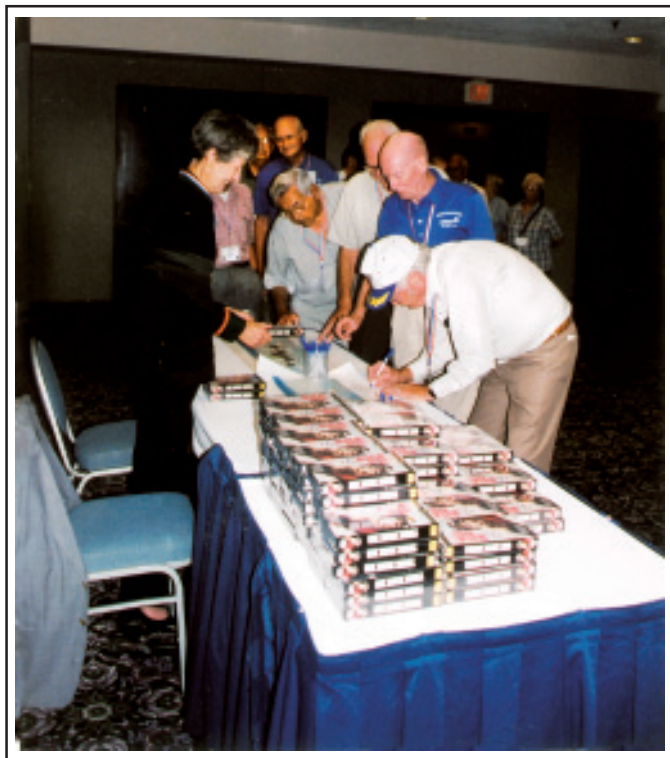


Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

November, 2004



MOLESWORTH VETERANS ATTENDING THE REUNION received gift videotapes of the World War Two air combat classic film *12 O'Clock High*. They signed prints of *Fortresses Under Fire* by artist Keith Ferris as gifts to the donors of the VCR's. Mary Lee Deerfield, in the photo on the left, distributed the tapes.

In the photo above, 360th Squadron bombardier Bob Hand is interviewed by WSAV-TV reporter Steven Ference in front of the 303rd Bomb Group exhibit at the 8th AF Heritage Museum.

SAVANNAH REUNION EARNS PRAISE AS "BEST IN YEARS"

The 250 *Hell's Angels* veterans, their wives and families who attended the 21st reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group, in Savannah August 26-30, were lavish in their praise of the gathering as "the best" in recent years.

Opinions varied as to the highlights of the reunion, the events that really made it extra special.

Some said it was the highly emotional Memorial Service, as family members of veterans still among us and others long gone told lovingly of their kin and the deeper meaning of the 303rd Bomb Group's annual reunions.

Some said it was the emotionally charged atmosphere in the Hyatt Regency Hotel's grand ballroom as veterans and their families watched *12 O'Clock High* on

a huge theater-size screen. Dean Jagger's role as a Bomb Group Executive Officer who returns to his abandoned World War II air base in England in 1949 to flash back in time to the war years earned him an Academy Award. The film, starring Gregory Peck as a hardened Group Commander who cracks under pressure, is seen as one of the most realistic portrayals of the heroics and perils of the air war against Nazi Germany. The sound track of the authentic aerial battle footage also won an "Oscar."

Some said it was the visit to The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum and the flyover by four World War II Stearman primary trainers as their pilots' tribute to the Hell's Angels.

Some said it was the

geniality of Hospitality Room host Harold "Red" Timm, 360th Squadron tail gunner, and his volunteer bartenders Dave Schaubert (his son-in-law), Lee Faulkner of the 360th and Tom Sullens of the 427th as they catered to the needs of 303rd guests.

Some said the best thing about the reunion was simply a greater sense of belonging and a deeper appreciation in being together as the ravages of time took away other comrades-in-arms. It was a sense shared by family members.

Plaques in recognition of services rendered to the 303rd BG Association were awarded at the farewell banquet to Lance Stoner, Harry Gobrecht, William Beasley, Hal Susskind and Reverend Robert Johnson.

IN THIS ISSUE

Additional coverage of the 2004 303rd Bomb Group Association's reunion in Savannah can be found on pages 5, 10, 11, 19, 20.

The Archives Decision—pages 3, 12, 13.

Dayton, Ohio, home to Wright-Patterson AFB, selected as site of 303rd's 2005 reunion—page 4.

The Prieto Family's mission to return the remains of 427th Engineer Raoul Prieto to the US from a grave site in Belgium. He was killed on the 6 April 1945 mission to Leipzig—page 6.

Ben Starr, 358th navigator, and Walter Mayer, 358th pilot, awarded DFC's—pages 7, 8.

Co-pilot Charles Coons of 360th tells how test hopping for a fuel leak ended in disaster—page 9.



303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Hell's Angels Newsletter

Editor--Eddie Deerfield

VOL XXVII, No. 4 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684 November, 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 to the extent allowed by law. 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 and others related to regular members may become Family Members. Others 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 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.

CHAPLAINS — PROTESTANT

NOTE: As this issue went to press, we received word from his wife, Helen, that Rev. Everett A. Dasher, 488 Barnes Moody Dr, Saluda, SC 29138-9159 has passed away.

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THE GAVEL OF THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT of the 303rd Bomb Group Association was passed by a smiling Al Dussliere to his successor, Dick Bowler. Above, Eddie Deerfield, the 303rd's Reunion Coordinator, made the introductions at the ceremonial banquet on August 30.

Heritage Museum Wins 303rd Board Vote As Repository for Bomb Group's Archives

The 303rd Bomb Group Association's Board of Directors, sitting in session on Thursday 26 August at the Savannah reunion, agreed to review the applications of three of the nation's finest institutions interested in serving as a repository for the Group's extensive collection of historical archives and artifacts. Eight of the Board's 14 members were present.

Expressions of interest were received from The Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum in Pooler, Georgia; the United States Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB in Dayton, Ohio, and the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

A motion made at the Savannah meeting to give the membership-at-large the right to vote their choice of a repository for the 303rd's archives was defeated by Board vote.

At a meeting of the 303rd BGA Board with President and CEO C. J. Roberts and Research Director Michael Telzrow of the Heritage Museum at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Savannah on August 26, the Board was informed that none of the other World War II Bomb Groups have transferred their archival collections to the Museum as yet. The 303rd Bomb Group would be the first to do so. The museum's representatives also advised that contrary to earlier proposals they now had adequate resources to process and care for the 303rd's collection and that no grant of funds from the Association's treasury was required.

President Richard Bowler polled the 14 members of the Board by mail on 8 September and reported a majority in favor of the Heritage Museum.

Following are the texts of the three statements—

From the USAF Museum at Wright-Patterson AFB:

We are very appreciative of being considered as a repository for the impressive and extensive 303rd BG archival holdings. The U.S. Air Force Museum holds as both its motto and goal, "We are the keepers of their stories". The USAFM stands ready and eager to be the keepers of the 303rd BG stories. We would offer the following for your disposition delibera-

tions:

1. The USAFM is the national museum of the Air Force. It is fully supported by the Secretary of the Air Force with both manpower and operational budget.
2. The USAFM features over one million square feet of facility on a museum campus which includes restoration, storage, exhibit, as well as research and archival areas. The total USAFM site is in the hundreds of acres including a runway facility to support incoming aircraft.
3. The USAFM is gaining in public visibility from both media and internet exposure. In 2003 the USAFM enjoyed having 1.4 million visitors.
4. The USAFM Research Division has on staff full time archivists, paper conservators, conservation laboratory, and storage areas all in climate controlled facilities.
5. The USAFM Research Division is fully resourced to both accept and effectively manage large collections such as those of the 303rd Bomb Group.
6. The USAFM has had past experiences in working in partnership with veteran organizations. The museum is currently working archival transfer and preservation issues with the 27th Troop Carrier Squadron and the China National Aviation Corporation (CNAC) veterans as well as large personal groupings such as the Gabreski Collection.
7. The USAFM has an open and mutually supportive relationship with the Air Force Historical Research Agency at Maxwell Air Force Base as well as all other USAF historical activities. In a cooperative spirit, materials are regularly shared with or transferred to other activities where they are more appropriate.

(Continued on page 12)

PLANS FOR 2005 REUNION IN DAYTON CERTAIN TO MAKE IT GRAND EVENT



DAYTON AT NIGHT



THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE US AIR FORCE near Dayton, Ohio at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base is the world's largest and oldest military aviation museum.



HELL'S ANGELS NEWSLETTER SILVER ANNIVERSARY BOOKS were presented to the USAF Museum in 2003. From left-to-right, Museum Curator Terry Aitkin, Maj. Gen. Charles Metcalf, presenter Dick Dobell of the 303rd, and his grandson, Cole, and son, Rick, a pilot like Dad.

By Walter J. Ferrari
Vice President for Reunions

The 303rd Bomb Group Association's reunion in 2005 will take place in Dayton, Ohio, the birthplace of aviation. We have selected the Crown Plaza Hotel in downtown Dayton.

The hotel has given us a special rate of \$89 plus tax per night. When Armed Forces Reunions planned and managed our reunions in Portland and Savannah, they received a rebate from those hotels for every room rented. Because my wife, Ruth, and I have taken on that responsibility, the rebates will go directly into the 303rd's treasury.

When I contracted with the Crown Plaza, the planned dates for the reunion were Thursday, September 8 through Monday, September 12. When our Board of Directors met in Savannah, however, a motion was approved to reduce the length of the reunions by one day and close with a banquet on Saturday night. This would enable family members to leave on Sunday and be back on their jobs Monday morning.

I will review the contract with the hotel's management staff at the earliest opportunity and try to change the dates. Under the present contract for a five-day reunion, we are guaranteed wide-ranging complimentary space for 303rd meetings and other planned events. I don't know yet how a reunion of shorter duration will impact the complimentary space.

On the other hand, regardless of possible changes in the contract, the following features will remain free of charge:

Complimentary transportation from and to the airport by a hotel shuttle. Free parking at the hotel for those who drive in.

Complimentary local phone calls, a daily USA Today newspaper at your door and extensive TV channels in your room.

Also in each room—coffee maker, iron and board, hair dryer, computer data port access and voice mail.

Located in the heart of Downtown Dayton, the Crown Plaza is within walking distance of shopping malls, restaurants and the historic Oregon District.

As for weather conditions, the average Fahrenheit high temperature in Dayton in September is 77.3 with a low of 55.4. Total precipitation during the month is 2.68 inches.

Without doubt, the highlight of the reunion away from events at the hotel will be the visit to the United States Air Force Museum at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. There's a Heritage Tour which covers the early years of aviation and takes visitors through the years of the first and second World Wars, concluding with the Cold War with the Soviet Union. The most impressive World War II display is the B-17 *Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby*, pictured at the right.

The USAF Museum is the world's largest and oldest military aviation museum. Nearly 1.35 million people visit it annually. There are nearly 350 aircraft and aerospace vehicles on display. Thirty additional aircraft are located in the Presidential and Research & Development Flight Test Galleries. The Memorial Park has more than 400 statuary memorials and plaques.

It's web site (<http://www.wpafb.af.mil/museum/>) with 3,000 pages and 1,500 photos received more than 69-million hits in 2003.

Make your plans to join us at the 2005 Dayton reunion!

MEMORIAL SERVICE

TO HONOR THE MEMORIES OF THOSE WHO FELL IN WORLD WAR TWO
AND THOSE WHO HAVE PASSED ON SINCE VICTORY IN 1945



BISHOP RENE GRACIDA, who served at Molesworth as a 359th gunner, opened with the Invocation.



RUTH FERRARI, wife of 427th pilot Walt Ferrari, gave the talk for Rae Susskind who was unable to attend.



VICKI AND CHARLIE SYKES spoke of her great-uncle David Miller, 358th tail gunner, who was killed in action.



ANGELE DUBOSE, wife of 427th pilot Carl Dubose, reported comments on the many joys of a 303rd reunion.



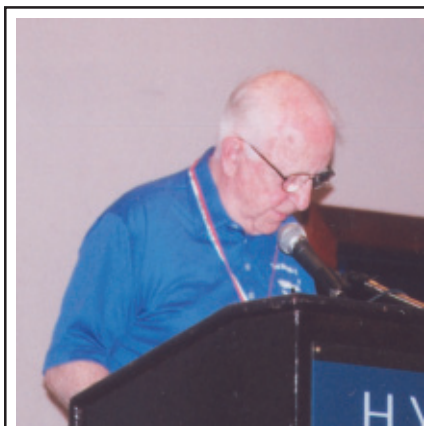
KATHERINE SCHAUBERT, daughter of 360th tail gunner Harold Timm, saw the war through the eyes of veterans.



CYNTHIA PRIETO told of the efforts of her family to return the remains of 427th's Raoul Prieto from Belgium.



WALT FERRARI recited the epic poem *Air Force Reunion* by Rachel Frith, a very moving moment.



RICHARD BOWLER, 427th togglier, read the names of 86 in the 303rd family, dead since the last reunion.



THE REVEREND ROBERT JOHNSON, 303rd Control Tower Officer, gave the benediction to close the service.



THE PRIETO FAMILY CAME TO SAVANNAH ON A MISSION OF MERCY—to seek the support of 303rd members in returning from Belgium the remains of the 427th's Raoul Prieto, killed in action on the Leipzig mission of 6 April 1945.

From left to right, James Force of the 359th, Cynthia Prieto, her husband Eugene Prieto, sister Veronica Prieto Berg and husband, Johnny Berg.

Bringing Loved One's Remains Home From Belgium Will Take Act of Congress

By Eugene Prieto

My uncle, T/Sgt. Raoul R. Prieto, was a 303rd Bomb Group B-17 crewman who died during a bombing mission over Germany on April 6, 1945. He is now buried in the American Cemetery near Liege, Belgium. After 59 years, the Prieto family has undertaken a family-funded effort to bring Raoul's body back to Palm Springs, California for burial with his parents, paying all expenses incurred.

Our primary focus has been on obtaining signature support from a wide variety of individuals and organizations.

The family feels that the initial decision to leave his body in Europe was made by his older brother in relief of his mother's grief, that by bringing him home at the time would have caused additional heartache and sorrow.

Raoul's mother, father and older brother have all passed on. The family now feels that Raoul belongs where he lived and was raised. If this request is granted, he will lie with his parents and the rest of the family.

HR 2930 was presented by Congresswoman Mary Bono (CA-R), but failed to reach the Veterans Affairs Committee's agenda because of a lack of support. Presently, the family is securing said corroboration in the form of letters of support and signatures of affirmation within the community.

Raoul, related to the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla

Indians, was a valued member of our community, well liked and fondly remembered by friends, teachers and family. Bringing Raoul home would certainly bring closure to nearly sixty years of an incomplete family circle.

To date, we have obtained over 1,000 signatures and petitions supporting our campaign. This material has been sent to members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, the House Veterans Affairs Committee, the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, several California elected officials and the President of the United States—75 document packages in all.

Here are the events leading up to Raoul's death. On April 6, 1945, while approaching a target near Leipzig, Germany, *Green Hill Belle* of the 427th Squadron, collided with a B-17 from the 360th Squadron. The 360th plane dropped down and struck my uncle's plane from above.

Green Hill Belle exploded, and the crew's bodies fell to earth near the German town of Loessnitz. The inhabitants of that town gave the time of the incident as 10:15 AM. The other B-17 went into a flat spin and crashed in the same area with a loss of the entire crew.

In the four year interval between the time my uncle was declared Missing In Action and the time his remains were identified, Raoul's mother walked to the post office six days a week, a distance of 2 1/2 miles, hoping for news of her son. For this act of love and devotion, she became a legend in our small town.

COMBAT VET FROM MEXICO ATTENDS FIRST 303RD REUNION



Enrique "Ricky" Reider wrote: I was born in Mexico. My mother was American and my father was Russian. I had dual American and Mexican citizenship. I was living in Mexico City when World War Two was declared. I had been working for Pan-American Airways, so I enlisted in the US Army Air Corps in November 1942. I was sent to Chanute Field, IL for training as a weather observer. Being of an adventurous nature, I asked for re-assignment to an air combat unit. It was granted, and two years later I arrived at Molesworth as a 359th Squadron ball turret gunner on Richard Tasker's crew.

After flying about 16 missions I messed up, was grounded and assigned to the detail spreading salt on the runways to reduce winter icing prior to the B-17's taking off on missions. During this period, my entire crew was lost on January 21, 1945 in a mid-air collision over Germany. I was detached to Luton, a small town in England, for duties as a voice interpreter and spot-jammer. I then returned to Molesworth and completed my combat tour in April, 1945, flying with various crews.

After the war, I returned to Mexico City where I now reside. It was an emotional experience for me to learn about the 303rd Bomb Group Association and attend my first reunion.



BEN STARR AND FRIENDS—AN ALL-STAR LINE-UP! When 358th Squadron Navigator Ben Starr walked away from the nose of a B-17 after flying 35 missions, he went west to New York and California to navigate through a brilliant career as a motion picture and television writer and playwright. The picture was taken last summer at a Friars Club lunch in Beverly Hills, CA. Standing, left to right, are Sy Jacobs, writer for The George Burns Show; Jackie Ellison, writer for The Andy Griffith Show; Ben Starr (his credits are listed elsewhere in this article), Rocky Kalish, writer/producer/fight promoter; Carl Reiner, multi-talented show business star, and Louis Nye, who first gained fame on The Steve Allen Show. Seated, l-to-r, are Mel Tolkin, head writer of Sid Caesar's Show of Shows; Hal Kantor, head writer for The George Gobel Show, and The King in person, Sid Caesar.

HEROISM ON 1944 LUDWIGSHAVEN RAID EARNS DFC FOR BEN STARR IN 2004

Well into retirement after a lifetime of achievements in the field of entertainment, furthest from Ben Starr's mind was any thought of a Distinguished Flying Cross for heroism during World War II service. He had flown 35 missions as a navigator in the 303rd's 358th Squadron, completing his tour in December, 1944.

Then, last year, he got a call from Bill Cox, 358th pilot and Chairman of the 303rd Bomb Group Association's World War II Awards Committee asking for details about events on Starr's B-17 on the mission to Ludwigshaven, Germany September 9, 1944.

"He wanted to recommend me for the DFC," said Starr. "I didn't think I had done anything worthy of the award. Bill hung in, so I said 'okay,' give it a try, and I sent him the following statement:

"Here's the account of how I recall the events of the mission to Ludwigshaven (I believe it was September 9, 1944) when our crew, flying a B-17 named *Fox* for the *F* painted on it, got shot up over Germany.

"Flak was brutally heavy over Ludwigshaven that day. We got hit hard. A couple of engines had to be feathered. There were thick clouds. We couldn't stay in formation. Suddenly we were all alone. I gave George McCutcheon, our pilot, a quick heading toward France.

"We lost altitude fast, and once we were in the clear I identified the area, then gave the pilot a better heading toward France, some of which, unfortunately, was occupied by the Germans.

"Clear of the clouds because of lost altitude, we were a sitting duck. Heavy flak exploded through the nose of our 17. Our bombardier, Fred Kiesel, got hit in the arm. I immediately went to his aid. I turned up his oxygen and adjusted his mask and made a temporary tourniquet out of his torn sleeve, and encouraged him to hang in, giving him as many positives as I could. I got him as comfortable as possible under the circumstances. He was very pale, and wasn't talking. But we made eye contact.

"I then reported to our pilot that our bombardier was hit, and I took hold of my machine gun, wondering if I was going to get a chance to fire at German aircraft, as I did on our third mission when eight of the 17s in our squadron got shot down. (It was the first time the Germans had come up in months. But because we were newcomers, unlike some of the older crews who had become a bit complacent about the German air force ever coming up again, I was keeping an eye out for enemy aircraft. And I saw them coming).

"With two engines gone, McCutch was struggling to keep us

(Continued on page 8)

DFC from 7

in the air, and doing a masterful job at it. But because of our lost engines we were now flying very low. And the tops of Ludwigshaven houses could be seen.

"Between keeping an eye on our bombardier and on possible enemy aircraft and navigating, I was relieved when our engineer, John Burcham, a real pro, came into the nose to minister further to our bombardier.

"As I kept identifying our location, I gave McCutcheon better headings for France, in an effort to avoid landing in Germany. Eventually, miraculously, we limped out of Germany and into France, where I spotted a grassy field near a little town which I identified as Epernay. McCutch made a great landing.

"At once we became aware of many people running toward us from all sides. It was real scary. I pressed the button to destroy the G Box, which I knew the Germans wanted to get hold of. Incredibly, and fortunately for our crew, it turned out that it was friendly French people descending upon us, coming to see an intact B-17 on the ground. And they informed us that the Nazis had left just an hour before because Patton's third army was chasing them.

"Some of Patton's jeeps and trucks arrived and quickly took our bombardier and the rest of us to a hospital in Verdun. Two days later it became necessary to amputate Kiesel's arm.

"A very sad time for all of us.

"The following days we kept checking up on Kiesel. Meanwhile, Patton's engineers became intrigued with our plane and started plugging up holes with corks and trying to work on the injured engines. Other American planes began to use our grassy field.

"Our co-pilot, Dick McGilvray, for reasons I can't recall right now, bummed a ride back to England. A few days later, Patton's engineers 'thought' that our plane 'might be' air worthy.

"We all, except for Kiesel and McGilvray, climbed into the plane, our fingers crossed. With McGilvray gone, I flew co-pilot. Good ol' McCutch got us off the ground, and since the G box was of no use now, I navigated us back to Molesworth using maps.

"After landing in Molesworth, we learned that somebody in the plane ahead of us during the mission actually reported that they saw the Navigator (me) blown out the nose of the plane, a slight error which I was pleased and anxious to rectify.

"Except for getting bawled out by Administration for bringing back a beat-up B-17, (they had already rolled out a new 17 and somebody painted an F on the nose, just like ours. And the ground crew was stuck with two 17s with an F on it) everything returned to normal for us.

"We finished the rest of our 35 missions and we were sent home."

With Starr's account in hand, Bill Cox sought corroborating statements from other members of the crew, re-cast the account into official language, and had the recommendation endorsed by 358th Squadron C.O. George T. Mackin. It moved up the line to California Congressman Henry Waxman's office and then on to the Pentagon. The DFC award was approved last July.



Pilot Bill Cox (left) and his 358th friend Navigator Ben Starr during the Molesworth days. Starr's show business credits included TV's "Mr. Ed," "All In The Family," "Bob Hope Special," "Phil Silvers Show," "Studio One," "Climax!," "Front Row Center," "Dick Powell Theater," "Tugboat Annie," "Perry Mason," "The Thin Man," "Facts of Life" and "Silver Spoons." He wrote scripts for the films "Our Man Flint," "The Pad," "Texas Across The River," "The Spirit Is Willing," "The Busy Body" and "How To Commit Marriage," as well as six on-and-off Broadway plays. He was nominated for Best Screen Comedy for "Our Man Flint," and won the Edgar Allen Poe Mystery Writers Award.

358th Squadron Scores Again With DFC For Walter Mayer

Excerpts from the successful recommendation of the Distinguished Flying Cross for Mayer follow:

1/Lt. Walter J. Mayer demonstrated exemplary skill and courage piloting his B-17 aircraft on a combat mission over Cologne, Germany, on 10 November 1944. He accomplished a miraculous achievement when he crash-landed his severely crippled B-17 on a parking runway, on an unfamiliar airfield, without a single injury to his aircrew. During his take-off the airspeed indicator became inoperative and he flew the mission mainly on basic instruments.

On the bomb run to the target, flying at 27,000 feet, the formation encountered very intense and accurate flak. His No. 1 engine was knocked out and less than two minutes later, flak hit his No. 2 engine and it went dead. Though his aircraft was severely damaged, he was able to drop his bomb load. When he discovered the Group formation was no longer in sight, he asked his navigator for a heading to Belgium, and headed for a fighter base at St. Trond for an emergency landing.

Lt. Mayer then discovered his radio was not working and with two engines out on the same side, he had no alternative but to continue his approach. He ordered the crew to take crash-landing positions. The B-17 rolled down the runway and its right wing was sliced off about three feet from the tip by the prop of a P-51 parked halfway down the runway. This caused a pull to the B-17's right and it crashed into the middle of a B-24 bomber parked near the end of the runway, almost cutting it in half. It also caused the nose of the B-17 to be smashed in, up to the pilot's windshields. The B-24 had just been loaded with fuel, but it did not catch fire.

The aircrew quickly evacuated the plane safely. They were shaken but there were no injuries. 1/Lt. Mayer demonstrated he was a very experienced pilot. He knew how to expertly handle his severely crippled B-17 through a most challenging predicament.

The May 2004 issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter showed this photo of a burning bomber, with the caption, "Something went wrong with this 305th Bomb Group B-17 on 1 May 1944."

The photo had been sent to the newsletter some time ago by 303rd pilot Bert Bordelon with no explanation of how he acquired a 305th photo.

In the story below, co-pilot Charles Coons explains how it all happened.



TEST HOPPING FOR FUEL LEAKS? VERY BAD IDEA!

By Charles L. Coons

In March of 1944, Berton Bordelon and his crew were sent on TDY to the 422nd Squadron of the 305th Bomb Group (H) at Chelveston, England. I was the crew's co-pilot. We were part of a pool of air crews formed to fly lead aircraft on long missions where weather in the target area required PFF Radar to select the aiming point for the bombs.

Our home base was Molesworth and our squadron was the 360th, but we also flew missions away from the 303rd.

Since we often only went on missions requiring PFF Radar use, we felt that our crew did not fly frequently enough to keep proficient. In an effort to get more time in the air, Bert offered to fly engineering maintenance test flights with our crew.

The story of the burning B-17 in the photo commences here: A 305th Bomb Group aircraft maintenance officer asked our crew to test hop a B-17 that had been shot through its left wing "Tokyo Tanks." The only way to determine the condition of the tanks was to either remove the sheet metal from the wing tip, or fill the tanks and test hop the aircraft.

As usual, I flew with Bert that day as his co-pilot. Also aboard were our flight engineer Forrest Barker and the crew chief assigned to the aircraft, whose name I never knew. Our navigator Fred Cromwell, waist gunner Don Adams and radio operator Joe Fontana went along for the ride.

After a very thorough pre-flight check, Bert started the engines and headed for the runway. There was neither visual evidence of fuel leaking nor gas fumes in the aircraft. After take off, Bert held the plane level for a short time to pick up speed, and then resumed a normal climb rate. Everything looked OK.

He made a left climbing turn to leave the traffic pattern, but when he leveled the wings a small stream of gasoline started coming out around the left aileron. Bert made an immediate turn to a down wind leg in the traffic pattern. The stream of gasoline grew much larger from the inboard end of the aileron.

When Bert turned on base leg, fuel started coming out around the wing flaps, and then it caught fire.

When the plane was on final approach, the radio operator called the pilot to tell him that burning gasoline was running into

the bomb bay. Bert landed the plane, but before he could get it stopped, the two people in the rear called to say that it was very hot and they were leaving. They jumped out the rear door while the plane was rolling, but they apparently did not get hurt much.

Finally, Bert got the plane stopped and while he and I were shutting everything down, the rest of the people headed for the navigator's escape hatch. Fred Cromwell got there first, but his parachute harness snagged on the sides of the hatch. He hung there with his legs dangling out.

Right behind him, the very polite crew chief said, "Excuse me, sir", and kicked him in the back with his big "GI" shoe. That freed the navigator, and then the rest of us exited the burning plane. As everybody ran toward an old RAF hanger about 75 yards away, fire got to the 50 cal. ammo and it started to "cook off." That really gave us an incentive to run.

As the last man rounded the brick wall of the hanger, fire got to the oxygen system and the plane exploded. The blast sheared the nose off and it fell to the ground. Finally, as the photo shows, the whole plane turned into a flaming inferno.

Flight time logged that day was fifteen minutes, but it seemed much longer. We learned a lot that day. Most importantly, don't volunteer to test hop a plane for fuel leaks.



BORDELON & COMPANY — Standing, l-to-r, are Bert Bordelon, Charley Coons, Ken Nebhut, John Cottrell and Fred Cromwell. Kneeling, Joe Fontana, Joe Harrington, Forrest Barker, Ted Couch and Don Adams.

S A V A N N A H R E U N I O N



AWARDS FOR YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE 303RD BGA were presented by Past Presidents Chair Walter Ferrari to Lance Stoner (above) and to Reverend Robert Johnson (at right). Also honored in absentia were Hal Susskind as Newsletter Editor Emeritus, Harry Gobrecht as Historian Emeritus and Bill Beasley for his work in the Hospitality Room at past reunions.



IN PLACE OF THE USUAL REUNION RAFFLE, a "door prize" drawing was held for five wood carvings donated by Bill Adams and a print "Slow Timing Bonnie B" donated by artist Keith Ferris.

Pictured are three of the winners, left to right, Walt Mayer, 358th Squadron; Dick Johnson, 427th Squadron, and Ralph Page, 427th Squadron.

HAROLD "RED" TIMM BEAMS WITH PRIDE as he holds a special award presented to him by Reunion Coordinator Eddie Deerfield at the farewell banquet. Timm was honored for his expert management of the Hospitality Room which was a key factor in the success of the Savannah reunion. He's seen with Sam and Frankie Maxwell.

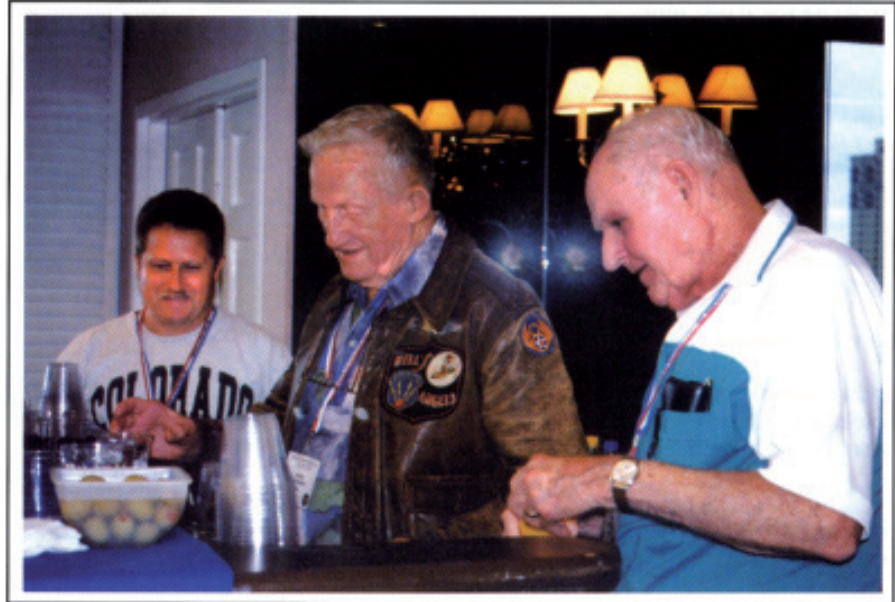
In presenting the award, a replica of the B-17F *Iza Vailable* mounted on a walnut stand, Deerfield recalled that on July 30, 1943, he and Timm and six other members of the Bob Cogswell crew were packed into the radio room of *Upstairs Maid* as it crashed into the North Sea.



THREE VOLUNTEER BARTENDERS helped "Red" Timm make the Hospitality Room at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Savannah a favorite watering hole for the 250 Molesworth veterans, their families and friends who attended the 21st reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group.

From left to right are Dave Schaubert, Lee Faulkner and Tom Sullens. Faulkner was elected as the 360th Squadron's representative. Timm described Schaubert as his favorite (and only) son-in-law.

Dave's wife, Katherine, took most of the excellent reunion photos shown in this newsletter.



ED GARDNER, 427TH SQUADRON REPRESENTATIVE, engages Evie Simpkins, on the right, and his wife, Sue, in animated conversation.

With Armed Forces Reunions managing the Savannah meeting, Gardner was spared his chore of record-keeping which he performed with distinction at many earlier reunions.

He returns to the grind next year in Dayton, however, to assist Walt and Ruth Ferrari as the 303rd reverts to its very successful "in house" planning and operating an Association reunion.

VAN WHITE, 358TH SQUADRON REPRESENTATIVE, is on the approach from the right to join Carol Kyle Sage and J. Hardy in social chit chat.

Carol is the daughter of George A. Kyle, Jr. She accompanied her father in 2000 on a trip to the Valley of the Cheviots in England where his 360th Squadron B-17 crashed on 16 December 1944 in blizzard conditions.

Her stirring account of that visit appeared in the November, 2000 Hell's Angels Newsletter.



ARCHIVES from page 3

8. Given the potential size of the collection, the USAFM will work with the 303rd organization to utilize Air Force resources in the safe transportation of the collection to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base.

9. The USAFM makes its research holdings available to serious researchers and authors on a regular basis. Access to the materials, however, is highly controlled and supervised to assure the security and safeguarding of the collection.

10. The USAFM offers a great synergy between archival and

artifactual holdings. The juxtaposition of 303rd BG archival holdings in close proximity to a B-17 and other related materials seems most appropriate.

11. The 303rd BG collection would be located at a facility that is continuously gaining in both reputation and utilization by research historians.

Again, we are honored to be considered as a repository for the 303rd BG archival holdings. We are confident, as an official Air Force entity, that we can provide the stewardship vitally necessary to assure both the long term survival of the collection as well as the appropriate utilization for research and exhibit support. We would look forward to a working partnership.

TERRY AITKEN
Senior Curator
U.S. Air Force Museum

From the USAF Academy, Colorado Springs:

Please convey to the 303rd Bomb Group Association Board our profound gratitude in considering the United States Air Force Academy as the repository for the Association's archives. We were delighted to get the e-mail of your inventory as it helps us assess how much space the collection will take and how long it will take us to have the collection ready for use by your members, cadets, faculty, and visiting scholars.

Dr. Mary Elizabeth Ruwell, the Academy's new Archivist and Special Collections Curator, and I have discussed the possibilities of adding this very significant collection to the Academy's Special Collections Branch. Dr. Ruwell has previously worked at the National Archives, the Smithsonian, and the Northeast Documents Preservation Center. Her specialty is materials preservation, and quite frankly, if the 303rd's archives are like many collections we have received, it will need a great deal of curatorial work. Below is the Academy's proposal to be the repository for the 303rd Bomb Group Association's archives.

We believe that the focus of the 303rd Bomb Group Association should be the perpetual preservation and effective dissemination of primary source archival records.

The Air Force Academy believes that it is the best place as the final repository of the collection because:

(1) We have an expert staff in the preservation and dissemination of primary source documents that provides users with easy-to-use finding aids (or catalogs, if you will) that thoroughly describe the documents held, thus allowing the potential user quick and easy access to the collections. (Samples of previous finding aids and a summary of some of our more significant collections has been sent via priority mail.) We actively seek pa-

pers for the collections that may be used by cadets to learn AF history and heritage, and by future scholars to remind all Americans of how much we owe to our veterans.

(2) We have the capabilities of electronically reproducing documents for use via the Academy library's web page or by other electronic means, so that the casual user has easier access to the items without having to visit the Academy.

(3) We have recently expanded our special collections area to house additional documents collections in an archivally sound environment that has 24-hour intrusion and fire suppression systems.

(4) We would strongly advocate placing all of the collection in one place so that any potential users (or future donors, for that matter) would not be faced with the challenge of:

- (a) figuring out what each repository holds,
- (b) what the use and dissemination policies are for each repository, and
- (c) how (or even if) each repository catalogs the collection to make it easily accessible to visitors, scholars, and researchers. Additionally,
- (d) where a potential donor, who had kept items with the intension of giving or bequeathing the items to an archive came to the point of relinquishing those items, they would be left wondering which archive should receive the gift/bequest.

(5) Our vision is for "USAFA to be the nation's premier institution for leadership and character development." and our mission is "To educate, train, and inspire men and women to become officers of character to lead the United States Air Force in service to the nation." We believe this is very complementary to the mission and goals of the 303rd Bomb Group Association.

We also recognize that there are some disadvantages to having the 303rd Bomb Group Association's archives at the Academy. These include:

(1) Because of the increased security dictated by the events of 9/11, the Academy's McDermott Library is no longer an open library. Users wishing to use the collection would have to make arrangements in advance. The casual traveler would, in all likelihood, be unable to visit the collection at the last minute.

(2) The Academy's policy is that it does not accept any gift or donation that does not come with all rights and the sole authority to catalog, house, disseminate, reproduce, or dispose of materials as may be in the best interest of the Academy as the sole proprietor of the collection. A copy of the Academy's gift policy was mailed earlier and is attached to this document.

(3) The 303rd Bomb Group Association would have to execute a "Proffer of Gift" form from the Friends of the Academy Library transferring and assigning sole ownership of and all rights to the 303rd Bomb Group Association collection to the Academy.

(4) The 303rd Bomb Group Association would be responsible for the costs of packing, shipping, and insuring (if desirable) the collection for transport to the Academy. The Academy would estimate that it would take at least a year after receipt of the complete collection to get the collection ready to use by cadets and scholars. Until that is accomplished, the collection would not be available for use. The Academy understands that some members may have kept personal documents or mementos that

would be shipped directly from the donor to the Academy at a later date; such items would be incorporated into the original 303rd archives.

(5) There are parts of the collection that are less useful to the Academy. These include: previously printed secondary source materials such as books and journals, and unidentified photographs (whether previously printed or not). However, we would still not advocate splitting the collection.

(6) We will not accept photocopies in lieu of actual original documents.

(7) Any reproduction costs of any archival materials for non-Academy purposes are at the total cost of the requestor, subject to special collections restrictions and reservations.

PROPOSAL:

The Air Force Academy's McDermott Library, Clark Special Collections Branch proposes that the entire 303rd Bomb Group Archives be placed in one location to facilitate ease-of-use of the collection and to create one strong, unified archival collection, as opposed to several weaker and disbursed collections that will always be incomplete and cause future researchers and potential future donors unnecessary hardships in figuring out who has what. We believe that the long history of governmental financial support of the Air Force Academy makes the McDermott Library the long-term depository of choice for the collection. However, we recognize the concerns of the 303rd Bomb Group Association's Board and will accept their decision to place the entire collection either at the Academy or somewhere else. We thank the 303rd Bomb Group Association Board for this opportunity to be considered as a possible repository of their archives.

Edward A. Scott, Ph.D.
Director of Academy Libraries
USAF Academy, CO

From The Mighty 8th Air Force Heritage Museum:

Please accept this proposal, on behalf of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, as a formal request for consideration as the repository for the 303rd BG archives. We are pleased to be included among the repository candidates, and we thank the officers and members of the 303rd BG for that consideration. We believe that our singular focus on the history of the Eighth Air Force sets us apart from other institutions dedicated to a wider discussion of Air Force history.

We have worked closely with Harry Gobrecht, the compiler and custodian of the collection, and we possess a clear sense of its nature, scope and size. We are confident that we possess the resources to adequately care for the collection well into the future.

Collections Objectives—The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum engages and educates visitors through the use of exhibits, artifacts, archival materials and stories, toward achieving an understanding of the history and evolution of the Eighth Air Force and American air power. The museum uses these resources to ensure that the character, courage and patriotism embodied by American service personnel are presented as lessons for the benefit of future generations.

Objectives—

To preserve artifacts and archives associated with Eighth Air Force operations since its formation on 28 January 1942;

To create permanent and temporary exhibits relevant to the mission of the Museum;

To fulfill the interpretive, educational, and outreach programs conducted by the Museum;

To create and maintain a research collection and other reference materials pertinent to the mission of the museum.

The highest priority in collecting will be given to the following: Materials relating to the Eighth Air Force operations since its inception. . Materials relating to other service branches, and air forces relevant to Eighth Air Force operation.

Accessibility and Preservation—Our archival collection is diverse and contains personal diaries, original flight logs, technical manuals, military orders, photographs, original artwork and publications related to WWII and Eighth Air Force History. A climate controlled environment and computer database system insures that the collection is secure and accessible. The Museum enjoys substantial storage space that allows us to maintain the 303rd collection intact.

The Library and Archives are open to the general public Monday through Friday, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Research requests are handled in accordance with professional standards and procedures. Controlled access is guaranteed by staff supervision. The Museum currently employs a research specialist, curator and registrar, all of whom are trained and authorized to assist researchers.

A collection of the scope and size of the 303rd archive will likely take several years to fully catalogue, however, materials become available to researchers as soon as they are catalogued.

Restrictions—All contracts concerning potential artifact/archive acquisitions are normally executed without restriction. The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, however, is willing to include a restriction that insures that ownership of the collection shall revert to the donor(s), or their heirs, in the event that the Museum should, at any time, cease regular operations.

The Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum is confident that it can provide the necessary resources to adequately care for the collection while making it available to public researchers as well as staff members engaged in exhibit and programming support.

Michael E. Telzrow
Director of Research & Interpretation
Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum

Following are excerpts from a second statement by Mr. Telzrow elaborating on the handling of archives:

"Each institution must perform a balancing act with respect to its holdings. The issue at hand is how to make the collection available to the public while insuring its safety and integrity.

"Accepted professional standards do not require that researchers submit a written request to view archival collections. Researchers must sign in, show identification, fill out a request form indicating the material they wish to see, and perform their research within sight of library staff. Only staff members may copy archival material at the request of the patron.

"Accessibility is the key to any archive. A written request policy would put us in an untenable position if we were to deny access to drop-in patrons, many of whom are 8th AF veterans."



303rd's Pin-ups

ABOVE—427th *SPIRIT OF WANETTE* GROUND CREW. Seated in back, l-to-r, Harry Lysell, Richard Dawes and William Burkett. In front, Guerdon and Benjamin Lugo. Standing is Crew Chief Walter Moore. *Spirit of Wanette* crashed in the sea off Denmark on a mission to Berlin 29 April 1944.

AT LEFT—360TH *IZA VAILABLE TOO* GROUND CREW. Standing, l-to-r, Gilbert Bengston, Harry Boreen and Hubert Miller. Kneeling, John Hughes, Alvin Etheredge and Crew Chief Robert Heiliger. On its 12th mission, *Iza Vailable Too* returned from Berlin on 7 May 1944 to land at Molesworth with its number four engine in flames. Damage was so extensive that the plane was salvaged.

BELOW—359TH RADAR MECHANICS Arthur Middleton and Charles Vardy count B-17's returning from a mission.



Molesworth Diary

COMBAT IN THE EARLY DAYS OF THE AIR WAR

Got up at 6:00 AM on December 12, 1942 to go on a raid. The target was southeast of Paris, the furthest trip the Forts have made. We had an escort of British Spitfires part of the way into France. Right after the escort left us, a bunch of FW-190's came after us. We were in actual combat for about two hours.

I saw a man bail out of a B-17, then saw the plane go into a nose dive and then into a spin. More of the crew were thrown out while in the spin. I kept talking on the interphone all the time, reporting everything I saw and notifying the crew of enemy planes coming in. One fighter at 3:00 o'clock high dove straight for the radio room. I couldn't get my gun around to aim at it. Its 20-mm cannon made hits a few feet behind me, penetrating the bomb bay, damaging a wing, cutting our rudder cables and hydraulic system and knocking out the number two engine.

Our pilot, Robert Nolan, reported two enemy aircraft at 12:00 o'clock. There was a loud bang, and I saw two FW-190's go streaking by, one on each side, with pieces of our plane trailing in their wake. I called out on intercom asking if everything was okay. The answers were "yes." We went on to bomb our "last resort" target.

When we were back over England, Richard Hooper, our bombardier, came back into the radio room, all bloody with his face bandaged. He was followed by David McCall, the navigator, whose forehead was bloody and bandaged. They said a 20-mm shell burst in the nose and hit them. An ambulance met us on the runway. I was never so happy to get back on the ground. This was the worst raid. The crew of *Jersey Bounce* is living on borrowed time.

Milton Hamill
358th Squadron Radio Operator

WEATHER WORST ENEMY ON PLAUEM MISSION

The 19 March 1945 mission to Plauen, Germany began with very poor weather conditions over England and we were to assemble over France. We took off in darkness in the rain, and as soon as we got the wheels up our plane, *Sweet La Rhonda*, was struck by lightning, immediately placing us on instruments. When we arrived at the meeting point over France, only a portion of the group was able to assemble before heading for the target. Visibility was so poor due to the cloud cover that many of the B-17's could not maintain visual contact and separated from the formation. We were scheduled to fly in the "Tail End Charlie" position, but as planes pulled away, we were flying on the lead aircraft's right wing.

We were on the final bomb run when another squadron—I believe it was B-24's—approached head-on and we were forced to cut throttles and dive to avoid

them. Fortunately, I was able to maintain good contact with the lead aircraft, and proceeded for a second try at the target. After releasing the bombs, we stayed in formation through many cloud layers until over France again. Then I was given permission to leave the formation and return on our own to Molesworth. When we reached England, the radio operator got a heading to base. We may have been the first of the squadron to return to Molesworth on that mission. Many 303rd Bomb Group aircraft landed elsewhere in England and on the continent.

Oliver Lee Bashor
359th Squadron Pilot

NAZI'S LORD HAW-HAW ANGERS 303RD SERGEANT

I remember one night at Molesworth when all of us in the Nissan hut were sitting around listening to Lord Haw-Haw on the radio. The Nazi named a sergeant in our hut, and said the man's wife was out on the town in Atlanta, Georgia with her boss at the defense factory. He even named the local haunts and bars in Atlanta. The sergeant grabbed the radio, threw it on the floor and kicked it out into the snow. Some radio men in our hut looked at the set and said it was beyond repair.

But, we really missed listening to the radio, so a couple of the technicians took it out to the flight line, and after a few hours work had it playing again. Some time later, when Lord Haw-Haw came on again, he said he was glad our hut had the radio back, and did the sergeant want to know where his wife was tonight. Crash went the radio, kicked out the door again. And everyone lived happily ever after, without a radio!

Millard E. Mason
360th Squadron Ball Turret Gunner

TROUBLE BREWS ON P-47 REQUISITION MISSION

The 303rd had a P-47 for use by qualified single engine pilots. It was parked in the 427th Squadron dispersal area. Although I was not a qualified mechanic, I took care of this bird because there was no one else to do it. Then, one bright day, a crew chief was assigned to our squadron who had come from a P-47 outfit. He quickly took our plane under his wing much to my relief.

We were short of spare parts for the P-47 because of the complex requisitioning procedure. Our new crew chief knew exactly where these parts were to be had at the field in England where he had been stationed. His old unit had moved to France, and our man said the parts were "just laying around in the warehouse." It was decided we would fly a B-17 over to that field and get those parts. A veteran pilot was available, but no flight crew so we had to make one up with non-rated personnel. I flew as co-pilot, a control tower operator was navigator, the B-17's crew chief was engineer and the

(Continued on page 16)

DIARY from 15

P-47 guy was radio operator.

All went well until we arrived at the former P-47 base which was in the process of being shut down. We contacted the tower and received no response so we started our landing procedure on a runway that was directly into the wind. We didn't know it would be too short. We touched down right at the near end, but were quickly eating up the asphalt. The pilot tried to ground loop, but we were already in the grass, went through two fences, and then the left wheel caught a ditch and we spun to a stop. No one was hurt and there was no apparent damage.

We eventually got our plane back on the runway. All seemed okay except that two of the props had a slight wobble. Someone in the tower had called Molesworth, and while we were rescuing our plane, another B-17 came in from base with a couple higher ranking officers. An "executive decision" was made to fly our plane back to base. I was "banished" to the nose of the second aircraft. Meanwhile, our P-47 man



A P-47 "Thunderbolt" flies an escort mission.

made this a successful mission by raiding the warehouse to pick up all the required parts and more.

When we returned to Molesworth, I was ordered to report to Major Ramsey, the S-4, where I received a first class ass-chewing for circumventing requisitioned procedures. It appeared to me, though, that he had the hint of a smile on his face. The P-47 was fixed up and flown many times thereafter.

Ernest A. Fischer
427th Squadron Assistant Engineering Officer

RUSHES TO END B-17 TOUR AND FLY FIGHTERS

I flew with Loren Bohle on two missions and then was transferred as co-pilot on Arthur Nicolaisen's crew. I flew 14 missions with him. I was still in love with fighters, so I thought that if I could complete my tour on B-17's I could ask for fighters. So, whenever our crew was on stand-down, I volunteered to fly extra missions with other crews. Since there was no need for co-pilots, they stuck me in the tail as a gunner/observer on four missions, two in the Group's leader aircraft and two in Squadron leader planes.

When the war in Europe ended, I was classified AC, first pilot with an MOS of 1091 from 1051. Looks like if the war in the Pacific continued, I would have been flying B-29's, not fighter aircraft.

Jack Silver
358th Squadron Co-Pilot

FROM THE PRESIDENT

(The letter from the President did not reach the newsletter in time for this issue. It will appear in the next issue.)

Board of Directors Meeting Monday, August 30, 2004 (Excerpts)

New President Dick Bowler opened the meeting at 1:00 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bill Cox, Treasurer, introduced Mrs. Frances Vogel, Widow Member, who presented an oral discussion of her audit of the financial records of the Association. Mrs. Vogel made a number of recommendations including the necessity of having proper signatures on financial instruments of the organization such as bonds and the checking account. Financial instruments of the organization, such as bonds, where the previous Treasurer had apparently used his own Social Security number on the bonds, rather than using our organization's IRS identification number, which should have been used."

The necessity of having completed financial records and funds transferred immediately when a new Treasurer is elected was discussed was presented by Bill Cox. He will contact Bill Roche for any records he may still have in his possession.

Treasurer Bill Cox addressed the need for additional income. The matter of a direct dues program was discussed. It was a general consensus of opinion that this would not be the way to go. A Benefactor Program was introduced as a possible source of income. Ed Miller, who conducted this program in the past, advised the Board that he has information on file, which would assist in the conduct of this drive if the Board desires it. A motion was made by Bill Cox and seconded by Al Dusliere that the Benefactor Program is authorized and Ed Miller appointed to conduct it. The motion carried unanimously.

Al Dusliere will contact Dennis Smith for names and addresses for each Unit and have them sent to the Squadron Representative. Eddie Deerfield suggested that each Representative contact the members in their Unit about the Benefactor Program. The program will be reported in the Newsletter as details become available.

Charlie Sykes spoke in reference to the inventory of the PX. He indicated it was at a desired level.

Al Dusliere made a motion, which was seconded by Bill Cox that the price of the book "303rd Bombardment Group" be reduced to \$10.00. The motion was passed.

A location for the 2006 Reunion was brought up and discussed. Eddie Deerfield moved that the 2006 Reunion be held in San Antonio, Texas with Albuquerque, New Mexico as an alternate site if San Antonio cannot be used. Van White seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

Lee Faulkner moved, seconded by Harold "Red" Timm, that reunion days be changed from 5 days to 4. The reunion will start on Wednesday, with the last official day and Banquet on Saturday. The motion was approved.

Dick Bowler initiated a discussion of the changes in the By-Laws, which were approved at the General Meeting. By-laws Committee Chairman Fred Reichel will make copies of the complete By-Laws with changes and send them to members of the Board of Directors and Alternates. Eddie Deerfield will report the changes in the by-laws in the newsletter when he receives the official record from Fred Reichel.

The cost of a Benefactor Program is not included in the present budget. Ed Miller will advise Bill Cox of his estimate so it can be included. Bill Cox will provide a revised budget to the Board of Directors.

Harold Timm moved the meeting be adjourned. It was seconded by Bill Cox. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Harold Timm, Secretary

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

AUGUST ISSUE BRINGS BACK MANY MEMORIES

I was pleased to find several references in the August 2004 issue that are very personal to me.

The Molesworth Dairy story by 358th Navigator Michael Zarelli about the mission on November 9, 1944 to Metz reminded me of the pre-dawn take-off which contributed to several mid-air collisions while trying to assemble. It was my crew's third mission.

There was another Molesworth Dairy item by 359th Radio Operator Oscar Deen. Oscar was assigned to my crew during March and April of 1945 when we were stationed at Merville, France. Our assignment was to fly B-17's which had landed on the continent back to England. Oscar was a very capable crew member who contributed significantly to our success.

Howard O'Neal's name is in the "New Life Member" listing. Howard was tail gunner on my crew. We flew a B-17 named *Lucille* for my new bride. I can't imagine a crew having a more capable tail gunner.

Finally, the painting "Slow Timing Bonnie B" on page 20, the background is an exact depiction of the 359th Squadron's hardstands, barracks, taxi strips. My plane used Hardstand 91, and was managed by Crew Chief Joe Strange. I've always credited Joe with sending us out with the best equipment possible.

Sixty years later, I still think about the 303rd Bomb Group personnel. They typified the high level of courage, ability and dedication which existed in those perilous times.

John Stephen Proffitt, Jr.
359th Squadron Pilot

SCHWEINFURT ATTACK IN MOVIE WAS REALLY ULZEN

I wasn't able to come to Savannah, but thought all the members who were at the reunion and saw the movie "12 O'Clock High" would be interested in this information. At the movie's

end, the B-17's were supposed to be bombing a ball-bearing factory in Germany, meaning Schweinfurt on August 14, 1943. In reality, the actual film was showing the bombing of the marshaling yards in Ulzen, Germany on February 22, 1945.

The camera was on my gunsight in the ball turret. I was given a duplicate print of the film on that mission and informed that the film was being released to Combat Film Highlight Productions of the 1st Air Division.

I flew 30 missions and 90% of them were with a camera mounted on my gunsight. I received a Letter of Commendation from the 1st Air Division.

Thomas D. Lardie
360th Sqd Ball Turret Gunner

COMBAT VET CORRECTS DATE OF FIRST MISSION

There was a write-up in the August newsletter about a wrecking crew tearing down a mess hall with a brick wall painted with the dates and targets of the 303rd's first 27 missions. It said the first mission was on November 17, 1943. The year should have been 1942. I was on that mission.

Frederick Ziemer
358th Squadron Engineer
(Editor's Note—You're right on target, Fred. Thanks for catching the typo.)

CEMETERY PHOTO REMINDS OF MEMORABLE MISSION

I have read my August copy of the Hell's Angels Newsletter from cover to cover and, as usual, enjoyed it very much.

Of particular interest was a letter from Michael Leonard regarding the grave site of Ben Bragg. The 28 February 1944 mission that his crew was shot down on was my first and maybe my most memorable one. We went over the target nine times and brought our bombs home. Ben Bragg's pilot was Noel Shoup. Noel sat next to me at briefing and when the target was announced as Bois Coquerel in France, he made the comment, "Good! A milk run."

Both Noel and Ben were killed on that mission.

I was shot down on a mission on March 26, 1944 to Wizernes, France—another "milk run" target.

William J. Dallas
427th Squadron Co-pilot

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON PRAISES 303RD BOOKS

It is my privilege to express our gratitude to the 303rd Bomb Group Association for the two-volume set "Hell's Angels Newsletter Silver Anniversary Collection." We appreciate the opportunity to have this fascinating resource presented to our library.

A strong and scholarly library plays an essential role in the educational process. Since the founding of the University in 1861, donations have helped build its outstanding collections. Your generosity carries on that tradition of giving and ensures the University Libraries will continue to foster quality scholarship and lifelong learning for generations to come.

Thanks again for sharing your splendid publication with out students, faculty and community.

Carolyn H. Aamot
Manager, Gifts Program
University of Washington

GOERING OFFERED \$5,000 TO PILOT DOWNING GABLE!

I thought all of you fly-boys who flew missions with Clark Gable on *The Eight Ball* might be interested in knowing there was a bounty on your ship.

There's a book by Don Combs and Fred Worth titled "4,139 Strange Facts about World War II." One of those facts concerned Clark Gable. It said that after Carole Lombard's death in 1942, he enlisted as a Private in the Army Air Corps. His enlisted serial number was 19125047, but he was soon commissioned and assigned to make training films. His serial number as an officer was 0-565390.

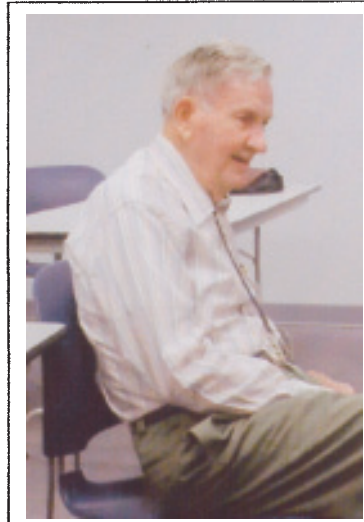
When Herman Goering heard that Gable was shooting film footage while flying

on B-17's over Germany, he put a bounty on Gable's head. He promised that any Nazi pilot shooting down the film star would receive \$5,000, an automatic promotion and a leave of absence.

No one collected. Clark Gable survived the war, was awarded the DFC and promoted to Major. When the time came for his honorable discharge, it was handed to him by Captain Ronald Reagan.

John W. Ford
359th Sqd Headquarters

LEW LYLE STILL MAKING SPEECHES AT AGE 88



General Lew Lyle spoke to the Saline County Arkansas History and Heritage Society on July 15. His talk was about the air war over Europe in World War II. He spoke of *Ooold Soldier*, the B-17 he flew, and noted that the bauxite ore to make that aircraft was mined in the Saline County area.

His remarks began with accounts of early missions over France without friendly fighter support, and continued with the heavy losses of B-17's and their crews in the months before the D-Day landings, and the long missions to Berlin and other military targets. He greatly impressed the group.

Arnold A. Wright
Benton, Arkansas

(Continued on page 18)

FORUM from page 17**MANNING OF MOLESWORTH'S
JAC ASKS FOR 303RD'S HELP**

My contact with members of the 303rd who visited Molesworth after the war was one of the highlights of my life. After Molesworth, my service in the US Navy was at DIA where I had some powerful experiences, but nothing compared to my tour in the Joint Analysis Center at Molesworth.

I have retired, and am very active in VFW Post 3175 in rural New York. I'm working on establishing a Distinguished Speaker Program, aimed at the younger members of our community. I have been dismayed to learn that so many college students are indifferent if not hostile to things military.

I would be grateful to hear from anyone in the 303rd with ideas for my proposed Distinguished Speaker Program, and especially to veterans who live in this area and would address our audience.

Dave Manning
164 Cortright Avenue
Port Jervis, NY 12711
Telephone 845-858-1106

**WANTS TO KEEP MEMORY
OF ALLEN FOSTER ALIVE**

I'm the daughter of Allen G. Foster, who flew on the Roland Haines crew. They were downed on the June 11, 1943 mission to Wilhelmshaven and Dad was taken prisoner. Thankfully, he did come home. I am trying to gather information. He has three grandchildren, two of whom were too young at his passing to remember him. I want them to know him, and ask the newsletter's help in finding anyone in the 303rd Bomb Group who remembers him. Please get in touch with me.

Kimberly Morgan
28518 Lochlevan Court
Huffman, TX 77336

**WIDOW REPORTS PASSING
OF BALL TURRET GUNNER**

I am sorry to inform you that Senior Master Sergeant Victor M. Craig passed away March 20, 2004. He was the ball turret gunner on "Pappy" Sheehy's crew in the 358th Squadron toward the end of the war in Europe.

Betty L. Craig
Dixon, California

**KATHERINE GARRIOTT DEAD;
HELPED WITH CREW ID'S**

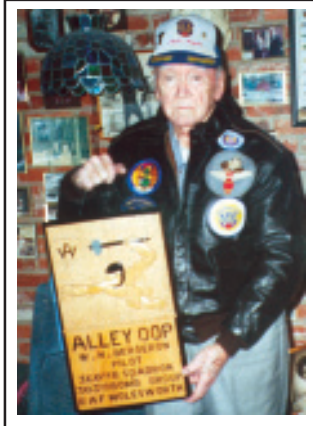
I wanted to let you know that my mother, Katherine Garriott has died. She helped identify most of the members of the crew in the photo of *Eight Ball* on line.

She's the widow of John Arnold Garriott, ball turret gunner in the 359th Squadron. My father was on the plane when Jack Mathis was shot on the mission to Vegesack, March 18, 1943.

Lois Garriott
Roseville, Michigan

**PROUD TO HAVE ADAM'S
ALLEY OOP WOOD CARVING**

Bill Adams sent me the *Alley Oop* wood carving. It sure is a wonderful piece of art work, and very heavy. He likes to have pictures, so I sent him this picture.



Willard "Bill" Bergeron
358th Squadron Pilot

**TWO PILOTS OF 1935 HIGH
SCHOOL CLASS REUNITE**

Charles Smith and I got together for a reunion at Pine Haven Home, more than 60 years since we were together in one place. We were in the 1935 graduating class of Philmont High School in New York.

Charles graduated from pilot's training in May of 1943. I took up flying in 1939, paying \$8.00 an hour for lessons.

I enlisted in August, 1942, and began pilot training at Camp Upton, Long Island.

Charles sailed to England on the Queen Mary. I flew on our B-17 from a base in Kearney, NE. I was assigned to the 303rd. He flew B-17 missions with the 306th.

It was a great reunion!
Don Johnston
360th Squadron Pilot

303RD BG PX GIFT CATALOG

DESCRIPTION	CIRCLE SIZE or CHOICE	PRICE	QTY	TOTAL
Jacket with pockets, 303 rd BG "Hells Angels"-Navy Blue, lined	SM / MED LRG / X-LRG	\$50.00		
Men's Golf Shirt, Red Silk screen B-17 & 303 rd Bomb Group	MED / LARGE X-LARGE	\$20.00		
Men's Golf Shirt, Purple Silk screen B-17 & 303 rd Bomb Group	SM/ MED/ LRG/ XL/ 2XL	\$20.00		
Men's Golf Shirt, Teal Silk screen B-17 & 303 rd Bomb Group	SM/ MED/ LRG/ XL/ 2XL	\$20.00		
Men's Golf Shirt, White Silk screen B-17 & 303 rd Bomb Group	SM/ MED/ LRG/ XL/ 2XL	\$20.00		
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Patch - 3 inch Embroidered Might in Flight or 8 th AF logo	Might in Flight 8th AF	\$5.00		
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B-17 Belt Buckle		\$5.00		
License Plate - metal with B17F(olive drab) or B17G(silver)	B17F (olive) B17G (silver)	\$6.00		
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Rev. 9/9/2004

THE MEMBERSHIP PAGE WHICH USUALLY APPEARS IN THIS SPACE WILL RESUME IN THE FEBRUARY 2005 ISSUE. DENNIS SMITH, WHO TOOK ON THE DUTIES WHEN HIS FATHER, CARLTON SMITH, FORMER MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN, PASSED AWAY, HAS JOINED A NEW FIRM AND ADVISED, "I COULD NOT EVEN GET STARTED ON MY PAGE 19 FOR THIS ISSUE. I DON'T GET BACK TO MY ROOM UNTIL 2:00 AM AND THEN HAVE TO BE BACK ON THE JOB AT 7:00 AM." DENNIS HOPES THINGS EASE UP IN COMING MONTHS.



303RD FOLKS LINE UP TO BOARD *GEORGIA QUEEN* FOR A LUNCHEON CRUISE. On board, guests included (l-to-r) Alan and Leora Frey, 360th; Don and Judy Conley, 360th; Helen and Peter Bandy, 359th.



CYNTHIA PRIETO PLAYS THE PIANO for a sing-along at the farewell banquet after the conclusion of the official remarks and presentations. In the photo on the right, Lew Lyle, Senior Advisor to the Board, and Carl Dubose, former 303rd President, share parting words.



OUR REPRESENTATIVES IN ENGLAND, Robin and Sue Beeby, wait for Ted Dey of Armed Forces Reunions to register them. In the photo on the right, Malcolm Magid, 358th pilot, proves he can still get into his World War II uniform while 360th gunner Lee Faulkner wears his war-weary leather jacket.



FOUR PILOTS IN THEIR WORLD WAR II STEARMANS saluted the veterans of the 303rd Bomb Group in flying three passes over the Heritage Museum during the reunion's visit there on August 28.

The first pass was in echelon, the second in diamond and the third in finger tip with the number three aircraft climbing out to form the "missing man" maneuver over the museum.

The pilots approached from west to east, perpendicular to I-95, to afford a better view by the veterans.



THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

Reflections on 303rd Bomb Group reunions—the first official post-war gathering of the veterans of the 303rd was held in Orlando, Florida, at the Sheraton Olympic Villas from August 29 to 31, 1975. Attendance was 167. In 1985, ten years later, 850 303rd veterans and their families and friends came to Bellevue, Washington for a reunion highlighted by celebrations at Seattle's Boeing plant. Fast forward another ten years to 1995, and attendance was still strong as 708 of our people journeyed to Colorado Springs and attended programs at the US Air Force Academy. What can we expect in 2005, after another ten years? The handwriting on the wall is easy to read, and the message is not encouraging.

Since the turn of the century, attendance at 303rd reunions has been in sharp decline. Under 400 in 2000, 2001 and 2002. Under 300 in 2003 and 2004. The reasons are obvious. Our ranks are thinning as our veterans pass away. Our surviving veterans are suffering the fragilities of age which make travel difficult. With rare exceptions, the interest of family members in attending a reunion passes when the veteran, himself, cannot be present.

An added complication in recent years is our inability to plan and manage our own reunions. We were doing nicely until 2003. Every one of the first 19 reunions of the 303rd from 1975 to 2002 was handled internally by volunteers from among our veterans and their wives. In 2003 and 2004, with no one willing to accept the responsibility, the 303rd Bomb Group Association hired Armed Forces Reunions to organize our reunions in Portland and Savannah. A professional reunion-planning organization is in business to make a profit. The profit comes in the form of a share of the registration fee, an add-on fee for every banquet meal, a 10% commission on all rooms booked, and a mark-up on bus transportation and optional tours charges.

The Savannah reunion, for example, was well-organized, but a principal complaint was the elevated level of charges, particularly for optional tour events, compared to those at previous reunions where we managed our own affairs.

Walt and Ruth Ferrari have volunteered to plan and conduct the 2005 reunion of the 303rd in Dayton, Ohio, where the US Air Force Museum will be a principal attraction. No one, as yet, has stepped forward to take that responsibility for the San Antonio reunion in 2006. There are not very many reunions left in our future. Would someone please step forward?

Eddie Deerfield

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