.

After over 22 months of captivity, the journey home didn’t come fast enough for Finck, who passed the time talking to old buddies, looking for other men from Wheeling, playing—and often winning—horseshoes and writing letters home. Finally, on June 1st he boarded a ship to the United States, disembarking June 11th and sitting in his Echo Terrace home with family and friends a few days later.

“We never talked about what we went through until now. People are beginning to realize what we really went through, a lot of the service men. But then, I never gave it a second thought,” he said.

Editor’s note:

Many thanks to the Intelligencer Wheeling News-Register for allowing us to reprint this story and most importantly, Lee Kelvington for bringing it to our attention. Ted Finck served in the 384th BG 544th BS. He currently resides in Steubenville, OH where he will be celebrating his 99th birthday on February 6th. If you’d like to drop him a card, his address:

**Theodore Finck
Lancia Nursing Home
Unit Villa Vista
1800 Sinclair Ave.
Steubenville, OH 43953**

FROM ACROSS^{the} Pond

A Time We Remember

By Brian Francis

The winter months have passed and spring has arrived with a new coat of color painting the British countryside. Once again nature is brightening the lanes and fields of East Anglia where mighty aircraft once stood ready for war and G.I.'s on bicycles found the nearest quaint English pub on a warm evening.

Looking back over the last few months it was a time to remember the many people, men and women, who sacrificed their lives through two world wars including those of the 1914-1918 war—the centenary—the start of World War I.

Across the country nearly every city, town, village and hamlet paid homage to the fallen of all wars. The respect shown was tremendous, but the most awe inspiring event was a special art installation at the Tower of London, where a sea of ceramic red poppies was created by planting a poppy for each person who had sacrificed their life not only in WWI, but also conflicts thereafter.

The first poppies were placed in the bastion window of the Tower, 'The Weeping Window' above the moat, then the public each added their poppy. The poppies increased every day as more and more people came. More and more poppies appeared flowing out of the window, down the wall they came and into the moat. It seemed that the flow would never stop. People came from across the world. This show of poppies when viewed was breath taking as each one represented a life lost, an amount totaling nearly nine hundred thousand now lay as a carpet of red around the Tower of London. It was titled from a WWI poem, "Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red."

Services were held to remember the U.S. servicemen who gave their lives during the WWI at the U.S. Memorial in Brookwood Cemetery. Southwest

of London, this cemetery contains the graves of 468 U.S. servicemen of which 41 have no names and two of whom were awarded the Medal of Honor.

During the past few years in the U.K., residents from towns and villages close to American airfields, whose areas were often the site of air crashes and loss of lives, have never forgotten what great sacrifices were made. These folks have researched the history of such events, tracing names of crewmembers who perished, and names and/or serial numbers of the aircraft and events leading to the crash. Many have located family members of those who perished. These are ordinary people who were not even born when these events took place yet they have made it their passion to erect memorials to honor these warriors of the skies.

This year in May will mark the 70th Anniversary of the end of the war in Europe. Looking back as our veterans remember this day, did they have a sigh of relief, look forward to returning home, getting married...a job, starting a family, and putting the horrors of war behind them? The veterans whom I have spoken with have never forgotten. They will never forget. They forged friendships in war and those links cannot be broken.

As a lad of 18 I was fortunate to be employed by the Cunard Steam Navigation Co. I was in New York harbor waiting for our Queen Mary to dock, the tug men were on strike so the Captain maneuvered her in to the dockside without their help. To see this mighty vessel being berthed then going aboard I imagined what it was like when she was "The Gray Lady" bringing thousands of G.I.s back home. They would be leaning on the aft rail looking out across the river and see the Statue of Liberty rise above the fog. They knew they were home.

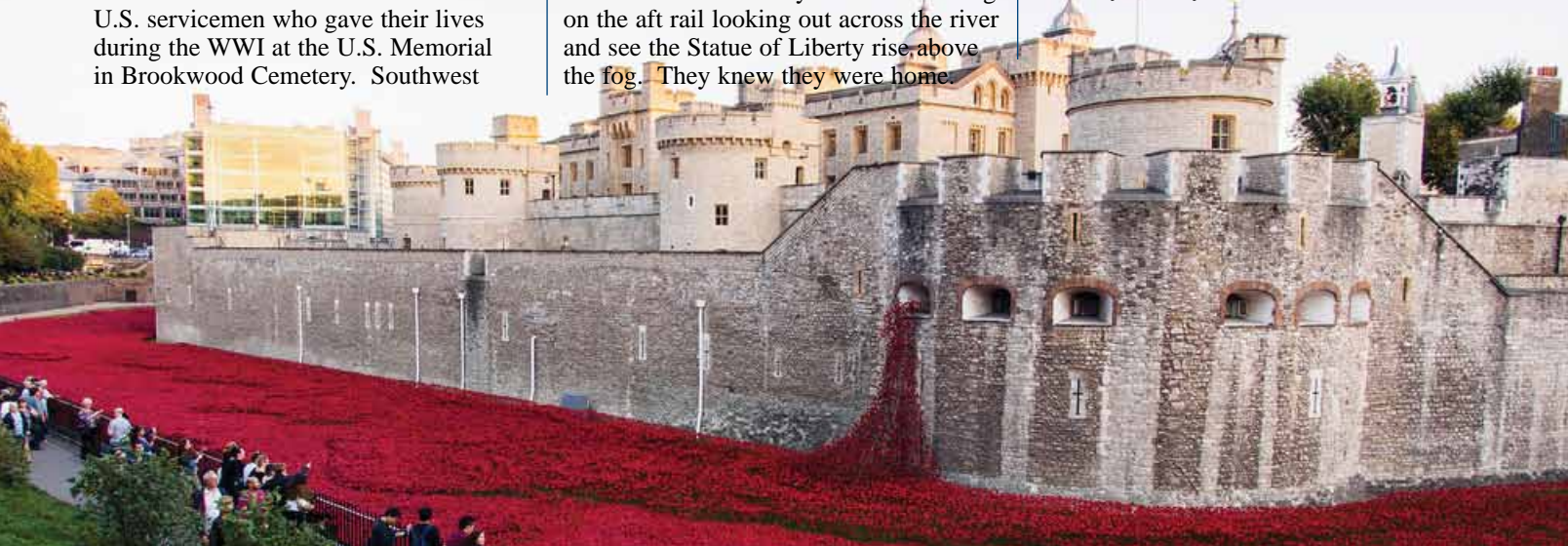
The Blood Swept Lands and Seas of Red

~Author Unknown

*The blood swept lands and seas of red,
Where angels dare to tread.
As I put my hand to reach,
As God cried a tear of pain as the angels fell,
Again and again.
As the tears of mine fell to the ground,
To sleep with the flowers of red,
As any be dead.
My children see and work through fields
of my own with corn and wheat,
Blessed by love so far from pain of my resting
Fields so far from my love.
It be time to put my hand up and end this pain
Of living hell, to see the people around me
Fall someone angel as the mist falls around,
And the rain so thick with black
thunder I hear
Over the clouds, to sleep forever and kiss
The flower of my people gone before time
To sleep and cry no more.
I put my hand up and see the land of red,
This is my time to go over,
I may not come back So sleep, kiss the boys
for me.*

Many of my Veteran friends past and present still wake up at night with dreams of their experiences and flashbacks of events that even time will not erase, but the spirit of comradeship and friendship is still there. When they meet at a reunions they look back with laughter and say, "Hey Buddy, do you remember the good old days when we..."

Respect goes out to all those veterans whom I and friends have had the pleasure of knowing throughout the years. Memories of sitting and talking with them, and becoming friends...Thank you, and may all of your memories live on.

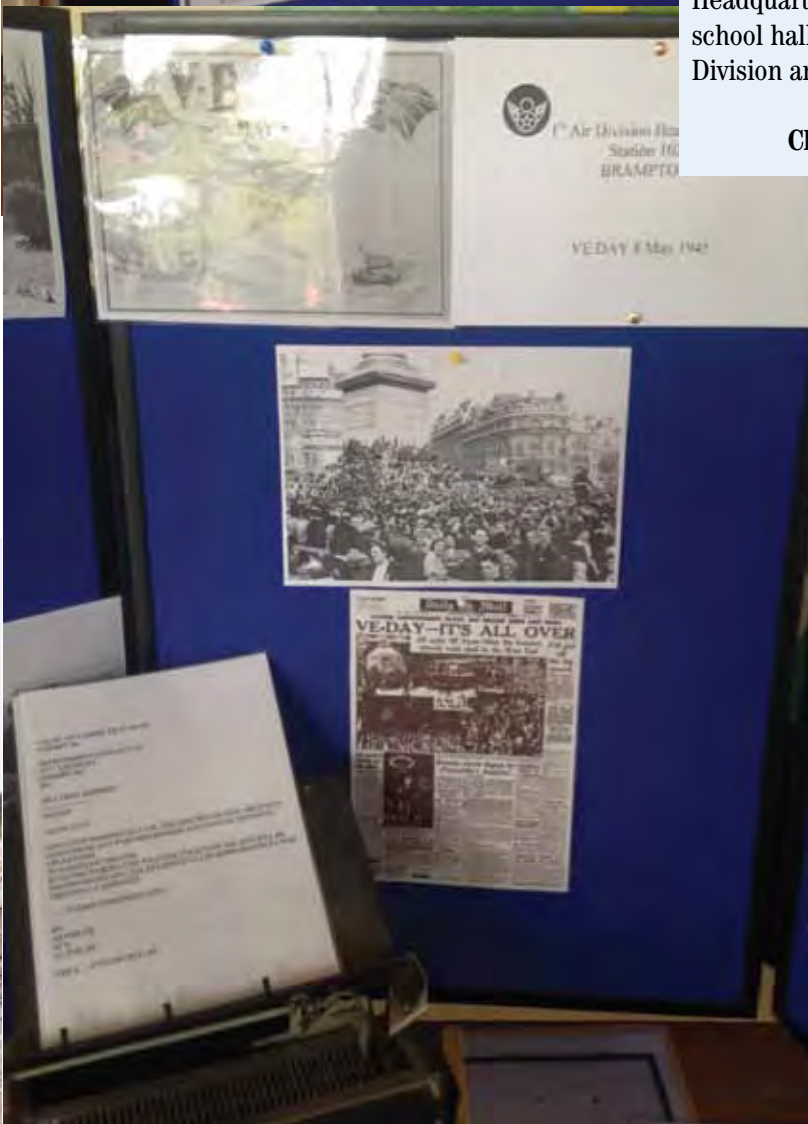




Brampton Village Primary School...

"The Brampton Village Primary School allowed the 1st Air Division Headquarters Heritage Society to display our VE Day collection in the school hall. It is great that the next generation will learn about the 1st Air Division and how they were involved in the local community. "

Chris Chandler & Jeff Hawley



70TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE-DAY

Dear Editor:

Like most of us who went through World War II, I am no longer in tip top shape! So it's no wonder that on May 8, 2015, I sat in my big chair, resting, and watching TV. Then, like a vision from yesteryear, there appeared a formation of airplanes flying across the screen. Then, a voice announced that it was a fly-over at the National Mall on the 70th Anniversary of VE-Day. The voice further explained that the ONLY Flying Fortress still airworthy, was leading the group!



As I gazed at the screen, I was carried back to England where often, at dawn, I watched the planes take off on missions over the Continent. (I then served in the British Army, being assigned to early duty in the cookhouses).

I barely heard my daughter entering the room, asking if I was all right. "Yes! Yes!" I said, "I am okay!" Knowing that seventy years ago we won the War. And, largely, this happened because of the bravery and sacrifices of thousands and thousands of young Air Force men. Thanks, Mighty Eighth!!!

Frances Nunnally
Richmond, VA

LAWRENCE COGSWELL

Dear editor:

Seeking info on Lawrence Cogswell, waist gunner, b-17G "Hi Blower." Knew Larry when I lived in West Newbury, MA. Larry passed away recently and I would like to write a tribute to him more complete than the small and inadequate obituary that was published locally. I am 78 years old and even those of us who, as children, knew several of the 8th AF guys,

are getting fewer.
They must NOT be forgotten.
Thank you.
Sid Smith
Sid61615@gmail.com
Bradford, MA

GET YOUR KLEENEX...

Dear Debra:

I have been busy, my last grandchild just got married and he was old enough to know better—26! <tissue> I can play that game, too!

Do you have a copy of the missions I flew? I am sending in my dues and a little extra donation. You can use it <tissue> toward whatever the Society needs most.

I think I might have some answers for kids who don't know or wonder why their dad did not talk [after the war]. If they had to wait two months to make that last mission, well, I went crazy nuts—you name it! I worked with people who did not know I was in any kind of service. I guess I have a right to make a few mistakes after all. I am now a senior citizen, ninety-two PLUS, and until 1975, I didn't even know my wife <tissue> had saved all of my medals, ribbons, and awards from the war.

Guess I'd better stop. (You might want to use this letter for tissue the next time you need to potty!)

I have a dear preacher friend who likes to work with wood. He made me a really nice display case for all of my medals. I have been invited to talk to high school kids and some show a real interest. And some act as if WWII never happened.

Well, I think you need to come up to Kansas and visit the "War Room!" That is what my wife called it. I am by myself, now, she has been gone eleven years this past March.

I will shut up. I love you and everyone in the Society for who you are and what you are doing...<tissue>

Bennie
Belle Plaine, KS

Editor: Yep, had to open a new box of tissues half-way through this letter. Love you too, Bennie!!!



I FOUND A "GOOF"

I hope my "goof" can be corrected prior to publication. My sincere apologies for letting something slip by related to Charlie Macgill. On page 6, I incorrectly say that Charlie was awarded the Air Force Cross. It was, in fact, the Distinguished Flying Cross. I don't know how I let that one get by as I certainly know better.

Those in the know would realize the Air Force Cross did not exist during WWII and that today it stands directly behind the Medal of Honor in importance. The Distinguished Flying Cross is about 4th in significance and awarded for a variety of heroic aviation actions.

I hope I'm not too late in sending this important correction.

Sorry and thanks.
Mack Parkhill

381ST ITEMS NEEDED

We at the 381st Bg Memorial Museum at Ridgewell UK are asking for your help in supplying anything relating to the 381st BG for our displays. Uniforms, photos (copies will do) or any other items of interest that would help us to show the visitors how things were here in WW2.

Personal items that are named would be a bonus. We are a small group that take care of the 381st BG memorial making sure that it is kept clean and tidy at all times. I am Alan Steel the membership Secretary here and welcome any new comers from the USA.

Alan Steel a.steel@btinternet.com

MAKE A DATE

490th Bomb Group (H) Memorial Dedication Station 134, Eye, Suffolk, England Weekend 28/29 May 2016

Keep an eye on Facebook Pages 490th Memorial Project or 490th Bomb Group (H) also so <http://www.490th.co.uk/> for further details.

We have now raised the initial funds needed to erect the long over due memorial to the 490th Bomb Group (H) and we wish to tell anybody who is interested in it what is happening. I am the current 490th Bomb Group (H) Historian / Archivist eric.490thbg@btinternet.com
Eric Swain
eric.490thbg@btinternet.com

MADINGLEY AMERICAN MILITARY CEMETERY AT CAMBRIDGE

Just to let you know that Memorial Day was remembered and celebrated over here yesterday at the Madingley American Military Cemetery at Cambridge.

I represented the Association and laid a wreath on behalf of us all on the Wall of the Missing.

VIP's attending were the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire who is the Queen's representative in the area and Brig Gen Douglas Cox, Director, US Air Forces in Europe-United Kingdom, together with many local civic leaders and senior RAF officers..

106 wreaths were laid by representatives of many US Bomb and Fighter Groups, current USAF bases in the UK such as Mildenhall and Lakenheath; local councils, and many more.

For once it did not rain but it was cold! There was a USAF Band, a RAF Piper and Firing of Volleys and Taps by the flag staff. Many, Many American servicemen and women attended in uniform and 106 carried the wreaths to the Wall; once there we moved forward and took them over and on the instruction laid them before

prayers and a few minutes contemplation.

There was no fly-past unfortunately, although a Harvard was flying around at the time.

After the ceremony I laid a red rose on each of the nine Burtonwood graves to show our respect. This is done twice a year; the other on Veteran's Day in October.

Last year we were graced with the presence of our President and his wife, Jim and May Bentley who remained in the UK after our UK reunion; they were joined by several from Warrington but unfortunately they could not make it this time.

Burtonwood may be gone but it will never be forgotten.

Whilst writing can I please remind you about the Las Vegas reunion in October. A great programme has been planned and the room rates are the lowest ever. Please see the advert in the last and next Burtonwood Times and please join us as it is organised for you and the more that come, the more fun it will be. Hopefully I will see you there.

With best regards
Aldon
AldonPF@aol.com





TENNESSEE CHAPTER

James Bass of Lebanon, Tennessee called a small meeting with some of the Tennessee chapter members and friends. Great stories were shared and updates on members that were not able to attend. L-R: Earl Wassom, Cindy Wassom, James Bass, Donna Neely and Bob Moses.

COMING IN OUR SEPTEMBER 2015 8TH AF ISSUE

Have you been awarded the
French Legion of Honor?

PLEASE let us know!

We are gathering names for a special page in the *September issue of the 8th A F News magazine*.

Drop us a line and let us know who you are:

ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org
or
8th AFHS
P O Box 60369
Savannah, GA 31420-0369



CUNARD WHITE STAR LINER "QUEEN ELIZABETH"

Ed Prystup [447th BG] was one of thousands who made the journey home after the War ended via cruise ships. This was taken in New York Harbor August 31st, 1945.



Bangert, Martin J. Maj., James (Jim) was born in the Riverdale section of the Bronx, NY in 1924. He passed away on 26 April 2015. On his 18th birthday, he enlisted in the army and reported for basic training 6 months later in Miami. After attending 3 months of preparation to be a mechanic, his older brother convinced him to apply for Army Air Force cadet training and he followed this advice. He trained as a bombardier, went to B-17 orientation in Tampa, FL, and soon was shipped to Deopham Green Air Base in England (Feb. 1945). He was a proud member of the 8th Air Force, 452nd BG, and the 730th BS. He flew 7 bombing missions over Germany and on one, his aircraft took major damage. He is, however, most proud of his involvement in 3 food drop missions over Holland. The operation was a joint program with the British Royal Air Force (Manna from Heaven) and the US (Chowhound) and took place in May 1945. He married a Chemistry Librarian at the company he worked for and they were married for 58 years, when she passed away.



James Bangert

He is, however, most proud of his involvement in 3 food drop missions over Holland. The operation was a joint program with the British Royal Air Force (Manna from Heaven) and the US (Chowhound) and took place in May 1945. He married a Chemistry Librarian at the company he worked for and they were married for 58 years, when she passed away.

Barnes, Joseph M., 94, of Mason City, died March 16, 2015. Joseph was born July 26, 1920, in Wapello, Iowa. Joe married Ardeth A. Lettow in Clayton, Missouri. Joe was sent to Navigation School where he earned his wings and commission as a Second Lieutenant in May of 1944. He flew 35 combat missions (Sweat 'N Duck). He was interviewed to become the personal navigator of General Twining stationed in the Pacific Theater of



Joseph Barnes

Operations, however Joe wanted to return home to his family so he turned down the opportunity.

Joe proudly served his country until his honorable discharge in October of 1945. He remained in the Air Force Reserve until 1952.

Bednarik, S/Sgt. Charles P., was a Waist Gunner on a B-24 Liberator, 467th BG/788th BS, with Lt. Bennard R. Jones crew 1944-1945. He flew 30 Combat Missions and awarded Air Medal w/4 Oak Leaf Clusters, EAME Medal w/ 4 Battle Stars. Charles played for the Philadelphia Eagles from 1949 to 1962. In 1969 he was chosen the NFL's all-time center. He was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1967. Bednarik was the first player drafted in the 1949 NFL Draft, by the Philadelphia Eagles, starring on both offense (as a center) and defense (as a linebacker). He was a member of the Eagles' NFL Championship teams in 1949 and 1960. In the 1960 NFL Championship Game, Bednarik, the last Eagle between Green Bay's Jim Taylor and the end zone, tackled Taylor on the final play of the game at the Eagles' eight yard line, and remained atop Taylor as the final seconds ticked off the clock, ensuring the Packers could not run another play and preserving a 17-13 Eagles victory.



Charles Bednarik

A tough and highly effective tackler, Bednarik is perhaps best known for knocking Frank Gifford of the New York Giants out of football for over 18 months, with one of the most famous tackles in NFL history, in 1960. Bednarik had a famous quarrel with Chuck Noll, who once, as a player for the Cleveland Browns, smashed him in the face during a fourth-down punting play. Bednarik proved extremely



Charles Bednarik with Lt. Bennard R. Jones crew 1944-1945



Charles Black Jr. with his crew

durable, missing just three games in his 14 seasons. He was named All-Pro eight times, and was the last of the NFL's "Sixty-Minute Men," players who played both offense and defense on a regular basis. Frank Gifford missed the 1961 season after this hit from Chuck Bednarik (#60) on November 20, 1960.

Black, Charles Boyd Jr., 91, passed away February 2, 2015. He was born in Mount Holly. He is survived by his wife of 69 years Frances Wiggins Black. He was a US Army Air Corps Veteran of WWII and Korea, with the 392nd BG 578thBS. He flew 26 combat missions in a B-24 Liberator as a Radio Operator. He was awarded four air medals; Good Conduct Ribbon, Europe - African - Middle East Medal with Three Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Victory Medal for WWII. He also was awarded the National Defense Ribbon. He was a charter member of the North Carolina Air National Guard at Charlotte where he served as a Communications Chief until he was recalled to the United States Air Force for the Korean Conflict.

Buxton, Reginald W., 91, born June 12, 1923 in Detroit, Mich., passed away Feb. 5, 2015 in Payson, Ariz. He served in the U.S. Army in the Korean Conflict, ultimately retiring as a Major. He was the recipient of the DFC,

Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal and the Air Medal with the Silver Oakleaf Cluster.

Reg will be cremated and interred at the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona in Phoenix, Ariz., with his wife, Betty Ellen, who pre-deceased him in 2012. He was with the 457th BG.

Carter, Oliver R. "Ben", age 91, of Little Rock, Arkansas went to be with the Lord February 28, 2015. Ben began his education in the one-room Rodgers Schoolhouse and received his undergraduate and master's degrees from Auburn University. He married the love of his life, Elizabeth "Betty" Abbott Carter, on Christmas Eve in 1948. During World War II, Ben served his country as a technical sergeant, top turret gunner, and flight engineer, flying 31 missions over Germany in a B-17 bomber before his 21st birthday. He was a member of the 351st BG. He was also a published author. He is survived by his wife of 66 years, Elizabeth "Betty" Abbott Carter of Little Rock.



Reginald Buxton



Oliver (Ben) Carter

Cogswell, Lawrence H., 90, of West Newbury, died February 1, 2015 at Merrimack Valley, Haverhill. He was born in Easton, Maine, March 18, 1924. He served with the 452nd Bomb Group. His survivors include his wife of 66 years, Vivian (Frost) Cogswell of West Newbury.

Dyson, Jack Brandon Sr., went to be with his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on October 16, 2014. He passed away at his home in Houston, with his family at his side. Jack was born in Mobeetie, Texas on April 26, 1925.

He attended high school in Mangum, Oklahoma and Midland, Texas, then joined the Army Air Corps and served in the 2nd Division, 8th Air Force during WWII with the 445th. He was stationed in England and proudly served as a tail gunner in missions over Germany and later became a gunnery instructor before the end of the war. Jack married the love of his life Doris on January 14, 1950. Jack is survived by his wife of 64 years, Doris Marie Durdin Dyson.

Edwards, Albert "Bob", 91, of Barling, AR passed away on November 22, 2014, leaving Virginia, his wife of 72 years. Inducted into the service in January, 1943, Bob attended basic training in Miami, FL, airplane mechanic school in Biloxi, MS and gunnery school in Harlingen, TX. Upon completion of these programs he was



Jack Dyson

qualified as a flight engineer on a B-17 or B-24 and sent to Lincoln, NE for air crew assignment and overseas deployment. He was then assigned to the 489th BG out of Halesworth, England in August, 1944.



Albert Edwards

After five missions with this crew, Bob was promoted to flight engineer. His 8th mission was especially somber because a plane in close formation collided with his former crew's plane and both planes went down. He was an eye witness and grief stricken often wondering... "Why not me?" After twelve missions, the 489th was re-deployed stateside to train in B-29s but the war ended before his training was completed.

Farias, Richard Ambrose, 89, known to many as "Cardy," was born December 7, 1925 in Culver City, CA and passed away January 14, 2015. He served with the 493rd BG as a B-17



Richard Farias

Belly Gunner and flew 25 missions. In June 1950, he married Esther Marie Lopez. Cardy attended 8th Air Force Reunions for over 30 years. He was an active member of the 493rd Bomb Group Memorial Association, the 8th Air Force Historical Society, and local VFW Post 1981. He was also an avid reader all his life and especially enjoyed reading books on the history of World War II. **Faulkner, Lt/Col Ret. Leroy (Lee)**, 90, passed on March 20, 2015. He was preceded in death his wife of 57 years, Eloise



Leroy (Lee) Faulkner

P. Faulkner. Lee served in WW II, Viet Nam, and Korea. Lee was a standing member of the 303rd bomb group. He enjoyed traveling annually to the 8th AFHS reunions.

Flammia, Joseph E. (Joe Flop), passed away peacefully on May 12, 2015 at age 92. Joe lived a very full life and will always be remembered for his positive attitude, kind words and helpfulness. Joe served in WWII as a ball turret



Joe Flammia

gunner on a B-17 with the 303rd "Hells Angels" BG, 360th Squadron and flew 33 missions.

Force, James Grant, 94, passed away on April 13, 2015 in Longmont, CO. In 1942, he married Margaret Ruth Stoner. He proudly served his country as a B-17 pilot gaining the rank of Captain. He served again in the Korean Conflict. His passion for flying never left him and he continued to fly until he was well into his 70's.



James Force

After Ruth's death in 2003, he moved to Longmont where he met and married Mary Frances Pickerell in 2006 who survives him.

Griego, Joseph Michael "Joe" age 94, entered into eternal life November 5, 2014. He was born in Primero, Colorado on September 8, 1920. He is

survived by his beloved wife of 49 years, Patricia McInerney. Joe grew up in Denver, Colorado where he lived at the Mullen Home for Boys. Prior to entering the service he played football at Regis College in Denver. Joe served with the 100th BG as a tail gunner on a B-17. On March 18, 1945, Joe's B-17 was shot down by a ME 262 Jet Interceptor. Although the entire tail section was shot off, Joe was able to parachute into Germany and survived the prison camp. In his later years, Joe wrote a book about his wartime experiences entitled, *The Tail End*.

Guiciardi, Nino L., Age 92, passed peacefully, surrounded by family, December 25, 2014, of Creighton, East Deer Township. Beloved husband of 68 years to the late Margie Alice (Harris) Guiciardi. Nino was an Army Air Corps Flight Officer veteran during WWII and was assigned to the 303rd Bomb Group 359th Squadron. On what became his last mission as a B-17 bombardier, his plane went down and he spent the remainder of WWII as a POW for 144 days.

Hackel, Eugene Norman, 92, of West Hartford, CT passed away on November 20, 2014.

He was born November 19, 1922 in Manhattan, NY. During WWII, Norman served in the 8th Air Force, flying 31 combat missions including 2 on D-day. He received several medals including The Distinguished Flying Cross. After combat, as a transport pilot, he rescued wounded G.I.'s, slave laborers, and concentration camp survivors. He was active in politics, West Hartford Regents, and presenting his war experiences to public schools students. He is survived by his wife Serene.



Eugene Hackel

Hand, Stanley I. Sr., USAF Colonel (Ret) went home to be with his Lord on March 26, 2015 one month shy of 97. Stanley was with 96th BG. He was a senior at the University of Kentucky, when he joined the U.S.

Army Air Corps in 1939. He married Marjorie Swope on June 10, 1941. She predeceased him in 2012. God blessed abundantly by giving them 71 years together. He served as a B-17 Squadron Commander and BG Air Executive Officer. He flew 27 combat missions. His 25th mission was on D-Day. He remained in the Air Force for 25 years retiring in 1964. His last two assignments were as Commander of the 306th Bomb Wing, at MacDill AFB, Tampa and Commander of the SAC wing at McCoy. During his command at McCoy, he was approached by the mayor of Orlando to intercede with the Air Force in purchasing one of the long runways at McCoy. He did so and this was the beginning of commercial airline traffic at what eventually became OIA. Colonel Hand was qualified to fly all but three of the heavy bombers in the USAF inventory. His favorite remained the B-17 although he felt an affinity for the B-47. His decorations include: The Legion of Merit; Distinguished Flying Cross with one oak leaf cluster; Air Medal with four oak leaf clusters. The Colonel accumulated over 5000 flying hours. Stan was a member of FBC-Orlando for over 50 years.

Houston, Francis C., 89, a retired business owner who flew 12 missions as a B-17 tail gunner, died in the Goerlich Center in Sylvania.



Francis Houston

He served with the, 486th BG. Mr. Houston flew 12 missions as the gunner in the ball turret of the B-17 Flying Fortress. Mr. Houston was among the veterans who took an Honor Flight in August, 2012, to the nation's capital to visit the World War II memorial. While processing documents for Honor Flight, a congressional representative discovered that Mr. Houston been awarded four medals for valor, including the Bronze Star, but for reasons unknown had never received them. He finally got

his medals in 2012. Mr. Houston made several trips through the years to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, Ga., where exhibits are dedicated to the 8th Air Force. After the war, he returned to Detroit, where he met the former Bernadine Clifford at a dance on Aug. 2, 1946. They were married exactly one year later. She died on Nov. 12, 2011.

Jones, Robert M. "Mack", age 94, of Charlotte, NC died February 26, 2015. Mack was a B-17 co-pilot with the 384th BG, 545th BS. Mack flew 26 combat missions and was awarded the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters. On his 17th mission to Berlin, Mack's bomber experienced a run-away prop and loss of oxygen at 32,000 feet. After making a wheels up landing at an airfield in Rawa Ruska Poland which was controlled by the Russians, Mack and his crew were taken to Lvov Poland under house arrest for 2 weeks until they were able to escape in a B-17 being used by a USAAF salvage crew that had permission to land there. Mack and his crew were then transported to Athens, Greece; Tehran, Iran; Tunisia, and Cairo, Egypt. They were then flown by Air Transport Command to Naples, Italy and finally back to Brighton, England. Mack is survived by his wife of 69 years, Anne Holmes Jones.

Kernodle, John T., 92 of Memphis, TN, died on March 24th, 2015. John T. served as a member of the 303rd Bomb Group. He was preceded in death by his wife Mary Jane Walker of Bethel Springs, TN.

Kindred, Beryl Eugene, was born April 16, 1925, in Jefferson, Okla., passed away May 7, 2015. Beryl married Shirley Tanton in Nov. 25, 1945. Sergeant Beryl Kindred was honorably discharged from the 251st 8th Army Air Force on Oct. 21, 1945, where he held the occupation of an Aerial Gunner. He was



Beryl Kindred

part of the Ardennes Campaign, the Rhineland Campaign, and the Central Europe Campaign. He earned several decorations and citations during his service. He is survived by his wife, Shirley.

Mackin, Lt. Col George T., 97, passed away May 14, 2015 in Lake Oswego, Oregon. He was a pilot with the 303rd BG, flying 38 missions, many as lead pilot, with all 4 Squadrons. Later he was the Commanding Officer of the 358th BS.



George Mackin

Maxwell, Verle Justin, 91, Martinsville, passed away peacefully, April 25, 2015. He was born on Saturday, September 8, 1923 in Martinsville, Indiana. He was a tail-gunner on a B-17 and was wounded on his third mission, earning him a Purple Heart. Verle was preceded in death by his loving wife of over 71 years, Betty D. (Goss) Maxwell.



Verle Maxwell

Moyers, Howard Dale, age 89 of Massillon, passed away January 29, 2015. He was born in Beatrice, WV on April 20, 1925. While serving overseas with the 305th BG, he earned the Air Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the European African Middle Eastern Theater Service Ribbon, the American Theater Service Ribbon, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the World War II Victory Ribbon. He was preceded in death by his wife Sarah Joan Moyers.

Nielsen, Carl V., 93, passed away peacefully at the Wisconsin Veterans Home – Boland Hall in Union Grove on Friday, May 1, 2015. A lifelong resident of Racine. On October 23, 1943, he



Frank Perez

married Lucille Yerdon in Monroe, LA. Carl served his nation with the 303rd BG, 359th BS. He flew 31 missions as a navigator, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross, 3 Oak Leaf Clusters and a POW Medal.

Noble, Chester, 89, of Jackson entered into rest January 20, 2015 at a Mobile hospital. Mr. Noble was a Ball Turret Gunner on a B-17 Bomber. He flew in 30 missions.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Rebekah Noble.

Payne, Harry, 96, of Knoxville, MD, died April 22, 2015. He was the husband of Irene T. Payne, his wife of 67 years. Born on March 11, 1919. He was a Co-Pilot of a B-17 bomber that flew missions over Europe. Harry's love for flying developed during his military service, spurring him to buy his first airplane, a Piper-Cub, and later a Piper-Comanche 250 single engine



Chester Noble



Harry Payne

airplane. Flying became his other life.

Perez, Frank Delgado, went aloft at the age of 91 years. Frank was born on 1/14/1924 in Los Angeles, CA. He became a member of the 401st BG flying with the 613th Squadron. He was a Ball Turret Gunner on a B-17 and completed 32 missions. He received several medals including the French Legion of Honor Medal and was knighted by the President of France in 2014.

Remolde, Eugene J. Sr., born February 12, 1923, died April 11, 2015, age 92. He was assigned as a Tail Gunner on a B-17 with the 303rd BG. He was born and raised in Manayunk where he attended St. John the Baptist High School for Boys. Eugene was in the Civilian Conservation Corps and was recruited to work in the Blue Ridge Mountains where he helped to build the historic Skyline Drive.



Frank Perez



Eugene Remolde

Salo, William W., 95, of Manchester, died February 13, 2015 at the Courville at Manchester after a period of declining health. He grew up in Milford and lived in Manchester for most of

his life. During World War II, he flew patrol missions in the Hawaiian area from the time of the bombing of Pearl Harbor until after the Midway Battle of June, 1942. He transferred to the Southwest Pacific, going first with the 19th BG and later the 43rd, both of which were heavy units of the 5th Air Force. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf cluster and the Purple Heart Award. He also participated in a Presidential Unit Citation. He was predeceased by his wife, Kiki (Courtis) Salo in 2010

Sommer, Robert E., 96, a decorated World War II veteran and business executive, died December 18, 2014. He met the former Frances O. Cameron and they were married in 1941 she died in 2005 after 64 years of marriage.

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Mr. Sommer enlisted in 1942 as an aviation cadet and became a pilot and officer in the Army Air Forces, forerunner to the modern day Air Force. He trained in Columbia, S.C., and was sent to England in August 1943, then was assigned to the 305th BG — a B-17 bomber group. He became a wing lead pilot and twice, with a general sitting in the pilot seat, flew as co-pilot and led the entire Eighth Air Force, according to his written



William Salo



Robert Sommer

account of wartime experiences. "It's like swarms of mosquitoes in the sky, and the lead was a dangerous spot," he said in a 2010 Buffalo News profile. "The enemy always tried to knock down the lead. It wasn't a great place to be." Once, on a mission to Leipzig, Germany, Mr. Sommer's plane was hit by flak and he instructed the crew to dump all heavy objects, including machine guns and radios, into the English Channel to lighten the plane. With the two left engines out and a right engine sputtering, Mr. Sommer was able to land the plane safely at the base. More than 200 holes were found in the plane, which had to be scrapped. None of Mr. Sommer's crew members were injured during his 32 missions and 255 combat hours, earning him the nickname "Mr. Lucky." A first lieutenant, he was the second Air Force member, after a general, to be discharged from service based on high combat points, and received the Distinguished Flying Cross with Oak Leaf Clusters and a Group Presidential Citation. In 2010, Mr. Sommer was presented with The Buffalo News Saluting Our War Heroes Award.

Steiner, Willibald P., "Wally The Butcher" Steiner, 90, of Bethlehem, died on April 30, 2015, in Holy Family Manor. He was the husband of Grace (Souders) Steiner. They were married 69 years in March. He served as



Willibald Steiner

Sargent, during WWII, in the 8th Air Corps, 445 BG under Jimmy Stewart. He is survived by his beloved wife, Grace.

Strait, Donald Jackson, AKA Don, Dad, Grampy, Ace, The Tiger, and always "The



Donald Strait

General," died at home with his family on Monday, March 30, 2015. Though he passed peacefully he tried his best to postpone the event. He wanted to go to the United States Capital May 20 ceremony to receive his Congressional Gold Medal, and of course to usher in another Yankee season. Enlisting in the 119th Observation Squadron Army Air Corp in 1940, he earned his wings and commission in three years. Assigned to the 361st Fighter Squadron and 356th Fighter Group stationed at Martlesham Heath, England, Don piloted the P-47 and P-51 fighters. His drive to be the best scored him the honor of Top Ace of the Group, having downed 13 1/2 German aircraft during 122 combat missions. On one of those missions he earned the Silver Star. After World War II Don rose to the rank of major general while serving in the New Jersey Air National Guard and became its commander. He graduated from the Air War College, and President Eisenhower appointed him deputy assistant secretary of the Air Force Reserve and ROTC. He went back to active duty for the Korean and Vietnam Wars, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Berlin Crisis (flying the RF-84F Thunderstreak).

Swanson, Walter Conrad (Bud), of Austin, Texas, died peacefully April 6, 2015. He met Helen Robisher Swanson, in high school and their love lasted for over 77 years. He was a bomber pilot and later as an instructor pilot. He served as a reserve officer in the United States Air Force and retired with the rank of Lt. Colonel. Bud participated in the reunions of the 303rd BG.

White, Otis M. ("Monte"), a resident of Poughkeepsie since 1952 and formerly of Cold Spring, NY, passed away suddenly on March 26, 2015. Monte became a Norden Bombsight - C1 Autopilot Maintenance specialist



Walter Swanson

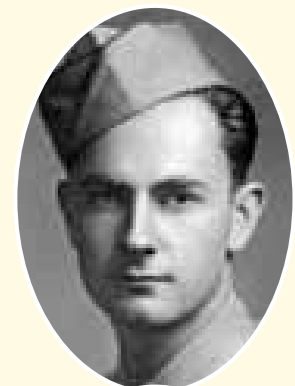
on B-17 Heavy Bombers with the 303rd BG. Together with the RAF, the "Mighty 8th" would eventually win the air war against Germany. 1952 Monte married Bernice E. Brannen of New Paltz.

Wallace, Richard, 93, Muncie, IN, passed away December 15, 2014. Dick was with the 306th BG and 367th BS (Clay Pigeons). He was awarded the Presidential Citation and received the Euopean Theatre ribbon with six Bronze Stars for Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Central Europe Ardennes and Air Offensive Europe. After the war he was attached to the Royal Air Downty School of Aircraft Hydraulics. He married Marjorie M. Muman in 1948 (60 years) until her death in 2008.



Richard Wallace

Williams, Eldon Oscar, 96 was born in Kerby, OR October 8, 1918 - March 28, 2015. He was a radio operator on a B-24 with the 458th BG, 753rd BS. Eldon met Bertha Ophelia Anderson in 1937 and they married in 1940. In 2012, Bertha passed away; they had recently celebrated their 72nd wedding anniversary.



Eldon Williams

THE RIGHT STUFF

The World has many people who are constantly complaining about their situation in life. They use one or more excuses, all of which are centered around their own self-centeredness or self-pity. They may say, "Oh, I was just 'born on the wrong side of the tracks', or I come from a dysfunctional family, or my nationality or the color of my skin has caused me to be discriminated against, or I have an abusive dad, or I was a middle child and the list goes on-and-on." No matter how many bad things are in your life, there is always something good you can thank God for and no matter how good things there in your life, there is always something bad that needs to be worked on. Just be aware that you were placed in your mother's womb, a one-of-a-kind unique individual and you were created to be just you. Remember, God ain't in the business of making junk. You are something special and you were made for a purpose.

In a life-time, we experience many injustices from other people. At the time of these actions, we consider these people to be ogres. But with the passing of time, we come to realize that their actions are often a cover-up for their own arrogance, cockiness, intimidation or threats. Sometimes it is their way of masking their feelings of inadequacy. When we are treated badly it is hard to take, but by ignoring this kind of treatment, one's own character is strengthened and one will benefit from the wisdom gained. Life's experiences tend to level the playing field.

A buddy of mine expressed his hostile and long-term feelings about his war-time squadron commander. He did

not understand many of the unrealistic demands this man expected of the crews of his Bomb Group and the decisions he made concerning the destiny and the fate of the men under his command. Many years later at a veterans reunion, my buddy and this commander were re-united. This 'bird-colonel' and this 'first lieutenant' came together as veterans. No rank protocol existed. Both were now civilians. They did hanger-flying and talked about the 'good-old-days'. To my buddy's amazement, he liked the man. As they became better acquainted, he realized that the immaturity of the commander may have caused him to make unfavorable decisions. War-time conditions required immediate leadership and rank and responsibility had to be given to individuals who, in many cases, did not have the age, maturity or experience to always make sound decisions. Decisions had to be made and the commander, two or three years older than my buddy, was required to make decisions whether they were right or wrong.

Both of these men had been called upon by their nation to fight and preserve freedom in the world. They were patriots for their country. They were courageous and sacrificial. They were fearless. They were made of the 'right stuff.' They could have focused on their problems, instead they focused on their purposes. If one focuses on his own problems, he will fall into the abyss of self-centeredness, that is..... my problems, my issues, my pain. Time, maturity and experience should help us to rise above this pettiness. There is freedom in forgiveness and all of us have ourselves been in need of understanding. Jesus, in encouraging his disciples declared:



Earl Wassom

"How blest you are, when you suffer insults and persecution and every kind of calumny for my sake. Accept it with gladness and exultation for you have a rich reward in heaven; in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you"
(Matthew 5:11-12 NEB)

This teaching applies to all of us as well!

Earl Wassom
466th Bomb Group
Chaplain, 8th AFHS





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