

# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

MAY 1998

## Open season for applying for honors!



Are you entitled to any of these medals?

## Time to start countdown for '98 Savannah Reunion

The reunion kits were mailed the latter part of March so everything connected with the Reunion in Savannah, Georgia, August 21-25, 1998 is starting to fall into place. The program while yet to be finalized is a very interesting one. On the agenda are several visits to the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum, once as a group, to include lunch, a memorial service and dedication of several 303rd plaques. Shuttle service has been set-up to handle individual visits.

Other items of interest include; a book tour; a Savannah River Dinner and Entertainment Cruise; a Golf Tournament; a three hour Low Country Tour; an Italian Buffet and Entertainment evening; and of course the Squadron, Hdq. and Support, Associates, Widow and general membership meetings.

I understand that delivery of our

reunion kits has been mediocre at best. Delivery time, thanks to the Postal System is running anywhere between two weeks and a month. That's for people who are lucky. If you haven't received your reunion package by the time you receive this newsletter, I recommend you contact Walter Ferrari, V/P for Reunions, at (910) 270-0824 as soon as possible.

A plaque honoring the original crew of "Thunderbird" plus the more than 500 other people who flew in it on its 116 missions will be unveiled on Saturday, August 22, at the 8th Air Force Heritage Center. Gary Moncur, son of the original pilot of Thunderbird, who has developed the 303rd Bomb Group Association's Web Site has invited all members of the original crew to attend the ceremony.

See you there!



One of Bill Adams' wooden plaques which will be raffled off.

## Time limits waived for WWII awards

*Veterans of the U.S. Air Force, Army Air Corps, and Army Air Forces are now eligible to be recommended for awards and decorations previously closed to them due to expired cut-off dates. Under the provision (Section 526), of the 1996 National Defense Authorization Act time-limits have been waived.*

Veterans who believe their actions or achievements while members of the armed forces deserve recognition in the form of a particular medal may now submit a request for consideration. These awards include, but are not limited to, such examples as the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Silver Star, and Airman's Medal. However, it does not include the Purple Heart.

Under this 1996 Act, a written award recommendation is required on the veteran. Veterans are cautioned that all award recommendations must be extremely well documented and corroborated. They must be initiated by individual(s) with first-hand knowledge of the veteran's actions or achievements, preferably by the commander or direct supervisor at the time. The veteran also cannot recommend himself/herself for an award. For these requests to be properly considered by the approving authority, the veteran must accomplish the following:

(a) Provide an original or reconstructed narrative of the actions/achievements meriting recognition. Narrative must be signed by an appropriate recommending official (i.e. former commander, supervisor, etc.). Any chain of command endorsements should also be submitted. The recommendation must include the specific name of the intended award, the reason for recognition (i.e., heroism, achievement, or meritorious service), inclusive dates, and both a justification and proposed citation.

(b) Attach accompanying witness statements that corroborated the veteran's actions/achievements. Such statements must be from individuals who personally witnessed

the veteran's actions/achievements.

(c) Provide copies of any documentation that would further support the veteran's case (i.e., flight records, extracts from unit records or logs, photographs, maps, report of separation, etc.). Such items must be directly relevant to the veteran's actions/achievements.

(d) The award request, with supporting documentation, must be submitted through the office of the veteran's member of Congress. Upon his/her examination of the veteran's case, the congressional representative can direct the appropriate Service Secretary to formally review the veteran's award request.

The decision to grant the veteran's recommended award is based upon the merits of the case, the recommendations degree of documentation, and the award criteria in existence at the time the actions/achievements occurred. Eligible veterans are encouraged to submit requests for past due awards and decorations they deserve. → → → → → → → → → →

## Replacement set of medals

All honorably discharged veterans of the Air Force, Army Air Corps, and Army Air Forces are entitled to a one-time, free of charge replacement set of their authorized medals and ribbons from the U.S. Government. Submit requests in writing to: National Personnel Records Center, Attn.: NRPMPF, 9700 Page Ave., St Louis, MO 63132-5100.

Request must contain veteran's full name, service or social security number, branch of service (approx-

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## 303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

### "HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

Editor: Hal Susskind

VOL. XX, NO. 1

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May 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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Publisher: Eddie Deerfield

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Chaplains Emeritus: None

# Hell's Angels Forum

## Your Chance to Sound Off!

### Records were made to be broken!

In response to the letter from William Cox ("Is this a record" Newsletter Feb. 1988), I do not know who has the record but I do know that seven members of the crew I came to Molesworth with flew 35 missions in 115 days or less. The crew members were: A.J. Tarvid, pilot; L.C. Grandwilliams, co-pilot; G.M. Webber, bombardier; M.L. Jenkins, engineer; C.W. Root, radio operator; D.H. Carlson, waist gunner and R.D. Dimick, tail gunner. The ball-turret gunner, G.F. Much more, suffered a non-combat injury and was not able to complete his tour. I had 34 missions when the 8th AF stopped flying combat missions. (See "Fortunate" Aug. 1997 newsletter).

I am sure there must be many other flight crew members who started flying combat missions after Christmas 1944 and completed tours of 35 missions before April 26, 1945. Missions came very quickly during that period.

**G.V. Hudson (359)**

**Box 8301**

**Longview, TX 75607-8301**

"Who in the 303rd holds the record for flying 35 missions in the least amount of time?" How does 56 days sound? (only 21 days of rest.)

I was a first pilot in the 360th and flew my first mission on May 19, 1944....and completed my tour by flying three missions to Munich on the 11th, 12th and 13th of July. I, too, wonder if 35 missions in 56 days constitutes a record?

Seven members of my crew are still living and remain in touch with one another and would be glad to hear where we stand.

**Dale E. Bartholomew (360)**

**248 Sodom Hutchings Rd.**

**Vienna, OH 44473-9679**

I was reading William Cox's letter anticipating that he might have broken our record of missions/days. As I read along I realized that he was not even close and then I thought "Well, Hal will put an "Ed. Note" at the end. No note!.

As you have printed before and as Gobrecht reiterated in "Might in Flight," II, the William C. Davis crew flew their 31 mission tour (full tour at that time) in 67 calendar days - May 11 to July 16, 1944.

We did not voluntarily give up the

"Rest Home." it was never offered to us.

This is not a complaint but you can imagine the fatigue we suffered. The last four missions were to Munich. Count the hours!

In good spirits.

**Kenneth Clarke (358)**  
**3504 Plumb Street**  
**Houston, TX 77005**

*Ed. Note: I only use the "Ed. Note." to comment on something that I have researched or have intimate knowledge of. I had no idea of who flew the most missions in the least amount of time so I didn't comment on it. I'm not even sure that the tour in 56 days is a record. I'm sure I'll find out soon enough.*

### Witnessing a mid-air collision

I don't remember the date or the mission but it was March or April of '45 that I was flying on the left side of the formation. The contrails were at their worst so about all I could see of the plane that I was flying off was a shadow and his exhaust making a solid contrail. It made me feel like slowing down but I had to keep up so I had my co-pilot fly so I could relax a little. He was having trouble flying too, but as I looked out my window to the left, there was a big clear arch with another group with a B-17 sticking out of the contrails over there. At that moment, there was another B-17 coming down out of the contrails on its side, colliding and both disintegrating! My ball turret gunner said he only saw one chute open until they were out of sight. That was a perfect example of vertigo in action!

**Clyde Henning (358)**  
**13280 Warren Road NE**  
**Paris, OH 44669-9718**

*Ed. Note: The incident referred to above probably happened on 6 April '45 on Mission # 353 to bomb the main marshalling yard at Leipzig. Two aircraft from the 303rd Bomb Group "Green Hill Belle" from the 427th and a B-17 from the 360th collided shortly before reaching the target area. The dense contrails appeared to contribute directly to the collision. There were no survivors; seventeen 303rd airmen were killed.*

*The target area weather conditions made visual bombing impossible - there were 10/10 low clouds with tops at 13,000 to 15,000 ft., 3/10 to 4/10 high clouds at 25,000 ft., and dense persistent contrails.*

*In retrospect why wasn't there a re-*

*call with weather conditions as miserable as outlined? Fighting the enemy was one thing but fighting the enemy and the weather simultaneously put the "good guys" at a disadvantage.*

### Thanks!

Every year the military personnel presently stationed at RAF Molesworth send personal Christmas cards to the former war time occupants of Molesworth. Printed below is a typical card received by one of Molesworth's octogenarian set..

Hello Mr. Miller:

I'm assigned to RAF Molesworth and work at Alconbury. The little bases in this tri-base area must have seen quite a few major changes since the days of the 303rd. Would you mind sharing a couple of thoughts or memories of your days at RAF Molesworth? I can't begin to imagine life here when the 303rd was active.

Thank you for the contributions and sacrifices made to the essential mission here in the U.K.

Have a very Merry Christmas.

**S/Sgt. Laura Buehler**

### Here's a letter of thanks sent by 303rder Harold A Lanigan.

Dear M/Sgt Moody

What a thoughtful gesture for you, Colonel Early and Colonel Evans to remember we pilots that flew out of Molesworth. There are some wonderful memories of those youthful days in 1944 and of course

some sadness in remembering our friends and comrades.

You and the personnel of Molesworth are also to be congratulated for keeping alive the purpose of that great war - WWII. Unfortunately, so many of our youth do not know what this great nation has accomplished in bringing freedom and justice to so many around the world.

I have visited Molesworth on three occasions and it is always a warm and heartfelt experience. My best wishes to you and your staff at Molesworth.

**Harold A. Lanigan**

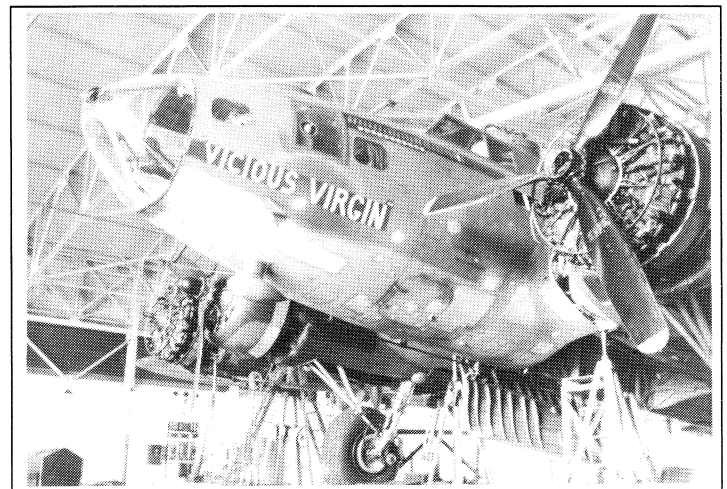
*Ed. Note: On behalf on the Board of Directors and membership of the 303rd Bomb Group Association I'd like to pass on our thanks and congratulations to Colonel Fran Early and Colonel Gerald Evans for their thoughtfulness and generosity in remembering what we did as youths some 50 years ago. RAF Molesworth is in good hands.*

### A varied post-war career

Several times I was asked at reunions to submit a video story, however, unfortunately a schedule for this video was never completed. So, the following are a few words about myself.

During my combat tour, I received the Purple Heart, Air Medal with 5 Clusters, POW Medal, DFC and other European combat recognition. In 1994, I applied for and was awarded the Liberation De La France Medallion by the French War Veterans Association in 1994.

After WWII, I flew as pilot in



**An optical illusion? - Here's the "Vicious Virgin" being patched up after being clobbered by flak and before the name change to "Scarlet Harlot." The restoration made her an assembly ship and a non-aircraft. When she splattered the runway at Molesworth, the case was made, that, "you can't crash an aircraft that doesn't exist." Therefore, how can you publicize an aircraft that doesn't exist? (photo by Tom Struck)**

South America, principally Argentina, Chili, Bolivia and Peru. After 28 hours of hood-time and an equal number in the simulator, I qualified for the airline transport rating ATR-Captain #438781. After returning to the States, my assignment was the north Atlantic to France, Spain, Italy and Egypt, with a few charters into Germany and Palestine. My last assignment in commercial aviation was with American Airlines in domestic operations. Later, I was an FAA designated periodic and new ATR examiner. I started my new aviation career as chief pilot for National Union Life Insurance Company. I have owned and flown my own aircraft with some adventures as far south as Argentina and north to Alaska.

My last assignment in the U.S.A. F. Reserve was with SAC at Homestead Air Force Base in Florida in which I qualified in all base operations aircraft, plus the B-47. With some 12,750 hours of flight time the Command Pilot rating was awarded to me.

**Harold A. Lanigan**  
541 Fairfax Avenue,  
Winter Park, FL 32789

*Ed. Note: Co-pilot Harold A. Lanigan, then a F/O was shot down on 22 January 1945 on a mission to Sterkrade, Germany. He and the engineer T/Sgt. R.R. Cooper were the only survivors. Captured, he escaped twice and was recaptured twice. He was finally liberated by Patton's Third Army.*

### Another entry-or two-in the record race

Incidentally, I don't like to burst Bill Cox's balloon, but our crew flew our first on 5 July '44 and our 35th on 19 October '44. I figure 106 days. No one was hurt; Thank God. Just a lot of scares. And that even included seven days at the rest home in Whitney, Oxfordshire. If there is any prize for this, John King and I will pick it up at Savannah

**William H. Smith**  
3524 Golfview Dr.  
Hazel Crest, IL 60429-2404

The February 1998 issue of the Newsletter is another great one. We can't imagine how the publication continues to be better with each issue but it does

We thought there would be many answers to your question in the November 1997 issue "Who in the 303rd holds the record for flying 35 missions in the least amount of

time." The February Newsletter includes the letter from William Cox who reports he completed a 35 mission tour in 127 days. Naturally his letter will trigger many responses and here is ours.

The G.N. Smith crew flew our first mission December 18, 1944 and four of the crew flew our 35th on March 24, 1945 for a total of 96 days to complete our tour. This period included 10 days on the continent after a forced landing in Luxembourg on January 10th, while we were on our 13th, or shall we say 12-B mission. On this mission the Navigator and the Bombardier were forced to bail out over Germany and were prisoners of war until released. Our 14th mission, January 22, 1945, included a forced landing in Ghent, Belgium due to heavy flak damage. Two members of the crew were wounded. We spent 7 days in Belgium. In February the crew received a much needed "flak" leave of 7 days. Our co-pilot Melvin Alderman was killed in action on his 35th mission after the remaining members of the crew had finished our missions.

Pilot, G.N. Smith; Radio Operator, George Parker; Ball Turret Gunner, Raymond Miller and Al Dussliere, Waist/Tail Gunner are the four members of the original crew who flew their 35 missions in 96 days.

**Al Dussliere**  
1901 5th St.  
East Moline, IL 61244-2421

### This and that

My Air Force training began with a job in the 8th AF, when I was scheduled to be a radio gunner on the B-17. When I got overseas in 1943 and stationed at Molesworth with the 303rd Bomb Group, they put me in the Military Police and also to fly when necessary, as a radio operator/gunner.

I spent most of my time as an M.P. We all got together down in the Dirty Duck in Old Weston and had a drink together and other places also.

In May 8, '45, the day the war was supposed to be over, I was invited to fly all the way over Germany as a reserve radio gunner then, and I did it. As you know after that we left our base and I went to Africa, and some to India, to go to finish the Japan War. Then the atomic bomb was dropped there, and all the wars were over.

My wife and I go to England quite often and I take tours on our



**Lead Crew - ((Back row) Lts. Hullar, Scroggins, Orvis, Balling and Maj. Snyder. (Front row) Sgts. Samson, Hoyt, Miller, Fullum and Rice. Taken when the "Vicious Virgin" was a viable aircraft.**

303rd Bomb Group. It sure has changed a lot now. Anyway, I went to the big war museum just below Cambridge (Duxford) and I got in it free and others were paying 13 pounds to get in.

I would sure like to make our reunion in Savannah, Georgia in August; if things work out right. I have to go to the big VA hospital in Reno all the time and my wife made arrangements to go on a ship tour to Alaska also. I hope things work out both ways.

**Lloyd Hanks**  
HC 60 Box 12  
Lake City, CA 96115

P.S. I hope this will get in our next newsletter.

### Did you bomb Brest?

I am currently setting up an university thesis about the Second World War bombings on the town of Brest, France, on its harbor by the American and British Air Forces. I would like to get in touch with 8th and 9th Air Force veterans who were involved in those kind of missions. Allied pilots' accounts have never been studied in France.

Could you please inform veterans of your Group about my research. I am interested in pilot and airmen accounts, personal notes, photos, copies of flight books, etc., relating to missions over Brest.

Thank you for your help.

**Jean-Yves Besselievre**  
30, rue Degas  
29820 Guillevin  
France

*Ed. Note: The 303rd flew two missions to Brest; one on 27 February 1943 and the other on 11 August 1944.*

### Information!

First off, congratulations on your new job with the 303rd Association. Walt Swanson had told me some time ago you would be the new president. Guess he called you about Paul Henderson's death on March 20, 1998. He was buried March 28th in his hometown, Beatty, Nevada. Paul was our right waist gunner on "Lady Luck." A swell guy and a staunch supporter of the 303rd Association and an accomplished guitar and fiddle player, I might add.

I'm enclosing a copy of my poem, "A Tale of Woe From Long Ago," thought you might like to include it in a future edition of the 303rd "Bulletin." Sorta tells the story of my "Shoot down" over Hamburg, July 25, 1943 with John Van Wie and the "Butch" Crew. Hope to make the Savannah Reunion and see you there.

**Robert L. "Bob" Taylor**  
2703 Spokane Rd  
San Antonio, TX 78222-1246

### Directory Donations

L1079	Marion D. Blackburn
2050	Robert W. Hanson
30	Harry F. Jenkins
A-65	Charles D. Rukes
L1110	Dale E. Schneider
L2024	Arlis F. Warburton

**"WE NEVER  
TURNED BACK"**

## "Half A Wing" gets second wind!

Dear 303rd Veterans and Friends,

Ever since my book about the 303rd Bomb Group and Bob Hullar's crew first appeared in 1989, many of you have encouraged me to write another book about the Group. I've always declined, saying that "Half A Wing" was the result of a unique set of circumstances; that I didn't think I had another book in me; that my work as a corporate attorney and my family responsibilities precluded me from taking the proverbial pen-in-hand again, etc.

Well, that's changed. "Half A Wing" enjoyed an extraordinarily good run in its first edition - seven printings in ten years and over 12,000 copies in print - but it went out of print last year. I called the Aviation Editor at McGraw-Hill, the book's publisher, to discuss this decision, and she encouraged me to think about ways we might get the book in print again. The idea of an expanded, revised edition came immediately to mind, and I made a proposal to McGraw-Hill which resulted in their offering me a contract to update the book. "Half A Wing" is now scheduled to appear in 1999 in a 400 page 6x9 inch hardbound "Special Edition: with up to 60 illustrations and new cover art which should feature real 303rd B-17s.

I need your help to make this exciting development a reality. What follows is a brief outline of how I believe the book will be improved and updated.

First, the book will have a Preface to the 2nd edition discussing the first edition's publishing history, what's new in the second edition, and providing the many acknowledgements I know will be necessary.

Second I want to update my mission narratives with new voices from the Group. If you flew any missions during the time that Hullar's crew flew - August 16, 1943 to February 20, 1944 - and especially if you went on any of the missions that are written up in the book, I would greatly appreciate any personal records, recollections or writing that you have which could add to the narrative. I've already contacted a number of the 303rd veterans and have been very heartened by their responses and enthusiasm.

Third, many of you have asked me to write about the work of the ground crews. I never felt that I

could pull together sufficient information about ground crew activities to make a separate publishable work, but I would love to include the recollections of ground crew members in some of mission write-ups in the revised edition. In particular, if you served on the ground crews of either "Luscious Lady" or "Vicious Virgin," or any of the other 303rd aircraft mentioned in the book, please contact me so we can explore ways in which your recollections may be incorporated into it. Two places where ground crew recollections would be especially welcome are the chapters dealing with the Second Schweinfurt mission of the October 14, 1943 and the Oschersleben mission of January 11, 1944.

Fourth, the book will contain much new information about what happened to crews that were shot down. In this area I am already greatly indebted to Harry Gobrecht, your official historian and the author of "Might in Flight," for permission to use the amazingly comprehensive information he has compiled. However, if there is any other information that you would like to add, I would love to hear from you.

Fifth, I hope to add a new chapter to what I have called the "Battle of Bremen" period in the book. This is the series of raids the Group flew to this City beginning with the November 26, 1943 mission, in which Charles Spencer was so badly injured, and ending with the December 20, 1943 raid, in which Forrest Vosler won the Medal of Honor. The new chapter will deal with the November 29, 1943 mission in which Dr. Carl Fyler's crew was shot down on his last mission. While the events of this raid, including the heroism displayed by Sgt. Sawicki, have received coverage in the Group's Newsletter, in Dr. Fyler's own book, "Staying Alive," and elsewhere, the story of this mission is certainly worth telling, and it may help to secure the posthumous recognition Sgt. Sawicki deserves. So, if you went on this raid, in any aircraft, and would like to contribute your recollection, please contact me.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the book will contain an Epilogue that will not just mention what happened to the principal characters after the war, but will also inform the reader about the efforts of

the 303rd Association today to perpetuate its history through the Association's Newsletter, its Web Site, the substantial 303rd contributions to the Mighty Eighth Heritage Museum in Savannah, and the remarkable collection of 303rd materials assembled by the Joint Analysis Center at Molesworth.

I am extremely excited about getting the revised edition into print, but I don't have much time. My deadline for submission of the manuscript to the publisher is September 30, 1998. While I plan to conduct a number of interviews during the August Reunion in Savannah, I need to hear from you now to get things started. So please contact me by mail, e-mail or regular mail at the addresses below. I look forward to hearing from you.

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Tel. (609) 448-8871  
Fax: (609) 448-3092

*Ed. Note: My editor's pride makes me take exception to your reference to the "Hell's Angels Newsletter" as the Group's Newsletter and the Association's Newsletter; especially since you were so careful to refer to all the other titles and planes by highlighting them in italics. As far as I am concerned the "Hell's Angels Newsletter" is the glue that binds this Association together. It is the pulse of the 303rd Bomb Group Association. It is not just another bomb group newsletter.*

*Since you are asking the members of the 303rd Bomb Group Association to share quite a bit of information with you, I wonder if you could make arrangements with your publisher to offer the updated book for sale to our members through our PX? I'm sure Charlie Sykes would be glad to stock it in our P.X.*

*If you are going to do a Chapter on the "Battle of Bremen" you should at least mention the week of 20-25 February 1944 "Big Week" when the 303rd hit all the big targets in Germany, i.e., Leipzig, Diepholz, Aschersleben, Schweinfurt and Stuttgart. It was called Operation Argument. I'm sure the ground crews patched up a lot of holes on 303rd aircraft after that week. Ask them how many 20 mm shells they took out of returning 303rd aircraft. They took one out of the Duchess after the 11 January raid on Oschersleben. The complete story on what happened to our MIAs is still to be written.→*

## "Thirty in 71 days!"

In the November 1997 issue of the "Hell's Angels Newsletter," the question was, "Who flew the 35 missions in the least amount of time?"

I don't qualify for the 35 missions because I flew only 30 missions, but I flew them in a very short time.

We flew our first mission on June 15, 1944 and at the end of June 25, 1944 we had already flown 10 missions. We flew our last mission to Merseberg on August 24; if I have counted right that's just 71 days. There is a story about the August 24 mission to Merseberg in the August 1997 newsletter.

When our pilot was wounded and grounded permanently, we got a new pilot and flew the next day. I was the radio operator on Lt. Alan Langford's crew. From our 20th mission on, our pilot was Lt. Altman.

This is probably not a record as to whom flew 30 missions in the shortest time but it must be close to the record.

**Chester Whisman (359)**  
4323 N. Wall St.  
Spokane, WA 99205

## "Wall of Valor"

As always I have been enjoying the "Hell's Angels Newsletter." I thought I would give you an update on how the "Wall of Valor" program at the 8th Air Force Museum is going on - you might want to include the information in your next newsletter.

To-date we have almost 2,200 orders and we have started taking orders now for Section II. As of today 165 members of the 303rd Bomb Group are on the "Wall of Valor." That is the largest contingent on the wall thus far. The 385th BG is not far behind with 163 names.

I am enclosing a copy of the order form in case you have room to print it in one of your upcoming newsletters. Again, thank you for all the help you have given us in the past. Please feel free to call me at my toll free number at 800-544-8878 should you have any questions or need any additional information.

**Judge Ben Smith**  
P.O. Box 1586  
Waycross, GA 31502-1586

*Ed. Note: Anyone wishing to get a copy of the "Wall of Valor" order form can contact Judge Smith at his toll free number listed above.*

# From the President

Sometime ago I received numerous calls from people in our organization asking me if I had any WW II photos of Walter Cronkite in my files. It seems he was writing a book about his career in journalism and wanted to include a photo of himself flying a bombing mission during WW II. I said to myself, this is a new twist; then I started to think that besides Cronkite many of the highly paid newsmen of this era were associated with the wars but as correspondents, not as combatants. It is safer that way. And the pay is much better; plus the career is much longer.

When challenged about their right to receive sensitive information on a certain topic, our fearless correspondents usually counter with, "The public has a right to know." or they scream about their First Amendment rights.

Just recently I read an interesting piece about the freedom of the press. It was in the newsletter from the Central New York Region of the 8th AF Historical Society. It went like this:

**It is the soldier, not the reporter, who has given us freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, who has given us freedom of speech.**

**It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, who has given us the freedom to demonstrate**

**It is the soldier, not the lawyer, who has given us the right to a fair trial.**

**And it is the soldier who salutes the flag, who serves under the flag and whose coffin is draped by the flag, who allows the protester to burn the flag.**

(I believe the article originally came from the 357th FG Newsletter.)

→ → → →

As you look down the list of names in the "In Memoriam" column of this issue of the newsletter, there are several that are quite familiar.

Charles G. Rice, Jr., was one of our Protestant Chaplains. I remember the reunion in Schaumburg, Illinois when we visited the Arlington Park racetrack; he picked the winners of the first two races and also picked the daily double. We had about six people in the 303rd with the surname of Rice. Were any related?

Walter K. Shayler was one of the original members of the 303rd. He was the C.O. of the 360th and an ardent supporter of the Association. As a member of a PFF crew I flew several missions with him during my tours at Molesworth. He was a big

help to me in my job as editor of the "Hell's Angels Newsletter."

Charles W. Spencer, DSM. Back in May 1988 I was honored to do a story about his heroic act in winning the DSM and what he did with his life after the War. I think the way he carried on in spite of his injuries is an inspiration for all of us. Last week the President of the U.S. honored a Kansan, Bob Dole with the highest civilian

award. for his work in Congress over the years. I think Chuck Spencer, who became a Kansan after the war, also deserved that award for his work as a Chaplain in the Dodge City community after World War II. Our heartfelt sympathy goes out to his wife Jeanne and to all the other widows and next of kin of the the departing heroes listed in the "In Memoriam" column on page 19.

## SAVANNAH REUNION PROGRAM CONTINUED

Tuesday, August 25

0800-0900	Registration & Information
0900	Squadron, HQ & Support, Associates and Widow Meetings
1015	303rd Bomb Group (H) General Meeting
1300	POW Clinic. Families invited. Dr. Carl Fyler
1300-1500	Registration & Information
1300-1500	PX Display
1300-1500	Hospitality Center
1300	Board of Directors Meeting
1700-1800	Reception - Cash Bar
1800-2200	303rd Group Banquet & Dancing - Fort Stewart Band
2200-2400	Hospitality Center

## HOTEL RESERVATIONS & INFORMATION

1. Reservations may be made at the Savannah Marriott Riverfront by calling 912-233-7722 or toll free: 1-800-228-9290. Be sure to mention that you are a member of the 303rd Bomb Group.
2. The \$83.00 rate applies to single or double room. An additional charge of \$20. per night for a person over 18 will be added to the room rate.
3. All reservation requests must be accompanied by a first night room deposit or guaranteed with a major credit card. Hotel will not hold any reservations unless guaranteed by one of the above methods. Room rates are \$83.00 plus applicable state and local taxes (currently 12%) in effect at time of check in.
4. If you must cancel your room reservation, notify the Marriott at 912-233-7722 as soon as possible. Deposit will be refunded only if cancellation notice is given at least 24 hours prior to arrival. NOTE: Don't forget to also cancel reunion sign-up.
5. Reservations must be received by the hotel no later than July 21, 1998, so make your reservations early.
6. Automobile parking fee will be \$5.00 per day.
7. Complimentary coffee and tea will be available in the lobby every morning.

## TRAVEL TIPS

Savannah International Airport is served by Delta, US Airways, Continental Express, Corporate Express/Midway, United Express and Air Tran.

Delta Airlines has been designated as the official airline for this reunion. Special rates are available. Our file number is 114401A.

Limousine service to/from the airport is provided by McCall limousine. One way fare is \$12 per person. Round trip fare is \$22 per person for 303rd members. If you plan this service, call 1-800-673-9365 the day before your flight and advise them of the airline, flight number and scheduled arrival times..

Amtrak serves Savannah.

Greyhound Bus Line also serves Savannah

If you would like additional information about Savannah or require additional travel assistance, call Kris Lane at the Convention and Visitors 1-800-444-2427.

The Bureau will have a table in the hotel registration area with information and discount coupons.

## Replacement medals

Continued from page 1

mate dates are OK). Also, the request must be signed by the veteran; if deceased, the veteran's next of kin can sign the request on his/her behalf. Ensure that information on the request is clear and easy to read. It is helpful to attach a copy of the discharge certificate to the request, but not required. It is best to use Standard Form 180 (Request pertaining to Military Records) to send request, if possible. These are available at VA offices and from most veterans organizations.

Please note that the Government does not provide badges, insignia, unit patches, or miniature medal sets - these must be obtained through commercial sources at veteran's expense. Allow 90-120 days for processing.

## The Purple Heart Medal

Veterans who believe they merit award of the Purple Heart Medal (PH) for wounds received as a direct result of enemy actions can submit their individual cases to the Purple Heart Review Board (PHRB). Former members of the U.S. Air Force, Army Air Corps, and Army Air Forces must submit requests in writing to: National Personnel Records Center, Attn.: NRPMPF, 9700 Page Avenue, St. Louis, MO 63132-5100.

The Purple Heart is a criteria-based award which does not require a written recommendation and has no time limit for submission. However, each request is considered based upon policies and criteria in effect at the time the veteran was wounded. In order to determine a veteran's entitlement to the PH, the following information must be provided to the PHRB:

(a) A detailed narrative of the circumstances involving the wound, including the veteran's rank, and unit of assignment, date wound occurred, and specifics of the injury.

(b) Medal documentation to verify treatment was received. If there is no documentation to show treatment at the time, a statement from a physician (military or civilian) is acceptable detailing that a medical examination has revealed evidence of the wound claimed by the veteran. Statements from the requesting veteran which are not substantiated by either medical or official records will not be considered as sufficient evidence of wounds.

(c) Statements from individuals who personally witnessed the incident can verify it happened.

# GOING BACK

by Brian McGuire

Gene Girman was the radio operator on the crew of Lt. Jack Hillary when they were shot down by flak on a mission to Merseberg on 24 August 1944 aboard the B-17 "Myasis Dragon." The crew is also remembered as the one aboard the "Thunderbird" in the Keith Ferris "Fortress Under Fire" mural covering the back wall of the WWII gallery of the National Air & Space Museum in Washington, D.C. That mission was nine days before that fateful mission to Leuna synthetic oil plant in Merseberg. Only two men survived - Gene and ball turret gunner Reid Bishop. They spent the rest of the war in hospitals and prisoner of war camps in Germany.

Gene always wanted to retrace his steps following the shootdown, and mentioned to me a few years ago. Last October we got to do just that. Gene and I set off for Germany, accompanied by my wife Dina, who speaks passable German and served as translator. We had an extremely successful trip and were able to find almost all of the places where Gene was interned, as well as the shootdown area near Merseberg. Following describes what we found, along with what happened when Gene was there 54 years ago.

Departing from Hemingford Grew, about 20 miles east of Molesworth, we went through Dover, the Chunnel, across North-

ern France and Belgium to Antwerp. From Steenberg we drove across Holland to Maastricht, then Route 278 east toward Aachen, arriving at the Margraten American Cemetery. At the reception desk we got some handouts so Gene could find the locations of the grave markers marking the final resting place of two of Gene's crewmates, and another friend. We also got a printout of 303rd crewmen buried at all American cemeteries overseas. There are 465 names on the list, which included (114-358th, 81 from the 359th; 119 from the 360th, 149 from the 427th and two from headquarters.)

From there we drove Autobahn 3 to Frankfurt, but took a short unplanned detour to Wiesbaden to visit the air base, which Gene last visited 53 plus years ago and 25,000 feet higher on the "mural" mission.

The remainder of our trip through Germany was not in the same order as Gene's ordeal in 1944-45, but in the order we ran across them on a map. However, the remainder of this article will chronicle our journey in the same order as Gene lived it in 1944-45, so it is easier to follow.

By the time the 303rd headed for the Leuna synthetic oil refinery at Merseberg on 24 August it was fast becoming the most protected target in the Reich, and soon would have more antiaircraft guns than Berlin - over 1,000 around Leipzig area oil plants. The 8th Air Force would visit

Merseberg more than 20 times, and for many crews it was a one way trip.

On that fateful August day, the 8th Air Force sent out 1319 bombers and 739 fighters over the Reich, with oil and aircraft industries being the primary targets. At the same time 600 bombers from the 15th Air Force came from Italy to hit oil refineries in Germany and Czechoslovakia. The 8th lost 26 bombers, and an additional 547 were damaged; 300 airmen didn't come home. Leading the 303rd that day (41 CBW-A group) was the 427th B-17#42-97691 (Capt. Bob Sheets' crew aboard). The weather was good, and by all accounts the mission was a success with numerous hits on the target. Flak was very heavy and accurate, with 22 aircraft suffering damage in addition to the two lost.

When the 303rd headed for Merseberg on 24 August, the 359th was on a run of 65 missions without a loss - nearly three months. Within minutes, two 359th B-17s would be lost on this day. The two B-17s were lost on the bomb run, with bomb bay doors open. One of them was "Myasis Dragon," with the Lt. Hillary crew aboard. Gene Girman was the radio operator on the Hillary crew. Gene and ball turret gunner Reid Bishop were the only two survivors from the Hillary crew, and both would be prisoners of war until the end of the war.

The other B-17 (no name) with Lt. Aldridge's crew aboard, flying on the right wing of "Myasis Dragon," went down from a flak hit at almost the same moment as "Myasis Dragon." An interesting note from this mission: Gene (and a few others in the formation) earlier noticed an unmarked B-17 near the back of the formation. Was this a German-manned aircraft providing the information on the formation to the air defense forces below? In his letter in the August 1997 Newsletter, Lt. Charles W. Ziesche, bombardier on Miss Lace, tells of seeing this B-17, and the tail gunner saw the aircraft peel off as the formation approached the IP.

"Myasis Dragon" was brought down by a direct hit. The first of the salvo of three shells took out the #3 engine. As the second exploded un-

der the radio room, Gene loosened his flak vest and clipped on one of his parachute rings. The third came right into the bomb bay, exploding between the two bomb racks. The B-17 immediately became an inferno, and Gene remembers seeing the aircraft melting before his eyes. Within seconds "Myasis Dragon" disintegrated in a large explosion which showered several other aircraft in the formation with debris. One piece of the falling wreckage included the ball turret with Reid-Bishop inside, and Gene, unconscious, his foot caught in the runner of the ball turret gunners hatch, trapping Bishop inside. Soon, however, Gene fell free, and Bishop was able to open his hatch, grab his parachute, connect it and free himself from the wreckage. Gene remained unconscious as he hit the denser air, and he remembers seeing Bishop's chute opening at almost the same time as his, maybe 1500 feet above ground.

The bodies from "Myasis Dragon" came down over a 17 kilometer wide area; the plane came down 5 kilometers northeast of Berglebenau, 5 KM from Merseberg. When the Germans were looking for Gene's crew, they came across an airman shot down a month earlier, and shot him.

In Berglebenau we ran across a gentleman who remembered a B-17 crashing in his area during WW II. His father took him out to the site where the plane crashed. He insisted on taking a picture with Gene.

The spot where Gene and Reid Bishop (whom Gene didn't see again until they met at Camp Lucky Strike after they were liberated) came to earth was Torgau, more than 30 miles east of Leipzig. This town is famous because it is where the Soviet and U.S. forces met on a bridge over the Elbe River, finally linking the Eastern and Western fronts in May 1945 and signaling the end of the Third Reich. Gene came to earth within site of the bridge, although Gene doesn't remember seeing it or the river. He also came down within sight of the camp (Stalag IV D) where he spent his first night in captivity, only a few hundred yards over open fields east of the same bridge. As Gene floated to earth he could see the camp not



**ALLIES** - Gene Girman, Brian and Dina McGuire and Albert Postma wartime member of the Dutch Underground at Antwerp, Holland. This was the first stop on the trip.

far away. About a half-hour after Gene landed, he was spotted by a 10 year old boy who went to get help. He brought a man with a rifle, who approached Gene and asked him if he had a gun. Gene shook his head no. The man helped Gene up the road, where Gene could see people coming out of an air raid shelter near a camp even though bombs were still exploding. The man sent the young boy into town to get the police, and when they came on bicycles the police formed a protective wedge around Gene fearing that the populace would try to kill him. Gene was taken into the restaurant at the camp where the field workers ate. The people at the restaurant at Stalag IV D treated Gene well.

Both French and English were spoken at the camp. An Englishman came up to Gene and offered to send a letter to Gene's parents. His name was Desmond Wiggett. (When the Provost Marshal intercepted the letter he wanted Gene's mother to tell him who Wiggett was. Of course, she didn't know.

His captors put him in a dungeon-type room for the night, for which they apologized. It had steel doors and no window. There was a burlap bag on the floor to use as a bed. They brought Gene a big bowl of potatoes, meat and gravy which he looked at but didn't eat. Due to the pain of his injuries, Girman leaned against the wall of the cell all night, and did not lay down to sleep. Early in the morning the man who ran the restaurant came back and got him and took him once again to the restaurant, where he was given hard rolls and a big glass of beer for breakfast. The restaurateur and his wife then put Gene in the back of their VW and drove him to the train

station where a couple of guards were waiting. He was put between rail cars so he wouldn't have to sit with passengers. After a 15-20 minute trip, the train arrived in Leipzig.

The road to Torgau was not near as good as the one to Merseberg. Torgau is a picturesque town on the west bank of the Elbe River. We had no luck when we asked where the WW II prisoner of war camp was. We went to the police station, where we were told that a former fortress across the Elbe east of Torgau was the site of a work camp during WW II. Since it was our only lead we drove over the bridge which replaced the one where the American and Soviet soldiers met. Finally we met a man who spoke English

wire, and had very little capability to treat the wounded prisoners. It had a large room where the prisoner patients stayed, and a hallway with smaller rooms. One of these rooms was used for minor operations by the only doctor, a Polish prisoner. Oddly enough, the Lazarette had both Italian prisoners and guards. There were also some Russian prisoners, and 3 or 4 British or American prisoners.

Girman was suffering from several wounds, the most serious a flak wound in his right arm which kept him from bending his elbow properly. At Leipzig the doctor applied an ointment which looked like tar, and bandaged the arm. Gene didn't have too much confidence in the doctor.

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## From Leipzig Girman and several other prisoners were moved by bus to Dulag Luft in Oberusal, a town 13 kilometers northwest of Frankfurt Am Main.

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and owned the complex where the camp was in WW II. He took us to the site of the building where Gene was brought the night he was shot down. Gene also recognized some underground bunkers from which he had noticed people emerging when he was brought into camp 54 years ago.

The train from Torgau brought Gene to Leipzig. Gene spent from a few weeks to a month at the Lazarette (hospital) IV C on the west side of Leipzig. The Lazarette was a former chocolate factory. It was a single frame one-story wooden building surrounded by barbed-

We entered west Leipzig having no idea where the Lazarette was. The Lazarette was on Piddlerstrasse and as luck would have it we found the street but it now housed some new buildings and we figured the hospital building was one of those. However as we left Piddlerstrasse we saw a derelict building in an overgrown field that Gene said looked just like the hospital building. We stopped and got through a fence and into the building, and Gene remembered the layout. He was sure this was the building.

From Leipzig Girman and several other prisoners were moved by bus to Dulag Luft in Oberusal, a town 13 kilometers northwest of Frankfurt Am Main. The bus was powered by a wood burning unit on the side of the bus. Occasionally the driver would get out and throw more wood in it. In moving through the city, the prisoners could see a desolate city, with the destruction appearing total. The Allied bombing of the city had reduced it to rubble. Dulag is a concentration of durchgangslager, or "entrance camp." It consisted of an interrogation center in Oberusal, a transit camp in Wetzlar, and a Lazarette at Hohenmark near Oberusal. Prisoners normally spent less than two weeks at the center before being moved to a prisoner camp.

Gene spent his initial time at Oberusal (about 10 days) in solitary confinement at the interrogation

center, which consisted of four large wooden barracks in a tavern off a main street across for the Kupforhammer trolley car stop, the third stop after Oberusal. (Description is from a Military Intelligence Service, War Department document, dated 1 Nov. 1945, but Gene remembers being in a large brick building). Gene's cell had a small window with bars, which he could not see out of. During his entire stay he had only one short session with an interrogator. He started to save crusts of bread to keep track of the days, but within a week he had eaten all the crusts. His daily diet was bread and weak tea, and his bed consisted of a burlap bag laid on the boards of his bed. Occasionally the guards would talk to him. After about 10 days Gene's arm became infected, and his elbow turned black. He was then transferred to Hohemark, a hospital one mile west of the interrogation center where he was being held, for treatment. Dulag Luft authorities requisitioned 65 beds at the hospital to treat wounded airmen brought to Dulag Luft. Few serious cases were treated here. Wounded prisoners were seldom here long, and if their convalescence threatened to be protracted they were sent to other hospitals before being sent to permanent camps. In Gene's words, compared to early accommodations Hohemark was a "nice place." There was minimum security and the food was good. Gene met Francis Gabreski at Hohemark. The ward where Gene was kept was attended by Scotch prisoner doctors. Since they wore kilts, they were often the target of prisoner barbs. At the hospital the Red Cross gave prisoners little blue books. Gene was able to hold on to two, he was given, and in one wrote poems and in the other the names and addresses of prisoners he knew. Gene retains these books to this day. After the infection cleared up, Gene was moved to Meiningen.

Gene, still with a badly injured arm although the infection was in check, was moved along with several other prisoners on a freight train from Oberusal east to Lazarette IX C in Meiningen. The prisoners were crowded in the freight car, and were not let out for the duration of the trip, which took several days. In the same car as Gene was the airman who survived the plunge to earth in the tail section of a B-17 after the aircraft was cut in two. He was suffering from lower body injuries, and laid stomach down over a barrel in severe



Gene returns to Wiesbaden Air Base for the first time since 15 August 1944 when he was at 25,000 feet battling the Luftwaffe.

pain. He was not able to relieve himself, and one night when the train was stopped, a doctor was summoned from the local town to help the prisoner relieve himself. Gene stayed at the Meiningen hospital about a month and a half, at which time he was moved to Obermassfeld to treat his elbow.

From Oberusall we (Dina, Gene and I) went to Meiningen which is in the former East German state of Thuringia. We stayed the night at Eisenach a few hours away by road.

From Meiningen Gene was taken to an orthopedic hospital (with the same Lazarette IX C designation) in Obermassfeld, just nine kilometers south of Meiningen in farming country. The short trip was made by either bus or truck (Gene does not remember for sure), and he remembers crossing an old bridge into Obermassfeld right next to the Lazarette. The building was used by the Hitler Youth in the 1930s. It was run by British doctors who had been captured at Dunkirk, and later refused repatriation because they did not want to leave the wounded prisoners without medical help. In addition to the large 3-story building there were four one-story wood and tarpaper barracks which accommodated prisoner/patients. Prisoner strength apparently ranged from 200 to 500, nearly all British and American Airmen shot down over German-occupied Europe. Most patients had serious wounds. The only anesthetic they had was sodium pentothal. Gene's arm was operated on here and the flak taken out of the arm, although permanent nerve damage remained.

At Obermassfeld Gene ran across a friend of his from radio school. Half of his face had been shot away and the British doctors operated on him. After the war he was operated on in a clinic in

Cleveland, and they did an excellent job restoring his face. Gene and his friend, Emil Spencer, went to school together at Illinois University after the war. To demonstrate what a small world it is, a fraternity brother of Spencer's whom Gene never met, moved to Gene's home town and later met and married Gene's wife's best friend! Gene remained at Obermassfeld for about a month before being moved to a prisoner of war camp for "flieger," or flyers. Patients at Obermassfeld usually were moved on as soon as they began their convalescence.

It is a short trip from Meiningen south on Route 19 to Obermassfeld. We stopped a young couple walking a baby and asked them where the building was that the Hitler Youth had used during WW II and they pointed out a large building right across the river on the other side of the bridge. A German youth took us inside the building. Gene recognized the surroundings. From Obermassfeld we took a more easterly road north to Autobahn 4 to head east toward Merseburg.

Gene and several prisoners were moved by unheated boxcars from Obermassfeld to Stalag Luft IV near Gros Tychow in Pomerania, Poland, a trip of five or six days. At a few stops along the way, the prisoners were fed by Red Cross personnel. It was late in the year and very cold. The large camp (capacity 6400) was set up for American non-commissioned flieger prisoners in mid-1944 but had some British flyers as well.

The camp had four rectangular compounds, A through D. Gene was in compound B, in either Barracks 5 room 4 or Barracks 4 room 5. The rooms were made to accommodate 16, but the prisoners were kept 24 to a room. The first

16 in a room would get one of the 16 wood bunks, and all 24 had only a burlap mattress with straw filling. Gene slept on the floor all the while he was there. Each room had a wood burning stove, but the prisoners were usually issued only two bricks per room per day. Therefore, the rafters in each barracks slowly disappeared. The prisoners left just enough to keep the roof from falling in.

At Christmas the camp guards received a treat, a big bowl of cabbage and a beer, which was more than the prisoners got. The POWs would spend their days playing cards or walking "circuits." Luft IV had a well, so the prisoners were able to bathe. Prisoners were often afraid to take off their shoes for fear someone would steal them. Gene had one pair of shoes and socks. Many prisoners had been transferred from Stalag Luft VI in Lithuania ahead of the advancing Soviets, crossing the Baltic in the hold of a coal barge and then force marched to Luft IV. They made the forced march in shackles, and were frequently attacked by the guards with bayonets or the guard dogs. Many of these airmen were suffering from wounds inflicted during the march. The prisoners of Stalag Luft IV knew they would also be forced to walk "one of these days," so spent their time preparing by walking "circuits," which was once around the compound. Many did this every day. A common refrain would be "let's get out and do 10 circuits." By early February the Soviets were closing in, and the prisoners were evacuated.

Prisoners were sent in different directions. Some prisoners were taken north along the Elbe. These prisoners were liberated earlier, by the Russians. Gene was in the group that was taken south in box cars. The prisoners, many with wounds, were loaded in the freight cars and waited. There were 54 prisoners to a car, and the train sat in the station for 2 to 3 days. There was straw on the floor, but there was not enough room for everyone to lie down, and it was very cold. There was no heat and no light. The only sanitation was one little green bucket in each car. Once they were underway, the train stopped once at a station, and the cars were opened to reveal civilians waiting on the platform. The guards herded the prisoners on one side of the car, then counted them off, six at a time and threw in a loaf of bread and a can of horsemeat. This was apparently for the benefit of the civilians, to

show that the prisoners were being well treated.

Stalag Luft IV was the only site where Gene was incarcerated that we did not visit, as Poland was just too far for us to drive.

After 11 nights of travel, the train from Pomerania arrived at Nurnberg at night, and the prisoners remained on board until the next morning. As they were unloaded, many prisoners passed out. The prisoners were all taken to Stalag Luft XIII D in the Langwasser area east of Nurnberg. That night the RAF bombed the same rail yard where the train full of prisoners sat the night before. Just before the bombing, an RAF advance aircraft outlined the POW camp with white flares so the bombers could avoid it.

There were air raids every night, and the prisoners could see the formations of bombers. The Germans had three air defense zones, with different types of air raid sirens indicating which zones approaching aircraft were in. There were planes flying through the zones or bombing nearby every night, so there was not much sleeping done in camp.

Conditions at Langwasser were crowded. Gene slept on a table in a large room without real bunks. Prisoners used the customary straw-filled burlap sacks for mattresses, and lice and bedbugs were common.

Gene stayed at Luft XIII D about a month and a half. The U.S. Army had reached the Wurzburg area about the time he arrived in Langwasser, so it wasn't too much later the prisoners had to be moved to stay ahead of the advancing forces.

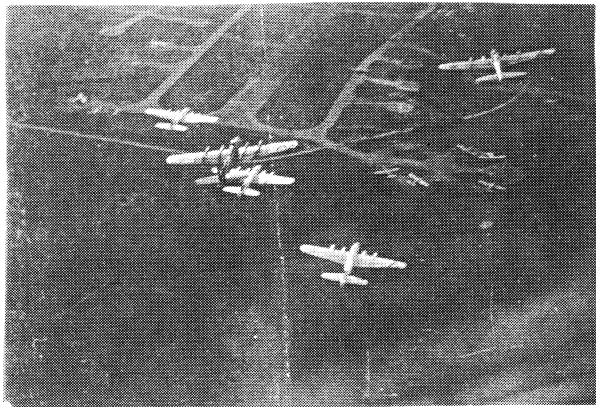
Our trip to Nurnberg was from Torgau, as the sequence of our trip was by geography, not by the chronology of Gene's voyage 54 years ago. Torgau was the easternmost point of our trip and it was from there that we headed south to retrace Gene's last stops during his captivity in 1945. We drove back to Leipzig and then went south to Eisenach. Back on the various autobahns to Nurnberg we tried to retrace Gene's forced march to Mooseberg.

The prisoners were forced to walk from Nurnberg to stay ahead of the advancing American forces. The large group of prisoners set out southeast to Stalag VII A in Mooseberg. They were guarded by older German soldiers, apparently veterans of the Eastern Front, some in bad shape themselves.

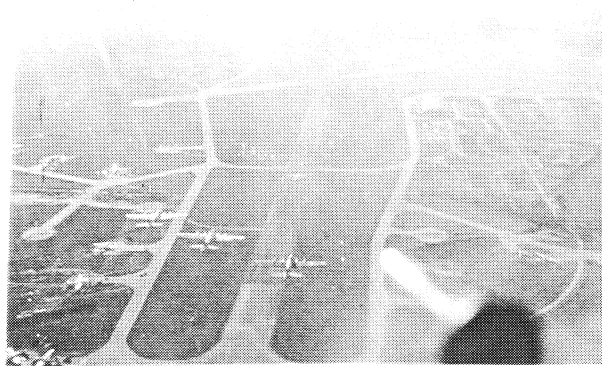
Shortly after leaving Luft XIII D  
(continued on page 16)



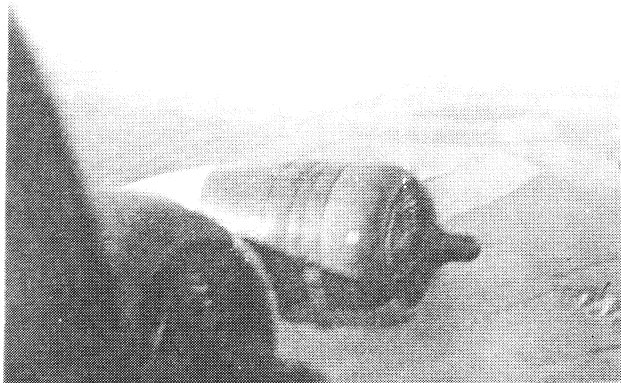
**MOOSBURG** - A Czech, formerly from Sudetenland and now living in Moosburg since WW II gave us a tour of the former camp site. This is a memorial put up by former French prisoners after the war.



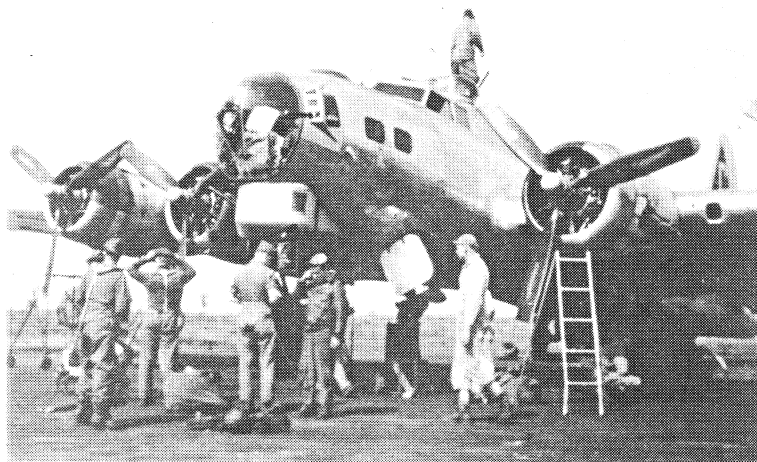
— RETURNING FROM MISSION —



— MAIN RUNWAY —



— ENGLAND —



— BACK FROM BERLIN —



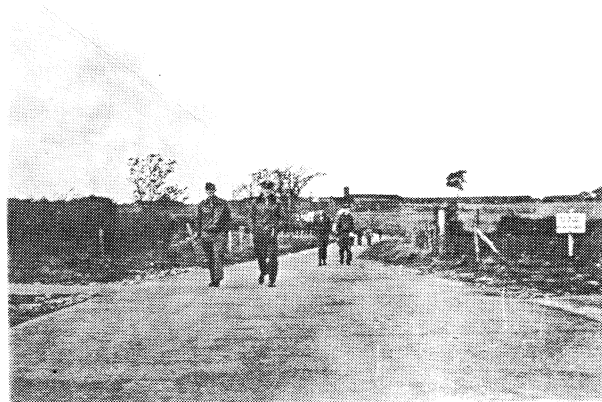
— LT. HALLUM —



— DAY OFF —



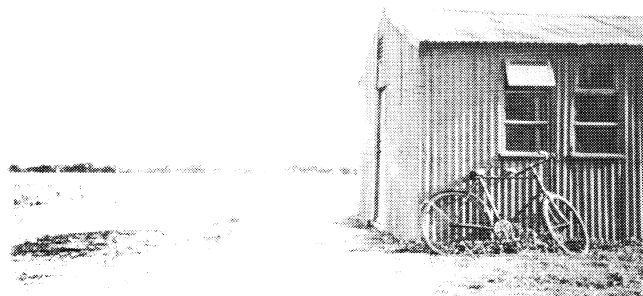
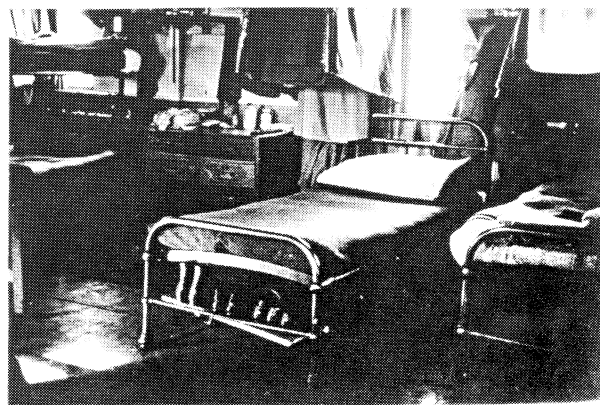
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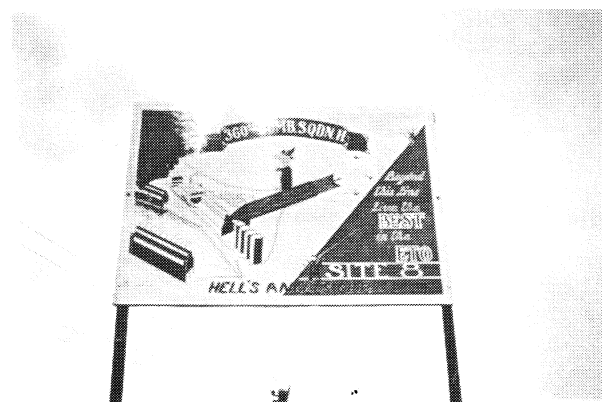
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# The Last Mission

By Raymond E. Hills

A flashlight shines in my face and a voice says, "You're flying today!" For security reasons air crews do not know of a mission until the day of the mission. The date is Wednesday, 25 April 1945. I am a tail gunner on B-17s of the 359th Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group, 8th Air Force, based at RAF Molesworth which I've never been able to find on a map.

I with other crew members, repair to the "ablution" to shave, etc. The ablution is separate from our Quonset Hut living quarters. Next we go to the mess hall where, because we are flying a mission today, we have real eggs and milk rather than the powdered type, which is our regular fare.

We then go to mission briefing where we are briefed on anticipated weather, fighter escort, expected anti-aircraft activity and the target. The target today is the Skoda Armament Works with the MPI power station as the secondary target at Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. Our aircraft today will be L-608, the same Fortress we had in our previous mission over Dresden, Germany. We will be in the No. 8 position in the lead squadron. We will be carrying ten 500 lb bombs. At the end of the briefing, those who wish, receive the blessings of the chaplain of their faith. In my Quonset Hut, among those who are sweating out their last few missions before going back to the States, there are a lot of believers. The sometimes empty bunks after a mission is not lost on them.

We check out our personal equipment; leather flying helmet with head sets, throat mike, oxygen mask, goggles, sun glasses, heated suit and shoes (it will be about minus 30 degrees at our bombing altitude of 22,000 feet), steel helmet, sheepskin lined jacket, nylon lined gloves, Flak vest, parachute, Mae West and inflatable dinghy. I also take a flak mat to put under me in

my position. We wear a flak suit and carry a holstered 45 cal. side arm in the event we are shot down. The German civilians are getting pretty testy with all the bombing and are attacking our chutists with such as pitchforks and scythes. A truck takes us to the Armament shack where we pick up our 50 cal. machine guns and ammo. We proceed to our plane, inspect our areas, install our guns and position but not load our ammo.

The ground crews have our plane ready. The plane is fueled and the bombs are in the Bombay and we wait in our positions for the signal to start engines. After starting and checking our engines we are cleared to proceed to the end of the runway to await take-off instruction. When the order comes we lumber down the runway. It is 5:30 a.m. In the tail I feel the gentle "fish tailing" of the plane as the pilot has to maintain directional control with brakes until there is sufficient aerodynamic pressure on the control surfaces. When airborne I signal our position with a six inch (diameter) colored light. The signal also identifies the formation to which our plane belongs.

We assemble at our assigned "buncher" and start climbing out over the English Channel. When we reach 10,000 feet we put on our oxygen masks and every 15 minutes thereafter, the pilot if at all possible, calls for an oxygen check from each position to ascertain that all is well. When we are out over the Channel each gunner loads and test-fires his guns to be sure they are operational. We learned in training to repair our guns, gloved and blindfolded. At altitude ungloved fingers will freeze to a gun. A burning oil tanker which we had seen on our last mission was still burning in the Channel.

As we cross over to the main-

land, I increase my search for enemy activity. There is none until we cross into Axis controlled territory where we encounter intense and accurate anti-aircraft fire (flak). When flak is close it makes a sound not unlike that of water hitting up under fenders of a car when striking a puddle. A thick blanket of flak is creeping up on us from behind. Tail gunner to pilot. "Go ahead tail." A thick blanket of flak is approaching from behind. "There is nothing we can do about it, out." A few seconds later our formation swerved sharply to the right postponing possible major damage.

After we reach the I.P. the control of the formation is turned over to the lead bombardier for the bombing run which usually lasts a few minutes during which time the bombardier keeps his eyes, literally, on his Norden Bombsight. No evasive action is taken until the bombardier says, "Bombs Away! Let's get the Hell out of here." Before we start our bomb run the pins have been removed from the bombs. With the pins in, the bombs are pretty safe. The Bombay doors are opened and we proceed on our bomb run.

Our plane did not get a chance to drop our bombs right now. We get a direct hit on our No. 3 (right side in-borne) engine; by some chance it did not explode but knocked us about 500 feet above our formation and then into a steep spiral down through our formation. Our pilot "Scotty" Scott, pulled us out of the spiral and we tagged onto the formation of the 427th Squadron of our bomb group which had been behind us. With one engine gone we had to use extra power to keep up. We dropped our bombs on the target on this second bomb run.

When the bombs are dropped we feel the plane rise as it's 2 1/2 tons lighter.

All of the 303rd planes received battle damage, 15 received major damage. I had seen one B-17 go down in a spin with three chutes opening. I also saw the debris of a disintegrated B-17. When we finally landed we counted 50 holes in our wings.

The returning formation was pretty ragged. We were not able to stay in formation because of the loss of our No. 3 engine. Fortunately for us, the German Air Force had been pretty much decimated. Although we have suffered damage we decide to try for England. We wonder if we made the right decision when we lose our No. 2 engine over the Channel. Because we suspect (and our suspicion was correct) that our hydraulic system had been shot out and are not sure that we can make it across the Channel. Every one of us who is not needed in flying the plane, assume the ditching positions. We sat with our backs to the Bombay bulkhead near the radio compartment with our hands clasped behind our heads, or backs against the ones behind us.

We make England and just before landing at the emergency landing field (Manson Field) we lose our No. 4 engine. We land wheels down with fire trucks and ambulances racing behind us. We are given the usual after mission shot of cognac. Our mission had lasted 9 1/2 hours. At 6:15 p.m., a B-17 from Molesworth picked us up, flew us home for debriefing and to bed.

# *My most unusual 303rd experience*

## **I almost missed WW II**

On the 1942 trip to England with the Air Echelon, I was the extra crew member assigned to Stpuse's aircraft. After taking off from Gander headed for Scotland, the flight became dull and I was looking for some place to stretch out. The tunnel from the forward access door (under the cockpit) to the cockpit was chosen and I was rearranging a large canvas engine cover taut and momentarily lost my balance. I reached back to catch it and put my hand on the forward access door for stability. The door was not latched and my hand and my ass were, all at once, hanging out in the slipstream, with my neck on one side of the door frame and my legs on the opposite side. I was able to get back inside and tried to close and latch the door by banging it shut in rapid attempts with the aircraft sprung in the flight position. The catch wouldn't catch. The cockpit heard my banging attempts and thought someone was shooting at us in the air. Immediately they took evasive action which startled the whole crew. I scurried up to the cockpit to tell Stouse that it was only me trying to get the door to latch and he stabilized the flight. I safety wired the door shut for the remainder of the trip to Preswick. Now I tell my friends how I almost missed WW II, by almost falling out of the B-17 on the way over.

**Bill Neff (359)**  
**Engineering Officer.**

## **Two in April**

On our mission to Marienburg on April 9, 1944 we had to get up at 1 a.m. Since it was Easter Sunday, everyone was expecting an easy mission but when we went to the briefing room we thought the maps on the wall looked kind of funny. They had added an extension to them which meant we weren't going on a short mission. Any way, the trip to Marienburg wasn't too bad. We experienced some light flak enroute but over the target the flak was kind of heavy. We didn't see any fighters on the way in. On the way back we ran into some heavy flak over Denmark and lost our wing man.. We were kind of straggling

and all of a sudden there were two FW-190s that came out of the sun. and we collected about 25 20 mm shells and probably more machine gun bullets than that. When we got back to interrogation they asked the pilot how many holes we had in the aircraft. He answered, "at least a thousand." They took the plane to the repair depot and we never got it back. The mission summary gives 11 hours and 30 minutes but we were in the air for 13 hours and 10 minutes. We were very fortunate to survive that one.

On the 18 of April 1944, our crew was on leave and I had lost all my money in a poker game so I didn't go with them. The 303rd was putting up a maximum effort (ME), so they came around and asked me to go which I did. I don't remember the name of the pilot or the crews names. We flew to the target at Oranienburg and everything was Ok. After we dropped the bombs, I looked into the bombay and there was still one hanging there. I called the pilot and he said to get in there and kick it out.

I never had the first bit of instruction on what to do if a bomb stuck on the rack. Anyway, I went into the bombay without a parachute, a 15 pound flak suit on with an oxygen bottle hooked to it. The bomb was on the right side of the fuselage on the outside. I put my arm around the bomb rack on the catwalk and stepped across to where the fuselage was butted together and got hold of the control cables and I couldn't get it loose. I went back and called the pilot and told him to close the bombay doors. Then I went back and put the pin back in the bomb fuse and made it safe in case it did get loose. Every time I think about hanging out there, over nothing but four miles of air, without a parachute, scares the Hell out of me.. And the pilot never even said thank you!

**John C. Hess (358)**  
**Radio Operator**

## **"We dropped the 1,000 lb bomb!"**

Molesworth: Winter of '43-'44.

The order for the next day's mission was two 1,000 lb bombs in

each of the B-17s scheduled for the mission. Capt. Bailes plane "FDR" on the pad adjacent to the 359th Squadron's office and living quarters was one of the planes scheduled to be loaded. Pitcher, Gilsdorf, and Smith of the 359th Sqdn. Ordinance Section were assigned to the loading of "FDR." It was a bitter cold winter night and the three of us were wearing heavy winter coats and gloves. Pitcher and Smith were on the catwalk in the bombay operating the lifting wench on the second 1,000lb bomb and had it up about 5 feet or halfway up and Gilsdorf was guiding the bomb in its sling, fully finned and fused as was the standard operating procedure. Gildorf's foot slipped from the step on the bombay door and fell that short distance to the ground, his coat catching the tail fin of the bomb and over-balancing it causing it to fall tail fin first to the ground and standing upright on Gildorf's coat tail. The fall completely crushed the tail fin and broke off the tail fuse right next to the bomb. There was only a crunching thud. After what seemed to be forever, in a state of shock, I came to my senses and together with Smitty we got out through the waist hatch and went to Gildorf's rescue by cutting his coat tail with my pocket knife. He was not injured and the three of us went for help.

The rescue team decided it was impossible to remove the bomb safely in any simple manner. The bomb, standing upright on its crushed tail fin, projected into the

bombay of the plane, preventing the removal of the plane. Should the bomb detonate, it would annihilate the plane and a large portion of the squadron's living quarters etc. A feasible option was to remove all four propellers of the plane, whereby a large crane lifted the tail of the plane high enough to roll the plane forward, clearing the bomb safely. The bomb was then very carefully slung and transported to a safe area and disarmed. No one was injured.

We were informed later that when the bomb crushed the tail fin and broke the tail fuse off, it also broke the long tail fuse firing pin and left a large burr on the firing pin which prevented it from detonating the bomb. That burr was truly a gift from God! It saved not only our three lives but perhaps many more as well.

**Maynard F. Pitcher (359)**  
**Aviation Ordinance Section**

## **"They painted 35 on the seat of our pants!"**

My worst mission was No. 4. We were shot up pretty badly, and our waist gunner R. Wislon caught a large piece of flak through his knee. Longest trip back. We ran out of morphine and he was in extreme pain. He did recover and was sent home. The crew morale was very low, we didn't see how we could complete 35 missions. Thankfully they weren't all that bad. Later a relatively low-level mission to a German Officers' Training Camp was almost enjoyable.



**IN FORMAL ATTIRE - Sgts. Bever, Wilson, Kasmerek, Rundus, Bran-non, Soule, Milliken, Ross and Burkett.**

## Experiences were varied and came in different packages.

A sight I'll never forget was having an Me-262 fly off our formation for a few seconds. Apparently everyone was spellbound by seeing this unusual but fascinating plane. Everyone realized finally and opened fire. He peeled off without further hesitation without major damage. We did have P-51s, little buddies, flying escort and considering the were outclassed speed wise, they could out turn the jets and downed several. What a sight. I think the mission was to Bremen.

We also lost our co-pilot, A. Kacus, while he was checking out for 1st pilot with another crew. He was killed in a mid-air collision on the mission to Leipzig, April 6, 1945. Our tail-gunner was trained for radar-jamming and was in another plane that took a direct hit by flak and blew up. He later turned up as a POW without really knowing how and why.

The most unusual experience was the day we actually completed our 35 and had that number painted in red on the seats of our flying suits.

**Kenneth R. Auer (360)**  
**Flight Engineer**

### Tail end "Charlie" over Merseburg - "That's all brother!"

It was 4:30 a.m. on a typical mid-morning in November in England in 1944. The men were filing out of the mess hall on the way to the briefing room.

The briefing was normal in all aspects, but the navigator raised an eyebrow at one point, when the briefing officer was discussing the type of enemy resistance that would be encountered. He said the Luftwaffe was decimated and were loading its fighters, therefore the formation would only see them on the return leg and then only in small numbers, even though this was a deep penetration.

On the way to the flight line, there were some catcalls and greetings between the airmen and supply people, mostly insinuations about the milk run, or perhaps about dividing the loot left behind should someone's luck run out. Our crew had been assigned an unusual position on this mission. We were to be "Tail End Charlie." Our plane would lead the last three B-17s, but would be the last in the formation to go over the target. On our left wing was a crew going on their first mission. Matter of fact, our crew only checked them out the day before.

They were kind of green but eager.

Finally aboard, check list completed, we were off. I took one last look at the base as we ascended to flight altitude, somewhere around 32,000 feet. Most of our crew were flying their last few of the required 35 missions, then it was back to the USA for them. I had just recently joined the crew, having been grounded for medical reasons, so I had several more missions to make before I could make the trip back home.

About an hour or so later, somewhere over Germany, we encountered some strong air turbulence. The plane on our left wing was jerking around. Suddenly their right wing tips us and we go into a spin. Our plane is losing altitude quickly. Over the intercom we can hear the pilot and co-pilot muttering feverishly, calling on all their experiences to pull us out. Finally, after an almost endless few minutes, the plane pulls out and is flying level.

I look around the sky, there is nothing there. The rest of the formation is long gone. The pilot requests a heading from the navigator--me. I had been following the leader so I did a little back tracking and announced to the pilot to take a heading of 350 degrees. The immediate reaction from the crew over the intercom was, "we're going to Sweden." No, I was just trying to avoid flak areas around Hamburg, I inform them.

Some short time later, the tail gunner announces, "German fighters sighted." The best he can do is estimate about five or six fighters. The pilot had reached normal flight altitude, the airmen got ready at their guns. We are flying without a bombardier, but we have an experienced "togglie" aboard.

Well here they come...each of our guns were in position, manned by very well trained gunners. I tried firing a few rounds with a gun but having limited visibility, decide if we get out of this, we'd better know where to go, and proceed to do some more navigation configurations. But I was also monitoring the gunners. I watch the first few fighters coming in from one o'clock. Our togglie is magnificent; as stingy with his burst as a Scotsman. I can't see any hits, but we are sure giving a good account of ourselves; if we're not hurting them, we're scaring them pretty good.

I thought back to our training missions, often wondered it all that practice had any importance. "If



Road sign pointing the way to the target. In '44 we could tell the way be following the flak.

you going to get it, what difference does it make?" Well, we finally got it, and it did make a difference.

They shot us up pretty good! I was hit on the left side of my face by shrapnel, as well as in my arm and legs. From the amount of blood and the lack of feeling in the right side of my face, I imagined that half my face was gone and wondered, "who wants to go on with half a face?"

The pilot orders us to abandon ship. The togglie is not moving, I think to myself that maybe he expects the navigator to jump first. Well, I'll go, but I intended to pull the chute's rip cord immediately, just in case I blacked out from my wounds.

It seemed like I was the first to go. I pulled the rip cord as soon as I jumped and my chute opened at approximately 30,000 feet. Fighter planes were circling around me, I could see the fighter pilots' faces clearly. They don't strafe us. Now the others are coming, almost all free falling - it seemed like forever before I saw their chutes open.

I am met on the ground by a group of armed civilians. They take me to a barn and begin discussing whether to hang me or not. Understanding a little German, I realize that one of the men is arguing not to hang me as his son was a POW of the Americans and he wanted his son kept safe. About an hour or so later, before they came to a decision, I was picked up by the German military. Most of our crew were taken, three of us were wounded, but our tail gunner most seriously with head wounds. We were marched through the streets of Hamburg, where civilians hurled insults, and some harder stuff at us. We were taken to Frankfurt for inter-

rogation. I was kept in solitary confinement and several times questioned by the officer in charge. Not only did they know my name and rank but they also knew where I was born, what schools I went to and just about every aspect of my life. The felt that since we were a single plane without a bombardier, that we were on a special mission, which was why we were not strafed in the air after bailing out. When they realized that this was not the case, we were transferred to Stalag #1, where I spent the rest of my internment until we were freed by the Russians. The most unusual experience was liberation by the Russian forward troops and then the regular troops. It was a very interesting difference and noteworthy revelation to an American soldier.

I never saw my crew again.

**Harold Scheer (359)**  
**Navigator**

*Ed. Note. An interesting sidebar to this mission and the reason for a togglie flying in the bombardier position was that the regular bombardier Lt. John C. Rhyne was killed on the 24 August 1944 mission to Merseburg. Also "Might in Flight" does not show a togglie as flying with Lt. Virag's crew on the November 21st mission. My question is, "Who was the togglie and what happened to him? What does the mission report say?*

*The other "Truth is stranger than fiction" fact about this mission was that the Air Commander for the 303rd's efforts was Capt. W.C. Heller of the 359th. One of the casualties on the mission was a B-17 named "Heller's Angels."*

*On the final mission of their operational tour, Lt. Virag's crew found Merseburg to be its nemesis.*

# *The unexpected experiences are the ones that you relive*

and

Today, a copy of a story which appeared in a Florida newspaper by Vera Fitz-Gerald was forwarded to me by J.E. Jeter, Jr who was the engineer on the 21 Nov. '44 mission. Here it is:

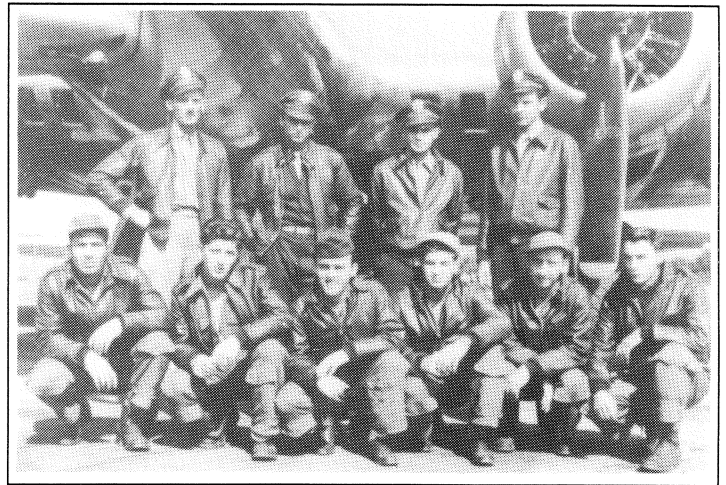
Stanley Gurka of 92nd Avenue N was living in Detroit, Michigan in the spring of 1943 when he was drafted into the Air Force which was the start of a very long one and a half years. After basic and specialized training in several different States, the group left for Molesworth, England where the 359th Squadron was stationed as part of the 303rd Bomb Group.

The 359th crew flew out of Molesworth and had several close calls. On their seventh mission, their lead plane got hit by flak and blew up and the assistant lead plane caught on fire from a hit and went down. Stan's plane, called "Special Delivery," limped back to base at Molesworth. Their Bombardier was dead and the plane was so badly damaged, it was junked. They flew other planes in the group until they finally got a new one. On the 32nd mission flying near Hanover, Germany, their plane was hit by fighter aircraft and crew was forced to bail out. One crew member, T/Sgt. J.E. Jeter, Jr. lost part of a leg but all survived the crash. The tail gunner had shrapnel in his head and the navigator took shrapnel in his face and legs. Later Stan learned that the member of the crew who had lost part of his leg was shot twice more by civilians while on the ground but he survived to tell his story.

On the ground the crew were caught by civilians and taken to a village where they were picked up by German soldiers. In the morning they were marched out and stood outside a mess hall where the Germans ate while the prisoners waited. No rations for them. They were marched down the middle of the

street to a railway station. The street was lined with civilians on both sides who spat on them, hit the poor tail gunner on his bandaged head and shouted, Luft gangsters." At the Railway station the guards stood apart from them fearing the civilians would shoot at them. They took a train to an airbase where they were interrogated one by one. Stan asked the guard if they didn't feed prisoners in Germany. This resulted in getting them their first food since leaving England on their mission. Then they were shipped by rail to an interrogation center in Frankfurt "where they really gave it to us," Stan said. They were there for four or five days during which they learned three things from Stanley Gurka; his name, rank and serial number.

From Frankfurt they went to Wetslar where they were shipped off to different prison camps. Stan went to Stalag Luft IV in Grostychow, Germany near the Polish border. By now it was November 1944. In February 1945, the Russians started coming up from Poland so the prisoners were marched out towards the Baltic Sea. They were ferried out via an island and then marched on to Rostock. They were forced marched around Germany for about 500 miles, being driven into barns at night to sleep and fed little except a potato or two at night from the farmers and a slice of bread during the day. Stan and two other prisoners escaped but were caught four days later. They were taken to a village jail overnight and in the morning a German guard came for them but first he beat them up badly. They were then put on a railway car to Berlin where they rode a streetcar with their guards to another railway station and finally ended up in Luckenwalde in Stalag III A. On April 21st, 1945 they were liberated by the Russians but were alarmed when they learned a few days later that



Lt. Virag's crew on Nov. 21, 1944 was composed of Lts Virag (P); Beck (CP) Scheer (N); and Sgts. Cottrell (Tog); Jeter, Jr. (E); Vrabel (RO); Gurka, Jr. (BT); Allerton (WG) and Bowman (TG).

the Russians planned to ship them to Odessa and send them home by ship. They wanted no part in being shipped off by the Russians so Stan and others "borrowed" some bicycles and made it to the Americans about 50 miles from Luckenwalde. He said they finally had a decent meal. By now it was May 1945. The Americans took them to LeHarve where they boarded a ship back to the USA. Stan ended up in Miami in a convalescent hospital where he stayed until August. In November of 1945 he was discharged in Miami and headed back to civvie life in Detroit.

## **"A test of courage"**

When I returned to the States in June of 1945, I would not talk to anyone about my overseas experiences. Working with people in the Military and civilian life, they never knew I had been a Prisoner of War in Germany. My family and I were transferred to England in December 1955, for a three year tour of duty. I refused to visit Molesworth, the home of "Hell's Angels. and to this day I do not know what made.

I remember a little about Dyersburg, Tennessee, where I took my B-17 training and going overseas in a troop ship without an escort. Do not remember much about Molesworth or the 303rd.

On our 11th mission (our ninth that month) to Wiesbaden, Germany on August 15, 1944, after dropping our bombs we were attacked by enemy aircraft and shot down. The painting "A Test of Courage" by Keith Ferris shows a Lt Klaus Bretschneider in his FW-190 shooting at aircraft B17G#446291, the aircraft I was flying in as Top Turret Gunner

The Tail Gunner and the Waist Gunner were killed in the aircraft. The rest of us bailed out. Our co-pilot, Lt. King, according to the Germans, died five days later. I do not know where or how. I don't remember seeing the plane going down. I landed in a field of rutabagas (never realized I could eat so many of them) and was met by an angry group of civilians charging at me with closed fists and sticks, after about 15 minutes of their confrontations (seemed like years) A Luft-



## document your experiences!

waife soldier rescued me. I spent the night in the local jail, there were other Americans there too. The next day they took us on a march that lasted for days, along the way we picked up more Americans, the group grew larger.

Four of us carried a wounded American Major, when bayonets were drawn to encourage us to run. After many, many days of marching and being packed into boxcars like sardines, without food or water, I arrived at Stalag Luft IV in September of 1944.

Life at Luft IV was not a pleasant one. Rooms were crowded, some of us had to sleep on the floor, insufficient heat, no bath room facilities inside. The thing missed the most was food. The small rations and the infrequent delivery of Red Cross packages, put us on a very lean diet. Our lives were interrupted with roll calls and searching of the barracks often. Time passed slowly; Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's, came and went. Gunfire from the Eastern Front could be heard, getting louder everyday. I believe it was the 6th of February, 1945 that we were forced to leave the camp (Luft IV). Before leaving each of us was given a Red Cross package. We were marched in all kinds of weather, frigid temperatures, rain etc., sleeping outside, or in barns, whatever shelter was available. We were vastly overcrowded in many of the barns. Days turned into weeks and weeks into months. Food was scarce and some days none at all. When we did get something to eat, it consisted of a cold boiled potato and maybe a slice of bread. Our main topic of discussion was food. One night while we were in a barn, some Polish workers gave us their rations

of potato soup and bread. The next morning they gave us their lunch rations. It was an act of kindness that will never be forgotten. Three of us tried to stay together; you had to if you wanted to survive. We kept looking out for each other. Everyone had diarrhea most of the time and it was impossible to contain one's self. Our bodies were dirty and covered with lice. Somewhere along the way, we traded a piece of soap for some peas. Weeks later, we found a lady at one of the farm house stays, who cooked our peas with a piece of meat. It was the most delicious meal we had in a long time. (I still remember it).

It was a sad day when we heard of President Roosevelt's death. But it was a happy day, about two weeks later, the 26th of April, 1945 when our death march ended at Halle, Germany when we were rescued by our American forces. I'll never forget that day.

When I was shot down on the 15th of August, 1944, my weight was about 155 pounds. On April 26, 1945, I weighed 100 pounds. We were given K&C rations, they tasted like Manna from Heaven, and we had plenty of them.

We were deloused, had hot showers, clean clothes, then off to Camp Lucky Strike for more delicious food, wonderful people, great entertainment, and rest and relaxation. I began to feel human again.

I arrived back in the States in June 1945, met a wonderful girl, who helped me get through a lot of bad times, we were married 29 October, 1945, raised five wonderful children, now have nine grandchildren. I retired from the Air Force August 1962 as Master Sergeant after 21 years of service.

**Martin M. Harbarger (358)**  
Flight Engineer

## "Hell's Angels Newsletter" Bonus

*Look for it in the August Issue...*

## GOING BACK

(continued from page 9)

the group saw three Me-109s pass by, followed by three P-47s. The Thunderbolts then bombed the road, and strafed it in both directions. The prisoners were under orders not to leave the road, but both prisoners and guards ran into the woods as the Thunderbolts began attacking the road. Apparently the pilots noticed the nature of the group, as following this incident a P-39 reconnaissance fighter circled them every day, keeping track of them. The weather was generally nice during the 11-day march. The group would stop to sleep in barns in small villages along the route. As the guards were as tired as the prisoners, occasionally a prisoner would carry a guard's rifle for him.

The prisoners at Langwasser knew they would be on a forced march, and Gene had sold most of the few clothes he had before leaving Nurnberg to get food. He kept his pants, undershirt, GI shoes, and a blanket. He also had a British jacket "about 10 sizes too big." One night on the March it was raining hard, so Gene and two other prisoners threw away their soaked blanket and informed a guard they were going into the next village and would meet up with them the next day which they did. They were hoping if they got there before the main group they could trade some of the soap from their Red Cross packages for bread eggs, on anything else that might be edible. The prisoners had lots of soap, as they

didn't wash very often, and the Germans usually didn't have any soap. The prisoners would dig for potatoes along the route. Some of the prisoners got to be very good at sniffing out potatoes.

Stalag VII was very crowded when the group that Gene was in arrived at Moosberg. His was one of the last groups to be brought to Moosberg. Already present were Russian, French, British, Yugoslavian and other American prisoners. Stalag VII A was a very large camp, and the final stopping point for the prisoners. At 1010 on 29 April tanks appeared over a hill, and one shell was fired into the camp, hitting the mail room. The camp was liberated. (Gene didn't mind the loss of the mail room, as he had not received one piece of mail since his arrival in Europe. He wasn't at Molesworth long enough for his mail to start.) Before the Americans arrived the "bad" guards had fled the camp. Gene remembers seeing members of the Hitler Youth, as young as 12, fighting the Americans as they approached.

From Moosberg the Americans were evacuated to France before returning to the U.S. Trucks took the prisoners from Moosberg to Landshut just to the east, where they were airlifted out. The Americans were the last to be evacuated. As all of the POWs had been shot down on their last flight, they were a bit uncertain about getting on another airplane without parachutes.



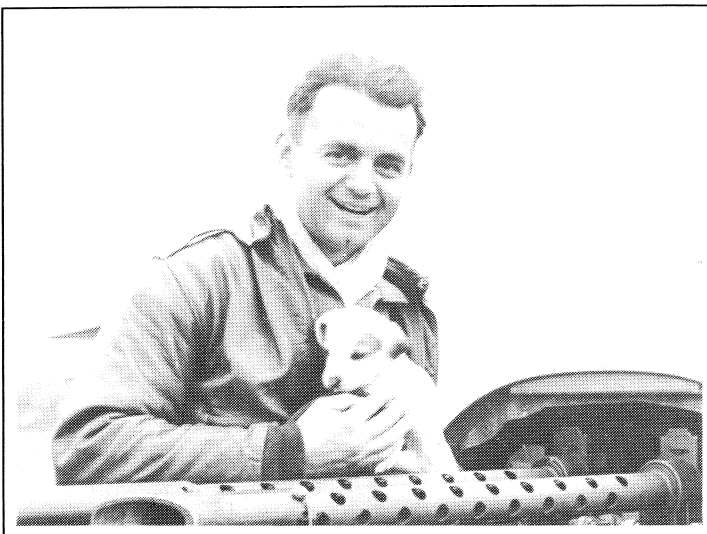
Behind the hospital at Obermassfeld. The lady (2nd from left) was formerly a "Hitler Madchen" (girl) is in charge of maintaining the building. Her son (1) was our tour guide

## A TALE OF WOE FROM LONG AGO

We were flying high that fateful day  
 The sky was an azure blue,  
 Everything seemed to be okay  
 As through the flak we flew.  
 All of a sudden, things went wrong  
 As flak burst under Engine No. 3.  
 No time to sing the "Air Corp Song"  
 Time to ask "Dear Lord please pity me."  
 We were on fire and trailing smoke  
 Couldn't hold our place in formation  
 I confess I began to choke,  
 Gone was the feeling of elation.  
 As the fire burned through the right wing root  
 Our pilot rang the "bailout bell."  
 It was time for us to hit the chute  
 before we were all burned to hell.  
 As I popped my chute and looked down  
 (Without any great anticipation)  
 I thought, "that's not friendly ground  
 That's the home of the German Nation."  
 My emergency oxygen had torn from my chute  
 As it brought me to a sudden stop.  
 I began to hear the Angel's flute..  
 I thought "I've bought the farm and crop."  
 But suddenly a voice from high above  
 (I couldn't mistake the source)  
 It was filled with God's great love  
 "From here on in, I'll chart your course."  
 I hit the ground like a fragile egg  
 My right leg grotesquely bent,  
 I knew for sure I'd broken my leg  
 (Surely this wasn't Heaven sent.)  
 After two years behind barbed wire  
 Cold, hungry days and sleepless nights,  
 In circumstances so very dire  
 I almost lost the will to fight.  
 We lost four good men that day,  
 Two in the air, two on the ground.  
 But with God's help I'm here to say,  
 He decided to keep me around  
 To live and fight another day.

Robert L. (Bob) Taylor  
 "Butch" bombardier, B-17F, Serial No. 42-29606  
 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association  
 San Antonio Chapter No. 1, American X-P.O.Ws.

"Dedicated to all the men who 'Hit the Silk' while defending this  
 Great Nation. Now it's time to kill the roots of drugs and discrimination."



Antoni Bednarchuk, T/Gunner with a little "flak."

## E-Mail Addresses of Members

James E. Aberdeen	Jaberdeen@waca.com
Kenneth D. Allen	Kallen@compuserv.com
Sue & Robin Beeby (Eng. Reps)	sbeeby@aol.com
Bill Burke	burkejb@erols.com
Donald Campen	IBSPEC@aol.com
Rich Christie	cusserv@mlode.com
William J. Dallas	wmjallas@aol.com
Al Dussliere	ald@derbytech.com
Keith Ferris (8th AF artist)	kferris303@aol.com
Ed Gardner (Computer D/B)	ewg303nav@aol.com
Gary A. Gaumer	ggaumer@neo.1run.com
Jeffrey Gilman	jgilman@erols.com
Harry Gobrecht (V/P & Hist)	Pilot8thaf@aol.com
Rober A. Hand	Bhandsr@aol.com
Warren L. Hedrick (Chaplain)	hedrick@grolen.com
Bill Heller (360 Rep)	KCTN57A@prodigy.com
B.D. Buddy Hight, Jr.,	Blue e1x@netcom.com(?)
Norman Jacobsen	sq359@aol.com
David E. Johnson	djon@the.grid.net
Dick R. Johnson (Secretary)	fortdriver@aol.com
Robert Kerr	Kerrb1468@aol.com
	Kerrb@juno.com
Thomas R. Keese	petekeese@aol.com
Bud & Mary Klint	(Past Pres) Theklints@aol.com
Walfred Korpi	GRNEIDIG@aol.com
Bill La Perch	afvet@aol.com
Serge Lebourg	SergeLEBOURG@compuserv.com
Trish Little	zsa7044@maia.OSCS.montana.edu
Jim Matthews	oseematt@aol.com
Cindy Mayes	1073@aol.com
Tom Mays	tmays@chickasaw.com
David L. Miller	millerffpg@earthblink.net
Ed Miller (Membership)	edmiller@pdi.net
Robert W. Miller	AUBNYY@aol.com
Gary L. Moncur (WebMaster)	glm@xmission.com
Morton M. Moon	MsargeM@aol.com
Brian McGuire (Molesworth)	jac@betac.com
Charles McPartlin	macpuzzl@west.net
Kenneth Nye	kfnye@aol.com
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Brian D. O'Neill	bdoneli@ibm.net
George & Dolly Parker	gfpcotty@aol.com
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Bill Roche (Treasurer)	dbroche@sunline.com
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Dave & Kate. Schaubert	KTIMM@vines.ColoState.com
Walter Schlecht	tomblitz@msn.com
Eric Schulstad	essla@ix.netcom.com
Richard G. Sharwood	RGSharwood@awol.com
Abbott Smith	ams303@aol.com
Dennis Smith	cretch@aol.com
Dennis & Marianne Smith	FITRON31@aol.com
Lawrence S. Smith	pixit@cybertours.com
Dick Smith (360 A/Rep)	spider@ivc.net
Steve Smith	handyman@totacc.com
Don Spruner	spruners@mlode.com
Ben Starr	benglo@earthblink.net
W.W. Stephen	w.w.stephen@pcsonline.com
Charles H. Stoner	cstoner@terraworld.net
Hal Susskind (President)	susskind@webtv.net
Charlie/Vickie Sykes (PX Admin)	csykes@goodnet.com
Kenneth Tashian	ken.tashian@ci.sf.ca.us
Earl Thomas	thebear@msn.com
Michael Charles Uher	JefferyMollusk@compuserve.com
Jim Walling	jimwall@ilhawaii.net
Michael A. Wegman	michaelwegman@sprintmail.com

## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

We continue to strive to keep every member of our 303rd Bomb Group Association as Active Members. We are reaching the point in time when many of our members will automatically become Life Members, as a result of reaching the age of 78. I would sincerely appreciate any of you that are going to become 78 this year, to drop me a note and tell me your birthdate, so I can change your record to Life Member.

However, we still have 34 of our Regular Members, whose records show that they are delinquent in their 1998 dues. I would suspect that a few of these members have reached the age of 78 and thereby, need to notify me. For the others, I would appreciate your prompt remittance of your 1998 dues.

In our Associate Member ranks, the situation is more critical. Here we find that there are 62 Associate Members who are delinquent. A recent mailing in March, has reduced this number from over 125. Yet 62, out of a total of 300 Associate Members, indicates that we may be forced to move some of them to the Inactive list, in the near future.

One of the problems with our Associate members is that many of these members were signed up by their father, or uncle, or brother, and they are probably unaware that they have to pay dues. If any of you regular members fall into that category, please see that your children, nephews, nieces, or grandchildren have paid their dues, or send a check to cover their dues.

Many of you may be interested in the statistics of our Membership function. Here are some numbers that will give you a feel for the size of our Association.

1298	Regular Member
179	Super Life Regular Members
864	Life Regular Members
258	Non-Life Regular Members
34	Delinquent Non-Life Regular Members
169	Prisoners of War
8	Evaders
9	Honorary Members
300	Regular Associate Members
5	Super Life Associate Members
64	Life Associate Members
231	Non-Life Associate Members
62	Delinquent Non-Life Associate Members
318	Active Widow Members
27	Members (both Regular and Associates) living overseas
35	Members with both a Winter & Summer address
619	Deceased Members (since records have been maintained)
3086	Total number of records on file

If there are questions relative to our Membership function, please drop me a note.

The listings that follow are as of 25 April 1998:

**Edgar C. "Ed" Miller**  
**422 S. Walnut Avenue**  
**Tempe, OK 73568-0219**  
**(580) 342-5119**  
**e-mail address: edmiller@pldi.net**

## NEW MEMBERS

A-475	Barbara I. Donnelly, 2923 S Wooddale Dr., Jackson, MI 49203-3759
A-478	Anthony Chiaravalliti, 7 Ridge Run, Pine Hill, NJ 08021-????
2043	Andrew R. Olds, (427) 569 S 640 West, Cedar City, UT 84720-3020, (801)586-4216
L2044	Maynard F. Pitcher (359) 883 Old Magnolia Dr., Conway, SC 29526-8253 (803)347-7250
2045	J. Stephen Proffitt, Jr., (359) 219 Sunset Drive, Richmond, VA 23229-7416 (804) 288-1478
2046	Aloysius I Sapak, (360) 6675 Mower Rd., Saginaw, MI 48601 9781 (517) 777-2959
A-489	David McClean, 18 Knockview Rd., Newtownabbey, BT36 6TT, Co. Antrim, N. Ireland (441) 232-844-826
A-493	Charles "Chuck" Zito, P.O. Box 415, Pelham, NY 10803-0415
A-491	Julian P. Bell, 2968 Golden Birch Lane, Longwood, FL 32750-3767 (407) 330-3840
A-494	Peter Carr, 45 Dovecote, Lakes Lane, Newport Pagnell, England MK16 8BB
L2047	Ernest A. Fisher, (427) 1741 Dalrymple Rd., Anderson, SC

## NEW MEMBERS

29621-4316 (864) 375-1150	
A-495	Jeanne M Horstick, 124 Valley Road, Lebanon, PA 17042-8978
A-496	William J. Werner, 984 Reber Street, Lebanon, PA 17042-6934
A-497	Kristy Park, 2791 C. Clarke Rd., Chewelah, WA 99109-9632
	Walt Mayer's Daughter
A-499	Amy Kirsch, E. 3201 Pine Needle Ave., Colbert, WA 99005-????
	Walt Mayer's Daughter
A-500	Lowell Smith, 931 Grand Ave., %Automotive Outlet, San Marcos, CA 92069-????
A-501	Robert J. Cullen, 1903 A Aviation Dr., Corona Airport, Corona, CA 91720-????
A-502	John W. "Jack" O'Hara, 1742 Queen Palm Dr., Apopka, FL 32712-2458 (407)884-7881
A-503	David C. Tressler, 5880 Fayette Road, New London, OH 44851-9442 (419)929-5102
2048	James E. Jeter, Jr., (359) 1115 Louisiana Ave., Minden, LA 71055-???? (504)377-0533
2049	Lawrence S. Smith, (358) P.O. Box 1136, Kennebunk, ME 04043-1136 (207) 985-6329
2050	Robert W. Hanson, (359) 2 Paseo San Pedro, Tucson, AZ 85710-2125 (520)298-1344
A-504	David D. Davis, 2735 25th St., Greeley, CO 80631-7623
A-505	Douglas, T. Sovern, 1420 S.W. 306th St., Federal Way, WA 98023-????
L2051	Louis E. Reed, (427) 3426 Freeman St., San Diego, CA 92106
L2052	Wayne L. Trant, (359) P.O. Box 1243, Aransas Pass, TX 78335-1243 (512) 758-2416
A-506	David B. Bass, PSC#46, Box955, APO AE 09469
A-507	John A. Eisenhart, 1734 72nd Ave., NE, Saint Petersburg, FL 33702-4712
2053	Brook H. "Hap" Lovell, (360) 44489 Laurel Ave., Hemet, CA 92544-9139 (909) 927-1229
A-508	David A. Wilcott, 1562 Thumb Butte Road, Prescott, AZ 86301-7501
A-509	Arthur J. Huenecke, 109 Mount Street, Willow Springs, IL 60480-1433
L2054	Isadore Gepner, 833 Central Ave., Apt 5B, Far Rockaway, NY 11681-4607
SLA-510	Joseph Vieira, Jr., 17 Garden Drive, Riverside, RI 02915-3006
SLA-511	Antone Vieira, 607 Dromedary Court, Poinciana, FL 34759-4205 (941)427-0848
SLA-512	Emma V. Amaral, 42 Manning Drive, Riverside, RI 02915-3006
A-513	Michael A. Wegman, 7320 Lansdowne Ave., St Louis, MO 63119 2834 (314)647-0467

## NEW SUPER LIFE MEMBERS

SLA-512	Emma V. Amaral
SL1422	George H. Counts, Jr. (359)
SL887	William J. Dallas (427)
SL671	J. Wayne Fredericks (360)
SLA-511	Antone Vieira
SLA-510	John Vieira, Jr.,
SL1904	William P. Zachar, SR (359)

## LIFE MEMBERS

LA-46	William D. Cox	L2039	Sam Masington (444)
LA-507	John E. Eisenhart	L1662	Mark L. McDermott (427)
L2047	Ernest A. Fischer (427)	L1830	James D. Mickle (359)
L1996	Richard T. Fogarty (427)	L1836	John J. Mulqueen (360)
L2054	Isadore Gepner (427)	LA-381	Kenneth F. Nye
L1817	Edward L. Grisworld (359)	L1883	John J. O'Donnell (358)
L1824	Joseph C. Haider (358)	L2044	Maynard F. Pitcher (359)
LA-449	John D. Hall IV	L1657	Anthony J. Sacco (359)
L621	Robert B. Heilliger (360)	L1330	Willard W. Stephen (359)
L452	Guy A. Lance (360)	L2012	Leon H. Slauson (427)
L1220	Burthor R. Larson (1114)	L2052	Wayne L. Trant (359)
L1152	Richard A. Lund (360)		

## DONATIONS/MEMORIALS

SLA-512 Emma V. Amaral, Memorial to 303rd BGA.  
 1470 John H. Bowman (359) Memorial to 303rd BGA.  
 SL1422 George H. Counts, Jr.(359) Memorial to Ralph L. Smith  
 SL887 William J. Dallas (427) Memorial to 303rd BGA.  
 SL671 J.Wayne Fredericks (360) Memorial to 303rd BGA.  
 A-286 Jeffrey A. Gilman, Memorial to 303rd BGA.  
 A-414 Stephen L. Haley, Memorial to 303rd BGA.  
 1124 Robert J. Hannan (360) Memorial to 303rd BGA.  
 L621 Robert B. Heiliger, (360) Memorial to Carlton M. Smith  
 A-277 Peter G. Horner, Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 A-488 Edward Johnson, Memorial to 303rd BGA.  
 L1123 Walter n. Jones, (359) Memorial to 303rd BGA.  
 SL563 Mrs. Ford Kelley, Memorial to 303rd BGA.  
 L209 Edward Levandoski, (360) Memorial to Alexander Bourque, Jr.  
 L2039 Sam Masinton, (444) Memorial to 444th Air Depot Members  
 L1662 Mark L. McDermott, (427) Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 SL255 William S. McLeod, Jr., (358) Memorial to Carlton M. Smith  
 A-384 William S. McLeod, III, Memorial to Carlton M. Smith  
 L1836 John L. Mulqueen, (360) Memorial to Carlton M. Smith.  
 L1998 George W. Pearson, Jr., (427) Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 932 Armand Pons, (360) Memorial to Carlton M. Smith.  
 L1065 Edward E. Ross (427) Memorial to Richard Waggoner  
 L1657 Anthony J. Sacco (359) Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 925 Alberct C. Santella, (359) Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 A-403 Hans-Jurgen Schuster, Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 A-423 John R. Silvis, Memorial to Carlton M. Smith  
 L2012 Leon Slauson (427) Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 SL2009 Walter E. Sloan (358) Memorial to 8th AF Heritage Museum  
 A-315 Larry M. Stafford, Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 L1162 Mrs Doris M. Vail, Memorial to Robert F. Vail  
 L1788 Donald E. Vanlier (358) Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 SLA-511 Antone Vieira, Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 SL005 Joseph Vieira (359) Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 SLA-510 John Vieira, Jr., Memorial to 303rd BGA  
 SL1904 William P. Zachar, SR., (359) Memorial to 303rd BGA

Correction to February 1998 Newsletter with our apologies:

L2036 Mrs John Conver, Memorial to Milton K. Conver (427) (not Walter)  
 1955 Evan R. Soule (not Coule), Memorial to 8th AF Heritage Museum

## ADDRESS CHANGES

(IMPORTANT) Please send in your 4-digit zip code number, for those who are shown with ????.

L1489 Wilbur R. Arnold (360) 55 Algonquin Dr., Warwick, RI 02888-5301  
 A-297 David Jesse Daniels, %Robert Petrucci, 8611 Depot Road, Lynden, WA 98264-????  
 A-118 Dennis D. Dowling, 3070 S. State Rd., #119, Winamac, IN 46996-9690  
 S639 Harry D. Gobrecht (358) 505 Via Deseo, San Clemente, CA 92672-2462 new area code (949)361-2662.  
 S428 Edgar C. Miller, (360) 422 D. Walnut Ave., Temple, OK 73568-0219 (new area code (580)342-5119  
 S385 Ralph S. Hayes, (427) 3 Colonial Parkway, Pittsford, NY 14534-???? (716) 249-9067  
 L195 Robert S. Lanam, (360) P.O. Box 620864, Ovideo, FL 32762-0864(new phone # (407) 365-5335  
 L1694 Thomas D. Lardie, (360) 10491 Live Oak Lane, Penn Valley, CA 95946-9391 (530) 432-8550  
 L1915 H. Duane Litwiller, (360) 9055 S Tamiami Tr. #17, Venice, FL 34293-5123  
 A-375 John G. Long, 225 Schilling Circle, JA3CB8ZOO, Hunt Valley, MD 21031-1102  
 A-381 Kenneth F. Nye, 5602 Bent Trail, Dallas, TX 75248-????  
 S1092 Robert E. Wherry, (360) 1625 10th ST., NE, Missillon, OH 44646 4113 (New area code) (330) 832-2703  
 L1311 William A. Denison (427) 15903 W. Clearwater Way, Surprise, AZ 86474-452d2 (602) 975-9583

## ADDRESS CHANGES

1899 Paul G. Hogan, (359) 7436 Riverview Dr., Gautier, MS 39533-3236 (228) 497-4903  
 925 Albert C. Santella, (359) 801 Crawford Rd., Fredericktown, PA 15333-0583 (new area code) (724)377-0257  
 L196 Bert J. Pandey, (427) 1404 S Border Ave., #7331, Weslaco, TX 78596-????  
 A-445 Victor H. Davis, 919 Solano Dr., NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110-???? (???)266-8122  
 S119 Albert E. Martel, Jr., (427) 29 Mt. Desert Dr., Bangor, ME 04401  
 A336/7 Katherine & David Schaubert, 212 Pelican Cove, Windsor, CO 80550-???? (970)686-8903  
 1124 Robert J. Hannan, (360) (New phone numbers) (707)433-3435 (707)838-8278  
 LA-449 John D. Hall IV,Capt.,2412 Fairway Ave., North Little Rock, AR 72116-???? (501)753-5850  
 A-479 Douglas L. Dolan, 203 Canyon Road, Winchester, VA 22602-7026 (540)665-0653  
 S410 Quentin W. Hargrove, (HDQ) 9846 Ellerbe Road, Shreveport, LA 71106-???? (318)795-9734  
 925 Albert C. Santella

## IN MEMORIAM

L125 Alexander Bourque, Jr., (360) February 6, 1998  
 L505 Gomer W. Cochran (360) February 5, 1998  
 1086 Edgar W. Cole (360) May 15, 1996  
 S1213 Paul E. Henderson (360) March 19, 1998  
 L788 Carl B. Kalkbrenner (444) March 20, 1998  
 Non-Mem. Charles J. Lonski (427) August 13, 1996  
 L914 Jack R. Magee (360) March 27, 1998  
 1755 Roy P. Malone (359) October 23, 1997  
 1222 Merrill N. Moore (360) September 22, 1996  
 588 Thomas L. Peacock (360) March 14, 1997  
 1257 Robert R. Relford (360) February 22, 1998  
 S611 Charles G. Rice, Jr., (360) January 11, 1998  
 L918 Walter K. Shayler (360) April 1, 1998  
 L1480 Charles W. Spencer (358) (DSM) April 16, 1998  
 1225 Donald R. Telford (360) November 21, 1997  
 1806 William H. Wagner (358) March 28, 1998



**MARGRATEN** - Gene Girman at the gravesite of Sgt. Harry Sansun, waist gunner on Lt. Hillary's crew, KIA, August 24, 1944 on a mission to Merseberg.

# 908 SAVANNAH 1998 REUNION PROGRAM

Friday, August 21

- 0900 Board of Directors Meeting
- 1300-1700 Registration & Information
- 1300-2300 Hospitality Center
- 1300-1700 PX Display
- 1900-2100 PX Display

(By appointment daily - 8th AF Heritage Museum oral history VCRs)

Saturday, August 22

- 0800-1200 Registration & Information
- 0900 Motor coach shuttle departs hotel for tour of Mighty 8th AF Museum. Last shuttle departs hotel at 1100. OPTIONAL TICKET REQUIRED.
- 1000-1700 PX Display
- 1200-2300 Hospitality Center
- 1300-1630 Registration & Information
- 1430 Motor Coach shuttle departs Museum to hotel. Last shuttle departs at 1530
- 1730-1830 Motor coach service departs hotel for Savannah River Dinner & Entertainment Cruise. Motor coach service back to hotel at end of cruise. OPTIONAL..TICKET REQUIRED

SUNDAY, August 23

- 0800 Protestant and Catholic Services
- 0830 Group breakfast starts
- 1000-1100 Registration & Information
- 1100 Start of Motor coach shuttle service from hotel to The Mighty 8th Air Force Museum for tour, lunch, Memorial Service and continue touring. Last shuttle departs hotel at 1200.
- 1700 Begin Motor coach shuttle service from Museum back to hotel. Last shuttle departs Museum at 1800
- 1800-2300 Hospitality Center
- 1830-2100 PX Display

Monday, August 24

- 0900-1200 Registration & Information
- 0830 Transportation departs hotel for golf tourney at Hunter Army Airfield Golf Club. OPTIONAL...TICKET REQUIRED
- 0900 Motor coach shuttle service departs hotel for tour of Mighty 8th Air Force Museum. Last shuttle departs at 1100. OPTIONAL...TICKET REQUIRED
- 1000-1200 PX Display
- 1200-2300 Hospitality Center
- 1300-1600 Registration & Information
- 1300-1800 PX Display
- 1300 Three Hour Low Country Tour departs hotel..OPTIONAL TICKET REQUIRED
- 1500 Motor coach shuttle departs Museum to hotel. Last shuttle departs Museum at 1700
- 1900 Italian Buffet & Entertainment. OPTIONAL..TICKET REQUIRED
- 2100 At approximately 2100, The Annual Raffle will be held. (continued on page 6)

Because quite a few members never received their Reunion brochure, we are reprinting some of the highlights in this issue. If you fall in this category recommend you call Walt Ferrari at (910) 270-0824 and request a duplicate copy.

## Visit our Web Site

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

The contents of our 303rd BombGroup association Web Site has expanded greatly since we announced it in the February issue of "Hell's Angels Newsletter." Harry D. Gobrecht, our Historian, and Gary L. Moncur, our Webmaster, have done wonders with the history and heritage of the 303rd Bombardment Group(H).

If you haven't visited the site recently, you will find many more photos of the activities at Molesworth. If you click on "In Action" you will find over 50 very interesting stories, told by our members, recounting their memories of fighting the war at 25,000 feet. And more are in the works.

Harry Gobrecht has provided a truly great set of 303rd Bomb Group records that he has labored over hundreds of documents to compile. If you haven't purchased his second version of the "Might in Flight" daily diary of the 303rd Bomb Group, you should acquire a copy without delay.

Elsewhere in this May issue of the Newsletter you will find the e-mail addresses of over 70 of our regular members and associate members. If you are on-line, please send your e-mail address and I will include it in the next up-date.

Ed Miller  
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### IN THIS ISSUE..

The best part about being the editor of a publication is the surprise you get when everything falls into place and you finally wind up with a finished product. Some you are pleased with, others you have to hide the matches before you finally get it to the printers.....This issue started out as a 16 pager, then I received Brian McGuire's story, "Going Back" about Gene Girman retracing his steps of 54 years ago when he was shot down on his way from Molesworth to Merseberg, 24 August 1944. When I looked at the 18 pages of single spaced copy plus 40 photos, I knew I had a problem. According to my third class math and using a minimum number of photos, I figured it was going to take at least seven newsletter pages. The solution was easy. I added four pages to the newsletter and cut the story to three and a half pages. It is a good story and if anyone wants to read the unedited copy I will be more than glad to send them a copy. I think Brian and Dina McGuire and Gene Girman did a great job in driving all over Germany. Then came the second bombshell. A survey showed us that quite a few of our members never received their Savannah Reunion booklet which went into the mail the first week in April. Since this will be the only publication that comes out before the August reunion, we decided to put information in this issue in considerable detail so members can at least make their hotel reservations. We still had to do a lot of cutting to shoehorn it in. So if I inadvertently left out a name or two, please forgive me because I had a deadline to meet. .... The feature story on page one has been a long time in coming to fruition. Now, deserving members of the 303rd Bomb Group can finally apply for the award they deserve. But your request must be well documented and submitted according to the latest requirements.....It looks like the honors for flying 35 missions in the shortest length of time goes to the Bartholomew crew who only took 56 days to accomplish that feat. They started on May 19, 1944 by going to Berlin. Nothing like starting with the "milk runs.".....The photos on pages 10 and 11 come from W.C Crawford's book. They brought back a lot of fond memories.....The countdown to the Savannah reunion has started. We recommend you make your room reservations as soon as possible and also send in your paperwork to Walt Ferrari and let him know if you are going to play golf, take the cruise or how many times you expect to visit the 8th AF Heritage Museum. See you in Savannah.

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

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