

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

OCTOBER 1991

303rd Historical Information Needed

by Hal Susskind

What do you really know about the 303rd Bomb Group (H)?

At first glance the question above appears to be facetious but the real honest answer—in a majority of cases—is two words; “practically nothing.”

For instance in the December 1990 issue of the newsletter we ran a list of 181 aircraft we lost on combat missions. We also mentioned a few we lost in accidents over England. In both cases there were discrepancies which we are presently trying to straighten out.

Recently I received a letter from our historian, Harry Gobrecht, in which he pointed out that we also neglected to mention those members of the group who died in non-combat accidents while the group was stationed at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho.

At 2030 hours on April 3, 1942 a 359th Sqdn. B-17E on a return flight from Ogden, Utah, crashed near Bridge, Idaho which resulted in the death of three flying officers and five enlisted crew members. Cause of crash was unknown.

On May 27, 1942 a flight of B-17B aircraft enroute to Gowen from Tucson, AZ, arrived just as the weather closed in. One B-17 made a forced landing in a farm pasture, a second plane in the same flight had three men abandon ship, via parachute, upon receiving a mistaken signal from the pilot. Two of the men landed safely but the third, a Lt. Hall, was killed when his parachute dragged him over a cliff after landing and his body was found on the rocks at the base of a cliff.

On Aug. 22, 1942, a B-17E crashed near Las Cruces, NM, killing five officers and one enlisted man. The ship was struck by lightning and exploded in mid-air. Two men were blown clear by the explosion and managed to parachute to earth safely.

Three war alerts were also experienced by the 303 BG (H) while stationed at Gowen Field. The February 1942 alert was due to a Japanese submarine shelling oil storage establishments near Santa Barbara in California and the



Gowen Field, May 1942, 303rd personnel enjoy picnic. Cpts. Sheriden and Wheless are at right. Who are the others?

June 1942 alert was due to a Japanese attack on Alaska.

Even though we were stationed at Molesworth during the war years, it is no guarantee that we know all about the 303rd Bomb Group. Take my case for instance. I was a navigator on Don Stoullil's crew which joined the Group in October of 1943 while the group was on its 82nd mission. At that time the tour was 25 missions. I finished my 30th mission on my first tour on D-Day, June 6, 1943. When I finished that tour I still knew very little about the 303rd. I started my second tour in September of 1944 and stayed with the outfit until it was deactivated in Casablanca in July of 1945.

Even though I spent some 20 months with the 303rd at Molesworth during the war years my real education of what the 303rd was all about started when I took over as editor of the newsletter in Seattle in 1985. My knowledge of the Hell's Angels Group increased enormously because of the many letters and stories sent to me by you, the members of the Association, plus other bits of information that has been forwarded to me by our present historian, Harry Gobrecht.

As an example, I knew nothing about the heroics of Lt. Frederick Kiessel on that mission to Ludwigshafen (see page 10) even though I was stationed at Molesworth



Molesworth, Jan. 1945 (l to r) Junior Tressler, Gee (?), Dave Kurtz and crew chief, Red Yocum pose in front of "Minnie the Moocher."

when the incident occurred.

I'm sure all of you have some very interesting stories and anecdotes about the 303rd that should be included in the history of the Group when it is finally assembled. We are hoping that we can accomplish that by the December 1992 reunion in Boise, Idaho, the 50th Anniversary of the Group.

A historical questionnaire will be included in the December 1991 issue of the newsletter. In the meantime, if you have any information on the 303rd that you would like to share with us please send it to the historian as soon as possible. His address is listed on page 2 of this issue.

“Where do we go from here?”

In September 1992, we will celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the 303rd Bomb Group with a reunion in Boise, Idaho. But what are the plans for the next 50 years for this 1600 member, viable and solvent Association? One of the aims, already discussed is to support, along with other Eighth Air Force units, the building of the heritage Center in Savannah, Georgia. That will be the final resting place for the records of the 303rd BG.

Right now we are busy researching and collecting information so that we can complete the Hell's Angels history in time for the Anniversary celebration. We are faced with many unanswerable questions such as how many people

actually served in the outfit from its inception to its deactivation in Casablanca in July 1945.

We are inserting a comprehensive questionnaire in the December newsletter to find out what you did during the war (to see if we can find some answers to some of our questions) and what you did after the conflict ended. I know that many became “men of the cloth” including a Catholic Bishop, Rene H. Gracida, a flight engineer during the war, but what of the other professions? I know that many remained on active duty and others were recalled at a later date and retired from the military. No one became president or vice president of the U.S., but did any

become members of Congress or the Judiciary. I'm sure that many of you held equally as famous or important posts. What were they? These completed questionnaires will become part of the 303rd's records to be deposited in the Heritage Center.

Life after the war was not a bed of roses for many, especially those who suffered serious wounds in combat and with advancing years their problems multiplied. The VA in many instances has not been the most compassionate organization for them to deal with. I know that many of our members have had trouble trying to get the VA to approve their claims. It is possible

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

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In this issue . . .

The makeup of this issue is a little different from some of the previous ones. For instance, we thought you would be interested in seeing how some of our members looked at Molesworth in the 1942-45 era versus how they looked at the reunion at Schaumburg in '91. The years have been kind to many. In this issue is a blow-by-blow account of the Weisbaden Mission of Aug. 15, 1944 as related by William Crawford "who was there." We lost nine aircraft on that one. Also included in this issue, is the story of Lt. Frederick T. Kiessel, a heroic bombardier who lived up to the high standards set by men of the 303rd, like Jack Mathis. The story was prompted by a Dec. 9, 1944 Strategic Air Forces news release found by our historian, Harry Gobrecht. Additional details of the mission were supplied by member, Richard "Pop" McGilvray who piloted the B-17 on that eventful raid. In addition, read about the historical group which adopted the 303rd's 427th Squadron because of its accomplishments over the years.

TREASURERS REPORT TO OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND MEMBERS FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING AUGUST 31, 1991

	BEGINNING OF FISCAL YEAR	INCREASE DECREASE	END OF FISCAL YR.
LIFE MEMBERSHIP CDs	\$52738.00	+ \$3458.00	\$56196.00
GENERAL FUND CDs	\$ 0.00	+ \$15000.00	\$15000.00
MONEY MARKET ACCOUNT	\$26422.58	-\$ 4389.99	\$22,32.59
CHECKING ACCOUNT	\$2597.31	-\$ 675.94	\$1921.37
	\$81757.89	+ \$13392.07	\$95149.96

SEE DECEMBER ISSUE FOR LISTING OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURES
S/CHARLES S. SCHMELTZER, TREASURER

MOTIVATION

Immediately following WW II, millions of dollars were spent trying to find out what motivated soldiers to succeed in combat. The war presented much material from which to draw conclusions. Up until the time that the Desert Storm encounter dominated our T.V. screens, I had my own convictions. My convictions were that there existed a lot of minor reasons, as example "patriotism" for one, but there was one big one, so I thought. That was "because everyone else was doing it, so would I." I surely didn't want to be chicken among my peers or to myself. "It took more courage to quit than to go on," was a very true statement. The ridicule of those who did quit was tremendous, even though sometimes beyond their control. This was my belief.

Come Desert Storm and sitting in my living room watching the news and seeing the combat crews climb down out of their aircraft swelled up in me a warm feeling of admiration for those high tech men whose very life had just been "on the line." These were guys I would like to have as friends and be able to shake their hands. How they got into that position was *not* important. Did they volunteer? Were they at the wrong place at the wrong time? Did this job pay more than they could make in civilian life? Retirement plan? Or did they just love to fly and the military provided the best? The fact that they actually *were doing it* lighted the burners under my admiration. Gosh, how I envied them!

So I look back about 50 years to our combat days and I remember how we impressed one another with how many combat missions we had. We never wore our combat ribbons locally on base but as soon as we went on pass we put them on. I remember how great I felt when I was home on leave and the local Chamber of Commerce had me speak at their luncheon about flying combat. How every shirt-tail relative wanted to come by and say "hello." It felt good.

We were not heroes. Definition of a hero is that he had a choice. We had no choice, as I recall, other than to quit by being "nervous in the service" and I covered that before. This was not a choice, so how could we be considered heroes? But we were there and we were "doing it" and we were generating more than normal acceptance by our fellow men especially our parents. Let's do it and do it right! We wanted to be liked.

Successful sport figures and entertainers realize this same feeling. If when we got back from each mission and the runways had been lined with screaming teeny-boppers most likely the combat crews would have volunteered for a third tour.

John Casello

Hell's Angels Forum

Your Chance to Sound Off!

Cannon Lauded

Re: Schaumburg, 1991

On behalf of the entire 303rd membership, I would like to express our sincere *thanks* to Harley Cannon and all his able assistants for a most pleasant and enjoyable time had by all in attendance at the 303rd's reunion in Schaumburg.

There were many highlights at the reunion, but for me, fellowship with old friends and making new ones will always be treasured. For those of you unable to attend *you were sorely missed*. Please, try not to let it happen again.

Plans are well underway to make Boise (Our 50th Year Reunion, September 7 thru 13) a most memorable occasion. Your reunion committee openly welcomes your suggestions (followed by your offer to help.) Your support and assistance will not be overlooked or forgotten.

James Taylor
(For Reunion Committee)
421 Yerba Bureau Avenue
Los Altos, California 94022
(415) 948-6596

Gowen's boxing team

Enclosed is a photo of the 360th boxing team for publication if you deem it of interest. The team was active in the early days at Gowen Field. Members are: (rear) Prosser, J. Watson, myself and J. Joyner; (front) H. Frohman, C. Poling, R. Hayes (I think) and W. Hessler. As an original member of the 303rd, I served as an armorer and later was assistant to the late Father Skoner.

David S. Fitterer
40 Deer Run North
Barnegat, NJ 08005



Information

During the squadron breakout at the convention in Chicago I mentioned having a book titled, "FORTRESSES OF THE BIG TRIANGLE FIRST."

Many of the members in attendance seemed to have a very strong interest in obtaining a copy. The book is a history of the aircraft assigned to the First Bombardment Wing and First Bombardment Division of the Eight Air Force from August 1942 to 31 March 1944.

My feeling as to the best way to put our people in touch with the publisher would be to put the address in our Newsletter.

Address letters of inquiry to:
Cliff Bishop
East Anglia Books
Station Road Elsenham
Bishops Stortford, England

I believe the price to be around thirty dollars American.

Jack Jernigan Jr.
3735 104th South St.
Tulsa, OK 74137

An Opinion

Before anyone starts the idea of building a 303rd Bomb Group Hall Of Fame, may I stick in my idea?

The flood of Halls of Fame lately diminishes such to "Ho Hum" status. I feel ours should be limited to *recent and future* Bomb Group Association accomplishments. I'm sure our past accomplishments on active duty with the Group are too numerous to ever get votes for nominations. So, for the future, I propose voting take place at reunions.

I also propose, voluntarily, a fitting Hall Of Fame. I'll maintain the

Bomb Group Assn. Hall Of Fame in my file drawer. Anyone wishing to visit it may send me 40¢ cash (taped to a 3 x 5 card), and I'll mail the most recent Xerox of the list. That's for a public library-supplied Xerox copy, 29¢ postage, and 1¢ for the envelope. My time is yours.

Oh, yes, I'm sure there'll be the Big-Big-Big proposers with requests for mucho dinero. But until then (and even after *then*), I nominate Harley Cannon to be first in our Hall Of Fame for the tremendous job he did with the Schaumburg Reunion. There are other support troops to be considered, Ed Gardiner and Al Dussliere for two, but since we were on the same crew at Molesworth, you realize I'm prejudiced.

Anyone who doesn't like this *somewhat* Tongue-in-cheek approach to something that is not a problem, just toss the newsletter aside. I am laying myself wide open to this volunteer work. Let Ed Gardiner know of *your* feelings. He'll sure-as-heck let ME know.

Grafton Smith
427th, Class of '45

A Suggestion

A few more pages for your files.

A thought came to me some time ago about the possibility of the 303rd Bomb Group contributing to any or all of the museums that maintain flying B-17s.

I realize that the idea is not original, but I don't recall that we or any other Bomb Group has become a unit member/sponsor.

My notion is that if we started this Group Identification, and the

publicity that could be generated, that it might lead to more individual contributions and an additional incentive for museums to fly a 17 to Boise.

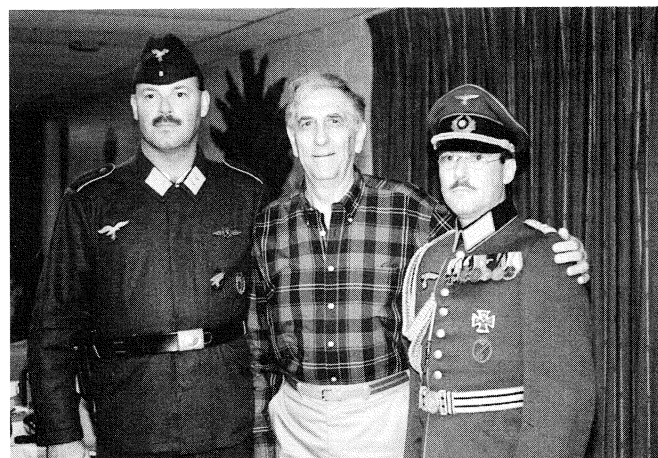
Merle Eckert
33 Greene Street
New York, NY 10013

Where Do We Go From Here—that we presently have members of our Association who could advise them on what further actions to take. Then there are many who were shortchanged on awards for heroic actions during the war. I know one that is being held up because the present military officials are insisting on us producing an eye witness some 40 years after the incident.

Like the war years this Association has a bright future for doing good deeds for our members and our country. Let's not fade into the woodwork. Let's hear some of your ideas.



Sue Lehmann displays plaque she accepted on behalf of her husband, the late E.C. "Al" Lehmann a past president of the 303rd Bomb Group Association.



Joseph F. Fertitta (358th) poses with members of the Texas Military Historical Society. Joe, who was a POW during WW II said, "seeing those uniforms certainly brought back memories of life in the PW Camp."

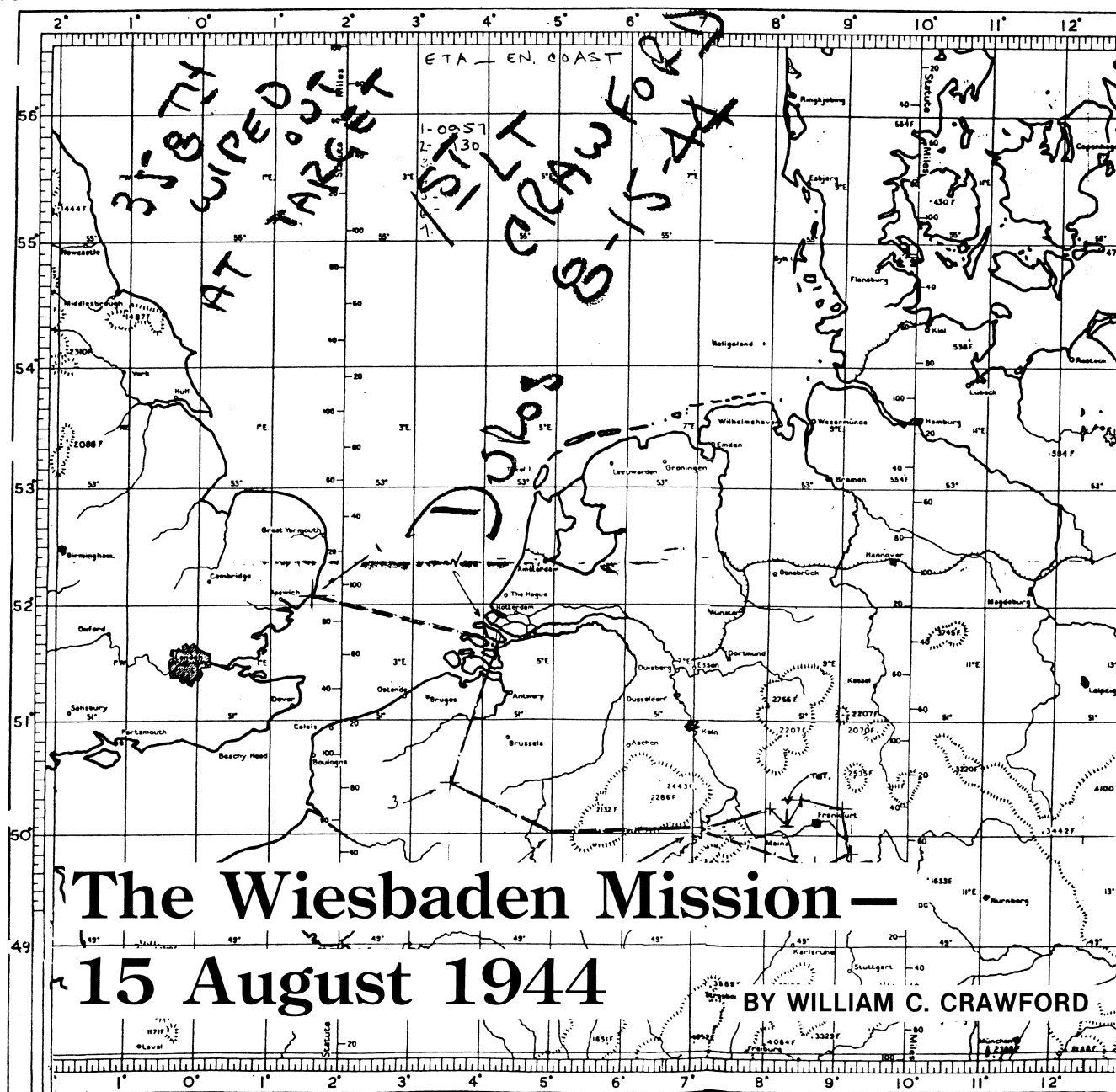
THEN: Molesworth 1942-45

“Might-in-Flight”



NOW: Schaumburg 1991





There is an imposing mural covering one wall in the National Air and Space Museum which shows B-17s under attack by German fighters, with flak bursting in the background. This scene by artist Keith Ferris, depicts an actual assault that occurred at 11:45 A.M. on 15 August, 1944. In the foreground is "Thunderbird" of the 359th Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group, U.S. Eighth Army Air Force, the "Hell's Angels Group," stationed at Molesworth, England.

The involvement of our flight crew in the Wiesbaden mission is related here.

Our base at Molesworth is located in the gently rolling Midlands about sixty miles north of London. The name "Hell's Angels Group" comes from an old B-17F named "Hell's Angels" which was the first bomber in the Eighth Air Force to complete twenty-five missions. The 303rd is either first or near the top in so many categories

that it is classed as prestigious and being assigned to the 303rd is indeed fortunate for our crew.

Our Bachelor Officers Quarters (BOQ) is not a Quonset hut but it is about the same size. This building has vertical corrugated metal sides and an angular roof instead of a rounded one. The interior is one large open space with each man's bunk along the sides; our English hosts have provided each man's bunk with three straw-filled "biscuits" that serve as a mattress. Newspapers and a blanket are used between the bunk springs and these biscuits to keep some of the cold from coming through from below, and blankets piled on top, plus sometimes an overcoat, are for warmth on that side. There are no sheets. A small pot-bellied coal stove is in an open area about a third of the way from each end of the building. Our clothes are hung from a shelf near

the head of each bunk and two men share a small dresser with drawers which stands between two bunks; a few of the bunks are double-decked but mine is not. There are blackout curtains at all windows and the entrance doors at each end of the barracks has partitions to block light. During the Summer months, due to daylight lasting until the late hours, they are drawn to make it dark enough to get some sleep. During the Winter months, when darkness comes early, they are drawn for security reasons to prevent any light from showing to enemy aircraft.

On the night prior to this mission it is "early to bed" to try to get some rest in anticipation of another mission in the morning. We are tired from four days of missions; this would be the fifth straight. On August 11th it was Brest area; on the 12th Metz Airdrome; on the 13th Bernay-Evreux; and on the 14 Stuttgart.

We are by this time an "experienced" crew, about half through our tour. I had flown the first two missions as co-pilot with a veteran crew to help determine whether it would be fairly safe for me to take our own crew out; this would be my eighteenth mission and would be the sixteenth for our crew as a team.

At about the time sleep has finally begun (3:30 A.M.) the door at the end of the barracks opens; we all lie there listening as the "alert" man, with his flashlight breaking the darkness, begins near the door to wake each man on the mission list. My bunk is about half-way of the building; I can hear his low-voiced queries and then the sleepy confirmation by each man as the flashlight gets closer. Maybe he'll go on by my bunk this time. The light is now at the next bunk; Lord, would it be possible for the light to pass me by just for today? Now the light is on my tag at the foot of my bunk, and now directly in my eyes, no more feigning sleep any longer. I am being gently shaken and queried, "Lt. Crawford?" Sleepily, "Yes." "You're flying today. Four o'clock breakfast. Briefing at five." Simultaneously the same procedure is taking place over in the non-com's quarters.

After getting my thoughts together and persuading myself that this is something that must be done again I roll back the blankets and shiver as the cold air in the barracks shocks me. We get dressed and make up the street for a cold shave. A close shave is necessary for the oxygen mask to fit correctly. Once I flew a mission with a half shave and not only did my mask not fit properly but it was a miserable feeling during the whole time it had to be worn. If a crew member were to fly a mission without having shaved he would be the weak link.

When we're dressed we walk to the mess hall and for being on the mission list we are served WHOLE eggs today.

After breakfast we get a ride to the briefing room which is near the control tower. The interior of this large Quonset hut resembles a small theater with a stage up front. There are plain backless long benches for the pilots and co-pilots; the navigators, bombardiers and non-coms have their separate briefings.

The men in the briefing room are the pilots and co-pilots from the four squadrons of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) stationed at Molesworth, England. These squadrons comprise the 358th, 359th, 360th and 427th, all part of the 41st Combat Wing of the U.S. Eighth Army Air Force; Doug Kidd and I will represent our crew. Thirty-nine B-17s from Molesworth will bomb today's target and a total of 1,722 aircraft are to be dispatched by the Eighth from England against the enemy today.

On stage to the left is a large board which has plan views of squadron formations painted on it. Aircraft are represented on this board as capital "T's." Names of the pilots and the last three digits of aircraft serial numbers have been chalked in for each formation position. We are part of the 360th Squadron and are to be "tail-end Charlie" in the low flight on the outside. We will be flying B-17G, serial number 43-37930 (F-930 on the briefing board). (This same aircraft will later be shot down by an enemy fighter on 28 September 1944 only two days after we will have flown her for the sixth time, but we will not

be aboard.)

Doug and I always arrive soon enough to get a good seat and make notes before the group is called to attention. From the stage up front the briefing will be conducted by Major Glynn Shumake, Group Operations; Captain McQuaid, Group Intelligence; the Weather Officer; Colonel Richard Cole, C.O. of the 359th Squadron, who will be leading the Group today and finally by Colonel Kermit Stevens, the 303rd Group Commanding Officer who will no doubt be imparting some of his familiar and emphatic tidings.

After we are dismissed, Father Edmond Skoner, the Chaplain, is always available with a service for any man who might wish words of strength and encouragement. He's a fine man and the men think of him as "one of the boys."

On the wall back of the stage is a large scale map of Europe; this map is covered by a black draw-drape and will remain covered until Captain McQuaid makes the familiar statement "*the target for today is...*" At this moment he will pull back the drape and reveal for the first time the target and the route laid out by a ribbon tacked to the map. Of course rumors have spread prior to this concerning what the target might be; if the target revealed is not to be a particularly rough one there are no groans, but if it turns out to be, as rumored, a long and tough one there will be audible sounds of pain. Usually the rumors are not too far fetched since someone will have checked the fuel load and type bombs being hung.

Today the target is to be the German fighter field at Wiesbaden; the map is marked with known flak areas that are to be avoided.

The briefing officers then impart to us the information that we'll need to know to carry out this mission: the number of enemy fighters that we can anticipate, the known flak along the route and flak we can expect in the target area. The weather is to be good, fifteen miles visibility with slight haze; bombing will be visual. We are to have P-51s, P-47s and P-38s as escorts which seems to please everyone. Doug and I also make notes as the following is given out: Stations 05:40, Start Engines 06:30, Taxi 06:40, Takeoff 06:50, Leave Base 08:04, Climb to 15,000 at 08:11, English Coast 08:39, Dutch Coast 09:05, Climb to 26,000 at 09:47, Initial Point (IP) 10:56, Target 11:02, Descend to 20,000 11:08, Enemy Coast 12:45, Base 13:49.

At the conclusion of the briefing Colonel Stevens has the final words ending with his familiar, "Get in there and bow-yer-neck, and stay off those *damned brakes!*" Captain McQuaid gives us a time "hack" to synchronize our watches and each man is issued an escape kit; a sealed packet which has been prepared for this type mission. It contains a silk map of the area we will cover, including escape routes to Spain, Switzerland or some other neutral country. There is also a booklet with some basic words in German, French, etc., some German or French money, a small circular compass about 1/4 inch in diameter which can be kept in the mouth or someplace less sanitary in case of capture, but of course the Germans know where to look, and a toothbrush which we are told is a great morale booster when by oneself, a needle and thread, etc. These kits are to be turned in after the mission.

We are then dismissed to go to the equipment room for our flight gear. There we also have our last opportunity for a trip to the toilet until after returning from the mission or being down somewhere in enemy territory so we make the most of it.

Flight gear includes an electrically-heated suit, a jacket, lined boots, a "Mae West," a leather helmet, an oxygen mask and throat mike, a parachute and harness and a pair of gloves. Flak helmets and vests are already in the aircraft. I am the only member of our crew not using an electrically heated flight suit. I have the strange belief that if I remain a little uncomfortable I will be more alert; with no electrical problems I can concentrate on the job at hand. This idea is possibly a hold-over from something I once read concerning Lindberg's Atlantic flight; he had said that he had no glass in the windows of his plane in order that the cold air and engine noise would help keep him awake and alert.

The truck ride to the dispersal site where the B-17 is parked is the first time that our crew gets together before the mission. Our crew consists of me, the Pilot; Lt. Doug Kidd, Co-pilot; Lt. Constantine Duros, Navigator; the Bombardier (not a member of our crew); T/Sgt. Lyle LeRoux, Flight engineer; T/Sgt. Bill Miller, Radio operator; S/Sgt. Danny Whitney; Ball turret gunner; S/Sgt. Ray Patton, Right waist gunner; the Left Waist gunner (not a member of our crew), and S/Sgt. Emmett (Em) Barder, Tail gunner. We arrive at the dispersal site and begin putting all our gear aboard the aircraft. It is now 05:40 A.M.

We have the utmost regard for the proficiency of the non-coms who have prepared the aircraft for us, however, Doug and I realize that we are responsible for this large and complex B-17 and for the safety of the crew, and ourselves. Flawless maintenance by a mortal human is almost impossible and we can't take anything for granted so we proceed with our inspection. We first walk around, and under, the B-17 for a visual outside checkup; then we enter the waist door and look at everything that we can see from the tail wheel strut on up through the waist section, radio compartment, bomb bay, where we check the bombs hanging in their racks, and into the pilots compartment on the flight deck. Doug and I take our seats for a few minutes and look things over.

Time for *start engines* is at 06:30; we have things pretty well set, with a few minutes to spare, so we get out and go to the Crew Chief's tent. He has a radio and we hear Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey or something good to help pass the time while we shoot the breeze. This non-com can probably also tell Doug and me what is actually happening. On later mornings we go to his tent to stay warm for a while. It is warm inside because this man has ingeniously modified his coal stove to burn aviation fuel! The flame is far from even; it is a drop-at-a-time explosion! "BOOM...BOOM..." To heck with base safety orders, coal is scarce and takes time to scrounge; aviation fuel is plentiful and right here!

We want to have plenty of time to go through the check list prior to *start engines* so Doug and I swing up through a small hatch under the forward fuselage, make it to the flight deck and take our seats.

The B-17 has a check list and it is essential

that we use it since the number of procedures in an aircraft such as a B-17 are far too many for any pilot to retain. Doug and I have both passed blind-fold tests where we had to touch each item on the flight deck but we still must use the check list. Doug takes the check list in hand and moves his finger down on each item as he calls aloud, "gear switch," to which I respond aloud, "gear switch neutral," etc. The check list takes at least five minutes or more to complete. Then we sit there; this is the most trying time; once we get the engines running we'll be O.K.

It is now 06:30 and a flare goes up from the tower. Our waiting is over; Doug begins the *start engines* part of the check list calling out, "*master switch*," to which I reach overhead and reply, "*on*." Using the check list we get each engine started and observe the instrument indications as the engines warm up. We are finally settling down to begin the job we were briefed to do. Doug and I run each engine up individually to take-off power; they are all perfect! Everything seems to be good; each crew member has checked in on the intercom and all systems are go ... now just to watch for the next flare.

It is now 06:40 and the flare is right on time. Doug unlocks the tail wheel and I advance the throttles; we begin to move slowly and taxi just far enough to wait for the B-17 with the tail serial number that we are to follow. Then we move into the line of B-17s ahead of us and I can feel the plane's mush tires and lack of response to throttles and brakes due to the heavy load. Slow taxiing with a heavy load is mandatory; trying to stop a 50,000 pound B-17 might exceed the mechanical limitations of the brakes and Colonel Steven's last words at the briefing, "*and stay off those damned brakes!*", seem to become indelible in my mind. We gradually move towards the take-off position, watching as each preceding aircraft takes off at thirty second intervals; now the B-17 ahead of us is starting his take-off roll.

We move into take-off position. I line the aircraft up with the runway, set the gyro-compass to the runway heading, call, "*tail wheel locked*," to which Doug responds, "*locked*." We get the green light; I ease the throttles up to *takeoff* and we begin our roll.

It is usually dark or instrument conditions so I remain on instruments, getting glimpses of runway lights out of the corner of my eyes as they flash past. Doug remains "visual" and calls out the airspeed. When we are airborne I call, "*gear up*"; Doug moves the landing gear switch to the "*up*" position, uses brakes to stop wheel rotation and when we have visually checked we acknowledge, "*landing gear up left*", and, "*landing gear up right*." Doug is assisting me by holding the throttles and making small power adjustments while I stay on the flight instruments. He is also watching the engine instruments closely since we're at take-off power.

Visibility is poor and we climb on instruments to Harrington Buncher Beacon (it is operating today). Ray and the other gunner at the waist windows and Em in the tail are using their flash guns to signal other aircraft but this seems useless in this soup; we are hitting prop wash from other B-17s which are also climbing out from nearby bases, and we don't see them.

We break out into the clear on top of the weather and everyone begins to look for our

Group formation. Our lead B-17 is shooting flares, coded by color for the day, but there are so many other Groups, each shooting different colored flares, that locating our Group is difficult. Then Duros from his Navigator's position exclaims, "There they are at 10:00 o'clock, a little high;" we concentrate on this area and finally are able to pick them out of all the muddle of B-17s and colored flares. I add some power and we begin to close in on them. Off in the distance we see a flare-up and debris falling where a mid-air has occurred.

We get closer where we ease into formation and continue circling the base area for almost an hour until 08:04 so that we can join the bomber stream at the proper time.

At 08:15 we are at 10,000 feet altitude and Doug calls for an oxygen mask check; the mask must fit tightly to operate properly and must be worn above this altitude. A man can die in a short time without his mask at 26,000 feet where we will be. Beginning with the Lt. Duros in the nose compartment, each position checks in throughout the aircraft back to Em in the tail.

We depart the English coast at 08:39 flying at 15,000 feet and over the North Sea the gunners are anticipating the words, "O.K. go ahead and test fire your guns, but don't waste your ammunition." Lyle in the top turret has his guns pointed straight ahead and when he fires Doug and I are jarred by the concussion since we are directly below the gun barrels. Doug calls for one more oxygen mask check and each man acknowledges in the affirmative and in the proper order. All communication between crew members must be done over the intercom since the noise level in our B-17 is such that even in the cockpit Doug and I cannot communicate normally.

We begin our climb over the North Sea using almost maximum power in the climb to maintain our position in the formation; the engines are groaning and I don't like to abuse them but this power is necessary and they surely do sound good! We are still climbing when we reach the Dutch Coast at 09:05 where we want to have as much altitude as possible in order to evade the flak that we're sure to encounter.

We finally reach our bombing altitude of 26,000 feet where we level off and maintaining our position in the formation becomes somewhat easier. The temperature on the flight deck and throughout the aircraft is now roughly minus 30 degrees Centigrade; this is why gloves are so necessary. If a crew member has bare hands his sweat will freeze to any metal part, and in the case of a pilot, his hand will freeze to the throttle.

We do not fly the shortest route to the target but rather quite out of the way to get there. To avoid flak we enter the Dutch coast at one of the islands south of Rotterdam, fly Southwest for about a hundred miles, then East-Southeast for about seventy-five miles, then East towards a point about twenty miles South of Frankfurt; Intelligence has decided that this is the best route. We then begin a wide left turn, keeping about twenty miles outside of Frankfurt all the way around the city until at a point about twenty miles North of Frankfurt. This is done to keep the enemy guessing as to what our real intentions are, but he is not so easily fooled. Dur-

ing this time we transfer fuel among tanks to equalize the fuel remaining since an empty tank is the most dangerous.

We are nearing the Initial Point (IP) and we are later than we had been briefed. Doug advises the crew to put on flak vests and helmets; Doug and I also have flak vests in the seats which have been put there by the crew chief for the protection of our "vital family parts."

All of our feinting of headings planned so that we will arrive unannounced seems to be of no avail; the Germans are great hosts and they have prepared a party for us. Without a word from the navigator we could easily see our destination; about forty degrees off to our left is a dense dark cloud. This cloud is above our target, the German fighter field at Wiesbaden; the cloud of course is flak being fired at the B-17s preceding us.

Colonel Cole gives the Group a call, "Cowboy leader to all aircraft, Tighten it up and *hold* it tight! We're coming up on the IP! Hold it in there tight and we won't have to come back tomorrow! We make a sharp left turn onto the IP at 11:13; from this point on it is tight formation, straight and level. Our Bombardier has charge of the bomb bay doors; we hear, "*Bomb bay doors coming open*" and we can hear the bitter cold air blasting past the open bomb bay. He will be watching the lead B-17 for a smoke marker and their bombs to drop and will release our bombs at that time.

Ray and the other waist gunner begin releasing "chaff;" chaff is metal foil strips intended to float down and confuse ground radar which aims the flak guns (maybe it does some good).

We are now on the bomb run, flying tight formation, straight and level, no dodging the flak now! Flak is bursting right at our altitude; the B-17 is being tossed by what seems like unending explosions and we can see the fireball in some of it and hear the deep thud! That's pretty close! Time seems to have stopped and here I've got these guys in the middle of this mess! Bill Miller is looking through the open radio room door into the bomb bay. He can see the flak bursting below the open bomb bay and just when we need it most we hear, "Old Ludwig is really p--- off today. He's shooting everything up but the kitchen sink. Pink, I just saw the kitchen sink go by!" That is just what we need! We have good discipline but thank the Lord for Bill. (I got the nickname Pinky during our crew training at MacDill but no one will take credit for it.) Finally we see the smoke marker and bombs being released from the lead B-17. Our aircraft leaps up and our Bombardier calls, "*bombs away!*" What a feeling of exhilaration for all of us! We were briefed to be on the bomb run for six minutes but it seemed more like an eternity.

I make a sharp right turn off the target and loosen up a bit to get out of the flak as soon as possible. The bombardier calls, "*bomb bay doors coming closed*," and it is now 11:20; we tighten the formation back up in case of fighters that might have stayed out of the flak area and take up a Westerly heading to lead us back the same route that we had used coming in. I find that I must reduce power to maintain the same airspeed as before; the B-17 now wants to *go* and I have to continue a periodic reduction of power to maintain airspeed. We have consumed almost

two thirds of our fuel in getting to the target but now we still have sufficient to get home.

We have successfully bombed the target and feel somewhat relieved to be on our way home when it happens! Twenty-five minutes after leaving the target Colonel Cole calls out, "Cowboy leader to all aircraft. Bandits at seven o'clock!" There is a light haze and visibility has been reduced by the contrails left by our B-17s; this is an ideal situation for an attack by enemy fighters. Out of nowhere a group of about forty FW-190s and ME-109s are aggressively attacking the 358th, 359th and 427th Squadrons in our Group and we have just encountered intense but inaccurate flak again. The fighters are obviously taking advantage of the contrails to make their passes.

Visibility to each side is pretty good but the Squadron ahead and the one behind are obscured to us in the contrails. I remind the crew who are now manning all our guns, "Keep your eyes peeled and stay on those guns!" The chatter on the radio is now reaching a much higher tempo. Our Squadron, the 360th, is in the same piece of sky with all this turmoil but our immediate concern is vigilance and listening. We expect to be involved in the fray any moment but it is as if we are invisible; we are terrified but are being ignored.

It is over as quickly as it began; a number of P-51s and P-38s who are our little friends are mixing it up with the Germans but not soon enough. In just a few horrifying minutes the 358th Squadron had lost seven B-17s and the 427th has lost two. Only eight chutes were counted and we will learn later that the records will list eighty two men as missing.

The splendid mural by artist Keith Ferris in the National Air and Space Museum has portrayed this harrowing encounter very realistically indeed.

We have been stunned by what has happened but are thankful to be still on our way home. We let down to 20,000 feet and dodged some flak areas; then near the Dutch islands we begin another let down and at 12,000 feet I tell the crew that they can come off of oxygen. We are over the North Sea now and getting the oxygen mask off seems awfully good; we have had them tightly on our faces for three and a half hours.

We begin to relax a little; no more flak or fighters for today! Lyle passes out a small snack to each of us; in this is a Hershey bar (which is frozen and is crumbly) and a sandwich, nothing ever tasted any better! In about thirty minutes as we are scanning the horizon the coast of England becomes barely discernable. We are low enough as we pass over the coast to see the tall radar towers which were so necessary during the Battle of Britain. England looks mighty good to us and it won't be long now until we'll be back home.

The closer to Molesworth we get the more a feeling of confidence begins to creep in to cover the apprehensions we had while over the continent. As we get closer we can vaguely make out the familiar outline of the base at Molesworth up ahead. We are approaching the base from the East and will be landing on the long East-West runway so we begin to get all our B-17s back into closer formation. We always want to look good overhead for the Crew Chiefs and the others who

have been sweating us out; today we particularly wonder how the vacant spaces in the 358th and 427th Squadrons will affect these anxious people on the ground as they look up.

The formation is over the end of the runway now and we're supposed to be peeling off for landing, but there are B-17s stretching the pattern out far too wide. We're looking like a bunch of old women! I'm tired and an urge prods me to take action; we're flying on the left side of our element so I peel off to the left and make a tight pattern, fully expecting the tower to come back with, "B-17 that just peeled off, pull up and go around." but there is silence so I continue on around. Apparently they are glad to have someone cheer things up a bit.

We are on the ground now and slowing to the turn-off; I make a right turn and taxi to our dispersal site, swing the B-17 around and stop. It is 14:34 and Lyle enters a 7:39 hour flight in the log book.

Doug and I have alternated flying formation but it is only after the switches are cut, props have rotated down to a stop and the noise and vibrations cease that we realize how completely exhausted we are. There is complete silence.

Our navigator, Lt. Duros, presents me with his navigation chart with his notation marked in black crayon, "358th wiped out at target 8-15-44, Duros."

Doug and I walk around the aircraft for a look and find some flak damage, but we wonder at how little damage we have received compared to the sacrifices made by some of the others this day. We learn that fifteen of the B-17s that returned to Molesworth have been badly damaged and will require repairs.

We unload all our gear, guns, etc. onto a truck that has been assigned to take us to de-briefing. There at de-briefing, or interrogation, each crew member is allowed one jigger of whiskey but I am weary and give mine to Ray who seems to want it more than I do. I'd love to have it but a shot of whiskey right now might knock me out, and I need to answer some questions with not too much exaggeration.

We are all bone weary but an overwhelming sense of satisfaction and achievement makes being tired a good feeling. We take a moment to offer a silent prayer to the Almighty for the men who didn't make it, and for ourselves, and for an honorable end to this destruction.

With each ensuing mission the devotion among our crew members becomes more evident; I find myself under this spell also; but I tell myself that I won't let it become too obvious.

This, then, was the Wiesbaden Mission of 15 August 1944 as one B-17 flight crew in the 8th Air Force experienced it.

According to the Honor Roll, the following aircraft and men were shot down by enemy fighters on Mission 229 to Wiesbaden, Germany on Aug. 15, 1944.

42-102432	427th	A/C (No name)	A/C Mis. 42	42-31224	358th	A/C Helen Heaven	A/C Mis. 48
Pilot	1stLt.	H.S. Cook	17	Pilot	2ndLt.	S.C. Smithy	11
Co-P	2ndLt.	F.H. Mason	15	Co-P	2ndLt.	E.P. Boat	10
Nav.	2ndLt.	R.E. Page	17	Nav.	2ndLt.	L.L. Joralemon	11
Bom.	2ndLt.	W.G. Warmuth	17	Bom.	2ndLt.	R.J. Klein	8
Eng.	S/Sgt.	J.L. Slight	17	Eng.	S/Sgt.	R.E. Fisher	11
R/O	S.Sgt.	F.W. Howell	17	R/O	Sgt.	A.E. Snoddy	11
B/T	Sgt.	R.F. Eaglehouse	17	B/T	Sgt.	R.S. Politylo	11
W/G	S/Sgt.	J. Joyce	28	W/G	Sgt.	J.A. Bazo-Fontaneil	11
T/G	Sgt.	J.L. Smalley	17	T/G	Sgt.	W.J. Bieranoski	11

43-37838	358th	A/C (No name)	A/C Mis. 19
Pilot	Capt.	A.S. Litman	7
Co-P	1stLt.	L.J. Stein	19
Nav.	1stLt.	W.E. Krouskup	26
Bob.	2ndLt.	L.M. Wolf	13
Eng.	T/Sgt.	H.R. Card	18
R/O	T/Sgt.	F.R. Meyer	18
B/T	S/Sgt.	W.P. Truesdell	18
W/G	S/Sgt.	M.E. Grissom	17
T/G	S/Sgt.	C.J. Williams	17

42-31423	427th	A/C Jigger Roocha	A/C Mis. 67
Pilot	1stLt.	H.C. Clark	12
Co-P	2ndLt.	G.P. Vesey	11
Nav.	2ndLt.	R.J. Davies	12
Bom.	F/O	E.E. Brosius	12
Eng.	S/Sgt.	H.P. Scott	13
R/O	S/Sgt.	F. Roswal	12
B/T	Sgt.	C.A. Sikora, Jr.	12
W/G	Sgt.	C.S. Cruttenden	12
T/G	Sgt.	E.W. Bjorn	13

42-97085	358th	A/C (No name)	A/C Mis. 51
Pilot	1stLt.	R.P. Charnick	16
Co-P	2ndLt.	L.H. Satre	26
Nav.	2ndLt.	S. Goldfield	16
Bom.	1stLt.	L.L. Ricky	21
Eng.	S/Sgt.	P.P. Carrissimo	16
R/O	S/Sgt.	R.H. Neidringhaus	16
B/T	Sgt.	F.O. Byrd	16
W/G	Sgt.	F.G. Herod	13
T/G	Sgt.	A.W. Schulz	16

44-6291	358th	A/C (No name)	A/C Mis. 14
Pilot	2ndLt.	A.I. Smith	10
Co-P	2ndLt.	R.G. King	9
Nav.	2ndLt.	E. Jones, Jr.	10
Bom.	2ndLt.	S.A. Kemp	10
Eng.	S/Sgt.	M.M. Harbarger	10
R/O	Sgt.	R.A. Swanson	10
B/T	Sgt.	J.D. Fischer	10
W/G	Sgt.	E. Beres	10
T/G	Sgt.	S.S. Bruno	10

42-102680	358th	A/C (No name)	A/C Mis. 37
Pilot	2ndLt.	J.L. Cathey	7
Co-P	2ndLt.	C.W. Stephens	5
Nav.	2ndLt.	C.S. Jackson	7
Bom.	2ndLt.	R.T. Blomberg, Jr.	7
Eng.	Sgt.	H.B. Reichling	7
R/O	Sgt.	L.H. Whittier	7
B/T	Sgt.	B.C. Nelson	7
W/G	Sgt.	N.R. Raspa	7
T/G	Sgt.	A. Moerman	7

44-6086	358th	A/C My Blonde Baby	A/C Mis. 50
Pilot	2ndLt.	O.B. Larson	16
Co-P	2ndLt.	G.B. Kersting	16
Nav.	2ndLt.	J.M. Card	17
Bom.	2ndLt.	J.J. Draves	15
Eng.	S/Sgt.	R.E. O'Connor	16
R/O	S/Sgt.	D.F. Mullaney	16
B/T	Sgt.	C.R. Sweeney	16
W/G	Sgt.	H.D. Holland	16
T/G	Sgt.	H.M. Philson	16

42-31183	358th	A/C Bad Penny	A/C Mis. 69
Pilot	2ndLt.	A.L. Goss	8
Co-P	2ndLt.	H.J. Cook, Jr.	7
Nav.	2ndLt.	L.E. Reuss	8
Bom.	2ndLt.	M.M. Fouts	7
Eng.	Sgt.	F.A. Sprague	8
R/O	Sgt.	R. Patsy	8
B/T	Sgt.	J.A. Earon	8
W/G	Sgt.	R.M. Stevens	8
T/G	Sgt.	N.A. Bunney	8

Men of 303rd Set High Standards

Of the many papers forwarded to me in the past several months by our conscientious historian Harry Gobrecht, one in particular caught my eye. It was a hardly readable release put out by the U.S. Strategic Air Forces in Europe on 9 December 1944. It told of the heroic dedication to duty by a bombardier of the 303rd Bomb Group. Although I was stationed at Molesworth at the time of the release, it was the first time I had heard of the incident. A check with our mission summaries left me further in the dark since the incident referred to in the release involved a raid on Ludwigshafen while our mission report for that date listed a mission to Stuttgart.

Intrigued by the story which appeared in the 18 December 1944 issue of the Stars and Stripes I decided to try and interview one of the principals.

Listed below is a copy of the original release and a very interesting letter with some very absorbing inserts as provided by the pilot of the aircraft Richard E. McGilvray.

A U.S. Eighth Air Force Bomber Station, England—9 Dec. 1944—Men like 2nd Lt. Frederick T. Kiessel, 765 Hyperion Ave., Los Angeles, Calif., a B-17 Flying Fortress bombardier of the 303rd Bomb Group, have established a tradition in the Eighth Air Force that the assigned objective must be hit despite price, pain or opposition.

While on a bombing mission over Ludwigshafen, Germany, Lt. Kiessel's ship was hit by flak which knocked out two engines and shattered the plexiglas nose as he was bending over his equipment preparatory to dropping his bomb load. Seconds later, a piece of shrapnel which tore into the compartment, nearly severed the bombardier's right arm, piercing his hip, and threw him into a corner of the nose, unconscious and bleeding severely.

Realizing the bombardier was wounded and seeing the rest of the formation begin to drop their loads, Technical Sergeant Johnnie O. Burcham, Roosevelt Ave., Sand Springs, Okla., the engineer-top gunner, yelled, "salvo" into the intercom so the plane's bombs could be dropped on the target.

2nd Lt. Benjamin Starr, 3050 Victoria Ave., Los Angeles, Calif., the navigator, grasped the emergency bomb release which is used when the bombardier's switch is knocked out.

Before the navigator could operate the emergency release, Lt. Kiessel, having regained consciousness, dragged himself back to his station, and, despite the pain, released the bombs with his uninjured hand and then collapsed with the fingers of his left hand locked in a viselike grip about the bomb lever.

With only two engines functioning, the crippled bomber dropped behind the formation after leaving the target area. A report of enemy fighters brought the engineer, whose guns had been hit by flak, to man the chin turret guns ordinarily operated by the bombardier. Lt. Kiessel, knowing the engineer was unfamiliar with their operation, raised himself from the floor to direct the firing until the enemy planes had been dispersed.

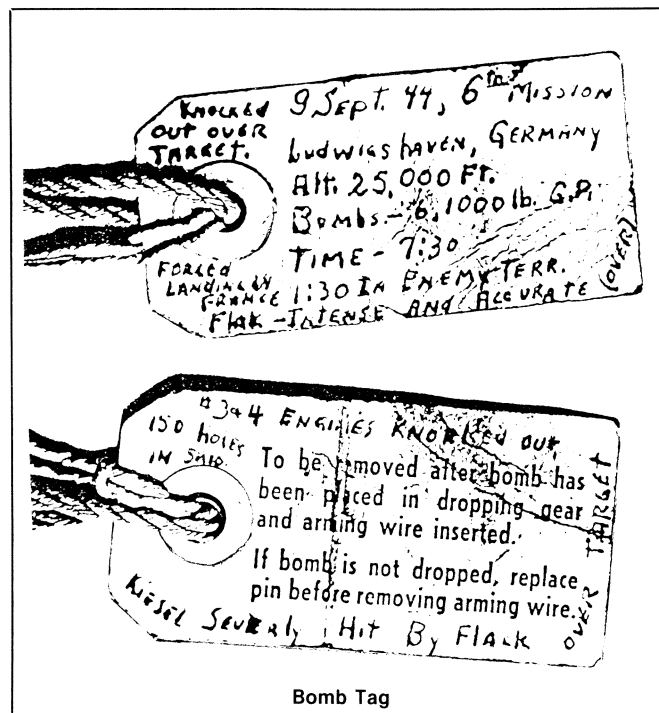
The pilot and co-pilot, 2nd Lt. Richard E. McGilvray, of Coarsegold, Calif., and 2nd Lt. George B. McCutcheon, 679 Lakeview, Birmingham, Mich., brought the crippled Fortress back to an emergency landing strip in France where the medical men rushed the wounded bombardier to a hospital. His wounded arm later was amputated.

It was great to hear from you yesterday. Your interest in what happened to me back on 9 Sept. 1944 is most flattering. At that time I was only interested in staying alive. I guess that is true of all missions that turn out like that one. Needless to say, the account in Stars & Stripes reads very well but some journalistic license was taken.

I was at the controls on the

bomb run, as usual, and the burst that hit us knocked our right wing down and we immediately dropped about 3000 feet before I got the ship back near a straight and level attitude. John Burcham, our engineer, yelled to "salvo" which we did.

When we finally got out of the target area and Ben Star, our navigator, had given me a heading to the nearest front line, I turned



Bomb Tag

the controls over to McCutcheon and told him to stay on course and keep it above a stall.

Ben had called for help in the nose to see what could be done for Fred. In the nose I found quite a mess, as you can imagine. Ben was busy navigating us back to friendly territory so I went to work on Fred. I always carried a very sharp "stock" knife and I stripped Fred's shoulder of all his gear. These were just enough of his arm to get on a tourniquet. I shot him with a morphine syrette and made him as comfortable as possible.

Back on the flight deck things weren't much better. We were losing about 1,000 feet a minute and it was a big sweat whether we would make it to the front lines or a Stalagluft. The last 15-20 minutes of the flight we started to get small arms fire from the ground. It began to get terrifying all over again. We made the front lines by about a quarter of a mile and McCutcheon took over and landed us in a cow pasture. The red flares we shot brought an ambulance out of the brush and got Fred to an aid station. The rest of us were pretty much unscathed.

The listing of me as pilot came from the 358th Sqdn., Hq. or Sqdn. Ops. I did not talk to anybody from Stars & Stripes for I was on a mission the day their reporter visited

the base.

Enclosed are photocopies of my bomb tag for the mission. I have one for every mission that I flew. The "letter of condolence" was on my bunk when Burcham and I got back to the base three days later. The "Boys" are my hut mates. I loved those guys.

As an aside, the photocopies of the "Luftpost" was that I carried on one of my two missions to Merseburg. Everybody else carried HE that day. I carried paper! I had lots to gripe about after that mission. The presentation "For Meritos Service" I found on my bunk when I got back from that one. "The Boys" had a great sense of humor. I guess that is what kept us sane throughout 35 missions.

Thanks again for your interest, Hal, I hope this is what you are looking for. Ben and I wrote Fred up for the Silver Star and most of the article in Stars & Stripes comes from the way we wrote the citation.

"Pop"

Richard L. McGilvray
655 Skyway #231
San Carlos, CA 94070

P.S. You asked me what I got for that mission. I got paid at the end of the month.

Ed Note: Did Lt. Kiessel ever get the Silver Star?

427th ADOPTED BY HISTORICAL GROUP

On April 7, 1991, a memorial, a 12' by 4' photo-mural of Keith Ferris' famous "Thunderbird" — an original 25' by 75' National Air & Space Museum wall-mural, was presented to the Lone Star Flight Museum at Galveston, Texas by the 303rd Bomb Group Association in memory of their comrades in arms who did not return from combat in World War II.

Staying at the same hotel in Galveston as the Hell's Angels delegation who journeyed to Galveston for the dedication were two other famous organizations. One was the "Association of Flyable B-17 Owners" and the other was the Galveston Chapter of the Texas Military Historical Society whose members are deeply committed to recreating events that happened in World War II. Members of the society purchase or make and maintain their own personal uniforms which are quite

authentic down to each minute detail.

Pictured on this page are examples of the uniforms worn by members of the society at their annual get-together to which members of the 303rd Association were invited. It brought back memories—possibly unpleasant — to some 303rds, especially those who spent quite a bit of time as POWs.

Also featured on this page is a letter and photo which tells about another historical group that Martin Ashley has formed in Sacramento, CA. The difference is that this particular group is dedicated to perpetuating the history and memory of the 427th Sqdn. of the 303rd Bomb Group.

But why did they pick the 427th Sqdn. to honor. Possibly the answer lies in the history of the 427th Sqdn.



Members of the 427th Air Squadron (HG) recreate a typical day at their base in Molesworth, England during 1944. (L to R) Capt. Brian Crites, Capt. Martin Ashley (Sq. CO), Maj. Doug Taggart, Capt. Richard Kempfer, and Capt. Richard Mason. Picture taken during "Air Fair 1991." Sacramento Executive Airport May 18, 1991.

Following is the chronological history of the 427th BS (H) and the 303rd BH (H):

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 12 June 1917 | Organized as 38th Aero Sq. (Kelley Field, TX) |
| 13 July 1918 | Redesignated Sqdn. A. (Chanute Field, IL) |
| 1 Dec. 1918 | Demobilized |
| 1933 | Reconstituted and consolidated with the 38th Pursuit Sqdn. which was constituted on 24 Mar 1923 |
| 1 Aug 1933 | Activated (Selfridge Field, MI) |
| 1 Mar 1935 | Redesignated 38th Observation Sqdn. (Long Range, Light Bombardment) and inactivated (March Field, CA) |
| 1 Sep 1936 | Redesignated 38th Reconnaissance Sqdn. and activated |
| 6 Dec 1939 | Redesignated 38th Reconnaissance Sqdn. (Long Range) |
| 7 Dec 1941 | Air Echelon departed Hamilton Field, CA arriving Hickam Field, Territory of Hawaii, on Dec. 7, during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. (Commanding Officer Major Truman H. Landon, who had participated in the first mass flight of B-17s to Hawaii, in May 1941. Intended destination was the Philippines to assist General McArthur. The 38th RS and 88th RS each flew a flight of 6 B-17Es. Squadron was subsequently dissolved and personnel assigned to other units; ground echelon departed San Francisco aboard ship on 6 Dec. 1941; returned 9 Dec. 1941. |
| 3 Feb 1942 | 303rd BG (H) activated at Pendleton Field, Oregon. Included the following Squadrons. Headquarters and Headquarters Sqdn., 358 BS, (H); 359 BS (H); 360 BS (H) and 31 RS (H). |
| 13 Feb 1942 | 303rd BG (H) and its squadrons transferred to Gowen Field Boise, Idaho. |
| 13 Mar 1942 | 38th RS transferred to Gowen Field from Bakersfield. |
| 16 Mar 1942 | 31 RS (H) disbanded. Personnel assigned to 38 RS (H). |
| 1 May 1942 | 38 BS (H), formerly 38 RS, now known as 427BS (H) |
| 1 July 1942 | Headquarters and Headquarters Sqdn dissolved into the 358BS, 359BS, 360 BS and 427 BS. |



427th AIR SQUADRON (HISTORICAL GROUP)

259 Rivertree Way
Sacramento, California 95831



ASSOCIATES

Martin Ashley
Edward Correll
Brian Crites
Daniel Dell
Richard Kempfer
Jay Linton
Richard Mason

28 May 1991

Mr. Bud Klint
5728 Walla
Fort Worth, Texas 76133

Dear Mr. Klint,

You may recall my correspondence with you during the latter part of last year. I was attempting to contact crew members of a relative, 2nd Lt. Daniel H. Singleton. I am pleased to report I have been in contact with one such gentleman, Mr. Francis H. Dietrich.

I also took your advice and joined the 303 Bomb Group (Heavy) Association, Inc. as an Associate. My letter writing campaign lead me to many fine gentlemen within your (my) organization.

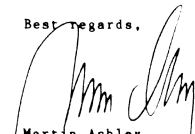
You may also recall me sending a picture of my 1943 Ford GPW restored Jeep with bumper markings honoring the members of the 303rd and 427th BS.

I am now very proud to report the formation of an historical group dedicated to perpetuating the history, customs, procedures, and memory of the 427th. We are a living history group who maintain our personal collection of uniforms and flight equipment. We have over the past eight months participated in parades, Benefit dances, Air Shows, Air Fairs, and other public functions. We are dedicated to recreating the actions of our Molesworth, England forefathers with authenticity.

The 427th Air Squadron, a name chosen in memory of Lt. Singleton, is gaining a reputation throughout the Northern California area for being historically accurate, sensitive to the memory of what the Air Corps accomplished during World War II, and responsive to the many veterans groups with whom we dedicate our activities.

I believe your kind and helpful efforts in the past have now had a beneficial response for the future, namely our humble endeavor.

Best regards,

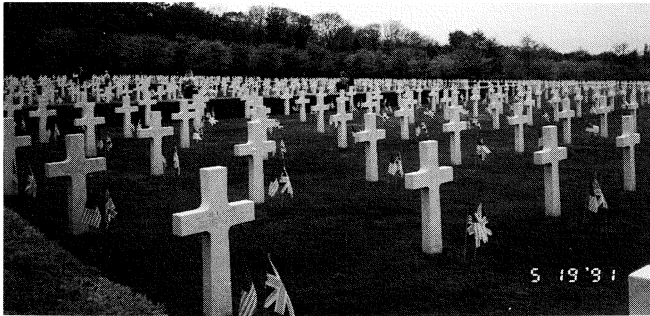

Martin Ashley
427th Air Squadron (HG)

VIGILANT ★ PREPARED ★ DEDICATED

IN MEMORIAM

The following long list of members did not necessarily die between the publication of the last two newsletters. Some were discovered when a special mailing was made to members who had not been heard from for a long period of time for no apparent reason. Dates if known are listed next to some of the members names. "May They Rest In Peace."

Roland C. Beasley (360th)
Edward Connors (358th)
Judd DeLeon (1114th)
Chester W. French (360th)
Paul H. Hassler (427th)
John F. Holmberg (360th), May 2, 1989
Clael E. Johnson (358th)
Rodney A. Ludeman (427th)
John C. Mayhugh (359th), Feb. 17, 1986
Gordon K. McCoy (359th)
Charles Olinger (360th), Aug. 28, 1990
James C. Riordan (360th), Feb. 2, 1991
Lester A. Sofield (427th), June 11, 1991
George Stallings (360th), August 1991
Meyer Supornick (983rd), June 8, 1991
Ray R. Sipe (359th)
John M. Twomey (358th), June 21, 1991
Frederick G. Wolf (444th)
Julia Wall Gould (ARC)
Charles K. Morrill (358th) died on June 17, 1991
Robert J. Yonkman (359th) passed away in March 1991
Cloud B. Whitson, (358) July 5, 1991
William F. Brown, Jr., (359) July 21, 1991



Madingley Memorial Cemetery

Upgrades to Life Member

Cioffi, Felix LB33 (1681st Ord), 10906 San Luis Ave., Lynwood, CA 90262
Clark, M.L. (Pete) L1088 (358th), 2208 Green Valley, Carrollton, TX 75007
Dennis, Walter L291 (360th), 1608 17th St., Two Rivers, WI 54241
Dulik, Eugene L1019 (427th), 509 Broadway St., South Haven, MI 49090
Hlastala, Michael S. L1214 (360th), 9614 15th Ave. NW, Seattle, WA 98117
Huguenin, Wesley V. L162 (360th), 1824 Sycamore Dr., Fairfield, CA 94533
Moon, Charles E. (Ted) L157 (358th), 4100 Crystal Lake Dr., #406, Pompano Beach, FL 33064
Schwartz, Vernon E. L1429 (360th), 210 W. Jessup, Alvarado, TX 76009
Travis, William L. L155 (41), 42 Delegal Rd., Aavannah, GA 31411
Yocum, Doal L. L134 (360th), Rt. 4, Box 26, Galena, MO 65656

NEW MEMBERS

#1633 Free, Ennis B. (360th), 264 Santa Clara Dr., Vista, CA 92083
#1634 Hiland, Robert L. (358th), 2141 Vaca Dr., Eckert, CO 81418
#1635 Graham, Edward (358th), 1901 Cole Springs Rd., Bishop, GA 30621
#L1636 Prestage, John L. (359th), Box 213, King Salmon, AK 99613
#L1637 Ross, Robert M. (358th), P.O. Box 16709, St. Louis, MO 63105
#1638 Schupplein, Orin H. (358th), 3033 Live Oak Ct., Danville, CA 94526
Fox, Raymond H., 9126 Blairmoor Rd., Tampa, FL 33635
Harvey, Mrs. Betty Larson, 16518 Virginia Pt. Rd. NE, Poulsbo, WA 98370

ADDRESS CHANGES

Beal, Donald L., 1205 E 9th St. #F-24, Upland, CA 91786-5504
Behne, Mrs. Anne W., PSC Box 3041, APO AE 09459
Brooks, Mrs. Betty, 4950 Mount Holland Dr. SW, Roanoke, VA 24018
Burch, Armand F., 662 Cascade Hills Hol'w SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506-3661
Czarny, Mrs. Adeline, 1055 W. Stanford Ave., Englewood, CO 80110
Dennis, Walter F., 1608 17th St., Two Rivers, WI 54241-2917
Dunlap, Charles W., RR #2, Box 2697, Hamburg, PA 19526-9345
Gust, Darrel D., 4510 State Rd. #64, LaCrosse, WI 54601
Hammel, Norman, 731 Longfellow Ter., Inverness, FL 32650
Hopkins, Mrs. Ann, 39650 US 19N #221, Tarpon Springs, FL 34689
Isham, Lawrence, 1258 E. Elmwood Ave., Burbank, CA 91501
Johnson, Claes E., 121 Fairway Dr., West Newton, MA 02165
Kilroy, Robert E., P.O. Box 8988, Victorville, CA 92392-0914
Krizman, Art, 10048 Sleepy Hollow Tr., Apache Junction, AZ 85219
Lesh, Mrs. Murdee, P.O. Box 2716, Hayden Lake, ID 83835-2716
Littlefield, Robert, 26555 Thistle Ln., Hemet, CA 92544
McCutchan, Eugene R., 16220 N 7th St. A #2034, Phoenix, AZ 85022
Mason, Millard E., 24310 Kirby St., #149, Hemet, CA 92543-1308
Mays, Robert L., 207 Lake Dr., Ripley, TN 38063-1139
Meleski, William E., RR 6 Box 6523, Amsterdam, NY 12010-9806
Melton, Mrs. Mabel Stout, RR 1 Box 241, Ellington, MO 63638
Moody, James D., P.O. Box 1694, Granbury, TX 76048-8694
Moser, Clinton A. (Returned) NSN in Houston, Texas
Muchmore, Gale F., 13010 Amberley Ct. #206, Bonita Springs, FL 33923
Rice, Laurence, (Returned) P.O. says street and/or number changed
Romstad, Al, 2320 NE 45th St., Ocala, FL 32670
Schulz, Mrs. Verna, 2560 Leroy Ave., Kingman, AZ 86401-1906
Tambe, Angelo J., 231 Dickerson, Newberry Pk., CA 91320
Tharp, Wallace, 8318 SE Taylor Ct., Portland, OR 97216
Torley, Donald W., 21 Delaware St., Pontiac, MI 48341-1103
Tractman, Larry B., P.O. attempted to deliver - unknown
Bailie, Homer P., 544 Fantasy St., Palmdale, CA 93551
Mann, Lowell J., RR#4 Box 2350, Marshfield, MO 65706
Morgan, Robert L., 1312 W. Geneva Dr., DeWitt, MI 48820

Revolting Development Department. Get 35 address changes, all disclosed by the postal system, the month you print a new roster.

Thinking of Moving? Please let the Membership Chairman know your new address, before we mail the Newsletter to the wrong address.

303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

c/o Hal Susskind
2602 Deerfoot Trail
Austin, Texas 78704

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**Plot your course for
303rds Silver Anniversary Bash
Boise, Idaho, Sept. 8-12, 1992**

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

JANUARY 1992

303rd 50th ANNIVERSARY REUNION — BACK TO BOISE —

Time is flying! The 303rd Reunion to be held in Boise is edging closer. If you have not already done so, this is a good time to mark your calendar and highlight the Reunion Dates.

September 8-13, 1992

Additional information will be forthcoming in our Newsletter, and you can expect the Reunion Package to arrive in early summer. Watch for it and RSVP as soon as possible to assure your reservation for the Red Lion Hotel Riverside, and tours. Space could be limited.

An all out publicity campaign is underway to locate former 303rds who are not members of the Association. It's a command performance—everyone is expected to help. "Every member get a member" is the theme for the drive.

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2602 Deerfoot Trail
Austin, Texas 78704

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303rd FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Again, the best of the Mighty Eight will assemble in Boise, Idaho September 8-13, 1992. Muster will be at the Red Lion (Riverside) Hotel.

A special invitation is extended to those 303rd members who were stationed at Gowen Field, Boise, in February, 1942.

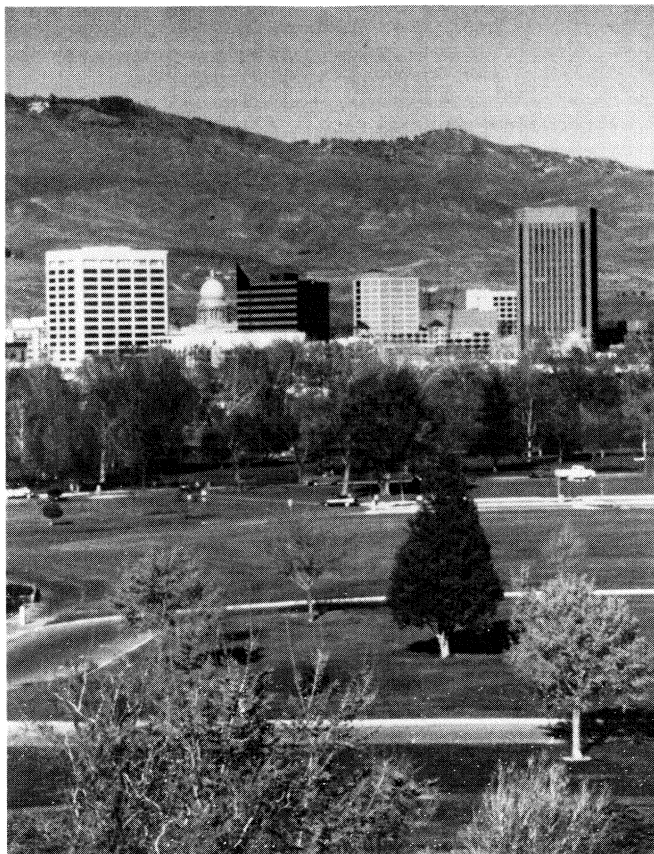
Additionally, our Anniversary Reunion presents the opportunity to honor the widows of our departed comrades. Each of these wonderful ladies are invited to be our guest for the Gala Banquet on September 12, 1992.

Information on our tours, car rental and airline discounts, etc. will be forthcoming in our 303rd Newsletters.

New and different for Boise: (see, we do pay attention to your suggestions)

- Name tags where you can see the name miles away.
- Well displayed signs for: The Hospitality Room, Registration/Information Desk.
- Shopping for the ladies.
- Golf and Bridge for those wanting to play.
- Piano music and sing-along for the Hospitality Room.
- Comfortable Social Room for our ladies. Good conversation, and *women war stories* told here. Light refreshment provided.
- Memorial Service at Gowen Field where it all started, fifty short years ago.
- Brave enough for River Rafting? It's available on September 9 and 10.
- 8th AF Movie Theatre.

Jim Taylor
Reunion - 303rd Bomb Group (H)



BOISE IN 1992

Attendance at the reunion in September in Boise should be a primary goal of every member of the 303rd. As the years go by old friendships become more important to each of us. At the 8th AFHS meeting in New Orleans in September, sixty of us enjoyed visiting with each other as much as we did the plethora of activities there. Everyone enjoyed the Schaumburg reunion and now we are expectantly awaiting Boise.

The reunion committee consists of individuals who are good at convention planning. They are providing the opportunity; now it is up to us to go and have a good time.

We have been blessed with an excellent group of officers who, after much deliberation, have taken actions which were best for the Association and its members. If some of you are unable to attend, we will miss you, but your suggestions and ideas are always welcome. Every single member of the Association is important and a concern to each of us.

I will see you in Boise!

Carl DuBose

303 Alumni:

Your Reunion Committee is working hard to make our 50th Anniversary Reunion (Back in Boise where we started) a great and memorable one. We've got a varied and interesting program coming up and have a very good chance of having a flyable B-17 here with the Guns, Bomb Sight, and Patched Flak holes (Real ones, this Bird is a Veteran).

BUT

What really makes a Reunion great is meeting your old friends and buddies and making new ones. The Reunion is scheduled in Boise, Idaho September 8 thru 13th, 1992. Right now please get on the phone, call your old 303 buddies, crew members, roommates, people you worked or flew or bunked with; get them to plan on coming. You can call information in the area where they were from. You'll be surprised how easy it is, sometimes, to find them. 303rd widows and spouses are especially invited.

We'll have lots to do and see. Would you like to float the rapids on a wild river, a golf tournament, sight seeing trips, Art in the Park, and bridge for the ladies. Lots of pictures, memorabilia, excellent food, fellowship and areal nice motel. Yellowstone Park, Hells Canyon, Craters of the Moon, Brice, Zion and much more are not too far away if you want to come early or stay late and have a vacation.

Let's all come to this 50th one. We're running out of time. There won't be too many more. Get on the phone and/or write letters. Let's get your old friends and you to Boise in '92. Start now, get this trip scheduled before something interferes. You'll be glad you did.

Jack P. Rencher
Boise Representative

To the Sweethearts of the 303rd Bomb Group:

We want you to come to the 50th Reunion Celebration of the 303rd.

Boise is a beautiful, friendly city with 80 degree days and cool nights. Outside your hotel room door is the Boise River stocked with trout for the fellows and with a paved Greenbelt for your morning walk.

We've planned days with river raft trips, a ride on our quaint tour train and an afternoon at a popular affair called "Art in the Park" where 250 of the best craftsmen in the northwest sell their wares.

In the park, within a stones throw of each other is the Boise Gallery of Art, Historical Museum and Rose Garden with an acre of blooms.

Are you a bird watcher? We'll take you to the World Center for Birds of Prey—no place like it on the globe.

Let's get together some morning for breakfast, tell our own war stories and view some classy clothes modeled for us.

Pack a pretty dress for the banquet and dance. We've got a great band coming to play.

Mark your September, 1992 calendar from the 8th thru 13th for a gala 50th reunion party.

Plan to come. We'd love to have you.

Louise Rencher
(Sweetheart in residence)