

September 2022



TH AF NEWS

Volume 22 Number 3 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

Why we *MUST* REMEMBER...



48th Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion
Washington, D.C. ~ Arlington, VA
October 19-23, 2022
~INSIDE THIS ISSUE!~



8th AF News

September 2022

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

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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
Jasper, GA 30143-4769**

EDITOR'S NOTES



Let me tell you a little about my dad...

In my ten-plus years with the Historical Society, hardly a day goes by that someone doesn't ask me if my father served in the eighth. My response—while not exactly defensive—is very quick and proud: “My dad served as a Navy pilot [PB2Y2]

during WWII and nearly lost his life in a horrible plane crash in which he was one of only four survivors.” He will always be my hero.

My “connection” continues to be with our “Greatest Generation” whom we must always honor, no matter whose uniform they wore.

When I first heard the story of the 8th Air Force in 2000, my question was: “What happened to the first seven?” I admit I was definitely a bit naïve, but I have amassed an incredible amount of knowledge since then. Even more importantly, I've been blessed to meet so many amazing people and form so many friendships through the years. I feel my dad's presence in all our

WWII veterans. His kindness, his wit, and most of all, humbleness. And when each one leaves us, my heart aches. I worry that the memories and legacies of these amazing heroes will be lost if we don't do everything we can to save them. Such an unconscionable loss to the world if we fail.

The history of the 8th is awe inspiring; filled with stories of courage, heroism, survival, sacrifice, and loss. It deserves to be preserved and shared.

We **MUST** remember these heroes—just as we must **never** forget the stories being written by the men and women serving today. With your continued support, we **CAN** do this!

With love always,

Deb

Note: This issue has information on our upcoming 48th Annual Reunion which is absolutely family focused! If you have any questions or need help in filling out the registration information, please contact me.



**Please JOIN or RENEW with the
Eighth Air Force Historical Society TODAY!!!**



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

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

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

Membership Annual Dues: \$40 or £30 GBP

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

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JOIN ONLINE: www.8thAFHS.org

PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING

Anne Marek
President



Capt. Victor G. Aubry, Jr.
USAAF
493rd Bomb Group
Retired as major

Greetings everyone! Our 2022 Arlington Reunion will be here before we know it. We have arranged a number of terrific tours to our Nation's Capital that you will find interesting and inspirational. I know you will enjoy them. I encourage all our members to attend.

I want specifically to reach out to our next generation and second-generation members. As a next gen myself, I can speak from experience how very proud I felt when I was asked during my Bomb Group's Rendezvous Dinner to stand up and tell everyone who I was representing – my dad, Major Victor G. Aubry, Jr., 493rd Bomb Group. Although he passed away in 1991 by attending the 8th Air Force Historical Society's Reunions, I continue to honor his memory and celebrate his legacy.

Our veteran family members were heroes. They defended our country's freedoms for future generations. By your attending these Reunions, you are the one continuing their legacy. I encourage each of you who has lost a veteran family member to honor his memory by maintaining your membership in the Society and continuing to attend the Reunions. So, stand up with me and proudly say his name so that you, too, can keep him alive for all of us.



"Old Sack" crew: Top Row L-R: Lt. Alfred C Schwarz, Navigator; Lt. Lester J Bondly, Co-Pilot; Capt. Victor G Aubry, Jr., Pilot; Lt. Robert S Ennis, Bombardier; S/Sgt. Collin A Hunley, Flight Engineer
Bottom R L-R: S/Sgt Calvin H Tucker, Radio Operator; S/Sgt Thomas G Strader, Tail Gunner; S/Sgt Sol B Kans, Nose Gunner; S/Sgt. Donald J Gibbs, Ball Turret Gunner; S/Sgt. Marvin R Wunschel, Waist Gunner

Thank you all for your support of our Officers and Directors. It is greatly appreciated. If you have anything you wish the Board to address, please reach out to us. We want to hear from you. Our contact information is on page 2 in each issue.

Best regards,

Anne
Anne A. Marek
President,
8th AFHS

TREASURER'S LEDGER

Paul W. Tibbets IV Treasurer

Hello!

For this issue of *8th AF News*, we are reporting the Financial Statements for the first half of calendar year 2022 ending June 30, 2022. As you can see from our Profit and Loss statement, the income for this period was -\$77,990.71. A negative income is clearly not desirable, but the cause of this was primarily the market downturn through the first half of the year, and therefore not a red flag for our organization. An additional reason worth highlighting is the skyrocketing cost to print and mail our magazine, which is nearly double the cost of this time last year.

Please see pages 11-12 in this issue for a more detailed discussion on our Society's financial health.

Other major expenses include an advance payment of \$7887.60 to secure the tours for our 2022 reunion in Washington, D.C., and \$12,560.00 for our new website, which includes a completely rebuilt and secure database. If you haven't already, please check it out at <https://www.8thafhs.org> and provide us feedback!

You, our members, continue to be generous towards the financial health of our Society. Our dues and donations are up 12% from this same period last year. Many thanks!

If any of you have questions regarding any of our financial statements, please do not hesitate to reach out. My contact information can be found on page 2. All the best!
Respectfully,



Paul
Paul Tibbets IV
Treasurer, 8th AFHS

8th Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position As of June 30, 2022	
	<u>Total</u>
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1017 Oppenheimer & Co	213,436.41
1040 Bank of America Checking Acct.	12,080.22
1042 Bank of America Savings Acct.	1,332.40
Total Bank Accounts	\$226,849.03
Total Current Assets	\$226,849.03
TOTAL ASSETS	\$226,849.03
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2000 Accounts Payable	107.69
Total Accounts Payable	\$107.69
Other Current Liabilities	
2050 Payroll & Taxes Payable	
2051 Payroll payable	2,896.57
2052 FICA & withhold taxes payable	9,230.97
Total 2050 Payroll & Taxes Payable	\$12,127.54
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$12,127.54
Total Current Liabilities	\$12,235.23
Total Liabilities	\$12,235.23
Equity	
3200 *Unrestricted Net Assets	292,604.51
Net Income	-77,990.71
Total Equity	\$214,613.80
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$226,849.03

8th Air Force Historical Society Profit and Loss January - June, 2022	
	<u>Total</u>
Income	
4000 Income/Miscellaneous	
4001 Amazon Smile	106.14
4005 BOA Rewards	8.17
4010 Member Dues Annual	31,634.71
4019 Member Contributions/Donations	12,273.16
Total 4000 Income/Miscellaneous	\$44,022.18
4050 Investment Income	
4058 Portfolio Dividends & Interest	2,390.93
4059 Realized Gain/(Loss) on Invest	0.00
4060 Unrealized Gain/(Loss) on Invest	-74,229.88
4061 Investment Management Fees	0.00
Total 4050 Investment Income	-\$71,838.95
Total Income	-\$27,816.77
Gross Profit	-\$27,816.77
Expenses	
5100 National Administration Expense	
5102 Officers/Directors Gen Expense	294.00
5108 Web Site Expense	12,560.00
5111 Corporation Charges	70.00
5121 8AF History Projects	309.85
Total 5100 National Administration Expense	\$13,233.85
5200 Magazine Expenses	
5210 Printing Expenses	9,851.00
5220 Postage Expenses	5,462.83
Total 5200 Magazine Expenses	\$15,313.83
5300 National Office Expenses	
5303 Telephone/DSL	378.91
5304 Supplies	-46.22
5305 Abila Software/ Computer Exps	1,632.91
5307 Office Rent	600.00
5308 Insurance	883.89
5312 FICA-8AFHS portion	1,663.88
5313 Payroll/ Office Management	21,850.00
5315 Postage & Shipping	164.39
5316 Bank Charges/ Returned checks	29.95
5317 Dues Collection Expense	791.15
5323 Merchant Account Usage Fees	807.71
5326 Payroll processing fees	325.00
Total 5300 National Office Expenses	\$29,081.57
Total Expenses	\$57,629.25
Net Operating Income	-\$85,446.02
Other Income	
6550 Annual Meeting Revenue	
6551 Event Registration	15,476.46
Total 6550 Annual Meeting Revenue	\$15,476.46
Total Other Income	\$15,476.46
Other Expenses	
7100 Annual Meeting Expenses	
7101 Supplies & Items for Sale	133.55
7104 Tours/Transportation	7,887.60
Total 7100 Annual Meeting Expenses	\$8,021.15
Total Other Expenses	\$8,021.15
Net Other Income	\$7,455.31
Net Income	-\$77,990.71

NOTEWORTHY

At Oshkosh 2022, time flies. After two years of COVID restrictions the Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) hosted a magnificent airshow at Oshkosh. Their Warbirds in Review schedule was top-notch. Its top gun draw being the legendary **Colonel Bud Anderson, the last triple ace from World War II.**

What made this year special was the appearance of three aircraft painted up as Bud's "Old Crow" mounts from World War II. Bud selected the name, "Old Crow" for all of his aircraft from training to combat missions. It is a play on words. The crow is a very intelligent bird. So too, the "Old Crow" title is reserved for a lower-shelf Kentucky straight bourbon whiskey that will knock your flight boots off.

The Commemorative Air Force (CAF) recently painted up their P-39Q aircraft as Old Crow from their Central Texas Wing. The livery markings were completely authentic, to include the white skull on the cabin doors with a dagger thrust through the cranium. The "Old Crow" banner was simply painted on the lower nose.

I spoke with John Cyrier who ferried this rare aircraft with the help of his brother to Wisconsin. There are only three P-39s in airworthy condition. The CAF went the extra mile to accomplish this mission. We also prayed it though.

During the war, the P-39Q was an unlucky aircraft. It was treacherous to fly and the 357th Fighter Group lost a number of pilots in training accidents. Those who survived the venom of the Airocobra would later fly the Mustang to glory.

Each pilot's life was in the hands of his maintenance crew. The plane that John flew to Oshkosh has Bud's name and that

of Otto Heino. Otto was Bud's highly skilled crew chief. Otto kept Bud's aircraft in perfect mechanical condition.



Bud with P-39 Old Crow. His 1939 Ford convertible is in the background.

Bud Anderson never aborted a mission due to Otto's talents and vigilance. After the war, Otto Heino would become the wealthiest and most famous potter in the world. Together these men formed an impressive team with the entire 357th Fighter Group.

Bud had two P-51 Mustangs present in this stable of fighters. One was a P-51 "Old Crow" in silver with invasion stripes. The other P-51B model that Bud sat beside was painted up in RAF green.

Jack Rousch had this rare aircraft built by the skilled hands of Dave

"Art" Teeters in Salinas, California. It took ten years to complete this massive project with Airmotive Specialities, Inc. Over 40,000 hours went into building this national treasure of an aircraft. It is drop dead gorgeous.

To see these three aircraft painted up in their wartime markings was a remarkable tribute to Bud. This gathering was filled with emotion, the interest of thousands of spectators, and living history. Bud



Bud and his son, Jim Anderson

truly was the star of this show.

Bud came all the way from California to share his stories. Every American I met at Oshkosh shared in his dreams of flight. To learn more about Bud visit his website: <https://tofly-andfight.com>.

Jeffrey Clemens, Bud Anderson Fan Club Chaplain

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*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

FACES OF CAMBRIDGE ...REALIZED

by Suzie Harrison

American Battle
Monuments Commission
Cambridge American Cemetery
and Memorial



The June issue of the 8th AF News reviewed how the USA was inexorably drawn into the conflict that was World War II. It also sought to describe what was happening in 1942, the first year of Operation BOLERO. This article aims to explain how we, at Cambridge American Cemetery, in BOLERO's 80th Anniversary year, commemorated those events during Memorial Day Weekend 2022.

In the beginning...

Between 1941-1946 nearly 3.5 million Americans passed through Britain in what became known as *The Friendly Invasion*. These men had left behind their families, wives, and children; their ploughs and lathes; and were issued their uniforms and military equipment to fight in a war, far from home.

Before setting out, American service members had

no idea where they were being sent. However, once they were issued a small War and Navy Department booklet called, *A Short Guide to Great Britain*, they knew. After a dangerous, nerve-wracking crossing of the North Atlantic Ocean hunted by enemy submarines, they started to arrive at bombed-out ports around the United Kingdom. It was quite a shock to be confronted by a country at war. Somehow, islands already crowded with civilians and Allied military had to shuffle up and make room for more.

On a cold January day in 1942, the Union Jack and Stars and Stripes flew side-by-side in Belfast, to welcome those first US soldiers to disembark in the UK.

The influx of these young Americans was the initial flurry of activity in the build-up of Operation

News from Across the Pond...

BOLERO, the 80th Anniversary of which we commemorated on Memorial Day.

***"Here we are together defending
all that to free men is dear."***

Winston Churchill

Speech before the Congress of the United States, 26 December 1941.

Sgt Robert S Arbib, 820th Engineer Aviation Battalion, stood on the decks of the troopship Monterey and surveyed the scene on 17 August 1942. The ship had run up the river, into the very heart of Glasgow. *"We were in a war zone at last! We stared at our first barrage balloons, moored to barges in the river. We saw a freighter with a gaping torpedo hole at the waterline ...[and]... noted little camouflaged naval craft..."* He commented to a friend, *"Seems quiet, almost empty"*, then *...looked for traces of war ... We soon discovered that the occasional open space between buildings, or gutted buildings, were signs of the blitz ... they were indeed bomb damage."*

US personnel disembarking in Glasgow or Liverpool were transported by train to ... *"somewhere in England."* Sitting in the tiny compartment of a fussy little English train, WAC Camilla Mays Frank commented on one of many similar journeys, *"Herds of cattle grazed in the patchwork of fields all around. I was fascinated by the hedgerows bordering the tiny fields ...[which]... gave way to such beautiful villages and small towns that looked like pages from..."* a school history book. That reverie was soon disturbed ... *"by the roar of engines. Across this same landscape flew four enormous bombers with British markings ... escorted by tiny fighters displaying their RAF roundels. I realized that the war was here, all around us. I just had not been looking for it."*

For those brave young Americans who arrived in 1942, nothing was ready. Conditions were harsh,

as they were coming to a country which had been at war for two-and-a-half years. They had to bring everything with them. Indeed they did, turning the United Kingdom into the largest military and logistics base of all time.

It would be another two-and-a-half years before they set foot on mainland Europe.

At its peak, just before the D-Day invasion in June 1944, more than 1.6 million Americans were stationed in the UK. American forces had become an integral part of English life, especially in the East Anglian region.

Unfortunately for many of them, the British soil of a Cambridgeshire hillside would become their final resting place. At Cambridge American Cemetery, on Memorial Day, the American Battle Monuments Commission honors the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice to deliver peace, stability, and freedom that has endured in Europe for the last 77 years.

Faces of Cambridge

So, who were these men and women?

What were their hopes and dreams?

We are sure that it wasn't part of their plan to stay in England forever.

In the cemetery their names are inscribed on headstones or on the Wall of the Missing.

What if we put a face to the name?

What better way to celebrate those young lives cut short by war, than by the project that we now call *Faces of Cambridge*.

Building on the work of our predecessors, Faces of Cambridge was 'born' in 2016, and first displayed in 2017. For five years, cemetery staff have con-



News from Across the Pond...

tinued to hunt down those elusive images of young Americans, who set off to war with such hope, trepidation, fear, and excitement. A small band of diligent volunteers has also continued that search, so that we now hold 4,670 individual images, representing 52% of all of those commemorated here. This year – having learned some lessons the hard way in 2017 – instead of trying to add small pictures to the Wall of the Missing for those who have no known grave, we decided on a different approach. The plan was to design a new “*Memorial to the Missing*,” by developing the grass area between the two small sections of “G Plot.” The positioning would be based on the mathematical layout of the headstones for the neatest solution. Volunteers from the local US airbases, researchers, and members of the British chapters of the US Bomb Groups and Fighter Groups came to support us. It took the whole day, but by the end we had dressed all of the headstones with the American and British flags; added American flags to the new plot for those commemorated on the Wall of the Missing; then set out all of the photographs. Tired but happy, cemetery staff were still walking around enjoying the spectacle at six o’clock that evening.



US Service personnel volunteered to help place the ‘Faces’ at the headstones. Cambridge American Cemetery for ABMC

It was wonderful to see our weekend visitors spending time, really looking carefully at the pictures, and perhaps wondering about the lives of the faces



The completed Memorial to the Missing. Cambridge American Cemetery for ABMC

depicted there. Some pictures were of cheeky nine-year olds; others of shy teenagers; or brash boys about town. They posed with cars, tractors, and boats; outside schools and universities; others, proud of their new achievements, during army and flight training. Many photographs showed them with their families; their mothers, sweethearts, or children. What were their hopes and dreams before their lives were cut so tragically short, preventing them from fulfilling their promise?

The current staff at Cambridge American Cemetery is also researching the biographies of those memorialized, so that we are better able to tell their story. This is a project that we do not expect will ever be complete, but it is our way of honoring the fallen and their sacrifice. It has been, is, and will be, a mammoth undertaking.

The Ezra Kreiss story

When two young American women walked into the Cambridge Cemetery Visitor Centre in early May, 2022, it was a beat before my conscious-

News from Across the Pond...

ness recognized the importance of what they were saying. They had come to visit the grave of their great-grandfather, Ezra Kreiss, who was one of the hundreds who had so tragically drowned during Exercise Tiger, on 28 April 1944, in training for D-Day.

The tangible for Faces of Cambridge is, of course, the photographs. In order to encourage people to visit, we had created some marketing materials. These included large banners which we could display around the site. To create these, we used some of our highest quality images. Poor quality photographs are just not good enough when blow-up beyond normal page size. Ezra was one of our 'poster boys'. To encourage visitors to come and see the Faces exhibition, we had pasted a flyer with Ezra's picture in the office window. Nicole and Brittany had spotted it and were very excited.

I think that it is fair to say, that the girls were then completely 'blown away' when we showed them the banner that was on display in the Memorial

Building!



At left: Nicole and Brittany, and, of course, Ezra!

We took them to the Field of Honor to visit their great-grandfather's grave and dressed the headstone for them. They toured the rest of the site while we explained the significance of Exercise Tiger. Nicole and Brittany

left, promising to keep in touch, and send us more biographical information. Indeed, they did, sending

over a cornucopia of materials and detail.

In mid-May, about two weeks after their visit, I had an amazing email from Nicole. She had decided to bring her mother and grandfather over to Britain to visit Ezra's grave and join us for Memorial Day. It was now our turn to be excited. Her grandfather, also called Ezra, had never met his father. However, Ezra's wife believed that her husband knew about the safe birth of his son, just a few months before his death.

The Kreiss family duly flew over from the United States to join us on 30 May. They met the dignitaries, partook in the ceremony, and watched the Heritage Flying Tribute. In the peace and quiet of the aftermath, we went down to Ezra's grave, dressed it; and this lovely family group was able to spend time with someone so dear to them. I can honestly say, that it was moving for all concerned. ...and the banner? Well. Of course, they took it with them, although I am not sure how airport security will have viewed a large metal object in a carry-case!

The power of photographs

Ezra's story exemplifies the power of a photograph, and the tangible reminder of someone long gone. Images have the ability to make a connection.

As we stand at the flagpole and look over the sea of headstones, it is almost impossible to contemplate the lives cut short on such a magnitude. However, if we look at a headstone and remember the one, and the man to his right, then the woman to his left, the enormity of it assumes a more human proportion. Adding a picture to the headstone or commemorating an inscription on the Wall of the Missing brings the name to life. It colors in the background of some of those long forgotten heroes, so that we can tell their story. Not everyone is a medal recipient, but without their contribution to the whole, the battle and the war could have had a different outcome. In this way, the ABMC Staff continues to fulfill US General Pershing's vision that, *"Time will not dim the glory of their deeds."*

KEEPING OUR SOCIETY ALIVE

Paul Tibbets IV, Treasurer, 8th AFHS

These last few years have been tough for all of us. But times like these give us the opportunity to reflect on the health of our organization and make appropriate adjustments to ensure success in the future. Your Board has done just that.

As your treasurer, I have been keeping a close eye on the markets, as I am sure many of you have. A good number of our Society's investments are in strong and resilient companies like Apple, Amazon, Google, and Paramount (producers of *Top Gun Maverick!*). These companies are part of the Nasdaq, the second largest stock exchange in the world. As of June 30th of this year, it was down nearly 30%. However, we know based on history that it will rebound over time and grow to new heights.

As our portfolio manager,

Gavin Natelli of Oppenheimer reminded me, we are in this for the long run! Thanks to the great

printing and mailing of our quarterly society magazine, the 8th *AF News*. Please let me explain.



The photo above was taken in May of 1998 during a flight in the B-29 *FIFI* over west Texas. On the left is Brig Gen Paul W. Tibbets, Jr. (USAF, Ret), pilot of the *Enola Gay* and commander of the 509th Composite Group. On the right is then captain and now retired Brig Gen Paul W. Tibbets IV, who commanded the 509th Bomb Wing, the successor to the 509th Composite Group, 71 years after his grandfather!

First, I want to recognize the great work done by our Managing Director AND Editor of 8th *AF News*, Ms. Debra Kujawa. Layout & design of the magazine in years past was always a paid position. A few years ago, your Board made the tough call to terminate this expense to keep our Society healthy. Those duties then fell on Deb, who already had a full plate with her Managing Director duties. With NO increase in salary, Deb agreed to take on this

work done by Gavin, our investment portfolio is healthy.

However, one area where we have seen increased costs that are exceeding our revenue is the

increased responsibility.

So, the **production** of the 8th *AF News* comes with no additional financial burden on the membership. Unfortunately:

- Magazine postage costs have doubled, and
- Magazine printing costs have increased over 30%

This is unsustainable.

What back in 2019 cost the Society \$15,000 annually to produce is now \$25,000...an overall **40% increase!** And, it is forecast that printing and postage costs will continue to rise for the foreseeable future.

How does this effect our budget?

- 2022 expenses (payroll, magazine, overhead): \$81,000
- Income (dues for 800 members*): \$32,000

*Although to date we have a little over 1,000 members paid through 2022 or beyond, only 800 paid this year. The other 300 paid last year for multiple years.

That's a deficit of \$49,000! We have already produced three magazines this year, so we cannot make up any expense there. For 2023, if we went primarily with a digital magazine, that would save us \$25,000, leaving a deficit of \$24,000.

It is also important to highlight that the reunion does not generate any income. We charge cost for the tours and rooms, and the registration fee covers all expenses – materials, programs, AV equipment rental, incidentals, etc.

Fortunately, as members you have been very generous, and we

receive a significant number of donations above and beyond the dues payments each year. But, as you can appreciate, that varies year by year. Thus far this year, we have received a little over \$12,000 in donations. But, even with this, we still have a deficit of \$12,000.

Let me say that again – a deficit of \$12,000. And, that assumes **we cut all magazine printing and postage expenses.**

So, what does your Board recommend?

Recommendation #1:

Cease printing and mailing the magazine as a benefit of membership. We will distribute the magazine digitally, which more and more organizations (and **particularly non-profits**) are choosing as a way to curb expenses. If a member would like a printed copy, there would be an extra fee for each issue (exact price would vary depending on quantities printed). Exception: we will print a copy of the magazine for all World War II veterans.

This recommendation is not required by our By-Laws to be presented to the Society general membership for approval. However, we want to be fully transparent and ask for your support in this endeavor. We plan to make a presentation at the reunion this fall.

Recommendation #2:

Increase dues to \$60 annually. We have not had a dues increase in 10 years. It is time. As mentioned earlier, we typically have 800 members that pay in any given year. This dues increase will provide an additional \$16,000 in income for the Society, eliminating our deficit* and providing a small cushion for other expenses.

*This assumes donations will continue based on historical averages.

This recommendation must be presented by the Board and ratified by the general membership. Your Board will also include this in the presentation at the reunion this fall.

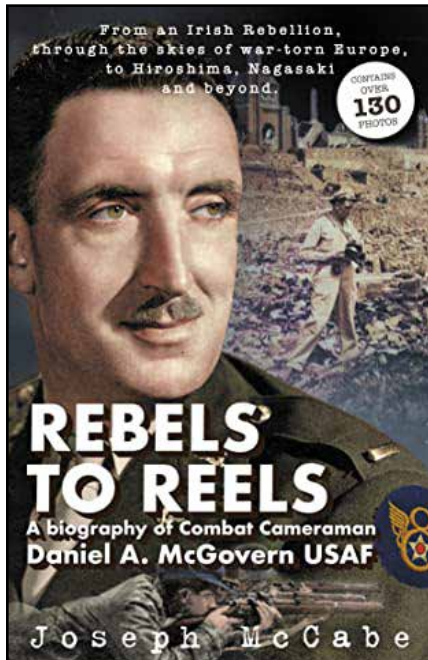
Importantly, both recommendations are tied together and are needed if we want our Society to continue to function.

Between now and the reunion, if you have any thoughts on this topic, please let me know! My contact information is on page 2.

We have a unique opportunity to launch the Society into the future, keeping the legacy alive that began back in 1942 by all the brave heroes of the Eighth Air Force...like my grandfather.

Respectfully,

Paul W. Tibbets IV
Treasurer, 8 AFHS



This three-part, highly researched biography by Joseph McCabe, tells the full story of how the often-harrowing footage we have today was shot and of how Daniel A. McGovern saved it for posterity despite decades of US government suppression. Earlier, ‘Big Mack’ was designated cameraman and photographer to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt before being chosen to train the very first combat cameramen of World War Two for the then United States Army Air Forces.

‘*Rebels to Reels*’, for the very first time, tells the full story of how McGovern trained those cameramen before he himself deployed to England from where he flew six perilous combat missions over Nazi occupied Europe. Readers glean a unique ‘fly on the fuselage’ experience as ‘Rebels to Reels’ brings them on McGovern’s B-17 missions as he filmed. This biography also contains Dan’s remarkable accounts of his involvement in the **UFO Roswell Incident** and of the transition of the USAAF into the United States Air Force – the 75th Anniversary of which occurs in 2022. However, Dan’s story begins

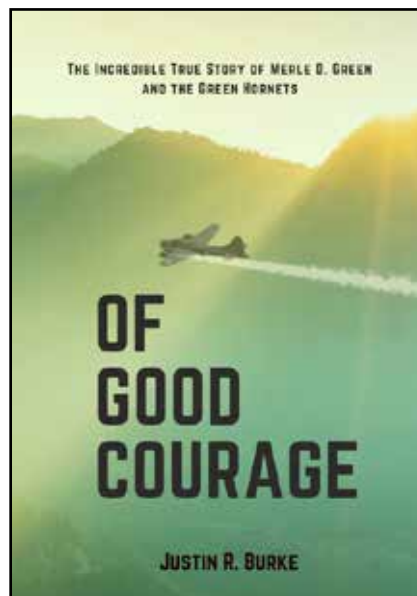
not in America, but in Ireland where, as a boy and the son of an RIC policeman, McGovern associated with the infamous “Black and Tans” as he eye-witnessed the Irish War of Independence unfold. This ultimately led to the partitioning of Ireland, the centenary of which also occurs this year.

431 pages

Publisher: Gallowglass

ASIN: B09MMK4Q21

Available through Amazon in hard, soft, and Kindle, as well as most booksellers.



With 4800 pounds of “war power” bridled in his grip, two tons of high-explosive ordinance stowed just feet behind him in the hold of the bomb bay of his B-17 Flying Fortress, and with the lives of a crew of eight souls resting on his shoulders, 2nd Lt. Merle D. Green had come a long way from, as a young boy, being boosted up into the open, bucket seat cockpit of his father’s old wood and canvas biplane.

From out of the corn fields of central Illinois, follow the 23-year-old “duster” pilot as he begins the grueling process of readying for war and what would be the greatest, most deadly conflict in human history;

“when the whole free world was in peril.” Armed with aspirations of winning a spot among the glamorized flyboys of the US Army Air Forces, and with his sweetheart Rose on his arm, Merle is shuffled around the pilot training schools of the Southern US before earning a commission as an Army officer and being given command of a B-17 bomber. Assigned a crew of young, idealistic “bomber boys”, eager to get into the scrap, the team prepares for deployment to England where, high in the stratosphere they are exposed to the dirty business of high-altitude, strategic bombing. Ever at the mercy of the elements where sub-zero slipstreams instantaneously freeze bare skin to metal and the perils of the oxygen-poor atmosphere is omnipresent and works against the fliers, danger lurks behind every cloud-bank. With the odds of surviving a full combat tour stacked against them, they hurtled headlong through devastating flak storms unleashed by sharp-eyed German anti-aircraft gunners and fought off enemy fighters, the feared “Luftwaffe”, whose aerial aces endeavored to collect a toll of flesh and machine from the American marauders.

But not all heroes were to be born to foreign fields of battle or to Northern European skies. Rose faces her own war back in the States as news of Merle’s failure to return from a bombing mission darkens her doorstep by telegram. Equipped with a tenacious resolve and bolstered by her irrepressible Faith, this story tells of the homefront heroine as she endures great personal tragedy and copes with the realization that her husband is lost in an enemy land, somewhere on the far side of the world.

Discover the indomitable spirit of the Green Hornets’ crew; shot out of the skies above Germany only to

BOOKSHELF

be hunted and then captured by the enemy. Interrogated, imprisoned, abused, and near-starved, the airmen are left to wait out the war in one of the most despicable POW camps where vile overseers take pleasure doling out their violence. As the Reich begins to crumble, the men are forced to embark on an unbelievable odyssey that would test the depths of human perseverance and compassion.

'Of Good Courage', by Justin Burke, is a riveting look into the extraordinary story of Merle D. Green and the airmen who flew the B-17, *Green Hornets*. Based on recently discovered documents, international research efforts, previously unknown eyewitness accounts and material obtained from an archive of family memories, keepsakes, and legend, this great, never-before-told story, where soldiers of the air walk the razor-thin line between survival and oblivion, where brotherhood inspires incredible acts of courage, where enemies become friends and men are forever transformed, where love overcomes all odds, is a remarkable American tale of duty and devotion, of Faith and War.

350 pages

Imprint: Independently published
ISBN: 9798830393515

Available for purchase after Sept. 1, 2022, on Amazon and Amazon Kindle. Pre-orders of eBook available now ([Amazon.com: Of Good Courage: The Incredible True Story of Lt. Merle D. Green and the Green Hornets eBook : Burke, Justin: Kindle Store](https://www.amazon.com/Of-Good-Courage-The-Incredible-True-Story-of-Lt-Merle-D-Green-and-the-Green-Hornets-eBook-Burke-Justin/dp/B0B1111111)).

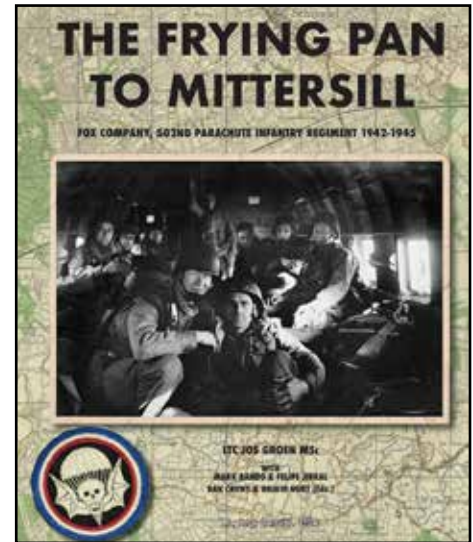
'Paladin: The Story of Augusta's Fighter Ace', by Charles Bowen, is a suspenseful historical romance novel about a young hero from

Augusta, Georgia, USA, who sets off for 1940s England and becomes a World War II fighter ace with the 353rd Fighter Group, part of the U.S. Mighty 8th Air Force waging war in the troubled skies over Nazi-occupied Europe. Between death-defying aerial dogfights, our hero, Matt Tower, by happenstance meets and quickly falls in love with a young woman. Vivian Davis, a uniformed British Women's Voluntary Service member, has suffered horrible losses and at first is reluctant to return Matt's affections. What follows is a sizzling courtship with Matt and Vivie facing terrible danger from gunfire during a German air raid on the streets of Ipswich in Suffolk, England. Numerous wartime adventures ensue with the reader flung headlong into Matt and Vivie's dangerous world. *'Paladin: The Story of Augusta's Fighter Ace'* is the first in Augusta author Charles W. Bowen's *Wars of Matt Tower* adventure series. Bowen's second novel in the series, *Thorns in the Garden City*, is set for release in 2023. [*Amazon et al*]

486 pages

Publisher: BookBaby

ISBN: 8986033607



During WWII, the paratroopers of Fox Company took part in three of the main campaigns in Western Europe: D-Day, Market Garden, and the Battle of the Bulge. Their efforts and sacrifices ultimately helped crush the armed forces of Nazi Germany. This book will give you an astonishing insight into the characters of these highly trained WWII paratroopers who fought so gallantly during this war.

The historical narrative of Fox Company is based on numerous resources that have never been published before, which makes these stories and the company's combat record unique. These are the untold stories of the men who saw the war up close and personal. Their accounts show the whole gamut of emotions a combat soldier experiences: from his fears, suffering and the anxiety of engaging with the enemy, to the humor, comradeship in despair and mutual bonds. The unique pictures that accompany the written words will leave a lasting impression on you. *'The Frying Pan to Mittersill, Fox Company, 502 PIR, 101st Airborne Division "Screaming Eagles" 1942-1945'* is by LTC Jos Groen.

336 pages

Publisher: www.flyingpencil.us

ISBN 9789 0832 41388

NOMINATIONS FOR THE BOARD

ELECTIONS WILL TAKE PLACE DURING THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING AT THE ANNUAL REUNION THIS OCTOBER IN WASHINGTON, D.C.



Eleesa Faulkner
Member #: 14

It is a sincere honor to nominate Eleesa Faulkner to continue her service on the 8th Air Force Historical Society Board of Directors. She is a vital servant who has made significant contributions to our Society!

Eleesa is a next generation member who began attending 8th AFHS reunions in 2008.

Her father, Lt. Col. Leroy

Faulkner, was a WWII (303rd), Korea, and Vietnam veteran. She continues to honor her father's legacy through her engagement in Society's reunions and her nearly 4 years of selfless, active service on the Board. After her father's death, she was granted his lifetime membership # 14.

Eleesa has a master's degree and taught [K-12] public education for 31 years and at the college level for 3 years. She is still involved with education by mentoring student teachers and Alternative Teacher Candidates. By staying involved with public education, she encourages students to remember the past sacrifices of our veterans and look to the future legacy of those who serve today.

As the 8th AFHS Vice President, Eleesa has been an integral part of implementing several cost saving measures to ensure the continued viability of the Society. These include the removal of the financial reimbursement benefit for board member travel and a moratorium on grant approvals until our financial outlook improves. As Chair of the Membership Growth and Retention Committee, Eleesa developed the Student Corner in *8th AF News*, which has dramatically increased visibility of the Society to students and younger generations. She is also in the process of revising this section to help our next gens better understand and embrace our history. Additionally, Eleesa worked tirelessly to promote the need for an update to the Society's outdated website, as well as boosting membership growth of 3rd and 4th generations.

It is my pleasure to highly recommend Eleesa Faulkner to continue her dedicated service to the 8th Air Force Historical Society Board of Directors. We need her!

Nominated by:

Paul W. Tibbets IV, Treasurer, 8th AFHS
Member # 36019

The members of the Board of Directors of the 385th Bomb Group Association would like to collectively introduce a member of our board to the 8th Air Force Historical Society for consideration for the open position on the Historical Society's Board of Directors.

Charles is a third-generation member. His grandfather flew a B-17 called *Flak Shak* out of Great Ashfield Airdrome in Suffok, England with the 385th Bomb Group, 548th Squadron. His interest grew out of having never met his grandfather but seeing journals and letters that his grandfather kept, and stories told to him by his father. He tried to locate some of the crewmembers, but all had passed away about the time his grandfather did.

In 1997, Charles attended a reunion in Arizona and became a member of the 385th BGA. In 2011 he became the editor of the 385th BGA newsletter, the *Hardlife Herald*. Since he had been a writer and producer in the entertainment industry, he was able to enhance the quality of our publication while decreasing the costs of producing and printing the newsletter.

Our newsletter, consistent with our founding purpose, offers information and stories so present and future generations will know what The Greatest Generation did. Going forward, Charles wants to preserve the legacy of our veterans while continuing to inform family members of war events and bringing in more third generation members. He is also providing research while digitally archiving physical copies of memories, photos, and records.

Charles holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction. He works at Berry College maintaining their website. The board of the 385th BGA would like to highly recommend Charles to the Historical Society's board. He has been a tremendous asset to us, as we feel he will be to the entire 8th AFHS.

Nominated by:

Shannon Muchow, President, 385th BGA
Member # 11732940



Charles Lundsberg
Member #: 11727350

48TH ANNUAL 8TH AFHS REUNION WASHINGTON, D.C. ~ ARLINGTON, VA OCTOBER 19-23, 2022

Washington, D.C. has been our nation's capital since July 16, 1790. Be prepared for an incredible reunion experience the entire family will enjoy every single day!

Our Thursday morning tour:

Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center



Opened in 2003, the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center serves as a partner facility to the National Air and Space Museum. The two locations together attract more than 8 million visits per year, making the National Air and Space complex the most popular museum in the United States.

For aviation enthusiasts young and old, the Udvar-Hazy Center is just plain cool. The expansive museum consists of two hangars—the Boeing Aviation Hangar and the James S. McDonnell Space Hangar—which house dozens of aircraft and spacecraft. Some of the most notable include the Lockheed SR-71 Blackbird, a Concorde, and the space shuttle Discovery. The Mary Baker Engen Restoration Hangar has

an observation overlook, allowing visitors to see the preservation and restoration work underway by the Museum's collections staff.

The aircraft and spacecraft hanging overhead would be impressive enough, but the Udvar-Hazy Center also offers thousands of additional artifacts to view and many interactive, family friendly exhibits and activities. Prepare to take off and explore Sport Aviation, World War II Aviation, Space Science, and more. Before departure, browse the museum store and take home unique aviation and space themed souvenirs.

Our Thursday afternoon tour includes:

Arlington National Cemetery Tour



Experience a narrated trolley tour of the Arlington National Cemetery. Our private tour of Arlington National Cemetery includes stops near the Ord & Weitzel walking gate to see President John F. Kennedy's gravesite, U.S. Coast Guard Memorial, U.S. Army Gen. John J. Pershing's gravesite, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier—including chang-

ing of the guard—and the Arlington House (The Robert E. Lee Memorial).

Air Force Memorial

The Air Force Memorial honors the service and heritage of the men and women of the United States Air Force. The three stainless steel spires reach a height of 402 feet above sea-level. It is adjacent to the Arlington National Cemetery and overlooks the Pentagon.

US Marine Corps War Memorial (Iwo Jima Memorial)



The U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial's world-famous statue, which is based on the iconic photograph taken by Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal, depicts the six soldiers who raised the second American flag at Iwo Jima in the Japanese Volcano Islands on February 23, 1945, signifying the conclusion of the American campaign in the Pacific during World War II.

Friday afternoon we will tour the Washington Mall.





Some of the highlights include:

Vietnam Veterans Memorial

This memorial honors member of the U.S. armed forces who fought, died in service or were listed MIA during the Vietnam War. It is divided into three separate parts; the Three Soldiers statue, the Vietnam Women’s Memorial, and the well-known Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. Controversy



surrounded the memorial’s unconventional design for its dark color and lack of decoration, but it quickly became a place of grieving, pilgrimage and healing. Today it stands as one of the most visited and moving memorials on the National Mall, as visitors have made a tradition of leaving mementos, letters and photographs of loved ones lost in the war.

Korean War Veterans Memorial

The Korean War Veterans Memorial was dedicated in 1995, on the 42nd anniversary of the armistice that ended the conflict. The memorial consists of 19 statues of soldiers representing a squad on patrol, drawn from each branch of the Armed Forces. The 19 figures create a reflection on the wall, symbolizing the border between North and South Korea: the 38th parallel. Alongside the soldiers stands the Mural Wall

with more than 2,400 photographs of men, women, and dogs who served in Korea.

Pershing Park/World War I Memorial

The American flag was raised over the World War I Memorial for the first time on Friday, April 16, 2021, at the formal unveiling of the memorial that honors the 4.7 million Americans who served their nation in World War I, including 116,516 who made the supreme sacrifice. Built by the United States World War I Centennial Commission and designed by architect Joseph Weishaar, the new memorial incorporates the existing memorial to Gen. John J. Pershing, commander of the American Expeditionary Forces during the war.



World War II Memorial

The National World War II Memorial, which honors the spirit and sacrifice of the 16 million men and women who served overseas and the more than 400,000 who perished, opened to the public in April 2004. The memorial built to celebrate the the heroes of the Greatest Generation remains one of the most visited sites on the National Mall, with more than 4.2 million visits in 2014. Each year, more than 300 Honor Flights bring World War II veterans, as well as those who served in the Korean and Vietnam wars, to the memorials dedicated to their service.

For a change of pace, on Saturday our tour will take you to:

Old Town Alexandria

On the Potomac River within eye-sight of Washington, D.C., Alexandria, VA, is nationally recognized for its rich history and beautifully preserved 18th and 19th century architecture. Named a Top 3 Best Small City in the U.S. 2021 by the Condé Nast Traveler Readers’ Choice Awards and one of the South’s Best Cities 2020 by Southern Living, Alexandria hums with a cosmopolitan feel and a walkable lifestyle—a welcoming weekend escape next to our nation’s capital. A nationally designated historic district founded in 1749, Old Town Alexandria is home to more than 200 independent restaurants and boutiques alongside

intimate historic museums and new happenings at the waterfront, making it the perfect home base for your D.C. vacation and an unforgettable getaway of its own.

Explore. Relax. Regroup. Have lunch at any of the

numerous restaurants or bistros.

Busses will return you to the hotel in plenty of time to get ready for our evening Gala!





48th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA

October 19-23, 2022

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

STOP!

◇ RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM ***FIRST!***

The reunion hotel has a liberal cancellation policy—in the event you are unable to attend the reunion, you will be able to cancel your reservation without penalty within 48 hours of your scheduled check-in time. However, if you wait until the last minute to book your room reservation, you may not receive the reunion rate or rooms may no longer be available at the reunion hotel.

Canceling your hotel reservation does NOT cancel your reunion activities.

◇ COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM

Please fill out the registration form completely.

- ⇒ Fill out your name as you wish it to be on your name tag—and for up to 3 guests registering with you. The principle attendee **MUST** be a current member of the Society to register for the reunion. You may JOIN and/or RENEW directly on the registration form. If you are a veteran, and/or affiliated with a bomb or fighter group, please indicate which group.
- ⇒ ALL meals are priced separately. Breakfast/Brunch Buffet will be served beginning on Thursday, October 20, thru Sunday, October 23. Be sure and select your choice of entrée if you plan on attending the Saturday evening gala.
- ⇒ There are four [4] tour options available during the reunion. Please read the information [here in this issue] on each tour and then make your selection on the form.

◇ MAIL IN YOUR REGISTRATION FORM

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

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

Or you may **SCAN** your registration form if paying by credit card
[a 3% convenience fee will be added]

and then

**EMAIL to:
ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org**

ALL registration forms **MUST** be received by **September 16, 2022** in order to guarantee your place. If you have any questions or problems in completing your registration, please contact:

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

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



48th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA
October 19-23, 2022

HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION

(800) 393-3680

[Book your group rate for 48th Annual Reunion Air Force Historical Society {click HERE}](#)

(Reference '8th AFHS' for group rate)

Location

The Crystal Gateway Marriott is located at 1700 Richmond Highway, Arlington, VA, 22202, and provides the perfect home base for your visit to the Washington, D.C. area. Ideally located in Arlington, VA, the hotel is near Reagan National Airport (DCA) & Washington, D.C. The exciting new National Landing development is close by as are Pentagon City, downtown Washington D.C., and Old Town Alexandria. All are easily accessible via the nearby Crystal City Metro. Stylishly refreshed hotel accommodations showcase deluxe bedding, Smart TVs, walk-in showers and city views. Challenge yourself to a workout in the expansive fitness center before dining at *15th & Eads*, the sophisticated American restaurant. You will be dazzled by the comprehensively transformed Arlington Ballroom, which can seat up to 2,100 guests. This hotel has it all.

Shuttle Service

For those of you flying into the Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, there is complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport to the hotel. To use the shuttle, go to the lower level, baggage claim. At this time the shuttle will pick up at door 4 and/or 7. Times are every 30 minutes at the quarter hour past and 15 minutes until the hour. The shuttle runs from 5am to midnight, daily. You do NOT need to call and/or reserve the shuttle.

If You Drive

Self parking is \$39 per day in the underground garage, valet parking is \$45 per day.

RESERVATION INFORMATION

Group Name: *8th Air Force Historical Society*

Reunion Dates: October 19-23, 2022

Rate: \$198+14.25% Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability.

Cut off Date: 9/28/2022

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

WHEELCHAIR RENTALS

ScotAround: (888) 441-7575 or ScotAround.com
Reserve chair rentals early!

HOSPITALITY SUITES

HOSPITALITY SUITES will be offered to groups on a first come, first reserved basis.

The number of suites is limited, so we ask that you reserve your suite as soon as possible. Suites are located throughout the hotel, but we will post location information at the registration desk as to where each group is located!

PLEASE contact ME ASAP to reserve your suite!

Call or email ASAP:

Debra Kujawa
Managing Director
912-748-8884

ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org



REUNION SCHEDULE

48th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA
October 19-23, 2022

Wednesday, October 19

1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration open
6:00pm — 7:00pm	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 20

7:45am — 8:45am	Breakfast/Brunch Buffet
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration open
9:00am — 12:00pm	Steven F Udvar-Hazy Center Tour
1:30pm — 4:30pm	Arlington Cemetery & Memorials Tour
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Buffet dinner and program: <i>"Preserving a Legacy, the Footsteps of Bud Owens"</i>

Friday, October 21

7:45am — 8:45am	Breakfast/Brunch Buffet
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration TBD*
9:30am — 11:00am	Group Meetings
12:30pm — 4:30pm	Washington Mall, Memorials, & Monuments Tour
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Rendezvous Dinners

Saturday, October 22

7:45am — 8:45am	Breakfast/Brunch Buffet
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion Registration TBD*
8:45am — 10:15am	General Membership Meeting
12:00pm — 4:00pm	8th AFHS Board Meeting
11:00am — 3:30pm	Exploring Old Town Alexandria, VA Tour
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion Registration TBD*
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 10:00pm	Gala Dinner and Program

Sunday, October 23

7:30am — 8:30am	Breakfast/Brunch Buffet
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*** TBD Registration may be closed during the time scheduled for certain tours.
Please pick up registration packets at your earliest convenience.**

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



REGISTRATION FORM

48th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington, VA
October 19-23, 2022

REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS September 16, 2022 (NO refunds on cancellations past this date)	Price p/p	# of People	TOTAL
DUES: The principal attendee <i>MUST</i> be a CURRENT member of the 8th AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are NOT CURRENT, or a member, please pay your yearly dues here:	\$ 40	#	\$
REGISTRATION FEE (non-refundable): EVERY attendee MUST pay registration fee	\$ 45	#	\$
BREAKFAST/BRUNCH BUFFET served 7:45am-8:45am, Thursday-Sunday (Price is \$40 per person per day) Thursday: # _____ Friday: # _____ Saturday: # _____ Sunday: # _____	\$ 40	#	\$
<u>DINNERS</u>			
Thursday, Oct 20: Dinner Buffet	\$ 57	#	\$
Friday, Oct 21: Rendezvous Dinners—Roasted Free-Range Chicken & all the trimmings!	\$ 58	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 22: GALA Banquet (Please select one entrée per person)			
Grilled Marinated Flank Steak (beef)	\$ 58	#	\$
Pan Seared Herb Crusted Salmon	\$ 58	#	\$
Vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, etc—Please indicate type: Thurs _____ Fri _____ Sat _____	\$ 58	#	\$
TOUR OPTIONS: ALL tours are LUNCH ON YOUR OWN each day			
Thursday, Oct 20: 9am-12pm Steven F Udvar-Hazy Center	\$ 38	#	\$
Thursday, Oct 20: 1:30pm-4:30pm Arlington Cemetery & Monuments	\$ 25	#	\$
Friday, Oct 21: 12:30pm-4:30pm Washington Mall & Memorials	\$ 38	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 22: 11:00am-3:30pm Historic Old Town Alexandria, VA	\$ 38	#	\$
Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS			\$

Please PRINT. If registering a veteran, please list their name, first. *MAXIMUM of FOUR [4] persons per registration form, please!*

MEMBER NAME (for name tag): _____ WWII VETERAN? _____

BG/FG Affiliation (for Rendezvous Dinner seating) _____ Post WWII Veteran: _____ (Branch of Military): _____

SPOUSE or GUEST #1: _____

GUEST #2: _____ GUEST #3: _____

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

DAYTIME PH #: _____ EMAIL: _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT: _____ PH #: _____

PLEASE INDICATE IF YOU WILL BE USING A WHEELCHAIR ON TOURS: _____ NEED HYDRAULIC LIFT?: _____

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

CARD #: _____ EXP. DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Your contact information will only be shared with attendees.

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

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

The Last Mission (#364) of the 303rd Bomb Group in WWII a Tale of Two Crews: Bashor & Mauer

By Oliver "Lee" Bashor

"This mission was on 25 April 1945 to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, to bomb the Skoda armament works visually. I was a 1st Lt. pilot on the last mission of the 303rd BG."

My crew and I were assigned to the 359th Squadron at Molesworth. We completed 21 missions over Europe as a part of the 359th Squadron, then we were transferred April 20, 1945, to the 358th so I could become one of three Flight Commanders for the squadron.

Our first five combat missions to Essen, Schwerte, Betzeorf, Minden, and Zossen were completed in seven days. The next four missions to Berlin, Plaven, Hamburg, and Furstenu were completed in six days. The next eight missions to Berlin, Bremen, Halle, Kiel, Unterlusz, Bayreuth, Leipzig, and Hitzacker were completed in 10 days. The next four missions to Freihan, Royan, Straubing, and Dresden were completed in six days.

So, the 22nd and last mission for my crew was to Pilsen on the 25th of April 1945. I don't remember the serial number or name of the aircraft that I flew.

On this mission to Pilsen, take off and formation gathering was fairly routine. I believe we flew "V" formation and I believe I flew just under the leader of the squadron of a thirteen-plane unit which was a part of three squadrons (approximately thirty-three airplanes) in formation.

The report of the mission in the "Might in Flight" book is a good summary of the mission. However, it states that Allied radio had broad-

cast a warning to the Czech workers to stay away from the factory since it was the target. Such an advance mission warning was unprecedented. It seems to me that we did not learn of this broadcast until we were about halfway to the target. We felt



Standing, l to r, engineer Paul Reed, ball turret gunner Norman Green, co-pilot Ira Baker, and bombardier Harry Adams. Kneeling, l to r, tail gunner Bob Thiesen, Waist gunner Bob Hanson, Pilot "Lee" Bashor, and radioperator Vic Shook. Navigator Lou Fish is not shown.

we were in trouble from anti-aircraft fire because Pilsen had a reputation for lots of anti-aircraft fire, and we were scheduled to fly less than twenty-five thousand feet above the surface so the accurate low altitude anti-aircraft fire would be a problem.

As reported, we had lots of P-51 support but that would not help us over the target. In addition, the requirement to visually sight the target before releasing the bombs required us to abort the first bomb run, and on the second bomb run we had intense and very accurate anti-aircraft action.

The report states that we made two passes at the target, however, it seems to me we made three passes. Maybe this was due to the number of times we opened and closed the bomb bay doors. I was so busy with flying that I thought we made three runs instead of two. I do not recall how many holes the anti-aircraft put in our aircraft, but we know that there were many.

We were very fortunate as a crew to complete this 22nd mission and not have any of the crew injured this time or on previous missions.

Returning to Molesworth was fairly routine for my aircraft; but it was exciting when it came time to land because many of the aircraft landed without gear or flaps, and the end of the runway looked like a parking lot.

Three airplanes landing ahead of me all veered off the runway, and I was able to land with an open runway from formation.

Except for the many holes in the air plane, we did not have any other major damage.

Two "Continental Express" missions were planned to show ground crews and others the extent of war in Europe.

I flew a B-17 and crew back to the United States and trained West Point graduates to fly the B-17 until WWII ended.

Three DIE, Four Taken Prisoner, One Evades On 303RD'S Final Raid

By Warren Mauger

Editor's Note: Eddie Deerfield was the original editor of this piece. Here are his notes, in his own words: "The last 303rd BG(H) B-17 crew to be lost on the last day of 8th Air Force bomber operations, on 25 April 1945 against the Skoda armament works in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, was hit by anti-aircraft fire immediately after "bombs away." Pilot Warren Mauger ordered his crew to bail out. Lt. Mauger managed to open his parachute after the Fortress exploded, despite burns on his face and hands. He spent 10 days evading capture by German troops. Following are highlights of his story of evasion."

As the farmer got closer, I could see that he was waving a white cloth. Somehow, by gestures and words, I asked him the way to travel west to get to our lines. He told me the best he could and offered his old farm jacket for me to wear. The jacket not only helped me keep warm, but also made me appear as one of the local farmers. My pants were all stained and burnt and no longer resembled an Air Force officer's uniform.

As I approached a river crossing, I saw a reconnaissance car approaching. I jumped down along the bank and lay there. It passed. Just before I got to some woods in the hills, another German soldier came out of a bomb shelter and spotted me. He walked on.

It was 1:00 pm I crawled into a drainage ditch and pulled a great quantity of leaves over myself. I moved out at about 5:00 pm. Ahead of me sat a German soldier with his

girlfriend. I strolled by them practically unnoticed. At the bottom of the hill was a set of railroad tracks. I followed the tracks in the darkness for about a mile. When it looked like I was coming to a city, I left the tracks and struck out cross country.

In the first faint glimmer of sunlight, I could see a small town looming up. I heard the roar of some trucks coming up from behind. I dove into the drainage ditch at the side of the road. A convoy of German army trucks passed.

Once on the outskirts of town, I started looking for farmhouses. I got into the barn unnoticed, but as I climbed into the hay loft on my heels was the farm's dog. It barked and howled until the farmer got up. The farmer said I could not stay on his property for if the German police found me there, he and his family would be shot. He did show me a spot to hide during the day. He left me there and, most important of all, left a small amount of food.

Progress the second night heading west was pretty slow. When the sun rose, I was glad to bed down. By sundown I was feeling well rested and walked through the night.

About 5:30 in the morning, a farmer overtook me with his horse and wagon. He bid me hop aboard.



(Back L-R) 2Lt Norman C. Gadbois (B/GHN), 1Lt Warren F. Mauger (P)(EVD), 1Lt William T. Burgess (CP)(POW), 2Lt Bernard J. Brown (N)
(Front L-R) T/Sgt Matthew W. Grden (R)(POW), T/Sgt Glenn R. Walling (E/TG)(KIA), Sgt Gerald H. Craven (WG)(KIA), S/Sgt Francis H. Kelley (BT)(KIA), S/Sgt James W. Haley (TG/SJ/RCM)

After about a half hour, he pointed up the road. Through the trees, there was a military check point. Everyone passing had to produce proper identification credentials. I jumped from the wagon and headed for the hills. The farmer moved off at a slow pace, and the soldiers at the check point did not see me or suspect anything.

The sun was setting now. I would sleep this night. I found a wooded area with a lot of leaf cover. As in the past, I awoke very hungry. I approached a house and was welcomed at the door. I told the farmer that I was an American flyer. He apparently understood and bid me come in. A family of six lived in one room of this farmhouse. I shared a meal with these kind and generous folks and was again on my way.

At about noon I came to a mountain stream, and just beyond the bridge I rapped on the door of one of the houses. A young lad, about 12 years old answered the door and let

me in the house. It appeared he was the only one home. He offered me some sour milk soup. He told me he was a member of the Hitler Youth and showed me his uniform. He said that it was all but mandatory to belong. Somehow, I believed him and left feeling that he would not notify anyone of my being there.

I would sleep the rest of the day and walk this night. I bedded down in the dense undergrowth along a field. By the time I awoke it was dark. I walked along rolling fields. Before the night was over, I was again looking for someplace to bed down. I spotted a large farmhouse and a very inviting haystack. Their dog was chained, and its barking seemed not to disturb the farmer, so I approached the haystack. As I was digging, I came across a sleeping man in a German army uniform. I made a fast exit and found some other place to sleep.

Toward late afternoon the next day, I came upon a large river that could not be crossed except by the bridge. Again, the military checkpoint was there. I had not waited long when there approached a group of six men. I got on the road ahead of them and let them catch up to me before I came to the bridge. All seven of us walked by the guards without a hitch. I hadn't walked very far into the city, when I became aware that I was being followed by two German soldiers. My pace did not increase for fear that they might suspect something in my actions. They were closing the gap. I mounted the steps of a church and gave a slight backward glance. To my relief, the soldiers continued down the street.

Entering the church, I slipped into one of the back pews. When the church was empty, I went to the front and identified myself. The priest understood immediately and motioned for me to follow him. We went outside the back of the church and onto a small street. He called to a woman in a second story window.

She disappeared and returned in a minute with her arms full of bread. She threw them down, with me and the priest doing the catching. I thanked both of them and head down the street with my shirt bulging with large pieces of black bread.

Now I was coming to the end of my 5th day—or was it the sixth? One loses track of time after a while in these situations. I was up pretty early the next morning and was anxious to get going. As I walked along, I had breakfast—a fine meal of hard black bread. The farmers paid little attention to me. The ones that did look my way probably thought me a vagrant for I certainly looked the part, dirty and unshaven.

Late in the afternoon I approached a village. The road leading into this village again had soldiers. Going past the soldiers in a group had worked so well before, I decided I would try it again. Some farmers from the neighboring fields were heading for their homes now. I fell in with one of the groups and again passed by the soldiers. Things didn't go so well though. Shortly after passing the sentries, a soldier on a motorcycle caught up to the group and looked us over pretty well. He proceeded on about half a block and wheeled around. He was coming back pretty fast. This was time to leave.

I bolted across a front lawn of one house, into the back yard and over a large picket fence. I must have jumped it like a hurdler. Up a large, terraced hill I raced. The first terrace I hit headfirst. I lay there a few minutes. My heart pounding and finding it hard to breathe. Slowly I raised my head. Down the road the German motorcyclist drove back and forth, stopped at every house and searched. I was afraid to proceed up the hill for fear of being seen. It was getting near dark, so here I would stay for a while. I had no sooner stretched out on the ground when another German soldier came strolling up a small path toward my hiding place. It was too late to

run. I had to do something fast. I put on the act of a man completely stoned. I got up, staggered around and fell down a couple times. He smiled while watching this and then turned and strolled up and over the hill.

When it was good and dark, I headed west. As the sun started to heat things up the next day, I began to feel better. I walked along the edge of some woods. About a half mile ahead, two farm hands were working with hoes. As I approached, they moved to intercept my path. Both men appeared to be friendly, judging by their gestures. I made an attempt to identify myself. It was successful. They were elated at this discovery. This meeting proved to be one of the greatest pieces of good fortune in this whole adventure.

One of these two was a young lad of about 15, the other, a man in his 20s who introduced himself as Andre Vesille. Andre was to be the key to my survival for the next several days. We walked to the crest of a small hill. Spread out below us was a village of not more than 15 houses. Off to one corner of the field on this hill was a large haystack. Upon getting to the stack, the tow men began to pull large clumps of straw out of the base. In a short time, they had hollowed out a sizable cave. They motioned for me to crawl in. Once I was in, they covered up the opening, leaving me a small air hole to the outside. Andre said that he would come back later. The haystack was dry and warm—not half bad really.

At sundown, Andre was back. He beckoned for me to come out. We sat there by the stack and tried to communicate. I munched on the small lunch he had brought. I found out that he was a Russian who had been captured at the front. He and his wife and child had been shipped to this small village to help with the farm work. He was very talkative and was a joy to have around. Before he left, he said he would return the next day.

I then settled down to a fine night's sleep with the first distant rumble of artillery.

My little Russian friend showed up and again he brought supper. This time my meal consisted of two pieces of black bread, two raw eggs, and a small bottle of milk. I had never eaten raw eggs before, but they tasted fine. After supper we again sat and chatted. The little spot in the haystack was out of view of the village, so we felt quite safe. After he left, I settled back for the night and again listened to the rumble in the west. The artillery roar was closer this night. Again, I quickly fell asleep.

The next morning was bright and clear. About 2:30 in the afternoon I looked out the little hole and saw a stranger looking in at me. He was an old man with a cane, well dressed in a black suite and a gray hat, apparently someone of importance in the village. Andre came at about sundown. I told him what had happened. He told me the man was the Burgermeister and that he was placed in the village because of his sympathetic feelings toward the Germans. He had the only telephone in the village and would call the military if he sighted any enemy in the area.

Andre rushed me off to another hiding place. My new refuge was a one-man bomb shelter about 300 yards from the haystack. These shelters were four-foot square holes approximately six feet deep. They were filled with straw to within three feet from the top. Over the top were placed logs. The logs were raised on one end so a person could slide in on his stomach. He bid me farewell here. I ate the small lunch he left and settled back for the night.

Early in the following afternoon, some small children arrived at the shelter and decided to play inside. They laughed and bounced all over, chattering and really enjoying themselves. When they finally discovered that they weren't the only ones there, they fled, terror stricken. It wasn't

long before they came back, but this time with their mothers, fathers, aunts, and uncles. The people seemed more curious than angry. I showed myself at the entrance which seemed to satisfy their curiosity. They soon left and I was wondering if they would bring back the Burgermeister, the police, or worse, some German soldiers.

It wasn't long before Andre arrived, this time with his young friend whom I had seen on our first encounter. I quickly explained what had happened. In a minute, I was racing across the fields with each man pulling me on either arm. I found it very difficult to run because I had been off my feet for a long period of time. The new hiding place was the same old haystack. Andre explained to me that the previous day the Burgermeister had called the authorities and that they had searched the haystack. When they found no trace of me, they assumed I had moved on. This was indeed a good place to hide in again. That night the rumble of artillery was much louder.

The next morning, it must have been Sunday, for Andre had with him his wife and son. She had brought a nice lunch and a washcloth, soap and a towel. We walked to a small brook where I cleaned up. After this we settled back to a fine picnic lunch. Andre's wife and son never took their eyes off me. I must have presented a curious sight to them. The rest of the day I spent in my cave. The artillery bursts were now getting so close that the ground shook. I could hear the distant sound of the cannon, the whine through the air and the explosion when the missile landed. I also hear something else now, machine gun fire.

Sometime after midnight, the machine gun fire on both sides became intense. You could distinguish the American fire by its low pitch and slower rate than that of the Germans. The artillery on both sides were now firing. Toward morning, I

could hear many voices of German soldiers. I heard another sound one I could not reconcile with the once mighty German army. Teams of horses were moving the biggest share of German equipment for this retreat. Evidently, the bombing of oil refineries had taken its toll. The army had no fuel to move its mechanized equipment. This lack of fuel had also knocked out most of its tanks.

Finally, the artillery bombardment stopped. It was now about sun-up. Intermittent machine gun fire was still present though. All of a sudden, Andre was peering in the peep hole. He told me he and his family were going into the hills. He said he would be back as soon as the fighting subsided.

Most of the day was filled with sporadic sounds of small arms fire, with an occasional larger report from heavy artillery. Tanks could also be heard rumbling about. I had always been happy to see Andre, and it was no exception when again I saw him at the peep hole. Excitedly he told me that the Americans were at the intersection of the village roads. We ran down the hill together. I couldn't keep up too well, so Andre helped me along.

At the intersection stood three light tanks firing down the road. Behind these tanks were two jeeps. I approached the last jeep and was about to identify myself when I took a second look at the helmets these soldiers were wearing. They had netting over them, and their shape was hard to distinguish. Then, a G.I. spotted me and tossed me two packages of Camel cigarettes. THANK GOD, it was all over!

I turned to Andre, but how do you thank a man who has probably saved your life? The words we exchanged were superfluous, but he somehow understood my feelings. I gave him my watch, something he had admired many times.

What a small price to pay for his great service.

Carrying Baggage and Bombs: 8th Air Force Pilot, 94th BG Walter Tejan

By Matt Dole



Lieutenant Walter Tejan [TEA-gin] came from Ohio. Part of a big family. They were farmers and salesmen and laborers. Tejan's uncle was a horse trainer who Will Rogers wrote had the best laugh he'd ever heard. He also came from German stock. His grandfather – Henry – came to western Ohio from just outside Bremen.

Tejan wasn't at the front of the line when the war started, and it's not entirely clear why. He was born in 1917 and had graduated from college by the time of the attack on Pearl Harbor. He worked for the Ohio Oil Company, which later became Marathon, so perhaps that was considered essential work. He did register for the draft, and he joined the Civil Air Patrol awaiting his call. In July 1943 he was activated and reported to Maxwell Field near Montgomery, Alabama, for pre-flight training.

In August, he transitioned into primary flight training at Jackson, Tennessee. He surely read about the "Black Thursday" ball bearing factory raids at Regensburg and Schweinfurt. General Hap Arnold knew that such losses weren't sustainable, and you can be sure that trainee pilots thought so too.

By March 1944 he qualified as an air cadet, transferred briefly to Columbus, Ohio, and married his sweetheart as he further learned the nuances of flying a B-17. He shipped out in October, ferrying a B-17 to England.

Secret orders at Rougham Airfield near Bury St. Edmunds for October 12, 1944, show Tejan assigned to the 410th bombardment squadron of the 94th bomber group of the 4th combat bombardment wing of the 3rd bombardment division of the Eighth Air Force. The orders explained that Tejan would be expected, "to participate in frequent and regular serial flights... until relieved by competent authority." From the bombs that festoon the 94th bomber squadron insignia to the Pegasus with bombs under its wings on the 410th patch, Tejan's mission was clear. Fly – a lot – and drop lots of bombs.

And that's just what he and his crew aboard *The Lad* did. Tejan was joined by Co-Pilot 1st Lt. Jim Sigler, Navigator 1st Lt. Bill Gorringer, Bombardier 1st Lt. John Hudson, Radio Operator Staff Sgt. Tom Bittinger, Top Turret Gunner Technical Sgt. Jim Cain, Ball Turret Gunner Staff Sgt. Joe Arnone, Tail Gunner Sgt. Marvin

Hanson, Left Waist Gunner Sgt. Raymond Birchett, and Right Waist Gunner Sgt. Bob Allen. Like so many crews, they were a motley outfit. Three were married and seven were single. They ranged in ages from just 19 to 27 years old, and they represented Pennsylvania, Michigan, Ohio, California, Alabama, and Minnesota.

Tejan carried with him a hardscrabble background and a story of pre-war family tragedy. The depression had been particularly tough on the Tejan's. The grandfather, Henry, happened to die on October 29, 1929 – the "Black Tuesday" of the stock market crash. An uncle disappeared in Chicago trying to find work as a door-to-door salesman, presumed murdered for the cash in his pocket. Walter's own kin were farmers – Father Walter Sr. and Mother Fern. They couldn't make ends meet. The friction boiled over, and Walter Sr. was abusive. Fern filed twice for divorce but reconciled each time.

In January 1933, their farm sold at a sheriff's sale and Fern once again filed for divorce. Friday, January 27 found 15-year-old Walter Jr. at school. The divorce hearing was a week off. The tension was palpable. Walter Sr. had slept in the

tobacco barn on the farm that had either been rented back to the family or not yet vacated. The senior Tejan awoke, confronted his wife in the cow barn, and shot her twice with a .25 caliber revolver. The gun was shoddy and unreliable and was known as a “suicide special.” This all proved bizarrely true in the cow barn. Thinking he had murdered his wife, Walter Sr. put the gun in his mouth, pulled the trigger and committed suicide. Fern was badly, but not mortally, wounded. A local newspaper reported that she struggled out of the barn where a daughter, home at the time, and neighbors working in the tobacco shed heard her screams and called for a doctor and the sheriff. No one dared go into the barn until the sheriff arrived to discover the senior Tejan’s body.

We don’t know if any of *The Lad’s* crew knew their pilot’s backstory. We do know that several newspaper clips about Tejan’s wartime service mentioned his father and his mother as if both were still alive. By 1945, Tejan’s mind was surely elsewhere. After 30 missions, the crew of *The Lad* was starting to see the light at the end of the tunnel, despite ever-changing crew flying requirements. They were there for a mega-mission in late February. More than 1100 planes would participate against multiple targets. *The Lad* only flew with nine crew that day; left waist gunner Raymond Birchett wasn’t aboard.

In an astonishingly good sign of the state of the air war, only two airplanes were lost during the mission – one, however, was *The Lad*.

On their final bomb run – about a minute and a half before bombs away – *The Lad* dropped from formation. Actually, it *dove* out of formation having been hit by flak directly in the bomb bay. The bomb run was at 26,000 feet. *The Lad* went into several deep dives, with the pilots struggling to keep control long enough even for the crew to jump. The ship slipped below cloud cover around 12,000



feet. Three chutes were later reported by other aircraft on the raid.

The situation in the aircraft was chaotic as the crew sought to escape. One crew member, radio operator Thomas Bittinger was reported hit in the head with flak and killed instantly aboard the plane. Another, right waist gunner Bob Allen, was seen preparing to jump from the plane, but was never seen again. The other seven crew escaped. Bombardier John Hudson later reported the bailing out as he witnessed it: Top Turret Gunner Cain was first out through the bomb bay; Navigator Gorringer was second out through the navigator’s hatch; Co-Pilot Sigler was third out; Hudson, himself, went next; Ball Turret Gunner Arnone bailed through his own hatch, with the crew unsure where in the order; and Tejan was last to jump.

That’s how Walter Tejan found himself falling through the sky towards – of all places on earth – Bremen, Germany. His ancestral home. From his vantage point below the clouds, Tejan could have seen the small village a few miles out of the city center from which Henry departed on his long journey to Ohio. What a peculiar set of unfortunate circumstances. Perhaps his life experience calmed him as he contemplated landing deep in enemy territory. Perhaps he focused on any of the number of scenarios that might await him on the ground – who might find him and whether there was any chance at all of evading capture (another crew member – Sigler – would be badly beaten by locals). Perhaps he just pondered why he had all the bad luck. Well, not *all*

the bad luck. Getting shot down in February 1945 instead of February 1943 was a plus. The seven who made the jump from *The Lad* survived, were imprisoned together, and were moved as the Russians and Americans closed their grip on Germany.

The crew was liberated by American forces at Nuremburg on April 16th. After the war, Tejan returned to his mother Fern and wife Hazel in Ohio. He also returned to the Ohio Oil company, making a career of managing various locations for them across the country. Tejan passed away in 1996 having carried family baggage, and bombs, from Ohio to the skies above Europe - back to his very family roots.

In photo above, "The Lad" crew. Walter is standing, 3rd from left.

Dietz, Harold L. Sr., 96, passed away peacefully, Monday, July 4, 2022. Harold, a lifelong resident of Palestine, Texas, was born on November 18, 1925, to Harold H.



Dietz and Ethel Lester Dietz. Harold is preceded in death by his second wife, Evelyn C. Verbois Dietz and is survived by a son, Harold Les Dietz, Jr. and wife, Donna of Flint, Texas, daughter, Dee Ann Dietz of Palestine, grandson Eric C. Dietz and wife Kate, stepdaughter Barbara (Babs) Verbois Mooney and husband Dan, step granddaughter Megen Mooney, and step grandson Michael Mooney of Baton Rouge. Survivors also include four great-granddaughters. Harold, a WWII veteran, proudly served in the Air Force as a tail gunner on a B-24 from 1943 to 1945 with the 466th BG, 785th BS. He flew 26 missions, 3 gas missions and Basel, Switzerland, bombing. Flew as waist gunner with John C. Welch, crew #565, Tail Gunner with John Gerrity crew #545 and N.G./ Toggler with Bernard J. Smoka, crew #574. He enjoyed the outdoors, traveling and his many Irish Setter dogs. He was a long-time member of the First Methodist Church in Palestine, Texas.

Mehring, Leon Gabriel, 96, passed away May 23, 2022. Leon was born October 29, 1925, to Roy and Esmeralda (LaChaine) Mehring in Butte, Montana. He was one of six children. At



seventeen, he volunteered to serve his country in WWII in the Army Air Corps. He started active duty on November 27, 1943. After basic

training, he was sent to Dyersburg, Tennessee, at Nellis AFB. After graduation he was assigned to flight crew as left waist gunner on a B-17 in England with the 305th BG, 364th BS. His first mission was February 20, 1945, over Germany, Holland, and France. Many of those missions were under extremely dangerous conditions. While on leave at a British Legion dance, he met his future wife of 76 years, the love of his life, Vera Frances Handshaw. She was beautiful and charming from Rushden, England. They married October 20, 1945, just outside London. Leon was 19, Vera was 17 years old.

After WWII ended, the 305th BG was ordered to stay in England to take aerial photographs of Europe to update U.S. government maps: the Casey Program. Leon was assigned to photograph from inside the ball turret. The assignment took 13 months; and Leon was finally discharged on April 23, 1946, and moved to his family home in Butte, Montana. His wife, Vera, was heading over to America on a hospital ship which took 13 days to cross the Atlantic and docked at the Statue of Liberty in New York City on July 3, 1946. They settled in Leon's hometown, Anaconda, Montana, and he worked for the Butte/Anaconda Railroad for 13 years. Leon then joined Cuna Mutual Insurance Co. and eventually became manager for Penick & Ford Credit Union, then the SW Cedar Rapids Community Federal Credit Union, until his retirement in 1989.

They loved to camp and fish every weekend and made frequent family vacations back to Montana where his family lived. Leon and Vera traveled back to England many times; also Hawaii, Guam and Montana. Leon remained very active in the 305th BG where he was President for

two years and the Iowa Chapter of the 8th Air Force Historical Society where he was President for five years and Treasurer for 21. Leon donated much of his WWII memorabilia to museums across the country. He was a lifetime member of VFW Post 788, a member of American Legion Post 298, and a lifetime member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society. In 2010 Leon was able to travel on Honor Flight with his son, David, to Washington DC. An emotional trip for all veterans on the flight and one he was grateful to be able to take. Leon was a dedicated member of All Saints Catholic Church, and his faith was very important to him.

He is survived by his loving wife Vera; children, David (Pam) Mehring, Stephen (Melissa) Mehring, Leon P. (Vicki) Mehring, Denise (Jerry) Vander Sanden and daughter-in-law Wilma (Dan) Rodgers, siblings, LeRoy Mehring and Elaine Baum (Ralph Schmoltd); along with thirteen grandchildren, twelve great grandchildren (with one on the way), and two great great grandchildren. Leon was preceded in death by his parents, his oldest son James Mehring, an infant son Stephen Patrick, grandsons Micah and Joshua Mehring, and his siblings Marcel, Paul, and Jeanine, and special sister-in-law Rose Bartosh.

Leon's Legacy will live on in his family, and we know he will be watching over us all until we meet again.

Perrone, Lewis, 98, died May 22nd in Millersville, MD, and was buried in West Hartford, CT, on June 2nd, the 78th anniversary of his first World War II bomber mission as



ball-turret gunner.

Lew graduated from high school in 1941 and enlisted after the attack on Pearl Harbor with plans of becoming a B-17 pilot until depth-perception issues dictated otherwise. At 5'6" and 130 pounds, he found himself in the ball turret and flew 32 missions with the 381st BG, 533rd BS out of Ridgewell, England.

D-Day marked his fourth mission. After his 10th, he was diagnosed with otitis, held in sick bay and notified that his crew had been shot down on its first run without him. He returned to duty aboard the aircraft Lucky Me. Lew completed his missions in October 1944 with the Distinguished Flying Cross, a Purple Heart for a flak hit that nearly took his right arm, a Marksman Medal, other decorations and base-wide regard as a cracker-jack skeet shooter. He prepared to leave Ridgewell when his quizzical CO said, *"Why you gonna do that? They'll give you a 30-day pass and ship your ass off to the Pacific."* Staff Sgt. Perrone thus accepted an offer to remain at Ridgewell as gunnery-school instructor and soon discovered that pulling tow targets entailed a different kind of risk.

He returned stateside after V-E Day, settled in his hometown, Hartford, CT, married Gloria Cannistraro, started a family and began a career as electronics salesman. After Gloria died in 1979, Lew took a job as buyer for a Connecticut circuit-board manufacturer before retiring to Vero Beach, FL. Retirement meant working only 30-hour weeks as office manager of a sign-making company. Lew began attending military reunions in the early 1980s, first with 381st BG, later the 8th AFHS. He moved to Maryland in 2013 and participated in World War II Memorial ceremonies, offered oral histories to videographers, and addressed

schoolkids on his wartime doings. In 2021, he received the French Legion of Honor medal. He toasted that achievement, and most every evening meal, with a glass of red wine. Lew presided as gourmet chef, pro-bono repairman and physical marvel. He celebrated his 80th birthday with 80 uninterrupted pushups. The butcher who custom-made his five-alarm sausage groused that his hands burned for three days afterward.

Lew leaves children Vincent (Anna), Gina Michie (Ward) and Anthony (William Moyle), beloved grandsons Taylor and Tristan Michie and many extended family members and friends whose lives he touched.

Swegel, 'Sir' Robert V. "Bob", 96,



of Forest City, passed away on Monday, July 11, 2022.

Born in the "Cowtown" area of Forest City, he was the son of the late Joseph A. and Anna J. (Simoles) Swegel. He was preceded in death by his wife of 63 years, Noreen (Rotherforth). The couple was married on May 28, 1955, and were members of Ascension Parish, Forest City. Bob dropped out of high school the day he turned 16 and went to work in various jobs with his father in upstate New York and New Jersey. Once eligible for military service, he left work to enlist in the U.S. Army Air Corps and became a tail-gunner on B-24, 44th BG, 68th BS during World War II. He saw 17 combat missions over Europe, crash-landing once and bailing out once. Three of those missions were against German troops surrounding French garrisons, which eventually led to France knighting him with the presentation

of the Legion d'Honneur, Chevalier rank (the foundation for his "Sir" title).

He obtained his high school diploma, graduated from night school at North Scranton High, and went on to become a Civil Engineer and then a Professional Engineer, having attended classes at the University of Scranton and Pennsylvania State University, as well as obtaining his Sewage Enforcement Officer certification. He worked most of his life as an Engineer for PENNDOT, eventually overseeing 9 counties in Northeastern PA before retiring in 1988. He also owned a land surveying business for many years. He was a licensed private pilot, an amateur "ham" radio operator (WB3JMK) and a member of Forest City American Legion, Charles and Martin Skubic Post 524, and Simpson VFW "Walter Paciga" Post 4712.

Surviving are a son, Col. (Ret) Jeffrey R. Swegel and wife, Destrianne; a daughter, Janine (Swegel) Martin; five grandchildren: Stefan, Robert and Abigail Swegel and Jake and Felicia Martin; two great-grandchildren, Wyatt and Addie Mae Swegel; and a plethora of nieces and nephews.

He was also preceded in death by 3 brothers, Joseph E. Swegel, Richard J. "Dick" Swegel and Thomas P. Swegel and a sister Arlene A. (Swegel) Vadella.

In lieu of flowers, please pay for a Veteran's lunch.



Varnedoe, William Whitfield, Jr., 98, passed away June 4, 2022. Born, 11 June 1923, in Savannah, Georgia. He attend grade school in

TAPS

Montgomery, Alabama, graduated from Murphy High School in Mobile, Alabama, and received his Bachelor of Electrical Engineering from GA Tech in 1947.

Huntsville was good to him for it was here that he was led by the Lord to meet and marry Louise Thomas. He has four children, Frank (Sharon) Varnedoe, W. Frank Varnedoe, John C. Varnedoe, and Ker T. Varnedoe. He has eight grandchildren and numerous great grandchildren. He is a born again Christian, a member of Calvary Bible Baptist Church, and a member of The Gideons International.

He worked for the Navy doing mine and torpedo countermeasures research. Then, he moved to Huntsville, Alabama, in June 1952 to work as an electrical engineer for the Army Guided Missile Development Division which later became Army Ballistic Missile Agency. He worked with Von Braun on the Redstone, Jupiter, and Pershing missile systems. When ABMA became NASA in 1960 he went with the Saturn program that put men on the moon. He retired from NASA in 1979.

During WW II he served as a 1st Lt. Navigator on a B-17 in the 385th BG. He flew 26 missions over Germany. After the war he left the military to pursue his career as an engineer. He wrote and published a history of his 385th BG and served a term as President of the 385th BG Association, an organization of 385 BG veterans. As a member and founder of the North Alabama Chapter of the 8th AFHS, he helped build a replica air force briefing room in the Veterans Memorial Museum. Bill was a State Certified Firefighter. He organized the Green Mountain Volunteer Fire Department and served 30 years as its Chief. This Fire Department's response area obtained

an excellent insurance rating, an ISO of 3, while Bill was Chief. He was one of the founding members of the Madison County Association of Volunteer Fire Departments and published several articles on firefighting in fire service journals.

Bill was well known, both in the U.S. and abroad, as an active caver and speleologist. He was a consulting engineer putting lights and trails in Cathedral Caverns State Park. He published a book about Cathedral Caverns. He founded the Huntsville Grotto of the National Speleological Society and led a surveying group from the Grotto in making the detailed, complete map of Cathedral Caverns as well as many other Alabama caves. He published several books on Alabama Caves and presented numerous papers and articles on speleology. In 1984, he received the McKinney Award of the Southeastern Region. In 1988, he was awarded the National Speleological Society's prestigious Stephenson Award, the highest recognition the society offers. He was the Chief of the local Cave Rescue Unit for 25 years and conducted many cave rescues.

Bill was an amateur radio operator, with an advanced FCC license, W4TKL. He achieved the WAS (worked all states) and WAC (worked all continents) awards. He served a term as the State Emergency Coordinator for Alabama.

Bill was a hiker, an active volunteer of the Land Trust of Huntsville and North Alabama. He and his wife laid out many trails on Land Trust property that were later opened to the public, including the trail inside of Three Caves and a trail on Green Mountain that bears the name, Varnedoe Trail. He and Louise liked to travel to off-the-beaten-path. They went to both the Nepalese (a 300-mile hike) and

Tibetan sides of Mt. Everest. They traveled to the Marquesas Islands on a copra trading boat, the Alta Verapaz region of Guatemala on a caving expedition, and caved in South Africa, climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro, hiked down the Tasman Glacier in New Zealand, helped a missionary build a house in the remote bush of New Britain Island of Papua, New Guinea, hiked trails in the Andes of Peru, rounded Cape Horn in Patagonia and hiked the European Alps, visiting and caving in England and Spain.

"Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices."

President Harry Truman

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

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A MOMENT IN TIME

Bottle Butts Buggy

Part I ~ The Wolf's Lair

JM Pittman, Next Gen 466th BG



Editor's note: John Pittman has written an amazing and riveting article which we are presenting here in three [3] consecutive installments. This is part two. The last one will be published in the December issue of the 8th A F News. ddk

Like most little boys in England, Eddy was used to doing without. Five holiday seasons had come and gone. Each one a little more Spartan than the last. Walking to the American Airbase his heart pounded in his chest. The anticipation almost unbearable. Lt's Wassom and Ross could only smile as they watched Eddy approach, his eyes fixed on the brand-new bike by their side. This was a Christmas he would never forget.

The Christmas spirit was in full swing at the 466th Bomb Group. Makeshift decorations adorned the base. Over 100 kids had been invited for a celebration on December 24th. Gifts and sweets were being prepared. The Glee club would sing in Norwich. There would be Christmas dinner and later in the evening a movie at the opera house.

'Tis the season' didn't have quite the same ring on the continent. Battling Hitler's 1st SS Panzer Division, S/Sgt. Paul Bolden, and T/Sgt. Russell Snoad of the 30th Infantry Division made their way through a dense patch of forest near Petit Coq, Belgium. They hoped daybreak would bring some relief from the frigid winter night, but that was not to be. Daylight revealed freezing temperatures, snow, and a low overcast sky.

Coming to the edge of the tree line, they observed a house occupied by German infantry. Bypassing the stronghold meant any GI moving into the open would be instantly cut to pieces. There was only one thing to do. "While his companion fired to cover him, Bolden rushed the door, tossed in a pair of hand grenades, then went in firing his Tommy gun. Bolden killed twenty of the enemy, then withdrew. A blast of fire killed Bolden's comrade and wounded the sergeant, but he dashed back into the house, killing fifteen more of the

enemy."

Across the length and breadth of the Ardennes, the master race was discovering - this was not 1940. Winter weather had slowed their advance. Death spewed from every hamlet, village, and crossroad. Battered and bloodied, the frozen GIs were extracting a fearsome toll for every foot of ground they surrendered.

Far to the west an ominous sound echoed through the night. Its steady hum droned in the background as keystrokes hammered out a rhythmic message. Mission Alert - Maximum effort. Target locations, units assigned, assembly points, and timetables poured from the teletypes. The weather was clearing, and the 8th Air Force was back in business.

As the Wassom crew slept, T/Sgt. Delinski doted over every inch of his aircraft. Like thousands of crew-chiefs he had received ordnance and ammunition from the depots. Fuses and tail fins had been attached to the bombs and they were being hoisted into the belly of the aircraft. Boxes of .50 cal ammo were being loaded aboard and strapped into place. Oxygen

bottles were filled. Fluids checked. Fuel tanks topped off. Engines started and inspected. Windows cleaned and last-minute repairs completed. As the sun broke free of the eastern horizon, Bottle Butts Buggy was ready for battle.

Across the field, the Wassom crew began their mission routine. Stepping into the pre-dawn darkness they headed for a breakfast of powdered eggs and strong black coffee. One hour later they gathered with the other crews. It was here they learned the days target.

At the pilots briefing, Lt. Wassom and Lt. Ross received information on the mission: timetables, radio frequencies, ordnance, location of the IP and MPI, assembly and formation, routes to and from the target, and rendezvous time and location with the escort fighters.

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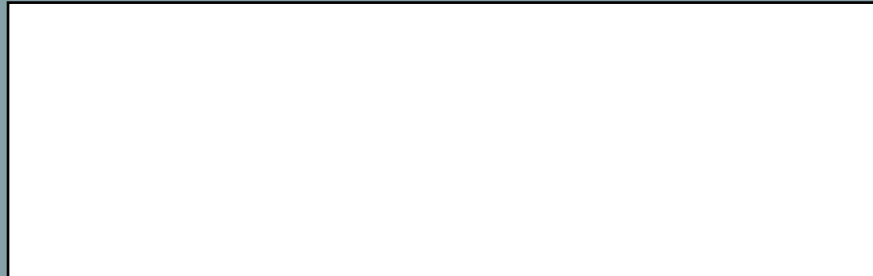




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With the navigators, Lt. Edelman picked up maps, photographs, and calculated the crew's flight path. With the bombardiers, Lt. Bohan received maps, target photos and calculations for his Norden bomb sight. Enlisted men received information on the target and expected enemy fighter activity.

Briefings complete, the crew moved to the Squadron Locker room. Here, each man collected his flight gear before quickly heading to the truck that would take them to revetment 37. Arriving at the hardstand the crew went to work. Lt. Wassom and T/Sgt. Delinski made their way around and through the aircraft. Lt. Edelman stowed maps and charts in the navigator's station. S/Sgts Seavey and Hamilton loaded eight fifty caliber machine guns into the aircraft. S/Sgt. Benny Olson, the crew's armorer, checked to make sure a pin was attached to the fuse of each bomb.

Like all flight crews, mission prep was a bit of a ritual. With the crew gathered together, Lt Wassom recapped the mission and gave final instructions. Each man's flight gear was then checked by someone else. Lt. Bohan did a little jig and sang an Irish tune. Lt. Edelman pulled out his flute and played the Air Force song. Lined up along the edge of the revetment the crew made one final pit-stop. With everyone onboard, the crew checked intercoms and oxygen.

All eyes now turned to the control tower. At Zero hour a green flare was fired into the air. The mission was a go. Within minutes, the thunder of Pratt and Whitney engines announced, another air battle would soon be fought. Moving off their hardstands, Liberators began the

choreographed ballet of moving in sequence to runway 09.

Cleared for takeoff, Lt. Wassom pushed the throttles full forward. Bottle Butts Buggy roared down the runway. A clear sky and no wind made the mornings takeoff long and hazardous. At 130 mph he lifted her into the air and raised the gear. With the exact heading and altitude reached, he turned for the group assembly area and began the long process of forming up with over 2,000 heavy bombers.

Like locusts from some biblical plague, radar blips began to fill German radar screens. Even those accustomed to seeing large bomber formations had never seen anything like this. Luftwaffe fighters were put on alert. Fire control centers were given azimuths and altitudes of the approaching bomber stream. Anti-aircraft crews uncased ammunition and trained their guns skyward. As German commanders prepared their men for the coming onslaught, reality stared them straight in the face. As if the *Funeral Toll* had begun to strike, the message was clear, "...never send for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee." ~ Ernest Hemmingway excerpts from *John Donne's essay*

J M Pittman

Photo on preceding page; Standing l-r: Wassom, Earl E. (P); Bohan, John T. (B); Olson, Benny, (TT); Seavy, Stanley (WG); Unknown; Unknown
Kneeling l-r: Delinski (CC); Hamilton, Harry (WG); Edelman, Julius (N); Ross, Lawrence (CP); Wolfe, Billy (R/O); Venegas, Louis (E)