

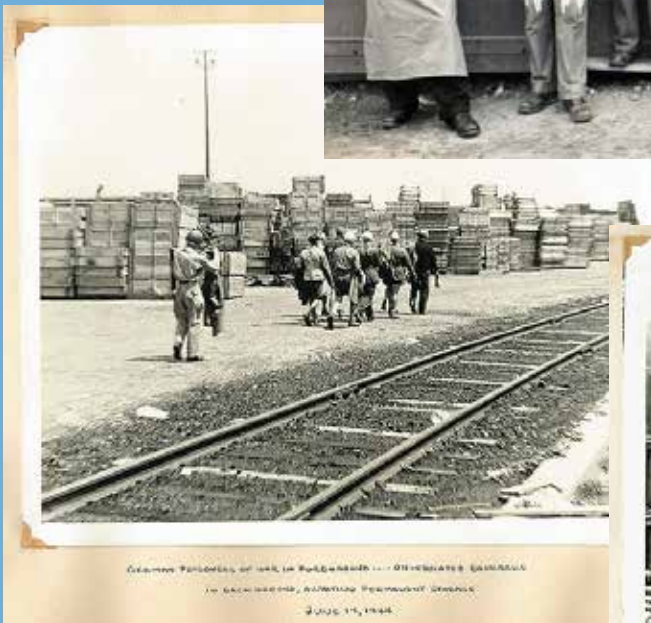
March 2020



8TH AF NEWS

Volume 20 Number 1 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

Axis POWs in Memphis, TN, 1944



GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR IN MEMPHIS -- OBSERVATION STATION IN BACKGROUND, AIRFIELD PRISONERS' QUARTERS
2005 15, 1944



GERMAN PRISONERS OF WAR, MEMPHIS, TENN.
2005 15, 1944

Inside this issue:
Info on 46th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion
October 21-25, 2020 ~ Memphis, TN



8th AF News

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Front cover: Photos from the Memphis Army Service Forces Depot during WWII. See more info on p.4

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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 AF 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

When I came on board with the Society in February, 2012, I never knew where I would be in nine years, or what I would be doing. I was simply focused on one day-at-a-time. To say these days and years have been an incredible journey is truly the height of understatement.

I have experienced so much; I could write volumes on places I've been and things I've done. Yet, all of that pales when it comes down to what I consider the most important aspect of this past decade: the people whom I've met and gotten to know along the way.

My heroes aren't just those who prominently graced the pages of countless history books—I will never forget them. I'm talking about the men and women whom history has silently overlooked; the thousands of young men who

returned after the war to 'pick up where they left off.' The ones who finished school, married their sweethearts, went to work, raised families, made an indelible difference in our society—our country—far beyond their months

or years in the military. These are my heroes, and they are quietly, far too quickly, passing away. And my heart breaks more and more each day.

For every hero listed in our TAPS section, there are hundreds more whom we will never know existed much less that they've passed away. We are trying so

desperately as an organization to continue—knowing that it will be up to our 2nd and 3rd generations and beyond to step up and continue our mission to remember. Is the commitment there? Will we be able to save these precious memories from disappearing into obscurity?

Only time will tell.

~

I hope many of you are making plans to attend our reunion this October in Memphis, TN. We have excellent programs and activities planned! I look forward to seeing you there!

Deb



"Only time will tell..."



**Please JOIN the Eighth Air Force Historical Society
TODAY!!!**



First Name: _____ Middle Initial: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State/County: _____

Zip/Postal Code: _____ Country: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ 8th Affiliation/Interest [optional]: _____

Membership Annual Dues: \$40 or £30 GBP

Payment: Check /Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date: _____ Amount: _____

Visa, MasterCard, or American Express ONLY--A \$2.00 processing fee will be added to all credit card purchases!

PayPal: ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

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.

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JOIN ONLINE: www.8thAFHS.org

PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING

Anne Marek
President & Treasurer



Greetings and Happy New Year to all our members. I am optimistically looking forward to 2020 because of the positive initiatives your Board of Directors is taking.

We had our first Board meeting in January and have identified four areas we plan to address this year – communication to Chapters and members, our annual reunions, membership growth and retention, and education with global outreach. We have appointed chairpersons for each respective area – Travis Chapin, communications; Betty Lewis, reunions; Eleesa Faulkner, membership; and Vivian Rogers-Price, education. You will be hearing more from each of them later in the magazine as they begin to develop their programs.

The Board also voted to consolidate all our accounting functions in one CPA firm in Jasper, GA, where our Executive Office is located. This constitutes an annual savings of approximately \$1,800.

We are gearing up for our 46th Annual Reunion in Memphis from October 21-25, 2020. We are putting a tentative schedule of events together in this issue so please take a look. Your Board has also selected Savannah as the location for Reunion in October 2021. It will be the 25th anniversary of The Mighty 8th Air Force Museum. We want to support and honor this milestone.

I wish to reinforce to all of you not to forget to remember the Society in your estate plan and to “shop” at Amazon Smiles (more info on p. 6) when purchasing on-line. This will help to contribute to our financial stability and future “down the road”.

Please reach out to me, Debra, or any of the other Officers and Board members if you have any issues to be addressed. Our lines of communication are always open.

Remember, *“our focus is on our veterans, preserving their legacy, and keeping the memories alive!”*

Memphis: Bits & Pieces (from the cover)

The Memphis Army Service Forces Depot was built as one of the major supply houses for WWII. At its peak, the depot supplied some 100,000 troops in the South and moved 100,000 items monthly. It handled about one-tenth of all quartermaster

supplies during WWII. When the prisoner of war camp was established early in 1944 at the depot in Memphis, it was originally a branch of the Como, Mississippi camp and housed about 250 Italian POWs. Around May of 1944, approximately 300 German POWs replaced them. By September, there were 1,912 prisoners who were involved with manual labor, mowing, grounds maintenance, and cafeteria work.

Some 800 of the POWs worked in warehouses, and moved a great deal of the tonnage handled by the depot. The depot did more than an adequate job of caring for these prisoners. The camp at the Depot consisted of 4 barracks and 5 tents - with 65 men in each of the barracks and 6 men in each tent. Half the tents had wooden floors and some had electric lights.

TREASURER'S LEDGER

For your information, I am including in this report the year-end financial statements which constitute the Profit and Loss Statement and our Statement of Financial Position. Please note that we continue to show a profit. At year-end 2019 it was \$14,335.

This includes all income and expenses from the Reunion in October.

The Society continues to show a nice increase in our Oppenheimer portfolio. For 2019, our portfolio was 8.5% better than year-end 2018. Please note in the Profit and Loss that there is no dollar amount for "investment management fees" while in reality Oppenheimer charged \$1,329. That is because Oppenheimer takes its commission/fees directly from the "trade" before it is deposited in our account. If it was included in the total it would be a negative amount and give an inaccurate picture of our financial position.

In summary, I am pleased to again report that your Society continues to enjoy financial security. Our portfolio is growing. It continues not to be used to fund administrative and daily operating expenses.

I wish the Society and all of our members a very happy, healthy, and prosperous 2020.

Anne

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Profit & Loss January through December 2019	
	Jan - Dec 19
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
4000 - Income	
4001 - Amazon Smiles	63.00
4010 - Member Dues Annual	60,954.39
4019 - Donations	3,310.31
4057 - UK Account	287.35
4000 - Income - Other	134.35
Total 4000 - Income	64,749.40
4050 - Investment Income	
4055 - Portfolio Dividends & Interest	5,990.87
4059 - Realized Gain(Loss) on Invest	784.93
4060 - Unrealized Gain(Loss) on Invest	29,800.84
4061 - Investment Management Fees	0.00
Total 4050 - Investment Income	36,585.64
Total Income	101,335.13
Expense	
5100 - National Administration Expense	
5104 - Awards, Gifts & Grants	247.00
5106 - Membership Promotion	135.02
5111 - Corporation Charges	70.00
5121 - 8AF History Projects	253.97
Total 5100 - National Administration Expense	685.99
5200 - Magazine Expenses	
5210 - Printing Expenses	12,117.03
5220 - Postage Expenses	6,394.78
5240 - Layout/Design	1,256.33
5260 - Sales Tax	180.37
Total 5200 - Magazine Expenses	19,977.51
5300 - National Office Expenses	
5303 - Telephone/D&L	800.00
5304 - Supplies	445.13
5305 - Abila Software/ Computer Exps	2,237.97
5306 - Accounting Support	2,795.00
5307 - Office Rent	1,200.00
5308 - Insurance	1,184.00
5312 - FICA-SAFHS portion	3,324.70
5313 - Payroll/ Office Management	46,075.00
5315 - Postage & Shipping	1,232.95
5316 - Bank Charges/ Returned checks	185.68
5317 - Dues Collection Expense	421.02
5323 - Merchant Account Usage Fees	2,182.18
5325 - Miscellaneous Expense	25.00
5326 - Payroll processing fees	1,387.30
Total 5300 - National Office Expenses	63,476.83
Total Expense	84,140.35
Net Ordinary Income	17,194.80
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
6550 - Annual Meeting Revenue	
6551 - Event Registration	64,287.47
6550 - Annual Meeting Revenue - Other	8,101.00
Total 6550 - Annual Meeting Revenue	72,388.47
Total Other Income	72,388.47
Other Expense	
7100 - Annual Meeting Expenses	
7101 - Supplies & Items for Sale	1,165.20
7103 - Hotel Expense/Catering	55,442.53
7104 - Tours/Transportation	12,746.80
7105 - Staff Expenses	655.32
7106 - Reimbursements	4,804.00
7110 - Site visit	534.60
Total 7100 - Annual Meeting Expenses	75,248.45
Total Other Expense	75,248.45
Net Other Income	-2,859.98
Net Income	14,334.82

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position As of December 31, 2019	
	Dec 31, 19
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1017 - Oppenheimer & Co	183,111.68
1040 - Bank of America Checking Acct.	2,016.52
1042 - Bank of America Savings Acct.	4,024.07
Total Checking/Savings	189,152.27
Total Current Assets	189,152.27
TOTAL ASSETS	189,152.27
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2050 - Payroll & Taxes Payable	
2051 - Payroll payable	2,896.57
2052 - FICA & withhold taxes payable	1,512.48
Total 2050 - Payroll & Taxes Payable	4,409.05
2500 - Accrued Expenses	157.61
Total Other Current Liabilities	4,566.66
Total Current Liabilities	4,566.66
Total Liabilities	4,566.66
Equity	
3200 - *Unrestricted Net Assets	170,250.79
Net Income	14,334.82
Total Equity	184,585.61
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	189,152.27

NOTEWORTHY

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Amazon donates.

[Go to smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com)

amazon smile

Or, simply type the URL below into your browser:
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/59-1757631>

**DON'T FORGET:
MEMBERSHIP INTO
THE SOCIETY MAKES A
GREAT GIFT FOR ANY
OCCASION!**

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!

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UPDATE: I have received over 200+ books! This is an awesome response. We are in the process of finalizing plans to ship them to the UK. Thank you! Please, keep them coming.

*Please submit ALL articles, etc. at least 45 days PRIOR to the date of the next issue of the 8th AF News to reserve space; content must be received 30 days prior to publishing date! 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

News from Across the Pond...



'Why is the List of Marines So Short?'

by Suzie Harrison

American Battle Monuments Commission
Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial

When visitors ask why there are so few names under the U.S. Marine Corps on the Wall of the Missing, we chat about the different roles of the Marines in the European versus the Pacific Theaters of Operation; and the longest running battle of WWII

sister Esther in New York, where he worked in the dockyards. As our narrative opens he is part of a crew re-fitting a French luxury ocean liner.

SS Normandie

time and was entitled to fly the Blue Riband. This pennant was awarded to a passenger liner for the fastest speeds achieved between Europe and New York. Perhaps the Buono family, along with 11-year old Joseph, had been there to welcome her.



- the Battle of the Atlantic. Then I introduce them to a young patriot named Joseph Buono, who desperately wanted to serve his country.

Joseph lived with his parents and



When the *SS Normandie* entered New York Harbor in 1935, 100,000 spectators crowded the wharves to greet her. It was her maiden voyage. She had crossed the Atlantic in record



With a worsening situation in Europe, *Normandie* was evacuated to America. Although retaining her French crew, when France declared war on Germany on September 3,

News from Across the Pond...

1939, she was commandeered by the U.S. Navy. Tied up in New York harbor, alongside *Queen Mary* and *Queen Elizabeth*, the world's three largest liners must have been quite a sight.

All three ships were to be converted to troopships. Joseph's role was to refit the *Normandie*, re-designated as the *USS Lafayette*. He was working onboard when fire broke out, thought to have been caused by sparks from a welder's torch. The ship's crew battled to contain it. Although the local fire brigade took only 15 minutes to get to the scene, strong winds thwarted all efforts, and the ship was lost. Joseph was extremely lucky to escape with his life.

The Marine

However, Joseph had a dream... his ambition was to join the Marines. As a minor, he needed his parent's consent to enlist, but they refused his pleas. However, on November 13, 1942, his 18th birthday, Joseph gained the right to decide for himself what his future would be, and he volunteered to serve as a 'Devil Dog'.



The U.S. Marine Corps sent Joseph to Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, for nine weeks of basic combat training.

Once complete, the Corps ordered him to New York where he would join a Marine Detachment preparing to deploy to Iceland aboard the *USS Henry R Mallory*.

The *USS Mallory* was to be part of one of the largest Atlantic convoys of WWII, designated as Slow Convoy (SC) 118. By the time the convoy reached Newfoundland it consisted of 64 transport ships, escorted by seven British and Canadian corvettes as well as the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Bibb*.



Iceland

At the outbreak of WWII, Iceland declared her intention to remain neutral, but Britain found this stance concerning due to a continuing German diplomatic presence. Then, on April 9, 1940, Germany overran Denmark, which was important because the King of Denmark was also Head of State for Iceland. Any potential occupation of Iceland by the Nazi's was alarming due to her strategic position in the North Atlantic. Britain needed to keep open the lines of communication with North America. If Germany managed to maintain a presence on Iceland, it would be disastrous. Therefore, on

May 17, 1940, the British began an occupation of Iceland in earnest. The next day Britain requested Canada to garrison and defend Iceland, which they did.

'I need hardly point out the strategic importance, not only of the security of the North Atlantic sea lanes, but to the defense of this continent, of maintaining control of Iceland.'

Prime Minister of Canada,
Mackenzie King, June 18, 1940

When British and Canadian troops were needed in the Mediterranean, a request was made for U.S. forces to occupy the island. Britain failed to persuade the Icelandic Parliament to approve an American occupation force; however; on June 16, 1941, Roosevelt gave approval to garrison defensive troops on the island. The U.S. Marine Corps commenced their deployment on July 8, 1941 – five months before the attack on Pearl Harbor.



Hunted

On February 4, 1943, SC-118 was heading for the south-western approaches to Iceland, shadowed by enemy submarines—the huge convoy was just too tempting. A

News from Across the Pond...

U-boat sank a merchant ship, but then convoy escorts HMS *Vimy* and *Beverley* hunted and destroyed that very U-boat. It was a tit-for-tat war of attrition.

That evening, several ships failed to hear the command for an unplanned turn, and the convoy split into two. This was not good - the ships were now being stalked and harried by a 20-strong U-Boat wolf-pack. The safety provided by the close file of the convoy had been breached. Attacks were constant, and another ship was sunk, but again the escort's aggressive action prevented any more losses. Meanwhile, reinforcements had arrived from Iceland, consisting of *USS Babbit* and *Schenck*, cutter *Ingham* and U.S. B-24 Liberator air cover.

By February 7, escort for convoy SC-118 was twelve ships; half of them destroyers. Yet, the U-boats regained the initiative, sinking seven ships before dawn.

SS Henry R Mallory



When she set off on January 24, 1943, the troopship *USS Mallory* carried a crew of 77; a Naval Armed Guard of 34; and 384 U.S. Army personnel and Marines. The Marine contingent was being sent to reinforce

and relieve the Marine Guard on Iceland, and Joseph's unit was to be assigned to the Marine Detachment, Naval Operation Base Reykjavik.

On February 7, a U-boat targeted and torpedoed the *USS Mallory*, and with no water-tight doors she sank within 30 minutes. Nine of her ten lifeboats were launched. Unfortunately, the frantic men overloaded the boats, which capsized. With the Naval ships committed to protecting the remains of the convoy, there was no one to rescue the men from the *USS Mallory*. In the icy February waters of the North Atlantic, two thirds of the men perished.

Joseph's sister, Esther

Joseph had left for training in November 1942, but he never returned home. He was reported missing on February 7, 1943 - the date the *USS Mallory* was sunk. Esther wrote to Joseph's fellow Marines to ask if anyone remembered where he was on the day; no one did. A year and a day later - as required by law - Pvt. Buono was officially presumed dead. The few letters he sent are treasured by his family; his belongings shipped home from boot camp.

Esther maintained a correspondence with one of these men and eventually married him. Frank Punturieri, the son of Esther (Buono) Punturieri, spoke of his uncle, 'Nothing else remains except family

photos and memories of this brave young hero and an uncle I never knew.'



What's On in 2020:

2020 marks the 75th Anniversary of Victory in Europe Day, when hostilities ended in the ETO. This year, in addition to our normal commemoration ceremony on Memorial Day, Cambridge American Cemetery will be marking VE Day with a special ceremony on Friday, 8 May at 2:00pm.

In order to honour those who sacrificed their lives fighting for all our freedoms, staff are planning to roll out our 'Faces of Cambridge' project. Since its inception in 2017, we and our volunteers have been researching to be able to put more faces to the names. Over 50% of those commemorated at Cambridge now have a photograph. These images will be displayed on the weekend beginning 8 May, so if you are coming to the UK, why not plan to visit us around May time?

Victory in Europe Day 75

Friday 8 May 2020

Time: 2:00pm

Memorial Day

Monday 25 May 2020

Time: 11:00am

Meet Your Board of Directors'

Committee Assignments



Eleesa Faulkner

I have been asked to chair a 5-member committee to promote *Membership Growth and Retention*. We have been encouraging 2nd and 3rd generations to continue their memberships. While many have continued to

remain members of the society, others tend to let their memberships expire once the veteran is no longer with us. I would like to ask for volunteers for the committee and/or ideas to help promote new and continued membership. I will be contacting individuals who express interest for this committee. I am committed to increasing our society membership for the 8th AFHS so that we can continue to honor all of our military veterans. Please contact me if you would be willing to serve on this committee. Thank you.



Betty Binnebose Lewis

Some of you may remember that when I was campaigning for office the one thing I said I could promise is that I would listen to anything you wanted to share. I plan to keep that promise in my position as chairperson for the *Reunion*

Committee. These are your reunions, and I want them to reflect your interests. I will be looking for suggestions for locations, programs, tours, menus and the overall agendas. I would also like your thoughts on possible workshops and any other interests that you may have concerning the reunions. Please feel free to share your thoughts with me or any of the Reunion Committee members any time throughout the year.

The 2021 Reunion will be in Savannah and is already in some of the planning stages. This will be the first reunion that my committee and I will be actively working on. It will be the Museum's 25th anniversary and it will be a special event so please feel free to share any of your thoughts.



L. Travis Chapin

Communication! Communication! Communication! So many solutions come from effective communication. I was asked to chair the *Communication Committee*. We have all

preached the value of communication, and we have all had the value of communication preached to us. This committee will look at how in this age of Social Media we can better maintain an open dialogue with all stakeholders of the 8th AFHS, both internal and external. When our organization was founded, long distance communication was a letter in a mailbox and a phone on a wall. We are now faced with the question as to how email, text messaging, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc., might help spread our message...all while being cognizant of the reality that the solution is not always by making the message LOUDER. For many of us our house phones have become almost useless because of telemarketers and robocalls. The 8th AF News has been our mainstay of communication but unfortunately as a printed media it cannot be very responsive to quick communication. The above outlines the challenges and opportunities for our committee. If you have any ideas that you want to share with the committee, please let me know. Effective communication can make a difference.



Dr. Vivian Rogers-Price

I have been asked to chair the newly formed *Education and Global Outreach Committee*. My team will develop educational initiatives designed to increase public awareness of the significance of the Eighth Air Force. This committee

will build upon the strong educational foundation already established by the Society through its website and its quarterly publication, *8th AF News*. It is an exciting task to develop innovative ways to promote sharing information about the Eighth Air Force with the both the national and international community.

Contact info for ALL Board members is on p. 2 (inside cover) of the 8th A F News. Please feel free to reach out to them with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have. Anne Marek, president/treasurer.

GONE, NEVER FORGOTTEN

JOHN RENDELL HILDEBRAN
MARCH 3, 1920 ~ JANUARY 11, 2020



During our 43rd annual reunion in New Orleans in 2017, one of the highlights of the Gala occurred when Dr. Nancy Toombs, who was serving as Society VP, presented John Hildebran with a plaque which recognized him “...as the last surviving member of the original group...” referring to the establishment of our 8th Air Force Historical Society in 1975. Sadly, John passed away on January 11, 2020, at his home at the Baptist Village in Madill, Oklahoma.

It is impossible to sum up anyone’s life with a handful of words, much less someone who lived for nearly 100 years, but here are some of the highlights:

John Rendell Hildebran was born on March 3, 1920, in Cochran, Pennsylvania, to the late Clyde and Ocie Work Hildebran. John was raised in Cochran where he graduated high school. He later joined the United States Air Force, where he served for 4 years with the 453rd BG. John was the recipient of several medals and awards including: the Distinguished Flying Cross, ETO Medal with 3 bronze stars, Air Medal with 4 oak leaf clusters, American Campaign Medal with Silver Star, WWII Victory Medal, and Good Conduct Medal. A D-Day veteran, John was honored by the French government with the prestigious French Legion of Honor (Légion d’honneur

Chevalier), as well as the Jubilee of Liberty Medal.

After returning from the war, he worked for United Airlines and retired after 40 years of employment.

He and his wife, Sally, moved to Moyers, Oklahoma, before moving to the Baptist Village in Madill, OK, in June of 2018. John was a member



John in the radio operator's seat onboard the B24, "Witchcraft", flown by Collins Foundation, during a stop in Ft. Smith, Arkansas. The 40 minute flight left John with "a smile that lasted for days" according to his friends and family.

of the New Hope Baptist church in Kingston and he enjoyed writing, photography, and loved activities at the Baptist Village.

He is survived by his wife, Sally Jo Hildebran, and children, John

Richard Hildebran, Donna Hildebran Diuguid, (Jimmy). Stepsons, Jeff Shannon, and David Shannon. Grandchildren, Mark Hildebran, and Jennifer Popperich. Great Grandchildren, Aubrey Popperich and Ryan Popperich. Step Grandchildren, Keegan Shannon, and Patrick and Carla Shannon. Sister In-Law, Pat McElroy. John was preceded in death by his parents, first wife, Aida Hildebran, and his brother, Edward.

It was an awesome undertaking some 45 years ago down in Miami, Florida, where John and the other seven members of the original founding group of the Society once gathered for their backyard barbecues. Now, it is up to ALL of us to ensure the legacy of the men and women of the Eighth Air Force continues, for as long as possible.

Blue skies, John.



Welcome to Memphis, TN! 46th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion

Historical Memphis (City Tour) Thursday, October 21, 2020

The tour of historical Memphis begins with a driving tour on an enlightening, eye-opening journey. We will explore the city of Memphis and will see many of the following sites:

- The Lorraine Motel
- The Peabody Hotel
- Victorian Village
- Orpheum Theater
- St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital
- Redbird Stadium
- Historic Cotton Row
- Court Square, the heart of 19th Century Memphis
- Hotel Chisca, where DJ Dewey Phillips played Elvis for the first time
- Sun Studios

Enjoy time to explore the pedestrian areas of downtown Memphis with its quaint shops and restaurants, including the Historic South Main Arts District OR



Beale Street at your leisure. Enjoy lunch on your own!

9:15am board bus, 1:30pm back at hotel
\$46/Person includes bus, guide, and gratuities
Lunch on your own



B17 “Ye Olde Pub” at Olive Branch Airport Friday, October 22, 2020

We are excited to welcome “Ye Olde Pub” back to Olive Branch Airport, and to our 2020 reunion in Memphis! This B17 has been painted in the colors and markings of the 379th Bomb Group, home to the original “Pub”.

“A Higher Call”, by Adam Makos and Larry Alexander, tells the story of American pilot Charles “Charlie” Brown, and battle-hardened German pilot Franz Stigler, who had flown over 480 mis-

sions. On Dec. 20, 1943, after a bombing run on Bremen, Germany, Brown's B-17 "Ye Olde Pub" was severely damaged by ground fire, and Stigler was dispatched to shoot it down, but risked his own life by making a different decision.



If you are unfamiliar with the details, this experience will fill in all the blanks of this incredible true story.

completed entertainment plaza, "Elvis Presley's Memphis". This \$45 million dollar addition enables



**9:30am board bus, 12:30pm back at hotel
\$26/Person includes bus, guide, and gratuities
Lunch on your own**



Graceland Saturday, October 24, 2020

Welcome to Memphis! Today, we will experience Elvis! Graceland is now one of the first historic homes in the U.S. to offer an interactive iPad tour that provides a fully immersive experience to guests. As your guests pull into Graceland, they will each be handed a pair of gold Elvis style sunglasses to keep as souvenirs. Today's iPad tour is narrated by celebrated actor and Elvis fan, John Stamos. Visitors will take a multimedia tour of the iconic music landmark while exploring content and hot spots which, when activated, allow users to dive deeper into the story of Elvis's life through unique archival audio, video & photo elements.



The journey through the mansion includes the decorated funky styles of the Jungle Room, racquetball court and Meditation Garden - where Elvis rests. Guests will have the opportunity to explore the mansion upon arrival.

After the mansion tour, guests will visit the newly

music fans, pop culture enthusiasts

and Memphis

visitors to follow the path that Elvis took, surrounding themselves with the things that he loved, and experience the sights and sounds of the city that inspired him. We will become fully immersed in Elvis' life and career like never before.

We will walk among some of Elvis' favorite automobiles, including his iconic Pink Cadillac, Stutz Blackhawk, 1956 Cadillac Eldorado, Dino Ferrari, Mercedes Benz limousine, Rolls Royce sedans and more.

Elvis' time in the US Army is well chronicled and the journey is a fascinating one! There are several food choices in the entertainment plaza.

**12:00pm board bus, 4:00pm back
at hotel
\$98/person includes bus, guide, and
gratuities
Lunch/snacks on your own**





46th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Holiday Inn Memphis Airport & Conference Center

October 21-25, 2020

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

STOP!

◇ RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM FIRST!

The reunion hotel has a liberal cancellation policy—in the event you are unable to attend the reunion, you will be able to cancel your reservation without penalty within 48 hours of your scheduled check-in time. However, if you wait until the last minute to book your room reservation, you may not receive the reunion rate or rooms may no longer be available at the reunion hotel. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that our vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$5 processing fee.

Canceling your hotel reservation does NOT cancel your reunion activities.

◇ COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM

Please fill out the registration form completely.

- ⇒ Fill out your name as you wish it to be on your name tag—and for any others registering with you. The principle attendee **MUST** be a current member of the Society to register for the reunion. You may **JOIN** and/or **RENEW** directly on the registration form. If you are a WWII veteran, and/or affiliated with a bomb or fighter group, please indicate which group.
- ⇒ ALL lunches and dinner meals are priced separately—Breakfast buffet is complimentary beginning Thursday, Oct 21st —Sunday, Oct 25th. Be sure and select your entrée if you plan on attending the Saturday evening gala.
- ⇒ There are three [3] tour options available during the reunion. Please read the information [here in this issue] on each tour and then make your selection on the form.

◇ MAIL IN YOUR REGISTRATION FORM

Once you have completed your registration form, please total up the amount owed and include a check, money order, or complete the credit card information on the form, payable to the **8th AFHS** and mail to:

8th AFHS
68 Kimberlys Way
Jasper, GA 30143-4769

Or you may **SCAN** your registration form [*if paying by credit card*] and **EMAIL** to:
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

ALL registration forms **MUST** be received by **September 25, 2020** in order to guarantee your place. If you have any questions or problems in completing your registration, please contact:

Debra Kujawa
Managing Director
8th AFHS
912-748-8884
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

ALL reunion information and forms are available on our website: 8thAFHS.org



46th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Holiday Inn Memphis Airport & Conference Center

October 21-25, 2020

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION
(800) 465-4329 or (901) 332-1130 Front Desk
or ONLINE registration on our website: 8thafhs.org
(Reference 'AFH' for group rate)

Location

The Holiday Inn Memphis Airport & Conference Center is located at 2240 Democrat Road, Memphis, TN 38132. It features the 'Corridor Restaurant', a full service bar, and a sundry shop for snacks and necessities. We are located just two [2] miles from Elvis Presley's iconic Graceland, seven [7] miles from the North Mississippi Shopping District, 6.5 miles to Downtown Memphis famous Beale St., and twelve [12] miles from West Memphis Arkansas's Southland Gaming and Dog Racing. We are a short drive from the Cooper Young and Overton Square nightlife district and fine restaurants. The Staxx Museum, National Civil Rights Museum, Orpheum Theatre, and Bass Pro's Pyramid, are all within an 8 mile drive. The Memphis Zoo is just 10 minutes away, the Brooks Art Museum and Botanical Gardens are all a 'must see' during your visit to Memphis!

Shuttle Service

For those of you flying into Memphis, there is complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport to the hotel. After you collect your bags, go to **Pole 16** just outside—the shuttle runs every half hour. You are welcome to call the hotel directly regarding the shuttle: (901) 332-1130.

Upscale Amenities

Enjoy complimentary wireless High Speed Internet in all public areas, plus signature amenities you'll only find at Holiday Inn. Wake up energized after a restful night's sleep in any of our recently refurbished rooms. Stay connected in our lobby's business center. Stay fit with a visit to our well-equipped fitness center. **Parking is always complimentary.**

RESERVATION INFORMATION

Group Name: AFH 8th Air Force Historical Society
Reunion Dates: October 21-25, 2020
Rate: \$110+8.5%+\$2.00 Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability.
Cut off Date: 9/15/2020
Cancellation Policy: All reservations have a 48 hour cancellation policy, or attendee will be charged one night room rate plus tax.

WHEELCHAIR RENTALS

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

HOSPITALITY SUITES

Once again 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



46th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Holiday Inn Memphis Airport, Memphis, TN

October 21-25, 2020

Wednesday, October 21

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 22

7:30am — 8:30am	Complimentary Breakfast
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration open
9:15am — 1:30pm	<i>Historic Memphis (City Tour)*</i>
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
2:00pm — 3:00pm	Curator's Corner
3:15pm — 5:00pm	<i>"Honoring the Memories"</i> — Speaker pending
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Buffet dinner and program: <i>"Legacy of the 8th"</i> — 8th AF Commanding General

Friday, October 23

7:30am — 8:30am	Complimentary Breakfast
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration open
8:00am — 9:15am	Group Meetings
9:30am — 12:30pm	<i>"Ye Olde Pub—B17"</i> (Olive Branch Airport)*
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
1:45pm — 3:00pm	<i>"Downed Behind Enemy Lines—Escape & Evasion"</i> — Lynn David
3:15pm — 4:30pm	Q & A WWII Vets
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Rendezvous Dinners

Saturday, October 24

7:30am — 8:30am	Complimentary 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	<i>"Graceland Tour"*</i>
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 10:00pm	Gala Dinner and Program

Sunday, October 25

7:30am — 8:30am	Complimentary 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
46th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION
 Holiday Inn Memphis Airport, Memphis, TN
 October 21-25, 2020

REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS September 30, 2020	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>	\$ 45	#	\$
Registration fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel:	\$ 30	#	\$
<u>BOX LUNCHES</u>			
Box lunches will be available from the hotel to attendees on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. You MUST PREORDER THEM HERE! Please indicate # of each kind of sandwich per day: HAM or TURKEY Thurs: Ham ___ or Turkey ___ Fri: Ham ___ or Turkey ___ Sat: Ham ___ or Turkey ___	\$ 18	#	\$
<u>DINNERS</u>			
Thursday, Oct 22 — EVENING DINNER BUFFET Memphis Style favorites	\$ 27	#	\$
Friday, Oct 23—RENDEZVOUS DINNER Chicken Marsala	\$ 29	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 24—GALA BANQUET (Please select ONE entrée)			
Sliced London Broil with Bordelaise Sauce	\$ 34	#	\$
Pan Seared Salmon with White Wine Beurre Blanc	\$ 34	#	\$
Vegetarian plate(s) Please indicate [X]: Thurs ___ # ___ Fri ___ # ___ Sat ___ # ___	\$ 29	#	\$
<u>TOUR OPTIONS:</u>			
Thursday, Oct 22: Historic Memphis Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 46	#	\$
Friday, Oct 23: Tour of “Ye Olde Pub” B17—Lunch on your own	\$ 26	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 24: Graceland Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 98	#	\$
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

IF paying by credit card, you may SCAN and email form to: ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

The White Sheets of Hemroulle

by Edouard Renière



American soldiers in the Bastogne area

Seventy-five years ago, at dawn on the cold morning of December 16, 1944, the Germans launched their major offensive through the Ardennes Forest, in the lightly held sector of the US Army's VII Corps. The ultimate goal was the Antwerp Harbor where they hoped to choke off the vital Allied supply lines. The initial assault took the Americans by surprise and many units, most of them newly arrived in the region, with a majority of replacements who hadn't seen combat yet. Under-equipped, lacking sufficient tanks and artillery, they had to retreat or fight against superior forces.

Furthermore, the Allied ground forces could not rely on support from the air, as due to bad weather, the 8th AF was grounded from 20 to 22 December 1944. The situation changed when the largest ever 8thAF operation, Mission 760, could be launched on 24 December, with more than 2000 bombers (1884 effective) and 853 Fighters (813 effective) involved, more operations being flown in the following days.

At the start of the German offensive, without sufficient reserves, the Allied commanders could only rely on men from the two US Airborne Divisions, just back from Holland after the Market Garden Operation in September ("A Bridge Too Far"), the 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions. On December

18, the 101st was hurriedly transported by trucks for an overnight rush to Bastogne, a vital crossroads and one of the main objectives of the Germans. The defense of Bastogne by the 101st presented a formidable obstacle to the German Fifth Panzer Army of General Hasso von Manteuffel. In the ensuing days the encircled troops of the 101st and elements of various other units engaged in vicious fighting. The 101st Division's 502nd PIR

(Parachute Infantry Regiment) held positions on the north and northwest portion of the Bastogne envelopment.

The 1st Battalion of the 502nd PIR was commanded by Major John Douglas Hanlon, from Winchester, Middlesex County, Massachusetts. Hanlon had jumped behind enemy lines on D-Day June 6, 1944 and had been wounded in Holland in September 1944 during the Market Garden Operation. On December 22, 1944 the 1st Battalion was ordered to move to the small village of Hemroulle, about 2 miles northwest of Bastogne. The village counted a few farms and houses and was home to about 100 inhabitants. Like other members of the 101st, Hanlon's outnumbered

troops lacked food, proper winter clothes, sufficient ammunition and armored support. The first snow fell on the night of December 22 and the US paratroopers became even more visible, thus more vulnerable, in their olive-green uniforms against the white backdrop.



Better-equipped German soldiers

Faced with the sudden need for camouflage material, Major Hanlon called a meeting of his staff in one of the two dozen farm houses of the village. Someone suggested using bed sheets. Good idea, but the question was how on earth could they get hold of sheets in a hurry. So, Major Hanlon sent his executive officer, Captain Edward Fitzgerald to meet Hemroulle burgomaster Victor Gaspar, a man in his seventies with a large mustache and a round red face. Fitzgerald told Gaspar about the Battalion's needs, telling him that Major Hanlon had said that if his men could obtain the sheets, "We'll return them when we can." Gaspar, whose village had twice been invaded by the Germans, the first time in 1914 and then again in 1940, didn't hesitate. He told Captain Fitzgerald to follow him across the road to the village church. There, Gaspar unwound the belfry rope and began to toll the bell. "The people will know", he said, adding "The ringing is a signal for them to come to the church."

As the first sound of the bell floated over the village, a surprised woman poked her head out of her house and listened. After wiping her hands on her apron, she put on a coat and started walking towards the church, the Eglise du Sacré-Coeur. Soon, others followed and singly or in small groups, some accompanied by their children, most of the villagers were on their way to the church. When they arrived, Monsieur Gaspar explained the situation, telling the people to bring the sheets the Americans needed for their camouflage... and to be quick about it. In his recollections, Hanlon wrote that a few villagers could not come. That was the case of Madame Eudoxie Collard, who couldn't leave her stove as she was too busy cooking a meal for the 60 people who had taken refuge in her cellar. But Monsieur Gaspar called in person on

those who hadn't answered the bell's summons. In the meantime, villagers were already beginning to return with their bundles of sheets, which were stacked in the church vestibule. According to Hanlon later, there was never a word about his promise to return them, although the sheets were a scarce luxury in those hard times.

Once all the 48 sheet sets had been collected, they were quickly distributed to the Battalion's men. Hanlon wrote later that a few minutes after that, he began to realize "the folly" of his promise. The soldiers were quickly making the best, proper military usage of their camouflage, tearing out square pieces of the sheeting to make coverings for their helmets or cutting strips of linen to lay across their machine gun barrels. For their own covering, the men split openings in the sheets and slipped them over their heads, poncho-fashion. When all the tearing and stripping was done, they were a weird-looking and ghostly lot, but, although worried about his promise, Hanlon was satisfied that they were relatively well concealed and understood he could never hand the sheets back to the villagers.

On Christmas Day, the Germans launched a powerful attack on Hemroulle and Champs and Major Hanlon described the action as the most vicious he ever encountered. It was close in, immediate and he once was able to notice the markings on an enemy tank and could clearly make out the features of a dozen or so Nazi soldiers. At one

point, he met one of his men, draped in his sheet, standing at the corner of a house with his eyes fixed calmly on six Nazis approaching from the rear. Hanlon asked the soldier how he supposed the enemy had got inside their circle. "Beats me," came the answer, the soldier adding "but they'll have a hell of a time getting out."



Lt Col. Thomas H Sutcliffe (2/502), Maj. John P Stopka (3/502) and Maj. John D Hanlon (1/502) conferring near Bastogne -- December 1944



The Hemroulle church (severely damaged during the war, it was repaired in 1948)

And so they did. The improvised camouflage was in some way paying off everywhere and Hanlon reported one bazooka team stationed at a crossroads watching a German tank closing in. The two men waited until the tank was within 50 feet of their position, then, with one perfect shot, they knocked it out. Suddenly, almost as if on signal, the fighting ended and an eerie calm came over the field, broken only with the crackling of burning tanks. Hanlon reports that his Battalion had a bag of 50 German prisoners and that the enemy suffered many casualties, with his Battalion's losses considered "light".



A Browning .30-caliber machine gunner in the Hemroulle area, wearing part of a sheet

Although the 4th Armored Division's tanks had broken the encirclement of Bastogne on December 26, the 502nd was involved in further combat, most notably at the beginning of January around the village of Longchamps a few kilometers north of Hemroulle. After the end of the Battle of the Bulge, the men of the 101st were relieved and sent back to the barracks at Mourmelon, near Reims, France, from where they had been trucked to Bastogne two months earlier.

After returning to the United States after the war, John Hanlon became a sports columnist for The Journal and Bulletin in Providence, NJ. Somehow, in the process of going on with his life, John's promise to the people of Hemroulle went forgotten. That is, until one day in 1947, when he read an article about Bastogne and the Battle of the Bulge in a local newspaper, where there was a remark about the sheets not yet having been returned to the people of Hemroulle. Hanlon wrote the newspaper explaining that part of the story was his own fault. Readers started sending parcels of sheets to Winchester and Hanlon, together with some of his neighbors helped the city organize a "Sheets for Hemroulle" day, which was held on Sunday, November 23, 1947. The festivities began when two squadrons of Navy planes from Squantum

Naval Air Base flew over Winchester in salute. As the roar of the planes subsided, church bells began tolling all over town and music from the chimes of the Winchester Unitarian Church filled the air as residents made their way to the high school auditorium bearing gifts of clean white sheets for the citizens of Hemroulle.



Two paratroopers outfitted with Hemroulle sheets

Altogether about 740 sheets were collected. The Associated Press and Life magazine covered the story and the Boston newspapers were there to record the day's events, which were also carried far and wide by radio.

On February 21, 1948 "Jack"

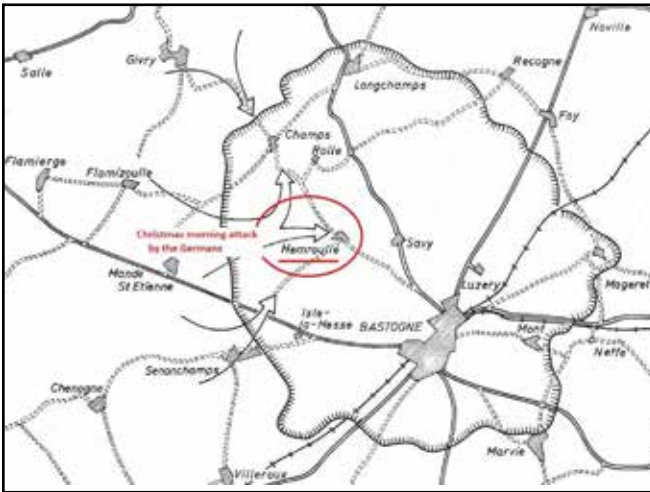
Hanlon returned to Hemroulle with the hundreds of donated sheets. The city had organized a "Journée Winchester" for the occasion. John himself rang the chapel bell this time and the villagers gathered, waving small American flags in celebration of "Winchester Day." He then handed each family several sets of sheets as a smiling Mayor Gaspar looked on. The extra bedsheets were handed over to a Bastogne institution. John Hanlon was made an honorary citizen of the village of Hemroulle.



Why not?

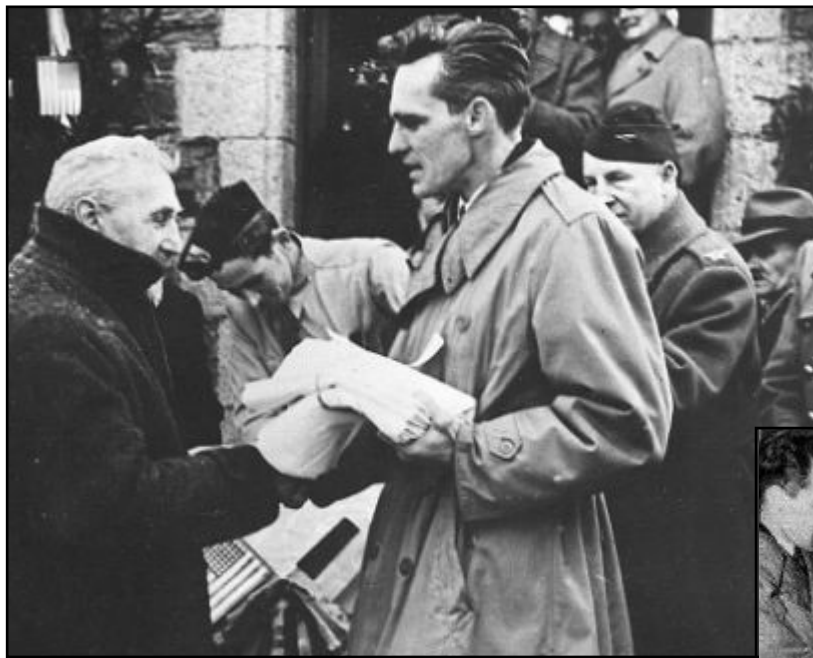
During his stay in Hemroulle, John Hanlon had the opportunity to pay back another "debt", the one he thought he owed to Belgian Boy Scouts who had helped spearhead the 1944 sheet drive. He had learned that because of post-war shortages, not enough Belgian Boy Scouts could replace their old uniforms with new ones. So, along with sheets, Hanlon had brought a load of used Boy Scouts of America uniforms contributed by the Boy Scouts of New York.

In recognition of the generosity of Winchester residents and the strong support given by the town's ten churches, the deeply touched citizens of Hemroulle wished they could find a way to express their gratitude. Their most precious possessions were the Stations of the Cross paintings, which had been hanging in their chapel since 1906. Before that, the paintings had been



the property of the Sisters of Notre Dame in Bastogne, Belgium. The paintings had been traced back to 1820

and four of them had been badly damaged or destroyed during the war. Ten paintings, some pierced by Nazi bullets, were sent to Winchester and presented to the representatives of the churches at the high school auditorium, on January 7, 1951. A snowstorm prevented an envoy from the Belgian Embassy in Washington, D.C. from reaching Winchester that day. In his place, the Belgian consul,



Dr. Navez, read a telegram from Ambassador Baron Silvercruys, which ended as follows: "These Stations, which endured the siege of Ardennes, may well reflect the sufferings we share in common. Let them remain in your churches as a token of our faith as well as our memories." Reverend John P. O'Riordan, pastor from 1940 to 1952 of St. Mary's church on Washington Street, Winchester, was one of the clergy present in the high school auditorium that Sunday in 1951 and received the ninth station, now hanging on the wall at the left front sidewall of St. Mary's. The painting was restored in July 1998 under the pastorate of Rev. Richard Messina.

As a sports reporter, John had been sent to Russia in 1958 and covered the Rome Olympics in 1960. In September 1961, Hanlon took a leave of absence from his newspaper and he, his wife Joan (whom he had married in June 1951 in Cranford, New Jersey) and their children

lived in England for a year. During their stay, John met a man from the "Readers' Digest" London office and

in the course of their conversation, he mentioned the sheet incident. The other reporter thought it would make a good story. As John didn't remember all the details, he went to Belgium in April 1962 and stayed in Bastogne, visiting



Hemroulle several times and speaking to most of the villagers there. The article was published in the December 1962 issue of "The Reader's Digest". In the 1970s, John Hanlon worked further for "The Providence Journal", writing about life in Rhode Island. He played the small part of a partygoer in the 1974 film "The Great Gatsby" and continued to write for the newspaper until his retirement in 1982. In 1991, he was inducted in the Rhode Island Journalism Hall of Fame.

Born on 24 June 1917, in Winchester, Middlesex County, Massachusetts, John Douglas Henlon passed away from cancer on 14 April 1996. He was 78 years old and his obituary in the "Providence Journal" recalled that he had "captured life in Rhode Island with grace and honesty for 23 years." John Hanlon rests at the Hunt Cemetery in East Providence, Rhode Island.

CHAPTER NEWS



Oregon Chapter 8th Air Force Historical Society

On November 2, 2019, the Oregon Chapter devoted their meeting to a "Salute to Our Veterans!" Here are some of the highlights in photos from their event:

[Photo above courtesy of Tom Philo]

Front Row: [S/Sgt] Don Anderson served during WWII in the 8th Army Air Force in the 401st BG as a tail gunner with 22 missions; [LCDR] George Bickford served in the Navy during WWII training pilots; [PFC] William Gier served during WWII primarily as an ambulance driver with the 4th FG from Jan. 1942-Oct. 1945

Back Row: [SFC] Bert Campbell served in the Army, 1st Infantry and MACSOG; [SFC] Lin Stott served in the Army during the Vietnam Era and in Desert Storm; [SP4] Tom Philo served in the Army in 120 (AH) in Alaska during the Vietnam Era; [MSgt.] Leonard Morgan served in the Naval Reserve, Active Army, and ORANG; [RD3] Robert "Bob" Dean served in the Navy as a Radarman during the Korean War; [CPL] John Wilberding served in the Army in Alaska at the end of the Korean War, Cold War/Pre-Vietnam Era



Don Keller and Jerry Ritter left,
in a salute to
Collings B-17G Nine-o-Nine Pilot,
Ernest "Mac" McCauley
[Photo courtesy of Joan E. Hamilton]

CHAPTER NEWS



Sophia Kennedy above, presenting Oregon Chapter of the 8th AFHS Vice President and Vietnam Veteran [SFC] Bert Campbell with a beautiful Quilt of Valor.

[Photo courtesy of Tom Philo]

WWII Display (below), in honor of Bert Campbell's father, T/Sgt. H. Albert Campbell, Jr.
[Photo courtesy of Tom Philo]



Dwight Gruber, left, with WWII display in honor of his father, Lt. Col. Clint Gruber, B-24 co-pilot with the 93rd BG(H) and a POW at Stalag Luft 1 in Barth from late 1943 until liberated by Russian forces in the spring of 1945.

[Photo courtesy of Joan E. Hamilton]

Right, WWII 8th AAF Veteran, [S/Sgt] Don Anderson showing a B-17 model built by Dave Foss to Oregon Chapter of the 8th AFHS President Tom Davis

[Photo courtesy of Tom Philo]



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

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of Victory in Europe Day [VE Day] during WWII, we are planning to a luncheon meeting on Sunday, June 7, 2020, at the Holiday Inn of Plainview, Long Island, New York. Veterans will talk about their VE Day experiences. Along with our 8th AF veterans, we are inviting British, French, and Soviet veterans to the luncheon.

Chapter President, Joseph "Pat" Keeley will discuss the post-VE Day 8th AF "Trolley" missions. These seven hour long "missions", which took place from early May to early June 1945, over bombed out cities deep in Germany, were flown by B17s and B24s solely to give 8th AF ground personnel the opportunity to see first-hand the result of their efforts to defeat Nazi Germany. *(From early June to early July 1945, 8th AF heavy bombers flew back to the United States).* Pat will also provide statistics of the

Mighty 8th in defeating Germany, including number of tons of bombs dropped, number of sorties flown, 8th AF awards, and the financial and human cost of the war in Europe.

To commemorate the 76th anniversary of D-Day, Jubilee of Liberty Medals will be presented to three veterans who were not able to come to last year's presentation. For more details about the luncheon, contact Pat Keeley (contact information on the inside cover p. 2 of the 8th AF News).

CHAPTER NEWS

GA Chapter
8th Air Force Historical Society
Brent Bracewell, president

William Henry Hughey
October 30, 1925 – January 20, 2020

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society and the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force lost one of its greatest fans and founding members this year.

William “Henry” Hughey was born in Memphis, TN and like most of “*The Greatest Generation*” was not destined to stay in his home town or remain a child for very long, as the ‘War’ was on and he was to quickly take his place in it. Having turned 18 years of age just two months earlier, he was drafted into the Army Air Corps; left home on New Year’s Eve, 1943 and reported for duty on 1 January 1944, Camp Shelby Mississippi. Training was quick, yet efficient and he arrived in England and was assigned to the Eighth Air Force, 487th Bomb Group, 838th Bomb Squadron, B-17 serving as a ball turret gunner, in October 1944.

As a testament to how fast this Greatest Generation had to grow up, this excerpt is a quote from Henry himself, taken from the book, “*Gentleman From Hell*”, by C. C. Neal... “*My tail gunner, Jimmy Spurlock, and I*



went into the service January 1, 1944. When we touched down on the runway at Lavenham the evening of January 1, 1945, we had just finished our first year in the military and our 16th mission. I was discharged November of 1945. I had been 20 years old for a week at the time of my discharge.”

During Henry’s short tour with the Mighty Eighth, he would fly 32 missions to include the famous 24 December 1944 to Babenhausen, Germany, in which the 487th would lead the entire 8th Air Force consisting of approximately 2000 bombers and 1000 fighters. On this mission, young Henry Hughey would witness the terrifying head on attack of four ME-109s raking the cockpit of B/G Fred Castle’s B17, which was flying lead off of the left wing of Hughey’s B17. Watching Castle’s mortally hit B17 fall out of formation, and seeing Castle give the last full measure in service to his country,

would be a vivid memory Henry would never forget. Henry survived being shot down on 2 March 1945, crash landing into Soviet held Poland. It would take over a month before he was able to return to his 487th (which was an adventure in itself),

where he would go on to fly 5 more missions before the end of the war.

Once the war was over, Henry, like most of his Greatest Generation, returned home, put the world behind him, and met the love of his life, the beautiful Jean Ann Luther, whom he loved dearly. Together, they raised two children: Bill and Julie. Henry was devoted to Jean and his family for 72 years of marriage; until age did what the Nazis could not, and took Henry to his final home.



CHAPTER NEWS



Once their children were grown and careers established, Henry turned his attention back to that time that defined him—his service in WWII. In 1983 Henry attended a symposium in Atlanta, Ga (*Air War Europe Comes to Atlanta*) which introduced him to efforts being launched to form the Ga Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society. Henry soon became one of the Ga Chapter's founding members. Along with Chatham County Manager, Russ Abolt, County Commissioner, Jimmy DeLoach, and friend, Wilber Bell, together they would make an even bigger impact in ensuring the memories of the Mighty Eighth were secure by helping procure land in Pooler, Ga for the construction of what is today the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force.

Henry's fingerprints can be found in the heart and soul of the Museum. He was a key planning

officer in the Mighty Eighth's 50th Anniversary Celebration held in Savannah, Ga. Henry was the point of contact with Chuck Hackett, arranging to ship the wing of Chuck's B17 (also shot down on the 24 December 1944 raid) from

Belgium, to where it is on exhibit today in the Museum. Henry also assisted in establishing the TN Chapter of the 8th AFHS and was a long-time member, past president, and coordinator for several of the 487th BG Association reunions. All the while, Jean was never far from Henry's side in these endeavors; acting as his secretary, administrative assistant, and executive officer, helping to manage the mountains of paperwork in a time before personal computers and cell phones.

Henry's contributions to the memory of the 26,000 Mighty Eighth Airman who gave their

lives in service for their country is legend, but how he did it is a legacy, not unique to him, but representative of that entire group we call the Greatest Generation.

Henry was recalled but never deployed to Korea, but he never missed an opportunity to voice his love for the B17 and his lack of enthusiasm for the B29. He went on to earn a private pilot's license--his instructor was a former WASP--flying all over the southeast as a very successful salesman.

Not only was Henry a founding member of the Ga Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society, but a continuous active member until his death. Henry loved this Chapter and ensured its continuation by aggressively recruiting members from the next generation(s), welcoming them to his Mighty Eighth Air Force family. Throughout his life, Henry touched people of all ages and planted seeds of interest in their hearts for the Mighty Eighth Air Force. He will be missed, but never forgotten.

Blue skies, Henry.



The photo to the left shows Henry in typical fashion, passionately promoting the legacy of the 8th Air Force from the podium. Note the presence of Roger Freeman to his left.

Georgia Chapter meets on the 2nd Saturday of every month in Atlanta. Please contact Brent Bracewell: brentbracewell@gmail.com for more information.

Benigno, Caesar J., 93, died November 27th, 2019. Caesar graduated from Washington Irving Evening High School in 1942. Shortly after, he enlisted



to live out his dream of becoming an Army Air Corp Pilot. During his distinguished career with the US Army Air Corps, Caesar trained on the B17 as a Ball Turret Gunner and as a Radar Jammer/Electronics Warfare Specialist, serving with the 452nd BG. Eventually, Caesar was asked to head up a training class specializing in Escape and Invasion. He was the recipient of many prestigious awards including the French Legion of Honor, US Presidential Unit Citation Award, WWII Victory Medal, National Defense Medal, European Theatre of Operations Medal with three campaign stars. He grew quickly in the ranks, climbing from Master Sergeant to Colonel. After the war, Caesar continued his work in the Air Force as a reservist but he then held a variety of jobs in the Defense Industry. Caesar had passion for life loving dancing, cooking, traveling, storytelling, music, old movies, women and politics. He was predeceased by brother Samuel Benigno, sister Jenny Demarco and sister Nancy Filoramo. Survived by his four children, Frank Benigno, Dianne

Benigno, Caesar Benigno Jr, and Janette Coleman. He had 6 grandchildren Stephanie, Andrew, Anthony, Kathryn, Sarah, and Sean. Five great grandchildren: Savannah, Sophia, Kira, Vivian, and Stephen.

Bostwick, Frank Taylor, 94,



passed away on January 4, 2020, after a short illness. He was born to Obie Osborn Bostwick and Mae Taylor

Bostwick of Blanchard, LA. Frank served as a tail gunner with the 466th BG in the 8th Air Force on a B-24 Liberator during World War II in England. He retired from United Gas Pipeline Co. in Houston after 38 years of service.

Frank loved his Lord with all of his heart and served Him faithfully. His greatest joy was to study God's word.

Frank is preceded in death by his parents and his brother, Ted Bostwick.

Frank is survived by his wife of 71 years, Louise; children, Neal and wife Karen, Mark and wife Barbara, Floyd and wife Patricia, and Rachel Browning and husband Raymond; grandchildren, Melanie Lobdell, Michael Bostwick, Matthew Bostwick, Taylor Bostwick, Tara Lawson, Sarah Crawford, Obie Bostwick, Erin Hanna, Christine Bostwick,

and Ben Browning; eight great-grandchildren; and sister, Ouida Tippett.

Brown, R. Edwin, 99, died



at home in Dickerson surrounded by his family.

Son of John Herbert and Elizabeth Oxley Brown. Survived

by his loving wife Winsome, of 73 years. He is also survived by loving children Malcolm Brown (Carol), Herbert Brown (Joyce), Neal Brown (Colleen) and Phyllis Brown Swensen (Paul); ten grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.

Preceded in death by his brother Thomas C. Brown and sister Erwin Staggs.

Ed practiced law from 1941 – 2019 in Montgomery County, MD. He was a member of the Monocacy Lions Club and was the longest active serving member in the history of Lions Club International.

A veteran of WWII, Edwin served honorably with the 8th Army Airforce in England, 92nd BG. He was also a founding member of the Upper Montgomery County Fire Department and served as President.

Besides practicing law, his passions were hunting, boating and he was commodore at one time of the Classic Yacht Club and

member of the Annapolis Yacht Club. He was also a life-long member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Poolesville, MD. One of his proudest accomplishments was the re-opening of White's Ferry in 1946. This became his lifelong hobby.

Gustafson, Carl H., 94,



passed away on November 19, 2019.

Humble and kind, he will be forever remembered for his compassionate,

giving spirit. He truly had a heart of gold. Carl loved to laugh until he cried. He filled a room with joy. A standout Oregon State baseball player in the 1940s following his military service, Carl remained a fervent Beaver believer for the rest of his life. He was an annual season-ticket holder for football, basketball and baseball, reveling in the three recent College World Series titles racked up by the baseball team. While watching Beaver games, the competitive, prickly part of his personality popped out. He was known for blasting referees for their bad calls.

In October 1943, Carl, enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps. As a nose gunner and bombardier in a B-24, he served with the 453rd BG and flew 27 missions as part of the Eighth Air Force's

campaign to liberate Europe during World War II. The crew remained intact through all 27 harrowing missions. In recent years, he visited with several of the remaining members of his crew. He was the last one to pass away. In 2015, he was awarded the French Legion of Honor. Carl took great pride in the medal, which he kept pinned to his shirt. He wore his B-24 hat everywhere.

In 1945, Carl returned to Oregon after the war and graduated from Oregon State College, where he majored in physical education and health, joined the Delta Tau Chapter of Sigma Nu and played center field for the Beavers' baseball team. He received offers to sign with pro teams. While proud of those invitations, he turned them down to focus on beginning a family-centered life. Carl maintained his ties to the Delta Tau Chapter of Sigma Nu, Oregon State, serving as its alumni treasurer for 40 years.

Carl and Betty Jean Neuman married on Aug. 20, 1949, and soon moved to Klamath Falls, where Carl worked as a coach and teacher. Later, they returned to Corvallis, where they raised a family and attended First Baptist Church. Betty, died in 1988.

Their strong, happy marriage lasted 39 years. Carl worked in the painting and contracting business of his father-in-law, Marvin Neuman. He learned the business from "Marv" and even-

tually ran it himself. Carl also volunteered with the Collings Foundation for 25 years on their tours of vintage aircraft.

On March 5, 1990, Carl married Roberta Fisher Beck. For almost 30 years, they were traveling companions and enjoyed attending Beaver games, family functions, church, school reunions and other activities.

During latter years, Carl was the oldest living former Beaver baseball player. He treasured his baseball seats, perched behind home plate and bearing his name. Another special tribute occurred at half-time of the Beaver football game on Oct. 29, 2016, where Carl took to the field at Reser Stadium and was honored for his four years as a baseball player from 1945-49, and for his service to our country during World War II from 1943-45.

Carl was an awesome story teller, sharing tales about picking cherries and berries while growing up in Woodburn, surviving flak-riddled bombing missions and crash landings in Europe, chasing down fly balls at Coleman Field, singing in the car while driving to Death Valley during family vacations, towing kids on water skis while he piloted a boat called "Gussy" around Triangle Lake, and so much more.

Carl is survived by his wife, Roberta, his four children and their spouses: Barry Gustafson

(Jan), Rhonda Gustafson McJunkin Kirkpatrick (Steve), Alan Gustafson (Nancy), and Greg Gustafson; 11 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Kerr, Perry, 94, went to be with the Lord on the evening of Feb. 05, 2020. He was born on Aug. 04, 1925 in Baird, Texas to Samuel and Millie



Josephine Kerr.

Perry graduated from Three River High School. Perry joined the US Army-Air Corp and proudly served with the 466th BG from 1943 until honorably discharged in 1945. Perry married the love of his life, Joyce on 1961 in Three Rivers. He was a resident of Tomball, Bellville, Three Rivers and retired to Kerrville in 2017.

He was preceded in death by his parents; brothers, Samuel Kerr and John Kerr; sisters, Loma Fay Kerr McGuire and Lola Mae Moses.

Perry leaves behind to cherish his memory, his wife, Joyce Hardcastle Kerr; children, Penny Kerr, Pamela Kerr Janwich (Billy) and Jay Kerr. He will be

loved and missed by many other family members and friends.



Maiden, Elmo, 100, passed away February 2, 2020.

Elmo flew 35 combat missions with the 466th as a pilot. Elmo was awarded the French Legion of Honor medal among several other awards. He is survived by his children, Eric Maiden, Tom Maiden, and Nancy Shattuck. Elmo was a familiar face at many Society reunions and often participated with other veterans in the WWII Veterans' panel—always the most popular attraction!

McConnell, MD., Claude, 95



of Davidson, passed away on Friday, January 17, 2020 at The Pines at Davidson, where he was a resident. Claude

was born on May 28, 1924 in Lewisburg, Tennessee. He was the next to the youngest of eight children born to Jennie Groves McKnight McConnell and Edmund David McConnell. Claude grew up in Tennessee, graduated from Marshall County High School in 1943 and immediately enlisted in the US Air Force as a Technical Sergeant/Flight Engineer/Bombardier with the Eighth Air Force.

He flew 32 missions over Germany in B-24 Liberators with the 458th BG and proudly remembered being on the crews flying fuel to General Patton in Africa.

At the end of WWII, he attended

and graduated from Northern Illinois College of Optometry. While there, he met and later married, Dr. Mary Jane Gates in 1950. Together, they moved to North Carolina and began their optometry practice on Main Street in Davidson. Both retired after 40 years of practice.

Dr. McConnell was devoted to his family, patients and community. He gave over 20 years of service internationally, working on medical missions in South America, Haiti, Mexico, Honduras, Guatemala as well as the USA. Claude loved adventure. He hitchhiked across Australia at age 65 and enjoyed camping/driving his old Ford F-150 to Newfoundland and Alaska. Every summer he planned a month-long family trip across the US and Europe. Claude was a member of Bethel Presbyterian Church, Sons of the American Revolution, Williams Masonic Lodge 176 and American Legion Post 86. Dr. McConnell was preceded in death by his wife of 62 years, Mary Jane Gates McConnell. He is survived by daughters, Mary Claudia (Coco) McConnell Killian (Ray), Gayle Jane McConnell Tallardy (Charles), and son, Hardison Gates McConnell, Sr. (Robbie). Grandchildren, Ray Allen (Rally) Killian III (Alison), Mary Gates Killian, Hardison Gates (Skip) McConnell, Jr., and Cameron O'Neal McConnell.

Mills, James Rex, 93, of



Morton, passed away Saturday, August 17, 2019, at Villas of Holly Brook in Morton, with his son and daughter holding his hand.

He was born on September 15, 1925, in Lawrence, Kan., to James S. and Sybol (House) Mills. He married Mary Marguerite Bellinger on September 11, 1959, in Lawrence, Kan. She preceded him in death on November 1, 2014.

Surviving are two children, Marc S. Mills, and Julie (David) Sprague; and three grandchildren, Davis Sprague, Maxwell Sprague, and Remy Sprague. He was preceded in death by three siblings, Marjorie, Archie, and Lawrence.

Rex was a veteran of WWII, flying 35 missions in a B-24 with the 453rd BG. He was awarded the French Legion of Honor. Rex was a graduate of Liberty Memorial High School and attended Pittsburg State Teachers College in Pittsburg, Kan. He was employed as a printer for 15 years at the Lawrence Journal-World and Capper Publications in Topeka, Kan. He then worked for 30 years as a printing equipment sales representative for Harris Corporation and its predecessor, Intertype Company, traveling most of the central United States.

He was a member of the Morton United Methodist Church and had been active in the church, serving on several boards and committees. He was a member of Lawrence Lodge No. 6 AF & AM, American Legion Post No. 14, VFW Post 852, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Experimental Aircraft Association & Warbirds of America.

Minton, Joe, 98 of East



Meadows, NY, passed away on December 30, 2019. Joe is survived by his wife of 38 years, Norma, and their five children. Joe

was born on January 5, 1921 and served with the 8th AAF from February 1, 1940 to August 1945 with the 2nd S.A.D. in England. Upon his discharge, Joe re-entered City College, NY and graduated in June, 1948. Joe then spent his working career as an HVAC engineer. Joe rose to the rank of Captain while serving in the Reserves. Joe was very active with the NYS Southern Wing Chapter of the 8th AFHS from its conception in 1990, until his death. He will be missed very much.



Moses, Robert "Bob" Yancey,

89, passed away Saturday, December 14, 2019, at his cherished home.

His adventurous life began July 14, 1930, the son to parents Robert Yancey Moses and Elizabeth Hay Moses. He enlisted in the National Guard at the age of 17 before graduating from Haywood High School in 1949. He then attended Murray State University until he joined the United States Air Force in 1951. He served in England during the Korean War as a personnel clerk at Mildenhall-Lakenheath Air Base for the 3910th Air Bomber Group, which was part of the 8th Air Force. Before being honorably discharged as an E-4 Staff Sergeant in 1954, he was named Outstanding Airman for the year, awarded the Good Conduct Medal, Unit Citation, and the Overseas Occupation Medal. Upon returning to the United States, Bob attended Memphis State University and received a BS in Business in 1957 and continued for an LLB law degree. He also attended The School of Banking in the South at Louisiana State University. After graduation from Memphis State University, he was employed by 1st National Bank (later 1st Tennessee Bank) before returning to Brownsville as an employee of First State Bank where he rose to Senior Vice President before retiring. He served as Chairman for the Brownsville Housing Authority Board of Commissioners, served as Chairman on the Board for First South Bank in Brownsville (now Simmons Bank), and served on

the Board of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. After 57 years of being a bachelor, he finally met his soulmate, the love of his life, Cheryl Ann Davis Clinton. They eloped and married in Redlands, California, in 1988. Bob always said he prayed for an angel, and the Lord sent him four.

Bob is survived by his daughters: Tracey Haywood (Keith), Allison Ferrell (Troy), and Melanie Quinton (Nick); nieces and nephew: Betty Walter (Martin), Vicki Weinkauf (Andreas), and Ralph Brickell, III. He was also the proud grandfather of Blake Call, Taylor Call, Emma Lea, Joseph Lea, John Robert Quinton, Jackson Quinton, and great-grandfather to Eden Hope Call. Aside from all his achievements in life, traveling the world was one of Bob's greatest joys. In his lifetime, he visited every state at least three times and traveled to over 40 countries. The city closest to his heart was London, which he visited almost 60 times. Bob had a love for tennis, golf, 12-year-old Macallan, Frank Sinatra, Volkswagen Beetles, University of Memphis football, and vintage clothing; but there is nothing more he loved in life than his countless friends, cherished family, and the Lord.

Bob was definitely one of a kind, he made this world a better place by touching the lives of everyone he met, and he lived a beautiful,

meaningful, adventure-filled life. To know Bob, was to love him.

Rowland, Robert S., 94,



McClure, OH, died peacefully Thursday, November 21, 2019, at his home surrounded by his family.

He was born

January 9, 1925, at his childhood home in Damascus Township, to the late Carl and Mildred (Anthony) Rowland. He married Sarah (Fisher) Rowland on June 22, 1952, in Deshler, OH, and she preceded him in death on November 28, 2014.

Bob was a 1943 graduate of McClure High School. After graduation he was drafted into the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. He served as a staff sergeant aerial gunner 1943-45 and received the Distinguished Flying Cross after flying 36 European Theater missions in a B-17 ball turret for the 398th BG. On November 2, 2018, he was awarded the French Legion of Honor.

Even with Bob's prestigious military background he stayed humble to his roots. He worked at Gilson Machine and Tool in Napoleon, State of Ohio Department of Highways in Bowling Green, and farmed part-time. He was a faithful member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in McClure, McClure American

Legion Post 332, Bethel Grange-Damascus Township, and the 398th Bomb Group Memorial Association.

He is survived by his children, James Rowland, John (Tresa) Rowland, Dennis Rowland, Nancy Rowland, and Tony (Roberta) Rowland; grandchildren, Jeffery (Dawn) Rowland, Cassandra (Todd) Bishop, Carla (John) Powell, Joshua Rowland, Tyler (Sara) Rowland, Matthew (Nicole) Rowland, Diana (Will) Swinghammer, Sonia (Mark) Schliegel, Tiffanie (Steve) Creager, Angela Green, Jacob Rowland, and Jared Rowland; 16 great grandchildren; a sister, Ruth Behnfeldt; and brother-in-law, Bill Heckler. He also was preceded in death by a daughter-in-law, Berlinda Rowland; sister, June Heckler; and brother-in-law, Walter Behnfeldt.

We are NOT automatically notified upon the death of our veterans or other members.

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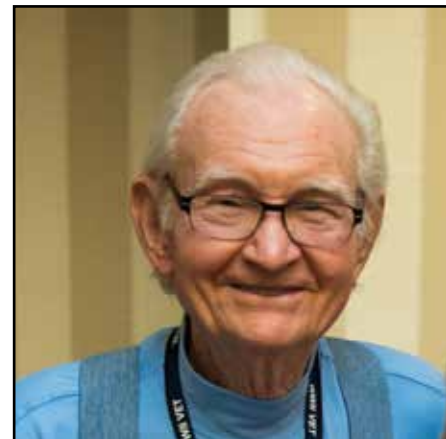
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HOW ABOUT IT!

NONAGENARIAN

Earl Wassom 466th BG, Chaplain 8th AFHS



NONAGENARIAN. Is this a new word to you? It was to me. So I looked it up in my dictionary. A nonagenarian is a person born in the 1920s and who is 90ish in age. An individual who has been exposed to all of the events of the century, both good and bad, and has survived. One hundred years is a long time to live and much can happen during this period of time. But every day and every incident that occurs has an impact on one's life.

Historians have famously dubbed 1920s as the year that made the decade *roar*. When I was born in 1923 in a rural farm-home out on the Oklahoma prairie, there wasn't a *roar* but perhaps a faint whimper coming from the infant just born who knew absolutely nothing except how to sleep, suck, cry, and mess his diaper. To Mama and Papa, it was a unique occasion to have a son born in this household. This was a definite change from the three sisters who arrived much earlier. This was the first day in the life of a nonagerarian.

From the beginning until the end, life is an endless series of learning and teaching experiences. The baby is hungry, wet, and cold and communicates this fact by crying. Mama responds by changing the wet diaper to a dry one and gives a warm hug. Baby goes to sleep. Mama takes a needed reprieve from her unvarying and almost constant vigil. Endless minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, years and decades pass. The teaching-learning experiences continue. Each of these teaching/learning moments help shape our emotions, personality, learning capabilities, motivations, value—everything that determines who we are and who we

will be! Now, let the roaring 1920s begin!

The Treaty of Versailles officially ended WWI. Americans were joyful that the boys were back home but saddened over those who did not come back. *"Happy days are here again"* was sung but the "hoped for" joy fell short. Both the 18th Amendment (Prohibition) and the 19th Amendment (women's right to vote) were ratified by Congress in 1919. At first, there was elation followed by dejection from the "women flappers" and the "robber barons." Corruption followed at all levels. During these turbulent times, President Harding prematurely, suddenly and mysteriously dies. Vice President Calvin Coolidge succeeds him. In addition, American citizens are seeking ways to cope with the Great Depression (economic collapse) and the devastating dust bowl (agricultural catastrophe) in the mid-west. As a boost to sagging national morale, Charles Lindberg makes the first ever transatlantic flight in his plane, the *Spirit of Saint Louis*, in 1927.

In the 1930s, baby Earl began his formal education by attending a one room school over two miles away from his home in rural Oklahoma. Inside the schoolhouse were 40 desks, one teacher desk, a chair, and a table with seats for the recitation area. Outside there was a horse barn for the animals belonging to the students who rode horses to school, and out behind the school were 2 out-houses (privies): one for boys and another for girls. The students were the children of the farmers and oil-workers. Our teacher was Miss Edna, who taught all of the students from first through eighth grade. She

was nice, but a very firm disciplinarian. After she rang the school bell, all of the students rushed to their desks, stood at attention, faced the American flag, and together recited, *"I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands..."* After we finished our pledge, we looked upward toward a picture hanging on the wall of George Washington who seemed to smile as we sang together *"My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing..."* There was another song called the National Anthem. It was the official song of the United States with lots of tough words to understand and a very hard tune to sing.

Opening exercises were a good way to start the day! Singing and saluting our red, white, and blue flag was thrilling to me and I was proud to be an American. Also, learning was fun.

How to do the three R's (*Readin', Ritin', and 'Rithmetic*)?

Here is how we did it: The class always began with the first graders going to the recitation bench. With the help of the teacher, they would read aloud their stories, or learn their spelling words, or work their arithmetic problems, or practice writing. All of the other kids just sat there and listened or practiced their own assignments knowing that soon, they would be up front, doing their lesson with the teacher. In turn, each grade would go to the recitation bench.

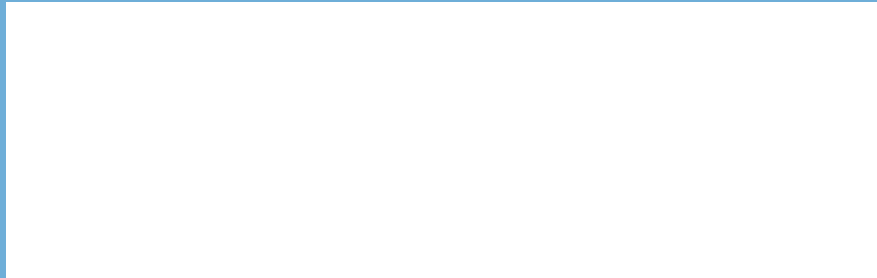
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Soon, the older kids were teaching the little ones and both ages were learning and teaching. This allowed the little kids to become close friends with the big kids. My buddy was Robert who was a 7th grader. He loved airplanes and so did I. *Lucky Lindy* (Charles Lindbergh) had just recently flown across the ocean non-stop and we talked a lot about his flight.

Many patriotic pilots who had flown in the Army Air Corp in WWI were flying surplus war planes over our farm. They were flying exciting low altitude air races, performing aerial acrobatics, wing walking, and executing daring parachute jumps.

In 1933 Robert and I shared a rare moment when we got to see Wiley Post (the one-eyed Oklahoma pilot) shortly after he flew his single engine Lockheed Airplane, the *Winnie Mae*, solo around the world in 7 days. Robert and I were hooked. We would be pilots! We always kept in touch.

Time passed; it was 1941. I had finished school and was a freshman in college, preparing to enter the service as a pilot cadet. Robert had finished college, had completed pilot's training, proudly wore his silver pilot wings, and was a commissioned officer!

On December 7, 1941, everything changed for Robert and me and for the world as well. On that date, Japan made a dastardly surprise attack on Pearl Harbor destroying much of the US Naval fleet, aircraft and ground personnel. Robert, in defense of his country,

manned his pursuit aircraft but fell victim to a burst of enemy fire and he went down. Robert was listed as one of the first Oklahoma casualties in WWII. Our friendship began at an early age and his life ended abruptly but the influence of his value system lived on in me and many others.

What did Robert add to my life? He was a patriot. He loved his country, respected its flag, honored the traditions of his nation and was true to the values of his upbringing. He verified his loyalty to his country. He demonstrated, grit, stamina, faith, and determination to join the armed forces and complete the rigorous pilot training which earned him pilot wings and a commission as an officer in the Army Air Corps. Enemy forces challenged his country. We were in a war. Robert was on duty. He became a target of the enemy and paid the supreme sacrifice, the result of fulfilling his duty as an American. Robert was a teacher and I was his student.

All of us are learners and teachers regardless of our age. Someone teaches and someone learns. Life is a never-ending process...a life-long series of events that shape our values, lives, and destiny. Every experience shapes us. Everyone faces adversity and must choose whether to "buckle down" or "face up" or "cave-in" to the choices presented. All of us are challenged to honor certain values. We are what we believe, the result of what we have been taught and what we have accepted. These beliefs are shown by our actions. We are teaching those who follow. Years of living have produced wisdom. Are we sharing our wisdom in a positive way?