



"HELL'S ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

VOLUME IV NUMBER 1

FEBRUARY 1980

THE MOLESWORTH MISSION

by Ray Cossey

It was a cold, misty morning on October 1st, as I left London's Heathrow airport at a quarter to eight. I'd just seen my wife, Theresa, off on her flight to Athens where she was to join one of her childhood friends and her family for a well earned two weeks vacation. It was by way of a reward for her allowing me to attend the late August reunion of the 303rd at Dayton, Ohio. As I turned up the car's heater I thought how nice it would be to be back in the -armth of Dayton, despite it's high humidity- anything was better than England on a cold Autumn morning.

I made a fast time, going east along the M4 motorway and skirted around the Northern outskirts of London. Some motorway I thought, remembering the four lane width of Dayton's main street, along which Beryl Kindred had allowed me to drive his sizeable American automobile on the Saturday of the reunion. I chuckled to myself thinking that the dangers he must have encountered in the wartime 303rd must have seemed nothing compared to the risks he and his wife exposed themselves to in allowing an Englishman to drive a left-hand drive, automatic vehicle for the first time on an American highway.

I made exceptionally good time going North up the A10 and A14.

At Huntingdon, I turned onto the final stages of my journey along the A604. After a few miles I saw it- the road sign which said simply 'Molesworth'. My pulse increased slightly in eager anticipation. What would it be like, I thought, this place I'd heard about from the guys who attended the Dayton reunion?

I only went maybe 200 yards and I found myself in the village. I pulled to a stop outside the Post Office. It was hardly a Post Office, more someone's front room, but I guessed it served well enough the needs of the local inhabitants.

Just then an elderly resident passed by on his morning walk. I guessed by his stoop and his slow walk that he was well into his eighties. 'Morning', he said. 'Good morning', I replied. 'Not so good', he countered, 'but I think the sun will break through once the mist lifts.'

I asked him if he could direct me to Mr. Michael Bent's house at Springhill Farm, Molesworth. 'You need much directing', he declared, 'it's right there just behind the telephone box.' It was one of those older type red telephone boxes, with small glass window panes, of the type which have virtually disappeared from our larger towns and cities.

I thanked the old man and walked over to the house. It looked to me to be centuries old. In fact, I later discovered it was precisely 350 years old having been built in 1629. Proof of this was to be found in the date carved into the oak lintol above the inglenook fireplace.

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Bent greeted me warmly, thanked me for arriving at the appointed time of 9:30 a.m. and immediately offered me coffee. Michael is the secretary of the village hall committee. We had not met before although we had spoken briefly on the phone a few days previously. I explained the reason for my visit, explaining how, as an art publisher I had commissioned a painting of a B17 G coming in to land at the wartime base of Molesworth. How I had produced a limited edition of 250 prints and how I had been over to the States to attend the 303rd reunion. How Frank Bartlett had bought two copies, one for himself and one which he wanted me to present to the village of Molesworth, hopefully to hang in the village hall. Frank wanted it to be a gift from all the boys in the 303rd, not just himself. I'd agreed to bear the cost of the framing as my way of saying 'thank-you' for being afforded the privilege of attending at Dayton.

After taking coffee, I joined the Bents on a short stroll across the fields to visit a fellow village hall committee member's house which stood right next to the old church hall. It was this building which, when renovated, would become the village hall. After emerging from the fields we came on a narrow lane which ran in front of the centuries old church. Standing right on the lane, and to the left of the church as one faces it, was a sad looking building. The windows were all broken, the roof was completely missing from the porch entrance and the main roof had a few tiles in need of replacing.

'This', said Mike Bent, 'is to be our village hall, when we can get together all of the £5,000 we require for its renovation.' 'How much have you collected thus far?' I enquired. 'About £1,200 from fetes, raffles and the like,' came the reply from Mrs. Bent. 'As a matter of fact,' added Mike, 'we've received some generous gifts of cheques from members of the 303rd in the States.' He said how grateful the villagers were for such generous support.

Soon we were joined by half a dozen or so other committee members who had emerged from a nearby house. I said a few words on behalf of the boys of the 303rd and explained how the print of the B17 G came into being. It was gratefully received by the committee with a promise that it would have a place of pride in the village hall as soon as it was renovated. In the meantime it would hang in the hall of the nearby house so that all of the villagers could see it.

We adjourned to this house for another coffee following which Mike Bent asked me if I would like to join him and a farmer friend on a short drive along the lane.

We hadn't travelled much over a half a mile when the lane came to an abrupt end, our way being blocked by a timber barrier across the lane. We all got out of the car and climbed over the barrier. I glanced to my right, across the acres of mist covered grassland and there in the distance but quite unmistakable were three familiar looking hangers. This was what I had been looking forward to- I was now standing for the first time on the old air base of Molesworth. This was the place I'd heard so much about during my all too few days at Dayton those few weeks previously. 'Would you like to see the hangers at closer quarters?', inquired Mike Bent. 'Too true', I replied, trying to suppress my excitement.

We walked across the perimeter track, approaching it over what must once have been a dispersal pad. I glanced down and there lying in the soil was a spent .50 shell casing. It must have lain there, undisturbed, for over 35 years. I picked it up to keep as a memento. At that moment I liked to think that perhaps it had been fired off by one of the guys who attended the Dayton reunion. Slim chance, but who was there to disagree with me?

Whilst thinking on this my thoughts were distracted by the sound of machinery and looking maybe half a mile down the perimeter track I observed much activity of heavy machinery. Large cranes were winching up very heavy weights right to the top of their jibs and the driver then released them to send them crashing down onto the concrete upon which the crane was standing. Even larger machines were scooping up the broken concrete, devouring it into their revolving insides and then spewing out the now crushed concrete into heavy duty trucks.

'What are they up to?', I asked Mike. 'Oh, they're breaking up all the old runways', he replied. He added that the Royal Air Force had no further need for Molesworth to have operational capabilities so the runways were no longer required. 'What about the hangers?', I inquired. Mike informed me that as far as he knew these would remain for the present and continue to be used as storage for the United States Air Force surplus materials. There was evidence enough of this continued use for I could see for myself the hundreds of disused trucks, fuel tanks and the like which littered the area around the still standing three hangers.

By some strange coincidence, Mike and his farmer friend had brought me onto the airfield from such a position that the first view I had of the hangers was precisely that depicted in Roger Brighton's

painting of the B17 G making it's emergency landing approach. I studied the mist shrouded hangers, standing almost defiantly against the threatening approaches of the bulldozers and their concrete guzzling friends. I thought how precisely Roger had captured the hangers in his painting but an important land mark was now missing. 'What happened to the old control tower?', I asked of Mike. 'Oh, that was pulled down years ago', was his quick reply.

The three of us walked down the middle of the main runway and very soon, because I was so deep in thought, I fell behind the other two. I didn't really mind for at this precise moment I preferred to be alone with my thoughts. I tried to imagine what Molesworth must have been like in those hectic war-time months during the 1940's. I tried to visualize in my mind's eye a B17 coming in to land just like the one in the picture. I wished at that very moment someone like Pop McGilvray could have been walking with me down that runway perhaps describing it all to me. I wished all the guys who were at Dayton, and who welcomed me so warmly, could have been there with me on that typical English autumn morning.

For some reason I felt into my overcoat pocket and by another strange coincidence I had on me a letter from one of the guys I had met at Dayton. He'll know who he is, but I know you'll forgive me if I keep his identity to myself. My eyes fell onto a particular paragraph which read:

'Ray, if you haven't thought it out by this time, I am compelled to tell you that your Country means a great deal to me and I will always have a special love in my heart for it. God willing, I would very much like to take my wife to see it someday.'

A lump came into my thought for in those few days in Ohio I had established a real affection for this particular 303rd member and his wife. We'd had many laughs and a lot of ribbing of each other but it was

totally without malice. I had written to him on my return to England and it was his reply I was now reading. I reread the rest of the letter but his and his wife's sentiments to me are personal ones and I know you'll permit me to keep them also to myself.

I folded up the letter, replaced it within its envelope and put it back into my overcoat pocket.

At that moment I felt sad. I suddenly realised that he and his wife never would be able to see his beloved Molesworth anything like he remembered it all those years previously. I only hope that he especially will find consolation in the fact that I did get to see it- but only just in time

I don't expect to go back again unless my friends do get over here someday, then of course I'll be privileged to drive them out to the old base, or what by then will remain of it. If we do go back together, then at least I can now point out to him where the landmarks were as I recall them on that misty October morning in 1979.

I'm so glad I got there, as I have already said, just in time. When it's all disappeared as it surely will in the near future at least the residents of Molesworth will have a record hanging in the village hall.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY TREASURER

Since my last report, we have signed up 40 new members. I would like to welcome them aboard and hope to see them some time soon or at our Reunions. The association is now 683 members strong. We can grow a lot faster if each one of us signs up another member this coming year. 800 members is not too far off and I still am shooting for that figure, and I believe it can be accomplished.

We are now a non-profit Veterans

Association, which means that our dues are now Tax Deductable, also all donations received by the Association. I have applied for and am now waiting for the Non-Profit Postal Rate from the Hollywood Florida Postmaster. Next subject I would like to bring to the attention of the members is Change of Addresses. Every time a Newsletter is returned, it costs the Association 25¢ for the correct address, or that the addressee moved and left no forwarding address. Seeing that the Post Office will not forward any mail that is not First Class, and/or First Class mail after one year, so the members lose out on the mailing list. So, if you move, please notify me of your new address. We can save 25¢ plus First Class postage to forward the Newsletter to the member.

CLASS OF 1975: (Members who joined the association in 1975.) For these members their dues are now due and will become delinquent 12-31-80. Request we get the 1980 dues in before the deadline. Thank you.

ATTENTION: All members who flew the Second Schweinfurt Mission, Oct. 14, 1943, are eligible to join the Second Schweinfurt Assoc., Inc., if you wish to join this assoc., contact: Phillip R. Taylor, 3158 Figi Lane, Alameda, CA, 94501.

Plaques and pins are still available to members of the association.

IN MEMORIAM

LTC Leon W Blythe (ret) Died 12-9-79
8134 Blythe Street
Columbus, GA 31904

MSgt Amedeus J Dandini (ret) Died
805 10th E Street 11-27-79
Berwick, PA 18603

Our sincere sympathy to their families.

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

The following 'Letter to the Editor' can be used by you to contact your local news media requesting that they consider publishing the following News Release. You may substitute your name and address for mine...

Dear Editor:

It would be appreciated if you could publish the article below as a public service for our World War 11, U.S. Army Air Corps Organization, the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association. We are a Non-Profit Association and chartered by the state of Florida. The 303rd Bomb Group (H) and its four squadrons, the 358th, 359th, 360th, and 427th, along with ground support units, was a B17 Flying Fortress outfit stationed at Molesworth, England from 1942 to 1945.

NEWS RELEASE

Former WWII, U.S. Army Air Corps Personnel who served with the Eighth Air Force, 303rd Bomb Group (H), composed of the 358th, 359th, 360th, and 427th squadrons and round support units stationed at Molesworth, England from 1942-45 are being sought for membership in the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association.

The 303rd has made contact with more than 800 former members living in the United States and overseas. However, it is felt that many more 303rd's residing in this area may not be aware of the reformation of the 303RD BOMB GROUP (H). Former members of the 303rd are asked to contact and send a 4x9½ stamped, self addressed envelope to:

CMSgt Joseph Vieira USAF, Ret
6400 Park Street
Hollywood, FL 33024

ASSISTANCE

Joseph Vieira requests assistance in locating the new addresses for the following members listed below with their old addresses:

Charles J Bonn #59/Sqd. 360
649 Hoey Ave, P.O. Box 163
Long Branch, NJ 07740
(201)222-0611

George A Kyle Jr. #542/Sqd. 360
281 NE 40th St. Apt #6
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33334
(305)563-9078

Thomas A. Buford #306/Sqd. 427
1558 Eastmoreland Ave
Memphis, TN 38104
(901)278-6726

Maj John Scott (Ret) #103/Sqd. 360
114 East Portal
San Clemente, CA 92672
(714)492-0404

INFORMATION REQUESTED

As has become our custom, we ask you, the men who flew through it all, to send us your stories. The purpose of the Newsletter is to inform you as well as entertain you. We know that you enjoy reading personal accounts of what was experienced, but we need to be supplied with the information. Take a few minutes to write us your experiences. Thank You.
Contact:

Harry F. Jenkins, editor
2612 Baker Drive
Carson City, NV 89701

EIGHTH AIR FORCE REUNION

October 29-November 2, 1980
Orlando, Florida
303rd will hold a mini-reunion in conjunction with the 8th Air Force
Contact: Joseph Vieira
6400 Park Street
Hollywood, FL 33024
1-305-989-9784

August 25, 1979
303rd Bomb Group Association
General Meeting

The meeting was held at the Stouffer's Dayton Plaza Hotel in Dayton, Ohio and called to order by Charles J. McClain, President.

The minutes of the Officer's and Directors meeting held on August 28, 1977 at Colorado Springs was read by the Secretary, Carl A. Hokans.

The Treasurer's report was read by Joe Vieira, and approved.

During discussion concerning membership, Chuck McClain revealed we now have in excess of 600 members.

Father Edward J. Skoner gave a brief talk praising Joe and Thelma Vieira for their continuing unselfish efforts on behalf of the 303rd Bomb Group Association. They were given a standing ovation.

Father Skoner followed with a brief and very interesting talk concerning the history of the 303rd commencing with its formation at Boise, Idaho to Molesworth and to its final break-up after World War II.

A discussion was led Don Harrison concerning the 1981 reunion to be held in San Diego with its many attractions, and the plans concerning the event.

With reference to the 1983 reunion, Charles McClain requested and received floor nominations for the location. After considerable discussion, it was voted by a show of hands to have the Board of Directors select the reunion site for 1983.

Van White suggested mini-reunions might be held in conjunction with the 8th Air Force Historical Society.

Elmer Fessler followed this with his comments favoring Van's idea as a way of maintaining interest.

Dick Waggoner conducted a questioning period to identify the:

- 1) Largest number present from one crew.
- 2) The largest number from a single squadron.
- 3) The man with most individual missions flown.
- 4) The members who flew the Schweinfurt mission and many other categories.

Father Skoner followed by reading the names of recently deceased members.

Larry Merton read a letter from John Glenn, the astronaut and now Senior Senator from Ohio. That letter is now a part of the minutes covering this meeting. Copy included.


Charles McClain announced the nomination of Paul J. Barton for the office of Secretary. His election was unanimous.


Harry Jenkins and Jim Ferris discussed the 303rd News Letter and requested members to contribute items of interest.

Charles McClain announced the assumption of the Presidency by William E. Eisenhart who then addressed the meeting.

Bill Eisenhart paid tribute to the very extensive contributions by Charles McClain during his time in office.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.


Carl A. Hokans, Secretary

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AUGUST 23, 1979

COLONEL LAWRENCE C. MERTHAN
 HEDRICK & LANE
 1211 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, N.W.
 WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

DEAR LARRY:

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE REUNION OF THE 303RD BOMB
 GROUP BEING HELD THIS WEEKEND IN DAYTON, OHIO.

PLEASE EXTEND MY BEST WISHES TO ALL OF THE MEMBERS
 OF THE "HELL'S ANGELS" GROUP.

I KNOW OF THE CONTRIBUTION WHICH YOUR GROUP AND THE
 REST OF THE 8TH AIR FORCE MADE TO THE ULTIMATE VICTORY IN
 EUROPE IN WORLD WAR II.

I HOPE YOU ALL HAVE A VERY PLEASANT STAY IN DAYTON.

SINCERELY,

JOHN GLENN
 UNITED STATES SENATOR

204 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
 WASHINGTON, D. C. 20510
 (202) 224-3353

INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON YOUR MISSIONS

The following information was received from Robert Moreman. He did a great deal of research in locating information on his missions and for those of you interested in doing likewise, he has simplified your task:

"At the last reunion I saw a few papers about the missions flown. I was interested in getting the same for the missions I flew.

I had been advised to get what I wanted to know from the Albert F. Simpson Historical Research Center, Maxwell AFB, AL. It is located on the edge of Montgomery. If you are retired, the base has very nice quarters. Mary and I stayed there for two nights. As far as I was concerned, I hit the jackpot. The period I was concerned with was between June and September, 1944. I called before I went to the Center; that is important. The gentleman I spoke with said that their information and records of the 359th was good and those of the 303rd was fairly good. Also he said that there was some information on some of the Squadrons and Groups that had not submitted an Activity Report or had just filed them intermittently. I did not check the other Squadrons, but I got the Activity Reports of the missions flown for the 359th. If there were no missions flown on a particular day, that day was omitted. Next I got a Loading List, which listed the names of each crew member, by crew, by airplane serial number, by the date, and by the position they occupied. The last thing I was able to gather was some interesting facts reported each month.

The next information listed was for the 18th of July. But that information was very good. The Activity Report accounted for each day. I was also able to look over

selected intelligence reports and that was very interesting.

The location of Simpson Center is in Air University Library. You ask for the parts of the history that you are interested in and then you are allowed to make copies. The cost is 10¢ per page, so you might as well go to the bank and get several rolls of dimes. The telephone number at Simpson Center is 1-205-293-7324."

We want to thank you, Bob, for your research and, in turn, sharing that information with us. I am sure that there will be many members that will be able to use this information and we all appreciate your efforts.

the Editor

HELP - INFORMATION

My father was a member of the 303rd and I have been trying to find out about his unit and his role in it. All I know about him is that he was shot down in 1943 while bombing suburbs in France. At that time, he was a Lieutenant and navigator. He was taken in by the Resistance while his wounds healed, then he made his way over the Pyrenees and eventually back to England. Of the other crew members, six died and three became POWs. One of the latter was named Rollins Mahoney. My father died in 1954 and the information I have is from my mother. Can anyone help me? Please contact:

Harry E Roach 111
P.O. Box 300
Alburtis, PA 18011

My father was Harry E Roach, Jr.

REMEMBER MOLESWORTH VILLAGE

Former members of the 303rd will remember Molesworth Village. The villagers are raising money to restore their village hall through dances, bazaars, jumble sales, shows and direct donations. To qualify for a 75% government restoration grant, they

must raise \$2,400.

It is their hope to place a plaque in the restored hall, in memory of the 8th Air Force men who were their friends.

Contributions from those who served at RAF Molesworth would be welcomed. They may be sent by international money order to:

The Molesworth Restoration
Fund
c/o Mr. Jim Hamilton
10 High Street
Molesworth, Near Huntingdon
Cambs. PE 180 QF

KREIGIE KORNER

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
AMERICAN EX-PRISONERS OF WAR, INC.

2620 North Dundee St., Tampa, Fla. 33609

Enclosed find membership dues for 19 _____ which includes subscription to the XPW Bulletin.

() Husband and wife \$10 () Single member \$7

Nickname while interned, if any _____

Name (print) _____

Mailing address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please State Your Status (where a POW) _____

Military Unit when taken prisoner _____

What camps were you in _____

Non-Members

Non-Members

Non-Members

The Following former 303rd's are carried in our non-active files. I have contacted them two or three different times with some expense and no response from them. I am calling on some assistance from our active members who live in the same city, town or nearby.

Members who wish to assist, could be of considerable help to me. Call them or contact them explaining the "Why's and What" of the Association. Maybe with your assistance, they may be convinced in joining our Association.

If contact is made, please contact Joseph Vieira with the correct address or any other pertinent information obtained, thank you. Following are their names and addresses in alphabetic order. If this program is successful, we will be publishing names and addresses every time we go to press with our News Letter.

Richard Abney
819 Clayman Ave
Ft. Pierce, FL
33450

Donald K Adams
500 E Richmond
Dayton, WA
99328

Raleigh L Alderson
106 Auburn St
Warner Robins, GA
31093

John Alexander
6118 No. Palo Christi
Paradise Valley, AZ
85253

Donald Allison
2717 Newberry St
Williamsport, PA
17701

Ned Allison
4549 No. Halifax Rd
El Monte, CA
91733

Walter J Ames
1236 Morris NE
Albuquerque, NM
87112

Clarence E Anderson
11 Franklin Estates
Export, PA 15632

Dale E. Anderson
Ft Atkinson, WI
53538

Fred Anderson
915 Camden Ave
Cumberland, MD
21502

Orville Anderson
419 Firefly Drive
Michigan City, IN
46360

William J Anderson
84 Ciro Street
Huntington, NY
11743

George Ashworth
114 Cider Street
Oriskany, NY 13424

303RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION
MIGHT IN FLIGHT
Hell's Angels



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

Name _____ Military Grade _____ Spouse's Name _____
 Street _____
 Address _____ Apt# _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Home Phone () _____ Business Phone () _____
 Crew or Retired Military
 Duty _____ Squadron _____ Grade if any _____
 (If flying & not pilot, list his name)

I HEREBY MAKE APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE 303RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

(Applicant's Signature) (Date)

DO NOT SEND CASH THRU THE POSTAL SERVICE; If you are already a member, please
pass this application to another 303rder that is NOT a member, THANK YOU.

MAIL APPLICATION TO: JOSEPH VIEIRA
6400 Park Street
Hollywood, FL 33024

Please include: \$10.00 for 5 yrs. dues.
Add \$1.00 for Roster of Members.

303RD BOMB GROUP(H)ASS'N. INC.
P.O. BOX8531
PEMBROOK PINES BRANCH
HOLLYWOOD, FL 33024
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
TIME VALUE

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