

# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

JULY 1992

## 303rd Bomb Group

# FROM BOISE TO BERLIN

More than 50 years ago - Feb. 11, 1942 - a bunch of fledgling fliers and ground crewmen gathered at Gowen Field, Idaho determined to build a first class fighting air unit. It was the birth of the 303rd Bomb Group.

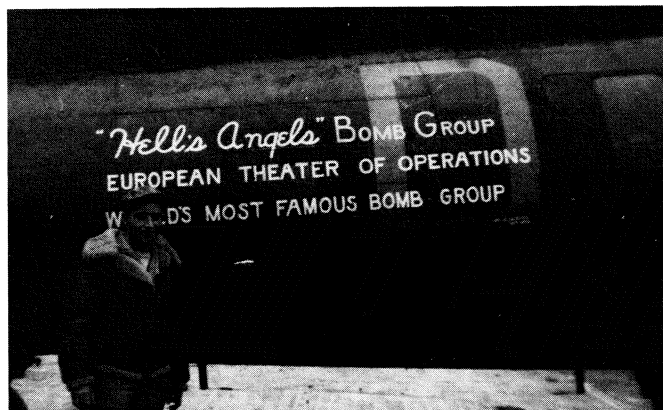
During the period, May 27 through June 4, 1942, the 303rd crews flew 11 missions, 59 sorties, searching for Japanese surface craft, subsurface craft and aircraft over the Pacific Ocean while on duty with the Hq. II Bomber Command Task Force at Muroc, California.

Several months later, the 303rd, both air and ground personnel, crossed the Atlantic Ocean to pit their "can do" spirit against the vaunted German war machine. The 35 air crews were in their new B-17Es; the ground personnel travelled via the Queen Mary. Their destination was Molesworth Air Base in England.

Their debut into combat can hardly be called a spectacular success. On Nov. 17, 1942, 16 aircraft from the 303rd took off with a load of bombs marked "special delivery" for the subpens at St Nazaire, France. The results were certainly not encouraging for the future of day-light bombing. Unable to locate the target due to bad weather, the Forts returned with their bombs without seeing any action.

By Jan. 23, 1943, they had completed 11 missions, all to the west coast of France but they had paid an enormous price for their first two months of combat. Ten aircraft and crews were lost to Luftwaffe fighters, three to anti-aircraft fire and three to other causes. The original 35 aircraft were whittled down to 19. Daylight bombing by the USAAF was in jeopardy.

On Jan. 27, 1943, practically a year since they had first assembled at Gowen Field, 11 of the 303rd's remaining aircraft with deputy commander Lt. Col. Charles Marion leading, took off to bomb Germany proper. The target was the ship-building yards at Wilhelmshaven. When the crews returned from their mission they



This photo says it all.

were jubilant. They had bombed the ship-yards and destroyed one German fighter and damaged another without suffering any losses.

With the knowledge that German targets were well within the range of their Flying Fortresses, the remaining 303rd crews knew that future missions would be very rough but help was on its way in the form of more crews and later models of the sturdy B-17. But the men and machines of the 8th Bomber Command still had to prove to the world that daylight, high-altitude, precision bombing would be what it would take to destroy the mighty German war machine.

Savage air battles ensued. The Luftwaffe bitterly contested the occupation of the sky over their homeland. But the men of the 303rd proved themselves in combat. On March 18, 1943, Lt. Jack Mathis, lead bombardier of the 35th Sqdn. was awarded the Group's first Medal of Honor for his heroic action in the bombing of Vegasack. Though mortally wounded by flak on the bomb run, he crawled back on the bomb-sight and dropped his bombs and died. For Mathis it meant the Congressional Medal of Honor—posthumously.

In December of 1943, T/Sgt Forrest L. Vosler was the second 303rd to win the nation's highest award for valor for his heroic action on a raid on Bremen, Germany.

On Jan. 11, 1944 the 303rd

took part in one of the fiercest, bloodiest aerial battles ever fought in any war. Forty-two bombers from the First Division did not return; ten of them were from the 303rd. For this the Luftwaffe also paid a stiff price by having 300 fighters destroyed, probably destroyed and damaged. That day the men of the 303rd helped earn that blue ribbon, the Presidential Unit Citation.

In February, the 8th made an all out assault on the Luftwaffe. The 303rd did its share by bombing Leipzig, Aschersleben, Diepholz, Augsburg and Schweinfurt. It was daylight bombing at its best.

In March of 1944, The Hell's Angels crews hit the jackpot. They bombed Berlin for the first time. It was the first of many assaults to come. There were no more closed doors in Nazi land.

Then came the big day, June 6, 1944. The 303rd was bombing in support of the ground troops who were landing on the Normandy coast. That day the 303rd flew three separate missions between dawn and dusk, blasting bridges and communications to help the infantry. That month the Hell's Angels men flew 29 missions, 1,000 sorties and fired only 1,400 rounds of ammunition for the entire month, compared to the 120,000 rounds fired at the early Schweinfurt Missions.

But everytime some expert said that the Luftwaffe was dead.

They would roar to life the next day and shoot the-hell out of complacent crews. On August 15, as the 303rd droned on towards their target at Wiesbaden, they were surprised by a formation of 50 German fighters who made one lightning attack and shot down nine fortresses. Seven aircraft and crews from the 358th were lost along with two from the 427th.

A little more than a month later practically the same thing happened except this time, 150 FW-190s dove out of the sun just as the formation was steadying for its bomb run on Madgeburg. With unerring precision they shot 11 B-17s out of the sky. The planes that did return were badly shot up. The date was Sept. 28, 1944 and the mission number was 248.

With the assignment of radar (Mickey) ships to the groups it meant more missions could be flown in the winter months. The group flew 16 missions in October; 16 missions in November and 14 missions in December. This compared to just 22 missions flown during those same months in 1943.

On Jan. 10, 1945 the group flew its 300 mission to Bonn. At this time it was apparent that the Luftwaffe was no longer the potent force - it was in previous years. Flak was now the principal obstacle for the B-17s to overcome. But there was plenty of it. On April 25, 1945 two years, five months and eight days of combat behind them, the 303rd B-17s took off from Molesworth on their final mission against the Nazis. The group's 364th mission was a long penetration to Pilsen in Czechoslovakia. When the aircraft returned, one B-17 was missing. Lt. W. Mauger's crew was shot down by anti-aircraft fire.

On May 7, 1945, the German war machine surrendered. The war in Europe was over for the 303rd and many of the original Gowen Field cadre, both air and ground personnel, were on hand to celebrate the victory and glory in their accomplishments. The 303rd flew 364 missions for 10,721 sorties, the most of

Continued on page 2



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

Editor: Hal Susskind

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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.

### HERE ARE YOUR OFFICERS FOR MAY 1991-SEPTEMBER 1992

**President** – Carl DuBose, Jr. (427)

**Vice President for Administration** – William S. McLeod, Jr. (358)

**Vice President for Reunions** – James B. Taylor (358)

**Secretary** – J. Ford Kelley (359)

**Treasurer** – Charles S. Schmeltzer (358)

### SQUADRON REPRESENTATIVES

#### 358th

Walter J. Mayer  
William H. Simpkins

#### 359th

Charles J. McClain  
Harold A. Susskind

#### 360th

William Heller  
John W. Farrar

#### 427th

Wilbur (Bud) Klint  
Fred Norman

#### 444th

Henry C. Johansen  
Melvin T. McCoy

#### Headquarters

Carlton M. Smith  
John R. Craven

**Membership Chairman (Roster)** – Carlton M. Smith

**PX Administrator** – Robert E. Kidd

**Newsletter** – Hal Susskind

**Advisor** – Lew Lyle

**Boise Reunion Committee** – Jim Taylor, Jack Rencher, Mel McCoy, Walt Mayer and Bill McLeod

**Historian** – Harry Gobrecht

**By-Laws Chair** – Robert P. Livingston

**Nominating Com. Chair** – Malcolm Magid

### From Boise to Berlin (continued)

any 8th AF bomber unit. But they paid a price in losing 165 aircraft or one for every 65 sorties. How many of the approximately 1650 men who were shot down and became POWS and survived the war is unknown. What is known is that we had many heroes, some officially recognized plus a majority who weren't. If time

is on our side we may at some future date finally recognize those individuals who are still deserving of those honors.

One thing is certain, Boise was the birth place of one helluva great outfit in 1942, and 50 years later the 303rd Bomb Group Association is still an outstanding organization.

Hal Susskind

My thanks to Harry Gobrecht for providing information on the early history of the 303rd and also to Sherrell Booe and Eddie Dusek of Wallace Engraving for helping me untangle this mess of copy

and graphically presenting it so you can read it. Also my thanks to Grassroots Marketing for the great printing job and for getting it in the mail to you in record time.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear 303rd Member:

The Reunion Committee, under the leadership of James Taylor and assisted quite admirably by Boise on-site chairman, Jack Rencher along with many others in your Association, is making special efforts for our "50th Anniversary Celebration" in September.

It has been a privilege and pleasure to serve this term as your president. Many things have been accomplished by your Association in this brief period.

The 303rd Bomb Group was formed in 1942 at Gowen Field in Boise and it is fitting that we return to Boise for our Golden Anniversary. In addition to renewing friendships and exchanging war stories, there are many special events planned for you. Let's make a "Max Effort" to attend this reunion.

I look forward to seeing you in Boise.

Sincerely yours,  
/s/ Carl DuBose, Jr.  
President

Beginning at Schaumburg one year ago the officers and committee members of the Association have been active in continuing the development of the 303rd Bomb Group Association to be as outstanding as the 303rd Bomb Group was in combat. Our reproduction center has been active for some time; a history has been written and is ready for publication; and we continue to find new members as well as upgrade memberships to life and superlife. At this reunion memorialization of the 303rd will be accomplished when our plaques are placed in Boise. While officers and members continue to initiate ideas to enhance the image of the Group, the contribution of each member is vital to our progress, whether it be a story for the newsletter, an item for the historian, a financial contribution, or attendance at the reunion. Finally, we all are going to have fun doing things together and associating with each other as we continue on to Boise.



303rd Bomb Group's official flag with battle streamers including Presidential Unit Citation

# Hell's Angels Forum

## Your Chance to Sound Off!

### 358th Unknown Crew Named

On page 9 of the April issue of the newsletter you featured a photo with the cutline, "unknown 358th combat crew." I was part of the crew. I am now home in Greenville, MS. Thank you for missing us.

**Philip Cascio**  
1834 Lake Manor  
Greenville, MS 38701

*Ed. Note: On page 8 of this issue, Cascio names the members of the crew and also gives his graphic recollections of the ill-fated mission of the "Spook" on 16 Feb. 1943.*

Re: April newsletter, page 9, Unknown 358th crew, it looks like Capt. Larry Dunnica, MIA, 16 Feb. '43. Earl Steele should know for sure. MIA was at St. Nazaire.

**John Shoup**  
718 W. 4th St.  
Larned, KS 67550

*Ed. Note: You are correct. See letter above.*

### Shortchanged

Your January issue with the use of gold leaf for the title and headline was great.

I especially appreciated the Stallings item. What a guy!

George was a barracks mate of mine when I first came to the 360th. His bed was just across from mine—i.e., we were foot to foot as it were. George was an insatiable reader. So late at night, he'd read under his covers with a flashlight so as not to disturb others in the barracks. A real gentleman. A man I loved from the day I met him.

Hal, I am especially interested in your quest to obtain awards for personnel of the 303rd who never received them, but which were richly deserved. I know of one; The DFC which should have been awarded to Charles Patterson formerly of the 360th. If he should begin the quest I shall be most pleased to offer whatever proof I can to aid him. As for myself, I have often felt that every man who went on the Merseburg mission of 21 November 1944 deserves an award. I know I have a personal interest in this but that interest goes far beyond myself—and to all who followed us that fateful day. And, we were successful even if we did bit off a bit more than was chewable at the time.

**William Heller**  
P.O. Box 3006  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

*Ed. Note: Anybody knows that when you bombed Merseburg you expected to see plenty of accurate flak even at 26,000 feet. But when you decide to bomb it at 16,000 feet you know you are going to see a great deal more flak. That's what Bill Heller was alluding to in his letter. As Ops Officer for the 359th Bill led the raid on Merseburg on Nov. 21, 1944. Forty-five minutes from the target the weather turned real bad with tops above 35,000 feet. Some groups received a recall and had turned back when Heller was in contact with Blue Boy Low who said at 16,500 feet he could see the target beautifully clear. So down went the 303rd led by Heller followed by any groups that were left. I believe they bombed at 16,500 feet with his low group at 15,800 or so. They clobbered the target and after turn off they climbed a bit into a thin cloud layer to avoid further attack and high tailed it for home. Upon return they were told they obliterated the target but that every plane (on average) had at least one engine out on turning off the target.*

*The following message was received through channels: "On 21 Nov. the 1st Bomb Division formations displayed outstanding courage, skill and determination in continuing on under extremely adverse weather conditions to attack the vital Leuna-Merseburg Oil Refinery. I commend you for the determination, excellent leadership and high degree of air discipline and training which made it possible for the 1st Bomb Division to successfully carry out this mission." Signed Doolittle Gen. Turner commander, 1st Air Div. endorsed it down to the 303rd Bomb Group with a "Well Done." But no other awards ever came to Bill Heller or any of the 303rd crews who did such an outstanding job on this assignment....Like I said many times before, the 303rd was pitifully short changed on awards throughout the whole war. And they are still short changed and will continue to be unless we do something about it.*

### Memorial Service at Cambridge

Please find enclosed two photographs that were taken at this year's Memorial Service held at the American Cemetery at Madingley, near Cambridge, on Sun. May 17th 1992. Please let me know if you need the negatives for these photographs, I will gladly send them to you.

I was honoured to lay the wreath on behalf of the 303rd Bomb Group Association. The ceremony was a special 50th Anniversary commemorative Service, and more bomb and fighter groups were represented than ever before. In fact, over 90 wreaths were laid.

The introductory address was given by the Honorable Raymond Seitz, Ambassador of the United States to the Court of St. James, and during the service there was a flypast by three veteran aircraft, a Spitfire, P47 Thunderbolt and a P51 Mustang.

After the laying of the wreaths, and the National anthems, there was a salute by the 48th Fighter Wing, R.A.F. Lakenheath, of 4 F111's in the missing man formation.

Almost immediately afterwards, we were all surprised and delighted by the appearance of our only airworthy Flying Fortress, "Sally B," who put on a brief display. It was a very emotional few minutes, as there were many veterans attending the service (especially your colleagues from the 379th Bomb Group at Kimbolton, and at least one veteran of the 303rd), and there couldn't have been a dry eye in the house!

**Robin J. Beeby**  
Associate Member  
40 St. Catharine's Rd.  
Kettering, Northants  
England NN15 5EN

### 38th Recon Sqdn. Reunion

I would like to make mention of a coming event: the first reunion of the 38th Recon. Squadron, which will take place in Albuquerque, NM, on October 22-24, 1992.

This is directed mainly at the 427 Bomb. Sqdn. as they were the 38th Bomb. Sqdn. and were well on their way to Clark Field in the Philippines when Pearl Harbor was attacked at the same time the 38th was landing at Hickam Field at precisely 8 a.m. on December 7, 1941.

The flight sustained severe battle damage and the Sqdn. lost its Flight Surgeon as well as several wounded crewmen.

The ground personnel, well on its way aboard the President Johnston, turned back after two days at sea and landed back at San Francisco, as did 11 other military transports.

The remaining personnel of the 38th finally came to rest at Gowen Field where it became the 427th Bomb. Sqdn. of the 303rd Group.

The remaining flying personnel

split up and went on various missions in the South Pacific.

The purpose of the reunion after 51 years is to renew old acquaintances and friendships when at the time we were not at war. This event will be our first reunion and probably our last, so let's make it a good one, and not an ego trip.

Those interested should contact Lee R. Embree at 1675 Monroe Rd., Port Angeles, WA 98362, phone (206) 452-7094, and do it soon.

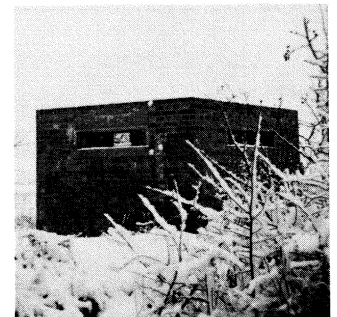
**E.J. Thorson**  
7004 Grange Ave., N.W.  
Albuquerque, NM 87120  
(505) 898-4931

### Who Was The Spy?

I just received the April newsletter and was extremely interested in E.J. O'Brien's letter about the spy on the base at Molesworth. I do not remember the date but one night after a hard mission, I went to the NAFFI hut to get a beer. They had the radio on to Lord Haw-Haw. He was commenting on the ones who had been lost from the 303rd. He named crews and planes that had been lost. His last statement was, "We know everything that goes on at your airbase. In fact, the clock in the NAFFI hut is five minutes slow." You can imagine how many watches were checked immediately and he was correct. I wondered at that time who would have given him such information. Since the NAFFI was a British organization many of the civilians who worked on the base went there.

I've often commented to my friends about this incident and how suspicious it made all of us feel. It makes you wonder if the person E.J. O'Brien wrote about might have been the one who supplied the information to Lord Haw-Haw.

**E.K. Carter**  
6847 N. W. 68th Ter  
Parkville, MO 64152



A "Deluxe" bathroom at "Molesworth Manor"

# Forum

## No Atheists in The Nose of B-17s

I was going through some old papers the other day and ran across these items. I believe they might be of interest to you and the members. The item about the prayer book, was printed in the Little Falls Herald, Little Falls, New Jersey, sometime in February of 1945.

I was in the 359th Sqdn. on a mission to Germany and while over the target at Euskirchen on December 27, 1944, something walloped me in the stomach and knocked me against the bulkhead by the navigator's table. I got on the intercom and hollered, "Art," the name of my Bombardier. He turned around and when I saw the look on his face, I said to myself, "If I am dying; I am dead." That is how frightened he looked. I reached through my flying clothes into my stomach area to see if I could feel any blood. I did not. Then I got some crazy idea in my head, that since it was 50 degrees below zero outside, my blood had frozen but when we come down from altitude and it gets warmer I am in trouble.

We got down to 10,000 feet and I still did not feel any blood.

I reached into my pocket to get a cigarette and "lo and behold" I felt this hot piece of metal in my jacket pocket. The rest is explained in the newspaper article.

### Prayer Book Vital

The Army chaplain who said there are no atheists in foxholes would be interested in learning that there are none in the crew of a B-17 Flying Fortress in the 303rd Bombardment Group of the Eighth Air Force. A pocket-sized Jewish prayer book, which saved

the life of 2nd Lt. Albert Simon, Newark in the skies over Germany may be the reason.

The Flying Fortress in which Lt. Simon was flying as a navigator was over Euskirchen when a two-inch square chunk of flak crashed through the plexi-glass nose striking him in the lower abdomen. Lt. Simon continued to navigate the Fort back to its home base in England.

Upon landing, he found the fragment of shrapnel had penetrated his flak suit, heavy flying clothes, and electric suit, but had left only a bad skin bruise. Medical officers at the base believe the steel fragment would have served a main artery, thus endangering Simon's life, if it had not been halted by the prayer book Simon was carrying.

The spot at which it stopped was a quotation from the Old Testament, the opening words of which in Hebrew are "Shema Yisrael" a prayer used at the start of every Jewish Service. The complete verse is translated: "Hear O Israel, the Lord Our God, the Lord is One."

I have also enclosed a picture of our beautiful latrine, one of the favorite activity in our hut and one of me showing the piece of flak to my pilot, C.W. Rogers and "Ole" Olson. I would like to hear from members of my crew: Pilot, C.W. Rogers; copilot, V.F. Powlus, bomb., Art Kraft; and other crew members: Reese, Wysocki, and Simpson. I would also like to hear from Phil Weil who took some of the pictures.

Al Simon  
14079A Nesting Way  
Delray Beach, FL 33484

## Kiessel Located

Enclosed is the completed Questionnaire that you requested in the last newsletter. As you will note I flew 86 combat missions during WWII. When I completed gunnery school in Las Vegas, Nevada in 1942 I was assigned to the 303rd Bomb Group, 358th Bomb Squadron. I was not in Boise very long. The Japanese Bombed Dutch Harbor which is situated in the Aleutian Chain extending from Alaska out into the Pacific. We were assigned to the 36th Bomb Squadron which was stationed on Kodiak Island. Two B-17 crews were transferred, thus we left the 303rd Bomb Group. After eleven months of flying in the North Pacific I returned to the states and was assigned to line maintenance at Dalhart Army Air Base in Dalhart, Texas, working on B-17 Aircraft. It was there that I applied for Aircraft Mechanics School at Amarillo, Texas. After completing that school I was sent to Salt Lake City, Utah and was assigned to George McCutcheons crew. After reaching England, we were assigned to the 303rd Bomb Group, 358th Bomb Squadron. I felt that the Questionnaire need a little more explanation than was possible with the space limitations.

In the last Newsletter there were questions asked about Fred Kiessel. Fred was our Bombardier, Ben Star was our Navigator (now deceased). I administered first aid to Fred during a hail of German antiaircraft bursts as we crossed the lines into France and landed in a grassy field near Etain. I have written to Fred more than once but have had no response. His address is 1947 McArthur, San Pedro CA 90732. It would be great if he could be at the reunion in Boise. A copy of the last and future newsletters might encourage him to become active.

John O. Burcham  
12204 E. 40th St.  
Independence, MO 64052

Ed. Note: Fred Kiessel is one of the heroes of the story, "Men of 303rd Set High Standards" which appeared in the Oct. '91 issue of the Newsletter.

## Among the First

It was with great interest that I read "Hell's Angels Forum," in the April issue, relative to the first arrivals at Boise.

I enlisted in the Army Air Corps in July 1940 from Chicago and was sent to McChord Field, Tacoma, Washington. In early spring of 1941,

I was on the advance cadre of Quartermaster troops to be transferred to Gowen Field. Communications being what they were in those days; that when we arrived at Gowen Field, nothing was ready. We pitched tents, first at the old National Guard Camp Grounds and then later on the lawn of the State Capitol. I don't believe we moved to the Base until April or May. In June or July of 1941, I was assigned, as a Sgt. to the 4th Chemical Detachment. We put all you fellows through the gas chamber located on the west end of the field. I was at Gowen Field, Dec. 7, 1941, and you can only imagine how weird it was issuing gas masks, ammunition and weapons, digging slit trenches etc.

I was subsequently sent to school at Fort Francis E. Warren in Cheyenne, Wyoming and received my commission to 2nd Lt. on July 3, 1942. I was assigned to the 161st QM Co. Avn. (attached to the 303rd B.G.) Gowen Field and when I arrived there the 303rd had left for Alamogordo, NM. I joined them two weeks later, and we all know the rest of the story.

Thanks for letting me add my 2¢.

Hank Pratten  
25 Ingersoll Blvd.  
Canton, IL 61520

## Anyone Fly With The Red Dog Squadron?

I read the reunion notice in the 8th AF News and am writing about my 3-4 missions we flew with the 303rd BG. My name is Anthony Frankewich. I began my combat flying with the RAF in Iceland; sub patrols over convoys, July 1941-April 1942. From Iceland we went to N. Ireland flying B-17s that landed in Reykjavik, Iceland (due to weather) so we (6 U.S. Pilots) transferred ourselves to those B-17s. These may have been the first B-17s in Ireland and England. The 6 of us pilots with 6 B-17s landed at Cookstown, N. Ireland. The other 11 B-17s went to England. In N. Ireland we went into training as "Intruders" along with "Intruder" RAF pilots. In late May '42, we left Cookstown AB and went to Mt. Farm AB, west of London. In '42 we shared the AB with RAF Intruders. They moved out later. As intruders we flew secret missions for the OSS, besides our intruder flights. Intruder flights were to certain German cities, blowing up power plants, bridges and certain buildings of aircraft factories. We flew those early



Lt. Simon (c) shows prayer book and flak to pilot Clem Rogers (l) and "Ole" Olson (r).



# Forum

missions with the RAF bomber groups. Then we moved to Polebrook, training some of the 97th BG pilots. Later we moved to Bassinbourne AB, training pilots of the 301st BG.

Then we moved back to our base at Mt. Farm. Later in March 18, 1943 we (Red Dog Sqdn.) went to Vegesack, Kiel and Bremen with the 303rd. On each mission we went after power plants, research and development labs and certain targets. We used three planes on each mission. We flew in with the 303rd BG and after bombing we flew back to our base at Mt. Farm. Some of the 301st BG pilots we trained went into the 303rd as the 301st went to N. Africa with the 97th BG.

I am writing to see if you have a list of pilots in the 303rd that trained with us? How many made it through the war?

**A. Frankewich**  
RD 1, Box 489  
Mohawk, NY 13407

*Ed. Note: This is the first I've heard of the Red Dog Sqdn. How many of our pilots trained with them? More info on the Red Dog Squadron will be carried in future issues of the newsletter. Frankewich was shot down on 6 May 1945 while flying with the 100th Bomb Group. The Red Dog Sqdn. lost all 5 B-17s on that mission.*

At the invitation of your Association Historian, Harry D. Gobrecht, I enclose herewith an application for Associate Membership of your Association.

Incidentally, my interest stems from research into incidents, such as the forced landing of "Werewolf," which happened here in the West of England. We, who were children during WWII, owe a great deal to those of you who fought for our freedom and if, in some small way, I can help to keep the memory of what you did alive over here, then I shall feel I am doing something worthwhile.

My regards to you all.

**Iris Drinkwater**  
55, Adams Street  
Burnham-on-Sea  
Somerset, TA8 1PQ  
England

## Celebration at Mt. Home AFB

Thought you would like to know that on Saturday, 12 Sept. 1992, the first Saturday after Labor Day,

Mountain Home Air Force Base celebrates "Community Appreciation Day." The base is home to the 366th Tactical Fighter Wing which flies F111A Fighter and EF111 Raven electronic aircraft. It is the day that Mountain Home says "Thank you Air Force" with its "Air Force Appreciation Day." Festivities include a parade and a flyby. Base is about 50 miles from Boise.

**Coleman Sanders**  
Photo Committee  
146 SW 53rd Terrace  
Cape Coral, FL 33914

*Ed. Note: According to the tentative schedule that's the day of our Memorial Services and also the Gala Reunion Banquet.*

## Information Wanted

I am undertaking an in depth study of the 8th AF Mission 230 conducted on the 22nd of February 1944. In addition to acquiring, or attempting to acquire, the mission reports of the various groups that participated on this mission I am searching for crew lists and information as to the fate of the different aircraft. The 303rd Bomb Group lost five aircraft on this mission. I have missing aircrew reports which give the names and fate of the crews for 2nd Lt. John Morris (A.O.G. Not in stock), 1st Lt. George Underwood (Satan's Workshop) but do not have much on the other three crews. Can you help with information concerning the crews of 2nd Lt. Jack McVay (Mizpah), 1st Lt. Charles D. Crook (a/c not named) and a Lt. J.W. Steurmer (Hell's Angels II). Lt. Steurmer's plane had a midair collision with another. I would like the names of the crews, fate of the aircraft and if you have other information pertaining to the other crews or groups on this mission, it would be most helpful in filling in some of the gaps of information on this mission.

**James Moran**  
Rt. 1, Box 247  
Carl Junction, MO 64834

*Ed. Note: The mission referred to above was the 11th mission of the 303rd BG and mission 218th of the 8th B.C. The target was Aschersleben. Copies of both mission reports can be secured by contacting David Matthews, 5530 Center Hill Church Road, Loganville, GA 30249. According to Freeman's Mighty Eighth War Diary a 303rd B-17 and a 384th BG B-17 collided near Irthlingborough during assembly. Nine members of Steurmer's crew were killed. Sgt. D.I. Miller, r. waist gunner was able to bail out.*

*Also according to 303rd records pilot's name was J.R. Morrin (not Morris) and he was flying Pluto's Avenger and Underwood was flying in Devils Workshop.*

I am the sister of a WW II veteran of the 303rd Hell's Angels now deceased, Lt. Frederick H. Mason. Since last December there have been many coincidental incidences entering my life about the Mighty 8th and the 303rd Bomb Group. I have decided to follow leads to connect me to former members of the 303rd and even the 427 Squadron who may be around.

I recently received a copy of your newsletter of October 1991, from Fred's widow in southern France. Mr. William Crawford surely gives a most detailed account of that fateful day my brother was shot down. Needless to say I read this with a great deal of emotion. It brought back some memories.

I also had the experience of seeing a B-17 in reality and up close when one was on exhibition, along with a B-24, here at our local airport in Gainesville, Florida. This gave me quite a thrill because I had only seen pictures of them up until then. I was even more astounded at what your combat experiences must have been like. I asked some of the veterans who were at the exhibit just such questions.

Fred died back in 1983 and I would like to obtain information or make contact with anyone from the 303rd and 427 squadron who may still be around. My son is very interested in learning anything he can about his uncle's combat experiences or even talk with someone who may have been close to him during that time. He has told me he wants to take me to the 8th AF Museum in Savannah when it is completed.

My sister-in-law sent me a transcription disc from a radio broadcast by the US Treasury Department back on May 27, 1946 about Fred's wartime experiences. I have had it transcribed onto audio cassette tape.

**Katherine Mason Ritter**  
5631 NW 27 Street  
Gainesville, FL 32606

I joined the 38th Reconnaissance Squadron at Boise on or about April 2, 1942, as a navigator, became a 359th Squadron member a bit later—when it was formed, I sup-

pose. Traipsed all over the West with the Group, rode the train to Battle Creek, Mich., got our B-17F—no. 41-24603 and we named it the Green Hornet, and so to Molesworth via Bangor, Newfoundland, Scotland when we took 35 planes across the North Atlantic. We flew eight missions, were shot down over L'Orient January 23, 1943. The 303rd lost five planes that day. Our crew: Pilot, E.J. (Sandy) Sanderson, of Cairo, Ill. Co-Pilot, Horace Dale Bowman, a Californian Bombardier, Grady Ward, of Tusculumbia, Alabama Engineer, Sidney Devers, of Philadelphia, Pa. (evaded) Radio Operator, Hiles B. Jones, a Kentuckian (evaded) Ball Turret Gunner, Frang N. Green, of New Jersey (evaded) Waist Gunner, Harry F. Swanson, of Montana Waist Gunner, C.J. Silva, New Mexico Tail Gunner, Joseph L. Markiewicz, Massachusetts (killed)

I made vigorous and partly successful efforts to rediscover all the crew a few years ago. I found Sanderson, Bowman, and Ward, none of whom knew whereabouts of the others.

Our crew chief, a fine man and a great mechanic, was a Master Sergeant whom we all greatly respected, and maybe an hour from now I'll remember his name—begins with an H. He must have cared for other planes after us.

I have indicated rather than said that I evaded capture and returned to England, with Devers, about 18 March 1943. Bomber Command—I think it had not become 8th Air Force yet—then sent me to all our bases to talk to aircrews and tell them: "See, getting shot down does not always mean death or capture. You can make it back, too."

I came back to the U.S. in May, 1943, and became an instructor at Alexandria AFB in Louisiana until I was discharged in Fall 1945.

A few years ago, '87 I think, the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society got word to me of its existence, and I have been fairly active in that, hosting its 1990 reunion here in Memphis. I have also kept in touch or got back in touch with the wonderful French people who hid me from the Germans and got me over the Pyrenees to Spain. My wife, Mary Ann, and I have made two trips to France in search of them, first in 1977, then just this Spring.

**John W. Spence**  
1565 Vinton  
Memphis, Tn. 38104

# Forum

## Who Shot Me In The Foot?

By way of introduction I was in the Hq. Sqdn. at Gowen Field in March of 1942. I was in the Armament Section and on June 13, '42, I was accidentally shot in both legs by another armorer as we were clearing .45 pistols in a shed out on the line, getting them in boxes for the B-17 crews. I was in the hospital there for about 2 months and then given a 30 day leave. At the point I wound up in the 527th Sqdn., 379th Group as the NCO in charge of the 527th Armament.

I would sure like to hear from anyone who might remember me and especially from the chap who shot me; I cannot remember his name. It was just an unfortunate incident.

I was in England at Kimbolton from May of '43 through August of '44 and came back to the states to be an instructor in B-29s.

Lew Lyle who was, I'm sure the 303rd Commander became the 379th commander at some point after I left England.

I would really be delighted to hear from you and good luck with your reunion.

**James A. Morrow, Jr.**  
Box 92  
Manchester Village, VT  
05254

## Seeking Information

I am writing to you on the advice of Brian Baldwin of F.O.T.E., who informs me that you are the UK contact for the 303rd Bomb Group based at Molesworth, Hunts, from 1942 to 1945.

If this is true, I wondered if you could possibly help me with a number of things. The first is, How can I get involved with the 303rd B.G. Association? Also are the Association doing anything in the way of a

reunion this year to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the 8th AF?

The 303rd, being a veteran group, should be remembered in 1992, also my cousin has a farm roughly 2 miles from the base at Molesworth, and in November of 1943 or 1944, a B-17 on auto-pilot crashed into one of his fields. The plane is believed to have come back from a mission, the crew bailed out somewhere over the town of Thrapston, the time is said to have been about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, in a snow-storm. I am trying to find out if the plane was a 303rd Group plane or a plane from another 1st Air Division group. Because of this one particular plane I have a soft spot for the 303rd. I would greatly appreciate any advice or help you could give me on these subjects. Thank you for your time and I look forward to your reply.

**A.P. Dick**  
2 Priors Farm Cottages  
Willow Hall Lane  
Thorney, Peterborough  
Cambs PE6 OQN / England

*Ed. Note: The letter was sent to Ray Cossey who forwarded it to the newsletter editor to see if anyone in the Association knows anything about the phantom aircraft.*

In the January 1992 newsletter on page 11, they ask who the ground crew members are. They are all members of the 427th B.S. Maintenance. They are: (l to r) Unknown; S/Sgt. Lloyd Bever. He worked for an airline for about 35 years and is now retired and lives in Long Beach, CA; M/Sgt. Millikin, crew chief and was from the New York area and #4 is unknown.

**Howard (Ike) Isaacson**  
Shoo Shoo crew chief  
923 S Monterey St.  
Redlands, CA 92373



Who remembers the Bingo games at the Red Cross Clubhouse?

## An Ignominious End

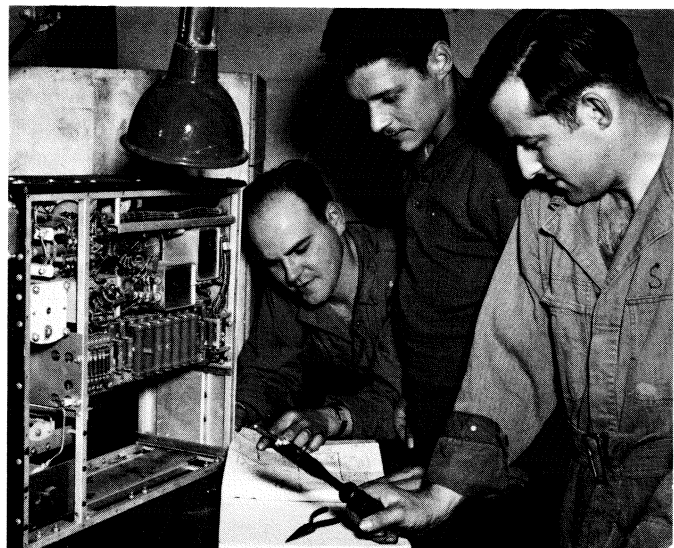
For the past seven years many people have written to me and asked if I knew what happened to a lot of the famous 303rd aircraft that fought the Luftwaffe tooth and nail in the skies over Germany. Emil Bryson came up with the answer in a series of photos he recently sent to me. They were taken in April 1948 when Emil was working as a mechanic at the Downtown Airpark in Oklahoma City, OK. The aircraft: *Hell's Angels*, *Knockout Dropper*, *Wabash Cannonball*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, *Pistol Packin' Mama* came to an ignominious end at a salvage yard, at No. 39th St., in Oklahoma City. (Maybe some of our Oklahoma City members can find out what finally happened to them.)



*Hell's Angels*, the plane our group was named for.



*Knock-out Dropper*, first in ETO to fly 75 missions.



Communications Repair project; Joe L. Steen (358th) is person in center of photo. Who are the other two?

## GROUND CREWS

### They also Served Who Watched and Waited

There was little reward for ground crews. Their tour of operations was for the duration plus; like most of the American Sad Sacks. There was no glory in their work. Nobody handed out medals for guarding bombers by night and grooming them by day.

When their ships took off they didn't know where they were going. But they could tell how long the trip would be from the amount of gas in the tanks.

They lined the runway during takeoff, staying to the last to be certain that their "queen" got a flying start on its mission. Then, bereft, they turned towards their huts for a few hours until the ships were due back.

With heads turned eastward to scan the skies and ears attuned an straining to hear the drone of distant engines, the coverall clad mechanics, armorers, supply specialists, cooks, medics and entire station's support personnel loitered aimlessly in the shadows of the control tower, awaiting anxiously to learn the fate of their very own combat crew and Flying Fortress.

"Here they come!" sounded the cry as tiny specks begin to appear against the darkening sky. 1.2.3.4.5.....13, 14, 15... "My God is that all?" Six out of 21 ships are missing!

From the desolate moping of several ground crews, it became quite obvious as to what ships failed to return. You had to be part of a ground crew to know what it is to lose a ship. To some it merely meant a different plane and a new crew—"too bad, they were nice guys." But to many the loss was greater than that. They may have worked on the bomber for months, since it came to the Theatre of Operations, and it's reasonable to believe that men became attached to planes as well as dogs and women.

The work done by ground crews didn't always stop with the servicing of planes according to the book. They were responsible for numerous improvements made on combat planes. It may have only been a modified gun mount, but it helped the gunners do better shooting and it was a small but valuable contribution to the progress of their Air Force.

Following is a list of 303rd personnel who invented mechanical devices or made improvements on existing devices:

**T/Sgt. Philip Fleming**—Devised safety lock for oxygen regulators.

**M/Sgt. Victor A. Dietz**—Devised vertical surface maintenance stand, landing gear strut locks, and an offset "C" clamp for removing taper pins.

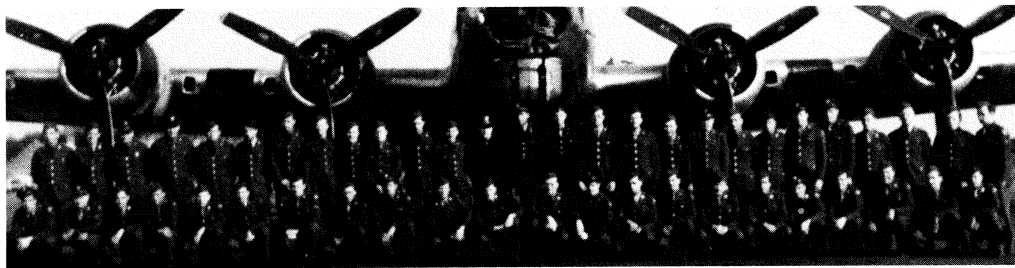
**T/Sgt. Robert T. Franklin**—Devised Flux Gate Compass test set.

**T/Sgt. Willard A. Ristow**—Devised electrical test panel, electronic turbo-supercharger regulator test stand, and a generator test panel.

**T/Sgt. Mathias Schrimpscher**—Devised propeller dome splitter and a propeller retaining nut removal tool.

Ground crew men may not have been so handsome with complexions dry and red from long, cold sleepless hours spent grooming planes. They may not have been glamorous without wings on their greasy coveralls but they were as much a part of the 303rd B.G. and the 8th AF, entrusted with tremendously important jobs, as any flier in combat.

Part of the above text was excerpted from the Capitol Region, 8th AF Veterans' Newsletter Burnt Hills, N.Y.



**358th WEAPONS SECTION - (Front row l to r) - M.B. Lewis; J.J. Van Wyche; R.A. Mentrasti; A.J. Fedor; R.E. Derr; J. Levesque; O.R. Leduska; G.J. Binkowski; T.H. Harris; W.R. Rahm; D.J. Schwarzenbach; F.B. Sloat; M.E. Brown; G.H. Oberman; J. Caroff; J.J. Wojcieszowski; G.A. Messier; M. Koptcho; C.O. Buster; W.B. Johnson; H.C. Krieger and T.R. Blue. (Back row l to r) P.J. Vargo; B.R. Spears; E.L. Hughes; F.P. Cecilia; J.G. Keifer; R.F. Leidig; L.E. Kelley; G.C. Kelly; H.J. Hall; L.K. Jones; R.S. Hames; S.D. LeRoy; Lt. J.J. Routt; Lt. J.I. White; Lt. R.L. Murphey; L.E.H. Johnson; L.R. Ganshert; L.E. Schultz; M.L. Grove; L.H. Miller; K.L. McGavin; R.W. Meredith; L.A. Kinsfather; C.L. McClain; W.W. Culley; E.E. Collom and K.L. Myers.**



**359th Sqdn Personnel Section, Jan. 27, 1944 (Back row l to r) Russell Seaton, Paul Johnson, Alvin Morton, Vernon Morton and Edwin Lumpkin. (Front row l to r) John Ford, Gerson Nadel, Frank Barnaby and Leonard Barwick.**



**Ground crews of 427th Sqdn. at Molesworth in 1943. Only ones identified were: M/Sgt. Mike Micknovicz (3rd from l) and M/Sgt/ Fred Kuhn (5th from l). Can anyone name the others? Judging by the grins, it must have been a standout day.**

**Ground crew personnel sweating out returning 303rd aircraft.**



# Courageous "Spook" Crew No Longer Unknown

*On page 9 of the April issue, we ran a photo of an unknown crew from the 358th Sqdn., standing in front of the aircraft "Spook." Little did we know of the very interesting story behind that photo. Here is that story aided by some very graphic recollections of the ball-turret gunner, S/Sgt. Philip Cascio.*

The primary and secondary targets for the Eighth Bomber Command on 16 February 1943 were the sub-pens at St. Nazaire, France. It was the 16th mission for the 303rd Bomb Group which put up 15 aircraft.

The formation was scheduled to be led by Lt. Col. G.L. Robinson and Capt. Lew Lyle in the 360th aircraft "Ooold Soljer" but they were forced to turn back when the ball-turret gunner's heated suit failed and all radio and interphone equipment malfunctioned. Capt. J.W. Fredericks took over the lead in aircraft #42-973, "Iza Vailable."

Thirteen 303rd B-17s bombed the primary target from 25,000 feet with more than 31 tons of 500 and 1000 lb. bombs. Many bomb bursts were observed in the target area. Twenty to fifty enemy aircraft were seen and there were 100 to 137 attacks. Gunners claimed 15 aircraft and were credited with 4 destroyed, 1 probable and 1 damaged.

The following is the recollection of the ball turret gunner S/Sgt. Philip Cascio, on the ill-fated mission of the "Spook" piloted by 1st Lt. L.G. Dunniga:

"On returning after dropping the bombs on the target at St. Nazaire, we were nearing the

English Channel. Dunniga, the pilot, called to our attention, over the intercom, that a B-17 about 15,000 feet below us was being attacked by ME-109 fighters. He asked if we wanted to go to their aid. We all agreed.

"We left our formation at approximately 25,000 feet. Descending, we then circled the crippled bomber at approximately 10,000 feet. From a pack of 5 ME-109s, we accumulated 15 ME-109s in a matter of seconds. !

"The final long outcome - some members of the crippled bomber bailed out leaving us to face the worst that was to come. Being close to the French coast and the English Channel, we tried to make our home base at Molesworth, England.

We were eventually shot down and crashed twenty miles from the English Coast in the English Channel. During that part of the air war, we had no fighter escort whatsoever.

On crashing in the water, our plane broke into parts. Tail gunner, Taylor, went down in the tail section. I feel he was shot and killed before we crashed. Waist gunner Dew and someone else were last seen floating in the high waves of the English Channel. I was able to get out of the ball-turret and crawl to the radio compartment. Holland was all shot up and blood coming from all over his flight suit. Tucker, upper-turret and co-pilot Pacey and Cascio escaped through the radio hatch. The two dinghys attached to the bomber-one did not inflate-the other did. We were lucky we grabbed the inflated one. The last I saw of the pilot, Dunniga, he was trying to get out the pilot window. He was pulled down with the front part of the plane.

The three survivors, while in the rubber dinghy were strafed at least three times. We floated in the bitter wet cold high waves of the English Channel for approximately fourteen hours. Yes, we flipped over many times; pulling each other back to the dinghy by a cord we had tied to our waist. We eventually drifted to the coast of Brest, France in the early dark morning. We crawled to a small hut on the shore line. Being exhausted, tired and cold, we slept a short time under leaves and paper to keep warm.

Waking about six in the morning, we saw a French house in the distance. The French family gave us coffee, bread and an exchange of clothing. A splendid exchange for them. They made us leave because they were afraid of the German soldiers in the vicinity.

We were captured a few hours later and taken to the bastille in Paris where you lose track of time in the tall, dark cell. A few days later, we were taken to Frankfurt, Germany to an interrogation camp. A few days later were then transferred in a box car to STALAG 3B, 7A and eventually 17B. In the POW camp we met the members of the bomber that we tried to save. They were from the 306th Bomb Group.

Twenty-eight months later, the long waited end of the war came.

Funny, isn't it; one typewritten page can cover two and one half years of prison life."

The 303rd Bomb Group lost another B-17 to fighters that day. Capt. W.H. Breed and his 360th crew flying in "Shak Hak" failed to return. They were the 15 and 16 aircraft lost since the 303rd began operations on Nov. 17, 1942.



358th combat crew pose in front of their aircraft Spook. (Front row, l to r) Tucker, Cascio, Holland, Dew and Taylor. (Rear row) Dunniga, Pacey, Thornton and Montgomery.



Capt. Breed's Crew: Breed, Lts. Sample, Allen, Santerre and Sgts. Putala, Herbert, Kuffel, Loken, Halpin and Lentz.



303rd BOMB GROUP MISSIONS 8th BOMBER COMMAND MISSIONS								
MISSION NO.	DATE	TARGET	TOTAL NO. OF PAGES	TOTAL COST	MISSION NO.	DATE	TARGET	TOTAL NO. OF PAGES
155.	5-19-44	Berlin	97	9.70	316	8th B.C.		36
287	8th B.C.		123	12.30	183	6-18-44	Hamburg	80
156	5-20-44	Orly	64	6.40	317	8th B.C.		78
288	8th B.C.		74	7.40	184	6-19-44	Fiefs AM	69
157	5-22-44	Kiel	64	6.40	310	8th B.C.		2
290	8th B.C.		86	8.60	185.	6-9-44	Predefin PM	60
158	5-23-44	Saarbrucken	83	8.30	311	8th B.C.		44
291	8th B.C.		112	11.20	186	6-20-44	Hamburg	96
159	5-24-44	Berlin	103	10.30	320	8th B.C.		152
292	8th B.C.		165	16.50	187	6-21-44	Berlin	88
160	5-25-44	Blainville	70	7.00	321	8th B.C.		141
293	8th		101	10.10	188	6-22-44	Wizernes	53
161	5-27-44	Mannheim	55	5.50	322	8th B.C.		39
294	8th B.C.		155	15.50	189	6-22-44	Lille	60
162	5-28-44	Cologne	43	4.30	323	8th B.B.		48
295	8th B.C.		86	8.60	190	6-24-44	Bremen	71
163	5-28-44	Rotha - Dessau	51	5.10	324	8th B.C.		118
296	8th B.C.		89	8.90	191	6-25-44	Toulouse AM	45
164	5-29-44	Posen	79	7.90	325	8th B.C.		41
-	8th B.C.		153	15.30	192	6-25-44	Sens/Coulanges PM	75
165	5-30-44	Halberstadt	96	9.60	326	8th B.C.		58
297	8th B.C.		162	16.20	193	6-28-44	JuvinCourt	57
166	5-31-44	Gilzer-Rijen	61	6.10	328	8th B.C.		99
298	8th B.C.		72	7.20	194	6-29-55	Heiterblick (Lelpzig)	78
167	6-2-44	Dannes	42	4.20	327	8th B.C.		109
300	8th B.C.		39	3.90	195	6-30-44	LeCulot	65
168	6-2-44	Juvisy	38	3.80	330	8th B.C.		47
301	8th B.C.		45	4.50	196	7-5-44	Gilze-Rijen	60
169	6-3-44	St Cecily	36	3.60	331	8th B.C.		106
302	8th B.C.		49	4.90	197	7-6-44	Beaumetz/Lesa	59
170	6-4-44	Le Touquet	63	6.30	-	8th B.C.		156
303	8th B.C.		51	5.10	199	7-8-44	Etaples	66
171	6-5-44	Aze'vile/Cean	67	6.70	334	8th B.C.		63
304	8th B.C.		44	4.40	200	7-9-44	Chateaudon	62
172	6-6-44	Caen	64	6.40	336	8th B.C.	335?	
305	8th B.C.		54	5.40	201	7-11-44	Munich	62
173	6-6-44	Caen	27	2.70	336	8th B.C.		115
306	8th B.C.		23	2.30	202	7-12-44	Munich	62
174	6-6-44	Vire S. Noir	67	6.70	-	8th B.C.		114
307	8th B.C.	307?	71	7.10	203	7-13-44	Munich	63
175	6-7-44	Flers/Noireau	75	7.50	-	8th B.C.	127	12.70
308	8th B.C.		45	4.50	204	7-16-44	Munich	42
176	6-8-44	Orleans	105	10.50	340	8th B.C.		91
309	8th B.C.		78	7.80	205	7-17-44	Peronne/Jus.	85
177	6-10-44	Nantes	73	7.30	341	8th B.C.		77
310	8th B.C.		64	6.40	206	7-18-44	Peenemunde	68
178	6-12-44	Cambrai/Epinoy	77	7.70	342	8th B.C.		138
311	8th B.C.		63	6.30	207	7-19-44	HollRiegels Kreuth	67
179	6-13-44	Evreux	67	6.70	343	8th B.C.		
313	8th B.C.		53	5.30	208	7-20-44	Dessau	82
180	6-14-44	Creil/Coulom	84	8.40	344	8th B.C.		1.65
314	8th B.C.		58	5.80	209	7-21-44	Lugwigshafen	89
181	6-15-44	La Possonnier	75	7.50	345	8th B.C.		144
315	8th B.C.		40	4.00	210	7-23-44	Creil	61
182	6-16-44	Juvin Court	59	5.90				
					346	8th B.C.		54
								5.40



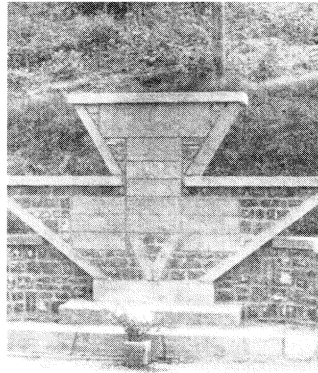
In addition to the missions listed, Dave Matthews informed me he has also received the following mission reports with corresponding reports for the 8th Bomber Command on missions 211 through 230. He has also received reports on missions 148-155. If you have any questions you can call **Dave at (404) 466-2003** or write to him at **5530 Center Hill Church Rd., Loganville, GA 30249.**



# ELUSIVE REWARDS FOR THE DESERVING



**Malicorne-sur-Sarthe**



**Solre-Saint-Gery**

In the seven years that I have been editor of your newsletter, I have run across many acts of heroism by members of the 303rd Bomb Group which have gone unrewarded. I have also run across several instances where citizens of "Allied" countries have erected or were erecting memorials to our airmen for acts of heroism; yet, our own nation has completely ignored these same heroic acts.

The French have erected a memorial at Malicorne-sur-Sarthe to honor Lts. Robert S. O'Connor and Richard Peterson; the Belgians constructed a memorial to Lt. James Fowler and his crew at Solre-Saint-Gery and I believe one more is in the process of being built in France to honor Capt. Arnold Litman and crew. Our French Associate member Dalila Beaudenon is involved in that project. In England, the Guild Hall in the Borough of Wenlock contains a tablet honoring Lt. Stephan's crew which crashed in their Borough. I'm sure that there are many more memorials that have been erected honoring 303rd airmen that I haven't heard about.

As we read the mission reports some 50 years later one could almost get the impression that individuals weren't people, they were just part of the statistics game. One would probably say that this is a harsh statement to make but with the exception of a War Department telegram to the closest relative notifying them that their kinfolk was shot down and missing, I find very little follow-up information in the reports except the words "shot down by fighters" or "lost to A.A. fire." In some cases I believe there may have been a second WD telegram to the relative notifying them that the downed flier was a PW, but in most reports that I have read, all information on each mission closes out with the group landing back at Molesworth. The complete story on each mission, which involves many acts of heroism, has yet to be told.

The story told by S/Sgt. Philip Cascio on page 8 of this issue is a classic example of what I am talking about. In spite of its many pages the official report on his mission can be summed up in a few sentences, i.e., "On Feb. 16, 1943, 15 a/c from the 303rd Bomb Group bombed St. Nazaire with excellent results; 50 enemy aircraft were observed, 4 were destroyed. The 303rd lost two a/c; one to fighters and the second to "other causes." Cascio's aircraft was lost to "other causes."

The heroic act of going to the aid of another B-17 in trouble, especially if you are flying at 25,000 feet in comparative safety is really "conduct above and beyond," as I see it. Yet, if I hadn't by chance run a photo of the Spook and her unknown crew and asked for someone to identify the people in the photo, we would never have had a chance to read Sgt. Cascio's very interesting story. It certainly rates more than the official line, "lost to other causes."

The Sgt Sawicki story is another example of heroism gone unrewarded. To refresh your memory, Sawicki was the tail gunner on Lt. Fyler's crew who had his arm shot completely off at the shoulder yet he disregarded his own injuries and saved the lives of two of his crewmates and died in the crash of his plane. But the story of Sgt. Sawicki's heroic acts didn't surface until we printed Carl Fyler's story "Staying Alive" in the July 1989 issue of the newsletter. Lt. Fyler and others are still involved in trying to get Sgt. Sawicki the honor he so richly deserves. Unfortunately, we are presently locked up in bureaucratic red tape.

I thought perhaps you would like to read my latest effort to try and untie the red tape by writing to Gen. Colin S. Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Dear General Powell:

Several weeks ago - on April 21 - to be exact, you opened an extensive World War II exhibit at the LBJ Library in Austin, Texas.

In your remarks from a platform in the shadow of the Library you told the more than 3,000 people in attendance that war is not to be celebrated but remembered.

Although you were only 8 years old when the war ended, you remembered the homecoming of the men and women who served more than 50 years ago. In your praise of them you said, "They defended freedom, they won the peace."

As I sat there digesting your words, I watched the setting sun shine on the stars and stripes waving furiously in the strong Texas breeze, and I couldn't help but think of Sgt. Joe Sawicki and wondered if he was watching the ceremony. If so, I wondered what his reactions were when you said that men like him should be remembered.

Sgt. Sawicki from Detroit, was of Polish descent. Soon after Hitler and his Army invaded Poland, he became a volunteer with the Polish Air Force which at that time was flying out of England with the R.A.F. After more than a dozen missions over Germany with the Polish/RAF in which he earned the Polish Legion of Merit, he joined the U.S. Army Air Force's 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth Air Base in East Anglia.

On Nov. 29, 1943 with 11 missions behind him as a member of the USAAF, he was assigned to fly as the tail gunner in a B-17 named Dark Horse piloted by Lt. Carl Fyler, then on his 25th and hopefully final mission.

"But I never completed it," said Fyler. As I approached the Bremen target, there were only two of us left in the high squadron. As we dropped our bombs, the flak hit us both. My ship lurched and I ended up putting both feet on the control column to hold the nose of the ship down. I did not know that the right horizontal stabilizer, part of the right wing and two engines were gone. Later the third engine caught on fire. I was flying on only one engine on the left wing. The ship nosed up turning to the right. I knew we were in trouble since I could not steer to the west towards our home base in England."

"Then the German fighters hit us. The co-pilot, Lt. B. Ward got hit in the face. The engineer was slammed out of his top-turret, a 20mm shell tore his leg and he lay on the floor alongside me bleeding. Other shells passed through the nose and cockpit and the navigator and I were hit. I rang the alarm bell and motioned to the two wounded men in the cockpit to get out. They went out the open bombay. I continued to try and fly west but 'no luck.' I could hear one gun in the nose still firing. At last I felt it was time for me to go! I broke the wires and oxygen hoses, snapped on the small chest chute and crawled under the floor to see if the men there got out. They were gone, so I dropped out the hatch and slid back along the tail and popped my chute. I broke all the limbs off a 60 ft pine tree in my fall to the ground. Soon the Jerries captured me. There was no place to run - all of Europe was Germany in 1943."

Unbeknownst to Lt. Fyler a drama was also taking place in the aft section of the Fortress some 50 feet behind him. When the alarm bell rang, Sgt. Sawicki who was still firing his guns, without a word, crawled from his tail gunner's position minus an arm which had been completely blown off at his shoulder. He was also suffering from other body wounds. Arriving in the waist section, he found both waist gunners, Sgts. Stachowiack and Fisher, dazed and lying there with face wounds and a broken arm each. With superhuman effort, Sawicki put parachutes on both waist gunners and helped them out of the stricken aircraft, hoping with their one good arm they could pull the ripcords. What happened to Sgt. Sawicki remained a mystery for 47 years.

In May 1945 after their liberation from their respective POW camps, Lt. Fyler and Sgt. Stachowiack met in a tent hospital at Camp Lucky Strike in France. It was there that Sgt. Stachowiack told Lt. Fyler the story of how he and Sgt. Fisher were helped out of the stricken aircraft by Sgt. Sawicki. Sgt. Fisher also survived the jump and was later repatriated from Germany through the Red Cross.

Lt. Fyler was so impressed by Sgt. Sawicki's heroic sacrifice that he put him in for the Congressional Medal of Honor. Unfortunately the paperwork was misplaced and no action was ever taken on Lt. Fyler's request. In 1947, Capt. Fyler (he had been promoted to captain the day he was shot down) resubmitted the paperwork on Sgt. Sawicki, but again, for some unknown reason, no action was ever taken by the U.S. Army.

In July 1989, as editor of the 303rd Bomb Group Newsletter I published

# ELUSIVE REWARDS FOR THE DESERVING CONTINUED —

the story of the Mission to Bremen on Nov. 29, 1943, as related to me by Carl Fyler. Since I was an air crew member stationed at Molesworth at the time of the mission, I decided to try and clear up the mystery of what eventually happened to Sgt. Sawicki. In September of 1989 I queried the USAF and was notified a month later by them to pose the question to the Total Army Personnel Center since the USAAF was under their jurisdiction at the time of the incident. This I did.

Finally in April 1990 I received a call from the Mortuary Affairs Office of the U.S. Army in Washington, D.C. I was told that Sgt. Sawicki died in the crash of his B-17. He was buried in a German grave. Several years after the end of hostilities, his body was returned to his father, his next of kin, in Detroit, Michigan. He was quietly laid to rest without fanfare, in the Holy Sepulcher Cemetery in Oakland County, MI. Only after a direct question would the authorities "volunteer" an answer that, "the body when found was missing an arm."

About two years ago, Carl Fyler and several members of the 303rd Bomb Group Association tried to reopen the case to get Sgt. Joseph Sawicki the recognition he so richly deserves. The U.S. Army in spite of several affidavits testifying to the authenticity of the story, refuses to act unless we can produce an eye-witness to the incident. Unfortunately, Sgt. Stachowiak died in 1975.

Despite your words, "They defended freedom, they won the peace, and they should be remembered," in the case of Sgt. Joseph Sawicki, the Army has not remembered.

Thank you for listening to my story about a very brave American soldier. Sincerely,

**Harold A. Susskind**  
Lt. Col. USAF (Ret)  
303rd Bomb Groups Ass'n

*Ed. Note: Gen. Powell's staff person in his reply said, "to ensure your concerns receive appropriate consideration I have forwarded your letter to the Chief of Staff of the Army." Is this more red tape? Only time will tell.*

I'm doing research on aircraft shot down over Germany during World War II and I got your address from Mr. Johnson from the USAFHRC, Maxwell, Alabama.

In October 1991 I located a crashsite in a wooded area near Eisenberg/Thuringen in East Germany. Together with two local museum people I recovered parts of the aircraft and human remains of the crew members.

We identified the aircraft as a Boeing B-17-Bomber. From the local

cemetery we got a document with the names of five crewmembers and three unidentified bodies. The date of the crash was February 9, 1945. The human remains we turned over to the US-Military.

As the recovery was going on, we found a golden wedding band with the initials M N to P B 1944. The initials are the ones of Shirl P. Best, F/O 129777. A second ring we found has the initials R.J.B., which probably was the ring of Robert J. Barrat, 2nd Lt., 82552.

From the USAFHRC, Maxwell, Alabama, we got the following information:

The aircraft was a Boeing B-17, Serial-Nr. 43-39149 of the 303rd BG, 427 Sqn. It belonged to the 8 US AF and was located in Molesworth, England. It was lost on February 9, 1945 during a mission against Lutzendorf/Germany. The following were crewmembers:

BARRAT, Robert J., 2nd Lt.; HARVEY, Dean, 2nd Lt.; BEST, Shirl P., F/O; KARP, William T., S/Sgt.; REISS, Raymond F., S/Sgt.; LAZ-AROWICZ, Matthew, S/Sgt.; LINHART, Louis N., Sgt.; LINK, Herbert D., Sgt.; EMERSON, George H., Jr.

The aircraft collided with another B-17, Serial-Nr. 42-31060, and lost its tail.

After the collision the aircraft, the bombs still on board, went down towards the center of Eisenberg. Just before it crashed into the city and killed undreds of villagers, the pilot leveled the aircraft and dropped the bombs on a field outside of Eisenberg. One house was hit by a bomb and killed ten people. Then the aircraft crashed into the woods and exploded.

Eight of the crewmembers were killed. The only survivor, Sgt. Emerson, became a P.O.W.

Since it was the first recovery after the german unification, it was published by local newspapers and TV stations. The villagers would like to build a memorial dedicated to the crewmembers of the aircraft who gave their lives to save the lives of hundreds of villagers.

The reason I'm writing this letter to the 303rd BG Association is to get some more information about the aircraft and the crew. Are there any pictures of the aircraft and the crewmembers available? Is Sgt. George H. Emerson, Jr. still alive and a member of the Association? How can I get in contact with him?

I also would like to send both rings back to the next of kin.

How can I get in contact with them?

If you are interested in photographs or copies of the newsletter articles please let me know.

**UWE BENKEL**  
86 SVS, Box 1805  
APO New York 09009



Ground Personnel of 358th Sqdn. (Front row l to r) 1. J.J. Olexa from Pennsy; 2. Victor Pean, "Norse"; 3. "Jake" Jacobson; 4. "Moe" Drake; 5. Michael Znak, "Prince Michael"; Ray Holland, "Uncle Raymond"; 7. Capt. William Higbee; 8. Lee E. Dolan, Jr., "Abbie"; 9. Chester J. Sperandio, "Taboldo"; 10. Francis Honeycheck, "Chuckle"; 11. Grande, "El Rancho"; 12. "Chris" Christoff; and 13. Rodger Strouse, "Dumbo." (Rear row l to r) 1. Rosky; 2. "Chuck" Williams; 3. "J.J." Adams; 4. George Frisbee, "Geeze"; 5. G.W. Bech "Grady"; 6. Kray, "Tony"; 7. Joe Steen; 8. Harry Neilson, "Butch"; 9. Unknown; 10. Dwight L. Pope (Popacolapetal); 11. O.H. Schoener, "Nubbins"; 12. Harkins; 13. George A. Boyd, "Slim." The photo was supplied by Pat Steen.

## 303rd Bombardment Group (H) – Original Group Pilots and Their Fate

358th Bombardment Squadron (H)		360th Bombardment Squadron (H)	
<u>PILOTS</u> Cpt. L.R. Baldwin 1Lt W.N. Frost *1Lt R.J. Nolan *1LT O.T. O'Connor 1Lt L.G. Dunnica 2Lt J.B. Clark 2Lt C.H. Morales 1Lt G.J. Oxrider *1Lt J.E. Hass	MIA 12/12/42 (2)  MIA 1/23/43 (4) MIA 2/16/43 (8) MIA 1/03/43 (3)  MIA 1/23/43 (6)	<u>PILOTS</u> Cpt J.W. Fredericks *Cpt L.E. Lyle *2Lt A.I. Adams *1Lt J.W. Farrar 1Lt W.H. Breed 1Lt P.F. Flickenger 2Lt J.A. Castle 1Lt L.M. Schulstad	C0360BS, (A) MIA 1/03/43 (3) KIA  MIA 2/16/43 (6) MIA 12/12/42 (3)  Oper. Off 303BG
<u>COPILOTS WHO LATER BECAME PILOTS</u> 1Lt R.S. O'Connor		<u>COPILOTS WHO LATER BECAME PILOTS</u> 1 Lt J.E. Trojan 1Lt K.O. Bartlett	
	MIA 7/04/43 (20)		MIA 5/23/43 (20) MIA 3/31/43 (12)

359th Bombardment Squadron (H)		427th Bombardment Squadron (H)	
<u>PILOTS</u> Cpt. W.R. Calhoun 1Lt E.F. Eyster 1Lt O.S. Witt 1Lt H.L. Stouse *1Lt R.C. Bales 1Lt J. Roller 1Lt F.A. Saunders 1Lt A.E. Reddig 2LT E.J. Sanderson	Co359BS, EXO 41CW MIA 4/04/43 (12) MIA 12/20/42 (2)  MIA 5/14/43 (21)  MIA 1/03/43 (4) MIA 11/23/42 (2) MIA 1/23/43 (7)	<u>PILOTS</u> *Cpt C.E. Hagenbach *Cpt B.B. Southworth *1Lt W.H. Goetz 1Lt J. VanGeorge 1 Lt R.L. Cole 1Lt D.E. Stockton *1Lt E.H. Reber *1Lt E.E. Rochester *1 Lt R.S. Haye	CO427BG, KIA Eng.  MIA 1/03/43 (5)  MIA 2/04/43 (7) MIA 1/23/43 (6)
<u>COPILOTS WHO LATER BECAME PILOTS</u> 1LT J.S. NIX		* – Original member 303BG (H) at Gowen Field, Boise, ID on 4/15/42 (A) Also DepCO 303BG, Acting CO 303BG, CO 379BG, CO 41CW MIA – Missing in Action – Mission date and (Number of Missions Flown)	
	MIA 8/19/43 (24)		

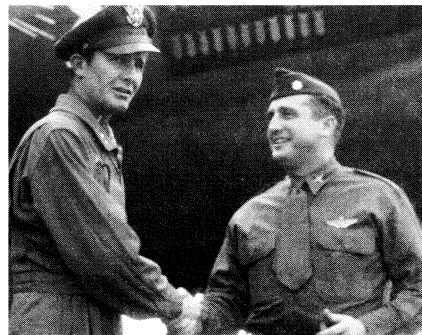
Harry Godrecht



Capt. W.R. Calhoun and Clark Gable



Bob Hope and Capt. B. Southworth



Lt. F. Saunders and Col. K. Stevens



Capt. W. Schulstad and crew



Capt. Baldwin, (?), Capt. Hagenbach and Capt. D. Stockton

### 303rd Bombardment Group (H) – Original Group B-17 F's and Their Fate

Aircraft Number	Aircraft Name	Squad Code		(Pilot)	Mission No. Target
358BS 41-24526 41-24539 41-24541 41-24558 41-24562 41-24577 41-24580 41-24582 41-24606	"Leapin Liz" "Jersey Bounce" "Spook" "Hunga Dunga" "Sky Wolf" "Hells Angels" "Hell Cat" "One O'Clock Jump" "Wherewolf"	VK-J VK-K VK-B VK-F VK-A VK-D VK-C VK-G VK-H	MIA 1-3-43 To 1CCRC 7/27/43 MIA 2-16-43 MIA 3-18-43 MIA 1-11-44 To USA 1-20-44 MIA 1-23-43 MIA 12-12-42 CL 1-23-43	(Clark) Bovingdon (Dunnica) (Austin) (Emerson)  (O'Connor) (Frost) (Oxider)	#9 St. Nazaire  #16 St. Nazaire 92BG Crew #98 Oschersbl  #11 Lorient #6 Rouen To 91 BG 4/22/43
359BS 41-24561 41-24565 41-24566 41-24568 41-24581 41-24603 41-24603 41-24608 41-24609	"The Duchess" "Idaho Potato Peeler" "Zombie" "Lady Fair Weather" "The 8 Ball" "Knock Out Dropper" Green Hornet "Yehudi" "Holy Mackeral"	BN-T BN-P BN-W BN-U BN-O BN-R BN-Y BN-S BN-Q	Reassigned MIA 11-5-43 MIA 11-23-43 MIA 11-23-43 BL 12-20-42 Reassigned 3-31-44 MIA 1-23-43 MIA 1-3-43 MIA 4-4-43	(Mathis MOH 3/ /43) (Grant) (Wilt) (Reddig) (Calhoun)  Sanderson (Saunders ) (Eyster)	#81 Gelsenkir #7 Romilly #4 St. Nazaire #7 Romilly  #11 Lorient #9 St. Nazaire #28 Paris
360BS 41-24559 41-24563 41-24567 41-24579 41-24585 41-24602 41-24620 42-2967	"Ooold Soljer" "Garbage" "Beats Me" "Thumper" "Wulf Hound" "Yardbird" "Snap-Crackle-Pop" "Shak Hak"	PU-C PU- PU-U-J PUF PU-B PU-A PU-O PU-G	Crash 3-31-43 F/L 11-11-42 MIA 1-23-43 BL 1-23-43 MIA 12-12-42 MIA 5-29-43 MIA 1-11-44 MIA 2-16-43	(Barlett) (Anson) (Haas) (Castle) (Flickinger) (Trojan) (Adams) (Breed)	#27 Rotterdam Tng. Land. (Salv) #11 Lorient #11 Lorient #6 Rouen #40 St. Nazaire #98 Oschersleb #16 St. Nazaire
427BS 41-24517 41-24569 41-24584 41-24587 41-24607 41-24610 41-24612  41-2461 42-2966	"Kali" "Memphis Trot" "Susfu" "Bad Check" "Jerry Jinx" "Joe Btfsplk" (No Name)  "S for Sugar" (No Name)	GN-O GN-W-W GN-Q GN-U GN-W GN-T GN-R  GN-S GN-U	MIA 1-3-43 MIA 2-4-43 MIA 1-23-43 MIA 1-11-44 MIA 1-23-43 MIA 5-1-43 To Langford Lodge Feb. 1943 MIA 1-11-44 To 1CCRC 7/4/43	(Gletzt) (Cole) (Robey) (McClellan) (Reber) (Walsh)  (Simmons) Bovingdon	#9 St. Nazaire #14 Osnabruck #11 Lorient #98 Oschersleb #11 Lorient #32 St. Nazaire  #98 Oschersleb



Ground crew changing a wind-shield on The Duchess (l to r) Sidney Jackson, Joe Worthington and Shorty Wilson



Knock Out Dropper's Gift to Hitler



Hell's Angels prior to take off to U.S.







## IN MEMORIAM

### IN MEMORIAM (As of 20 June 1992)

939 Barteau, Edward L. (358)—14 October 1990  
 571 Berger, Donald E. (358)—20 February 1992  
 L1248 Boyer, Wesley A. (1114)—26 April 1992  
 L782 Dulin, Woodroe G. (358)—15 December 1991  
 406 Dugan, Charles (427)—9 November 1991  
 1445 Fydrychowski, John J. (359)—10 September 1991  
 S1536 Haskell, Whitney (358)—October 1991  
 L1513 Intersimone, Frenk J.—14 March 1992  
 1128 Jones, William P. (360)  
 1505 Kasik, Robert F. (358)—2 December 1991  
 L1296 Petrie, Joseph D. (360)  
 S084 Rosborough, Robert H. (360)—18 April 1992  
 Earhart, Amon E.—30 March 1991  
 Cassidy, Ray—25 March 1990  
 L750 Adams, Dearl E., (427)—16 May 1992  
 Garrett, Charles E.—1 August 1990

### — ADDRESS CHANGES (As of 20 June 1992) —

1496 Cantor, Milton, 1970 New Rodgers Rd., Apt. M-20, Levittown, PA 19056  
 837 Goetz, H.W., Box 596, Middletown, OH 45042-0596  
 L1004 Jurgensen, Louis C., 120 - 40th Ct., Vero Beach, FL 32968  
 L415 Klabe, Milton L., 938 E. Sheridan St., Ely, MN 55731-1636  
 1268 Konsuvo, Nick, 7730 Belden St., Apt. BB, San Diego, CA 92111  
 L238 Laverty, Leo E., 1009 Charles St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
 L1048 Mayer, William G., 1676 Ala Moana Blvd., #704, Honolulu, HI 96815  
 1244 Pleasant, James H., 349 Safford, Apt. 3, Bennington, VT 05201  
 L395 Thorson, Ellwood J., 7004 Grange Ave., Albuquerque, NM 81720  
 641 Kilroy, Rob. E., 5228 Orchard Hills Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89130  
 Bailey, Mrs. Melicent, 4713 Cheryl Dr., Bethlehem, PA 18017  
 L1346 Malott, Earnest, 1402 S. Border Ave., Weslaco, TX 78596  
 1264 McMahon, Franklin, 1711 West Devonshire, Lake Forest, IL 60045  
 L175 Blum, Eugene, 26 Carter Lane, Glastonbury, CT 06033  
 977 Tractman, Larry—Mail returned—New address needed  
 L253 Rawlings, Bernard—Mail returned—New address needed  
 828 Ciglar, Joseph—POB 8152, Orange, CA 92664-8152  
 L143 Hamilton, Bruce B.—17477 N. Raindance Rd., Surprise, AZ 85374-3546  
 759 Klein, Robert J., Sr.—3938 Surfside Blvd., Corpus Christi, TX 78402-1434  
 L1052 Littlefield, Robert I.—45700 Buckeye Lane, Hemet, CA 92544-6724  
 1083 McClurg, Galt L.—1450 W. Colfax Ave., Denver, CO 80204-2033  
 A-62 Muntz, Jon A.—281 E. Main St., Fredonia, NY 14063-1411  
 1291 Smith, Forrest—202 N. Garrett Ave., San Angelo, TX 76901  
 S1037 Whittall, Ernest A.—135 Quail Hollow Drive, San Jose, CA 95128

## REUNION UPDATE • REUNION UPDATE • REUNION UPDATE •

Dear Friends:

How time flies! Fifty years ago we were young and fearless, ready to take on world tyrants. We believed we were invincible and that within a few months, we would be home again. Unfortunately, that was not to be. Many remained in England for a long duration, and many comrades never made the return trip home. War and Remembrance live on in a special way in each of us.

Plan joining us for our Special 50th Year Commemoration, in Boise September 8-13, 1992. Renewing and building friendships turn out to be the best part of a Reunion. We look forward to seeing you in the City of Trees – Boise, where it all started fifty short years ago.

### REUNION COMMITTEE

**Walt and Bev Mayer**

**Jack and Louise Rencher**

**Evelyn and Jim Taylor**

P.S. Early reservations are highly recommended in order to avoid disappointment. We're expecting a large contingent of 303rd's. Our Reunion Hotel is Red Lion, *Riverside* (Rate, \$69.00 plus tax). In case of overflow, we've arranged for rooms at the Red Lion, *Downtown* (Room Rate, \$59.00, plus tax – 10 minutes away with excellent shuttle transportation provided by the Red Lion Hotels).

### — Reunion News —

Attendees: please check in at the 303rd Registration desk in Red Lion Riverside Hotel, Boise ASAP after arriving to receive your reunion materials. If possible, everyone should be checked in no later than Thursday Evening, closing time 17:00 hours (5 p.m.)

Make choice of Banquet entrees when checking in: breast of chicken or baron of beef.

Tours will run all day Wednesday, all day Thursday and Friday afternoon only.

Wear your name tag at all times. It will get you a 20 percent discount on meals eaten in the hotel restaurants.

Reserved tables banquet seating will be handled at Registration desk.

A Special Performance of the USAF "*America's Band in Blue*" from Travis AFB, California, honoring the 303rd Bomb Group will take place at 7:45 p.m., Friday, September 11. Tickets at no cost will be available to all Reunion Attendees on sign-in at the Registration Desk. You are the Band's invited guests.

Draft copies of a proposed unit history will be displayed during the reunion by the Association's historian, Harry Gobrecht. Your ideas and opinions will be solicited.

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

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

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It's time to plot your course for  
 303rd's Golden  
 Anniversary bash  
 Boise, Idaho, Sept. 8-13, 1992