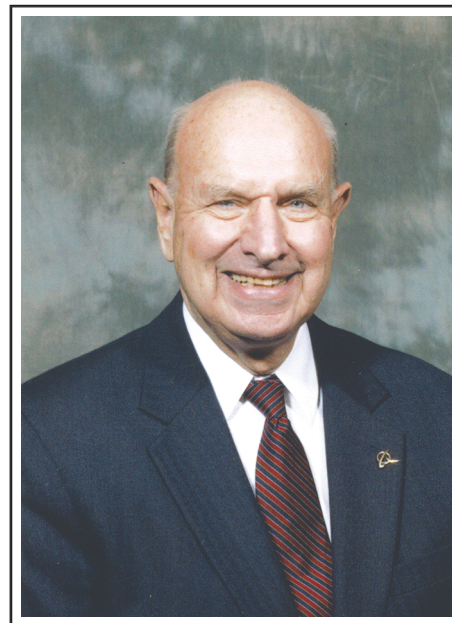


Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

August, 2007



HONORED GUESTS WHO WILL JOIN US AT THE FINAL REUNION BANQUET OF THE 303RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION—Walter Cronkite, eminent journalist who flew combat missions with the 303rd; General T. Michael Moseley, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force, and Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering, career diplomat who served as U.S. Representative at the United Nations and was Senior Vice President for International Relations at Boeing after retiring from the U.S. Foreign Service.

SURGE IN REUNION REGISTRATIONS MAY COMPEL SETTING LIMIT OF 400

Registrations for the 303rd Bomb Group Association's reunion have surged beyond expectations as an extraordinary number of family members signed in to accompany veterans.

For this year's final gathering, the Board's Executive Committee had approved a subsidy to reduce the costs to veterans and their family members. That act of generosity lowered the "break even" fee from \$188 to \$120, saving each person \$68.

But, when registrations began to surge to 400, the treasury was in danger of both running out of funds for the reunion as well as reserves to meet future obligations. A halt to registrations was imminent.

The total turn-out at the Dayton reunion in 2005

was 165 persons and in San Antonio last year 230 persons.

Another complication was that the Sheraton National hotel in negotiations with Armed Forces Reunions, representing the 303rd BGA, was unwilling to contract for more than 200 rooms a night at the greatly discounted rate of \$109 for rooms that normally go for \$289.

By mid-June, most of the hotel's rooms at the special rate were sold out.

President George H. Bush has been invited to speak at the Group's Memorial Service on the Plaza of the World War II Memorial on the morning of Saturday 22 September, and indications are that he will accept.

The legendary news-

man **Walter Cronkite**, age 90, plans to attend the farewell banquet on Sunday 23 September evening, as do **USAF Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley** and **Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering**. The veteran diplomat will represent the Boeing Company. They are pictured at the top of this page.

Plans include lunch at Andrews Air Force Base and a tour of the facility, a dance orchestra and floorshow at the banquet, a World War II memorabilia display in the Hospitality Room and a mock mission briefing prior to the showing of the film *Command Decision*.

These and other reunion events are described on the following pages.

IN THIS ISSUE

News of upcoming reunion—pages 1, 3, 6, 8.

B-17 hangar doors at Molesworth torn down as scrap—pages 4, 5.

Third and final book with last 24 newsletters due out in December—pages 7, 19.

303rd BGA Chaplains, from 1975 to 2007—pages 8, 9.

MOH winner honored at dedication of Vosler Park in Livonia, NY—Pages 10-11.

Apartment complex in UK named for pilot who saved town—page 12.

USAF Chief of Staff pays tribute to airmen—Page 14.



303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Hell's Angels Newsletter

Editor--Eddie Deerfield

Vol. 31, No. 3 3552 Landmark Trail, Palm Harbor, FL 34684 August, 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

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

CHAPLAIN -- PROTESTANT

Rev. Warren L. Hedrick (Alma), 3 Andrew Avenue, Sanford, ME 04073-3149



A STUDY IN CONTRASTS!

Chou Chou, featured singer in the 1940's floorshow to be performed by Doc Scantlin's Imperial Palms Orchestra at the farewell banquet Sunday night.

The Presidential aircraft *Air Force One* and the main gate at Andrews AFB where the 303rd BG will have lunch and tour on Saturday afternoon.



Medley Of Memorable Events Set As 303rd Marches on Washington

If variety is the spice of life, the 303rd Bomb Group's closing reunion is certain to be well-flavored. The four-day gathering will offer events in a single reunion which have proven popular in the past spread over a number of reunions.

First and foremost, there's the Memorial Service. The site for the event will be the most unique since the 303rd BGA was first organized in 1975. It's going to be held on the Plaza of the World War II Memorial in Washington, DC on the morning of Saturday 22 September, and the President of the United States has been invited to honor the Molesworth veterans by addressing the service. The names of those 303rd veterans who have passed away since the last reunion will be read aloud.

After the Memorial Service, buses will take us to Andrews Air Force Base for lunch in The Club, followed by a "windshield" tour with stops on the flight line in the time permitting. Reminder—the tour is not open to children under the age of 10.

The farewell banquet on the evening of Sunday 23 September will be a gala affair, with the three chief guests pictured on the cover of this issue. After the speeches and ceremonies are concluded, Doc Scantlin and his Imperial Palms Orchestra will present a floorshow and then continue with music for dancing in the finest tradition of the big band swing era. The floorshow by a cast of 23 musicians and singers will feature a nostalgic throwback to another era—the 1940's.

The Hospitality Room, popular watering hole at every reunion, will be open daily. Unlike previous years when donations were accepted to offset some of the operating

costs, all hard and soft drinks as well as snacks will be free and donations refused. The 303rd Bomb Group treasury is absorbing all costs. A special exhibit is planned for the Hospitality Room—a World War II air combat display mounted by the Capital Wing of the Airman's Preservation Society, with such items as WWII flight clothing, mae west life jackets, flak suits, oxygen masks, footlockers, mess gear, canteens and on down to the smallest items such as insignia.

On the evening of Saturday 22 September, members of the Airman's Preservation Society will stage a mock briefing reenacting what combat crews saw and heard at Molesworth before the 303rd's B-17's took off on the first mission to Schweinfurt, Germany on 17 August 1944. After the briefing, the film *Command Decision*, starring Clark Gable in a World War II US 8th Air Force drama will be shown.

The popular Post Exchange will also be open daily for as long as supplies last. As an added treat, approximately six large scale models of B-17's flown by the 303rd out of Molesworth will be on display in the PX Room. They were crafted by the same enthusiasts who set up a display at the reunion in Dayton in 2005.

Optional events being offered by Armed Forces Reunions on Friday 21 September include a daylong sightseeing City Tour and an evening theatrical performance at the Kennedy Center. The tour will include the main sites of the nation's capital, dutch-treat lunch at Union Station, and a visit to the new Smithsonian Air and Space Museum at Dulles Airport. The play is "Shear Madness," described as a hilarious whodunit murder mystery.



AERIAL VIEW OF THE 303RD BOMB GROUP AIR BASE AT MOLESWORTH IN 1945—

From 1942 to 1945, Hangar 84 at the American base, also known as a British-designed “type J” hangar, was home to many distressed B-17 Flying Fortresses in need of repairs after combat missions. It’s in the center of the photo, to the left of the main runway and below the fuel store. The 303rd Bomb Group flew 364 missions during the war, more than any other B-17 Bomb Group in the Eighth Air Force.

According to T/Sgt Phillip A. Allen, “It was during the Cold War in 1972 that airmen got back to their roots and proudly painted the Triangle-C emblem on the doors of the “J” Hangar. A unique design of the hangar is the six massive doors weighing 11 tons each. They telescoped in and out together on rails with suspended outrigger tracks to open and close.”

But, after some 70 years of aging, wear and tear had taken their toll. The doors were torn down and scrapped—Triangle-C and all.

And The Wall—Hangar Doors And All—Came Tumbling Down

**By Phillip A. Allen
Technical Sergeant, USAF**

Two things that can be said of RAF Molesworth; it’s been around a long time, and it’s seen a lot of changes. It has supported two world wars, the “Cold War” and various other missions. It has also passed between U.S. and U.K. stewardship a couple of times.

Hangar 84 originally supported maintenance of heavy bombers and other aircraft from WWII onward. During the Cold War its new mission became warehousing supplies at one end and housing offices in the other. The new mission meant the warehouse side doors would be opened constantly throughout the day; more so when the weather gets bad. It was a physically demanding task hand cranking those old heavy doors open and shut throughout the day.

Several decades of Atlantic weather and a couple of base closures meant heavy corrosion and a lack of maintenance on the doors. Hangar 84, (now Building 84), had its outer four doors sealed closed, leaving only the first two doors left free to open.

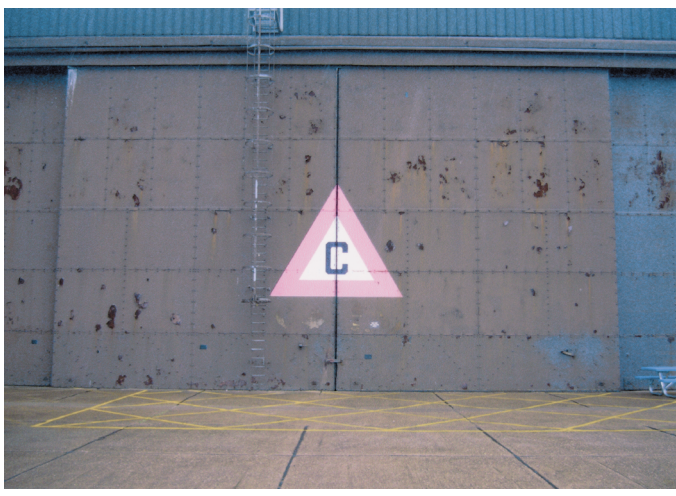
The decision was made to remove the doors completely and replace the whole building side. A modern insulated and sealed sheeting system was proposed. A roller shutter door would provide a safer and

easier to maintain working environment. Additional Fire and Safety works would also be undertaken.

The entire side of the facility is now recovered in insulated metal sheeting and the massive doors are now replaced by a smaller single roller style door. The building side now also blends in smoothly with the adjacent offices that connect to the building’s side. The building was then repainted in the original GI brown that has adorned the facility for decades. The total project cost \$559,000.00 to complete.

The original doors with the 303rd’s emblem were attempted to be reworked into the design of this project. A tight budget and advanced decay of the doors prevented re-incorporating them into the new design. It was also suggested by to donate the doors to the Imperial War Museum, Duxford or similar heritage organization. It was not feasible since part of the original contract put value on the metal doors as scrap. Personnel have suggested repainting the 303rd’s Triangle-C emblem on the new doors, but only time will tell if the tradition will be upheld.

Special thanks to the following for their help and for providing information: Nigel Foster, 423rd CE Squadron, RAF Alconbury; TSgt William Power and Ms. Deirdre Teeter, JAC, RAF Molesworth.



THE OLD HEAVY METAL DOORS ON THE "J" HANGAR....



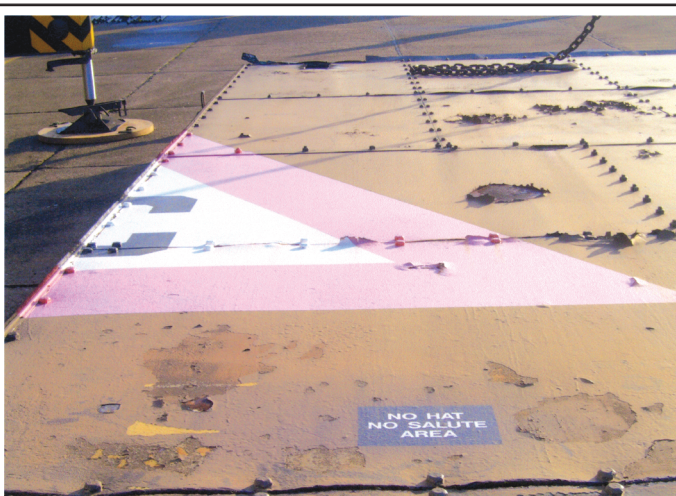
WERE SOMETIMES CRANKED OPEN BY USAF S/SGT CHRISTINA HUNT....



SO THAT WAREHOUSE VEHICLES COULD ENTER AND LEAVE....



UNTIL A WORK CREW CAME ALONG TO DEMOLISH THE DOORS....



LEAVING THEM TO BE CARTED AWAY AND SHREDDED AS SCRAP....



MAKING WAY FOR A NEW HANGAR WALL AND SMALLER DOOR.



AN HISTORIC ARTIFACT FOR 303RD BOMB GROUP VETERANS AT THE REUNION—These are the special gifts for 160 Molesworth veterans attending the unit's last reunion. That's the number of pieces of stone excavated from the original floor of the main hangar at the base. Sixty of the artifacts are mounted in blocks of Lucite and placed in gold boxes with blue velvet lining. Another 100 pieces are mounted on walnut veneer wall plaques against a photo of the original hangar doors. The doors are now gone. Is the hangar and its floor next?

Better Than A Moon Rock?

A PIECE OF THE HANGAR AT MOLESWORTH

This particular story had its origins in February of 2005. That's when Jack Gardner of Pittsburgh, former 427th Squadron Armament Officer, suggested that we collect some earth or gravel from the base at Molesworth as mementoes for our veterans.

This idea graduated into "let's try for pieces of the old runway and present them to our veterans at the final reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group."

Trouble was, all the original runways were long gone. The next thought was to try for fragments from the floor of the original main hangar which was still intact.

Discussions began with Col. Richard Ayres, JAC Commander at RAF Molesworth, who was very cooperative. But, then Col. Ayres was transferred, and the project was put on hold until the new CO, Col. Darryl Reyes arrived at post.

Col. Reyes was equally helpful, and led

his staff at Molesworth in making arrangements to extract two cores from the floor of the hangar.

The foundation was constructed of stones and gravel set in a concrete slurry reinforced by iron rods. The extractions were accomplished in March of 2006.

Two stone cores—20 pounds and 25 pounds—were shipped to Newsletter Editor Eddie Deerfield who was also serving as Reunion Manager.

A firm named Cutting Edge Granite was running ads in the Tampa Bay, Florida area that it could cut granite "And Anything Else You Can Imagine." They accepted the cores, and began cutting them into pieces about the size of dominoes. There was a considerable diminishing of the expected yield as sections of the concrete flaked off or crumbled into powder during the cutting process.

The final count of usable fragments as arti-

facts for presentation to the 303rd's Molesworth veterans was 160.

Cutting Edge Granite refused to charge the 303rd BGA for its work, and Unlimited Images, another Florida firm, offered to donate wood plaques to mount 100 of the pieces. The remaining 60 were set in Lucite and placed in gold boxes.

NEED WHEEL CHAIR ASSISTANCE ?

Veterans who cannot leave their wheel chairs to board buses for reunion events must inform the 303rd BGA in advance so special arrangements can be made. Call Molly Dey, Armed Forces Reunions, 757-625-6401 X 304.



THE "J" HANGAR AT MOLESWORTH, with its new face.

THE LIBRARY AT ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE has the 303rd Bomb Group's *Hell's Angels Newsletter* 25th Anniversary set.

The books were presented to Heidi Meyers, the Base Director of Library Operations, by Eddie Deerfield, editor of the two-volume World War II air combat retrospective.



THIRD AND FINAL BOOK IN FAMED *Hell's Angels Newsletter* SERIES TO BE DISTRIBUTED IN DECEMBER

The third and final book in the impressive 31-year history of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* will carry the full contents of every issue published from 2002 through 2007. The title is *Hell's Angels Newsletter, The Final Six Years—A World War II Retrospective*.

The earlier 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.

The third volume will also have a detailed index with listings in such categories as Persons (303rd veterans and their family members), Missions (targets and dates), B-17's, POW's, KIA's, Escapes and Evasions, Cities, Memorials, Reunions and

other headings.

It's estimated that the third volume will consist of about 480 pages plus a 40-page index. Cost to families and friends of 303rd Bomb Group veterans to purchase the third volume is \$50, including all handling and shipping costs.

All living veterans of the 303rd will receive the book free as a farewell gift from the 303rd Bomb Group Association as the curtain comes down on our organization.

The first set of two books sold for \$120. 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. There was no second printing. Second-hand copies may be available through Amazon or E-bay.

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.

SEE PAGE 19 FOR DETAILS ON HOW TO ORDER OR RESERVE THE BOOK

And the ranks continue to thin....

BISHOP GRACIDA ONLY 303RD BGA REUNION CHAPLAIN STILL ACTIVE

Rene Henry Gracida, Bishop Emeritus of Corpus Christi, Texas, will be the only 303rd Bomb Group Association Chaplain physically able to conduct services at the final reunion of the Molesworth veterans.

Here, he celebrated Mass last December in the Church of Saint Helen of the True Cross in Corpus Christi.



Ever since the 303rd Bomb Group Association was chartered more than 30 years ago, our own chaplains have conducted Sunday services, invocations and benedictions, and other blessings at annual reunions. We have rarely had to go outside the Association for such offerings. This year, only one of our Chaplains is still up to the task.

Catholic Bishop Rene H. Gracida will be with us at the gathering in September at the Sheraton National Hotel. Protestant Minister Warren L. Hedrick wrote, "I'm sorry, but I'll be unable to attend the Last Reunion because of illness to both myself and my wife Alma. Both of us have spent time in the hospital in the past few months. Our best wishes go out to all who will be there celebrating this sad, but great occasion. May God continue to Bless all of you in the days and years to come."

The Reverend Hedrick and Bishop Gracida are the Association's only surviving Chaplains from an original

corps of nine. Two of those Chaplains, now deceased, actually served the 303rd Bomb Group in that capacity at Molesworth. They are Edmund J. Skoner (Catholic) and Merritt O. Slawson (Protestant).

Bishop Gracida was a tail gunner in the 359th Squadron during the war. Mr. Hedrick flew in the same crew position in the 358th Squadron. They were among seven 303rd Bomb Group veterans who chose to dedicate their lives after the war to serving God. The others, now dead, are Everett A. Dasher, 358th Radio Operator; Robert L. Johnson, Control Tower Chief; Charles G. Rice, 360th Bombardier; Bernard Schumacher, ground crew and Charles W. Spencer, 358th Bombardier.

Bishop Gracida will celebrate the Catholic Mass from 6:30 to 7:15 AM on Sunday September 23, and will then conduct Bible Study for all faiths from 7:15 to 8:00 AM. The latter will include scripture readings, prayers, songs and a sermon.

DURING THE YEARS THAT CHAPLAINS MERRITT O. SLAWSON AND EDMUND J. SKONER MINISTERED TO THE FAITHFUL AT MOLESWORTH, THEIR DUTIES INCLUDED WRITING TO THE NEXT OF KIN OF AIRMEN KILLED IN COMBAT OR MISSING IN ACTION. BELOW IS A COPY OF SUCH A LETTER WRITTEN BY FATHER SKONER TO THE PARENTS OF SERGEANT SHEPPARD KERMAN, MISSING IN ACTION ON THE MISSION TO MAGDEBURG, GERMANY ON 28 SEPTEMBER 1944. IT WAS LATER DETERMINED THAT SERGEANT KERMAN WAS DEAD, POSSIBLY KILLED BY CIVILIANS AFTER PARACHUTING DOWN.

HEADQUARTERS
303RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)
APO # 557, c/o POSTMASTER
NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

September 29, 1944.

Mr. Simon D. Kerman,
837 Junior Terrace
Chicago, Ill.


Dear Mr. Kerman:

On behalf of the Commanding General of the Eighth Air Force and the Commanding Officer of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H), I wish to express the deep sympathy the personnel of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) feel for you at the loss of your son, Sgt. Sheppard Kerman, 16078681, who has been missing in action since September 28, 1944.

I sincerely regret that I can give you no additional information about your son. I can assure you, however, that as soon as definite information is available, the War Department will immediately notify you. Although I can appreciate the fact that you are anxious for some word, any word, there is nothing I can say which would not be pure conjecture.

Certainly words are inadequate to express our sympathy, but we do want you to know that all of us are deeply touched by the sudden loss of our friend and comrade. We pray for you that God may give you much courage to go through these trying days; that He may provide comfort in your hours of trial. We who knew and lived with your son, will never give up hope for him, but place our faith in the compassion of a just and righteous Almighty God.

Very sincerely yours,


Edmund J. Skoner,
Chaplain.

Vosler Veterans Memorial Park Opens In Livonia, NY As 300 Attend Dedication

By Calvin Lathan
Mayor, Village of Lavonia, New York

On a sunny Saturday, June 16th, 2007, the Forrest L. Vosler Veterans Memorial Park was dedicated in the Village of Livonia. Six months ago this was an empty lot and today it is a beautiful park that has been dedicated to "Woody" Vosler, winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor during World War II, and to the other men and women who have provided us the freedom that we enjoy.

The dedication was attended by more than 300 friends, family and Village residents. For an hour before the dedication, the 98th Division Brass Quintet and the Conesus Choir provided patriotic music. It marked the beginning of a "community dedication."

The 303rd Bomb Group and the crew of the B-17 *Jersey Bounce, Jr.* was represented by Mr. and Mrs. William Simpkins and the family of George Buske.

Representatives from Peterson AFB, MSgt Chris Vossmer and MSgt Richard Rutolo, along with Raymond Connell, a WWII vet and classmate of Woody, and Gun-nery Sgt Barbara Bourcy, Village Trustee and the daughter of a WWII Marine, raised the flag for the first time. The ceremony was followed by our National Anthem.

Steven Vosler spoke on behalf of "Woody's kids," Steven & Karen Vosler, Susan & Robert Bass and Jeff Vosler. They then uncovered the kiosk that featured pictures and memories of Woody and his family.

There were comments from MSgt. Chris Vossmer, Congressman Tom Reynolds, State Senator Dale Volker and State Assemblyman Joseph Errigo. MSgt. Vossmer talked about the NCO Academy at Peterson AFB that is named after Forrest L. Vosler. Congressman Reynolds, Senator Volker and Assemblyman Errigo spoke about the dedication of our service men and women.

Retired USAF Colonel Cleon Vosler, Woody's brother, spoke for the siblings, Cleon and Jane Vosler, Arvilla and Harm Credit and Marjorie and James Payne. They then uncovered the granite memorial that was created to recognize Livonia's hero and the Medal of Honor. At the base of the monument are the names of the crew of the *Jersey Bounce, Jr*

The Conesus Choir, accompanied by the 98th Division Brass Quintet, sang a medley of service songs, and then ended with a spirited rendition of the Air Corps Anthem. The dedication closed with a 21-gun salute and taps by the Fredrick Totten VFW Post 5005 Rifle Team. At the conclusion of the dedication, the community gathered at the Harrison-Lee American Legion Post for food and a chance to meet and renew old friendships.

It was a grand day.



THE GRANITE MEMORIAL AND BRONZE PLAQUE honoring Forrest "Woody" Vosler at the new park bearing his name in the Village of Lavonia, NY. The pavers at the foot of the monument are engraved with the names of Woody's 358th Squadron crew.

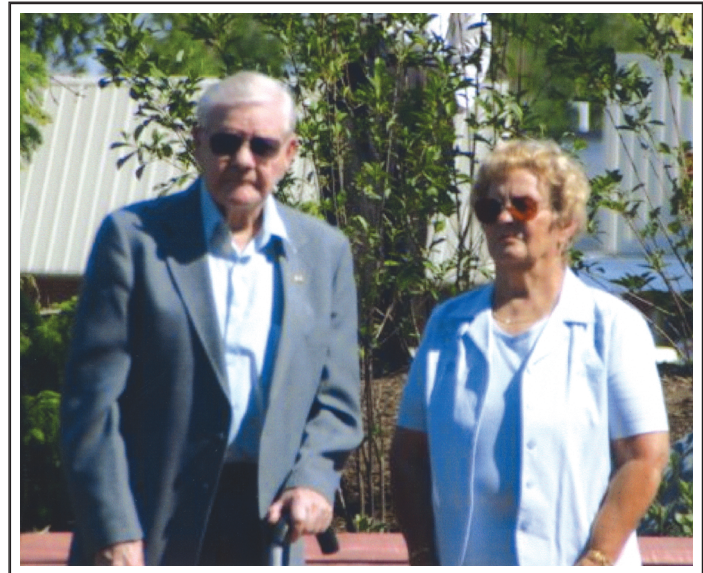
From the prayer opening the dedication ceremony:

When our country was at war, Forrest "Woody" Vosler, a native son of Livonia, fresh out of high school, ready to begin his life in the working world, enlisted in the service and risked his life as a radio man on a B-17 bomber in England. It is not so much for Woody's bravery that we dedicate this small park in his honor, but for the humility, wisdom and integrity that he showed so that the harmony and justice of our nation may be secured. Bless this place not as a reminder of the glory to be found in war, but as a reminder of what one person can do for another....

Father John Hayes



MORE THAN 300 PERSONS CROWDED INTO THE NEW VOSLER VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK for the dedication. Village of Livonia Mayor Cal Lathan made the welcoming remarks and closing comments. Retired Air Force Colonel Cleon Vosler, Woody's brother, spoke on his own behalf and for their two sisters, Arvilla and Marjorie. The 98th Division Brass Quintet, on the far right in the photo, opened the program with the National Anthem after the invocation and flag raising ceremony.



THE FOUR PRINCIPALS IN THE FLAG RAISING CEREMONY were MSgt Chris Vossmer and MSgt Richard Ruotolo of Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado, Livonia Village Trustee Gunnery Sergeant Barbara Bourcy and Raymond Connell, a World War II veteran and classmate of Woody Vosler.

REPRESENTING THE 303RD BOMB GROUP was William Simpkins and his wife, Evelyn, of Cologne, NJ. Bill was the crew's engineer on the 20 December 1943 mission to Bremen which earned the CMOH for Vosler. Family members of tail gunner George Buske also attended the ceremony.

APARTMENT COMPLEX IN U.K. NAMED FOR 303RD PILOT HERO

(Text source—A2 Winchester web site. Photos by Colin Metcalfe)

Tiny Niamh Gailer has just moved into a brand new home and, as she was only born in January, the last few months have been extremely hectic for new parents Karl and Sonja, who have had to cope with both a new arrival and a house move. They are thrilled with their new flat at Cogswell House, in the centre of Alresford, which for them is a dream come true, as they have lived in rented accommodation for nine years. They have bought their two bedroom flat under a shared ownership scheme, built for A2 Winchester by Archstone Lifestyle Homes.

"This was the only option for us," says Karl, "as we would never have been able to afford to buy a property around Alresford and, as we both work locally it meant we didn't have to move out of the area to live or face a long commute."

Tenant Board Member Sue Bignell welcomed the Gailer family with a box of baby goodies for Niamh.

Cogswell House was named after a US World War II pilot, Captain Robert Cogswell, who famously ordered his crew to bail out before ditching the Lady Luck in a field near Old Alresford Pond.

The crew had been on an abortive mission to France when they were recalled because of cloud cover and while returning to base an engine caught fire.

Capt. Cogswell managed to steer the loaded bomber away from the town before bailing out himself, saving Alresford from catastrophe.

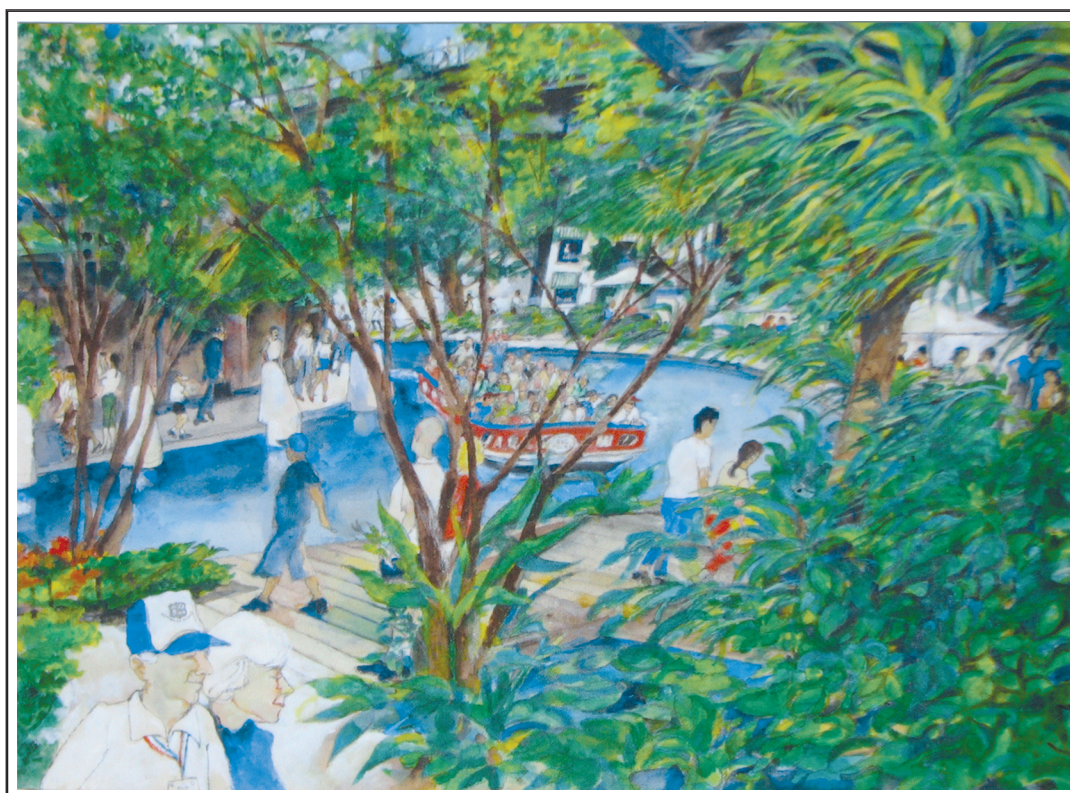


THE ARROW MARKS THE LOCATION OF THE SIGN "COGSWELL HOUSE" ON THE SIDE OF THE APARTMENT COMPLEX IN ALRESFORD, ENGLAND





WREATH LAYING CEREMONY AT THE CAMBRIDGE AMERICAN CEMETERY IN MADINGLEY, ENGLAND—Robin Beeby, the 303rd Bomb Group Association’s representative in the UK, lays the 303rd’s wreath as he has over many years in the past . He was joined by other military and civilian wreath layers on a rainy Memorial Day, May 28, 2007.



WHILE AT THE SAN ANTONIO REUNION, FRANKLIN MCMAHON PAINTED THIS RIVER WALK SCENE FOR THE HELL’S ANGELS NEWSLETTER. The 427th Squadron navigator was a POW as the war ended. He went on to international acclaim as an artist-reporter whose work took him all over the world. “Mac” was recently joined in an exhibition at the Hinsdale Gallery near Chicago by eight members of his family—each a talented artist.

AMERICA SOARS ON AIR FORCE WINGS

By General T. Michael Moseley
US Air Force Chief of Staff

Today, America depends on its Air Force to an extent unseen in history. In my 35 years of service, many things have changed, but the extraordinary dedication, courage, and skill of those we call "Airmen" remains constant. Airmen deliver for the nation every minute of every day in the air, on the surface, in space, and cyberspace. I am often asked, "What does our national investment in air, space and cyberspace power bring to America?" Let me share with you some observations of our Air Force that have inspired me since I was a second lieutenant and continue to fill me with pride today as the 18th chief of staff of the United States Air Force.

I see Airmen vigilant, providing first warning of threats worldwide through air, space and cyber systems that never sleep or blink. They scan the globe with the world's most advanced sensor network. They are America's eyes and ears — likely the first tip of an emerging threat.

I see Airmen providing the first response worldwide for natural disasters — rescuing people and delivering humanitarian supplies spelling the difference between life and death. I see Airmen airborne, in the center of the worst storms and hurricanes in history, tracking and providing warnings critical to saving lives. I see Airmen airborne, fighting fires to save lives. They exemplify American compassion and strength. They perform these missions so well that people expect an American response no matter the distance, the conditions or the complexity of the task.

I see Airmen arriving first to the fight, engaging enemies, striking targets or transporting our warriors throughout the world. They fly bombers to strike targets at ranges unequalled in history, with peerless precision, speed, and lethality. They fly airlift and refueling aircraft delivering humanitarian relief supplies, troops, cargo and equipment. Every 90 seconds, somewhere on the globe, an Air Force mobility aircraft takes to the sky — 24/7, delivering help, hope and combat capability.

I see Airmen slip into fighter aircraft cockpits and, to paraphrase James Salter's "Gods of Tin," plug themselves into the machine — the canopy grinding shut, sealing them off. Time and space are compressed, geographic expanses reduced and barriers bypassed by the hurtling aircraft. Airmen fly and fight alongside others, but they live or die alone, fighting increasingly lethal enemies.

I see Airmen shoulder to shoulder with ground forces. Special Ops teams hunt terrorists. Others drive convoys, guard bases, conduct combat search and rescue missions, and provide medical services in places the devil doesn't dare to tread. I see Airmen on the scene when ground troops are in contact. Airmen who respond with aircraft mounted guns and precision guided munitions. They set the conditions for victory.

I see Airmen supporting national objectives. Airmen have fought in Iraq for 16 straight years — 12 years in support of Operations Northern and Southern Watch. Meanwhile, they demonstrated the flexibility of American Air Power in the Arabian Gulf, Bosnia and Kosovo, while providing an unwavering air bridge for re-supply and medical evacuation — without skipping a beat.



U.S. JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF SYMBOL

I see Airmen flying military spacecraft. Serving as the nation's eyes and ears to provide early warning, communications, precise navigation and weather information. They are "on watch" 24/7 — and they have never skipped a beat.

I see Airmen airborne in Operation Noble Eagle, overhead our cities and citizens. This solely Air Force mission involves hundreds of aircraft and thousands of Airmen serving as the airborne shield for America. These Airmen are "on watch" 24/7 — and they have never skipped a beat.

I see Airmen on duty across the Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile fields and deep within missile silos across the heartland of America. This solely Air Force mission involves hundreds of missiles and thousands of Airmen, serving as the most responsive element of America's nuclear deterrence. These Airmen are "on watch" 24/7 — and again, they have never skipped a beat.

Airmen represent America at its best: honor, valor, courage, and devotion, mastery of science and technology, awesome military might, commitment to freedom, flexibility and adaptability and diversity. One of the clearest illustrations of America's air dominance is this: enemy aircraft have not attacked American Soldiers since April 1953 — over 53 years ago! The ability for our ground forces to look up into the sky and know there's nothing to fear is priceless. This dominance is not an entitlement, but a direct fight that must be won as a predicate to any other activity. The battle for air, space, and cyberspace superiority has been — and will always be — the first battle of any war. Airmen must continue to mold America's incredible technological might into the air, space and cyber systems that guarantee our freedoms and our future.

I stand in awe of those who served before me and those brave Airmen who today make our world a better place. It is because of them that the Air Force dedicated its first-ever national memorial in Washington on Oct. 14.

The United States of America depends on their Air Force to deliver on a global scale to an extent unseen in the history of mankind. America truly soars on Air Force wings.

FORMER EDITOR FONDLY RECALLS 303RD REUNIONS

The year was 1947. World War II was still a vivid memory. The military services had shrunk in double time as veterans traded in their khaki uniforms for civilian clothes. Job seeking was the order of the day. The camaraderie of military life was still very much on veterans minds. They still missed their buddies; so three former members of the 303rd Bomb Group: John Tulloss, David "Red" Schwartz and I met for lunch in New York City. Out of the lunch came the "idea." Sponsor a "Hell's Angels Group Reunion." It was my job to start the ball rolling.

But where to start? I had no experience, no roster of names, no funding and just a vague idea of what we had to do. In the interim, the staff was increased by one when Rae Romano joined us as a "volunteer." Rae, who worked in the same Wall Street brokerage firm as I, helped us gather more than 500 names of ex-303rds, mail out the reunion literature and look for a place to hold the shindig. Somehow or other, "the fabulous four" overcame most of the obstacles and on May 7 1948, the first reunion of the 303rd BG was held at the Henry Hudson Hotel in New York City. The weather cooperated — "it rained like Hell." — to give an English touch to the occasion. In July of 1948, two months later, Rae and I got married.

In a special January 1949 issue of Esquire Magazine, an in-depth account of the reunion appeared along with a history of the 303rd BG plus references to the Mathis brothers and an account of the Oschersleben mission of January 11, 1944. It also covered promises made by the 200 Hell's Angels in attendance. Out of the memories and reminiscences of that May 7th reunion grew a determination to keep the spirit of the 303rd BG alive. Plans were discussed for holding annual reunions in different parts of the country. Also discussed were ideas for erecting a memorial at Molesworth to honor the members of the group who made the supreme sacrifice.

While planning for the second reunion I was recalled to active duty in August of 1949. I didn't return to civilian life in Austin, Texas until May of 1973. While visiting Florida in 1974 I had a telephone conversation with Charlie McClain who informed me that he, along with Joe Vieira and Bill Eisenhart plus some others, were forming a 303rd Bomb Group Association in Florida. I didn't know how successful they were until I was contacted early in 1985 and became a member in time to attend the 1985 reunion in Seattle (Boeing's anniversary rollout of the first B-17) along with Rae, plus my daughter and son-in-law, and our two grandchildren, three and one year olds. It was the group's sixth reunion.

Reunions had been held every two years. On the 7th reunion, the Board made a decision to hold future reunions yearly. The 17 annual reunions that followed included visits to Molesworth and Savannah twice each. Since then, what started out as reunions of World War II, 303rd BG warriors, also became yearly reunions of families and friends. As you filled out reunion questionnaires you not only looked forward to seeing "old friends" but their offspring's as well. The 303rd Bomb Group had become a big family.

The 2006 reunion was undoubtedly the best reunion of our association that I have ever attended. The difference was not in the food or accommodations but in the love and affection accorded my wife and I after an absence of three years due to health reasons—mostly mine. The attendance was equally divided between the generations—and it was a wonderful mix.

On July 7, 1945, in Casablanca, North Africa, I along with a small cadre of 303rds observed the deactivation of the 303rd Bomb Group. So, I'm sure, it will be with mixed emotions that sometime in 2007 I will observe the deactivation of the 303rd Bomb Group Association. Love you all.

Hal Susskind

From The President

With deep regret I have to inform the membership that the formation of a successor Organization has stalled, if not come to a complete end. President Designate Chuck Vieira has suggested he be replaced, because of what he sees as an impasse with the Board of Directors over the purpose of the successor Organization.

Based on conversations with the Veteran Members and their families it was the Board's position that any organization we funded the founding of, must remain in the control of the Family Members of the Veterans of Molesworth. When Chuck requested funds to pay an Attorney to prepare the paperwork for Incorporation he would not provide written confirmation that the control of the "Might in Flight Legacy Association" would be left in the hands of Molesworth Veteran's Families. I have had no further communication from him.

If someone else wants to step forward and take this project on, we still have time to get it launched, before the end of the 303rd BGA, but they will have to work fast. I have contacted everyone recommended to me as a possible replacement for Chuck, but no one so far has been willing to make the commitment. If any family members have suggestions on how to resolve the impasse, please contact me by phone, E-mail or regular mail immediately.

It's hard to believe that in a few weeks we will be gathering in Arlington for our final reunion, and retiring the gavel of the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Assoc. Sad as that may be, the list of names to be read at the last Memorial Service at The World War II Memorial grows daily, and the number of Veterans that have contacted me regarding the health issues which will keep them from being with us is daunting. Unfortunately, it underscores the need for the Association, which must have a majority of 303rd Bomb Group Veterans as members, coming to an end.

We leave a proud legacy, and our website will continue as a source of reference and information, keeping our history alive and available for research. It receives hits daily from people who found it by accident while doing research for various reasons. They never fail to thank us for what we did to preserve the world's freedom in what we hoped would be the "War To End All Wars".

I hope you sent your suggestions to your Squadron Representatives regarding where we should send any remaining assets. The suggestions will be voted on at the Reunion.

Charlie Sykes reports the PX is about out of Inventory. Eddie Deerfield is looking ahead to the final issue of the *Hells Angels Newsletter* in November and then the printing of the book which will contain the collection of the final six years. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you in Arlington.

William H. "Bill" Cox

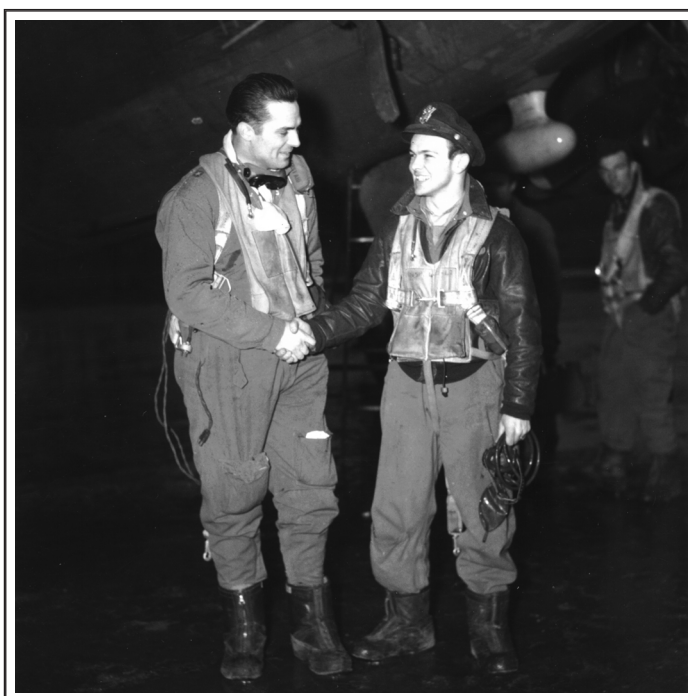


303rd Bomb Group Pin-ups

ABOVE—The men in the Operations Section of Group Headquarters in February, 1945. Front row, left to right, Wilbur Mooring, Jimmie Johnson, Frank Mikus, Jack Urban, Joe Johnston, Van White (Operations Section NCOIC, holding card), Red Frymark, Ed Dierebinski, Hugh Parkhurst, Joe Caroff and Fred Althar. Standing, Ralph Schnabel, Oliver Blank, David Schwartz, Louis Schulstad, Edgar Snyder (Deputy Commanding Officer), John Tulloss, John Faustini and Jim McNamara.

BELOW LEFT—Brigadier General Robert F. Travis congratulates 359th Squadron Pilot William R. Calhoun on the ground at Molesworth after the Oschersleben mission on 11 January 1944. The First Bomb Division commander flew as co-pilot with Calhoun on *The Eight Ball*. The 303rd dispatched 40 crews. Eleven of the 303rd's B-17's were shot down. Weather conditions had forced a recall order, which Gen. Travis later claimed he never received.

BELOW RIGHT— Captain Donald Bone and *Hell's Angels* Pilot Captain Irl Baldwin on the 1944 bond tour of the 303rd Bomb Group's most famous B-17. The photo was taken at Tinker Field in Oklahoma City.



Molesworth Diary

WHISKEY STILL MAKER HEATS NISSAN HUT

The day in November 1944 finally came when the 303rd Bomb Group Commander ordered a stop to the thefts occurring on the Molesworth Base's large coal pile. Many officer's and airmen's method of attempting to fight the cold weather during the winter of 1944-45, had to change. New double fence wire, additional barbed wire and a patrolling M.P. vehicle forced a new approach in trying to keep warm during that miserable winter. One shovel full of coal per man, for a week, just didn't provide anywhere near enough warmth in our Nissan hut. So a meeting of all the officers in our hut—R. W. Grisham's and H. D. Snider's aircrews, along with two other officers living in the hut, Ben Starr and Jack Rencher—was convened soon after the Group Commander's order had been posted.

Jack Rencher's idea for converting the coal burning stove into a oil burner was selected because of his vivid stories about building an "all copper" whiskey still, hidden back in the mountains on the border of Arizona and New Mexico. After cleaning out the central stove in our hut, Rencher went to the Molesworth Base dump and found the needed items, such as a yellow low-pressure oxygen supply tank, 1/4 inch fuel line and an on-off control switch, plus several other small items to convert the coal burning stove.

He mounted the supply tank on the outside of the Nissan hut about 5 feet above the ground so used engine oil could flow under a gravity system. After having all the required parts inside the hut, we all sat down that evening and discussed how to bring the oil line thru the metal walls, since we had no drill to make the hole in the required location.

While the other officers debated the problem, Rencher quietly left the "round table discussion." About 10 minutes later there was a sudden very loud Bang! which vibrated throughout the living quarters. Looking around to see what had happened all eyes fell on Jack Rencher, standing with a still smoking .45 caliber handgun in his right hand.

Jack stated he had just seen a large "rat", so taking his gun, he aimed quickly while the rat (?) ran along the side of the hut where it met the floor. He fired, but missed and the rat (?) quickly disappeared. The hole made by the shot was exactly where Jack had previously planned for the oil supply line to enter the living quarters. A coincidence? By the next evening, the complete system was in place and working, and we began enjoying the new warmth.

Approximately two weeks later when our air crews returned late in the day from a combat mission, Ben Starr informed us he had bad news. Our 358th Squadron Commander had gone through the hut on an inspection and ordered the oil burning stove be removed immediately. It was his belief the system was unsafe and could cause a fire.

With great reluctance and considerable griping, the Whiskey Still Stove Heating System was dismantled, and we regressed back to many damp, cold and near freezing days and nights for the duration of our tour at Molesworth RAF Base.

William H. Cox
Pilot, 358th Squadron

FOOD AT BASE GREAT, BUT CLIMATE AWFUL!

I have seen a lot of this country (after reaching Molesworth) and it sure is pretty, but as for the climate it will be hard to get used to. I shower by heating water over a small coal stove and shave out of my mess kit. We have outdoor latrines as all the English seem to have. We can send in a certain amount of laundry, so at least I have clean clothes. The food is A-1, and we have movies six nights a week. Each week we're allowed seven packs of cigarettes, one candy bar, two razor blades, a tube of tooth paste and a bar of soap. The people are very friendly. The girls aren't like the girls back home, here they're very friendly.

There's a saying at the base, "It's winter all the time except for the 4th, 5th and 6th of July when the sun shines." I sleep under four blankets so you can imagine the situation.

Alfred K. Hollritt
Ball Turret Gunner, 427th Squadron
(Excerpted from a letter to his mother, dated 17 May 1944)

"THE ARMED CIVILIANS DISCUSSED HANGING ME"

Somewhere over Germany we encountered strong air turbulence. The B-17 on our left was jerking around when suddenly their right wing tipped our plane and we went into a spin. We could hear the pilot and co-pilot on intercom as they struggled to get the plane under control. The few minutes it took seemed endless.

When we were back to level flight, the rest of the formation was long gone. Then, the tail gunner called out "German fighters!" He estimated about five or six of them. We had a togglier who fired the chin turret guns. Our guns gave a good account, but we were too vulnerable flying as a lone bomber.

Andrew Virag, our pilot, ordered us to abandon ship. It was 21 November 1944, and we had been hit hard by those enemy fighter planes on this mission to Merseburg. I was wounded by shrapnel on the left side of my face as well as on my arm and legs. I jumped and immediately pulled the rip cord just in case I blacked out from my wounds.

I was met on the ground by a group of armed civilians who took me to a barn and began discussing whether to hang me or not. I was able to understand a little German and realized that one of the civilians argued against hanging me because he had a son who was in an American POW camp and he wanted to keep him safe. Before they reached a decision, the rest of the crew and I were picked up by the German military. Three of us had been wounded.

We were marched through the streets of Hamburg where the civilians hurled insults and harder stuff at us. We were taken to Frankfurt for interrogation. I was kept in solitary confinement and questioned by the Officer-in-Charge several times. Not only did he know my name and rank, but where I was born, what schools I went to, and other aspects of my life. I was then transferred to Stalag Luft 1 where I spent the rest of my imprisonment until we were freed by the Russians.

Harold "Hy" Scheer
Navigator, 359th 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: THE EDITOR, HELL'S ANGELS NEWSLETTER, 3552 LANDMARK TRAIL, PALM HARBOR, FL 34684

"I'LL GET SOME FLAK OVER THOSE NUMBERS"

On the Molesworth Diary page of your outstanding newsletter there's my article "35 Missions in 68 Days Is Claim To Fame." (Feb 2007 issue.) I must have made a typing error or old age is creeping up on me. The number of days should have been 99, not 68, and I was 19 years old, not 18 as it says in the article.

Sorry for the misinformation. I bet I'll get some flak over those numbers.

John J. Nicastro, Sr.
358th Sqdn Navigator

"FOREVER GRATEFUL" TO 303RD'S FAULKNER

Daddy didn't talk about the war. We knew he was stationed somewhere in England as a tail gunner. He passed away in December of 1991 leaving his four children with many unanswered questions.

In October of 2006 I arrived at Memorial Hospital for my emergency room volunteer training. I was lucky enough to meet Mr. Lee Faulkner, an 18 year volunteer. He was assigned the task of training me. Lee was noticeably loved and admired by all.

As the weeks went by he began to share stories of his military career and I felt an immediate and strange connection between Lee's stories and the little I knew of Daddy's war experiences.

Lee talked to me extensively about the 303rd Bomb Group that was stationed in Molesworth, England. I searched the internet looking for information about the 303rd. I found a site which included a personnel listing. I burst into tears when I came across the name of my Dad, Lawrence Hankins.

We now know they were not only stationed in Molesworth at the same time, but in the same squadron,

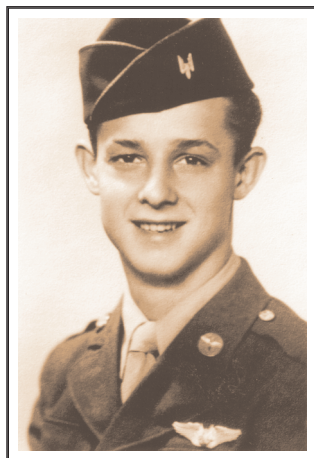
the 360th, as gunners. Now that I knew Daddy was a member of McCormack's crew, I typed in McCormack and to my everlasting joy, there was a picture of Daddy, 25 years old, with his crew in front of a B-17.

My older sister Mary Lou, my twin brothers Mike and Mark and I will be forever grateful to Lee for helping to finally paint a complete picture of our Dad's story. What a small, small world!

Linda (Hankins) Ransom
Colorado Springs, CO

303RD GUNNER HELPED ORGANIZE VETS GROUP

When I got home from a veterans' luncheon today, the Hell's Angels Newsletter was waiting for me. Thought you'd like to know that these luncheon meetings are something four of us started about four years ago. We had 28 there today at Denny's in Concord, California, all local veterans no matter what service or what war. If I remember right, there were eight POW's in the 28. Here's a picture of me in 1945.



Ralph Brehl
427th Ball Turret Gunner

POW FRIENDSHIPS ENDURE OVER YEARS

Remembering fondly some of your 303rd Bomb

Group POW boys in Stalag 17: our camp leader K. J. Kurtenbach, Ed Sexton, musician Bob Garcia. To those hundreds of POW's who knew the American leader of Stalag 17-B, he was simply "Kurt." But, to Myrtle, his wife, and others he was better known as "Joe." Many hundreds of friendships began at the Stalag and have endured for over half a century and beyond.

Edward McKenzie
Albany, NH

COMPARING THE B-17 TO HIS 1957 CHEVY

I would like to take this opportunity once again to thank you and all of the 303rd for welcoming me as your bus guide on a very enjoyable tour of Randolph Air Force Base last September. You are my heroes.

The B-17 and the men who flew it have always been very special in my heart. I always compare the B-17 to the '57 Chevy, just beautiful machines that can never be duplicated. The B-17 was a piece of artwork that can never be duplicated.

M/Sgt. Jeff Womack
USAF, Retired

REMEMBERING 303RD'S GEORGE STALLINGS

One of our family's oldest friends, now long dead, was a B-17 pilot in the Eighth Air Force — Capt. George V. Stallings. We met him, his wife and their children after the war when we were all assigned to Waller Field on the island of Trinidad where my father served as an Engineering Officer.

I am still in touch with three of his children who grew up in the Air Force as I did. His two daughters live in England with their families. He has two sons living in the U.S.

I recall that George was assigned to the 360th Bomb Squadron of the 303rd Bombardment Group. He became famous in a *Life Magazine* picture story for his heroism when he nursed his crippled B-17 to the coast of England, let his crew bail out and then turned the aircraft out to sea and bailed out himself.

As the story goes, George, who was an excellent swimmer, was observed by people living on the coast as he descended into the sea. Then, they watched as he swam to the beach and emerged to walk up to waiting people. An elderly woman, who had witnessed the whole event, greeted him and offered him a glass of gin on the spot.

Bruce K. Byers
Reston, VA

GOING THE EXTRA 303RD MILE ON HIS GOLF CART!

Over the years, I've seen a number of pictures of auto license plates depicting bomb groups. Thought the Hell's Angels Newsletter might find interest in my golf cart, golf bag and club covers. I am now retired USAF, have a son who is retired USAF, and a grandson who is a cadet at the USAF Academy, Class of 2010.

Thomas Hardin
360th Sqdn Pilot



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

Nick Asvestos	359 th	1/10/2007
Richard T. Blomberg, Jr.	358 th	5/12/2007
Ernest Paul Boat	358 th	1/9/2003
John E. Borg	358 th	8/4/2005
Charles F. Cassidy	360 th	4/28/2007
Charles F. Coe	358 th	4/17/07
Howard Gravrock	360 th	3/25/07
Thomas Gunderson	427 th	1994
Franklin C. Hall	359 th	May 2005
Donald L. Haynes	360 th	4/1/2007
James L. Hollowell	358 th	2/7/2007
Chester S. Maluchnik	358 th	2/15/2007
Lowell James Mann	358 th	3/1/2007
William F. Miller	359 th	2/15/2007
Clement Resto	358 th	4/11/2007
Elmer W. Roesner	359 th	5/22/2007
Clarence V. Sanderson	3 rd SC	10/28/1999
Frank A. Saunders, Jr.	359 th	3/17/2007
Peter Schaafsma	427 th	4/18/2007
Richard O. Schacht	427 th	1/28/2001
Don J. Schwarzenbach	358 th	3/14/2007
Elbert E. Stone	358 th	4/28/2007
Ami L. Sumarlidason	358 th	12/8/2003
Joe B. Vogel	358 th	2/22/2007
Clyde E. Wagner	358 th	7/19/1967
Lawrence E. Wilson	360 th	11/24/2006
Arthur J. Worthington	360 th	4/27/2007

NEW MEMBERS

Mary Middleton, RR 1 Box 603, Graham, TX
76450-9727 (940) 456-1901 – Assoc.

Frank X. O'Brien (Ellen), 119 Ranch Lane,
Levittown, NY 11756-4696 (516)731-5429 – 359th F

Richard F. O'Leary, 2301 EW. 52ne Ave #17,
Anchorage, AK 99507-1651 – 427th F

Larry J. Baxter, 112 Lakewood Pkwy, Burlington,
VT 05408-2763, (802) 862-1213 – Assoc.

ORDER FORM

Hell's Angels Newsletter *The Final Six Years—* *A World War II Retrospective*

If, as a family or Associate Member, you have sent in a pledge to purchase one or more volumes of the final newsletter collection, please consider this your invoice. Copy this page and send it along with your check in the amount of \$50.00 per copy, payable to **The 303rd Bomb Group Association**. Send to: **303rd Bomb Group Treasurer, 441 Sandstone Drive, Vacaville CA 95688-4225.**

If you have not pledged previously to order a copy of *Hell's Angels Newsletter, The Final Six Years—A World War II Retrospective*, and now want to purchase, please fill out the form and send as instructed above.

I wish to order _____ copies of *Hell's Angels Newsletter, The Final Six Years—A World War II Retrospective*, at \$50.00 per copy.

Please ship to:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____

Enclosed is my Check for:

\$ _____

Remember, all 303rd Veterans who are living Members of the Association will receive a copy free of charge, but only on request. If you have not already requested a gift book, do so now in a letter to the Treasurer at the address shown above.

Books will be printed and shipped soonest after the November 2007 newsletter has been published.



A RARE LOOK AT A B-17G FLYING FORTRESS AIRBORNE WITH A B-52H STRATOFORTRESS—The B-17 is *Thunderbird*, owned by the Lone Star Flight Museum in Galveston, Texas. The B-52 is a Second Bomb Wing aircraft. They flew in the “Defenders of Liberty Air Show” at Barksdale Air Force Base in Louisiana. (USAF photo by M/Sgt Michael Kaplan)

THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

There's a lot in the news these days coming out of the war in Iraq about *post traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD). The cause is broadly stated as “the experiencing of psychologically traumatic events outside the range of normal human experience.” That seemed like an apt description of what we went through on aerial combat missions against Nazi Germany, so I did some reading on the subject.

According to Dr. David P. Niles, more than one million combatants in all U.S. service branches exposed to violence during World War II suffered debilitating psychiatric symptoms. In well over 300,000 of these cases the symptoms were severe enough to warrant military discharge. The condition wasn't known as *post traumatic stress disorder* in those days. It wasn't called PTSD until after the war in Vietnam.

During the first World War, it was known as *shell shock*. During WWII it was called *combat fatigue* in the American military. The term used in the British Royal Air Force was harsher—LMF or *lack of moral fibre*. The contributing factors in flying combat missions were the constant threat of death or injury, the intensity and frequency of the experience, and each person's individual ability to withstand the trauma.

During my 30 missions, which included a ditching on the sixth, a crash landing on the 11th and a bail-out on the 14th, I don't recall that any member of my crew or of other crews who faced the guns of the enemy sought counseling from the flight surgeon. But, there were a few instances when airmen were suddenly shipped out and you never knew why or heard from them again. And airmen who stayed at post and were transferred to ground support duties never to fly combat missions again. Some of these men were our own crew mates, and when we saw them in their new jobs there was never any questioning or scorn.

I think each of us knew that somewhere, deep down, we had our own breaking point.

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