

# Hell's Angels Newsletter

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.

November, 2007

## Hell's Angels Veterans Honored as 303rd BGA Nears "Deactivation"

### *Final Reunion a Triumphant Tribute By Family Members, a Memorable Alternative to Just "Fading Away"*

303rd Bomb Group veterans and their family members who have been attending reunions over the years hailed the 2007 gathering from September 20 to 24 as the most outstanding in the 32-year history of the Association.

Registrations totaled 560, the largest number since the 1995 reunion in Colorado Springs. The most remarkable difference, however, was the outpouring of family. Most accompanied their veterans. Others included widows and families who came for the express purpose of honoring the memory of their veterans.

It's estimated that of the 560 persons in attendance, only 120 were surviving 303rd Bomb Group veterans—each more than 80 years of age.

While there were a multitude of reunion highlights, the most distinctive were the Memorial Service and the farewell banquet.

The annual Memorial Service was staged at the World War II Memorial in Washington, beyond doubt the most appropriate setting for a gathering of World War II veterans. The program was conducted by Eddie Deerfield, and began with

the posting of the colors by the United States Air Force Color Guard, the playing of the national anthem by the Air Force band's ceremonial brass quintet, and an invocation by the 303rd's own Rene Gracida, retired bishop of Corpus Christi, Texas.

A letter was read to the assemblage from Lew Lyle, who wrote, "I'm 91 years old. Something broke and the doc's can't seem to fix it, so I'm homebound. Have a good time. I will miss you." His message evoked a round of applause out of respect for the best known of the 303rd combat airmen.

Senator John Cornyn of Texas was the keynote speaker, representing President Bush who was unable to attend but noted in a letter from The White House that "this event is an opportunity to renew the strong bonds of friendships forged in adversity and celebrate the proud history and achievements of the 303rd Bomb Group."

The names of 174 303rd veterans who passed away or became known as deceased since the 2006 gathering in San Antonio were read aloud by 303rd BGA Vice President for Administration Ed Gardner, Secre-



**A US AIR FORCE COLOR GUARD posted the colors to open the 303rd Bomb Group's Memorial Service in the inspirational surroundings of the World War II Memorial in the nation's capital.**

tary Harold "Red" Timm and Reunion Coordinator Eddie Deerfield. As the last name, Arthur Zewert, was read, US Air Force M/Sgt. Michael Bosch sounded "Taps."

A wreath was placed by President Bill Cox and an escort of veterans at the foot of a bronze plaque depicting a combat air crew at a B-17.

The final banquet on the evening of Sunday, 23 September, was a kaleidoscope of stirring music, speeches, awards, the retiring of the gavel, and a spectacular floorshow.

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## 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

# Hell's Angels Newsletter

Editor--Eddie Deerfield

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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 were being accepted with the payment of a one-time \$25.00 dues/registration fee, but this has been discontinued.

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## ELECTED OFFICERS — EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### President

William H. Cox (Jean)  
441 Sandstone Drive, Vacaville, CA 95688-4225  
TEL: (707) 448-0571, EM: Pilotrb36@aol.com

### Vice President - Administration

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

### Secretary

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

### Editor, Hell's Angels Newsletter

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

### Treasurer

Jean Cox (Bill)  
441 Sandstone Drive  
Vacaville, CA 95688-4225  
TEL: (707) 448-0571  
EM: Treas303rd@aol.com

### Past Presidents Chairman

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

### Director of Internet Operations

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

## ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### 358th Bomb Sqd. Representative

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

### 359th Bomb Sqd. Representative

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

### 358th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

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

### 359th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

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

## ELECTED TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Continued)

### 360th Bomb Sqd. Representative

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

### 360th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Richard "Spider" Smith  
790 Crenshaw Drive  
Hemet, CA 92543-4793  
TEL: (951) 652-4793

### 427th Bomb Sqd. Representative

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

### 427th Bomb Sqd. Alternate

Richard "Dick" Johnson (Marjorie)  
5901 Joe Road  
Deale, MD 20751-9739  
TEL: (410) 867-0597

### HQ, 444th Air Depot Representative

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

### HQ, 444th Air Depot Alternate

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

### Family & Associate Member Rep

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

### Family & Associate Member Alt

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

## APPOINTED COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

### Membership & Roster

Jean Cox (Bill)  
441 Sandstone Drive  
Vacaville, CA 95688-4225  
TEL: (707) 448-0571  
EM: Treas303rd@aol.com

### Reunion Chairman

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

### PX Administrator

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

### United Kingdom Representative

Robin Beeby  
8 Teal Close, Burton Latimer  
Northamptonshire, England  
NN15 5TP  
TEL: USA 011-44-153-651-6423

## HONORARY OFFICES

### Editor Emeritus

Harold A. Susskind  
2602 Deerfoot Trail  
Austin, TX 78704-2716  
TEL: (512) 441-6475  
EM: hasusskind@hotmail.com

### Historian Emeritus

Harry D. Gobrecht  
505 Via Deseo  
San Clemente, CA 92672-2462  
TEL: (949) 361-2662  
EM: Pilot8thaf@aol.com

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





**THE US NAVY PROVIDED A COLOR GUARD for the banquet, joining US Army musicians to salute 303rd Bomb Group veterans at their final gathering.**



**M/SGT. BEVERLEY BANDA AND M/SGT. JOE HOLT of the US Army Band, with S/Sgt. Colin Eaton on the piano, sang a variety of favorites of the World War II era.**

## NAVY POSTS COLORS, ARMY SINGS TO HONOR 303RD VETERANS AT BANQUET

After the inspiring presence of US Air Force ceremonial personnel at the 303rd BGA's memorial service, the military icing on the cake came the following evening at the banquet when a Navy Color Guard and an Army trio of musicians celebrated the combat history of the 303rd.

The evening opened with the posting of the colors, the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mary Hemminger, daughter of the 303rd's late Chaplain Robert Johnson, and the conveying of God's blessing by Chaplain Rene Gracida.

Immediately following dinner, the Broadway Trio of the US Army Band performed such favorites as "Sentimental Journey," "Autumn Leaves" and "White Cliffs of Dover."

Reunion Committee Chairman Eddie Deerfield, serving as master of ceremonies, read a letter dated 21 September from Walter Cronkite which said, in part, "Just now I have learned that I cannot be with you, and I suffer deep disappointment. I wanted so much to see you all again—you courageous men of the 303rd Bomb Group whose achievements I reported to a grateful nation during World War II. The 303rd wrote in the skies of Europe an incredible history of valiance."

Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering, who joined the Boeing Company as Senior Vice President for International Relations after a distinguished diplomatic career, spoke glowingly of Boeing's B-17 bomber and the 303rd's accomplishments.

He was followed by General T. Michael Moseley, USAF Chief of Staff, who recounted a history of the United States Air Force and the significant role of the 303rd Bomb Group in the progression from an Army Air Corps to a full-fledged US Air Force.

There were four "President's Award of Excellence" presented to Gary Moncur, Charlie and Vicki Sykes, Harry Gobrecht (in absentia due to illness) and Eddie Deerfield. The gavel was retired as every 303rd BGA past president at the reunion came forward for a unique ceremony. President Cox and his wife, Treasurer Jean Cox, were then honored with a Board of Director's Award.

The evening ended with a rousing floor show by Doc Scantlin and his Imperial Palms orchestra, and music for dancing when the aging veterans showed their juniors that they could still trip the light fantastic.



**GENERAL T. MICHAEL MOSELEY, USAF CHIEF OF STAFF, gave the keynote speech at the banquet. He found time, also, to present "Challenge Coins" to 10-year-old Ian, Gary and Susan Moncur's grandson.**



**AMBASSADOR THOMAS R. PICKERING chats with Mary Lee Deerfield. He served as Boeing's Senior Vice President for International Relations after a distinguished career in the US Department of State.**



THE EDITOR THANKS GARY MONCUR, WHO TOOK MOST OF THE REUNION PHOTOS IN THIS FINAL ISSUE OF THE *HELL'S ANGELS NEWSLETTER* ....

# Memorial Service



**SOLEMN MOMENT** as the United States Air Force Color Guard posts the colors and the USAF Ceremonial Band plays the National Anthem. The Lincoln Memorial and the dancing fountains made an inspiring background.



**SENATOR JOHN CORNYN OF TEXAS**, son of the late Lt. John "Tex" Cornyn, 427th Squadron pilot, stepped in as the principal speaker when President Bush sent regrets that he was unable to attend.



**303RD BOMB GROUP VETERANS AND FAMILY MEMBERS** observed the memorable ceremony while seated on the grassy slopes and concrete steps on the Plaza of the World War II Memorial.



**THE 303RD BGA'S WREATH** was carried by Treasurer Jean Cox to be placed on the far side of the Memorial at the foot of a bronze panel depicting a B-17 and combat crew. Several veterans escorted her.



# ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE FOR LUNCH AND TOUR



**ELEVEN BUSES CARRYING MORE THAN 500 303RD VETERANS AND FAMILY** left the World War II Memorial after the ceremony for lunch at The Club of Andrews AFB and a windshield tour. One of the bus guides, known as the “Andrews Tour Ambassadors,” was S/Sgt Lindsay Rausch of the 316th Wing.

## AND LATER, BACK AT THE HOTEL....



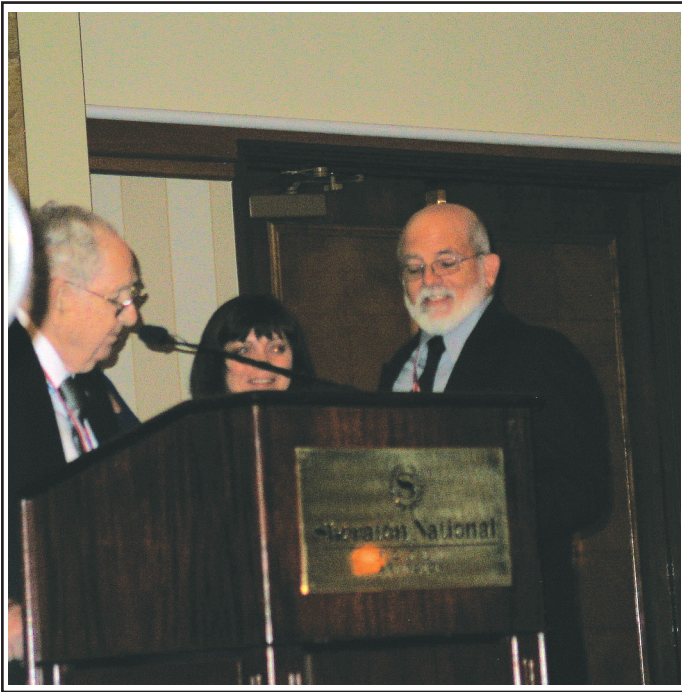
**THE EVER-POPULAR WATERING HOLE** was again managed by Harold “Red” Timm, with the aid of his family and members of the Lee Faulkner clan. As always, it was the place to socialize. Carl Dubose extends the hand of friendship.

**SHARING THE HOSPITALITY ROOM** was a World War II memorabilia display set up members of the Capital Wing of the Airman’s Preservation Society who also dressed the part. Mike Crosman, their leader (4th from left in photo), said “Words cannot express how honored we were to attend your final reunion.” His crew also staged a mock briefing based on records of the second Schweinfurt raid.

**STEPHEN McCOLAUGH** is a talented builder of model B-17’s. He displayed several of his authentic scale models based on Flying Fortresses that flew combat missions in the 303rd Bomb Group.







**HONORING CHARLIE AND VICKI SYKES** for more than 10 years of service as managers of the 303rd Bomb Group Association's PX operations throughout the year from their home in Phoenix, AZ, and at every reunion.



**HONORING GARY MONCUR**, the 303rd BGA's Director of Internet Operations, for establishing an outstanding web site telling the Hell's Angels story to the world, and for his plan to sustain it well into the future.

## *President's Award Of Excellence*

**HONORING EDDIE DEERFIELD** for serving nine years as editor of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter*, for managing five of the Group's reunions, and for editing and publishing a three-volume collection of 32 years of 303rd newsletters.



**BILL AND JEAN COX**, President and Treasurer, respectively, were honored with a Board of Directors Award for distinguished service, extraordinary skill and dedication in the final two years of the 303rd BG Association.







## Banquet Music Brings Back 1940's Nostalgia

Doc Scantlin And His Imperial Palms Orchestra were a sensational fit for the 303rd BGA's farewell banquet. From the moment songstress Chou Chou opened the evening with a respectful rendition of the Star Spangled Banner to music for the final dance number, the room rang with melodies well known and loved by the Group's veterans. The band's 19 musicians and the three girl singers, who performed in the style of the era's Andrews Sisters, were all in perfect harmony with the audience. The balance of music and ceremonies made the evening an affair to be remembered.







## CONGRESSIONAL RESOLUTION HONORS 303RD BOMB GROUP

Congressman Thaddeus G. McCotter of Michigan introduced a Resolution in the House of Representatives on September 18, 2007, which was passed unanimously. Following are excerpts from the document:

"Expressing the nation's sincerest appreciation and thanks for the service of members of the 303rd Bombardment Group (Heavy) upon the occasion of their final reunion;

"Whereas the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) flew its first mission on November 17, 1942, and its last mission on April 25, 1945;

"Whereas the 303rd Bombardment Group's B-17 'Hell's Angels' was the first to successfully complete 25 combat missions on May 13, 1943, six days prior to the 'Memphis Belle's' same accomplishment;

"Whereas the 303rd Bomb Group (H) flew 364 combat missions against enemy targets, the most of any B-17 Bomb Group in the 8th Air Force;

"Whereas two 303rd Bombardment Group (H) airmen were awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, four were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, 33 were awarded the Silver Star, and approximately 1,200 Purple Hearts were awarded for those killed or wounded in action;

"Whereas due to age and the declining health of the 303rd Bombardment Group (H) veterans, the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association Board of Directors has made the difficult decision to dissolve the Association at the end of 2007;

"Now, therefore, be it resolved that—

"(1) the dedicated men and women who served in the 8th Air Force, 303rd Bombardment Group (H) 'Hell's Angels' during World War II are heroes and champions of American freedom; and

"(2) the House of Representatives, on behalf of a grateful nation, recognizes the final reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association and commends the honorable veterans of the Association who never once turned away from their assigned target, for their selfless service to our country."

## *From The President*

When I became the 55<sup>th</sup> member of the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group (H) Association, back in 1978, little did I imagine someday I would have the honor of being President, much less the dubious honor of being the last President of the Association. At each Reunion before I accepted the position of Treasurer and then President, I just attended and enjoyed being with my combat crewmembers and former Quonset mates. As the years swiftly passed, I have seen the overall membership numbers become smaller, including my crew there are only three of us left.

Regardless of our age and health situations, I was really pleased to see the large turn out of our family members who made the effort to attend our final Reunion. The attendance far exceeded our planning estimates and we had to acquire rooms in a second hotel and sadly turn away people who did not register on time.

The Executive Board's voted to subsidize the Registration Fee, in an attempt to make it more financially feasible for some of our members to attend. We did this based on a projected attendance of 300 people, which was more than double the attendance at our last two Reunions. With a registration of 566, this put a bit of a strain on our finances and we had to go back on our word to eliminate donations in the hospitality room. Our members took that in stride and were more than generous and I thank those in attendance for that.

Jim McCoy and Rob Galbraith are now working hard to see what they can do to create a successor organization or more accurately what can be done, with the support of other family members. You will be able to track their progress and garner information on the website. [WWW.303rdbg.com/legacy.html](http://WWW.303rdbg.com/legacy.html)

At the Board Meeting on Thursday, September 20, 2007, the Board voted that any remaining assets will be gifted to the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum. So whether we have \$1.50 or \$1,500.00 or more that's where it will go. If you wish to receive a copy of the last minutes please contact Red Timm.

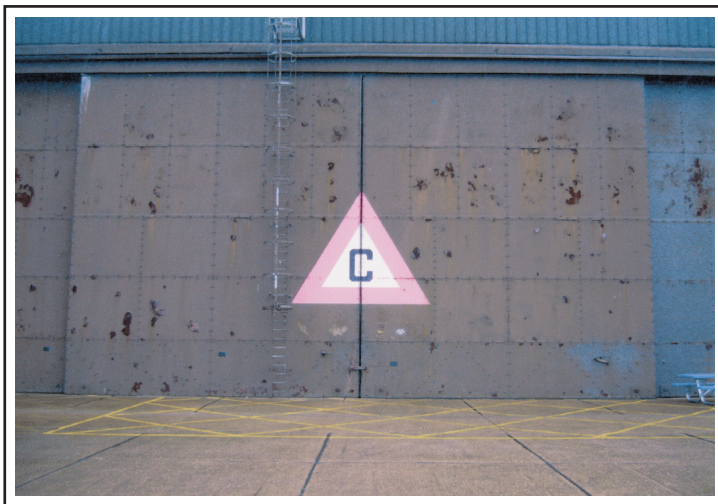
There are so many things about the Reunion I would like to share with you, but the pictures and articles Eddie has included really tell the story.

Personally, I think we truly saved the best for last. The Memorial Service at the WW II Memorial was my personal highlight. Having General Moseley speak at the banquet closely followed it and then we were taken back in time with the terrific Doc Scantlin Orchestra and the best music ever! The Music of our generation!

Until we meet again,

**William (Bill) Cox**

# TRIANGLE-C EMBLEM RESTORED TO “UPHOLD HERITAGE” OF 303RD BG



**THE OLD**



**AND**

**THE NEW**

**By T/Sgt Phillip Allen  
US Air Force**

Readers of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* know that the massive sliding doors of the original main hangar at RAF Molesworth have been removed and replaced by a new wall and smaller entrance. The old doors had the 303d Bomb Group's "Triangle-C" emblem painted on them. To many of us at RAF's Molesworth and Alconbury it was as if the end of an era had come.

Our community here is not just US Department of Defense personnel, but also Great Britain's Ministry of Defense, (MoD). We work side by side with the British on multiple projects everyday; even 60+ years later! Some MoD employees are even old enough to remember the Americans during WWII.

At ceremonies and special events I've been thanked on occasions by British veterans and civilians for what the Americans did to defend our brethren in the United Kingdom during WWII.

There are numerous individuals on both sides of "The Pond" who appreciate the heroism, sacrifice and exploits of the Allied powers fighting the Axis powers during WWII.

That is the "big deal" with replacing the "Triangle -C" emblem on the old main hangar for B-17's, now known as building 84. We are upholding our heritage and proposing to recognize what many people take for granted today.

That was the general attitude with the 423d Civil Engineering Squadron when a project was initiated to

reinstate the 303rd's logo on the building. Coupled with the 303d BG's final reunion, it all seemed to make sense to those involved in the project. The project was expedited especially to ensure it would be completed before the 303d reunion.

Nigel Foster (MoD) said, "The scaffolding took a day to put up and then the sign was located and fixed in place. The insignia is heat-laid plastic on sheet-aluminum and will be good for twenty years or so, but it will have to be occasionally washed. The 12 foot long, even-sided triangle emblem was brought in three pieces and each section bolted to the new cladding. The parts required two men to lift each section into place. The project cost about \$4,000 including installation.

"There is certainly a general sense of pride amongst us all now the sign is up, giving the building a great focal point. Many employees working in building 84 were happy to see the 303rd's emblem back on their building. It even sparked curiosity as to the meaning of the emblem; once again bringing to mind the history of the 303d."

Nigel added there was a second sign made that may be added to the other end of the building. He also pointed out that the project was done in time for the anniversary of the 2001, September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks.

I was running on base for physical training recently when I heard the familiar hum of Pratt and Whitney Twin-Wasp radials. I stopped in my tracks to look around and saw a restored C-47 lumbering through the sky above the base. It was just another reminder to the many of us who want to keep alive the memory of those who fought for our freedom.



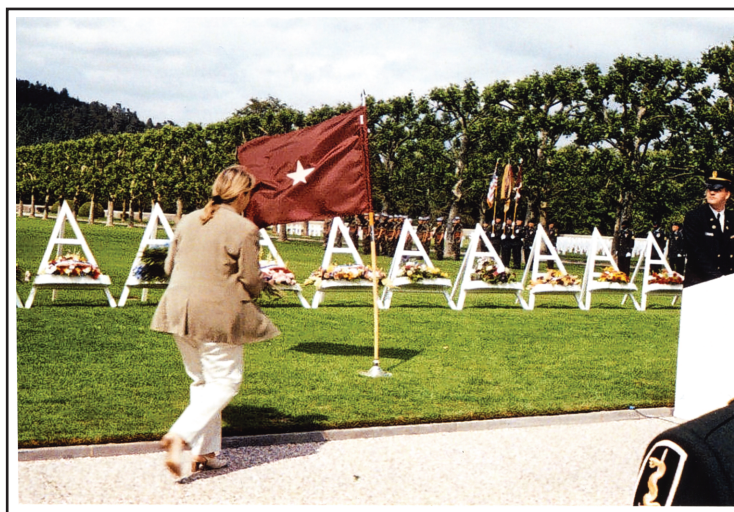
**In Memorial Day 2007 ceremonies at nine American cemeteries in Europe, foreign friends of the 303rd Bomb Group placed wreaths to honor the World War II service of the famed Hell's Angels of the U.S. 8th Air Force.**

*(Photos courtesy of Gary Moncur, 303rd BG Director of Internet Operations)*

**Jan-Willem van de Griendt of the Netherlands placed a wreath honoring 303rd Bomb Group veterans at the Margraten Cemetery in the Netherlands (photo on the right) and provided and delivered wreaths for the Memorial Day services at the Ardennes Cemetery in Belgium ( below left) and the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Belgium (below right).**



**Therese Treard, whose father was a French soldier and a prisoner of the Germans, showed her appreciation of the sacrifices of U.S. troops by placing a 303rd Bomb Group wreath at the Epinal American Cemetery in France.**



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# REMEMBERED IN EUROPE



Margaret Heesen-Schoch, accompanied by her husband, Jean, visited two cemeteries to present 303rd Bomb Group wreaths. On the left, she stands behind her wreath at the Brittany American Cemetery in France. Above, an Airman carries the wreath she presented for ceremonies at Normandy. Margaret is the niece of the 427th Squadron's Phillip Schoch, killed on a mission to Metz, Germany on November 9, 1944.

It was a rainy day at the Cambridge American Cemetery near Madingley in England on May 28 when Robin Beeby came out lay the 303rd Bomb Group wreath.

Many British and American civilian dignitaries along with military members of all ranks attended the ceremonies and placed wreaths at the base of the Memorial Wall.



At the Lorraine American Cemetery in France, Arnaud Beinatz stood at attention in front of his 303rd Bomb Group wreath tribute. In the distance, an American flag flew at half mast.



Henry Schmit placed a wreath in Luxembourg at one of the cemetery's nine markers where 303rd dead lie buried.





**AMERICAN PRISONERS OF WAR ARRIVING AT THE TRAIN STATION IN BARTH.** Next stop—Stalag Luft I, a strip of land on the Baltic Sea, 105 miles northwest of Berlin. It was “home” to officers of the 358th’s Bass crew for 15 months.

# “MILK RUN” MISSION TO FRANCE ENDS IN GERMAN STALAG LUFT

**By Milton B. Abernathy  
Navigator, 358th Squadron**

We were called as an alternate crew to fly a mission to Dijon, France, on 6 February 1944. Looked like a “milk run,” only 16,000 feet over the target with minimum German resistance expected. The briefing was correct, but an engine burst into flame and Sam Bass, our pilot, told the crew to bail out. Replacement Co-Pilot Myron Goldman was killed in the action; the rest of the 10-man crew became prisoners of war.

On arrival by train to Barth, Germany, we walked about seven to ten miles to Stalag Luft I, a POW camp used primarily for US Army Air Corps officers. Over 250 were crowded in our barracks with three toilets and three sinks. Only two of the toilets were operational.

The Germans did not feed us in a mess hall. They made available barley soup, bread and potatoes, and we rationed it to ourselves, barracks by barracks. Daily rations were two slices of black bread, a bowl of soup and one potato. It was only when the Germans allowed us to have Red Cross parcels that we had enough to eat. During the summer of 1944, Russian and Polish forced farm laborers risked their lives by tossing some vegetables over the compound fence.

Some of the boys got too weak to walk. They were bad enough for the Germans to excuse them from roll call. Word got out somehow, and relief came after, according to rumors, the 8th Air Force threatened to level major cities. More food was released. The Red Cross was allowed into camp to give the prisoners tetanus shots and medical supplies. One British doctor was serving the needs of thousands of POW’s. He was a great surgeon. The guards made a sport out of shooting POW’s who failed to hear the air raid sirens in Barth

and return to their barracks in time. The doctor saved the lives of many of those with bullet wounds.

Our German guards were mostly old men. One was a former butcher in New York City and another had been a waiter in a café in Washington, DC. We heard that the Stalag Luft I Commandant had lived in California and planned to go back after the war. Dogs accompanied the guards on all roll call and search operations. They ran free during the night.

We spent most of our time planning escape attempts. Colonel Malstrom was our ranking USAAF officer, and he set up groups to check and approve all plans. Escape plans ranged from a single man to large groups of 20 or more. I was not a member of any of the escape groups but helped with security.

We needed resources for escapee hopefuls, food preparation and living improvements. The barbed wire had potential. Some of it, out of sight of guards and towers, disappeared and was converted into bed springs after the barbs were removed. These tightly drawn wires made a better base for our straw mattresses than the wood they replaced. The wood was not wasted. It made good support for escape tunnels. Also, we carved many small items with pocket knives gained through trade with vulnerable guards.

All trading was made by carefully selected representatives from each barracks. Our man had been an experienced negotiator in his family-owned business back home and could speak their language. Most trades were cigarettes from Red Cross parcels for vegetables, but occasionally knives and simple tools were obtained to help on small building projects. But, never a radio!

We had lots of time to spend reading, playing cards,



chess and the like. During these times, we learned a lot about ourselves and each other. All of us had interesting stories of being shot down, captured, interrogated and escape attempts. There were reported successful landings in only part of a tail blown off a B-17 and survivors of jumping without a parachute and landing in soft mud or deep snow.

There was a familiar pattern to the escape attempts. The guards let us plan to the moment of escape, and then stepped in. They did this on a long term tunnel plan in a barracks near mine. Many of us had helped with hiding dirt in the ceilings, dropping dirt out of our clothes while we walked on the parade grounds, carving wood supports for the tunnel and so forth. The guards allowed the work to continue until one night we thought we had it made and the line to freedom formed. The first men to emerge from the tunnel in open farm land were facing German rifles. They were punished for trying to escape.

The closest any came to escape were two fighter pilots who found a place where they could vault over the compound's double fence and barbed wire. They were captured and brought back to the camp after a few days of freedom.

When we first came to Stalag Luft I in February 1944 we were subject to security clearance by our fellow officers already there. A suspected German plant among the officers would be told nothing and watched as closely as the guards. The rest were assigned responsibilities for taking over the camp and surrounding areas as soon as the Germans were defeated or left. Our Air Force fliers had the engineers, mechanics and specialists to take over the camp when the time came. We did just that when the guards ran away from the oncoming Russians in May of 1945. Due to lack of technical experience, I was assigned to guard duty.

I don't know who was involved, but it happened in my compound. Not long before the Russian advance, our Stalag Luft I identification cards disappeared. It was during roll call one morning that the Germans lost our ID's. They became more and more upset as they could not find the ID papers by searching barracks and raking all the grounds while we were kept at "parade rest." The guards became very dangerous throughout the day and into the evening as they found no signs of the records. We stayed quiet in the open field until late in the night. Finally, the Germans gave up and made new ID photos and records for all of us.

One of the saddest days we experienced was the day our Jewish roommates were separated from us. All American Jews were transferred to a special part of the camp for unknown reasons but we suspected the worst. Two were taken from our room, but a third was missed because he had not had the conventional circumcision the Germans expected. Luckily, the war ended before the Germans could do anything further with our Jewish friends.

Just before May Day, 1945, all able-bodied Germans began evacuating out of fear of the Russians. By the time the first Russian troops arrived we had taken over the camp according to plan. We had secured the Barth airfield and also took over water plants, electric power plants and motor vehicle depots and put them in working order. The Russians wanted all the facilities but our



**THE BASS CREW OF THE 358TH SQUADRON—Standing, I-to-r, Alfonso Quevedo, Julius Bass, James Burns, Matthew Zientar, Milton Abernathy and James Hensley. Kneeling, John Grsetic, Michael Canale, Anthony Hendricks and Harold Brown.**

most senior officers negotiated. We kept control of the airport and Stalag Luft I. We gave Barth and its civilians to the Russians. They set up a strict curfew for the German inhabitants and told us to stay out of town.

As mentioned earlier, my responsibility was guard duty. It was a very strange feeling pulling guard duty against the Russians. I felt no emotion even when a couple of very tall Siberian soldiers came near with their "liberated" bikes. I motioned they could not go any closer to our camp. They just stopped and gave me a mock showing of knife fighting and then rode off toward Barth happy.

The Russians offered to take us home through Odessa, but we waited for our 8th Air Force. They set up a little stage and brought in entertainers similar to our USO shows. They sang and danced, playing instruments while guns were kept propped between their legs. The women entertainers were good, but could not begin to keep up with the men.

It was about 10 days before American air transport arrived and we were flown to Camp Lucky Strike where we were housed in tents and ate the same food being served to German POW's. General Eisenhower stopped by to see us, and said it would be a while before our turn to be shipped home.

Another navigator and I decided to visit Paris even though we had no proper uniform, money or authorized leave. We were on the road thumbing for a ride when two colonels came by. They took us into Paris, and dropped us off near a Red Cross facility. The Red Cross gave us some cigarettes to use as currency. We soon found we didn't need any money. The French took one look at our crazy uniforms and refused to let us pay admission fees to any of the sights. We had no trouble exchanging our cigarettes for food and hotel rooms.

We waited about six weeks at Camp Lucky Strike and then boarded the USS Hermitage, a former Italian cruise ship. We had a very smooth six-day voyage, and then came the welcome sight of New York City.



# WOUNDED IN 1943, FRANK BARTLETT GETS HIS PURPLE HEART IN 2007

By Tammy Alhadeff

Published with permission of the Pueblo (Colo) Chieftain

After 64 years, U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Frank W. Bartlett finally received an honor he should have received in World War II, had the records not been misplaced.

Bartlett, now 84, lost his eye in 1943 while jumping out of an aircraft that was crippled by enemy flak and fighters during an aerial bombardment mission over St. Nazaire, France.

He was presented with the Purple Heart that was awarded to him all those years ago during a ceremony at his daughter's ranch. As many as 75 people attended the event, which included members of the Army's 1st Cavalry Division and a horseback-riding presentation by children from the Journey Home Horse-powered Learning Center.

Cheers erupted from the crowd as Maj. Gen. Mike Edwards, Colorado National Guard adjutant general, pinned the medal on Bartlett's chest.

A letter, written by the pilot of the B-17 bomber from which Bartlett jumped, prompted the Army to locate the records and honor Bartlett, who served as a waist gunner on a bomber crew with the 303rd Bombardment Group based in Molesworth, England.

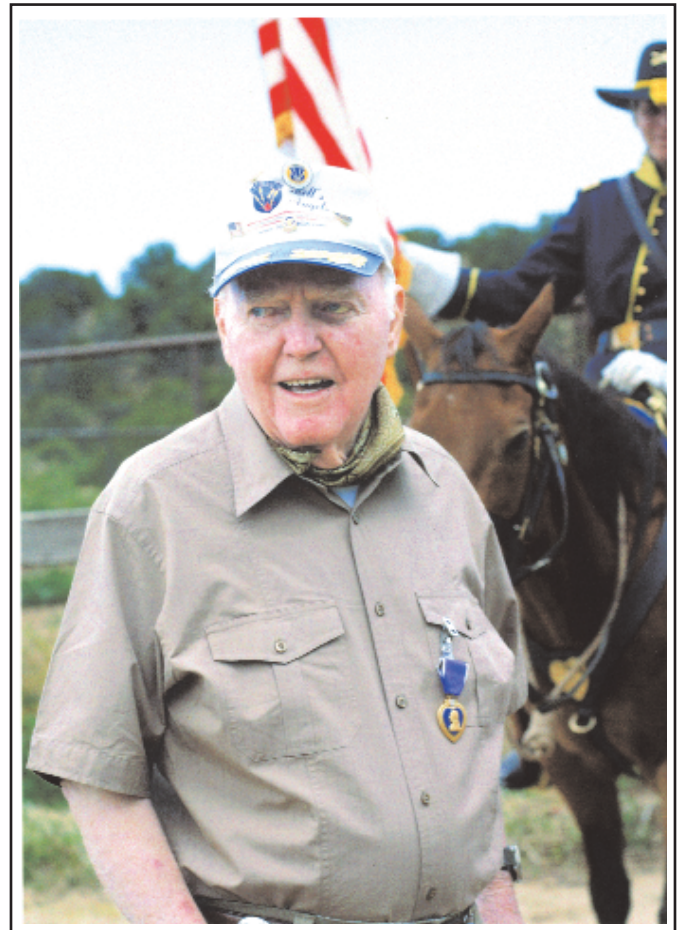
The general read from the letter before presenting Bartlett with the long-overdue medal:

"Staff Sgt. Frank W. Bartlett had already completed his required 25 missions, but went on his 27th with me that day out of loyalty," wrote the former Colonel Joseph Trojan.

Injured and unconscious, Bartlett jumped from the plane with the help of fellow crew members as the aircraft went down. Although Bartlett told Trojan that he didn't remember pulling his ripcord, the parachute opened.

Trojan said Bartlett was found by German troops and taken to a hospital where his eye was removed and he was treated for injuries to his chest, arm and head. He was taken to an interrogation camp a month later and then taken by boxcar to the German prison camp Stalag 17-B at Krems, Austria. He remained there as a prisoner of war for 16 months.

Bartlett's daughter, Deb Williams, organized the Purple Heart presentation at her Journey Home ranch southwest of Walsenburg where she teaches kids about life through horseback riding.



She said incorporating the kids into the ceremony for her dad made perfect sense. "We had been studying heroes," she said. "And he's my hero."

**(Editor's Note—Here's a summary report of the mission to St. Nazaire, France on 29 May 1943)**

**Yardbird**, #41-24602, 360BS, an original 303rd BG(H) B-17 piloted by 1Lt. **Joseph E. Trojan**, failed to return.

The Fortress was last seen leaving the target after having been disabled by flak. It was subsequently hit by attacking FW-190s and ME-109s which caused the aircraft to crash.

Nine parachutes were seen leaving **Yardbird**, which exploded with a burst of fire when it hit the ground.

1Lt. **Thomas S. Vaughan** was killed. Lt. **Trojan**, 1Lt. **Parley W. Madsen, Jr.**, 1Lt. **Jack W. Stewart**, S/Sgt. **Paul H. Prescott**, S/Sgt. **Cecil E. Craft**, S/Sgt. **Joseph R. Sunderlin**, S/Sgt. **Martin A. Semonick**, S/Sgt. **Frank W. Bartlett** and S/Sgt. **Lincoln T. O'Connell** were captured by the enemy.

S/Sgt. **Prescott** died in a German hospital at Paris-Clichy on 4 June 1943. He is buried in Epinal American Cemetery near Vosges, France.

S/Sgt. **Bartlett**, badly wounded, was repatriated in 1944.



**SPIRIT OF WANETTE** CRASHED IN THE SEA NEAR DENMARK after heavy damage from flak barrages on the 29 April 1944 mission to Berlin. Of the crew of 10, five were killed, four became POW's and one evaded capture. (See evasion story on page 18)

The 427th Squadron ground crew kept the B-17 airworthy through more than 30 missions. Pictured atop the ladders are Harry Lysell, Richard Dawes and William Burkett. Below are Gerald Jones, Benjamin Lugo and Guy Moore.



## 303rd's Men of the Month

THE MEN WHO DIDN'T FLY KEPT THEIR EYES ON THE SKY as the B-17's of the four squadrons returned from combat missions. If Ernest Fischer, the 427th's Engineering Officer, was monitoring the sky on 29 April 1944 he would soon know that two of the squadron's bombers would not return from the Berlin mission.

LONDON WAS OFTEN THE DESTINATION of personnel whenever there was a leave opportunity. Below, 427th Crew Chief Oldrich Fojt visits the Queen Victoria Memorial.





# Molesworth Diary

## WALKING WOUNDED NOT A HAPPY CAMPER

On the 17th day of September 1944 we bombed a bridge at Seraing, Germany and encountered intense anti-aircraft fire. Don Pickett, my bombardier, was seriously wounded in the leg and I suffered a lesser leg wound. The number four engine burst into flame and I couldn't feather the prop due to lack of oil pressure. I was deliberating having the crew bail out, but we were over water heading for England and I asked Bob King, our navigator, to give me a heading to the nearest air base. We sighted a base 20 miles away. I fired red flares to report "wounded aboard," and as I set the bomber down and rolled off onto the grass to let a flight of P-47's land our number four propeller spun off.

A flight surgeon met the plane and had the bombardier taken off on a gurney. I told him my wound was minor. After examinations, the doctor had both of us transferred to a hospital about 60 miles away. At the hospital, the surgeons operated to save my bombardier's leg. A flak fragment had severed the main artery in his leg. I had about five small penetrations in the calf, but nothing life-threatening. After about 10 days, the doctors said I could return to my airbase, while they continued to monitor the progress of my bombardier.

I had someone in hospital administration telephone my squadron at Molesworth to ask for a plane to pick me up. The response was that no plane could be spared from combat missions and I should take a train. So, I called the local station to get a schedule and then advised the squadron operations office that I would arrive at the Kimbolton rail station at 7:30 PM and requested someone meet me. After traveling most of the day to Kimbolton, there was no one there to meet me. So I told the station agent I would just wait. Later, when he closed the station for the night, I sat down on the grassy bank, hoping some transportation might come by.

Finally, I had to limp about 5 miles, arriving at my

Nissan hut on the base at midnight. My navigator was still awake. He was surprised to see me, and when I told him I had to walk from the rail station, he was shocked. The next morning, the flight surgeon was informed I had returned and wanted to see me. He was also shocked that no one had met me. He said, "Take off a few days, go any place you want, you don't need any written orders, you are going at my direction."

I took a train to visit friends in London. After I returned to Molesworth and after talking to the flight surgeon I was scheduled to go back to flying. I did not have a very good attitude toward my squadron. The Squadron Commander called me aside one day asked why I felt that way. I told him what had happened. He tried to explain it away by telling me I was just one pilot in one squadron in one group in a large air force. To me that was not a satisfactory explanation. After another 24 missions I completed my tour of 35, and returned to the States. I think I was the first pilot in the squadron to complete 35 missions without an abort.

**Phillip McDavid**  
Pilot, 359th Squadron

## B-17 LANDS AS LUFTWAFFE FLEES AIR BASE

For the second time in as many days, we were headed for the I. G. Farben plant at Ludwigshaven, Germany on 9 September 1944. We were on the bomb run, having opened the bomb bay doors at the I.P. The flak was heavy and we could hear the anti-aircraft shells explode. That is when everyone knows they are close. The one that exploded just above the nose section of *Silver Fox* took out number 3 and 4 engines and severely injured Fred Keisel, our bombardier. The flak nearly severed Fred's left arm and penetrated his hip. Momentarily after the explosion I keyed my mike and said, "Salvo the bombs" which was executed. We were losing altitude.

I left my station in the upper turret and went to the aid of Fred who was lying prone near the opening of the nose compartment. I began to remove Fred's clothing to expose his wounds and stop the bleeding. Our co-pilot, R. L. McGilvray, joined me momentarily and together we examined the arm. I placed a tourniquet above the wound which was bleeding profusely and stopped the loss of blood. I then gave Fred a shot of morphine and applied sulfa powder to the wound. While this was going on, George McCutcheon, our Pilot, regained control of the aircraft and did a skillful job of maneuvering *Silver Fox* into cloud banks as we were receiving hit after hit from anti-aircraft fire. We were still losing altitude. Having done all I could do for Fred, I returned to my station.

We crossed the enemy lines at about two thousand feet and made a wheels down landing in a grassy field near Etain, France. We were in Allied held territory. We exited the aircraft knowing that we had to find medical help for Fred.



**THE McDAVID CREW—(Back, L-to-R) Phillip McDavid, Richard Berman, Don Pickett, Bob King. Front, Warren Linville, Tom Hall, Wilfred Sikkema, Ralph Johnson, Joe Erdody.**

(Continued on page 18)



# OPEN FORUM

FOR NINE YEARS THIS SPACE HAS REPORTED WHAT YOU HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE WAY THINGS WERE OR THE WAY THINGS ARE. THE EDITOR THANKS YOU FOR MAKING THE PAGE MEMORABLE, ISSUE AFTER ISSUE.

## JOY OF REUNION TOOK 40 YEARS OFF HIS DAD

A capital KUDOS to all who worked the 2007 reunion. It was wonderful and I hated to leave! I'm not going to try to list everyone's name for fear of missing someone, but a big thanks to Eddie Deerfield for his oratory skills and coordination of events. It is hard to describe how special this event was. I think the wonderful experience took 40 years off the age of my dad.

One thing that I meant to do was post a note on the board to see if anyone knows the whereabouts of some of the men who flew with my father, Will Ketner, in the 359th. Unfortunately, I'm not certain they all stayed together in the Group. Specifically, Grover Mohn, John McColl, Will Metsopolus, Tom Drennan, Joe Geary, Harrison Cutter, and Glenn Sears. If anyone has any information, please write or email at [mepengy@earthlink.net](mailto:mepengy@earthlink.net).

**Rich Ketner**  
143 Stoney Run Road  
Dillsburg, PA 17019

## REMEMBRANCE FROM A LATE PILOT'S SON

I am the youngest son of George Vernon Stallings, captain of the B-17 *Quinine* with the 303rd Bomb Group in World War II. I recently heard that you were preparing for a Washington, D.C. final reunion.

Since my father passed, I have had a copy of the moving article you wrote about his crew and the Hamburg mission in 1943 (*Hell's Angels Newsletter*, November, 2000.) I keep your article and dad's

DFC medals in safe deposit. Occasionally, I take them out and read your article. It never fails to inspire and ground me.

I will be following 303rd Bomb Group activities through your web site. On behalf of my family, please accept profound, heartfelt thanks for your service to the 303rd and my father.

**Scott Stallings**  
Charleston, SC

## DISASTER ON MISSION AS 486TH BG CREW

After my 26 missions with the 303rd Bomb Group, I was stationed at Drew Field in Tampa, Florida and while there met up with Neal Fielder. He was in our 303rd hut, his pilot was Baker, and he was engineer on that crew. We got back on another crew and flew with the 486th Bomb Group in the Eighth Air Force. I was tail gunner on this crew.

On our seventh mission, April 10, 1945, around Brandenburg near Berlin, we were shot down by anti-aircraft fire, parachuted into German capture, sent to prison camp at Luckenwalde Stalag III-A, liberated by the Russian Army sometime in May.

Last summer, I got in touch with Neal at a telephone number I have had for many years. He was still at the same residence, lost his wife a few years ago, is 86 years old and could not remember much about what happened that April day in 1945. I will be 85 in January, and we are just lucky to have survived.

I did go back to Molesworth with an English friend in 1997, and many memories, both good and

bad, made my day.

**Leo Lanier, Jr.**  
360th Sqdn Waist Gunner

## LAMENTS CLOSING OF MANY VETERANS POSTS

Your 303rd Bomb Group Association is very special to me, not just because of my uncle, Al Pero, but because you do so well to maintain contact and a collegiality I've not seen in the past. I am a member of the VFW and at my relatively young age of 62 I've witnessed the closing of many posts with a great deal of sadness. You are glad the war is behind you, but you hate to see the survivors passing on.

Aloysius R. Pero died on June 29 this year. He was very proud of his service as a 427th Squadron navigator. When he received his copy of the CD "The Molesworth Story," he bought his first computer just to see the pictures and information. He attempted to contact many of his fellow servicemen and had moderate success, such as his call to Al Hollritt. When he received the May 2007 issue of the Hell's Angels Newsletter, he was so proud that he was showing all whose attention he could get, the article about Al Hollritt which mentioned his telephone call. Mr. Hollritt passed away a few days later and my uncle soon followed. He was the last of the 427th's Johnson crew.

**James A. Mooney**  
US Army, Retired

## SURVIVES OSCHERSLEBEN, STILL ASKS "WHY ME?"

Humans are bereft of life's portend, and so it was with me and my wife,

Rose. Because the 303rd Bomb Group would be gathering for the last time, we decided to be part of that history. Lo and behold, my wife fell down in June, was hospitalized, eventually sent for rehab, and is still getting therapy to recover her strength. So, unfortunately, our plans to attend hit the proverbial road block.

Incidentally, I should remark that my crew went down on the Oschersleben mission (11 January 1944). The pilot was KIA. Also, the co-pilot was KIA. I was the third person on the flight deck, and still ask the question, "Why me?"

**Henry M. Beben**  
360th Sqdn Engineer

## WIDOW DISTRESSED BY STUPID WWII ANSWERS

Is anyone extant who remembers the Flying Cadet tea dances at the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio in the 1940's? College girls used to be invited formally to meet the new cadet class and it was there I met my husband, Capt. Milton K. Conver (427th Squadron Bombardier).

Those were very special times, interrupted by December 11th, 1941. I always marvel at the special qualities of those days and wonder how many of our friends survived the perils of war. When you watch Jay Leno interview college students about all of our wars, you marvel at the stupidity of their answers, and wonder how such tumultuous times could be oblivious to this generation.

The young men who went through cadet training

(Continued on page 18)



## OPEN FORUM from 17

(and often did not survive) only to enter a world war so confidentially and courageously certainly deserve to be remembered.

Jean Carmean Conner  
Cincinnati, OH

## AUGUST ISSUE LEFT OUT A SURVIVING CHAPLAIN

The last issue of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter* reported that only Bishop Rene Gracida and The Reverend Warren Hedrick were still with us as 303rd Bomb Group airmen who turned to the church as a life profession. Henderson Driver was a togglier on my crew. He is a retired Methodist minister.

Tom Hardin  
360th Sqdn Pilot

## KUDOS FOR "GREATEST EVER" 303RD BGA REUNION

I can imagine the staggering man hours it took to engineer this past and greatest ever 303rd Reunion. Let me add one more expression of appreciation for a job superbly done.

Bob Hand  
360th Sqdn Bombardier

## A VOTE OF THANKS TO NEWSLETTER EDITORS

Thank you, Eddie, for your part in all the 303rd Bomb Group newsletters. And thanks to Hal Susskind and all the others through the years.

Glen R. Swenson  
359th Sqdn Navigator

## UNABLE ATTEND REUNION, SENDS WARM WORDS

I have been meaning to write for some time. I felt I should get it done.

Through the years the Association has had many hardworking people to make it what it was. Of all these, the "cement" that held it together was Eddie Deerfield and the *Hell's Angels Newsletter*, with Mary Lee backing him up. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

I will not make the last reunion, as I have not made the last three. Louise, my wife, took sick in March of 2004 and has not been well since, one thing after another, in and out of hospitals.

Thanks again, and God Bless America.

Marvin Edwards  
360th Sqdn Tail Gunner

## DIARY from 16

In a very short interval we spotted a military vehicle coming our way. The vehicle came to a stop a few yards from the aircraft. It had a German swastika on the side. We knew we were about to be captured. To our surprise and delight, an American GI stood up and said, "What in the hell are you people doing here? The German Air Force just left here three hours ago." We told them about Fred, and they transported him to a hospital in Metz, France. We secured the aircraft as best we could and walked into the village of Etain. We spent the night with a Rear Guard outfit that fed us and allowed us to sleep in a barn. The next day we made our way to Metz and saw Fred. His left arm had been removed.

Lt. McGilvray and I requested a ride on a C-47 back to Molesworth. I arrived at my barracks about midnight. It was dark and everyone was asleep. I asked if anyone would loan me a blanket. Joe Blinebury said, "Who is it?" I replied, "John Burcham." He said, "You're a ghost. We saw your plane explode in mid-air." The following day I reported to the Squadron Adjutant. The remaining members of the crew, Ben Starr, John Alexander, James Aberdeen, Don Fould and Russell Kinsman subsequently returned to Molesworth in *Silver Fox* which had been made airworthy by a field maintenance crew. She became a hanger queen since she had suffered severe damage. Her flying days were over.

John Burcham  
Engineer, 358th Squadron

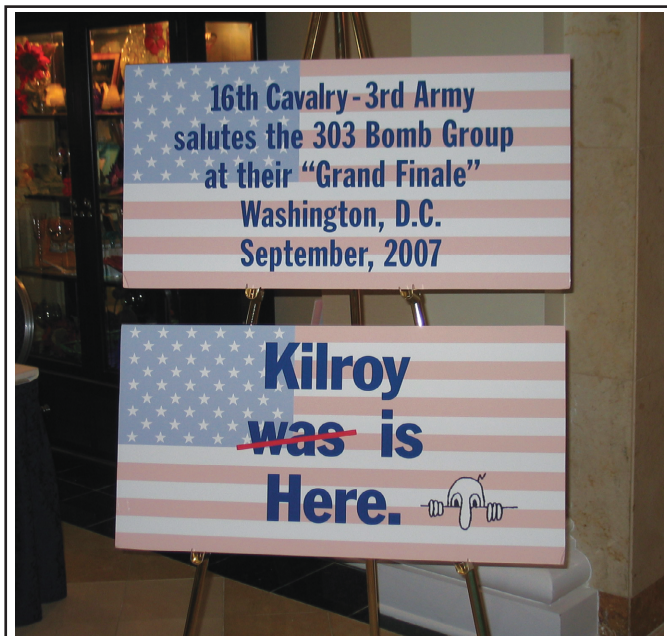
## EVASION FROM DENMARK TO ENGLAND

Here's a brief account of my escape from German-occupied Denmark after our crew bailed out of *Spirit of Wanette* on the Berlin mission April 29, 1944 after flak knocked out our number three engine. I learned later that five of my crew mates were killed and four became POW's.

I came down on a farmer's field. He approached me, and with a friendly gesture said he spoke English and that I was on the Isle Of Falster in Denmark. At considerable risk to himself and his family, he took me to their home, fed me like royalty, and then hid me in a dense growth of bushes in a corner of the farm. I could hear German patrols nearby. The farmer came back at dusk with a complete change of clothes for me. He had two bicycles, and after riding six or seven miles we arrived at the home of a school teacher and his wife. After some explanations, the young couple took me to an upstairs bedroom to spend the night. The next morning at breakfast, there was a small American flag on the table. The teacher's wife had lived in the U.S. for many years!

She said the Danish underground would move me by train to Copenhagen and then to neutral Sweden. There were many German GI's on the train, but no one paid any particular attention to me. After many adventures and close calls, I boarded a fishing boat for Malmo, Sweden. Soon after arriving, I was greeted by the American Consul, introduced to our Ambassador, and prepared for a flight to England. I was told my combat missions were over. I was never again to fly over enemy territory because, if captured, I would be treated as a spy.

Robert R. Kerr  
Co-Pilot, 427th Squadron



SHARING THE SHERATON NATIONAL HOTEL with the 303rd BG was the 16th Cavalry of the 3rd Army, also meeting in reunion. Our brothers-in-arms saluted us.



## 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](mailto:membership@303rdbg.com). The sad news of members passing can be sent to the Treasurer or [taps@303rdbg.com](mailto:taps@303rdbg.com).

## In Memoriam

Donald R. Bauer	359 <sup>th</sup>	5/30/2001
Everett H. Black, Jr.	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sta. Comp.	9/27/1959
LeRoy P. Christenson	359 <sup>th</sup>	7/21/2007
Fred T. "Red" Crissman	360 <sup>th</sup>	7/04/2007
Deane K. Day	359 <sup>th</sup>	7/26/2007
Richard P. Dubell	427 <sup>th</sup>	5/6/2007
Carl A. Fredricksen	427 <sup>th</sup>	9/02/2007
Robert E. Galbraith	358 <sup>th</sup>	8/16/2007
Kenneth Hildebrand	358 <sup>th</sup>	4/25/2007
Joseph B. Johnston	Grp. Ops.	2/07/2007
John C. Kaliher	427 <sup>th</sup>	July 2004
Frederic T. Kiesel	358 <sup>th</sup>	Unknown
Arthur C. Kraft	359 <sup>th</sup>	4/29/2007
Gerson I. Nadell	359 <sup>th</sup>	6/1/2007
Henry F. Nogash	358 <sup>th</sup>	12/31/2005
William "Bill" E. Olson	427 <sup>th</sup>	7/30/2007
Nelson R. Patton	360 <sup>th</sup>	5/15/1978
Aloysius R. Pero	427 <sup>th</sup>	6/27/2007
Martin E. Plocher	360 <sup>th</sup>	8/03/2007
Robert L. Rosier	359 <sup>th</sup>	7/19/2007
Ralph J. Reynolds	360 <sup>th</sup>	8/08/2005
Burnham E. Shaw, Jr.	303 <sup>rd</sup>	4/08/2007
Victor N. Shook	359 <sup>th</sup>	9/19/2007
Carl K. Shumar	427 <sup>th</sup>	7/13/2007
James W. Smith	358 <sup>th</sup>	10/08/2006
Sebastian L. Vogel	427 <sup>th</sup>	4/19/2007

## DONATIONS IN HONOR OF

**Margaret "Molly" Lehmann in Loving Memory of her parents Al & Elizabeth "Sue" Lehmann who loved the 303<sup>rd</sup>, attended many reunions and made many lasting and loving friendships within the Association.**

## NEW MEMBERS

Joan M. Fox, 9990 Old Annapolis, Ellicott City, MD 21042-5602, (410) 461-1406 358<sup>th</sup> (F)  
Margaret "Molly" Lehmann, 2662 E. 20<sup>th</sup> St. #407, Signal Hill, CA 90755-5617 (562) 986-9731 427<sup>th</sup> (F)



**PAST PRESIDENT WALT FERRARI receives his Molesworth hangar floor historic plaque from Jean Cox as Mary Lee Deerfield stands ready for others with an armful of plaques.**

## VETS AT REUNION FIRST TO RECEIVE HANGAR ARTIFACTS

The old 303rd Bomb Group base at Molesworth is slowly disappearing. That fact alone makes the presentation of historical artifacts from the base all the more meaningful to the veterans who served there during World War II.

The artifacts are pieces of the stone floor of the original main hangar where sick and broken B-17 bombers were taken to be repaired and fly again on combat missions. Each fragment was mounted on a walnut plaque against a photo of the old hangar doors or encased in a clear Lucite block in a velvet-lined gold box.

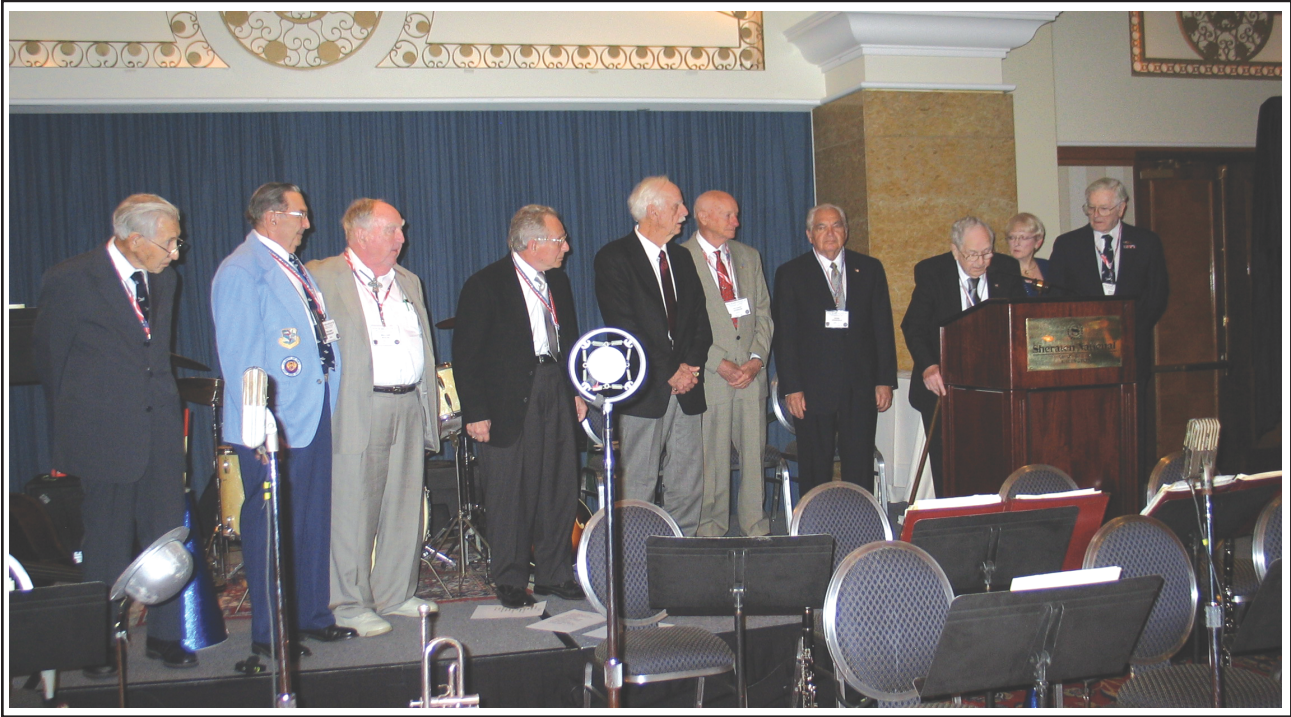
During the four-day reunion, 100 plaques and eight gold boxes were presented as gifts to veterans. The remaining 52 boxes will be mailed to veterans unable to attend the reunion, in accordance with a distribution plan approved by the 303rd BGA's Board of Directors.

The runways, Nissan huts, squadron and group headquarters, the control tower and most of the original World War II buildings are gone. Even the most imposing remaining structure—the "J" hangar—is in danger. The original doors have been ripped down and replaced with a new wall. There may come a time when the hangar, itself, now used by the Joint Analysis Center as a warehouse, becomes expendable.

The JAC extracted two stone cores from the floor and shipped them as a gift to the 303rd BGA. The cores, each six inches in diameter and about a foot tall, were taken to a stone cutting firm in Largo, Florida, to be reduced to fragments about the size of dominoes. The yield was expected to be about 200 pieces, but in the cutting process the stone cores, composed of an aggregate of gravel in a concrete slurry, began to disintegrate and fall apart.

The final yield was 160 hangar floor artifacts.





**THE RETIRING OF THE PRESIDENT'S GAVEL** was among the many memorable events at the farewell banquet. Incumbent President Bill Cox invited all past presidents at the reunion to participate in the ceremony. On stage, l-to-r, are Jack Rencher (2001), Bill Eisenhart (1979), Bill Roche (1999), Walt Ferrari (2002), Carl Dubose (1991), Dick Johnson (2000), Eddie Deerfield (1996), Bill Cox, Treasurer Jean Cox and Bill McLeod (1992). The gavel, mounted on a plaque, will be sent to the 8th AF Heritage Museum.

## THE EDITOR COMMENTS....

It's odd the things an editor speculates about when preparing to write his last column after nine years at the helm of the *Hell's Angels Newsletter*. Should he wax poetic and try to come up with golden phrases that tantalize the minds and emotions of more than 1,500 veterans and family member readers? Or, should he clam up, conceding that everything that needs to be said has been said?

I'm going to walk the middle road, mentioning only a single event during my tenure that had the most impact on my role as editor. It's inevitable to recall the effort in 2002 by a three-man power bloc in the Association to unseat me as editor. The trio's charges were reviewed by the 303rd BGA president and members of the Executive Committee who promptly dismissed them. The president commented that the three individuals "seem to be the only ones with a problem." The consequence was to strengthen my resolve not to surrender the newsletter's editorial independence, to continue in good faith to tell our readers not only the way things were when we served at Molesworth but also the way things are.

On the other hand, what if that palace coup had succeeded? I might have found time to write the Great American Novel. Or, in despair, I might have increased from two to ten martinis a day and become an alcoholic. Most certainly, there would have been far more quality time with my wife, Mary Lee, who rarely saw me leave my computer cave when under pressure to get the newsletters done.

One thing for sure—there's glory in knowing that as editor, issue after issue, I made a difference for my fellow 303rd Bomb Group veterans, the men I respect the most. I sign off feeling good about that.

**Eddie Deerfield**

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

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