



March 2021

8TH AF NEWS

Volume 21 Number 1 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"



SPECIAL REUNION ISSUE
"HOMEWARD BOUND"
47TH ANNUAL 8TH AFHS REUNION
OCTOBER 27-31, 2021
MARRIOTT SAVANNAH RIVERFRONT
SAVANNAH, GA



8th AF News

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

March 2021

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Front cover: *Brig. Gen. James Fitzmaurice (a colonel at the time) stands with Savannah Mayor Thomas Gamble, examining a plane at the City of Savannah Airport in 1945. (Photo from the Jim Blaes Collection, courtesy National Museum Mighty Eighth Air Force)*

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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 not for profit corporation.. The 8th A F News is distributed to members of the Society and is not for public sale.

National office is located at:

**68 Kimberlys Way
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EDITOR'S NOTES

"We do not live an equal life, but one of contrasts and patchwork; now a little joy, then a sorrow, now a sin, then a generous or brave action."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Wow. Kind of sums up not just the past twelve months, but really describes our lives in general, doesn't it?

I remember when I was a child—loving the freedom of playing outside, climbing the neighbor's chinaberry tree, launching myself from my swing at the highest point so I could fly through the air, shooting marbles in the dirt, and being totally amazed by tadpoles. Yep. Tadpoles.

Each and every one of us had a childhood filled with adventure, wonder, and amazement...but for many of you reading this, your childhood ended abruptly as our nation was enveloped in WWII.

Instead of climbing chinaberry trees, you climbed into fighter and bomber cockpits and flew in a bone-chilling sky devoid of oxygen. Some of you were forced to abandon your planes as they succumbed to the

enemy. No matter how many times I hear the stories, I can still only imagine what it must have been like to experience—all of this.

You were thrust into adulthood—accepting the awesome responsibility of serving your country and saving the world from global tyranny.

And when the war ended, tens of thousands did not come back. Many of those who did, never spoke of what happened. What they experienced. What they endured.

That is why it is SO important that we NEVER stop honoring their/your sacrifice, their/your service, their/your memories. That is why our Society even exists.

Reunions started in the early 70s with simple back yard barbecues. Through a lot of effort and hard work, the Society was officially "born" in 1975. Reunions and a newsletter, have always been the focal points for the Society. And while the newsletter has grown into the 8th A F News magazine, this year marks our 47th year of holding an annual reunion.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic last October, we were forced to cancel

our "physical" reunion scheduled in Memphis, and host a mini-virtual reunion via ZOOM and Facebook live.

All of the planning has been done in anticipation of our upcoming reunion this October in Savannah, GA. Please review all of the information on the reunion here in this issue: pp.22-27. We have a GREAT reunion planned and are moving forward—provided we can assure the safety of ALL our attendees.

While we will always mourn the loss of so many of our veterans who have passed away, our sorrow is mixed with the joy of seeing so many who continue to support our reunions and the entire Society.

We hope and pray to see many of you in Savannah. Be safe and well...

My love and prayers to all of you!

Deb



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



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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.

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Jeff Hawley, 3 The Stiles, Godmanchester, CAM PE29 2JF
014804 13503

JOIN ONLINE: www.8thAFHS.org

PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING

Anne Marek
President & Treasurer



PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING

Hello everyone and Happy New Year! The Society's plans for our 47th Annual Reunion are in full swing as you will see in this issue of AF News. We are very excited about our Savannah tours and especially the one to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler. As you probably all know, the Museum is celebrating its 25th Anniversary, and we will be there to congratulate them on this historic achievement. So please mark your calendars for October 27-31, 2021, and plan on joining us. ***Keep in mind that during our Reunion week, provided you are wearing your nametag, admission to the Museum is free.*** Travis Chapin, our Communications Committee Chairman, has volunteered to serve as Reunion Liaison to the Museum and the Birthplace Chapter as needed. Debra has also been in touch with Bill North, Chapter President, to encourage their participation as "ambassadors" as they did in 2013. They are eager to get involved.

Your Board of Directors continues to meet regularly via Skype. We accomplished a great deal at our January meeting. The Membership Growth and Retention Committee is developing a program to encourage our 2nd and 3rd gens to become involved through a "**Student Corner**" essay contest. Eleesa Faulkner and Paul Tibbets are also working on the potential for having an 8th AFHS "App" that would actually put the Society's website on a mobile device. This will be explored with our webmaster.

Regarding Global Outreach, Vivian Rogers-Price has suggested that because our Fall 2020 virtual reunion was a huge success, a Spring Virtual Webinar should be explored. The Board enthusiastically supported this proposal for the Spring of 2022. More details will be forthcoming.

I want to remind everyone that there is a "**Call**

for Nominations" in this issue. If any of our members would like to serve on our Board of Directors, now is the time to step up! I encourage you to give it serious thought. Read the protocol, talk to fellow Bomb Group or Chapter members and give it a go. We welcome all who wish to serve.

Thank you all for your support of our Officers, Directors and Advisors. It is greatly appreciated. If you have anything you wish the Board to address, please reach out to us.

TREASURER'S LEDGER

I am including in this issue of AF News the Financial Statements for the year ending December 31, 2020, for your information. This includes the Society's Profit and Loss Statement and Statement of Financial Position. In examining these reports, you will notice that our investment portfolio is still growing since my last report to you in December. This is very encouraging, and I am pleased to be able to report this to all of you. Our investment portfolio and the income it generates continue to only be used on an individual case basis and only when deemed absolutely necessary.

Our financial advisor, Mr. Gavin Natelli, discusses the Society's financial position with me on a regular basis. He continues to make sound decisions as to what investments we should make to continually grow our portfolio. While it is early in 2021, I'm glad to report that our membership continues to be very generous. For the month of January, we have received donation checks totaling \$7900. Please note that total donations for 2020 were \$17,000. I thank all of you for your continued financial support of our Society.

As a member you can personally help bring rev-

TREASURER'S LEDGER

enue into the Society by registering with Amazon Smiles when shopping on line. It's quick and easy to do. For 2020, Amazon Smiles generated \$164 in additional income. While this is not a large amount,

it does help. Thank you all for your participation. You can find the link on page 6 of the Magazine.

If any of you have any questions regarding any of our financial statements, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. My contact information can be found on p. 2 of every issue of the 8th A F News magazine.

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Profit & Loss January through December 2020	
	Jan - Dec 20
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
4000 · Income/Miscellaneous	
4001 · Amazon Smiles	163.28
4010 · Member Dues Annual	51,868.31
4019 · Member Contributions/Donations	17,064.88
Total 4000 · Income/Miscellaneous	69,096.47
4050 · Investment Income	
4058 · Portfolio Dividends & Interest	8,496.24
4059 · Realized Gain/(Loss) on Invest	0.00
4060 · Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Invest	80,905.95
4061 · Investment Management Fees	0.00
Total 4050 · Investment Income	87,402.19
Total Income	156,498.66
Expense	
5100 · National Administration Expense	
5111 · Corporation Charges	70.00
5121 · 8AF History Projects	141.26
Total 5100 · National Administration Expense	211.26
5200 · Magazine Expenses	
5210 · Printing Expenses	9,320.00
5220 · Postage Expenses	9,644.90
Total 5200 · Magazine Expenses	18,964.90
5300 · National Office Expenses	
5303 · Telephone/DSL	612.97
5304 · Supplies	480.67
5305 · Abila Software/ Computer Exps	2,410.43
5307 · Office Rent	1,200.00
5308 · Insurance	1,171.00
5312 · FICA-8AFHS portion	4,188.30
5313 · Payroll/ Office Management	52,677.14
5315 · Postage & Shipping	921.84
5316 · Bank Charges/ Returned checks	158.85
5320 · Annual Fees	30.00
5323 · Merchant Account Usage Fees	1,389.26
5325 · Miscellaneous Expense	201.24
5326 · Payroll processing fees	3,798.47
Total 5300 · National Office Expenses	69,240.17
Total Expense	88,416.33
Net Ordinary Income	68,082.33
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
6550 · Annual Meeting Revenue	
6551 · Event Registration	12,680.74
6555 · Tours	5,162.32
Total 6550 · Annual Meeting Revenue	17,843.06
Total Other Income	17,843.06
Other Expense	
7000 · Other Expense	0.00
7100 · Annual Meeting Expenses	
7103 · Hotel Expense/Catering	5,000.00
7104 · Tours/Transportation	5,512.32
7106 · Reimbursements	11,429.54
7107 · Entertainment	194.99
Total 7100 · Annual Meeting Expenses	22,136.85
Total Other Expense	22,136.85
Net Other Income	-4,293.79
Net Income	63,788.54

Respectfully submitted,
Anne A. Marek
President and Treasurer, 8th AFHS

Remember,

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

Anne

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position As of December 31, 2020	
	Dec 31, 20
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1017 · Oppenheimer & Co	259,512.22
1040 · Bank of America Checking Acct.	7,404.50
1042 · Bank of America Savings Acct.	1,325.72
Total Checking/Savings	268,242.44
Total Current Assets	268,242.44
TOTAL ASSETS	268,242.44
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2050 · Payroll & Taxes Payable	
2051 · Payroll payable	2,896.57
2052 · FICA & withhold taxes payable	8,938.76
Total 2050 · Payroll & Taxes Payable	11,835.33
2500 · Accrued Expenses	2,367.03
Total Other Current Liabilities	14,202.36
Total Current Liabilities	14,202.36
Total Liabilities	14,202.36
Equity	
3200 · *Unrestricted Net Assets	192,618.57
Net Income	61,421.51
Total Equity	254,040.08
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	268,242.44

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

NOMINATIONS FOR CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUST BE IN THE HANDS OF THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN NO LATER THAN MAY 15, 2021. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE INCLUDED.

- FULL NAME AND ADDRESS OF THE PERSON BEING NOMINATED.
- NOMINEE'S 8TH AFHS MEMBERSHIP NUMBER.
- 8TH AIR FORCE UNIT IN WHICH THE NOMINEE SERVED, IF APPLICABLE.
- BRIEF RESUME OF THE NOMINEE.
- NOMINATING MEMBER'S FULL NAME AND ADDRESS
- NOMINATOR'S 8TH AFHS MEMBERSHIP NUMBER AND, IF APPLICABLE, HIS UNIT.

THE CHAIRMAN WILL RELAY ALL NOMINATIONS TO THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE. NOMINATIONS RECEIVED BY THE CHAIRMAN AFTER MAY 15, 2021, WITHOUT COMPLETE INFORMATION WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY, NOMINEES ARE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS (EITHER ELECTRONICALLY OR BY MAIL) TO THE CHAIRMAN NO LATER THAN JULY 1, 2021, IN ORDER TO BE PLACED ON THE BALLOT.

- A RESUME OR OTHER FORM OF CURRICULUM VITAE.
- IF THE NOMINEE IS IN A PROFESSION THAT REQUIRES A PROFESSIONAL LICENSE TO PRACTICE, A COPY OF THAT LICENSE.
- A COPY OF THE NOMINEE'S PASSPORT.
- IF THE NOMINEE WAS IN THE MILITARY – A COPY OF THE DD214. IF THE NOMINEE IS CURRENTLY ON ACTIVE DUTY OR IN THE ACTIVE RESERVES OR NATIONAL GUARD, A COPY OF THE PERSON'S LAST ORDERS.

SEND ALL NOMINATIONS & DOCUMENTS TO:

ELEESA FAULKNER, 58 DRAKE ST., PUEBLO, CO 81005
EMAIL: EKF58@AOL.COM

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URGENT!!! 8THAFHS WEBSITE

THE SOCIETY IS LOOKING FOR AN INDIVIDUAL TO BE PART OF A TEAM TO MAINTAIN OUR WEBSITE. IF YOU HAVE EXPERIENCE IN WEBSITE DEVELOPMENT AND WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HELPING AS A VOLUNTEER, PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

*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

TEST PILOTS: *'Strive for the Stars'*

by **Suzie Harrison**

American Battle Monuments Commission
Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial

The stories of some of those commemorated at Cambridge American Cemetery naturally align themselves with the incremental technological advances that were staged by the Allies in the rapid implementation of a more modern warfare.

There has always been a direct link between advances in technology and war. In the struggle to prevail over the adversary, man made the leap from flint to copper, to bronze, to iron, right up to C21st digital weapons. Technological progress accelerated throughout 1939-1945, and each advancement prompted a reactionary development from the other side. Indeed, up until WWII's cataclysmic end in 1945, gaining technological superiority over the enemy had been *'a two-sided activity of action, counter-action, and counter counter-action.'*

That was the situation in which the technology-loving American military found itself during WWII. In order to take the fight to the enemy, aircraft had to fly faster, higher, and farther than ever before pushing the boundaries of science. Even the most recent designs were soon upgraded to adapt to the latest escalation. For example, the newest fighter aircraft at the beginning of the war were later modified to carry external fuel tanks to escort bombers deep into enemy territory. Select Airmen – those with sufficient experience and qualifications – tested new technological adaptations in order to find and publish their breaking points; but in the process, it was sometimes the pilots, such as Major Damon



Gause (F-3-85) and 1Lt John Havey (F-5-8), who made the ultimate sacrifice, (Vol.20 No.3).

In April 1916, at just 17 years old, Tommy Hitchcock (pictured left) joined the French Army as a pilot and, thus, entered the fraternal ranks of American Volunteers in the French Air Service known as the Lafayette Flying Corps. He served under the French flag for two years before transferring into the US Army Air Service in February 1918, becoming the youngest American pilot to earn a commission in World War I.



Major Thomas Hitchcock Jr., 18 April 1944

News from Across the Pond...

Twenty-three years later at the outbreak of WWII, Tommy again volunteered his service, but this time he was too old for a fighting role. Instead, the US Army commissioned him as a Major in Air Intelligence and assigned him to the Military Attaché Office at US Embassy, London. His job as liaison between the US Army Air Forces and British Fighter Command enabled him to travel around Britain.

Meanwhile, North American Aviation Co. was in the process of developing the P-51 Mustang for the RAF. During a visit to an RAF development facility at Duxford, Hitchcock was able to directly compare the flight characteristics of the Mustang and Spitfire. As one observer remarked, *'The Mustang was faster than the Spitfire, had a longer range, and, at medium and low altitudes, was nimbler at diving'*. However, the P-51's Allison engine was proving underpowered for high altitude combat and was inclined to stall when flying above 15,000'. British Rolls-Royce test pilot, Ronald Harker, was the first to suggest testing a Merlin engine in the Mustang.

General 'Hap' Arnold, Commander of US Army Air Forces, initially dismissed the proposal outright, but Hitchcock convinced him to at least test the Merlin engine by arguing that any design, which had been tried and tested by the British and survived in the midst of the toughest air war, obviously worked.

Both Hitchcock and Harker, on parallel paths, appreciated that the Merlin engine could solve their problems. Tommy knew of Harker's work and had flown the Mustang himself, so while stateside he enthusiastically lobbied Robert Lovett (US Undersecretary of War) to support the American design. On opposite sides of the Atlantic, engineers at Rolls-Royce (UK) and Packard (US) competed fiercely to produce the first viable aircraft with the new engine. Rolls-Royce won and produced the "Bravo" and "Charlie" models, though Packard eventually was awarded the contract to build the "Delta" model as the US version.

Thomas Hitchcock returned to Britain with a promotion to Lieutenant Colonel and a position as deputy chief of staff of the 9th Air Support Command. As bombing raids progressed deeper and deeper into enemy territory, fighter escorts required

more fuel to keep up with the bombers. The original design of the Mustang was modified to carry more fuel, using both external drop-tanks and modified internal tanks. The extra weight and shift in center-of-gravity, however, destabilized the aircraft and often resulted in wings separating from the fuselage!! As head of research and development, and as a test pilot, Tommy wanted to see the problem firsthand. Sadly, during a test flight of a modified P-51 on 18 April 1944, the aircraft became unstable and plunged to the earth killing its only occupant – Lt Col Thomas Hitchcock.

US Ambassador Winant (who had taught Tommy at St Paul's School in Concord, NH) wrote that the Mustang, *"...is tangible evidence of Tommy's contribution to victory. Without it, we would not be winning the air war over Germany today."* Tommy Hitchcock was *"a chase pilot - first, last and always."*

Another of the many problems that fighter pilots encountered was the lack of oxygen if they had to bail out at high altitude. The man who attempted to resolve this was Nathan Hylan, a small-town doctor from Derry, NH. He was a keen member of the flying club and owned his own aircraft. When he volunteered for the US Army Air Forces, he was assigned as Flight Surgeon with the 352nd Fighter Group at RAF Bodney.



Major Nathan W Hylan, 28 January 1944 (A-7-7)

News from Across the Pond...

In developing a high-altitude escape system to help pilots survive bailouts, Nathan hitched a ride on a training flight at a nearby bomber base. His idea was that the hand-held oxygen system used by bomber crews to move around the aircraft in flight might hold the key to producing a similar system for fighter pilots who needed to bail out in the thin air above 10,000'.

On a cold winter's day, he was driven over to RAF Hethel to join Capt. Alan Green's flight in B-17 Flying Fortress 'Drawers' (42-100001). Green kindly invited Nathan's Sergeant and the driver to accompany them for a 'jolly'.

The aircraft had just levelled off when there was an explosion behind the co-pilot's seat above the liaison radio. One might theorise that working with the oxygen system could have created a spark and the ensuing fire. The flight deck, bomb bay, and nose were immediately filled with acrid smoke, which completely incapacitated the Radio Operator and Bombardier. The fire spread, and the crew tried, but failed, to put it out with a small CO₂ extinguisher. Capt. Green gave the order to bail out.

Those who could don their parachutes did so and jumped. Nathan managed to escape from the dying aircraft with a parachute on his back, but unfortunately, he had failed to fasten his leg straps. When the parachute deployed, he fell straight through his harness, and to his untimely death. His Sergeant and driver were too terrified or unable to jump, and they tragically died in the ensuing crash.

The previous two vignettes illustrate just how rapid developments in aircraft were during WWII, driven by the need to technologically dominate the enemy. This propelled the race for the next generation of aircraft – the jet.

Frederic Austin Borsodi, a Texan, was already a keen golfer and an amateur Grand Prix

Bugatti racer when he left home for his chosen university, Yale. During a 1937 University trip to St. Andrews golf course in Scotland, Frederic had made headlines by tying the course record of 69. He also learned to fly at university. Following graduation, he joined the US Navy, but resigned after a year (to get married) and went to work as a test pilot with the Chance-Vaught Company. Spurred by the attack on Pearl Harbor he volunteered:

The young man in civilian clothes appeared at the Army Air Corp base at Windsor Locks, Connecticut, three days after Pearl Harbor. He said he knew how to fly and wanted to join the Air Force. Assigned to check him out was Lt. Waldo Johnston, Yale 1937, base operations officer. Waldo got into the front seat, the applicant in the back of an AT-6. Off they went to go through the routine figure eights, pylons, and so on. "He went through the book maneuvers flawlessly," remembered Waldo. "Then, just as we were preparing to land, he asked me if I'd mind staying up a little longer. He'd like to try this plane out a bit. I said, 'Sure.' God almighty, in the next half-hour I was put through something like I've never been put through before or since. We rolled and plunged and cartwheeled and skipped and danced. We even went down under the trees along the Farmington River. Right side up, upside down, it made no difference to him. [Ed. note: At Yale, Fred had been a tumbler on the gymnastics team and a diver on the swimming team, in addition to his golf.] I'd never seen such a pilot, but I was damned if I was going to say I'd had enough. I stuck it out. When I landed, shaking, I told him blandly, 'I think you're capable of flying this plane.'"

*'The War Begins', John Field
(Yale Class of 1937)*

Borsodi went on to serve as



News from Across the Pond...

a pilot with the 86th Fighter Squadron of the 79th Fighter Group of the US Army Air Forces.

Flying 130 missions in North Africa and Italy, Fred led a charmed life and was highly decorated (*Distinguished Flying Cross with one Oak Leaf Cluster and one Air Medal with fifteen Oak Leaf Clusters*). He had many adventures, such as the time he was shot down; bailed out; landed between enemy lines; was rescued by a New Zealand tank, which subsequently broke down; and ran 'like Jesse Owens' to get back to friendly lines. Later he found a JU-88 (German light bomber) in Italy which he repaired and used to transport personnel and provisions. When the authorities found out, he was ordered to fly it back to the US for research purposes.

Borsodi returned to the fray in 1943 and was assigned as Air Force chief test pilot. At that time the US was developing a jet aircraft in response to the first sighting of the German Messerschmitt ME-262. America knew it needed to get in the game quickly or be left behind, as Germany and Britain were well ahead in the research and development of jet power. Most early jets designed during World War II, such as the XP-80 had straight wings, similar to previous propeller-driven fighters. This was before the Allies captured German research data that showed the speed advantages of swept-wings. The XP-80 was the first operational jet fighter to have its engine in the fuselage, a design that was used by nearly all subsequent fighter aircraft. It had underwing mountings for rockets or fuel tanks.

Lockheed built the YP-80a and four aircraft were sent to Europe for trial. Two of the planes were disassembled, boxed, and shipped as deck cargo to RAF Burtonwood, England, in December 1944 for reassembly and testing. The first test flights on 27 January 1945 were successful, but tragically, the

next day, with Major Frederic Borsodi (C-4-73) at the controls, the plane suffered an engine fire and crashed.

The remaining YP-80 was grounded during the investigation and was kept from entering service before the war ended. The P-80 testing program had proved very dangerous and like those before him, Fred's luck had finally run out.

The YP-80 re-entered service in July 1945 and on 27

January 1946, Colonel William H. Councill set a record when he flew a P-80 nonstop across America in 4:13:26 hours at an average speed of 584 mph. It was during the Korean conflict that it saw extensive service. Known as the F-80C 'Shooting Star', this highly successful aircraft was the first to be involved in jet-versus-jet combat.

Meanwhile, after flying P-51 Mustangs out of RAF Leiston with the 357th Fighter Group, Chuck Yeager, who survived the war, became a test pilot at Muroc Army Air Field (now Edwards Air Force Base), following graduation from Air Materiel Command Flight Performance School. In the words of the motto of the RAF – *Per*

Ardua Ad Astra – his aspiration was to 'strive for the stars' when he broke the sound barrier on 14 October 1947. None of it would have been possible without the great technological strides made by the pioneers of WWII.

American Battle Monuments Commission will never forget the sacrifice of these brave and innovative Americans. Today, we remember them at Cambridge American Cemetery, along with the thousands of other service members and volunteers who served, achieved, and sacrificed for our freedom.

*Pic top: Lockheed P-80 'Shooting Star' with drop tanks.
Pic bottom: Chuck Yeager (13 February 1923 - 7 December 2020) in Bell BX-1 cockpit – the first jet to break the sound barrier at Muroc Field.*



"...to rest in honor."

by Edouard Renière

The first members of the US forces who were buried in Europe during World War II were those who died in 1942 in the United Kingdom, mostly members of air crews returning from raids on Continental Europe. There were two temporary cemeteries in England, one in Brookwood, near Farnborough, southwest of London and another in Coton, west of Cambridge. On the Continent, temporary US Military Cemeteries had been established

from 1943 in Italy and in 1944 in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, as soon as battle areas of those territories had been liberated. There were others elsewhere with graves of US personnel fallen on the battlefield or in the loss of downed aircraft. Others were set up in the Western part of Germany for battlefield deaths in the last months of the war, others concentrating the remains of downed airmen recovered from local cemeteries. There were also graves for battlefield losses or of downed airmen in Eastern

Germany, Poland and the Balkan countries.

(Below) Map of temporary US military cemeteries in Western Europe – 1945-1947



Memorial Division of the Office of the Quartermaster General. The burial sites were temporary military cemeteries, private and communal ones and they ranged from just one grave to over 17,000 burials in the largest, the U.S. Military Cemetery at Henri-Chapelle, Belgium. Many isolated burials in France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy had been recorded, and those remains had to be exhumed, identified or classified as unknown before they could be reinterred in temporary US Military cemeteries. In the rest of Europe,

Eastern Germany, Poland, Austria, the Balkan countries, were not in the Allied military zone after the cessation of hostilities. Several thousand burial locations there were more difficult to attain before remains could be concentrated in established temporary US Military cemeteries in friendly countries.

A September 1945 War Department plan was set up for the repatriation of World War II dead and the establishment of permanent cemeteries at home and abroad. Graves Registration Companies were utilized for conducting, when required, new searches on the battlefields for unburied remains and isolated graves. Their job was to contact local officials and other civilians in helping locate the graves and register information to identify individuals known to be missing in action in a given area. They also had to secure data on all burials in other Allied, neutral and enemy countries in the theater. Finally, they had to disinter remains from isolated graves and from local and communal cemeteries, identify or record all the data on those classed as unknown in order to have them buried in established US military cemeteries.

In 1947, 14 sites, twelve of them in Europe, were selected by the Secretary of the Army and the American Battle Monuments



A member of the 607th QM Graves Registration Company, assisted by locally hired civilians, during the disinterment procedure at an isolated grave of an American airman in a German civilian cemetery.

Commission (ABMC) to become permanent American cemeteries. These permanent sites were turned over to the ABMC after the interments had been made by the American Graves Registration Service in the configuration proposed by the cemetery architect and approved by the Commission. Among the 12 European sites, 1 was in the United Kingdom, 3 in France, 2 in Belgium, 1 in the Grand-Duchy of Luxemburg and 2 in Italy.

After the disestablishment by the War Department of all temporary cemeteries, remains were permanently interred in accordance with the directions of the next of kin. Many families wanted their loved ones buried in the United States and in a few instances, the next of kin directed that isolated burials be left undisturbed. When doing so, the next of kin assumed complete responsibility for the care of the grave.

All feasible wishes of the families or next of kin were complied with, and they were given the opportunity to designate final burial in either a U.S. national cemetery, a local or private cemetery in the homeland of the next of kin, any American military cemetery abroad that would be established as permanent nearest the place

of temporary burial or a local cemetery abroad nearest the place of temporary burial. "Soldier Dead" from World War II were returned home or reburied in a permanent American Military Cemetery overseas from late 1947 through 1951.

The US Government assumed all costs of those burials or repatriations. Between 1947 and 1954 the Army's American Graves Registration Service oversaw the repatriation of 172,000 American dead from all theaters of operations. The first repatriation to leave Europe took place in Belgium in October 1947. A highly impressive ceremony, planned by Graves Registration with assistance from the US Embassy, the Belgian Army and Antwerp city officials, preceded the first shipment of American war dead from the European continent. The ceremony started in the morning of 4 October 1947 on the Antwerp Market Square, Belgium. A flag-draped casket, chosen anonymously, was placed in the middle of the square and the crowds heard addresses by American General Lucius D. Clay, Mr. Robert Grillon, President of the Belgian Senate, and US Ambassador Alan G. Kirk. General Clay, standing before the coffin said, "We have not yet found the lasting peace for which these men died in their youth. We must determine that free men everywhere should stand together in solid front to ensure a world in which there is a lasting peace, in which the dignity of the individual is recognized and maintained." Mr. Grillon pledged that Belgium would care for the graves of those who remained "as if their tombs were our children's." In fact, since then and even to this day, graves of thousands of the fallen buried in Belgium or other American cemeteries in Europe have been adopted by local citizens who are caring for them,

putting flowers, especially in the Memorial Day period, as a token of remembrance, gratitude and respect.

After prayers by chaplains of the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish faiths, the speakers laid wreaths at the foot of the catafalque, while in the nearby cathedral towers, all the bells pealed. A US Infantry squad fired three volleys and buglers sounded Taps. Military pallbearers lifted the symbolic casket onto a caisson, and the coffin was borne on a gun carriage through the streets of Antwerp. The casket was put on board of the U.S. Army Transport "*Joseph V. Connolly*" while the national anthems of both nations were played. Then, thousands of other caskets were hoisted and put in the holds of the transport, which left the port with the remains of 6,248 US war dead destined for their homeland.

After crossing the Atlantic, the transport glided slowly into New York harbor in the early morning of October 26. Two Navy destroyers, the USS "*Bristol*" and USS "*Beatty*", and the Coast Guard cutter "*Spencer*" escorted the Liberty Ship as their crews snapped to rigid attention along the guardrails. The solitary flag-draped coffin still stood on the Connolly's boat deck surrounded by an honor guard as



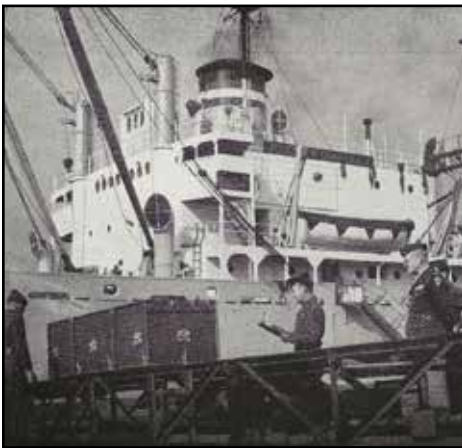
The parade through the streets of Antwerp



Casket and US firing squad on Antwerp Market Square



The casket on the deck of the "Joseph V. Connolly"



The last casket is checked aboard the ship



the ship approached the towering mass of New York City. The huge 16-inch guns of the battleship USS "Missouri" boomed a salute that echoed off the New Jersey Palisades and back through Manhattan's man-made canyons. As the thunder of the guns rolled away, a flight of fighter planes roared overhead before gracefully turning to leave the city's streets in an unnatural quiet. A lone Marine on the Bristol's fantail raised his bugle and sounded "Church Call" and as the notes drifted away, a somber voice broke the silence to deliver a prayer. The Connolly slipped into Pier 61 in Manhattan, and the accompanying tugboats reversed screws and withdrew in a rush of churning water and pounding engines as the crew cast the Connolly's lines ashore and she was firmly secured.

Shortly after noon, the heavy steel sarcophagus was carried ashore by pallbearers representing all the nation's armed services and placed on a caisson that was hitched to a turreted armored car. A bugle sounded, onlookers wiped away tears, and the procession began, solemnly, quietly, 6000 men strong, as it moved up Fifth Avenue, past the first ranks of 400,000 New Yorkers who lined the sidewalks on this warm autumn day to pay final tribute to the nation's war dead.

Pictured below: The "Joseph V. Connolly" moving down the Scheldt River, leaving Antwerp.

There was no confetti or ticker tape and no roaring crowds as there had been 2 years earlier for the shiploads of homecoming veterans and liberated POWs. There was only the sound of muffled footsteps and the hollow clomp of horses' hooves as the procession walked on to Central Park. The marchers turned into the Park and advanced into the Sheep Meadow where forty thousand mourners had assembled to see the casket lifted from its caisson by pallbearers, who solemnly carried it forward and placed it on a purple and black catafalque. As the day wore on and a heat haze settled over the Sheep Meadow, the crowd swelled to 150,000.

Chaplains of three faiths offered prayers for the souls of the war dead and for solace and peace for their loved ones. Speakers eulogized the fallen warriors of World War II. Secretary of the Army Kenneth C. Royall represented the Nation, Governor Thomas E. Dewey the State of New York, and Mayor William O'Dwyer the City. Maj. Gen. Harry H. Vaughan, President Harry S. Truman's military aide, placed a wreath on the coffin. At 4 p.m. a seven-man honor guard fired a three-volley salute, a drummer began a slow roll, and a mournful Taps sounded across the plain. After the last notes had sounded from another, distant bugler beyond a stand of trees, the pallbearers returned the casket to the caisson as the West Point band played "Nearer My God To Thee". The public ceremonies ended, and the assembled onlookers filed home to get on with their lives. The lone casket was carried away and returned to the Connolly from whence the body would make its way home to Ohio or maybe Alabama, where a mother, a father, a brother, and a wife would accompany the remains to a final resting place. For that

American family and thousands of others, life would never be the same.

One of these was the Borgstrom family. Respectively of Swedish and Norwegian descent, Alben Borgstrom and Gunda Peterson were married in Logan, Utah, on December 14, 1910. The first of their ten children, Veran, born in 1911, died at nine from a ruptured appendix. His sister Aleda was born in 1912, followed by Leroy Elmer in 1914, Clyde Eugene in 1916, Mildred in 1917, Wilma in 1919, Boyd Carl in 1921, twins Rolon Day and Rulon Jay in 1925, Eldon Kay in 1929.

The family was poor and lived through hard work on their farm in Thatcher, near Tremonton, Box Elder County, Utah. Before World War II broke out for the United States, Clyde Eugene enlisted in October 1940 in the US Marine Corps, then Boyd Carl went in, followed in November 1942 by Leroy Elmer who joined the Infantry. Two months after they turned 18, the twins, Rolon and Rulon enlisted in July 1943 in Salt Lake City. Rolon went into the USAAF, training as a gunner, while Rulon joined the Infantry. Five sons had "gone off to war" and only young Elden, 15, was left. On their farm, Alben and Gunda felt somehow lost, but regular letters coming in from the five absent sons helped to keep up their spirits. The family home proudly



Memorial srvcies held at Central Park,
New York, 26 October 1947



Borgstrom family late 1930s

displayed a service banner with a blue star for each of the five sons in the service. But sad news came in late March 1944, when the family was advised that Clyde had been Killed In Action. A member of Company A, 2nd Aviation Engineer

Battalion, 1st Marine Amphibious Corps, PFC Clyde Eugene Borgstrom had been sent to the Pacific area in 1942 and had served in New Caledonia, Bougainville and Guadalcanal, a southwestern Pacific Island secured only after fierce fighting, which he survived. As a bulldozer operator, he was clearing land of trees and debris for a new airstrip on Guadalcanal on 17 March 1944. Thick mud and heavy rains made the task difficult, and a tree fell and crushed him.

Three months later, added grief came when Alben and Gunda learned that Leroy had also been killed. Pfc. Leroy Elmer Borgstrom, 30, the oldest son and generally known as "Roy," was a medic with the Army's 361st Infantry Regiment of the 91st Infantry Division, and, by convention, was not allowed to carry a gun. Following training in North Africa in the Spring of 1944, the Regiment debarked at Anzio on June 1st. During the 5th Army's campaign up North from Rome, it had been momentarily attached to the 36th Infantry

Division and was later involved in heavy action on the advance along the Batignano-Paganico Highway, northeast of Grosseto. While carrying a wounded soldier to safety over his shoulder under heavy fire near Roccastrada, Leroy was shot and killed on June 22, 1944.

The Bergstrom brothers



Clyde Eugene



LeRoy Elmer



Rolon Day



Rulon Jay

As for one of the twins, Sgt Rolon Day Bergstrom, he was shipped overseas to England on June 28, 1944, and assigned to the 506th Bomb Squadron of the 44th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force as a tail gunner. His crew had flown on a few missions to Germany. On take-off from Shipdham on 8 August 1944, B-24 "Pregnant Peg", Serial 42-50328, one of the Squadron's 8 Liberators sent to bomb the La Perth airfield in Romilly, France, lost one of its engines. Pilot 2nd Lt Myron G. Jacobs decided to abort the mission and tried to return to the base. While flying the traffic pattern, the pilot attempted to get back to Shipdham, but as a result of turning into the dead engine, it spun in and crashed with a full load of bombs. It exploded at 11:55 hours alongside the road at Birds Corner, Yaxham near Dereham, Norfolk, 4km northeast of the base. The load comprised 46 x 100lb fragmentation bombs, half of which exploded in the crash and others in the ensuing fire. All 10 crew members lost their lives in the incident, Rolon being recorded as having died from injuries. The crew of 42-50328 was Pilot 2nd Lt Myron G. Jacobs of Muscantine, Iowa; Co-Pilot 2nd Lt Howard K. Harmon of Salt Lake City, Utah; Navigator 2nd

Lt Frederick F. McDaris of Inola, Oklahoma; Bombardier 2nd Lt Kenneth P. Ward of Burlington, Iowa; Engineer S/Sgt Emil L. Grogg of Dunmore, West Virginia; Radio Operator S/Sgt Jack V. Whalen of Decatur, Illinois; Right Waist Gunner Sgt Robert J. Bell of Springfield, Massachusetts; Left Waist Gunner Karl D. Breakey of Johnsonburg, Pennsylvania; Top Turret Gunner/Armorer Sgt Shirley A. Jones of Largo, Florida, and Tail Gunner Sgt Rolon D. Borgstrom.

All were buried on 10 August at the temporary US Army cemetery in Cambridge, which later became the permanent Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial in Coton, Cambridgeshire, England. Only Left Waist Gunner Breakey's remains still rest there, those of all the others were brought back to the United States, including those of Rolon. Pilot Jacobs, Co-Pilot Harmon, Bombardier Ward and Engineer Grogg rest in a common grave at the Fort Scott National Cemetery in Kansas. Navigator McDaris is buried in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Radio Operator Whalen rests in Decatur, Illinois. Right Waist Gunner Bell is buried in Springfield, Massachusetts. Top Turret Gunner Jones rests in Clearwater, Florida.

So, once again, a Western

Union telegram had arrived at the Borgstrom farm. When Rolon Day was killed, Utah's senators, congressmen and governor petitioned the federal government to release his brothers Rulon and Boyd from service in combat zones, but no decision could be made before another telegram came in August reporting that Rulon was Missing In Action in France.

PFC Rulon Jay Borgstrom had been serving with Company E of the 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. After landing in Normandy, his unit was engaged in the fight to gain control of the Brest harbor facilities in Brittany. He had first been reported as missing in the area of Le Dreff but was found and died later on August 25, 1944, from wounds received in action. Wilma Hawkes, one of the Borgstrom sisters, recalled in a 1998 Utah newspaper interview that the regular agent at the Western Union office refused to deliver the telegram reporting fourth son Rulon's death because he did not want "to see Mrs. Borgstrom faint in grief again." It was another agent who brought the terrible, sad news.

The family petitioned the Marine Corps asking for a permanent discharge for their son, Boyd Carl, who had been serving

in the Pacific. Boyd's commanders on Johnston's Island, an outpost protecting Hawaii, were reluctant to send the fifth brother home, for he'd had recent furloughs. Besides, with the war not yet won, Boyd wanted to fight on. But in the end, permission was granted, and Boyd came back home to Utah. He didn't go back to the Pacific as he had wished but was posted to Camp LeJeune, NC, for further training and ultimately discharged as a PFC on October 7, 1944. Boyd would struggle with the loss of his brothers for the rest of his life. So would his sisters and their younger brother Eldon Kay, too young to serve and still a teen when all this was happening around him. For their devastated parents and for them, the experience and the loss were as painful as could be.

As the only four Gold Star family in the country (a Gold Star stood for each family member who died in the service), Alben and Gunda and the tragedy of their sons' loss became in a way, a media sensation. In the same way, another family had suffered the loss of five sons in the Pacific, the Sullivan brothers from Waterloo, Iowa, who served on the cruiser "Juneau" which was hit by a Japanese torpedo and sank with the ship during the battle of the Solomon Islands on November 13, 1942. Like the parents of the Sullivan brothers, the Borgstroms appeared at conferences and events and helped sell War Bonds, trying to cope as best they could, but their lives were destroyed.

The four Borgstrom brothers had been buried in Europe and the Pacific. A collective funeral for them was planned in 1947 and it took a year to organize the joint 1948 services, again, a particularly



The four coffins at the Utah Distribution Center before their transfer to Tremonton.

hard period for their parents and the family. Elaborate plans were made for a special two-day tribute to the four brothers. As they had served in separate branches of the service and different theaters of action, it was thought important to give them and their family all possible honor.

The caskets holding the remains that had been exhumed from Guadalcanal, Nettuno in Italy, Cambridge and Brittany had been brought to the Utah Distribution Center in Salt Lake City and arrived on June 25, 1948, at the Shaw and Roberts Funeral Home in Tremonton, Utah. The bodies lay in state during the afternoon, and the brothers' parents emotionally paid their respects there. A sentry from each of the 4 services, Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force stood at each casket. One sentry kept vigil all through the night. The following morning, 26 June, memorial services took place at the crowded Tabernacle Mormon Church in Garland, 2 miles North of Tremonton.

Speeches were made by Church President George A. Smith, Utah Governor Herbert B. Maw, Clarence E. Smith (Principal of the High School attended by all the Borgstrom boys) and General Mark W. Clark, Commander of the 5th Army in the Italian campaign,

who had been assigned to represent the military. In his speech, Clark expressed the gratitude of the nation : "These four boys - Leroy, Clyde, Rolon and Rulon - symbolize the spirit of sacrifice evidenced on land, on the sea and in the air by millions of American fighting men - the living as well as those now dead." He concluded that they "achieved what very few of us dare hope will be our

fortune - a share in the shaping of destiny. To them belongs a page in history, a page of courage and strength that will be forever read and re-read by their fellow citizens." Other high-ranking officers of the four branches and dignitaries of the State of Utah attended the event, as well as thousands of private citizens, present at the church and the cemetery. After the "impressive, yet simple military services" as a local newspaper reported, the parents of the deceased brothers were presented with posthumous decorations from the three generals and the admiral present at the rites, including three Bronze Stars, an Air Medal and a Good Conduct Medal.

After the morning service, the Sixth Army Escort detachment furnished luncheon for more than 700 persons at the Garland National Armory, the Borgstrom family and some distinguished guests being served in a private dining room. After the meal, the funeral cortege was formed and moved slowly southward to the Riverside cemetery in Tremonton. Traffic was diverted all along the route and when the band passed through the cemetery gates, hundreds of onlookers watched in respectful silence. Many tears were shed as the procession of the four dark olive drab hearses, each bearing the flag-draped casket

of one of the brothers, approached the canopied gravesite.

Behind each hearse were Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps pallbearers, side by side with members of veterans' organizations acting as honorary pallbearers. The rites at the gravesite were brief but impressive in their sad solemnity. After the caskets had been lowered to their final resting place, side by side, and a final honor volley had been discharged, the military band marched silently through the cemetery gate and the



family and high officials began to leave the grandstand that had been built beside the graves. For the Borgstroms and all of the Bear River Valley community, a tragic occasion had ended.

The services had been broadcast live on local radio, and newspapers all around the country reported the ceremony. LIFE magazine did a spread in its July 19, 1948, edition. In April 1959, the Army honored the Borgstrom brothers by naming a reserve training center in Ogden, Utah, in their honor. Alben and Gunda and their surviving children got along as



best they could with their lives and their grief. Alben died of cancer in 1956, and Gunda passed away in 1971. In August 2001, a memorial to all North Box Elder County Veterans and prominently bearing the images and names of the brothers was dedicated at the Midland Square in downtown Tremonton, Utah. On the city's Main Street, the Bear River Valley Museum, opened in 2011, has a memorial that pays tribute to the Four Brothers.

As of November 2019, Bergstrom family members and the Veterans of Foreign Wars are trying to erect a monument to mark the spot in the Tremonton Cemetery where the boys are buried side by side. Former City councilwoman Diana Doutre had said at the time that the city would help in financing the monument, leaving the planning to the family. Deborah Kay Long, of Garland, a daughter of the youngest son, Eldon, is representing the family. In a local late 2019 newspaper interview, Long said that the family doesn't want to change the headstones, but would like larger flags and some kind of monument or statue there. "It will be nice," Long said. "My dad would love what we

are doing. We've been working at it for some time." She added that her family always decorates the graves on Memorial Day. "Our mother decorated graves until she couldn't anymore. I took over and eventually my daughter will take over," Long said. "Our mother Evelyn has been gone for 11 years. We have a fabulous daughter who will see that the graves are decorated with respect when I am gone," she said, adding that *"This is a great story. We need to mark their graves so people can find them and learn their story."*



Pic at left: Borgstrom brothers are borne to their final resting place. Top: Funeral service at the Mormon Church in Garland, Utah. Above: The Memorial on Midland Square, Tremonton.

INTRODUCING...

★THE STUDENT CORNER!



Hello Members,

I hope this finds everyone healthy and safe in 2021. We are happy to introduce a new section of our magazine in hopes of generating more interest for the youngest generations of our veterans. The **Student Corner** will focus on students from the elementary to high school level. We are planning that future issues of the magazine will contain a variety of activities for students interested in learning about World War II and especially, our veterans.

Our first Student Corner will be an essay type contest where students need to interview or talk with a World War II veteran. You may do a phone, facetime or an in-person interview of the veteran. ***If you need help finding a veteran to interview, please email us and we will send you information of a person willing to be interviewed.***

Contest requirements are as follows:

- **Elementary- (3rd-5th)- 200-400 words**

Possible interview questions for this age group:

What group did you serve with? Were you part of the ground crew or air crew? What were your responsibilities of your position? How much training and what type of training did you have before going to war? Provide their response. In your own words, describe what you learned from the veteran, and how it has impacted your life.

- **Middle School- (6th-8th)-350-600 words**

Possible interview questions for this age group:

How did you end up in the Air Force (Army Air Corp) instead of another branch of service? What

were some of your responsibilities in the war? What was the hardest part of your job during the war? Did your training prepare you for the war? Provide their response. In your own words, describe what you learned from the veteran, and how it has impacted your life.

- **High School- (9th-12th)-500-750 words**

Possible questions for this age group:

How old were you when you fought in the war? Were you drafted or did you volunteer? Were you part of the ground crew or air crew? What were some of your job responsibilities? How did it feel to serve your country during wartime? Did you make the military a career? Did you ever lose some of your friends during the war? Provide their response. In your own words, describe what you learned from the veteran, and how it has impacted your life.

Essays/articles **MUST** be submitted by **May 15, 2021**, to ekf58@aol.com

The winner in each grade category will have their article published in a future issue of the 8th A F News and will be recognized during our next reunion in October, 2021, in Savannah. We are considering setting up a small type of scholarship fund for the winner in each age group of this contest.

If anyone has ideas or suggestions for this section, please email me at ekf58@aol.com.

Thank you,

Eleesa Faulkner

CHAPTER NEWS

8th Air Force Historical Society Badger Chapter Don Hilbig, President

Greetings from Wisconsin! Sunshine here today (mid-January) and I am happy to report minimal damage thus far from the COVID-19 attacks. No fatalities reported. But it is rather tough going, to keep the Chapter together. Our Board meets monthly in person and has put a priority on intrachapter communication with and between members.

Although we continue to be grounded from in-person meetings, we are developing a Zoom program meeting similar to the National Zoom meeting last October. We hope to roll that out in March or early April. Beyond that we are exploring two projects. One of which is a major long-term effort to preserve any 8th Air Force artifacts; and at the same time, be a visible community outreach and educational site/center for the general public as well as our chapter members, i.e. a “store front” type museum.

This could be an overreach but worth an exploratory effort. The second project, more modest, would build on previous successful educational efforts by Chapter team members to visit schools,

and service organizations, etc. Some of our WWII members have done an admirable job with this in the past, especially at aircraft/flying conventions like the EAA in Oshkosh, WI.

On a lighter note, these gloomy days remind me of my three years stationed in “merry ole England”. Ah, to walk Piccadilly Circus again or per chance observe the activities in Hyde Park or sip a warm pint of “black and tan” along with a game of darts. The English really were a friendly



sort; despite their language and shillings and weather. Certainly, a faithful, generous people full of both a fighting spirit and humorous gift.

Telling the story of the 8th Air



Force is exciting and rewarding, but most of all, it presents that awesome legacy of accomplishments to the current and future generations. Much like our nation's storied early beginnings in the struggle for indepen-

dence and the birth pangs of our founding, the story of the “*Mighty Eighth*” must be told or it will fade into oblivion. It is too precious to allow that ending. Let us cherish, remember, and tell the story of those awesome events in England and over the skies of Europe.

I will close with a prayer for all of us to stay healthy, active and gener-

ous in this New Year. May God bless you and yours. Cheers!

Pictured above: Bob Birmingham, 358th BG nose gunner; middle: Chet Gardeski, 305th BG; bottom: veterans from WWII forward in the Wisconsin Chapter.

CHAPTER NEWS

**8th Air Force Historical Society
Georgia Chapter
Atlanta, GA
Brent Bracewell
President**

For the month of November, the GA Chapter in lieu of our regular monthly luncheon traveled to Savannah where we partnered with the Birthplace Chapter and the National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force for a memorable weekend of growing and building new friendships, while we remembered and honored the sacrifices made by our loved ones and friends who served in the Mighty Eighth.

This trip was especially sensitive to many of our GA Chapter members as this was our first weekend trip to Savannah to visit our Mighty Eighth Museum in which we did not have a single WWII Veteran with us. We each recalled the day, (not too long ago) in which we had to rent a bus to carry our multitude of WWII and Mighty Eighth Chapter Member Veterans. Now we were a group of “Second Generation-ers” or just Mighty Eighth Enthusiasts. As sad as that was to me, I was encouraged and inspired by the participation, enthusiasm, and comradery that was felt, and the love that was shared among these Historical and Museum members who are excited to meet and preserve the stories of the Mighty Eighth.

We kicked off the weekend by arriving at the Museum on Friday around lunchtime (having departed



from all points on the compass to get there) to meet Birthplace Chapter members who both welcomed us, had lunch with us, and even took us on guided tours of the Museum (some of our Chapter members being first time visitors, and several not having visited the Museum in some time). Museum CEO, Scott Loehr, also took time to “put out the welcome mat” making us all feel like we had returned home to family after a long deployment. Of course, the food at Ms. Sophie’s Restaurant was delicious as usual. Friday night was back to the hotel to meet in the hospitality suite for fellowship and story sharing late into the evening.

Saturday morning, Jerry McLaughlin (Author of the book about the restoration of the B-17 “*City of Savannah*” which is on display at our Museum) gave us a guided tour and presentation all around the “*City of Savannah*” B-17. Jerry has spoken all over the country about this amazing restoration. He is an entertaining speaker and very knowledgeable of both its history and restoration, and even included and recognized other members of the restoration team.

Following Jerry’s presentation, we were free to continue to tour the Museum or visit the sites around Savannah until Saturday evening.

For Saturday evening we got back together for dinner and a presentation at the American Legion Post 135 located in downtown Savannah (which happens to be the Birthplace of the Mighty Eighth Air Force!). That evening’s event included dinner at the co-located great “*American Eatery-Betty Bombers*”, grabbing a beverage of your choice at the American Legion Bar (also co-located on the same floor), and joining our friends from the Birthplace Chapter of the Mighty Eighth Air



CHAPTER NEWS



Force Historical Society, in the Legion Hall meeting room (also on the same floor) for fellowship and a great presentation by our very own Ray Fordyce whose father served in the 385th Bomb Group. We could not help but enjoy Ray's already very informative and entertaining presentation imagining that we were in the birthplace of the Eighth Air Force (maybe the same room). In addition to members of the Birthplace Chapter joining us, our very own Museum CEO, Scott Loehr and his lovely bride Debra, accepted our invitation along with WWII Mighty Eighth Veteran and B-24 Pilot, Paul Grassey to join us. We are all proud of Scott for the wonderful job he is doing leading our Museum and much appreciated he spending his Saturday evening with us. Of course having a real Mighty Eighth veteran Paul Grassey to entertain us with his stories was the perfect appetizer to Ray's presentation.

A little more about our speaker, Ray. He is an 8th Air Force Historian and the son of Capt. RB Fordyce, who served 3 ½ years with an 8th Air Force bomber group, flying B-17s, during World War II. He is the author of numerous published articles about the air war in Europe and has spoken at many venues around the country on the WW2 Air War and other aviation related subjects. Ray went to West Point, retired from a management career with IBM and later Siemens, registering 3 US patents. First elected in 2016, and re-elected this year, he today serves as Chairman of the Cobb County Civil Service Board.

That concluded the events for Saturday, but we did have one final event on Sunday that ended up being yet another weekend highlight.

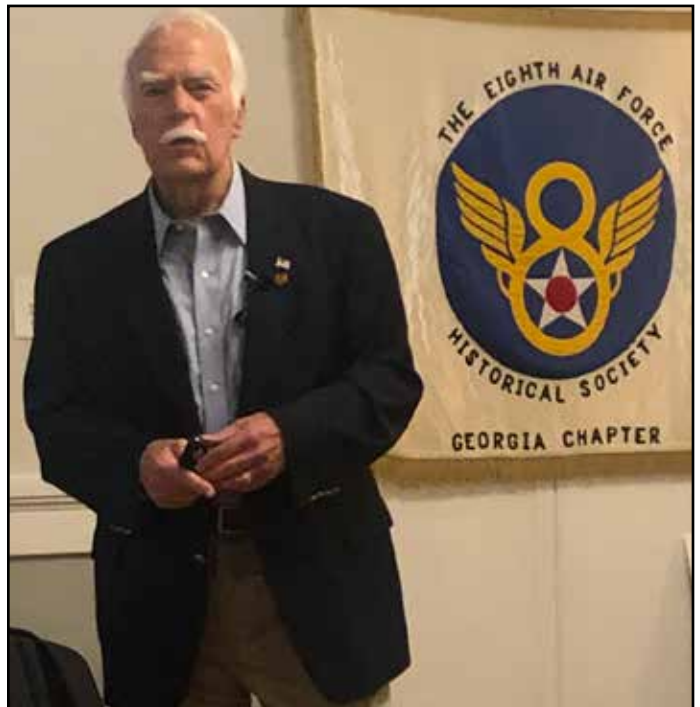
Scott allowed us to get into the Museum Memorial Chapel before the Museum opened for a Remembrance Ceremony on Sunday morning. This ceremony included candle lighting to remember the 26,000 killed in action and also those who did return, but have

since gone on. We have a saying in our group that as long as we continue to say a past family member's name out loud, they never truly die, and this was our opportunity to recall our family member or friend before the group. What a moving ceremony it was for each person in attendance to come forward to light a candle while saying their family members name and what unit they served with in the Mighty Eighth. The Mighty Eighth veterans who gave us that Museum also built the Chapel for this very purpose. It was an honor to say their names and recall them with a smile in the Chapel that they built. There was many a happy tear shed that morning which is how our Mighty Eighth veterans would have wanted it.

Upon conclusion of the weekend, Scott Loehr, I think, captured everyone's feeling and said it best, "This was so much fun, let's make this an annual event and do it every Veterans Day Weekend!"

Great idea and maybe members from other Chapters can join us next year!

Blue Skies!



Pics preceding page, top: Project Manager, Jerry McLaughlin with City of Savannah and tour group. Bottom of preceding page: Ray Fordyce, Andy Steigmeir, veteran Paul Grassey, Museum CEO/President Scott Loehr, and Brent Bracewell.

Pic at top of this page: Candle lighting ceremony in Museum Chapel

Pic above: Ray Fordyce speaking



Savannah: Someward Bound

47th Annual 8th AFHS Reunion

October 27-31, 2021

Savannah...filled with beauty, mystery, and history. She has it all. So much in fact, we've scheduled three (3) tours to help you see and experience as much as possible in the Hostess City!

Our first tour on **Thursday morning, October 28th**, will explore some of the more 'unfamiliar places' you may not have seen before during a past visit. We'll take a look outside the Historic District and visit lesser known but beautiful neighborhoods such as Ardsley Park and Victory Drive. Also visit the tranquil area of Isle of Hope to see beautiful Antebellum Homes situated along the beautiful yet quaint, Bluff Drive. This area is where they filmed "Glory"

On **Friday, October 29th**, we will be guests of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. It is one of the finest

museums in the US—the only one dedicated to the 8th Air Force! For many of you, this will be a "coming home." A time of reflection and remembrance.

Often referred to as "soul stirring", the "Mighty Eighth" is an incredibly emotional experience



throughout every inch of the more than 90,000 sq ft under roof. Stroll through the contemplative Memorial Gardens and wind your way into the Chapel of the Fallen Eagles. Modeled after a Gothic English village chapel, be sure to

enjoy the exquisitely hand-crafted stained-glass windows and the beauty of the antique furnishings. Imagine young airmen attending Sunday services on occasion, and the comfort they experienced.

The Roger A. Freeman Eighth Air Force Research Center is dedicated to promoting research on Eighth Air Force history and to expanding its priceless collection of over nine thousand books significant to the history of the Eighth Air Force as well as original manuscripts, photographs, artifacts, works of art, oral history interviews and personal accounts.

The John H. Woolnough Library serves as the research center's reading room. Of special interest is the research center's collection of Eighth Air Force volumes, including all the published group histories. Most of these books are shelved in the John



H. Woolnough Library.

Manuscript highlights include original diaries and letters as well as over 62,000 previously unpublished photographs.

Of course, the centerpiece exhibit of the Museum would have to be the B17-G, named appropriately, “*City of Savannah*”, and currently undergoing extensive restoration by an incredibly talented team of volunteers in the Combat Gallery.

Be sure and order a delicious box lunch from Miss Sophie’s (check your registration form). You’ll be able to enjoy it in the Museum’s beautiful Colonial Group, Inc., Art Gallery. The Art Gallery displays paintings from the world’s leading aviation artists. Currently, the “Permanent Collection Exhibit” selected by guest curator, Keith Ferris, features 64 paintings by artists from around the world who specialize in aviation subjects.

Founded in 1733, Savannah is one of America’s finest preserved cities and considered a jewel of the south. During our final tour on

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE



Saturday, October 30th, you will enjoy a comprehensive, completely narrated guided tour of one of the largest National Urban Historic Landmarked Districts in the United States. You will be transported through more than 287 years of American history. Ride along cobblestone paved streets beneath moss-draped



beautiful squares, romantic riverfront and abundance of true southern charm. Your driver will



then take you to City Market—a wonderful pedestrian area downtown filled with quaint shops and eateries—for a leisurely lunch on your own. Your driver will then

oaks and experience the “Old South” with her stately mansions,

pick you up and return you to the hotel by 3:00pm.



47th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Marriott Savannah Riverfront

October 27-31, 2021

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 meals are priced separately**—Breakfast buffet begins Thursday, Oct 28th —Sunday, Oct 31st. 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 **October 10, 2021** 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



47th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Marriott Savannah Riverfront

October 27-31, 2021

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION

(800) 285-0398

or **ONLINE** registration on our website: **8thafhs.org**

(Reference '8th Air Force Historical Society' for group rate)

Hotel has a 48 hour cancellation policy

Location: 100 General McIntosh Blvd., Savannah, GA

Stay in the heart of historic Savannah, Georgia, at Marriott Savannah Riverfront. Explore the warmth and beauty of Georgia's oldest city from our riverfront location, with many top attractions, shops and restaurants just a short stroll away. Treat yourself to a massage at our premier day spa, work out in the 24-hour fitness center or go for a swim in our seasonal outdoor pool. Enjoy traditional Southern breakfast options at Blue, our delightful restaurant overlooking the riverfront, or enjoy cocktails and a light meal in the Atrium Bar. If a meeting, conference or social event brings you to our hotel, our contemporary indoor and outdoor venues, custom catering and outstanding service are available to help create an impressive gathering. At the end of the day, retreat to your room or suite and enjoy plush bedding, room service and Wi-Fi access while you take in views of the Savannah River or downtown. No matter what brings you here, we look forward to making your visit to Savannah remarkable.

Parking

Self-parking has been discounted to \$25 per day per vehicle. There are two [2] electric charging stations available.

RESERVATION INFORMATION

Group Name: *8th Air Force Historical Society*

Reunion Dates: October 27-31, 2021

Rate: \$180+13% (tax) +\$6.00 (City & State occupancy fees) Total per night: \$209.40

Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability.

Cut off Date: 9/27/2021

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

WHEELCHAIR RENTALS

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

****HOSPITALITY SUITES****

The 8th AFHS is pleased to announce that we are again offering **HOSPITALITY SUITES** to groups. However, due to restrictions on alcohol in the hotel, **SUITES** will be "**JUNIOR**" **SUITES**—sleeping rooms @ **\$230++ per night**. The number of suites is limited, so we ask that you reserve your suite as soon as possible. **This is also a sleeping room, so just an additional \$50 above the group rate.** Suites are located on various floors throughout the hotel. **Two bedroom suites are also available for larger groups to share space.**

In order to **RESERVE** your suite,

please call **Jamie Walker** ASAP for details:

(912) 373-2036



47th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

Marriott Savannah Riverfront, Savannah, GA

October 27-31, 2021

Wednesday, October 27

1:00pm — 6:00pm
6:00pm — 7:00pm
7:00pm — 9:00pm
7:00pm — until

Reunion Registration open

Complimentary Welcome Reception, followed by dinner on your own

8th AFHS Board Meeting

Hospitality Suites remain open throughout reunion

Thursday, October 28

7:30am — 8:30am
8:00am — 12:00pm
9:30am — 12:00pm
1:00pm — 6:00pm
2:00pm — 3:30pm

3:45pm — 5:00pm
5:30pm — 6:30pm
6:00pm — 9:00pm
7:00pm — 9:00pm

American Breakfast Buffet

Reunion Registration open

*"The Other Savannah"**

Reunion Registration open

"Learn from the Past...Journey to the Future"— UK Speakers: Emily Charles, Hattie Hearn, Suzie Harrison, Jeff Hawley, & Paul Bellamy—with Q & A

"Honoring Their Service" Gary Webb—Webb Military Museum

Heritage League Meeting

Cash Bar Open

Buffet dinner and program: *"The 8th—Beyond the Legacy"* LTC Steve Bolton, Garrison Commander, Hunter Army Air Field *(subject to the needs of the US military)*

Friday, October 29

7:30am — 8:30am
8:00am — 12:00pm
8:00am — 9:15am
9:30am — 2:30pm
1:00pm — 6:00pm
3:15pm — 4:30pm
6:00pm — 9:00pm
7:00pm — 9:00pm

American Breakfast Buffet

Reunion Registration open

Group Meetings

*National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force**

Reunion Registration open

WWII Vets with Q & A

Cash Bar Open

Rendezvous Dinners

Saturday, October 30

7:30am — 8:30am
8:00am — 12:00pm
8:45am — 10:15am
11:00am — 2:30pm
12:00pm — 4:00pm
1:00pm — 6:00pm
6:00pm — 9:00pm
7:00pm — 10:00pm

American Breakfast Buffet

Reunion Registration open

General Membership Meeting

*"Historic Savannah" (City Tour ~ lunch on your own)**

8th AFHS Board Meeting

Reunion Registration open

Cash Bar Open

Gala Dinner and Program

Sunday, October 31

7:30am — 8:30am

American Breakfast Buffet

***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 35 participants, unless otherwise stated. Driver and Staff gratuities ARE NOT included in the tour prices.**



REGISTRATION FORM

47th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

Marriott Savannah Riverfront, Savannah, GA
October 27-31, 2021

REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS October 10, 2021	Price p/p	# of People	TOTAL
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	#	\$
REGISTRATION FEE—ALL attendees MUST pay registration fee.	\$ 45	#	\$
Registration fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel:	\$ 30	#	\$
Buffet Breakfast @ \$33 per day: Thursday _____ Friday _____ Saturday _____ Sunday _____	\$ 33	#	\$
BOX LUNCHES @ \$10 per lunch FRIDAY, Oct. 29th, ONLY!!!! Box lunches will be available from the Mighty 8th Museum ONLY: You MUST PREORDER THEM HERE! Please select: Ham # _____ or Turkey # _____ Vegetarian Wrap # _____	Price is per lunch per person: \$ 10	#	\$
DINNERS			
Thursday, Oct 28 — EVENING DINNER BUFFET Savannah Style favorites	\$ 55	#	\$
Friday, Oct 29—RENDEZVOUS DINNER Roasted Breast of Chicken and seasonal sides	\$ 45	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 30—GALA BANQUET (Please select ONE entrée)			
Filet Cut Sirloin	\$ 55	#	\$
Pecan Grouper (<i>a Savannah favorite</i>)	\$ 55	#	\$
Vegetarian plate(s) Please indicate [number]: Thurs # _____ Fri # _____ Sat # _____	\$ 45	#	\$
TOUR OPTIONS:			
Thursday, Oct 28: The Other Savannah Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 25	#	\$
Friday, Oct 29: Tour of National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force —round trip	\$ 15	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 30: Historic Savannah City Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 25	#	\$
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

Berardi, Joseph R. Sr., 97, of



Cumru Township, passed away Monday, November 2, 2020, in the Heritage at Green Hills. He was the husband of the late Virginia E.

(Moricca) Berardi who passed away in 2015. Born in New York City, Mr. Berardi was the son of the late August and Louise (Praino) Berardi. He was a member of the Church of Saint Benedict, Mohnton, and was a 1940 graduate of Olean High School in New York. Mr. Berardi enlisted in the US Army Air Corp, completed Aviation Cadet Training, was Commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant, Class of 43 E, and received his Pilot Wings. After completing training Flying the B-17, he was assigned to 351st BG, 509th Squadron stationed at Polebrook, Northamptonshire, England. He completed 32 combat missions over France and Germany. He was promoted to the rank of Captain and awarded the Distinguish Flying Cross along with Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters. Following completion of his combat tour, he was assigned to Air Force Engineering Officer's School and then served as a test pilot. After completion of his military service Mr. Berardi was employed by New York Telephone Company in Buffalo, New York for 37 years, retiring June 1, 1983, as a senior equipment engineer before the split of Bell Telephone Company. He is survived by his sons, Dr. Joseph R. Berardi, Jr., husband of RoseAnn Berardi of Amherst, New York, and Dr. Thomas R. Berardi, husband of

Ann Marie Berardi of Collegeville. Mr. Berardi is also survived by 8 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren.

Bracewell, CMSgt. James N. (ret), 97, passed away November 17,



2020. He was surrounded by his daughter, grandchildren and great grandchildren in San Diego, California.

He was born near Allerton, Iowa,

and grew up on the family farm. After the droughts of 1934-1936 he decided not to farm, and his girlfriend Mildred Fenimore would not marry a farmer. At age 17, he went to Ft. Des Moines to enlist in the Army Air Corp as a mechanic. After basic training at Jefferson Barracks, Missouri, he went to Chanute Field, Illinois, for mechanics training and finished mid-January 1942. He was sent to Mc Dill Field, Tampa, Florida, as part of the 8th AF.

Due to his height of 5'2" he was transferred to an aircrew as a tail gunner on a B-17. He went to Indian Springs, Nevada, for paratrooper and gunnery school. He returned to Florida for flight training on a new B-17.

Jim was part of the 97th BG first to arrive in England, July 1942. He was on the first daylight bombing mission on August 17, 1942, over Rouen, France. He flew 10 more missions before catching pneumonia and was reassigned to mechanics duty. Jim went to North Africa with the 12th AF and later onto Foggia, Italy, with the 15th AF.

He returned to the U.S. and married Mildred the first open day the minister had on Friday, September 13, 1944. He went to Seattle, Washington, to train on B-29s and then to Tucson, Arizona. He was still in the reserves and was called up July, 1948, to help with the Berlin Airlift.

He received every mechanics certificate except the one for welding. His B-17 "Our Baby" set a Group and Squadron record of 71 missions without an early return before being shot down. Jim was one of the many who "kept 'em flying!" Jim's honors are: WWII Victory Medal, Presidential Conduct Medal, European-African-Middle East Theatre Service Medal, 5 Overseas Service Bars, No Time Lost Under AW107 Lapel Button, American Campaign Medal, Blue Campaign Ribbon (for being the oldest group overseas), 6 Battle Stars, and Honorable Service Badge.

While at home, half of his garage was a large train set for his great grandsons. He enjoyed going to Lawrence Welk shows and local basketball and football games. He also shared his travel slide shows at his home and at the assisted living center.

Croce, Leo R., 96, passed away on January 27, 2020,



in Orinda, CA. He was a true patriot and gentleman, a devoted family man, and a leader in his profession and the communities he served. He was kind, charming,

intelligent and generous. He possessed a great sense of humor and a true zest for life. Leo was the youngest of four children, a precocious student, talented athlete and natural born leader. He was student body president of his elementary, junior high and high schools. In his senior year he represented his school at California Boys State. He lettered in track and football, was a competitive swimmer, played church-league baseball and achieved Eagle Scout. He was passionate about music and formed a quartet that won radio Amateur Hour competitions, had a gig at Lake Tahoe and performed at the Golden Gate International Exposition at San Francisco's Treasure Island. In 1941 he was awarded the Citizenship Cup as the outstanding graduating senior.

Leo received a Cal Alumni Scholarship to the University of California, Berkeley, and completed his freshman year before enlisting in the US Army Air Force. At age 19 he began B-17 pilot training. He was stationed at Nuthampstead, England, with the 398th BG, successfully completing 35 missions over Germany. He was awarded the Air Medal with Silver and Bronze Cluster, the European Theater of Operations with two Bronze Stars, the American WWII Victory Medal, the American Campaign Medal with Bronze Star and the French Jubilee of Liberty Medal.

After the war, Leo graduated from UC Berkley, married his childhood sweetheart, Pina, and fulfilled his dream of becoming an educator. During his 41-year career he was a teacher, coach, counselor, vice-principal, associate superintendent, and superintendent of schools. Upon his retirement in 1991, the Board

of Education named a school after him: the Leo R. Croce Elementary School. He and his family started the Leo Croce Scholarship, which bestowed college scholarships annually to students who attended Croce Elementary. Leo personally presented the scholarships at annual Awards Night ceremonies. He attended events at the school throughout the year, visiting classrooms and interacting with staff, students and parents, which brought him immense joy until the last days of his life.

Leo and Pina were deeply religious, committed and generous to their church and to many educational and community service programs. He was an active Rotarian for over 45 years. He received the Rotary Community Service Award for his outstanding volunteer efforts. He was a Lifetime Honorary Member of the Livermore Chamber of Commerce and was founder of the Business and Education Committee. He served on numerous boards and committees for the community college, the Boy Scouts of America and the Cerebral Palsy Association of the East Bay.

Upon his retirement, Leo played 18 holes of golf at least once a week until the age of 94. He remained active, loved to read, did daily crossword puzzles and kept a sharp mind. At age 95, he co-authored a memoir of his life and war years, "*Mission Completed*," after which he was able to return to Nuthampstead to revisit his WWII air base for a Memorial Day service, 2018, held at the Woodman's Inn, where he spoke on his war experiences. The next day he laid a wreath for his 398th BG at the Memorial Day commemoration ceremony at Cambridge American

Cemetery. The experience was one of the greatest joys of his twilight year! His family was thrilled to be notified that the new addition to the Nuthampstead Airfield Museum will be named after him.

Leo was preceded in death by his beloved wife of 69 years. He is survived by his devoted daughter and son-in-law, Pamela and John Goode, two grandchildren, five great grandchildren Cade, and numerous nieces and nephews, great and great-great nieces and nephews.

D'Lugos, Donald A., 94, passed away December 18, 2020, in Pensacola, FL. Donald had been a resident of the Arbors in Gulf Breeze for the past two and a half years. He was born



at home in Pensacola on February 7, 1926. He was a 1943 graduate of Pensacola High. During World War II he served as a tail gunner on a B-24 with the 466th BG, flying 15 combat missions over Germany. After returning to the US he married his high school sweetheart, Madge Sanders, on November 24, 1945. They were married 66 years until her death in 2012. Donald worked at Pensacola NAS for forty-two years, rising from a mechanic apprentice to a division director. He was an avid tennis player, participating in many leagues and winning many tournaments in the Pensacola area. He played tennis twice a week until he was 91. He is survived by a daughter, Linda Hitpas of Tampa, FL; son, Michael (Martha) of Hilton Head Island, SC; and sister, Edie (Bob) Davis of Gulf Breeze, FL.

TAPS

Three grandsons, two granddaughters and fourteen great grandchildren.

Katsaros, John, 97, of Haverhill, MA, passed away on Saturday, January 9, 2021, at Beverly Hospital. He was born in Haverhill on July 6, 1923, the son of the late Speros and Helen (Christos) Katsaros.



John was a graduate of Haverhill High School Class of 1942. After graduation he proudly served on a B17 with the 401st based in Deenethorpe, England. He was shot down over Reims, France, and was taken prisoner by the Gestapo and later escaped to freedom. John was a Purple Heart recipient. After the war, John received his bachelor's degree from Boston University. He owned and operated Katsaros Realty and Haverhill Finance.

John was involved with many organizations. Most notably, John was past president and longtime member of Haverhill Kiwanis, Haverhill Country Club and the Holy Apostles Greek Orthodox Church. He served on boards of Historic Haverhill, AHEPA, Haverhill YMCA and Linwood Cemetery. John was the longtime president of the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society. For twenty-seven years John was the voice of Haverhill Hillies football on WHAV radio.

In 2011 the French government awarded John the Chevalier of the Legion of Honor medal for what was cited as "your personal precious contribution to the United States role in the liberation of our country during World War II." John also wrote a book, *"Code Burgundy – The Long Escape"* detailing his service during WWII. He spoke at hundreds

of locations in connection with his book over the years deriving great pleasure speaking to the public about his adventures. John's catchphrase from his book and speaking engagements was *"Cherish your Freedom."* A lifelong New England sports fan, John was honored by the Boston Celtics in 2016, as well as the Florida Panthers in 2019 for his exploits during the war. John had a zest for life and loved his family, people, golf, skiing, tennis, sports and history.

In December 2019, John was one of seventeen WWII Vets who traveled to France, Luxembourg, and Belgium to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

John is survived by his loving wife of 62 years, Mary (Vanites) Katsaros. his two children Laurie Katsaros Sirois and her husband Michael L. of Amesbury and Lynne (Katsaros) Miller and her husband Christian of Darien, CT. He was the loving Papou to Caroline Miller (Steven Gahl), Craig Miller, Cameron Miller (Remy Peace), Corey Miller, and grandpups Willow and Dash. He also leaves behind brother-in law James (Nancy) Vanites, sisters-in-law Theodora Lebares and Effie Katsaros as well as several nieces, nephews and numerous friends. John was predeceased by his siblings, former HHS Principal Sotiris Katsaros, former Haverhill Mayor George Katsaros, S. Charles Katsaros, Ann Zeihl and Madeline Alphas.

Smallin, James M, 98, passed away



at his residence of 65 years in San Francisco on Oct 7, 2020. Jim moved to San Francisco from Joplin, MO, at the age of 15. He was happily married to

his wife of 36 years, Wilma, until her passing in 1981.

Jim was a tail gunner with the 401st BG in WWII. He was shot down and captured in Magdeburg, Germany in 1944 and remained a POW for 13 months. Upon his return to San Francisco, he became an Operating Engineer with Union Local 3.

Jim retired from the SF Water Department in 1985 after 22 years. After his retirement, Jim was an active member of the Shriners and Masonic Temple. He enjoyed his hobbies of traveling, hunting and fishing trips with his son and grandsons. Jim will be missed by all who knew him. Jim was always very generous to his family. He is survived by his son, Mark and his grandsons, Chris and Scott.

***We are NOT
automatically
notified upon the
death of our veterans
or other members.
Please
forward all TAPS to:***

ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

or

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

912-748-8884

HOW ABOUT IT!

Epic Words!

Earl Wassom 466th BG, Chaplain 8th AFHS

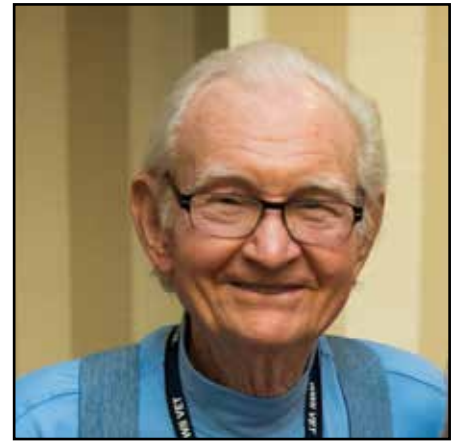
Words have significant importance. They call attention to how we think, how we act, and how we live. Two influential individuals spoke to the civilized world in the 1940's. Their words inspired people throughout most of the world to action. One was a Brit; the other, an American.

In June, of 1940, the Prime Minister of Great Britain addressed the House of Commons. They and the Continent of Europe had been under assault for months. London and its industrial and port cities had been under constant attack. Their factories, ports, railway systems, government buildings, homes, and businesses lay in ruins and rubble was everywhere. Aerial attacks were a constant threat. The seas surrounding England were alive with German submarines which were sinking marine shipping relentlessly. Poland and the smaller Balkan Nations had fallen to the German onslaught. France was being overrun, British troops in retreat from the European continent escaped back to the British Isles via the English Channel. None of their military weapons and equipment was saved. Munitions and supplies were in short supply. Food, fuel, and the necessities of life for the civilians were rationed. National pride and morale was at an all-time low. Winston Churchill addressed Parliament regarding this crisis:

"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight on the fields and the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender..."

Across the Atlantic Ocean, Americans citizens looked on in awe and horror and fear at the mayhem happening 'over there'. Who was this guy Hitler? They knew little about the Nazi's and for sure, they wanted no part in this conflict. The ink was hardly dry on the World War I peace treaty signed with the understanding that this was 'the war that would end all wars'. After all, this clash was over there. The USA had the protection of an ocean on both sides of the country. We were safe and secure. We had empathy for the Europeans, but war was their problem. America felt very secure until... December 7, 1941, when the Empire of Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. America was suddenly at War! It was not even expected! Suddenly, only a few days later, Germany, declared War on the USA!!! The nation was totally unprepared. There was War in the East and war in the West. Taking inventory, the Naval Pacific Fleet lay in ruins at Pearl Harbor. The islands of the South Pacific, Singapore, the Philippine Islands, other bastions of America were being overcome and occupied by the Japanese. Australia was on alert. Southeast Asia was being overrun by Japanese land and naval forces. German forces were taking control of the European continent, Mediterranean Sea, and submarines almost unchallenged were sinking freighters at an alarming rate. President Franklin D. Roosevelt in one of his "fireside chats" in a nationwide broadcast to Americans everywhere said,

"I am convinced that you



will again support leadership in these critical days...let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."

The message of these two men was clear: ***they would fight and they would win!***

Soon, an economic revival broke out. Factories once shuttered, were opened. Steel mills were humming with activity. Railways were carrying raw and finished products to a needy nation. Troops and recruits were heading to newly opened facilities and training camps. Naval stations built ships and trained sailors. Airport runways were built and hangers were opened to accommodate the flood of modern aircraft and newly trained cadet pilots who flew them. There was an abundance of eager and patriotic recruits and volunteers to fill the ranks of the growing military that was emerging. Women entered the work-force, those not of military status grew "victory gardens", built munitions and weapons of war.

A common enemy existed, one bent on destroying our way of "*...Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*" Aggressors would not destroy us. Our freedom was at stake, and we would defend it—whatever the cost; and the cost was great. With little else but this determination, we would turn back our foes.

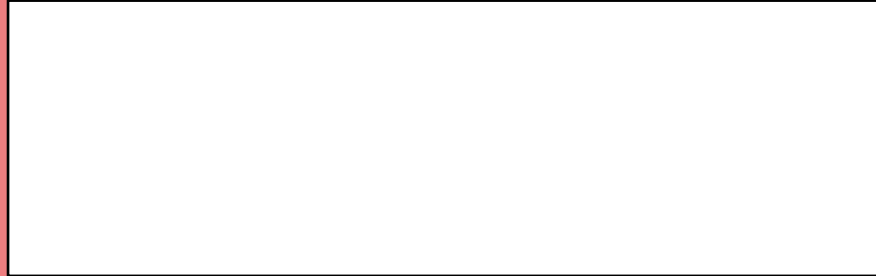
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8th AF News
8th Air Force Historical Society
68 Kimberlys Way
Jasper, GA 30143-4769

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(continued from previous page)

They failed on the battlefield and their mode of warfare was defeated. Churchill said "... *we shall fight on*" and Roosevelt declared that "... *we would cease having fear.*"

Faith, hope, and charity still live! For generations past, present, and future, in good times and bad, through the entire range of life, we are all Americans. We recognize and honor validity and hold strong convictions of the Ten Commandments. Fake and spurious, questionable claims, and foul language, have no part in fulfilling the American Dream. Shame utterances are not a part of the true citizen, nor are debasing remarks from

individuals from the back roads, state houses, school rooms, ball parks, campuses, bars, villages, big cities, beaches, run-down neighborhoods, or any or all venues of American life.

Shaming, intimidation, and threats are not on the agenda. These are not the qualities that made America great. Our citizens are what made and continue to make us great!

America is beautiful, good, and worthy of our love. There are areas needing improvement. You and I need improvement also.

With the help of Almighty God and cooperation with each other, we can continue to make America truly great.