

September 2019



TH AF NEWS

Volume 19 Number 3 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"





June 2019

8th AF News

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Front cover: Another incredible illustration by Roger Stuch featuring Cpt. Eddie K. Simpson, Jr., 357th FG. Brief story and photo continued on back cover!

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THE 8TH A F NEWS

The Eighth Air Force News is dedicated to the memory of Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough, founder of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society in 1975, and Editor of the "News" for sixteen years. It is published quarterly and is the official news magazine of the Society, a 501(c)3. The 8th A F News is distributed to members of the Society and is not for public sale.

Home offices are located at:

**68 Kimberlys Way
Jasper, GA 30143-4769**

EDITOR'S NOTES

I think I was ten when my parents elected to take a cruise to Nassau in the Bahamas. Even though the islands were close neighbors of my home state of Florida, it was still my first venture outside the boundaries of the US. A few years later in 1970, my mother and I struck out for Europe—clutching that paperback, “Europe on \$5 a Day!”

We visited 10 countries during our six-week adventure and, because we were not part of an organized tour, our trip was totally spontaneous, filled with the unexpected.

One such memory I will never forget, traveling from West Berlin into East Berlin through Checkpoint Charlie. Our tour bus slowly made its way past the imposing walls of cement and concertina wire until we were through to the other side. Armed guards then entered the bus, scrutinizing our passports carefully before pronouncing us clear to continue. A young woman—our ‘guide’—stepped on at that point, and the tour began.

The difference between East and West 8th Air Force. Eerily ironic that much

was immediate and striking. Where West Berlin had modern buildings and newer automobiles busily maneuvering the streets, the East was drab and colorless, as if we had traveled back in time. There were shells of bombed out buildings scattered throughout the city, as if to give silent testimony to the horrific



destruction that had taken place some 25 years earlier. Many of the occupied buildings still bore the pock marks of war, and the streets were nearly empty of pedestrians. We were told it was because there was no unemployment in East Berlin...

Back then I had never heard of the 8th Air Force. Eerily ironic that much

of the aftermath I saw was due in large part to the courage and tenacity of tens of thousands of men—many of whom sacrificed their lives—determined to crush Hitler and the evils of the Third Reich.

I wish I could somehow implant that memory in every single person alive... in the hopes that the world would never allow such evil to gain a stronghold again. As long as the Society exists, we pledge to never let the world forget the men and women who bravely DID stop that powerful war machine in its evil quest for world domination—but ONLY with your continued help and support. Thank you.

Hope to see you all in St. Louis!



Deb



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By renewing or requesting membership in the 8th Air Force Historical Society, I hereby grant permission for the Society to hold and maintain my information as contained herein, indefinitely, with the stipulation that my information not be shared nor be made public to any other entity without my expressed written permission.

US Residents PLEASE mail to:
8th AFHS, 68 Kimberlys Way, Jasper, GA 30143-4769
(912) 748-8884

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Jeff Hawley, 3 The Stiles, Godmanchester, CAM PE29 2JF
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JOIN ONLINE: www.8thAFHS.org

PRESIDENT'S PEN

Benjamin J Jones
President

Writing this is bittersweet for me as this will be my last message to this great organization as your President. Just like all good things, they come to an end. I have been honored and privileged to be elected as President of your Society.

The Society, like all volunteer, nonprofit organizations has had to endure some belt tightening due to the fiscal climate, dwindling memberships, more regulations, etc., all while still trying to keep on track of their primary purpose. As a Board, we have tried to ensure that the Society has weathered these hurdles and continues to grow stronger for the future. Anne has worked diligently to bring the finances back to a healthy track through wise investments and accounts. Debra has been working behind the scenes to keep the membership list updated in new systems, as well as streamlining, producing and editing the magazine in house to save precious dollars. We've made cuts to expenses, without impacting the primary mission of the 8th AFHS so it can grow stronger, healthier, and leaner well into the future.

In the future, I would like to hope that the next board members and President will continue on a similar path of running a leaner organization that will still carry the torch with the legacy of all those who served in the Mighty 8th.

While the magazine is one of the prized assets of the organization, it's expensive to produce so going digital in today's world only makes sense. It can be sent to anyone with an email within seconds, rather than incurring printing and expensive overseas mailing costs.

I envision bringing together all the small volunteer and major museums to work together to form a powerful group of researchers, information and collective goals. As I've stated many times, we have a vast amount of knowledge and experience around the world; from a one-man museum in someone's house, to a major multimillion-dollar museum like our 8th Museum in

Savannah. By bringing these together and supporting each other, verses competing, it would make a powerful entity. Hopefully, work will continue to make this a reality because nothing happens without the support and backing of all involved.

One of the main events of the Society, is of course, the reunion. While I was pushing for a return to England reunion in 2020 on the 75th Anniversary of the end of WWII, it was unfortunately not to be. I would like to see this turned into a reality, possibly 2021.

The Board and President answer to its members, those who elected them to office. I have enjoyed talking with the membership and bringing their ideas to the table. While not always easy to enact on every idea or recommendation, they are heard. When I was first approached about running for office on the board, I made it clear I didn't want politics to play a role in my position. I wasn't running for office to get my name in lights, or make a name for myself, but I did it for those guys who lay under the white crosses all over Europe; to continue their legacy and ensure that they and their sacrifices are NEVER forgotten.

Keep active in the organization, attend the board meetings, bring ideas to the table, and help play a part to develop the Society for the future.

Thank you for allowing me to serve on the board and as President. I look forward to seeing you at the reunion.

Best Regards,

Ben



SAVE the Date!
46th Annual Reunion
>> October 21-25, 2020 <<
Memphis, TN

TREASURER'S REPORT

Anne Marek
Treasurer



As Treasurer of the Society, I'm including the second quarter financial statements, both the Profit and Loss and the Statement of Financial Position, for your information. Please note that we continue to

show a profit of \$47,012.00 for the year. Our account executive, Mr. Gavin Natelli, continues to monitor our investments and discusses the account with me several times each month. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

I wish to remind everyone that *"It's never too late to remember the 8th Air Force Historical Society in your will or estate plan."* This can be a major way to insure the continuation of our Society and to fulfill our legacy for not only the next gens but the second and third gens as well.

Don't forget to "shop" at Amazon Smile when you are purchasing on-line. We continue to receive benefits from them. (See p.6)

In spite of any rumors you may hear that the Society is dissolving and giving all of our money to either the Museum in Pooler or the American Air Museum in Duxford, I want to assure all of our members that this is totally inaccurate and unfounded. It is unfortunate that an individual would start such a rumor considering that your Society has not been this financially secure in a very long time. In any case, any decision to dissolve has to be voted on by the general membership at a regularly scheduled membership meeting during a Reunion. Please know that this will not be happening anytime soon. In fact, the contract has already been signed and sealed for our 2020 reunion in Memphis. I hope this clarifies the issue. I know this rumor has traveled to England as well.

Our reunion in St. Louis should be a fabulous one. I hope to see all of you there.

Anne

Profit & Loss	
January through June 2019	
	Jan - Jun 19
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
4000 - Income	
4001 - Amazon Smiles	7.10
4010 - Member Dues Annual	52,261.72
4019 - Donations	1,038.31
Total 4000 - Income	53,307.13
4050 - Investment Income	
4058 - Portfolio Dividends & Interest	2,123.07
4059 - Realized Gain(Loss) on Invest	784.93
4060 - Unrealized Gain(Loss) on Invest	21,327.19
4061 - Investment Management Fees	0.00
Total 4050 - Investment Income	24,235.19
Total Income	77,542.32
Expense	
5100 - National Administration Expense	
5104 - Awards, Gifts & Grants	158.00
5111 - Corporation Charges	70.00
5121 - 8AF History Projects	189.72
Total 5100 - National Administration Expense	417.72
5200 - Magazine Expenses	
5210 - Printing Expenses	7,457.03
5220 - Postage Expenses	2,361.95
5240 - Layout/Design	930.33
5260 - Sales Tax	180.37
Total 5200 - Magazine Expenses	10,929.68
5300 - National Office Expenses	
5303 - Telephone/DSL	300.00
5304 - Supplies	283.08
5305 - Abila Software/ Computer Exps	1,195.48
5306 - Accounting Support	1,772.00
5307 - Office Rent	600.00
5312 - FICA-BAFHHS portion	1,386.55
5313 - Payroll/ Office Management	18,125.00
5315 - Postage & Shipping	689.90
5316 - Bank Charges/ Returned checks	83.58
5317 - Dues Collection Expense	421.02
5323 - Merchant Account Usage Fees	750.55
5325 - Miscellaneous Expense	20.00
5326 - Payroll processing fees	519.00
Total 5300 - National Office Expenses	26,146.16
Total Expense	37,493.56
Net Ordinary Income	40,048.76
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
6550 - Annual Meeting Revenue	
6551 - Event Registration	8,929.00
Total 6550 - Annual Meeting Revenue	8,929.00
Total Other Income	8,929.00
Other Expense	
7100 - Annual Meeting Expenses	
7101 - Supplies & Items for Sale	778.03
7103 - Hotel Expense/Catering	275.40
7104 - Tours/Transportation	32.80
7106 - Reimbursements	252.00
7110 - Site visit	534.60
7111 - Rebates to Veterans	93.00
Total 7100 - Annual Meeting Expenses	1,965.83
Total Other Expense	1,965.83
Net Other Income	6,963.17
Net Income	47,011.93

Statement of Financial Position	
As of June 30, 2019	
	Jun 30, 19
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1017 - Oppenheimer & Co	178,764.29
1040 - Bank of America Checking Acct.	7,023.24
1042 - Bank of America Savings Acct.	34,521.01
Total Checking/Savings	220,308.54
Total Current Assets	220,308.54
TOTAL ASSETS	220,308.54
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2050 - Payroll & Taxes Payable	2,896.57
2051 - Payroll payable	149.25
2052 - FICA & withhold taxes payable	
Total 2050 - Payroll & Taxes Payable	3,045.82
Total Other Current Liabilities	3,045.82
Total Current Liabilities	3,045.82
Total Liabilities	3,045.82
Equity	
3200 - *Unrestricted Net Assets	170,250.79
Net Income	47,011.93
Total Equity	217,262.72
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	220,308.54

NOTEWORTHY

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Return to Attlebridge

Three veterans return to their airbase to meet local residents and pay tribute to lost comrades on Memorial Day

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Available DVDs



*Please submit ALL articles, etc. at least 30 days PRIOR to the date of the next issue of the 8th AF News! Remember: submission does NOT guarantee publication. Due to size constraints of the magazine, I am very limited in publishing non-solicited material, however, I will review for consideration. Please submit materials via email [preferred] with hi-res photos attached in jpg format. NEVER send originals--they may not be returned. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. I appreciate your help immensely. DDK

Destination: Debach and Cambridge

by Anne Aubry Marek



Debra Kujawa, Managing Director of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, and I traveled to Debach in May a few days before the first Open Day of the season on Sunday, May 26. What a grand day that was. The weather was gorgeous which brought out a lot of people. There were all the military vehicles you would expect as well as some very special antique cars on display.

I had the special honor this year of presenting Dottie Smith's husband, John's, B4 flight bag to Richard Taylor to add to all the uniforms and equipment in Veterans' Corner at the Museum. He was very pleased and happy to receive it. For me, a highlight was the convoy of military vehicles which winds its way through the countryside. Because the weather was so love-

ly, it was a very, very long convoy, as the picture shows. After the ride we settled down in the Visitors Center for a cold drink and ran into Barbara and Wayne Bladen. Wayne's uncle was Sgt. Calvin Bladen, Radio Operator. They were both huddled with Darren Jelley and his laptop reviewing his uncle's mission reports.

On Monday, all four of us headed to Madingley for the Memorial Day Ceremony at Cambridge American Cemetery. It is always a very moving experience highlighted by the presentation of the memorial wreaths at the Wall of the Missing. Debra did the honors for the 8th AFHS and Wayne for the 493rd BG. We thoroughly enjoyed the



fly-over by the B-17, Sally B and her 2 fighter escorts. Afterwards, we all met up with Darren, Helen and Gordon Thomson at a local pub for a late lunch. Helen is Darren's assistant in the Archives. We had a wonderful afternoon which ended with coffee at the Thomson's lovely home.

Sadly, Debra and I bid a fond goodbye to all and headed home on Tuesday, May 28th, promising to return, and taking with us many cherished memories.

Photos: above left, Darren Jelley and Anne Marek in front of "Lucy" at Open Day. Above right, Anne presenting B4 bag to Richard Taylor.

News from Across the Pond...



Photos this page: top left then clockwise, Richard Taylor with Wayne Bladen who laid the wreath in honor of the 493rd; view from inside the control tower at Debach on Open Day; the convoy of military vehicles winding its way in and around Debach; The American Cemetery at Cambridge; Debra Kuja laying the wreath in honor of the 8th Air Force Historical Society.

News from Across the Pond...

Podington/Santa Pod: B17s to Top Fuel Dragsters

in search of 92nd BG personnel



by Richard Foster-Turner

Santa Pod Raceway (SPR) has been the home of European Drag Racing since it opened as Europe's first permanent drag strip in 1966. SPR is built on the site of the former RAF Podington (Station 109). The drag strip itself is located where the main runway used to be. The name Santa Pod is derived from Santa Ana, location of the first drag strip in the USA, and the local village of Podington. Owner and operator, Trakbak Racing (TBR) is now planning to build a museum on the site. Whilst the main focus of this project will be the history of Drag Racing in Europe, plans include a separate hall, or even a stand-alone museum dedicated to RAF Podington, all those

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who served there, and particularly the 92nd Bombardment Group who flew 274 missions from the airfield. The scale of the RAF Podington element of the museum will depend on the stories and artifacts available.

Santa Pod Raceway is one of the busiest drag strips in the world, with events running from February to November with over 400,000 visitors passing through the gates annually. Second World War history is woven into the fabric of SPR, with a memorial on the road leading to the raceway and also at the start line. There's even been a beer specially brewed and sold on-site called "*92nd Bomber*".

With the new museum, SPR will

be showcasing all the history of what has become arguably the best-known drag strip in the world, and also the history of Drag Racing throughout Europe. There are several drag racing-themed museums in the USA, but there are none in Europe, so the museum should become a destination for Drag Racing fans from around the world. The RAF Podington exhibits will become another place to learn about the rich history of the USAAF in the UK both for those with a specific interest, and also the many Drag Racing enthusiasts who will visit in the coming decades.

If you, your relatives, or someone you know, has links to RAF Podington, or to the 92nd BG Santa

News from Across the Pond...

Pod, we want to hear from you.

We're interested in stories and anecdotes related to the site that could be exhibited in the museum. We are also interested to hear about artifacts that might be donated and/or exhibited on either a temporary or permanent basis. At present there is only a handful of items in the collection, so there's plenty of space if you know of something stashed away in storage somewhere.

We are also extremely interested to hear any stories that might link the veterans who served at RAF Podington with the early years of Drag Racing in the US. The first ever drag strip at Santa-Ana, California, opened in 1950, and the National Hot Rod Association (NHRA) was founded in 1951. Many WW2 veterans returned to

the US with their new-found mechanical skills would have been involved in the early growth of organized drag racing in the US—building and racing cars and hot rods. Today, Santa Pod draws visitors from the current generation of USAF personal stationed in the UK. If you know of any connections, again we would love to hear about it.



Richard Foster-Turner

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United Kingdom**

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*Photos from preceding page:
top left--the 92nd Bomb
Group memorial on Airfield
Road as you approach Santa
Pod; center--2018 European
Top Fuel Dragster champi-
on, Anita Makela, racing at
Santa Pod; bottom right--Po-
dington Airfield memorial at
the Santa Pod Raceway star-
tline; this page--aerial view
of Santa Pod Raceway during
an event.*

In Search of: BOOKS

As many of you know, one of our UK representatives, John Gilbert, works with four of the schools in and around Norwich, sharing 8th Air Force history with the students and faculty alike.

All of the schools are in the process of growing and expanding their libraries on WWII history, but in order to do this, they need books. (Real books as opposed to the digital variety.)

Here is how you can help: If you have books on WWII history—they do NOT have to be specific to 8th Air Force—and would like to donate them to these students, simply send them to our office and we will get them to John in the UK. Check to see which shipping method is most economical in your

area. Often, UPS ground is very inexpensive.

One of the best ways to assure the preservation of the memories and legacies of the men and women of the 8th is to instill this knowledge in our youth.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your help!

**Debra Kujawa
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Our Favorite War Story

by John Corcoran

My sisters and I loved to get my father, John J. Corcoran—a member of the 384th Bomb Group—to tell us our favorite war story. He never hesitated, even though this particular story did not paint him in the best light. The fact that he was so forthcoming is a tribute to his wonderful sense of humor. This account comes from an audio recording made sometime in 1994. JC

“After I came back from overseas in the fall of 1944, I was assigned to Lockbourne Army Air Base, in Columbus, Ohio. I was teaching there at the Central Instructors School. We actually instructed pilots who had been flying for some time and, in fact, had been instructors themselves in other types of aircraft. At that time, Hap Arnold discovered that a lot of his pilots had spent the war instructing, and he got upset over that and said he wanted every instructor who hadn’t had combat duty to be prepared and sent overseas. I had five students, all pilots, and my job was to teach them the B-17.

“On this particular day the weather was very bad; it was total cloud cover. But we used to fly in all kinds of weather at this Instructors' School. We had alternate landing sites as far away as Florida; so, if we took off and found out we couldn’t get back down due to weather, they just sent us someplace else.

“We took off at about noon and, not long after we got off the ground, we got above the clouds. All of a sudden all of our radios went out on the airplane. This was very, very unusual. As a matter of fact, I’m not sure the people on the ground

believed us when we came back, because the B-17 had a lot of good and different kinds of radio equipment. Of course, we didn’t have a radio operator with us. Nobody on the airplane could figure out how to get any of the radios to function; and bear in mind, they had been working up until then. We certainly had communicated with the tower before we took off.

“At any rate, we flew around for a while hoping to establish radio contact. There were clouds where we were at 10,000 feet, so I wanted to go up a little bit higher. At that time, I think—believe it or not—the established airline routes were at 12,000 feet, and I wanted to get above that because a lot of the time we were in clouds. I tried to fly the airplane along a course that would keep me roughly over Columbus. I tried to figure in the winds aloft. Knowing that they were from the south, I’d fly a certain distance north, and then turn around and fly a longer period south to make up for the tailwinds. Well I don’t think I did too well. The winds aloft were much stronger from the south than I thought; I had flown further north.

“At around 4:00 or 5:00, we finally got through on the radio to a special frequency that had nothing to do with Lockbourne Army Air Base. They asked me where I thought we were. I thought they would have some kind of radar which would tell them where we were, but apparently, they didn’t. Remember, this is ’44 or ’45, and everything was antiquated compared to the technology that we have today. Based upon how I had flown, I told them where I thought



I was.

They told me to fly at the altitude I was at for a certain

length of time—something fairly precise—then to descend to 6,000 feet, and either at the end of that time, or as I came down, I should break out. Sure enough, exactly as they had said, we broke out. Everything as far as you could see was clear... just beautiful! But we didn’t know where the hell we were, and I couldn’t reestablish contact with them.

“We started to look around, and one student saw a lot of lights over toward the left front of the airplane. He said, “That’s Chicago. I’d know it anyplace.” So, we flew a little closer, and it was nothing. I mean it was hardly an intersection.

“Not long after that, I spied an airport; the runway was lighted. I could see the tower. I couldn’t establish contact with them because you’d have to know their frequency. So, I buzzed the tower. You have a signal in the airplane that you can give—it’s like a big flashlight—and you can either give a red light or a green light. I gave them a red light, telling them I was in distress, that I couldn’t communicate with them and please help. They responded with a green light. That meant I could land. As I started to get into what appeared to be the traffic pattern, I saw an airplane ahead of me. It looked like a



commercial airliner. So, I got behind that airliner a respectable distance, and followed him around. He landed in front of me and got all the way down to the end of the runway. I came in on the final approach and landed and, unfortunately, this airliner—and it was an airliner—didn't know there was anybody behind him. He was going to taxi back on the runway. When I saw him and he saw me he got the hell off the runway very quickly. I hope he found a taxi strip. As far as I know he did.

"I finished my roll, and taxied back toward the tower. As I taxied—remember we didn't have the slightest idea where we were, but we knew we weren't in Chicago—the first thing I saw was a couple of British airplanes... Mosquitos—a wonderful twin-engine British airplane—with the RAF concentric circles on the

side. I wondered, *where did these British airplanes come from?* We continued toward the tower. Soon we got close enough to see the



name on the tower. And the name of the airport that we had landed at was... London! We had landed in London—Ontario, that is—which is

right across the lake from Columbus, Ohio. I had landed by accident in Canada.

"Of course, as soon as I got to the tower I got in touch with my base. Remember, my base hadn't heard from me since noon time. They had no idea where I was. Later that night the Deputy CO, a nice guy, a big Captain, called your mother out in Worthington, and said something like, "*Mrs. Corcoran, are you and your husband getting along pretty well?*" She said, "*Certainly.*" And he said, "*Has he ever said anything about wanting to go back overseas?*" And she said, "*Heavens no!*" And he said, "*Well, what would you say if I told you he is now in London?*"

"So that's the story of how I accidentally flew from Columbus, Ohio...all the way to London." (Pic of Dad with his trainer.)

AFEES TO PARTICIPATE IN 8TH AFHS REUNIONS!

We are very pleased to announce that the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society (AFEES) has decided to begin having its annual reunion in conjunction with the 8th AFHS annual reunion!

AFEES had its first reunion in Niagara Falls, New York in 1964.

The purpose of AFEES is to encourage airmen who were aided by Resistance organizations or patriotic nations of foreign countries to continue friendships with those who helped them.

Over the past 55 years, hundreds of evaders, helpers, family members and friends, have gathered each year to commemorate, remember, and honor all those who were involved in escaping and evading—both the escapers and the thousands of brave, ordinary people in occupied countries who took extraordinary risks at huge costs to help these airmen.

There were approximately 90,000 Air Force casualties from 1942-1945 in the European theater with 18,000 injured but returned to base and 72,000 shot down.

Of those shot down, 34,000 were killed, 35,000 were POW and 3,000 evaded.

AFEES has first and second-generation members

from the 8th, 9th, and 15th Air Forces from WWII, as well as from Vietnam and Korea. They also have historical writers and friends of those who escaped and/or evaded capture.

Lynn David, Executive Vice President of AFEES, indicated that during their 55th reunion in May 2019 in Niagara Falls, their Board of Directors and attending members voted to begin having their annual reunion with the 8th AFHS.

Lynn's father, Lt. Clayton C. David, was the copilot of a badly damaged B-17G, when he bailed out northeast of Amsterdam on January 11, 1944. With the help of the resistance, he evaded through German occupied Holland, Belgium, and France, crossing the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain on April 11, 1944.

Lynn says AFEES records show other airmen who evaded longer than his father, but his father covered a greater distance in his evasion!

Please welcome the AFEES members during our reunion in St. Louis. They are extending an open invitation for everyone to stop in and visit with them in their hospitality room, not only to meet each other, but to learn more about AFEES as well.



SHOT DOWN

The true story of pilot Howard Snyder and the crew of the B-17, *Susan Ruth* by Steve Snyder

Howard Snyder was born in Norfolk, Nebraska, and moved to Eagle Rock, California, with his family at the age of thirteen. After graduating from Glendale High School, he went to work for Desmond's Clothing Company in Los Angeles. As a result of President Franklin Roosevelt (FDR) implementing the first peacetime draft in U.S. history on September 18, 1940, Howard entered the Army in April, 1941, and was stationed at Ft. Lewis, Washington, with the 41st Infantry Division. At the time, the U.S. military was woefully weak, ranking 18th in the world in military strength behind Romania.

Three months later on July 3, Howard married Ruth Hempel at First Lutheran Church in Pasadena, California. On December 7th, "a date which will live in infamy", Pearl Harbor was attacked by Japan and the United States was at war. Being very much afraid about an uncertain future, Ruth went up to Washington to visit Howard over Christmas during which Susan Ruth Snyder was conceived. Having a new bride and with a baby on the way, Howard was worried how he was going to support his new family. He didn't think he could do it very well on a private's pay in the Army so he decided to volunteer for the Air Force.

The pay was better, especially if he could make it through pilot training and become an officer.

In June 1942, he began Preflight Training at Santa Ana, California, and then went through the three stages of Pilot Training. His Primary Pilot Training was at Hancock College of Aeronautics in Santa Maria, California, where he flew a Stearman PT-13 (PT for primary trainer) biplane and soloed on October 22, 1942. Basic Pilot Training was at Lemoore Army Air Field, California, and Marana Army Air Field, Arizona, where he flew a single wing Vultee Valiant

BT-13 (BT for basic trainer).

After graduating from Basic Pilot Training, pilots were separated going into Advanced Pilot Training. They were assigned to either single engine planes (fighters) or two-engine planes (bombers or transports). Howard was assigned to twin engine Advanced Pilot Training at Douglas Army Air Field, Arizona, where he flew both Curtiss-Wright AT-9s and Cessna AT-17s (AT for

advanced trainer). On April 12, 1943, as part of Class 43-D, he graduated and received his pilot's wings and commission as a 2nd Lieutenant.

After graduating, he went to Transitional Pilot Training in Pyote, Texas, (known as Rattlesnake Bomber Base) where he learned how to fly a 4-engine B-17 bomber and was selected to be a first pilot. Following this, Howard began Operational Unit Combat Training or Phase Training beginning at Pyote and then moving to Dalhart Army Air Base, Texas. Here he was assigned a crew, and they learned to operate as a team. Once they were deemed ready, the crew went on Active Duty and was assigned to the 8th Air Force and the European

Theater of Operations. On September 27, 1943, Howard Snyder's crew departed Dalhart to Scott Field, Illinois, then on to Dow Army Airfield, Bangor, Maine, and to Gander, Newfoundland, before flying their new B-17 across the Atlantic to Prestwick, Scotland.

On October 21, 1943, Howard and his crew reported to the 306th Bombardment Group based at

Thurleigh, England, in Bedfordshire about 60 miles north of London. The

Photos: center, Howard Snyder during primary training at Santa Maria, CA; lower rt, Howard & Ruth Snyder wedding photo.



8th Air Force was made up of 3 Air Divisions. The 306th was in the 1st Air Division which along with the Third Air Division flew B-17

Flying Fortresses so named because of the firepower on the plane. They had 12-13 50 caliber machine guns on each plane and carried about 5,000 rounds of ammunition on each mission. They could also sustain a tremendous amount of battle damages and still keep flying. The Second Air Division flew B-24 Liberators.

The 306th's nickname was The Reich Wreckers, and its slogan was "First Over Germany" because it was the first bomb group to hit a target in Germany (Wilhelmshaven on January 27, 1943). The 306th was also the longest continuously serving bomb group in the 8th Air Force (from September 1942 to December 1946) as it participated in the Casey Jones Project after the war aerial photo mapping western Europe and northern Africa. The 1949 movie classic *Twelve O'Clock High* starring Gregory Peck was based on a true story about the 306th Bomb Group. The fictitious 918 Bomb Group portrayed in the movie was derived from multiplying the 306 by 3. Another distinction of the 306th was that its Flight Surgeon, Dr. Thurman Shuller, was responsible for convincing 8th Bomber Command General, Ira Eaker, to implement a mission tour limit in April, 1943. Shuller wanted a limit of 20, but Eaker decided on 25. After Jimmy Doolittle took over command of the 8th on January 6, 1944, he later increased it to 30 and then to 35.

Pilot Howard Snyder named his B-17 the "*Susan Ruth*" after his daughter who was now one year old. The rest of the ten-man crew were fellow officers co-pilot George Eike, navigator Robert Benninger, and bombardier Richard Daniels, along with six enlisted men, also referred to as non-commissioned officers or

NCOs. They were mainly gunners and consisted of flight engineer/top turret gunner Roy Holbert, radio operator



Ross Kahler, ball turret gunner Louis Colwart, right waist gunner John Pindroch, left turret gunner Joe Musial, & tail gunner Bill Slenker,

The crew's first combat mission (except for co-pilot George Eike who was assigned to another crew) was on November 3, 1943, to Wilhelmshaven. It was the first time that the 8th Air Force flew 500 bombers on a mission. Flying combat was a brutal undertaking and extremely dangerous; 26,000 men died while serving in the 8th Air Force which is more than the entire Marine Corps lost fighting in the Pacific. Another 28,000 men became prisoners of war after their planes were knocked out of the sky.

Flying combat was perilous from the time the planes took off to the time they came back to land. Too begin with, the planes had to take off and form up. Although the number varied during the war, at its peak there were forty bomb groups stationed in England in and around an area called East Anglia which was about the size of Vermont. These bases were only five to ten miles apart and on the day of a mission, hundreds of bombers would all be taking off at the same time. There wasn't any radar or air traffic control back then so everything was based on visual sight. With the weather in England usually being over-

cast, pilots couldn't see anything until they broke through the cloud layer. As a result, mid-air collisions were not uncommon.

Then they had to form up. Individual planes formed up into 3 plane elements; elements formed up into squadrons; squadrons formed up into bomb groups; bomb groups formed up into combat wings; and finally combat wings formed up into air divisions. All this took one to two hours before the bombers could even begin the mission and start out across the English Channel.

Then, they had to deal with the elements. The bombers were not pressurized so above 10,000 feet, the crew had to go on oxygen or else they'd pass out and within a few minutes, die. It was extremely cold as well, with temperatures reaching 40 to 60 degrees below zero. As a result, frostbite was a huge problem. Many airmen suffered severe frostbite injuries and were hospitalized for lengthy periods of time. "*Susan Ruth*" waist gunner John Pindroch was hospitalized for a couple months due to frostbite injury.

The next problem the bombers faced was enemy fighters. The Germans had radar stations set up along the continental coast of Europe and knew when the bomber formations would be arriving. When they did, the German air force, the Luftwaffe, would be there to meet them.

At the beginning of the war, 8th Bomber Command thought the heavily armed bombers, flying in tight formations, could defend themselves from enemy fighters, that they flew too fast and too high to be even reached, and didn't need fighter escort support. They flew in what was called a *Combat Box Formation*, and the belief was that all the interlocking fire power

Photo: Howard Snyder (kneeling far left) and crew.

of the .50 cal machine guns would make them invincible. Unfortunately, Bomber Command was badly mistaken. These formations could not defend themselves and took devastating losses, especially in 1943.

Even with the 25 mission limit, it was statistically impossible for an airman to complete his tour. The average number of missions flown before being shot down was only 6. At the losses they were taking, 100% of the aircraft and bomber crews would have to be replaced every 3 months. Even when fighter escorts were finally provided, problems with the P-38 Lightnings and P-47 Thunderbolts limited their effectiveness to adequately escort the formations to targets deep into Germany.

The losses culminated in October of 1943, called Black Week, when on four raids into Germany (Bremen, Marienberg, Munster, and Schweinfurt), 148 planes were shot down; almost 1,500 men lost. However, the worst day was October 14, Black Thursday, when 291 bombers were sent to hit the ball bearing factories at Schweinfurt. On that one day, 60 planes went down – 600 men lost. Another 17 planes were so badly damaged, they had to be scrapped. The 306th Bomb Group lost 10 out of 15 planes that went on the mission.

After Black Week, the 8th Air Force was in complete shock. There was no way such losses could be sustained, and they seriously considered discontinuing day-light bombing. It wasn't until external fuel tanks were added on the P-47s and the introduction of the P-51 Mustangs in December 1944 that the bomber formations finally had adequate fighter support all the way to and from the target. The P-51s were extremely effective and were responsible for virtually wiping out the Luftwaffe in the spring of 1944. On June 6, D-Day, there was hardly a German fighter to be seen over the beaches of Normandy.

The next obstacle the bombers faced was German anti-aircraft fire or Flak which was an abbreviation for the German word, Flugzeugabwehrkanone,

meaning "aircraft-defense cannon." They were deadly weapons and could fire 20 shells per minute. They were calibrated so that the shells would explode at the same altitude the bomber formations were flying, and the shells were filled with different shapes and sizes of razor-sharp metal (called shrapnel) that would burst out hundreds of feet and easily rip through the thin aluminum skin of the bombers.



(The skin was so thin that you could take a screwdriver and poke a hole right through it.)

From a distance, the exploding shells looked like innocent black puffs, but as the planes got closer, the puffs got bigger and the explosions got louder. Once amongst them, the concussion of the shells exploding would violently rock the ships. If hit directly, a bomber would just disintegrate and disappear. If a wing was hit, the bomber would drop to earth like a stone. Heading into



that killing field in the sky, an airman's adrenaline would pump furiously as any moment might be his last. Even with below freezing temperatures, Howard Snyder said he would be sweating profusely, and his clothes would be wringing wet.

On February 8, 1944, twenty B-17s from the 306th Bomb Group flew Low

Group in the 40th Combat Wing on a mission to Frankfurt, Germany. The B-17 "Susan Ruth" AC #42-31499 was flying "in the hole" in the Lead Squadron. On the way in, no enemy fighters were encountered although the formation did encounter accurate anti-aircraft tracking fire with seven aircraft being seriously damaged. The bomb run was made at approximately 11:30 am. Bombing was by PFF (*Pathfinder were target marking planes*) due to 7/10ths clouds though ground was visible through breaks in the clouds.

One of the ships damaged by flak was the "Susan Ruth" whose bomb bay doors had been hit, and the crew couldn't get them back up. That caused a drag on the plane, it lost air speed, and began to lag behind the formation heading back to England.

About an hour after the bomb run, enemy fighters finally appeared. P-38, P-47, and P-51 fighter support was good except for a gap between 12:35 and 12:45 when they left the formation to engage in dog fights. Left unguarded and lagging behind the formation, the "Susan Ruth" was singled out over Charleville, France, by two German Focke-Wulf 190 fighters who popped out of the clouds from below and came in for the kill, firing their 20 mm cannons. Crew members, radio operator Ross Kahler and ball turret gunner Louis Colwart, were killed in the plane, and the other eight airmen had to bail out. Although some worse than others, all the crew suffered shrapnel wounds.

Both Focke-Wulf 190s were shot down as well. One, piloted by Siegfried Marek crashed at Borlers, Belgium, and he was killed. The other was piloted by Lt. Hans Berger who was able to bail out, landing in the village of Beauwelz, Belgium. He was picked up by a German patrol and made it back to his Jagdgeschwader 1 air base at Dortmund, Germany.

[story continued on p. 22]

Photos: top, Howard Snyder fighting with the Maquis; bottom, Howard Snyder with Belgian helpers.

Welcome to St. Louis, MO

45th Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion

Sights of St. Louis (City Tour)

Thursday, October 17, 2019

Sit back and enjoy the amazing sights of St. Louis as your guide expertly traces the history of St. Louis beginning with the city's original settlement, Laclède's Landing. It is now a nine-block historic district filled with renovated turn-of-the-century buildings housing shops, eateries and offices.

We will visit the famous Gateway Arch, the Nation's tallest monument, which commemorates the gateway to the west for thousands of 19th century pioneers. We'll take a tram ride to the top of this 630' stainless steel architectural wonder and get a unique, bird's-eye view of St. Louis. If you're not quite up to those heights, you can enjoy "*Monument to the Dream*," the film documenting the construction of the Arch.

Enjoy the view of Old Cathedral, the oldest cathedral west of the Mississippi. Across the street is the Old Courthouse, the setting for cases involving slavery, the fur trade and equal rights. Of these cases, the Dred Scott Freedom Trial is perhaps the most notable. We will pass Busch Stadium, home of the 2011 World Champion St. Louis Cardinals. Continuing west on Market Street, we will pass several of St. Louis' civic buildings and plazas, as well as Citygarden, a unique urban oasis blending art, architecture and landscape. St. Louis Union Station, once the busiest rail terminal in the world, has undergone a magnificent renovation and is home to a luxury hotel and restaurants.

At the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis, also known as the New Cathedral, we will see one of the largest collections of mosaics in the world—84,000 square feet in 8,000 shades of tiny pieces of color! The tiny pieces of tesserae and glass portray scenes from both the Old and New Testaments, the life of Saint Louis IX, King of France, and many men and women prominent in the history of St. Louis.

9:00am board bus, 2:00pm back at hotel.

\$65/Person includes bus, guide, and gratuities.

BOX LUNCH INCLUDED!

Keep the Memory Alive Tour

Friday, October 18, 2019

Boeing James S McDonnell Prologue Room

At our first stop on this experience, we will learn the history of the Boeing Company and the companies with which it shares a common heritage paralleling the exciting history of humankind learning to fly. The men and women of the Boeing Company and the aircraft they have built—from the first cloth-and-wood airplanes to today's sleekest fighters and jetliners—have played a pivotal role in shaping the history of aerospace. The James S. McDonnell Prologue Room in St. Louis tells this panoramic story of nearly eight decades of aviation progress, from biplanes to bombers to space travel. Scale models, dioramas, paintings, and photographs depict such important events as the first flight around the world in 1924, the first take off of a jet fighter from a US Navy carrier in 1946, the first aircraft to land at the South Pole in 1956, and the first manned spacecraft to orbit the Earth in 1962.

Holocaust Museum and Learning Center

Our next stop is the Holocaust Museum and Learning Center. The work at the Learning Center focuses on building a community of defenders. Even in the face of this world's history of genocidal injustices perpetrated in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda, and most recently, Darfur, we cannot lose hope that the next generation will hear, understand, feel compassion, and take action to end such tragedies.

The museum contains eight different installations that you can wind your way through. Begin at the Introductory Room which contains pre-World War II photographs of the survivors who immigrated to St. Louis, continuing through the Rise of Nazism in Germany among many other exhibits.

9:30am board bus, 1:30pm back at hotel
\$26/Person includes bus, guide, and gratuities.

Lunch/snacks on your own.

Sights and Shops in St. Charles Tour

Saturday, October 19, 2019

Enjoy a visit to St. Charles, the oldest town on the Missouri River. Founded as Les Petites Cotes (The Little Hills) by French Canadians, St. Charles has carefully preserved its heritage as a river town that has been welcoming visitors since 1769. Thousands of pioneers replenished supplies here on the awe-some journey west. St. Charles is a source of multiple historical encounters: the Lewis and Clark Rendezvous, Missouri's First State Capitol, and the origin of the Boone's Lick Trail. We'll take a driving tour of Main Street—a nine block historic district filled with 80 restored buildings dating from 1790 to 1900. This cobblestone street is known for its array of gift, antique and craft shops.

If you wish, you will have time to explore Missouri's First State Capitol* or the Lewis & Clark Nature Center* on your own during this tour. The Capitol has been completely restored and furnished as it appeared during the period of 1821-1826 when the Missouri State Legislature met in St. Charles. The lower level of the Nature Center houses replicas of the three boats of the Lewis & Clark Discovery Expedition. Upstairs, the Nature Center is a "hands-on" museum following the adventures of Lewis and Clark into the wilderness of the West. Take in the various displays of Native American tribes, the men of the expedition with their equipment and artifacts, and a walk through the forest as it was during Lewis and Clark's expedition.

12:00pm board bus, 4:00pm back at hotel.
\$26/Person includes bus, guide, and gratuities.

Lunch is on your own.**

***IF you wish to visit the First Missouri State Capitol State Historic Site, admission is \$4.50/Person and is NOT included in the cost of this tour.**

Also, you may choose to visit the Lewis & Clark Boat House and Nature Center, admission is \$5.00/Person and again, is NOT included in the cost of this tour.

****A list of restaurants will be provided for your convenience.**



45th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO
October 16-20, 2019

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION

888-627-7066 or ONLINE registration on our website!

(Reference Sheraton Westport 'CHALET' and 8th AIR FORCE for group rate)

Location

The Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet is located in Westport Plaza, (191 Westport Plaza, St. Louis, MO 63146) which features 18 shops, popular restaurants, and entertainment venues like the Westport Playhouse, The Funny Bone Comedy Club, Jive and Wail Piano Bar, and Backstreet Jazz and Blues. Guests will enjoy convenient access to popular destinations and attractions. We're located just 10 minutes from historic St. Charles, 15 minutes from Forest Park, home of the Saint Louis Zoo, Science Center, Art Museum and the History Museum. We're also close to the world-famous Gateway Arch, the St. Louis Cardinals baseball stadium, Six Flags® and Missouri's Wine Country.

Shuttle Service

For those of you flying into St. Louis, there is complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport to the hotel. Go to Baggage Claim/Hotel Shuttle exits—the shuttle runs every half hour.

Upscale Amenities

Enjoy complimentary wireless High Speed Internet in all public areas, concierge service, plus signature amenities you'll only find at Sheraton. Wake up energized after a restful night's sleep in a plush Sheraton Sweet Sleeper® Bed. Sheraton Club rooms and suites provide guests with special access to the Sheraton Club Lounge, offering complimentary breakfast, evening hors d'oeuvres, and a variety of beverage options. Stay connected at our lobby's connectivity hub, the Link@Sheraton™ experience with Microsoft®. Stay fit with a visit to our Sheraton Fitness center, programmed by Core Performance™.

Dining Options Aboard

The Terrace Restaurant and Lucerne Restaurant feature a wide variety of menu items served in a friendly, casual atmosphere. There is also a private dining area perfect for intimate gatherings. In the summer, enjoy poolside refreshments every weekend at the Tiki Bar, serving snacks, beer, wine and frozen drinks. We also offer guests the convenience and privacy of in-room dining service. Stroll through the Westport Plaza Complex and visit any one of their many casual and fine-dining options, from seafood restaurants to specialty cafés.

RESERVATION INFORMATION

Group Name: 8th Air Force Historical Society

Reunion Dates: October 16-20, 2019

Rate: \$122 + tax (currently 17.863%) Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability.

Cut off Date: 9/15/2019

Cancellation Policy: All reservations have a 48 hour cancellation policy, or attendee will be charged one night room rate plus tax.

WHEELCHAIR RENTALS

ScotAround: (888) 441-7575 or ScotAround.com

HOSPITALITY SUITES

This year, the 8th AFHS is pleased to announce that we are again offering **HOSPITALITY SUITES** to groups at **NO CHARGE**. The number of suites is limited, so we ask that you reserve your suite as soon as possible. Suites are located in close proximity to one another and most are large enough for two or more groups to share space.

In order to guarantee your suite,
please call or email ASAP:

Debra Kujawa

Managing Director

912-748-8884

ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org



45th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO
October 16-20, 2019

Wednesday, October 16

1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
6:00pm — 7:00pm	Complimentary Welcome Reception, followed by dinner on your own
7:00pm — 9:00pm	8th AFHS Board Meeting
7:00pm — until	Hospitality Suites remain open throughout reunion

Thursday, October 17

7:30am — 8:30am	Breakfast
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration open
9:00am — 2:00pm	Sights of St. Louis (City Tour)*
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
2:15pm — 3:00pm	Curator's Corner
3:15pm — 5:00pm	"Researching the Past: Step-by-Step" —David Schmitt, Lane Callaway, & others
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Buffet dinner and program: "Op Frantic" & Mission Update , Lane Callaway

Friday, October 18

7:30am — 8:30am	Breakfast
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration open
8:00am — 9:15am	Group Meetings
9:30am — 1:30pm	Keep the Memory Alive Tour (includes Holocaust Museum)*
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
1:45pm — 3:00pm	Historical Presentation: "Eighth Airfields as Wartime Homes"
3:15pm — 4:30pm	Q & A WWII Vets
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Rendezvous Dinners

Saturday, October 19

7:30am — 8:30am	Breakfast
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration open
8:45am — 10:15am	General Membership Meeting
12:00pm — 4:00pm	8th AFHS Board Meeting
12:00pm — 4:00pm	Sights and Shops in St. Charles Tour*
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 10:00pm	Gala Dinner and Program

Sunday, October 20

7:30am — 8:30am	Breakfast
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***It is important that you be in the bus boarding area
at least ten [10] minutes prior to the scheduled departure times.
All tours require a minimum of 45 participants, unless otherwise stated.
Driver and Staff gratuities ARE included in the tour prices.**



REGISTRATION FORM

45th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO
October 16—20, 2019

CUT-OFF DATE IS September 25, 2019	Price p/p	# of People	TOTAL
<u>DUES</u>			
The principal attendee MUST be a member of the 8th AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are NOT a CURRENT member, please pay your yearly dues here:	\$ 40	#	\$
<u>REGISTRATION FEE</u>			
Includes meeting expenses and other reunion expenses.	\$ 45	#	\$
Registration fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel:	\$ 30	#	\$
<u>BREAKFAST BUFFET (please indicate below and place totals to the right)</u>			
Please indicate [X] which days you would like buffet breakfast and quantity: Thursday ___ # ___ Friday ___ # ___ Saturday ___ # ___ Sunday ___ # ___	Price per breakfast: \$ 23	Total # of breakfasts: #	\$
<u>DINNERS</u>			
Thursday, Oct 17 — EVENING DINNER BUFFET Roasted Pork Loin & Grilled Chicken Breast	\$ 48	#	\$
Friday, Oct 18—RENDEZVOUS DINNER Chicken Marsala	\$ 48	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 19—GALA BANQUET (Please select entrée)			
Sliced London Broil with Bordelaise Sauce	\$ 48	#	\$
Pan Seared Salmon with Balsamic Reduction	\$ 48	#	\$
Vegetarian plate(s) Please indicate [X] : Thurs ___ # ___ Fri ___ # ___ Sat ___ # ___	\$ 48	#	\$
<u>TOUR OPTIONS:</u>			
Thursday, Oct 17: Sights of St. Louis Tour— INCLUDES BOX LUNCH	\$ 65	#	\$
Friday, Oct 18: Keep the Memory Alive Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 26	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 19: Sights and Shops in St. Charles Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 26	#	\$
Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS			\$

Please PRINT. If registering a WWII veteran here, please list their name first.

MEMBER NAME (for name tag): _____

WWII Veteran _____ BG/FG Affiliation (for Rendezvous Dinner seating): _____ POW: _____ (Korea, Vietnam, etc.): _____

SPOUSE or PERSON attending: _____

ADDITIONAL GUESTS: _____

ADDRESS: _____ CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

DAYTIME PH #: _____ EMAIL: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ PH #: _____

PLEASE INDICATE ANY PHYSICAL OR DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: _____

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD —M/C; VISA; or AmEx (**a 3% convenience fee will be added**):

CARD #: _____ EXP. DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____ *Your contact information will only be shared with attendees.*

MAIL completed form with check or credit card info to: 8th AFHS ~ 68 Kimberlys Way ~ Jasper, GA 30143-4769



FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR AND

Manny Abrams**	392nd BG	Thomas L Creekmore	305th BG	Marvin Graham	392nd BG
Stewart Ackerman	303rd BG	Leo R Croce*	398th BG	Sidney Grant	493rd BG
J R Akin	95th BG	Howard Croner	452nd BG	Wesley Grayer	493rd BG
Jay D Allen	94th BG	Robert Culp	100th BG	Charles J Greenough	379th BG
Andy Anderson	100th BG	John F Curcio	458th BG	Bruce F Gregg*	487th BG
Ed Anderson	453rd BG	Wayne Davis	452nd BG	Robert Gross	34th BG
William H Andrew*	493rd BG	Steve de Pyssler	VIII BC	Joseph "Joe" Gualano	493rd BG
Richard Andrews	379th BG	Victor DeCaria**	446th BG	Rudolph "Rudy" Guerrero	493rd BG
William Junior Arnold*	303rd BG	Eddie Deerfield	303rd BG	Laurence R Gulick**	466th BG
Albert Arreola**	100th BG	Louis E Deutsch	446th BG	Milton R Gunther	487th BG
Victor G Aubry, Jr*	493rd BG	Seymour Deutsch*	493rd BG	C Norman Gustafson	384th BG
Albert Audette	385th BG	Harold L Dietz	466th BG	Carl Gustafson	453rd BG
George W Bachmann, Jr	306th BG	Richard Dinning	351st BG	Russell W Gustafson	452nd BG
James A Baker*	339th FG	Jack F Disney	94th BG	Paul C Haedike	452nd BG
Orville Baker	445th BG	Donald A D'Lugos	466th BG	Adolph R Hanslik* 124th SC R/Intel	
Willis Barney	379th BG	Jack Dodson	398th BG	Percival L Hanson	305th BG
Oliver L Bashor	303rd BG	John H Doyle	94th BG	Haas M Hargrave**	493rd BG
Andrew L Bates*	436th TCG	John J Dunnigan	351st BG	Alfred B Harris	390th BG
John Wesley Beaver*	92nd BG	Norman R Dunphe	448th BG	Howard G Harris*	Veteran
William Becker	492nd BG	George Durgin	493rd BG	Morton Harris	95th BG
Richard L "Dick" Bedford	353rd FG	Peter Durso	493rd BG	Glenn A Harrison**	96th BG
Sheldon Beigel	306th BG	Alfred Dusey	447th BG	Charles E Harter*	3rd Army
Caesar J Benigno	352nd BG	Eugene Dworaczek*	448th BG	Robert B Hastie	95th BG
Nelson Berger	100th BG	Harold Dwyer	34th BG	Robert Haynes	493rd BG
Tony Bezer	490th BG	Don Echols	458th BG	Robert Hecker	401st BG
Leo S Bielinski	44th BG	Stanley Edelman	351st BG	Walter Hendricks	452nd BG
Jack F Blackham*	34th BG	Richard J Eiseman**	94th BG	Lewis E Herron	100th BG
William D Bodiford**	487th BG	William "Bill" Eisenhart	303rd BG	John R Hildebran**	453rd BG
August C Bolino	388th BG	James H Eshelman	385th BG	Temple Hix Hill	392nd BG
Bob Bowen	398th BG	Dr. James Facos	388th BG	Robert H Hitchcock	303rd BG
James M Bond	385th BG	George Farrar*	384th BG	Bill Holden	1st B RNR
Frank T Bostwick	466th BG	Joseph Fischer	94th BG	Don E Holmes**	458th BG
Robert L Brandt	452nd BG	Harry Mundy Fisher*	467th BG	David Holst*	448th BG
Gordon Breeding**	34th BG	Robert Fisher**	384th BG	Dewey A Holst**	448th BG
Carl F Brown, Jr	4th FG	John C Flora*	482nd BG	Theodore C "Ted" Hood	306th BG
Dudley Brown**	94th BG	Clifford J Foss	29th TCG	Charles S Hopla*	447th BG
Harvey Brundage*	91st BG	Donald H Foulk	303rd BG	William F Houlihan*	306th BG
Joe Burdis	388th BG	Donald M Frank	389th BG	Wayne E Howarter*	34th BG
Ed Burnham	95th BG	Paul Frank*	96th BG	James Howell	447th BG
Charles F Byrd*	493rd BG	Herbert Friedlander**	351st BG	Jake Howland	91st BG
Paul E Calkin**	100th BG	Joel Friedman	34th BG	Jack C Hubbard	306th BG
Douglas S Canant*	1st SAD	James E Frolking**	479th FG	David Huckabay	489th BG
William R Carlile, Jr.	306th BG	Tom Funderburk*	493rd BG	Blaine Hufnagle	94th BG
Frank Casey*	487th BG	Frank Gaccione	7th PRG	Colin A Hunley*	493rd BG
Andrew D Caswell**	91st BG	Henry C Gagnon	385th BG	Melvin Hurwitz	493rd BG
Clarence F Cherry**	100th BG	Anthony J Gallagher*	100th BG	Albion Kenneth Hutcherson	95th BG
Guy Chookoorian**	94th BG	Joseph Garber	96th BG	Joseph O Ingram, Jr	96th BG
John P Chopelas**	452nd BG	Ted Gary	493rd BG	Gustave W Jacobson	94th BG
Samuel A Christiano**	18th WSQ	Robert Genesky	493rd BG	Bennie L Jefferies	306th BG
George E Clark*	3rd Army	Stoddard B Gerald*	55th FG	Arthur Jenkins	390th BG
John A Clark	100th BG	William Gerecitano**	388th BG	David Johnson	1st B RNR
John J Clark*	452nd BG	Gerald Gerston	392nd BG	Martin Jordan	351st BG
James O Clemons	484th BG	Albert Gese	20th FG	Jay Karpin**	493rd BG
Grayson Cocharo	492nd BG	Dr. C W "Bill" Getz**	491st BG	Edward J Kastanek*	493rd BG
Myron Cohen	91st BG	Gil Gilbert	493rd BG	John Katsaros	401st BG
Paul J Collins**	447th BG	Joe Glasser	94th BG	Samuel Katz	389th BG
Joseph Connaughton	319th BG	Reuben Glazer	445th BG	George H Keating**	452nd BG
Marbury L Councell, Jr	96th BG	Dallas Godsey**	351st BG	Victor Keech	1st B RNR
Jay Dee Cowan*	490th BG	Irving Goldstein*	439th TCG	Perry Kerr	466th BG
Wallace E Cowan*	487th BG	Stanley Goldstein	466th BG	Howard Kesitalo	388th BG
James D Cox*	303rd BG	Ralph Goldsticker, Jr.**	452nd BG	John Ketzner	92nd BG
James W Cox, Jr*	94th BG	Hewitt B Gomez	492nd BG	Michael D Kindya	385th BG
Salvatore Cracolici	96th BG	George Gorman	96th BG	James King	1st B RNR

JUBILEE OF LIBERTY RECIPIENTS



John H 'Jack' Kleinsorg**	92nd BG	John W Newman**	94th BG	Robert W Smothers	452nd BG
Russell A Knudson	303rd BG	Henry J Nykamp**	93rd BG	Christopher Spagnola	44th BG
Carroll F Knutson	447th BG	Art Nystrom	445th BG	Leland C Spencer**	93rd BG
Cornelius A Kohlman	452nd BG	George M Ogle*	487th BG	Si Spiegel*	490th BG
Donald L Koons**	401st BG	William J O'Leary	384th BG	Orange D Steffey, Jr.*	493rd BG
Joseph T Kozak*	94th BG	Allen G Ostrom	398th BG	Willard Stelling	34th BG
John F Kraeger	466th BG	William "Bill" Overstreet, Jr	357th FG	Edwin A Stewart**	493rd BG
Donald F Kremper	94th BG	John A Paller*	491st BG	Louis J Stoffer	398th BG
Ralph J Kurka	93rd BG	Frank Parkinson, Jr.	448th BG	Colin D Storey	94th BG
Herbert J Kwart	381st BG	Nels Pedersen*	44th BG	William E Stovall	390th BG
Harold Langfeldt*690th FA Bn, Army		Frank D Perez	401st BG	Herman Stroupe	390th BG
Dean C Larson	401st BG	LaVerne Peters	389th BG	Walter Sturdivan**	34th BG
Paul W Latenser*	389th BG	Stanley Peterson	96th BG	John S Swarts	351st BG
William G Lathrop	94th BG	Philip M Petterson*	305th BG	Robert V Swegel**	44th BG
George A Lawson	7th PRG	Anthony W Pircio	7th PRG	John Roger Swihart	388th BG
Franklin H Lemonds, Jr*	389th BG	Nicholas Plackis*	390th BG	Paul Swope, Jr**	353rd FG
John Lemons	445th BG	Wilmer "Will" Plate**	489th BG	Edward J Tatro**	100th BG
Mathias J Leupold	385th BG	William Podolsky*	93rd BG	Henry E Tessien	96th BG
Donald D Levine	453rd BG	Howard Polin**	352nd FG	William Thacker, Jr	457th BG
Sherman Levitt*	491st BG	Steven Politis	97th BG	Dennis E Thompson	487th BG
Richard B "Dick" Lewis	493rd BG	Robert H Preller*	384th BG	William M "Bill" Thorns**	96th BG
George R Leyva**	351st BG	Michael H Prestia	452nd BG	Robert J Toeppe*	445th BG
James L Livingston**	44th BG	William Provonsha	381st BG	William C Toombs, Sr**	493rd BG
Robert "Bob" Livingston*	351st BG	Charles A Purcell*	493rd BG	Jimmy J Traupel**	379th BG
Stan Loftsgard	493rd BG	Vincent J "Bill" Purple	379th BG	Robert Tuchel	392nd BG
Lester Lyall*	401st BG	Walter "Mike" Quering	487th BG	Seymore E "Jack" Vann**	388th BG
Ralph Lynn, Jr*	466th BG	Albert Rapvano	466th BG	William "Bill" Varnedoe	385th BG
Dallas V Madland*	446th BG	Seymour Ratner*	306th BG	Rudolph Villalobos	96th BG
Russell Madsen	100th BG	Lauri Rautio	447th BG	Adolph L Visconti*	306th BG
Malcolm J Magid	303rd BG	Lester Reekers	490th BG	Charles F Von Der Leith*	357th INF
Elmo Maiden	466th BG	Jesse A Reese	96th BG	Robert H Voss	94th BG
Warren B Marsh*	493rd BG	Edward G Reuland**	379th BG	Jay Walker	384th BG
David Marshall	381st BG	Joseph H Reus	445th BG	James H Walston, Jr	466th BG
Burnia Martin	384th BG	James A Rich, Jr	96th BG	Douglas J Ward	305th BG
Richard Martin	398th BG	Charles J Richardson**	390th BG	Charles Warren*	351st BG
Ken Mason	1st B RNR	Wilbur Richardson	94th BG	Earl E Wassom**	466th BG
William Massey	401st BG	William H Richeson, Jr.*	392nd BG	Harry Watson*	401st BG
Samuel Mastrogiacomio	445th BG	Wendell R Ringheim	92nd BG	John Wearing	96th BG
Walter M "Boots" Mayberry	388th BG	George G Roberts**	306th BG	Mark B Weber*	389th BG
Ellis McClintick	390th BG	Mort Robinson	94th BG	Billy D Welch**	361st FG
Robert McCormack**	389th BG	William L "Bill" Roche	452nd BG	Berton Werth	492nd BG
James McCutcheon*	392nd BG	Kenneth E Rohde**	457th BG	Charles Wheelwright	392nd BG
Elmer "Lucky" McGinty	95th BG	J Warren Roundhill**	379th BG	James E Wicker, Sr*	7th PRG
Hugh McGinty	379th BG	Robert Rowland**	398th BG	William O Wilbur, Jr*	448th BG
Jay McIntosh	94th BG	Jack Rude	493rd BG	Douglas C Willett	94th BG
B/GEN Seth McKee	370th FG	John Rumancik	392nd BG	John M Williams	448th BG
Birch G McVay	95th BG	Peter "Rupy" Ruplenas	486th BG	Paul R Wilson	305th BG
Leon G Mehring	305th BG	Al Sadowsky	34th BG	Robert W Wilson*	313th TCG
Seward M Meintsma	466th BG	Jesse Sandlin	447th BG	Arlyss D Wineinger*	493rd BG
Julius M Micek	381st BG	Walter Schattel	487th BG	Frank A Wiswall	96th BG
James Mikusi	447th BG	Carmen Schiavoni**	447th BG	Lawrence Wolfson	493rd BG
Donnell "Don" Miller**	493rd BG	Robert F Schlack*	356th FG	David L Wolman*	100th BG
Charles Mills**	492nd BG	Fred Schonwetter**	55th FG	Richard P Woodson, III	96th BG
Rex Mills	453rd BG	Robert Schuberg	306th BG	James Zographos**	388th BG
Joseph Minton*	SAD-2 1stAD	Bob Schuh	398th BG		
Bernard Mirotznik*	452nd BG	Donald L Seesenguth**	457th BG		
E E "Mitch" Mischler	94th BG	Horace Seyster	457th BG		
Lloyd Mitchell	96th BG	Horace Shankwiler	445th BG		
Kenneth Moulden	448th BG	Ambrose C Shaw	493rd BG		
James D Mynatt, Jr**	490th BG	Harold W Smith**	448th BG		
Clayton A Nattier	306th BG	Heber H Smith	94th BG		
Warren G Nelson**	398th BG	John A Smith*	493rd BG		
William J "Bill" Nevitt	353rd FG	Samuel W Smith	303rd BG		

[] FLOH; [*] FJOL [**] BOTH MEDALS

*****The Jubilee of Liberty program is now closed. We congratulate all who qualified and received this award!**

Berger was credited with eight kills during the war (seven B-17s and one Spitfire) but was also shot down three times himself. After the war, he became a translator, worked for the U.S. Army occupational forces for a while, and eventually started his own translation school. He is now 95 years old and lives in Munich, Germany.

All the "*Susan Ruth*" crew members who bailed out came down in northern France, except Howard Snyder, who was the last one to bail out. He and the "*Susan Ruth*" landed in Macquenoise, Belgium. The most seriously wounded crew members were waist gunner Joe Musial, whose left foot had almost been blown off, and bombardier Richard Daniels, whose upper right arm was almost torn off. They were picked up by the Germans right after they came down and became prisoners of war. What was left of Musial's foot was amputated. Daniels arm was saved, but he lost the use of it. Both were eventually repatriated back to the U.S. aboard the Swedish cruise ship the *SS Gripsholm* sailing into New York Harbor on February 21, 1945.

Flight engineer/top turret gunner Roy Holbert was also captured by the Germans and spent the remainder of the war as a POW. He first went to Stalag Luft VI and then to Stalag Luft IV where he was part of the notorious "Heydekrug Run" and the infamous 86 day, 500 mile "Black March." He was finally liberated by the U.S. Army 104th Infantry Division on April 26, 1945, at Bitterfeld, Germany, after 444 days as a prisoner of war.

Co-pilot George Eike and navigator Robert Benninger landed near each other and were taken by members of the French Resistance across the border into Belgium to "Camp de Riezes" which the Resistance had set up to house escaped prisoners of war, men wanted by the Gestapo, wounded resistance fighters, and downed allied airmen. While there, Eike and Benninger were joined by other downed U.S.

airmen.

From the 306th Bomb Group's B-17 "*Rationed Passion*" AC #42-30782 were navigator Ivan Gaze, radio operator Charles Nichols, waist gunner John Gemborski, tail gunner Warren Cole, and flight engineer Orian Owens. They had been shot down a month earlier over the Netherlands on the infamous January 11th raid to Halberstadt, Germany, and their plane had crashed at the village of Nijverdalseberg, near Nijverdal in The Netherlands.

The camp was raided by the Germans on February 25th so the U.S. airmen had to flee. Over time, they

From
a distance, the
exploding shells
looked like innocent
black puffs...

were joined by three more U.S. flyers. One was another "*Susan Ruth*" crew member, waist gunner John Pindroch, who had been hiding at the farmhouse of Georges and Nelly Deshorme. Billy Huish from the 91st Bomb Group B-17 *Skunkface* AC #42-29656. It was shot down February 20 on a raid to Leipzig, Germany, and crashed near the Belgian villages of Vaudignies and Chièvres. Vincent Reese had been a waist gunner on the B-17 "*Women's Home Companion*" AC #42-39795 of the 303rd Bomb Group which was shot down on the December 30, 1943, raid to Ludwigshaven and the I.G. Farbenindustrie chemical works. His plane crash landed in a field at Cerfontaine, Belgium.

The airmen were aided by the families of Florent Simon and Fernand Fountaine, and eventually built a hut in the Champagne Woods outside of Chimay where they hid until they could make their way through escape routes back to England. Ivan Glaze and

Warren Cole, who grew impatient and left on their own, were successful and made it back to England that June.

While the other eight men were still at the hut, a Belgian collaborator informed the Germans about them, and the hut was attacked on April 22. All eight airmen were captured, taken to the school house in Chimay for interrogation, then driven back out into the Champagne Woods and executed. Joseph Simon and Henri Fountaine, the sons of Florent and Fernand, were also arrested, sent to concentration camps and never heard from again.

After bailing out, "*Susan Ruth*" tail gunner William Slenker was picked up by members of the French Resistance. He was injured and need medical attention so they took him to Dr. Trigaux's medical clinic in Chimay for treatment. Although the clinic was controlled by the Germans, Slenker was snuck in the back door to receive care and then taken to the home of Josephine Collet in Chimay where he stayed for seven months until Belgium was liberated by the First and Third Armies.

Pilot Howard Snyder came down a couple miles from the plane. His parachute got hung up in some tress, and he was dangling 20 feet above the ground and couldn't get down. Fortunately for him, a couple of young Belgian farmers, Raymond Durvin and Henri Fraikin came to his rescue before the Germans got there. It was too dangerous to try and move him during the day with German patrols combing the area so they told him to hide and they'd come back that night to get him. They took him to Raymond's home where he stayed one night; again, because it was too dangerous for him to stay any longer with the Germans searching the area.

After that, Howard was moved from place to place. How long he stayed depended on how brave the people were who lived there, and how dangerous the Belgian Underground thought it was for him to stay there; it might be one night or up to 6 weeks. The people who helped downed air-

men were extraordinarily brave. Not only did they risk their own lives, but those of the family as well. If found out, they would be arrested, tortured, sent to prison camps, or executed. Several of the Belgian patriots who helped members of the “*Susan Ruth*” crew met those fates.

When downed airmen evaded capture in the Nazi-occupied countries of France, The Netherlands, and Belgium, the Underground would try to move them through escape routes down through France, over the Pyrenees, into Spain and then out through British controlled Gibraltar back to England. However, something always went wrong trying to get Howard Snyder out.

It was very stressful for any downed airmen hiding from the Nazis, and it was certainly true for Howard Snyder. His plane had been attacked, on fire, and he had to bail out. He came down in a foreign country, not knowing where he was. He didn’t know what happened to his buddies on the crew. He had no way of communicating with the U.S. military. The Germans were all around him. He was being helped by complete strangers with whom he couldn’t communicate, and anyone of them could have been a German collaborator and betray him. While in hiding, the German secret police, the Gestapo, could have barged in at any moment night or day and arrest him; either send him to a prisoner of war camp or decide to shoot him. He did have several close calls.

Finally, Howard got tired of hiding and decided to join the French Resistance, called the Maquis. Besides tired of being hunted, he heard that the Allies had invaded Normandy and wanted to get back into the fight. Plus, he had a year’s infantry training at Ft. Lewis, Washington, so he knew how to fight on the ground.

The Maquis were made up of

small, independent groups of guerrilla fighters located all across France. They were supplied by the British through air drops; and their mission was to harass and destroy German targets, disrupt communications, sabotage railways, attack German convoys, and assassinate German officers. They

received instructions by coded radio messages by the BBC. The group Snyder joined was comprised of about 20 men, led by a French lieutenant who had escaped from a German prisoner of war camp. There were some Belgians, Frenchmen and a few Algerians whom Snyder said were particularly fierce fighters.

Finally, on September 2, 1944, seven months

after the B-17 “*Susan Ruth*” was shot down, word came that American troops were in the nearby village of Treton. It was the 3rd Army of General George S. Patton which had come up through France after D-Day. Walking



into the town square, Howard Snyder went up to a major and identified himself. After being interrogated, Snyder went through Paris to go back to the 306th Bomb Group at Thurleigh, England, and then returned back to the States.

Like most World War II veterans, Howard Snyder didn’t talk a lot about

the war, but that changed in 1989 when a memorial was built to honor the crew of the B-17 “*Susan Ruth*” at Macquenoise, Belgium, a couple hundred yards from where the plane came down. The four living crew members (Howard Snyder, Joe Musial, Bill Slenker, and Roy Holbert along with their wives) attended the dedication ceremonies where Howard was reunited with many of the people who hid him while missing in action. Seeing them again and visiting homes and farmhouses where he stayed brought back all the memories, and he began to talk about his war experiences after that.

Howard Snyder was not the last crew member to die, that was Roy Holbert in 2010, but he was the oldest at 91. Today, the World War II veterans are in their 90s.

At the end of World War II, there were 16 million veterans, but that number has been rapidly diminishing. No other event history affected more people than World War II. 60 million people died. Millions more were wounded. Millions more

were displaced and left homeless. The war changed the course of the United States and the world forever. The brave young men who fought and died for freedom are The Greatest Generation. Their sacrifice must never be forgotten. It is our duty to remember.

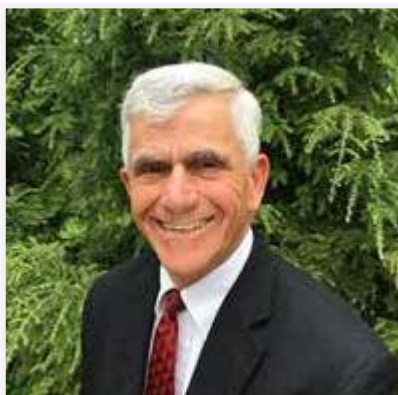
Written by Steve Snyder, Howard Snyder’s son, immediate past president of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association, and author of SHOT DOWN: The true story of pilot Howard Snyder and the crew of the B-17 Susan Ruth. SHOT DOWN is available from most major outlets.

For more information, go to:
<http://SteveSnyderAuthor.com>

Photos: top, Hans Berger during war-time; center, Hans Berger today; bottom, l to r, Joe Musial, Bill Slenker, Roy Holbert, Howard Snyder

NOMINATIONS

FOR THE BOARD 2019~2023



L. Travis Chapin
member # 814010

Travis Chapin has been a member of 8th Air Force Historical Society for 10 years. His interest in the Society was generated by his effort to find out his father's WWII history... unfortunately the hard way. His father, Robert F. Chapin, was a B-24 co-pilot for the 389th BG and passed away at the age of 75 without sharing very much of his legacy with his family. Travis' search for his father's story began in 2008 as a member of the Toledo, Ohio, Chapter of Honor Flight and in 2017 he visited various airbases in England.

He is now retired from his 26-year career at Bowling Green State University where he taught and was Chair of the Construction Management Department. This followed a management career in the construction industry having graduated with a civil engineering degree from Purdue University.

As a relative newcomer (He and his wife, Ginny, have attended the last three Society Reunions.) he brings the perspective of an outsider. Travis recognizes that with the passing of our WWII veterans the Society is at a critical point of its existence. He believes that all the realities of the Society's future presently exist and that through thoughtful consideration a logical path forward can be determined.

Nominated by: Gerald Ogle ~ member # 35896



Betty Binnebose Lewis
member # 11727470

Betty Lewis has been retired for a little over three years and lives alone with her cat, Bailey. Most of her working years were spent as a secretary, then administrator. Her father was a right waist-gunner on a B17, *Our Bay-Bee*. His plane was downed by flak and fighter attack on August 17, 1943, over Mol, Belgium, in the double strike mission. He was captured and a POW for 22 months in Stalag 17. Betty grew up hearing stories of his war experiences and time with the 95th bomb group. Wanting to know more, she began doing extensive research. Past associations have been with AFEES, the Wisconsin chapter of the Historical Society and the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler. She began attending the reunions of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society in Nashville in 2014, and found her "happy place." She has faithfully attended every reunion since then. Betty's other current associations are the 95th Bomb Group Heritage Association, Moose Lodge, and Kiwanis. She feels it important that the 8th AFHS continues to preserve the history and tell the stories of the men and women who have served and to reach out to future generations to share their legacy. She says, "*We* must never forget, but *they* must never be forgotten." Betty believes serving in the Society is a way of saying "thank you for your service."

Nominated by: Dr. Nancy J. Toombs ~ member # 762550

Voting will take place during the annual General Membership Meeting, on Saturday, October 19th, which begins at 8:45a.m. Please refer to your reunion schedule for all times and locations of events and activities. Remember: you MUST be a current member of the Society in order to vote and/or nominate a candidate for the Board.

Oregon Chapter
8th Air Force Historical Society
Edited by Joan E. Hamilton
Photo credits: Tom Philo

Our February speaker was ET1SS Ron Roden, USN, (see photo above by Tom Philo) a former submariner trained in electronics and nuclear engineering, who served in the US Navy from 1962 to 1969 on the diesel-electric USS Razorback [SS-394] and as part of the Nuclear engineering team on the nuclear-powered USS Ulysses S. Grant [SSBN-631]. He spent 5 years on sea duty and logged about 250,000 miles under water.

After his military career, Ron worked at Tektronix becoming Director of Facilities and high tech equipment maintenance for a division of the company. Here are excerpts from his presentation:

During the 1960s, I was working for Crown Zellerbach setting chokers when a Navy Leaguer convinced me to talk to a recruiter who suggested that I get into submarines, electronics and nuclear. I was on 2 submarines during my career, the USS Razorback and the USS Grant.

In training, we had to make buoyant ascents from both 50 and 100 feet in a diving tower to simulate the escape trunk on a submarine, though average depths in the Pacific are 3800 feet, and no one could survive an ascent from that depth. They would flood the middle chamber, you'd go through a hatch, and they'd equalize pressure inside and outside the chamber with 700-pound air. As you'd step through, someone would inflate your vest and up you'd go.

On the Razorback we lived like setting up housekeeping in an elevator with 75 or so close friends. Bunks were stacked 4 high in an area with low overhead. We "hot-bunked" since there weren't enough for every crewman. On the Grant berthing was

individual bunks for each man with plenty of personal storage in a pan under the bunk mattress.

We had freezers and cans of dry goods for food, and the chow was really good. There were 75-110 people on the Razorback which was just a little over 300 feet in length, and 150 people on the Grant which was 425 feet in length. On Razorback the dry goods were in square five-gallon cans, and canned goods were in one-gallon cans, six to a case. All of these were in layers on the deck...you walked your way through dinner! Grant had storage for months' worth of goods plus large freezers and refrigerators. Grant was roomy compared to Razorback. Think living in an elevator with 75 of your closest friends!

For entertainment, we had a movie screen that would come down and you could see through it so you could play movies and everybody got a view of it.

On Grant we had an area with an operating theater and a medical doctor and an independent-duty corpsman onboard. Razorback was less so, often at the galley tables in the galley area.

Up in the control room was where the diving officer worked and where they maneuvered the planes on the boat for diving and surfacing. On Razorback the conning tower where the periscopes were used was above the main part of the submarine. All the way forward was the helmsman who steered the boat. Grant control room looked like the flight deck of a 747 on steroids.

Typically, there are 4 people in the maneuvering room including the engineering officer of the watch. This was where the electrical panel, the reactor-control panel, and the throttles were. This area was the center of the



engineering spaces.

On Grant we had the Polaris series and on up through the Poseidon missiles. The Poseidon missile was the first to have multiple-reentry vehicles, and it had 3 warheads each bird. Both submarines had torpedoes. All were very smart and accurate.

We wore one-piece suits with Velcro fasteners, called poop suits and canvas loafers. Dirty clothes were placed in mesh bags, and we used non-ionic soap. Everything we had was designed to dry quickly and be lint free. There were stacked washer and dryer machines, and each week the lower rated men rotated the duty. On the Razorback...well, that's why they were called "stinky boats".

You couldn't transmit out of the boat using a cell phone since you were underwater in a submarine with a 4-inch steel hull. Incoming messages were received on a mile-long antenna that was towed underwater. Razorback could raise antennas but also was sound and signal sensitive.

On the nuke boats, we made our own freshwater, up to about 7000 gallons a day if we chose to. We condensed saltwater and the salt was pumped overboard. There were scrubbers and burners there that took the carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere. Electrostatic air cleaners (way before the civilian world)

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removed dust and bacteria. Razorback had to surface or snorkel to exchange air periodically.

When we went on patrol out of Apra Harbor in Guam, trawlers that would key the Russian nuke boat were waiting for us to try to follow us onto the patrol cycle. We also follow their submarines. So, we had a garbage scow and a couple of escort vessels, and we all went out making all kinds of noise. At some point, we went dead quiet and just settled. Ten to 15 minutes would pass and along would come the Russian submarine following the garbage scow or other escort vessel. We'd let it get by and then we turned very quietly and went on patrol cycle. That was what you had to do in those days. Sad to say, the cold war is still pretty cold what with China entering the fray along with Russia.

People in the submarine service tend to be in the top 1% of intelligence in the military. The specialty ratings of enlisted and the overall officer training is very high. Some of the enlisted ratings (nuclear trained) can earn upwards of \$100,000 per year. Education opportunities with the GI bill and the high level of training are very attractive to employers. Living and working and fighting in the submarine environment can be challenging, and the Navy works hard to make sure that the people are ready to do whatever is needed.

NY Southern Wing Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society by David C. Levitt

We had another successful luncheon meeting on June 2, 2019, at the Holiday Inn of Plainview, Long Island, NY. With our meeting just 2 days prior to the 75th Anniversary of D-Day, we chose D-Day as our theme. Ten of our 28 attendees were actually "first timers". Of the seven veterans in attendance, three were WWII 8th AF and one had served in the 9th.



Our luncheon began with the Pledge of Allegiance by chapter president, Joseph "Pat" Keeley, and was followed by our candle lighting ceremony which was particularly touching with twelve-year-old Kole Gorden lighting a candle for 8th AFHS present and future. Kole attended the luncheon with his grandfather, Lloyd Becker; both WWII buffs. The youngster is especially interested in WWII fighters and aces. We are encouraged by having Kole and other teenagers join us to assure the continuation of the 8th AFHS for years to come.

We had our attendees introduce themselves and tell about their connection to the 8th AF. The four WWII USAAF veterans spoke about their D-Day experiences. Long-time chapter member, Joseph Minton, attending with his wife, Norma, was an engineering officer in charge of a hangar at SAD2 [Strategic Air Depot], part of the 1st Air Division. Thanks to Joe and his crew, many B17s with severe battle damage and mechanical problems were put back into service for D-Day.

Si Spiegel, another long-time member, arrived in England at the tail end of the liberation of France, when he flew as a pilot in the 490th BG. His ferry flight was delayed with a multitude of weather and mechanical problems which included an engine fire.

Irving Goldstein came to the luncheon with his grandson. He was a C47 assistant crew chief (prior to

D-Day) in the 439th Troop Carrier Group. [He was not scheduled to fly the D-Day mission, but at the pre-flight briefing, 3 crew chiefs refused to fly on that mission, and Irving and his two buddies volunteered to go.] The plane carried paratroopers, battle armaments, and supplies. Flying over the drop zone behind Utah Beach post midnight on June 6, Irving kicked a machine gun attached to a parachute out the open cargo door, released para packs—canvas bundles filled with supplies attached to the aircraft's belly—and helped paratroopers jump out. German machine gun fire severed the plane's rudder control cable while the plane was crossing the Normandy coast, but the plane and crew managed to return safely to England. Irving



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flew a special mission the next day: towing a glider filled with troops to Normandy. Irving was promoted to crew chief and received an Air Medal. The 439th TCG received a Presidential Unit Citation. A life-long Yankees fan, Irving will be honored for his WWII service at Yankee Stadium on September 17th.

New member David Wolman attended with his daughter, Nancy. David was an air traffic controller with the 100th BG. During the first 3 days of Operation Overlord, he worked tirelessly in the control tower, getting B17s in the air and helped bring in battle-damaged planes especially with the number of missions ongoing.

John Karamagna and his wife, Barbara Grocki Karamagna, are also new to our chapter. Barbara's dad, John Grocki, served with the 303rd.

Another of our members, Joyce Gay, is the leader of a local British veteran's group, along with her husband, Andrew, a British veteran. Our chapter has always fostered and enjoyed a close relationship with our British veterans, several of whom regularly attend our luncheons.

David C. Levitt, our chapter's membership manager, organized a special D-Day awards program and presented the French Jubilee of Liberty medals to Joe Minton, Si Spiegel, Irving Goldstein, and David Wolman. The medals and certificates were part of an initiative begun by Dr. Nancy J. Toombs, former past president of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, recognizing those WWII veterans who participated in Operation Overlord

[D-Day thru August 31, 1944].

Three medals were presented posthumously to family members for:

Bernard Easton—a B25 pilot in the 2nd Tactical AF of the RAF. He flew a critical mission on June 7, 1944, to stop German reinforcements from reaching British troops on the Normandy beach head. Chris Parouse from the local British veterans group accepted the medal on Berny's behalf.

Sherman Levitt—a B24 airplane mechanic with the 491st BG, worked over 65 hours straight during D-Day and the days following. The 491st had the highest rate of operations of any 8th AF B24 group, and achieved it with half the number of mechanics. David C. Levitt accepted the medal and certificate on behalf of his father.

Rocco Moretto—was in the first wave landing on Omaha Beach. Out of 219 original men in his unit, only Rocco and one other soldier made it to Czechoslovakia without becoming a casualty. His son, John Moretto (accompanied by his wife and daughter) accepted the medal on behalf of his father. He gave a touching, heart



warming talk about his dad's D-Day and additional war time experiences.

Bernard Mirotznik—our chapter's legal counsel for many years, received his medal at home as he was unable to attend the luncheon. Bernie, a B17 mechanic, worked 72+ hours straight during D-Day and the days following.

Other WWII veterans who also received Jubilee of Liberty medals at



home: John McHugh, Sr—who was in the 2nd wave at Omaha Beach and Edmund Rosenblum—Normandy veteran who also fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

Pat Keeley spoke to the group about the 8th AF D-Day missions. He pointed out that both the 466th and 493rd bomb groups flew their first missions on D-Day. As a poignant reminder, Pat spoke on the tens of thousands of casualties and loss of life on both sides during D-Day.

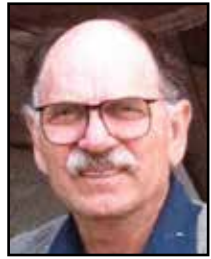
Our luncheon concluded with a great raffle.

Sunday, November 17, 2019, is the tentative date for our next luncheon, which will commemorate Veterans Day. We will be welcoming veterans from all conflicts, ages, and nationalities to join with us. During our luncheon we will be paying tribute to the 75th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge as some of our veterans will speak about their Ardennes Offensive experiences.

We are in the process of organizing an awards program of New York state military medals. For more information please contact Pat Keeley. His contact information in on the inside cover (p.2) of this issue of the 8th A F News.

Photos: p.26 top l-r, David Wolman, Kole Gorden, Irving Goldstein, Joe Minton, Si Spiegel; bottom, David Wolman and daughter, Nancy. Top this page left, John Karamagna, Barbara Grocki Karamagna, Joe Domhan; top rt standing, Irving Goldstein, Chris Parouse, John Moretto, David Levitt, seated, Joe Minton and Si Spiegel. Bottom center, David Levitt and Pat Keeley.

Chopelas, John Peter, 95, of Killeen, died Feb. 14, 2019, at his residence.



He was born on Oct. 10, 1923, in Dallas to Pete and Olga (Vatsures) Chopelas, both Greek immigrants.

His father came from Megalopolis, Greece and his mother from Yeraki. John was one of six children. John was educated in Dallas and Lubbock before moving to Waco, where he graduated from high school in 1941.

John enlisted in the Air Force at age 18 on Jan. 1, 1942. He took basic training at Sheppard Field, Wichita Falls. He attended six months of radio-operator school in Scott Field, Illinois. His Preflight Pilot Cadet training was at Maxwell Field, Alabama, and Primary Flight training at Union City, Tennessee. He soloed in a PT-17 Stearman "Kaydet" before "washing out." He was then assigned to gunnery school in Las Vegas, and to a crew at Salt Lake City. He received combat phase training at Rattlesnake Field, Pyote, Texas.

John and his fellow crew members flew the northern route to England via Kearney, Nebraska; Grenier field, Manchester, New Hampshire; Presque Isle, Maine; Goose Bay, Labrador; Keflavik, Iceland; and Prestwick, Scotland. Their plane became lost over northern Scotland during stormy weather, and they were rescued by a Spitfire piloted by a Polish refugee who guided their B-17 to an RAF Base at Peterhead. John served with the 452nd BG at Deopham Green, completing 33 missions. John returned to the United States in September, 1944, aboard the Queen Mary. The VIP passenger on the Queen Mary during this voyage was Winston Churchill who was on his way to meet with President Roosevelt. John was awarded the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters,

the Purple Heart, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Campaign Medal with three Bronze Stars, a Russian Medal for participating in one of the shuttle missions to that country, a certificate of "thanks" from France for contributing to the liberation of that country, the French Jubilee of Liberty and the French Legion of Honor Medals. John graduated from Baylor University in 1950, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in journalism. After working for five Texas newspapers, he began traveling by bus and train in Mexico and Central America. Upon returning from his travels, he worked a year in a law office and then worked for the Texas Employment Commission as an unemployment insurance claims examiner. John retired in 1982 and survived prostate cancer in 1990. His wife, Emily, of 37 years passed away in 1999.

John spent the past 19 years collecting World War II Army Air Force memorabilia, baking Greek pastries, frequenting his favorite restaurants and spending time with his family and friends. He is survived by his niece, Stephanie Holthaus (Kurt), his nephew, Byron Johnson (Robbie), his great nephew, Tom Johnson (Carey), and great-nieces Liz Papineau (Scott), and Karen Johnson. He is also survived by an abundance of friends, including Carol and Kate Berridge and Larry and Joy Wiess and all the wonderful waitresses, librarians and community members who enriched his life.

Davies, Russell P. "Phil", 92, of St.



James and Ruth J. Davies; devoted father of Daniel G. (Judith) Davies and the late Terry Lee (Rebecca)

Charles, Missouri, passed away on Saturday, April 21, 2018. Beloved husband of Gloria McKean Davies; cherished son of the late Russell

Davies; loving grandfather of Linnea (Bryan) Vance, Jessica (Jack) Swain, Christopher Davies, and Renee (Patrick) Boni; and treasured great-grandfather of Jacob, Alley, Kannon, Ethan, McKenna, Ryken, Jaxton, Rilynn, and Kolten. He was also a loving uncle, cousin, and friend to many. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his first wife, Shirley Jean Davies, and his sister, Patricia Ruth Tastad. Phil served with the 452nd Bomb Group, and was a member of the Quiet Birdmen. He flew for Ozark Airlines for 30 years, retiring in 1985. In retirement he was a member of the CAF flying the B17 bomber, Sentimental Journey, to airshows across the country. Captain Phil Davies, may you have a long dry runway, a strong tail wind, and sunny skies.

Keating, George Herbert, 99, of



Vancouver, WA passed away peacefully on 5/26/2019. He was born May 13, 1920, in Cosmopolis, Washington.

George enlisted in the Army Air

Corps in 1941, two months before the Pearl Harbor attack. He spent the next two years training B-17 mechanics in various locations in the United States before he was sent to serve near Norwich, England as a B-17 crew chief for the rest of the war. He received the Bronze Star in recognition of his effectiveness in maintaining B-17 airplanes during the air battles. After the war, he returned home to Eugene, Oregon, where he met the love of his life, Lois Russell, whom he married in 1946. They raised three children in Federal Way, Washington, while George worked nights as an airplane mechanic at United Airlines and worked days in his backyard car repair business. In 1961, the family moved back to

Eugene where George started his business acquiring rental property. George had a keen mind and was an avid reader who routinely stayed up late to finish a good book. He loved a game of poker with friends, especially when he won. All of his four-footed grandkids held a special place in his heart. Nothing pleased him more than when a grandcat or granddog climbed into his lap. George also loved travel with his son Patrick that included yearly WWII reunions all over the country. Some notable trips they took included a reunion at George's old airbase in England in 2010, a reunion in New Orleans in 2017, and a scenic tour of Iceland in 2015. In recent years George has been most frequently described as a "kind gentleman" by those he has met. He was well loved and cared for by the staff and residents at Hampton Care Center in Vancouver. George is survived by his son, Pat (Lynda), and his daughters Mary and Michelle. Predeceased by his wife Lois Keating in 1979, sisters Mabel Haxby and Wilma Allum, and brother, Michael Keating.

McIntosh, Jay Duncan, 98, died



June 29, 2019. Born in Clarkston, Washington, he earned a BS in Agriculture from the University of Idaho in 1942 and by November of that year was

training as a B-17 bomber pilot in the 8th Air Force, 94th Bomb Group. He piloted 35 combat missions over France and Germany out of Bury St. Edmunds in England and was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal with Four Oak Leaf Clusters, and the French Legion of Honor.

Later in life he gathered with members of his flight crew for many reunions; their respect and love for him was palpable. They reveled in

telling how, during WWII bombing missions, this 23-year old had saved their lives and brought them home safely.

Jay met and married Annie Laurie Kennedy in 1945 and came West to work at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Richland, Washington, where he spent 40 years as a chemist and manager, ultimately in the Plutonium/Uranium Extraction (PUREX) plant. Annie Laurie died of a stroke, and Jay married Carol Hebert in 1972. This brought the blended family to ten children, growing to 30 grandchildren, 22 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great grandchildren.

In the 1970's he returned to his passion - agriculture - and grew apples, apricots, cherries, peaches, plums, and berries at Sun-Ray Orchards in Benton City, Washington. He shared the 'fruits' of his labors at the farm, which was the gathering place for extended family for over 15 years. He also re-ignited a secret love he had for horses, raising and riding three over the years. He and Carol then moved to Lincoln City, Oregon, and built a house by the sea, enjoying it with many guests for a dozen years before moving to Beaverton, Oregon, where his house was known as 'Grampie's Road House' because he generously welcomed extended family. He leaves behind children Kathy, John, Doug, Steve, Larry, Ginnie, Jerry, Laura, Carole, and Jean. Jay put family above all other values and was the hub of the family wheel. He was rarely seen without a camera around his neck and made sure family events were documented and shared.

We will all miss his generosity, his wry wit, his goodness and great humility. We realize that a huge part of our lives has now changed, leaving a huge void.

He was so quiet in his ways; it is hard to comprehend what an enormous impact he really had on us.

Nezolosky, Andrew Raphael, 95,



passed away August 22, 2015. He was born in New York City in 1920 and celebrated his 95th birthday with family on August 3, 2015.

Andrew served in the 96th Bomb Group. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross Medal. He spoke often of the honor he felt having met Winston Churchill after his B-17 was shot down. After the war he traveled to Washington D.C. to offer his respect and condolences to the parents of the pilot. It was there he met his future wife, Mary Blake, their visiting niece from Charlottesville, VA. After Andrew and Mary married, they resided in Washington several years before moving to East Meadow, NY, where he became a proud member of the Carpenter's Union Local 348. They lived and raised their two daughters there until retirement when they relocated to Santa Rosa. Andrew loved his family, fishing, music, billiards, and the Dodgers. He embraced life and died peacefully with no discomfort knowing he would be joining his Lord.

He is survived by his loving wife of 68 years, Mary Olivia of Santa Rosa; his daughters, Doreen Finnegan Killeen (Don) of Santa Rosa and Barbara Sourikoff of Lake Tahoe; grandchildren, Sam, Shelley, Julia, and Mark; and brother, John Nezolosky. He was preceded in death by his parents, Stephen and Julia Nezolosky; brothers, Stephen and Louis Nezolosky; and sisters, Margaret Maloney and Elizabeth Cappell. He was loved and will be remembered by many nieces and nephews. For many years Andrew was an active member of the Santa Rosa Alliance Church. His family is grateful for the loving care he was given until his passing as a resident of Broadway Villa in Sonoma.

Offermann, Robert H., 97, of Modesto, California passed away on November 13, 2018. Robert (Bob) was the youngest of three sons born to William and Mabel Offermann. Bob



graduated from Shandon High School, Shandon, California, in 1939 and attended the University of California, Berkeley. He left college to enlist in the Army Air Corp on August 20, 1942. He graduated from bombardier training class 43-16 in Victorville, California, and received overseas training at Alexandria AB, Louisiana. He flew overseas via Goose Bay, Labrador; Reykjavik, Iceland; and Preswick, Scotland and was assigned to the 94th Bomb Group (H), Rougham Air Base. He flew 32 combat missions in a B-17, the last 20 as the lead bombardier. After completing his combat missions, he stayed on as assistant group bombardier of the 94th BG. Bob was discharged January 14, 1946, with the rank of captain. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, European Theater Service Medal, American Theater Service Medal and the World War II Victory Medal. After the war, Bob returned to the University of California, Berkeley and graduated in 1946. He moved to Modesto, California, to work at The Grange Company. Bob eventually became the president of The Grange Company Insurance Agency and in later years, president of the Hedberg-Offermann Insurance Agency. He was an insurance agent and broker for 42 years. He married Margaret Michelotti in 1950. They built a home and raised three daughters on a walnut ranch north of Modesto, California. Bob was a member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, 94th Bomb Group Auxiliary Association, California Independent Insurance

Association, Modesto Independent Insurance Association (past president), Stanislaus County Safety Council (past president), American Legion – Post 74, Knights of Columbus, St. Joseph's Senior Club, and Sons in Retirement. He is preceded in death by his wife of 68 years, Margaret Offermann, daughter Gail Friedrich, and brothers William and Paul Offermann. He is survived by daughters, Barbara Grant and Nancy Marcotte, eight grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

Quering, Walter A. "Mike", 95, of Littleton passed away on January 26, 2019, surrounded by his loving family. Born on October 12, 1923, in Glassport, Pennsylvania. He was the son of



August and Blanche (Konat) Quering. Mike married Catherine Job in 1947 and together they shared 48 years of marriage. Mike worked as a manager and owner of several restaurants in Colorado, Nebraska and Arizona, and as a manager for Sachs-Lawlor in Denver. He enjoyed reading, traveling, cars, and his family. He was a long-time member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, and in served in the Army Air Force in World War II as a waist gunner in B-17s. He is survived by his daughters, Cathi Quering Barnes (Steve), Paula Birmingham (Jack), and Susan Quering Osborn (Steve), his grandchildren, Becca Morgan and Grant Birmingham.

Rohde, Kenneth E., 98, died March 31, 2019, at Shell Point Retirement Community in Fort Myers, Florida, where he had been a resident since 1993. He was preceded in



death by his wife Marjorie E. (Wood) Rohde. He was born in Muskegon Heights, Michigan, the son of the late Elmer C. and Ellen C. (Lofquist) Rohde. Kenneth graduated from Muskegon Heights High School and attended Western Michigan College (University) before being drafted into the Army before Pearl Harbor. He served with the 37th Army Infantry Division in WWII and was stationed on Fiji as a radio operator. He then was transferred to the Army Air Corps to received training as a co-pilot of B-17s, flying 35 missions in Europe from Glatton, England, with the 457th Bomb Group. He later wrote of his experiences in *"The Last of the Four R's"*. In July of 2018, he was honored by the French government with the French Legion of Honor for his missions over France in WWII. Following WWII, he worked for Sealed Power Corporation in Muskegon, Michigan, as an engineer and then became a plant manager. In 1972 he oversaw the construction of a new plant in Franklin, KY, and became the plant manager there until his retirement in 1981. He leaves 5 children: John (Nancy) of Fort Myers, FL; Jim (Sharon) of Shakopee, MN; Tom of Houston, TX; Barbara (Patrick) of Rochester, WA; Peter (Tammie) of Bowie, TX; eleven grandchildren and 20 great grandchildren.

Please forward all TAPS

to:

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HOW ABOUT IT!

What's for Sure?

Earl Wassom 466th BG, Chaplain 8th AFHS

Benjamin Franklin is credited with saying, "There are only two things certain in life...**death and taxes.**" However, I think most of us would agree that there is another thing that should be on the list...**change.**

Regardless of our age, gender, race, political orientation, nationality, station in life or any other category; and regardless of how hard we try, we cannot stand still. Time goes on and change is inevitable!!!!

Change is challenging, it makes everyone skittish, fearful, uncertain...why is it that way? Is it the unknown factor? Is it better the old way or will change improve things? Regardless of how you answer these questions, there are two facts about change: (1) It is inevitable and (2) Most people don't like it. Change is a fact of life. Change can be happy or it can be sad, depending on how you approach it. You can learn from change or you can reject it.

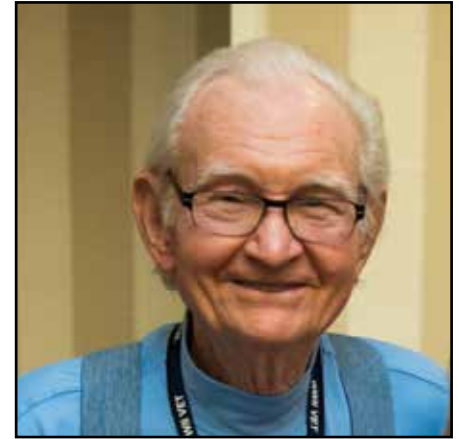
There are no exceptions or options to the reality of death. From our observations of life, we all know that everyone's life will end sooner or later. Experiences we have had with people in our lives, history, and literature attest to the fact of death; and God's Word further finalizes it when he declares, "*It is appointed unto man once to die.*" (Hebrews 9:27 KJ) We can all be assured of **death**. We can also rely on the fact that there will always be **taxes**. The idea of taxes is a nasty idea to many. It is a subject that is avoided by most folks but is always a welcome concept to the politician who wants to fund his beloved pork-barrel project. Like-it-or-not, we have had taxes and we always will!!!

Another category is **change**. **Death** is a certainty, **taxes** are a social issue, but **change** is another matter. It encompasses everything in the universe: nature, human interaction, emotions, everything. Changes will occur. They will actually happen. To try and cover the subject is like asking someone to describe the Love of God in a few words. Impossible!! The song writer described this situation as follows with the words:

*all of the sky of parchment made
And all with ink the oceans filled, and all of
men were scribes by trade.
To write the love of God above would drain
the oceans dry
Nor could the scroll contain the whole
though stretched from sky to sky.
The love of God how rich and pure, how
measureless and strong
It shall forevermore endure, through saints
and angels song.*

These words are built upon the idea of an eternal God and His actions with the people who reside on this planet. This is an eternal event, and we must consider a shorter time period to understand **change** a little better. We have just celebrated the 75th Anniversary of the invasion and the liberation of the continent of Europe by Allied military forces. My little city recently had a celebration for centenarians honoring their longevity. Honorees included three women and one gentleman, ages 100, 101, 104, and 105. Since I was only 96, they didn't include me but I could relate to the stories, events, and conditions that they shared. What a life—the events and the changes they have experienced. Like they, we are part of that change which is constantly evolving.

Let's go back in time a few decades. We are all immigrants, unless of course we are Native Indians. Folks came to the United States from Europe seeking a better way of life in America. First, the wilderness from the Atlantic Coast through the mountains to the Mississippi River; and once that was settled, they pressed on through the Great Plains and the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. They had a compelling "drive" with the persuasive promise of a better life. They travelled for months through the blistering heat of the Great Plains, crossing raging rivers, climbing or skirting the tall cliffs and deep valleys of the Rocky Mountains, encountering wild animals and often belligerent natives along the way and the ever-shortage of provisions necessary to sustain life. These ambitious immigrants colonized the land between the



Mississippi River and the Pacific Ocean. They travelled for months along the Oregon Trail and its offshoots, the California Trail, the Bozeman Trail, the Mormon Trail. Wagon trails grew in number spreading over the landscape like a honeycomb. The call for change was springing up. The demand for goods and services grew. This need to move people and raw materials more quickly drew the attention of wealthy investors in the east. The Rail Road System was introduced. Transcontinental travel-time was reduced from months to weeks. Then came the advent of travel by automobile, then a highway system to accommodate all of the traffic, then travel by spanning the continent in mere hours via airplanes.

This is but a small part of the changes to which we have been subjected. Changes are everywhere, look out the window, the grass needs to be cut again and the weeds are still growing and need to be pulled! It is a part of life. We have disciplined ourselves to do a multitude of things, all of which fulfill the goal of changes occurring in society and in our daily lives. But changes will continue. You are affected in one way or another by changes in medicine, health care, law enforcement, income taxes, travel, crime, education, organizations, religion, communications, technology, advertising and interpersonal relations. Most of these changes come as a result of the growth of technology, the demands of government and the pressures of society. With all of these changes, it is easy to be confused about the things that should never change: the value of human life, honesty and fairness in life and business, gentleness, respect for one another and a willingness to be transparent. May these traits never be lost but may they become the fabric of our lives, a lasting hallmark of our heritage.

Were all of the stalks on earth a quill, and



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Cpt. Edward "Eddie" Kingsbury Simpson, Jr.
with his P51B, "Flying Panther"

Much has been written about the brief but heroic life of **Cpt. Edward "Eddie" Kingsbury Simpson, Jr.** The following is a short summary of his last 5 days...

On August 10, 1944, Lt. Simpson was on a fighter sweep mission. His element was attacked by a number of German fighters, and in the running dogfight that ensued, Simpson's aircraft collided with another P-51. Both aircraft crashed, although Simpson managed to evade capture by the Germans.

He was found by a group of Maquis (French Resistance fighters) and given shelter. On August 14, 1944, as the Maquis were moving their operations, they were attacked by German forces. Knowing the entire group would be killed unless extraordinary measures were taken, Simpson and five of the French fighters mounted a rear-guard action that allowed all the other Maquis—between 200-400—to escape. Simpson and the French fighters were all killed.

After the war, Simpson's body was recovered

and placed in the Epinal American Cemetery and Memorial in the Lorraine region of France in Plot A, Row 45, Grave 31. His name is also inscribed on the Hunterdon County, New Jersey, Veterans Memorial.

"Eddie" Simpson was assigned P-51B #42-106978 nicknamed "*Flying Panther*." His second aircraft, also called "*Flying Panther*" was purchased by the children at East Orange, New Jersey,

High School. This aircraft was lost when Lt. Louis E. Nowlin was shot down and killed in action on September 15, 1944. Simpson is also listed in the assignment register as being the pilot for P-51B #42-6393 named "*All Away II*," named for his horse back home.

Simpson was actually flying P-51D#44-137 "*Reluctant Rebel*" when he collided with Lt. Don Feron in another P-51, killing Feron. The MACR# on Simpson is 7778.

"*Miss Marvel*", P51B, 43-6710 also pictured on the front cover; was assigned to the 357th FG but was not associated with Cpt. Simpson.