

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

MAY 1997

Search for "lost" Angels brings good results

Czechs honor downed flyers



HONORS - Col. David E. Potts, USAF Military Attache from U.S. Embassy at Pilsen renders honors along with his young Czech friends to three members of Lt. Mauger's 303rd Bomb Group crew and seven members from two 379th Bomb Group crews who were killed during a raid on the Skoda Armament Works at Pilsen on April 25, 1945. Ceremonies were held in Krimice on May 7, 1996. Photos by Jaromir Kohout of SLET. Story on page 12.



Hell's Angels ground crew. Front row (c) John R. Kosilla, (r) Fabian Folmer now Association members. Where are the others?

"Maximum effort" veteran search successful throughout country

Thanks to the "all-out" cooperation from the members - both regular and Associate - in the drive to locate all the people who were based at Molesworth in 1943-45, the 303rd Bomb Group Association can now boast of the highest number of members since its formation in 1975.

Since the drive is scheduled to run through calendar year 1997, there is a good possibility that we may exceed these numbers by the time that we gather at Pittsburgh in September.

As President Eddie Deerfield pointed out in his column on page six, there are a lot of people we should thank for "walking-the-extra-mile" to make sure we got our message out. They are: Norm Hammel, Jim Walling, Al Dussliere, Bob Mitchell, Glenn Canning, Norm Clark, Chet Jameson, Jr., Bob Perry, Lee Fegette, Ralph Roseland, Bob Blythe, Paul Boat, Herb Shanker, Conrad Kersch and Mrs LaVerne Huck.

Of big help to the Editor of the Newsletter has been George Coleman who sent the news release to several newspapers and also supplied the editor with names and addresses of three crewmates and suggested we send them some newsletters. to entice them to join the Association.

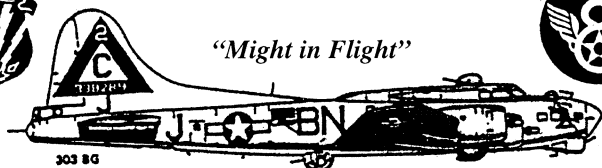
An Associate member who has also been a big help with names and suggestions is: William O. Muhl. Of the names that were listed in the story on Page one of the February issue, he came up with names and addresses for five of the people. He even came up with an address for Murray Pearl. Unfortunately this Murray Pearl although a veteran of WWII was not the former 303rd personality. He told me he has gotten quite a few phone calls over the years from people looking for "Murray Pearl of the 303rd BG." Muhl also had an address for Bodie Fite who recently became a member; John Kosilla who is also a member and Edward West of the Hell's Angels ground crew. A letter was sent to West and we are awaiting an answer.

Of the other names listed, Charlie Young died in the 80s and Billy Goolsby, a Texan is still among the missing. With 137 Texans listed in our directory, we should be able to find Goolsby by looking through the city or telephone directories in the cities in which you live.

As you look through the list of new members on page 23 see if any of them come from your city. If they do, give them a call and welcome them to the Association.



.303rd Bomb Group's colorful plaque at 8th AF Heritage Museum



303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

"HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

Editor: Hal Susskind

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The 303rd Bomb (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. Annual dues is \$10; \$15 for foreign addressees.

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OFFICERS 303RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

President

Eddie Deerfield
3552 Landmark Trail
Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016
(Wife's name: Mary Lee)
(813) 787-0332

Vice President/Administration

Harold A. "Hal" Susskind
2602 Deerfoot Trail
Austin, TX 78704-2716
(Wife's name: Rae)
(512) 441-6475

Secretary

Richard R. Johnson
5901 Joe Road
Deale, MD 20751
(Wife's name: Marjorie)
(410) 867-0597

Vice President/Reunions

Walter J. Ferrari
207 Lake Circle Drive
Hampstead, NC 28443
(910) 270-0824

Treasurer

William J. "Bill" Roche
1428 Gleneagles Drive
Venice, FL 34292
(Wife's name: Doris)
(941) 485-5073

SQUADRON REPRESENTATIVES

358th Squadron Representative

Walter J. "Walt" Mayer
W. 14605 Taylor Rd.
Cheney, WA 99004-9245
(Wife's name: Beverly)
(509) 299-3250
(W) 6649 E. Hwy. 80, SP331
Yuma, AZ 85365-8441
(520) 344-6961

Alternate(s)

William H. Simpkins
348 S Cologne Ave., Box 217
Cologne, NJ 08213
(Wife's name: Evelyn)
(609) 965-2871

359th Squadron Representative

William E. "Bill" Eisenhart
1734 72nd Ave. NE
St. Petersburg, FL 33702
(Wife's name: Mary)
(813) 526-5088

Eugene E. "Gene" Girman
8420 Parrish Place
Highland, IN 46322
(Wife's name: Corlis)
(219) 838-5882

360th Squadron Representative

William C. "Bill" Heller
P.O. Box 3006
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019
(Wife's name: Ruth)
(415) 726-6686 Fax 726-4214

J. Ford Kelley
7073 Fairway Bend Lane
Sarasota, FL 34243-3264
(Wife's name: Betty)
(941) 351-2281

SQUADRON REPRESENTATIVES

427th Squadron Representative

Vernon W. Stone, Jr.
75 Camino Del Rio
Port St. Lucie, FL 34952-2374
(Wife's name: Jeanne)
(561) 878-7057

Alternate(s)

Fred E. Reichel
553 Mallard St.
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-3431
(Wife's name: Catherine)
(313) 852-2980

Headquarters & Supporting Units & 444th air depot Representatives

Melvin T. McCoy
8865 SW Maverick Terrace, #806
Beaverton, OR 97008-7474
(503) 524-3587

Maurice J. Paulk
205 W. 12th
Wood River, NE 68883
(Wife's name: Opal)
(308) 583-2583

WIDOW MEMBER'S Representative

Joanna M. Tressler
Rd. #1, Box 373-K
Northumberland, PA 17857
(717) 473-3816

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE

Charles R. Sykes
16281 N. 31st Ave
Phoenix, AZ 85023

APPOINTMENTS: COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Newsletter Committee Chairman

Harold A. "Hal" Susskind
2602 Deerfoot Trail
Austin, TX 78704-2716
(Wife's name: Rae)
(512) 441-6475

207 Ridge One
Hot Springs, AR 71901-9118
(Wife's name: Betty)
(501) 321-1956

Membership & Roster Management Chairman

Carlton M. Smith
12700 Red Maple Circle #54
Sonora, CA 95370-5269
(Wife's name: Phyllis)
(209) 533-4033

By-Laws Chairman

Jack P. Rencher
2901 Hill Road
Boise, ID 83703-4705
(Wife's name: Louise)
(208) 343-2265

Px Administrator

Charles R. Sykes
16281 N. 31st Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85023-3008
(Wife's name: Vicki)
(602) 993-8015

Audit Committee

Frank C. De Cicco, Jr.
6 Kitty Hawk West
Richmond, TX 77469
(Wife's name: Jean)
(713) 341-5004

Computer Data Base Committee

Edward W. Gardner, Jr.
5764 Lakeview Drive
Interlochen, MI 49643
(Wife's name: Sue)
(616) 276-7126

Mission Reports Administrator

Jack Rencher
2901 Hill Road
Boise, ID 83703-4705
(208) 343-2265

Past-Presidents Advisory Committee Chairman

Edgar C. "Ed" Miller
422 S. Walnut Avenue
Temple, OK 73568-0219
(405) 342-5119

Historian & 8th AF Liaison

Harry D. Gobrecht
505 Via Deseo
San Clemente, CA 92672-2462
(Wife's name: Barbara)
(714) 361-2662

Pittsburgh 1997 Reunion Committee Chairman (Sept. 4-8 1997)

Eddie Deerfield
Local Committeemen - Jack
Gardner, (Chair), John Peters and Al
Morton

Group Advisor

Lewis E. "Lew" Lyle

Chaplains:

Rom. Catholic:

Bishop Rene H. Gracida, 4126 Ocean Dr., Corpus Christi, TX 78411
Rev. Bernard Schumacher, Subiaco Abbey, Subiaco, AR 72865

Protestant:

Rev. Charles G. Rice, Jr., RR #2, Box 18, Greenville, NY 12083
Rev. Everett A. Dasher, Rt. #4, Box 425, Saluda, SC 29138
(Wife's name: Helen)

Rev. Warren L. Hedrick, 14 March Drive, New Durham, NH 03855
(Wife's name: Alma)

Chaplains Emeritus: Merritt Slawson, Charles Spencer

Hell's Angels Forum

Your Chance to Sound Off!

A Tribute

I hope the membership will bear with me on this, but I cannot let the passing of Lloyd Holdcroft go without comment.

It was my good fortune to be a member of his crew at Molesworth, and I truly believe we survived primarily because of his maturity and coolness under fire. He was a quiet unassuming man, which probably worked against him in his military career, but his character, intelligence, and an inner strength made him an outstanding combat pilot and airplane commander.

We were together for a comparatively short period of time in terms of a lifetime, but he made a lifelong impression on me. The world will be a lesser place without him.

Jack O'Donnell
1315 Mayflower Ave.
Melbourne, FL 32940

The infamous Aug. 15, '44 mission

I wrote you on June 12, 1996 looking for information on 2nd Lt. Lester E. Reuss and Sgt. Fred O. Byrd of the 303rd BG, 358th BS. Someone sent me a copy of your newsletter of August 1996 with my letter in it. The Editor noted that Sgt. Byrd stayed in his aircraft and was killed and Lt. Reuss was captured and shot when he landed and was killed. I have court transcripts from the US Army War Commission of a trial held after the war of four German civilians tried for the death of an Unknown American Airman. The Airman's body was exhumed and identified as Lt. Lester E. Reuss. Three of the civilians were hung and the last one received five years in prison.

I was researching information on a member of my BG who was KIA supposedly for parachute failure, when I heard of another Unknown American Airman killed by a German policeman whose body was found in an area close to where my BG member was found. I have received court transcripts of this German policeman by the US Army War Commission and the 'Unknown American Airman' was Radio Man Patsy Rocco from the same aircraft as Lt. Reuss.

Their aircraft is listed in MACR #8170 - KU #902A. Lt. Reuss was killed by three German civilians while two German soldiers (In civilian clothes) were attempting to help Lt. Reuss get out of his parachute harness. Sgt. Rocco hid out for a day

and finally gave himself up to a young civilian and was killed by the German policeman when he supposedly was attempting to escape.

I noticed on the MACR report both of these Airmen are still listed as MIA. I sent a letter to Pilot Arthur Goss in Spokane, Washington with my information but received no answer. I talked to Floyd Sprague on the telephone at one time.

If you feel the crew would be interested in this information you can feel free to give them my address.

I was in the 93rd BG and was a POW. Five of our crew were KIA and the other five were POWs. I still keep in touch with three other remaining crew members and with my pilot's wife. He was KIA.

Paul O. Bergman
P.O. Box 237
Eagle Creek, OR 97022-0237

Ed. Note: This proves beyond a doubt that bailing out over Germany during WW II was very dangerous, a fact that some of our high ranking officials, secure in London, could never grasp. Also the thanks of the 303rd BGA go to Mr. Bergman for clearing up a few 50 year old mysteries.. Pilot Goss lives in Colorado Springs not Spokane.

* * * *

The following letter from Associate member Horst Weber of Niederstedem, Germany was forwarded to me by Carlton Smith. — Editor

"Today I sent a letter to Floyd A. Sprague. I hope it is all-right and properly written. In the case that he can't send me a photo of his crew, could you probably do it for me. The fate of Lester E. Reuss and Patsy Rocco are now very well documented and I am highly interested in photos of these two men to publish in our book beside their stories. Following is the letter to Floyd Sprague.

"Thank you for your letter, dated 1 July 1996. In the meantime, I found out some answers to the questions I asked you in my 3 June letter, particularly the war-crime and the violation by civilians to your crewmates, Lt. Lester E. Reuss and Sgt. Patsy Rocco.

In the time since my last letter, I received some interesting information. The most interesting is the long-awaited trial file of the war crime at Preist, County Bitburg, Germany. The file contains about 455 pages and it is in my possession now.

It was really a surprise to me to see my letter of last November 15 printed in the February 1997 issue of the "Hell's Angels Newsletter." However, that surprise quickly turned to disappointment when I observed the amateurish editing that had been done on it. Having been a writer and editor of technical reports and documentation for well over half of my working life, I do not feel that what I put to paper needs much changing. In other words, if you cannot improve on it, kindly leave it alone!

Specifically, one does not leave a pair of adjectives in the superlative form unconnected by either a comma or an "and". Also, some sort of connector belongs between "having" and "egregiously"; and believe me, an apostrophe is a needed part of "nation's". The change from singular to plural of "accomplishment" did, however, not alter significantly the meaning I wished to convey.

No response to this message is expected.

John I. Jenkins
P.O. Box 1020
Alamogordo, NM 88311-1020

Ed. Note: I do not wish to rain on your parade but I do not censor or edit letters unless the facts, such as dates of missions, casualties, etc., are in error. In your case if mistakes were made they were purely typographical. I input about 20 pages of the Newsletter (90 pages of typewritten copy) and sometimes at 2 a.m. in the morning the screen gets blurry. But you are right, I should have caught the mistakes in the proofing. So if any of you professional writers and expert editors out there wish to take over from this amateur as editor of the "Hell's Angels Newsletter"; be my guest. I'll be more than happy to step down effective with the August issue.

Among these pages are the whole trial files of the two trials on 2 June 1945 and 16 June 1945 at Ahrweiler, Germany.

The file contains photos and newspaper articles. It was the first trial against German civilians, who were accused of violations against American flyers on German soil. It is a fascinating and exciting document. Here one can see what could happen, when in extreme situations, an aggressive propaganda campaign, human stupidity and the typical German responsibility-confusion rules people in a certain situation.

The story in short form:

On 15 August 1944, an American flyer landed near Preist, Germany. He was caught with his chute in a tree and tried to unbuckle himself. All around were people in the fields, cutting wheat. Two German soldiers on furlough were first at the scene and tried to help the flyer and arrest him afterwards. Around the scene, people appeared from the fields but in a certain distance to watch what happens. Shortly after that, a Landwacht man (something like home guard, civilians, but in certain situations permitted to carry guns) tried to arrest and protect the flyer, because he is responsible in situations like that. The two soldiers didn't want to hand over the American, because they want to arrest him. Into the whole scene comes the local party-man and shoots the flyer with

these words. "This is revenge for the dead in Speicher, some days ago." The soldiers wanted to stop him, but they were not able to. The Landwacht man is standing helpless around and is also not able to stop the man. A verbal argument between the four men starts and the local-party-man says, "Remember the speech of Dr. Goebels, who said that the population should do the first trial against allied terror flyers.

After that, two other men came and hit the American with a wooden club and a hammer, so that he finally died.

In May 1945, the four men were accused of murder and three of them arrested. The fourth, the party-man hid himself and his family in Bavaria. On 2 June, the trial began against the three other men. The trial was very fair, but they had no chance. They stated that they hit the flyer and the "landwacht" man stated, that he wasn't able to protect the American properly. About ten witnesses, all people from the village, stated the same. All three, the "Landwacht" man, the man with the club and the man with the hammer were sentenced to death. On 6 June, the party-man appeared by pressure of his wife, at an MP post at Motsch near Bitburg. He gave up and was questioned on 9 June 1945. He said that he shot the American twice in the head, but that he did not wound him deadly. The

trial was held on 16 June and he was also sentenced to death. On 24 June the "landwacht" man was relieved to life at hard labor. On 29 June, the other three were hanged at Rheinbach prison.

This event and the trial with the resulting death sentences naturally brought enormous disturbances into a very Catholic village community of about 120 inhabitants. It is still today nearly impossible to gain information about this event from someone in Preist. The people are simply embarrassed and ashamed that something like that happened in their village and three inhabitants were hanged for it.

Although the flyer wasn't identified by the American Grave Registration Command, a witness who worked at the local administration at that time remembered the name Lester Reuss during the trial. He had to register the ID-papers of the flyer and had this certain name still in his memory. This must be true because at least two more crew members landed safely in the vicinity and were captured very close to the village of Preist.

The second criminal event against one of your crew mates happened against Sgt. Patsy Rocco. I still don't have the trial-file, which contains about 300 pages, but it is on its way to me. But I received some preliminary information.

Sgt. Patsy Rocco bailed out safely and landed in the general vicinity of the Kyll River valley around Preist, Idenheim and Dahlem. The area is about 9 km southeast of Bitburg, Germany. Witnesses say that he hid for some days in the Kyll River valley but he could easily have been captured the same day. However, he gave up and was transported to the Idenheim local police post. Here he spent a night in solitary confinement. At the next morning, the policeman was going to bring him to the Bitburg main police station. Both men were walking on the street northbound and the policeman had shouldered his rifle. Halfway, near Scharfbillig, something happened and the policeman shot at Patsy Rocco and wounded him fatally. I believe that the trial file will clear what really happened. Witnesses say that Rocco tried to escape but it could also be that something scared the policeman, because he was not very courageous. Sgt. Rocco was buried at Bitburg communal cemetery. The trial against the

policeman was in August 1946 and he was sentenced to life imprisonment. The sentence was later reduced to 2 years imprisonment. In shame of the whole event, the family of the policeman left Idenheim and moved to another village far away.

But it was not only dangerous for the American aircrews that day. One of the attacking FW-190s was hit and crashed about one km away from the scene where Lester Reuss was shot. The German pilot parachuted safely and landed near Speicher. There he was beaten by the population until he could identify himself as a Luftwaffe pilot.

Fate struck back in a funny way. Your B-17 BS-J, "Bad Penny" flew for a short while northbound and exploded finally in mid-air. One wing of the plane crashed burning into the village of Seinsfeld and set some farmhouses and barns on fire. The local fire brigade couldn't extinguish the fire properly because the water reserves were exhausted. So a part of the village burnt down.

Ed Note: Mr. Weber requested that Floyd Sprague send him a photo of the crew and also a statement from him outlining his experiences after he bailed out and was captured. In his note to Carlton Smith, Mr. Weber also asked him if he or anyone in the Association has a photo of the crew of "Bad Penny." Mr. Weber also stated that after reading the very interesting trial files and all the other material in connection with the mission of August 15, 1944 it would certainly make a great TV play or movie. He sends his very best wishes to the 303rd Bomb Group Association. His address is:

Horst Weber
Burgstrasse 9
54634 Niederstedem
Germany

Member search

I started my search in January 1990 with a photograph of the A/C Supply personnel in front of the Supply building (dated May 1944) and a list of about 10 addresses that I collected prior to shipping out of Molesworth on June 11, 1945. By calling the telephone directory in the home towns and several National Telephone directories (on CDs) I have located 12 living and 10 deceased former A/C Supply members. The last one was Robert E. Quigley in Missouri. I heard from his sister on 3/13/97. Robert died in 1988. Not that this is an outstanding accomplishment. The moral to the story is that I waited too darn long to start.

If this letter happens to appear in the Newsletter, I'll be glad to share my list with any of the former A/C Supply members (or 444th members) that might want it; also a copy of the Supply photo.

Maurice Paulk
205 W 12th St.
Wood River, NE 68883-9164

Ed. Note: I hope you shared your list with Carlton Smith our membership chairman. Also our thanks to Associate member William O. Muhl, who through his computer was able to supply addresses for five people who were listed in the story on page 1 of the February issue. So far we have already signed up one member. We are checking out three others.

E-Mail addresses!

A number of 303rd Bomb Group Association members have and use computers. Within this number it is more than likely there are some who are on the internet. E-Mail is a quick, convenient and economical way to correspond and could be an instrument which can be utilized among those of our members interested in doing so. If there is sufficient interest I would be happy to collect the E-Mail addresses of members and then pass them on to you for publication in a future issue of "Hell's Angels" Newsletter. My E-Mail address is: aldusli@derbytech.com.

On the internet there are many sites for addresses and telephone numbers. This source could be used in Eddie Deerfield's excellent program of trying to locate former members of the group.

Thanks Hal for the greatest Newsletter of all.

Al Dussliere
1091 5th St.
East Moline, IL 61244-2421

Ed. Note: I believe Eddie Deerfield is using the internet to find our "lost members." You collect the E-Mail addresses of our members and I'll run them plus I'll include them in the new Directory which will be published sometime between the May issue of the Newsletter and the reunion.

Aid from the Czechs!

I have sent the press release about the group's next reunion to the Bozeman (MT) Daily Chronicle, the paper with the largest circulation in my area, southwest Montana. Great idea. I hope it locates some 303rd

buddies who have been "lost."

The enclosed clipping is from my town's weekly paper. It certainly rocked me! When you read it you will understand why- by the following memory.

On my first mission, Oct. 7, 1944, I was the Bombardier on Hank Embry's crew. Our primary target was Brux, Czechoslovakia. We hit the secondary - Dresden - instead. My notes say, "we bombed the target visually. Flak was moderate, but accurate. Large hole in left wing from dud. No fighters."

Was the shell a dud on purpose? I now like to think so. Ten of us owe our lives to "him."

I have not been able as yet to locate the book, "The fall of Fortresses," the source for Pastor Schrader's story in the clipping.

Do you have any info on this fascinating event? Maybe many of us Hell's Angels were saved by some brave, unknown Czech. If verified, it would make a great story for our newsletter (if it hasn't already run!)

I'm still in touch with the co-pilot and ball turret gunner on my original crew with the 359th Sqdn. I have also contacted a fellow bomb aimer and friend from the 429th.

Keep up the good work. I look forward to the newsletter.

Bob Mitchell
101 10th Street
Belgrade, MT 59714

Ed. Note: Here's the clipping Mitchell referred to:

"In a book entitled The Fall of Fortresses," Elmer Bendiner tells of Nazi gunners hitting his B-17 in World War II. Upon landing he was horrified to find a hole in the fuel tank of the big plane. It had been pierced by a 20 millimeter shell; but the shell had not exploded

When he asked the crew chief if he could have the shell as a souvenir, the chief responded, 'Which one do you want?' He was shocked to discover that the plane had ben hit, not by just one shell, but by 11 of them. The nazi shell were designed to explode upon impact but none of them had. So, after being defused, the 11 shells were whisked away by intelligence officers to be carefully examined. What they discovered was that the tips of the shells had absolutely no explosive powder in them. Instead, they were crammed full of paper and each contained a note written in Czechoslovakian. The notes said, 'This is all we can do for you now.' The Czech prisoners who had been forced to assemble the Nazi shells had saved the

Forum

Allies untold lives and aircraft. Unable to take up arms against the Germans themselves, the had nonetheless, done what they could.

Mike Schrader
Belgrade Church of Christ

What's the target?

Thank you for sending me the "Press Release," with a stamped envelope. I would appreciate your sending me three additional sets because Glen Cove and its satellite communities have four fairly large newspaper circulation. You needn't stamp the envelopes, I can take care of that - in fact, I might better succeed if I hand deliver them to the newspapers - maybe even get a write-up about the 303rd!

I think the red coloring on the B-17 tail adds more excitement to the press release than a colorless photocopy; and maybe get the attention of these young editors.

On this point though, my wife and I were having breakfast at a local restaurant recently, I was wearing a "T" shirt with a large B-17 imprinted on the front and back that I bought while visiting March Air Base in California. A man about 40 years old stopped at our table and asked, "Did you fly in the great Flying Fortress?" I said "yes" proudly. He then said, "I would like you to know that lots of us younger generation guys are very proud of you; and thank you." We're better remembered and appreciated than we might know!

In our February Hell's Angels Newsletter, I read the accounts written under, "My most Unusual 303rd Experience" and I have an unusual experience to write about. But first, and very important to me personally, is that someone in the other crews with us on this mission will remember the target and the date of this mission:

Bud Fontana was flying lead. I was his Flight Engineer, and Connie Duros was our Bombardier. Our plane and #2 were the only two planes flying with qualified Bombardiers. The other B-17s in our group flew with toggliers who were to drop their bomb load when they saw ours drop.

We got over the target, and Duros called out, "Bombs Away." But I saw that none of our group dropped their bombs. I looked in our bomb bay and saw that our bomb bay doors were wide open, but that our bombs were still there, and reported that to Bud Fontana - our bombs had hung up.

On our first run over the target, flak shot down two B-17s and their crews! We flew over the target again...we lost one more B-17 and crew! Again, no bombs released and none were dropped by our group formation. Bud Fontana ordered, Duros, our Bombardier to go into the bomb bay to find the reason our bombs had not dropped, and to fix the trouble.

But I was not confident of Duros' mechanical knowledge; and even if he did find and repair the trouble, he would be away from the bombsight and out of position to drop our bombs on the target. So I volunteered to go into the bomb bay myself, taking the risk of falling out of the bomb bay - and I very nearly did.

With Bud Fontana's OK, I went into the bomb bay. But before leaving the cockpit, I asked Duros to make sure that all electric switches were OFF. He said, "All switches are off!"

I reasoned that ice might have formed on the button-like bomb bay door switches, preventing the bomb bay doors from opening fully, thereby not releasing our bombs, (like those found on refrigerator doors that turn the interior light on and off when the refrigerator door is open or closed). It was my intention, therefore, to partially close the bomb bay doors with the the manual crank located on the outer side of the bomb bay bulkhead, then open them forcefully to break off any ice. I inserted the crank handle and partially closed the bomb bay doors and then swung them open hard. It broke the ice on the door switches - and all our bombs dropped, nearly taking me off with them! The toggliers dropped their bomb load too - all off target! Duros' switches were not all off.

The crank handle kept turning in my hand while I desperately held on to it, and my right foot, draped over the bomb bay catwalk, were the only holds I had. Of course there was no room for me to work in the bomb bay between the hung-up bombs and the bulkhead if I wore a parachute. If I had gone out with the bombs, it would have been without a parachute.

The bomb bay doors closed and I desperately pulled myself back on to the catwalk and crawled into the cockpit where I lay on the floor, physically and from fright, exhausted and semi-conscious until we arrived back at Molesworth.

I hope someone will remember the Mission and Date when our group dropped its bombs off the tar-

get after flying over the target twice, because we as lead dropped off target due to our malfunction. If so I will be grateful and will greatly appreciate hearing from them!

Bob Perry
18 Meadowfield Lane
Glen Cove, L.I.
New York 11542-1691

PFF Dilemma!

After reading your PFF story (actually it was Alfred Hollritt's experience as part of Lt. Charles E. Johnson's PFF crew) in the February Newsletter, I got out my Combat Diary. I was a member of Bert Bordelon's crew who was shanghaied to the 305th BG at Chelveston. I recall the rosy picture they gave us. We were lead potential. All officers were to be captains and majors; all enlisted men, master sergeants. Pilot Bordelon and Navigator F.P. Cromwell finally made captain. Co-pilot, C.L. Coons made Lt. Col. but it took him almost 20 years.. After all we went through, I sometime wonder if they didn't think we had the potential to get shot down and they were just trying to rush it.

To the reason for this letter. As you recall when you flew lead, your co-pilot flew tail gunner as observer. I was tail gunner so I was sometimes left behind. Coons, our co-pilot, got as much tail gunner time as I did.

According to my brief Combat Diary, the May 19, 1944 mission you mentioned was with the 384th BG. My crew, Lt. Bordelon's was leading with Lt. Stoullil flying deputy lead. Your tail gunner was sick and I rode with your crew. I remember how I felt; my crew was in a different plane and if they were to go down I wouldn't be with them and it could be my fault because I was not in the tail doing my job. Funny how ingrown a crew could get ...

According to my diary, on the mission to Berlin on May 24, 1944, neither Bordelon or Stoullil were good enough to lead the 384th, so both crews flew as deputies while the 384th Commander "led us into Hell." I recall the flak was very intense and accurate. German fighters flew right into their own flak to get at us. Contrails were so bad you could hardly see the planes on your wing. Anyway that was one trip I was glad to see end.

I flew my last mission with a pilot from the 360th. It was his third mis-

sion and his crew's first. We went to Leipzig. It was an easy mission but on "Bombs Away," he got caught in prop wash and we were on our side. When we got back to Molesworth, he had to make three passes at the field before he got it down. Finally he made it.

Keep up the good work
Ted Couch
RR 1 Box 742
Keytesville, MO 65261-9788

Ed. Note: You flew as Tail Gunner with Lt. Stoullil's crew on May 19th because the regular Tail Gunner Sgt. Cal Turkington was recovering from wounds he received on the April 24th mission to Oberpfaffenhofen. It was the same old story that day too. The two PFF crews flew deputy leads to the Commander of the 384th Bomb Group as he led with his own crew in one of his own radar less aircraft. Needless to say we got the Hell shot out of us that day too. The 384th lost seven aircraft. After Stoullil's crew finished their tour on D-Day, Sgt. Turkington, who had fallen behind as a result of the hospitalization, returned to the 303rd at Molesworth to finish his tour which had increased from the original 25 missions to 35.. He was killed on the raid on Magdeburg, Germany on 28 Sept. 1944 when the 303rd lost 11 aircraft.

Flying with the PFF pool stationed at Chelveston you felt like a "man without a country." Although we were attached to a squadron in the 305th BG we were never made to feel a part of that group. Yet the 303rd never considered us part of their group either. Furthermore, we almost flew as many missions with the 379th and 384th as we did with the 303rd. Yet when the 384th Group received an award for the April 24, 1944 mission to Oberpfaffenhofen we got zilch although we flew deputy lead with the 384th. and bore the brunt of the fighter attacks.. As I said before, we were great aviators but lousy bookkeepers. But that's a poor excuse.

But it brings up an important point: if you think you are entitled to an award now is the time for you to accumulate your documentation and submit it to the proper authorities. Ed Giering submitted the paperwork on behalf of Lt. Wertz's crew for their heroic actions performed on Feb. 16, 1945 and they are now authorized to wear the DFC which will be presented at the 8th AF Heritage Museum.

From the President

Seek and ye shall find! Remember the Pittsburgh reunion press release? We asked you to forward it to your local newspaper to help search for our "lost" Molesworth veterans. Many of you not only mailed or hand carried the release, but wrote or called me to say that you made copies for other newspapers in your region.

Bill McLeod, for example, contacted 28 dailies and weeklies in California's San Joaquin Valley from Bakersfield in the south to Modesto in the north. Jim O'Leary covered 10 newspapers in southwestern and central Montana. R.L. "Pop" McGilvray called personally on eight newspapers and the monthly Senior Magazine, and reports that "I did get an excellent response from all those I called on." Many, many others each took care of four, five or six publications. Clippings and constructive suggestions were received from Norm Hammel, Jim Walling, Al Dussliere, Bob Mitchell, Glenn Canning, Norm Clark, Chet Jameson, Jr., Bob Perry, Lee Fegette, Ralph Roseland, Bob Blythe, Paul Boat, Herb Shanker, Conrad Kersch and Mrs LaVerne Huck.

Some of you added your own covering letters and listed your own name on the press release as a local contact to make it more effective. Some of you who are still involved in a family business reminded the editors that your firm is a regular advertiser in their publication. A grand lady let me know that her husband John Olson, had passed away, but she made sure the local paper received the press release because "John was such a 303rd Bomb Group fan and loved the B-17 that he flew in WW II." Others checked their personal records and sent us the names and addresses of Molesworth friends who are not currently members of the Association, suggesting that we send them Pittsburgh reunion information packets.

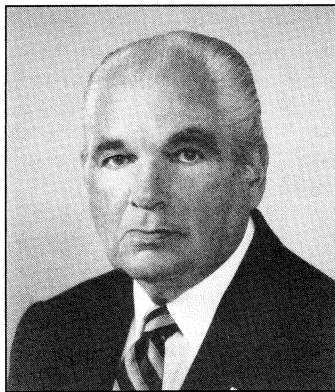
My son Rick, an Associate member who is a computer-literate (unlike his father), created an internet web site for the 303rd through America on Line as one facet of the member search campaign. He advised, "The 303rd is now registered with all search engines and linked with a couple of related sites (<http://members.aol.com/the303rd/303rd.html>) is the web site address". The results are positive - we've had contacts from the younger generation wanting to know more because

"Dad was in the 303rd at Molesworth."

There's no way of predicting how many newspapers will publish the reunion notice or how many of our "lost" 303rd veterans will find us. What we can say for certain is that this has been a "maximum effort" by the 303rd Bomb Group members. All of us pulled together again for a common cause, just as we did in those days at Molesworth.



Several of our Association members heard conflicting reports from various sources that commemorative medals were being awarded at no cost to World War II veterans and asked me to look into the matter. I wrote to the U.S. Senate Committee



on Armed Services, the Department of Army's Institute of Heraldry and the embassies of France and Belgium. The answers were enlightening.

Senator Strom Thurmond, who chairs the Armed Services Committee, wrote, "The European Air Offensive medal, depicting a B-17 in flight, is not an official medal of the U.S. Government, so there are no stipulations from the Department of Defense. The medal is commemorative and is available for purchase from a company named Pieces of History in Phoenix, Arizona."

A reply from DA's Institute of Heraldry conveyed the same information, and gave the specific address as "Pieces of History, P.O. Box 4470, Cave Creek, AZ 85331. It reported a charge of \$29.95 plus \$3.75 or postage and handling. No proof of service is required.

Defense Attaches posted to the French and Belgium embassies in Washington, D.C. advised that medals had been issued commemorating the D-Day landings in Normandy and Provence and the liber-

ation of Belgium, respectively. The Federation of French War Veterans, which sponsored the D-Day award, requires a copy of the veteran's service record and Report of Honorable Discharge, and requests a donation of \$24.50 for the medal and 50th anniversary certificate. Their address is: Federation of French War Veterans Inc., 141 East 44th Street, Suite 604, New York, NY 10017. An order form was carried on page 19 of the October 1995 issue of the newsletter. The Belgium medal is available through the Pieces of History firm for \$33.70



In the article covering the Pittsburgh reunion on the back page of this edition you'll read about the crew chief awards the Association plans to present during ceremonies at the farewell banquet on September 8. We have the names of 11 303rd Bomb Group crew chiefs at Molesworth who supervised their men in keeping any single B-17 airborne for 100 or more combat missions.

I was able to reach Blaine Ruark (Old Black Magic), Albert Curtis Fox (Neva, The Silver Lady), Howard Isaacson (Shoo Shoo Baby), Robert Heiliger (Sack Time), and Norman Cote (Ida Liza). We hope to have them with us to accept the award personally. The plaques will be presented posthumously to widows of Jim Thompson, Frank Furman and Oldrich Fojt. We need your help in trying to locate John Peterson (Daddy's Delight), George Ham (The Floose) and Wesley Gradeville (no name B-17). If you have an address or telephone number for any of these men, please let me know.

Bob Heiliger echoed the feelings of all the chiefs when he praised the mechanics and technical specialists who made up the crews. "My conscience always bothered me," Bob said, "over the fact that my men did all the work and I ended up with the credit." The reality is that Bob and other crew chiefs earned their awards by taking clusters of men of varying talents and personalities and molding them into the outstanding teams that kept the 303rd Bomb Group flying throughout World War II.

The leadership abilities of the crew chiefs and the mechanical skills of their teams provided 303rd air combat crews with the means of forcing the decline and fall of the Nazi empire.

Eddie Deerfield

Incidentally

Bill Adams writing from England says, "I wish I had started carving 303rd Bomb Group nose art a lot sooner than I did. Your Bomb Group has really done me proud and it's really an honor to be part of it."

"On the 14th of May I will be at Molesworth to present the 'Hell's Angels' crew plaque that I carved. It took a little while to carve but it is well worth it. I have also finished two more nose arts, 'Winning Run' and 'Wallaroo,' and just the other day Brian McGuire picked them up and took them back to your old base, Molesworth, so they will be on display."

Please put in the newsletter that I want nose art photos so that I can carry on carving the nose art for display at RAF Molesworth. I'm sure there are still crew and ground crew members around that have photos of themselves in front of their B-17 showing the art work. There must even be some widows that have photos showing the artwork on their husband's aircraft. If they can't have a copy made, I will have a copy made and return the original.

"I just can't carry on without the photos. I'm sure someone has a photo of 'Thumper' that I'm interested in carving."



Do it now for all the Generations to come!

At recent reunions, members have gone "on camera" to tell the story of their lives before, during and after Molesworth. The oral history videotapes are now in the computerized files of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum at Savannah, Georgia.

How does it work? For example, let's say the descendants of J. Ford Kelley, our beloved former president who passed away last year, visit the museum and call up Ford's name on the computer. They will see him on screen telling his personal story. It wouldn't have happened if Ford hadn't taken advantage of a unique opportunity at a recent reunion to record his image and remarks for posterity.

Every member is encouraged to make a videotape at the next reunion. There's no charge of any kind — just make an appointment with the 303rd's Senior Advisor Lew Lyle after you reach Pittsburgh.

8th AF Heritage Museum celebrates 1st anniversary

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum will hold its first anniversary celebration at the museum May 15-18, 1997.

"We have had a very gratifying and encouraging first year at the Heritage Museum," said Lt. Gen. E.G. Shuler, Jr., USAF (Ret), Museum Chairman and CEO, "and we want to show our appreciation to all Eighth Air Force veterans and others who have so strongly supported the museum. We also want to use the celebration as an occasion to introduce the museum to all those people who have not visited or heard about the Heritage Museum."

The anniversary celebration will begin on Thursday evening, May 15, and conclude with a memorial service on Sunday morning May 18. Friday's events will be geared towards visiting school children in the morning and at Eighth Air Force veterans and their families in the afternoon and evening. Saturday's events will be geared toward the general public.

The Heritage Museum opened May 13, 1996, with almost 5,000 Eighth Air Force veterans and family members from 38 states and four foreign countries present.

"Since then we have continued to work on the museum. The Rotunda has added permanent flooring, plants, organizational banners and will soon have flags of all 56 American states and territories. The Canteen snack bar opened July 26 and is very popular with visitors. And the Memorial Gardens are going strong with more than 40 memorial plaques, five large free-standing monuments and more than 400 names on the Wall of Valor.

Phase II of the museum exhibit plan is well underway with the opening of the Schweinfurt/Regensburg exhibit. Work recently started on expanding the "Honoring the Eighth" Gallery. More unit display cases are being assembled so that more individual unit artifacts can go on display. A new theatre is also being built in the Eighth Gallery and work continues in the Combat Gallery, Escape and Evasion area and Prisoner of War area with additional signs, lights and artifacts going in regularly. More and more exhibit construction and installation work is being done in-house with the recent creation of the museum workshop stock with donated tools.

A new film is being made for the Freedom Theatre and Shuler hopes to have it ready for the First Anniversary Celebration. At that time

Vosler's Medal of Honor donated to Museum

Late one afternoon, several months ago, a young lady on her way to Florida, drove through Pooler and decided to stop at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center. Since it was late and near closing time, the attendant decided not to charge her the admission price because she would not have time to look over all the excellent attractions. He told her to look around and visit the more popular exhibits. She told him her father was part of the 8th Air Force and had flown quite a few missions. The name of the late visitor who hailed from Wilson, North Carolina was Mrs Susan Vosler Snow daughter of the 303rd Medal of Honor winner, Forrest Vosler.

When she returned to her home, Mrs Snow, who was very much impressed with the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, donated her father's Congressional Medal of Honor along with a photo of the medal presentation by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Forrest Vosler's medal will have a place of honor in the 303rd Bomb Group's showcase display at the museum, along with the photos of the crew and the medal presentation by President Roosevelt.

the museum will also introduce a new show in the museum art gallery featuring the work of a prominent aviation artist.

The library has become one of the most popular areas in the museum with almost 4,000 volumes donated and available. The museum archives continue to grow rapidly and visitors will soon be able to access information on a computer terminal in the Rotunda as well as in the library. Well underway is the educational program which will make the entire museum facility including the library available to teachers and students for their use.

Almost 40,000 people visited the Heritage Museum in its first eight months open Shuler reported. "That's a good start but we need to increase that many times over to get the 500 visitors per day that we need. Membership is almost 5,000 but with the thousands of Eighth Air Force veterans and interested citizens and students we should have ten or twenty times more than that.

Fund raising is still a top priority for the museum according to Shuler. "We have some very specific financial milestones we must meet. The first was to raise \$1.5 million to go into the debt service reserve account as required by Chatam County. We have done that and now we are working hard to raise the second \$1.5 million required by the county by Dec. 31, 1997. Approximately \$250,000 of that has been pledged so we must pick up the pace to meet that next milestone.

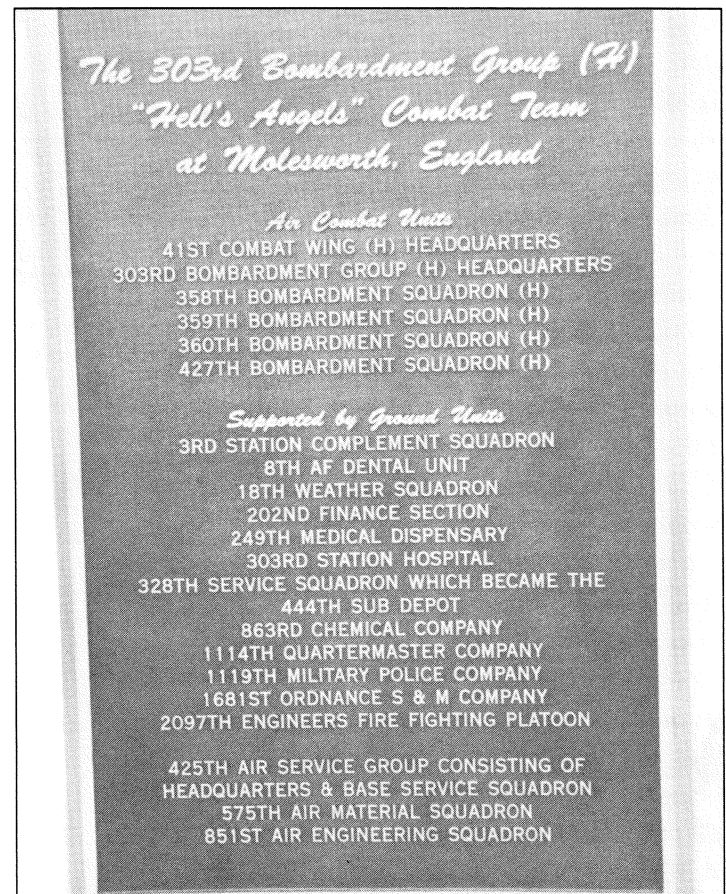
To sustain the Heritage museum, Shuler has set some lofty goals and targets. "To meet our obligations to Chatam County we have set a target of \$1.75 million in contributions in 1997. We need to get our life mem-

bership total up to 20,000 people. We need to get our daily average attendance up to 550 people. We need to get at least 30 reunion groups into the museum in 1997. We have set a target to get a B-17 or B-24 bomber aircraft for display in the museum by 1998. And we are working to get \$500,000 in grant money to complete phase II of the museum exhibit plan."

"These are some lofty goals but

keep in mind we are creating a one-of-a-kind world-class facility that has already received a lot of praise for its concepts and accomplishments in its first year open. Also keep in mind that museums grow and evolve with time and that will necessitate these goals being adjusted as we grow," said Shuler. "But with your continued individual and collective support we can reach those goals and thus leave a fitting memorial to all those who served in the Mighty Eighth and provide generations to come with a world-class educational facility and repository of information and artifacts."

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum was built to honor the more than one million men and women who served in the Eighth since it was created in Savannah in January 1942. The 90,000 square foot museum is located at the intersection of Interstate Highway 95 and U.S. Highway 80, seven miles west of Savannah, Georgia, in the town of Pooler. The Heritage Museum is open to the public from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. seven days a week. ✈



One of the 303rd's plaques at the 8th AF Heritage Museum

"As the weather turned bad and the nights grew long, control of the U-boat menace in the Atlantic suddenly took a turn for the worse in October 1942. In November, the blackest single month of World War Two, sinkings rose to a terrifying level.

The fledgling Eighth Air Force was now invited to take a crack at the un-inviting submarine pens which the Nazis had sited all around the Bay of Biscay - at Lorient, at St. Nazaire and La Pallice. The prospects for distinctive service in this mission were not bright.

Against the formidable submarine bases which resembled tiny cardboard shoe-boxes from four miles up, was pitted the Eighth Air Force whose plans for precision bombing were so large and whose means to accomplish it were yet so modest. Three important missions were sent in against the sub-pens. Fighter opposition was ferocious and skilful yellow-nosed FW-190s attacked from the rear in such a way that the high sweeping tail fin of the Fortresses screened them from the fire of the radio hatch and top turret. The Germans brought in fresh concentration of flak, including 100 big guns sited around St. Nazaire - now known as "Flak City."

"FLAK CITY"

St. Nazaire

By Michel Lugez

After the signing of the Armistice with Germany on June 25, 1940, by Marshal Petain, France was divided into three territories:

(a) Non-occupied Territory: but controlled, watched by the German secret services.

(b) Occupied Territory: by German troops coming generally from USSR, the big towns were occupied, but the towns of least importance and the country had got no parked troops

(c) Coastal Territory: Included between Dunkirk and Bayonne, in the west the North Sea, Channel, the Atlantic Ocean, in the East about 30 miles far from the coasts. In this territory, all the towns and countries were occupied by the German troops, who in the course of the years built their submarine bases, bunkers, airfields, batteries against both aircraft and ships. They also fitted out the harbors, requisitioned hotels, villas, vehicles, bicycles, radio sets and so on...

Each town was managed by a German officer, called the "Kommandantur."

Of course St. Nazaire and its countryside were part of the coastal territory, that is to say, there was an important German presence, with a lot of constraints, ban on circulating without being allowed by the occupying power, frequent identity checks in the streets, at night control of people staying in the building who had to check with the identity of the people written down on the front door, curfew from 21:30 hours to 06:30 a.m., etc.

That was a very difficult period for the French people as a whole, who were mostly for the Allies. We could see while the American bombing which started in November 1942 and that caused the death of a great deal of civilians, nobody showed any anger nor reprobation for we had the feeling that it was the price we had to pay for our liberation.

In spite of the German propaganda that wanted to take advantage of the French people's misfortune, by calling American aviators killers, we often saw the inverse effect happening, i.e., French people, at the



Helen and Alan Magee with Michel Lugez (r) leaving church at La Baule during Magee's return visit to St. Nazaire where he landed on roof of railway station during WW II.

risk of their lives, helped aviators by hiding them, giving them board and lodging, dressing them as farmers, organizing their flight towards Spain, in order for them to get back to England and join their bombardment groups.

We must explain, that since the 22nd of September 1941, German General Von Stulpnagel, Commander of the German Forces in France, had the following notice posted in all the towns of France.

"Every male who might help directly or indirectly the crews of the enemy's aircraft after parachuting or forced landing, or would assist their flight, or would hide them or help them in whatever way, will be shot immediately.

"Any woman who is found guilty of the same offense, will be sent to concentration camps in Germany.

People who will seize aircrew members obliged to land, or bailout by parachute, or will have helped in their capture, will get an allowance of up to 10,000 Francs. In some cas-

es this reward could even be increased to 100,000 Francs.

It's true that I could tell you from my inquiries, several cases where French people notified or turned over to German authorities one or several American aviators. In some cases it was because of fear or because of political opinions, especially so because the Germans were at war against the USSR and "Communism." In some cases it may have been for lack of courage; but certainly "never" for money.

A lot of women and young girls were arrested, beaten, tortured, and sent to concentration camps. The men who were caught helping allied aviators, were shot.

The first great repression began on October 20, 1941 when the French Resistance Fighters killed with several bullets, in the center of Nantes, Colonel Hotz, Commander of Feldkommandantur of the town. One hundred men from different classes were detained; fifty of them were immediately shot including



View of Saint Nazaire. On the very top is the Bay and Beach of La Baule. Below that is the Loire River, the town of St. Nazaire, the harbor, submarine pens and the shipyard. The causeway was not identified.

several inhabitants of St. Nazaire. The others were discharged because of interventions from civil and religious authorities.

Since the first American bombardment over St. Nazaire on November 9, 1942 (the 303rd did not participate). Bombing from 7,500 feet, three B-17s of the 306th BG, were brought down; two of them fell into the sea and one crew was reported missing. Six men of the second aircraft were picked up by a German patrol boat. Six men on the third B-17 #41-24491 of the 423rd BS were killed, several intentionally by the German fighter aircraft. This callous act brought a cry of protest from the French people. The Fortress crashed in Ranlieu, commune of Saint Andre des Eaux, a suburb of Saint Nazaire.

The co-pilot, Robert J. Jones and the Navigator, Forrest D. Hartin landed in Rezac. At once the French population helped them. Jones, badly wounded by a shell in his leg, was taken to a table in a farm; unfortunately nothing could be done for him. Afterwards his leg was amputated. Lt Hartin, relatively in good

health, was actively encouraged to bolt and hide because the Germans would not be long in coming. In no time at all, seeing a crowd, the Germans arrived at the scene and Jones was remanded in custody. On the contrary, Hartin disappeared in the surrounding woods and hid in a ditch. Here began his classical fugitive story. He suitably used his escape kit, walked at night and slept by day and avoided the towns.

He cautiously approached the French farms where he could get something to eat and drink. The occupants of the farms showed him the way to Nantes. Because many of the French farmers were already prisoners, the farms were often managed by women and their children. They were often hesitant to allow the aviators to come inside for fear of reprisals by the German authorities who seemed to be everywhere.

Hartin often slept in a barn in agreement with the farmers who were able to say to authorities that they didn't know that an American aviator was in their barn. While it was not always possible for the

French farmers to know who was occupying their barn at all times, it was very necessary to be very careful, especially as in several cases, German soldiers dressed in American uniforms and went into the barns and called for help and took advantage of the situation to arrest real French Resistants.

After four days in the country, French friends gave Hartin an overcoat, woolen socks, cognac, food and cigarettes. They arranged to meet him at a crossroads called, "les Six Croix" i.e., the six crosses.

At the six crosses, he was requested to get into a truck which carried him to Blain, a small town, quieter than St. Nazaire. Mr Alphonse Lesimple, a truck-driver accommodated him at his home for one month before the Resistance organized his transfer to Paris where he stayed for several days.

One night, he took a train with a Belgian soldier and two Englishmen towards the Pyrenees where they were piloted by a guide all-night long across the mountain. They slept by day and in the evening, they took again to the road to St. Sebastien,

Bilbao, Madrid and Gibraltar where Hartin was fortunate to get transportation to rejoin his bomb group in England.

On the other hand, as in the case of two parachutists, it did not always turn out so positive.

Lt. Andrew L. Graham, Jr., a Bombardier, crashed down in front of the farm of the Taubry, Henri Bertho, a farmer 24 years old, was enraged to see the Germans shooting at the man in his chute. Shouting in German he rushed to help the aviator. He talked to the flyer and they went together towards the way from Taubry to l'Epine.

It was a thornbush lined way and Mr. Betho thought he could hide the aviator inside the impenetrable cover, but unfortunately the path had been cleared. A German soldier from Cotres village, situated on a higher level, was watching what had happened along the hollow path and informed the German patrols who were riding to the scene.

Graham and Bertho were arrested and had to answer the Germans' questions. Lt. Graham was taken to the Stalag Luft III in Sagan. Mr.

Corrino was sent to Nordhausen Camp (Saxony) where he died after some ill-treatment. This account shows that the risks taken by the French people in aiding the downed flyers were much more extreme than that experienced by the Americans.

The fourth flyer to jump and the last one to leave the aircraft, Doane Hage, Jr., fell down in Villes Pierre at about 14:00 hours. he hid in a concrete pipe under the road and waited for night. At about 22:00 hours, he knocked at the door of the Angulo family. A family that the Germans had not succeeded in arresting in spite of the many searches.

After checking his identity, the Angulo family didn't hesitate to hide him, accommodating him from the 9th of November to the 6th of February 1943.

He tried crossing the Spanish frontier, but this one was too well-guarded and knowing no Resistant Group (that was the first American flight over St. Nazaire), he had to turn back with Mr. Angulo who came with him.

For the second time, the Angulo family tried making him cross by saying he was a Spanish person who wanted to come back home, calling him Benito Guibert and giving him identity papers.

On February 6, 1943 he left with 2000 francs from his escape kit, plus more money given to him by Mr. Angulo and food for several days.

Mr Angulo took the first train in Saint Andre des Eaux, to Nantes, so as to buy a ticket for Cerbere. Hage had to join Mr. Angulo in Nantes by the next train which went through Saint Andre des Eaux at 11 p.m. Like that Hage would have no difficulty at the booking office. Mr. Angulo came back in the evening after seeing Hage getting into the train for Cerbere.

Three months after his departure, i.e., on May 8, 1943, the whole Angulo family was detained by the Gestapo and taken to Lafayette prison in Nantes.

On July 6, 1943, they were court-martialed and sentenced: Mr. Angulo, to the death penalty; he was shot on October 6, 1943. Mrs Carmen Angulo, to two years hard labor in a camp in Germany. The M. Carmen and Isabelle Angulo, each one to six months imprisonment in Germany. Miss Angulo, 14 years and three months old, the brother-in-law and the fiancé, to one year's imprisonment.. Miss Marie Angulo, to two years and a half at hard labor.

On August 2, 1943, the Angulo family went to Fresnes prison (France) to join a convoy for

Germany where they stayed from August 16, 1943 to May 25, 1945, in different fortresses. They were finally liberated by the Allies on May 21, 1945.

Hage, an aviator, captured on his bid for freedom, must have given the family Angulo's address, after being tortured. He finished the war as a prisoner in Germany and he was repatriated to the United States on June 17, 1945. He wrote on his return to New York.

This day (November 9th) was also marked by another tragedy. A lot of bombs landed in the shelters of a training-school, claiming 163 victims, without counting the wounded many of whom were severely injured.

The 9th of November 1942 will remain grievously marked in Saint Nazaire's memory.

It is impossible to describe to you all the tragedies endured by Saint Nazaire's inhabitants (arrests, internment, death penalties) during the years 1943 through 1945, to do so, it would be necessary to write a book.


In the brief account above mentioned, I wanted to give you a glimpse of the circumstances under which the French lived during the five long years of occupation.

Memorial to St. Nazaire


In April 1996, Michel Lugez mailed a check for \$1,000 to each of four Bomb Group Associations to build a memorial in the new 8th Air Force Heritage Museum honoring the citizens of St. Nazaire and the personnel of the 91st, 303rd, 305th and the 306th Bomb Groups who bombed St. Nazaire 13 times in their effort to liberate France from their Nazi oppressors. The bombing resulted in the loss of 33 aircraft from the four groups and the destruction of 90 percent of the St. Nazaire buildings. In spite of the devastation from the bombing, the French people, at the risk of their own lives, helped many of our downed airmen in their attempt to evade capture. The plaque pictured here will be installed in the Museum in July 1977.




The American Memorial Monument. Dedicated on June 26, 1926 as a Memorial to the American troops who arrived in France at St. Nazaire in WW I. It was destroyed by Hitler on Dec. 13, 1941 after he declared war on the U. S. It was rebuilt by the French after WW II. Michel Lugez headed the committee responsible for its reconstruction.



IN MEMORY OF
THE BRAVE CITIZENS OF
SAINT NAZAIRE, FRANCE WHOSE EFFORTS,
SUFFERING AND SACRIFICES CONTRIBUTED
TO THE WORLD WAR II ALLIED VICTORY



91st BG




303rd BG

THIS MEMORIAL HONORS -


- ◇ THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE PIONEER "FOUR HORSEMEN" 91ST, 303RD, 305TH & 306TH BOMBARDMENT GROUPS WHOSE B-17 AIRCRAFT BOMBED THE SUBMARINE PENS IN SAINT NAZAIRE DURING 1942 & 1943
- ◇ THE CITIZENS OF SAINT NAZAIRE WHO ENDURED ELEVEN BOMBINGS

THE BOMBINGS RESULTED -

- ◇ IN THE LOSS OF 33 "FOUR HORSEMEN", AND 16 OTHER BOMB GROUP, AIRCRAFT AND THEIR AIR CREWS
- ◇ THE DESTRUCTION OF 90% OF THE SAINT NAZAIRE BUILDINGS. THE DEATH OF 163 YOUNG STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND WORKERS ON THE FIRST MISSION OF 9 NOVEMBER 1942 PLUS ADDITIONAL FRENCH CIVILIAN DEATHS ON THE OTHER 10 MISSIONS



305th BG



306th BG

IN SPITE OF THE BOMBING DEVASTATION, THE FRENCH PEOPLE HELPED FEED, SHELTER AND DRESS MANY DOWNED AMERICAN AIRMEN AND ASSISTED IN THEIR ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE CAPTURE AND CONTINUE THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

8TH AIR FORCE SAINT NAZAIRE BOMBING MISSIONS -
1942: NOV 9, 14, 17, 18 & 23.
1943: JAN 3, FEB 16, MAY 1 & 29, JUNE 28 & DEC 5

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B-17s THAT FLEW 100 OR MORE COMBAT MISSIONS

Serial Number	Squadron	Aircraft Name	Missions Flown	Crew Chief
42-39885	427-R	Sweet Rosie O'Grady	134	M/Sgt Frank F. Furman (Deceased 18 Dec. '90)
???????	427	?????	130	S/Sgt. Oldrich Fojt (Deceased 12 Sept. '94)
42-107206	359-R	Old Black Magic Crash landed 25 April 1945	122	S/Sgt. Blaine R. Ruark
43-37590	358-Q	Neva-The Silver Lady	118	M/Sgt. Albert C. Fox
42-38050	359-U	Thunderbird	116	M/Sgt James P. Thompson (Deceased 15 Oct. '95)
42-97944	359-I	Daddy's Delight	108	T/Sgt. John L. Peterson
42-97311	427-O	Shoo Shoo Baby	107	T/Sgt. Howard E. Isaacson
?????	360	?????	107	M/Sgt. Wesley F. Gradeville
44-97546	360-E	Idaliza	104	M/Sgt. Norman A. Cote
42-102544	360-E	Sack Time MIA 17 Apr 1945	103	M/Sgt. Robert B. Heiliger
42-97298	358-H	The Floose Crash landed in U.K. 24 Dec. 1944 by 92nd BG Pilot	102	M/Sgt. George W. Ham
44-6006	358-E	No Name	100	Unknown
42-39875	427-S	Buzz Blonde	100	Unknown

They kept 'em flying



They kept 'em flying - Posing in front of Lucious Lady are some of the outstanding crew chiefs of the 303rd Bomb Group. They are (l to r): Twistern, Ed Monson, Oldrich Fojt, Winkleman, Howard Isaacson, Frank Furman and Klien. Sgts. Fojt, Isaacson and Furman are members of the 100 plus club.



Posing in front of "Betty Jane" which flew 86 missions before it was lost in September of 1944 are (l to r); Lloyd, Oldrich Fojt and Randall. Sgt. Fojt was also the crew chief of a B-17 which flew 130 missions. Does anyone know the serial number of that aircraft and whether or not it had a name?

Molesworth's team effort insured victory for Allies!



"Shoo Shoo Baby" (427th) Flew 107 missions



"Buzz Blonde" (427th) flew 100 missions. Crew chief is unknown



"Queenie" with Bennie Parisi, Ted Peters (crew chief); Les Voth and Earl Young.



"Idle Wheel" with two unknown members of its ground crew.



"Load 'em up and truck 'em out." You load them and we'll carry and drop them in Hitler's backyard.

Potpourri - - a little bit of this - - and a little bit of that

Membership drive!

Thanks for a great newsletter. Received the news release and sent it to several local newspapers.

I am enclosing a very poor copy of an old crew picture along with what addresses I have been able to secure. After 50 plus years of being uninterested in the old 303rd, the top-turret Engineer in this picture (M.C. Compton) brought me a copy of your newsletter and it all came back. He found me through using the telephone directory in my old hometown. He and I only lived 50 miles apart. I have marked the three of us who are members and who are in contact with each other. Maybe if you could send the others (3) a newsletter, maybe they would become interested as I did.

My wife is unable to travel so I haven't been able to make any of the reunions. Maybe sometime in San Antonio.

I'm sending you an extra \$10 to cover expenses. Thanks.

George E. Copeland
Tail Gunner (358th)

Ed. Note: Thanks for your support; I'll get newsletters off to them this afternoon. Thanks for the donation I'll send it off to Carlton Smith. By the way, our 1999 reunion is scheduled for Texas.

Re: Frankfurt, 19 Jan. '44

What a surprise to read Loren Zimmer's letter on pg. 18 of the Feb. '97 Newsletter! (re: Frankfurt 29 Jan. '44) At the time I happened to be connected with his aircraft and crew in: ascertaining that the crashed B-17's equipment did not fall into German hands. and meeting and helping some of the evading crew members.

As a young underground operative in aviation matters in my part of Belgium, I happened to live at the time six miles East of where Lt. James Fowler pancaked "GI Sheets."

I was on another errand when the Fortress came down but nevertheless reached the spot the next morning. The location was halfway between the villages of Barbencon and Solre-St-Gery, 26 km (16 miles) Southwest of Charleroi, Belgium. A German guard detail and a party of Luftwaffe officers were present (obviously from the unit claiming the machine) who prevented close examination of the wreck. Still, I was able to report as follows, according to my sketchy notes:

- The Fortress had belly-landed on flat ground, practically devoid of obstruction...except for
- a line of fence separating two adjacent fields, the rails having been crushed longitudinally indicating an obvious lack of lateral control at touchdown.
- the aircraft had been destroyed by fire except for the engines (the starboard outer devoid of its prop), the left wing and the tail;
- identification could be ascertained as #239786, yellow letter R, black C in white triangle; no nickname visible. (by coincidence, this Fortress was from the same unit, i.e., your, although I could not attribute them then.) as the one I had had to investigate one month earlier, on 30 December 1943. (see newsletter August 1996) Furthermore their serials were similar: #239795 for the first one.
- two guns (in tail) could be salvaged by the Germans, the others being either crushed or burned.
- one airman deceased, two later reported POW, seven evading with at least three identified.

Later on, more details were pieced together from evaders hiding in the region. The crippled Fort had apparently overflown and machine-gunned the German airbase at Florennes, 17 miles due East of the crash. This was the home of a

night/fighter unit and of single engine day fighters from I/JG. 26, operating a mixed fleet of FW-190s and Bf-109s.

Survivors reports included that of S/Sgt Richard Arrington, the ball turret-gunner with whom I had long conversations in his hiding place, the home of Valentine Lequeux, a widow living with her daughter Raymonde in nearby Beaumont.

Dick was overrun and liberated by the US 9th Infantry Division on 3 Sept. 1944. He arrived back in the UK with Loren Zimmer on 8 September. I kept in touch with him (Dick) until his death in 1978, at 731 Central Avenue, Westwego near New Orleans, LA. I lost contact with Lt. Fowler in 1966.

I'm including a photo of the wreck as seen after the Luftwaffe party had left (but not the guard). Photo is via helper-doctor Maurice Verstraeten.

Roger Anthoine
Genevray's Hauts
F-01630 -Peron
France

"Big Week"

I am an Associate member of the 8AFHS, and I note, with interest, that you are the Editor of the 303rd BG Newsletter, "Hell's Angels." Is there any possibility of me having a couple of your Newsletters and to subscribing to your association as an Associate member?

Also, I am writing to you to ask for some help. For several years, I have been researching the series of bombing missions flown by the 8th AF during the week of 20th-25th February, 1944, which became known as "Big Week." I have obtained all the 8AF Mission Reports and MACRs for the period. However, I am trying to get information on one particular loss - that of a mid-air collision between an aircraft of the 384th BG and a/c #42-38041 of the 303rd BG, flown by Lst Lt. J.W. Steurmer on Feb. 22nd of that month.

Is there, by any chance, anyone in your Association who would have information on this loss. There was one survivor - Sgt. D.J. Miller. Does anyone have any idea what became of this man?

Andy G. Wilson
4, Residence du Chateau
Gaillard
Route de Milly
91820 Boutigny Sur Essonne
France

In Memoriam

It is with sadness that I write to in-

form you of the death of my uncle, Thomas J. Peacock, a 1st Lt. with the 303rd BG, "Hell's Angels" during WW II. He was the navigator on the Temptress, 360th Sqdn, from what we are able to understand.

He may have kept in touch with a few people in the military and we would like to use the newsletter as a vehicle for informing them of his passing

Sandra J. Miele
3 Sand Hill Rd.
Salem, NH 03079

"Molesworth Remembers"

As you know, last November I sent out 1,615 lithographs of the Keith Hill print, "Molesworth Remembers." Every veteran and widow member of the Association was sent a lithograph. I recently found out that a veteran never received his. I have sent him another one.

I would like to know if there are any other veterans or widows who did not receive their copy, or if they received one that was damaged. If either is the case, they should contact me immediately and I will send them another one. If it is a damaged one, I need to know the number on the lithograph.

Brian S. McGuire
JAC
PSC 46, Box 404
APO AE 09469

Did you know Don DeCamp?

My name is John Hall, an Associate Member, a Captain in the USAF and a C-130 pilot based in Ramstein, Germany. I am currently on temporary duty to Little Rock AFB, Arkansas. My grandfather, Donald F. DeCamp, flew 25 missions with the 303rd BG, 358th, from July 1943 to Jan. 1944. I talked with him briefly about his flying career, but he unfortunately passed away on 8 March '88. I am trying to learn as much as possible about his flying career while stationed at Molesworth.

I was wondering if it would be possible to put a request for any information, stories, or photographs of my grandfather, his crew or Capt. Elmo Clark's crew (for which he was a co-pilot for 9 missions) into the newsletter. Responses can be sent to: Capt. John Hall, PSC Box 2267, LRAFB, AR 72099 until June 5th. After 5 June please send responses to: Capt. John Hall, PSC 1 Box 1362, APO AE 09009.



Czechs honor Downed flyers

By Jaromir & Martin Kohout

Our best greetings to you again from Pilsen and a great thank you for sending the February issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter which we found to be very interesting and containing important information about the war activity of the 303rd Bomb Group Association.

We were very pleased to see that you wrote about our activity in researching for information about the crew of our friend, Lt. Warren Mauger, pilot of B-17G #44-83447 that was shot down over our town on 25 April 1945. It was the last aircraft lost by the 303rd Bomb Group.

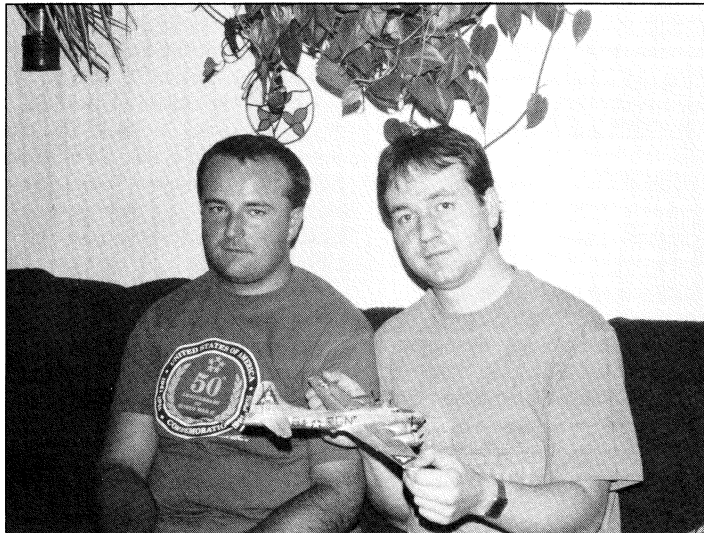
We have more information that we hope will be interesting for you and the members of the 303rd Bomb Group Association.

We have made for your pleasure a set of photos showing the unveiling of a memorial honoring the flyers of Lt. Mauger's crew who lost their lives on April 25, 1945, bringing freedom to our country.

During the second half of April and May 1996, we designed and erected a memorial dedicated to the memory of Lt. Henry G. Moss, S/Sgt. Glen R. Walling and S/Sgt. Francis H. Kelley from Lt. Mauger's crew of the 303rd BG, Hell's Angels and six other flyers from a B-17 of the 379th BG piloted by Lt. Clair Evans that was shot down on the same day and crashed near the village of Krimice in the same area where parts from Lt. Mauger's plane fell after the explosion in the air. This was about two miles from Pilsen.

Also listed on the Memorial is the name of the Tail Gunner from Lt. James N. Blain's crew of the 379th whose B-17 was involved in a mid-air collision during the April 25, 1945 mission. The tail gunner's position was hit and he was blown out, unfortunately, his parachute did not open and his body was also found near the Village of Krimice.

Mr. Zdenek Prosek, Mayor of Pilsen and the Mayor of Krimice along with Air Force Colonel David E. Potts, Air Attache at the U.S. Embassy in Pilsen, said a few words during the dedication ceremonies held on May 7, 1996 at Krimice Village.



Martin and Jaromir Kohout from SLET and Cair Historical Ass'n. hold model of B-17 #44-83447 (Lt. Mauger's) that was shot down over Pilsen on April 25, 1945

During May 1995 we prepared an exposition about the shot down flyers of the 8th Air Force and the air war over our country during World War II. The exposition was held at the historical city hall at Pilsen and about eight thousand visitors visited our exposition so they could find out more about the flyers from the 8th AF who were shot down over our country. One part of the exposition featured a case which contained artifacts from the aircraft of our friend Lt. Warren Mauger and his crew of B-17G #44-83447. There was displayed as exhibits several parts from his B-17 including an oxygen bottle, propeller, and part of the seat of the radio operator, S/Sgt. Matthew W. Guden. which we found several years before. A poster for the exposition was made by a member of the SLET Association containing a drawing of the B-17G #44-83447 flying over Pilsen.

During the past few months we have gotten other parts of the B-17; mostly are parts of aluminum plates from both sides of the fuselage from sections between positions of the RO and WG. One large 9x6 feet contains the Squadron code, "GN-B" and part of the USAAF emblem, star from the left side. We are very proud to have in our possession these parts from

the B-17 of the famous 303rd Bomb Group "Hell's Angels."

We would like to inform you and other members of the 303rd BGA about one mistake in your excellent book about the history and activity of your famous 303rd BG. We got copies of pages 708 and 709 about the mission to our town Pilsen on 25 April 1945.

We must inform you that photos on page 708 are not photos of the wreckage of Lt. Mauger's B-17 #44-83447 but are photos of B-17G #43-

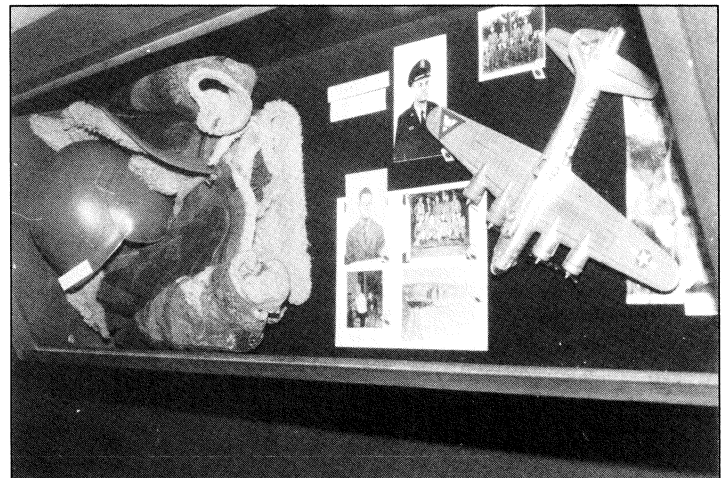
37597, "Earthquake McGoon" piloted by Lt. Kahler that was shot down on 17 April 1945 and exploded in air and parts of plane crashed near Brux, about 100km-66 miles from Pilsen.

And on Page 709 is a photo of the German anti-aircraft gun -Flak 88mm. The gun on photo was near crash site of Lt. Kahler's plane. The position is still there. The gun in photo did not shoot down Lt. Mauger's B-17 but Lt. Kahler's plane.

We don't know who sent the photos to the 303rd Historian and mistakenly informed him that they were correct but if they had visited both crash scenes, Lt. Mauger's near Pilsen and Lt. Kahler's near Brux (now Most) they would have seen the difference in both areas.

We would like to inform you about some of our other research projects. We are documenting the air-battle over the north west Czech-German border which took place on 11 September 1944. The air-battle involved the 100th BG and the German Fighter unit JG4 and the US 339th FG flying P-51s. This air-battle over a small area saw 12 B-17s and 31 German fighters - Me 109Gs and FW-190s shot down. Many of the planes shot down crashed on Czech or German territory. It is interesting that we have located most of the crash sites of the B-17s and the German planes.

We are opening our Museum on



Part of the display shown during the May '95 exposition held at Pilsen's historic city hall. The case holds items from Lt. Mauger's a/c.

Czechs honor downed flyers (continued from page 14)

13 September 1997 and at the exposition we will include our discoveries from the downed B-17s of the 100th BG, the German fighters, memorabilia of USAAF and Luftwaffe, models of aircraft, photos and other interesting artifacts.

During our researching project, we've investigated mostly downed flyers from the 8th AF who crashed in our country.

We'd like to ask you for your assistance as editor of your excellent "Hell's Angels Newsletter." As you know for a long time we have been looking for information about the crew of our friend Lt. Warren Mauger and his B-17G #44-83447,

We'd like to ask members of the 303rd BGA who knew any information about the training, combat activity, and duty at the 303rd and other information about members of Lt. Mauger's crew.

Members of Lt. Warren Mauger's crew:

2nd Lt. William T. Burgess
1st Lt. George E. Knox
2nd Lt. Henry G. Moss
S/Sgt. Glenn R. Walling
S/Sgt. Matthew W. Grden
S/Sgt. Francis H. Kelley
Sgt. Earl M. Dugan

We are very interested in every small information about these flyers, their relatives, their photos, etc.

We will be very happy if anybody from the 303rd flew any missions in B-17 #44-83447 or knows of the history of that aircraft. We'd like to hear from any members of the ground crew or the crew chief.

We'd like to know if there are any photos of the aircraft available that we could borrow and return.

Very important for our research project would be personal observations by members of the 303rd who flew on the 25 April 1945 mission to bomb the Skoda works at Pilsen.

Any information, photos from the

mission would be most welcome. Ed. Note: The mission was the 364th and the last combat mission flown by the 303rd BG. Forty-two aircraft were dispatched including six spares. The new group Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. William C. Sipes led the 41st CBW-A and the 303rd as Air Commander. Two runs were made on the target because of clouds in the area. Flak was meager to moderate on the first run and became intense and very accurate on the second run.

Allied radio had broadcast a warning to the Czech workers to stay away from the factory since it was the target.

Every returning aircraft sustained battle damage; twenty four major and fifteen minor. Many aircraft landed without gear or flaps. Three aircraft landed away from Molesworth. One a/c was lost. →

Things like this could ruin your entire day!



This B-17 from the 303rd Bomb Group was the lead plane when the 532nd Sqdn. of the 381st Bomb Group made its bombing run over a Rhine River Bridge at Germersheim, Germany on Jan.13, 1945. Only member of the 303rd aboard was radar operator Ken Carnahan, Ashland, Ohio. The plane received severe flak damage over Frankfurt and with the hydraulics out, one propeller feathered and another engine acting up, it landed at Valenciennes, France. The crew popped several chutes to slow the plane on the short, icy runway of the USAAF fighter plane base.

My most unusual 303rd experience

Did it open or was it a streamer?

The plane we flew for the most missions was "Shoo Shoo Baby." We were downed by flak on our 21st in "Sack Time" as "Shoo Shoo Baby" was having the #2 engine changed. "Sack Time" was on its 110th mission. I flew as Co-pilot on the Blaine Thomas crew. Our target on the 17th of April in '45 was the marshalling yards at Dresden. At the I.P. we had an 88mm anti aircraft shell go through our wing and the #1 fuel tank without going off. The hole was so big, that the self sealing tanks did not seal and we opened the bomb bay door to get rid of the leaking fuel. The target was obscured by clouds, so the lead plane took us back to the I.P. Again we had intense flak which hit our #2 exhaust system knocking out the #2 turbo system. We feathered the #2 engine and tried to stay under the squadron. I checked the #1 engine visually and thought I saw flames in the hole the 88mm shell had made so I had the engineer, Harry Hanes, in the top turret look at it and tried to get the radio operator, Walter Smith, to get the ball turret gunner, Louis Contreras, out of the fish bowl. The engineer confirmed my observation of fire and I told him I had not got the radio operator and to check on him and the ball turret operator. Conferred with the pilot, Blaine Thomas, and told the crew we would probably have to bail out and get ready. This time at the target, a squadron of B-24s were below us, so back to the I.P. the lead ship went. We tried both bottles of CO 2 on the fire with no results. We picked up flak again at the I.P. but were able to stay under the squadron until bombs were finally away on the 3rd trip. At this time the tail gunner, Mevin Carlson, got on the intercom and said the flames were going by the tail. Blaine and I decided it was time to get out and gave the order to bail-out and turned on the bell and hit the button to destroy the IFF.

The ones that opened their chutes right away drifted back to Dresden. We believe the tail gunner, Melvin Carlson, and the toggler, Edward Eschinger, were killed

by civilians and the ball turret gunner, Louis Contreras, was roughed up and received three broken ribs.

Our auto-pilot evidently had received damage, as we had trouble getting the plane to fly level and spent some time rolling in rudder trim to fly level. I checked the nose to see if everyone got out and then set down to go out the nose door and saw my shoes so I fastened them under my right leg harness. I evidently passed out from lack of oxygen and fell out. When I came to, I was looking at a couple of plowed fields and a fence line and pulled the rip cord on the parachute.

The next I knew there were several regular German Army personnel around me. I had landed two blocks from an encampment in the woods. MY parachute was gone as was my 45 pistol and shoes, and I knew I had two broken legs. I never found out whether my chute opened at the last possible moment or if my chute was a streamer.

Max R. Bartholomew
Co-pilot (427th)

Ed. Note: In the next issue we hope to do an in-depth article on the 17 April 1945 mission to Dresden. We hope to have inputs from Czech historians.

Crew chief-extraordinary

Proud to have crewed "Neva-The Silver Lady," 123 missions without any major damage.

First airplane was a "Jinx." No one seemed to be able to get aircraft across the Channel. After some time the plane was assigned to me. Still no luck. Put new engines and superchargers on. Went on mission and returned. Pilots complained could not keep up with formation. Operations Officer came out to the pad, saw the complaint and said, "O.K. we will make a lead ship out of it." No problems after that.

Albert C. Fox
Crew Chief (358th)

Baseball Champ!

James D. Stewart dearly loved baseball; played centerfield on the 303rd Hell's Angels baseball team (The Moles). The "Moles" won the

Eighth Air Force Championship in 1943. Team record - 29 games won and only one loss.

In the "Might in Flight" book by Harry Gobrecht, in the picture of the team on page 250, James is on front row, second from left.

James D. Stewart
Crew Chief (427th)

Ed. Note: The item above was submitted by Hildreth Stewart, James' widow. He died 11/10/93.

"Happy Birthday, Dear Doris!"

I celebrated my wife's birthday on April 22, 1945, by crawling out from under a railroad trestle somewhere in the western part of Germany, and surrendering to a scout party of the U.S. Army's 45th Infantry Division. And "surrendering" is exactly the word I mean, too.

My companion in the adventure, John Maksymic, and I were the first Allied prisoners of war these American troops had encountered, and they were taking no chances. They were all too aware of the kind of deadly tricks they could encounter from a desperate and resourceful enemy.

The story of how we got to that railroad trestle began when Stalag Luft III was evacuated in January, 1945. The group I marched out with eventually wound up at an abandoned Italian prison camp in Nuremburg. This camp was a far cry from Stalag Luft III; it had open bay sheds for barracks, filthy and loaded with bed bugs and every kind of vermin known to mankind.

While we were there we had front row seats to some of the most spectacular sights I have ever seen. For 14 straight days the Americans bombed during the day and the British bombed at night. From our vantage point about two miles away from the rail yards, we could see it all, and it was spectacular.

We felt relatively safe because the bomber crews knew where we were, and we also had some concrete slit trenches that had been made for outdoor latrines but had never been used. Admittedly, we were a little apprehensive during the first American daylight raid through

a thick overcast - we had never heard of radar-controlled bombing.

We had been at Nuremburg about two months when the rumors started that the Gestapo was going to hold all officer personnel as hostages to be used to bargain with when the time came for them to surrender, which everyone knew was not too far off. The rumor got more believable when we saw some of the men in their long black leather coats in the voerlager of the camp. Mac and I decided it was time to go, reasoning that we would rather die trying to escape than to take our chances with the Gestapo.

We picked a night when the British were bombing, because on these nights all lights were out, including the sweeping searchlights on the guard towers. On the night of April 1st or thereabouts we managed to climb over the fences, using a piece of siding from one of the latrines to walk over the coiled barbed wire between the fences.

It was about three weeks of walking at night and sleeping during the day that we arrived at the point under the railroad trestle. During this 21 day trek we were recaptured once. We walked right into a German forward scout post. I guess the Germans were as surprised as we were, and for reasons known only to God, they didn't shoot us.

We were being marched back toward the interior by two German GIs; sleeping in barns at night and stopping for food along the way at farm houses in the country and at little home cooking cafes in the villages.

It was while we were in one of these little cafes that Mac and I thought that our time had come. There was a sudden loud explosion and the building started to collapsing around us. Needless to say, the Germans went one way, and Mac and I went the other.

After we got out of the building we ran to a wooded area just outside of town and from there watched two P-51 fighters strafe and destroy the little town with 50 caliber machine guns. The town was a motor pool and truck depot for the Germans, which they were out to destroy. And that they did, believe me! It is only

Experiences were varied and came in different packages

by the Grace of God that I am alive today. A few nights later we were holed up under the railroad trestle, and that was our ticket home. The American scouting party we surrendered to marched us back to their headquarters with our hands held high, and there we stayed in the custody of the Military Police while they checked out our stories. In my case they contacted the 303rd Bomb Group in Molesworth, England, who verified that Lt. James H. Fisher, Serial Number AO-753783, a B-17 Pilot, had been shot down on April 19, 1944, was reported captured by the Germans and held at Stalag Luft III. When Mac's story checked out too, they treated us royally.

After dining in their field kitchen on pork chops and cherry cobbler, we were given a little car that had been "field requisitioned" from a German civilian, and we were allowed to make our own way back. We were given directions to a field hospital, where we were given a cursory physical.

While waiting at the hospital we met two pilots of some kind of small airplane that could handle short-field landings and takeoffs. Their job was to pick up and return crew members of downed aircraft.

They took us to Brussels, where they had a building with four apartments all to themselves. They had found the basement stacked with Seagrams 7-Crown, apparently left when the Germans evacuated. Three drinks and I passed out. While I was there, I also had my first ice cream in more than a year. After we spent a day sightseeing in Brussels, they flew us to Paris, where we checked in with the American Command at Allied Headquarters.

After we received a \$300 pay advance and a new outfit of clothing at the PX, we were allowed two days of sightseeing and entertainment, including the Follies. Then we proceeded to Camp Lucky Strike for the boat ride home.

Jack H. Fisher
Pilot (427th)

Ed. Note: Fisher's story appeared in the book "Through the Eye of the Needle." Which was printed by the Former Prisoners of War of Stalag Luft III.

An act of valor!

My greatest achievement with the 303rd was earning a Medal of Valor.

One day while Joe Robida and myself were working on our plane, after a raid, the drop cord we were using shorted out. His coveralls caught fire, as well as the plane, and he started to run which made the fire spread over his body. I ran after him, using a flying tackle to bring him down and beat out the flames with my hand. Joe was taken to the hospital with second degree burns. In the meantime, Russell Shuppe working nearby, grabbed an extinguisher and put out the fire on the plane. Russell Shuppe and I received the Soldier's Medal for heroism. It was a proud moment for me when the general pinned the medal on my chest, June 1944.

My most unusual experience was while our crew was in the tent, beside the end of the runway, waiting for our plane to land from a mission. As it came closer it sounded like it wasn't on the runway, so I opened the tent flaps and looked out. It was coming straight for us, so I yelled to the crew, "let's get out of here," and luckily they all followed. In fact the last one out had to duck down to clear the flaps. The props tore the tent apart and split the heavy workbench in two. To add to the danger, the plane was still loaded with bombs, because it had aborted the day's mission.

Richard A. Lund
Mechanic (360th)

Ed. Note: Four more tents and the pilot of that aircraft would be considered an Ace.

Some days were long and scary!

I never thought too much about my war-time experiences until I became a member of the 303rd Bomb Group Association and realized what an elite group I was associated with. After reading some of the Group's experiences contained therein, a couple of outstanding recollections did occur as follows:

It was August 15, 1944 - 3rd mission - Target: Wiesbaden. It was an exciting day to say the least. After "Bombs Away," we turned right off target. The turn was not sharp, and we spread out and fell behind the combat wing. As we were beginning to catch up with the lead and high group, we were greeted by about 35 FW-190s! It was scary - how fast the situation could deteriorate and still feel like eternity.

They attacked from the rear - high and low - making one pass that es-

entially wiped out the 358th squadron. We were fortunate to be one of the two surviving crews from the 358th. I do believe I kissed the ground after we touched down. What a way to be initiated into the ranks of "Baptism by fire."

I remember wondering if we would ever survive "35".

Well we made it through August. Here it is September 9, 1944 - 7th Mission - Target Ludwigshafen.

The flak was intense and accurate, the kind that made ball-turret gunners "pucker up." We were on the bomb run when we were hit by flak which knocked out #3 #4 engines and caused our right wing to drop. The bomb load was salvaged and our aircraft lost about 2500 - 3000 feet before it was returned to level flight. As we continued losing altitude at an alarming rate, first aid was being administered to our Bombardier, Fred Keisel, whose right arm was nearly severed by the shrapnel.

I spent as much time as possible in the "ball" monitoring the oil smoke pouring out of #3 and #4. Fortunately, no major flames were visible. I finally got out of my turret when a crash landing seemed imminent.

The descent was becoming hazardous as we skimmed over enemy occupied territory. We knew those were not friendlies down there because of the small arms fire we encountered. Miraculously, we survived the shooting gallery without further crew injuries.

We were braced for a crash but landed safely in a pasture 1500 - 2000 feet inside our lines. It was a relief to see that we had made it when we were greeted by the good guys. Our red flares brought an ambulance for our wounded Bombardier who later lost his arm.

I remember thinking, "This was the best landing McCutcheon ever made."

James E Aberdeen
Ball Turret Gunner (358th)

Merseberg - one of the roughest targets in the ETO!

Most difficult mission was mission #275, 21 Nov. 1944; target Leuna works in Merseberg, Germany. Thick fog from 18,000 to above 28,000 feet made visual bombing impossible. PFF (Radar) bombing from 18,000 feet was ineffective and also exposed the group to murder-

ous accurate flak. Thick contrails obscured vision and made tight formation impossible. As it was, Lt. Green's plane collided with Lt. Virag's ship sending him down where ME-109s finished the job. Many ships dropped bombs when they saw others salvo, resulting in a scattered drop and in no way accurate.

Our ship (Lt. Haynes) lost two engines over the target and received major flak damage. We were unable to keep up with the group and stayed hidden in the fog until we emerged north of Frankfurt in bright sunlight and unlimited visibility. We felt that at any moment the Luftwaffe would appear and pounce on us, but miraculously they did not appear; instead a lone P-51 eased in on us and flew with us for a short time until a sudden burst of flak from the Frankfurt area hit him and he plunged down - no chute was seen.

We were gradually losing altitude crossing the Dutch coast under 5,000 feet and hoping we could reach Molesworth. We were now 1 1/2 hours late and dusk was falling. When we reached Molesworth a run away prop on #3 engine, due to severed throttle cable, caused us to lose the engine. We came in on one engine and without hydraulics or brakes, we used up the entire runway before finally coming to a stop on the perimeter.

The ground crew counted over 200 holes in the ship including one that had partially severed the main spar. This was to be our last mission as a complete original crew. Most of us became lead crew team members finishing our tours flying sometimes with some of our original crew but mostly as lead crew members.

February 3, 1945 - my last mission was to Berlin as lead Bombardier, 359th Sqdn. and my 32nd mission. Target was wide open and bombing results were very good. My original pilot Chas. D. Haynes flew with me on this one. We both agreed that although the Berlin mission was one of the most important we had flown on, nothing could compare with the nightmare of experiences we shared at Merseberg on Nov. 21, 1944.

Charles A. Dando
Bombardier (359th)

Ed. Note: I believe the 303rd Bomb Group bombed Merseberg seven times. I can't remember hearing anyone ever referring to it as a milk run.

The unexpected experiences are the ones that you relive

WW II as I remember it!

My father wanted my younger brother and I to leave Italy and come to America not only for the freedom and opportunity, but also to avoid fighting the war in the Italian Army. Ironically, once here and an American citizen, we were drafted. After boot camp, eighteen young men (myself included) agreed to meet on a certain day in a specific location before our next assignment, overseas. Five of these young men and myself made a pact to meet at Ft. Dix on July 14, 1941

Once there I found myself alone. None of my buddies were anywhere to be found. The disappointment and fear were difficult to describe. In desperation, I boarded a bus that went all around the area hoping to spot one of my comrades. I even went around the route a second time until finally, the bus driver yelled over, "hey, you gonna get off?" I explained the situation (the best I could in my 'broken' English) that I'm supposed to meet my outfit here. He directed me to the barracks. What a wonderful sight - another buddy had been waiting. We were thrilled to find each other!

Out of the 18 men who wanted so much to be together, one got lost somehow, and the remaining 17 were dispersed to various squadrons. It would have felt more secure and less frightening if we could have stayed together. I had this recurring thought, "I don't want to kill anyone, and I don't want anyone to kill me."

I had thoughts of deserting, but there were about 18,000 soldiers boarding the Queen Mary, and on all sides were MPs. Being seasick was one of the worst experiences of my life - death would have been a welcome relief. Upon arriving in Scotland, we were greeted by groups of Scottish women who came to welcome us and convey their support and encouragement by displaying the Victory Sign as we disembarked.

While stationed in England, they thought I was an Italian spy because they saw me talking with the Italian prisoners of war. I was ordered to see the English Captain who interrogated me about my activity. I admitted I was talking with them, and yes, I did give them cigarettes, but I was no spy. My captain, Captain Seaton of the 359th, vouched for me, reassuring the officer I was trustworthy. What I didn't disclose at the time, was my agreement with the Italian prisoners. Since Italians were

considered the enemy, I was not allowed to correspond with my parents. In exchange for cigarettes, they mailed letters to my parents so I could let them know I was O.K. It had been 14 years since my parents had last seen my brother and myself. I was grateful I could converse with the Italian prisoners since this facilitated my correspondence with my family in Italy.

One day the woman who owned the farm where the prisoners worked, called me over to say I had received a letter - this particular letter brought the news of my grandmother's death.

My trade agreements, secret and benign, were beneficial to many. In exchange for sugar (which I obtained from the kitchen), the English gave me eggs. The English were thrilled to have sugar and the American soldiers were thrilled to have eggs. Italian prisoners working the farms even gave me chickens now and then. - (this made me popular amongst some of the officers). I was given a pass in exchange for obtaining (through honest trade and barter) staples not provided to American GIs. A pass was a wonderful 'ticket' during this time - I was one of the few GIs who could take a date to the movies.

During my short stay of approximately one and a half months in Dakar, Africa, my job was to keep the planes and facilities clean and working as the new recruits came to replace us. Also, during this time, I remember the incredible heat and swarms of mosquitoes that attacked my body. The African natives were paid fifty cents a day to work. The conditions were unimaginable. Poverty was so bad, leftover scraps of food were consumed regardless of the debris in which it was found.

Probably the best event of this experience was, although I did not recognize it at the time, my fathering a daughter while stationed in England. Now 50 years later, I have been reunited with her. Within the last year I have visited her in England and she has visited here.

I have many memories: love and romance, fear and friendship, bombings and bargaining, bridges and bicycles, air raids and air corps, heat and heroes, service and salutes,...and, looking back- what a great experience - I am proud to be an American.

Antonio Pascucci

Admin. Clerk (359th)

Ed. Note: The questionnaire was prepared by Antonio's daughter

Diane. I thought you would like to read the letter she sent along with it.

"My dad received this form quite some time ago and since he doesn't write English very well I offered to help him with it. He still has a strong Italian accent, and there are times I know I'm not understanding exactly what he's saying. I hope my 'translation' is accurate. It was and has been very enjoyable to hear about my father's WW II experiences. As strange as this may sound, he says they were the best years of his life.

At 80, he is spry, active, continues to do a little masonry work, keep a garden and dance at the VFW on Saturday nights.

I'm delighted at the efforts invested in preserving the history you all helped to create.

My hats off to all of you. If I can help in any way, please let me know.

Diane Pascucci

A machinist speaks!

There are so many memories of Molesworth. I was in the 328th Service Squadron which became the 444th Sub Depot. We were mostly not in any danger but most of us went thru a few raids on London. The Germans were very considerate of us as they came over after the pubs closed; then we were brave being full of beer.

I worked in the very good machine shop we had and very seldom worked directly on planes. I made parts, special bolts and tools. The one job I hated was to go out on the line and drill and remove a broken exhaust manifold stud. When the drill was in that small space, visibility was nil.

During a conversation with Mel McCoy, who was our engineering officer, he showed me a picture of the wall inside the J1 hangar. This was by the office and showed a large amount of B-17s stenciled on the wall designating planes repaired by us. I think he said 1600. I wish that we were able to tour the J1 hangar on the last trip to Molesworth and see if the list was still there. I remember how in the first few months of combat when supplies were hard to get, that crew chiefs were reluctant to leave their B-17s in the hangar overnight. Too often there was a "Moonlight Request" done on them; nobody knew where the parts went but we were sure that it put another plane in combat status. This ceased when supplies became more plentiful.

I remember the "Sweating In." When the raid was tough they land-

ed fast, almost tail to tail. But after a "Milk Run" it took a long time to land. The crews of the plane that didn't return were a very sad bunch, but would brighten up on the news that their plane landed somewhere else. I was amazed how some badly damaged planes came back and we repaired most of them, a few of them had to be scrapped. Some of the planes became familiar to us like the "Black Diamond Express." She received a lot of battle damage but always came back while some of the newer ones were shot down.

I remember how nice the people were to us even though their towns and pubs were crowded with us GIs. I also remember being invited to stay the night with people that I had just met. Especially a British Soldier who was invalidated out because of wounds in India-Burma where he had been with Wingate's troops. We met in a pub and he invited me to his home for the night. His sister warmed a pair of pajamas by the fire for me. I wish I hadn't lost their address.

I also remember the difference in pay. Theirs seemed so little compared with ours; we were wealthy once a month. I also remember how stringent their rationing was. How little meat and clothing they could get. My buddy Joe Michel and I tried to buy two of the ugliest red neckties to wear to our squadron party, but we were unable to bribe the clothing store owner to part with them.

I also remember when the British Bombardier put a practice bomb through the hangar roof. There was a completed B-17, but the crew chief said leave it for the night as it wasn't scheduled for the next day raid. The bomb landed a few feet from the side of the plane and made a dent about a foot in diameter and 1 1/2 inch deep. The cement was like buckshot and there were many holes to repair; it took a couple of days.

There are many memories of the 303rd. Some happy and some sad but we were all happy when the war came to a close.

Henry G. Johansen

Machinist (444th Sub Depot)

"Look Mom - no pilot!"

During 1944, I was the lead crew radio operator on a mission to Cologne. We were over the target and the bombardier attempted to release a smoke marker as a signal to others in the squadron to release their bombs. At that point, there was a

Now is the time to document your exciting experiences!

loud bang that jarred the plane which was immediately filled with smoke. We all thought we had been hit with flak which was heavy that day. Our waist gunner immediately kicked out the side fuselage door and was prepared to jump as were the rest of us. In that section of the plane. Luckily though we were all on intercom, and the bombardier asked me to check the bomb bay to determine if the smoke bomb had released or had hung in the bay and exploded. To our great relief, I found the smoke bomb had not released and had exploded in the bay resulting in no damage to the plane. I can assure you this was an exciting day. We successfully completed our mission and returned safely to base.

This incident occurred during our Flight Crew's temporary assignment to the Chelveston Air Base.(305th BG). However, we were still flying our mission out of Molesworth (303rd Bomb Group; 358th Sqdn). This particular day, we were on a flight practicing bomb drops over England. We had a partial crew and everything seemed to be going O.K. The engineer, who was normally the waist gunner, was operating the upper turret. Suddenly, the alarm bell sounded and shortly thereafter the acting engineer came into the radio room looking for a fire extinguisher. and rushed through the bomb bay to the turret to do battle with the fire. We were spraying the fire when to our amazement we noted with alarm, that there was no one in the cockpit...pilot or co-pilot! The alarm bell was still sounding. We immediately decided that it was past time for us to abandon ship. The acting engineer threw the fire extinguisher into the fire. We went back through the bomb bay to the radio room picking up the Mickey-Navigator on the way to the fuselage side door. Then it was 1 -2 -3, out that door! The last I saw of the plane; it was still flying. I learned later that the pilot had set the controls on auto-pilot, heading it out from England towards the English Channel. We all landed safely, but we three - the last to jump - were approximately 10 miles down range from the earlier jumpers.

After considerable time, and with some help from local English farmers, we all got back together. The pilot contacted the base and during our wait for pick-up, a very kind and generous English family invited us into their home and served us tea and crumpets.

We all finally arrived back at the base safe and sound. This was an

unforgettable experience and I have often wondered about the plane... where it went down and the thoughts of anyone who may have seen it crash.

O.Z. Rowe
Radio Operator (358th)

Ed. Note: Are you sure you had a pilot and co-pilot on board when you took off?

Fate deals strange hands!

Most of my memorable experiences are well described in Carl Fyler's book, "Staying Alive" which I recommend to anyone who hasn't read it.

Although I feel very lucky that I had been transferred to 8th Air Force Headquarters a few days before my crew was shot down and my successor in the Radio Room was killed, I have always felt pangs of guilt that I was not there for that last awful mission.

John S Jillson
Radio Operator (360th)

"Double Jeopardy!"

June 21, 1944(Berlin) we were hit by flak just after "Bombs Away." Right wing was on fire and plane filled with heavy black smoke. Pilot gave order to bail out. I jerked off my oxygen mask and flak suit and looked for my chest pack chute. In the smoke, confusion and panic I was unable to locate it immediately. C.R. Allen, the pilot, came forward and motioned for me to get out. I told him to go ahead. I finally found my chute and crawled to the hatch only to find Allen stuck in it. I pushed him out and followed him.

I remember the blast of air and seeing the plane pass over me, then I lost consciousness (I assume from lack of oxygen). My next memory is being vaguely aware that I was spinning slowly on my back with my head down about 45 degrees. I tried to maneuver, to turn myself so I could see the ground but couldn't. I had no idea of how long or far I had fallen but decided I probably should open my chute.

I reached for the "D" ring on my right side but it wasn't there. I had my chute on upside down so the ring was on my left side. Surprisingly I figured this out pretty quick. I pulled the rip cord and the chute blossomed out yanking me upright where I could see the ground which was frightfully close. I swung back and forth about three

times and landed between the wall of a bombed out building and an iron picket fence on top of a coal pile. I hid my chute in the rubble, climbed over the fence and was met by the only person around, an unarmed Air Raid Warden. Since bombs were falling fairly close and spent shrapnel was kicking up dust all around us, I was glad to accompany him to a nearby air raid shelter which was occupied by several teenage slave labor girls from various occupied countries. When the all clear sounded I was turned over to the military.

John A Thurmon
Navigator (427th)

Ed. Note: What are the odds of getting hit by flak from the enemy, bailing out, and then get caught on the ground just in time to get hit by bombs from your own countrymen? Things like that could ruin your entire day.

Deserving Awards!

Reference Mission #83 to Bremen, 26 Nov.1943, A/C #42-5177 "Fast Worker Mk II" (359th) It is most unfortunate that the pilot (Lt. H.S. Bolsover) declined to be interrogated. There were several actions on this aircraft way beyond the call of duty and at the risk of ones life. There may have been a CMH or DSC awarded if the story was told.

Reference Mission # 114. 28 Feb. 1944, aircraft # 42-5306, (359th). 1st. Lt. N.E. Shoup pilot. A/C downed by flak. Lts. Clark and McClain and Sgt. Asvestos bailed out. Lt. McClain and Sgt. Asvestos were captured immediately. McClain and Asvestos escaped and evaded through France. Both returned to England.: Asvestos on May 17 and McClain on June 21.

Reference Mission #109, 20 Feb. 1944, Target Leipzig, Germany. Note mission commendations on pages 347 and 348 of "Might in Flight." The strike photos and other related material should be displayed in the 8th AF Museum

Charles J. McClain
Bombardier (359th)

Royalty

The day the King, Queen and Princess visited the 303rd Red Cross HQ. The now Queen Elizabeth, opened the window and allowed me to take her picture which I later entered in a contest sponsored by the RC and won 1st prize of \$50. which really seemed like a lot of money at that time. But I'll never forget the day we sent out 11 planes and only two returned. Going through the boys things to send home really left an impression on me that I'll never forget

Arthur M. Stoy
(360th)



Vietnam, May 1964 -Then Major Harold A. Susskind (r) discusses the Vietnam War with "Pistol Packin," Col. Nguyen Cao Ky, Commander, Vietnamese Air Force in the woods outside of Danang. Later Susskind made Lt. Col. while Col. Ky was "promoted" to Premier.

Some unusual experiences

London's Eiffel Tower

In the predicament it was a case of assuming that the other guy had everything under control:

"In January 1944 the Ken Edwards crew was assigned to the 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth. We took ground classes for a week and then went for an area familiarization flight with Tommy Quinn, an experienced pilot, and Joe Vieira as radio-operator. We flew around the area so that they could show us the prominent landmarks. When it was time to return to base, the Group was returning from a mission, and Flying Control needed us out of the way while the planes landed. We flew around, climbing through the overcast to about 5,000 feet. As I'd finished my assigned duties for the flight, I didn't pay much attention to the instruments and didn't know that a 100-knot wind had developed at the altitude we were flying.

"When it was time for us to let down through the cloud, Quinn asked me for a heading back to Molesworth, I looked down as soon as we broke out and saw London below. Joe Vieira, our radio operator, heard my report to the pilot and came on the intercom with, 'London doesn't have an Eiffel Tower!' At first I thought he was joking, but sure enough it was Paris not London. What a shock. An unarmed B-17 flying around over enemy-held territory was unlikely to be ignored. Sure enough someone calls out that a couple of fighters were coming up fast. Quinn promptly took us back into the clouds, but not before one of the fighters had taken a shot at us. We took a heading for England and finally got a steer from the radar people who had been tracking us and wondering what we were doing. When we eventually got back base we all swore secrecy, hoping our stupidity would not be known. Next morning the ground crew found a few bullet holes in the B-17 so we had some explaining to do

**Coleman Sanders (359)
Navigator**

"Ground Pounder!"

In retrospect, I know now that I had the rather unique experience of viewing and participating in a broad concept of a successful military operation made possible by the cooperative efforts of many. I claim no personal laurels, but was proud to be a part of that team effort. As a

"ground pounder" I dealt with mission preparation and the paper war that supported combat. The dedicated performance of duty by the ground support units cannot be over emphasized or praised. By special permission I flew five missions and thus experienced the combat side of the war. Flying as an observer or photographer I was in various positions in the plane and in various slots in the formation, from deputy lead to tail-end Charlie. I returned better prepared to brief the bombardiers on target identification, interrogate crews on mission results and interpret the strike attack photos. On two occasions I put the whole package together over a period of almost 24 hours. When the field order came in around 0200 hours I prepared the bombardiers' briefing and conducted it about 0600. I flew the mission (8-10 hours) and after the quick shot of "Four Roses" or whatever it was, I interrogated the crews. By that time the strike attack photos were in from the photo lab and it was time to put on my photo interpreter's glasses. Several hours later I issued the PI Report to the Group & Squadron Commanders. I hadn't felt any lack of sleep during this time because there was so much activity and so much to do, but eventually I sacked out like a rock. Unlike the crew I had just flown with, I could sleep in the next day; they weren't as fortunate. After a few hours of well-deserved sack time, they were aroused with the familiar you're flying today. Breakfast at 0400; briefing at 0500." The Intelligence did a lot of report writing which eventually became history-recording. I did my share of it, but I wished I had kept more notes and was more mature at that time. I didn't realize I was an eyewitness to history in the making and was experiencing the broad view of the war. I also wish I could shake the hands of my good and now departed buddies. They performed so well and contributed so much. Experience with the 303rd Bomb Group is hard to describe in terms of one man's experience. Molesworth contained a family, a team, a group of dedicated men who did a variety of jobs to win a very important battle. Maybe my greatest achievement at Molesworth was getting to know that great gang of guys. I have never known a better bunch in my 30 years of service in the Air Force.

**Carlton M. Smith ((HDQ)
Photo Interpreter**

DONATIONS/MEMORIALS

L1530	James E. Aberdeen (358)
Widow	Mrs Pearl B. Anderson (359) Memorial to Francis D. Anderson
L999	Ralph P. Anderson (360)
S401	Irl E. Baldwin (358)
S1379	Edwin B. Barry (1114) - Memorial to Henry Pratten
LA-288	Andrew B. Claster - Memorial to Stanley M. Claster
417	Vincent A. Deliso (427)
L1967	Joseph DeLuca (360)
S424	Julian E. Dennis (359)
A-283	C. Royce Dixon
A-145	Iris Drinkwater - Memorial to Eugene Blum
S670	Al Dussliere (427)
L916	Leroy Faulkner (360)
Widow	Mrs Rosalie L. Ferris (358) - Memorial to James Ferris
1996	Richard T. Fogarty (427)
L671	J. W. Fredericks (360)
L888	Dwight W. Gonser (359)
L1949	Harold W. Gunn (358)
621	Robert B. Heiliger (360)
L1694	Thomas D. Lardie (360)
L1961	Russell S. Klingensmith (359) - Memorial to Charles G. Covington
L1076	Guy H. McClung (359)
S316	James W. O'Leary, Sr.
L1554	Hugh J. Parkhurst (HDQ)
L1998	Geroge W. Pearson, Jr. (427) To 8AFHM
Widow	Mrs Bea Pratten (1114)
Widow	Mrs Sylvia Reeves (427)
L840	Mrs Betty D. Regis (358) Memorial to Donald F. DeCamp & Donation to 8AFHM
A-304	Michael R. Ripley
A-6	Charles D. Rukes
L039	Mel Schulstad (HDQ)
S265	Samuel W. Smith (360)
S890	Vernon W. Stone (427)
L338	Tom C. Sullens (427)
S530	James B. Taylor (358) - Donation and Memorial to J. Ford Kelley
Widow	Mrs Joanna Tressler (360)

A Tribute to the JAC

The following "Tribute to the JAC" from the 303rd Bomb Group Association was delivered by Irl Baldwin at ceremonies at Molesworth, May 14, 1997.

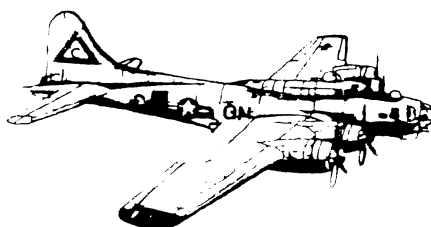
"I bring you a special message from the 303rd Bomb Group Association, from the men who lived in this air base during World War II. It was given to me by Eddie Deerfield, president of our Association, to be read to the men and women of the Joint Analysis Center and 423rd Air Base Squadron.

"I quote: 'The veterans of the 303rd Bomb Group salute you. Molesworth is always in our hearts and often in our minds. More than 50 years ago, from 1942 to 1945, we lived and worked here. The ground support personnel kept us flying. The combat crews went off in B-17s to attack Hitler's empire. All too often, our men in the bombers of the 303rd didn't come back to Molesworth - they died in battle, were missing in action or became prisoners of war.

The barracks and the Nissen huts are gone, but the bittersweet memories linger on. The best of the memories was the sense of getting the job done, the feeling that we really were effective in putting an end to the Nazi empire. The worst of the memories was seeing bombers in our formation hit by flak or enemy fighters, exploding, no parachutes sighted. And then, the terrible sensation of seeing those empty bunks in the barracks that night.

Today, the veterans of Molesworth are spread across 50 states. With widows and Associates we have two-thousand members. When we are able to return to visit Molesworth, it's always such a great joy to see how we are still remembered. It seems like everywhere we look there is a tribute to the 303rd Bomb Group, our motto of Might In Flight, and our Group name - Hell's Angels. We have been especially honored by the woodcarving skills of Bill Adams and the artistry of Keith Hill, and extend to them our deep appreciation, warm regards and best wishes.

None of this would have happened without the dedicated efforts of Colonel Philip Marcum, Brian McGuire and so many of your officers, enlisted personnel and staffs. The years are taking their toll of us veterans of the 303rd, but all of you at Molesworth have our undying gratitude. After half a century, it is now "you" who are keeping us flying."



MIGHT IN FLIGHT

DAILY DIARY OF THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE'S HELL'S ANGELS

303RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

By

Harry D. Gobrecht, Lt. Colonel, USAF (Ret)
358th BS/303rd BG(H) Pilot. Historian, 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Second Revised Edition, 1997 - Limited Edition of 500 books
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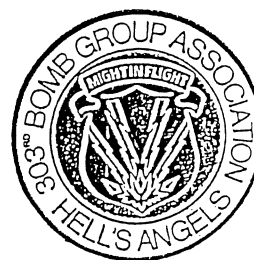
Might in Flight traces each day of the 303rd's history from it's February 1942 constitution and activation, explores it's lineage and stateside pre-combat training and overseas movement to Eighth Air Force Station 107 at Molesworth, England. Each of the Group's 364 combat missions are discussed including: 8th AF, 1st Bomb Division, Wing and Group order of battle information; formation leaders; 210 aircraft losses, 1,748 casualties with their MIA status, MACR and/or E&E numbers; Mission facts, stories and highlights; Mission commendations, honors and major awards received; Aircraft accidents.

Interspersed throughout *Might in Flight* are important USAAF, 8th AF and other happenings that impacted upon the 303rd's remarkable air war record. Included are key visitors, fun and non-combat events and command changes. Briefly described is: The post war shut-down at Molesworth; July 25, 1945 inactivation with the Air Transport Command in Casablanca, North Africa; Brief reactivation as a USAF B-29 and B-52 Wing; Utilization of the Molesworth, England airfield and site as a key "Cold War" airfield and cruise missile base. The book end sheets contain full size color reproductions of the 303rd BG(H), 358th, 359th, 360th and 427th BS insignia. An extensive page number index includes: Personnel - All individuals whose names are mentioned in book events or stories, who were MIA, other casualties, who are known to have completed a full combat tour; Aircraft - All 303rd BG(H) named aircraft mentioned in book. Events - Those mentioned in book.

Completely revised sections include: Molesworth's present use as the important Joint Analysis Center, United States European Command and how the 303rd BG(H) is remembered; Photos of the 43 303rd BG(H) memorials and monuments in the United States and Europe; Bibliography; 303rd BG(H) Association leaders and reunions. Additions include: MACR and E&E numbers for MIA crewmen; Crash locations of most MIA B-17's; New mission and support unit stories and photos; Index revisions.

Might in Flight has been recognized as one of the best, accurate and most complete USAAF Group histories. It has been described as -- "A remarkable accomplishment" - Col R.S. Rauschkolb, Commander, USAF Historical Research Agency. "Ya Dun good" - Col Richard Uppstrom, Director, USAF Museum. "Most impressive. Sets the standard that I would like to see achieved in all future unit histories" - E.G. "Buck" Shuler, Jr., LtGen, USAF(Ret), former 8th AF Commander and Chairman & CEO, The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum.

Others have stated -- "It exceeds all of my expectations", "It's a printing wonder", "A colossal undertaking", "Other Group histories pale in comparison, "Everyone who served with the 303rd BG(H) can relate to someone or something mentioned in the book", "It's a tribute to the 303rd BG(H) heritage".



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FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

We had planned to publish the new Membership Directory in March, but have now decided to wait until we receive the results of our Molesworth Member Search Campaign. By doing this we will have the very latest changes and additions to publish. I must remind you though that any Membership Directory is completely accurate and valid only for a day or so after publication. Those updates come across my desk almost daily. Watch for them to be listed in this column. This is the way to keep your Directory current.

Corrections to February '97 Newsletter:

Page 18, Upgrade to Life Memberships - Robert W. Featherstone is in the 444th, not the 359th.

Page 19, New Members - Dale H.

Gordon (#1992) should be Dale H. Carlson (Sorry Dale).

Page 19, Listed in my column text - We have now found Mrs Mary McConaghy and Mrs Nancy Walder and have their current addresses.

Special thanks and recognition go to James B. Taylor (S530). He not only made a son and daughter Life Associate Members, but sent a \$1,000 memorial to the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum in the name of J. Ford Kelley. The 8th Air Force Historical Society matched the donation, so \$2,000 was gifted to the Museum.

The lists that follow are current as of 26 April 1997.

Carlton M. Smith
12700 Red Maple Circle #54
Sonora, CA 95370-5269
209-533-4033

NEW MEMBERS

- A-435 W. David Wood, P.O. Box 307, Sun City, CA 92586-2012
 A-436 Terry A. Sullens, 4431 W Urbana Ct., Broken Arrow, OK 74012-6065
 A-437 Janet L. Wills, 6733 Kendall St., Arvada, CO 80003-4152
 L1998 George W. Pearson, Jr. P.O.Box 494, Gibsonville, NC 27249-0494 (427)
 A438 Thomas Ervin, 158 Nob Hill Rd., New London, Ct. 06320-3241
 1999 Charles A. Callahan, 6815 Prairie Rd., Apt. 320, Albuquerque, NM 87109-1945 (427)
 2000 Thomas N. Kelly, 480 Hawk Hollow Rd., Greeneville, TN 37743-3565 (359)
 L2001 Jack Strahs, 218 West End Ave., Apt. 26, Freeport, NY 11520-5250 (359).
 A-439 Mark Tressler, 235 Lincoln Dr., New Cumberland, PA 17070-2828
 L2002 Fabian S. Folmer, 702 N 8th St., Osage, IA 50461-1406
 2003 Dal Nichols, 1112 SE 17th St., Pryor, OK 74361-8215 (Sq. unk)
 2004 Fred P. Reichmann, 23640 Montaigne Dr., Pensacola, FL 32504-4537 (358)
 A-440 Sharon R. Smith, 11053 Paddock Cir., Dallas, TX 75238-3204
 2005 John E. Phillips, 2470 Hwy 51 S, Hernando, MS 38632-1733 (Sq unk)
 2006 James Frey, 1601 Altland Ave., York, PA 17404-4901 (427)
 A-441 John Miller, 812 Highland Ave., Palmyra, NJ 08065-1925
 A-442 Edward Stone, 2913 Robindale Ln., Grapevine, TX 76051-2627
 A-443 Michael A. Stone, 189 Solaz Ave., Port St. Lucie, FL 34983-8406
 L2007 Loren Rawlings, 23354 County Rd. X, Shell Lake, WI 54871-359)
 A-444 James E. Aberdeen, Jr., 5135 W. Mountain St., C-9, Stone Mountain, GA 30083-2845
 A-445 Vic Davis, 3416 Mackland Ave., NE, Albuquerque, NM 87106-1217
 A-446 Jay Morrison, 7814 Morrow Rd, NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110-4830
 A-447 Maida Forman, P.O. Box 1734, Union, NJ 07083-1734
 2008 Louis E. Reed, 3426 Freeman St., San Diego, CA 92106-1415 (427)
 A-448 Steven P. Smith, P.O. Box 3741, Alamogordo, NM 88311-3741
 A-449 John D. Hall, PSC Box 2267, Little Rock AFB, AR 72099-2267
 S2009 Walter E. Sloan, 1885 Linneman Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45238-1952 (358)
 2010 Bodie Fite, 264 Vista Del Parque, Redondo Beach, CA 90277-(Sq unk)
 A-450 Terence Hanna, 413 East Ninth St., Newton, KS 67114-2715
 A-451 John W. Nolan, 14922 W 82nd Terrace, Lenexa, KS 66215-5804
 2011 Darwin Hopkins, 1764 Scenic Dr., Fort Dodge, IA 50501-8718 (359)
 A-452 Louis H. Redhage, Jr., 27150 Armada Ridge Rd., Richmond, MI 48062
 2012 Leon H. Slauson, 2111 Harley Dr., Madison, WI 53711-4351 (427)

ADDRESS CHANGES

- A-360 Kenneth D. Allen, P.O. Box 4100 (London Pouch), The Woodlands, TX 77387-4100
 Widow Mrs Dorothy W. Brown, 92 Plantation Blvd. #3, Fort Pierce, FL 34982-6350
 S513 Armand F. Burch, 662 Cascade Hollow Hills, Grand Rapids, MI 49546-3661 (Sole address; no longer a winter resident of Tampa, FL)
 L771 Merle Eckert, 8008 Delightful Ave., Las Vegas, NV 89128-2104
 A-166 Sandra Edgerton, 3975 NW Susbauer Rd., Cornelius, OR 97113
 S696 Robert J. Evans, 20550 Falcons Landing Cir., Apt 5204, Sterling, VA 20165-3587
 Widow Mrs Fern Fox, 2408 Van Reed Rd., West Lawn, PA 19609-1136 (Sole address; no longer a winter resident of Tampa, FL)
 333 George W. Henderson, 516 S Pennsylvania Ave., Columbus, KS 66725-1750
 L1301 James P. Johnson, 2202 Green Meadows Cir., McAlester, OK 74501
 A-276 Thomas A. Lardie, 1500 207th Ave. NE, Redmond, WA 98053-6679
 L1915 H Duane Litwiller, 9055 Tamiami Trl S #17, Venice, FL 34293-5123 (1 Dec - 1 Jun)
 L1915 H Duane Litwiller, 523 Northwestern Ave., Taylorsville, IL 62568-1235 (1 Jun - 1 Dec)
 S032 Walter J. Mayer, 14605 W. Taylor Rd., Cheney, WA 99004-9245 (Sole address; no longer a winter resident of Yuma, AZ)
 Widow Mrs Mary McConaghy, 37 John St., Chelsea, MA 02150-2124
 L805 James D. Moody, 4120 Blue Ridge Rd., Edmond, OK 73034-9063
 L1948 Thomas H. Morrison, 1083 Charity Drive, Virginia Beach, VA 23455
 Widow Mrs Sylvia Reeves, 28101 Tefir, Mission Viejo, CA 92692-5700
 A-413 Robert Shayler, 18417 Center St., Castro Valley, CA 94546-1609
 Widow Mrs Nancy Walder, 65 School St., Bar Harbor, ME 14609-1618

UPGRADE TO LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

- L999 Ralph P. Anderson (360)
 L1910 Wiley A Buckner (444)
 LA-288 Andrew B. Clastet
 L1546 Carl J. Dye
 L301 Ray T. Haman (359)
 LA-157 Katherine Johnson
 L1076 Guy H. McClung (359)
 L1958 Julius C. Persyns (444)
 L1982 Robert P. Rabassa (358)
 LA-158 James A Taylor
 LA-230 Susan R. Taylor

IN MEMORIAM

- L1649 Robert C. Altizer (359) - 19 May 1996
 L664 Francis D. Anderson (359) - 21 May 1996
 L1934 James H. Batton (359) - 2 March 1997
 Louis H. Bourgeault (unk) - 10 Feb 1997
 L1776 Joseph E. Bradbury (360) - 18 Jan 1997
 L1629 Richard Braden (359) - Jan 1996
 L605 Edward F. Eccleston (427) - 18 June 1996
 1801 Paul R. Willis (427) - 16 Feb 1997
 L953 Harry W. Haynes, Jr. (427) - 3 Mar 1997
 L027 James C. Hensley (358) - 8 Jan 1997
 L1273 John R. Olson (358) - 28 Jan 1996
 A-208 Allan Ritchie - Aug 1996
 418 Bernard Schumacher (358) 1 Feb 1997
 L1011 James C. Stavast (358) - 4 Nov 1996
 637 Robert J. Warner (360) 24 May 1994
 S1037 Ernest A. Whittall (358) - 2 Mar 1997

The 303rd BGA is saddened by the loss of one of its Catholic Chaplains, the Reverend Bernard Schumacher, of the Subiaco Abbey, Subiaco, Arkansas. Rev. Schumacher along with Bishop Rene Gracida participated in many of the Sunday masses held at some of the recent reunions. Rev. Schumacher along with the other heroes listed above will be sorely missed.

Pittsburgh Reunion to Feature Honors, Memories and Good Times

By Eddie Deerfield



Downtown Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle, at the Confluence of the Monongahela, Allegheny and Ohio Rivers. The 303rd's Reunion hotel, The Westin William Penn is in the midst of the Golden Triangle.

The 303rd Bomb Group Association's reunion planners have put together an impressive program for 1997, including awards for Molesworth's "100 Mission or Bust B-17 crew chiefs," a nostalgic remembrance tribute to our departed veterans in a hallowed hall and a variety of entertainment including a follies revue on a luncheon cruise showboat, three-hour sightseeing tours of the Pittsburgh area and a professional performance of Broadway's most memorable hit songs.

Eleven 303rd Bomb Group crew chiefs, who led their men in keeping a B-17 flying from Molesworth for 100 combat missions or more, will be honored at the reunion farewell banquet on 8 September 1997. Plaques will be presented to the crew chiefs or to a spouse or family member in the event the veteran has passed away/ Tim Basset and His Great Big Band will play for dining and dancing at the banquet. It's the big band sound right out of the

1940s, with rousing renditions of the memorable tunes we knew and loved.

First day of registration for the reunion is Thursday 4 September at the Westin William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh. Registration packets were mailed to all members in the last week of April. If you didn't receive yours, send a note to 1997 Reunion Chairman, 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016.

Here's what else to expect when you come to Pittsburgh for the 14th reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group:

"Broadway Tonight," in performance by theatrical stars Joyce Sterling and Dean Patterson. Experience a journey through Broadway's golden years as the stars brilliantly perform some of the most memorable medleys, solos and duets of Broadway history. In addition, Joyce and Dean will honor the 303rd with a medley of songs from the World War II era, such as "I'll Be Seeing You; Harbor Lights; You'd

Be So Nice To Come Home To; That Old Black Magic; Always; It Had To Be You; My Prayer and My Buddy."

Enjoy the elegance of a private cruise aboard Pittsburgh's finest event facility - the Gateway Clipper Fleet! The 303rd Bomb Group Association has chartered "Party Liner" for a private luncheon, with excellent cuisine, professional service and a spectacular view of the city from the confluence of the Monongahela, Allegheny and Ohio Rivers. The nostalgic charm of the river boat makes this event a unique and memorable experience. To entertain the 303rd, we've booked a dazzling Riverboat Follies Revue with a cast of six actors and actresses dressed in the colorful costumes of the original river boat captains, crew and dancing girls.

An all-new memorabilia exhibit sponsored by the World War II Air-mens Preservation Society. These are some 500 men and women dedicated to preserving the artifacts, stories and spirit of those who were part of the greatest aerial conflict in history.

Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall, modeled after the Greek's empire's Mausoleum of Halicarnassus, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world, will be the magnificent setting for the 303rd's remembrance service. The ceremony will take place in the buildings majestic and solemn auditorium. The Hall was built in 1910 to honor Allegheny County veterans who served in the Civil War. It was rededicated in 1963 to honor the memories of veterans of all wars and conflicts. The Hall also houses an impressive military museum.

Dr. Walter Brown will present a program with slides on "Emergency

Medicine for Seniors." Dr. Brown is a consultant to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, and is eminently qualified to advise 303rd veterans and their wives on how to cope with medical emergencies.

Tour historic and cultural Pittsburgh in large, modern, comfortable buses. A study in contrasts takes you to the old and the new in Pittsburgh. Ride to the top of Mount Washington for a spectacular view of Pittsburgh's three rivers and Pointe State Park where the city of Pittsburgh had its beginnings in 1753. Travel to old Allegheny City, now known simply as "the north side," to Mexican War Streets, Millionaires Row and Cavalry Church. Journey past the Carnegie Science Center, Three Rivers Stadium and Andy Warhol Museum. Visit the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning and its famous Nationality Classrooms.

A TV Theater Program will feature two videotape documentaries never before shown at a Group reunion - "Mission Berlin" and "The B-17 Celebrates Its 50th Anniversary."

Play at Grand View Golf Course, a distinctive, challenging 18-hole par-71 layout, winding its way along the tree-lined, rolling fairways and undulating greens of a 160-acre woodland hilltop. It will test the shot-making skills of the accomplished golfer, yet it is kind to the average golfer who simply wants to enjoy a pleasant, relaxed game.

Last but far from least - the Hospitality Center, always a prime watering hole for members and their families at every reunion, will be located in the Westin William Penn's Presidential Suite, the largest in the hotel and normally reserved for visiting presidents and potentates.

In this issue - This 24 page issue is the largest newsletter in the history of the Association, coincidentally it will go to the largest number of subscribers in our history. Unfortunately, due to the idiosyncrasies of the postal system, the number of newsletters that go into the mail is not the same number that get delivered. Look at the list of new members; you may come across some names of people you knew quite well at Molesworth. The "all-out" blitz to find lost souls has been quite successful. By the end of the year we should post a record number of members. Read about the sacrifices of the citizens of St. Nazaire on page 8 and an update on the 8th AF Museum on page 7.

303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

c/o Hal Susskind

2602 Deerfoot Trail

Austin, Texas 78704-2716

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