

September 2021



8TH AF NEWS

Volume 21 Number 3 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"



"HOMEWARD BOUND"

47TH ANNUAL 8TH AFHS REUNION

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



8th AF News

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

September 2021

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Front cover: Another extraordinary original art piece by our own, Roger Stuch--especially created to commemorate our 47th Annual Reunion in Savannah!

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THE 8TH A F NEWS

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

National office is located at:

**68 Kimberlys Way
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EDITOR'S NOTES



“If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write something worth reading or do something worth writing.” ~ Benjamin Franklin

I truly believe most of us—myself included—live our lives striving to be good and productive members of society. We start within our own families and communities—we just try to do the right thing at the right moment, and keep going. For most of us, the idea of doing something with the intention of creating and leaving a legacy for anyone, never enters our minds.

The same is true for the young men and women who served during the infancy of the 8th in WWII. None sought notoriety, or medals and awards. None risked and/or sacrificed themselves for a flag draped coffin. These heroes—many of whom were just teenagers—followed a call to serve our country at whatever cost. A call that didn't come from without, but from within.

And the legacy was born.

One of the important things of which I became aware about the Mighty 8th some 20+ years ago, was a set of ominous, yet incredible statistics:

250,000 Those who served in the 8th during WWII
28,000 POWs and Escape & Evaders
26,000 KIA

As incredible as these statistics are, they tell only part of the story...

Today over 16,000 men and women are serving in the 8th Air Force; from 1942 to the present, the cumulative number becomes 1,000,000. ONE MILLION men and women who served or continue to serve in the 8th.

Isn't it our duty to honor and remember ALL men and women who serve? While our focus continues to be the 8th Air Force, we would be remiss not to include and recognize the hundreds of thousands of men and women who daily keep the incredible legacy of the 8th alive as they serve our country all across the globe. Their accomplishments and sacrifices **MUST** be remembered, too.

Today the 8th is an integral part of the security of not just the United States, but of the world.

With our help and dedication, the legacy will continue into perpetuity.

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.

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PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING

Anne Marek
President & Treasurer



Hello everyone!

I hope all of you had a wonderful summer possibly filled with some interesting trips. Your Board of Directors continues to meet regularly via Skype and has recently approved the hiring of a consulting firm to modify and update our website. We are very excited that this new website will contain a complete database which will be “searchable”. All our historical records and photographs will be incorporated into the new format. We hope to have this completed and launched within the next three months.

Our Communications Committee of Travis Chapin and Steve Snyder will be sending out notices when it will be available.

Our Membership Growth and Retention Committee of Eleesa Faulkner and Paul Tibbets IV have been working diligently and have decided to extend the deadline for submissions to the Students' Corner Essay Program until Veterans Day in November because it has created a great deal of interest in several school districts. More of this appears in this issue. *(Please check out 'The Student Corner' in this issue!)*

Our 47th Annual Reunion in Savannah is almost upon us. Savannah's very own Birthplace Chapter of the 8thAFHS, is very excited that the Society is coming to town. The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force has opened up its doors to us and will allow all attendees free admission all week provided they are wearing their nametags. Our reunion hotel, the Marriott Savannah Riverfront, has sold out and our overflow hotel has few available rooms. We have some really fun tours planned. I am so looking forward to seeing everyone again at our reunion in October—especially since we were unable to meet last year due to the COVID pandemic.

If any of our veterans would like assistance

with reunion expenses: hotel room costs, registration fees, meals, please don't hesitate to contact **Debra [912-748-8884]**. Through the amazing generosity of members in the Society, we have funds available in our **SaV*2*SAV** (*Send a Veteran to Savannah*) program.

TREASURER'S LEDGER

I am including in this issue of AF News the Financial Statements for the period ending July 31, 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 June. It is currently at approximately \$299K, up about \$25K, thanks to the wise management of our Financial Advisor, Mr. Gavin Natelli. He discusses the Society's financial position with me on a regular basis, and continues to make sound decisions as to what investments we should make to continually grow our portfolio. 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.

I'm also glad to report that our membership continues to be very generous. Through the month of July, 2021, we have received donations totaling \$10,691. These donations do not include contributions to our **SAV*2*SAV** (*Send a Vet to Savannah*) Program which has now reached a high of \$5,850. I thank all of you for your continued financial support of our Society.

As a member you can personally help bring revenue into the Society by registering with Amazon

TREASURER'S LEDGER

Smiles when shopping on line. It's quick and easy to do. So far this year, Amazon Smiles generated \$105 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.

Thank you especially 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. If any of you have any questions regarding any of our financial statements, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Our contact information appears on page 2.

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Profit & Loss January through July 2021	
	Jan - Jul 21
Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
4000 · Income/Miscellaneous	
4001 · Amazon Smiles	105.57
4003 · SaV*2*SAV	5,860.00
4005 · BOA Rewards	7.26
4010 · Member Dues Annual	28,795.30
4014 · Chapter Closings	16,953.01
4019 · Member Contributions/Donations	10,691.46
Total 4000 · Income/Miscellaneous	62,412.60
4050 · Investment Income	
4058 · Portfolio Dividends & Interest	2,251.33
4059 · Realized Gain/(Loss) on Invest	0.00
4060 · Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Invest	37,717.41
4061 · Investment Management Fees	0.00
Total 4050 · Investment Income	39,968.74
Total Income	102,381.34
Gross Profit	102,381.34
Expense	
5100 · National Administration Expense	
5111 · Corporation Charges	70.00
5121 · 8AF History Projects	628.79
Total 5100 · National Administration Expense	698.79
5200 · Magazine Expenses	
5210 · Printing Expenses	4,860.00
5220 · Postage Expenses	3,214.56
Total 5200 · Magazine Expenses	8,074.56
5300 · National Office Expenses	
5303 · Telephone/DSL	392.08
5304 · Supplies	841.19
5305 · Abila Software/ Computer Exps	1,307.53
5307 · Office Rent	700.00
5312 · FICA-8AFHS portion	1,948.66
5313 · Payroll/ Office Management	25,375.00
5314 · Local Travel/Miscellaneous	211.14
5315 · Postage & Shipping	301.15
5316 · Bank Charges/ Returned checks	602.31
5323 · Merchant Account Usage Fees	1,289.66
5326 · Payroll processing fees	2,887.66
Total 5300 · National Office Expenses	35,856.38
Total Expense	44,629.73
Net Ordinary Income	57,751.61
Other Income/Expense	
Other Income	
6550 · Annual Meeting Revenue	
6551 · Event Registration	28,363.31
Total 6550 · Annual Meeting Revenue	28,363.31
Total Other Income	28,363.31

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

Remember,

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

Anne

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position As of July 31, 2021	
	Jul 31, 21
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1017 · Oppenheimer & Co	299,477.96
1040 · Bank of America Checking Acct.	18,706.05
1042 · Bank of America Savings Acct.	36,328.72
Total Checking/Savings	354,512.73
Total Current Assets	354,512.73
TOTAL ASSETS	354,512.73
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Other Current Liabilities	
2050 · Payroll & Taxes Payable	
2051 · Payroll payable	2,896.57
2052 · FICA & withhold taxes payable	9,942.89
Total 2050 · Payroll & Taxes Payable	12,839.46
2500 · Accrued Expenses	138.14
Total Other Current Liabilities	12,977.60
Total Current Liabilities	12,977.60
Total Liabilities	12,977.60
Equity	
3200 · *Unrestricted Net Assets	256,407.11
Net Income	85,128.02
Total Equity	341,535.13
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	354,512.73

NOTEWORTHY



The theme for **Veterans Day 2021** is centered on the centennial commemoration of the **Tomb of the Unknown Soldier**. Located at Arlington National Cemetery, the Tomb was initially dedicated by the Army on Armistice Day, November 11, 1921, with the burial of an unknown service member from World War I. One hundred years after the World War I Unknown's burial, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier continues to be a powerful symbol of service and sacrifice, mourning and memory.

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

*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

Carrying the Torch



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

As every school-child knows, the origin of The Olympic Games was in Ancient Greece. This athletic and religious festival was held every four years, and legend has it that all conflicts ceased for the duration. Its origins are lost in the mists of time and are intertwined with the Greek Gods on Mount Olympus. However, in 779 BC, Coroebus – a cook, baker and athlete from the Greek region of Elia – was accurately documented as winning the race over the proscribed distance of 192 meters, known as a *stade* (root of the word ‘stadium’). The honor was in taking part, so an olive branch was the prize. As the Romans grew more powerful against the Greeks, the games eventually declined in importance, and were ultimately declared a pagan practice and banned around 400 AD.

Centuries later, Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a Frenchman, was credited with being the father of the modern Olympics, having founded the International Olympic Committee in 1894. His proposal was to create a four-year rotating Games to celebrate athletic prowess; and thus, the first modern Olympiad was held in

Athens in 1896. Each subsequent Games has been numbered, including those of 1916 (WWI) and 1940 & 1944 (WWII) – the three times in history when the Games were cancelled. It was in 1924, during the Paris Olympics, that the popularity of the Games really took off.

Last year should have been the XXXII Olympiad, but due to the Coronavirus Pandemic it was postponed. The plan is for Tokyo to host the Summer Olympics in 2021, but at the time of writing that is not definite. These circumstances have set me thinking about how many Olympians might have competed and then lost their lives fighting in 20th conflicts. I already knew of some commemorated here at Cambridge, and found others at several ABMC sites, plus more from later wars. This is a good opportunity to celebrate the double achievements of some of those commemorated in our

cemeteries.

Sport should transcend all boundaries, but it doesn’t mean its above politics.

Perhaps one of the most famous pre-WWII Olympians of all time was James Cleveland Owens, known as ‘J.C.’, a nickname mis-interpreted as ‘Jesse’! Studying at both Technical School and Ohio State University, and rather than confront the prejudice that he found there, he continued concentrating on his sport. As Jesse was entering his senior year, he and many groups in the USA were bent on boycotting the 1936 Berlin Olympic



The US office of Civilian Defense appointed Owen as director of a national fitness program for African Americans in 1942. He traveled around the nation holding fitness clinics and promoting the war effort.

News from Across the Pond...

Games after news of Nazi repression in Germany. However, changing his mind, Jesse spent his Games challenging Aryan supremacy by racing faster and jumping further than anyone else – records which stood against challengers for years. There is a story that when Owens visited Adolf Hitler's box, he was snubbed by the German leader. However, a lesser-known fact is that, encountering Jesse as he was walking through the stadium later, Hitler gave the fastest man his congratulations. After the Olympics Jesse's career was rather lackluster until WWII. In 1942 the Office of Civilian Defense was sponsoring a program of national fitness for the African-American Community. Jesse was the ideal person to act as liaison, so, instead of joining up, he spent the war on the home front.

of Owens. He went on to become a B-24 Liberator Command Pilot with the 44th BG, flying from Shipdham, England. A USAAF buddy recalls him being less than complimentary about the German leader, "Jack once mused over our warm beer in a cold Nissen hut, *'I could have reached over and strangled the sonovabitch then, and we wouldn't be here now!'*" Unfortunately, flying through an electrical storm close to the Belgian border, and while dealing with a fire in the bomb bay, his aircraft, *'Flying Ginny'*, collided with another B-24. Two of the crew managed to bail out before the crash, but the rest of the crew – nine in total – were killed. The wrecked aircraft came to rest next to a convent, the nuns caring for the only survivor until, succumbing to his injuries, Jack died. He and the crew were buried at

have been that way. Standing at 5' 5", what was lacking in inches, Foy made up for with speed, holding the record for the 100-yard dash in 1935. He earned his place on the Relay Team, along with Marty Glickman, Sam Stoller, and Frank Wykoff. However, the fact that Sam and Marty were Jewish-American runners was believed to have earned them a benching. Their places were cancelled on the morning of the trials, the team coach replacing them with Jesse Owens and Ralph Metcalf. All that training! Jesse, remonstrating with Coach Cromwell, was warned, *"You'll do as you're told."* It led to poor Sam spending the day of the final – his 21st Birthday – weeping with frustration in his room in the Olympic Village. Why was he not running? The official story is that it was a decision to have the fastest



Lt Col John Inglehart "Jack" Turnbull, 44th BG. DoD October 20, 1944. Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with Two Oak Leaf Clusters.



16 Aug. 1936, Jesse Owens (left), Ralph Metcalf (2nd left), Foy Draper (2nd right), and Frank Wykoff (right), the USA 4x100 meters relay team at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. The USA was the gold medal winning team. IOC Museum.

Also visiting Hitler's box at the Berlin Olympics, alongside Jesse Owens, was Jack Turnbull, half-back for the US Hockey Team. Turnbull was originally US Lacrosse Team Captain for the 1932 Los Angeles games, but switched to Hockey when Lacrosse was dropped. He was one of those watching the apparent 'snubbing'

Flanders Field; his repatriation occurring in 1947.

Chatting with one of my colleagues recently, I heard of another Olympian, buried at ABMC's North African Cemetery. Foy Draper's name is forever linked with Jesse Owens, as they made up half of the USA Men's 4x100m Relay Team, but it shouldn't

men on the team with the inclusion of Metcalf and Owens, but had politics reared its ugly head? On the day of the final, Foy, running the third leg of the relay, considered to be one of America's fastest athletes, was instrumental in bringing home gold.

Enlisting in the Army Air Corps in 1940, Foy Draper spent his training

News from Across the Pond...

in San Antonio, before shipping out to North Africa. Flying twin-engine A-20 Havoc attack bombers with the 97 BS, 47 BG based at Thélèpte, Tunisia, he was soon promoted to Captain. Heading to support the Battle of Kasserine Pass on January 4, 1943, his aircraft crashed killing both Foy and his crewman. Capt. Foy Draper AM PH, is buried at ABMC's North Africa Cemetery, F-10-7.

At Cambridge American Cemetery we commemorate two Olympians. The name of one – Heywood Lane Edwards, of Saba, Texas – is inscribed



on the Wall of the Missing. Heywood, aka 'Tex', 'Babe' or 'Swede,' started life "wrasslin" steers on the plains of Texas. Graduating from the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1926, he represented his country at Freestyle Wrestling in the 1928 Olympics in Amsterdam, although unfortunately unranked. Leading up to WWII, he served aboard the battleship *USS Florida* and destroyer *USS Reno*. On completing submarine instruction, he also served aboard a number of submarines. April 6, 1940, finds Lieutenant Commander Edwards having assumed command of the *USS Reuben James*.

Reuben James had left Argentia, Newfoundland, on October 23, 1941, to escort Convoy HX-156 across

the North Atlantic. This was before the US was in the war, so the mis-



Heywood Lane Edwards, PH. WOM Cambridge American Cemetery.

sion was officially a "Neutrality Patrol;" but despite this technicality,



Commander Edwards was being stalked by none other than Erich Topp, a veteran U-Boat Commander. They would never make the safety of the Icelandic harbor, where they were bound in support of the new American garrison there. In dawn's dim light on October 31, the

Reuben James was turning to investigate a strong direction-finding signal

– a German U-Boat? Cruising at periscope depth, possibly not seeing which flags the convoy escorts were flying, Erich Topp, in *U-552*, sent a single torpedo into the hull of Heyward Edwards' ship. There was a massive explosion as the magazine was hit, sending fuel and men skyward. It cut the ship in two. The first US Navy ship of the Battle of the Atlantic was lost, sinking within minutes,

her depth charges exploding as she descended into the inky darkness. Only 45 of the approximately 165-man crew were recovered alive. Of Commander Edwards, there was no sign. Fifty years after the battle, Topp was still haunted by the carnage, saying, 'We were all just boys you see...' The sinking of the *Reuben James* prompted President Roosevelt, during one of his 'fireside chats' to the nation, to comment, 'When you see a rattle-



1st column left: *USS Reuben James*; middle above, Tommy Hitchcock, Jr., who, during WWII, rose to become Lt Col Thomas Hitchcock, Jr. LM, DFC, Assistant Military Atache, US Embassy, London, and then Deputy Chief of Staff of the 9th Air Support Command. A-6-21.

News from Across the Pond...

snake poised, you don't wait until it has struck before you crush it.' He was

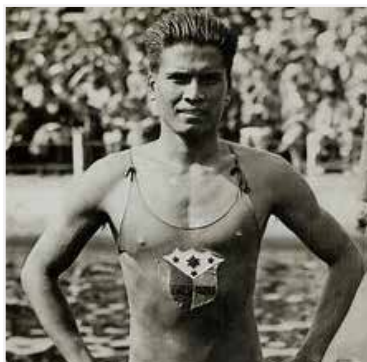


priming America to defend itself!

The other Olympian at Cambridge is someone with whom you may be familiar...the larger-than-life Tommy Hitchcock. After his exploits in WWI he attended Harvard University to complete his education, and while there he discovered a real aptitude for Polo, having been introduced to the sport by Phillip and Robert Lehman. His brilliance on the Polo field was almost unsurpassed; and he was so strong, in fact, that the rules of Polo had to be changed to account for his dominating presence on the sports pitch. Between 1922 and 1940, Hitchcock carried a 10-goal handicap, which is the highest ranking in polo. From Harvard, Tommy joined Lehman Brothers Bank (1LT Peter G. Lehman – DFC AM/3 - is also buried at Cambridge B-2-20), eventually rising to be a partner. Tommy was known to be friends with author F. Scott Fitzgerald who found him irresistible, modelling two characters in his books on him: the Polo playing Tom Buchanan in *The Great Gatsby* (1925) and the Tommy Barban character in *Tender Is the Night* (1934). Tommy's expertise on the polo field earned him a well-deserved place on the 1924 US Polo Team at the Paris Olympics, winning a Team Silver Medal.

The final Olympian story is not that of an American but of a man from the Philippines, whose name is inscribed on the Wall of the Missing at Manila American Cemetery.

Born in Piddig, Philippines, and growing up next to the River Guisit, what could be more natural than that Teofilo and his brothers became proficient swimmers at an early age. In



1920, he joined the 57th Infantry Regiment of the Philippine Scouts (created in 1901), led by American Officers. Being in the Scouts was very prestigious and a great honor. The Regiment encouraged sport and fitness as a way to instill pride and loyalty. Teofilo soon rose to prominence as an exceptional swimmer. The fact that his stroke was more at the surface of the water, than below, was probably in part due to the depth of the water in the Guisit...knee deep! Chosen for the Philippine Olympic Swim Team, he was placed third in both the 1928 Amsterdam and 1932 Los Angeles Olympics, winning two Bronze Medals – the first Filipino to win any Olympic medal. Incorporating Teofilo's unique breaststroke style, the European sports bodies still refer to him as, *'the father of the modern breaststroke'*.

When the Japanese invaded the Philippines in WWII, the 57th was one of the first units to come under fire. Sgt Yldefonso (39yrs) was a veteran and known as a good rifleman. Fighting along the Filipino-American defensive Abucay-Mauban line, his skills as a sniper would have been paramount. Repulsing ferocious enemy attacks, but with limited supplies, the men were exhausted and eventually overwhelmed. A surrender was

arranged by Commander Gen. King on April 9, 1942, and those who had fought so valiantly became prisoners. Teofilo and his comrades were then forced to take part in the infamous Bataan Death March to a POW Camp at Capas. Beaten and malnourished, sick and despondent, in the arms of



Pics above: Teofilo Yidefonso, Olympian and Philippine Scout.

his brother Teodoro (12th Medical Regiment), Sgt Yldefonso died on June 19.

There is always the hope that the Olympics will rise above politics and conflict. Lt Yoshi Tsuruta, of the Japanese Army, was the living embodiment of that aspiration. A long-time friend and swimming rival of Teofilo, on hearing of his incarceration, Yoshi called for his release, but it was too late ... or perhaps Teofilo did not want to leave his men.

On the bronze basement pedestal of the Cambridge Cemetery Flagpole is an inscription, part of which reads, *'To you from failing hands we throw the torch'*. It always reminds me of the Olympics. The analogy I use when explaining the inscription's meaning to school groups, is of passing the baton in a relay race. The Americans who were Olympians had been the flower of American youth, and yet they sacrificed their lives a few years later. ABMC remembers them for their prowess and valor.

An Unknown American Soldier Rests Here

By Justin Burke

Friedrich Griessman stood among the small band of men, civilians fetched from nearby Lieblos, who had gathered over a shallow rut that had been dug two days before between the rail tracks and the border of Karl Koch's cornfield. For a moment the solemn group lingered over the hole before reaching down to carefully lift a form from the depression, a cascade of fresh dirt tumbling off of the object. Gripping the load, the men stumbled from the field before muscling the weight up the slight rise of the railway embankment where, at the berm, locals had gathered to watch the proceedings. As the form was placed into the back of a worn wooden cart, the crowd converged. Some of these Germans whispered in low tones and, after getting a look into the rear of the wagon, many recoiled from the disturbing sight. Some appeared burdened after setting eyes on the figure before turning away disheartened and in shock. Others worked to quickly usher off confused and stupefied children who had sprinted to the scene on the outskirts of their small village hoping to catch a glimpse of this "terrorflieger."

In the bed of the cart lay the charred body of 2nd Lieutenant Jack Williams. The handsome twenty-two-year-old bombardier, hailing from the Appalachian foothills of West Virginia, had volunteered for the United States Army Air Forces in 1942, during a time when the nation's immature and inexperienced aerial arm was still trying to find its footing in the air war over Western Europe. Like so many other idealistic, adventurous young American men of his generation, Williams had not only been caught up in the intrigue and romanticism of the "Golden Age of Flight" but, following the attack at Pearl Harbor, felt obligated to join in the fight.

At "bombardier college" Jack and his peers mounted towers of scaffolding and were wheeled along through simulated bomb runs in hangers as they learned how to master the tools of their deadly trade: the top-secret Norden bombsight, one of the first opti-



cal-mechanical analog computers. This was also where they were expected to develop the "pickle barrel" bombing skills necessary for high-altitude daytime strategic bombing; a theory adopted by the Americans, chastised by the British, and currently being tested and hotly debated among Allied bomber command. In combat the difference between striking an aircraft manufacturing center, vaporizing enemy soldiers huddled low their trenches, knocking out a U-boat pen, wrecking a rocket site, rendering a fuel production plant out of service, and wiping an entire village off the face of the earth would be wholly dependent upon Jack's focus, technique, and competence. Amidst many long, stressful hours of didactics, the students took to the skies in twin-engine trainers where they practiced their trade by killing the large, evil, white chalk circles spread along the training ranges with salvos of sand-filled bombs. After racking up enough points over the eighteen-week program, Jack graduated with the coveted wings of an airman and a commission as a second lieutenant. He was now only a few short months away from being sent to deliver thousands of pounds of high-explosive ordnance upon the enemy from one of the most destructive and technologically advanced weapons of the era.

Only a few months after the conclusion of "Big Week" in the last days of February 1944 where Allied bombing operations had targeted Germany's war industry and attempted, unsuccessfully, to fully neutralize the Luftwaffe, Lt. Williams was ordered to the

combat crew assembly center at Drew Army Airfield in Tampa, Florida. There he would meet the nine, specialty-trained men who he would go into combat with aboard what would be one of the most famous and beloved war machines in history; the B-17 "Flying Fortress."

At the conclusion of combat crew training at Tampa, Jack and the crew dispersed back to their



The "Green Hornets" crew at Drw Field, July, 1944: Top row (L to R): Paul Klekot, Frank Jons, Jack Williams, Merle Green, Irving Metzger, Sidney Hatfield. Bottom row (L to R): George Ostrowski, James Gegenheimer, Peter Riley, Louis Lehere. [Green family collection] color by J. Burke.

hometowns for a short visit with their loved ones before they were to be deployed to some still-unknown area of operations. Not long before, Jack had deployed on the football fields around Wheeling, West Virginia, where he ran track on his high school's squad. Among other subjects, he took French, most likely an attempt at impressing a few fellow students of the opposite sex. However, by July 1944, the young man would be donning the dapper uniform of a U.S. Army Air Forces officer, preparing to dodge flak instead of linebackers and attempting to outrun enemy fighters instead of varsity track sprinters. The visit was bittersweet as all too soon a proud Carrie Williams, Jack's mother, was soon waving goodbye to her boy through tear-filled-eyes as she watched the young bombardier roll out of the train station, off to war. Unbeknownst to her, these would be the last moments that Mrs. Williams would have with her son as in little over a month's time Lt. Williams would bleed to death on the cold floor of his bomber on a mission high over Germany.

Just past 1400 hours on the 11th of September, 1944 a B-17 from the 94th Bomb Group based out of Rougham Airfield in Suffolk, England crashed in a field outside of the small village at Lieblos, Germany. Upon grinding to a stop, a fire had lit off in the aft section of the aircraft, and the surviving crewmembers, severely wounded, disoriented, and seeing the need to get far away from the fuel-laden, broken bomber, hastily aban-

doned the Fortress, leaving behind the body of their dead friend, Lt. Williams, which had become entangled in the wreckage. The men limped away from the bomber and collapsed alongside the railway embankment that bordered the cornfield. With their ship aflame and smoking behind them, the band of shaken bomber boys quickly realized that they were being watched.

Since late spring 1944 on an ever-increasing basis and in overwhelming force, the community of Lieblos had watched American bomber streams streak across the sky above them, heading off to deliver their deadly cargo deep into the Reich. The raiders usually arrived late in the morning, passing overhead in massive formations only to return a few hours later, lightened of their tonnage, and headed back to England. Unlike the Luftwaffe "hunters" that buzzed in and out of the nearby airfield seeking refuge or fuel, the locals had never seen one of these giants up close but today, with the sudden arrival of the Boeing, and the Americans within, they would flock, excited and intrigued, to the site of the crash. After witnessing the bomber descend, Gerhard Solzer climbed on his bicycle and rode to the outskirts of town, chasing after the smoking B-17 as it coasted over the village. The fifteen-year-old was one of the first to arrive at the embankment where he then climbed the gentle hill to witness the scene unfolding before him. Positioned over the field, he watched from "Out of the smoking aircraft climbed 4 or 5 American flyers in fur jackets and big boots". A small group of locals began to gather, alerted after hearing the four-motored American war machine echo down the Kinzig Valley before passing over their quiet, picturesque village and landing in the fields to the west.

For many Germans, many of whom National Socialism had been pressed upon them, the unrelenting, round-the-clock bombing raids by U.S. and British Air Forces were taking a great toll on the civilian population. Fueled by the destruction of R.A.F.'s controversial fire-bombing raids on the populace of cities like Hamberg and reinforced by effective Nazi propaganda campaigns denoting American fighter pilots and bomber crews as nothing more than murders of women and children, the frustrations of many German civilians began to boil over. In the fall of 1942, Adolph Hitler had openly approved the extermination of Allied "terror and sabotage troops." One year later, S.S. Reichsfuhrer Heinrich Himmler issued orders restricting local police units from intervening with any retribution by the populace towards any captured "terror fliers." In May of 1944 both propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels and Hitler's deputy, Martin Borman, blatantly encouraged

vengeance, or “lynchjustiz”, and, in some instances, permitted on-the-spot executions of downed American and British fliers. Reports show that, between August and October of 1944, incidences of violence against and murder of Allied aircrewmembers at the hand of German civilians would spike. These occurrences, while tragic and not to be discounted or condoned by any means, were far from the norm for most Germans. The atrocities that did occur, while understandable, can be better understood given the extreme circumstances at hand. As is the unfortunate reality of war, examples of barbarity and cruelty can be found perpetrated by all parties and by both sides. Such examples are not unique to a nationality, of course, but are a consequence of the desperate circumstances and the passions of war.

U.S. airmen, newly arriving in England in 1943 and '44 were given lectures about escape and evasion techniques that included what to expect from the civilian populace in the countries where they would be operating. “We were told that we weren’t going to be treated too well”, chuckled one former bombardier with the 94th Bomb Group as he reminisced on his indoctrination to the warzone. Additional rumors, some greatly exaggerated, spread through the combat crew’s Nissen huts regarding the supposed wide-spread disdain that the Germans had for American fliers. Reports of lynchings, executions, and even torture at the hands of angry mobs were rampant leaving many downed U.S. airmen to purposely seek out refuge with the Wehrmacht when confrontations with hostile citizenry manifested. In response to the reports, some of which were unfounded but many confirmed, the combat men were instructed to avoid German civilians in all cases. As an additional precaution, many bomb groups issued sidearms for the crews to carry on their missions to utilize not necessarily in event of a shootout with the enemy, but more likely to be used when a challenging civilian, armed with a pitchfork or hunting rifle, may need some discouragement.

When the group of locals from Lieblos crested the rise that ran along the rail tracks adjacent to the village they could see that a long scar had been torn in the earth leading to where the giant, broken aircraft had come to a rest on its belly. Below them at the base of the hill, huddled the American “terror fliers”; “air gangsters,” clad in their heavy, drab flight gear, bloodied and

in pain. It was at this moment when, most vulnerable, helpless, and hurt, that the Germans came upon these intruders.

The survivors on Lt. Williams’ crew were not met with pitchforks or rifles on that Monday afternoon. Instead, Germans like Karl Ost, Gerhard and Phillip Solzer, Friedrich Griessman, and many others in attendance that day saw the need to help. As the men assisted one bleeding crewman to a nearby house, Gerhard’s mother appeared carrying folds of cloth that she used to bandage the American’s wounds. She had retrieved some water from the family’s well and handed the shaken boy a cup which he gratefully accepted and guzzled down. Other villagers, none able to speak English, offered comfort to these boys as they tried to recover from the shock of the incredible ordeal they had just survived.

Without hesitating, Fredrick “Fritz” Griessman, the local cemetery caretaker, had also rushed to the scene of the crash. “After the plane had landed, I went from my house to the plane because I was in the Red Cross, thought I could help, if anyone was wounded” he wrote in a post-war interview with U.S. investigation officials. Gerhard Solzer’s Father, Phillip, was tending to one of the bleeding airmen as Griessman, assessing the flaming bomber and risking his safety, entered the mangled nose compartment to search for any trapped or incapacitated airmen that may need help extricating themselves from the fiery wreckage. Finding none, “Fritz” retreated from the inferno, joining up with the battered young fliers just in time to watch military trucks, dispatched from the infantry barracks at Gelnhausen, pull up on scene. The soldiers rapidly dismounted, leveled their rifles at the group, pushed the civilians back away from the airmen, and searched the nervous fliers, stripping them of their escape kits. While some soldiers scrambled around the smoldering Fortress attempting to douse the flames that still cooked inside the forward sections, others fanned out, scouring over the countryside to hunt down any other Americans that may be attempting to evade capture. The soldiers returned, empty-handed of any fliers but brandished the Fortress’ bombsight. The Norden had been found in one of the surrounding fields after having broken loose of the craft as it maneuvered over the town. Back in the cornfield, the Americans were pulled to their feet and marched to



Gerhard Solzer [E Sauer collection] color by J Burke.

the road where they stumbled up into the back of the trucks before being hauled off to the airfield where they were held overnight. Before leaving the crash site, the soldiers made sure to collect the names of all the hesitant witnesses.

For Germans citizens, and any peoples who found themselves under Nazi rule, aiding the enemy came at a steep price. In many cases, the offense was considered treason, an act of “defeatism”; a crime against the state. To remedy the betrayal, “vermin” who were deemed guilty of helping the enemy would be dealt with by the ruthless Gestapo or would find themselves being “rehabilitated” at a concentration camp after examination by the State’s much-feared people’s court. Despite the risk of interrogation, detainment, torture, or worse, those courageous Germans who cared for the rattled, injured American fliers that day knew that they were directly defying the regime. “The inhabitants were fed up with the war in late 1944 and longed for peace”, explained Eckard Sauer, local historian and author of the book, *Absturz im Kinzigtal: Die Luftfahrt im hessischen Kinzigtal von 1895 bis 1950*. “When American troops arrived at the end of March 1945, they were considered by many to be liberators.”

No doubt, as the people of Liebloß tended to the airmen’s wounds, they couldn’t help but see the faces of their own sons, many of whom were, at that moment, deployed along the crumbling front lines in Pomerania or France, fighting not for the Führer or the Nazi ideal, but for their country, their families and their comrades. Due to the atrocious brutality and coldness that commonly exists in war, examples of hope and humanity are often overshadowed. The events that occurred on the 11th of September 1944 along the border of Karl Koch’s cornfield were, without a doubt, among the great acts of selflessness and courage of the entire War. Ironically enough and seemingly unfounded, when adapted to English, “Liebloß” translates to “without love.”

With the departure of the infantry soldiers late in the evening of the 11th, an exciting opportunity presented itself for the local boys; one which they could not pass up. The kids climbed into the wrecked ship and took turns sitting at the controls of the tail guns where they imagined blasting away at enemies in the sky, high above their homes. One of the adventurous youths, Heinrich Goy, decided to explore the rest of the aircraft and maneuvered through the cramped interior to the front of the Fortress where he stumbled across the unforgettable sight of Lt. Williams. “He had been badly injured. Beneath his knees, the bones of his lower legs protruded, and his head was deformed”. Goy quick-

ly retreated, scrambling out of the B-17. The sight of the American officer, however, would leave a lasting impression on the teenager; “A terrible sight that I cannot forget until today.”

Luftwaffe salvage teams assumed control of the wreckage at 1800 hours and wrenched the body of Lt. Williams out of the plane. Along with the local police force that had been ordered to keep everyone away from the downed machine, locals somberly watched as the soldiers carried the burnt body of Jack Williams to the edge of the field and set it into a hastily dug hole. Members of the team tossed dirt over the body and returned to their work of searching for any pieces of intelligence that remained in the aircraft. The following day, soldiers arrived at the Solzer house looking for Gerhard’s father. As an award for his act of humanity toward the Americans, Phillip had been summoned by the local Luftwaffe intelligence staff for questioning related to his interactions with the enemy. Luckily after a few tense hours of questioning, could not formulate a case of wrongdoing and Solzer was released with a warning.

It was not until September 13th when the Luftwaffe salvage teams finished their operations and abandoned the crash site. Additional crews wouldn’t disassemble the aircraft for a few weeks leaving the local kids in command of the impressive warbird. Dissatisfied at the treatment of the fallen American, “Fritz” obtained permission from the Burgemeister of Liebloß and, after rallying some eager volunteers, recovered Williams’ hastily buried body. Greissman brought the officer back to the cemetery where he cleaned the mess of remains as best he could. Besides being charred in the fire after landing, the body showed signs of horrific trauma, the aftermath of events that had proved fatal for the lieutenant while on his mission two days earlier. Those who were able to look upon what was left of the bombardier would report being haunted by the gruesome sight for decades to come. No identification tags were found on the body leaving Griessman to record the unknown airman as “heavy built” and “very tall.” After carefully wrapping the lieutenant in clean sheets, the care-taker arranged the remains in a simple wooden casket which he had constructed himself specifically for the stranger. The following day, Griessman and his companions carried the casket to the northern end of the cemetery and gently settled the boy into a freshly dug grave where he could rest in the shade trees overlooking the beautiful rolling fields, mountains, and lush forests surrounding Liebloß. In attendance to pay their respects to the young airman were the Burgemeister and many of the same people

who had been witness to the crash, the capture of the crew, and the original impromptu burial. To welcome their new guest, the Germans had chosen to mark the grave of the stranger with a simple wooden cross bearing the inscription “hier ruht ein unbekannter amerikanischer soldat”- “*an unknown American soldier rests here.*” For the next year-and-a-half, Williams would remain in the cemetery, resting in a plot alongside the community’s loved ones.

Back in West Virginia, the sporadic flow of letters that the Williams family had been receiving from the wayward bombardier since his arrival at some classified location in England suddenly dried up. Late in September, Mrs. Williams received a telegram that she and countless other American families feared the most. Jack was listed as “missing-in-action”, lost somewhere in the “ETO”; the European Theatre of Operations; an intimidatingly large expanse indeed. The following weeks were miserable for the family as any additional information was scarce, at best. The communication between the wives and mothers of the boys on

the crew was just as frustrating as the status of the men remained a mystery. What was known for sure was that Jack and his brothers-in-war had disappeared over hostile territory, somewhere on the other side of the world.

Confirmation of the horrible reality of Jack’s death finally reached the Williams’ weeks later as letters, sent from the survivors on his crew, who were then being held in German prisoner camps, began to trickle in to the homes of their loved ones. As these men attempted to describe the events that led to their downing, capture, and the death of their dear friend, word of Jack’s demise was sorrowfully passed on to his family. To make matters worse, the whereabouts of the Williams boy’s body was unknown, although the War Department assured his heartbroken mother that a “continuous and intensive search is being made of the area where your son died”. However, as the agony of week after a week turned to months with no further word, the Williams family, distraught and still in shock, was beginning to believe that Jack may be lost for good.

Three months after the end of hostilities in Europe in August of 1945, a box arrived at the Williams home containing Jack’s personal belongings, recovered from his barracks at Rougham in the days following the crew’s failure to return. The items had been kept in storage until the Army finally arranged to get his belongings back to his next of kin. The package contained two shirts, two woolen trousers, one service cap, two belts, four undershirts, a dozen pairs of socks, one pair of boots, a few photographs, a handkerchief, one sewing kit, a worn New Testament, a pair of flight wings and three checks totaling \$204.04. All that Mrs. Williams noticed, however, was the faint smell of her son.



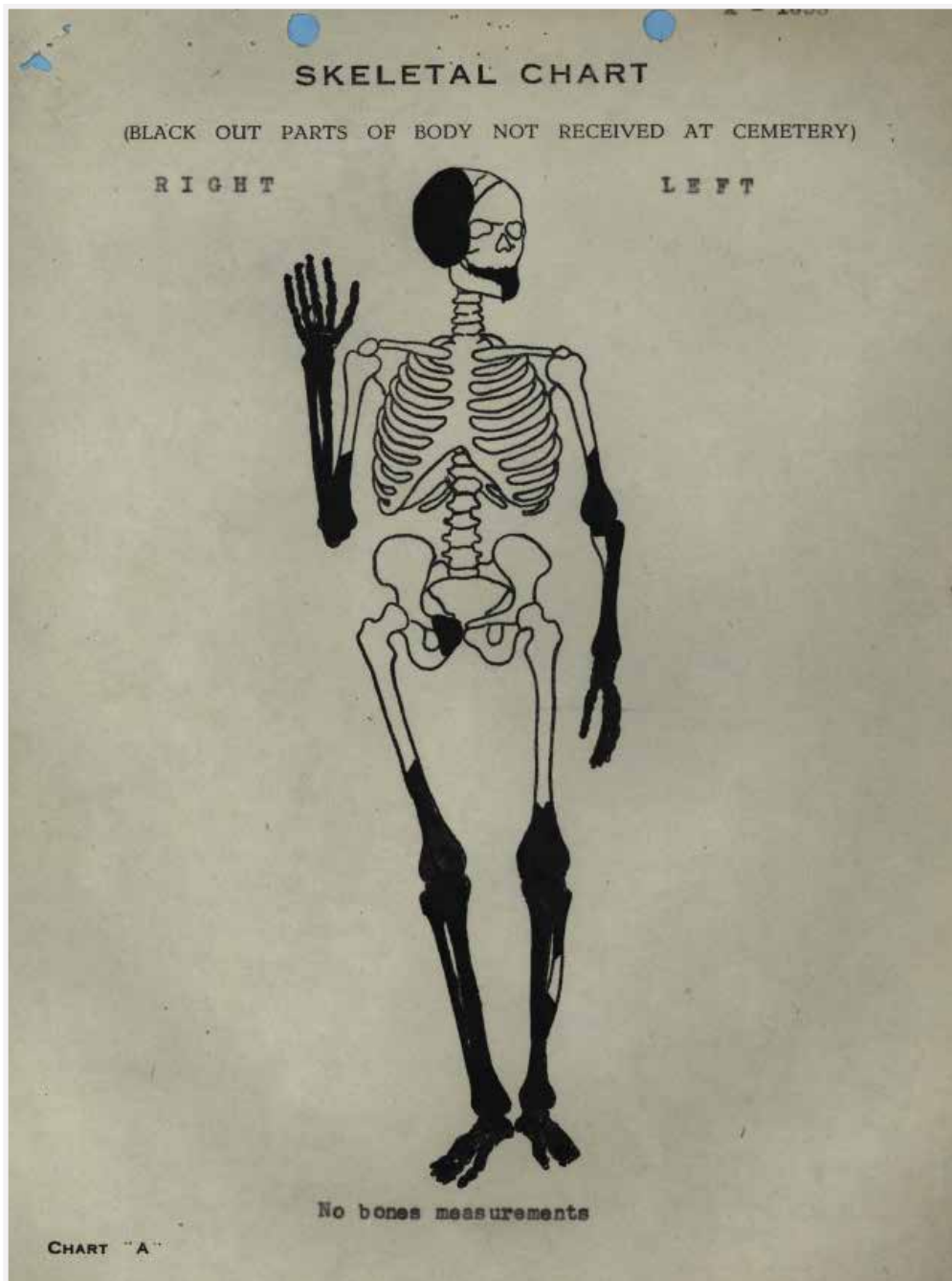
Former gravesite of Lt Williams in the cemetery at Lieblos [E Sauer collection]

In February of 1946, the 48th Quarter Master Graves Registration Service (QMGR) was assigned the task of looking into rumors that had emerged regarding the location of the body of an American airman that had disappeared within their area of responsibility nearly a year-and-a-half earlier.

After piecing together captured German reports and sifting through piles of

records recovered at War’s end from Dulag Luft, the infamous German interrogation and processing center for captured Allied air personnel, the trail led the 48th to a cemetery in a small village in central Germany. Led on by helpful locals, the soldiers were directed to a grave marked with by a simple, weathered wooden cross. After nearly breaking their shovels, along with their backs, on the frozen ground, the unit unearthed the shattered skeletal remains of an individual resembling the description noted in their reports. Satisfied with the discovery but unable to confirm the identification due to the state of decomposition of the remains, the body was shipped to the U.S. military collection site at St. Avold, France, where the mysterious occupant would be housed while the investigation into his identity continued. Unfortunately, when compared to the lieutenant’s medical file, Army doctors were unable to confirm that the skeleton was that of Jack Williams. It would seem that the identity of the “soldat” would remain a mystery.

For nearly three years Army investigators sorted



Greissman, were happy to assist the Americans and participated in interviews to give their accounts describing the events surrounding the arrival of the aircrew on that exciting day in mid-September of 1944. In addition, the personal journal of a local policeman who had been tasked to watch over the crash site in the days following the landing had been located and provided a final piece in helping to solve the mystery of the unknown airman.

On October 24, 1949, more than five years after Jack had been lost in Germany, Carrie Williams received word that her son's body had been found. When given the option of having the young lieutenant returned home to Wheeling, Mrs. Williams instead chose to have Jack's body remain in Europe to be memorialized with the thousands of other American husbands, brothers, and sons who had fallen in battle in Europe. So, in the summer of 1950, Jack was, once again and for the last time, moved and reinterred. This time he was transferred to the Ardennes American Cemetery and Memorial, recently established for U.S. servicemen at the

through stacks of misleading reports concerning isolated graves of Allied airmen spread all across central Germany attempting to establish the fallen airman's identity. Interviews from the surviving members of Lt. Williams' crew had finally been organized as QMGR field units continued to work diligently to track down eyewitnesses from Lieblos and the surrounding areas who had seen the landing or been present during the recovery or burial process. The investigators first visited "Koch's Acre" and then Gelnhausen Airfield but were unable to find any sign of the aircraft, which had long been repurposed as scrap in the months after the crash. While the Burgermeister could not be located, numerous residents, including the Solzers and Friedrich

village of Neuville-en-Condroz in Belgium. Lt. Jack Williams still rests at Ardennes American Cemetery and Memorial in plot C, row 38, grave 14, "side by side with comrades who also gave their lives for the country."

The story of 2nd Lt. Jack Williams is only one of the incredible stories explored in the upcoming book, *Of Good Courage*, by Justin Burke. To find out more about Williams and the "Green Hornets" crew visit www.Facebook.com/OfGoodCouragebook or email the author at OfGoodCourageBook@gmail.com Bibliographic source information available upon request.

B-17 *City of Savannah* Reaches a Milestone at the National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force!

Final Turret is Installed and Operating

by Jerry McLaughlin

The B-17G with the tail number 44-83814 arrived at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force (NMMEAF) on January 15, 2009, after the bomber had been gifted to the museum by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and was immediately named *City of Savannah*.

On the 16th of June, 2021, at 10:12 AM the final major chapter in the airplane's restoration took place on the floor of the museum's Combat Gallery, when, for the first time, the upper turret of the B-17 operated within the aircraft, under power. After nearly ten years of restoration efforts, this was the last of the three power turrets to become operational.

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After a 34-year career in ariel photography and firefighting, followed by 25 years in Smithsonian storage, 44-83814 arrived at the Mighty Eighth to become the centerpiece of the museum's Combat Gallery. However, considerable work would be required to make it the crown jewel.

The fuselage was an empty tube, except in the upper cockpit, which had two seats, pilots' controls, and the instrument panel. Aft of



44-83814, the soon-to-be *City of Savannah*, arrives for restoration at the National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force.

the cockpit the interior was filled with corrosion, borate residue and guano. The fuselage exterior was coated with what had been a "protective" plastic covering that had been applied 25 years earlier, and over the years had adhered to the entire fuselage. Finally, there was an empty hole in the rear of the airplane because the tail turret was missing. Three other areas of the fuselage were covered with metal plates, where powered turrets had once been mounted in the fuselage. Despite these issues, the B-17 could not have been welcomed by a more excited audience. 44-83814 had found its "forever home."

The NMMEAF was awarded 44-83814 in a competition with several other qualified organizations. What made the Mighty Eighth rise to the top of the list of candidates? Several stories have evolved over the years. The story with the most credence involves a visit to the museum by President George W. Bush in 2008 during which museum CEO Walter Brown told the president that the museum was looking for a B-17, to which the president replied, "We can do that." Whatever the actual reason for the Smithsonian award, 44-83814 arrived in January of 2009, and was named *City of Savannah* by the museum's Board of Trustees,





Scrubbing team removing plastic residue from fuselage

in honor of a B-17G with the tail number 42-39049, that had received that name while passing through Savannah's Hunter Army Airfield on its way to England in 1944.

From January of 2009 until January of 2010 the newly formed volunteer restoration team was assembled and dedicated itself to the task of preparing the *City of Savannah* for its restoration.

Much needed outside advice and leadership was provided to the project's leaders by Dr. Harry Friedman of the national B-17 Co-Op, a group of individuals and organizations involved in B-17 related activities.

The interior of the fuselage, the landing gear, and wings were attacked with a great deal of cleaning equipment and ACF-50 anti-corrosion fluid. The final step for the interior was completed by a professional painting team from Gulfstream Aerospace Corporation, that painted the interior of the fuselage in classic WWII olive drab green.

Exterior work involved hundreds of hours of very carefully removing the "protective" plastic that had adhered to the surface of the airplane after twenty-five years, followed up with support from another local aviation corporation – International Aerospace Services – that provided the same first-rate cleaning and waxing of the exterior that they provide to all of Gulfstream

Corporation's products. One year after its arrival at the museum, the *City of Savannah*'s aluminum exterior shown as it had when it left the Douglas factory in Long Beach, California, in May of 1945.

Finally, after a full year of preparation, the actual restoration of the *City of Savannah* began.

The first major effort involved the flight control operational system and the rotting surfaces on the rudder, elevators and ailerons. One of the first volunteers to join the team, David Pinegar, was an accomplished



Gulfstream painters in the waist area

builder of flying model airplanes, and was very familiar with applying fabric to forms and treating the material to make it firm and reliable. David took all of the flight control frames and brought them to the shop of his employer, LMI Corporation, and over a period of nearly a year completely restored all of the flight control surfaces.

Meanwhile, a second team of volunteers fully reconstructed the wire and pulley operation of the flight control system within the fuselage and wings.

Outside of the museum walls, another group was doing significant restoration work for the *City of Savannah*. A local HAM radio team comprised of members of the Coastal Amateur Radio Society (CARS) had signed on to restore the radio room to fully operational con-

dition. The CARS team purchased WWII radio parts and matched them with period radio equipment that was found in the museum archives and with parts donated by one of the country's most renowned B-17 restoration professionals, Tommy Garcia, of Houston, Texas. The first broadcast from the CoS radio room took place on July 13, 2011, with CARS President Guy McDonald sitting in the radio operator's seat. The uniquely arranged broadcast was conducted between the CoS and members of the Shreveport, Louisiana, Amateur Radio Association, operating from the B-17 *Miss Liberty* at the Barksdale Global Power Museum at the Barksdale Air Force Base.

Broadcasts from the *City of Savannah* radio room continue to take place on national holidays and WWII anniversaries.

One major surprise for the restoration team was the realization of how much of the interior of a G model B-17 is made of wood. A carpentry team was organized, and once again, Tommy Garcia became an advisor, supplying drawings that he had used for the set designers as a consultant on the 1990 movie, *Memphis Belle*, to construct a B-17 interior. Several months and hundreds of man hours were necessary to produce all of the necessary wooden parts, to include floors, ammunition boxes, and desks for the radio operator and navigator.

After extensive study of B-17 interiors from photographs in the museum's archives, special attention was also given to details inside the fuselage, including interphone and oxygen gauges, portable oxygen containers, and even wooden holders for paper cups at the various crew positions.

The most prominent stories of the *City of Savannah* restoration

are the four very special adventures associated with the airplane's individual turrets.

As mentioned previously, 44-83814 had arrived in Savannah without a tail turret, due to the original "Cheyenne" version of the turret having been removed during the airplane's storage time in Virginia to serve in the Smithsonian American History Museum's "Rosie the Riveter" exhibit. The turret that fits so perfectly at the rear of the *City of Savannah* today was constructed from scratch by the restoration team's metal crew, led by master mechanic Jack Nilsen, and is proudly presented as "the only B-17 Cheyenne tail turret that was not built in Cheyenne, Wyoming." An original Cheyenne turret was salvaged and brought to Savannah from a B-17 wreck in Alaska, but was not restorable. However, a benefactor arrived to save the day. Chris Henry from the Grissom Air Museum, in Peru, Indiana, offered to loan the Mighty Eighth their complete Cheyenne turret to provide templates for the construction of an entirely new turret, in return for restoration of their original turret, which was seriously corroded. It was a win-win situation for both museums.

Before the chin turret was purchased in 2010 it had spent a decade being operated by children at various parties in the Atlanta area under the auspices of Fred "The Turret Guy" Bieser. Fred operates multiple WWII turrets in his children's party business. He also builds and sells turrets to aircraft restoration projects worldwide. When he heard that 44-83814 was arriving in his home state of Georgia, he immediately took an interest in the project and worked with the restoration team

on all four of the *City of Savannah*'s turrets.

The team learned in 2013 that a ball turret was in storage in California and looking for a buyer. Joseph Glasser, a museum donor, and WWII combat veteran of the 94th Bomb Group, offered to purchase the turret for the museum. Negotiations between the NMMEAF and the turret's owner resulted in the turret being driven across country from



Newly installed upper turret

California to Savannah by Tommy Garcia and the CoS's future chief turret engineer, Jeff Hoopes, to fill in the large opening in the bottom of the *City of Savannah*. The ball turret is another veteran of the *Memphis Belle* movie, and today movie script related pin-ups remain on the turret's ammunition boxes.

Finally, the very challenging upper turret was a decade in the making, starting with the frame, which was discovered being used as a flower pot in Aurora, Illinois, in 2012, and was generously donated to the Mighty Eighth by the Military Aircraft Preservation Society Museum. The turret's motors, gears and other parts were located from various parts suppliers and computer searches over the next nine years. Parts that did not exist on the restoration market were produced by Gulfstream Corporation using 1940's

drawings and state-of-the-art 3-D printing techniques. The restoration of the frame and plastic dome for the turret were accomplished over a full year period by volunteers Mort Glick and Joe Pritchard.

Now that the installation of all four turrets is completed, and the three power turrets are operational, the next step in the museum plan is to present visitors with scheduled demonstrations of the turrets and flight controls. It is believed that the *City of Savannah* is the only B-17 restoration in the world that is capable of conducting such a presentation.

During the 12 years that the *City of Savannah* has been under restoration at the NMMEAF over 200 volunteers have donated tens of thousands of hours and incredible expertise into the project. Three of the volunteers are the sons of WWII Eighth Air Force personnel. Many are the sons of veterans who served in other branches of our country's military during WWII. A major part of the message that the group has delivered over the years is that "we are the children and grandchildren of the men who won WWII."

As is the case with all major museum restorations there will always be more work--restoration and maintenance--that will require constant attention to the *City of Savannah*. The continuing attention to the B-17 will allow it to be a premier object in the nation-wide tribute to WWII veterans and what they accomplished.

Today the *City of Savannah* sits proudly in the Combat Gallery of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force –

***May she shine brightly for generations to come in her final home.***

# LAST MISSION: BAILOUT AND RESCUE IN LUXEMBOURG

**Ordway B. Gates**

(Edited by Robert Gates)

*Ordway Gates was born on December 1, 1921, in Chesterfield Court House, Virginia. He died in Williamsburg, Virginia, on January 12, 2011. He left the College of William and Mary to join the U.S. Army Air Corps on May 28, 1942, and completed pre-flight training at Santa Ana, California, and bombardier training in Deming, New Mexico. He was commissioned a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on October 2, 1943. He flew missions with the 336<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. He flew his last combat mission on July 21, 1944. This is the story of that mission.*

In April of 1944, we picked up our B-17 at Hunter Field in Savannah, Georgia, and ferried it to England via Labrador, Iceland, and Scotland. We began flying missions over Germany and Occupied Europe in early May. Between May 1<sup>st</sup> and July 21<sup>st</sup>, we flew 17 missions, including a double mission on D-Day. On July 21<sup>st</sup>, our target was the Messerschmitt aircraft assembly plant in Regensburg.

We completed our bombing run and were able to release our bombs successfully. As we were leaving

the target, we received damage from both anti-aircraft fire and fighter attacks. We initially lost an inboard engine (#2) and were forced to drop out of formation. Fortunately, we were protected by P-51s and were able to maintain control of the aircraft. However, almost immediately, we lost an outboard engine (#4), which the pilot was unable to feather, and which continued to windmill.

It seemed doubtful that we could make it back to our base at Horham but our navigator and pilot thought that we had a chance to get to the Channel and ditch. Shortly thereafter, we lost a third engine (#3) and were unable to maintain altitude. Even after throwing everything we could overboard, we were flying close to 75 knots IAS and losing several hundred feet of altitude per minute. Our navigator thought that we might still be able to get out of Germany and maybe to France or Luxembourg.

The pilot ordered the crew to bailout when we reached 5000 feet altitude. All 10 members of the crew exited the aircraft successfully. The plane was left on autopilot and,



Lt. Ordway B. Gates

after the crew was clear of the ship, our fighter escort shot it down. I later found out that we were in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, near the town of Ettelbruck.

I exited the aircraft by diving out of the bomb bay. My parachute opened and I drifted down into a forest and landed in the top of a tree. I grabbed the trunk and a limb, released myself from the chute, and climbed down. I looked to see if anyone was around and could hear a lot of noise, gun shots and dogs barking. I decided to get away from the area as quickly as I could.

I made my way to the edge of the woods and looked across a field to see what was happening. I



heard a noise behind me, and when I turned around, saw a young man approaching on a bicycle. He came up to me, and in perfect English, asked if I had been on the crashed airplane. I answered affirmatively and he responded: "Do you want me to help you escape?" After I said "Yes," he led me deep into the forest, maybe one or two miles from where we started. Everything was quiet, and he seemed very confident of what he was doing. He found me a hiding place and told me to hide quickly if anyone showed up before he returned.

No one came near my hiding place during the next several hours. My new friend returned in the late afternoon with bread, cheese, and a bottle of wine. He said that plans were being made to bring me into a neighboring town and that he would return later to guide me to a safe place. Before he left, he told me how I would recognize his signal when he came for me. I knew that my best chance was with him and that I shouldn't make any move, at least until the next morning.

After dark – maybe 8 or 9 o'clock – I fell asleep and slept for several hours. When a noise woke me, I struck a match and looked at my watch. It was well after midnight, and my first reaction was that I had overslept and missed the signal. Since I didn't have any alternative, I just stayed put and in about 20 or 30 minutes I heard the signal. I returned his signal and he said "Come with me."

The path to town was under the surveillance of a number of his compatriots who let us know that it was okay to continue through each checkpoint. When we finally got to Ettelbruck, the town was completely blacked out. My escort tapped on

the door of a two-story building. The tap was returned, and I was taken into the house.



The house in Rambrouch  
(Claren-Rodesch)

Imagine my surprise when I saw six or eight people waiting for me. This was the home of Joseph Leyder, his wife, and their infant son. My breakfast was being prepared, and everyone was helping. I'll never forget that breakfast! Mrs. Leyder had made scrambled eggs, bacon, home fried potatoes, bread, and coffee. After I ate, they took me to a room that had been prepared for me.



Closeup of opening (note 'latch' on left)

They suggested that I might be a little tired and should try to rest.

I stayed with Joseph and his family for about a week, and they were very good to me. Some of their friends came to see me every day and told me stories about the difficulties and hardships that they had faced since the Nazis overran

their country. They really hated the Germans. They had a doctor come and check my left ankle that had been injured when I landed in the trees. He put a splint on my ankle and gave me a crutch.

A member of Joseph's family had been conscripted into the German army and came to see me – in his German uniform. At first, I wasn't so sure about him! The Germans were searching the area for the downed American fliers, and it was decided that I should be moved to a new location since the searchers were getting closer to the Leyder home. They made their plans for the move; and one night after dark, I was moved across town to the home of Henri Muller. Henri lived in an area that had already been searched.

Before I left the Leyder home, I was told that four members of the crew had been captured upon landing and that six of us, with the help of the Luxembourgers, were being hidden in various locations.

Henri Muller and his wife, Madeleine, took excellent care of me while I was with them, but they had two small children and were very nervous about me being there. Nevertheless, they were willing to assist me; and I stayed at their home for several weeks. During that time my ankle had a chance to heal, and I was able to move around much better than before. During my stay there, I was told that two members of the crew were being hidden in the basement of a railway station in a nearby village. They didn't know their names, but from their descriptions, I was sure that they were Pat Tortora (radio operator) and Bill Shuster (ball turret gunner). I didn't know who else was in Luxembourg.

Finally, it was felt that the Germans were too close to me,

and that I should be moved out of Ettelbruck. A Sunday afternoon was picked for my move. The Germans were having a big meeting in Ettelbruck, and it was believed that most of them would be at the meeting and not looking for me. I was given a bicycle that had been stolen from the Germans. I wasn't told where I was going, but I was taken out of town and toward Belgium. The entire route was under surveillance; and as we met a bike going the other way, a nod from the rider told my escort that everything was clear ahead. We travelled for several hours, including stopping at an inn for refreshments.

We reached our destination shortly after dark. I was in the village of Rambrouch and I met Camille Claren. I would be living in the Claren home with Camille, his wife, and their four daughters. Their daughter Maria was close to my age and spoke English flawlessly. The rest of the family spoke little, if any, English. Their youngest daughter, Yvonne, who was 17 or 18 years of age, spoke some English. I had very little contact with anyone other than the Claren family. I stayed with them for nearly two months.

The last day I stayed with them has special significance. The Germans were quickly retreating to their homeland, and I could finally leave the house and meet the people of Rambrouch. They were planning a party for me since all of the Germans were gone.

Early in the afternoon, Maria came to me with a friend and said that there had been an accident outside of town. An American fighter plane had crashed in a meadow, and they were afraid that the pilot was

badly injured or dead. They asked me to go with them and check out the situation. When I got there, many people were already there and waiting for me. The plane, a P47 Thunderbolt, was in two pieces and the pilot was still strapped in the cockpit. I checked his pulse, and he was obviously beyond help. We got him out of the aircraft, and I searched his pockets for any identification. I took one of his dog tags, his wallet, and his escape kit. About

American airman!

Shortly thereafter, a jeepload of Americans showed up looking for the downed P-47 pilot. They found me. I identified myself as a member of the Eighth Air Force who had been forced to bailout over Luxembourg and who had been protected by its people since July. I told them where the pilot's body was, and they made arrangements to retrieve it. The leader also said that I would have to go with them



Standing (L-R) Frank Gregg - Tail Gunner, William E. Shuster - Ball Turret Gunner, Patrick C. Tortora - Radio Operator, Royce C. McMinn - Top Turret /Engineer, Ordway B. Gates - Bombardier, William O. Gifford - Navigator, Frederick Clark - Co-Pilot, Henry L. Laird - Pilot Sitting: Mrs. Laird Photo courtesy of Pat Tortora

that time, some people brought forward a coffin and laid the pilot in it. A lady came forward with an American flag that she had made and placed it on the closed coffin. She had planned to wave it when the Americans liberated the town. Six men carried it, ahead of a large number of people, into the Catholic Church in Rambrouch. It made a lasting impression on one grateful

too. As a result, I missed my party! I got my gear together and thanked everyone, especially the Claren family, for their help. Finally after many sad goodbyes and hugs, we left.

The rest is history. I made my way through Europe to Paris and hitched a ride to London. Shortly thereafter, I received orders to return to the States.

# NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD

ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE DURING THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AT THE ANNUAL REUNION THIS OCTOBER IN SAVANNAH, GA.



**Mark  
Klingensmith  
Member #  
11729430**

Mark is a partially retired ENT physician

who lives in Greensburg, PA with his wife of 44 years, Wanda. They have 3 children and 2 grandchildren.

He is the son of Russell S. Klingensmith, who passed away in August, 2019, at the age of 99. Russ completed 27 missions as a navigator with the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group serving from November 1943 to April 1944. Russ remained at Molesworth until April 1945 as Assistant Group Navigator.

He was a long standing member of the 303<sup>rd</sup>'s association as well as the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society, where he attended reunions regularly.

Mark accompanied his dad on his last seven reunions—the highlight of his year. He says the experiences with him especially during the reunions cemented his affection and respect for the brave men who served in WWII.

Mark vows to commit and focus his efforts to advance the mission of the Society and to always serve those who served.

**Nominated by Eleesa Faulkner  
Member # 14**



**Anne A.  
Marek  
Member #  
11729110**

Anne is a graduate of Berkeley College in

New Jersey. After working for several major corporations, she was hired as the Executive Director of the Morris County, NJ Medical Society. While there, she was elected to the Board of Directors of the Regional Health Planning Council, and served on the Review Committee whose function was to approve or deny certificates of need for medical/surgical equipment, services, or health facilities in Northern NJ. She was elected as Chairman of this Committee and served for two years until its legislative demise. Anne retired from the Medical Society in 1992 to open her own retail business of needlepoint and cross stitch. She ran this business for 23 successful years until retiring in 2015.

She has been an active member of the 493<sup>rd</sup> BG Memorial Association since 2011. She was elected to the Board of Directors in 2013 and appointed Treasurer and Membership Manager in 2015. Her father was a pilot in the 493<sup>rd</sup>, flying both B-24s and B-17s.

Anne joined the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society in 2013 and

has attended every reunion since then.

She is completing her first term on the 8<sup>th</sup> AFHS Board of Directors, currently serving as President and Treasurer. In these positions she has promoted new initiatives and ensured that the Society maintains a sound financial footing.

**Nominated by David Nowack  
Member # 36652**



**Steven Ray  
Snyder  
Member #  
11725900**

Steve was born in Pasadena, CA, and

graduated from UCLA after which he had a 40-year career in sales and sales management. He is a longtime member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society and currently serves as an ad hoc advisory member to the 8th AFHS Board. Steve is also on the board of directors and past president of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association.

His passion is to remember the air war over Europe, to honor the men of the 8th Air Force who fought it, and to educate the public about it which he does by attending air shows, signing copies of his book, *SHOT DOWN*, which recounts the true story of



# NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD-CONT'D

his dad, Capt. Howard Snyder, pilot of the *Susan Ruth*, 306<sup>th</sup> BG, based out of Thurleigh, England. Steve keeps the memory of his dad and other WWII veterans alive by making PowerPoint presentations to various organizations across the country. His motto is "It is our duty to remember".

**Nominated by Richard Shandor  
Member # 36244**



**Paul W.  
Tibbets IV  
Member #  
36019**

Paul received his commission through the

U.S. Air Force Academy in 1989. Following graduation, he served in a variety of operational assignments as a B-1 and B-2 pilot. The general commanded the 393<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Squadron and 509<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing, both assigned to Eighth Air Force. He flew combat missions in support of operations in Southwest Asia, the Balkans and Afghanistan and was awarded the Bronze Star and Distinguished Flying Cross. Paul retired from the U.S. Air Force as a Brigadier General with more than 4,000 flying hours after nearly 30 years of service.

He is currently the President and Owner of Strike Advanced Solutions, LLC, as an Independent Consultant. He assesses strategic plans, risk management programs and lead-

ership strategies to find optimum solutions to business challenges. Strike Advanced Solutions also provides leadership coaching, messaging, speeches/seminars, mentoring and networking/team-building.

Additionally, Paul is a First Officer for FedEx Express, flying the B-777.

Paul joined the 8th Air Force Historical Society as a Life Member in 2002. For the last year, Paul has been serving on a specially created ad hoc committee as an advisor to the Board of Directors, working alongside Eleesa Faulkner, focusing on Education and Outreach. He has also been instrumental in advising the Board on critical decisions involving the Society's current website and development.

**Nominated by Judy Knight  
Member # 11735150**



**Kevin E.  
Wilson,  
PhD  
Member #  
38571**

Dr. Kevin Wilson is the

son of the late SSgt Howard E Wilson. SSgt. Wilson served in the AAF from 1942-45 and was an electrical specialist in the 858<sup>th</sup> Air Engineering Squadron of the 381<sup>st</sup> BG (Ridgewell) throughout its entire combat history from June 1943-May 1945. Dr. Wilson began researching his father's military service in the

1990s and joined the 381<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Association in 1996. He continued his involvement with the group following his father's death in 1999. The 381<sup>st</sup> veterans invited him to join their Board, and he eventually served on the Board and in all officer positions including President; he now holds title of Executive Director of the 381<sup>st</sup> association. He recently retired as a licensed PhD clinical psychologist in private practice where he also served as clinical faculty in Pain Management at Wake Forest University School of Medicine for 29 years.

Dr. Wilson has served as the 381<sup>st</sup> Group Historian for many years and maintains the historical archives of the 381<sup>st</sup> BG Memorial Association.

In his role as director and historian, he continues to assist veterans and families with research of their 381<sup>st</sup> service. The 381<sup>st</sup> has joined with the 8th in the annual reunions since 2017 and held 43 annual reunions up until the Covid crisis in 2020.

Dr. Wilson, with his wisdom, commitment and humility, would further dignify the board.

**Nominated by Vinnie Perrone  
Member # 11736430**

*We will be electing FIVE (5) members to the Board this October during our general membership meeting. This brings us to a SEVEN (7) member Board of Directors. Your vote will be very important--as always! ddk*



# ★THE STUDENT CORNER!

I hope this finds everyone healthy and safe in 2021! We are reintroducing “*The Student Corner*” here, in hopes of generating more interest from the youngest generations of our veterans.

“*The Student Corner*” will focus on students from elementary thru high school level. Future issues of our 8<sup>th</sup> A F News magazine will contain a variety of activities for students interested in learning more about World War II, our veterans, and the Eighth Air Force from 1942, to its current mission around the world.

Our first ‘Student Corner’ was an essay contest where students interviewed or talked with a World War II veteran. However, we realized the timing of our contest occurred too late in the school year. So, we are relaunching our essay/interview contest—this time in conjunction with Veterans Day this November. Our goal is to allow educators ample time to plan lessons around this holiday and encourage more interest among their students.

As always, we encourage families to attend the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society reunion in Savannah, GA., Oct. 28-31, 2021. Many of our veterans will be attending, and this would be a great opportunity to interview them in person.

Students may conduct interviews by phone, Facetime, or in-person for those with access to a veteran. If a student needs help finding a veteran to interview, please have them contact us; and we will put them in touch with a veteran.

Contest requirements are as follows:

## **Elementary (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>) 200-400 words**

*Suggested interview questions for this age group:*

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

impacted your life.

## **Middle School (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) 350-600 words**

*Suggested interview questions for this age group:*

How did you end up in the Air Force (Army Air Corp) instead of any branch of service? What were some of your responsibilities in the war? What was the hardest part of your job during the war? Did your training prepare you for the war? Provide their response. In your own words, describe what you learned from the veteran and how it has impacted your life

## **High School (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>)-500-750 words**

*Suggested interview questions for this age group:*

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

**\*\*All essay/interviews *must* be submitted by December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, to [ekf58@aol.com](mailto:ekf58@aol.com)**

The winner in each grade category will have their article published in a future issue of the 8<sup>th</sup> A F News magazine, and will be recognized during our next, 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion in October 2022. We have also set up a small scholarship fund for the winner of each education level of this contest:

**High School (9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>) ~ \$200**

**Middle School (6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>) ~ \$150**

**Elementary (3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>) ~ \$100**

We would love to hear your ideas and/or suggestions for future projects!

Please email me at: [ekf58@aol.com](mailto:ekf58@aol.com) or call Debra Kujawa at the Society office: 912-748-8884.

Thank you all, *Eleesa Faulkner*



## 47th ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

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

### Wednesday, October 27

|                 |                                                                 |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1:00pm — 6:00pm | <b>Reunion Registration open</b>                                |
| 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 | <b>Reunion Registration open</b>                                                                                                                                           |
| 9:30am — 12:00pm | <i>"The Other Savannah"*</i>                                                                                                                                               |
| 1:00pm — 6:00pm  | <b>Reunion Registration open</b>                                                                                                                                           |
| 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 | <b>Reunion Registration open</b>                       |
| 8:00am — 9:15am  | Group Meetings                                         |
| 9:30am — 4:15pm  | <b>National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force*</b> |
| 3:00pm — 4:15pm  | <b>WWII Vets with Q &amp; A [at Museum]</b>            |
| 1:00pm — 6:00pm  | <b>Reunion Registration open</b>                       |
| 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 | <b>Reunion Registration open</b>                            |
| 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  | <b>Reunion Registration open</b>                            |
| 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.**

***Please refer to the June 2021 8th A F News pp.22-25 for additional reunion information!***





# 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 <b>MUST</b> be a member of the <b>8th AFHS</b> to register for this reunion. If you are <b>NOT</b> a <b>CURRENT</b> member, <b>please pay your yearly DUES here:</b>                                                             | \$ 40                                   | #           | \$    |
| <b>REGISTRATION FEE—ALL attendees MUST pay registration fee.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | \$ 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                                   | #           | \$    |
| <b>BOX LUNCHES @ \$10 per lunch FRIDAY, Oct. 29th, ONLY!!!!</b><br>Box lunches will be available from the <b>Mighty 8th Museum ONLY:</b><br>You <b>MUST PREORDER THEM HERE!</b><br>Please select: Ham # _____ or Turkey # _____ Vegetarian Wrap # _____ | Price is per lunch per person:<br>\$ 10 | #           | \$    |
| <b>DINNERS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                         |             |       |
| 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                                   | #           | \$    |
| <b>TOUR OPTIONS:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                         |             |       |
| 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                                   | #           | \$    |
| <b>Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                         |             | \$    |

**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

**Cherry, Clarence F.**, 96, born on August 9, 1924, in Bowling Green, Kentucky, to Austin and Carrie Cherry and passed away on July 15, 2021, in St. Louis, Missouri. Clarence



was attending Hadley Technical High School when he was drafted into military service on April 21, 1943. He served Basic Training at Jefferson Barracks, in St. Louis, Missouri. Prior to entering the service, he married his sweetheart, Lorraine Betty Nintemann of St. Louis, MO, who preceded him in death in 2006.

He served in the 100th Bomb Group 350th Bomb Squadron as a left waist armorer gunner on a B-17 named Rogers Raiders and completed 29 combat missions. During a raid on Berlin on May 19, 1944, they were attacked by waves of FW 190 fighters and fought their way towards Denmark where their plane was shot down and ditched in the North Sea. Clarence suffered head wounds, and the crew floated for 40 hours in the North Sea on two inflatable rafts before being saved by British Rescue boats. After spending three weeks recovering, he returned to active duty on June 6 and flew 19 more combat missions. He received the French Legion of Honor Medal, Purple Heart, Air Medal, EAME with four bronze stars, Good Conduct Medal and WWII Victory Medal. After the war he worked for Saint Louis Testing Laboratory as an Industrial Radiographer. He x-rayed weld seams on the St Louis Arch as it was being built. His work took him to many different locations for testing work such as Boeing (aviation), Shell Oil Co. (Refinery Piping) and steel plate fabrication companies. Clarence served at Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church as a lay Minister for over fifty years. He was also Chaplain of the American Legion Post

335 of Bellefontaine Neighbors, MO. He was on the City of Bellefontaine Neighbors Beautification Committee judging homes decorated for the Christmas holidays, as well as maintaining flower pots and beds throughout the City. He gave numerous speeches to schools about the war and was called upon frequently by the Missouri Athletic Club and Scout groups to speak about his war service and work on the Arch. Clarence flew the American flag 24 hours a day at his home, he was a true American Patriot.

He was the last surviving member of the Rogers Raiders crew. He was preceded in death by Lorraine his loving wife of 63 years; his brother, Austin; his sister, Catherine; and his grandson, Phillip Sapp. Clarence is survived by: his daughters, Kathy Sapp (late Roger) and Linda (Richard) Niewegowski; his sister, Demetra Kelly; two brothers, Louis and Charles; and many nieces, nephews, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

**Dawes, Thomas R.**, 100, passed away on June 15, 2021.



Predeceased by his former wife, Ann T. Washburn, infant daughter, Patricia Ellen and son, Timothy K. Dawes. Thomas "Tom" Dawes was born on May 11, 1921, in England. He came to the United States at the age of two, graduating from Charlotte High School in 1939. Tom proudly served our country in the United States Air Force. He was a college student when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. After he finished the semester, he enrolled in the Aviation Cadet Program in 1942. Served with 458th BG from 7 September 1944 to May 1945. Flew 24 missions. Discharged to reserves in December 1945. Recalled for Korea in 1950.

Served until 1968, then retired from USAF. Navigator at the time in SAC. He retired after 26 years of military service and has been a member of the Williamson American Legion for over 30 years. He also was a member of the Pultneyville Mariners Club for 50 plus years. Tom has resided in Pultneyville since 1969 and remained active in his community, church and church choir.

Survived by his loving wife of 34 years, Lorraine; children: Tom (Andy) Dawes, Liz (Ben) Minier, Barbara and Tom (Deb) DeRoo, Sandra (Larry) Lagree, and Sharon (Ken) Dzielak, (16) grandchildren, (23) great grandchildren; brothers in law: Richard (Kay) and Jon Montondo; many extended family members and numerous friends.

**Gorman, George**, 96, passed away July 3, 2021. He was born on July 10, 1924, to Ann Car and Nicholas Gorman. He graduated from St. John the Baptist grade school in 1938, and from Wyandotte High School in 1942.



In 1943, he was drafted into the U.S. Army and assigned to the Air Force. He was sent to Texas Tech as an aviator student for pre-flight training. After graduating he was assigned to a Flying Fortress (B-17) crew as a gunner and sent to England with the 96th BG. He flew on 14 missions and was awarded 2 Air Medals, 5 Battle Stars and the French Legion of Honor Medal. When the war was over in Europe, barely 21 years old and without any legal training, he was appointed the non-commission office of the Courts and Boards of the 96th Bomb Group where he served until, he was discharged in January of 1946.

He enrolled at the University of Kansas in the fall of 1946, where he served as the first president of the

new Oread Hall, a dormitory of 160 veterans of World War II. He was also the left field starter of the KU baseball team. He received a letter from the Kansas governor thanking him for signing the petition that allowed black students to participate in Big 7 athletics.

After two years he left KU for a sales position with Swift and Company. In 1947, he was introduced to the love of his life, Kathryn Sambol. They were married in 1949, and were blessed with 5 daughters and a son. It was a happy marriage with trips to Hawaii, Spain, North Africa and family vacations to Disneyland, Disneyworld, Grand Canyon, Mexico and the California Coast. Kathryn died in 1985, from ovarian cancer.

He left Swift and Company in 1954, for the position of Sales Manager and eventually plant manager of Sambol Packing Company. In 1980, he was appointed to the Board of Directors of Brotherhood Bank and Trust where he served as chairman of the Loan and Discount Committee for 40 years. George was always grateful to the bank for the strong support they gave to him and his many charitable endeavors. George also served on the Board of Providence Hospital and the greater Kansas City Hospital Association. He served as a governor of the American Royal. He was civic minded and sat on the committee for the unification of the Kansas City Kansas and Wyandotte County governments.

George was a proud, devoted Catholic. He was past president of St. John Catholic Club, past president of the Serra Club, Fourth Degree member of the Knights of Columbus, a Knight Commander of the Equestrian Order Knights of the Holy Sepulcher of Jerusalem, a member of the men's club of the Sisters Servants of Mary, and also served as a lay minister and lector. George loved all sports and played baseball at the parochial, high school, legion, college, and semi-pro level. His first love was golf where he had a couple holes-in-one and a number of club

tournament trophies to his credit. In 1989, George married Virginia Buford. She preceded him in death in August of 2016.

George is survived by his children Jeanne Gorman, Joan Dickey, Janet Hoven (Don), June Gorman, Jackie Kindred (Doug), and George Patrick Gorman (Cadey); his grandchildren Zachary Gorman Rau, David (Stacey) Jackson, Michael (Trudi) Jackson, Kathryn, William and Gorman Thomas Hoven, Rose Kindred, Abby and Caroline Gorman and his great grandchildren, Brenden Dawley, Trella, Charles and Collin Jackson. He is also survived by a ton of nieces and nephews who he loved and rejoiced in their many accomplishments.

**Holst, Dewey Aaron**, 96, passed away



at his home on Tuesday morning, May 25, 2021.

The eleventh of fourteen children of Harley Emmett and Nellie Conner Holst, Dewey was

born at Gravois Mills, MO on January 12, 1925. In 1931, his family came to Howard County and located near Lisbon where he attended Rose Hill School. For High School he came to Glasgow where he graduated with the class of 1943. There he met Lillie Mae Nation who became the love of his life. The two were wed on September 4, 1945, in Kelso WA, where Dewey was stationed at nearby Portland (Oregon) Air Force Base.

Mr. Holst was justly proud of his service to his country during World War II. He was drafted in 1943 and requested to be sent to the U. S. Army Air Force. Serving in the European Theatre of the War he was stationed in England and flew as a Tail Turret Gunner on the new B-24 Bomber with the 448<sup>th</sup> BG. His crew flew combat missions into Germany and were met with heavy enemy fire. On his first mission, their plane lost an engine but they were able to return to base on the

remaining three. On their third mission the loss of two engines and fuel forced Dewey and three other airmen to bail out over Le Mans, France. They survived and were picked up by a U.S. Security Patrol. Dewey and his fellow crew members were to fly a total of thirty-five missions the last of which was flown on April 7, 1945. For his meritorious service he was awarded the European African Middle Eastern Ribbon with 5 Bronze Stars and the Air Medal with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters. (Further information is available at the website, [www.ollietwo.com](http://www.ollietwo.com)).

After completing his tour of duty, he returned to Missouri and worked from 1946 to 1987 at the Fairfax General Motors plant in Kansas City. During that time, the Holsts made their home in Kansas City where they were active members of the Belmont Christian Church. A 32<sup>nd</sup> Degree Mason, he was a member of Sheffield Lodge # 65, A.F.& A.M. They enjoyed traveling and attended several 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force reunions.

After his retirement from General Motors, Dewey and Lillie Mae returned to Howard County and enjoyed life on their farm near Richland Christian Church where he continued to live after the death of his wife on March 27, 2014. Strong is his faith, Dewey was devoted to his church. He joined Richland Christian Church in 1946. Later he was a member of Belmont Christian Church, Richland Church, and Fayette First Christian Church where he faithfully attended for as long as his health permitted. He was a loving and devoted husband and father and a cherished friend who will be sincerely missed by all those who knew him.

Mr. Holst is survived by his daughter, Vinita (Stephen) Schmitt, eight grandchildren, Bruce (Deven) King, Aaron (Brandy) King, Krystal (Jason) Burris, Julie Barton, Jaclyn Barton, Tiffany Blackwell, Stacey (Preston) Weaver and Stephanie Livingston; numerous great and great-great grandchildren, including his special doctor,



# TAPS

Sammy. Dewey is also survived by numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. In addition to his wife and parents, Dewey was preceded in death by eight brothers, Jack, Wils, Johnny, Dolcy, Robert, Noah "Nine", Daniel and David Holst, and five sisters, Naomi Holst, Nehemiah Van Skyke, Kathryn Boggs, Nell Hendricks and Tiny Burchard.

## Wexler, Col Edward I. USAF (Ret.),



75, passed away on June 30, 2021. He was a Savannah native who lived a truly global life. He traveled the world with the United States Air Force serving in many different countries, while always staying committed to being a public servant to his hometown. Col Wexler was a proud graduate of the 1964 class of Savannah High School. He went on to attend The Citadel where he graduated in 1968 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the US Air Force. That same year he married his high school sweetheart, Mary Witt Wexler. Col Wexler served on active duty as a Munitions Maintenance Officer with assignments in Colorado and Taiwan, Republic of China. While stationed at Tainan Air Base in Taiwan in the early 1970's, they were blessed with the birth of their first child, Susan Dorothy. Col Wexler finished out his tour and returned to Savannah in 1972. He joined the Georgia Air National Guard, 165th Airlift Wing as the first full-time Air Intelligence Officer in 1974. In 1978, he was reassigned as Commander of the 165th Mission Support Squadron. In the same year, they welcomed their second daughter, Sara Claire and in 1979 Sharon Ashley arrived. He received his Master's degree in Business Management from Central Michigan University in 1981, and was a graduate of the USAF Squadron Officer School, Air

Command and Staff College, and the Air War College. Col Wexler was deployed around the world in support of Air Force Missions including, Korea, Egypt, Rwanda, Panama, Curacao, Italy, England, and Germany. In 1992, he was deployed to Saudi Arabia supporting Operation Desert Storm. He served as Commander of the 165th Maintenance Group, leading personnel deployed to Southwest Georgia during the devastating floods of Tropical Storm Alberto in 1994. He served two years as chair of the ANG C-130 Logistics Council, representing over twenty-two C-130 wings on the national level. In 1996 he served as venue officer for the sailing event during the Centennial Olympic Games in Savannah. He was promoted to the rank of Colonel in June 1997, and his team received the Air National Guard Team Excellence Award from the Chief of Staff of the Air Force. He became the Wing Vice Commander in 2000. In 2003, he was assigned to Headquarters Georgia Air National Guard in Atlanta. He was a life member of the Air Force Association, serving as past-president of the Savannah Chapter AFA and as Georgia State past-president for three years. He also served three years as a National Director of the Air Force Association. He served four years on the Board of Directors of the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Historical Society. He was a Trustee Emeritus of the National Museum of the Mighty 8th Air Force and served on numerous boards and organizations. His military decorations include: the Legion of Merit (oak leaf cluster), Meritorious Service Medal (two oak leaf clusters,) Air Force Commendation Medal (oak leaf cluster,) the Army Commendation Medal, the General Oglethorpe Distinctive Service Medal, and numerous other federal and state decorations. Col Wexler was the 2017-2018 Veteran of the Year by the Chatham County Veterans Council. In 2018 he also received the Senior Citizens Inc. Life Well Lived Award.

He retired from the Air National Guard in 2006, having over 35 years of service. He was preceded in death by his loving wife of forty-two years Lt Col Mary Witt Wexler, USAF Nurse Corps (Ret.); his parents, Dr. William A. Wexler and Dorothy Levy Wexler, local civil rights activists and international advocates for Israel; and his brother, Savannah optometrist, Dr. Allan V. Wexler.

His legacy continues with his three daughters and their families: Susan and Eric Darling (Savannah) and their children Evelyn, and Elijah; Sara and Chaplain (Lt Col) Michael Bram (Los Angeles), and their children, Devorah, Chaya, Elisheva, Avigayil, and Moshe; and Sharon Ashley and Michael Walter (Denver) and their children, Simone and Corinna. He is survived by his devoted wife of five years, Catherine Hopkins Wexler and her family. Following his retirement, Col Wexler became an avid collector of scale model trains and was a board member of the Coastal Rail Buffs. He enjoyed showing off his train collection to his children and grandchildren. He enjoyed driving his 1987 Air Force Blue Corvette. Throughout his life, Col Wexler remained a loving patriarch to his family and a servant leader to his community. "To all my model train enthusiasts High Green and to all others Let's have a beer!"

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

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# A MOMENT IN TIME

## That Others May Live

*JM Pittman, Next Gen 466th BG*

Captain Richard Hardegen brought U-123 to periscope depth. Looking through the eyepiece his arms slowly swung the periscope 360 degrees to scan the surface. With no threats to his submarine or its precious cargo of G7e Falcon torpedoes he closed in on his prey. With the early morning sun at their backs, the crew calculated speed, distance to the tanker, the subs depth, and its angle of attack. With torpedoes loaded and a firing solution plotted, quiet filled the boat as they waited for Hardegen to give the order to fire.

Sailing 60 miles off the coast of Long Island New York, the Panamanian tanker Norness was making her way north to Halifax before heading out into the sub infested waters of the North Atlantic. The danger was closer than this Norwegian crew could imagine. With a bright morning sun reflecting off the sea, Norness lookouts never saw the small wake created by the U-Boat's periscope as it sliced through the 45-degree water. The first torpedo slammed into the freighter's thin hull at 08:34. At 08:53, another hit. By 09:29, her back broken amidship, she slipped beneath the waves and began her descent to the ocean floor below. Sailing these waters was a dangerous business indeed.

From January to July of 1942, Admiral Donitz's U-boats sank over 230 ships and took the lives of over 5000 sailors off the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the

United States. To counter this threat the US Navy had fewer than 100 planes along the eastern seaboard. Asked to help, the US Army could muster fewer than 120 aircraft of its own. With the vast proportion of American airpower rushing to counter the Japanese advance in the Pacific, most of the available aircraft were old and obsolete.

Undeterred, Americans rolled up their sleeves and prepared to fight. From every corner of the country, from every walk of life, men and women flocked to recruiting stations. Those who joined the Air Corp were sent to Boot Camps and training schools that molded them into a uniform group with a common mission. Pilots, navigators, bombardiers, gunners, and radiomen were trained at Airfields all across the country. At the same time, an Army of weathermen, mechanics, tin benders, radio technicians, cooks, doctors, truck drivers, administrators, and MPs were trained and assembled.

These civilians, turned airmen, would put Billy Mitchell's theories of airpower to the test. Assembled into groups, divisions, and wings, the fledgling 8<sup>th</sup> Bomber Command would eventually become the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force. They would destroy countless airfields, factories, munition plants, roads, bridges, rail networks, and turn Hitler's oil industry into a shattered heap of burnt and twisted metal. They



would drive Luftwaffe fighters and bombers from the skies of Europe. By the fall of 1945, only Hitler's anti-aircraft gunners would remain to contest their command of the air.

But the cost of victory would not be cheap. In 1942 and early 1943 only 3 bomber crews in 10 would survive their 25-mission rotation. Over 6500 heavy bombers and 3300 fighters would be lost. 350,000 airmen would eventually serve in the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force. By the war's end over 26,000 would give their lives in the effort. More 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force fliers would be killed in action than all the US Marines killed in World War II. In addition to the killed and wounded, more than 21,000 fliers would endure starvation, lack of medical care, and harsh treatment in German POW camps.

But in the dark days of 1942, all this lay in the future. The order of the day was hard work and sacrifice. In the Pacific, the Japanese advance had finally stalled in the Coral Sea, the battle of Midway still in the future. Along 3700 miles of US coastline, the task of driving Hitler's U-boats back into the Atlantic was just beginning. Arriving in England in early 1942 to

*(continued on back cover)*



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command American bomber forces, General Ira C Eaker told the British people, “We won’t do much talking until we’ve done more fighting. After we’re gone, we hope you’ll be glad we came.”

After three long and bloody years, the dark days of 1942 were but a distant memory. England no longer suffered from the terror of Hitler’s rockets. The rumble of military vehicles no longer shook houses. The roar of thousands of bombers and fighters taking off for missions in flak and fighter infested skies would never be heard again. Seamen plied the waters of the North Atlantic without fear of burning or drowning after their ships were torn apart by German torpedoes. Frenchmen were enjoying freedom for the first time since 1940. Those in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg no longer played host to their Nazi occupiers. For Western Europe’s Jewish population, the nightmare of extermination had come to an end. Free of war and occupation, Western Civilization would soon begin the arduous task of rebuilding a shattered continent. To this day, these people have not forgotten: freedom would still be a distant memory but for tens of thousands of young Americans who fought and died that “Others May Live.”

My father, Albert W Pittman, (photo above) was counted among their ranks. Flying as a tail gunner on the Wollstein crew, he arrived



in England shortly before D Day. Flying out of Attlebridge with the 466<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, the Wollstein Crew flew 28 missions in the Queen of Hearts and the Wild Princess. These were the men my dad fought with. These were the men he loved most. Many had never ventured more than 50 miles from home. Now their country sent them halfway around the world. They had no idea what war was. Just that their country needed them. In spite of the savagery, the death and misery, the stress and fear, they woke up each day, ate, put on their gear, and climbed aboard their plane. My father called it “Unpremeditated heroism.” They were not interested in dying for God and country; but they were willing to risk a horrible death that others might be free.

It is my great honor to join with the 8th Air Force Historical Society and all those who have labored over the years to preserve their memory, their deeds, and the example they set for future generations. If, as some say, History repeats itself; then it is our duty to tell their story. It is indeed our privilege to keep alive the memory of what they accomplished as they looked Evil – ‘Square in the face’. To remind others that in the darkest of times, standing for freedom is noble, and will always be costly.

**JM Pittman**