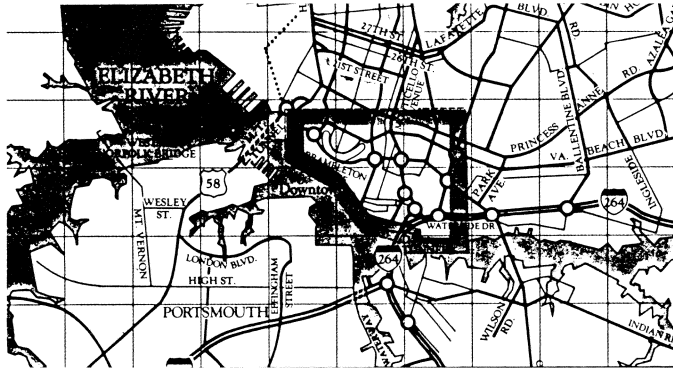


# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

JULY 1989

## Maximum Effort for Norfolk



The Field Order from higher headquarters is in. The target is Norfolk-by-the-Sea and the 303rd has been tasked for a maximum effort. According to Intelligence, the mission should be a "milk run" with little flak in the target area and fighter opposition is expected to be minimal. Friendlies are expected to be out in force from September 27 through October 1. An intelligence and weather debriefing will be held immediately following the mission.

As we gather in Norfolk this September, we will be celebrating the 47th Anniversary of the arrival of the first 303rd troops in England. Of course that honor goes to the ground personnel who sailed from New York aboard the unescorted Cunard liner, Queen Mary, and disembarked in the

British Isles on Sept. 11, 1942. From there they made their way to their new home, acres of muddy real estate, known simply as RAF Molesworth.

In August of 1942, the air echelon left Biggs Field, El Paso, Texas by train for Kellogg Field, Battle Creek, Michigan where they acquired their B-17s. On Oct. 7, they left for Dow Field, Bangor, Maine, then to Gander, Newfoundland for their hop across the North Atlantic to England. They arrived at Molesworth on Oct. 21, 1942.

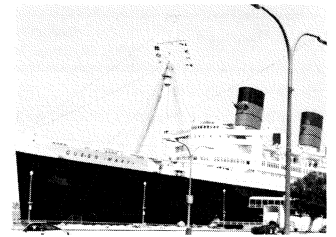
After a month of intensive training, the day of reckoning arrived. On Nov. 17, 1942, the 303rd was tasked for a mission. On that eventful day, 16 bombers took off with a load of bombs bound for their target, the sub-pens at St. Nazaire.

As they were to do for 363 more missions, the excited crowds of ground personnel lined the airfield and waited for the return of the formation of B-17s, halfway never expecting to see them again. In the afternoon when the first hum of aircraft engines reached their ears, they raced out to the runways and dispersal areas, eager for the news of the mission.

What they heard was not especially encouraging. Unable to find the target due to bad weather, the Forts had returned with their bombs without seeing any action. It was a terrific letdown for everyone.

For the next 29 months, the Hell's Angels Group made history. When they landed from their final mission to Pilsen in Czechoslovakia on April 25, 1945, the 303rd had participated in more bombing missions than any other B-17 outfit in the European Theatre of Operations; but at a price—180 bombers and 1800 men had failed to return.

The box score of the 303rd's war efforts reads simply: 364 missions flown; 26,346 tons of bombs dropped on the enemy; 378 enemy aircraft destroyed, 104 probably destroyed and 182 damaged.



The Queen.

But it was the men who had made the 303rd such an outstanding outfit: Fellows like Medal of Honor winners, Lt. Jack Mathis and T/Sgt. Forrest L. Vosler, and others like S/Sgt. William T. Werner, Lt. Thomas Dello Buono, Lt. Charles W. Spencer and Col. Lew Lyle, all winners of the Distinguished Service Cross.

Unfortunately there are many others who rightly belong in this Hall of Fame whose exploits, during the war years, through some oversight were never recognized. One of the goals of our Association is to research the records and recreate the history of the 303rd so that we can get them the honors they so rightfully deserve.

This reunion at Norfolk offers an excellent opportunity for us to relive the past and to use that knowledge to help keep the peace in future years.

Hal Susskind

## Valuable Information for Remembering Those We Lost

For those surviving family members of KIA or MIA or since passed away, who wish to find records of their Air Force member, I suggest they write for the following records. I did so, and received a wealth of records for my uncle, Lt. Homer R. Allen (Pilot, Wm Breed, plane Shak-Hak), his plane and crew, MIA Feb. 16, 1943 on mission to St. Nazaire sub pens. (360th sqdn.)

*For Flight Records:* Dept. of the Air Force, Headquarters AF Inspection & Safety Center, Norton

AFB, CA 92409-7001. *For Personnel Records:* National Personnel Records Center, Military Personnel Records, 9700 Page Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63132. (There was a fire at this center and not all records are available, though Allen's records were available, parts of some pages burned.)

For those seeking records of overseas cemeteries and memorials for our lost military relative (WW I & II, KIA or MIA) write: The American Battle Monuments Commission,

CASIMIR Pulaski Bldg., 20 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington D.C., 20314-0300.

I received two beautiful brochures with pictures and maps of location of overseas cemeteries/memorials. Also an order form with which to order flowers.

I am going to write again asking for possible records of Lt. Homer Allen's other crew members at Brittany/American Cemetery on "Tablets of Missing." Also how did Homer's record happen to be

listed? Records from Headquarters of 303rd or of 8th AF?

Flowers can be sent to Brittany/American Cemetery for \$15.00! (Can't buy them here for that). Prices vary at other cemeteries.

Virginia M. Howell  
Niece of Lt. Homer Allen  
Ventura, CA 93003

P.S. Records show date of death as Feb. 16, 1944, one year after missing and declared officially dead.



"Might-in-Flight"



## 303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC. "HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

VOL. XII, NO. 3 Editor: Hal Susskind  
2602 Deerfoot Trail, Austin, TX 78704

JULY 1989

The 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc., a tax exempt organization under IRS Code 501(c)(19), founded in 1975, is chartered in the State of Florida to perpetuate the history of the 303rd Bomb Group and to provide opportunities for 303rders to meet and do things together.

Because you are helping to perpetuate the history of the 303rd Bomb Group, your dues and/or donations to the 303rd Bomb Group Association are tax deductible.

The Association is open for membership to all persons assigned or attached to the 303rd Bomb Group, from its activation in 1942 in Boise, Idaho, throughout its war years at Molesworth Air Base in England to its deactivation in Casablanca in 1945. Spouses of 303rders may also become members. All other persons, interested in perpetuating the history of the 303rd Bomb Group and in furthering the aims of the Association, may apply for Associate status.

Membership years begin on the first day of January. In the future, the 303rd Bomb Group Newsletter will be sent only to paid up members. When you pay annual dues, the membership chairman will send you an updated membership card.

If you do not receive the 303rd Newsletter for a period of more than four months, it means you are delinquent in your dues for that calendar year.

### 303rd Officers

#### President

Fyler, Dr. Carl J.  
300 Yorkshire Road  
Topeka, KS 66606  
(913) 472-8492

#### Vice President

Cannon, Harley E.  
8 North Louis Street  
Mount Prospect, IL 60056  
(312) 255-8045

#### Secretary

Dubose, Carl L. Jr.  
2601 Loma Vista  
Victoria, TX 77901  
(512) 573-9226

#### Treasurer

Schmeltzer, Charles S.  
E2903 Hoffman Ave.  
Spokane, WA 99207  
(509) 487-7983

#### Headquarters

Schulstad, Louis (Mel)  
3518 208th Ave. NE  
Redmond, WA 98053  
(206) 868-6893

#### 444th

McCoy, Melvin T.  
655 Rogue River Hwy  
Gold Hill, OR 97525  
(503) 855-1712

#### 358th

Mayer, Walter J.  
Rt. 2, Box 118A  
Cheney, WA 99004  
(509) 299-3250

#### 359th

Luman, Morton  
3015 SW Underwood Dr.  
Portland, OR 97225  
(503) 292-2135

#### 360th

Heller, William  
P.O. Box 3006  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019  
(415) 726-6686

#### 427th

Lehmann, E.C. (Al)  
29844 Knoll View Dr.  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90274  
(213) 832-5830

#### Advisor to Board

Lyle, Lewis E.  
Belvedere Country Club  
207 Ridge One  
Hot Springs Nat'l Park, AR 71901  
(501) 321-1956

#### HELL'S ANGELS NEWSLETTER

Editor ..... Hal Susskind  
Typesetting ..... M&L Typesetting  
Printing ..... Grassroots

## Will you help in locating a wartime buddy?

One of the aims of this Association is to locate as many members of the "Molesworth Bunch" as possible. Through a recent notice in the VFW Magazine we found 10 former members: now we need your help in locating many more.

We ask you to please send the following "Letter to the Editor" to the periodical which you read regularly, be it daily, weekly, monthly or quarterly.

*We are trying to locate former Army Air Corps personnel from this area who served with the highly decorated 303rd Bomb Group based at Molesworth in England to join in celebrating the 47th Anniversary of the group at a reunion in Norfolk, VA, Sept. 27 through Oct. 1, 1989.*

*Anyone who served with the 303rd in any capacity during WW II is asked to contact Hal Susskind, Newsletter editor, 2602 Deerfoot Trail, Austin, Texas 78704.*

Sincerely,

Your name  
Your address

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

### This Is How I Feel

I am addressing this article to two issues brought up in the April Issue of the Newsletter. The first I will address to the letter from Charles A. Palmer in "Sound Off".

Hate is a terrible disease. It is like cancer. The longer it stays in one's heart the more it eats away the healthy tissues of compassion and forgiveness. I will have to be honest and admit that it took me a long time to accept the tragedy of those muddy mounds of English soil where Fr. Skoner and I conducted the Last Rites at the American cemetery at Cambridge. Had I met a German pilot four years after our last mission I probably would have wanted to spit in his face. But as time went on I can now rationalize that Bill Heller and others in our Group as well as Troops on the ground were risking their lives of close kin, even grandparents every time they went into combat action over or in Germany. If any one of you as an individual still hates; I have to ask you this question: If a German pilot whose brother you killed in combat looked you in the eye; would you expect forgiveness or hate? Have you ever thought he might say, "I am sorry Yank I did not know I killed your brother too".

War is a "Two way street". One of my relatives handled it this way. The Battle of Boonesboro during the American Civil War was fought on my grandmother's farm. In fact her home was used as a hospital for the Southern wounded. Would you believe, a few years later she married a Yankee.

On the second issue I will address myself to division of the 303rd into Ground and Air Echelons. As compatible as this Group has been all these years, I am not disturbed as Col. Walter Shayler put it in his letter. I am incensed that divorce would even be considered and that is exactly what this division would be. That would be saying we are different than you and we no longer want to live in the same house with you. I venture to say they would meet together for a while but sooner or later, one or the other would decide to have a Reunion of their own and the Divorce would be final. Well I think it has been a pretty good home, and when we come to a Reunion as we do, it is always good to come home.

In the Infantry before I was transferred to the Air Branch I was not really accepted in the Field until with the Old Man's permission I went into the "Gun Pits" and fired with them. I scored in the upper ten. From then on I was able to communicate with the Troops. They realized I was one of them and understood some of their problems. Upon transfer to the 322nd Bmb Gp (M) and B-26 of unwanted fame "A Crew A Day in Tampa Bay", there again I found the same attitude until I qualified on the gunnery range from the nose of the B-26 and I was accepted not only as a Chaplain but as a partner and friend. In England I was transferred to the 303rd from a British Hospital. Some time after arrival I had a session with an Air Crewman who had the "Shakes". I made the mistake of saying I knew how it was and he informed me right away that I did not know a damn thing about it, and he was right. At that moment I decided, well we shall see. Now from this point on if some of my activities were ever reported officially I would swear and be damned it was a lie. "Geneva Convention". I learned what the North Sea and Europe looked like from the air and it was very unfriendly. Having had a few hours of flying time logged, a few of you pilots were good enough to let me try my hand on the controls, and I realized that it was no picnic under stress but I thanked God for the Crew Chief and his Crewmen who had put in all day, and half the night, with "TLC" making that plane ship shape. When I fired one of the nose guns in the old "F" model, I again thanked God for the man on the ground had made sure it was in as perfect order as he could make it.

Now I have made this confession to make this point. The Ground Echelon agonized as they waited, watching the sky for the planes to come home. Holding their breath when red flares bloomed out of the Traffic Pattern; shedding tears when some did not return. Now viewing the picture from the ground as well as from the air, there were times when some of us would rather have been in the air knowing what was going on than agonizing on the ground. It boils down to one fact. We were one family. God forbid that there ever be a divorce of this great family — The 303rd.

"Chappie Slawson"

# Hell's Angels Forum

*Your Chance to Sound Off!*

## How Do You Feel?

In my last correspondence to you I was critical of your association with the German pilots, Adolf Galland and others. A young fellow who is gung-ho on the 8th AF, and who has made a hobby of buying books on the 8th, and makes models of B-17's visited me recently. He had read my story and was deeply moved. However, he left several books and articles for me to read, one of which you might possibly have read, "The Military Gallery News." Once again I am puzzled and curious about its contents relating to several prints by the artist Robert Taylor, and the pictures and brief accounts of four German pilots who were leading aces during the war. I cannot understand why pilots such as Johannes Steinhoff who had 176 victories should receive so much publicity. Perhaps I am mistaken. Perhaps WW II belongs in the category of a Hollywood movie. The thousands of deaths were not real. These enemy pilots were not firing live ammunition. Walter Krupinski's 197 "kills" represent the death of hundreds of Allied airmen, and a permanent hurt in the hearts of the parents and families of those airmen. But why are they glorified here in America? Should we consider them heroes? I firmly believe that their praise and "hero worship" should be confined to their country. I also believe that the artist Robert Taylor should be reprimanded, or prevent the sale of his prints of German aces. Obviously he is concerned mainly with making money!

If I sound bitter, it's because I am. I wonder if anyone else feels as I do. Your beautiful Newsletter should reflect the subscribers, who flew combat, reaction to their feelings today toward German fighter pilots.

Once again, you are to be commended for publishing an interesting, and beautifully printed Newsletter. I hope you will continue to be instrumental in keeping alive the exemplary role that the 303rd performed during the war.

Congratulations, good luck, and "cheers".

Charles Palmer  
141 Laurie Dr.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15235

I agree very much with the views expressed by Charles Palmer whose brother suffered death at the hands of the Germans.

Certainly there is no good or legitimate reason to allow our former enemies to be members of an organization when in fact they were bent on destroying it and killing its members.

The 303rd membership should only be made up of former military personnel of the 303rd during WW II.

When we all pass away the organization should be disbanded. Associate membership should be open to anyone who is a blood relation to a member and that should cease upon the member's death.

If there are to be any associate members then let it be restricted to persons of American citizenship or countries allied with us during WW II such as Great Britain, Russia, members of the British Commonwealth or persons who were with the Free French or liberating units from other European countries. But not from those representing Germany, Italy or Japan (the Axis powers); membership for former German pilots — not no but "Hell No!"

Jim Lemon  
P.O. Box 1416  
Gulf Shores, AL 36542

I read with interest the Newsletter of April 1989. The letter from Charles Palmer interested me. As a friend of mine, Hal, and a former 303rd comrade you will note areas where I might differ from your views and other areas where others might differ from my views. I think you are aware that it has been my belief since the beginning of the Hell's Angels Bomb Group Association that we should concern ourselves with membership only for those who served. However, **there is where my agreement with Mr. Palmer ends.**

At the risk of repetition, I think many of my fellow 303rd'ers know I had two cousins in the Luftwaffe, one of whom flew with me in my little plane in the 30's. I also had a cousin in the Wehrmacht who had boarded with us in the 30's. He went back to Germany in the late 30's merely to take his new Ameri-

can wife on a honeymoon. You guessed it: They grabbed him and into the Army he went. His bride, the sister of a high school chum of mine, and an American, sat in Munich for the entire war. They both returned to the US after the war after he represented himself as a former immigrant to the US who had made that mistake of going back for a visit in the late 30's. They are now both deceased.

**At any time during the war, had I come face to face with my relatives, it would have been THEM or ME!** The same obtains for the many fine German pilots and other crewmembers I met and worked with when I was a post WW#2 Captain-pilot with the German airline, Lufthansa. **But the war is over!** We won! Enough said!

My cousins from the Luftwaffe were killed in action. One in North Africa and one in Europe. Perhaps opposing me. I met fellows in Lufthansa who knew them both well.

To make my position clear — since this is a forum — I feel that continued enmity for any reason with our former enemies is wrong. However, **never should we forget our veterans nor celebrate anything anent the opposition.** To this end, I am still, to this day, aghast at the amount of self-punishment we allow to be put upon us for the Nagasaki and Hiroshima raids when we seldom do or say anything about Pearl Harbor. And everyone knows that had there been no Pearl Harbor there would have been no Nagasaki or Hiroshima raid! And when I led a Dresden raid in WW#2, I never, for one moment, gave any thought to my relatives living down there in that city!

For the 303rd. I still believe we should remain until that last man reunion and then be gone with the wind. The 8th Air Force Historical Society is charged with the responsibility that history gives us a proper niche therein and that the 303rd will have a proper niche therein also. But beyond our last man, we need no other members. And they should all be 303rd people.

William Heller  
Former pilot, 360th Sqdn.  
Former Ops. Off. 359th Sqdn.  
Former Commanding Officer, 360th Sqdn.

You asked for comments.

When I read in the January Newsletter about the upcoming article featuring Manfred Frey and Rex Reichert, I had the same reaction as Charles Palmer who commented in the current issue. Indeed, we were not playing a game!

I spent two weeks in the fall of 1985 in Bavaria and Austria and found the German people very friendly, helpful and delightful. But I think it would have strained most relationships if I, or anyone else for that matter, had volunteered that I had been a Flying Fortress pilot during the war and bombed many German cities. This probably would have been particularly true in Stuttgart and Munich.

After I completed my tour with the 303rd. I transferred to a P-51 Group and flew sixteen more missions before the war ended. I thought that references to Frey's shooting down B-17s and P-51s and those implied for Reichert almost seemed to flaunt their "kills". I just do not think that the 303rd BGA is the place for these particular war stories. Its too personal and many of our comrades remain in Europe.

If I had met either Frey or Reichert as Bill Heller did, on a postwar, business basis, I have no doubt whatsoever that I would have disregarded (but not forgotten) the past and moved forward with them in a new era and new relationship. But it is more difficult from within the context of the 303rd.

Now...about fragmenting the 303rd. This organization simply can't be split apart...it's a family! We are brothers and members of a very special fraternity. Everyone who fried an egg, guarded a gate, drove a 6x6 or replaced a muffler, repaired a leaking roof, assembled an ammunition belt, issued a pair of trousers, overhauled a Wright 1820, repaired a road or runway, created a weather chart, prepared bombs for delivery, manned a fire truck or ambulance, repaired a wing, made radios and telephones work, typed payroll lists or woke up the flying crews at 0300 was with every flying crew on every mission. Without those who did these things and others not mentioned, no engine would have ever coughed and belched to life, no aircraft would have ever rumbled down a runway and no B-17 would

(continued)

## Forum

have ever reached a target.

It does not matter what an individual's role or rank was but only that he was part of the 303rd sharing its joy, sadness, fear, courage, and pride and contributed to its outstanding performance as part of the Eighth Air Force. Those who started the Group in this country but may not have accompanied it overseas also are essential members because without them there would not have been any group to go to England. Just as those who kept the organization together from the end of the war until its deactivation.

After forty-five years, I have been reunited with the 303rd only since last November. I am looking forward with great anticipation to my first reunion in Norfolk...there's a lot of my brothers that I want to meet and talk to.

Congratulations on the excellent newsletter that you are getting out. This is a demanding and often thankless task.

**Jim Hickey**  
1829 Wolf Laurel Drive  
Sun City Center, FL 33570

I would like to comment on a couple of letters in our April edition in "Your Chance to Sound Off" section. The first of which was a letter from Charles A. Palmer, of Pittsburg, PA, wherein he states that he could not remove from his mind the jubilant scene at a German airfield when those German pilots landed after shooting down one of our B-17s; one of which his brother was killed in; during WWII. I wonder if he had the occasion to view the jubilant scene our pilots and gunners displayed upon our return from those missions wherein we had shot down German fighter and bomber planes on our missions over their country. I too lost my youngest brother - who was a paratrooper - on his first jump into enemy territory (only 17 then) just a few months before the end of that war.

After flying 47 missions from summer of 1942 to spring of 1945 I knew - as those German airmen knew - that we were each trying to win a war we were caught up into. We flying airmen routinely were awarded Air Medals and Distinguished Flying Crosses and were paid an additional 50 percent of our base pay to fly these missions;

and, if I am correct, most of us volunteered for flight in combat for these added incentives. I have yet to hear that aircrews in the German Air Forces were awarded these amenities.

Within weeks after the war ended in Europe I was sent first to Chartres and then Beauvais, France for a couple of months and then to Frankfurt-on-Main, Germany. In France - being able to speak German - I was able to serve as interpreter for our Prisoners-of-War and through them learned that they (like myself) were just as anxious for the war to end so that they could get back to what was left of their country and to their wives, parents, and loved ones as most of us Americans and other Allied Military people were.

After arriving at Frankfurt Airfield, and living in Koenigstein about 15 miles north, I had many enjoyable times with many German folks - also some German Prisoners-of-War who had returned from Russia - and only in a very rare occasion did I encounter any Germans that carried any noticeable malice towards us Americans for the destruction we had done to their country. Even after all of these years I still communicate with a German family that I had the pleasure of becoming acquainted with back then (in the fall of 1945).

So, to live with malice all of these years towards Germans that were just doing their jobs as we were doing, would seem to me that would be carrying on the same war without end; a war and hatred towards a person (or persons) who never knew of a Joe Palmer, or of a William Henderson (my younger brother).

The second interest in "Your Chance to Sound Off" article is an article from Hal Susskind "My Forty-second Mission to Germany" wherein he states that the last time he saw Frankfurt it was leveled and not even one building was left standing. I can disagree with him on this since I had been there right after the war and the most outstanding building that was left standing was the entire Krupp Chemical Works. This facility had a below ground floor with rather fabulous sloping lawns with lots of shrubbery down to this first level and then with several stories more above ground along with a

large auditorium building about a block away. Also, it seems, like the entire barracks facilities for their workers were untouched by any bombs. These facilities served as General Ike's headquarters, and his several other of our General's planes were parked at our Frankfurt Airfield and serviced by our troops.

I remember the railroad station (which was a large station) was leveled to the ground - as were all the bridges around the town - and many of the town's buildings; but I also remember that there were many other buildings in the town that hadn't been damaged by the war.

The most startling of all of these buildings; to me; was the fact that the Krupp Chemical Buildings seemed to have not even been hit by a single bullet (much less showing any types of bomb damage); and, since these buildings were also on some of Frankfurt's highest grounds and were a bright white in color; also, since Krupp people used a lot of displaced prisoners for free labor (slaves, in other words) and were one of Germany's prime war industries, I have often wondered if we didn't deliberately avoid bombing these facilities.

I was all the more disturbed by the fact that just about every building around this Krupp Facility was leveled to the ground, and wondered how we - and the British - managed to accomplish such a feat without doing some damage to this Krupp (Corrupt) Facility.

To add to this, I was troubled some years back reading an article in the news that our government was paying General Motors reparation payments for the damage we done during WWII bombing their factories in Germany where they were making even better tanks and trucks for the Nazis than they were making for America - an act that would have been treasonous for other less influential companies.

So, those of you who still have trouble trying to make friends with the German people - especially after 44 years - think about some of these things. Also, remember, we are guilty of making a lot of deals with German War Criminals to whatever advantages we sought for our benefit in those days right

after (and many times during) the war.

**King Henderson**  
Moreno Valley, CA 92337

*Ed. Note: Thanks for a very interesting letter. When the war in Europe ended we took the ground crews on a tour of bombed out Germany. When we flew down the streets in Frankfurt (we were a trifle low) I don't remember seeing any buildings standing on the streets we went down. Anyway they have done a marvelous job in transforming those piles of rubble into very nice buildings.*

### Where's Art Nilson?

RE: April Forum, Down Memory Lane, 303rd. ball team Art Nilson was with the photo section and flew with our crew on Jan. 14, '44. We were on a "Milk Run to Calais" at 12,000, flak got us. Art survived (two broken legs) the war as POW. Our crew is still looking for Art. Any info sent to address below or call 409-892-4203 in the evening.

Hal, you are doing a great job as Editor, God Bless You.

**Joseph F. Fertitta**  
2020 Chevy Chase  
Beaumont, TX 77706

PS. #1 April 26, 1945 was my liberation day.

PS. #2 Art is the tall fellow 3rd from left front row in photo on pg. 5 of April Newsletter.



**Still Friends** - The above photo taken in December 1944 in sunny England shows Gerry Campbell (r) about to clobber Bill Sears with a snowball. Sears was a waist gunner and Campbell, a ball turret gunner in those days with the 427th Sqdn. Still the best of friends they attended the Seattle reunion in '85. Campbell works for Pacific Fruit Co. in Washington and Sears, head of media relations at the Kingdome in Seattle for 12 years is now director of media relations for the 1990 Goodwill Games.

# Forum

## Reflections of Molesworth

I'm not sure of the target but I think it was Oschersleben but we all know the 303rd Bomb Group was hit hard on the raid over Germany on Jan. 11, 1944.

I was a truck driver and was called on to pick up two ground crews from the 360th Sqdn. to drive to a base somewhere on the east coast of England to pick up the guns on two aircraft—The Black Diamond Express and Yankee Doodle Dandy—which did not make it back to Molesworth.

The airman who rode in front with me to show me the way was the ball turret gunner on the Black Diamond Express who was lucky to be alive as the ball turret was half blown away but he was unhurt. Our first stop was to visit a buddy of his who had been hit but not fatally. The tail gunner had been killed. Our next stop was to where the Black Diamond Express was parked and when I saw the pool of blood under the tail section it made me realize how much we owed to the boys in these planes. We didn't get the guns that day and when we came back to where the Express had been parked all we found was a pool of blood. It had been moved. When we finally found it, we found more blood under the tail section. I found out later that the tail gunner had bled to death as the fighting was so fierce no one had time to help him.

Our next stop was the Yankee Doodle Dandy. This plane was hit so bad the crew all bailed out except the pilot who stayed with the plane and brought it back alone. I've always wondered if this was the last flight of these two aircraft. Also about the crews of these two planes, especially the wounded gunner, the ball turret gunner who was my guide and the pilot of the Yankee Doodle Dandy. Did any of the crew who bailed out survive the war? Would like to know if any of the ground crew who made the trip with me, remembers it?

There was a lighter side of life. How many remember the poker games at the Red Cross until the good ladies who ran the place saw the huge amount of money on the table and told us that was Verboten. We got by for awhile by using poker chips instead of cash but the Red Cross ladies were no

dummies and they soon put the Blitzkrieg to that operation so we were forced to carry on our games of chance at some friendly Nissoon hut. Many players came and went but the more steady ones were Shorty Warren from Texas who always carried a nickel in his ear, a little corporal from somewhere in the New England States, big blond, good looking Frank Mades from Florida, Goldwasser also from Florida, a big tough red head named Wyatt, Bill Beckam whose brother was the leading fighter ace at the time until he was shot down over Germany, and of course Wes Boyer. Beckam's brother survived and returned to active duty after the war.

My outfit was the 1114th QM Company but I was on special assignment to the motor pool. I was sworn in at Fort Snelling in January of 1942. Did my basic training at Ft. Warren, Wyoming and from there was sent to Gowen Air Base in Idaho. Just marked time there until June when we were sent to Alamogordo where the 161st QM Co. was formed. If some of you remember some time in August all passes were cancelled and the base was put on quarantine for Scarlet Fever. I was the culprit. I was sent to the hospital at El Paso and while there my outfit got orders to move out and I was transferred out of the company but the orders got delayed and I returned in time to rejoin my outfit and I will always be grateful to Sgt. Durkey who pulled the strings to get me back. In late September we arrived at Ft. Dix where we joined a convoy headed for England. Our ship was a former British Mail Ship name the Strathallen. It was her last Atlantic crossing as she was sunk a short time later off the coast of Africa. After 13 days at sea we landed at Greenock, Scotland, Oct. 12, 1942.

In a matter of hours we were put on a train and after an all night ride we landed at Alconbury. At Alconbury we were divided into five groups with one staying at Alconbury and the rest going to Bassingbourn, Kimbolton, Polebrook and Molesworth. My unit went to Polebrook where we stayed for a short while before we were sent to a Liberator base on the east Coast of England near the town of Norwich. Our stay there was also short and the day before Christ-

mas we were sent to Molesworth where I spent the duration. This is where the 1114th QM Co. was formed.

My job in the summer of 1943 was making a daily salvage run into Kettering. I still remember most of the crew. In charge was Sgt. Boutillier from Louisiana, Bill Ring from New York whose dad was a former pitcher for the New York Giants, Chilstrom from the Twin Cities and Joe Kurek from Pennsylvania and his friend Steve.

I was assigned to the motor pool in the fall of 1943 until my knee swelled up with arthritis and I was hospitalized. I returned to the base and was assigned to Col. Lew Lyle as his steady driver. I always wondered if Col. Lyle remembers the driver he had for only one day and what happened to him. My swollen knee would not let me work the clutch safely so after another examination I was put on limited service and spent the rest of my time in England as a paid KP at the 360th mess hall.

I left England in June of 1945 and I wonder how many remember the long chow lines at Camp Dushane near Casablanca. I was sent to Tunis for a short while but was returned to Casablanca where we were hopped a C-54 for Miami, and eventually discharge in Nov. 5, 1945.

**Wes Boyer**

**Elk River, MN. 55330**

*Ed. Note: Perhaps the Fort with the toughest record of battle damage was the old "Black Diamond Express." Inherited by the Eighth Air Force from the RAF, the plane collected major flak and canon damage on every one of her 10 missions. It was SOP for the "Express" to go to the hangar after every mission. It was a relieved ground crew that saw it leave for training grounds in the States. "Yankee Doodle Dandy" came back from the Oschersleben mission with twenty 20 mm canon holes from the fierce battle. The tail gunner Sgt. R.A. Jeffrey was killed and the left waist gunner, Sgt. R.F. Burkart was dying when the "Yankee" brought them home. "Yankee" had 19 fighters to her credit when she was retired from combat and sent back to the U.S.*

Just received the Hell's Angels Newsletter for April and it was super as they all are. The pictures are great as they always are. I was

drawn to the one where English royalty visited the base because the 360th Sqdn. was the squadron chosen for the rulers to visit. But where was I? This was during the time I was home on R and R but the guys in the squadron kept photos of the visit for me and I have them in my album. Ray Espinosa, who was in the 444th Sub Depot, and I have had several visits here in Redlands. He was in the band that played at many of the dances at Molesworth. In our last conversation he expressed regret that more was not printed about the support personnel especially the ground crews, etc who kept the "big birds" flying. They were really the men who did the dirty work while us "fly boys" were waiting for the next mission. They were out there at all hours getting the planes ready to fly.

I do not know if any of the enclosed pictures are of any value but I thought I would send them anyway. From my thinking these fellows need recognition which is long overdue. Lt. Rowsell, Communications; Lt. Piper, Ordnance and Capt. Lucey, Armament. I also have a picture of the Engineering unit with Capt. Quinney. Thought the other pictures would also be interesting: B-17 and flak; B-17 going down in flames over Big B and B-17 after a bomb run showing the target being hit.

I don't know if Charles Palmer has a picture of his brother's crew but here is a picture I have along with a picture of Capt. Brinkley's crew. Keep up the good work and I hope to see you in Norfolk in the fall.

**Walt Shaylor**  
**Redlands, CA**

## Whereabouts of Ball Team?

In the Jan. 1989 Newsletter, Jim-my Stewart asked for information about the 8th Air Force Baseball Champs. Enclosed is a copy of the championship game program. Also a copy of the article that was written in the English paper, Chronicle and Echo.

Sure would like to know how many of the players are still alive. Hope to make one of the future reunions. I have a lot of artifacts, such as escape maps, flak and bomb drop photos. Hope you can use these articles.

**Louis F. Torretto**  
**Sgt., 358th Sq., mechanic**



# Forum

## One Association

In recent letters to the Forum, certain individuals are criticizing the idea of the ground crew personnel getting together. Everything that they mention is very negative. It really don't make any difference whether it is negative or positive if they don't know what they are talking about.

We are in no way trying to divide the 303rd. The 303rd was made up of different units which had their own experiences, as well there was a difference of experiences between the flight and ground crews. We just want to sit down and discuss different things that happened which didn't involve the flight crews.

In the newsletter there are very good articles on happenings during a bomb run and return. I enjoy reading about them, so why can't the ground crews get together to talk about their experiences. I believe that there should be a two way street, and not somebody with horse blinders on looking in only one direction.

**Joe Worthington (359th)**  
Chestertown, MD 21620

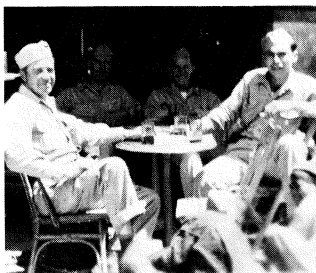
Whats all the fuss about breaking up the 303rd outfit into Ground Echelon and Air Echelon?

The members of the ground echelon just want to get together and talk about and discuss things that they're familiar with. No one that I know of said anything about being a separate unit. All the reunions I've attended seem to center on the air echelon; who flew this mission; who was in on the first Berlin mission? etc.

We all worked together to achieve a victory. Some one says how about the ground crews getting together, seems the air crews get all upset, don't know why, the ground echelon isn't breaking away. I think if the air echelon wants a room to hold a meeting during the reunion, I can't see anything wrong with that. I hope this may help close the subject on the air echelon and ground echelon. United we stand, divided we fall, we don't fall and we won't fall.

A closing note: the Eight Air Force Historical Society will be having a reunion in October, recognition of the ground personnel will be the central theme of the reunion.

**Christ M. Christoff**  
Merrillville, IN



**Smith, Kray, Whisocky and Christoff at Casablanca in 1945.**

As I read the April issue of the "News Letter," I am highly displeased and most disturbed to learn that there is a proposal to divide the BGA, as it is now, into two separate organizations.

You could hire a combination of a Harvard lawyer, and a Yale professor and they couldn't come up with a better plan to destroy this Bomb Group Association as we have and yes, enjoy.

For a group of people that got along so well together and did the work that we were called on to do during it's war years, at this point in time to say that we can no longer continue in this frame is pure barnyard refuse.

There has been an awareness of some dissent and this may be justly so, to a point. This has probably come from ground personnel. There is some reason for this. After the war most of them were discharged and went on to other careers in education, business and some as entrepreneurs etc., and did quite well at it. In war time they were highly capable in their position but there were those that were above them in leadership positions and of course it had to be that way because you can do nothing without leaders. Now, today those of this ground personnel, of which I speak, are people of great accomplishment and are of just as much leadership ability as our top leaders were in war time. This, in my opinion has caused friction; and yet I have heard none of these stand up and note that they have the ability and willingness to give up their time and will do a job if elected.

I was ground crew, on planes,

as opposed to the many other jobs of the ground personnel and I press the point that these "many other jobs" don't want to be overlooked or considered small. All jobs were necessary and run from lesser to greater as far as responsibility was concerned.

I think that it is of worthy note that, although they were both crews, there was a lot of difference in the way they were handled. The flying boys were chosen to be compatible. The ground crew were never really a crew except when they were on the job; whereas the flight crew were, more or less, continually operating as a family group. Yes, you could say with truth that they flew together, fought together, got hit together, some were killed together, went down together, and were prisoners of war together and if fate prevailed, the finished their mission quota and went home together. And yet farther they, when there is enough of a crew attending the reunion, obtain a suite and stay together and of this I have no qualms, for them I'm sure it is most enjoyable.

Col. Shayler said that the flight personnel got all they glory and the dirty work was done by the ground crews. I don't agree with this; firstly, we didn't get shot at by the enemy but I'll agree that we did the dirty work but to fly combat it took a lot of guts and I'm not sure if there wasn't some booze along the way somewhere to hold the nerves. I have great respect for those who flew.

Now, for the 303rd BGA. Who is responsible for this Association? I'm not so sure but I think that those of our 303rd who were leaders put the big interest in getting it going. It then therefore goes without saying that they were the first directors. This I have no problem with. You can have no organization without somebody to head it up; we also have had directors from the ground personnel. I am happy with this, the way it has gone and is, but it seems that there are others that may not be. We have many ground personnel who are in and support the BGA but I am disappointed that more of them have not taken part. People you are missing out on something good and until you attend a reunion you are not going to find out what you are losing out on.

For me, Hicks, crew chief of the "Queen of Hearts" this BG Association is a top highlight in my life and the times that I have had to miss the reunion was certainly most disappointing.

**James C. Hicks**  
Henderson, KY 41410

## "Beats Me"

Reference the April newsletter in which Col. Shayler was wanting to know the name of Col. Schulstad's original ship. I was one of the original crew members of Schulstad's crew. I remember when Schulstad came over to me and asked my opinion as to what we should name our ship. (last number - 567). I recall that I said, "Beats Me," and I suppose the rest of crew had given the same reply — so it was named "Beats Me." There was no fancy pin-up girl etc., but a neat sign "Beats Me" on the right side of the ship beneath the co-pilot's window.

Enclosed please find a photo of the 303rd lead crew that first bombed Germany proper — Wilhelmshaven.



Does anyone have any information on "Rosey" Nathan Rosenbloom. He was injured on the leg and was evacuated stateside. I was the bombardier on that raid. John Casello was the pilot.

**R.J. Said**  
Eclectic, AL 36024

I was sorry to hear of the death of Simeon Oxendine. I received a Christmas card from him. He said he was feeling pretty good after his last heart attack. He was my B.T. Gunner. He joined our crew in Nov. '43 after he had a few missions. I finished him up with his 25 missions. I have enclosed a picture of our crew. If you could reduce it down and print it in the next newsletter, I think the crew would like it.

**Bill Bergeron**  
San Antonio, TX

*Ed. Note see page 8*

# "Staying Alive"

*The July 1987 newsletter: An article by S/Sgt. Lance, "November 29, 1943 was our day." This is the rest of the story by Dr. Carl Flyer, B-17F 1st pilot on the same mission to Bremen. He calls it "Staying Alive."*

At 2:00 a.m., the Officer of the Day awoke me and said "you are flying today!" I replied "No, I am convalescing from being 'run down' at night by the SQ jeep." The O.D. insisted—so I dressed and went to H.Q. in the dark. Sure enough, there was my name to lead the high SQ. So being a conscientious person, I went to breakfast, gathered my combat gear and headed out to the B-17G they had assigned for me to fly. No. 42-29498-D.

This was to be my 25th mission. Just a few days earlier on the same target, a plane below me "blew up." I had to leave formation to dodge the debris. My nerves were almost shot from so much combat like this. I was unable to join the formation, so I flew back to England parallel to the group.

Today as I approached the target, there were only two of us in the top SQ. As we dropped our bombs, the flak hit us both. My ship lurched and I ended up putting both feet on the control col-

umn to hold the nose of the ship down. I did not know that the right horizontal stabilizer, part of the right wing and two engines were gone. Later, the third engine caught on fire. I was flying only on 1 engine on the left wing. The ship nosed up turning to the right. I knew we were in trouble since I could not steer to the west.

Then the German fighters - FW-190s, hit us. The co-pilot, B. Ward got wounded in the face. The engineer was slammed out of the top turret, a 20mm shell tore his leg and he lay on the floor alongside me bleeding. Other shells passed through the cockpit and the navigator and I were hit. I motioned to the two wounded men in the cockpit to get out. They went out the open bombay. I continued to try to fly west—"no luck". I could hear one gun in the nose still firing. At last, I felt it was time for me to go! I broke the wires and oxygen hoses, snapped on the small chest chute and crawled under the floor to the nose to see if the men there got out. They were gone, so I dropped out the hatch and slid back along the plane and behind the tail I popped the chute. My heels hit my shoulder blades. As I hung there in my chute, a German fighter, a FW190 made passes at me. I tried

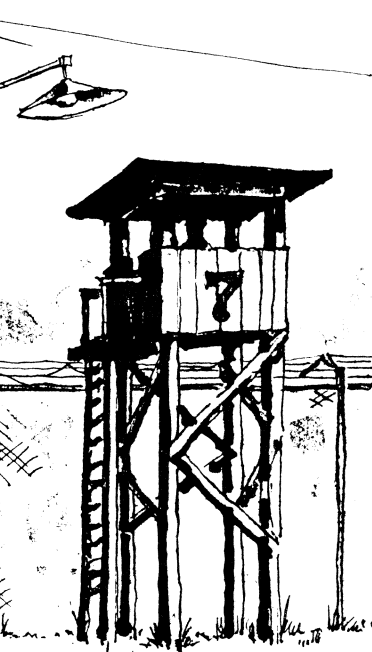
to swing—he split my chute and I fell. When I awoke I found I had taken all the limbs off a 60ft. pine tree with my back in the same spot where the Jeep had injured me.

Soon the armed Jerries captured me. There was no place to run—all of Europe was Germany in 1943. The FW 190 pilot and his wing man photographed me. He told me he had 300 aircraft to his credit and he had lived in the USA and worked for Pepsi Cola Co. As I was marched to the RR station, I had to carry an American officer who broke two ankles when he parachuted. The mob in the RR station wanted to "hang us," calling us "Chicago gangsters."

I was interrogated at Dulag Luft at Frankfurt. The prison had electric fences, solitary cells and there was screaming - hollering and singing in the other cells. Then came a 5 day ride in a box car to Berlin. After a few days in the RR yards there, I was hauled to Barth on the Baltic Sea to Stalag Luft #1. Here I teamed up with 303rd Lt. Don Marsh, co-pilot of my left wing ship (Red Ass). We shared the boiled barley, grass soups and Rutabagas diet.

Meantime, S/Sgt. B. Addison from my crew arrived. His wounds did not allow him to make the long march across Germany that his camp made. (There were two long 600 Kilometer marches by American POWs across Germany in the snow ahead of the Russians.) I met him while we sat on the floor waiting for treatment by the camp's only doctor. We compared notes on what happened to the crew for the first time.

The Russians arrived May, 1945 and wanted us POWs to go to Russia with them. After I got away from the Russians and got to France, I found S/Sgt. Marty Stachowiack. He was in the tent hospital at Camp Lucky Strike, France. He made one of the long marches across Germany in the winter of 1945. He was bayoneted in his good arm and the German guard dogs were turned loose on him. He

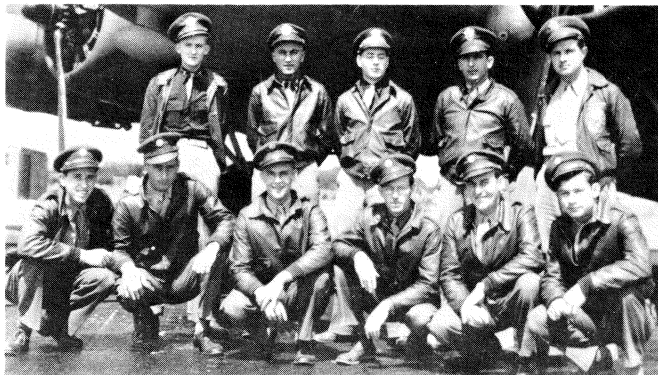


had lost a great deal of weight. He looked terrible—I did not recognize him. He told me he was pushed out of the plane by the tail gunner, S/Sgt. Jo Sawackii who had lost an arm. When he could not fire the guns with one hand, he crawled out, put chutes on both waist gunners, who had face wounds and a broken arm apiece. He pushed them out hoping with their one good hand they could pull the chute. Out of a crew of 11, 10 were wounded, 4 died immediately, 3 more later of POW residuals.

People ask me what I think of going down on my final mission of my tour. It is absolutely impossible to comprehend the emotional jolt and the trauma of being shot down and the POW experience!

I still think of my combat. The Hamburg raid, the first Schweinfurt raid in August 17, 1943 where planes, junk, gun barrels, belts of ammo were falling through the sky when 60 planes were lost. The long trip to Heroya, Norway, the heavy water plant (Hitlers Atomic Bomb), Stuttgart, Frankfurt and others, even flying combat as tail-end Charlie in a YB-40, B-17.

It all was just like yesterday.



Flyer's crew, July 1943—(Top row, l to r) B. Ward, CP; G. Molnar, N; R. Wary, P; S. Gipson, B and C. Flyer, P. Lower Row: S/Sgts. Addison, Crowder, Jillson, Kelly, Stachowiack and Ford. But on the mission on Nov. 29, 1943 there were some changes and the following were on board: Lts. Flyer, Ward, Molnar and Petrolino as Bomb. Rest of crew were Sgts. Addison, O'Connell, Ford, Stachowiack, Fisher, Sawicki and N.P.S. Egge as photographer.

*Ed. Note: On the Nov. 29th mission Sgts. Ford, Egge and O'Connell were killed. Flyer lost 8 inches around the waist in the PW camp. When his uniform fell off he traded it for an RAF blue one. He was also promoted to Captain the day he was shot down but he didn't find out until 39 years later.*

## Forum



**Bergeron's Crew — (Top l to r) Bergeron, P; DeWall, CP; Nolan, N; DeFeis, B. (Bottom) Wilson, WG; Oxendine, BT; Cervi, Eng; Hemming, WG; Cline, RO and Shorty Appleton, TG.**

### Tailwheel Kaiser

*In the past few issues of the newsletter I mentioned that I was trying to locate an old friend named "Tailwheel Kaiser." The mention of his name brought responses in the April issue from people who knew and had flown with him. Reprinted below are excerpts from a letter I received from his daughter Kate Kaiser.*

My aunt sent an article from the Youngstown (Ohio) Vindicator that you were looking for group members for a reunion. The only name specified in the article was: Capt. J.W. Kaiser of 67 W. Florida. My father, James McCall Kaiser, did live at that address from 1946 to 1948 when I was born. He was an Army navigator captain.

I assume the middle initial was a typo. Assuming the coincidence could not be anyone else, I'll share more information for those buddies of his who may be curious. I am very sorry to tell you that he died on May 2, 1970 from a stroke at age 51.

After returning home from the war he married my mother, Rosemary Hogan (an Army nurse stationed primarily at the Battle of the Bulge). She died in 1977.

Most people called my Dad "Jimmy" but his Army name was "Tailwheel." He often talked about being in the Army but he always made it exciting and told us kids about special places like India, Jerusalem, and the pyramids of Egypt as if he was on world tour. As I was older I realized that both he and my mother were either very brave or very crazy to defend their country. I'm sure it was not the travelogue he made it out to be

and I am very proud of him and all in your group for your participation in the war. My dad always was a good timer and looked at everything in a positive light.

I adored my father typical of oldest daughters. He would teach me the summer stars and tell me how those stars guided him many times as a navigator. I have never married and am a business professor at Marquette University in management information systems. When people have asked me how I achieved my unusual career, I tell them my father made me a feminist because he let me think I could do anything I wanted to.

Please let me know if I can do anything. I hope to hear from you concerning why you wanted to locate him especially. I know that the Distinguished Flying Cross and Silver Star Medal were honors. I do not know about the Presidential Unit Citation. I would like to know what situations occurred that warranted him receiving these. I never heard why.

I was very touched by your effort to find him and wish you luck in finding others. I hope they are healthy and able to share the years since they have been very happy. I'm sure my father would have come to the reunion and had a wonderful time. Maybe he'll come anyway!

**Kate M. Kaiser  
Milwaukee, WI 53202**

*Ed. Note: Our deepest sympathy goes to you and your family on the death of our good friend "Tailwheel" Kaiser. He received the decorations you mentioned before he joined the 303rd. He was quite a guy.*

### Surprised

Imagine my surprise when I picked up my copy of Air Force magazine and saw your notice about the reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group.

I was sure the 303rd had been dissolved years ago. However, I recently heard it was activated years ago as a missile group.

I was with the Molesworth original group in Aug. of '42 and finished my 25th mission in June of '43 and sent home to Boeing in Seattle as a Ground Engineer Instructor 'til Aug. of '45.

We flew our aircraft — B-17 — to England via the Northern Route and landed in mud soaked runways at Molesworth. First Sqdn. the 360th.

Our B-17 was the "Snap-Crackle-Pop" crew that was written up in Air Force Magazine (April 1986) and we lost our ship to another crew while we were on leave to London. Sure felt bad about the crew, but learned later some had survived.

My interest is, not only that I will make the reunion, but if you do hear from other members of 360th, from Aug. '42 thru Nov. '43, please if possible let me know.

I have been in touch with Mr. de Guitant (the 15 year old boy in AFA story in April 1986) which was an enlightening story for me.

**Hank Schneiderman  
Mesa, AZ 85205**

*Ed. Note: Yes and the 303rd has been deactivated once again. Also 3 members of your original crew are members of the 303rd Association. They are : Pilot, J.W. Fredericks; Richard Smith and G. Gil A. Murray Jr.*

### Info Wanted On "Fearless Fosdick"

Passionate by aviation, I undertook on the study of the B-17G, Serial #337838 VK, which crashed near Reims in France, August 15, 1944 at Beine Navroy village (a very small city).

I researched its exact crash site, its escape network of different crew members, precise photographs of this B-17G and some metal debris were also studied.

I then contacted the HQ USAF Historical Research Center at Maxwell Air Force Base which transmitted a report of this mis-

sion of the 303rd BG on the 15th of August 1944.

They also provided a list of the crew members of the B-17G. I have found different crew members of "Fearless Fosdick" of the 358 BS of Molesworth, England. Since 2½ years, I work on this research.

I'll explain my request: I am 27 years old, I am a woman and I like aviation. Aviation, is for all my family, a sort of "virus." My father works on a base-aviation in France. My grandmother flew a plane in 1930. My job is a registered nurse in a medical emergency service with a helicopter. Of course I fly often and aviation is my hobby. But this B-17G, this research is very important to me.

First I think often that these young Americans had given their lives for our Freedom. Then, I am impressed by this plane, the B-17 Flying Fortress of the 8th Air Force. I have found some information on the crew members but I have some problems in finding their addresses. Can you help me to find these men? Please?

I have found the pilot of this B-17, more exactly his wife since Arnold Litman died in September 1985. Mrs. Gloria Litman is marvelous, she helps me in my research in the U.S. I have contacted the navigator, Lt. Wayne Krouskup. I have also found the memorial in Restland Memorial Park in Dallas where the bombardier, Lt. Lawrence Wolf is buried. He was killed in action by flak. Also I have contacted the radio operator, T/Sgt. Fred R. Meyer but I have no answer to my letter.

I am still trying to locate five other members of this crew, they are: T/Sgt. Harry R. Card; S/Sgt. William P. Truesdell; S/Sgt. Manley E. Grissom; S/Sgt. Clarence J. Williams and the co-pilot, Lt. Lawrence Stein.

Excuse me, my school English is very bad but I want to find these crew members. I write with a lot of faults but I write with my heart.

Thank you in advance for your help.

**Mlle Beaudenon, Dalila  
56 rue Marie Ognos  
51100 Reims  
France.**

*Ed. Note: Although I edited the above letter, I purposely did not change the English since I felt that would have destroyed the flavor of the letter. Miss Beaudenon has since applied for membership in our Association.*



## Forum

### Heaven's Angels

Some time ago someone gave me a copy of your "Hell's Angels" Newsletter and since I am a Lutheran Pastor I have marked out the old planes name and put Heavens Angels on the plane.

Our crew was among the first replacements for the 303rd and there was no lack of empty Nissans for our housing for the Group had been cleaned out on previous raids and was grounded when we arrived at Molesworth in late May of 1943. For my birthday gift from the Army Air Force I was allowed to make my first bombing mission on June 4th, 1943. I was so pleased about the entire affair I never forget to remember it each birthday—now close to my 70th.

And now I believe I have some data that may be of help to you in your research concerning several items.

Item Number one:

I put in at least 19 or 20 of my missions in the Duchess—and this was the plane in which Jack Mathis was killed on his fatal last bomb run.

Our Officer Crew consisted of Pilot—D.M. Reeder, Jr., Navigator—Harvey Salk, and Co-pilot—Ralph McLean, and myself—the Bombardier.

Information on Jack Mathis

Off to the right of the bombardiers nose position in the Duchess as I manned the nose guns was a small hole an inch or so in diameter that had been patched and that hole was the entry point of the fragment of flak that caught Jack Mathis in the right side as he leaned over his bomb sight on the final fatal run that removed his life. I suppose you know that Jack Mathias brother joined the 8th Air Force and was also killed in air action—or at least that was the information I was given at Molesworth by one of the ground crew.

In addition to flying in the Duchess, on later missions I flew in the Knockout Dropper, the Vicious Virgin, and the 8 Ball.

Another story well worth the telling is the December 14th, 1943 Mission that was planned for the *First Raid on Berlin*. I was to be lead bombardier on that mission and being a First Lt. was the ranking Officer in the entire 303rd Bomb Group for that raid on that day. I still have the target photos, for True Altitude Diagram and the

British prepared selected Target grouping photos—which included the following:—Friedrichstrasse Stations, Air Ministry, Four important Departmental Building, Foreign Office, Ministry of Propaganda, Reich Presidential Chancellory, and Gestapo Headquarters. I am attaching a copy of the strike photos and true altitude charts for your collection.

We were briefed on some 40,000 anti-aircraft guns enroute to target and some 8,000 Luftwaffe aircraft available for strikes as we sailed merrily thru the flak to target.

We quietly packed our gear and laid it on our bunks and sallied forth to our destiny which really didn't seem to have much earthly future.

Out to plane and to assembly on the runway—and then the love of God took over for twin red flares bit the morning dawn—the mission was scrubbed. Later we learned weather—heavy cloud cover—had closed over the target. Remember this was before the 17's were equipped with pathfinder devices and weather penetration devices used to see target and bomb thru weather.

I believe our crew—Reeder's Crew was the 19th crew to complete 25 missions from Molesworth and get to watch our names inscribed on the wall plaque behind the bar in the Officers Club.

Best of wishes and send me an application so that I can join your happy group. The Military may well need us next war for my observations of the current operation are not to optimistic and we had better stay organized. (that's somewhat of a semi-serious joke.)

**Reverend Earl Eugene Vermillion  
Orlando, FL 32803**

P.S. Noted your Schweinfurt Memorial Association. Reeder's crew, including myself were on the first raid, the ball bearing plant raids.

### The Virgin Harlot

I read with interest, the article about the VICIOUS VIRGIN and WHO DONE IT? in the January newsletter. When our crew arrived at the 303rd in early April of 1944, the most noticeable thing on the field was SCARLET HARLOT done up in wide, red and white stripes. I was co-pilot for Theodore R. "Bud" Beiser.

After we flew several missions,

we had a turn to fly her. After having flown the overloaded 17s of war, I couldn't believe that so large an airplane could fly so easily. She handled like a dream! We flew out first to do formation work, and while the others formed up, we flew on ahead to check the weather enroute. After sighting enemy territory, we turned back and landed at a nearly empty field. We didn't get credit for missions.

I had said then, that given a five minute start, a Mustang couldn't catch us before running out of gas. Beiser and I were lucky enough to get to fly her twice.

Having heard of her previous name, I often referred to her as the VIRGIN HARLOT.

There is a small problem with MEL MCCOY's version of the accident that caused her death. It was not in early 1945 as he remembered, because I had left the ETO in early September of 1944, having completed my tour. I believe the time was in the wee morning hours of July 5, 1944. When I heard about the incident later that morning, I walked out to the runways to take a look. As I approached her, it seemed she might fly again. As I examined the prop marks on the runway, and the great distance she slid, I assumed that it was a "buzz job" gone awry. If she had stayed on the runway, she might have had a chance, but the last several hundred feet, she veered off the right side of the runway into the dirt. This ripped her belly open and it filled her innards with a very large amount of dirt. The engine nacelles were also dug in deeply and destroyed. It didn't take a doctor to pronounce her dead. I walked around her grieving greatly, and even contemplated getting a lynch mob together. But the "MYSTERY PILOT" out-ranked

my quite a bit, and so I thought better of it.

I also heard that there was an unqualified co-pilot aboard. It was rumored that he was of the weather persuasion. He also out-ranked me. I'm certain that our "MYSTERY PILOT" will clear up all the details.

But, now, the statute of limitation has finally run out, and I have forgiven the gentleman for messing up my favorite toy.

**Richard R. Johnson  
Deale, Maryland 20751**

### Was Virgin a Harlot?

Got all kinds of things to say, so to save you reading time, I'll list 'em:

My son gave me a book on the 8th which chronicled a lot of the raids I was on. These accounts made me realize how very lucky Hal Susskind and Abbott Smith and all the others still around are. Also what we went through.

We read today a lot about stress. How about the crew chiefs and men with their aircraft responsibility. When their plane didn't come back or did, shot up and with casualties.

**TOTAL UNEQUIVOCAL SHOCK!!!**  
Page 10 changing the name of the Aircraft that got me back from so many raids from "VICIOUS VIRGIN" to the "Scarlet Harlot." Under its old name it lead the whole 8th on August 16th 1943 and got its pilot, Colonel Stevens, the silver star.

I guess that nobody could remain a "vicious virgin" for long at the 303rd, so maybe a name change was in order, but a "harlot" she never was.

**Abbott M. Smith, Jr.  
Barboursville, W.V.**



360th Sqdn, Transportation Section

## Forum

### Another Heroic Act

Appreciate your letter. I wonder about the plane that Mel belly landed. Sometime between Dec. 11 (Emden) and Jan. 11 (Oschersleben), I flew on a mission in an old E with constant flow oxygen, the big bag mask. Then on Jan. 11, we (Hoegs crew) were in a new G which got busted up good. We landed near the coast at a RAF Training Base and were there four days when a hot rod pilot in the old plane came after us.

It was a grass runway so he gave those people a buzz job after we loaded. WOW. Could that have been Mel?

At the RAF base, the women and men who were in separate wings ate together and all I had to wear was my heated pants with the back vent flap.

On the mission we had a 500lb GP bomb shake off the rack and was nose down hanging by one end of the shackle. I was the right waist and the first I knew of this was when Cronin, our bombardier, was in the radio room which was very unusual.

We passed over the Frisian Islands and picked up a little flak and Cronin took off for his nose position. Nosey me went to check with the radio operator who said we couldn't drop the thing. I immediately grabbed a lid off an ammunition box, climbed down into the bomb-bay and pushed one of the levers on the shackle. It was the wrong one, so I grabbed an arming wire off the rack but had some trouble getting the ring over the other lever. Presto! and no more bomb.

The reason I'm telling you this is that in the last month I saw where a gunner got a lot of publicity in the papers for doing this in WW II. No one ever said anything to me about this. I was the one who knew how because I had gone to armament school. It was my job. My butt was on this plane too. I never flew waist again although Phil O'Hare got a crew and asked me to fly tail for him.

**Jesse McLaughlin**  
Ozark, AR 72949

*Ed. Note: Here's another case of someone in the 303rd doing a heroic deed but until now no one has ever heard about it. My hat is off to you Jesse. Unfortunately this story will not appear in the records we are researching in*

### Barksdale's Museum



As you may already know, in January the 8th Air Force Museum in Barksdale A.F.B. was officially dedicated. By chance I was in Shreveport, Louisiana that day and attended the ceremony. The main attraction for me was the B-17 that has the markings of the 303rd.

Other 303rds in attendance were Mrs. Vivianne Woodley Harlan and Lewis E. Lyle. Mrs. Harlan is the widow of Lt. Robert F. Woodley who died in action while serving as co-pilot in the 427th, May 14, 1943. I remember that day very well, as I met the plane that afternoon and helped remove Lt. Woodley who had been hit by a 20mm bullet from a German fighter. It has remained in my memory, as he was from Marshall, Texas, where I was born, and also the home town of Major Ben Ramsey (Group S-4 Officer at the time).

The only other crew member, of Woodley's crew, that Mrs. Harlan knows is Abbot M. Smith, Jr. (member of the association), and she is very interested in obtaining any information concerning her late husbands' crew. Any information may be sent to me and I will see that Mrs. Harlan receives it.

The enclosed photo of Lew and me was taken at the museum dedication by Mrs. Harlan. Any visitors in the Shreveport-Bossier, Louisiana area should visit the museum, for it is worth seeing even though, at this stage, it is fairly small. Entrance to the museum is easy as it is adjacent to the North Gate of Barksdale AFB.

**Quentin Q. Hargrove**  
18 Bill Rogers Drive  
Texarkana, Texas

*Washington. If anyone has a story like this I recommend you send a copy to our Historian E.C. Al Lehmann so he can properly document the history of the 303rd for others to read about it in future years.*

## Book Review

**Half a Wing, Three Engines and a Prayer** by Brian D. O'Neill, an Associate Member of the 303rd Bomb Group Association, 304pp, photos and illustrations. Available through the 303rd P.X. or at the reunion.

Thirty-three aircraft of the 303rd Bomb Group, Hell's Angels, had already been lost to enemy action in its first 57 missions by the time that Lt. Robert J. Hullar's crew arrived at Molesworth, England as one of the first replacement crews for the original air cadre.

The book follows Hullar's crew through its 25 combat missions starting with its first sortie against Amiens on Aug. 15, 1943 and ending with its last raid on Bernberg on Feb. 20, 1944. Through a very thorough research of official records blended with interviews with other members of the 303rd Bomb Group the author helps the reader experience the tremendous odds a combat crewman faced just to stay alive in the aerial warfare over "Target Germany."

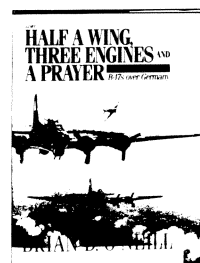
Through the use of wartime diaries of the navigator and co-pilot, the book reveals the perse-

verance needed by the crew to endure the two raids on the ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt when the 8th Air Force lost more than 100 bombers; and also a ditching in the English Channel when their B-17 ran out of gas within sight of the English Coast after a long mission to Stuttgart.

Gen. Lew Lyle, one of the original 303rd cadre and later its commander, summed it up best in the Foreward when he said, "The Hullar crew's tour spanned the end of the survival period of the 303rd and the beginning of the real bombing phases of the air war. Brian O'Neill has realistically portrayed what a typical crew thought and did during those days of fierce fighter attacks and flak, when thousands of crews were destined to go down. Those who lived through the experience, and those who made it through their missions, will attest to the accuracy of human behavior under tremendous stress that is portrayed here and all readers will become engrossed in the story of this crew's fight to survive.

**Hal Susskind**

## HALF A WING, THREE ENGINES, AND A PRAYER



by Brian O'Neill  
with a foreword by Gen. Lewis E. Lyle

Brian O'Neill, an associate member of the 303rd BG, has brought an encyclopedic knowledge of Eighth Air Force history to this intimate, scrupulously researched chronicle of one bomber crew and the 303rd Bomb Group they flew with during WWII. *Half a Wing, Three Engines and a Prayer* relates the entire 25 mission tour of Captain Bob Hullar's crew over Germany and occupied Europe during the crisis of 1943-1944.

Here, five members of one crew look back on this common experience, holding nothing back. Their stories have been blended with accounts from many other 303rd crews and the official records to achieve a finely woven tapestry of hard, correlated fact. The net result is both a memorable portrait of one of the most famous units in the Eighth Air Force and an overview of the whole daylight bombing campaign.

**TAB**

**TAB BOOKS Inc.**

Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17294-0850

Available at your local bookstore or direct from TAB at 1-800-822-8158 [AK/PA (717) 794-2191]

HA79

## 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

***Might - in - Flight***\*\*\*\*\* APPLICATION FOR ☐ MEMBERSHIP FOR ☐ LIFE MEMBERSHIP FOR ☐ ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP \*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\* See Below \*\*\*\*\*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Military Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Bus. Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ ext. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Crew and/or Duty \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ Pilot's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Retired Military Grade, If Any \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

**MEMBERSHIP DUES/\$10.00 FOR CALENDAR YEAR****LIFE MEMBERSHIP DUES SCHEDULE**

60-64 years	\$75
65-69	60
70-74	45
75-77	30
78 years, or older	Free

Substantial savings are available to our members who wish to apply for Life Memberships. A few of our members have sent in money for 2 or even 3 years at the annual rate of \$10 per year. They should evaluate whether they might be able to save dollars by converting these prepayments to a Life Membership.

**DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE MAIL!**

Make Check or Money Order payable to:  
 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Mail to: Jim Reeves  
 28101 Tefir  
 Mission Viejo, CA 92692

**Reunion Potpourri**

**Automobile parking**—The Omni Hotel provides parking for 303rd attendees at a special rate of \$4.00 per car per day for inhouse guests, and \$4.00 per car per day for guests staying outside the hotel. The new "Dominion Towers" Parking Garage, adjacent to the hotel, takes Omni guests at \$3.00 per day, valet parking is available at \$8.00 per day.

**Airport Transportation**—The hotel is approximately fifteen minutes from the airport and can be reached by airport limousine service at a current charge of \$5.25 per person. No hotel van service is available. Taxi service is available for approximately \$12.00.

**Reunion packets**—Because of many changes of address and many addresses being "temporarily away" it is feared that many of our reunion packets were never delivered. If you have not received your reunion packet by the time you receive this newsletter, you are urged to contact Mel McCoy, P.O. Box 1675, Rogue River, OR 97537.

**Barrier Free**—The Omni Hotel is rated "handicapped accessible" but some rooms do not have baths that allow wheelchair access. When making reservations, a room having wheelchair access to the bathroom should be requested.

**Historical documents**—If you have any historical documents or photos that will help in telling the complete story of the 303rd Bomb Group, that you would like to donate or loan for copying, please bring them to the reunion and contact the Group Historian, E.C. Al Lehmann.

**Agenda items**—Any member in good standing who has an item which he believes should be covered at the general meeting Norfolk is asked to forward that suggestion to President Fyler, no later than Aug. 1, so that it may be presented to the Board at their meeting on Sept. 26, 1989 and become an agenda item at the general meeting on Sept. 29.

**Financial Status**—A financial report will be posted on the main bulletin board near the registration booth and also on the bulletin board in the Hospitality Room prior to the General membership meeting.

**In Oversight**

I got out my diary to make copies for the kids to answer their question "What did you do in the war, Daddy?" On reading it over again it occurred to me that it might jog some memories of other members of the squadron who



**"Might in Flight." This is what it was all about; but it took the combined efforts of all of us to accomplish it.**

were around about the same time.

It is unedited except for the few explanatory notes which are in parens.

Enclosed is a photograph of Gamble's original crew.

**Ralph F. Coburn**  
 Maitland, FL 32751

*Ed. Note: Lack of space prevented us from running Coburn's diary and photo. It will run in the October issue which comes out right after the reunion and election of new officers. Also in the October issue will be a follow up on Rex Reichert, ex-Luftwaffe pilot and the proud possessor of an American passport. It is an interesting story and one which I hope will clear up a lot of misunderstanding.*

**From the Editor's Scratchpad!**

The reunion in Norfolk in September will signify the end of my four years as editor of your newsletter. It will also mark the completion of their two years as officers of the Association by your present Board of Directors. Since I serve at the pleasure of that board, I am submitting my resignation as editor effective with their final meeting on Sept. 26. Whether I will continue as editor in the future depends on the wishes of the new board of directors.

It has been a hectic four years but it was always interesting. I've learned more about the 303rd since I have been editor of your newsletter than I did flying two combat tours. At that time I was pretty well tied up with the fortunes of the 359th Sqdn and also in trying to save my butt.

The Association has grown since the Seattle reunion of '85. At that time we had about 1150 regular members. Now I believe we have about 1500. There are still about 1000 more out there that we have never contacted. But you can help if you would please send the suggested letter to the editor, which is on page 2 of this newsletter.

I honestly believe that we have one of the best newsletters around and my thanks go out to all the members for their support and their wonderful and interesting letters that really made this newsletter. I'm a bit sad that some of the acts of heroism that we covered were never recognized during the war years. I'm thinking of Lt. Robert S. O'Connor who stayed with his aircraft rather than have it crash into a French town an act for which the French erected a monument to him and to his bombardier who was also killed. Read Jesse McLaughlin's letter in this issue for an example of the devotion to duty one could expect from members of the 303rd during the wartime years.

We were a great outfit then and I believe we are now a great Association. We accomplished a lot in the past and there are a lot of great things we can still accomplish; but we need your support and participation.

I'm looking forward to meeting and talking to all 1500 of you at Norfolk.

**SPECIAL NOTICE****THE 8TH A.F. MUSEUM'S 303RD COMMITTEE**

General L. Lyle — Chairman     Bill Heller (360th SQ. Rep.)  
 Dr. Carl Fyler — Vice-chair.     Carl Dubose, Jr. (303rd Sect.)  
 Judge B. Smith — Alternate

These men are sincerely interested in saving the records of our people in World War II and their memorabilia for future generations.

With the selection of Savannah, GA. as the location for the 8th A.F. museum; this group of people will serve to help get the museum built and a good location for the 303rd "Might in Flight" H.B.G.

**Dr. Carl Fyler**  
**303rd pres.**

**Planning Underway for 8th A.F. Museum**

Plans for the museum and the future home for housing the records of the "Mighty Eighth" are progressing well for Savannah, Georgia, the birthplace of the 8th Air Force in 1942.

Extensive negotiations are presently going on and an announcement will be made to members of the 303rd Bomb Group Association at their reunion in Norfolk, VA, Sept. 27 through Oct. 1, 1989.

**Lew Lyle**

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Galt L. McClurg** (359th) CP with Haynes crew, later flew as P with his own crew until war ended, died on 3/16/89, survived by his widow Dot, of Lakewood, CO. Crew members Dando and Oscar Deen were pallbearers.

**Morris (Sammy) Folkman** (359th) died on 5/14/89 at Philadelphia, PA. Survived by wife Guida.

**Carl S. Owens** (427th) of Doniphan, MO. No further info available.

**James McCall "Tailwheel" Kaiser** (358th & 359th) With 303rd from Aug. '44 until end of war as navigator. Accompanied 303rd cadre to Casablanca when war in Europe ended. Awarded Silver Star and DFC for combat service prior to joining the 303rd. Died May 2, 1970.

**Silas B. Ashwell** (427th) died suddenly on Aug. 9, 1988 He was 72 years of age. He was survived by his brother Lloyd S. Ashwell and his sisters Zetta Robinson and Ruth Charf, all of Portland Oregon.

**ADDRESS CHANGES**

Ashwell, Silas B. — Deceased  
 Bartlett, Frank W., P.O. Box 534, LaVeta, CO 81055  
 Carlson, Mrs. Doris, 1555 Coburg Rd. #79, Eugene, OR 97401  
 Cheek, Roy A., P.O. Box 395, Lawson, MO 64062  
 Clem, Bill, P.O. Box 330, Lone Grove, Okla. 73443  
 Cole, Mrs. Selma, 3017 S. Kennewick Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89121  
 Collom, Edwin E., 1160 W. 15th #201, Eugene, OR 97402-3910  
 Deen, Oscar A., P.O. Box 166, Groveland, CA 95321-0166  
 Denison, William A., 5200 Irvine Blvd. #410, Irvine, CA 92720  
 Dyer (Leach) Mrs. Marjorie, 43 Bixby St., Bainbridge, NY 13733  
 Ferguson, Jack D., No forwarding address  
 Furman, Frank, 1865 Pine St., Myrtle Point, OR 97458  
 Griffith, Elwood A., 4961 Jupiter Rd., Fort Myers, FL 33905  
 Haney, Robert C., Rt. 4, Box 244, Versailles, MO 65084  
 Hartel, Mrs. Lois, P.O. Box 607, Canal Fulton, OH 44614  
 Higbee, William, P.O. Box 17002, Munds Park, AZ 86017  
 Jenson, Horace, 204½ N. 6th, Temple, TX 76501  
 Miller, Mrs. Viola, 1603 16th Loop SE, Albuquerque, NM 87116-1115  
 Moser, Clinton A., 871 Bunker Hill Rd., Houston, TX 77024  
 Owens, Carl S., Deceased  
 Page, Frank, c/o Akers, 1100 German School Rd. #121, Richmond, VA 23225  
 Pearson, George D., 264 Willowby Ct., Schaumburg, IL 60173  
 Quinones, Francisco, 220 Gun Powder Rd., Mays Landing, NJ 08330  
 Redhead, George R., 770 Juan Tabo NE Apt. 120, Albuquerque, NM 87123  
 Schmeltzer, Charles, E815 Central Ave., Spokane, WA 99207  
 Smith, Richard L., 790 Crenshaw Ddr., Hemet, CA 92343  
 Stevens, Kermit D., The Peninsula Regent, One Baldwin Ave. #208, San Mateo, CA 94401  
 Stout, Mrs. Mable R., 444 N. Main #200, Poplar Bluff, MO 63901  
 Taylor, Don, 2447 Woodstock Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15128  
 Tremelling, Claude C., 242 W. 200 N., Rigby, ID 83442  
 Vastine, Robert E., Rt. 2, Box 429-C3, Greenbrier, TN 37073  
 Van Duzer, Sheldon, Box 1167, Georgetown, CA 95634  
 Viets, John B., 1743 Dunbar, Madison, OH 44057  
 Vogel, Mrs. Frances, 658 Misti Drive, Leesburg, FL 34788-7595

**NEW MEMBERS**

Bason, William A., (427) Box 10607, Raleigh, NC 27605  
 Boat, Ernest P., (358) 3051 NE 11th Terr., Pompano Beach, FL 33064  
 Burcham, John D., 12204 E. 40th St., Independence, MO 64052  
 Cottle, Clyde J., Rt. 1 Box 196, Turkey, NC 28393  
 Intersimone, Frank, 1201 Mills Ave., Burlingame, CA 94010  
 Kelley, Clarence H., 12641 Joppa Ave. S., Savage, MN 55378  
 Pesetsky, Paul, (360) 33 Dane St., Sayreville, NJ 08872  
 Shook, Victor N., (369) 95 Dorothy Ln., Troy, OH 45373  
 Joy, Franklin R., (A) 6807 Sunnybrook Dr., Frederick, MD  
 Ratelle, James L., (A) 555 Vine Hill Way, Martinez, CA 94553

**303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.**

C/O Hal Susskind  
 2602 Deerfoot Trail  
 Austin, TX 78704

NON-PROFIT  
 ORGANIZATION  
 U.S. POSTAGE  
 PAID  
 AUSTIN, TX  
 PERMIT NO. 1424

Forwarding and Return Postage Guaranteed  
 Address Correction Requested