

September 2025



8TH AF NEWS

Volume 25 Number 3 Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

50

Anniversary
CELEBRATING

51st Annual 8th AFHS REUNION

50th Anniversary of the Founding of the 8th AFHS

October 1-5, 2025 ~ Colorado Springs, CO



th AF News

Voice of "The Mighty Eighth"

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Cover: Fifty years ago a group of 8th Air Force WWII veterans joined together to form an organization to preserve the accomplishments and memories of those who served and continue to serve in the 8th Air Force.

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THE 8TH A F NEWS

The Eighth Air Force News is dedicated to the memory of Lt. Col. John H. Woolnough, founder of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society in 1975, and Editor of the "News" for sixteen years. It is published quarterly and is the official news magazine of the Society, a 501(c)3 not for profit corporation. EIN: 59-1757631
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**68 Kimberlys Way
Jasper, GA 30143-4769**

EDITOR'S NOTES

Time.

As a child, it often felt like time stood still, especially when birthdays and holidays felt so far away. I remember being so eager to start school...become a teenager...get my driver's license...turn 21...so many milestones!

Now, time is passing far too quickly. This year marks my 14th annual 8thAFHS reunion, yet it feels like my first was only yesterday. I have met so many incredible and wonderful people through these reunions over the years. I've formed life-long friendships with many of our veterans and their families. My heart is broken every time one of them passes away.

These past few months, I've learned that several of our "next gens" (my contemporaries) have also passed away. I place obituary notices in the Taps section of 8th A F News as I receive them. We feel it is both a responsibility as well as a privilege to honor the lives of those who served our country as well as those who diligently worked to preserve their memories.

Preserving memories, the history of the Eighth Air Force, has been the focus of the 8th Air Force Historical Society for

the past **FIFTY YEARS!** In order to continue this mission—this incredible journey—we need the support of not only those who currently serve and/or have served in the Eighth since its birth in 1942, but historians, teachers...**EVERYONE** dedicated to preserving the incredible history and stories of these men and women.

We must not let the memories of the past fade into obscurity. They must be preserved as we add new memories made by the brave men and women of the Eighth Air Force every single day.

Congratulations on the Society's Fiftieth Anniversary! We can do this. **With your help.**

During this upcoming reunion we will be electing and/or re-electing members to serve on our Board of Directors. Please consider donating your time and talent to the Society by serving on the Board...

See you all in Colorado!

Deb



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



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

Address: _____ City: _____ State/County: _____

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

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

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

Includes digital copy of 8th A F News ONLY~ *Hard copies are \$25 US or £20 outside US (annually)*

Credit Card # _____ CVV: _____ Exp. Date: _____ Amount: _____

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

Please make checks payable to 8th AFHS

PayPal: ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org

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

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

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Hattie Hearn, 104 Barclay Rd, Norwich, NFK
NR7 9QT
(011 44) 7584 668976

JOIN/RENEW ONLINE: www.8thAFHS.org

PRESIDENT'S BRIEFING

Paul W Tibbets IV President

Greetings everyone!

Your Board is very excited for our upcoming **51st Annual Reunion** October 1st-5th in Colorado Springs. This is also the **50th Anniversary** of the Founding of the 8th Air Force Historical Society! We have another outstanding agenda planned with nearly 300 of you, your family and friends planning to attend. We will also have some limited-edition coins and shirts at the reunion. For all the latest info please check out our website.

We have some exciting **keynote speakers** for your enjoyment. Thursday night we will hear a fantastic presentation on NORAD from **General Gregory Guillot**, Commander, United States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command, Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado. At our Gala Saturday evening, **General Stephen Whiting**, Commander, U.S. Space Command, Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado will discuss today's Space Force. I am so proud of both of these gentlemen, who are classmates of mine from the USAFA Class of 1989 and now 4-star generals.

In this issue (see page XX) you will find all the information on this year's **elections** for your Society Board of Directors. **Six total positions** are available:

- Three of our current board members are running for re-election – Steve Snyder, Kevin Wilson and myself.
- Additionally, there are three open positions to be filled.

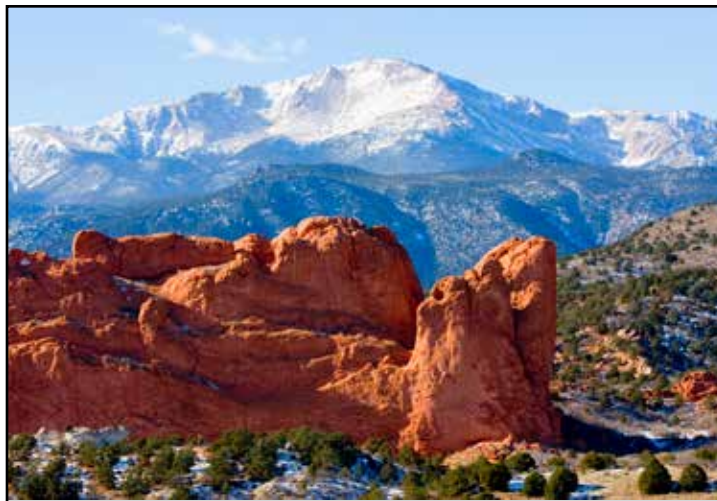
Both **Anne Marek** and **Mark Klingensmith** will be departing the Board...please join me in thanking them for their outstanding service to the Society!

Once again this year we have a **unique opportunity** to hear updates from three distinguished speakers during the **General Membership Meeting**.

- **Jim Petersen, President, Historic Wendover Airfield Foundation.** Mr. Peterson will discuss their work at Wendover Airfield, the oldest original remaining and authentically preserved WWII Army Air Force base in the United States.



- **Dr. Hattie Hearn, Curator, American Air Museum, Duxford.** Dr. Hearn will update us on the American Air Museum and its effort to document the Anglo-American cooperation during World War II.



- **Scott Loehr, President/CEO, The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force.** Mr. Loehr will provide the latest details on the Museum expansion now underway!

For your planning, we have an **update on the dates for our future reunion sites**. Due to the ongoing construction at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, we are moving the reunion in Pooler to 2027,

and the San Antonio reunion to 2026:

- Oct 14-18, 2026: San Antonio, Texas, home of the River Walk and many military organizations.
- Oct 13-17, 2027: Pooler, Georgia, home of The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force.

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

Respectfully,

Paul

Paul Tibbets

President, 8 AFHS

Looking forward to seeing you in Colorado Springs!

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 July, 2025. The Profit and Loss Statement and the Statement of Financial Position are printed here. Our investment portfolio opened this year at \$217K. It closed at the end of July at \$212K indicating that it is slowly returning to its opening value as markets stabilize and the tariff issues are resolved. Mr. Gavin Natelli, our account executive, continues to recommend no further changes at this time.

The Keep 'em Flying Giving Campaign was created in

March, 2023, in order to stabilize the Society's financial resources. It continues to provide steady income to offset our expenses. So far this year, our very generous members which includes two of our bomb groups have donated a total of \$14K across the various membership levels. Details of the program appear in AF News, and the individuals and their donation amounts are printed on our website, 8thAFHS.org. I will continue to report on the progress of this initiative. I have enjoyed my years as being your Treasurer but this will be my last Treasurer's Report as my term on the Board will end next month. 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 - July, 2025

	Total
Income	
4000 Income/Miscellaneous	
4005 BOA Rewards	0.05
4006 Account Processing Fees	337.35
4010 Member Dues Annual	27,821.70
4012 Magazine Subscription	5,500.00
4013 Magazine Income	205.00
4015 Keep 'em Flying	14,000.00
4019 Member Contributions/Donations	15,495.00
4022 Merchandise	256.00
Total 4000 Income/Miscellaneous	\$ 63,615.10
4050 Investment Income	
4058 Portfolio Dividends & Interest	1,126.22
4060 Unrealized Gain(Loss) on Invest	-6,248.25
Total 4050 Investment Income	-\$ 5,122.03
Total Income	\$ 58,493.07
Gross Profit	\$ 58,493.07
Expenses	
5100 National Administration Expense	
5103 Officers/Directors Meeting Exp.	159.90
5104 Awards, Gifts & Grants	422.52
5108 Web Site Expense	1,208.49
5111 Corporation Charges	70.00
5121 BAF History Projects	2,500.00
Total 5100 National Administration Expense	\$ 4,360.91
5200 Magazine Expenses	
5210 Printing Expenses	4,508.34
5220 Postage Expenses	3,586.18
Total 5200 Magazine Expenses	\$ 8,094.52
5300 National Office Expenses	
5303 Telephone/DSL	426.12
5304 Supplies	1,869.16
5305 Abila Software/ Computer Exps	1,782.17
5306 Accounting Support	56.00
5307 Office Rent	700.00
5308 Insurance	1,198.17
5312 FICA-BAFHS portion	2,405.77
5313 Payroll/ Office Management	31,448.17
5314 Local Travel/Miscellaneous	493.99
5315 Postage & Shipping	699.52
5316 Bank Charges/ Returned checks	4.60
5323 Merchant Account Usage Fees	2,488.97
5326 Payroll processing fees	430.00
Total 5300 National Office Expenses	\$ 44,004.64
Total Expenses	\$ 56,460.07
Net Operating Income	\$ 2,033.00
Other Income	
6550 Annual Meeting Revenue	
6551 Event Registration	44,872.29
Total 6550 Annual Meeting Revenue	\$ 44,872.29
Total Other Income	\$ 44,872.29
Other Expenses	
7100 Annual Meeting Expenses	
7103 Hotel Expense/Catering	18,000.00
7104 Tours/Transportation	3,120.64
7106 Reimbursements	347.00
Total 7100 Annual Meeting Expenses	\$ 21,467.64
Total Other Expenses	\$ 21,467.64
Net Other Income	\$ 23,404.65
Net Income	\$ 25,437.65

8th Air Force Historical Society Statement of Financial Position As of July 31, 2025

	Total
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
1017 Oppenheimer & Co	211,560.00
1040 Bank of America Checking Acct.	36,961.78
1041 B of A Deposits in Transit	0.00
1042 Bank of America Savings Acct.	43.83
Total Bank Accounts	\$ 248,565.61
Accounts Receivable	
1100 Accounts Receivable	0.00
Total Accounts Receivable	\$ 0.00
Other Current Assets	
1200 Prepaid Expenses	0.00
1201 Undeposited Funds	0.00
Total Other Current Assets	\$ 0.00
Total Current Assets	\$ 248,565.61
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 248,565.61
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	44,665.34
2051 Payroll payable	2,896.57
2052 FICA & withhold taxes payable	52,408.15
Total 2050 Payroll & Taxes Payable	\$ 10,639.38
2500 Accrued Expenses	0.00
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$ 10,639.38
Total Current Liabilities	\$ 10,639.38
Total Liabilities	\$ 10,639.38
Equity	
3100 Unrestricted Net Assets	0.00
3200 "Unrestricted Net Assets	212,568.58
Net Income	25,437.65
Total Equity	\$ 238,026.23
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$ 248,565.61



“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 **today!**

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 Kimberlys Way, Jasper, GA 30143-4769.

Visa, MasterCard, or American Express credit cards only.

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____ CVV: _____ 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.

UNSUNG HEROES...

by Suzie Harrison

American Battle Monuments Commission Cambridge American Cemetery and Memorial

*The
only thing that ever really
frightened me during the war was the
U-Boat peril...It did not take the form of flaring
battles and glittering achievements, it manifested it-
self through statistics, diagrams, and curves unknown
to the nation, incomprehensible to the public.
Winston S Churchill*

We do not know if the "...U-Boat peril..." really did terrify Britain's wartime premier, Winston Churchill. He might be forgiven for relying on hyperbole when looking for a more emphatic turn of phrase. Penned with hindsight in his World War II tome *Their Finest Hour* – the series for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, 1953 – it is, however, a stark phrase that conjures up terrifying visions of men lost at sea.

Churchill coined another phrase – the Battle of the Atlantic – giving name to the "longest, largest, and most complex" naval battle in history. It lasted from September 1939 to May 1945. For Great Britain, a net importer of food, raw materials and fuel, winning this battle was vital to her continued survival; coincidentally, Japan was in a similar position in the Pacific. The protection of merchantmen, transports and troopships was paramount.

*The line between order and disorder lies in logistics.
Sun Tzu: 544-496 BC*

Apart from the obvious supply of troops and war *material*, logistics is that stuff you never knew you needed.

*For want of a nail, the shoe was lost;
For want of the shoe, the horse was lost;
For want of the horse, the rider was lost;
For want of the rider, the battle was lost;
For want of the battle, the kingdom was lost;
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.
Mother Goose*

So, the problem was how to get goods from where they were produced to the front line. The protection of these trade routes using a 'concentration and economy of force' was overriding. British Naval Captain Donald MacIntyre, successful escort commander, historian and journalist went on, 'During the centuries of almost incessant naval warfare which came to an end with the defeat of Napoleon, the application of these principles to the defense of merchant shipping has resulted in the unquestioned adoption in time of war of the convoy system.'

The amateurs discuss tactics: the professionals discuss logistics.

Napoleon Bonaparte: 1769-1821

From when this remark was made by Bonaparte nothing has changed. Nothing will ever change.

Well before the United States entered WWII one group of Americans was heavily involved in the conflict. These were the men of the United States Merchant Marine. They went out in ships, day after day, in all weather, to make sure that goods were transported around the world.

A sea-going nation, reliant on imports, Britain soon ran low on food, raw materials and fuel after war started in Europe, September 1939. It was the merchant seamen who kept the British supplied. Sympathetic to the Allied cause, President Roosevelt was able to come to the aid of the Allies with the Lend Lease program. Britain, Russia and China could purchase supplies vital to the war effort,

News from Across the Pond...

with a promise to pay later. It behooved the USA to look after her own interests; so along with other Allied nations, she provided military escort to the convoys of merchant ships, against an enemy trying equally hard to stop those ships reaching their destinations. It was like sheepdogs protecting a flock from the wolves!

When America entered WWII (December 7, 1941), she knew it would not be possible to fight a war in the European Theater of Operations from the USA.

Almost the only place left that could be considered was the British Isles, from which it was a 'short hop' to mainland Europe. Already two years into the war, Britain could not support the newly arriving GIs, which meant that there needed to be a continuous supply of food, building materials, fuel and war *materiel* for the expanding American military presence. Ships transporting those goods needed ongoing protection during the long Atlantic leg.



LC-USZC4-6770 Library of Congress



IWM Art.IWM PST 13989

A British perspective



Russian Arctic Convoys. Daily Mail.

Conditions at sea were often horrendous. In *Merchantmen at War*, His Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) describes, '...winter convoys to Murmansk and Archangel...[when]... the ship has often labored under an extra burden of 150 tons of ice...To Malta, often called the classic convoy...Across the Atlantic...peopling those 2,000 miles of sea with maybe a dozen mighty

News from Across the Pond...

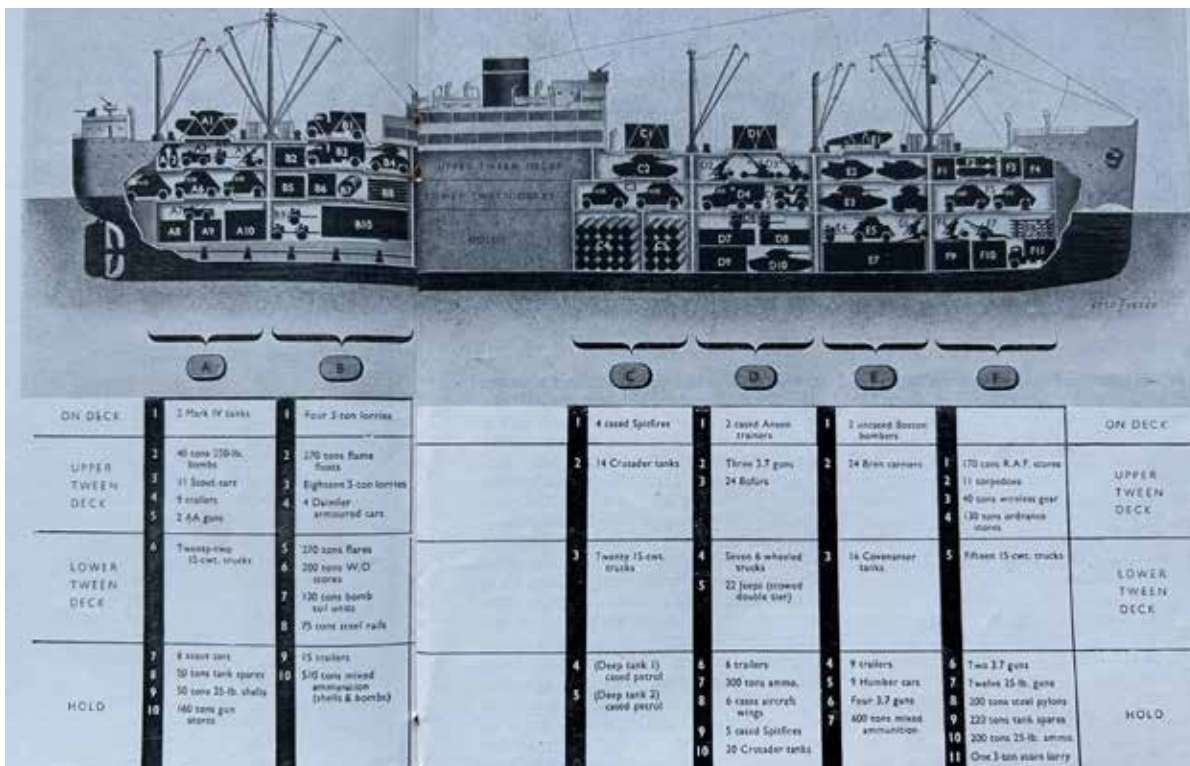
convoys at a time... often [*carrying*] cargoes they were never built for.'



Above: Iced-up merchantman on Arctic Convoy. www.usmm.org

Pictured below:

'WAR CARGO: This diagram shows in detail the typical cargo of an outgoing liner of 10,500 tons. Loading must take into account balance, safety, accessibility, and speed of discharge. Around the items indicated above another 5,000 tons of general stores are stowed wherever space allows. Loading officers ring many changes in the general arrangements shown here.' Merchantmen at War, HMSO.



'Before a deep-sea convoy sails, a conference is held between the...[*naval escorts*]...and the merchant Masters, accompanied sometimes by their chief engineers or navigating officers. To this conference comes, where possible, the Commodore of Convoy.' He talks of his ship keeping revolutions steady and the importance of keeping together; of changing course to sound signals when in fog; U-boats hunting in packs of 20; of stragglers (ahead, behind, or abeam) getting picked off; maintaining the blackout; not making smoke, which can easily be seen by reconnoitering aircraft. All to ensure the convoy reaches its destination safely.



Above: 'Convoy Conference – It is the last meeting before the convoy sails. Here final instructions are given on formation, dispersal, rendezvous, and all the intricate details of convoy tactics at sea. These men are Masters, each man is a ship, and each must know his place.' July 1941. IWM: A 4546.

These men are Masters, each man is a ship, and each must know his place." July 1941. IWM: A 4546.

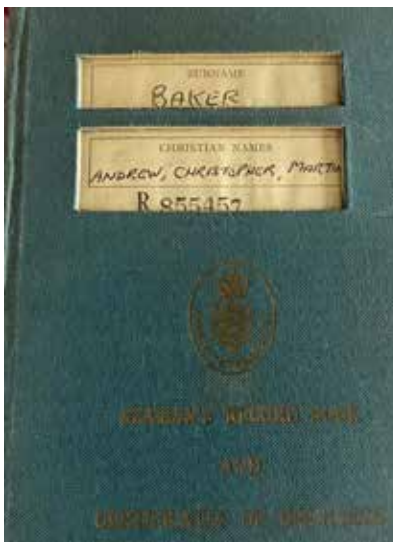
Sailing at the rear of the convoy was a rescue ship, the Master of which offered sage advice that, "...ship's officers and men wearing dentures

News from Across the Pond...

should keep them in their mouths or their pockets, because men in open boats have suffered much from having left them behind..." If a ship is torpedoed it is vital to know its position, so he instructs the merchantmen to send off a radio message or flare. He tells the conference that his ship is fitted out as a hospital ship, but "The only thing the Admiralty don't do is tell us how to get them out of the water. They say that it is ordinary seaman's practice, but believe me, ... "and he smiles dryly, "...it is *extraordinary* practice."

If you can, watch these three short reels of *We Sail at Midnight* <https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060022001>

Below: This is an example of a seaman's log. It dates from 1968 but is in fact very similar in detail to those issued from 1941. Instead of being unwaged between voyages it guaranteed continuity of pay, even when a man was discharged after a voyage. It would appear to still be in the paler blue economy wartime version rather than the usual dark blue. S K Harrison family papers.



In 1941 the 'Essential Work Order for the Merchant Navy' was introduced, calling for all seamen to be registered. By 1942, there were 120,000 seamen in the British Merchant Navy, including Commonwealth and foreign seamen. The war had created the

need to regularize the profession of 'Seaman', guaranteeing pay, leave, and welfare. 'The Pool' was created to fill positions on board ships wherever the discharge of seamen left a vacancy. If directly reemployed after a voyage a sailor does not enter 'The Pool', but after longer shore leave has to join again for reassignment.

An American View

In his introduction to *Heroes in Dungarees*, John Bunker writes that when America entered WWII, the Merchant Marine, although still privately owned, came under government control. The men who sailed the ships were civilians, but...subject to disciplinary action by the US Coast Guard and, when overseas, by local US military authorities...After completing a voyage they could usually leave ship but had to join another vessel within a reasonable period...or be drafted into the US Armed Forces... no uniform [was] required...'

America had pioneered the use of pre-fabrication to

build ships for dry goods, from pre-prepared sections that could be welded together, shortening the time a ship would spend on the dockyard shipways. In June 1936 Congress created the

US Maritime Commission to expedite the creation of '...a modern merchant marine, which would also serve as a naval auxiliary in time of war.' There were various ship designs, but with the pressures of war in Europe, a standard freighter was chosen, based on the adaptation of the British tramp ship (unscheduled cargo pick-ups) design. These easy to assemble vessels

News from Across the Pond...

were called Liberty Ships (later followed by the faster long-haul Victory Ships). By peak production in 1943, around 100 Liberty ships annually were rolling down the slipways at a cost of \$1.5 million each.



A Liberty ship needed a crew of around 43. Here is part of the crew of the SS Savannah - including the cook - who could be spared from duties for a photo. J Bunker Collection.

Training

Basically, prior to WWII, all Merchant Marines trained their sailors from the bottom up. Men who had gone to sea as boys became the 50-year-old Master Mariners. Training was on the job, through experience. When war came many merchant officers and seamen went to the Navies. Reservists, or those who had taken shore jobs during peacetime, were also called up to either the Navies or Merchant Marine. Crewing the new fleets of cargo ships required a more formal training program to professionalize the service.

From the 1900s in the USA, some coastal states offered officers hands-on training in maritime academies. Then, in 1941, the National Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, was established to increase numbers of officers, where young men engaged in classroom studies, followed by work experience aboard cargo steamers. The US Maritime Service set up schools to give basic training to young apprentices who were able to qualify for further training as engineer or deck officers. Radio operators had their own school. With construction of the Academy complete, it was dedicated by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, on September 30, 1943, stating that it, "...serves the Merchant Marine as West Point serves the Army and Annapolis the Navy." 'By war's end, the Academy had graduated 6,634 officers.'

Defending the Merchantmen

The naval sheepdogs protected the flocks of merchant ships, but that does not mean to say that the sheep were defenseless.

It was the sinking of the *SS Robin Moor* by U-Boat, on May 21, 1941, that drove America toward a need to arm her Merchant Fleet.

The merchantmen were fitted with deck guns. When mounted, these were manned by the ship's crew, until military gun crews were assigned. Where the British had Defensive Equipment Merchant Ships (DEMS) manned by...gunners from the armed services who were specially trained and deployed for this purpose; the US...Congress approved the arming of merchant ships on November 17, 1941...with the 20-millimeter Swedish anti-aircraft Oerlikon being the gun of choice, manned by men of the Merchant Marine Naval Armed Guard. On larger ships a full complement of gun crews was raised, but smaller vessels used a mixture of military and seamen crews.

Such artillery could be useful against bomber aircraft or for low angle shots against surface-running submarines. If seamen spotted U-Boats running at periscope depth, they could indicate positions with tracer fire; similarly at night.

It is interesting to note that survivors from sunk merchantmen often included a disproportionate number of gun crew members. That may have been because they were on deck in any engagement. Alternatively, did their collective military training make them a more cohesive group?

Strange bed-fellows

Both ships sailing and escorts were multi-national. This brought with it several issues.

British Naval Commodore Boddam-Wetham was in charge of Convoy PQ 18 (September 2-21, 1942) consisting of forty Allied freighters from Scotland and Iceland to Arkhangelsk, Russia. A ferocious storm broke up the convoy. He reported, "The Americans in particular pay but scant attention to signals, know little of the importance of good station-keeping and do not as yet know anything about convoy work. The largely inexperienced American mercantile marine had yet to acquire the battle-hardiness that would come in the succeeding months; it was not their fault, but it was not helpful to at

News from Across the Pond...

particular convoy Commodore, making the handling of such a large and mixed convoy a difficult matter.”

Not heavily involved early in WWII, it took some time for US Navy to play catch-up and understand the nature of the convoy game. According to the British and Canadians, the US needed to learn fast, however Admiral Ernest King, Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Fleet, was stymied by a lack of ships, inexperienced crews, and deficiency of anti-submarine training to standardized techniques. Eventually, little-by-little, proficiency improved. As the US production of naval vessels ramped up, more seamen were trained and passed on their expertise to each other and to the mercantile fleet. The management of the convoy system became a well-oiled machine, where, whatever the nationality of the crews, everyone knew what was expected of them.

The problems of the merchantmen were many, if only the difficulties of travelling in such close formation. Enemy action consisted of marauding submarines, and Focke-Wulf Fw 200 Condor aircraft commerce-raiding the convoys. The elements were often against the ships - the dark; the extreme weather - so it was inevitable that things did not always go to plan.

MS Murray M Blum E-0-51



Photo left, Blum Family Collection

On the night of December 3, 1943, the merchant ship *SS Leonidas Polk* collided with a Dutch ship, due to the difficulties of keeping station at night in rough seas. As the crew searched for survivors from

the stricken vessel, chief radio officer Murray Blum of Brooklyn, New York (aged 22), left the safety of the *Polk* to rescue two men, then attempted to save a third. *The President of the United States takes Pleasure in*

Presenting the Merchant Marine Distinguished Service Medal to

Murray M. Blum

Radio Operator on SS Leonidas S. Polk

For heroism beyond the line of duty.

In the middle of the night, his ship, SS Leonidas S. Polk, was steaming in blacked-out convoy through icy North Atlantic waters when it collided with another ship which sank almost immediately. Radio Operator Blum, hearing cries of a drowning survivor who was beyond the range of buoy lines, dived overside into a rough sea filled with wreckage and was last seen swimming away from his ship in search of the distressed man. That he was unsuccessful in his mission does not detract from the glory of his effort, but his heroism was further sanctified when, in his attempt to rescue the drowning man, he gave his own life.

His utter disregard of the odds against his own survival was a heroic manifestation of the spirit which so inalienably characterizes the men of the United States Merchant Marine.

For the President
Admiral Emory Scott Land

SS William H Welch – February 26, 1944

Not all ships were lost mid-ocean. Some foundered close to shore. One such was the Liberty *SS William H Welch*. She left London in February 1944, as the vice commodore's ship, the second in a single file column of seventeen vessels that formed Convoy EN350 bound for the Royal Navy base at Aultbea, Ross-shire, Scotland, for orders, before heading to New York. On this return crossing, she had no cargo. Loaded only in water ballast, the *Welch* rode high out of the water, proving hard to handle. In ferocious seas, as she attempted to round the headland and enter the safety of Loch Ewe, *Welch* grounded on the granite shelf off Fura Island, Black Bay. It was 04:20. By 06:00 the ship had broken in half. 'Slowly, one by one, the frozen men clinging to the disintegrating ship were washed off the wreck and into the boiling surf.'

The only surviving officer was George L. Smokovich, the second assistant engineer, who gave a personal account:

I heard a loud noise and the ship suddenly stopped and began quivering...when I came out on deck I noticed that our ship had a heavy port list and was down by the stern. It was snowing

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and hailing and the visibility was very poor. I went to my boat station; because of the rough seas, it was impossible to launch any of our boats...

[Rescue attempts by a British escort tug were unsuccessful] At 10:45 A.M. all the crew were on the flying bridge. At 11:15 A.M. two large waves came over the bridge, smashing the wheelhouse and casting the crew into the water. All the men were wearing life preservers.

I was washed ashore on a high cliff. I swam out again expecting to be picked up but the oncoming seas were so heavy that I was washed back on the cliffs. I was covered with fuel oil and this fuel oil probably saved my life. Two old women came down the steep rocky cliff and carried me to their home four miles away. An ambulance took me to Gairloch Hospital which was seven miles from the accident.

The women drew him back, beyond the terrible rush of the breakers. They first opened his mouth wide and pulled out the gob of congealed fuel oil, baseball size, that would soon choke him to death. They cleansed his nostrils, his eyes, and his ears. Then they wrapped him closely in the blankets and gave him tea to drink. He lapsed into coma. The women picked him up, tight in the blankets, a clumsy and difficult weight for the climb up the narrow way along the cliff...[before setting off for their cottage].

The SS William H Welch had a complement of seventy-four; sixty-two perished. Half of the crew was swept away and never recovered. Those still commemorated at Cambridge are below:

US Crew			USN Armed Guard		
Grade	Name	Buried	Grade	Name	Buried
MS	Clarence M Bell	B-2-2	S1C	Jasper N Davis	E-1-77
MS	Moishe Berger	C-3-76	S1C	Durward Mahalick	E-6-67
MS	Sotinius Criticos	D-5-75	S1C	Vito A Maro	F-5-40
MS	John Derzy	E-4-66	S1C	Robert L Outzs	D-1-29
MS	Frank E Hoyer	F-5-95	S1C	James W Patterson	D-7-29
MS	Edgar S Jones	F-2-75	S1C	Victor F Planishek	B-7-22
MS	Daniel McMahon	G-1-7	BM2C	Leo F Rohrbach	WOM
MS	George C Rusty	F-5-83	S1C	Stephen J Smiesko	E-3-76
MS	Henrik J Sallstrom	E-2-66			
MS	Olaf R Stoneman	D-2-19			
MS	Bernhard Wolff	F-6-53			

The island was home to poor crofter folk, and with the men away serving in the Royal Navy, it was only the women and elderly who could help.

The pair of elderly women who saved Smokovich climbed down the cliffside with the wind battering and howling. They carried shawls which held flasks of hot tea and their proudest possessions, their sheer white, very soft blankets, hand-made of Highland wool.

The Unknown Sailor

When unidentifiable remains are recovered it eventually becomes the role of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) to attempt to identify service members using familial DNA.

So often, when ships sink at sea, there are very few survivors. Which is why so many names on the Cambridge Wall of the Missing are attributed to The Battle of the

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Atlantic. Sometimes, circumstances are such that there is recovery of remains, but it is not possible to determine who they are, given the scientific capabilities of the period.

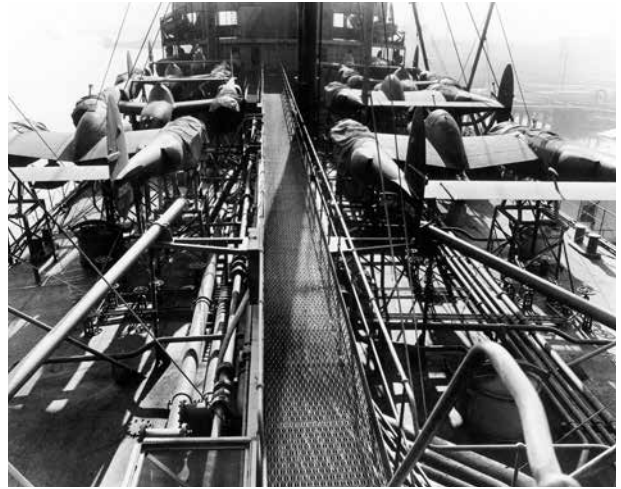
Let's look at the story of the *SS George Hawley*. Her keel was laid on 6 April 1944. Testament to the rapid fabrication of Liberty ships, she was launched on 20 May. By 31 May she was ready for a life delivering dry cargoes in the North Atlantic.

Convoy TBC-43 was designated as a short English Channel/Thames route. It left Southend on the morning of January 19, 1945, bound for Milford Haven, Wales. The *Hawley*, sailing in ballast with 77 bags of Fleet Post Office mail, joined the convoy in the English Channel as it passed the Isle of Wight, moving into position as the second ship in the starboard column. On January 21, as she rounded Lizard Point, about 3 miles off Wolf Trap Lighthouse, Cornwall, she took a starboard hit by a torpedo from submarine *U-1199*.

The explosion destroyed the engines, flooded the engine room immediately, killed one officer and one crewman on watch below...The Liberty ship began to list to port ...[and]...The remaining seven officers, 32 men and 27 armed guards were picked up...and landed at Cardiff. [Two hours later]...The master, the chief mate, the bosun and another crewman reboarded the vessel...They passed a line to a tug, which did not have the power to tow the Liberty ship. Eight hours after the attack, the British salvage tug HMS Allegiance arrived and took the ship in tow to Falmouth, arriving there on 22 January.

There were only two men missing from the *Hawley*. They had been keeping watch in the engine room when the enemy torpedo struck midships. Unfortunately, although one was recovered it had not been possible to further identify him. Perhaps DPAA will be able to resolve the matter, and give closure to the families of these sailors, one of who rests as an Unknown at Cambridge American Cemetery.

Did the Merchantmen make a difference?



*Above: P-38 Lightnings as deck cargo.
Don Stephens Collection*

Below, P-47s are being towed across Pier Head Liverpool on trucks bound for Burtonwood or Speke airfields. The aircraft were covered in Cosmoline, a wax-like petroleum-based corrosion inhibitor; used to protect the airframes during the Atlantic crossing. The protective layer would be removed before the aircraft were readied for flight and transfer to active airfields. Aldon Ferguson Collection



The Allies knew that victory would not be gained without the superiority of air power, however, in *Crusade in Europe*, Dwight D Eisenhower wrote, "...the need for airplanes in vast numbers competed with all other needs – shipping, cannon, tanks, rifles, ammunition, food, clothing, heavy construction material, and everything from beeswax to battleships that goes to make up a nation's fighting power." Troops, nurses, airmen also had to make the journey to Britain by ship. It was the

News from Across the Pond...

merchant shipping, and the men who sailed in the vessels, that made this possible. Many paid a terrible price.

There are 92 Merchant Marine burials at Cambridge American Cemetery. The majority are Americans, but the statistics also reveals a disproportionately high number of foreign nationals - Chile, Denmark, England, Greece, Netherlands, Malta, Norway, Panama, Philippines, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Scotland – reflecting the multi-national nature of the work of merchant sailors.

‘733 US-flag merchant ships were lost during WWII’... worldwide, plus other ships sailing under flags of convenience eg Panama. It was a rare occurrence when more men survived than went to a watery grave. ‘More than 6,000 merchant seamen died as a result of enemy action.’ Yet, their names appear on neither the



Cambridge Wall of the Missing, nor the East Coast Memorial in Battery Park, New York. I understand this to be because precise details were hard to establish due to incomplete records. It took until 1991 for their service to be truly recognized. I think Ian A Millar sums it up.

Adrian E Millar -- served in the British, Canadian, and American merchant navies:

As a youth I remember well that my father was not regarded as a war veteran; he was never invited to take part in an Armistice Parade. When he died he was not officially entitled to have his nation's flag over him. Did he need any veterans group to pronounce him a veteran? No, a German torpedo accomplished that on a cold night off Greenland.

Ian A Millar
Maritime Historian

COME ONE, COME ALL!!

If you are planning a visit to England in 2025, 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 in 2025 from 10AM until 4PM:

Sunday April 13, 2025

Sunday May 18, 2025

Sunday June 22, 2025

Sunday July 27, 2025

Sunday August 17, 2025 (*our main Open Day*)

Sunday September 14, 2025

Sunday October 19, 2025



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

Watching the movie *Memphis Belle* I was overwhelmed by the sight of the mass formations of B-17 Flying Fortress being attacked by nests of 'Flak' canons. Flying at 25,000 ft enroute to its next target in Nazi Germany, the bombers were sitting ducks for the numerous Fliegerabwehrkanonen. The exploding 88 mm canon shells around the aircraft looked like swarms of angry fireflies. The B-17 bombers were often hit by detonating anti-aircraft shells, but that did not stop the heroic aircrew of this classic World War II aircraft.

The first B-17 Flying Fortress took off on July 28, 1935. Developed as a fast and high-flying bomber for the United States Army Air Corps, the aircraft was primarily flown during World War II in the European Theatre of Operations. To conquer the enemy, 12,731 B-17s were built in several variants. This incredible number of B-17s far exceeds the total of F-4 Phantoms manufactured. During the peak of World War II, 16 B-17s were manufactured at Boeing, Vega, and Douglas in a single day.

The B-17G was the final variant used by the Eighth Air Force. Eight thousand, six hundred eighty were built, but several G models received AN/APS-15 radar in place of the Sperry electronic powered manned gun turret just behind the cockpit. These radar equipped Flying Fortress bombers were assigned as lead aircraft in the mass formations during bombing missions. Of the roughly 1.5 million tons of bombs dropped on Nazi Germany and its occupied territories by Allied aircraft, over 640,000 tons were dropped from B-17s. The losses of the B-17 force during WW II were enormous. More than half of the manufactured B-17G bombers were lost in combat.

80th Anniversary '44-8846'

'The Pink Lady' is a flying memorial to the 54,000 men and women of the Mighty Eighth Air Force who were killed in combat, wounded, or shot down and captured during WW II. The B-17 was one of the two heavy bomber types used by the USAAF in WWII. Their mission was fly into the heart of Germany and occupied Europe and destroy its military installations, infrastructure, and cities. This was no easy task as Germany was well defended by a skilled and dedicated fighter force and thousands of Flak batteries.

The B-17G was flown by a crew of 10 and was the

definitive and most heavily armed version of the B-17, having been fitted with thirteen 0.50 caliber machine guns. It was powered with four, 1200hp Wright Cyclone R-1800-97 engines, enabling a cruising speed of 350 km/h at 25,000 ft (approx. 7.6 km) with a normal bomb load of 2724 kg and a range of 1760 km. The 8th Air Force lost 2935 aircraft to enemy action and 1000 in crash landings at bases on return from missions. Twen-



ty-six thousand men lost their lives in these operations and 28,000 were captured.

44-8846 was manufactured in the last months of 1944 and is one of the few B-17's to have survived. The B-17G-85-VE was modified in January 1945, before delivery to the USAAF. Plane '846' received a special radar AN/APS-15 in place of the standard B-17G turret. The special radar enabled the modified Flying Fortress to bomb through cloud cover and assume the role of squadron lead aircraft. On March 1st, 1945, the aircraft was flown to RAF Polebrook, England, and assigned to the 511th Bombardment Squadron (BS) from

The Lady

y
Boymans

the 351st Bombardment Group (BG). The bomber was delivered in metal-finish with the 'J' on the tail (white letter in black triangle with a red diagonal stripe), squadron marking DS-M. On the nose of '846' the name 'Half Pint' was painted and a pin-up in a green swimsuit. During WWII, '846' flew 6 missions till the end of the war. After the war, '846' was assigned to 'Project Casey Jones' and was transferred to 305 BG,



45th Reconnaissance Squadron at Chelveston, England. The aircraft was based in Belgium at Sint-Truiden Airfield to conduct photo-mapping flights over Europe and North Africa. In 1949 the aircraft was converted to a photo-reconnaissance RB-17G and based at Fliegerhorst Fürstenfeldbruck in Germany to fly secret flights to map the borders with the Soviet Union and in the Berlin corridor area. Ironically '846' bombed its homebase 'Fürsty' on one of its last bombing missions during WW II. In 1950 the aircraft moved to Wiesbaden in Germany. '846' retired in 1954 and was bought by Institut Geographique National 'IGN' at Creil in France and received registration F-BGSP. IGN operated several B-17's for high

altitude mapping and survey duties. Plane '846' moved to Paris-Orly. The RB-17G also operated in Africa on mapping duties and finally F-BGSP retired in 1979.

The aircraft was flown to Melun Villaroche and started its 3rd life as airshow and movie star. In 1985, '846' was bought by the foundation 'Forteresse Toujours Volante' and flew at several airshows and was the star at the Paris Air Show, Melun, and Jersey Air Display. The historic aircraft flew in several movies and in 1989 was painted for the film, Memphis Belle.

Plane '846' received a ball turret and was painted differently on both sides to represent 2 different B-17F bombers: *Mother and Country* and *The Pink Lady*. In 2002 the chin turret was removed and 'The Pink Lady' was painted in its correct serial 48846 and with original 351 BG, 511 BS markings and registered as F-AZDX. In March 2010, 'The Pink Lady' flew its last flight to the airfield of Amicale Jean-Baptiste Salis Museum in Cerny- La Ferté Alais accumulating approximately 10,000 flying hours.

Nowadays, you can still find this historic WW II veteran Flying Fortress at the beautiful Salis Flying Museum/ Musée Volant Salis, in La Ferté Alais, Cerny, France. During the last airshow at the Museum in May 2024, 'The Pink Lady' started its engines to taxi to its static spot to commemorate the 80th anniversary of D-Day. The classic aircraft showed that it is still in flying condition, and the only flying survivor to have seen action in Europe during WWII. But this dream flight is unlikely to happen in the near future due to structure modifications of the wing spar. Before 'The Pink Lady' receives its Certificate of Airworthiness of the FAA/CAA, the Museum must inspect the wing spar.

In the meantime, you can visit the WWII hero at the beautiful Salis Flying Museum.

Many thanks for the assistance of the 8th Air Force Historical Society in sharing this story. gb

Gerard Boymans--reprinted here with express permission by the author/photographer. Questions? Please contact:

g.boymans@hotmail.com

www.gerardboymans.com



Coming Home After 81 Years:

The Return of 2nd Lt. Milton Hymes, Jr.

by Dawn Brosnan

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

In the early morning hours of June 21, 1944, 2nd Lieutenant Milton Leonard Hymes, Jr., age 22, boarded a B-24J Liberator bomber on what would be his final mission. As navigator for the 389th Bomb Group, 565th Bomb Squadron, Hymes was part of a crew assigned to fly deep into occupied Poland as part of the Allied bombing campaign. The formation lifted off from a Royal Air Force station in Norfolk, England, but never reached its destination.

Shortly after takeoff, two B-24s collided in heavy cloud cover over the Baltic Sea. The impact sent both aircraft down. While some crew members were rescued by a Danish fishing vessel and taken as prisoners of war by German forces, Hymes was among those who remained unaccounted for. He was declared Missing in Action, one of thousands of young men whose families were left without closure.

That changed in 2019 when divers exploring off the Danish coast discovered the wreckage of a WWII-era bomber submerged roughly 60 feet beneath the sea. After it was confirmed to be a U.S. military aircraft, the site was sealed off under international protection protocols. The U.S. Department of Defense assigned the case to the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), which launched an investigation to recover

and identify the crew.

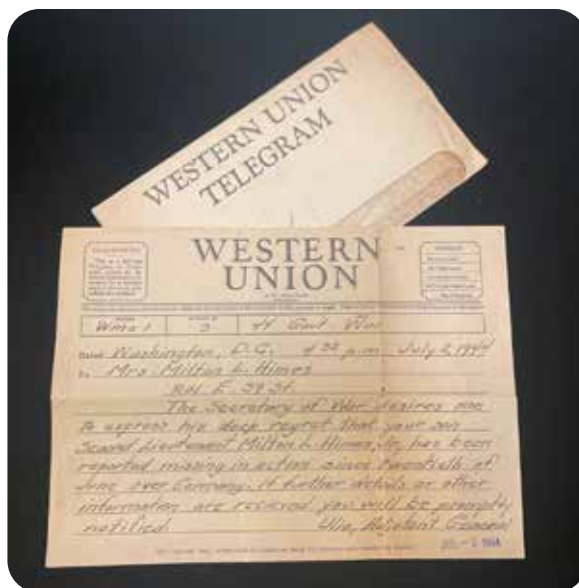
In partnership with Trident Archäologie, a marine archaeology team based in the Netherlands, DPAA researchers began underwater recovery efforts in 2022. Despite challenging conditions, their methodical work yielded a remarkable breakthrough, a unique carburetor model matched only to

a specific type of -24J, corresponding to a single missing aircraft from WWII records.

By combining material evidence, forensic analysis, and DNA identification conducted by the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System, the remains of three crew members were positively identified. Among them: 2nd Lt. Milton Hymes, Jr.

On July 18, 2025, more than 80 years after he was lost, Lt. Hymes returned home to Savannah, Georgia, where he was laid to rest beside his parents in

Bonaventure Cemetery. The service drew a crowd of nearly 200, a testament to the enduring resonance of his story. Family members, veterans, members of Project Recover, and representatives from the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force gathered to honor the young airman who had at last come home.





It was a day of solemn gratitude, a long-awaited chapter of healing and remembrance. Long before his remains were found, Lt. Hymes's story had already touched the museum. In 1998, a family member donated his Purple Heart and Air Medal to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, where they have been preserved in the archives for more than two decades.

Following his repatriation, the family made a new and deeply moving contribution: fragments of Hymes's dog tag, recovered during the Baltic recovery effort, along with other personal artifacts. These items will become part of the museum's newest permanent exhibit, Service Above Self, which commemorates the 26,000 Eighth Air Force airmen who never returned from war.

Lt. Hymes's return is a deeply personal chapter in a much larger story, a story shared by 26,000 Eighth Air Force airmen who never came home from World War II. His name, his artifacts, and his sacrifice are now part of a new permanent space dedicated to honoring them all.

In late 2026, the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force will unveil a powerful new exhibit titled Service Above Self. At the heart of the exhibit will be a striking visual installation of 26,000 dog tags, each representing a fallen Eighth Airman. Suspended in a solemn and rever-

ent display, these tags will envelop visitors in the scale of loss and the weight of sacrifice, transforming numbers into names and history into memory.

Among these will be the original fragments of Lt. Hymes's own dog tag, recovered alongside his remains and now entrusted to the museum by his family. His story, one of duty, loss, rediscovery, and homecoming, will help anchor the exhibit's message: that each tag represents a real person, a grieving family, and a freedom paid for at great cost.



To further connect visitors and supporters with these stories, the museum also invites participation through its Honor & Remember campaign. Launched in 2025, this initiative allows donors to sponsor a dog tag inscribed with the name of one of the 26,000. These sponsored tags will be displayed in the future Service

Above Self exhibit as part of the museum's expansion and exhibit revitalization.

Through this campaign and through exhibits like Service Above Self, the museum continues its mission: not simply to educate, but to ensure that the legacy of these airmen is never forgotten and never taken for granted.

Previous page: MIA telegram; this page: Purple Heart and Air Medal; Wings and dog tag.



Historic WWII Box Car Arrives at Mighty Eighth Museum for Future POW Exhibit

A rare and powerful artifact arrived at the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in August: a 1902 German box car used during World War II to transport captured Allied forces to prison camps. After a transatlantic journey and careful coordination, the box car was unloaded at the Port of Savannah on August 1 and transported to the museum on August 5, where it is now in storage awaiting exhibit preparation.

The box car will serve as a centerpiece in the museum's future Airman's Fate exhibit, which will explore the experiences of Eighth Air Force airmen who became prisoners of war or evaded capture behind enemy lines. This exhibit is part of the museum's ongoing Maximum Effort Capital Campaign, a multi-phase initiative focused on expanding storytelling, preserving artifacts, and deepening the public's understanding of the Eighth Air Force's history.

Manufactured between 1900 and 1927, this type of wooden-sided railcar was originally built to trans-

port freight that needed protection from the elements. During both world wars, however, these cars were repurposed for military use and became known as "40 and 8s," referring to their capacity to carry 40 men or 8 horses. The box car received by the museum had undergone modifications over time, with its original wooden doors replaced by steel. For its journey to Georgia and eventual display, it was restored with authentic wooden doors salvaged from original stock.

The Airman's Fate exhibit will feature the box car alongside immersive interpretation of POW and Escape & Evasion stories, offering visitors a deeply personal understanding of the sacrifices and fortitude shown by Eighth Air Force airmen.

This important acquisition underscores the museum's mission to honor, educate, and preserve the history of the Mighty Eighth, both in the skies and in the trials faced on the ground.

(Box car pictured above and top of next page.)



HONOR & REMEMBER

WE ALL DIE TWICE. FIRST, WHEN WE TAKE OUR LAST BREATH.
SECOND, WHEN OUR NAME IS SPOKEN FOR THE LAST TIME.
EGYPTIAN PROVERB

ONE GIFT. ONE OF THE 26,000 REMEMBERED.
\$100 TO SUPPORT THE MIGHTY EIGHTH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE



Board Nominations



Beth Howard

Member # 11733450

Beth is a 3rd Generation family member who says she's "lucky to have had 3 grandparents that served in WWII, Army Air Corp, Navy and Navy WAVES." She has been involved in her group, 398th

BGMA, since 2002 when she traveled back to the Nuttampstead base to see where her grandad spent his time while in England. She started out on the board as a 3rd generation liaison to try and help with recruiting and engagement, then she took over the dues collection in 2019 and last year became the VP.

Beth is a Product Analyst Supervisor for Sentry Insurance, which is based out of Stevens Point, WI, but she lives and works in Freeport, IL. She has been at Sentry for 20 years. Her job also includes hiring, on boarding, training and documentation for their processes.

Beth says that being involved in an organization like the 398th BGMA and the 8th AFHS is something that she believes she *needs* to do. History has been an important topic of interest for her and especially WWII and European History. Beth lived in Germany for a total of 4 years and during that time she tried to visit as many places as possible, especially historical sites. Beth says it was an eye opening experience for her, and she tells everyone that you should travel internationally at least once to see how other cultures live and to experience the history out there.

According to Beth: "I don't always have the right thing to say and I won't always agree with everything everyone wants but I will always try and put the Veterans' memories and the organization first, over any individual needs or wants."

Nominated by Debra Kujawa

Member # 11728230

Jim Park

Member # 29938

James R. Park (Jim) is a recognized leader in the real estate valuation and mortgage lending industry with more than 30 years of experience in valuation standards, regulatory policy, and industry oversight. From 2009 to 2024, he served as Executive

Director of the Appraisal Subcommittee (ASC) of the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (FFIEC), leading a federal regulatory agency for nearly 16 years. He has held leadership positions in private industry, federal government, and nonprofit organizations, and currently serves as President/CEO of the Collateral Risk Network (CRN), an association (501 C3) of industry thought leaders committed to strengthening integrity, transparency, and effectiveness in collateral valuation.

Jim has extensive board experience, having served on and managed several national boards throughout his career. Jim holds a Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Communications from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs.

As the son of Colonel Paul L. Park, a highly decorated USAAF and USAF combat veteran, Jim has a lifelong connection to the history of the 8th Air Force and its pivotal role in securing freedom and peace worldwide. Colonel Park's 31-year career (1942– 1973) included 30 combat missions in WWII as pilot of a B-24 Liberator named after his wife, Nona Rhea. He later served with distinction in Korea, earning the Silver Star as a MASH air/sea rescue pilot, and in Vietnam, where he commanded a Tactical Control Squadron. His military service also included air/sea rescue assignments in the U.K. and flying RC-121s out of Otis AFB. His decorations include the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross, Bronze Star, Air Medal with five Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Commendation Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters.

Jim is deeply engaged in preserving the history of military aviation. His contributions include: • Docent, National Museum of WWII Aviation, Colorado Springs, CO • Vice President, 446th Bomb Group Association • Contributor, USAAF Heritage Trust (U.K.), supporting preservation of the 446th BG air base • Member, 8th Air Force Historical Society
Nominated by Mark Klingensmith
Member # 79311212





Paul W. Tibbets IV received his commission through the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1989. Following graduation, he served in a variety of operational assignments as a B-1 and B-2 pilot. The general commanded the 393rd Bomb Squadron and 509th Bomb Wing, both assigned to Eighth Air Force. He flew combat

missions in support of operations in Southwest Asia, the Balkans and Afghanistan and was awarded the Bronze Star and Distinguished Flying Cross. Paul retired from the U.S. Air Force as a Brigadier General with more than 4,000 flying hours after nearly 30 years of service.

Paul is currently the Global Strike Portfolio Lead for LinQuest Corporation. As the operations and business development lead for Air Force Global Strike Command and the nuclear enterprise, Paul leads a high-performing team to rapidly advance ground-breaking technologies for the warfighter. He drives revenue growth through agreements with customers for solutions to critical requirements.

He is also the President and Owner of Strike Advanced Solutions, LLC, as an Independent Consultant. He assesses strategic plans, risk management programs and leadership strategies to find optimum solutions to business challenges. Strike Advanced Solutions also provides leadership coaching, messaging, speeches/seminars, mentoring and networking/teambuilding.

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

Paul joined the 8th Air Force Historical Society as a Life Member in 2002. In 2020 he was appointed to serve on a specially created ad hoc committee as an advisor to the Board of Directors, working alongside Eleesa Faulkner, focusing on Education and Outreach. He was also instrumental in advising the Board on critical decisions involving the Society's current website and development. He was formally elected to the Board in 2021, where he served as Treasurer, and then as President beginning in 2022.



Born in Pasadena, California, **Steve Snyder** graduated from UCLA with a degree in Economics in 1970. During the Vietnam War, Steve served six years in the California Army National Guard. In 1972, he moved to Seal Beach, California where he lives today.

In 2009, he retired from Vision Service Plan (VSP) after a 36-year career working in sales and sales management. He then began his quest to learn more about the World War II experiences of his father, 306th Bomb Group pilot Howard Snyder, and his crew who were shot down over occupied Belgium on February 8, 1944. After 4 ½ years of dedicated research, Steve wrote SHOT DOWN which tells what happened to each member of the crew and about the courageous Belgian people who risked their lives to help them. Since writing the book, Steve keeps busy traveling around the country making PowerPoint presentations and attending air shows.

In addition to being a member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society Board of Directors, Steve he is also President of the 306th Bomb Group Historical Association and a member of the Air Forces Escape & Evasion Society (AFEES).



Kevin Wilson, PhD, is the son of WWII 381st Bomb Group veteran, Howard Wilson, and a retired clinical psychologist living in Kernersville, NC. In his professional work as a licensed psychologist, he served as Clinical Faculty in the Pain Fellowship Program at Wake Forest University

Medical School for thirty years and as a private practice psychologist specializing in chronic medical illness and chronic pain disorders for thirty-nine years.

Kevin's interest in the WWII airwar history began in the 1990s and started with researching his late father's service. He has been involved with the 381st Bomb Group Memorial Association for over twenty nine years. Kevin serves as Executive Director and Group Historian of the 381st BG Association and has led annual reunions, conducted historical presentations, website development, membership maintenance, and memorial commemorations here and abroad devoted to the group. He especially enjoys doing research to assist 381st families learn about their veteran's WWII service and maintains a large 381st historical archive for the association. He has been a member of the 8th Air Force Historical Society since 2007 and was elected to the Board of Directors in 2021. He became Secretary to the Board in 2022 and additionally has participated in multiple projects including the Joint Study Committee with the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth, Reunion Committee, Communications Committee, and By-Laws Revision Committee.

He also researched and wrote an article about the use of Qualified Charitable Donations (QCDs) for the Society and helped foster the publication of the Honor Roll of 26,000 8th AF Casualties on the website.

Remembering the men...

7th PRG

Photo Recon Group

by Lori Rutland



On November 10th, 2024, two Board members of the Florida Aviation Historical Society (FAHS), Eddie Hoffman and Lori Rutland, participated in a very special ceremony held on Remembrance Sunday in Berinsfield, England at the site of the former Mount Farm Base occupied by the 7th Photo Reconnaissance Group during World War II.

Eddie's father, Ed Hoffman, Sr. and Lori's father, George Lawson, both served in the 7th Photo. Although they did not know each other during the war (as they were stationed at Mount Farm at different times), they became great friends years later through their work with the 7th PRG Historical Society and FAHS.

These two men never forgot the men they served with and were determined to put a permanent monument in place in Berinsfield to honor the 62 men of the 7th Photo who gave their lives in defense of freedom. They, along with other surviving members of the 7th Photo, raised the money for a monument, found an appropriate location, and secured the necessary approvals for its installation. Ed Hoffman, Sr.

designed and built the monument constructed with propeller blades from a P-38. The monument was installed in 1985 in a ceremony attended by a large group of men who served with the 7th Photo and their families.

Eddie and Lori, like their fathers before them, became good friends and wished to continue to honor these men and to share the story of the 7th Photo that played such a vital role in the Allied victory in WWII. They decided that a trip to the monument was in order for the 2024 Remembrance Sunday (particularly in light of the 80th Anniversary of D-Day) and that the ceremony would have a special focus on the men of the 7th Photo.

Word spread of the ceremony and both the BBC and ITV, the local television station, interviewed Eddie and Lori upon their arrival in England. This gave them the opportunity to share the story of their fathers and the importance of the role of the 7th Photo Recon Group.

Eddie and Lori arranged for this year's ceremony to include the reading of the names of the 62 men of



the 7th Photo who gave their lives for their country. Additionally, the ceremony featured the laying of a wreath by Eddie, Lori, and military personnel of the RAF and USAF. The ceremony also included a fly-over by helicopter pilots from the nearby RAF base and concluded with the playing of Taps by a talented musician.

After the ceremony, there was a church service followed by a reception in the town hall where an extensive collection of memorabilia and photographs told the story of the work of the 7th Photo. Attendees of the reception were able to learn that the 7th Photo had taken more than 1,000,000 photographs which covered over 3,000,000 square miles of enemy territory. These photographs were essential to the planning of the D-Day invasion and helped to ensure the success of the bombing campaign that destroyed the German war machine.

Lori, in making remarks to those in attendance at the reception, reviewed the dangerous work of the pilots of the 7th Photo, who flew unarmed and alone with a 33% percent chance of not surviving their mission.

She further shared the story of Captain Steven Scott, a friend of her father's and fellow pilot, who while trying to complete his mission and return his photos back to England perished two days before Christmas of 1943 when his damaged plane sunk in the North Sea just 10 miles from the coast.

After the ceremony, reception, and a visit to the fields where the base had been located, the two board members left England knowing that their fathers would be pleased that the story of the 7th Photo was still being told and that the men who served and perished would never be forgotten.

PS: George Lawson was one of the early members of the 8th AFHS and served as a Past President. He was also instrumental during his term as President in supporting the funding for the establishment of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force.

Pictured on previous page: Eddie Hoffman and Lori Rutland, members of the (FAHS), Florida Aviation Historical Society, pay homage to their fathers from the 7th PRG in Berinsfield, England. Pictured above: Lt Steven Scott and Capt George Lawson. A lone trumpet sounds taps at the monument.

CHAPTER NEWS

Birthplace Chapter Happenings

The Birthplace Chapter

P.O. Box 15714

Savannah, Georgia 31416

Contact: Bruce Adams, President

BadamsHHI@gmail.com

All Meetings are held at the

Museum of the

Mighty Eighth Air Force

175 Bourne Avenue

Pooler, GA 31322

21 October 2025 Meeting

Michael Darter – Author of “In Search of his WWII MIA Brother”

18 November 2025 Meeting

Ron Barlett, Col, USAF (Ret)
– 8th Air Force Linebacker 2
Experiences

15 December 2025 Meeting

Holiday Party – No Speaker

Oregon Chapter 8th AFHS

Date: 1 November 2025

Site: Beaverton Elks Lodge

3464 SW 106th Ave

Beaverton, OR 97005

<http://beavertonelks.org>

Speaker: Bert Campbell.

Bert was a forward observer in the "Big Red One," the First Infantry Division. He was a member of a LRRP (Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol) team in MACSOG (Military Advisory Command, Special Operations Group)

Meetings Are Free. Meetings are open to everyone. There is no cost to attend. You do not have to be a member in order to attend a meeting.

Doors open at 10:00 A.M.

A luncheon sandwich bar is available for \$16

Questions?

John P. 'Pat' Keating, 360-430-8989

8thafhsoregonsecy@gmail.com

<https://www.8thafhsoregon.us/8thAFHS-Meeting-Notice.html>

Wisconsin Chapter
Meets Quarterly

Greendale Courthouse/Police Station

5911 W Grange Ave

Greendale, WI 53129

Upcoming Meetings:

September 2, 2025

December 2, 2025

Questions and/or to RSVP for lunch (\$12)

Bob Christie 262-327-0442

IMPORTANT NOTICE!!!!

A priority of the 8TH AFHS and the Mighty Eighth Museum joint committee has been bomb/fighter group website preservation. The American Air Museum @ Duxford and the WW2 aviation Museum @ Colorado Springs have a similar priority. There will be a meeting at the Colorado Springs reunion on October 3, 2025 @ 08:15 AM at a site to be determined.

The purpose of this meeting is to develop a task force comprised of all above institutions and interested individuals so as to finally move forward. All interested parties are encouraged to attend.

CHAPTER NEWS

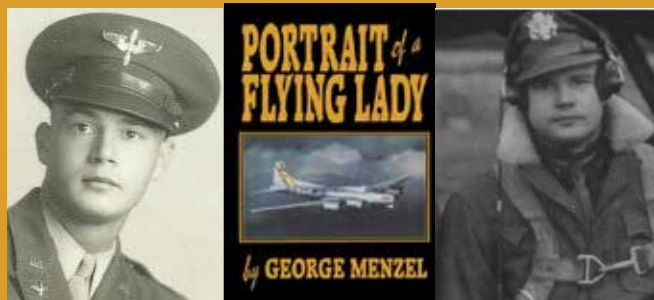
**The Georgia Chapter of the Mighty 8th Air Force Historical Society meets
the second Saturday of every month at the American Legion Post 160
160 Legion Drive SE
Smyrna GA 30080**

*December 2025, our Chapter holds a joint meeting with the WWII Roundtable and will be meeting at
Dunwoody United Methodist Church;
1548 Mt Vernon Road,
Dunwoody, GA 30338

Contact Info:

brentebracewell@gmail.com or gachaptermighty8th@gmail.com
www.8afgc.org 678-416-5749

13 September – American Legion Post 160



Larry and Lisa Beth from the Birthplace Chapter in Savannah, will give us a presentation on Lisa Beth's Father, George Menzel, B-17 Bombardier on his service in the 401st Bomb Group and his writing the book "Portrait of a Flying Lady".

11 October -- American Legion Post 160

Terry Kingery tells of the adventures of his father flying as a B-17 Navigator in the 96th Bomb Group.

8 November – American Legion Post 160

"Honor the Fallen, Thank the Living"

13 December – Dunwoody United Methodist Church

Ellen Weaver Hartman

For more information on any of our upcoming programs, please email or call!

URGENT NOTICE! PLEASE READ!

Although prior communications have stated that next year's 2026 reunion would be held in Savannah, GA, that will now NOT be the case. Instead, the 2026 reunion will be in San Antonio, Texas and the 2027 reunion will be in Savannah. The reason being is that the addition and renovations to the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force in Pooler, GA will not be completed in time to hold our reunion there in 2026. The 2026 reunion will be held at the La Quinta Inn & Suites by Wyndham San Antonio Riverwalk on October 14-18. Mark your calendars--it will be an incredible reunion!

Curtis, William Taylor “Bill”, 78, died Monday, June 2, 2025, in Foley, Alabama. Bill was born in Cincinnati, Ohio to Jack Lee and Mary Lou (Rogers) Curtis on April 19, 1947.



Along with their daughter, Jane Ellen, they made their home in Centerville, Ohio. The family was very musically talented, singing in their Westminster Presbyterian Church choir, and enjoying choral music, which Bill participated in and loved throughout his life. He also sang in the Dayton Rotary Club Boys Choir and traveled around the country as they performed. The Curtis family also had a love of the outdoors and began camping long before it became popular. Bill and his sister, Jane, also spent their summers in the Adirondack Mountains of New York at Hawkeye Trail Camps, where he found his next loves: hiking in the mountains and forests and paddling a canoe. During Bill’s high school years, when folk music became popular, several of his friends also in the Centerville H.S. band decided to form a folk singing group that they called “The Ten of Us.” They ended up performing all over the area, singing with guitars, a banjo, and Bill on the stand-up bass. They stayed in touch with one another throughout the years since their graduation in 1965 and still have regular reunions around the country to play and sing together and perform a free concert for whoever will listen. After high school, Bill headed west to college at Utah State University, in Logan, Utah, where he intended to study forestry and become a forest ranger. However, he quickly discovered that the science classes required were way beyond his abilities. He had been involved in plays in high school, so he switched his major to theatre and speech with a minor in music. He performed in many shows there during the

school year, and as a member of their summer repertory theatre in the historic Lyric Theatre in Logan. He also was a member of “The Balladeers”, the college folk singing group. Even though he wasn’t studying forestry, Bill could enjoy the mountains and forests of northern Utah and began his hobby of scenic photography there. After graduation, Bill returned to Ohio to teach theatre and speech at West Carrollton, Ohio. It was there he met his future wife and love of 54 years, Martha Jane Horney. Martha was attending Miami University nearby, and student taught in the classroom next to Bill’s. They were married on August 15, 1971, in Dayton. Bill taught for three years in Ohio and then headed west again with Martha. He spent the summer of 1972 at the acting school at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco. He decided after that experience to not pursue a professional acting career and so returned to Utah State to study for his masters’ degree, intending to teach in college eventually. After receiving his MFA, college jobs were very scarce, but one of his professors had heard of a unique opportunity in nearby Brigham City, Utah. Intermountain High School was looking for a theatre and speech teacher. This was an inter-tribal boarding school that was housed in what had been a former Army amputee hospital during World War II. This was a U.S. Government facility, and so Bill began his 30-year career with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. He taught students from many different tribes from all over the country, including Alaska natives. He enjoyed his students and encouraged many with naturally shy natures to appear in plays and broadcast over the campus wide radio station he installed there. Bill and Martha bought a turn-of-the-century farmhouse in the little mountain village of Mantua, Utah, up the canyon from Brigham City. Using a do-it-yourself book from Readers’ Digest, they renovated it into a beautiful home. Their

son, Seth Robert, was born on May 8, 1977. The three of them loved their time in Utah, including the life-long friends they made there. They also added cats to their family, the firsts of a long line of felines in their lives. Bill’s and Martha’s time in Utah is especially notable as the time that they both came to know Jesus as their Savior. During the last year Intermountain School was open, Bill began teaching himself to use the new invention of “video equipment.” As the Bureau of Indian Affairs began to see the need of this new media, Bill became the head of video production for their new unit called the Office of Technical Assistance and Training (OTAT). Within a year, the school was closed in Utah, but Bill’s unit was moved to Lawrence, Kansas, to Haskell College (now Haskell Indian Nations University.) The family moved there in 1984 and settled in another old home to remodel in Old West Lawrence. In his new program there, Bill taught native college students television production, with he and his students producing videos for Haskell, the Bureau and other government agencies. Bill also had his students involved in local television in Lawrence and running cameras at Haskell and KU football games. In the summers when the students were gone from campus, Bill arranged to be detailed to the U.S. Forest Service in Alaska to produce training videos for them. He then used the video footage he took there as footage that his students could work on during the school year. He was able to see and photograph some incredible scenery in Alaska while he worked with forest service employees. As an added blessing, he could experience a bit of his childhood dream to be a forest ranger! There he was constantly awed by the majesty of God’s creation. Bill and Martha enjoyed their time in Kansas, as they had Utah. They made many life-long friends, were happy in both homes they owned there, were always involved in

church and Bill with church choirs and both taught Explorers' Bible Study and followed Jayhawk basketball. He also sang in the Lawrence Civic Choir. Bill retired from Haskell in 2005. At that time, they began attending reunions of Martha's father's World War II group: the 8th Air Force Historical Society. Bill became the official videographer for the society and interviewed many veterans and produced videos for their historical records. They also traveled twice to England, the first -time escorting veterans, with Bill producing videos from their memories of their planes and missions and also interviews with local English people who lived in the vicinity during the war. Bill also created photographic art of the planes and crews, especially of the B-24 bomber, that art often commissioned by the veterans or their families. His photographs now hang in a restaurant in Norwich, England that is called: "The B-24". The other special trip Bill and Martha made was to the Philippines to produce a video for a friend who is a Wycliffe Bible translator there. It was an incredible visit, especially since Martha was born there on Clark Air Force Base. Beginning in 2012, they also took volunteer jobs with the Michigan State Parks as campground hosts in northern Michigan. The beautiful scenery there on Lakes Michigan and Superior and their many lighthouses became subjects for more beautiful photos taken by Bill. In 2013, they decided to move south to Foley, Alabama, to be near Martha's parents in Pensacola, Florida. They enjoyed hosting old friends from the north there, walking the beach at Gulf Shores and eating lots of seafood. In Foley, Bill continued to sing in choirs, they camped along the Florida coast and learned to appreciate Southern living and retirement years together. Despite his worsening struggle with heart disease, at the end of his life, Bill was thankful that his life had been so interesting and wonderful. He told Martha that, "It couldn't have been

better." Bill is preceded in death by his parents, his sister, Jane, and her husband Karl Gurokovich. He is survived by his wife, Martha Curtis, Foley, AL; their son, Seth Curtis, and his wife, Kate; grandchildren, Paige, Levi, and Simon, (all of Lakeland, MN); niece, Ellen Browne, TN; nephew, Andy Gurokovich, CO; and many cousins.

Hanson, Ambers E., 101, died peacefully in his home in Auburn, Alabama, on Monday, June 9, 2025. His home was the place he loved most dearly. He was fortunate to remain there



with the help of a host of caregivers that included loving family, friends, neighbors, and professional staff who were all led by his devoted wife, Jean. Ambers was born on July 31, 1923, to James Madison Hanson and Lora Butler Hanson in Pine Hill, Alabama (Randolph County). He grew up on a farm, which—with the family's labor and know-how—provided much of the food that sustained them during the Depression. He enlisted in the US Army Air Corps in 1942 and served in World War II for three years as an Air Force radio operator and gunner on B-17s and B-24s. He was assigned to the 8th Air Force, 34th Bomb Group, 391st Division. He survived a plane crash during training before he was deployed to Mendlesham, England. From this air base, he flew 25 bombing missions over Germany, France, and Czechoslovakia. At the end of the war, he participated in food drops over Holland. His military awards include the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the World War II Victory Medal, and the European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with two Bronze Stars. During the Korean War in 1950, while Ambers was attending Alabama Polytechnic Institute (API, now

Auburn University), he was recalled to Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana. Once again, he served as a radio operator on B-29s and also practiced loading the atomic bomb. Although his education was interrupted twice by military service, Ambers graduated from API in March 1952 and married his sweetheart in October 1952. He then began a long career as an agricultural economist with the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), focusing on river basin studies. In 1964-65 he was awarded a Kellogg Fellowship to attend North Carolina State for additional graduate courses. Ambers was a faithful and loving husband to Jean Lowery Hanson throughout their 72 years of marriage. Together they were charter members of Lakeview Baptist Church in Auburn. After retirement from SCS, the Hansons also owned and operated a horse boarding business with two of their lifelong friends, Dorothy and Walter Grimes. Ambers is survived by his wife, Jean; his children, Scott (Sarah) and Lynn (Mary Lou); his grandchildren, Lora Lynn (Andrew) and Daniel (Anna); and his greatgrandchildren, Sam, Ian, Adam, Ellen, Willa, Mira, and Finn. The family is especially grateful to Annie Ruth Epps for the love and tender care she offered Mr. Hanson in his final years, as well as to the Compassus staff for oversight of his hospice care services. Ambers lived an extraordinary life. He chose kindness and gentleness in all seasons. The very core of his character inspired respect. A kind and wise man, Ambers loved well and was well loved.

Winter, Ralph Edwin, aka Butch, 81,



died at his home in Decatur on June 12, following a brief illness. As a young boy, watching cars and people go by, the sad expression on Ralph's face

caused his mother to ask him what was wrong. "I'm sad to think about all the people in the world that I will never know." Ralph Winter proceeded to live a life that allowed him, as much as possible, to overcome that limitation. The careers and passions he chose, including teacher, tutor, travel executive and advisor, numismatic appraiser and sales agent, and WW II history, provided exposure to a large number of people in diverse walks of life. The friends he made gave him tremendous happiness. More importantly, the joy he gave to an untold number of people was a gift that changed lives. He was a mentor to many, a life coach to those who sought his advice, and the most loyal of friends. Ralph Winter was born March 23, 1943, in Albany, GA to Ruth Moore Haston and 1st Lt. Ralph Edwin Lamma. His father, a pilot with the 392nd BG, was killed when the B-24 he was piloting was shot down in an air raid over Bremen Germany. Ralph was adopted by Paul Henry Winter in 1947 when his mother remarried. He grew up in Albany and earned his undergraduate and master's degree at the University of Georgia. He returned to South Georgia and began his career in teaching. However, the lure of travel continued to call. Ralph returned to Atlanta and worked in increasingly responsible positions with various airlines as the airline industry continued to consolidate. His moves from the Mid-West to south Florida to New England culminated in an executive position with commuter airline, Gull Air. In 1987, Ralph returned to Atlanta and purchased a small travel agency. Renaming it Cumberland Travel Services, he built it into one of Atlanta's most trusted corporate travel agencies. In addition to corporate travel, Ralph serviced a variety of personal clients providing an array of customized trips for small groups to Canadian and European destinations. Major changes in the travel industry prompted a decision to leave that business for good and finish

his working life as a teacher. He joined the mathematics faculty of North Druid Hills Middle School, a short walk from his home. Although he retired from full time teaching in 2009, he continued to substitute teach and tutor until 2024. His continued coaching of Math Counts at the school enabled that program to flourish, sending several students to statewide competition. He was in such demand as a substitute that his teaching friends would call him directly to get him to sub for them. They knew if they went through the computerized system their chances of engaging him were slim. Everyone, students included, wanted Mr. Winter. At an early age, an aunt encouraged an interest in coin collecting in Ralph. It lasted his entire life. The expertise and education he pursued in that field provided a final career that opened yet another world. As a consultant, advisor, and agent, he provided a valuable service to clients in the sale of unique pieces and liquidation of collections. An account of Ralph's life experiences would not be complete without mention of his personal pursuit of its history centering on his father's ultimate sacrifice in the Allied Forces' defense against totalitarian tyranny. This led to his involvement with the 392nd BGMA, a group composed of the surviving members of the 392nd BG stationed in Wendling, Norfolk, England, their families, and any others wishing to honor and perpetuate their legacy. He began reunions with the group in 2010, was elected a director in 2015 and President in 2019. He traveled with the group to Wendling on three trips. He was there a final time in February 2025 to attend the funeral of the English historian/friend of the 392nd BGMA. He traveled as well to Germany to the site of his father's plane crash; meaningful trips all, and each yet another opportunity to attempt to meet and know everyone in the world. Ralph is survived by his husband, Kenneth Fanning, his sister, Bunny Winter (Michael Doyle), neph-

ews, John, David, and Peter Doyle, his sister, Nancy Huggins (Bill), nephew Robert Huggins, his sister-in-law Gwen Lively and nephew Samuel Lively. He is also survived by his animal companion, Angel, and as many of the world's people as he was able to befriend in his 82 years.

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

or mail to:

8th AFHS

68 Kimberly's Way

Jasper, GA 30143-4769

***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 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**

One Day in the Eighth

CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS



William Lane Callaway
Historian, Eighth Air Force

14 October 1962, Cuban Missile Crisis: On this date, an Air Force U-2 reconnaissance flight over Cuba proved the presence of Soviet missile sites on the island, just 90 miles from the American Homeland. (See attached photographs of missile complexes in Cuba.) Attached is a speech that General Curtis LeMay, the then Chief of Staff USAF, presented to the 44th Annual Industrial Preparation Meeting conducted on 5 December 1962. During his remarks, General LeMay noted the value of deterrence and professionalism of Air Force personnel during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

On 18 October 1962, USAF Reserve units began to mobilize troop carrier and aerial port squadrons in response to the Crisis. President John F. Kennedy on 22 October broke the news to the nation while on the same day the Strategic Air Command's (SAC) B-52 bomber fleet increased its airborne alert presence. In response, the Soviet Union on 23 October placed the forces of the Warsaw Pact military alliance on alert, although Soviet nuclear submarines were not deployed nor were Soviet missile units placed on heightened alert. The United States declared worldwide Defense Condition (DEFCON) 3 on 23 October.

With its headquarters at Westover AFB, Massachusetts and mission set covering all of the Eastern Seaboard of the United States; 8 AF implemented DEFCON 3. Specific steps by 8 AF for heightened alert readiness included: discontinued training, established 24-hour posture in its operations center, generated two B-47 bomber aircraft from each assigned wing and placed them on ground alert, implemented airborne alert posture synchronized with SAC's larger effort, dispersed its Florida-based B-47s from both Homestead AFB and MacDill AFB, and placed all assigned Atlas ICBM

sites at Plattsburg AFB in New York directly under SAC to shorten the ballistic missile launch time if directed.

For 13 days in October, President Kennedy discussed the crisis and the appropriate American response with his civilian and military advisors. Essentially two courses of action emerged. One course was an unlimited military action including a "surgical" air strike on the missile sites in Cuba. Another possible course was to conduct limited actions including a "quarantine" blockade of Cuba by U.S. Navy vessels. General LeMay advocated a strong and massive but surgical air strike. Several of the President's civilian advisors began to favor this surgical strike option.

President Kennedy summoned to the White House, General Walter C. Sweeney, Jr., at the time Commander Tactical Air Command at Langley AFB, Virginia. General Sweeney had vast experience with bomber operations during World War II and had been the Commander of Fifteen Air Force followed by being the

Commander Eighth Air Force – both command tours under General LeMay when he was the SAC Commander-in-Chief. As well LeMay and Sweeney were long-time friends as well as military comrades.

General Sweeney met with the President at the White House on Sunday, 21 October at 11:30am; where President Kennedy asked the General about the "surgical" strike options. General Sweeney knew the advice that General LeMay had provided the President. Notwithstanding, General Sweeney demonstrated integrity by voicing an opposite viewpoint not advocated by General LeMay and several senior advisors. General Sweeney in

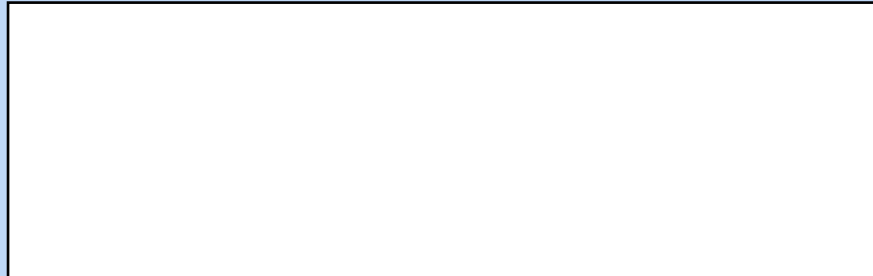




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his judgement and what he related to the President, it could take hundreds of air sorties to eliminate Soviet missiles from Cuba.

On 23 October, President Kennedy issued Proclamation 3504 authorizing the quarantine of Cuba by American naval forces to become effective on 24 October. By 2 November 1962, the Cuban Missile Crisis was peacefully concluded with the Soviet decision to withdraw its missiles and other

military forces from Cuba. A combination of diplomatic efforts, Soviet internal political considerations, and the naval quarantine – all contributed to the Soviet decision to withdraw from Cuba. The bombers of the

Eighth remained on alert until 27 November 1962, when the last Soviet missile, nuclear weapons, combat aircraft, and mil-

itary forces had been withdrawn from Cuba.

Lieutenant General Bruce Carlson, the #46 Commander Eighth Air Force memorialized the Eighth's headquarters primary conference room as the "General Walter C. Sweeney, Jr. Conference Room"

in honor of General Sweeney, who was the #20 Commander Eighth Air Force – 6 August 1955 to 1 October 1961 – thus the longest tenured Commander of Eighth Air Force to date.

