

# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

MAY 1995

## COLORADO SPRINGS "RIGHT" FOR WWII 50th ANNIVERSARY REUNION

By Eddie Deerfield

It seems fitting that the 303rd Bomb Group's reunion in 1995—50 years after its vital role in defeating the Nazi's in World War II—should take place in Colorado Springs, home of the United States Air Force Academy. The old Army Air Corps' heroic battles against German and Japanese enemies were the baptisms under fire which gave rise to the modern air force as a powerful new and separate arm of the American military.

And it was in Colorado Springs a century ago, on 22 July 1893, that Katherine Lee Bates wrote the immortal lyrics of "America, The Beautiful."

During the reunion from 12 to 17 September at the Red Lion Hotel, flight crew members and ground support personnel alike will have an opportunity to recall their wartime experiences at Molesworth and to reflect on their lives before and after the epic struggle to save the world from tyranny. It's more than just

social intercourse; it's part of the Eighth Air Force's all-important oral history project on videotape.

Arrangements are being made to create a VCR studio at the hotel. Members who haven't done so yet will be encouraged to sign up for a session in front of the camera on a voluntary basis. Aside from the immense historical value in these spoken accounts, the descendants of 303rd members through the generations will be able to put names into a computer at the Heritage Center in Savannah and view personal remembrances of the way things were.

Another special feature of the reunion will be the presentation of "Distinguished Service Award" certificates to all who served with the 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth. During the general meeting of all units on Friday, 15 September, ground support personnel will be recognized for their outstanding performances which contributed immeasurably to the success of the



**A modern cog rail train takes passengers to the top of Pike's Peak at an altitude of 14,110 feet. The trip is one of many 1995 options. (Pike's Peak is higher than some of the altitudes we bombed at.)**

war. Identical awards will be presented to air crew members at squadron meetings just prior to the general meeting. The certificates will be signed by Major General Lewis E. Lyle and 303rd President J. Ford Kelley.

Also among the more memorable events scheduled for the reunion is the visit to the U.S. Air Force Academy on Thursday, 14 September. The USAFA day will open with a service in the stunning cadet chapel to pay homage to our departed comrades. Next, a guided tour of the Academy's facilities, where our finest young men and women are learning the skills to lead tomorrow's U.S. Air Force. Lunch will be served in the Non-Commissioned Officer's Club and the Association of Graduates Building, followed by a brief stop at the Visitor's Center for souvenir hunting. The day at the Academy will end with a unique ceremony on the cemetery grounds to rededicate a bronze plaque honoring the 303rd's "Might in Flight" against the Nazi enemy during World War II.

At the hotel, immediately following the Academy program, 303rd past president Dr. Carl J. Fyler will

conduct a clinic for ex-POW's, focusing on the benefits they are eligible to receive.

The reunion calendar also features such optional offerings as a visit to the U.S. Olympic Training Center, the Garden of the Gods red sandstone park, a cog rail to the top of Pikes Peak, a "Flying W Ranch" barbecue, the casinos of Cripple Creek, the antiques of Old Colorado City, and an 18-hole golf tournament.

The U.S. Air Force Academy's famous "Moods in the Blue" ensemble, a talented group of 12 singers and dancers, will perform for the 303rd Bomb Group at the gala farewell banquet in the Red Lion Hotel's grand ballroom on the night of Saturday, 16 September. Their 30-minute program will bring back the nostalgia of the 1940's and the unquestioned spirit of patriotism which prevailed in those trying times.

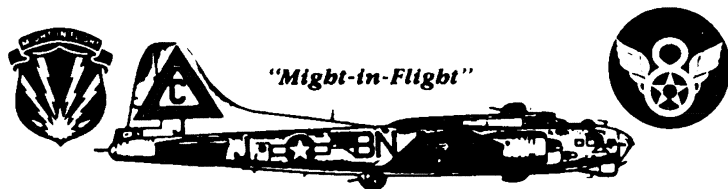
Music for dining and dancing will be provided by one of Colorado Springs' better small bands, through arrangements being made by Leroy Faulkner, the 1995 local committee chairman. Faulkner has also been tasked with inviting a galaxy of area

*(Continued on page 6)*

### Smithsonian Mural Artist Ferris Set As Guest Speaker at Anniversary Reunion



**Smithsonian mural artist Keith Ferris at home in Morris Plains, NJ. The aircraft is his painting of Eddie Rickenbacker's World War I Spad "Old Number One." Behind Ferris' left shoulder is a model B-17. Ferris said he'll do a three-person synchronized slide presentation on Sept. 15 at the reunion telling how he came to select the Hell's Angels group as the subject for his Smithsonian mural. Story on page 16.**



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

### "HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

Editor: Hal Susskind

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MAY 1995

The 303rd Bomb (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 statuses.

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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## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Fellow 303rds:

This will be the last issue of the "Hell's Angels Newsletter" before our reunion in Colorado Springs. At the reunion, aside from sharing fond memories and having a good time, we will be electing a new Board of Directors and Squadron Representatives who will accept the honor of serving the Association until our next reunion at a time and place still to be decided.

I believe the time is right for me to tell you how much I enjoyed and appreciated the honor of being your President for the past year and a half. Together we built on sound programs initiated by previous Boards and I'm happy to report we have had a very successful period since Savannah.

Future newsletters clarifying the committee reports submitted at the Colorado Springs Board Meeting will provide you with all the details of our recent accomplishments. At this moment I would like to mention just a few: we have improved our financial position including increasing our membership; we have developed, and will distribute at the reunion, a 303rd Combat Team Recognition Award; we have collectively participated in the naming of the "Might in Flight" Headquarters building at Molesworth, and, most importantly, we have continued publishing the best Military Association Newsletter in the U.S.

These accomplishments haven't come without a lot of hard, efficient work on the part of the Board and many individual members operating under the 303rd Team Concept which was so successful during the war years. Not wishing to risk offending anyone, I won't try to recognize all the individual contributions, but to the members involved, please know that I will always appreciate your fine efforts.

Thank you for letting me serve as President of the finest Bomb Group Association in the U.S.

Ford Kelley

## IN THIS ISSUE ...

the biggest of my 10 year tenure as editor, I tried to bring you a mix of stories about some interesting people like then Major George Robinson and Bill Adams and an interesting place like Cologne, Germany where in spite of hundreds of missions, the Dom, the great Cathedral survived the war practically unscratched. Was it a miracle? We also got lots of good letters to read.

## COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN, APPOINTMENTS

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# Hell's Angels Forum

**Your Chance to Sound Off!**

## "Courage: Above and Beyond"

Thanks to your story in the February 1995 issue of "Hell's Angels Newsletter," another part of the puzzle has been put together. I'm referring to the fate of Joe Haas and the crew of "Beats Me" on January 23, 1943. I had known that Joe had been killed on that date but knew nothing of the circumstances. I had always presumed my brother, Bob, for some reason or another was on another plane on that mission.

Joe was the first pilot of #124558, the "Hunga Dunga," and my brother the co-pilot when they ferried it over to England in October 1942 from Kellogg Field, Battle Creek, MI. The enclosed photo shows the crew ("Scoop" refers to Lt. Anderson, the Navigator so dubbed, I guess, because of his upturned nose).

On one of their training flights across Lake Michigan, Joe and Bob buzzed our house in Milwaukee and then called back at base to confirm it was they. Since they couldn't have been more than 300 feet up when they did it, it was fortunate no one reported the B-17's number or, otherwise, I'm sure there would have been all sorts of hell to pay.

Subsequently, just before they left for England, we drove over to Battle Creek to say good-bye to Bob and there we met Joe. Joe had been with the B-17's at Midway in June of 1942 so he was something of a veteran even then.

The Bombadier in this photo was Earl Steele whom I got to meet several years ago when a World War I aviation society to which I belong held a seminar at Wright Patterson AFB (Earl lived in Dayton). Earl told me that "Hunga Dunga's" crew was considered a pretty wild bunch, frequently in hot water with higher-ups. The fellows all grew mustaches which I guess was also frowned on. Couple that with the reprimand that Bob got on a later mission (Wilhelmshaven or Kiel?) when after the bomb run, he broke formation to get back to Molesworth ASAP to get medical attention for a badly wounded crew member (Everett Dasher who has told me that he is convinced this action saved his life) and perhaps that is the reason the brass never sanctioned any recognition for what Bob did on July 4,

1943 when he stayed with "The Mugger" so that the other eight survivors could bail out. I know from my own service experience that it takes "friends in court" to get a high decoration approved and moved through the channels.

Anyway, that's a long time ago but that period of time and what you and the others like you did will always retain my highest admiration.

Hope all goes well with all of you.

**Neal W. O'Connor**  
**Foundation for Aviation World War I**

**P.O. Box 212**  
**Princeton, NJ 08542**

*Ed Note: Thank you for a very informative and interesting letter. We appreciate very much getting the photo of the "Hunga Dunga" crew which included Lt. Joe Haas. I'm sure that quite a few of the citizens of Pluvigner, France will enjoy seeing a photo of the pilot they just honored.*

*Now let's chat regarding some of your other comments. First of all we can find no record of any reprimand that your brother was supposed to have received for leaving the formation and racing home with the injured Everett Dasher on board. If there was a reprimand it wasn't in writing and I doubt that he left the formation after "Bombs Away," because a lone B-17 would have attracted a lot of German fighters. That's why we flew in tight formation. I believe your brother left the formation over the North Sea out of*



**July 1943 - Young French girl looks over wreckage of Lt. O'Connor's aircraft after German guards had left.**

*the range of German fighter aircraft. Which I think was a sensible thing to do. But be that as it may, a reprimand wouldn't have prevented your brother from being put in for an award for his heroic action which cost him his life.*

*It is true that some "brass" did receive some high awards for performing the same heroic act as your brother; I can think of a General that got one posthumously but his action was reported immediately by some of the crew members who parachuted out and were rescued by Allied personnel.*

*In your brother's case, his story was unknown until your letter to Everett Dasher contained the story of the May 19, 1943 raid on Keil which told about your brother racing home because of a wounded man aboard. It was written by Philip Grune of the London Evening Stan-*

*dard. (May 1988 issue of the newsletter). This was followed up by your letter which appeared in the August 1988 issue of the newsletter and told about your visit to the crash site in 1949 to observe the monument that the people of Malicorne, France had erected in honor of your brother and Lt. Richard Peterson. Your brother was honored because the citizens of Malicorne firmly believed that his heroic action in staying with the stricken aircraft until the last possible minute saved the town from destruction. The co-pilot, Donovan B. Manifold, confirmed that in his letter which appeared in the January 1989 issue of the newsletter along with another letter from you containing a photo of the memorial.*

*I am of the opinion that your brother deserved a high commendation but certainly no less than the*  
*(Continued on page 4)*



**Haas' Crew - (L to R) Lt. Haas(P), Lt. O'Connor(CP), Lt. Anderson, Lt. Steele and Lt. Van Helot (not a crew member); Kneeling (L to R) T/Sgt. Koenig, Sgt. Hall, Pvt. Gergash, Sgt. Kinney and Sgt. Patterson. Lt. Haas was killed flying with the crew of "Beats Me" on Jan. 23, 1943.**

(Continued from page 3)

*Distinguished Flying Cross for saving the lives of eight members of his crew and also saving the lives of many citizens at Malicorne. But we have a lot of work to do and many obstacles to overcome before our efforts can reach fruition.*

On May 3, 1950, Congress enacted Public Law 501 which established time limitations for submission of recommendations to recognize services performed between Dec. 7, 1941 and Sept. 2, 1945. However there is no time limitations imposed for recommendations submitted in a timely manner but subsequently lost in processing channels or through inadvertency.

Since you visited the crash site in 1949, is there a possibility that you reported the incident to some military personnel in France in connection with your visit?

I think Public Law 501 should be modified. I don't think there should be any time limit imposed on the awarding of a military decoration if it can be proved that the heroic act took place but was not discovered until a later date because of unusual circumstances.

For your information, Major General Lewis E. Lyle, an advisor to the 303rd Bomb Group Association, led the 303rd Bomb Group on that mission to bomb the Gnome Rhone aircraft engine works at Le Mans, France, on July 4, 1943.

Thank you for your support of the 303rd Bomb Group Association.

### Lorient, France - 23 Jan. 1943

I don't know if I can recall very much about the 23 Jan. 1943, Lorient mission after 52 years.

We were flying at 23,000 feet over the target when we got hit by flak. When we fell out of formation, the fighter planes had a field day taking turns coming at us. One of the planes came so close, I could have hit him with a coke bottle. With all his guns blazing away I thought he was on fire. Lucky me, all his bullets went right behind my seat.

We fought our way down to about five or six thousand feet where there was a small layer of clouds. By then our guns were pretty well

burned out, so I gave the order to bail out while we had the clouds.

After the crew bailed out, I told the co-pilot, Lt. H.D. Bowman, to jump, but he said he was going to ride it in. I said I will ride it in with you. I later found out there was only one chute between us, and the co-pilot didn't want to take it. It seems that during the evasive action one of the chest-packs rolled out from under the seat, and down through the bottom hatch.

By that time we were down to a couple of thousand feet, the engines and the controls were gone, so we just sat there. We were headed straight as an arrow toward a farm house. It happened we were in hilly country, so when we were low enough the right wing tip hit the top of a tree and swung us into the side of a hill where we stopped.

The plane pretty much cracked up except the cockpit. My left hand was on the wheel, so when we hit, the steering column broke and my hand crashed into the dash and cut two fingers almost off. The windshield broke and cut the co-pilot's face in several places.

We dove out the windows of the cockpit and crawled to the bushes, because the fighter planes followed us all the way to the ground. They radioed out position. We were in shock so we just lay there until a farmer came out and carried us to his house. It wasn't long before a German ambulance showed up.

They took us to a hospital where a German doctor amputated my fingers. The German doctor was a real nice man. He later escorted us to the reception center in West Germany. He wouldn't let us drink the water in France. He bought us soda and food with his own coupons.

Somewhere along the line we picked up Grady Ward who had also been captured. Lt. John Spence got with the underground, and later wound up back in England. He now lives in Memphis, Tenn. Lt. Bowman, my co-pilot, lives in Southern California.

When we left the reception center we were sent to a camp in Poland. We left there when Stalag Luft III was completed. When Stalag Luft III was about to be overrun by the Russians, we were put on the march, and ended up in Mooseburg, north of Munich. We were finally liberated by Patton.

That's about it.

**Ellis J. Sanderson**  
5424 E. Bellevue  
Tucson, AZ 85712

*Ed. Note: This 11th mission of the 303rd Bomb Group which was led that day by Lt. Col. G.L. Robinson was probably one of the most viciously fought battles of the war. It is a prime example of the "esprit de corps" of the 303rd. The courage displayed by the crews was unbelievable. The Group merited a Presidential citation. But we got short changed again.*

### Pacheco Remembered

Re: The French dedication ceremony in the February issue of the newsletter, the first I received as a member of the Association, I dropped everything and started reading. The name Pacheco struck home immediately. I rushed to my service photo album and the first page showed photos of Antone (Tony) Pacheco and other service friends taken Feb. 24, 1942 at Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho.

Tony and I were buddies. You couldn't help liking this short, good looking fellow with the everlasting smile. We must have separated at the time he was assigned to flying status. I wished he had flunked out

like I did.

Should anyone have the name and address of any member of the Pacheco family, relative, etc., and relay the information to me, I would mail one of the original photos, if they so desire.

Thank you for all your help.

**Norman A. Cote**  
12 Kettredge St.  
Augusta, ME 04330-5328

### Re: Idaliza

Thanks to Philip G. Fleming who was with the 360th Sqdn. at Molesworth, we now have the answers as pertains to Mary Lou Gunson's photo on the nose of Idaliza and where the painting (nose art) was done and by whom. We do not have the Lt.'s name who gave the photo to the painter, Sam P. Rodman. However, Phil Fleming has done a super job for the Association.

Please find enclosed a copy of Phil's letter.

**Norman Cote**  
12 Kittredge St.  
Augusta, ME 04330-5328

P.S. Your Feb. '95 issue of the newsletter got the ball rolling with informative results.

*Ed. Note: We solved one mystery but added two more. Who was the Lt. and when and where did he*



Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho, Feb. 24, 1942 (left to right) Antone (Tony) Pacheco, Norman Cote and Yanish. It was the finding of Pacheco's dog tags at the crash site that eventually led to the dedication of the memorial to the crew of "Beats Me." (Cover story of the February 1995 issue of the newsletter)



# Forum

get the photo?

I read the February newsletter and noted your letters therein. I have some comments for you and a copy of a short story that I wrote some time back. I only claimed "faded" memories. It may jog your memory.

If your memory is in shape that you claimed for it, you won't even remember your old friend who repaired battle damage and other chores.

To refresh your memory; the photo of Mary Lou Gunson was given to Sam P. Rodman (assigned to my crew and was a spare-time in-house artist) by a 1st Lt. (I did not record his name) who told me that he had talked to you and to then Major Lew Lyle. I was with Sam during the discussion on size and area placement where the Lt. wished the painting to appear. I think Sam did very well (especially when he had to scrounge the local towns for art colors). I don't think many people knew that Sam painted the same picture on the back of the Lt.'s leather flight jacket; and that was a beautiful job.

I visited with Sam Easter (Iowa) and Bill Hart (Ind.) last Spring. I hear from John Hughes and John Bushmaier. I live, not too far, from Bill Heller (Half Moon Bay) your squadron rep.

I lost my wife just before Christmas in 1993. We had been together for 58 years.

**Philip G. Fleming**  
850 Adams Ave.  
Livermore, CA 94550-3726

*Ed. Note: Phil Fleming's story "Lady Luck Ground Check's" appeared on page 5 of the July 1987 issue of the newsletter. O.K. Lew, who is the 1st Lt. who got your permission to paint Mary Lou Gunson's picture on the nose of the aircraft, or who remembers the 1st Lt. who had Mary Lou's photo on his A-2 jacket?*

## A Word from "Chappie"

I am writing this letter for my husband, Chaplain M.O. Slawson. At the present time he is recovering from a bad fall, which resulted in a broken hip and broken elbow. With

a cast on his arm writing is not possible. In the meantime he "celebrated" his 85th birthday!

He thought you should have the enclosed obituary notice of this 303rd member, William T. Hembree. Bill was a dear friend of ours and we kept in close touch with him. "Chappie" was able to talk with him a few days before he died and had a prayer with him via telephone. He was in St. Thomas Hospital in Nashville, Tenn. His wife said he wanted to go home when all treatment failed so he had ten days at home. Bill was a member of DeCamp's crew in the 358th. Sqdn.

We both enjoy the newsletter and are sorry that our health does not allow us to attend the reunions anymore. So many of our 303rd friends keep in touch and we do appreciate it.

**Katherine Slawson for "Chappie"**  
227 Bocawood Dr.  
San Antonio, TX 78228

## The Phantom B-17

In August you published a letter written by me to Harry Gobrecht regarding the loss of an aircraft on a training mission. I was puzzled that this event was not mentioned in his fine history of the Group.

Since the August newsletter I have been contacted by two former crew members (O.Z. Rowe, radio operator and Norman Putney, the flight engineer). They both remember the stolen nylon story, but Norman says that rumors of that nature were always in circulation.

The consensus seems to be that we picked the aircraft up at the 305th Bomb Group where it had been converted to a Pathfinder configuration and were to return it to Molesworth after the flight. This would explain why there is no record in the 303rd History. Does the 305th have a historian? If so, I might get to the bottom of this yet.

**Earl Douglass**  
P.O. Box 1604  
Cashiers, NC 28717

*Ed. Note: Your story makes sense. I was a 303rd, exiled to the 305th as part of a Pathfinder crew from April to June of 1944. At that time the 303rd had no radar equipped aircraft based at Molesworth. We only came over*

*when there was deep penetration to Germany where we could bomb regardless of weather. Here is a 305th Bomb Group Ass'n contact: Stan Soderblom, 5904 Dashwood Rd, Bethel Park, PA 15102. Lots of luck!*

## The St. Lo Mission

Re: The St. Lo mission of 25 July 1944, it seems to me that I have seen several references to "100 lb. Frags" being carried on this mission. My sketchy notes indicate that we were briefed for 244 28 lb. frags.

We were flying in the No. 5 or No. 6 in the low element of the 359th that day and the three bombs that almost hit our right wing from planes up ahead certainly didn't act like 100 pounders.

I must confess that I didn't look into the bombbay that day but the prop wash created certainly tossed the bombs around quite easily. Once the clusters let go, there seemed to be hell to pay.

Just curious.

**Herb Shanker**  
57 Hacking Circle  
Mashpee, MA 02649

*Ed. Note: According to the "Might in Flight, Daily Diary," the lead and low groups dropped a total of 1,046 100-lb. M1A1 fragmentation bombs on their assigned targets. The high group did not bomb because it could not positively identify the target and because it was cut off by other groups on the bomb run.*

## Margraten's 303rd Heroes

On page 3 of the February "Hell's Angels" newsletter was the contents of a letter to you from Anthony Sacco under the Heading of "Veterans Honored." He mentions sending you a copy of the 303rd members that are buried in the American Cemetery at Margraten in Holland.

On Feb. 4, 1943, I was a crew member on a plane that was shot down and crashed in the Zuider Zee, near Amsterdam. Three crew members were killed at the time and I understand that the pilot, Capt. Cole, died some time later. I would appreciate it very much if you could mail me a copy of these names so that I could see if it included any of our crew.

Thanks so much for all of the fine work you do on the newsletter. We appreciate it.

**George D. Miller**  
P.O. Box 20298  
Wickenburg, AZ 85358

Would you please send me a copy of the 303rd members buried at Margraten. Two or three of my crew are there. This is the list sent to you by Tony Sacco.

**Gene Girman**  
8420 Parrish Place  
Highland, IN 46322

*Ed. Note: to expedite mailing, anyone requesting a copy of the list please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.*



**Lt. Akers crew - (Top row L to R) Lt. Neil A. Montone (N); Lt. Robert O. Akers (P); Lt. Leslie W. Giddings (CP); Cletus H. Vogel (TG); (Bottom row L to R) Herbert Shanker (E); Donal W. Saam (BT) Louis V. Pierce; Gerald E. Meyer (RO) and Fulton R. Meyer (WG).**

**"Target for Today"**

Kindly consider publishing the following Appeal to the membership.

In the August 1994 issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter a fellow member of the 303rd B. G., John M. Hagar, of the 360th Sqdn. appealed for aid to help him purchase an electric wheelchair for his son.

He requested our help because of his tragic circumstances. John himself, suffered heart problems that have prevented him from working since age 51. He is now 70 years of age. His son, now 41 years of age has had Muscular Dystrophy since he was 21. John's son is now almost completely helpless and unable to operate his current manual wheelchair. Neither John, nor his wife, severely arthritic, are able to do all that is necessary.

The electric wheelchair will enable John's son to move about, and to live as normal a life as is possible for one in his condition. The wheelchair is costly. I have corresponded with John and have ascertained that the British National Health Service does not provide for such wheelchairs. The cost of the wheelchair is now 4800 pounds. To date John has been able to raise 2265 pounds, leaving him short 2535 pounds.

Since his letter of appeal in the August 1994 newsletter, John has received only three donations from the 303rd BGA. Surely we can do more, much more, for one of our own.

May I suggest that all of us, all 303rd members, if at all possible, place a one, two or three dollar donation in an envelope and mail it directly to John today! We can resolve his need and express our caring for a fellow member in this simple manner.

Target for Today

**John M. Hagar  
11 Berkeley Crescent  
Stourport-On-Severn  
Worcestershire, DY13 OHJ  
England**

Bomb load

Lots and lots of letters

Code name

Wheelchair

Thanks for caring.

**David "Stan" Fitterer  
360th and Hq. & Hq. Sqdns.  
40 Deer Run Drive N  
Barnegat, NJ 08005**

**A French Pen Pal**

First of all, I'd like to introduce myself; I'm a 22 year old French man, who lives in a small town north of Paris. I'm very fond of World War II (particularly the years 1943-45), that's why I took the liberty to write to you. I'd really like to correspond with WW II veterans.

If you don't mind, I'd like you to give me some details about your personal WW II story. For example which unit and Air Force division you belonged to, (which squadron, which plane and his nickname), when you entered the service and where, which branch and grade, your campaigns, missions, etc... but what I'm fond of, is the little anecdotes, little true stories, sometimes funny, sometimes sad, that happened to each one of you. You would do me a favor if you had a few ones to tell.

I would be much honored and grateful if you could send me a picture (or a copy) of you in uniform at that time (with your plane behind you or with your A-2 flying jacket if possible). Thank you very much.

All this information would help me in my personal research about World War II.

I'm also a collector of World War II U.S. military items, more particularly pictures, patches, clothes and anything reminding the G.I.

The reason why I have decided to devote my spare time and energy to the fascinating time, is that I don't want the sacrifice of all those brave men to be in vain. I have the deepest respect for those who freed my country some forty-seven years ago. They must never be forgotten. They must live forever in our memories.

I hope my letter will not bother you too much, I would like to thank you in advance for the time you will allow me.

I have already written to a few World War II U.S. veterans but it is really hard to get addresses here for me, so I manage. If you can, could you send me some (whatever their ranks or branches in the U.S. Army). Be sure each one would get a letter from me.

**Arnaud Mananet  
24 Place Saint-Saens  
95400 Villiers-Le-Bel  
France**

**Gremlins Take Over**

Once again the gremlins have been at work. As of Monday, March 20th, I have not received the latest issue of the newsletter. I've spoken to a few members and was told that they received their copy some 10 days ago. Haven't the vaguest idea why my copy is at rest someplace. As you know, the newsletter and I are sexually compatible so the sooner I receive the latest issue, the sooner the world becomes a better place in which to live. Please forward a copy.

**Ralph Walder  
P.O. Box 149  
Sea Cliff, NY 11579**

*P.S. If your sex life depends upon the Postal Service delivering the newsletter you are in for a celibate future. But you have plenty of company. I'd hate to venture a guess as to what percentage of our newsletters never get delivered.*

**Tribute**

Thought you might like to remember one of our "really fallen comrades." (Enclosed was a clipping of funeral services for one of the motorcycle "Hell's Angels.")

I don't recall if you were present at the time the group at the Shaumburg bash were going into the race track at Arlington. A couple of the local characters seeing our caps and badges made some crack about where were our wheels. DeCicco told them we had just brought our babes that day. Hope all is well for you.

Am just going to drop a note to Terry Smith whose father Bill's passing was mentioned in the last newsletter. After I wrote to the newsletter telling of my experience with prostate cancer, "Major Bill" was kind enough to call me and tell me of his similar problem. Thankfully, I had different doctors and treatment and am into my third year of survival.

**William H. Smith  
3524 Golfview Drive  
Hazel Crest, IL 60429-2404**

**Reunion**

*(Continued from page 1)*

VIP's as guests of the 303rd at the banquet.

The Presidential Suite of the Red Lion has been reserved as the group's Hospitality Room. The 303rd's veteran barkeep John Ford will handle staffing and stocking. He promises the best in hospitality cheer at all times when there is no conflict with an ongoing program event or a good night's sleep.

Registration packets for the 1995 reunion were mailed to all members in late April. Those interested in attending the reunion are urged to fill out and return the registration forms promptly in the self-addressed envelope marked "1995 Reunion Committee, 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, P.O. Box 1386, Palm Harbor, FL 34682-1386." For reservations at the Red Lion Hotel at the special group rate, the postpaid postcard should be returned to the hotel.

The 1995 Reunion Committee noted that hotel and events spaces are limited, and urged members not to miss out by registering too late for the 303rd Bomb Group's celebration of the 50th anniversary of victory in World War II.

**Late News...** Mr. Peter D. Clark just wrote us from England to inform us that the memorial on the Hills of the Cheviot will be unveiled and blessed on May 19, 1995. The Duke of Gloucester will head the unveiling party. The memorial is to be placed next to the "Cubbystone" Hall where Gen. Doolittle's illuminated scroll hangs. All known and traceable survivors of WW II crashes have been invited to attend. Space at the site is very limited because of the presence of a member of the Royal Family. The event will include a fly past by an RAF Spitfire and hopefully B-17 "Sally B."

❖ ❖ ❖

**Did you know...** Did you know that we have four commercial artists in our Association, some specializing in military aviation? They are Archie McLachlen, Bob Hand, Bob Lubbers and Bill Means. Maybe we can do a story on them with illustrations in a future issue of the newsletter.





# Raid on St. Nazaire

by Major George Robinson

*Colonel George L. Robinson, one of the early pioneers of the 303rd Bomb Group, died on 18 Nov. 1994 at his home in Jacksonville, Florida. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant with pilot's wings 30 June 1937 at Kelly Field, Texas. He trained with the group at Boise, Alamogordo and El Paso and moved overseas to Molesworth as Group Operations Officer accompanying the 427th air echelon arriving in October 1942.*

*He was the Group Leader on the 303rd fourth mission to bomb the submarine pens at St. Nazaire, France on 23 Nov. 1942. He led the group many times during the early days including the infamous raid on the U-boat pens at Lorient on 23 Jan. 1943.*

*He was named Deputy Group Commander on 12 Feb. 1943, a position he held until he was named Commanding Officer of the 306th Bomb Group (H) at Thurleigh in June of '43.*

*The story which appears below was found by Russell A. Strong, Editor of the "306th Echoes," as he was going through Col. Robinson's files. Written in pencil, it was Col. Robinson's account of the 23 Nov. 1942 mission to St. Nazaire when the 303rd suffered its first crew loss. Since it has a little unusual ending, it is reproduced here for your reading pleasure.*

When Lt. George T. Mackin, the Duty Officer, called me at the Officers' Mess and said he "had something," I knew that another Operations Order was in. I called the Group Commander, Col. James H. Wallace, and the Group Executive Major Charles Marion, and together we proceeded to the Operations Office, speculating on the target and wondering what "the damned Wing has thought up this time."

The Operations Orders was just like all the rest; the "zero hour," target, bomb load, number of airplanes, rendezvous point, route to target, axis of attack, maneuver after attack, supporting units, and other information necessary to the proper tuning and coordination of the four heavy bomber groups participating in the attack. The order was of special importance to me because it was my turn to lead the group. Colonel Wallace, Major Marion and I alternated in leading the missions. While two planned the mission and took care of the many details to be arranged, the other, who was to fly the leading ship, went to bed. So, after familiarizing myself with the mission in general, and knowing that everything would be covered in minute detail at the morning briefing, I went to bed.

At 04:30 a.m., the telephone rang and the tired voice of the duty officer informed me that it was time to get up. I dressed quickly, remembering the long woolies which are reserved for high-altitude missions and rushed out into the dark and down the muddy road to the mess hall. Getting up in the middle of the night and slopping through the mud reminded me of the opening of the duck season back home.

Full of hot coffee and food, all the combat crews assembled at the briefing room where watches were synchronized, signals of the day given, and pictures of the target shown on a screen. The Group Commander gave a resume of the entire mission for the benefit of the gunners, showing them the route, formations, altitudes and fighter opposition expected after which they were excused to clear guns, check

turrets and load ammunition.

I reported to "stations" at 09:30. At this time all crew members are to report to their respective airplanes and make all final checks and inspections. I looked over the Form 1 and talked to all the crew members, familiarizing myself with them and with their procedures in general. This was necessary as pilots of Group Headquarters are not assigned airplanes and must choose one for each mission. I suspect this procedure sometimes makes the regular pilot and co-pilot slightly unhappy since the pilot is relegated to the co-pilot's position and the co-pilot is left out completely. However, full cooperation from the crews has always been forthcoming. The co-pilot, Lt. Ercil F. Eyster; the Navigator, Capt. Harold Fulghum; the bombardier, Lt. A. H. Haas plus the Ass't navigator and myself went over the complete mission, covering the target photos, route in and out, altitude, etc. Fifteen minutes before take off time, the engines were started and the crew took their assigned positions.

I took off at 10:30 and circled the field once to pick up the 358th squadron led by Major C. K. Wurzbach. We climbed on course to the rendezvous point at Beach Head, circled it once and left exactly at the given time, climbing toward France.

We reached our bombing altitude about halfway across the Channel and took up our defensive formation. Lt. Haas called off the altitude to the gunners as we climbed and the gunners checked in when their oxygen masks were adjusted and when their guns had been test fired. Capt. Fulghum checked our course and drift and gave me a small corrections in course. Over the French coast I took slight evasive action against flak and went back on course for the run to the Initial Point (IP). There were broken clouds just above the ground and below them the countryside looked deceptively peaceful; small villages and a mosaic of tiny farms. It was inconceivable that any form of danger or violence could exist there. Was there actually a war on or was I only

dreaming?

"Pilot from Navigator," Fulghum was calling. "We are four minutes from our IP."

"Navigator from Pilot. O.K." "Bombardier from Pilot, did you get that?"

"Pilot from Bombardier, received O.K."

As we passed over the junction of a railroad and river which was our initial point, the bombbay doors were opened. This was a signal for the trailing squadron that we were commencing our run to the target, about 12 miles away. At this signal Wurzbach was to lead his squadron off to the left and approach on a course about 30 degrees from ours. This, theoretically, was making it more difficult for the flak gunners guarding the target to track us.

I began taking rather violent evasive action, and as we turned towards the target, I could see it very plainly, just as it looked in the target photographs.

"Pilot from Bombardier, turning on course!"

I turned the nose of the ship as straight for the center of the target as possible, concentrated on the instruments until everything was centered and replied, "Bombardier, from Pilot, on course, ship level," and watched for the needle of the P.D.I. to show me any needed correction in course. Concentrating harder than ever before in my life, I kept the air-speed constant, the ship level in all directions, and the altimeter needle glued at 21,000.

When the bomb release light flickered twice I knew that if Uncle Sam's famous bombsight had done its part, those big eggs we had just laid would land exactly where they would do the most good.

I flew straight and level for about 10 seconds after the bomb run to be sure the wing men had gotten their bombs away and then began the corkscrewing evasive action again. Flak had been popping around us more or less ineffectively for a matter of a few seconds but we hadn't paid it much attention. A six-gun burst appeared just off our left wing and on the theory that lightning never strikes twice in the same



place I had just turned toward it when there was a terrific jarring crash accompanied by the sound of ripping metal and the ship shuddered and shook from nose to tail. With a peculiarly detached thought I noticed a red, sticky substance dripping from the throttle pedestal, from my hands and clothes, and spattered over the windshield and instruments.

Afraid of what I would see I glanced over at Eyster and the top gunner. They were O.K. Number one engine was out completely. Oil was gushing out of a hole in the nose section and the prop was wind milling with the tack needle against the peg at 3500 rpm. Eyster punched the feathering button, turned off the gas and switches while I trimmed the ship to fly on three engines. We were losing altitude rapidly and were headed out to sea.

As we recovered from the first rather stunning shock we found that the red stuff all over the cockpit was hydraulic fluid which had spurted from a cut line, and looking around saw that the wings and fuselage were well sprinkled with sizable, jagged holes. Number four engine was showing low manifold pressure and wasn't doing much good but the oil pressure and temperature were O.K. so we let it go. Any small bit of additional power was welcome.

About a minute away from the target and at about 19,000 feet, the gunners began reporting enemy fighters. There were about 50 of them. Some of them attacked our formation and the gunners began firing. Later four E.A. were claimed as destroyed by the group.

We were well out at sea and had turned to parallel the coast when the tail gunner called and said that one of our ships was leaving the formation to the right. I turned slightly to the right to see better and to cover the ship if possible from further fighter attack. As I started to turn, Lt. Reddig, number two in my second element, pulled up to the right past the formation. The huge ship nearly stalled, then rolled slowly on its back, and went down in a steep spiral, leaving a plume of black smoke and flames to mark its path. A horribly beautiful sight as it was silhouetted against white clouds and blue water. A few thousand feet below us parachutes appeared near it. We hoped they all got out. Capt. Miller, my first assistant was acting as either pilot or co-pilot in Reddig's ship. That morning he had asked me if he couldn't go along, "to get in flying time for the month."



**Colonel (then Major) George Robinson wearing 34th Bomb Sqdn insignia.**

"Navigator from pilot. What is the course out?" A strange voice gave me the first compass heading on our course out. Wondering why Fulghum didn't answer my call, I called the Bombardier. "Haas from pilot. Where's Fulghum?"

"Pilot from Bombardier, Fulghum's hit. He's out. Gilliam is navigating for us."

"Bombardier from Pilot, O.K." The extra navigator gave me the course out. Looking back over the wing as we turned I could see the target. There was a great deal of smoke and some fires. More puffs of white smoke broke out as the groups behind us dropped their bombs. The air around us fairly swarmed with airplanes, both friendly and distinctly otherwise.

Above the target area the sky was almost black with round blobs of smoke caused by bursting heavy flak shells. My respect for flak has risen several hundred percent.

The ride home was a long one. The complete loss of one engine and the half hearted efforts of another coupled with a terrific head wind and bombbay doors which would not close cut our ground speed down to less than one hundred knots.

There were a couple of interest-

ing incidents: Just off the northwestern tip of France, four JU-88s cut in behind us and essed there, waiting for a straggler. Happily we disappointed them and they apparently didn't want to close in on the formidable array of guns we presented. While they were following us a blaze broke out in the cockpit behind the co-pilot's seat. The turret gunner tired to put it out with his hands, paying absolutely no attention to Eyster who was hammering him with the fire extinguisher and trying to get him to take it. Finally I got a good grip on the waist band of his flying trousers, jerked him up between the seats and held him there while Eyster put the extinguisher in his hands. The fire was burning intensely by then, fed by the oil-soaked soundproofing that lines the cabin, but was quickly extinguished. Never a dull moment!

Due to our enforced slowness we were soon alone. In due time, however, we made a landfall on the southwestern tip of England and picked our way through various balloon barrages to Exeter where we were to land.

As we approached Exeter I sent the turret gunner down into the nose to tell the Bombardier and Navigator to ride in the radio cabin for the

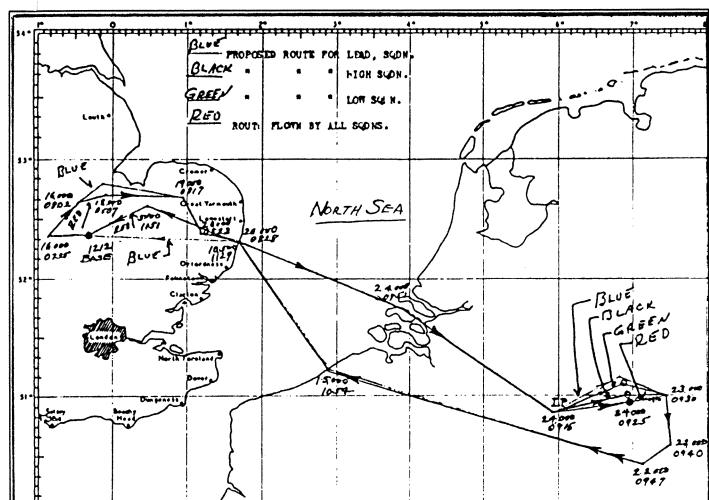
landing and to help them bring Fulghum up in the pilot's compartment. He popped right back up with the astounding statement that Capt. Fulghum wasn't there. I couldn't figure that one out right then as we were busy preparing to land.

Since both hydraulic systems were shot out, thereby rendering the brakes and all other hydraulically operated units useless, and since I wasn't too sure my tires weren't flat, I circled the airdrome until the other four ships had landed. When they were down I picked the longest runway, set her down just over the fence, cut the engines off, and rolled and rolled. A gentle ground loop near the end of the runway parked us very neatly just short of the perimeter track. None of the crew lost any time getting their feet planted solidly on the terra firma.

While we were waiting for a truck, Haas told me that Fulghum had simply bailed out after we were hit by the bursts of flak. He thought he must have been wounded because there was blood on his face, and there was still some on the emergency escape hatch where he had gone out. Haas coat had been blown out and had hung on the ball turret for some time while the gunner had frantically twisted and turned trying to shake it loose. Eventually he shook it loose and concentrated on looking for German fighter aircraft.

According to Harry Gobrecht's version of the incident in the Daily Diary of the 303rd Bombardment Group; this is what happened. "The lead navigator on lead ship #41-24609 "Holy Mackerel" bailed out over the target. The aircraft had been hit by flak, causing considerable damage which made the interphone inoperative. Hydraulic fluid flowing into the navigator's compartment led the navigator to assume that it was blood and that his pilot had been killed, so he bailed out and was last seen descending near bursting flak. He became a POW."

Why did Capt. Harold Fulghum leave the aircraft? Was he wounded or not? Was it blood or hydraulic fluid that the bombardier saw on his face? These questions have gone unanswered for 50 years. Maybe if we can locate Capt. Fulghum, we can get the answers, otherwise it will remain a mystery for the next 50 years.



By William Crawford

# Cologne: Through Flak Valley

**W**e are called to attention as Lt. Col. Lewis E. Lyle, the acting commander of the 303rd Bomb Group, enters the room and heads for the stage. For some unknown reason, our reaction is, this looks like it is going to be a rough one. The colonel takes his seat and Major Glynn Shumake, Group Operations Officer, steps forward to begin the briefing.

He begins, "First I'm going to bring you up to date on where our ground troops are so you will know what's going on below you. As of 1 September General Patton's U.S. Third Army had advanced ahead of his gasoline supply and had to halt his troops; 4 September the British entered Antwerp, Belgium, to attempt to obtain a seaport for the Allies; 6 September the U.S. Third Army attacked along the Moselle River line in Eastern France; 7 September the U.S. Third Army began attacks on Metz in eastern France; 10 September, a decision was made to postpone opening Antwerp's port until a secure crossing of the Rhine River had been made and the U.S. Third Army began a large scale crossing of the Moselle River. On the same day the U.S. First Army captured Luxembourg, east of the French border. On 11 September patrols from Overlord in the north and Dragon in the south established contact near Dijon, France. On 12 September the German garrison at Le Havre surrendered and the U.S. First Army reached the German West Wall. On 14 September the U.S. First Army reached Aachen, Belgium, almost at the German border as the U.S. Third Army surrounded

Nancy, along the Moselle in eastern France. On 15 September the U.S. First Army breached the German West Wall and on 18 September, the Germans counterattacked the British airborne troops at Arnhem, Netherlands. On 19 September the U.S. Ninth Army completed mopping up in Brittany, on the Brest peninsula—and yesterday the Germans overran the last British units in the Arnhem area. So you can see that in some areas we don't know where the Jerry might be."

He continues, "Now to get to our mission for today. Thirty-nine B-17s from the 303rd Bomb Group will attack the following targets in Germany: the Lead Squadron, an oil plant at Reishols, near Dusseldorf; the Low Squadron, an oil plant at Mannheim; and the High Squadron, the Ford Motor plant at Koln. —In case these targets are not visual and we have to revert to our special navigational aids the target will be the rail marshaling yards at Koln. In any case we're going into the heart of German industrial might and Jerry isn't going to make it easy for us. We can expect the heaviest concentration of flak that he has to offer. —We'll fly as the "C" Group in the 41st Combat Wing and we'll be led by Lt. Col. Richard Cole in Z-137."

Doug Kidd and I note that we'll be in the Lead Squadron, leading the Second Flight, flying our favorite B-17, F-930. —Our other special B-17 was shot down yesterday when Lieutenant Bennett was flying B-124 on our left wing over Osnabruck. We had flown B-124 more times than any other B-17 and she was personal to the crew. We haven't recuperated

from that loss yet.

It's not daylight yet when we arrive at the hardstand where F-930 is waiting for us. She was hurt yesterday at Osnabruck but the men have worked all night getting her blemishes patched up and when the sun finally shows itself we can see that she's still the picture of the noble lady we've come to regard.

Colonel Cole is first off in Z-137 at 0620 and four ships later F-930's wheels are leaving the runway for our climb to assembly of the Group at 16,000 ft. All of our B-17's come into position in good order and we orbit the area until we depart on course at 0755. Before we depart the English coast at Southwold we've climbed to 20,000 ft. and it's 0828.

Over the North Sea Colonel Cole has the Group make a dog-leg to kill time so that we can fall into our proper position in the Division Force. We enter the Continent over one of the islands about forty miles north of Antwerp at 0851 flying at 24,000 ft. Jerry doesn't shoot at us today, possibly because the British have him busy around Antwerp.

The Group receives word from Buckeye, our weather aircraft, suggesting that we bomb our secondary target, the marshaling yards at Koln, because the primaries are obscured by clouds. That means we'll use PFF, our airborne radar scanner, which works fairly well from the image a rail yard presents.

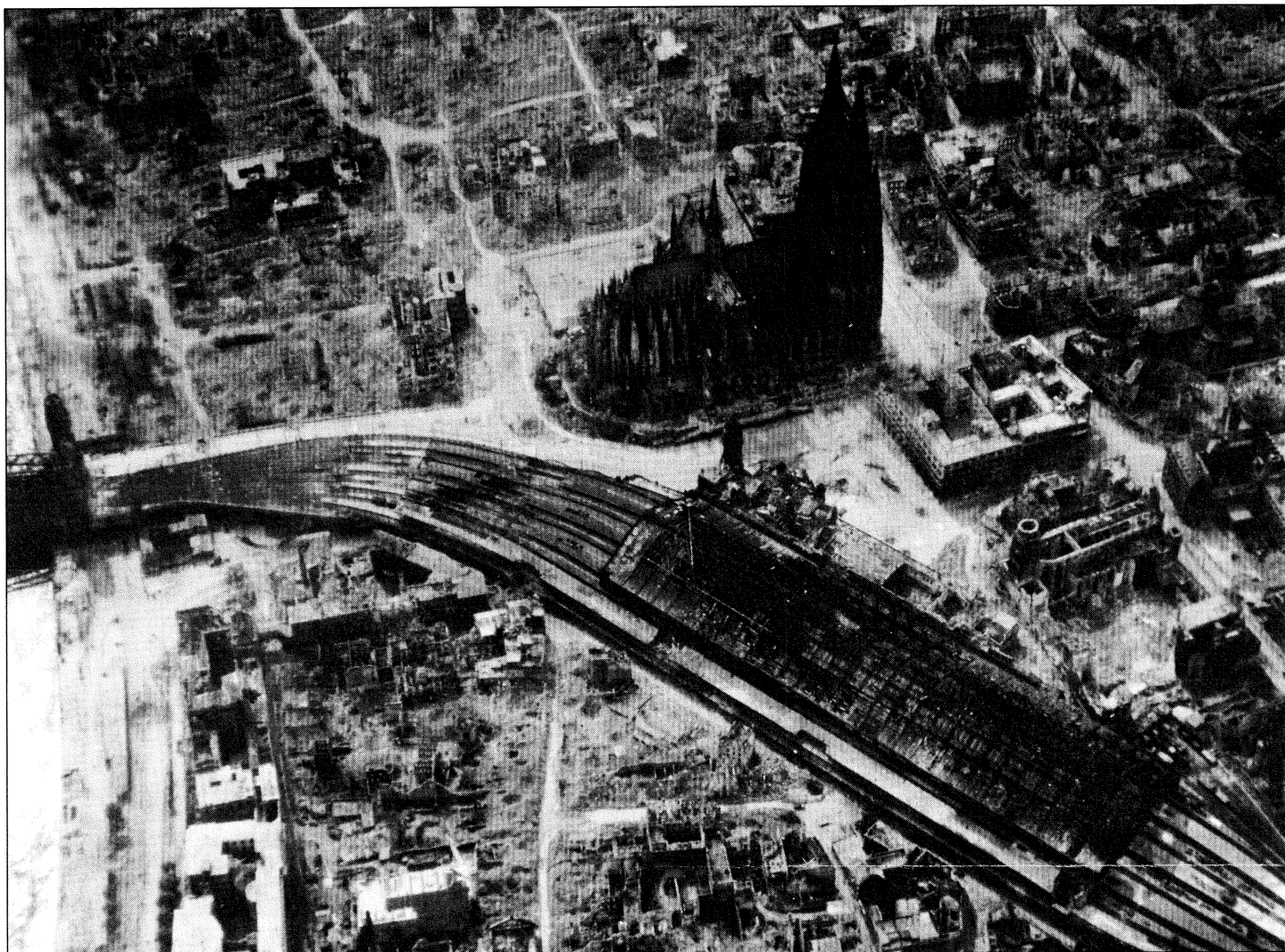
At 0900 Colonel Cole comes over the VHF, "Cowboy Charlie Lead to all aircraft, remain in Group formation for PFF bombing. We're coming up on the IP now, so hold it

in there and let's make this a good run!" We're apprehensive about the flak we're preparing ourselves for but at least we've got a good tail wind which makes our ground speed 242 mph as we turn onto the IP (Initial Point) at 0915.

And it begins. There's an 8/10 to 10/10th's cloud cover at low altitude, so the city of Cologne is obscured but the sharpest gunners in Germany are on those guns and the sky ahead is a blackened shroud right at our altitude as we begin to plow into it.

I can't help but have concern for that magnificent Gothic structure right down there beneath those clouds, the beautiful Cologne Cathedral with its twin 515 ft. towers, which was in construction some 600 years. Allied bombing, with all its inaccuracies, has managed to destroy ninety percent of the city and damage the Cathedral, but it's still standing in the midst of the rubble. Right in our Group of B-17s we have the means to completely demolish such a work of art in a few moments. (But when this war is over the city of Cologne will have sustained 262 air raids, 10 by the 303rd, and the Cathedral, and the twin towers with their steeples intact, will be left standing. —How can this be?)

Jerry is so merciless in his determination to devastate us that he's injuring some of our aircraft even before we get on the bomb run. This is going to be a brutal one all right! The bomb run is exhausting and it's evident that some of our B-17s are being crippled on this one with these devastating, accurate detonations all around us. Hitler's sharpest gun-



ners are putting up an umbrella of flak to protect the most immense industrial complex in Germany, the heart of the Ruhr Valley. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: —" Psalm 23.

But fear of the evil that is exploding so near to us is real and it's difficult to be ignored, and we press on. Eventually F-930 gives a lurch as our Bombardier, Lieutenant Bays, calls, "Bombs away!" and Colonel Cole leads us into some strenuous evasive maneuvers so we can get away from the target as quickly as possible. The Group makes a couple of right turns and we're down to 22,000 ft. when we begin our heading for home. We encounter several places where we run into flak, so Hitler has loyal troops even in the areas that are questionable.

By the time we depart the Continent over Ostend, Belgium, at 1054 we're down to 15,000 ft. and we continue our let-down over the North Sea. We come across the English coast at Southwold at 1129 and find

that we have to dodge scattered clouds and let down through the breaks.

We arrive over Molesworth at 1212 and the Colonel advises the High Squadron to land first. It's 1223 when F-930 touches her wheels to the runway again. We've been in the air just 5:50 hours for a short but costly one, but we've earned our pay another time.

When F-930 brought us safely home today, as she always does, we had no conception that this would be our last trip with this very special grand lady. Only yesterday she had been wounded by flak at Osnabruck while we were flying her, but she maintained her dignity with a damaged right wing and brought us home safely. Her wounds had been patched during the night and today she presented herself as the elegant lady once again.

But tomorrow Lieutenant Howard and his crew will fly F-930 on the tragic mission to Madgeburg and will become one of the eleven 303rd B-17s that are shot down by

German fighters. — As fate would have it, our crew will not fly tomorrow. — And we just lost our other choice B-17, B-124, yesterday to flak over Osnabruck while she was flying on our left wing.

It's beyond comprehension—.

*Ed. Note: The 27 September '44 mission was a very significant one for me for two reasons: it was my first mission on my second tour and the target was Cologne, the birthplace of my grandparents.*

*Attending my first briefing in several months was quite interesting. There were some familiar faces but on the whole, there were mostly new faces. I didn't know whether this was a good omen or not and I didn't take the time to try and figure it out since I had to meet my pilot for the day Lt. George Baltis and his crew that I was going to spend the better part of the day with. I think they looked at me rather strangely when I told them it was my first mission on my second tour.*

*Stations, start engines, taxi and finally take off were something I re-*

*membered doing in my distant past. Soon it was back on oxygen as we climbed through 10,000 feet. Everything was fine until we hit the I.P. and started on the bomb run.*

*As I looked through the plexiglass nose, past the bombardier, and saw the box of black flak we were going to fly through, I said to myself, "what the hell am I doing here? What did I get myself into?" At times like this, prayers help a lot.*

*But as always, we plowed through the black stuff (it was reported as being intense and extremely accurate) and before long we were landing back at Molesworth for the debriefing and the shot of whiskey. Some of the comments at the debriefing were quite interesting. Some crews liked the sandwiches; others said they were lousy. One crew complained about throwing out peanut butter sandwiches while in formation; their nose glass was broken by one. Walt Mayer complained about not having any whiskey. (I'm sure he could have used it the following day.)*  
(Continued on page 16)

*An American flyer's comforting words  
left a lifetime impression*

# Once In A Lifetime

By Bill Adams

**M**y dad died at the age of 29. My mum packed up all of their bits and pieces and other gear and took my sister and myself back to live with her mother. Also living in the same house were my mother's two brothers, Joe and Bob. Gran's house had only three bedrooms, so I had to share a room with my two uncles, and if you did not like snoring, it was too bad; in fact it was murder.

My mother worked full time at St. Mary's Hospital, Paddington Green. Time went by and the war broke out. I cannot remember much before then. I can remember men building air raid shelters at the bottom of our street, which was a block turning, and you could see the railway running along the bottom. There was a wall with wire on it about eight feet high. I suppose it was there to keep daredevils like me off the railway lines.

The air raid shelters were finished but seemed to stay empty for ages and ages. Then one day the air raid warning sounded. My friends and I stood looking up at the sky. People were saying that planes were going to come over and bomb us, but nothing happened. We started to play football again, and again the air raid warning, but it was the all clear. We soon found out the difference as time went by.

My mother said that a man called at the house who in fact was the air raid warden. He called round to tell her that, as she had two children and gran was over a certain age, we had been given an air raid shelter at the bottom of the street. But gran said she was not going in the bloody shelter just because some little German had big ideas. "I am staying in my house, and they can do as they like," she said. She then turned around and walked back into the kitchen, but turned around and came back and gave me a clump round the ear, because I was laughing.

Gran then told me to go in the

yard and feed the chickens and clean out the rabbits that she kept. I couldn't stand chickens but my uncle Joe used to give me a dollar (five shillings) a week to look after them; and a dollar was a dollar, a lot of money to me in those days.

It was about this time that the Germans began to bomb London in the day time. I think they lost too many planes then, so they started to come over at night. So just as soon as the air raid warning sounded, my mum used to come upstairs to our bedroom and wake my sister and myself. Then we would have to go across the main road to the public shelter in our night clothes. There my mum would make up a bed for my sister and myself, but it was hard to go back to sleep again after being awakened, with the guns banging and the German bombers droning overhead.

I remember one night the all clear had sounded and mum and gran took us back to the house and there to everyone's surprise was my uncle Bob asleep on the floor in the living room with two young ladies, and he was in the middle of them.

My gran started shouting, "Oi what's your game, get these women out of here." The difficult thing was, these women were in their undies; no wonder my gran was doing her nut. Uncle Bob started to say something but my gran just whacked him around the earhole. I thought a whack around the earhole only happened to me. I was to find out later that Uncle Bob married one of his floormates, but my gran never did forgive that girl.

Yet another night in the shelter, and this time the bombing was very heavy, the Germans dropped a bomb on the school I used to go to. My Uncle Bob came into the shelter and said something to my mum, then he took me outside and put me on his shoulder and started off up the street, all the time you could hear the guns blazing away and the

searchlights shining up into the sky, and for once I was not scared. We went up past what used to be my school and it was in one hell of a mess. There were fire engines, police, air raid wardens all standing around trying to sort things out. Further up the road we came across some houses, and they were burning. Most of them had no fronts, you could see the peoples' furniture inside, a dressing table with swing side mirrors and a wardrobe hanging from part of a floor that used to be a whole room. Most of the houses in that street were in the same condition. I don't know if anybody had been killed or not, several people said there were, but being a small lad my eyes were looking all around me. I had never seen anything like that before. It was a terrible sight, one which I will never forget.

Another night in the shelter during a heavy bombing raid, A German bomber dropped a bomb smack in the middle of the main road breaking the water main, causing the water to rush down the road flooding the shelters. Both my uncles were nearby when this happened. So Bob came rushing down into the shelter and said to my mum, I think we will have to pack up and go home. When we were all packed up, we joined Uncle Bob who was waiting for us outside. Off we went, Uncle Bob saying to my sister, "you stick close and watch where you are walking just in case anything happens; if shrapnel falls off the roof, it will cut you head open."

If it was not too hot during the day, most of the boys used to walk around the turnings looking for shrapnel. They used to save it. It was a big thing to see boys willing to swap one piece of shrapnel for another. Being kids you could always swap something for something else. You could get three lumps of shrapnel for an old army badge.

The war seemed to be going on and on. Some nights we never went

to the shelter, and the next night, when we did go it seemed to be more crowded than usual. The next day we found out why. It seems our next door neighbor's sister was murdered in one of the air raid shelters. She used to use a shelter underneath the arches in Lenor Street. It must have been a terrible sight for the people who found her. You know how people are; all sorts of talk was going on about this woman going out with all sorts of people, soldiers, sailors, airmen. You name them; she had them. It did not mean a lot to me being a kid, but most of the grownups in our turning were very shocked that something like this should happen on our doorstep.

Now the war seemed to be getting to the people in our turning. They certainly did not have any love for the Germans. Some old man said to my mum, "that's what happens in time of war. So many people die, but life has to go on." He certainly was right, life has to go on, and we had to get on with it.

It seems every night we are dragged out of bed to go to the shelter. In the daytime you could see where the Germans had dropped their bombs. Where there were houses were now just a pile of rubble.

The people in our shelter used to have a nickname for the German planes. It was, "where do you want it?" because of the droning of their engines which seemed to be saying, "where do you want it; where do you want it?" Some of the old ladies used to say, "we don't want it over here, keep going." Some used to say, "take it back where you got it from." It seemed as if the bomber was up there all the time. One night one old lady said, "Be quiet."

We said, "What's up."

She said, "listen, 'old where do you want it', ain't up there." And true enough he was not there. Everybody was happy he was not up there that night. We had hoped a night fighter



had gotten him.

One night mum came running upstairs and told us to hurry up down to the shelter, the guns were going like mad. But I lagged behind a bit. I was fascinated by a bomber caught in the searchlights. I soon came back to life when mum came back and gave me a belt around the ear; boy did that one hurt. I was still crying when we reached the shelter. My sister said, "it serves you right."

As my mum was busy trying to make us a bed on the floor, a stranger bent down to comfort me, and made me feel safe. As young as I was, he gave me a feeling that everything was going to be all right but he left before the all-clear sounded, but before that, he gave me a pair of air force wings to keep as a souvenir. I carried those wings everywhere, refusing to swap them, even for a bar of chocolate. And that was a sacrifice indeed in those days. The man said that everything was going to be all right when he gave me his wings and I trusted him. That was the faith of a small child, and it did not let me down.

A bomb fell in Cambridge Grove, just a couple of streets away during the daytime. It went right through a

railway arch where it made a big hole. Our turning lost all their windows and all the doors were blown wide open. I ran into our house and straight into our living room. Suddenly down came the ceiling covering me with dust and plaster. My mum wondered what on earth had happened to me. My sister said, "go on mum, give him a clip around the ear, he is always getting into something." It was that great bomb that fell in Camebride Grove, that loosened up the ceiling. That meant we all had to live in the front room.

It looks as if Jerry has a secret weapon called the Doodle Bug, and he started to send it over. It used to make a funny noise, then stop, and drop anywhere. Gran said, there don't seem much point in running down to the shelter with these things coming over but my mum said we should go to the shelter to be on the safe side. So gran had to do as she was told in the end.

Sometimes now we didn't go to the shelter at all because my gran's legs were getting bad and it was becoming difficult for her to walk. So Uncle Joe put blankets up over the windows, just in case the bombs dropped nearby and to stop the

glass from cutting anyone sitting in the front room.

I know you must be wondering by now about the stranger who gave me those wings. Yes, he was an American, and there were lots of them over here. Everywhere you went, you saw an American. Even the food situation was not the same. We are now eating powdered eggs, something I really enjoyed along with the American Spam.

Now the Germans have another new weapon called the V-2. You could not hear it coming; just the explosion. I know my mum, my two uncles, and, I should imagine, a great many more people were worried about this new weapon. Mum said, now it was not worth going to the shelter. So as time went by, we were going less and less.

In the end we found out that the Germans were beginning to give up and the war was almost over. Then came the news that the Germans had finally given up. Even the German POWs who used to walk our street seemed to be very relieved. Not far from where I lived was a German POW camp. They seemed quite friendly and there were also some Polish POWs too. When I asked my uncle Joe why the Poles were POWs. He said they were the men who were forced to fight for the Germans. They seemed quite friendly.

Now the war was over and people were dancing in the streets. It went on for hours on end. Then us kids had street parties and there were all kinds of flags flying everywhere. Everybody seemed so very happy. Some girls were kissing the Americans and also our own soldiers, sailors and airmen. Now all my friends fathers were coming home from the war, bringing with them all sorts of souvenirs. But I already had my souvenir; the wings that the American airman had given me that night in the air raid shelter. The American's words were to come true later on in my life.

Now all our families and friends were no longer glued to the wireless to listen to the news; no longer would they hear the newscasters say that some of our bombers had bombed some parts of Germany, and then say how many bombers failed to return. My mum used to say how sad it was that these young American boys never returned home and how their families would miss them.

My school was never rebuilt. I will never forget the sight of the school and bombed out houses, or the sound of the German bombers,

doodle bugs or V-2s.

But one thing I shall always remember until I pass out of this world and that is what the American airman said to me that night in the air raid shelter. His words really came true. Now, people who know me will understand why I put so much in my carvings of American Nose Art of World War II planes.

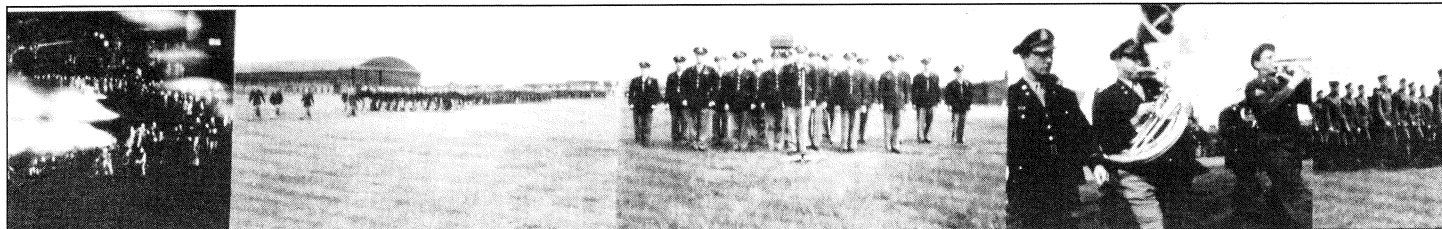
♦ ♦ ♦

April 18, 1995 was "Bill Adams Day" at RAF Molesworth, England. The JAC Commanding Officer, Col. Philip C. Marcum and other Molesworth dignitaries welcomed Adams to the wartime home of the 303rd Bomb Group. In honor of the occasion, Adams carved and presented a sixth plaque of a "No name" 303rd BG (H) B-17 to the JAC. It was Mr. Adams' way of paying tribute to the many 303rd BG (H) B-17s that carried no name but nevertheless played an essential part in the war-time activities against the enemy.

In a letter to Harry Gobrecht describing the events of the day, Bill Adams had this to say, "The trip to Molesworth was certainly 'Bill Adams Day.' I have never known so many people that didn't know me but really made me feel welcome. Colonel Philip Marcum and Brian McGuire really did honor me. After presenting Col. Marcum with the 'No name B-17' plaque in memory of the 303rd Bomb Group guys that were shot down, Col. Marcum presented me with a picture that artist Keith Hill had painted and autographed to me. It certainly took me by surprise. It was also a surprise when I walked into the presentation room and saw all those soldiers standing there along with other dignitaries. After the presentation everyone in the room started clapping. I have never in all my life had that sort of thing happen. I was certainly honored and was very proud that I had spent the time carving the plaques to honor the 303rd BG."

"I doubt very much if we will ever forget the trip we made to Molesworth. As we drove through the main gate, we came across a sign that said, 'Welcome to Molesworth, Mr. & Mrs. Adams.' That certainly brought a lump to my throat. Like I said, nothing like that has ever happened to me before and it will be a very long time before I ever forget the visit to Molesworth. My wife Joyce was thrilled with everyone's kindness. Joyce has always said to me, that 'one day someone will honor you for the carvings that you make.' Well, Joyce was right. I was certainly honored."





# A V-E Day Memory, 50 Years Later

By John McCall



John McCall on return from Berlin in 1944

**MAY 8, 1945, EARLY A.M.: IN THE HUT OF AN EIGHTH AIR FORCE HEAVY BOMBER BASE IN ENGLAND. (303rd B.G.)**

As a morning to wake up to, this one's in first place. We already know within the hour we'll hear the Official Announcement, a paltry, feeble term for the telling of such exalted news; have known since yesterday of Germany's surrender.

There's no show of excitement or clamor here. No shouting; that wouldn't observe the code. The subculture of air crews, consciously anti-hokum, rejects any spurious hint of heroics in our purpose or work. Such denials and pride before peers are what compelled them to do the next mission. A pattern ingrained is no facade, or maybe the perfect one.

So everyone is trying to act normal, not saying much, as though absorbed and not giving anything away. Yet their unspoken sentiments may be as close to the surface as mine, and as easily read.

I must prep myself for a day in history. Perhaps a tiny psyche adjustment? No, no need for that. I am

ready. The requirement is simply to proceed with utmost deliberation, each moment instantly savored, assimilated, and thus remembered. To ablutions hut, shave, shower. Class-A, no raunch. Tunic, twill pinks, 50-mission-crush cap. Routine, yes; ordinary, not today.

The radio is tuned in now, Armed Forces Radio. Winston Churchill's voice is coming in loud and clear. It's the speech declaring Victory-in-Europe Day. So it's for real and no hoax. In character, the Prime Minister ends with low-key eloquence, unforgettable, noting simply that "We may now allow ourselves a brief period of rejoicing." Through it's an a cappella performance, I hear kettledrums and trumpet flourishes. I'm stomping the concrete floor of the hut.

Thus ends what began September 1, 1939 in Europe, with an outcome at dark moments in doubt. For me it's now four years three months in uniform. So the invitation needs no importuning. Let celebration rip. The whoopee threshold will meet its test.

Next comes a follow-up radio report, a V-E-Day present from on high. U.S. military are confined to their bases. Momentarily was forgotten that military and chicken (in fore-shortened slang) are synonymous, ubiquitous and perpetual. Forget this order. It is to be ignored. AWOL today will be merely a venial sin.

Outside, the zephyrs are mild and fragrant. In cobalt sky, bright warming sun and brilliant white cumulous cloud of fair weather are favorable portents. A redolent Earth is moist and sprouting green. Fields are splashed with wildflowers vivid red and yellow. Senses pick up signals not before recognized for pre-occupation with other concerns. Awareness comes suddenly, as Saul was struck on his Damascus

road. Of course! It's Springtime in East Anglia. Comes recall of lyric Eve speech in Paradise Lost.

"Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet/With charm of earliest birds; pleasant the Sun/When first on this delightful land he spreads/His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit and flower/Glistering with dew..."

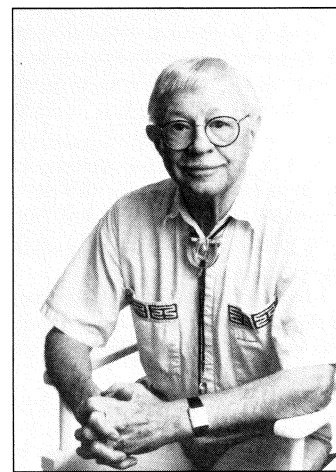
Euphoria is complete. Alive in Eden. Until a few days ago they were shooting at me—with serious intent to maim, I realized with shock on that first raid. Thrills and fear were mingled, being shot at and missed, and a surreal memory of going down in France on fire and engines feathered, short of a return trip from a synthetic oil plant outside of Leipzig. Now no more sweat in cold damp 4 a.m. darkness waiting for a flashlight in the face that tells of a trip you're chosen to be up for today. No more thoughts of flying through red-center flak or watching for a staffel of bf109s coming in at 12 o'clock level through the formation of B-17 Flying Fortresses.

Won't miss the ritual black humor in questions of how many missions to go in your tour, and to your answer, always a slow shake of the head with the mocking retort, "You'll never make it," standard guffaw routine from pals.

But with war end a fact, why just last night did a guy, one tough SOB, bolting up in his sleep, cry out, "We're on fire, bail out!" An incident not to be remarked upon, of course.

Time to take Winnie up on the invitation. Stroll over to the club before morning ends and with cup in hand begin some earnest, friendly rejoicing. A pint of mild and bitter is always available, as in gin,—gin and lime, gin and orange. Bourbon and Scotch are rationed. So gin it is, one shilling.

Celebrations are about to begin across America, where the people,



John McCall in Florida today.

my family included, do not know the price, and surely never will. In the Eighth Air Force alone, 26,000 U.S. airmen dead, 28,000 POWs behind the wire, another 3,000 evaders and escapees, all shot down with their 7,000 heavy bombers and 3,700 fighter craft. Purple Hearts issued to 7,000 more returning wounded. Out of the wild blue yonder, appalling stats.

Missing today from the club barstools are regulars, two crewmen hearties who nightly close the premises. Where is the put-on rogue of solemn choirboy face, "Tail Wheel?" He is a chubby navigator who addresses astonished colonels and corporals as "Agnes." A cherub captain with two Silver Stars, flak-happy in his private world from too much combat in too many theaters of war. And Werner, a skilled and valorous pilot, at age twenty-one on his second volunteer tour, this captain whose uncle is Hermann Goering, Luftwaffe Reichsmarschall, the same. (Forty years later we are to hear of a shameful FBI surveillance, a loyalty question cited and seeking clandestine reports from some

"comrades." Seen here are only plump, oakleafed, paddlefoot strangers, cavorting from the rafters with Red Cross females. These are not the companions for today.

The next move calls for the small musette bag and overnight necessities, for a change of setting is in order. The destination is to be a randomly found hamlet. There to join non-military humans who have endured stoutly against bombs and short rations. There to witness their authentic ceremonies and mix in their spontaneous rites and revels. Not in the crowds and tumult of London, but a village.

To hitch a ride unseen, it's a half-mile hike to the nearest back-country lane, across a resident farmer's field, and behind the air station. Sit under this roadside tree to await whatever vehicle passes from either direction, to ride wherever it stops. A lorry driver pulls up with a "Ta, mate," and no questions asked, I hop alone in the back. Through pastoral landscape it later chugs into a village square and pauses long enough for a passenger to alight.

Compactly lining the square are half-timbered 16th Century and Georgian structures with shops and a likely period inn for the night. I do not ask the name of the town, for such knowledge is of no consequence.

Later the pub at the inn is the oasis to quaff a few potions and prepare for a pageant that will be no charade.

British double summertime darkness is lowering. Outside in the center of the square a ritual bonfire is being lit. Surrounding it are villagers enough to crowd a Bruegel wedding canvas. They are, the draughts tell me, heirs to a heroic age, with a legacy twelve centuries old. "Noble was Beowulf, bloomed wide his name." (Those drinks were not meant for children.) As their ancestors (and mine?) hailed his slaying the dragon Grendel, so the generation now ceremonially cheers the end of terror

and menace of the monster Hitler, dead in a Berlin bunker.

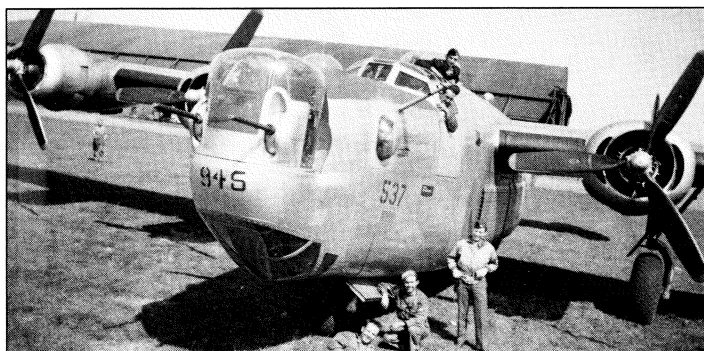
In this scene move images diversify human, focused on one response. Mostly women, young or matronly, ancient women wrapped in drab colors. Small, aged patriarchs, bent as though emerging from years in a bomb cellar. Some middle-aged men, few chivvy-street males of conscription age. Short-clad schoolboys and their sisters with inscribed pale legs showing tints of blue.

The townsfolk are joined in a wide circle around the fire that lights the medieval square, romping in dance. They are singing, to the night and to each other, songs of the tribal culture, dancing and circling.

I break into the ring and join hands, knowing this is why I came. The final memory of the night is of singing and dancing in growing loop. We are doing "Knees Up, Knees Up, Mother Brown." The flame burns higher, with consuming passion, joyful liberation, from its embers to spring a phoenix flight to the shaping of a wondrous world.

McCall was in the 358th Sqdn. After his first six missions on the wing, he was assigned to a pool of lead bombaimers. "At times I flew with Goering and Tailwheel, the two guys whose names I took in vain in the memory piece," said McCall. His crew crash landed on an ex-Luftwaffe grass field outside if St. Quentin coming back from a mission in the Leipzig area. "Another crippled B-17 came over at 300 feet moments after we got out of our aircraft. It was followed by a damn FW-190 which got them. I saw big smoke rise behind a nearby hillock and a short time later, this truck pulls up and I looked in back and saw those big canvas bags. The tags said 'KIA.' It was then I got a little shaky. Could have been us."

He had 22 missions to his credit when V-E Day happened.



Is it a bird? Is it a plane? or is it superwhale? 303rd personnel look over the flying mammal. That's Capt. Hill, 444th in front and Major Mel McCoy on top of aircraft. (photo by Duane Bush)

## POTPOURRI

Rev. Bernard Schumacher, Subiaco Abbey, Subiaco, AR 72865 should be listed as the other Roman Catholic Chaplain. We apologize for the oversight in not listing his name sooner.

Harry Gobrecht, 303rd Historian, has been named to the Board of Directors of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center.

The local RAF facility at Baulmer, England, is planning to erect a memorial on May 19, 1995 to all airmen who were lost in the Hill's of the Cheviot during W.W.II.

According to Alvin L. Morton, this will be the seventh year that the 303rd Bomb Group Association will be placing a wreath in the American Military Cemetery at Cambridge on Memorial Day for the Annual Commemorative Memorials Service. Maybe next year we will place wreaths in all the overseas cemeteries where 303rd "Rest in Peace."

Yearly membership dues of \$10 is due on the first day of January. Overseas yearly membership dues is \$15 because of extra mailing cost involved. (It cost \$1.85 to mail each copy). Life membership dues is levied according to age of the member: 60-64 years is \$75; 65-69 is \$60; 70-74 is \$45; 75-77 is \$30 and 78 years or older is FREE. Super Life membership dues is your life membership dues plus \$100. When in doubt contact the membership chairman, Carlton M. Smith, 12700 Red Maple Circle #54, Sonora, CA 95370-5269, tel. 209-533-4033. Please don't contact the editor of the newsletter. He doesn't know anything; that's why he is editor.

Volunteer(s) Wanted — To go through each mission report (364 of them) and pull out all the most important elements of each, to make up what could be called a "Reader's Digest" version of each mission. The specific pages of each mission report that would be included, would have to be determined by some type of committee action. This way, hopefully, we could ensure that the viewpoints of our entire membership would be considered.

In addition to being appropriately priced for distribution to anyone who would like reproduced copies, these "Reader Digest" versions would provide the basis for the 303rd Bomb Group Association "mission histories," that would ultimately be made available for public use at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center.

But that adds another problem, How do you make a "Readers Digest" version of the accomplishments of the ground personnel, which includes, ground crew, clerks, cooks, and bakers, Military Police, doctors, dentists, chaplains etc.?

Anyone interested in performing these important writing tasks is asked to contact Ed Miller, V/P for Administration, P.O. Box 219, Temple, OK 73568-0219.

Memorabilia — Anyone with memorabilia to donate the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Center should start getting it together. Now that the Heritage Center is being staffed I'm sure they will be calling for donations in the very near future. Information on what they are looking for and how to pack it and where to send it will be carried in the next issue of the newsletter.

Our attempts to try and locate the present whereabouts of John Henry Embach one of the three who successfully bailed out over Pluvigner on Jan. 23, 1943 uncovered some bad news. Captain Embach was killed in Korea on Feb. 28, 1945. He was the navigator on the crew of "Beats Me" which was honored by the citizens of Pluvigner in November 1994.

## Le Souvenir Francais

I thank you very much for your letter and the February and August issue of your newsletter.

I am happy to see a memorial to the crew which crashed at Pluvigner on January 23, 1943. The seven brave young men who gave their lives for liberty and for our country will never be alone. In taking care of the fine monument, Pluvigner will take care of the memory of the American aviators. The adventure of the crew who crashed at Le Cloître is very moving.

I am proud of the contribution of Le Souvenir Francais to the memorial. This organization is a very important one all around France, with more than 200,000 members. As a delegate to the USA, I founded the American Society of Le Souvenir Francais Inc., under the law of New York State with jurisdiction in all of the territory of the United States. I am working to develop the association in the places where French soldiers, sailors or aviators gave their lives for Liberty or undertook commendable actions.

We plan a "Homage to the Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant" at Arlington National Cemetery on June 22, 1995 after some works around his grave. We are working also in a L'Enfant Memorial in Washington, D.C. We work also with local historical societies at the campsites of the Washington-Rochambeau Route from Newport, RI, to Yorktown, VA.

Until last year I was president of the Federation of French War Veterans Inc. and I created the "Medaille du Cinquantenaire des Debarquements de Normandie et de Provence et de la Liberation de la France." We had a ceremony and banquet where 175 veterans were invited by 150 French people.

I would like to have two additional copies of the newsletter. Yours is the best that I have. Bravo, to the editor.

With best wishes,  
**Roger Cestac, President**  
**American Society of Le**  
**Souvenir Francais, Inc.**  
**141 East 44th Street, Suite 604**  
**New York, NY 10017**  
**(212) 697-0866**

## Tally Ho Museum

We are in the process of putting together a small aviation museum in the Southern NH area. It will deal with all aspects of aviation, but because of Grenier Field used during World War II as a training field for heavy bombers we will have a large portion of the museum dedicated to aviation during the war. I am writing to you, to ask for your help. We have a small collection of uniforms and flight gear and some photos but need more. One of preliminary exhibits we have planned is a wall with photos, momentos, and memoirs of airmen and groundcrew and we would like to get in contact with as many airmen and groundcrew as possible.

**Matthew Bole**  
**Tally Ho Aviation Museum**  
**4 Mobile Coach Lane**  
**Mt. Vernon, NH 03057**

## Cologne

(Continued from page 11)

*lowing day, when he had to bail out just inside the French border. We didn't know he was safe until October 2.)*

*About five years ago I visited Cologne and stopped off to tour the beautiful Cathedral. Very little damage had been done to this wonderful piece of architecture. This was amazing when you consider the number of times Cologne had been bombed — many times through an overcast — and how close it was in relation to the marshaling yards. It was a miracle!*

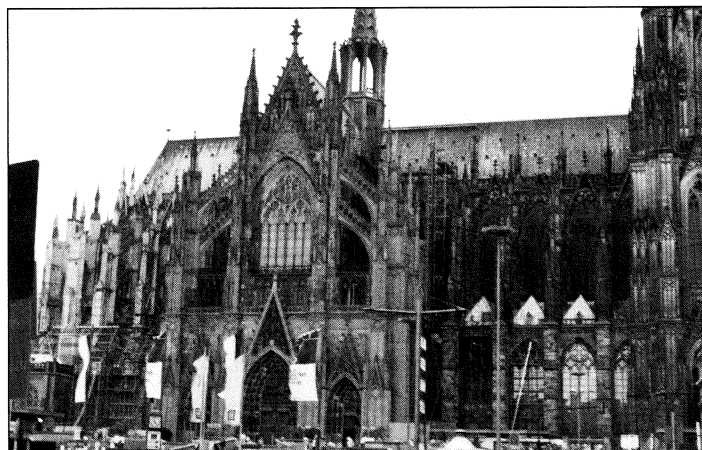
## Smithsonian Mural Artist Keith Ferris Set As Guest Speaker At Anniversary Reunion

"Thunderbird" was among 39 B-17's from the 303rd Bomb Group to fly from Molesworth on 15 August 1944 for a raid on the Nazi airfield at Wiesbaden. Nine of the group's aircraft — almost one out of every four in the attack force — were shot down by waves of ME-109's and FW-109's. "Thunderbird" was among the survivors. Almost 32 years later, it became the inspiring symbol of the heavy bomber war against Germany in a huge wall mural in the World War II gallery of the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum.

On Friday 15 September 1995 at the 303rd's reunion in Colorado Springs, 50 years after victory in the war, artist Keith Ferris will tell how he came to select the "Hell's Angels" group and "Thunderbird" for the Smithsonian exhibit. The mural,

titled "Fortresses Under Fire," has been seen by millions of Americans and international visitors since it was opened to the public in 1 July 1976. It is 75 feet wide and 25 feet high. On a pedestal in front of the mural is a brass plate identifying "Thunderbird" as B-17 in the 359th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group.

In a telephone interview, Ferris said he'll do a three-screen synchronized slide presentation with the assistance of his wife, Peggy. He'll review his work on the mural art commissioned by the Smithsonian, the chain of circumstances which led to the selection of "Thunderbird" and the 303rd, and his research on the Wiesbaden mission in U.S. archives and German pilots of the Luftwaffe's Jagdgeschwader 300 who flew against the B-17's defend the airfield.



"Off Limits" — The Dom, the Cologne Cathedral as it looks today. It only suffered minor damage during World War II.

## Volunteers Needed

As time marches on we desperately need members who are willing to be nominated and serve, if elected, as officers to run our excellent 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association. Beside squadron representatives; the elected officers are: President, Vice President/Administration, Vice President/Reunions, Treasurer, and Secretary.

If you are willing and able to run for elective office, please contact: Malcolm Magid, Chairman; Nominating Committee; 2307 Briarwood Hills Drive, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30319.

I am aware that we were warned, some fifty years ago: "Never, Never, volunteer for anything." But we do need your help. So, thank you for your help and send in your name as soon as possible so that I can send you a questionnaire. We need a list of names so that we can come up with a slate of officers to run for office during the reunion in Colorado Springs in September.

**Malcom Magid, Chairman**  
**Nominating Committee**



## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Recently I have received several letters from those who have used the 1993-1994 Directory to check the membership for names and addresses. It has resulted in confusion because that Directory is very much out of date. Unfortunately, it was so about a week after it was published due to the almost daily changes I make to the computer. We have had hundreds of new members, deaths, address changes and membership upgrades since the Directory came off the press. My computer database is the only absolutely correct roster. One way to keep up with it is to refer to my lists in this column as supplements to the Directory. When are we going to put out another Directory? Probably when Hal and I can find a few free minutes to discuss the matter, but no promises are possible at this time. I do plan to broach the subject at the Colorado Springs Board Meeting.

Considering guaranteed return postage, envelopes, postage for mailing single Newsletters at the rate of 78¢ per copy, phone calls to confirm addresses and other miscellaneous expenses we spent approximately \$200 in the past few months. Please help us save that unbudgeted expense. It only takes a 20¢ stamp on a postcard to inform me of an address change and I'll return the 20¢ to anyone requesting it.

The following lists are current as of 5 April 1995:

**Carlton M. Smith**  
**12700 Red Maple Cir. #54**  
**Sonora, CA 95370-5269**  
**209-533-4033**

## NEW MEMBERS

- A-276 Tom A. Lardie, 2280 Marshall Ave., Simi Valley, CA 93063
- 1877 Everett J. Anderson, 1004 Chateau Meadows Dr., Eugene, OR 97401-7030 (359)
- 1878 Cecil Allen, 8705 Slater Dr., Overland Park, KS 66212-3861 (359)
- A-277 Peter G. Horner, Bachstrasse 7, Leipheim, Ger D89340
- L1879 Robert B. Robinson, 16501 N. El Mirage Rd., Surprise, AZ 85374-3603 (360)
- L1880 Arthur S. Stevens, 10441 Indiana, Kansas City, MO 64137-1531 (360)
- 1881 Joseph B. Strange, Rt. 5, Box 211, Bloomfield, IN 47424-9554 (359)
- S1882 Raymond E. Hills, P.O. Box 42, Winterport, ME 04496 (Sqdn ?)
- 1883 John J. O'Donnell, 52 Charles St., Tappan, NY 10983 (358)
- 1884 Stanley W. Lloyd, 3709 Federal Ave., Everett, WA 98201-4651 (359)
- 1885 Ralph Peters, 5126 Dunes Ct., Charlotte, NC 28226 (359)
- L1886 Jack Weinberg, 152-18 Union Tpke, Apt. 11-G, Flushing, NY 11367 (Sqdn ?)
- L1887 Charles L. Hahn, 77 E. Dixon Ave., Dayton, OH 45419-3438 (Sqdn ?)
- 1888 Milton B. Abernathy, 6000 North Beach Rd., Englewood, FL 34223 (358)
- L1889 Kenneth R. Auer, Sr, 9266 Kempwood Dr., Houston, TX 77080-2917 (360)
- 1890 Bernard T. Boomer, 10302 Yellow Pine Way, Hudson, FL 34667-6674 (427)
- L1891 C. Lloyd Giltenboth, 352 W. Beaver St., Zelienople, PA 16063 (359)
- 1892 Walter E. Hammond, 488 Liberty Rd., Orleans, IN 47452 (358)
- L1893 Edward J. Wiencek, 59 Preble St., So. Boston, MA 02127-3542 (427)
- L1894 John T. Williams, 577 Pine Forest Ln., Orange Park, FL 32073-2962 (360)
- 1895 Joseph E. Bowman, 405 W. Liberty St., Butler, IN 46721 (444)
- L1896 Rodolfo A. Villarreal, 1016 San Carlos Dr., Antioch, CA 94509 (360)
- 1897 Leroy P. Christenson, 1971 Carl St., St. Paul, MN 55113 (359)
- 1898 Walstein W. Wallace, 2415 Comanche Rd., Augusta, GA 30904 (427)
- 1899 Paul G. Hogan, 2015 Forest Ln., Mobile, AL 36605 (359)

- 1900 Alan E. Magee, P.O. Box 283, Angel Fire, NM 87710 (360)
- 1901 Paul E. Chennault, 14239 Parkland Dr., Sun City West, AZ 85375-5206 (Sqdn ?)
- A-278 Beverly S. Chain, 206 So. Third St., Apt. 9, Copperas Cove, TX 76522
- A-279 Gerry Dacey, 8 Bassenthwaite, Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon, Cambs., EN PE 18 6UN
- A-280 Richard Carlson, 105 Maplewood Dr., Michigan City, IN 46360
- 1902 Frank Trosi, 4896 E. Amherst, Fresno, CA 93703 (444)
- A-281 Jocelyn Leclercq, 51 Route de Fromelles, 59249 Aubers, France
- A-282 Rudy R. Paolino, 27512 Soncillo, Mission Viejo, CA 92691
- L19003 Loy J. Ramsey, Rt. 1, Box 228C, Edgewood, TX 75117 (444)
- L1904 William P. Zachar, Sr., 2547 E. Hayes St., Davenport, IA 52803-2249 (359)
- 1905 Arthur Akers, 5017 12th St. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107 (1199)
- A-283 C. Royce Dixon, 2203 Clearlake Dr., Rock Hill, SC 29730
- L1906 Humphrey P. O'Leary, 11262 Davenport Rd., Rossmoor, CA 90720-3046

## DONATIONS/MEMORIALS

- L664 Francis D. Anderson (359)
- L1067 Elmer R. Barkman, Jr. (360)
- L1625 Dale E. Bartholomeu (360)
- L465 Robert C. Black (HDQ)
- 1641 Donald "Spec" Campen - Memorial to Dearly E. Adams, Richard H. Beadle, Joseph B. Bourgot, Alex G. Czarny and Sidney W. Newby
- S990 Frank C. DeCicco (427)
- A-173 Leone Best Deckard
- L1271 Charles R. Doback, Sr-Memorial to William T. Hembree (358)
- L1251 J. Dewey Dorsett (358)
- L671 J. W. Fredericks (360)
- L888 Dwight W. Gonser (359)
- A-242 Robert S. Haley
- 1145 Lee Hinds (427)
- L1694 Thomas D. Lardie (360)
- 1662 Mark L. McDermott (427)
- S069 William J. Neff (HDQ)
- L316 James W. O'Leary, Sr (427)
- A-39 Brian D. O'Neill - A contribution of 10% of the sales of his book, "Half A Wing, Three Engines and a Prayer" at the 1994 Savannah Reunion.
- Widow Betty DeCamp Regis - Memorial to William Hembree
- A-208 Allan Ritchie
- S645 Milo R. Schultz (360)
- L1202 Vincent J. Spring (444)
- Widow Mrs. Hazel L. Tupper - Memorial to Theron S. Tupper

## UPGRADE TO LIFE MEMBERS

- L502 A. C. Anderson (359)
- L1854 William F. Cervenka (Sqdn ?)
- L1728 Keith W. Clapp (427)
- L1075 Marvin R. Edwards (360)
- S1606 Milton Jansky (427)
- L690 Lloyd F. Kern (360)
- L1045 John J. O'Donnell (360)
- S872 William S. Rader (HDQ)
- L1202 Vincent J. Spring (444)

## ADDRESS CHANGES

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| Widow | Mrs. Jacqueline Baker, 701 Harbor House Dr., Apt 2, Madison, WI 53719-2326  |
| Widow | Mrs. Lila Balint, 7616 Harding St., Taylor, MI 48180-2536   |
| Widow | Mrs. Frances Byers, 8726 McCarty Ranch Dr., San Jose, CA 95135-2156   |
| A-177 | Mrs. Joyce L. Carringer, 8320 Willowpark Dr., Boise, ID 83714-1675  |
| 1792  | George E. Copeland, 3326 Rock Brook Dr., Apt 602, San Angelo, TX 76904-6967   |
| L1604 | William C. Davis, Rt 3, Box 3735, Navasota, TX 77868  |
| L402  | Charles P. Eberly, 338 N. High St., Selinsgrove, PA 17870   |
| 1827  | James E. Eubanks, 2614 Marleigh Farm Rd., Kennesaw, GA 30144-6520   |
| Widow | Mrs. Jean Fraser, 200 Concord Ave., Belmont, MA 02178   |
| A-198 | Tom Hillary, 3826 Farmville Dr., Apt 447, Dallas, TX 75244-4731   |
| Widow | Mrs. Pauline Hodge, 9202 Oglethorpe Dr., Houston, TX 77031-3406   |
| 849   | Grady Hodges, 2010 S. Union Ave., Apt 416, Tacoma, WA 98405-1068  |
| L1585 | Marlow W. Jones, 428 S. Concord St., Davenport, IA 52802  |
| 765   | Chester D. Judd, 310 First St. E., Apt 106, Milaca, MN 56353  |
| 641   | Robert E. Kilroy, 9513 Yucca Blossom Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89134-8984  |
| S625  | John E. King, 121 N. River Hills DR., Spartanburg, SC 29303-1991  |
| L031  | Burdelle J. Lackman, 3644 N. Weston Pl., Long Beach, CA 90807-3948  |
| A-185 | Renee Lawson, 2805 Darrow Rd., Walkertown, NC 27051   |
| Widow | Mrs. Genevieve Losiewicz, 1165 Golden Hills Rd., Colorado Springs, CO 80919   |
| L1290 | John Mason, 2409 E. Elm St., Urbana, IL 61801-4564  |
| Widow | Mrs. Opal McCoy, 40 Colony East, Houston, TX 77069  |
| Widow | Mrs. Claudia Merthan, 39850 Ferns Rd., Elizabeth, CO 80107-8905   |
| A-215 | Richard W. O'Leary, 6970 Stagecoach Trail Rd., Manhattan, MT 59741  |
| Widow | Mrs. Joan Patterson, RR2, Box 500, Acma, PA 15610-9500  |
| H-07  | William Phillips, PO Box 667, Ashland, OR 97520-0023  |
| Widow | Mrs. Geraldine Saiz, 3360 Little Kowaliga Rd., Eclectic, AL 36024   |
| L315  | Samuel R. Sapienza, 205 Williamsburg, Media, PA 19063-6032  |
| L917  | Anthony J. Savastano, 128 East St., West Sayville, NY 11796   |
| Widow | Mrs. Charlotte Sayers, PO Box 74, Royal Center, IN 46978-0074   |
| L447  | Sanford T. Smith, 1910 Canterbury Dr., Indialantic, FL 32903-4027   |
| Widow | Mrs. Ella F. Spears, 2410 Memorial Dr., Bryan, TX 77802   |
| 846   | Roy F. Statton, 3430 Cape Charles Rd W, Lincoln, NE 68516-5446  |
| A-219 | David E. Stone, 949 Hiawatha Ln., Saginaw, TX 76131-4834  |
| A-188 | Jeffery T. Streifling, 1035 Isaacs, Walla Walla, WA 99362   |
| L684  | Joe C. Thompson, PO Box 40, Lacey's Spring, AL 35754-0040   |
| L1087 | Everett E. Van Horn, 4340 Dunmore Ave., Apt 1, Tampa, FL 33611-5707   |
| A-196 | Ron R. Van Sickle, PO Box 87362, Gaithersburg, MD 20886-7362  |
| L1131 | Joe P. Vogel, 8626 NE Schuyler, Portland, OR 97220  |
| 1504  | Elvin F. Webbink, (Until 1 June '95) 4225 N. First Ave., Apt 1001, Tucson, AZ 85719. (After 1 June '95) 3671 W Bellwood Pl., Tucson, AZ 85741 |
| L1258 | Franklin F. York, 33 Barracuda Dr., Sebring, FL 33872-9546  |

Fifty six copies of the February issue of the newsletter were returned to the editor because of address changes. To save the Association money, please send address changes to Carlton Smith, Membership Chairman before moving or ASAP after the move. Do not send the changes to the editor. Thank you for your cooperation.

## BOOK REVIEWS

**"Wrong Place, Wrong Time"** The story of the 305th Bomb Group and the 2nd Schweinfurt Raid, October 14, 1943 by George Kuhl.

The author, a pilot in the 305th, tells of the errors, poor judgment, lack of leadership, combined with bad luck and constant German fighter opposition that caused the loss of 60 B-17s that day, 45 of them from the 1st Division. Of the 16 a/c dispatched by the 305th, 13 were lost and only three effectively bombed the target. The 303rd lost one a/c after leaving the target and one was abandoned in mid-air over England. It crashed in Risely, in the backyard of associate member John T. Gell.

Although the author did not fly on "Black Thursday," he has written a brutally honest and well researched history of one of the tragic 8th Air Force raids deep into Germany in October 1943.

He follows each crew from the beginning to whatever happened – shot down, returned to base, captured, POW, evader, etc. As you follow each crew you would almost think you were there. Even though our group was not featured, it is a "must" reading especially for the 42 men who flew on both Schweinfurt raids on 17 August 1943 and 14 October 1943.

It may be available from your local book store or if you would like an autographed copy, order direct from George C. Kuhl, 2329 Redwood Dr., Augusta, GA 30904, at \$23.80, which includes postage.

## IN MEMORIAM

|       |   |
|-------|---|
|       | Dan Gutter (444) - 1993                     |
| L747  | William T. Hembree (358) - 20 February 1995 |
| 695   | Ralph M. Holper (359) - 10 November 1994    |
| S863  | Warren G. Hubley (360) - 12 March 1995      |
| L162  | Wesley V. Huguenin (360) - 20 March 1995    |
| L1150 | Joseph Islava (427) - 12 March 1992         |
| L181  | Walter N. Moore (427) - 29 January 1995     |
| L908  | Samuel A. Rhyne, Jr. (360) - 17 June 1993   |
| L1085 | Theron S. Tupper (359) - 27 March 1994      |
| L878  | Robert J. Volz (427) - 22 May 1994          |
| L898  | Robert E. Kidd (427) - 17 April 1995        |
| 399   | Clyde V. Engholm (359) - 25 March 1995      |

I'm taking this time to let you know of my father's (Henry G. Schneiderman Sr.) "last flight." He passed away January 19, 1995.

He was so proud to be a part of your group and very proud of his service to our country. He was happy to give me his first Air Medal, and my stepmother his Distinguished Flying Cross. I wore mine next to my heart during the funeral. It will always mean a lot to me. It'll keep my father close at heart, and I'll be full of pride.

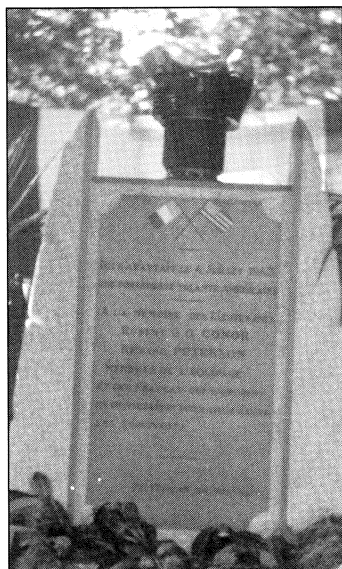
**Elizabeth F. Hill**  
**Survived by his wife:**  
**Louella Schneiderman**  
**5807 E. Leonora**  
**Mesa, AZ 85205**

I have lost my dear Clyde after a short illness. He had suffered with Alzheimers Disease for the last few years. He was always so proud of his time he was with the 303rd Bomb Group. I will miss him so.

**Mathilde Engholm**  
**PO Box 84**  
**Weimar, CA 95736-0084**

## Robert E. Kidd

Robert E. Kidd (427) ball turret gunner with Carl Duibose's crew passed away on April 17, 1995 after a short illness. Bob was an ardent supporter of the 303rd Bomb Group Association and spent many years as the PX Administrator. He was especially proud of his ability to stock innovative items in "his PX." He spent many hours assembling the items himself and spent hundreds of hours along with his wife June tending to the PX at the reunions. Failing eyesight forced him to give up the PX several years ago. He is survived by his wife June, son Scott and daughters Laura and Sandra. The Association lost a hard worker, ardent supporter and great guy. And I lost a very good friend.



**Memorial to Lts O'Connor and Peterson at Malicorne-sur-Sarthe.**

*(Continued from page 20)*

USAAF airmen who lost their lives as a result of WW II crashes in the vicinity of Much-Wenlock. Includes the names of seven members of the P.C. Stephan crew who were killed on 11 November 1944 returning from a combat mission.

**5. Summit of Arenig Fahr Mountain, near Snowdonia, Gwynedd, North Wales** - a cairn with slab containing the names of eight members of the James Pratt crew whose lives were lost on a Aug. 4, 1943 night cross country flight from Molesworth.

**6. West Hill of the Cheviot, near Alnwick, Northumberland** - a monument with memorial plaque honoring two members of the George A. Kyle crew whose lives were lost on a Dec. 16, 1944 crash returning from a recalled combat mission. Original memorial dedicated in June 1968 has been vandalized but a new memorial is scheduled to be dedicated in May 1995.

**7. Community Hall, College Valley at foot of the Cheviot Hills** - scroll signed by Gen. Jimmy Doolittle presented to the Shepherds of Cheviot in 1945.

**8. Globe Inn, Alresford (Arlesford) Essex** - a plaque to the memory of 1st Lt. Robert Cogswell who avoided crashing his 360th B-17 "Lady Luck" into the town of Alresford on Sept. 26, 1943 after his crew bailed out from the disabled aircraft. Unveiled in November of 1994.

In Belgium there is one memorial to the 303rd:

**1. Soire-Saint-Gery** - a monu-

ment honoring members of the J.F. Fowler crew whose lives were lost returning on a Jan. 29, 1944 mission to Frankfurt, Germany.

In France there are four memorials:

**1. St. Pere-On-Retz** - Stone monument honoring members of the J.R. Sterling crew lost on May 1, 1943 mission to St. Nazaire. Dedicated on Oct. 17, 1984.

**2. Malicorne-Sur-Sarthe** - a stone monument and memorial to Lt. Robert S. O'Connor (pilot) and Lt. Richard W. Peterson (bombardier) killed returning from a July 4, 1943 mission to Le Mans. O'Connor after bailing out his crew stayed with his aircraft to avoid crashing his stricken B-17 into the town of Malicorne.

**3. Pluvigner** - a monument and plaque to those killed in Jan. 23 1943 crash of the Joseph E. Haas crew at Pluvigner. Dedicated on Nov. 5, 1994. Plaque in memory of crew of "Beats Me" lost on Jan. 23, 1943. Unveiled and dedicated on Nov. 5, 1944; location where it was hung is unknown.

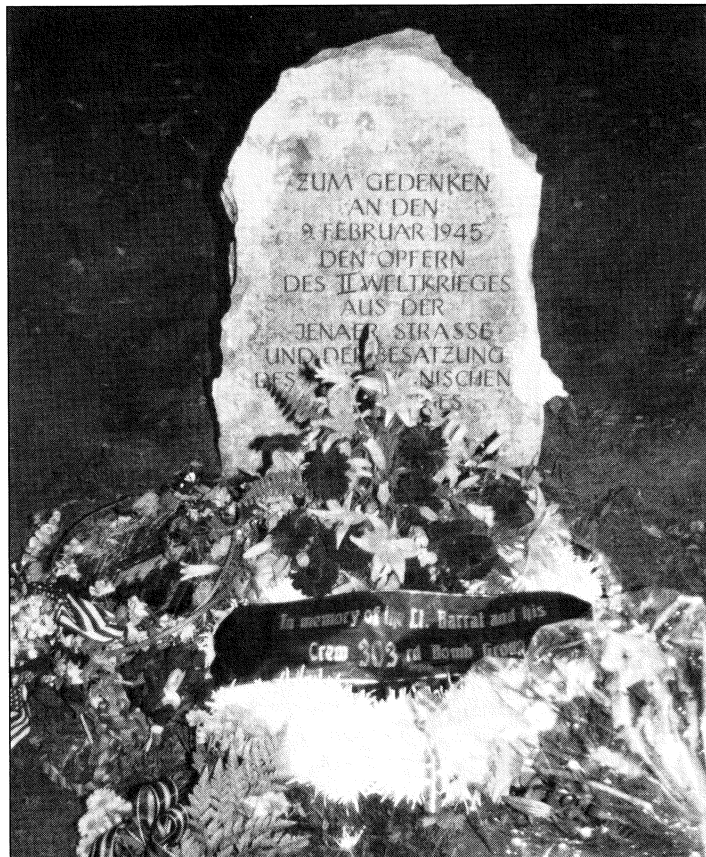
**4. Unknown location** - a monument to honor the Lt. Arnold Litman crew whose B-17 crashed near Reims returning from a Aug. 15, 1944 mission to Wiesbaden, Germany. Was scheduled to be dedicated in 1944.

In Germany there is a memorial to a 303rd crew:

**1. Eisenburg (East Germany)** - a memorial to Lt. Robert J. Barrat and his crew who were killed in the crash of a 303rd B-17 in the piney woods outside of Eisenburg. Lt. Barrat skillfully maneuvered his stricken bomb laden B-17 away from



**Memorial to Lt. Fowler's crew at Soire-St.-Gery.**



**Memorial to Lt. Barrat's crew at Eisenburg, Germany.**

the town of Eisenburg, dropped his bombs in an open field and crashed in the piney woods near the Pfarrmuhl Inn. The stone memorial erected by the German people is in the piney woods in back of the Pfarrmuhl Inn.

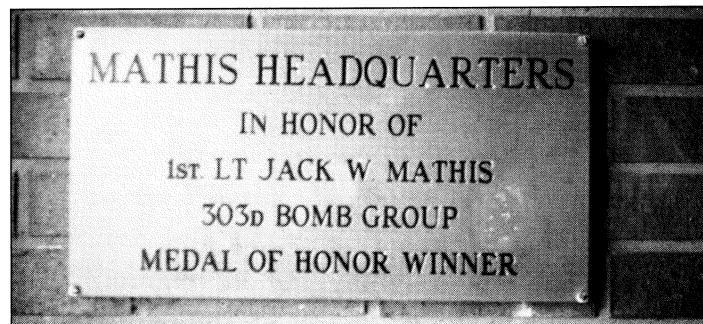
In Czechoslovakia there is an exhibit to a 303rd crew:

**1. Pilsen** - a museum exhibit featuring parts of the B-17 that crashed near Pilsen. Lt. Warren Mauger and crew crashed on 25 April '45 on the last 303rd mission of the war. A memorial plaque is planned for a

future dedication.

I'm sure that there will be additional memorials built as more and more 303rd crashed aircraft are uncovered and the heroic acts of the crews are discovered.

I still remember the very warm feeling I got on my last visit to England in 1993 when the people came up to us on the street to tell us how much they owe us for coming to their aid back during the war years. It is nice to know, even 50 years later, that we were appreciated for something we did a long, long time ago.



**The Jack Mathis plaque at one of the new buildings at RAF Molesworth.**

After 50 years

# Allies still honor 303rd Bomb Group

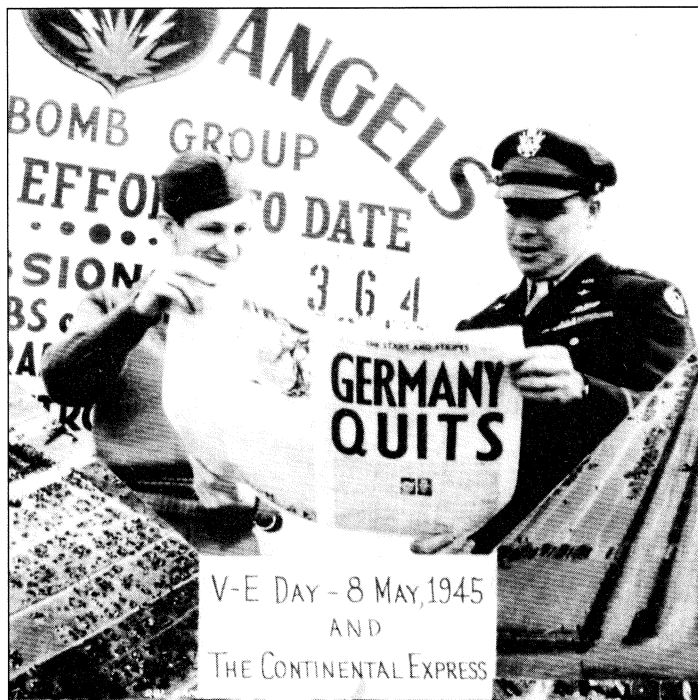
By Hal Susskind

Fifty years ago this month, the war in Europe ended. V-E Day, May 8, 1945 was officially born.

It was a day of unbridled joy in London and other parts of Great Britain. The celebrations partially erased memories of the nights of terror when German bombers droned overhead unopposed for years. It meant no more sleeping in bomb shelters night after night. It was also a day to remember the 70,000 loved ones who had perished as a result of the various types of bombs and missiles which had rained down on England for six years.

At American bomber bases throughout East Anglia, it was also a day to reminisce: no more "break-fast at three, briefing at four," no more early morning wakeups; no more flak; no more German fighters, guns blazing, to ward off and no more freezing temperatures to endure. At RAF Molesworth it was also a day to think about the 180 B-17s lost in combat and on training missions and of the comrades who failed to return. For our ground crews it meant no more "round-the-clock" work in all kinds of weather.

On the Continent, it was the day of liberation our Allies had been looking forward to for many years. It was a wonderful day for our many Air Force buddies who had recently been liberated from prisoner-of-war camps. Unfortunately many were not given physical examinations after their release, a fact which haunts many veterans to this day, especially when they apply to VA facilities for treatment of illnesses triggered off



by their long confinement in sub-standard barracks and their forced marches in frigid temperatures.

Lincoln's words, spoken at Gettysburg in 1863, "The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here" are seemingly apropos at the time. Unfortunately, Lincoln was wrong. The country has long remembered what he said there but has long forgotten what the fighting men did there. I dare say only a few history buffs can tell you all about the Civil War.

I'm afraid that the V-E and V-J celebrations this year will be the last hurrahs for many veterans of WW

II. As they slowly fade away their places will be taken over by veterans of later wars such as Vietnam and Desert Storm. But even they are slowly being relegated to the ranks of the "forgotten" as appropriations for Veterans benefits are being slashed considerably by a Congress whose benefits are multiplying each year. Now it seems to be more patriotic to fight the political battles in Washington, D.C. than it was to fight the battles for Berlin and Merseburg in '44. "Nothing is too good for our fighting men," was the slogan back in 1942-45 but in '95 it has been changed to "let's give them nothing."

With the passing of the years

there has been one bright spot. It is the reverence with which the fighting men of the '42-'45 era are still being held by our Allies overseas. At the last count, there are 15 locations with 22 known memorials honoring the 303rd Bomb Group that are presently located in various places in Europe.

In the United Kingdom there are seven locations featuring 14 memorials:

1. **All Saints Church, Brington, Cambridgeshire** - there is a 303rd memorial plaque inside the entrance which was dedicated on June 24, 1984. Another plaque inside the church honors all American Servicemen.

2. **RAF Molesworth, Cambridgeshire** - there is a "Might in Flight" insignia display at entrance to base. Other memorials are: plaque for Jack W. Mathis inside doorway of old Headquarters Building; plaque for Forrest L. Vosler, outside Mess hall Building; "Might in Flight" Headquarters Building sign for new Operation and Headquarters Building, dedicated Aug. 15, 1994; a display of 303rd BG photos, paintings and memorabilia in Heritage Hall of Headquarters Building and a Lewis E. Lyle plaque in conference room of new Headquarters Building.

3. **Imperial War Museum, Duxford, Cambridgeshire** - a 303rd BG insignia on the 8th AF wall as part of display featuring all Bombardment and Fighter Group Insignia.

4. **Guildhall, Borough of Arenig Fahr, Shropshire** - Memorial plaque honors 16 RAF and  
(Continued on page 19)

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