

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

August, 2004



WORLD WAR II B-17 FLYING FORTRESSES ON THE SILVER SCREEN AND STEARMAN PRIMARY TRAINERS IN THE AIR—

On the evening of Friday 27 August, at a private showing of "12 O'Clock High," every 303rd veteran will receive a free gift of the VHS cassette, courtesy of Rupert Murdoch, Chairman of the Fox Entertainment Group. During the day on Saturday 28 August, when reunion guests visit The Mighty 8th AF Heritage Museum, a flight of four Stearman aircraft used as primary trainers for pilots during WW II will fly in formation over the museum, weather permitting. The Stearman pictured above is owned by David Bruce. He organized the fly-over at the request of 303rd President Al Dussliere.

ASSOCIATION BOARD AT REUNION FACING CRUCIAL DECISION ON 303RD'S ARCHIVES

During the annual meeting of the 303rd Bomb Group Association's Directors at the 2004 reunion in Savannah, Board members will be faced with a crucial decision—when to give up the 303rd archives and artifacts collected over the years following the end of World War II and to whom should they go after the "when" is decided.

Many bomb groups haven't made that determination yet. For the 303rd, it became urgent with the resignation of former group historian Harry Gobrecht, who still serves as caretaker for the archives on behalf of the membership. He asked that the collection, which now fills numerous filing cabinets, be removed from

his residence.

In pressing for this action, Gobrecht, who is a member of the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum's Board of Directors, urged that the 303rd's archives and artifacts be turned over immediately to the museum. He first proposed that the 303rd commit \$25,000 to \$50,000 from the Association's treasury to ship the collection and to purchase a variety of audio-visual equipment for the museum.

He later modified this proposal, and requested \$2,500 for shipping costs and \$15,000 for the museum.

The 303rd's Board of Directors, at its meeting in Portland, Oregon last year, decided to delay action on

Gobrecht's request pending further study.

In Savannah, the Executive Committee of the 303rd's Board will meet with Heritage Museum President and CEO C. J. Roberts and Director of Research Michael Telzrow to learn their views on both the timing and possible transfer of the 303rd's collection, and the impact, if any, on the Association's treasury.

The Committee will then report its findings to the full Board.

If the Board decides against relinquishing the 303rd's archives at this time, the former historian would be asked to continue holding them or to pass them to

(Continued on page 12)

IN THIS ISSUE

Decisions pending at 303rd's 2004 reunion in Savannah—pages 1, 12

Hell's Angels attend WW II Memorial dedication in Washington—pages 3, 4, 5

303rd's Bill Cox is real live nephew of nation's Uncle Sam—pages 6, 7

303rd widow tells story of "Charles and His War"—pages 8, 9

How aerial gunners on the ground and in the air trained for combat—pages 10, 11

Mobile Repair Unit worked on 303rd's remote B-17's in distress—page 13

Death of Memphis Belle pilot revives "first 25" controversy—page 20



303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Hell's Angels Newsletter

Editor—Eddie Deerfield

VOL XXVII, No. 3 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684 August, 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 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 to the extent allowed by law. 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 and others related to regular members may become Family Members. Others 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 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 2004 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

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

Vice President - Administration

Richard Bowler, Jr. (Catherine)
P. O. Box 3126
Burlington, VT 05401-3126
TEL: (802) 863-2784
EM: dickbowler@aol.com

Vice President - Reunions

Position vacant.
2004 Savannah Reunion Chairman —
Eddie Deerfield. Also on Reunion
Committee—Walt Ferrari, Dick Bowler

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

Kenneth Clarke (Barbara)
3504 Plumb Street
Houston, TX 77005-2928
TEL: (713) 668-7404
EM: Zandzpapa@aol.com

Treasurer

William H. Cox (Jean)
441 Sandstone Drive
Vacaville, CA 95688
TEL: (707) 448-0571
EM: Pilotrb36@aol.com

Past Presidents Chairman

Walter J. Ferrari (Ruth)
5361 Belle Mead Drive
Aiken, SC 29803
TEL: (803) 648-5598
EM: Ferrariw@bellsouth.net

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

John W. Ford
4248 W. Colby
Springfield, MO 65802-5612
TEL: (417) 831-3919
EM: warrenburke@worldnet.att.net

358th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Rufus W. Grisham, Jr. (Nancy)
4417 89th Street
Lubbock, TX 79424-5108
TEL: (806) 794-7003
EM: RGrish20@aol.com
359th Bomb Sqd. Alternate
Donald W. Stoullil
4200 Islemount Place
Robbinsdale, MN 55422-1577
TEL: (612) 537-0211

ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Continued)

360th Bomb Sqd. Representative

Richard (Spider) Smith
790 Crenshaw Drive
Hemet, CA 92543-8044
TEL: (909) 652-4793
EM: spider@netzon.net

360th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Alternate position vacant.
Eddie Deerfield appointed as
Assistant to Representative.

427th Bomb Sqd. Representative

Edward W. Gardner, Jr (Susan)
5764 Lakeview Drive, Box 246
Interlochen, MI 49643-0246
TEL: (231) 276-7126
EM: EWG303nav@aol.com

427th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Fred E. Reichel
553 Mallard Street
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-3431
TEL: (248) 852-2021

HQ, 444th Air Depot Representative

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

HQ, 444th Air Depot Alternate

Maurice J. Paulk (Opel)
205 West 12th Street
Wood River, NE 68883-9164
TEL: (308) 583-2583

Widow Member's Representative

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

Family & Associate Member Rep

Lance Stoner (Trish)
809 E. 31st Street
Pittsburg, KS 66762
TEL: (620) 230-0847

APPOINTED COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Membership & Roster

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

Group Advisor

Lewis E. "Lew" Lyle (Betty)
205 St. Charles Circle
Hot Springs, AR 71901
TEL: (501) 321-1956

PX Administrator

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

By-Laws Committee

Fred E. Reichel
(See listing as 427th Squadron
Alternate)

Historian & 8thAF Museum Liaison

Harold A. Susskind (Rae)
2602 Deerfoot Trail
Austin, TX 78704-2716
TEL: (512) 441-6475
EM: hasusskind@hotmail.com

Director of Internet Operations

Gary Moncur (Susan)
4483 Palmer Drive
West Valley City, UT 84120-5052
TEL: (801) 969-7639
EM: glm@303rdBGA.com

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
(See listing as Treasurer)

United Kingdom Representatives

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

Rev. Everett A. Dasher (Helen), 488 Barnes Moody Dr, 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

CHAPLAIN — CATHOLIC

Bishop Rene H. Gracida, P. O. Box 217, Tynan, TX 78391-0217



World War II Memorial as seen from the Washington Monument

303rd Veterans Join Thousands For Dedication Of World War II Memorial In Washington, D.C.

Richard R. Johnson, 427th Squadron pilot, and his wife, Marjorie, attended the reunion of the 8th AF Historical Society at the Radisson Hotel in Alexandria, Virginia last May. The timing for the gathering was to enable members to be present as a group for the dedication of the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. Following is Dick's account of that experience:

"At 0900 on Saturday morning, May 29, we boarded four busses at the hotel and drove to RFK Stadium where we got off those busses and boarded busses which had been screeners for the trip to the Mall. At the Mall there were metal screeners as far as the eye could see, with three or four police at each one. All packages were inspected and we had to walk through the detectors. Some were screened additionally with the wand just like at airports.

"When we arrived at 1030 we took seats in the VIP section about a hundred feet from the podium. We were entertained by many singers and bands until the dedication ceremony started. It was easy to identify the big-wigs from our vantage point. At one point, President Clinton and Bob Dole jumped up to assist a Medal of Honor recipient who fell out of his wheelchair on stage. A medic checked him over and he was OK.

"Various companies donated over a half million bottles of water which were given free to all attendees. The weather was cool for the first time in over a week, but the sun was bearing down and the water was welcome.

"At the start of the ceremony the Postmaster General gave a speech and unveiled a new stamp honoring the memorial. Bob Dole got a standing ovation for his effort to make the

Memorial a reality. Tom Hanks got a standing ovation for a very good speech as did Tom Brokaw who expanded on his 'Greatest Generation' theme.

"Shortly thereafter the band started playing 'Ruffles and Flourishes' and everyone jumped to their feet to welcome our president. After the applause died down President Bush gave an impassioned speech, praising all the military and civilian people of the war era.

"At the end of the speech all the folks in attendance started for the busses. It took us two hours to get onto an empty bus which took us back to RFK stadium where we boarded our un-secured buses for the ride to the hotel. Our banquet was delayed from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM. This was the only glitch in an otherwise perfect event.

"I'm glad we went to this historic affair."

Following are excerpts of remarks at the dedication which, by police estimates, attracted a crowd of 140,000:

SENATOR DOLE: "We have kept faith with our comrades from a distant youth. What we dedicate today is not a memorial to war. Rather, it is a tribute to the physical and moral courage that makes heroes out of farm and city boys, that inspires Americans to lay down their lives for people they'll never meet. This is our final reunion."

PRESIDENT BUSH: "These were the modest sons of a peaceful country. They gave the best years of their lives to the greatest mission their country ever accepted."

(PHOTOS ON PAGES 4 and 5)



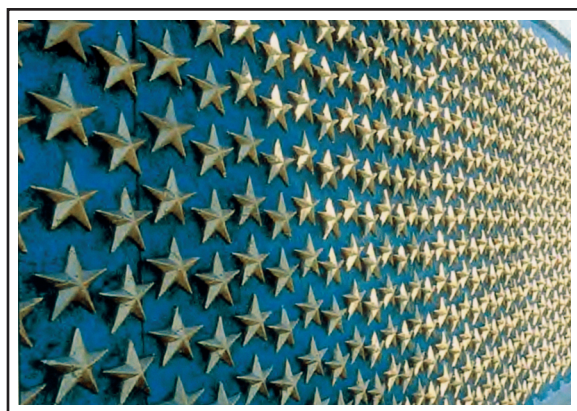
THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL SHIELD is engraved on stone at the ceremonial entrance to the Memorial. The photos on these pages were taken by Richard Latoff.



FOUR AMERICAN EAGLES hold a suspended laurel wreath in the Baldacchino sculpture. This view is from beneath the sculpture.



THE ATLANTIC PAVILION, with each pillar representing a state or territory and the District of Columbia during World War II. There are 56 granite pillars in the Atlantic and Pacific Pavilions.



THE FREEDOM WALL glitters with 4,000 gold stars, each star commemorating one hundred of the 400,000 Americans in the Armed Services who perished during World War II. There were sixteen million men and women in service.



SECURITY WAS TIGHT UNDER THREAT OF A TERRORIST ATTACK — All attending the dedication of the World War II Memorial were required to pass through gates where they and their belongings were screened, much in the manner of airport security checks.



PHOTOGRAPHERS AND CAMERAMEN had a field day as President George W. Bush and other speakers addressed the crowd estimated at 140,000.



358TH SQUADRON PILOT GEORGE McCUTCHEON of Gaylord, Michigan attended, proudly wearing his 303rd Bomb Group tee shirt and hat.



SITTING IN THE MCI SECTION, Donald "Spec" Campen, Jr., 427th Squadron toggler of Richmond, Virginia sat with his friend J. Edward Thornton, US Army veteran.



MARJORIE JOHNSON FACES THE CAMERA while her husband, Dick Johnson, 427th Squadron pilot, takes the picture. They sat in the 8th AF Historical Society section.

Nation to Celebrate PATRIOT'S DAY on September 11

303rd Vet is "Real Live Nephew" of the Original "Uncle Sam"

By Colonel William H. Cox, USAF (Ret)

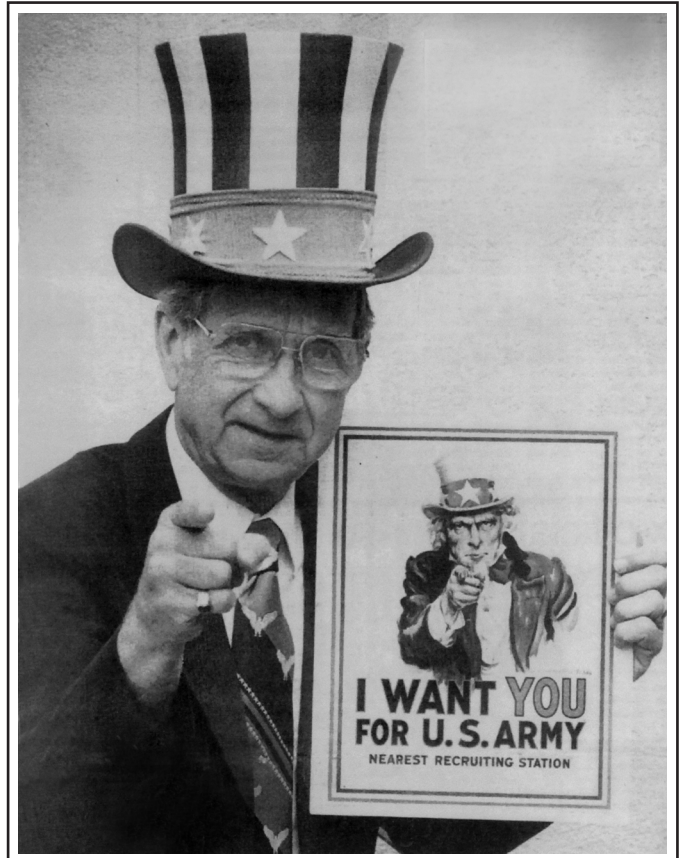
In the 1960's while discussing our ancestors with my cousin, I discovered he had completed a considerable amount of research of our family's genealogy. To my surprise the research revealed I was a real live nephew of "Uncle Sam." The lineage of our family tree can be traced back to the small town of Mason, New Hampshire, where Edward and Lucy Frances Wilson lived during the early 18th century. Records revealed they had 13 children, not uncommon at that time. Edward and Lucy had moved there from Old Menotomy (now Arlington), Massachusetts, according to the records found in the family bible. In this family of 13 children, the seventh and eighth were boys; Samuel (born Sept. 13, 1766) and Nathaniel (born Feb. 10, 1768) The relationship of these two young men is the point of my story, with Samuel being the central character.

I found in the "tree" that my namesake and grandfather, William Henry Cox, had married Sarah Elizabeth Wilson. Sarah was the fourth child born from the marriage of Edward Saxon Wilson, who was the grandson of Edward and Lucy Frances Wilson of Mason, New Hampshire and the son of Nathaniel Wilson. My Grandmother, proud of her maiden name passed it down to my father Orin Wilson Cox. Following the lineage back, you will find that Nathaniel Wilson is my great, great Grandfather, while his older brother Samuel, is my great, great, great Uncle Sam. "Uncle Sam" as the world knows him, is not just a fictional invention of some author or artist, but was an actual person.

While it may be true that July 4th was the birth date of George M. Cohan, as he states in his song, it isn't my Uncle Sam's. His was September 13 and the people of the small upstate New York town of Troy celebrate the anniversary of his birth on that date each year with a parade. The parade winds through the center of the city and proceeds to the Oakwood Cemetery where he is buried. At his gravesite, tribute is paid to "Uncle Sam" by the leading dignitaries. A flag is flown at the site and is raised and lowered every day by dedicated people of the city. The city of Troy, N.Y. also has a sign as you enter, welcoming you to the "Home of "Uncle Sam."

Who was Samuel Wilson? How did he become our "Uncle Sam"? As a lad Samuel saw Paul Revere go past his window in 1775, warning Minutemen that the British were coming. During the Revolutionary War, Samuel served as a service boy, where his duties were to tend livestock and repair fences that confined the animals and as a messenger for the embattled colonials. Later, he and his brother Ebenezer were taught the trade of brick making by the village brick maker in Menotomy. However, there wasn't enough business to support three men, so there was good reason to move on to the West. In February 1785 after having heard of the thriving community of Troy, New York from friends and tales of passing travelers, the two Wilson brothers, Samuel and Ebenezer, being just over legal voting age, moved to Troy. (An earlier name of the settlement was Van der Heydon's Ferry.)

In Troy, Samuel prospered in the brick making business, so he acquired property, which he used as grazing land. Today it is the city's Prospect Park. Samuel and Ebenezer provided



358TH SQUADRON PILOT BILL COX bears a resemblance to artist's rendering of his uncle of many generations ago, the original Uncle Sam. (Vacaville Reporter photo, 1989)

bricks for the town's first courthouse and jail, as well as for the construction of the First Baptist Church.

Soon after settling in Troy, Samuel returned to his former home to marry Betsy Mann, daughter of Captain Thomas Mann, Esquire, on January 3, 1787. He was 21; Betsy was 24.

As a man in his 30's Samuel and his brother began a meat packing business which operated under the name of E & S Wilson. By the time the War of 1812 began, Samuel Wilson found himself one of Troy's best liked and well known citizens. As an early settler of the town, he had established a place for himself in this thriving community, wielding a wide influence over local business and commerce. He also had a kind and benevolent disposition which won him the esteem and affection of the townsmen. As a result, he was early given the affectionate nickname of "Uncle Sam".

In a similar manner his wife received the name of "Aunt Betsy." She, being the daughter of a distinguished father, undoubtedly led her husband not only to a distinguished career,



THE TOWNS OF TROY, NEW YORK AND ARLINGTON, MASSACHUSETTS HONOR THE MEMORY OF AN ILLUSTRIOUS PATRIOT— In a small park near the house where Samuel Wilson was born, Arlington erected a larger-than-life statue of the man who became the legendary "Uncle Sam." He was born in 1766 and died in 1854. His grave site is in Troy.

but to national distinction as well.

With the outbreak of the War of 1812, the brothers landed a lucrative government contract to provide meat for the troops in New York and New Jersey. The contract was from Elbert Anderson, Jr., an Army Contractor. The meat, both pork and beef, was to be packed in full-bound barrels of white oak. The barrels were marked E A- U.S. The E A for Edward Anderson, the contractor, and U.S. for the United States. When New York's Gov. Daniel Tompkins visited the troops at Troy, he asked soldiers what the initials meant. "The EA is for Elbert Anderson," one soldier replied, and being a local boy who had known and liked Sam Wilson for years, told the governor that the letters stood for Uncle Sam Wilson, who was supplying their meat.

The interpretation spread quickly to other troops in the area. From this, the soldiers began referring to all government property as belonging to "Uncle Sam". Soon all this publicity attracted national attention. References to the nickname of "Uncle Sam" could be found in American newspapers as early as 1813.

Sometime about 1830, a fourth of July celebration took place in Woburn, Massachusetts. A tall man with chin-whiskers was seen dressed in red and white striped trousers, blue vest with white stars, a red and white striped coat and a tall hat. Not only was this individual widely pictured in the periodicals published that year, but from that time on local and national newspapers always showed "Uncle Sam" wearing those patriotic colors. The first "Uncle Sam" cartoon said to catch the public's attention appeared in a New York Comic weekly called *The Lantern*, on March 13, 1852, drawn by F. Bellew, entitled "Raising the Wind." This drawing depicts the struggle between American and British ship owners, representing them as boys blowing tiny vessels across a tub of water. "John Bull" helps his protege, while "Uncle Sam" looks on with amused interest. In this cartoon "Uncle Sam" was smooth-shaven, but wore striped trousers and



a top hat. Not until Thomas Nast, the famous cartoonist, adopted the representation in the 1860's and 70's, did the figure of "Uncle Sam" gain permanent wide popularity, although Nast used the starry vest and pointed beard which "Uncle Sam" wore in the Woburn celebration of the 1830 time period. That was the inception of "Uncle Sam's" regalia, a source that had previously escaped the attention of American historians.

The first American caricature of "Uncle Sam" wearing chin-whiskers appeared in *Harper's Weekly* under the date of February 6, 1869. This figure, without whiskers had been used by cartoonists for several years previously and had ultimately evolved from Civil War caricatures. Samuel Wilson of Troy saw himself caricatured in the press as "Uncle Sam", a symbol of the United States of America, a quarter of a century before his death and with a title, which he is said to have enjoyed immensely. Actually, though, Mr. Wilson was a large, barrel-chested, broad-shouldered man who was clean shaven.

Because the creation of "Uncle Sam" was claimed by many would-be originators all over the country, an Act of Congress on August 14, 1961, declared in part that: "Whereas the years of 1766 to 1854, the years in which Samuel Wilson lived, witnessed the birth and glorious progress of the United States; and whereas no Congressional action has ever been taken to make the symbol of that American tradition, the symbol of "Uncle Sam" official and permanent: Therefore, be it resolved - "That the Congress salutes "Uncle Sam" Wilson of Troy, N.Y. as the progenitor of American's national symbol of "Uncle Sam".

In 1988, President Reagan signed a Bill designating September 13, 1989, Wilson's 223rd birthday, as an official "Uncle Sam" Day throughout the United States. In addition to the grave-site of "Uncle Sam" Wilson in Troy, New York, the city of Arlington, Massachusetts has placed a larger-than-life statue of Samuel Wilson in a small park near the center of town. The park just happens to be near the house where Wilson was born.



TAIL GUNNER CHARLES DUGAN AND HIS 427TH SQUADRON CREW were shot down on the January 11, 1944 mission to Oschersleben. In the above photo, Dugan was freed after 16 months as a POW. **HE AND HIS WIFE, JEAN**, in the photo on the right, celebrated his retirement from the USAF in 1974 in the rank of Chief Master Sergeant.



A 303rd Bomb Group Widow Tells The Story Of

CHARLES AND HIS WAR

By Jean Early Dugan

Charles Edward Dugan was a junior in high school in December of 1941 when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. He wanted to join the military service immediately. His mother, Margaret, said, "No!"

There had just been a death in their family. Charles had lost his father in November from kidney failure. Margaret did not want another death in the family. To her, war meant death.

Finally, after much persuasion, she did give in and signed papers for Charles to go into pilot training. He was very happy about this. He could now enlist.

Enlistment meant all kinds of physical tests. Charles passed them with flying colors except the eye test. His right eye came up 20/25. He took the eye test again. It came up the same. He tried again and again. It always came up 20/25.

Finally, the recruiting officer said, "You would make a dandy tail gunner." Charles said, "My mother would never sign the papers for that." The recruiter's answer was, "She already has!" Charles asked, "Do you mean the papers she signed for pilot training are good for this, too?" The recruiter said "Yes," and that was all Charles needed.

On October 28, 1942 he was sworn into the Army Air Corps and became Private Charles Dugan. Soon he was off to basic training in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Then, short stays in Baltimore, Maryland and Denver, Colorado, and on to gunnery school in Harlingen, Texas.

After gunnery school, Charles was promoted to Staff Sergeant and shipped off to Wenatchee, Washington to join pilot George McClellan's crew as a tail gunner. They were given a new B-17. They flew and practiced, flew and practiced, flew and practiced. They practiced navigation. They practiced gunnery. They practiced everything so each one would know his job. They were practicing all the time.

When they were combat ready, they flew to Scott Field, Illinois, across the river from St. Louis, Missouri. From there in June of 1943 they took off for Prestwick, Scotland. The B-17 was taken away from the crew at Prestwick and put immediately into combat. This was customary procedure.

Charles and his crew went on to England by train, where their destination was Molesworth. When they arrived in England it was green everywhere Charles looked, a really different climate from what he was used to in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

At Molesworth, they were assigned to the 427th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group, nick-named "Hell's Angels."

After settling in they were given another B-17. The plane was named *Bad Check*. It was paid for with donations from inmates at San Quentin. They named the plane *Bad Check* because a bad check always comes back. They wanted this to work for their plane.

When the men had free time, they enjoyed going into town to meet the English girls and to go to the "pubs". They lived it up when they could.

Charles became buddies with Dave Tempesta, the crew's flight engineer. Dave's home town was only about

twenty miles from Pittsburgh. Charles and Dave had lots of good times together, double dating with the English girls, going on picnics and to the pubs.

The crew was awakened at 4 A.M. on August 12, 1943 for their first combat mission. The target was Gelsenkirchen, Germany. They had their breakfast, then a briefing on the mission, and then climbed aboard their B-17 and away they flew.

On Charles' fifth mission, he shot down his first German fighter. He received a medal for it. They all received medals for every fifth mission. Charles' sixth mission was special. It was to Anklam, Germany, and earned a special citation from Winston Churchill. The crew had several missions to Gelsenkirchen, Bremen and others.

Bad Check took a direct hit on their fifteenth mission, January 11, 1944, to Oschersleben. They were hit hard by German fighter planes. The pilot said, "Prepare to bail out." The waist gunner, Bernell Heaton, was the first to jump. Charles didn't hear the pilot say "bail out," but he knew they had been hit, so when he saw the waist gunner bail out he knew it was time to go. He had to kick the escape hatch door off, and then out he went.

When Charles pulled the rip cord, his parachute opened with a violent jerk. He said it felt like someone had kicked him in the groin. As he looked down he thought all eyes in Germany were on him and was sure he would be shot before he hit the ground. He was lucky and landed okay. German farmers were the first to get to him. They seemed to be friendly. The only word Charles could think of was "beer" so this is what he said. The German farmers took him to a Gasthouse (a beer bar) and bought Charles a beer. This is where he was when the German soldiers came.

The Nazi soldiers took him by horse and buggy to an air field. There they met his waist gunner, Bernell Heaton. They didn't know where the rest of the crew were. The next day Charles and Bernell went by train to Oldenburg, where the wounded were being treated. Charles' testicles were terribly swollen from the ride down in the parachute. He said they felt like watermelons. Instead of being treated he had to help carry the men with more severe wounds into the hospital. He could barely walk. He was never treated.

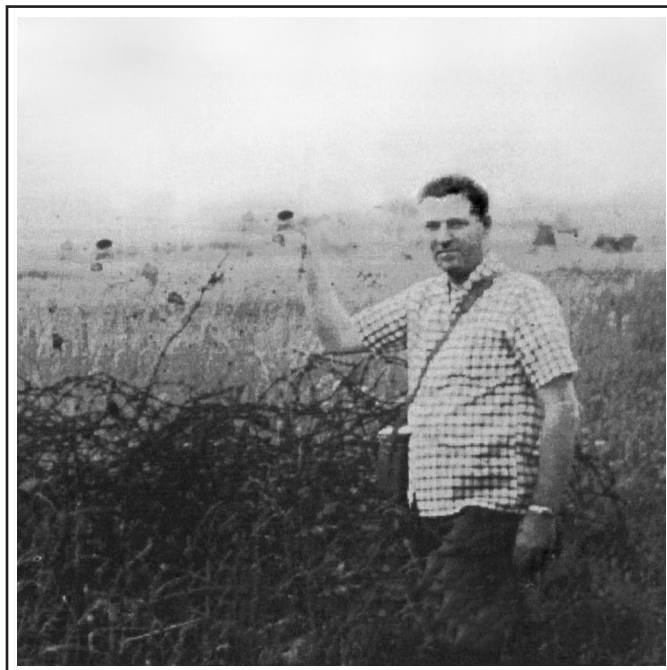
Their next move was on to Frankfurt where they were put into solitary confinement for a week before they were interrogated. This was normal procedure for all the captured men. It was there that Charles found out his pilot, co-pilot and his best friend, Dave Tempesta, had been killed when the plane was shot down. Now came the final ride to the prisoner of war camp. Instead of a camp in Germany, the train took them to Krems, Austria and to the infamous Stalag 17-B. From the train they walked up a steep hill to the camp.

Charles was put in a cubicle in Barracks 18A. The cubicle had double bunks, with two on the bottom, two in the middle and two on the top. There were twelve men in a cubicle. Each bunk was made of all wood with burlap bags filled with two inches of straw to sleep on. Each man was given one blanket if he was lucky.

They slept in their clothes with their overcoats on. Winters are very cold and long in Europe; summers are mild, never hot but short. The men played cards (usually bridge). For exercise they ran around the compound or played softball.

They sometimes received packages from home and the Red Cross. They were usually very happy when a package arrived, but one day the Red Cross sent in a truck load of golf clubs. Charles said maybe they thought the clubs were going to a country club.

Most of the prisoners made cups for themselves from large milk cans. They even put handles on their cups. I don't know what they used for solder to make the handle stay on,



FORMER POW CHARLES DUGAN returned to the site of Stalag 17-B in 1956, on a journey early in his US Air Force career. All the buildings were gone. He found only barbed wire and foundations of the old barracks.

but they did. They would use the cups to heat their soup or anything else. Charles told me about trying to make a cake out of something and using aspirin as baking soda.

The food they received was very little. The usual breakfast was only a cup of very weak luke warm tea. For lunch, it was 2/3 of a cup of soup. For supper they got 1/10 of a loaf of bread. They did get a lot of turnips when those were in season. Charles said he never wanted to eat another turnip as long as he lived.

When the war was just about over they were forced to walk for days and days getting back to Germany from Austria. One day they passed a group of Russians going the other way. A Russian prisoner made a motion for an American soldier to give him a cigarette. The American obliged. The Russian soldier was shot dead on the spot by the German guards. Needless to say the Americans ignored the Russians after that.

They had almost no food. Charles was so hungry. He had a chance one day to steal a chicken which he did. This was one of the times they stopped to sleep overnight near a farm. Somehow they got a pot and boiled the chicken. He and the others could have been shot if they had been caught.

When the war was over, Charles was very thin and weighed only about 105 pounds.

After going through the ordeal of sixteen months in a prison camp, and the long, long walk, he was sent back to the States by ship. He was sea sick all the way. Every time the ship would roll, Charles would say "Sink, damn you, sink!"

One of the first things he did after getting back to the States and seeing his family was to go to see his waist gunner, Bernell Heaton, who was dating one of my best girl friends, Jerry McCracken, at the time. Jerry and Bernell wanted me to meet Charles when he got to town.

A year and two months later, Charles and I began a beautiful, forty-five year marriage that ended in November of 1991 when my Charles was stricken with lung cancer and passed away.

Aerial Gunners - **FORMIDABLE IS THE WORD**

*A*fter six weeks of ground to ground and air to air firing — from the turrets of an actual bomber — the

enlisted gunner becomes the deadliest individual in the history of aerial warfare. Every day newspaper headlines tell of tremendous enemy aerial losses at slight cost. These headlines stem from the hot slugs blasted out by the embryo gunner on the practice ranges of the Training Command's gunnery schools.



Air to air firing.

SOURCE — THE US ARMY AIR CORPS TRAINING COMMAND, 1944

As the war progresses on many fronts, it becomes increasingly apparent that America's paramount contribution is the four-motored heavy bombardment airplane.

This sturdy craft is long ranging, heavily armored, and bristles from nose to tail with machine guns.

Four of the ten crew members are designated as air crewmen (pilot, co-pilot, navigator and bombardier) and the remaining six are combat crewmen. The last eight are qualified as gunners. It is the performance record of these gunners, trained in the Command's six flexible gunnery schools, which brings the big Fords back.

Because these men would be too often just passengers if their only function were to preside at their guns, they are also required to be technical specialists—mechanics, radio operators or armorers.

The gunner's role in aerial combat was described in a speech by General H. H. Arnold:

"It is the gunner who may double in brass as an engineer or radio man, who dishes it out—dishes it out in a manner designed to keep the other fellow at a respectful distance. They are all members of a team. For a time, only the pilots wore wings. Then wings were authorized for bombardiers and navigators. Now wings are authorized for the other men of that combat team. The gunner always has been appreciated by the Army Air Forces as such; now we are giving the man himself something to wear that will identify him as gunner—a man to be honored and respected by all."

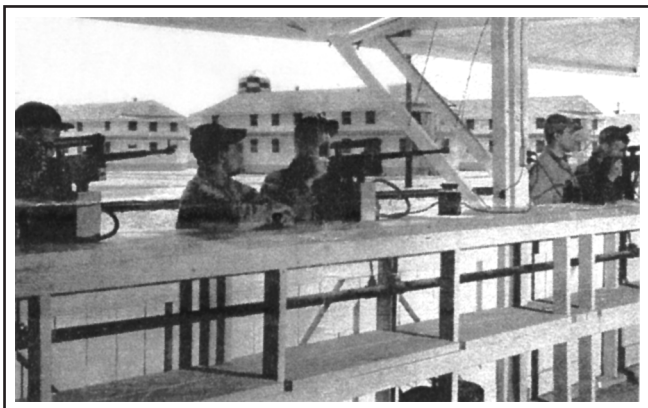
The aerial gunner's apprenticeship begins with a workout on a standard .22 rifle range. Later he learns to lead a target on the skeet range where he blasts away at clay pigeons. When he begins to score from a standing position on the ground, he learns how it is when you try the same thing from the back of a truck bouncing down a rutted road. On synthetic training devices, the young gunner uses the standard turret sights and fires spots of light with a photo-electric gun. A meter records the number of "hits," and an automatic noise-maker accustoms him to the sounds of battle.

He first shoots real machine guns, the .30 and .50 calibers, on the ground ranges where he fires on targets which are atop driverless jeeps which run about on a track in front of his turret-mounted guns.

Finally, the gunner goes into the air as a passenger in an AT-6 to shoot at a target towed by another AT-6. In continued training, he'll shoot from positions on an actual bomber.

The potential Axis-slayer gets also many hours in classrooms learning the 200 parts of a .50 caliber machine gun, the various types of sights and simple formulae for sight adjustments. And he spends hours learning to identify all the world's aircraft.

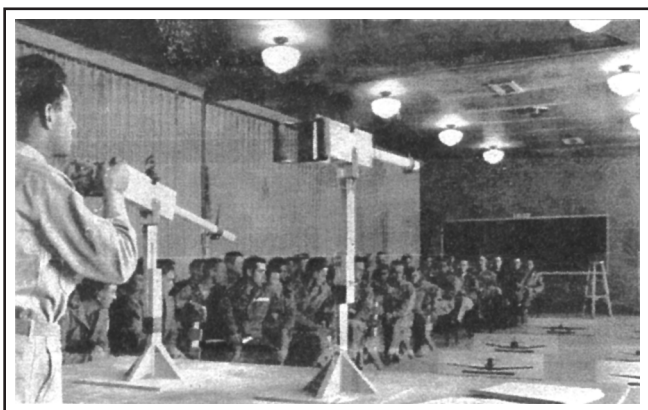
A gunner never knows just how good he is until he swaps lead with an enemy aircraft. How well he is "swapping" is told every day in front page accounts of tremendous enemy air losses at slight cost. But the headlines are written first in the hot slugs blasted out on the Training Command's practice ranges.



1. THIS SHOOTING GALLERY has four fast moving rows of little plane silhouettes. The students must be able to mow down all four with their miniature machine guns which squirt streams of pellets.



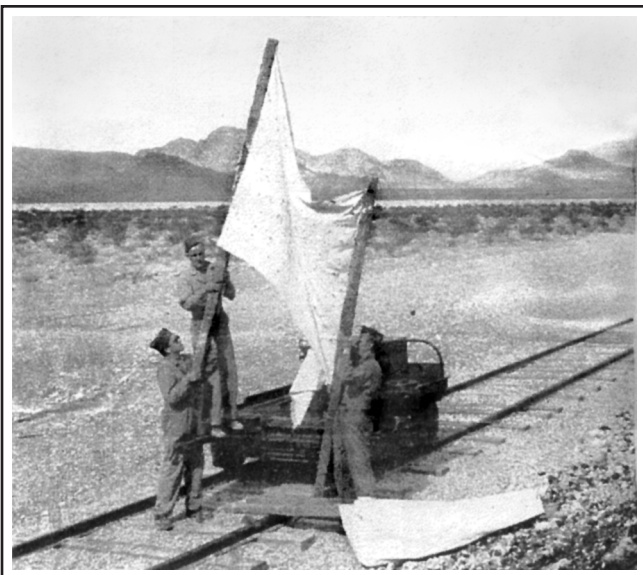
2. SHOOTING ON THE MOVE in the school is this "super-skeet." Armed with shot guns, men ride pick-up trucks down dusty and rutted roads and fire at unexpected clay pigeons that come from anywhere.



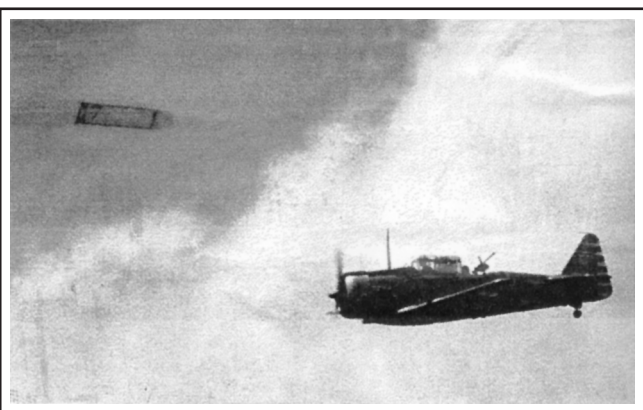
3. AIRCRAFT RECOGNITION, vital to gunners in combat, is taught to the men in classrooms. Knowing the incoming aircraft, gunners can avoid shooting at "little friends" and judge the enemy's range by its size in the ring sight.



4. NEAR THE END OF THE FOUR WEEK COURSE the gunners learn how to operate power turrets, which have more elaborate sights than plain guns. The turret shown above is standard in B-24's and B-26's.



5. AT 40 MILES AN HOUR, this cloth target travels a triangular course on rails around the gunnery range. Students in turrets fire bullets with tips painted different colors. Hits are scored by counting colored holes.



6. THE FINAL WEEK at gunnery school is in the air, firing at towed targets. The gunner, in the rear seat of an AT-6, is coming along side the sleeve. His bullets are tipped in his assigned paint color, and his hits are recorded when the sleeve is landed by the tow plane.



A LUNCHEON CRUISE ON THE GEORGIA QUEEN or its sister ship, Savannah River Queen, is planned for Friday, August 27. It's a 90-minute voyage and a lunch buffet.

REUNION from page 1

another member who would assume the caretaker responsibility.

There are many major potential repositories for the 303rd's huge collection, and the Board, in its deliberations, will seek to make an informed decision on behalf of the membership.

In addition to the Heritage Museum, consideration will be given to the National Air and Space Museum in Washington, the U.S. Air Force Museum in Dayton, the U. S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and other interested museums and universities which have World War II collections.

The twin goals of the 303rd Board's deliberations will be to decide, first, when to release the archives and artifacts from Association control and, second, which institution is most likely to give our collection the most extensive exposure over time for research and reference.

There are other decisions facing the 303rd's Board, as outlined in the "From The President" column on page 16.

When not engaged in those weighty matters, Board members and others

at the Savannah reunion will find each day from the opening of registration on Thursday 26 August through to the farewell banquet on the following Monday filled with reunion activities.

Aside from the usual order of events at 303rd reunions, two new highlights have surfaced.

A memorable "first" will be the proposed "fly-by" of a formation of Stearman aircraft, familiar to many World War II pilots as a primary flight trainer. Weather permitting, the formation will fly over the Heritage Museum on Saturday 28 August while the 303rd's veterans are present. The precise timing is still to be determined.

Every year a National Stearman Fly-In is held on Labor Day at the Galesburg, Illinois Municipal Airport. The gathering evokes memories of another age. During an 11-year span in the 1930's and 1940's, more American military pilots learned to fly in the Stearman Model 75 primary trainer than in any other aircraft. The U.S. Army's official designations for the plane were PT-13, PT-17, PT-18 and PT-27.

Al Dussliere, the 303rd's incumbent president, lives near Galesburg and has attended the festivities. He befriended Stear-



IS IT CHEAPER TO FLY OR DRIVE TO THE SAVANNAH REUNION? That's a tough decision, as portrayed in this cartoon by Don Addis of the St. Petersburg (FL) Times.

man pilot David Bruce, and this led a few months ago to Dussliere's suggestion for a Stearman fly-over while the 303rd gathered in Savannah for the 2004 reunion.

Bruce's aircraft is pictured on page 1. He explained, "My airplane was accepted by the Army Air Corps on July 18, 1941. It spent the war at Americus, Georgia and Orlando, Florida. It was stricken from the military inventory in 1946. After the war, it was in the air for 20 years as a crop-duster in Louisiana."

The serial number is 75-1801. The number 117 painted on the side of the plane is of no significance. Bruce said the previous owner of the Stearman said it was just the easiest number to paint.

The other unique highlight of the 303rd's gathering in Savannah will be a private showing of the World War II classic film "12 O'Clock High" and the presentation of a gift VHS cassette of the film to every veteran attending. When the 303rd's 2004 reunion coordinator, Eddie Deerfield, contacted 20th Century Fox for permission to show the film, Fox Chairman Rupert Murdoch not only gave copyright clearance, but responded with a gift of 260 VHS cassettes for veterans at the reunion.

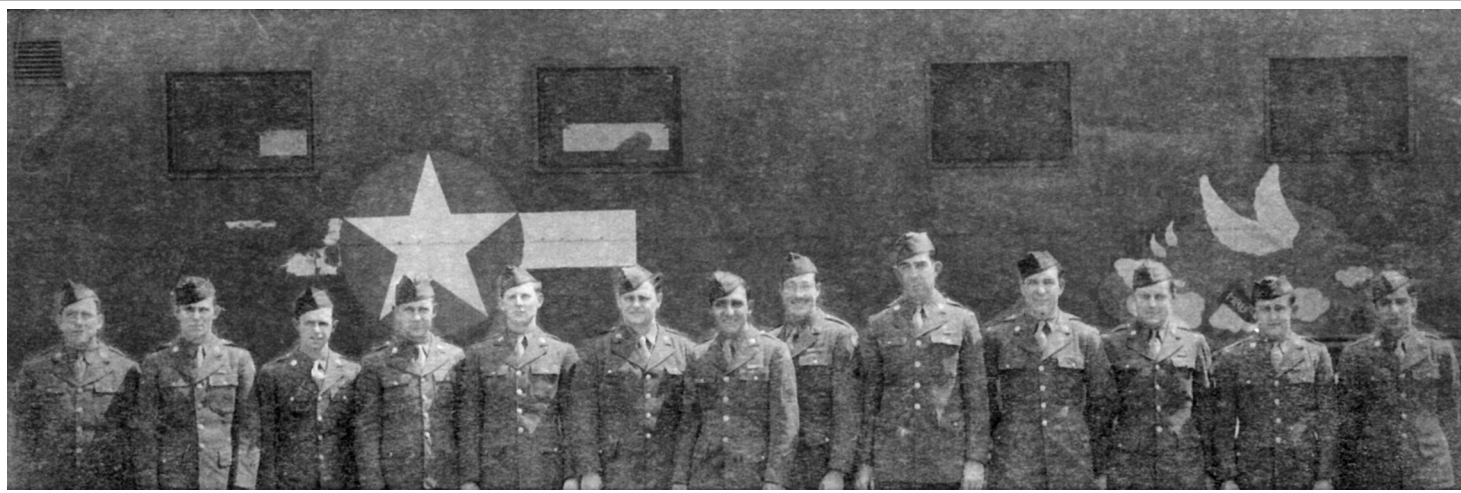
Henry Johansen, 444th Air Depot Representative on the 303rd's Board, commented in an earlier issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter, "I saw the movie '12 O'Clock High' the other night and it had a ten-second shot of the *Black Diamond Express* in a combat scene. That plane kept us busy at the hangar, but it always came back...with holes."

The film, starring Gregory Peck, won two Academy Awards in 1949—Dean Jagger as Best Supporting Actor, and the sound crew for Best Sound. It is widely recognized as the most outstanding motion picture made about aerial combat in the ETO during the war.

According to a comment in the New York Times, the 1990 film "Memphis Belle" was largely derided as overdramatic pap by the surviving crew members.

Armed Forces Reunions, a professional planning organization, was retained last year under contract with the 303rd to select a hotel in Savannah for the reunion, to confirm space in the hotel for the group's events, and to organize optional tours in the area.

The Hyatt Regency Hotel in Savannah was an excellent choice.



MOBILE REPAIR UNIT NUMBER TWO consisted of 14 mechanics who worked on damaged B-17's unable to make it back to their bases and forced to land at the earliest opportunity. T/Sgt Sal Santangelo is in the middle, flanked by six men on each side. The 14th member, M/Sgt Donald Rowland, is not pictured. Behind them is one of the Squadron's nine trailers, each 50 feet long and 10 feet wide.

WHEN B-17'S COULDN'T MAKE IT BACK TO BASE, MOBILE REPAIR UNITS CAME TO THE RESCUE

By Iris Knight Rowe

My contact with Mobile Repair Unit #2 began with M/Sgt Salvatore Santangelo, known as "Suntan" or "Sal." MRU#2 was attached to the 7th Repair & Reclamation Squadron based at RAF Honington, Suffolk, England. The 7th was the only R. & R. Squadron equipped to carry out aircraft repairs in the field. It had seven officers, 155 men and 9 trailers. Their task was "to repair battle damaged bombers where they are, also to return them to RAF Honington for further repair and maintenance." Sal was with MRU#2 for the move to Dawlish to repair the 303rd's *Werewolf*.

(Werewolf pilot George Oxrider crash landed at Dawlish on 23 January 1943 after losing three engines on the mission to Lorient, France. He ordered the crew to bail out, and then came in on the number two engine which he said was "purring beautifully." After skimming low over a bunch of kids playing rugby, Oxrider brought the B-17 down in an alfalfa field near a mental hospital. Oxrider said, "When she stopped, her wheels were in soft ground up to her hubs and her nose came to rest between two trees, only a few feet short of a stone wall.)

Unlike the RAF whom dismantled and salvaged aircraft that had landed in places other than on airfields, Americans wanted to put all serviceable aircraft back into combat wherever possible. *Werewolf* would be the prototype for this operation. Thus, on completion of repairs and as soon as the makeshift runway had been constructed, it received much attention by aircraft "dignitaries," the media, including Pathe News and Stars and Stripes. Sal's brother wrote saying he had seen Sal on Pathe News. On take-off, Sal

rode in the nose of *Werewolf* for its flight to Exeter, before it was sent to Honington and eventually back into service.

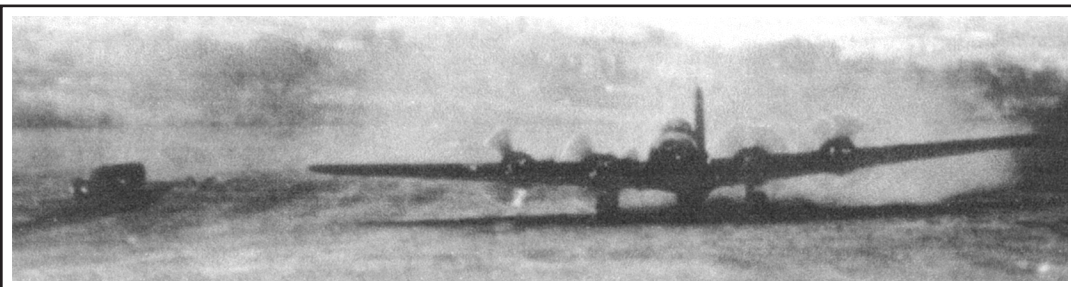
On the same day as *Werewolf* landed near Dawlish, the 303rd's *Bad Check* landed at Exeter, and it is assumed repairs were carried out by MRU#2. The third 303rd BG B-17 to make an emergency landing in Southwest England, following the mission of January 23rd, was *Thumper*. It came down at Lulsgate airfield, near Bristol. It went through the hedge and onto the road. It was too badly damaged to be repaired and so was salvaged.

From April 19th to around July 15th, the MRU#2 worked in East Anglia, mostly on B-17's. They repaired two unidentified B-17's at Molesworth -- their third job in that area, then went back to Molesworth June 9th to start repairs on *Eight Ball*.

They went from the east coast of England, down to Lands End and back into East Anglia for 16 months without going back to their base. Sometimes they lived in the trailer and sometimes they were housed in hotels -- especially if they were in areas that were subjected to enemy bombing raids.

It was no easy task to negotiate the narrow English roads with their 50-ft long, 10-ft wide trailer, made even more difficult by the absence of signposts. All had been removed as a precaution should England be invaded. Neither was it an easy task for those who hauled salvaged aircraft back to Honington.

After D-Day, Sal and others were sent to Fersfield, England, where they worked on stripping out the aircraft to be used for the "Aphrodite Missions." JFK's brother, Joe Kennedy, was killed flying on one of those missions. Later, Sal was sent to Denmark to retrieve aircraft that had been landed there.



WEREWOLF TAKING OFF FROM THE ALFALFA FIELD at Dawlish on an emergency runway after repairs by MRU 2. Sal Santangelo, who was in the nose, said, "The dust we kicked up was so thick that the spectators on the ground could hardly see the plane taking off."



WRITER IRIS KNIGHT ROWE of England, a recognized authority on World War II aerial combat.



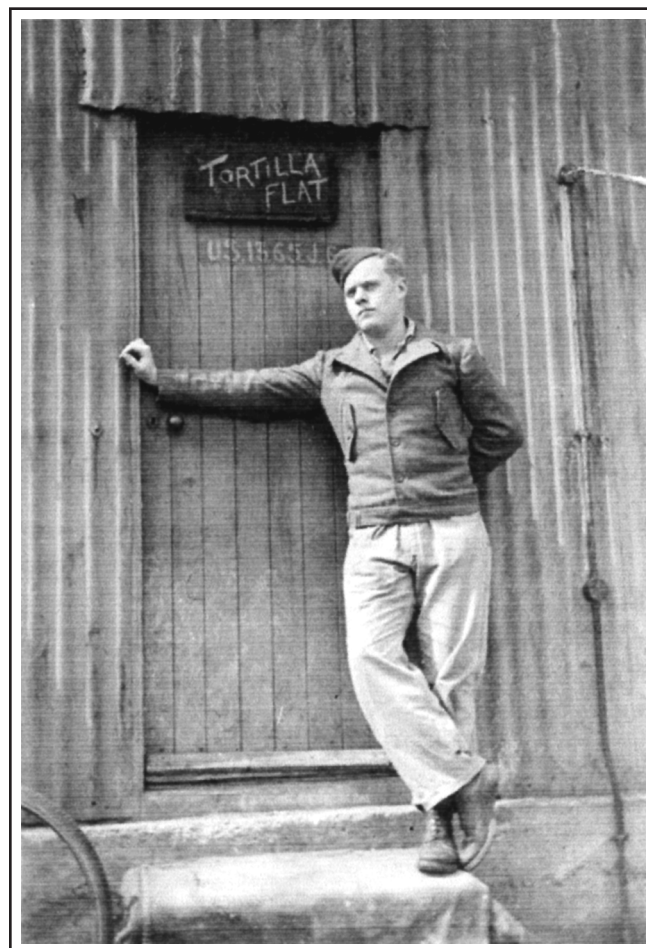
303rd Pin-ups

UPPER LEFT — A friendly pose by three members of the 358th Squadron's William C. Fort, Jr. combat crew. In back is Radio Operator James Supple. In front, left to right, Waist Gunner John Viszneki and Navigator John Nothstein.

UPPER RIGHT — "Radar," one of several canine pets at Molesworth, was transported around the base in his private carriage. Chauffeuring are 358th Squadron aircraft radar mechanics Harris Westerhoff and Joe Steen.

LOWER LEFT — The 427th's Durward Hines checks his waist gun before take-off. During his 25 missions in the 303rd's early months of combat, Hines flew as toggler and tail gunner as well as waist gunner.

LOWER RIGHT — O. M. "Monte" White, at ease in front of the 359th Squadron barracks, served in the critical capacity of Bombsight Maintenance Specialist.



Molesworth Diary

LATE START, THEN 35 MISSIONS IN TWO MONTHS

While stationed as a radio operator at Will Rogers Field, Oklahoma in February 1942, I was selected for pilot training. I graduated on June 26, 1943, and my class standing qualified me for fighter aircraft. I was on Cloud Nine! However, I soon found myself in Pyote, TX in the right seat of a B-17. I was assigned to Lt. Eugene Flick's crew. After several months of training, we were transferred to England and the 303rd Bomb Group in November, 1943.

We didn't fly our first combat mission until May of the following year. In early 1944, our crew was sent TDY to the 214th Squadron, RAF Sculthorpe, England. We were assigned to check out RAF crews in their B-17F's. Each of our crew members taught ground school in their respective areas of expertise, as well as flying training missions.

By the time I flew my first combat mission with the 303rd, I had approximately 170 more B-17 hours than most replacement crew pilots arriving from the United States.

About two months before completing our TDY at RAF Sculthorpe, our crew asked permission to fly one of the B-17F's to Bovington, outside London, for a week-end on the town. The Group Captain in charge of the base said, "If you can get *Old White Lady*, a B-17C flying, you can take it to London." This aircraft was one of the original 20 B-17C's given to the RAF.

The first thing our small maintenance crew did was to find out what problems the aircraft had. It needed 4 starters and they were not available because the B-17C used a different DC voltage. With Yankee ingenuity we scrounged four B-17F starters without motors and configured them to work on the B-17C. After servicing and replacing all of the spark plugs, we started the engines by hand-cranking all four. Success!

On March 13, 1944, we flew off to London. The B-17C was a much better flying aircraft than the B-17F or G. The major differences were weight and the needle props. It was faster and easier to fly.

On May 9th our crew returned to the 427th Squadron and we flew our first combat mission on May 29th. From May 29th until July 4th I flew as a co-pilot on Lt. Flick's crew. On July 5th I was checked out as First Pilot. However, I was never assigned my own crew.

From July 5th until July 31st, I flew with many different crews. I served as a co-pilot to new crews, some of which were on their first few missions. Additionally, I volunteered as a Tail Gunner/Observer (TG-O) for the lead aircraft in the Group.

In summary, from May 29th through July 31st I flew 35 missions, 33 as co-pilot and two as Tail Gunner/Observer, and accumulated 230 combat hours.

Donald W. Keating
427th Squadron Pilot

FIRST COMBAT MISSION ALMOST HIS LAST

My first mission was as a replacement gunner. They woke me up at 2:30 AM on the 6th of September 1943 to fly on the Cogswell crew. The mission was to Stuttgart, Germany, the longest so far. We were pretty much a make-up crew due to the original Cogswell crew's misfortunes. I had not even fired a .50 caliber machine gun yet. I was scared as we crossed the English Channel realizing I was now over enemy territory. Then we hit the target, and flew through a blanket of flak bursts headed for home. We were doing some violent evasive action when I saw my first enemy fighter planes.

Those little yellow-nosed devils would hit us and then come back to follow us and hit us again. An engine was shot up and the pilot had to feather it. We couldn't keep up and dropped out of formation. An FW-190 came in on our tail. Every one was shooting, and then Deffy, the tail gunner (John Deffinger), yells, "Ata boy, Beng (Gil Bengston in the top turret), you got him!" That ended the fighter attacks.

The pilot called and said we had to lighten our load, so we began throwing everything that was loose out the window. Cogswell asked the navigator (Ed Cobb) if we had enough gas to get home. The answer was "No." We started to lose altitude. As we approached the French coast, the pilot asked the radio operator (Eddie Deerfield) to start sending SOS signals and we all crowded into the radio room to prepare for ditching in the North Sea. A couple of RAF Spitfires started circling overhead.

We skimmed over the waves on two engines and barely made it to land on an RAF fighter plane runway near the coast. As we taxied, a third engine conked out. I concluded that we had one hell of a pilot.

Harry L. Patterson
360th Squadron Waist Gunner

MESSAGES TO NEXT OF KIN STOPPED IN TIME

My introduction to combat took place 9 April 1944 to Marienburg, Germany, an 11 hours and 38 minutes round trip. Then, on our fifth mission, on 20 April, our co-pilot, Andrew Lux, was killed by flak over Sottevast.

On 19 July, my next to last mission, we attacked Munich. On the return, we were hit hard by enemy fire and lost our number three engine. The pilot feathered it. Then, our number four engine failed but so much oil had been lost that it couldn't be feathered. We left the formation and there was a frantic exchange on the intercom about heading for Switzerland. I had only one more mission to go, so argued against that idea in favor of trying to return to Molesworth. The pilot agreed, and we did make it back for an emergency landing at an RAF base.

When we arrived back at Molesworth, I heard that messages to our next of kin were being prepared stating that we were missing in action. My very last mission was

(DIARY continued on page 16)

Molesworth Diary (Continued from 15)

a short one to St. Lo, France in support of our ground forces. After we landed, my crewmates and I celebrated by ripping the flight suit off Clinton Moser, our pilot. He went to debriefing wearing only his "blue bunny" heat suit. Then we gathered all the booze we could find, sat on top of a bomb shelter and burned our old and dirty flight clothing.

Willis A. Duffey
359th Squadron Engineer

303RD BOMBING ACE EARNED 379TH'S PRAISE

I was one of 8 or 10 Gee-H operators at the 303rd. We were occasionally loaned out to other bomb groups which didn't have any. On 9 November 1944, I was loaned to the 379th for the mission to Metz. I was in the lead plane with 38 other B-17's dropping bombs on my release. Things looked good on the Gee box, but you never know.

At any rate, back on the ground at mission debriefing, the 379th commander came in with a strike photo showing smoke rising right over the aiming point. This didn't happen very often. The 379th C.O. said, "Where is Lt. Zarelli? I want to meet him." He shook my hand warmly and said I'd be welcome to join his bomb group any time. That was pretty heady stuff for a 21-year-old. I was as proud as could be.

Back at the 303rd the next day, getting ready for the Cologne raid, the briefing officer read a letter from General Patton to General Spaatz. My recollection is that Patton's language was somewhat saltier than recorded on page 576 of "Might In Flight." Or maybe the briefing officer was paraphrasing to get a laugh. I believe the way he read the letter was something like "Your bombing of Metz was lousy, but you must have scared hell out of the Boche because the Third Army went in and took the city right after you left."

Michael L. Zarelli
358th Squadron Gee-H Navigator

WHEN YAH GOTTA GO, YAH GOTTA GO

Now it can be told. The Haynes crew was on a mission one day. As we were climbing over the English Channel, the bombardier came through the radio room with an urgent look on his face and said he had to "go" urgently. I gave him the cardboard box that my oxygen mask came in, and told him to throw it out the waist window when through. He came back a few minutes later with a big smile and gave me a "thumbs up."

After we completed our mission and debriefing, a rumor was circulating that a very angry pilot was looking for the crew ahead of him in the formation that had messed up the windshield of his B-17. He was quoted as saying that it was bad enough getting his ass shot off fighting the Nazis, but he hated like hell to get crapped on while doing it.

We never confessed to anyone; now, if that pilot is still around, he'll know the dirty truth.

Oscar A. Deen
359th Squadron Radio Operator

FROM THE PRESIDENT

"Back To the Future" is the title of a movie many of us may have seen some time ago. It is an appropriate title to this, my last, message to you as your president.

What has happened is history and there is no way it can be changed. We must look forward to be certain our direction is focused on what we would like to have happen in the future. Some of what may be ahead of us can be controlled somewhat by planning.

Numerous decisions face us when we meet in Savannah, GA in August. New officers for the coming year are to be nominated and elected. Elected and appointed officials for years to come are needed. Step forward and give us the use of your talents.

A number of changes in the By-Laws will be discussed, considered and voted on. A sound workable budget for the coming year will be established. Our present finances will allow us to continue as we are through 2006. Sources of financing beyond that time must be found. Do we want a new Benefactor Program? Where will the 2006 reunion be located?

A discussion is necessary to decide where and when the archives and artifacts of our Association will be located so they will be readily available to all that are interested in viewing them. Let us know your thoughts in this matter. These and other items require your input and suggestions. This is your organization. Be an active part of it by making your ideas known.

The dwindling numbers of our veteran members is no secret. It is something all of us are very well aware of. If we are not already there we are closely approaching the time when we must decide what is to be done with our association. Are we to continue as the viable organization we now are? Shall we retain the best newsletter and website known for units such as ours? Do we wish to continue to "perpetuate the history of the 303rd Bombardment Group"? Will yearly reunions be retained "to provide opportunities for 303rd veterans, families and friends to meet"? Or will we just fade away?

Our get together in Savannah in August is an opportunity for everyone to visit, reminisce and plan the future. The optional events are suggested for your enjoyment and entertainment. Let's all make this another great reunion to remember.

Thank you for allowing me the honor of representing you this past year.

Al Dussliere



CREWS UNLOADING AFTER MISSION IN JANUARY, 1944

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

PILOT TRIES TO "UNCLOUD" TRAINING CRASH MEMORY

Sixty years have clouded the memory of most of us. They have for me. And they have for Bobbie Reese, 359th Squadron engineer.

I'm referring to his letter in the Open Forum of the May 2004 issue.

He tells about an orientation flight when our B-17 clipped off some tree tops on the return to Molesworth. His memory is OK until his claim that I was in the pilot's seat. Wrong. I was in the right-hand seat as co-pilot and Clem Rogers was in the left seat as pilot.

Bobbie's memory fails again when he writes that I, as a new pilot, asked Rogers about "buzzing." It never happened. I was a real greenhorn then, and to suggest a buzz job was the furthest thing from my mind. Al Simon, the navigator on Rogers' crew, was in the nose that day and confirms that Rogers was at the controls when our B-17 flew too low and clipped tree tops.

No big deal. Just wanted to clear out the cobwebs.

Bob Stauffer
359th Squadron Pilot

HE WAS FLIGHT OFFICER ON 1943 MISSION, NOT CAPTAIN

I would like to correct my rank in the article on page 8 of the May 2004 issue. It was Flight Officer, not Captain when I flew as co-pilot with the Thomas Quinn crew on the 14 October 1943 mission to Schweinfurt, Germany.

An excellent newsletter again, as usual.

Bill Eisenhart
359th Squadron Pilot

COMMENTS ON A SCENE IN FILM "12 O'CLOCK HIGH"

The pilots in the 303rd might remember a scene in the movie *12 O'Clock High*. The aerial combat film showed a Group cutting us off

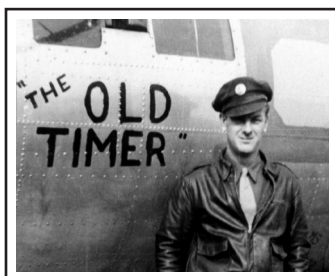
after the I.P. That Group had the Triangle-K on their tails.

Next time you see the film, watch for their insignia. Their pilots said the 303rd with our Triangle-C was out of line and the drastic maneuver was necessary.

Millard E. Mason
360th Sqd Ball Turret Gunner

CREW MATE CONFIRMS MEYER AS "THE OLD TIMER"

In the May 2004 issue there's a picture of Fulton "Pop" Meyer on the Pin-Ups page. The caption asks if he was the old time on the crew. He was, indeed! At the time the picture was taken, "Pop" was 33 years old, five years older than Clete Vogel, tail gunner on our Bob Akers crew. In the picture, "Pop" is standing next to our B-17 *Duchess' Granddaughter*.



Later, Joe Cappucci, about Clete's age, was assigned to our crew as toggler.

Herb Shanker
359th Squadron Engineer

VETERANS' STORIES NEED TO BE PRESERVED FOR FUTURE

Just wanted to let you know that my dad, Wayne Humphries, was very pleased with his article in the May 2004 issue. Our family is very glad that his story is now recorded, since he is the last crew member living.

These types of accounts should be preserved and available for other generations. They almost cannot comprehend all the things that our combat veterans experienced in World War II.

Stacia Herndon
Shelley, Idaho

INFIRMITIES OF AGE FORCE 2004 REUNION REGRETS

I regret that I will be unable to attend the reunion in Savannah. In fact, travel of any kind is quite a problem, including flying. But, I'll be there in spirit, thinking about old times with the 303rd Bomb Group.

Kermit Stevens
303rd Bomb Group Commander

It is with regrets that I will be unable to attend the Savannah reunion. During the past year my vision has been failing. I hope the reunion will be a great success.

Harold Lanigan
358th Squadron Pilot

As much as I would like to attend the reunions, I can't any more because of my wife Norma's health. That keeps me busy at home. Wishing you all the best.

Eldon Audiss
359th Squadron Engineer

GUNNER WONDERS ABOUT PILOT'S COMBAT UNIFORM...

I flew my 13th mission on 24 March 1945 with pilot Bill Heller to attack a German airfield at Twente-Enschede in the Netherlands. It was a rough mission—I saw a B-17 in another bomb group take a direct hit from flak and go down in flames.

After we landed back at Molesworth, photographers were waiting to take a picture of the crew as we had led the mission. Bill Heller peeled off his flight suit and was in a Class-A uniform. I wondered at the time if this was for the picture taking or if he always dressed that way on combat missions.

Many years later, at one of our reunions, I asked Bill about this. He said he always flew in his Class-A uniform. Also, he spoke fluent German and wanted the enemy to know that he understood their language.

That was an interesting sidelight.

Lee Faulkner
360th Squadron Waist Gunner

...AND THE PILOT EXPLAINS THE "INTERESTING SIDELIGHT"

Many times I did wear my Class-A uniform under my flight suit. It was a quirk of mine. We all had some little thing we did which made an otherwise difficult time seem bearable. I just vowed that I would be the best dressed POW if I were ever shot down. It was also not done for any photo opportunity.

I had another quirk. Germans historically have little humor, as it were. I decided that if caught and when interviewed by my captors, I would answer all their queries in German just to get their reaction. Happily, none of these situations obtained.

Bill Heller
360th Squadron Pilot

VISITOR TO NORMANDY TAKES 303RD GRAVE SITE PHOTO

I visited the American Cemetery in Normandy with my wife, and we took photos. After looking at one of the pictures and reading the man's name and unit I went onto your web site and found that he was part of one of the bomber crews that was listed—Shoup's crew.

I don't want to show any disrespect to the man or the military service, but I wanted to share the photo of his gravestone with you.

Michael Leonard

(Editor's Note—The photo is of Ben Bragg's grave marker. He was killed on 28 February 1944 on a 303rd Bomb Group mission to attack German missile launching sites in the Pas De Calais area of France. The right wing of their B-17 was torn off by a burst of flak.)

Three of the crew members were thrown clear of the falling aircraft and survived. The remaining seven perished.)

SEE PHOTO ON PAGE 18

FORUM from page 17



Normandy grave site of 359th engineer T/Sgt Ben Bragg.

RELATIVES REPORT LOSS OF THEIR 303RD VETERANS

I am writing to inform you that my husband, Val Lowers, passed away. He was in the 360th Squadron. Thank you so much for keeping in touch with him through the newsletters and other material he received. He was very proud of serving in the war and always enjoyed reading all the articles.

Laura Lowers
Leechburg, PA

John Hughes passed away on March 7, 2004 at 10 AM at his home. He was 83 years old. His ashes will be laid to rest in his wife, Clair's, grave. Please pass the word to all friends and fellows, and give a toast at the reunion in Savannah. (He was Assistant Crew Chief on Iza Vailable and other 360th Squadron planes.)

Sherri Hughes
Melbourne, FL

DID YOU TRAIN AT NM'S ALAMOGORDO AIR FIELD?

I am the historian at Holloman AFB, New Mexico. During World War II, the base was known as Alamogordo Army Air Field for training before entering combat. Unfortunately, our archives of the WWII days are very sparse.

In order to record the World War II history of the Alamogordo Army Air Corps

training field, I'd like to request any stories, recollections or photographs 303rd Bomb Group veterans might have of their time in New Mexico. These will be used in writing a history of Alamogordo Army Air Field that I would be glad to share with those veterans when completed.

MSgt Greg Henneman
Holloman AFB Historian
49FW/HO
490 First Street, Suite 1300
Holloman AFB, NM 88330

WRECKING CREW IN 1997 TEARS DOWN 358TH MESS

A friend and I visited Molesworth in July, 1997. We drove up from London. There were no gates or guards at the entrance. I assumed we must be in the old 358th Squadron area because of the nearness to the entrance. A wrecking crew was preparing to demolish a building which turned out to be the 358th Officers Mess. The crew was on lunch break. We identified ourselves and got permission to go inside. We found a room with a list of 303rd Bomb Group missions painted on the wall. We took a couple pictures inside and outside (See top of page, right side).

Next, we visited a hangar, and on the wall next to the entrance door was a sign DMA BRANCH, ENGLAND and next to it a round painted emblem with the words DEFENCE MAPPING AGENCY—AERO SPACE CENTER. A sergeant inside told us they were using the hangar to store aerial photos in filing cabinets. Later, in looking at the history of RAF Molesworth I couldn't find any trace of that unit.

Christ M. Christoff
358th Sqdn Engineering

(Editor's Note—In the Hell's Angels Newsletter of May 2003, USAF M/Sgt Dale Brandl wrote, "The Defense Mapping Agency used Hangar J for many years as their distribution warehouse for the European Theater. It housed the 303rd Bomb Group's B-17's during World War II.")



THE 358TH OFFICERS MESS AT MOLESWORTH nears destruction in 1997 as a wrecking crew prepares to tear the building down and load the dump truck.



THE GHOSTS OF MISSIONS PAST were recorded on a brick wall in the mess hall. Seen are the first 27 combat missions flown by the 303rd Bomb Group from 17 November 1943 to attack submarine pens at St. Nazaire, France to 31 March 1944 to hit shipyards at Rotterdam, Netherlands.



GWENDOLINE HOLLINGSHEAD, who volunteered her time as a hostess in London's American Red Cross Rainbow Corner during World War II, paid her respects to the victims of September 11 some 60 years later. Behind her is a monument to Franklin D. Roosevelt in London's Grosvenor Square.

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

It is August again and time for the Savannah reunion. Both my wife Marriane and I will not be able to attend the reunion this year, due to my work. We will miss the chance to see everyone and sell Raffel Tickets as during the past reunions.

This year has many things to recall and remember. The 60th anniversary of D-Day, the gallant men on the ground and the air that took part on June 6th. The tough road after those days until the final victory in Europe. God bless every one and all of them.

It has been discovered that a lot of address changes have taken place without letting the association know. The Editor of the "Hell's Angels Newsletter" sends me about 25 to 30 extra copies of each newsletter for use to send to new found veterans, family members and associate members. If I'm not advised of address changes, these newsletters go undelivered or thrown away. This costs the association money, which can be cut down by communications. If you change your address, let me know. If the recipient of the newsletter has passed away, please let me know also.

Now to the good news, there are more and more relations to the veterans that served at Molesworth, finding and giving us information about these men. I know and feel better when I receive an e-mail or copy of an e-mail that lets us know that a name from the Missing Comrade List is either still alive or has passed away.

To everyone that can make it to Savannah, Ga, have a great time and think of us that are not able to make it there this year.

Dennis Smith
Membership/Roster

IN MEMORIAM

Fayette H Botts	360 th	2/24/04
William F Cahill	427 th	3/13/04
Victor M Craig	358 th	3/20/04
Charles D Crook Sr.	360 th	4/22/04
William R George	358 th	4/20/04
John R Hughes	360 th	3/7/04
Irwan A Johnson	360 th	date unknown
John E King	360 th	5/8/04
James B Nelson	358 th	3/8/04
Paul W Pesetsky	360 th	Feb 2002
Othmar P Sahli	358 th	5/11/04
Allen B Syler	358 th	12/2/03
Robert C Tracy	358 th	10/25/03
Paul J Winkleman	427 th	4/5/04

FOUND COMRADES

Dale R Anderson (427th)
Edward G Berzanski (427th)
William C "Curley" Byerly (358th)
Ernest E Drank (3rd Station Complement Squadron)
James B McDowell Jr. (359th)
Jerome Milman (358th)
Enrique M Reider (359th)
John Scott (360th)

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Dale R Anderson (427th), 6430 North Leoti Avenue, Chicago, IL 60646-2819, (773) 631-4918, spouse Helen
Edward G Berzanski (427th), 7514 Grant Street, Darien, IL 60561-4419, (630) 968-6474, spouse Annea
William C "Curley" Byerly (358th), 4612 33rd Street West, Bradenton, FL 34207-1617, (941) 758-0611
Ernest E Drank, (3rd Station Complement Squadron), 5801 Lewood Dr., Austin, TX 78745-3565, (512) 444-7382
James B McDowell Jr (359th), 11 E Quail Run, Wildwood, FL 34785-9034, (352) 330-4200, spouse Frances
Jerome Milman (358th), 2970 Alton Drive, St. Pete Beach, FL 33706, (727) 360-0173, spouse Beryl
Oran T O'Connor (358th)
Howard F O'Neal (359th)
John Scott (360th), PO Box 504, Camas, WA 98607-0504, (360) 835-2002

NEW FAMILY MEMBERS

Veronica Berg (427th), 540 S Evening Rose Ave., Tucson, AZ 85748-3556, (520) 885-3106, spouse Johnny L, niece of Roaul R Prieto
James S Hardy (360th), 101 Carnoustie, Williamsburg, VA 23188-7423, (757) 258-0194, spouse Jeri, son of James H Hardy
George Milman (358th), PO Box 6362, Goodyear, AZ 85338-0623, (623) 925-7514, son of Jerome Milman
Tyler L Weems (360th), 1201 Middlebury Lane, Euless, TX 76040-6375, (817) 545-1917, spouse Jeanne, grandson of Thomas L Weems

IN MEMORY OF DONATIONS

Mrs. Frances M Kasik, in memory of her husband Robert F Kasik (358th)
Russell S Klingensmith (359th) in memory of passed members of the Dahleen crew.
Sidney L Larsen (427th) in memory of his wife Joan and Paul J Winkleman (427th)
Mrs. Carolee Prosser, in memory of her husband Charles F Prosser (360th)

BENEFACTOR PROGRAM

William H Cox (358th), general donation



SLOW TIMING BONNIE B is the title of this work by artist Keith Ferris who helped immortalize the 303rd Bomb Group by using another 303rd B-17 as the focal point for his wall mural at the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. Keith presented us with a gift print of the *Bonnie B* art, with the note, "It could be used for a drawing or whatever way you want to use it at the reunion." Numbered print 81 of a limited edition of 450 prints will go to a lucky winner at the reunion in Savannah, August 26-30, 2004.

THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

The recent death of Colonel Robert Morgan triggered again the 61-year old conflict between *Memphis Belle* and *Hell's Angels* for public recognition as the first B-17 Flying Fortress to complete 25 combat missions against enemy targets in World War II. Col. Morgan was the pilot of *Memphis Belle*. He died at age 85 after breaking his neck in a fall at his home in Asheville, North Carolina.

Historical fact leaves no doubt that the B-17 *Hell's Angels* won the honor, recording its 25th mission on 14 May 1943 with an attack on submarine pens at Kiel, Germany. The 91st Bomb Group's *Memphis Belle* reached this mark three days later, on 17 May. But, because the *Belle* was selected by the military's top brass to return to the US first on a flag waving and bond selling tour, the public impression has persisted that it was first to score those 25.

Col. Morgan's passing generated articles and obituaries across the country, and, for the most part, they perpetuated the misinformation. In the St. Petersburg Times of Florida, for example, the obit claimed, "The crew completed its 25th bombing mission during World War II on May 17, 1943. It was a historic number; the *Belle* was the first heavy bomber in the European theater to last 25 missions, the magic number to be sent home." Since the source of the obituary was the Associated Press, scores if not hundreds of other newspapers told the same story.

Captain Irl Baldwin, the original pilot on the 358th Squadron's *Hell's Angels*, died in his sleep at his home in Albuquerque, New Mexico on 19 February 2002. He was 81. His passing made hardly a ripple in the public media.

A story in the New York Times quoted Peter Cash, an authority on Col. Morgan's B-17, "Other aircraft may very well have reached that milestone a day or two or three before the *Memphis Belle*, but a bomber nicknamed for a faraway girl friend had a certain memorableness. A buxom lass in a skimpy bathing suit looked a lot better than *Hell's Angels* in another group. I think that's why the decision was made to go with *Memphis Belle*."

What's in a name? The 303rd's *Knockout Dropper*, *Sky Wolf*, *S for Sugar* and *The Duchess* were hard on the heels of *Hell's Angels* for the first 25. Would one of them have made a difference?

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