

# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

NOVEMBER 1996

## Maximum effort to locate all former 303rds in 1997

### President Clinton salutes 303rd B. G.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

August 7, 1996

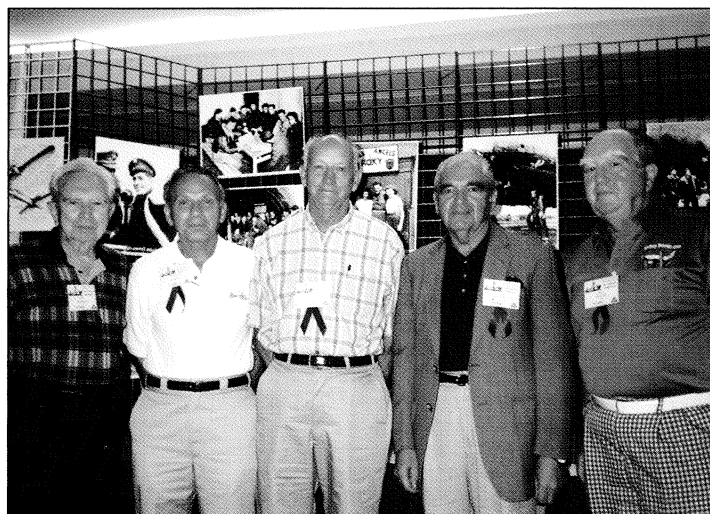
Greetings to the veterans of the 303rd Bomb Group as you gather for your reunion.

Your unit served the United States with honor and distinction during a crucial period in our history. We owe our liberties to the sacrifices of people who, like you, were willing to risk their lives for freedom. I know you join me in honoring your fallen comrades.

Each of you embodies the pride, professionalism, and accomplishment that make the United States Armed Forces one of the finest fighting forces the world has ever known. I salute you for your distinguished record of service, and I hope that you will enjoy your time together as you reflect on the bonds you share.

Best wishes for a memorable reunion.

*Bill Clinton*



**New Officers for 1996-97 - (l to r) Harold Susskind, V/P for Administration; Walter Ferrari, V/P for Reunions; Richard Johnson, Secretary; Eddie Deerfield, President and William Roche, Treasurer. (Photo by - Walt Mayer)**

"It was a great reunion," was the phrase most frequently repeated by many of the 545 Association members as they prepared to leave San Francisco for their homes scattered throughout the country. Although the turnout was surprisingly less than the Colorado Springs attendance - surprisingly, because California alone boasts of 270 members - nevertheless all that attended thoroughly enjoyed themselves, thanks to the hard work done by Eddie Deerfield and his wife, Mary Lee.

Eddie who was elected President for the 1996-97 term, is already working on the 1977 reunion to be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on Thursday, September 4th through Monday, September 8th. Since it is scheduled after Labor Day; travel arrangements should be a little easier to make.

Other officers selected for the 1996-97 period are: Harold Susskind, V/P for Administration; Walter Ferrari, V/P for Reunions; Richard Johnson, Secretary and William Roche, Treasurer.

Highlight of the Gala Banquet was the naming of Maj. Gen. Lew Lyle as the 303rd Bomb Group Association's "Man of the Century." An appropriate memorial, presently being prepared will be mounted on the Wall of Valor at The Mighty

Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Savannah, Georgia, where the 1998 Reunion will be held.

Accepting the gavel from outgoing President Ed Miller, Eddie Deerfield said being elected President of the 303rd Bomb Group Association was one of the proudest honors he had ever received. His number one priority is to use the best talents available to plan and implement a campaign to locate individuals who served at RAF Molesworth in England during WW II and who are not presently members of the 303rd BGA., to inform those persons about the Association and the reunion in Pittsburgh in 1997, and to encourage them to join as members and to attend the reunion.

Also honored at the banquet for their years of service to the Association were: Sue and Robin Beeby (UK Liaison), John Ford, Henry Johansen, Mark and June Matthews, Ed and Jill Miller, Mike Ripley, the Stafford Family, Vernon Stone, Vicki and Charlie Sykes, and Warren L. Hedrick.

One of the highlights - there were many - of the reunion was the Memorial Services held at the Golden Gate National Cemetery.

Scattered throughout this newsletter are photos and other highlights of a wonderful reunion. ➔

### 303rd Bomb Group's Man of the Century



**MAN OF THE CENTURY-Maj. Gen. Lew Lyle thanks members of the Association for naming him "Man of the Century" as wife Betty and (l to r) Bill McLeod, Carl DuBose and Harry Gobrecht look on. (Photo by Timm-Schaubert)**



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

### "HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

Editor: Hal Susskind

VOL. XVIII, NO. 4 2602 Deerfoot Trail, Austin, TX 78704 November 1996

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 status.

Membership years begin on the first day of January. In the future, the 303rd Bomb Group Newsletter will be sent only to paid up members. When you pay annual dues, the membership chairman will send you an updated membership card. Annual dues is \$10; \$15 for foreign addressees.

Copyright ©1996 by the 303rd BGA, the Hell's Angels Newsletter may not be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the 303rd BGA.

## OFFICERS 303RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

### President

Eddie Deerfield  
3552 Landmark Trail  
Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016  
(Wife's name: Mary Lee)  
(813) 787-0332

### Vice President/Administration

Harold A. "Hal" Susskind  
2602 Deerfoot Trail  
Austin, TX 78704-2716  
(Wife's name: Rae)  
(512) 441-6475

### Vice President/Reunions

Walter J. Ferrari  
207 Lake Circle Drive  
Hampstead, NC 28443  
(910) 270-0824

### Secretary

Richard R. Johnson  
5901 Joe Road  
Deale, MD 20751  
(Wife's name: Marjorie)  
(410) 867-0597

### Treasurer

William J. "Bill" Roche  
1428 Gleneagles Drive  
Venice, FL 34292  
(Wife's name: Doris)  
(941) 485-5073

## SQUADRON REPRESENTATIVES

### 358th Squadron Representative

Walter J. "Walt" Mayer  
W. 14605 Taylor Rd.  
Cheney, WA 99004-9245  
(Wife's name: Beverly)  
(509) 299-3250  
(W) 6649 E. Hwy. 80, SP331  
Yuma, AZ 85365-8441  
(520) 344-6961

### 359th Squadron Representative

William E. "Bill" Eisenhart  
1734 72nd Ave. NE  
St. Petersburg, FL 33702  
(Wife's name: Mary)  
(813) 526-5088

### 360th Squadron Representative

William C. "Bill" Heller  
P.O. Box 3006  
Half Moon Bay, CA 94019  
(Wife's name: Ruth)  
(415) 726-6686 Fax 726-4214

### Alternate(s)

William H. Simpkins  
348 S Cologne Ave., Box 217  
Cologne, NJ 08213  
(Wife's name: Evelyn)  
(609) 965-2871

Eugene E. "Gene" Girman  
8420 Parrish Place  
Highland, IN 46322  
(Wife's name: Corlis)  
(219) 838-5882

J. Ford Kelley  
7073 Fairway Bend Lane  
Sarasota, FL 34243-3264  
(Wife's name: Betty)  
(941) 351-2281

## SQUADRON REPRESENTATIVES

### 427th Squadron Representative

Vernon W. Stone, Jr.  
75 Camino Del Rio  
Port St. Lucie, FL 34952-2374  
(407) 878-7057

### Alternate(s)

Norman O. Peterson  
7658 Found Lake Road  
St. Germain, WI 54558  
(Wife's name: Jane)  
(715) 542-3983  
(W) 850 Snead Drive  
Fairfield Glade, TN 38555  
(615) 484-5528

## HEADQUARTERS & SUPPORTING UNITS & 444TH AIR DEPOT REPRESENTATIVES

Melvin T. McCoy  
8865 SW Maverick Terrace, #806  
Beaverton, OR 97008-7474  
(503) 524-3587

Maurice J. Paulk  
205 W. 12th  
Wood River, NE 68883  
(Wife's name: Opal)  
(308) 583-2583

## WIDOW MEMBER'S REPRESENTATIVE

Joanna M. Tressler  
Rd. #1, Box 373-K  
Northumberland, PA 17857  
(717) 473-3816

## ASSOCIATE MEMBERS REPRESENTATIVE

Charles R. Sykes  
16281 N. 31st Ave  
Phoenix, AZ 85023

## APPOINTMENTS: COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

### Newsletter Committee Chairman

Harold A. "Hal" Susskind  
2602 Deerfoot Trail  
Austin, TX 78704-2716  
(Wife's name: Rae)  
(512) 441-6475

207 Ridge One  
Hot Springs, AR 71901-9118  
(Wife's name: Betty)  
(501) 321-1956

### Membership & Roster Management Chairman

Carlton M. Smith  
12700 Red Maple Circle #54  
Sonora, CA 95370-5269  
(Wife's name: Phyllis)  
(209) 533-4033

### By-Laws Chairman

Jack P. Rencher  
2901 Hill Road  
Boise, ID 83703-4705  
(Wife's name: Louise)  
(208) 343-2265

### Audit Committee

Frank C. De Cicco, Jr.  
6 Kitty Hawk West  
Richmond, TX 77469  
(Wife's name: Jean)  
(713) 341-5004

### Px Administrator

Charles R. Sykes  
16281 N. 31st Ave.  
Phoenix, AZ 85023-3008  
(Wife's name: Vicki)  
(602) 993-8015

### Mission Reports Administrator

Mark Matthews  
5530 Center Hill Church Rd. SW  
Loganville, GA 30249  
(404) 952-4622  
**Past-Presidents Advisory  
Committee Chairman**  
Edgar C. "Ed" Miller  
422 S. Walnut Avenue  
Temple, OK 73568-0219  
(405) 342-5119

### Computer Data Base Committee

Edward W. Gardner, Jr.  
5764 Lakeview Drive  
Interlochen, MI 49643  
(Wife's name: Sue)  
(616) 276-7126

### Historian & 8th AF Liaison

Harry D. Gobrecht  
505 Via Deseo  
San Clemente, CA 92672-2462  
(Wife's name: Barbara)  
(714) 361-2662

### Group Advisor

Lewis E. "Lew" Lyle

### Pittsburgh 1997 Reunion Committee Chairman (Sept. 4-8 1997)

Eddie Deerfield  
3552 Landmark Trail  
Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016  
Local Committeemen - TBA

## Chaplains:

### Rom. Catholic:

Bishop Rene H. Gracida, 4126 Ocean Dr., Corpus Christi, TX 78411

Rev. Bernard Schumacher, Subiaco Abbey, Subiaco, AR 72865

### Protestant:

Rev. Charles G. Rice, Jr., RR #2, Box 18, Greenville, NY 12083

Rev. Everett A. Dasher, Rt. #4, Box 425, Saluda, SC 29138  
(Wife's name: Helen)

Rev. Warren L. Hedrick, 14 March Drive, New Durham, NH 03855  
(Wife's name: Alma)

Chaplains Emeritus: Merritt Slawson, Charles Spencer

# Hell's Angels Forum

*Your Chance to Sound Off!*

## Creation of the Hell's Angels Motorcyclers!

I was with the Eighth AAF for 17 months in Chorley, England, and then to the 303rd at Molesworth, first as a Ground Crew member, then Combat for 25 missions. I flew 25 within the first 61 made by the 303rd. I was not aware our pilots were drunk on their asses when on combat missions.

Col. Stevens was demanding of precision formation at all times. I don't think our pilots could have held up full of booze. Irl Baldwin and his crew were my personal friends. Irl and I go to some meetings at times. We have many memories to talk about.

**George R. Redhead**  
770 Juan Tabo NE  
Albuquerque, NM 87123

P.S. The above letter is being sent because of the article on page 11 of the February newsletter.

**Ed. Note:** The article on page 11 of the February newsletter was made up entirely of quotes which appeared in Yves Lavigne's book published in 1994 about the Hell's Angels Motorcycle gang. He stated that the infamous gang was started by a bunch of World War II flyers from the 303rd Bomb Group. Unfortunately two Dutch newspapers reviewed his book and thinking it to be truthful ran the story in their September and October issues. One of the publications is called "Bulletin Airwar, 1939-1945," a Dutch WW II Airway Study Group publication.

Since Lavigne said the motorcycle group was started in the San Bernardino area, I thought perhaps one of our 270 members who live in California could shed some light on the subject. There is a theory that some WW II flyers did start a motorcycle club as sort of a fraternal organization. Unfortunately an unsavory group later took over and the present day Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club was born. All opinions and ideas for tracking down the truth are welcome. How about it?

## How many crews are left?

Re: May issue, page 4, "How many crew members are left?" Roger C. Lee was not a member of the Blaine E. Thomas' crew on 17 April, 1945 and I apologize for using the words that left the impression that I was. I was the original crew

Bombardier but was sent to advance Bombardier school after the first few missions and I flew thereafter with various crews. The only reason for writing was to say that seven of the nine original Thomas' crew members did survive the war and are all active Hell's Angels members and that we still do keep in touch.

I'm quite honored to yet be considered a crew member by the five original men who survived the 17 April mission and I share their grief in the loss of Sgts Edward Eschinger and Melvin Carlson.

**Roger C. Lee**  
10342 Bon Oak Drive  
St. Louis, MO 63136-2202

P.S. In April '96, I toured the Dayton Ohio Air Force Museum and I recommend that the 1997 reunion be held in Dayton. Everyone should see the great display at Dayton

**Ed. Note:** From what we have learned so far, the 17 April 1945 mission to bomb the marshalling yards at Dresden, Germany was a rough and sorrowful mission. We hope to recreate the entire mission in a future issue of the newsletter.

## How bad was the weather?

With reference to the letter to the Forum in the most recent Hell's Angels newsletters, the drawing of the two pigeons walking, not flying, originated with a Robert A. Hand who lived for a time in one of the 360th Nissen huts at Molesworth. Hand is also the author of the book entitled "Last Raid" which was available last year at our reunion in Colorado Springs. Everyone who was



**Lead crew, 3 March 1945, Mission #329, Target: Tank Factory at Hanover, Germany. (Rear row l to r) Lt. L. Lifshus, L/C R.H. Cole, unk, Lt. J. C. Dodson. (Front row, l to r) Lt. H. A. Susskind, unk, Sgt. S. Cohen and unk. In photo but not positively identified were Lt. J.W. Bally, Lt. R. H. Herrmann and Lt. L. Christensen.**

at Molesworth should have one of these. Bob is a commercial artist living at 6197 97th Court South, Boynton Beach, FL 33437.

**Roger L. Kuykendall**  
P. O. Box 6220  
Lubbock, TX 79493

## Information on 15 August 1944 mission to Wiesbaden

I wrote you on June 12, 1996 asking for any crew members of Lt. Lester E. Reuss or Sgt. Fred O. Byrd to contact me and lo and behold I got a FAX from my friend in Germany supplying me with a copy of your August 1996 newsletter that contained my letter. My contact in Germany is a young man (40s) named Horst Weber who is re-

searching military aircraft that crashed in his area of Bitburg, Germany. I first learned of Horst thru Floyd Maybee (President of the 93rd BGA) and Paul Steichen (Editor of Ball of Fire newsletter of the 93rd BGA) in a letter he wrote on Dec. 31, 1994 asking for information on my B-24 aircraft crash, October 9, 1944. Horst sent the letter to Floyd Maybee who sent it to Paul Steichen saying it sounded like my aircraft. Paul Steichen then sent the letter to me to follow up on. Another strange coincidence was that Paul Steichen's co-pilot, Donald Peterson flew as our co-pilot the day we got shot down and was killed along with our pilot Walter Sanders when they crash landed the aircraft.

Since that first letter, Horst and I have continued our relationship and he has helped me to find out about the fate of my crew. Of our crew of ten, five were KIA (two when they crash landed the aircraft, one whose parachute did not open and two who were killed by German soldiers after they hit the ground). I have also learned about MACR and KU reports. I am presently working on my fourth air crash of Lt. Reuss and Sgt. Byrd (303rds) having both their MACR and KU microfiche film.

Horst tells me that he wrote to someone in your organization but was unable to get any information. In your editor's notes you mention that Lt. Reuss was captured and killed by the Germans (I assumed you meant German soldiers) after he landed. Horst tells me Lt. Reuss landed in a tree with his parachute and was killed by three German

17 NOV. ST. NAZAIRE	14 FEB. HAMM
18 NOV. ST. NAZAIRE	16 FEB. ST. NAZAIRE
22 NOV. LORIENT	26 FEB. WILHELMSHAVEN
23 NOV. ST. NAZAIRE	27 FEB. BREST
6 DEC. LILLE	4 MAR. ROTTERDAM
12 DEC. ROUEN	6 MAR. LORIENT
20 DEC. ROMILLY	8 MAR. RENNES
30 DEC. LORIENT	12 MAR. ROUEN
3 JAN. ST. NAZAIRE	13 MAR. AMIENS
15 JAN. ST. NAZAIRE	18 MAR. VEGESACK
25 JAN. ST. NAZAIRE	22 MAR. WILHELMSHAVEN
27 JAN. ST. NAZAIRE	28 MAR. ROUEN
4 FEB. ST. NAZAIRE	31 MAR. ROTTERDAM

**Scorecard for the Group's first 26 missions adorns a wall somewhere at Molesworth. Does anyone know the exact location? An interesting fact is that the group claimed 76 Luftwaffe aircraft downed during this period with the loss of 20 of their own.**

civilians while hanging there. When the three were taken to trial, they claimed self-defense and were released. Horst claims that witnesses to this crime do not know (or do not want to know) about this case. Also there is a Sgt. Patsy Rocco (RO) in Lt. Reuss' crew that was also KIA. Do you know how he was killed?

Also in your editor's notes, you say that Sgt. Byrd was in the aircraft when it exploded, so he obviously was not killed by German civilians. On this particular aircraft one other crew member was killed - 1st Lt. Roman P. Charnick (pilot), so it is possible that he was the one beaten and shot by four German civilians. Horst has information of a trial held after the war that was published in the "Frankfurter Neue Presse" dated June 7, 1945 and June 14, 1945. Their names were Peter Kuhn, Mathias Gierens, Mathias Krein and Peter Back. Mathias Krein was released from prison in 1950 and Peter Back was hung. The newspaper article said that General Gerow (Commander of the VII U.S. Corps) must confirm the judgment. Horst is looking for transcripts of this trial.

In closing, I will enclose the FAX that I received from Horst on July 29, 1996. If you can help me with any information, I would greatly appreciate it. I am keeping a file of this information and would forward anything you might have to Horst Weber.

**Paul O. Bergman**  
P.O. Box 237  
Eagle Creek, OR 97022  
(503) 637-6546

**Ed. Note:** Following is excerpts of the FAX from Horst Weber:

"I found some new things in the war-crime cases and want, that you know them. It seems that Sgt. Fred O. Byrd was killed during the crash of the aircraft. In the recent issue of the 303rd Bomb Group Association's newsletter, your request is published with a note of the editor. A copy of the page is included.

The editor says, that Sgt. Byrd was killed during the crash. That's absolutely possible, because nobody of the eyewitnesses could tell me, who was found at the the crashsite. It is now very possible, that the pilot of B-17 #42-97085, 1st Lt. Roman P. Charnick, AO-757608, 303rd Bomb Group, 358 BS, was killed by the mentioned civilians. This presumption is con-

firmed by the fact, that some of his crewmembers mention in the post-war questionnaires that he was presumably killed by civilians.

Paul I would like, that you check the fate of this officer, too. Maybe he was the man who was killed at Preist by the four men. The trial against the four men was probably a military trial, because the newspaper says, that General Gerow must confirm the judgment. General Gerow was at that time, Commander of the VII U.S. Corps, and was responsible for our area. Maybe the trial was held under the rules of military justice and the documents are filed in military archives."

**Horst Weber**  
Burgstrasse 0  
54634 Niederstedem  
Germany

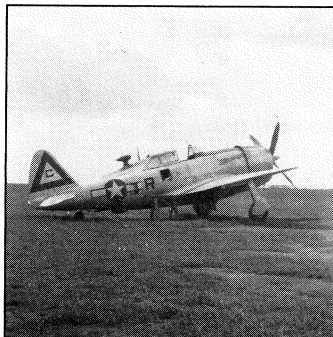
**Ed. Note:** With the help of people like Horst Weber and our own Historian Harry Gobrecht, we may be able to recreate the entire mission of August 15, 1944 when we lost nine aircraft to German fighters with most of them crashing in the the Bitburg area. Twelve crewmen evaded capture, 46 became POWs and 22 were killed; some under mysterious circumstances.

### 303rd's Thunderbolt

I've heard quite a few stories of the P-47 at Molesworth and to the effect that no one knew of the 303rd or Hell's Angels markings. Enclosed you will find that photo that I have kept for 50 years and as far as I know this is our markings. I don't know what the "R" on the side is but all I can say is that here is proof that we had one with our identification. Hope this confirms a few doubts.

**Robert B. Helliger**  
2834 S 71st St.  
Milwaukee, WI 53219-2951

Old crew chief from 360th. Had "Old Soljer," "Sack Time," "Iza Vailable," and one unnamed.



## PX AND ASSOCIATE NEWS



**The largest Associate's meeting yet-23 in attendance- met in San Francisco and elected Charlie Sykes as their representative.**

The Associate meeting in San Francisco was the largest yet, attended by 23 Members. They elected Charlie Sykes as their first representative to the Board of Directors.

For the second year in a row, the PX has been managed by your 303rd BG Associate Members and for the second year in a row it was a success; thanks to all the Associate and regular members who volunteered their time and help making sales, stocking and packing.

In spite of a good turn out and a lot of interest in the items offered, we still have a selection of tee shirts, polo shirts and caps, some commemorating our 13th reunion in San Francisco. These would make great Christmas gifts so don't miss the order form in the newsletter. In addition to the order form, you will see a short list of proposed new items. Please take the time to look this list over and indicate which, if any, of these proposed items would be of interest to you. Thanks again to everyone who shopped in the 303rd Bomb Group PX! See you all in Pittsburgh.

**Charlie & Vicki Sykes**

## AWARDS

During the 303rd Bomb Group's Gala Banquet, Distinguished Service Award Plaques were presented to the following for outstanding service to the Association: Sue and Robin Beeby, UK liaison; John Ford, Hospitality Room; Henry Johansen, Hq. Sq./444th Support Gp. Representative; Mark & June Matthews, Mission Records Retrieval Project; Ed & Jill Miller, 1995-96 President; Mike Ripley, Reunion Historical Displays; Stafford Family - Sheldon, Marian, Larry, Shelley, Roxanne and Diane - "Inspiration."; Vernon Stone, Jr., 427th Sq. Representative; Vicki & Charlie Sykes, PX Administrators and Warren L. Hedrick, Chaplain.

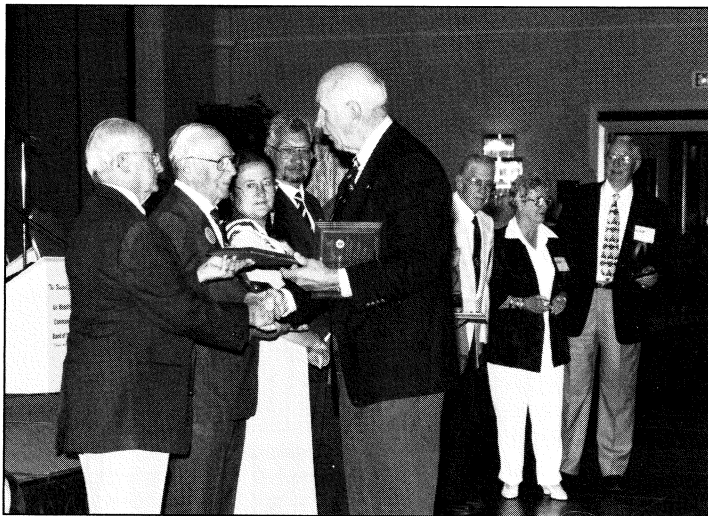


Photo by Katherine Timm Schaubert



## B-17 with German markings

I ask a favor. One of your members was shocked to see a photo of the B-17 he was shot down in, in my presentation at the reunion. It was in German markings, having been restored by the Luftwaffe. He had never seen a photo of it, so was most anxious to secure a print. I told him I would be most happy to oblige. But for some stupid reason, I have misplaced his name and address, so I have no way to get the photo to him. I'm terribly embarrassed about this because I think I know what it will mean to him! So would you be so kind as to publish a note in your newsletter asking him to identify himself and send me the missing information. Thanks!

**Don Sachs**  
**Boeing**

P.S. It was a privilege being your guest.

*Send your name and address to Eddie Deerfield who will forward it on to Don Sachs.*

## Even the pigeons are walking!

That was a great reunion in S.F. It was swell renewing acquaintances with all the fellows.

I talked to you about the cartoon with the two pigeons talking about the bad weather but the 303rd up practicing C-1 bombing. Enclosed is a copy of that cartoon sent to me by the fellow (Bob Hand) who drew the original.

Bob Hand wanted a golf shirt of the 13th reunion and I am sending it to him. He sent me a copy of his book so I am sending him the golf shirt. Hope you had a good trip home. I doubt that I will be able to make the Pittsburgh reunion, but God willing, the creek doesn't rise and the dam does not break, I hope to be in Savannah in 1998.

Best regards and keep up the good work with the newsletter. I don't know what we will do if you ever decide to retire.

**Walter Shayler**  
**810 Robinhood Lane**  
**Redlands, CA 91373-6666**

*The cartoon is number one on this page. I would also like to thank the members who came up to me at the reunion and let me know how much they appreciate my work as editor.*

## A-2 jackets worth their weight in gold!

I continue to enjoy my member-

ship in the 303rd Bomb Group Association and I appreciated the recognition I received regarding my uncle, Robert F. Woodley, and I have shared it with the family. On another subject of possible interest to you, as you know I am on assignment with my company in London and I noticed this past week an auction of military items conducted by Christie's Auction House. One of the items for sale was an Army Air Force A-2 leather jacket which was inscribed "Hell's Angels" on the back and the name stated to be on the lining of the jacket was Lt. C. J. Duros. There are several references to a Lt. C. J. Duros in the book on the history of the 303rd.

For you information, the jacket sold for 1,700 Pounds Sterling! There were several other similar A-2 jackets in the auction, but none of those sold for more than 550 Pounds Sterling.

**Ken Allen c/o Tenneco Inc.**  
**(London Pouch) P.O. Box**  
**2511, Houston, TX 77252**  
FYI; One Pound Sterling = \$1.50

## Thanks!

This year, as last, I had the distinct pleasure of attending the 303rd Bomb Group's reunion and socializing with the finest group of gentlemen and ladies I've had the pleasure to know. Those in my generation and the generations to come owe each and every one of you a big debt of gratitude.

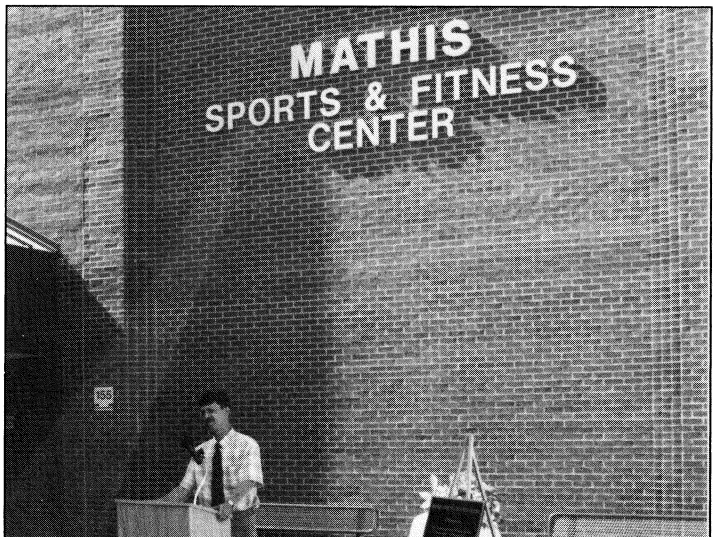
While at the reunion, I took a few roles of photographs to capture memories of what has become a very special time in my life. My father (Harold R. Timm), 360th Squadron and USAF Retired) suggested I send the enclosed photographs to you for possible inclusion in the Hell's Angels newsletter. He thought perhaps I may have captured an image or two to complement the photos taken by Coleman Sanders. At any rate please feel free to use or share the photographs as you see fit. I have many other photographs, and you are welcome to them at any time. I also want to take this opportunity to tell you how much I enjoy your newsletter. It is obvious you invest a tremendous amount of time and energy in each edition, and the results certainly reflect your efforts. I am a professional writer and photographer, and I appreciate the work that goes into a project such as the newsletter. I knows it's a huge undertaking, and if there is any way I

can help with the production, I would like to offer my assistance.

Again, Mr. Susskind, I commend you on your work, and thank you and your comrades in the 303rd for

protecting and preserving the freedoms I enjoy as an American.

**Katherine Timm Schaubert**  
**4986 N. Hathaway Lane**  
**Fort Collins, CO 80528**



The nephew of Jack Mathis helps dedicate the Sports and Fitness Center in his honor at Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo, Texas.(USAF)



Frank Cueto (l) explaining the theory of relativity to Prof. Albert Einstein. Of course drinking a little schnapps helps in understanding the problem. (Photo by Katherine Timm Schaubert)

# From the President

In my careers in the military in World War II and in Korea, in the Diplomatic Corps where I served at the American Embassies in seven countries, for my work in the fields of print and television journalism and in public relations, I have been blessed in the last 50 years with a number of honors. Yet, I prize the honor bestowed upon me in election to the office of president at the general membership meeting in San Francisco as one of the proudest I have ever received.

I have to make a comment in the best tradition of the politicians who are campaigning for office and regaling us with stories about their humble beginnings. I, too, had a humble beginning. I was an enlisted man (radio operator/gunner) at Molesworth!

I first learned about the 303rd Bomb Group Association about seven years ago, shortly after retiring from the Foreign Service. We were living near Washington, D.C. at the time. My son, Scott, was at a gas station when he noticed a 303rd Bomb Group sticker on the car next to him. He told the driver that his father had served in the 303rd. He made a note of the fellow's name and telephone number, and gave it to me that evening. I joined in a hurry.

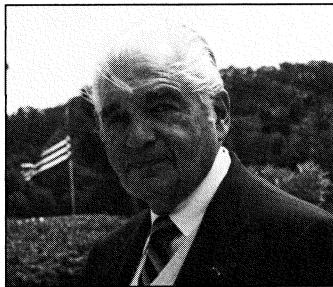
Scott passed away a few months ago after a long bout with cancer. I would like to dedicate my presidency to his memory.

Let me summarize what I consider to be the most important goals for my term of office:

First and foremost, to use the best talents in the Group to prepare and implement an organized campaign to locate and inform every person who ever served at Molesworth in the 303rd that we have an Association, we have reunions, come join us for an experience you'll never forget. One of the greatest pleasures I have had is in being reunited after a half-century with fellows I served with at Molesworth. We need more than bumper stickers to bring people in.

Secondly, to use the best talents in the Group to find or develop a computer data base and the means for a systematic input of all the details of the 303rd's illustrious history. Posterity demands this, so that long after we're gone, in this age of high tech and the internet and even greater communications advances to come, the world will have an electronic record of who we were and what we accomplished.

Finally, to support The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum near Savannah, Georgia. The 303rd's own Lew Lyle was the dedicated driving force behind the establishing of this living memorial. But, that alone is not the rationale. The Heritage Museum is, in fact, the foremost repository in the world for the artifacts and monuments which reflect most dramatically the proud record of the 303rd and its personnel in the service of our country. I believe it is incumbent upon all of us to do what we can to assist the Museum in achieving its goals, which, after all, in many respects, are our own goals.



I have a great team to work with in the coming year. I'm particularly pleased that Hal Susskind has joined the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors as Vice President for Administration. He will, of course, continue as editor of the Hell's Angels Newsletter, a position he has held for more than 10 years in making our publication the very best among all bomb group newsletters. Walt Ferrari, Vice President for Reunions, is getting a two-year jump in planning our 1998 gathering in Savannah. Dick Johnson, who stepped in as Secretary when we lost John Ladd, demonstrated at the San Francisco board meetings that he'll do a fine job. And Bill Roche, who continues as Treasurer, is a treasure in himself in the way he is managing 303rd finances.

To all the Committee Chairmen and their teams, you are the propellers and the petrol that keep the Association flying. We owe each of you a vote of thanks for succeeding in assignments that are too often thankless and go unnoticed by the membership. Ed Miller—a round of applause for your dedicated service as the outgoing president and succession to the chair of the Past Presidents Committee.

Members of the 303rd, we make this solemn pledge—we will never let you down.

You'll read elsewhere in this edition about the happenings at our re-

union in San Francisco. Special credit for extraordinary service above and beyond the norm in working to make the reunion a resounding success must go to John Ford for his 24-hour-a-day management of the English Pub hospitality centre, Lee Faulkner for arranging a great raffle, Charlie and Vicki Sykes for making the PX display bigger and better than ever, Jim Taylor for his untiring contacts in paving the way in the San Francisco area, Ed Gardner for his low key but highly effective ongoing computer operations, Mike Ripley for mounting a memorable exhibit taking us back to our time at Molesworth, Ken Tashian for working his way through the City and County of San Francisco bureaucracy to secure a proclamation honoring the 303rd, Jill Miller for eliminating the banquet hall rush by coming up with an effective seating plan, and my talented wife, Mary Lee, for organizing and managing a superb team at the registration and information counter.

Now, just a few words about the 1997 reunion. Don't forget Pittsburgh, PA, from Thursday, September 4th through Monday, September 8th. That's after the Labor Day weekend, so air fares should be reasonable and the roads more free for driving. It's the Westin William Penn Hotel, a fabulous place in downtown Pittsburgh. This is not the steel or coal city of old. It's a modern metropolis with many sights and activities ideally suited to our interests.

We're getting older, and our memories aren't as good as they once were. I'm told this happened during our reunion at the San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel. They were in their room about 10 o'clock at night when the wife of one of our members said to her husband, "Dear, I would really like a hot fudge sundae. I don't want room service. Would you run down to the restaurant and get me one with nuts and whipped cream? You'd better write it down so you don't forget." The husband was a former 303rd Navigator who knew his way around, so he said, "Don't worry, darling, I can remember exactly what you want." A half hour later, he returned and brought her a tuna fish sandwich. The wife looked at the sandwich, was very upset, and said, "I told you to write it down. You forgot to tell them I wanted extra mayonnaise."

It's Pittsburgh in 1997—don't you forget—be there!

**Eddie Deerfield**

## Memorial Day at Madingley, 19 May 1996



A much quieter affair this year, after the hustle and bustle of 1994, with visits from President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister John Major, and 1995's event with Vice President Al Gore. The special guests this year were groups of US veterans over in England for reunions.

On a blustery but fine and sunny day, the official party was greeted by Scottish Pipers. The party included the Lord Lieutenant of Cambridgeshire, the US Ambassador to the court of St. James, and the Commander of the 3rd Air Force, from RAF Lakenheath.

There followed stirring speeches from all three honored guests, during which they each emphasized the special relationship between the two countries, the continuing effort to maintain peace in the world, and the noble sacrifice made by the servicemen and women at rest at Madingley. The 98 wreaths were then laid, and of course, Molesworth and the 303rd BGA were well represented, firstly by the lovely wreath supplied by the memorial committee but also by the tribute laid by the JAC. As there were no 303rd veterans present, Robin Beeby laid the wreath on your behalf.

Following the raising of the flags of the USA and Britain, there was a tribute by four F-15 fighter planes from RAF Lakenheath of a fly-by in the missing man formation. The MC then asked for all veterans of WW II to stand and make themselves known to the assembly. They were warmly applauded.

The final act of the service of remembrance was the Benediction, but some of us were in the know, and watched as the many veterans picked up a sound they all knew and remembered. Seconds later, our B-17, "Sally B" made a magnificent low pass over the crowd, sideways! The wind was very strong, gusting between 30 and 40 knots, so she did well just to get there! There wasn't a dry eye in the place.

**Robin Beeby**

# Two Villages That Care

*Bala, Gwynedd, North Wales and Tinley Park, IL.*

*by Harry D. Gobrecht*



Inscription on stone monument at crash site on Arenig Fahr mountain near Bala, North Wales. Restored in June 1995

On August 4, 1943, 427th BS Pilot James N. Pratt was assigned to make a night cross country flight from RAF Molesworth. The eight man makeup crew consisted of five members of the regular Pratt crew plus three others. For reasons known only to the crew, the flight ended when their B-17 slammed into rocks just below the 2,801 foot summit of the Arenig Fahr mountain eight miles from Bala, Wales, killing the eight crewmen. (See "Might in Flight" pages 224-5).

Captains Quentin W. Hargrove, 427th BS Engineering Officer and Louis Lane, Medical officer were dispatched from Molesworth to investigate the crash site and identify the bodies.

(Quentin and Virginia Hargrove and Ford and Betty Kelley made a memorable visit to Bala in August 1994. See HANL 5/94 & 11/94).

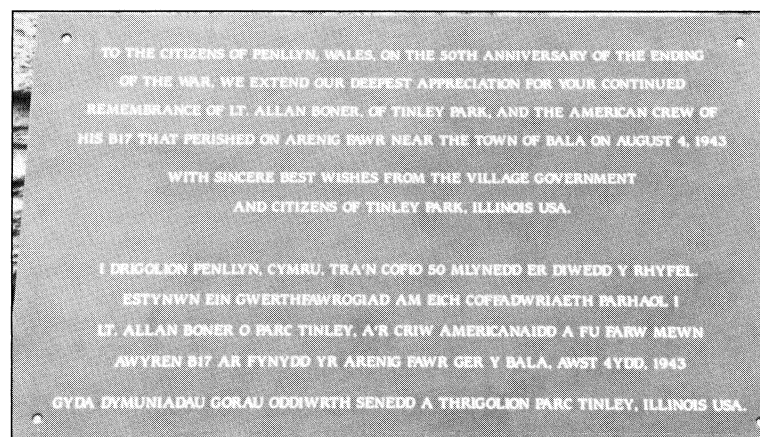
Shortly after WW II, citizens of Bala, North Wales erected a crash site monument in memory of the crew. Every year since then, a group of Bala citizens climb the mountain to place a floral wreath at the monument. An annual memorial Service is also held at Bala's Llandil Church on or near August 4th at which time the names of the eight 303rd Bomb Group crewmen are read. The Bala Air Crew Association, Royal British Legion and Sea Cadets participate in the service.

In 1994, Don Konley of Tinley Park, Illinois, while visiting relatives in Bala, was told about the monument and the fact that Lt. Allan Boner of Tinley Park was one of the crewmen named on the monument plaque. Don Konley then took it upon himself to spearhead a crusade to repair the deteriorating monument. The Tinley Park government approved funds for the repair. Tinley Park's Mayor Jack Dunn visited Bala in June 1995 where a Tinley Park "Resolution of Appreciation and Friendship to the People of Bala, Wales" was presented to the Mayor of Bala, Cllr. Gwyndaf Hughes and members of the Town Council and members of the Bala and Penllyn Royal British Legion. following a ceremonial parade led by the Bala Sea Cadets in their colorful uniforms.

Don Konley again visited Bala on May 23, 1996 where he presented a plaque to the Village of Bala in behalf of the Village of Tinley Park, It was placed on the outside entrance wall of the Bala Village Hall.

It is heart warming to know that the two villages have cemented a friendship and continue to care for and remember the eight 303rd Bomb Group crewmen who died in the tragic crash of their Flying Fortress more than 50 years ago.

→ → → → → → → → → → →



Plaque from Village of Tinley Park, IL to Village of Bala, Gwynedd, North Wales honoring Lt. Alan Boner of Tinley Park and his 303rd BG B-17 crew. Dedicated May 23, 1996



Plaque on outside entrance wall of the Bala Village Hall.



The meeting was called to order at 09:00 by President Edgar Miller with 23 members and committee heads and guests present.

Ed Miller reported that he was pleased with the 1700 Service Awards that were prepared and dispatched and that there were very few comments. The Board expressed its pleasure also.

In February, 1996, there were 1700 personal questionnaires sent with only 519 replies so far. Squadron representatives were asked to urge their members to respond.

Carlton Smith asked that the minutes of the previous meeting be amended to read that the \$1,000 budget was made to the membership Chairman, instead of naming the individual.

The treasurer, Bill Roche, handed out his report and mentioned that there was an increase of \$12,000 in the budget, and \$13,000 in expense items. The budget was accepted as presented.

The audit documents were distributed and there was a small discussion before the audit was accepted by the board.

At this point there was an extended discussion of the computer data base program that is being done by the 379th Bomb Group. A standing committee was recommended to study the program to see if it fits the needs of the 303rd Bomb Group. Comments by Harry Gobrecht and Ed Deerfield, that the program needed more study and recommended that it be placed on hold. Ed Miller said that the program should be first and foremost for the benefit of the 303rd if we fund such a program. A comment was made that the "system won't fly," and Bill Roche questioned the value of the system. Ed Deerfield didn't want the project to die, and there was considerable discussion. Walt Mayer said that the idea was "based on money from day one." Lew Lyle said that the records are a memorial to all of us and that the records would be used as a research tool. He said that a lack of information on other groups was a stumbling block for the database program. Ed Deerfield mentioned the massive amount of material from the 303rd.

The accuracy of some mission reports was brought up, and Gobrecht responded that we could only print what was reported and written during our tenure at Molesworth. "You have to report what people tell you." (Lew Lyle). Bill Heller added that the de-briefing sheets was our

prime source of information.

Ed Deerfield congratulated Vern Stone and his wife Jeanne on the occasion of their fiftieth anniversary that is occurring during this reunion. Ed also reported that the Colorado Springs reunion made a profit of \$8,846.98. As of today there are 524 registered for this reunion.

He also said that the 1997 reunion to be held at the Westin Penn Hotel on Sept. 4-8, has been secured with a block of 300 rooms. We must guarantee an occupancy of at least 60 percent in order to avoid a penalty. The price per room will be \$75.00. The Westin Penn is an old hotel that has been refurbished and loaded with antiques. It is also the site where Lawrence Welk developed his bubble machine. Ed also said that the legwork for the 1998 reunion (to be held in Savannah, near The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum) must begin immediately.

There was considerable discussion of the practice of taking up collections at the religious services during the reunion. While some members found it objectionable, other said that it was a non-issue. Finally, Vern Stone moved to provide the Chaplains with two nights lodging with no collections being made. Bill Heller seconded the motion and it was passed.

The grand opening of the Mighty 8th AF Museum in Savannah was described by Bill Heller and others. Bill opted for that location for our 1998 reunion in a period from September to November for the dates. Others agreed and Bill Eisenhart moved that Savannah be the site for the 1998 reunion. Ed Deerfield seconded and the motion carried.

Squadron reports were accepted and approved. During Bill Heller's report, he told of his recovery from a stroke and thanked all for their support. Bill Heller then discussed the publishing support of a book being prepared by a private individual. It was decided that such a project would not be financially viable.

Mel McCoy reported on the 444th support sq. and mentioned difficulty in getting the Military Occupation Specialty numbers (MOS) of members. After Joanna Tressler reported on the Widow's Committee, Hal Susskind reported on the need for a back for the newsletter editor so that the publishing of each issue would continue on schedule. Ed Deerfield agreed to take the responsibility. Hal was lauded for the quality of the newsletter which is better than any seen.

Carlton Smith reported that the membership is growing at a slightly greater rate than the loss caused by deaths and drop-outs.

Charlie Sykes reported on the need for volunteers. He sent out 80 letters and had only five responses. There was about \$11,000 in sales this year and the inventory is worth \$39,012.

Lew Lyle said that nearly 300 members have made video tapes so far. He reported on the flood problems at the museum in Savannah which caused delays in filling out the Memorial Garden. The brick floor is laid but heavy equipment can't get in for now. Walter Cronkite visited the museum.

Harry Gobrecht reported that there are 100 names on the museum's Wall of Honor.

In the future, the 303rd will furnish a wreath for Robin Beeby (303rd contact in England) to lay at the Wall of Honor at the military Cemetery at Madingley, Near Cambridge, England. This will eliminate the need for a memorial committee. The motion carried.

There was a long discussion about the mission reports and the copy machine located at Mrs D. Matthews' home. Also whether it would be a good idea to give the copy machine to the museum to do as they see fit, since the machine has very little value, given its age. Mrs Matthews would like to move the reports and the machine out of her house in the near future. The safety of the mission reports was the prime focus. There is only a small request for mission reports at five cents per page. Bill Roche is reluctant to release the files to the museum until proper arrangements are made. President Ed Miller appointed Bill Roche to do the negotiations with the museum library.

There are still 400 Distinguished Service Award Certificates to distribute.

Since the death of John Ladd, the minutes of the last general membership meeting have not yet been located.

On old business, there is a need to change the by-laws in Article 3-C regarding Associate Members, giving them the right to have a representative on the Board of Directors with voting privileges, which is not now allowed. Motion passed.

There was further discussions about donations to the Savannah museum but it was found that they are OK for this year. Discussions will be resumed at the Pittsburgh reunion.

Mel Schulstad's letter concerning a day to honor all ground crews at reunions was discussed. It was decided that squadron reps would feed ideas to Ed Deerfield on this subject for next year.

On scholarship funds, the Heritage center is working on it and Carlton Smith moved that we do not consider it. This was seconded and the motion passed.

Robin Beeby reported that if we need, we could bulk mail those newsletters to him that we mail to European members. We might save money by his re-mailing them from the UK. Hal Susskind said that we are doing OK for now.

Nominating committee chair, Malcolm Magid presented the slate of officers to be presented at the general meeting. These are: Eddie Deerfield, President; Harold Susskind, V/P for Administration; Walter Ferrari, V/P for Reunions; Richard Johnson, Secretary and William Roche, Treasurer. Bill Heller moved that the slate be accepted. It was passed by a unanimous vote.

Members present at the meeting were: Walter J. Ferrari, Walter Mayer, Bill Roche, Charlie Sykes, Carlton Smith, Lew Lyle, Harry Gobrecht, Eddie Deerfield, Vernon Stone, William Eisenhart, Melvin McCoy, Joanna Tressler, Harold Susskind, Richard R. Johnson, William Heller, Malcolm Magid, Carl DuBose, Jr., Frank DeCicco, Bud Klint, Robin Beebe, Edward Giering, Fred Barnes and Ed Miller.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:43 hours.

Respectfully submitted by Secretary,

**Richard R. Johnson**

## WHY PITTSBURGH?

Pittsburgh is within 500 miles of more than half the U. S. population and is less than 90 minutes flying time from cities in 20 states.

Sixty-eight members of our Association live in Pennsylvania, and nine live in Pittsburgh, which has one of the largest inland ports.

It is only 221 miles from Washington, D.C. in case you want to visit the Nation's Capital City, with its many monuments including the Vietnam Memorial.

The University of Pittsburgh is housed in a 42 story building stretching 535 feet into the air. That's higher education for you.



# *The V-1 launch ramps at Crepieul*

by William Crawford

It's 3 August 1944 and a week since we flew our last combat mission. On the 25th of July we went to Saint-Lo, France, where the heavies were called on to aid the U.S. First Army in blasting a hole in the German defenses so our ground forces could finally get moving out of the Normandy beachhead. But there were so many bombers trying to occupy the same piece of sky at the same time that we couldn't bomb; all of our High Group B-17s returned to base with their bomb loads and landed, and without a single mishap. That's saying something for the pilots of the 303rd

After that I thought we were lucky when we were issued a 48 hour pass. I boarded a British train and was on my way for some real "relaxing" in the big city of London. I had been there previously and had experienced a few "doodle-bugs," V-1 buzz bombs, which came over but they all exploded somewhere in the distance with no particular problem for me. Even the reserved English went about their duties as usual.

But after I got there this time, when the air raid alert sounded I found myself in the street by myself. The normally undemonstrative Britons had disappeared to seek shelter! There had been a big change since my last visit. Now it seemed there was let-ups to the alerts.

The noises of these infernal machines, which sounded like powerful one-cylinder motorcycle engines, seemed to be heading straight for us. Then the silence until a terrific explosion shattered the air a few seconds later. And it didn't let up all night.

The next morning I grabbed the first train out of there for the relative safety and quiet of our base. London would be off limits for this chicken-livered mortal for the duration of this war!

Now that I was safely back at

Molesworth it was great to stay in my own sack with no buzz bombs to worry about. We think we've got another day made when the word comes down, "Briefing at 1300 hours."

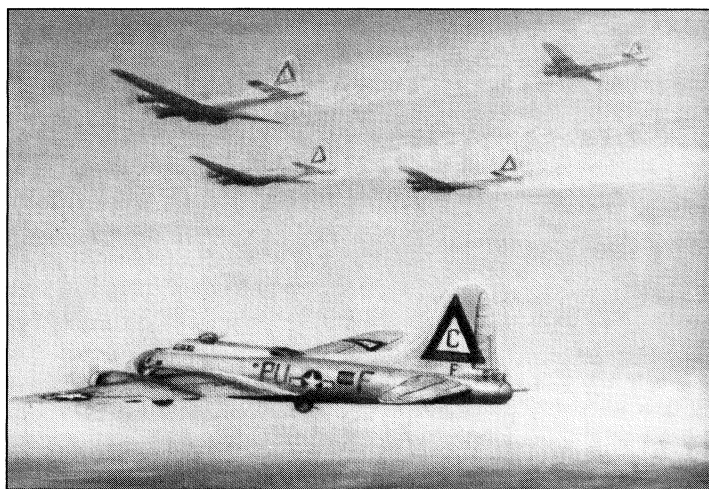
At the briefing the map at the rear of the stage is uncovered and we see that this one will be just across the Channel and back; it's going to be an "easy one."

The briefing then begins: "We're getting off late but today we've got a short one. Over 500 Eighth Air Force heavies will attack 20 V1 weapon sites in France. The 303rd Bomb Group will hit separate launching sites: Group "E", Fresnoy; Group "F", (Us), Crepieul; Group "G", Fressin. These targets are in the same area so Groups will maintain vertical clearance.

"A little background to emphasize the importance of these targets. By the end of June about 100 V-1 buzz bombs were arriving over Southern England each day from France. The British were accounting for a good part of them. Fighters were getting about 30 per day; balloons stopped about 10; some were flying past London, but about 50 of these flying bombs were getting through to hit London every 24 hours.

"Production in London factories is suffering because of the air raid alerts around the clock which send workers to shelters. Specially fast Spitfires and Tempests are able to get close enough to tip the V-1's wing and upset the gyro, but the V-1 wing is made of sheet steel and The RAF fighter's wing tips are thin aluminum, so the fighter's wing tips are bent out of shape each time. The sheet metal also deflects machine gun bullets. It takes cannon fire from the fighter to bring the V-1 down.

"As of now something on the order of 1,800 V-1s have hit London and it seems there's to be no let-up. Allied ground forces are a long way



from Paris and the Pas-de-Calais launch sites are still securely in German hands, so it's going to be up to air power to neutralize these sites until our Allied ground forces can take them.

"You can see that there's a lot more than just a short mission involved in this one. Let's do a good job of it for the people in London. Maybe we can even knock these launch sites out before our ground forces are able to take them!"

We arrive at the hardstand where M/Sgt. Alex Bourque observes us dismounting from the truck. His thoughts today might well be, "By God, they're beginning to look like a combat crew! They've brought B-124 back from Leipzig, Peenemunde and Munich. You can't ask for any more from a crew."

And, S/Sgt. Ralph Walder takes time out to relate a good story while we're in the Crew Chief's tent. Ralph has very much a boyish countenance which makes the story even more humorous. —"Sometime in August 1943 I was waving "Thumper Again" to its proper spot on the hardstand after a mission when I noticed that the pitot tube was smoking. I lost my cool for a moment and shouted to the pilot, "Turn off the G.D. pitot heater. The

pilot appeared flustered but he did lean down and toggle it off. At that time nothing further was said.

"It so happened that the pilot was a great guy and very capable. He was Lt. Joe Bradbury and prior to getting his own crew, was co-pilot for George Stallings. As co-pilot he had a few rough and tough missions, worst being 25 June 1943 to Hamburg. The entire crew bailed out except Dick Jones who was killed in action. Stallings had them bail out over the English coast and he headed out over the channel and bailed out over the water. He then swam the mile to shore. The crew received one British D.F.C., three Silver Stars, one D.F.C. and seven Purple Hearts. And here I am a peach-fuzzed Staff Sergeant faulting the pilot.

When Lt. Bradbury finished his tour on 3 September 1943, he threw a little party for our ground crew at the local pub. We all sat around telling stories, reminiscing, lying, etc. I know that Bradbury did not recognize me as the culprit who had chewed him out and he told the following story: "Let me tell you about a lesson I learned the hard way. While getting set to park the bird I looked out the side window and saw and heard this old iron-ass

Sergeant screaming. I thought I saw smoke coming out of his ears, nostrils and mouth. I assure you I never forgot to turn off the pitot heater from that day on.'—I was twenty-two at the time and looked like an altar boy. We all had quite a laugh when I told Bradbury I was that old iron-ass Sergeant."

With that we left the tent and climbed into our iron steed for the day.

The Group B-17 get fired up and as we rev-up and begin to move out from the hardstand M/Sgt. Bourque and his men give us the encouraging thumbs-up for good luck. This is our sixth trip with their B-124 and we're becoming awfully attached to Sergeant Bourque and his men. We are in the air at 1520 hours climbing to assembly altitude at 18,000 feet. where we identify the flares being fired by our formation B-17. This makes the 11th mission for the crew and we can't help but feel that we are almost veterans now. Locating the Group on assembly doesn't cause near the anxiousness that it once did.

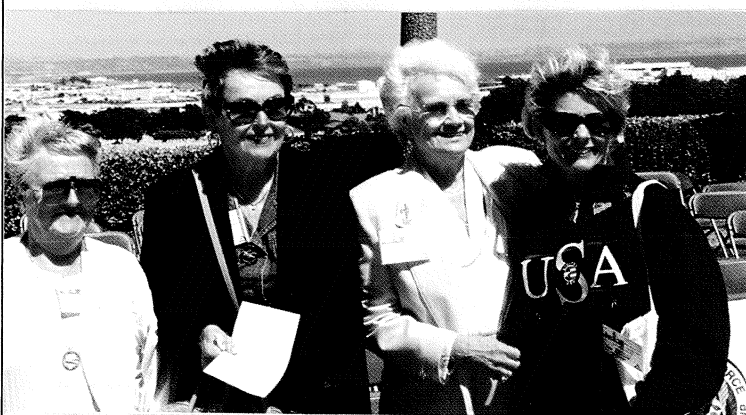
At 16:48 hours, the Groups depart on course and we begin to climb. At 17:34 we've reached our bombing altitude of 25,000 feet. and we leave England for the short 16 minutes across the Strait of Dover before we reach the Initial Point at the French Coast.

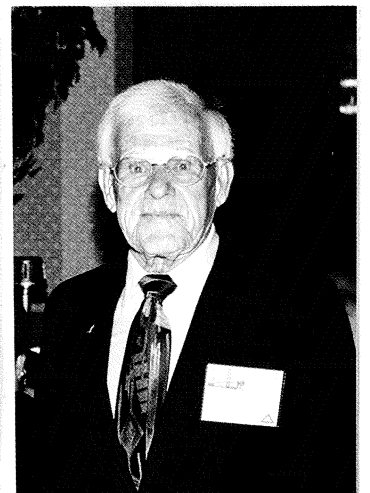
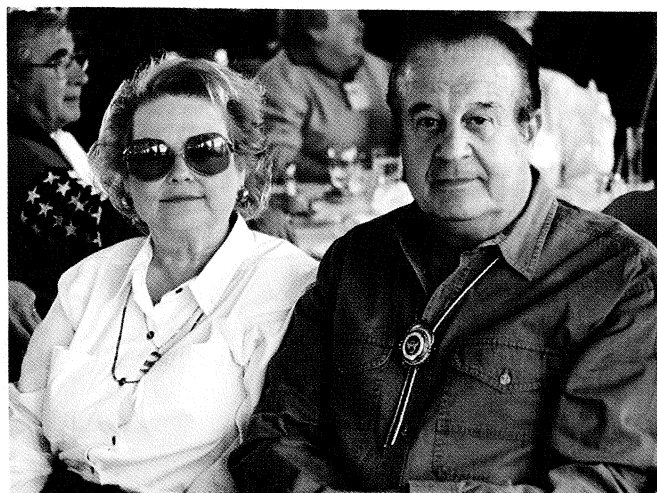
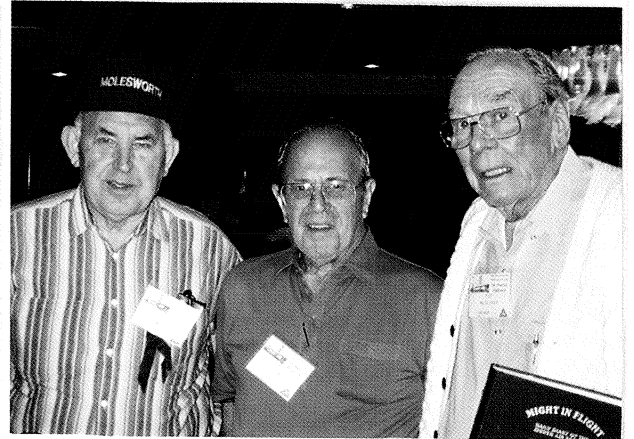
A left turn and we're on the bomb run, "Bomb Bay doors open!" The flak begins but it seems to be tracking the chaff that the Group is dispensing. Seven minutes of this and B-124 gives a leap as our bombs go cascading downwards. A sharp left turn gets us out of here and we head for the coast.

We begin our let-down close to Calais and our return route is over the North Sea to Orford Ness which we cross at 15,000 feet. The Group continues our let-down and we arrive over Molesmowth at 18:54 which seems late for our return but at this time of year we still have more than an hour of daylight left. By the time we get on the ground and have cut our switches it's 19:05 hours. We log a 4:15 hour flight; the shortest one yet.

No enemy fighters were seen and our "little friends" gave us good area support today. Each B-17 bombed with twenty 250 pound bombs but our degree of success has been listed as "poor." Not a rough mission but our Group surely didn't shorten the war with our effort today. We didn't help the people in London or our ground troops at all!

## Reunion Memories







# Fallen 303rd Comrades Honored



A Reading by Bill Heller

Golden Gate National Cemetery,  
Sunday, 25 August 1996.

INTRODUCTIONS By Eddie Deerfield

POSTING OF THE COLORS By Honor Guard

WELCOMING REMARKS By Gloria Gamez, Director

INVOCATION By Rex E. Carpenter, Lt. Col., Chaplain

"Almighty God, we pause on this honored ground to give thanks to You for your sovereignty over the course of history and the outcomes of wars of liberation. Thank You for the leadership You gave to our Allies in the successful operation of the Combined Bomber Offensive and of Operation Overlord. Thank You for the dedication and devotion of brave men and women, both living and deceased, who flew and supported the awesome fire power of the 303rd Bomb Group! "No greater love has any man than to lay down his life for his friends!" Oh God, these hallowed dead and these honored living are Great Friends to our Nation. We are a free and strong America, thanks to friends like these!...As strong as we are, help us to become a good and more righteous nation. Help America now, Oh God, to be mighty in Goodness - we ask in your most Holy Name. Amen."

## A READING By William Heller

The skies are silent today.

Nothing but soft cumulous clouds playfully pushing toward the Sun, while at loftier levels - a few scattered cirrus stand...But my memory drifts back more than half a century. I see drizzle-swept airfields...and bombers racing down ghostly runways!

As I sit on my patio - pondering the past - no flak and no fighters shatter this azure blue. Then...once again - we are some four miles high! Turrets turning! Machine guns blazing!...And...The Luftwaffe stalks...and the B-17 is its prey!

Contrails now are friendly. Made by passenger-filled jet airliners peacefully roaring from city to city. Long - long ago...contrails marked our places in hostile air - and enemy cannon shells spit their agony at us! Bursts of orange flame from the forests below...terrible flak...punishing our formations. A Fortress in flames - falling! A crew of ten...only four parachutes sighted!

The great air battles are all dim memory now, as Schweinfurt, Berlin and the Ruhr Valley...are tamed. It was long ago...and far away...and yet - so near...only yesterday!

Yes...the skies are silent today. But - they remain the silver screen on which our vivid memories are projected. Comrades have gone, never to be forgotten... Thank you!

## A READING By Carl DuBose

We are all conscious of the fact that it gets more difficult to put up a full crew for each mission. The Association has been conscious of the problem and is acting to perpetuate the memory of the 303rd. One of the solutions is to encourage sons and daughters of members to become Associates and get involved. These young people are already a significant part of the Asso-

ciation. With your permission, I would like to read a poem written by Bill Parrot, son of John Parrot, one of our 303rd pilots. He titled it:

— All The Fine Young Men —

My father was a pilot in the big war  
But he doesn't talk about it anymore  
When I open up his memories for a while  
I can't believe the things he saw  
And the things that he survived  
For just one in three ever made it home alive

To all the fine young men who flew the skies  
You will always be heroes in my eyes  
And I owe to you my life this very day  
For you flew to meet the Devil  
And you met him face to face  
And so today we still have freedom in this place

When he went to fly he knew his chance was slim  
That he would ever see his family again  
When I ask if he was scared it's plain to see  
That the terror of those moments is still a harsh reality  
But he did it so his children would be free

To all the fine young men who flew the skies  
You will always be heroes in my eyes  
And I owe to you my life this very day  
For you flew to meet the devil  
And you met him face to face  
And so today we still have freedom in this place

Sometimes he has a far off look within his eyes  
And I know that he's re-living all the times  
All the times he saw his friends go down in flames  
And he just kept on flying  
Though he'd never be the same  
And Dad I am so very proud to bear your name.

To all the fine you men who gave their lives  
You will always be heroes in my eyes  
And I owe to you my life this very day  
For you flew to meet the Devil  
May you now be in God's hands  
Because of you we still have freedom in this place.

Finally, for those who have not been to Cambridge, England to visit the American Cemetery, I would like to read the inscription on that beautiful chapel's ceiling:

"In proud and grateful memory of those men of the United States Army Air Force who from these friendly isles flew their final flight and met their God. They knew not the hour, the day, nor the manner of their passing. When far from home they were called to join that heroic band of airmen who had gone before. May they rest in peace."



(l to r) Col. R.E. Johns Jr., Lew Lyle, Mel Schulstad and Carl DuBose



# "May they rest in Peace"



Carlton Smith reads list of deceased members since 1995 reunion

## A READING By Mel Schulstad

Once again...we meet...in a Hallowed Place...to honor the memories of those of our 303rd, men who fell during World War II, and those who have passed on since our victory in 1945.

I say...Hallowed Place...because here lie...in their final resting place over 100,000 military veterans and members of their families; included among them are 15 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients. Together and inclusively, these thousands of veterans of all wars have consecrated this place...this Golden Gate National Cemetery...this Hallowed National Shrine.

I bring you today...a prayer...a prayer personally conceived and delivered to the nation by our wartime President Franklin Delano Roosevelt...a prayer especially notable because it was given on D-Day, the sixth of June 1944.

I had never known of this prayer...until recently. Nor was I aware that our President had seen fit to call the Nation to prayer, by radio, on that fateful day in 1944.

It is a prayer of great simplicity...yet with a certain majesty and nobility: a prayer with somber tones...but full of confidence in us, who served then in the Armed Forces of the United States. And it was a powerful yet poignant and pleading prayer.

As it recognized the supreme risk...to which...thousands and thousands of American lives would be put in the cross channel invasion of Fortress Europe...an armada of land, sea, and Air Forces of such power and enormity that...it has never before and never since been equalled...nor will it be in our time.

When I read this prayer for the first time...I knew in my heart that it applied to every one of us who ever served with the 303rd during combat operations in World War II.

And I felt that this prayer applies today. It is applicable today...Because as we are gathered here this Sunday in August 1996 more than 242,000...I repeat 242,000 ...American men and women...in our Armed Forces are deployed to far away foreign bases...where they too are attempting to preserve, strengthen and establish peace among nations...and peace among men.

A peace seemingly always vulnerable to the forces of evil...to the schemings of unworthy men...and to the apostles of greed.

So it is today...again...that our children...and our grandchildren who serve in our armed forces are carrying on the mission of our 303rd comrades who gave their lives that there might be peace among nations - and peace among men.

Let us hear now the prayer that President Roosevelt gave on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

"Almighty God: Our sons, pride of our nation, this day have set upon a mighty endeavor, a struggle to preserve our Republic, our religion and our civilization, and to set free a suffering humanity.

"Lead them straight and true; give strength to their arms, stoutness to their hearts, steadfastness in their faith.

"They will need Thy blessings. Their road will be long and hard. For the enemy is strong. He may hurl back our forces. Success may not come with rushing speed, but we shall return again and again; and we know that by Thy grace, and by the righteousness of our cause, our sons will triumph.

They will be sorely tried, by night and day, without rest — until the victory is won. The darkness will be rent by noise and flame. Men's souls will be shaken with the violences of war.

For these men are lately drawn from the ways of peace, They fight not for the lust of conquest. They fight to end conquest. They fight to liberate. They fight to let justice arise, and tolerance and good-will among all Thy people. They yearn for the end of battle, for their return to the haven of home.

Some will never return. Embrace these, Father, and receive them, Thy heroic servants, into Thy kingdom.

And for us at home — fathers, mothers, children, wives, sisters and brothers of brave men overseas, whose thoughts and prayers are ever with them —help us, Almighty God, to rededicate ourselves in renewed faith in Thee in this hour of great sacrifice.

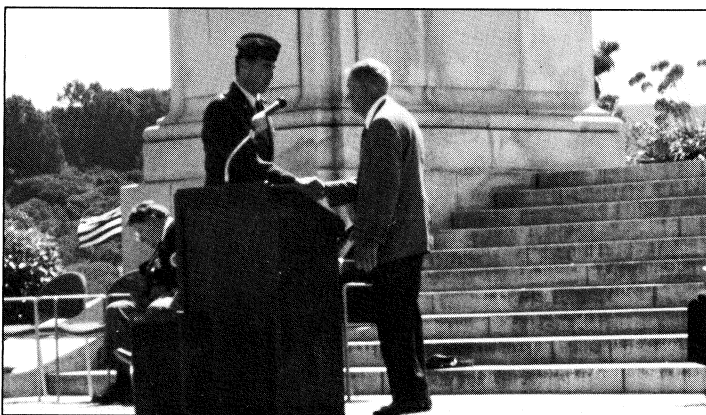
Give us strength, too —strength in our daily tasks, to redouble the contributions we make in the physical and material support of our armed forces.

And let our hearts be stout, to wait out the long travail, to bear sorrows that may come, to impart our courage unto our sons, wheresoever they may be.

And, O Lord, give us faith. Give us faith in Thee; faith in our sons; faith in each other, faith in our united crusade. Let not the keenness of our spirit ever be dulled. Let not the impacts of temporary events, of temporal matters of but fleeting moment — let not these deter us in our unconquerable purpose.

With Thy blessing, we shall prevail over the unholy forces of our enemy. Help us to conquer the apostles of greed and racial arrogances. Lead us to the saving of our country, and with our sister nations, into a world unity that will spell a sure peace — a peace invulnerable to the schemings of unworthy men. And a peace that will let all men live in freedom, reaping the just rewards of their honest toil

Thy will be done, Almighty God.....Amen.



M/Gen. Lew Lyle (r) presents 303rd "Might in Flight" book to Col. Raymond E. Johns Jr., Commander, 60th Ops. Gp., Travis AFB.

(Photos by Coleman Sanders)

## MEMORIAL ROLL CALL By Carlton Smith

Deceased members since Colorado Springs reunion

Robert Balkcom Michael Beggins Eugene Blum Ralph Coburn Scott Deerfield Joseph Donnelly Harold Froehlich Vern Hellisvig Grady Hodges Robert Kilroy John Ladd Harold Ludlow John Lutz Walter Melton William Moody Robert Nye Michael Pasquarelli Henry Pratten Lehman Rahn Louis Redhage Ralph Schnabel Wendell Sprague Leonard Tapp James Thompson Alfred Tomlinson John Urban Ralph Walder Horace Williams Donald Wilson

## BENEDICTION By Chaplain Carpenter

"Almighty God, grant to us the continual benediction of knowing that we are thoroughly loved by You and that our work for our country is not finished. Amen"

## TAPS

**FLASH** — J. Ford Kelley a 1995 President of the Association and a dear and close friend of many of its members, passed away on Oct. 2, 1996 at his home in Florida. He is survived by his wife Betty and children. Burial was in Arlington National Cemetery. Ford was a very active supporter of the 303rd BGA and its aims. On behalf of the Association we offer our deepest sympathy to his wife and family.

## 303rd Bombardment Group (H) Memorial & Recognition Locations

### UNITED STATES

1. **National Air & Space Museum**  
Washington, DC (6/76)  
Keith Ferris's 303rd BG 25'x75'  
Mural "Fortress Under Fire"
2. **U.S. Air Force Museum**  
Wright Paterson AFB, OH  
Memorial plaque in Museum  
Memorial park (10/9/82)
3. **Eighth Air Force Museum**  
Barksdale AFB, LA (9/14/90)  
->Monument & Plaque  
->B-17 "Yankee Doodle Dandy"  
with 303rd BG markings
4. **Lone Star Flight Museum**  
Galveston Island, TX (4/7/91)  
->4'x12' replica of Keith Ferris  
Mural "Fortress Under Fire"  
->B-17G "Thunderbird" with  
303rd BG markings
5. **Strategic Air Command Museum**  
Offutt AFB, Omaha, Nebraska  
Medal of Honor plaques for Lt Jack  
W. Mathis and T/Sgt Forrest L. Vosler
6. **Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum, Savannah, GA (5/13/96)**  
->303BG showcase exhibit  
->303BG original flag with streamers  
->Lew Lyle Rotunda Plaque  
->303BG Memorial Garden Monument  
->303BG Memorial Garden Lew Lyle  
plaque  
->303BG individual Crew and other  
plaques in Memorial Garden  
->303BG articles in museum archives  
& other exhibits
7. **U.S. Air Force Academy**  
Colorado Springs, CO  
->303rd plaque on cemetery  
Memorial wall (11/4/82)  
->2nd Schweinfurt Memorial  
Plaque-lists 303rd (9/11/84)
8. **Mathis Municipal Airport**  
San Angelo, TX (7/21/88)  
Display honoring MOH winner  
Jack Mathis & his brother Mark  
303rd BG KIA Bombardiers
9. **Gowen Field**  
Boise, Idaho (9/12/92)  
Monument & memorial plaque
10. **Swindle Field**  
Walnut Ridge, AR  
Memorial plaque, Robert J. Swindle,  
427th BS Bombardier  
KIA on 23 January 1943
11. **Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery - St. Louis, MO**  
Grave marker for 5 members of  
Barratt crew KIA 9 Feb 1945
12. **Pine Bluff Ark (1995)**  
AAFFTD Grider Field aircraft mural  
on Community Theater Building wall  
with 303rd B-17's. Features M/Gen  
Lewis E. Lyle's 360th BS B-17F  
"Ooold Soljer"
13. **Goodfellow AFB, San Angelo, TX (6/19/96)**  
Mathis Sports Center honoring  
303rd BG MOH awardee Lt Jack Mathis

### UNITED KINGDOM

1. **JAC-USEUCOM**  
RAF Molesworth  
->Mathis Headquarters  
Lt Jack Mathis MOH plaque  
->Vosler Hall  
T/Sgt Forrest Vosler MOH plaque  
->303rd BG "Might in Flight"  
Memorial Headquarters Building  
\* Building sign (8/15/94)  
\* Bill Adam's 303rd B-17 Nose  
Art wood carvings (1995-96)  
\* 303rd BG art collection,  
artifacts & photograph displays  
\* M/Gen Lewis E. Lyle  
Conference Room (1995)  
->"Thunderbird" Cafeteria  
->Heritage Room - 303rd BG (H)  
memorabilia, artifacts and photos  
->Original "J" hanger with the  
303rd BG red triangle "C" B-17  
tail insignia on the main door  
->JAC & 303rd BG insignia  
->RAF Molesworth entry sign
2. **All Saints Church - Brington**  
303rd memorial plaque (6/24/84)
3. **Imperial War Museum**  
RAF Duxford  
303rd BG insignia with Other  
8th Air Force exhibits
4. **Guildhall - Borough of Much Wenlock, Shropshire**  
Memorial plaque for Lt Stephan  
Crew (7 KIA) on 11 Nov 1944  
in "Duffy's Tavern"
5. **Globe Inn - Alresford (11/93)**  
Memorial plaque. Capt Cogswell  
who avoided crashing in town  
when B-17 was abandoned in air  
on 26 September 1943
6. **Summit of Arenig Fahr Mountain - No. Wales (6/95)**  
Crash site cairn & slab. Pratt Crew  
(8 KIA) 14 Aug 1943
7. **Village City Hall, Bala, Wales (5/23/96)**  
Plaque to Pratt crew donated by  
Village of Tinley Park, IL in memory  
of their citizen Lt Alan Bonner
8. **West Hill of Cheviot - near Alnwick (5/19/68)**  
Crash site cairn & B-17 prop blade.  
Memory of Kyle Crew  
16 Dec 1944 crash (2 KIA)  
B-17 remains at crash site
9. **Cheviot Memorial - College Valley near Kirknewton (5/19/95)**  
Memorial to WWII airmen lost  
on Cheviot Hills - includes  
303rd BG Kyle crewmen
10. **"Cuddystone Hall" Sutherland**  
->Plaque to Shepherds who rescued  
the Kyle Crew  
->"Roll of Honor". Lists two  
KIA members of Kyle Crew
11. **Mears Ashby (3/31/96)**  
Plaque in memorial to crews of  
"Ooold Soljer" & "Two Beauts"  
Lost on Midair collision 31 March 43  
15 KIA & 5 survived.
12. **Cambridge American Cemetery (Madingley)**  
303rd BG: 59 graves plus  
85 "Wall of Missing" names

### CONTINENTAL EUROPE

1. **Solre-Saint-Gery, Belgium (6/27/87)**  
Memorial & plaque. Fowler Crew  
(1 KIA, 6 POW, 3 EVD) 29 Jan 1944
2. **Cerfontaine, Belgium (8/15/93)**  
Monument & plaque. Osborn  
Crew (3 KIA, 5 POW, 2 EVD) on  
30 Dec 1943
3. **Most, Czech Airport (6/6/96)**  
Plaque "Earthquake McGoon" and  
Lt Kahler & Sgt Smith KIA 4/17/45
4. **Pilsen, Czechoslovakia**  
Museum exhibit, Mauger Crew.  
MIA 25 Apr 1945 over Pilsen  
(3 KIA, 4 POW, 1 EVD)
5. **St Pere-On-Retz, Fr (10/17/84)**  
Memorial monument. Sterling  
Crew. MIA 1 May 1943 over  
St. Nazaire (3 KIA, 4 POW, 3 EVD)
6. **Malicorne-Sur-Sarthe, FR (Late 40's)**  
Stone memorial monument.  
O'Connor Crew, MIA 4 July 1943.  
Avoided crash into town.  
(3 KIA, 4 POW, 3 EVD)
7. **Pluvigner, France (11/5/94)**  
->Obelisk & plaque near City  
Hall Park. Haas Crew "Beats  
Me" crash in city 23 Jan 1944  
(7 KIA, 3 POW)  
->"Beats Me" Haas Crew plaque  
in City Hall
8. **Beine-Nauroy, FR (near Reims) (4/21/90)**  
Dedicated to 2Lt L.M. Wolf (KIA)  
Litman Crew 15 Aug 44 in "Fearless  
Fosdick", mission to Wiesbaden,  
Germany
9. **St Nazaire, FR (9/23/95)**  
Monument & plaque. Adams Crew  
in "Snap! Crackle! Pop!"  
Crash near city on 3 Jan 1943  
(7 KIA, 3 POW)
10. **Pleubian, FR (Scheduled for 1997)**  
Memorial Trojan Crew "Yardbird"  
29 May 43 (1 KIA, 1 POW death,  
8 POW)
11. **Eisenberg, Germany (9/24/93)**  
Memorial & plaque. Barrat Crew  
9 Feb 1945 (8 KIA, 1 POW)
12. **Jarocin, Poland (6/30/91)**  
Memorial & plaque. Nemer  
Crew 9 Feb 1945 in "Poque Ma  
Home" (5 KIA, 1 POW, 3 Return)
13. **Brummen, Holland (9/15/95)**  
Memorial & Plaque. Sgt Bader  
of Davis Crew. 2 Nov 1944 the  
"The '8' Ball MkIII" crash in city.  
(1 KIA, 9 POW)
14. **American Cemeteries in Europe**  
303rd BG: 237 graves plus  
82 "Wall of Missing" names  
->**France:** Brittany (10+32)  
Normandy (19+0)  
Lorraine (32 + 1)  
Epinal (4 + 0)  
->**Belgium:** Ardennes (86+6)  
Henri-Chappelle (2 + 3)  
->**Luxembourg:**  
Luxembourg City (9 + 0)  
->**Holland:** Martgraten (75+40)

# The Incident at Mears Ashby

779



Clayton Balcombe unveils plaque at Mears Ashby on 31 March 1996

On an overcast day in March 1943, 20 B-17s from the 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth took off at 09:35 on Mission #27 (VIII Bomber Command's #48) to bomb the engine shops and assembly halls at Rotterdam's shipyards. The weather was usual for this time of the year, being cold with a 10/10 cloud cover.

The formation was forming up and were trying to break out of a heavy cloud cover. At 10:26 at approximately 7,000 feet, just west of Wellingborough, Northants, two of the aircraft were involved in a mid-air collision. They were #41-24559, "Ooold Soljer" of the 360th BS, and #41-29573 "Two Beauts" of the 358th BS. "Ooold Soljer" was Capt. Lewis Lyle's regular B-17, but this had probably been its first mission without him at the helm.

According to eye-witnesses, on colliding "Ooold Soljer's" right wing broke off between number 3 and 4 engines, causing it to fall to the ground in a spin. "Two Beauts" broke up in mid-air and fell to the ground. There were two survivors from "Ooold Soljer" and three from "Two Beauts." This is a story of one of the survivors.

Clayton Balcombe was the radio operator on board "Ooold Soljer." He managed to parachute clear

when the ship broke in half at the ball turret section. He landed just outside the village of Mears Ashby, sustaining back injuries after being dragged across a field and into a stone wall by his parachute. He was taken to the cottage hospital at Wellingborough by ambulance, driven by a 16 year old boy.

Some 52 years later, in 1955, I was contacted one evening by Richard Watts, who had lived in Mears Ashby all his life. He had been told about the crash many years before, and on his son's 19th birthday, he thought of the young airmen who had lost their lives over the village-they would have been the same age as his son now was. He decided that there should be a memorial to them in the village, and, being a graphic designer, set out to tell the story in words and pictures, so that locals and visitors to the village would always remember.

Between us, the plaque began to evolve initially from my library of 303rd information, and later the vast store of knowlege of our own group historian, Harry Gobrecht. He found out for us that the two survivors of the "Ooold Soljer" crew were still alive, and contacted them

on our behalf. Richard Watts then also spoke to Clayton Balcombe to see if he was able to attend a ceremony to dedicate the memorial plaque, which had been planned for Sunday, March 31st, 1996, exactly 53 years after the actual event took place. After some persuasion from his children, Clayton agreed to attend.

## The Day. 31 March, 1996

The dedication of the plaque began with a formal ceremony. It was expected to be quite a small affair, but well over 200 people showed up

The JAC at Molesworth provided an Honor Guard, which stood alongside English Veterans of the British Legion and the Royal Air Force Association. The youth of today were represented by the local Air Training Corps.

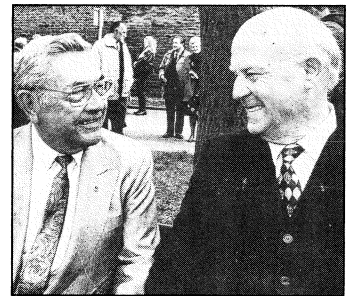
Richard Watts began by telling the story of the accident, and prayers were led by the local vicar. The Mayor of Wellingborough made an address, and handed over to Clayton Balcombe to unveil the plaque. He made a very moving speech, mentioning that he had visited the other less lucky members of the crew at the American Cemetery at Madingley the day before. He unveiled the plaque, and folded the US flag which had covered it with the help of one of the JAC members.

Following the playing of the last post, there was a flyby from a vintage Tiger Moth aircraft. (Our local friendly P-51 pilot was on duty elsewhere - helping out the Formula One Grand Prix in Australia!)

After the formal part of the ceremony was over, Clayton Balcombe was presented with flowers by the local village children. He was then reacquainted with Mr. Roy Saddington, the ambulance driver that looked after him all those years ago. It was an emotional meeting. Mr. Saddington, 71, of The Ridge, Great Doddington, was a 16 year-old ambulanceman who rescued Mr. Balcombe from a field where he had landed by parachute. He said, "It was great to find out that Clayton had survived the war. I can remember the day very well. The remains of the planes were scattered all over but I saw him lying in the grass."

Mr Saddington then told how he took the young airman to the Wellingborough Cottage Hospital.

The plaque that was presented to Clayton Balcombe was on display at the San Francisco Reunion.



ABOVE - Clayton Balcombe meets Roy Saddington after 53 years.



Balcombe addresses the crowd before unveiling the plaque in square

# *My most unusual 303rd experience*

My 23 months as a POW was my outstanding experience. It helped me to mature and learn how to cope with difficulties. In spite of our many hardships, it was a great learning experience. I spent most of my time studying and exercising by walking five to six miles around the compound. This was most helpful when we were marched out of Stalag Luft III in February 1945 just ahead of the Russians. I walked about 80 miles in the next five days. Then we were loaded 60 men to a boxcar designed to hold only 40 men and travelled across Germany with virtually no food and very little water-four days and four nights. Our new camp was Stalag VIII A, and conditions were very primitive with very little food. On April 29, 1945 we were liberated by some of Patton's troops. When the Nazi flag was lowered and the Stars and Stripes were raised on the Camp flagpole, there was a moment of silence followed by tremendous cheers. We were free.

**Anthony E. Morse(359)**

→ → →

The 29th of December 1944 all of England was weathered in solid and the 8th Air Force was grounded.

While lounging in my hut in the 358th Squadron area, I was instructed to report to the Operations Office nearby where forthwith I was offered an option that to this day seems incredible. Capt Lynch informed me that my brother Sgt. Evert Snider, was in the military hospital in Southampton, England, and that a B-17 was available if I wanted to visit him. After trying to grasp what he had just said, I asked him to repeat and explain.

Capt Lynch stated all he knew was that authorization had come from the 8th Air Force. He said all of England was grounded, but if I wanted to try getting in some place, take the Captain, who was our Squadron Supply Officer and a rated pilot with me as co-pilot.

I asked what should be done with the plane and when I should return. He told me to leave the Captain with the plane and they would pick it up later. There was no date for my return, but they would need me

when the weather lifted.

We took off in the soup and called Darky for a heading to a British Field near Southampton. When we approached the field on a runway heading and requested a flare at the end of the runway, we were curtly advised that we had been refused clearance to land as the field was closed. There were no options, so I advised we were making a 360 and coming in. They fired a flare and we landed under a very low ceiling.

I hitched a ride to the hospital and walked in to surprise my brother just after the evening meal. OH! What a reunion! I found him well. My family had received no mail from him since before my departure for the ETO in September 1944.

Evert was in Gen. Patton's 2nd Armored Division. Made the landing in Algiers, went through the Kasserine Pass Operation, Sicily, then to Europe and the breakout at St. Lo and on into France.

Some time later, on the drive toward Germany, he lost two tanks and crews on his last day ahead of the line. He was the last man of his original company and was relieved from combat duty and assigned to supply and transportation bringing materials to the front. Later they screened the support troops for soldiers like him, sent them to the hospital in England for evaluation and rotation to the states.

A Red Cross lady had contacted him in the hospital. He told her he had a brother who flew B-17s and would be in the 8th Air Force. He gave her my last letter from the States with my temporary APO address.

I bunked in the Ward with my brother for two nights and returned to base December 22nd in time to fly the mission on December 23rd to Erhang during the Battle of the Bulge.

Mark one for the Red Cross! Whatever was put into play and why, I have no clue, but I will be forever grateful.

**Harley D. Snider (358)**

→ → →

I remember the many planes that came in the hangar for repairs. The first plane I worked on was the "Vi-

cious Virgin," then there was "The Eight Ball," that I was told was Clark Gable's plane. I worked on "The Knockout Dropper," "Meat Hound," "Satan's Workshop," "Bow-ur-Neck-Stevens"-and many others too numerous to mention. Many came in more than once, also "Hell's Angels" and the "Black Diamond Express." Many out there will remember these. Every day was an unusual experience, being a small part of such a big undertaking.

Then there was the camaraderie of working and being with other GI's, and the friends we made.

One day while the movie "Command Decision" was being filmed in part at our base—according to the story line—the director, as the planes were returning from a mission, had us line up outside to "sweat" the planes return(which we did anyway)- so we had a bit part in the movie. Saw the movie several times after the war and many times on TV. They don't always show that part of the film.

Then there was "D Day" and the night before. We knew "something" was up by all the activity. I was put on guard duty, on the perimeter track, had a Thompson sub-machine gun shoved in my hand(which I had no experience with) and told to stay there until relieved.

In the early morning hours, just before dawn, I started to hear a roar that kept getting louder and louder-then coming from the north, the sky seemed to be filled from horizon to horizon with C-47s each pulling a glider. It was an awesome sight, one that I will never forget. After that-and all day the sky was filled with planes of all kinds going in all directions, landing, refueling, reloaded with bombs and taking off again not waiting to take formation. We knew it was the beginning of the end. But not as soon as we had hoped.

**Joseph E. Bowman(444th)  
Sheet metal worker**

→ → →

I wonder if any other B-17 was damaged by a peanut sandwich? Our plane, I think we were flying the "Floose," was hit on one of our early missions in the fall of 1944 by a frozen peanut butter sandwich. It hit

right on the button of the plexiglass nose and put a perfect round hole in the plexiglass. It must have been one of our early missions for us because we still had Lt. Birkinser flying as Bombardier

Anyhow, after we left the target, Lt Birkinser announced over the intercom that we had been hit. Then he told us what it was and where the hole was.

At debriefing, he told the officer to tell the other crews to be careful what they threw out. The debriefing officer did not believe Lt. Birkinser until he first pulled out the peanut butter sandwich on a hamburger bun and then pulled out the perfectly round piece of plexiglass the exact size of the bun.

We had a bit of a laugh over our "Combat Damage."

**Alan D. Chesney(358)  
Ball Turret gunner**

→ → →

Late in November or December 1942, a fellow ordnance worker and me were on guard duty at the bomb dump on our field. It was about 4p.m. The bomb dump had high coils of barb wire and the only way into the dump was through the only gate-always guarded-into the dump. We were making our rounds, carrying a 30 cal. carbine - and towards the end of the dump we saw two individuals dressed like "English Hunters" with shotguns. We caught them flatfooted and ordered them to put their guns down. We knew no one-and I mean no one-was supposed to be in the dump, especially civilians. We don't know how they could have gotten in; anyway we put in a call to the captain of the guards. He came by jeep with an M.P. and took them away. To this day, I do not know how they got in with all that barbed wire and the gate under heavy guard. I did try to find out more about this incident, but I guess it must have been "hush-hush." Have you ever heard of this?

I would say that in mid 1943, the group was preparing to go on a mission. I was in the Ordnance Section. We loaded the B-17 with 500 pounders. All went well until some gunner from another plane was testing and clearing his guns. In do-



# Experiences were varied and came in different packages

ing so-one of the rounds went off and it hit the B-17 we were working on. It hit the gas tank on our plane and set the gas on fire. It didn't blow up, just causing the gas to drip and burn. The main concern was that the bombs were all in their racks and armed. The first order given us was to toggle the bombs and drag them away. This was done and our ordnance team did this. The heat was getting to us but we did manage to drag the bombs away. When this was about completed the fire wagon came and foamed the fire down. The whole plane could of blown up, with everyone around it, with it. Some major came over and gave us a pat on the back!

What about the gunner who cleared his guns? Well as I remember, he was tried for negligence and they found him for not following procedure. He was fined to the tune of \$25 per month as long as he was in the service to pay for the plane. How about that!!

**Anthony J. Sacco (359)**  
**Ordnance**

→ → →

Harold intended to fill in your questionnaire, but I'm sorry to have to inform you that he passed away suddenly, Jan. 21, 1996 at home. He had been sick with chronic fibrosis for over a year, but last December had the flu and pneumonia which aggravated his condition and apparently weakened his heart.

He so looked forward to the publications of your activities, and I'm happy he got the Certificate recently, the Distinguished Service Award from the 303rd Bomb Group

We met and married in Nottingham, England, the last year Harold was in service in England. He then went to Africa, ferrying troops, and then to St. Joseph, MO for a short while before being discharged at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin.

I was one of the "G.I. Brides" from England. We were happy to have celebrated "our" Golden Wedding Anniversary last May with an Open House and a dance. I never expected that Harold would go as soon afterwards.

He was so proud of the Air Force and of his country, which has also been so good to this adopted Englishman!

**Joyce Froehlich**  
**Mrs. Harold Froehlich (359)**

→ → →

Friendships, both G.I. and English have lasted a life time. One of the few good things about a war.

**Joseph R. Dufresne (359)**

January 14, 1944 - "Alas Kaput!"  
"For you the war is over!"

It's 10 a.m. at Molesworth, and the overcast lifted. What a beautiful day for a "Milk Run." Our three day pass to London would begin at 12 noon. "Sorry fellows, you have got to go, before London."

Pas de Calais, bomb the V-2 rockets that are devastating London. Bombbay doors open at the I.P., the coast of France. We were in the #2 position because January 11, (Oschersleben) our Squadron lost five of seven on that day! Direct hit in the tail from A.A. All 11 men out (photo man on board). At 10,000 feet, the "White Cliffs of Dover" are a sad sight if you are hanging in a chute over France!

April 25, 1945 - Yanks and Russians met at Torgue, on Elbe. About 500 POWs in our group made contact that night with the 104th Division (Timberwolves). We were on the Russian side at the river. We informed our guard the next day. They surrendered to us, and walked west to the Yanks!

April 26, 1945 - "O Happy Day!" I am looking forward to meeting my "Guardian Angel" to "Thank Him" for "One Hell of a good job!"

**Joseph F. Fertitta**  
**Tailgunner (358)**

→ → →

My crew and I flew on the last mission the 303rd Bomb Group flew on April 25, 1945. The target was the Skoda Armament Works in Pilsen, Czechoslovakia. Allied Radio warned the Czech workers to stay away from the factory since it was the target for the day. Forty-two aircraft were dispatched. The mission to the target was free of enemy aircraft. Since the target could not be seen on the first run, all three squadrons decided to make another run from a different angle. On the first run the anti-aircraft fire was meager to moderate and inaccurate, but on the 2nd bomb run the anti-aircraft fire was intense and accurate.

A few minutes before the 2nd bomb run, radio silence was broken and a voice gave our altitude, direction and air speed. Then all hell broke loose. I was hit by flak in the right elbow. Several other planes were also hit. My co-pilot flew back to Molesworth. I spent the next six months recuperating. I was very fortunate. I am still well and active.

**Jack R. Magee**  
**Pilot (360)**

**Have you sent in your questionnaire???????**

We replaced engine on #4 and it checked out perfect. I flew as Engineer. Went down runway and heard a big bang so we aborted takeoff. Went back to hangar and checked out engine and it checked OK. Started down the runway again and took off when a loud bang and engine #4 blew up, trying to get altitude, when #1 caught on fire. It was a foggy day and the runway was hard to see. With #1 feathered and #4 windmilling, we finally landed. Thank God for a good pilot.

Worked on "Knockout Dropper" when it was first to make 75 missions. Worked on "Old Black Magic" at end of war-129 missions. Didn't lose a plane.

**Stanley Jacobs**  
**Aircraft mechanic (359)**

→ → →

My crew and I outdid ourselves by almost rebuilding an entire B-17 that had been involved in a perimeter crash and was classified as "Salvage." We did it in only 21 days. In between times, we also did a major repair job on another Fortress.

**Walter T. Niemann (444th)**  
**Sheet metal mechanic.**

→ → →

I think when I worked on the "Hell's Angels" ship, the original ground crew were sweating each mission because they were due to return to the States.

I believe it was the 48th mission, we were standby. A new crew pulled up. Fabian, the crew chief, briefed the pilot on our manual turbo controls. They were set with a little extra if needed: red lined at 48 inches. We sweated take off. Manifolds were white on takeoff and we all got concerned.

It was after mess, we heard a ship return. It was "Hell's Angels." It lost two engines and no compression in the other two. The ship made it home. The ground crew got to go home on a bond selling tour.

I transferred to another crew.

**Albert J. Orth**  
**Mechanic (358)**

→ → →

The Keith Ferris 25' x 75' mural on the Boeing F-17G Thunderbird is of extraordinary significance to me. I was the Flight Engineer on George McCutcheon's crew manning the top turret as I did throughout my tour of duty (36) missions flying out of Molesworth, England during WW II.

The 358th Squadron, 303rd Bomb Group put up twelve B-17s and the 427th Bomb Squadron put up one B-17 to fill out the 39th air-

craft that the Group put up for the raid on that mission. Just as the book, the "National Air and Space Museum" states, our bombs had been delivered and we were headed for home when I reported to the crew, "50 bandits at 6 o'clock" and ordered Russell Kinsman, our Tail Gunner to commence firing. I did likewise. The German fighters flew right into our formation, destroying nine of our thirteen plane squadron. Only four aircraft, of the low squadron, returned to our base at Molesworth

I have a vivid memory of a FW-190 just off our port wing-tip, my twin 50s were pointed directly at the German pilot. I could not kill him for fear of shooting a B-17 directly in my line of fire. He rolled over and headed for the earth. I have no idea of what happened to that pilot. He had managed to hit our outboard engine on our port wing. In retrospect, had I killed that pilot I might not be writing this letter.

It is a devastating sight to see a B-17 aircraft on fire from wing-tip to wing-tip. The Germans had a field day. I firmly believe that our firing at the "bandits" early in their attack kept them from shooting us down. We all lived to fight another day. Our crew consisted of Lt. George McCutcheon, Lt. R.L. McGilvary, Lt. Fred Keisel, Lt. Ben Starr, Russell Kinsman (TG), James Aberdeen (BTG), John Alexander (RO) and John O. Burcham (E).

This explains the significance of the beautiful mural to me and my family.

**John O. Burcham**  
**Flight engineer (358)**

→ → →

16 March 1944 - Raid to Augsburg. Last plane out of Germany, tons of FW-190s hit us. I counted 30 queue up on our plane and attack; 20MM hit radio room, knocked out radio and wounded T/Sgt. Gaylord Geisman (RO). Sgt. Cole kept him from floating out of the radio hatch during evasive action. Without communications, I was unable to keep crew aware of incoming fighters. I destroyed one FW and damaged another. We were under fighter attack for better part of three hours. Without communications I was not aware of crew members or condition of aircraft, everytime plane went into evasive action, I would consider leaving, but felt each turn of the props meant less miles to walk home.

**Marvin Edwards (360)**  
**Tail gunner**

# 303rd B.G. PX MAIL ORDER PAGE

DESCRIPTION	COST EA.	QTY.	TOTAL
T-Shirt, White - Hanes 50 / 50	Medium 38-40		\$10.00
8th AF insignia and Drawing of the B-17 "Hell's Angels"	Large 42-44		\$10.00
T-Shirt, Light Blue - Hanes 50 / 50	Medium 38-40		\$10.00
San Francisco Reunion design with drawing of three B-17s	Large 42-44		\$10.00
Children's T-Shirt, Hanes 50/50	10-12		\$8.00
Light blue with 8th AF logo & Drawing of the B-17 "Hell's Angels" on Front	14-16		\$8.00
Sport visor, white with 303rd BG/8th AF insignia.			\$2.00
Cap, Blue & White with 303rd BG "Might in Flight" insignia, one size fits all			\$6.00
Cap, White with Triangle "C" insignia			\$6.00
303rd Bomb Group "Hell's Angels", one size fits all			\$2.00
Decal, 4" - Interior / Exterior "Might in Flight" logo			\$5.00
3" Patch, Embroidered "Might in Flight"			\$5.00
3" Patch, Embroidered 8th AF/303rd Bomb Group			\$5.00
3-1/2" Patch, Embroidered 356th Squadron			\$5.00
3-1/2" Patch, Embroidered 359th Squadron			\$5.00
3-1/2" Patch, Embroidered 360th Squadron			\$5.00
3-1/2" Patch, Embroidered 427th Squadron			\$12.00
B-17 Earrings for pierced ears, Rhodium Electroplate (Silver color)			\$12.00
B-17 Earrings for pierced ears, Gold Electroplate (Gold color)			\$12.00
B-17 Lapel Pin, Rhodium Electroplate (Silver color)			\$5.00
B-17 Lapel Pin, Gold Electroplate (Gold color)			\$5.00
<b>PX INVENTORY SURVEY:</b> Here are some ideas we are working on for new stock. Please circle the items that you would like to see available.			
Windbreakers with B-17 or 8th AF/303rd Logo			
Sweatshirts - zip front or pull over			
Denim Vests for patches, pins, etc.			
Ties with B-17 or 8th AF/303rd logo			
Caps with a B-17 picture			
Ladies Polo Shirts			

DESCRIPTION	COST EA.	QTY.	TOTAL
Large Cloisonne Lapel Pin, 303rd BG Life Member (Life and Super Life members only)	\$4.00		
Small Cloisonne Lapel Pin (or tie tack), 303rd BG Life Member (Life and Super Life members only)	\$3.00		
Small Cloisonne Lapel Pin, 303BG/8th AF insignia	\$3.00		
Key Rings, Plastic w/303rd BG 50th Anniversary	\$1.00		
Key Rings, Leather, with 303BG / 8th AF insignia	\$2.00		
Book: "Last Raid" by 303 BG Member Bob Hand from original notes & drawings done at Molesworth	\$20.00		
Book: "Half A Wing, Three Engines And a Prayer" by 303 BG Associate Member Brian O'Neill	\$20.00		
License Plate, with 8th AF insignia and a Drawing of the B-17 "Hell's Angels"	\$8.00		
Tote Bag, Heavy canvas with 8th AF/303rd insignia	\$12.00		

**LIMITED STOCK. Please call 1-800-606-9065 to check availability**

License plate bracket, plastic-303 BG/Hell's Angels	\$2.00		
Polo shirt-303rd BG X-Lg only. It blue or raspberry	\$20.00		
Polo shirt-SF Reunion design X-Lg only, white	\$20.00		
Book: "Flying with Hell's Angels"-Sam Fleming	\$6.00		

<b>TOTAL COST of Items Ordered</b>	<b>\$</b>	
SHIPPING & HANDLING (Add to all orders)		<b>\$3.00</b>
OVERSEAS SHIP & HANDLING (Add for overseas orders only)		<b>\$10.00</b>
<b>*** TOTAL AMOUNT DUE</b>	<b>\$</b>	

**\*\*\* Make Check Payable to: The 303rd Bomb Group**

(Please print or type)

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ Order Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL YOUR CHECK & ORDER PAGE TO:** Charlie Sykes  
16281 N. 31st Avenue  
Phoenix, Arizona 85023-3008

**\*\*Please Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery\*\***

If you have any questions about your order or PX stock, you can call Charlie Sykes at: **(602) 993-8015**

## FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

Those of you who attended the San Francisco reunion know that I (with the expert help of my wife, son and daughter-in-law) was collecting the plus 4 digits to your ZIP codes. I'm still collecting them. I have about 15 more to go before I have all 1860 on the active roster documented. Mailing costs for this current issue of the Newsletter have already risen, but we can lower those costs when we have the plus 4 information. If they are not shown on this issue's mailing label, please ask your local postmaster for them and pass it on ASAP.

At the reunion I was also accepting early dues payments for 1997 to save us all some time and postage. That was the first notice. This is the second notice. The annual dues reminder notice that Bill Heller sends out (some of you may already have received it) will be the third notice. If a 96 on your address label is encircled in red, that is the fourth notice. There will be a couple

of more reminders in the coming months, but they won't be necessary if all annual dues payers will start sending in those payments for '97 now. Yes, it's still only \$10 a year. Remember — this pertains only to annual dues payers who have not yet paid their '97 dues. Life Members, Super Life Members, Widows and Honorary Members do not pay dues. Your donations and memorials are always welcomed.

This column in the August '96 Newsletter listed our Associates who were assigned to units other than the 303rd Bomb Group. I said six but only five appeared in print. We omitted Elwood Ligon, 94th Bomb Group A-236. We signed up another one in San Francisco. He is Bil Caruso of the 388th Bomb Group (LA-400). The lists that follow are current as of 19 Sept. 1996.

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

## NEW MEMBERS

- L 1950 Raymond Tartaglia, 754 Skipjack Dr., Henderson, NV 89015-5656
- A-391 Clifford Broderick, 109 Barnes Rd., Washingtonville, NY 10992-1931
- 1972 Harry V. Hosso, 11620 N 31st Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85029-3205 (360)
- 1973 John F. Reed, 140 Fort De France Ave., Toms River, NJ 08757-4343 (358)
- L 1974 James H. Fisher, 82102 B Dowl;ing Cove, Austin, TX. 78745-6908 (360)
- L 1975 Edward F. Kuester, 5177 SE Miles Grant Terr., Stuart, FL 34997-1853 (358)
- S 1976 John E. Pacheco, 12647 116th St. N, Largo, FL 34648-1811 (427)
- A-392 Fred W. Burkart, P.O. Box 483, Shamokin Dam, PA 17876-0483
- 1977 Merrill M. Stiver, P.O. Box 812, Trinidad, CA 95570-0812 (360)
- L 1978 Lester H. Dawson, 719 Hazel Dean Rd., Waterford, CA 95386-9736 (?)
- 1979 Arthur O. Reckert 237 Stevens St., Bristol, CT 06010-2766 (359)
- A-393 Joan E. Veazey, 2005 Casa Loma, Grapevine, TX 76051-2806
- L 1980 William C. Hunter, Jr., 23852 Brant Ln., Laguna Niguel, CA 92677-1342 (358)
- 1981 Walter H. McDonald, 12 Eagle Pointe, Charleston, IL 61920-4418 (358)
- 1982 Robert P. Rabassa, 9 Ernest Street, Lewiston, ME 04240-4610 (358)
- 1983 Paul D. Freese, 2330 Mazzaglia Ave., San Jose, CA 95125-3626 (359)
- A-394 Coburn L. Grabenhorst, Jr., 1853 Lexington Cir. SE, Salem, OR 97306-1456
- A-395 Virginia Nelson, 14768 Ronda Dr., San Jose, CA 95123-5111
- A-396 Barry K. Whittall, 668 Colleen Ct., San Jose, CA 95123-5509
- A-397 Ronald D. Whittall, 17680 Bear Creek Rd., Boulder Creek, CA 95006-9534
- L 1984 Arthur R. Mehlhoff, 1320 Addison St., Apt. !304, Berkeley, CA 94702—1705 (360)
- A-398 Klaus Schneider, 428 Estado Way, Novato, CA 94945-1305
- A-399 Craig M. Sigler, 813 Hedgestone Way, Modesto, CA 95355-4560
- 1985 Donald L. Spruner, P.O. Box 1248, Twain Harte, CA 95383-1248 (427)
- L A-400 William Caruso, 14 Sylvan Way, Morristown, NJ 07960-4618
- A-401 M. Jean Devlin, 207 SW Kendall Ave., Topeka, KS 66606-1279

- A-402 Lloyd Timm, 35109 Hwy 79, Spc 208, Warner Springs, CA 92086-9711
- L 1986 Steve Dulick, 4535 Tortoise Rd., Venice, FL 34293-5963 (359)
- A-403 Hans-Jurgen Schuster, Schloss Strasse 24, Malberg, Germany 54655
- A-404 Eugene F. Ashton, 1140 Pine St. #6, San Francisco, CA 94109-5134
- A-405 Ronald W. Chase, 1091 Bush St., San Francisco, CA 94109-6257
- 1987 Weldon T. Mahan, LCR 319 Box 2900, Colorado City, TX 79512-7400
- A-406 Linda Hays, 7734 Riverside Dr.. #108F, Tulsa, OK 74136-2672
- A-407 Roxanne Stafford, 14801 Judicial Rd., Burnsville, MN 55306-4867
- A-408 Shelley Stafford, 14801 Judicial Rd., Burnsville, MN 55306-4867
- A-409 Richard Watts, 26 Paddock Ln, Mears Ashby, Northamptonshire NN6 0EQ, England
- A-410 Frank Y. Galvan, 10524 Texwood Ave., El Paso, TX 79915-7368
- L 1988 Charles Jaehne, 5312 S Cherry Ave., Fresno, CA 93706-5723 (359)
- 1989 Richard D. Dimick, P.O. Box 99, Canyon Dam, CA 95923-0099 (?)
- A-411 Calven Mogck, 103 Mount McDonald Rd., Port Angeles, WA 98363-9482
- A-412 Les C. Lofquist, 110 Southfield, Winona Lake, IN 46590-1717
- A-413 Robert Shayler, 22007 Young Ave., Castro Valley, CA 94556-6441
- L 1990 Clarence L. Counsell, 1425 E 8th Ave., Kalispell, Mt 59901-5862 (360)
- A-414 Stephen Haley, 1535 Forest Villa Ln., McLean, VA 22101-4132
- L A-415 David M. Rencher, 3706 Stone Creek Way, Boise, ID 83703-4745
- L A-416 Jack Q. Rencher, 3706 Stone Creek Way, Boise, ID 83703-4745
- Widow Mrs Grace Sachau, 2957 La Carlita Pl., Hermosa Beach, CA 90254-2244 (358)
- L 1991 F. H. Botts, 8015 Meadowcroft Dr., Houston, TX 77063-xxxx

## ADDRESS CHANGES

- \* A-331 Darlene Barrier, 5419 W. Tropicana Ave. Apt. 2501, Las Vegas, NV 89103-5071
- L 308 Louis W. Considine, 1006 N Taffee Dr. Apt. 1D, Hastings, MI 49058
- S 015 Lee E. Dolan, Jr., 13546 Gordon Ct., Jacksonville, FL 32224-6653
- A-340 Steve Dussliere, 4520 7th St Apt 4309, East Moline, IL 61244-4636
- A-166 Sandra Edgerton, 828 Webster St., Hastings, NE 68901-4359
- 1581 Walter J. Ferrari, 207 Lake Circle Dr., Hampstead, NC 28443-2519
- S 1314 Richard Fortunak, 1817 Warwick Ave. Apt 17, Whiting, IN 46394-1431
- A-267 Thomas Gano, 6500 S MacArthur Blvd., Hanger 8E, Oklahoma City, OK 73125-xxxx
- L 025 William Hart, P.O. Box 141, Markleville, IN 49056-0141
- L 1212 Logan Hatch, 8855 Creekwood Ln, Apt I-7, Murray, UT 84107-xxxx
- S 1467 Lloyd D. Hester, P.O. Box 106, Hennepin, OK 73046-0106
- L 426 Ingvald M. Iverson, 1301 S 2nd St., Coldspring, MN 56320-2144
- 1706 Norman Jacobsen, 4612 Driftwood Circle, Carlsbad, CA 92008-3716
- Widow Mrs Ann R. Roth, 2522 Concan xx, San Antonio, TX 78251-xxxx
- S 433 William H. Simpkins, P.O. Box 217, Cologne, NJ 08213-0217
- L 693 Alfred L. Smith, 355 N Rush Rd., Rush, CO 80833-9717
- 1952 Eugene L. Zawacki, 5317 Hansel Ave., Apt E2, Orlando, Fl 32809-3418

## UPGRADE TO LIFE MEMBERS

- H-09 William F. Adams
- L 426 Ingvald M. Iverson (427)
- S 1467 Lloyd D. Hester (427)
- L 926 Jesse W. McLaughlin (427)
- S 1223 Jack P. Rencher (358)

## DONATIONS/MEMORIALS

- The 444th Guys at the San Francisco reunion - Memorial to Daniel Gutter, Walter Canning and Jack Rake
- S 1379 Edwin B. Barry (1114) - Memorial to Henry Pratten
- L 796 Roger K. Bates (359)
- H-06 Robin J. Beeby
- S 377 George V. Broderick (359)
- Widow Mrs Myrtle B. Brown (359) Memorial to William F. Brown
- S 122 Orlyn D. Chumat (360)

# Pittsburgh's New Look and Historic Penn Hotel Earn 1997 Reunion Bid

By Eddie Deerfield



Pittsburgh's downtown section is called the "Golden Triangle" at the confluence of the Monongahela, Allegheny and Ohio Rivers. The world-class Westin William Penn, Pittsburgh's only "Grand Hotel," is in the heart of the triangle.

Downtown Pittsburgh, banked on all sides by green hills and bordering the confluence of three major rivers, will be the scene of the 303rd Bomb Group Association's 1997 reunion. A great reunion is being planned, from the first day of registration on Thursday, 4 September, through to the gala farewell banquet on Monday, 8 September.

Every city has a grand hotel, one that's a regal reminder of the city's past and central to its progress. It's a place where presidents and monarchs stay when they come to town, where old world elegance mingles with contemporary comforts. In Pittsburgh, that hotel is the Westin William Penn, where members of the 303rd and their families will gather for the Association's 14th reunion.

The William Penn Hotel was built in 1916 as Pittsburgh's showplace designed to rival the great hotels of Europe in Old World style. Pittsburgh was a bustling manufacturing city at the time, riding the crest of the industrial revolution. Mills spewed forth dirt and smoke to provide steel for a growing America

and a world at war. This image of Pittsburgh persisted until after the second World War and into the 1960s. Then with demand for steel sharply declining, the city fathers embarked on a massive modernization campaign which has completely changed the face and the flavor of Pittsburgh. It's now one of the most beautiful cities in the country.

During this time, ownership of the William Penn passed to Alcoa. In 1984, in partnership with Westin Hotels and Resorts, a \$30 million restoration began. Guest floors were gutted and rebuilt. Rooms were resized, plumbing and electrical systems were replaced, and new windows installed. Despite the massive renovation, the guiding philosophy was to retain the Old World charm of the original structure. This has been accomplished, and the hotel is resplendent with crystal chandeliers, stained glass, marble columns, towering ceilings with gold leaf appliques and gleaming walnut trim.

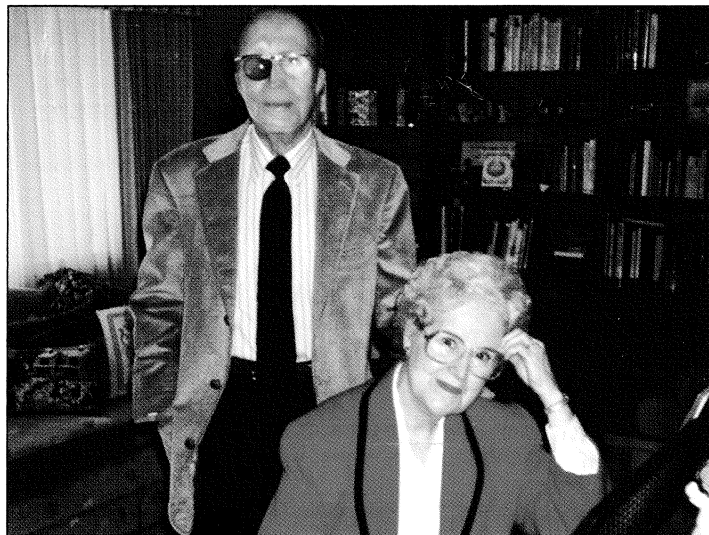
The Westin William Penn has extended to the 303rd a remarkable nightly room rate of only \$75.

## DONATIONS/MEMORIALS

- L 356 William Crawford (360)
- L 088 Fred T. Crissman (360)
- S 639 Harry D. Gobrecht
- A - 394 Coburn L. Grabenhorst, Jr.
- S 1213 Paul E. Henderson (360) Memorial to Walter Melton
- S 1467 Lloyd D. Hester (427)
- S 1493 James A. Hickey (359)
- S 580 Bud Klint (427)
- L 1418 Raymond T. Leal
- L 1262 Gordon Lofquist (360)
- A 324 Cindy Mayes
- L 926 Jesse W McLaughlin (427)
- L 1012 Angelo Petix (358) Memorial to our deceased comrades
- Widow Mrs Bea Pratten (1114) Memorial to Henry Pratten
- Widow Mrs Martha E. Redhage (358) Memorial to Horace D. Williams
- S 1223 Jack P. Rencher (358) three
- A - 315 Larry Stafford
- L 1786 Harold R. Timm (360)
- Mrs Dorothy L. Young - Memorial to Horace D. Williams
- S 1037 Ernest A. Whittall (358)

## IN MEMORIAM

- 256 James A. Andrus (359) - 17 July 1996
- L 731 Robert E. Balkcom (358) - 21 June 1996
- L 1797 James Brooks (359) - 5 JULY 1995
- 848 Grady Hodges (358) - 3 JULY 1996
- 414 Wilmer A. Knutson (427) - 8 Sept 1996
- L 938 Henry Pratten (1114) - 15 July 1996
- L 687 Lehman W. Rahn (359) - 2 May 1996
- John H. Simpson (unk) 1996
- S 1064 Albert C. Steele (427) - 4 Sept 1996
- L 439 Horace D. Williams (358) 27 June 1996



**CONGRATULATIONS - To Distinguished Service Cross winner Charles Spencer and his wife Jeanne on their 55th wedding anniversary. Read his life story, "Portrait of Courage" in the May 1988 issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter. It's a remarkable story.**

**303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.**  
c/o Hal Susskind  
2602 Deerfoot Trail  
Austin, Texas 78704-2716

Forwarding and return postage guaranteed  
Address Correction Requested

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 1  
Austin, Texas