

Hell's Angels Newsletter

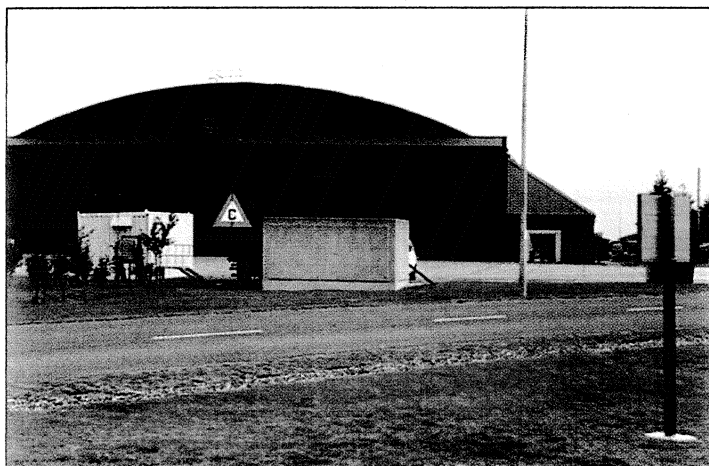
303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

February 1998

303rd Bomb Group targets the internet



"Thunderbird"- a flyable version of the 303rd's fine old warrior is at the Lone Star Museum in Galveston, Texas as is a smaller version of the famous Keith Ferris mural about the Wiesbaden mission featured at the Air & Space Museum.



A memorial pole and plaque marks the site where the RAF Molesworth Air Traffic Control Tower stood in the heydays of the 303rd Bomb Group. The tower controlled the B-17s departing and returning from bombing missions over occupied Europe and Nazi Germany between 17 November 1942 and 25 April 1945.

On December 18, 1997, The 303rd Bomb Group Association lost an ardent supporter and a very hard worker when **Carlton M. Smith**, our Roster Manager and Membership Chairman lost his bout with cancer. Although quite ill, Carlton managed to make the reunion in Pittsburgh and took part in the Memorial Services where he read the names of our departed comrades who passed on since the previous reunion in San Francisco. "Smitty" as he was usually called, was a member of the Intelligence Staff at Molesworth during WW II. As the Photo Interpreter of the group he usually worked very closely with the Bombardier and was often in charge of their briefing. Although not required to fly, Smitty earned an Air Medal by flying on different missions in various sections of the B-17. Smitty is survived by his wife Phyllis who has done a marvelous job in seeing that we had a smooth transition in moving his records to Ed Miller. Phyllis and family often came to the reunions to help Smitty update his roster **We will miss you Smitty.** ➔

By Edgar "Ed" Miller

Your Association is not one to let "technology" pass us by. We are on the Internet with an outstanding Website. We must offer our thanks and appreciation to one of our newest Associate Members, Gary L. Moncur

When Gary sent in his membership application last December, he invited me to visit his own Website. Was I surprised and pleased to find old 42-38050, "Thunderbird" on the opening page. Gary had dedicated this website to his father, Vern L. Moncur, of the 359th Bomb Squadron, who was the first pilot of Thunderbird, completing 25 missions in April 1944.

It took me no time at all to e-mail Gary and ask him if he would like to develop a Website for the 303rd Bomb Group Association. He volunteered. After checking with Hal Susskind, our President, Harry Gobrecht, our Vice President for Administration, and Eddie Deerfield, our Chairman of the Past Presidents Advisory Committee, to determine if they would approve, I put him to work.

Harry Gobrecht, the best Historian in the 8th Air Force, has contributed scads of information, which has been, or will be included in the Website. He now has another avenue to offer the result of his hundreds, upon hundreds of hours of labor and research, which culminated in the second edition of his book, "Might in Flight."

Everyone of you has your name on the Internet, as the listing of all of the men that served at Molesworth, during 1942-1945, have been included. That amounts to over 9,975 names. The list includes your name, rank, service number, squadron assigned, your MOS, and date of assignment. If you were flying personnel, your pilot is listed along with those unfortunate to have been POWs, KIAs, and WIA. If you want to look up the name of one of your old buddies, or whom you flew with; it will be there.

All of the aircraft are listed by number and name. This list includes their fate. Harry has a listing of most of the crew chiefs, and we

hope to have that list included soon.

A section called "Mission Scenario" is planned; if we can find volunteers to help develop it. We would like to depict the actions that took place, throughout Molesworth from the time the "Battle Orders" were received from 8th Bomber Command, and 41st Combat Wing, to prepare for a "Maximum Effort." We are seeking help from anyone who played a part in this kind of scenario, while at Molesworth. This includes the people in Intelligence, in Operations, in Maintenance, in the Squadrons, in the support functions of engineering, armament, munitions, communications, chemical, chaff, parachute, transportation, specialty maintenance shops, and the mess halls, etc. We want to know what critical role you played in this integrated effort of getting everything done, to make sure we were on time for take-off and also on time to depart the English Coast in the proper spot in the formation.

Won't you please write down what you did, and how you did it, and send it to me. With help from Harry Gobrecht and Hal Susskind, and others, we will attempt to "build a play by play account of your actions." In other words, a "Mission Scenario" that will tell everyone who visits the Website, how you helped make the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) one of the best groups in the 8th Air Force in its battle to attain air superiority over the Luftwaffe.

For those of you who haven't visited a Website, it will be an exciting experience for you. You can move all around, from any subject to another. The technology uses "Links" to shift the screen from one area to another. As you proceed to view the 303rd's Website, you can jump from one of the subjects listed above to another, and back again.

Another of our newest Associate Members, Charles E. McPartlin has developed a Website honoring his uncle, Charles Cassidy (L635) a bombardier in the 360th Bomb

(continued on page 10)



303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

"HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

Editor: Hal Susskind

VOL. XIX, NO. 4 2602 Deerfoot Trail, Austin, TX 78704 February 1998

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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Hell's Angels Forum

Your Chance to Sound Off!

"An experience"

From the perspective of 52 years after the event, memory glazes over some details, but some things come back in a flash - can't find my combat file re:date, plane, and pilot. (I was assigned to a lead-crew and thus we were sort of pieced together, not always the same crew members).

It was not necessarily an heroic mission. In truth, aerial bombardment, Luftwaffe fighters and flak were life threatening, malevolent and extremely frightening experiences-never "interesting;" not of Hollywood calibre.

I was a lead Bombardier in 17's, First Lieutenant in the 427th, 303rd Bomb Group. Time was very early January 1945; flak, not fighters, at this point in the air-war, was our implaceable worry.

On an evening after a particular harrowing bombing mission to the bridges of Frankfurt-am-Main, during which #3 ship on our wing took a direct hit, I found myself on a liberty-run into nearby Northampton, North Hants. It was Friday night and the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath.

I felt a need for calm and a strong measure of religious reflection. For a 23 year old, too much emotion and an inordinate sadness had been building up - my older brother (my hero and icon) had been killed three months earlier on the Moselle River line; and a particularly good friend had flown on #3 wing. Where was there a synagogue?" I inquired. None were presently open.

However, there was a large house in a residential neighborhood, in which a Rabbi was sheltering many Jewish orphans. He had been conducting religious services for his charges. I was told Rabbi Hirsch, formerly of Frankfurt (surprisingly) was house mother, teacher, religious mentor, and, in loco parentis, a warm bosom. Approximately 50 boys from 5 to 15 years of age lived there, British authorities had assigned this house to the Rabbi for a collection spot for homeless, unaccompanied Jewish children from Germany, France, Holland and Belgium.

Mattresses were spread on the floors, 8 to 10 per room. Nor were there any sheets or pillow cases for these "beds." Friday night dinner was sparse, with emphasis on potatoes, turnips, inevitable brussels sprouts, and some canned vegetables; a fragile chicken rounded out

the meal. I was given the seat of honor next to the Rabbi. The children clustered around asking about the war, my airplane, the cities bombed and the like. To my embarrassment, I was venerated as one who had come, in person, to liberate Europe from Hitler.

The children intoned the traditional Sabbath meal prayers, blessing the candles, the wine and the challah. There was an air of peacefulness, despite the dissonance of their youthful voices and the war beyond the walls of the house. I had begun to relax; it was warm, comfortable feeling. After dinner, prayer services were conducted by the Rabbi. Along with the children's memorial prayers of lament for their lost parents and families, I joined in the memorial prayer (Kaddish) for my brother and my buddies in the #3 wing ship.

I had come so much closer to this war, which up to now, had been viewed from 5-6 miles up - a war in which cities were Lilliputian, where bomb bursts were like flash bulbs, and flak was puffs of black smoke that hurled metal against and into our aluminum shell.

This household in North Hants was, indeed, Act III of the bloody tragedy that had decimated people, massacred millions, destroyed cities and nearly swallowed up civilization as we knew it. Absolute horror! The children's faces mirrored the hopelessness of war. They were in the front row; I had been sitting in the balcony.

**Clifford Steinberg (427)
40 Sturges Ridge Rd.
Wilton, CT 06897**

Is this a record?

Reference your question in the November 1997 issue of our newsletter - "Who in the 303rd holds the record for flying 35 missions in the least amount of time."

I may not be that person, however, I do want to feel that I might be close to the winner

I flew my first mission on 3 Sept. 1944, and my 35th mission on 7 Jan. 1945. That means I did my 35 in 127 days. I was Lt. Grisham's copilot at the start, but checked out as a first pilot as soon as allowed and then flew with several new crews on their first missions, as a check pilot. Around my 27th mission I asked to again fly with Lt. Grisham as his copilot and our experienced crew. As a crew we voted to forgo our "Rest Home" break and agreed to fly

every mission that the squadron (358th) would allow. I had caught up with Lt. Grisham and his crew, so we all ended up together on that last (35th mission) on 7 Jan. '45 to Kall, Germany R.R. Junction, a six hour and 10 minute sortie.

How does my 127 days compare?

**William Cox (358)
441 Sandstone Dr.
Vacaville, CA 95688**

Oranges via a B-17

In 1992, I learned that a B-17 had crash landed on a golf course, in Devon, during WW II. The information came from three men, who had either seen the plane crash, or visited the area afterwards. All had been aged between 13 and 17 years at the time.

One had been cycling near to the golf course, with two of his friends, and they had arrived at the same time as the local policeman, or 'Bobby,' as they were known in England. He was amazed to see oranges everywhere, and was absolutely delighted when one of the crew gave him one.

With the exception of the bare details, found in the records books, all efforts to discover anything about the crew, who they were, where they were going, had they survived the war, and so on, failed. But I kept my file open, in the hope that something would turn up one day. And every time I passed the golf club, which was often, my thoughts would return to the B-17, and I wondered if I would ever solve the 'mystery.'

Today I received the November edition of "Hell's Angels," and just could not believe my eyes, when I read the article on page 17, which had been written by George W. Ashworth, the Radio Operator who

had been on board that B-17, and whom I now hope to contact.

Whilst not attempting to condone the lack of welcome George and his crew received, on their unscheduled arrival on a Devon golf course in a B-17 Flying Fortress, I would like to offer 'mitigating circumstances.' In 1943, England was a war torn nation, with rationing at a near starvation level, and oranges were an unknown luxury. But be sure that if any of the crew had needed help, they would have taken priority over the oranges. The British AA battalion would have tried on countless occasions to shoot down enemy planes which were bombing the cities of England, in which family members undoubtedly lived. A few miles along the coast, the City of Plymouth was being decimated. The sudden arrival of the B-17 would have been a distraction from the grimness of war, which was reaching the stage when many English people fully expected the Nazis to over-run their small island.

Any piece of land which the Germans had not succeeded in bombing was precious. It was regarded as a victory, which helped to keep the British spirits alive. And it was the British spirit which helped the people through the dark days of the war. In a similar way, The G.I.'s will say it was their humor which helped them get through the D-Day Landings. Ask the G.I. who dove under a truck, cracking his head on the axle, as a German plane strafed Utah Beach, and who was heard muttering, "Someone is going to get hurt around here in a minute, if they are not careful."

The British needed to hang on to something, and to see the golf course, which had survived the bombing, being ploughed up by a



Fact or fiction?

Forum

B-17, may well have initially depressed the greenkeeper, but you can 'bet your bottom dollar,' he would have it repaired in double quick time. And if he did complain about "those goddamned Yanks," at least it took his mind off the Germans for awhile.

But don't ever think the British were not grateful, or that any of you have been forgotten.

As a result of reading George W. Ashworth's article, today I talked with one recipient of the crew's generosity, for the first time in five years, to find he had been discussing the incident with friends, only a few days ago. Obviously with the 'anniversary' in mind, I have also been interviewed on the telephone by a Devon newspaper reported, who intends writing up the story.

I will send a follow-up as and when. Meantime I hope to contact George and record his story in the interests of history.

Sincerely,

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

Ed. Note: Thank you very much for your very interesting letter. I'm glad the Newsletter was able to help clear up a 50 year old mystery. Ms. Drinkwater is an Associate Member of our Association and has been instrumental in erecting memorials to members of the 303rd Bomb Group in the Somerset area.

Was it Sam Blanchard?

With reference to the picture at the bottom of page 3 of the Nov. '97 newsletter, the fellow on the right appears to be Samuel Blanchard, co-pilot on our crew (Harry Jenkins, pilot). I never met Paul Hogan but I see he was at Molesworth during the same period as we were. Sam became a commercial pilot after the war and was killed in an airplane accident on the ground in the 50s, I believe. He lived and left a wife in Houston at the time, but had a Port Arthur address before entering the service.

I also note Harry Jenkins write-up on our Esbjaerg mission (page 16-17) I submitted one on the same mission but I think over 50 plus years my memory may have skewed some of the facts so I defer to Harry's version of the mission.

It is only within the last year and a half or so that I became aware of the Association, after I had located most of my crew members on my

computer. Since then four of us met here in Florida last February, first we had seen each other since the war. Three of us were present at Pittsburgh in September and again had a chance to rehash our experiences.

The newsletter staff is doing a great service in bonding and keeping the members aware of what is going on, as well as refreshing our memories on the contributions we made to that crucial period in history. Great job.

Wesley Loosemore
1112 Inverness Street
Pt. Charlotte, FL 33952-1788

Interesting articles

Please extend my subscription to the Hell's Angels Newsletter for 1998. My brother 1st Lt. John J. McGarry was a B-17 pilot at Molesworth and was killed on April 9, 1944. So I find articles about their brave service very interesting.

Barbara J. Donnelly
2923 S. Wood Dale Dr.
Jackson, MI 49203

Ed. Note: According to "Might in Flight," Lt. McGarry (427) piloting B-17 "Spirit of Flak Wolf" crashed shortly after take-off, about 2 1/2 miles from the end of the runway. Because of its heavy gas and bomb load, it could not gain sufficient altitude and hit a tree while taking off. Its tail part of the stabilizer tore off. Still unable to gain altitude and hard to control, it hit another tree and crashed to the ground one mile south of Winwick. There were four survivors. Visibility at take-off from Molesworth was restricted.

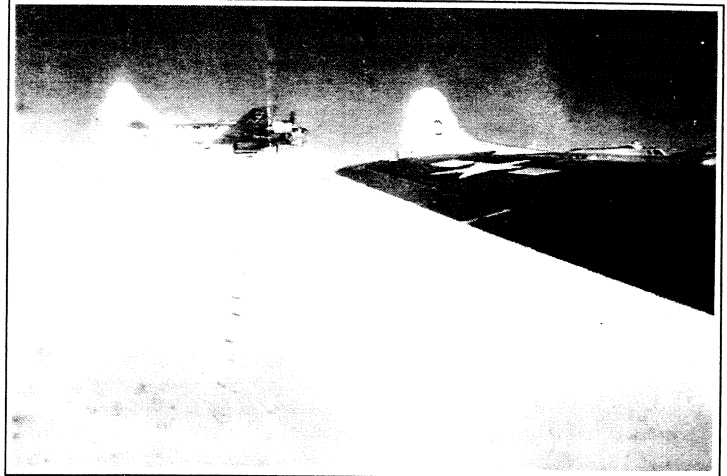
Did you know John McGarry?

My uncle, 1st Lt. John J. McGarry was a pilot in the 427th Squadron. He and five of his crew died in a crash on take-off on Easter Sunday, 9 April 1944. The aircraft was named, "The Spirit of Flak Wolf" and this would have been their 19th mission. An aircraft his crew had flown previously was named: "Luscious Lady." I would like to contact anyone who knew Lt. McGarry or has any information, stories, anecdotes etc. Thank you.

Jack Donnelly
2231 E. 3225 N,
Layton, UT 84040
(801) 771-8027

Merseburg: Regardless of how you spell it – it was a rough target!

First I want to tell you how much I appreciate your work on my behalf as editor of the newsletter and now



Merseburg- the Flak Capital of Germany. Six times the men of the 303rd bombed Merseburg and each time the flak damage to the B-17s was considerable. The photo above was taken on the 6 Dec. '44 raid. It appears that an aircraft in the lower left is going down in flames.

as president of our Bomb Group Association. You really do a great job - the very best.

I'm responding to your request to hear from others participating on the mission to Merseburg, August 24, 1944. I've read with interest the article by Lt. Ziesche in the August '97 newsletter (pg 13) and G. Girman comments in the Nov. '97 newsletter and can't help but add my recollections of the mission.

My crew pilot was Lt. Butler who was on his second mission, the rest of the crew including myself (Bombardier) were on our first mission and, if you recall, had no idea of what we were getting into.

The co-pilot and I were giddy and making general conversation and comments relative to the flak that, "someone is shooting at us" - "somebody could be hurt up here," etc., and just generally having a good time. We had written on the bomb fins prior to take-off, notes to Hitler such as, "Look out below" - "This one will kill ya" and "Best to Hitler."

As we flew over the target, I couldn't see much since they had set up a smoke screen and covered the area very well. The flak was all around us but didn't really bother me or "Hap" (co-pilot), but as we cleared the target area a small piece of flak about the size of a BB or little larger struck the plexi-glass nose in front of me and spalled off spraying my chest and oxygen mask. (On the other 34 missions I wore my goggles.)

As I sat there enjoying the ride and scenery, I noticed a B-17, all alone, forward to the right and several thousand feet below our altitude.

As I watched the B-17 I was saying to myself; "What does that guy think he is doing? Is he trying to win

this war all by himself? Get back into formation before you get picked off, you dumb nut." Then I noticed little white specks appearing below him; the crew was bailing out and I felt awful, then and now.

That is my vivid memory of Merseburg, 24 August '44.

I was never aware of any loss of aircraft or personnel from my squadron (360th) whenever I flew.

I'm sending a copy of my diary which I kept in a little address book and a strike photo which was given to me by a captain in intelligence, at my request, upon completion of my tour.

The bombing altitude was 25,000 feet which was the lowest of my missions; most were at 27,000 or higher. On one mission we went as high as 33,000 with full bomb load to clear the clouds along German border, just mashing along, nose high. My diary doesn't show that, but it's true. I don't know what mission it was or what altitude we bombed at.

My 29th mission, 11 Dec. '44, according to my diary says we bombed at 22,000'. Our target for that day was the bridge over the Rhine at Ludwigshafen-Mannheim and that was the mission when our squadron commander aborted late and left 11 aircraft flying around over Germany by ourselves looking for some means to bomb - no radar, no Gee Box, just bombsight and 10/10 undercast all over Germany. We had turned from the target area (as determined by DR) and were headed home when we spotted another group coming in and we bombed on their smoke markers. We must have started letting down because I don't remember being briefed for that low an altitude for bombing.

Forum

In summary let me say that Merseburg, 24 Aug. '44, wasn't any "milk run" but neither was it particularly memorable as far as flak concentration around our aircraft. Maybe I was just too fascinated by it all to grasp what was going on. According to my diary, the flak was intense and accurate. We had holes in our aircraft but I personally feel I had it rougher on other missions. We may have been flying tail-end Charlie that day and stayed out of the main concentration of flak. I don't know.

Time does take its toll on memories, doesn't it?

Thanks again for a great publication.

Maurice Hackler (360)
425 N. Mercedes
Norman, OK 73069

Ed. Note: It's a great publication because the members of the 303rd Bomb Group have great stories to tell. And we have only started to scrape the surface on those stories.

Can you top this?

Just got the November '97 newsletter. Some very good stories and I am glad the airmen (crew chiefs) are getting credit for keeping the aircraft flying. The poems on page 8, 9 and 10 were excellent.

On page 13, "Can you top this," you know that I flew 38 missions to get 25 combat missions. That may be a record. Also, I was sent back overseas to same Bomb Group - 303rd-on special orders after going through a B-17 Instructor's School. I flew two tours - 53 missions which may be a record. I also flew on two Schweinfurt missions on 17 Aug. '43 and 14 Oct. '43. Just a thought.

Willard H. Bergeron
1118 Melissa Drive
San Antonio, TX 78213

Ed. Note: In the late fall of 1945, Bill Bergeron, Bill Heller, "Tailwheel" Kaiser, Bob Hullar, John Tulloss, Logan Hatch and myself all wound up assigned to Hamilton Field, California as part of the Western Division of ATC. Our headquarters building was the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco.

RHIP and good food!

To: Harry Gobrecht

Your book is great. My grandchildren loved it. I ordered three on your first printing. Could use one more of your excellent work.

I noticed that your first combat mission was on Nov. 26, 1944. That was the completion of my tour with the 303rd - 30 missions.

I was the lead radio operator for Capt. Tulloss and Major Kerwin on that day. Also flew as lead radio operator on Gen. Travis' last mission on his tour. I have a photo with the General and crew after that mission. I remember a non-com dropping off a large box of "goodies" on the radio room floor. When I asked, "What was this?" The reply was "You're flying with the general today." My reply was, "Good! If we get it today, at least we will go out with a full stomach!"

Being a single stud at the time - "humor" was a major factor in our survival!

Paul A Tognetti
845 Olive Avenue
S. San Francisco, CA 94080

Ed. Note: I found the letter to Harry Gobrecht to be quite interesting since I was the lead navigator on the Nov. 26, 1944 mission. It was my sixth mission on my second tour. Also on Nov. 26, 1944 the tour was 35 missions., yet the writer finished his tour with 30 missions Unless the writer got credit for flying as a lead crew. But when was that regulation put into effect? On my first tour I flew 15 lead missions as a navigator with a PFF crew but didn't get credit for being a member of a lead crew. Nor did I ever see a rest home on any of my tours. But why go to a rest home when London was just a stone's throw away. It is still a remarkable city.

Why was the 303rd short changed on awards?

A short time ago I wrote to you about the gripe from John J. Jenkins and your reply, but I failed to mail the letter and so I am now re-writing what I wrote then.

You were most gracious in your response to his caustic note as published in the May, 1997, issue of "Hell's Angels" Newsletter. As a former English and foreign language teacher, I feel I can also offer a criticism of his note. First of all, he should not have written: I do not feel that what I put... He certainly does feel...etc. He should have written: I feel that what I put on paper does not need changing." His misplaced negative voids the point he is trying to make! If I were a technician who relied on his grammatical accuracy, I would perhaps be hesitant in accepting the correctness of his reports!!!

Be assured, the entire 303rd membership (save one, perhaps) is most appreciative of the work you have done and are doing to keep us

happy and informed of the group's activities. One of the most fruitless human activities, is to try to please everyone! please continue doing what you are doing...we love it!

I am now putting the finishing touches on my book "Diary; 35 Combat Missions of B-17 Crew on 'Henn's Revenge' over Germany - WW II." This work includes the diary I kept as we flew our 35 missions during 1944-45. It also includes some biographical sketches of our crew members, the Captain Gmernicki crew, as we trained at Drew Field, Florida, etc. I was pleased to see that you included the article in August, 1997, Newsletter about our tail gunner, Tom Henn, after whom we named our B-17. Tom and I were very close friends and he was indeed a terrific person. Tom died on May 9, 1995.

As I paged through my collection of past issues of the Newsletter, the headline of the June, 1990, issue caught my eye. "Was the 303rd short changed on awards?" The article included a reference to Sgt. Jesse McLaughlin who went into the bomb bay to kick out a 500lb. bomb that had hung up. I am enclosing a copy of my diary entry of October 22, 1945, during which I did the same thing. When we were asked to complete a form a year or two ago, I sent a copy of this to Harry Gobrecht, who flew many missions with us at the time, thinking it might some day appear in the Newsletter as a unique experience I had. But he may not have mailed it to you or perhaps it was not important enough. But having read about a man who was married as a unique experience, I feel mine was much more unique!!!

So my question is, was my experience worthy of publication and second, my answer to your headline question about 303rd being short changed, is an unqualified YES!! May I refer you to a book by Fred Kroger of the 92nd Bomb Group at Poddington, entitled "Countdown! 35 Daylight Missions Against Nazi Germany," page 165 quote: "I got my DFC before I finished my tour. I suppose that was customary. They figured I'd make the last two, and if I didn't I could have it posthumously." Again on page 169 quote: "She smiled, looked me right in the eyes, and said, 'Isn't the DFC award a rather automatic thing when you finished your ops?' If you read this book it seems he spent more time romancing the women than fighting the war. Furthermore he calls him-

self a bombardier, when actually he was a gunner turned togglier!

My point is that we who flew some tough missions to Merseburg, Sterkrade, Berlin, etc. were never considered for the DFC while some of these groups gave them away like gum to the British children! Where is the equity in making these awards? Can you shed some light on this apparent neglect in the 303rd of those who should have received this award?

I realize that a good deal of the publications regarding the combat missions, are replete with assumed or imagined heroics, like the one man who claimed to be the best pilot in the 8th Air Force. I feel our pilot and co-pilot were the best...after all, they brought us through 35 tough missions. Also a navigator in another group left the reader with the impression that without his leadership in navigating some "of the worst missions" for the entire 8th Air Force, we might very well have lost the war! The jacket of the book states that he only went on the worst missions...really, now, how does one know ahead of time if it will be the "one of the worst missions"? (Then there is the Tooth Fairy, Santa Claus & Easter Bunny!!!) To most flyers, every mission is the worst before-hand. I am not intent on pouring cold water on some of these articles, but sometimes it becomes a little too much to those of us who were there.

I would appreciate a response, when you have time, to some of my concerns about my 5th mission experience Brunswick as well as the DFC matter. I am enclosing a picture of our crew on "Henn's Revenge" which may be of value in reference to the article in the August issue or my 5th mission experience.

Raymond N. Calenberg
8206 W. Muriel Place
Milwaukee, WI 53218-3542

Ed. Note: Thank you for a very interesting letter. Your write-up of your heroic act on Mission #5 will appear in the "My Most Unusual 303rd Experience" section of this newsletter. I'm sure that Harry Gobrecht must have forwarded your "Experience" along with several hundred others but I just haven't come across it yet. Originally when I started to receive the information from Harry Gobrecht I allotted two pages of the newsletter to the "Experiences." But the stories were so good I am now filling up six pages of the newsletter.

From the President

Although I spent more than 16 months overseas with the 303rd Bomb Group during World War II, I realize I learned practically nothing about the outfit compared to what I've learned about it since I took over as editor of the newsletter back in 1985.

Arriving at Molesworth in November of 1943 I departed in April of '44 to spend three months flying out of Chelveston as part of a 303rd PFF crew and only visited Molesworth when we came over to lead a mission. So the only parts of Molesworth that I became familiar with were: the washrooms, mess hall and my Nissen hut. And the people I met were practically limited to the Goolsby crew that shared the hut with us. I also got an official looking paper that was signed by someone named Thompson that certified that I flew 16 missions. Why I never got a certified document crediting me with the other 14 missions that I flew, I'll never know!

My second tour started in September of 1944 and I moved into the same Nissen hut that I lived in on my first tour. It was lucky on my first tour so why tempt fate. This time I got to see more of the base and worked in the Headquarters building as a duty navigator, as such, I occasionally set the times for breakfast and briefings. That was when I got the phone calls (I had a phone attached to my bed) in the wee hours of the morning telling me a mission was on and when they gave a time we were scheduled for either departing the base or the English coast, I would figure out a time for breakfast and briefing. Occasionally I took part in the mission briefing. Eventually the war ended but someone still owes me an official record for the 25 missions that I flew after the first 16.

Separating from the Service in 1946, I was recalled to active duty in 1949. In 1951 I saved an injured seaman's life by flying as a Bombardier-Navigator on an Air Rescue B-29. I located and made a night drop of blood plasma on the deck of a vessel 1,000 miles out of Bermuda.; although recommended for an award I didn't receive any because no one would write it up and submit it.

In 1963 I was assigned to the Second Air Division in South Vietnam as a Public Affairs Officer. I was fortunate enough to be awarded the Aviation Space Writer's Orville Wright Award which got me assigned to the Pentagon as the

Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. One of my first official duties was to brief wartime commander, Gen. Ira Eaker on the conflict in Vietnam. He was going to visit Vietnam on a fact finding tour at the request of the Air Force Chief of Staff. He was nice enough to call me on his return to share his experiences with me.

During my next five years in the Pentagon I had many lunchtime conversations with Gen. Eaker and I learned quite a bit about the 8th Air Force from his point of view. He was a great General and a wonderful person.

My first two years of editing the newsletter was a learning experience. At that time, I believe we had slightly over 850 members - now we have about 2,000.

As the membership increased so did the letters. It wasn't too long before I found myself with some wonderful stories. Stories of heroic acts and sacrifices, which had gone unrewarded... And they are still coming in. I read three stories in one week about personnel having to go into the bombay, with the doors open at 25,000 feet, temperatures 50 degrees below zero, to kick out live bombs that had hung up. I think that could be considered acts "above and beyond."

After reading "Might-in-Flight" plus hundreds of questionnaires containing unusual experiences, I have no doubt that we were a great outfit. It also confirms the fact that we were negligent in honoring our heroes.

My blood boiled when I read the

item on page 400 of "Might in Flight" which stated that Gen. Spaatz ordered an investigation into the number of landings in neutral Switzerland after the April 24, '44 mission to Oberpfaffenhofen. Our crew flew deputy lead to Col. Dale Smith of the 384th on that mission. We got the hell shot out of us and if any planes opted to go to Switzerland I'm sure they had good legitimate reasons. Hardly a confidence builder, working for a general who has no confidence in the judgment of his men.

On page 8, you will find two letters issued in 1944 which contain policy changes on the awarding of decorations to personnel of the Air Forces. It is common knowledge that after August of 1944 the awarding of Distinguished Flying Crosses to flying personnel fell off considerably. As I see it the awarding of the DFCs was no longer automatic on the completion of a tour. Presumably it was not supposed to limit the number of DFCs awarded but it made it clear that someone had to write and submit the paperwork which justified the award. But who was the somebody?

First as editor of the newsletter, now as president of your Association I want to see a project started to assist people in getting the awards they earned some 50 years ago.

In the next issue of the newsletter with advice and help from our advisor, Lew Lyle, we hope to publish some guidance on how to submit the paperwork which will make the task easier and worthwhile.

Hal Susskind



The Pentagon - Maj. Gen. Ben LeBailly, USAF Director of Information (2nd from r) presents silver tray to Lt. Col. Hal Susskind, (303rd alumnus) recipient of the Aviation Space Writers, 'Orville Wright Award', as top Air Force Information Officer for 1964 for his work in Vietnam. Arthur Sylvester, (l) Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs and Aviation Space Writers' representative (r) look on.

Forum

Continued from page 5

I wish I could give you a concrete answer as to why there was an apparent neglect in the submission of paperwork authorizing awards to deserving members of the 303rd; especially in the time period from August of 1944 until the end of the war. But there were cases before that date where we were delinquent in honoring our heroes. I believe that Chuck Spencer should have received the Medal of Honor, I believe that Lt. Robert S. O'Connor should have been awarded no less than the DFC for his heroic action on July 4, 1943 when he bailed out his crew over France but stayed with his aircraft so that it would not crash into the town of Malicorne-sur-Sarthe. The town erected a memorial in his honor. Later on a general of another group performed the same act for which he was awarded the Medal of Honor.

It all boils down to one fact. Who was responsible for initiating the action; the pilot, the debriefing officer, the executive officer of the squadron or the commanding officer. Having been none of the above I can't answer the question. Maybe some of our WW II commanders who are presently members of our Association will be kind enough to give us some advice.

But there are extenuating circumstances. In some cases, especially where an aircraft was shot down some of the heroic actions were not discovered until after the fighting was over. (the heroic acts by Joe Sawicki and Lt. O'Connor) In other cases the act was not brought to life until we read about it in the questionnaire submitted by the individual like yourself.

If you firmly believe you are entitled to an award then by all means submit the paperwork.

Chaff inventor dies

Please find enclosed a recent newspaper article, that honors Dr. R.V. Jones who devised counter measures that used strips of tinfoil to blind the German Radar.

I will never know how much Dr. Jones helped me survive my tour; but I can assure you that the blacker the sky got over Europe, the more my radio operator and I baled chaff out that little chute. over Europe. We often dropped 12 to 15 cartons. If it did nothing else, it helped us physiologically. I think R.V. Jones should be remembered some place in the 8th Air Force History.

Bob Umberger

P.O. Box 92

West Rockport, ME 04865

Forum

Frankfurt, Nov. 21, 1944

(I thought you would be interested in this exchange of correspondence between Gus Lerch of Frankfurt, Germany and Al Miller a member of the 303rd B.G. about a mission that took place 53 years ago.)

Dear Mr. Miller:

I have researched the crash of your B-17 Flying Fortress, which was shot down on the outskirts of Frankfurt on November 21, 1944, and have on hand copies of the missing air crew report, as well as the records of the war crimes trial against 3 Nazi-Officials, who were hanged in 1946 for the killing of Lt. Couch and S/Sgt. Martin. The fate of S/Sgt. Moss, who jumped from your aircraft right after the target, is not known to me, except the fact that he was re-buried in 1951 in Belgium/France. I was a 15 year old boy on Nov. 21, 1944, as I watched your aircraft being hit by flak and saw seven crew members jumping from the aircraft. I was puzzled by the fact; that only seven parachutes were floating down, since it was known to me, that a B-17 carried a crew of 9 or 10. About 10 years ago, I remembered the incident and visited the National Archives to find out what happened at the time.

The files did not contain any information on S/Sgt. Moss, who had left the aircraft right after the target when it was hit for the first time, except that he was buried in 1951 in a cemetery in Belgium. If you have any information on how he was killed, I would appreciate hearing from you.

Finally, if you have a photo of your crew, I would appreciate a copy for my documentation.

Gus Lerch, M.A.

Melemstr. 20

60322 Frankfurt, Germany

P.S. I contacted Harry Gobrecht recently and he was not aware of the fact that two of your crew members were killed near the crash site by Nazi-Officials, who had obtained their release from local Police/Wehrmacht at gun point.

Dear Harry:

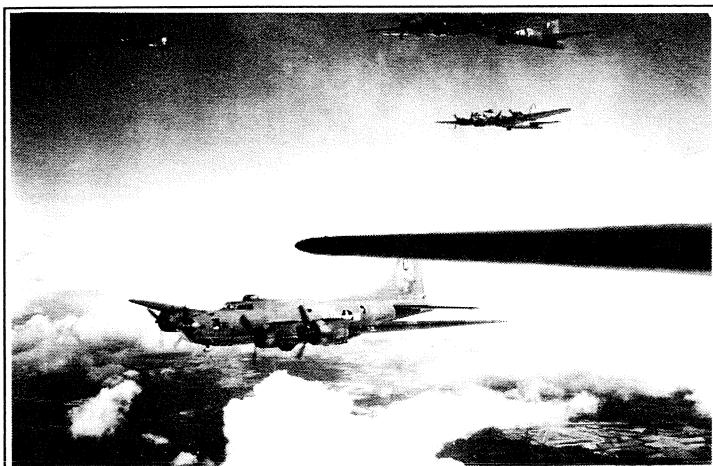
By way of introduction, I am the Al Miller, mentioned in the enclosed letter from Gus Lerche of Frankfurt, Germany. The note at the bottom of his letter will help to clarify the situation. Our crew under Lt. Arthur F. Chance of Pilots Point, Texas, was hit on our 35th mission on Nov. 21, 1944. That target was the synthetic oil plants at Merseburg. We were knocked out of the formation after bombs away, (luckily) and limped back on three engines until we got blasted out of the sky over Frankfurt by as described in Gus' letter. Captured and incarcerated as "Kriegsgefangenen" until liberated by the Russians in May of '45. We eventually got home, and here we are, fifty-four years later. My co-pilot Bob Johnson lives nearby and we are quite friendly.

The enclosed poems are the products of some spare time and a few thoughts that crossed my mind in "Kriegieland."

Al Miller

130 N. Valley Brook Road

Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-3830



Faith

We'd dropped our bombs, and closed the bombbay doors
To get home, was our desire
when suddenly the plane got hit
engine number four was on fire
I sat there at the radio
flak bursts all around us
and breathed a prayer, into the air
for HIS presence to surround us.
The ship was doomed, 'Twas plain to see
every gun for miles was on us
each man got up, to 'hit the silk'
before we all were goners
I stood up to go, got knocked right down
(the ship was in a spin)
and lay there helpless, on my back
amid the terrible din.
With wings ablaze, and fuselage
ripped from nose to tail
My one salvation was in prayer
I knew it could not fail
"Almighty God," thou knowest well
to what each man is fated
But it seems to me, my destiny
But it seems to me, my destiny
is prematurely dated
that's all I said, I know not why
though my mind was wracked in torment
then suddenly all hell broke loose
it looked like the final moment
a burst of flame and then a roar
twas like a clap of thunder
I saw a tear, a gaping hole the fuselage was torn asunder
then once again, that chilling sound
it started with a rumble
a wing fell off and then the tail
the rest began to crumble
I checked my chute, and made quite sure
that it was on securely
for I knew darn well, if I got clear
without it, I was done, most surely
then came the blast, that blew me clear
as though HIS hand had plucked me
out of the wreckage of the ship
and into the air had chucked me.
I felt a sudden searing pain
blood from my forehead spurted
it seemed my prayer had been in vain
disaster had not been averted.
with anxious hand I felt the wound
it seemed that I was blinded
and just as quickly came the thought
to pull the ripcord, I was reminded
then the chute unreeled, it seemed to take
an age for it to open
a sudden jerk, and there I hung,
it happened, as I'd been hoping.
A deathly silence all about
replaced the engines roar
I looked around me for the ship
Alas! I would fly no more.
A stream of blood, ran down my face
my thoughts to the wound returning
except for losing some precious blood
all I felt was painful burning
As I dropped to earth, and thought again
of what had happened, my body quivered
then I knew somehow, my prayer got home
the Good Lord had delivered
Sometimes we seldom stop to think
we take our luck as we find it
but I guess it's not the prayer we say
it's the **FAITH**, that lies behind it.

Al Miller - 1945

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES WASHINGTON

24 June 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT CHIEF OF AIR STAFF, PERSONNEL:

Subject: Automatic AAF Awards.

1. On his recent visit in the Combat Theatres, General Arnold directed that action be taken to prohibit the continuance of awarding Air Medals, DFCs, or any other award on a mechanical basis. I informed him that I believed such instructions had already been issued, and that a letter to each Air Force Commander for his signature would be required to accomplish the desired end.
2. General Arnold definitely does not wish to instruct Air Force Commanders to reduce the quantity of awards now being made, but insists that each award be made for a worthy act. He does not want to read any more accounts of returning heroes who "wear the Air Medal and six Oak Leaf Clusters because they had thirty-five combat missions."
3. Please take the necessary action on this matter.

s/s L. S. Kuter

Major General, U.S.A.

Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Plans

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY AIR FORCES WASHINGTON

26 December 1944

HISTORICAL REPORT

FROM: Office of the Recorder
Army Air Forces Awards Board

TO: Assistant Chief of Air Staff, Personnel

1. One of the most important changes in policies concerning the award of decorations to Air Forces personnel came on 14 August 1943. In accordance with Adjutant General's letter of that date, Subject: "Suggested Guide for Uniform Award of Decorations to Personnel of the Army Air Forces." All Commanding General of Air Forces were notified by wire as follows:

"Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism in flight evidencing voluntary action in face of great danger above and beyond line of duty. Achievement in flight must evidence exceptional and outstanding accomplishment. Air Medal for achievement in flight accomplished with distinction above and beyond that normally expected. May recognize single action or sustained operational activities against the enemy. Hours and sorties not constitute sole basis for awards, but may be used to substantiate meritorious achievement in flight which would include sustained operational activities."

2. This information was sent to the Air Forces Commanding Generals in order to stop the previous practice of making so-called "automatic awards." In at least one theatre, for instance, the Air Medal was awarded to all men in a crew after that crew had made five missions over enemy territory. The Distinguished Flying Cross was automatically awarded after twenty-five missions.
3. This policy did not change the award of the Distinguished Flying Cross or Air Medal to men who had, before this date, participated in actions which would, under the old policy, be sufficient basis for these awards. The Adjutant General's letter stated that the War Department policy governing these awards was being revised and prepared for publication but that decorations for combat time could be awarded under the old policy for actions prior to 14 August 1943.

s/s Harold D. Krafft

Lt. Colonel, Air Corps

Recorder, AAF Awards Board

SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE 303rd AT YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY

Here's an easy way to provide your local library with more than 900 pages of facts and figures detailing the dramatic history of the 303rd Bombardment Group.

Now that the second edition of "Might in Flight" the daily diary history of the 303rd, is in distribution, many members will find that they have both the first and second edition on their bookshelves. Since the new work is an expanded and updated version of the original publication, it's not likely that purchasers will need to keep both editions. Why not donate the earlier book to a library of your choice?

When Eddie Deerfield, chairman of the 303rd's Past Presidents Committee, received his second edition, he contacted the director of the Palm Harbor, Florida, library, and asked if there was interest in a donation of the first edition of "Might in Flight." The director was delighted, commenting that World War II was a popular subject among the library's patrons for both reference and personal reading. He even arranged a presentation ceremony for the local media.

By the time the print run of the second edition sells out, there may be as many as 500 first editions owned by the Association members available for local presentation throughout the United States. Contact a public or university library in your area and offer it our history, probably the most detailed and accurate account of an Eighth Air Force bomber unit available anywhere. Odds are the library director will jump at the chance to add "Might in Flight" to the institution's collection.

It's a great way to spread the word about the 303rd!

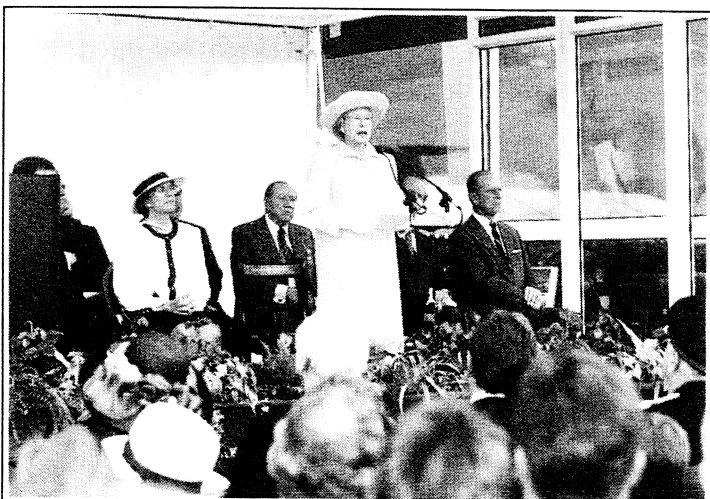
Ed. Note: William L. Hoots who flew with both the 91st and 303rd Bomb Groups presented histories of both organizations to the Roodhouse Library in Illinois. (See August 1997 edition of the newsletter.) Since a lot of high schools now have Jr. ROTC detachments you might look into the possibility of donating a "Might in Flight" to the library at one of those schools.



What a difference 53 years make!

To the left is a photo of Princess Elizabeth posing for a snapshot by Sgt. Yocum during the visit of the Royal Family to Molesworth on July 6, 1944

Below is a photo of Queen Elizabeth II officially opening The American Air Museum in Britain at Duxford Air Base on August 1, 1997



I evaded through Belgium and France to Switzerland

By Robert L. Ward

I was drafted into the Military Service in August of 1942 and sent to Fort Niagara at Niagara Falls, New York, for testing. I was assigned to the U.S. Army Air Forces and sent to Scott Field, Illinois to Radio School and after finishing I was sent to Air Gunnery School at Laredo, Texas. Passing the air gunnery test, I was sent to Moses Lake, Washington, to join one of the bombing crews. The crews then remained at Walla Walla, to complete their Phase training.

After finishing the training at Walla Walla, the crews were sent to England by ship. The trip across the Atlantic took 14 days and the convoy was escorted by British destroyers. Arriving in England we eventually wound up at Molesworth and assigned to the 358th Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group.

After flying six missions, the target on the seventh mission on Oct. 20, 1943, was the railway marshalling yards at Duren, Germany, near the Ruhr Valley region. It was the third time in a week that the 303rd had been briefed to bomb Duren. One previous mission had been scrubbed and the other was recalled.

We took off at 11 a.m., a perfect day, not a cloud in the sky. We were briefed to bomb from an altitude of 27,000 at 14:30 p.m. About 30 minutes from the target, the formation was surprised by a formation of six Me-109s coming out of a cloud bank. Two 303rd aircraft were hit by fighters and shot out of formation.

On fire and in a spin I bailed out at 27,000 feet and blacked out from lack of oxygen. I started to come to at about 10,000 feet and as I got closer to the ground I began looking for some woods where I could hide when I hit the ground. I noticed a civilian man running towards me. Then from another direction several more. When they arrived I knew by their actions they were friendly. I found out that I had landed in Belgium. There was a woods nearby and I hid there for 24 hours. Late the next afternoon (October 21), an old gentleman came by picking greens. I went over to him and he seemed to know at

once what I was and what I wanted. He showed me on my maps that I was in the Mons district of Belgium. The gentleman told me to stay where I was and he would bring me help. A little while later another old gentleman came bringing me some bread, honey and a bottle of beer. He told me his name was Victor and when he left, he told me he would return at 8 p.m. Victor arrived right on time, and walked me to a small village. We then went to a small farmhouse, where I was made welcome by the farmer. The farmer's name was Abel and I stayed with him for four days. These people were wonderful to me and I'll always remember them for all their kindness they showed me. On the fourth day, Pierre and Max, came to get me and after an emotional farewell to the Abel family, I left with the two gentlemen.

Max gave me his bicycle and I was to follow Pierre. After travelling three miles, we stopped in a wine cellar. We waited for Max who was detained for some reason. When he came, I started walking towards his home. Max lived with his mother, who kept house for him. He was a butcher, and his shop was in front of his home. The second day I was there, they brought in a gentleman who spoke excellent English, as he had lived in the U.S. for ten years. He told me that they would take me to Switzerland. I told him I would rather go to Spain as we were briefed to do, but they said it was rather impossible. Then they took a picture of me to put in a passport they were getting me. Abel's son-in-law had given me his wedding suit and my passport said "Dumb-mute" (couldn't talk, mute)

The next afternoon Pierre came after me and told me that we were going to cross the frontier into France. Crossing the frontier we were not bothered at all by the frontier guards. Pierre merely nodded his head and we walked by. We then went to a wine cellar where I met a number of gentlemen, among them was Arthur, the man who took me all the way to Switzerland, I was taken to the home of a wine dealer, where I stayed for two nights. This was at

Quarable near the City of Valenciennes.

I had the pleasure of meeting the Mayor of Quarable who came over to see me. His son who was with him spoke excellent English. He told me that his father was a Captain in the organization against the Germans. They were all very nice to me and they were taking great risks by helping me. They would have been shot if they had been caught.

Arthur came the next afternoon and we went to the train station to start our journey to Switzerland. Arthur, by the way, spoke and understood only French, but we got along very well. We left Valenciennes at 1 p.m. and arrived in Paris about 6 p.m. When we reached Paris we took a subway to another railway station to make our connections for Lyon. We arrived in Lyon at 8 a.m. During all of this journey I was not bothered by the German Police.

Arthur had some friends in Lyon that we visited. We then went to a barber shop, where I got a haircut and a shine. Later we went to a boarding house, where Arthur had rented a room. We went to bed and slept until 7 p.m. We then went out to a nearby restaurant. There were a few German officers eating there too, but they didn't bother us.

The next morning we started for Annemasse, a town near the Swiss frontier. We reached Annemasse about 11:30 a.m. It was here that I had to show my passport for the first time, and it worked well. We had lunch in a very nice place and then started on our way. We had to walk about seven miles along the French frontier. We passed many German and French guards who did not bother us at all. After we completed the seven mile journey, we came to the home of Joe, another of Arthur's friends. We had our supper there and then discussed our plans for crossing the border into Switzerland. Along the frontier they had a barbed wire fence which was 10 ft. tall and guarded by German soldiers. Then about 200 yards in was another fence, the same height, guarding the Swiss side. This fence was pa-

trolled by Swiss soldiers. We planned to leave at 4 a.m. Joe gave each of us a small revolver.

We woke at 3 a.m. and had some breakfast and started on our way. We walked about a 1/4 mile and then decided to go through the fence. Joe guided us up to here and then bid us goodbye. We cut our way through the first fence, then Arthur and I crept over to the next fence, and seeing a Swiss soldier patrolling nearby we dropped to the ground. When we thought we were safe, Arthur and I got busy cutting the wire. I crawled through and it was then a Swiss guard came running towards us. He pointed his gun at us and instructed us to put our hands in the air. He let Arthur come on through the fence, then marched us away to his commanding officer.

The Swiss officer was very kind to us. He told me I would be safe now. We were searched and he kept the guns and wire cutters, but returned the rest of the articles. We were then taken to a police station. This was a civilian station. We were kept here until the Army police from Geneva came for us.

I was put in jail for three days in Geneva and was interrogated by Swiss officers. Arthur had been taken back to the border and released. I was taken to Bern and was turned over to the American Military Attache.

In November 1943 I went to work in the office of Mr. Alan Dulles, head of the O.S.S. I was given an appointment and stayed there until September 1944 when we were able to leave Switzerland after the southern France invasion.

I was sent back to England for more interrogation and then returned to the United States, where I was assigned to the Air Transport Command

Of the 11 members of the crew on that mission; the pilot and navigator escaped through Spain; one waist gunner was killed; the co-pilot, bombardier, ball turret gunner and tail were all taken prisoner. John Lowther, the other waist gunner arrived in Switzerland, six months later. He had been in the hills with the French Maquis.

303rd targets Internet

(continued from page 1)

Sqdn., who was interned in Switzerland, after his pilot determined that his aircraft couldn't make it back to England. This Website tells an interesting story, so pay it a visit, too.

I will be recording everyone's "E-Mail Address" for inclusion in the

next issue of the Master Directory. So if you are on line, please send me your e-mail address. And happy "browsing on the net."

Ed Miller

422 S. Walnut Ave.

Tempe, OK 73568-0219

303RD BOMB GROUP'S WEBSITE

The Website we envision will cover many aspects of the 303rd Bomb Group Association, and every one of you should pay it a visit. Now I know that you know someone, your kids or your grandkids, that are on the Internet, or one of your neighbors. Seek them out and take a look at these following Website pages.

* A welcome by our President, Hal Susskind

* A history of the Hell's Angels' Group

*The 303rd Bombardment Group in action (War stories)

*A coverage of our many reunions and of Savannah, 1998

*The story of the B-17, "What a wonderful Lady"

*How to become a member of the 303rd BGA. We hope it will find some of our "lost comrades."

*Research that includes: People, Missions, Targets, Aircraft, etc.

*And "Links" that will take you to related stories about WW II.

*And please visit often, as new items are included and sign the guest-book.

— Addresses of the Websites —

303rd Bomb Group Association:

<http://www.xmission.com/~glm/303rd/303rd.html>

Gary L. Moncur:

<http://www.xmission.com/~glm/thunderbird/thunderbird.html>

Charles E. McPartlin

<http://www.west.net/~macpuz/internee.html>

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Stanley J. Backiel(358); John L. Beringer(359); Charles A. Callahan(427); Dale H. Carlson(359); Seymour Cohen(359); Richard D. Dimick(359); Jack D. Fisher(358); Paul D. Freese(359); James L. Frey(427); Howard Isaacson(427); Norman Jacobsen(Hdq); Wilfred B. Johnson(360); Thomas N. Kelly(359); William P. Kiggins(427); Russell A. Knudson(360); Leslie L. Latz(427); James B. Nelson(358); Dal Nichols(359); John J. Nicastro, Sr.(358); Bert J. Pandey(427); Ralph A. Roseland (358); Max Smolar(359); Walter M. Soha(427); Francis Stellato(360); Willard W. Stephen(359); Glen A. Tableman(358); Robert L. Taylor(360); Val E. Thompson(359); John A. Thurmon(427); Richard M. Vincent(Hdq); Lawrence Volmer(427); G. Moulton Webber(359); Thomas E. Zenick(360).



Sgt.s - O'Lena, Joy, Yokum, Kurtz and Granville taking five.

Another mission to Schweinfurt!

On June 15th, this year, a ceremony to dedicate an ecumenical monument to those who perished on that famous mission of 14 October 1943, will be hosted by Herr Georg Schafer and Her Honor, The Mayor of Schweinfurt. Many US 8th Air Force crewmen along with many Luftwaffe pilots who flew that day, will meet in a three-day dedication program in the City of Schweinfurt.

Herr Schafer was a "Flak Helfer" at age 16, defending Schweinfurt and a scion of one of the families owning the plants we bombed. For more than 40 years after the war, he was a Managing Partner of the largest ball-bearing factory in Schweinfurt; one of our targets in the raid on 14 October 1943. Herr Schafer has attended reunions of the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association in America.

Herr Fritz Koenig, a former Luftwaffe pilot- and a close friend of our own Bill Heller, will be present with former Luftwaffe Col. Goebel who publishes the "Jaegerblatt" magazine in Germany. An article about the June Schweinfurt Monument

dedication will appear in the March issue of Col. Goebel's magazine.

The trip, open to all, and especially those who flew on the Second Schweinfurt mission, is an economically attractive package. The cost is \$220 per person, which includes bus from Frankfurt to Schweinfurt, June 15 and return to Frankfurt on June 18 plus three nights in the Panorama Hotel in Schweinfurt including Continental breakfast and all meals while in Schweinfurt and, a tour of the wine country!. All you must do is furnish your own transportation to Frankfurt. Is this a bargain or what?

For further information, please contact Malcolm Higgins of the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association at 1143 Whitemarsh Court, San Jose, CA 95120, Tel: 408-997-0272. For E-Mail: <KOSHARE@prodigy.net >-Texans can contact Bud Klint at 817-292-1147, E-Mail:<Theklints@aol.com>

Ed. Note: After this mission they practically cleaned house at Bovington. I know it expedited my assignment to the 303rd Bomb Group.

The Map as Tom Struck sees it!

After I talked to you on Sunday, I called Harry Gobrecht as you suggested and got the information I wanted. He seems to have the same map that I have. I don't know where he got it; I copied mine from a library book a long time ago. When I found out that he had the map I first decided not to bother sending a copy to you. On second thought, though, I decided that it might be of some interest to you and, frankly, I have had some visions of it being used sometime on the front cover or one of the pages of the newsletter. I am sending both my marked up copy and the original - which ever would be more suitable. Just an idea - not all of my ideas are good. I only identified places on the map that I am fairly sure of. I would like to do more but I am not sure it is worth the trouble.

I did this map thing in the first place because at Christmas time I got a card from a Navy gal stationed at Molesworth who says she is interested in the history of the place. She also thought I might have interesting stories to tell, but I'm going to disappoint her in that respect. I'm afraid. What I can tell her is something about what life was like there 50 plus years ago.

You will note that "Site 1" on one map is identified as "Site 7. That

may have been true when the map was made, but that is where I lived, and it was "Site 1" then.

I have rather enjoyed messing with the Molesworth map. It sort of stimulates the ole memory bank; though not nearly as much as I would like. I hope you find it somewhat interesting.

One thing that working with the map reminded me of is the time a P-51 pilot had been visiting Molesworth, and when he took off he wheeled around to give us a buzz job. Well, he gave us a most spectacular one and, it turned out, set the record for the lowest possible one a pilot could survive. After buzzing the field, he immediately came back around and landed. He taxied up to the hangar and when the prop stopped turning we could see that some six inches of blade tips were bent back. He said he felt a little vibration but didn't think much of it. But then he got a look at his coolant temperature and decided he had better land. The air scoop was full of turf!

Tom Struck (444)

14940 SE Edelweiss Dr.

Boring, OR 97009

Ed. Note: You'll be happy to see that your version of the map is on page 12.

KNOWN MEMORIAL & RECOGNITION LOCATIONS

303rd Bombardment Group (H)

UNITED STATES

1. National Air & Space Museum
Washington, DC (6/76)
Keith Ferris's 303 BG 25' x 75'
Mural "Fortress Under Fire"
2. U.S. Air Force Museum,
Wright Paterson AFB, OH
->Memorial plaque in Museum
memorial park (10/9/82)
->MOH plaque - **Mathis & Vosler**
3. Eighth Air Force Museum
Barksdale AFB, LA (9/14/90)
->303 BG Monument & Plaque
->Static B-17 *Yankee DoodleDandy*
with 303BG markings
4. Lone Star Flight Museum
Galveston Island, TX (4/7/91)
->4'x12' replica of **Keith Ferris**
mural "Fortress Under Fire"
->Flyable B-17G *Thunderbird*
with 303BG markings
5. Strategic Air Command Museum
Offutt AFB, Omaha, Nebraska
MOH plaque - **Mathis & Vosler**
6. USAF Academy Colorado Springs
Cemetery Memorial Wall
->303BG plaque (11/3/82)
->2nd Schweinfurt Memorial
Lists 303BG (9/11/84)
7. Mathis Muni Airport San Angelo,
7/88 Display honors MOH winner
Jack Mathis & brother Mark
Mathis 303BG KIA Bombardiers
8. Gowen Field Boise, Idaho (9/92)
303BG Monument & memorial
9. Swindle Field Walnut Ridge, AR
Memorial **Robert J. Swindle**
427BS Bombardier KIA 1/23/43
10. Jefferson Barracks National
Cemetery - St. Louis, MO
Grave marker 5 members 427BS
Barratt crew KIA 2/9/45
11. Community Theater Bldg Wall
Pine Bluff, AR (1995) AAFSTD
Grider Field mural. Features Lt Gen
Lyle 360BS B-17 *Ooold Soljer*
12. Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo,
TX (6/19/96) **Mathis** Sports Ctr.
Honors 303BG MOH awardee
13. St. Mary's Church of the Visitation
Clinton, CT (1994) Stained
glass window & plaque. Three
Werts Crewmen KIA 2/16/45
14. Mighty 8th AF Heritage Museum
(Savannah, GA) 5/13/96
->303BG Showcase exhibit
->303BG WWII flag & streamers
->303BG rotunda flag & plaque
->**Lew Lyle** Rotunda plaques
->303BG MemGrdn monument
->303BG MemGrdn individual,
crew & other plaques
->303BG articles in archives &
other exhibits
->MOH plaque-**Mathis & Vosler**
->St Nazaire 91,303,305,306BG
plaque & photo exhibit

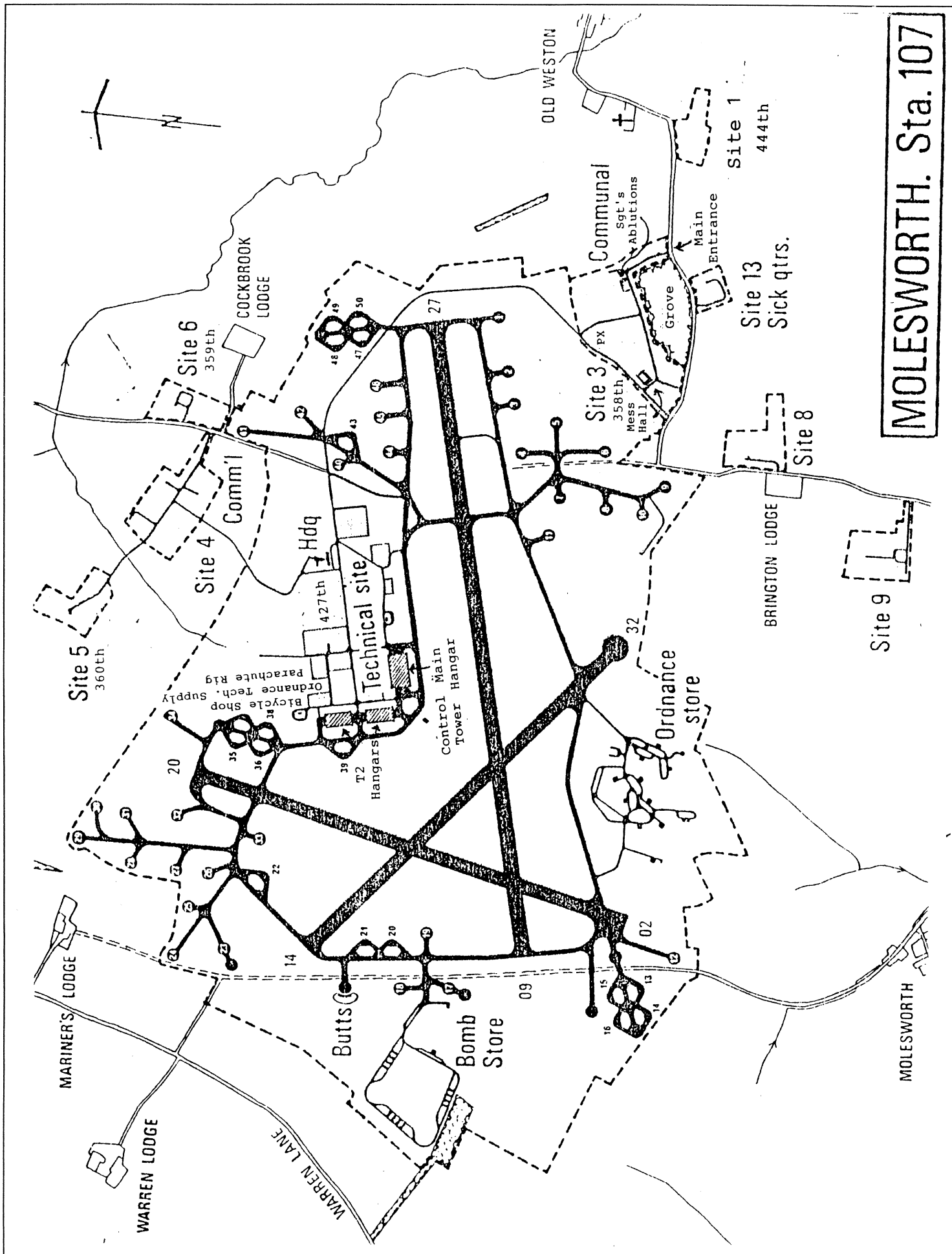
UNITED KINGDOM

1. JAC-USEUCOM, RAF Molesworth
->Mathis Headquarters MOH Plaque
honors Lt **Jack Mathis**
->Vosler Hall MOH Plaque
honors T/Sgt **Forrest Vosler**
->303BG "Might in Flight" JAC
Memorial Headquarters Building
* Building sign (8/15/94)
* **Bill Adam's** 303BG wood carvings
(1995-97)
* 303BG art collection
* B-17 artifacts & photo displays.
* M/Gen **Lewis E. Lyle** conference
room (1995)
->Thunderbird Cafeteria
->Heritage Room - 303BG photos,
memorabilia & artifacts
->Original 303BG "J" hanger with the
303BG (H) red triangle "C" B-17
tail insignia on the main door
->RAF Molesworth entry sign
2. All Saints Church - Brington
303BG memorial plaque (6/24/84)
3. Guildhall - Borough of Much
Wenlock, Shropshire
Memorial plaque Lt **Stephan Crew**
7 KIA on 11/11/44 in *Duffy's Tavern*
4. Globe Inn - Alresford (11/93)
Memorial plaque. Capt **Cogswell**
Avoided crash in town when B-17
was abandoned in air 9/26/43
5. Summit of Arenig Fahr
Mountain - No. Wales (6/95)
Vandalized Crash site cairn & slab
Pratt Crew. 8/14/43 - 8 KIA
6. Village City Hall, Bala, Wales (5/23/96)
Plaque to **Pratt** crew donated by
Village of Tinley Park, IL in memory
of their 303 BG citizen Lt **Alan Bonner**
7. West Hill of Cheviot - near Alnwick
(5/19/68) Crash site B-17 prop blade
cairn & B-17 remains. Memory of **Kyle**
Crew 2 KIA 12/16/44
8. Cheviot Memorial - College Valley near
Kirknewton (5/19/95) Memorial to
WWII airmen lost on Cheviot Hills -
Includes two 303BG Lt **Kyle** crewmen
KIA on 12/16/44
9. Cuddystone Hall Sutherland
->Plaque to Shepherds who rescued
the **Kyle Crew** on 12/16/44
->"Roll of Honor". Lists two KIA
members of **Kyle Crew**
10. Mears Ashby (3/31/96)
Plaque & memorial. *Two Beauts*
& *Ooold Soljer* lost in midair
collision 3/31/43 - 15 KIA 5 B/O
11. Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland
Engine & artifacts from 12/16/44 **Kyle**
Crew Cheviot Hills crash.
12. Cambridge American Cemetery
(Madingley) - 303rd BG(H)
303BG - 59 graves plus 85 wall of
missing names

CONTINENTAL EUROPE

1. Soire-Saint-Gery, Belgium (6/27/87)
Memorial & plaque **Fowler Crew** -
1 KIA 6 POW 3 EVD 1/29/44
2. Cerfontaine, Belgium (8/15/93)
Monument & plaque. **Osborn Crew**
3 KIA 5 POW 2 EVD 12/30/43
3. Most, Czech. Airport (6/6/96)
Plaque *Earthquake McGoon* and
Lt **Kahler & Sgt Smith** KIA 4/17/45
4. Pilsen, Czechoslovakia
Museum exhibit, **Mauger Crew** MIA
4/25/45 over Pilsen -3 KIA 4 POW 1 EVD
5. St Pere-en-Retz, France (10/17/84)
->Monument. **Sterling Crew** MIA 5/1/43
over St. Nazaire-3 KIA 4 POW 3 EVD
->Photo of *Black Swan*, **Sterling**, 303rd
& 427BS insignia in City Hall (5/97)
6. Malicorne-Sur-Sarthe, France (Late 40's)
Stone memorial monument. **O'Connor**
Crew MIA 7/4/43. Avoided crash into
town . 3 KIA 4 POW 3 EVD
7. Pluvigner, France (11/5/94)
->Obelisk & plaque near City
Hall Park. **Haas Crew Beats Me**
Crash in city 1/23/43 7 KIA 3 POW
->"Beats Me" Crew plaque in City Hall
8. Beine-Nauroy, France (near Reims)
(4/21/90) Dedicated to 2Lt **L.M. Wolf**
(KIA) **Litman Crew** 8/15.44 in *Fearless*
Fosdick. Mission to Wiesbaden, Germ
9. La Baule les Pins France (9/23/95)
1/23/43 crash site monument & plaque.
Adams Crew in *Snap! Crackle! Pop!*
7 KIA 3 POW. S/Sgt **Magee** fell 20,000"
onto St. Nazaire rail station without a
parachute
10. Pleubian, France (Scheduled for 1997)
Memorial **Trojan Crew** *Yardbird*
5/39/43-1 KIA 1 POW death 8 POW
11. Eisenberg, Germany (9/24/93)
Memorial & plaque. **Barrat Crew**
2/9/45 - 8 KIA 1 POW
12. Jarocin, Poland (6/30/91)
Memorial & plaque. **Nemer Crew**
2/9/45 in *Poque Ma Home* -
5 KIA 1 POW 3 Return
13. Brummen, Holland (9/15/95)
Memorial & Plaque. Sgt **Bader** of
Davis Crew. 11/2/44 8' Ball MkIII
crash in city - 1 KIA 9 POW.
14. Krimice, Czechoslovakia (9/7/96)
Mauger KIA crewmen memorial
lost near Pilsen 25 April 1945
15. American Cemeteries in Europe
303BG (Graves+wall of missing names)
France:
Brittany (10 + 32)
Normandy (19 + 0)
Lorraine (32 + 1)
Epinal (4 + 0)
Belgium: Ardennes (86 + 6)
Henri-Chappelle (2 + 3)
Luxembourg:
Luxembourg City (9 + 0)
Holland: Martgraten (75 + 40)
Total (237 + 82)

10/28/97 -- Harry D. Gobrecht, Historian
303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.



My most unusual 303rd experience

The demise of the first "8 Ball"

The date: 12/20/42 - the target; Romilly-sur Seine. Capt William Calhoun was the pilot with Major Romig flying as co-pilot. The "8 Ball" was the squadron lead ship. Pilot took us over the target twice. Our four ship formation came off the target 10 miles behind the rest of the group. Enemy fighters found us and started the first head-on attacks. The fourth ship in the diamond formation was flying high when the fighters came head-on. Calhoun dove down and the ship in the diamond formation was taking the hits. The plane went down on the French coast in the English Channel. The enemy fighters made their last pass halfway across the Channel. The main spar was hit and two engines were out. We had no hydraulic system and the plane was shaking violently. As soon as we crossed the coast of England, we were ordered to bail-out. I landed in a tree. When I opened my eyes I was three feet off the ground and not a scratch. Calhoun and Romig flew on with no navigator. They didn't know where they were until they were over London. A Spitfire appeared in front of them and guided them to Bovington where they crash landed with wheels up. We all made it back to Molesworth three days later.

Charles R. Terry (359)
Radio Operator

"Schweinfurt was the worst of the lot"

As most of the original men who went over to Molesworth in 1942, it is hard to explain your most unusual experience. Having flown most of the real tough missions in late 1942 and 1943, it would be hard to pick any one as the worst of the lot. But in August of 1943 the raid on Schweinfurt had to be the longest and roughest for me. But the fondest memory I have of Molesworth was when I was presented the DFC by Gen. Travis. The General had been a friend of my father for many years and when he was presenting it to me, he said, "Bob, I should be giving you your high school diploma, you are the youngest man that I

have ever awarded the Cross to." I was 19 at the time. My dad and I talked about it on my return to the States.

Robert M. Cooney (427)
Tail Gunner

There I was 28,000 feet over Brunswick!

Today we went to Brunswick, Germany. We were briefed for intense flak and intense fighter opposition. That along with the fact that we were going deep into Germany made us all plenty scared. Everything went as planned until bombs away. One of the 500 lb GP bombs wouldn't release or salvo. It was half in and half out, since it was hanging by only the rear clip on the bomb shackle, and the arming wire had pulled free, so we had to get rid of this armed bomb. So I called for bombay doors to be closed and then went into the bombay with a walk around oxygen bottle to see if I could reach the bomb shackle with the bottle, since there was nothing else available to reach the outer wall of the bombay. When I found that I could reach the shackle with the walk around oxygen bottle, I went back into the radio room to give instructions over the intercom to our waist gunner, who could see me from his position, and to our bombardier as to what I was going to do and what signals I would use. Then I went back into the bombay wearing my chest pack parachute, oxygen mask plugged into a walk around bottle and carrying an extra walk around bottle to knock with. I sat down on the catwalk and twisted my feet around the braces and seeing that the walk around bottle was in the way, I tossed it back into the radio room. Then hanging onto the upright supports as best I could with my left arm, I signaled for the bombay doors to be opened. The waist gunner called the bombardier who opened the bombay doors. I was breathing out of one end of the oxygen bottle and swinging at the bomb trip release with the other end. For a split second as I looked down and saw the clouds flying by I became terrifyingly aware that 28,000 feet below was the enemy and I couldn't afford to fumble now.

After four swings with the bottle, the bomb fell away! I then signaled for the bombay doors to be closed and I proceeded to drag myself out of the bombay and into the radio room again. Whew! What a relief! Now when I think of what could have happened, I feel a bit light headed, but it went as planned. My prayers must have done it, because my actions were fully controlled by adrenaline at the time and I gave little thought of the possible consequences. And I do pray on the bomb runs especially, during all missions. We dropped five 500 lb GP bombs and six incendiary clusters from 28,000 feet. No battle damage to our plane and no fighters were seen, but there was inaccurate flak over the target, thanks to our foil strip chaff being dropped. I'm really dragging anchor tonight! And so to bed!

(The above article is an excerpt from the complete 35 mission diary which I kept while flying combat with the 303rd Bomb Group, 358th Bomb Squadron at Molesworth, England)

T/Sgt Raymond N. Calenberg
(358) Radio Operator

Our different enemies

Flying missions over Europe during WW II taught us that there was more than one enemy to fight. There were well known German fighter planes, Me-109s and Me-262s; frigid temperatures which reached 65 degrees below zero which could easily cause a loss of fingers; then there was anoxia (loss of oxygen) which could snuff out a

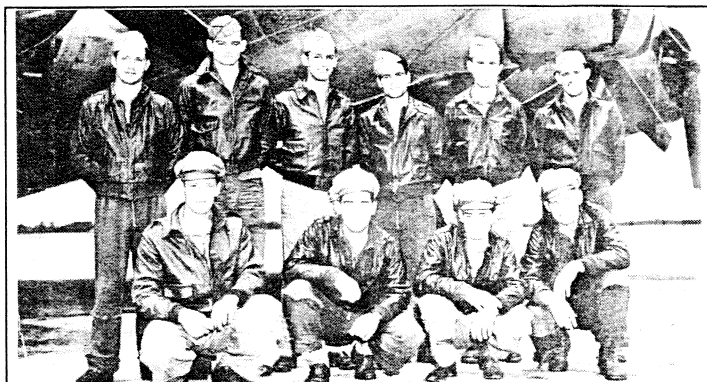
life in a matter of minutes, the enemy of red-hot flak sent up by 88mm guns; and confusion caused by the excitement of battle. Perhaps the most sinister of all which the news media seldom mentioned was the WEATHER.

According to the book "Might in Flight" by Harry Gobrecht, Mission #290 was the largest raid ever in which over 2,000 bombers participated. The target was Merzhausen, near Frankfurt, a vital German landing field. The famous "Battle of the Bulge" was into its eighth day and our ground troops needed all the help they could get.

Today, 24 Dec. '44, we battled zero visibility fog. Even the birds walked. A man was stationed at the end of the runway to assist each plane with take-off. Within three minutes of flight in any direction many other Bomb Groups were also in progress.

The great armada streamed across the English Channel and reached the target under clear blue skies. We dropped our bombs, made our turns and headed into the Westerly Winds toward "home." Six hours passed since our original lift off, therefore, we had hoped to return under clear skies but this was England and continued fog.

Each group commander was given a specific landing base, so we all headed off to our destination. Bassingbourne was our assigned field. As we descended through the dense layers of fog, we all anxiously searched for the smudge-pots which lined each runway. Tense



Gmernicki's Crew - (Back row l to r) Griffith, Cooper, Calenberg, Greenberg, MacClymont and Henn. ((Front row l to r) Gmernicki, Judd, Guerrieri and Jones.

Experiences were varied and came in different packages

minutes began ticking away when finally on our third approach our togglier spotted the "pots" and our pilot made a perfect landing. Many silent prayers of gratitude were said as all 38 planes with dangerously low fuel supply once again survived our silent enemy "WEATHER."

**T/Sgt. Walter N. Jones (359)
Radio Operator**

Ed. Note: Touche. I'll bet the brass in London weren't flying that day!

57 Missions!

Assigned to William Baker's crew in Pyote, Texas in May of '43. Flew to Preswick, Scotland and then went to Molesworth, England. Flew 25 missions, came home in January 1944. Got into so much trouble here in the States that the best thing for me was to go back overseas again. Joined William Martin's crew in October '44 went back over and flew 32 more missions in the 401st Bomb Group and Germany surrendered. Came home in June of '45. Have Air Medal with 11 Oak Leaf Clusters and the DFC with one Oak Leaf Cluster. Had a Purple Heart issued to me but did not accept it because I was not hurt that bad.

**Norwood "Woodie" Borror
(360) Gunner**

Ed. Note: How about some additional information on your added note, "Landed in France behind enemy lines once. Was there several days before American's got to us. Spiraled down to the ground in Germany and flew out about 10 feet off the ground and made it".

Number 3 was a charm

It took three of them to complete the experience, although not one of them was a thrill. I was a member of Lt. Harley D. Snider's crew, the navigator in fact. Three times we were forced to abort missions to Merseburg. The number two engine began vibrating and lost power each time and we couldn't reach altitude or maintain speed. We began to feel that everyone thought we were "chicken" because the engine would recover after we had turned back. The maintenance crew could find no fault after the first two aborts.

But it happened again on the third trip and we dreaded the return to base. As might be expected, we were met on the hardstand by the base operations officer. He was really excited. He pulled his jeep under the number two engine and climbed up on the hood. You can

understand our relief when all he said when he climbed down was:

"Move the jeep before the engine falls on it."

**Robert Mc Corkle (359)
Navigator**

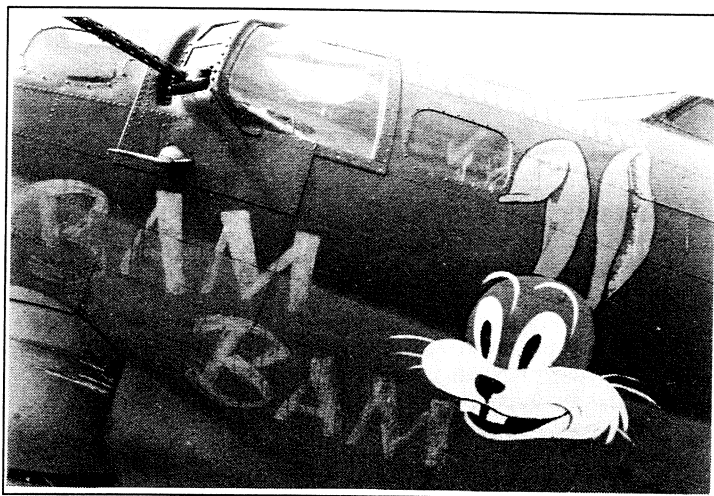
Two memorable missions

My most memorable experiences with the 427th was my third mission on Sept. 12, 1944 to Brux, Czechoslovakia and my seventh mission which was on Sept. 20, 1944 to Magdeburg.

The Brux mission was a diversion mission which went by way of Berlin. This mission was led by General Travis flying "Mercy's Madhouse" and took nine hours. Approaching Berlin we were hit hard by the Luftwaffe and were not protected too well by the few planes that we had for our fighter support. This was my first experience of actually seeing fighters in action and my adrenaline was running high. Three of our B-17s were put out of action with one returning to England on three engines. "Lonesome Polecat" and "Temptress" were shot down. Out of the 25 Luftwaffe 109s, 190s and jets, six were shot down. Our waist gunner Bob Berkemer got credit for one of those shot down. Four missions later, Bob was seriously wounded, losing part of his leg and returned to the U.S.

After the fighters finally gave up on their attacks we proceeded on course to the target in Czechoslovakia where we ran into intense and accurate flak with nine aircraft receiving major and five minor damage. I didn't think we would all get home without further fighter attacks with still over four hours flight time left. We did however and I was glad to get my "spirit" allocation plus that of two of our crew who didn't partake. Forget mess hall. I went to my bunk and slept until the following morning being completely exhausted, both physically and mentally. But very thankful.

About two weeks later, what I considered my worst mission, "Number seven," came up which was Magdeburg on Sept. 28, 1944. The 427th was the lead squadron with Capt. Bob Sheets and Lt. Ashwell in the lead crew. Twenty-seven aircraft reached the target area, 16 dropped their bombs on the target and only 16 returned to our base that day. Eleven aircraft and 99 men were missing in action. The 358th and 360th squadrons took the heaviest losses that day. The 427th



Bam Bam #42-37893, 358th BS - On 10 June 1944 on mission to bomb Nantes/Bougeumaie, France, blew up on take-off, six crewmen killed.

and 359th each had one loss.

Our plane was heavily hit by flak and two of our crew, the radio operator and waist gunner severely wounded by flak. We lost our oxygen, hydraulics and rudder control and could not stay with the squadron. We sought low level and had to find our way home alone. Not knowing the status of our plane, Gano had given the order to prepare to bail out. As we descended we found that we still had some control of the plane. The left outboard engine was running rough and we sought cloud cover at about 10,000 feet. Fred Gano, our pilot did a remarkable job of dodging the flak which followed us for what seemed a long time. We stayed just above the clouds in case we had to duck in to avoid fighter attack. We were "running a gauntlet" so to speak. Our bombardier, Ray Haakonson was in the rear of the plane attending to our injured crewmen. He happened to be a replacement for our regular Bombardier that day. We were still thinking we might still have to bail out and thoughts went through my mind; what about the wounded?

We limped back towards home, hoping we would get over the channel without further mishap which we did. The problem now was landing with no brakes or rudder control. Gano, brought the plane in and used up as much runway as he dared and then ground looped the plane to a stop and taxied off of the runway where we met by an ambulance to remove the two wounded airmen. I don't recollect the name of the plane that day but ground crew reported that we came back with 540 holes in the aircraft.

I was aware that we had been under fighter attack in the target area and saw at least two planes go down but wasn't aware that it was as devastating as it turned out to be until we finally got back home. Our ball turret gunner, T/Sgt. Art Coyle reported later that he had seen the fighters coming in, four of five abreast, behind the low squadron at slow speed and didn't believe that the squadron had even seen them before they were shot down. Nine of the enemy aircraft were reported to be shot down and confirmed however.

This mission changed my entire view of air combat. I finally realized that we had very little control over our fate and were playing "roulette" as far as finishing our complete tour was concerned. My prayers were all I had to fall back on for the rest of my tour. I still had 28 missions to go. Many of my friends were lost on this mission, some of whom I went through all of my Cadet training with. I was to lose more friends that came with me to the 303rd before my tour was completed.

My last and 35th mission was Berlin on Feb. 3, 1945. When I arrived at the briefing room and they uncovered the target I thought, "this is it." No other missions had been flown to Berlin during my tour to my recollection and I had a premonition that it would not be a "milk run" for my final mission. The mission air commander was Lew Lyle and the lead crew Bob Hullar and Bob Healy. By this time I had acquired 1st pilot status and had been flying new crews on their first missions. My regular crew had already completed their tour and returned to the U.S.

The unexpected experiences are the ones that you relive

Our plane was hit over the target during the bomb run and again our plane lost oxygen and we had to leave the group and fly home at low altitude alone. Surprisingly, we got back to base without any further damage. I was destined to finish my tour and this was my last mission or flight in any plane of the Army Air Corps. European air warfare was to end in less than three months..

**Wesley J. Flanders (427)
Co-pilot/Pilot**

Mission #53

When we first flew, we were a 12 plane formation over targets such as St. Nazaire and Lorient sub-pens. Then when more support arrived we had more formidable formations. At that time we faced the German "Yellow Nose Fighters". They were great pilots. As a prisoner, I met them in the basement of a railroad station in Frankfurt during a bombing. They were very much the gentlemen. (S/Sgt. Bridges was shot down by fighters, part of a pack of 150-200 fighters on July 23, 1943 on a mission to bomb the Blohm and Voss shipyards at Hamburg.)

The prison hospitals I was in were numerous. I woke up in a hospital somewhere not far from the Baltic. Then was picked up by two Gestapo agents and brought to a brig at a JU-88 airfield. Later I joined a group and was shipped by rail to a Stalag at Frankfurt. Then went to a hospital at Obermassfett. Then was sent to Stalag 17B

**Robert C. Bridges (360)
Tail gunner**

Combat was punishing!

As a tail gunner on my third mission to Augsburg, Germany, I picked up some flak which put me in the hospital for 17 months. I was lucky though as the gunner who replaced me was blown out of the tail and lost. My crew made it back but later Lt. Binder was killed when he became lead navigator. I also heard that Sgt. Berman was killed.

**Verle J Maxwell (358)
Tail gunner**

A fire the first thing in the morning could ruin your day!

On Oct. 19, '44, I was called to fly as navigator on Lt. Hallum's (I believe) crew. This would have been my third mission. While waiting in the crew chief's tent before start-up time, we heard a machine gun go off. The crew chief stepped outside the tent and then Hollered, "My plane's been shot and it's on fire."

We all piled out of the tent and indeed gas was pouring out of the wing between #1 and #2 engines and there was a pretty good fire going. The pilot said, "I think we had better get out of here." I figured he had a lot more experience than I did so I would stick with him. The pilot, another crewman and I ran for the woods. After a ways we stopped but the pilot said, "I think we should get further away." Both the Sergeant and I thought this was a good idea too, so we all ran some more. By and by we finally stopped and after waiting for an hour or so, we made our way back to the field. The fire was out, and the plane had been towed away. We recovered our equipment from the tent and returned back to headquarters and then back to our barracks.

I later found out the gun had been fired by the ball-turret gunner from our crew (Lt. Hardin's). He had been called to fly at the last minute to replace a ball-turret gunner who became sick. In checking the guns the other gunner had hooked up the ammo belt with a round already in the chamber. "Shorty" Kaber, our gunner was not used to doing this and he somehow hit the trigger setting off a few rounds.

They told me the firemen had handled the whole thing just right; no explosion and got the fire out., but no before there was over \$30,000 damage to the plane.

"Shorty" was taken off flying status for a short time and busted down to PFC. In a few weeks he was put back on flight status, returned to our crew and flew a good number of missions with us and finished his 35 missions shortly after we did. He got his Sergeant rating back too.

At the last reunion in Colorado Springs, I met and visited with the

man who had the privilege of towing the burning plane away from the hardstand to a more remote area while the firemen were trying to put the fire out. He said it was the last thing in the world he wanted to be doing, but someone came along and volunteered him for the job.

I learned that morning that things can go wrong, even before you get on the plane and take-off.

**George E. Hiebeler (360)
Navigator**

"Fly your missions and keep your nose clean!"

On December 5, 1941 as an enlisted man (radio operator) 38th Recon. Sqdn., I sailed on the President Johnson for Clark Field in the Philippines. Seven of our B-17s flew into Pearl Harbor the morning of Dec. 7, 1941. We turned around and sailed back to San Francisco. Ultimately wound up at Boise, Idaho where we became the 427th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group. While at Boise I flew with 2nd Lt. Calhoun and Capt. Billy Southworth. Captain Ben Stone was our ground executive and 1st Lt. Frank Doherty our Adjutant.

I left the 427th in mid April 1942 to enter the Aviation Cadet Program. When I completed my pilot training - commissioned a 2nd Lt. on June 26, 1943 at Pampa, Texas. and completed my B-17 phase training. We sailed on November 3, 1943 aboard the Queen Elizabeth and landed at the Firth of Clyde. Following a few days in an assignment center, our crew, 1st pilot T.L. Simmons and myself as co-pilot were assigned - Yes.-miracle of miracles to my old outfit the 427th Sqdn. of the 303rd Bomb Group, Molesworth, England. When I reported in to then Col. Ben Stone, he called in Frank Doherty, now a ma-

jor, and said, "You're the first one of the old 38th Recon to be assigned to us; others have stopped by, fly your missions and keep your nose clean and we'll take care of you!"

We were shot down on January 11, 1944, short of the IP for Oschersleben. That day then Lt. Col. Calhoun with Gen Travis aboard, led that mission. Remarkable coincidences, while at the Colorado Springs reunion, I got reacquainted with George Miller and Paul Winkelman who were old 38th Recon members. I had only been in the 38th for two weeks before we sailed or the Philippines.

I brought to the reunion a plaque with the wings of Russian, British, Polish, Czech, Free French and U.S. pilots who were POWs in Barth. These were cast using silver foil from cigarette packages (Red Cross parcels) by a Czech Sgt. Frank Crap. He didn't want cigarettes but he saw a ring on our Bombardier Dick Vaughn's little finger for this he would make the plaque. I asked him to step outside then I asked Dick if the ring was of sentimental value. He said, "No." and agreed to give it to me to accept payment upon return to the U.S. The deal was struck and I donated it to the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum, Savannah, GA, in the name of the 427th Sqdn. of the 303rd Bomb Group. I told Maj. Gen. Lew Lyle that I was originally going to make the gift upon my death, but decided that right then and there was the time to do it. I had been offered \$3,000 for it by a collector but I told him, "this was too precious and that I'd donate it in honor of the wonderful comrades-in-arms I was privileged to serve with."

Gen. Lyle was so pleased he asked me to make a tape telling about my service and about the plaque. This I did and the tape will enable visitors to know how it came into being and the great outfit it represents. He kindly sent me a copy which I treasure. In this tape I told about my experiences as a POW, a portion of the highlights and some of the lighter aspects I now repeat.

We had flown with two outboard engines props windmilling- we lost all hydraulics on first FW-190 pass. We flew for about 5-10 minutes - 2700 RPMs-55-60 inches of mercury before the number three engine caught on fire. I can't say enough about the ground crew and the condition old S for Sugar was in. I bailed out at 19,000 feet. Free fell to about 2,000 feet. My chute



Yardbird ground crew (l to r) Sgts. Shepherd, Santora, Ward, unk., Hampl and Crew Chief Savoy.

Now is the time to document your exciting experiences!



Luscious Lady assigned to the 427th BS on 15 Feb. 1943. Ground crew members (Back row) Sgts. Tweston & Winkleman. (front row) Isaacson, Klein and Hewitt. On 22 Feb. 1944, S/Sgt William Werner flying in **Luscious Lady** was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

was in for repack, so I had an English chest pack on. I had not adjusted it like my own, so when it opened I worried about my 'family jewels.' Fortunately no serious damage as I fathered three great sons. The area I came down in was heavily wooded (Hartz Mountains) and there was a small clearing from center to circumference about 75 feet. Beyond that the area had been logged and stumps protruded above the snow. The Good Lord was with me as I landed right in the center of the area; on my heels then on my rear end. If I had been a skydiver I couldn't have done it any better. I said a prayer, buried my chute and then saw a ski patrol about a quarter mile away coming in my direction. I walked up a small stream looking for the biggest tree I could find. Not a redwood in sight.

I took two quick steps and got behind the biggest tree I could find. There were four old men who carried large sticks and four youngsters -13 or 14 - with guns wearing Wehrmacht green. The last one saw my two footprints. I backed around and threw up my hands. Although of German ancestry, I didn't speak or read German. I did know a few words. I said, "Vas is los? What's up." This led to a stream of German. I told them I didn't understand or speak German. The old men wanted to beat me but the kids pushed them away. I was taken to a farmhouse where there were a grandmother, mother and three girls. One about eighth years old asked me in perfect English, if I'd like some coffee? We had been briefed that Hitler had told the German people that U.S. airmen were gangsters recruited from American cities to bomb innocent women and

children. I asked her to drink first. She jabbered in German to her mother, then she drank telling me it was alright. So I thanked her and drank it. I then reached in my flight jacket and offered her some gum. Without batting an eye, she said, "you chew first." I took out a piece, it was Beechnut, and chewed it and then handed her the pack. She again conversed with her mother; handed it back saying, "No thank you. Have you got any Wrigley's?" I chuckled and replied, Sorry I haven't any with me." Deep in the heart of Germany and she knew Wrigleys.

During interrogation at Dulag Luft, Frankfurt, I would give only, name, rank and serial number. The German Hauptman said, "You could be a spy and we could shoot you." I indicated that both our countries abided by the Geneva Convention so I didn't think that was a true option as we had many German POWs. He then proceeded to tell me where I had my training, when I left the States, when I landed and what my outfit was. We had been warned their intelligence might be very good but we shouldn't confirm anything. I gave him a blank look and he said, "Everything true -yes?" I replied, "I must congratulate you, you are the first German I've met with a wild imagination."

He said, "After you've been in solitary, you won't be so smart.

I replied, "I meant no insult but come on, you're not going to waste time with a lowly 2nd Lt." A week later I was enroute to Barth.

Stalag Luft 1 was right on the Baltic and when I arrived we had about 4,000 POWs.-upon Liberation Week over 15,000. While we

got Red Cross parcels and one package every two months from home, we held our own. We got Rutabagas and turnips; once in awhile, horsemeat and a few times some moldy Argentine cheese.

We played softball, had four baseball teams and I was lucky enough to play on one of them. Some played Rugby and there was some boxing. Life was austere and the last six weeks; a little watery soup, 1/2 loaf of bread was all we got. I lost 35 pounds - some bigger chaps, more.

We had two Catholic priests (captured in the lowlands) and protestant services on Sunday. Some of the chaps put on stage shows and we got books from the Red Cross.

A day at a time was the answer. We dug tunnels - only two guys got away- one to Sweden the other to Switzerland. We kept our spirit.

One English flyer got this letter from his wife, "I've been living with A Sgt. since you got shot down, but love, please don't cut off your allotment as we need the money."

Another-"I didn't know what to send you, so I'm sending a diary with five years on it - looks like you'll need it."

A Canadian's wife wrote, "We understand that you're at a summer resort on the Baltic and have Country Club privileges. We have German POWs nearby and we let them use our Country Club one day a week. I've loaned them your golf clubs!" Her reply, after receiving her husband's, "Get the G-D clubs back," was, "My how your disposition has changed." We were liberated by the Mongols on horseback with a bottle of vodka in one hand and their women riding along with them.

We refused to work on farms for we knew that would free men for the front.

All this was our share in the ultimate great victory. May the history of our great group endure forever and may we be blessed to share many more reunions together.

**Fred F. Reichel (427)
Co-pilot**

If the flak didn't get you; the weather sure as hell would!

One day during the winter of 1944 or 45, I was on guard duty outside on foot. It was snowing very hard. Could hardly see. Visibility was less than 100 yards. It was late in the afternoon and the B-17s

were starting to come back from their mission. This one bomber circled the field preparatory to landing. I couldn't see him but I could hear him easily. He pulled up with a roar of engines and circled back. This time he hit the many trees around the field. He cut a huge chunk out of the top of the trees, the width of the plane's wings, crashed and exploded and caught on fire. All on board were killed. The wreckage burned for hours. I was one of those sent out to guard the wreckage until it was cleared away. It was still burning. The wheel hubs were so hot you could stand by them and keep warm. I was very impressed. I had never seen anything like that before. I never knew the name of the plane or the names of the crew.

**Arthur Akers (1199 M.P. Co.)
Military Police**

Ed. Note: This proves without a doubt that the combat mission wasn't over until you rolled to a stop at the hardstand. Does anyone remember this incident? This story certainly adds credence to the experiences of Walter N. Jones on pages 13-14.

The Old Timer!

The date was September 19, 1944. The 303rd Bomb Group, a B-17 outfit in the 8th Air Force, was briefed to fly a bombing mission to Hamm, Germany. This mission would take seven and a half hours. The 359th Bomb Sqdn., one of four in the 303rd, took part in this mission. One of the 359th crews was that of 1st Lt. Robert O. Akers, Pilot (then of Lubbock, Texas). The waist gunner on this crew, an armament specialist, was S/Sgt. Fulton R. Meyer.

The 359th was scheduled to fly with the High Squadron of the Group which meant that they would drop their bombs between the Lead squadron and the Low squadron. Each flying group consisted of three squadrons designated: "Lead, High and "Low" and flew as a cohesive unit until the Initial Point (IP) was reached, the point at which the bomb run started. At the IP the three squadrons separated and bombed individually, two minutes apart, and then reformed as a cohesive unit as quickly as possible to consolidate the Group's fire power for defensive purposes.

On this particular mission, the Lead squadron had two Radar equipped aircraft (code name Mickey) and the Low Squadron had one

Experiences were fantastic and bizarre but never dull!

Mickey ship. For some inexplicable reason, the High squadron had none. The 303rd BG was scheduled to be the last group to bomb this day which meant that the 359th squadron would be the next to last squadron in the entire bomb stream to bomb.

As things worked out, the Lead and Low squadrons were able to bomb visually, therefore having no need for the Radar aircraft for bombing purposes. The High squadron, on the other hand, found the target obscured by clouds and made a 360 degree turn to make another attempt.

The second attempt was less successful than the first and so the High squadron "Lead" decided to find a "target of opportunity" on the way home. As the other two squadrons had completed their part in the mission, they took off for home, which was standard practice, so as to limit exposure to loss. All crews had been constantly briefed not to hang back to protect disabled aircraft as the practice usually resulted in greater loss.

The High squadron was now completely on its own as even our fighter escort had disappeared by this time. The squadron, consisting of 12 or 13 aircraft, eventually

bombed the town of Osnabruck. Because of a navigational error after "Bombs Away," the squadron found itself in the Ruhr Valley, one of the most heavily defended areas in the world. At least one aircraft was shot down and all aircraft were subjected to extremely intense flak. The aircraft flown by the Aker's crew sustained something like 400 holes in the fuselage, its Radio Operator, T/Sgt. Gerald E. Meyer of Mill Valley, Calif., was wounded and all other crew members miraculously escaped being hit although there were chunks of flak all through the aircraft. The ammunition track of S/Sgt. Cletus H. Vogel, Tail Gunner, sustained a hit which caused several rounds of 50 calibre ammunition to "cook off," luckily being directed outward of the aircraft and not hitting Sgt. Vogel. All this while a very sharp watch was kept for the enemy fighters which, fortunately, did not appear.

The formation was crossing the North Sea toward England, when on the Akers' aircraft, it was discovered that one of the 500 lb bombs had not dropped during the bomb run because of a bent triggering mechanism. The safety cotter pins had been removed from the bomb which is the first step to-

ward creating a "live" bomb. Lt Akers directed our armament specialist, S/Sgt. Fult "Pop" Meyer to kick out the bomb ("Pop" nearing age 34 was one of the oldest aerial gunners in the USAAF). Sgt. Meyer then proceeded into the very narrow passageway in the bombay and, although handicapped by his flight gear and open bombay doors, somehow managed to release the bomb from its defective shackle and into the North Sea some 2,000 feet below. All this without benefit of a parachute as it would have been impossible to work with a parachute attached. The thought of that bomb having been hung up during our fiery passage through the Ruhr Valley was chilling to all on board.

Our adventure was not yet over because the weather was so bad when we arrived over England that most of our formation landed at a fighter base, Boxted, home of the famed 56th FG, in completely zero weather. The Akers aircraft had to go around for a second (and successful) pass when it was discovered when lowering the wing flaps to "full down" position, that the left flap had been damaged by a flak hit and would not lower fully. This landing called for exceptional skill

by Lt. Akers and Co-pilot Lt. Leslie W. Giddings, to land a "hot" aircraft with non-existent visibility and on a strange field. They were equal to the task and, as a result, we are here today to tell the story.

The Akers' crew was awarded battle stars for the Battles of Normandy, Northern France and Germany.

The other members of the crew were: Lt. Neil A. Montone, Navigator; T/Sgt. Joseph R. Cappucci, Togglier; S/Sgt. Donal W. Saam, Ball-Turret gunner, now deceased. Sgt. Cletus Vogel has also passed on.

**T/Sgt. Herbert Shanker (359)
Engineer -Top Turret gunner
(then of "The Bronx")**

"What a man!"

Raid to Posen, Poland -11 1/2 hours. Landed on coast of England with two engines out of gas. British charged half-crown per gallon! Lend-lease program? We flew maps to Gen. George Patton (someplace in Germany) Upon arrival at IP, we asked where was Patton? His answer, "I'm in the lead tank of the 3rd Army. Drop those 'God-damn' maps!!" "We salvaged!" What a man!

**R.A. Boreland (358)
Togglier**

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FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

When Quentin and Virginia Hargrove established a gracious Memorial to Mel McCoy, as reported in the August 1997 newsletter, he said, "The King of Maintenance has gone, but his contributions will be around forever."

I would like to copy them by saying, "The King of the 303rd Membership and Roster is gone, but Carlton Smith's contributions will keep his name in our memories for a long, long time. We all will miss you, Smitty!"

Phyllis Smith has been very helpful in transferring the membership records to me. Every member of the Association send along their deepest sympathy to her and the family.

We have added a new list this time, so we can offer our thanks for those of you who enjoyed reviewing the new Master Directory, that Smitty and Hal Susskind labored over. Your donations are sincerely appreciated.

We have just passed into another "DUES" year, and the response has been rewarding. In great thanks to Bill and Ruth Heller, who took the time to mail out, at their expense, the dues notice, and request for donations and/or memorials. How many years has it been, Bill that you two have been contributing to the betterment of the Association by doing this time-consuming and costly effort? We sincerely thank you both. However we have over 125 of our active members that have yet to send in their 1998 dues. Check your address label on your Newsletter. If it has a "RED" mark on it, you will know that you are delinquent.

Even a greater concern is the fact that we have over 140 of a much smaller group of Associate Members who have failed to send in their 1998 dues. This may be a problem for you regular members who have been paying the dues for your sons and daughters, nephews and nieces, etc.

If that is so, don't postpone it until we have to stop the Newsletter. If you want them to remain active, and you have been paying their dues in the past, it is time again to remit.

While I was sitting with Smitty at the Pittsburgh Reunion, trying to soak in all of the hundreds of different things that he had to do, he told me that if he had to do it over, he would not have started sending out Membership Cards. He complained that almost every week, he cut himself, from sealing a card in plastic. And that he didn't see any value in sending them out. Well, your new membership chairman agrees with him. The card has little or no purpose, other than to clog up your billfold, or clutter up your dresser drawer. It is never used for admission, etc. Let your cancelled check be your documentation for paying your dues. On each of your newsletters, you can find the status of your dues. And in about four years, everyone of you will be Life Members, whether you will be pleased about it or not. Age 78 is rapidly approaching for many of us, for others it has already arrived. And too damned fast, in my case.

For anyone that wishes to continue to receive plastic enclosed membership cards, please let me know. I will consider you as a volunteer to prepare and send them out. I will send you the remaining supply of cards and plastic sheets, along with names that "just must have their cards." You can take over the job of sealing and sending them out.

The lists that follow are current as of 29 January 1998.

Edgar C. "Ed" Miller
422 S. Walnut Avenue
Tempe, OK 73568-021(580)
342-5119

A list of E-Mail addresses will be carried in the May issue

NEW MEMBERS

- L2042 Dudley V. Martin, 3769 Countryside Rd, Sarasota, FL 34233-xxxx
 A-374 Eugene Rubin, 601 Pembroke Ave., Norfolk, VA 23507-2053
 Tel. (757) 627-7447
- 2026 Jack J. Smith, 14545 Westview Ct., Brookfield, WI 53005-2310
 Tel. (414) 781-7168
- A-475 Barbara I. Donnelly, 2923 Wooddale Dr., Jackson, MI 49203-3759
 A-476 Donald F. McGarry, 2720 Oakwood Ave., NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505-3541 Tel. (616) 361-6802
- A-477 Bruce E. Arnold, P.O. Box 741, Lewiston, ID 83501-0741
 2034 Luther J McCullough, Rt#2, Box 555, Sulphur Springs, TX 75482-9601 Tel (903) 383-2795
- A-479 Douglas L. Dolan, 302 Greenfield Ave., Winchester, VA 22602-
 A-480 Thomas E. Rogers, 120 Apache Trail, Winchester, VA 22602-xxxx
 L930 Robert Taylor, 2703 Spokane Rd., San Antonio, TX 78222-1246
 (Reactivated)
- A-481 Jeanette Zachar, 2547 E. Hayes St., Davenport, IA 52803-2249

NEW MEMBERS

- A-482 Dean Ackard, 620 W. Foster Ave., State College, PA 52803-2249
 L2035 Walter M. Soha, 867 Ridge Lake Dr., Melbourne, FL 32940-
 A-483 Gregg Soha, 4025 Graham St., #1, San Diego, CA 92109-(son of Walter)
- L2036 Jean Conver, 7272 Deaconbench Court, Cincinnati, OH 45244-
 (wife of Milton K. Conver - deceased)
- A-484 Angela R. Hewitt, 3725 Timberlake Dr., Gainesville, GA 3030-
 (Dau of O.Z. Rowe #1565)
- A-485 Richard C. Swanson, 12542 Honeywood Tr., Houston, TX 79510
 (son of Walter C. Swanson L422)
- A-486 Gary L. Moncur, 4483 Palmer Dr., West Valley City, UT 84120 (son
 of Vern L. Moncur, pilot 359th Thunderbird)
- 2037 Thomas L. "Tom" Akens, 3143 County Road 275, Clyde, TX 79510
 (tel. (915) 893-4796)
- 2038 William C. Fluke, 7307 Wrangler Trail, Fort Wayne, IN 46835
 A-487 Charles E. "Chuck" McPartlin, 1040 Via Regina, Santa Barbara, CA
 93111-1340 tel. (805) 964-8201
- A-488 Edward Johnson, 201 Denali St. #107, Anchorage, AK 99501-4593
 tel. (907) 274-8600
- 2039 Samuel Masinton, 7014 W 74th Place, Arvada, CO 80003-2720 tel
 (303) 422-2209
- 2040 Theodore J. Holen, 4711 Tonyawatha Trail, Mononak, WI 53716-
 922 tel (608) 222-5922
- 2041 Erwin Hilborn, 2609 Midwood St., Lansing, MI 48911-

ADDRESS CHANGES

- 1539 Stephen H. Mudge, (427) new phone (810)367-2022 for MI ad-
 dress - (813)788-6047 for FL address
- L226 Fred Buddingh, (358) 4005 16th St., #18B, Lubbock, TX 79416-
 6024
- 1792 George E. Copeland (358) 128 Garden Crest Circle, Del Rio, TX
 78840- tel (830)768-2081
- L1656 Tom Keese (427) 10306 Royal Chapel Dr., Dallas, TX 75229-5039
 1744 George E. Emerson (427) new zipcode 30047
- L111 Beryl Kindred (358) new area code (580) 532-6241
- S877 Lloyd I. Long (427) 14231 W. Dusty Trail Blvd., Sun City West, AZ
 85375- tel (602) 975-2516
- L1694 Thomas D. Lardie, (360) new phone (530) 432-8550
 S-115 Peter L. M. Packard (358) new zipcode 20176-2316
- A-460 Scott Girman, 7607 Blain Way, Indianapolis, IN 46254-9735
 A-053 Ralph C. Littge, 106 Church St., Altenburg, MO 63732-6105
- A-113 Norbert Czamy, P.O. Box 764, Los Gatos, CA 75031-
 L824 Allen Wheeler, (427) 4725 135th St., Montezuma, LA 50171-
 S1906 Humphrey P. O'Leary, new area code (562)596-3793
- 1180 Carl A. Fredrickson (427) new zipcode 92869-4712
- 1784 C. Moulton Webber, (359) 1281 Pond Road, Sidney, ME 04330-
 7451
- 1947 Edward J. Pawlowski, (427) 136 Walker Road, Lyman, ME 04002-
 6043
- L356 William C. Crawford (360) new area code (770)424-1763
- L607 Mrs Irene Loy, new area code (757) 336-3394
- L056 Herbert Shanker, (359) 5250 Las Verdes Cir. #306, Delrey Beach,
 FL 33484-) (address through Mar 31 1998)
- 1712 Robert E. Black, (360) 6651 W. Alice Ave. #15, Glendale AZ
 85302-4324.
- John G. Long, 225 Schilling Cir., JA3CB8ZOO, Cockeysville, MD
 21030-1102
- Kenneth F. Nye, 5602 Bent Trail, Dallas, TX 75248 tel.
 (972) 18-0366

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 S1766 Richard D. Green (358)
 S640 Maurice M. Hassett 9358)
 S222 Lewis E. Lyle (Hdq)
 S115 Peter L. M. Packard (358)
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 S222 Lewis E. Lyle (HDQ)
 L1076 Guy H. McClung, (360)
 1789 Henry H. Means, (427) Memorial to Mighty 8th AF Heritage Museum
 L915 Frances E. Miller, Memorial to George D. Miller (427)
 L558 Merle S. Mullendore, (358)
 S069 William J. Neff, (HDQ)
 L1583 Maurice E. Ogburn, (359)
 1328 Howard F. O'Neal, (359) Memorial to our fallen comrades
 S115 Peter L.M. Packard, (358)
 L1078 Maurice J. Paulk, (444)
 L1998 George W. Pearson, Jr. (427)
 932 Armand S. Pons, (360) Memorial to Mighty 8th AF Memorial Museum
 S570 Coleman Sanders, (359) Memorial to Kenneth C. Edwards
 1350 Harold L. Scott, (360) Memorial to Mighty 8th As Heritage Museum
 L056 Herbert Shanker, (359) Memorial to Mighty 8th AF Heritage Museum
 L1001 Orvis K. Silrum, (427) Memorial to Ballard T. Byers
 S2009 Walter K. Sloan, (358) Memorial to Mighty 8th AF Heritage Museum
 L905 Abbott M. Smith, Jr. (427)

DONATIONS/MEMORIALS

1865 Charles W. Smith, (427) Memorial to 1st Lt. Thomas F. Kahler
 S286 Robert J. Sorenson, (360)
 L1240 Clifford Steinberg, (427)
 S144 Kermit D. Stevens, (HDQ)
 L1623 Thomas H. Struck, (444)
 L1240 Neil J. Svare, (427)
 L1971 Raymond Tartaglia, (359)
 L1592 Warren V. Tashian, (360)
 L930 Robert L. Taylor, (360) Memorial to Walter C. Melton
 S214 George A. Torrey, (360) Memorial to Ralph Walder
 S005 Joseph Vieira, (359) Memorial to Kenneth C. Edwards
 S1092 Robert E. Wherry, (360)
 L1940 Tom Williams, (358)
 L164 Martin Yaniga, (359) Memorial to Lester Hansen
 L409 Frederick B. Ziemer, (358)

**ADDITIONAL DONATIONS MADE BY THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS
 TO
 THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE HERITAGE MUSEUM.**

1566 Marion F. Fitko
 S1194 Philip G. Fleming
 L1544 Horace S. Kenney, Jr.
 L470 Conrad J. Kersch
 1767 George A. Kyle, Jr.
 L1638 Orin H. Schopplein
 1955 Evan R. Coule
 539 Neil J. Svare
 L1592 Warren V. Tashian
 L420 John B. Viets
 L1829 William J. Yepes.

MEMBERSHIP ROSTER DONATIONS

James E. Aberdeen; Sibley M. Andriessen; David H. Arnott; Roger D. Ayers; Harry Baffa; Joel A. Berly, Jr.; Ralph C. Brehl, Jr.; Curtis O. Brooke; Fred E. Call; Charles A. Callahan; Charles F. Cassidy; Louis M. Christen; Fred T. Crissman; Willis A. Duffey; James T. Elovich; Philip G. Fleming; Howard J. Frohman; William R. George; Alexander W. Gray; Martin M. Harbarger; Roy D. Harvey; James A. Hickey; Basil D. Hight, Jr.; Gordon E. Hoeft; George F. Hoyt; William F. Kahlden, Jr.; Elizabeth C. "Betty" Kelley; Lee F. Knedler; Russell A. Knudson; Thomas D. Lardie; Raymond T. Leal; Wesley G. Loosemore; Robert B. Lubbers; George Mabary; Malcolm J. Magid; Walter H. McDonald; Ralph E. Moffett; Dal Nichols; Humphrey P. O'Leary; A.G. Oswald; Leonard Ratermann; Katherine M. Ritter; Anthony J. Sacco; Coleman Sanders; Ernest Schieferstein; Eileen E. Schmidt; Dorothy Steele; Kermit D. Stevens; Joseph B. Strange; Thomas H. Struck; Norman W. Thye; Joanna Tressler; Hazel L. Tupper; Van R. White; Elmer W. Wilson, Jr.; William P. Zachar, Sr.

IN MEMORIAM

S1147 Carlton M. Smith (Hdq) Dec. 18, 1997
 L915 George D. Miller (427) Oct. 21, 1997
 L054 Robert P. Brud (360) Jul. 10, 1997
 L314 Kenneth C. "Buzz" Edwards (359) Nov 9, 1997
 L1494 Parley W. Madsen (358) Jul 27, 1993
 450 George W. Stumpff (359) Jun 25, 1997
 L281 Julian R. Cassino (359) Jul 10, 1996
 1734 Richard R. Rowan (359) Pending letter from Edith Non. Mem. Harry W. Haynes (427) POW Mar 5, 1997
 L576 Jack Jernigan, Jr. (360) Sep 4, 1997
 L004 Owen H. O'Neill, Jr. (359) Jun 12, 1997
 L1091 Floyd A. Sprague, (358) Nov 3, 1997
 L1162 Robert F. "Bucky" Vail, (360) Nov 9, 1997
 L979 John P. Thrasher, (358) Nov or Dec 1997
 460 Ennis L. "Buck" Rogers, (427) Dec 22, 1997

888 IF IT'S '98; IT'S OFF TO SAVANNAH AND THE EXCITING EIGHTH AF MUSEUM "BE THERE!"

The 15th reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group Association is scheduled for August 21-25, 1998 at the Marriott Riverfront Hotel in Savannah, Georgia. This will be the first time that the Association has returned to a former reunion city, having met at the birthplace of the Eighth Air Force in 1994.

We are going back by popular demand and there is a good reason for going back. That reason is to visit the two year old, 8th Air Force Heritage Museum and to examine all the memorabilia and memorials that the 303rd BGA has donated and erected there.

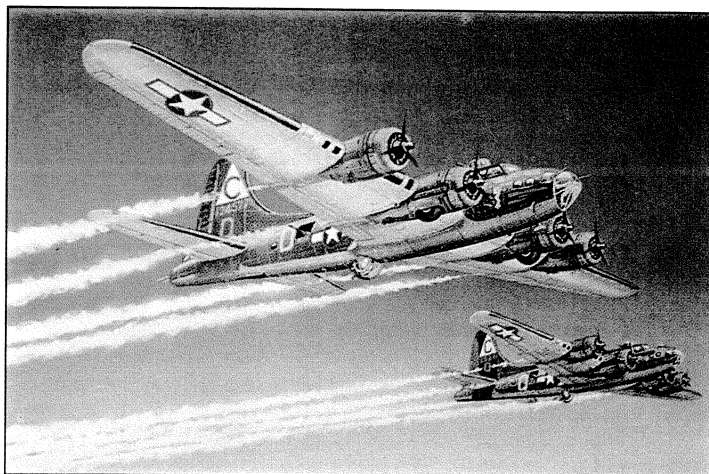
Don't miss this opportunity to visit this outstanding museum and see Forest Vosler's Medal of Honor, as well as the Memorial to the brave citizens of St. Nazaire,

The museum highlight is the "Mission Experience Theatre." It starts in a Quonset Hut briefing room where a film shows an actual mission briefing (many 303rd scenes).

You then move outside the briefing room to another area which shows a B-17 being prepared for a mission takeoff. You then go to another theatre where you go on a combat mission which is made almost as realistic as the real thing. You experience fighter attacks, flak hitting the aircraft and the rush of cold air as the bomb bay doors are opened.

Walt Ferrari is busy with the agenda and he has scheduled a full day at the museum which includes lunch and the Memorial services. He has also arranged round trip transportation between the hotel and the museum on two other days for people wishing to visit on their own. Tours of Savannah and the area will also be available.

The rates for the Marriott are \$83 per room and \$5 per day parking fee. Reunion kits containing additional information will go into the mail in late March. Make your reservations as soon as possible.



A Marriage in the Skies - 303rd B-17Fs, "Hell's Angels" and "Vicious Virgin" create contrails as they slice through the cold skies over Germany on their way to the target as envisioned by artist Mike Bailey.



"Remember when?" What is going through Charles Smith's mind as he looks at the B-17 "Sally B" parked on the tarmac at Duxford Air Base in Britain during the ceremonies at the opening of the American Air Museum, August 1, 1997



Bill Adams, our English wood carving friend, displays one of the 66 wooden plaques he has made for 303rd alumni and for display at the JAC at Molesworth. He plans to attend the reunion in Savannah

About this issue.....Publication of this issue is a joint venture between Hal Susskind and Eddie Deerfield. It was written and edited by Hal Susskind in Texas and printed and mailed out of Florida by Eddie Deerfield. It is a plan of the Association to have backups for key personnel to make sure the Association will continue to operate smoothly in case of emergencies.....We tried to outline the problem of getting awards for deserving members by publishing the letters drafted in Washington in 1944 which changed the ground rules for awarding DFCs and Air Medals. More on this subject will appear in May. ➔

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