

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

May, 2002

Colonel Kermit D. Stevens, the World War II commander of the 303rd Bomb Group, was given special recognition as the 8th Air Force celebrated its 60th anniversary at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum near Savannah.

As Colonel Stevens received a plaque from Lt. Gen. E. G. Shuler, Jr., he was applauded by his former deputy commander at Molesworth, Maj. Gen. Lewis E. Lyle. Standing behind Col. Stevens are his daughter, Ellen Marshall McBride, and the Museum's CEO, C. J. Roberts.



303rd's Kermit Stevens Honored as 8th Air Force Celebrates 60th Anniversary

A resolution honoring Colonel Kermit D. Stevens, longest serving commander of the 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth during World War II, was presented to him at the 60th anniversary of the US Eighth Air Force in ceremonies at the Heritage Museum near Savannah.

The resolution recognized Col. Stevens for a multitude of merits, citing him for flying many dangerous missions during the war to serve as an example to his men and to instill in them a strong sense of esprit-de-corps second to none among 8th Air Force units. The resolution also praised Col. Stevens as a tireless advocate for the preservation of 8th Air Force history.

During Kermit Stevens' fourteen months as the 303rd's commander, phrases he used during mission briefings became rallying cries for combat crews. Best known, perhaps, was his "Bow your

necks and keep going." A 360th Squadron B-17 was named *Bow-Ur-Neck Stevens* in his honor. After flying many missions against enemy targets, the plane was shot down in the attack on Saarbrücken, Germany on 11 May 1944.

The ceremony honoring Col. Stevens on 26 January 2002 was part of a full week-end of activities in celebration of 60 years of continued service of the Eighth Air Force.

The Mighty Eighth was activated on 28 January 1942 in a National Guard Armory in Savannah, Georgia. By 17 August of that same year, operating out of England, the 8th AF mounted an attack by twelve B-17's on railroad marshalling yards at Rouen, France. The mission was considered highly successful and was the beginning of strategic daylight bombing.

One of those B-17 pilots was Paul W. Tibbets,

who was at the controls of the B-29 Enola Gay three years later when the first atomic bomb was dropped.

The heavy bombers of today's 8th Air Force, with headquarters at Barksdale AFB in Louisiana, include the B-1 *Lancer*, B-2 *Spirit* and B-52 *Stratofortress*.

The highlight of the anniversary weekend was the Museum's "General H. H. 'Hap' Arnold Lecture Series." Guest speakers included:

Lt. Gen. Tom Keck, current commander of the 8th AF;

Roger Freeman, a leading authority on World War II air force operations;

Allen Jones, a professional photographer who created the impressive "Return To Normandy" exhibit;

Donald Miller, an internationally known historian who holds the McCracken Chair at Lafayette College, PA, and

Paul Tibbets, pilot of one of the most famous missions of World War II.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Life in Stalag Luft 1 not like Hollywood portrayals, as explained by 359th Squadron pilot Bill Miller—Page 3.

Lions Club of Leadville, CO, lauds 358th Squadron pilot Don Gamble for wartime heroism—Page 5.

Veterans Memorial Museum in Branson, MO, will be a highlight of 2002 reunion, says John Ford—page 6.

Brutal flak encountered on the Lutzkendorf mission of 11 September 1944. An account by William Crawford of 360th Squadron—Page 7.

War on terrorism generates new US Air Force aircraft nose art—Page 16.

SEE 303RD MARKETING PAGES AS SPECIAL INSERT



303RD BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

Hell's Angels Newsletter

Editor—Eddie Deerfield

VOL XXV, No. 2 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684 May, 2002

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*, published quarterly, will only be sent to members whose dues payments are current. 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.

Copyright©2002 by the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association Inc. Contents of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* may not be reproduced in any form without the express written permission of the editor, Eddie Deerfield.

Editor Emeritus: Hal Susskind

ELECTED OFFICERS — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

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

Vice President - Administration

Walter J. Ferrari (Ruth)
5361 Belle Mead Drive
Aiken, SC 29803
TEL: (803) 648-5598
EM: wrferrari@aol.com

Vice President - Reunions

John W. Ford
4248 W. Colby Street
Springfield, MO 65802
TEL: (417) 831-3919
EM: warrenburke@worldnet.att.net

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

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

Past Presidents Chairman

Nominating, Awards, Memorials
Richard R. Johnson (Marjorie)
5901 Joe Road, Deale, MD 20751
TEL: (410) 867-0597
EM: fortdriver@aol.com

ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

358th Bomb Sqd. Representative

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

359th Bomb Sqd. Representative

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

358th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Kenneth Clarke (Barbara)
3504 Plumb Street
Houston, TX 77005-2928
TEL: (713) 668-7404

359th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Roger K. Bates (Barbara)
961 Amstrutz Drive
San Jose, CA 95129-2219
TEL: (408) 252-7226

ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Continued)

360th Bomb Sqd. Representative

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

427th Bomb Sqd. Representative

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

Headquarters & Supporting Units

444th Sub Depot Representative

Louis M. Schulstad
3518 208th Place NE
Redmond, WA 98053-9367
TEL: (425) 868-6893
EM: Melschulstad@questline.com

Widow Member's Representative

Joanna M. Tressler
109 Mountain Road
Northumberland, PA 17857-9766
TEL: (570) 473-3816

360th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Howard J. Frohman (Jeanne)
1363 Via Cibola
Oceanside, CA 92057-2623
TEL: (760) 721-8540

427th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Edward W. Gardner, Jr (Sue)
P O Box 246
Interlochen, MI 49643-0246
TEL: (231) 276-7126
EM: EWG303nav@aol.com

Hdqs & Supporting Units

444th Air Depot Alternate

Herny G. Johansen
8989 E. Escalante Rd., #78
Tucson, AZ 85730-2830
TEL: (520) 886-6093

Associate Members Rep

Lance Stoner
11422 W. 70th Street
Shawnee, KS 662034026
TEL: (913) 268-3944
EM: L.stoner@worldnet.att.net

APPOINTED COMMITTEE

CHAIRMEN

Membership & Roster

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

PX Administrator

Charles R. Sykes (Vicki)
P. O. Box 33474
Phoenix, AZ 85067-3474
TEL: (602) 993-8015
EM: PX303BG@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

Audit Committee

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

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

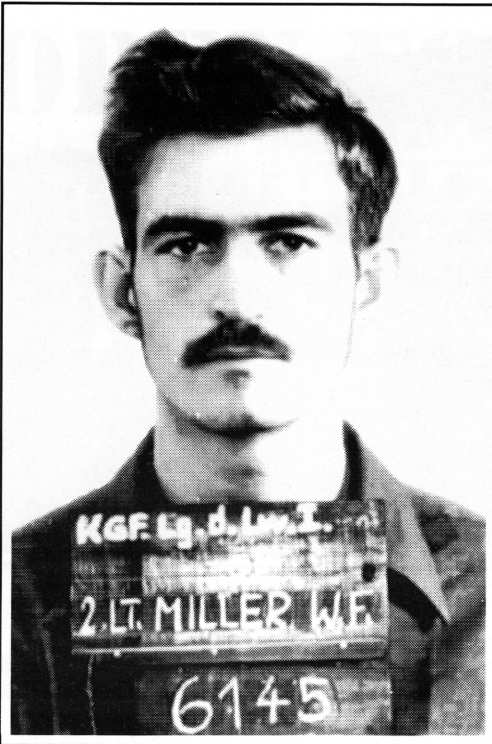
Gary Moncur (Susan)
4483 Palmer Drive
West Valley City, UT 84120-5052
TEL: (801) 969-7639
EM: glm@xmission.com

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

RAF Molesworth, England Rep

Bruce Henninger, head of Protocol at the Joint Analysis Center, has offered to assist. Persons planning to visit the base, however, should first contact UK Representative Robin Beeby to advise him of travel plans.



2D LT. WILLIAM F. MILLER AS A PRISONER OF WAR AT STALAG LUFT 1, and his 359th Squadron crew. They went down under attack by German FW-190's on the 28 September 1944 mission to Magdeburg. Standing, I-to-r, Navigator Arthur Conn, killed; Bombardier Ted Smith, killed; Co-Pilot John Hill, POW; Pilot Bill Miller, POW. Kneeling, Engineer Leo Waldron, killed; Gunner Tony Zelnio, POW; Ball Turret Gunner Warren Ball, killed; Radio Operator Max Smolar and Tail Gunner Johnny Hutson. Smolar and Hutson had been medically grounded a day earlier and their replacements, Frank Posada and Cal Turkington, were both killed.

LIFE IN STALAG LUFT 1 "FAR CRY FROM HOLLYWOOD PORTRAYALS"

In the February 2002 issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter, 359th Squadron pilot Bill Miller ended his article by writing "We were back (from the Cologne mission of 27 September 1944) safe and sound, with nobody hurt, but very lucky to be alive, and somewhat shook up. The radio operator's blood pressure and pulse rate were so high the Flight Surgeon grounded him. And he grounded the tail gunner because he had the flu. The next day we got shot down for good, and their replacements were both killed." Under the crew photo above is a capsule summary of the fatal mission. Miller's story continues after his arrival at Stalag Luft 1 as a prisoner of war.

By William F. Miller

Let me make clear that life in Stalag Luft 1 was nothing like life in a concentration camp. Our camp was run by the Luftwaffe. It was divided into four compounds, and there was normally no prisoner traffic between compounds. I was in room 6, block 6, North Compound 2. There were about 8,500 prisoners in the camp by war's end.

With almost no exceptions, we were all officers. According to the Geneva Treaty, we were not supposed to work except for our own housekeeping and cooking, and, in fact, we did that cheerfully and little else. We had individual guards who had duties that required them to come into the compounds, but basically the guards were in towers placed strategically around the double barbed wire fence. In each tower was a liquid-cooled machine gun. About three meters inside the main fences was a so-called "warning wire," a single strand of barbed wire on posts about a foot tall. We were not allowed to touch these warning wires, at pain of being shot without warning.

When we received Red Cross parcels, a guard would come into the compound and supervise the allocation to each room. He would see to it that no one kept any of the small pepper packets from each parcel and made sure the canned goods were all punctured so they couldn't be hoarded. The theory about the pepper was that someone trying to escape could use it to throw a dog off his trail, but I suspect the officers who ran the camp simply confiscated that pepper for their own personal use. We in my room managed to steal a few packets for our own use.

We were counted twice a day. Each barracks would line up in a formation of four rows, with the senior officer ("barracks commander") standing in front as the commander of an infantry company would do. The *Lageroffizier* (camp commander) for our compound was a major who had been the headmaster of a boys' school, and he was in no way similar to the textbook tough German officer, but was quiet and peaceful. While the outside prisoners were being counted, one prisoner would remain in each barracks, along with any prisoners who were too sick to stand outside. A guard would walk through each barracks and count the number of men in them, accompanied by that one prisoner whose job it was to see that the guard didn't steal anything.

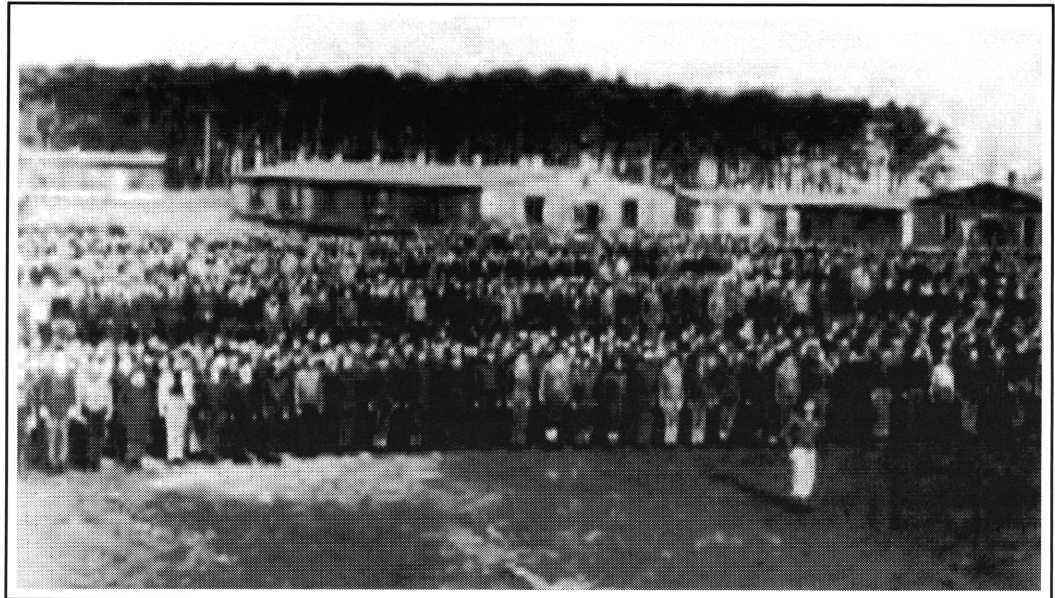
The Luftwaffe had never been very Nazi, and until the attempt on Hitler's life on 24 July 1944 they did not use the Nazi salute. Thereafter they were ordered to do so, but I must say they managed the sloppiest salute I ever saw, barely raising the right forearm up toward the shoulder, but

See STALAG on 4

THE PRISONERS OF WAR at Stalag Luft 1 were counted twice a day. They would line up in rows of four, with the senior POW officers standing in front of their formations.

According to Bill Miller, the "quiet and peaceful" German officer in charge of the prison compound had been the headmaster of a boy's school and was in no way similar to the textbook tough Nazi officer.

(PHOTO CREDIT: Web Site www.behindbarbedwire.com)



STALAG from 3

with the hand no higher than about shoulder level, and not extending it forward. They were obviously expressing disdain.

Our activities, other than housekeeping, were strictly social. There were two bridge games going on in our room at all times when we were not sleeping or eating. I declined to learn much about bridge while I was there, because I thought the game was taken much too seriously by all the players. We spent a lot of time swapping rumors, mostly about when the war would be over.

There were 20 men in our room, which was about 20 feet square. We had a small stove that had been built by one of the few Soviet prisoners, and we did all our cooking on that small stove. Our bunks were of the two-tier arrangement. In the normal course of things, each of us got one Red Cross parcel per week, plus whatever German military rations could be afforded. The Red Cross parcels contained 5 kg (11 lb.) of various American staples such as lump sugar, raisins or prunes, soap, soluble coffee, Spam or corned beef, a "D" ration bar of chocolate, and five packs of American cigarettes. We all smoked like so many chimneys. That was the only period in my life when I smoked cigarettes.

In late February 1945, the Germans ran out of transportation and could not get Red Cross parcels delivered to us. They were supposed to supply us with regular German military meals, but the quality of those meals slowly sank until they didn't amount to much. I'll never take another bite of a rutabaga as long as I live, and it was 20 years or so after the war before I could eat cabbage in any form.

The Hollywood portrayal of American POWs is a far cry from what I saw. It was clear to all of us that the war should already have been over, and we expected to be out of there in short order. Consequently, almost nobody in the camp was interested in planning an escape. The camp was built near the shore of the Baltic Sea at an elevation of maybe two feet, so tunneling was basically out of the question. The barracks were built about four feet above ground, standing on wooden pilings, and at night the Germans put a guard with a sentry dog into each compound, thereby stopping any attempt to do anything involving work under a barracks. To the best of my

knowledge, no one ever escaped from Stalag Luft 1.

Late in the War, when the Red Army was getting closer to liberating us, we were told by our leaders to dig fox holes in the open area between our various barracks, and trap doors in the floors of each room, "in case the Germans counterattack." I couldn't imagine the German Army being able to counterattack anything at that stage of the war. In the first place, there were no German Army organizations anywhere near us up there isolated along the Baltic coast. In the second place, our guards now contained a large number of very old and very young men of the "*Volksturm*," the equivalent of the Home Guards in Britain, who were patently incapable of attacking the Red Army that was pouring all over Germany.

During the night of 30 April 1945, our guards all disappeared. It was dark, but we could see them quietly leaving the guard towers and marching silently away. We had no way of knowing what they were going to do, how far they would go, or whether they were leaving a skeleton crew to keep us quiet while they distanced themselves from us and the oncoming Red Army. My idea was to take off behind them and head down to the southwest toward Lübeck, figuring I could make it there in maybe three days. My natural skepticism about the folkways of bureaucracy and its rules made me feel strongly that I should get the hell out of there as quickly as possible.

So as soon as I figured the guards were all gone, I went down to the small night latrine at the end of the barracks, looked outside carefully for any sign of guards or dogs, and when I felt reasonably sure they were all gone, I jumped out the window, and ran over to Big John Hill's room in a nearby barracks. I found the trap door in his room, and started banging on it. I scared the hell out of those guys in the room, because I hadn't told them what I intended to do. They opened their trap door and were relieved to see that it was just me. So I tried to convince Big John or anyone else to come with me and walk toward Lübeck. They weren't having any. I heard a zillion reasons not to go. So, I stayed there in the camp and let the bureaucracy come and get me out.

The next night a lone Soviet tank approached our camp. The arrival of that very drunk tank driver constituted our formal liberation.



THE OFFICERS OF THE GAMBLE CREW pause for a photo under the 303rd Bomb Group B-17 *Sky Wolf* minutes before a mission. From left to right, 358th Squadron officers are Navigator William D. McSween, Bombardier Ralph F. Coburn, Co-pilot Walter R. Kyse and Pilot Don Gamble.

LIONS CLUB RECOGNIZES DON GAMBLE'S COURAGE IN WWII

By Reid Armstrong
The Herald Democrat
 of Leadville, Colorado

It is a time of patriotism, and heroes. Flags are proudly displayed on homes and businesses across town. People don pins on their lapels and bumper stickers on their vehicles. Every day since Sept. 11, a new hero is made in the newspapers.

"The same thing happened 60 years ago when we were bombed at Pearl Harbor," recalled Howard Tritz at a recent Lions Club meeting.

"There were many, many heroes from that second world war. We owe a great debt to those

heroes."

Don Gamble is one of those heroes, and he was honored by the Lions Club Jan 10, 2002. Tritz made the presentation. "We are lucky to have one of those heroes among us," he said.

At 22, Gamble was commissioned as a 1st Lieutenant and made a pilot for the Army Air Force. On June 3, 1943, Gamble was assigned to the 358th Bomb Squadron of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) at Molesworth, England.

B-17 combat missions were considered very dangerous. One out of three people died every mission, but Gamble was never afraid of dying during his

World War II missions.

"I was too young," he said.

Before departing on their first mission, the group leader gave the men a grave speech. Gamble recounted what his group leader told them that day.

"He said, 'Look at the fellow on either side of you. One of you isn't going to make it home.' I looked to my left and my right and thought, 'That's too bad.'"

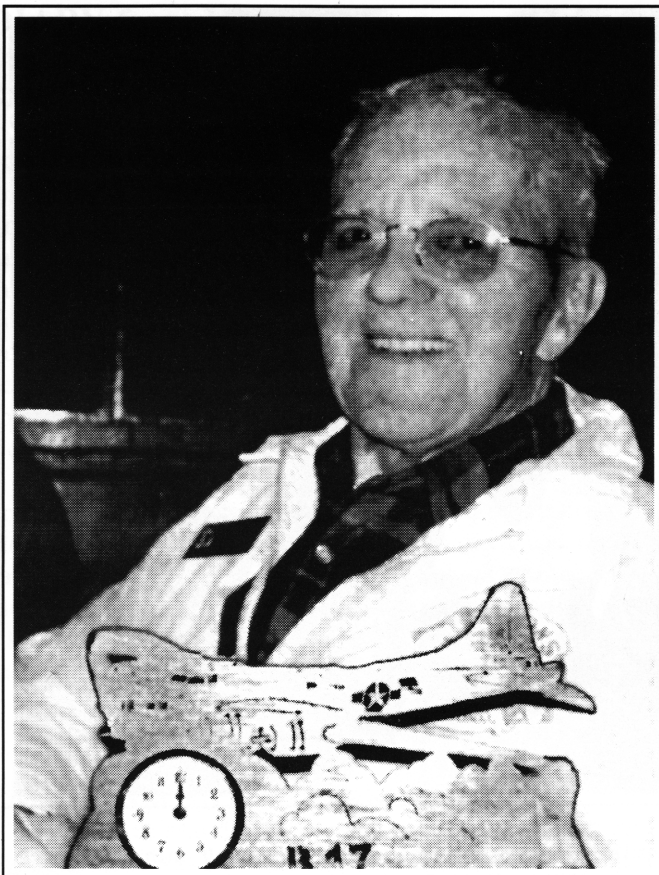
During his combat tour, Gamble flew 12 different B-17's with names like *Sky Wolf*, *Meat Hound*, *Hell's Angels* and *Vicious Virgin*.

Gamble flew 17 missions as a Pilot and Aircraft Commander. Five of these 17 missions were flown as the Squadron Lead Crew and five were as a Group Lead Crew. This position was very significant because it placed Gamble at the head of a group of 39 B-17s.

In recognition of his combat leadership, Lt. Gamble was promoted to Captain on Oct. 20, 1943, less than a year after his first commission. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clovers.

Gamble completed his 25th combat mission on

See GAMBLE on 6



Don Gamble poses with his B-17 award. It was cut out of wood with a scroll saw, and then a clock was inset.

GAMBLE from 5

March 19, 1944. Because of the high mortality rate, the Army Air Force relieved their combat airmen after the 25th combat mission.

"I had a feeling of relief," Gamble reflected. "I was happy they were done."

Gamble returned to the United States to serve out the remainder of his military career training new B-17 pilots in Nebraska. He retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

He is remembered as a hero by historians.

"He helped pave the way for developing air tactics used by later crews that made our group motto 'Might in Flight' a reality," said 303rd Bomb Group historian Harry Gobrecht.

"Don Gamble is one of the key men that made the World War II 8th Air Force and the 303rd 'mighty' and set an example for the present day 8th Air Force crews who are currently on combat missions in Afghanistan."

At the Lions Club meeting, Tritz awarded Gamble with a scroll-sawed B-17 clock which he, himself, had made, and a copy of the movie *Pearl Harbor*.

Gamble was visibly moved by the presentation and humble about his own role in the war.

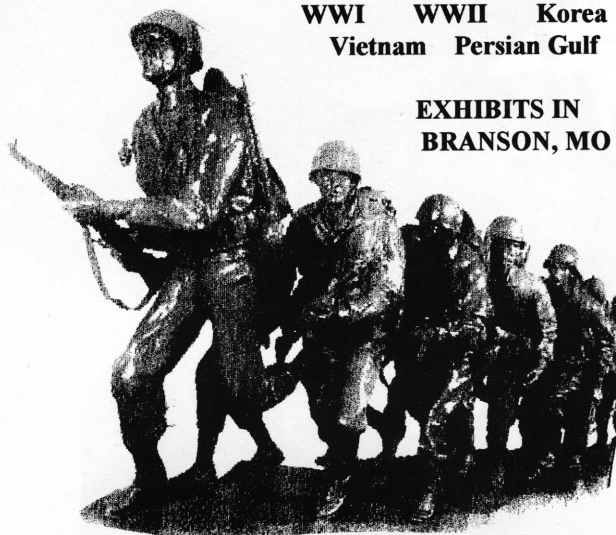
"I'm kind of overwhelmed," Gamble said. "I knew if I lived long enough I'd be honored for something."

VETERANS MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Honoring those who served in

WWI WWII Korea
Vietnam Persian Gulf

EXHIBITS IN
BRANSON, MO



BRANSON REUNION TO FEATURE ENTERTAINMENT, MILITARY LORE AND OLD-FASHIONED SOCIALIZING

By John Ford

303rd BGA Vice President for Reunions

The 303rd's reunion in Branson, Missouri from October 3 to 8, 2002 will be one of the best our veterans, family members and friends have ever experienced. Marv Edwards of the 360th Squadron is helping me make it so. We canvassed the area, and have now signed up entertainers for every afternoon, except Sunday, in the Hospitality Centre, and for the banquet night.

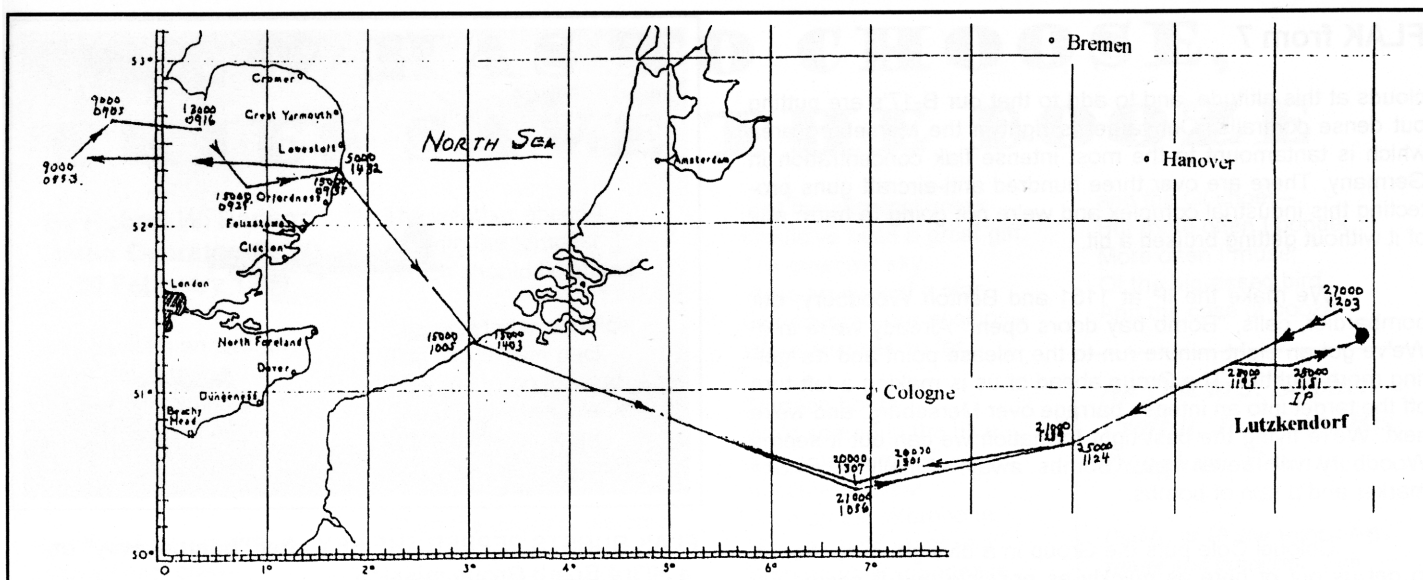
Quality accommodations (with indoor heated pool and hot tub), food and fun is in store for all who attend. No need to dress up fancy. Come casual with your relaxed vacation clothes on so you can be comfortable.

There will be plenty time allowed for what is most important to any military reunion — time to visit with each other. There's additional time to experience Branson's many shows and to take in the Veterans Memorial Museum with the world's largest bronze sculpture.

Branson is one of the top destinations in the country today. It's a place where patriotism is a way of life and veterans are honored every day of the year.

If you haven't done so yet, send in your Registration Form. If you've misplaced it or failed to receive it, contact my fellow coordinator Marv Edwards at 179 Old Glory Road, Branson, MO 65616, telephone (417) 334-7778. He'll see that the information gets to you.

This is a reunion you won't want to miss!



ROUTE MAP, ALTITUDES AND TIMINGS FOR ATTACK ON SYNTHETIC OIL PLANT NEAR LUTZKENDORF, GERMANY ON 11 SEPTEMBER 1944

Chased Across Germany By Flak, Badly Wounded B-17 Survives To Fly Again

By William C. Crawford

We had finally gotten to a sort of semi-sleep when the door at the end of our barracks bursts open and the lights come on. The ear-splitting blasts from a forty-five caliber pistol reverberate throughout the building as bullets whiz through the roof and over our heads and out the other end of our quarters. A rollicking voice proclaims in a loud, boisterous manner, "All right, all you poor bastards who're going tomorrow, you've got a good one coming up. They're loading 2,700 gallons of gas and a max load of G.P.'s"

This is not an unusual way to be shaken from an attempt at sleep. If an officer is told that he's not flying the next day he usually heads for the "O" club for a little workout which he sorely needs. By the end of an evening of elbow bending, reinforced by a few sips of the cheerful restorative poison, he's feeling in much better shape, and when he and his friends are persuaded that a good night's rest should greatly enhance the therapy, and the club's closing anyhow, he heads for the barracks with the good news that he's picked up during his treatment at the club. This is why we've got the glimmer of the sky through so many little holes in our roof; we're used to coming alive like this!

Our intruder may have shaken us out of our "sleep" but he wasn't too far off on his declaration. At the 0500 hour briefing we learn that the target today, the eleventh of September, 1944, is the synthetic oil plant at Lutzkendorf, Germany, a suburb west of Leipzig. The bigger picture for the Eighth Air Force is the beginning of another frantic shuttle-bombing mission to attack the armament plant at Chemnitz and then to land at USSR bases. Over 850 other heavy bombers, escorted by 14 fighter Groups will bomb six synthetic oil plants, an ordnance depot, an engine plant, a marshalling yard, a tire plant,

and more. Today our 303rd Bomb Group will fly as the Lead and Low Groups of the 41st "A" Combat Wing and we'll be led by Lt. Col. Richard Cole in B-17, Z-137. Our crew will be flying B-17G *Iza Vailable III*, S/N 42-97861 in the Low Group, leading the fourth flight.

At 0740 hours Colonel Cole is beginning his take-off roll. At 1005 we enter over German occupied Belgian territory near Brugge flying at 15,000 ft. Our Allied ground forces may have liberated Paris seventeen days ago and our front lines are not well defined, but we do know that Jerry is still in this area as he welcomes us to the Continent in his usual way. Soon after we make our entrance we begin another climb, and to avoid the predicted flak areas we turn south of the Cologne and Bonn industrial complex, but we run right into a flak barrage near Koblenz.

We continue our climb on an easterly heading and Buckeye, our weather aircraft, calls, "It'll probably be necessary to begin the run on instruments and finish by visual bombing through scattered clouds but the target will be visual." So, Colonel Cole gives the Groups a call, "Cowboy Able Lead to all aircraft, take interval for visual bombing." We ease our Low Group in behind Colonel Cole's Lead Group and the High Group maneuvers into the rear position for bombing by individual Groups.

At 1125 the Wing is at 25,000 ft. but we're still in and out of clouds and we're still climbing; we're pulling excessive power (40 inches manifold pressure) to reach 28,000 ft. which is about as high as we can attain. Coaxing 30 tons of B-17 to 28,000 ft. becomes a delicate balancing act in formation with the other B-17's at minus 40 degrees C. We're still in and out of

See FLAK on 8

FLAK from 7

clouds at this altitude, and to add to that our B-17's are putting out dense contrails. Our target is right in the Merseburg area which is tantamount to the most intense flak concentration in Germany. There are over three hundred anti-aircraft guns protecting this industrial complex and we're not going to harm any of it without getting bruised a bit.

We make the IP at 1151 and Benton Woodbury, our bombardier, calls, "Bomb bay doors open!" Already we're in it! We've got an eight minute run to the release point and it's getting more frightful. The Group ahead of us is making a left turn off the target into an intense barrage over Merseburg, and we're next. We're flying the best tight formation we can but it seems Woodbury will never call, "Bombs away!" Finally a smoke marker and a rain of bombs.

Colonel Cole puts the Group in a diving turn to the left to get us out of here as quickly as possible, but it seems we can't get away. Several of the B-17's ahead of us are hit and go down. Woodbury calls, "Bomb bay doors closed! Let's get out of here!" We get a close burst of flak which knocks out most of the instrument panel in front of Doug Kidd, my co-pilot. He yells, "We don't have any manifold or oil pressure on number three or four engines. Should I feather?"

"No, wait a second. Our trim is still the same. They must be running O.K.. How do number three and four look out your window?"

"They look like they're running O.K."

"We've still got manifold pressure and tachometer indication on number one and two engines and she's still in trim, so number three and four must be running O.K. Let's keep an eye out the window on number three and four and keep going on what we've got indicating on number one and two engines. O.K.?"

"Yeah, O.K. with me."

Flak from another burst hits behind us in the cockpit and we know that *Iza Vailable III* is being hurt, but no systems seem to be out and she keeps plowing on. We're thankful to rejoin the Lead Group as we throttle back to continue our letdown. By this time we've consumed over half of our fuel but we still have sufficient to get home, providing nothing else happens.

Today, as an example, our fuel was consumed during ground operations before take-off, then hauling 32.5 tons of B-17 to the assembly altitude, orbiting the area for about an hour before starting on course. Again, lifting the weight to altitude, straining the last few thousand feet at 40 inches manifold pressure to 28,000 ft., our gas was being consumed at a good clip. And, finally releasing our 2.5 tons of bombs at the target, and being at least four tons of fuel lighter, our B-17 has become a flyable aircraft. From this point on it's all reduced throttle, down hill. The airplane wants to go faster the closer to home we get.

We're on the way home at 21,000 ft. when we run into flak near Eisenach, and then some pretty accurate flak north of Koblenz and again west of Koblenz. When we've passed this industrial area the Groups begin another letdown to continue the monotonous two hours from the target to the Belgian coast



FLAK BURSTS PEPPER THE SKY after "bombs away" on a 303rd Bomb Group mission.

which we cross at 1403, and we're down to 15,000 ft.

Over the North Sea our Low Group throttles back a little in an attempt to keep one of our damaged B-17's in formation, but in slowing we lose sight of the Lead Group in the haze, so we make the remainder of the flight on our own. We come into England over Southwold at 5,000 ft. and make our route as short as possible to Molesworth. Colonel Cole is first to land in at 1508. By the time we taxi in and get shut down Lyle LeRoux, our engineer, enters a 8:00 hour flight in the log.

Before we leave the cockpit we've already got souvenirs of this one; there are pieces of fiber-board from partitions between bulkheads lying on the floor, knocked out by flak fragments and the instrument panel is shattered. After we're outside we walk around for a look and we find that the B-17 was badly hurt. There are flak holes in her skin all over, but she didn't let a few wounds stop her. None of her systems were out and she just kept coming. Like all B-17's she was going to get her crew home. We find enough pieces of flak in the crevices around solid places for each of us to save mementos of this trip.

One chunk had the imprint 11194311 in the machining marks on it, which would mean that Jerry hasn't used all of his supply of shells from last year yet. And, we had hoped he was about to run short!

Iza Vailable III will be patched up and checked over, and she'll be ready for another crew. Six days ago she took us to Ludwigshafen where she encountered intense and accurate flak and she was hurt then, but she brought us home. She was wounded then and she'll be bruised some more, but she'll maintain her dignity through it all to the end, like every B-17, whatever the end might be.

I'd swear this beautiful machine has a real soul!

WWII Aircraft Group No Longer "Confederate"

After two years of arguing and vote-taking about whether or not to rid itself of a name steeped in a dark chapter of American history, the Confederate Air Force, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving World War II aircraft and honoring those who flew in them, has retained the acronym CAF, but the "C" now stands for Commemorative.

**For All Those Interested in World War II,
the 8th Air Force and the 303rd Bomb Group --**

Hell's Angels Newsletter

THE SILVER ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION, 1976-2001

The 303rd Bomb Group Association, by Executive Committee vote, has ordered 100 sets of additional books to fill orders by those who were unable to respond by the original cutoff date of February 28, 2002. Orders will continue to be accepted until the supply is gone. The Collection includes every one of the 86 issues of the 303rd Bomb Group Association's highly acclaimed HELL'S ANGELS NEWSLETTER since publication began in April 1976 through to the last issue of 2001.

There are 1,300 pages bound in a two-volume hardcover set. Thousands of names of World War II air force veterans, family members and friends, with stories about combat missions and ground support achievements, military awards, famous B-17's, escapes and evasions, prisoners of war, airmen killed in action, memorials, post-war reunions, World War II humor and much more. Hundreds of photos in vintage black-and-white or brilliant color.

The Collection is a "must buy" even for those who have saved most of the original newsletters. Every page of every newsletter has been meticulously re-numbered and indexed to enable readers to quickly find the contents of most interest to them, wherever they appear in the 86 issues.

This is a family heirloom to be treasured and passed from a veteran's generation to later generations. A unique gift for a loved one. A World War II reference work of immense value. \$120 for the set, with shipping and handling included to U.S. addresses. Add \$30 per set for mailing to addresses outside the U.S.

Requests will be taken until the 100 sets are sold out, with delivery in the late Spring. Proceeds in excess of costs go to publish the Hell's Angels Newsletter and to support other projects approved by the 303rd's Board of Directors.

Hell's Angels Newsletter Silver Anniversary Collection ORDER FORM

Please send me (enter number of sets) _____ at \$120 per set of two books.

My check in the amount of _____ is enclosed.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Make check out to 303rd Bomb Group Association.

Mail to: Charlie Sykes, 303rd BGA PX Manager
P. O. Box 33474, Phoenix, AZ 85607

303RD BG PX GIFT CATALOG

DESCRIPTION	CIRCLE YOUR SIZE AND / OR CHOICE	PRICE	QTY.	TOTAL
"Might In Flight" T-Shirt. White. Design on front of shirt.	MEDIUM / LARGE / X-LARGE	\$11.00		
B-17 T-Shirt: Beige Hanes Heavyweight Tee. Design on back of shirt	SMALL / MEDIUM / LARGE / X-LARGE	\$15.00		
Kids T-Shirt. "I ♥ 303"	MEDIUM (10-12) ONLY	\$8.00		
Women's Polo - w/Embroidered "Might In Flight" insignia	LARGE ONLY / WHITE ONLY	\$15.00		
Women's Polo - w/Embroidered "8th Air Force/303rd BG" insignia	LARGE ONLY / WHITE ONLY	\$15.00		
Men's Golf Shirt - w/Embroidered "8th Air Force/303rd BG"	SMALL / MEDIUM / LARGE / X-LARGE WHITE / BLUE	\$20.00		
Sweatshirt - w/Embroidered "8th Air Force/303rd BG" insignia	X-LARGE ONLY / WHITE ONLY	\$15.00		
Windbreaker - screened with a B-17 & 303rd Bomb Group	X-LARGE ONLY / WHITE ONLY	\$20.00		
Patch - 4 inch Fully Embroidered	Circle Squadron: 359 / 360	\$20.00		
Patch - 3 inch Embroidered with Squadron insignia	Circle Squadron: 358 / 359 / 360 / 427	\$5.00		
Patch - 3 inch Embroidered w/ "Might in Flight" or 8th AF insignia	Circle choice: "Might in Flight" / 8th AF	\$5.00		
Patch - Embroidered American Flag		\$2.00		
Decal - "Might in Flight" insignia	Circle choice: Interior / Exterior	\$2.00		
Decal - Triangle "C" & 303rd BG for interior or exterior		\$2.00		
Bumper Sticker - 8th AF/303rd BG, Triangle "C"		\$2.00		
License Plate Bracket - plastic with 303rd BG "Hell's Angels"		\$2.00		
License Plate - metal	Circle choice: B-17F / B-17G	\$8.00		

✂ CUT HERE and Please Send With Your Check Made Payable To: 303RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

👉 MORE on NEXT PAGE 👈

B-17 Tee Shirt



License Plate

Available with B-17F or B-17G



**Might in Flight
Decal**

Bumper Sticker



**American Flag
Patch**



WWW.303RDBGA.COM

303rd BG PX GIFT CATALOG

DESCRIPTION	CIRCLE YOUR SIZE AND / OR CHOICE	PRICE	QTY.	TOTAL
Baseball Cap — with Embroidered "Might in Flight" insignia	ADJUSTABLE ONLY / BLUE ONLY	\$9.00		
Lapel Pin - Cloisonné with Squadron insignia	Circle Squadron: 358 / 359 / 360 / 427	\$3.00		
Lapel Pin - Cloisonné with "Might in Flight" insignia		\$3.00		
Lapel Pin - Cloisonné - 303rd Bomb Group Life Member		\$3.00		
Lapel Pin - Cloisonné - 8th Air Force & 303rd Bomb Group		\$3.00		
Replica Victory Medals		\$3.00		
Replica Wings	Circle choice: Pilot/ Navigator/ Air Crew /Bombardier/ Flight Engineer	\$3.00		
Dog Tag Key Ring with 303rd Bomb Group & Triangle "C"		\$3.00		
B-17 Belt Buckle		\$5.00		
Tote Bag - Heavy Canvas w/8th Air Force / 303rd BG insignia		\$8.00		
Hand Towel - Embroidered with 8th AF/303rd BG		\$7.00		
"Half a Wing, Three Engines and a Prayer" by Brian O'Neill		\$15.00		

Please type or print clearly

Name _____	TOTAL COST of Items Ordered	\$
Address _____	SHIPPING & HANDLING (Add to ALL orders)	\$3.50
City, State Zip _____	OVERSEAS S & H (Add for overseas orders only)	\$10.00
Phone _____ E-Mail _____	TOTAL AMOUNT DUE	\$
Country _____ Order Date _____		

✂ CUT HERE and Please Send With Your Check (US DOLLARS ONLY) Made Payable To: 303rd BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION ✂

MAIL YOUR CHECK & ORDER FORM TO:

Charlie Sykes / 303rd PX Administrator
P.O. Box 33474
Phoenix, Arizona 85067-3474

*****Please allow 2 weeks for delivery*****

If you have any questions about your order or PX stock, please contact:
Charlie Sykes at (602) 993-8015 or E-Mail: PX303BG@aol.com

Rev. 3/6/2002

**Canvas Tote Bag****Squadron Lapel Pins****Belt Buckle**

For more pics go to the PX page on the 303rd BGA web site at:
www.303rdbga.com

The Molesworth Story

303rd Bomb Group (H) Records on CD-ROM

The 2nd Edition of "The Molesworth Story" CD-ROM is a vastly improved update to our 1st Edition. Containing well over 5000 pages of historical information, the 2nd Edition is, by far, the largest collection of information about all aspects of the 303rd Bomb Group's outstanding contributions during World War II. We have been working almost full-time for a year on the 2nd Edition. Literally thousands of errors have been corrected. The CD navigation problems have been resolved and you will easily be able to view any portion of the CD at any time. Photos and Lead Crew photos have been added to the Mission Reports, plus many more new additions. The CD Contains:

AIR SUPPORT

Index of Flying Personnel (Over 5,500 men - plus a listing of all the missions on which they were dispatched.); **Mission Reports** (all 364 Missions - every target, crew, aircraft, formation and more. (Reports print to over 3600 pages.); **Index of Aircraft** (all 338 B-17s - complete with a list of all missions on which they were dispatched.)

GROUND SUPPORT

Index of Ground Support Personnel (over 3,550 men listed with Squadron and job assignments); 303rd Headquarters; S-2 Intelligence; Chaplains; 358th, 359th 360th & 427th Squadrons; 444th Sub Depot; 1681st Ordnance; 1114th Quartermaster; 425th ASG; 3rd Station Complement; 1199th MP; 2097th Fire Fighting; 863rd Chemical; 3rd Provisional Gas; 18th Weather; 202nd Finance; 249th Medical; 8th AF Dental; 303rd Station Hospital

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

303rd Bomb Group (H) Overview, Group & Squadron Commanders, 303rd Stations, Credited Campaigns, Distinguished Unit Citation, The First 300 Missions, Major Individual Awards, Goldfish Club, Longest Flying B-17s, Stats and Facts, Hell's Angels vs Memphis Belle, Books & Publications, Stories

PHOTO and ART GALLERIES

Crew Photos (Over 700 photos), Support Unit Photos Ground Crews & Nose Art, Paintings & Art, Video Clip from "Target for Today"

CASUALTIES

Killed in Action (Memorial to our fallen heroes), Prisoners of War (Tribute to our 764 POWs), POW Camp Information, Intermees, Escapees & Evadees Missing Air Crew Reports.

The historic content on the CD-ROM is staggering. Consider purchasing additional copies for your family and loved ones. It is very unlikely that there will be a Third Edition. This history should be treasured for many generations to come.

-- clip here ----- clip here ----- clip here ----- clip here ----- clip here --

MOLESWORTH STORY (2nd Edition) - ORDER FORM

Cost per CD:

Upgrade: \$20.00 (available ONLY to those who purchased the 1st Edition); 303rd BGA Members: \$65.00; General Public: \$80.00 - (shipping and handling to the USA is included - overseas orders add \$10 per CD)

**Mail this order form
and your check
payable to the "303rd
Bomb Group
Association" to:**

**Gary L. Moncur
303rd BG CD-ROM
4483 Palmer Drive
West Valley City, UT
84120-5052**

**Questions? Email to
CD@303rdBGA.com**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State - ZIP: _____

Country: _____ Order Date: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Total CDs Ordered: _____ Total Enclosed: _____

CREW HAS TO CHOOSE, TRIES SAVE THE BOOZE

By Robert W. Hanson
Radio Operator, 359th
20 February 1944

They gave us an aircraft,
A Bee-Seventeen—
All silver and shining,
That flying machine.
Her weight? Thirty ton,
Yet a flying machine.

Controlled by a mortal,
With adjunct crew—
This "Queen of the Skies"
Toward the old country flew,
Dispatched by the "Brass,"
Toward the old country flew.

Oh! We were not eager,
We boys of the blue—
Of the prowess of Herman
The German we knew—
Of the yellow nosed squad-
rons we'd heard and we
knew!

But like pawns on a chess-
board we steadily moved—
Directed by masters
For whom it behooved
Us to follow. Like pawns on
a chessboard
We steadily moved.

The flight o'er the ocean
Should have been no event,
But the masterful planning,
To pieces it went,
The plan of the "boys"
With smarts heaven sent.

"A storm in zone six,"
The "boys" had said—
(What wonderful planning
To know what's ahead.)
"You simply climb over
the storms ugly head."
(What wonderful planning
To know what's ahead.)

So, through the night
Flew the big-assed bird—
Unwary, unguarded,
Unwatchful, unheard—
Into the tempest,
Its raging unheard.

Into zone five—
Not six, as was said
By the "boys" who predicted

The weather ahead—
But into the tempest
Which should lie ahead.

She was laden with ice,
Too late to turn back—
She had to go forward,
The outlook was black—
(The abysmal depths, too,
Of the ocean were black.)

Then the updrafts did catch
her, and downdrafts too,
And her structure was
twisted, even though new.
Her engines were scream-
ing, the cries of the shrew,
And ten hearts beat wildly—
The hearts of the crew.

The lunging and plunging,
The stress and the strain,
The bolting and jolting
Withstood by that plane,
Created a picture
Which burns in my brain—
The terrible turbulence
Withstood by that plane.

Two engines faltered,
Sputtered and spit,
Beat out a crescendo
And suddenly quit—
Had the other two failed us—
This earth we'd have quit.

But the two stalwart engines
Though sobbing and throb-
bing and singing and sigh-
ing—They still kept us flying,
And so far from the main-
land 'Twas best to be flying.

"Pilot to crew!" O'er
The interphone came,
"Our gasoline ebbeth,
Our time does the same—
So lighten our load
Before time does the same."

Out went our baggage,
Our clothes and our shoes,
Our records, our orders,
But never the booze—
Everything went,
With no time to lose,
The fifties, the Norden,
But never the booze.

An undercast sky
Obscured our drift,

Just the slightest break
Would've been a great gift.
The overcast sky
Gave no view of a star,
Our course— our position—
Were guesses so far.

Thirteen hours
We'd soared in the blue,
A crippled bird,
A luckless crew.
Then on the interphone:
"There's land up ahead!"
With no correspondence
To maps we had read.

Was it Scotland or England
Or Ireland or France?
What now really mattered—
We did have a chance.
But the shoreline was rug-
ged, with mountains
and rocks,
No chance for a landing
with wheels
Down and locked.

With the engineer transfer-
ring fuel by the cup,
The time for decisions
Was just about up.
So, it was "Pilot to crew—
We're going to ditch!
Take your positions,
Each one in your niche."

The sobbing and throbbing
Of engines now hushed,
And the ship toward the wa-
ter very rapidly rushed—
Like a stone in a vacuum
Most rapidly rushed.

The crashing, the tearing,
The ripping is past,
And the Bee-Seventeen
Is settling fast—
But her crew is not with her
When she settles at last.

In life rafts of rubber
They finished their journey—
By the fates they were
saved for an abominable
tourney,
A tourney quite equal
To that of their journey.

But now it is over,
And often I muse
Of the ill fitting garb

and the GI shoes—
But more often I ponder,
More often I muse,
Of the big-assed bird
And the case of booze.

An Ode to J. Stephen Proffitt, Jr., From His Daughter, Bonnie

*Daddy, at 18 you were a boy,
young and innocent. You
dated Momma, went to
school, and earned money.
Then, suddenly, your life
changed. The United States
was at war.*

*Important things had to wait,
like Momma, college and
dreams. You boarded a train
on an unknown journey to do
your part. There were
strange new places and men
to bond with as a team.*

*Now, you were going to fly a
B-17. You grew from a boy
into a man. You hurried
home to marry Momma. One
new life begun by two had to
wait for your country needed
you.*

*You flew your crew in a B-17
to Molesworth. The home of
the Hell's Angels—some of
the bravest men on earth.*

*From November 1944 to Feb-
ruary 1945 you flew 35 mis-
sions to Germany. Each was
dangerous and helped defeat
the enemy. While you were
flying, Momma wrote you
letters and rationed to help
ensure victory.*

*You returned home to your
wife and family. The world
was safer; the United States
remained free. You each did
your part; your efforts were
well spent. For your children
and grandchildren could also
be young and innocent.*

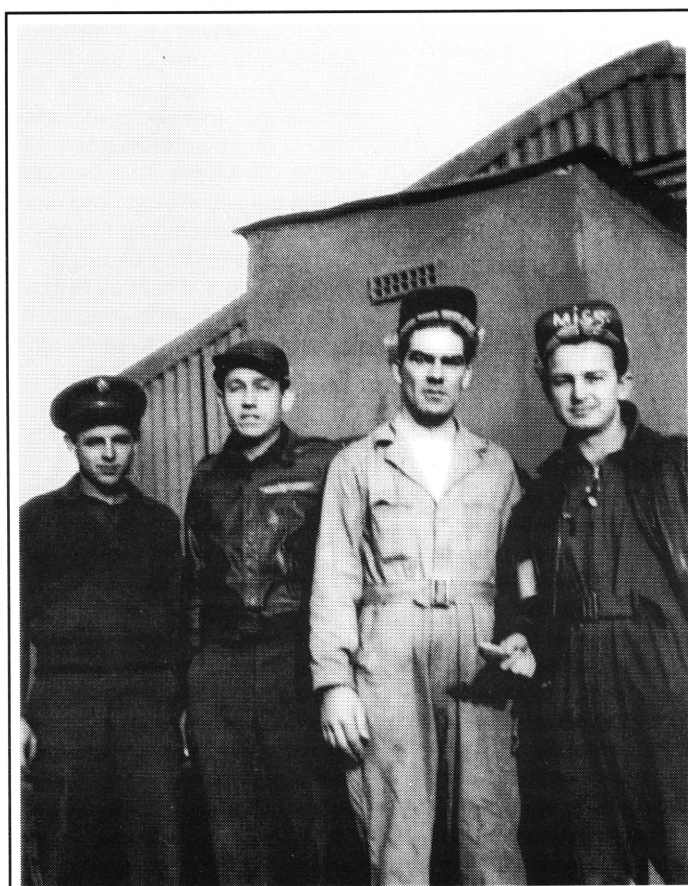


303rd's Pin-up Men of The Month

TOP LEFT — With a four-day pass in hand, Christ Christoff set off from Kettering near Molesworth by train to Edinburgh, Scotland in 1944. While passing a photography studio, the 358th Squadron radio mechanic noticed that the shop was promoting pictures of men in Scottish garb. He went in, was outfitted from head to toes, and had the picture snapped. Said Christ 58 years later, "The photographer may have told me what clan colors I was dressed in. I can't remember. With a name like 'Christoff,' I'm a million miles from the 'Mac's'."

LOWER LEFT — Flak damage to a 358th Squadron B-17 gets prompt attention from the sheet metal specialists. On the job are Delbert Roberteille, the non-commissioned officer in charge; Ival Salisbury and PFC Garza. The ground support echelons of the 303rd Bomb Group were the keys to the motto "Keep 'Em Flying."

BELOW RIGHT — Barracks buddies in the 360th Squadron, who flew on three different crews. From left to right are Neil Fielder, engineer on the Robert Baker crew; Felix Spoerri, radio operator on the Bill Heller crew; Virgil Bowman, waist gunner on the Baker crew, and Paul Davis, ball turret gunner on the Bob Cogswell crew.



Molesworth Diary

IZA VAILABLE TOO BECOMES SPARE PARTS

On our return from a mission to Berlin on May 7, 1944 aboard *Iza Vailable Too*, we didn't think we had any flak damage. We were wrong. On final approach back at Molesworth we lowered gear, set flaps and increased booster pumps. Immediately, the intercom began crackling with crew reports from nose to tail of the smell of gas fumes. At about 300 feet over the runway, our number four engine on the outer right wing became a ball of fire. My co-pilot, Bob Heussler, and I feathered the engine to reduce fuel supply, with no help in controlling the flames. As I veered off the runway onto the grass, my main concern was to enable our crew to clear the burning aircraft without injury. I departed through the cockpit side window onto the left wing. After the engine was hosed down, the ground crew found the flak shrapnel that had damaged our fuel line. By that time, *Iza Vailable Too* was useful for nothing but spare parts.

Recently, Don Doheny, a talented artist and active member of the Commemorative (formerly Confederate) Air Force dedicated to the preservation of World War II aircraft, sent me a pencil sketch of *Iza Vailable Too* in flight. I'd like to share it with readers of the Hell's Angels Newsletter.

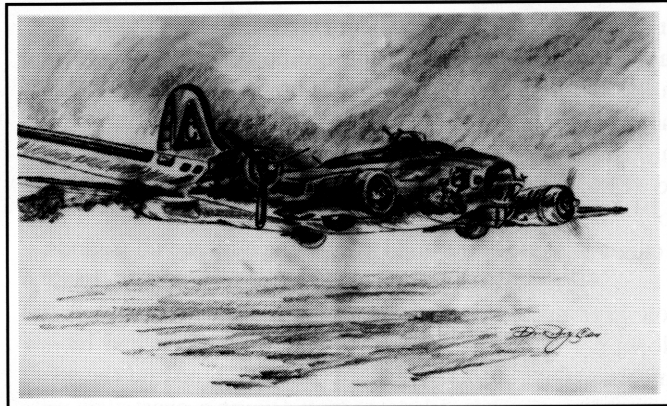
Don Johnston
Pilot, 360th Squadron

PERKINS CREW WINED AND DINED BY RUSSIANS

On the 26th of February, 1945, we took off on a mission to Berlin to bomb the railroad marshalling yards. Lt. M. C. Perkins was the pilot and I was the tail gunner. On the way to the target we began having trouble with one engine, which began using a lot of fuel. Lt. Perkins did not believe that aircraft #44-8316 (No Name) could make it back to friendly territory, so just before we dropped our bombs he called the Group Leader and told him we were heading for the Russian lines. We were sort of sweating it out with the Russians, but the weather was so bad we couldn't see a thing so we kept going until we began running out of fuel.

We had a great navigator, Lt. Robert Wallace, who had no maps of that part of the country but he was pretty sure that we were over flat land. No one wanted to bail out so we let down until we broke out of the soup at about 400 feet, and, sure enough, we were over real flat farm country. We bellied in on a field covered with snow which enabled us to slide real good and we stopped near a small village with a river. We later found out that the place was Zolotonosha, USSR and that the plane was later salvaged.

We weren't sure what our reception would be like when the people started heading towards the plane, but as soon as we made them understand that we were American, everything turned out OK. With the help of a woman who spoke French, we went into the village and got everything sorted out. We ended up splitting up and staying with three



Sketch of the 303rd's *Iza Vailable Too* © by Donald J. Doheny

or four different families that night. I still to this day don't know what kind of fat meat we ate that night, but we had the same for breakfast the next morning. Later that day we all gathered in the village hall where they gave us a banquet of fried chicken accompanied with a lot of wine and vodka, with which we had to drink one toast after another to Stalin, Roosevelt and Perkins. A couple of the younger guys got sick because their systems weren't used to that sort of thing. That afternoon, they flew us out in five small ski planes.

My plane was a one passenger open cockpit, so I got down as low as I could to keep warm. The pilot must have thought I fell out because he stood up and looked back and I gave him the thumbs up, to let him know that all was OK. We landed at one of their bases and were kept sort of isolated. I ate a lot of Spam and eggs while I was there, about one week. We had a Russian woman as an interpret, who was a Lieutenant in their Army. She really wanted my flying boots, so I let her wear them while we were there but I told her I had to have them back when we left. Finally, we were shipped to Poltava, Russia by train. The cars had shelves that pulled down from the walls to sleep on, but as soon as we laid down on them, the lice started to make meals out of us. As soon as we got to Poltava, they had to delouse us and we stayed there for about three or four days. We were flown out by our Air Transport Command.

Our first stop was Tehran, Iran, where we stayed overnight. From there on to Cairo, Egypt, where we stayed for two nights and got to see some of the sights. We stopped at a British base at Tobruk, North Africa, for refueling and then on to Athens, Greece. From there we went to Naples, Italy, where we stayed overnight and then back to London. We finally got back to Molesworth on the twelfth day of March and then went back on duty.

Walter D. Beckwith
358th Squadron Tail Gunner

See DIARY on 12

DIARY from 11

KNOCK, KNOCK—WHO'S WOUNDED?

Our fourth mission was to Berlin on 18 March 1945. Lots of flak. In the diving turn after the bomb run, as I was lowering the RPM's on the engines, I felt something hit the fingers on my left hand. Then, Harry Haynes, our engineer, came onto the intercom saying he thought he was wounded in the behind and asked me to see how badly he was hit. At the same time, our pilot, Blaine Thomas, sitting next to me in the cockpit, motioned for me to examine his chest to see if he was hit. I asked both of them to give me a few seconds to count the fingers on my left hand. They were all there. I took a closer look at Blaine and Harry, and could see no wounds.

Checking the instrument panel for damage, I saw a hole high on the pilot's side where flak had penetrated and blown out our clock. The glass from the clock had hit my fingers, the spring had hit Harry in the behind and the spent piece of shrapnel had bounced off Blaine's chest flak vest. About this time, Walter Lacy, our navigator, came up from the nose with a first aid kit. No need—everyone was okay.

Max Bartholomew
427th Squadron Co-pilot

COLLISION WITH BALL TURRET A-FRAME

On the May 19, 1943 mission to Kiel, Germany, our Plexiglas nose was shot out and we went into a dive. I remember hanging on to my waist gun handles and hitting the ceiling of the plane. When we leveled off, I scrambled for my parachute which was under the catwalk in the waist section. I never got there. We went into another dive, and I was thrown up to the ceiling again with nothing to hold on to. When I came down, I collided hard with the A-frame holding the ball turret. I was pretty dazed when I got back to my gun. We were under an attack by a ME-110. Dave McEachern, our tail gunner, had his guns jammed. I kept yelling on intercom to the pilot for right rudder for a better shot at the German fighter. I had it my sights and fired away. I saw pieces of the plane falling off, and just held down on my trigger until I didn't see it any more.

The injury from the collision with the ball turret frame was worse than I thought. It sent me to different hospitals for many months before I was able to return to combat.

Robert A. Rettinhouse
359th Squadron Waist Gunner

FRAG HOLES COUNT STOPPED AT 300-PLUS

We were carrying fragmentation bombs on an attack on a German jet plane airdrome at Hesepe on March 21, 1945. Somehow, two of our frag bombs collided and exploded after "bombs away," knocking out our number three and four engines. The pilots were able to feather the engines, and we limped back across Germany. After landing at Molesworth, I saw the huge holes in the engines and wing. The bomb bay doors looked like sieves. I stopped counting the holes when the number exceeded 300-plus.

Rex Chambers
358th Squadron Bombardier

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I will have a letter from the president in each benefactor packet, I will not provide a president's letter for the May newsletter.

Jack Rencher



Captain Irl Baldwin on 14 May 1943 after flying *Hell's Angels* to Kiel, Germany on its historic 25th mission.

BALDWIN DEAD AT 81; FIRST PILOT ON *HELL'S ANGELS*

Irl E. Baldwin, the original crew pilot on the 358th Squadron B-17 *Hell's Angels*, passed away in his sleep at his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico on February 19, 2002. He was 81. His widow, Carolyn, said his health began to deteriorate more rapidly last November, and hospice personnel would come to their home several times a week.

Despite the need for a wheel chair and portable oxygen tank in recent years, Mr. Baldwin attended many 303rd Bomb Group Association reunions with family members, as late as the gathering in Oklahoma City in 1999.

On 14 May 1943, with Captain Baldwin on the controls, B-17 number 41-24577, *Hell's Angels*, became the first Eighth Air Force bomber to complete 25 missions.

Irl and Carolyn were married on 15 September 1944. He is survived by his widow, three children and four grandchildren.

MOVING? DIDN'T GET THE NEWSLETTER?

Please **DO NOT** send change of address or requests for back issues of the newsletter to the editor. Dennis Smith, the Membership Chairman, prepares the mailing list for the newsletter, records changes in addresses, and, while his supply lasts, sends missed copies of the newsletter to those who request it. You'll find his address and telephone number on page 2.

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

SHOCKED WHEN BODIES FELL OUT OF B-17 NOSE

I noticed with great interest the picture of Dick Healy's plane in the February 2002 issue. I observed this terrible incident on 26 November 1944 and was shocked when the bodies came falling out of the nose after the plane was hit. It was at this time that I took over the lead and brought the squadron home.

Dick and I were friends, and we conversed in later years.

George C. Newton
427th Squadron Pilot

WERE HEALY CREWMEN DEAD BEFORE FALL?

The print titled "Straggler" on the back page of the February newsletter was both a shock and a pleasant surprise. Dick Healy related the story of that flight to me shortly after I arrived at Molesworth in December, 1944. He felt the occupants in the nose were not killed by the flak burst but fell from the plane without parachutes to a frightful death.

A couple years after the war, I ran into Dick on the streets of Hermosa Beach, California. We renewed our friendship, and eventually he became our family attorney. Dick passed away several years ago.

Roger D. Ayers
427th Squadron Pilot

TERRORISTS FORCE LONG JOURNEY HOME FOR VET

On the afternoon of Monday, September 10, 2001, after attending the 303rd's reunion, I flew out of Baltimore enroute to my home in West Rockport, Maine, with a change of planes in Newark, New Jersey. My flight to Maine from Newark was scheduled to leave that evening, but it was cancelled, and the airline put me up at an airport motel. I was given a new ticket for a flight departing Newark at nine o'clock on the morning of September 11.

I boarded a shuttle bus to the plane with the other passengers the following morning, and we were belted in for take-off. Then, the pilot shut down the engines and instructed us to deplane and return to the

terminal. As we headed back, we all saw one of the most shocking sights of our lives. Just across the river and in full view, one of the twin towers of the World Trade Center was on fire and smoking like a steel mill. After more than an hour in the terminal, there was an announcement that the airport was closing and everyone should leave. There were about 3,000 of us in the terminal building at the time.

I managed to get back to the motel where I had been last night, but it was too late—not a room to be had. Same "no vacancy" for every lodging in the area. I wound up at a second rate motel in Linden, about eight miles away, at a rip-off rate of \$115 per night. At least, I was able to reach my son, Bob, by telephone. At 12 o'clock that night, he was at my motel door after an eight-hour drive. We started home immediately, and arrived there at 8 AM on September 13.

The feeling was like that of arriving back at Molesworth after a mission.

Robert Umberger, Sr.
359th Squadron Gunner

NEW BOOK ABOUT 303RD "VALUABLE ADDITION"

Valerie Smart's new book, *The Original Hell's Angels: 303rd Bombardment Group of WWII* is a valuable addition to any aviation library. It tells the story of the 303rd Bombardment Group's B-17F *Hell's Angels* whose name was adopted by the 303rd as its Group name. Except for the two page introduction the entire book consists of photographs, charts, drawings, etc that have captions explaining their historical significance. The photos trace the history of the *Hell's Angels* B-17, the original Capt Irl E. Baldwin crew who named the aircraft, its arrival at the 303rd airfield at Molesworth, England, its ground crew, the fact that it was the first 8th AF B-17 to fly 25 missions, its subsequent 23 additional missions, and then departure to the USA on an "industrial morale

tour" of war plants. Final chapters consist of photos of other 303rd crews and aircraft nose art. Many of the photographs have never been previously published.

The author is the great-niece of the late Kasmer Wegrzyn, a member of the *Hell's Angels* ground crew whose scrapbook provided many of the book's photos. The book gives the reader a unique perspective of the 303rd's most famous aircraft and its original combat crew.

Harry D. Gobrecht
303rd BGA Historian
(Editor's Note—Mr. Gobrecht commented also that "Captions on many of the photos are incorrect.")

ACCOLADES FOR THE NOVEMBER 2001 ISSUE

Accolades for the total content of the November 2001 issue of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter*. I was struck by what seemed like a more varied series of stories, articles and pictures. I found all of them most interesting — the WASP story, Molesworth Diary, Open Forum, Sidney Kallet's article and all the rest, including your graphic memory of the first Schweinfurt raid. By the way, has your left shoulder ever been out of alignment from hauling around those belts of 50-caliber ammunition?

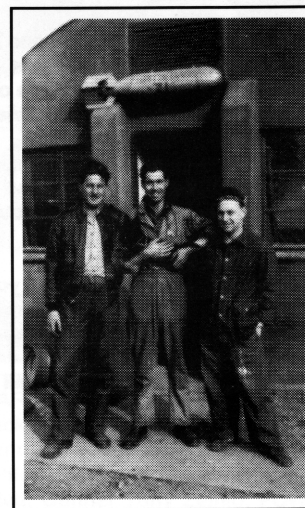
Dick Bowler
427th Squadron Navigator

SISTER'S PRIDE AND LOVE FOR JIM TRABAN

My dear brother, James J. Traban, passed away February 7, 2002. He was a waist gunner in the 303rd, and was one of the first men in our area to come home after completing 25 missions. He was so proud of the 303rd and his time in World War II. He was in the hospital with pneumonia in the last week of his life, and put aside his newspaper and funnies so he could read the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* from front to back. He enjoyed it so.

I thank all the veterans who protected our freedom.

Theresa Traban
Wilsonville, Illinois



CORRECTING ID'S OF CREW OF KNOCKOUT DROPPER

The caption under one of the photos on page 13 in the February 2002 issue is not correct. It should be (see photo at top) Joseph Marcelonis, our engineer, on the left; Frank M. Ketron, our Assistant Engineer, in the middle, and me on the right.

The whereabouts of Joe Marcelonis are unknown. Frank Ketron passed away in the fall of 1997. I'm still kicking around at my home in Rancho Palos Verdes, California.

Keep your excellent issues of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* coming!

John L. Beringer
359th Ass't Radio Operator

AUTHOR AT WORK ON 2ND BOOK ABOUT 303RD GROUP

Many of you know me as the author of *Half A Wing, Three Engines and A Prayer* which first appeared in 1989. After years of being asked, "Are you ever going to write another book about the *Hell's Angels*?" I'm delighted to inform you that I'm doing just that. Your contributions are eagerly sought to make the new book as accurate and authentic as possible. I am interested in hearing from all 303rd veterans, both air crew members and ground support personnel, regardless of when you served. My final manuscript is due at the publisher in mid-2002 so I need your contributions as quickly as possible. Many thanks.

Brian D. O'Neill
339 Thomas Avenue, 2d Floor
Lyndhurst, New Jersey 07071

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

As I was not able to send my copy of the February Newsletter page 18 & 19 to Eddie Deerfield in time for the printing of the issue, this issue will cover both months.

Just to let everyone know, I'm working to combine the information that Ed Miller, Gary Moncur and various e-mails that I have received, in order to gather every veteran, widow, family member and friend into one database.

On to other matters, I want to meet everyone that will attend the upcoming Branson reunion. I will be pestering everyone for information about addresses. A lot like what my dad Smitty did.

Be sure that when you check in at the registration table that you look just behind it and check in with me. I will be able to verify, correct and change any information in the roster.

Anyway, talk with all of you next issue and see you all in Branson.

Dennis Smith
Membership/Roster

IN MEMORIAM

Clayton R Bagwell (358 th)	8/6/2001
Joseph F Bauer (359 th)	10/13/2001
Edwin W Bjorn (427 th)	10/6/2001
Mac Chesney Desmond (427 th)	2/8/2001
William W Duggan (427 th)	1/2001
Merle W Eckert (359 th)	9/18/2001
Raymond A Espinoza (444 th)	11/20/2001
Isadore Gepner (427 th)	1/18/2002
Adolphus J Ottremari (359 th)	11/24/2001
R. Clifton Sanders (358 th)	2/2/2002
John E Tevis (427 th)	1/5/2002
Robert W Thoma (HDQ)	11/16/2000
James J Traban (359 th)	2/7/2002
Allen R (Whitey) Untiedt (444 th)	11/2/2001

CURRENT LOST MEMBERS

Paul J Barton, (359th), last address Tucson, AZ
Warren E Church, (427th), last address
Sherman, TX
Quentin R Howard, (359th), last address
Pikeville, KY
Thomas N Kelly, (359th), last address Knoxville,
TN

SUPER LIFE MEMBERS

Louis "Mel" Schulstad HDQ

REPEAT SUPER LIFE MEMBERS

None Reported

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Robert R Carpenter	427 th
Lawrence C Carriere	358 th
Luis L Contreras	427 th
Howard F Delaney, (380 th), 5515 Barbara Street, Zephyrhills, FL 33641-3106, (813) 783-2679	
John F Dittmar	359 th
Eugene H Farland	427 th
David Glass	427 th
Lawrence T Harding, (359 th), 55 Harbor View Land, Apt. # 207, Belleair Bluffs, FL 33770-2645, (727) 587- 0945, spouse Adrianna	
Paul H Johnson	359 th
Walfred J Korpi	427 th
Richard H Lebeck	359 th
Phill I Levin	444 th
Maj. John D Myers(USMC)	Family
John W Parker	359 th
Elmer E Prusha	427 th
Vernon Richard	359 th
Victor N Shook	359 th

NEW REGULAR MEMBERS

Donald L Beal, (427th), PO Box 1183, Parowan, UT
84761-1183, (435) 477-8645, spouse Macel
John F Dittmar, (359th), PO Box 73, Cottekill, NY
12419-0073, (845) 687-8907, spouse Eva
Eugene H Farland, (427th), PO Box 6519, Yuma, AZ
85366-6519, (928) 726-7599, spouse Miriam K
David Glass, (427th), 704 E Capitol Blvd., Salt Lake
City, UT 84103-2210, (801) 322-0528, spouse Natalie
Paul H Johnson, (359th), 21263 Yontz Rd, Lot 48,
Brooksville, FL 34601, (352) 764-9353
Richard H Lebeck, (359th), 316 W 4th Ave, Garnett, KS
66032-1318, (785) 448-6166, spouse Mary Jane
Robert H Lenhard, (427th), 1 Sheffield Dr., Toms River,
NJ 08767-6474, (732) 473-0076, spouse Theresa
Phillip I Levin, (444 A/D), 27604 Kingsgate Way,
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3613, (248) 563-3721, spouse Norma
John W Parker, (359th), (mail in c/o) J D Parker, 1274
James Dr., Kaufman, TX 75142-4550, (972) 386-6169
Vernon Richard, (359th), 124 Froeba Dr., Carencro, LA,
70520-5127, (337) 896-7688, spouse Ethel

NEW FAMILY MEMBERS

William E Albertson, 4820 Gatwick Dr., Virginia
Beach, VA 23462-6437, (757) 495-2740
Roger Ayers, 7702 Finevale Dr., Downey, CA 90240-
2644
Brian D Carr, 1103 Myrtle Ave., Watertown, NY 13605-
4809, (315) 782-3769
Andrew Gornito, 1806 Adams Place, Hillsborough, NC
27278-9513, (919) 644-7582, spouse Tracie
Ryan Hammond, 6919 Raina Dr., Centreville, VA
20120-3452, (703) 803-9054, spouse Laura
Robert J Hivey, 2211 Garden Rd., Aurora, IL 60506-
5803, (630) 896-5380, spouse Dorothy
Lori Lacy, 1229 N. Woodland Beach Dr., Hauser Lake,
ID 83854-5560, (208) 777-4091, spouse Wayne
R. J. Manning, 1831 Port Kimberly Pl., Newport
Beach, CA 92660-6621, (949) 759-9034
Francis M (Frank) Marshall, 5150 Hopner Court,
Colorado Springs, CO 80919-7980, (719) 594-0373, spouse
Linda
Debra Mattmann, PO Box 620274, Woodside, CA
94062-0274, (650) 851-1115, spouse Lon
Donald S McClure, 211 Stanley Ridge Rd.,
Spartanburg, SC 29302-6203, (864) 582-4138, spouse Darlene

Marlow V Moncur, 14132 Saarinen Court, Irvine, CA 92606-1626, (949) 857-0176, spouse Virginia (Gini)
 Donna Prussman, 310 Normandy Ave., New Smyrna Beach, FL 32169-2420, (386) 427-4361
 Claire Saucier, 237 Edge Creek Ln, Odenton, MD 21113-2684, (410) 305-0366
 Barry Schneidell, 629 Bair Island Road, #117, Redwood City, CA 94063-4701
 Elizabeth M Suitter, 803 Colony Square, Rocky Mount, NC 27804-8421, (252) 984-0352, spouse Edwin (Jerry)
 Nolan F Strange, 2423 Douglas Drive, Bossier City, LA 71111-3447, (318) 748-2315

NEW FRIENDS OF THE 303rd

Vince Felletter, 531 Fruitwood Dr., Grand Junction, CO 81504-6782, (970) 523-1618, spouse Leigh
 John Gell, 170 High Street, Riseley, Bedfordshire, England MK44 1DR
 Margaret F Keating, 14304 Rosy Lane #26, Centreville, VA. 20121 (703) 815-9056
 Peter J Lewis, 54 Coton, Road, Rugby, Warwickshire, CV21 4LU, England
 David L Luiten, 428 N Meyers St., Bryan, OH 43506-6082, (419) 636-6082
 Leonard S Pretti, 7623 Dexter Grove Dr., Cordova, TN 38016-6798, (901) 756-5891, spouse Mary

DONATIONS

Howard L Abney (358th), General Donation
 Forrest E Barton (360th), Directory Donation
 LeRoy P Christenson (359th), Directory Donation
 Ray Cossey, General Donation
 Dr. J Dewey Dorsett Jr. (358th), General Donation
 Carl DuBose, Directory Donation
 William E Eisenhart (359th), Directory Donation
 Wendell Z Ferguson (358th), General Donation
 Harold J Hall (360th), General Donation
 Brenda E Keegan, General Donation
 A R Pero (427th), Directory & General Donation
 Johannes Hans Reusink, General Donation
 Victor N Shook (359th), Newsletter Donation
 Harold R Timm (360th), General Donation
 Mrs. Frances Vogel, Directory Donation
 Judson F Watson Jr. (360th), Directory Donation
 Arnold Wedlund (427th), Directory Donation
 Daniel F Whitney, General Donation
 William P Zachar SR. (359th), Directory Donation

BENEFACTOR PROGRAM

Dennis Foreman
 Brig. Gen. William S Rader
 Judson F Watson Jr., (360th)

IN MEMORY OF DONATIONS

Stuart & Cecile Alexander, in memory of Morris "Moishe" Tepper (360th)
 Dennis U Bjorn, in memory of Edwin W Bjorn (427th)
 R Wesley Featherstone (444 A/D) in memory of Raymond A Espinoza (444 A/D)
 Grafton N Smith, in memory of Melvin R Alderman (427th)
 Myra Linden, in memory of Irl E Baldwin (358th)

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Roy P Barrowman, (360th), 1000 Lake Ave., Berthoud, CO. 80513-1226
 Roger Bates, (359th), 2385 Fountain Hill Loop, Lincoln, CA. 95648-8222
 Donald L Beal (427th), PO Box 1183, Parowan, UT 84761-1183, (435) 477-8645
 Anthony J Boland, (358th), 12366 Pinecrest Drive, Plymouth, MI 48170-3061, (734) 463-1813
 Michael J Canale, (358th), 7609 Pine Island Way, West Palm Beach, FL 33411-5801
 Nelson J Catlin, (380th), 105 Howard St., Camden, NC. 27921-6993
 Luis L Contreras, (427th), 160 North Linden Ave., Apt. 46, Rialto, CA
 John M Craven, 11999 Gadwell Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45246-1540
 David S Clifton, 630 S W 6th Street, Apt. 91, Pompano Beach, FL., 33060-7741, (954) 942-7769
 Henderson M Driver, (360th), 51 Terracedale Ct., Griffin, GA. 30224-4384
 Oscar a Deen, 84136 Avenue 44, Spc 707, Indio, CA 92203-6107
 Peter J Fleck (358th), 1402 22nd St. NE, Unit 527, Auburn, WA 980021001
 Dennis E Foreman, (358th) 115 S Woodlawn Ct., Wichita, KS 67218-1836
 Richard C Fortunak, (359th), 10 Princeton Lane, Hawthorn Woods, IL 60047-9161
 Graham C Gould (359th), 7887 North La Cholla Blvd. Apt. #1047, Tucson, AZ 85741-4350
 Robert A Grimm, 27 Manor Rd., Shrewsbury, MA. 01545-2224
 William E Hanna, (444th), 3412 W. 123rd St., Leawood, KS. 66209-1456
 Thomas K Harrelson Jr., (358th), 5344 S. Lansing Stra, Tucson, AZ 85706-1989
 Mrs. Rosemary Hensley, 12177 SE 31st Pl., Apt. 39, Milwaukee, OR 97222-6867
 William C Hutschenreuter, (427th), 1474 Seabrook Drive, Alden, NY 14004-1467
 Thomas R Keese, (427th), 3362 Forest Lane, Apt 210, Dallas, TX 75234-7000
 James W Kintner, (3 RD), 3625 Grange Hall Road NE, Corydon, IN 47112-8263
 Fred P Kirsling, (358th), 6111 W Nebraska Ave., Apt. 105, Milwaukee, WI. 53220-1993
 John G Long, 119 Queen Annes Ct, Suffolk, VA 23434-8052
 Costa "Mark" Markos (358th), phone number only, (303) 989-8583
 Brian S McGuire, 8132 S. 93rd Street, La Vista, NE 68128-3205
 James C Miller, 202 NW Bay Path Drive, Crystal River, FL 34428-4027, (352) 564-9064
 James P Miller, 4101 Plaza Tower Drive, Suite 319, Baton Rouge, LA 70816-4399, (225) 291-8604
 Robert W Miller, 7874 Rainview Court, Anaheim, CA 92808-2110, (714) 281-0826
 Fred J Norman, (427th), 104 Rickenbacker Place, Grand Prairie, TX 75051-2116, (972) 262-4669
 Kenneth F Nye, 2826 Garrett Drive, Fort Collins, CO 80526-6215
 Olen Obar (444 A/D), 305 Santa Clara Ave., Eugene, OR 97404-1944
 George R Redhead (358th), 992 South Broadway St., Truth or Consequences, NM 87901-3163
 David M Rencher, 12014 W Ramrod Drive, Boise, ID 83713-4717
 Louis "Mel" Schulstad (HDQ), 3518 209th PL NE, Sammamish, WA 98074-8367
 Lumir E Schultz, (358th), 1654 N. Colson Ave, Apt 205, Fremont, NE 68025-3387
 Edgar E Snyder Jr., (427th), 9731 E. Dleindale Rd., Tucson, AZ. 85749-8385
 Lee Tavvab #5835, (360th), VA Domiciliary, Section #1, 8495 Crater Lake Hwy., White City, OR. 97503-1088, (541) 828-4769, Ext. # 5835

US AIRCRAFT NOSE ART IN WAR ON TERRORISM

"Let's Roll," America's two-word marching order in the fight against terrorism, is being displayed in nose art on various aircraft in the United States Air Force as a way of recognizing the heroes and victims of the September 11 attacks.

The words were made famous by Todd Beamer, who led fellow passengers in fighting for control of the airliner that crashed into a field in western Pennsylvania. He was overheard on a cell phone reciting The Lord's Prayer and saying "Let's roll" as passengers charged the terrorists. It is widely believed that either the White House or the US Capitol Building was the intended target.

The US Air Force has authorized nose art on its aircraft throughout much of its history, reaching its zenith during World War II.



THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

Although the 303rd Bomb Group Association's Board of Directors meets formally only once a year, in conjunction with the annual reunion, business is conducted almost daily in a maelstrom of e-mail exchanges. A flurry of such activity in recent months centered on the two-volume Hell's Angels Newsletter Silver Anniversary Collection. The positive outcome was the decision by the Executive Committee of the Board, without dissent, to order 100 sets for sale through the Association's Post Exchange and 40 sets for presentation to the Library of Congress, the US Air Force Academy, the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum and other military, university and community libraries. These books are in addition to the 360 sets which were ordered by members before the two month cut-off date of February 28. Delivery is scheduled for late Spring.

Support for the project, both moral and economic, has been inspiring. **Kermit Stevens**, the longest serving commander of the 303rd Bomb Group during World War II, made a substantial donation to help underwrite the cost. He called me from his home in Medford, Oregon to say, "This history of our 303rd, as told by our veterans on the pages of our great newsletters, must not fail to be published for lack of funds." Donations came also from **Lew Lyle, Charles Kirksey, George Arvanites, Myrtle Brown, Eva Cozzo, Peter Zimba, Ruth Bale, Eugene Dulik and John Gell**.

The preparation of this Collection for publication has been replete with challenges. First, there was the need to accumulate in good condition every one of the 86 issues of the newsletter published over the last 25 years. In this effort, I had contributions from **Joe Vieira, Bill Eisenhart, Al Dussliere, Hal Susskind, Dick Johnson and Ed Gardner**.

One of the most tedious, yet essential, tasks was to create an index to enable readers to find items of specific interest on any of the more than 1,200 pages of newsletters. The page numbers in the original issues were converted to consecutive page numbers in the two volumes. Thousands of index entries were logged in against the new book page numbers. In this task, my wife, **Mary Lee**, was a tower of strength and dedication. She was joined by **Betty Kelley**, widow of the 303rd's former president **J. Ford Kelley**; **Bill and Doris Roche** and **Bill and Mary Eisenhart**, each of whom worked on recording hundreds of index entries on new book pages.

We owe the ultimate debt of gratitude to the 303rd Bomb Group veterans, themselves, who contributed articles and photographs to the Hell's Angels Newsletter over the last 25 years, making this unique history possible.

EDDIE DEERFIELD

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

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PALM HARBOR, FL.
PERMIT NUMBER 303