

March 2024



8TH AF NEWS

Volume 24 Number 1 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"



Celebrating 50 years!
~Reunion Info Inside~



th AF News

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

March 2024

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Cover: We are so proud to feature aviation artist Gil Cohen's iconic, 'The Crewman' on our cover. We do so with expressed permission from the artist.

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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. EIN: 59-1757631
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EDITOR'S NOTES



I first saw “*The Crewman*” (cover of this issue) over 20+ years ago, when I met Gil Cohen, the artist. The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force chose “*The Crewman*” as its logo all those years ago as well. Who is the person behind the image? Over the years I’ve met hundreds of 8th Air Force WWII veterans who were positive that it was them, or someone they knew.

So. Who was right? They all were.

Gil told me “*The Crewman*” was never drawn from any one individual but inspired by hundreds of faces; eyes...mouth...posture...becoming the essence of ALL who selflessly served in the air war during WWII. It is why this piece is so iconic. Timeless. Evocative.

Fast forward to today’s incredible series, *Masters of the Air*. Don Miller is an award-winning author and historian whose *Masters of the Air* has exposed us to the human element of the air war in Europe—unlike any other movie or production I’ve ever experienced.

By focusing on a real bomb group with real people—

the 100th—we immediately connect with Cleven, Harry Crosby, Egan, Rosie Rosenthal... I assure you, nearly everything the men of the 100th encountered was NOT unique to the 100th. I’ve heard the exact same or similar stories from almost every WWII 8th Air Force veteran I’ve ever met. No single bomb group is or was more important than any other. Together, these men lived and 26,000 died, for our freedom. That should be the “takeaway” from MOTA.

Masters of the Air is NOT a documentary. It was never intended to be. Experience this epic series as you would view “*The Crewman*”—it embodies EVERY man who EVER climbed into a bomber and faced death with every single mission.

Hope to see you all in the “Big Easy!”

Celebrating 50 years and counting!

Deb



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Eighth Air Force Historical Society TODAY!!!**



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Membership Annual Dues: \$60 or £50 *outside US*

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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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PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING

Paul W Tibbets IV
President



Hello Society Members and Happy New Year!

As I shared in our recent Quarterly Update, for the next two years, we will be celebrating **50 years of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society**, founded in 1975! This year in New Orleans, we will kick off this celebration at our **50th Anniversary Reunion**. Plans are in full swing, as you will see in this issue of AF News, for our gathering in the Big Easy September 25-29, 2024! This will be a reunion you don't want to miss:

- Hotel: we are staying at the historic Higgins Hotel, across the street from the fabulous National WWII Museum. Due to the overwhelming response, we have also arranged an overflow hotel: The Hilton Garden Inn, located just 3 blocks from the Higgins and the WWII Museum. Reservation information is on p19 (this issue) and on our website as well!
- Museum: we have arranged a special \$50 membership with unlimited visits to The National WWII Museum, good throughout the reunion and beyond (expires the end of 2025)!
- Tours: aside from the museum, available tours include the New Orleans Steamboat Natchez Jazz Cruise & Lunch and a Guided Sightseeing Tour of New Orleans.
- Speakers: you are in for a special treat! Thursday night we will hear a fantastic presentation from Stephen Watson, President and CEO, The National WWII Museum. At our Gala Saturday evening, the current Commander of the Mighty Eighth, Major General Jason Armagost, will enlighten us on the activities of today's Eighth Air Force.
- Merchandise: we are bringing back 8th Air Force Historical Society merchandise! For the reunion, we are pre-selling polo shirts and challenge coins. These will be pre-order ONLY. All the details will be posted on the website soon...keep an eye out!

I encourage all of you to check out our **8th Air Force Historical Society website** at <https://www.8thafhs.org>. As I previously reported, we have completely re-hosted the website and database and added new functionality to both. Many thanks to our webmaster, Garrett Jaxon, Owner,

Flint & Flux Creative Group, for all his dedicated hard work to our Society! Here are a few of the recent updates:

- 8th Air Force Roll of Honor, fully searchable
- 8th Air Force Operations Research Database, fully searchable
- Chronology of Historical Highlights of Eighth Air Force Post-World War II
- Online Reunion Registration
- Keep 'em Flying Active Donors List
- 8 AF News Magazine Archive, with Members-Only access for current issues
- Updated links on 8th Air Force Units and Partners
- Biographies on Society Board Members

Your Board remains focused on our five Focus Areas for this year. In no particular order:

- Strengthen 8 AFHS relationship with current 8 AFHS bombardment, fighter and reconnaissance groups/organizations and post-WWII 8th Air Force organizations
- Expand 8 AFHS presence on social media
- Expand 8 AFHS relationship with the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force
- Expand and diversify 8 AFHS sources of revenue
- Strengthen relationship with the post-WWII generations

Wishing everyone a wonderful 2024!

Respectfully,

Paul

Paul Tibbets
President, 8 AFHS

TREASURER'S LEDGER

Anne Marek
Treasurer



Greetings everyone -

I'm including in this issue of AF News the financial position of the Society for the period ending December 31, 2023. The Profit and Loss Statement and the Statement of Financial Position are printed here. At the end of 2023 our investment portfolio had increased from an opening balance of \$135K in January to closing at \$193K, an increase of \$58K or approximately 70%. Mr. Gavin

Natelli, our account executive, continues to recommend no changes at this time.

The Keep 'em Flying Giving Campaign was created in March, 2023, in order to stabilize the Society's resources. In an effort to increase the number of members willing to participate, the Board approved the establishment of an additional level of Crew Chief with an annual gift of \$250. Details of the program appear in AF News, and the individuals and their donation amounts are listed on our website, www.8thAFHS.org.

I will continue to report on the progress of this initiative. If any of you have any questions regarding our financial position, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. My contact information can be found on page 2.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne

Anne A. Marek,
Treasurer,
8thAFHS

8th Air Force Historical Society Profit and Loss January - December 2023	
	Total
Income	
4000 Income/Miscellaneous	
4001 Amazon Smile	100.28
4010 Member Dues Annual	38,780.52
4012 Magazine Subscription	6,305.00
4015 Keep 'em Flying	15,700.00
4019 Member Contributions/Donations	16,627.00
Total 4000 Income/Miscellaneous	\$ 82,501.80
4050 Investment Income	
4058 Portfolio Dividends & Interest	588.82
4069 Realized Gain(Loss) on Invest	12,612.75
4060 Unrealized Gain(Loss) on Invest	43,631.38
4061 Investment Management Fees	0.00
Total 4050 Investment Income	\$ 57,230.93
Bank Adjustment BoA	0.01
Total Income	\$ 140,032.77
Gross Profit	\$ 140,032.77
Expenses	
5100 National Administration Expense	
5104 Awards, Gifts & Grants	258.84
5108 Web Site Expense	3,304.60
5111 Corporate Charges	70.00
5121 8AF History Projects	167.73
Total 5100 National Administration Expense	\$ 3,811.37
5200 Magazine Expenses	
5210 Printing Expenses	8,700.37
5220 Postage Expenses	3,670.62
5240 Layout/Design	1,407.61
Total 5200 Magazine Expenses	\$ 13,838.10
5300 National Office Expenses	
5303 Telephone/Cell	749.51
5304 Supplies	1,448.20
5305 Abila Software/Computer Exps	3,244.72
5306 Accounting Support	463.10
5307 Office Rent	1,200.00
5308 Insurance	1,171.62
5312 FICA-8AFHS portion	3,769.90
5313 Payroll/ Office Management	51,304.12
5315 Postage & Shipping	677.85
5316 Bank Charges/ Returned checks	73.85
5323 Merchant Account Usage Fees	2,723.09
5325 Payroll processing fees	1,638.50
Total 5300 National Office Expenses	\$ 68,688.39
6690 Reconciliation Discrepancies	2,371.06
Total Expenses	\$ 85,710.82
Net Operating Income	\$ 54,321.95
Other Income	
6650 Annual Meeting Revenue	
6651 Event Registration	63,523.68
Total 6650 Annual Meeting Revenue	\$ 63,523.68
Total Other Income	\$ 63,523.68
Other Expenses	
7100 Annual Meeting Expenses	
7103 Hotel Expense/Catering	57,550.29
7104 Tours/Transportation	10,085.62
7106 Reimbursements	1,726.00
Total 7100 Annual Meeting Expenses	\$ 77,404.91
Total Other Expenses	\$ 77,404.91
Net Other Income	\$ 13,881.33
Net Income	\$ 37,440.82

8th Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position As of December 31, 2023	
	Total
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1217 Oppenheimer & Co	162,629.55
1840 Bank of America Checking Acct.	6,840.20
1841 B of A Deposits in Transit	0.00
1942 Bank of America Savings Acct.	10,036.78
Total Bank Accounts	\$ 209,486.53
Accounts Receivable	
1120 Accounts Receivable	0.00
Total Accounts Receivable	\$ 0.00
Other Current Assets	
1208 Prepaid Expenses	0.00
1201 Undeposited Funds	0.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$ 0.00
Total Current Assets	\$ 209,486.53
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 209,486.53
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2000 Accounts Payable	0.00
Total Accounts Payable	\$ 0.00
Credit Cards	
Card Assets - Everywhere Card	0.00
Total Credit Cards	\$ 0.00
Other Current Liabilities	
2050 Payroll & Taxes Payable	17,305.68
2051 Payroll payable	2,869.57
2052 FICA & withhold taxes payable	26,836.61
Total 2050 Payroll & Taxes Payable	\$ 18,776.39
2060 Accrued Expenses	157.51
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$ 18,933.90
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 18,933.90
Total Liabilities	\$ 18,933.90
Equity	
2100 Unrestricted Net Assets	0.00
2200 *Unrestricted Net Assets	181,030.64
Net Income	37,440.82
Total Equity	\$ 198,471.25
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$ 209,486.53



“Keep ‘em Flying” Giving Campaign **Honor your veteran or loved one!**



The Board of Directors of the 8th Air Force Historical Society is continuing its on-going Giving Campaign. Our mission is to keep our administrative functions operational. Historically they run on a \$12-15,000 yearly deficit which has been partially covered by member donations when they send in their annual membership dues. We need the Society to have a more defined and reliable source of income.

We can accomplish our mission by establishing a group of members who are committed to keeping the Society financially solvent. This investment is renewable annually. In this way, the Society will continue to preserve the legacy of our family members and loved ones who continually put their lives in danger and in some cases made the ultimate sacrifice. You are still able to join our ***“Keep ‘em Flying”*** Giving Campaign in just your name, but **you now have the opportunity to honor a veteran or loved one as well.** Their name will appear after yours on our ***“Keep ‘em Flying”*** online leaderboard. By joining, you will provide critical financial support for the continuation of the Society. In addition you will be recognized on our website and on your Annual Reunion nametag. So please join our ***“Keep ‘em Flying”*** Giving Campaign by becoming a Member in 2024.

All participating Leaders will receive the premier benefits of their annual membership dues of \$60 being covered, and they will receive a hard copy of AF News which is a \$25 value. Below are the different levels of membership as a part of the ***“Keep ‘em Flying”*** Giving Campaign.

Level 1 – Crew Chief Leader with an annual donation of \$250 will receive both premier benefits.

Level 2 – Flight Leader with an annual donation of \$500 will receive both premier benefits plus the registration fee of \$45 to attend the Annual Reunion.

Level 3 – Group Leader with an annual donation of \$1,000 will receive both premier benefits plus the registration fee of \$45 to attend the Annual Reunion and your Rendezvous Dinner ticket.

Level 4 – Wing Leader with an annual donation of \$1,500 you will receive both premier benefits plus the registration fee of \$45 to attend the Annual Reunion, your Rendezvous Dinner ticket and your Gala Banquet ticket.

Your Board of Directors invites you to join with them ***today*** in participating in our ***“Keep ‘em Flying”*** Giving Campaign supporting our Society. Please use the form below to enroll or simply click the link:

<https://www.8thafhs.org/keep-em-flying-giving-campaign/> (or copy and paste into your browser).

We ***thank you*** for your continued support and generosity.

“Keep ‘em Flying” Giving Campaign

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

Street: _____ City: _____ State: _____

Zip code: _____ Email: _____

In honor of (veteran, etc.): _____ Group, etc.: _____

Level 1 – Crew Chief Leader at \$250 _____ Level 2 – Flight Leader at \$500 _____

Level 3 – Group Leader at \$1,000 _____ Level 4 – Wing Leader at \$1,500 _____

Please check which level you are choosing above and mail with your check or credit card information to:

8th Air Force Historical Society, 68 Kimberly Way, Jasper, GA 30143-4769.

Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit cards only.

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____ Amount \$ _____

By joining the 8th AFHS “Keep ‘em Flying” Giving Campaign and sending in this form, I hereby authorize the Society to process this application without my expressed written permission.

MAXIMUM EFFORT:

a new era for the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force



by Dawn Brosnan

Director of Communications and Marketing
The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force

They Saved the World, We Save Their Stories is the motto of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, Georgia. The museum, which opened in 1996, was the project of the veterans of the Eighth Air Force, led by Major General Lewis A. Lyle. Lyle knew there needed to be a place for people to remember and honor the heroes of the Eighth; a museum was essential to preserve the stories and militaria, ensuring their history would not be forgotten. For over 27 years the museum has done just that. Now, thanks to the support of the children and grandchildren of those same heroes, the museum is undergoing a massive transformation in the form of a 20,000-square-foot expansion and complete overhaul of the visitor experience and exhibits.

Maximum Effort, the Capital Campaign for the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force began in earnest in 2020 to expand the Museum's facilities to continue presenting the stories of the

greatest air armada the world has ever seen to a new generation.



Cooling towers.

Phase I, of three phases, was completed in August of 2023 with the installation of two cooling towers for visitor comfort and the preservation of the collections. Thursday, February 15, 2024, the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force continued to Phase II by breaking ground for a 20,000-square-foot expansion project that will enhance the museum's ability to preserve and share the remarkable stories of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. This \$12 million project, in total, will enable the museum to showcase additional artifacts currently not on display from the collection, documents, and interactive displays that delve deeper into this pivotal chapter in history. This expansion will allow the museum to highlight even more stories of courage and resilience from those who served in this elite Air Force unit.

Visitors will have a chance to experience firsthand



accounts and gain a deeper understanding of how these heroes played a crucial role in destroying the Luftwaffe while providing vital support to Allied forces.

New Exhibition and Gallery Spaces

The current exhibits were built years before the first smartphone was introduced and have begun to show their age. The initial focus was on displaying the objects in the collection with limited historical contexts and interpretations. Consequently, visitors

Immersive Experiences

Engagement is key in the world today. With these new spaces, the museum aims to create an immersive experience that allows our visitors to delve deeper into the remarkable history of the Eighth Air Force. From interactive displays and multimedia presentations to engaging storytelling, every element has been carefully curated to evoke a sense of awe and admiration for these brave individuals who served their country.



walk away without fully comprehending the value of what they have seen, and thus the museum does a disservice to the airmen to whom we owe everything. The forthcoming expansion will introduce state-of-the-art exhibition and gallery spaces that have been specifically designed to accommodate a breathtaking B-24 bomber in the future, along with rotating exhibition programs that will ensure there is always something new and exciting for visitors to explore. In addition, recent advances in climate control and security systems will allow the museum to better protect and conserve the permanent collection.

H+STEM Educational Center

We take bombsights and radar for granted today, but they were extensively used during WWII, which contributed to the success of the Mighty Eighth. WWII history and STEM fields together will be explored in new classrooms designed for experiential learning.

We encourage you to visit our website and social media channels to keep up to date on the progress of this exciting new phase of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force.



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Help Us Save the Data!

A committee consisting of board members of the 8th AFHS and the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force has been established. Our purpose is to explore ways that the two organizations can further our common mission of advancing the history and accomplishments of the 8th AF.

One of our foci is the history currently residing in the fighter and bomb group websites. Recognizing that these sites are maintained by the private efforts and financial support of their webmasters, our concern is the possible loss of this valuable data if these sites shut down especially if/when the sponsoring organization or group dissolves.

Apparently, several sites have already shut down which has resulted in the permanent loss of their group's history.

We are exploring ways to centralize this precious information with the goal of long-term preservation. We are working with our own webmaster; exploring the possibility of collecting and banking this data—possibly on a dedicated server—with public access.

Any bomb or fighter group webmasters interested in pursuing this idea should contact Mark Klingensmith at mrkent54@comcast.net.

Hope, Survival, and Death:

and the WWII Story of 306th Bomb Group Surgeon, Thurman Shuller

World War 2 History Short Stories by S. R. O'Konski

Born on May 6, 1914, Thurman Shuller was the youngest of six boys born to E.W. and Sarah Shuller on their farm located five miles north of Ozark, Arkansas.

Thurman graduated from high school in 1932 and enrolled in Arkansas Polytechnic College, a two-year school in Russellville, Arkansas. Tuition was five dollars a semester, room and board was twelve dollars and fifty cents per month, and he earned extra money sweeping floors for twelve and a half cents an hour. In 1934 he attended Hendricks College in Conway, Arkansas, for one year before being accepted into medical school at the University of Arkansas in Little Rock, Arkansas. [At that time, one needed only medical school prerequisite courses and not a college degree to be considered for medical school admission.] Graduating from medical school in 1939 Thurman did a two-year internship at Charity Hospital in New Orleans, Louisiana.

While in medical school, Thurman and seven of his classmates joined the Arkansas Army Reserve. In the summer of 1941, they were called up for one year of active-duty training. On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked the American

naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The United States (US) declared war on Japan the next day. One year of active duty turned into five years for him.

First Lieutenant (1st Lt.) Shuller trained at Randolph Field, San Antonio, Texas, graduated as a flight surgeon, and arrived on April 15, 1942, at Wendover Field, Utah, to become part of a medical unit for the newly formed 306th Bombardment Group (BG) of the Eighth United States Army Air Forces (USAAF). The 306th BG would fly the B-17 Flying Fortress. Dr. Shuller was assigned as flight surgeon to the 369th Bomb Squadron. In August 1942 the 306th BG would begin the move that would take them to their wartime base at Thurleigh, Bedfordshire, England. Captain (Capt.) Shuller left Wendover for England as the 306th BG Surgeon. The 306th BG personnel, equipment, and B-17s would arrive at Thurleigh in September.

The 306th BG flew its first combat mission on October 9, 1942, to bomb the metalworks factories at Cie. de Fives-Lille, France. This mission resulted in the first 306th BG combat death, Staff Sergeant (S/Sgt.) Arthur E. Chapman, a gunner on the 1st Lt. Robert W. Seelos crew. Chapman lost

his left hand and was shot in the chest by an attacking German fighter plane. S/Sgt. Chapman died October 14, 1942.

When the bombing war began in 1942, for the Eighth USAAC, there was no stated number of combat missions a flyer was expected to complete before finishing a wartime tour. Flight crews were then required to fly until they died, crashed and became a prisoner of war (POW), were wounded or injured or medically removed from flying status, or WWII ended.

Crew and aircraft losses took a serious toll on morale of flight and ground personnel. The medics were at the flight line as B-17s returned from missions to care for the wounded and the dead. The B-17 ground maintenance crews were nearing exhaustion repairing the planes and dealing with the loss of the flyers they knew. The medics were also encountering serious flight issues such as frostbite and anoxia at high altitudes. Other medical problems included flying and combat fatigue, flying “jitters,” and the physical and emotional stability of the men.

By early 1943 twenty of the original flying crews and some replacements had been lost. Major (Maj.) Shuller wrote a letter to General Ira Eaker, 8th USAAF Commander, and requested a limit of 20 combat missions be established after which a flyer would be relieved of flying duties. The response to his letter did establish a limit of 25 missions. This change gave flyers a goal and hope that they had a chance to live through the war.

Men and aircraft continued to be lost. There are some WWII stories that have been told over the decades and may be considered representative of the experiences and emotions felt by flyers and ground crew. The following is the story of Capt. Raymond Check as told in the book *First Over*

Germany written by WWII 306th BG navigator Russell A. Strong:

“Officers of the 423rd Squadron were planning a party for the night of 26 June [1943] because on this day Capt. Raymond Check, an original pilot and a very popular member of the squadron, would be completing his twenty-fifth mission, along with his navigator, 1st Lt. M. Prue Blanchette. A short hop over the [English] Channel to an airfield at Tricqueville [France] looked like an ideal run for those winding up tough combat tours. Because it was Check’s last ride, Lt. Col. [Lieutenant Colonel] J. W. Wilson, his original squadron commander, came back to Thurleigh to fly with him.



Photo above: Lt. William Cassedy (left) and Capt. Raymond Check. Photograph 306th BG Historical Association Collection.

Photo this page: Lt. Col. J. W. Wilson. Photograph 306th BG Historical Association Collection.

As the crew was preparing for the mission, it was noted that a waist gunner was needed. Lt. William Cassedy, Check's regular copilot who had had his seat preempted by Col. Wilson, said that he needed a milk run as badly as the next person and would fly as the waist gunner, a circumstance which proved most fortuitous for members of this crew. The takeoff of twenty-one planes at 1555 [3:55 pm] was uneventful, and the mission proceeded to Tricqueville under the command of Maj. Henry W. Terry. Two planes aborted and nineteen were on the bomb run.

Col. Wilson was flying in the left seat and Check was serving as copilot as the nineteen planes turned on the bomb run. At almost the time of 'bombs away,' Check's plane was hit by 20 mm cannon fire in the cockpit area by a German fighter attacking out of the sun. One shell exploded just above Check's head, sending fragments into the cockpit and killing Check instantly, nearly decapitating him. At the same time a machine gun bullet hit the flare box behind the pilot's seat and 20 mm fragments punctured the oxygen system.

Check was dead; T/Sgt. [Technical Sergeant] James A. Bobbett, engineer, was wounded and flames

were dancing through the cockpit area, severely burning Col. Wilson's hands and face. Bobbett fought the fire and extinguished it. When flares exploded, the concussion blew open the bomb bay

doors and the doorway behind the top turret was filled with flames, reported Lt. Cassedy from his vantage point in the waist.

The alarm bell rang! Lt. Lionel Drew, bombardier, squeezed between Lt. Blanchette and Maj. George Peck, a visiting surgeon who insisted on flying, and bailed out. Those in the rear of the plane were preparing to jump when Lt. Cassedy told them to wait while he investigated; the plane was flying all right and the engines at the moment sounded good. Cassedy pushed through the radio room, across the bomb bay catwalk, crawled through the turret frame and came up between Wilson and the bloody body of Check. The plane

was in a climb and Cassedy reached in and pushed the yoke forward to get a more level flight attitude while he assessed the situation.

Col. Wilson turned to him and motioned Cassedy to take the oxygen mask off his burned face. Cassedy shook his head that he would not, Wilson had been flying the plane with his elbows as long strands of skin hung off both hands. Wilson finally forced his mask off, got out of the left seat and went down to the nose where Dr. Peck was. Sgt. Bobbett had already been there for treatment of his wounds.



Once the way was cleared, Cassedy got into the left seat, trying to ignore the body of his close friend and flying mate a couple of feet away from him. He began to get the plane oriented for the short flight over the English coast and north to Thurleigh. Soon Col. Wilson came back to the flight deck and, as the English coast disappeared under the nose of the plane, he motioned for Cassedy to take the aircraft down and land. Cassedy, a second lieutenant [2nd Lt.], ignored the hand motions and the implied order and kept the plane churning northward toward Thurleigh. He reasoned the medical treatment for the wounded would be faster and better at the home station than at some other base. There were other problems for him to consider as well. As they closed in on the base how was he going to handle the traffic problem and the landing pattern?

In all of the intense enemy fire, the plane had had its flare gun destroyed, and it was therefore unavailable for signaling. The radios had also been shot out. Cassedy did not think the plane was in condition to fly by the tower to convey any messages. He did not want to get into the traffic pattern already being flown by the other aircraft of the group that had arrived before him. Nor did he think that to land on one of the short runways intersecting the main runway was the safest way to get to the ground either. There was another complicating factor in all of this, a human equation that must have run through Cassedy's mind during these tense moments. A big party was being planned that evening and among those attending was an American nurse. Check and the nurse were to be married the next day. She was in a jeep at the end of the active runway waiting with others for the momentous conclusion of Check's tour. Not wishing to bring his planeload of misery to a stop there, Cassedy decided to land down wind, against the incoming traffic and to take his chances.

As he came in on final approach the planes flying in the opposite direction sensed a problem

and pulled up. Cassedy brought his craft in for a smooth landing and pulled off the runway at the far end of the field, away from the waiting crowd. When the engines wound down and the switches were off, Cassedy raised himself out of the seat and with a long, tearful look at his good friend Check, dropped down into the nose and lowered himself out of the plane."

In a 2005 oral history interview, Dr. Shuller emotionally recounted the story of his friend, Raymond Check. Maj. Shuller was in the base emergency room when his friend's body was brought there. He said Capt. Check's funeral was the only one he attended during WWII. In October 1943 Maj. Shuller was named US 1st Air Division Surgeon and was transferred to Eighth USAAF Headquarters at High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, England.

The 306th BG flew its last wartime combat mission on April 19, 1945, to the marshalling [railroad] yards at Falkenberg, Germany. WWII officially ended on May 8, 1945.

When WWII ended the 306th BG reported the following: 38 men were killed in flying accidents after the group left the US, 738 men were killed on combat missions, 855 became POWs, 44 were evadees, 1 escaped a German POW camp, and 69 were interned in the neutral countries of Switzerland and Sweden.

Dr. Thurman Shuller returned to the US after the war ended, completed a residency in pediatrics, and practiced medicine in McAlester, Oklahoma, for 41 years before retiring.

Those who have not experienced war may wonder why WWII military reunions are still held to this day. Speaking at a 1983 306th BG Reunion in Omaha, Nebraska, Dr. Shuller said, "*We've all had a great time the last two days renewing old friendships, reviving old memories, and reliving some of the experiences of so long ago. Have you ever wondered why we have retained such deep affection for some of our wartime buddies — why periodic reunions at this stage in life can be so*



meaningful, so much more so than a class reunion, for instance? Andy Rooney [American radio and television writer], who generally hits us with such everyday and simple truths, has in his book A Few Minutes with Andy Rooney included a piece called 'An Essay on War' in which he makes a very thoughtful statement ... 'If war brings out the worst in people, it also brings out the very best. It's the ultimate competition. One lives at full speed, finding strength he didn't know he had, accomplishing things he didn't know he could do. Most of us get a warm sense of fellow feeling when we act in close and successful relationships with others and maybe that happens more in war than at any other time'."

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Photo this page: Dr. Thurman Shuller (left) and William Houlihan, 306th BG medic, discuss their days at Thurleigh while attending a 306th BG Reunion in San Antonio, Texas, in 2005. Photograph S. R. O'Konski Collection.

Capt. Raymond Check had a WWII US Navy fighter ace brother, Leonard J. Check. He was killed in a flying accident over the Philippines on January 5, 1945.

The WWII experiences of William Houlihan are told in two other stories on this website. See [The Story of WWII 306th Bombardment Group Medic William F. Houlihan](#) and [Last Flight of a B-17 Named "Combined Operations": And Emily Harper Rea.](#)

Thank you to Dr. Vernon Williams, Military Historian and Director, East Anglia Air War Project for access to his 2005 interview with Dr. Thurman Shuller. For more information visit [East Anglia Air War Project](#).

Thank you to WWII 306th BG Historical Association Historian Cliff Deets and Board members Nancy Huebotter and Deborah Conant. Further information about the WWII 306th BG can be found at [306th Bomb Group Historical Association](#).

S. R. O'Konski
Author
World War 2 History Short Stories
www.ww2history.org

COME ONE, COME ALL!!

If you are planning a visit to England this year, be sure to include a tour of the
96th Bomb Group Museum!

Telling the stories of the service members from the ground to the air, you can learn the history of the 96th Bomb Group where it actually happened -- situated on the site of what was the base hospital.

The 96th BG Museum will be open on the following dates from 10AM until 4PM:

Sunday April 21, 2024

Sunday May 19, 2024

Sunday June 16, 2024

Sunday July 21, 2024

Sunday August 18, 2024 (our main Open Day)

Sunday September 15, 2024



Please note: Private tours can also be arranged for any Saturday or Sunday during the year if a veteran's family member is visiting the UK.

Prior to your visit, please contact Jill Tebble, the 96th BG Museum Curator, at

96thbombgroupmuseum@gmail.com.

Find the 96th BG Museum at Aurora Eccles School, Quidenham, Norfolk, NR16 2NZ

"The 96th was almost wiped out in the spring of 1944. When I was on my way back in about September 1944, I ran into a guy in the chowline at some replacement depot who was from the 100th. I was commiserating with him about the 100th's misfortune, and then he asked me what group I was from. I told him the 96th and was astonished to hear that the people in the 100th sustained themselves by feeling sorry for the 96th! (You know the old bit: I had no shoes and complained until I met a man with no feet.)"

Letter from Lew Warden, Navigator, 338th



50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

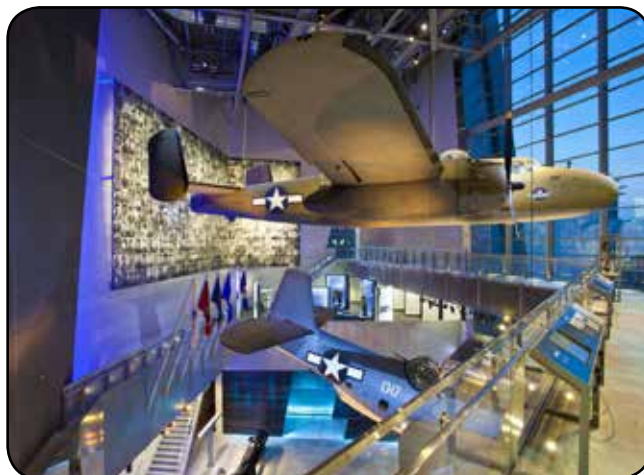
The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA

September 25-29, 2024



THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM*

Please note: Selecting this 'tour option' on the registration form is an individual membership in the National WWII Museum! This entitles you to unlimited admission to the Museum not only during the reunion, but through 12/31/2025! If you are already a member of the WWII Museum, you **MUST show your card for admission.*



Offering a compelling blend of sweeping narrative and poignant personal detail, The National WWII Museum features immersive exhibits, multimedia experiences, and an expansive collection of artifacts and first-person oral histories, taking visitors inside the story of *the war that changed the world*. Beyond the galleries, the Museum's online collections, virtual field trips, webinars, educational travel programs, and renowned International Conference on World War II offer patrons new

ways to connect to history and honor the generation that sacrificed so much to secure our freedom.

LOUISIANA MEMORIAL PAVILION

the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion, *The Arsenal of Democracy: The Herman and George R. Brown Salute to the Home Front* tells the story of the road to war and the Home Front, drawing on personal narratives and evocative artifacts to highlight facets of WWII-era American life through an experiential narrative.

Start your visit in the Museum's original pavilion, which features the Museum's original D-Day exhibit, the story of the war experienced on the Home Front, macro-artifacts, special temporary exhibits, and the *L.W. "Pete" Kent Train Car Experience*—the perfect place to begin your journey into the WWII story.

THE ARSENAL OF DEMOCRACY

Opened June 2017 in

CAMPAIGNS OF COURAGE: EUROPEAN AND PACIFIC THEATERS

Follow in the footsteps of the citizen soldier in 360-degree displays that take visitors through key settings in World War II. The galleries serve as an immersive timeline and provide a service-member's view of the war.

ROAD TO TOKYO

Road to Tokyo: Pacific Theater Galleries retraces the grueling



trail that led from Pearl Harbor to Tokyo Bay by way of New Guinea and Southeast Asia, the Himalayas, Burma, the islands of the Pacific, China, India, and Alaska.

ROAD TO BERLIN

Road to Berlin brings to life the drama, sacrifices, personal stories, and strategies of America's campaign to defeat the Axis powers and preserve freedom.

US FREEDOM PAVILION: THE BOEING CENTER

Stand beside ground-level tanks and trucks to view WWII airplanes—or brave sky-high catwalks for an up-close look. Exhibits describe the history and production of war machines and honor service in every branch of the military.

Thursday, September 26, 2024
Busses Board at 10:30am
Board "Natchez" at 11:00am
Sailing: 11:30am – 1:30pm
Arrive back at The Higgins at 2:15pm

**New Orleans Steamboat
 Natchez Jazz Cruise & Lunch**

includes an incredible southern-inspired buffet lunch, filled with New Orleans' favorites!

Friday, September 27, 2024
Busses Board at 9:45am
Arrive back at The Higgins at 2:15pm



Travel like the residents of New Orleans did decades ago when you step aboard the historic riverboat on this Mississippi River cruise. After you depart from the harbor, listen to entertaining commentary on the sights that pass by as you stroll the expansive deck, enjoy live jazz music in the main dining area, and check out the churning paddle wheel in action. Along with an exciting cruise on the "*Mighty Mississippi*" your experience

Guided New Orleans Sightseeing Tour

This four (4) hour city sightseeing tour covers 25 square miles of iconic neighborhoods through three (3) centuries with ample opportunities to experience the beauty and history of New Orleans. Includes stops at St. Louis Cemetery #3, City Park, and lunch (on your own) in the incomparable Garden District on Magazine Street.





REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS
50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION
The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA
September 25-29, 2024

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 72 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. ONE address per registration form, PLEASE! 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. *Please note: Breakfast is on your own!* Be sure and indicate if you need special meals such as vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, etc.
- ⇒ There are two [2] tour options available during the reunion. Please read the information on each tour and then make your selection on the form. **Tours have limited seating and are filled on a first come first available basis.**
- ⇒ **The National Museum of WWII** is located directly across the street from **The Higgins** hotel. **Admission/unlimited access to the museum is via a special membership purchased on the reunion registration form**—unless you **ALREADY HAVE** a **CURRENT MEMBERSHIP** to the **WWII MUSEUM**. If you are a **current member of the WWII Museum**, you **MUST PRESENT** your **MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP CARD** for admission.

◇ **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 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 **August 23, 2024** 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: www.8thAFHS.org



HOTEL INFORMATION

50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA

September 25-29, 2024

THE HIGGINS

RESERVATIONS

(833) 357-1172

(Reference '928' for group rate)

Direct link to reservations:

<https://group.curiocollection.com/zg61jf>

Or on our website:

www.8thafhs.org

NEW—>OVERFLOW HOTEL<—

HILTON GARDEN INN

RESERVATION INFORMATION

(800) 774-1500

(Reference '91A' for group rate)

Direct link to reservations:

[Hilton Garden Inn reservations](https://www.hilton.com/en/reservations/)

Or on our website: www.8thafhs.org

Location

As the official hotel of the National WWII Museum, The Higgins Hotel & Conference Center's name reflects the contributions of the extraordinary entrepreneur, Andrew Higgins, who designed and built over 20,000 boats in New Orleans that were used in every major amphibious assault of World War II.

Conveniently located directly across the street from The National WWII Museum, **1000 Magazine St., New Orleans, LA 70130**, the hotel offers 230 era-inspired guest rooms and specialty suites, premium amenities, full-service restaurant, lounge, and a rooftop bar, as well as a second-floor conference center with more than 18,000 square feet of meeting and event space.

***The Hilton Garden Inn is located 3 blocks from the Museum: 1001 South Peters St., New Orleans.**

Transportation to/from Airport & Parking

For those of you flying into New Orleans, you will need to either rent a car, use a cab or car service, or a ride-share such as Uber or Lyft. Self-parking is available at the Higgins. The rate is \$32 per day + 12.45% tax (per car/per day) when charged to a guest room account. Clearance is 7 ft. **Valet parking available at the Hilton Garden Inn @\$45 per day. Additional parking options available. Call for more information.**

RESERVATION INFORMATION

BOTH HOTELS!!!

Group Name: *8th Air Force Historical Society*

Reunion Dates: September 25-29, 2024

Rate: \$189.00 + 16.20% + \$1.00 = \$220.62 per night.
Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability.

Cut off Date: August 21, 2024

Cancellation Policy: All reservations have a **72 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 (HIGGINS ONLY)

HOSPITALITY SUITES are very limited and will be offered to groups on a first come, first reserved basis.

We ask that you reserve your suite as soon as possible and consider sharing with another group! 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

50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA

September 25-29, 2024

Wednesday, September 25

8:00am — 5:00pm Reunion Registration open
9:00am — 5:00pm ***The National WWII Museum****
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, September 26

7:00am — 8:30am Breakfast on your own**
8:00am — 5:00pm Reunion Registration open **TBD*****
9:00am — 5:00pm ***The National WWII Museum****
10:30am — 2:30pm ***Lunch Cruise on Steamboat Natchez ~Live Jazz***
6:00pm — 9:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm Dinner and program: ***Stephen J. Watson, President & CEO,***
The National WWII Museum

Friday, September 27

7:00am — 8:30am Breakfast on your own**
8:00am — 5:00pm Reunion Registration **TBD*****
7:45am — 8:45am Group Meetings
9:00am — 5:00pm ***The National WWII Museum****
10:00am — 2:00pm ***City Tour of New Orleans (lunch on your own in the Garden District)***
6:00pm — 9:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm Rendezvous Dinners

Saturday, September 28

7:00am — 8:30am Breakfast on your own**
8:00am — 5:00pm Reunion Registration **TBD*****
8:45am — 10:15am General Membership Meeting
9:00am — 5:00pm ***The National WWII Museum****
12:00pm — 4:00pm 8th AFHS Board Meeting
6:00pm — 10:00pm Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 10:00pm Gala Dinner and Program
Speaker~ ***Major General Jason R. Armagost,***
Commander, Eighth Air Force, Barksdale AFB, LA
Music and Entertainment ~ ***The Victory Belles***

Sunday, September 29

7:00am — 8:30am Breakfast on your own**

****The National WWII Museum is self-guided...your "ticket" is a one year membership for unlimited access!***

*****Breakfast is NOT included in our reunion package...please check times with hotel.***

******TBD Registration may be closed during the time scheduled
for certain tours and/or group meetings.***



REGISTRATION
50th Annual 8th AFHS REUNION
The Higgins by Hilton ~ New Orleans, LA
September 25-29, 2024

REGISTRATION CUT-OFF DATE IS August 23, 2024 (NO refunds on cancellations past this date)		Price p/p	# of People	TOTAL
DUES: The principal attendee MUST 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:		\$ 60	#	\$
REGISTRATION FEE (non-refundable): EVERY attendee MUST pay registration fee		\$ 45	#	\$
DINNERS				
Thursday, Sept 26: Dinner—Chef's delightful favorites welcoming you to the Big Easy!		\$ 82	#	\$
Friday, Sept 27: Rendezvous Dinners—Roasted Marinated Chicken & all the trimmings!		\$ 70	#	\$
Saturday, Sept 28: GALA Banquet—Surf & Turf buffet... <i>the best of both worlds!</i>		\$ 78	#	\$
Vegetarian [Vg], vegan [V], gluten free [GF], etc— Please indicate # of meal types each day: Thurs _____ (\$82) Fri _____ (\$70) Sat _____ (\$78)		---	---	\$
TOUR OPTIONS: <u>LUNCH INCLUDED</u> on Thursday				
NEW!!! UNLIMITED ADMISSION to National WWII Museum. This is a MEMBERSHIP* <i>details in tour descriptions</i> . If you are already a <u>current member of the WWII Museum</u> , you MUST SHOW YOUR CARD to ENTER! After each name on registration, please enter <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <u>if touring Museum.</u>		\$ 50	#	\$
Thursday, Sept 26: 10:45am-2:00pm ~ Fabulous River Cruise Includes Lunch & Live Jazz		\$ 92	#	\$
Friday, Sept 27: 10:00am-2:00pm ~ New Orleans & Garden District ~ <u>LUNCH ON YOUR OWN!</u>		\$ 48	#	\$
Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS				\$

Please PRINT. If registering a veteran, please list their name first.

MAXIMUM of FOUR [4] persons per ADDRESS per registration form!

MEMBER NAME: _____ BG/FG (for name tag & seating) _____

VETERAN? If yes—> WWII: _____ Post WWII: _____ (conflict or era): _____ (Branch of Service): _____

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

DAYTIME PH #: _____ EMAIL: _____

Name #2: _____ WWII Museum: _____ Military service: _____

Name #3: _____ WWII Museum: _____ Military service: _____

Name #4: _____ WWII Museum: _____ Military service: _____

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

Questions? PLEASE CALL: (912) 748-8884



Major General Jason R. Amagost
Commander, Eighth Air Force

2023 was a remarkably busy year for the Mighty Eighth Air Force, and 2024 is showing no signs of slowing. The Bomber Task Force missions brought all three bombers all over the globe and across several Combatant Commands, numerous B-52 program upgrades continue to be underway and the B-21 Raider had its first successful flight. The Eighth accomplished many “firsts” last year and seeks to continue to think differently and push the limits as competition continues to intensify globally.

The B-1s from Dyess supported the largest Nordic air exercise as part of the Arctic Challenge 2023, a first since it began in 2013. The exercise concentrated on advancing Arctic security ingenuities, enhancing interoperability with European allies as well as developing solutions to the challenges posed by the extreme conditions in the Arctic. Participants includ-

ed Sweden, Norway, U.S., the U.K., the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Canada, France, Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, the Czech Republic, and the newly minted NATO ally, Finland. The B-1s also joined ROK F-35s in a bilateral exercise through the Korean Air Defense Identification Zone. This exercise came only one day after North Korea tested an intercontinental ballistic missile. Finally, the B-1s from the 28th Bomb Wing participated in the first-ever joint air exercise with the Indian Air Force.

Like the B-1s, the B-52s were also moving around the globe ensuring allies and strengthening credible strategic deterrence. In June, 2023, two B-52s from Minot landed in Indonesia for the first time to execute training exercises with Indonesian F-16s. The integration worked to solidify interoperability, identify future training opportunities, promote regional

stability through cooperation, and enhance capabilities integral to a variety of bilateral missions.

In another historic mission, the B-52 landed on the Korean Peninsula for the first time in decades to mark the 70th anniversary of the U.S.- South Korea alliance at the 2023 Seoul International Aerospace and Defense Exhibition.

The B-2s had many first accomplishments last year as well. In August, B-2s made a historic first landing in Norway to continue to refine the Agile Combat Employment concept as it applies to bombers. From Keflavik, Iceland, they conducted training north of the Arctic Circle, integrating with the U.S. and allied aircraft over the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex. These exercises are key to improving navigating and operating procedures in challenging arctic environments. The B-2s also returned to Australia, where



they certified to conduct daytime refueling with Australian-flagged tankers.

Upgrades and transition to the B-52J continue to progress as we look to replace the engines and the radar in the platform. With the new engines will come modern performance. We know what we're buying with the Rolls Royce engines: efficiency, cleaner power, extended range, and noise reduction. In terms of sustainment, it also means worldwide parts availability while conducting global BTF operations. The B-52 is installing a modernized radar to ensure viability and resilience in demanding future environments. Through this new radar, the B-52 will modernize the ability to navigate, self-pro-

tect, and communicate, thus demonstrating to our adversaries that they don't have the option to stop us from imposing our will at the time and place of our choosing, regardless of the operational environment.

Finally, we are anxiously waiting the contract award to produce the successor for the E-4B Nightwatch, the Survivable Airborne Operations Center (SAOC). The current aircraft is expected to reach the end of its service life within the next decade. We are very excited for the future of such an important mission.

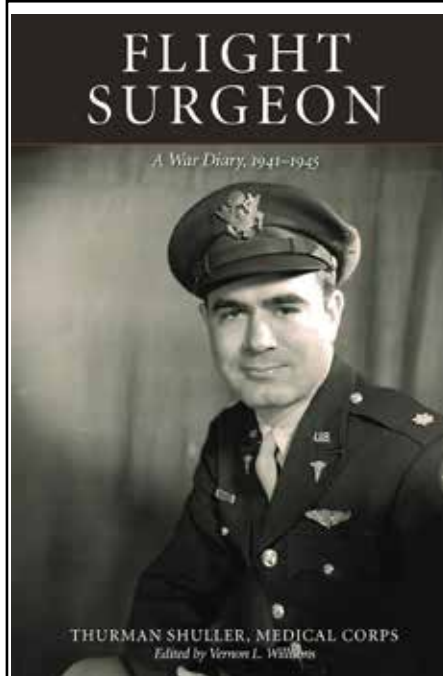
As we look forward to operations in 2024, I am confident we will continue to execute our missions with the same dis-

cipline and tenacity the Mighty Eighth has demonstrated. We will refine our practices and remain a lethal force, able to effectively conduct global strike by – on order – holding any target around the world at risk, anytime, anywhere.

Photo above:

In Australian airspace, the B-2 teamed up with a KC-135 Stratotanker from the Alaska Air National Guard to complete aerial refueling before integrating with eight fighter aircraft—two Royal Australian Air Force F-35A Lightning IIs, two RAAF EA-18 Growlers, two RAAF F/A-18F Super Hornets and two U.S. Air Force F-16C Aggressors to conduct training operations.

BOOKSHELF



Flight Surgeon: A War Diary **Thurman Shuller, Medical Corps**

Colonel Thurman Shuller's war diary traces his story from Las Vegas Army Airfield in the summer of 1941 to the desperate days of the air war in Europe. The group surgeon character in the motion picture *Twelve O'clock High* was based on Shuller during his time as Group

Surgeon of the famed 306th Bomb Group at Thurleigh, England, where he struggled with finding medical solutions for high altitude frostbite, oxygen deprivation, combat fatigue, and a growing crisis of hopelessness among the air crews. Shuller campaigned for setting the maxi-

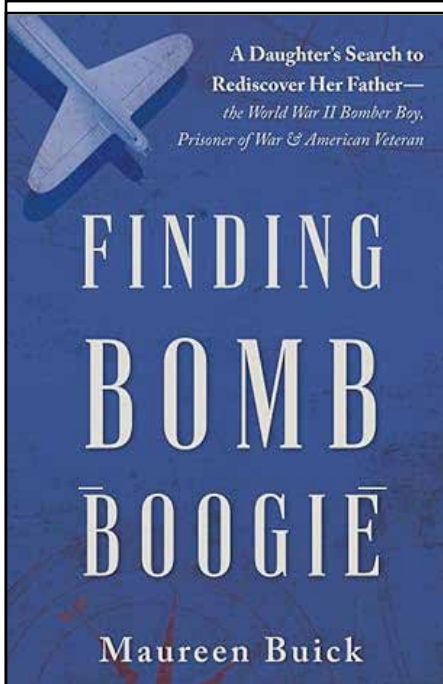
mum number of missions for air crews to fly in a combat tour and argued for the elimination of "Maximum Effort" missions that forced them back to base from furloughs and passes.

Shuller's diary brings his wartime experience back to life. His descriptions of the journey across the North Atlantic in the nose of a B-17 Flying Fortress are vivid and personal. His accounts about life among the British during the war bring a fresh look at the air war as it emerged from the pleasant meadowlands of East Anglia.

Royalties for the book are being donated to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force (www.mightyeighth.org).

PUBLISHER: Texas Christian University Press
PUBLISH DATE: 07/12/2021
PAGES: 368
ISBN-13: 9780875657790
ISBN-10: 0875657796
LANGUAGE: English

Availability may be limited to digital versions.



Finding Bomb Boogie: A Daughter's Search to Rediscover Her Father—the World War II Bomber Boy, Prisoner of War, and American Veteran **Maureen Buick**

How often has it been said—my father was in World War II but didn't want to talk about it? The sounds of silence related to personal war

stories reverberated in so many veterans' households. Families were left knowing only bits and pieces of their loved one's war narrative. Some were left with nothing at all.

Finding Bomb Boogie is a daughter's search to discover her father's war history long after he is gone—the quiet World War II veteran and tail gunner on a B-17 named "*Bomb Boogie*" flying bombing missions over Nazi-occupied Europe, the bomber boy of twenty-one years, scared of heights, parachuting twice out of a plane to his eventual capture by the Germans, the resilient airman held in a prisoner of war camp for twenty-two months who spent his twenty-fourth birthday year on a forced march in one of the coldest winters in over fifty years, the daredevil who rolled down a hill during the march to escape captivity in another prison camp, and the tired, emaciated young man who finally made it home, only to fight more battles.

Finding Bomb Boogie will inspire family members to learn and share their veteran's history with future generations—before these stories silently slip away. "Lest we forget."

PUBLISHER: West Portal Press (August 28, 2023)
LANGUAGE: English
PAPERBACK: 328 pages
ISBN-13: 979-8987024102

Available from Amazon and most booksellers.

We Called it Mission 12A...

by Maurice Hackler, 303rd Bomb Group/360th Bomb Squadron

My name is Maurice Hackler, former bombardier/navigator of the Army Air Force, better known to friends and acquaintances as "Hack." In the summer of 1944, I was a member of the Milton C Butler crew assigned to the 360th SQ, 303rd BG, stationed at Molesworth, England. This is a story about a fine young navigator that joined our crew for mission 12A. (We didn't call it thirteen until later.)

Following our ninth mission our crew navigator was grounded and shipped back to the States to be discharged from the military. We never knew why, but that is another story. I don't remember the name of the navigator assigned to our crew for this mission, but for the purpose of this story I'll call him Mike. He was a very likeable young man, and I was very comfortable and pleased to have him as my partner in the nose compartment in the B-17 in which we would spend the next few hours of our lives as we flew our assigned mission over Nazi Germany.

Our target this day was to be into Czechoslovakia, but was to be bombed by visual means

and his station for the mission. He was readily accepted by the crew and joined in the preparation activities and the usual light talk.

The take-off, rendezvous, and flight across the Channel into France and deep into Germany was normal and uneventful until we reached the Czechoslovakia border where the weather was 10/10 solid undercast cloud cover preventing any visual bombing of the primary or secondary targets within Czechoslovakia. The formation turned to a north heading and selected the Dresden Marshalling

Yards as the new target. The weather was clear without a cloud in the sky. No other flight formations could be seen, including fighters (ours or theirs), and from my position a beautiful panoramic view could be seen of highways, country villages, wooded areas and in the distance, the Marshalling Yards of Dresden.

We were flying in position three of the element such that



MILTON C. BUTLER CREW - 360th BS
(crew assigned 360BS: 07 Aug 1944 - photo: 29 Aug 1944)

(Back L-R) 1Lt Brook H. "Hap" Lovell (CP), 1Lt Milton C. Butler (P),
2Lt John E. Holden (N), 2Lt Maurice G. Hackler (B)
(Front L-R) S/Sgt David T. Johnson (TG), T/Sgt Harry G. Bird (E),
Sgt Robert E. Peterson (WG), T/Sgt Donald R. Christ (R)(KIA),
S/Sgt Donald E. Miller (BT)

only, which meant if the target was not visible thru the Norden Bombsight we were not to drop our bombs and would proceed to a secondary target within Germany—in this case, Dresden. Since this was Mike's first combat mission and with people he had never met before, he was somewhat apprehensive and confused as to what was expected of him relative to preparing himself

the pilot was in the co-pilot seat for better formation visibility and all I had to do was drop my bomb when the lead dropped his. We were on a north heading at approximately 25,000ft altitude with severe clear weather and all the time needed to make a good run, and no interference until just a few minutes before bombs away. Little Ludwig was manning the 88s and 105s that day and he was good since all he needed was a good telescope to see his target which included which plane in the formation he wanted to hit. The flak was intense and accurate, and the strike photos showed the bombs landed, for the most part, in the middle of the heaviest concentration of tracks in the yard.

As we cleared the target area the ball turret gunner, Don Miller, came on interphone and requested the waist gunner (Robert Peterson) to help him out of the ball, as he had been hit. Pete responded that, *"I can't, I've been hit, too."* My thoughts were, *"My God, the whole back end is shot off,"* and since my bombing duties were completed and I was unofficially designated as "Doc" for the crew, I began disconnecting my life lines to the ship's systems (oxygen, electrical, heat, and intercom) discarding my flak helmet and flak suite and plugged into a "walk-around" oxygen bottle which was supposedly good for 10 minutes of use.

As I passed the navigator I looked into his eyes for any sign of problems and with my thumb and forefinger asked the question, "OK?" He returned my stare and

gave the "OK" sign and I proceeded on thru the tunnel passed the pilots (Milton Butler and Brook Lovell), flight engineer (Harry Bird) and radio operator (Don Christi) checking on them to see they were still there. Since I was not on interphone I did not know if anything was being said between crew members as I made my way back to the ship waist and ball turret gunners.

It was always interesting to enter the bomb bay area since it wasn't possible to wear a parachute along the cat walk past the "V" braces. You could carry it, but not wear it attached to your harness. When pulling the cotter pins from bomb fuses (2 per bomb) it was sometimes necessary to straddle the bomb bay doors and bend down on my head to reach that bottom bomb. My thoughts at that time were "don't step on the door." To this day I don't know if it would have held my weight or not, and I'm glad I never found out.

When I reached the waist position, I was surprised to find Miller (ball turret) lying on the floor beneath the waist window and curled up against the armor plate that extended from beneath the window to the floor. Pete (waist gunner) was standing at the window looking out and apparently in the same position as over the target. Since Miller was lying on the floor, and he was the first to say he was hit, I began inquiring by language as where he was hurt. To my surprise he gave me the "OK" sign and assured me he was all right. My thought at the time was, *"If you're all right*

and not hit, what are you doing lying there?" In retrospect I can't say I could blame him. Hanging outside the bottom of the aircraft in a very cramped position is a very unnerving thing, and I can almost imagine what it would be with shells bursting below you. I know I'd want out of there. I found out later that the springs attaching the ammo chute to the turret guns had come loose and popped him in the thigh, and he thought he was hit.

Pete was just staring out into space with his thoughts all to himself. As I turned my attention to him he held out his elbow to me and I could see his heated suit had a small tear in it where something had penetrated the cloth. Looking across at the opposite waist window I could see where something had also penetrated the plexiglass causing it to spall off the inner side. I obtained a "rubber life-raft" knife (which looked like a sickle with the tip rounded off so that it couldn't puncture or cut the rubber) and proceeded to fold Pete's heated suit between my fingers and with the sickle knife began to cut. As I did so, sparks flew everywhere. His electric heated suit was still connected. Disconnecting his suite (the temperature must have been around -40°F at our altitude that day) and cutting away all clothing and expecting the worst, I was surprised again. As I looked at his elbow all I could see, other than a normal elbow, were two little red dots about ¾ inch apart. If you hold your arm straight the skin at the elbow is loose and flabby, which was apparently the

position Pete's arm was in when he was hit with a little piece of shrapnel the size of a "BB". The "BB" had penetrated the waist window behind Pete and gone in and back out of this loose fold

of skin on his elbow.

For this he received the Purple Heart. On a previous mission he had been hit in the middle of the back about 4 inches above the bottom of his flak suit with a piece of shrapnel about the size of an average man's thumb,

which bent and tore several steel plates out of his flak suite and left a black and blue bruise mark on his back. He sent that piece home when he told his folks he had received the Purple Heart. Having cut up Pete's heated suit and wrapping him up with any loose parkas or other warm clothing we could find, we sent him to the radio room to try to keep warm.

I plugged into intercom and called for an oxygen check and received an answer from everyone except Pete and tail gunner (David Johnson). Johnson had a bad habit of disconnecting his interphone connection accidentally as he shifted around in his close quarters. Whenever this happened Pete would pick up a spent 50 cal. Shell and throw it back to the tail to get his attention and signal him to connect his interphone. Following this procedure (Johnson) informed us that everything was "OK" at the tail position. On another mission

(his last) he let his pant leg rise up and got his bare leg against the fuselage metal frame. The last time I saw him he was in the hospital with a moderate case of frostbite complaining about the



Fort over Molesworth

fact that Uncle Sam had spent all that money on him, training him to be a gunner, and he had completed his tour of duty without ever firing at an enemy fighter. I told him I was very happy about the whole thing.

Returning to the nose compartment, I found that my oxygen system had been shot out and my supply was reading zero. Since my 10-minute bottle was now approaching 15 minutes, I looked around for another source and found a bottle replenishing connector above the navigator's table whose oxygen system was apparently all right. As I started to plug in my empty bottle to his supply, Mike put out his hand to stop me.

Since I hadn't as yet connected my intercom, I returned to my station up front and connecting my interphone I asked him what was the matter. He informed me that if I made the connection, it might stick open due to the low temperature and deplete the

oxygen supply. He was right, it might, but on the other hand, what were my choices? I didn't answer him. Instead, I disconnected my interphone and moved past him where I plugged into

his system while he watched.

I had just completed disconnecting my bottle from the ship's left side oxygen system (without any problem) when we ran into more flak. From where it was coming, I didn't know; and

since I was still disconnected from the ship's systems, without flak suit or helmet, and sitting on the navigator's floor of armor, I reached for my flak suit, threw it up in the air and crawled under it. Mike remained standing, leaning against the compartment. He just stood there staring at me lying on the floor and I motioned him to do likewise. (That's one thing I could never understand about the navigators I flew with. They always stood up looking over my shoulder while on the bomb run instead of hugging the 5/16th armor plate floor on which they were standing. I had a quarter inch of plexiglass under me which was the access cover to the twin fifties of the chin turret. I also patched up two navigators who received flak hits while standing up. One was hit in the arm by a small piece that left a red mark but didn't break the skin, and the other was hit in the thigh, scooping out a tablespoon of skin and muscle before ricocheting off and

...but after we landed, we called it 13

lodging in his chute harness webbing. I dug the piece of flak out of the webbing and gave it to the navigator as a souvenir. I never saw him again.)

In response to my hand waving and my example action of hugging the floor, Mike did a very slow deep knee bend keeping his back vertical while assuming a squatting position. His eyes (which is all that can be seen of a person's face while wearing an oxygen mask and flak helmet) gave me the impression that he was completely bewildered by my actions and the events of the mission up to that time. Nothing more was said and after clearing the flak attack, I climbed back into my seat, put on my flak suit, and plugged into interphone and called for an oxygen check. All stations reported in, and things returned to normal—well, almost. The tail gunner remained on interphone and the ball turret gunner was sure hugging the armor plate beneath the waist window. I and the rest of the crew except for Butler, Lovell, and Byrd (pilot, co-pilot, and engineer) didn't know until after we landed that the pilot and co-pilot had switched positions since the right-hand seat would be easier to fly for close formation. Butler was flying on the bomb run when a large piece of flak penetrated the right-hand window upper track area striking Butler on his helmet's right-hand ear flap hinge spot-welds, knocking off the ear

flap, and knocked him over into the aisle and off the controls.

Lovell took over the controls and no one in the crew except the three in the pilot's compartment knew anything had happened. Lovell said Butler sat back up in his seat with the left-hand ear flap covering his face, he turned his helmet back to the normal position, shook his head, and took over the controls. Nothing was said, but I understand Lovell started wearing his flak helmet—which he hadn't done before. Butler wasn't hurt. The rest of the mission was uneventful except for what happened after landing at base and the reason for writing this story.

Following engine shut down and changing out of flight suits, pulling guns, etc., and while waiting for the truck to pick us up to take us to interrogation (and refreshments supplied by the lovely ladies of the Red Cross) we were missing the navigator. One of the crew reported he had seen the navigator leave the plane without changing clothes and flag down a jeep that passed by while the rest of our crew went through the motions of cleaning up and doing whatever you do following a mission. The navigator didn't show up for interrogation and no one knew of his whereabouts.

To close the story down and get to the point, it seems that Mike had gone directly from the shop to see the Priest, who I presume, was Father Skoner. What

occurred after that I do not know, and we never saw Mike again. I presumed he went on flying and hopefully completed his tour of duty. I do know that our mission number 12A, and Mike's mission number 1 (one) left serious doubts in his mind about his future, to the extent he felt the need for reassurance from someone other than his fellow crewmen.

While attending my first 303rd reunion in Washington, D.C. in 1983, I was introduced to Chaplain Slawson and in my surprise, I blurted out, "*Thank heaven I didn't need you.*" It was the above story that immediately came to mind and caused me to make such a stupid statement for which I sincerely apologize to Chaplain Slawson and the members of the 303rd. At the time (after 40 years) I could not immediately remember Chaplain Slawson or of attending services while at Molesworth. Since then, I've been able to recall attending services and communion in the theatre near the NCO club of the 360th SQ. I even have a mental picture of the Chaplain, his portable sacrament table and even his appearance and mannerisms as he gave his sermon. I don't remember the exact words, but I do remember that what he said was a comfort to me. Need him? Of course, I did—we all did.

Epilog: After a long and successful career as an aeronautical engineer, Maurice Glen "Hack" Hackler passed away in 2017 at the age of 95.

Maida, Dr. Frank Vincent, 98,



passed away on January 16, 2024, in Raleigh, NC. Dr. Maida was born on October 15, 1925, in Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania; he was the son of

Italian immigrants Emanuele Maida and Francesca Cutaia Maida.

Drafted into the Army at 18, Frank proudly served his country from 1943 to 1945. As a member of WWII's "Mighty 8th" Air Force, he flew 43 daytime missions over enemy-occupied Europe as depicted in the documentary film *The Cold Blue*.

Despite never completing his high school diploma due to his military service, he got his GED, and utilizing the GI Bill, enrolled in the University of Pittsburgh's School of Pharmacy graduating in 1949. In 1950 he married Phyllis Santoriello, of Pittsburgh, PA. He returned to his hometown of Mt. Pleasant where he owned and operated 2 locations of Maida Pharmacy for the next 7 years.

A licensed pharmacist, Frank embarked on his medical career at the University of Rome, Italy in 1957, graduating with a degree in medicine and surgery in 1963. He did his internship at St. Francis Hospital in Pittsburgh. He then practiced in Pittsburgh prior to setting up his own practice of 40 years in his hometown of Mt. Pleasant, PA.

Frank was an avid gardener and hunter, a college football fanatic, particularly concerning his alma mater, The University of Pittsburgh, and a diehard fan of the Pittsburgh Steelers. He is lovingly survived by his wife of 73 years, Phyllis Santoriello Maida, of Raleigh, NC. Children: Emanuele and (Youvapa) Maida of Beltsville, MD, Frances and (Dale)

Martin, of Raleigh, NC, and Andrea Maida and (Joe Knight) of Solana Beach, CA. Grandchildren: Julia and (Bryan) Earnhardt of Raleigh, NC, Phennapa Phetkanpoom, and Mirintra Zubrez, both of Beltsville, MD. Great-Grandchildren: Caroline Earnhardt, Emmy Earnhardt and Taylor Earnhardt of Raleigh, NC., and Shuphitha Phawapoothanon of Beltsville, MD.

Frank is also survived by his brother Peter P. Maida of Norvelt, PA and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins and many great friends in the communities of Abbotswood and Whispering Pines in Raleigh, NC, as well as those in western Pennsylvania, and Europe.

In addition to his parents, Frank was preceded in death by sisters, Angelina and Elizabeth and brothers, Gerald, Alfonso, and Joseph.

McClintick, Ellis Burnett, 101



passed away on November 12, 2023. He was a longtime resident of Sarpy County. He retired from the U.S. Air Force at the Strategic

Air Command Headquarters on November 1, 1972, after completing over 30 years of active-duty service. He was the husband of Rhoda "Rae" (Enslow) McClintick for nearly 50 years, and they were the parents of four sons, eight grandchildren, thirteen great grandchildren, and six great, great grandchildren. Rae preceded him in death in August 1996. Also preceding him in death were his parents, William, Alta, and Louella (Burnett) McClintick, three sisters, three brothers and their wives. Ellis served in Europe during WWII

as B-17 "Flying Fortress" navigator in the 390th Bomb Group. After he survived his tour of aerial combat against the Hitler regime, he completed pilot training and continued to serve during the Korean and Vietnam conflicts and the Cold War as a Command Pilot, staff officer and commander. Among the medals he received in recognition of his service are four Air Medals, the Distinguished Flying Cross, and the French Legion of Honor.

After his retirement, Ellis actively supported the public effort to ensure all military veterans are honored and remembered. He joined and financially supported a wide array of organizations and museums memorializing the sixteen million veterans that served in WWII, as well as those serving in subsequent conflicts. He was a Charter Member of the American Air Museum in Great Britain and the WWII

Museum in New Orleans, LA. He was a Life Member of the Daedalian Foundation, the Strategic Air Command and Space Museum near Ashland, NE and the 390th Bomb Group Museum in Tucson, AZ. He was a member and supporter of the U.S. Air Force Museum at Dayton, OH, the Commemorative Air Force Museum at Midland, TX, the WASP (Women Air Service Pilots) Museum at Sweetwater, Texas, the 8th Air Force Historical Society, and the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force near Savannah, GA. He was also a member and supporter of both the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). Love of family was most important to Ellis, and he conducted regular and frequent family gatherings to help insure his offspring remained close. Family reunions and published family memories were essential activities.

He is survived by four sons: James E. (Deanna), Lincoln, NE; Phillip R. (Deborah), Louisville, KY; Thomas R.; William A. (Elizabeth); plus, eight grandchildren, thirteen great grandchildren, and six great, great grandchildren across the USA.

Also survived by devoted companion, Bonnie S. Heald of the Hillcrest Grand Lodge, and a sister-in-law, Laurene McClintick of Indian Wells, CA.

Vickery, Benjamin Franklin, Jr.,



98, of Minnetonka, Minnesota, went to be with his Lord on December 8, 2023. "Minnesota's Most Humble Artist" was featured in the 2018 award-winning

documentary, *Grandpa Ben*, which was created by his granddaughter and her husband. Ben was quite the character and always ready with a witty joke. In WWII, Ben was a Staff Sergeant tail-gunner in the Army Air Force flying in a B-24 Liberator named "Homeward Angel". A native of Jamestown, Colorado, born March 29, 1925. He met the love of his life, Millie Hoover, from Howard Lake, MN, in 1949, when she was living in Denver. During their courtship they would go dancing to the Lawrence Welk Orchestra. They married on September 23, 1950, in Howard Lake and started their life together in Minneapolis, where their first child, Robert, was born. They then moved to Longmont, Colorado, and added their second child, Marilyn. Finally, they moved back to Minnesota to settle down for good. A bricklayer by trade, he built their home in Minnetonka brick-by-brick, where they added two more children to

their busy home, Janet and Ronald and, sadly, lost another shortly after birth. Ben's creativity and love of music were passed on to his children. He continued singing with the Minnetonka Clippers Barbershop Chorus well into his 90's. He was an artist at heart, painting and carving incredible works of art including many ribbon-winning paintings and carvings featured at the Minnesota State Fair and other competitions. His love for airplanes allowed him to identify at home, by sound, the vintage airplanes flying overhead from the Wings of the North airplane museum at the Flying Cloud Airport in Eden Prairie. He was also an avid University of Minnesota Gopher football fan (with many years of season tickets) and a fair-weather Vikings fan on Sundays in front of the TV. Many an evening was spent sitting with Millie watching Gopher basketball and then Cheers after the news (popcorn required!). A huge lover of big band music, classic TV, model trains, and airplanes, Ben's fun-loving spirit and quick wit will be greatly missed. After Millie's sudden passing in 2014, Ben adopted a rambunctious puppy he named Elvis to keep him company when the kids or grandkids were not visiting. Preceded in death by parents, Benjamin F. Vickery, Sr., and Elizabeth (Stockton) Vickery, sister Lois Moss, brother Lloyd Vickery, and wife Mildred. Survived by his children Robert Vickery, Marilyn (Rob) Rukavina, Jan (Rick) Lillemo, and Ron (Serra) Vickery; grandchildren Jennifer (Justin), David, Benjamin III (Lux), Hayden, Cole, and Noah; sister Donna Martin. In lieu of flowers, memorials preferred to 8th Air Force Historical Society or Shriners Hospital for Children. A special thank you to Brookdale

North Oaks and Brookdale Hospice Minnesota for their wonderful care and kindness to our incredible Dad the last few months of his life. He will be missed by many and loved by all. "Tooda-loo! Don't take any wooden nickels!"

While it is truly our honor and privilege to print death notices here, please understand we are NOT automatically notified upon the death of our veterans or other members.

Please forward all TAPS to:

*ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org
912-748-8884*

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***Remember: submission does NOT guarantee publication.**

***Due to size constraints of the magazine, I am very limited in publishing unsolicited 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**

A MOMENT IN TIME

A Dirty Little War

Part 1

Deja Vu

JM Pittman, Next Gen 466th BG



For those who had flown in the Flak and Fighter filled skies over Nazi Germany, the briefing room brought back memories of missions and friends from a not-too-distant past. Chatter filled the room as excited fliers chafed at the briefing that kept them from getting into the air. Others retreated inwards as the momentum of the mission carried them inexorably toward their fate. It was little different from Attlebridge or Thorpe Abbots.

A familiar routine took hold as the briefing moved from one point to the next. Take off time, rendezvous location with the fighters, location of the turning point and IP, target coordinates and escape routes to the departure point. Over Germany the bomber stream would have stretched nearly 15 miles behind the lead aircraft. Ahead of them, hundreds of fighters would have swept the sky clean of Hitler's best. It felt like 1944 ~ But it wasn't!

Today, less than fifty bombers would conduct the strike. The chariots they would ride into battle were the best the US had to offer ~ in 1945. With America's newest Strategic Bomber held in reserve to conduct nuclear strike missions, Air Force commanders reached into their tool bag and pulled out an old friend.

Reclassified as a medium bomber, the venerable B-29 was pulled from storage and reserve units across the United States. Refurbished and refitted, they would fight a war halfway around the globe. They might be a little older, they may have seen better days, but they still packed a punch.

Like so many airfields in WWII, revetments on Okinawa's

Kadena Airfield were filled with bombers. The

Superfortresses of the 19th Bomb Group were impressive. With a wingspan of one hundred and forty-two feet, each bomber could carry a payload of twenty thousand pounds to targets nearly four thousand miles away at altitudes in excess of thirty thousand feet.

Pilots, navigators, bombardiers, and flight engineers, however, were in short supply. To flush out the crews, many reservists who had bomber experience during WWII were yanked from families and jobs to man the planes. A businessman could go from boardroom to bombing mission in less than six months.

Leaving the briefing room pilots, navigators, and bombardiers gathered separately before reuniting with their crews on the flight line. The days targets would include bridges near the Yalu River. Flak would be minimal. Korean airfields along the approach were not operational. They could expect Migs but would be escorted by nearly one-hundred fighters.

April 12, 1951, was a typical day at Antung Airfield. Located just north of the Yalu River, its landscape was dotted with small sleek fighters. Fast and nimble their twenty- and thirty-seven-millimeter cannons carried a punch much larger than their

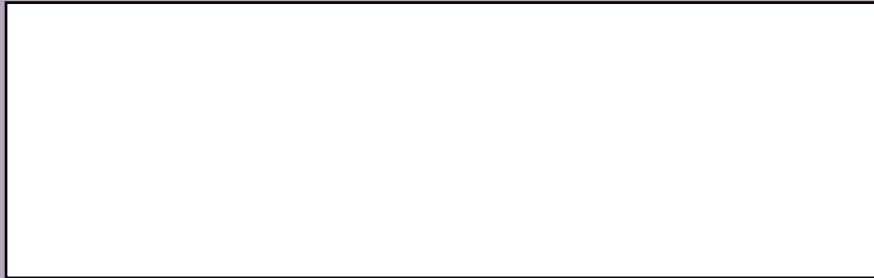




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opponents. On this day, most of the Mig pilots and their ground crews stayed close to the planes. Increased radio traffic meant the US Air Force was probably up to something.

Radar operators tracked the formation as its winged its way across the Pacific. When they approached the Korean Peninsula, Soviet Commanders sounded the alarm. The airfield reverberated with the sound of jet engines roaring to life. Climbing and forming up, one group of fighters marshaled in defense of the hydroelectric system along the Yalu, while another group of thirty headed across the river to intercept the bombers.

The B-29s were massive and slow. They could be seen from miles away. Flying at the same altitude, the escort fighters were slow and vulnerable as they performed figure eights in an attempt to stay with the bombers. Faster and higher, the Mig-15 pilots swung around and behind the bombers before making their attack.

Rolling his fighter over on one wing, Sergey Kramarenko dove at the bombers below. Descending, he picked up speed as he lined up on

a B-29 and squeezed the trigger. *"I still remember the image in my mind: an armada of planes is flying in combat formation. Suddenly, we swoop down on top of them. I open fire on one of the bombers—immediately white smoke starts billowing out. I had*



damaged the fuel tank." Having inflicted a crippling blow on the bomber formation, the Soviet pilots broke contact and scooted across the Yalu River before any Sabres could come on the scene.

As if the dark days of 1943 had returned. Four aircraft and their crews had been lost. Battered and bruised, the remainder headed for the safety of the

sea. Counting aircraft shot down and heavily damaged, the loss rate had approached nearly 25%. The plan to keep the fighters with the bombers hadn't worked any better over Mig Alley in 1951 than it had over Nazi Germany in 1943. Forbidden from chasing the Migs into China, Doolittle's tactics that defeated the Luftwaffe in 1944 were prohibited. There was no other choice but to suspend B-29 operations anywhere Soviet Migs could operate.

J M Pittman