

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

JULY 1993

303RD'S SPIRIT AND COLORS STILL PRESENT AT MOLESWORTH



When the Tactical Mission Wing (TMW) was deployed to Molesworth in 1986, they requested and received permission to call themselves the 303rd TMW in honor of Molesworth's illustrious wartime inhabitants. When the Joint Intelligence Center was proposed for organization at Molesworth in 1991 there was opposition to the term "intelligence" in its name, so it was changed to Joint Analysis Center thus negating any possibility of using 303rd in its title. Still anxious to maintain a tie-in to the wartime occupants of Molesworth, the JAC incorporated the 303rd wartime insignia into its own. As you can see by the illustrations, the 303rd's colors still fly over Molesworth.

By Hal Susskind

Two words – "fantastic and emotional" – best describe the sentimental journey made to RAF Molesworth by 125 members of the 303rd Bomb Group Association as part of their 50th Anniversary, "Return to England" celebration.

When the three bus loads of veterans arrived at Molesworth on the morning of May 22, they were unaware of the surprise tribute planned for them by Col. Glenn D. Shaffer, Commander, Joint Analysis Center, the present occupants of RAF Molesworth.

Standing at attention, in two lines which ran from the road where the busses were parked, to the base dining facility, were all the military members of the multi-service Center. As the visiting 303rd members alighted from the busses, they passed between the double file of JAC per-

sonnel who saluted each Hell's Angel as he passed by. It was a very emotional experience for each veteran as he acknowledged the salute from the much younger military member. Because the tribute was so totally unexpected, it brought tears to the eyes of the 303rd vet and his family members who had accompanied him on this sentimental journey.

Inside the dining hall, they were officially welcomed to Molesworth by Col. Shaffer who introduced members of his staff and gave a run down of what the Center personnel had planned for their "Distinguished Returnees." "On behalf of all military and civilian personnel stationed at RAF Molesworth, welcome back," said Col. Shaffer. "Our proud heritage began over 50 years ago with your heroic actions, personal sacrifices, and exhilarating triumphs during World War II. Today, we continue

to build upon that heritage and are doing our best to ensure that the legend of the 303rd Bomb Group lives on. I hope you enjoy your return to RAF Molesworth."

"We have a variety of activities planned for you today which I know you will enjoy." Continuing, he said, "We are transforming the main conference room in Bldg. 320 into a heritage room and today we will dedicate a plaque in your honor. After a light lunch, we will provide a tour of the base and former 303rd BG sites used during WW II. While the runway and most of the original buildings are long gone, many of the original sites are still visible. After the tour, a memorial service will be held at the All Saints Church in Brington. The highlight of the day will be a good old fashioned Hangar Dance, a la 1940s era, and I guarantee it will be a fun time. Many local residents from the

surrounding villages will be there to welcome you back and swap war stories."

"Once again, enjoy your stay in England and your return to RAF Molesworth. I look forward to meeting each and everyone of you. Welcome back."

Col Shaffer also informed the group that two of the newer buildings on Molesworth had been named in honor of two 303rd BG Medal of Honor winners; Lt. Jack Mathis and T/Sgt. Forrest L. Vosler. Presently under construction is a brand new Administration Building which Col. Shaffer is anxious to name in honor of someone selected by the 303rd Bomb Group Association. (Letters on this subject appear elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter.)

Following Col. Shaffer's remarks, Ray Cossey, Honorary member of

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

Editor: Hal Susskind

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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 303rds 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 303rds 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.

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3015 SW Underwood Dr.
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Mission Reports

Dave Matthews
5530 Center Hill Church Rd.
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Update from Board of Directors

I am pleased to announce that Eddie Deerfield has accepted the office of Vice President-Reunions. He will be working closely with Jim Taylor learning the ropes with primary responsibility for selecting a site for the 1995 reunion and the reunion itself. Of course selecting a committee to help him goes with the territory. If you have any suggestions for reunion sites, please forward them to Eddie. His address is: 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016. (President Bill McLeod)

Congratulations to Jack Rencher for the great job he did both financially and socially in running the Boise Reunion. Because of the greater attendance than anticipated, Jack was able to renegotiate some of the contracts with the vendors and suppliers of services and return a nice profit to the Association. (President McLeod)

Harry Gobrecht, Historian and "Might in Flight" author recently advised that total book sales are approaching 700. That only leaves 300 available for purchase. This is a high priority item and everyone should be involved in spreading the word on the 303rd Bomb Group. Contact Harry if you need an order form or additional information.

Ralph Adams advised that the Archives Committee has finished their work on the Group Mission Reports. Now is the time for those interested to contact Dave Matthews, 5530 Centerhill Church Rd., Loganville, GA 30249. Dave says he has also catalogued all the Missing Aircrew Reports and the Aircraft Accident Reports in which each report contains only about 3-5 pages. Dave complained that he wasn't very busy, so maybe with all the 364 mission reports on hand, we can put him back into business. Ralph Adams said his committee copied between 68-70,000 pages of all the 364 missions that the Group participated in. We should all thank Ralph and his crew for a job well done.

Malcolm Magid is putting together a "Blockbuster" visual presentation for the Savannah Reunion in March. Anyone who served at Molesworth between 1942-45 who has some good still B&W (color if you have them) photos that you would like to be returned as soon as they are incorporated into the production. Malcolm also serves on the Nominating Committee. Anyone who would like to serve as an officer or committee member in the organization is asked to send their name to Malcolm Magid, 2307 Briarwood Hills Dr., NE, Atlanta, GA 30319. Tel. (404)237-1212.

THANK YOU!

For the record number of 303rd who made the sentimental journey back to Molesworth, it was a fantastic and emotional experience. On behalf of the group I would like to thank the personnel of the Joint Analysis Center and its commander, Col. Glenn Shaffer and his staff, including Maj. Joseph Cafarella Jr., the tour organizer. Our sincere thanks also goes to Col. Peter W. Tkacs, 10th Air Base Wing Commander; to Kathy Shaffer and the wives of the JAC personnel for fixing and serving lunch and to our WW II neighbors who welcomed us back to England and our old air base. We would also like to thank the Vicar of the All Saints Church in Brington for the impressive memorial service. Gratefully we acknowledge the work done by Ray and Teresa Cossey and Robin and Sue Beeby for the outstanding program they arranged for the first four days of the trip. We shall always remember that. We would also like to thank Jim Taylor, our V/P for Reunions; Coleman Sanders, for his great photos, some appear in this issue of the newsletter; Dick D'Amata of Tamarac Travel, Peter and Carol Hill of the Eagle Pub in Cambridge, Michael Tagg PR of the RAF Hendon Museum and the hundreds of other English people who made this trip so enjoyable. If I missed anyone, I apologize. But I'll remember you in the next issue along with some more of Coleman's photos.

Hell's Angels Forum

Your Chance to Sound Off!

The Return to Molesworth

May I please send my very best wishes to all those 303rds who were able to join Teresa and I at the 'Return to Molesworth' UK Reunion in May.

I hope that we did you proud in what we were able to arrange, especially during the first four days of your visit to this country. I shall long remember the Saturday, especially. It was truly a memorable day for all those privileged to attend the old base and to be so warmly honored by the officers and other ranks of the present day USAF.

Teresa and I were delighted to have the opportunity of renewing old acquaintances and to forge new friendships. It was a very happy occasion for all concerned.

At the official reception at Molesworth I announced my retirement from the position of UK Liaison for the 303rd Bomb Group; a position which I have held since 1979. During the past almost 14 years I have been pleased to co-ordinate three UK Reunions (1984, 1990 & 1993). Teresa and I have enjoyed each and every one of them, but this year's was, we feel, something special. At the San Diego reunion, in 1981 (or was it Washington DC in '83?) you honored me by bestowing Honorary membership on me. I hope now that I have 'retired from active service' you will not feel inclined to withdraw this privilege. I certainly hope not!

Please print my full address at the end of this letter in the hope that any 303rds who attended the Molesworth Reunions can, if they wish, drop us a line. We are always pleased to hear from any Hell's Angels members.

Yours in friendship,

Ray Cossey
Oaklands, Blofield Corner Rd.
Little Plumstead
Norwich Norfolk, NR13 5HU,
England
tel: (603) 720980

We sincerely hope that everyone who made the trip back to the UK enjoyed their visit - we were pleased to have you back. We hope that things hadn't changed completely beyond recognition. The present staff of Molesworth even surprised us with their welcome, and we thought we knew all that was planned!

Everyone we have spoken to since the Hangar Dance has agreed that it was the best that they had been to in a long time. The main reason seemed to be that they could mix with the

303rd's and have time to sit and talk, as well as enjoy the costumes, atmosphere and music, which they seldom have the opportunity to do. We all people tried really hard to get "in the mood", most of the costumes were genuinely 40's and much research was done to get hair and styles right. For those that didn't get a chance to talk to Robin on the night, but just get a view of the legs - his kilt etc. was the dress uniform of an officer of one of the Scottish Army regiments, the Gordon Highlanders!

We were glad that you managed to get a tour around one of our B17's, the Mary Alice, at Duxford Museum. A great number of volunteers have spent many years to get her back to the condition you saw her in. The same applies to the airworthy B17, Sally B, which added to the very moving Memorial Day ceremony on the Sunday afternoon. The costs of keeping her flying are met by donations, appearance fees and film starring roles (such as the Memphis Belle film). A worthy cause, I'm sure you agree.

We all saw Malcolm Magid laying the wreath at Madingley on behalf of the 303rd Bomb Group, but were you all aware that Col. Shaffer also laid a wreath dedicated to the memory of the 303rd, on behalf of the Joint Analysis Centre? (photograph enclosed).

I have also enclosed a photograph that I am pleased actually came out - it was taken in the Eagle Pub in Cambridge on the Friday night. As you can see, the natives are still friendly, and some of you haven't lost the knack of charming the young ladies even after all these years! The Eagle was typical of an English Pub on a Friday night - Friday has always been the "Boys Night Out!" The Eagle was an apt place to be - it was frequented by British and American airmen during WW II. The ceiling contains signatures, squadrons and comments etc. written by candle smoke, and has been preserved as it was then.

We would like to thank Ray and Teresa Cossey for all their hard work over the past few years as your representatives in the UK. We have enjoyed working with them to assist with the smooth running of your visits. We will be honoured to take up where they leave off, and hope that we can live up to the very high standards set us. On this note, if anyone is visiting, or planning to visit the UK, and need any help or information, please call us beforehand and we will be pleased to assist you

in any way we can.

All that's left to say is "See you all in Savannah!"

Robin & Sue Beeby
40 St. Catharine's Road
Kettering, Northants
England NN15 5EN
Tel: (O) 536-516423

Please find enclosed the copy of "Molesworth Lady" that you purchased at the "Hangar Dance."

Also enclosed are copies of the other two 303rd prints ("Homeward Bound" and "You're Almost Home Yank") that I have published. You will probably note that they are both copy No. 303!!

As you can probably appreciate, these two prints are highly sought after, in the same way as copy No. 1 is with any limited edition print. I have sent them to you in the hope that, either through your newsletter or, at your next reunion in the U.S.A. you could arrange for them to be either auctioned or raffled, etc. and the money raised be added to the 303rd funds.

As you will see from the enclosed article, Molesworth is quite special to me, and it was a great privilege to meet so many members of the 303rd.

I hope that in asking you to do this I have not added too greatly to your work load. I trust that the rest of your stay in our country was enjoyable.

Keith Hill
24 St. Peter's Avenue
Rushden
Northants
NN10 9XW, England

Ed. Note: "Homeward Bound" and "You're Almost Home Yank" are smaller prints than "Molesworth Lady." They can be purchased separately or as a matching pair. For further information on prices which includes air mail to the USA contact the editor.

I went to England with my father, Jim O'Leary, to see England. I came home believing in heroes, having met so many. I heard many stories which were told matter of factly, about heroic acts that were never acknowledged by anyone but the people you did them for. You are all brave men, and have wonderful wives who share your war years with patience because they know what it means to you and what you did. Thank you.

Kathy O'Leary Streifling
1035 Isaacs Avenue
Walla Walla, WA 99362

Ed. Note: Thank you very much for your kind remarks. The men of the 303rd and their patient wives did another great thing. They raised wonderful children.

Crusade Molesworth 1993 was a fantastic success. The welcome Hell's Angels received from the Joint Analysis Center (JAC USEUCOM) personnel was a greeting to be long remembered. It was a most emotional occasion and brought a tear to the eyes of many of us returnees.

Little of the installation we knew in the 1940's remain. All 3 hangars and the rusting remains of residential site #1 are all that I recognized. Many new brick buildings and concrete bunkers (for cruise missiles now long gone) replace the installation we had. A large multi-storied building is under construction. When completed it will be the headquarters of the United States European Command's intelligence center. Developing a name for that building is the purpose of this letter.

During the welcoming festivities it was pointed out that our Medal of Honor awardees were further honored by having a permanent building named for each of them. A bronze plaque recognizing the heroics of Lt. Jack Mathis is installed on one building. A similar plaque recognizing the heroics of T/Sgt Forrest Vosler is installed on another. The speaker, Col. Glen D. Shaffer, Commander, JAC asked our association to come up with a name for the new building when it is completed.

At a subsequent meal gathering I proposed for consideration the name might well be the "Bow Your Neck Stevens" building to recognize Col Kermit Stevens. He was assigned as 303rd Bomb Group Commander in the summer of 1943. He was, without a doubt, the finest Base Commander that Molesworth had during the war years. I knew and served under each and every one of them. He took over when the bombing deep into Germany was just beginning; he instilled a feeling of greatness among the flight personnel with his charge "Bow Your Neck;" he brought about a high degree of cohesion and cooperation among all the ground support people that really didn't exist before he came. He truly was a prime motivator of much of the greatness of "Hell's Angels."

Other great and good combat leader's names were suggested at this meal gathering. None, however, were overall Base Commanders. The

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point was also made as to whether we should recommend the name of any individual. A point well taken, as the entire roster of all those ever assigned to Molesworth during the war years might well and should be recognized and re-membered in perpetuity. To achieve this, such names as "303rd Bomb Group Hell's Angels" building and "303rd Bomb Group Might in Flight" building were suggested as possibilities.

A perplexing matter isn't it? It was suggested that the president of the Association appoint a committee to study the subject and submit recommendations for a permanent building name that could be presented in the newsletter for association consensus approval.

Mel McCoy
8865 SW Maverick Ter. #806
Beaverton, Or 97005

... Anent the naming of that new building at Molesworth.

I vociferously support the use of the Stevens name. And, if we run into trouble with using the name of Stevens, we can always name it . . . The Bow Your Neck Memorial Building . . . and then have a small plaque explaining what the "bow your neck" means and the great fellow who we all named thusly. And for those of us who went off on the mission, often "Bow Your Neck" was what we were thinking all the way! This is to serve as my support for such an honor for Steve.

William Heller
P.O. Box 3006
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019

Ed. Note: Since the building, when completed will be part of the military presence in Europe well into the next century, I think it is important that as many members of the Association as possible submit their recommendations to the president Bill McLeod.

I am an associate member writing to you from Northampton, England. The reason for this letter is to say a "Big Thank You" to all the 303rd B.G. veterans that returned to Molesworth in May.

I attended the Hangar dance at the Molesworth base and it was such an honour to be in attendance with all of these veterans and their charming ladies.

I am a collector of B-17 prints and at the dance I got many of the vets to sign one of these prints. Enclosed with this letter is a photograph of this print. I have a three year old son and when he is older it will make me feel so proud to pass this print on to him

and tell him about the time I met the returning veterans of the 303rd.

I also attended the memorial service at the Madingley American War Cemetery on a Sunday afternoon. This service was attended by many high ranking officers of the present day U.S. Air Force in England and other dignitary's from the British Forces and councils. It was a very moving service made even more emotional by the attendance of the 303rd Bomb Group. They made everybody attending, feel so proud of them and the respect that they had from the British people during the war years still holds strongly to this day.

Let me end this letter by once again saying a big thank you to them all. They done their country and the 303rd Bomb Group association proud. I hope they also enjoyed the rest of the trip to England at Stratford-Upon-Avon and London.

I hope that the group will return another year.

Russ Tyson
51 Greenglades
West Hunsbury
Northampton
M4 9YW, England

P.S. Thank you for an excellent newsletter. It is very informative, and I can't wait for the next one.

Ed. Note: On behalf of the returning 125 veterans of the 303rd I'd like to thank the British people for their warmth and kindness during the visit. You overwhelmed us with your hospitality. We will return.

I'd like to place a reunion notice in your next issue. A good number of the 38th Recon Sqdn. members were in the 303rd Bomb Group; 427th Sqdn. from Feb. 1942 until the end of the war in Europe.

Les Hilliard
23485 Evening Snow
Moreno Valley, CA 92557

Ed. Note: OK here it is:

**—Reunion of the 38th—
Recon. Sqdn, USAAF
Sept. 16-17-18, 1993**
Wyndham Garden Hotel
18118 Pacific Hwy. South
Seattle, WA 98188
Tel. (206) 244-6666
Contact: Lee Embree
1675 Monroe Rd.
Port Angeles, WA 98362
(206) 452-7094

The Lutzendorf Mission

The very informative and interesting piece on the recovery of Lt. Barrat's aircraft and effects in the Oct. '92 Hell's Angels Newsletter by

Hal Susskind prompted me to add some more information about that 9 Feb. 1945 mission to Lutzendorf, Germany.

The collision and loss of two 427 BS aircraft are detailed and a third loss of a/c #338764 of the 359 BS should be noted. Piloted by 1st Lt Jack Bailey, the crew was ordered to bail out after bombs away. Two engines out and one windmilling prop caused rapid altitude loss and increasing separation from the formation. Bailey and co-pilot Lt. Mervin Hall continued to Belgium after acquiring close air support from P-51s to ward off the now menacing enemy fighters.

After Bailey and Hall safely parachuted, #764, now pilotless, proceeded to belly land, gear up, with only 90 percent damage.

Bailey's original navigator, 2nd Lt. Glen (Swede) Swenson was flying as GH-Nav. in Capt. Bill Eisenhart's squadron lead aircraft #44-8564 on this mission. To continue the name dropping, TISgt. Joe Vieira was the R/O with this crew.

Swenson has recently revealed to me that a crew member on his aircraft re-marked, "there go your buddies, Swede."

Capt. Eisenhart turned his aircraft to count the chutes. Seven were observed. The POW experience from Erfurt to Eisenach, then Dulag Luft near Wetzlar for interrogation and processing was an adventure experienced by thousands. Our first POW Camp was Stalag 13D at Nuremberg and then the famous March to Stalag 7A at Moosburg.

We were liberated 29 April 1945.

Merle Eckert
33 Greene St.
New York, NY 10013

Ed. Note: Bailing out with Merle that day were:

Lt. William H. Fisher(N); S/Sgt. William E. McGuire(T); Sgt. Carl A. Muller(E); S/Sgt. E.J. Darden(R); Sgt. Donald F. Geng(LT); Sgt. Edward L. Bartkoski(WG).

How Many Brothers

It only took 49 years! I first met Bill Means in 1944. Under what circumstances, I don't recall, but it may have been when I was interrogating his crew after one of the missions. Bill was a "hell-of-a-nice-guy, always smiling and a great pilot highly regarded by his crew. His plane was "Sheed," named for his now deceased wife.

Our paths didn't cross often at Molesworth, but I always remem-

bered him especially since he was from the Sacramento area, my birthplace, and because his brother Hank, was also in the Group at the time — on John Griggs crew. Having two brothers on the base at the same time prompted the base photo lab to take their picture and the story was later published in the Sacramento Bee. I obtained a copy of the picture and put it in my album with all the rest of the WW II mementos I brought home.

I never saw Bill or Hank in person again. I had heard that the "Sheed" had been shot down and I always looked for Bill's name among the POWs, but never found it. The brothers' picture has been in my album all these years, but I had neglected to write any names on the back of it so I had forgotten theirs.

Now 49 years later, everything fell into place (another benefit of being Membership Chairman of this organization). I recently received the name and address of Henry H. Means from Jim Taylor as a prospective member. The name rang out loud and clear and Hank lived less than 100 miles of me. I immediately wrote to Hank with a PS asking if he was the one I remembered at Molesworth. A few days later his completed application and check came back with the note, "Bingo, I am the brother who was a gunner and Bill was a pilot." Hank had heard about the Savannah reunion coming up and had been looking for a point of contact with the Association for months. Bill was never a POW because he was never shot down. The Means boys both finished their tours.

Hank resides in Sacramento and Bill in the Lake Tahoe area. Both are now members of the Association and I look forward to a Savannah bull session with a couple of guys it has taken me 49 years to find again.

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

Ed. Note: The letter above prompted our Historian Harry Gobrecht to ask the question, how many sets of brothers served at Molesworth during the 1942-45 period. The two Means brothers were reunited at Molesworth in June 1944. Both were members of the 427th BS. 1st Lt. Wilford T. Means was assigned to the 427th as a pilot on May 29, 1944. He completed his 35 missions on Aug. 13, 1944 and returned home. S/Sgt Henry H. Means, Jr., a waist gunner on the Lt. John C. Griggs, Jr. crew was also assigned to the 427th on June 30, 1944. He finished his 35 missions on

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Dec. 4, 1944. The brothers lived about 100 yards apart during the months that they were both assigned to the 427th. The Heller brothers were reunited in December of 1944. Capt. William C. Heller was Ops officer of the 359th BS and was promoted to Major and made CO of the 360th in February 1945. His younger brother Lt. Emerson Heller joined the 359th BS as a co-pilot on the Richeson crew. He later checked out as a first pilot. The brothers flew in many combat mission formations together but in different aircraft. Emerson remained in the service and was KIA in Vietnam in 1969. Of course another famous brother combination was the Mathis brothers. Rhude Mark Mathis, also a bombardier was at the field the day his brother, Jack was KIA over Vegesack and for his heroic actions was awarded the Medal of Honor. Mark was KIA on a mission to Kiel while flying with the 303rd BG.

DID YOU KNOW THEM?

While on holiday in Donegal, Ireland last year, I came across two aircraft engines on the beach at Fintragh Strand, Donegal.

Intrigued, I started making enquiries locally and then continued to check when I got home. The outcome was that it was a B-17 Fortress 4297553 that had crash landed after crossing in appalling weather from the United States.

From an Irish Army '92 report on the incident I learnt it crashed at 1810 on the 20th of February 1944 and names of the crew.

I made contact with one of the crew John L. Arendt in spite of having wrong name and address. He wrote me a wonderful letter and told me they were all safe and went to the 303rd BG at Molesworth.

Could you help me, do you have any contact with any of the other crew members? I would dearly like to write them.

John tells me what with picking up the pieces after the war and starting a family he lost contact with the other crew members, something he has always regretted.

Alan Ritchie
891 Eastern Avenue
Newbury Park
Ilford, Essex
United Kingdom

Ed. Note: Here's the rest of the story as put together by Harry Gobrecht. The Rowan crew crash landed their new B-17 G-20-VE after crossing the Atlantic Ocean in appalling weather. While enroute they ran into a severe electrical storm and their aircraft was

hit by lightning. The radio operator had difficulty getting signals and the winds created navigational problems. Knowing that they might have a problem in reaching land, the pilot ordered the crew to throw out all excess weight. The aircraft was ditched within sight of land and the crew could observe fires that had been built on shore by some Irishmen. The crew had only one life raft and five men climbed aboard and the other five men hung on to the sides. Reaching land they were provided hospitality and warmth in a large summer home (hotel) believed to have been owned by a Doctor O'Bern. Actual ditching was on sandbar near the beach at Fintragh Strand, Killybegs, Donegal, Ireland at 1810 hours. After a pleasant recuperation the crew "escaped" from the Irish Republic, and reported to the 359th BS on 17 March 1944.

T/Sgt. John L. Arendt who arrived at Molesworth as an Aerial Gunner and Flight Engineer later became qualified as a Togglier. He finished his combat tour of 35 missions on 30 Oct. 1944 as a Togglier and then volunteered to fly an extended tour. He finished his combat experience with 42 missions. Other members of the Rowan crew eventually received new crew assignments with whom they flew their combat missions. Crewmen on the crashed B-17 #42-97553 were: 2nd Lt's F.L. Rowan (P); W.G. Moyer (CP); R.L. Bates (N); and L.F. Rawlins (B); Sgt's. L.E. Ela, Jr. (E); R.W. Hanson (R); J.L. Arendt, V. Roughley, E.D. Salmon and T.G. Miller (gunners).

Unfortunately none of the members of the Rowan crew mentioned above are members of the Association. Does anyone have any idea of their present whereabouts?

ANOTHER MYSTERY

RE: Missing Air Crew Report, 28 Sept. 1944; Time 11:48, Location 52° 11' N, 10° 35' E; Salzgitter-Barum. 8th AF, 303rd BG, 427th Sqdn., Molesworth AB, Great Britain. B-17, Type B-17G, ASN: 44-8335, Pilot, Glasgow, Charles G., 1st Lt. 0-25490.

It is my hobby to help clarify the fate of aircraft crews in the Braunschweig-Salzgitter-Wolfenbittel area during World War II.

In 1944 I was an eye witness of the crash of the above mentioned airplane. Two airmen got out of the stricken aircraft and used their parachutes. One of them was Mr. Glasgow. The other one is not known to me. If it is true that the plane

carried a crew of 9, it would mean that 7 of the crew perished.

In the archives of the city of Salzgitter it is recorded that the bodies of six American soldiers were discovered on June 11, 1948 more or less by coincidence at Heerte cemetery when reburial work was carried out. At that time nobody knew that these six had been part of the crew of said B-17G. The bodies were transported to the American cemetery Neuville en Condroz in Belgium. That leaves two of the crew unaccounted for.

The location "Cemetery Linden" given in MACR 9405 is, in my opinion, not correct. As evidence I've been able to locate the headgear (leather cap) of Top Turret gunner Lisabeth, Hilaire A.

The other crew members were: Co-pilot, Ashford, George H. 2nd Lt. 0-827 121 (MIA) Navigator, Cashman, John H. Jr., 2nd Lt. 0-723 004 (Bombardier, Goff, Homer W., 2nd Lt., 0-717 779 (MIA) Radio Gunner, Britz, Robert T., Sgt., 1602 9539 (MIA) Ball Turret Gunner, McConathy, Jethern J. Jr., Sgt. 3839 8429 (MIA) Tail Gunner, Miller, James T., Sgt. 3851 7922 (MIA) Waist Gunner, McGlinn, John H., S/ Sgt., 3332 4014 (MIA)

I would like to check these points with you or with Mr. Glasgow. Have all crew members been accounted for? Where are they buried? What happened to the second man who managed to leave the plane by chute? Is it possible that still undetected graves exist here in the BS-WF area.

Would you be kind enough to find out Mr. Glasgow's present address. A splendid source of information could be the complete documentation of the group command of Braunschweig-Broitzem military airfield (Dulag Luft). This institution registered all aircraft movements. I suppose their documents contain further valuable information.

Karl-Heinz Bartels
Harzstrasse 47 (Barum)
38229 Salzgitter 41
Germany

Ed. Note: On 28 Sept. 1944 we lost 11 aircraft, 99 men, mostly due to enemy aircraft on the mission to Magdeburg. So I'm sure that as many of these crash sites are discovered we will get more mail like the letter above. Unfortunately Lt. Glasgow is not a member of our Association. He became a POW after the above mission. In with all the other inclosures sent by Mr. Bartels was an official

looking document from Braunschweig Broitzem AF which listed two names: John Disbrow Hill, 2nd Lt. 0-711 202 and William Field Miller, 1st Lt. 0-532 898. They were the pilots on 359th a/c "Miss Umbrigo" which was shot down on the same mission. Both are members of our Association. I'm sure our historian Harry Gobrecht has the answers to a lot of Mr. Bartels questions. I'm sure his history of the 303rd, which is nearing the "Blue Line" stage will also have quite an account of this mission. Have you ordered your copy yet?

DID YOU KNOW CPL. SMITH?



My brother Cpl. Charles Richard Smith, ASN. 18065132, served in the 360th BS, 303rd Bomb Group (H) from Boise, Idaho to RAF Molesworth in England. Unfortunately his stay in England was short since he was killed in a jeep accident in England on Jan. 16, 1943.

Since I was only 8 years old when my brother was killed, I'm anxious to hear from anyone in the 303rd BG who served with Richard from Boise until his death.

I am enclosing a photo of Richard which was taken while he was in England.

Thank you very much for your help.

T/Sgt. Donald G. Smith,
USAF (Ret)
6407 Nasco Dr.
Austin, TX 78757-2717

IN MEMORIAM

Our deepest sympathy goes out to Don Stouil on the loss of his wife, Shirley in June 1993 and to Joe Vieira on the loss of his wife of 52 years, (April 1993). Thelma along with Joe was very active in the early days of the Association.

the 303rd BGA and its UK Liaison for the past 14 years and one of the coordinators for the present UK reunion, presented Col. Shaffer with a painting of a 303rd aircraft returning from a combat mission.

With the conclusion of the welcoming ceremonies, the group attended the dedication of the Heritage Room in Building 320 where the main conference room was redesignated in honor of the 303rd BG. Photos of 303rd aircraft, personnel and bomb strikes now adorn the walls. Members of the 303rd were also asked to sign various photos and artifacts to be included in the collection.

After lunch, which was made and served by wives of the JAC personnel, the group was loaded on busses for a tour of the base including the hangars, one of which was adorned with a "Triangle C." Very few if any of the original buildings are still standing. I was absolutely lost when I tried to re-orient myself with places which were familiar to me back in the 1943-45 period.

After the tour we overflowed the Memorial Services at the All Saints Church in Brington. In a previous trip back to England in 1984, members of the 303rd BGA gave the Church a plaque recognizing it for the support it gave to the American flying unit when it was stationed at RAF Molesworth during WW II.

As for the hangar dance, it turned out to be the fun time that Col. Shaffer promised and then some. With the decorations which included camouflage netting, the JAC personnel turned back the clock some 50 years. The JAC personnel turned out in WW II uniforms and their wives wore 1940 style dresses and hairdos. In front of the bandstand were blow ups of all the squadron insignias of the 303rd

while high above the bandstand just underneath an American flag was a banner which read, "303rd Bomb Group 'Hell's Angels' Welcome Back." Another pleasant surprise was the number of English friends who also attended the dance to honor the returning Hell's Angels. Especially surprising was the number of young English friends of the 303rd who showed up wearing English Army uniforms of the 1940s.

Sunday, May 23, 1993 was another emotional day for the 303rd Sentimental Journey Group. Checking out of the Holiday Inn at Cambridge, which incidentally was a first class place to stay, we boarded busses for a visit to the Duxford Imperial War Museum. In our honor there was a flight demonstration by a WW II, P-47, one of our "little friends" which flew cover for us on many missions over Germany.

From there we attended Memorial Day Services at the Cambridge American Military Cemetery. It was a very moving ceremony from the posting of the Colors by a multi-service color guard and Piper through the various remarks by the Minister, U.S. Embassy in London, the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, The Chairman of the south Cambridgeshire District Council and the Right Worshipful Mayor of Cambridge followed by the Presentation of the Floral Decorations. Malcolm Magid assisted by an ROTC Cadet made the presentation for the 303rd BGA at The Wall of the Missing which contains the names of some of the heroes of the 303rd who failed to return.

Inscribed on the wall above the list of names is this message, "The Americans, whose names here appear, were part of the price that free men for the second time in this century have been forced to pay to defend human liberty and rights. All



Former 2nd Lt. Malcolm Magid returns the salutes given by the members of the Joint Analysis Center just after arriving at RAF Molesworth Saturday. Magid wore his World War II uniform for the day's activities.



Dr. Carl J. Fyler, member of the 303rd Bombardment Group and former Association president, presents Joint Analysis Center Commander, Col. Glenn Shaffer a portrait in honor of the group's return to RAF Molesworth. (USAF Photos By Sr/A Stuart Camp)



After the dedication of the 303rd BG Heritage Room, members of the World War II unit walked around looking at the historical artifacts and photos adorning the walls. Here, Jack Rencher signs a 50-year-old photo of himself for inclusion in the collection.

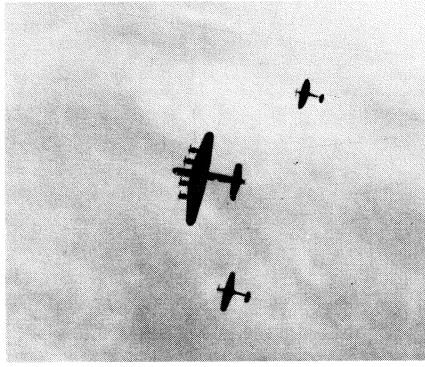
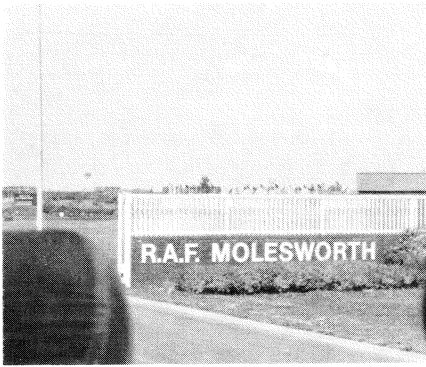
who shall hereafter live in freedom will be here reminded that to these men and their comrades we owe a debt to be paid with grateful remembrance of their sacrifice and the high resolve that the cause for which they died shall live eternally."

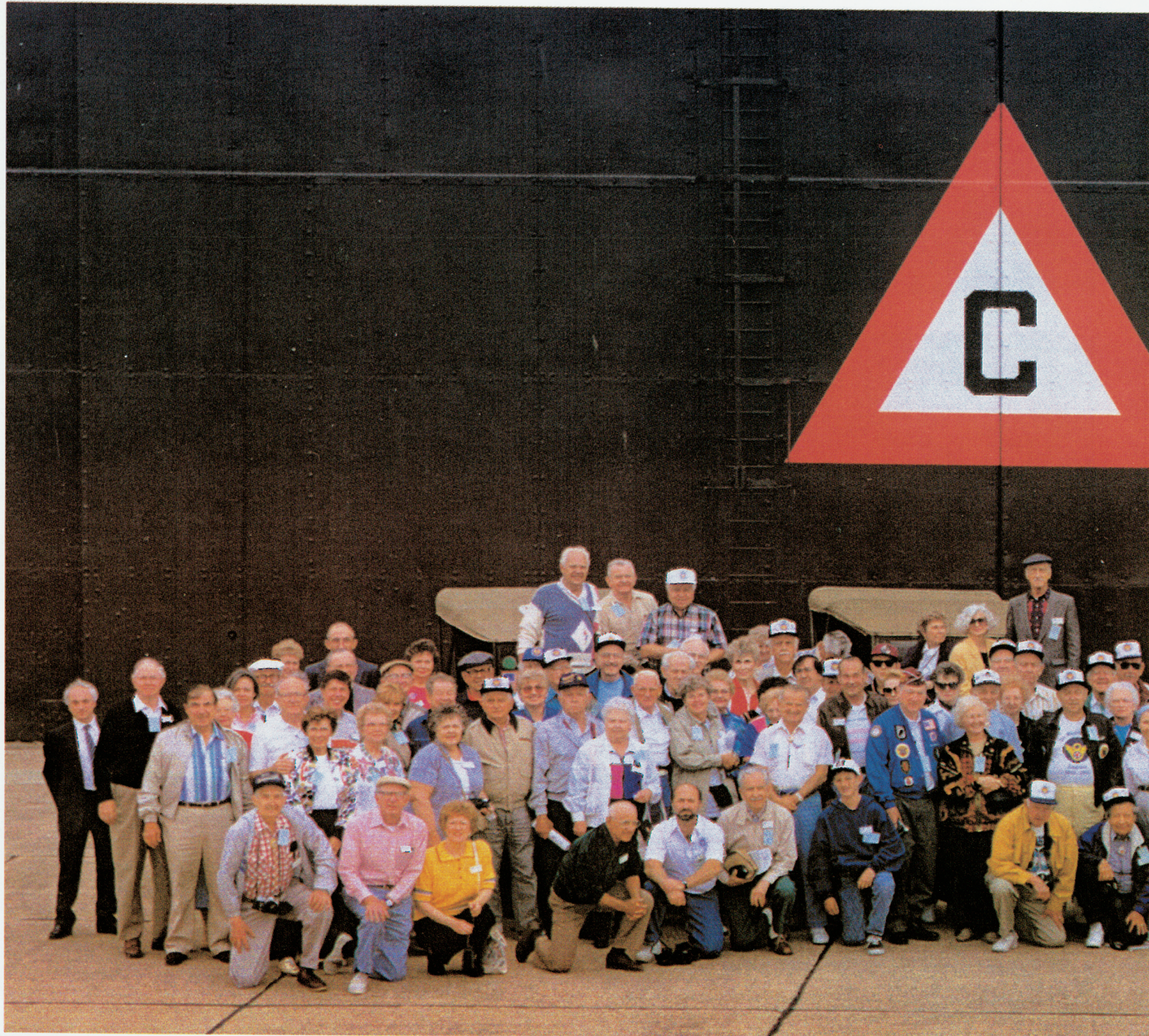
One of the highlights of the very colorful and inspiring ceremony was a flyover by the B-17 "Sally B" from Duxford. I dare say that there wasn't a dry eye among the 303rd contingent when the Flying Fortress made a low slow pass over the row of white crosses that mark the graves of the 3,811 who are interred here.

As the strains of Taps echoed over the cemetery, four jets from the U.S.A.F. flew over in the "missing Man" formation, a fitting climax to the American Memorial Day Ceremony

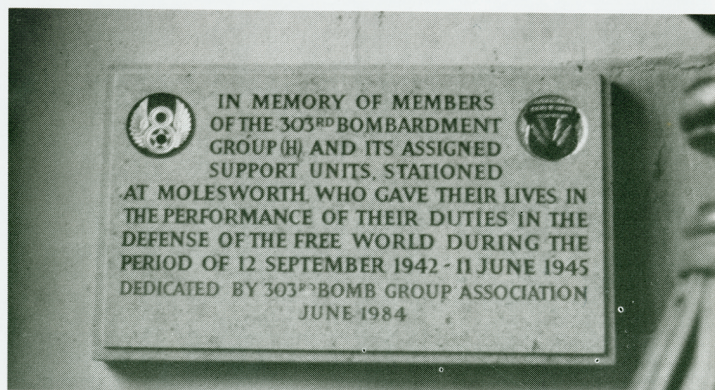
at Coton, Cambridgeshire, England.

No visit to the Cemetery at Cambridge is fulfilling unless you stop at the very beautiful Chapel and read the inscription on the ceiling. It says, "In proud and grateful memory of those men of the United States Army Air Force who from these friendly isles flew their final flight and met their God. They knew not the hour, the day, nor the manner of their passing. When far from home they were called to join that heroic band of airmen who had gone before. May they rest in peace." At Cambridge we said good bye to Col. Shaffer and his wife and a fond farewell to this portion of the trip's coordinators, Ray and Theresa Cosse and Sue and Robin Beeby. Our next stop was The Alveston Manor in Stratford-on-Avon.

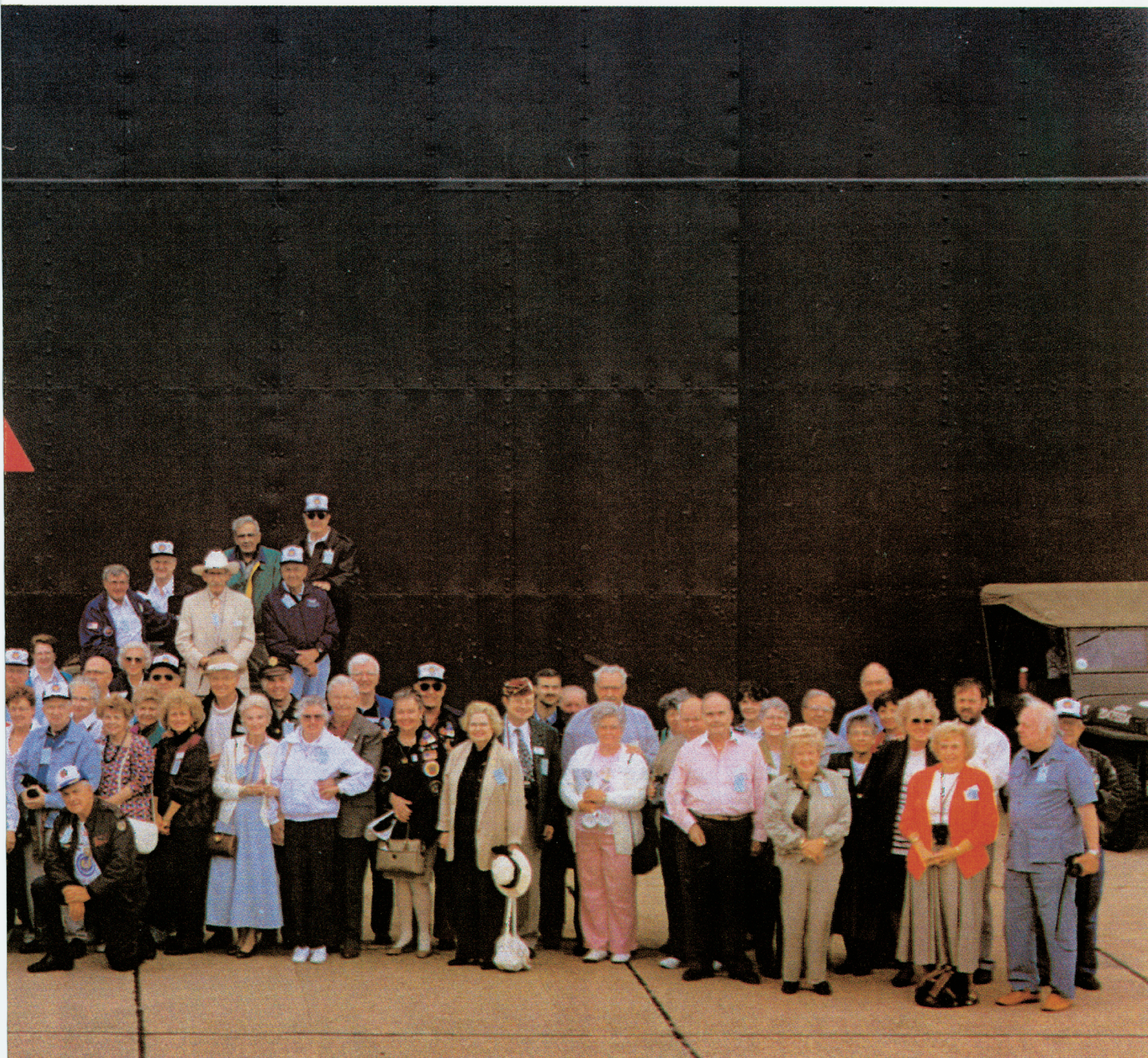




Edward Giering talks to Army S/Sgt. Beverly Chain and M/Sgt. Marie Phillips after the memorial service in Brington for their fallen comrades.



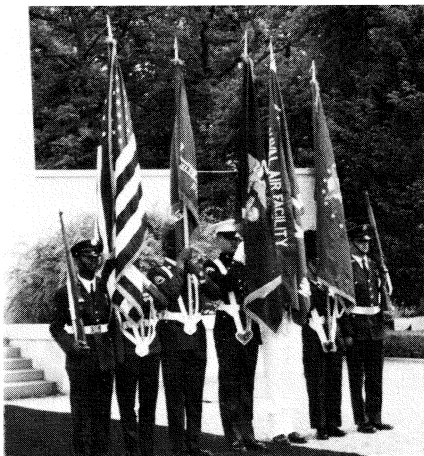
In a previous trip back to England several years ago, some members of the 303rd BG gave the church a plaque recognizing it for the support it gave the American flying unit when it was stationed at RAF Molesworth during World War II.



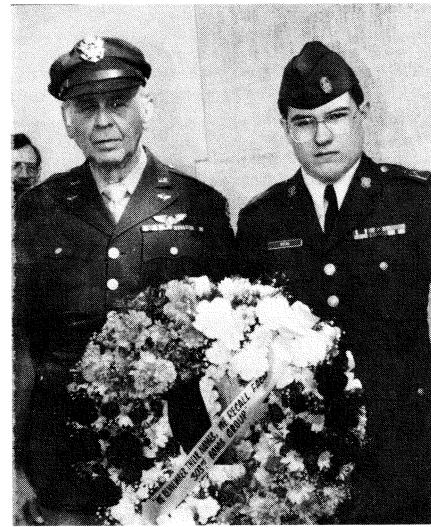
Our ace photographer Coleman Sanders doubles as a fish peddler in London

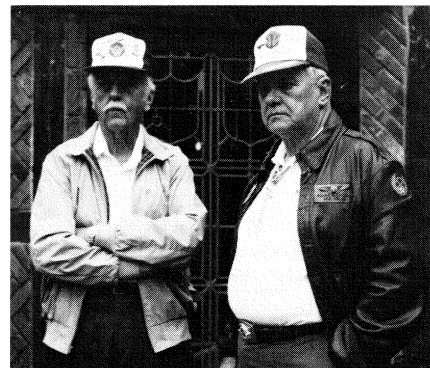
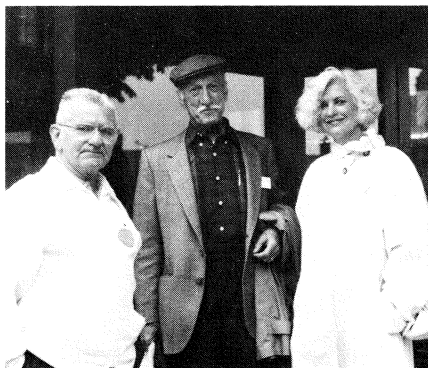
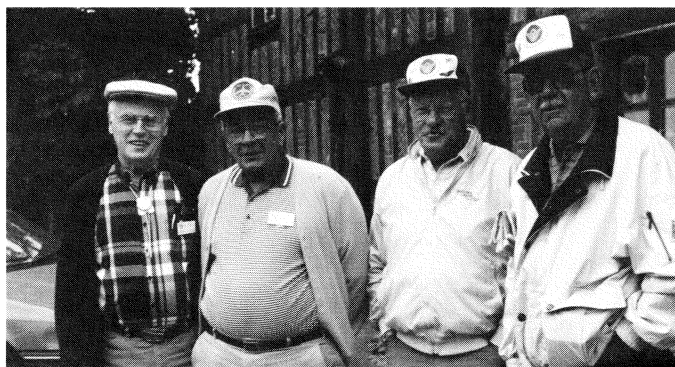


Hangar as it looked in 1942-45

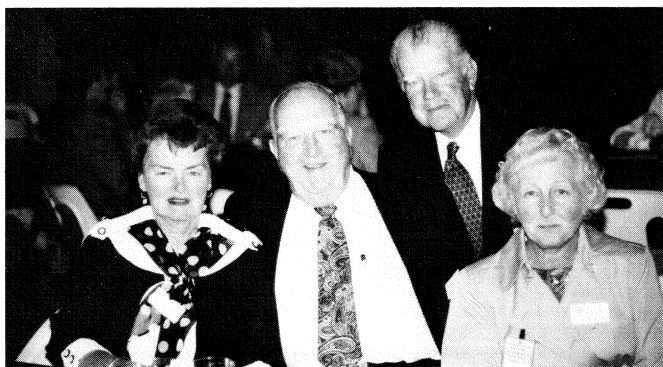


S/SGT Leonard A. Kesky
427th SQ AUG. 17, 1943





Ray and Teresa Cossey



Jim & Sara Barton and Sue and Robin Beeby in attire reminiscent of the 1940s.

The Last Mission

By William Crawford

When we're wakened this morning at 0330 it's with the anticipation that this is to be my 35th mission. If everything hadn't gone wrong for us on that day when we were still a fledgling crew I'd be finishing my tour today.

But, on that day while we were still being observed by skeptical eyes our mission was to be a short "milk-run" to France and back. We became airborne with the Group and attempted to home on Harrington Buncher beacon, but it wasn't operating. After take-off we climbed to the altitude the Group was orbiting at but everyone was laboring so intently to identify the flares the Group was firing that we were un-able to locate them. All of us continued to search the jumble until time for the Group to depart on course. We had a substitute Navigator who gave us some changes of headings to Felixstowe; we thought we could catch our Group before they departed the coast. Group-after-Group de-parted as we scrutinized the tail markings, but no red triangle "C". The last Group passed and we realized too late that we should have tagged onto some formation. We got a heading back to Molesworth from the Navigator who changed our heading several times after being questioned. But, when we began to see mountains ahead we knew that we had to be in Western England, our Co-pilot, Doug Kidd, piloted the air-craft and I went below to navigate us home. Our Navigator was as entitled to a day just as lousy as the rest of the crew! — This fiasco convinced someone in the Squadron that even though this had been a milk-run, we had intentionally failed to go. — And I was assigned an extra mission. That's why I still have one more to go after this one today.

After breakfast at 0430 we have until 0530 when briefing for the mission begins. — Captain Packard of Group Operations conducts the briefing and we learn that there are to be two primary targets for our 303rd Bomb Group today. Lt. Col. R. H. Cole, C.O. of the 359th Squadron will lead twenty-six B-17's of the 41st Combat Wing "A" Group to bomb the Ostheim Air Base at Koln (Cologne), Germany, and Captain Riseden of the 427th Squadron will lead twenty-six B-17's of the 41st Combat Wing "D" Group to bomb the Brutzweiler Air Base, also at Koln. Both of these fields are used by German aircraft for support of their ground operations, and our mission is to knock these fields out in support of our own ground forces who are attacking towards Koln. The Germans are pretty deceptive, too. They have two fake airfields near our destinations and that will make positive identification of our targets more difficult.

We are to be part of the "D" Group and will be flying B-17G, Serial Number 44-8318 (P-318). Captain Fontana will be leading our Low Squadron and our B-17 will lead the third flight.

Koln is close to the center of the most concentrated German industrial complex. We already know that this is their most heavily defended region so we're not looking forward to the reception that they'll be greeting us with. It all adds up to a rough one; not a long one but rough.

It's a generally accepted figure that fifteen missions is the average life expectancy for a B-17 and it's flight crew. Every mission past that point has been icing-on-the-cake for us, but accompanied by a lot more stress for each additional mission. And, as we successfully complete more missions we don't dare discuss the subject; we just keep our fingers crossed and sweat a little more. I'm two days ahead of the Non-coms, except for Danny in the ball turret; and several ahead of Doug, our Co-pilot, because we've had a few different men fly with us as Co-pilot when Doug wasn't along.

During the ride out to the hardstand where our B-17 is parked we bounce along and I have time to recollect some of our previous truck rides; now I'll have just one more ride out to a B-17 that'll be waiting for us. After that there's going to be a helluva let-down I know. But we've been stretching our luck thinner and thinner as we beat the odds and I guess if we finish a tour we'd better thank the Lord, and let things be.

Our truck arrives at the B-17 by 0750 hours; we load our gear, do our inspections and then we sit. Waiting for the green flare from the tower, the signal to start engines, has become more stressful for us as we approach the final mission. — Once we get the engines running we'll be O.K.

Almost thankfully we see the green flare go up at 0840 and Doug and I get the engines started. We warm them up and everything looks good. Now we wait for the next green flare and trust that nothing will cause the mission to be

scrubbed. If a red flare goes up we'll have to shut the engines down and go through it all again. But the Lead Squadron of thirteen B-17's who are to taxi ahead of us has seen the next green flare and have already begun to pull out from their hardstands. When they've passed our positions our Low Squadron begins to move out and we watch for Lieutenant Hardin in I-672 to pass so that we can pull in position behind him.

After all of this we're finally beginning our take-off roll at 0859 hours. We home on Harrington Buncher beacon and climb out to look for the flares being fired by our Low Group leader who's circling the base 1,000 ft. below the Lead Group at 16,000 ft. We join them and continue circling the base until 1010.

The Group departs on course but we have some difficulty maintaining our formation while in the climb over England due to the heavy contrails being produced by our B-17's. — Lieutenant Gravrock in E-546 develops engine trouble and advises our Squadron leader that he's going to have to return to Molesworth. This leaves twelve B-17's in our Low Squadron to depart the English coast at 1132 hours at 26,000 ft.

The weather below us is beginning to sock in and "Buckeye", our weather aircraft, radios that the target is covered by solid clouds and that our bombing will have to be by instruments. Our Navigator advises us that we've got a good tail-wind, and that we've just entered Hitler's fortress at 27,000 ft., but except for the bursts of flak that greet us we'd never know that we're over land. The weather is a solid undercast now and our temperature is minus 33 degrees C. We encounter sporadic flak bursts above the cloud cover at several places, so Jerry knows where we are even though he can't see us.

The Group makes a right turn onto the Initial Point (IP) at 1242 and we're beginning to get some pretty accurate flak. — Already the Lead Group which is ahead of us has run into rough going. Lieutenant Boulter in N-830 received a direct flak burst and his B-17 has blown apart. Nine men were aboard and all eyes are focused on the mishap. We're pulling for them but not a single chute is seen. Our fears be-come reality; the flak is going to be worse then usual on this run. It's getting heavier and closer as we near the target. How can these B-17's endure this predicament?

After ten minutes of running the gauntlet in tight formation our B-17 leaps up as it's 3800 lb. burden is released. Our Bombardier, Lieutenant Duros, calls, "Bombs away!", and the Squadron makes a diving turn to the left. Some of the flak is tracking behind us and our Tail Gunner, Em Barder, calls, "Take it left!, — now take it right!" With all my strength I attempt to make the turns but Doug and I are straining against each other. I feel a sharp, burning pain in my left arm; I'm positive that I've been hit and I loose the wheel and drop my arm down to my side. We continue the dive for 2,000 ft. to get away as quickly as possible and I think, "If we get out of this one there's got to be a damned good reason!"



The Squadron levels off at 25,000 ft. and I test the fingers on my left hand; they seem to work O.K. I feel my left arm and it's dry. I haven't been hit at all! Obviously the straining must have snapped a nerve, so I resume my flying with both hands. I say a prayer to the Good Lord for all of us as we continue towards home.

Lieutenant Mayer in F-442 falls behind our Lead Squadron. He apparently has gotten some flak damage but has his B-17 under control as he descends into the clouds over Belgium.

On our trip home we have a terrific head-wind and our ground speed is only 130 MPH, but luckily we haven't seen an enemy fighter all day. The Group makes a let-down over the North Sea and they're back home over the base at Molesworth at 1537 hours. By the time our Low Squadron has circled the base waiting our turn to land it's 1617 when we're finally on the ground at the hardstand and have cut the switches. We log a 7:18 hour flight. Today has been one of our most arduous missions.

We look out and notice that a group of our Squadron men are on the ground at the hardstand as if they're waiting for us to deplane. When Doug and I swing down through the bottom hatch we hear, "You're through! You've made it!" A few of them take my hand, put their arms around me, and congratulate me. But, I'm not the only one. Some of them go to our Bombardier, Lieutenant Duros, and embrace him; and some do the same for our Ball Turret Gunner, Danny Whitney. They tell each of us that we've finished our tours.

This is a tremendous shock for me. It's so abrupt! I had fully expected to have to do the extra mission; this is quite an emotional situation! But, my friends tell me that our Squadron C.O. had decided that our crew's combat record after that incident proved we really hadn't wanted to abort that day. So, the thirty-sixth mission has been rescinded for me. — And I hadn't realized that Duros and Danny were finishing today.

There won't be any more sweating the flak. Do I actually hate to see it end? Have I fallen into liking this war? It's said of General Patton that in the midst of a battle he was heard to say, "I love it!" I can't be compared to that but there

is a fascination about playing roulette with fate. Beating the odds can become addictive I'm afraid. And, what will take its place? Nothing can. — Leaving the crew is going to be just as abrupt, for me and for them too I'm sure. I pray that good luck will be their fortune until they complete their tours. It's going to be back to becoming individuals for all of us, and that will take getting used to. And, what am I good at? Flying the B-17 with the crew was the best thing that ever happened to me.

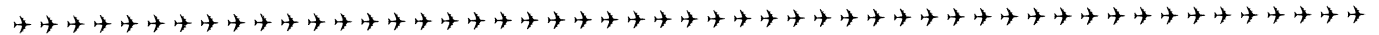
We learn later that even though there was practically a solid overcast at the target our bombs hit very near their aiming points. We knew that this was a rough one but the results showed battle damage from flak was: Lead Squadron; four major, five minor and one lost. — Our Low Squadron; All of our B-17's suffered flak damage, three major and nine minor.

But, no more time for reminiscing. We're on our way to the Non-com's quarters where our Flight Engineer, Lyle LeRoux, indulges us with a bottle of bourbon. This must be part of the contraband they sneaked aboard the B-17 that we flew across the Atlantic; bourbon is hard commodity to come by in Britain. — I'm not sure of much that transpires but we're able to accomplish in a few hours what the Germans hadn't been able to do; put most of the crew out of action.

I wake up in my own sack and use the morning to recuperate, but they don't want us to hang around and get sentimental. Tomorrow the three of us, Duros, Danny and I will be on our way to a replacement depot at Burtonwood, between Liverpool and Manchester; and on the 22nd of November 1944 we'll be aboard a C-54 headed across the Atlantic for Washington National Airport, D.C.

Each of us has earned a rest and the Government has provided that for us. I do my "resting" at a posh hotel facing the ocean at Miami Beach. Most anyone would think that we'd be happy to be back in the States with no responsibilities but for me this is all a big let-down.

I miss flying with the crew. I'll fly other airplanes, but regretfully I'm to learn—to learn that I'll never have another opportunity to fly that incredible B-17 again.



RAF Alconbury Salutes 303rd B.G. Vets

By SrA Stuart Camp 10th ABW Public Affairs

Fifty-one years after their first "invasion" of England, the 303rd Bombardment Group (Heavy) returned to their old stomping grounds.

More than 130 former servicemen, family members and guests visited RAF Molesworth Saturday (May 22) in what was touted as a "Sentimental Journey" and a "Last Hurrah." Close to 80 members of the World War II unit returned to where they operated B-17 Flying Fortresses in the area surrounding today's RAF Molesworth.

The unit originally settled on the base in September 1942 and flew B-17s on deep strikes into Germany throughout the war. Historically, the 303rd was the first 8th Air Force unit to fly 300 missions into Germany.

The group received an emotional welcome, including a bagpipe player and a receiving line made up of Joint Analysis Center members saluting each returnee. Tears streamed down the faces of the 303rd members and the JAC participants. SrA Robert Taylor got emotionally charged "thinking about the sacrifices they made."

Malcolm Magid, a former second lieutenant and B-17 co-pilot, showed up wearing his World War II uniform

and returned the salutes of each member in the receiving line. "The reception makes us feel exceptionally good. When you see something like this, it makes you feel proud."

In a speech to the assembled members and guests, Harold "Hal" Susskind said, "It's very touching to come back here."

Maj. Joseph Cafarella Jr., tour organizer, said, "Hey, those guys are the real heroes of Molesworth. Our inspiration for the future is based on their heroic deed in World War II. (The greeting) sent chills up your back and put tears in your eyes."

The return to Molesworth included a base tour, dedication of the JAC conference room/303rd Bomb Group Heritage Room and a World War II-style hangar dance.

Nicknamed "Hell's Angels," unit members had many stories to tell about their exploits in England—the first time around. Now in their 70s, the men remembered their stories with such detail, it was easy to imagine flying with the 303rd on their bombing missions.

"The most memorable of the stories was Richard Fortunak talking about flying with Clark Gable," said Army SSgt Beverly Chain.

Fortunak, a former flight engineer on the Flying Fortress, divulged that

Gable was called a gunner, "but he never operated a gun."

"I even helped him on with his oxygen mask on our bombing mission over Antwerp on April 5, 1943," Fortunak said as pointed to his picture of Gable and the crew of the B-17 taken on the day of the mission.

Many stories were told, but not a single member of the group admitted or acknowledged knowing about the legend of a dead cow being dropped over Germany. Almost 50 years later,

the men still remain tight-lipped over the whole affair.

Sadly, as the former members of the 303rd BG lined up for a group photo in front of one of the remaining structures from World War II at Molesworth, it was apparent that the number of survivors is dwindling.

Jim Taylor, vice president of reunions for the group explained, "We're calling it a 'Last Hurrah' because we don't know if we can ever come back collectively."

SPARTAN

RAF Alconbury, Cambridgeshire, England

The magazine for the RAF Alconbury Community

Friday, May 20, 1993, Vol. 7, No. 21

303rd BG returns to Molesworth



World War II unit holds reunion
pages 8-9

10th CS captain wins AF award
page 3

Air Force makes uniform changes

Can You Help Clear Up This Mystery?

By Hal Susskind

In the Forum section of the March 1987 issue of the newsletter we featured a letter by William A. Broughton under the heading, "Lest we forget." It dealt with Lt. Thomas Kahler's crew being downed on April 17, 1945 on a bombing mission to the Friedrichstadt Marshalling yards in Dresden, Germany. Kahler's crew including Broughton were from the 427th Sqdn. They were flying B-17, #43-37597, "Earthquake McGoon." The MACR said that their aircraft had a direct hit from anti-aircraft fire in its #3 gas tank. The right wing caught on fire. Flames streamed back over the top of the aircraft and all around the bomb bay. The plane then exploded in mid-air. No parachutes were seen.

In his letter Broughton said, "When we were shot down and captured, the civilians and the S.S. beat Kahler and Smitty (Sgt. T.R. Smith) our tail gunner to death and hanged their bodies in a tree."

"I and the rest of the crew landed in a different area, were taken prisoner by soldiers and put in the town jail in Bilin, Czechoslovakia. Three days later, Les Latz, our radio operator and I were sent to a make shift POW hospital. We remained there until the end of the war."

In a letter dated June 22, 1987, Barry Gilkes of Lt. Flanigan's crew which had inherited "Earthquake McGoon" as their aircraft had this to say about the Dresden mission of April 17, 1945.

"We were not initially scheduled to fly to Dresden. At the last minute, the mission was declared a 'maximum effort' so we were scheduled and assigned to another standby aircraft from another squadron. Flanigan was an element leader with "Earthquake McGoon" on our left and another B-17 on the right. We made three passes over the target, each time at a lower altitude, and passed over Brux each time. The flak was intense and accurate and "Earthquake McGoon" took a direct hit and exploded. I don't recall on which pass. I saw the waist door fly off. Before she blew up, only one man baled out.

In the summer of '45, I was at Greensboro, NC Reassignment Center waiting for orders when who sits across from me in the mess hall but Kahler's engineer (T/Sgt. L. Lowery). He said that four got out, but the S.S. and civilians killed two of them. Obvi-

ously more got out according to Broughton's letter in the last issue of the newsletter."

The same MACR which listed the demise of "Earthquake McGoon" also listed that another aircraft #42-102544, "Sack time" on its 110th mission without aborting was hit by flak north of Brux. It then slipped off to the left and exploded. Six parachutes were seen. The first three came out together, then three a bit later. The men in the rear of the B-17 went out the waist hatch, Sgt. M.C. Carlson jumped first followed by Sgts. Smith and Contreras. Other crewmen jumped from the nose hatch. Sgt. Contreras landed separately from the rest of the crew, sought shelter and was captured by angry civilians. He witnessed an unknown airman being shot by civilians. But who was this airman?

A short time ago, Hary Gobrecht received the following letter from: Karel Novak, Serikova 529/1060, 434 01 Most, Czechoslovakia Republic which shed some light on the mystery but also added a few more questions.

"Thanks for your letter. After seven years of searching and two years of writing letters, I was successful with your help to identify the plane and the crew. The most important however is that I am able to identify the names of both the pilots who perished here.

"After studying the facts I can finish the case and in the next year we would like to build a monument on the place where the plane fell. It is the plane, B-17 #43-37597 from the 427 BS, which was shot down on the 17th of April 1945. In the comment is written, that the pilots were killed and after hung on trees. Due to the people of these days, it was shot on the pilots on the parachute. One was certainly shot this way, but the pilot was seen dead in the plane by navigating it. Both were buried in the village Libkovice near Most. The plane was shot down here."

"In the last days I received a protocol of the American Exhumation Commission and here is mentioned, that on the 16th of August 1946, the commission carried out the exhumation of the grave of the American pilot under number X-7692. The name of the pilot they did not gain. On this place we are going to search for the second grave, which the American

Commission didn't identify. For this further search we need the MACR of this mentioned plane. I ask you kindly for it or how can we gain it?"

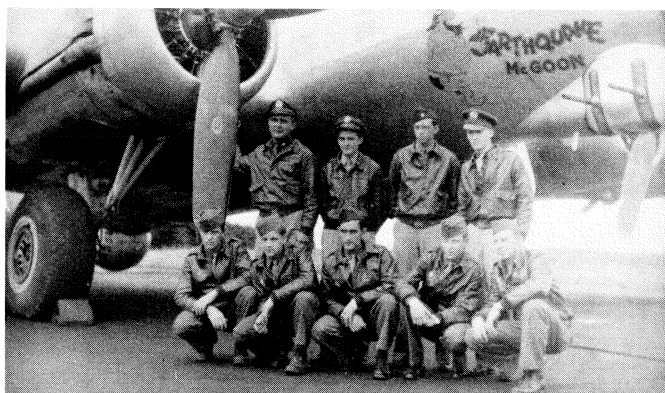
"If you wouldn't mind I would like to write something about myself and my friends. I am forty years old. I am married and have three children. I work in the biggest theatre in this republic as chief of the artistic technical service. I am the chairman of the Northbohemia aviation archives, which are interested in the actions of the allies over our country during the war. The top of our endeavour is to explore all pilots who perished here. Due to the fact that most of them are American planes, we aim especially on these. We are a voluntary organization and we do all this in our free time. All these actions are financed by ourselves: only for building monuments are we sometimes successful to gain money from various sponsors. We are persons and work in various branches. For all we have done these days, we have to be thankful to our wives, without their help we wouldn't be able to do it."

"On the 13, December 1992 was a monument for the American fighter unveiled in Perstejn near Chomutov, who perished there.. We were successful after so many years to gain his identity. He was from the 31 FG, 15th MF." (Ed. Note: Novak included a photo of the memorial with the pilots name of it, 2nd Lt. George Wilson and also a photo of the pilot.)

s/s Karel Novak

P.S. "Are any of the surviving members of the downed aircraft members of your association. I would like them to send photos of their plane, after they were downed."

Ed. Note: So here we are, 50 years later still finding information on our downed aircraft and lost crews. Unfortunately most of the work is being done by foreign nationals as a hobby. The finding of the aircraft with personal belongings of the crews at Eisenberg, Germany is another example of this. Maybe we should start asking our congressmen about what our government has been doing over all these years in locating some of our missing airmen from WW II. But that doesn't solve our immediate problems regarding the loss of "Earthquake McGoon" and "Sack Time." Broughton's letter said that Lt. Kahler and Sgt. Smith were killed by the civilians. Novak said there was a dead pilot in the aircraft. The co-pilot Lt. Cotton became a POW so who was in the aircraft when it was found? What was the name of the pilot whose body was exhumed by the Commission? Where was Sgt. Smith who was killed by civilians buried? Who was the airman that Sgt. Contreras saw being shot by civilians? Sgt. Carlson was listed in the MACR as being the first one to bailout of the stricken "Sack Time," yet he is listed as being KIA and buried at Ardennes American Cemetery at Liege, Belgium. Was he the airman that Sgt. Contreras saw being shot? Looks like we have a 50 year old mystery on our hands that needs solving. Unfortunately only one member, William A. Broughton, of Lt. Kahler's crew is a member of our association, however, several members of "Sack Time" Lts Thomas and Bartholomew and S/Sgt. Haynes are members of the association. Maybe they can shed some light on the situation.



"Earthquake McGoon"

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

It is hard to come down from cloud nine after that return to Molesworth. We'll never forget that reception, but I must get back to mundane matters. The trip to England also netted us several dues renewals and additional Associate members. Our total membership count remains constant. In spite of the losses of about 150 in 1993 by death, non payment of dues and lost addresses, we still have about 1500 active members on our Regular, Associate, Honorary and Widows Rosters. It changes daily, but you will have a more accurate count when you receive the newly published membership roster and all valid members will. Hal and I are working on it now.

It may not be immediately recognizable in the new roster, but several of our Regular members have sponsored a block of Associate members — their offsprings. Hank Pratten started the trend with his three sons and two daughters and he challenged others to do likewise. Jim O'Leary now leads with six by including his grandson. Anyone care to try for seven? Many of us have signed up our sons and daughters, but not in the quantity that the Pratten O'Leary team has. The important aspect of this is that these new Associates are not just members in name. They are genuinely interested in carrying on the history and memory of Hell's Angels. The future is in good hands.

I'd like to give a special thanks to Associate member Jim Droke (A-139). He purchased two reels of microfilm from the Historical Research Agency at Maxwell Air Force Base and after completing his personal research he donated them to the Association. I sent one copy to Secretary Ed Miller and one to Historian Harry Gobrecht. The films include General Orders, Special Orders, Daily Bulletins, Operations and Intelligence Summary Reports, photos and newspaper clippings covering the period August 1944 to April 1945. I recognized many names of 303 BGA members and old friends. They may be available at the Savannah Reunion and you may want to review them.

The lists below are as of 5 July 1993.

CARLTON M. SMITH

12700 Red Maple Circle #54

Sonora, CA 95370-5269 209-533-4033

New Members

- A-186 William Robertson IV, 26 Belvidere Rd. Atlantic Highway, NJ 07716
 A-187 Kethleen O. Streifling, 1035 Isaacs, Walla Walla, WA 99362
 A-188 Jeffrey T. Streifling, 3730 Cameron Bridge West, Manhattan, MT 59741
 L1780 Clarence S. Coomes, 6381 Valley Hi Dr., Sacramento, CA 95823 (427)
 A-189 Cyril Sherman, 16999 Barbar Green Rd. Maple Park, IL 60151
 1781 Edmund F. Andersen, 16 Border St. N Scituate, MA 02066
 A-190 James A. Brush, 1036 Bennett Ave., Long Beach, CA 90804
 A-191 Kurt J. Cicinelli, 4530 S Brennan Rd., Hemlock, MI 48626
 1782 Basil D. Hight, Jr., 1126 Roqueretta Dr., Atlanta, GA 30329 (360)
 1783 Robert N. Stauffer, 2912 Elmhurst, Royal Oak, MI 48073 (359)
 1783 G. Moulton Webber, 5389 Pond Rd., Sidney, ME 04963 (359)
 A-192 Clive Bassett, "Welwyn" 84 Northampton Rd. Wellingborough, Northants, NN8 3LS, England
 A-193 Patricia O. Little, PO Box 81, Bozeman, MT 59771-0081
 L1785 Claude W. Sherwin, 1951 East Terrace Dr., Sandy, UT 84093 (358)
 1786 Harold R. Timms, 3500 Carlton Avenue, D-23, Fort Collins, CO 80525 (360)
 1787 George Mabary, 828 W Briarwood Ave., Littleton, CO 80120-3707 (359)
 A-194 Glenn J. Pfeiffer, 1328 Harrington Dr. Racine, WI 53405
 A-195 Russ Tyson, 51 Greenglades, W. Hunsbury, Northampton, England NN4 9YW
 1788 Donald E. Vanlier, 8690 N Island Dr., Standwood, MI 49346 (358)
 1789 Henry H. Means, 3932 Scotty Way, Sacramento, CA 95821 (427)
 A-196 Ron R. Van Sickle, 9605 Duffer Way, Gaithersburg, MD 20879
 1790 Michael L. Zarelli, 19 Greenbrook Rd., Greenbrook, NJ 08812 (358)
 A-197 Marie Leduc, 59 Townline Rd. Forestville, CT 06010
 A-198 Tom Hillary, 7016 Briar Meadow, Dallas, TX 75230
 A-199 Christian Loop, Walddoerferstarsse 47, Northants, England NN14 2HG
 L1791 Wilford T. Means, Box 1366, Kings Beach, CA 96143 (427)
 A-201 Larry C. Miller, 806 Carter Blvd., Prattville, AL 36067
 A-202 Sylvia M. Vinyard, 230 Dailey Mill Rd., McDonough, GA 30253
 A-203 Stephen G. Watson, 6464 Langdon Ave., Van Nuys, CA 91406

- 1792 George E. Copeland, 112 Hackberry, #6, Del Rio TX 78840
 L1793 Nicholas A. Grondin, 128 Pery St., #101, Sandusky, OH 44870
 A-204 Andrew P. Dick, 2 Priors Farm Cottages, Willow Hall Lane, Thorney, Peterborough, Cambs. 0QN, England

Upgrade to Life or Super Life Membership

- S1630 Arvid Anderson (385)
 LA-144 David B. Benepe, Sr.
 L1251 J. Dewy Dorsett (358)
 L442 Emil E. Grob (427)
 L171 Matt C. Hemming (358)
 L180 John R. Hughes (360)
 S563 J. Ford Kelley (385)
 S1731 Richard E. Kitson (427)
 S129 Ralph J. Reynolds (359)
 S1619 Dave L. Rogan (358)
 L137 Harry Steinmetz (358)
 L1412 Ernest Tuescher (358)
 L1162 Robert F. Vail (427)
 L1131 Joe Vogel (427)

Donations/Memorials

- 845 Bruce E. Babitt (360)
 L880 George P. Bailey (358)
 L298 Marvin Brown (358)
 L602 Clayton C. David (358)
 A-139 James L. Droke
 1265 David S. Fitterer, Sr. (360)
 Widow Dorthy M. Friedland - Memorial to Laurence Friedland
 L747 William T. Hembree - Memorial to Donald F. DeCamp
 891 Alfred G. Kemmerer (427)
 172 Norman Lehto (358)
 995 H. Cecil Miller (360)
 L316 James W. O'Leary (427)
 S129 Ralph J. Reynolds (359)
 315 Samuel R. Sapienza (359)
 5265 Samuel W. Smith (360)
 L1240 Clifford Stienberg (427)
 L1200 Lester J. Voth (427)
 51037 Ernest A. Whittall (385)

Address Changes

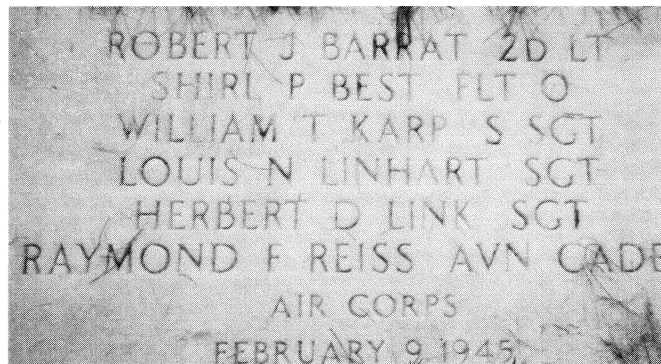
- Arvid Anderson, 305 N. Midvale Blvd., Madison, WI 53705
 Norwood Borrer, Rte #2, Box 143, Keyser, WV 26726
 James Brown, 5295 Eldon Dr., Colorado Springs, CO 80916
 Jay Craig, 45 Oldborough Road, Wembley, Middlesex, U.K. HA03QA
 Leonard L. Dahnke, 3930 Shenstone Dr., Eugene, OR 97404
 Ken Edwards, 2650 W. Union Hill Dr., Sp 368, Phoenix, AZ 85027
 George H. Emerson, APTO Postal 64, Todos Santos B.C.S., Mexico 23300
 Dennis E. Foreman, 3015 E. Douglas, Wichita, KS 67211-1625
 Warren L. Hedrick, 14 March Drive, New Durham, NH 03855
 Alfred G. Kemmerer, 1204 N Halifax Ave., Daytona Beach, FL 32118
 J.E. (Jack) Stevens, 1409 Madford Dr., Bedford, TX 76021
 Jonathan S. Swift, 7237 Ridgeview Dr., Big Canoe, GA 30143
 Charles Twesten, 300 Trinidad Blvd., Williamstown, NJ 08094
 Jack W. Watson, 2058 Mystic Bay Ct., Indianapolis, IN 46240
 Joseph G. Worthington, 202 Central Drive, Chestertown, MD 21620

In Memoriam

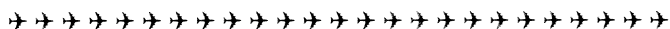
- Robert E. Chisholm (427)
 Harry J. Cook (358) - 3 April 1993
 William B. Humphrey (359) - 25 March 1993
 Robert E. Vastine (359) - 16 April 1993
 Robert D. Wentz (359) - 13 April 1993
 Thelma Vieira - April 1993. Wife of Joe Viera for 52 years. Very active in the affairs of the Association since its inception in 1975. Fell and broke her hip at the 1985 reunion in Seattle.



JAC wreath dedicated to memory of the 303rd BG placed at wall by Col. Shaffer, Commander JAC.



Grave marker for five members of Lt. Robert Barrat's crew at Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis, MO. At 3 p.m. on Sept. 25, 1993, citizens of Eisenberg, Germany are dedicating a memorial to Lt. Barrat's crew for saving their town from destruction by deliberately avoiding the town when they crashed on Feb. 9, 1945 while on a mission to Lutzendorf, Germany. (See Oct. '92 issue of newsletter). Uwe Benkel, German businessman who discovered the crash site which contained rings belonging to Lt. Barrat and F/O Best is coordinating the activities. George Emerson, lone survivor of the crew plus relatives of Lt. Barrat and Sgt. Link are also expected to attend the ceremonies. Anyone wishing to attend the ceremonies or to make a donation towards the memorial are asked to contact the newsletter editor.



Just a reminder that it is less than seven months before our **next reunion** in Savannah, Georgia. The dates are **March 29 - April 2, 1994**. The Reunion Committee says that Savannah, where the 8th Air Force was born, will be an *eye opener*. They have booked us into a great hotel along the Savannah River with many restaurants and gift shops nearby and responding to one of the suggestions received, a cafeteria with good food at affordable prices.—one egg, two slices of bacon, and biscuit for \$1.19. In keeping with our Southern theme, grits can be substituted for the biscuit! Other surprises are in store for those attending.

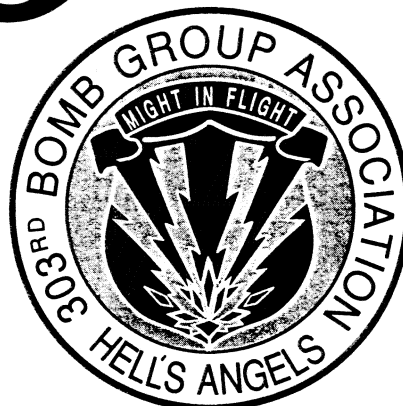
Mark your calendar now!



Chet Whisman, R/O; Don Torley, Bomb.; and Jim Donovan, Nav.; with picture of Al Lanford's original crew (May 1944) who flew most of their missions in Wallaroo II, #42-31405. A model of that aircraft was made by Robin Beeby and displayed at Holiday Inn Hotel, Cambridge during our England reunion.



NEXT CONVENTION



*Savannah, Georgia
March 29 - April 2, 1994*

SEE YOU THERE



303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.
c/o Hal Susskind
2602 Deerfoot Trail
Austin, Texas 78704

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