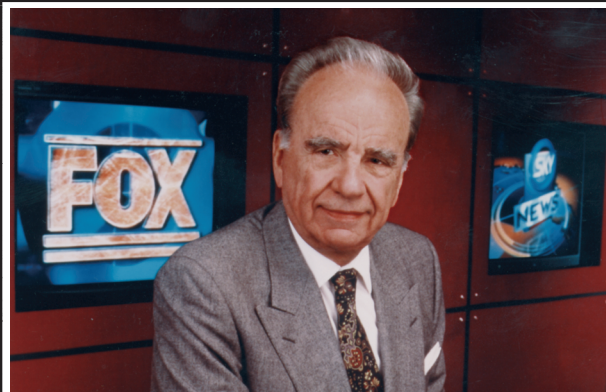


# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

May, 2004



**MEDIA GIANT RUPERT MURDOCH** hopes that the 303rd Bomb Group has "a great reunion," grants us copyright clearance for a showing of the Fox War Classic *12 O'Clock High* and sends gift of 260 VHS recordings of the film for presentation to veterans at the reunion. See The Editor Comments, page 20

## Prepare To Start Engines! REUNION TARGET IS SAVANNAH, FIVE DAY MISSION AUGUST 26-30

The 21st annual reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group Association takes us back to Savannah, Georgia from August 26 to 30 at the city's majestic Hyatt Regency Hotel. Our last reunion in the city was in 1998.

Armed Forces Reunions, a professional planning organization, was retained under contract to make all the arrangements for activities at the hotel and to schedule optional tours around the area.

Association President Albert Dussliere delegated the responsibility of coordinating with AFR to Eddie Deerfield who, with his wife, Mary Lee, managed the 303rd's reunions in Colorado Springs (1995), San Francisco (1996) and Pittsburgh (1997).

The turn-out for last year's reunion in Portland, Oregon was disappointing, a record-setting low of 238 persons. Average attendance over the last five reunions has been 348.

Registration packets for the Savannah reunion were scheduled to be mailed in late April. Members who

have not received the information by the end of May are urged to call Molly Dey at Armed Forces Reunions, telephone (757) 625-6401.

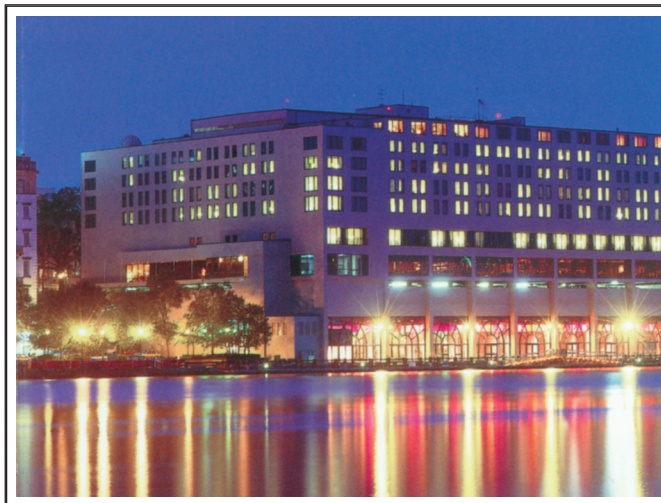
The hotel's special rate offered the 303rd for single or double occupancy is \$99 plus tax per night and is valid until August 3rd.

A one-time registration fee of \$122 per person will cover an hors d'oeuvres welcome reception, buffet breakfast, farewell banquet dinner, the AFR fee and

multiple reunion expenses.

All tours will be optional. The tour highlight of the 1998 reunion was the visit to The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, and it's expected that the same will be true in 2004. There have been many changes in the museum's exhibits in the last six years.

The highlight of activities scheduled at the hotel is likely to be the Memorial Service, affording veterans (Continued on page 18)



The majestic Hyatt Regency Hotel on the Savannah River.

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Wish comes true for 303rd bomber pilot who wanted to fly P-51's—pages 5, 12

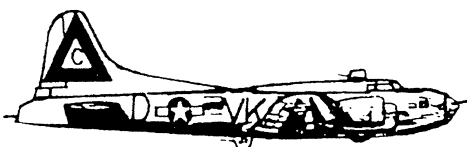
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Crew chief writes about the 1944 *Hell's Angels* tour of U.S.—page 9

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

## Hell's Angels Newsletter

Editor--Eddie Deerfield

VOL XXVII, No. 2 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684

May, 2004

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 303<sup>rd</sup> 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.

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Editor Emeritus: Hal Susskind

### ELECTED OFFICERS — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Eddie Deerfield appointed as  
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Alternate)

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**For a visit to the highly  
rated Website of the  
303rd Bomb Group  
Association, go  
online at:**

**www.303rdBGA.com**

#### World War II Awards

William H. Cox  
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EM: RJBeeby@aol.com

### Planning a trip to England and RAF Molesworth?

Persons planning to visit the base should contact UK Representative Robin Beeby and advise him of travel plans. Mr. Beeby will make the appropriate contacts and coordinate a visit to RAF Molesworth.

#### CHAPLAINS — PROTESTANT

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**AND THE WINNERS ARE!** Major Steven P. looss and Staff Sergeant Tristan Schlientz, on the left in the above photos, are presented with the Joint Analysis Center's Carlton M. Smith and Peter Curry Awards, respectively. They received the honors from JAC commander Colonel Richard Ayres. Smith was the 303rd Bomb Group's Intelligence Officer at Molesworth. Curry was also in the 303rd's Intelligence Section during World War II.

## AWARDS NAMED FOR 303RD'S SMITH AND CURRY PRESENTED AT RAF-MOLESWORTH

By Technical Sergeant Daniel Stein  
US Joint Analysis Center

The Joint Analysis Center, RAF Molesworth, held its Annual Awards Banquet on 25 February 2004 at the Stukely Inn on RAF Alconbury. The honors were presented by JAC commanding officer USAF Colonel Richard Ayres.

Presentations included the annual Air Force Intelligence awards, the Air Force Communications and Information Professional of the Year, Airman of the Year, Soldier of the Year, Sailor of the Year, and the JAC Service Member of the Year.

The highlight of the ceremony was the formal recognition of the Joint Analysis Center's top intelligence professionals with the presentation of the awards named in honor of two 303rd Bomb Group veterans, Lt Col Carlton M. Smith and 1Lt Peter Curry.

Both of this year's award recipient's hard work and devotion to duty were direct factors in the Joint Analysis Center's and United States European Command's mission success during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and the war on terrorism.

The Lt Col Carlton M. Smith Award is bestowed on an Officer or Civilian Intelligence Professional who provided exceptional support to United States European Command warfighters.

Army Major Steven P. looss was selected as this year's award recipient. Major looss serves as the Chief of the Plans and Requirements Division within the Joint Analysis Center. He leads a 61-person multi-service division consisting of military, civilian, and contractor systems specialists.

These systems experts are responsible for implementing and managing United States European Command Joint Analysis Center, SHAPE Survey, and deployed forces' command and control, communications, computers, and intelligence infrastructure.

The theater architecture of computer systems Maj looss

manages directly supports the production and dissemination of force protection, threat warning, imagery, and targeting intelligence.

Originally a six month project, Maj looss led the planning and construction of the Joint Analysis Center's Crisis Intelligence Center, delivering a state-of-the-art, \$1.6 million war room in just three months. This extraordinary feat enabled the Joint Analysis Center to successfully execute its demanding intelligence mission in support of United States Central Command during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

The 1Lt Peter Curry Award recognizes outstanding support provided by enlisted members of the JAC to United States European Command warfighters.

Army Staff Sergeant Tristan Schlientz received the award. Staff Sergeant Tristan Schlientz serves as the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge of the Operations Center at the Joint Analysis Center.

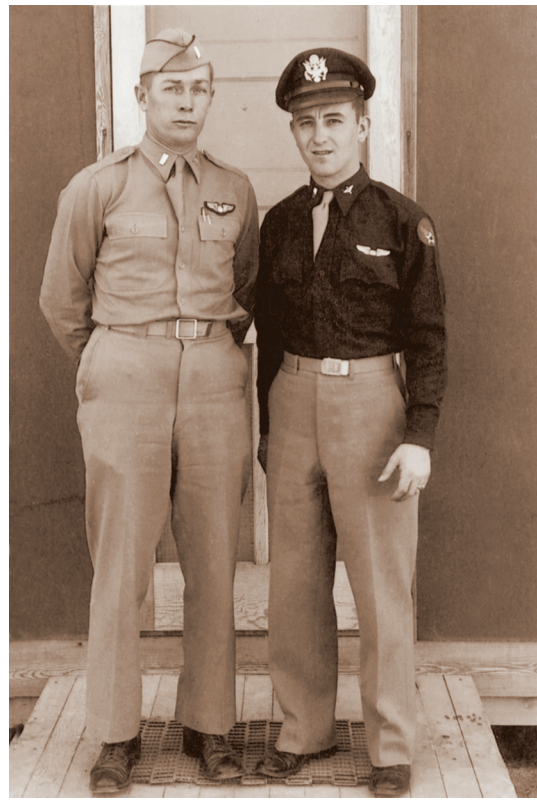
Staff Sergeant Schlientz directs a 72 member multi-service Indications and Warning Operations Center providing time sensitive threat warning intelligence throughout the United States European Command Area of Responsibility.

Staff Sergeant Schlientz possesses superior leadership and technical qualities. He was hand picked by the Joint Analysis Center leadership to the NCOIC of a 50 member multi-service Crisis Intelligence Center, responsible for providing direct intelligence and targeting support to combat operation in Iraq.

Also during the year, Staff Sergeant Schlientz attended specialized training on Personnel Recovery and helped develop the United States European Command Personnel Recovery procedures.

He is now recognized as the United States European Command subject matter expert in intelligence support to Personnel Recovery and has been lauded by senior officers of the Defense Intelligence Agency.





**THE CURSE OF BAM BAM, THE B-17 WITH THE NOT-SO-LUCKY RABBIT NOSE ART** — 358th Squadron tail gunner Wayne Humphries wasn't happy about flying in *Bam Bam* on the 10 June 1944 mission to attack an airdrome at Nantes, France. His favorite B-17, *The Floose*, was down for repairs. Wayne had cause to worry. *Bam Bam* crashed shortly after take-off, killing pilot Sam Oliver and co-pilot Stanley Shankweiler, seen l-to-r in the photo on the left. Four other crew men also died in the crash. Only Humphries and three others bailed out in time.

## “LAST MAN” RECALLS THE HORROR WHEN *BAM BAM* EXPLODED AFTER TAKE-OFF TO HIT NANTES AIRFIELD

By Wayne Humphries

I am the only survivor of the *Bam Bam* crew, still alive.

Three of my crew-mates and I survived the crash of our B-17 shortly after take-off from Molesworth on June 10, 1944. The other six died in the crash.

The other survivors—navigator Spiros Contos, bombardier Harry Chappel and engineer Whitney Haskell have passed away.

Shortly after the *Bam Bam* crash, I was transferred to A-20 Marauders, low level attack planes in the 9th Air Force.

My story begins in late 1938 when I went to Weiser, Idaho to Vo Tech school and took Machinist and Sheet Metal training. When I graduated from there, Boeing hired me right out of school.

I was on a bus headed to Boeing in Seattle the evening the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor.

I worked for Boeing for about a year and a half building B-17 Flying Fortress bombers. I left there about a year and a half later and returned home to Shelley, Idaho. I was drafted into the Army and eventually ended

up in the Air Corps. Fortunately, that's where I wanted to go.

I took my training in Long Beach, California; Las Vegas, Nevada; and Pyote, Texas.

We were assigned a crew in Pyote. We eventually went to Lincoln, Nebraska for our final flight training.

After that, we picked up a new plane in Grand Island, Nebraska and flew it to Manchester, New Hampshire; to Goose Bay, Labrador; to Reykjavik, Iceland; and eventually down into Scotland and ended up in Molesworth, England, just out of London.

There, we were assigned another plane called *The Floose*. We flew that plane many times.

During the invasion of France, our crew was assigned the job of photographing the invasion of Normandy. We would fly back and forth and photograph the invasion, then return to the tower and buzz the tower and throw the film

(in a can with a parachute on it), out the window to give them a minute by minute story of what was going on.

On June 10, 1944, we were assigned to make a raid on Nantes, France. Our plane *The Floose* was in for repairs, so we were assigned a plane called *Bam Bam*.

We were awakened very early in the morning for a briefing and then entered the plane, which was loaded with bombs. We took off before day light in a light fog.

The process was to take off and fly around and around in a circle, gaining altitude, which was quite slow to achieve because of the heavy, full load of fuel and bombs. We flew round and round and finally reached altitude of 16,000 – 18,000 feet.

We were just about to enter into formation before we headed out across the Channel. When we turned into formation, our plane was apparently iced up, (See *Bam Bam* on page 6)





DICK "SPIDER" SMITH in the P-51 Mustang *Easy Does It*. The painting is by Charles Mackey, a member of the Hemet Model Masters of Hemet, California.



SIGNED PHOTO TO HIS FUTURE WIFE was mailed by Smith in 1945. He's in the cockpit of *Easy Does It*.

## Disappointed By Assignment To Heavy Bombers, 303rd Pilot Finally Moves On To Fighter Planes

By Richard L. Smith

I have recently received messages from the Flemish people who helped me when I bailed out of my P-51 *Easy Does It* on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1945.

At the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Reunion in Portland in 2003 I was talking to Monique Polk, and I asked if she was French because of her accent. Monique said "no," that she was from Tielt, Belgium. I told her that I had bailed out 12 miles from there at Inglemunster. Monique said that she had a nephew who lived near there and she would contact him.

A couple of weeks later I received e-mails from some of the people who had helped me when I landed by parachute in their town. After a month Monique sent me a copy of the Inglemunster newspaper with the story of my bailout. They even had a picture of my wife and I which Monique had taken at the reunion. Monique sent me a translation of the story.

Wow! How's that for returning to the past? And how did a B-17 pilot become a P-51 pilot? Here's how it happened:

I graduated from Aviation Cadet training as a pilot on Feb. 8, 1944. As with most pilots my only desire was to fly as a fighter pilot. They were the ones that we heard all the great stories about. Much to my disappointment, and to all who graduated with me, we were all assigned as heavy bomber co-pilots.

After a short training period I was assigned to a crew and we flew a B-17 across the Atlantic. We arrived in England in late May 1944 and were assigned to the 303rd Heavy Bomber Group (360th Squadron) stationed at Molesworth in the midlands of England.

We began flying combat in late June with our first combat mission to Leipzig, Germany on June 29. As France was under re-invasion, most of the B-17 missions were deep into the heart of Germany. On 15 August, I flew a mission to Weisbaden which became the subject of Keith Ferris' famous painting in the World War II room of the Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

We became a lead crew and I began to fly some missions, training new crews on their first combat missions when my seat on my crew's plane was taken by a "command pilot." I

completed my bomber tour with my 35th mission on October 25, 1944. While I was waiting my transfer back to the States I was offered a chance to enter the most exciting time of my life.

An organization had been formed in July 1944 to scout ahead of the bombers to help the group and division leaders with target and weather information. Several missions had been badly torn up by weather and German action prior to the formation of the scouting forces. The idea was to assemble a unit with ex-bomber pilots with combat experience who would fly out ahead of the bomber formation to experience firsthand the conditions that the bombers would soon encounter. These scouts were very successful and soon became essential to the accomplishment of successful bombing raids. General Jimmy Doolittle mentions the scouts in his book. "I COULD NEVER BE SO LUCKY AGAIN."

After about ten hours of training (not even including any gunnery training), the Colonel said I was ready to fly my first combat mission on which I was to fly his wing. I was assigned a P-51D5 which was a rejection from the 364th Fighter Group but was a dream ship to me. I was told that I could pick a name for the airplane, and as the identification letters were 5E-E, and the phonetic alphabet for E was Easy I decided on the name, *Easy Does It*.

On the left side of the canopy I painted my nickname "Spider" and on the right side I painted, "Betty" which served two purposes; I was going with a nurse named Betty, and writing to my future wife, Betty. They both thought their name was on the airplane and who was I to tell them different. The nickname "Spider" was given to me by my squadron mates because I was so tall and thin, like a Daddy Long Legs.

On the morning of Dec. 6, 1944, I made my first formation takeoff on the wing of Colonel Bud Peasley, my hero. The flight was uneventful until I heard the command, "Break left," over the radio. I thought this meant me, so I broke left leaving my formation heading into Germany. When I came to my senses and realized that this command was from some other group, I was all alone and deep in the heart of Germany. I called the Colonel with my plight and he calmly said, "I wondered where you were going." He gave me a heading and I

(See SPIDER on page 12)





**THE BAM BAM CREW** — In front, l-to-r, radio operator John Kissling, waist gunner Robert Scalco, ball turret gunner Francis Russell, waist gunner Americo Imbrogno, tail gunner Wayne Humphries and engineer Whitney Haskell. In back, co-pilot Stanley Shankweiler, bombardier Harry Chappel, navigator Spiros Contos and pilot Sam Oliver.

### ***Bam Bam* from page 4**

because it gyrated and went into a roll and apparently came apart.

I heard the engines rev up loudly and the plane made a wild rotation and the tail broke off directly behind where I was sitting in the tail gunner position.

Then everything went quiet. I don't know what happened to the rest of the plane.

The tail section tipped up and I fell out. On my way out, I grabbed my chest pack and hooked it onto my harness.

I was too high to pull my rip cord. I waited and waited. I went through a cloud formation. When I came out, I was near the tops of the trees. I pulled the cord.

When the chute opened, it flipped off my shoes. We wore civilian dress oxfords on raids, so if we went down behind lines, we would have civilian foot wear.

I hit the ground stock-footed, and landed in a freshly cultivated beet field.

An old English farmer came running out. He must have thought I was dying, because I was huffing and puffing and trying to get my breath. The wind had been knocked out of me.

He took me to his farm

house. His wife made us a cup of tea. I remember they had two little girls. They said, "Oh, that silk parachute sure would make some nice dresses" and I told them they could have it because I wasn't fixing to use it again.

Shortly after, someone brought Harry Chappel to the farm house. He "came to" while coming down and his chute was open. Chappel was the bombardier.

The navigator, Spiros Contos, "came to" hanging in a tree with his chute.

Whitney Haskell, the engineer, doesn't know how he got out. He was standing between the pilot and co-pilot, with his hands on the backs of their seats. Neither the pilot nor co-pilot made it out of the plane.

After the crash of *Bam Bam*, we were all assembled. Harry Chappel, Whitney Haskell, Spiros Contos and myself. Harry Chappel and Whitney Haskell were taken to the hospital with minor injuries. I did not receive any injuries that required treatment.

The other six crew members were Sam Oliver, Stanley Shankweiler, John Kissling, Robert Scalco, Francis Russell and Americo Imbrogno. They were all killed in the crash.

I think of my crew-mates often. I'm the last man alive.



**WORKERS ON THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON** install a panel of sculpted stars. The 4,000 gold-plated stars are a tribute to the more than 400,000 Americans killed in the war.

## **NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL SET TO BE DEDICATED MAY 29**

Nearly 59 years after the end of World War II, the National World War II Memorial will be dedicated in Washington, D.C., on Saturday, May 29, 2004.

The Memorial Day weekend celebration on the National Mall will culminate an 11-year effort to honor America's World War II generation. The memorial was authorized by Congress in 1993. Construction began in September 2001 after several years of fund raising and public hearings.

The official dedication celebration will span four days and will include a WWII-themed reunion exhibition on the National Mall staged in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, a service of celebration at the Washington National Cathedral, and an entertainment salute to WWII veterans from military performing units. Other related activities in cultural venues throughout the city are planned.

The memorial is constructed of bronze and granite. Granite was chosen for its aesthetic appeal, superior strength and durability. Water resistance was another important criterion. The two principal stones selected for the memorial are "Kershaw" for the vertical elements, and "Green County" for the main plaza paving stone. "Kershaw" is quarried in South Carolina, while "Green County" is quarried in Georgia.





**FOUR LIVED, SIX DIED IN THE CRASH OF *SPIRIT OF FLAK WOLF* ON TAKE-OFF FROM MOLESWORTH —** Three of the four survivors were (l-to-r) right waist gunner Irvin Hilborn, ball turret gunner Ira Friedman and left waist gunner Michael Vargas. The fourth survivor was tail gunner Walter Kowalonek.

**Target On 9 April 1944 Was Focke-Wolf Aircraft Factory at Marienburg, Germany**

***SPIRIT OF FLAK WOLF* CRASHES ON TAKE-OFF FROM BASE; SIX DIE, FOUR SURVIVE WITH BURNS**

**By Ira Friedman**

On April 9, 1944 the John McGarry crew was assigned a 427th Squadron B-17 called *Spirit of Flak Wolf* or *Flak Wolf II*. I was the ball turret gunner.

Upon taking off from Molesworth as lead plane for our 12th mission as a crew, the left wing of our plane caught in a tree top and half was torn off. Not being able to land back at base, the pilot managed to keep out of the flight paths of other B-17's taking off.

We were able to jettison our bombs and they didn't explode.

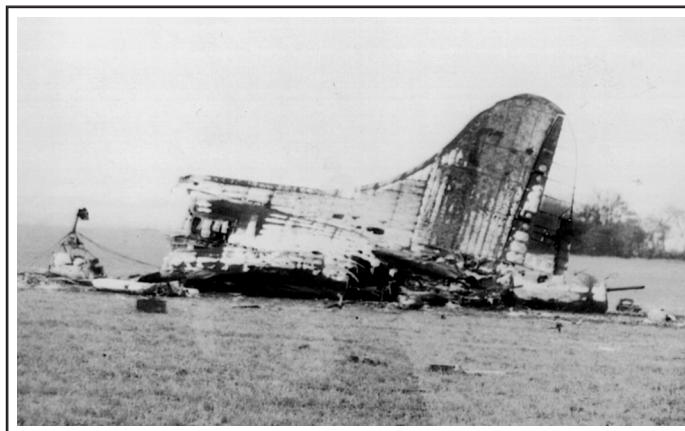
We crashed in a farmer's field, and six of our 10-man crew died in the crash.

Killed were the pilot John McGarry, co-pilot Willie Cotham, navigator Robert Halligan, bombardier Kenneth Foe, engineer Henry Grace and radio operator Stephen Stuphar.

They were in forward sections of the B-17.

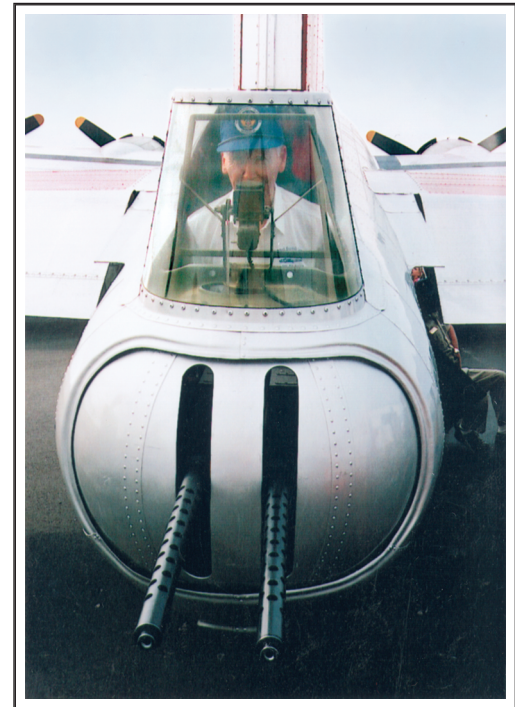
I was in the waist section with gunners Michael Vargas and Irvin Hilborn and tail gunner Walter Kowalonek. Our hands and faces were badly burned in the flames that engulfed the plane.

I cannot explain why we were not killed in the crash.





**359th SQUADRON PILOT BILL EISENHART** strikes a happy pose under the number two engine of the B-17 *Aluminum Overcast* at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. When the aircraft went on to visit Madison, Wisconsin, 358th Squadron tail gunner Arnold Willis was back in his old position, ready to fire on all incoming enemy fighter planes.



## B-17 Visits On Tour In Florida and Wisconsin Arouse Memories For 303rd Pilot, Tail Gunner

**By Nick Stubbs**  
MacDill Air Force Base "Thunderbolt"

On October 14, 1943, Captain Bill Eisenhart of the 303rd Bomb Group "Hell's Angels," was piloting a B-17 Flying Fortress on a daylight bombing mission targeting Schweinfurt, Germany. His plane was hit and had an engine flame out but he and his crew made it back safely. Some of his comrades were not so lucky.

Sixty planes were lost that day so it was bittersweet almost 61 years to the day that he stood beneath *Aluminum Overcast*, a meticulously restored B-17 that flew into MacDill on a nationwide tour.

"It brings back a lot of memories," said Eisenhart, a St. Petersburg, Florida retiree, as he looked over the aluminum hulk with its multiple gun turrets and four massive engines. "We lost a lot of planes and a lot of people but these planes saved a lot of people."

Eisenhart recalls the plane being a bit of a handful to fly, but that it was rock steady and tough as nails. Many were damaged beyond imagination, and yet still able to fly.

"It's a wonderful airplane and we had good combat crews and also good ground crews that kept this airplane flying," Eisenhart said, adding, "I wish I could jump in and fly it again!"

*Aluminum Overcast* was on a tour of air bases around the country. The plane is owned by the Warbirds Group of the Experimental Aircraft Association, and is one of several war planes lovingly restored by the group for display and flying.

**By Arnold A. Willis**  
358th Squadron Tail Gunner

I flew my tour as tail gunner with the Rufus Grisham crew from August 1944 through January 1945. Three members of our crew still survive and have attended most reunions — our pilot Grish, co-pilot Bill Cox and myself.

We lost our engineer Edwin Scheuermann last fall.

Last summer, the Experimental Aircraft Association brought their B-17 *Aluminum Overcast* to Madison, Wisconsin. A tour of the aircraft was offered, with veterans boarding free of charge. But, the tail section was off limits.

It took a little negotiating by my son, Dave, who is an EAA member, to have the "off limits" sign removed for a short time. After 59 years, I was back in the tail of a B-17.

Crawling through the tail gunner's door and back to the gun position was no problem, but I found that kneeling while perched on that little bicycle-type seat was a different matter. I lasted for 15 or 20 uncomfortable minutes.

To think that I could do that for eight to ten hours back then with no discomfort except for flak and fighter plane attacks.

It may have something to do with age!





**THE HELL'S ANGELS GROUND CREW .... AT WORK AND AT PLAY** — Above, the crew performs maintenance on the B-17's engines at Molesworth. At left, the crew on tour in Los Angeles meets Hollywood stars.

Front row, (l-to-r), musician Hoagy Carmichael, 303rd combat pilot Irl Baldwin, actor Humphrey Bogart, crew chief Fabian Folmer, actress Lauren Bacall and Wilson Fairfield. Behind them are Ernest Touhey, Edward West, Jr., Capt. John Johnson (he flew *Hell's Angels* back from England to the US), John Kosilla, actor Walter Brennan and Kasmer Wegrzyn.

## B-17 *HELL'S ANGELS* GROUND CREW ON TRIUMPHANT 1944 TOUR OF U.S. CITIES

By Fabian Folmer, *Hell's Angels* Crew Chief

In October of 1943 I was called to a meeting with the 303rd's Group commander, 358th Squadron commander and our Engineering Officer. I was told that if all the details could be worked out our *Hell's Angels* ground crew would be sent back to the US on a nationwide tour.

It took a long time to get those details worked out and approved.

Finally, on the 18th of January 1944, with Captain John Johnson as our pilot, we left Molesworth and flew to Land's End, England. The weather over the English Channel was lousy and for eight days we were grounded. Then the weather got just a little better and we flew to Marrakech and on to Dakar in North Africa.

A problem with one of the engines delayed us again while we made the repairs and test hopped the B-17. When everything went well, we headed across the South Atlantic to Fortaleza, Brazil.

From there to British Guinea, Puerto Rico and, finally, on February 2, 1944 we landed in Miami, Florida.

We were there for several days, and then flew to our first tour stop in Oklahoma City.

The Army Air Corps really surprised us there. They had rounded up Captain Irl Baldwin and the original combat crew on *Hell's Angels* and flown them to Oklahoma City for a reunion with the ground crew.

I believe we spent six days there and, needless to say, it was really an experience. We met lots of people,

including Governor Kerr.

From then on, Captain Baldwin and Captain Johnson were our pilots for the entire tour. Next, we went to Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio where we were given 30-days leave before continuing the tour.

In March 1944, we were sent to New York and received orders covering our entire itinerary for the remaining cities on the tour.

Our first stop was the Pratt and Whitney Company in Patterson, New Jersey. From there we flew to Canton, Ohio as guests of the Timken Roller Bearing Company, then on to their Columbus, Ohio plant.

The remaining stops on the tour included the Studebaker plant in South Bend, Indiana, roller bearing plants in Chicago and Rockford, Illinois, and in Detroit, Michigan. Then on to Denver, Colorado and Cheyenne, Wyoming.

Next stops—the Anaconda Mining Corporation in Butte, Montana and then on to Yakima and Seattle, Washington as guests of the Boeing Corporation. Our tour ended in Long Beach, California.

My *Hell's Angels* ground crew and I were assigned to the Redistribution Center in Los Angeles to await further orders. While there, we were privileged to visit several movie studios and met a number of the famous stars including Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Hoagy Carmichael, Walter Brennan and many more.

We had met so many nice people on every stop of the tour and had experiences that I will never forget.



# Nazi Swastika Used as Symbol of Passive Resistance By German POWs in U.S. Camps

By Charles O. Neidt



In 1968, my wife, Martha, and I purchased 80 acres of forested land (in Colorado) previously owned by the U.S. Forest Service. While inspecting our newly acquired property, we discovered swastikas carved on several aspen trees. The shallow cuts on the outer bark had healed nicely and the swastikas were plainly visible. Discovery of the swastikas led me to review the use of the land while the Forest Service owned it. The probable origin of the swastikas became immediately apparent. Records indicated the Forest Service had contracted with the Provost Marshal General's Office for German Prisoners of War to remove dead and diseased trees and thin live trees on this land. The resulting wood products were sold for fence posts, saw logs, corral poles and firewood.

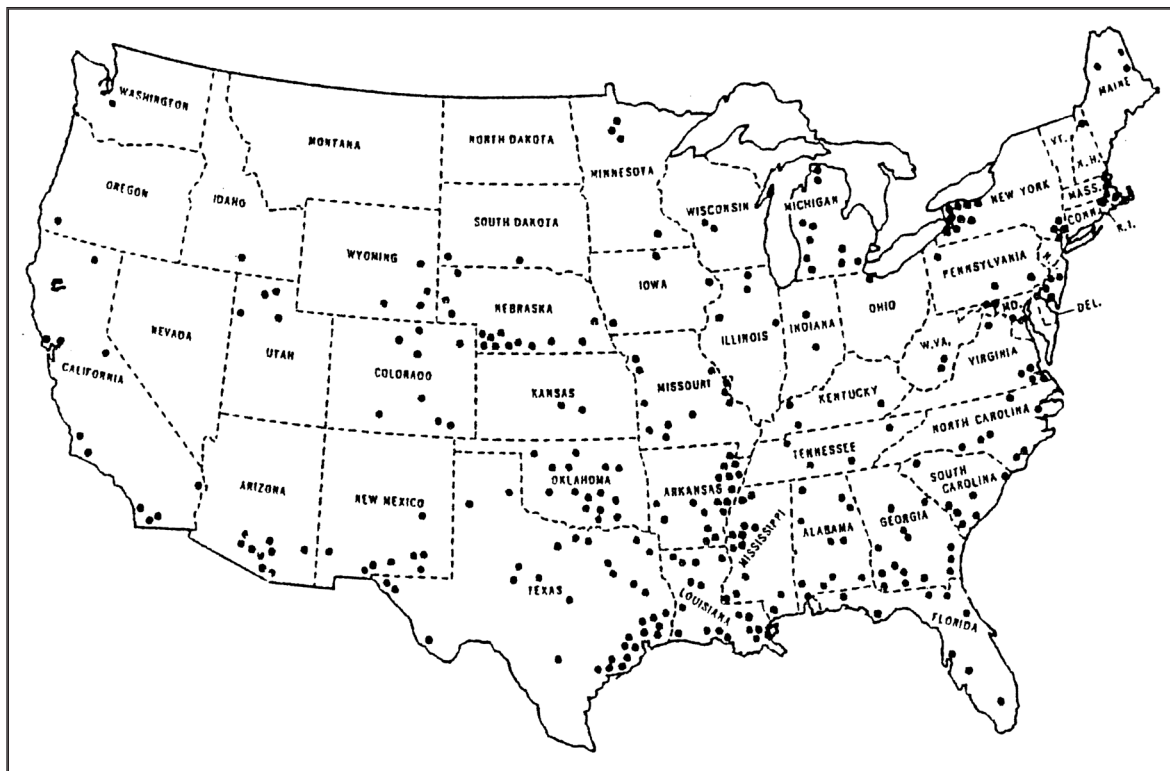
In 1992, the Colorado State Forest Service made a microscopic examination of a cross-section of one of the "swastika trees" and verified the carving took place in 1945. Armed with this bit of information and a great deal of enthusiasm generated by our discovery, I embarked on a quest to learn more about the German POWs held in the United States during World War II. This was relatively new territory for me, since my two-year World War II combat experience in North Africa and Italy was devoted exclusively to *creating* prisoners of war rather than dealing with them following their capture. After interviewing 45 people who interacted with the POWs, and studying more than 80 documents and books on the subject, I assembled my findings and conclusions in a monograph entitled "Swastikas on Aspen Trees: Prisoners of War in America During World War II".

When the United States entered World War II on 8 December 1941, Britain was already "saturated" with POWs. Intense pressure was exerted on the United States to accommodate not only some of the existing POWs, but also prisoners to be captured in future engagements. American rationale for housing POWs in the United States related to relieving America's own fighting forces of the problems of guarding, feeding and housing POWs in the theaters of operations, and alleviating critical manpower shortages existing in the United States. There was little cost in transporting the prisoners to the United States in returning empty troop ships, and the concept was strategically sound.

Between August 1942 and July 1946, more than 425,000 European prisoners were held by the United States in 155 "Base" (permanent) and 500 "Branch" (temporary) camps. The total number, 425,000, included 53,000 Italian prisoners who were re-classified from "Prisoners-of-War" to "Co-Belligerent" status after Italy surrendered on 8 September 1943. In Colorado, four sites were designated major base camps: Fort Carson, Camp Trinidad, Camp Hale and Camp Greeley. Base camps accommodated one to five thousand prisoners, with an average of 2,500. The map shows the distribution of major base and branch camps throughout the United States as of June 1944.

The Army Provost Marshal General's Office administered all aspects of the POW camps, including an extensive work program whereby government agencies, businesses, farmers and ranchers could contract for POWs to work at a prevailing local wage. Each employer was required to furnish transportation to the work site; the camp provided lunch and military guards. When there was a large contract for work at a distant site from a base camp, a branch camp would be established near the work site. Such was the case when the Colorado 4-H summer camp near Gould was converted to a POW branch camp to house prisoners held in the base camp at Greeley while the prisoners completed forest management projects in north central Colorado.





**Distribution of major POW camps across the U.S. in June, 1944**

Other branch camps for wood production and forest management were established along both sides of the Colorado-Wyoming state line. These branch camps also housed many POWs from the base camp at Douglas, Wyo.

In June 1945, the Provost Marshal General's Office reported to the House Military Affairs Committee that, as of that date, the total contribution of the work program was \$100,000,000. By that date, contractors had contributed \$22,000,000 to the United States Treasury. Of this amount, forestry-related projects were credited with contributions second only to farm and ranch-related projects.

At the conclusion of World War II, all POWs were returned to Europe and the base camps were demolished. All materials used in constructing the camps were sold to local bidders.

Included in my research was an effort to identify other incidents involving the creation of swastikas by German POWs. Although no official statistics appear to have been collected relative to the frequency with which German POWs created and displayed swastikas, accounts of a substantial number of swastika incidents are reported in disciplinary investigation and hearings, newspaper articles and in post-war correspondence with rehabilitated prisoners.

Among the two-dozen incidents I examined, the following are among the more interesting:

1. POWs at Camp Foley, Alabama, painted swastikas on the backs of large incoming female sea turtles and displayed the "politicized" turtles to their guards when the turtles returned to shore to lay their eggs.
2. Six POWs assigned to repair the roofing of a hospital at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, arranged two-tone shingles to form a giant swastika on the roof of the hospital.
3. Twenty POWs at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, were given seven days' confinement on bread and water for carving swastikas on trees and refusing to remove them.
4. German POWs employed by a creamery and produce company at Holdrege, Nebraska, painted swastikas on the shells

of eggs they were candling.

5. POWs in Brigham City, Utah, carved swastikas on fresh peaches they were packing in crates.

6. In Chandler, Arizona, POWs unfurled a swastika flag from the back of a truck on the way to a work assignment. Their guard was riding in the cab.

7. A POW in Camp Atlanta, Nebraska, created swastikas by pounding many nails into boards he was using to construct a popcorn crib.

8. POWs at Camp Charleston, South Carolina, secretly slit swastikas into tomato skins with their thumbnails.

9. POWs enroute from Camp Reno, Oklahoma, to another camp threw hundreds of propaganda leaflets decorated with swastikas from their moving train. The leaflets were traced to a mimeograph machine, which POWs had been allowed to use to print their camp newspaper.

10. In an Illinois vegetable canning factory, POWs placed pieces of waxed paper displaying swastikas in cans of corn just before the lids were sealed on the cans.

Although some of the swastika incidents I identified could be interpreted as serious efforts to disrupt the war effort, I concluded that most of the incidents, including carving the swastikas on aspen trees in the Neidt Stewardship Forest, fell into the category of "pranks to relieve boredom" or "goon baiting American guards".

Do the swastikas on our aspen trees have any significance? Probably not. However, each time I file a tree farm recertification renewal, I place a check in the box entitled "Archeological" under the heading "Special Sites on the Property"—along with the notation "Swastikas on aspen trees carved by German POWs during WW II".

*(The Editor thanks Katherine Timm Schaubert, daughter of 360th veteran Harold "Red" Timm, for gaining permission for the Hell's Angels Newsletter to publish this unusual and fascinating monograph by Mr. Neidt).*

# The Perils of Flight in the Space Age



## SPIDER from page 5

proceeded to fly back to England, all alone. Lucky for me, there were no German fighters around or I would have been another notch on their guns.

After the first mission was under my belt I proceeded to fly regularly on missions to many targets in Germany. Even some in support of our troops in the Battle of the Bulge. Most of the missions logged around 3-4 hours but a couple were over five hours long; that's a long time to be cramped up in such small quarters.

On my 25th mission on 31 March, 1945, I was picked to lead a mission to Leipzig. At about 14,000 ft, climbing out over the English Channel, my engine quit. I tried everything I knew how to restart but to no avail. On my "MAYDAY" call, I was vectored into Belgium to try and land the aircraft. I jettisoned the drop tanks and set up the most efficient glide I knew how.

The radio man who was offering words of encouragement to me, told me that I didn't have far to go when there was a tremendous explosion and the cowl flew off and the airplane began to burn. Time to go, I thought. I told the guy on the radio that I was bailing out. He said, "Oh! don't do that, you only have a short way to go." When I told him I was burning he said, "You better bail out."

I was about 8,000 ft and I attempted to roll over and drop out. In my excitement, I forgot to wind in down trim to hold the nose up when I got inverted. As soon as I let go of the stick and released my seat belt, the airplane split-s'd into me and I was forced part way back into the cockpit. I then slowed the airplane down and attempted to dive for the trailing edge of the

left wing. My lengthy frame prevented me from clearing the cockpit and my foot caught in the canopy roller and I was suspended out the side of the aircraft with flames whipping past me.

I was able to get my other foot up to the windshield and I gave a mighty push and I was free. Not knowing how high I was, I immediately began to think about pulling the rip cord. My right hand wouldn't respond. I tried to get the rip cord with my left hand but couldn't do it. I grabbed my right wrist with my left hand and hooked my fingers. The chute opened and I swung outward once and hit the ground on the downswing. The wind dragged me across a field and into a fence which stopped my slide.

The next thing I was surrounded by wooden shoes, and being made comfortable by some wonderful Flemish people who couldn't understand my French or English. I was picked up by a Canadian ambulance and when I woke up in a hospital I found that I had a broken arm and severe contusions of the groin area.

When my jacket was returned, I discovered that the right arm was covered with red paint. The aircraft had a red spinner and red borders around the tail. I knew that I didn't go through the prop, so I must have hit the tail which explains why I couldn't pull the rip cord with my right hand.

Due to my injuries, I was sent home and was on the first ship to arrive in New York after the Germans surrendered. My first mission on B-17's with the 303rd was to Leipzig and my last mission on a P-51 was to Leipzig! I arrived back in the States in late May 1945 and had my 21st birthday on June 3.

Pretty good! Sixty combat missions before I was 21.



*For all the 303rd's "would be" pilots and rusty old "used to be" pilots*

# HOW TO LAND A PLANE

## (But only if you really have to)

**Say the pilot of the small jet or passenger plane you're riding in has fallen ill and no else is available.** Bummer. According to David Borgenicht, your proxy pilot and the coauthor of *The Worst Case Scenario Survival Handbook*, here's what to do:

**Hail the tower.** Assuming the plane is on auto-pilot, get the incapacitated pilot out of his seat, put on the radio headset, and immediately summon help. If no one answers on the current channel, try the emergency channel at frequency 121.5.

**Identify your equipment.** The yoke for steering (pull it to ascend, push it to descend, turn it left or right to bank); the altimeter, usually a red dial at mid-panel; the heading indicator, a compass with an image of the plane on it; the air speed indicator, at the panel's top left; the throttle, a black lever between the two seats; the fuel gauge, in most aircraft just above the throttle; and the landing gear lever, just to the right of the throttle.

**Slow down.** Once your radio helper clears you to reduce altitude, throttle back while watching your air speed indicator. Drop your speed by about a quarter. As you slow the plane's nose will drop. On descent, the nose should be about four inches below the horizon. "If it goes much deeper than that," says Borgenicht, "you're descending too fast."

**Deploy the landing gear.** "Now's as good a time as any."

**Find an open space.** If no airport is visible, look for a mile-long field, but any clear, flat area will do. It's an emergency!

**Line'er up.** Reduce your altitude to 900 feet. Steering with the yoke, fly past your land-

ing strip, keeping it two football fields or so to the right of you. When you're at a 45-degree angle to the far edge of the strip, make a U-turn.

**Set 'er down.** Ready for showtime? Gradually align the plane with the landing path. At the same time, reduce power by pulling back on the throttle, making sure that the nose of the plane doesn't drop more than six inches below the horizon. You want the craft to be 100 feet off the ground when you're just above the beginning of the strip. The plane will stall at around 55 to 65 miles per hour; you should be within that range when you touch down. Try to get the rear wheels to touch first by gently pulling back on the yoke. When you hit terra firma, pull the throttle all the way back and continue pulling on the yoke to level the plane.

**Halt!** Once on land, steer clear of obstacles with the floor pedals, not the yoke, and brake to a stop. The lower pedals control the steering, the upper pedals activate the brakes.

**Finally.** Buy yourself a six-pack. Await your call from the president.

*By The Editors of Men's Journal From Men's Journal, April 2000 © Men's Journal LLC All Rights Reserved. Reprinted by Permission.*



**SOMETHING WENT WRONG** with this 305th Bomb Group B-17 on 1 May 1944. Was it pilot error? Photo submitted from the photo collection of 303rd pilot Berton Bordelon.





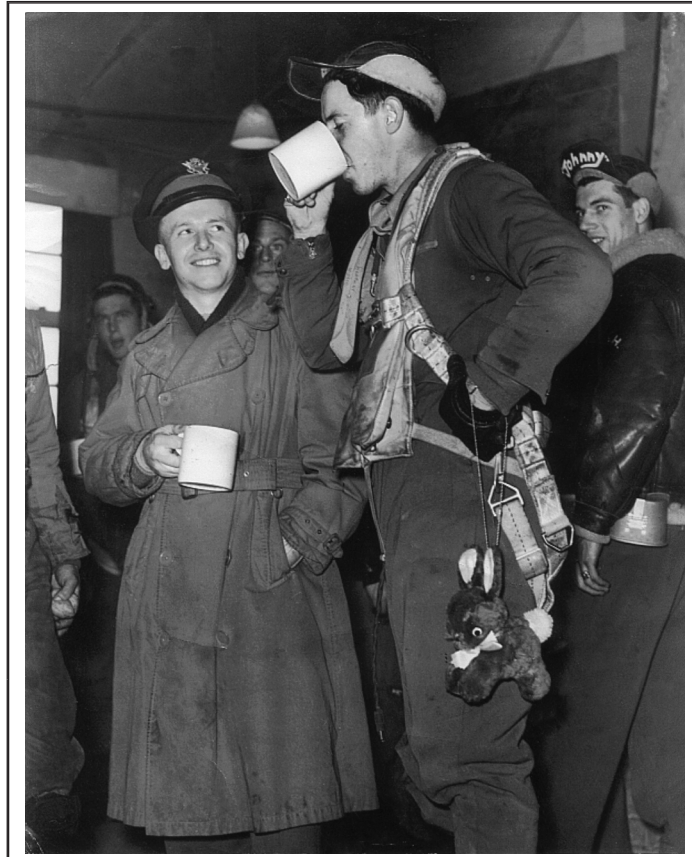
## 303rd Pin-ups

**UPPER RIGHT** — At interrogation after a mission, Major George T. Mackin of the 427th smiles at the man with the Lucky Bunny. Anyone recognize the coffee drinker? That's 427th waist gunner John L. Hunt behind him.

**UPPER LEFT** — A 360th conference "on the line" brings together (l-to-r) pilot Loyd Griffin, supply officer Louis Jurgensen, armorer John Hagar and armament officer Jack Lucey.

**LOWER LEFT** — The 359th's Fulton "Pop" Meyer, waist gunner on Bob Aker's crew, poses at the side of his favorite B-17. Was he "the old timer" on his crew?

**LOWER RIGHT** — William Fleming, waist gunner on the 427th's Alexander Strickland crew, works on his caliber .50 ammunition belt before take-off on one of the 303rd's earliest missions in the air war.





# Molesworth Diary

## 303RD "BEST BUNCH OF GUYS" HE EVER MET

I went through typical training for pilots, and finished that phase as Cadet Colonel at Marfa Army Air Force advanced flight school. My assignment was to B-17's, and, after training at Ardmore, Oklahoma, went on to Lincoln, Nebraska to pick up a B-17 and fly it overseas. We joined the 360th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group.

Our crew was lucky in that no one (except me) was wounded. The war was going fast and furious and we seldom stood down, starting with our first mission on October 18, 1944 to Cologne. After nine missions, the pace eased as we had a week of team training. From my 12th mission on, we flew as Squadron lead plane until we moved to lead the Group and ultimately the Wing.

I must say that my 303rd friends were perfect for the job at hand. I have great respect for all the good friends I made in combat. I have almost no remembrance of slackers in our Group. What a great, loyal and dedicated people they were. It was sometimes rough, but I wouldn't take anything for the memories of those associations and good times. Best bunch of guys from top to bottom I have ever met.

**Logan "Curly" Hatch**  
360th Squadron Pilot

## FINGERS FROZEN TO TRIGGERS IN BALL TURRET

An odd event happened on my first mission to Kiel, Germany on January 4, 1944. As we climbed to our assigned altitude, it started to get cold in the ball turret and I switched on my electrically heated suit. I knew right away I was in trouble because there was no heat coming into the suit. On the ground before take-off I had checked and it was working, but now the gauge read "zero."

We were nearing our target and I was freezing and shaking from the intense cold, and firing my twin .50 caliber machine guns at incoming German fighter planes while the outside temperature was fifty degrees below zero. After "bombs away" we started to descend to warmer temperatures. I immediately left the ball turret with the permission of Lt. Arondale, our pilot. However, my fingers on both hands from holding and pressing the gun handles and firing the guns were frozen and twisted to one side of my hands. My feet were also partially frozen.

As soon as we landed at Molesworth I was rushed to the base hospital and didn't fly for about five weeks. On the crew's next mission while I was recovering their B-17 was hit by flak and they all bailed out and became prisoners of war. When I was well enough to fly again, I became a "spare" gunner and flew with many crews to complete 35 missions. I also flew on the very first mission to Berlin as the crew togglier.

Funny thing about that heat suit. After leaving the hospital to return to combat duty, I checked it out

again and it was heating nicely. In fact, I completed all my missions in that very same suit.

During my tour with the 303rd, my family name was Czeczotka. After leaving the service, I had it changed legally to Cody.

**Theodore R. Cody**  
358th Squadron Ball Turret Gunner and Toggler

## BERLIN MISSION ENDS WITH CREW IN POLAND

Flying the beautiful *Miss Lace* to attack Berlin on March 18, 1945, we lost the prop control on the number one engine shortly after releasing the bombs. Under attack by ME-262's, we decided to make a run for Russian-held territory in Poland. Louis Christen, our navigator, gave us a heading to Warsaw and we landed on a small airstrip near the city.

A staff car drove up and out popped a Russian officer who turned out to be the commandant of the area. John Minoff, our ball turret operator, conveyed to him that we were friendly Americans. Next to the airfield were perhaps 25 or 30 homes and apartments occupied by Polish families. Paul Kindig, my co-pilot, and I were housed with a shoemaker, his wife, and two daughters.

We had meals at the Russian mess hall. They consisted of potatoes, black bread, carrots, and borscht. A party was held in our honor one night, and to the menu they added pigs' knuckles and vodka. Their vodka tasted very similar to sucking too long on a hose while siphoning gasoline. Those of us who drank were asked to toast Stalin and Roosevelt by each Russian across from us, and, being outnumbered, we proceeded to get staggering drunk.

The airfield was almost two miles from Warsaw proper. We hitched a ride on a horse drawn wagon. An estimated 95 percent of the city had been reduced to rubble. Shortly after we left the wagon, a Polish man approached and in broken English asked if we were Americans. He immediately became our tour guide and took us to where we could exchange English pounds for Polish zlotys. First stop was a shop to buy tobacco and papers to roll our own cigarettes.

Word finally reached our American base at Poltava, Russia, that our crew was in Warsaw. On the seventh day, a C-47 arrived. The pilot said he was going on to Lodz to pick up a fighter pilot, and would return the next morning to get us. He left us two cases of C rations and a case of cigarettes. This called for a farewell party!

In the city, we had seen a shop with a small supply of red meat. We bought the entire lot of perhaps five or six pounds, and, with the C rations, made up a grand meal for about 20 people in the immediate area that evening. All the smokers got packs of cigarettes, and one of the older men produced a bottle of Schnapps that had been carefully saved for a special occasion. A wind-up Victrola provided music for dancing, and at that time the

**(DIARY continued on page 16)**



## Molesworth Diary (Continued from 15)

war seemed to be far, far away.

The following morning, after a tearful goodbye with our hosts and new friends, we departed for Poltava. There, we were provided with showers and clean clothes for the first time in a week. Even the G.I. bunk was like heaven, after the wooden boards back in Warsaw.

**Robert Krohn**  
427th Squadron Pilot

### **8-BALL MK III NARROWLY AVERTS CRASH AT SEA**

We bombed a German airfield at Esbjerg, Denmark on 27 August 1944. The flak didn't seem intense, as I recall, but we got nailed and lost the number two and four engines.

Our pilot, Harry Jenkins, said we were dropping at the rate of 1,500 feet a minute, and it looked like we were headed for the drink. With the pilot's permission I got on the radio and sent out an S-O-S.

Jenkins, co-pilot San Blanchard and engineer Norton Gillespie finally got the plane stabilized and we made it back to base minus machine guns, ammunition and all non-essential equipment we had thrown overboard to prepare for ditching.

The ground crew counted more than 120 holes in the B-17, and one piece of flak had creased the gas line on the number three engine. If it had punctured the line, we probably would not have made it back.

At debriefing, we learned that British Air-Sea Rescue was impressed with the strength and clarity of my S-O-S signal. It was good to know that my training at Sioux Falls, Iowa and Pyote, Texas came through in an emergency.

**Wesley G. Loosemore**  
359th Squadron Radio Operator

### **SCHWEINFURT MISSION IN 1944 STILL DEADLY**

We never reached the ball-bearing works at Schweinfurt on 13 April 1944. We were hard hit and knocked out of formation by enemy fighters, and I gave the order to bail out. I was the last to leave, and for a few anxious moments thought, "Oh, my God, you fool, you waited too long and there's no time or height left for the chute to open." Happily, I was wrong and came down safely.

About five minutes later, I was captured by a German Home Guard. When I saw him approaching, my first thought was, "Wow. It's Daniel Boone with his old fashioned long rifle over his shoulder and hound dog lunging in front of him."

Luckily, my entire crew survived the bail-out. The plane crashed west of Bitburg, Germany. Nine of us on the crew were assembled and sent off to a prisoner of war camp. The tenth man, tail gunner William Ferrell, successfully evaded by hopping a coal train going to Belgium. He was from West Virginia, and knew coal trains!

**John B. Viets**  
358th Squadron Pilot

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are thankful for so many modern devices and technologies none of us even dreamed of during our time together at Molesworth in the 1940's. The computer and the Internet with its' communication capabilities are excellent examples of modern day electronic which allow many of us to keep in close contact with each other at a reasonable cost. All of the Executive Committee and more than half of the Board of Directors as well as most of our Committee Chairs have the ability to correspond with each other by e-mail. Who said, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks"? Using the Internet we have the ability to keep the business of our Association current as well as expedite plans and actions for the future. Hardly a day goes by that we do not correspond with each other. Thoughts and ideas can be scrutinized, action taken, delayed or disposed of within a matter of hours. How did we run this outfit before?

Plans for the reunion in Savannah are progressing even though we are working within the constraints of a previously signed contract with a "professional" reunion planning firm.

Since our meeting in Portland your officers have been busily engaged in many details of the operation of our organization. Fred Reichel has accepted the appointment as Chairman of the By-Laws Committee. Some changes to the By-Laws are being proposed including the area of finance to improve accountability and security of funds, officers, including the line of succession of officers, oversight responsibility of officers and committee appointments so all are made in the same manner. These will be presented to the Board of Directors and Members in Savannah. A meeting is being planned with officials of the Heritage Museum to discuss the Archives and Artifacts of our 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group. Arrangements have also been made to engrave the names selected the past two years on our Memorial Plaque.

Our financial picture is one your officers, especially Bill Cox, Treasurer, have devoted much time to. Except for new Family or Associate Members the income from membership dues is very small. We are getting few new members in these categories. Regular members, when reaching the age of 78, are no longer required to pay. For all practical purposes dues are no longer a major source of income. We receive a number of donations, which are very helpful, but there has not been a concerted effort to promote any type of a major fundraiser this year. The treasury was enhanced by profits from Harry Goebrecht's "Might In Flight" book, our two CD ROM's "Fly With Hell's Angels" and "The Molesworth Story" created by Ed Miller, Gary Moncur and others and the two volume issue of "The Silver Anniversary" printing of "Hell's Angels Newsletters" by Eddie Deerfield. At the present rate of normal expenditures our treasury will be depleted by 2006. Continuing as a viable association is a decision to be considered by everyone.

We look forward to seeing you in Savannah at the reunion in August.

**Al Dussliere**



# 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**

## PEABODY "HATE LETTER" ANGERS 303RD VETS

As I read the last newsletter and the "hate" letter, I was also indignant. As a 303rd'er from early Boise to the end, he also stepped on my toes. I read the November 2003 issue carefully, and for the life of me I can't see what caused that kind of thinking. As my memory is never far from Molesworth days, I find it very rewarding that our magazine has an editor who keeps his members up to date on the Association. An appreciation for this is in order as well as an appreciation to the editor for a brilliant job, well done.

**Jim Hicks**  
359th Squadron Crew Chief

The intent of this correspondence is to commend you for the superb job you are doing as editor of the 303rd bulletin. Other Group bulletins that I have seen lack the excellent graphic layout, the easy-on-the-eyes type fonts and the pictures which are always top notch. I would be remiss not to excoriate those who find fault. My personal observance is that you take great pride in what you do. Keep it steady.

**Henry M. Beben**  
360th Squadron Engineer

My letter is a result of the sick message from "Pea-brain"—oops, Peabody. What a jerk. I just got around to reading the issue thoroughly and I wish I could meet this guy face to face.

On another subject, I received a mailing from Alvin Morton and a copy of a speech he is making in lots of places, focusing on the 359th Squadron. He pays particular tribute to the *FDR*, the B-17my crew went over with. At that time it was *Idaho Potato Peeler*. On Roosevelt's birthday in 1943 we were asked to rename our B-17 *FDR*. We respectfully declined but finally

agreed to compromise and renamed it *FDR's Potato Peeler Kids*. The "Peeler" was in honor of Ross Bales, our pilot, who was from Caldwell, Idaho. The name was my idea.

I will never know why I was selected to replace Jack Mathis and return with the Stouse crew in May of 1943. My sons were named for Ross Bales, our navigator Richard Browning and Jack's brother Mark.

**Paul Thomas**  
359th Squadron Bombardier

As editor of Hell's Angels Newsletter—I think you do a great job and we are proud that you are editor. Keep up the good work. May our Lord bless you in your work.

**Ralph A. Roseland**  
358th Squadron Waist Gunner

## STARS & STRIPES HAPPY TO BE IN NEWSLETTER

I'm quite proud to be a contributor to the Hell's Angels Newsletter! It really is a great product and the idiot who took you to task was surely drunk, an idiot or both.

I'd be interested, by the way, in knowing if any of your veterans will be visiting Molesworth. It'd be a personal pleasure to meet them and a professional opportunity to write about them in the pages of *The Stars and Stripes*. Drop me a line.

Again, thanks for including me in the newsletter. It really is an honor.

**Ron Jensen**  
Europe Edition, Stars & Stripes

## ABOUT TRAINING FLIGHT THAT TORE TREE TOPS

I was on the orientation flight that new pilot Robert Stauffer wrote about in the February 2004 Molesworth Diary, the one that "sheared some six or eight feet off some tree tops." He was in the pilot's seat. Our pilot Clem W. Rogers was instructing as the co-pilot, Al Simon in

the nose as navigator, John F. Wysocki in the radio room and I flew up front as engineer. We were to check out this new crew.

As we were nearing completion, the new pilot asked about buzzing. Clem took over and dropped down to right over tree top level. It was dusk and before we knew it there were trees coming up in front. I quickly told Clem to give it full throttle and get the nose up. We managed to keep from crashing but we did take the tops out of about six trees. The 303rd was returning from a mission about the same time we came in for a landing. The tower saw our damage and a large tree limb through the ball turret. An ambulance came to the plane, along with a staff car for Clem.

We didn't see him again at Molesworth. John Wysocki and I returned to the States soon after that and happened to be in California at the same time. I called Clem's home in Long Beach, and he answered the phone. He asked us to visit him and he would fix steaks. He said he had been discharged.

**Bobbie Reese**  
359th Squadron Engineer

## BOB HAND'S PAINTING A PERFECT BIRTHDAY GIFT

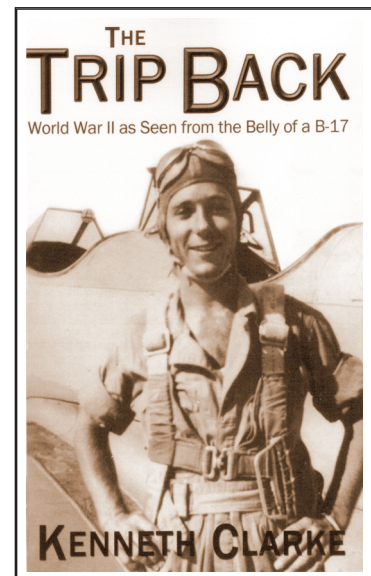
In June 2000 we were at RAF-Molesworth for the 303rd's reunion. Hanging in one of the buildings was "New Kids On The Block." My husband has been looking for a print of this painting since.

Imagine my surprise when I saw your February 2004 newsletter. There the painting was, on the back cover.

Can you tell me how I can go about obtaining a print of this painting by Robert A. Hand? It would make a perfect birthday gift for my husband.

**Sharon Agrifoglio**  
Reedley, CA

(Editor's Note—Done!)



## KEN CLARKE WRITES ABOUT "THE TRIP BACK"

For 40 years after service in the war as a 358th Squadron ball turret gunner, I tried to forget the stress and deaths, the noise and the cold, the early wake-up calls, the saunters from the living quarters to the mess hall in the eternal mud, the pulverization of B-17's off one's wing when the German Flieger Abwehr Kanone flak made direct and fatal strikes through the soft skin of the Boeing beauties—the death knell of a big-assed bird and 10 human beings, the mid-air crashes of planes of like kind trying to navigate and assemble through the English fog, smog and clouds—up and out until the battle was joined over the English Channel, North Sea or Zuider Zee, or over the reaches of Hitlerland.

Detaching one's oxygen mask in the confines of the ball turret at 24,000 feet to vomit in a bomb fuse can was a hair-raising experience. Will I be off oxygen too long? The eternal penetrating odor of aircraft fuel and oil. The pungent odor of cordite from spent 50-caliber bullets. Yes, these were all events understandably forgettable and,

(Continued on page 18)



## FORUM from 17

yet, I did not forget, but, simply moved them to the back reaches of my mind.

In my book I have provided detailed descriptions of each of my 32 missions, including maps and significant comments from the actual mission reports.

Any one interested in history, especially the history of the Second World War will want to read it. Order through our 303rd PX. No where else will you find these unique descriptions of the war as seen from the belly turret of a B-17.

**Kenneth Clarke**  
358th Sqdn Ball Turret Gunner

## WIDOW'S TRIBUTE TO 303rd B-17 MECHANIC

My dear husband, Charles F. Prosser has passed away. He was laid to rest with full military honors. He was 85.

In 1944 he enlisted in the

Army Air Corps and was a mechanic in the ground crew working on B-17's at the base at Molesworth.

He loved our country and was always proud to hang our flag. He loved going to reunions and enjoyed his Hell's Angels Newsletters.

Our family has many loving memories of him. I'm keeping all his things so that in time when his grandchildren are grown they can understand how proud he was of his country.

**Carolee Prosser**  
Hot Springs, MT

## CORRECTION — THAT'S MOLNAR, NOT MELNOR

In the Fyler crew photo caption in the February 2004 issue, my father's name is spelled as George Melnor. It should be George Molnar. Dad died in April 2002.

**Paula Molnar**  
Rohnert Park, CA.



**LAST MAN ALIVE?** For what it matters, I am to my knowledge the last member of the William P. Lay crew still alive. Could you publish the photo and ask if any crew member is still out there? **John T. Goslin, 358th Sqdn Bombardier**

(Back, l-to-r) Ray A. Miller, engineer; David A. Grenier, co-pilot; William P. Lay, pilot, and Vernon E. Gant, waist gunner. (Front, l-to-r) Donald T. Hasper, waist gunner; Henry Gillespie, tail gunner, and Edward P. Kedzierski, ball turret gunner.

Members of the Lay crew not pictured above are bombardier John T. Goslin, navigator Robert M. Lasker and radio operator Freddie E. Kane.

Killed in action were Grenier, Lay, Hasper, Gillespie, Kane and Lasker. Alive as the war ended were Goslin, Miller, Gant and Kedzierski. Miller passed away in 1999.



THE 303RD BOMB GROUP'S EXHIBIT CASE at The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum. Photo courtesy of Mary Jane Donohue, the museum's Director of Marketing.

## REUNION from page 1

and their families opportunity to honor the memories of comrades who didn't survive World War II or who have passed away since the war ended. Speakers will include Rae Susskind, wife of Emeritus Newsletter Editor navigator Hal Susskind; Angele Dubose, wife of former 303rd BGA president pilot Carl Dubose; Kristen Moncur, granddaughter of the late pilot Vern Moncur, and Vicki Sykes, grand niece of David Miller, killed in action while a 358th Squadron tail gunner. Other speakers will also be invited.

The benediction will be given by The Reverend H. Mack Driver, 360th Squadron bombardier. The invocation by Bishop Rene Gracida, 359th Squadron tail gunner. They will also conduct Sunday morning Protestant and Catholic services at the hotel.

A special event will be a private screening for 303rd BGA members of the classic World War II film *12 O'Clock High* starring Gregory Peck, arguably the best motion picture ever made of aerial combat in the skies over Europe. There's a special thrill in seeing the film in the company of fellow veterans. Every veteran will receive a gift VHS cassette of the movie, courtesy of Rupert Murdoch, Chairman and CEO of Fox Entertainment Group.

The always popular reunion Hospitality Center, this time in the hotel's Waterfront Room, will be managed by Harold "Red" Timm, 360th Squadron tail gunner. He'll be assisted by his son-in-law Dave Schaubert. Volunteer bartenders now signed up are Walt Ferrari, 427th pilot; Rufus Grisham, 358th pilot; Dick Bowler, 427th navigator; Ken Clarke, 358th ball turret gunner, and Bill Cox, 358th pilot. More bartenders are needed, each for just two hours of volunteer duty. No experience necessary. If you would like to help, call "Red" Timm at his Colorado home, telephone (970) 686-7238.

Optional events, variously priced, will include a 90-minute luncheon cruise on the Savannah River Queen, a city tour of 18th and 19th century buildings, streets and squares which make up the largest National Historic Landmark District in the United States, a visit and lunch at The Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum created as a living memorial to the men and women who served in the 8th Air Force, dinner at the oldest standing brick fort in Georgia and a bus tour of the "Low Country" with stops at several sites including Wormsloe Plantation established in 1737 by a British colonist.



## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Back in November 2003, I sent out a mailing to remind veterans, family and associate members of dues. These letters were only sent to members who's dues had been paid up through 2003 and all inactive and past due members.

By the time the information that was due from me for the February newsletter, very few replies had been received. But by the writing of this section for the newsletter, there has been a 34% reply rate with renewed membership, re-activation of membership and several notices of veterans that have turned 78 and are now life members.

You will also notice something new on this page, the section called "Found Comrades". I have added this area as a way to let everyone know that the search still goes on for the "Missing Comrades".

Dennis Smith  
Membership/Roster

## IN MEMORIAM

Everett J Anderson	359 <sup>th</sup>	9/13/03
John L Beringer Jr.	359 <sup>th</sup>	1/13/04
Milton Cantor	359 <sup>th</sup>	6/17/97
Guy W Collier	360 <sup>th</sup>	2/15/04
Eugene E Girman	359 <sup>th</sup>	3/3/04
Carl E Keipper	360 <sup>th</sup>	8/2/03
Val P Lowers	360 <sup>th</sup>	2/9/03
Alan E Magee	360 <sup>th</sup>	12/20/03
Albert E Martel Jr.	427 <sup>th</sup>	12/23/03
Charles F Prosser	360 <sup>th</sup>	1/16/04
Ralph R Relyea	427 <sup>th</sup>	11/19/03
Thomas H Struck	444 <sup>th</sup> A/D	12/3/03
Thomas L Weems	360 <sup>th</sup>	1/20/04
Lemuel R Williams	359 <sup>th</sup>	11/23/03
William E Wolff	359 <sup>th</sup>	11/14/03
Clyde R Younglove	360 <sup>th</sup>	9/1/01

## FOUND COMRADES

Raymond A Bachhuber, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. (359<sup>th</sup>), 1060 Pilgrim Way, Green Bay, WI 54304-5883, (920) 497-7252  
George E Stewart, (360<sup>th</sup>), 412 Oak Street, Windsor, CO 80550-5324, (970) 686-2696, POW in Stalag Luft 4 and 1

## NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Robert E Alaska, (427<sup>th</sup>), RR 6, Box 522, Clarksburg, WV 26301-9583, (304) 622-7781  
Lloyd L Alberne (359<sup>th</sup>), 900 Comet Avenue, Central Point, OR 97502-1829, (541) 664-1490  
Harmon E Amos, (358<sup>th</sup>), 204 Maple Drive, Pocola, OK 74902-3311, (918) 626-4965, spouse, Edith  
Donald T Clare, (427<sup>th</sup>), PO Box 278, Taylor, AZ 85939-0278, (928) 536-2403  
Robert W Cribley, (360<sup>th</sup>), 5341 Lake Jessamine Drive, Orlando, FL 32839-2833, (407) 855-3007, spouse Roselle B  
Oscar K Foran, (303<sup>rd</sup>), 3 Lancaster Drive, Bella Vista, AR 72715-5329, (479) 855-9602  
Peter Fuczka (360<sup>th</sup>), 9196 East Evans Drive, Scottsdale, AZ 85260-7586, (480) 614-1248  
James L Hollowell (358<sup>th</sup>), 209 North Seminary Street, Princeton, KY 42445-1427 (270) 365-4475  
Darwin D Hopkins, (359<sup>th</sup>)

Frederick J Illgen (303<sup>rd</sup>), 3015 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Oakland, CA 94605-1601, (510Z) 635-4868, spouse Edith  
Vernon L Kampa (358<sup>th</sup>), 7128 Ivy Ridge Lane, Lino Lakes, MN 55014-2703, (651) 780-0000, spouse Ardyth  
Florian T Kokoszka (360<sup>th</sup>), 31 Jack Rabbit Place, Littleton, CO 80126-2009, (303) 791-6258  
Brook H Lovell, (360<sup>th</sup>)  
Jack McGuffin Jr., (360<sup>th</sup>)  
Rudy T Rendon, (1199<sup>th</sup> MP Co.)

## NEW FAMILY MEMBERS

Harley D Brown, 2000 Panama St., Boise, ID 83705-5118, (208) 353-3045, spouse Jonita, uncle Fred Miller  
Andrew Cantor, 7 Bowmans Drive, New Hope, PA 18938-9269, (215) 862-3762, spouse Elyse, father Milton Cantor  
Gary W Frederick, 12900 Stanzel Dr., Austin, TX 78729-6454, (512) 258-7038, spouse Judy A, father-in-law Jack McGuffin Jr.

Edward H Kalkbrenner, 2749 Hillview Drive, Fairfield, CA 94534-1079, (707) 290-5711, father Carl B Kalkbrenner (444<sup>th</sup> Sub-Depot)

Jon A Kulesa, 8106 NE 141<sup>st</sup> Street, Bothell, WA 98011-5324, father Frank E Kulesa

Pamela Kulesa, 10353 Miller Ave., Cupeetino, CA 95014-7412, (408) 996-9333, father Frank E Kulesa

Kenneth E Mete, 2011 Stanford Drive SE, Kentwood, MI 49508-6536, (616) 455-1683, uncle Leonard U "Doc" Raterman

Vicki J Morgan, 3518 South 95<sup>th</sup> Street, Omaha, NE 68124-3726, (402) 393-8496, father Jack Timmins (360<sup>th</sup>)

Pat Saiz, 319 Meadow Mountain Dr., Waco, TX 76712-8165, (254) 666-9202, spouse Glenn Pack, father Reinaldo J Saiz (360<sup>th</sup>)

Kevin J Wilson, 8836 Grenore Drive, Dallas, TX 75218-3931, (214) 324-9122, spouse Cheryl, father Claud Wilson

## NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Alex Duncan, Moorend House, Sampford Peverell, Tiverton, Devon EX16 7EG, United Kingdom, spouse Lourdes T, 1884-820240

Dorothy Edwards, Flat 29, Oakwood, Amberley Close, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, RH16 4BZ, England

Stephen E McColaugh, 1406 Glenview Drive, Yellow Springs, OH 45387-1316, (937) 767-8922, spouse Kate Levesconte

## IN MEMORY OF DONATIONS

Rufus W Grisham (358<sup>th</sup>), in memory of S/Sgt. Edwin P & Jane Scheuermann (358<sup>th</sup>)

Carolyn A Guertin, Associate member in memory of her life partner and late husband, Donald J Guertin (34<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group)

Kenneth E Mete, in memory of his uncle Sgt. Leonard Urban "Doc" Raterman (359<sup>th</sup>)

Jean R Simpkins, family member in memory of her brother S/Sgt. Bernard J Radebaugh (358<sup>th</sup>)

## BENEFACTOR PROGRAM

Robert C Bejna, general donation

Ralph C Brehl Jr., general donation

Mrs. Clara C Butler (427<sup>th</sup> Widow), general donation

Dr. Carl J & Marguerite E Fyler (360<sup>th</sup>), general donation

W. Ralph George (358<sup>th</sup>), general donation

Darwin D Hopkins (359<sup>th</sup>), general donation

Rev. Robert L Johnson (360<sup>th</sup>), general donation

Brook H Lovell (360<sup>th</sup>), benefactor donation



### 303RD'S NEWSLETTER BOOKS PRESENTED TO USAF ROTC AT UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Colonel Mel Schulstad, credited with 44 combat missions as a pilot at Molesworth, was guest of honor at the annual "Dining In" of Detachment 910. In making the presentation, he extolled the 303rd's brilliant record of 364 bombing missions against the enemy, more than any other bomb group in the Eighth Air Force, and lamented the losses suffered by the "Hell's Angels."

Colonel Schulstad, a career USAF officer, is holding one volume of the two-volume set *Hell's Angels Newsletter Silver Anniversary Collection*. To his right is Cadet Colonel Wang. To his left is Colonel Robert Coe, Commandant of the University's USAF ROTC Cadet Corps.



## THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

Rupert Murdoch is Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of News Corporation, whose holdings in the U.S. include major daily newspapers, an American television network, DirectTV, local TV stations, cable channels and the Fox Entertainment Group. How did Mr. Murdoch and the 303rd Bomb Group Association come together?

First, some history. The U.S. Information Agency was our nation's strongest intellectual weapon during the Cold War, telling America's story to the world to counter Soviet Union communism. Its Directors over the years included such stalwarts as radio and television personality Edward R. Murrow, the Columbia Broadcasting System's Frank Shakespeare and the Agency's longest serving leader Charles Z. Wick, an influential figure in the motion picture industry.

I served in USIA overseas for 22 years at seven foreign posts. I had met Mr. Wick along the way, and when I retired in 1988 he honored me with a Career Achievement Award, noting in part in a covering letter, "Among your accomplishments was the Director's Award for Outstanding Creativity in a series of programs in Lagos, Nigeria and the report by an Inspection Team from Washington praising your improvements in post management and programming under extraordinarily difficult circumstances."

Fast forward to 2004. I needed to get permission from 20th Century Fox for a showing of "12 O'Clock High" to our veterans and their family members attending the reunion in Savannah. It's Fox's most famous film about aerial combat in the European Theater of Operations. I didn't know where to start in securing copyright clearance, so I wrote to Charles Wick. He's 86, but hasn't slowed down. I asked him for a contact name and address.

He called me at home and said 20th Century Fox was now part of the Fox Entertainment Group of News Corporation. He said he would forward my letter to the office of Rupert Murdoch.

About two weeks later I received by fax from Mr. Wick's office a copy of a letter he had just received from Rupert Murdoch. It read, "I am happy to agree to the screening of "12 O'Clock High" during the 303rd Bomb Group Association's reunion. I understand it is a one-time showing for an estimated 200 veterans and their families and no charge will be made for admission. I hope they have a great reunion and send them my good wishes."

Within a few days, UPS delivered to me 260 VHS videotapes of "12 O'Clock High," a gift from Mr. Murdoch for our veterans. We're grateful also to Charles Z. Wick. The gifts will be distributed at the film's showing on August 27 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Savannah.

**Eddie Deerfield**

303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.  
Hell's Angels Newsletter  
Eddie Deerfield, Editor  
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