

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

February, 2001



THE 303RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION HONORS BRIAN MCGUIRE FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT. McGuire, in the gray suit, planned and implemented the construction of an impressive memorial at RAF Molesworth to the 303rd airmen and ground support personnel who set an Eighth Air Force record of 364 combat missions during World War II. The presentation was made by Robin Beeby, the 303rd's representative in Great Britain.

MCGUIRE HONORED FOR MOLESWORTH MEMORIAL

Brian McGuire, a retired US Air Force officer now a civilian contract employee at the Joint Analysis Center, RAF Molesworth, was honored recently for his achievement in establishing at the British base a magnificent memorial to the 303rd Bomb Group.

The award was first bestowed on McGuire in absentia by the 303rd Bomb Group Association at its reunion in San Diego last September. Robin Beeby, the Association's representative in England, attended the ceremony and took the plaque back to Molesworth to present it in person.

While the memorial was McGuire's crowning achievement, he has also been instrumental over the years in collecting and displaying at RAF Molesworth a wide variety of 303rd Bomb Group artifacts and memorabilia, ranging from photos to wood carvings.

The memorial was first proposed in 1994 during a visit to the base by the 303rd's Ken Clarke, a 358th Squadron ball turret gunner, who offered to personally

fund the project then estimated at costing from one to two thousand dollars. McGuire proposed instead a much grander edifice and offered to seek the additional funds. The end result was the most stately and majestic memorial in England recognizing an Eighth Air Force unit. The final cost was \$21,538.30.

The design was based on a study of six other bomb group memorials, adapting their best features.

A site was chosen inside the main gate of RAF Molesworth but outside the security entrance, making it accessible to the public by day or night. The location also virtually eliminated the threat of vandalism which has plagued some of the World War II memorials. A closed circuit TV camera at

the site is monitored by the security personnel.

A long term advantage of the location is that in the event the base is ever shut down and the land sold the British government could still retain control of the small parcel of peripheral land on which the memorial rests.

Appropriate permissions for construction were obtained from the United Kingdom's Defense Department and Her Majesty's Government. The 423rd Air Base Squadron, which provides host support to the Joint Analysis Center, agreed to maintain the site if the memorial was legally transferred to the U.S. Air Force.

The JAC commander wanted assurance that the wording on the memorial would be approved by the 303rd Bomb Group Association's Board of Directors. The goal was to present on the front and back of three main panels a wealth of data on what the 303rd

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Nazis wipe out town in Occupied France for aiding Allied airmen to escape. John Snede's story on pages 3 and 4.

A former Kriege goes back to Stalag 17B and relives the trauma and despair. Ed Sexton's memoir on pages 5 and 6.

The life and times of a nurse at the 303rd Station Hospital. Mary Eisenhart on page 7.

Insights by Ray Holland about the 303rd's top secret radar operations. Page 9.

Interned in Switzerland during the war. Ever wonder what it was like? Art Habich tells all in an exclusive interview on pages 10 and 11.

And The Editor Comments on page 20 about the dead cow said to have been loaded into a B-17's bomb bay and dropped over Germany.



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Editor--Eddie Deerfield

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The 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc., a tax exempt organization under IRS Code 501(c)(19), founded in 1975, is chartered in the State of Florida to perpetuate the history of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) and to provide opportunities for 303rd veterans, families and friends to meet.

Because members are helping to perpetuate the history of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H), dues and/or donations to the Association are tax deductible. Regular Members include persons assigned or attached to the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) from its 1942 activation in Boise, ID, through its war years at Molesworth, England, to its 1945 deactivation in Casablanca. Spouses, children & grandchildren of regular members may become Family Members. All other persons interested in perpetuating the history of the 303rd and in furthering the aims of the Association may, with approval, become non-voting Associate Members.

Membership years begin on the first day of January. The *Hell's Angels Newsletter* will only be sent to members whose dues payments are current. New annual dues are \$25 in the US and \$30 for foreign addresses, \$60 for a veteran's life membership and \$150 for a family member's life membership.

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Editor Emeritus: Hal Susskind

ELECTED OFFICERS — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

Richard R. Johnson (Marjorie)
5901 Joe Road

Deale, MD 20751-9739

TEL: (410) 867-0597 EM: fortdriver@aol.com

Vice President - Administration

Frank C. DeCicco, Jr. (Jean)
6 Kitty Hawk West
Richmond, TX 77469-9710
TEL: (281) 341-5004
EM: FDremax@aol.com

Vice President - Reunions

Walter J. Ferrari
207 Lake Circle Drive
Hampstead, NC 28443-2519
TEL: (910) 270-0824

Editor, Hell's Angels Newsletter

Eddie Deerfield (Mary Lee)
3552 Landmark Trail
Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016
TEL: (727) 787-0332
EM: ED303fsra@aol.com

Secretary

Albert L. Dussliere (Lorene)
1901 5th Street
East Moline, IL 61244-2421
TEL: (309) 755-5339
EM: ald@derbytech.com

Treasurer

Jack P. Rencher, P.O. Box 7927,
Boise, ID 83707-1927
TEL: (208) 343-2265
EM: Jprecher@aol.com

Past Presidents Chairman

Nominating, Awards, Memorials

William J. Roche (Doris)
1428 Gleneagles Drive
Venice, FL 34292-4306
TEL: (941) 485-5073
EM: dbroche2@aol.com

ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

358th Bomb Sqd. Representative

William H. Simpkins (Evelyn)
348 S. Cologne Ave., Box 217
Cologne, NJ 08213-0217
TEL: (609) 965-2871

359th Bomb Sqd. Representative

Harold A. Susskind
2602 Deerfoot Trail
Austin, TX 78704-2716
TEL: (512) 441-6475
EM: susskind@webtv.net

358th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Van R. White (Lore)
3156 La Ronda Place NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110-2631
TEL: (505) 881-8111

359th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Coleman Sanders
146 SW 53rd Terrace
Cape Coral, FL 33914-7131
TEL: (941) 542-8684

ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Continued)

360th Bomb Sqd. Representative

Richard Smith (Betty)
790 Crenshaw Drive
Hemet, CA 92543-8044
TEL: (909) 6524793
EM: spider@ivic.net

427th Bomb Sqd. Representative

Fred E. Reichel
553 Mallard Street
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-3431
TEL: (248) 852-2980

Headquarters & Supporting Units

444th Air Depot Representative

Henry G. Johansen
8989 E. Escalante, Site #78
Tucson, AZ 85730-2899
TEL: (602) 886-6093

Widow Member's Representative

Joanna M. Tressler
Rd#1, Box 373-K
Northumberland, PA 17857-9766
TEL: (570) 473-3816

360th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

William Eason
RR# 1 Box 404
Vincent, Ohio 45784-9742
TEL: (740) 989-2326
EM: weason@1st.net

427th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Albert L. Dussliere (Lorene)
1901 5th Street
East Moline, IL 61244-2421
TEL: (309) 755-5339
EM: ald@derbytech.com

Hdq's & Supporting Units

444th Air Depot Alternate

Maurice J. Paulk (Opal)
205 W. 12th
Wood River, NE 68883-9164
TEL: (308) 583-2583
EM: mjpntman@kdsi.net

Associate Members Rep

Lance Stoner
11422 W. 70th Street
Shawnee, KS 662034026
TEL: (913) 268-3944
EM: Lstoner@gvi.net

APPOINTED COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Membership & Roster

Dennis S. Smith
142 Vista Drive
Sonoma, CA 95476-3607
TEL: Residence (707) 938-0634
TEL: Office (707) 933-3318
EM: Da1smith@pacbell.net

PX Administrator

Charles R. Sykes (Vicki)
16281 N. 3 1st Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85023-3008
TEL: (602) 993-8015
EM: PX303BG@aol.com

Computer Data Base

Edward W. Gardner, Jr. (Sue)
5764 Lakeview Drive
Interlochen, MI 49643-0246
TEL: (616) 276-7126
EM: ewg303nav@aol.com

Historian, 8thAFHS &

8thAFH Museum Liaison

Harry D. Gobrecht (Barbara)
505 Via Deseo
San Clemente, CA 92672-2462
TEL: (949) 361-2662
EM: pilot8thaf@aol.com

Lost 303rd Comrade Search Project

Edgar C. Miller (Jill)
422 S. Walnut Avenue
Temple, OK 73568-0219
TEL: (580) 342-5119
EM: edmiller@pldi.net

RAF Molesworth England Rep

Brian S. McGuire (Dina)
PSC 46 Box 404 APO AE 09469
TEL: Home 011-44-1480-896266
TEL: Office 011-44-1480-842626
EM: bmcguire@acsdefense.com

Group Advisor

Lewis E. "Lew" Lyle (Betty)
207 Ridge One
Hot Springs, AR 71901-9118
TEL: (501) 321-1956

By-Laws Committee

William S. McLeod, Jr. (Alice)
1676 West Mesa
Fresno, CA 93711-1944
TEL: (559) 439-8922
EM: B17bomberbill@aol.com

Webmaster

Gary Moncur (Susan)
4483 Palmer Drive
West Valley City, UT 84120-5052
TEL: (801) 969-7639
EM: glm@xmission.com

Audit Committee

Frank C. DeCicco, Jr. (Jean)
6 Kitty Hawk West
Richmond, TX 77469-9710
TEL: (281) 341-5004
EM: FDremax@aol.com

Mission Reports Administrator

Jack Rencher
2901 Hill Road (POB 7927)
Boise, ID 83707-1927
TEL: Residence (208) 343-2265
TEL: Business (800) 635-8930
EM: jprecher@aol.com

United Kingdom Representatives

Robin & Sue Beeby
40 St. Catherine's Road
Kettering, Northants, England NN15
5EN TEL: UK 1536-516-423
TEL: USA 011-44-1536-516-423
EM: RJBeeby@aol.com

CHAPLAIN -- CATHOLIC

Bishop Rene H. Gracida, 4126 Ocean Dr., Corpus Christi, TX 78411-1224

CHAPLAINS -- PROTESTANT

Rev. Everett A. Dasher (Helen), Rt#4 Box 425, Saluda, SC 29138-9159
Rev. Warren L. Hedrick (Alma), 3 Andrew Avenue, Sanford, ME 04073-3149
Rev. Robert L. Johnson (Mary), 2208 W. Granite St., Siloam Springs, AR 72761

Evading the Enemy in Occupied France

THE LONG WALK OUT OF DANGER

Underground To The Rescue, But Whole Town Pays A Tragic Price

By John Snede

This is the story of my escape from France and how the people sheltered and protected me from capture by the German occupation forces during World War II. I didn't know their names or where they lived at the time, but learned them when I returned a half-century later.

I had celebrated my 19th birthday at Molesworth on June 3, 1944 as a waist gunner in the 427th Squadron. On June 28, flying in *Old Crow* piloted by Stan Wardowski, our mission was to attack a German air base at Juvencourt, France. Shortly after releasing our bombs, a flak burst ripped into our number three engine, engulfing the whole wing in flames. Seconds later, the plane exploded.

Some of us managed to bail out, others were blown out. I delayed opening my chute until I could distinguish objects on the ground. My boots flew off when the chute opened. I landed in a plowed field near a hedgerow dense with growth and thorns. Several small children appeared, gathered up my parachute and ran off.

I crawled into the hedgerow. I had just hidden myself when a German soldier came down the path next to the bushes. He was so close I could have grabbed him by the foot. A little later, another German soldier walked right by me.

It was later in the morning when Renie Baillie found me lying in the bushes. He reached in and put his hand on my shoulder and spoke to me in French, but I did not understand what he was saying. I did not know if he was with the free French or the Gestapo but felt that I had to take a chance with him.

I had an escape kit in my pocket that included translated phrases. We looked at this together, and from this I understood that I should stay where I was that he would be back. A short time later he returned with food and a bottle of cider. We looked at the translation

phrase booklet again and from this I understood that I should stay at this spot and that he would return at dusk to get me. I ate breakfast at 4 AM and now it was getting to be late morning so the food and cider tasted really good. The only problem was that I developed a case of diarrhea, which could have been from the food or from nerves. I spent the afternoon with my pants down, thinking it was a good thing I was on a sloping bank.

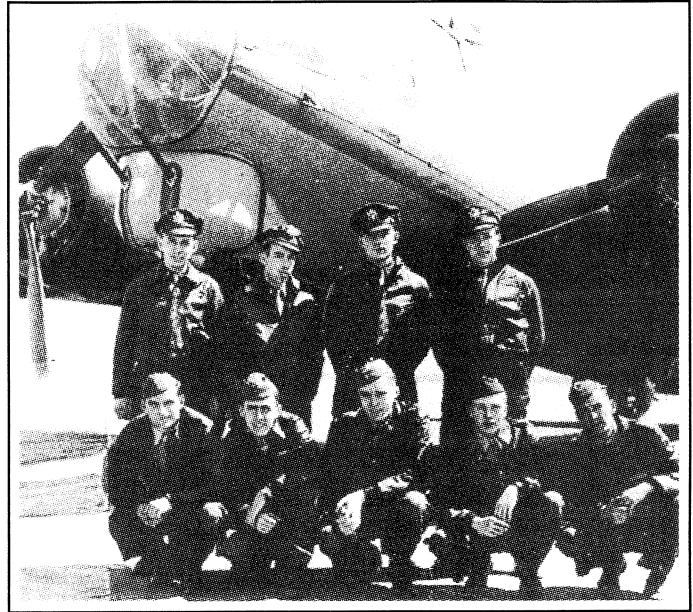
At dusk, Rene Baillie came back and got me and took me to his home in the village of Ebouleau. He also brought me a pair of knee high rubber boots to walk in. At this time I did not know his name or the name of the village.

We entered his place from the back road. The house was a large two story structure with an attic. His wife, Leone, had dinner ready when we arrived. It was a wonderful meal. After dinner I was taken up to the attic over the garage. There was a large very comfortable bed for me and I slept well.

I remember hearing a clock chime. It turned out that it was in the church across the circle from where they lived. The church was built in 1743. The bells chimed the hours on the hour and one chime on the half-hour. It worked on the same principle as the cuckoo clock. They would pull up the weights once a week.

The Baillies had a baby named Bernard, who was one year old. They were nervous about me being there. I'm sure that they felt the Germans would kill the baby as well as themselves if I were caught in their house.

I could understand their



THE WARDOWSKI CREW WAS DECIMATED on the mission to Juvencourt, France on 28 June 1944 when their B-17 exploded seconds after being hit by flak. Standing, from l-to-r, pilot Stan Wardowski was killed in the explosion and hit the ground still strapped to his seat; co-pilot Neil Hainlin bailed out, suffered a broken ankle and became a prisoner of war; navigator Warren Birnbaum was unconscious and failed to open his parachute; bombardier Charles Eisel survived as a POW. Kneeling, from the left, engineer Ray Kowatch bailed out and was captured; radio operator Al Willard and waist gunner John Snede evaded capture; ball turret gunner Ben Hope became a prisoner; tail gunner Don Wagner's chute cords were damaged and he died on impact.

feelings. They woke me early in the morning and gave me a wonderful breakfast.

The yard was surrounded by a large concrete wall that was about 10 feet tall and two feet wide. There was a place in the wall, hidden by a lilac bush, that had a hole in it large enough for me to crawl through. After breakfast I was told (using the translated phrase booklet) that I would spend the day at the wall, behind the bush. If the Germans came, I was to get out through the hole as quickly as possible and flee the area.

The weather was beautiful and at noon Leone brought me a tray with a delicious lunch.

We ate the evening meal together in the house. After dinner Renie showed me a picture and asked if I could identify it. I said it was Albert Willard, our crew's radioman. I had given Renie some of my escape pictures

so I am sure Al was asked the same question. The pictures were given to us to be used for fake passports if it was necessary.

After looking at the pictures, Renie and I left and walked on the path next to the road over to the Jean LaBrousse farm. It was there that Al Willard and I met up with each other for the first time since we had bailed out of *Old Crow*. We stayed together the rest of time we were in France.

We remained with the LaBrousse's about a week and then moved to Pierre and Odette Maujean's home in Tavaux. We lived with them for about a month. Their children slept across a bed so that Al and I would have a bed to sleep on.

While we were living with Pierre and Odette a neighbor of theirs sent a letter to the Gestapo saying that

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we were in the Maujean house, but the underground intercepted the letter at the Post Office. The reward would have been the equivalent of \$20,000 for each airman turned in.

Odette gave me a picture of herself with three sons (Christian, Alain, and Pierre) and one daughter (Maryse). They did have another infant daughter (Alette). She gave me the picture the day we left their home to live in the woods.

I learned later with a heavy heart that the day before the American troops arrived to liberate Tavaux, the Gestapo and Hitler's Elite SS troops tied Odette Maujean to a table and mutilated and burned her in front of her children. They then locked the children in the basement of their house and set fire to it. Neighbors rescued the children.

The Germans used flame throwers and torched the whole town of Tavaux. Altogether, I was told 22 people were killed and 22 homes destroyed.

Our journey started after having an early evening meal with the Maujeans. We walked through fields and back roads all night except for an hour when we took a nap in the hayloft of a barn.

We had many different guides who walked with us. At pre-arranged meeting places, our guide would signal by whistling, a new guide would respond with a whistle and then come out and lead us on our way.

We walked until the next evening, over 60 miles as the crow flies, over fences and through fields, paths and side roads with me in my oversized knee high boots. When we arrived at the camp where we were going to live, the only thing I can remember is laying down on the ground and falling asleep and not waking up until the next morning.

The camp, in Rumigny Forest, was made up of men who had escaped from German labor camps or were wanted by the Germans for other reasons. The forest was not far from Blanche-fosse-et-bay in an area called Caillaux.

There was a farm at the edge of the woods owned and

operated by a couple named Monsieur and Madam Blain, and they provided our drinking and cooking water as well as other supplies. The farm was located a little over 60 miles east and north of Tavaux.

In the evening just as it was starting to get dark, we would walk to the farm for water and whatever supplies they could give us. If the upstairs window was not covered, it was safe to come in. If the window was covered, we should stay away.

While living in the woods, I got an infection in my right ring finger and it hurt all the way up to my armpit. The Blains contacted a French doctor who met me at the farmhouse in the evening. He cleaned out the infected area, put some medication on it and bandaged it. It healed very nicely with no more problems.

Al and I stood guard duty at night. The ground sloped up away from us and on moonlit nights we could see the wild pigs (boars) running through the fields.

There was a young fellow in our group whose parents were in a German prison camp for helping airmen. His favorite past time was cutting down telephone lines. He came back with large coils of wire.

Our sleeping quarters were huts made from tree branches that we tied together with the telephone wire. We had bunk beds also made of tree branches wired together, built onto the side of the huts. The huts were wide enough to hold two people.

Our latrine was a thick branch tied horizontally in place between two trees, with a hole dug behind it. The leaves on the branches served as toilet paper. We washed in a stream that ran near by. It was a gently flowing stream that was clear and shallow.

The leader of our group was a lawyer with code name of George. His real name was Henri Lallement. Another man who lived with us had been a sports writer with a newspaper in Paris. His code name was Julien. His real name was Jean Boeler. Julien spoke very good English and wanted to talk with us most of the time to improve his English.



JOHN SNEDE AND RENE BAILLIE WERE REUNITED during the 303rd Bomb Group's return to Molesworth in June, 2000. Baillie was presented with a plaque recognizing his heroism in rescuing downed airmen. Eight other resistance fighters from Holland and Belgium were also honored.

The man who wrote the letter to the Gestapo about Al and me staying in the Maujean home was brought to this camp. He was married and the father of two children. He was given a trial, found guilty and disposed of.

We were at the camp in the forest about a month. We left the camp with a group of young men who had a radio. They were led by Raymond Hantoaux, and we traveled north to Hurtebise to the farm of Raymond's parents. We stayed overnight sleeping in the hayloft of the barn.

After leaving the farm, we traveled south and east towards Reims. Whenever a radio message was sent we would have to be on the move immediately or the Germans could track us down.

We traveled constantly, moving closer to the American lines as the Germans retreated and the battle front moved closer to us. It got to the point that as we moved forward we would sleep in a farm house one night and the retreating Germans slept in it the next night or we slept in a barn and the next night the Germans slept in it.

Raymond and his group received a radio message to

join up with French marksmen, 12 miles from where we were. They said goodbye and told us we would be okay.

Al and I were alone and we did not know at the time that this would be our last night of evading the enemy.

We found another wooded area and bedded down with a raincoat to cover both of us against the pelting of a light drizzle. We could hear the German equipment moving by not too far away. How and why we slept, I do not know. When I woke up in the morning the sun was shining and it was a beautiful day.

Two men from the French underground and a American platoon leader were standing over us. The platoon leader was T/Sgt. Paul Maiorana with the 3rd Armored Division Service Co. His men were camouflaged in the bushes all around us. After we identified ourselves, the platoon leader called his squad together to meet us. One of the Frenchmen had a bottle of liquor and we all had a toast.

It wasn't much longer before Al Willard and I were on our way to Paris, London, Molesworth and home.

Memoirs of a Former Kriegie — My Return To Stalag 17-B

By Edward J. Sexton

When the brochure arrived inviting us to join in a "Final Return To Stalag 17-B," it was probably the word "final" that got to me. I wanted to go. Hundreds of us had spent months of our youth in that infamous German prisoner-of-war camp. I had been there for 18 months. The experience left a deep and lasting impression on all of us for the rest of our lives.

My wife, Florence, was surprised that I wanted to go, but she joined me as did four other Stalag 17-B survivors and their wives who were our personal friends.

The first night in Vienna, we were given a welcoming reception at the Hotel Sofitel, and the memories began crowding back when I saw Dr. Michael Kozial. He was a Polish doctor taken prisoner by the Nazis and held for six years. It was Dr. Kozial who operated at Stalag 17-B on my foot, which had been badly torn by flak, saving it from being amputated.

My story really began on the morning of November 5, 1943. The 303rd Bomb Group's target was Gelsenkirchen and our 359th Squadron crew was flying in *Rambling Wreck* piloted by Ambrose Grant. We had made our turn after the bomb run and were headed back toward Molesworth when we were hit by anti-aircraft fire and an engine was damaged. We dropped out of formation. As radio operator, I prepared to send out S-O-S signals to alert rescue boats if it looked like we would ditch in the English Channel off Holland.

A staffel of Luftwaffe fighters attacked our lone bomber. Tony Kujawa, in the top turret, shot one down and tail gunner Frank Andersen got another, but the fighters had knocked out another of our engines and we were goners. The pilot gave the order to bail out.

As I clamped on my parachute and left the radio room for the waist door, an explosion under the B-17 drove shrapnel into my foot. The entire crew of 10 men bailed out, but one of us, replacement gunner Joe Hauer on his first mission, was killed after his parachute failed to open. Enemy soldiers were waiting on the ground below us, and we were all rounded up in a very short time.

We were taken to a local jail to be held briefly for questioning. It was here that a bandage was wrapped around my wounded foot. It was the last time the wound would be attended to until we reached Stalag 17-B after a horrible three weeks of solitary confinement, transport like cattle in boxcars and then to the Dalag Luft interrogation center. Finally, we were ordered off a train at Krems, Austria, and marched several miles to Stalag 17-B, a prisoner of war camp for non-commissioned airmen.

By the time I got to the Stalag, my foot was badly swollen and in very serious condition. I was wholly dependent on fellow crew members Frank Andersen, Tony Kujawa and Chet Petrosky who had helped me limp through the last three weeks. Lt. Frank Hall also gave me help until he was sent to a camp for officers.

It was Dr. Michael Kozial, a Polish POW, to whom I am deeply indebted for the foot surgery on the morning following my arrival at Stalag 17-B. Medical supplies were scarce and there was no anesthesia available. I was given a large shot of whiskey and held down by three large fellows while the doctor worked. He saved the foot. I was kept in the dispensary and checked daily by a POW sergeant medic known to us as Harry Vozic. After the war, I learned that "Harry Vozic" was in reality a Jewish doctor who, to avoid death in a Nazi concentration camp, had deceived the Germans into thinking he was a downed airman.

Now, the return almost 55 years later. The first stop at Krems was at the railroad station where most of us American flyers had arrived in crowded box cars as prisoners of war. In 1943, we had walked to Stalag 17-B, but this time our bus took us all the way up the hill to the site of the camp. It was about five miles away, and I still wonder how I made it that dark night, even with all the help from my crewmates. For me, there seemed to be no end to the road,



IN THE WEILHARDT FOREST OUTSIDE OF BRAUNAU, AUSTRIA, five former prisoners of war at Stalag 17-B at Krems reminisce about one of the most trying periods of their lives. From the left are Mack Sexton, 381st Bomb Group; Henry Reilly, 447th Bomb Group; Ed Sexton, 303rd Bomb Group; Frank Sexton, 381st Bomb Group and Bill Orphan, 401st Bomb Group. No Sexton is related to the other.



THE GRANT CREW WENT DOWN ON 5 NOVEMBER 1943, some 10 days after this photo was taken. Standing, l-to-r, are the pilot A. G. Grant, co-pilot Franklin Hall, bombardier Marion Blackburn and navigator James Berger. Kneeling, engineer Bob Jaouen, waist gunner Tony Kujawa, tail gunner Frank Andersen, ball turret gunner Chet Petrosky and radio operator Ed Sexton. Joseph Hauer, flying in place of Jaouen, was the only fatality when his chute failed to open. New gunner Harold Kraft and the rest of the crew became POW's.

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going up hill, mile after mile.

The camp itself is no longer there. The story is that the Russians took everything that could be used for building material and sent it back home. There were piles of rubble and barbed wire around and many of the tour group took home souvenirs. The area is now mostly open fields, with a small airfield and a restaurant where we had lunch. It was by far the best meal I ever had there.

At the entrance to the former stalag there were several memorial stones with dedications to the former occupants. Many of our group took long walks around the fields, but I waited by the airport. I had broken an ankle just three months before we were to go to Austria, but I was not going to miss this trip, so I traveled with the help of a cane. As I waited for everyone to return to the bus I carefully looked around to see if anything was familiar. In the distance I could see where our barracks used to be located, and beyond that the grove of trees where the bodies of Russian prisoners were buried almost on a daily basis, while we stood inside the fences, showing proper respect for our allied soldiers.

Memories, some forgotten and others repressed, came flooding back to me. These I list in no particular order:

....The revolt against having our heads shaved, by the fellows in my barrack who rubbed oleomargarine from the Red Cross parcels in their hair and also rubbed sand in with the oleo, breaking every set of clippers in the camp and succeeding in stopping the hair cutting for a short time. Quite a few of the fellows spent some time in the "cooler" for this.

....The escape attempt in December of 1943 of Ralph Lavoie and a friend of his which resulted in Ralph being severely wounded. I was in the dispensary recovering from my wound at the time and it seemed as though every light in the camp was turned on and bullets were flying everywhere.

....The great joy at the arrival from Switzerland of Red Cross parcels, which kept us going and reasonably healthy.

....The rumors which flew through the camp about the arrival of hockey sticks and toilet paper, which tended to really upset people.

....The reading of the nightly news in every barrack, picked up by radios made from bits and pieces. Great for the morale.

....Going out to roll call at least twice a day, sometimes more, regardless of rain, snow or bad weather of any kind.

....The three days we spent outside while the Germans tore the barracks apart looking for the "Grey Ghost", but never finding him.

....Walking around the compound behind the barracks to try to keep in some sort of shape. This proved to be a good thing when we were forced evacuate the camp and march.

....The several British air raids late at night, the target believed to be a German airfield nearby. Spending time in the trenches, hoping that they would hit the target and not us.

....Every couple of months being marched to the showers in another part of the camp and locked in for a period of time. We later found out that this was a method used in other camps for extermination of prisoners.

....The extremely overcrowded barracks. Sleeping on a mattress made from straw inside a burlap bag on a few bed boards. One blanket, no pillow, plenty of fleas for company. Wearing all of your clothes to bed on a cold night, of which there were many. Windows were closed and covered and shuttered to keep any possible light from showing.

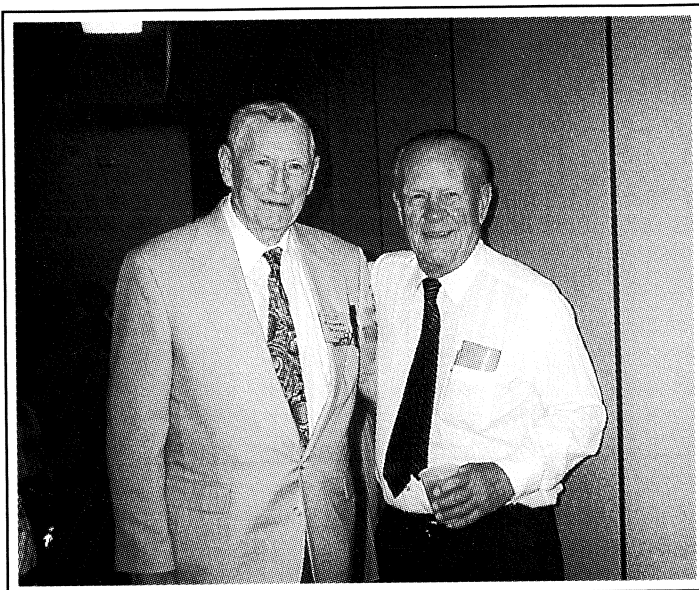
....Smudge pots made from cans of oleo, with a home made wick that was lit at night so the card games could continue.

....Everyone taking a turn carrying the heavy wooden containers of water or soup from the cook shed to the barracks. Rutabaga soup and very hard bread and not much of either. Thank God for the Red Cross parcels.

....The shows put on by some very talented guys, with little to work with.

....And, last but not least, Camp Leader Ken Kurtenbach who represented us extremely well with the Germans, and Father Steven Kane, a Catholic priest who ministered to all faiths in the camp.

Such were my thoughts as I spent a few hours at the former Stalag 17-B.



EX-KRIEGIES GET TOGETHER — Ed Sexton and the late Ken Kurtenbach, both 303rd Bomb Group veterans, at a Stalag 17-B reunion in Myrtle Beach, SC. As Enlisted Camp Leader (Man of Confidence), Kurtenbach is credited with tough negotiating with their German captors to save the lives and ease the miseries of his fellow prisoners.

In April of 1945, we were taken in groups of 500 men and marched to the west for almost three weeks. The move was made so that the approaching Russian troops would not liberate us and quite possibly we would be used as bargaining chips in negotiations with the western allies. We marched day after day with little or no food, sleeping outside in the rain and the snow unless we were lucky enough to be put up in a large barn loft, sleeping in the hay. The Germans told us that we were going to a new camp.

On the return of which I write, we stopped at one point in the city of Linz. I did recall marching through Linz in 1945. Our captors were expecting trouble in that city, due to recent, heavy bombing. Extra guards had been put on for that march through the city, but no problems arose.

The Weillhardt State Forest on the bank of the Inn River a short distance from the city of Braunau was to be our home, at least for a while. We were herded off the road and spread out among the trees, being warned not to cross the cleared zone that had been created. Not only were there no barracks or tents, there were no sanitary facilities.

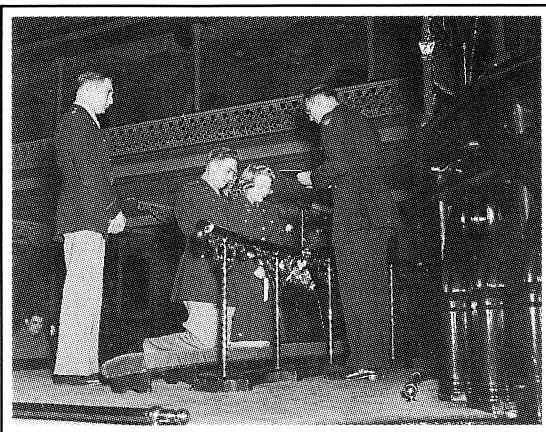
We had to dig trenches and roll logs up to them to create a usable area. In order to get some protection from the almost constant rain and snow we had to clear an area large enough to sleep in and cut tree branches to cover us. It was against the law in Germany to cut down trees, but we somehow managed to get branches and bark from the trees to make lean-tos, none of which could keep us warm and dry.

There was no food available and water was difficult to get, as we had to climb down a very steep slope to a spring by the Inn River, fill whatever containers we had and then try to get back up the slope. Getting back with half of what you started with was considered a successful trip. The building of shelters was done mostly without tools of any kind. Knives had always been forbidden so there were very few of these among thousands of men. Other tools were also unavailable.

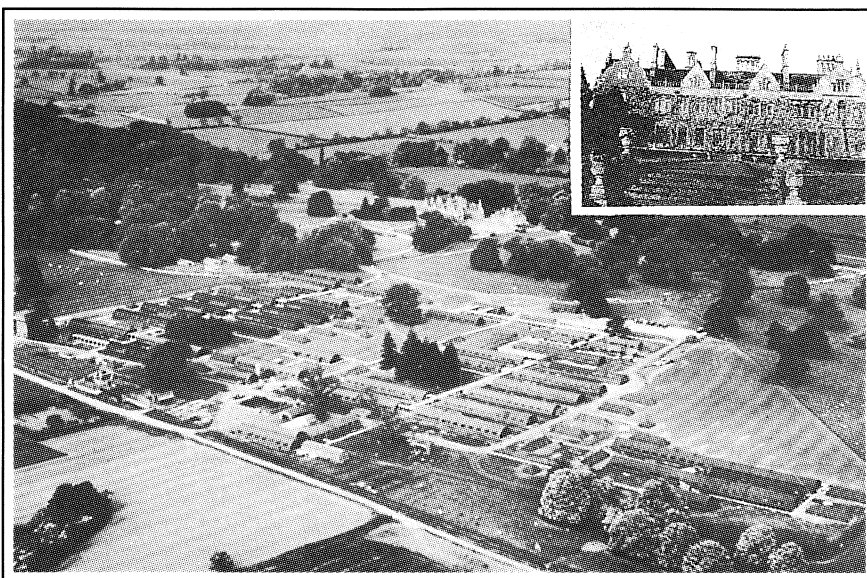
We stayed in the forest over a week waiting to be liberated. All day and all night we could hear the heavy guns in the distance and knew that it was just a question of time. It was almost impossible to sleep being cold, wet and hungry.

On our return trip a half century later, we found the forest was still there and thicker than ever. A plaque set in a large boulder stands at the entrance commemorating those of us who had been prisoners in the forest.

(I am grateful to Ed McKenzie, Stalag 17-B Association historian, for his generous guidance to me in the writing of my memoirs.)



303rd Pilot Bill Eisenhart and Nurse Mary Shore take the vows in Westminster Chapel. Chaplain Slawson conducts the ceremony as best man Mel Schulstad looks on. At right, the 303rd Station Hospital grounds, with Lilford Hall upper center and inset.



“Morale Was Good and There Was A Definite Aura of Urgency” THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A NURSE AT THE 303RD STATION HOSPITAL

By Mary Eisenhart

After a very long trip from Camp Atterbury, Indiana, I arrived 24 September 1943 at the new 303rd Station Hospital on the estate of Lord Lilford near Northampton and Molesworth. The hospital facilities and beds were being set up in numerous Nissan huts on the estate's spacious grounds, while the nurses were housed in Lilford Hall, a 17th Century manor.

Living in a castle might sound luxurious, but it was actually quite Spartan. I shared a room on the second floor with five other nurses. We had GI cots, a footlocker, no closets, no chairs, bare wooden floors and a fireplace which was our only source of heat. The toilet was down a corridor while the bath house was a separate building to the rear of the castle. We adapted well, and I don't recall a lot of complaining.

Lord Lilford lived in one wing of the castle and was reported to have said he would just as soon have a Nazi bomb hit Lilford Hall as having all those American Army nurses on his estate.

There was a definite aura of urgency to be operational as soon as possible. Morale was good and there was a sense that we were united as a team to perform our assigned role in the war effort. The first main body of medical personnel included about 70 nurses, 400 enlisted men and 40 officers divided evenly between doctors and administrative staff.

Our first task in organizing the hospital wards was to standardize them. The medicine cabinets, linen closets, kitchens and related facilities were all set up identically so the nurses could easily adjust from one ward to another. They were also standardized so that we could work in the dark with the aid of flashlights (or torches, as the English called them).

Our first patients came from Molesworth and other nearby air bases. We were constantly aware of the potential for receiving those who were wounded on the almost daily bombing missions. I can vividly remember the roar of the bombers and the sight of them as they assembled overhead to get into formation for sorties on the continent.

The 303rd Station Hospital started with a 750-bed capacity. After D-Day, the hospital was expanded to 1,500 beds. This was done by adding 15-bed tents as attachments to the Nissan hut wards. After the invasion, we had as many as 300 patients arrive at one time. I believe the rail head was at

Thrapston. I remember the ambulances lined up to transport the patients, many with shrapnel wounds, others with frozen feet. The hospital prided itself on being able to unload incoming trains and ferry all patients to the hospital in less than 60 minutes.

For duty hours, we were issued brown and white wrap-around seersucker dresses and caps to match, a warm sweater and the traditional nurse's cape. For off duty, we had an O.D. jacket, skirt and tie, slacks, tailored dress and trench coat. For drill exercises in the courtyard, we were issued fatigues, combat boots, a helmet and gas mask. We were told that Lord Lilford sometimes watched us do our drilling.

We worked 12-hour shifts, with a two-hour break when possible. It was a long hike from Lilford Hall to the hospital wards, mess facility, mail room and chapel, so some of us bought bicycles to get around more easily.

The Officer's Club for our unit was on the ground floor of Lilford Hall. Many officers from nearby bases were frequent visitors, and, reciprocally, the nurses were invited to attend dances at their clubs. We were transported in the back of a big 6 X 6 canvas covered truck. Not exactly a limo, but it didn't hamper us. We also rode the truck to surrounding towns and cities to sample the local culture.

It was always a special treat to go to London by train, and then riding the tube and staying at the American Red Cross hostel. I have vivid images of great theater, blackouts, taxis driving in the fog with dim lights, air raid sirens, evidence of terrible bomb damage, seeing bombed-out victims of the war sleeping in the tube stations. So many military people from so many different places filling the streets, Piccadilly Circus, Soho, Trafalgar, Buckingham Palace—these are some of the many things I remember about that great city.

I left England on 25 March 1945. The time I spent there will always be special to me. It's where I met and wed Bill Eisenhart, a 303rd Bomb Group pilot, and we've been happily married for more than half a century. Over the years we've returned to London and Lilford Hall from time to time.

I'm always mindful that the events of 1943-1945 in England were a most important part of my life.

(With thanks to former 303rd Station Hospital Head Nurse Frances Nunn (Greenan) for contributing to this article)

(MCGUIRE from page 1)

accomplished while at Molesworth.

The center panel, crowned by the group's B-17 "triangle-C" tail marking and illustrated by a Flying Fortress and the 8th Air Force and Might in Flight insignia, states "303rd Bombardment Group (H) 'Hell's Angels' flew from this airfield Station 107 Molesworth, 1942-1945. They never turned back in the face of the enemy."

The legend on the left panel, under the American flag, notes that the 303rd arrived in the U.K. on 12 September 1942, flew its first combat mission on 17 November 1942 and last mission on 25 April 1945. It records the following honors and sacrifices:

..... 364 combat missions, the most of any 8th AF B-17 Group, 10,721 sorties, 378 enemy aircraft destroyed.

..... First 8th AF B-17 to reach 25 missions. "Hell's Angels."

..... First 8th AF B-17 to reach 50 and 75 missions. "Knockout Dropper."

..... First 8th AF Bomb Group to reach 300 missions. 9 January 1945.

..... Distinguished Unit Citation for mission of 11 January 1944.

..... 303rd Bomb Group airmen awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. 1st Lt. Jack Mathis. 18 March 1943. T/Sgt. Forrest Vosler, 20 December 1943.

..... 841 killed in action. 747 taken prisoner of war. 210 B-17's lost (combat and training).

The right panel notes that the 303rd Bomb Group was activated at Pendleton Field, Oregon, 3 February 1942 and deactivated in Casablanca, Morocco, 25 July 1945. It lists all the combat commanders, assigned squadrons and support organizations.

On the back of the center panel is the Group motto "Might In Flight" and on the back of the left panel is the text of a statement by General Henry "Hap" Arnold eulogizing those who made the supreme sacrifice.

In selecting a stone mason to construct the memorial, McGuire solicited bids from six companies. H.



A MARBLE PAPERWEIGHT MOMENTO OF THE MEMORIAL was presented to retired USAF Major General Lewis E. Lyle (at far right) by Harold Rackham, a director of H. L. Perfitt Ltd., during last June's 303rd Bomb Group reunion at RAF Molesworth. The 303rd's Senior Advisor and the monument company executive are seen with (l-to-r) Eddie Deerfield, Hell's Angels Newsletter editor; Bill Adams, talented London artist who made many of the wood carvings honoring the 303rd at Molesworth, and Brian McGuire who directed the memorial project.

L. Perfitt, Limited was chosen, not because its bid was lowest but because interviews with the principals were convincing evidence that it was the right firm to do the job. Keith Wesley Rackham, the Managing Director of Perfitt, displayed a strong sense of the U.S. Air Force's role in the World War II history of England and wanted to do the memorial.

Rackham said, "I was born in 1945, and feel very humble when we are requested to provide memorials for those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom. The workmanship and selection of materials means that the memory of those brave young men will be perpetuated during the centuries to come. The materials for the 303rd Bomb Group Memorial were specially quarried. We were determined to provide the magnificent stone base in one piece, and we were successful. This has helped to make the memorial unique."

The memorial was built using dark granite imported from South Africa. The granite was then sent by ship to India where it was rough cut, and then to England for final

polishing and lettering. The base is 13 1/2 feet in length and weighs 3,000 pounds.

The memorial is enclosed by a heavy link chain on granite posts in a semi-circle 25 feet from the center panel. There are two granite benches. Floodlights make the memorial a spectacular vision for people driving on and off the base at night.

McGuire's most challenging problem was in meeting his commitment to raise the funds to pay for the memorial. The November 1999 issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter carried an appeal for donations. A message from the Association president in the May 2000 issue urged donations. Individual members of the 303rd contributed \$5,498, approximately 25% of the total cost.

Assumptions that corporations in England and the U.S. would be major donors proved unjustified. Even from among the eight corporations with a physical presence at RAF Molesworth, only two supported the memorial. ACS Defense, Inc., McGuire's employer, made a small contribution and Science Applications International Corporation donated

\$1,000. The lesson learned was that corporations may be willing to help support local schools and hospitals, but not veterans' projects.

McGuire said the memorial was paid for by the heroic efforts of local people who were as driven as he was to make it a reality. A huge auction organized by a civilian employee of the Defense Intelligence Agency raised about \$3,000. In another significant fundraiser, a Naval reservist assigned to the JAC wrote a book titled "Homer's Luck" about a 303rd pet dog that flew several missions. The book was illustrated by a famous English artist and a talented U.S. Army artist. None of the three asked for any payment or royalties for their efforts. Other artists contributed profits from lithograph prints, adding up to additional thousands of dollars. The sales of such paraphernalia as maps, pens, hats and other items brought in funds.

In achieving success and closure, McGuire said, "The memorial now ensures that Molesworth will bear evidence of the 303rd presence for, hopefully, another thousand years."

The 303rd's Base Radar Shop

A REAL HUSH-HUSH OPERATION

By Raymond E. Holland

I'm probably the only member of the Base Radar Shop still around. I was one of the original cadre of the 303rd Bomb Group at Boise, and was with the outfit in Casablanca in the 358th Squadron when we were deactivated. Rudy Rutiser of the 427th and I formed the Radar Shop in 1942.

There were about 10 of us in the shop, concerned mostly with Gee Set installation and maintenance. We were not at liberty to discuss details of the equipment, aircraft installations or shop operations with other personnel. About all we could safely divulge was that the word "radar" was an acronym for "radio direction and ranging."

The Gee Set was a navigation tool designed by the British. It consisted of a receiver, a voltage control panel, an inverter and an indicator. Its operation depended on three ground transmitters—one a master and the other two slaves. They transmitted signals that enabled the bomber's navigator to locate his position or to fly to a pre-determined location using special maps. Its limitations were a 300-mile range and potential for being jammed, although there were anti-jamming circuits in the receiver.

In January, 1943, Rudy Rutiser and I left for 8th Air Force Bomber Command HQ at High Wycombe to attend the Gee school for five weeks, followed by a one-week course on the IFF. This was the standard recognition device on all B-17's to identify friend or foe. The highly secret IFF was designed to detonate automatically in a crash landing or be detonated manually to prevent the critical circuits from falling into the hands of the Germans.

In May, 1943, 303rd Bomb Group radio maintenance moved into a new building and we got one end as the Radar Shop. We didn't move into our own separate building, which we helped erect just east of the main hangar, until the following March.

The first Gee Set was installed in the 427th Squadron's *Winning Run*, aircraft number 42-29944, on 3 July 1943. Eventually, about 40 of the 303rd's aircraft were fitted with Gee Sets. They were spread among the squadrons, for those B-17's designated as Lead Ships, Deputy Lead and so forth. There were not enough sets to equip all the aircraft in the Group. Parts for the sets were always in short supply. I hoarded what critical items I had.

We received a Gee flight simulator to indoctrinate and train navigators in the use of the equipment. The Gee Set was not complicated in its operation, so the learning process was fairly short.

In December, 1943, we flew down to Bungay to pick up some radar parts from B-17's which were no longer airworthy. On the return, I asked the pilot if he would mind coming in over the main runway at Molesworth. I had the coordinates of the main runway, and this was a rare opportunity for me to personally check the accuracy of the Gee equipment in flight. When the coordinates lined up perfectly I called out on intercom "now!" When I looked out, there was a beautiful sight—the main runway. For me, this was very reassuring first-hand



RAY HOLLAND IN THE UNIFORM HE WORE TO WORK in the 303rd Bomb Group's radar shop as a 358th Squadron master sergeant.

proof of the equipment's capabilities.

In the spring of 1944, a specially trained crew arrived at Molesworth to maintain and operate the APS-15, popularly known as the "Mickie." This was a blind bombing set installed on only about ten B-17's designated as "Pathfinders." The equipment was quite large and very complicated. It took a lot of power to operate vacuum tubes which projected on a cathode ray tube screen a view of the terrain under the aircraft. My radar shop crew and I didn't have much to do with the Mickie, so I can't attest to its reliability and ease of operation. I think its maximum range was only about half of the Gee Set.

A new version of the Gee, called the G-H, emerged later in the war, designed for blind bombing as an alternative to the APS-15 Mickie. It contained its own transmitter and did not rely on ground stations for its operation. I don't think it was tested enough to adequately determine if it matched up with the Mickie in effectiveness.

Our radar shop also had the responsibility for "chaff," bundles of narrow metallic strips designed to jam enemy radar. It was very effective if released from the bombers in a configuration to lay a blanket of strips between the formation and the German anti-aircraft gunners. It was not very effective if the pattern was distorted, leaving gaps in the blanket.

We had a great shop, a lot of very good technicians, hard working and loyal because they were well aware of the importance of what they were doing. We manned our stations until the close of combat operations when we were ordered to pack up all remaining sets, all shop equipment and supplies, and shut down the Radar Shop. In a way, I was reluctant to do this, but then it meant we were going home.

During my time at Molesworth with the 303rd Bomb Group, I learned a lot more radar than I thought I ever could, but it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that I will never forget.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO BE INTERNED IN SWITZERLAND?

On 13 July 1944, for the third day in a row, the 303rd Bomb Group attacked Munich. Just after "bombs away," a 360th Squadron B-17, no name aircraft #42-97905, was hit by flak which ripped huge holes in the wing between the number 1 and 2 engines. The fortress left formation and swerved toward Switzerland with fuel leaking from the wing. One of the airmen aboard the B-17 was Art Habich, the radio operator. Eddie Deerfield, editor of the Hell's Angels Newsletter, interviewed him at the San Diego reunion last September to find out what happened to the crew and the aircraft. The interview follows.

Q What was your position on the crew, and how many missions did you fly?

A I was the radio operator. We came down in Switzerland on my 32nd mission. I needed just three more missions to finish my combat tour.

Q What was the target and date on that mission?

A It was Munich on July 13, 1944.

Q Who was your pilot and what happened to your B-17?

A Our pilot was Paul Long. We dropped our bombs, and were then hit by anti-aircraft fire. Two engines were blown out. We couldn't keep up with the formation. We turned and went into Switzerland. That was our orders.

Q When you say those were your orders, was the pilot given that order by the Air Commander on the mission or did the pilot make the decision because of the damage to your aircraft?

A I believe that he had this type of order before we took off on the mission. If you couldn't make it back to England, don't bail out or crash in Germany. Turn and go into Switzerland.

Q Was the entire crew aboard when you landed?

A We were all still on the plane. After we entered Switzer-

land's air space, one of their planes guided us in to an airfield where we crash landed. Our hydraulics were all shot out, no brakes, no nothing. We went off the end of the runway onto a plowed field. The waist gunner was the only one injured.

Q What happened after the plane landed?

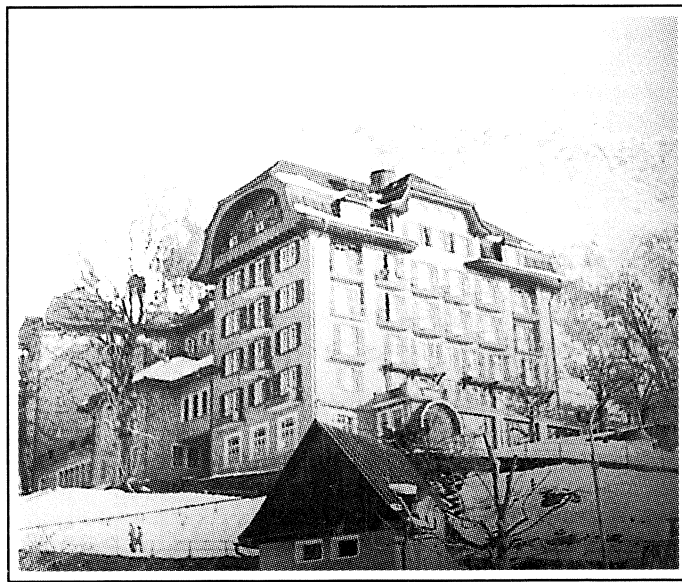
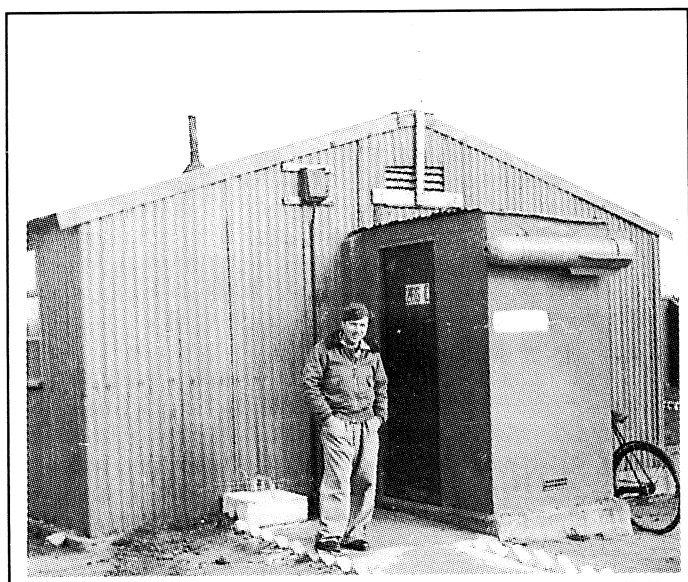
A We got out of the B-17 as quickly as we could. The gas fumes were thick, and we figured that sucker was about ready to blow up. There were four or five vehicles near our plane with soldiers wearing what looked like those Nazi bucket helmets and I thought, oh God, here we are in Germany. But, they were Swiss, and they took us to their military headquarters for interrogation.

Q What did the Swiss do with your B-17?

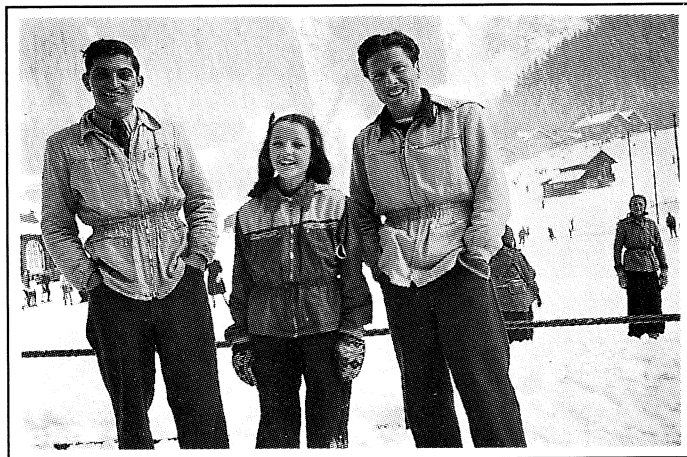
A They had quite a few. They just lined them up, like in storage. As far as I know, they weren't returned to the Americans or handed to Germany during the war. I think that would have been against the Geneva Convention.

Q When they finished questioning all of you, what happened next?

A We were fed lunch. They put these quart bottles of beer on the table, and we thought we had died and went to heaven. That afternoon we were transported to the town of



FOR 31 MISSIONS, Art Habich left his barracks in the 360th Squadron area to fly against the German enemy as a radio operator. On his 32nd mission, with only three left to complete his combat tour, the fortunes of war transferred him from a corrugated hut at Molesworth to the charming Regina Hotel in Wengen, Switzerland.



TWO 360TH SQUADRON INTERNEES on pilot Paul Long's crew, ball turret gunner Joe Flammia and radio operator Art Habich, pose on the Swiss ski slopes with an American 10-year-old girl whose family fled Paris before the city fell to the Nazis.

Adelboden and from there to Wengen to be assigned to quarters.

Q Were these quarters on a Swiss military base?

A No, no. A hotel with maid service.

Q Were you under guard?

A So-called guard, but it was a farce. Nothing strict about it at all.

Q Did the officers on your crew go to the same hotel in Wengen?

A No, Wengen was only for the enlisted internees. The officers were taken to a hotel in another town called Davos. I never saw them again after we were separated.

Q Were you free to travel around Switzerland?

A We needed passes to leave Wengen. But, we didn't mind. We were skiing and ice skating and doing the whole thing.

Q Did the Swiss government provide the equipment to you for all of these sports?

A No, we took care of ourselves. Our regular flight pay was flown in every month and we bought what we wanted. We all had personal checking accounts that we opened in Swiss banks and we operated out of that.

Q Did you learn to ski for the first time during your internment?

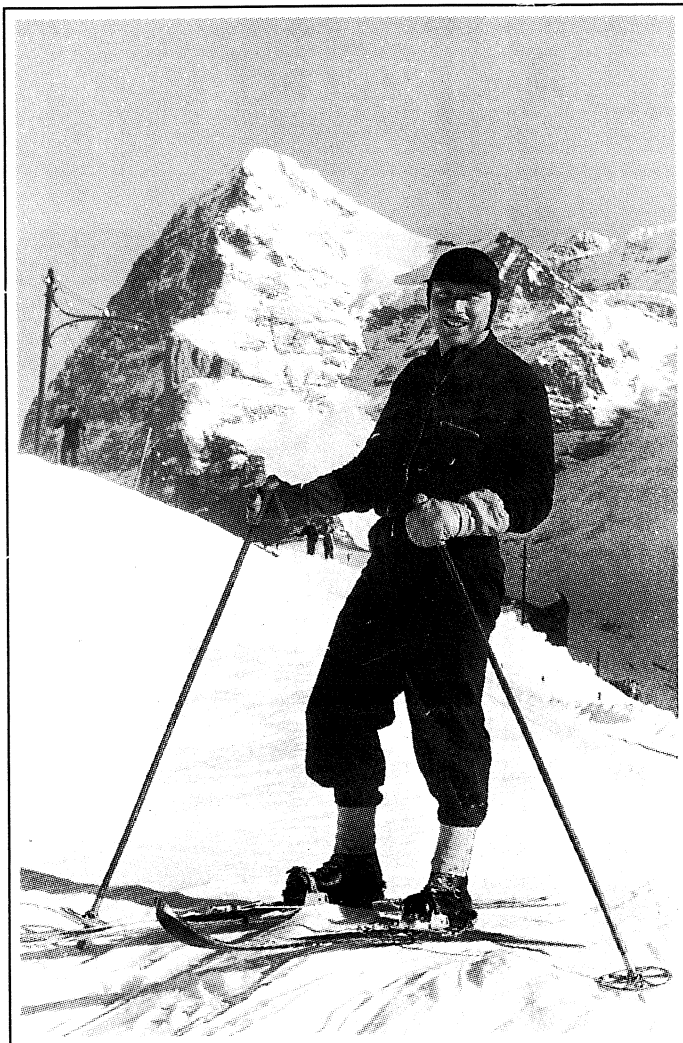
A Oh, yeah. When we would come down the slopes, the Swiss would call out, "Achtung. Here come the American Luftwaffe!"

Q Did you get letters and packages from home?

A Yes, we got them mostly through the Salvation Army and some came through the Red Cross, but overall they were few and far between.

Q How did your family first find out you had been shot down and interned in Switzerland?

A It was the Salvation Army that was in contact with our families in the States to tell them we were fine, and this was about a week before the Air Force notified them. Thank the



ART HABICH, 360th Squadron B-17 combat radio operator interned in Switzerland in July, 1944, was an accomplished skier by the time he was repatriated to the United States in April, 1945.

Lord for the Salvation Army. They were great.

Q What was the attitude of the Swiss people towards you as American internees?

A Very good. They accepted us very well. They didn't have a pro-German attitude.

Q Did some of you have girl friends in Wengen?

A All the time. More girls than we could handle.

Q Did you know during the course of the war after you were interned what was happening on the battlefronts?

A We knew how it was going. We heard radio newscasts in English. We knew that the war was winding down.

Q What were you thinking when you were finally repatriated in April of 1945, about ten months after you were interned?

A We didn't want to leave. We were having too good a time. We were sent by train to Marseilles in France, then on a C-47 back to Molesworth for a short time, and from there back to the United States. Then they sent us to a convalescent center for a couple weeks, the President Madison Hotel in Miami Beach.

MINUTES OF THE BOARD AND GENERAL MEETINGS AT THE SAN DIEGO REUNION IN SEPTEMBER 2000

(Following are the summary highlights of the meetings. Full transcripts are available on request from 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association Secretary Albert Dussliere.)

Board of Directors Meeting, 25 September 2000

A motion by Bylaws Committee Chairman **Bill McLeod** to make all terms of office one year, unless renominated and elected, was approved. VP Admin **Dick Johnson's** recommendation of Baltimore, MD as the site for the 2001 reunion was approved. VP Reunions **Jim Taylor's** and 359th Squadron Representative **John Ford's** recommendation of Branson, MO as site of the 2002 reunion was approved. Treasurer **Jack Rencher** reported that the Association is in sound financial condition. Membership Chairman **Ed Miller** announced an increase since last year of 145 members and his proposal for launching a "Lost 303rd Comrade Search" was approved. He said sales of the CD-ROM might not reach the \$25,000 level. 427th Representative **Fred Reichel** presented a report on copyright law which concluded that all contents of the Hell's Angels Newsletter were protected from infringement unless properly cleared by the editor or already in the public domain. Newsletter Editor **Eddie Deerfield** was authorized to prepare an index to the contents of all issues of the Hell's Angels Newsletter from its inception and to direct the writing of two books (his own and **Hal Susskind's**) concerning the 303rd Bomb Group. Deerfield reported a need for more items suitable for the Molesworth Diary pages in the newsletter. Past Presidents Chairman **Harry Gobrecht** announced the nominations for Executive Committee offices for election at the general meeting, and reported that the Molesworth Memorial is now fully paid for, with 75% in donations raised by Molesworth Representative **Brian McGuire** and 25% in donations from Association members.

General Membership Meeting, 28 September 2000

Elected to executive office were **Dick Johnson** of Deale, MD as president; **Frank De Cicco** of Richmond, TX as Vice President Administration; **Walt Ferrari** of Hampstead, NC as Vice President Reunions; **Al Dussliere** of East Moline, IL as Secretary; **Jack Rencher** of Boise, ID as Treasurer; **Eddie Deerfield** of Palm Harbor, FL as Newsletter Editor, and **Bill Roche** of Venice, FL as Chairman of the Past Presidents Committee. In Squadron elections, **Bill Simpkins** of Cologne, NJ succeeded **Walt Mayer** as 358th Representative and **Hal Susskind** of Austin, TX succeeded **John Ford** as 359th Representative. There were no changes in the other elected offices. The names of **Richard Johnson**, **James Reeves**, **Gary Moncur** and **Joanna Tressler** will be engraved on the 303rd's Association Service Recognition Memorial at the Mighty 8th AF Heritage Museum. Honorary memberships were granted to **Gary Moncur**, **Keith Hill** and **Brian O'Neil**. "Might in Flight" award plaques were presented to **Brian McGuire** (in absentia), **Ed and Jill Miller**, **Bill and Doris Roche** and **Robin and Sue Beeby**. Announcements were made of actions taken at the Board of Directors meeting of 25 September 2000, including locations for future reunions, financial status and acceptance of the audit report, bylaws changes, the CD-ROM, lost member search project, etc. Webmaster **Gary Moncur** reported 600 daily visitors to the 303rd's Web Page. The 303rd's UK Representative **Robin Beeby** said he had completed his project of taking photographs of every 303rd headstone at the American cemetery at Madingley.

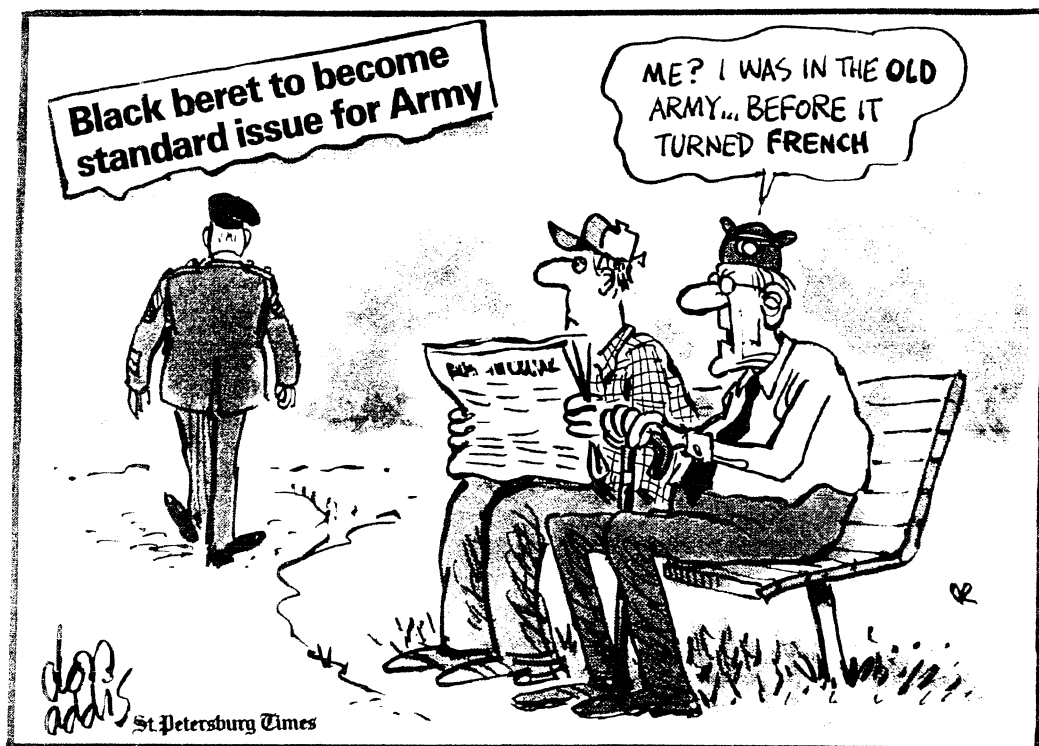
Board of Directors Meeting, 28 September 2000

Portland, OR was proposed as the site for the 2003 reunion, without objection. The Board approved a charge of \$10 for individual purchases of the 2001 Directory of Members. **Ed Miller** declined reappointment as Membership Chairman and he was succeeded by **Dennis Smith**, son of the late **Carlton Smith** who held the position for many years. **Harry Gobrecht's** motion to hire a professional firm to manage the Association's reunions effective with 2002 was approved. The Board approved increases in annual dues to \$25 for veterans, family members and friends, \$30 for overseas members, \$60 for a veteran's life membership and \$150 for family individual life membership. To achieve recognition in the "Super Life" category, payment of an additional \$100 would be required. 303rd veterans 78 years and older do not pay dues.

General Membership Meeting Extension, 29 September 2000

The sole purpose of the extension was to validate the increase in dues approved by the Board of Directors at the previous day's meeting. The members present approved the new dues structure without exception.

Cartoonist Don Addis, whose humorous sketches appear regularly on the editorial pages of Florida's St. Petersburg Times and other newspapers throughout the country, gave the Hell's Angels Newsletter permission to use his commentary on the U.S. Army's new headgear.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we move into the twenty-first century starting in January, 2001 we find the 303rd Bomb Group Association still leading the pack. The 303rd is the envy of other bomb groups, due in large part to the hard working dedication of the board of directors and all the rest.

Several new programs have been initiated this past year, some of which are continuations of past programs. Under the able direction of Ed Miller with invaluable assistance from his wife, Jill, the membership committee thrived. Now with Dennis Miller taking the reins we anticipate the printing of a new and accurate personnel roster which will be available for purchase by members who desire one.

The annual benefactor program has been renewed under the able direction of Ed Miller and has generated needed funds to keep our programs going. At the same time, the letters have brought over thirty corrections to members' addresses and phone numbers which will make the roster more accurate.

The Benefactor program has also given us names of several members who have passed on; the first we have known of. These will go into the memorial page of our web site.

Another program that is underway is the seeking of lost members of the 303rd Bomb Group that we don't know the whereabouts of. Again, under the direction of Ed Miller, a number of volunteers have taken lists of twenty or so names and will try to locate them using the guidelines set forth by Ed. Our goal is to locate at least a thousand of them, either alive or dead, before the Baltimore reunion in September. Some have already been found.

Planning for the Baltimore reunion is in the capable hands of Walter Ferrari who has made one trip to Baltimore and will do another in January or February. Many options will be offered to the reunion attendees who will congregate at the BWI Marriott on Sept 4th or 5th. Some will leave on the 9th and others on the 10th. Trips to the inner harbor will be offered as well as trips to the Smithsonian's Air and Space Museum.

Our newsletter remains the best of any that served in the ETO thanks to the hard work of Eddie Deerfield. Keep sending him stories and pictures! Some pictures can go on our Hell's Angels Web Site that is so good that we get raves from Europe, Spain, Poland, France, England and others. Thank you, Gary Moncur!

Dick Johnson

Black beret to become standard issue for Army

The beret, a symbol of the dash and power of elite military forces, will become standard gear for all U.S. Army units under a new morale-building initiative. Facing enlistment problems and an exodus of junior officers, Gen. Eric K. Shinseki, the Army chief of staff, said that the army will begin outfitting troops with the black beret to symbolize their transformation into a lighter, more mobile force. Wearing of the beret will become mandatory next June.

Gen. Shinseki said "It is time for the entire army to accept the challenge of excellence that has so long been a hallmark of our special operations and airborne units." Army Special Forces wear a green beret, while Army Rangers wear black and airborne units wear maroon. British, German and United Nations troops also wear berets.

Changes in military dress always cause controversy and some traditionalists quickly predicted that the move could make the elite units feel diminished, while not doing much for the others. A retired Army colonel commented that the beret doesn't keep out the wind or rain, yet has to be carefully shaped and placed on the head to look neat. "Without a great deal of care," he said, "you'll look like a French chef with a squashed hat."

The design of uniforms is an emotion-charged issue in the military, and one that has a considerable effect on recruitment. Some advocates have argued that the Army should restore the sleeker styles of World War II uniforms. So far, however, the Army bureaucracy has resisted.

Gen. Shinseki, who took over the top Army post in July, 1999, said he is preparing to "make our case" for an increase in the size of the Army, which is authorized to have 480,000 soldiers on active duty. Although the exact numbers have not been announced, an increase of 40,000 has been mentioned.

The Chief of Staff added that in order to relieve stress on the force he was doing away with weekend work and arranging four-day weekends in connection with federal holidays. He also ordered strict limits on the number of instances in which units are directed to make short-term deployments that take them away from home, and he is seeking ways to make school transfers easier for soldiers' children.

(Information from the St. Petersburg Times and the Associated Press was used in this report)



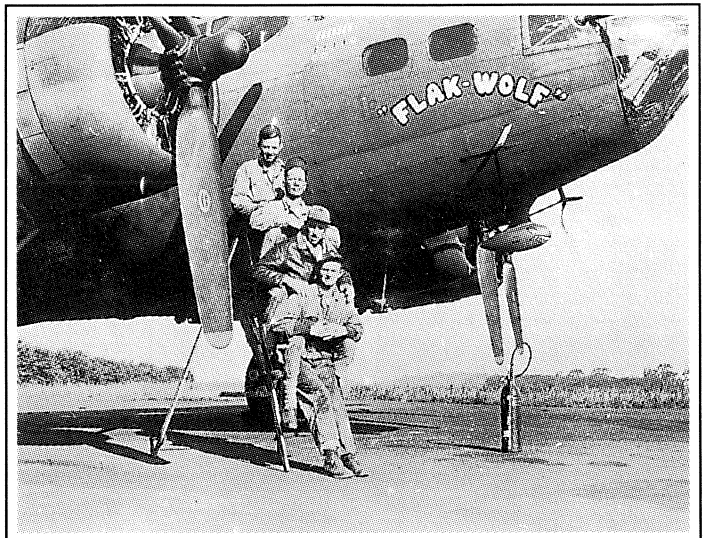
303rd's Pin-up Men of The Month

TOP LEFT—Engineer and top turret gunner Charles Zipfell of the 427th Squadron prepares for combat in the early days before extended fighter support. He completed his tour of 25 missions on 29 June 1943.

TOP RIGHT—Engineer gunner Tom Stephenson of the 359th Squadron was wounded on the 16 June 1944 raid on the airdrome at Juvencourt, France. His crewmates visited him in the 303rd Station Hospital. From left to right, tail gunner Frank McPherson, ball turret gunner Gordon Bale, Stephenson, left waist gunner Cecil See, radio operator Everett Van Horn and right waist gunner Bob Umberger. Pilot George Sirany took the photo.

BELOW LEFT—Sgt. Frank Schuster and S/Sgt. Don Richter of the 360th Squadron's parachute shop check harness straps before issuing the silks to combat crews.

BELOW RIGHT—The ground crew of *Flak-Wolf*, a 427th Squadron aircraft, takes a breather between maintenance chores. From top to bottom are Gaylord Kirtley, Arnold Wedland, Fred Randall and Howard Middleton.



Molesworth Diary

"ONE SURLY OLD GERMAN GUY PUNCHED ME"

We were badly hit on the 12 August 1943 mission to Gelsenkirchen. Up in the cockpit, I learned via intercom that our navigator had been killed and our bombardier severely wounded. Most of our instrumentation had been shot up and two engines were afire. We left the formation and headed west, steadily losing altitude. My objective was to have the crew bail out only at the last possible moment, hoping to be beyond the German border. The crew positioned the bombardier so he could get out with his one good hand on the ripcord. Regretfully, we would have to leave our dead navigator in the B-17's nose where he had been mortally wounded. I hit the bell and called out on intercom that it was time to go.

Soon, everyone was out. I walked into the bomb bay where the wind noise and the flailing wires were making eerie sounds and I bailed out. When the chute opened, off flew my fur-lined flying boots. I was impressed by the silence of my descent. I landed in a cabbage field, and discovered that I was still in Deutschland near the town of Julich. A number of people had gathered to "welcome" me. Some were armed with an odd assortment of what may have been rifles and shotguns. One surly old German guy punched me a few times until a farm lady drove him off. I was taken to a farm house where I gratefully consumed a mug of soup. From there, I was hauled off by oxcart to the Julich town hall for a preliminary interrogation, and then sent to the Dulag Luft at Frankfort as a prisoner of war.

Arthur H. Pentz
359th Squadron Pilot

TERRIBLE DESTRUCTION IN LIVERPOOL

At Molesworth, I served in the 360th with ground crew responsibilities. Before that, I was in the Civilian Technical Corps assigned to the British Royal Air Force at RAF Sealand near Chester.

I saw terrible destruction in the Liverpool area during seven straight nights of almost continuous German bombing. One German "parachute bomb" was caught up in electric power lines and was suspended above a narrow street. It did not tear loose, and detonated above street level. There was a freakish damage pattern. My guess is that the plates on each end of the bomb blew out and send shock waves down both lengths of that very narrow street. Terrible damage was done to the buildings from one end to the other.

The "buzz bombs" were something else. As long as you could hear them, there was no need to stop what you were doing. They were unmanned motorized gliders. If the sound suddenly stopped, that meant the motor had run out of fuel, and it was the time to dive for cover. As for the German rockets, there was no need to worry

about them. They came in so fast it was too late to take cover.

Phillip G. Fleming
360th Squadron Aircraft Maintenance

REMEMBERING THE LOVELY MISS LACE

She was a beauty, and lived a short but heroic life in the pursuit of world peace. B-17 number 42-102569 was a no name aircraft when another crew ferried it to England in 1944 while our crew came over by ship. Although we flew on other B-17's from our first mission to Lyon, France on 30 April 1944 to our last mission to Mersberg, Germany on 29 July 1944, *Miss Lace* always had a special place in our hearts. The nose art was painted by our pilot, Fred Mitchell, and although many thought it was named for the sexy lady in Milton Caniff's comic strip, it was really named in honor of our ground crew chief, M/Sgt. Rorex Lacewell. The bomber flew almost 90 missions before being retired from combat duty.

Like so many World War II veterans, I'll never forget June 6th—D-Day. We took off to bomb a bridge at Conde-Sur-Noireau, only about 15 miles from the French coast. As we flew over the beaches, we saw what looked like hundreds of ships and thousands of men wading to shore. There were flashes of gunfire and smoke from bursting shells. A stunning sight, with the terrible realization that men were dying down there.

William "Bob" Byers
427th Squadron Waist Gunner

"JUST CALL ME A GUST OF WIND"

I was flying co-pilot on the Werner Goering crew. About every half hour on the mission, we rotated at the controls. We were on the bomb run with Werner driving the B-17 when we encountered flak from about 16 guns tracking us. I observed a flak burst at our exact altitude about 300 feet off the starboard wing. I counted 1-2-3-4 seconds and the next burst was 200 feet away, again to the right and at our altitude. I counted another 1-2-3-4 seconds and there was a burst only 100 feet off the wing. I knew then that we were being tracked and the next explosion would be a direct hit if we held position in the formation. I called out, "I've got it, Goering," grabbed the controls and pulled the B-17 up sharply 100 feet. The next shell exploded right where we had been. I dropped back into formation and said, "You've got it, Goering."

Many years later, at a reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group, we were sitting around talking when our ball turret gunner, Bill LaPerch, said, "Talk about luck,

(Continued on page 16)

(DIARY, from page 15)

we were on a bomb run one time. The air was smooth. Suddenly, a strong gust of wind hit us and lifted us up about 100 feet. Just then a flak burst exploded exactly where we were before the gust." I turned to him and said, "Bill, just call me a gust of wind."

Jack Rencher
358th Squadron Pilot

A CREW CHIEF'S PRIDE IN SHOO SHOO BABY

I was one of the first members of the 303rd Bomb Group to arrive at Molesworth. I was serving at March Field when my orders came. I sailed on the Queen Mary in October, 1942. It wasn't long before my life became totally focussed on *Shoo Shoo Baby*, one of our squadron B-17's. My airplane flew 107 missions over Europe, and my ground crew and I took great pride in that accomplishment. It was something of a survival record for Flying Fortresses. We sweated out every mission. As the bombers returned to Molesworth we would run out on the field and count them as they flew over to make their landing approach. We knew then who wasn't coming back. Once on the ground, our job was to get the plane ready for another mission as quickly as possible. We got pretty good at it. We could change an engine in four hours. After the war, *Shoo Shoo Baby* was flown to a base at Kingman, Arizona. It had outlived its usefulness and was destroyed in December, 1945.

Howard E. Isaacson
427th Squadron Ground Crew Chief

WARM FOOT, COLD SANDWICHES

On one of our missions, a piece of shrapnel from a flak burst sliced into the electrically heated boot on my right foot damaging the wiring but not wounding me. The air temperature must have been about 60 degrees below zero so I knew I was in trouble. The foot was beginning to freeze. We had an electrically heated bag aboard that was used to keep the crew's sandwiches from freezing hard as rocks. The bag had a plug that matched the plugs on our heat suits. I tossed the sandwiches to the side, put my foot in the bag and plugged it into the connection in my pants leg on the right side of the suit. The crew had icy cold sandwiches, but my right foot was nice and warm on the rest of that mission.

That was in the air. I remember another kind of survival tactic on the ground. Some of us were going into town, and the mess hall chief asked me to pick up some large cases of corn flakes. The beer on the base was kind of weak, so we picked up two kegs of ale and hid them in our vehicle under the boxes of corn flakes. We had no trouble with the MP's at the main gate as the kegs were well hidden. We dropped off the corn flakes at the mess hall and rushed the ale back to our Quonset hut. As I recall, just about every man in the squadron had a drink from the kegs.

Arthur L. Bailey
360th Squadron Tail Gunner

COMRADE SEARCH AN EARLY SUCCESS

By Ed Miller

The 303rd Bomb Group Association has set a "goal" of finding at least 1,000 of our missing comrades by the time we meet in Baltimore next September. We have 133 of our members, both regular and family members, who have volunteered to help with this most important project.

We have provided a set of guidelines for each volunteer which will help them as they get on the Internet and try to locate some of our comrades, that we have not heard from since we left Molesworth in 1945.

So far, the search has been very successful as our Assistant Project Director, Gary L. Moncur reports that in the first three months of the campaign we have located 112 comrades. We are sorry to report that 75 of these "missing comrades" have been reported as having passed away.

Out of a list of men that served at Molesworth (9,975 of them) between September 1942 and June 1945, we have over 5,000 of them that have never made contact with the 303rd Bomb Group Association.

We started with a list of 4,899 of our comrades, for which we had their army serial number that they used during World War II. Gary Moncur made a random mixing of these numbers, and we sent out sheets that held 26 names to each of our 133 volunteers. We mixed them to make sure that each volunteer had an "equal shake" in their names.

Simple arithmetic will tell you that we are in dire need of additional volunteers, as we have sent out only about 3,500 of those names for searching. So, anyone that has a computer and would like to pitch in and help—we would be most appreciative.

Or, if you would like to take a sheet of 26 names and send each a letter for forwarding by the Veteran's Administration, we would like to have volunteers for that kind of help. Please send me your name and I will send you a packet covering the guidelines and a list of names. Send to Ed Miller, Project Director, P. O. Box 219, Temple, OK 73568 or edmiller@pdi.net.

303rdbga.com Honored As "Customer Site of the Week"

Pair Networks, the Web hosting provider for many well-designed, high-profile internet sites, created a "Customer Site of the Week" feature to showcase selected sites. The honor was given recently to "Hell's Angels: 303rd Bombardment Group," managed by Gary Moncur, son of the late Vern Moncur, a 303rd pilot.

The site was described as "Extensive historical archives about the 303rd Bombardment Group, a B-17 Bomber Group stationed in Molesworth, England during World War II. There is an amazing depth of content here."

* * * * *

RECOGNITION FOR HELL'S ANGELS NEWSLETTER, the 303rd Bomb Group Association's quarterly publication, came in a letter from Dr. Walter Brown, editor of EIGHTH AF NEWS, who wrote, "Hell's Angels Newsletter is the best of all the Bomb Groups. I get a good number of them."

The 303rd's newsletter was first distributed in 1976 as a six-page mimeographed sheet.

OPEN FORUM

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

FURTHER INSIGHTS TO THE FATE OF THE CHANCE CREW

In the November 2000 issue, Jim O'Leary wrote about seeing Arthur Chance's crew go down on the Merseburg mission of 21 November 1944. I was the radio operator on that 359th crew, and here's what happened:

After releasing our bombs, we were hit, an engine caught fire and we started to fall. Lt. Chance gave the order on intercom for the crew to bail out. As tail gunner Tony Martin and ball turret gunner Shirley Moss jumped through the waist section door, I heard the pilot shout "Hold on, the fire's under control, don't leave the ship." I stopped the others and we looked down and saw our crewmates' chutes open. Pilot Chance and co-pilot Johnson headed us toward what they thought were the Allied lines in France. Instead, we were suddenly over Frankfurt, Germany in clear bright daylight. Flak batteries blew us out of the sky.

I was blown clear of the wreckage, and managed to pull the ripcord with blood streaming down my face. Seconds after I came down behind some houses, a crowd of German civilians rushed up to attack me. They were yelling epithets and throwing stones. They were held off almost immediately by three German soldiers with fixed bayonets.

I was taken to a nearby air raid shelter where I met up with four others of our crew. Our chutes were then piled into a wheel barrow, and our engineer, Elmer Menasco, had to push it as we were marched to our next destination along a rocky, muddy road. He was wearing only one shoe—the other had flown off when his chute opened. When I tried to help Elmer, one of the German soldiers shoved the butt of his rifle into my chest hollering, "Nix helfen."

After we reached the Dulag, we were interrogated, my head wound was treated

with sulfa and we were transported to a Stalag up north.

After some six months, we were liberated by the Russians and returned to Allied Military control. I learned later that the two men who had bailed out early didn't survive.

**Albert Miller
359th Radio Operator**

AF VETERAN OPPOSED TO GAYS IN THE MILITARY

The Editor Comments column in the November 2000 issue hit the target right on the nose. Homosexuals do not belong in the military. I was in the Air Force for more than 20 years after World War II and am proud of those extra years. I believe women do belong in today's military as they perform a lot of tasks which free the guys to perform combat duties. I still don't think women should perform duty in combat. Big bonuses alone will not entice young people today to join the military. It should be mandatory for all male high school graduates to serve one or two years in the service upon graduation.

**Harold "Red" Timm
360th Tail Gunner**

FIREFIGHTER APPLAUDS "GREAT GENERATION"

I'm a 42-year-old firefighter. I just finished reading a book about your bomb group—"Half A Wing, Three Engines and A Prayer." All I can say is thank you for helping to save the free world so that I can now enjoy it with my family. The book made me laugh at times, but mostly weep. Crying for all the men that never got to hold their children, never to enjoy the laughter of their grandchildren. There are plenty of us out here that give thanks to you and your generation.

In the book I saw your picture with the 50-cal. rounds on your shoulder and remember thinking, "That looks like one tough SOB."

**Duane McDonald
Fort Collins, CO**

(Editor's Note—I've mellowed a little since that photo was taken in 1943).

LOOKING FOR THE CREW CHIEF WITH THE SMILE

The enclosed picture was taken on the occasion of the 35th and last mission of the Marvin Fink crew, to Berlin on 3 February 1945. It shows our good-natured, hard working crew chief whose name, unfortunately, I do not recall. What a pity. He met us with a smile each time we got to our aircraft (no name F-PU #44-6517) and was there with words of encouragement. I wonder if any of our 303rd vets recall who he is.



Many thanks for a fine newsletter that brings back so many memories.

**Robert Hand, Sr.
360th Navigator**

AND THE SEARCH GOES ON AND ON AND ON

I was in the 359th Squadron from early 1942 to late 1945. I had a very good friend there that I would like to see again. His name is Morris Pearl. I sure hope you can find him for me.

**George Turkel
359th Ground Crew**

I am writing to find information and friends of my father, Burton Rodgers. He was a bombardier in the 358th Squadron and imprisoned near Barth, Germany after his B-17 was shot down by a German fighter during a mission to Schweinfurt on

April 13, 1944.

**Larry Rodgers
P. O. Box 5172
Whittier, CA 90607**

Robert T. Britz, a radio operator in the 427th Squadron, was killed on September 28, 1944 when his plane was shot down by enemy fighters and crashed at Linden, Germany. According to the records, it was the Magdeburg mission, and the only survivor was the pilot, Charles G. Glasgow. The family would like to talk to any one who knew Bob Britz at Molesworth.

**John Chopelas
508 South. Gray Street
Killeen, TX 76541**

HISTORIAN INTERESTED IN HEARING FROM POW'S

I am in the process of collecting "shot down" stories from former Kriegies in Europe during World War II. I need their stories for a new book I'm writing titled "From Out Of The Blue." My goal is to let the future generations of this nation realize that their freedom came at a high price. The book will not be sold but will become part of the collection at the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum and the USAF Academy library.

**Arnold A. Wright
515 Ruth Street
Benton, AR 72015**

303rd Vet Needs Books For Disabled Youth

Thank you for giving my home town newspaper, the Palmyra Courier, permission to print your story about the 303rd Bomb Group's return to Molesworth. My children paid my way so I could attend that great gathering. I give my Hell's Angels Newsletters to an 18-year-old boy who has suffered seizures all his life. He takes them to school to show his teachers and other students. If any of our members can send me books about the 303rd, this young man would put them in the school's library.

**Julius Persyns
444th Sub-Depot
2460 Parker Road
Newark, NJ 14513**

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

As the "Past" Chairman of the Membership Committee, I want to introduce you to Dennis S. Smith, who will be taking over this Committee. Dennis comes from great stock—his father was Carlton M. Smith, who passed away in December 1997. He helped his father, while Carlton was the Membership Chairman, so he knows the ropes, as well as the many hours that it takes to do this job.

Please help him as much as you can. Make sure that your address and phone numbers remain up-to-date. I am sure Dennis will keep you happy.

I am finishing up the 2 year project of preparing the "303rd Bomb Group Records Project" and placing the CD-ROM disk in the mail, for all those who have purchased it. If you haven't placed your order, you are making a real big mistake, as it contains information about all of you while at Molesworth.

My project for year 2001 is "Lost 303rd Comrade Search." We hope to have found 1,000 of our lost comrades by the time we join each other in Baltimore in September 2001. If you know of a comrade that has passed away, please let me know of his passing. That will prevent one of my volunteers from continuing to search for him.

This is my second tour as the Membership Chairman. My first one started back in 1985 after Seattle, and continued until Jim Reeves took over 1988 or 1989. And both tours have been a "labor of love." I want to sincerely thank everyone, who has "thanked me," over the years.

Ed Miller

IN MEMORIAM

James F. Berger (POW)	359 th	1999
Claude W. Campbell	359 th	
Francia B. Chuba	427 th	23 Apr 1999
Frank J. Doherty	Hdq	14 Aug 2000
James F Green	359 th	Unknown
Billie E. Hudler	358 th	04 Sep 2000
Theodore "Ted" S. Lappo	358 th	23 Aug 2000
Vernon G Marker	444 th	10 Aug 2000
Robert D. Miller	427 th	28 Aug 1998
Philip A. Olander	359 th	28 Jul 2000
Loy J. Ramsey		Sept 1999
Robert E. Stout		Unknown

SUPER LIFE MEMBERS

(N) – New Super Life Members (R) – Repeaters

William C. Heller (R)	360 th
William J. Roche (R)	360 th

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

George W Buske	358 th
Janet L (Minick) German	Family
Vernon E Gant *	358 th
Paul L. Greenwald *	427 th
Walter Hargrove	358 th
Thomas L Moore	359 th
Mary Lou Roche	Family
Charles A Sikora Jr. *	427 th
Vivian S. Van Derhei	427 th

* Found as a result of "Lost 303rd Comrade Search Project"

NEW REGULAR MEMBERS

Robert E. Bonenberger * (358th), 118 Webb Drive, Washington, PA 15301-6414 (724) 228-8282
 Obert Enget, 418 23rd ST SW, Minot, ND 58701
 George Frechter, (427th), 200 Old Palisade Rd, Apr. 14C, Fort Lee, NJ 07024-7059, (201) 592-5911
 Paul L. Greenwald *(427th), 1615 Speed Avenue, Louisville, KY 40205-1229 (502) 459-1481 (Elaine)
 Richard S. Moll (358th), 143 Chambers Lane, Jefferson Hills, PA 15025-3721 (412) 384-7301 (Jean)
 Vivian S. Van Derhei (427th), 1308 S. 17th Street, Las Vegas, NV 89104-1852 (702) 384-8562

* Found as a result of "Lost 303rd Comrade Search Project"

NEW FAMILY MEMBERS

Stephanie A. Cooper, 3335 SE 68TH Avenue, Portland, OR 97206-2609 (Dau of 1/Lt Edward G. Cooper, 427th Bomb)
 Debra D. Cunningham, P. O. Box 25, Checotah, OK 74426-0025 (918) 473-5042 (Dau of Sgt Carman E. Cunningham)
 Phillip L. Fisher, 6105 E 16th Ave, Apache Junction, AZ 85219 9336, (480) 983-3537 (Nephew of Dale Fisher(?))
 Judy A Frederick, 8812-B Springmail Cir., Austin, TX 78729-0000 (512) 258-7038 (Dau of 1st Lt Jack McGuffin-360th)
 Janet Minick German, 15 Washington Ave, Front Royal, VA 22630-3803 (540) 636-6756 (Dau of Melvin R. Minick-358th)
 Charles "Chuck" Grohs, 5275 Somerset Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89120-1546 (Grandson of 1/Lt Edward G. Cooper, 427th)

Pamela Cooper Gulley, 6526 SE Aspen, Milwaukie, OR 97222-2910 (Dau of 1/Lt Edward G. Cooper, 427th Bombardier)

Bryan D. Gust, 13806 Paseo Cevera, San Diego, CA 92129-2706 (858) 484-1243 (Mary) (Son of Darrell D. Gust)

Dr. James L Hargrove, Athens, GA. (Son of Walter Hargrove)

Michael A. Malerich, 911 Roanoke Dr., Springfield, IL 62702-3426, (217) 793-0640 (Adele)(Son of Earl J Malerich Jr-359th)

By Request of Jack Mc Guffin(360th), Michael J Mc Guffin of Longview, TX, Larry J Mc Guffin of Dallas, TX, Peggy Lynn Mc Guffin Vaughan of Dallas, TX, Susan Jane Mc Guffin Wallace of Longview, TX, and Judy Mc Guffin Frederick of Austin, TX.

Dallice Mills, 105 NW Overlook Dr, Corvallis, OR, 97330-9545. (541)745-7961, (related to Eldon Audiss, 359th)

Thomas J. Monahan, 43 Balfour Lane, Willingboro, NJ 08046-1011 (608) 871-7612 (Karen)(Unc: 1/Lt Wm J. Monahan-358th)

Ronald H Heely, PO Box 5451, Amarillo, TX 79117-5451, (806)-679-8265

Joseph Kevin Reynolds,

Jon Kurtis Reynolds,

Mary Lou Roche, 17 Dustan Street, Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, Canada B2Y3T5 (902) 469-0445 (Dau of 1/Lt Wm J. Roche)

Teri Cooper Scharback, 48 Monterey Drive, Medford, OR 97504-9329 (Dau of 1/Lt Edward G. Cooper, 427th Bombardier)

Fate L. Thomas, 5413 Country Village Drive, Ooltewah, TN 37363-9078 (423) 238-9974 (Barbara)(Bro of Edward H. Thomas Jr. 427th Bombardier-deceased)

Jane & Edward Wahl, 1923 E. Stratford Road, Olathe, KS 66062-2311 (913) 829-1908 (Niece of 2/Lt Forest E. Miller-427th pilot)

NEW FRIENDS OF THE 303RD

Clive J Bassett, "Welwyn" 84 Northampton Rd, Wellingborough, Northants NN8 3Ls, England

John L. Chambers, 10740 Caminata de Luz, San Diego, CA 92129-2007 (858) 672-7150 (Linda)

Emil J. Faieta, 405 2nd Street, Vestaburg, PA 15368-???? (724) 377-0524 (Loretta)(Friend of Al Santella)

Eugene F. Martin, 4101 S. Marion Road, Sioux Falls, SD 57106-1725 (605) 362-0438 (Mary Joe)(Frd of Al Santella)

Michael Piccinni, 54 Russell Road, Garden City, NY 11530-1935

Leo & Sharyn Sweeney, 698 Twin Oak Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15235-2632 (412) 795-7540 (Friend of Al Santella)

Harry "Doug" Tanner, 2923 Roy Bunch Road, Sulphur, LA 70663-0762 (337) 527-0322 (President, Louisiana Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society)

DONATIONS & MEMORIALS

Robin & Sue Beeby In Memory of the 303rd Comrades
Resting at Maddingly Cemetery

Allison Clarke, donation to Molesworth Memorial

William J Dallas, donation to the 303rd BGA general fund

Johannes "Hans" Reusink In Memory of the 303rd Crewmen who became POW's or KIA in the crash of 42-97781 "The '8' Ball MK III" near Winterswijk-Ratum, The Netherlands

Charles L. Roth 360th Donation for Master Directory

Kermit D. Stevens, in honor of daughters, and to support "Hell's Angels Newsletter"

BENEFACTOR PROGRAM

William J. Roche. . . William C. Heller. . .

NEW E-MAIL ADDRESSES

G. Neil Bech, Jr.	359 th	gnbjr@att.net
James G. Force	359 th	e-jgmrforce@aol.com
Wilbur "Bud" & Mary Klint	427 th	Theklints@msn.com
Humphrey P. O'Leary	1681 st	hholeary@earthlink.net
Brian D. O'Neill	Friend	bdoneil@attglobal.net
Kathy O'Neill	Friend	oneill22@home.com
Milton S. Riley	359 th	wildirishman@earthlink.net
Dennis S. Smith	Family	Da1Smith@pacbell.net
Barbara A Barnes Stier	Family	bas@tscnet.com
Vicki Sykes	Fam	cvsykes@aol.com
Michael A Malerich	Family	mikem@eosinc.com

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Anthony J. Boland (358th), 7766 Hoffs Circle, Lake Worth, FL 33467-7839 (Winter Address)

Oryln D. Chonat (358th), 34925 Gran Grae Rd, Prairie du Chien, WI 53821-9802 (608)875-6742 (Marjorie)

Luis Contreras (427th), 510 N. La Cadena Dr., L-101, Colton, CA 92324-2821 (909) 783-3999 (Lucy)

G. P. Greene Jr, 3411 S Camino Seco #94, Tucson, AZ 85730

Leslie L. Latz (427th), 7803 Saint Vincent St, Tampa, FL 33614-3374 (813) 933-8563 (Judy)

Wilbur W Lee, 2110 Cactus Court #1, Walnut Creek CA, 94595

Leslie C. Lofquist, 8701 Woodhaven Drive SW, Byron Center, MI 49315-8535 (Miriam)(Fa: Gordon B. Lofquist)

Mrs. Sally Maresh, 1724 F. M. 163, Cleveland, TX 77327-8813 (281) 592-3044 (Wife of M/Sgt Lewis A. Maresh - 444th dec)

Albert E. Martel, Jr. (427th), 26 Clark Street, Lincoln, ME 04457-1134 (207) 794-8484

Marion L. "Dutch" Niemants (Hdq), 301 Avenida Mirador, Santa Teresa, NM 88008-9401 (505) 589-5868 (Dixie)(Zipcode in November issue was 8808-9401)

Gerald C. Rasmussen (360th), 6 Azalea Drive, Winter Garden, FL 34787-2344 (Darline)

THE FORREST L. VOSLER NCO ACADEMY OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE

A distinguished military training center for US Air Force non-commissioned officers is named for T/Sgt. Forrest L. Vosler, the 303rd Bomb Group's most illustrious enlisted airman, who was awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism on the mission to Bremen, Germany on 20 December 1943. "Woody" Vosler, who died in February 1992 at the age of 68, would have been proud to know that the Academy carries on his belief in and support of strong education and training programs for enlisted men and women.

In this September 1992 photo, Lt. Gen. Thomas S. Moorman, Jr., Vice Commander of the USAF Space Command, joined widow Virginia Vosler in a ribbon-cutting ceremony dedicating the facility at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado.



THE EDITOR COMMENTS

During the 12 years I worked as a newspaper reporter and television news editor in Chicago, I did a fair share of investigative reporting. So, when a story surfaced recently about a dead cow being loaded into the bomb bay of a 303rd Bomb Group B-17 and then dropped on a mission over Germany, I thought here's something that needs looking into. The inquiry began on the Open Forum page of the November 2000 issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter with 303rd historian Harry Gobrecht's request for information about the alleged incident. In response, Ray Cossey, formerly the 303rd's representative in England, reported that he had been told the story by 358th Squadron pilot Dick McGilvray during a 1985 interview for a British radio station in Norfolk. Cossey was able to provide a tape recording of the original program.

In the wide ranging interview, Dick McGilvray had said, "It was in the fall of 1944. There was pasture land between the runways at Molesworth and the local farmers sent cows out there. One day, a big black-and-white Holstein was hit and killed, by an aircraft, as I recall. We were all standing around looking at the dead cow. There it was, and what to do with it? We were on a mission the next day. One of the ground crews went out and picked up the cow with a weapons carrier that had a hoist on it for loading bombs. The cow was placed in the bomb bay. We flew that mission, and when the bomb bay doors opened the first thing out was the cow." Dick McGilvray didn't give the date or target for the cow bomb drop, saying, "It happened to be one of those (routine) missions that you didn't remember. To some place, somewhere in Germany."

According to 303rd Bomb Group records, Richard L. McGilvray flew 35 combat missions, plus several aborted missions, from 14 August 1944 to 30 December 1944. For most of the first half of his tour, he was co-pilot on the George McCutcheon crew. He moved into the pilot's seat with his own crew on 18 October 1944. I was able to contact 358th Squadron airmen who flew with him on most of his missions, as well as a leading ground crew chief. Pilot George McCutcheon said, "I don't think it ever happened. If anything bad happened or funny happened, I could remember it. Putting a dead cow in the bomb bay wouldn't go unnoticed. Dick McGilvray was always able to tell a good story." Radio operator Donald Foulk said, "To my knowledge, this incident did not take place. I think I did hear this story from 'Pop' McGilvray at a Group reunion, but I think he said it occurred on a non-mission flight, a new crew check-out." Engineer John Burcham said, "I cannot confirm the story about bombing Hitler with the carcass of a dead cow." Crew Chief Albert Curtis Fox said, "I never heard of a dead cow in any 358th airplane. I knew all the other 358th crew chiefs. If anyone had put a dead cow in any of our squadron's bomb bays, I would have heard about it. A dead cow must have smelled pretty bad." The most definitive and succinct comment came from Navigator Ben Starr who flew 23 missions with Dick McGilvray—"The cow story is all bull. It never happened. But it's a good story, which probably was conceived after eight or nine beers." I was not able to interview Dick McGilvray himself. He passed away a few years ago.

In introducing his guest to his radio audience in the 1985 broadcast, Ray Cossey referred to Dick McGilvray as a "raconteur whose remembrances of World War II are not all entirely serious." The dictionary says a raconteur is a person skilled at telling stories. It would appear that Richard L. McGilvray, an officer and a gentleman who distinguished himself in flying 35 combat missions against the enemy, was also a story teller of awesome proportions above and beyond the call of duty.

Eddie Deerfield

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Eddie Deerfield, Editor
3552 Landmark Trail
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