

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

February, 1999

Westward, Ho!

OKLAHOMA CITY GETS NOD FOR 303rd's 1999 REUNION



By Ed and Jill Miller, Reunion Hosts

Start planning your 1999 Reunion right away. We are most fortunate to find the beautiful Marriott Hotel available for a 4-day Reunion starting on October 8th (Friday) and ending on October 11th (Monday) 1999. We are excited--we hope you will be!!

The facilities of the Marriott most suitably fit the needs of our 303rd Bomb Group Association's Reunion. We will have a very large Hospitality area, a PX and Memorabilia room near the Reservations desk, and plenty of space to meet and chat with our comrades. The Marriott is located in the newer, Northwest area of the City.

We have contracted for 275 rooms, for the 8th, 9th, 10th & 11th of October, that will be offered on a first-come, first-served basis. But, be fully aware that you must call in for your hotel reservations very early, because the "Room Block" drops to 210 rooms per night on 23 August 1999.

They will honor 2 day early arrivals and 2 day late departures.

One of the outstanding sites of the city is the Cowboy Hall of Fame, with its outstanding display of frontier life, beautiful statues and the largest presentation of Western Art in the world. We are planning on having buses available for this tour.

A City Tour is planned that will include the site of the April 1995 Murrah Building bombing, the State Capitol, with an operating oil well on the grounds, the Omniplex, (a museum with 6 different themes), and the Myriad Botanical Gardens, for those who wish to get acquainted with one of the leading cities of the Great Plains area.

The Marriott Hotel has 365 rooms, and two fine restaurants. It is 10 minutes from the Will Rogers World Airport, the Remington Park Race Track, and the State Capitol. The Hotel's address is 3233 Northwest Expressway, Oklahoma City.

The Airport serves all of the major airlines and American is the Official Airline for our 1999 Reunion. By calling the "All About Travel" Agency at 1-(800) 880-8517, you will receive a 10% discount off the least expensive American Airlines ticket, as long as you purchase your ticket a minimum of 60 days prior to departure.

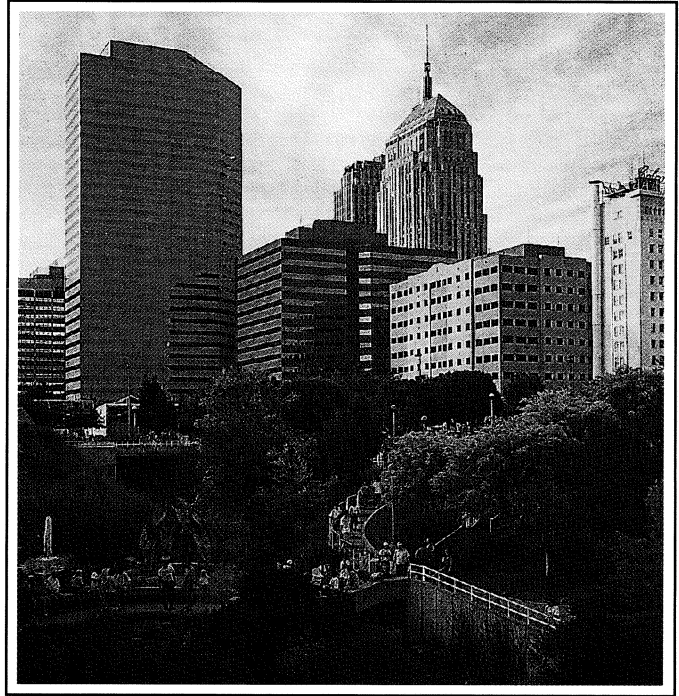
However, this Agency will book the lowest price ticket, whether it be American, Delta, United, TWA, Southwest, or Continental.

If you fly with American, they will give the Association one ticket for every 25 tickets purchased, to be used in our Raffle.

This Agency will also reserve you a car for Oklahoma City, and Avis will give a 5% discount.

You might also remember that Branson, Missouri is right on the way for those of you that are driving from the eastern part of the United States. It will make a wonderful overnight stop, with many up and coming Country Western performers.

In the downtown area of the City is the newly renovated historic Bricktown. This area is famous for its dozens of fine eating places,



OKLAHOMA CITY'S SKYLINE blends dramatically with greenery to create shaded walking and biking trails along the riverfront.

and at very reasonable prices. The newly constructed canal and moat that flows through these numerous eating places, will be opened in July 1999, just in time for our Reunion.

We can't say enough about the amenities of the Marriott and its beautifully decorated rooms, that we have obtained for \$62 per night plus city and state tax (\$68.43). We will receive free auto parking.

Keep in mind that for the business traveler these rooms are priced at \$129.00. We are getting outstanding quality at 1/2 the regular rates.

For those of you that have an interest in the renowned Oklahoma Sooner's rush into the Indian Territories in the very late 1890's

and early 1900's, a visit to the Capitol building and the Oklahoma State Museum is a must.

If you would like, a trip to a Western Rodeo just 40 miles north of the City can be arranged.

Or some of you may wish to take in the "horse races" that will be running at Remington Park.

So, don't delay--call the Marriott at 1 (405) 842-6633 for your reservations. Be sure and tell them that you are with the 303rd Bomb Group Association Reunion on October 8th, 9th, 10th, & 11th of 1999.

Registration will open on Thursday afternoon, October 7th, for those who wish a free day on October 8th, to do whatever they wish.

See you there!!



303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

"HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

Editor — Eddie Deerfield

VOL XXI, No. 1 3552 Landmark Trail Palm Harbor, FL 34684 February, 1999

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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Target—Augsberg, Germany on 16 March 1944

TWO RADIO OPERATORS: ONE SERIOUSLY WOUNDED, THE OTHER A TORN TROUSER

(EDITOR'S NOTE—Call it the fortunes of war, the luck of the draw or any other cliché that comes to mind to explain why some combat airmen came back safe and sound from 303rd mission after mission, some were wounded, some became prisoners of war and some were killed in action. Here are the personal recollections of a 358th Squadron radio operator/gunner who was favored by the Gods of War.)

By Bob Phillips

I was the radio operator/gunner on Lt. Wendell Ferguson's crew in the 358th. I did my first mission on February 22, 1944 and also made the first daylight bombing of Berlin on March 6. My last mission was on June 5, 1944.

On my March 16th mission, the 8th Air Force bombed Augsburg, Friedrichshafen, Ulm and other targets in southern Germany. The 303rd flew the 9-hour mission to Augsburg where we encountered lots of flak and enemy fighters.

Our plane was hit by flak and a piece came through and tore my pants open while standing at my gun position.

We had a couple of other close calls.

On May 8, 1944, target Berlin (6th time)—while on the bomb run, we caught a heavy burst of flak that knocked out engines number three and four. We pulled away from the formation and lost altitude at a fast rate.

We dropped our bombs and managed to feather those two props. We threw out everything else that wasn't needed and maintained our altitude. We were alone now.

Fortunately, there were a lot of clouds in the area, and we flew in them to cover us from enemy fighters. We managed to get across the North Sea and land at an emergency field on the coast of northern England.

Our crew, with Lt. Ferguson as pilot, was among those who took part in that long raid to Posen, Poland on May 29, 1944. On such a long trip, fuel consumption was a major factor.

It is my understanding that many crews, on the return trip, bailed out over the Scandinavian countries because of lack of fuel.

Lt. Ferguson felt that we could make it across the

North Sea, so we went for it.

We dropped down from altitude to only a few hundred feet from the water. I was continually on the radio with S.O.S. procedure to the Air Sea Rescue forces in northern Britain. My communication with them enabled them to establish a good position fix on us in case we had to ditch.

We thought we could make it, but it would be very, very close. Well, our prayers were answered! We landed at an emergency field just beyond the beach.

I don't think the engines were turned off. They turned themselves off from lack of fuel as we sat on the runway.



A TROUSER TORN BY FLAK is evidence of S/Sgt. Robert B. Phillips' narrow escape on the Augsburg mission of 16 March 1944. Checking it out are (from top, clockwise) Sgt. R. S. Brooks, Sgt. T. J. Rogers and Sgt. B. J. Hendin.



BADLY WOUNDED, T/Sgt. Gaylord Geisman, 360th Squadron radio operator/gunner, is carried to a waiting ambulance at Molesworth after the mission to Augsburg on 16 March 1944. Geisman, flying with Lt. David Hicks' crew, recovered from his wounds.

From The President

Much has happened since our August reunion in Savannah.

★ 1999 reunion location

It was announced at Savannah that our 1999 reunion would be held in August in San Antonio, Texas with Albuquerque, NM as the alternative. Later developments required a change to Oklahoma City, OK.

I was advised that hiring a professional meeting organizing company was not satisfactory for the 303rd BGA. We were unable to recruit a VP Reunions or a local Reunion Chairman. Hotel rates, services and arrangements at San Antonio and Albuquerque, and the lack of a 303rd BGA member to take charge, made both of these locations undesirable - even in the hot month of August.

I accepted Ed Miller's, Past President and Membership Chairman, offer to become VP Reunions if we would hold our reunion in Oklahoma City. He has since done a wonderful job in making arrangements at the Marriott Hotel on October 8 (Friday) through October 11 (Monday), 1999. Meeting details are elsewhere in this Newsletter. Mark these dates on your calendar. You will be pleased with the planned program. The October dates should result in great weather.

★ 2000 and 2001 Reunion

Bill Roche, myself and others, are trying to finalize plans for our year 2000 and 2001 reunions. The 2,000 reunion will be in the West. Suggested locations are Seattle, WA, San Diego, CA, Sacramento, CA, Coeur d'Alene, ID and Las Vegas, NV. The 2001 reunion will be in the East. Suggested locations are Washington, DC or Orlando, FL.

A professional meeting planner will be used if we are unable to recruit a VP-Reunions. We hope to finalize a decision by mid-year 1999.

★ The 8th AFH Museum B-47 Erection Fund

\$10,000 has been donated by our 303rd BGA. \$25,541 has so far been received or pledged from our members with \$1,000 gifts from twenty-one. Joe Viera is our champion \$1,000 giver with a donation of \$1,001 - thanks Joe. We hope to reach a gift total of \$50,000 which will require additional donations.

Those who donate \$1,000 or more will become Museum Wing Commander Circle members. Names will appear on the Sustaining Donors Wall in the General Lew Lyle Rotunda. Donations in any amount are essential and will be welcome.

The B-47, now undergoing restoration at the museum, will have our 303rd BG(H) red Triangle "C" insignia painted on the tail surface. Send your donation check to our Treasurer, Jack Rencher, P.O. Box 7927, Boise, ID 83707-1927.

★ [Http://www.303rdBGA.com](http://www.303rdBGA.com) Web Pages

Our 303rd BG(H) web site now has over 1,000 pages online. You can spend many hours enjoying the information that has been installed by our "Super Webmaster", Gary Moncur. He is now placing 303rd BG(H) crew photos in a new web site section. If you want your crew photo on the internet for everyone to enjoy send a photo with the names of your crewmen to Gary Moncur, 4483 Palmer Dr., West Valley City, UT 84120.

★ Mission Report digests

Our overworked Ed Miller has taken on the long dreamed of task of developing a list of every combat crew and B-17 who flew on each 303rd BG(H) combat mission. Each mission digest will include a brief story on the mission. Individual listings will be fully indexed to permit every combat crewman to obtain a list of all the missions he flew, with the name of the pilot, target and B-17. MIA crewmen and B-17's data will also be available. The B-17 listing will also be indexed to show missions flown by every 303rd BG(H) B-17 with mission & formation location where each B-17 was flown.

Mission Report Digests will be placed on CD disks that can be placed in a computer to obtain printouts for Group or individual crewmen or B-17.

Data is also being developed for our Ground Support people. Ed needs your input & photos.

We hope to have this project completed by our 1999 Oklahoma City reunion.

★ Might in Flight Book

We still have a few copies for sale at \$75. Order from Harry Gobrecht, 505 Via Deseo, San Clemente, CA 92672-2462.



PATRONS LINE UP to visit The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum near Savannah, Georgia.

8th AF Heritage Museum Attendance Up Over 30%

By Dr. Barry M. Buxton, President & CEO

The "Spirit of the Mighty Eighth" is alive and well at Savannah's Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum!

We are enjoying a banner year with attendance up 32% over last year and school group visits on the rise over 30%. Visiting teachers tell us the Museum is a great field trip experience.

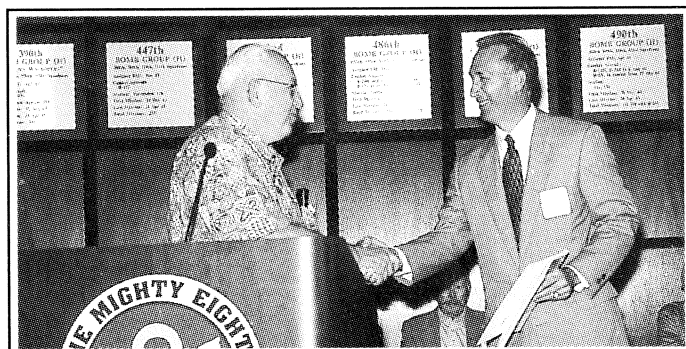
By the end of the year, over 100,000 visitors will have flown The Mission, toured the Combat Gallery, enjoyed The Mighty Eighth and Freedom Theaters, and paused to reflect on the sacrifice and valor in the Memorial Gardens.

Our Library & Archive Department is busy cataloging individual and group mission experiences, and new exhibits are being added every month. Derrell Westberry and his exhibits team are busy preparing for the exciting Gil Cohen Art Exhibit.

John Edwards, our new Director of Education, has introduced some exciting new programs, including a series we call our "Heritage of Values." The program features dramatic reenactments portraying patriotism, self-sacrifice, courage, valor, creativity and love of country. These values are truly hallmarks of The Mighty Eighth.

In just two-and-one-half years, the Museum has become a "must see" for history and aviation enthusiasts from around the world. On a recent Sunday, we had Russians, four Brits and two Frenchmen in the Museum. That same day, seven historic aircraft flew in from Tampa, Florida with renowned airman Henry Bohler in the lead plane. His group spent the day at the Museum and shared some great memories with other visitors and staff.

On your next Museum visit, don't miss our new Founder's Wall and Sustaining Donor's Wall. This new donor recognition program will honor individual, corporate and group gifts of \$1,000 and more. It is these special people who help us keep the memories alive for future generations.



8th AFHM PRESIDENT BUXTON is welcomed to the podium by 303rd President-designate Harry Gobrecht at memorial services in the Museum during last August's reunion in Savannah.

A Reporter's Life in WW II

CRONKITE RECALLS THE COMBAT DEATH OF A 303rd PILOT

(The following excerpts from Walter Cronkite's book "A Reporter's Life," are reprinted with the permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.)

Fleet Street, all the national newspapers crammed into a few blocks, the great pubs filled with journalists throughout their working hours, would be my home for almost two years, until the Allies were on the Continent.

I was lucky enough to be assigned to cover the American and British air forces. The air war was the only war in Europe during that long year of 1943 and those months of 1944 before the landings in Normandy. It shared the headlines at home with the island-hopping invasions in the Pacific.

Sizable numbers of the British four-engined bombers—the Lancasters and Halifaxes—had been carrying the war to the German homeland. British fighters—the doughty Spitfire heroes of the Battle of Britain, Hurricanes and Typhoons—had wrested control of the air over England from the Luftwaffe, and the bombing raids on London were far less frequent and less effective.

By the end of 1942 the American Eighth Air Force, including the four-engined Boeing Flying Fortresses and the Consolidated Aircraft Liberators, was still testing its strength against targets in nearby France. They were testing, too, their daytime strategy, which was based on a belief that well-armed aircraft flying in formation could spread across the sky a field of fire that would defy attacking fighters.

This proved to be wishful thinking. Luftwaffe Messerschmitt and Focke-Wulf fighters, particularly the crack squadrons in the distinctive aircraft with checkered noses, were taking a heavy toll. The Americans called them "the Abbeville boys," for the French town where the Germans were first based.

None of the fighters, British or American, yet had the range to accompany the bombers past the European coast, and they were left alone to battle the full force of the German defenses—both the fighter planes and the heavy flak thrown up by concentrations of anti-aircraft guns that ringed every city.

When the bombers were going out on a mission, we got a call at our London offices with some coded message from Air Force public relations—"we're going to have a poker game to-night," for instance—that sent us scurrying for the first train to air base country.

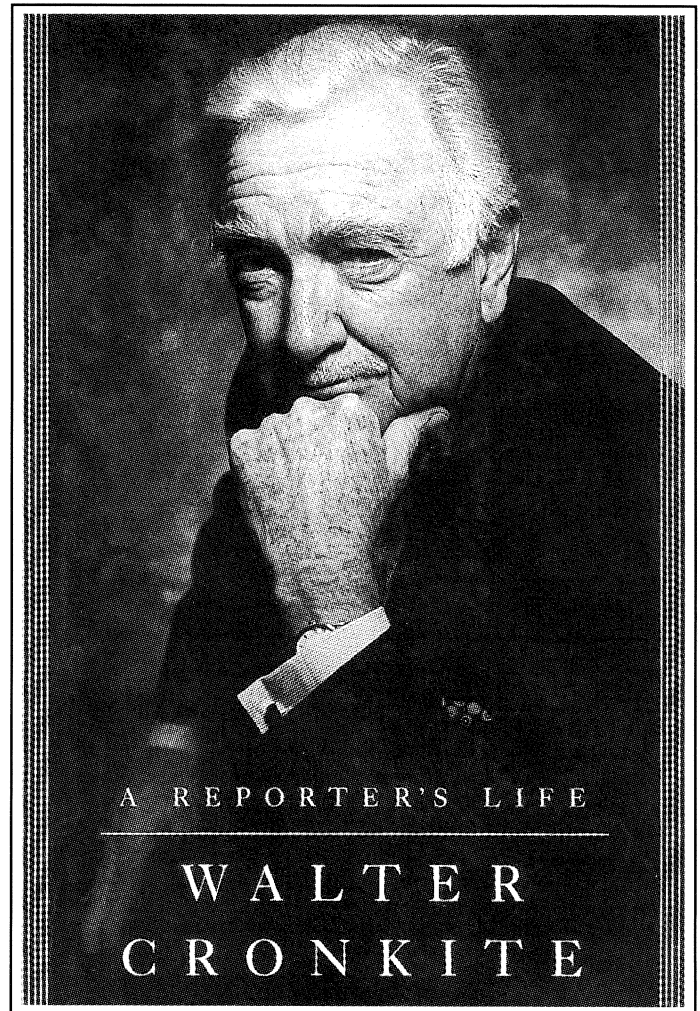
Our coverage of the air war consisted mostly of interviewing the bomber crews as they returned from their missions. We watched them coming home from battle, most with at least some damage—a cannon hole here or there or the almost delicate lacework of holes left by a trail of machine-gun bullets.

Sometimes the damage was so great that the earthbound airmen of the headquarters staff gasped in disbelief that the plane had made it back at all. Engines would be missing, tail surfaces almost shot away, wing tips crumpled. And too often, as those crippled ships cleared the edge of the runway, out from the radio operator's window would fly a red flare. Wounded aboard! The ambulances would follow them down the runway to bring what succor was possible the minute they rolled to a stop. Often that stop came more abruptly than planned, as the landing gear, damaged by gunfire, collapsed beneath them.

Those young Air Force crews quickly became veterans. One flight usually did the job. The bombardier of one of the first Forts over France came back full of wonder at what he called the amazing tactics of the German pilots.

"When they come in to attack, they flash these signals back and forth to each other."

What signals? an amazed debriefing officer asked.



"These red lights they have in the wings of their planes."

When he was told that those were not red lights, those were guns, he fainted.

I watched one day as an aircraft flown by a friend came gliding down to its landing. It appeared undamaged, but the red flare burst over it. The ambulance was there at the end of the runway and then departed, apparently for the hospital. The open truck that ferried the air crews around the base came rolling back toward the debriefing shack and, to my anxious but apparently hasty eye, all the crew seemed to be aboard. They drew closer and the scene changed drastically. There were only nine of them. There should have been ten. And to a man—or make that, to a boy—they were crying uncontrollably.

Their captain was one of the most popular men of the 303rd Heavy Bombardment Group. He was twenty-six, with a cowlick always adorning his forehead under his crumpled officer's cap—a "twenty-mission cap" they used to call them when they took out the stiffening wire to give them that daring Air Force look. He had a beguiling smile for everyone and a hearty greeting for all. He planned to marry an Air Force nurse he had met in London. We had spent many evenings together at various London pubs.

His plane was hit by a single machine-gun bullet. It pierced the windshield—and his heart. With my heart heavy, I wrote the story. I called it "Nine Crying Boys and a Flying Fort." Nine crying boys and a war correspondent who thought he was too tough to cry.

EDITOR'S NOTE—Mr. Cronkite's book does not identify the pilot. With the help of 303rd Bomb Group Association president and historian Harry Gobrecht, we have determined that the reference is most likely to Captain Donald E. Stockton of the 427th Squadron, flying "S For Sugar" on a mission to Kiel, Germany on 14 May 1943.

COLONEL KERMIT STEVENS HONORS WIFE'S MEMORY BY ENDOWING MUSEUM PROJECT

Colonel Kermit D. Stevens, longest serving commanding officer of the 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth, has made a substantial contribution to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in honor of his late wife, Marion. She passed away at the age of 84 on 4 September 1998.

With Col. Stevens' generous donation, the Exhibits Section has embarked on one of its most pressing and ambitious projects—to expand the interactive and educational scope of the museum with a vastly improved computer system.

The following statement from the Exhibit Staff explains its goals:

In order to expand our interactive and educational areas of the museum, we are interested in creating a new front rotunda kiosk and updating the old kiosk to be used in association with the ground crew exhibit.

We want to follow the current trend of interaction in the museum and allow both young and old visitors to be able to enhance their visit. The museum requests your support in order to make this possible.

The front rotunda update will include building a new kiosk. We want to create a cockpit atmosphere and allow more than one visitor to relax and spend time with the exhibit. The kiosk will be built with an attractive exterior shell to compliment the front rotunda. It will contain a comfortable two seat cockpit simulation complete with a larger touch screen monitor, aircraft instruments, stellar lighting and high quality sound effects.

The case will also have a place so that visitors could stand behind the seated area and watch as others explore the interactive exhibit.

We want to obtain a much faster and larger computer system in order to expand the possibilities of the kiosk itself. This will allow us to update it with more question and answers sections, biographies, group profiles, great video clips and sound effects.

We have had quite a few visitors enjoy the exhibit, but we realize that it is time to upgrade and modify it to fit our growing needs. We have expanded our archives and video library so we can add

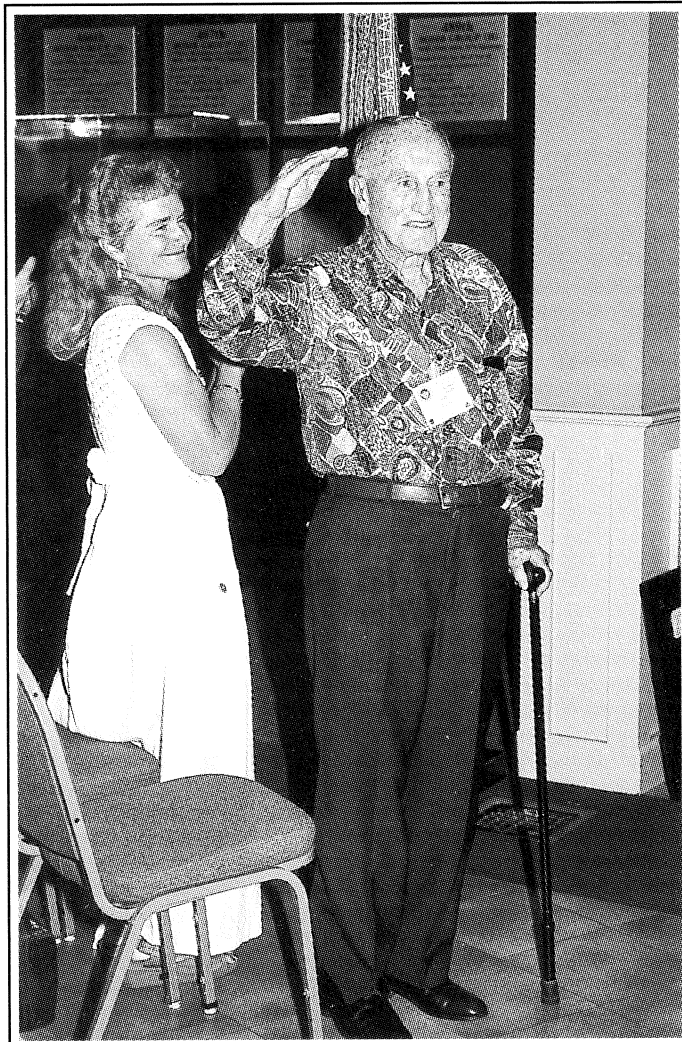
more photos and recordings. Visitors, and especially school children, enjoy spending time in front the computer learning about the aircraft and personnel of the Eight Air Force. By expanding the computer system the visitors can leave with a greater impression of the growing and expanding technology within the museum.

In addition to the front rotunda kiosk we would like to take the original system and modify it for use in the actual exhibit area. We feel that the computer is a great medium for teaching people about more topics in smaller amounts of space. These computers are versatile and can be moved around the museum depending on the need and occasion.

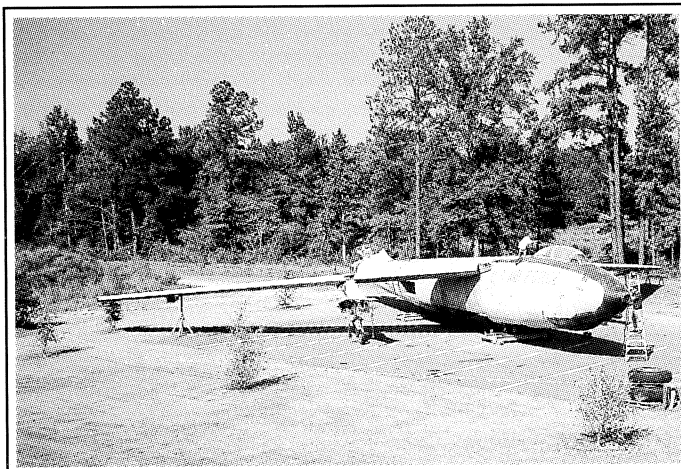
Currently we would like upgrade our exhibit on the ground crew and utilize some of our substantial collection of 303rd Bomb Group ground crew photos.

We currently have a standard exhibit kiosk dedicated to telling the history of the ground crew personnel in World War II. In order to expand upon the essential role that these people played in the victory we need to give more background information and show more photos relating to the crucial role they played in the war.

The computer kiosk exhibit will let us take literally dozens of full size photographs and compliment them with text to educate patrons. We can also add actual voice recollections of ground crew personnel and videos of them working on aircraft. We feel that there is a need for a more thorough view of 8th Air Force personnel, and this upgrade would allow us to pioneer that examination.



A SALUTE AND A SMILE—Colonel Kermit D. Stevens acknowledges his introduction to the crowd attending the recent 303rd Bomb Group reunion memorial service in the Lewis E. Lyle Rotunda of the 8th AF Heritage Museum. His daughter, Ellen, joins in the applause.



B-47 ON THE APPROACH! Restoration experts clamber around the B-47 destined to grace the grounds of the Heritage Museum memorial garden in the near future. The 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association and more than 40 of its members contributed in excess of \$45,000 to the project. The donation greatly exceeded the Board's original goal of raising \$15,000 in addition to the \$10,000 pledged by the Association. The names of major contributors and their wives will be displayed on the Wing Commanders Circle, Sustaining Donors Wall.

303rd Veterans Contribute "Might in Flight" History to Texas Tech University

Three former Lubbock, Texas members of the 303rd Bombardment Group, who flew numerous aerial combat missions during World War II, were honored recently by Texas Tech University for donating to the University Libraries the book "Might in Flight: Daily Diary of the Eighth Air Force's Hell's Angels."

The volume was contributed jointly by Roger L. Kuykendall, a pilot with the 360th Bomb Squadron; Rufus W. Grisham, a pilot with the 358h Bomb Squadron; and Joe Bob Johnston of Group Operations.

A special plate honoring Kuykendall, Grisham and Johnston for their generosity was placed in the book. All three men represent the 303rd Bomb Group Association, Inc.

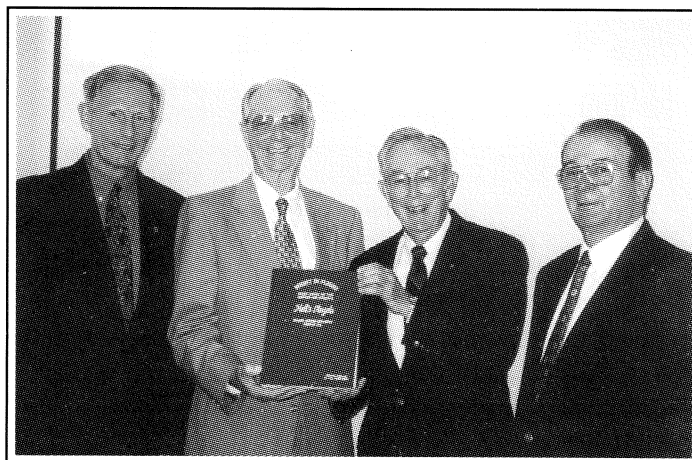
A news release to the media from TTU noted that "The 303rd Bombardment Group (H) based in England flew combat missions over Europe and participated in one of the first strikes on Berlin on March 6, 1944. The 303rd also provided aerial

support on D-Day, June 6, 1944."

Only 1,000 copies of the book were published, said Kuykendall, and few have found homes in academic libraries.

Dean of Libraries E. Dale Cluff, said, "I feel privileged to accept the book not only because of its rarity but also because it will provide students, faculty and library patrons with an increased understanding of aerial combat missions as seen through the eyes of the Eighth Air Force."

Cluff said contributions like that of the 303rd Bomb Group Association, Inc., are vital in that they enrich the library's resources, thus contributing to the success of future generations of students and



"RARE DONATION"—Three 303rd Bomb Group Association members present Texas Tech University with a copy of "Might in Flight," the Group's monumental history of participation in World War II. Left to right are Dr. E. Dale Cluff, who accepted on behalf of the university; Roger Kuykendall, Rufus Grisham and Joe Bob Johnston.

researchers.

The first edition of "Might in Flight" was published in 1993 and quickly sold out. It earned wide praise as the most authoritative history of any World War II Eighth Air Force unit.

The second edition was published in 1997 with numerous revisions, including substantive changes in text, additions of new photos, charts and other documentary materials. The print run

was 500 copies.

Harry Gobrecht, Group Historian and editor of "Might in Flight," said only 123 books remain from the second edition, and added that the book would not be printed again.

He urged members to purchase copies while they're available. Libraries throughout the country would welcome a donation of the first or second edition.

All net profits from sales go to the 303rd treasury.

READY FOR SHIPMENT

MIGHT IN FLIGHT – DAILY DIARY OF THE EIGHTH AIR FORCE'S HELL'S ANGELS – 303rd BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) – SECOND EDITION (1997)

The Second Edition of our 928 page 303rd BG(H) history is now ready for shipment. The First Edition, was acclaimed as the best and most complete Group history ever compiled. The Second Edition has been further improved with numerous changes and additions. The 1993 price has been maintained. Only 500 copies were printed – There will no more available after these have been sold. Will make an excellent gift for your family members and friends and enable them to share in your participation with the Eighth Air Force's most distinguished Bomb Group.

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The View From the Ground— HOW THOSE DEADLY GERMAN FLAK BATTERIES OPERATED!

By Dick Johnson

(As adapted from his book "25 Milk Runs and a Few Others")

On May 28th, 1944, the 303rd Bomb group was scheduled to bomb the night fighter base at Juvincourt, near Reims, France. This base had been disguised by German troops by placing a fence across the runway when it was not in use. The hangars were built like large Quonset huts with sod and brush growing on the roofs.

The Luftwaffe was testing a new twin jet plane called the ARDA 234. It took off on a wheeled trolley and landed on retractable skids. One morning the workers forgot to replace the fence, and our reconnaissance planes took a picture that revealed the runway.

Defending the airfield was a six gun battery of 88mm flak guns that we got to be so familiar with. These guns would fire a three and a half inch diameter grenade with a muzzle velocity of about two and a half times the speed of sound, giving them a range of about ten miles. This velocity bled off quickly as it fought air friction and gravity, so that if fired straight up it would run out of steam at about forty thousand feet and fall back to earth. They only had about three minutes firing time on any given target.

At this battery was 18 year old Helmut Schade who described the operation:

"It required six to ten buildings and over 120 soldiers to operate a six gun battery. The rangefinder was a four meter wide optical device that showed symbols on the view screen. The magnification of the rangefinder was 12 power, 24 power, and to fill the entire screen with a single B-17, 36 power. While focused on the number two engine of the lead plane, the screen showed a rhombus, a square, a trapezoid and a triangle. When these symbols were all brought together, the Entfernungsmesser, or Final Aimer, gave the order to fire by radio. The two kilometer or so lead was automatically figured in by the rangefinder. If the target aircraft disappeared behind a cloud, the firing was continued in a straight line until the target

re-appeared at which time the corrections would be made. A slow turn in either direction by the target was enough to throw off the aim. All the guns were connected to the rangefinder by a large umbilical, and fired in parallel rather than converging. Thus they covered a larger patch of sky, being fifty meters or so apart.

"The final aimer was the only one of the cannon crew who went to school for training, all the others being trained on site. Often during manpower shortages the guns were operated by civilian volunteers and sometimes by women and children.

"Before being thrust into the breach, the shell was pushed into the range box which grasped the flats on the shell to set the distance it would fly before exploding. If it struck a plane before that time, it would pass through and explode above. It was not designed to explode on impact."

On this particular mission of June 28, our bombs missed the airfield and almost hit the flak battery, the last bomb in the string failing a scant 300 feet short of the guns. Helmut said that as the bombs approached, they made a strumming noise like a flock of humming birds, not like the whistling in the movies. When they hit the ground they made a mighty thud like a small earthquake. He said that the noise was not nearly as loud as the firing of their guns. And no one wore ear protection!

I had gotten to know Helmut fairly well and one day I said, "Now for the big question, did your battery ever shoot down a B-17?"

"Well, we damaged several," he said rather evasively, knowing that I had been a B-17 pilot. "One day



THE ENEMY IN ACTION—German soldiers load 88mm shells into a World War II anti-aircraft gun. (Geo. Schaefer Collection, 8th AFHM)

we hit a B-17 and set his number two engine ablaze, and the fire reached back past the tail. We all started jumping up and down, celebrating our good marksmanship. We were certain that we had shot him down, but in a short while the fire went out and then the smoke stopped and the B-17 never left the formation.

"As they disappeared in the distance, our joy turned to glum disappointment. I couldn't believe it. The guy never even got out of formation."

"But," I insisted, "did you guys ever shoot down a B-17?"

"We did manage to shoot down a couple of B-24s during the course of the war," he said, still being evasive. "They were much easier to shoot down than a B-17. Once we were firing at a B-24 group when suddenly a bunch of parachutes started coming out of one of them. The airplane seemed to be intact and on auto-pilot, and it flew on for over fifty kilometers before it crashed. We never did know why they left it."

Helmut had been conscripted into the German army as a 17 year old and was in the army at age 18. He was born in Dusseldorf on May 18, 1926.

In the winter of 1943 and spring of 1944, Helmut was sent into the Taunus Mountains to train as a cannoneer. They were so short of supplies that they didn't even have coats to protect them from the bitter cold.

Helmut's mother died

when he was a child and his father was killed during a British night attack on Dusseldorf in 1944.

After I got to know Helmut better, I again asked him the big question.

"Did your battery ever shoot down a B-17?"

"Well, yes," he replied, "They were hard to shoot down, but we did manage to shoot down a couple of them during the course of the war. One that we shot down came all to pieces with the engines still turning, making the eeriest noises, and several parachutes came out. I'm glad it wasn't the one you were flying."

"Not nearly as glad as I am," I replied, "but I think I was there. It may have been your battery that shot down a good friend of mine who was flying on our left wing. On his fifth mission, Lt. Wardowski, the pilot of 'Old Crow,' with the tail number 42-32100, and his navigator, Lt. Birnbaum were killed as was the tail gunner, Sgt. Wagner. The French underground helped two of the crew evade capture and returned them to American hands. The others were captured and made prisoners of war.

"It's strange," I said, "how we could be sworn enemies at one time and then develop a friendship at another time."

"It's a different time and place," he said. "We were both doing the job that we were assigned to do. Your job was to break things, and my job was to try to keep you from breaking things in my area."

"The Right Stuff!"

Hal Susskind, Editor Emeritus

Several weeks ago all facets of the media hailed the return to space of a "legend" Senator John Glenn, an American hero with "the right stuff." As the giant engines ignited and the space vehicle blasted off, the female voice of NASA said, "We have the lift off of 'Discovery' bound for space with six astronauts and one legend aboard."

It was about the same time that I received a letter from Mark J. Adamic an Aviation Artist/Historian in which he said, "I recently had the good fortune to acquire a grouping of items of a former member of the 303rd B.G. who unfortunately was killed in action. I'm hoping that members of your group can help me obtain more information about this airman."

"The items which I obtained are from the late S/Sgt. Calvin G. Turkington of the 359th B.S. He was killed in action on Sept. 28, 1944. They include: Air Medal (named); Purple Heart Medal (named); Air Gunner Wings, 8th A.F. Patch, crew photo, some paperwork and a 303rd Group Patch. I'm planning to display these items with the rest of my USAAF collection. I display at various airshows and veterans' events. For this reason, I'd like to have as much information as possible."

Other information requested by Adamic was the name of the original crew that Turkington flew with; plus when and where was he wounded; what aircraft was he flying in when he downed a German aircraft and contact with anyone who might have known Sgt. Turkington.

I first met Sgt. Calvin Turkington in August of 1943 when I joined Lt. Donald Stoullil's crew at Ephrata AFB, Washington. A recent graduate of a navigation school, I was the Navigator they needed to fill out the ten man B-17 crew.

Two days later we were transferred to Geiger Field in Spokane, Washington to start phase training in the B-17 as part of the Skaer Provisional Group. Upon completion of our training we were shipped to Grand Island, Nebraska where we picked up a brand new B-17 to ferry to England. After stops at Ft. Wayne, Indiana, Wright-Patterson AFB, Bangor, Maine, and Stephenville, we finally arrived at Gander, Newfoundland to await favorable weather so we could make the big hop across the pond to England.

Many days later, we got the "go" sign from the weather forecaster. We were the first of many aircraft that rolled down the runway that evening in October bound for Nutts Corner in Northern Ireland.

As we lumbered into the air with our full gas load, we slowly climbed to our briefed cruising altitude of 10,000 feet. Over the water but still within sight of Gander we were startled to see, what appeared to be, gun flashes from the surface. Something splattered against the fuselage and we immediately took evasive action. Whether we were fired on by a German submarine, we never did find out, but it made an interesting item in my navigator's log and it was an interesting introduction to World War II.

A few more hours into the flight we were treated to another surprise. The weatherman's prognostication of the weather enroute was as genuine as a three dollar bill. We had to climb to get over the weather. Eventually we broke into the clear at 26,000 feet. On oxygen, now, I could see some stars to get a fix.

Hours passed by before we got close enough to Ireland so that we could pick up the Dernycross Beacon. It showed us on course.

Ultimately we crossed the Irish coast and set our course for Nutts Corner and a landing. We managed to taxi off the runway and got ourselves stuck in the mud. That is the last we saw of our aircraft.

We debarked the aircraft to a strange welcoming remark, "What the hell are you guys doing here? Didn't you get the recall message?"

We all turned and looked at our Radio Operator, S/Sgt. James Owen who sheepishly stammered, "I guess I must have fallen asleep."

A few days later our crew was at Bovington for further training and assignment to a permanent station. We were part of a replacement pool to fill in the various gaps at bomb groups throughout England after the second Schweinfurt raid. By the luck of the draw we were assigned to the 303rd Bomb Group at RAF Molesworth. I guess our Guardian Angels had a hand in this. We were then assigned to the 359th Sqdn. A combat tour was 25 missions.

After our pilot Lt. Don Stoullil and co-pilot, Lt. Ed Callahan got their baptism under fire on missions to Bremen, we flew our first mission as a crew on December 24 1943. We attacked a "Crossbow" target at

Vacqueriet, France. It was a "milk run," the last we would see like that for many a moon.

The second mission was an eighth hour mission to Ludwigsfafen, Germany on Dec. 30, 1943. The plexi-glass windows on both sides of the navigator's section was shot out. We soon learned what flak was like on a combat mission. I also realized we had a great cohesive crew anchored in the tail by Sgt. Calvin Turkington.

We started the new year with a mission to Kiel on Jan. 4, 1944. This time the flak took out part of the plexi-glass nose in front of our Bombardier, Lt. George Trawicki. George who tipped the scales at over 200 pounds, was as wide as he was tall and completely filled the nose cavity. He was my personal "flak-stopper." On this mission, Sgt. Turkington was credited with destroying a JU-88 and our ball-turret gunner, Sgt. Ken Holder was credited with probably destroying a JU-88.

Our fourth mission on Jan. 11, 1944 started out as routine but turned out to be one of the roughest missions of the war. The target was Oschersleben and the route to the target gave the appearance of a run on Berlin so the Luftwaffe responded in force. It was probably one of the biggest and longest dog-fights of the war. The 303rd lost 11 aircraft and crews and our ball-turret gunner was credited with destroying a FW-190. The close coordination of our crew, led by Sgt. Turkington, in calling out enemy fighters and their positions contributed greatly to our landing back at Molesworth. I can still hear Cal saying, "FW-190 coming in on our tail. Hold it. 'Bronco' which was a signal to our pilot to take evasive action. I also believe that our aircraft, "The Duchess" on its 50th mission, was determined to make it through the battle.

Soon after the crew's 16th mission to Lechfeld, we received notice that our crew had been selected to join the newly formed PFF (Pathfinder) pool with the 305th BG at Chelveston. The B-17s in the pool were to be equipped with radar and a radar(Micky) operator would be assigned to each crew. We would fly as lead crews only on deep penetrations into Germany, especially when the target would be obscured by clouds. Since there would be no ball-turrets on the radar aircraft our ball turret gunner

Sgt. K. Holder was not transferred with us.

After a month of training at Chelveston, the Stoullil crew returned to lead the 303rd on a mission to Oranienburg on April 18, 1944.

On April 24, '44, the Stoullil crew was alerted to lead the 384th BG which was scheduled to lead one of the two 41st CBWs tasked to bomb the Oberpfaffenhofen Airdrome near Munich. Col. Dale Smith, CO of the 384th, decided to lead with one of his own crews and aircraft; consequently, we in our radar equipped aircraft, would fly as deputy lead. It was a screwed up mission. Consequently, the 41st CBW-B, led by the 384th bore the brunt of the air attacks by more than 50 Me-109s and FW-190s for more than an hour. It was during one of these air attacks that Sgt Turkington was wounded and upon landing he was hospitalized. It was his 18th mission.

Because of being hospitalized, Sgt Turkington fell behind the rest of the Stoullil crew. who finished their missions on or about D-Day, June 6, 1944 when they flew two missions.

I returned to Molesworth in September of 1944 and started on my second tour. I flew my first mission on my second tour on Sept. 27, 1944 to Cologne, Germany. I ran into Sgt. Turkington at one of the briefings. I believe it was his 20th mission. He now had 15 missions still to fly. During the time he was hospitalized they raised the tour from 30 to 35 missions. Was he penalized for being wounded?

On Sept. 28, 1944, flying with. Lt. W. F. Miller's crew on a mission to bomb the Krupp Works at Magdeburg, Germany, Sgt Turkington was badly wounded by fire from an FW-190. He came out of his tail position and died as he asked Sgt. Tony Zelnio to help him. The 303rd lost 11 B-17s on this mission due to persistent attacks by about 40 to 50 FW-190s and Me-109s. Sgt Calvin Turkington was buried at the American Military Cemetery at Margraten in the Netherlands.

I wrote this column as a tribute to a good friend, Sgt. Calvin G. Turkington, husband and father, as well as a fine and courageous soldier who gave his all for his country.

He died as he lived; quietly without fanfare but when all is said and done, I'd like to say that he, like John Glenn, had the "right stuff."

The Continuing Saga of "Earthquake McGoon" NEW EVIDENCE SURFACES, MYSTERY ALLEGED MURDERS OF TWO DOWNE

By Eddie Deerfield

On 17 April 1945, on a mission to Dresden, Germany, the B-17 "Earthquake McGoon" piloted by 1st Lt. Thomas F. Kahler was lost with its crew of eight. Six bailed out and survived as prisoners of war. Lt. Kahler and tail gunner Sgt. Theodore R. Smith were listed as killed in action, and were believed to have been slain on the ground by Czech civilians. New evidence casts doubt on the theory that both were murdered.

The most recent sources are Richard Bowler, Jr., aboard the ill-fated "Earthquake McGoon" as one of the few enlisted navigators in the Eighth Air Force during World War II, and Radovan Helt, grandson of a Czech witness to the crash of the B-17.

Sgt. Bowler was a POW for less than a month when he was freed by advancing Allied forces. A year later, on 10 April 1946, he gave an official statement in response to a military inquiry into the deaths of Lt. Kahler and Sgt. Smith. The text of his statement to Lt. Col. John T. Burns of the Adjutant General's office follows. Navigator Dick Bowler made it available to us a few months ago.

"On the 17th day of April, 1945 a B-17 bomber was dispatched from the 303rd Bomb Group of the 8th Air Force, England with the above-named flight personnel, to participate in a bombing mission to Dresden, Germany.

"When approaching the target for the first bomb run, the lead bombardier of our group was unable to synchronize his bomb sight and a second bomb run was necessitated.

"The second bomb run enabled enemy ground gun crews to obtain a better bearing upon us. The resulting flak was extremely detrimental to a second synchronization of the lead bombardier's bombsight. It is firmly believed that this was the reason for a second bomb run failure,

"A third bomb run was anticipated and carried out with the initial point bearing 172 degrees and 50 miles from the original target. About eight minutes after turning on our new run the aircraft which these men were flying received four direct hits of enemy anti-aircraft fire. The first hit completely demolished the wing root and main gas tanks of the port wing and immediately exposed the entire aircraft to burning gasoline. The pilot continued his line of flight and kept his position.

"The second hit occurred about twenty seconds later just beneath the lower ball-turret, smashing the ventral side of the aircraft and severely injuring the lower ball-gunner. It was this hit that decommissioned the interphone and warning bell system.

"A third hit unfortunately exploded within our open bomb bay, knocking all bombs, with the exception of one, off of the shackles. The remaining bomb was a 250-pound incendiary bomb which ignited and exploded within, tearing away the radio room's partition and severely injuring the radio operator.

"The fourth hit came through the ventral side of the nose and completely demolished the controls, most of the instruments and oxygen supply.

"With what control the pilot might have had, we nosed out of formation from 24,000 feet and proceeded toward the ground at an angle of attack of 35 degrees.

"At this point preparation was made for a bail-out. Upon turning toward the escape hatch, the navigator was confronted by the co-pilot Lt. Cotton, who said that to the best of his knowledge Lt. Kahler was not injured but would not leave his position. Lt. Kahler could not help but know the extreme danger of staying in his position at this time, but insisted on the welfare of the men who flew with him.

"Smith, the tail gunner was completely cut off from voice contact, since the preceding oxygen check was received and logged by the navigator.

"The navigator was first to leave the aircraft by way of the nose escape hatch. A 70-second interval ensued from the time of bail-out until

time of sustenance by parachute. At this time, the navigator saw the aircraft in the distance falling from the sky above in small pieces. It had exploded in the air presumably before the pilot had a chance to make an escape.

"After reaching the ground, transportation was provided by German Gestapo agents to the scene of the felled aircraft. It was at this time that German medical officers were seen to have been picking up what apparently might have been the remaining parts of Lt. Kahler's body, and possibly the remains of Sgt. Smith's body, and placing them into sanitary receptacles for their future disposal.

"Sgt. Smith might have died in his position or he might have bailed out injured and died later; or again, he may have bailed out in safety with his parachute failing to open. If he landed on the ground uninjured, he might have been killed by the German civilians or, if injured, died, and a failure on the part of the Germans to report and pass in identification resulted.

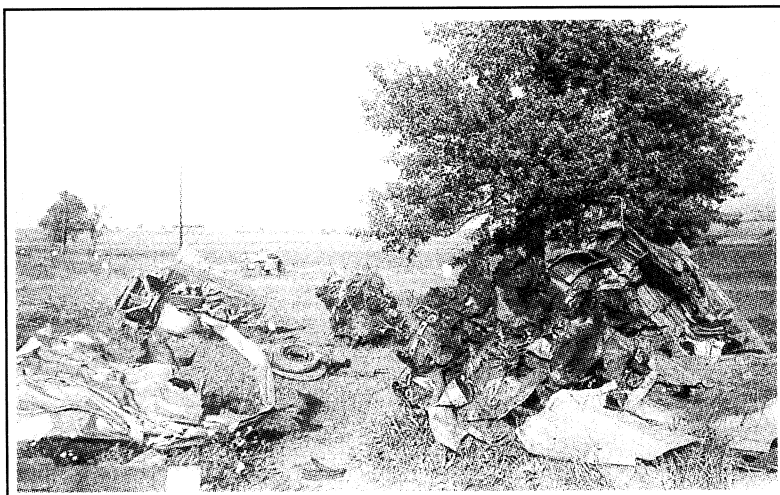
"This fatal accident occurred approximately seven miles north of Brux, Germany at about 1515 G.C.T.

"It is the desire of his living crew members that Lt. Kahler's skill and undaunted efforts, coupled with his meritorious achievements and spirit, be weighed with the utmost care and consideration before an official Military Award Board for the recommendation of one of the three highest awards. We, who knew and flew with both Lt. Kahler and Sergeant Smith, regarded such soldiers of war as men of the highest order."

Dick Bowler's statement is the most detailed account we have of the final moments of "Earthquake McGoon."

In addition to Bowler, five other crew members bailed out and were taken prisoner by the Germans—co-pilot L. Cotton, togglier R. T. Fogarty, engineer L. Lowrey, radio operator L. L. Latz and ball turret gunner W. A. Broughton.

In a 1987 comment to the Hell's Angels Newsletter, Bill Broughton claimed, "Czech civilians and the Nazi SS murdered



THE REMAINS OF "EARTHQUAKE MCGOON"—Wreckage from the crash occupied Czechoslovakia. The photos were taken in 1945 by Ladislav Helt

REMAINS IN THE D 303rd AIRMEN

Kahler and Smith on the ground and hanged their bodies in a tree." But, Boughton came down in a different area and did not actually witness the killings he reported.

In a follow-up letter a few months later, Barry Gilkes, who was on a B-17 in the same formation as the Kahler crew, said he saw "Earthquake McGoon" take a direct hit and explode, and saw only one man bail out. He added that he met the stricken plane's engineer Lowrey in a Greensboro, NC, reassignment center in the summer of 1945 who told him, "Four got out, but civilians and the S.S. killed two of them." Again, there's nothing to indicate that Lowrey was witness to the alleged murders; he may have been passing on hearsay evidence.

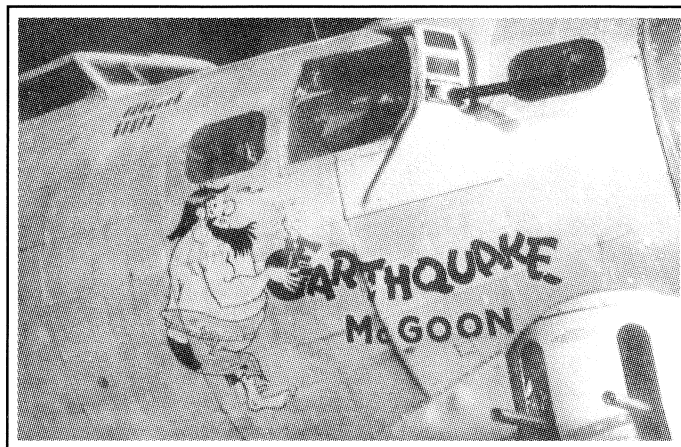
The facts are further complicated by the testimony of L. L. Contreras, ball turret gunner on "Sack Time," who bailed out of the 303rd B-17 shot down on the same mission. He said he was taken prisoner by angry civilians and, from the distance, saw an airman being shot by the unruly mob. While the identity of the slain airman has never been officially determined, evidence points to the victim as Sgt. Edward G. Eschinger, toqqlier on "Sack Time."

Karl Novak, a Czech historian who resides in the city of Most near Brux, conducted seven years of research into the crash of "Earthquake McGoon" as Chairman of the North Czechoslovakia Aviation Archive. His findings indicated that the pilot Lt. Thomas F. Kahler died at the controls or was killed when the plane crashed. He concluded that Sgt. Theodore R. Smith was killed by revengeful civilians while "on the parachute."

Novak was instrumental in recent years in establishing a memorial to honor the two dead American fliers who were buried in the village of Libkovice near Most. The memorial was dedicated in June, 1996 near the town's new airport.

Radovan Helt, founder of a private museum focused primarily on the World War II air war in the Brux-Most area, is a third generation of Czech citizens linked to the "Earthquake McGoon" disaster. On 17 April 1945, his grandfather watched the ill-fated B-17 explode in the air and crash about four miles from where he stood.

Shortly after Germany's surrender on 8 May 1945 put



an end to the occupation of Czechoslovakia, Helt's father and grandfather visited the scene of the crash. The ground was still littered with the wreckage of "Earthquake McGoon." They took photographs of sections of the aircraft and collected several souvenirs that they could carry off by hand.

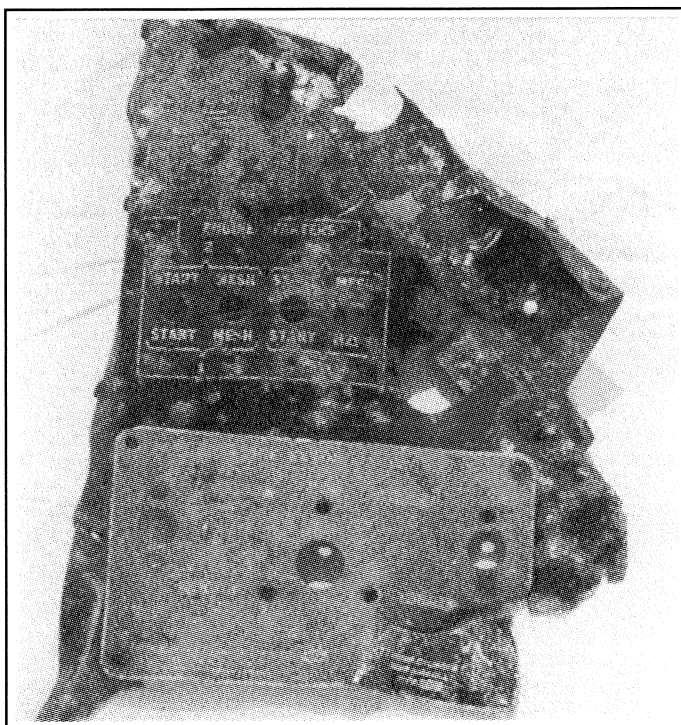
Helt said his father, 16 years old at the time, wanted to cut from the nose "a picture of a figure with a burning grenade in the hand," but didn't have the tools to do so.

The Helt family maintained its interest through the generations in the air war over its country, and has met in recent years with the 303rd's Les Latz, the radio operator who bailed out in time to survive the crash and ended the war as a German prisoner.

As recently as June of 1998, Radovan Helt returned to the scene with a metal detector and uncovered a part of "Earthquake McGoon's" cockpit instrument panel.

Today, almost 53 years later, what conclusions can we draw from all the evidence and reports available to us concerning the fate of the eight-man crew? From an evaluation of all the data, it appears most likely that Lt. Kahler, the pilot, was already dead when his body was found at the crash site, that Sgt. Smith, the tail gunner, was murdered on the ground by civilians after parachuting and that the remaining six airmen bailed out safely and survived as prisoners of war.

The mystery is that we will never know with an absolute certainty how the lives of Tom Kahler and Ted Smith ended.



SCRAP OF B-17 INSTRUMENT PANEL—This fragment from the cockpit of "Earthquake McGoon" was dug up in 1998.



the B-17 is strewn over the countryside in the vicinity of Brux in German-
nd provided to the Newsletter recently by his grandson, Radovan Helt.

303rd Ground Troops: DID ANYTHING HAPPEN TO YOU AT MOLESWORTH?

By Maurice Paulk, Supply Sergeant, 444th Sub-Depot

Isn't it odd that only the combat crews have something to talk about? Didn't anything happen to you guys in the 33 to 36 months that we spent at Molesworth? How about some humorous happening or maybe something on the trip over.

I have a copy of the diary that Robert Petersen (from Santa Barbara, CA) kept on the ship on the way to England. The "Marnix Von Sent Aldegon," that is. How about it Pete ??

That brought back some memories. Fish eye-ball stew, British hard tack, bitter orange marmalade and our main rations of PX Hershey bars and Pepsi. And don't forget the fresh bread from the bakers while on KP and the stolen apples.

Let's have a bull session—How about this one for starters:

MUDDY WELCOME: On arrival at Molesworth on October 8, 1942 we were assigned to Site #1. Like the rest of the base, it was a total mess. The base was in the process of being finished by the RAF. There were no "working" latrines (remember the "Honey Pots").

If there was a stool available and in operation the Irish workers usually left muddy boot prints on the edge of the porcelain. I don't think they ever sat down.

They were installing water and a water heating system in the building near us. The trenches between buildings had "bridges" over them consisting of mostly none-too-wide planks.

Our Supply Sgt was a M/ Sgt by the name of Jake Ruefer from Alaska (27 1/2 Years of service when he was shipped overseas.) He was a very large man and quite a drinker besides.

On his way back to his barracks one night from the NAAFI (British Navy Army Air Force Institute) Club, he missed his step and wedged himself into one of the trenches. After much profanity on his part and the five or six

G.I.s that helped, he was freed from that very muddy trench.

A TRIP TO THE DEPOT: Buck Buckner was driving and I was along for the ride. We had a cab-over Autocar tractor and a low-boy trailer.

On the way to the depot we traveled a nice wide highway until we came to a town with a "T" where we had to negotiate a left turn.

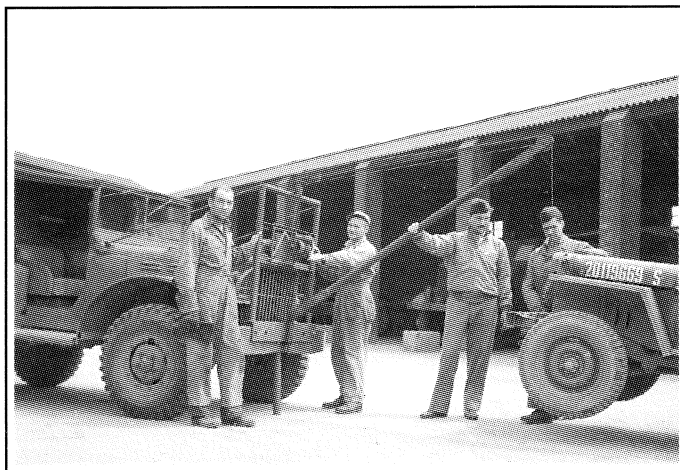
Buck put it in the lowest gear and told me to get out the window and hold up the awning. As he made the turn I'm holding up the awning, the right front wheel is on the side-walk, the wheel lugs are within inches of a shop's plate glass window and the store keeper is watching us with a very concerned look on his face. His lips were moving but we didn't hear what he was saying.

After clearing this obstacle, we headed out of town by way of an underpass with a downward sloping approach. Buck gunned the engine, shut off the ignition and said "Let's see if we can get rid of this governor."

On reaching the upward slanting exit he depressed the foot-feed and turned on the ignition. There was a resounding "boom" from the exhaust.

A three or four year old girl was playing in the yard to our left. The noise of the back-fire caused her to jump and run screaming into her house. Our first reaction was to laugh—then we called each other a "dirty bird" for acting that way.

GRAND OPENING: I wasn't present at the "Grand Opening" when one of the fellows received a real treat—a can of Van Camp's Pork & Beans! He set them on the stove to warm but forgot to punch holes in the lid. The



KEEP 'EM DRIVING!—The 303rd's motor pool repair unit kept the wheels rolling. Like every soldier who served in any military occupational specialty at Molesworth, these men were cogs in the Hell's Angels machine that helped win the war.

natural result of pent-up steam in the can was visible that evening when I got to the barracks after supper—beans all over the ceiling. He had quite a time scraping them off too.

I don't want to get carried away so maybe I had

better stop here.

Just remember fellows—when a memory intrudes on your thoughts (and it's usually when you don't expect it) write it down and share it with the rest of us. If you don't, I'll bore you with some more of my own!

An Insider's Look at Molesworth's World War II Gas Defense Set-up

By James Kintner, 3rd Provisional Station Gas Defense Detachment

The 123rd Chemical Squadron left Ft. Dix on June 3, 1942 for Grimsby, England.

In July, we were broken into 4-men detachments and sent to other air bases in England. My team was sent to RAF Molesworth as members of the 3rd Provisional Station Gas Defense Detachment. We were then attached to the 359th Squadron for payroll.

The 15th Air Squadron was stationed there at that time. It was sent to North Africa.

Our job was to prepare the station in case of a chemical attack and to train personnel in the protection and decontamination of aircraft and themselves along with other equipment on base.

We had our office in the building at the end of the road across the road from number 4 hanger and the QM. The building was also a warehouse for decontamination clothing.

In back of the office building was the gas cham-

ber to test gas masks. Up the road was our warehouse for storing chloride of lime. My living quarters were nearby. Down across from the enlisted men's mess hall was our Decontamination Center for men to go in case of a chemical attack.

There we had a shower with hot water and a change of uniforms. We had 300 complete uniforms stored there. There was also the quarters for the other three men of the unit. We had three 1,000 gallon decontamination trucks.

Sometime in 1944, the 3rd Station Complement came to Molesworth and we were transferred to them.

The three men who started out with me were:

Floyd Williams from Prescott, Arizona;

Wilford Payne from Ogden, Utah, and

Char Price from Salt Lake City, Utah.

When Floyd Williams left for Officer Candidate School, he was replaced by Sidney Richmond from New York.

Molesworth Diary

THE TASTE TEST WENT WRONG

The target was Halberstadt on 30 May 1944. Took a major hit in #1 engine. It threw a piston and lost oil pressure so that the prop couldn't be feathered. Because of the wind-milling prop, we couldn't keep up with the formation or maintain altitude. We hoped that we could make it back as far as the Channel and then expected to ditch the aircraft.

Everything loose was thrown overboard to lighten the load. Fortunately, we had personal fighter escort back to coast. We were flying so slow that fighters had to put flaps and wheels down to stay with us. We appreciated P-38's because they would fly closer to us than other fighters.

The #1 engine and left wing vibrated so violently that the cowlings fell off and many rivets popped in the wing. As we approached the English coast, fuel gauges registered empty. We discussed the option of ditching, but all favored a try at a dry landing. Fortunately, John Watson, our pilot, was able to stretch our approach to a landing at a fighter base that I located near the coast.

During the channel crossing, bombardier John Borg taste-tested some yellow fluid dripping from tubing on the bulkhead in front of the pilots, thinking he should report a hydraulic leak. I'll never forget the expression on his face when he discovered that the fluid was urine. Watson and co-pilot Glen Neely were so busy keeping the aircraft under control that, thinking that the airplane was going to be ditched anyway, the pilot didn't bother to use the relief tube.

Charles Coe
358th Navigator

NO INTEREST IN A PURPLE HEART

I think that my greatest achievement was that, after all we heard about the Luftwaffe and all the flak guns that we were told about at briefings, I still managed to fly 30 missions without ever getting a decent shot at an enemy fighter and had only one piece of flak come close. Of course, it did wreck my radio transmitter, which I was leaning against. It missed me by six inches, which was okay because I never wanted a Purple Heart anyway.

Herbert Kennedy
359th Radio Operator

A TRIBUTE TO MOM

After a rough mission to Berlin, a lieutenant and I were in the armament tent cleaning our guns when he told me of an incident that had taken place while he was stationed at the Kingman, Arizona, Gunnery School. As he was new to the squadron, he didn't know that I was raised in Kingman.

He told me he had been in Kingman only three times—his arrival, his departure and a mandatory formation for a ceremony in front of the County Courthouse. He recalled that a local widow was being honored on Memorial Day, 1943 be-

cause all her five sons had enlisted and were overseas in combat. The new lieutenant told me what he thought of any woman stupid enough to have five sons in the first place, much less to have them overseas in combat.

I informed him that the foolish woman was my mother, Della McDevitt. None of her sons were in Kingman at the time to see her honored, but this lieutenant was, though not by choice. About 18 months later, my brother, S/Sgt. Francis McDevitt, was killed in the Battle of the Bulge.

Theodore McDevitt
360th Bombardier

A CREW CHIEF'S GLORY

The most satisfying experience was never to have our plane abort on a mission. "The 8-Ball" led the Group many times with Col. Calhoun, Romig, Cole and many others at the controls. Clark Gable flew on "The 8-Ball," as did many others who were well known.

The most unusual experience? Probably two—the morning that an armourer dropped all the bombs onto the ground while loading a plane across the road from us and the morning a tail gunner sprayed the Guard House with 50-cal. ammo. Most of the time, though, everyone did their best to keep things running smooth.

Duane Turner
359th Crew Chief

FROM THE NOSE CONE TO THE CLASSROOM

After Germany's surrender, a program was devised by the 8th Air Force to bring learning to all personnel at air bases. Courses and classes were established. Apparently, a perusal of my records noted my college studies and degree. And lo, I became an instructor.

This was truly an exhilarating experience—from the macabre participation in daily bombing to the ivy halls of an Officer's Club was exciting. My class of seven included three mechanics, two headquarters personnel, a pilot and a navigator. We analyzed the causes and history of World Wars I and II and military combat in general. We solved nothing nor did we really get into the heart of the matter.

Daily missions were the awesome, frightening routine of our war. This shortened journey into academia was an unusual experience.

Clifford Steinberg
427th Bombardier

OUR OWN BOMBS HIT OUR FORMATIONS

I was on Lt. John Scott's crew on a raid to a German air field towards the end of the air war over Germany. The attack strategy was to send the bombers in first at low level to destroy anti-aircraft defenses. Armament for the raid was

(See DIARY on page 14)

Diary (Continued from page 13)

fragmentation bomb clusters. The fighters would then attack after the Group's run.

When the attack started and bombs were released the clusters broke open as they left the bomb bay. Squadron bombs came back into our own formations causing heavy damage and loss to our aircraft. The tubular rack fuses of the clusters had not been set to give us time to get away from the falling clusters. This was the first and only time that I could actually see German soldiers on the ground and fire my nose guns at them.

Our plane was hit and resulted in two engine fires. Coming off the target, we climbed to altitude and headed to England. The pilot gave the order to reduce weight by throwing out as much equipment as possible. Our co-pilot, Lt. Weinant, came on intercom and asked if he had to throw out the apple he had gotten at the mess that morning. That broke the tension in the plane.

It was soon apparent we still had a major problem and the order was given to prepare to jump. I attached my chute to my harness and sat down with my legs hanging out of the front hatch ready to jump into the North Sea. Lt. Bergson, our navigator, grabbed my harness and pulled me back into the plane. The fires were under control and we made it back to Molesworth.

After we taxied to our site, the crew chief told us to come around to the front of the B-17. Our number one engine had a tubular rack behind the propeller lodged against the cylinders. He said if the rack had moved forward a fraction of an inch, the engine would have exploded.

Robert Morris
360th Togglier

GERMAN BUZZ BOMB ATTACK ON BEDFORD

In the fall of 1944, our crew was granted "flak leave." As we returned to base, Loren Clark, my co-pilot, and I stayed overnight in the town of Bedford near Molesworth. We checked in at the Red Cross Club, the usual place for U.S. troops. We had started to undress when the air raid sirens went off. Suddenly, we heard the putt-putt sound of the German V-1 bomb.

Civilians could be heard yelling, screaming and running for the air raid shelter. I suggested to Clark that we dress quickly and find an air raid shelter. Clark replied, "They've shot at us a lot closer than this and missed. Let's stay here."

Just then, the engine on the V-1 quit. All was complete silence for a few seconds, then the explosion. It seemed that the building was rocking. The one light fixture hanging down from the ceiling in the center of the room started to sway back and forth. We heard the civilians screaming and yelling again. We went to bed.

Benjamin O'Dell
359th Navigator



LETTER FROM BRITAIN—Theresa and Ray Cossey write to say "hello" to many friends in 303rd Bomb Group Association.

FORMER UK LIAISON URGES "ONE LAST" REUNION IN ENGLAND

Way back in 1983, I think it was, at your Washington DC reunion, you honored me with Honorary Membership of the 303rd Bomb Group Association. Since then I have been privileged to attend several of the Group's reunions, both within your country and here in England.

As your then UK Liaison it was my pleasure to organize no less than three get-togethers over here, and I look back with fond memories of the times many of you enjoyed with Theresa and myself back in our country.

We have forged so many friendships over the almost 20 years I have been associated with the 303rd and have enjoyed many stateside visits and benefited from numerous 303rders' hospitality. Likewise, many of you have been welcomed into our home and we've always enjoyed having you visit with us.

Theresa and I regularly exchange letters and/or faxes with our many 303rd friends and every so often chat with them on the phone. With the unrelenting passage of time we've seen several such friends move on to that better place and we miss them. I suppose we have to accept that, by its very nature, organizations like the 303rd will inevitably diminish in membership. Sad, but true.

My real reason for writing this piece is to apologize to our many 303rd friends for not having attended a reunion within the States for some years. As you will know only too well, it's a long way (especially to the West coast) and not inexpensive. Having said that Theresa and I do promise to get out the passports and get to the States in the not too distant future.

We often think about our friends in the 303rd and like to think they recall us from time-to-time. Whilst I am no longer the U-K Liaison for your Group (that's now Robin Beeby's job), I hope that there'll be an opportunity for one last mini-reunion over here. If this should come about I can assure you I'll be there to meet with you once again and to share a pint in a traditional English pub!

Just because we're out of sight does not mean you're ever out of our mind. We wish you all you would wish yourselves in the future and express the hope that if you're ever this way you'll look us up.

Ray Cossey
Oaklands, 73 Blofield Corner Road
Little Plumstead, Norwich
NR13 5HU Norfolk, England

OPEN FORUM

BATTLE OF SHORT TIMERS RAGES ON!

In the February, 1998 issue, the question was asked, "Who in the 303rd holds the record for flying 35 missions in the least amount of time." Attached is a copy of the list of missions I flew. As you can see, I flew my 35 missions in 72 days.

Arthur Johnson
200 Wyndemere, W-115
Wheaton, IL 60187

I'm not claiming a record, but would like to mention my tour duration. I started my tour on May 29, 1944 and completed 33 missions on July 31, 1944. A total of 64 days. To say the least, I was quite busy.

Donald Keating
3901 Briarcrest Dr.
Norman, OK 73072

I have enclosed a copy of my combat record, certified by Capt. Frederick R. Schuknecht. You will note that I flew 35 missions between May 20 and July 13, 1944 in 55 days.

Dale Bartholomew
248 Sodom-Hutchings Rd.
Vienna, OH 44473

IN FOR THE DURATION

During the recent 359th Squadron meeting at the Savannah reunion, Joe Vieira made an emotional tribute to the ground crews who supported the flight crews.

Thinking about Joe's remarks, I remember some time in the middle of 1944, while I was working in the headquarters personnel section, someone asked the question "How many men on the ground does it take to keep one man in the air?"

After considering all the squadrons, the supporting organizations stationed at Molesworth and all the outside logistical supporting personnel, our calculations came to ten to one. With a 10-man crew on a B-17, it took 100 ground personnel to keep them flying.

The ground personnel

had to stay almost three years at Molesworth. There was no glory in their work and no medals were handed out, but they did give support and sweated out every mission. I applaud Joe Vieira's comments, made from the bottom of his heart.

John Ford
4248 W. Colby St.
Springfield, MO 65802

ANYONE REMEMBER WINNIE FAUBION?

We're the grandsons of Winfred E. Faubion. We think he was a gunnery instructor with the 303rd. We're looking for anyone who know him or flew with him.

Our grandfather passed away on July 19, 1980. We didn't get to hear the stories or learn much about what he did. We have a small photo album that shows he was on the lead crew for a mission to Hamburg 20 March 1945 with the 359th Squadron. We've been in touch with the pilot in the photo, Bill Eisenhart, but he has little information to offer.

John and Ryan Nolan
c/o Jean Nolan
14922 W. 82nd Ter.
Lenexa, KS 66215

A FAMILY APPEAL TO SHARE INFORMATION

My dad was 2d Lt. Neal Hainlin, a co-pilot, and was shot down on June 28, 1944 over France. Although he survived being a POW in Reims, France he lost his battle with Alzheimer's in 1996. Before he died, we were contacted by John Snede, waist gunner on that mission, and we learned about many of the crew on that plane.

Mr. Snede traveled back to Reims to see the field where their plane was shot down and met with the families that hid him and helped him to escape. My dad was badly wounded and taken prisoner.

My mom is still living. We would love to share information,

READERS—This is your space. Let's have your comments on the way things were or the way things are. Write to Editor, Hell's Angels Newsletter, 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016.

and look forward to hearing from any one in the 303rd.

Sarah Crutchfield
4012 Stonewall Tell Rd.
College Park, GA 30349

A NICE COMPLIMENT

The tradition lives on.

The November 1998 Hell's Angels Newsletter continues the excellence we in the 303rd BG Association have become accustomed to for many years. Even before this first issue, we were more than confident that you would be up to this new venture. Knowing you as one who will accept nothing but the best, there was no doubt what the results of your efforts would be.

Al and Lorene Dussliere
1901 5th St.
East Moline, IL 61244

SEARCHING FOR GROUND CREWS

My husband John Hendry was one of many that actually piloted the famous "Hell's Angels" B-17 on some missions (not sure how many.) I have a picture of him painting one of the bombs on the side of the ship.

I lost my precious husband in 1990 (cancer) but I still keep him alive by researching some of the events in his life.

I plan on answering Joss Leclercq's request for more information as soon as I can compile it. I'm also writing a letter to Archives in Washington, DC to see if it's possible to locate any of the ground crew members. Wouldn't it be great to get in contact with one of them! I can imagine the pride and concern for "their" B-17 and its crew, and anxiously searching the skies upon returning from a mission.

Mrs. Gloria Hendry
4716 Princess Anne Ln
Jacksonville, FL 32210

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Mons. Leclercq is a French writer interested in WW II aviation. Lt. Hendry, 358th Squadron,

survived as a prisoner of war after his unnamed B-17 crashed near Valenciennes, France on 20 October 1943. In addition to *Hell's Angels*, John Hendry also piloted *Meat Hound*, *Black Diamond Express* and *War Bride*.)

YOU'RE ALL INVITED TO MOLESWORTH'S 1999 HANGAR DANCE

We are all grateful for the service the 303rd provided to our great nation, and wanted you to know that the legacy lives on.

This is evidenced by the many reminders we have at Molesworth, and the occasional functions we have to honor the memories of those that served before us.

One such function is our annual "Hangar Dance," which was attended this past year by over 1,200 people in the 1940's dress and honoring over 100 8th Air Force veterans and/or family members who were our guests.

Our next hangar dance is scheduled for June 5, 1999 at RAF Molesworth and it's a privilege to extend an invitation.

SMSgt Bob Jones
423 ABS/LGC
PSC 47, Unit 5720
APO AE 09470-5720

MUSEUM CURATOR DOING BOOK ON B-17 GRAVEYARD

Over the past seven years, I've been putting together a book about the 475 combat aircraft that were scrapped at our airport in 1946. Among them were 78 B-17's, including some which saw service with the 303rd Bomb Group.

They were *Hell's Angels*, *Knockout Dropper*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, *The Flying Bitch* and *Wabash Cannonball*.

I'm trying to acquire photographs of those historic aircraft. Also, I'd like to make contact with former crew members in order to record for posterity their memories about their Flying Fortresses. I'd like to encourage anyone who is interested in these specific B-17's to contact me as soon as they can if they'd like to assist me in this endeavor.

John L. Dienst, Curator
Stillwater Airport Museum
P. O. Box 6042
Enid, OK 73702

MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS AT THE 1998 REUNION

THE FOLLOWING MINUTES WERE COMPILED BY 303RD BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION SECRETARY RICHARD R. JOHNSON. THEY WERE CONDENSED TO MEET NEWSLETTER SPACE CONSIDERATIONS. FULL TEXTS ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE SECRETARY.

General Meeting of 25 August 1998

The general meeting was called to order at its scheduled time of 1015 by President Hal Susskind who asked for and received approval of the 1997 minutes. He gave a comprehensive overview of the activities of the past year, mentioning especially the St. Nazaire memorial. He also mentioned that the site of the 1999 reunion has been tentatively approved for San Antonio with much leg work to be done. Room rates will be about \$75.00.

Hal talked also about the difficulty of getting those earned awards, saying that the regulations are 180 degrees from reality and that assisting our members is necessary.

Treasurer Bill Roche reported that the audit would be at the end of the fiscal year. He gave a report on the finances of the group.

Vice President for Administration Harry Gobrecht had no report.

Vice President for Reunions Walt Ferrari reported on attendance and cancellations. He returned the money of those who couldn't make it, but said that 528 had signed up for the banquet.

Widow's Representative Joanna Tressler had no report, but reported earlier that she was making a special effort to interest grandchildren in becoming members.

Associate Representative Charlie Sykes reported that the associate membership is growing at a satisfactory pace.

Membership Chairman Ed Miller gave data indicating 40 new members, 74 new associate members, 76 upgrades to life member and 17 super-life. There were 61 deaths in the past year, leaving us 1289 regular and 305 associate and 319 widow members. He is still sending out distinguished service awards and thanked Lew Lyle for the original idea. Ed gave the address for our 700 page web site. (WWW.303rdbga.com).

Newsletter Editor Eddie Deerfield has taken the job vacated by Hal's retirement. He asked that Hal remain on the editorial staff and sent a letter to Hal and Rae thanking them for their many years of dedicated service to the 303rd Bomb Group.

Historian Harry Gobrecht reported on his many projects along with his new responsibility to the museum. He urged veterans to donate war related artifacts to the museum. His book, *Might in Flight* has about 150 unsold from the run of 500. When they are all sold we will realize a profit of about \$7000.00.

Brian McGuire, English representative from Molesworth, gave a presentation and read a poem "The Liberators" which is a salute to American servicemen and women who came to the aid of the British in World War Two.

PX Chairman, Charlie Sykes mentioned that members of the Motorcycle gang "Hell's Angels" came into our PX and bought about \$800.00 worth of goods.

Jack Rencher had no report, but then added from the floor that the Website has added to his workload by people wanting copies of mission reports.

Lew Lyle in a brief statement said that he is proud to be a member of the best outfit out of World War Two. He was referring to the 303rd Bomb Group, of course.

Eddie Deerfield, Chairman of the Past President's Committee, said that their responsibility of nominating officers for the next year would be easier if more veterans would take an active role in the organization. The Committee nominated Harry Gobrecht for President, Bill Roche for VP for Administration, Dick Johnson for Secretary and Jack Rencher for Treasurer. The position of Vice President for Reunions was left vacant for the time being. There were no nominations from the floor and motion to close nominations was made and seconded. The vote was unanimous. Those nominated were elected to begin serving immediately.

Eddie Deerfield gave a further report on the Association Service Recognition Memorial which was dedicated at the Museum during the

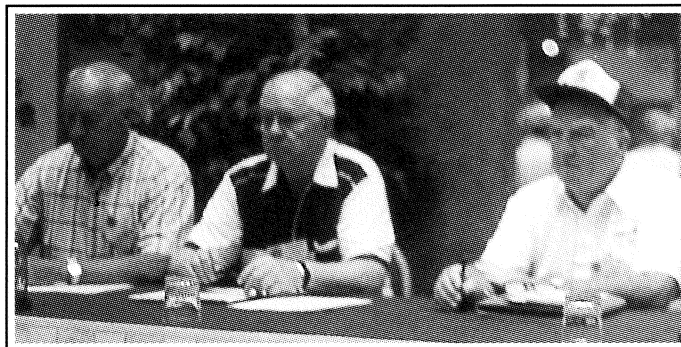
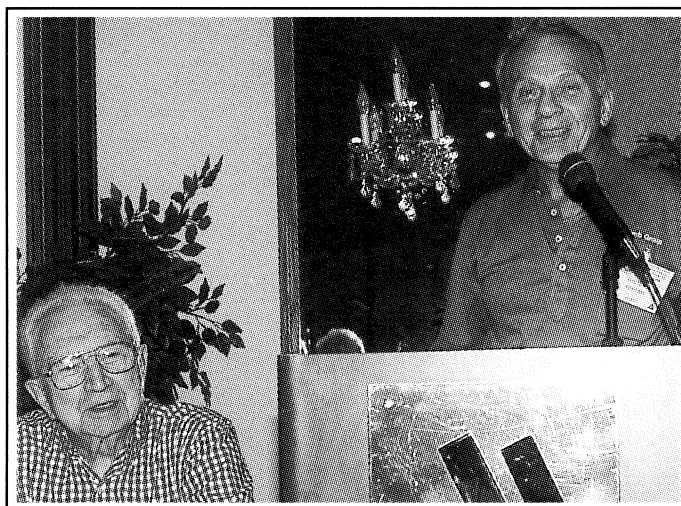
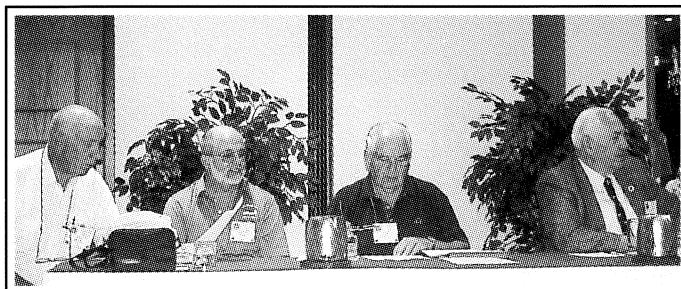
Sunday service. He appealed for volunteers to fill vacancies on the Board as they occur, and to serve on committees as well.

Joe Vieira gave an impassioned talk about his pleasure of seeing Colonel Kermit Stevens and how he felt about all the people at the reunion. He talked of his work in the ground crews. Dick Johnson added a few words concerning the near impossibility of doing an adequate pre-flight of so large an airplane as the B-17 on such short notice preceding a mission. It was necessary to rely on the ground crews to assure that all was ready to go. And it was.

For those needing mission reports, identify the date and the pilot of that aircraft and which mission of that day if there were two on that day.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:17 with the pledge of allegiance led by Walt Mayer. Pictures were made of the first reunion attendees of 1948 who were at this reunion, after the adjournment.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard R. Johnson, Secretary



ON THE FIRING LINE—Members of the Board report at the General Meeting. **TOP**—(l to r) Walt Mayer, 358th Squadron Representative; Charlie Sykes, Associate Members Representative; Eddie Deerfield, Chairman of Past Presidents Committee and Harry Gobrecht, Vice President for Administration. **MIDDLE**—Hal Susskind, President, and Walt Ferrari, Vice President for Reunions. **BOTTOM**—Dick Johnson, Secretary; Ed Miller, Membership Chairman, and Bill Roche, Treasurer.

Board of Directors meeting Tuesday August 25, 1998

The meeting was called to order by new president Harry Gobrecht at 1300, who gave a few opening remarks and thanked all those who have worked with him in the past. He distributed to board members his list of appointments for 1998-1999 committee chairmen with some changes in responsibilities.

New treasurer Jack Rencher gave a report on the upcoming audit at the end of the fiscal year. He will continue to keep records in the same manner that Bill Roche has been doing.

Secretary Dick Johnson had no report.

It was suggested that the Chairman of the Past Presidents Committee should be on the executive board. It was pointed out that this would require a change in the by-laws and was tabled for the time being.

New VP for Administration Bill Roche said that he had no report as yet.

Bill Heller of the 360th says that his squadron did not want to go to San Antonio in August, it being a hotter time of year.

Jack Rencher asked that the ground personnel be recognized at tonight's banquet.

Vern Stone of the 427th reported that the room was crowded at its squadron meeting.

Walt Mayer of the 358th said that yearly reunions was the desire of that group.

Ed Miller recommended that we buy a new printer for Ed Gardner costing \$158.68 since we were responsible for wearing his out. Approved. Ed talked about sending a floppy disc of our roster to a back-up person in case anything happens to our membership chairman. Roster security was an issue, but the idea had favorable comment.

Eddie Deerfield suggested a personal note from Joanne Tressler to widows who have attended reunions in the past in order to keep them coming back. They have a tendency to drop out over time.

Eddie says that he has no plans to alter the format of the Hell's Angels Newsletter. He gave data on mailing and handling by bulk (19 cents) vs first class (78 cents). Three editions will go bulk rate and the issue before a reunion will go first class. It was decided not to put the Newsletter on the web, but to keep it "in house" for the time being.

Charlie Sykes said that the PX is doing well and thanked Bill Roche for tending store so that he and Viki could go to the museum.

Walt Ferrari gave a report on reunion activities. Eddie Deerfield who has much experience in reunion organizing said that Walt and his wife did an outstanding job with this reunion. (Applause).

Jack Rencher has gone through all the minutes and will do the by-laws as needed. There was much discussion about the need to redefine the membership categories in order to stay within our tax-exempt status. It was suggested that dues paying Molesworth veteran members, their spouses, widows and relatives be listed as "Regular Members" with voting privileges. Unrelated members would be listed as "Friends of the 303rd" and not have voting privileges. Motion by Bill Heller and seconded by Bill Roche. Motion carried.

[It was decided to carry the meeting over to the banquet that evening for a vote by the membership at large so that the by-laws could be legally changed to reflect the new membership status.]

For the mission reports supplied by Jack Rencher it was decided to charge \$5.00 for the first mission, plus ten cents per page. Subsequent mission reports on the same request would cost \$2.00, plus the ten cents per page. The workload for Jack has been compounded by access to the internet by people wanting reports.

Computer data base is as reported in the previous minutes.

Those seeking past overdue awards were told that they must work through their Congressional committee and that the paperwork must be thoroughly documented and complete as they are only looked at once by that committee. (Lew Lyle)

Hal will look into reunion times and prices for September and October vs August in San Antonio and maybe even Albuquerque.

que. Albuquerque is having a balloon festival in October.

There was much discussion about the locale for the year 2000 reunion. Most seemed to think that it should be in the west. Lew Lyle will find a price for a return to Molesworth reunion and Bill Heller will research Las Vegas. There was then some talk about using a reunion service, but there was fear that once a contract was signed, we would lose control. It was decided that if we went with a reunion service we would still have to have a group to solve problems. Walt Mayer and Bill Roche opposed, saying that we could hire our own clerks and still be in control.

In old business, Harry Gobrecht mentioned again about the 8th AF Historical Society vote coming up in Cherry Hill NJ.

Lew spoke about the Mighty 8th Air Force Museum and their plan to install a B-47 so that it would be visible from Interstate Route 95. It would carry the triangle "C" tail logo of the 303rd Bomb Group if donations of 20,000 dollars can be garnered. Bill Heller moved that we donate that amount by using \$10,000 from our treasury with matching amounts from our membership. Ed Gardner seconded and all voted aye. Seven members of the board pledged one thousand dollars each on the spot. This donation is tax deductible and the name of the donors will be placed on a bronze plaque on the museum wall.

Eddie Deerfield said it took most of a year for the Past Presidents Committee and Executive Board to identify and approve the first 20 names on the Association Service Recognition Memorial. He said there's space for 20 more names, and suggested that we add four names a year for the next five years.

Ed Miller reported more about his "Project Digest" of mission reports to be made available to Molesworth veterans on a floppy at no cost. This would commemorate their contribution to the war effort made during our 10,721 sorties. Lew says that we can get the funding and Ed asked for a committee of 4 people to work on the project so that it would be finished for the year 2000 reunion. Motion by Dick Johnson and second by Eddie Deerfield to approve a requested 21,000 dollar expenditure for the project passed with little dissent.

The budget was accepted as presented by Bill Roche with his restrictions and limits. Vern Stone moved that the treasurer be bonded. Seconded and passed.

Meeting was adjourned at 15:15.

Attending were Roche, Gardner, Lyle, Stoner, Sykes, Eisenhart, Heller, Mayer, Miller, Tressler, Rencher, Stone, Ferrari, Gobrecht, Susskind, Deerfield and Johnson.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard R. Johnson, Secretary



ASSOCIATION SERVICE RECOGNITION MONUMENT—Twenty more names will be added to the 20 in place on the marble column in the 8th AF Heritage Museum Memorial Garden. The honors are open to veterans, wives, widows and Associates who have rendered sustained exemplary and distinguished service to the 303rd Bomb Group Association over many years.

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

In my efforts to improve the accuracy of our Master Directory, I am still awaiting the responses from sixty-two (62) of our widow ladies. My mailing, which included a stamped self-addressed return envelope, consisted of 301 letters. One hundred and sixty three of you ladies requested that you remain on our Active Widows list. Fifty six ladies requested to go on the Inactive Widows list. Seven letters were returned indicated that our lady had joined her fallen comrade.

No mailing was made to the ladies who have been attending the Reunions, as I assumed that you wanted to remain Active.

We received 8 returned envelopes with no forwarding addresses, and I suspect that we may have several more that have been going to a bad address.

I will try a second mailing in a few weeks. If I receive no response, they will automatically be placed in the Inactive Widows list.

We have succeeded in locating a service on Internet that lists all of the Area Code changes. I have used all of the area code changes back to 1995, and updated our Master Directory. This is a real advantage as it allows us to publish a new Master Directory with the correct area codes. With the Executive Board's approval we should have a new one in the spring of 1999.

Remember, please send your changes and membership up-dates to me. If you have not received your Newsletter, please contact me rather than the Editor.

Edgar C. "Ed" Miller
422 S. Walnut Avenue
Tempe, OK 73568-0219
(580) 342-5119

NEW MEMBERS

John D. Haynie, (360) 8501 Spring Valley, Raytown, MO 64138-3156
Clement Resto, (358) 2425 Williamsbridge Road, Bronx, NY 10649
Wallace Goldfarb, (358) 8465 E. Hazelwood St., Scottsdale, AZ 85251
(602) 994-9489 (Janice)
Billy A. Cunningham, (359) P. O. Box 68, Gause, TX 77857-0068
(409) 279-5519 (Callie)
Nicholas C. Millek, 171 Bate Avenue, West Berlin, NJ 08091-1865
(609) 768-9456 (Linda) (Father: John Millek)
Barbara King Wallace, 2208 Windward Shore Drive, Virginia Beach, VA
23451-1728 (757) 496-6922 (Father: Raymond Carlton King)
Thomas Lofquist, 740 Pleasant St, Excelsior, MN 55331-3038
(Father: Gordon B. Lofquist)
Danny Nieves, 108 Duellk Avenue, Monroe, NY 10950
(914) 783-0465 (Mildred) (Nephew of Clement Resto)
Henry A. Waas, (427), 2818 Par Valley Court #A, St. Louis, MO 63129-5232
(314) 846-5519
George I. Pilgrim, (427), 9704 U.S. Highway 271, Tyler, TX 75708
(903) 593-5833 (Helen)
Vincent J. DeNisi, (444), 123 Sterling Road, Hyannis, MA 02601-3631
(508) 771-1641 (Michelina)
Carol Kyle Sage, 1771 Blackwell Road, Marietta, GA 30066-2910
(770) 977-7449 (Ken) (dau of George A. Kyle)
Dan West, 12810 Hwy 43, Seneca, MO 64865 (417) 776-3555
(Karen)(Close Friend of Wesley A. Gradeville 360th)
Sandi Bachom, 235 E. 22st, Apt 16J, New York City, NY 10010
(212) 686-6979 (Barry)(Niece of Thomas F. Bachom 359th KIA)
Mark J. Adamic, 627 W. Jefferson, Joliet, IL 60435-7301
(815)726-345 (Aviation Artist)
Rex Miller, 5023 Sangamore Rd, Bethesda, MD 20816-2327
(301) 229-1031 (Lisa) (Son of Richard C. Miller)
Jeremiah McLaughlin, H.C. 63, Box 155, Ozark, AR 72949-0155
(Grandson of Jesse W. McLaughlin 427th)
Richard W. Gushman, 151 Saxon Court, Rochester, MI 48307-3158
(248) 651-0202 (Mary) (Nephew of T/Sgt Edward N. Lovelock)
Wesley F. Gradeville, (360), P. O. Box 255, Vinita, OK 74301-0255
Arthur S. Middleton, (359), 4154 Mayflower Blvd, Columbus, OH
43213-2366 (614) 235-4037 (Lucile)

IN MEMORIAM

James S. Andrus (359), 17 July 1996
Joseph E. Bowman (444), 29 July 1998
James F. Fowler (427), 28 April 1998
David E. Johnson (359), 28 October 1998
Doris Ida Lovold, 20 October 1998
(wife of Ole Lovold)
Arthur B. Middlemas (360), 8 January 1997
Harley D. Snider (358), 18 January 1998
Loy E. Tingley (358), 17 October 1998
Robert E. Clippinger (360), 17 November 1998

SUPER LIFE MEMBERS UPDATE

Rex Miller (Son of Richard C. Miller)
Joseph Vieira
George T. Mackin
William S. McLeod, Jr.
Frank DeCicco
Samuel W. Smith
James B. Taylor
Edgar E. Snyder
Dale E. Schneider
Vernon W. Stone
Gilbert C. Borges
Anthony J. Cecchini
Frank Doherty
Morton M. Moon, Jr
Irl E. Baldwin

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Gordon A. Ballagh (360)
Philip T. Cascio, Sr (358)
Thomas Lofquist (Son of Gordon B.)
Gary L. Moncur (Son of Vern L.)
Clement Resto (358)
Henry A. Waas, (427)
Vincent J. De Nisi (444)
Wesley F. Gradeville (360)
Arthur S. Middleton (359)

DONATIONS

Mrs. Regina Carbillano
Philip Cascio, Sr
Mrs. Corinne B. Lovelock
Mrs. Polly Mayfield
Rex Miller
Mrs. Lynn Seelock
Mrs. Jessie Ruark
Mrs. Jessie Ruark
Mrs. Hazel L. Tupper
Mrs. Vera C. Yaniga
Leonard Ratermann

Donation to the 303rd BGA
Donation to the 303rd BGA
Donation to the 303rd BGA
Donation to the 303rd BGA
Donations to the 303rd BGA
Donation to the 303rd BGA
Memorial to Blaine R. Ruark
Memorial to Martin Yaniga
Donation to the 303rd BGA
Memorial to Blaine R. Ruark
Donation to the 303rd BGA

DONATIONS TO B-47 MEMORIAL

Joseph Vieira
Samuel W. and Mary Ann Smith
James B. and Evelyn Taylor
Frank C. and Jean De Cicco, Jr.
Vernon W. and Jeanne Stone
Anthony J. and Carol Cecchini
Morton M. and Ruby Lee Moon
John R. and June Sivils
John C. Zerr

William S. and Alice McLeod, Jr.
George T. and Barbara Mackin
Edgar E. and Dorothy Snyder
Dale E. Schneider
Gilbert C. and Dorothy Borges
Frank J. and Sylvia Doherty
Irl E. and Carolyn Baldwin
Zaven and Mitzi Jardarian
Philip D. and Ann Eisenwinter

ADDRESS CHANGES

Leslie C. Lofquist, 110 Southfield, Winona Lake, IN 46590-1717
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New area code (425) 868-6893

John G. Brauchle, 258 Porter Avenue, Biloxi, MS 39530-2914
New area code (228) 435-1638

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New area code (651) 699-6258

Nino Guiciardi, 323 Bailie's Run Road, Creighton, PA 15030-1003
New area code (724) 226-1693

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New phone number (912) 285-8040

Charles J. Fulanovich, 1139 Mistwood Lane, Downers Grove, IL
60515-1266 New area code (630) 971-2561

Angelo Petix, 7 Dunbar Avenue, Piscataway, NJ 08854-5702
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3221 New area code (407) 773-0830

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34606-3511 New area code (352) 666-0013

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Mrs. Arlene Gilbert, 500 3rd Street, S., Apt 167, Waite Park, MN
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85205-8721

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36117-2732

Mrs. Sonia Z. Bonn, 120 Allen Douglas Road, Richmond, KY
40475-8757

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66203-3077

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85206-2308

Mrs. Peggyann Brown, 20 Brigadier, Irvine, CA 92612-3460

Mrs. Joanna M. Tressler, RR 1, Box 373, Northumberland, PA
17857-9766 New area code (570) 473-3816

Mrs. Lynn Seelock, 17922 83rd Avenue, NE, Kenmore, WA
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33914-6303

Sheri Jacobsen, 1441 Nipomo Street, San Luis Obispo, CA
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TN 37172

Mrs. Delores R. Oxendine, 417 Tracy Sampson Road, Pembroke, NC
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Mrs. Eleanore R. Steele, 5315 Bennett Lawson Rd, Mansfield, TX
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Sylvester Rape, Jr., (360), 303 Braeburn Terrace, Lansdale, PA
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Mrs. Thelma Hubley 304 Crestview Drive, Mattoon, IL 61938-4624

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20136-1158 (Annie)

Mrs. Theda Davis, 106 Sharon Street, Marietta, OH 45750-265

James F. Brown, (358), 953 Desert Circle, Fountain, CO 80817-1697

Daniel F. Whitney, (360), 1308 Carpenter Branch Court, Oviedo, FL
32765-5600 (Laura)

Duane A. Bush, (444), 9924 El Greco Circle, Bonita Springs, FL
34135-6885 (Dorothy)

William S. McLeod, Jr., (358), 1676 W. Mesa Avenue, Fresno,
CA 93711-1944 New area code (559) 439-8922

Fletcher Helton, (359), 2851 County Road L, Emporia, KS 66801-
7906 (316) 528-3518 (Lena)

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES

Kenneth "Dick" Hawes 358 th Waist Gun	DGHawes@ix.netcom
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Donald Foulk 358 th Radio Oper	donfenaf@worldnet.att.net
William M. Eason 360 th Asst Sqd Rep	weason@speed1.net
Charlie & Vicki Sykes Our PX Committee	PX303@aol.com
James A. Hickey 359 th Co-Pilot	flyer@hcnews.com
Paul O. Harmon 1199 th Mil. Police	podharmon@webtv.net
Arthur S. Middleton 359 th Radar Mech	amiddlet@qn.net
William J. Carter 358 th Ball Turret	Wcarter516@aol.com
William J. Roche 360 th (V/P, Admin)	dbroche2@aol.com
Woodley O. Butler, Jr 358 th Waist Gunner	woodjr@teambase.com

A PILOT'S LAMENT, by Tony Gatti
I'm only a poor first pilot; my hair is turning gray.
I push and pull this flying fort from dawn to end of day.
My navigator lost us, my bombardier can't aim,
My gunners are near-sighted, and I get all the blame.

THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

As this edition was going to press, calls came in reporting that **Donald Harrison** and **Vernon Stone** had passed away. Don was the first president of the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, elected to office in August, 1975. Vern was the incumbent and longtime representative of the 427th Squadron on the Association's Board of Directors.

Every time a 303rd comrade passes away, we grieve, and it reminds us of our own mortality. Most of us who served at Molesworth in World War II are in the 75 to 85 age bracket, give or take a few years, and we have the aches and pains that go with seniority.

The members of the Association's Board of Directors have agonized at annual meetings in recent years over the "when" and "how" of pulling the plug on our organization and giving it a decent resting place in memory. We've come up with a statement of purpose that seems best suited to the situation:

At an appropriate time in the future, to be determined by prevailing conditions, the Association's World War II veterans, sitting as the elected Officers and Board, shall dissolve the Association and terminate reunions and, if appropriate, allocate a limited amount of funds to Associate Members to sustain an organization which would succeed the present Association. Concurrently, the Officers and Board will convey to the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association's monetary funds, inventories, records and equipment.

Firm, yet flexible language. Time will tell.

This is my second edition as editor of the Hell's Angels Newsletter. It's a labor of love, my way of paying respect to my fellow World War II Molesworth veterans. I would guess that this is what inspired **Hal Susskind**, my talented predecessor, to stay on the *pro bono* job for 13 years until the pangs of aging caught up to him. I don't mean to upstage Hal, but if I can manage to do the newsletter for 25 years, I'll reach the age of 100 and you'll still be there to read it. That's a respectable goal.

Frank Cueto, a 359th waist gunner who is a genial participant at our reunions, says the fact that he is alive today is "a testament to the tremendous collective efforts of all the ground personnel and all the air crews" with which he served.

Frank calls our attention to a few lines from Alfred Lord Tennyson's epic poem "Ulysses" which so beautifully reflect both the glory of youth in war and the relentless march of time:

Though we are not now of the strength
Which in old days moved earth and heaven,
That which we are, we are;
One equal temper of heroic hearts, made weak
By time and fate, but strong in will to strive,
To seek, to find, and not to yield.

Eddie Deerfield

URGENT APPEAL FOR 303rd BOMB GROUP PHOTOS!

The Hell's Angels Newsletter needs any photos taken during your time at Molesworth. They will be returned to you or passed to our Historian, as you wish. Send them to Editor, Hell's Angels Newsletter, 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016.

303rd Veteran's Effort Aids in 8th AF Week Honor in Colorado

(The following letter was addressed to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado by resident Harold R. Timm, SMSGT, USAF-Ret)

Enclosed please find a proclamation from the Eighth Air Force Historical Society declaring our request to establish October 8-14 each year as Mighty Eighth Air Force Week. By doing so, it is our hope that later generations will understand the contributions and sacrifices made by 8th Air Force veterans during World War II.

As the enclosed magazine notes, our casualties were high in what would turn out to be the largest bomb unit in history. Moreover, we proudly served our country in war and in peacetime by upholding the principles that made the United States the global presence it is today.

I was a tail gunner for the 303rd Bomb Group, and many of my Eighth Air Force colleagues live in Colorado. All of these brave men and women who gave so much to their country would be honored and deeply appreciative of this proclamation. I invite you pay particularly close attention to the articles on page 6 and pages 9-10, which detail some of my colleagues' accomplishments and acts of heroism.

On behalf of the entire Eighth Air Force, especially those who reside in Colorado, I sincerely thank you for your consideration of this important request.

GOV. ROMER'S REPLY TO SMSGT TIMM:

"On behalf of the people of Colorado, it gives me great pleasure to honor the week of October 8-14 in recognition of the heroic Eighth Air Force.

"The veterans of the Eighth Air Force deserve the thanks of all the people of our state and nation. You have served our country with courage and dignity. We will forever be grateful for the sacrifices you made for freedom and our way of life here in America. On behalf of all Coloradans, I would like to thank you for your selfless efforts and acts of heroism."



SAVANNAH AWARD FOR 303rd—Mayor Floyd Adams presented a City Proclamation honoring the 303rd Bomb Group to President Hal Susskind during ceremonies at last August's reunion.

303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.
Hell's Angels Newsletter
Eddie Deerfield, Editor
3552 Landmark Trail
Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016

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