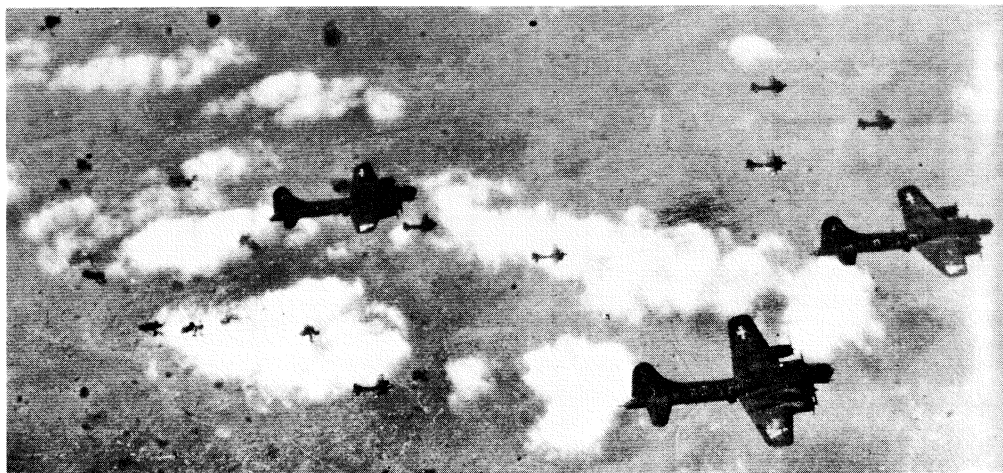


Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

MARCH 1991

303RD ON BOMB RUN FOR SCHAUMBURG



303rd BG B-17s ride through flak on their way to Berlin on Mar. 6, 1944.

From May 23 through May 28, hundreds of 303rd Bomb Group (H) "Angels" will rendezvous at the Schaumburg Marriott in Illinois to celebrate the group's 49th Anniversary and make plans for its 50th in 1992.

This legendary combat group has many claims to fame: One of its aircraft, "Hell's Angels," was the first B-17 in the 8th AF to complete 25 missions; another aircraft, "Knockout Dropper," was the first B-17 in the 8th AF to complete 50 and 75 missions; it was the first 8th AF group to complete 300 combat missions from the UK; it flew more missions—364—than any other 8th AF B-17 group and two of its members—Jack Mathis and Forrest Vosler—won Medals of Honor.

Unfortunately, there are many others who rightly belong in the

Hall of Fame whose exploits, during the war years, through some oversight were never recognized. One of the goals of the Association is to research the records and recreate the history of the 303rd so that the country can bestow on them the honors they so rightfully deserve.

The 303rd was activated at Pendleton Field, Oregon on Feb. 3, 1942 and was assembled at Gowen Field, Idaho on Feb. 11, 1942. The April 15, 1942 roster of Officers at Gowen contained many familiar names which have become closely associated with the history of the group. To mention a few, they were: captains—Eugene Romig, Charles Marion, Frank Doherty and Benjamin Ramsey; 1st lieutenants—Peter Packard, Bernard Kalman, William S. Raper and Edmund Skoner; 2nd lieuten-

ants—Lewis E. Lyle, William R. Calhoun, Jr., Glynn Shumake, Edgar Snyder, George Mackin, Walter Shayler Ross Bales, Melvin McCoy and Quentin Hargrove.

To provide a proper balance over the years, the 303rd was always fortunate in having exceptional airmen assigned, such as: Lee Fegette, Stan Fitterer, Robert Heiliger, Frank Intersimone, E.W. Audiss, Fabian Folmer, Joe Vieira and Buford Pafford. Whether they were assigned to keep the aircraft in top condition for missions or man the guns on combat missions, they always put forth an outstanding effort.

Regrettably, as we head towards our 49th birthday celebration, there are still plenty of ex-Molesworth personnel we have never been able to contact. The total number of people assigned to the

303rd during the war years is still a mystery. It is hoped that we can bring our Association membership total up to 2000 by 1992. Doing their part to reach that figure is Al Dussliere who sent out news releases about the upcoming reunion at Schaumburg to 71 Illinois and 36 Iowa daily newspapers, and Clyde Bradley who sent out releases to 13 newspapers in Alabama. Now all that is needed is a group of dedicated people who will volunteer to send releases to publications in the other 47 states. "Two thousand by '92," is our motto.

To make the business meeting at the reunion more meaningful, it is recommended that members send their suggestions and ideas for future Association projects to their squadron representatives ASAP. In this way your suggestions and ideas can be discussed at the early board of directors meeting on May 23 and put on the business meeting agenda.

Harley Cannon, your reunion committee chairman has arranged a special 303rd rate of \$50 per night, single or double at the Schaumburg Marriott. That's a real bargain for a Chicago area hotel. An exciting program has been planned including an early bird reception on May 24. Also on the program is a tour to the Rosenswald Museum of Science and Industry and a day at the Arlington Race Track. The Memorial Service has been scheduled for Memorial Day, May 27.

Make your plans now to enjoy the comradeship, fun and fellowship of Hell's Angel Reunion '91.

Reeves Takes Over As Ass'n. Historian

Membership director Jim Reeves has been appointed as the Association's Historian replacing Al Lehmann who passed away recently. Reeves will also be the contact person for the 8th AF Historical Society. Carlton Smith who presently has the membership roster in his computer and provides the Association with labels is expected to take over as membership director.



Feb. 5, '44—360th Sqdn Armament.

A WAR WITHIN A WAR

For 2nd Lt. John F. Henderson and crew that's just what the 303rd mission to Oschersleben, Jan. 11, 1944 turned out to be. Read about this amazing crew's feat of shooting down 12 Luftwaffe on one mission. But they paid a price. It is part of the article, "If I live to be 200," starting on page 6.



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

VOL. XV, NO. 1 Editor: Hal Susskind
2602 Deerfoot Trail, Austin, TX 78704 MARCH 1991

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.

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"THIS CANNON IS AIMED AT YOU"

I had just received my December copy of the Hell's Angels Newsletter and was looking at the photos of the Schaumburg Marriott our home for the May reunion when Hal Susskind called and asked for a "scoop" for the March issue of the newsletter.

After I hung up I wondered what I could say since this had been one of those weeks, rain has turned our lawn into an alfalfa field, the dishwasher needs fixing and Ruth's oven door has fallen off. Suddenly I had an attack of the "blue." What if no one shows up for the reunion?

For the past 18 months I've spent practically all my time working on the various deals, speaking to various services, planning events, looking at menus making sure to omit the broccoli in case President Bush shows up, writing reports, answering questions and responding to comments (had a mess of them).

But is anyone listening? Where's all the help? A real cloud of doom and I seemed to hit the "pits."

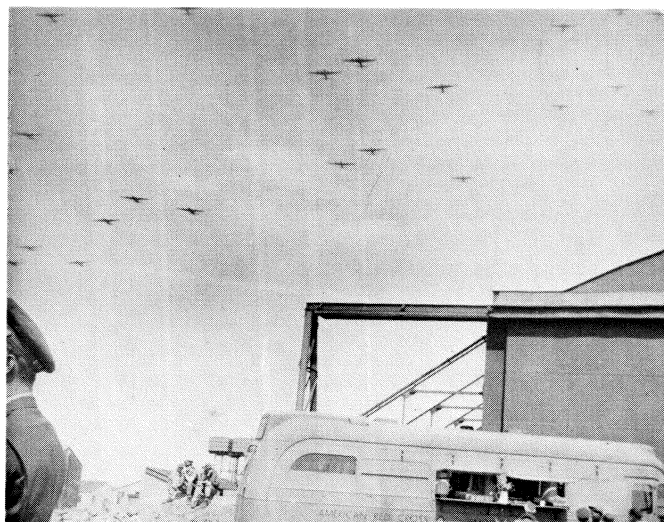
But there really is a "silver lining." A couple of days later the mail man dropped off a number of letters, one from Al Dussliere from East Moline. Al said, "Hey Cannon, what can I do to help?" That seemed to start the ball rolling, others offering their help and services came from Henry Pratten, Canton, Ill., another from Murray Wade, Jr., a veterinarian from West Lafayette and an avalanche of phone calls; Harry Gobrecht from California; Beryl and Shirley Kindred from Oklahoma; Ed Gardner from Palatine called offering his computer to aid in the registration; then some of our local members started to call: Dennis Mahoney of Niles, Art Johnson of Wheaton, Tom Miller of Elmhurst, all ready and willing to go to work.

The "Fightin' Illini" are beating their drums, setting on their war bonnets and inviting all to the greatest "Pow Wow" you've ever attended. Now it's up to you guys!

Come from the Eastern seaboard, head down the Mohawk Trail, or retrace Sherman's march through the Shenandoah Valley, head west to the Land of Lincoln. Ya'll deep south rebels, grab and prime your muskets, we're going to have a Turkey Shoot, and all you "Fat Cats" from the west coast, circle your wagons and head east through the Gateway Arch of St. Louis to the fertile plains of Illinois and we'll have the sweet corn boiling and the steaks are on the grill, we'll show you what living is all about.

Ya'll come, ya hear!

Harley Cannon
VIP Reunions



Landing Instructions Please—Pictured above is a familiar sight which was repeated 364 times at Molesworth during WW II. The above photo shows 303rd aircraft returning from a combat mission while ground crewmen (left photo) sat on a knoll "sweating them in." Judging by the loose formation, it must have been a rough mission.

Hell's Angels Forum

Your Chance to Sound Off!

28 SEPT. '44 MISSION TO MADGEBURG

I thought the last *Newsletter* was unusually good, and I appreciated the list of those of us who were shot down. *That First Mission* by Ted Binder was to my knowledge the most accurate, detailed account of a mission that's ever been printed. Beyond its technical accuracy, it captured the spirit of the event and the times.

One of the aspects of combat anywhere is that those whose luck prevailed do most of the telling, yet the most profound experiences are bound to be of those who were not so lucky. Further, I have always felt that, to make a combat story complete, the enemy's side needs to be brought in, and for a long time, I have carried on a low-level search for the Luftwaffe gun-camera film of my airplane being shot down. Finally I have found it, and it is either fascinating or dreadful, depending on how you look at it—you will remember that T/Sgt. Turkington was my tail gunner when I was shot down, and he and two others were killed outright in that attack. I know the name and brief background of the FW-190 pilot who did the deed.

This film will make a great addition to my life's history that I have put together for my grandchildren. It occurs to me that the survivors of the crews shot down that same day, 28 September 1944, might be interested in seeing this film. Do you have any way of identifying the Association members who are survivors of those other ten crews lost that day? If you do, please let me know, and I will contact them directly.

The newsletter lists the following other pilots lost on 28 September 1944: J.A. Matheson, A.D. Michaelis, W.P. Lay, E.F. Shields, J.T. Hahn, C.G. Glasgow, V.L. Howard, W.I. Mayer, G.H. Gillespie and G.F. Railing.

* * *

Thanks a lot for your 10 January letter. I was surprised that there are only three members of the association who were shot down at the same time I was on 28 September 1944. Doesn't say much for the survival rate, or of the joining-the-association rate, one or the other, or maybe both.

In the small room next to ours in Stalag Luft 1, there was a 2nd Lt. William Gambrell, Jr. who was

the translator for our barracks. Willie and I were good friends, and after the war, when I was taking engineering at UT (Austin, the only one they had then), Willie was going to medical school. I've lost track of him for many years, but the next time you write, if indeed you ever do, I would appreciate it if you would send me his address. I understand he's a big doctor there in Austin now.

I called Jim Fuls (1 of 3 ass'n members) and talked at some length to him. He was exceedingly surprised—maybe “shocked” would be a better word—to hear from me, but after discussing it for a while, decided he would like to see the film whenever I get it. I'll certainly oblige. I haven't called Hamann yet because there are two of them in the roster, and I suspect that one of the area code numbers is wrong. In any case, I'll call them both on Saturday. Meantime I am going to write to George Stallions and see if I can get the names of the crew members of the other aircraft.

I think I told you that Tony Zelnio told me, many years after the war, that Turkington had been hit very badly in the chest area by that fighter attack, had crawled out of the tail compartment, said, “Tony, help me,” and then died. This film shows, of course, that attack.

William F. Miller
10820 Teachout Road
Black Forest, CO 80908

Ed. Note: Sgt. Cal Turkington was the tail gunner on Lt. Stoull's crew. He was shot up on the Apr. 24, mission to Munich and fell behind while recovering. He was on his 21st mission when he was killed.

RETURN TO MOLESWORTH

I just wanted to let you know that I enjoy the “Hell's Angel's” newsletter very much. I was interested in the mission summary, it brought back memories of “Sweating them in” and how after a rough mission they would land almost nose to tail, but after an easy one they were well spaced out. Also we could see that after a rough mission there would be lots of work for us in the hangar.

I enjoyed the reunion in England last June. We were showed such

a good time. It was nice to go back to Molesworth Airdrome and see the hangar where we had worked for so long a time. I couldn't get in but could see where the windows of the machine shop; where I worked; had been bricked up, I guess that security was a lot tighter for the 303rd Missile Squadron. Site one where we lived was overgrown with brush, but some of the Quonset Huts were still up and a wash house. We didn't have time to explore so I couldn't find my barracks.

The friends of the 303rd gave a nice party for us at the Molesworth Vissage Hall. They have a collection of mementoes of when we were there including the black board of aircraft repair status from the hangar engineering office. They also had two WW2 jeeps, and a WW2 US ambulance, and gave us rides around the area.

The cemetery at Madlington was beautiful and very impressive. For our visit the graves of the members of the 303rd had an American and a British Flag by the headstone. I was honored to lay the wreath in memory of them at the Flagpole.

Should anybody be interested in seeing my pictures of our trip to England—Come to the reunion at Shaumburg. I'll have them there as well as the scrapbook I had made of about the first year at Molesworth—the rough ones, but I shouldn't say that as they were all rough, and I don't know how the men could take it time after time.

Henry G. Johansen
2046 Nortonia Ave.
St. Paul, Minn. 55119

A SHOPPING TOUR OF NOTE

Every issue of the newsletter brings back memories of the 303rd. Many of these memories leave us thankful that a given situation wasn't any more serious. From time to time however, there are memories that can bring a smile.

I would like your help in rounding up a very small, very select, group of people from the 360th.

“Who went to the PX with me in the summer of 1944?”

Now, going to the PX doesn't sound like a very unusual or memorable activity—particularly when you remember that our base PX had only a very limited inventory.

But, the traveling PX had a much extensive inventory, not just a few of the basics.

One day, probably in early September, we heard the traveling PX was going to be at Polebrook, home of the 351st BG and only just a few miles northeast of Molesworth. Several of us attempted to arrange for transportation to Polebrook but everything we tried failed—the use of fuel and equipment for personal reasons just could not be justified.

Well, I certainly wasn't going to ride a bike that far. Giving the matter a little thought resulted in a very bright idea. Let's fly over.

I approached John Casello, 360th operations officer, with what I felt was a very practical request. Being one of the squadron check pilots for new crews, and not having flown at all for several days, and particularly feeling rusty on takeoffs and landings, and, since I had a co-pilot, engineer, and radio operator ready to go along, could I take a plane for some time in the local area and shoot a few landings. Maj. Casello was always one to appreciate his pilots wanting to sharpen and improve their skills, and readily ok'd the flight.

This is where we picked up the crowd I have referred to as a very small, very select, group. The word went out that we were flying to Polesbrook to visit the PX. Anyone who wanted to go was welcome—show up at the hardstand and “BYOP”, bring your own parachute. I really don't remember how many we had on board—10, 15, maybe 20 or more.

To avoid the engineer having to scurry to the bomb bay and the tail to check “gear down” with the hand crank, we didn't even bring the gear up. Polebrook tower was most cooperative when we requested a straight in on the appropriate runway. I recall they gave us a parking place near the tower and arranged for transportation to the PX. I also recall the tower seemed somewhat puzzled at the lack of any significant rank aboard.

About an hour and a half later we re-assembled at the aircraft and made ready for departure. Again the tower was most cooperative as was Molesworth tower when we asked for landing instructions. After another routine “paint job” we were taxiing back to the hardstand when the tower re-

Forum

quested the pilot report to squadron OPS immediately after shutdown.

Now, the 360th had an asst. squadron OPS. officer, a captain whose name I have but won't divulge at this time, who proceeded to storm, rage, and rant in a manner most unbecoming to an officer and a gentleman. I do believe he was even considering what charges he could use as the basis for a court martial. I simply stood my ground; that I did fly in the local area; that I did make multiple landings and takeoffs, that I knew of no regulation against landing at a friendly base; that I did check the weight and balance; that I did list all crew and passengers on the form 1; and that I did check all crew and passengers for parachutes.

I seem to recall that Maj. Casello left the room before our upset captain ran out of steam, perhaps because he seemed to be having trouble keeping a straight face.

Come on you PX'ers, let's have a roll call.

John E. King
104 Allen Court
Inman, SC 29349

Ed. Note: This should open up Pandora's box.

ABOUT THOSE MISSION SUMMARIES

In reading the December 1990, Newsletter, I noted that in the Honor Roll listing of the 303rd losses, line 69 contains an error. My aircraft on 3, 4, 5, and 6 February 1944 was 42-37927 (no name) which is shown on line 68 as having been lost at Wilhelmshaven on 03 Feb. 1944. My only concern in the matter is that this one line error in aircraft numbers and names might have been carried on through the remainder of the list. Hopefully, it was only a transposition of numbers on lines 68 and 69.

Many thanks for the fine job you have done for us as Editor of the Hell's Angels newsletter. I get a number of newsletters and the 303rd letter is at the top of the heap. Keep up the good work. Your efforts are greatly appreciated.

J.E. "Sam" Bass
2280 Sykes Cr. Dr.
Merritt Island, FL 32953

Ed. Note: Chart #3 of the Honor Roll and the Mission Summary Chart from 22 Dec. 1943 through 21 Feb. 1944 both list a/c #42-37927 as going down at Wilhelmshaven

on 3 Feb. 1944. I will check further with the actual mission reports now being copied in Washington.

In the December 1990 issue of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* on pages 8, 9 and 10 is a list of the planes lost in combat.

On Jan. 10, 1945 on my last mission, the plane G 502 with Lt. Gates as pilot, Lt. Zapara as copilot, Lt. Harold F. Elliott as bombardier and Lt. Benjamin L. O'Dell as navigator was hit by flak at the secondary target (Cologne), (primary target—Bonn) and went down in the Bulge area. A Sgt. Wysocki was the engineer and was reportedly gunned in his parachute; a counter-intelligence man (Y-operator) walked several days and nights in the Ardennes Forest and was rescued by the advancing Allied tanks as the Germans retreated. The Germans missed him in his parachute. He related his experience to me a few weeks later back at Molesworth.

Some of the crew came down in Allied area; some of the crew evaded capture; some of the crew were killed and I understand some were captured.

It has been nearly 46 years since then, however, the information above is factual from my records kept mostly at that time.

I would hope that you would do whatever is necessary to correct the record and add as follows:

Number	Pilot	Target
153	Gates	Bonn (Köln)
	A/C	A/C name
502	—	—

The ground crew chief referred to the plane as George.

Ben L. O'Dell
1808 N. Roan St.
Johnson City, TN 37601

Ed. Note: Thanks for setting the records straight.

Your publication, December 1990, *Hell's Angels*, stated on page 10, No. 140, the name of the pilot, Lord, T.R., mission on Nov. 10, 1944.

I flew with the 303rd, 358th Sqdn., same mission and witnessed the blow up of the airplane from flak outside my right window, Bombardier position.

I write this only in the event any member of this crew—or families thereof are interested.

Edward A. Davis
4748 So. Ocean Blvd. PH5
Highland Beach, FL 33487

In the December 1990 newsletter I read with interest the article about the ships we lost on combat missions. On the Honor Roll, Nos. 124 and 125 we show 2 ships lost by the 303rd but no mention of "Miss Liberty" (I have no a/c #) which I piloted on the Brux mission of 12/09/44. I understood at the time that she was earmarked for a bond tour.

We were shot out of formation by Me 109s N.E. of Berlin enroute to Brux. With 2 engines out and a third with O.P. wavering, this wonderful ship brought us nearly to the channel before the third engine failed. We headed for an emergency field near St. Omer with one good engine and were promptly shot down by A/A fire. Miss Liberty was so full of holes by now she couldn't hold together when we crash landed.

After convincing some French peasants that we were Americans and not "Bosch" we were helped to a nearby Canadian field hospital and subsequently made it back to Molesworth after being MIA for a couple of days.

My main purpose for this writing is to gain for Miss Liberty the distinction she so justly deserves. Also it is further evidence of what a great aircraft the B-17 was.

As a final note, after the crash one of my crewmen took pictures of the fallen Miss Liberty and some of the crew. After nearly 47 years wouldn't it be a thrill if the pictures could somehow be dug out of the archives. They were confiscated at our debriefing.

Arnold Moselle (Mosel)
152 Urbana Ave.
Newbury Park, CA 91320

Ed. Note: Do any of our ex-intelligence officers know what happened to the pictures?

Having been a member for a long time I do look forward to each new issue. It has been a door opening to the past, not always pleasant, but stimulating as you wipe the fog from the window of our memory. Now, with the advantages of time and knowledge, a lot of the picture can be seen clearly. However, some of the picture still appears to be a jig saw puzzle with a lot of the pieces missing.

I have been tempted to comment before but have put it aside. Now you ask for information about a mission I was on. Your figures

show no losses on mission No. 360 but I remember going down. We landed at a former German fighter base near Lyon in the south of France. They didn't let us know how many other planes came in but there were several from other groups and the locals were not too friendly, even though one of our crew spoke French. Armed guards were placed on our planes and we were confined to quarters. I might add that the German barracks were not too comfortable. Finally we were allowed to fly out with another crew and as we crossed the Chanel we picked up two Spitfires who tagged along to Molesworth. When we landed one of them came in with us. We all got out at the end of the tarmac, loaded into jeeps and went off to a debriefing.

The debriefing was individual and I think they wrote down every word. Then they took my picture and fingerprints. I never saw the Spitfire pilot who landed with us. The other Spitfire pilot followed our taxi to their base I would guess. When we got back to our barracks we found all our personal belongings packed, as was the custom.

Some of you may remember that when going on a mission we put our wallets under our pillows, if we didn't get back our buddies took the cash and went to the PX and purchased liquid consolation in our name.

When we returned to the barracks there were several pound notes laying on my bunk. I guess our buddies were glad to have us back, as I now had more money than when I left, so that evening we all went to the PX to celebrate.

I had mentioned a good meal, so I should add, that I had a cousin in a fighter group come to visit me one day when we were on a mission so he ate in our mess hall. When we landed he told me about the wonderful food we had; I thought he was nuts but he insisted that compared to his, ours was ambrosia. His people had told him that his base was the best in the ETO.

Millard E. Mason
601 Woodlawn Cr.
Grants Pass, OR 97526

I hope that my comments are accepted as constructive, and not as the expected carping of an ex-Bomb Aimer.

Forum

I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the editorial group who put the Newsletter together, and until now I have found no reason to do other than praise it.

However, this issue, which attempts to reconstruct our losses by date, name of aircraft, and pilot, really struck me as inconsiderate of all the others involved in these losses. I can understand that it would be a sizeable task to put together the entire list of crew members, but to not mention them, and mention only the pilot is in my view a mistake.

Also the name of the FDR's Potato Peeler Kids was misspelled as "Kits." I served as the Bombardier on the FDR until I was sent to the states in May of 43 with the crew of the Eight Ball in place of Jack Mathis.

Incidentally, you might like to know that the FDR was The Idaho Potato Peeler in the beginning. I came up with the name, in honor of Bales, who was a native of Caldwell, Idaho. My eldest son, Dr. Ross Thomas, of Omaha, NE, is named in honor of Ross Bales. We were asked to change the name of Peeler to the FDR, in honor of FDR's birthday, and we refused to do it unless we could also keep the Potato Peeler as part of it, so it became the FDR's Potato Peeler Kids. It had a real run from the time we got it, as our third plane, until Ross lost it two weeks after I left them. There are many other stories about the FDR, like our first Co-Pilot, Wilson McGough, who was a real life Georgia Tech Aeronautical Engineer, in 1942! Wilson just couldn't take combat, and after the first mission he was grounded and reassigned to Engineering.

There, he had a major role in the development of the first forward

firing nose gun! The first was a 30 caliber, and it was mounted in the nose of the FDR.

Incidentally, I am not going to get in a debate over statistics, fifty years later, but my records do not agree with the records published in the Honor Roll.

For example, I show that we lost two planes from the 359th on Dec. 20, 1942, one in addition to Lt. Witt's crew, but at the moment I can't place the name.

In closing, what would have been even more interesting in the Honor Roll would have been the Squadron Number, and whether or not the crew was lost, or whether some were imprisoned.

Paul Thomas
3496 S. Via Del Papagayo
Green Valley, AZ 85614

Ed. Note: Let's tell it like it is. The Editorial Board of the Hell's Angel Newsletter since July 1985 has been one person—me. I am the writer, researcher, paste up artist, mailer, etc. In other words, "the buck stops here." The tables put together for the past two issues were researched by me for months using all the information I could put my hands on.

Unfortunately, I do not have a complete set of any of the charts. Inferring that I did not list the names of all the crew members that were lost on missions because it was a sizeable task is an insult. They were not listed because a complete list of names were not available and will not be available until the project at the National Archives is completed. Since I could not list everyone, I decided to just list the pilot. Furthermore, we usually referred to a crew by using the pilot's name.

The fact that I made a proof reading mistake in referring to the

name of the aircraft as FDR's Potato Peeler Kits instead of Kids was an honest mistake, even the New York Times makes mistakes like that.

Your mention that Ross Bales went down in the FDR Potato Peeler Kids two weeks after you left his crew to accompany Capt. Stouse's crew to the states in May 1943, in place of Jack Mathis was certainly ironic since the bombardier that went down with Bale's crew on May 14, 1943 was Rhude Mark Mathis, Jack's brother.

I'm not going to debate with you because your records do not agree with the Honor Roll but since the copies of the charts of the Honor Roll that I have in my possession are official, I have to go by them. You are correct in saying that we did have two aircraft involved in incidents of Dec. 20, 1942. Lt. Witt and crew were shot down by fighters on a mission to Romilly, France and the other aircraft No. 41-24581 was flown by Major Romig, CO of the 359th who crash landed it on the base after bailing out his crew. That incident was not listed in the Honor Roll but was carried on the Mission Summaries and listed in the September issue which carried the list of the missions flown by the 303rd. A photo of the FDR Potato Peeler Kids is carried on this page.

Many thanks for the photo of "BAD CHECK" in the December 1990 issue. What memories it brought to mind. I thought the ground crew might be interested in her last flight. As always, she was mechanically perfect, there were just too many ME-109s and FW-190s. We fought valiantly but were forced to abandon her near Osnabruck. Our crew flew "BAD CHECK" almost exclusively. I was tail gunner on my fifteenth mission when we went down. The pilot, co-pilot, top turret gunner, and radio operator (McClellan, Fisher, Tempesta, and Callahan) were killed. The navigator, bombardier, ball turret, waist gunner and I, (Kalliher, Cornish, Yarian, Chiles, Heaton and Dugan) bailed out and were POWs for the rest of the war.

Does anyone out there have a close-up shot of "BAD CHECK" that I might copy and pass on to my heirs?

Charles E. Dugan
1370 Holiday Blvd.
Merritt Island, FL 32952

INFO WANTED

For the last seven months we have been trying to research what happened to my wife's brother during WW II. He was co-pilot on a mission to Bremen and was lost 26 Nov. 1943. We have finally determined that he was with the 303rd. The national Archives located the MACR #1324. We have ordered a copy but understand that this will take from 2 to 3 months. Any information you can furnish would be appreciated.

My wife's brother's name was 2nd Lt. Clarence C. Bixler, the pilot's name was Cote, the aircraft was No. 42-29955.

Dennis D. Dowling
Rt. 2, Box 381
Winamac, IN 46996

Ed. Note: I supplied the basics but the cause of the aircraft loss was listed as unknown. I believe it was Bixler's first mission but it was an experienced crew that he flew with.

Mr. name is Mark Brotherton, I'm a Technical Sergeant in the US Air Force. Currently doing a tour of RAF Alconbury. As a member of the Tri-Base Heritage Association, I'm involved in the research of war time events that concern Alconbury, Molesworth and Upwood. You may have heard of me, I was the tour guide for the 303rd at Molesworth and Alconbury in June this year. I don't recall all the names of the veterans, but if you were at the reunion then you'll probably remember me.

It was a great pleasure to share in the visit to your old base.

I would like to know if you could provide me with information concerning one of the 303rd Fortresses. Tail number #42-31632 "Old Glory". The pilot was Lt. D.M. Fisher. They were shot down over Lille, France on the 22nd of June 1944. We believe there was at least one survivor. Any information would be appreciated. Details on crash, available names of survivors, etc. The ill fated Fort was in the 360 Bomb Squadron.

If you don't have access on this information, any references would be appreciated. Does the 303rd plan on returning to England in 1992 for the 50th celebration?

T/Sgt. Mark Brotherton
P.O. Box 5317
APO, NY 09238



FDR's Potato Peeler Kids.

"If I live to be 200 years old...."

By Harold A. Susskind

Forty-seven years ago, U.S. and British newspapers headlined stories about the vicious air battle over Germany on Jan. 11, in which the U.S. Army Air Forces lost 60 bombers while downing 125 German fighter aircraft. The long running dramatic air battle developed when the 8th Air Force sent a force of 633 B-17s and B-24s to attack fighter production plants in the Oschersleben, Brunswick and Halberstadt areas.

Commenting on the loss of 60 bombers, the Eighth Air Force officials said, "Possibly fearing that Berlin was the bombers destination, the Luftwaffe reacted in force and demonstrated that it had lost none of its ability to make a deep bomber penetration by daylight a costly enterprise.

Unfortunately, for the 8th Air Force bomber crews of that period, the possibility of many more vicious encounters with the Luftwaffe in the future was almost a certainty since the Allied Air Forces were committed to stepped up operations against Germany to prepare for a summer invasion.

As a result of the negotiations at the Cairo Conference in November 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt notified Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, then Commander-in-Chief of Allied Forces in the Mediterranean Theater, that he had been selected to become Supreme Commander for Project OVERLORD, the code name for the invasion of France planned for the summer of 1944.

At the same time, a reorganization of the U.S. Army Air Forces was under way. On Jan. 1, 1944, Gen. Carl A. Spaatz, became the overall commander of the 8th and 15th U.S. Strategic Air Forces. Lt. Gen. James H. "Jimmy" Doolittle who served as air commander under Eisenhower during Operation Torch in North Africa, was selected by Eisenhower to lead the Eighth Air Force replacing Lt. Gen. Ira Eaker, who built and commanded the 8th Bomber Command from 12 aircraft in 1942 to the powerful air force of the day. Eaker was transferred to command all of American and British air forces in the Mediterranean area. The shuffle was part of the Allied planning for D-Day.

The overall planning called for the start of intensive air operations against Germany beginning on Jan. 1, 1944. Unfortunately the weather over the continent that day did not cooperate. However, for future operations, the 8th Air Force had equipped a limited number of B-17s with radar which would enable it to bomb targets in spite of the usual cloud cover over Germany during the winter. Some targets like the IG Farbenindustrie Chemical Works at Ludwigshafen, presented an unusually good radar return.

On Jan. 4, 1944, 569 bombers of the 8th attacked the sub-pens at Kiel. Seventeen bombers failed to return including one B-17 from the



Gen. Robert Travis (l) congratulates 303rd BG's Lt. Col. William Calhoun after Oschersleben mission.

303rd Bomb Group. On Jan. 7, 1944, 502 aircraft were dispatched to bomb the I.G. Farben plant at Ludwigshafen. There was a thick cloud cover, so bombing was by radar. Four B-17s and seven B-24s were lost.

Early in the evening of Jan. 10, 1944, Headquarters 8th AF decided to take advantage of a forecasted break in the clouds over Central Germany and scheduled a mission. Moments later, their teletypes were sending out the field order to heavy bomber combat wings all over England. Consequently at 04:00 hours on Jan. 11, a much harassed corporal in the 359th Sqdn., 303rd Bomb Gp., opened the door of our Nissen hut, switched on the lights and said, "Lt. Goolsby and Lt. Stoulil, you and your crews are scheduled for today's mission; breakfast at 04:30, briefing at 05:30."

Soon, eight pairs of feet were hitting the icy cold floor of the Nissen hut, with their owners reaching for all kinds of clothing in an effort to stop the chattering of teeth. After washing and dressing, the pilots, co-pilots, navigators and bombardiers for both crews headed for the mess hall to get fresh eggs made to order—a bonus you got on the days you were flying combat missions. Other days, you got powdered eggs.

With breakfast out of the way we headed for the briefing room anxious to see what target we had drawn for today. This was to be my fourth mission. The first one had been a "milk run" to a rocket installation in France; the second, an eight hour mission to Ludwigshafen where flak managed to knock out some of the plexiglass in the nose of our B-17, the third was to Kiel where flak once again shattered plexiglass in the nose. But each mission you got out of the way was a step closer to the 25 missions which was needed to complete a tour—at that time. Unfortunately the list of names then scrawled on the wall of the Site Seven O' Club of people

who had finished 25 missions was not too numerous in spite of the fact that air operations against Germany had been going on for 13 months and the 303rd Bomb Group was now on its 98th scheduled mission.

The briefing room at Group Headquarters for the Hell's Angels Bomb Group was crowded as all the crews tried to find seats. A sheet covered the huge map that covered the front wall. Since the target was still hidden, I looked at the board which showed the names of the pilots, the aircraft number and the positions in the formations they would be flying in today. I looked for my pilot's, Lt. Stoulil, name on the board. There it was, "Tail end Charlie" in the high squadron of the lead group; sometimes a very vulnerable position. The aircraft number was #41-24561.

"Today is a maximum effort for the 8th Air Force. The 303rd Bomb Group, will be putting up 41 aircraft, divided into the lead and low groups," said Col. Kermit Stevens, the group commander. He continued with talk about flying a close formation, keeping radio silence and he offered some other suggestions for surviving the day's mission. Then the intelligence officer, Lt. Peter Michael Curry (now Judge Peter Michael Curry of the 166th District Court in San Antonio) removed the sheet from the map exposing a long line leading to the target. The mission was to be a fairly deep penetration into Germany, to bomb the A.G.O.). Flugzeugwerke, A.G., an FW-190 fighter assembly plant at Oschersleben. In November 1943, the plant had turned out 110 aircraft.

The 303rd Bomb Group with Gen. Robert Travis, Commander, 41st CBW, on board as air commander, was to lead a major force of three divisions comprising 633 B-17s and B-24s attacking three major targets, i.e., the FW-190 plant at Oschersleben, the JU-188 fighter production plant at Halberstadt and the Me-109 fighter production plant at Brunswick.

The part of the briefing that drew the most attention was Lt. Curry's remark about fighter opposition, "there are over 500 single-engine and twin-engine enemy fighters within 100 miles of your route." To balance that fact was the more pleasant numbers; the friendly fighter support we could expect along the route. Eleven groups of P-47s and two groups of P-38s could provide us with cover up to 70 miles of the target. One group of P-51s was capable of giving us air cover over the target area.

The general and special briefings over, we jumped onto a truck to take us on a cold ride out to where our aircraft was parked. I took a good look at the aircraft that would take us to our target and hopefully, back. Aircraft number 41-24561 was "The Duchess."

Today's mission to Oschersleben was The Duchess' 50th mission. She was one of the few planes in the ETO to run up that total at that

time. According to the ground crew, cameramen were going to be on hand when we landed to take pictures of the event. We promised the ground crew we would bring her back and ourselves with her.

I boarded the nose of the aircraft and spread my maps out on the navigator table to study the route to the target. What I saw was not particularly encouraging. The route in, up to the point where we turned at the initial point (IP) of the bomb run, could be interpreted by the Luftwaffe as a raid on Berlin. If so, this could turn out to be a very rough mission.

I didn't have too long to wait to find out what kind of a prognosticator I was. We took off at 08:09 hours and departed from our base at Molesworth at 09:18 at 10,000 feet. Our formation led by Lt. Col. William Calhoun as pilot and Gen. Travis as air commander, departed the English coast at 10:01 at 14,000 feet. Everything was normal except that we moved up into the No. six position in the high squadron of the lead group due to another B-17 leaving the formation because of mechanical failure.

We crossed the enemy coast near Egmond at 20,000 feet at 10:35 and picked up our fighter escort of P-47s as the weather started closing in. It was hard going from then on. As we passed over the Zuider Zee, the Luftwaffe turned out in force and seemed to be sending every plane it could muster through our formation. "The Duchess" rocked and shuddered as her upper and lower turrets answered the bursts of the Luftwaffe. The intercom was filled with shouts of, "Fighters at 6 o'clock low, fighters at 12 o'clock high, fighters lobbing in rockets from 3 o'clock," as the various crew positions called in the directions from which the enemy aircraft were attacking. The Luftwaffe was determined to stop us from reaching Berlin. Minutes seemed like hours and hours dragged on like days. Finally, we reached the IP and started on the bomb run. Ultimately, at 11:48 our Bombardier George Trawick called out "bombs away" over the intercom, and The Duchess bucked as the bombardier hit the toggle switch that released our bombs on the FW-190 plant at Oschersleben. It was a direct hit.

As soon as we left the target area, the Luftwaffe, which hadn't tried to come through the

flak to attack us, took up where it had left off. They seemed angrier than before — if that was possible — and came at us like a swarm of bees.

At 12:18, our ball-turret gunner Kenneth Holder, the Texan on our crew called out, "FW-190 coming in from 9 o'clock low." We heard the ball turret gun barking and then Holder yelling over the intercom, "I got him. The pilot bailed out and the aircraft just blew up." The rest of the way home was a battle against the weather. Because of the weather we had to cross the enemy coast lower than originally briefed and we were exposed to some moderate and accurate flak.

My pilot, Don Stoullil, who spent the day putting the B-17 through more maneuvers than imaginable, summed up the mission by saying, "If I live to be 200 years old, Jan. 11, 1944 will always bring to mind one event — the raid on Oschersleben."

He continued, "When the bad weather moved in preventing the remainder of our fighter escort from taking off I knew we were on our own. Prayer time began about there. Somewhere in the area of the Zuider Zee it started. Bandits and more bandits all the way to the target — queuing up in the sun just out of range, then following the leader, they would swoop down and barrel through the formation head on, repeating this tactic time after time. Seeing a B-17 go down on nearly every pass, you began to wonder if your turn would come on the next one."

"As cold as it was at altitude, I recall vividly the sweat dripping from my sun glasses. I also recall just as vividly the empty feeling in my stomach when I saw Purcell's ship get hit in the engine, then fire streaming back beyond the tail. As he pulled away from the formation, his ship simply disappeared in a huge ball of fire. I saw no chutes."

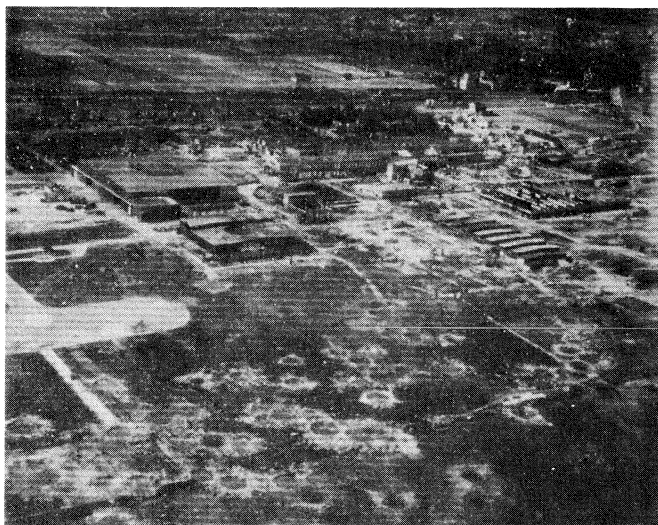
"On the next pass, an FW-190 got us square in his sights and headed straight for us. (You just know when he's got you singled out). As his guns started blazing away, I kicked left rudder, put my head down and waited for the shells to come spraying through the cockpit. I waited — nothing — he missed. Well not entirely. I noticed one or two jagged holes in the right wing just beyond the No. 4 engine. It seemed like it would never come, but we finally hit the

IP and turned on the bomb run. Not wanting to get their tails shot off by their own flak, the enemy fighters remained at a distance. However, after bombs away and making our way out of the flak area, they rejoined the battle and harassed us nearly all the way to the coast."

"As the surviving groups began to descend over the channel, we relaxed a bit, but not for long. Approaching the English coast, we could see the wall of weather that covered most of central English. Attempting to maintain some semblance of formation, we descended to a few hundred feet above the deck to stay under the ceiling, barely skimming the tops off several factory smokestacks."

"By the time we reached Molesworth, the field was completely closed in with fog so thick we could not see the runway. Had it not been for the fog-piercing phosphorous flares which an alert ground crew had set out, we would probably still be looking for a place to set down. By now it was every man for himself as all semblance of formation had disintegrated. As I turned on my downwind leg, suddenly on our left another B-17 loomed out of the soup on a sure-fire collision course just yards away. Instinctively, I pulled back on the controls fully expecting his props to chew through our underbelly. We couldn't have missed by more than inches. I shuttered to think what would have happened had he made the same move. The near midair collision really scared the hell out of me. I tried pushing the rudder to turn and my leg doubled up like rubber."

"Somehow I managed to line up with the flares for a landing. Seconds later my co-pilot Ed Callahan, called out "B-17 just off our right wing." By now all I wanted was the feel of wheels on the runway and I remember remarking "to hell with it, I'm setting this kite on the ground." The landing was not the best one I ever made, but each bounce felt better than the last one. How all the planes milling around in that soup made it down safely, only the good Lord knows. After we pulled into the hardstand, we learned that a message had gone out to the group to land at bases in southern England. Somehow, our group radio operator never received the message. When the word went out that we were not to land at Molesworth, the



Main factory buildings were mere shells.



From above FW-190s looked like huge swatted flies.

Photographers and reporters departed and "The Duchess" never received the publicity she so richly deserved."

"Inspecting the ship for battle damage, we counted 38 holes from flak, bullets or shells. Fortunately, none of the crew was hurt and none of the controls or vital systems was hit, but the floor of the waist section was covered with several inches of empty 50 caliber shells — mute evidence of one helluva fight."

"Referring to the jagged holes that appeared in the right wing, that evening our ground crew chief came over to my hut to say, 'Lieutenant, I just wanted to tell you what a lucky guy you are. We just pulled an unexploded 20mm shell out of the gas tank.'"

Jan. 11, 1944 was an especially important day for Capt. Darrell D. Gust. It marked his first wedding anniversary and his last mission of his combat tour. His recollections of the mission, are outlined below.

Capt. Norman Jacobson, the group navigator and a classmate in Navigation School in 1942, called Gust the night before and invited him to come down to Headquarters to help with the field order coming in for the mission on Jan. 11. At that time Gust, was the squadron navigator for the 359th. The field order stated that the 303rd Bomb Group would be leading the 41st CBW, the 1st Air Division and the entire 8th Air Force. Since the 359th would be the lead squadron in the Group, that meant that Gust and Jacobson would be flying in the lead aircraft along with Brig. Gen. Robert Travis, air commander of the 1st Division, and Lt. Col. William Calhoun, 359th Squadron Commander. Because it was late when they finished the flight plan, Gust hit the sack.

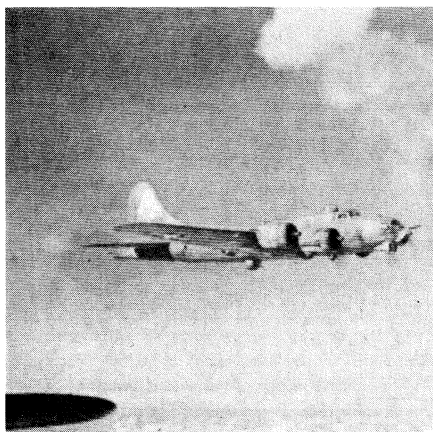
"I don't know how long I slept before the corporal awakened me for the 04:30 breakfast and 05:30 briefing. The emphasis at the briefing was that it was a maximum effort for the 8th Air Force, the importance of knocking out the FW-190 plant, which turned out 110 fighters in November 1943 and the number of German fighters that could be expected along the route."

"Station time was 07:00 and as I arrived at the aircraft, my nervous stomach started doing flip-flops because of the importance of the mission and the fact that it had been months since my last combat mission. I went behind 'The Eight Ball' and tossed my cookies."

"The mission went as briefed until we hit the Zuider Zee and then in spite of our fighter escort, the enemy fighters came at us in bunches. Our first attacks were four FW-190s, the next was 30 FW-190s, the next was 12, and they just kept coming. They came at us from all sides and it was quite apparent that they were out to stop the formation from ever reaching the target."

One of the enemy tried to ram the lead ship, causing Lt. Col. Calhoun, to say at the debriefing: "The fighters were desperate today. A group of 30 FW-190s came at us head-on and I had to lift a wing once to keep one from ramming us."

"We were near Dummer Lake in Germany when General Travis notified us that, 'The weather is closing down over England. The 2nd and 3rd Divisions are being recalled, but because we are this far into Germany and weather is constantly improving, I'm electing to continue on and bomb the primary target.' Soon after



"Flying Bison" passes smoke from an exploded B-17; FW-190 is at top left.

this, our fighter escort did 180s and headed for home. No sooner had they left us when we were hit hard by about 50 to 60 FW-190s making frontal passes at us. They seemed intent on downing the lead aircraft and I spent quite a bit of my time manning the two cheek guns in the nose."

"The Eight-Ball continued to weather the attacks but other group bombers began falling to German fighters. On their first pass they got the 'Mickey' (Radar) aircraft on our left wing. On their second pass they got our second element leader and one of his wingmen."

"We hit the IP at 11:39 and I could see the primary target plainly. At 11:48 bombs were away and our tail-gunner observer reported an excellent clustering of bombs right on the target. The Hell's Angels Group had succeeded in its' mission. Our bomber formation started for home and the German fighters once again attacked with the same fury shown on the inbound flight. More B-17s went down."

"At 12:09, P-51s of which we had been briefed as being our over the target escort, began appearing. One of them got an enemy fighter. At 12:30, a twin engine Me-110 started to make a frontal attack on us. Out of nowhere with guns blazing came a P-51 and the 110 blew up right in front of us. A fraction of a second later we flew through the black puff of what was once an enemy aircraft."

"I saw three more B-17s of the 303rd go down as we continued our flight towards England. We crossed the English coast at Great Yarmouth and the weather deteriorated rapidly. We landed at Molesworth at 15:05 aided by the magnesium flares to help us find the runway. Because of the weather and being low on fuel, eight of our bombers landed at other airfields and 10 of our aircraft — 7 from the low group and 3 from the lead group — were missing."

For their bravery and courage under fire, the attacking groups of the 8th Air Force's First Air Division were awarded the Presidential Unit citation. A prime example of this bravery and the will to survive, was exemplified by the heroic actions of the men of 2nd Lt. John F. Henderson's crew, 427th Sqdn., 303rd Bomb Group. On this particular mission they were flying second element lead in the high squadron of the low group which was led by Major Glynn Shumake and Capt. John Casello.

Henderson's own private war started at 11:00 hours when R.A. Jeffrey on his first mission, fly-

ing as the right waist gunner, shot down an FW-190 near Minden, Germany, as it was turning to make another pass from the 3 o'clock position. It might have been this particular fighter that caused "Yankee Doodle Dandy" to fall behind the formation by raking it with machine gun fire as it crossed over the top on its first pass, knocking out some of the plane's controls. Seconds later, a Me-110, out of range of the B-17's guns, fired a rocket from its 9 o'clock position knocking a hole in the vertical stabilizer, the size of the triangle which framed the C. This added to the problems Lt. Henderson was already having trying to control the aircraft and keep it in the air.

Soon, "Yankee Doodle Dandy" was all alone trailing the rest of the formation while a bunch of German fighters surrounded it, making passes at will.

The next kill was recorded at 11:13 hours by the navigator, Lt. Warren S. Wiggins, who shot down an FW-190 as it was making a pass from 11 o'clock. Suddenly, the tail gunner's guns stopped chattering. Sgt. Ralph F. Burkart died at his position fighting off the multiple tail attacks by the Luftwaffe. Unfortunately for Burkart, one got through.

At 11:18, S/Sgt. William H. Simpkins, left waist gunner recorded the first of his kills when he shot down an FW-190 coming in from the 8 o'clock position, south of Hanover. With the tail guns out, the enemy aircraft concentrated on the tail attacks. When this happened, the engineer and top-turret gunner, S/Sgt. Stanley R. Moody, turned his guns toward the tail and picked off an FW-190 at 11:20 hours, attacking from the 6 o'clock position. It exploded at about 150 yards behind their aircraft.

Three minutes later, Sgt. E. Ruppel, the ball-turret gunner got two FW-190s making belly attacks. With the tail guns still silent, the attacks continued from that direction. At 11:24, Moody spotted another FW-190 coming in for a tail attack using the same procedures the previous FW-190 had used. The FW came within 400 yards of the "Dandy" when it exploded from a long burst fired by Moody.

Firing through the radio hatch, Sgt. R. E. King downed an FW-190 which came in from seven o'clock, quite high. Seconds later King became a casualty when he got hit in the side by shell fragments that shattered his thigh between the knee and hip.

Now the Germany fighters changed tactics and once again started making attacks at the nose of the aircraft. Suddenly, Ed Ruppel looked to his right and saw a German fighter aircraft making a pass from underneath a wing. "He seemed to be firing everything he had at me," said Ruppel at the debriefing. "I got him in my sights, pumped a few big bursts and he disappeared. He blew all to pieces. But I think this is the one that got Jeffrey."

Still furiously firing their waist guns, Simpkins was standing only inches away from Jeffrey when a 20mm shell came up between them and although Jeffrey was wearing a flak suit, the fragments came up between his legs and mortally wounded him. Simpkins got hit in the back with several pieces of the shell but fortunately he was standing on his flak suit, instead of wearing it. The shell fragments got imbedded in the flak suit on the floor and in the fleece lined flying suit he was wearing.

"Yankee Doodle Dandy's" own private war continued. At the time that Ruppel blew up the aircraft that seriously wounded Jeffrey, Moody scored another kill from his top-turret gun position. He had his guns firing towards the tail when he saw a twin-engine Me-110 coming in. He told the pilot to take evasive action. The pilot dropped the B-17 quickly bringing the 110 into Moody's sights. Moody fired a long burst and the Me-110 started smoking from one engine. The pilot bailed out and the plane went down.

Between 11:20 and 11:30 hours, (You lose track of time at times like this), the bombardier, Lt. Woodrow Monkres, claimed a kill when an FW-190 with belly tanks, made a level head-on attack. Monkres got him with his single nose gun. The pilot of the enemy aircraft bailed out just before the plane blew up.

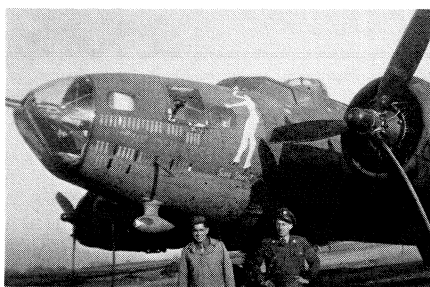
At 11:34, Ruppel warded off another belly attack from a Me-110 coming in low from 6 o'clock. He pulled up sharply and raked the belly of the "Dandy" when Ruppel, firing his ball-turret guns, knocked out an engine. The enemy aircraft went down trailing smoke from one of his engines.

In spite of all the action, the "Yankee Doodle" was still five minutes from the IP. Despite the many sustained attacks by the Luftwaffe, Lt. Henderson's "Yankee Doodle Dandy" was one of the Hell's Angels aircraft that bombed the primary target that day.

On the homeward bound flight, Sgt. Simpkins recorded another kill when he knocked down an FW-190 Northwest of Oschersleben. At the debriefing, the tally sheet for the "Dandy's" personal war against us the Luftwaffe showed Dandy with 12 enemy aircraft destroyed plus one damaged.

"Yankee Doodle Dandy" was one of the group's eight aircraft that had to land at another base. Lt. Henderson selected Watton, a former RAF base serving as an air depot for overhaul and repairs of B-24s. Firing off "red flares" to signify wounded aboard, Lt. Henderson made a smooth landing in spite of damaged tires. Jeffrey, Burkart, Simpkins and King were put into ambulances and rushed to the local base hospital for immediate medical attention. Burkart was dead. Jeffrey died on the operating table. King and Simpkins were operated on that night. Both survived to fly more missions. Simpkins was eligible for his second Purple Heart.

Eighth Air Force officials in further discussion of the Luftwaffe's tactics on the Oschersleben raid said, "The Luftwaffe's fighters gave the 8th the stiffest battle it had since the October day in 1943 when the Germans so seriously mauled a similar force attacking Regensburg and Schweinfurt. Indeed, it appeared that they had in some respects improved their tactics. Never before had they been able to stay with the bomber formations for such extended periods. By using belly tanks, the Germans were able to stay out of escort range, following the bomber formation until the escort was forced to return to base or until a few escorting planes were left. Then dropping their tanks, the enemy planes pressed home large and coordinated attacks on the relatively unprotected AAF formations. In instances where the bomber formation was as tight as required for mass protection against single-engine enemy fighters, the German twin-engine fighters made use of the op-



"The Duchess"

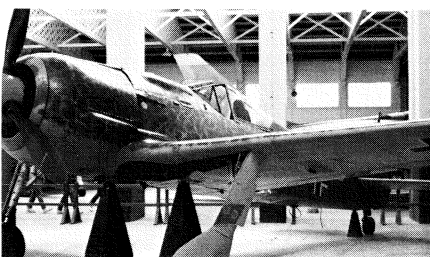
portunity to lob rockets into the formation from a point beyond normal gun range, often with deadly effect. If on the other hand the formation became spread out enough to make a rocket attack relatively harmless, its elements fell prey to mass attack by single engine fighters."

Were the results of the mission worth the price paid?

At a group critique of the Oschersleben mission held about two weeks later, there was a heated discussion about Gen. Travis' decision to go on the bomb the target in spite of the orders recalling the bombers and supporting fighters sent out by higher headquarters. Of the major force of 633 bombers sent out, 408 turned back when the order was received. In his defense Gen. Travis emphatically stated that he received no recall orders. Sixty bombers were lost from the 225 that continued on to bomb the primary targets with the 303rd Bomb Group losing 10 aircraft and 11 crews (110 men) for a loss rate of more than 25 percent; a very high price to pay in both men and machines.

On the other hand the primary targets, like Oschersleben which was turning out 45 percent of the German fighter planes, were generally destroyed which hampered German fighter production for many months. This, added to the 300 German aircraft destroyed or damaged on the mission, was in keeping with the objectives of the January 1, 1944 plans, "to mount and conduct intensive air operations against Germany and its war making facilities," so that a summer invasion of France could be more than just a possibility.

Eventually the summer invasion of France became a reality so it was with a great deal of satisfaction that on June 6, 1944, the 303rd, including Stoullil's crew, flew two mission in support of the ground troops in their assault on the Normandy Beaches. On our second mission of the day, which was my 30th, we led the First Air Division with Gen. Robert Travis aboard as Air Commander. Possibly the sacrifices made by the 303rd at Oschersleben on Jan. 11, 1944 were not in vain.



Focke Wulf 190.

1st Div. Photographs Oschersleben Ruins

Reprinted from the (Vol. 1, No. 5) May 12, 1945 issue of the "First Over Germany," the Headquarters, 1st Air Division Newsletter.

The damage inflicted to the FW-190 aircraft plant at Oschersleben during the 1st Division attack on Jan. 11, 1944, which produced one of the greatest air battles of the war, was surveyed and photographed last week by members of the 381st Bomb Group.

For more than an hour the bomb blasted factory area was photographed as the B-17 circled only a few hundred feet over the devastated area. As seen from the air the entire area appeared to be in ruin. The main factory buildings were mere shells, containing only twisted steel and rubble. Patches of recently laid cement showed where bombs had splattered the landing strip, and in front of the hangars there were wrecks of Focke Wulf 190's appearing from above like huge swatted flies.

The accuracy of the bombing was indicated by the fact that the town of Oschersleben itself was unharmed. Although the factory site is only a mile east of the residential section, at only one point was there any bomb damage visible. There is a small suburban development of, perhaps, 70 houses less than a mile north of the factory, and here only one house had been flattened. Unlike the 'dead cities' seen along the route in and out today, Oschersleben is virtually intact. But the big Focke Wulf plant, which at one time was turning out forty-five percent of the German fighter planes coming off the assembly lines, was completely destroyed.

The success of the attack on Oschersleben was soon reflected in a sharp decline in German fighter production, which gradually led to the virtual disappearance of the Luftwaffe from the air.

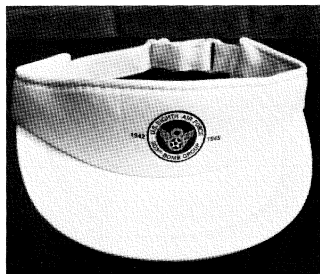
The return to Oschersleben brought back memories to the great battle the 1st Division's bombers fought with the Luftwaffe to carry out the successful attack on the target.

Due to adverse weather conditions, a recall of the mission had been sent out which the 1st failed to receive. Continuing in alone, Forts of the Division were jumped by 200 Nazi planes just past Dummer Lake. The air battle lasted for more than an hour and a half and the Division lost 42 of the 60 American heavies shot down that day.

For "extraordinary heroism, determination, and esprit de corps" displayed in carrying out this highly successful attack, the 1st Air Division was awarded a Distinguished Unit Citation.

Potpourri

NEW P.X. ITEM



Pictured above is a new 303rd Bomb Group P.X. item. It is a white sportcap, one size fits all, with the 8th AF emblem including 303rd Bomb Group mounted on front. Cost is \$5.00. Contact Bob Kidd, PX Administrator, 13214D Fiji Way, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292 for total cost including \$3.00 for postage and handling. Look for this special item at the reunion in Schaumburg.

359TH CORNER

Your representative would like to improve the lines of communication between each member of the 359th and the Board of Directors. To do this your input should find its way to me *prior* to the meeting of the Board at the Reunion. To represent each of you, I need to know your feelings. Please let me know by phone (407-639-0073), by mail, or in Chicago *before* the Board meeting. In the event I am not at Schaumburg, I made arrangements with Hal Susskind to act as my back-up. I am pleased to act as your representative, and will have pad and pencil at all times during our reunion. If I am unable to attend, please corner Hal.

Charles J. "Mac" McClain

303RD MEMORIAL TO BE INSTALLED AT TEXAS MUSEUM

A memorial honoring everyone who served with the 303rd Bomb Group during WW II will be installed at the Lone Star Flight Museum in Galveston, Texas on April 7.

The display will be a 4 ft by 12 ft photographic reproduction of the Keith Ferris mural in the Smithsonian Institution featuring a 303rd aircraft formation led by Thunder Bird returning from a mission over Germany. Anyone interested in attending the ceremony is asked to

contact Association president Bud Klint. Notices with further information will go out to members in Texas and Louisiana in the near future. Photos of the event will be carried in the next issue of the newsletter.

About Those Mission Summaries

Besides the letters I had several phone calls pointing out that there were some omissions in the lists published in the September and December newsletters. Mrs. V. Harlan called to point out that although the aircraft returned there were several instances where the pilots were killed, i.e., Capt. D. E. Stockton and Lt. R. F. Woodley both on May 14, 1943 on the Kiel mission. Stockton was in a/c #41-24619 and Woodley in a/c #42-29520.

Ed Gardner called to report the demise of "Buzz Blonde" on her 100th mission on Jan. 10, 1945 which was not listed on the lists. Buzz Blonde was in a collision with another aircraft of the 303rd South of Bonn. It happened in a turn after the bomb run when some flak under a plane flying beneath them which forced the plane to rise and hit their aircraft knocking out the nose. Gardner and the Bombardier bailed out. Damage was also done to the No. 3 engine and the right wing. The pilots Grafton Smith and Mel Alderman finally managed to get the plane under control and fly it into France where they landed it with wheels up upon advice from the ground at front line observation field. The other 303rd aircraft landed at a long strip along the coast. Gardner wound up spending the rest of the war in a POW camp. It was the 13th mission for the crew. I hope to do a more in depth story in a future issue of the newsletter. It is quite interesting.

GET WELL CARDS

Reinhart E. Reinhart (360) has been in the hospital for the past 19 months recovering from spinal surgery. Enjoys reading the newsletter but would like to hear from some of his WW II buddies. Also, Robert J. Warner (360) is in the Dayton, Ohio V.A. Nursing Home. Would like to hear from some of his old friends.

8TH AF HERITAGE CENTER

Lew Lyle, Project manager reports that:

- "The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center, Inc." has been incorporated in the State of Georgia as a non-profit corporation under Sec. 501(c)(3) IRA tax-free status, which allows donors to deduct contributions from their income tax returns.
- We now have the final signed and approved contract for approximately 15 acres of land just off I-95 and U.S. 80 at Pooler, at Exit 18, one of the best exits to Savannah, Georgia.
- "Why Savannah?" The 8th AF was formally constituted on 28 Jan. 1942 in Savannah. We are in fact, "Coming Home."
- Planning is well underway with a contractor doing site surveys, initial studies, and conceptual drawings for THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE CENTER.
- The first structure will provide administrative offices for handling our Heritage Center business, special interests and organizations, as well as providing space for all the aspects of a museum setting and storage in preparation for public exhibition. It will house a library for the 8th Air Force documentation for use by 8th AF members and families as well as serious researchers.
- What is the timetable? We would like to be open in time for the 50th Anniversary of the 8th Air Force in 1992. Estimates are \$3-4 million to get the first phase completed and open to the public. Eventually the project may require \$7-8 million to complete.
- We are currently forming a foundation to help raise funds. This is a critical item since the foundation will play a key role in our operations.
- For more information you can call the office in Savannah at (912) 234-1992, or write: The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center, P.O. Box 1992, Savannah, Georgia 31402-1992.

IN MEMORIAM

Cameron L. Self, MD (359) died on Sept. 23, 1989. He is survived by his wife Frances.

Alexander Dombrowski (427) died in December 1990. He was a bombardier with one of the 303rd crews that was part of the Pathfinder pool that was stationed with the 305th at Chelveston from the summer of '44 through the fall of '44.

Phil W. O'Hare (427) died on Oct. 30, 1985. He was a pilot class 43 E.

Ralph Neathery (359) died Aug. 7, 1990 of cancer. Survived by his wife Rose.

Carl L. Mohr (358) died on March 18, 1990 of a heart condition.

Gilbert Bengtson (360) died on Nov. 19, 1990. Survived by Irene, his wife of 41 years, sons John and Don and daughter-in-law Kathey and four grandsons.

Walter R. Kyse (358) died Oct. 18, 1990. He is survived by his wife Ethel.

Leo McConaghy (359) died Jan. 8, 1991 of lung cancer. He is survived by his wife Mary and two sons, both of whom served in the Air Force during the Viet Nam conflict. Leo was a fire fighter in Massachusetts until he retired in 1972 because of lung problems.

E. C. "Al" Lehmann (427) died suddenly of a heart attack on Jan. 4, 1991. He is survived by his wife Elizabeth (Sue), three daughters and two sons. He was a longtime member of the Association and served as its Historian. He was elected president during the Seattle reunion in 1985 when the membership totaled about 1100. During his tenure he started a campaign encouraging each member to sign up another member. He also recommended that regular members become life members. Starting at zero in 1985, life membership grew to 45 by July 1986 and presently we have about 500 life members. During the Molesworth days he flew as a first pilot with the 427th Sqdn during the period before and after D-Day. He completed 30 missions and was awarded the DFC.

Sue has asked me to pass on her thanks to all the members of the Association who have called and written expressing their sympathy. She also wants to thank the Association for the lovely flower arrangement which contained the group's insignia. "I had the floral arrangement placed at the foot of the casket so that Al could face it. It was beautiful and I cried everytime I looked at it. Thank you all for everything."

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

	Beginning of Fiscal Year	As of Jan. 31, 1991
Checking Account	\$ 2597.00	\$ 717.00
Money Market Account	\$26423.00	\$32142.00
Trust Fund Certificates	\$52738.00	\$53769.00
Total in Treasury	\$81758.00	\$86628.00

Donations

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following members of the 303rd Bomb Group Association for their donations to the various projects undertaken by the Board of Directors over the past two years.

100 Dollars

Robert Huck and Kermit Stevens

75 Dollars

Harold A. Belles and Morton M. Moon

50 Dollars

Charles Schmeltzer, James Taylor, Jack Eady, Sam Fleming, Armand Burch, John Jenkins, Albert Martell.

30 Dollars

William Heller, Robert Black, Edwin Barry, Grover Bates, Kenneth Clark, Andrew Lynch, Charles Dando, Joel Berly.

25 Dollars

Richard Dawes, Robert Sorenson, Morton Luman, William Roche, James Crangle, Robert App, Robert Mays, Anthony Cecchini, Robert Moreman, Gerson Nadell, Donald Wrinn, Horace S. Kenney, Leonard Ratermann.

20 Dollars

Robert W. Krohn, Russell Seaton, K.J. Kurtenbach, Burt Cardwell, William Neff, James Thompson, Charles Herman, Maurice Hackler, Louis Redhage, Herman Hetzel, Lee Fegette, Edwin Lamme (2), Tommy Mays, Rowland Witters, William Clyatt, Alfred Hollritt, William McSween.

15 Dollars

Clifford Steinberg, Yale Lasker, Marvin Brown, Elmer Brown.

10 Dollars

Robert H. Scott, Marvin Brown, Howard F. O'Neal, Edgar Snyder, J. Carl Hensley, Lester Voth, Harry Gobrecht, Glenn Canning, Martin McGuire, Warren Hubley, Joseph Levesque, John Lutz, John McCall, James O'Leary, William Cline, John Casello, Arthur Lorentz, Ernest Nebelong, Mary Rodriguez, Grafton Smith, Billy Gaumer, Robert Stewart, Theron Tupper, Irving Birken, Clyde Bradley, William Dallas, William Cox, Edward Gardner, Edward Ross, Leslie Pratt, Lee Knedler, Forrest Vosler, Curtis Brooks, Victor Smith, John Olson, Milton Klabe, Irl Baldwin, Ernest Danquard, Lawrence Friedland, Woodroe Dulin, Eva Cozzo, J.W. Fredericks, James Cheney, Harold Froehlich, Conrad Kersch, Robert McCall, Victor Quebberman, William Hembree, Clyde Dewald, Sanford Smith, James Kelley, David Fitterer, Harold Scheer, Robert Hurdle, Charles Bonn, Allen Herr, Milo Schultz, Melvin Brown, Robert Brassil, Charles Fulanovich, David Matthews, Maurice Ogborn, John O'Donnell, Thomas Miller, Warren Wiggins, Orlyn Chonat, Ray Espinoza, William Ferri, Robert Campbell, Gordon Hoeft, Walter Jones, Norman They, Robert Redmond, William Jones, Fred Wilson, Hank Schneiderman, William Wolff, W.A. Knutson, Marvin Boyce (2), George Pearson, Roland Witters, Roland Smith.

5 Dollars

Frank J. Doherty, Jack Roller, John Hughes, Marion Fitko, Elmer Brown, Rowland Smith, Harold Scott, Angelo Petix, Robert Hand, Walter Slusser.

Other in-kind donations of members of the Board will be acknowledged in later issues.

"It has been very inspiring to me to see the generosity and loyalty of the membership."

Jim S. Reeves
Membership Chairman

SUPER LIFE MEMBERS

Barnes, Frederick E.	Hardin, Thomas H., Jr.	Munroe, Linton
Barry, Edwin B.	Haskell, Whitney	Murray, Gilbert
Barton, Paul J.	Hawes, Kenneth D.	Mussi, James L., Jr.
Bednarchuk, Antoni (Dec)	Hayes, Ralph S.	Neff, William J.
Belles, Harold A.	Hayes, Ralph W.	Norris, Loy R.
Bradley, Clyoe W., Jr.	Heller, William C.	O'Donnell, Thomas M.
Burch, Armand, F.	Henderson, Paul E.	Palmer, Gerald M.
Burcham, John D.	Hickey, James	Patterson, Charles A.
Buschmeyer, John C.	Holdcroft, Lloyd L.	Paullin, James R.
Casello, John J.	Holland, Raymond E.	Payne, Harry
Chunat, Orlyn O.	Hoyt, Robert B.	Pearson, George D.
Clark, Elmo E.	Hubley, Warren G.	Peterson, Robert
Clyatt, William L., Jr.	Huck, Robert L.	Redhage, Louis
Coburn, Ralph F.	Hurdle, Robert E.	Reichel, Fred E.
Curry, Peter M.	Jacques, Warren L.	Reeves, Jim S.
Dando, Charles A.	Jardarian, Zaven	Rice, Charles G.
Davis, Darius, R.	Jenkins, John I.	Roche, William J.
De Cicco, Frank C., Jr.	Johnson, Hugh B.	Rogers, Oron J.
Dolan, Lee E., Jr.	King, John E.	Rosborough, Robert H.
Dubose, Carl L., Jr.	Klint, Wilbur	Roth, Charles L.
Durst, Melvin A.	Koon, Bennie	Ruark, Blaine R.
Eason, William M.	Kray, Anthony R.	Schmeltzer, Charles S.
Edmonds, Robert E.	Krohn, Robert	Shultz, Milo R.
Eide, Richard W.	Kuwik, John	Seaton, Russell D.
Eisenhart, William E.	Kuykendall, Roger L.	Smith, Carlton M.
Eisenwinter, Phillip D.	Lasker, Yale	Smith, Donald R.
Evans, Robert J.	Lehmann, E.C.	Smith, Richard L.
Farrar, John W.	Livingston, Robert P.	Smith, Samuel
Fegette, I. Lee	Long, Lloyd I.	Stallings, George V.
Finley, Robert A.	Lucey, Jack P.	Steele, AC.
Fitzsimmons, Evan	Lutz, John R.	Steele, Earl L.
Fleming, Phillip G.	Lyle, Lewis E.	Stevens, Kermit D.
Fleming, Sam P.	Lynch, Robert J.	Stewart, Robert D.
Fleming, William W.	Malerich, Earl J., Jr.	Stone, Elbert E.
Foley, Norment	Martel, Albert E., Jr.	Stone, Vernon W., Jr.
Ford, John W.	Mayer, Walter J.	Susskind, Harold A.
Foulk, Donald H.	McClain, Charles J.	Swift, Johnathan S.
Freedman, Joseph T.	McCutchan, Eugene R.	Taylor, James B.
Frost, Carlyle A.	McKenzie, Malcolm L.	Tingley, Loy E.
Furey, Lawrence E.	McSween, William D.	Tulloss, John W.
Fyler, Carl J.	Melton, Walter C.	Umberger, Robert C.
Galbraith, Robert E.	Miller, Richard D.	Vieira, Joseph
Giering, Edward J.	Moon, Morton N., Jr.	Westfall, Albert R., Jr.
Girman, Eugene E.	Moreman, Robert	Wherry, Robert E.
Gust, Dararell D.	Morton, Alvin	Worthington, Joseph G.
Hackler, Maurice, G.	Morton, Vernon	Zaorski, Roman R.



Who remembers this sign? The photo above was taken on May 5, 1942. Plowed on a field where 303rd crews from Gowen Field could see it was the words, "GIVE EM HELL," with a V for Victory underneath along with 3 dots and a dash (code for V). Does anyone know the height.

NEW MEMBERS

New 303rd Bomb Group Association members since Jan. 1, 1991 are:

- 1595 Scaglione, Joseph, 494 Summit, Norwood, NJ 07646
 1596 Caprusso, Frank, 25 Santiago Ave., Toms River, NJ
 A-108 Quillen, Randy, 13525 Kerrville Flwky., Austin, TX 78729
 A-109 Beeby, Robin J., 40 St. Catherines Rd., Kettering, Northamptonshire, England NN15 5EN
 A-111 Beer, David, 12007 Rotherdam Dr., Austin, TX 78753
 A-112 Czarny, Robert
 A-113 Czarny, Robert
 A-114 Brinkley, Lynn Mrs.
 A-115 McConaghy, Pat, 45 Carrol St., Chelsea, MA 02150
 1597 Campbell, Laurie
 1598 Abbott, Robert E.
 1599 Carocari, Roger P.
 1600 Cotter, William J.
 1601 Chapple, Harry
 A-116 Schmeltzer, Mike
 A-117 McConaghy, Michael, 95 Bellingham St., Chelsea, MA 02150
 1602 Grant, Ambrose
 1603 Bradshaw, Charles A.
 1604 Davis, William C.
 1605 Lee, Wilbur W.
 1606 Jansky, Milton, 18671 McArthur, Redford, MI 48240
 1607 Henn, Thomas, 26377 Meadow, Pioneer, CA 95666
 1608 Bice, Lowell E., 1428 Wood St., Lacrosse, WI 54603
 1609 Barrios, Alfred R., 4 Summit Dr. #003, Reading, MA 01867
 A-118 Dowling, Dennis D., Rt. 2, Box 381, Winamac, IN 46996
 1610 Gilcrease, Roland, 305 Deerwood Dr., San Marcos, TX 78666
 1611 Hustus, Walter L., RFD 1, Box 1127, Pownal, ME 04069
 ? Ciglar, Joe, 948 S. Pearwood, Anaheim, CA 92806
 ? St. Julien, John, 1820 Ave. Del Mundo #1407, Coronado, CA 92118

U.S. Airmen Won 1,550 Local Brides

Cupid has been working overtime with the Americans in this District. The winning ways of the Air personnel at six of our U.S. Aerodromes have won them no fewer than 1,550 English brides. The Anglo-American marriage stakes table is as follows:

Molesworth	400
Polebrook	250
Podington	205
Chelveston	175
Grafton Underwood	155
Thurleigh	148
Harrington	117
Benefield	100

Of the 155 marriages between American personnel at Grafton Underwood and English girls, Kettering provided 40 of the brides.

The "cutting" above which appeared in a local English paper in the 1942-45 era was sent to me by Mrs. Sylvia Vinyard whose parents kept the Fox Pub which was located about a mile from Molesworth. Her sister is Susan Hamilton one of our honorary widows. Sylvia lives at 230 Dailey Mill Road, McDonough, GA 30253. Her husband Don was an airman stationed at Molesworth in 1952.

ADDRESS CHANGES

- Akers, Robert O., P.O. Box 195, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948-0195
 App, Robert G., 4422 Forsythe Rd., Saginaw, MI 48603-5623
 Barder, Emmett R., RR #1 Box 305, Browerville, MN 56438-9801
 Benigno, Peter A., Nutley, NJ, Forwarding order expired
 Borror, Norwood, 9100 Hwy. 78W, Okeechobee, FL 34974-9717
 Carter, William J., 709 Duff Avenue, Ames, IA 50010-6353
 Clark, Byron, 7616 Fallwind Ct., Powell, TN 37849-3523
 Considine, Louis W., 4960 W. 115th St., #205, Chicago, IL 60655
 Crangle, James C., 4048 25th Ave., Rock Island, IL 61201-5702
 Czarny, Adeline L., 33 Cedar St., Brownsville, TX 78521-2316
 Dennis, Walter F., 5034 Boca Chica Blvd., Brownsville, TX 78521
 Drewry, James A., Forwarding order expired
 Evans, Don Marlin—need new address, not deliverable as addressed
 Hammond, Raymond D., 175 Sea Hammock Way, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082
 Hughes, James W., Delivery attempted—not known
 Hardin, Thomas H., Jr., 2374 Port Marnoch Lane, Spring Hill, FL 34606
 Klein, Monroe, 803 Lanark Ct., Inverness, FL 32650-4412
 Knox, George E., 1130 13th Ave., Apt. 609, Altoona, PA 16601
 Latz, Leslie, Ocala, FL, No forwarding address
 Malone, William C., Knoxville, TN, Insufficient address
 Marozas, Arthur, 855 Winter Park Dr., New Lenox, IL 60451
 Martel, Allen E., Jr., 3 B St. Ext., Bangor, ME 04401
 Morrill, Charles, P.O. Box 63, Seabrook, NH 03874-0063
 Neff, William J., 1221 Hillsboro Mile #48A, Pompano Beach, FL 33062-1429
 Page, Frank N., c/o Akers, P.O. Box 195, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948
 Petrie, Joseph, 724 Allen Rd., Independence, MO 64050-1404
 Schwartz, Vernon E., 210 Jessup, Alvarado, TX 76009
 St. Julien, John D., Forwarding order expired
 Stout, Mable R., 1106 South Road #34, Ellington, MO 63638
 Tharp, Wallace, c/o Ferguson, 8841 Palos Verdes Ave., Westminster, CA 925683-6833
 Watson, Mrs. Estelle, 26656 Nieman St., Roseville, MI 48066-3426
 Wiegand, 19041 N. 95th Ave., Peoria, AZ 85382-2632
 White, Jim 15226 S. Power Rd., Higley, AZ 85236-9686



Capt. Bill Bergeron and Lt. Werner J. Goering

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

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