

# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

OCTOBER 1992

## At Gowen Field

# 303rd RETURNS TO ITS ROOTS

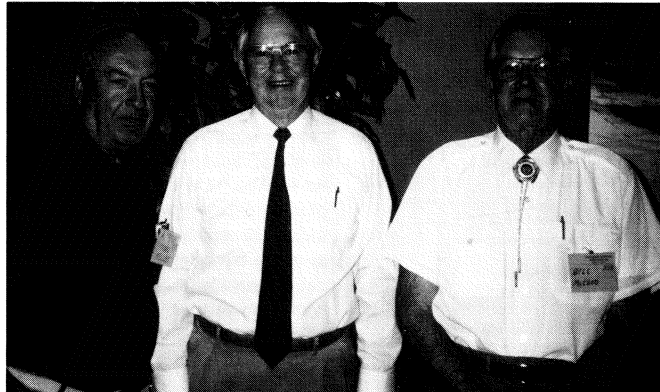
In what could be termed as their "last hurrah," 700 members -including 83 of the original cadre - of the 303rd Bomb Group returned to their roots at Gowen Field, Idaho to celebrate the Golden Anniversary of the group and to honor all those who have passed on since the unit was formed at Boise in 1942.

The second best attended reunion included three former group commanders and many squadron commanders as well as at least one representative from every career field which made the Hell's Angels Group the workhorse of the 8th Air Force. Group Commanders included Colonels Kermit D. Stevens, William S. Rader and Lew Lyle. Squadron Commanders included Glynn F. Shumake, Walter K. Shayler, William C. Heller, Edgar E. Snyder, Jr. and Robert M. Sheets. Edwin Barry who commanded the 1114th Quartermaster Company from Gowen Field to Molesworth also attended.

The program put together by James Taylor, V/P for Reunions and his committee of Walt Mayer and Jack Rencher and their wives kept the tremendous turnout both busy and wet. The Payette River rafting trips turned out to be all they were touted to be. For all appearances it seemed to be a contest between the occupants of the six person rafts as to whom could get the wettest. And the wetter each person got the more amusing the four hour trip on the Payette became, but I don't know if the lady who fell overboard will agree with that statement. The other tours to the Warhawk Air Museum, Boise City of Trees and the Birds of Prey were all well patronized.

At the group breakfast on Friday a 303rd brass plaque was presented to city officials for hanging in Boise Air port Terminal.

The squadron and general membership meetings also held on Friday were well attended. The highlight of the general membership meeting was the election of officers for the 303rd BGA for 1992-94. Heading the list is William S. McLeod, Jr., president; J. Ford Kelley, V/P for Administration; James B. Taylor, V/P for Reunions; Edgar C. Miller, Secretary and William J. Roche, Treasurer.



**ELECTED** - Pictured are 1992-94 officers of the 303rd BGA. They are (l to r) Ford Kelley, V/P for Admin.; Ed Miller, Secretary and William McLeod, President. (Photo by Walt Mayer)



**Colonel Kermit Stevens and Marion.** (Photo by Coleman Sanders)



**Bill Rader (3rd from left) one of the 1942 Gowen cadre who became commander of the 303rd at Molesworth following Col. Stevens, views memorial ceremonies along with Mary and Bill Eisenhart (left), Shirley Sanders and Bill and Alice McLeod.** (Photo by Sanders)

On Friday night, a jazz ensemble from the USAF's Band in Blue from Travis AFB, CA, gave a concert of "Golden Oldies" for members of the 303rd Bomb Group and their guests. The ensemble was under the direction of T/Sgt Bill Murphy.

A very colorful and moving Memorial service was held on Saturday to dedicate the 303rd memorial erected at Gowen Field and to honor all former 303rds who lost their lives in the war and those who have since passed away. The eulogy was given by L. Melvin Schulstad, one of the original members of the 303rd. Benediction was given by Bishop Rene H. Gracida, Bishop of Corpus Christi and a former member of the 303rd. A fly-by was performed by the 124th Fighter Guard, Idaho Air National Guard commanded by Lt. Col. Jim Davies.

Also discussed during the reunion was a "nostalgic return to Molesworth," England, May 19-28, 1993 and a reunion in Savannah, GA., from 29 March through 2 April 1994. Additional information is contained elsewhere in this newsletter.

For the group's golfing enthusiasts a golf tournament was held at the Plantation Golf and Country Club in Boise. Two flights were formed for the competition. Fourteen women competed in the Molesworth flight and the low net winner with a net of 70, was Peggy Edmunds. Eighteen men competed in the Gowen flight and Oscar Deen with a 64 was the low net winner.

Gil Murray, an original member of the 360th Sqdn. made a substantial supply contribution to the hospitality room.

Plaques of appreciation were presented to Association out-going president, Carl DuBose, Jr.; Harry Gobrecht, historian; Carlton Smith, membership chairman; Charles Schmeltzer, treasurer; Jack Rencher, Boise, host for this year's reunion and a special plaque to Jim Taylor in recognition the fine work done in preparing for and implementing the Boise Reunion. Special recognition was acknowledged for the outstanding reunion work done by Louise Rencher and Bev. Mayer.



# Hell's Angels Forum

## Your Chance to Sound Off!

The attached correspondence and prayer from Chappie Slawson was forwarded to me by Walt Mayer. Although it was received too late to use in the ceremony at Gowen Field and at the Boise Reunion I agree with Walt that it should be used in this issue of the newsletter. Since it expresses Chappie's feelings for the 303rd, it is being presented to you just as it was received.

*"I have been working on the enclosed for several days. After several efforts I got it typed — so many mistakes. On the last typing I got disgusted and put 2 corrections together. Use any, none, or all of it as you see fit. I love the Group so much that I hope some of it can be used in Memorial Service or business meeting. I will be honored if it can be used to express my love for the best friends I could ever have."*

Dear members of the 303rd Bmb (H):

I had hoped to be with you for this special event but it was not to be. The years have taken their toll and my activities are very limited now. Rest assured we will be thinking of you as you meet.

Of course those of you who formed the Group here at Boise will remember that Father Skoner was Group Chaplain and it is regrettable that he did not live to see this day. He had two loves, his Church was number one and the 303rd Bomb Group number two. My experience with you began in early 1943 in England when I was transferred to the 303rd from a B26 Gp and it has been a wonderful love affair ever since. I can not put into words how much your expressed friendship and love have meant. I doubt if any other experience could have affected my life as deeply as this. In turn I have tried to bring you the consolation of God's love. God bless you for this experience and we love you all. For this I would like to share this prayer with you:

Thank you dear God for bringing us here to a moment of memory. We remember with pride the courage and skill of young men who sometimes through trial and error showed others the way. Some survived to pass their knowledge on. Some through their sacrifice while in training here makes this hallowed ground to those of us who remain. Here today we give thanks for a brothered born. never to be forgotten. In great measure it was the skill, courage, and dedication of our Group members who made our B-17 the instrument of success that it became. God bless the memory of the men who

flew them and God bless the memory of the men who kept them flying.

Amen

**"Chappie & Mama"**  
**MERRITT O. SLAWSON**  
**Ch LtCol. USAF. Ret.**

### "Return to England"

Thought the letter below might be of interest to the FORUM and also the reunion committee. While we did not make it to Boise; my wife and I returned to England in May 1992 traveling with the 379th from Kimbolton and visited with M/Sgt. Bill Evans at Molesworth. Also at Molesworth that day was Pete Clark of Dallas, the original Hells Angels crew along with his son and daughter-in-law. Great to meet him and Robin Beebe of Kettering. (Beebe was at the Boise reunion). Attended the Memorial Service at Maddingly. Very impressive and very emotional. While at Molesworth in late '44 and early '45, I took a great many snapshots which a friend developed at the base photo lab. These are the negatives that Sgt. Evans is referring to. I think his letter is interesting and his thoughts about centering at least part of your "return to England" reunion at or near Molesworth.

We traveled with Tamarac Travel and they did a great job for the 379th and went out of their way to accommodate a few of us from other bomb groups. We stayed an extra week at a B&B in Bedfordshire, near Sandy; and took day trips by Brit Rail pass.

The people were great - those of our generation as well as younger people stopped us on the street, shook hands and thanked us. Really heart warming. The village of Kimbolton held a day long celebration, memorial service and evening dinner at a local pub with village leaders. A great experience

**William J. Carter**  
**709 Duff Avenue**  
**Ames, Iowa 50010**

Dear Bill,

Just got your the letter day before yesterday and thought I'd better write right away to let you know that I have received the negatives.

A friend of mine has volunteered to print the negatives for me. What we'll do is print a contact strip of all the negatives to see which ones we can enlarge. Then we'll print multiple copies of each useable negative. One copy of each will go into the Molesworth History Room (which you'll be able to visit next year, if we

can talk you into coming back to Molesworth).

Col. Shaffer and I have talked several times about trying to get the 303rd Association to hold the convention at RAF Molesworth next year. Not only does it seem appropriate to bring the guys back together again at Molesworth but the young kids stationed here would get a kick out of meeting all of you. I am frequently stopped in the street to ask when the next 303rd veteran is coming. A lot of the kids have a keen interest in the guys who made Molesworth famous. While we don't have all the facilities here at Molesworth to hold a convention, we could help find a convenient site suitable to the 303rd's needs. We'd love to open the base and the dining hall, show the guys around and feed them a modern chow hall meal (which is a heck of a lot better than either the meals we used to get from a combat chow hall or the K or C-rations we used to eat on long flights!).

Bill, you'll remember the only remaining J-type hangar we have here at Molesworth. We stood at the end and talked about the old days. I suggested to Col. Shaffer that that hangar would look real good with the original 3G3rd emblem painted on the hangar doors. As I expected, he is all for that idea. Hopefully, we can have that done before you and the other fellows get back next summer.

**Sincerely**  
**MSgt. Bill Evans**

I have been a member for many years and recently received my LM card. In my request for this card I mentioned to C. Smith that in all the Hell's Angels publications I had never read any article regarding the 41st CBW stationed at Molesworth. The Combat Wing under the leadership of General Travis had a staff of 20-25 officers and 40 EMs. The 41st controlled the 303rd BG, the 92nd BG and the 384th BG. Kimbolton, Polebrook and Molesworth. You could contact Col. Travis, the general's brother, who was stationed with us for more info, or Capt. Thompson, Lt. Finley, Col. Calhoun and Lt. Donald Sheldon. It would be interesting.

**Rene G. Pilon**  
**109 Shawmut Ave.**  
**Central Falls, RI 02863**

*Ed. Note; I don't write about robbing a bank because I never robbed one. Since I never served with the 41st CBW I don't feel qualified to write about them. For instance I always thought the 41st CBW was composed of the 303rd, 379th and the 384th, i.e., Molesworth, Kimbolton and Grafton-Underwood. We learn something new everyday.*

### One of the first!

Being a new member of the 303rd Bomb Group Ass'n., I received a copy of the Hell's Angels newsletters April '92 and July '92. After reading them may I have all prior newsletters?



**Lt. Ligino and "Little Tush." - (Back Row l to r) Steve Ligino (P); F.B. Tyler (CP); Arthur M. Smith (B) and William A. Dugger (N). (Front Row l to r) Harvey L. Rau (E); Howard E. Dudley (Tall); E. R. Dahell (RO); George R. Howard (BT), Philip B. Gaines (W) and M.M. Muiyke (W). They say their roughest mission was to Poznan, Poland when they came back on two engines. A long haul.**

# Forum

I find many interesting things, however, being one of the very originals going back to the first 20 to come to Gowen Field prior to the 30 some from the old 38th and prior to any barracks except one! I find no mention of any of these first ones except Fred Kuhn. (July - Page 7)

We suffered so many losses so early and I for one was a free lancer after May 5th '43 mission, flying every position under various circumstances *except* pilot and navigator - special requests and special cases - finishing July 4, 1943. Then being commissioned at Bovington later in July with one other chap named -first name Benjamin-nickname Benny; then staying on for another year before staff school.

**C.R. "Chuck" Storer**  
**P.O. Box 411**

**Shawnee Mission, KS 66201**

*ED. Note: Since you attended the reunion at Boise were you able to pick up any of the back issues that I brought along with me?*

## Bad Check Info

I just recently found out about and joined the 303rd BG (H) Association through contacting Carlton Smith. My Uncle, (Lt.) Ernest G. Greenwood was a member (co-pilot) of the 303rd BG, 427th BS. I met him on a family vacation about 15 years ago and we immediately struck up a strong friendship from our common interest in aviation. Until his death in 1983 we would keep in touch through the mail and occasional visits with the conversation always turning to the subject of aircraft and his time with the 303rd BG. Before he passed away, he gave me many of his Air Force related items from the war. His A-2 had the name of the 427th BS aircraft "Bad Check" (41-24587,GN-P) painted on the back and a photo of the two of us in our A-2's is among one of my most treasured possessions. Since his death, I have studied quite a bit about the 8th AF and the 303rd BG. I was able to locate a photo of "Bad Check" through the Defense Audiovisual Agency in Washington D.C., and have located a photo of Ernie with Bob Hullar's crew in the book "Three engines, half a wing and a prayer" by B. O'Neill. I am still looking for a crew photo of Ernie with the "Bad Check", or any of Bad Check's crew members (air or ground) that might be able to give me more information about my Uncle or "Bad Check". I know that the "Bad Check" was lost on 11 January 1944 on mission #98 over Oschersleben

and that ten chutes were seen to come from the plane, however Ernie was not scheduled for that mission but he said that "Lord Haw Haw" mentioned his absence from the mission. I am unfortunately not able to make it to Boise in September due to finishing up my engineering degree, however I plan to go on the "Return to England" tour in May 1993. I would be grateful if you could put the part of this letter requesting information regarding my Uncle and the "Bad Check" in a future Hell's Angels Forum.

**Mike Meister**  
**2538 Fisher Rd.**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46239**

## Can you top this?

Enclosed is picture of Ground Crew of Miss Liberty crashed landed in France by Arnold Moselle. It was on its 80th mission without an abort. The crew chief was awarded a Bronze Star. The ship crashed approximately Sept. 14, 1944. The pilot would like any pictures available. His address is:

Arnold Moselle, 152 Urbana Ave., Newbury Park, CA 91320-3246 The crew chief would also enjoy any pictures of the aircraft or ground crew or air crew.

**Willis G. Meyer**  
**813 Sunny Dr**  
**Bryan, Ohio 43506**

P.S. I wish I had a Sqdn. patch or the exact coloring of Smokey Stover.

## Capt. Brinkley's crew

Re: July 1992 Newsletter, page 12, bottom left corner labeled Capt. W. Schulstad and crew. The picture is of Capt. Pharis C. Brinkley's crew. I was assistant engineer and left waist gunner, third from right, front row in the photo. The picture was taken upon return from leading the group to Bois Coquerel, France on our 16th mission on Jan. 21, 1944. The ranking group officer, whom I have shown in my album as Colonel Travis, is second from right, back row. Is that Travis or Schulstad? I am sorry I did not identify everyone at the time and now I don't recall the names and faces. Note the eleven man crew, common to the group lead. Left to right, back row; unknown bombardier; Sylvester "Red" Becker, our navigator; unknown observer; Schulstad, ranking officer and co-pilot and Pharis Brinkley, our pilot. Front, left to right; Arthur Worthington, engineer; William Rein, tail gunner; Richard Snyder, radio; Guy Lance, left waist; Charles Ferguson, right

waist and Harold Reid, ball turret. All enlisted men are original members of Brinkley's crew. The plane is "Satan's Workshop" one of the old reliables that we usually flew as lead plane. The name "Satan's Workshop" was painted out when Bomber Command ordered many names removed from planes in late 1943. I have photos of her with the name painted in the ribbon under the bed. Roger Freeman's book, "Mighty Eighth War Manual" does her justice with a photo on page 222 of the book. Freeman says she was a B-17F, 42-29931, 360th Sqdn. of course. According to the 303rd Honor Roll, Satan's Workshop went down on Feb. 22, 1944 on a mission to Aschersleben, G.E. Underwood was the pilot. The Honor Roll mistakenly called her "Devil's Workshop." I am sorry to be so long winded, all the enlisted men are alive except Ferguson. All our original officers are dead except John Parrott who, because we became a lead crew had to leave us. He finished his tour with his own crew.

You do a good job. Our newsletter is "classy" and professional in addition to be "damned good reading."

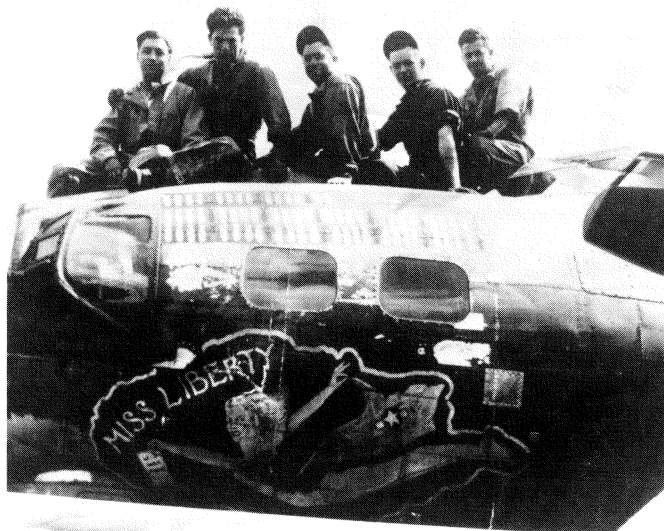
**Guy A. Lance**  
**26361 Spaniel Lane**  
**Sun City, CA 92586**

P.S. I have an original photo of the one mentioned with the photo shop data underneath. It shows the target as Beaulieu Fme.

*Ed. Note. Photo below also shows the target as Beaulieu Fme. Also the person in the photo, top row, fourth from left is the slimmer, younger version of Mel Schulstad.*



**Brinkley's crew with Capt. Schulstad as Air Commander.**



**Ground Crew of Miss Liberty**

## Greetings to the 303rd Bomb Group

We the family of Capt. Ross Cartee Bales wish to welcome you to the home state of Capt. Bales. Perhaps some of you will remember his B-17 in the 359th Sqdn. which was named the "Idaho Potato Peeler." Hopefully you will have enjoyed some of our potatoes by now.

His second plane christened on President Roosevelt's birthday, "The FDR Potato Peeler Kids" was the plane in which Capt. Bales as pilot was returning to England from a raid on Kiel, Germany on May 14, 1943,

when it was last seen going down in the North Sea.

As members of his family we want to share with you in memory of our brother Ross Cartee Bales, Captain, United States Army Air Corps.

**Gwyneth Bales LaVoy**  
**John Frank Bales**  
**Leona Bales Sanders**  
**Lorene Bales Thurston**  
**Nathelle Bales Oates**

The letter above was hand carried to the reunion by one of Capt. Bales' sisters.

# Meetings, Meetings . . .

## Board Meeting Sept. 8, 1992

Present - Carl Dubose, President  
 Bill McLeod, VP Admin  
 James Taylor, VP Reunions  
 F. Kelley, Secretary  
 Walt Mayer, L. Lyle, B. Klint, C. Smith,  
 H. Gobrecht,  
 B. Heller, H. Susskind, F. De Cicco, M.  
 Magid,  
 J. Rencher, V. Matthews, and B.  
 Simpkins

The meeting was called to order at 9:00am, Clearwater Room, Red Lion Riverside.

J. Rencher reported on the status of the Gowen Field Memorial.

J. Rencher reported on the Gowen Field Airport Commission's consideration to change the Airports name from Gowen Field.

After a discussion of our Association's concern about losing the long heritage and association with Gowen Field, W. Mayer made the following motion:

So as to preserve the heritage of the many WWII air units that trained at Boise, Gowen Field, it is requested that the name Gowen Field be retained. This decision is especially important to the 303rd Bomb Group Association since this group, with its rich history of combat effectiveness in Europe, was formed at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho in 1942. Further, the secretary be directed to write the Airport Commission and inform them of this resolution.

The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The minutes of the 28 May 1991, Schaumburg, IL, meeting and the 20 September, 1991, (mini reunion) New Orleans, LA, were approved as presented.

The Treasurers report was passed out, studied, and discussed. Motion to approve the treasurers reported was approved unanimously.

Dave Matthews reported, in detail, the status of the Georgia Mission Records Center.

C. Smith passed out a detailed membership report. There is a total of 1306 dues paying members. Improved roster management is ongoing in preparation for a roster publication in January, 1993.

H. Susskind distributed a prepared newsletter report. After a discussion about escalating foreign postage, B. McLeod moved that dues for all foreign members be increased to \$15.00. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

H. Susskind referred to a letter from Joyce Link Carringer concerning the families of lost members who crashed on 9 February 1945. F. Kelley was directed to invite Ms. Carringer to the Gowen Field Memorial Service, 12 September 1992. (Done on 10 September)

### SQ. Reports

427 SQ B. Klint continuing to encourage attendance at reunions.

444 HO C. Smith continuing to follow up on members and request responses.

360 SQ B. Heller. Personally contributed the mailing of dues notices to entire Association; asked the board to consider "streamlining" future reunions, including the reduction of the number of days to 2 or 3; authorization for the president to make more decisions; suggested further by-law changes including declaring support for 8th AF Heritage Center and official plans for dissolution of Association. No action taken on these items.

359 SQH. Susskind striving to improve information at SQ meetings.

J. Taylor passed out detailed reunion activities report that included:

Boise Reunion, Back to England (19 May 1993-28 May 1993); Savannah, GA (29 March 1994-2 April 1994); and future reunion site considerations.

J. Taylor reported on the Gowen Field Memorial and the potential for adding other unit markers and appropriate charging.

Walt Mayer moved that the decision related to the Gowen Field Memorial be left to the Reunion Committee. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

M. Magid presented the Nominating Committee report, including recommended candidates for the upcoming election of officers.

Motion made to approve the Nominating Committee's recommended slate. Motion received a second and was approved

unanimously.

Lew Lyle reported on the 8th AF Heritage Center. 15 acres have been donated to the Center which is located at the intersection of I-95 and US 80 near Savannah, GA. Over 1 million tourist vehicles pass this intersection per month. A large foundation has been formed and is dedicated to building this facility. Supporting this foundation is the Governor of Georgia, the Chairman of the Commission for Economic Development, and top leadership of Savannah. Estimated start of construction is the latter part of 1993. 8th Air Force Groups will be asked to pledge from their corporate fund at least \$25,000 so as to provide the single means for preserving the 8th Air Force History. It is anticipated that 40 groups will make the minimum pledge of \$25,000 from their corporate funds. These funds will not be asked for until construction starts. Individual contributions will also be needed to fund the operation of the center. The USA is now committed to supporting the Center.

H. Gobrecht circulated the Historians report. The details included data on correspondence, expenses, mission record, and the status of the group's historical book.

B. Heller moved that the book be authorized for printing. The motion received a second and passed unanimously.

F. Kelley moved that the Historians recommendation to sell the books as follows—\$60.00 pre-publication, \$75.00 post-publication, be approved and that the initial printing be limited to 1,000 copies. The motion received a second and was approved unanimously.

The President presented the 1993 budget and it was approved unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 1415.

**J. Ford Kelley**  
**Secretary**

## Minutes—General Meeting.

**11 Sept. 1992**

President Dubose called the meeting to order at 1030 hours.

The Invocation was given by Bishop Gracida.

The Pledge Of Allegiance to the United States Flag was led by Bud Klint.



What reunions are all about - good fellowship and cheer. (photos by Coleman, Sanders.)

A black and white photograph of a group of people, including several elderly individuals, posing together indoors. In the foreground, a woman is seated in a wheelchair, smiling at the camera. She is wearing a patterned top and light-colored pants. To her left, another woman is seated, also smiling. Behind them, a man in a light-colored, patterned short-sleeved shirt stands with his hands on his hips. To the right, a man in a military-style uniform, including a cap and a belt, stands with his hands on his hips. He has a name tag that reads "303rd". In the background, other people are visible, including a man in a white shirt and a woman in a light-colored top. The setting appears to be an indoor space with a dark background.

# B-17, "Cat O'9 Tails" Still Flies On

by: John T. Gell  
Bedfordshire, England



**Propeller blade from B-17F, 42-5482 which crashed 14, jct. 1943.**

Following the recent article in "Hell's Angels" Newsletter about the late George Stallings and his association with B17F, 42-5482, CAT 019-Tails, 359th BS, 303rd BG, I wondered would you consider a follow-up for the news-letter on the life and eventual fate of 42-5482 on 14 Oct. 1943, mission to Schweinfurt II.

"CAT O'9 TAILS" was a B-17F of batch 50, built by Boeing in December 1942 and was flown to England by Lt. George Stallings and crew. It was flown on missions from March 1943 by a variety of pilots until taken over as a regular mount by Lt. Victor Loughran and crew who flew her on 20 missions from June until October. Loughran left her on the ground on October 4th due to battle damage and was shot down on a mission to Frankfurt in 42-29846 (no name) with all crew taken prisoners. The old "Cat O'9 Tails" was soon in the air again and was readied for the second raid on the Schweinfurt ball bearing fac-

tories. Her crew this day was to be a new crew of four missions with Lt. Ambrose Grant, pilot; Lt. Franklin Hall, co-pilot; Lt. James Berger, navigator; Marion Blackburn, bombardier; Robert Jaouen, waist; Edward Sexton, radio; Chester Petrosky, ball; Tony Kujawa, engineer; Woodrow Greenlee, waist and Francis Anderson, tail: The "Cat" had been hastily but carefully prepared by her ground crew under the crew chief Joseph Dufoesne. They were used to toiling to get the "Cat" ready as she was a very frequent target having been badly shot up on many occasions. Morning arrived with the usual English weather, thick fog and heavy drizzle. Take off was delayed. Eventually the signal to go, came. "5482" joined the take off stream and rose into the murk to take the no. 6 slot with the 359th Sqdn. with Phelps, Quinn and Hendry as near neighbors. It then settled down for a long hard trip into the heart of fighters and flak country.

Attacks by fighters started as soon as enemy territory was reached. The "Cat" was soon taking on a sieve like appearance and a stray 20 mm shell entered the waist position and exploded in the face of Woody Greenlee and badly damaged his face and eye. Blackburn lined up the "Cat" for the target. Soon it was "bombs away" on the target and she turned for home. A hit on the port side put the engine out but the engine was not feathered until out of fighter danger as she did not want to give the appearance of being a disabled aircraft. Flak made more holes and with loss of power she slowly slid away from the formation. She was attacked by enemy fighters over France but her gunners were able to fend them off. Kujawa bagged a Me-109 and Anderson in the tail got a 110 before they reached the channel.

Looking across the channel, they could see that England was still in a blanket of fog. Stock was taken of the condition of "5482." It had no radio, no compass and many damaged control lines including one to a rudder. She was carefully flown on dead reckoning and brought down through the



**Crew on ill-fated mission. (Back row, l to r) Blackburn, Berger, Hall and Grant. (Front row l to r) Anderson, Kujawa, Sexton, Greenlee, Petrosky and Jaouen.**

overcast to look for a landing field. None could be found. The crew eventually decided to use the remaining fuel to try and gain enough altitude for a bail out. Seven thousand five hundred feet was reached and the wounded and unconscious went out first with Jaouen and the rest following. The "Cat" now had a mind of its own and flew on in a descending northerly direction which took her back to the Molesworth area before flying in a large circle. Meanwhile the crew were all safely on the ground; Woody being found by a farmer and taken for help on a tractor. The others found houses for shelter and rest.

At about 6:40 p.m. DBST (double British Standard Time) the "Cat" had used up all remaining fuel and went into a final shallow dive and hit trees in the back garden of the Gell's house in Risely Bedfordshire. The right wing detached from the fuselage on im-

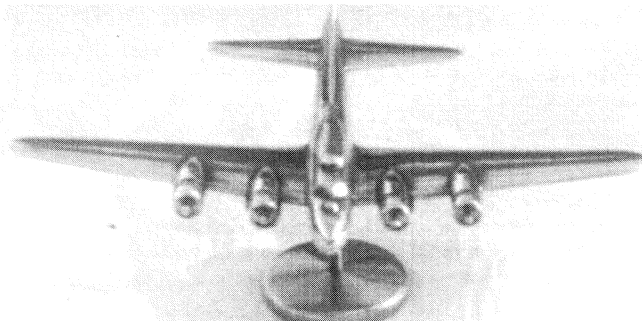
pact, part of the left wing felled a nearby elm tree and the fuselage carved an erratic path through the brush in the field beyond. Finally it came to a rest in two pieces leaving a path of debris for a hundred yards. After all useful items had been gathered up for reuse, the hulk was removed several days later by the R.A.F. to an unknown destination.

Thus the end of the line for a fine, trusty B-17 with a tally of 30 combat missions.

**Postscript!** Maybe you thought that this was the end of this trusty B-17; but she lives on. One of her propeller blades is still kept in a restored condition at the place of the crash and a Piece of wing spar has been melted down to produce "new," miniature B-17s, some of which have "flown" back to the U.S.A. So George Stallings' B-17 still flies on after nearly 50 years.



**End of the line for a once proud "Queen of the Sky."**



**Six Inch span models made from a piece of wing spar of "Cat-O-9-Tails."**

# FALLEN 303rd WARRIORS HONO



## EULOGY FOR THE 303RD BOMB GROUP

by Mel Schulstad

Distinguished guests, fellow men and women of the 303rd Bomb Group Association.

Fellow Americans. I am deeply honored to stand here before you this morning.

You and I are gathered together here in Boise—Where it all began 50 years ago and we are *bound* together today—and have been over these 50 years—by our strong and deep allegiance to, and love for, the 303rd Bomb Group which was first formed here as a part of the United States Army Air Corps in 1942.

And so—it is fitting and proper that we come together *in this place* to pay our homage and respect to those of our fellow airmen who gave their lives-fighting for our country-while we served with them at Molesworth, England.

The memorial we have dedicated here this day is inscribed with the magnificent words written by our 303rd's own Jack Rencher.

I want to read them again as they form a foundation for my brief remarks which follow—

"If free men are to inhabit this earth they must be prepared to fight—and even to die to maintain that Freedom."

Those of our fallen comrades whom we honor today *were* prepared to fight and even to die.

Their courage and willingness to fight was tested time and time again as they flew their assigned combat missions and never ever did they turn back in the face of the enemy — *even to die*.

When the Black English night gave way gradually and grudgingly to a bleak cold dawn — "The Mission" had already been ordained from "on high". "The base" was bustling and busy with preparation. The hum of the generators, moaning at the hardstands saturated the morning air and was every where present—a secret signal heard and understood by all and yet—a quiet—indeed an ominous almost sinister stillness hung over the base as preparations moved with a deliberate speed irrevocably toward a take off and target. Where would it be?? Bremen? Berlin? Schweinfurt? Again — *even to die*.

There had been a wake-up call—a breakfast—a briefing—a truck ride to the Fort waiting at the hardstand—then taxi out and hold—waiting then — a green flare arced upward into the dawns early light. Clear for take off.

A thousand pistons pulsing, pushing a hundred propellers. Straining to lift over-laden forts—one by one—into the murky morning skies.

*Even to die?*

For the group the take off of the group was always to the *known* target, but for each individual combat airman the take off was always into the unknown; into the face of unknown destiny; and perhaps even into the face of God, *even to die*.

For him, the combat airman, the skies were heavy with fore boding because he knew death was ever present there—*lurking, waiting*. Waiting for *some* with *certainty*, and others to be brushed only lightly, this time.

But always waiting after every take off, and every man who went knew it.

He knew it every time he went. He knew that every time he went he could be asked to give his life and he knew he would give his life if he had to—not without a fight, but he would give his life if he had to. He knew that—and some how—in *that knowing* was the greatness of it all. The unspeakable greatness of our combat airmen. Our combat airmen who gave their lives for *great* things—For freedom—for liberty—for the pursuit of happiness—for their children and their children's children—and for ours. They knew that too—*even to die*.

One thousand eight hundred men of the 303rd gave their lives fighting our fight. And we the living are here today to *bear witness* to their heroic courage, to be uplifted in our spirits by their spirit of sacrifice. To take strength and comfort from their legacy to us.

We are here to say how proud we are to have served with them and to salute them gallantly. And finally, we are here to unite in a pledge to them that we will uphold with our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor, their principles they fought and died for.

"For if free men are to inhabit the earth, they must be prepared to fight and *even to die*."

In conclusion, I want to read a short and very poignant poem. That our wonderful editor Hal Susskind published in the anniversary edition of our newsletter. This poem, author unknown, was sent to Hal from Mrs. Alex Czarny after Alex died. It tells a story of heroes in combat—which is why we are here today. I will let this poem conclude our eulogy.

### "THE STRAGGLER"

I saw a Fort knocked out of its group  
on fire and in despair,  
with Nazi fighters surrounding her  
as it flew alone back there.

The Messerschmitts came barreling thru,  
throwing a hail of lead  
at the crippled Fort that wouldn't quit  
though two of it's engines were dead.  
But a couple of props kept straining away  
and her guns were blazing too  
as she stayed in the air in that hell back there  
and fought like Fortresses do.

Four times a fighter belched fire and smoke  
four times a fighter went down  
as the Fortress kept on winging home  
and the nerve of the crew stayed sound.

But time after time, the fighters came  
and attacked the lagging plane  
I knew she couldn't last for long  
and my heart was touched with pain

But gunners fought a bitter fight  
but now the guns were still  
and a fighter, seeing the time was ripe  
came in for the kill.

A stream of lead ripped into a tank  
and the Fort exploded in two,  
and somewhere the Angels prepared a place  
for a weary Fortress crew!

### BENEDICTION

Almighty God, Eternal Father, we stand here in awe of the mystery of your divine providence wherein we are privileged to participate in this Memorial Service rather than those whom we commemorate. We ask you to bless them and to grant them eternal rest. May perpetual light shine upon them. Bless all the members of the 303rd Bomb Group Association. Grant that we may continue to strive, according to our state of life to promote the well-being of our nation. God bless America!

Rene H. Gracida  
Bishop of Corpus Christi

# ED IN IMPRESSIVE CEREMONY

As dawn broke on September 12, the day of the memorial service honoring the fallen warriors of the 303rd Bomb Group, the skies wept ever so softly.

But as the time approached for the ceremony to begin, the clouds drifted away and the sun started to peek through as if to get a good look at the new 303rd memorial stone which was to be dedicated during the program.

The ceremony began with opening remarks by Jack Rencher, the host member of the reunion committee who reminded the 700 members of the Association who turned out for the solemn observances, that Gowen Field was the place where the history of the 303rd began.

The program opened with the posting of the colors by the Idaho Air National Guard under the leadership of M/Sgt. John Logan. This was followed by the Invocation given by Chaplain (It. Col.) Larry E. Harrelson, 116th Cavalry Brigade, Idaho Army National Guard.

The welcome address was given by Maj. Gen. Darrell V. Manning, Commanding General, Idaho National Guard who welcomed the 303rd to Idaho and to Gowen Field, the birthplace of the organization.

A memorial wreath was placed at the new 303rd Bomb Group Memorial by the presidents of the Association, both past and present: including Carl DuBose, Bud Klint, Bill Eisenhart, William McLeod and Carl Fyler.

L. Melvin Schulstad, Colonel, USAF (Ret) who joined the 303rd in

El Paso, Texas in 1942, and who was an aircraft commander and group operations officer at Molesworth, gave the eulogy. Written by Schulstad, the eulogy was a wonderful and fitting tribute to the men who gave their lives in the pursuit of victory in World War II and also to those who have passed on since the end of hostilities.

The benediction was given by Bishop Rene H. Gracida who flew a combat tour at Molesworth as a gunner with the 359th Sqdn. He is now the Bishop of Corpus Christi, Texas.

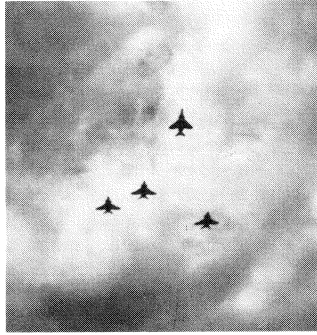
A ceremonial salute to the 303rd Bomb Group was given by the Idaho Air National Guard Honor Guard which

was followed by "Taps" by buglers from the 25th Army Band, Idaho Army National Guard. As the strains of taps echoed through the air, a "missing man" fly-by was performed by the 124th Fighter Guard, Idaho Air National Guard, Lt. Col. Jim Davies, commanding.

The colorful and somber ceremony ended with the retirement of the colors. As the formal ceremony ended, I was asked by a TV commentator, if I thought that the men we honored today were watching the ceremony?

I replied, "I'm sure it was they who pushed the clouds away and let the sun shine through. Although 48 years have elapsed since some of them passed on, I have a feeling that they were all there looking down favorably at what we were doing. They are gone. But they will never be forgotten as long as there is a 303rd Bomb Group Association.

**Hal Susskind**



**124th Fighter Guard "Missing Man" formation fly-by. (Photo by Coleman Sanders)**

## Dedication Talk

**Jack P. Rencher**



**Opening remarks by Jack Rencher.**

Think, if you will, of a small city in your area with a population of 20-25,000 persons.

If I said "the 8th Air Force" alone, had some 20,000 casualties during World War II it doesn't really convey what we really lost. If I said every man, woman, and child in the city you visualized were gone for ever, it might more clearly convey our losses.

When even one of our planes went down it wasn't "just a plane went down". There were up to 9 or 10 young men on that plane who were each losing some 50-60 years of their lives.

They were our best friends, our roommates. The people we talked to, ate with, laughed with, cried with. The people we lived with. They were our family. When we lost them, it was sad and it was nearly daily.

They were also sons, husbands, fathers, brothers, sweethearts and that was sad. They certainly had equal potential to those of us who survived. When we look at the accomplishments of those who came home, who

became civic and business leaders, teachers, scout masters, professors, inventors, scientists, doctors, congressmen, yes even Presidents, we begin to realize our real losses.

When we think of the girls they never married, the children they never had, their grandchildren who were never born, the medicine that was never developed, the devices that were never invented, the best sellers that were never written, the famous statesman who never was, it is sad. What would our country and world be if they and their descendents were still with us?

We cannot bring them back as much as we wish we could. We can do little really, but we don't want what they have done for us to be forgotten. So it is little, but with love and gratitude that we dedicate this monument in their memory. It is a sacred and hallowed place to us and we hope it will become such to future generations as they read its message.

The price of freedom is never quoted in a bargain basement.

## Members who passed on since Schaumburg Reunion

Adams, Dearn E.  
Berger, Donald E.  
Boyer, Wesley A.  
Brown, William F. Jr.  
Cannon, Harley E.  
Dugan, Charles  
Dulin, Woodroe S.  
Earhart, Amon E.  
Ferris, James  
Fydrychowski, John J.  
Haskell, Whitney  
Intersimone, Frank J.  
Kasik, Robert F.  
Kindis, Paul B.  
Mays, Robert L.  
Morrill, Charles K.

Norris, Loy  
Paul, John F.  
Riordan, James C.  
Rosborough, Robert H.  
Slusser, Walter  
Sofield, Lester  
Stallings, George  
Strickner, Walter  
Supornick, Meyer  
Testone, Taldino  
Twomey, John M.  
Vosler, Forrest L.  
Werner, William L.  
Whitson, Claud B.  
Yonkman, Robert J.  
Young, Warren



**Benediction by Bishop Rene Gracida**

# Out of the Ashes!

*Discovery of a 47 year old crash site reveals two rings plus a very heroic act by a 303rd Crew.*

**By Hal Susskind**

This is a story about two rings and nine brave young men of the 303rd Bomb Group who took off on February 9, 1945 from Molesworth Air Base in England to bomb the synthetic oil facility in Lutzkendorf, Germany.

Deep in Germany and only five minutes from their target they were in a mid-air collision with another B-17 from the same squadron. The rear part of their fuselage from the waist window back was torn off and the aircraft was seen plunging towards earth 25,000 feet below. At the returning crews debriefing there was an unconfirmed report that one parachute was seen, possibly someone from the stricken aircraft.

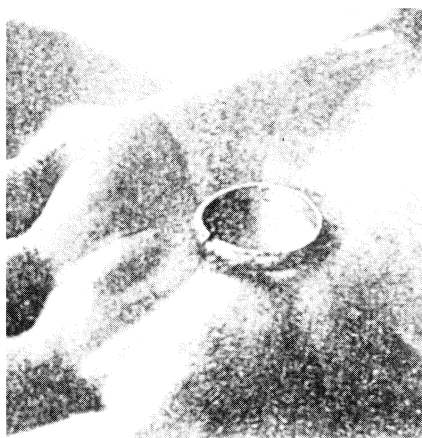
That night, they -Lt. Robert Barrat's crew- were listed as missing in action in the mission report sent to 8th AF Headquarters by the intelligence officers of the group. It was later established that eight members of the crew were killed in the crash of the aircraft and one survived to become a prisoner of war.

But it took 47 years and a German businessman whose hobby is searching for crash sites of both German and Allied planes to discover the circumstances under which they died. They died heroically saving a German town from sure destruction. The town was Eisenberg located in what later became East Germany. Now the people of Eisenberg are planning a memorial to their one time enemies they now consider heroes.

Uwe Benkel, the German businessman, is a member of Vermissten Suchdienst, a club which has already dug up three German and two U.S. aircraft, a P-51 and a P-47. Henkel who works for the German Health Insurance in Kaiserslautern, went to East Germany in September 1991. Upon arrival he put an ad in the local paper asking people to contact him if they knew of any airplane wreckage in the area. About 10 people contacted Benkel including Gert Kohler who said he witnessed a plane crash near Eisenberg near the end of the war. Communicating with him, Benkel soon found what he was looking for - the crash site of a B-17 Flying Fortress which had crashed into a hillside in early 1945.

Benkel learned from witnesses that the B-17 exploded into a hillside during a heroic landing attempt. The crew members were and still are considered heroes by the local people because they dropped their bombs in a field and maneuvered the flaming plane away from the town on Feb. 9, 1945.

Benkel discussed the incident with Kohler who was a 15 year old student, standing in his yard when the sky suddenly filled with enemy bombers from the U.S. 8th Air Force based in England. He told Benkel that he thought the B-17 had been hit in the left rudder by anti-aircraft guns from nearby Jena and after the bomber was hit went into a



**A golden wedding ring.**

nose dive before leveling off over the town of Eisenberg. The plane dropped most of its bombs in an empty field said Kohler. The bombs that were dropped on the field did not explode and later were cleared away by Jewish prisoners from the Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

Uschi Weik was six years old and standing on a table when she and her family heard the plane coming. Weik said the flaming bomber attempted to land in a small clearing in front of her parent's hotel but the pilot appeared to decide that the clearing was too small and began climbing again. The plane, however, barely cleared the hotel and crashed about 200 feet up the hill beside their house. The aircraft was about 200 feet shy of clearing the hill, Weik said.

From September until November, in all kinds of weather, Benkel and people from the local archives spent almost every day at the site. After unearthing pieces of the cockpit and bones at the site, Benkel and two members of the local museum were about to call it quits one night when one of the workers dug up a gold wedding ring. A tree root had grown through the middle of the warped and tarnished ring, Benkel said. The ring bore the initial M (followed by an illegible letter) to P.B.

A few days later a German citizen of Eisenberg brought Benkel a ring which he had found at the same site two years earlier. The ring bore the initials R.J.B. The German citizen insisted that the ring only be turned over to the closest relative of the former owner of the ring.

That gave Benkel an immediate problem. What were the names of the crew members who perished in the crash?

From the local cemetery he got a document with the names of five crew members and three unidentified bodies. The date of the crash was Feb. 9, 1945. With this information, he then contacted the USAF Historical Research Center at Maxwell AFB, Alabama and received the

following information.

The aircraft was a Boeing B-17, Serial Nr. 43-39149 of the 303rd BG, 427th Sqdn. It belonged to the US 8th AF and was based at Molesworth, England. It was lost on Feb. 9, 1945 during a mission against Lutzkendorf, Germany. The crew members were: Barrat, Robert J., 2nd Lt.; Harvey, Dean, 2nd Lt.; Best, Shirl P., F/O; Karp, William T., S/Sgt.; Reiss, Raymond F., S/Sgt.; Lazarowicz, Matthew, S/Sgt.; Linhart, Louis N., Sgt.; Link, Herbert D., Sgt. and Emerson, George H. Jr., Sgt.

The aircraft had collided with another B-17, Serial Nr. 42-31060, 303rd BG and lost a large portion of its tail. After the collision the aircraft, the bombs still on board, went down towards the center of Eisenberg. Eight of the crew members were killed. The only survivor was the tail gunner, Sgt. George Emerson, who became a prisoner of war.

Seeking further information about the crew and the aircraft, Benkel contacted the 303rd Bomb Group Association. In his letter Benkel asked, "Are there any pictures of the aircraft and crew members available? Is Sgt. George H. Emerson, Jr. still alive and a member of the Association? How can I get in touch with him? I would also like to send both rings back to the next of kin. How can I get in touch with them?"

The letter eventually found its way to Hal Susskind, editor of the Hell's Angels Newsletter, the quarterly publication of the 303rd Bomb Group Association for inclusion in its next issue. But Susskind decided the first priority was to find the next of kin. In his letter Benkel suggested that the wedding band, although lacking one initial probably belonged to the navigator F/O Shirl P. Best and the rings with the initials R.J.B. probably belonged to the pilot, Robert J. Barrat.

Agreeing with Benkel's theory, Susskind set out to find Emerson and the close relatives of both Best and Barrat. With the assistance of the Association's historian he found out the 1945 addresses of all three. Emerson came from Meridian, Idaho; Barrat from Woonsocket, Rhode Island and Best from Durand, Illinois. Susskind then went to the Austin Public Library to research which newspapers came within a 75 mile radius of each of the targets.

Figuring out that a letter to the editor of each of the papers selected was a better approach than writing a news release, he then sent letters to the Boise Idaho Statesman seeking to locate Emerson; the Durand News Gazette, Rockford Register Star and Beloit News looking for the next of kin of Best and the Woonsocket Call and the Providence Journal Bulletin looking for some close relatives of Barrat.

The letters essentially told of the recent finding of a WW II, B-17 crash site in East Germany, the first since the unification of the country, and the finding of rings belonging to a former resident of their area who was killed in the crash and that the

German citizens who found the rings were anxious to return them to the next of kin. The letters also told of the desire to locate the lone survivor of the crash.

The cooperation of the targeted news agencies was outstanding. Within a week Susskind received a call from Judy Emerson, columnist for the Rockford Registrar Star saying she had located Leone Best Deckard, sister of F/O Shirl P. Best who confirmed that the ring belonged to her brother. According to Mrs. Deckard, Shirl Best and his wife Mary Evelyn Van Etten were married in 1944 after his graduation from Navigation School in San Marcos, Texas, July 1944. His ring was too large and he was afraid he'd lose it overseas. So he took it to a jeweler to have it sized. She recalls Shirl complaining that the jeweler didn't look at the engraving inside before he cut the ring. Consequently the S in the engraving was cut out. Although her brother was upset with the jeweler he remarked that at least he wouldn't lose it. Time proved him right. After the report of his death, his widow left the area and later remarried. She too has since died said Mrs Deckard.

Tim Woodward of the Boise Idaho Statesman said, Newspapers routinely get requests to help find people. Most lead nowhere, but the letter from Hal Susskind from Austin, Texas was different." Still thinking it was a long shot, Woodward turned to the Boise telephone directory. Two George Emersons were listed.

When I called the second number and asked whether a George Emerson Jr. was there, a strange thing happened. Just a minute, a voice said. I'll go get him. Emerson came to the phone listened to my explanation of the reason for the call. I brought him up to date about the recent finding of the site where his aircraft crashed 47 years ago and also about how the citizens considered his crew as heroes since they purposely crashed their aircraft into a wooded area thereby saving the town of Eisenberg. Your timing is scary, he said. He explained that he hadn't lived in Idaho for more than 30 years and would only be here for a few days - on a visit from his home in Baja, Mexico."

When told that the citizens of Eisenberg are planning a memorial to his crew, Emerson said, "I think it is nice that the Germans want to do this and I would probably go if they asked me. I just can't believe the timing of this call."

Woodward's column had an extra bonus attached to it. Through it, Mrs. Joyce Link Carringer, from Boise, Idaho, widow of Sgt. Herbert Link who also died in the crash of the aircraft at Eisenberg was able to contact Hal Susskind and was brought up to date on the circumstances surrounding her husband's death and the events that just happened recently.

The last to be discovered were the relatives of Lt. Robert Barrat. It was Joseph G. Barrat, brother of the pilot of the crashed aircraft who called Hal Susskind from Shepherdstown, W.V. telling him that a friend had called him from Providence, R.I. telling him of Susskind's letter in the Providence Journal Bulletin seeking the whereabouts of a relative of Lt. Robert Barrat who crashed in Germany in 1945 and about the ring bearing his initials that was found in the recently discovered crash site. With the exception of the official notice notifying them of the death of their brother, the Barrat family knew very little about the circumstances surrounding his death. The news of the finding of his ring was good news to the family.

Presently Hal Susskind is acting as the liaison between Uwe Benkel in Germany and the relatives of F/O Best and Lt. Barrat. He has supplied the relatives with packets of information including photos of the rings and news articles about the discovery of the crash site, which had been forwarded by Benkel.

In a telephone conversation with Benkel who lives in Kaiserslautern which is not too far from the U.S. Air Base at Ramstein, Susskind learned that Benkel spends all his free time in the search for missing aircraft and crew members from World War II. He works together with Otto Schmitt. They locate crash sites and dig out remains of the aircraft and sometimes remains of crew members. All the costs for the research and the recoveries are paid out of their own pockets - a very expensive hobby. When asked, "Why do you spend all your money and time to dig out the aircraft?"

He replied, "We try to find the remains of still missing crew members, identify them and inform their next of kin. The final result is what they deserve; a grave in a cemetery with a name. They are no longer missing."

George Emerson is still a little hazy as to the collision and how he got out of the aircraft. "I remember hearing a thump while sitting in the tail. I usually kept my chest pack parachute on, hanging by one connection so I could man the guns. Experiencing a falling sensation, I remember pushing with my feet and hooking up the other connection and out I went. The next thing I remember was floating in my chute and nearing the ground. When I landed I was surrounded by citizens with guns. Some of the townspeople tied me up in a hut and set it on fire. When I freed myself, one of them raised his gun to shoot me but another civilian stopped him. I was turned over to the German military authorities and spent the



George Emerson, Jr. - 1992



Mrs. Joyce Link Carringer with sister-in-law Mrs. Loraine Link.



**HEROES - (Front row 1 to r) Sgt. Herbert D. Link; Sgt. Louis N. Linhart; S/Sgt. Raymond F. Reiss; Sgt. George H. Emerson, Jr.; (Rear row left to right) S/Sgt. Matthew Lazarowicz; Lt. Dean Harvey; Lt. Robert J. Barrat; F/O Shirl P. Best and S/Sgt. William T. Karp. The photo was taken in the U.S. before the crew went overseas to England.**



Also found at the crash site was this amulet but who carried it during the mission? Does it have something to do with a birthdate? Just one of the many questions that came "out of the ashes" and are still unanswered.



Uwe Benkel and Gert Kohler look over articles found at the crash site.

remaining days of the war in a prison camp."

In September 1992, 700 members of the 303rd Bomb Group Association celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the Bomb Group with a reunion at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, the birthplace of the organization. George Emerson Jr. and Mrs Joyce Link Carringer were among those who attended the Memorial Service to dedicate the 303rd memorial erected at Gowen Field to honor all former 303rd who lost their lives in the war and those who have since passed away. I'm sure there were many in the crowd who thought of the young men

who gave their lives less than three months before the end of the war in Europe.

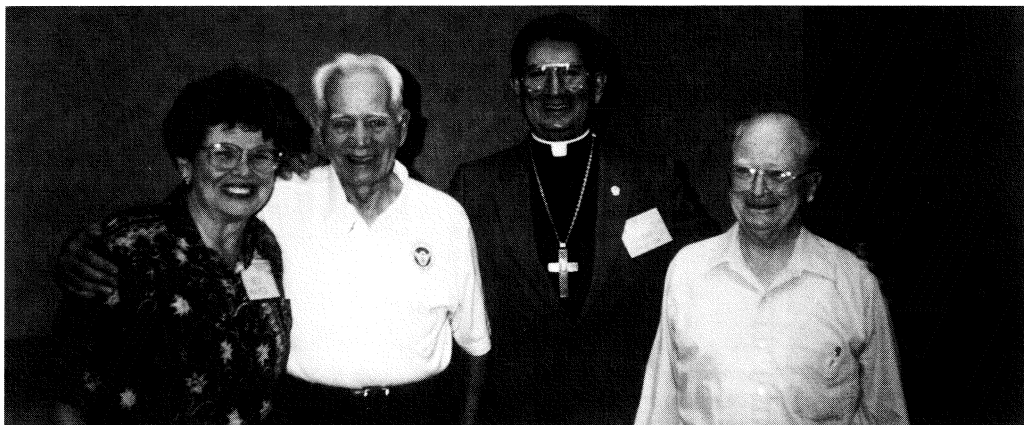
Lt. Barrat, F/O Best, S/Sgt. Karp, S/Sgt. Reiss, Sgt. Linhaart and Sgt. Link rest together in the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis, Missouri. Lt. Harvery is buried at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia and S/Sgt. Lazarowicz was laid to rest in the Holy Sepulcher Cemetery in East Orange, New Jersey.

In the meantime, the time and method of deliv-

ery of the rings is still being worked out. The golden wedding band of F/O Best will soon be back in possession of the Best family and may it remain there until the end of time. I'm sure the Barrat family is eagerly looking forward to receiving the ring that was worn by Lt. Barrat as he skillfully, against all odds, managed to maneuver his damaged aircraft to save the lives of the citizens of Eisenberg who up to the time that his aircraft hit the hill had thought of him as the enemy.



Historian Harry Gobrecht. (Photo by Coleman Sanders)



(left to right) Bev Mayer, Richard Fortunak, Bishop Gracida and Fr. Bernard Schmacher. (Photo by Walt Mayer)



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CALENDAR**

England Tour  
May 19-28, 1993

Savannah Reunion  
March 29/April 2, 1994

LOST: A camera left in the room in which the Catholic Services were held on Sunday morning. In it were photos of the activities which were held on Saturday and Sunday, which were the "highlights" of the reunion. If anyone has any info on the camera please contact: Ray Espinoza, 233 Phlox Ave., Redlands, CA 92373. Tel. (714) 793-0862.

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# Might In Flight

## Daily Diary of the Eighth Air Force's Hell's Angels

**"Might In Flight"**, The Daily Diary of the Eighth Air Force's 303rd Bombardment Group (H) is the most comprehensive World War II United States Army Air Force Combat Group book yet published.

This book traces the 303rd's history from its February 1942 constitution and activation, explores its lineage and describes its stateside pre-combat training and overseas movement to Station No. 107 at Molesworth, England. Each of the Group's record 364 combat missions is discussed in detail, including formation leaders, list of all aircraft and crewmen missing in action, mission facts and highlights. Interspersed throughout the book are mentions of important USAAF, 8th Air Force and other happenings that impacted upon the 303rd's Air War from England. Every one of the Group's 1,173 days of existence through April 1945 is commented upon, including key visitor's, fun and non-combat events. The movement of the Hell's Angels to Casablanca, North Africa, its brief Air Transport Command association and all post war 303rd organizations through 1991, are briefly discussed. An Appendix provides supplemental facts.

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		<b>303BG MISSION NO's</b>	
1942	November	1 to 4	( 4 )
	December	5 to 8	( 4 )
1943	January	9 to 12	( 4 )
	February	13 to 18	( 6 )
	March	19 to 27	( 9 )
	April	28 to 31	( 4 )
	May	32 to 40	( 9 )
	June	41 to 47	( 7 )
	July	48 to 56	( 9 )
	August	57 to 65	( 9 )
	September	66 to 72	( 7 )
	October	73 to 79	( 7 )
	November	80 to 84	( 5 )
	December	85 to 94	( 9 )
1944	January	95 to 102	( 8 )
	February	103 to 114	(12)
	March	115 to 131	(17)
	April	132 to 145	(14)
	May	146 to 166	(21)
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	July	196 to 215	(20)
	August	216 to 234	(16)
	September	235 to 248	(14)
	October	249 to 264	(16)
	November	265 to 280	(16)
	December	281 to 294	(14)

1945	January	295 to 309	(15)
	February	310 to 328	(17)
	March	327 to 349	(23)
	April	350 to 364	(15)

### III. POST WAR - 303rd BOMBARDMENT GROUP

A. Molesworth Shutdown and Continental Express	May 1945	June 1945
B. Air Transport Command – Casablanca, French Morocco	6/30/45	7/25/45
C. United States Air Force		
1. U.S. Air Force Created	7/26/46	-----
2. 303rd BG (YX) Andrews Field, MD	6/11/47	9/06/48
3. 303rd Bomb Wing (H) Davis Monthan AFB, AZ	8/27/51	6/15/64

### IV. APPENDICES

A. 8th AF, Headquarters, Division and Wing Commanders & Biographies
B. 303rd Bombardment Group (H) & Squadron Commanders & Biographies
C. 303rd Bombardment Group (H) Staff & Support Personnel
D. 303rd Bombardment Group (H) Facts
1. Missions, Aircraft lost and Sorties
2. 303 BG (H) Aircraft & Combat Crew Firsts
3. 303 BG (H) Stations
4. WWII Organizations to which the 303BG (H) was attached
5. 303 BG (H) – Long Flying B-17's
6. 303 BG (H) – Plaques, Memorials & Monument locations
7. 303 BG (H) – Song: Hell's Angels by Name, by Fame-Glenn Canning
8. 303 BG (H) – Campaigns & Decorations
9. 303 BG (H) – Medals of Honor
10. 8th AF & 303 BG (H) Group & Squadron Insignia
11. Unofficial Badges worn during WWII – Caterpillar, Goldfish, Late Arrival Clubs
12. Approval of Group Name – "Hell's Angels"
E. Abbreviations used and Glossary
F. Bibliography

Please reserve _____ copies of the 303rd BG (H) history <b>"Might In Flight"</b> @ \$60.00 each. Total remitted \$ _____
Pre-publication price includes mailing to a location in the United States. Delivery anticipated mid-year 1993.
Note: Overseas addresses remit in U.S. Funds only and add \$3.00 (Canada) \$3.50 (Other) for additional mailing expenses
Remittances should be payable to: 303rd BG (H) Association
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Country _____
Mail orders and remittance to: Harry D. Gobrecht, Historian 303rd BG (H) 505 Via Deseo San Clemente, CA 92672-2462

## From the Secretary

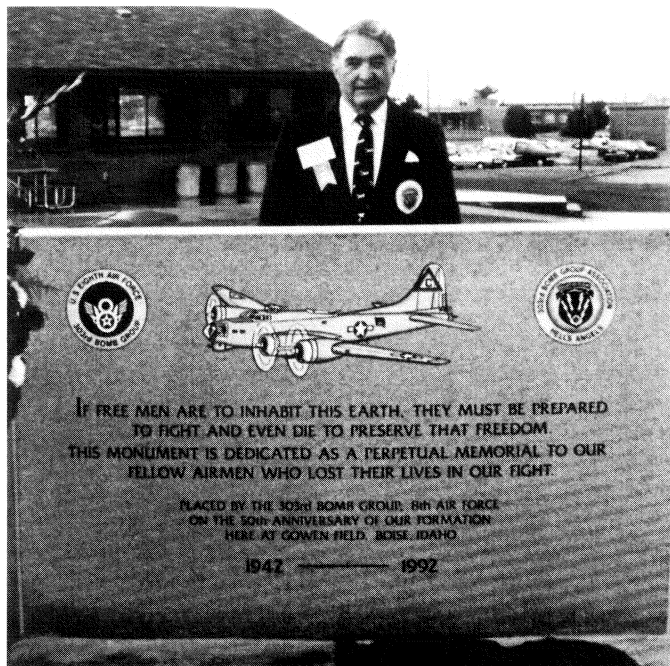
I am attempting to document all the names of the "GROUND SUPPORT PERSONNEL" that served at Molesworth from 1942 to 1945. To do this will require considerable assistance from you, the members of the 303rd who might have old "orders", "documents", or any letters, records, etc. Would you please make a copy of anything that you have, even if it is names that come to mind, and send them to me.

We have no problem with the names of the flying personnel, but, somehow, we are more able to find the names that were painted on the airplanes, than we are able to find the names of the crew chief, and his 4 or 5 assistants. This is a "sorry bit of heritage" of the 303rd Bomb Group, that I am dedicated to remove. So, won't you please help me, so I can, at least, make a computer listing of our faithful, but often, forgotten, "Ground Support Personnel."

Send anything you have to: Ed Miller, Secretary, 303rd Bomb Group Association, Inc., 422 S. Walnut Avenue, Temple, OK 73568.



Present and past presidents lay wreath at the new 303rd Memorial. (L to R) AF Major, Bill Eisenhart, Carl Fyler, Bill McLeod, Bud Klint and Carl DuBose.



Mel Schulstad stands in back of the new 303rd Memorial. The design for the new 4,000 pound granite memorial came out of a discussion between artisan Marc Santoro and Jack Rencher. It took about 60 hours to complete the art work and sandblasting.

If you were unable to attend the reunion or if you were at the Reunion and did not have your picture taken you can send a picture to be included in the Memory Book and/or order a book. Send a clear, color snapshot with a check for \$12.00 plus \$2.00 postage and handling by **November 23, 1992** to:

REUNIONS, INC.  
P.O. BOX 876  
ORLANDO, FL 32802-0876

(Detach Here)

### REUNION: 303RD BOMB GROUP EVENT NO: 92-0761

SPOUSE'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

BOOK ORDERED YES ☐ NO ☐

(Please enclose \$13.50) Florida and New York Residents add 6% Sales Tax

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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(Order subject to charge approval)

**If you have any questions on the form above please contact  
Coleman Sanders at (813) 542-8684**

## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

We did a brisk business at the roster check desk in Boise. In the five days we added eight new regular members, four new associates, five renewals, five life members and six super life members. This, of course, was in addition to the dozens of corrections and updates made to the printout. When the new roster is published in early '93 we should be in good shape with the latest addresses and other data.

Incidentally, the new roster will include both an alphabetical listing and a ZIP code listing so you can more easily find those who are your neighbors.

A REMINDER: Please send all notices of address changes, dues payments and deaths to me (See my address at the end of this column). After I process these notices and update the computer I notify Editor Hal Susskind, Treasurer Bill Roche and others as required. We can expedite the procedure and save everyone extra postage if you send them only to me. Also, it would help if you included your membership number on all your checks.

I was asked by several at Boise what the Inactive Roster is. It is a listing of the members with whom we have lost contact. Either we haven't received their dues, and they are possibly deceased, or their Newsletters have been returned with no forwarding address. In some cases, the members have requested removal from the active roster. In all cases we no longer send Newsletters and other correspondence to them, but we don't want to lose the names. Thus, the Roster with the last known addresses.

Dues renewal time is coming up again. If you are not sure of your dues category and status, check your address label on this Newsletter. The dues code consists of a number and a symbol (i.e. X or &) that follows your membership number. That digit in the dues code indicates the year through which your dues has been paid. Life members are exempt and their code shows "LM" or "SLM." Most of the annual dues payers have codes showing a "2" (for 1992). It is now about time for all those 2's to become 3's. Also included on most address labels are a rank and unit designation. If they are absent on yours, it is because I don't have that information in the computer. The rank followed by slash R (/R) indicates your rank at retirement. Otherwise it is the war time rank while at Molesworth. I will add, change or delete it at your request.

Carlton M. Smith,  
12700 Red Maple Cir. #54  
Sonora, CA 95370

The following lists include all NEW names received as of 1 October 1992:

Continued on page 16

## NEW MEMBERS

- L1725 David W. "Duck" Plewes, 129 Woodlawn Ave., Ridgeland, SC 29936 (359)  
 L1276 Dale E. Ragel, Z325 E Marilyn St., Simi Valley, CA 93065 (444)  
 1727 Val Stoddard, 144 Trail Creek, Pocatello, ID 83201 (358)  
 1728 Kieth W. Clapp, 12310 Tamarack Rd., Sand Lake, MI 49343 (427)  
 S1729 Chuck R. Storer, POB 411, Shawnee Mission, KS 66201-0411 (427)  
 1730 Peter P. Zimba, 700 Jefferson Ave., Cherry Hill, NJ 08002-3721 (427)  
 A-148 Barbara Ellen O'Leary, 3730 Cameron Bridge Rd., Manhattan, MT 59741  
 A-149 Michael A. Meister, 2538 Fisher Rd., Indianapolis, IN 46239-9510  
 1731 Richard E. Kitson, 4308 Milberry Rd., Morenci, MI 49256 (427)  
 1732 Roger D. Ayers, 764 Via Somonte, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274 (427)  
 1733 Sander Campbell, 1166 Campbell Centre, Dallas, TX 75206 (360)  
 1734 Richard E. Rowan, 1607 Layton Ct., Sun City Center, FL 33573 (359)  
 A-150 Erinrose, O'Grady, 639 Roseland Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19111  
 S1735 James Traban, Box 342, Wilsonville, IL 62093 (359)  
 1736 Norton Gillespie, 2459 W Broadway St., Anaheim, CA 92804 (359)  
 A-151 Robert E. Barrat, 308 South Queen St., Martinsburg, WV 25443  
 1737 Robert W. McCorkle, POB 1550, Durham, NC 27702-1550 (358)  
 1738 Werner G. Goering, 6632 Los Leonas, Tucson, AZ 85718 (358)  
 1739 Joseph G. Andreason, 201 East A, Shoshone, ID 83352  
 1740 Harvey N. Kaber, 368 Elk Trail, Whitefish, MT 59937 (360)  
 L1741 Frank D Garrett, 4815 W Grove, Apt 1705, Dallas, TX 75278 (427)  
 1742 Clarence Sanderson, 2414 E. Lewis Lane, Nampa, ID 83651  
 1743 Kenneth T. Zetlmaier, 19971 Williams Hwy, Williams, OR 97544 (427)  
 1744 George Emerson, Box 439030, San Diego, CA 92143 (427)  
 1745 Harry W. Hop, 599 E Wolf Creek Dr., Elko, NV 89801  
 1746 Clarence V. Walenta, PO Box 56, St Clair, PA 17970  
 1747 Peter G. Decker, 166 Hanover St., Suite 301, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702  
 A-152 James, McCoy, 360 Menlo Oaks Dr., Menlo Park, CA 94025  
 A-153 Brandon A. Vos, c/o Frank DeCicco, 6 Kitty Hawk W, Richmond, TX 77469  
 A-154 Bruce R. Canning, 8318 Elmont Ave, #36, Pico Rivera, CA 90660  
 A-155 Ryan P. Whimpey, 18516 Ibex, Artesia, CA 90701  
 A-156 John L. Peacock, 207 Kathryn Ln., Marietta, GA 30066  
 L1748 James R. Donovan, 18222 Charter Rd., Villa Park, CA 92667 (359)  
 A-157 Kathy M. Johnson, W 14401 Taylor Rd., Cheney, WA 99004  
 A-158 James D. Taylor, 7948 La Riviera Dr. #238, Sacramento, CA 95826  
 L1749 Charles E. Kerwin, 2850 Dunbar Ct., Arcata, CA 95521 (359)  
 L1750 Arthur H. Pentz, 715 Rollingwood Dr., Greensboro, NC 27410 (359)  
 L1751 Hower E. Bitler Jr., 12179 97th Ave. N, Seminole, FL 34642  
 A159 Nathalie B. Oates, 2502 S. Kimball, Caldwell, ID 83605  
 A160 Jane B. Donahue, 1165 HiPoint St., Los Angeles, CA 90035

## ADDRESS CHANGES

- Brown, Jack, 33952 Cape Cove, Dana Point, CA 92629 (359)  
 Dolan, Lee E., 120 Apache Trail, Winchester, VA 22602 (358)  
 Drewry, James A., 6701 Ridgecrest Circle, Texarkana, TX 75503 (427)  
 Goettman, Andrew T., 4438 Red Oak Ln, Zellwood, FL 32798 (359)  
 Hawes, Kenneth D., 9056 La Vine St., Altaloma, CA 91701 (358)  
 McCoy, Melvin T., 8865 Maverick Terr., Apt. 806, Beaverton, OR 97005 (444)  
 Miller, Edwin C., 422 So. Walnut Ave., Temple, OK 73568 (360)  
 Morgan, Robert L., 1305 Memorial Dr., Baytown, TX 77520 (359)  
 Roller, Jack, 33 Oxford Ct., Petaluma, CA 95952 (359)  
 St. Julien, John D., 777 Matagual Dr, Vista, CA 92083 (360)  
 Stevens, Kermit D., 2631 East Congress Way, Medford, OR (HDQ)  
 Vogel, Mrs Frances, 798 Sandi Dr., Leesburg, FL  
 Vosler, Mrs. Virginia, 533 Cedar Lake Club, Clayville, NY 13322

## UPGRADE TO LIFE OR SUPER LIFE MEMBERSHIP

- L1073 Coleman, Loyd, Box 186, Melba, ID 83641 (427)  
 L1271 Doback, Charles R., Sr, 266 Scott St., Naugatuck, CT 06770 (358)  
 L021 Gervais, Joseph R., 1400 N Baird, #140, Green Bay, WI 54302 (427)  
 S1020 Harrelson, Thomas K., 1506 So Prudence Rd, Tucson, AZ 85710 (358)  
 L1212 Hatch, Logan B., PO Box 1213, Great Falls, MT 59403 (360)  
 L192 Jillson, John S., 54 Carleton Rd, East Sandwich, MA 02537 (360)  
 S723 McCoy, Melvin T., 8865 Maverick Terr., #806, Beaverton, OR 97005 (444)  
 S255 McLeod, William S., 1676 W Mesa, Fresno, CA 93711 (358)  
 L700 Pilon, Rene, 109 Shawmut Ave., Central Falls, RI 02863 (41)  
 L570 Sanders, Coleman, 146 SW 53rd Terr., Cape Coral, FL 33914 (359)  
 L1386 Smith, Roland M., 3354 Joyce Dr., Salt Lake City, UT 84109 (360)  
 S1727 Stoddard, Val, 144 Trail Creek, Pocatello, ID 83204 (358)  
 S1550 Thoma, Robert W., 27 Keene St., Whiting, NJ 08759-2340 (HDQ)  
 L1730 Zimba, Peter P., 700 Jefferson Ave., Cherry Hill, NJ 08002-3721 (427)

## DONATIONS

Roland M. Smith  
 James B. Taylor

*Thank You*

More than 100 wonderful people who were present in Boise volunteered their time and assistance in making the 50th anniversary reunion an entertaining and memorable celebration for us all. The Reunion Committee wishes to express sincere appreciation to everyone who helped. *Thanks a million, 303rd family! We couldn't do it without you.*

**James and Evelyn Taylor  
 Jack and Louise Rencher  
 Walt and Bev Mayer and Kathy Johnson**

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

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