

# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

APRIL 1993

## Molesworth

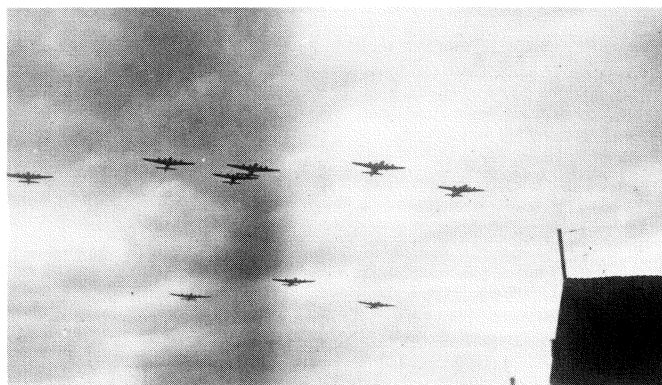
# The Hell's Angels Group

By William C. Crawford

We had arrived in the European Theater of Operations via a faithful B-17 which had unflinchingly conquered the broad Atlantic for us, and after we had become so attached to her that we felt this beautiful bird belonged to us, we were compelled to turn her in at Alconbury. From there we had proceeded by rail to an installation at Bovington, North of London, where the crew received a short course in "Combat Crew Readiness." From there our orders read that we had been transferred to the 303rd Bomb Group (H) at Molesworth. How we were fortunate enough to have been assigned to one of the most prestigious Groups in the Eighth Air Force was difficult for us to comprehend.

The 303rd Bomb Group was one of the four original Groups to begin operations in England and a 303rd B-17F, "Hell's Angels", was the first bomber in the Eighth Air Force to complete 25 missions (not the Memphis Belle) on 14 May 1943. By 4 October 1943 this B-17 had completed 43 missions and after 47 missions had never turned back for mechanical reasons. Hence the name "Hell's Angels Group." The 303rd was also the first Eighth Air Force Group to complete 300 combat missions from the U.K., and by war's end the 303rd will have flown more missions (364) than any other Eighth Air Force B-17 Group. So, when we're assigned to the 360th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group (H) on 23 June 1944 we begin to realize that we're going to have quite a tradition to attempt to live up to.

The 303rd Hell's Angels Group is based at Molesworth, a small English town 55 miles North of London in the Midlands of East Anglia and is



"Home at Last"

one of three Groups in the 41st Combat Wing. The other two being the 379th Bomb Group at Kimbolton and the 384th Bomb Group at Grafton-Underwood, six and nine miles distant respectively.

The 41st Combat Wing is commanded by Brig. Gen. Robert Travis, with Headquarters here on the base. Both the General and I have the same home town, Savannah, Georgia. I wonder if he realizes this? There are more than 130 military airfields in an area smaller than some counties in Texas. Back in the States most of our military air-fields are located out in the "boonies" on undesirable land where all trees have been bulldozed from the entire area and the streets are laid out in a well-organized checker-board fashion. There is usually a large elevated water tower located near the center of a concentration of buildings and the aircraft are parked in neat rows on wide conspicuous concrete ramps. A high chain-link security fence laid out on the square encloses this whole arrangement.

Not so in England. The British airfields are about as contrasting to

ours at home as one can imagine. All land is precious to these people and the area in East Anglia where most of these airfields are located is the historic seat of their English civilization. The location just happens to be closest to the Continent and that's of prime importance right now. The British, it seems, will do anything to preserve their heritage, even to allowing the construction of these air-fields on this hallowed ground. The bases give the appearance of having been laid out in a haphazard fashion to make no sense at all; but that's not the case. This war is only a temporary thing and they have carefully planned for the future when the sword will be turned back into the plowshare. Their two main considerations have been air raid safety and food production. The buildings and hardstands are spread over disjointed areas and dispersed among the trees; the runways extend right into the farms which are producing crops.

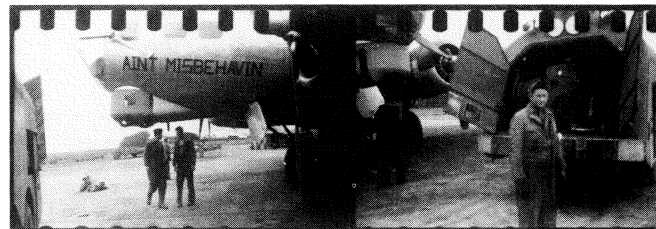
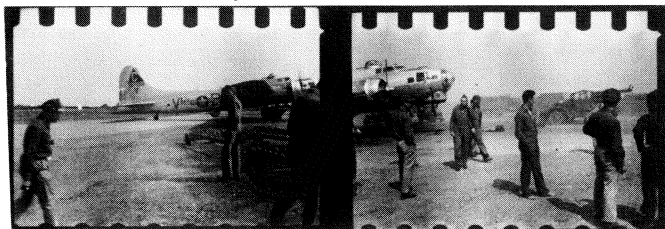
The runways at Molesworth are laid out so as not to encroach on the landscape too much and are typical of the pattern that the English have established for the Eighth Air Force

bomber bases. Our main East-West runway is about 7,000 ft. long and sometimes seems barely adequate to get a heavily loaded B-17 off of. The North-South and the North West-South East runways are shorter and present a real thrill if they should have to be used.

The 303rd Bomb Group is comprised of four B-17 Squadrons. The Quonset and Nissen huts of these units are well dispersed around the base. Our 360th Squadron is North of the base; the 358th is South of the base; the 359th is North-East of the base and the 427th is near the center of the base. Mess halls are located between these areas. The hospital is South-East of the base. Bomb storage areas are West and South of the base.

Our Bachelor Officer's Quarters (BOQ) building is about the size of a Nissen hut. It has vertical corrugated metal sides and an angular roof. The interior is one large open space with the men's bunks along the sides. Each bunk is provided with three straw-filled "biscuits" that serve as a mattress and to keep some of the English cold from coming through we put newspapers and blankets between the bunk springs and these biscuits on that side and pile blankets on top. If it's cold enough we may keep our flight gear on. A small pot-bellied coal stove is in an open area about a third of the distance from one end of the building. Coal is rationed to one bucket a day which makes "midnight requisitioning" of the coal supply dump a legitimate pastime. When the stove is going full-bore, and if you're close enough, it's possible to feel some heat on one side while the other side is still freezing. Our clothes are hung from a shelf near the head of each bunk and

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## 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.

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## From The President

During the past six months, we have had a lot of correspondence among the Board of Directors, members and other people seeking information about our Association. I would like to personally thank Bill Heller for mailing out all dues notices for the Association pro bono and for including an order form for our forthcoming History of the 303rd. Thanks again, Bill.

Speaking of the History, Harry Gobrecht has been toiling all kinds of hours to make sure we put out a first rate history of the 303rd. When you read it you will be amazed at all the information he has dug up on the premier Bomb Group of the 8th AF. Harry informs me that we are almost at the 75 percent break even point. This means that many of you out there have not sent in your order for this very important piece of history as well as your financial support of the Association. I strongly urge all of you to send in your order as soon as possible. An order form is in this newsletter.

I understand that about 100 of you are making that Sentimental Journey to Molesworth in May. If there are members out there who are still thinking of going I recommend you contact Tamarac Travel as soon as possible. Time is growing short.

Bill Roche continues to do an outstanding job as Treasurer and he informs me that we are in good financial shape. Thanks Bill.

My thanks also goes out to Bob Umberger who has volunteered to be the contact person for the Association in the State of Maine.

I want to express my appreciation to all Committee members as well as the Board of Directors for their support and dedication.

I also want to thank the many members who have made such generous donations to the Association during the year.

Lastly, my thanks again to Hal Susskind for putting out such a tremendous Newsletter.

William S. McLeod, Jr.  
President

## In This Issue

You will find Part II of the Tailwheel fantasy plus a very interesting account of Clayton David's evading capture and returning to Molesworth after bailing out over Holland during the Oschersleben mission of Jan. 11, 1944. Bill Crawford describes what it was like joining the 303rd back in June of '44, some scant 49 years ago. Also reported in this issue is the Group's 300th mission. It may have been a milestone in the history of the 303rd but unfortunately, it turned out to be a sad affair. Look for the new order form on page 9 for Harry Gobrecht's 880 page, "Might-In-Flight" history of the 303rd. Order now and take advantage of the pre-publishing discount price. In the history, Gobrecht comments on every one of the Group's 1173 days of existence from February of 1942 through April of 1945. Approximately 100 Hell's Angels have signed up to revisit Molesworth in May. If you haven't signed up as yet, give Tamarac a call and see if they can still accommodate you. Dave Matthews informs us that he now has copies of all of group's 364 missions and is ready to take of all requests. Why not give him a call at (404) 466-2003. Coleman Sanders notified us that he sold 125 copies of the Boise Reunion "memory book." It contained 224 posed portraits and 162 candid shots. He has 26 books left of the original run. Anyone desiring a copy should contact Coleman at (813) 542-8684.

Hal Susskind  
Editor

# Hell's Angels Forum

## Your Chance to Sound Off!

### Tailwheel's Posse

Just received your January 1993 "Hell's Angels" Newsletter, Hal. As usual, it is a masterpiece. In reading it, however, and enjoying your article on Tailwheel Kaiser, I have to add two comments which I believe are important to your article...

- 1) The name "Tailwheel"...

It so happens that my greatest and most pleasant surprise was to see Tailwheel at Molesworth, for I met him, known him and drunk with him before... in the States.

In the late Spring of '43, my Provisional Group was training at Walla, Walla, Washington just prior to getting our full crew and going overseas. I walked into the Walla Walla Officers Club and there, standing at the Bar was a short, round, cherubic-faced Captain with a chest full of ribbons. **But he was like a statue!** Just standing there, looking straight ahead and not moving. I looked at the bartender and he told me, "No problem, Sir. He's just got a case of the puckers. He'll be all-right. What can I get you?"

I took a drink and then Tailwheel came around. We met. We kept on drinking. We became friends.

The base at Walla Walla was commanded by a Col. "Shorty" Wheliss who had been immortalized by FDR when Shorty flew his disabled B-17 over Legaspi in the Philippines and was battling fiercely with a core of Jap Zeros. Though not certain, I believe this was around December 10th or 11th or so of 1941. I think he was with the famous 19th Bomb Group of early WW II fame.

Still amazed at the rows of ribbons on this cherubic captain's chest I also noted he was a navigator. Hal, in those days, navigators did not acquire such rank that soon. But, we struck up a fine friendship and used to meet at the bar many afternoons around cocktail time. I had heard Tailwheel was also with that famed 19th and had already seen action.

And, Hal... his nickname then was Tailwheel...

- 2) Your famous "quarters" in the 359th...

You may know that when I came to the 303rd my crew was assigned to the 360th squadron. It was there we flew most of our first tour of combat (25 missions in those days). Sometime after I had become a captain, I was assigned to the 359th as Operations Officer, replacing Major Kalhoefer, reassigned to the 21. Bill Eisenhart was my assistant. It was later that I was reassigned as commanding officer of the 360th after a

one month stint as Assistant Group Ops Officer.

When I was first in the 360th, I obtained an old glycol tank from Mel McCoy, who ran the 444th Depot. I bought a hot plate in Bedford and rigged up a hot water system and sink, using a half-round tank bottom. Thus I had hot water with which to shave in the mornings. Many mornings, Walt Shayler, the then CO of the 360th would wave and laugh as he walked past our barracks and, looking through our window, saw me shaving.

When I was assigned to the 359th as Ops Officer, I took my hot water system with me. **And that is the system you inherited.**

And the rug on the floor and the "cottage cheese" painted walls and ceilings? Bill Eisenhart and I, along with help from ever-present Joe Vieira... did all that. We also made the partition separating our "4th" of the barracks from the other 3/4ths. In that part we kept most of our lead crew pilots, navigators and bombardiers. We also built a fireplace in that part of the nissen hut. As a former employee of the John B. Kelly Brick Construction Company of Philadelphia, I supervised the brickwork (PS: You also know I used to drive Grace Kelly to dancing school when I worked for the Kellys).

When my younger brother, Emerson, (he was with the Richeson crew as copilot then. He later got his own crew) came to the 303rd, he spent his first night with me in those quarters. You can imagine what a great time that was. Our family relished those letters we sent home. (He was KIA in Vietnam).

So, Hal, there you are. And you are absolutely correct. Jim "Tailwheel" Kaiser was one of the most unforgettable... if not **THE**... most unforgettable characters of all time.

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

As you thumb thru this mess I think you will see that I knew Tailwheel also. Attached is a copy of our orders to go overseas dated 7 Oct. 1944. We had been at Avon Park, Florida.

P Lt. Chet H. Jameson, Jr  
CP Lt. Robert N. Blazey  
N Capt. James M. Kaiser  
B Lt. Wilson Ford  
EG /Sgt. Glenn W. Hall  
ROG S/Sgt Howard D. Hole  
AG T/Sgt Ferdinand P. Haevers  
AG Cpl. Roland J. Bender  
TG S/Sgt. William L. Hoots

Lt Jameson was in the Field Artillery as an officer. He went thru Aviation Cadet training and was an instructor pilot at Avon. Lt. Blazey was new to flying. Capt. Kaiser (the man of the hour) had flown a tour out of North Africa - in B-24s, I think. Lt. Ford had flown in the South Pacific. I met him in May 1943 at Walla Walla, Washington. He was just back from overseas and was a T/Sgt. He was in bombsight when the war started and then flew as a bombardier. T/Sgt. Hall. His service number will show he was regular Army. He washed out of cadets in early 1940. He was an engineer instructor at Avon. S/Sgt. Hole's service number shows he came into service overseas (Hawaii). He had flown many missions over there. T/Sgt Haevers was an instructor at Avon. Cpl. Bender was on a training but to the best of my memory he had to bail out and later got on our crew. S/Sgt Hoots (another idiot) I had flown 25 missions with the 91st B.G. (3 Sept. '43 to 19 Feb. '44). Rotated back to Avon Park and was an instructor also.

We had flown 4 or 5 missions as a crew when they pulled Kaiser and Ford off to go on a lead crew. Our last mission (rest of crew) was #7. 26 Nov. 1944. We had a fuel leak and a fire around #4 engine and had to bail out way before the target. All became POWs.

I saw Ford in 1946 at Dayton, Ohio. He said when Kaiser went to our barracks to help with our belongings he had a fifth of booze. As you knew them, they tried to drown their sorrows.

I have always been in contact with Haevers, Jameson and Bender. Blazey and Hall dropped out of contact after the war. Ford stayed in the service and retired as a Lt. Col. He died several years ago. Of course Tailwheel is gone too. I joined the 303rd BGA in January 1992. I had met Mr. Smith at our second Schweinfurt meeting in Oct. 1991 at Las Vegas.

I can say I belong to two greatest outfits - Hells Angels and Memphis Belle.

Carry on with your story. Nice to know that you met Kaiser also.

**Wm. Lester Hoots**  
Box 97  
Patterson, IL 62078

*Ed. Note: I thought you would like to know that Chet H. Jameson is also a member of our Association.*

I enjoyed your initial newsletter article about Tailwheel Kaiser. He and I were drinking buddies at Dakar,

Africa and I often wonder what Tailwheel did after separation from service. Please write to tell me whatever you might know.

**Frank Forve**  
3184 Serra Way  
Fairfield, CA 94533

*Ed. Note: Tailwheel had many buddies. Like Will Rogers, Tailwheel never met a man he didn't like.*

### W/T's Crew Names

In the January issue of Hell's Angels Newsletter, on page 12, top left, the Witches Tit groundcrew were shown. I can give you the names of some of them as follows: standing on the rear third from left is Howie Homberger; myself, Dick Lund; and Chester French. The short fellow standing in front of us is Sanfacon, and the kneeling together are, left to right, crew chief Bellesario, Ralph Hayes, and Norman Bossie. The fellow sitting in front and the two standing at the left, I can't recall their names. We were from the 360th Sqdn. and this plane was shot down on a raid to Hamburg, Germany on February 1943. A FW-190 shot the tail off, out of the vapor trails. Hope this info will help. I really enjoy the newsletter.

**Richard A. Lund**  
10 Norman Road  
Leominster, MA 01453

Re: "Witches Tit" picture on page 12; the ground crew personnel in the picture are various mechanics, etc., that represent aircraft other than the famous "Tit." They are all members of the 360th assembled for the group photo. The individuals are: (back row, standing, l to r) Unknown, Mark Smallwood, Santora, Howard Homberger, Dick Lund and Chester French. (kneeling l to r) Ballisario, Frank DeMaria, Ralph Hayes and Norm Bossie. French, Bellisario & Bossie were crew chiefs. Hayes was a flight chief. I believe French crewed, "Iza Vailable," Bellisario - "Red Ass," and Bossie "Satan's Workshop." Homberger, French and DeMaria are deceased.

Hal, please accept my personal thanks for the excellent job that you do with the newsletter. I always looked forward to each issue and now in my dotage it gives me as much pleasure as ejaculation.

I've attended most of the reunions starting with the N.Y. Henry Hudson Hotel affair dated May 7, 1948. The only ones missed were Colorado, Fort Worth and Schaumburg. I joined

the 303rd in Boise in May 1942 and  
after VE Day to ATC in Casablanca.

Sort of makes one wonder; one year in the States and 33 months overseas and never went home in the entire time. Today's heroes start whining after four weeks deployment. ("When are we going home?")

**Ralph Walder**  
P.O. Box 149  
Sea Cliff, NY 11579

*Ed. Note: Many thanks for the nice things you said about the newsletter. What makes it all worthwhile is the nice letters I get from you people. I also appreciate all the nice things you people, both ground and air crews, did for me during the combat days.*

## Molesworth Connection

I was stationed at Molesworth from 1953 to 1955. The base was much the same as it was when you left in 1945. I returned in 1991 and took pictures. Would like to exchange information, pictures, etc., with fellow Molesworth alumni of the 1940s and 1950s.

Glenn J. Pfeiffer  
1328 Harrington Dr.  
Racine, WI 53405

## A very old mystery

I am a member of the 303rd. Was with the 360th Sqdn. 'til I got shot down, June 20, 1944 over Hamburg, Germany. Became a POW. I was released from Stalag at Barth I in 1945. My question is what happened to the personal stuff fellows like me had in the shed after they got shot down? I tried every agency to find out, but no such luck. Maybe you can shed some light on this subject or maybe you can find out or maybe you would know. I know it has been a long time, but it sure is working on my mind

Maybe you know some one who was at the depot or some personnel who worked there that can shed some light for me.

**Joseph W. Szudlo**  
524 E. Michigan Ave.  
Phoenix, AZ 85022

*Ed. Note: O.K. 360th I'm dropping this mystery in your lap. Anyone want to venture a guess as to what happened to Joseph's personal belongings?*

## “Pistol Packin’ Mama” Crew Named

Regarding the picture on Page 13 of the Hell's Angel Newsletter of Jan.1993-lower right hand corner- (1 to r) James P. Thompson, crew chief of Arlington, VT., Bob Goldsbury of

Chicago and Maurice (Sammy)  
Folkman of Philadelphia, deceased.

**James P. Thompson**  
RFD 2 Box 30  
Arlington, VT 05250-9401

## Another 303rd Memorial

What this letter concerns is the monument in the enclosed photo. The airport at Walnut Ridge, Arkansas is named after a 303rd Bombardier, Robert J. Swindle. I recently visited this airport and photographed the marker, suspecting the 303rd BGA might not know of its existence.

I thought you might want to put this photo in an upcoming newsletter, when time and room permits.

At the same time, maybe you can put a small notice in the newsletter that I am the Dyersburg Army Air Field, Tennessee, base historian. I'd like to hear from any 303rd guys who trained at or were stationed at this base from 1942-45. This was a final phase training base for B-17 combat crews.

We have formed a Dyersburg Army Air Base Memorial Association and hope to open a museum in the future. We'd like to have DAAF related memorabilia to display, and anyone who has such items could contact me. This would include photos, orders, patches, uniforms, anything pertaining to this base.

By the way is Grover Henderson still an active member of the 303rd BGA? Last I heard of him he was in Greenwood, SC. He was a 303rd pilot who came through this base as part of the Shower Provisional Group in 1943.

**Tim L. Bivens**  
1569 Upper Finley Road  
Dyersburg, TN 38024  
(901) 286-5900.

*Ed. Note: Our roster shows Grover Henderson as still living in Greenwood, SC. Although Harry Gobrecht trained at Dyersburg in '44, I did my phase training at Geiger Field, WA in August of 1943 as part of the Skaer Provisional Group.*

## Some Medical Advice

I read Bill Smith's letter in your recent Hell's Angels Forum with more than a passing interest, because I have just had almost exactly the same experience he related, but I want to add something that I believe to be vitally important. You be the judge.

You may or may not remember me – I always say hello and chat with you at least a few minutes at the reunions. I have been to all of them

from Seattle to Boise and Dayton before that. I was a crew navigator in the 358th B. Sqdn. (June '43 – Feb. '44) and the squadron navigator Dec. '43 – Feb. '44.

Now my prostate cancer story: I had not had a prostate check since I retired from the Air Force until October of 1992 when I took advantage of a free clinic set up by the urologist in the Shreveport/Bossier City area. I, too, had not had any reason to think I had a problem, but remembering all I had seen and heard, I knew I should resign myself to getting the "finger." So, I made an appointment, filled out required forms and appeared at the proper place at the appointed time.

A medical technician took blood for the PSA test and I was directed to an examining room where a urologist gave me the digital check. Right away he told me I had a small tumor and should see "my" urologist. Since he was the only one I had seen in 25 years, I made an appointment to see him – a nice *young* man, age 44 years.

A week later at my urologist office he had another blood sample taken for a PSA test – this would be for a much quicker answer. He briefed me on the various possibilities, emphasizing the smallness of the tumor. A few days later I went back to my urologist to hear the results of the *second* PSA. (The first PSA results were slow coming due to the hundreds that were done during the clinic). The results were **NEGATIVE!** So, the doctor tells me that, undoubtedly, my tumor is benign, however, he recommended that a biopsy be done to remove all doubt.

As you can probably guess, I was in no mood to fool around, so I said "lets get with it". Again, a few days

following the biopsy I go to hear the results, expecting to hear that my tumor was benign. My luck ran out — the report said it was *malignant*!

I opted for radical surgery ASAP. My doctor directed me to build a 3 pint blood back which I did in November. Surgery was scheduled and done on 1 December. My surgeon must have been a little more careful (neat) than Bill Smith's, since he didn't use any of my blood during or after surgery. Later he told me knew a man that needed the blood much worse than I!! Some comedian!

While I was giving blood and awaiting surgery the results from the first PSA test (from the clinic) came in – again, the results were **NEGATIVE!** The point is very clear – the PSA test is **NOT** conclusive and the ‘troops’ should go one step further, if there is any room for doubt.

If you see fit to comment about this in the newsletter, you have my permission to use any part of this letter or to rephrase anything you want to use. Together we may save somebody's life, indirectly.

The physiological adjustment following this type of surgery is long and slow. My progress has been steady and I hope to be 99.9% in another month. Like Bill Smith my surgeon feels he has gotten rid of my problem.

Before I went to surgery, I told my surgeon I had not been so scared since 14 October 1943. Of course he asked my why that date was significant. I replied that it was my *second* Schweinfurt raid and I was flying it with a green crew (not my own seasoned crew). Of course I doubt he had ever heard about those two raids.

**William D. McSween, Jr.**  
3900 Sunset Dr.  
Shreveport, LA 71109



Swindle Field, Walnut Ridge, Ark., named in honor of Robert J. Swindle, 427th B.C., 303rd B.G., Bombardier, KIA, 1/23/43 bombing the sub-pens at Lorient, France.



Many Americans who fought in World War II have had the opportunity to return to the scenes of their triumphs and disasters. After a lapse of forty-nine years a 303rd veteran returned to England to retrace the route of "Lady Luck" on its final journey.

## Final Flight of "Lady Luck" Retraced

A 303rd Bomb Group airman, who was aboard a wartime bomber which his pilot heroically steered away from crashing into a Hampshire town, returned to the UK to retrace the route of the Flying Fortress on its final and very eventful flight.

Some 49 years ago, on the afternoon of September 26, 1943, the B-17, "Lady Luck" from the 360th Sqdn. crashed in Alresford in a field near to the big pond after the crew had bailed out into the area. It was still carrying its load of ten 500-lb demolition bombs.

Memories of the crash were recalled at a garden party at Manor Farm, Old Alresford, the home of John Bevan, president of the Alresford branch of the Royal Air Force Association. The reason for the gathering was a visit by the radio operator from the ten-man crew, Eddie Deerfield.

Deerfield, who now lives in Palm Harbor, Florida, was 20 years old when he last "dropped in" on Alresford. This time the visit was far more pleasant for him as more than 30 persons who had seen the crash and helped rescue the crew from roof-tops, trees and fields, gathered to welcome him and his wife Mary Lea, and to honor the memory of his pilot, Capt. Robert Cogswell.

On that fateful day in 1943, the B-17 was on a mission to bomb the Nazi submarine pens at Nantes. Visibility over the target was so bad that the bomber formation was ordered to return to base at Molesworth.

On the return flight, off the south coast of England, "Lady Luck" developed a malfunction in one of its engines. The wing began to vibrate and buckle. Pilot Cogswell told his crew he could not save the aircraft, and, as the B-17 crossed the coast, he ordered the men to bail-out.

Cogswell stayed at the controls until he was certain the plane with its bomb load would not crash into Southampton, Winchester or Alresford. Because of his late jump, Cogswell suffered torn ligaments in his back which put him out of action for the rest of the war.

Although Cogswell survived a ditching in the English Channel in July of 1943 returning from a mission to Kassel and also the Alresford crash,



American visitors, Eddie and Mary-Lee Deerfield(center) pictured with members of the Alresford RAFA. They are: (l to r) Clifton Sheriff, Buntly Hawkins, Derek Sweetenham, John Bevan, Ken Bevan and Jane Underwood.

he was killed in action some eight years later while piloting a B-29 bomber during the Korean War.

Thanks to Steve Challis, head of the British Classic Aircraft Restoration group based at Chandler's Ford, Deerfield and his wife in a single engine French Tobago Tourer were able to retrace the very same route that the doomed B-17 made almost a half century earlier.

Local people at the festive garden party were eager to reminisce, recounting their own experiences of that eventful day. Clifton Sheriff, now 83, recalled that he was one of the foursome playing tennis at the home of the local drapery store owner, Charlie Erroll, when the plane crashed about 200 yards away in a field belonging to the Maxwell family.

"It went up in one mighty explosion!" he said.

Jane Underwood, 69, was looking out the bedroom window of Upton Farm and saw the pilot leave the stricken B-17. "The plane swung around the pond and then came down with an almighty bang." Derek Sweetenham, then nine years old, saw two crew members parachute from the crippled plane and had the excitement of helping to rescue them.

Buntly Hawkins, 81, was gardening at their home at the top of Swelling Hill when she heard a "terrible

noise" in the sky. The Flying Fortress came into sight just skimming the tree tops and she saw that it had an engine on fire.

Ken Bevan was tending to his bees when he saw the falling aircraft. "I was one of the first to arrive at the scene of the crash," he said. "One of the consequences was that we lost six cows. One was so frightened it went into the pond and drowned.

Deerfield remembers bailing out and that his parachute was carrying him down backwards. He was

stunned when he hit the ground flat on his back. When he opened his eyes, he saw a farmer standing over him pressing a pitchfork to his chest, wondering if the Germans had invaded. When the farmer heard the American accent, however, it was home to tea and then out again to find the rest of the crew.

(The story above was compiled from articles in *The Southern Evening Echo*, *Hampshire Chronicle* and *The Herald of England*.)



M.P.s checking passes at a local pub in 1944.

# THEY HELPED ME ESCAPE

by Clayton C. David

The date was January 11, 1944. I was flying copilot on a B-17 with the 358 Sqd. of the 303rd Bomb Group from the first division of the Eighth Air Force. Our target was Oschersleben, Germany. The other two divisions were assigned to Brunswick and Halberstadt, Germany. This was scheduled to be a maximum effort against the German aircraft industry and our group was leading the first division. The mission was being flown on a direct route for Berlin with delayed turns to the target. We were expecting support from our fighters to the target and back.

Weather is always a factor that can be uncertain, but on this day it changed faster than expected and deteriorated rapidly. Our lead groups were over Holland and already engaged with German fighters when the mission was recalled. It became clear that our fighters would be unable to support us as planned and bombers would have trouble getting back to their bases because of heavy clouds reaching closer to the ground as the day progressed. Rather than turn back while engaged with German fighters, the lead groups continued to our targets. As a result of the recall, instead of having a planned force of some 700 bombers over Germany well escorted by our fighters, we had 300 bombers and very few fighters to help protect us. Fifty nine of those bombers, each with a crew of ten, failed to return that day. I was one of the 109 men from our 303rd. Bomb Group missing-in-action at the end of the day.

After a continuous air battle that had lasted for some two and one half hours, we had reached the target, dropped our bombs, and were approaching Amsterdam, Holland on our way back to England. Our two inboard engines were out, but we still had the two outboard engines operating and 15,000 ft. of altitude. Just when we thought we would be able to make it back to England we took another hit from a German fighter and it set our number two gas tank on fire. When Jack Watson gave the order to bail out the wing was burning and we quickly obeyed the order. I exited from the front escape hatch in the same manner that was normal for me when the plane was on the ground.

From information provided at training briefings I was well aware of the importance of delaying the opening of my parachute. We could not see the ground because of the clouds below us, but I estimated the top level of the clouds to be about 3000 ft. and decided to wait until falling into them before opening my parachute. I did just that. In an instant I was below the clouds and less than 500

ft. from the ground. But it was water I was looking at and not solid ground. Then I spotted a dike between two bodies of water. I successfully guided my parachute toward the dike and landed along side of it. My first parachute jump was perfect!

Immediately, I removed my parachute and threw it into the water to hide it. When it was slow to sink, I took off my heavy flying boots, filled them with water, and tossed them onto the parachute which quickly sank. At this point I looked up and saw some of my fellow crew members, who had jumped before me, coming through the clouds and landing in the water. At this same moment, while I was trying to decide which way to run, a man came riding by on a bicycle and pointed the direction. I ran a few hundred meters and came to a open pasture field on my left. There, in the open, I lay down in a shallow drainage ditch into two or three inches of water. It provided the only possible hiding place at the moment. I had parachuted onto a narrow strip of land between the Yselmeer (Zuider Zee) and the Kinselmeer Lake 2 Km from Durgerdam, and only a few miles east of the city limits of Amsterdam. The man on the bicycle had alertly directed me to run away from the village.

While I was in the ditch I heard boats out picking up other members of my crew and I knew they were falling into German hands. The few hours I spent there waiting for darkness was a long afternoon for me. But, before I thought it was dark enough to start moving on my own a man approached my location in a friendly searching manner and I raised my head briefly so he could see me. Then, as I assumed my original prone position, he came near and asked if I was an American. When I said, 'Yes,' he motioned for me to stay put and he went back toward the farm house from which he had come. He soon returned and had me follow him to the farm yard. From the barn we entered the kitchen of the house where I was given food and questioned by a man very fluent in English. During this time some of my clothes were drying in the oven of the kitchen stove. Years later this was identified for me as the Piet Schouten farm and home.

The darkness of night had blackened the sky by the time I convinced my interrogator that I was an American flyer who had no intention of surrendering to the Germans and that I would make every effort to evade capture with or without their help. When I recovered my partially dried clothes, I left my electrically heated flying suit, because it was too wet to offer any warmth. Wearing my own clothes, I was escorted by two young men to a

small canal where we used a boat to cross so I could hide in the cattle shed on the other side. It was shelter I might have found on my own that would not have required local helpers if the Germans should find me. That night I was thankful for the cattle that shared their housing with me. I covered myself with some hay from the manger and took off my cold wet shoes so I could warm my feet on the animals as they lay resting.

The next morning, long before daylight, the young men returned for me and we walked a short distance to a home where I had breakfast. After that I was taken by row boat to a small island to spend the day in an unoccupied house. When it became daylight visibility was limited by the same fog and weather that had created our flying problems the day before. An unknown benefactor brought me lunch on the island. I'm sure the roast beef in the bowl with potatoes and carrots constituted someone's weekly ration of meat. The milk and the apple were also very good.

It was after dark on January 12, 1944 when one of the young men returned for me with his row boat and took me back to the house where I had been for breakfast. There we were joined by a couple from Amsterdam. After being given a coat from the farm to wear over my flying suit, I was given a bicycle to ride and told to follow the other couple on their bicycles. They led me to their home at the edge of the city. This was Mr. and Mrs. J. Rensink. He was a barber and gave me a shaving mug and a razor.

After two days in his home, Mr. Rensink took me across on a ferry to another part of Amsterdam to the home of Betty Glimmerveen who kept me for 17 days. Betty worked in a bank where Mr. Schouten, an uncle of the farm boys, worked and this had apparently provided the contact. From Miss Glimmerveen's I was escorted to the train station near by and via train to Venlo. (I understand that young man, Suebro Suiss, was later captured and killed.) It was at Venlo, in a house near the railroad station where Suebro took me, that I met Joke Folmer. I spent the night in this home and Joke returned the next day to travel with me on the train from Venlo to Maastricht. She was so aware and confident that her composure did much to reduce my anxiety and make me a person who would be less apt to be noticed and perhaps questioned.

In Maastricht, Joke and I were met at the railroad station by Jacques Vrij and E. Smits. At that point I told Joke 'Good-bye' and left the station with Jacques and Smits. They escorted me across the river bridge to the butcher shop of Giel and Jen Ummels where I stayed in the living quarters over the shop. (Both Giel and Jen were arrested later and died in separate concentration camps.)

After about a week with the Ummels, Smits returned for me early one evening and walked me some distance to a street corner where we met a young girl whom I met again 40 years later as Marianne Spierings - Slabbers. Even though she was small, Marianne rode me on the back of her bicycle in darkness to the Belgian border. There she hid her bicycle and went to the guard house to engage the German guard in conversation while I slipped across the border behind the hedge on the opposite side of the road. Once I was about a block inside Belgium, she rejoined me and took me to a home where I stayed for about two hours while she went back and got two more men. One

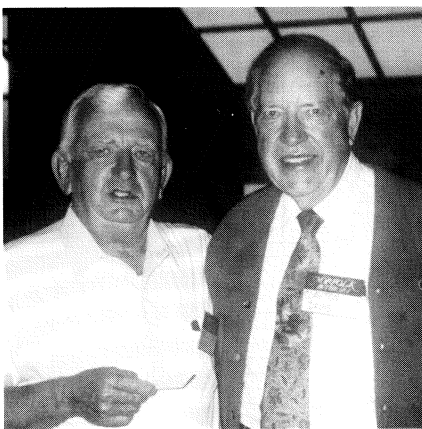
was English and one was an American. Marianne then walked the three of us to her father's home where we stayed the night. The next morning we were joined by three other Americans who had been hiding in a shed at the back of the house. Marianne and two of her girl friends then walked the six of us to a tram station about two kilometers away. The tram took us to a railroad where we took the train into Brussels North. From the station we walked to a cafe. There we met the man who would be our next guide and Marianne left with her two girl friends.

We remained in the cafe until dark and then our new guide, who was fluent in many languages, shoved us on to an overloaded street car for a ride across town to a large home managed by a lady. There we joined two other Americans. A few days later this same guide made two trips to take us four at a time by train to Paris. At the Belgian - French border the train stopped and we got off the train. With our fake passports and some possessions in a small suit case we went through customs and reboarded the train to Paris. Arriving there early in the morning we took a subway some distance to reach our next hiding place. It was a school and church complex which I now know to be Ecole Normale Supérieure on Rue Lhomond street.

Upon our arrival at the school we were taken to a hiding place to join the four men who had been delivered there before us. Within 30 minutes, a police search of the building came within 15 feet of finding us. A locked door that bore a sign, "DANGER-HIGH VOLTAGE" had made the difference. After the police left, we were all eight moved to the upper floor of the church building next door and housed there for two weeks in two rooms that were unused and unheated. Our stay was extended beyond the anticipated period of time. We later learned this was because the group which had preceded us along this route had been infiltrated and was shot up in the mountains above Toulouse. Most were captured or killed, but at least two got away and later arrived in Spain.

Before our helpers could move us from Paris the police moved in to arrest Father Superior, the school custodian, and the custodian's wife for black market food. It was food they had secured to feed us and others in hiding from the Germans. While the arrest was being made another priest, Father Robo, came to our hiding spot and alerted us to get out. The eight of us exited two by two through the front door of the church into the street. (Father Superior and the custodian died in prison from ill treatment. The custodian's wife only lived a few years after being liberated from prison.) We were advised to travel no more than two men together, so Kenneth Shaver and I agreed we would team up. Ken and his crew had gone down in Holland in November of 1943. They had been captured and escaped from a train on their way to prison in Germany. He was one of the three men who had joined us on our way to Brussels. Now as we left the church, we were on our own and responsible for ourselves. We later learned that four of the men, two of his crew members and the two Marianne got into Belgium the same night she helped me across, were captured and became prisoners of war. The other two men we had joined in Brussels got to the west of France and back to England by boat across the channel.

Ken and I walked south from Paris as fast as we could travel and got help for our first night in a home at Bretigny where a lady lived with her



**Evader William Wolff, 360th B.S., shares experiences with Clayton C. David of the 358th B.S.**

brother and her two children. Her husband, an officer in the French Army, was a POW in Germany. The next day she and two of her girl friends walked us to the train station and bought us tickets for Toulouse. When we failed to get on the correct car of the train we found ourselves returning to Bretigny after the commuter train had turned around and headed back for Paris. It was dark by then, so we got off the train and to keep our tickets we walked to a remote area of the railroad yard and jumped over the fence. At the edge of the village we were taken in by the Gabriel Guillion family. The next day we began our trip to Toulouse over again and with better, but not total success. It was the following day, while stopped at a station in snow covered mountains, that the conductor started taking up tickets in the car where we were riding. Not knowing where we were, we jumped off the train! To avoid the station agent, who was collecting the tickets from those who got off the train, we ran around the station through heavy snow into the mountains. Our tickets which showed Toulouse as our proper destination may have marked us even more than running away.

Later that day we were taken in by Mr. and Mrs. Rene Beffera at Banilles de Loupiac Pleaux, France and with a map they showed us our location. The Befferas took great care of us for three weeks and got us in contact with a group of the Maquis that had a mountain hideout where they received parachute drops at night from Allied aircraft. In route to the Maquis camp, in a car fueled with coke gas, we stayed with Henri Pontier whose son Rene Pontier had exercised his security assignment and checked us out with military intelligence in London. We were with the Maquis for about ten days and they arranged for our passage to Spain. It was a Sunday when "Claire" and her friend "Andre", now Jean and Paule Arhex, came to the camp and escorted us on foot and then by train to Toulouse where we spent the night. Ken and I each carried two suitcases into Toulouse. They were filled with guns and ammunition. We became a part of the Maquis delivery system as we walked through the Toulouse railroad station into the city's darkness. Our guides knew the station was not normally guarded on Sunday. If we had arrived on any other day, which would have been the case had we gotten there on our earlier tries, there would have been guards and we probably would have been spotted and arrested.

The next day Claire rode beside us on the train to Pau while Andre was somewhere as a lookout. In Pau a car met us and took us to a location at the foot of the mountains where we met our guide. A French courier, who was making his third crossing after having parachuted into France, joined us as did a Spainard who was wanting to slip back into Spain after running out during the Spanish Civil War. For three days and nights our Basque guide led the four of us toward the top of the Pyrenees mountains while taking every precaution against our being spotted by German guards who constantly roamed the mountains looking for evaders. Finally, in waist deep snow at about 3:00 AM on April 14 we reached the mountain top which divided France and Spain. At that point our guide showed us how to slide off the mountain into Spain. He turned to make his way off the visible peak back into France before daylight.

Ken and I separated from the other two. Our objective was different than theirs. Therefore, we slid and walked down the mountain as quickly as possible to get away from the border as far as we could before being apprehended. We were finally stopped and taken into custody by the Spanish police near Canfranc, Spain. Later that same day we were taken under guard by bus to Pamplona. There, and later at a warm springs hotel in Alma de Aragon, we were interned for about five weeks with other American, British and Canadian flyers. William Wolff and Bernard Rawlings of the 303rd and Chuck Yeager were among the group. Men from the American Embassy took us by car to Madrid and we took a train to Gibraltar. We stayed on the rock a few days and then we were flown back to England.

I arrived back in England on May 25, 1944 thankful for all the wonderful people who had helped me and grateful to my Lord that had guided me into their helping hands. I was the only man of those 109 MIA from the 303rd on 11 Jan. 44 that returned to base before the war ended. The way we have recently heard politicians use the word "freedom", we know they do not know the meaning of the word. To understand the true meaning of the freedom we enjoy daily, one must walk with those who have lost their freedom to a tyrant. Then, you can appreciate the price that is willingly paid to regain that which is too often taken for granted. I have made that walk, and it was an eye opener clouded with tears of joy and pain in learning the truth. The price of freedom from oppression can be very great, but if we are too selfish to pay the price when necessary, freedom loving peoples can be lulled into losing that freedom by choosing peaceful coexistence with an oppressor. Through my helpers, fortunate enough to survive, I have learned to understand why they risked their lives in their fight for freedom, rather than accept a living hell. They know we risked our lives in their behalf and many of our fellowmen paid the supreme price. But, it had to be done and when we evaders and our helpers meet at a reunion, we celebrate success in a common cause, enriched with mutual respect.

→ → → → → → → → → → → → → → → →

*Mark Your  
Calendar*

Savannah Reunion  
March 29 / April 2, 1944

## 303rd Bomb Group Leads All by Completing 300th Mission

**T**hat was the way the front page story in the Stars and Stripes for January 11, 1945 heralded the milestone mission of the Hell's Angel Bomb Group.

The story, datelined, 303rd Bomb Group, Jan. 10, said - "This Fortress outfit, commanded by Lt. Col. William S. Raper, of Wheeling, W. Va., today chalked up its 300th mission from a British base to lead all bomb groups in this respect, as it flew as part of the force of 1,100 heavies of the 8th Air Force which bombed airfields, communications centers and bridges along the Rhine from Cologne to Karlsruhe."

But what was the real story behind those headlines.

The 303rd was tasked to supply 39 aircraft led by Maj. G.T. Mackin, CO of the 358th Sqdn. The target for visual bombing was the Bonn/Hangelan airfield. There was considerable excitement at the briefing in recognition of the fact that the 303rd was to fly its 300th mission, thereby becoming the first bomb group in the ETO to reach this historical plateau. But weather and gremlins fouled up the planning and execution of this significant achievement.

In his recap of the mission, Lt. Col. Edgar E. Snyder, Deputy Commanding Officer, expressed it eloquently when he said, On mission #300 'we had it.' That so and so, known as weather, put on one of its better shows the night before to give us a rough time throughout the entire mission. It started off with a snowfall which necessitated men being up all night to clear the runways and taxiways. To add to the problem, the wind decided to sweep out of the north-northeast at 15 mph, necessitating takeoff from south to north. Under favorable weather conditions, taking off on the N-S runway is complicated and requires prompt compliance and execution of instructions; under adverse weather conditions anything less than clockwork precision produces falling

hair and a condition best known as FUBAR.

We ran the gauntlet on the 300th and about the only thing we missed was cracking up on takeoff. The right wheel on one aircraft would not roll so that it slid under as if on skates; this was one of the squadron's lead aircraft and as a result it took off late. Also we had one run off the perimeter track due to loss of hydraulic pressure in the brake lines. This delayed the takeoff for seven other aircraft for an hour. They were to assemble over the field and catch the bomber stream at Clacton. Unfortunately, contact was never made and they went on to bomb with another group. In addition we had an epidemic of aircraft taxiing at the wrong time.

The main portion of our effort stayed together until the I.P. was reached. From the I.P. to the target we ran the gauntlet of all the things that shouldn't happen to our worst enemy, even the good Lord is confused as to just what went on. The aircraft turned on the bomb run in formation in good order. The leader of the low squadron lost an engine and had to fall out of formation, the deputy lead took over. The group leader was having trouble with his GH signals as they were a bit on the puny side. A break in the clouds came to their rescue for a possible visual run. This was fine except that snow on the ground very thoroughly camouflaged the land marks, check points, etc., and the bombardier found himself on the wrong target. Corrections were made in an attempt to get on the right target. The corrections resulted in causing the high and low squadrons to lose the lead squadron.

The lead squadron intended to make a 360 degree turn and make a visual run on the proper target. During the process of turning, half of the bombs in the deputy lead aircraft "went away." "We had it again." About half of the aircraft in the formation

dropped on him.

Col. Snyder concluded by saying, "We did get a nice write up in the 'Stars and Stripes' for the mission, didn't we?"

The weather as Col. Snyder pointed out was abominable. In the target areas, there was 2-3/10ths middle cloud, tops 16,000 feet, and 8-10/10ths thin cirrus clouds tops 26,000 feet with dense persistent contrails. These conditions made formation flying and bombing difficult. As a result of the weather conditions, the 39 dispatched aircraft bombed six different targets with unobserved results.

There was no enemy aircraft opposition and fighter support was provided by the 137 P-51s and 54 P-47s scheduled for the 1st AD on a free-lance basis. Flak was intense and accurate at Bonn, moderate and accurate at Cologne, and moderate and fairly accurate as Euskirchen. Thirteen aircraft received battle damage, six minor, four major and three category E.

Three aircraft were reported missing:

#44-6502	(No name)	359BS					
1st Lt C.J. Gates	(RTD)	P	S/Sgt	C.S. Mauer	(POW)	RAD	
2nd Lt T.I. Zapora	(RTD)	CP	Sgt.	R.D. Duerr	(POW)	BTG	
1st Lt B.L. O'Dell	(RTD)	NAV	S/Sgt	C. Tarnava	(POW)	WG	
2nd Lt H.F. Elliott	(RTD)	BOM	S/Sgt	E. Kayrallah	(KIA)	TG	
S/Sgt W. Wysocki	(KIA)	ENG	Sgt	P.H. Hassler	(RTD)	VI	

#44-6502 was hit by flak at the target and was losing altitude. The #1 engine was out and feathered, #2 was burning and #3 was windmilling. Interphone communication was inoperable. The only working compass was the Pilot's magnetic compass. Lt. Gates was almost standing on the left rudder with the control yoke nearly to his chest attempting to maintain control.

At the urging of Lt. O'Dell, Lt. Gates turned west in an attempt to make it past Allied lines. There was an 100 percent overcast below, the Battle of the Bulge was raging, and the battle lines-per briefing-were fluid. It was also apparent that a safe descent could not be made through the overcast with the flight instruments out.

Lt. Gates sent Lt. O'Dell back to the waist to bailout the six enlisted men. They were briefed on the direction to walk, to take cover and try to evade capture. The German speak-

ing Y-Operator, Sgt. Hassler, realized that he would probably be executed if captured and was reluctant to jump. He bailed out with the other EM's when it was explained that he had no choice. After reporting that the EM's were out, Lt. O'Dell and the other three officers departed the aircraft somewhere between Neufchateau and Florenville, Belgium.

The EM's landed behind enemy lines. Sgts Wysocki and Kayrallah were captured and killed by Germans. Sgt. Hassler, the counterintelligence Y-Operator, landed several miles southeast of St. Vith. He spent several days and nights in the Ardennes Forest and was rescued by advancing Allied tanks after being overlooked by the retreating Germans. The other three EM's were captured by German soldiers, made POWs and were told that the road they were on had just been heavily mined.

The officers landed in Allied territory and with the help of French speaking Belgians, members of the F.F.I., were reunited with the Ameri-

can troops. Lt. O'Dell was greeted by a very nervous Lieutenant with a Thompson machine-gun who stated, Don't move or I'll cut you in two. He was afraid that Lt. O'Dell was one of the English speaking Germans that had parachuted into Ardennes and that it might be a trap. After following the now famous method of identification; baseball, football, movies, geography, state capitals, cities, etc., he was transported to a command post.

Sgt. Duerr recalled that after parachuting he landed near Florenville, Belgium and was free for about three hours before being captured. He was a member of the Lt. Henry C. Embry crew flying as a substitute with the Lt. Gates crew on his 15th mission. His bail out landing was in a wooded area. His feet hit some tree branches, upending him and causing him to hit the ground head first. He was knocked unconscious and came to with a ter-

# 300th Mission - A Great Milestone but a Sad Affair

rific headache and numerous cuts and bruises. A short time later he met up with waist gunner Sgt. Tarnava and they walked along a snow covered road along a wooded hillside. They were spotted by a retreating German column and captured. A young German soldier told them that he had spent the day placing mines in the area they would have walked through and that they would have been blown to pieces if they hadn't been captured. Fate is indeed strange

in war.

Sgt. Duerr was placed in a German field hospital with a fractured skull. The supplies in the German field hospital were so skimpy that they were using paper for bandages and had very few drugs. Amputations were being performed because of lack of medication to patch up the wounded. There was no food and no beds. He then entered the POW stream and was liberated about four months later by Patton's 3rd Army.

#42-39875	Buzz Blonde	427BS
1st Lt G.N. Smith (RTD) P	S/Sgt D.I. Massingill (RTD) ENG	
2ndLt M. Alderman (RTD) CP	S/Sgt G.F. Parker (RTD) RAD	
2ndLt E.W. Gardner, Jr (RTD) NAV	Sgt R.M. Miller (RTD) BTG	
F/O W.F. Dohm (RTD) BOM	Sgt A.L. Dussliere (RTD) WG	
	Sgt M. Howell (RTD) TG	

**#42-39875** collided with **#42-97861** just after bombs away at Bonn/Hangelan Airfield. There were dense contrails and Lt. Alderman was applying full power to stay in formation. He suddenly saw "Iza Vailable II" with its tail down and nose up and collided. The B-17 was tossed about violently for about two minutes. The Bombardier and Navigator bailed out due to the damage in the nose and their belief that the B-17 was out of control. Their oxygen system, interphones and heating equipment were out at 27,000 feet in 60 degree below zero temperature. Lt. Alder-

man brought his aircraft under control and landed at Field A-67, a fighter strip in Luxembourg. He was advised to land with gear up alongside the regular strip so the fighter strip would not be damaged. Most of the nose was gone, the right wing was wrecked and the horizontal stabilizer was a disaster. The ball-turret wound up inside the waist section of the aircraft. (See the article "We Remember Bonn" in the July 1991 issue of the newsletter). Mel Alderman was killed-in-action at a later time in a mid-air collision on his 35th and last mission.

#42-97861	Iza Vailable II	360BS
2ndLt R.F. Stratton (RTD) P	Sgt W.H. Rhodes (RTD) ENG	
2ndLt D.A. Schroll (RTD) CP	Sgt C.D. Knowles, Jr (RTD) RAD	
2ndLt T.R. Donahue (RTD) NAV	Sgt R.W. Koci (RTD) BTG	
2ndLt G.C. Bays (RTD) BOM	Sgt G.H. Maxon (RTD) WG	
	Sgt M.M. Mooney (KIA)* TG	

(\*) Buried in Ardennes American Cemetery near Liege, Belgium

**#42-97861** was at 26,000 feet when its nose suddenly went up. The pilot, Lt. Stratton and co-pilot, Lt. Schroll jointly exerted control pressure to bring the nose down.

At the time they believed they had been hit by flak. The autopilot was used to control the aircraft which had dropped to 25,000 feet. The waist gunner reported that the tail gun position had been knocked off and that tail gunner, Sgt. Mooney was missing. He was wearing his parachute at the time. The accident and weather forced Lt. Stratton to drop behind the formation and an emergency landing was made at airfield B-53 at Merville, France.

After landing an examination of the tail indicated that it had been hit by another aircraft whose props had chewed away the tail position, the rudder, vertical stabilizer and parts of the wing. Lts Stratton and Schroll

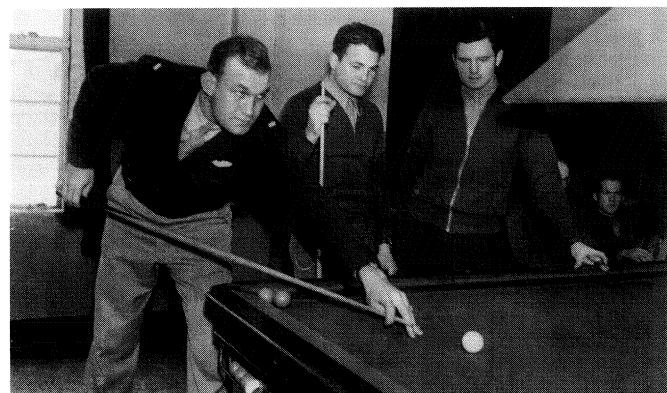
were awarded the DFC for their skill in controlling and landing their damaged aircraft. (See "A Cold and Unusual Mission" in the December 1986 issue of the newsletter.)

Another B-17, **#42-102411**, Miss Lace (427BS), piloted by F/O Demain, landed at Field A-69, Laon, France. They returned to Molesworth one week later.

Mission #300 was anything but a perfect mission but it did have elements of frustration, ingenuity, sacrifice and heroism. In one respect the story does have a happy ending for Lt. Ben O'Dell. When he bailed out the 6 EMs back in 1945 he thought that they were over Allied held territory. Over the years he thought that Richard Duerr had been killed. A short time ago they were reunited via a phone call instigated by the Association's Historian, Harry Gobrecht.



Red Cross gals count returning a/c. What were their names?



Between missions, "Goon" Miller, Carl Morales and Bob Nolan, rack 'em up.

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the 303rd BG (H) history book

## "Might In Flight"

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# World War II's Most Unforgettable Character

*During World War II as a member of the 303rd Bomb Group, I met a lot of wonderful, heroic and talented guys. But just one stood out as "World War II's Most Unforgettable Character." Formally he was addressed as Captain James McCall Kaiser but to the entire U.S. Army Air Forces and possibly some of the Allied Air Forces he was known simply as "Tailwheel." Here is part two of my recollections of that character as I jotted them down some 47 years ago. Was he a legend? Or was he just a figment of my imagination?*

## Chapter IV

The next morning the new 359th Squadron Navigator's combination of Kaiser and Susskind went to work. We selected the barrack that we were going to use for a briefing room, and commenced putting up maps and charts all over the walls. At one end of the barrack, we put up a map covering all of Europe within range of our bombers. Then we put in the up-to-date location of the battle lines. A black line, representing the Allied Armies was somewhere around the Rhine River and a red line, representing the Russian Army, was somewhere around Poznan in Poland.

As I worked on the battle lines, I noticed Tailwheel go over to one of the desks and start writing. He wrote feverishly. In a few minutes he finished, handed the material to the clerk and said, Type three copies of each of these immediately.

I finished my work on the maps and went over to see what Tailwheel had written. Instead of a training schedule which I presumed he had been working on, there were 20 letters of recommendation for promotion, one for each of the navigators now assigned to our squadron. I turned to Tailwheel with a look of bewilderment on my face. He must have read my mind, because he smiled, turned and pointed to the map containing the battle lines and said, I figured I'd better put the paperwork for promotions in early, because by the time that those feather merchants up at headquarters start working on them, the Red Army will probably be bathing in the English Channel and the American Army will be sleigh riding in Siberia.

As I looked at the map, I had other ideas. I wondered how many times

Tailwheel would get The Puckers before those battle lines met?

Luck must have been riding with Tailwheel and me, because on the first mission when our squadron led the group, the bombing results were excellent. We decided to celebrate that evening and take the Liberty Run to Northampton to have a few alf and alfs."

As we were dressing, I thought to myself that this would be the first time I had seen Tailwheel in his class A uniform. I awaited the outcome with mingled curiosity and anxiety. Usually I had seen him in shirt and flight jacket, looking like a duffel bag that had just survived a transatlantic crossing on a troopship.

As we got ready to leave the barrack, I glanced over at TW and stared at the rows of ribbons. They spread over his chest like butter on bread. This was the fellow, who on his first mission and our first meeting, had said that the black puffs of black smoke being shot up by the Germans were liable to hurt someone. He must have seen flak before, many times. On his chest were the Pre-Pearl Harbor ribbon, all three theatres of war ribbons, the Air Medal with cluster, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Silver Star. Pretty good for a fellow who was only supposed to have been a training officer back in the States.

I whistled long and low and said, Quite a bit of spinach you have there. Tell me, why the space next to the Silver Star? With a serious expression on his face, he answered, I'm saving that for the Congressional Medal of Honor. With that, the fat face broke out into the famous Tailwheel grin.

Spring arrived in England and things started running smoothly. We had 20 crews busy on training missions to simulate the actual sorties. All that was missing was the flak and the Luftwaffe. That meant scheduling crews for early takeoffs and also scheduling a gaggle of crews for the afternoon missions. After trying the impossible, getting Tailwheel up to give the navigation portion of the early briefings, I gave up hope and decided to do them myself. The round man could do the afternoon briefings. In this way, it would not interfere with his outside curricula of raising a

few at the bar every night.

Early one morning, I was awakened by a flashlight shining in my face and the voice of Tailwheel somewhere behind it.

"Cheers to you Agnes, I've brought you a present."

With that, he reached down inside his jacket and brought out a kitten that he had picked up in his travels. I didn't want to think of where his travels might have taken him.

"Her name is Agnes and she is going to be our mascot." With that he ambled over to his bed and in less than a minute, his snoring echoed throughout the room.

The next morning, I got up for the early briefing. On my way out of the barrack, I glanced over at Tailwheel. There he was fully clothed, sleeping peacefully, with Agnes perched on his chest. I wonder what the weather officer would have done if he had to room with Tailwheel.

Life in our barrack ran about as normal as a three ring circus. Every morning when I arose, there was Agnes sleeping peacefully on Tailwheel's chest.

Very late, one dark evening, Tailwheel struck again.

I was awakened by a light shining in my face and again the voice of Tailwheel came out of the darkness. "Cheers to you Agnes, I have brought you a present." With that he reached down inside his jacket and came up with the smallest and funniest looking dog that I had ever seen. Between his big, floppy ears nestled a small head. His small beady eyes regarded me suspiciously. The rest of him reminded me of an overstuffed sausage.

"This is Butch," said Tailwheel. "I think Agnes needs a playmate so I brought him home to join the family." With that he waddled over towards his bed calling, "Here, Agnes, here Agnes, I have brought you a playmate."

I pulled the covers up over my head and dozed off in a trouble sleep, dreaming of a bomb run on Berlin, but the Nazis were shooting up cats and dogs instead of the normal big puffs of black smoke.

Morning came faster than usual and I rolled out of the sack for that morning briefing. This time I was more than curious to see how

Tailwheel and his new friends were getting along. There they were, all sleeping peacefully, Butch, Agnes and Tailwheel.

And again I tried to speculate how long it would be before those red and black battle lines would meet.

I returned to the barrack around noon, to wake Tailwheel for his afternoon briefing and was surprised to find Butch among the missing.

"What happened to Butch?" I inquired.

"Nature called him, only it didn't call him far enough," said Tailwheel as he pointed to a newly washed pair of shoes under his bed. "I presented him to our next door neighbors, only they don't know it yet."

Well, that meant that our happy family numbered only three.

The next day it was further reduced when I returned to find Agnes missing. I looked over to Tailwheel for some sort of explanation.

"I asked Agnes to join me in a drink and she refused," he explained. "I think she was a member of the W.C.T.U., so I had to ask her to leave."

That night I took the Liberty Run to town and managed to visit my share of pubs before the familiar cry of the barkeep, "The towel is up," echoed throughout the pub. But try as I might, I still couldn't erase from my mind the picture of Agnes carrying a W.C.T.U. banner.

## Chapter V

A rainy day came to England, as rainy days usually did, so that meant no flying for our crews. It also meant a day of sitting around the barrack shooting the breeze.

Being a curious guy by nature-back in New York they called it nosy-I decided to find out a little more about Tailwheel. For instance where did he come from? What did he do before the war? I had found out that Tailwheel would never volunteer any information, especially about himself. The only way you got information from Tailwheel was to ask him a question point blank. Which I did.

"Hey Tailwheel! What part of the U.S. do you inhabit?"

"Columbus, Ohio," he said, as he stretched out on his bunk, yawned and looked up at the ceiling. "Columbus, Ohio, the home of the Buckeyes."

"You mention Ohio State University sort of reverently. Did you go there?"

"Certainly did. Went there for about five and a half years," was the reply.

"Oh, you're an alumnus of Ohio State," I said.

"Nope," he answered and smiled very slyly.

"Five and a half years and you didn't graduate? Sounds rather funny," I remarked. "You must have had a contract with the school, or else the co-eds were very attractive, or you were just plain dopey."

"Not to all your observations, Agnes! I just didn't feel like being told what courses I had to take, so I took the ones I wanted to take. Whatever course appealed to me at the time, I took. I learned what I wanted to learn, not what they wanted me to. It's more fun that way. About that time the President decided to send me his 'Greetings and Salutations,' so I applied for the cadets and here I am, Agnes."

"What happened in between?" I asked.

"That's a long story," he said. "I enlisted in the army and went through the usual SNAFU red tape, and found myself an aviation gadget, studying navigation in one of those flying boats down in Florida. From there, I went to training in B-17s. When Pearl Harbor came I was still an aviation air gadget, so I went to the Pacific Theatre as a replacement with the 19th Bombardment Group. I flew over China with a lot of 'Brass' and finally got my Commission as a 2nd Looie. The 'Top Brass' then pulled his rank on me and made me the finance officer for the trip. One day a character, with a chicken on his shoulder, requested and got a partial payment from me against his salary and was transferred. Now the army is still trying to collect that money from me because the colonel conveniently forgot to sign for it. I guess that's part of the reciprocal lease they are talking about. The character gets a loan and they reciprocate on me."

"How were the flying conditions over China?" I then asked.

"Best country I ever got lost over," was the reply.

"One trip, I was flying with a general and we were an hour overdue at our destination, because of bad weather. So this star-studded character called me on the intercom and asked me how far we were from our destination. So I measured the distance on my map and told him two fat thumbs and a short pencil. He took a dim view of my methods of navigation and got mad. That was quite a trip, though. When we finally reached our destination we couldn't land because of weather so we had to fly to

an alternate base over Jap held territory. Our gas was running low so the general gave us the orders to throw everything overboard, including guns and ammunition, to lighten the load. But of course, the general kept his own personal luggage. After all, his set of golf clubs and that case of caviar were more important to the war effort than the fifty caliber guns which we had just thrown overboard."

Figuring I was on a roll, I decided to ask Tailwheel some more questions.

"By the way, Tailwheel, where did you pick up all the fancy spinach you were wearing the other night?" I asked.

"Oh that, I helped my bomb-aimer sink some ships off Africa. Quite a place, that Africa! Oh, that Casbah, and those girls!"

With that I think Tailwheel figured he had been talking too much because he got up from his bunk, stretched, and went over to look out the window.

"It's stopped raining," he said. "Let's go over to the bar and down a few. Just mentioning that caviar made me sort of thirsty."

"Why don't you have a glass of water, if you're thirsty?" I asked.

"I said I was thirsty, not dirty," said Tailwheel as he ambled out the door in the direction of the O'Club.

The news from both fronts was getting better by the day. The distance between them was gradually becoming smaller and smaller. On our maps in the briefing hut, the distance was considerably smaller than Tailwheel's waistline. Our missions these days were in support of the ground troops but they were moving so fast, that we were expecting recalls on half of our missions, because the ground troops had already overrun our targets.

During one of these missions Tailwheel and I flew together as navigators for the group's scout aircraft carrying group headquarters personnel who wanted to observe the 303rd forming over England as well as joining the bomber stream over Clacton on their way across the channel. As the formation approached the French coast, we turned back and headed for Molesworth. Over the English Channel I saw Tailwheel move the navigator stool directly beneath the celestial dome. For a moment I thought Tailwheel was going to take out a sextant and practice some celestial navigation. But instead, he stood on his head, stuck his feet into the celestial dome and at the same time he clicked on the intercom and said, "Bookkeeper to Chauffeur. Are you sure we are flying straight and level?" For a moment there was complete silence in the aircraft, but I'm



**FLAK: What Tailwheel referred to as black smoke.**

sure the air in the pilot's compartment turned blue. Tailwheel with a grin on his face, like the proverbial cat who ate the canary, took his feet out of the dome, removed his headphones, sat back and enjoyed the ride back to Station 107. Tailwheel had struck again.

Then came a deep penetration to Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. The target was the gun factory and it was one of the last few remaining big targets that the Nazi Army had left.

Our new commanding officer, anxious to watch the group forming that day also planned to accompany the group to the French coast and return. Tailwheel went along as the navigator. When the CO's plane reached the French coast, they left the group and altered course for home. Tailwheel estimated they would arrive over the English coast in about an hour. Enroute, they ran into a storm and after flying for a little more than an hour, the CO called TW on the intercom and said, "Pilot to Navigator."

"Bookkeeper to Chauffeur," answered Tailwheel.

The colonel, not being used to the unorthodox methods of the fat man, hesitated and then said, "Pilot to Navigator. How far are we from the English coast. Are you sure we are on the right course?"

"Naviscratcher to plane jockey," came the voice from the navigators'

compartment. "We should have passed the English coast about 15 minutes ago. Just keep on this heading and everything will be OK."

After another 15 minutes of flying and now able to see water beneath him, the colonel became a little impatient and more than a little annoyed. In a voice bristling with authority, he once again called Tailwheel. "Pilot to Navigator. Are you sure you know where you are?"

"Navigator to Pilot. Yes sir! You just hold this heading for another eight hours and we will be in Bangor, Maine," said Tailwheel.

"Bangor, Maine!" thundered the colonel.

"Yes sir!" said Tailwheel. "I figured the war is just about over, so we might as well go home now and avoid the rush."

Some choice remarks came out of the pilot's compartment but Tailwheel being a diplomat at all times, unplugged his headphones, sat back and enjoyed the scenery on the way back to Molesworth.

The round one was quite a prophet, because that was the last bombing mission our group flew and the CO, now appreciating the humor in the flight with Tailwheel, let him off with only a reprimand.

Yes, sir! Life in England was never dull, even though the war was in the home stretch. *Next issue: Tailwheel returns to the Casbah.*



**Hokanson, Tomlinson, Carlson and Shupp.**

# Mission Reports for all 364 missions now available

Several years ago the Association's Board of Directors authorized funds to copy all the 303rd Bomb Group's Mission Reports which had been filed away at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

It has been a long struggle for the volunteer crew headed by the late George Stallings and Ralph Adams. According to Adams the project to copy all 364 missions flown by the 303rd At Molesworth will be successfully completed by March 31, 1993. All information on the combat missions, both the 303rd commander's reports and the 8th Bomber Command reports will be forwarded to David Matthews soon after that date.

David Matthews is the project officer for making copies in answer to requests.

Although there was a great interest in the retrieval of the records from the National Archives when the idea was first proposed, there has been very little interest in ordering mission reports since. One possibility is the fact copying all 35 missions for an individual could be a costly proposition. For instance, the January 11, 1944 mission to Oschersleben would cost \$14.60 for the 303rd commander's report plus \$27.60 for the 8th Bomber Command version for a total of \$42.40 for one mission. Another possibility is that people are

not familiar with what is contained in each report.

Each report contains an Operations, Intelligence, Maintenance and Communications section as well as strike photos. Unfortunately, these are copies not the original glossy print.

Here is a thumbnail sketch of what is usually in each report: Field Order/41st CW Supplement/Intelligence Annex; Loading List of Aircraft; Formation Chart; S-3 Report; Mission Summary Report; Report of Aircraft Not Attacking; Lead Navigator and Lead Bombardier Report; Group and Squadron Leader's Narrative; Summary of Hot News; Flak Report; Crew

Comments in Interrogation and S-4 Combat Report. One copy of each report is earmarked for the 8th AF Heritage Center in Savannah, Georgia.

One copy of each has gone to the Historian, Harry Gobrecht, Harry is condensing each report for inclusion in the Group History scheduled for release in the Fall. One copy of each report is being held by David Matthews who is charged with making copies for members upon request. An order form was included in the April 1992 issue of the newsletter. The mission reports have been very popular with our Associate members most of whom are usually doing research on some particular mission.

## 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	TOTAL COST
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478	8th B.C.		85	8.50	317	2/19/45	Gelsenkirchen	61	6.10
303	1/17/45	Paderborn	62	6.20	472	8th B.C.		115	11.50
479	8th B.C.		121	12.10	318	2/20/45	Nurnberg	68	6.80
304	1/20/45	Mannheim	70	7.00	473	8th B.C.		120	12.00
480	8th B.C.		120	12.00	319	2/21/445	Nurnberg	72	7.20
305	1/21/45	Aschaffenburg	35	3.50	474	8th B.C.		121	12.10
481	8th B.C.		69	6.90	320	2/22/45	Ulzen		
306	1/22/45	Sterkrade	52	5.20	475	8th B.C.		137	13.70
482	8th B.C.		89	8.90	321	2/23/45	Kitzengen		
307	1/23/45	Neuss	37	3.70	476	8th B.C.		129	12.90
483	8th B.C.		63	6.30	322	2/24/45	Hamburg		
308	1/28/45	Cologne	37	3.70	—	8th B.C.			
—	8th B.C.		72	7.20					

## Hell's Angels Group

*Continued from page 1*

there's a small dresser between two bunks. There are blackout curtains at all windows which are drawn early during the Summer months to make it dark enough to try to get some sleep.

As austere as these conditions may seem we never forget how fortunate we are to have a home with its dry beds and roof over our heads.

The Non-coms have quarters which are about as lavishly furnished as ours are except that they're more crowded. Their bunks are double-decked.

During the early hours of the morning the "Alert-man" will enter the barracks with his flashlight and check the bunk tags before waking the men that he has on his mission list. If you're one of the "lucky" ones you make it up the street to the shower house for a shave; the latrine is in another area close by. Then there's about a quarter of a mile walk to the mess hall; if the weather's good the exercise is good for you. If it's bad it's a long walk.

After breakfast there's a ride to the briefing room where the plain backless benches are occupied from front to rear in this case for the mission briefing. There is no excuse for being late. An officer for each category covers everything that will be necessary for the men to know.

The weather over the Continent is bad half the time so a Weather Officer from the 18th Weather Squadron is always part of every mission briefing.

And, to wind it up there's always the pep talk by Colonel Stevens, the Group C.O., on the importance of this particular mission; how it will shorten the war. After the briefing we collect all of our flight gear and board a truck for the ride out to the hardstand where the B-17 is parked. As the truck nears the hardstand we get our first sight of the noble B-17 that has been made ready for us. Our feelings are positive knowing that whatever was humanly possible has been done to make her ready. If anything goes wrong now it'll be mechanical failure, not lack of devoted effort. — And, we're proud of our 303rd Group tail insignia. We're sure we've got the most distinctive design of all the Groups; a black "C" on a white background surrounded by a large red triangle. This is the design depicted by artist Keith Ferris on his large mural of "Thunder Bird" in the National Air And Space Museum.

The Crew Chief has been at our B-17 in the bone-chilling dampness for hours by now and is on hand to greet

us. We feel a close bond to him, knowing that our very lives can depend on his concern for us. The newspapers and radio are burdened with the exciting exploits of the flight crews, and this is great, but the stories that aren't receiving near enough publicity pertain to the non-flying people who make this whole thing function. Not an engine could be started without their around-the-clock labors. These ground personnel compose the great majority of our population; the fly-boys constitute only about one-fifth of the total. — And there's only one priority for every-one, top priority; to have the aircraft and the flight crews ready for the mission.

When the mission departs the formations are neat; when they return the B-17's show the evidence of the kind of day they've had. Some of them are pretty beat-up. The men of the 444th Sub-Depot hop to it and under pressure of time they labor around the clock if necessary to get the aircraft in commission. They handle the volume of fuel and oil consumed, the transportation section, make the engine changes, pack the parachutes and do things we don't even know about. Some of them have won decorations for heroism on the base. There's a strong bond between the flight crews and these men.

The 3rd Station Complement Squadron has the enormous tasks of maintenance of all base facilities including water, electricity, engineering and even keeping our runways in good condition, which is certainly a high priority.

Loading the bombs usually takes all night. The men of the 1681st Ordnance Company can't wear gloves in some of their work in the often freezing cold to perform their delicate work which is about as dangerous as flying combat. Man-handling the 50 calibre links of cartridges aboard is an additional chore.

Security of the base is performed by the 1199th Military Police Company. These duties are particularly necessary since it seems that Americans by nature are not too ingrained in matters of security. The Europeans have us beat on this one.

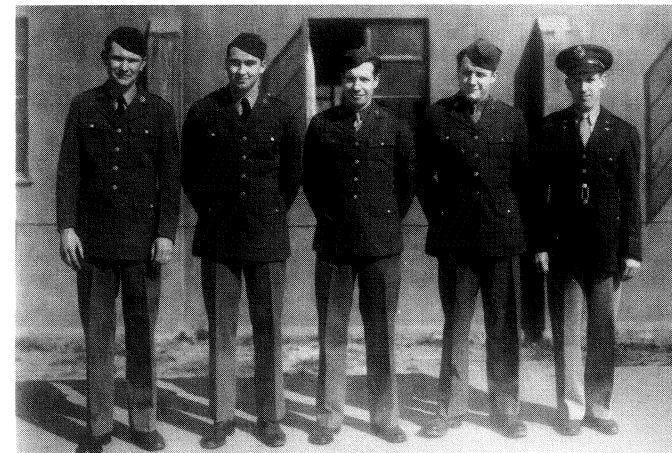
The 863rd Chemical Company has the dangerous task of handling incendiary bombs and sky markers. Most of their work is done at night.

When a B-17 returns firing red-red flares on final, the signal that wounded are aboard, or with a feathered prop the 2097th Fire-Fighting Platoon and ambulances from the Base Hospital are standing by.

Obtaining food and clothing for the thousands of men is the responsibility of the 114th Quartermaster Company. Also, obtaining the small allotment of coal that we burn in our pot-

bellied stoves makes rationing necessary, and contributes to "midnight requisitioning" of the coal supply dump a must.

It's a paradox of this war that all the dedicated, selfless people on this base who exhibit such compassion for one another can at the same time have as their mission the devastation and defeat of another people who probably exhibit the same characteristics among themselves.



427th B.S. Bombsight personnel; (l to r) Sgts. Kenneth Zeitmaier, Jack -Pinnell, Edward Gonder, James Crangle and Lt. Morris Sjöberg.



A totally contrasting typically English scene only one mile from the base in the village of Brington



Relaxing in the Red Cross Clubmobile

# AFEES Information on the 303RD Bomb Group, Feb. 8, 1993

Compiled by: Clayton & Scotty David

E&E	NAME	RANK	SQUAD	MIA	UK
*+6	Robert L. Mays	2nd Lt.	358	12 / 12 / 42	27 / 1 / 43
+8	Gilbert T. Schowalter	1st Lt.	360	12 / 12 / 42	26 / 1 / 43
+9	Jack E. Williams	2nd Lt.	360	12 / 12 / 42	29 / 1 / 43
12	Mark L. Mc Dermott	2nd Lt.	427	23 / 1 / 43	7 / 2 / 43
*13	Sebastian L. Vogel	S / Sgt.	427	23 / 1 / 43	7 / 2 / 43
14	Norman P. Therrieu	Sgt.	360	23 / 1 / 43	7 / 2 / 43
*16	John W. Spence	2nd. Lt.	359	23 / 1 / 43	15 / 3 / 43
+17	Sidney Devers	T / Sgt.	359	23 / 1 / 43	15 / 3 / 43
18	Kenneth G. Hildebrand	T / Sgt.	358	12 / 12 / 42	15 / 3 / 43
+ 19	James R. Toney	Sgt.	358	12 / 12 / 42	15 / 3 / 43
20	Frederick B. Hartung	T / Sgt.	360	12 / 12 / 42	15 / 3 / 43
21	Bruce W. Gordon	2nd Lt.	358	23 / 1 / 43	28 / 3 / 43
22	Eldon T. Ruppe	2nd Lt.	358	23 / 1 / 43	28 / 3 / 43
23	Thomas P. Mayo	1st Lt.	358	16 / 2 / 43	28 / 3 / 43
*29	Miles B. Jones	T / Sgt.	359	23 / 1 / 43	25 / 4 / 43
31	William A. Whitman	T / Sgt.	360	12 / 12 / 42	25 / 5 / 43
32	Iva Lee Fegette	S / Sgt.	360	12 / 12 / 42	25 / 5 / 43
+44	Harry E. Roach, Jr.	2nd Lt.	427	1 / 5 / 43	29 / 6 / 43
+51	Frank W. Greene	S / Sgt.	359	23 / 1 / 43	6 / 8 / 43
+63	Bernard H. Koenig	T / Sgt.	358	4 / 7 / 43	10 / 8 / 43
+118	William P. Maher	2nd Lt.	358	31 / 8 / 43	5 / 10 / 43
121	Edward F. Chonskie	Sgt.	358	4 / 7 / 43	18 / 10 / 43
122	John Z loance	S / Sgt.	358	4 / 7 / 43	18 / 10 / 43
+123	Albert V. H. Carrol	S / Sgt.	358	4 / 7 / 43	19 / 10 / 43
+134	Frank Kimotek	S / Sgt.	358	31 / 8 / 43	25 / 10 / 43
+231	William R. Hartigan	2nd Lt.	358	16 / 9 / 43	23 / 11 / 43
232	Lorin F. Douthett	2nd Lt.	358	20 / 10 / 43	23 / 11 / 43
293	Walter Hargrove	2nd Lt.	358	31 / 8 / 43	27 / 12 / 43
+377	Verdis B. Pryor	Sgt.	359	31 / 8 / 43	5 / 2 / 44
633	Nick Asvestos	S / Sgt.	359	28 / 2 / 44	11 / 5 / 44
*655	William E. Wolff	S / Sgt.	360	30 / 12 / 43	21 / 5 / 44
*671	Bernard W. Rawlings	2nd Lt.	427	24 / 1 / 44	25 / 5 / 44
*674	Clayton C. David	2nd Lt.	358	11 / 1 / 44	25 / 5 / 44
*683	Robert R. Kerr	2nd Lt.	427	29 / 4 / 44	27 / 5 / 44
700	Frank Mitchell	2nd Lt.	360	1 / 12 / 43	1 / 6 / 44
735	Nelson Campbell	2nd Lt.	360	31 / 12 / 43	10 / 6 / 44
744	Walter A. Meldrich	2nd Lt.	358	22 / 4 / 44	15 / 6 / 44
*752	Charles J. McLain	1st Lt.	359	28 / 2 / 44	15 / 6 / 44
+1383	Arnold S. Litman	Capt.	358	15 / 8 / 44	3 / 9 / 44
1384	Lawrence J. Stein	1st Lt.	358	15 / 8 / 44	3 / 9 / 44
1385	Wayne E. Krouskup	1st Lt.	358	15 / 8 / 44	3 / 9 / 44
+1386	Fred R. Meyer	T / Sgt.	358	15 / 8 / 44	3 / 9 / 44
+1387	Harry R. Card	T / Sgt.	358	15 / 8 / 44	3 / 9 / 44
+1388	Hanley E. Grissom	S / Sgt.	358	15 / 8 / 44	3 / 9 / 44
+1389	William P. Truesdale	S / Sgt.	358	15 / 7 / 44	3 / 9 / 44
1484	John R. Seddon	2nd Lt.	358	22 / 4 / 44	5 / 9 / 44
1485	Lowell L. Ricky	1st. Lt.	358	15 / 8 / 44	5 / 9 / 44
*1486	LaMar H. Whittier	Sgt.	358	15 / 8 / 44	5 / 9 / 44
1597	Albert Willard	S / Sgt.	427	28 / 6 / 44	6 / 9 / 44
1598	John L. Snede	Sgt.	427	28 / 6 / 44	6 / 9 / 44
+1662	Joseph M. Thompson	2nd Lt.	427	29 / 1 / 44	7 / 9 / 44
1684	Clarence J. Williams	S / Sgt.	358	15 / 8 / 44	7 / 9 / 44
1722	Loren E. Zimmer	S / Sgt.	427	29 / 1 / 44	8 / 9 / 44
+1723	Richard Arrington	S / Sgt.	427	29 / 1 / 44	8 / 9 / 44
1884	William R. Ferrell	Sgt.	358	13 / 4 / 44	10 / 9 / 44
1943	Joseph De Luca	F / O	360	22 / 2 / 44	11 / 9 / 44
*2014	Robert H. Johnson	T / Sgt.	360	22 / 6 / 44	12 / 9 / 44
*2060	Geo. R. Weinbrenner	Maj.		22 / 2 / 44	13 / 9 / 44
2119	Salvador Chavez	Sgt.	360	22 / 2 / 44	15 / 9 / 44
2120	Bert C. Nelson	Sgt.	358	15 / 8 / 44	15 / 9 / 44
*2225	Conrad J. Kersch	T / Sgt.	427	26 / 3 / 44	19 / 9 / 44
*2275	Robert J. Hannah	T / Sgt.	360	22 / 2 / 44	24 / 9 / 44
2308	Charles D. Crook	1st Lt.	360	22 / 2 / 44	28 / 9 / 44
+2335	John W. Lowther	S / Sgt.	358	20 / 10 / 43	29 / 9 / 44
*2424	Robert L. Ward	T / Sgt.	358	20 / 10 / 43	4 / 10 / 44
*2734	Elmer P. Israelson	2nd Lt.	358	24 / 4 / 43	2 / 12 / 44
*2796	Roy A. Cheek	S / Sgt.	360	22 / 2 / 44	6 / 1 / 45
*	Benjamin L. O Dell	Capt.	359	10 / 1 / 45	11 / 1 / 45
*+	Paul H. Hassler	S / Sgt.	427	10 / 1 / 45	20 / 1 / 45

Note Dates are reported as, day of month / month / year.

Date under UK is the date the men returned to the United Kingdom and were debriefed. That is where their report was given an Escape & Evasion number.

Some men were liberated on the Continent and not debriefed in London. Therefore, no E&E #.

(\*) denotes the men who have affiliated with AFEES

(+) are the men who we have reported as deceased.

## TALL TALES

B/Gen. Robert M. Travis, flying on a mission to complete his operational tour, led the 41st CBW on 21 Sept. 1944 to bomb Mainz, Germany. Capt. William R. Eisenhart, Operations Officer with the 359th BS who flew with Gen. Travis became somewhat of a folk hero after the mission.

Several months previous to this mission, the 359th BS had instituted a policy that pilots could not leave the cockpit area during a mission to urinate in the relief tube in the bomb bay. They were advised to use a procedure instituted by pilot, George Stallings which was to crack the cockpit window, get up on their haunches and the slipstream would carry their urine outside. This was done on the condition that they would personally clean the window area upon landing. During the September 21st mission, Capt. Eisenhart used this technique to relieve himself only to discover that Gen. Travis had also cracked his window while he was smoking and the urine hit him full in the face. Upon landing Gen. Travis chewed out Capt Eisenhart for a full half hour and ordered him to take down the bulletin board notice on the suggested method of urinating while piloting a B-17. He also advised Eisenhart that he was going to award the DFC to the bombardier and navigator and was damned if he would award one to him, but might instigate a court martial instead. Later Capt. Eisenhart was known as the only captain who urinated in the face of a general and got away with it. Such is how folk heroes are made.

A snowstorm blanketed England on 11-12 January 1945 and the Eighth Air Force bombers and fighters were stood down due to the bad weather. Looking for something constructive to do, the officers of the Gobrecht and Goodberlet crews, occupants of the hut Sad Shack, located next to the 358th BS Operation Hut, decided to get even with the occupants of said hut for all the early morning mission wakeup calls. They built two large snowmen and blocked the front and rear entrances to the operations hut. They were soon joined by many other volunteers of the squadron who wanted to get their share of the retribution. The completed snowmen did their jobs magnificently and it was only after a great deal of door pounding, yelling and threats was one of the snowmen removed. It was a very satisfying and constructive day for the flying crews of the 358th.



## POTPOURRI

### Underage Veterans Sought

A national veterans association is seeking veterans who falsified their age and served in the U.S. Military under the age of 17. A national reunion will be held in October. A free handbook on government policy on underage veterans will be sent on request to any underage veteran. For more information write to:

Allan Stover, Commander  
Veterans of Underage  
Military Service,  
3444 Walker Drive  
Ellicott City, MD 21042.

### U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home Undergoes Changes

Nestled in the heart of our Nation's Capital, is 300-acres of secure, park-like setting, in which 2,000 enlisted Army and Air Force veterans have found a home.

No longer called "The Old Soldiers' Home," the U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home (USSAH) is a thriving community that offers Army veterans a haven of retreat.

Membership of the USSAH is made up of veterans from the Armed Services whose active duty was at least 50 percent enlisted or warrant officer and who are:

- Retirees at least 60 years of age (previously there was no age requirement)
- Veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to service-connected disability
- Veterans unable to earn a livelihood due to non-service disability and who served in a war theater.

Private rooms, three meals a day and health services are available in this city within a city. The Home has its own laundry, banking facilities and

post office as well as a golf course and other amenities.

For additional information call 1-800-422-9988, or write:

Admissions Office  
USSAH  
Washington, D.C. 20317.

### Gen. LeMay to be honored in Washington, D.C.

The General and Mrs. Curtis E. LeMay Foundation is planning a tribute dinner to General Curtis E. LeMay on Sunday, May 16, 1993, at Bolling Air Force Base Officers' Club Ballroom. The following day, Monday, May 17, 1993, General LeMay's military collection will be presented to the Smithsonian Institution by Jane LeMay Lodge, only child of General LeMay. The ceremony will take place at the Smithsonian Institution's Gerber Facility in Suitland, Maryland.

For more information on the events and placement on the invitation list, please call toll free (800) 554-5510. Jane LeMay Lodge and the LeMay Foundation want to reach all those air corps and Air Force personnel with whom General LeMay served.

### Medals Lost?

As time goes on you realize that the real importance of the medals that you received during WW II may be to show them to your grandchildren and in some cases great-grandchildren. But how do go about it? Send a letter to:

National Personnel Records  
Center  
(Military Personnel Records)  
9700 Page Boulevard  
St. Louis, MO 63132

Besides asking for a replacement of the awards and decorations that you may have misplaced add the sentence "in addition I should like to receive such other awards and medals that I may be entitled to but which I am not aware of."

In due time you will receive a form (SF 180) from the records center. This form is headed Transmittal of and/or entitlement to awards. There are the usual boxes to be checked off characteristic of any all purpose government form. Check the various boxes confirming what medals you believe you are entitled to. The medals will be forwarded to you from HQ AFMPC/DPMASA, Randolph Air Force Base, TX 78150-6001 within 90 days.

NOTE: Some 1912-1964 records were destroyed in a 1973 fire).

## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

### LAST CALL FOR DUES or LAST NEWSLETTER

We'll hate to lose you, but if your '93 dues are not paid by 1 May, we must transfer our regular members to the Inactive Roster and delete our associate members. Some of you may no longer be interested in membership, some are deceased and we haven't heard about, but most of you have just overlooked the due dues due date. Please due it — do it, that is — today. Check your mailing labels. If your dues code, which follows your membership number, shows a "2", your dues are in arrears and this will be your last Newsletter. You are OK if that dues code indicates a 3, 4, 5, LM, SLM or is blank.

Some dues, donations, memorial checks, address changes and death notices are still being sent to Bill Heller, Treasurer Bill Roche or Editor Hal Susskind. They always forward them to me, but let's save time and extra postage and send them directly to me at the address shown below. Be assured I will notify all interested parties.

I've had some calls for the location of 303rd chapters or local units of any kind who occasionally meet together. Please let me know if you are a member of such so I can steer others to you. The new published roster will have an index by ZIP codes so you will have a better handle on who is in your area in case you want to start such a chapter.

I will be on the Molesworth trip in May and a short side trip to Scotland in June. We expect to return home on 7 June. That will explain any delay in processing your dues payments between 19 May and 7 June. Thanks for your patience.

And now the new lists which are as of 12 March 1993.

**CARLTON M. SMITH**  
12700 RED MAPLE CIRCLE #54  
SONORA, CA 95370-5269  
PHONE: 209-533-4033

## NEW MEMBERS

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| 1760  | George Anthony, 4763 Santa Cruz Ave., San Diego, CA 92107 (427)                |
| A-186 | David B. LeFevre, P.O. Box 879, Ventura, CA 93002 0879                         |
| 1761  | Leonard Cohen, 805 Fraser Rd., Erdenheim, PA 19118 (427)                       |
| S1762 | Robert B. Smith, Rt. 1, Box 41, Cozad, NE 69130                                |
| 1763  | John R. Kosilla, 3800 Amador Way, Reno, NV 89502 (358)                         |
| 1764  | Dalton R. Hutchins, 211 Pine Ct., Sheffield, AL 35660 (360)                    |
| 1765  | Joseph J. Beshar, 198 Merritt Dr., Oradell, NJ 07649 (358)                     |
| 1766  | Richard D. Green, 20 Harbour House, Ocean Reef Club, Key Largo, FL 33037 (358) |
| 1767  | George A. Kyle, Jr, 2222 N. Atlantic Blvd, #7, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33305 (360) |
| 1768  | John L. Arendt, 123 Amarillo Dr., Carpentersville, IL 60110 (359)              |
| 1769  | Thomas D. Coulson, 14 Ocean Blvd., Naples, FL 33942 (359)                      |
| 1770  | Wendell Sprague, 11622 Alpine Dr. SW, Port Orchard, WA 90366 (359)             |
| L1771 | Wayne Cope, 702 S. Main, Homer, IL 61849-1515 (358)                            |
| 1772  | William H. Ferguson, 404 N Union St., Mc Louth, KS 66054                       |
| 1773  | Leonard A. General, 304 Old Trenton Rd., Browns Mills, NJ 08015 (427)          |
| 1774  | Otis M. White, 24 Scofield Heights, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603 (359)               |
| L1775 | Charles W. Ziesche, 5529 Capr Leyte Dr., Sarasota, FL 34242 (427)              |
| 1776  | Joseph E. Bradbury, 102 Harrow Ave., San Antonio, TX 78227-4311                |
| 1777  | Anthony J. Magnano, 49 Longfellow Ave., Pittsfield, MA 01201 (359)             |
| 1778  | Charles P. Johnson, 14709 Carrolton Rd., Rockville, MD 20853 (358)             |
| L1779 | Raymon G. Walker, 20 Rosemary Lane, So. Weymouth, MA 02190                     |

## UPGRADE TO LIFE OR SUPER LIFE MEMBERSHIP

- |       |                         |
|-------|-------------------------|
| L105b | Melvin A. Brown (358)   |
| 5122  | Orlyn D. Chunat (358)   |
| L055  | William H. Cox (358)    |
| L1604 | William C. Davis (358)  |
| L110  | Lloyd J. Flaniqan (427) |



## TARGET YOUR CALENDAR

England Tour  
May 19-28, 1993

Savannah Reunion  
March 29/April 2, 1994

L028 James C. Hicks (359)  
 L1164 George R. Howard (427)  
 L1262 Gordon Lofquist (360)  
 S681 Campbell Miller (358)  
 L1273 John L. Olson (358)  
 L1592 Warren Tashian (360)  
 L1663 Warren G. Yates (427)

### DONATIONS / MEMORIALS

Widow Adeline Czarny Adams  
 5740 Frederick E. Barnes (359)  
 S1379 Edwin B. Barry (1114)  
 L1282 Curtis O. Brooke (358)  
 L335 Robert C. Campbell (427)  
 Widow Ruth L. Cannon – Memorial to Harley Cannon  
 S361 John J. Casello (360)  
 S122 Orlyn D. Chunut (358)  
 L308 Louis W. Considine (359)  
 Widow Eva E. Cozzo – Memorial to Lawrence Cozzo  
 Widow Katherirle Duros – Memorial to Constantine Duros  
 L671 Jake Fredericks (360)  
 L1602 Ambrose G. Grant (359) Memorial  
 L909 Bernard Greenberg (358)  
 L023 Lester C. Hansen (359)  
 Widow Helen M. Hoke – Memorial to Marvin Hoke  
 S820 Robert E. Hurdle (359)  
 A-79 Franklin R. Joy  
 Widow Frances M. Kasik – Memorial to Robert F. Kasik  
 Widow Kathleen D. Keely – Memorial to Eugene Keely  
 414 Wilmer A. Knutson (427)  
 L1280 Wayne E. Krouskup (358)  
 553 William E. Lewis (427)  
 L729 Malcolm J. Magid (358) - Memorial to two deceased comrades  
 673 Costa Markos (358)  
 S806 Morton M. Moon, Jr (359)  
 A-148 Barbara E. O'Leary – Memorial to Carl Ulrich  
 A-163 James W. O'Leary, Jr – Memorial to Oliver T. Eisenhart  
 1328 Howard F. O'Neal (359)  
 L1689 Richard B. Paul (360)  
 L1725 David W. Plewes (359)  
 L510 Sidney R. Richman (3rd)  
 L1065 Edward E. Ross (427)  
 S645 Milo R. Schultz (360) – Memorial to Robert Rosborough  
 L378 Loyd A. Shirley (427)  
 L268 Morris B. Sjoberg (427)  
 L1091 Floyd A. Sprague (358) – Memorial to Patsy Rocco and Lester Ruess  
 L1592 Warren Tashian (360)  
 L1014 Robert L. Ward (358)  
 Widow Lucille O. Yannie – Memorial to Emilio Yannie

### ADDRESS CHANGE

Paul J. Barton, 38323 S. Golf Course Dr., Tucson, AZ 85737-1115  
 JenninGs Brown, 21495 E. Parlier Ave., Reedleyville, CA 93654-9535  
 Melvin A. Brown, 7129 Mission Hills Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89113  
 Joseph R. Cappucci, P.O.Box 105, Croton Falls, NY 10519-0105  
 Morris Dimowitz, 1025 N. Fairfax Ave., #125, Los Angeles, CA 90046-6156  
 Thomas R. Donahue, 3501 Cedar Ave., Apt. 125, Long Beach, CA 90807-3837

James L. Droke, 3306 Wood Hollow Dr., Memphis, TN 38118  
 Lloyd Goff, 150 Ridge Rd., Harpers Ferry, WV 25425  
 Lloyd Hanks, HC 60, Box 12, Lake City, CA 96115-9801  
 J. Carlisle Hensley, Jr., 5874 SW Menlo Drive, Beaverton, OR 97005-4574  
 Warren Jacques, P.O.Box 371, Circleville, OH 43113-0371  
 Harld A. Laniqan, 541 Fairfax Ave., Winter Park, FL 32789-5021  
 Renne Lawson, 4811 Cobble Creek Circle #C, Winston Salem, NC 27105-1220

Robert J. Lynch, 3450 Gulf Shore Blvd. N, Apt 302, Naples, FL 33940-3652  
 John Mason, 133 S. Bellwood Dr., Lot 36, E. Alton, IL, 62024-2077  
 Thomas McGiffin, 1800 12th Ave. S, Great Falls, MT 59405-4803  
 Martin J. Mc Guire, 24745 N. 117th St., Scottsdale, AZ 85255-5900  
 Donald P. Morin, 1851 Dolphin Blvd S., St Petersburg, FL 33707-3845  
 Everett E. Van Horn, RR1 Box 148, Winfield, KS 67156-9714  
 Robert F. Vail, 10540 E. Apache Trl., Lot 315A, Apache Junction, AZ 85220-3353

Jack Watson, 908 Augusta Dr., Ruskin, FL 33573-5451  
 Jim White, 2137 N 63rd Place, Mesa, AZ 85205-2802  
 Rowland C. Witters, 155 Canyon Rd, #7B, Salt Lake City, UT 84103-4705

### IN MEMORIAM

Clarence M. Fountain (358) - 11 February 1993  
 Jesus F. Ortega (359) - 2 October 1991



The 303rd B.G. Memorial plaque in Brington Church.

303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

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

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