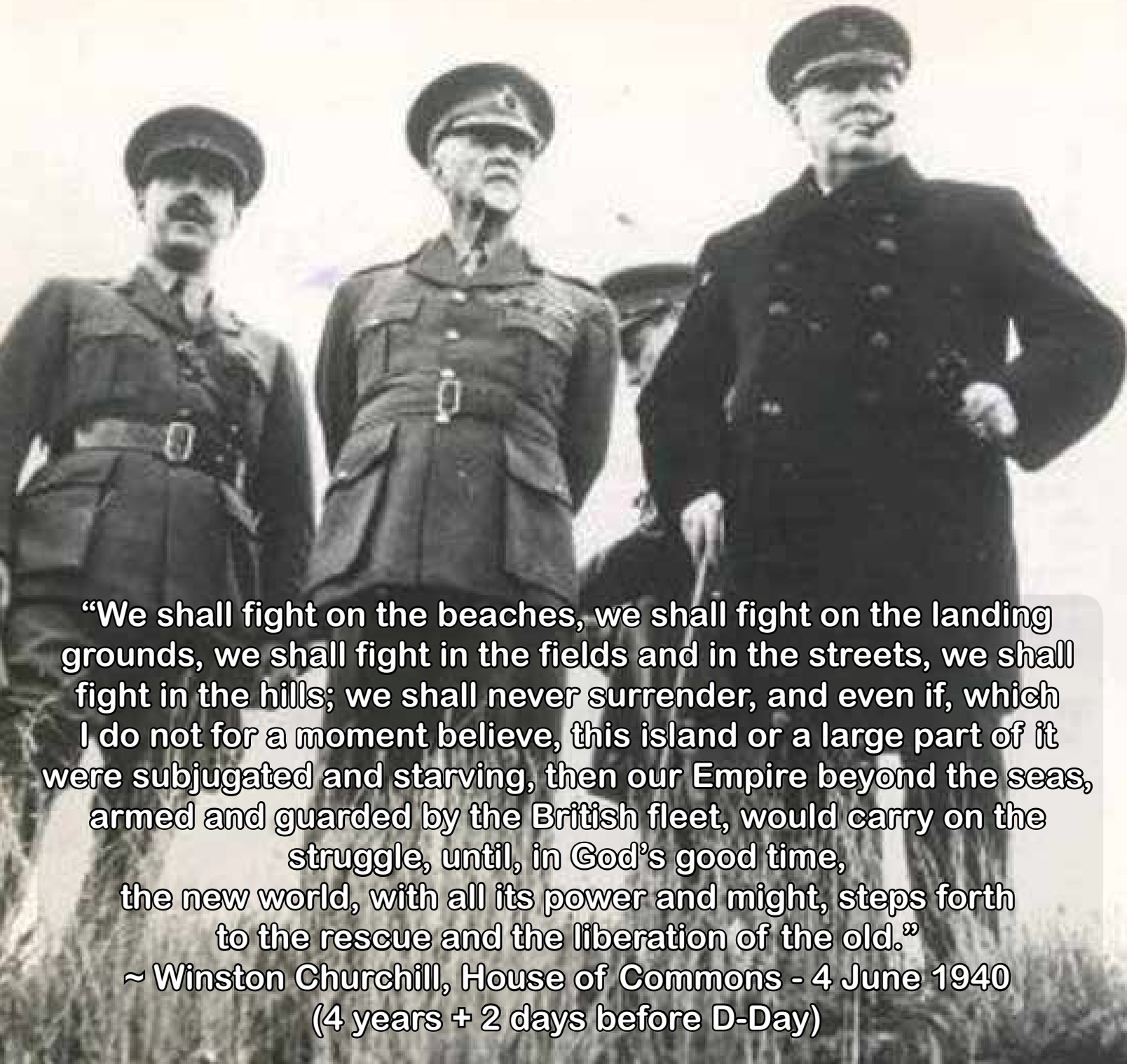




June 2021

TH AF NEWS

Volume 21 Number 2 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"



"We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender, and even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, then our Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British fleet, would carry on the struggle, until, in God's good time, the new world, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the old."
~ Winston Churchill, House of Commons - 4 June 1940
(4 years + 2 days before D-Day)

"HOMEWARD BOUND"

47TH ANNUAL 8TH AFHS REUNION

OCTOBER 27-31, 2021 MARRIOTT SAVANNAH RIVERFRONT, SAVANNAH, GA



8th AF News

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

June 2021

OFFICERS

President

Anne A Marek (Rick) 2021
2 Logan Ct
Mendham, NJ 07945
(201) 960-1783 cell
(973) 543-8832 home
majorsoldsack@verizon.net

Vice President

Eleesa Faulkner 2022
58 Drake St
Pueblo, CO 81005
(719) 252-9170
ekf58@aol.com

Treasurer

Anne A Marek (Rick) 2021
2 Logan Ct
Mendham, NJ 07945
(201) 960-1783 cell
(973) 543-8832 home
majorsoldsack@verizon.net

Secretary

L Travis Chapin (Ginny) 2023
17303 Euler Road
Bowling Green, OH 43402
(419) 575-4337
tchapin@bgsu.edu

Director:

Dr Vivian Rogers-Price (Mike) 2021
117 Charlton Rd
Rincon, GA 31326
(912) 667-4478 cell
(912) 988-1837 office
vrogersprice@mightyeighth.org

Chapter/Unit Liaison

Joseph P Keeley (Andrea)
1335 Belmont Ave
North Haledon, NJ 07508-2842
(973) 495-3404 cell
(973) 423-4854 home
fxe84@optonline.net

8th AFHS National Office

Managing Director/Editor

Debra D Kujawa (Joseph)
68 Kimberlys Way
Jasper, GA 30143-4769
(912) 748-8884
ManagingDirector@8thafhs.org

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

UNITED KINGDOM

Jeff Hawley
3 The Stiles
Godmanchester, CAM
PE29 2JF
United Kingdom
011 4477623 28575
the8thafhsuk@yahoo.com

Paul Bellamy
6 Station Road
Holme, PTE
PE7 3PH
United Kingdom
011 4477623 28575
the8thafhsuk@yahoo.com

John P Gilbert
Glen Ann
42 Chapel Street, Cawston
Norwich, Norfolk
NR10 4BG
United Kingdom
011 4416038 71124
johngilbert392bg8th@gmail.com

BELGIUM

Edouard Renière
Avenue Henry Dunant 5--Bte 25
1140 Brussels Belgium
Riiren.belsuo@skynet.be

FRANCE

Jean-Paul Favrais

La Haye-Ouaisais N. 85
35310 Breal
France
Jeanpaulfavrais1@orange.fr

CHIEF OF VETERANS AFFAIRS & EDUCATION

Joan Garber

46 Coquina Ridge Way
Ormond Beach, FL 32174
(386) 672-5359
jbey2008@aol.com

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Front cover: *Memorable words...Field Marshal Jan Smuts standing next to Prime Minister Winston Churchill.*
Photo: IWM collection (ref H 24785).

Contacts.....	2
Editor's Notes	3
President's Briefing.....	4
Treasurer's Ledger.....	5
Noteworthy.....	6
News From Across the Pond.....	7-11
A Moment in Time.....	11
History Found.....	12-17
Chapter News.....	18-21
Reunion Info	22-27
TAPS.....	28-30
How About It?.....	31-back cover

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
Jasper, GA 30143-4769**

EDITOR'S NOTES



In the 70s, the Steve Miller Band proclaimed: *"Time keeps on slippin', slippin', slippin', into the future."*

Wow. Those lyrics really hit home these days.

Physics assures us that time is a constant. It doesn't speed up or slow down, it just passes. When I was younger, I wanted to hurry and be 13—a teenager—then 16 so I could drive. At 18 I could register to vote and be considered an adult. I remember it seemed like an eternity to hit those milestones...but not anymore.

As a "senior citizen" I now want time to SLOW DOWN. I want to savor every single second of the precious moments I have left. In reading the obituaries families send to be placed in TAPS, I

am reassured that life should only end when it ends. And until then, it is up to us to take charge of those seconds, and minutes, and hours, and DO those things we dreamed of doing. Sometimes, that also means *NOT* doing something.

Earl Wassom, whom I have known for several years now, contributed his 113th *How About It* column in this issue of the 8th A F News. Per his wishes, it is his final one. That's nearly 30 years of dedication; Earl sharing his stories and his faith with all of us. And, in "Earl" fashion, he has named a successor: John Pittman. John's dad, S/Sgt Albert Pittman, served with the 466th BG.

I invite you to learn a bit more about John and his new column

which will debut in September, *"A Moment in Time,"* by reading his intro on p.11 in this issue.

Earl has blessed us with many years of inspiration for which we are all, eternally grateful. We now look forward to John's stories of faith and encouragement.

Because...*time keeps on slippin'.*

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

Be safe and well...

My love and prayers to you all!

Deb



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



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

Address: _____ City: _____ State/County: _____

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

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

Membership Annual Dues: \$40 or £30 GBP

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

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

PayPal: ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

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

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

UK/European Residents PLEASE mail to:
Jeff Hawley, 3 The Stiles, Godmanchester, CAM PE29 2JF
014804 13503

JOIN ONLINE: www.8thAFHS.org

PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING

Anne Marek
President & Treasurer



Hello Everyone!

I hope this finds all of you safe and well. I'm encouraged by the fact that the COVID pandemic is slowly on its way out. Restrictions are being modified here in New Jersey, enabling more people to return to a more normal life. Masks and social distancing are still in effect, but by the fall when more have been vaccinated, hopefully that will be lifted too.

Our Communications Chairman, Travis Chapin, has been diligent in getting information regarding our ongoing programs out to all members who have operational email addresses. If you are not getting his emails, please send your correct email address to him. His contact info is on p.2 of this issue of 8th A F News. If you have a computer, please try to have a family member or friend to help you create an email address. It's easy!

Eleesa Faulkner reports that her Students' Corner has taken off! She has been inundated with requests from students to interview an 8th Air Force Veteran. She has had to extend the essay submission deadline to mid-June due to its overwhelming success.

I'm also happy to report that our **SaV*2*SAV** (*Send a Veteran to Savannah*) program created by Mark Klingensmith and administered by Debra has received well over \$5,000 in contributions. If you are a veteran and in need of financial assistance in order to attend our upcoming reunion in Savannah, please contact Debra Kujawa at 912-748-8884. If you would like to speak with someone regarding making a financial contribution to this program, please contact Mark Klingensmith at 714-787-3063 or mrkent54@comcast.net. Thank you all for your contributions!

I hope you are planning to attend our 47th Annual Reunion and have made your room reserva-

tion at the Marriott Savannah Riverfront Hotel. Rooms in our block are going fast so please don't wait much longer. Hope to see all of you there!

Thank you 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. Our contact information appears on page 2.

TREASURER'S LEDGER

I am including in this issue of AF News the Financial Statements for the period ending April 30, 2021, 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 March. It is currently at approximately \$272K, up about \$20K. 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. I'm also glad to report that our membership continues to be very generous. Through the month of April 2021, we have received donations totaling \$10,339. These donations do not include contributions to our **SaV*2*SAV** Program. Please note that total donations for 2020 were \$17,000. I thank all of you for your continued financial support of our Society.

TREASURER'S LEDGER

As a member you can personally help bring revenue 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 page 2.

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 Profit & Loss January through April 2021	
	Jan - Apr 21
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
4000 · Income/Miscellaneous	
4001 · Amazon Smiles	59.06
4003 · SaV*2*SAV	4,960.00
4010 · Member Dues Annual	27,155.30
4014 · Chapter Closings	16,953.01
4019 · Member Contributions/Donations	10,338.73
4000 · Income/Miscellaneous - Other	2.14
Total 4000 · Income/Miscellaneous	59,468.24
4050 · Investment Income	
4058 · Portfolio Dividends & Interest	1,084.02
4059 · Realized Gain/(Loss) on Invest	0.00
4060 · Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Invest	11,964.20
4061 · Investment Management Fees	0.00
Total 4050 · Investment Income	13,048.22
Total Income	72,516.46
Gross Profit	72,516.46
Expense	
5100 · National Administration Expense	
5111 · Corporation Charges	70.00
Total 5100 · National Administration Expense	70.00
5200 · Magazine Expenses	
5210 · Printing Expenses	2,330.00
5220 · Postage Expenses	1,602.53
Total 5200 · Magazine Expenses	3,932.53
5300 · National Office Expenses	
5303 · Telephone/DSL	200.00
5304 · Supplies	430.84
5305 · Abila Software/ Computer Exps	591.17
5307 · Office Rent	400.00
5312 · FICA-8AFHS portion	1,114.23
5313 · Payroll/ Office Management	14,500.00
5315 · Postage & Shipping	242.39
5316 · Bank Charges/ Returned checks	91.31
5323 · Merchant Account Usage Fees	873.99
5326 · Payroll processing fees	1,060.52
Total 5300 · National Office Expenses	19,504.45
Total Expense	23,506.98
Net Ordinary Income	49,009.48
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
6550 · Annual Meeting Revenue	
6551 · Event Registration	7,058.94
Total 6550 · Annual Meeting Revenue	7,058.94
Total Other Income	7,058.94
Net Other Income	7,058.94
Net Income	56,068.42

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position As of April 30, 2021	
	Apr 30, 21
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1017 · Oppenheimer & Co	272,559.53
1040 · Bank of America Checking Acct.	16,046.68
1042 · Bank of America Savings Acct.	36,326.63
Total Checking/Savings	324,932.84
Total Current Assets	324,932.84
TOTAL ASSETS	324,932.84
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2050 · Payroll & Taxes Payable	
2051 · Payroll payable	2,896.57
2052 · FICA & withhold taxes payable	9,513.26
Total 2050 · Payroll & Taxes Payable	12,409.83
2500 · Accrued Expenses	47.48
Total Other Current Liabilities	12,457.31
Total Current Liabilities	12,457.31
Total Liabilities	12,457.31
Equity	
3200 · *Unrestricted Net Assets	256,407.11
Net Income	56,068.42
Total Equity	312,475.53
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	324,932.84

NOTEWORTHY

★THE STUDENT CORNER!



Remember,

The **Student Corner** focuses on students from the elementary to high school level. We are planning for future issues of the magazine to contain a variety of activities for students interested in learning about World War II and our veterans.

Our first Student Corner was an essay contest where students needed to interview or talk with a World War II veteran. Students could do a phone, facetime or an in-person interview of the veteran.

Complete contest requirements appeared on p.18 of the March 2021 issue of the 8th A F News!

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 you are a veteran and would like to participate in future student projects, or have ideas and/or suggestions for projects, please let me know!

Simply email me at:

ekf58@aol.com or call me: (719) 252-9170.

Thank you,

Eleesa Faulkner

Support Eighth Air Force Historical Society Inc.

When you shop at smile.amazon.com,
Amazon donates.

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

amazonsmile

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

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 DE-
VELOPMENT AND WOULD BE INTER-
ESTED 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]. Written text MUST be TYPED and sent as a WORD.doc, 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

**HE IS NOT
MISSING.
HE IS HERE.**

Detail inside the Menin Gate, listing the missing from the Ypres Salient, Belgium.

by Suzie Harrison
American Battle Monuments Commission
Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial

At Cambridge American Cemetery, there are more names inscribed on the Wall of the Missing than there are individuals buried. Inclusion on the role of honour at Cambridge comes about because Britain was the last place that these Americans were officially seen. For those whose last sighting was over Europe, their names are carved on tablets of stone at other American Cemeteries.

I have been writing this article over the Easter period, which is one of the more thought-provoking festivals on the Christian calendar. Thinking about those who are Missing in Action took me back to when I was a little girl at Sunday School, just before Easter. While learning the scripture story, our leader read:

*“And they said unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken my Lord away, and I know not where they have laid him”.
(John 20:13, KJV).*

I remember thinking, “How sad!” Little did I know that some

decades later I would be working at Cambridge American Cemetery, which has the heart-breaking distinction of hosting the longest list of the *missing* in the European Theatre of Operations (ETO). The Wall of the Missing is inscribed with 5,127 names of those whose final resting place is unknown.



Above: The Wall of the Missing at Cambridge American Cemetery.

“The Americans whose names here appear, were part of the price that free men for the second time this century have been forced to pay to

defend human liberty and rights. All who shall here after live in freedom will be reminded that to these men and their comrades we owe a debt to be paid with grateful remembrance of their sacrifice and the high resolve that the cause for which they died shall live eternally”. This is the quotation that runs

along the top of the Wall of Missing and is an extract from the dedication by President Eisenhower of the Golden Book enshrined in St. Paul's Cathedral, London. The book lists

all those Americans who gave their lives in Military Operations from the British Isles.

When memorializing War Dead, it is vital to recognize each individual by name who gave their life for

News from Across the Pond...

... we count the survivors and an unknown remainder neither known to be alive nor definitively deceased are given the bizarre name of the lost But in these matters Accuracy is necessary. One can't get it wrong, Even in a single case. In spite of everything We are our brothers' keepers ignorance about those who are lost undermines the reality of the world. ... we must therefore know. Draw up exact accounts. Summon them by name ...
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

the cause. The name carved into stone is the last remaining physical representation of the person who has disappeared, and who is undoubtedly gone forever. But a name on its own may not be as powerful as one might imagine. How do we feel when there are hundreds of John Smiths, or James Spencers? How does a grieving mother find her Johnny or Jim?

In the summer of 1924, the first ABMC Commissioners visited America's WWI overseas cemeteries, and they pondered the same questions. They concluded that the names of our Missing in Action would not be enough and that more identifying information would be needed. How, then, can we make the name better reflect the individual? We need to add details.

The man selected for this work after WWI, as the American Cemeteries were being built, was Major Dwight D. Eisenhower. He had already spent months touring the battlefields, giving him an intimate knowledge of the terrain – good training for what was to come! The result of his hard work was a major role in the production of ABMC's first publication, *A Guide to the American Battle Fields in Europe*. For this he earned the nickname of "Guidebook Ike". ABMC called him back to compile the list of the missing whose names were to be inscribed on tablets, along with details of their service and from where they hailed. His acknowledged attention to detail and editorial skills made him ideal for the job.

Above: *Selected stanzas from, 'Mr Cogito on the need for precision', one of twelve "Cogito" poems published in Zbigniew Herbert's 'Report from the Besieged City and Other Poems', 1983.*

This was another gargantuan task. The room for error was huge, but error was not permissible – it had to be exact. Imagine the distress which might be felt by a family coming to locate that special name and finding it misspelled. One eminent historian described how *"Eisenhower concluded that the parents or siblings of missing Soldiers should be given a chance to check the names; otherwise errors would inevitably find their way onto plaques ... he introduced a timetable for correspondence with relatives ... that would give them reasonable time to mail in corrections ... Ensuring that the missing, who numbered more than 4,000, received suitable – and accurate – commemoration."* The Veterans Bureau and the service branches, who supported Eisenhower's initiative, helped him locate families in order to ensure accuracy.

Inscribed upon the Tablets of the Missing was not only the name, but the rank, unit, and state of enlistment, thus, providing needed details to recognize each individual. They had their place in the world. Moving forward to WWII sees Cambridge American Cemetery with a list of names that includes US Navy Lt Joseph P Kennedy, Jr. (scion of the Kennedy Family) alongside US Marine Corps Private Joseph Buono (18 years old, and away from home

for the first time). They are all there – young and old – ordinary or high ranking – famous or not. They are all equal, in that to their families they are missing.

If, the *"Unknown Soldier speaks,"* how much more so does the missing Soldier? In commemoration, the War Dead take on a new social identity that resonates with visitors differently. When visitors come to the cemetery, we encourage them to touch the headstone or Wall of the Missing; to feel the inscription; to make a real-life connection with that person. For family members who never received any news about their loved one's fate, the Wall of the Missing provides some closure. They can touch the name of their son or daughter. As Field Marshal Lord Plumer said during his speech from the unveiling of the Menin Gate, **"He is not missing. He is here."**

Top of next page: *Field Marshal Lord Plumer on Sunday 21 July 1927, Menin Gate.*

Following WWII, America became embroiled in the Korean War, 1950-53. In a sharp deviation from WWII practices, American Forces adopted a policy of repatriating War Dead from the Korean peninsula. Remains were removed from the battlefield almost immediately, prepared for transfer to the US, and repatriated without delay. This became known as the Concurrent Return Policy, and it would remain in effect throughout the Korean War,

News from Across the Pond...



as well as set the precedent for repatriation during the Vietnam War.

In some instances, battles raged back and forth over ground containing burials and cemeteries, which made post-war field recoveries and identification extremely complex. Another instance that significantly complicates the task of finding the Missing is when a new international boundary springs up across former battlefields. This occurred when North Korea and South Korea set up the Demilitarized Zone along their new border, hindering recovery activities being carried out. In Washington, the Vietnam Memorial charts the course of the war through those who were classified “declared dead,” from day one to the end of the war. The names of those who were, or are, “missing in action” (MIA) are included.

Monuments raised to commemorate War Dead have progressed from blocks of stone, to statues, to lists of the main protagonists, to lists naming of all those who fought. That would seem to be an end of it, and yet...

Right: *Vietnam Memorial, Washington DC, Architect: Maya Lin, 1982.* Alamy AHJ243.

Government agencies tasked with burying the dead and finding the missing have changed over time,

but their mission is essentially the same. Within the US Quartermaster Corps is housed Mortuary Affairs, of which the Graves Registration Service (GRS), formed shortly after the American entry into WWI, is a part. For WWII, GRS was charged with locating 25,000 men

either killed or missing in action in Europe. The combined number for the European and Pacific Theatres of Operations was 78,000 lost souls. In 1976, while significant recoveries were still taking place, the Central Identification Laboratory, Hawaii (CILHI) was established to “*recover and identify all unrecovered United States service members from past wars.*” Systems became more streamlined in 2003 when CILHI merged with Joint Task Force-Full Accounting (JTF-FA), becoming the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC). Then, on 30 January 2015, JPAC transformed into the modern organization that exists today – Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). Today, 76 years after the end of WWII, DPAA still strives to fulfill America’s national accountability

mission by recovering and identifying MIA service members.



PFC Reece Gass

On Veterans Day 2017 at Luxembourg American Cemetery, DPAA Director Kelly K. McKeague delivered the keynote address. He spoke about the “*Unknown*” graves found in America’s overseas cemeteries, which have always been inextricably linked with the Missing. “*Who were these brave Americans who answered the call of duty?*” McKeague explained his pride in the fact that – “*there was one less missing American, one less “Unknown”, in this cemetery than there was on Veterans Day 2016.*” After decades of work by historians, genealogists, investigators, analysts, administrators, and families, DPAA positively identified the Unknown Soldier buried in Plot H, Row 13, Grave 30 at Luxembourg American Cemetery as 20-year-old US Army Private First

Class (PFC) Reece Gass of Chattanooga, Tennessee. PFC Gass, assigned to the 3rd Armored Division, had been listed MIA since January, 1945, when his tank disappeared during an ambush by Wehrmacht forces in Cherain, Belgium. Two years later the US War Department discovered the wreckage of an American Tank, with an unidentified Soldier inside. Although recoverable, they



News from Across the Pond...

were unable to confirm an identity, so he was buried as an "Unknown." The stark inscription on his headstone read *"Here Rests in Honored Glory a Comrade in Arms Known but to God."* The Soldier known only as X-5867 was disinterred from Luxembourg American Cemetery in 2016 and repatriated to the US. Once positively identified, the US Army conducted an official notification to the Next of Kin as though the casualty had just taken place. PFC Gass then received a burial with full military honors in a private family plot, at the wishes of his family. Next to his name on the Luxembourg Tablets of the Missing was placed a bronze rosette to indicate that this Soldier, once MIA, was now recovered. Another of America's sons gone home.



1Lt William W Shank

Exactly one year later, in 2018, Director McKeague delivered another Veterans Day speech at Cambridge American Cemetery. This time he had a new story about veterans who, as ordinary people *"...out of a sense of duty, performed extraordinary tasks for ...[all]... mankind,"* and he alluded to the continued silence of those listed as MIA. He described how on 13 November 1943, 1Lt William Shank of 338th Fighter Squadron, 55th Fighter Group, set off from RAF Nuthampstead, England – just 20 miles away from Cambridge American Cemetery – flying a P-38 Lightning. Shank was to provide escort for 8th Air Force bombers on

a mission to strike the port facilities at Bremen, Germany. Due to extremely bad weather over the English Channel, most of the pilots turned back, but William bravely continued forward to meet the bombers returning from the mission. He found them under attack from 100 German fighters. Despite the poor odds, William threw himself into the fray, but in the ensuing dog fight he disappeared. After the war, a search was made in the vicinity of his last known position, and a crash site was found. Unfortunately, forensic analysis available at that time was not sufficient to make a positive identification of the remains that were discovered, so the unidentified Airman was buried as an Unknown at Ardennes American Cemetery, Neuville-en-Condroz, Belgium.

In 2008, a DPAA Field Recovery Team collaborated with local researchers to locate the wreck near Essen, Germany. As expected, they confirmed that it was indeed Lt Shank's P-38. Unexpectedly, however, the team found additional DNA evidence that was sent to the Nebraska Laboratory for analysis. In 2016, DPAA disinterred the Unknown Soldier believed to be Lt Shank, then known only as X-7466, from Ardennes American Cemetery. The two sets of remains were analysed, compared, and discovered to be the same person! William was identified, and his family was notified. His family members were given the same courtesy and options that families received back in the 1940s. The Casualty Notification Officer asked, *"would you like your loved one buried in Cambridge American Cemetery, a National Veterans Cemetery, or a private family cemetery?"* 75 years after he set out on his last mission, 1Lt William Shank was buried with full military honours in a family plot in

Harrisonburg, Virginia. ABMC Staff at Cambridge American Cemetery added a bronze rosette next to his name on the Cambridge Wall of the Missing.

Below: The inscriptions on the Cambridge Wall of the Missing for 1Lt Ben B Barnes and FLT O Dewey L Gossett, both of whom have been found, recovered, and buried. A bronze rosette has been placed alongside their names to show that they are no longer missing.



DPAA work continues to this day. Advances in forensic science allows DPAA laboratories to use advanced DNA analysis to pair Unknowns with familial descendants, but it is not always easy to find willing family members to participate. Without DNA samples from family members, identification efforts frequently reach a dead end. Therefore, DPAA employs a group of genealogists to track down family members, explain the circumstances (as many families have forgotten about long lost relatives who never returned from WWII), and persuade the family members to donate DNA. Only after a family member has provided a DNA sample will the Deputy

News from Across the Pond...

Secretary of Defense authorize disinterment of the Unknown Soldier. To quote their website...DPAA considers that “*fullest possible accounting*” is achieved when all practicable investigations and reasonable recovery efforts are complete; and based upon the evidence gleaned from such efforts, an analytic and scientific conclusion is reached that a person’s remains are deemed “*non-recoverable*.”

In July 1944, the 92nd Infantry Division (“Buffalo Soldiers”) was the only African-American Combat Unit operating in Europe at that time. The combat role of this seg-

regated unit – comprised of black enlisted men, black junior officers, and white senior officers – was unusual because most African-American troops were assigned to the Support Services. February 1945 found them still in Italy and part of Operation FOURTH TERM, on the Gothic Line – the last German line of defense. By the end of the engagement, including days of cold winter weather and fierce fighting, approximately 700 men of 92nd ID were listed Killed in Action or MIA. 53 remained on the MIA list in 2014 when (then) JPAC created a new project to find them. Historians

suspected that they were included among the 51 Unknowns buried in Florence American Cemetery. As of January 2021, this project is still ongoing, but with the help of DNA samples from the descendants of the Soldiers of 92nd ID there is a chance that at least some of them can be returned to their loved ones.

There will always be Soldiers who are unaccounted for, lost in the fog of war. While their names are inscribed on the Tablets of the Missing, and until they are found, ABMC will always remember them and strive to tell their story.

“A Moment in Time...” coming soon!

Created in 1975, the 8th Air Force Historical Society has worked to, “Perpetuate the accomplishments and heritage of the 8th Air Force for present and future generations”. Thousands of veterans have devoted countless hours to that cause. As a former B-24 aircraft commander and Chaplain of the organization, Dr. Earl Wassom, in his column ‘*How About It*,’ has encouraged and advised many of his fellow veterans. As the pages of time have turned, he has encouraged the next generation to take up the mantle of recording, keeping alive, and disseminating the history of the 8th Air Force in WWII.

When he asked me to take over his writing assignments with the 8th AF News, I was very intimidated. How could anyone even remotely hope to fill his shoes. However, with his encouragement, and a sense of duty to the man who has come to mean so much to me, I accepted the challenge and sent my first submission to Deb. Then came the doubts. How can I be of value to people who have been dedicated to this cause for years?

As I contemplated the task ahead of me, I came to several conclusions. First, I can never replace Earl Wassom and what he means to the veterans of the 8th AF, or, to those who have been guided and encouraged by his words and deeds since those days. Second, I would be foolish to try to emulate his writing or his point of view. Finally, I would need to use the writing voice that is uniquely mine to add continuing value to the legacy with which Dr. Wassom has so eloquently given to the 8th AF News.

As I prayed about the direction of this new column, I began to think of my dad. I listened to his stories anytime

he was willing to tell them. Only a chosen few, however, knew what he really went through during those turbulent years. Even fewer understood the price paid to accomplish the mission. For the average American today, World War II is but a distant memory. While there are certainly WWII history buffs, and those who work to keep the memory of that conflict alive, most of the people I talk with know very little about the air war over Nazi-occupied Europe.

As I join with you to keep alive the memory of the 8th Air Force, it is not enough to just tell their stories. It is not enough to regale ourselves with tales of valor and courage. Are we just the latest in a long list of empires that rose to power, conquered distant lands and peoples, and are headed for the dustbin of human history? Or was there something bigger, more monumental going on when our fathers climbed aboard those magnificent machines?

While no one can replace Earl Wassom, or duplicate his “*How About It*” column, it is my hope that ‘*A Moment in Time*’ can bring to light not only the deeds of the men and women of the 8th Air Force but keep alive the reasons *why* they were there. *Why* it was so important that they accomplished the mission they were given. To remind the world of the moral and ethical reasons that were the underpinning of the campaign in which they sacrificed so much. If our nation forgets that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, then future generations of Americans are just as much at risk of perpetrating horrific deeds in the name of patriotism as the generation of Germans who sold their souls to Adolph Hitler for the creation of his Third Reich.

JM Pittman

**HISTORY FOUND:
DELTA REBEL NO. 2 OF THE 91ST BG,
"ONE OF THE FIRST"
BY MICK HANOU**



Delta Rebel No.2 42-5077 with 25 mission symbols at 323rd hardstand in Elm Tree Lane. (photo credit Harlick)

Adapted from an article first published in the Summer 2020 issue (Vol. 43, No. 3) edition of the Friends Journal, with permission from the Air Force Museum Foundation, Inc.

First, let me be clear: This is not an attempt of one-upmanship or “who’s first”. I have always recognized the accomplishments and records of such venerated aircraft as the 91st Bomb Group’s (BG) *Memphis Belle*TM, 303rd BG’s *Hell’s Angels*, 93rd BG’s *Hot Stuff*, and the crew of *Pistol Packing Mama*. There may be other a/c that also finished 25 missions in early 1943, but were not credited. And, unfortunately, there were B-17s that completed 23-24 missions, and in consideration by William Wyler for his documentary, that didn’t finish their 25th. I honor those crews of WWII, and others who fought in a foreign land to liberate people they didn’t know. Late 1942 and early 1943, when the odds of finishing 25 missions were extremely low, was an especially rough time for aircrews. I also do not criticize other historians as

they did not have full access to two critical documents which, when compared to one another, resolved many questions, and led to further research. What I hope here is to share my 25-year effort to discover accurate historical documentation, and demonstrate that *Delta Rebel 2*TM, finished her 25th mission on May 1, 1943.

My interest began in 1993, when I first hosted the Collings Foundation *Wings of Freedom* tour at my local airport of Livermore, California. At the time, 80 WWII veterans (both B-24 and B-17 crew) volunteered to relate their experiences and answer questions from the crowd. One of those veterans, a pilot named George Birdsong, led one of the original crews of the 91BG and flew *Delta Rebel 2 (Rebel)* from November 1942 through June 1943. He related that the *Rebel* had finished 25 missions before the *Memphis Belle (Belle)*. Being a “southern gentleman” as he put it; and with the more-important task of fighting the war, he’d never made a big issue about “who was first”.

I was intrigued and set out to learn more about the early missions of the 8th Air Force, the 91BG, and *Delta Rebel No 2* specifically. Steve Birdsall and Roger Freeman's book *Claims To Fame, The B-17 Flying Fortress*, states *Rebel* had 25 mission symbols on her nose before the Hell's Angels date (May 14, 1943), but this information was "not recorded in official records". In *The Memphis Belle, Home at Last*, Menno Duerksen covered the question and mentioned a logbook of *Rebel* bombardier Robert Abb noting the May 1 25th mission date but concluded "the weight of evidence leans towards *Hell's Angels*". Graham Simons and Harry Friedman's definitive tome *Memphis Belle, Dispelling the Myths* is exceptionally researched, thoroughly detailed, and provided me with much-needed guidance and information on various missions of the *Belle*, and often had added information on what other aircraft were in the same formation.

I joined the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association and at meetings met some original 91BG crew, notably the *Rebel*'s ball-turret gunner Steve Perri. I captured as many stories from Birdsong and Perri as possible. (Along the way, I encountered Whit Hill who related how Birdsong and he were the first to install the field-modification of .50 cal guns in the nose of the B-17s, at least in aircraft of the 91BG. A great story for another time.) Perri was the first to tell me that a small museum had contacted the crew for donations. *Rebel*'s bombardier, Robert Abb, gave his mission logbook to them. Steve eventually got a scanned copy of the Abb logbook to me.

Joe Harlick, a 323rd Bomb Squadron photographer and I became friends. He had a photo of *Rebel* in the hanger with 16 mission symbols and a firm date, and one taken in the hardstand area of the 323rd BS with 25 missions but no date. In the latter, the elm trees appear to be sprouting leaves, dating it to spring. Not quite good enough to provide evidence of a firm date, but I was on the right track.

I created a spreadsheet to track what I learned from all these sources, noting each Eighth Air Force mission and the source of information. By comparing each reference, I reconciled the information. In 2008, the Simons/Friedman book came out, which added another column and made the spreadsheet more robust. At one of the 91st BG Reunions, George Bruckert, a remarkable WWII re-enactor and collector, brought original 1942-43 charts that showed all of the 323rd crewmen and their missions.

I made many notes, but with limited time to digest or record all of the information, the notes were incomplete.

Then in 2016, the museum that had Abb's logbook closed, and it was brought to my attention that material was being sold on eBay. Because I believe that items lose their context when separated, I bought the remaining *Rebel* crew items in hopes of preserving the crew's history intact. I now had the original of Abb's logbook and, under the date May 1, 1943, he had written "Tough scrap - *Delta Rebel*'s 25th mission". In the back of the logbook, there were formation plans. These plans had never been noted, but offered added context to the fact that *Delta Rebel No 2* was the first to complete 25 missions. I had an original-source document with good provenance!

Cross-referencing my sources with the logbook, especially the formation plans that had never been scanned or made available, I managed to positively identify 23 of the missions.

Unfortunately, in April 2018, George Bruckert passed away. That was a great loss to the reenactor community and the 100BG and 91BG specifically. However, knowing of my interest in his 323rd squadron charts, he had bequeathed them to me.

In May, 2018, the National Museum of the United States Air Force™ (NMUSAF) rolled-out the *Memphis Belle* after a 13-year restoration. They targeted the occasion for May 17 to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the *Belle*'s crew completing her missions (the aircraft did it May 19th with a different crew). We coordinated to have our 91BG Memorial Association Reunion in Dayton in conjunction with the NMUSAF event, and they did a wonderful job of hosting us at the museum. Reenactor Chip Buerger and historian Mark Copeland managed to bring the charts to me. I was fortunate to meet NMUSAF curator, Jeff Duford, and had a sincere conversation about the *Memphis Belle* displays, which mention *Hell's Angels* and *Hot Stuff*. In passing, I spoke of *Delta Rebel No 2*, that I had a logbook mentioning May 1, 1943, as her 25th mission, and had just received the 1942-43 mission charts and had to digest them. He was very cooperative and encouraged my research, generously saying "history is important". At the banquet, I shared the charts with Simons and Friedman, and got their input. Someone noted that not only did I have a wealth of information, but also signatures from many of the original crewmen, who signed off when they finished their 25th mission. I finally had the ultimate, incredibly-informative, original document with proven provenance.

Above: Original 323rd Squadron Operational Status Chart of crew missions. (Hanou photo)

Note: "Aborts" counted as they went over the target and were shot at but failed to drop bombs due to undercast.

Upon my return home, I reviewed the charts in more detail. They are amazing! The rows and columns have coding in the boxes for mission completions, aborts and turn-backs. They are the Excel spreadsheet of their day! For column headers, they show the mission, date, target and bomb load. In the rows, they show each crew member, associated with aircraft showing the serial number. In the cells they have the status of each person's mission. I added this information to my spreadsheet and reached 24-25 missions.

I shared what I had learned and my Excel sheet with Duford, and he followed-up on my findings. He researched further and retrieved interrogation reports for every one of the missions. We found that one of crew's missions, related by Birdsong and also in Abb's logbook, was actually in another aircraft. However, two of the *Rebel's* aborts counted as missions in the reports, as they did in Abb's logbook. In the earliest days of the air war over Europe, an "abort" counted as a mission because the aircraft successfully reached the target but couldn't release bombs because of weather, and because they encountered flak or fighters on those missions. A "turn-back", on the other hand, occurred earlier in the sortie and meant the a/c literally turned back to base, often due to weather – the mission not completed nor counted. Thanks to my sources of information, not available to previous historians, and Jeff's help officially verifying missions, we established *Delta Rebel 2's* 25 missions and documented she finished her 25th mission on May 1, 1943 (before either *Memphis Belle* or *Hell's Angels*).

Below: The *Delta Rebel No 2* crew being visited by Clark Gable June 5 or 6, 1943. (Hanou photo of Abb's original)

The Crew, Left to right: B. Z. Byrd, Radio Operator; Randy Peterson, Left Waist Gunner; Steve Perri, Ball Turret Gunner; Harry Kulchesky, Right Waist Gunner; Clark Gable; Chuck Bennett, Co-pilot; George Birdsong, Pilot; Robert Abb, Bombardier; Robert Card, Tail Gunner

Actor Clark Gable is included in the *Rebel* crew as he was in the process of shooting the documentary film "Combat America."



In my opinion, there are three reasons the *Memphis Belle* was chosen to return to the United States for the war bond tour. First, the name - aircraft with names like *Delta Rebel No 2* or *Hell's Angels* weren't going to sell war bonds effectively in a god-fearing country just 75 years after the Civil War. Second, the morale angle — Birdsong and his crew had been badly shot up in a March 4, 1943, mission to Hamm. Many of the crew had gone on injury leave, and so hadn't finished 25 missions on May 1 when their aircraft did. Meanwhile, their copilot had been killed. For propaganda purposes the U.S. Army Air Forces wanted a crew and aircraft that had both completed 25 missions to convince the American people, especially mothers, that their boys could get home safe. Many of the *Rebel* crew didn't finish their 25 missions until mid- to late-June 1943. And third, Robert Morgan, *Belle's* pilot, had a talent for self-promotion and spent many an hour talking with William Wyler who spent much of his time at Bassingbourn (where both *Belle* and *Rebel* were based).



Acknowledgement: I could not have accomplished this research without the help of others. Simmons and Friedman added their thorough knowledge of the subject. In deference to their expert opinion, I call this narrative “One of the first”. Jeff Duford contributed valuable time to research this more fully; and our iteration and collaboration in verifying *Rebel’s* record was most satisfying to me, and especially George Bruckert, who knew of my strong interest and assured, prior to his death, that the charts came to me. (*with help from his Mom, Buerger, and Copeland*).

Mission chart listing all 25 missions for Delta Rebel No. 2.

[illegible]

Editor's note: Mick Hanou's interest in WWII aviation started as a kid building models. In the mid-1980s, he started assisting at air shows as a marshaller, eventually becoming a ramp boss at one. He takes great joy volunteering at air shows here and "across the pond" and hosting the local Collings Foundation stop for the past 27 years. In the past two decades, Mick has developed a breadth of knowledge of the air war in Europe, has been an historical consultant for four books and a recent TV documentary, and is respected by other historians for his attention to detail. His interest in the 91BG has led him to higher levels of responsibility and organizing reunions as President of the 91BGMA. He loves to help out with the WWII veterans, hear their stories and, most critically, keep their history alive. His Dutch father was taken by the Germans in 1943 and became a forced laborer in a factory in Germany. His mother was with the Dutch Underground, mostly as a Courier, but also helped Evadees. During the war, they saw the Eighth Air Force massive formations flying overhead. This boosted their morale greatly as they knew "one day we'd be free again". Hanou thanks veterans not for "our freedom" but for "risking their lives for the freedom of people you didn't know".

**PART II OF THE STORY:
THE MEMPHIS BELLE,
DELTA REBEL NO. 2, AND
HEAVY BOMBER FIRSTS
BY JEFF DUFORD**

“Which heavy bomber was the first to finish 25 combat missions?” The answer to this question has been argued for years among experts, enthusiasts, veterans, and now on social media. And why is 25 an important number, and not some other number, like 50 or 100?

Accurately identifying any historical first is problematic because the lack of evidence and the omission of necessary qualifiers often leads to the wrong answer. During my many years of research for the B-17F *Memphis Belle's*™ restoration and exhibit, I had the fortunate opportunity to look at this in great depth.

The above question is intricately tied to the *Memphis Belle*. During World War II, the US Army Air Forces (USAAF) chose the *Memphis Belle* as a symbol of the heavy bomber crews and touted it as the first bomber to finish 25 missions. While it was not actually the first, the war bond tour's success required such a simple, powerful message. Since the Eighth Air Force set 25 missions as the finish line for heavy bomber crews to complete their tours—and most were not making it—selling the *Memphis Belle* as the first to do so told a compelling story to a war-weary public. Unfortunately, though, the myth this created has long endured.

The first qualifier in the question at hand is nationality. In 1940, the Royal Air Force introduced four-engine Sterling and Halifax bombers into service, and German Luftwaffe Fw 200 Condors began flying antishipping missions far out into the Atlantic. Some British and German heavy bombers probably flew 25 combat missions before the US even entered the war.

The more pointed question we are really asking, then, is “which USAAF heavy bomber was the first to finish 25 missions?” That aircraft was undoubtedly a B-17E fighting early in the Pacific war, but it is difficult—if not impossible—to nail it down to one specific aircraft. The chaos during that time left us with few records, and since there was no mission-based tour policy at the time, reaching 25 missions would not be noteworthy.

However, a good candidate is the 19th Bomb Group’s B-17E *Suzy-Q*. From February-October 1942, *Suzy-Q* struck targets across the southwest Pacific, including many raids against the Japanese stronghold at Rabaul and the important fighter bases at Lae and Salamaua. In late October 1942, *Suzy-Q* returned to the US, where the crew took it on a war bond tour. In doing so, it became the first USAAF heavy bomber to finish 25 combat missions and return to the US.

The title definitely does not belong to the B-17D *Swoose* (currently in the Museum’s restoration facility). The *Swoose* was stationed in the Philippines in December 1941, but it only flew a handful of bombing missions before being converted into an armed transport. Most of the sister ships in the *Swoose*’s 19th Bomb Group were destroyed in the first days of the Japanese attack, and the few that escaped were relegated to second-hand duty in favor of more capable B-17Es.

Traditionally, however, one usually thinks of heavy bombers as Eighth Air Force B-17s and B-24s flying strategic bombing missions in flak-filled skies over mainland Europe. It is there that 25 missions became meaningful, because so few early Eighth Air Force bomber crewmen survived to reach this milestone and go home.

The B-24D *Hot Stuff* was—in a narrow sense—the first Eighth Air Force heavy bomber to complete 25 combat missions. It flew about half of its missions while attached to the Ninth Air Force in the Middle East. During this time, *Hot Stuff* was still in the Eighth on paper, but it flew with and under the operational control of the Ninth.

Hot Stuff flew its first mission against Lorient, France, on October 21, 1942, two days after *Suzy-Q* returned to the US from the Pacific. It then flew nine antisubmarine patrols over the Atlantic and the Bay of Biscay, which represented about a third of *Hot Stuff*’s total missions. In early December 1942, it was sent to

the Mediterranean theater, where it flew 16 bombing missions with the Ninth Air Force, mostly against targets in North Africa, but also six over Sicily and Italy. In late February 1943, *Hot Stuff* returned to the UK and flew four more missions, with the last of its 30 total missions against Rotterdam, Netherlands, on March 31.

Tragically, *Hot Stuff* crashed in Iceland while returning to the US in May 1943, killing all but one of those onboard, including Lt Gen Frank Andrews. Lt Gen Andrews was an important US military leader for whom Andrews Air Force Base was later named.

The big question, at least in regards to the *Memphis Belle*, is “what was the first USAAF heavy bomber to finish 25 missions over Europe?” For a long time, the generally accepted answer in published works has been the 303rd Bomb Group B-17F *Hell’s Angels*. This aircraft flew its first mission on November 17, 1942, against St. Nazaire, France, and its 25th mission against Meaulte, France, on May 13, 1943, about a week before the *Memphis Belle*. *Hell’s Angels* went on to fly a total of 48 missions and returned to the US in 1944 for a war bond tour.

It was, however, the 91st Bomb Group B-17F *Delta Rebel No. 2 (Rebel)* that actually became the first USAAF heavy bomber to complete 25 missions over Europe. Its first combat mission took place on November 8, 1942, against Abbeville, France. *Rebel* flew about two-thirds of its first 25 missions against targets in France and one-third against targets in Germany. *Rebel* also participated in the Eighth Air Force’s first raid on Germany when it struck Wilhelmshaven on January 27, 1943.

Delta Rebel No. 2 completed its 25th mission when it bombed St. Nazaire, France, on May 1, 1943—about two weeks before *Hell’s Angels* and nearly three weeks before *Memphis Belle*. *Rebel* continued flying in combat until enemy fighters shot it down on the August 12, 1943, raid against Gelsenkirchen, Germany.

So how is it possible to say for sure that *Delta Rebel No. 2* was the first USAAF heavy bomber to fly 25 missions over Europe? A thorough, critical look at primary source records supports this conclusion. From 2018-2020, I examined firsthand evidence I had been collecting for more than a decade.

Defining the criteria for an officially credited mission was the first step. The Eighth Air Force policy gave crews credit for some missions even if they returned early or did not bomb. What counted was where they turned around, and intelligence officers recorded these coordinates while debriefing the crews. Staff officers also typically noted credit or non-credit in the paperwork.

The next step was to reconstruct the tours of early Eighth Air Force heavy bombers. Examining

the remarkable collections preserved at the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, and at the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, made this possible. Reels of microfilm and thousands of file folders containing detailed crew debriefs, bombing reports, formation charts, and other documents provided virtually all of the information required to check and cross-check facts, myths, and assumptions. Analysis of these extensive records proved that *Delta Rebel No. 2* was indeed the first USAAF bomber to complete 25 missions over Europe. Ironically, the *Memphis Belle*, at best in third place, reached mythic status in aviation lore, while *Rebel* has faded into obscurity.

What does all this mean? To some degree, the great interest over “the first” was a result of the shocking bomber losses over Europe. It also illustrated the role of luck—any of these “firsts” could have instead been lost to flak, fighters, or accident had some small variable changed during one of their many missions. Several skilled crews almost reached that magic number only to be shot down right before making it.

With some qualifications, the *Memphis Belle* was



Famous photograph of the Memphis Belle and its crew. The crew finished their 25th mission on May 17, 1943, but the aircraft did not fly its 25th mission until two days later, on May 19th, 1943.

“a first”—the first USAAF heavy bomber to complete 25 missions over Europe and return to the US. Nevertheless, the *Memphis Belle*’s true significance is in being the iconic symbol that represents the service and sacrifice of American bomber crews.

Perhaps in the end, this documentation simply establishes facts and timelines for an accurate historical record, because in no way does it change the admirable service of all these bombers’ crews. Nor does it lessen the sacrifice of tens of thousands of USAAF heavy bomber crewmen who gave their lives in the fight against tyranny. May they always be remembered.

I would like to especially thank Mick Hanou, President of the 91st Bomb Group Memorial Association, for spurring on this research. At the Memphis Belle exhibit opening in May 2018, he told me Delta Rebel No. 2 finished its 25th mission before Hell’s Angels. It instantly piqued my interest, and I knew records existed that would provide conclusive proof since I’d seen them in researching the Memphis Belle. He also generously shared original material from the 91st Bomb Group and Rebel’s crew.



*The original “Delta Rebel”—Clark Gable of *Gone With the Wind* movie fame with the B-17F Delta Rebel during a visit to the 91st Bomb Group at Bassingbourn.*



B-17E Suzy-Q in the fall of 1942 after it returned to the US.



B-17F Hells Angels during its 1944 US war bond tour.

CHAPTER NEWS

8th Air Force Historical Society Birthplace Chapter Bill North, President

It's a sad time in the Mighty Eighth world since the passing of the irreplaceable Paul Grassey. I can hear Paul saying that there is still work to be done so pick yourself up and keep moving ahead. And that we will, but we will also take a moment to remember this larger than life force with his examples of respect, perseverance and caring. For those who missed it, below is the obituary written by his sons Gary Grassey and Terry Overton. At the April 24 Funeral Mass, Gary Grassey concluded with his "Remarks of Remembrance". Thank you, Gary for allowing us to reprint and share some of your heartfelt words. We wish the entire Grassey/Overton family our sincere condolences and prayers in this difficult time.

~ Andy Steigmeier

Paul Charles Grassey, a World War II veteran of the U.S. Army Air Force, died peacefully in his sleep on April 11th at the age of 97 after a brief illness. Affectionately known to family and friends as "Big Paul", Grassey enjoyed a long and rewarding life, including his final 32 years in Savannah, Georgia, where he enjoyed retirement with his beloved wife Nancy, their friends, their passion for the game of golf, and a mutual devotion to The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, where Paul served for decades as a Board trustee and volunteer docent, spinning stories and conducting hundreds of educational tours, presentations, speeches, and interviews.

Paul Grassey was preceded

in death by his first wife, Jeanne (Kiefer Overton), parents Henry and Bertha, brother Henry and wife Margaret, and daughters-in-law Deborah Stine Overton and Marilyn Murphy Overton. Paul is survived by Nancy, his wife of 61 years, their four children, including son Terry (Overton), son Robert and his partner



(William King), son Gary and wife Tara, and daughter Marianne (Muse) and husband Steve; seven grandchildren, including Keith (Overton) and wife Cindi, Ken (Overton) and wife Valerie, Michael Brandt, Lauren (Stevens) and husband Charles, John Paul ("Jack"), Michael Crane, and Patrick; and five great grandchildren, including Ryan, Claire, Tilghman, Peri, and Matthew.

Grassey was born on July 27, 1923, in Glens Falls, NY. He graduated from Ridgewood (NJ) High School in 1941. After graduation, Paul traveled to Havana, Cuba, with his father as the latter tried to find work to support his family. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, Grassey joined the U.S. Army Air Force and began train-

ing at the Virginia Tech Military School in 1942. He learned to fly in Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi, ultimately receiving his wings in Stuttgart, Arkansas, where he was assigned to pilot B-24s. After receiving orders to join the 446th Bomb Group, 704th Squadron, Eighth Air Force in Bungay,

England, he flew a B-24 Liberator nicknamed "Lady Luck" on 13 combat missions over Europe in 1944-45.

On V-E Day in May 1945, while on a brief leave in London, Grassey watched and celebrated as the lights of the city were turned on again for the first time in years. Soon, he was ordered to

return to the U.S. and begin training as a B-29 pilot in the Pacific theater. In August 1945, while en route to San Francisco by train, Grassey and his fellow servicemen received the news that Japan had surrendered, abruptly ending his active-duty military career.

In 1946, Grassey enrolled as a student at Lafayette College in Easton, PA, where he earned his undergraduate degree and played baseball. During his senior year, Grassey, a catcher, helped lead coach Charlie Gelbert's Lafayette squad to a deep NCAA tournament run that ended when the Leopards were eliminated by a Yale team whose lineup featured future President George H.W. Bush.

In Easton, Grassey married

CHAPTER NEWS

Jeanne (Kiefer Overton), a widow with a son, Terry, and whose first husband was killed in France during combat shortly after D-Day. After graduating from Lafayette, Grassey began his sales career in New York City with the Burroughs Corporation, where he would work for more than 30 years. In 1950, son Bob was born. Tragically, Jeanne passed away in 1959.

In a stroke of luck that would carry him for 61 years, Paul Grassey met Nancy (Steindl), a nurse in the U.S. Air Force, during the summer of 1959, shortly before she was scheduled to leave the country for a tour of duty in Spain. They were soon married, and settled in Glen Rock, NJ, where Gary was born in 1960. Their daughter, Marianne, arrived in 1963. Eventually, Paul kept his promise and took Nancy to Spain.

Beyond Manhattan, Grassey's work at Burroughs took him to Newark (NJ), Detroit, Wilmington (DE), Hempstead (NY), Syracuse (NY) and back to New York City again. Every stop along the way seemed to bring a new group of friends and characters who loved to work hard and play hard. While he loved sports, golf was Paul's game of choice, as reflected in thousands and thousands of rounds on courses throughout the country, a 41-year attendance streak at The Masters in Augusta, GA, with his Burroughs friends, the "Billy Blitz", and a deep well of tall tales.

After retiring from Burroughs, Grassey continued his sales career at Data Systems of New Jersey, Sweda International, Credit Card Software Systems, and Heartland Bank - the latter two while living in Savannah. While work and golf fueled his boundless energy during retirement, Grassey's most treasured mission and purpose was discovered when he

became involved with the building, growth, and development of the The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, GA. The "MEW-zee-uhm", as he called it, gave Paul focus and stirred a passion for sharing his stories about those who served during World War II. His tales ranged from personal memories and reflections to inspirational talks about the achievements, courage, and sacrifice of the people with whom he fought and served.



At the Mighty Eighth Museum, his favorite moments included providing tours and conversations with active duty military personnel, the families of veterans, as well as young students and their teachers. Grassey's personal collection of wartime tales culminated in a book that he wrote and published at age 90 - *It's Character that Counts*. Paul's book chronicles the stories of six high school friends who, like him, enlisted in military service during December 1941. In his words, each of Paul's friends represented one of six pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship.

Big Paul also loved music, especially the sounds of the Big Band Era and Frank Sinatra. He sang and even played the piano. His favor-

ite tunes were *The White Cliffs of Dover* and *Nancy (With the Laughing Face)*, a tribute to his bride which he performed frequently. In 2015, he collaborated with Mike Miller (piano), Doug Andrews (producer), and Andy Steigmeier (artwork) to create "*Songs to Victory-Old Favorites and WWII Memories*", a CD to benefit the Mighty Eighth Museum, which included 11 patriotic songs and featured Grassey's distinctive voice and style.

As *The White Cliffs of Dover* begins, Grassey explains the significance of the song to the warriors who flew across the English Channel: "*As we approached England, we could see the White Cliffs from a couple miles away. As we neared the cliffs, we were happy to be the lucky few who survived that mission.*" When he discussed those flights, he often added the words he told his crew: "*We're home guys.*"

In 2019, as honored guests of the National World War II Museum and the Gary Sinise Foundation, Paul and Nancy traveled to Europe, where they participated in the 75th Anniversary of D-Day ceremonies at Normandy, France. This journey was the trip of a lifetime, as Grassey and his fellow veterans were honored on June 6th by President Macron of France, President Trump, and other dignitaries near the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial.

In January 2020, in a ceremony at the Mighty Eighth Museum, Grassey was awarded the Legion of Honor, France's highest military honor. When asked about the award, Grassey reflected on the place that mattered most to him, saying, "*It was 22 years ago when this museum started. It was 90 volunteers and 60 of us were veterans. They have all passed away. And what I got today is for them.*"

CHAPTER NEWS

8th Air Force Historical Society
NY State Southern Wing Chapter
Joseph "Pat" Keeley, President

A Night to Remember; An Airborne C-47 Crew Chief's D-Day Story By David Levitt

The post-midnight sky west of the French coast on June 6, 1944, is teeming with over 800 American Skytrains [C-47s] heading to their D-Day drop zones. The aircrafts' silhouettes are visible in the moonlight, reflecting off the English Channel.

Each troop carrier plane is full of paratroopers and aircrews. Facing formidable German defenses, the tension inside each Skytrain is palpable. General Dwight Eisenhower believes that at least 50-60% of the vulnerable C-47s flying low and slow over the drop zones will be shot down.

Behind the handful of Airborne Pathfinders sent in to mark the drop zones and 2 other lead Airborne groups is the 439th TCG [Troop Carrier Group] heading the 50th TCG Wing. LTC Charles Young, the 439th TCG commanding officer—and superb DC-3 airline pilot—is leading the precision formations. He turns east, directly to the Cotentin Peninsula...Normandy.

The air armada stretches back across the English Channel well over England.

Flying in the seventh position of the first nine plane formation—called a flight element—was corporal Irving Goldstein. Not scheduled to fly that night, Irving had volunteered on that mission.

During the pre-flight briefing for D-Day, three crew chiefs refused to fly. When the CO asked for volunteers to replace them, Irving and two of his buddies eagerly stepped forward.

As the son of Jewish immigrants who fled the antisemitism in Poland, Irving had many close relatives trapped in Europe during the war. Most perished in the Holocaust. This made the war deeply personal for Irving. He enlisted in the USAAF as a patriotic American and a Jew determined to fight Hitler and the Nazis.

While RCG crew chiefs were responsible for the maintenance and repairs of their aircraft on the ground, they also functioned as flight engineers. A required member of a C-47 five-man aircrew, they monitored their Skytrain's mechanical functions and performed emergency repairs in flight. As an assistant crew chief, Irving flew combat missions in a backup capacity.

The 50th TCG Wing transported the 101st Airborne Division paratroopers. Known as the "*Screaming Eagles*" their shoulder patch depicted an eagle "screaming" with its beak open. They were in good hands that night. The

439th TCG had practiced formation flying day and night for months. They were ready. The "Argonia", lead aircraft of the 439th, was one of a handful of C-47s equipped with a belly-mounted radar dome for navigating at night and through cloud cover.

Just before reaching the Normandy coast there was an unexpected cloud bank. Despite extremely limited visibility, the 439th TCG pilots maintained their close formation, following their CO as he climbed above the clouds.

All hell broke out when they crossed the coast. "*The sky was filled with tracers of many colors from a multitude of antiaircraft guns,*" Irving distinctly remembered. The tracers are special bullets that leave a phosphorous glowing trail to help with aim. To Irving, it was like the 4th of July.

"*I heard the ping ping ping as German bullets tore through my C-47's cabin,*" he recalled. In addition to the tracers were ominous flak bursts—ragged chunks of metal from exploding 88mm antiaircraft shells.

C-47s lacked the armor plating and defensive machine guns found on the heavy bombers. Irving managed to find a rectangular piece of armor plate and placed it on the floor by his battle station next to the cargo door. "*It was just big enough to stand on. However, it didn't help when bullets came in horizontally!*" he chuckled.

In contrast to the aircrews flying parallel further north, the 439th TCG aircrews resisted the urge to take evasive maneuvers and increased their airspeed in an attempt to avoid the antiaircraft fire. As the 439th flew inland, an antiaircraft battery mounted on a railroad car opened fire on them. C-47s did not have the self-sealing fuel tanks like the heavy bombers. They were vulnerable to fuel tank fires from the enemy guns. Rubberized fuel tank liners which sealed bullet holes in punctured fuel tanks were not installed in Skytrains until 1945.

Irving saw the macabre orange-yellow glow from a C-47 behind him on fire reflected off the other aircraft in the formation, in the overhead clouds, and finally, on the ground as it plunged to earth.

The red light by the cabin ceiling behind the cockpit came on which signaled four minutes before the green light was illuminated, which told the paratroopers to jump. Each of the "*Screaming Eagles*" on board carried over 100 pounds of weaponry, ammunition, food and other items in addition to their parachutes. It was a struggle to stand up.

One-by-one they all hooked their parachute's static line onto the overhead cabin wire. There was a distinctive snapping sound with each paratrooper.

A plane load of paratroopers was called a "stick," comprised usually between 15-18 men. The term was used because the paratroopers stood in a tightly packed single file of soldiers, formed up, stretching from the cargo door up to the cockpit. Standing first in line of the "stick" at the cargo door, was the jump master, Irving, standing by

his side as was his post. It had been Irving's job to remove the cargo door prior to the flight so the paratroopers could jump unimpeded.

The jump master bellowed out "*Number ONE!*" The first paratrooper responded, "*Number ONE, OK!*" The jump master continued to call out the numbers and listened for the corresponding response. However, when he bellowed out, "*Number SEVENTEEN!*" there was no familiar reply. In the moonlight Irving saw that Number 17 was crying. The jump master made his way back to number 17 to speak to him, then returned back to his place up front. "*Number SEVENTEEN!*" A barely audible "...*Number 17...okay*" was heard.

Irving hearing the port (left) engine being throttled back. Before reaching the drop zone, C-47s would reduce air speed from a 140-mph cruising speed at 1,500 ft., to 110 mph at 700 ft., to minimize paratrooper's exposure to enemy ground fire during their parachute drop. Power—only on the port engine—was reduced to minimize the air flow past the open cargo door as paratroopers jumped. Green light on! In unison as planned with the jump mast, Irving kicked a 100+ pound machine gun with its parachute, out the door. Immediately, Irving then triggered a switch by the door to electrically release the 6 para-packs attached to bomb rack type devices on the aircraft's belly. Prior to flight, Irving filled the para-packs (6 ft. long canvas sacks with a parachute) filled with ammunition, supplies, and food. Irving deduced that the "stick" on board were a medical unit since medical supplies were loaded inside the para-packs.

Immediately behind the kicked-out machine gun, the "stick" jumped out. Standing by the open cargo door, being careful not to fall out himself, Irving helped the overloaded paratroopers steady themselves as they jumped out. If number 17 hesitated, number 18 pushed him out! The static cords automatically pulled their parachutes out as the paratroopers fell clear of the C-47's tail.

Flying out over Utah Beach, there was additional anti-aircraft fire. Once over the Channel, the planes flew west to return to England. Irving noticed that his aircraft banked left, but did not turn. When he heard power increased on the starboard [right] engine and the Skytrain turned left, he realized that the rudder control cable had been severed by enemy fire and the pilot was now steering using engine power. Luckily, the skill of the pilot enabled the plane to return safely to base.

After returning to Upottery Air Field, Irving found out that two additional 439th TCG C-47s were shot down in the serial [a large formation of multiple flight element formations] flying behind his plane. Out of the eighty-one 439th Skytrains that flew that night, 27 had battle damage.

The TCGs that broke formation in the cloud cover off the Normandy coast, then took evasive action, scattering

paratroopers all over Normandy. Most were unable to form up their units and could not meet their objectives to help the D-Day amphibious troop landings.

In contrast, Irving's serial was one of a handful that placed all of their "sticks" within their designated drop zone. Charles Young won a bet with Colonel Robert Sink, the 101st Airborne, 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment CO, by dropping him within 200 yards of the intended drop zone.

After returning, the ground crew replaced the severed rudder control cable and repaired the battle damage on Irving's C-47. On June 7th, Irving flew a re-supplying day-time mission towing a glider to Normandy. With a wingspan over 83 ft. and weighing 7,500 lbs. loaded, CG-4A Waco gliders were almost as large as the C-47s. Gliders could carry troops, ammunition, supplies, or even a jeep or small artillery gun to the battle zone.

For their superb performance on D-Day, the 439th TCG was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. Charles Young was promoted to full colonel; and Irving was promoted to full crew chief and his rank was increased to sergeant, and later, staff sergeant [four stripes]. Irving received an air medal for his exemplary skill and grace under fire. He received a 2nd air medal for his crossing the Rhine River mission in March 1945. Before his discharge, Irving was awarded the Croix de Guerre by the French government as well as the prestigious Legion of Honor. In 2018 Irving received the Jubilee of Liberty medal by the 8th Air Force Historical Society for his participation in Operation Overlord [the 90-day mission period which included D-Day]. Our chapter presented Irving a special medal, and he also received medals from the State of New York. The New York Yankees paid tribute to Irving as both an ardent, life-long fan and veteran in 2019.

Irving continues to be an enthusiastic, active member of the NYSW Chapter of the 8th AFHS. He often speaks at local chapter luncheons. A few years ago, Irving visited the American Air Power Museum at Republic Airport in East Farmingdale, NY, to see their C-47 painted with the markings of the "*Argonia*."

In his century of life, Irving Goldstein has had numerous incredible experiences, however, his June 5-6th, 1944 D-Day mission in particular, was truly a "*night to remember*."

In additional chapter news:

We hope to have a great luncheon this fall—depending upon the COVID pandemic situation. Please stay tuned!

If you live or will be visiting the southern New York area, please contact Pat Keeley [info on p.2 of this issue] for information on our upcoming luncheon meetings! *They are held at the Holiday Inn, Plainview-Long Island, NY. We would love to see you there.*



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



NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE

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



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

Thursday, October 28

7:30am — 8:30am	American Breakfast Buffet
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration open
9:30am — 12:00pm	<i>"The Other Savannah"*</i>
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
2:00pm — 3:30pm	<i>"Learn from the Past...Journey to the Future"</i> — UK Speakers: Emily Charles, Hattie Hearn, Suzie Harrison, Jeff Hawley, & Paul Bellamy—with Q & A
3:45pm — 5:00pm	<i>"Honoring Their Service"</i> Gary Webb—Webb Military Museum
5:30pm — 6:30pm	Heritage League Meeting
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Buffet dinner and program: <i>"The 8th—Beyond the Legacy"</i> LTC Steve Bolton, Garrison Commander, Hunter Army Air Field <i>(subject to the needs of the US military)</i>

Friday, October 29

7:30am — 8:30am	American Breakfast Buffet
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration open
8:00am — 9:15am	Group Meetings
9:30am — 2:30pm	<i>National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force*</i>
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
3:15pm — 4:30pm	<i>WWII Vets with Q & A</i>
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Rendezvous Dinners

Saturday, October 30

7:30am — 8:30am	American Breakfast Buffet
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration open
8:45am — 10:15am	General Membership Meeting
11:00am — 2:30pm	<i>"Historic Savannah" (City Tour ~ lunch on your own)*</i>
12:00pm — 4:00pm	8th AFHS Board Meeting
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 10:00pm	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

Atkins, Everett Richard 'Dick', Jr.,



95, passed away April 1, 2020. Richard was born in St. Petersburg, Florida on 11 December 1926. He moved to Beaumont, Texas in 1936 where he attended Beaumont High School and Lamar Junior College. He enlisted in the Army Air Force in January 1944 and attended Aerial Photography School. He was training as a B-29 Aerial Gunner when the war ended. He went on to receive a commission and attended pilot training as a student officer. He returned to Beaumont, Texas after separation from the US Air Force in 1948 and worked as a Structural Steel Designer until recall to the Air Force in 1951. He served in France as a Unit Commander and was separated in 1953 and immediately joined Chance Vought Aircraft Company (later LTV Aerospace corporation) and worked as a Design Engineer, Research and Development Engineer, and was a Technical Project Manager at retirement in 1990. Mr. Atkins was well known in Aerospace circles, serving on many industry and Government technical committees and industry organizations. He was President of SAFE Association, Chairman of the Aerospace Industries 340-5 Crew Systems Committee and a longtime member of DOD Air Crew Station Standardization Panel.

At the time of his retirement Mr. Atkins headed the Pilot/Vehicle Integration organization at LTV. Among his many accomplishments was the invention of the SENDS Safe Ejection Envelope Display System, a device to keep pilots of high-performance military aircraft constantly informed of their safe ejection capabilities.

Mr. Atkins retained his military status, serving with the 136th Fighter Wing (later the 136th Air Refueling Wing)

of the Texas Air National Guard at Hensley Field. He retired in 1974 with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Upon his retirement from LTV, Mr. Atkins converted his avocation as an aviation writer to a full-time profession. He authored many magazine and newspaper articles and several books including *Outstanding Military Aircraft of World War II* and *Fighting Scouts of the 8th Air Force*, and *The Long Wait*. He was active in World War II historical organizations and was President of the North Texas Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, Chairman of the Interlink Aviation Task, Executive Director of the Scouting Force Association, Chairman of the Southwest Aviation Museum Council and Director of Museum Activities for the Lockheed Martin Vought Center Retiree Club. He also served as a member of the Governing Board of the Vought Internet Project and was instrumental in developing the history of the Chance Vought Company Website.

Preceded in death by his wife of 72 years Marian Burkhart Atkins and son Everett Richard (Rick) Atkins III. He is survived by daughters, Terry Craddock and husband Phil, Carol Wampler and husband John. Grandsons Phil Craddock and wife Adela, Johnny Wampler; granddaughters Tammy Craddock, Kim Drake and husband Rod, Skye Hasan and husband Fe; 16 great grandchildren and 5 great great grandchildren.

Bass, James L., age 98, died May 21, 2020.



He served with the 457th Bomb Group as a radio operator, mechanic, and gunner. After his service, he graduated from the University of Tennessee and the Vanderbilt University School of Law. He engaged in the practice of law for 71 years. He was preceded by

his wife, Erma of 62 years and son, John. He is survived by son, David, daughter, Jane Turner and three grandchildren. He was the author of the *Fait Accompli Trilogy*, an anthology of the 457th Bomb Group.

Carlile, William Robert, Jr., 100,



passed away December 6, 2020. He was a resident at Oak Crest Village in Baltimore County, MD; devoted son of the late William and Agnes Carlile; dear cousin of Robert L. Miller, Jr. and Richard G. Miller. Also survived by close friends Bobby Ortt, Emma Christianson and many other loved ones.

William served with the Army Air Corps in World War II and the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. He was a Lieutenant in the 306th BG (H) as an Air Traffic Control Officer before being promoted to Captain as an Aircraft Controller at Tyndall AFB, Florida. He received several medals from the USAAC and the USAF for his service from 1943 to 1953.

Ford, Bob, 98, passed away on Feb.



20, 2021, peacefully in his sleep surrounded by his loving family. Bob was born Oct. 11, 1922, in Madera, California, to Grace and Stanley Ford.

Upon graduating from high school in 1940, he found work as a firefighter with the California Division of Forestry (CDF) in Madera. In 1940-1941, he attended San Bernardino Junior College. When WWII broke out, he returned to Madera and enlisted in the Navy to become a carrier pilot, but was eventually released due to childhood exposure to TB. He then enlisted in the Army Air Corps

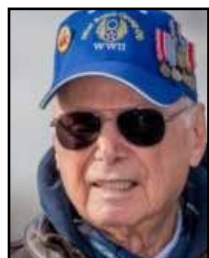
continuing to work at CDF until he was called up in 1943. Bob was assigned to fly bombers in Texas to train bombardiers.

After the war, Bob returned to work at the CDF, making it his career and rising through the ranks with an assignment in Santa Cruz. Bob met Gaytrell, in Santa Cruz, whom he married in 1954. His assignments included positions in Hollister, Gilroy, and Morgan Hill before working many years in the CDF headquarters in Sacramento until his retirement in 1977.

Bob was an active member of the California Division of Forestry Employees Association (CDFEA). He served on the board of directors for many years representing the retired members of the association with the California Employees Public Retirement System. Bob was a long-time union leader of local 2881 International Association of Fire Fighters. He was a member of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Prescott, Arizona.

He was preceded in death by his loving wife of 50 years, Gaytrell; his son, Larry Robert Ford; and his daughters, Ann Marie Ford and Barbara Grace Johnson. Bob enjoyed family, friends, traveling the world and golfing. Bob is survived by his children, David Ford, Kathy Ford and Donald Ford; his twin brother, Richard (Dick) Ford; and many nieces, nephews, grand and great-grandchildren.

Goldstein, D.D.S., Jack, 96, of



Annapolis, MD, passed away on January 17, 2021. At 19, Jack went to war; he was the last living member of his 10-man bomber crew that flew missions during

World War II as part of the "Mighty Eighth" Air Corps. Jack served with the 381st BG/535th BS, on a B-17 Flying Fortress from 1943-1945. Jack completed 25 bombing missions over

Western Europe as a waist gunner. It took him forty years to share stories about WWII. When he did, he shared them with his family, fellow veterans, students, and the Washington Football Team, thanks to the Friends of the WWII Memorial and The Greatest Generations Foundation. Jack was the beloved husband of the late Marian Lewitz. Devoted father of Linda (Martin) Kaufman, Susan (Gary) Goldstein, and Daniel (Jody) Goldstein. Beloved brother of the late Abraham Goldstein, Robert (Bea) Goldstein, the late William Goldstein, and the late Melvin Goldstein. Cherished grandfather of Joshua Goldstein, Mark (Elyssa) Kaufman, Karen (Justin) Sossin, Tori (Mickey) Leibner, Hannah (Lindsay) Freedman, and Michael Goldstein. Great grandfather of Maci and Emmett Sossin, Brody Freedman, and Jeanette Kaufman.

Handy, Sr., William "Howard", 98,



a lifelong Sedro-Woolley resident, passed away February 22, 2021, at home surrounded by his family. He was born September 27, 1922, to William Lewis and Mabel

May (Belles) Handy in Sedro-Woolley, Washington.

Howard graduated from Union High School in Sedro-Woolley in 1941. On October 26, 1942, he was united in marriage to Clarissa Pells in Samish. They settled in Sedro-Woolley to start their family.

On January 20, 1943, Howard enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He served in England as a flight engineer on a B-24 with the 466th BG. He flew 33 bombing missions over Germany and Northern Europe including two missions on D-Day. He returned to the states on the Queen Mary and was stationed at several bases before being discharged on September 4, 1945.

Returning home was especially exciting since he was able to see his wife and

finally meet his daughter for the first time. They stayed in Sedro-Woolley and continued expanding their family with a second daughter, a son, and a third daughter, over the course of the next eight years, all while building their new home.

After being discharged, Howard found employment with Ewing Plumbing in Mt. Vernon and began his plumbing apprenticeship. A year later, Howard joined the Snelson Boys and worked for them for over 30 years.

He enjoyed attending and coaching baseball, Scouts, and any other activity his children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren were involved in. Spending time with his family was his proudest accomplishment and favorite pastime.

Fishing (with anyone who would get in the boat), camping, motorcycle riding, and planting a large garden, were activities he enjoyed. After retiring, Howard and Clarissa enjoyed traveling across the country, visiting with family, and working on family history.

Howard is survived by his children, Clara May (Gordon) Hooper, William "Bill" Handy, Jr., and Diane Marie (Don) Feeney; siblings, Kenneth (Dorothy) Handy, and Robert (Burnette) Handy; five grandchildren, Bonnie Morrill, Bill Bailey, Kelly Bailey (Tammi), Dennis Feeney (Megan), and Darrel Feeney (Danielle); 13 great grandchildren; one great great grandchild with two more on the way; and numerous nieces, nephews, and extended family.

He was preceded in death by his parents; wife, Clarissa; daughter, Donna Bailey; three brothers, Allen, Richard and George Handy; sister, Barb Eaton; granddaughter, Vicki White.



Leo, Joseph A., 94, passed away October 8, 2020, at Cuba Memorial Hospital, surrounded by his loving wife and family. Born, Dec. 17,

1925, in Oneida, he was the son of the late David and Catherine DeSenza Leo. On September 27, 1952, in St. Patrick's Church, in Oneida, he married Betty Rossello, who survives.

Joe served with the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. He was a staff sergeant with the 490th BG/849th BS, flying in 15 combat missions over Germany and one goodwill mission over Holland in a food drop.

He and his wife moved to Cuba, NY, where he worked for Cooper Industries, now Eaton-Cooper Power Systems, as a safety administrator.

Joe was a longtime parishioner of the Basilica of St. Mary of the Angels, Olean, NY. He was an avid hunter and enjoyed stone masonry and wood working.

In addition to his loving wife of 68 years, he is survived by his daughter, Karen (Craig) Bell, and his son, David (Roxann) Leo; a sister, Margaret Wadkins; and several nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by two brothers, Edward Leo and Anthony D. Leo.

Roundhill, Joseph, 97, passed away February 8, 2021.



Preceding him in death were his young son Jeffery, his dearly beloved wife of 61 years, Betty, and his two younger siblings, Melvin Roundhill,

and Marilyn Gunderson.

Born in Seattle August 1, 1923, of English immigrants, JW attended Leschi grade school until 1933 where at the tender age of 10 he was put on a ship and told he was in charge of his 2 younger siblings until their arrival in England, where they would start a new life once reunited with their mother. JW would attend school in Reading, Berkshire, and later work as an apprentice toolmaker for the Miles Aircraft Co.

While in England during WWII, JW served in both the British Royal Air Force in pilot training and then the infamous 379th BG where he flew on 35 missions over enemy occupied Europe, as a right-waist & nose gunner on a B-17G aircraft. He returned home on December 31, 1944, after successfully eluding the U-boat packs at a speed of 17 kts across the Atlantic aboard the famous hospital ship *Marine Wolf*. His decorations include the Distinguished Flying Cross, four Air Medals and the French Legion of Honor.

In 1948, he joined The Boeing Co and met his smart, talented and beautiful red headed future wife Betty Attlessey. After 32 years with some time in both Experimental and Engineering management, JW took early retirement to pursue other interests. In 2000, JW and Betty retired as co-owners of world renowned "*Patterns Unlimited*" a company specializing in discontinued china, crystal and silver patterns. JW was active in Masonic organizations and local charities.

Survivors include sons Barry Herbert, John Paul (Arlene) and grandchildren; Kevin (Susie), Kent, Rebecca Downs (Craig), Daniel (Sarah) and Jeffs' son Elton (Heather). He also leaves behind 12 great grandchildren and 4 great, great grandchildren plus many nieces and nephews and other relatives in England.

Seesenguth, Donald Leroy, 99, of East



Ridge, TN, passed away April 6, 2021.

Don was born and grew up on a family farm in Adams County, Indiana.

Enlisting in the Army Air Corp at 20 years of age, he

became a pilot with the 457th BG and flew 30 combat missions in B-17's over Germany during WWII obtaining the rank of Captain. He was a Purple Heart Recipient and in 2017 was awarded

the French Legion of Honor Medal by the French Consul General. Returning home to Indiana, he worked at Central Soya Company until being recalled to the Air Force for the Korean War. There he was a B-29 Aircraft Commander and flew 38 combat missions for a Reconnaissance Group.

After returning home for several years, he transferred to Chattanooga to work at the new Central Soya Plant. In Chattanooga, he met Betty Hammack, his wife, who passed away in 2014 after 57 years of marriage. In his final years of work for Central Soya, he was Maintenance Supt. for 15 years and Supt. of Engineering for 12 years before retiring. He has been a member of the Friendship Class of Simpson United Methodist Church for over 64 years.

Don was preceded in death by his parents, Barthold and Elizabeth Seesenguth, and sister, Ruth Mankey. He is survived by his Stepson, William C. Robertson, Jr. (Kathy), Step daughter, Sandra Womack (Randy), sister, Pauline Augsburg (Richard), three grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and many nieces and nephews.

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

Please

forward all TAPS to:

ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

or mail to:

8th AFHS

68 Kimberlys Way

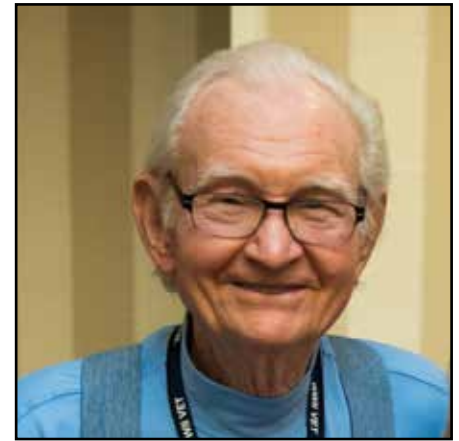
Jasper, GA 30143-4769

912-748-8884

HOW ABOUT IT!

Stand Tall!

Earl Wassom 466th BG, Chaplain 8th AFHS



An event occurred which became common-place practice in the 8th Air Force during the War in Europe, 1942-1945. On each mission day, many hundreds of four engine bombers would take off from their bases in England and each aircraft would circle the skies jockeying for position to find their individual Bomb Group, Squadron, and Element. Once in formation, these groups would form into Wings, then Divisions. Each aircraft was staffed by ten air-men, each, a specialist in his field. During the one hour or longer time it took for all aircraft to become airborne and get into combat formation, the two pilots and flight engineer became heavily engaged in flying the plane; the other men were spotters or observers. Once the plane passed the North Sea and entered enemy territory, everything changed. Little black dots suddenly appeared, darting in the skies above. Each of those "dots" were heavily armed enemy fighters getting organized to attack the bomber stream. In addition, over the cities and industrial areas, large black bursts of flak came up with increasing intensity and accuracy. A bedlam of noise and activity arose. The black bursts of smoke and the odor of cordite, noted by the crew in the stations throughout the aircraft, were proof of the accuracy of the flak gunners on the ground. This was outside the plane but on board, the inexperienced crew had prepared for combat but had never experienced it! This was new to them. They had trained together as individuals and had a general knowledge of each other's responsibilities, but never did they feel dependent upon the other.

Now, things were different! Their

pilot was experienced as a pilot but not as a combat pilot. As conditions outside worsened, he took command of the situation. His confidence grew and the crew's confidence was strengthened also! Their training was excellent but their effectiveness only became better when specific needs emerged which cannot be taught but learned only through experience. Each new encounter strengthened the team. They learned *trust* in one another as well as developed *confidence, reliance, security, appreciation, honesty, and love for their country*. They had become a team. When they completed their missions, they were decorated, commended for their services and graduated as "happy warriors". This phase of their assignment was completed! They moved on! They were homeward bound!

Over seven million of them became civilians and began life again. Now, they had new dreams. Before, this assignment, they were delivery boys, clerks, grocery baggers, small-time farmers, students, and the like. With new opportunities and a greater out-look on life, they aspired to new goals. The sky was the limit. All of them wanted the freedom to choose a vocation, a career, find a girl who would become their wife, buy a house, start a family, live a life built on sound and proven moral values. These were sound principles to follow. Everyone was different. No two choices were the same. Many entered the work-force. Others enrolled in trade, vocational, technical or vocational schools. A large number went to specialized research and professional schools, colleges, and universities. Their careers were peerless. Their successes cannot

be numbered. One of my friends entered the work-force as a floor sweeper and terminated his tenure as CEO of that same corporation. Many were research scientists, inventors, investors, entrepreneurs, educators, lawyers, farmers, politicians, and many more. A journalist described us as "*the greatest generation*". But this generation had, by decree of government, to retire and thus pass their mantle on to the "next generation". Another phase of life had ended, another graduation, what now? One wise old sage said, "To have a successful retirement you must have plans, things you want to accomplish, and places you want to go. *"If you have no plans other than to golf, fish, to rest and be entertained, you will be dead in six months."* Playing games, hunting, TV watching, may soon lose their appeal. There are hobbies worth pursuing such as woodworking, painting, writing, bird watching, gardening, body building, to name only a few. Returning to work in a less demanding job, such as a consultant, greeter, docent, counselor or financial advisor can be helpful and personally rewarding. Teaching is both rewarding and productive. Volunteers at a hospitals or charitable organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Samaritan's Purse, and the Red Cross, can provide a challenge.

Father Time keeps moving on. We are shocked when we look at the calendar and figure our age. An octogenarian? Where has the time gone?

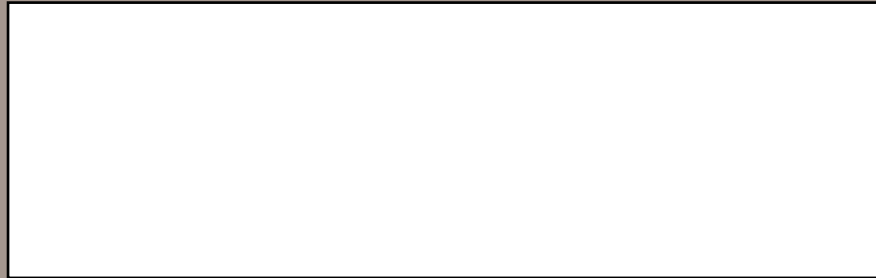
(continued on back cover)



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

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE
PAID
NASHVILLE, TN
PERMIT 1

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



(continued from previous page)

When physical strength is not as it was 'back then', when mobility becomes difficult or impossible, when we become more dependent on others, our attitude must remain positive, reflect good humor and tolerance. Don't be a storm cloud. Everyone is carrying baggage. Everyone needs a listening ear, a sympatric friend, a warm smile and whenever possible, a 'hug'. Old age is for everyone. It is natural and simple. The machinery of our skeleton just gets tired or wears out. But through the Grace of God and His healing touch and medications and all of the care-givers, we survive and live on and on.

The nonagenarian, a person living in his 90s, asks the question, what now? Who knows? Look at the time-piece and ask the question again. We do routine things which are often done without enthusiasm, such as one's personal care, paying the bills, balancing the check-book, eating. They have to be done but be thankful you can still do it. Every day there are blessings you can receive and blessings which you can pass on!

Recently delivered to my door through the post office were over 160 reminders from over 25 states and 3 foreign countries that my wife and I were

celebrating Cindy and Earl's 75th wedding anniversary. WOW. Beautiful greeting cards all signed with loving notes by our friends, many cards which were original art work, pictures, notes and things to remind us of wonderful times of the past. This was God's way of blessing a 97 and 94-year-old couple. Thank you for remembering. We are eternally grateful.

Paul the Apostle was a mortal just like the rest of us. He declared: *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."* 2 Tim 4:7 N IV. What more could one ask? An old-time gospel song writer, Johnson Oatman, Jr. wrote these most appropriate lyrics:

*When I've gone the last mile of the way
I will rest at the close of the day.
And I know there are joys await me
When I've gone the last mile of the way.*

Editor's note: This 113th 'How About It' column marks the end of an era in the 8th A F News magazine. At Earl's request, this is his final column. All of us have been touched so deeply by his inspirational messages throughout the years. However, Earl has appointed a successor. Stay tuned!