

# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

May, 1999

## JAC NAMES ANNUAL INTELLIGENCE AWARD IN HONOR OF 303RD'S LATE CARLTON SMITH

The Joint Analysis Center at RAF Molesworth has named a prestigious recognition it makes annually to its most outstanding intelligence professional as the *Carlton M. Smith Award*. "Smitty," who passed away last year, was the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association's Membership Chairman for many years and served at Molesworth during World War II as an Intelligence Officer.

Col. Frances M. Early, the JAC commanding officer, wrote, "This annual award recognizes the intelligence professional—officer, enlisted, or civilian—who made the most significant contribution to the accomplishment of the JAC's mission of providing critical intelligence support to theater operational forces.

"It is appropriate to have the award named for an intelligence professional who served his country with distinction during a time of conflict and who shares with us a connection to RAF Molesworth. The JAC has been recognized as one of the premier intelligence organizations in the Department of Defense, establishing a record of excellence in supporting American and Allied forces engaged in operations throughout the U.S. European Command area of responsibility.

"Carlton Smith epitomizes the qualities we wish to instill in every intelligence professional: dedication to the mission, excellence in performance, patriotism, integrity, and courage.

"Carlton Smith served his country with honor and distinction. I am proud to say that his name and legacy survive at RAF Molesworth. Those intelligence professionals who followed Carleton Smith at Molesworth are still providing the information America's warfighters need.

"In an organization of 750 people, this is a prestigious award. The 1998 recipient of the Carlton M. Smith Award was named at the JAC

Annual Awards Luncheon on 11 February, 1999. He is Doug Smith, a senior intelligence analyst (GS-14) at the JAC. He is chief of the Balkans Branch within the Analysis Division of the JAC, responsible for providing the intelligence needed by U.S., NATO, and UN forces deployed in Bosnia, Macedonia, and Kosovo.

"He is also a veteran, having served in the U.S. Marine Corps, including three tours in Vietnam. His last tour was cut short when he was severely wounded."

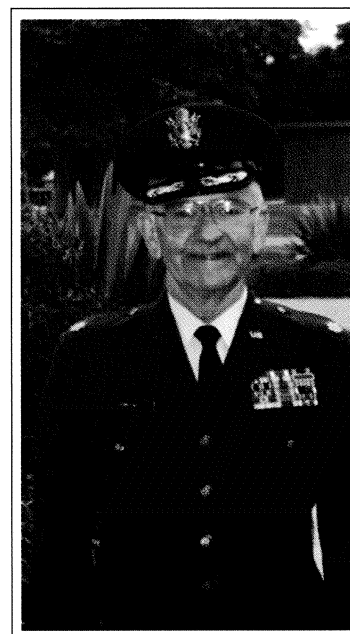
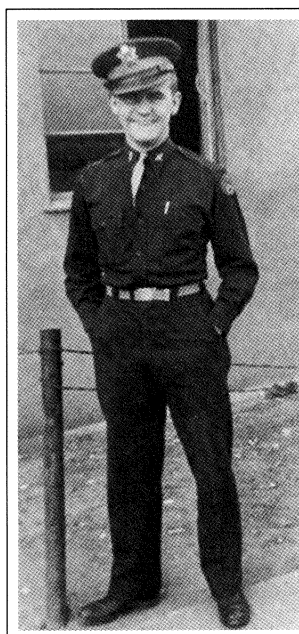
Carlton was affectionately known as "Smitty" by his fellow veterans in the 303rd Bomb Group. Although he was, in his own words, a "ground pounder," he managed to persuade his superiors to grant him permission to fly five missions to experience the air combat side of the war.

Smitty flew as an observer or photographer in various sections of the B-17 and in a variety of slots in the formation, from deputy lead to tail-end Charlie. He flew with five different crews, at altitudes from 12,000 to 30,000 feet, and said later that the missions made him better prepared to brief the bombardiers on target identification, interrogate crews on mission results and interpret the strike attack photos.

Phyllis, Smitty's widow, said he would have been delighted to know that his name would be synonymous with an award honoring the virtues of honesty, integrity, patriotism and courage in the field of military intelligence.



**THE FIRST CARLTON M. SMITH AWARD** is presented by Col. Frances Early, the JAC's commanding officer, to Senior Intelligence Analyst Doug Smith. The same names are a coincidence—he's no relation to the 303rd's veteran.



**1ST LT. CARLTON SMITH** at Molesworth in 1944 as 303rd BG Photo Interpreter, and **LTC Carlton Smith (USAF Ret)** at Molesworth in 1994 for dedication of the Might In Flight Building.



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

### "HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

Editor — Eddie Deerfield

VOL XXI. No. 2 3552 Landmark Trail Palm Harbor, FL 34684 May, 1999

The 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc., a tax exempt organization under IRS Code 501(c)(19), founded in 1975, is chartered in the State of Florida to perpetuate the history of the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group (H) and to provide opportunities for 303rders to meet and do things together.

Because you are helping to perpetuate the history of the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group (H), your dues and/or donations to the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc. are tax deductible.

Association Regular Members include persons assigned or attached to the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group (H), from its 1942 activation in Boise, ID, throughout its war years at Station 107 Molesworth, England, to its 1945 deactivation in Casablanca. Spouses, children & grandchildren of regular members may become Family Members. All other persons, interested in perpetuating the history of the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group (H), and in furthering the aims of the Association may, with approval at a membership meeting, become non-voting "Friends of the 303<sup>rd</sup>" Associate Members.

Membership years begin on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of January. Our *Hell's Angels Newsletter* will only be sent to members whose dues payment are current. Annual dues are \$10 and \$15 for foreign addresses.

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**A HAPPIER TIME** in the 427th/358th Officers Mess at Molesworth. Clockwise, from top on right side of table, are Lloyd Cole, Charles Sheridan, Glenn Hagenbuch, Donald Stockton, William Goetz (back to camera, end of table), Ehle Reber, George Mackin, Jack Denison (hidden by server) and Quentin Hargrove. Aerial combat claimed the lives of Stockton, Sheridan, Goetz and Reber. Cole died of injuries as a POW. Hagenbuch was killed in a P-40 crash. (See THE EDITOR COMMENTS.... on page 20).



**CO-PILOT J. C. BARKER**, with the help of Flight Engineer R. Q. Smith, flew the B-17 back to base after Stockton was killed at the controls. From left to right are Armament Officer Jack Gardner, Co-Pilot J. C. Barker, Engineering Officer Quentin Hargrove and Adjutant Larry Furey.

## THREE VETS WHO WERE THERE CONFIRM STOCKTON AS SLAIN PILOT IN ARTICLE

The February issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter made a tentative identification of the unnamed 303rd pilot eulogized in Walter Cronkite's book "A Reporter's Life" as Capt. Donald E. Stockton of the 427th Squadron. Comments from three men who served with him at Molesworth confirm the identification.

Jack Gardner, Armament Officer at Molesworth, told the Newsletter, "When I read Walter Cronkite's book several months ago, I was certain the dead pilot he referred to was Don Stockton. Your conclusion jibes with mine.

"I was in the 427th and knew Don well. I remember the day he was killed (May 14, 1943, on a mission to Kiel, Germany, on "S for Sugar"). The plane was flown back to Molesworth by his co-pilot, J. C. Barker and the flight engineer. They were both real heroes.

"Cronkite, I'm pretty sure, was at the base at the time.

"Morris Sjöberg, the 427th's Bombsight Officer, told me recently that J. C. Barker stayed on in the U.S. Air Force as a career officer, and passed away several years ago."

A second confirmation came from Engineering Officer Quentin Hargrove who recalled going out to the B-17

minutes after it landed. He said that as the crew left the aircraft, every man appeared to be in a highly emotional state with the body of their dead pilot still aboard. He recalled that the crew members were so protective of their pilot that they refused to let anyone approach the aircraft until after the body was removed to the ambulance.

During the mission, Roy Q. Smith, the flight engineer aboard "S for Sugar," helped move Don Stockton who was slumped over the controls. He then sat shoulder to shoulder with the co-pilot to bring the B-17 back from Kiel for a safe landing at Molesworth.

Smith tells a poignant story about that mission and its consequence:

"On 14 May 1943, I flew my 24th mission to Kiel, Germany. My pilot, Donald E. Stockton, was killed by two 20mm slugs. We buried him on 18 May.

"Early on 19 May, I was called to fly a mission. When

I walked into the Briefing Room and saw the map and the target, Kiel, I just turned and said 'I quit.'

"My navigator, Larry Grant, and bombardier, Lloyd Shirley, had flown every mission I had with Stockton, and they convinced me to go. We went, and all three of us completed our tour that day by going back to Kiel."

Walter Cronkite, who flew on two missions with the

303rd, and reported on other missions from Molesworth, had developed a special friendship with Don Stockton. "We spent many evenings together at various London pubs," said Cronkite.

The journalist was there when "S for Sugar" landed, and later described the scene in an article as "Nine crying boys and a war correspondent who thought he was too tough to cry."



**WAR CORRESPONDENTS** suit up. From left to right are Gladwin Hill, William Wade, Robert Post, Walter Cronkite, Homer Bigart and Paul Manning. (Photo courtesy of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.)

# Early Reservations Urged For Oklahoma City Reunion

By Ed Miller  
Vice President for Reunions

The pace of hotel reservations for the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association's 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion in Oklahoma City, is already shattering the pace set for the Reunions held at Colorado Springs and San Francisco. We just may have underestimated the needs for hotel rooms for the October 8<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>, 1999 get-to-gather. Our original estimate of a maximum of 210 rooms a night, appears in jeopardy at this time. We already have over 100 rooms reserved. We can increase our block to 270 rooms, if the reservations are made before 15 August.

At Colorado Springs in 1995, we had several members who delayed their decision on coming, until after the "room block" at the Red Lion Hotel was exhausted. They were very disappointed when they had to be placed at motels away from the hustle and bustle of the rest of the Group. Don't fall into that trap because our "overflow block of 270 rooms" will drop back to 210 rooms, come August 15.

You may arrive on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October and depart on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and still have the low rate of \$62.00 per night. Even though we have reduced the "official days" of the Reunion from five to four, we have a program for "early-bird arrivals" and "I don't want to go home stragglers." And October is, historically, the very best time to visit this great frontier state.

The same kind of urgency is required when making your selections of the "Optional Tours/Events" that are listed in your Reunion Invitation. You must remember that Oklahoma citizens are "fanatics" when it comes to football on Saturday, and October 9<sup>th</sup> will be a "big game" day. That means that we must contract for our busses and vans, well ahead of time. So, August 15<sup>th</sup> becomes a "critical date." Make sure you don't get relegated to the "Stand-By List."

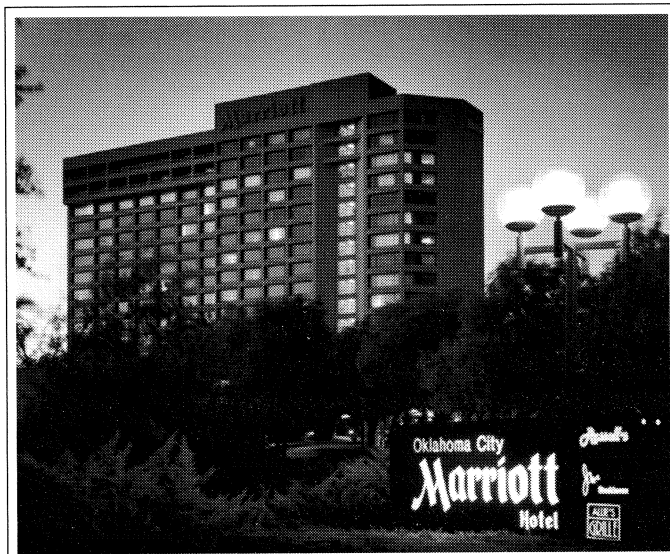
It was from this location that thousands of "Sooners" were to start their "Run" for "free land locations" in the southwestern part of the State in the 1890's and early 1900's. Some, in fact many, left before it was legally permitted, and that is why you see and hear the word "Sooners" so much around the state. So, we have arranged tours for the "Sooners" of the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group.

We will have two "Escorted City Tours" – one on Friday for early-arrivals, and one on Saturday. These tours will show you the sights of the City, including the Murrah Building bomb site, the world's largest stockyards, the oil baron's beautiful office towers, historic "Bricktown," it will allow you to go inside the only State Capital with "pumping oil wells" on its yard, and drive by the famous National Cowboy Hall of Fame, and the Myriad Gardens. You will enjoy a fine lunch at one of the territorial style restaurants.

No visit to the City is complete without a visit to the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and the Western Heritage Center to enhance its western flavor. It is a cultural mecca of beautiful art and artifacts of western history. You will need three hours to cover all of the exhibits—and there is plenty of seating space to rest while viewing. You can take a trip through the 1890's, and view the manner of living that your ancestors experienced when they came west. Pay a visit to <http://cowboyhalloffame.org/> to see the Cowboy Hall of Fame.

If you like, you may extend your tour to include the Kirkpatrick Center Museum Omniplex that contains six different museums. Busses leaving the Cowboy Hall of Fame will drop you off and pick you up for a return to the Hotel. Pay a visit to <http://omniplex.org/> for a look at these fine museums.

On Saturday evening, we will have busses available to take you to the Historic Bricktown area of Oklahoma City for dining. There are 35 different restaurants, many with familiar names, in a 5-block area that offers many different kinds of cuisine. You will be able to satisfy your own desires as to the en-



**THE OKLAHOMA CITY MARRIOTT HOTEL makes an impressive twilight display against the darkening skyline.**

tree for the evening, but we warn you, it just may have an "Okie" flavor.

Sunday morning will feature the always-emotional highlight of every 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group reunion--the Memorial Services that honor our Fallen Comrades. The ceremonies will include posting of the colors, the reading of the Names, the playing of Taps, and time to reminisce with memories of our Fallen Comrades.

On Sunday afternoon we will view "horse-racing" at it's best—in the finest enclosed air-conditioned grandstand in the world. You may opt for "VIP" or "First-Class" treatment or you may go on your own. If you wish to go "VIP" be sure to bring along a dress coat and street shoes, and be ready to eat and snack all afternoon at a very deluxe buffet. Going "First-Class" means reserved seating at the "Silks" restaurant, with a full buffet keeping you busy until Post Time. Or you may catch a cab and get in for \$1.50 grandstand seating. For those of you who are yet to see the Cowboy Hall of Fame, there will be an opportunity this afternoon.

The Group Dinner on Sunday evening will feature our Webmaster, Gary Moncur. We want to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to view this "Outstanding Web Site," [www.303rdbga.com](http://www.303rdbga.com). We will have a large auditorium screen in the ballroom, to demonstrate the contents of the Web Site. The winners of the "Raffle" will also enjoy this evening.

Our Squadrons and General Membership Meetings will take place on Monday morning after a Group Breakfast. And the theme for our Gala Banquet will be, "A SALUTE TO OUR SUPPORT PERSONNEL." We are expecting a large number of our supporting personnel to come to this Reunion, and we are going to pay them tribute.

It is time that every man that helped build the Group's outstanding record of getting the aircraft into the air and bringing them back, 364 times, receive a big salute. I am talking about the drivers, the cooks, the squadron orderlies, the medics, the finance clerks, the utilities people, the supply clerks, the parachute riggers, the bomb loaders, the maintenance men, the crew chiefs, the MP's, the headquarters and squadron staff people, and all the guys that stayed up all night figuring out where the "flak was located" and what route should be flown. I am talking about all these "unheralded men" that have never been fully recognized. If they come to Oklahoma City, we will make sure they are "Recognized."

The Marriott offers two fine restaurants. The Hotel's trademark is their JW Steakhouse, for up-scale dining. Early arrivals on Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, may opt to have dinner with

(Continued on page 18)

# Red Carpet Treatment at Molesworth DRIVE UNDER WAY TO ERECT PERMANENT MEMORIAL TO 303rd VETS NEAR BASE

By Colonel Frances Early  
Commander, Joint Analysis Center, RAF Molesworth

Since Molesworth is one of the two former 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force bases at which Americans are still stationed today (the other being Alconbury, now a support base for Molesworth), the current Molesworth residents are in a unique position to welcome former 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force members. When we have the opportunity to do this it is a special occasion for us.

As military members, we feel that those who preceded us during wartime and "paid their dues" are special. While stationed on the same soil, you underwent sacrifices and hardship which we, fortunately, do not have to bear today, thanks in great part to what you did. For these reasons I and the two Joint Analysis Center Commanders that preceded me have had an open invitation for any 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group (H) veteran to visit us at any time.

If the Commander is on base during the visit, the Commander will personally greet the visitor if at all possible.

During the visit we will escort the visitor through the Might In Flight Building, the main operations building of the JAC. We will give the veteran a tour of the base, and provide any local assistance he and his family may need. We have also hosted many visits by families of veterans, and are happy to do so.

You will be welcome whenever you come, but we ask that, if you can, let us know ahead of time when you will be here. We would prefer visiting veterans provide us as much notice as possible, but even if you drop in unannounced we would be very pleased to see you.

Not surprisingly, the summer months have traditionally been the busiest for veteran visits. We have had

several functions during past summers to honor 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force veterans. The first big function the JAC hosted was the special day in May 1993 when a large group of 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group (H) veterans visited Molesworth for a day. Those few personnel still here who experienced that affair feel it was their most memorable day at Molesworth.

It was capped off by a hangar dance in one of the T-2 hangars that are still standing at Molesworth. Last year we had another hangar dance, in the same hangar, attended by over 1,200 people including over a hundred 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force veterans. It was an emotional and enjoyable evening.

We plan to do it again this year. The hangar dance will be on Saturday 5 June. As last year, any 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force veteran and his family will be admitted free and considered an honored guest. We have retained a band known for its ability to play wartime tunes. There will be a few dozen WWII vehicles on the premises, and everyone will be dressed up in 1940s garb.

There will be lots of 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force displays in the hangar, and door prizes as well as food and drink. If any 303<sup>rd</sup> veterans plan to be in England at this time, please contact us so we can have tickets waiting for you (see box on page 14).

Most of you are

aware through the Newsletter that we have a superb art collection at Molesworth honoring the 303<sup>rd</sup>. It is probably the largest collection of art honoring any 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force group, and continues to grow. The collection is housed in the Might In Flight Building, although the artwork can also be found in other buildings.

One thing that has been missing at Molesworth, however, which does exist at many other former 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force bases, is a permanent memorial to the 303<sup>rd</sup>. At several bases, there are beautiful marble monuments documenting what took place at those locations. They all have public access, and they are never without wreaths and flowers left by thankful British citizens as well as American visitors and veterans groups.

A committee has been established at Molesworth to correct this omission, and we will erect a permanent memorial as soon as the funding can be raised. This effort was triggered by a



Colonel Frances Early

member of your Association, Ken Clarke, who noticed the many other memorials at 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force airfields and the notable absence of one at Molesworth. The memorial will honor all those who served with the 303<sup>rd</sup> at Molesworth, including support organizations.

Unfortunately, regulations prohibit the U.S. military from formally sponsoring such an effort, but military members can support such as effort as private individuals and many at Molesworth will do so. Brian McGuire, a contractor working for the JAC and a retired Air Force officer, has worked with every JAC Commander to date on projects to perpetuate the heritage of the 303<sup>rd</sup>, and is on the independent committee working the memorial project.

We will keep the Association informed of the committee's efforts through the Newsletter.



WWII MILITARY POLICE ESCORT was provided to veterans attending last year's Hangar Dance. MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 20.



**WHEN EARTHQUAKE McGOON** took off 17 April 1945 to attack Dresden, Sgt. Richard Bowler was flying his second mission as Navigator. It was to be his last.

## HOW A TAILGUNNER EARNED NAVIGATOR WINGS IN COMBAT

(Editor's note—The February issue of the Newsletter carried the story of the crash of *Earthquake McGoon*. Dick Bowler and seven other crew members became POW's. The pilot and the tail-gunner didn't survive. What follows is a personal account of how Bowler of the 303rd's 427th Squadron became the only enlisted man in the 8th Air Force to fly combat missions as a navigator.)

By Richard Bowler, Jr.

During my senior year in high school one of my elected courses was Marine Navigation. This was a fascinating course which melded our current math, science, and physics classes to a practical working process. It was comprehensive and covered dead reckoning, pilotage, radio compass, and a considerable emphasis on celestial. All phases were held in our classroom lab and on the flat roof of our school at night and in actual practice on board ship. This turned out to be an appropriate

experience under the circumstances at the time.

Near the end of the school year my dad reluctantly signed release papers permitting me to seek enlistment in the Air Corp Cadet program where I could continue training toward what I could do best in mastering this science of navigation with a much faster moving base.

My navigation training at Selman Field was my final experience. After having completed this training and ordering my uniforms, I was told I would not graduate owing to either missing or failing to pass one of the multiple exams. To this day my memory is not clear in this matter, but I'm inclined to think I missed a

final exam. At any rate this disappointing experience resulted in orders to advanced aerial gunnery school at Kingman, Arizona, to become a gunner. But that was not to become the end of a dream.

The development of a bomber crew was to be a story all of its own. I found the friendships and mechanics of making a bomber function for its intended purpose depended on meshing the individual training talents and minds of men and personalities to make it all happen. This activity occurred successfully under the leadership of 1st Lt. George Sabine, our pilot, who also made us aware of the ground crew mechanics whose skills kept the airplane



**THE LONG VOYAGE HOME** kept ground crews and other support personnel scanning the skies for the return of their aircraft. The 303rd Bomb Group lost two B-17's on the Dresden raid.

alive and operable. The flight and ground crews made up the team, and I was proud to be a member.

Arriving at Molesworth on March 11, 1945, was the beginning of the real thing for our crew #394. I flew as tail gunner for 11 missions. During the first mission, regardless of age, we became "men" awful fast. Nobody cried, skipped out, panicked, or required too much "laundering" and didn't need defrosting, but we sure as hell found out what a war zone was all about. During my short tenure between missions, I was encouraged by my pilot, Lt. George Sabine, and navigator, Lt. Warren Dickey, to continue my pursuit in navigation training at the 303rd. This was a genuine attempt on their part to have me take a continued interest in pursuing a dream I had quietly tucked away. I did just that.

I went to our squadron navigator, a Captain Marshall Neubert and explained my background and desire to pursue further local navigation training and exposure. Captain Neubert approved and advised me to attend local squadron ground school and radar training between my regular missions for later evaluation.

Having completed this activity and following a check flight he personally supervised, Capt. Neubert was satisfied that I should be reassigned for combat navigation. Shortly after

assignment to Lt. Thomas Kahler's crew as navigator, two things happened. I had to leave Lt. George Sabine's crew on "Rosie O'Grady" as tail gunner which was not emotionally comfortable, but I knew they would be flying our wing or vice versa. My new assignment on *Earthquake McGoon* to Lt. Kahler's crew as navigator, although as casual friends to only a few, I came to the realization that all eyes might be wondering if their confidence was to be a factor. I was fully confident, but were they? As it turned out this first mission (this was Lt. Kahler's 34th mission) was a success. At the time I had not given any thought to the fact that my rank as sergeant might be a little strange to the crew members. I had learned earlier that in spite of rank or custom that war is a dirty business and under the circumstances what really counted was a team ethic and knowing how to handle the job.

"*Earthquake McGoon's*" next and last mission was the Dresden raid on April 17, 1945. I always thought that any target requiring revisits three times during the same mission was going to be tough and very risky. And tough it was - intense flak was the culprit as two of our crew lost their lives and the rest of us survived by parachute.

On March 8, 1948, I received a commission as 2nd Lt. per order of 1st Air Force Commanding General.

**6 March 1943**

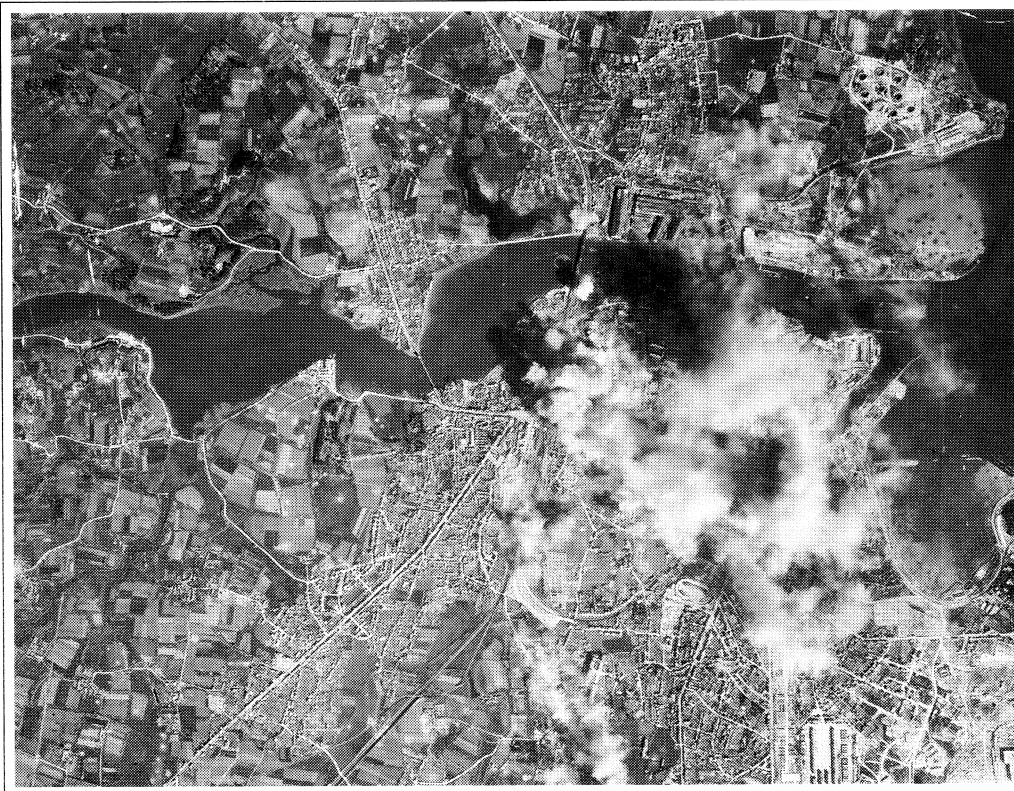
**303rd Bomb Group  
Mission Number 20**

**Target: Lorient,  
France**

**Aiming points:  
Power station and  
adjacent bridge**

**17 aircraft bombed  
the primary target  
with good results**

**One 360th Squadron  
aircraft was downed  
by an FW-190**



## THE TERRIFYING LAST MISSION OF THE MARTIN PLOCHER CREW

Henry Legge, engineer on the ill-fated B-17 #42-5262, says he will never forget the horror of the mission to Lorient on March 6, 1943. In his words, "We were hit by an FW-190. The number one and two engines were knocked out. The co-pilot and left waist gunner were killed instantly. The navigator and the tailgunner were seriously wounded.

"We threw all the loose equipment out of the airplane, but continued losing altitude. Number four engine was overheating, and we were forced to make a water landing in the English Channel.

"We had three men (officers) in one dinghy and five men in the other one. We were in the water about 12 hours when a German boat picked us up and took us to Brest, France."

Seven of the surviving crew members spent the next 26 months as prisoners of war. The wounded tailgunner, A. E. Tornow, was repatriated by the Germans.

Pilot Martin E. Plocher, an accomplished writer, provided the Newsletter with a more detailed and graphic account of the event, which we edited to meet space requirements—

It was a beautiful day, not a cloud in the sky. This

was hard to believe, because England has so much fog, rain and wind.

We took off on our scheduled time and joined in formation. I was assigned the number three position, the left wing on the lead aircraft. We climbed to our assigned altitude of 22,000 feet while flying over the English Channel. We arrived over the target, dropped the bombs, and headed for England.

There is an old saying "Beware of the Hun in the sun." We were hit by FW-190 20mm cannon shells, knocking out the #1 and #2 engines and damaging the #3 engine. The co-pilot was hit and killed instantly, as was the left waist gunner. The navigator and the tail gunner were wounded by shell fragments. A fire in his area was extinguished by the radio operator.

I leveled off at 500 feet above the water, and ordered

the crew to throw all useless equipment overboard. I flew approximately 40 minutes on a course to England when the #4 engine began to belch black smoke, losing power. The crew took ditching positions to brace for impact, and I maneuvered the plane to a large swell. It was a good landing, one you never get a chance to practice.

We climbed into two dinghies, plugging holes in the fabric with torn handkerchiefs. The plane stayed afloat for approximately two minutes, then sank with the bodies of my co-pilot C. A. Tyler and left waist gunner R. L. Stevenson.

I maneuvered the raft to where the navigator, Lt. Corwin, and the bombardier, Lt. Kahlden, were bobbing in the water, and pulled them aboard. I spotted the other life raft with five crew members, and we managed to tie the two rafts together.

The navigator was drenched with blood, but kept insisting he was OK. I asked him if he could

place our position. He said we were at mid-English Channel, near the Bay of Biscay, and the currents might take us toward the shores of Portugal. As the sun began to set, we heard an aircraft. A German fighter had spotted us, and flashed its landing lights before veering away.

Around midnight, all of us shivering from the cold and wet after floating for 12 hours, we saw a light sweeping the waters some distance away. A loud and clear English speaking voice asked us who we were. We were not able to see anything so we kept quiet. Again the voice spoke, and I recognized the German accent. It looked as if we were to be taken prisoners of war.

The German vessel approached our rafts and lowered a 30-foot rope ladder. I was the last one to make the climb.

The August issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter will carry Martin Plocher's dramatic account of his 26 months as a prisoner of war.

# <sup>956</sup>PFF was a series of adventures: But not always according to Hoyle

By Hal Susskind

Sometime about March 20, 1944, a piece of paper from Group Headquarters did something the whole German Luftwaffe couldn't do in 17 combat missions; it broke up Lt. Donald Stoullil's crew.

The unwelcome orders assigned Lt. Stoullil's crew along with Bert Bordelon's crew to a new PFF outfit being formed with the 305th Bomb Group at Chelveston Air Base near Rushden.

Whether Lt. Stoullil's crew was the "first choice" is still open to question. (Even the ensuing 50 years hasn't tempered my skepticism) But a few days later we were on a truck bound for our new home and unknown experiences; but without our top gunner, Ken Holder, our ball-turret operator with several German planes to his credit. Also not making the trip was our bombardier, Lt. George Trawicki, my own personal flak-stopper.

The original crew of ten which came together at Ephrata Air Base in Washington in August of 1943 was now down to eight which proves that a piece of paper from Headquarters is sometimes more potent than German flak.

The next few weeks were spent on training missions and adjusting to the fact that we were going to be one gun short in defending ourselves in the future. Being a navigator I was presented with a very important bonus. As long as the radar equipment was working and the radar operator knew his stuff, I was assured of knowing my position almost instantaneously at all times.

"Graduation Day" came during the early hours of April 18, 1944 when we were alerted that we were to lead the 303rd Bomb Group on a mission to Oranienburg. So off we went into that black English sky and in a matter of minutes we were touching down at Molesworth. We were home; or were we?

We soon realized that we were just "that PFF crew from Chelveston." We were informed that since we were leading the 41st CBW, it would become a 303rd crew with the addition of the mission commander Major G. F. Schumake as pilot; Lt. R. R. Bowen as Bombardier and Capt. H.H. Steely as first Navigator. I believe our co-pilot, Lt. Ed Calahan was designated



**Lt. Stoullil's crew - (Front row l to r) Sgts. Kenny Holder, George Greene, Jim Owens, Eugene Romer and Cal Turkington. (Back row l to r) Lts. Hal Susskind, George Trawicki, Don Stoullil, Ed Calahan and Sgt. Bill Brown.**

to fly as tail gunner to report on the Group's formation. It was valuable "lead team" experience for our crew and we all benefitted from it. It also demonstrated the benefits of the close working relationship between the navigator and the "Mickey" Operator under combat conditions.

A week later, on April 24, 1944, a date I'll never forget, we were alerted and tasked to lead the 384th Bomb Group on a mission to bomb the airdrome at Oberpfaffenhofen, Germany, in the Munich area.

Departing Chelveston for Grafton Underwood in the wee hours of the morning was uneventful but we had no idea of what was about to happen and what a long day it would be.

Landing at Grafton Underwood and with a few hours to spare before briefing, we went looking for a place to sack out. We had just about hit the sack when someone came into the room and awakened me and said, "Are you the navigator?" "No," I answered. "I'm the co-pilot; that's the navigator over there," I said pointing to Ed Calahan. He woke up Ed and told him he had to go to a briefing.

Minutes later Ed came barging through the door and practically threw me out of the bed, yelling, "They want you!"

Sheepishly, I took off for the Navigator pre-briefing where I learned that we were going to fly one of the deputy positions off the left wing of Col. Dale Smith, C.O. of the 384th who was going to lead with his own crew, in his own aircraft. It was a maximum effort by the 1st Air Division led by Gen. Robert Travis lead-

ing the 41st CBW-A and Col. Dale Smith leading 41st CBW-B. The crew assembled at our PFF aircraft awaiting the arrival of a 384th Bombardier. But instead of a bombardier, the 384th assigned a young airman toggler to our crew. Unfortunately, I never asked him how many missions he had flown. I thought his assignment to us, was very strange. Here we are, one of the deputy leaders, with a bombsight aboard but no bombardier. What happens if the lead aircraft has to abort or gets shot down? "Oh well; I'm being paid to fly, not to think."

The take-off and assembly were routine but as we neared the French Coast I noticed we were slightly off course. We paid for that mistake when a B-17 fell out of formation and started that long spiral to the ground a victim of flak.

As we entered the Strasbourg area, all Hell broke loose. More than 50 Me-109s and FW-190s savagely attacked the bombers. The crews of the 41st CBW-B, us included, bore the brunt of the savage enemy attacks for more than 40 minutes, even up to the target area. Our two waist gunners Sgts. Brown and Greene were very busy calling out fighters coming in from all directions. Sgt. Turkington in the tail was also kept very busy calling out fighter attacks, until he yelled out "I'm hit."

Sgt. Greene rushed back to the tail to drag Sgt. Turkington into the radio room. Our mickey operator with his equipment shot out then made a career change and became the medic.

And the attacks continued. After

a few more nose attacks, and with flak breaking all around us, our young toggler lost it, and screamed over the intercom. "Let's put our wheels down and surrender." About that time, we then took a hit in our right wing and I watched as gas poured out over our wing. Would it break out in flames? We watched carefully as the problems mounted.

Our tail gunner was wounded, and there was a doubt of whether we could ever make it back to England.

My thinking was interrupted by my headset coming to life and breaking the silence with: "Pilot to Navigator. How far is it to Switzerland?"

I replied, "Look out your window to your left. That body of water is Lake Constance. On the other side of that is Switzerland. But I can see two Me-109s between us and Switzerland."

Suddenly as if by a miracle, there were no more fighter attacks and the gas stopped flowing over the wing. We were in the clear.


"Let's go back to England" said co-pilot Lt. Calahan. We all agreed and back to England we went; but not knowing how much gas we lost, we sweated out every mile.

Entering the traffic pattern at Chelveston, we fired our red flares and landed. Sgt. Turkington was taken to the hospital. I looked for the toggler, but he had vanished. It had been a long day with ten hours of it being spent in the air.

Our next five lead missions after the Oberpfaffenhofen shootout, were hardly conducive to living a long life. They were: April 29-Berlin; May 8-Berlin; May 13-Stettin; May 19 Berlin and May 24- Berlin. Only one mission was with the 303rd, the other four were divided up between the 379th and the 384th.

All in all we flew 13 missions as a PFF crew before we ended our tours on D-Day by flying two missions. Although we had been reluctant to leave Molesworth and the 303rd to fly as a PFF crew, we shared a lot of wonderful experiences that would make for good reading in future issues of the newsletter.

I firmly believe that the invention and use of the on board radar shortened the war by allowing us to bomb German targets even when the weather was less than perfect.




# Hell's Angels


## 303rd Bombardment Group (H) Association

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♦ MEMBERSHIP ♦ REUNIONS ♦ PX ♦ HISTORY ♦ PERSONNEL ♦ ACTION ♦ PHOTOS ♦ LINKS ♦ GUESTS ♦

Welcome to 303rd BGA.com  
Internet Home of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) Association

 Search 303rdBGA:

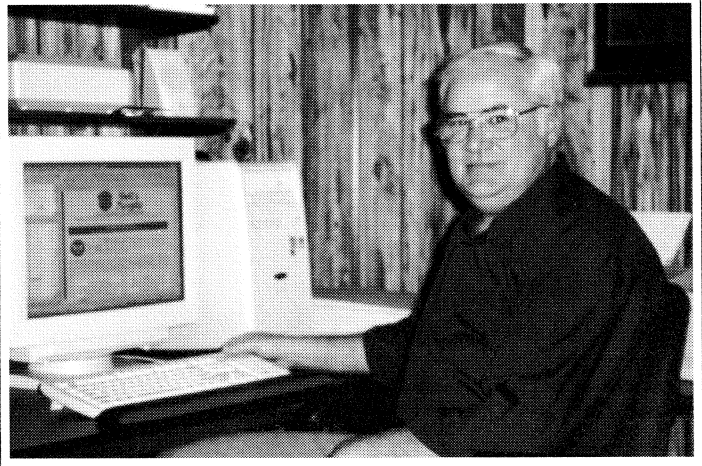


This site is dedicated to the brave men who served in the 8th Air Force, **303rd Bombardment Group (Heavy)** "**Hell's Angels**" during World War II. They adopted the motto, "**Might in Flight**" in October 1942 and lived up to it on each of their 364 bombing missions.

- DISCLAIMER -

There is no known historical connection between the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) "Hell's Angels" and the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club.

The 303rd BG Association consists of former members of the 303rd BG(H), their families and others interested in perpetuating its history. There are currently almost 2000 active members of the Association. If you or someone you know served in the **303rd Bomb Group**, we'd love to hear from you. Some of your comrades are already members. For information about joining us, click [here](#).



**WEBMASTER GARY MONCUR** in a rare moment of quiet introspection as he prepares to add another entry to the 303rd's voluminous website.

the internet home of the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association.

**THE HOME PAGE**, in living color, is the first image guests have when they visit the 303rd Bomb Group Association Website. The upper portion of the page, shown above, includes a new search engine to facilitate finding what you're looking for on the electronic equivalent of more than a thousand pages.

# The A-B-C's of The Internet

By **Gary L. Moncur, 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA Webmaster**  
(son of Vern L. Moncur, original 359th Thunderbird Pilot)

What in the world is the "Internet?" My dear 82-year-old mother calls it the "intercom." She's really not too far off, but it is a little more complicated than that. Basically, the internet is a bunch of computers hooked together so their users can communicate with each other and share information. Imagine a few computers in a building or office linked to a few other computers in another building, linked to even more computers in other buildings, and so on and so on throughout companies, organizations, businesses, schools and homes around the world. The links are via cables, telephone lines and satellites. In fact, there are so many computers linked together that the wires would resemble a huge spider web - hence the name "World Wide Web."

How many computers are linked in this huge web? No one knows, but recent surveys estimate about 60 million people worldwide use the internet and the World Wide Web - and that figure is growing rapidly each day. The biggest advantage of electronic communication is the speed. While normal US Mail may take two or three days to be delivered across the state, Electronic Mail (or E-mail) takes two or three seconds to be delivered to the other side of the world.

There are about 350 million "websites" or "web pages" online throughout the world that cover every subject you can imagine - and many subjects you wouldn't want to imagine. Virtually every major company now has a website. Millions of websites are maintained by individuals and organizations to promote their interests or hobbies. If you are online, any information can be easily searched from your home computer.

A recent search for "World War II" shows more than 270,000 web pages. If you search for "303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group," you'll find more than 100 web pages to look at - and the first one listed is "[www.303rdBGA.com](http://www.303rdBGA.com),"

The 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association Website celebrated its first anniversary on 31 January 1999. Our online presence is growing steadily as the word spreads around the world about the quality of our website and the massive amount of 303<sup>rd</sup> BG information we showcase. Our daily visits are also growing rapidly. We now average from 175-200 unique visits each day. At last count, we have been visited by people from more than 70 countries. Our pages have received rave reviews from hundreds of visitors.

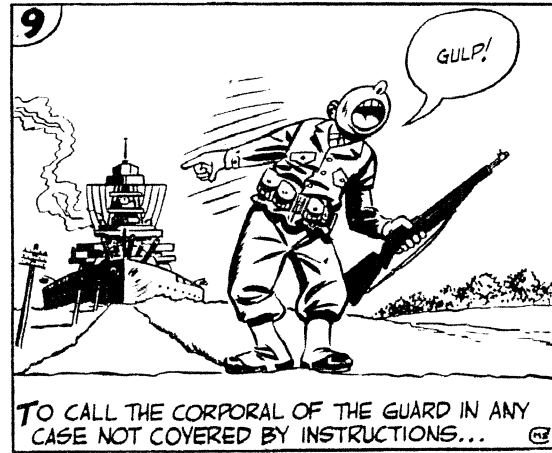
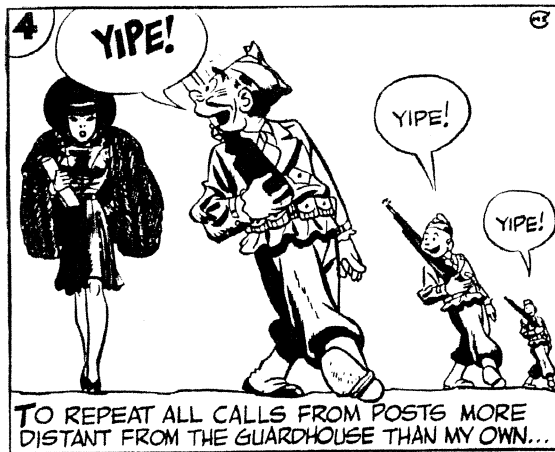
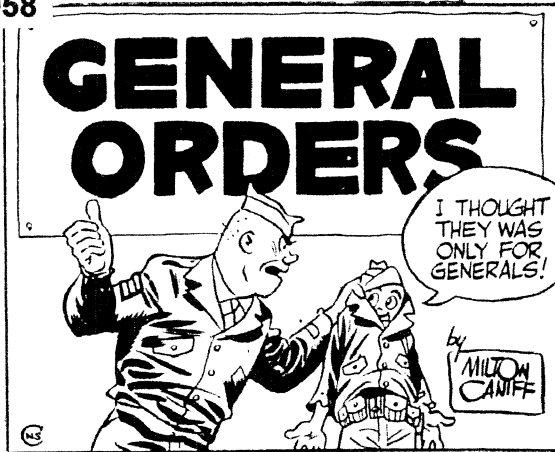
The information we have online, for you and the world to view, boggles the mind. What is there? Well, if you were in the 303<sup>rd</sup> BG, the most interesting thing you will find is your own name. We may even have your crew photo. Most of the information on our web pages is due to the efforts and research of President and Historian Harry D. Gobrecht and Vice President Edgar C. Miller. Much of the webpage content is from Harry Gobrecht's *Might in Flight*, and some of it is not published anywhere else. The 303<sup>rd</sup> Personnel Rosters were compiled by Ed Miller, after years of work extracting names from old records. My job as "Webmaster" is to design and update the web pages. I work daily to ensure our web pages are easy to find, easy to navigate and easily accessible to the entire world.

There is really too much information available on 303rdBGA.com to list here. In fact, if you were to print it all out it would take over 1000 pages. Here is just some of the information you can find on our pages:

**303rd BG PERSONNEL:** Searchable Index of almost 10,000 303rd Members  
**303rd COMMANDERS:** 303rd BG Group & Squadron Commanders  
**303rd COMBAT TEAM:** 303rd BG Squadrons highlighted  
**303rd BG MISSIONS:** 364 Bombing Missions with dates and targets  
**CITIES BOMBED:** Cities Bombed by the 303rd  
**ORIGINAL CREWS:** 303rd's First Crews with Crew Photos  
**303rd CREWS:** 303rd Crew Photos (Do we have your crew yet?)  
**303rd NAMED B-17s:** Listed Alphabetically and by Serial Number  
**303rd AIRCRAFT:** All Known 303rd BG B-17s  
**PHOTOS:** Relive some of the memories  
**STATS & FACTS:** 303rd Statistics  
**GUEST BOOK:** Visitors leave comments, ask questions and search for old friends.

If you haven't had the opportunity to visit YOUR webpage, please try to do so. If you're not connected to the internet, someone you know is. Your visit will be time well spent and a trip down Memory Lane. While you're there, leave your comments in our Guest Book. We'd love to hear from you!

**E-mail:** [glm@xmission.com](mailto:glm@xmission.com)  
**Web:** <http://www.303rdBGA.com>



# MILTON CANIFF—WWII'S STAR "STEVE CANYON"

By Eddie Deerfield

It can be arguably claimed that Milton Arthur Caniff, creator of *Terry and the Pirates* in 1934, became the most prolific civilian cartoonist of World War II after he was disqualified for military service by an old injury. His talents in support of the war effort earned him numerous citations from the U.S. War, Navy and Treasury Departments.

Aside from his *Terry and the Pirates* fame, he was best known among men in uniform for introducing *Male Call*, a new strip drawn exclusively for the troops and distributed weekly by the Camp Newspaper Service. It was said that

interest in the ongoing adventures of Caniff's characters in *Male Call* even rivaled getting news from home.

General Henry "Hap" Arnold was reportedly so impressed with Caniff's devoted following in the Army Air Corps that he ordered the assignment of an officer to assist the artist with technical details.

Caniff's lesser known contributions during the war included the designing and illustrating of scores of military instruction manuals, posters and unit insignia.

Shortly after the war, Milton Caniff launched his new strip, *Steve Canyon*, which became the basis for a movie and television series.

In addition to the honors bestowed on him by the U.S. government for wartime contributions, Caniff received the

# Here's How To Order Those Mission Reports

By Jack Rencher

Greetings, fellow 303'd-ers. By the time you see this in print we will be able to resume sending mission reports to those who request them.

The cost will be as follows: \$5.00 for the first report plus \$2.00 for each additional report plus 10 cents for each page. The Bomb Group is not trying to make money on the reports, but hopes to break even. The income is used for postage, packaging, paper and our share of the maintenance contract on our Xerox copier. If we run 45% of the copies, we would pay 45% of the maintenance contract. The new copier is furnished by the undersigned at no cost to the Bomb Group. (Over \$13,000 for the beast, but it's a GOOD one, I hope)

The reports probably average about 60 to 80 pages each per mission, but some might have only 20 or 30 pages and some run from 100 to 140 pages. Please be aware: The copies we have are on legal size paper (8 1/2 x 14), which were copied from onion skin copies, which were copies themselves copied under war time conditions with copier technology available some 55 years ago. What I am trying to say is: Some copies are hard to read. Some are unreadable. We can't make copies that are much better than our originals.

It takes me about 8 to 10 hours to run a package, and re-file a 35 mission order. We share the copier with 2 companies, so I use it mostly at night and on week ends. A 35 mission report would probably contain over 2000 sheets (4 reams) and weigh about 30 pounds.

If you order reports, I need most of all the date of the missions and/or the mission numbers. The name of the target is helpful. If you need a specific mission for some specific information, I need the squadron number and the pilot's name in addition to the above.

You don't need to send money. I'll send you a bill with your reports. BE SURE to include your name, address and phone number with your order.

Jack P. Rencher, Treasurer  
The 303'd Bomb Group (H) Association  
P. O. Box 7927 Boise, ID 83707-1927  
e-mail [jpreacher@AOL.com](mailto:jpreacher@AOL.com)  
Phone: Days 208 375 7200 Home 208 343 2265



**WAR BOND DRIVES** were not the exclusive domain of civilians back in the States. 303rd Bomb Group personnel at Molesworth contributed in the "Victory Squadron Bond Drive" three months after the June landings in Normandy in 1944.



## IP ARTIST"

prized Reuben Award in 1947 and 1972, journalism Sigma Delta Chi's Distinguished Service Award, the Tom Foundation's National Service Medal, the U.S. Air Association's Man Of The Year Award, the New York Anthropropic League Award and numerous other recogni-

Milton Arthur Caniff was named to the National Comic Hall of Fame in 1981. He died in 1988 at the age of 82.

REFERENCE SOURCES: Smithsonian Collection of News-Comics, 1977; Encyclopedia Americana, 1997; Who's in America, 44th Edition; Milton Caniff, Rembrandt of Comic Strip, 1981; Public Affairs Office, MacDill Air Force (FL)

# From the President

## "PLANNING FOR OUR FUTURE"

### OUR NEXT 303RD BG(H) MISSION

#### **[Our 303rd BGA Organization]**

Many of the Eighth Air Force Units have already made plans for their dissolution. Our 303rd BGA is fortunate. We remain a strong and active organization. We have concluded that we will not dissolve our organization as long as the following exist.

Treasury Funds - Sufficient to sustain our operations

Leaders - Members who are willing to fill all of our essential leadership positions.

Membership base - Active number of Regular, Widow, Family and Associate members

Reunions - Continued membership support in attending our outstanding reunions

Hell's Angels Newsletter - An Editor who will continue to prepare and publish our Newsletter which has been "glue that has held us together"

#### **[Planning for the Future]**

Members can be very proud of our 303rd BG(H) Association plans for the future to further preserve the heritage of our 303rd BG(H).

#### **★Our renowned Web page -**

**<<http://www.303rdbga.com>>.**

Our web page continues to expand and become more useful. Recent improvements include:

□ A "Search Engine" that permits easy and rapid search for individuals, aircraft, missions, etc. named in our web page.

□ Expanded photos coverage of combat crews, lead crews and ground crews.

□ Feature stories that are frequently changed.

We have been averaging approximately 50 web page hits per day and have had visitors from 35 countries. This is a remarkable record.

#### **★Mission Report Digests**

Ed Miller has now completed approximately one-third of the reports that will enable each combat crewmen to determine the missions that he flew and all missions flown by each B-17. Each of our 364 missions will have a condensed mission story plus all crews dispatched and formations flown.

#### **★Mission Folder Reports**

Jack Rencher has a new copy machine and is prepared to accept orders for copies of mission folders.

#### **★Might in Flight (2nd Edition)**

We still have 98 unsold copies.

Place your order now to avoid disappointment

#### **★Might in Flight (1st Edition)**

Ten special presentation books are being presented to USAF Airbase museum libraries

#### **★Memorials**

303rd BG(H) Roadside memorial  
RAF Molesworth We are working with Brian McGuire at The Joint Analysis Center to erect a roadside memorial immediately outside the main gate at RAF Molesworth.

B-47 Erection Fund - M8thAFH Museum, Savannah, GA. Fifty-one 303rd BG(H) Association members have donated \$30,126 plus our \$10,000 303rd BGA donation. The B-47 erection, with our 303rd red triangle "C" tail insignia, is anticipated to be completed by the fall of 1999.

M8thAFH Museum front entry rotunda kiosk display. This display as a memorial to Colonel Kermit Stephen's wife Muriel should be completed by May 1999

#### **★303rd BG(H) Archive Records**

Our archive photo collection will be available for viewing at Oklahoma City. Donation of additional photos are still urgently required to make our collection as complete as follows before it is given to the M8thAFH Museum.

#### **[1999 Reunion]**

Ed & Jill Miller have a great reunion program planned. The Marriott Hotel has already received over 100 room reservations. Reservations should be made promptly to help in reunion planning and to make sure that you have a room

#### **[303rd BGA Directory]**

In response to the request of many we anticipate having our new 1999 directory completed and mailed before July 1999.

#### **[Thank You]**

To our Past Presidents and Executive Committees for all of their help. You are a great bunch of superior leaders.



961

## USAF Chief of Staff Awarded 8th AF Heritage Museum's 1999 Gen. Jimmy Stewart Honor

General Michael E. Ryan, Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, received the prestigious B/G James M. Stewart Award at a black-tie affair in the Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum's Lewis Lyle Rotunda Monday, March 1.

The Award is given on an annual basis in honor of General Stewart to an individual or group in recognition of distinguished contributions to United States civilian or military aviation or exceptional airmanship and leadership involving aerial flight. This award recognizes uncommon aviation skills, dedicated leadership, and high competence of aviation-minded men and women whose actions are distinctively noteworthy. This year's recipient, General Ryan, serves as the senior uniformed Air Force officer responsible for the organization, training, and equipage of 750,000 active duty, Guard, Reserve, and civilian forces serving in the United States and overseas. As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he and the other service chiefs function as military advisors to the Secretary of Defense, National Security Council, and the President.

The General entered the Air Force after graduating from the U.S. Air Force Academy in 1965. He has commanded at the squadron, wing, numbered air force, and major command levels. He flew combat in Southeast Asia, including 100 missions over North Vietnam. He also served in staff assignments at the major command level, Headquarters U.S. Air Force and the Joint Staff. As Commander, 16th Air Force and Allied Air Forces Southern Europe in Italy, he directed the NATO air combat operations in Bosnia Herzegovina which contributed to the Dayton Peace Accords. Before assuming his current position, the general was Commander of U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Commander, Allied Air Forces Central Europe, with Headquarters at Ramstein Air Base, Germany.

The first B/G James M. Stewart Award was made last year to Colonel John H. Beard, USAF, for leading the longest combat mission in history.

Selections for this prestigious award are made annually by the Board of Trustees of The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum. The award includes a trophy, life membership in the Museum, and placement of the recipient's name on the Museum's Wall of Honor.

James "Jimmy" Stewart was already an established motion picture star when he enlisted in the Army Air Corps in March 1941, nine months before the United States entered the war. Commissioned in 1942, he was a Captain commanding the 703rd Squadron of the 445th Bomb Group when it went overseas the next year. In 1944 he was promoted to Major and became Operations Officer of the 453rd Bomb Group. By March, 1945 he had been promoted to Colonel and was Chief of Staff of the Second Combat Wing. Stewart flew a full tour of combat missions, 20 as command pilot, 14 as wing lead, and one mission as division lead pilot. Stewart received two DFCs, four Air Medals, and the French Croix de Guerre for his service. He remained active in the Air Force Reserve as he resumed his acting career after the war and was promoted to Brigadier General in 1959.

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum was built to honor the more than one million men and women who have served in the Eighth Air Force since its activation in Savannah, Georgia in 1942. The 90,000 square foot Museum opened in May of 1996 and has attracted more than 225,000 visitors. Museum operating hours are from 9 AM to 6 PM daily. Admission provides access to all Exhibits, The Art Gallery, The Lewis E. Lyle Rotunda, The Mission Experience, (4) Theaters, Research Library & Archives, Memorial Garden, Canteen & Snack Bar, and The Mighty Eighth Gift Shop. Group tours are welcome. For more information, call The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum at 912-748-8888 ext. 102 or visit their website at: [www.mighty8thmuseum.com](http://www.mighty8thmuseum.com).



## 303rd's Pin-up Men Of the Month

AT THE TOP—Ground crew members Sgt. John O'Connell, Cpl. Robert Wertz, Cpl. Walter Demansky, S/Sgt. Raymond Kiser and Cpl. Derr.

TO THE LEFT—S/Sgt. Harry Brody, ball turret gunner.  
BELOW—T/Sgt. Roy Hively, flight engineer.



# Molesworth Diary

## IT SEEMED LIKE AN ETERNITY

On March 8, 1945 our target was Alten-Essen in the Ruhr Valley, a heavily defended area. We came off the bomb run with over 90 holes in our plane, one engine feathered and most of our instruments not in working order. As the formation flew off to the north, we lagged further and further behind, until, finally, we were all alone, a perfect target for German fighters.

I could navigate by pilotage for a while, but we were soon above an undercast and the ground was not visible. After what seemed to be an eternity, I saw a slight break in the clouds below. I could get just a glimpse of a narrow strip of land. I realized that this had to be the dam holding the ocean water out of the Zuider Zee. I gave the pilot the new heading for Molesworth, and we were the first plane to land. The rest of the formation was on a Cooke's tour of England to confuse German radar.

**Walter McDonald**  
358th Navigator

## AN UNEXPECTED FLYING LESSON

One bright morning in November, 1943 when the Group was "stood down", a practice mission was scheduled to train the many new crews. After take-offs had begun, I was approached by an officer who asked if "609" was ready. When I advised that it was, he said "Let's go." I asked, "Where's your crew?" He said "You're it." I said, "I've never flown in a B-17 and I never sat in the left or right seat of any plane." He said, "I'll tell you what to do." And he did!

The B-17 we were flying was completely stripped down and flew like an eagle. We rapidly climbed up above the Group and observed a very ragged formation. After several critical comments by radio, the officer announced, "A whole squadron of 109's can fly through the group and take a bunch of you with them." Whereupon, he peeled off to the left and put our plane into a steep dive right through a big hole in the group formation! On the intercom, I heard the pilot say, "Pull up!" so with all my strength, I helped pull back on the wheel until we leveled off and again started to climb. Needless to say, what we then saw was a dramatic improvement in the formation with continuous refinements until the end of the practice mission.

After we landed, the officer said "Thanks, Lieutenant, for the help." I said, "Thank you, sir, for my first flying lesson." Does anyone recognize who this pilot was?

**Ernest Fischer**  
427th Asst. Engineering Officer

## 1,300 GAL. OF FUEL, AND NOT A DROP TO USE

I was leading a formation over Cologne on October 18, 1944. After the bombs were dropped, I noticed that we were getting short on fuel. The Tokyo tanks at the end of the wings

contained 1,300 gallons of fuel. The valve that operated them was in the radio compartment. After the main tanks ran down, we would open the Tokyo valve. If we didn't let the main tanks run down first, they would overflow. When we tried to open the Tokyo valve, it had frozen. We were over Germany with 1,300 gallons of fuel we couldn't use.

I turned the lead over to Deputy Group, and landed at Brussels. The valve thawed, the main tanks filled, and we flew back to Molesworth.

**Charles Mainwaring**  
359th Pilot

## CREDIT FOR DOWNING THE 11TH GERMAN JET

The mission was to Hamburg, and the target was the fuel supply for the new German jet, the ME-262. On the way over, we were hit by anti-aircraft fire which took out one engine. We lost another engine over the target, and then an ME-262 came after us. It shot out our third engine, but I was able to hit the jet fighter from the tail position.

Flying with one engine, our pilot decided to try to make it back to base. In order to save fuel, he told us to dump everything that was not essential. While we were tossing things out, the navigator asked the pilot on the intercom if he had to throw out an orange he was planning to eat. This broke the tension and helped us through a very scary time. We made it back to Molesworth.

About 50 years later, a friend sent me an article that had appeared in the Stars and Stripes after the Hamburg mission. It said the ME-262 I shot down was the eleventh German jet destroyed in combat. I had heard about the article, but missed seeing it during the war.

**John Woolpert**  
360th Tail Gunner

## GROUND CREW INGENUITY

Any day that we were aroused by the C.Q. and told there was a mission scheduled got the mind going as to what your immediate routine was. Go wash up, brush your teeth, comb what hair there was left and go back to the barracks in the dark. Off to the mess hall on your bike with a flash light—no bracket to put it on unless you were lucky enough to have an installed light. Off to the flight line through a muddy ditch. We were warned not to take that short cut in the dark, but we didn't want to lose time.

Once there, we got a little fire going in the tent. A shovel full of coke was made into a nice fire by the combination of used engine oil diluted with 100-octane gasoline. It was regulated by a copper tube and a valve connected to an old gallon can. "Air Force ingenuity!"

Then, it was out to the aircraft, pulling the props through about five revolutions to get the oil out of the cylin-

(Continued on page 16)

# Diary

(Continued from page 15)

ders so they wouldn't blow because of the excessive pressure. We loved to see the flare go off and get the flight in operation. Nothing worse after a pre-flight check than to have a mission scrubbed. After the air crew was off on the mission came the long, long wait and the strain of wondering "Would ours be among the returnees?" No one day was special. Every day was special.

**Robert Heiliger**  
360th Crew Chief

## ENGLAND ON A WING AND A PRAYER

On July 30, 1943 on a mission to Kassel, we were subjected to heavy anti-aircraft fire and to repeated attacks by enemy fighters. Prior to reaching our target, one engine was knocked out. We successfully bombed our objective and another engine was knocked out and further damage suffered. I managed to get the plane back to England despite the fact that we lost the controls on the third engine.

I had seven of the crew bail out over England, and landed on a field that had two ditches across an unfinished runway. I was able to stop before further damage was done to the plane. All four engines had to be replaced before the B-17 could be flown back to Molesworth.

**George Shope, Jr.**  
427th Pilot

## BOMBS LOOSE IN THE BOMB BAY

We were on the I.P. on the Saarbrücken mission May 23, 1944 when we were hit by an ME-110 from 2 o'clock high. The pilot put the plane in a steep dive, and, when he brought it out, bombs came loose in the bomb bay. I remember the bombardier and the engineer cutting the bomb bay doors open with axes. Then, we hit the deck and went home.

When we finished our missions, we were put on guard duty because of D-Day. Each B-17 had a guard and we had a jeep with a mounted machine gun for perimeter protection and to take coffee to the guards.

**Carl Books**  
360th Waist Gunner

## EMERGENCY LANDING AT RAF PREDANNACK

I was co-pilot on *Old Faithful*, later renamed *War Bride*, when we were attacked by FW-190's after dropping our bombs on Lorient April 15, 1943. Two FW-190's were shot down, but we had lost one engine and two others were damaged. We jettisoned over two tons of equipment and had dropped to 20 feet over the water when we were attacked by another two FW-190's. One was shot down by our gunner, and the other flew away. We landed our badly damaged B-17 at RAF Predannack on the southern coast of England.

**Dave Rogan**  
358th Co-Pilot



# Bailed Out To Save Your Life? Here's How to Join The Caterpillar Club

By Cheryl Davis

The Caterpillar Club is a spontaneous organization that had its beginning in October, 1922. On that date, Lt. Harold R. Harris made a successful parachute escape from an aircraft over McCook Field, Ohio.

A group of Harris' fellow officers presented him with a watch and Caterpillar Certificate in recognition of his successful "Bailout". The Caterpillar was selected for the name and symbol of the Club since this insect furnished the life-saving filaments used in early parachutes.

Many airmen have joined this exclusive organization, most of them during World War II. Today, records including those originally kept at McCook are maintained by Switlik Parachute Co. Inc., Trenton, New Jersey.

No records have been kept to determine the exact number of Caterpillar Club members from different branches of the Armed Services.

The Caterpillar Club is in name only. We issue credentials and keep a file of members accepted into the Club. There is no roster maintained, no magazines published, etc.

Membership is obtained by sending a bonafide account of an emergency parachute jump to the Caterpillar Club. In return for these records, the applicant receives a lapel pin, membership card, and Caterpillar Club certificate.

To become a member of the Caterpillar Club, you need to complete an application form and remit \$10.00 (payable to The Caterpillar Club). This fee is to cover the cost of the membership card, certificate, and lapel pin.

For an application, write to The Caterpillar Club, c/o Switlak Parachute Co., Inc., P. O. Box 1328, Trenton, New Jersey 08608. Once accepted into the Club, these items will be sent to you.

## MOLESWORTH VISITOR ALERT

If you plan to visit RAF Molesworth, be sure to contact Brian McGuire of the Joint Analysis Center well ahead of time to enable him to help you enjoy your time at the base. He can be reached by mail at:

JAC  
PSC 46, Box 404  
APO AE 09469

To telephone from the U.S.:  
(44) 1480-842626 (office) or (44) 1480-394274 (home)  
In the UK, add a 0 before the 1480.

# OPEN FORUM

READERS—THIS IS YOUR SPACE. LET'S HAVE YOUR COMMENTS ON THE WAY THINGS WERE OR THE WAY THINGS ARE. WRITE TO: EDITOR, HELL'S ANGELS NEWSLETTER, 3552 LANDMARK TRAIL, PALM HARBOR, FL 34684

## RADIO SCHOOL AT RAF BASE?

I've been trying to find out if anybody has any knowledge of an RAF base that had a school for studying the VHF radio used in the B-17 and other allied aircraft. Bomber Groups sent radio maintenance men to this RAF base for advanced training on this piece of equipment.

The radio SCR-522-A was installed in the B-17 under the floor of the radio compartment and controlled by the pilot. If I remember correctly, there were four or more men sent from the 303rd to this RAF base.

**Christ Christoff**  
358th Radio Maintenance

## AUTHORS IN NEED OF MATERIAL

I am a military historian, currently writing a book on the Combined Bomber Offensive over Germany in World War Two. This is the first single volume history of the Bomber War, covering all the air forces—British, American, Canadian and German. What I need are personal accounts, the more personal the better, of bomber and fighter operations, and the opinions and experiences of US aircrew about the Bomber War and their part in it.

**Robin Neilland**  
5, Silbury, Beckhampton  
Marlborough, Wiltshire  
England SN8 1QJ

I am an aviation writer and former B-17 gunner under contract to do a book on the most costly missions flown by individual Bomb Groups in the 8th Air Force. The 303rd suffered heavy losses on a mission to Magdeburg on September 28, 1944. I would like to get a copy of the mission report or related documentation. More importantly, I would like to contact members of the 303rd who flew on that mission to get firsthand accounts of their memories of

the day. I also seek photos of the aircraft and men who flew the mission.

**William Hess**  
11706 Meadowtrail Lane  
Stafford, Texas 77477

## A SWISS SEEKS LETTERS FROM INTERNEES

For quite some time, I have been dealing with the emergency landings and plane crashes of the RAF and U.S. Air Force in Switzerland during World War II. I'd like to finish my work on World War II with a letter from every person who was once interned in Switzerland.

**Rolf Zaugg**  
Ruttistrasse 7  
3427 Utzenstorf  
Switzerland

## 303rd WEBSITE AIDS IN SCHOLARLY RESEARCH

Some time ago, I signed the Guest Book asking for assistance on my research of the B-17 "Hell's Angels" of the 358th Squadron. I was writing a research paper on that subject for one of my upper level college history courses.

Thanks to your help, I called Irl Baldwin and Fabian Folmer, the original pilot and ground crew chief of "Hell's Angels," and interviewed them on the phone. They gave me tons of very good primary source information for my paper, and I also obtained a copy of the history "Might in Flight."

I had a great time and was honored to be able to deal with everyone who helped me. As it turned out, I got an "A" on the paper.

**Brian Rukes**

## PRAISE FOR GRAND-DAD AND BRANSON, MISSOURI

My grand-dad was in the 303rd BG, and is very proud of it. His name is Marvin Edwards, and he was the tail gunner on the Fleming crew. He is a wonderful man that I admire and love with all my heart. I think of him as a hero, along with all the veterans that served our country. I'm going to tell him

about your website. He will love it, and I'm sure will visit it. I am trying to teach my oldest son about things that went on in WWII.

If you ever want to come to a wonderful Veterans Day celebration, then come visit Branson, MO. This is where I live, and every year there is a huge party for vets so that we can say "thank you."

**Jessica Epps**

## 388TH BGA DAUGHTER HAS GIFT SUGGESTION

Congratulations to the 303rd BGA on a website well done! My dad was a B-17 flight engineer at Knettishall with the 388th. In 1997, he had open heart surgery and I wanted to do something special for him.

I covered an album with fabric that had B-17's and fighters on it. I ordered two brass plates engraved with his name and the names of his crew, and fastened them to the front of the album. Each of the crew members or their families contributed photos and stories for the album. When I gave the gift to my dad, he was deeply touched that the crew pulled together again to complete another mission.

**Jeanette Thibault Rice**

## ANY LINKS TO 8-BALL OR BLACK DIAMOND?

I finished my 25th on the Second Schweinfurt raid and landed away from base short of fuel. I've lost touch with all members of the squadron and group, and would like to hear from any flight or ground crew personnel with ties to the B-17's "8-Ball" or "Black Diamond."

**Robert L. Phelps**

## DID YOU FLY WITH MY FATHER?

I am the daughter of T/ Sgt Earl Hogue. My dad was in the 358th Squadron as a radio operator/gunner. He passed away in the late 1970's, and I still miss him so. He was also a POW in Germany for 24 months after

being shot down on July 4, 1943 over France. O'Connor was his pilot. I am very interested in learning more about my dad.

**Janice Hogue Baldwin**

I would like to contact someone who flew with my father, Jerome Koshar of the 360th Squadron. He was in action from July, 1944 to March, 1945. So far, I have learned he was on the Mosel crew.

**Robert Koshar**

## DID YOU KNOW MY UNCLE?

Trying to locate anyone who might have known my uncle, S/Sgt James C. Burke, tail gunner on Shagrila Lil, 360th Squadron. He was shot down near St. Omer, France, on August 27, 1943. I assume he was captured near there and moved to a POW camp, possibly Stalag XVIIIB at Krems, Austria. Would appreciate anyone who might have known him to share experiences with me.

**Bill Burke**

## 303rd WEBSITE ARCHIVE "A WONDERFUL TRIBUTE"

My father, John Stephen Proffitt, Jr., was the pilot of "Lucille" (named for my mother, his new bride) from October, 1944 to May, 1945. The archive you have built is a wonderful tribute to the many great men whose remarkable courage, devotion to duty and love of country brought the Mighty Eighth's 303rd Bomb Group the success that it enjoyed in WWII, and the fame that it will carry forever.

**John Stephen Proffitt III**

## EDITOR'S NOTE

The Hell's Angels Newsletter is pleased to devote Open Forum space to assist 303rd BGA Website Guests in their efforts to learn more about kith and kin.

We will forward all responses to the interested and grateful parties.

## REUNION (Continued from page 4)

many of the leaders of the 303rd Bomb Group Association, in JW's. You must make a "reservation" as we have reserved all 42 seats in the restaurant. You may have your choice of entrees from their menu. A second restaurant is Allie's American Grill, which offers a fine buffet breakfast and luncheon menu.

Within walking distance of 3 blocks there is a full-service Cafeteria. Several other fine restaurants are nearby, but you will need a cab. In your "Reunion Bag" at Registration, you will find a list of dining establishments, located about the City.

Those arriving at the Oklahoma City airport should look for the Airport Express vans to carry you to the Marriott, which is about 7 miles almost directly north of the airport. They are the most economical means of getting to the Hotel.

The Registration desk will be located on the ground floor, right next to the large ballrooms, which open out to the parking space. Jill Miller and her 303<sup>rd</sup> Ladies will be ready to serve "Sooner Rush" on Thursday afternoon, and will be open for the general registration on Friday afternoon.

In Oklahoma, state law requires that a member of the hotel's staff must serve all alcoholic beverages that are served. So, in our Hospitality Room, we will have hotel bartenders serving us—at cut-rate prices. \$1.00 for soft drinks, \$1.30 for beer and wine, and \$2.00 for mixed drinks. Premium bar selections will be served.

Harry Gobrecht, our President and Historian, will have his materials available in the Memorabilia Room, for any and everyone to view. We are seeking "volunteers" to manage these precious bits of memorabilia and provide strict security for all materials and photos.

For the first time we will present demonstrations of the "303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Records" Project. We expect to have completed, and be able to present the first 200 missions, together with the detailed write-ups on our Ground Support Units. The name of every man that served at Molesworth will be included in these Compact Disks. The names will be indexed, and following every flight crewman's name, will be the number (1 to 364) of each mission that he flew. For every Ground Support man, there will be a description of the function that he performed, if known, in support of the Group. Each aircraft by number and name, will be indexed, along with the mission number for each of the missions that was flown by the aircraft. When finished, over 135,000 names will be entered. We will be taking orders for the "303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Records" on CD-ROM disks, at the Reunion.

Charlie and Vicki Sykes will bring the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group Association's PX items from Phoenix, Arizona. But they will do it only one more time, unless we provide them with some "capable help." They would also like to enjoy the Reunion, so if we can have volunteers, we will keep the PX open.

Your opportunity to "VOLUNTEER" some of your time will be offered on the mail in Registration Form. Please do not pass up this opportunity to serve your fellow members, by giving a couple hours of your time at the PX, the Memorabilia Room, at the Registration Desk, or managing the Bus Traffic by taking tickets, and keeping track of its occupants so that no one will be left without a ride home.

Be sure and bring your swimming suits, as you'll find both indoor and outdoor pools. For those of you that wish more exercise, there is a fitness room.

See you all in Oklahoma City, October 8<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup>, 1999.

## NEW DIRECTORY OF MEMBERS OF 303<sup>rd</sup> BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

Membership Chairman Edgar "Ed" Miller and Newsletter Editor Emeritus Hal Susskind are updating the 1997 Directory, and hope to have it the mail soon to all members. It will incorporate up-to-the minute information, as well as adding a new feature—a complete listing of e-mail addresses. With this in mind, these Newsletter pages will not carry the usual address changes and e-mail entries.

## IN MEMORIAM

1760	George E. Anthony (427)—6 May 1997
S2018	John B. Bielecki (359)—6 January 1999
L844	Robert F. Bishop (359)—3 March 1998
L1702	Raymond W. Cassell (360)—24 June 1998
S178	Charles A. Dando (359)—8 October 1997
L001	Weldon O. Harrison (359)—6 December 1998
1782	Basil "Buddy" D. Hight (360)—22 January 1999
L1763	John R. Kasilla (358)—9 July 1998
L1675	Charles A. Leidy (360)—19 July 1997
L559	Richard L. McGilvray (358)—11 February 1999
L1543	Harry A. McLeod (359)—29 October 1998
L1948	Thomas H. Morrison (427)—29 October 1998
L968	James B. Noland (360)—6 March 1994
L600	Eugene J. O'Brien (358)—12 April 1998
	Wilbert C. Pherson (360)—January 1986
S890	Vernon W. Stone (427)—28 December 1998
L164	Martin Yaniga (359)—22 September 1998

## NEW MEMBERS

L787	William F. Miller, (359), 1042 De Forrest Street, Corpus Christi, TX 78404 (512) 852-1607 (Bill has been inactive for several years, but we have reinstated him.)
2074	Everett H. Thornton, (358), 12484 Road 8 NW, Quincy, WA 98848-9727 (509) 787-2788
2075	Donald R. Walter, (358), 721 Swanton Avenue, Casper, WY 82609 (302) 234-6587
A-569	Ruth Nan Hawk, 3551 Stancliff Road, Clemmons, NC 27012
A-570	Edward A. Eschinger, 12518 West Hampton, Wellington, FL 33414 (561) 798-2421
2076	Paul O. Harmon, (1199), 50013 Hacha Bay, Boynton Beach, FL 33436-1939 (561) 369-0568
A-571	Sterling L. "Pete" Morrison, 204 Leaning Oak Court, Chapin, SC 29036-2323
L2077	Delos H. Hamann, (359), 652 S. Ellsworth #147, Mesa, AZ 85208-3500
LA-572	Susan (Vosler) Snow, 5172 Redmon Road, Elm City, NC 27822-8246 (252) 245-3030 (Doug) (Susan is the daughter of our own T/Sgt Forrest L. Vosler-CMH)
A-573	Victor W. Williams, 14325 Casa Linda Court, Red Bluff, CA 96080-8836 (530) 527-0143 (Susan) (Vic is the son of T/Sgt Victor W. DeWitte, Pilot Miller's radio operator)
2078	Joseph R. Germaine, (360), 400 Highland Ave, Wollaston, MA 02170 (617) 472-025 (Jean)
2079	David S. Peterson, (1114 <sup>th</sup> ), 1312 3 <sup>rd</sup> Avenue, North, Fargo, ND 58102-4228
L2080	Rexford I. Proud, (360), 1608 Elm Street, Valparaiso, IN 46383-4313 (219) 462-5991
L2081	Carl O. Books, (360), 1212 Cedon Drive, Valinda, CA 91744-2308 (626) 333-6166 (Maravon)(At last, we have found all of the members of the Earl Thomas crew)
F-574	Robert P. Ives, 3343 Rustburg Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28303-4691 (910) 867-6071
2082	Jack O. Severson, (358), 2295 Sawyer Lane, Carlsbad, CA 92008-7116 (619) 431-2522 (Shirley)
2083	Edwin W. Bjorn, (427), 620 74 <sup>th</sup> Street, Kenosha, WI 53143-5548
2084	Sidney Kallet, (360), 1 Stiring Circle, Jamesburg, NJ 08831-2614 (609) 395-8250 (Janet)
A-575	John Chandler Woodworth, 318 Currier Street, Almont, MI 48003-8609 (810)798-0023 (Jo Anne) (Son of Kenneth R. Woodworth, 427 <sup>th</sup> Co-Pilot)
F-576	Edward L. Dombroski, 16 Catskill Ave, Poughkeepsie, NY 12603-6400 (914) 452-0367 (Close friend of John J. Grocki, (358) L1143)
A-577	Matthew S. Meichtry, 4255 Pebble Ridge Circle, Colorado Springs, CO 80906-6520

(Continued on page 19 )

## NEW MEMBERS (Continued from page 18)

LA-578 Bryon Stoner, 1042 S. 57<sup>th</sup> Street, Kansas City, KS 66106-1528  
 A-579 Robert Donnelly, RD #2, Box 996, Cooperstown, NY 13326  
 A-580 Gary A. Birken, 1150 N. 35<sup>th</sup> Ave, Suite 555, Hollywood, FL 33021-5431 (954) 981-0072 (Rhonda) (Son of Irving Belkin-360<sup>th</sup>)  
 A-581 Thomas P. Kerr, 3807 Pasadena Ave, Suite 100, Sacramento, CA 95821-2895 (916) 971-0489 (Ann) (Cousin of 2/Lt James R. Burns (358<sup>th</sup>)-KIA)  
 A-582 Nancy B. Musko, 8975-366 Lawrence W Drive, Escondido, CA 92026-6421 (760) 749-1125 (Sister of 2/Lt James R. Burns (358<sup>th</sup>))  
 F-583 Lt/Col. Robert G. Stiegel, PSC 46, Box 288, APO AE 09469-0288 (Stationed at Molesworth)  
 A-584 John Bouton, 629 San Carlos, Garland, TX 75043-5135 (972) 681-9404 (Carole) (Son of Paul Bouton, Jr 2/Lt, 358<sup>th</sup> Co-Pilot, KIA 3 Jan 1943)  
 L2085 Graham C. Gould, (359), 3090 Tarina Court, Tuscon, AZ 85741-4822 (520) 797-2510 (Elsie)  
 A-585 Michael G. Gould, 671 Ives Road, Mason, MI 48854-9614 (517) 676-4997 (Sandra)  
 L2086 Theodore S. Essock, (444), 17105 Gulf Boulevard #223, N. Redington Beach, FL 33708-1488  
 A-586 David T. Sheets, 7200 SW Ridgemont St, Portland, OR 97225 (503) 244-4698 (Son of Robert W. Sheets, Major, CO, 427<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron)  
 L2087 Thomas G. Fennell, (444), 20 Valleyview Avenue, Troy, NY 12180  
 F-587 Roger Anthoine, Genevrays Hauts, Peron, France F-01630  
 A-588 Donna J. Morrows, 142 Webb Avenue, Ocean Grove, NJ 07756-1230 (732) 776-6129 (Ed) (Dau of Andrew J. Diaczynski, 358<sup>th</sup> Ball Turret Operator)  
 F-589 James W. Leal, 2207 West 121<sup>st</sup> Street, Leawood, KS 66209-1173 (913) 491-1492 (Bonnie) (Veteran of 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Wing, 71<sup>st</sup> FMS, Davis-Monthan, AZ)  
 2088 Donald G. Bartels, (358), 1309 8<sup>th</sup> St., P. O. Box 38, Erie, IL 61250-0038 (Esther)  
 LA-591 Stephen A. Vosler, 29 Brookside Drive, Mohawk, NY 13407 (Stephen is son of T/Sgt Forrest L. Vosler, MOH)  
 A-592 Mark C. Vail, 6590 NW Monticello Drive, Parkville, MO 64152-3061 (816) 746-8798 (Lisa) (Son of Robert F. Vail-dec, - 360<sup>th</sup>)  
 A-593 Patricia A. Keyes, P. O. Box 6685, South Brunswick, NC 28470-6685 (910) 579-3121 (Donald) (Dau of Nino Guiciardi-359<sup>th</sup>)  
 A-594 Paul Losiewicz, 539 Higby Road, New Hartford, NY 13413-3507 (315) 738-0149 (Beth) (Son of Benjamin Losiewicz-Dec) (360<sup>th</sup>)  
 A-595 Wade & Sharon Kearns, 13630 W. Nicolet, New Berlin, WI 53151-8056 (414) 427-1560 (S-L & Dau of Benjamin Losiewicz-Dec) (360<sup>th</sup>)  
 2090 John Clark Woolpert, (360) 145 Tivoli Lane, Danville, CA 94506-4603 (925) 736-082 (Barbara)  
 A-596 Joanne Hartman, 490 Forest Place SW, Issaquah, WA 98027 (Dau of Elmer J. Schmidt-Dec) (427<sup>th</sup>)

## DONATIONS

L1995 358 Howard L. Abney Memorial to my Crew  
 L589 359 Robert O. Akers Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1878 359 Cecil H. Allen Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L614 427 Sibley M. Andriessen Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1654 360 John M. Armfield Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 A-477 Bruce E. Arnold Memorial to his Father, William J. Arnold (359<sup>th</sup> Pilot)  
 L1921 360 Walter E. Barnes Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 S1379 1114 Edwin B. Barry Memorial to Henry Prat-ten-1114<sup>th</sup> QM Company  
 F-506 David B. Bass Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 F-125 Robert C. Bejna Memorial to all 303<sup>rd</sup> Veterans  
 L487 360 Joel A. Berly, Jr. Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1319 360 Irving Birken Memorial to fallen comrades

L349 427 Stanley Bober Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L2081 360 Carl O. Books Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1502 360 Robert C. Bridges Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 S377 359 George V. Broderick Memorial to Edward V. Radford  
 L1282 358 Curtis O. Brooke Memorial "Bill" Hembree  
 LA-553 Nancy (Schultz) Byers In Recognition of Milo Schultz  
 L1433 359 William D. Cargill Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 Barbara A. Carlson Memorial to her Uncle  
 Thomas I. Peacock (360<sup>th</sup>)  
 L1564 427 Milbury C. Charlton Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1897 359 LeRoy P. Christenson Memorial to 2/Lt Gordon G. Anderson who died in a P-38 crash, Moses Lake, WA in 1944  
 S122 358 Orlyn D. Chonat Donation for the Directory  
 L135 358 Norman M. Clark Memorial 303<sup>rd</sup> Comrades  
 F-376 Richard F. Cody Memorial to T/Sgt Alfred M. Union - KIA in Snap, Crackle & Pop, over St. Nazaire, Fr 1943  
 H-03 Ray & Theresa Cossey Donation, with Many Memories to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 LA-462 William D. Cox Memorial to my Grandfather, James D. Cox S/Sgt in the 360<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron  
 F-173 Leona Best Deckard Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1423 359 Dominick De Lorenzo Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L2063 358 Glenn J. Denning Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 F-472 John N. Dinsmore Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 S1476 Hdq Frank J. Doherty Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 2033 360 James "Jim" Durfee Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 S670 427 Albert L. Dussliere Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 S561 427 Philip D. Eisenwinter Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1581 427 Walter J. Ferrari Memorial to Deceased  
 Members of the 427<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron  
 L1284 359 Kenneth Fitzsimmons Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 S1194 360 Philip G. Fleming Memorial to Carlton M. Smith, former Chairman of the Membership Committee  
 L380 359 James G. Force Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 S543 359 John W. Ford Memorial to M/Sgt. Martin Yaniga (359<sup>th</sup>)  
 L675 358 Charles Fulanovich Memorial fallen comrades  
 F-524 Edward L. Frank Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 1104 427 Edward W. Gardner, Jr Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 1095 359 Billy A. Gaumer Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 A-170 Kerry M. Gavin Memorial to his Father William E. Gavin (359<sup>th</sup>)  
 2020 358 Norman Genter Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L802 360 Edward F. Goggin Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1828 358 Robert E. Greene Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L810 360 Fred H. Gruenberg Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L387 360 Roy D. Harvey Memorial to all Comrades  
 L026 360 James H. Hensley, Jr Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1352 427 Charles Herman Memorial to fallen comrades  
 L223 360 Arthur E. Johnson Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1652 360 William F. Kahlden, Jr Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1644 358 John B. Kahle Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1763 Mrs. John R. Kasilla Memorial to my Dear John, Crewman on the "Hell's Angels" aircraft  
 L982 427 James D. Kelley Memorial to Charles F. Miller, Bombardier, KIA 9 Sept 1944  
 L1544 427 Horace S. Kenney, Jr Memorial to Fred N. Cal-non (427<sup>th</sup>)  
 L1466 360 W. Douglas Kidd Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1618 427 William P. Kiggins Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L830 359 Owen A. Knutzen Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L2048 359 James E. Jeter, Jr. Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 A-169 Debra J. Lange Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 L1694 360 Thomas D. Lardie Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 A-193 Patricia O. Little In Honor of James W. O'Leary, Sr.  
 LF-382 Bruno D. Lombardi Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA  
 F-375 John G. Long Donation to the 303<sup>rd</sup> BGA

(THE LIST OF DONORS WILL CONTINUE IN THE AUGUST, 1999, EDITION OF THE HELL'S ANGELS NEWSLETTER)

*The Board of Directors extends sympathy to Jack Rencher, the Association's Treasurer and Mission Reports Manager, and to his wife, Louise, on the death 27 February 1999 of their son, Jack.*

## THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

One of the devastating emotional traumas of aerial combat against Nazi Germany was in the aftermath—returning safely from a mission only to confront in your Nissen hut the dreaded empty bunks of those who didn't make it back and who were at that instant either dead or prisoners of war. Good men whose lives you had shared for weeks or months, and who were so suddenly gone that for a fleeting moment you almost wondered if they had ever existed. The empty bunks were as solemn as grave markers at a cemetery.

That feeling of stunned disbelief struck me again as I worked on the caption for the Officers' Mess photo on page 3. Of the nine men sitting around the dining table at Molesworth in December, 1942, their faces animated by congenial companionship, seven were combat pilots and two were in non-combat assignments. Of the seven airmen, only one survived the war. The terrible statistic—four killed in action, one dead of wounds in a POW camp, the other killed in a fighter crash.

Most of them were in the original cadre of 303rd Bomb Group pilots who formed at Gowen Field in Boise, and came to Molesworth in the air echelon movement of October, 1942. They went into combat almost immediately.

On 3 January 1943, **William H. Goetz** and **Charles C. Sheridan**, two of the 427th's most able pilots, were at the controls of *Kali* as second flight formation leader to St. Nazaire, France. The B-17 blew up over the target, killing the entire crew. It was their fifth mission.

On 23 January 1943, **Ehle H. Reber** was piloting *Jerry Jinx* to Lorient, France. It was the crew's sixth mission. The B-17 crashed into the Bay of Biscay and went to the bottom without a single survivor.

**Lloyd R. Cole** and his crew were on their seventh mission, target Osnabruck, Germany, on 4 February 1943, when their B-17 *Memphis Tot* was attacked by FW-190's and ME-109's. Pilot Cole took a 20mm hit on his left hip, but managed to successfully ditch the bomber off the coast of The Netherlands. Soon after, as a prisoner of war, Cole's leg was amputated. He later died of complications in the POW camp.

**Donald Stockton** was piloting his crew on their 24th and next-to-last mission, target Kiel, Germany on 14 May 1943, when he was killed instantly by 20mm shells. His co-pilot on *S For Sugar* brought the B-17 back to Molesworth, and Stockton was buried at the Cambridge American Cemetery.

**Glenn Hagenbuch**, commanding the 427th Squadron, completed his combat tour and was reassigned to VIII Bomber Command. He died late in 1943 in a P-40 crash in England.

Only **George Mackin** of the seven pilots at the table survived the war. He served as 358th Squadron commander, and led the Division to Bonn, Germany on 10 January 1945 when the 303rd completed its historic 300th mission, first among all Bomb Groups in the 8th Air Force.

### URGENT APPEAL FOR 303rd BOMB GROUP PHOTOS!

The Hell's Angels Newsletter needs any photos taken during your time at Molesworth. They will be returned to you or passed to our Historian, as you wish. Send them to Editor, Hell's Angels Newsletter, 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016.

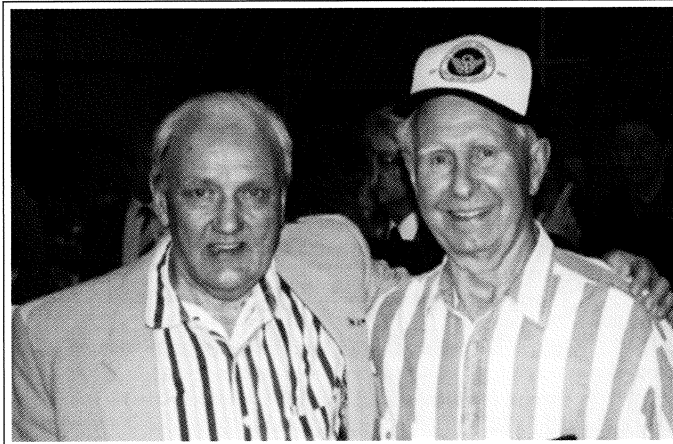
**303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.**

**Hell's Angels Newsletter**

**Eddie Deerfield, Editor**

**3552 Landmark Trail**

**Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016**



**1998 HANGAR DANCE AT MOLEWORTH**—More than 1,200 attended. Top—the JAC Honor Guard. Note the Triangle-C painted on the hangar floor. Middle—Bob Hitchcock of the 303rd (with cap) and Albert Postma, member of Dutch underground. Bottom—Many guests wore World War II uniforms. **STORY ON PAGE 5.**

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# BENTON, ARKANSAS REMEMBERS 303RD'S BOMBARDIER McCRIGHT

Ewell R. McCright, bombardier on the 360th B-17 *Beat Me* when it was lost on a mission to Lorient, France on 23 January 1943, was honored by his home town of Benton, Arkansas 56 years later, almost to the day. He survived the war in a German prisoner camp, and passed away after many years as a lawyer in Benton.

Attending the event as featured speakers were former Arkansas Governor Sid McMath, himself a retired Marine major general; Arnold Wright, a World War II historian and author, and Lew Lyle, retired Air Force major general and 303rd Bomb Group veteran who serves as the Association's Senior Advisor.

General Lyle presented to the Gann Museum of Saline County a copy of *Might In Flight*, the Group's official history, and a framed print of British artist Keith Hill's *Last One Out* showing McCright's B-17 under attack by German fighters.

In his remarks, General Lyle told a standing-room-only audience in the Gann Museum about McCright's determination to serve his country even as a prisoner of war. He said the 303rd's bombardier devised a scheme to smuggle ledgers from camp to camp to gather the names and personal comments of some 2,200 other airmen. McCright managed to hide the ledgers from the Nazis and, after the war, they became a valuable part of the U.S. Army's official history.

It was this unique collection of data that Arnold Wright used in writing his World War II history *Behind The Wire*. In his

remarks, Wright commented, "I am reminded of what on old Indian Chief once said, 'If we don't know our past, we won't know our future'."

"Today, I have the opportunity to honor a generation of men and women who lives within my heart, the men and women of World War II. A generation who gave us a gift, that gift being the free soil we walk upon and the freedom and the liberties we enjoy today.

"A generation who grew up during the hard times of a depression and suffered the hard life.

"A generation who defeated an enemy who wanted to conquer the world.

"This nation will never produce another generation of these men and women who lived by the words—duty, honor and country.

"We, the citizens of this great nation, can never pay the debt we owe these men and women. But, today, all of us are here to pay a small amount on that debt."

Jerry Breeden, staff writer for the Benton Courier, wrote, "Gov. McMath paid tribute not only to the bravery McCright exhibited in combat and later as a prisoner of war, but to the war



MAJ. GEN. LEWIS E. LYLE (USAF, RET), 303rd Bomb Group Association Senior Advisor, presented a copy of the Group's *Might in Flight* history to Gwen Eviitts for the Gann Museum of Saline County, Arkansas. The presentation was part of the ceremony honoring the memory of the 303rd's Ewell McCright.

effort displayed by the people of Saline County in general and the town of Bauxite in particular.

"McMath recalled how Saline County residents mined the bauxite ore fields to produce enough aluminum for building more than 100,000 warplanes as the United States was thrust into global warfare with the bombing of the American naval base at Pearl Harbor."

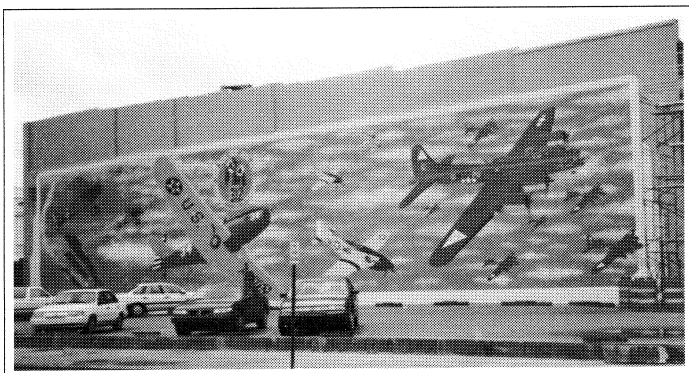
The Gann Museum, where the ceremony took place, is the only building in the U.S. constructed out of bauxite ore.

Ewell Ross McCright was born in Benton, in bauxite coun-

try, and was a member of the original 303rd Bomb Group air echelon which arrived at Mulesworth in October, 1942. Three months later, he was missing in action.

A native of Pine Bluff, Arkansas, Lew Lyle now lives in Hot Springs, and was the driving force behind the founding of The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum near Savannah, Georgia.

General Lyle flew 70 combat missions during World War II. After the war, he had a distinguished career in the newly created United States Air Force.



303rd BOMB GROUP FORMATION adorns a wall of the Community Theater Building of Pine Bluff, Arkansas. The mural includes a B-17 formation led by (in the foreground) *Ooold Soldier*, flown by then-Major Lewis E. Lyle.

## A FEW BOOKS ARE STILL AVAILABLE

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ copies of the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group (H) 928 page History Book, Second Revised Edition (1997) Numerous changes and additions from First Edition (1993)

## "MIGHT IN FLIGHT"

Price per book: USA & APO addresses \$75.00

Foreign addresses \$78.00

Prices include shipping & Handling

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