

Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

February, 2007

THE CURTAIN COMES DOWN ON THE 303RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION in 2007 at its farewell reunion. The place is the Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. The dates are from September 20 to 23.

Among the attractions planned for this historic meeting is a vintage display of authentic World War II US Army Air Corps paraphernalia sure to bring back many memories of life at Molesworth.

The exhibit will be set up in the Group's Hospitality Room by the Capital Wing of the Airman's Preservation Society.



303RD VETERANS: MISSION IS “GO”! FINAL REUNION A MAXIMUM EFFORT

Over the years, for the obvious reasons of death, reduced mobility and financial concerns, attendance at reunions of the 303rd Bomb Group Association has steadily declined. After an attendance of 850 in 1985 and 708 in 1995, there was a drop to 165 in 2005.

Now, with credit to a heartwarming gesture of support, the trend is likely to be reversed for the final reunion of the 303rd BGA.

At the 2006 reunion in San Antonio, family members decided to make a "maximum effort" to help as many veterans as possible attend the 2007 "farewell" reunion in the Washington DC area.

Charlie Sykes, elected representative of Widows, Family and Associate Members, said, "There are many veterans unable to attend the reunions without assistance for one reason or another. Many do not have a family member who can attend with them and give that assistance.

To this end, the family members would offer to help veterans at the next reunion."

Sykes sent out the following call, "Do you know of a 303rd veteran who would like to attend the reunion in September 2007 but cannot because he doesn't have anyone to offer this assistance? Are you a veteran who would like to attend the last reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group Association and will need some help while there? We would like to hear from you.

"If you're a family member willing to help a veteran at the farewell reunion, we would like to hear from you, too."

Charlie Sykes can be reached by mail at Post Office Box 33474, Phoenix, Arizona 85067-3474.

His telephone number is (602) 993-8015. His email address is C2Sykes@realty17.com.

Meanwhile, family member Chuck Vieira, President-designate of the Might in Flight Leg-

acy Association, proposed successor to the 303rd BGA, is "changing the incorporation to provide security for the group so the 303rd can retain control." There had been concern over giving voting rights to members who are not 303rd vets or their kin.

Association President
Bill Cox has made arrangements for the 303rd Bomb Group's 2007 Memorial Service to be held on the Plaza at the World War II memorial in Washington, DC. Invitations will be extended to several of our nation's civic and military leaders.

Reunion Chairman Eddie Deerfield will work with staff of the Armed Forces Reunion organization to assure a varied and enjoyable program of tours and events. Costs to our 303rd veterans, their family members and friends will be kept to a minimum and partially subsidized from funds remaining in the Association's treasury.

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303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Hell's Angels Newsletter

Editor--Eddie Deerfield

Vol. 31, No. 1 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684 February 2007

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.

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**For a visit to the highly rated Website of the
303rd Bomb Group (H) Association
please go online at: www.303rdBGA.com**

Planning a trip to RAF Molesworth?

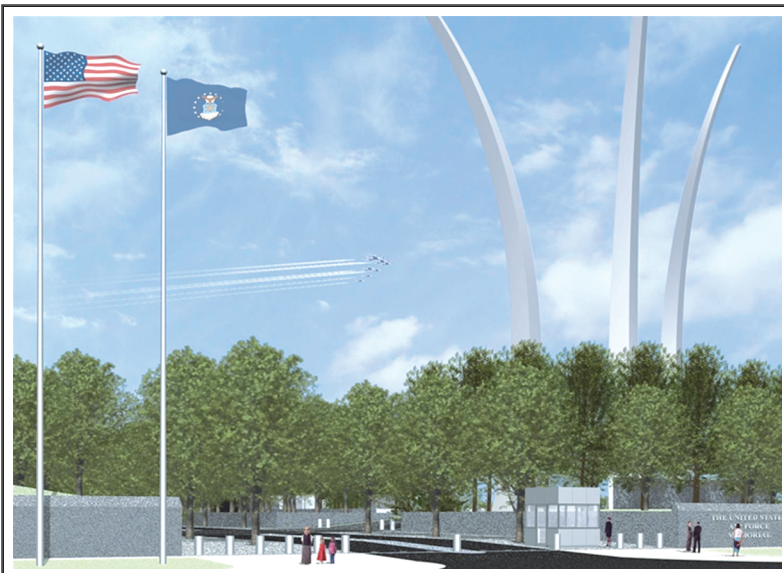
Persons planning to visit the base should contact UK Representative Robin Beeby and advise him of travel plans. Mr. Beeby will make the appropriate contacts and arrange a visit to RAF Molesworth if the base security situation permits.

CHAPLAIN -- CATHOLIC

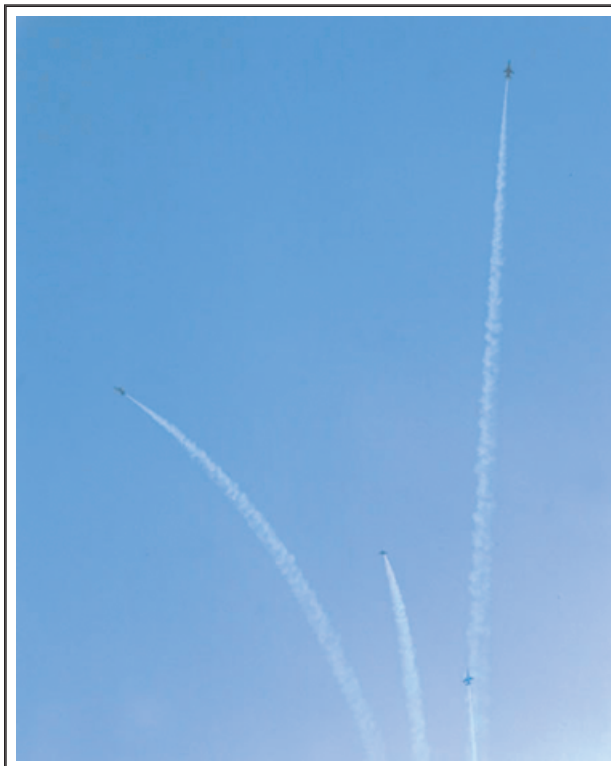
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AS THE THREE STAINLESS STEEL SPIRES SOAR SKYWARD, the new United States Air Force Memorial in Washington, DC evokes flight, the flying spirit and the core values of America's Air Force—integrity, service before self, and excellence. The design of the spires is reminiscent of the famed precision "bomb burst" maneuver performed by the USAF'S Thunderbird Demonstration Team.



NEW USAF MEMORIAL COMMEMORATES SIXTY YEARS OF AIR AND SPACE POWER

The dedication of the U.S. Air Force Memorial in Arlington, Virginia on October 14 last year inaugurated the service's 60th Anniversary Commemoration, "From Heritage to Horizons -- Sixty Years of Air and Space Power."

The Memorial, composed of three bold and graceful spires soaring skyward to a height of 270 feet, was dedicated and given to the nation by the Air Force Memorial Foundation at an official ceremony on the three-acre promontory adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery and a short walk from the Pentagon.

It honors the millions of men and women who have served in the U.S. Air Force and its predecessor organizations—the Army Air Corps and the Army Air Forces—as well as the U.S. Signal Corps. It pays tribute to the dedication, sacrifice and contributions of those who pioneered the skies, those who shape the air, space and cyberspace victories of today, and those who will continue to do so in the future.

There's a paved "Runway to Glory" at the site entrance, a larger-than-life bronze Honor Guard statue, two granite inscription walls located at either end of a central lawn and a glass contemplation wall that reflects the missing man formation, the final tribute given to fallen airmen. The Memorial's surrounding spaces are being landscaped to create a memorial park and parade ground overlooking the nation's capital.

The official dedication party included former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of the Air Force

Michael W. Wynne, Air Force Chief of Staff T. Michael Moseley and Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force Rodney J. McKinley, as well as H. Ross Perot, Jr., chairman of the Air Force Memorial Foundation.

The ceremony included an aerial review of aircraft from the 1930s through modern day, from the B-17 and B-24 of World War II fame to the B-2 Spirit and C-17 Globemaster of the global war on terror, as well as a five-ship "Heritage Flight" featuring the P-51 Mustang, F-86 Sabre, F-4 Phantom, F-15C Eagle and F-22A Raptor. The U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds also performed a flyover and "bomb-burst" maneuver reflecting the design of the Memorial's three spires.

The Air Force hosted an Open House in Pentagon South Parking featuring performances by the U.S. Air Force Drill Team and the U.S. Air Force Band high-energy "Max Impact" ensemble, a "Heritage Parade of Uniforms," a concert by country singer Lee Ann Womack and a wide variety of interactive displays and exhibits showcasing America's Airmen, Air Force equipment, technology and aircraft.

Static aircraft displays included the Predator and Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicles; UH-1, HH-60, MH-53 helicopters; CV-22 tilt rotor aircraft, and an F-35 Joint Strike Fighter display model.

The weekend concluded with a service on the site of the USAF Memorial on the morning of October 15, with a wreath-laying ceremony punctuated by a missing-man formation flown by F-16s.



THE PATIO ROOM AT THE MENDER HOTEL in San Antonio enjoyed an unusual "dress-up" for 303rd Bomb Group veterans and their guests dropping in for refreshments in the reunion Hospitality Centre. The walls were lined with photographs taken of Group personnel at Molesworth during World War II. The exhibit was prepared and installed by students participating in the East Anglia Air War Project at Abilene (Texas) Christian University.

East Anglia Air War Project Enters Final Phase

WORLD WAR TWO SHAPED "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" BETWEEN BRITISH PEOPLE AND AMERICAN AIRMEN

By Dr. Vernon L. Williams
Professor of History
Abilene Christian University

As a military historian based in the academic world, I have spent many years researching and writing on military topics about our American past. In 2003 I embarked on a new research venture I decided to call the East Anglia Air War Project (EAAWP), and it just may take me the rest of my career to complete.

In working on the history of the men and women of the Eighth Air Force and those British families who lived nearby, I have traveled across the United States and throughout England

searching for an understanding of the events that took place in those pleasant East Anglia meadowlands and the impact the war had on people during those desperate years. Students continue to be an important part of the East Anglia Air War Project as they come face to face with the history makers of the war years.

I recently attended the 303rd Bomb Group's reunion in San Antonio where I set up a special 303rd BG photographic exhibit in the hospitality room at the Menger Hotel. Created from photographs in the East Anglia Air War Archives, the

thirty exhibit panels included a variety of historic Hell's Angels photographs found in the National Archives and personal collections. Luke Truxal, a sophomore research intern with our Project worked many hours to construct the display for the 303rd BG Association.

In training our students for history and teaching careers, we include students in the real work of preserving the history of World War II. Working on the 303rd reunion project gave Luke and other students valuable training in the history of WWII and a clearer understanding of what

was at stake and the value of the victory won those many years ago.

I began my work on the air war in East Anglia determined to produce a collection of oral history interviews, documents, photographs, and documentary films that taken all together, would support a number of books I will write on the military and social history of the war fought from air bases in England. I have completed three years of interviewing in the United States and England and 2007 begins the final phase of interviews as I organize the materials collected so far.

I anticipate that I will



LUKE TRUXAL, A SOPHOMORE RESEARCH INTERN with the project, helped construct and set up the display at the 303rd BG reunion.



THERE WAS RARELY A MOMENT when one or more 303rd veterans or family members were not viewing the photo exhibit. Veterans often found their own images frozen in a time long gone.

begin writing the first book based on this research during the fall of 2007. Interviews will continue through 2008 at which time I will close the research phase and turn exclusively to writing a series of books drawn from the East Anglia research. It is a dramatic story to be told, filled with human drama and ordinary life within the context of war.

Early in the war the United States established large numbers of air bases in East Anglia to support daylight bombing against the Axis powers in Europe. Throughout the region, small communities made way for the construction of large-scale airdromes. Farm land turned into a landscape of concrete, Nissan huts, and the implements of war as American bomber and fighter groups built significant infrastructure for operations against Nazi-held targets deep inside Europe.

The sudden appearance of the Eighth Air Force in rural England, the rapid growth of the number of bases over a short time frame, and the resulting daily struggle for life and death over the skies of England and the continent forged a unique sense of community in these British villages and towns. American airmen (both air crews and ground personnel) and their British hosts shared common goals and with the daily demonstration of sacrifice by the young Americans for Mother England and the Free World, the war shaped a special relationship between the embattled British people and their distant American cousins from over the pond.

My interviews and research have revealed a rich and important story about people. From the beginning of this project in 2003, Gary Moncur has supported and encouraged 303rd veterans and their families to par-

ticipate in our preservation work. Gary is the principle reason why the 303rd Bomb Group will have a significant place in the histories that are written in the next few years.

Important 303rd historical materials have been added to the EAAWP Archives and I hope that during next year and at the final Association reunion in Washington, D.C., many of you will plan to sign up for an oral history interview or fill out a questionnaire about your experiences during WWII. The EAAWP website (www.acu.edu/anglia) has copies of questionnaires for air crews, ground personnel, British adults, and British children during the war. These questionnaires can be downloaded and printed out on your printer or you can call or write for a hard copy to be sent to you. You can also view the Menger Hotel Photographic Exhibit at the website by scrolling down the home page and se-

lecting the 303rd BG Scrapbook.

I have produced a number of documentary films that are now available, the most recent is a film about the 303rd, titled: "Hell's Angels and the Battle for Europe." These films are important teaching tools for schools and families and they help support the East Anglia work. Proceeds from the sale of these films help fund new interview trips and the processing of the EAAWP Archives.

Log onto the Old Segundo Productions website to find out what films are currently available (<http://www.oldsegundo.com/videos.shtml>). The EAAWP is non-profit and donations to support the preservation work we do is tax-deductible.

Contact: Dr. Vernon L. Williams, Box 28130, Department of History, Abilene Christian University, Abilene, TX 79699-8130. Telephone: (325) 674-2150. Email: vwilliams@acu.edu

MAX BARTHOLOMEW, A CO-PILOT IN THE 427TH SQUADRON, BECAME A PRISONER OF WAR ON THE DRESDEN MISSION 17 APRIL 1945.

In a German hospital he met another patient, Ed Grove of the 6th Armored Division. He credits Grove with keeping him alive until they were freed by the Russian advance.

More than 61 years later, Max (on the right in the photo) drove from his home in Algona, Iowa to visit Ed in Winchester, Virginia, their first meeting since the war. The get-together was made possible by Max's teenage grandson who conducted an Internet search to locate the POW buddy.

In the May 1997 issue of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter*, Max told the story of the Dresden mission and how their B-17 *Sack Time* was downed by flak, forcing the crew to bail out. In the article below, he continues the story.



303rd POW Says 6th Armored Division POW "Probably Saved My Butt" in 1945

By Max R. Bartholomew

My left foot lay on the ground pointing left and my right foot pointed right with blood seeping through my flying suit and I knew both legs were broken. The Germans brought what looked like a horse drawn manure wagon, which I found out later was an ammunition carrier. I wanted them to splint my legs before they picked me up, but couldn't make my wishes known. They hauled me about two blocks to an encampment in the woods.

Here, a lieutenant in the regular German Army questioned me. I told him my name, rank and serial number. He wondered what we were bombing and I told him a railroad bridge. About this time a captain came up and uttered a sentence that I thought meant, "off with his head." The lieutenant translated that the captain couldn't understand how a man with a good German name like Bartholomew could bomb German cities. I always thought I was English from watching Freddie Bartholomew in the movies.

I was hauled to Freiberg in Saxony in the same wagon to a German Army Hospital and put in a small room off a ward on the 5th floor. They carefully took off my clothes. I still had on the sheep lined boots we wore over the heated felt slippers. About this time, they brought in a 1st Lt. Edward Grove from the 6th Armored Division. He probably saved my butt.

Ed and his driver had been ferrying a jeep load of

champagne between two spearheads of the 6th Armored Division and had not cut back far enough when the Germans lobbed a grenade into the jeep which lit on the far side of the driver, killing him. Ed had several fragments from the grenade in his left side.

I think Ed and I had seen the same training film where the Germans put a "ringer" in with POW's to extract information. Ed had a sack of sulfathiazole and, "ringer" or not, he gave me some of it for my wounds and continued to do so until I got back into American hands. I reciprocated by picking grenade fragments from his side as they surfaced on the skin.

When I was in primary flight training in Oxnard, California, the 6th Armored was having swimming lessons at Santa Barbara. We used to go there on our days off and some of us were at a local watering hole and made friends with liaison pilots from the 6th Armored. They had a supper club on floats and they wanted to see how good the Army was at teaching us how to fly. I had learned to fly in a Piper Cub back home, so I got elected to be first.

A Major Milligram was the liaison pilot. He was a small man supporting a handle bar mustache with three curls. I got along fine during the ride and set up the landing quite a ways out (first and only flight with floats) when he opened up the throttle and told me it would take forever to taxi in.

I was talking to Ed about this event and he wanted

to know what was unusual about the Major. I told him I supposed it was the handle bar mustache and we came to the conclusion we were both Americans, and not "ringers."

The Germans put me under with ether to set my legs and I came out of it in the hallway lying on the floor and throwing up. I was all by myself with an air raid going on. P-51s were strafing a railroad yard about two blocks away.

Some of the foreign patients would come in and talk to us in broken English. One from Czechoslovakia would bring in a chess board and we would play chess. I found out over there you don't sneak in and get their queen without saying, "check'." I had a terrible time convincing him we didn't do the "check" thing in America.

We were treated as well as the German soldier patients. They had next to nothing left. They didn't have plaster of Paris to make casts, so they used paper mache.

One day, laying in bed, I heard funny noises. My Czech chess player friend came in and said the Russians were coming and handed me a 9-mm pistol, less ammunition, which I stuffed in a flying boot. Ed took off to see what he could find out. I could hear artillery shells going over. About this time, Ed came back and said almost everybody was gone. I told him I didn't care for the shelling, and he said not to worry until I saw him hit the floor—which he promptly did.

Ed said the 5th floor was no place to be and went looking for help. He came back with a stretcher and put me on it, letting the foot end drag on the floor and bounce as he pulled me down the steps. We were down to the ground floor when we ran into the Dutch intern who had been taking care of us. He said he had found an ambulance and a driver to take us to the American line. But, our driver didn't know what to do with two American officers so he stopped at a French POW camp near Olbenbaugh.

In addition to the Frenchmen, the camp had a plentiful supply of "cooties" which got into my paper mache casts. Ed had a fit when he saw me scratching with a stick and tearing pieces off the top of my cast. Since the Russians had come to town, he went off in search of better quarters. He came back with a doctor who had once been the physician on the German luxury liner, The Bremen.

The doctor now had an obstetrics hospital and he and Ed moved me in with the pregnant women and babies. The doctor and his wife came into the room that night and visited with us. The lights were out because the Russians shot out any lights they saw. He talked about being a doctor on a liner and how tough the war had been for them. He made the observation that it would be nice to be on the winning side once.

The next day, Ed found a Russian officer who spoke English and knew where the American lines were. The Russian gave Ed a "liberated" bike. Ed came back to the hospital and told me he was going to the



DOWNED ON THE DRESDEN MISSION OF 17 APRIL 1945.
Front row, l-to-r, Co-pilot Max Bartholomew, Pilot Blaine Thomas, Bombardier Roger Lee, Navigator Walter Lacy.
Back row, Radio Operator Walter Smith, Engineer Harry Haynes, Tail Gunner Melvin Carlson, Waist Gunner Edward Eschinger, Ball Turret Gunner Louis Contreras. Carlson and Eschinger were killed in action. Lee and Lacy didn't fly the mission. The others became prisoners of war.

American lines, that he would be back for me and not to worry.

A Frenchman I met at the hospital had liberated some strawberry liquor. I don't know what proof it was, but it didn't take too much to make the time pass very fast. The Frenchman knew very little English and I knew even less French.

On the third day, Ed was back with a couple of ambulances and several other vehicles. There were too many Frenchmen to take with us, so they were informed that trucks would be back for them. We looked for other Americans, cameras and guns, and picked up two English flyers walking to the American lines. Ed had a little trouble getting permission to come back for me, but he finally found a Lieutenant Colonel who pulled strings and got permission from the Russians to make the trip.

They left me at a base hospital where they deloused me with DOT. The next day, a C-47 hospital plane flew a load of us to a Paris hospital. I was back on the fifth floor, only this time about two blocks from Pig Alley. One of the fellows in the ward had an old time ship captain's spy glass, and we would take our wheelchairs out on the balcony to pass the telescope around and watch.

They tried twice to set my legs by manipulation in Paris, and then flew me back to Shiek General Hospital in Clinton, Iowa for final treatment.



ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY—Ever since 1992, Worcester Wreath Company of Harrington, Maine, has donated thousands of wreaths each year to honor the dead at the nation's cemetery. Merrill Worcester, owner of the company, accompanies groups of school children from Maine to Arlington, Virginia, to help place the wreaths at grave stones. He was a 12-year-old school boy, himself, when he first visited the site.

“This is the least we can do....” **UNIQUE TRIBUTE TO NATION’S HEROES**

From a story in the Washington Post

Every year for more than a decade, at the height of the season, Morrill Worcester would pack up a truckload of his Christmas wreaths and head down from Maine to Arlington National Cemetery. Without fanfare, he and a dozen or so volunteers would lay red-bowed wreaths on a few thousand headstones of fallen Americans.

There was no publicity. No crowds gathered. The gesture was one man's private duty, born of a trip to Washington he won as a 12-year-old paperboy. Of all the monuments and memorials he saw, it was the visit to Arlington that stuck with the boy—the majesty and mystery, the sadness and the pride, the sight of all those neat rows of gov-

ernment-issue, white headstones.

Years later, after he had started his Christmas products business, at the crunch point of one season Worcester asked some men who were building his new factory to locate some wreaths and buy them for him. They went a bit overboard. When Worcester heard that he was now the proud owner of 4,000 wreaths that couldn't possibly be sold by Christmas, he called a friend who owned a trucking company, he contacted his senator in Washington and, two weeks before Christmas 1992, Worcester was at Arlington laying wreaths.

It seemed like the right thing to do. So, each year, he continued the ritual, honoring those who died so that he and other Americans might live as they saw fit.

Every year, the superintendent of the cemetery assigns the wreath brigade to a different part of the grounds. This time, [in addition to school children from Maine] there were hundreds of people to lay the wreaths on December 14.

Worcester, who never served in the military, said the wreath laying is his personal statement. “This is the least we can do.” He

has always returned the checks that people send him.

Worcester makes certain to reserve a few wreaths for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the John and Robert Kennedy grave sites, the memorial to the USS Maine and the resting place of Senator Edward Muskie of Maine.

“It's just my way to say thank you,” he said. “I've got a lot to be thankful for.”



MILITARY BURIAL REQUIREMENTS AT ARLINGTON DIFFER FROM THOSE AT NATIONAL CEMETERIES

By Dean Moline

Director, Sacramento Valley VA National Cemetery

The main difference is whether a veteran is eligible for a ground burial. At a National Cemetery run by the National Cemetery Administration any former member of the Armed Forces who served on active duty (other than for training) will be eligible for a ground burial. At Arlington, you have to meet special criteria.

The persons specified below are eligible for ground burial in Arlington National Cemetery. The last period of active duty of former members of the Armed Forces must have ended honorably. Interment may be casketed or cremated remains.

A. Any active duty member of the Armed Forces (except those members serving on active duty for training only).

B. Any veteran who is retired from active military service with the Armed Forces.

C. Any veteran who is retired from the Reserves is eligible upon reaching age 60 and drawing retired pay; and who served a period of active duty (other than for training).

D. Any former member of the Armed Forces separated honorably prior to October 1, 1949 for medical reasons and who was rated at 30% or greater disabled effective on the day of discharge.

E. Any former member of the Armed Forces who has been awarded one of the following decorations:

1. Medal of Honor
2. Distinguished Service Cross (Navy Cross or Air Force Cross)
3. Distinguished Service Medal
4. Silver Star
5. Purple Heart

F. Any former prisoner of war who, while a prisoner of war, served honorably in the active military, naval, or air service, whose last period of military, naval or air service terminated honorably and who died on or after November 30, 1993.

G. The spouse, widow or widower, minor child, or permanently dependent child, and certain unmarried adult children of any of the above eligible veterans.

H. The widow or widower of:

1. a member of the Armed Forces who was lost or buried at sea or officially determined to be missing in action.
2. a member of the Armed Forces who is interred in a US military cemetery overseas that is maintained by the American Battle Monuments Commission.
3. a member of the Armed Forces who is interred in Arlington National Cemetery as part of a group burial.

I. The surviving spouse, minor child, or permanently dependent child of any person already buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

J.. The parents of a minor child, or permanently dependent child whose remains, based on the eligibility of a parent, are already buried in ANC. A spouse divorced from the primary eligible, or widowed and remarried, is not eligible for interment.

K. Provided certain conditions are met, a former member of the Armed Forces may be buried in the same grave with a close relative who is already buried and is the primary eligible.

From The President

Our Past President Dick Bowler suffered a severe stroke in April of 2005. He has been in a Care Center near his home where his wife, Cathy, visits him daily. On good days, Cathy says he speaks about the 303rd and his friends in the Group. Unfortunately, the good days are fewer, and things don't look too promising.

When I spoke with Cathy just before Thanksgiving, Dick had been taken to the hospital where they could deal with a serious heart problem that has developed. It is not good news and it will only add to his failing condition. Keep Dick and Cathy in your thoughts and prayers, along with Harry and Barbara Gobrecht, as Harry is fighting a serious health problem of his own.

For some good news: Frank W. Bartlett, a member of Joe Trojan's aircrew, contacted me for help getting his Purple Heart. All his records had apparently been destroyed in the fire that took place in the St. Louis, Missouri Military Records Center.

After Jay Trojan was made aware of the problem, he enlisted Senator John Cornyn's help and I now can report all the records of that mission have been re-constructed from the Mission Reports and sent through the Veterans Affairs to the proper channels at Randolph AFB. Frank's Purple Heart should be presented in the very near future.

Plans are underway for our final reunion in the Washington DC area. The National Park Service has granted our request to hold our last Memorial Service on the Plaza of the World War II Memorial, on the morning of Saturday, Sept. 22, 2007. Chairs and a sound system with two podiums have been reserved. We have our request in for a Military Color Guard and Band, however final approval from the Military cannot be expected quite so far in advance.

By now you should all have received a letter from the Membership Chair about updating our mailing list and about the third collection of newsletters being published. The Board of Directors voted to publish "*Hell's Angels Newsletter: The Final Six Years*", and send it as a gift to the living veterans who are on our active mailing list on the date of publication, and requested it.

Friends and Family Members were, or will be, given the chance to pledge to purchase copies of the book. We will only print enough copies to fill the requests and advance orders. In addition, we will print enough to complete the collections of the 40 libraries which were gifted with the Silver Anniversary volumes.

In the May issue of our Newsletter, I will be addressing the disbursement of our remaining assets, should there be any.

William (Bill) Cox



BOB COGSWELL WAS A CIGAR SMOKER. The officers on his 360th Squadron crew favored pipes. He survived a crash in the North Sea on 30 July 1943 and was injured in bailing out of a disintegrating B-17 on 26 September 1943. He didn't fly combat again until the Korean War. His B-29 was attacked by MIG fighters and crashed in the Yellow Sea in October 1951. He was killed in action.

NAVIGATOR ED COBB (sitting next to Cogswell) was injured in the ditching, but not hurt during the bail-out. Cobb was flying with a new crew when his plane went down on the Ludwigshafen mission 30 December 1943 and he became a prisoner of war.

BOMBARDIER DWIGHT KENNEDY (sitting behind Cogswell) was medically grounded by a fall from a bicycle after 16 missions.

CO-PILOT H. ROBERT DE WALL (behind Cobb) didn't fly the ditching or bail-out missions. He was promoted to pilot, given a new crew and completed a 30 mission tour.

THE COGSWELL LETTERS — Rare Look Into the Emotions of a B-17 Combat Pilot

(Following are excerpts from letters written by Robert Whitney Cogswell, 360th Squadron pilot, to his family in the last six months of 1943. They were given to the editor, who flew on the Cogswell crew, by Rob and Claudia Richardson and their son, Tyler. Bob Cogswell was Mr. Richardson's uncle.)

JULY, 1943

>>> Having heard from mother—3 letters, all in one day—I feel, once again, at peace with the world. There is one thing my family has done exceptionally well while I've been in the service of my country. They have backed me up beautifully. You folks have always been "there." I shall never forget it.

>>> The big news, so far as I'm concerned, is that I've taken my crew into action with good results. I cannot give any of the details, of course, but you may, at least, know now that my crew is performing admirably. My Flying Fortress is named *Iza Available*. Poor *Iza* has already picked up a couple of holes, on my last trip.

>>> I've been on several raids now. My crew has been marvelous. Never once have I had trouble with them. It is just exactly as I have wanted my crew to react. My new co-pilot (Paul Tippet) works with me smoothly and efficiently. The Operations Officer felt that Bob De Wall was not ready, so he is receiving additional training. I have a new radio operator (Eddie Deerfield), from Chicago. He is, at present, as good a man as I have on my crew. He has a good head on his shoulders, and knows how to use it, plus plenty of initiative. You just have to know how to bring it out of him.

>>> Our crew has received numerous compliments. Two days in a row we came back with more gas than anyone in the Group, which proves that we are treating our

equipment with the proper care. If I overwork the engines, my steed may fail me in time of need.

>>> Please send me a box of Bering cigars. Churchill and I have that in common. We both like good cigars.

AUGUST, 1943

>>> I guess it won't be violating military censorship to let you know that I went down in the drink last week. Yes, the water was fine; practically tepid. I brought my entire crew out of it, though, so everything is fine and dandy. It was a real adventure—hell while I was going through it, but quite interesting in a way. At any rate, I fooled hell out of "Jerry." Once again, the crew functioned beautifully. Never once was there any excitement or panic, though all of them must have known that something was wrong from my conversations over interphone with the co-pilot

.... For some strange reason, I had faith that everything would turn out all right. It is this faith for which I am thankful. During some of the hottest moments, I can remain calm and collected, looking about quite objectively at the battle that is going on. Supplementing this faith is the realization that I am fighting for the right side, the right things, the right ideals, and as long as I retain this there will never be fear.

>>> When I come to the moment when I must balance the ledger, I will look back over the career of R. W. Cogswell very much alone. I, alone, can judge whether the good deeds outweigh the bad, whether I have made the most of the life that God bestowed upon me. It is sometimes simple to fool others, but to fool oneself is sheer folly.

>>> Tomorrow, we, the crew, go on pass for the first time since we have been with the squadron....I think our work



BOB COGSWELL'S NEPHEW IS ROB RICHARDSON, SEEN HERE WITH HIS WIFE, CLAUDIA. It was their son, Tyler, the 303rd Bomb Group pilot's great-nephew, who made the first contact with the Hell's Angels Newsletter. He has the crew picture on his computer screen. After exchanges of correspondence with the editor, who flew as radio operator on the Cogswell crew, the Richardsons contacted other relatives and gathered the letters which are excerpted in this article.

would be better if we were allowed out more. It is a devilish sort of thing to wait a month and a half for a pass.

SEPTEMBER, 1943

>>> I was called into the Adjutant's office yesterday. It seems that I am to get an Oak Leaf Cluster for my Distinguished Flying Cross for my work on the Watten raid. That was the one where *Iza Vailable* was hit over the target, had controls shot out of number 1 and 2 engines, a fire in the number 2 engine, and then the number 3 engine shot out. We came back on one engine, plus about 150 holes in the plane....I felt very fortunate indeed to be able to limp into an RAF base just over the English coast with my crew safe.

>>> We just discovered that flak had knocked the fuse off of one of the 2,000 pound bombs that we carried, coming a fraction of an inch from the detonator. I'm glad I didn't know this at the time. I might have fainted.

>>> Some men on my crew have been grounded (Alvin Etheredge, Harold Timm and Augustus Brundage.) Still with me are Dwight Kennedy, Ed Cobb, Bob De Wall, Gil Bengston, Paul Davis and Eddie Deerfield. To tell the truth, my nerves are far from healthy....They tell me here at the base (Molesworth) that I've had my share of trouble now and shouldn't have any more.

>>> I'm afraid that we've had another shaky deal. Once again I was able to save everyone on my crew, but the *Lady Luck* will be hauled away in a bushel basket. On my way to enemy territory, I lost an engine, which isn't unusual, but complications set in. The engine set up such a vibration that structural failure was started in the wing. I told the crew to bail out, and went on by myself to find an airdrome at which to set her down. The bombs were still on board. I couldn't jettison them because I was over England. I also knew the wing was liable to leave any time

.... *Lady Luck* almost made it, but at about 2,000 feet the engine cowling went and the wing tip started to curl up. I couldn't find an open area and thought I'd have to ride it in to avoid loss of life and property. But, almost by miracle, the open area appeared. I was almost too low to

jump by this time, but tried it anyway. The plane exploded so near that I could feel the heat of the blast in my face. No one was killed or injured, so once again I thank God for divine assistance

.... Dwight Kennedy was not with me on that flight (only Cobb, Bengston, Deerfield and Davis from my original crew.) The crew was swell. When I saw them, I asked if they still wanted to fly with me. They all laughed and said they certainly would, that I've always brought them back and what more could they ask

.... Well, now I've ditched, crash-landed and parachuted. What more is there to do?

NOVEMBER, 1943

>>> I picked up all the mail which has been stacking up during my three weeks in the hospital. My crew has been more or less broken up. De Wall was only with me on a couple of our shaky deals, and is flying with another crew. Dwight Kennedy fell off his bicycle, injuring his head, and may be grounded. Bengston, Deerfield and Davis are sitting around, waiting to see what I'll do. I, myself, would like to go back and finish my missions. That, however, is for a Medical Board to decide.

DECEMBER, 1943

>>> I'm in North Ireland, associated with a Replacement & Training Center. My back is lame (from the bail-out), my weight is down and my health is not what it used to be. I've been offered a trip home, and refused. I've heard many people saying "You've done your share." I can't figure out what "my share" is. A lot of our boys have done their share, but they're not going home—ever.

(EDITOR'S NOTE— Major Robert W. Cogswell's B-29, on a bombing mission against a North Korean airfield on 23 October 1951, was attacked by enemy MIG fighter planes and crashed in the Yellow Sea. He was listed as missing in action. On 28 February 1954, the US Air Force officially declared the former 303rd Bomb Group pilot killed in action. His body was never recovered.)



END OF A LEGEND—The venerable *Buzz Blonde*, flying its 100th mission, came to a bitter end at an Allied fighter aircraft base in Luxembourg after colliding with another 303rd B-17 soon after the bomb run on a German airfield at Bonn.

Navigator Ed Gardner and Bombardier Bill Dohm bailed out at high altitude when the tail of the other B-17, *Iza Vailable III*, shattered the nose of *Buzz Blonde*. The two men became POW's. Pilot Grafton Smith and Co-pilot Mel Alderman's crash landing in Luxembourg saved the rest of the crew.

THE DAY BOYS BECAME MEN

10 January 1945 – Mission to Bonn

By Al Dussliere

427th Squadron Waist/Tail Gunner

Of our original G. N. Smith crew of nine, one was killed in action, two were taken prisoner of war and two others suffered combat wounds which were serious enough to return them to the states to recover. I was one of the lucky ones.

In the early morning hours of January 10, 1945 we were awakened with the cheery message, "You're flying today." At briefing we learned that this would be the 303rd Bomb Group's 300th combat mission making us the first Bomb Group to fly that number of missions. We felt great pride in being part of this history-making event.

The primary target was an airfield at Bonn/Hangelar, Germany. After briefing, some of us made our way to the Chaplain for a few minutes of prayer. We were assigned to fly A/C 42-39875, *Buzz Blonde*, our favorite. We loved that plane and more so the ground crew who kept her in great condition all the time. They advised us that this would be the 100th mission for *Buzz Blonde*. We were a little more nervous than usual because this would be our 13th mission, 100 for *Buzz Blonde* and 300 for the group.

The mission was uneventful until we reached the IP. Here and in the target area there were middle clouds at 16,000 feet, and thin cirrus clouds with dense persistent contrails. The conditions made formation flying and bombing difficult. It was necessary to make three runs over the target because of various reasons. On the third pass, the flak guns zeroed in on the squadron quite well. We took some minor hits.

Very shortly after "bombs away" the squadron started a strong left turn, which turned us into a blinding low angle sun. At full power and almost in the contrails of our element lead we began moving to our left and up to our left wing position on the high element lead. The bombardier, Bill Dohm, leaned over to observe the bombs hit. Instead of bombs falling he saw another B-17 directly below our Plexiglas nose. He grabbed the "mike" button and called out for the pilot to pull up. Knowing this B-17 would be coming through our nose he jumped up and headed for the catwalk pulling off his oxygen mask and intercom con-

nection. When he reached the navigator, Ed Gardner, he yelled, "Get out of here, get out of here."

The next thing he recalled was lying on his back with his head toward the tail and looking up into the cockpit. There were some ammo belts on his legs and the navigator by his feet. The terrific blast of air coming from the opening at the front of the plane where the nose cone should be was so strong he could hardly move. His helmet and oxygen mask were gone as well as his right glove. He attempted to get the attention of someone in the cockpit for a "walk around" bottle of oxygen. He guessed they were too busy attempting to get control of the aircraft because they did not get it. Both he and the navigator, Ed Gardner, were right next to the escape hatch. He yelled at the navigator to bail out. Ed released the door but did not bail out because he was unconscious from a lack of oxygen. Out of necessity Bill pushed Ed through the hatch. This permitted him to leave the plane also. Bill couldn't move so he stuck much of his upper body out of the hatch hoping the blast of wind would suck him out. This must have worked because he did not remember leaving the aircraft.

Navigator Ed Gardner saw the bombardier jump from his place in the nose, tear off all his connections and dive through the opening in the catwalk. The navigator looked to the nose and saw a black shadow, which was the vertical tail of a B-17. He got out of his seat as a collision occurred which smashed the entire nose section away. Spread-eagled against the bulkhead he thought he would be crushed. But at that moment we broke away from the other plane and he was able to get back to the catwalk aided by the terrible force of the bitterly cold wind.

The navigator had disconnected his heated suit, intercom, and oxygen but lost his helmet and gloves. He reached up and beat on the engineer's legs for assistance. There was no response. The bombardier made motions to release the hatch door and bail out. It was then that the navigator realized that his chute was still in the nose. Reaching into the right hand corner by the bulkhead, he found the chute. He hooked it on the left side of the harness but could not attach the right side. Once more he tried to attract the engineer, but to no avail. He could



SUCH ARE THE FORTUNES OF WAR—Within a few months after *Buzz Blonde* crashed, the bomber became a favorite playground for neighborhood children. Berthe, the girl standing in front on the wing, is now married to Constant Goergen, President of The Luxembourg Society, an organization which honors America's World War II dead laid to rest overseas.

see the pilot and co-pilot, Melvin Alderman, intently trying to fly old *Buzz Blonde* and slid back into the catwalk and released the hatch door. He moved toward the escape hatch as everything went black.

Ray Miller, the ball turret gunner, called out over the intercom. "Someone just bailed out, someone else bailed out. What the hell's going on up there?" Smitty, our pilot, told him to get out of the ball. In record time he did.

The collision banked us to the left toward the aircraft of our low element. Pulling back on the wheel we went over them into the clear beyond. Trying to bank back right to stay with our squadron we found the ailerons were jammed in fixed position, luckily neutral. It was necessary to use the rudder for turning. It was effective but slow. We were to the left of the squadron but going in the same direction.

The crewmembers behind the bomb bay felt a violent jolt and heard an extremely loud noise. We thought we had been hit by a direct burst of flak. I was thrown forward but able to maintain my balance. Looking out the right waist window I could not see any of the other planes in the formation and could feel that we were pulling away to the left. The radio operator, George Parker, appeared to be OK. Mel Howell, the tail gunner, seemed to be alert and manning his guns. The wing was battered and bent and the horizontal stabilizer was a tangled mess but we were still flying.

Smitty looked down between the pilot and co-pilot seats and saw the bombardier lying on his back without helmet or oxygen mask. Fighting to gain control of the plane, there was nothing anyone on the flight deck could do to help him. A little later he was gone. About this time the pilot realized a flap of fuselage was bent back and lying against the lower half of the windshield and realized Number 3 engine was shaking like hell forcing him to feather the prop. Looking to the right he noticed the right wing was bent in two pieces, drooping down like a wounded bird. This was the reason for the aileron jamming. About three inches were gone from the tips of Number 3 prop.

Massengill, the engineer, was sent back to the waist to get out of the wind and inform the rest of the crew that we were going to descend to a lower altitude where it would be warmer. We couldn't keep up with the rest of the squadron.

After being pushed out of the plane the navigator said his next conscious memory was of hearing popping sounds. He opened his eyes to a grey quiet world in the clouds. He was somewhere over Germany falling freely. The popping was in his ears. His hands were frozen making it impossible to hook his chute on the right side. He debated as to when to pull the ripcord but decided that he must see the ground first. Finally he broke out of the clouds; the earth appeared to be far away. He decided it was time to try pulling the ripcord, which took many attempts because he could not use his hand. The parachute opened well, but he was left dangling by one set of ropes. He was over open country and thought possibly he could evade capture. Suddenly he heard the sound of bullets zinging by, then heard the sound of gunfire. He oscillated the parachute wildly as he came down into a snowdrift on a hillside. When he dug out of the snow there were many irate German citizens with rifles pointed at him. Luckily, several Luftwaffe personnel drove up in a German version of a jeep, ran over to him, helped him carry his chute and assisted him into the jeep. Ed Gardner was now a POW.

When the bombardier regained consciousness he didn't know where he was or what was happening because he was falling with his back facing the ground and he was looking up into the sky. He looked over his shoulder and returned to reality when he saw the ground coming up. He estimated he was at about 10,000 feet and he thought it time to open his chute. It was a good thing because when he tried to grasp the ripcord he could not bend his fingers. His right hand was frozen. With his right hand out of commission, he grabbed the ripcord with his left hand and pulled like "hell". The "Man" upstairs must have helped because the chute opened and down he floated. He landed on a barn and rolled off. His "welcome committee" was right there to welcome him to his new life in Germany.

Without a navigator or maps it was decided that we should head south toward France. The tail gunner assisted in keeping the plane on course by reporting the position of the sun. Although we were not sure where we were when we reached about 6,000 feet we were given the opportunity to bail out. The pilot and co-pilot were going to stick with the plane so the rest of the crew chose to do the same. Shortly, the co-pilot, Mel Alderman, spotted a C-47 taking off from an airstrip which we assumed was one of ours. We had no radio reception at all from the time of the collision. With the condition of the plane there was no other choice but to attempt a landing.

When we turned downwind to the strip and extended the landing gear the pilot heard a clear voice in his headset say, "17, if you're going to land here, pull up your gear; this is a fighter strip. Land alongside the strip. We need to keep it going." The gear was retracted and the voice said, "Good Luck." Reducing power and setting it in the snow on its belly was a strong sense of relief. Ground personnel met us and informed us we were in Luxembourg.

Most of the nose was gone, the right wing was wrecked, the horizontal stabilizer a disaster, the ball turret was practically inside the waist of the plane with the support column pushed through the top of the fuselage and the belly smashed in from the landing. We learned months later that Gardner and Dohm were prisoners of war. Both were liberated in May 1945. Mel Alderman was killed in action in a mid-air collision on his 35th and last mission. Smith, Gardner, Dohm, Parker, Howell and I got together for the first time in Chicago in 1950. Bill Dohm passed away in 2004 and Mel Howell in 2006.

With all our experiences we can look back at that time now and realize it was the most remarkable of our lives. It was a challenge that most have not had again. Those were exciting times. It was a different time in history. We endured impossible conditions as we fought in this severe environment. We were a part of history and at times thought there was no end. Reflecting on the period we wonder if it really happened.

303rd BG POST EXCHANGE ORDER FORM **Clearance Sale!**

FEATURED ITEMS	COST EACH	QTY	TOTAL
"The Molesworth Story" 303 rd BG History on CD-ROM. 303 rd Mission reports, photos & more	\$5.00		
2005 303 rd BGA Membership Directory (available ONLY to 303 rd BGA members)	\$5.00 \$10.00		
Challenge Coins – Set of 2, double sided Designed by 303 rd BG President Bill Cox.	\$5.00 \$6.00		

DESCRIPTION ** Check your size and / or choice **	COST EACH	QTY	TOTAL
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Embroidered "8 th Air Force/303 rd BG" <input type="checkbox"/> WHITE <input type="checkbox"/> BLUE <input type="checkbox"/> SMALL <input type="checkbox"/> MEDIUM	\$15.00		
Silk screened B-17 & 303 rd Bomb Group Red <input type="checkbox"/> MED <input type="checkbox"/> LARGE	\$15.00		
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Patch – 3 inch Embroidered with Squadron insignia Check your choice & how many you want next to each patch <input type="checkbox"/> 358 #_____ <input type="checkbox"/> 359 #_____ <input type="checkbox"/> 360 #_____ <input type="checkbox"/> 427 #_____	\$1.00 \$2.00		
Patch – 3 inch Embroidered with Might in Flight, 8th AF, American Flag Check your choice & how many you want next to each patch <input type="checkbox"/> Might in Flight #_____ <input type="checkbox"/> 8 th Air Force #_____ <input type="checkbox"/> Flag #_____	\$1.00 \$2.00		
Lapel Pin - Check your choice and how many you want next to each pin <input type="checkbox"/> Might in Flight #_____ <input type="checkbox"/> 8 th Air Force #_____ <input type="checkbox"/> 360 th Squadron #_____	\$1.00 \$2.00		
Replica Wings - Check your choice and how many you want next to each wing <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot #__ <input type="checkbox"/> Navigator #__ <input type="checkbox"/> Bombardier #__ <input type="checkbox"/> Flight Engineer #__ <input type="checkbox"/> Air Crew #__	\$3.00		
Golf Ball Markers-Cloisonné-8 th AF .303 rd BG	\$1.00		
License Plate Bracket	\$1.00 \$2.00		
License Plate – metal with B17F (olive drab)	\$3.00 \$5.00		
Book – "Staying Alive" by 303 rd BG member Carl Fyler	\$22.00		
Book – "Last Raid" by 303 rd BG member Bob Hand	\$20.00		
Book – "I Flew with Hell's Angels" by Bill Albertson	\$24.00		
Book – "303 rd Bombardment Group" by Brian O'Neill	\$15.00		

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Revised 12/6/2006



303rd Bomb Group Pin-ups

ABOVE—The 427th Squadron Bomb Sight Maintenance Section. Left to right, S/Sgt. Kenneth T. Zetlmaier, S/Sgt. Jack B. Pinnell, T/Sgt. Edward A. Gonder, S/Sgt. James C. Crangle and Capt. Morris B. Sjoberg.

BELOW LEFT—Al Tomlinson, 359th Squadron aircraft engine mechanic, joins the locals in feeding pigeons on a Sunday in London's Trafalgar Square. BELOW RIGHT—Tony Sequin, 444th Air Depot NCO in charge of aircraft sheet metal repairs, gets ready to take off on his bicycle for a mission on the base.



Molesworth Diary

MEMORIES OF HAPPY TIMES

It was September 24, 1944, a beautiful fall day. All the planes at the base were on stand-down, and in the absence of Col. Stevens, Lt. Col. Lyle had planned a celebration to remember. He opened the program of the Second Anniversary in England at 1400 hours by letting us know that the only order of the day was to have a "helluva" good time. And boy did we!

The tables in all the clubs and mess halls were filled with a continuous supply of good food; from roast beef to delicious desserts and lots of beer. The tanks were loaded to capacity and it was every man for himself.

At 1930 hours the groups assembled in the main hangar for a big blow-off followed by a baseball game between the Hell's Angels Champs vs a bunch of bums from another station behind the HQ. That evening in the EM Club we got together for a dance. We sent a truck to Thrapston and Kettering to pick up some girls and invited a bunch of ladies from the RAF Base in Bedford. (That's where I met my wife, Anne ... but that's another story!) It sure was a day to remember.

The next memory is "The Pig Caper." Someone in our group stole a pig from a nearby farm. We dug a roasting pit and stuffed the pig with potatoes and carrots and anything else we could find. We slowly roasted the pig over a hot coke fire. While we were enjoying the fruits of our labor, a succulent, perfectly roasted pig, who walks into our camp but the MPs, an English Bobby and the very irate farmer. The first thing he said was "There's me bloody pig!" To pacify the farmer we all dug deep in our pockets and collected around 120 pounds. When we gave this to the farmer a big smile came over his face and he said, "Anytime you want to steal one of my pigs, go to it!" You see, if he sold that pig at market he probably would have only gotten around 25 pounds. The Bobby and the farmer left but the MPs stayed to enjoy the roast.

The last happy memory is the Christmas Parties we put on for the local children of the village. The cooks made cake and cookies and we cleaned out the PX of candy, gum and children's delights to present to them on Father Christmas Day. Someone from the base dressed up as Father Christmas and the children were in awe. We didn't forget the dad's of these children as they were given cigarettes, a short commodity in those times.

Anthony J. Sacco
359th Squadron Transportation Section

SKY WAS FILLED WITH BURNING B-17'S

The weather was clear for the mission to Frankfurt on 15 August 1944. Everything went well to the IP, but on the bomb run things started popping. Flak was intense and getting awfully close. We got many holes, but no one was wounded and no engine damage.

Seconds after we dropped our bombs, the flak suddenly stopped. We figured we were out of their range. Then, our tail gunner called out enemy fighters forming in the rear.

He said it looked like there were over a hundred of them. Our own fighters were there, but they couldn't break up the enemy attacks.

Fortresses were going down as fast as the tail gunner could call them off. The sky was filled with exploding and burning planes, both B-17's and German fighters. An enemy fighter came at our Fort from the front. I swung the chin turret to meet him, getting in a few bursts before he broke away. He didn't hit us, nor do I think I hit him, but he didn't come back.

The enemy attack was finally broken up by our own pursuit planes. Our formation got back together as best it could and, badly crippled, we headed for Molesworth.

Edward H. Thomas, Jr.
Bombardier, 360th Squadron

35 MISSIONS IN 68 DAYS IS CLAIM TO FAME

I was assigned to the 303rd Bomb Group from November 1944 to April 1945, and participated in 35 combat missions. We had many memorable though harrowing experiences, including a forced landing at Ramsgate due to engine failure. Another was when our waist gunner was wounded by flak, and I had to administer first aid. Maneuvering from the nose to the waist of the aircraft under fire was frightening to say the least. At one point our radio operator noticed that I was groggy and discovered that my oxygen supply line had become detached from my oxygen bottle. I sure was thankful that he was watching. We were also forced to land at Antwerp, Holland due to battle damage. We were walking to our hotel that evening when we were introduced to a V-2 bomb that landed 3 blocks away. Needless to say, we didn't get much sleep that night.

My only claim to fame, however, is that I completed all of my training and my 35 missions in 68 days and returned to the states when I was still 18 years of age. That's got to be some kind of a record.

John J. Nicastro, Sr.
Navigator, 358th Squadron

SHOT DOWN OVER GERMANY ON 22ND MISSION

The target on 16 February 1945 was Langendreeer. The number one engine was shot off by a direct flak hit, crashed into the left side of our fuselage just above the ball turret, and then fell away. The pilot regained control, but the other engines were dying and we had to bail out.

I landed in a tree after a delayed drop, and then swung my chute to avoid ground fire. I hid for about an hour in the woods, but then the Germans found me. I met up with five of my crew within days after being shot down. We had come down about a half-mile from the British front lines. We were still near the front lines when the British attacked. The house we were in was blown up by British artillery. We were marched out at midnight by the Germans with lugers at our necks in pitch dark all night until dawn.

Edward J. Giering
Radio Operator, 427th Squadron

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

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL STEVENS REMEMBERED

Putting Dad's picture in the Hell's Angels Newsletter never goes unnoticed. I will always remember how important the 303rd was in his life, and the tribute to Kermit Stevens you published two years ago upon his passing.

Mary Stevens Porter
Redwood Shores, CA

FLAVOR OF AIR COMBAT FOUND ON DIARY PAGES

The Hell's Angels Newsletter has meant a lot to me and my family over many years. It represents an enormous effort on the editor's part. You have our admiration and gratitude for your achievement.

My son saw "Nam" service on an aircraft carrier, and this gave new meaning to him of what World War II air combat was all about. The *Molesworth Dairy* pages have also given him a flavor of what it was like. His experience is not unique—it goes for all of us.

Abbott Smith
427th Sqdn Bombardier

HOTEL EXEC NOTES END OF WW II ASSOCIATIONS

Unfortunately, the passing of World War II veterans Associations is becoming all too common. I have always enjoyed working with the WWII vets in arranging their reunions. It is sad to see so many different groups coming to an end.

Enjoy your final reunion to its fullest! What a wonderful location to have it in—make that trumpet fanfare so loud and with such joy that it will surely leave a mark

behind so that those who shall follow will know that you were there.

Melody Sharp
Crowne Plaza Hotel

QUESTION AT REUNION MEETING "DISTURBING"

Congratulations on your back page comment in the latest edition of the 303rd BG newsletter.

I was both astonished and disturbed by the question asked of Chuck Vieira at the meeting of the Associates on the day of the General Meeting at San Antonio.

As only an Honorary Member I try not to get embroiled in any controversy and had to bite-my-tongue. I thought the question "who appointed you as chairman?" was quite out of order.

As you so rightly commented we were not exactly overwhelmed with offers from any others.

Ray Cossey
Norwich, England

SOME HAPPY TIMES AMID CHAOS OF WAR

As I was sitting home on a lazy afternoon listening to the news of the day on television I decided to turn it off and try to concentrate on happy times.

I started looking through a box of memorabilia and came across a program commemorating our second anniversary in Molesworth, England. Yes, amid the chaos of wartime there were some happy times to remember.

We worked hard both at the base and on our daily missions. Our comrades gave 100% to the tasks at hand and never faltered. These happy times helped to over-

shadow the business of war.

I know the ranks are getting thin, but if any of you would like to reminisce, give me a call in North Adams, Massachusetts at 413-663-5493.

Anthony Sacco
359th Sqdn Ordnance



303RD VET AWARDED MEDAL BY FRANCE

Last June, the French government awarded me their "Legion of Honor" at a ceremony in Topeka, Kansas. I wore my Prisoner of War wine-colored jacket and all my medals and silver wings. About 700 were present for the

ceremony.

I'm 85, and my war injuries keep me from attending the reunions. I'm the last man of my crew of eleven.

Carl Fyler
360th Sqdn Pilot

LATE HUSBAND TO BE IN 2007 CALENDAR

Just finished reading the very interesting, as usual, newsletter. Thanks for including Everett. He's going to be featured in the 2007 calendar of the 8th AF Museum for the month of May. He was wounded on a mission in May, 1943.

Helen Dasher
Saluda, South Carolina

SIX 303RD CREWMEN HONORED IN ENGLAND

On "Remembrance Sunday" services at St. Michael's Parish Church in Great Gidding last November, the names of six American airmen were read aloud. They died when their B-17 *Bam Bam* crashed on the village outskirts on June 10, 1944.

The photo below is our church memorial to the Americans and to our town's war dead.

Bruce Jordan
Great Gidding, England



SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL MINUTES OF MEETINGS AT 2006 REUNION

Meeting of Board of Directors 12 September 2006

Ed Gardner, Vice President for Administration—Reported that he represented the 303rd BGA at the presentation of the award for the DFC to George McCutcheon.

Jean Cox, Treasurer—Gave report on current finances and the budget for next year.

Eddie Deerfield, Hell's Angels Newsletter Editor—Reported as follows:

Newsletter—The cost of printing and mailing remained about the same as last year.

2006 Reunion—Credited Jean Cox with making this reunion easier for him to manage by sending him daily updates on registrations. President Cox had instructed him to reduce costs for members attending the reunion, and he was pleased to do so.

Newsletter Volume III—The third volume will be titled *Hell's Angels Newsletter—The Final Six Years: A World War II Retrospective* to include 24 issues of 480 pages plus facing pages and a comprehensive index. He estimated the cost for each book at between \$30 and \$40.

2007 Reunion—The Sheraton National Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. Dates are Thursday 20th thru Sunday 23rd of September. Room rate is \$109 per night. Contract and fringe benefits look good.

Molesworth Artifacts—The Joint Analysis Center at the RAF base sent cores extracted from the original floor of the main B-17 hangar. A firm in Largo, Florida harvested 65 pieces about the size of dominoes and a bucket full of scraps from the cores. A firm in Spokane, Washington had the 65 stone pieces embedded in clear Lucite blocks and placed in presentation boxes. A firm in Hudson, Florida provided 100 wood plaques for mounting the irregular pieces. All refused to charge us. The Executive Committee will decide how to present these mementos.

Gary Moncur, Director of Internet Operations—Reported that he receives numerous requests from family members and others interested in information about the 303rd BG. He and his family expect to continue with the site for many years to come.

Harold Timm, Secretary—The Association purchased a voice recorder to be used at all meetings. This recorder is more advanced than past recorders and does an outstanding job.

Al Dussliere, Past Presidents Chairman—Reported as follows:

In recognition and appreciation for dedicated service to the 303rd BGA during the period their respective husbands held the office of President, the following names were placed on the Presidents Monument at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum in Pooler, Georgia: Mary Lee Deerfield, Betty Kelley, Ruth Ferrari, Jill Miller, Louise Rencher, Jean Cox.

In recognition and appreciation for dedicated service to the 303rd BGA the following members' names were added to the Service Recognition Monument at the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum: Henry G. Johansen, Dr. Robert Johnson, Chaplain; Bishop Rene H. Gracida, Chaplain; Harold R. Timm, Fred E. Reichel, Robin Beeby, Coleman Sanders, William H. Cox, Jean C. Cox, Charlie & Vicki Sykes, William M. Beasley, Lance Stoner, Leroy Faulkner

Reports of Unit Representatives—358th Squadron, **Van White**—Keeping track of associate members in the Albuquerque, NM, area. 359th Squadron, **Donald Stoullil**—Not present and no report. 360th Squadron, **Lee Faulkner**—Nothing new to report. 427th Squadron, **Fred Reichel**—Not present, no report. Headquarters & Support Units—No report. Widows & Family Members—**Kathy Johnson** reported an increase in the number of widows and family members attending this reunion.

Reports of Committee Chair Persons:

Jean Cox, Membership and Roster—Asked Board members to keep her informed of deaths. The in-memoriam list continues to grow (over 100 to be read at memorial service this year).

Charlie Sykes, PX Administrator—Reported sales in excess of \$7,000, including mail order sales. He suggested reducing prices on remainder of inventory before shut-down time in D.C.

Bill Cox, World War II Awards—He has closed the books on World War II Awards.

Lew Lyle, Senior Advisor—Not present, no report

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion held to place a plaque posthumously to honor Brian McGuire who maintained and cared for the Monument at Molesworth. Vote postponed pending further study of locations. Red Timm questioned whether a final decision to pay Robin Beeby's expenses to attend the final reunion had been made. A motion was made, seconded and carried to pay his expenses.

Al Dussliere, Nominating Committee—All officer positions to remain the same for 2006-2007. A motion was made, seconded and carried to accept the nominations.

Chuck Vieira, Successor Organization—Chuck reported on the status, goals and future of the successor organization. Rebecca Mitchell is Secretary designate and Rob Galbraith is Treasurer designate. 303rd BGA Treasurer Jean Cox informed Chuck that the only financial assistance we would be able to provide the new organization at this time would be to help with committee and mailing expenses for a membership drive.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS

Ed Miller is compiling a listing of all Purple Heart recipients from the 303rd Bomb Group. Bill Cox suggested that he contact Michael Clark of the National Purple Heart Qualifier. A motion was made by Eddie Deerfield, seconded by Jean Cox and carried to make banquet guest speaker US Senator John Cornyn an honorary member of the 303rd BGA.

Meeting of General Membership 16 September 2006

Ed Gardner, Vice President—Was present at the program for George McCutcheon in Gaylord, Michigan where he received the Distinguished Flying Cross. In Interlochen and Travis City, Michigan, Ed presented the *Molesworth Story* CD for their archives.

Jean Cox, Treasurer—gave a report on finances as of June 30, 2006: \$120,184.29 in our treasury.

Eddie Deerfield, Editor Hells Angels Newsletter—asked members and guests if they like the newsletter and received a round of applause. End of report.

Gary Moncur, Director of Internet Operations—The web site receives about 2,000 to 3,000 visitors daily. There are about 17,000 electronic pages on the site and about 10,000 printed pages. A new addition to the web site is "This Day in 303rd BG History." Mission reports and individual photos are also on the web site. The web site will stay with the Moncur family for 20 to 30 years in the future. Gary's son Mike will take over when Gary no longer is able.

Harold Timm, Secretary—no report

Al Dussliere, Past President's Chairman—The new names to be placed on the President's plaque and the Service Awards plaque at the Memorial Garden at the 8th Air Force Museum were read.

REPORTS BY UNIT REPRESENTATIVES

358th Squadron, Van White—16 attended. Members voted the 358th the best squadron in the 303rd and the 303rd the best bomb group in the 8th Air Force.

359th Squadron, Donald Stoullil—15 present. They, too, thought they were the best squadron in the 303rd.

360th Squadron, Lee Faulkner—10 present. Lee reported that they should be the top squadron because his World War II

jacket represents the Group's best.

427th Squadron, Al Dussliere—Fred Reichel was not able to attend. The members voted to keep the Association going as a matter of record. Al said there were 22 members present, and four volunteered to help maintain the Association. Members decided they were the best squadron because they had more votes than anyone else.

Dale Ragle, Representative of Headquarters & Support Units—Dale was the only member in attendance.

Kathy Johnson, Widows & Family Members—Charlie Sykes was elected to be the representative for next year. There was standing room only at the meeting. Charlene Jaehne volunteered to help those veterans and their wives who need assistance to get to the 2007 reunion.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Jean Cox, Membership & Roster—Please send information to Jean regarding changes of address, deaths, and donations etc.

Charlie Sykes, PX Administrator—no report

Eddie Deerfield, Editor Hell's Angels Newsletter—reported on San Antonio reunion (attendance 230), third and final volume of Hell's Angels Newsletter, Molesworth hangar artifacts and 2007 reunion planning.

Al Dussliere, Past President's Chairman, presented names of nominees for elective positions for 2006-2007. The 2005-2006 officers were re-elected.

Chuck Vieira, Successor Organization—The name of the successor organization is "The Might In Flight Legacy Association." Chuck reported on the present status, goals and future for the successor organization. He took questions from the floor.

Ray Cossey brought greetings from the 303rd's United Kingdom Representative, Robin Beeby.

Meeting of Board of Directors 16 September 2006

Ed Gardner, Vice President—During the 427th squadron meeting, a vote was taken in favor of continuing with the present Association. Ed tried to explain that membership of veterans was failing and there were not enough people to step forward. Al Dussliere asked for members of the squadron willing to step up and take a position. One person stood up and said yes. A call was made for nominations from the floor and no one stood up. Eddie Deerfield said the reasons that made closure unavoidable had been printed several times in the newsletter and that President Cox had informed everyone through his columns in the newsletter. Eddie said these points should have been explained to 427th members before the discussion on voting got out of hand.

Jean Cox, Treasurer—gave a report on the 2006-2007 budget, and said there is enough money in the treasury to cover all items in the budget for the coming year.

Eddie Deerfield, Editor Hell's Angels Newsletter—there will be no increase in the budget for the newsletter.

No further reports were submitted by Secretary, Director of Internet Operations, Past President's Chairman (Awards), and Squadron Representatives. Alternates selected were Rufus Grisham (358th), Don Geng (359th), Richard Smith (360th), Richard Johnson (427th), Maurice Paulk (444th) and Lance Stoner (Family).

Family & Associate Members Representative Charlie Sykes requested space in the newsletter to advertise PX items and to announce a plan to help veterans who may have difficulty getting to the 2007 reunion. He also asked the Board's permission to lower prices on present inventory. All requests were approved.

(FULL REPORTS OF EACH OF THE THREE MEETINGS AS SUMMARIZED ABOVE ARE AVAILABLE ON REQUEST AT NO CHARGE FROM HAROLD "RED" TIMM, SECRETARY, 303RD BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, 2072 35TH AVENUE COURT, GREELEY, COLORADO 80634.)

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please send any changes of address to the 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

Charles A. Bradshaw	358 th	Unknown
Robert C. Bridges	360 th	1/13/2005
John O. Burcham	358 th	2006
Frank P. Campbell	359 th	8/11/1981
Robert R. Carpenter	427 th	12/1/2004
Harold R. Carver	427 th	12/9/1998
Frank Z. Cueto	359 th	Unknown
Alvin G. Determan	358 th	5/14/2004
Bernard D. Dooley	358 th	2/5/1995
Louis P. Droll	427 th	Sept. 2002
Richard W. Eide	358 th /POW	Unknown
James E. Eubanks	358 th	4/26/2006
Florice Ford (Mrs. John)	359 th Wife	10/1/2006
James L. Frey	427 th	10/5/2006
Joseph Germaine	360 th	9/7/2006
Leslie W. Giddings	359 th	8/2/2006
Charles L. Giltenboth	359 th	11/22/2004
Charles G. Glasgow	427 th	Unknown
Harry Goland	360 th	8/18/2006
Wesley L. Hasty	427 th	1/28/2006
Matt C. Hemming	358 th	10/21/2006
James H. Hensley, Jr.	360 th	12/27/2005
Michael S. Hlastala	360 th	Unknown
Robert E. Hoke	359 th	11/17/2002
Melvin Howell	427 th	10/31/2006
Aquilla B. Hughes, Jr.	358 th	8/9/1994
Frank M. James	358 th	6/30/06
Paul H. Johnson	359 th	6/28/2006
Robert H. Johnson	358 th	2005
John Kaza	360 th	2/18/2002
Charles J. Kelly	360 th	9/3/2006
Vincent J. Malisse	359 th	5/31/2006
Ray N. Massey	358 th	5/3/2006
James O. Matthews	358 th	1/20/2005
Neil Montone	359 th	11/6/2006
Robert J. O'Hearn	360 th	8/15.2004
Calvin H. Owen	359 th	Unknown
John W. Parker	359 th	2005
Maynard F. Pitcher	359 th	9/11/2006
John D. St. Julien	360 th	4/07/2005
Arthur S.C. Shanafelt	360 th	Dec. 1999
Raymond H. Shotsinger	427 th KIA	8/12/1943
Jack Silver	358 th	11/1/2006
Raymond Tartaglia	359 th	Unknown
George Turkel	359 th	Unknown
Glen B. Walley	358 th	7/27/2006
Thomas E. Weaver	360 th	4/16/1994
Cleveland W. Whitten	360 th	10/3/2006
Paul R. Wingle	359 th	9/18/2006
Arthur J. Zewert, Sr.	358 th	2002

HERE'S A 303RD BOMB GROUP B-17X flying over the North Sea. The target is the FW-190 assembly plant at Balderdash, Germany.

This is the crew's very first mission. From right to left, the pilot glares at the co-pilot who raised flaps when he should have lowered them. The co-pilot tries to look innocent. The bombardier looks down, hoping that he can find the switch to release the bombs. The navigator searches the sky for the North Star to get a compass bearing. The radio operator hides his head, hoping to get out of this alive. Someone forgot to wake the engineer and gunners who are still asleep at Molesworth.

Not to worry—the whole crew was alert and “on target” for their second mission.



THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

This is the first of the final four issues of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter*. Thirty-one years of publishing. Five different editors. I've been at the helm these last nine years, and what a ride it has been. Mostly pleasure and some regrets. Pleasure in the pure joy of taking 20 blank pages and filling them with the articles and photos and layouts that have made the 303rd Bomb Group Association's quarterly newsletter the best. Regrets that when facts are made known the telling may irritate some involved individuals.

My editorial philosophy has been governed by the need to keep members as fully informed as possible about events impacting on the Association. The consequences of decisions by the Board of Directors. The expenditure of funds from our treasury. Reporting actions not in accord with the best interests of the membership as a whole. And always the mandate to treat such reporting on the basis of verifiable facts.

Let's look at a few of the more significant examples: At the time work began in 1999 on the 303rd Bomb Group Memorial at Molesworth, the project had not been authorized or funded by the Association, and differences needed resolution..... There was confusion about details related to the expenditure of \$40,000 from the 303rd BGA treasury to paint a Triangle-C on the tail of a B-47 at the 8th AF Heritage Museum.....A wrong needed to be righted on a bronze plaque at the Heritage Museum which mistakenly identified the 303rd Bomb Group's 1199th Military Police Company as the 1119th.....A claim by one person that almost all of the Group's archival collection donated to the 8th AF Heritage Museum was his personal property was contested and led to changes in the Deed of Gift to rightfully record the donation as that of the 303rd Bomb Group Association.

The “Open Forum” section of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* asks readers to sound off “on the way things were or the way things are.” No one has written a “letter to the editor” to dispute these or similar stories. On the contrary, the response from readers has been consistently supportive.

The pleasure (and the occasional regrets) will soon end. I will join my fellow 303rd Bomb Group veterans in a deep and abiding sense of loss when the very last issue of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* is put to bed.

Eddie Deerfield

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