

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

February, 2004



TWO 303RD VETERANS WHO LIVE IN MINOT, NORTH DAKOTA, WERE HONORED GUESTS at the US Air Force Base, joining Master Sergeant Irwan Johnson's family at the Professional Development Center dedication ceremony. They are Fred Gruenberg, 444th Air Depot, at the extreme right, and Obert Enget, 360th Squadron waist gunner, to his right. Sergeant Johnson's widow, Lorraine, is in the center of the family photo.

MINOT AFB NAMES CENTER IN HONOR OF 303rd POW

by S/Sgt. Carla Williams,
Minot AFB Public Affairs

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. (ACCNS) - Team Minot honored a former World War II prisoner of war from North Dakota by naming the Professional Development Center in his honor during a dedication ceremony last September.

The PDC was named after Lakota, N.D., native M/Sgt. Irwan A. Johnson.

Sergeant Johnson was assigned to the 360th Bomb Squadron, 303rd Bombardment Group at Molesworth

Airfield, England. He was a radio operator on a B-17 shot down by German fighter aircraft on Nov. 29, 1943. He spent 24 months as a prisoner of war in Germany, and received a Purple Heart for his performance during the war.

After his release, he also had tours in Korea and Vietnam. M/Sgt. Johnson retired in 1967 after more than 23 years of service to his country.

Johnson's widow, Lorraine, and his son, Kip McClean, and his family, joined base leadership from

the 5th Bomb Wing and the 91st Space Wing and former POWs at the dedication.

M/Sgt. Mary Mercado, 5th BW career assistant advisor, opened the ceremony by welcoming all those in attendance, highlighting the former POWs, who received a standing ovation for their service and sacrifice.

During his remarks, Col. Greg Biscone, 5th BW commander, said the PDC is designed to keep our enlisted heritage strong, enhance the enlisted corps' (Continued on page 8)

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Memorial dedicated in England to 303rd pilot who saved town—pages 2, 3, 8.

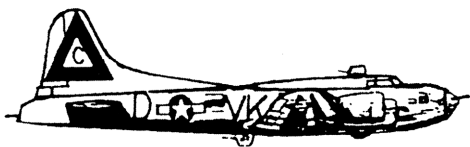
Sixty years later, Carl Fyler awarded Silver Star—page 5.

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Andy Rooney strikes back at e-mail theft of name—page 9.

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William Rader, former 303rd BG commander, dies of cardiac arrest at 89—page 12.



303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Hell's Angels Newsletter

Editor--Eddie Deerfield

VOL XXVII, No. 1 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684 February, 2004

The 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc., a tax exempt organization under IRS Code 501(c)(19), founded in 1975, is chartered in the State of Florida to perpetuate the history of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) and to provide opportunities for 303rd veterans, families and friends to meet.

Because members are helping to perpetuate the history of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H), dues and/or donations to the Association are tax deductible. Regular Members include persons assigned or attached to the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) from its 1942 activation in Boise, ID, through its war years at 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 303rd and in furthering the aims of the Association may, with approval, become non-voting Associate Members.

Membership years begin on the first day of January. The *Hell's Angels Newsletter*, published quarterly, will only be sent to members whose dues payments are current. Annual dues are \$25 in the US and \$30 for foreign addresses, \$60 for a veteran's life membership and \$150 for a family member's life membership.

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For a visit to the highly
rated Website of the
303rd Bomb Group
Association, go
online at:

www.303rdBGA.com

Planning a trip to England and RAF Molesworth?

Persons planning to visit the base should contact UK Representative Robin Beeby and advise him of travel plans. Mr. Beeby will make the appropriate contacts and coordinate a visit to RAF Molesworth.

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A PERMANENT MEMORIAL TO 360TH SQUADRON PILOT ROBERT W. COGSWELL WAS UNVEILED IN SOKE PARK, NEW ALRESFORD, ENGLAND ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2003.

Sixty years earlier, to the day, Capt. Cogswell had remained at the controls of his stricken B-17 *Lady Luck* to prevent it from crashing into the town. He then bailed out at the last minute, injuring his back and ending his combat status as a 303rd Bomb Group pilot.

The "Hell's Angels" hero was killed in action in October, 1951 on a B-29 during the Korean War.

US Army Major Barry Hoffman unveiled the plaque. The standard bearers are local residents Bill Brixey and Len Pearce. Both witnessed the crash.

PHOTO CREDIT—ALRESFORD ADVERTISER ©



British Town Honors 303rd Pilot Cogswell Who Averted Deadly Crash 60 Years Ago

By Ron Jensen, Stars and Stripes, European Edition
(Copyright clearance granted by Stars and Stripes ©)

NEW ALRESFORD, England — This town nearly in the shadow of Winchester's grand cathedral in south England marked the 60th anniversary on September 26, 2003, of the day no one died.

It celebrated the day its buildings did not burn.

New Alresford unveiled a permanent marker to the memory of the American pilot who on September 26, 1943, put his life at risk to guide his crippled, bomb-laden B-17 Flying Fortress named *Lady Luck* away from the town's center.

Capt. Robert W. Cogswell, alone on the aircraft after ordering his crew to bail out, jumped to safety only after ensuring the plane would land away from houses, shops and people. (Capt. Cogswell flew in the 360th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group).

"Captain Cogswell represents the best of any officer and any soldier at the time of war," said U.S. Army Maj. Barry Hoffman, who was invited by the town of 5,000 to unveil the marker on the shore of the lake near where *Lady Luck* crashed.

Len Pearce, 81, a local resident who remembers seeing the plane crash, said after the brief ceremony attended by about 50 people, "If it hadn't been for that pilot, the middle of Alresford could have disappeared."

Until last week, the only recognition for Cogswell in the town was a photo of the crew and a small plaque on the wall of The Globe on the Lake, a 17th century pub about 500 yards from the crash site.

The marker unveiled by Hoffman, an exchange officer serving with the Royal Army in Winchester, will be

a permanent tribute to one man's bravery.

"There's no doubt about his heroism," said Eddie Deerfield, 80, the bomber's radio operator on the day of the crash.

Contacted at his home in Palm Harbor, Fla., where he lives in retirement after a career in journalism, international diplomacy and the Army Reserve, Deerfield said the bomber had flown from its home base at Moleworth, a base still in use by the U. S. Air Force.

At the time, the base was home to the 303rd Bomb Group.

The target that day was submarine pens in Nantes, France, but bad weather caused the mission to be aborted, and the bombers of the 303rd, including *Lady Luck*, turned for home. On Cogswell's plane, which was still carrying 10 500-pound demolition bombs, an engine caught fire.

Despite his best efforts, the pilot could not extinguish



the flame. "You could see rivets popping off the wing," Deerfield said.

Cogswell told the men to jump while *Lady Luck* was still at about 8,000 feet.

Deerfield asked the pilot if they could ride it out, trusting their pilot's skills to get them down safely.

The pilot told his radio operator, "You have my permission, but I plan to bail out," Deerfield recalled.

The nine crewmembers
(Continued on page 4)



THE TRIBUTE TO CAPTAIN COGSWELL, engraved on a brass plaque mounted on a stone column, was composed by Colin Metcalfe, The Secretary, Alresford Historical and Literary Society. Other principals were Simon Cook and John Hankin of the Town Council, David Goodman of The Alresford Society, local historian Nelson Trowbridge and officials of the Chamber of Commerce.

Prior to official recognition by New Alresford, the only reference to the event was a small plaque placed in a local pub as a personal gesture by Iris Knight Rowe, a WWII air combat writer.

COGSWELL from 3

jumped, leaving the pilot alone in the cockpit.

Deerfield landed in a field and was immediately confronted by a pitchfork in the hands of a farmer who feared the falling parachutes signaled a German invasion.

Meanwhile, with *Lady Luck* losing altitude, Cogswell realized the plane was on a path directly into New Alresford, a town founded in about 1200.

A major fire in 1689 destroyed much of the town and it was - and still is - thick with grand 17th century architecture.

As the airplane continued a quick descent, Cogswell stayed aboard

until he was sure it would miss the town. Deerfield estimates his commander jumped out as the plane was between 1,000 and 1,500 feet above the ground.

Because the plane was in a fairly steep and rapid dive - about 250 to 300 mph, Deerfield guessed -- Cogswell's parachute was violently jerked as it opened, tearing ligaments in the pilot's back and grounding him for the rest of the war.

On the ground at this time, 6-year-old Fred White and his father and grandfather were watching. They saw the plane disappear behind the pub The Globe on the Lake, and White, now 66, said he heard "a great big whomp!"



THE COGSWELL CREW OF THE 360TH SQUADRON — In three months of combat, five members of the Cogswell crew survived a crash at sea and a crash landing in addition to the bail-out. Standing, (l-to-r) Co-pilot Bob Dewall, Pilot Bob Cogswell, Waist gunner Alvin Etheridge, Waist gunner Gus Brundage and Togglier Bill Stamper. Kneeling, Ball turret gunner P. J. Davis, Radio operator Eddie Deerfield, Bombardier Dwight Kennedy, Tail gunner Harold Timm and Engineer Gil Bengston. The five survivors—Cogswell, Bengston, Davis, Deerfield and Navigator Ed Cobb (not pictured).

Nancy Farthing, now 85, was walking in the town center when she looked up.

"I saw this plane come over and I thought to myself, 'Oh, it's going to hit the tops of those houses,'" she remembered after the ceremony.

Len Pearce was in the military at the time. "I saw this plane coming over, losing height," he said. "It managed to get around the church tower."

When the plane crashed at the side of a lake, the bombs did not explode, but the fuel burned. Had it crashed in the center of town, the damage would have been great.

For years, the town was really unaware of Cogswell's

heroism and its close brush with destruction. The town had a front row seat for the Battle of Britain from 1939 and had witnessed the crash of many airplanes.

But over the years, the realization sunk in. The photo and plaque were placed in the pub in 1992.

Deerfield visited the town last year and wondered why the town had not done more to honor Cogswell, who risked his life and suffered an injury in his successful effort to save the town. That got the ball rolling and resulted in the ceremony.

"We owe him a debt," said Pearce.

The marker in the quiet
(Continued on page 8)

IT'S A HAPPY OCCASION for Dr. Carl J. Fyler and his wife, Marguerite, as Kansas Congressman Jim Ryun presents him with the Silver Star for heroism in World War II.

Fyler was piloting the 360th Squadron aircraft *Dark Horse* on the mission to Bremen, Germany on 29 November 1943. His B-17 was brought down by a horrendous flak burst. Of the 11-man crew (a photographer was aboard), four were killed and seven taken prisoner.

Only one member of the crew survived without injury. Pilot Fyler and nine other men on *Dark Horse* were wounded.



360th pilot Carl Fyler awarded Silver Star in 2003 for heroism on mission in 1943

By Dr. Carl J. Fyler

Sixty years late!

Maj. Gen. Lyle, our Commanding Officer, found out that S/Sgt. Martin Stachowiak (my left waist gunner) had written me up for the Silver Star award (and S/Sgt. Joe Sawicki for the Medal of Honor.)

This was at RAMPS, the "Lucky Strike" base in France where 40,000 of us prisoners of war were returned to U.S. control.

These award sheets were lost, so, when in 1996 the laws were changed for the awards, I told General Lyle and Kansas Representative Jim Ryun.

The results were the "award," and my first D.O.-214.

Plans were made to have General Lyle and General Shuler pin the award on at the 8th AF Heritage Museum, where I am recognized for various displays. But, my health; 100 % S.C. disabilities and 510 days POW time prevented me from driving down there.

US Kansas Representative Ryun gave me the

medal at a "Kansas Recognition Day" ceremony.

Our crews were in Maj. Watts Group at Blythe, CA. Bill Baker, Lou Benepe crews all dead. My crew of 11—two of us left. Engineer Bill Addison and me.

Government records are a "mess." In 1982 AF wrote I was deceased! Ha! It goes on and on. Same for V.A.

I gave the two volumes of the 303rd newsletters to the Shawnee County library. We are recognized! They even sell my book "Staying Alive" in their book store, and have three copies in the library for check-out.

The Topeka Veterans Administration has a copy in their medical library and in the patients' library.

The Combat Air Museum at Forbes AFB sells my book and has four displays of World War II aircraft photos, POW maps and a "mock-up" POW room. I curate these.

The Topeka Veterans Administration building has two displays of mine—WWII aircraft, including the B-17 Thunderbird, and Stalag Luft

I and III, map of all German prisons.

I continue to lead the Kansas Chapter of American ex-prisoners of war (since 1974).

Also, I addressed the Military Order of World Wars

last October, showing a video of the first Schweinfurt mission on August 17, 1943.

I'm slowing down, with three artificial joints, back surgery and two hearing aids.

Almost house bound!



FYLER CREW—standing, l-to-r, right waist gunner George Fisher, navigator George Melnor, engineer Bill Addison, bombardier Steve Gibson, co-pilot Paul Tippet and pilot Carl Fyler. Kneeling, tail gunner Joseph Sawicki, radio operator Gayther Crowder, ball turret gunner Ray Ford and left waist gunner Martin Stachowiak.

Molesworth's Joint Analysis Center Plays Key Role in Veterans Day Program at Cambridge Cemetery

The US European Command's Joint Analysis Center, based at the 303rd Bomb Group's wartime home of Molesworth, was given the responsibility of organizing last November's Veterans Day ceremony at The Cambridge American Cemetery. It's the final resting place for 3,812 American servicemen and women, including some of the 303rd's finest.

Welcoming remarks were made by USAF Capt. Brian K. Thompson, Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, 423rd Air Base Squadron. The colors were posted by a EU-COM JAC Color Guard. The playing of the national anthems of Britain and the United States followed.

Traditional "Words of Remembrance" were delivered by Col. Richard Ayres, commander of the Joint Analysis Center, and by RAF Alconbury Commander, Squadron Leader R. P. Cunliffe.

In 1918, on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the armistice was signed ending World War I.



A PROCLAMATION BY THE MAYOR OF FRESNO, CALIFORNIA on Veterans Day honored The Mighty Eighth Air Force. Former 303rd Bomb Group Association president and 358th Squadron pilot William McLeod accepted the Proclamation from Mayor Alan Autry on behalf of Fresno's 8th AF veterans.

"Mighty Eighth" Honored by City of Fresno on Veterans Day; 303rd's Bill McLeod Accepts Proclamation

By John Wagenhalls, 379th BG

The city of Fresno, CA, the Veterans Day Parade Committee and the mayor, Alan Autry, chose to honor the veterans of the 8th Air Force as the Grand Marshals of the 83rd annual Veterans Day parade in downtown Fresno. Almost 5,000 individuals participated in the parade which took two and a half hours to pass reviewing officials.

A resolution from the mayor's office recognized the 8th Air Force for their gallant effort to help defeat Adolph Hitler's military might, as well as other major contributions during WW 2. The Proclamation was presented to William McLeod, a veteran of the 303rd Bomb Group, as representative of the 8th AF veterans by the mayor of Fresno.

The pride of the Mighty 8th was clearly visible as the parade wound through the streets of Fresno for nearly two miles to an enthusiastic crowd estimated at over 25,000. We were greeted with admiration and respect.

It was evident that although the crowd was mostly of different generations they seemed to be aware of the role, sacrifices and courage the veterans of the 8th Air Force displayed during the air war over Europe. This was particularly apparent as 25 proud veterans of the Mighty 8th, seated on a big-rig trailer with large banners on each side, were transported along the parade route.

It was a great day for the Mighty Eighth.



THE COLORFUL COVER of the program for the ceremony at the Cambridge American Cemetery in England.

100 years ago — FIRST AIRPLANE TOOK OFF UNDER OWN POWER

On 17 December 1903 at 1035 hours, the world's first powered aircraft lifted off the beach at the Outer Banks of North Carolina for a 12-second, 120-foot flight. A new way of life was born. Here's the epic story:

By June 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright had finished designing and building their powered machine. *The Flyer* had a wingspan of a little more than 40 feet, a surface area of 510 square feet, and weighed 625 pounds. They constructed as much of *The Flyer* as they could in Dayton, Ohio; then shipped the parts to Kitty Hawk for final assembly.

The brothers left for Kitty Hawk on September 23 and arrived at their camp at Kill Devil Hill two days later. While they waited for their shipment to arrive, they repaired the old hangar and built a new workshop. After the shipment arrived, it took the Wrights three weeks to assemble *The Flyer*. They continued to practice gliding, using their 1902 glider for longer times and increasing their ability to control the craft.

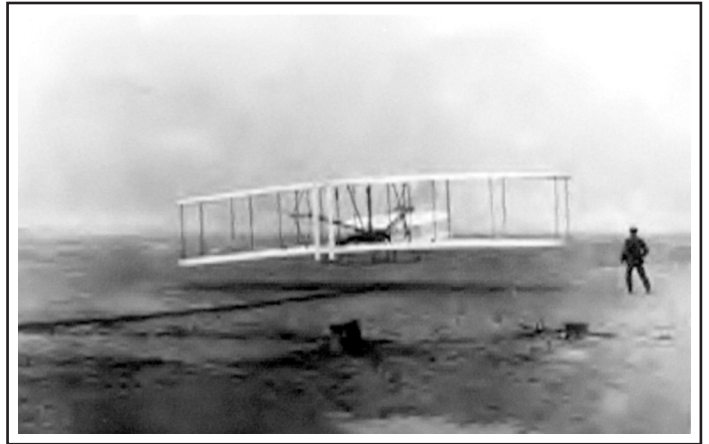
The weather was horrid—cold and stormy. Nevertheless, they worked on and finished assembling *The Flyer* in early November. On November 5, they tested the motor. The results were not good. The engine ran roughly and did not work as expected. Its excessive vibrations damaged the propeller shafts, which had to be sent back to Dayton for repair.

They tested the engine again on November 28. Once more they had problems with a cracked propeller shaft. Orville went back to Dayton to make new propeller shafts of solid spring steel. It was December 11 before he returned to camp.

The Flyer was ready for flight on December 12, but the winds were too light to take off. They did not attempt a flight on Sunday, since they had promised their father they would not fly on the Sabbath. Their first attempt at powered flight would take place Monday, December 14.

With the help of the Kill Devil Hills Life Saving Crew, they hauled the machine up the slope to where it would take off. They tossed a coin to see who would fly. Wilbur won, climbed aboard *The Flyer*, and lay prone on it. After a somewhat difficult start, the craft began to move down its rails and then rose from its track. But Wilbur had miscalculated and had turned upward too soon, not realizing the effectiveness of the elevator. *The Flyer* climbed a few feet, stalled, and then settled onto the ground near the foot of the hill. The machine was damaged slightly.

Repairs took two days, and the machine was ready again late on December 16. December 17 dawned with a strong



BEGINNING OF THE FIRST FLIGHT—The Wright brothers named their plane *The Flyer*. (Photo: Library of Congress)

wind blowing from the north and rain beating down. The rain stopped, but the wind kept blowing. Wilbur estimated that it was at least 25 miles per hour. The brothers waited until after 10 AM, hoping that the wind would die down a little. When it did not, they decided to go ahead anyway. They sent a signal to the men from the Life Saving Station to come and help them haul *The Flyer* to their staging area up the hill.

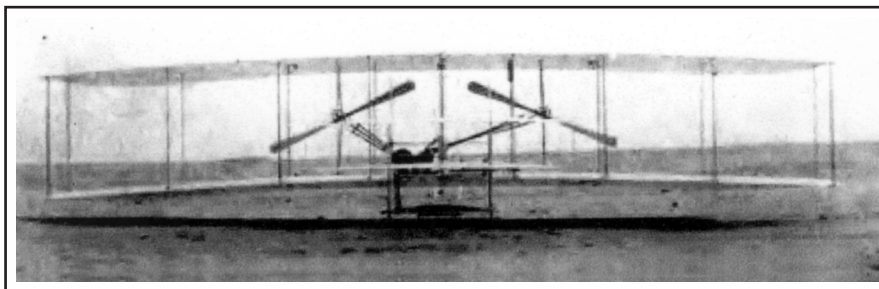
It was Orville's turn to fly, and he climbed aboard. *The Flyer* was released from its restraining wires and began to move down the rail into the wind. It rose quickly—again they had underestimated the effectiveness of the elevator. The machine pitched up and down for 12 momentous seconds and then landed—with the machine and the pilot intact except for one damaged skid. It had flown 120 feet from the end of the rail. For the first time, a powered flying machine had taken off from level ground, traveled through the air, and landed under the control of its pilot.

Not satisfied, the brothers wanted to try again. They repaired the cracked skid, and at about 11:20 AM, Wilbur made the second flight—traveling about 175 feet. With the help of the life saving crew, they carried *The Flyer* back to its starting point and tried again. Twenty minutes later, Orville made the third flight and landed about 200 feet from his starting point.

The fourth flight took off around noon with Wilbur at the controls. The flight began like the others—with *The Flyer* pitching upward and down. After about 300 feet, Wilbur got it under control and began traveling on a fairly even course. He proceeded this way until he was around 800 feet out. Then *The Flyer* began bucking again and suddenly plunged into the ground. The front rudder frame was badly broken, but the main frame was intact. It had traveled 852 feet in 59 seconds.

As the men were carrying the plane back to its starting point—ready for another try—a sudden gust of wind grabbed one wing and lifted it up. One of the life saving crew tried to seize the spars, but could not. The plane was destroyed. It had accomplished a milestone, but would never fly again. The brothers would ship the remains home to Dayton.

(Source: US Centennial of Flight Commission)



**Front view of
The Flyer on
launching pad**

(Credit: Wright State University)

(COGSWELL from 4)

garden behind the pub is a realization of that debt.

"To make such a decision, what went through the guy's mind?" wondered Tom Hankin, the town council chairman.

Deerfield kept in touch with Cogswell through letters and telephone calls after the war, including while both served in the Korean War.

"One of the letters (to Cogswell) came back unopened," Deerfield said, "and stamped 'missing in action.'"

Cogswell was piloting a B-29 bomber that went down in the Sea of Japan in October 1951. He was later listed as killed in action.

"I know he would have been honored by this recognition," Deerfield said.

"On the other hand, I don't think he would have been disappointed if the recognition had not come his way."

* * * *

(EDITOR'S NOTE:

The Stars and Stripes Museum and Library is located in Bloomfield, Missouri, about 120 miles south of St. Louis. The first edition of a newspaper called *Stars and Stripes* was published in Bloomfield during the Civil War by Union troops who found a working press after they captured the town.

The museum is locally operated. For more information, go to the web site www.stripes.com).

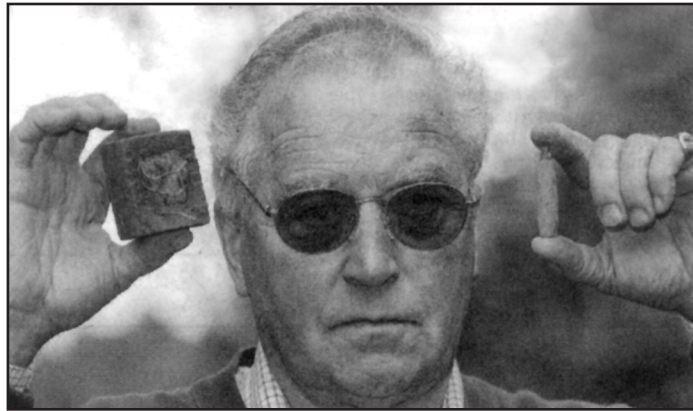
* * * *

EXCERPTS FROM THE DAILY ECHO —

Captain Cogswell, you gave your life to save others, now it's our turn to salute you....

George Watson, 70, was an eyewitness on the day the plane came down and he was present at the service.

"I remember there was a



B-17 DEBRIS OF LADY LUCK — George Watson of New Alresford, who witnessed the crash, recovered a few of the shattered pieces. He's holding a caliber .50 bullet and a small transformer (DAILY ECHO PHOTO ©).

hell of a bang and a great pool of smoke," he said. "All the kids rushed to get as close as we could and we gathered up guns that had been scattered. The police came fairly quickly and took them off us."

EXCERPTS FROM THE WINCHESTER NEWS —

Members of The Alresford Society, the Historical and Literary Society, the Chamber of Commerce and the Town Council, and a number of residents, joined in the memorial service to pay tribute to this remarkable man, who by his judgment and quick thinking saved Alresford.

EXCERPTS FROM THE HAMPSHIRE CHRONICLE

The most memorable event of World War II in Alresford has been commemorated 60 years later by a memorial plaque in a garden adjacent to the Globe Inn on the Lake.

EXCERPTS FROM THE ALRESFORD ADVERTISER —

The name of Captain Robert Cogswell may not be immediately recognizable to many of the town's current residents, but a brief visit to Soke Gardens where a brand new commemorative plaque now stands should put them in the picture.

Bill Brixey, one of the standard bearers at the ceremony, said, "I was 14

and we used to spend our leisure hours on the golf course. I remember an aircraft getting lower and lower until it disappeared over Sun Hill. It was all quite exciting really. We'd just experienced the Battle of Britain and we didn't have any idea that we might be in danger."

St. John's Gospel (15:13-14) provided a fitting thought for those assembled in the gardens and was read out by Dr. Christopher Brill, chaplain to the RAF Association, "There is no greater love than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends."

Robert Cogswell showed that he was willing to lay his life down.

JOHNSON from 1

leadership skills and promote teamwork.

Colonel Biscione said Sergeant Johnson was an air warrior who personified dedication to service and to his nation.

"Master Sergeant Johnson's legacy is an example of selfless service and professionalism," Colonel Biscione said.

"These are things we hope to sustain through the actions of this center. Today, we will make Master Sergeant Johnson's legacy tangible in order to ensure we never forget where we came from."

According to Senior Airman Lori Bartz, project contributor, the building was named after Johnson after extensive research.

"Master Sergeant Johnson stands out above the rest and would be proud of having the PDC being named after him," Airman Bartz said.

Reflecting on Sergeant Johnson's military career which spanned three wars, his family said the dedication ceremony was a fitting tribute to the challenges he overcame.

"We are really proud that the center was named after him," Mrs. McClean said. "This is as good as it gets."



THE LATE M/SGT IRWAN A. JOHNSON, 360th Squadron radio operator, former POW, and career USAF specialist. The new PDC at Minot AFB, ND was named in his honor.

ANDY ROONEY "UP IN ARMS" OVER THEFT OF HIS GOOD NAME

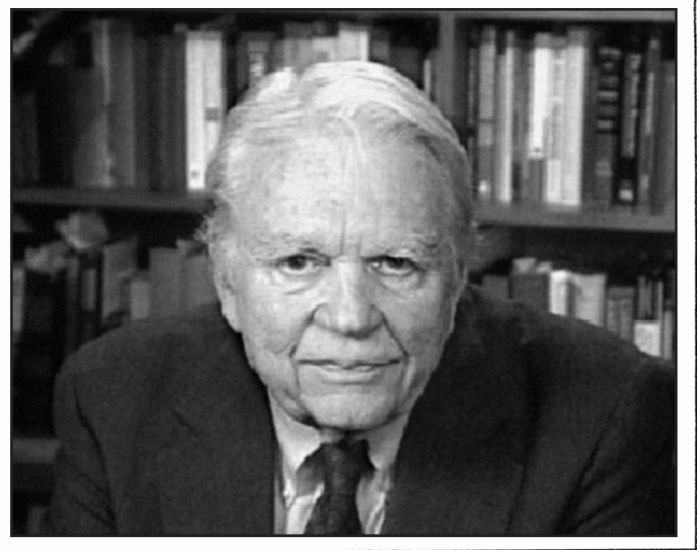
Andy Rooney, longtime commentator on CBS-TV's "60 Minutes," Tribune Media newspaper columnist and World War II correspondent, is a victim of what he described as a serious theft of his name, hurtful to his reputation.

Rooney was referring to a widely circulated message on the Internet which attributed to him 20 remarks he considered "detestable" and "inconsistent" with his philosophy of life.

As a correspondent during the second World War, Rooney often wrote about "ordinary people" caught up in combat. Today, his commentaries often follow a similar path in reporting the human side of the news.

The author of the fraudulent email used the writing style to masquerade the message as coming from Rooney.

Last June, the journalist was awarded the Ernie Pyle Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Society of Newspaper Columnists. The award was presented by Mike Leonard, NSNC president, who commented, "Ernie Pyle's life and work eloquently captured the hopes and aspirations of the



Andy Rooney (CBS Photo)

common man. Andy Rooney's work is in that same fine tradition."

Rooney sought to set the fraudulent email record straight in one of his newspaper columns. When the Hell's Angels Newsletter became aware of the rebuttal, we asked his permission to publish it. Andy Rooney's reply, "Feel free to use the column if you want to."

We want to, with pleasure. Glad to help a World War II journalist and Army veteran tell it as it really is.

* * * * *

Two years ago, someone broke my car window, took some things from the glove compartment and a suitcase I had left on the back seat.

Twenty years ago, I had a motor-bike stolen from my garage. In the Army, at Fort Bragg, someone went through my footlocker and took \$20 I had saved for the day I could get a 24-hour pass. These were the only brushes with crime I'd had in my life until recently. Now, several thieves have taken something of great value from me — my name.

Several months after I first saw the e-mail, a man named Frank Kaiser wrote asking why I had put my name on something he had written in 2000 for his syndicated column called Suddenly Senior. I called Frank immediately and he accepted the fact that someone else had taken what he wrote and put my name on it.

There have been two other instances of someone distributing a list of opinions under my name. What would make someone write down a series of personal observations and distribute them using my name as the author? It mystifies me.

About a year ago, I became aware of a more serious theft of my

name and it is so hurtful to my reputation that it calls for legal action against the thief. Hundreds of people have written asking if I really wrote the 20 detestable remarks made under my name that have had such wide circulation on the Internet.

The list of remarks begins:

"I like big cars, big boats, big motorcycles, big houses and big campfires."

It continues:

"I believe the money I make belongs to me and my family, not some governmental stooge with a bad comb-over who wants to give it away to crack addicts for squirting babies."

"Guns do not make you a killer. I think killing makes you a killer."

"I have the right NOT to be tolerant of others because they are weird, different or tick me off."

Some of the remarks, which I will not repeat here, are viciously racist and the spirit of the whole thing is nasty, mean and totally inconsistent with my philosophy of life.

It is apparent that the list of comments has been read by hundreds of thousands of Americans, many of whom must believe that it accurately represents opinions of

mine that I don't dare express in my column or on television. It is seriously damaging to my reputation.

The only good thing to come out of this incident is the dozens of letters I've received from people saying they know me well enough to know I didn't write the comments. There must be many more, however, who are ready to believe I did write them.

I have tracked the e-mail back to an address in Tucson and a Web site called "CelebrityHypocrites.com," which is owned by a man named Dave Mason.

Mr. Mason lists as his address, "405 East Wetmore Road, No. 117 PMB 520, Tucson, Arizona 85705." I was in Tucson recently and foolishly went to that address thinking it might be Mason's home or business. I'd like to know more about Mason, but the address was a commercial mailbox business and I didn't wait around for him to show up so I could confront him.

If it is Dave Mason who has stolen my name, I demand that he put out a retraction that reaches as many people as his fraudulent e-mail did.

THE MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR FORCE B-17 “FLYING FORTRESS” BOMBER BASES IN EAST ANGLIA, ENGLAND

The counties of Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire and Bedfordshire were home to many Bomb Groups of the American Eighth Air Force during the Second World War. Although the thunder of the B-17 Flying Fortresses is long gone, there are many reminders of the days when local pubs and villages were the haunts of young American flyers.

The locations of eight US air bases are shown on the map. The 303rd Bomb Group, Triangle-C, at Molesworth, surpassed all other heavy bomber units in the European Theater of Operations by racking up a record 364 combat missions. An impressive marble memorial to 303rd personnel, who called themselves the Hell's Angels, was dedicated a few years ago near the main gate. The old air base is now home to the US Joint Analysis Center.

The other bases and their assigned Groups are:

Bassingbourn, Triangle-A, 91st Bomb Group. Known as the “Ragged Irregulars.” Was home to the heralded *Memphis Belle*.

Podington, Triangle-B, 92nd Bomb Group. The chin turret for the B-17G was designed at the base.

Chelveston, Triangle-G, 305th Bomb Group. Their motto, “Can Do.” The Group led the “Black October” 1943 attack on ball bearings works at Schweinfurt.

Thurleigh, Triangle-H, 306th Bomb Group. The longest serving Group in the 8th AF to remain at the same base through the war.

Kimbolton, Triangle-K, 379th Bomb Group. Flew 330 combat missions, and won numerous awards.

Glatton, Triangle-U, 457th Bomb Group. The first B-29 to arrive in England landed here in March 1944, but did not become operational.

Nuthampstead, Triangle-W, 398th Bomb Group. Their motto, “Hell From Heaven.”

(Source of the map and much of the data on these pages is the Bedford Borough Council's Tourist Information Centre)



GENERAL RADER DEAD AT 89; COMMANDED 303RD BOMB GROUP LAST SIX MONTHS OF WAR

Brigadier General William S. Rader, who commanded the 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth from 29 October 1944 to 18 April 1945, passed away last November at the age of 89. Cause of death was cardiac arrest.

He flew 72 missions in Europe during World War II, leading the first daylight B-17 formations against targets in France in 1942. His combat career began earlier in the Pacific, flying reconnaissance missions during the Battle of Midway, and surviving a crash at sea. He was awarded the Silver Star for making a bomb run on St. Nazaire submarine pens in 1943 after two engines and the aircraft's manual controls were shot out by enemy fighters, and bringing his crew safely back to England by manipulating the auto-pilot device.

Gen. Rader succeeded Col. Kermit D. Stevens as 303rd Bomb Group commanding officer 29 October 1944 and served until a few weeks before the war in Europe ended.

After the war, he held many key positions in the US Air Force, retiring in 1968 as Deputy Commander of SAC's 1st Strategic Aerospace Division..



LT. COL. WILLIAM S. RADER AT CONTROLS OF B-17

4.37-million American veterans of World War II are still living

THE QUESTION, asked by a family member —

How many U.S. veterans of World War II are still living? Just in my own father's unit, three men, including my father, died last September. Several others also died last fall, and we know of a few more this year.

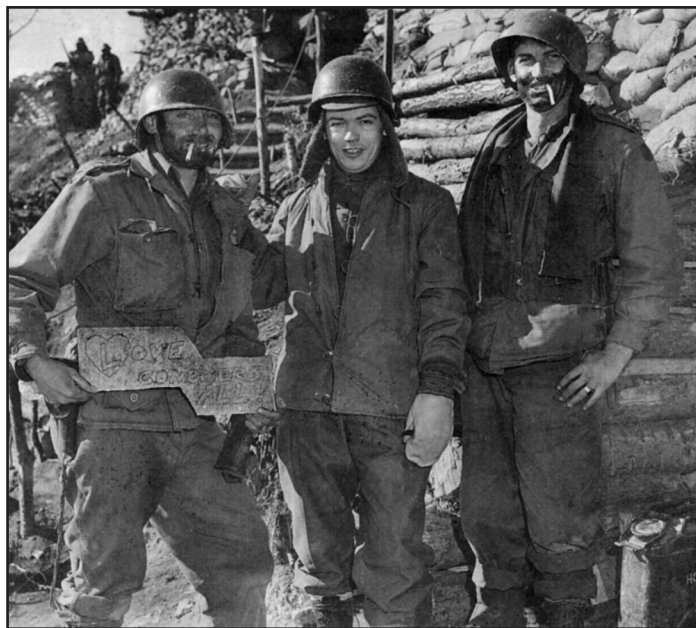
THE ANSWER —

Sixteen-million men and women served in the Second World War. About one in four, 4.37 million, are still alive.

Tom Thomas of the Department of Veterans Affairs said, "World War II veterans are dying at the rate of nearly 1,100 per day.

The 2000 census reported a total of 26.4 million surviving veterans of all wars. Fewer troops fought in Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf combined than in World War II.

Fewer than 200 veterans of the First World War are still living.



CARTOONIST BILL MAULDIN, center, met Korean versions of his World War II characters, *Willie and Joe*, during a visit to the 7th Infantry Division on Heartbreak Ridge in February, 1952. Mauldin passed away a year ago. He will be remembered by GI's for his art and sense of humor.

Minutes of 303rd BGA Board Meetings Portland, Oregon August 7 & 11, 2003

Thursday 7 August 2003

President Walt Ferrari called the meeting to order at 0905. He announced the resignation of Harry Gobrecht as Historian and from other committees. Hal Susskind had been offered and accepted the Historian responsibility. A discussion of the disposition of the archives followed. The president also announced the resignation of Ed Miller, 360th Squadron Representative.

Vice President for Reunions Walt Mayer reported that Armed Forces Reunions has negotiated a contract on behalf of the 303rd BGA with the Hyatt Regency hotel in Savannah for the 2004 meeting. He gave other details of the arrangements, and suggested that if attendance at future reunions is abnormally low the 303rd might want to have joint reunions with other bomb groups. This is not likely to happen soon, if ever.

Secretary Dick Bowler gave an addendum to his 2002 Board meeting report, noting the correction of the 1199th MPC designation on the 303rd's memorial at the 8th AF Heritage Museum, the selection of Savannah for the 2004 reunion and a grant for extra funding.

Treasurer Bill Roche provided a written report on the Association's financial status.

Past Presidents Committee Chairman Jack Rencher presented the nominations for officers in the coming year.

Newsletter editor Eddie Deerfield presented a well-documented report comparing the costs of printing and mailing the Hell's Angels Newsletter with those of a comparable Bomb Group publication. The report demonstrated that the 303rd's newsletter is superior in paper quality, text layouts and color content while maintaining a similar cost structure.

Audit Committee Chairman Rencher provided a written report which indicated a balance different from the Treasurer's report. A lengthy discussion followed, and it was generally accepted that the different ending dates of the two financial statements contributed to the disparity. The possibility of hiring a professional auditor was also discussed.

By-laws Committee Chairman Bill McLeod proposed changes in the by-laws to adjust the Association's reunion planning schedule to two years in advance instead of four years.

Membership Chairman Dennis Smith's report reflected a decline in Family membership. He also said he was researching to add the "plus-4" digits to the mailing roster.

Webmaster Gary Moncur submitted a written and graphic report demonstrating the increasing popularity of the 303rd BGA's web site.

PX Administrator Charlie Sykes said he and Vicki had brought a \$13,000 inventory to the Portland meeting. The newest item is a dark blue lined jacket with 303rd insignia at

\$50 each.

WWII Awards Chairman Bill Cox announced successes in seeking DFC's for 303rd airmen. He said 38 members have contacted him.

Under "Unfinished Business," Eddie Deerfield's motion to standardize the financial reporting period as July 1 to June 30 was approved. Fred Reichel reviewed the 303rd contract with AFR for Savannah and said it cannot be broken without penalties. Bill McLeod advised against vacating the VP Reunions position and his position was supported by vote.

Monday, 11 August 2003

President Al Dussliere called the meeting to order at 1305.

Charlie Sykes said the PX would be willing to handle future sales of the 303rd's CD "The Molesworth Story." Gary Moncur said he thought it would be better if he continued to handle sales of the CD. The president suggested delaying a decision on the matter.

Eddie Deerfield said there was no need for an increased budget for the newsletter, and also reported on the presentations of 40 sets of the newsletter books to various institutions.

Squadron and other unit representatives reported on the results of their elections. (See officer list on page 2).

A discussion on the transfer of the 303rd's archives concluded with an understanding of need for further study.

Widows Representative Joanna Tressler suggested that their members attend their late husband's unit meetings instead of as a group. The Board was in favor.

President Dussliere announced the VP Reunions position as vacant. Kathy Johnson was a candidate; Eddie Deerfield made a motion for acceptance, seconded by John Ford, and approved by Board vote.

Walt Ferrari moved that Dayton, Ohio be designated as the 303rd's reunion site for 2005. It was approved.

Under new business, Jack Rencher proposed that the Past Presidents Committee of four members be increased to five to break a tie vote. The proposal was rejected, with the tie-breaking vote going to the incumbent president.

Al Dussliere suggested that the Treasurer be authorized to seek the services of a professional auditor, at Bill Cox's discretion. This was approved.

Respectfully submitted,
Richard Bowler, Jr., Secretary

(The above is a summary report. Accounts of the full minutes are available on request from The Secretary).



303rd's Pin-up Men of the Month

THE MEN WHO KEPT THE BOMBERS FLYING in the 358th Squadron pose for a "family" portrait. The photo of the Engineering Section was made on 21 March 1944.

S/SGT. WILLIAM E. SAUCIER, assigned to 303rd Bomb Group Headquarters, is hard at work at his desk in the Molesworth Control Tower as Capt. Harry M. McDaniel, Airdrome Control Officer, looks on.

THREE OF THE LEADER'S OF THE 359TH SQUADRON ground support personnel were (l-to-r) Engineering Officer Capt. William Neff, Line Chief M/Sgt. Martin Brucher and Armament Officer Lt. Samuel Sapienza.



Molesworth Diary

"I TIED A BANDAGE ON GENERAL TRAVIS"

We were on a mission to Berlin when the formation was getting a little spread out. General Robert Travis was up front, and he called for a flare to be fired through the waist window. When I shot the flare, the Very pistol kicked my hand back, knocking off my neck microphone. When the General called me again on intercom, I didn't hear him at first. When I finally got hooked up, he gave me hell and told me to fire another flare. I did, and he said, "That's better, Sergeant."

A short time later, word came back from the cockpit that General Travis was wounded. I grabbed the first aid kit and went forward. He was holding his hand to a bleeding wound on his forehead above his right eye. I could see at a glance that it wasn't serious (Travis later said, "At first, I was blinded by the blood, but as I slid my fingers apart I realized my injury was minor). Anyway, I grabbed the largest bandage in the whole kit and fastened it over the wound and most of his forehead.

After we landed at Molesworth, I was sitting on my parachute bag when General Travis came over and said, "You are a good soldier."

George Greene, Jr.
359th Sqdn Waist Gunner

WARMED BY COAL FROM A SERVANT OF GOD

It was cold and damp in England. I roomed with my bombardier, Ralph Coburn. We had all the coke we needed for our stove, but it was very hard to start with paper or kindling, and we were always cold. I went down to the flight line and brought back a two-gallon can of 100 octane gas. I would pour some on the coke, step back, and light it. It worked most of the time. One time, though, I poured and lit, poured and lit, and the blaze wouldn't start up. On the third try, the stove blew up, knocking the top half off the bottom and sending the pipes crashing down. Ralph wasn't paying attention to me and when he heard the explosion he thought the Jerries were bombing us.

We got the stove repaired, but the heating problem wasn't solved. We needed a new tactic. Walking to the mess hall soon after, we saw a large wooden box at the corner of the base gym. It was about eight feet by four feet, and almost full of coal. Ralph and I guessed it was probably used by the chaplain. We managed to borrow a half track truck with a low flatbed, and drove it to the gym. We were hoisting the box onto the bed when a bunch of fellows ran out of the gym, yelling. We thought they were after us, so we drove off without the box. We then realized they were just exuberant after exercising, so we went back, retrieved the box and took it to our quarters. The box became kindling, hidden under one bunk, while the coal disappeared under the other

bunk. Needless to say, we kept warm the rest of the winter.

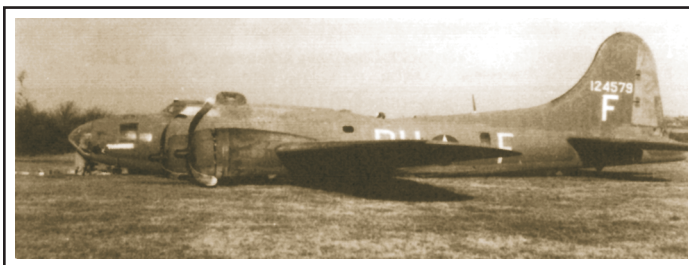
Don Gamble
358th Sqdn Pilot

BAIL-OUT OVER ENGLAND KILLS GUNNER

I was flying with the Castle crew on a mission to attack the submarine pens at Lorient, France on January 23, 1943. The approach to the target and bomb run was uneventful. But, soon after leaving the target, we were attacked by German FW-190 fighter planes. They came in from positions of about 12:30 high, with cannons blazing. A shell hit the Plexiglas nose of our B-17 named *Thumper*, and blew a huge hole in it.

Dark pink hydraulic fluid began pouring from above, and the bomber went into a dive. I thought the pilot must have been hit and was slumped over the controls. After recovering from the shock of the blast, the bombardier and I crawled up into the cockpit. Castle, the pilot, had pulled out of the dive, and we were making it back to England. He ordered us to bail out before he tried to crash land the plane at an RAF Primary Training Base. One of the gunners was killed when his chute failed to open in time, and there were other injuries. *Thumper* came down safely, but so badly damaged, that it never flew another mission. (See photo below).

Chuck Herman
427th Sqdn Navigator



Thumper's 10th mission was its last, crashing at Lulsgate Bottom.

100TH BOMB GROUP ATTRACTS FIGHTER FIRE

During the air war there was an understanding between the Luftwaffe and the Eighth Air Force. If a B-17 was in distress, it would lower its landing gear as an indication of surrendering, and the German pilots would lead it to one of their airfields.

Unfortunately, a pilot leading a formation of 100th Bomb Group B-17's ordered his pilots to lower their landing gear, I guess to gain the element of surprise, and when enemy fighters led the bombers to their airfield, he commanded his crews to start bombing. This violated the unwritten code.

What may have been a calculated move by the 100th was a Godsend to the 303rd and the rest of the bomb groups. From that mission onward, given a choice by

(DIARY continued on page 16)

DIARY from 15

combat circumstances, the German ME-109's and FW-190's would pounce on the 100th Bomb Group B-17's with their distinctive letter "D" on the tail before attacking other planes in the same formation. I guess their losses were our gains.

Joseph R. Germaine
360th Sqdn Tail Gunner

"YOU'RE RUINING TOO MANY PLANES AT BASE"

Arriving late at Molesworth, our crew got in only four missions. Two 'incidents' before we flew our first mission stand out clearly. I was co-pilot on an orientation flight over the area. The experienced pilot wanted a closer look, and came down so low the B-17 sheared some six or eight feet off some tree tops. We had branches wrapped around the ball turret and on the leading edges of the wings. I guess his excellent combat record saved him from harsh disciplinary action.

Then, I was flying as co-pilot again, with three of our crew aboard and an experienced pilot in the left-hand seat, slow timing a B-17. On the return, Molesworth was fogged in. We wound up crashing on the field. All crew members survived, but the plane burned completely. A few days later, the Squadron C.O. called me in and said, "You're ruining too many planes at the base. You had better start flying missions tomorrow." That was less-than-confidence-building.

Robert Stauffer
359th Sqdn Pilot

ENEMY FIGHTERS THICK AS FLIES ON HONEY

Things began to fall apart on the morning of August 19, 1943 when my good luck charm—a small pocket knife—turned up missing just before a mission. The target was an airdrome at Gilze-Rijen in The Netherlands. The first plane we took off in blew its number one engine, and we had to abort. On the ground, a second B-17, *Black Diamond Express*, was waiting for us. We took off again, and managed to rejoin the formation. Problem was, I don't think anyone had bore sighted the guns. When I test fired over the Channel, my gun was firing way left of the mark.

On our second bomb run, more enemy fighters than I had ever seen, as thick as flies around honey, came after us. Those guys were the most aggressive I have ever seen. A FW-190 was coming straight at me, and I started firing, using tracers to make corrections. I hit him and he went down trailing black smoke, but not until after one of his 20-mm shells exploded next to me, mangling my right arm from the wrist to the shoulder, with fragments lodging in my hip and ankle.

My pilot, Jim Hendry, landed in England away from base to get me emergency medical treatment.

I have credit for four German fighters shot down on 11 missions, but there's still enough enemy metal in me to set off security alarms when going through the boarding gates at airports.

Howard L. Abney
358th Sqdn Tail Gunner

FROM THE PRESIDENT

All of us are very aware of how swiftly time passes. It seems as if we just left the great reunion chaired by Walt Mayer in Portland, OR but six months have already whizzed by.

Bill McLeod, Chair of the By-Laws Committee, presented me with a letter of resignation. In his letter Bill wrote, "This is done strictly for medical reasons - my wife's well being and health". We sadly accepted the resignation first of all because of the reasons in his letter but also for the many years as a loyal member, officer and as our counselor in the area of our By-Laws. His guidance is a major reason we are strong as an organization.

A Reunion Committee was appointed and is working on and planning for our next reunion in Savannah, GA. Kathy Johnson has resigned as VP Reunions. Past reunions here have been some of our better attended and we are hopefully expecting a great turnout again next year. Of course the highlight will be a visit to the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum.

Prior to the beginning of our 2004 reunion the Executive Committee will meet with a committee from the Heritage Museum to discuss and hopefully conclude arrangements to deposit our archives there as a permanent location for all to view and appreciate. We would be remiss if we did not recognize the many historians of our Association who have made these artifacts available, especially Harry Gobrecht who has maintained our history for more than the last ten years.

Your Board of Directors, especially the Executive Committee, has been working diligently on the many matters involved in conducting the business of this great organization.

Walt Ferrari, Chairman of the Past President's Committee, is hard at work trying to recruit members who are interested in serving in elected positions. If you are so inclined, make it known. Walt is also beginning the work of planning our 2005 reunion in Dayton, OH.

It seems as if Gary Moncur comes up with something new every day for our outstanding website. The numbers of visitor's daily and the many hundreds of pages viewed are remarkable. Our site on the Internet is our connection to the world. Each great issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter edited by Eddie Deerfield is the window of information to our members. No other veteran military unit can provide anything comparable to these two media.

Bill Cox, Treasurer, has worked many weeks putting a budget together which meets our present needs with an outlook for the future. Two of our greatest assets, the 303rd Bomb Group Association Website and our Hell's Angels Newsletter require approximately \$30,000 a year to produce and keep up to date. The large majority of our veteran members are now automatically excluded from paying yearly dues so the revenue formerly received in that area has been greatly reduced. Without another source of revenue it is projected that the end of 2006 will deplete our treasury. If we are to continue as a viable and forward moving organization we need another source of income. The alternative is to do away with our newsletter and website.

For a number of years we conducted a Benefactor Program to augment our income. I, among a number of others, was opposed to this type of a program each year. It was my thought that we should not continue increasing the amount in our treasury until there was a need to do so. That time of need is here. I have recommended to the Board of Directors that we make plans to present a Benefactor Program to our members. It is my hope that this plan will be in operation near the time of this issue of the newsletter.

We are thankful for the many blessings of the past year and look forward to seeing or hearing from you.

Albert L. Dussliere

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

"ONE DOESN'T NEED THIS KIND OF DISCONTENT"

I think you have produced an extraordinary newsletter and I commend you for your excellent journalism. I look forward to reading it with great anticipation. I cannot understand why anyone wants your resignation as editor. I regret that those kind of resentments surface with such a wonderful organization. One doesn't need this kind of discontent.

I compliment you for your dedication and commitment to our nation and the 303rd BGA.

Fate Thomas
Ooltewah, Tennessee

MISSING CREW PHOTO SENT BY BOMBARDIER'S WIDOW

I saw a list in the Hell's Angels Newsletter asking for missing combat crew photos. I saw the name Clarence M. Fountain, and am sending a picture of his crew (to our internet website).

My husband, Charles Bradshaw, was in his crew, but is now deceased. He would have been so proud that their picture made the magazine. The pilot is also deceased.

Maxine Bradshaw
Glascow, Kentucky
(EDITOR'S NOTE — SEE CREW PHOTO BELOW)

REMINISCING ABOUT GOOD OLD DAYS IN CHICAGO

Enjoyed your "Editor Comments" in the November 2003 newsletter. And your picture with Mayor Daley. Though mundane, my wife Ruth and I knew his father (when he was mayor), and we liked him. In fact, at one time we had a notice signed by him which would allow us to park anywhere and at any time we were in Chicago!

Your recollections interested me as well. Do you recall a wonderful night spot which my airline crews used to love—The Ivanhoe? Also, we visited Chappie Skoner in Chicago very soon after the war (the one we won).

Good newsletter.

Bill Heller
360th Sqdn Pilot and CO

NEPHEW OF SLAIN 427TH ENGINEER ASKS DETAILS

My uncle, T/Sgt Roaul R. Prieto, B-17 flight engineer, was lost on a bombing mission to Leipzig, Germany on the 6th of April 1945. He has been buried in Belgium for over half a century. There is legislation in Congress to bring his body home. Roaul was in the 427th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group. He's a native son of Palm Springs, CA and is survived by numerous relatives in the area.

If anyone knew my uncle or remembers the two B-17's coming together and falling to earth 50 miles from Leipzig, please get in touch with me. He was engineer on the B-17 *Green Hill Belle*, piloted by M. Alderman.

Eugene R. Prieto
P. O. Box 1141
Palm Springs, CA
Telephone (760) 323-9194

303rd BRITISH FRIEND JOHN GELL PASSES AWAY

I received a call from England a few days ago advising me that John Gell had passed away. The caller was his brother, Andrew.

Returning from Schweinfurt on Black Thursday, October 14, 1943, badly shot up and unable to find the base at Molesworth, the Ambrose G. Grant crew, flying the *Cat O' Nine Tails* that day, was forced to bail out over England.

We all got out safely and the B-17 crashed into a large tree behind the home of John Gell in Riseley, Bedfordshire, England. John was six years of age.

After the plane was recovered by the 8th Air Force, a section of one of the props was discovered embedded in the tree. That propeller is now in the backyard of John Gell's home, where he had it cemented in as a memorial to the crew and to the plane.

John Gell had a lifelong interest in the Molesworth base and in the Second Schweinfurt Memorial Association, for whom he laid a wreath of flowers every October 14th, at the Cambridge cemetery, in memory of all those lost at Schweinfurt.

John Gell was a member of SSMA and an associate member of the 303rd Bomb Group.

We corresponded for a number of years and I got to meet him and visit his home and the old base in 2000. On that visit John presented me with a model of a B 17 made from metal found in his yard after the crash in 1943.

I considered John Gell a

good friend and looked forward to receiving his letters. I will miss him.

Ed Sexton
359th Sqdn Radio Operator

LEGION OF MERIT FOR 360TH POW BOMBARDIER?

On January 23, 1943 2/Lt Ewell R. McCright was on a mission to Lorient, France sub pens. His plane went down and he became a POW in Stalag Luft III, South Compound. Lew Lyle, the squadron commander, was flying tail-end Charlie that day and witnessed the aircraft getting hit from bombs from above from another group.

Last June, General Jake Smart, a former POW in the same camp, wrote Lt Gen Bub Clark asking if the Air Force had ever done anything for McCright and the ledgers he kept as a POW. Clark wrote me and I informed him the Air Force had not.

Lew Lyle and Clark got together, and with Gen Smart, Lt Gen Klocko, Maj Gen Jones Bolt, and Maj Gen Dave Jones are putting him in for the Legion of Merit Medal. All the generals were in the South Compound and knew if these records had been found by the Gestapo when they searched Stalag Luft III after "The Great Escape" in 1944, McCright was subject to have been taken from the camp. The records of the men arriving from the Buchenwald concentration camp would have signed his death warrant.

I have submitted a statement to Lew Lyle on how I obtained the ledgers.

Perhaps in the near future, McCright will receive the honor which he should have received in 1945. Gen Clark was the officer who issued McCright the job of keeping these ledgers but didn't know until 1990 that the ledgers had made it out of Germany. The War Department had them for a number of years as top secret.

Ten Purple Hearts have been issued from the ledgers.

Arnold A. Wright
Benton, Arkansas



MISSING 358TH CREW PHOTO—Standing, l-to-r, bombardier Charles Bradshaw, navigator Howard Widener, co-pilot Paul Pinkert and pilot Clarence Fountain. Kneeling, ball turret gunner Ralph Darley, engineer John Grocki, gunner Carl Hackney, radio operator William Riehl and tail gunner George Powell.

Seeking

Nose

Art

Photos

Our website at www.303rdBGA.com has an impressive collection of Nose Art photos of 303rd BG(H) B-17s. In our quest to complete the collection, we are seeking photos of the B-17s listed below. If you can help, please contact us at: noseart@303rdBGA.com, or mail your photo to: Gary Moncur, 303rdBGA Webmaster, 4483 Palmer Drive, West Valley, UT 84120. We will return the photo, or preserve it in our archives as you direct. Thank you for your support.

Avenger, The (F)	42-5390	360-L	Miss Lace (G)	42-102569	427-X
Baltimore Bounce (F)	42-29894	359-C	Mugger, The (F)	42-5792	358-I
Beats Me (F)	41-24567	360-J/V	Myasis Dragon (G)	42-97291	359-I
Blues in the Night (G)	43-38891	359-H	My Darling (G)	44-6516	360-Q
Bouncing Betty II (G)	43-38176	358-B	Nero (G)	42-39807	359-Y
Bouncing Betty III (G)	43-38554	358-B	Old Black Magic (G)	42-107206	359-R
Duffy's Tavern (G)	44-8422	358-M	Ole George (G)	42-31574	358-G
El Screamo (G)	44-6957	427-D	Padded Cell II (G)	42-97498	358-J
So Ragged (G)	43-38621	427-E	Pappy (F)	42-29624	359
Flying Bitch (F)	42-29795	427-O	Princess Pat II (G)	43-38065	358-J
Full House (G)	43-37666	427-T	Road Back, The (G)	42-97552	360-O
Green Hill Belle (G)	43-38958	427-H	Santa Ana (G)	42-39764	427-B
Helen Heaven (G)	42-31224	358-F	Shades of Stricnine (F)	42-5221	427-Z
Hell's Angel II (G)	42-38041	358-D	Shasta (G)	43-38191	358-A
Hell's Cargo '44 (G)	44-8734	359-C	Silver Fox (G)	43-38206	358-L
Jackie (G)	43-38583	360-H	Star Dust (F)	42-3064	358-I
Jigger Rooche (G)	42-31423	427-M	Terrible Ten, The (F)	42-29656	358-F
Joan of Ark (F)	42-29477	358-B	Tiny Angel (G)	42-102432	427-U
Kali (F)	41-24517	427-O	Virgin Mary (G)	42-97590	360-A
Lady Alta (G)	44-6503	358-F	Wallaroo MKII (G)	42-31405	359-X
Lady Beth (G)	43-38883	359-A	Wanton Woman (G)	42-39787	358-L
Liberty Run (G)	44-6076	359-Y	We Dood It (F)	42-5444	359-C
Lonesome Polecat (G)	42-31177	359-L	Werewolf (F)	41-24606	358-H
Memphis Blues (F)	42-29791	358-B	Woman's Home		
Memphis Tot (F)	41-24569	427-W/V	Companion (G)	42-39795	360-E



IF YOU'VE EVER SERVED ON A BOARD OF DIRECTORS, you know it's impossible to please all of your constituents all of the time. Last year, the 303rd Bomb Group Association's Board made key decisions in good conscience and in the best interests of the membership, despite unusual pressures. This year, the Board faces similar challenges. Hence, the following parable:

One day, a boy and an old man went through a village with their donkey. The boy rode on the donkey and the man walked. They passed some people who remarked that it was a shame that the boy was riding while the old man walked. So, the two changed places. Then, they passed some people who said to the man, "Shame on you for making the boy walk." So, the two decided they both would walk. But, people said they were stupid for walking when they had a donkey. So, they both climbed on and rode the donkey. Now, they passed some people who said, "How awful to put such a load on a poor donkey." To solve the dilemma, the man and boy decided to carry the donkey. But, as they crossed a bridge, they lost their grip and donkey fell into the river and drowned. The moral of the story? If you try to please everyone, you might as well kiss your ass goodbye.

(With apologies to anyone who might be offended. Cartoon courtesy of 303rd veteran Jack Gardner of Pittsburg, PA)

FROM THE MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

It is with sorrow that I have to report the passing of one of the Bomb Group Commanding Officers, Brig. Gen. William S Rader.

This page of the newsletter is like a sword with two edges, very much like the entire newsletter. One side where we remember the veterans that have passed away, the other side being when we are able to welcome new members into the association.

When the Association was formed in 1975, the average age of the veterans at that time was about 55. With this 2004 issue of the newsletter, these gentlemen are now in their 80's. There is going to be a time when this association will meld into the Mighty 8th. In order to hold that off, we need family members to keep this associate alive and strong. This is where all of you come into play, get your children and grandchildren interested in your history.

I'm working up a new membership directory that should be ready early in 2005. This will be a total change from all of the past directories as it will be in a 3 ring binder form, something like a personal phone book. If only say the letter "B" has a change, then only the letter "B" will be changed, not the whole directory. I will keep you all updated as the progress goes along.

In order to keep the cost down, this directory will be on a pre order basis. Contact me by phone or e-mail and place your order. I don't see the price being more then \$10.00 per roster. Thinking of a binder, dividers, paper and postage, it should come in well under the \$10.00 mark. This will be the one and most information filled roster ever done for the association. All of the men that served at Molesworth, alive and dead, family and associate members as of the date of publication the e-mail addresses that are known.

Dennis Smith
Membership/Roster

IN MEMORIAM

Christopher Balzano Sr.	358 th	11/18/03
Roy P Barrowman	360 th	6/25/03
Robert Blumenthal	360 th	4/20/03
Lawrence C Carriere	359 th	8/19/03
Paul E Chennault Jr.	359 th	3/25/02
Walter F Dennis	360 th	6/25/03
Samuel L Edwards	360 th	8/12/03
Billy A Gaumer	359 th	9/3/03
Norton A Gillespie	359 th	10/21/03
John C Griggs Jr.	427 th	11/10/03
Robert H Herrmann	360 th	8/22/03
Lester L Hilliard	427 th	9/16/03
Antonio Ippolito	444 A/D	8/23/03
Warren N Linville	359 th	5/6/03
Patrick Pecchia	358 th	10/9/02
James H Pleasant	358 th	11/3/03
William S Rader	303 rd BG	11/5/03
Edwin P Scheuermann	358 th	11/6/03
Marcus F Shamban	358 th	11/24/03
Clyde E Smithson	358 th	8/25/03
Clifford Steinberg	427 th	4/4/03
Richard E Wakefield	427 th	3/17/01

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Nick Asvestos (359th), 268 Waitman Street, Morgantown, WV 26501-7532
 Roger Ayers, (427th Family), nephew of Roger D Ayers
 Vito J Brunale, (358th)
 William F Cahill, (427th), 3600 Faircastle, Chevy Chase, MD 20815-5646, (301) 656-7367, spouse Margo
 Charles D Crook Sr., (360th)
 Keith E Day, (358th)
 David S Donalson, (427th), 1111 3rd Street, Weslaco, TX 78596-5607, (956) 968-3852, spouse Eva Marie
 Walter E Hammond, (358th)
 Wilfred L Kaliel, (427th), 9 East Palm Drive, Arcadia, CA 91006-5173, (626) 446-6737, spouse Antionette L
 Jack B Kennedy, (359th)
 Ernest E Knight, (427th), 551 4th Road NE, Fairfield, MT 59436-9226, (406) 467-2858, spouse Patricia
 Robert H Lenhard, (427th), 1 Sheffield Drive, Toms River, NJ 08757-6474, (732) 473-0076, spouse Theresa
 Henry H Means Jr., (427th)
 Leo R Meichry, (359th)
 Dale W Naylon, (427th), 206 N 117th Avenue, Omaha, NE 68154-2211, (402) 330-3140, spouse Patricia
 Norman A Sampson, (427th)
 Ernest G Schieferstein, (360th)
 John C Schwolow, (359th), 13 Marshall Place, Sayreville, NJ 08872-1044, (732) 254-7163, spouse Virginia
 Charles W Smith 427th
 Joseph W Szudlo, (360th)
 Claud Wilson Jr., (358th)

NEW FAMILY MEMBERS

I would have added some names in this section but there does not seem to be anyone interested. I know that Gary Moncur and I have tried to get family members to join. Give them a push and get them interested.

NEW ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Guy K Schlegel, 4703 S. 172nd Place, Seatac, WA 98188-3735, (206) 246-6403

BENEFACTOR PROGRAM

Charles D Crook Sr., (360th), general donation
 Margaret F Keating, (Associate Member), general donation
 Jack B Kennedy, (359th), general donation
 Henry H Means Jr., (427th), general donation
 Leo R Meichry, (359th), general donation
 Norman A Sampson, (427th), general donation
 Joseph W Szudlo, (360th), general donation

IN MEMORY OF DONATIONS

Mrs. Myrtle B Brown, in memory of her husband William F Brown Jr. (359th)
 William H and Jean Cox (358th), in memory of Edwin P and Jane Scheuermann (358th)
 Maj. Stephanie C Rader, in memory of her husband William S Rader (303rd BG)
 Ernest G Schieferstein (360th), in memory of Joel Berly (360th) radio operator
 Mrs. Eileen Schmidt, in memory of her husband Elmer J Schmidt (427th)

THE ARTIST IS ROBERT A. 'BOB' HAND, BOMBARDIER IN THE 360TH SQUADRON.

He calls it "New Kids On The Block," and explains it like this — a B-17 has caught a direct hit, explodes and passes into a new dimension.

It lands like a feather, unblemished, on a bank of clouds. One by one, crew members climb out. They react to the silence, the wonder of it all.

The bombardier points to someone or something approaching them from the horizon....



THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

After more than five years as editor of the Hell's Angels Newsletter, I have now received my first "hate" letter. It came by e-mail on 6 November 2003. It bubbled with bile and righteous indignation. The writer signed it "Mike Peabody." He complained bitterly about my tenure as editor and particularly about the November 2003 issue. I was rightly puzzled because 303rd veterans and family members through all these years have consistently praised the newsletter.

Mr. Peabody attacked my editorial style and said it was "because you were only enlisted and could never get past the idea that officers were better than you." As a matter of fact, I was an officer in Korea during that war and retired as a Lieutenant Colonel. Truth be known, I had more fun as a sergeant on leave in London than as an officer in later assignments.

Mr. Peabody said the newsletter was "a platform for lies" because I was a professional journalist so that lying, in his words, "would be second nature to you." And here, all this time, I was so sure that the Hell's Angels Newsletter was recognized as the best among bomb group publications because of that professionalism and my faith in reporting the facts.

Mr. Peabody accused me of "never having stood up in front of anything, seeking to hide behind some form of cover." I have recollections of having "stood up" against German flak and fighter plane attacks for 30 missions when there was nothing to hide behind. I still have occasional nightmares about my crew's crash in the North Sea and later bail-out from our burning B-17.

Mr. Peabody said, "If my father was alive, he would have punched you in the nose." As a teenager in Chicago, I boxed in a local club and continued in the gym at Molesworth. I wondered if I had ever put on the gloves with his father.

Mr. Peabody declared, "I have cancelled my membership in this organization." I checked with Dennis Smith, the 303rd's Membership Chairman. Dennis said, "We have no one on the roster by the name of Peabody." Also, no Peabody on the mailing list for the newsletter. And there's no Peabody on the roster of officer and enlisted personnel who served at Molesworth with the 303rd Bomb Group. I sent a message to Mike Peabody's e-mail address asking for answers. There was no reply.

Mr. Peabody's invective addressed to me was also sent by him as a copy to 303rd BGA president Al Dussliere, who asked, "I wonder who put him up to the letter?" I guess we'll never know.

Eddie Deerfield

303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.
Hell's Angels Newsletter
Eddie Deerfield, Editor
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