

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

February, 2006



A CRUISE ON THE RIVER WINDING AROUND THE DOWNTOWN SECTION OF SAN ANTONIO is one of the highlights of a visit to the famous Texas city. It will be on the program for the 303rd Bomb Group Association's reunion in September.

Mark Your Calendar!

Reunion in San Antonio—September 12-16

The 303rd Bomb Group will meet in reunion in San Antonio from the opening morning of registration on Tuesday, September 12 to the farewell banquet on the evening of Saturday September 16.

A luncheon at the Officers' Club at Randolph Air Force Base and a unique Memorial Service in the base's main chapel on Thursday, September 14 are in the planning stage.

Information packets, including program details, optional events and sign-up forms, will be in the mail to all members in March. The packet will also provide guidance on how to make hotel reservations.

The Menger Hotel, itself a landmark in the city, has offered the 303rd BGA a special rate of \$99 per night for a single or double. The hotel is right around the corner from The Alamo and a few minutes away from the San Antonio river with its popular walkway, tour boats and scores of restaurants.

This will be the first time the 303rd has held a reunion in a hotel that's said to be haunted. Even the William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh, site of our 1997 meeting, didn't say that the ghost of Lawrence Welk was wandering the halls at night blowing bubbles. But, the historic Menger Hotel, built in 1859 as a trail ride stop on the Texas frontier, is willing to admit it may have its own ghosts.

So, if any of our 303rd members attending the next reunion see a ghost at The Menger, please take a picture and send it to the *Hell's Angels Newsletter*.

We're always on the lookout for a good story.

IN THIS ISSUE

Red carpet rolled out by Joint Analysis Center to welcome 303rd gunner at RAF-Molesworth—page 3.

Bam Bam crew's KIA honored by new memorial in England—pages 4, 5.

303rd evader's wife preserves history of escapes and evasions—page 6.

Boeing's predecessor of the B-17, a failure in tests before WWII, a winner after the war—page 7.

John "Tex" Cornyn recalls Rose crew's bailout on the Mannheim mission, and his capture by the Germans—pages 8, 9.

British author says "Luftwaffe pilots were handed a two-course feast" on the Schweinfurt-Regensburg missions of 17 August 1943—pages 10, 11, 12.

303rd widow treasures husband's collection of badges made as prisoner of war—page 13.

303rd BGA President Cox explains logical and legal reasons for disbanding the Association—page 16

Summary of minutes of 2005 Board meetings—page 18

The Editor comments on the forming of a 303rd Veterans Family Association—page 20.



303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Hell's Angels Newsletter

Editor—Eddie Deerfield

Vol. 30, No. 1 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684 February, 2006

The 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc. is a tax exempt organization under IRS Code 501(c)(19), chartered in 1977 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.

In anticipation of the dissolution of the Association at the end of 2007, membership status was frozen as of August 23, 2005 at the level each member held on that date. That level will be maintained for the life of the Association, with no additional dues being required. New members will continue to be accepted, with the payment of a one-time \$25.00 dues/registration fee valid for the life of the Association.

Copyright 2006 by the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association Inc. Contents of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* may not be reproduced in any form without the express written permission of the editor, Eddie Deerfield.

Editor Emeritus: Hal Suskind

ELECTED OFFICERS — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President

William H. Cox (Jean)
441 Sandstone Drive, Vacaville, CA 95688
TEL: (707) 448-0571, EM: Pilotrb36@aol.com

Vice President - Administration

Edward W. Gardner, Jr (Sue)
5764 Lakeview Drive, Box 246
Interlochen, MI 49643-0246
TEL: (231) 276-7126
EM: EWG303nav@aol.com

Secretary

Harold "Red" Timm (Alice)
2072 35th Avenue Court
Greeley, CO 80634
TEL: (970) 330-4577
EM: Redtimmm@msn.com

Editor, Hell's Angels Newsletter

Eddie Deerfield (Mary Lee)
3552 Landmark Trail
Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016
TEL: (727) 787-0332
EM: ED303fsra@aol.com

Treasurer

Jean Cox (Bill)
441 Sandstone Drive
Vacaville, CA 95688
TEL: (707) 448-0571
EM: Treas303rd@aol.com

Past Presidents Chairman

Albert L. Dussliere (Lorene)
1901 5th Street,
East Moline, IL 61244-2421
TEL: (309) 755-5339
EM ald@qconline.com

Director of Internet Operations

Gary Moncur (Susan)
4483 Palmer Drive
West Valley City, UT 84120-5052
TEL: (801) 969-7639
EM: glm@303rdbg.com

ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

358th Bomb Sqd. Representative

Van R. White (Lore)
3156 La Ronda Place NE
Albuquerque, NM 87110-2631
TEL: (505) 881-8111
EM: Loreduffer@aol.com

359th Bomb Sqd. Representative

Donald W. Stoullil
4200 Islemount Place
Robbinsdale, MN 55422-1577
TEL: (612) 537-0211

358th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Rufus W. Grisham, Jr. (Nancy)
4417 89th Street
Lubbock, TX 79424-5108
TEL: (806) 794-7003
EM: RGrish20@aol.com

359th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Donald F. Geng
2131 Wellesley Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55105-1234
TEL: (651) 699-6258

ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Continued)

360th Bomb Sqd. Representative

Lee Faulkner
1114 Moffat Circle
Colorado Springs, CO 80915-2221
TEL: (719) 596-2732

427th Bomb Sqd. Representative

Fred E. Reichel
553 Mallard Street
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-3431
TEL: (248) 852-2021

HQ, 444th Air Depot Representative

Dale E. Ragle (Ann)
1471 Sorrel Street
Simi Valley, CA 93065-3338
TEL: (805) 526-4190

Family & Associate Member Rep

Lance Stoner (Trish)
809 E. 31st Street
Pittsburg, KS 66762
TEL: (620) 230-0847
Lstoner@mobill.net

360th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Harold "Red" Timm (Alice)
2072 35th Avenue Court
Greeley, CO 80634
TEL: (970) 330-4577
EM: Redtimmm@msn.com

427th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Alois "Al" Oswald (Lucille)
1003 Oak Street
Oshkosh, WI 54901-4065
TEL: (920) 235-6680

HQ, 444th Air Depot Alternate

Maurice J. Paulk (Opel)
205 West 12th Street
Wood River, NE 68883-9164
TEL: (308) 583-2583

Family & Associate Member Alt

Kathy Johnson
14401 West Taylor Road
Cheney, WA 99004-9245
TEL: (509) 299-5303

APPOINTED COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Membership & Roster

Jean Cox (Bill)
441 Sandstone Drive
Vacaville, CA 95688
TEL: (707) 448-0571
EM: Treas303rd@aol.com

Group Advisor

Lewis E. "Lew" Lyle (Betty)
205 St. Charles Circle
Hot Springs, AR 71901
TEL: (501) 321-1956

PX Administrator

Charles R. Sykes (Vicki)
P. O. Box 33474
Phoenix, AZ 85067-3474
TEL: (602) 993-8015
EM: PX@303rdbg.com

By-Laws Committee

Fred E. Reichel
553 Mallard Street
Rochester Hills, MI 48309-3431
TEL: (248) 852-2021

Historian

Position no longer required. 303rd BGA archives transferred to Mighty 8th AF Heritage Museum. History posted on 303rd website. Harry Gobrecht, Historian Emeritus, is a member of the website committee.

World War II Awards

William H. Cox (Jean)
441 Sandstone Drive
Vacaville, CA 95688
TEL: (707) 448-0571
EM: Pilotrb36@aol.com

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

www.303rdBGA.com

United Kingdom Representatives

Robin Beeby
40 St. Catherine's Road, Kettering,
Northants, England NN15 5EN
TEL: USA 011-44-1536-516-423
EM: RJBeeby@aol.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

Rev. Warren L. Hedrick (Alma), 3 Andrew Avenue, Sanford, ME 04073-3149
Rev. Robert L. Johnson (Mary), 2208 W. Granite St., Siloam Springs, AR 72761

CHAPLAIN — CATHOLIC

Bishop Rene H. Gracida, P. O. Box 217, Tynan, TX 78391-0217

THOSE OF US WHO ATTENDED THE LAST 303RD REUNION AT MOLESWORTH IN THE YEAR 2000 WILL NEVER FORGET THE EXTRAORDINARY HOSPITALITY OF JOINT ANALYSIS CENTER BASE PERSONNEL.

The welcome mat remains in place for 303rd Bomb Group veterans and their families visiting our World War II base in East Anglia, England.

Lee Faulkner, 360th gunner and currently the Squadron's elected representative on the 303rd's Board, reports on his visit to the old base.



J.A.C ROLLS OUT RED CARPET FOR 303RD WAIST GUNNER

By Leroy Faulkner

My family (son Michael, daughter Eleesa, daughter-in-law Marsha and grandson Michael Jeremy) were on our way to RAF-Molesworth with Robin Beeby, our U.K. representative.

As we turned toward the entrance to the base, the guards and our special escort, S/Sgt Jerry Chasteen, stood at attention to welcome us. The first thing I saw was our 303rd Bomb Group Memorial and then the Joint Analysis Center sign with the words, "The J.A.C. Welcomes Mr. Lee Faulkner." WOW! I was speechless! After several moments of picture taking, S/Sgt Chasteen drove us onto the base to begin our tour.

The first stop was the main hangar building. The "Big Triangle C" was a sight to behold! From that point, we were able to see the other facilities on the base. We stopped to remember the main runway from the "small concrete site" which is all that remains at this time. As I looked at that small slab, memories came flooding back, seeing and hearing the B-17s taking off for designated targets in Germany.

You really would've had to have been a part of the 303 Bomb Group during those days to have known just what this all meant to me. To stand in silence at each place for a few minutes remembering those times during the war and sharing bits with crew members as well as others I flew with!

After touring the remainder of the base, our group stopped at the Hilltop where our 360th Squadron had been located. Of course now it is covered with trees.

We traveled on to the Joint Analysis Center Building where we met Col. Reyes, J.A.C. Commander, as well as other members of his staff. This building is a memorial dedicated to the 303 Bomb Group. The hallways are covered with photos of different B-17s in flight over Germany, bits of personal testimonies of events, ground personnel, various crew members, crew chiefs and group commanders, a pictorial history, second to none, of our dedicated Bomb Group—the 303rd.

Throughout the tour, members of the J.A.C. took the time to stop and shake my hand, honoring me with their gratitude for the sacrifice that our group gave to the cause of freedom. In appreciation of that honor, I stood humbly accepting for our entire 303 Bomb Group. Words cannot express those moments—it was awesome.

As we were leaving the J.A.C. Building, Col. Reyes presented me with a framed photo collage showing the 303rd Bomb Group monument, the J.A.C. monument, and a print "Thunderbird Returning Home From a Mission." It was difficult to find my voice at that moment.



I was overwhelmed by the outpouring of thanks, and every honor I was given for coming to visit and spending time with these wonderful, dedicated people. I stopped to sign the visitor registry and this is where we said our farewells to all those who had made my "Return to Molesworth" a memorable experience that I will never forget. GOD BLESS THEM ALL!

BAM BAM CREW MEMORY HONORED IN ENGLAND

Since 2001, Bruce H. Jordan has lived within a half-mile of the site of the *Bam Bam* crash near the village of Great Gidding in Cambridgeshire, England. When he became aware of the World War II mishap, he was distressed to discover that it had gone unmarked over the last half-century. Due to his efforts, the 358th Squadron crewmen who died in the incident now have a memorial in their honor in the Parish church.

The B-17 went down on 10 June 1944 shortly after take-off on a mission to attack an airdrome at Nantes, France. There apparently was a control malfunction, and the aircraft went into a dive. Pilot Sam Oliver managed to pull it out, but there was a second plunge followed by an explosion. Oliver and five others were killed. Four managed to bail out and survived.

Jordan said the names of those 303rd Bomb Group crewmen who died will be read out in church services every November, along with the names of all those in the village of Great Gidding who lost their lives in the two World Wars.



ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH CHURCH in Great Gidding, and, inside the church, the memorial to the honored dead of the 358th Squadron's *Bam Bam* crew.



THE WRECKAGE OF THE 358TH SQUADRON B-17 *BAM BAM* on the ground after a mid-air explosion and crash near the village of Great Gidding in England.

And those who died....



1Lt Sam Oliver
Pilot



2Lt Stanley R Shankweiler
Co Pilot



Sgt Robert Scalco
Left waist gunner



Sgt Americo R Imbrogno
Right waist gunner



S/Sgt John Kissling
Radio operator



T/Sgt Francis H Russell
Ball turret gunner

303RD EVADER'S WIFE PRESERVES HISTORY OF ESCAPE AND EVASION

By Clayton C. David
358th Squadron Co-Pilot

My wife, "Scotty" David, has spent some 20 years collecting records, stories, pictures and newspaper articles about the men and women of the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society.

Of the 109 members of the 303rd Bomb Group reported MIA on 11 January 1944, I was the only survivor who evaded capture and returned to our base at Molesworth, England before the war ended in Europe.

I bailed out of our burning plane near Amsterdam, Holland and evaded across Holland, Belgium and France to reach the Pyrenees Mountains in mid April. The trip over the mountains in waist deep snow required three days and nights.

In Spain I was arrested and interned for several weeks before being flown from Gibraltar to London on May 25, 1944.

"Scotty" was finishing her senior year at Ohio State University at the time I was making new friends in the Underground. We met while I was in the B-17 pilot instructor program at Lockbourne AAF near Columbus, Ohio.

In 1978, "Scotty" met two of my underground helpers from Holland. They were in Pittsburgh, PA with a bus load of former Dutch Helpers touring in Canada and eastern United States.

It was also my first meeting with Joke Folmer and Jacques Vrij since they had escorted me to safety in the Venlo/Maastricht area of



MRS. CLAYTON C. DAVID AND ONE OF HER 20 NEWSPAPER SIZE SCRAP BOOKS dedicated to the motto of the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society—"We Will Never Forget."

Holland in February, 1944.

On meeting with these wonderful people, who helped save many downed flyers in their enemy-occupied country, "Scotty" was hooked on the cause and dedicated to the motto of the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, which is "We Will Never Forget!"

During the AFEES reunion at Philadelphia, PA in May of 2004, men from the Department of Defense's POW/Missing Personnel Office saw some of the scrap books "Scotty" had made and recognized the value they could be in their research.

The books with personal stories, many pictures, cop-

ies of records and newspaper articles, reference 642 evaders and more than 2000 people in Europe and other parts of the world who helped the men and women evade or escape capture.

The men from the Defense Department also knew it would be possible to have them scanned without being damaged. They could then be put on computer DVDs and CDs for preservation and extensive study.

When they learned that she had enough material to complete two more books to go with the 18 she already had, they asked her to complete the other two and contact them when she was finished. This was very interesting because several

other groups had expressed a desire for this "one of a kind material", but didn't have the ability to scan them without taking them apart.

When Lt. Col. Sanchez, US Army, and Navy Chief Petty Officer Michael Allen attended the AFEES reunion at New Orleans in early May 2005, they informed "Scotty" they had the scanning project out for bids. A few days later, we got the call to announce they had determined a company at Frederick, Maryland had won the bid and could do the scanning the next week while Sanchez and Allen were both at their Arlington, Virginia office. This was just before they were to return to Europe for their continued search of airplane crash sites and MIAs.

I loaded the 20 books into our car and we met their scheduled time at Frederick. In about four days, the job was complete and the Department of Defense had all 20 large scrap books, a total of some 1400 pages, scanned onto a hard drive from which they created computer usable DVDs and CDs.

Modern technology is fantastic and "Scotty" still has her 20 newspaper-sized scrap books.

In appreciation for "Scotty's" labor of love and our dedication to the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society, its members and their helpers, "Scotty" and I were commended.

The highly dedicated personnel working in these recovery groups serve under the motto, "Keeping the Promise".



BOEING'S 299, A LOSER IN A PRE-WAR TESTS, IS A POST-WAR WINNER AS 299Z

(Excerpted from the Bradley Air Museum Newsletter, with permission of New England Air Museum's General Director)

In answer to an Army Air Corps specification for a "multi-engined" bomber in 1934, the Boeing Company proposed a radical departure from contemporary standards. While Douglas and Martin, the other competitors, proposed twin-engined aircraft, the Boeing Company's Model 299 had four Pratt & Whitney Hornet engines, and the B-17 saga was born.

Although eminently successful in preliminary trials in 1939, the Model 299 was judged not to be the winner in the competition because the aircraft had crashed after setting a long distance speed record. The accident was not the result of a design fault, but caused by a human failing. But, since it could not complete the trials, it was eliminated from the competition.

Nevertheless, military leaders could see the tremendous advantages of the Boeing design and a small production contract was let. By the time of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, only 35 B-17 Fortresses were available in the Pacific Theater, and more than half of these were destroyed in the first few days of the war.

Early models of the B-17 showed weaknesses in combat. It wasn't until the B-17E with its turbo-supercharged engines that the Air Corps had a truly "offensive" weapon, which was to prove the feasibility of high altitude precision bombing.

The final production version, and the most extensively produced was the B-17G, bristling with thirteen .50-caliber machine guns and able to carry a maximum bomb load of almost nine tons. Over 12,000 Flying Fortresses of all variants were built, and became one of the classic bombers of all time.

By the time the Second World War ended, the need for heavy bombers had ceased to exist. During the working life of the B-17, in addition to its primary role as a high altitude

bomber, it was used as an escort fighter, for anti-submarine patrol, search and rescue missions, a transport and, ignominiously, as a target drone.

After the war, two B-17G's were drastically modified to serve as flying test beds for turboprop engines. The military features were taken off, the pilot's compartment was moved aft, and the nose modified to accommodate a fifth engine—a turboprop. The first of these aircraft, eventually designated as the Boeing 299Z, was delivered to the Wright Aeronautical Corporation to test its XT35 Typhoon engine.

In November, 1947, Pratt & Whitney Aircraft purchased a B-17G for \$2,700. The price included four Studebaker-built Wright R-1820-97 engines. After modification at the Boeing plant in Seattle, the 299Z was awarded an airworthiness certificate by the Federal Aviation Authority which stated, "This aircraft is certified for experimental and evaluation flight testing of new power plants and associated systems under development for civil and military use."

The airplane then began a long and distinguished career as a flying laboratory. The turboprop fifth engine, called the PT-2, was shut down in normal take-off and landing operations, the engine feathered. At test altitude, the PT-2 was fired up while the four piston engines were modulated as needed for the tests or shut down with the propellers feathered.

For almost 20 years, the 299Z served with distinction to flight test engines for Pratt & Whitney aircraft, propellers for Hamilton Standard and navigational equipment for the Norden Company. It proved to be a swift and relatively inexpensive method of exploring certain phases of jet engine development since no ground facility existed at that time that could duplicate the variety of temperatures and air densities that would be encountered in actual flight. All told, the 299Z accumulated more than 1,100 flight test hours at altitudes up to 40,000 feet.

By the mid-1960's, the need for the modified B-17G had diminished. Pratt & Whitney had built the Andrew Willgoos Turbine Laboratory, the largest privately-owned facility of its kind in the world.

The 299Z was donated and enjoyed a prominent position in the Bradley Air Museum. On October 3, 1979, it was crushed in a tornado, and reconstruction was not possible.

“I’ve never seen more holes at one time in my life!” **MULTIPLE FLAK HITS FORCE CREW BAILOUT AT 14,000 FEET**

**By John Cornyn
Co-Pilot, 427th Squadron**

The morning of January 13, 1945 dawned the same, to all outward appearances, as some twenty-five previous mission mornings with a few exceptions. The pilot who had lived in my quarters before I moved in had gone down in France on his 26th mission and I was using his mission tally board.

My 13th mission had been to Merseberg where our waist gunner had been severely injured. All in all, today’s mission looked none too good, with the exception of the target—Mannheim. This was to be my second time to this target in Germany and the first time had been a fairly easy mission.

We took off somewhere around 0800 and made our assembly on the left wing off the high squadron lead with as little incidental excitement as usual and also, per usual, I ate my mission candy and the very unusual apple on the way to assembly.

The flight to the target was routine with the exception of our preparation to take over for a visual bomb run. Then we were notified the run was to be off and to resume our place in the formation. The flak came over the target meager to moderate but accurate.

The head squadron went over and the flak that looked a little late for them loomed black and twelve o’clock level for us—the high squadron. It was the lead bombardier’s last mission and just before bombs away we made a sharp turn to the right to drop the bombs.

As bombs went away and we continued our turn to the right our ship was hit in the bomb bay. Smoke filled the plane and cockpit so that we had to turn out of formation. The instruments weren’t even visible.

The right oxygen system was out—dead at 25,000 feet. Anoxia started taking effect. Another hit right under the chin turret, and ammunition started exploding filling the cockpit with smoke. The next hit blew the top turret off and filled the cockpit with more smoke.

Flake Dyson, our engineer, was blown out of the turret, coming down between Pilot Jack Rose and I. Rose started pointing to Dyson and trying to talk to me, but my intercom was out. Dyson signaled he was OK.

Then we got our worst hit in the right wing behind the number four engine. I’ve never seen more holes at one time in my life.

Number four died and I jumped out of my seat, grabbed my chute, took my flak suit off and put my chute at the side of my seat on the hydraulic hand pump. Then I got back into my seat, putting my chute back under the seat. I helped Rose to take his flak suit off and put his chute on. While this went on, Rose had feathered number four and I tried to feather three with no success.

The crew was told to prepare for bailing out and we sent Dyson to the nose. About this time the ship started turning over to the right and the controls wouldn’t answer with both of us on them. Rose throttled back on one and two and the ship righted. The hit behind four had destroyed the controls and set fire to the perforated gas



A RELAXED MOMENT FOR THE JACK ROSE CREW— Their mission to Mannheim ended with flak bursts which virtually destroyed the B-17 called *Red*. Pictured, I-to-r, in front, Flake Dyson and William Russo. On rail, Warren Yates, John Nazarian, Jack Rose and Donald Clare. In back, John “Tex” Cornyn, Lamar McCall, Clyde Cottle and Lynn Brinkley.

tanks. The fire was now of considerable size and was noticed burning inside the wing by our waist gunner.

Rose gave the signal to bailout and there didn’t seem to be anything else I could do so I sat awaiting my turn. The crew started going at about 14,000 feet if I remember correctly. Between 9,000 and 10,000 feet I got the signal to leave. I hesitated not one second and went out at the gesture from Rose’s thumb.

My reactions to the tension of waiting for an explosion, lack of oxygen, difficulty in adjusting my chute harness, fear of the fire, the confused thoughts that I was a coward were indescribable in my small vocabulary. There was a horrible sensation of weakness, physical and mental, and a feeling of frustration and impotency such as I have never known and never hope to know again.

I went down and out the navigator’s escape hatch without a moment’s hesitation. I faced toward the back of the ship, grasping the hand rest on the sill of the hatchway with my left hand and my ripcord with my right hand.

Then, out. Down into the slipstream -- tumbling -- twisting -- turning -- in an immediate silence, thought subduing in its oppressive weight, a silence suggestive of stories and thoughts of God, religion and immortality..

I withdrew my hand from my chute release on realizing the distance I had yet to fall. I had heard stories of the aerodynamics of the body so I tried righting myself so that I could see where I was going, other than just down. I tried everything I could think of without success.

My heavy mackinaw acted as a sail and I settled into a steady horizontal spin—as if I had a pin in the center of my back. Then I developed a slow roll and caught a

glimpse of clouds and wooded hills below me. I thought I would delay my fall through the clouds, then thinking I might have need of a little time to pull my chute by hand I pulled the cord.

My spinning stopped abruptly and the serenity of my fall was disrupted by a sudden and vicious pain in the groin and the loss of a little molar enamel. Spitting the enamel out I struggled to make myself more comfortable but I was too weak to be able to do anything beyond jamming my hands between the chute harness straps and my body. I couldn't stop the wild oscillation of my chute.

Then suddenly the ground and trees were under me in a flash and I think I must have briefly passed out. I crossed my feet for protection and felt the trees ripping past in added velocity. I glanced up to prevent getting the limbs in my eyes and saw my chute close quickly. I looked back down and the ground was away off.

Resoundingly I hit the ground on my heels then on my neck. I couldn't move and I couldn't breathe and I thought I could chew on my knees by the simple process of opening and closing my mouth. My first thought was of internal injury—I had broken a rib and injured my neck.

After a while I could move and I got to my feet and struggled with the chute harness freeing myself. I dropped to my knees thanking God for my life then made off slowly up the slope of the hill where I landed. I didn't know where I was because I had no intercom after we were hit and was suffering from lack of oxygen.

I was moving up a trail, slipping and sliding in the snow, preparing my 45. Then I heard the sound of voices. I turned around and saw children coming around the bend. They saw me and screamed "Pistole." Then a soldier of unknown nationality appeared with a six-shooter in his hand and when he saw me he yelled "Pistole Avec."

I tried to talk to him in several languages but he only yelled "Pistole Avec" and finally, getting tired of this, he took a shot at me which missed but which caused me to dive hastily into the bushes.

I didn't feel any fear but merely disgust at his poor

marksmanship and thought that he had better be careful because I could hit him from where I was when I heard a voice below me saying over and over with a definite German accent, "It is better to surrender".

At this time I heard movements in the bushes all around me and decided to agree with those who said that discretion is the better part of valor. Crouching low to make a smaller target and to be able to reach my gun more easily in case of necessity I laid it down on the trail and arose slowly.

At this time a German Lieutenant, apparently of the cavalry, appeared and greeted me with "For you, the war is over and soon it will be over for me, too." Still unafraid and sure somehow I would not be taken a prisoner, doubtless because of my addled condition, I tried to make the best of my appearance.

I said to him, "Just who do you think will win this war." The officer then searched me for guns, and from there I was marched down the hill to a truck and was crowded in the front seat between the Lieutenant and the driver.

I was driven to the little town of Lemberg. There I was taken into what appeared to be an orderly room of a military unit where the Lieutenant relieved me of my binoculars. After a short wait I was taken outside to a civilian car of early date and the Lieutenant who had captured me and an officer of the German Medical Corps drove me to another military office a short distance away where I was turned over to a Hauptman who immediately harangued me with mutterings of "Gangster Pistole," "Luft Gangster," "Terror Flyer" and endless rot to which I replied with silence and a sweet smile.

On first entering the Hauptman's headquarters, I immediately saw others from my crew—Navigator McMahon, Waist Gunner Cottle, Engineer Dyson and Bombardier Nazarian. I tried to give the impression that they were total strangers with, I felt, some success.

(John "Tex" Cornyn's story of his months as a prisoner of war will continue in the May 2006 issue)



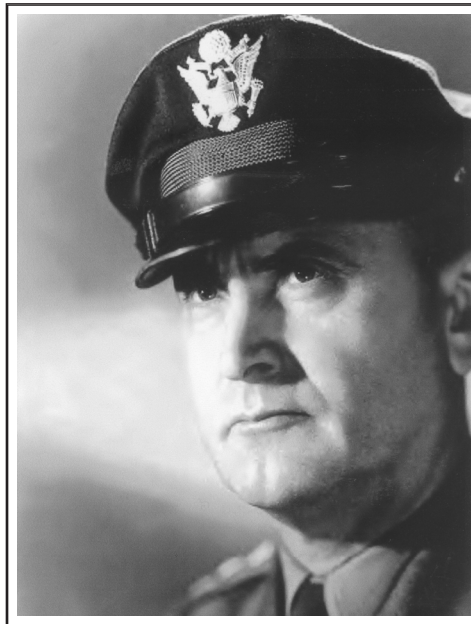
John Cornyn, educated as a pathologist after the war, served in the Air Force for 31 years and retired as a colonel. He died in March, 1989 after suffering a heart attack while working on his ranch in Hondo, Texas. His story was sent to *Hell's Angels Newsletter* by his widow.

John and Gail were married in 1946 in Biloxi, Mississippi after a two-month courtship. Gail is seen on the right as Business Manager of the Crippled Children's Hospital near the Corpus Christi Naval Air Station where John was stationed in 1973.



General Ira C. Eaker, commander of the U.S. 8th Air Force, was "dead set" against the raids of 17 August 1943 against Schweinfurt and Regensburg. He is quoted as saying, "We were pushed into this before we were ready and I protested bitterly."

His feeling was shared by British RAF Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris who regarded such missions as "panaceas—attacks that looked good on paper, promised much, but achieved very little."



Schweinfurt and Regensburg — “LUFTWAFFE PILOTS WERE BEING HANDED A TWO-COURSE FEAST”

B-17 Gunners Claim 228 Fighters Downed; Actual German Losses— 27

Following are excerpts from *The Bomber War* by British author and historian Robin Neillands, with copyright permission from the publisher *The Overlook Press* ©.

By the summer of 1943 the commanders of the Eighth Air Force were fully aware that deep-penetration raids into Germany in daylight were high-risk affairs. They were, however, prepared to accept high losses, reaching 10 per cent or more, and believed that part of the problem was that they still did not have enough aircraft to make up a defensive bombing force - one capable of forcing its way into the heart of Germany, far beyond the range of fighter escort, and of fighting its way home again.

Then, in June 1943, close to the arrival of the *Point-blank* Directive, the magic figure of 300 USAAF bombers was reached. A plan was then prepared to send sixteen bomb groups from the 1st and 4th Bombardment Wings - a force totalling 288 B-17Fs - to attack the ball-bearing factory at Schweinfurt. This plan then expanded as more aircraft became available, and it was then decided to send another force out on the same day, to attack the aircraft plants at Regensburg.

Ball-bearing plants and aircraft factories were 'choke points' in the USAAF's strategic bombing doctrine, vital targets which could be destroyed by daylight precision bombing and prove a great loss to the German military-industrial machine.

The plans for this joint mission were quite intricate,

but were basically designed to disperse the German fighter strength. The final plan called for 230 aircraft of the 1st Bombardment Wing to attack the three ball-bearing plants at Schweinfurt and then return to the UK, while 146 aircraft of the 4th Wing, which had aircraft equipped with 'Tokyo tanks', would bomb the aircraft factory and airfield at Regensburg and then fly on to North Africa.

There would be P-38 and P-47 fighter escorts to the frontiers of Germany and home again from that point, while a force of B-17s from the Fifteenth Air Force in North Africa would cause a useful diversion by bombing airfields at Istres near Marseilles in the south of France.

Meanwhile, the RAF and other USAAF groups would fly diversion raids to other targets in northern France. The important element in the plan was that the two large missions should enter Germany *together*, to disperse and confuse the fighter controllers. If this could be achieved, the missions would probably succeed; if not, they could be costly.

The commanders of the USAAF recognized that this was a high-risk mission, and General Ira Eaker, for one, was dead set against it: "There was always someone who wanted to do something facile to get a quick result. We were pushed into this before we were ready and I protested bitterly." Another person who had distinct reservations about attacking Schweinfurt and Regensburg was British Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Harris, who was being urged to follow up the USAAF daylight precision attacks with a night area attack. Harris regarded these piecemeal attacks on what others saw as the vital supply links in the German military machine as 'panaceas' - attacks that looked good on paper, promised much, but achieved very

little.

The Air Staff had been pressing Harris to have a go at Schweinfurt for some time. Harris had rejected this pressure on the grounds that, first, Schweinfurt was a precision target that needed a daylight strike and, rather more to the point, smiting Schweinfurt would do nothing to shorten the war, since, although ball-bearings were certainly important, the Germans would have other sources of supply from neutral countries like Sweden, and would maintain large stocks in some safe location.

Harris wanted the Eighth to join him in an all-out attack on Berlin, arguing that if they did to Berlin what they had done to Hamburg the Germans would have to end the war. The USAAF commanders were unconvinced by this argument and pressed on with their efforts to get results with daylight precision bombing.

What happened over Schweinfurt and Regensburg was simply a larger and more horrific extension of what had happened over Ploesti. There were, in addition, a number of tactical errors and these will be picked out as the story develops. But, as often happens when things go wrong in war, things began to go wrong at the start.

The joint mission should have begun at 0545 hrs on the morning of 17 August 1943 but there was an immediate problem. Some of the airfields were "socked in" by cloud, and no aircraft could take off. The first delay was official—a message from Brigadier-General Anderson at VIII Bomber Command, delaying take-off for one hour.

There was then a round of telephone discussions between Anderson and his two commanders. General Robert B. Williams of the 1st Wing (including the 303rd Bomb Group) could afford to wait a while, as his aircraft were coming back to Britain. Curtis LeMay of the 4th Wing had no such latitude: his aircraft had to fly on to North Africa and needed every hour of daylight - and every gallon of fuel - they could get. Waiting or hanging about in flight was not an option for LeMay's wing.

The commanders agonized over what to do for some time; then Anderson made a decision. LeMay's 4th Wing, bound for Regensburg and North Africa, would take-off at once. The Schweinfurt force, which had more time to spare, would wait a little longer. The result was that the plan for a coordinated raid, designed to split the German fighter force, at once broke down: the *Luftwaffe* pilots were being handed a two-course feast.

Then there came another problem. The 4th Wing took off at 0620 hrs, but the cloud cover had thickened and the groups had a great deal of difficulty and used a lot of precious fuel in finding each other and getting into their 'lead', 'high' and 'low' group formations. Eventually, 139 B-17s of the 4th Wing, with a strong fighter escort of P-47 Thunderbolts and P-38 Lightnings, crossed the Belgian coast near Antwerp, with two hours and 425 miles of hostile air to go before they reached Regensburg.

They were in three large formations, not tightly closed up, and when the US fighters turned back, the bombers were immediately engaged by German fighters from *II/JG 1* and *III/JG 26*. The bulk of the fighters, though warned by *Freya*, were still assembling or waiting for the US fighters to turn back, but from the moment the first FW 190s and Me 109s spotted the American *Fulks* crossing

the Rhine the bombers were under constant attack - an attack augmented by a storm of flak rising from every town the bombers passed over.

When the first of the attacking fighters turned for their bases to refuel and rearm, other *Luftwaffe* fighters started to make their now classic frontal attacks, and as the big bombers droned steadily south and east a pattern developed. The German fighters, like children using a playground slide, came charging in from ahead, passed through the American formation with all guns firing, dived away, climbed, and flew back to the front of the American formations, where they turned to come in again. Three B-17s were shot down in quick succession and a large number received battle damage, but the US bomb groups held on. The bulk of the *Luftwaffe* fighters were running short of fuel and had to land. While they were refueling, the 4th Wing's B-17s forged on into Germany.

Meanwhile, the 1st Bombardment Wing was still on the ground in England. Take-off was put back to 1118 hrs, and, after they had taken off, the nine regular 1st Wing bomb groups and the additional 'Composite' bomb group, made up of spare squadrons from various airfields, then had to get into their standard operational formation before crossing the Channel coast.

This took time - almost two hours in the overcast - and it was not until 1313 hrs that the first aircraft of the 1st Bombardment Wing crossed the English coast by Shoburyness. As they did so they were immediately picked up on German radar.

The German fighters were having a field day. Deep in Germany, a force of around 130 unescorted B-17s was being attacked by scores of German fighters; now a second US force was starting out, and every radar post, flak gun and fighter station between the Channel and the Rhine was on the alert and ready to give it a murderous reception.

This Schweinfurt force was in for an especially hard time, for the Germans had no idea that the Regensburg force was to fly on to North Africa. The Germans anticipated that, after they had bombed, the 4th Wing survivors would turn back towards the UK, and so every available fighter, from Schiphol in Holland to Brittany in France, was now mustering astride their route to ambush them on the way home.

The Schweinfurt aircraft were heading into this trap with every mile they covered. Estimates vary, but some 250 fighters, most of them ME 109s, took off to attack the American aircraft, most of them concentrating east of the Belgian town of Eppen, where a shortage of fuel would oblige the US escorts to turn back.

There is no real need to cover what happened east of Eppen in detail - it is better imagined than described. But this account, from Eddie Deerfield of the 303rd Bomb Group, certainly sets the scene:

At the briefing we were told that the target was a complex of ball-bearing plants and the war would be shortened by six months if we pulverized it. P-47 Thunderbolts were to escort us to the German border, then the limit of their range, and when we got

(Continued on page 12)

(SCHWEINFURT from 11)

there they waggled their wings in salute and peeled away. Within minutes we were under attack by swarms of enemy fighters.

There were deadly Me 109s and FW 190s joined by the relatively cumbersome Me 110s and Ju 88s; the Germans were throwing everything they had at us. A 20 mm shell ploughed through our right wing, missing the gas tanks by inches, and the bombardier called out what looked like .30 msn holes in the cowl-ing of the No.2 engine - and we were still an hour from the target.

The box formations out on the far left and far right seemed to be getting most of the attention, and Fortresses were falling everywhere. As they dropped out of the protection of the formation, the enemy fighters roared in for the kill. Parachutes started peppering the sky as American airmen jumped from their burning B-17s; what sickened me to the point of tears was the Fortresses that exploded in mid-air, giving the crews no chance of escape.

We bombed the ball-bearing works at 1511 hrs and turned for home; from the fires and smoke it appeared the bombers had devastated the target. Then the Me 109s and FW 190s swooped in again. Our aircraft suffered no hits on the return journey, but B-17s in other formations were being pounded unmercifully. It was a bloody re-enactment of the inbound flight as American parachutes filled the air and more B-17s plunged to earth or became fireballs.

The surviving aircraft - many with wounded men aboard- landed at their bases about 1800 hrs. At the post-mission debriefing, it turned out that, of the 194 B-17s that crossed the enemy coast, 36 were shot down with the loss of 360 crew members. The Eighth's 'acceptable loss rate' at this time was 5 per cent. The Schweinfurt loss rate was 20 per cent.

Between Eppen and Schweinfurt the German fighters chewed into the US bombers, all the way there and all the way back. They came swarming in from 'twelve o'clock high' and from the beam, curving through the American formations, machine-gun and cannon flame glittering along their wings, showing their bellies as they broke off the attack and dived away.

Flak added its contribution, damaging aircraft and killing crewmen. Crippled aircraft falling behind or out of formation were hacked down by the German fighters, but still the bombers pressed on - every gun in action, every plane struggling to hold station. An RAF fighter pilot who saw the US bombers heading east into this slaughter wrote later that 'The disciplined flying of the remaining units was outstanding.'

Meanwhile the Regensburg force, now down to 122 aircraft, was nearing its target. Fourteen aircraft had been shot down and three had lost formation or jettisoned their bombs since crossing the Channel Coast. This represented about 10 per cent of the force - hardly 'acceptable losses' at this stage of the operation. Late that afternoon, at 1650 hrs UK time (1550 hrs local time), the Regensburg force started to land in North Africa; 122

aircraft had made it, 24 had been lost—16 per cent.

The Schweinfurt groups were still taking punishment, the German fighters using bombs and rockets as well as cannon and machine-guns to back up the usual storm of flak rising from the ground. Between crossing the Dutch coast and reaching the IP the Schweinfurt force lost 24 B-17s - ten more than the Regensburg force had lost up to this point.

Around 198 bombers passed over the IP, and the lead group - made up of the 91st, 381st and 101st (Composite) Groups - bombed three minutes later. Not surprisingly, this was hardly a precision attack: the bombs fell over an area four miles in length and up to two miles from the factories.

The second formation - from the 351st, 384th and 306th (Composite) Groups - bombed too early and most of their effort was expended on open fields and on a small village a mile from the nearest ball-bearing factory.

The third formation - from the 92nd, 305th and 306th Bomb Groups - was also unlucky. The Schweinfurt defenders had now ignited their smoke pots, and a great cloud of smoke obscured the target - leading many air-crew to assume that the factories were on fire. This third formation therefore elected to bomb the town centre, and the bombs from the lead group of this formation, the 306th Bomb Group, landed plumb in the heart of the town; the bombs of the other groups were released too soon and fell in open country.

The final formation - from the 303rd, 379th and 103rd (Composite) Groups - stood no chance of finding an un-obscured target and there are no reliable details on where its incendiaries fell. When the photographs were analysed later it seemed that only three of the twelve groups had bombed anywhere near the target and Schweinfurt's production of ball-bearings was unaffected.

The attackers incurred further loss. Schweinfurt was a heavily defended target, and the bomb groups running in from the IP were too big and too steady to miss. Many aircraft were hit and damaged by flak, a number of crewmen were killed, and three B-17s crashed within a few miles of the town. Twenty-nine bombers had now been lost from the Schweinfurt force - and they still had to get home. As they did so, the slaughter continued.

The final tally from the Schweinfurt-Regensburg mission is as follows. A total of 376 aircraft took off from the UK. After 'aborts', 361 aircraft crossed the Dutch coast and 301 returned to the UK or reached North Africa, so 60 aircraft were shot down on the mission; eleven aircraft were so badly damaged that they had to be written off later, and a further 162 aircraft received battle damage.

The overall loss rate, including aircraft written off, was therefore 19 per cent. As for the casualties, 482 air-crew were lost, over 100 being killed. The Eighth Air Force lost as many bombers on the Schweinfurt-Regensburg mission as it had lost in all its missions between August 1942 and March 1943.

German losses were slight: the gunners claimed to have shot down 228 German fighters, a total which equals or perhaps exceeds the entire *Luftwaffe* contingent committed that day. Actual German losses were 27.



303rd Widow Treasures Late Husband's Collection of Badges Made at POW Camp

Betsy Jameson's husband, Chet, was a pilot in the 358th Squadron. He and his crew went down on the 26 November 1944 mission to Osnabruck, Germany. The nine men became prisoners of war. Jameson was sent to Stalag Luft 1 in Barth, and remained there for six months until the Russians liberated the camp in May, 1945.

Chet Jameson passed away in January, 2005. His widow wrote to the *Hell's Angels Newsletter*, "I still receive the Hell's Angels publication at my request. After reading the last issue, I thought possibly you might be interested in telling the story of Chet's collection of replicas of various wings made from lead in sand castings while he was a prisoner. The lead was melted out of cans of food from American Red Cross boxes."

The legend on the back of the framed collection reads:

"These lead flyer's badges were made from originals in prisoner of war camp Stalag Luft 1, Barth, Germany, during World War II. Molds were made in sand, then melted drops from cans such as corned beef were poured to form the pieces. Toilet paper was used to polish them—that should tell you something about their toilet paper! Melted tooth brush handles supplied the coloring. The third insignia from the top in the center row was enamel on the original, but was done in water color and then covered with clear plastic. The wing below it, a Royal Air Force original, was embroidered on fabric, but reproduced by carving a wood replica for molding. The badges were made by 1st Lt. Chet H. Jameson, Jr., and others in the camp."

The above photo is by Dennis Thompson, a retired professional photographer. On the left, in descending order, 1—Polish pilot, 2—Finland air gunner, 3—Luftwaffe pilot, 4—Fabricated German POW, 5—Fabricated POW. In the center, 1—Russian aviator, 2—French pilot, 3—Free French Air Force, 4—British Royal Air Force, 5—Czechoslovakian pilot, 6—Czechoslovakian air gunner. On the right, 1—U.S. pilot, 2—U.S. navigator, 3— U.S. bombardier, 4—U.S. gunner, 5—U.S. paratrooper.



THE GEORGE OXRIDER CREW ENJOYS A COFFEE BREAK after a mission briefing. The records indicate that they had just returned from an attack on the port of Wilhelmshaven, Germany on March 22, 1943. From left to right, Co-pilot Donald Hurlbut, Right Waist Gunner Sam Maxwell, Tail Gunner James Sadler, Engineer Frederick Ziemer, Left Waist Gunner Theodore Heaps, Radio Operator Everett Dasher, Ball Turret Gunner Robert Smith, Navigator Donald Grant, Bombardier Earl Steele and Pilot George Oxrider.

PICTORIAL REVUE

Love Story With Tragic Ending

Sergeant Acel Livingston married his sweetheart, Gloria, in Helper, Utah, on November 1, 1943. He was on leave before going overseas, after training as a B-17 gunner.

He was assigned to the 358th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group as waist gunner on pilot Alvin Determan's crew. The crew flew its first mission on 30 April 1944 to Lyon, France.

On 28 May 1944, Sergeant Livingston's ninth mission, the target was an electric power plant in Leipzig, Germany. Their B-17 suffered a direct hit from flak. The right wing collapsed as the plane went into a dive.

Three members of the Determan crew were able to bail out and survived. Seven were killed in action. Sergeant Livingston was among the dead.



Molesworth Diary

LOSING ALTITUDE, WITH WOUNDED ABOARD

The synthetic oil plant at Sterkrade, Germany, on January 22, 1945 was the 14th mission for us, and it was to be the roughest of our 35 missions. On the bomb run flak was correctly forecast to be "intense and extremely accurate." Somehow, I "tunnel-visioned" so I could see only part of my lead aircraft. Still, flak bursts were happening between us. Twice, I heard "I'm hit."

We dropped our bombs with the other aircraft in the Group; then our aircraft sagged to the right suddenly. Warning lights showed we'd lost all oil and power in both right engines. Flak damage, so prop feathering didn't work. We fell back and out of the formation, and I headed us toward Holland at max power on the two remaining engines, the two right props windmilling and putting up resistance to airflow like large barn doors. Airspeed required we keep descending with controls fully against the left engines' pull and right wing high to keep directional control.

At the Dutch coast we were holding altitude, and I turned us south toward Belgium. I knew that if one of the engines failed I'd have to try to bail the crew out (including the wounded) or try to belly land this aircraft on a Dutch farm. Seemingly hours later we spotted Ghent airfield. Friendly territory. I started an approach pattern. Without reducing power one circle lost us 1,500 feet of altitude. One more circle, the same. One more and we'd be "committed to land."

Electric power had failed, so the radio operator crawled into the empty bomb bay and manually cranked the landing gear down. Somehow everything worked and we landed. Two men wounded, flak-flattened tire, countless holes in the right wing and tanks pouring green-colored fuel on the ground.

But, SAFE!

Grafton N. Smith
Pilot, 427th Squadron

REPORTED "MIA," PERSONAL EFFECTS REMOVED

Short of reaching our target in Posnan, Poland, we were attacked by Me-109's. One came up and got us dead in its sights. But—a miracle—either his guns jammed or he was out of ammo. That Messerschmitt didn't fire on us.

On the return, we were running short of fuel. To get back to England, we had to jettison everything loose on the plane. We just made the east coast and landed on an emergency RAF field. Because of delays in getting the report back to base, we were reported as missing in action, and our personal efforts had been cleared from our Nissan huts by the time we got back.

William R. George
Ball Turret Gunner, 358th Squadron

"GREAT CRASH LANDING" BY PILOT EDMUNDS

On my 29th mission, on March 28, 1945 to Berlin, flak was moderate and we did receive a few hits in the wings. The problem on this long run was insufficient fuel. We didn't have enough to get back to Molesworth, and we learned by radio that all RAF fields near the coast of England were fogged in.

Pilot Bob Edmunds determined that the best alternative

was to crash-land our B-17 on the coast near Rye, England. He made a great landing, and all aboard were safe.

Norman D. Hammel
Flight Engineer, 360th Squadron

SHUTTTLING FROM GROUP TO GROUP FOR COVER

We were among the early combat crews to arrive at the Molesworth base, and flew the first recorded mission of the 303rd Bomb Group on November 17, 1942. Our pilot was George Oxrider.

On the January 23, 1943 mission to Lorient, France, there was a big black flak cloud over the target. We had to fly through it, and when we came out the number one engine was dead, and our number four engine was not running very good. We started to lose speed. We dropped out of our formation and picked up the Group behind us. The number four engine went out and the number three was smoking. We dropped back and joined the next Group behind us.

I was transferring gas from the dead engines to the others when the third engine quit. We were over England, and the pilot gave the order for the crew to bail out. We jumped. I don't know how he did it, but he was able to land the plane on a field near Dawlish.

Frederick B. Ziemer
Flight Engineer, 358th Squadron

THREE DAYS IN THE LIVES OF A COMBAT CREW

We flew to Cologne in the highly industrialized and fiercely defended Ruhr Valley on 27 September 1944. We met no resistance from enemy fighters this day, but the flak was intense and very accurate. Our B-17 had 25 flak hits, five in my radio room. One had my name on it, but I wasn't there—I was dispensing chaff. It was my 28th mission, and they were not getting any easier.

Yesterday, we bombed the marshalling yards at Osnabruk. We ran into heavy flak. One of our 303rd aircraft took a direct hit between the number 3 and 4 engines. It slid under the formation, went into a glide and blew up at about 5,000 to 6,000 feet. Several parachutes were spotted. The co-pilot on that plane reported that his chute had bullet holes in it when he landed. He said he feared that some of his crewmates were killed by ground fire while descending.

The next day it would be the Krupp factory at Magdeburg, and the enemy fighters would be waiting for us. Forty or so FW-190's and Me-109's attacked primarily the low squadron and wiped out nine of the 12 B-17's on the first pass through the formation. Our own aircraft lost one engine and part of our oxygen system but we made it home to put our second aircraft in the hangar in two days. Our 303rd gunners did get nine of the enemy fighter planes.

Our pilot was Harry Jenkins and we were all fortunate to make it through our combat tour, but I think often of the many whose lives were sacrificed and who did not even get to vote in this great country of ours.

Wesley Loosemore
359th Squadron Radio Operator

Volume Three of *Hell's Angels* Newsletter Collection Planned

The two-volume set of books titled *Hell's Angels Newsletter Silver Anniversary Collection—A World War II Retrospective* was published in 2002.

It included every page in 86 issues of the newsletter from the first in April of 1976 to the latest at that time—November of 2001. More than a thousand pages were copied and reproduced exactly as in the original issues, in full color.

There was a 75-page index at the end of Volume Two to make it easy for readers to look up and find items of special interest.

Forty sets were donated to libraries at universities, museums, air bases and communities throughout the country. An additional 460 sets were sold in a matter of a few months.

The books are an historical document of tremendous importance as well as a treasured family heirloom. Their pages carry thousands of names and hundreds of stories and photos about our time in World War II.

The plan now is to publish a third volume, covering all pages in all issues from February 2002 to November 2007. The three volumes would then include every newsletter page from the first in 1976 to the last in 2007 as the Association brings down the curtain.

It's estimated that the third volume would consist of about 480 pages plus a 30-page index. The first set of two books sold for \$120. Estimated cost of purchasing the third volume is \$50 or less.

Britain's Airworthy B-17 *Sally B* In Danger of Being Grounded

The high cost of insurance may ground Britain's only airworthy B-17, *Sally B*, indefinitely. The island nation is now a member of the European Union whose rules classify the Flying Fortress for insurance purposes in the same category as commercial airliners. The new classification meant that annual operating expenses for the World War II bomber went up an additional \$43,000.

Members of B-17 Preservation, a charitable foundation which owns the vintage aircraft, was seeking an amendment to the EU regulations which went into effect May 1 of last year. For the first time in 30 years, the annual Memorial Day services at Madingley did not include a flyover the American cemetery by *Sally B*.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Some members have said we should continue the Association till "we just fade away". We cannot do that for many logical and legal reasons. If it were agreed to "fade away" then the final few members must still hold a general membership meeting and fulfill the legal and financial requirements. Our original Articles of Incorporation call for "dissolution" of the Organization" and by law that is what must happen. The Offices of President, Treasurer and Secretary must be filled with physically able and rationally thinking members. Final Minutes, and financial statements must be provided to the legally required areas of government, both state and federal.

Decisions must be made about what happens to the Association's remaining assets. The law requires assets be given to one or more Non-Profit organizations and no part of the assets can inure to benefit any of the members or individuals. All of the decisions must be documented in Minutes of the Association, along with the date voted on to dissolve, so it has to be planned for in advance.

Emotionally we all hate to see the 303rd BGA dissolve, but to quote one of our Board Members, "there comes a time when we must vote with our heads and not our hearts." The Board of Directors did that in Dayton. While the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc., still has individuals capable of accomplishing all of the legal requirements, they voted to "Bring Down the Curtain" the way it should be with the pride, dignity and honor the Association deserves.

The majority of the Board Members still hold onto the hope that a successor organization can and will be formed by our sons, daughters, nieces, nephews and even grandchildren. The reality of that happening is still in the very early stages of being worked on. Gary Moncur, Charlie Sykes and Lance Stoner have taken the lead in this endeavor. Please look for more information on this subject elsewhere in the Newsletter and check the website for postings.

I gave a pair of Challenge Coins, along with the history, in each Registration Packet at the reunion in Dayton. I designed these coins and Charlie Sykes had them made especially for the reunion. Two sets of these coins have been mounted, in order to show all four sides of the coins, and framed along with a reduced copy of Geoff Pleasance's painting of our Monument at RAF Molesworth. This framed display has been sent to the Mighty Eighth Air Force Heritage Museum to be displayed along with our archives. Those members who were unable to attend the reunion in Dayton can order a set of the coins from our PX for the very reasonable price of \$6.00 per set. I think they make a great memento for our members and a nice addition to the collection of 303rd BGA merchandise.

William H. Cox

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

OFFERS "PERHAPS FINAL" SALUTE TO HIS CREW

After reading the November 2005 issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter, I feel I need to express myself in view of the planned dissolution of the Association in 2007. At that time, I will be 84, and my own days will be "dwindling down to a precious few." So, before it is too late, I need to tell the Association how much the Molesworth experience has influenced my life.

Aside from my wife and family, no event has even approached the pride and satisfaction of being a member of the elite 303rd Bomb Group. I credit the Group for its primary influence on me as I evolved from an ordinary boy to a responsible man at Molesworth.

I feel the need to pay tribute to the members of my crew, even though for some it will be posthumous, to recognize and praise their abilities and courage as they performed their duties flawlessly.

While it was customary 60 years ago to routinely receive salutes, I now offer a profound and perhaps final salute to Pete Ogburn, Bud Finke, Carl Malerich, Jim Young, Cornie Norris, Oscar Dean, Bob Bechtold, G. L. Rose, Howard O'Neal, and, of course, Joe Strange and his ground crew.

John Stephen Proffitt, Jr.
359th Squadron Pilot

STALAG LUFT III REUNION IN 2007 WILL BE ITS LAST

I attended the Stalag Luft III reunion in Tucson last April. The talk was that the 2007 reunion would be the last. Both the 303rd and the Luft III reunions will be coming to a close that year. It is sad this must happen. If the good Lord allows, I will attend the 303rd reunion in San Antonio in 2006. I haven't been there since 1955 after raising my right hand to join the Air Force, Great job on the newsletter!

Arnold A. Wright
Benton, Arkansas

LEARNS THEY FLEW SEVEN MISSIONS TOGETHER

I was pleased to attend the 2005 reunion in Dayton with my wife, Bernadine ("Penny") and my daughter, Kim. We went to the Group breakfast, already in

progress when we arrived. Just inside the door, a gentleman and a young lady were sitting alone at a table. We asked to sit with them, and the gentleman and I soon began comparing notes about the 303rd. We learned we were at Molesworth at the same time.

I told him I flew most of my missions with the Howard Dahleen crew. He seemed surprised and said he also flew some missions with the Dahleen crew. We compared notes and were astounded to find that we had flown seven missions together from February 20 to March 3, 1944. He had filled in as Engineer, replacing Orrick Malcolm. The gentleman is John Newman, who was attending with his daughter, Sunny.

Although John lives in Colorado and I live in Pennsylvania, we have been in touch by phone and mail since the reunion.

Russ Klingensmith
359th Squadron Navigator

"YOUR NEWSLETTER IS AMONG BEST I HAVE SEEN"

Sorry I missed you in the Hospitality Room at the Dayton reunion but Don Foulk and I had to get back to Toledo. I would appreciate it if you would send some of your 303rd newsletters to me. Your newsletter is among the best I have seen and I think some other editors will profit from it.

I enjoyed being with the 303rd at the reunion and meeting many new 8th Air Forcers.

Jim Erskine
Committee Chairman
8th AF Historical Society

NEW MEMBER'S STORY RUNS IN OKLAHOMA NEWSPAPER

Being a new member of the 303rd Bomb Group Association, I was happy to get my first copy of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter*. I had lost contact with my crew until recently when Jerry Rasmussen, a member of the crew, got in touch with me and told me about the Association.

He sent me a packet about the 10 missions I flew with the 303rd. I showed them to my brother who is editor of the *Barnsdall Times* in Osage County, Oklahoma. He used a lot of the material on two full pages in the Veterans Day is-

sue. In his Editor column, here's part of what Bob wrote:

"I hope you will excuse me for sorta 'tooting my horn' in this issue of *The Times*. My brother Bill and his wife were visiting from Tucson, and we had sort of a family reunion. Bill had a package of legal-looking papers that were declassified reports of Air Force missions made over Germany 60 years ago. Bill and his crew made 10 daylight precision runs into Germany the last two months before V-E Day.

I had this information in my hand, and I realized the principals involved were family, but I felt that there were many more out there who flew the B-17s and B-24s and would be interested in how these crews handled the situation. My brother and 16-million other young men and women have made life better for us and the whole world for the last 60 years."

William A. Evans
360th Squadron Tail Gunner

MICHIGAN RESTAURANT HOSTS VETS ON THEIR DAY

There were all the usual ceremonies honoring veterans up here in Northern Michigan, but let me tell of one unusual event.

Rico's Restaurant again offered a free meal to any and all veterans. The restaurant was open from 9 AM to 9:30 PM, serving continuously; breakfast, lunch and dinner. Rico said it was his way of honoring veterans and he would continue as long as he could.

Sue and I had lunch at Rico's, which is located in Grawn a few miles from Interlochen. Most of the veterans had caps or uniforms or jackets as a means of ID. Business was brisk.

Ed Gardner
427th Squadron Navigator

303RD PILOT'S INTERVIEW IN COLLEGE NEWSPAPER

Thought you'd like to see the article which appeared in Fresno State's *The Collegian*. Donna Taketa, one of their reporters, interviewed me. I was a student there after the war. It was a long interview and a long article.

Aside from many details about my missions with the

303rd Bomb Group, here's what she wrote about my philosophy of life,

"Although long retired from the service as a Lieutenant Colonel, the 81-year-old veteran is in no way divorced from the military nor is he inclined to stay at home and spend his days watching television. He attended his bomb group's reunion in Dayton, Ohio and is preparing for the Veterans Day Parade with the 8th AF Historical Society, and he meets weekly with about 30 fellow veterans at the Memorial Building in Clovis.

"He said, 'I'm so busy with things. That's how to stay going: get busy, keep involved, make appointments into the future. That's how I'll make it to 82.'"

William S. McLeod, Jr.
358th Squadron Pilot

RESIDENT OF AF VILLAGE FINDS TWO 303RD BUDDIES

Thanks for mentioning Air Force Village I in the last issue of the newsletter. Just found out there are two more 303rd vets in Air Force Village II. They're Gordon Smith and Bill Cargill of the 359th Squadron. They flew their missions in 1942 and 1943.

Ray Gorham
358th Squadron Bombardier

A DAUGHTER'S TRIBUTE AS FATHER PASSES AWAY

My dad, George A. Kyle, Jr., passed away 20 September 2005. His final physical problems were circulatory-related, and he went downhill quickly. He was "ready to go," he told me. I'm glad he and I were together at the 303rd reunion in Dayton a month earlier.

And I had the opportunity to speak at the Memorial Service in Dayton. Having Dad there, front and center, made it all the more special. Those are the times I visualize now in my mind...and those are the times I'll treasure in my heart forever.

So, although I'm still teary-eyed, I know he's once again sitting in the cockpit of his beloved B-17.

Carol Kyle Sage
Talking Rick, Georgia

SUMMARY OF MINUTES AT 2005 BOARD MEETINGS

Dayton, Ohio—23 August 2005

In the absence of President Dick Bowler, who had suffered a stroke, the meeting was opened by Acting President Al Dussliere.

Mr. Dussliere reported that a new and correct Deed of Gift concerning the 303rd Bomb Group Association's donation of its archives to the 8th Air Force Heritage Museum had been received.

Treasurer Bill Cox's financial report showed a balance of \$180,860.27 in the Association's treasury.

Newsletter Editor Eddie Deerfield said "the well is running dry" for the Molesworth Diary and pin-ups pages. He said an appeal would be made to our veterans to send in personal stories and photos that have not appeared in past issues of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter*.

Mr. Deerfield also reported that he was in contact with the commanding officer at the Joint Analysis Center at Molesworth to secure pieces of the old runway for mounting in acrylic as gifts to our veterans.

Mr. Dussliere said a plaque had been prepared honoring the men who gathered the 303rd's mission reports. It will be displayed at the Heritage Museum.

He also announced that a Certificate of Appreciation would be sent to the Joint Analysis Center in recognition of their efforts to keep the memory of the 303rd Bomb Group alive at the Molesworth base.

A report by Membership Chairman Dennis Smith, in absentia, stated that dues would no longer be required from members now on the rolls of the Association.

A report by Director of Internet Operations Gary Moncur, in absentia, announced the addition to the 303rd web site of a list of cemeteries, worldwide, where our honored dead lie.

By-laws Chairman Fred Reichel distributed copies of changes to be voted on at the general meeting.

World War II Awards Chairman Bill Cox said he continues to work with veterans or their widows to secure awards. He said it takes about two years of processing.

Mr. Deerfield, who managed the 2004 reunion in Savannah, reported that the 303rd treasury gained about \$7,500 from the event.

Vice President for Reunions Walter Ferrari said attendance at the Dayton reunion was a disappointing 169, the lowest turnout in the history of the 303rd BGA.

2006 Reunion Manager Eddie Deerfield reported that the next gathering would be in San Antonio September 12-16 at the downtown Menger Hotel. He said it's around the corner from The Alamo and near the popular River Walk. He added that the memorial service would be held in a chapel at Randolph Air Force Base.

Ed Miller, a guest at the Board meeting, said he was working on a personal history of every member of the 303rd for transfer to compact disks. Board approval of the project was postponed pending more details.

Mr. Cox said that in "bringing down the curtain" on the 303rd BGA, many issues would need to be managed, following the law for non-profit organizations in Florida where the Association was chartered. He said it's only a plan at this stage, pending a vote by the Board to dissolve the Association at the end of 2007.

Mr. Deerfield said he had been asked to publish a third volume of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter Collection*, covering the period from February 2002 to November 2007, if

the 303rd BGA plan to dissolve at the end of 2007 was approved. The three volumes would then include every page of every issue of the newsletter from the first in 1975 to the last in November 2007. He estimated a charge of \$50 for the sale of each book to cover expenses.

The Nominating Committee, chaired by Mr. Dussliere, announced its slate of officers for 2005-2006 to be presented for approval at the General Meeting.

Dayton, Ohio—27 August 2005

The meeting of the Board was opened by newly-elected President Bill Cox. (See page 2 for the names and positions of other officers elected at the General Meeting.)

Newsletter Editor Eddie Deerfield said the cost of publishing the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* in the last fiscal year, including printing, mailing and other expenses ranged from \$6,000 to \$7,000 per issue. He said he didn't expect an increase in budget would be necessary in the next fiscal year.

Widow Members Representative Joanna Tressler said only four persons attended her meeting. She proposed that at future reunions the widows attend the family members meeting. The new unit will be known as Widows, Family and Associate Members.

Post Exchange Manager Charlie Sykes said he wanted to know the Board's wishes about stocking the PX in view of the close-down plan. It was decided to stock only limited items.

Treasurer Jean Cox's 2005-2006 budget was approved.

There was a discussion on how to continue insuring the monument outside the entrance to RAF-Molesworth. Mr. Cox said he would look into the matter.

Fred Reichel brought up the subject of dissolving the 303rd BGA and suggested that the membership vote on it.

Mr. Deerfield said he had been given the responsibility by President Cox of preparing a third and final volume of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter Collection* and also managing the 2007 reunion, possibly the last. He said he needed an up-or-down vote on the Association's future to know whether or not he should proceed with the two projects.

He made the motion "That the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association be dissolved on 31 December 2007 in accordance with legal requirements and other commitments, or soonest thereafter when those obligations are fulfilled" and "That the 303rd BGA give unlimited encouragement and support to the formation of a new non-profit Association by our successor generation to carry on the traditions and sustain the history of the veterans of the 303rd Bomb Group."

The motion was seconded by Mrs. Cox and approved by the Board.

Gary Moncur and Charlie Sykes asked veterans to encourage their family members to get involved in a new Association.

Mr. Reichel moved that the 2007 reunion be held in Washington, DC. It was approved. The Board also approved retaining the services of Armed Forces Reunions for the 2007 meeting at Mr. Deerfield's discretion.

(NOTE—A full account of the minutes of the two Board meetings and the General Meeting are available on request from Secretary Harold "Red" Timm, 2072 35th Avenue Court, Greeley, CO 80634.)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

You will notice some of the names in the *In Memory* column have dates that are several years old. The majority of these were previously listed as missing in our records. Through the efforts of our Web Master, Gary Moncur, these Veterans have been located, and we have listed them here in recognition and to honor their memory.

Please send any changes of address to Treasurer, (see page 2 for address) or they can be sent to membership@303rdbg.com. The sad news of members passing can be sent to the Treasurer or taps@303rdbg.com.

In Memoriam

Dale W. Allbaugh	3 rd Sta.Comp.	4/20/2002
Wm. M. "Bill" Beasley	359 th	11/12/2005
Curtis O. Brooke	358 th POW	11/08/2005
Thomas A. Buford	427 TH	1/19/2005
Francis J. Burns	358 th	8/01/2005
William F. Burrill	1114 QM	11/13/1998
Kenneth Clarke	358 th	11/21/2005
Arthur Driver	359 th	UNKNOWN
Willis A. Duffey	359 th	8/27/2005
Obert Enget	360 th	11/30/2005
David E. Fackler	359 th	5/30/2003
Frank L. Farmer	358 th	8/03/2005
Leo A. Figiloli	303 rd Weather	4/03/2002
Joseph Fraites	303 rd Eng.	8/08/2002
Roger A. Freeman	8 th A.F. Historian	10/07/2005
John M. Gard	358 th POW	11/02/2005
Edwin G. Geist	3 rd Sta. Comp	11/04/2005
JB Lewis Halliburton	358 th POW	5/31/2005
William C. Hunter, Jr	358 th	8/2005
James O. Inman	360 th	8/23/1977
Nicholas F. Kail	427 th	3/1979
Nicholas Katusic	429 th Medical	11/27/2003
George B. Kersting	358 th	10/01/2005
George A. Kyle, Jr.	360 th	9/20/2005
Russell L. Ney	358 th	1/04/2005
Henry R. Legge	360 th	9/6/2005
Gilbert A. Murray, Jr.	360 th	11/05/2005
Harry F. Newcomb, Jr.	360 th	9/16/2005
James D. Nolan	359 th A/C Mech	1956
Bernard W. Rawlings	427 th	7/19/2004
Charles F. Scholz	427 th	10/1997
Robert L. Taylor	360 th	9/25/2005
Richard H. Wentworth	427 th	6/26/2005

DONATIONS "IN MEMORY"

Steven D. Levin	For	MacChesney Desmond
Betty Brooke	For	Curtis O Brooke
Betsy F. Jameson	For	Curt H. Jameson, Jr.
Mrs. Jay Morrison	For	Jay P. Morrison & Irl Baldwin
Jon K. Reynolds	For	Col. Ralph J. Reynolds

NEW MEMBERS

William F. Carney, 100 Holly Circle, Covington, GA 30016-5312
Sandra Cisler, (Robert), 8538 110th Avenue, Pleasant Prairie, WI 53158-1320
William A. Evans (Madge), 9890 N. Stageline Trl., Tucson AZ 85742-9178
Todd A. Holtritt, 51 Wallace Ln., West Paterson, NJ 27424-2647
Kevin Kersting (Sheri), 5343 Mardel, St. Louis MO 63109-1762
Col. Kenneth Lazier (Kathryn), 11736 Polaris Dr., Grass Valley, CA 95949-7609
Harry Roach (Jane), RR 2 – 99A, Henryville PA 18332-9726
Helen C. Strong (Jimmie D.), P.O. Box 970521, Ypsilanti, MI 48197-0809
Tamara Ann Velasquez (Andres), 5102 San Antonio Ave., Midland TX 79707

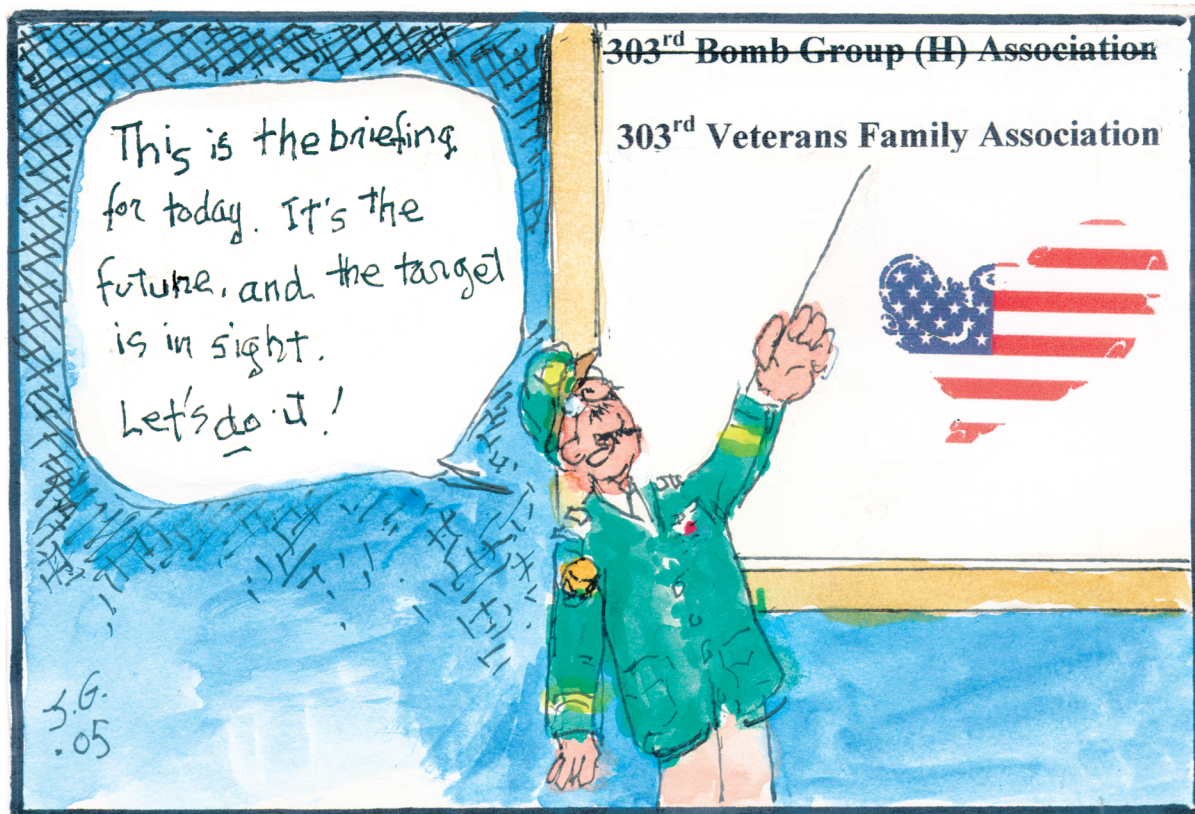


FOR THE HELL'S ANGELS NEWSLETTER

The newsletter needs stories and pictures from our veterans for the Molesworth Diary, 303rd Pin-ups and feature articles.

If your article, Diary story or photo of your time in the 303rd Bomb Group at Molesworth has not been published in our newsletter, send it NOW to:

The Editor
Hell's Angels Newsletter
3552 Landmark Trail
Palm Harbor, FL 34684



~~~ Drawing by 303rd Bomb Group veteran Jack Gardner of Pittsburgh, PA. ~~~

## THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

My son called me, ecstatic over a movie he had just seen. "The new King Kong is the greatest," Jim said. "You've got to see it to believe it." Thinking back to the King Kong film made in 1933, with Faye Wray, Bruce Cabot and Robert Armstrong, and the spellbinding awe I experienced seeing it as a 10-year-old, I scoffed, "No way! Those remakes are never as good as the originals." I was wrong.

The making of the 303rd Bomb Group Association, in its own way, was an epic endeavor, but its time is running out. The remake now in production is the 303rd Veterans Family Association. And it can be the greatest, too, with different directors and a younger cast.

What will it take to make this production a success? We need three dedicated persons in our successor generations to step forward, willing to stand as President, Secretary and Treasurer. Then, a membership drive which would be paid for by our 303rd BGA treasury. Let's say from 25 to 50 of our sons, daughters and other family members join and form the nucleus of the new Association. That's all that's needed for starters.

For the founding officers, this doesn't have to be a lifetime commitment. Officers in every organization come and go as new leaders emerge. And, the commitment need not be excessively time consuming. As in any organization, that's dictated by circumstances. The 303rd Bomb Group's veterans will counsel and share the responsibilities for as long as we are physically able. In other words, formation of a new 303rd Veterans Family Association and obtaining a state charter under existing regulations are not the daunting tasks they may appear to be. We veterans did it in 1976 when we were about the same ages as our children are today.

Eddie Deerfield

303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.  
Hell's Angels Newsletter  
Eddie Deerfield, Editor  
3552 Landmark Trail  
Palm Harbor, FL 34684-5016

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT NUMBER 7124  
TAMPA, FL.