

# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

MARCH 1990



"341" Homeward Bound

## Molesworth Opens Again With New Mission

A year after the 303rd Tactical Missile Wing left RAF Molesworth, the base is to gain a new mission.

After discussions between the British government, and United States and NATO authorities, the United States European Command has decided to develop Molesworth as their Joint Analysis Center (JAC).

The JAC will be moved to Molesworth from Germany due to more suitable accommodations.

The role of the JAC will be to

process and analyze military information from a variety of sources for the benefit of the United States, the United Kingdom and NATO.

The JAC will be constructed on a fresh site within Molesworth. Major construction work is planned to start in 1991 and be completed in 1995. In addition, many of the existing facilities at the base will be modified to support the JAC. The work is planned to start shortly.

Eventually, some 700 U.S. per-

sonnel will be assigned to Molesworth. The base will become the home of the 497th Reconnaissance Technical Group with its associated units.

In addition, certain buildings will be converted to accommodate the Northern Region Command Center, the wartime headquarters for 3rd Air Force, while other buildings will be used for administrative purposes as an annex to Alconbury.

## Knockout Dropper: An Early 303rd Champion

Early in April 1944, the Fortress "Knockout Dropper" was crowned the undisputed champion of heavy bombers in the European Theater of Operations, (ETO).

On March 27, the venerable bomber, piloted by Lt. J.N. Savage of Cherryvale, Kansas, dropped a bellyful of bombs on the airfield at Chartres, France to complete its 75th mission to targets in Germany and the occupied countries of Europe. Strike photographs revealed that the last load of bombs that the "Dropper" dropped neatly leveled a row of buildings along the side of the airfield.

Since Nov. 18, 1942 when the "Dropper" first went into action against the sub pens of St. Nazaire, she had a busy time. While roaring off to places like Hamm, Wilhelmshaven, Vegasack, Bremen, Oschersleben, Brunswick, Schweinfurt and Leipzig, she carried approximately 300,000 pounds of bombs to Nazi targets. While she was doing this, her gunners used up about 100,000 rounds of ammunition to drive off attacking fighters and downed at least 12 of them in the process.

Quite naturally, the ship did not come through all of those battles unscathed but her battle damage was comparatively light, considering the extent of her

operations. On March 18, 1943, the bomber returned from Vegasack with bullet and flak holes in the leading edge of the wing and aileron. During the June 11, attack on Wilhelmshaven the ship was hit by empty shell cases and flak, breaking the pilot's and co-pilot's windshields and damaging the right wing and elevator. Both wings and stabilizers suffered in the attack on Huls on June 22 and in the October 14 attack on Schweinfurt the vertical stabilizer was hit by a 20mm shell, ripping out a huge hole that threatened the security of the plane. The worst battle damage was suffered at Hamm on Feb. 4, 1943 when a 20mm shell crashed into the radio room, destroying all equipment and slightly wounding the radio operator.

At Oschersleben, Jan. 11, 1944, almost every other ship in the group received extensive damage—the group lost 10 aircraft and 11 crews—but the "Dropper" came home with one small bullet hole.

Some of the biggest battles of the war was fought by the ground crew, headed by M/Sgt. Buford G. Pafford of Stewartstown, PA. Other members of the ground crew included: S/Sgt. Morton Moon, Sgt. Jim McShane, Sgt. Martin Strassburg, Sgt. Wayne Trant and Stanley Jacobs.



In the never-ceasing struggle to keep the "Dropper" airworthy, these men installed 16 new engines, 10 superchargers, three new stabilizers, four tires, 48 oil coolers, five sets of brakes, one generator, one oil sump, two glycol pumps, one gas tank, four tail wheel tires, a new nose, a complete set of radio equipment and nearly 2500 spark plugs.

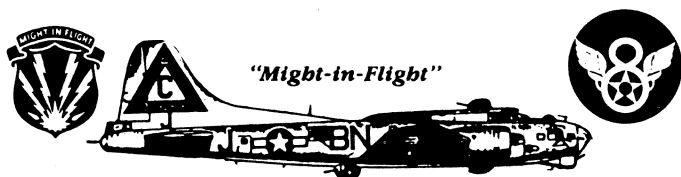
A great majority of this work was done at night by the light of flashlights and the "feel" of cold numb fingers. When the Eighth Air Force was desperately short of bombers, Sgt. Pafford and his crew often stayed up all night in cold weather to repair battle damage to get the "Dropper" back in condition for the next mission.

Besides being the first heavy bomber in the ETO to reach the

total of 75 missions, the "Knockout Dropper" started on several others but had to return early because of frozen guns, oil cooler trouble, broken interphones and illness of crew members.

Capt. Jack Roller of Los Angeles, CA who took the "Dropper" on her first mission, piloted her on 17 others before he finished his tour of operations. During her career she was flown by 29 other pilots, all of whom said she was an outstanding ship and one of the fastest and most maneuverable on RAF Molesworth.

*Ed. Note: The information above was forwarded to me by Wayne Trant who crewed the "Dropper." A list of her missions along with the names of the pilots will be included in the next issue of the newsletter.*



## 303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC. "HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

VOL. XIII, NO. 1 Editor: Hal Susskind  
2602 Deerfoot Trail, Austin, TX 78704 MARCH 1990

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 Bomb Group and to provide opportunities for 303rders to meet and do things together.

Because you are helping to perpetuate the history of the 303rd Bomb Group, your dues and/or donations to the 303rd Bomb Group Association are tax deductible.

The Association is open for membership to all persons assigned or attached to the 303rd Bomb Group, from its activation in 1942 in Boise, Idaho, throughout its war years at Molesworth Air Base in England to its deactivation in Casablanca in 1945. Spouses of 303rders may also become members. All other persons, interested in perpetuating the history of the 303rd Bomb Group and in furthering the aims of the Association, may apply for Associate status.

Membership years begin on the first day of January. In the future, the 303rd Bomb Group Newsletter will be sent only to paid up members. When you pay annual dues, the membership chairman will send you an updated membership card.

If you do not receive the 303rd Newsletter for a period of more than four months, it means you are delinquent in your dues for that calendar year.

### 303rd Officers

#### President

Wilbur (Bud) Klint  
5728 Walla  
Fort Worth, TX 76133  
(817) 292-1147

#### Vice President/Administration

Peter Michael Curry  
166th Dist. Court  
San Antonio, TX 78205  
(512) 220-2554

#### Vice President/Reunion Planning

Harley E. Cannon  
8 North Louis Street  
Mount Prospect, IL 60056  
(312) 255-8045

#### Secretary

Carl L. Dubose Jr.  
2601 Loma Vista  
Victoria, TX 77901  
(512) 573-9226

#### Treasurer

Charles S. Schmeltzer  
EB15 Central Ave.  
Spokane, WA 99207  
(509) 487-7983

#### Headquarters

Carlton M. Smith  
3219 Cobblestone Drive  
Santa Rosa, CA 95404  
(707) 546-3635

#### Membership Chairman

Jim Reeves  
28101 Tefir  
Mission Viejo, CA 92692  
(714) 951-1247

#### 444th

Melvin T. McCoy  
655 Rogue River Hwy.  
Gold Hill, OR 97525  
(503) 855-1712

#### 358th

William S. McLeod Jr.  
1676 W. Mesa  
Fresno, CA 93711  
(209) 439-8922

#### 359th

Charles J. McClain  
6265 Anchor Lane  
Rockledge, FL 32955  
(305) 639-0073

#### 360th

William Heller  
P.O. Box 3006  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019  
(415) 726-6686

#### 427th (Historian)

E.C. (Al) Lehmann  
29844 Knoll View Dr.  
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA 90274  
(213) 832-5830

#### Advisor to Board

Lewis E. Lyle  
Belvedere Cty. Club  
207 Ridge One  
Hot Springs Nat'l Pk, AR 71901  
(501) 321-1956

#### PX Administrator

Robert E. (Bob) Kidd  
13214D Fiji Way  
Marina Del Rey, CA 90292  
(213) 823-1592

#### Newsletter Editor/PR

Harold A. Susskind  
2602 Deerfoot Trail  
Austin, TX 78704  
(512) 441-6475

## Thanks For Your Dues

During the Board Meetings at the 1989 Reunion, our financial situation was addressed. It was noted there were many 303rd Members, who due to not being apprized of the dues change, thought they were up to date after the Seattle Reunion.

Invoicing was a difficult chore, considering the ability to recap all those who had paid. I offered, if someone could get me some semblance of a print-out of those who needed to be invoiced and/or reminded of the new dues structure

- to do this at no cost to the Association. I was given the material and began the task. Many of you have received such notices and the returns have been gratifying, especially getting some back into the fold.

In thanking you all for your reaction and understanding, I want to say it was one of the most pleasant tasks I have undertaken in some time. I have been advised that some form of dues invoicing will be done henceforth.

Thank you so much,  
**Bill Heller**

## Chicago/Schaumburg in '91

I wonder if everybody like me has ever wondered how it would be like to submerge in a submarine and go cruising under the ocean. I remember the movie, "Seven Leagues Under the Sea." I think I saw it three times and got a kick out of it every time. Well, come Memorial Day 1991, you'll all have a chance to feel how it is to live in a sub.

One of the most heroic actions of World War II occurred off the coast of North Africa, when a US Naval vessel under the command of Capt. Gallery forced a German sub to surface. The German commander, in abandoning the sub, attempted to sink her, but the Americans with great risk and valor boarded the US boat and closed the valves which were set to scuttle her. Thus, they were able to save her. This action became one of the war's most valuable secrets as they also captured the codes and other documents that allowed the Allies to break the submarine war in the Atlantic.

But this is not where the story ends. Towed in secret to the American coast and kept under wraps throughout the war, it was finally going to be sold as scrap or sunk in the Atlantic as an obsolete war salvage; instead a move was initiated to make it a war memorial. But where? The answer was Chicago. Towed through the St. Lawrence and the Great Lakes, it finally arrived in the Windy City. Then with a super engineering feat it was lifted from the water and mounted permanently along side the Museum of Science and Industry where you will be able to explore it and in your fantasy, torpedo your buddy's new Chevy parked out there at curbside.

Come on to Chicago in '91 and it is all yours!

**Harley Cannon**

## Drive To Locate "Lost Souls"

The Board of Directors of the 303rd Bomb Group Association are embarked on a program to increase the membership to 2000 regular members by the September '92 Reunion. At the present time we have approximately 1500 regular members.

But we need your help. We need—at the minimum—50 volunteers, one from each state to spearhead a statewide media campaign to reach former members who have, up-to-now, been

missed by our previous membership drives.

In the past we have directed our efforts mostly towards military affiliated publications. Now it is time for us to hit all facets of the media to include daily and weekly periodicals as well as radio and television outlets.

All those interested in helping with the campaign to find "lost souls," are asked to contact Bud Klint, President of the Association.

### Financial Status 303rd Bomb Group Association Inc. Jan. 31, 1990

Operating Fund	
Checking Account	\$ 1,361.00
Money Market Account	26,444.00
<b>Trust Fund</b>	
Trust Fund Certificates	48,525.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$73,330.00</b>
<b>Norfolk Reunion</b>	
Net Income	\$11,448.55
Receipts from PX	4,000.00
Hardin Raffle (clock)	511.00
Cannon Raffle (Flight doll)	511.00
Abbott Smith Raffle (Painting)	385.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$16,855.55</b>

The 303rd Bomb Group Association would like to thank Harley Cannon's daughter for making the flying doll and S/Sgt. Scott Hardin for making the clock which collectively raised \$1022 at the reunion. Our thanks also goes to Abbott Smith for bringing the painting "Wings in the Dawn" which was painted and donated to the 303rd by L.S. Beedle, Jr. It depicted the 303rd Bomb Group winging its way across the English Channel.

# Hell's Angels Forum

Your Chance to Sound Off!

## 1975: The Beginning

*Although the first reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group was held in 1948 it wasn't until 1975 when Charles McClain and his Florida cohorts really got the idea of a 303rd Bomb Group Association off the ground. Here are excerpts of two letters from his 1975 file which may be of interest to you:*

24 June 1975

What a pleasure to hear the Hell's Angels are still fluttering around in the halls of memory. I used to hear or run into old buddies while I was still on active duty but it has been years since my last contact.

I remained on active duty after the war and made Regular AF. Served various ZI bases, had another tour in England and was Staff Chaplain of the 314th Air Division in Korea. retired at Lackland AFB and settled here in San Antonio in 1963.

In case anyone remembers I was the Protestant Chaplain and joined up with the 303rd after I got to England transferring from the 2nd Evac Hospital after the 322nd Bomb Gp. (M) got shot up on the Velson raid. I sent many an English Penny over with the boys just as a reminder I was "talking to the Lord" on their behalf. Edmond J. Skoner was the Catholic Chaplain.

Hello to everybody and keep "Hell's Angels" in the air.

**Merritt O. Slawson**  
Ch. Lt. Col. USAF (Ret)

14 May 1975

Dear Colonel McClain

I am 13 years old and am very interested in the reunion of servicemen from RAF Molesworth. I have been there going to school but we had to go back to Alconbury to the new school. Also, I have a painting of "Eight Ball" from the 359th Sqdn. By the way did you guys bury some combat film? A man found it and dug it up and still has it in good condition. I read a book by the same man that is called "The Mighty Eighth" and has lots of information on Molesworth. In June there will be some B-17F and Gs coming to land at Duxford but I probably won't be able to see them because I will be in the U.S. for a vacation.

Was there a Lt. Col. Harold Susskind stationed on the base?

In our "Spartan Spirit" (our school paper) there was a bibliography that had "WW II revisited; Memories of Molesworth" by Harold Susskind.

I hope to get a B-17 when I'm older, though it sounds like a crazy idea. Could you give me some more information on the reunion and if I could come.

Thanks for your help.

**John Opgenorth**  
Box 352 RAF Alconbury  
APO 09238

*Ed. Note: Truth is stranger than fiction. In today's mail along with the letters from Charlie McClain was a Jan. 19, 1990 copy of the "Spartan Spirit" with news about the latest happenings at Molesworth. "WW II Revisited: Memories of Molesworth" was a story I wrote for the Air Force Magazine back in 1970 after I visited Molesworth almost 25 years to the day that I left Molesworth in the nose of a B-17 with Bill Heller bound for Casablanca and the deactivation of the 303rd.*

## Molesworth Tour

Theresa and I would like to thank all of the 303rds who made us so welcome at the Norfolk, VA reunion. The time we spent with you was all too short but the time we were able to spend in your hospitable company will be long cherished by us both. It was great to renew old acquaintances and to forge new friendships. I was especially honoured by the presentation of the "Certificate of Appreciation." After leaving Norfolk we motored down to Florida with Thelma & Joe Vieira, stopping off at both Cape Canaveral and Disney World in Orlando. A visit to the latter is obligatory for us "limey" visitors.

Theresa and I are currently working closely with Tamarac Travel Inc. of Florida on the 303rds get together over here next June. We have a great itinerary lined up for those of you able to make the journey back to England next year; including a behind the scenes look at the Molesworth Cruise Missile base now in mothballs and deactivated as the home of the 303rd Tactical Missile Wing of the USAF.

I am delighted to tell you that ¾ days of the week long activities will be in an around the Molesworth, Cambridge area with hotel

accommodation being centered on Bedford. This will save a lot of journeying to and from London. We shall be in a London hotel for the second part of the week. The villagers of Molesworth have formed a small welcoming committee and you'll be able to meet up with the local folks in a number of social get togethers. We will also be returning to Brington Church to rededicate the 303rd Memorial Plaque erected there during the 1984 mini reunion. Other visits are planned to the War Cemetery at Maddingly, Cambridgeshire and to the Imperial War Museum at R.A.F. Duxford where "Sally B", the only still flying B-17 in Great Britain is housed. The USAF will also be welcoming us onto their biggest base in the UK, at Alconbury.

It will, I assure you be a trip to remember and both Theresa and I will be in attendance throughout the week long activities. Tamarac Travel has mailed out details of this get together to all 303rd members. If they miss out on you, for some reason, you can contact them on (305) 484-4500; they also have a free-phone facility on 1-800-228-9690.

I am confident that many of you who returned in '84 will be wanting to return again this year. We hope that many more of you will make it this time, perhaps for your first journey back to England since the 1940's.

You'll all be made most welcome.

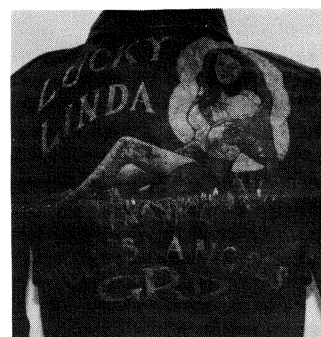
**Ray Cossey**  
5 Woodland Drive  
Thorpe End  
Norwich, Norfolk NR13 5BH  
England

## Who Knew Lucky Linda

About a month ago I spoke with you on the telephone about a 303rd BG airplane that I was trying to find more information on. The name of the plane was "Lucky Linda." I called William Heller and Walter Shayler to see if they could help, since I believe the plane was in the 360th BS. Both men had heard of the "Lucky Linda" but could not find out any info on it.

Since that time, I have joined the 303rd BG as an associate member and have received my first newsletter, which I enjoyed very much.

Enclosed are several pictures of



an original A-2 jacket and painting with the "Lucky Linda" on back and the Bomb Group/Bomb Squadron patch on front. Also enclosed is a copy of an original photo showing a collage of "nose art" and other individual photos from the 303rd BG. The picture of the "Lucky Linda" is at the top right. An enlargement of this section is also enclosed.

**John S. Reid III**  
4797 Rebel Trail N.W.  
Atlanta, Georgia 30327

*Ed. Note: The "original" photo he is referring to is one of the hundreds that was given out at Molesworth to 303rds near the end of the war. From the pictures of the A-2 jacket it seems to be on display someplace but the writer didn't say where. Here's a photo of Lucky Linda on the back of the A-2 jacket. Did you know the lady? If so let's hear from you.*

## Fate of Hell's Angels?

Just received the December issue of the Newsletter. I enjoyed it very much as I always do, but pages 4 and 9 were blank. As there must be very important or interesting news on those pages I wonder if you would be so kind as to send me a copy of them.

We enjoyed the reunion at Norfolk and I have just finished putting my pictures in an album. While doing so I have relived some of the memories of the good time that we had. I am also enclosing a little information that I received the other day about our famous plane "Hells Angels."

A former member with me in the Boy Scout Troop 9, of St. Paul, Minn., Oz Newuman remembers our B-17 "Hells Angels." He was a B-24 pilot instructor and to become a B-29 pilot, he had to have some time in B-17s. He was first sent to Roswell, N.M., and then the program was transferred to La

## Forum

Junta, Colo. In the training, they flew what they called "War Wearies," of which "Hell's Angels" was one. He is not sure at which of these two bases that he flew "Hell's Angels."

I saw the movie "12 O'Clock High" the other night and it had a 10 second shot of the "Black Diamond Express" in the combat scene. That plane kept us busy at the hangar, but, it always came back... with holes.

**Henry G. Johansen**  
444th Sub. Depot

### Our Top Recruiter

At long last I have received another affirmative reply to the thirteen letters my wife and I sent out to lost former 303rd members. With two affirmative and five return to senders we still have six to hear from.

This latest response is Wm. Mayo Reeves, P.O. Box #687, Lebanon, IN 46052. As with the earlier member, I have already sent him an Association membership application and am sure he would appreciate a copy of the latest newsletter.

I am hoping to be able to notify you of more affirmative responses in the future.

**Charles D. Rukes**  
Associate Member #A-65  
Rt. 1, Box 147A  
Geary, OK 73040

### No Divorce

A close friend of mine—we grew up and went to school together—(both of us are now 70) was an original member of the 303rd B.G. and passes on to me the "Hell's Angels Newsletters."

I really enjoy reading every word of them, and congratulate everyone involved in producing same. In the July newsletter I really enjoyed "Chappie" Slawson's article, "This is how I Feel" and I'll tell you why.

I was an original member of the first B-24 group in the 8th AF arriving late in August 1942, with the 93rd B.G. known as "Ted's Travelling Circus."

During our 33 months, I as crew chief had four of my planes listed as MIA and lucky enough to fly home in #5 in May 1945. After every loss I was sick inside for a long time and even now I have my

"down in the dumps days." Our air crews and ground crews had a great relationship and we do have the same today as we attend our various 2nd Air Division reunions and stay in touch thru mail and telephone. As an example my first group C.O., Lt. Gen. E.J. Timberlake and first sqdn C.O. Maj. Gen. Ramsey D. Potts still keep in contact with me even though I was only a M/Sgt., crew chief and part of the ground crew. We were then, and are, now, one large happy family.

I am sure with men like Chappie Slawson, the 303rd will not have a divorce in its midst and will continue to be a great, great group as you were at Molesworth.

Your newsletter is great, keep up the good work just as you did in the Mighty Eighth.

**Howard Macreading**  
93 Darrow Drive  
Warwick, RI 02886

### Bugs Bunny Not a Road Sign

When the 303rd was training at Alamogordo, N.M. in the summer of '42, the 427th Sqdn. C.O. Charlie Sheridan ok'd my suggestion to write to Warner Brothers requesting that Bugs Bunny be our mascot and squadron insignia. In a few weeks we received an original drawing showing Bugs with one foot on a sputtering bomb casually munching a carrot. It was accompanied by a letter authorizing the 427th's use of the artwork.

We had "Bugs" shoulder patches made and the insignia painted on the noses of our B-17s before they left the States. Later, as I recall, the 8th AF ordered squadron insignias removed from the planes, although I always thought Bugs was more creative than the letters GN that replaced him.

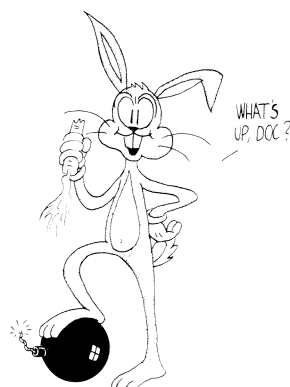
The original art disappeared before we departed the States, and I have no patch or photo of it. However, it looked something like my enclosed drawing.

John Gell writing in the December issue about researching group and squadron insignias, said, "The 427th is a simple thing that looks a bit like a road sign."

As the wascally wabbit might retort: "like a road sign? Geez, doc, gimme a break—do I look like a road sign?"

Bugs was the 427th, and vice versa.

**Jack Gardner**  
5147 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15232



*Ed. Note: When the 303rd was reactivated as a wing at Davis Monthan AFB all the squadrons submitted insignias which were approved. The 427th's does look like a road sign. As I said before and will keep on saying, "In WW II we were good flyers but terrible administrators. We have been terribly short changed on awards because of the same reason."*

### Request For Info

How can I obtain pictures of two flight crews which were taken in November 1943 when we were assigned to the 360th? One is of Lt. George Underwood and crew of which I was a member at that time and the other is Lt. Fred Wilson and his crew. Both crews were shot down and I lost some very dear friends.

Any help that you can give me would be greatly appreciated. These pictures would mean a great deal to me.

**John J. O'Donnell**  
P.O. Box 373115  
Satellite Beach, FL 32937

I have been trying, for more than 20 years, to get a chronicle of our missions over Germany together. I had a partial list of our missions but we had a flood here in 1972 and I lost all of the records.

Now, I am trying to reconstruct my records if I can; or try to make a new chronicle of my crew's missions. I am wondering, if, perhaps you could help me before I kick the bucket.

Our crew was in combat from July 1944 to February 1945. We flew 35 missions. Our crew as piloted by Sidney Underdown; co-pilot William Knolle; navigator was John Kenny; bombardier was Joseph Tyree; I was the engineer-gunner; radio man was Frank Posada (we lost him); he was replaced by Wayne Carmen; ball turret gunner was Walter Guptill; waist gunner was Pins Botton and

tail gunner was Richard Stevens.

If there is a way that I could get information on the missions flown by the Group and the 359th Sqdn., on or about the dates I have mentioned, I would be forever grateful. We mostly flew in the "Bonnie Bee" but we also flew in the "Eight Ball."

"Bonnie Bee" is pictured in the mural in the Air and Space Museum of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. We were the crew on that day that is depicted in the mural.

Do you think there is any way that I could get some information on the mission I have mentioned. I recall some of the names but not the dates, as for instance, Brux, Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, Bonn and others.

Could you help me? I hope you can.

**John Kuwik**  
79 School St.  
Wellsville, N.Y. 14895

*Ed. Note: I know Bob Black has a list of practically all the missions that the group flew. He showed it to me at the reunion. But when George Stallings finishes his project at the National Archives we will also have the names of all the people who flew on those missions. We hope to put that into a computer so that if anyone wants a record of his missions and some particulars of any of those missions it will be a simple matter to query the computer and then get a printout. At the present time I guess we are about a year away from finishing that project. If you can give me dates I can give you the mission that the 303rd flew that day. You can do this by writing to the Air Force Flight Records Section at Norton AFB, California and ask for a copy of your Form 5. Everytime you flew a combat mission there will be a "C" next to your flight time and date. The names of the target will not be on your form 5. We will match up your dates and times with the missions that the 303rd flew.*

I am attempting to locate former aircrew members who served with a relative of mine, 2nd Lt. Daniel Singleton (0766963), deceased, while he was attached to the 427th BS, 303rd BG as co-pilot on a B-17: P Lt. Thomas A. Duncan N FO Martin Morrison B Lt. Dennis A. Byrne E S/S Francis H. Dietrich RO S William O. Murphy G S William A. Ralphs G C Orphus Smith Jr.



# Forum

G S Myron A. Elling  
G S/S Charles P. Chalcraft.

I would appreciate a notice in the next newsletter. Replies may be made to me at the address below.

**Martin Ashley**  
**259 Rivertree Way**  
**Sacramento, CA 95831**

*Ed. Note: Dietrich and Elling are members of the 303rd BGA.*

I write to respectfully request that you place the following item in the next Hell's Angels Forum:

My best friend, Harry B. Britter, 2nd Lt., Bombardier, 360th, was killed (whole crew 43-37629) Aug. 27, 1944 over Esbjerg, Denmark.

Would anyone who might have known Harry please write or call me.

**Bill Luttrell**  
**2519 So. 3rd E #3**  
**SLC, Utah 84115**  
**(801) 487-7027**

You will not know me but I have been given your name and address by a very old and dear friend of mine, who I met during World War II and he told me that if I got in touch with you, you may be able to help me locate an American Officer who was in the USAAF during the war and stationed, I seem to remember in Molesworth, England.

It was in 1944 and his name was 1st Lt. Howard Wright, age 25, with the 360th Sqdn., 303rd Bomb Group.

He was a very nice man and took a lot of photos of me and since then I have lost all my photos of that time because of moving house in those days. I have always longed to have some of the photos but have never, until now thought of any way I could get in touch with Howard. He will now be at least 69 or 70 years old and I hope he is still going strong. Failing this, you may be able to let me know of any one who knew him; perhaps wife or relatives who could help. He took lots of photos as he was quite a keen photographer. I'm sorry I haven't been able to supply his service number but as I was only 19 in those days, I didn't think to ask for it.

Yours truly and hopefully.

**Jean Nancy Abrams**  
**1, Spinney Close**

**Valley Prospect**  
**Newark**  
**Notts NG 24 40X**  
**England**

P.S. In those days my name was Jean Rowe and I lived in Northampton with my parents.

*Ed. Note: Perhaps someone in the 360th can help this lady. My meager records show a Capt. Howard R. Wright, a navigator, as having finished his tour of 25 missions on 9 Sept. 1943. Does anyone have an early roster of the 360th Sqdn. with Wright's service number?*

I would like to invite your attention to the following:

Since over five years I am researching in detail the 8th Air Force mission #182 to Oschersleben, Halberstadt and Brunswick on January 11, 1944. All Bomb/Fighter Groups which were participating in that mission are included in my research. I am intending to publish the entire story about that day's mission as a factual account, dedicated to the perished crewmen for their supreme sacrifices in fighting for the freedom of Western Europe.

The 303rd B.G. was also involved in that mission and ten of the Group's planes were lost that day. I am in possession of the Group's mission reports, navigator logs, etc. and nearly all the MACR's. Such a history can not be written without the help of the crewmen involved, hence I very much would like to get in touch with crewmen who flew that day's mission, those who did not return that day and those who died, to learn some more about the heavy air battle. Presumably not all survivors are members of your association but you might have addresses of some of them. Just to name a few crews who were lost: Emerson, Simmons, Carother, Eich and Schwaebe.

For illustrating the 303rd B.G.'s involvement, I am searching for photographs taken during the mission, lost planes etc. I will be more than glad to reimburse any costs for mailing copies etc.

Your help to record the events of those days is greatly appreciated and I would be grateful for any assistance you can provide.

Many thanks in anticipation and I am looking forward to hearing from you soon.

**Jaap van der Kuylen**  
**Pietgorslaan 8**  
**3181 SN Rozenburg**  
**Holland**

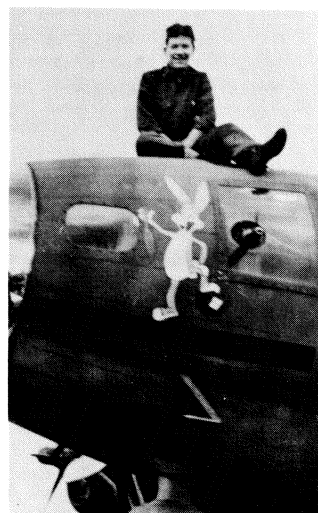
*Ed. Note: We also lost McClelland,*

*Hallden, Dashiell, Pursell and Campbell crews and parts of the Watson crew.*

*Following is an excerpt of a letter from the undersigned to Dr. Flyer and relayed to me for inclusion in the newsletter.*

I did not know that the glide bombs were used before May 28, 1944 in combat. You told me that you used them, although smaller ones, on the Sept. 27, 1943 mission to Emden. As I will visit the National Archives probably this year for detailed documentation research, I hope to gather additional information about the use of these bombs and find confirmation for earlier employment. If there is a newsletter of the 303rd Bomb Group I would appreciate it if you could make a small article of my research into the May 28, 1944 mission and ask all veterans who flew on this one to contact me.

**Ivo M de Jong**  
**Nettelhorst 6**  
**7414 HH Deventer**  
**The Netherlands**



Is this a 427th A/C? Who is on top?

## Evaders

I will report what our records indicate with reference to Evaders from the 303rd. While this information may either clear up or confuse the thinking, I must say the 303rd was well represented among the early group of Evaders. The numbers we have were assigned to the debriefing reports by intelligence in London. From experience, I know several men may have returned at the same time, but we were debriefed as individuals and numbers were then assigned to the reports. Our information indicates the following:

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| #1. Hollingsworth, Dal O.    | 303 BG  |
| 2. Crooks, Wm. B. Jr.        | 303 BG  |
| 3. Judd, Frank               | Group not known   |
| 4. Hollingsworth, Leroy S.   | 303 BG  |
| 5. Martin or Hartin, Forrest | — 306 BG  |
| 6. Mays, Robert L            | — 358 Sq., 303 BG down 12 Dec. 42 and returned 27 Jan. 43 |
| 8. Schowalter, Gilbert       | — 360 SQ., 303 BG   |
| 9. Williams, Jack E.         | — 360 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 12. McDermot, Mark L.        | — 427 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 13. Vogel, Sebastian         | — 427 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 14. Therrien, Norman P.      | — 360 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 16. Spence, John W.          | — 359 Sq., 303 BG down 23 Jan. 1943 returned March 43     |
| 17. Devers, Sid              | — 359 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 18. Hildebrand, K. G.        | — 358 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 19. Toney, J. R.             | — 358 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 20. Hartung, F. A.           | — 360 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 21. Gordon, Bruce W.         | — 358 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 22. Ruppe, E. T.             | — 358 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 29. Jones, Miles B.          | — 359 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 31. Whitman, Wm. A.          | — 360 Sq., 303 BG   |
| 32. Fegette, Lee             | — 360 Sq., 303 BG down 12-12-42                           |

From #33 up the 303rd group is not as dominant due to more groups in the theater. For example, I went down in Holland on 11 January, 44 returned 25 May, 44 and my # is 674.

Mays, Spence and Fegette from the above group are members of the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society. We believe there are 76 men of the 303rd who qualify for AFEES. There are 12 of us who belong and there are six known to be deceased. It is apparent we need to hear from many more of the Evaders from our 303rd.

**Clayton David**  
**19 Oak Ridge Pond**  
**Hannibal, MD 63401**

1943

JUNE 3, Thursday

We arrived today at Molesworth, England, 358th Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group. I think I'm going to like this.

June 11, Friday

Was scheduled to go on my first one today but was outranked at the last minute by the squadron bombardier, McCord. McSween (W.D.) and Kyse (Wally) went. We'll sweat them out. (Later—This one was rough. They bombed Wilhelmshaven instead of Bremen.)

June 13, Sunday

1st raid—Bremen. This was easy. Didn't see much flak and only 3 FWs. Dropped my bombs OK but didn't fire my twin nose guns at all in combat. Was worried more waiting for fighters than if they had actually been there. Flew with Jess and his crew. Good pilot. Next one should be tougher. 13 Bombers down.

June 14, Monday

Bill Pharmer (friend) went down yesterday on the raid to Kiel. Now a POW.

June 15, Tuesday

Started for France with O'Conner and his crew but turned back before we reached the French coast because of clouds. McSween was navigator.

June 21, Monday

Mission to Huls Synthetic Rubber Plant in the Ruhr; was scrubbed both morning and afternoon. Didn't even get off the ground. Was going with own crew for the first time with Rogan pilot. Looking forward to these missions now.

June 22, Tuesday

2nd Raid Huls. Another easy one for us. But more fighters (30) and more flak. Got a few shots in as fighters attacked our lead and low squadrons. We led the high squadron and were lead group. Rogan pilot. Good bombing, but Jess went down in flames over the target. E/A shacked us out to Rotterdam where Spits met us and drove them off. Good raid. May I see 28 more like it. 20 Bombers down.

June 23, Wednesday

Started for France (Paris) again this afternoon but turned back as we reached the English coast due to clouds. Guess I never will get to see Paris. Getting shot down over Paris would be real interesting. ("Sam" Bass told me later it certainly was). These damn dry runs are worse than the real thing. Hope we don't have any more. Tail-end Charlie today. Rogan pilot.

June 29, Tuesday

3rd raid Paris. Took off this afternoon to bomb an airdrome south of Paris. Didn't drop our bombs because of clouds but encountered flak and E/A. C.O. of P-47 Group was riding with us in the nose but he didn't see much excitement except when I shot at P-47s. Rogan Pilot. No bombers down.

July 4, Sunday

4th raid Le Mans.

Good raid but we got hit by flak. Plane damaged a little but no one injured. Good bombing. Plenty of fighter attacks kept us busy in the vicinity of the target. Saw an FW from 25 feet head on.

O'Connor went down on that attack over the target area. Timken's waist gunner killed by 30 caliber bullet. Rogan pilot. Led the squadron.

July 10, Saturday

5th raid Abbeville and Poix. Short haul to France today to bomb an airdrome. Some flak but no fighters. Escorted by P-47s in and out. Flew with Thompson in number five position. Three bombers down in day's operation.

July 24, Saturday

6th raid Heroya, Norway. Tough one. Plenty of flak and we got shot

## A Bombardier's

up bad, 49 holes in the ship. Oxygen system blew out. Salvaged bombs. Hope we have no more like it. Rogan pilot. Led the squadron. Low and low group. Kyse flew with Timken. Almost lost them but they finally got back.

July 25, Sunday—2 p.m.

Hamburg today but not for us. We're resting. They'll meet plenty of fighters today. Joy's last mission. Hope he makes it. We'll be sweating him out. (Later—Deignam, Davis and Schindler went down - all from the 384th.)

July 26, Monday

7th raid Hamburg again. A few fighters and plenty of flak. Saw some B-17s go down but we weren't attacked. Good bombing. Led the low squadron. Rogan pilot. Bombed an aircraft plant.

July 29, Thursday

Kiel today but not for us. Chaplain says we'll all be home by Xmas. Bomber Command is planning a big one which will end the war in three months—they say. Must be an invasion. Rogan got his captaincy today—Beer on him tonight.

July 30, Friday

8th raid, Kassell. What a Cook's Tour this was. Went around the Ruhr to the west and south and came back to the north. Over 2½ hours over land and 4½ hours on oxygen. They made us know it with their fighters today—over 100 of them. Almost ran out of gas over the North Sea. Had to fall out of formation and come home on our own. English Coast looked good. Rogan pilot.

August 12, Thursday

9th raid Gelsenkirchen in the Ruhr. Synthetic oil refinery. Rough! Flak and fighters. 25 bombers knocked down. Rogan pilot. Led low squadron-low group. They had a good smoke screen over the target so the bombing was only fair. Rogan's 25th one today so that finishes him up.

August 15, Sunday

10th raid Poix and Amiens airdromes. An easy one. Good bombing. No fighters and little flak. Gamble Pilot—first one as pilot. High squadron-high group. One bomber down.

August 16, Monday

11th raid Le Bourget airdrome in Paris. Good bombing. No flak but plenty of fighters. High squadron-lead group #2. Three bombers down. Gamble Pilot.

August 17, Tuesday

12th raid - Schweinfurt. Ball bearing factory and town, Flak and fighters. Plenty rough. Flew #3, low squadron-composite group. Our high squadron of 5 planes wiped out. McCord, lead bombardier, hit by flak on the bomb run. Has a 50-50 chance, our gunners got 4 E/A. 36 bombers down but we did our job.

Gamble-Pilot-good flyer. This was the big one.

August 19, Thursday

13th raid airfield at Gilze-Rijen in Belgium. Almost got it. Made 2 runs and missed target. Attacking E/A hit nose, tail and #4 engine setting it on fire. 20mm cannon shell knocked me ass over teakettle when it hit the nose and exploded in my face. By the Grace of God.

Shebeck went down in flames. Also Solverson who was on his 23rd. This was supposed to have been a milk run. No more please! Over the hump.

August 20, Friday

48 hour pass. Met Walker Mahurin and his wing-man in London. P-47 pilots. Mahurin has 5 E/A destroyed to his credit. Nice guys. Learned a lot.

August 31, Tuesday

Started for France today but we had to abort because #2 engine gave

# Diary 1943-44

out. We were flying "Hell's Angels". First abortion in 40 missions. Lost Monahan today.

**September 3, Friday**

14th raid—Romilly Sur Seine an airdrome in France. 70 miles southeast of Paris. Gamble-pilot. Led the second element of the lead squadron, lead group. Pretty good bombing in spite of clouds. We'll go back again. Some flak and some fighters. Landed at Bovington for gas.

**September 6, Monday**

15th raid Stuttgart. A long raid into southern Germany but the fighter opposition wasn't bad and neither was the flak. Thank God. Gamble pilot. Led the high squadron lead group. Lost no ships in our squadron but we sweated out gas half way home. Most of the ships landed in fields near the coast. Target covered by clouds. Ten more.

**September 16, Thursday**

16th raid Nantes, France. A supply ship in port. Flew #4 low squadron—lead group Gamble-pilot. Not too tough for us but rough on the other groups. Clouds over the target but the bombing was fair.

**September 23, Thursday**

17th raid—Nantes. Same target but better results. Led high squadron, high group. Gamble-pilot. Saw only 4 E/A but flak was heavy over the town. 1 bomber down. Landed after dark. Practice mission to mid-channel in the morning. 8 more raids.

**September 27, Monday**

18th raid—Emden shipyards. Led high squadron-high group. Gamble pilot. Didn't drop our bombs because of cloud cover. A lot of E/A and some flak. P47 escort which did a good job covering us. Seven more.

**October 14, Thursday**

Rain and fog but they took off for Schweinfurt just the same. Our crew not going so we'll sweat them out from the ground. Later-60 bombers lost. Sanders went down. Good boys, we'll miss them.

**October 16, Saturday**

Don (Gamble) got his captaincy today.

**October 20, Wednesday**

19th raid—Durren but we didn't get there. Led low squadron low group. 8 FWs made a nose attack out of the clouds knocked down Hendry and Hartigan both flying on our wing. Hendry's 24th mission. McNamara went down with Hendry. His last mission. Six more to go.

**November 1, Monday**

Was promoted today (to 1st Lt.)

**November 3, Wednesday**

20th raid—Wilhelmshaven.

Led the low squadron, low group again. Dropped our bombs through the overcast. Had good P-38 and P-47 escort so we were not attacked by E/A although there were plenty of them around. 5 bombers down but none from our group. I'll take four more like it.

**November 26, Friday**

21st raid, Bremen. Rough raid. Led high squadron lead group. Plenty of flak and one nose-on fighter attack that was a lulu. 20mm knocked off Fort's ship, killed the navigator and badly wounded Spencer, bombardier. Cote, of 427th squadron down. 29 bombers lost.

**December 30, Thursday**

22nd raid—Ludwigshafen. A long ride into Germany with plenty of fighters and flak. Gamble pilot. Led high squadron of low group. 3 more 22 bombers down. Good fighter escort all the way.

**December 31, Friday**

And so ends the most eventful year of my life. Mayer, Hartigan, Douthett and Hargrove have escaped from France so far.

1944

**January 1, Saturday**

48 hour pass. A good way to start the new year.

**January 11, Tuesday**

60 bombers lost today, 10 from our group (but 11 crews) Campbell, Emerson, DaShiell and Schwabe went down. Watson came back after his crew bailed out over Holland. Kaliher (427th) went down. Fighters were very rough.

**January 29, Saturday**

23rd Raid Frankfurt. Major Mitchell pilot. Led the high group and hit the target. Plenty of flak and fighters around but we weren't attacked. Mitchell, Lake and Lemon finished 25 today. 31 bombers down and 13 fighters down.

**February 6, Sunday**

Raid to France. Don's 23rd mission but I didn't go as I was outranked by the group bombardier. Sweating them out now but it should be easy. Scharch will be finished 25 today. Later-Bass went down.

**February 23, Wednesday**

Gamble made a one wheel landing today after bailing the crew out over the field. Good job.

**February 28, Monday**

24th raid—Pas De Calais. Cross bow target. Flew with Taylor in the high squadron. No fighters, plenty of flak. Dropped our bombs after four runs on the target. Hit by a small piece of flak on the chest which also cut a hole in my oxygen mask tube. Good old flak suit. I'll wear three of them on my 25th.

**March 4, Saturday**

Berlin again. Bombed Cologne instead - a couple of groups got there 14 bombers, 23 fighters missing. Still sweating out that last mission. Tomorrow maybe.

**March 9, Thursday**

25th raid Berlin. No fighters but plenty of flak. Led the low squadron of the lead group. Litman-pilot. 7 bombers missing. That's all, brother!

**March 11, Saturday**

Relieved from combat!

**March 28, Tuesday**

Went by rail to the River Clyde to board the Queen Mary for the five day trip back to the States. There were very few of us on board.



**GAMBLE'S CREW**—Coburn is rear row center with Gamble far right.

The foregoing is not meant to be a history of the 358th but rather my perception of some missions that I participated in or knew about plus some extraneous but vital events that caught my attention at the time. These bare-bones notes are open to corrections and different interpretations by others. On reflection, I'm sure I was going funny (flak happy) early on.

**Lt. Col. Ralph F. Coburn USAF Retired**

# Munich

The mission on July 16, 1944 began like most. At 0330 hours an operations sergeant opened the front door of the Nissen hut, stepped inside and said:

"OK gentlemen . . . four-o'clock breakfast, five-o'clock briefing"

He walked twenty feet further toward the far end of the barracks and repeated the wake-up call in the same apologetic but firm tone. In this hut the pilots, navigators and bombardiers for two B-17 crews began to stir and prepare for eight or nine hours in the air, mostly over enemy territory. Similar wake-up calls were going on in the huts where the flying engineers, radio operators and gunners were sleeping.

Outside, it was dark and pleasantly cool. The stars shined brightly in the sky. Some heading for the mess hall rode bicycles but most walked the quarter mile. Breakfast was eaten quietly and with some apprehension about the day ahead.

Pilots, navigators, bombardiers and gunners each had their own briefing because they had different jobs in the course of the mission. Their briefings were designed to prepare each to do his job. Pilots began arriving at their briefing room about ten minutes before the scheduled time. It was a rather large room with several rows of backless benches divided down the middle by an aisle. When full, it would contain the 110 pilots and copilots who, with their crews, would fly 55 B-17's in today's mission. The 303rd Bomb Group with its four Squadrons, the 358th, 359th, 360th and 427th was responding to an Eighth Air Force Bomber Command order for a MAXIMUM EFFORT. This meant . . . get every aircraft possible over the target with all the bombs they can carry.

The wall behind the slightly elevated stage at the front of the briefing room was covered by a draw-drape concealing a huge map of northern Europe showing the route that the 303rd along with many other groups would take to the target. At the left of the stage, a large blackboard on an easel provided aircraft and formation assignments for the mission. White T's representing airplanes were painted on the blackboard in a pattern simulating the formation. Pilot's names were chalked in above the T's and a letter and the last three digits of an aircraft's serial number were written to the left and right of the T stems respectively.

Lieutenants Walt Carney and Jim Hickey took seats toward the front of the room and began copying information displayed. They noted that they would be flying off the low flight leader's right wing in aircraft C442. The B-17 that they would fly today also had a name like most. Some were very imaginative. The name painted on the nose of C442 was Aint Misbehavin. Although the mission planners used official designations, the crews knew by their names.

Conversations among the pilots subsided as the Briefing Officer took the stage and faced them. There was never any delay in that somewhat dramatic moment when the drapes were drawn and the target was announced. Usually there was no response from those listening

unless the target, like today's, was regarded as a rough one. This was the third consecutive trip for the 303rd to heavily defended Munich. There were some subdued grunts and moans.

Once the target was known, the briefing staff provided information about the route, wind speed and direction, cloud conditions, type and number of enemy fighters expected along the route, type of friendly fighters and rendezvous times, temperature at altitude (usually about -45%) and flak strength and accuracy anticipated in the target area. Instructions were given about forming the Group after takeoff and departing for Germany. Times were provided . . . times for leaving the English coast, reaching the IP (Initial Point, the beginning of the bomb run which was a straight line to the target about fifty miles long), even a time for turns that the formation would make enroute. Then, of course, there were times for checkpoints on the way home and arrival at base. The times for the crews to be at their aircraft, start engines, taxi and takeoff also were given and finally, everyone synchronized watches.

At the Equipment Room flight clothing, oxygen masks, throat mikes, head sets, escape kits (in case you survived being shot down over enemy territory) and, of course, parachutes and Mae Wests were either put on or carried in a bag to the airplane. Flak helmets and vests, which were worn on the bomb run and in the target area, were always left in the airplane. When crew members were ready, trucks waiting outside took them to their aircraft.

Carney's crew assembled at a hardstand in the 359th Squadron dispersal area where Aint Misbehavin was parked. The airplane, bombs, ammunition and machine guns were all checked. Engines were started at 0720 and the crew radio checked. A few minutes later according to the taxi sequence diagram received at briefing, they followed K484 from a nearby hardstand joining the long line of B-17's heading for takeoff.

Aircraft ahead were disappearing into the early morning sky and when K484 was far enough along in its takeoff, Carney rolled Aint Misbehavin onto the runway and eased the throttles forward. The sound of the four Wright 1820 engines, totaling 4800 hp, rose from a soft flutter to a roar and the ship moved rapidly forward. As it rumbled down the runway gaining speed, the tail lifted off then, momentarily, Aint Misbehavin thundered into the air with its 2880 gallons of gasoline, ten 500 pound GP bombs and nine crewmen. It climbed 10,000 feet in an upward spiral where it joined the growing formation of the 303rd Bomb Group.

Bomb groups from the bases at Kimbolton and Grafton-Underwood together with the 303rd, located at Molesworth, formed the 41st Combat Wing which consisted of approximately 175 Flying Fortresses. The 41st along with other Wings accounted for the more than 1200 four-engine bombers that were almost daily bombing Germany during the second half of 1944.

The 303rd concluded its assembly and headed toward Germany at 0904 as scheduled. On the way to departing the English coast, the three Groups identified each other and formed

into the 41st Combat Wing. It was a beautiful day and the sun was shining brightly. The higher you were the brighter it was. It danced and flashed off the many bright silver planes in the formation. Early in 1944 the practice of camouflaging new aircraft with paint was discontinued. The gain in flying speed outweighed any loss in concealment. The Germans did not have to see the aircraft to shoot at them. They were tracking them and firing their 88's and 155's with radar. Enemy fighters were not fooled by the paint either. Besides painted or not they had to stay in formation and that was where they were initially attacked.

When the 303rd left the assembly point, it began a slow climb to 28,000 feet, the bombing altitude. The higher you were above 10,000 the more critical was the need for oxygen. It was fatal to be off oxygen for three minutes at 28,000 feet. On long missions, like the one today, crews were above 10,000 feet and on oxygen for five hours or more. The masks were pulled snug against the face to form a good seal and sometimes you sweated into them. After five hours they were tiresome and a bit of a nuisance. Masks were usually not worn by crew members until they reached 10,000 feet. On board Aint Misbehavin it was time for an oxygen check.

Carney and Hickey had their masks on. Hickey pressed his mike button and said:

"Copilot to crew . . . oxygen check"

Turning his head left, he looked back at S/Sgt. Harold Turner, engineer and top turret gunner. Turner's usual position, when he was not in the turret, was in the middle of the flight deck just behind the pilot and copilot. Turner replied:

"Top turret OK"

The rest of the crew followed. . .

Philadelphian, Lt. A. Ray Taylor said:

"Navigator OK"

Togglier S/Sgt. Ray Tartaglia reported:

"Togglier OK"

S/Sgt. Al Foster radio operator said:

"Radio OK"

Sgt. Emil Kayrallah said simply:

"Ball turret"

Sgt. Willie Encinas reported:

"Waist OK"

And last, Clarence Howe from Minnesota commented:

"OK in the tail"

Routinely after departing the English coast, gunners were advised to test-fire their weapons. For the next few minutes the fifties from various places in the airplane stuttered short bursts to verify their readiness. All crew members were told to stay alert for enemy fighters.

As the formation neared the Continent, it turned and appeared headed for Cologne. The Germans knew that it was not that simple, they were not really going to Cologne. . . were they? They could not disregard this possibility because it had frequently been a target. As the stream of bombers got closer their uncertainty grew. . . they must alert their fighters. . . the city's defenses. Well short of Cologne the for-

# Remembered

by Jim Hickey

mation turned again. This time Frankfurt could be imperiled... certainly precautions must be taken! Next it looked as though Stuttgart might be the target. Mission planners at Bomber Command employed such strategy in an effort to prevent the enemy from guessing the target for as long as possible. At some point, of course, the Germans concluded that the target was Munich and activated their defenses with certainty.

Over enemy territory the radio operator manned one of the two waist guns so on the bomb run Encinas and Foster would be busy throwing chaff out of the airplane... chaff was thin aluminum strips intended to interfere with the anti-aircraft radar.

Along the route some clouds had been encountered. Mostly they were well below the formation. Now there were some high cirrus. When the IP was reached and the Wing headed straight for Munich, the clouds became solid. Only the element leader's aircraft to the left was visible. Bombing would be by radar because the target was obscured. Dropping off the lead ship, Tartaglia said: "Bombs away" as was customary and the ship lurched upward a little suddenly free of 5000 pounds. Moments later there was a substantial thud and Aint Misbehavin shuddered and rumbled like a car with a flat tire.

Hickey looked to the right out his side window and saw what looked like a stream of smoke trailing off the right wing behind the outboard engine (#4). Then from the waist, Encinas and Foster reported a strong gasoline odor. Number 4 prop was feathered. The airplane was under control and everything seemed reasonably normal. The impossibility of what had happened took a few moments to accept. An anti-

aircraft shell, probably an 88, had penetrated the right wing between #3 and #4 engines and about midway between the leading and trailing edges of the wing. The shell went completely through the wing! It went through #4 main tank and severed lines to the Tokyo tanks in the right wing tip emptying both. This was a direct hit!... and they survived it. About 800 gallons of gasoline was lost. It was learned later, on the ground, that the hole was about 18" in diameter and that the shell had just nicked the main spar in the wing.

Earlier in the war the Germans used anti-aircraft shells that exploded on impact. Today they were using time fuses which detonated the shell at the end of the time that the fuse had been set for... the time that it was expected to take to reach the formation. Sometime later they began using proximity fuses which detonated when they came close to a substantial metal object such as an airplane.

The reduced airspeed caused by the loss of #4 engine immediately dropped Aint Misbehavin out of the Group formation leaving it alone on instruments. Carney asked Taylor about getting back to the base. After some calculations involving headwinds, reduced airspeed, and remaining fuel, Taylor estimated that they would come down substantially short of the North Sea and with only three engines they would be prey to German fighters all the way. D-Day had occurred only six weeks earlier and virtually all of the Continent was enemy territory. Taylor suggested Switzerland and Carney asked for a heading.

Miraculously and a testimonial to the Boeing Aircraft Corporation and its workers, Aint Misbehavin climbed on three engines from

28,000 feet to over 32,000 breaking into the clear over northeastern Switzerland. No Swiss fighters came up to meet them as they had often been told at briefings would happen and as they neared Zurich they encountered anti-aircraft fire. Taylor did not have any maps that went south of Switzerland but he gave Carney a heading to the south and the journey continued. Everything was visual and they crossed the Ligurian Sea shoreline a little west of La Spezia, Italy which was German held. They fired at Aint Misbehavin but were far out of range. Carney had been letting down since leaving Switzerland and concern now focused on where the front-line was in Italy. No one knew. They were from England and had not followed the Italian campaign that closely. Hickey and Foster attempted to get an answer to Mayday calls but wound up talking to each other. Then #2 engine expired due to lack of fuel... they were running out of gas!

Carney and Hickey saw an airfield a few miles inland from the west coast of Italy and headed immediately for it not knowing whether it was German or American. As they got closer they recognized C-47's on the field and after landing learned that it was a hospital air-evac squadron.

Eight days later they were told to fly the airplane to Bari on the east coast of Italy where there was a large repair depot. Carney and Hickey took Aint Misbehavin off that short dirt runway with #4 feathered... another incredible compliment to Boeing... flew it to Bari and left it with the 15th Air Force. Aint Misbehavin certainly behaved well on July 16, 1944 despite many temptations.

The crew returned to England by courier.

## 38th Recon Sqdn.: Was It My Waterloo?

By  
Conrad J. Kersch

The picture and short history of the 427th Bomb Squadron, (formerly 38th Recon. Sqdn) reminded me of the strange quirk of fate that seemed to draw us together, let me explain;

When I graduated from Curtiss-Wright Tech, Glendale, Calif. as an airplane mechanic I was assigned to 4th Air Base, Sqdn. at March Field, Calif. Among other units there, the 38th existed as a Photo-Recon Sqdn. and was equipped with the B-18 and B-18A Douglas Bombers.

When the YB-17s were replaced by the new B-17Bs a number of us former Infantry machine-gunners were assigned to the 38th for aerial gunnery instruction. The B-18A had a retractable gun turret located about halfway between the wings and the tail. After the turret was hand-cranked up the gunner had to don a harness, similar to the lower portion of a parachute harness. This was worn

tightly as the gunner rotated the turret by hip power. Each gunner fired rounds, with painted tips for scoring, at a sleeve target being towed by another B-18 at the end of a long cable. The gunnery range was off Santa Barbara with the firing done towards the open sea. Anyway, most qualified for the Expert Badge.

Just before the new B-17 model (B-17E) came out I volunteered to attend the very first Power-turret specialist at the Sperry Gyroscope Co. factory in Brooklyn, N.Y. In the meantime the 19th Bomb Group had moved from our new base at Albuquerque, N.M. to the Philippine Islands. After being stranded unattached I was sent to Hamilton Field, Calif. for air-transportation to the Philippines.

To expedite the delivery of the new B-17Es coming out of Boeing Plant at Seattle, Wash, numerous flight crews were ferried up there to take delivery. It was a strange

experience following our aircrafts through the final stages of construction. After a quick, brief instrument and engine runup we took off to complete the aircraft shake-down on the flight back to Hamilton Field. The following day (6 Dec., 1941) I busied myself with checking the aircraft's special equipment and repairing a leaky hand-operated primer pump, after all, this B-17 was to take me to the Philippines, I wanted no problems over open water. It was late afternoon when I had finished my inspection and repairs when our pilot informed me that an outfit coming through was taking our aircraft and we had to go back to Seattle for a replacement. I found out later that it was the 38th on its way to the Philippines. That night while we were being ferried by C-47 back to the Boeing Plant the 38th was on its way to Hawaii.

Being short of rated pilots I filled-in as the co-pilot on a new

B-17E for the return trip. This aircraft required no maintenance and so joined two other B-17s (after the Pearl Harbor attack) in pioneering the new delivery and re-enforcement route to the Philippines via S. America, across Africa, across the Middle East, India and finally to the Netherlands East Indies. After flying combat for the rest of the year with the 19th Bomb Group I returned to the States to spend a dull life for eight months before being accepted for a return to combat flying. I joined the Osborne Provisional Group and was sent to England to be deposited in a Replacement Depot named Whitehall. Would you believe it...I was assigned to the 427th, formerly the old 38th. Evidently she didn't like my presence for I was shot down during my sixth mission. Each time the 38th touched my life it was of short duration, but, all in all, I have fond memories of her.



# AN EDUCATION IN FIVE SECONDS

By Jim Hicks

## Forward

The following story is put together from memory and is based on facts. Some of these facts are second handed and considering the length of time from when it happened, the memory may possibly, have a measure of fault.

The writer of this story, Jim Hicks, was a member of the 359th squadron, who first joined the group at Boise, Idaho, after attending tech schools, at Chanute Field and Boeing Factory Maintenance school, at Seattle. He was first assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron of the 303rd. After the move from Boise, Idaho to Alamogordo, New Mexico, the airplane and maintenance echelons of the Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron were dissolved into the other units. At this time and from then on the group had only four airplane and maintenance Squadrons.

Hicks was assistant crew chief on the famed "Duchess" for a period of time. This was the plane in which Bombardier Jack Mathis was killed and later received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his very successful bombing of Vegesack in spite of being mortally wounded on the bomb run.

He was also crew chief of the "Queen of Hearts," it doing about twenty-five missions with Bob Moreman and crew. At that point in time it was converted into a radar pathfinder (PFF) aircraft. From then on it was used as a lead ship within the 1st Air Division for whatever Squadron or Group was lead for the day. It even went so far as, on occasion, to be Air Force lead, also Air Force standby lead.

He puts this story together, as is said, from memory in hopes that it will be of interest to those who read it, whether they be an Air Force veteran or just one who is interested in how things went on in WW2 from the Air Force—Ground side—that is.

## The Story

The main parts or involvement in the story, or participants, maybe I should say, are, what is commonly known as a "Ninety Day Wonder," an airplane and a aircraft mechanic. His name was either M. Mortimer Moon or Mortimer M. Moon. I never was for sure which.

We would start with "The Ninety Day Wonder." Yes, and wonder

what this actually was? Well, to everybody that knew, this was a person that had usually finished college, was considered too educated to be a buck private so he was allowed to enlist or was drafted into the armed services. He was then put into a school called OTS or Officers Training School. This schooling was for ninety days and when he had finished he was commissioned a 2nd Lt. This was where the "Ninety Day" came from. Now, the wonder is another part. When we look at the word **Wonder** and think about it, we find that it covers a very wide scope. We can think of the wonders of nature such as the Grand canyon, The Petrified Forest, The Royal Gorge and many other things that are wonders of nature. Then there is the wonders that man has created. Hoover Dam, Washington Monument, and others. Yet we can also use this word for such things as to say, I wonder which way that plane will go when it takes off or I wonder which tree that bird will alight in. However, the above is not what we are thinking of as we look at this "Ninety Day Wonder." I think that there were many who looked at this individual with the thought in mind "I wonder what he is good for." These Officers, after they were commissioned were sent in as replacements for various positions and there were many places that they were in need; such as Mess Officer, Officer of the day, Officer of the Guard, Pay Officer and many other places where an officer was needed just to have an officer to sanction the operation in progress. Many of these men turned out to be very good in replacement and did excellent jobs. However, when they first came on the scene most of them thought, or at least it seemed that way, that because they were educated and had this ninety days of training that they were just hot stuff on a stick and—that's where they really got the name "The Ninety Day Wonder."

So now let us take a look at the airplane aspect of this story. When we first arrived in Great Britain, that is Scotland on the 12th day of September 1942 and at our airbase, station 107 Molesworth on the 13th, arriving by train at a little town by the name of Thrapston

and being trucked from there to our base. At this point in time our planes had not arrived and would not arrive until about mid-October. We did what chores that was necessary and other things to get ourselves in shape for the arrival of the planes. At the point and time of arrival they had to be made ready to fly combat, with a good many changes having to be made. And then there was flying training for the flying crews and just a lot of things and work had to go into getting ready to go into actual combat operation. Basically, at this time, there were no airplane guards and to my knowledge, other than field perimeter guards, there were none.

In the late winter of 1943 for one reason or the other, none of which was known to us, we were told that we had to guard our airplanes. This was not to be by posting guards in the usual manner as of regular guard duty but that members of the crew, except for the crew chief, would sleep in the plane every night, starting at dark, staying there all night or until he was relieved by those coming to work in the morning or by preparation for a mission which may be anywhere from 3:00 AM to 7:00 AM. It made this night of duty quite lengthy most of the time. The guard slept as he was dressed, in his work clothes. As weapons, he had a 45 pistol and a Thompson-sub machine gun. For bedding? Most of the flight crew left their heavy sheepskin flying clothes in the plane. Part of these he spread out on the floor and covered himself with some of the others. It was quite comfortable, to a point. Needless to say that these weapons were as handy as possible.

This guard was not supposed to go to sleep until he had been checked out by Officer of the guard which was sometime between 7:00 and 9:00 p.m. This made for a long time for him to be there and not sleep. There got to be tricks to this. There were those who would try to slip up on the guard and catch him asleep.

On this given night of which I speak, we have this one individual. Sgt. Moon. He was a person that wore glasses and because of the type of glass in the glasses, they almost looked like two moons and particularly so when being looked

at with a flashlight. Sgt. Moon was a little on the shaky side and if the occasion arose, a little jittery also. These two assets were somewhat enhanced by the fact that he was also stuttered a little if either of the other assets were present.

Apparently, Sgt. Moon was smarter than the rest of us. Instead of making his bed in the main middle of the plane, he made his by the back entry door, the one to the tail gunners compartment. True enough, if there were an enemy attack, it would probably come at the main part of the plane and not at the tail section. This would also give him the best possible advantage.

Now, as fate may have had it, on the given night, of which I speak, Moon was back there, 45 handy and sub-Thompson chambered, with safety on. All he had to do was release the safety, pull the trigger and he could mow down a row of 50 gallon drums.

There was also in action that night a new "Ninety Day Wonder" and he had drawn the duty of Officer of the guard. He and the Sgt. of the guard were making their rounds. He also knew what this was all about and was going to show his stuff by catching him a guard asleep. So he orders the sgt. of the guard to drive up easy and stop out a ways from the plane. He slips up to the main entry door, which was locked but not known to the officer. He reaches up there with a big hefty twist and jerk, the only thing happening was the near loss of a door and an arm; and then Moon came into action. The rear door opened, the sub-thompson was pushed out, out toward the officers belly and Moon says, "wwwwhhhhhhaaaattttt-dododoooo youuu wwaannnnntt?" As the officer turned toward Moon and with his flashlight seeing his so odd looking glasses and that twitchy finger on the trigger of the gun, the about five seconds that it took Moon to say what he did was all he, the officer, needed for an **EDUCATION** in five seconds.

*It is acknowledged that Sgt. Moon was entered into this story without his permission. However, we feel that since his character was enhanced and not degraded, he will not be displeased to be in this story.*

Jim Hicks

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

***Might - in - Flight***

APPLICATION FOR ☐ MEMBERSHIP    FOR ☐ LIFE MEMBERSHIP    FOR ☐ ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP  
 FOR ☐ SUPER LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Military Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. # \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Bus. Phone (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ ext. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Crew and/or Duty \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ Pilot's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Retired Military Grade, If Any \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

**MEMBERSHIP DUES/\$10.00 FOR CALENDAR YEAR****LIFE MEMBERSHIP DUES SCHEDULE**

60-64 years	\$75
65-69	60
70-74	45
75-77	30
78 years, or older	Free

**DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE MAIL!**

Make Check or Money Order payable to:  
 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Mail to:

Jim Reeves  
 28101 Tefir  
 Mission Viejo, CA 92692

Substantial savings are available to our members who wish to apply for Life Memberships. A few of our members have sent in money for 2 or even 3 years at the annual rate of \$10 per year. They should evaluate whether they might be able to save dollars by converting these prepayments to a Life Membership.



**MEMORIAL SITE**—Standing in front of the site chosen for the 303rd memorial at the 8th AF Museum, Barksdale AFB, LA are: Bill McSween, Bud and Mary Klint and Virginia and Quentin Hargrove. The B-17 in the background carries the 303rd markings. Negotiations are now underway to pick a contractor to erect a memorial stone marker with plaque installed. Additional information will be carried in the next issue of the newsletter. Tentative date for dedication ceremony is September 15.

**New Super Life Members**

Since the December issue of the newsletter, the following have qualified for Super Life Members: Lloyd I. Long, Warren L. Jacques, Robert G. App, M.D., H.H. Heller, Morton M. Moon, Jr., Martin J. McGuire, Anthony Kray, Clyde J. Bradley, Jr., Blaine R. Ruark, Kermit D. Stevens, Earl L. Malerich, Jr., William H. Peterson, James H. Hensley, Jr. and Mike Levin. Unfortunately, we overlooked Bill Heller and Richard L. Smith as Super Life Members in the December issue.



**I NOW PROUNOUNCE YOU**—Was this the first wedding of a 303rd member to an English young lady? This wedding took place near London in February or March of 1943. The groom was Larry Farrell, the co-Pilot on Sanford Smith's crew, 359th Sqdn. The photo was forwarded by Ford Kelley, 4th from right in photo. What happened to the couple? Maybe Ralph Adams or Sanford Smith can fill us in.

**Status Report:  
"Home for the 8th AF"**

Savannah, Georgia has been selected as site for the 8th AF "Home." The city has agreed to give us approximately 20 acres on US Interstate 95 adjacent to a newly funded interchange which will be the new entrance to Savannah International Airport. Traffic count is approximately one million vehicles per month.

Lew Lyle has been appointed project manager for this endeavor and has already established a new tax-free corporation "8th AF Heritage Center Inc." to raise funds and construct the facility.

This "Home" for the veterans of the Eighth and its units, special interests and memorabilia, records etc. is expected to be a major step in preserving the Heritage of the Mighty Eighth and its people.

A Foundation of top leaders from Georgia and other parts of the U.S. is being formed.

The 80,000 square foot facility will consist of a historical display and research center, an operational WW II control tower and a combination hangar and office complex.

A&E renderings are now in the hands of contractors for bidding. Ground breaking is planned for 1992 and when completed will represent an investment of \$7-8 million.

Work on the organization to conduct the fund drive, build the complex and get the new facility operational, are progressing quite well. Eight AF veterans have already provided \$140,000 to get the fund drive underway.

The corporate office is now located at 3025 Bull Street, Savannah, GA 31405.

Len Lyle

**Another Ex 303rd**

I was a member of the 303rd Bomb Group, 427th Sqdn., from Jan. '44 to June 16, 1944 as a S/Sgt gunner, S/N 11092339. From March 26, through June 14, 1944 I was in various hospitals in England before being returned to the states.

Horace S. Kenney, Jr.  
 Planting Island  
 Marion, MA 02738

This year's 8th AFHS Reunion is scheduled for Las Vegas, Nevada. Tentative dates are Oct. 4-7. More info on a possibility 303rd mini-reunion will be carried in the next newsletter. For further information contact Bud Klint.

## IN MEMORIAM

**Seymour Feldman** (358th Sq.) passed away in Charleston, S.C. on Dec. 3, 1989 at age 74. He joined the 303rd at Boise, Idaho in 1942.

**Darwin D. Sayers** (427th Sq.) 71, died on Oct. 3, 1989 in Logansport, IN. He was a pilot with the 303rd and was wounded over Germany. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters and the Purple Heart. He is survived by his wife Charlotte, two sons, Michael and John and one daughter Mary Jo and two stepsons Gary and Mark English and one stepdaughter Susan English; six grandchildren and four stepgrandchildren.

**Ted N. Peter** (427th Sq.) died in Las Vegas on Dec. 2, 1989 after a long illness. He was a crew chief at Molesworth in England. He is survived by his wife Mary and two sons, one who is a master-sergeant in the USAF in Las Vegas.

**David B. Foreman** (444th Sq.)

passed away on Fed. 11, 1989 in Lowell, Mass. after a long illness. He served with the 303rd at Molesworth in England. He is survived by his wife Mary and two brothers and a sister.

**Frank Juns, Jr.** (360th Sq.) passed away on Jan. 16, 1986 in California. He retired from the USAF as a colonel. He is survived by his wife Barbara Ann.

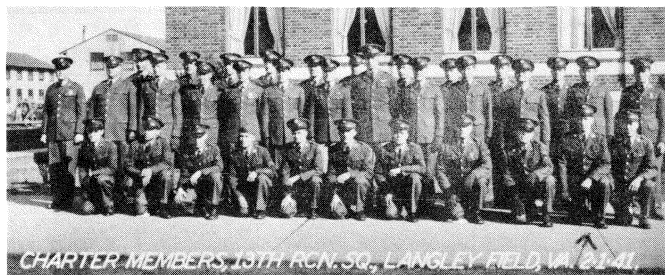
**Fay Lacquement** (360th Sq.) passed away in 1985. He is survived by his wife Phyllis.

**James A. Ellis** (427th Sq.) passed away on Dec. 23, 1988. He is survived by his wife Betty.

**Joseph J. Kalafut** (359th Sqdn.) passed away on December 26, 1988. He is survived by his wife Ann.

**Horace Dale Bowman** - passed away on July 29, 1989 from cancer of right lung. He is survived by his wife Patricia.

## Who Remembers The 13th Recon



I enlisted in the Air Corp on January 2, 1941. Took my basic training at Langley Field. I was assigned to the 41st Recon Squadron.

Later we formed the 13th Recon Squadron on February 1, 1941. A short time later we were sent to Dow Air Force Base in Bangor, Maine. Shortly after Pearl Harbor, some of the personnel in the enclosed picture formed the 43rd Bomb Group and were shipped to the Pacific. The rest of the person-

nel was sent to Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, assigned to the 303rd Bomb Group.

I would appreciate having the picture and this information published in Hell's Angels Newsletter.

Picture copies are available to anyone wishing to have one. Simply write a request to: Joseph Levesque, 13640 S.E. Highway 212, Clackamas, Oregon 97015. Cost would be approximately \$1.75 each.

## AIRMEN MEMORIAL MUSEUM

Founded in 1986, the Airmen Memorial Museum stands as a tribute to enlisted airmen who have served in the United States Air Force, the Army Air Corps, and the United States Army Air Forces.

Since the first Aeronautical Division was formally created in 1907, enlisted airmen have served at the leading edge. They have been balloon pilots, mechanics, gunners, engineers, communications specialists, cooks, clerks and more — much more. They helped perfect aerial bombing, jumped with the first parachutes, tested the ejection seats, kept Billy Mitchell flying, and they have sacrificed their lives for their comrades, the mission and the aircraft.

This relatively new museum is a maturing showcase of accomplishments. It is also designed to function as a research and reference center that documents and preserves the contributions of the men and women who have served honorably but, until now, without a memorial or museum they could call their own. No other repository in the world has accepted this challenge or pursued this mission. Information preserved here is available to the general public, student and scholar alike.

In June 1989, the Airmen Memorial Museum launched a major research effort to identify the role, duties and responsibilities of former enlisted veterans. Questionnaires are being mailed to 30,000 former members of the Army Air Corps, the Army Air Forces and the United States Air Force who served during World War II and the Korean War.

The museum's research effort is aimed at documenting the enlisted airman's role in service to the nation. We are telling a personal story. One of dedication, round-the-clock duty, years away from home, unswerving loyalty and a pioneer spirit. This is not a museum about planes, pilots or missions. It is a museum about people — enlisted people!

Museum displays and programs will tell the story of airmen — of individual remembrances and personal sacrifices. Planned exhibits will present artifacts, diaries, personal gear and dated equipment with historical narration. All of this will be complemented with a careful blend of audio-visual programs and "high technology."

The Airmen Memorial Museum is located at 5211 Auth Road in Suitland, Maryland, just eight miles from Washington, D.C., and near the Smithsonian Institution's Paul Garber Preservation, Restoration and Storage Facility and Andrews Air Force Base. The museum is open 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. weekdays and during specially scheduled events. For more information about this affiliate if the Airmen Memorial Foundation, contact George E. Hicks, Museum Director, toll-free at 1-800-638-0594 or (301) 899-3500.

## 303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

C/O Hal Susskind  
2602 Deerfoot Trail  
Austin, TX 78704

Bulk Rate  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Round Rock, TX  
Permit #861