

"HELL'S ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

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JULY 1981

Radio— Gunner— Hero

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Back in 1946 an unofficial committee representing veterans' organizations and former combat newsmen were asked to choose World War II heroes who epitomized Sergeant Alvin York, generally recognized as the outstanding hero of World War I.

Tennessean York, engaged in action with the Germans in the Argonne Forest, singlehandedly captured a German machine gun battalion. He killed 25 enemy soldiers and took 132 prisoners.

Former Tech Sergeant Forrest L. (Woody) Vosler was chosen as the "Sergeant York of the Army Air Forces."

You can readily understand why hard-nosed newsmen and combat veterans chose Vosler over the other AAF Medal of Honor recipients when you read the account of his heroic deed.

Vosler, at 20, was a radio operator and gunner on a B-17. His Flying Fortress was on a bombing mission to Bremen, Germany, Dec. 20, 1943, when it was attacked by a fighter, losing two engines. Knocked out of the 303rd Bomb Group formation, it continued to

German fighters swarmed around the crippled plane.

the target at low altitude, released the bombs, and turned for home.

German fighters swarmed around the crippled plane. Vosler kept up a steady barrage of fire until a 20 mm. shell ripped through the fuselage and exploded near his legs. Blood oozed out of the top of his boots from wounds in his feet

and legs. Turning around from his gun position he noticed the tail gunner was badly wounded. Realizing that the fighters were concentrating on the Fortress' tail, he staggered back to man the gun.

While firing, he was hit in the chest and face by another 20 mm. shell. Pieces of metal lodged in both eyes, impairing his vision to such an extent that he could only distinguish blurred shapes. Declining first-aid treatment, he continued firing until, as he describes it, "Jerries ran out of ammunition".

Losing altitude and fuel rapidly as the Fortress approached the coast of France, the crew jettisoned every bit of extra weight. Adding to the dilemma, Vosler's radio was knocked out during the air battle. With blood running out of his eyes and unable to see,

Vosler repaired the radio entirely by touch. He was able to send out distress signals despite several lapses of consciousness.

Headquarters directed them to a Norwegian trawler in the North Sea. The pilot miraculously flew the crippled B-17 to the trawler and ditched. The blind Vosler crawled out to the wing unaided. Hearing the moans of the wounded tail gunner, he held him until the other crew members could get them into a dinghy. He was later picked up by a PT boat and rushed to a North Hampton hospital.

Following years of recuperation he returned to Syracuse to attend college, but with one eye gone, and the other requiring extensive surgery, he decided to drop out.

After a stint as a radio station engineer, Vosler decided to once again serve his country. Today his VA extension office handles veteran matters for the Syracuse area.

Here are some of his comments from a recent interview.

Q: What makes a hero?

Vosler: What makes a hero is someone else appraising an action you did. You certainly don't set out

You certainly don't set out to become a hero.

to become a hero. If someone thinks you did an excellent job with your severe disability, they make you a hero. I'll never forget the feeling that I didn't do the job the right way, or as well as I could have during the action because of the injuries I suffered. I was concerned that it wasn't the perfection that I demanded of myself. After the action I wasn't thinking of myself as a hero, but if I had done my job. I was full of doubts.

Q: Both Levitow and Erwin, featured in previous issues, attributed training to their heroic deeds. Do you agree with this?

No matter what job I held in life, I have always put out.

Vosler: Yes, I agree. If you weren't properly trained, you would never react to a critical situation. In my training, I worked hard. I was considered as being good at my job, hopefully one of the best in that particular field. And you must not forget our crew was all well-trained, from the pilot down. Whatever the job demanded, the crew always came through. Training is most important, there is no question about it.

Q: What are the psychological factors involved in combat?

Vosler: One has to face imminent death in a severe situation in order to know how you might react. I think it would be just as easy to blow your stack as it is to do something heroic. It's a question I asked myself over and over again. How does one really know how one is going to react in a critical situation. I don't think anyone can answer that.

Q: What advice would you have for young airmen today?

Vosler: Be loyal. I have extreme loyalty for an employer whether it be for the government, the military, peddling milk or whatever. No matter what job I held in life, I have always put out. I felt the same way when I was in the military.

I like to feel that I have produced to the upmost of my ability for the VA over the past 25 years. That is my philosophy. Give a little more and you'll make out better.

It is very hard for young people today to see this, although certainly not all of them. I have met some wonderful youngsters in the service today. Take those airmen that flew the early radar system aircraft. In

all kinds of extreme weather they performed. This is the type of dedication that all airmen should adopt. They must have pride in accomplishment.

Q: What do you think of today's national defense posture?

Vosler: I think our weapons arsenal is adequate. However, the people in the volunteer Army somehow disturb me. I am very concerned about the quality of the volunteers.

Q: What do you suggest to improve quality?

Vosler: There are a number of things. The most important is to provide more incentive to advance

I am very concerned about the quality of the volunteers.

to a higher grade. An example, the pay differential between a three-striper and those in the senior grades. Secondly, I think they should have more recognition upon reaching the higher grades. Perhaps a different type of uniform, one that would distinguish them above those in the lower grades. Something like the old Navy, where the chief wore a different uniform. It gives you a much greater incentive to move up. A much larger pay gap and a different uniform is the answer.

Q: Many airmen blame their dissatisfaction on the Air Force because they consider their job boring. With your background, do you have any advice for these young people?

Vosler: Well, yes. When you are young you wonder why you duplicate so many efforts in the military. It gets very boring. But then, all of a sudden, an emergency exists and you can do things without opening a textbook. You meet the critical situation automatically. That so-called boredom saves lives and accomplishes the mission.

PROUD TO BE A "HELL'S ANGEL"

Dominick Carbillano was one of the original crew members of the fortress Hell's Angel". His pilot was Lt. Glass, and he has sent us a few of his recollections.

"It was our forty-ninth mission and our target was Bremen, Germany. About thirty minutes before we reached the target, we started to have some trouble in our No. 4 engine. It started to leak oil badly, so Lt. Glass tried to shut the engine off, but the engine started to shake and some of the cowling flew off and hit the horizontal stabilizer, putting a large hole in it.

"We left the formation and headed back to England. We began having trouble on engines 2 and 3 as well. The skipper told us to prepare to ditch. It did not take us long to accomplish this request.

"With a little luck and the grace of God, we made it back to the base. We had dropped our bombs in the channel, but just as we hit the runway, No. 4 prop flew off the engine and hit the runway. After we had successfully landed, the crew chief informed us that Nos. 2 and 3 had also been burned out.

"As you know, the plane was repaired and everyone signed their name on the plane. It was then flown back to the US on a bond selling tour.

"I am very proud to have been a member of the "Hell's Angels" crew. I still have my flight jacket with the name "Hell's Angels" printed on the back with 28 bombs and the names of all the

places we bombed. I did this while I was waiting to come home.

"I have a diary of all my missions. The worst I can remember was January 11, 1944. The target was Oserschleben, Germany. I never saw as many planes as I saw I saw that day. The fighters came at us from all directions, even flying through the formation. We lost 59 bombers on that raid which was worse than the raid on Schweinfurt, where we lost 60 bombers. The 303rd Bomb Group received the President Unit Citation for their efforts.

"My missions began on December 16, 1943, and my last mission was flown on April 11, 1944. I completed 28 missions and was in the 360th Squadron."

IN MEMORIUM

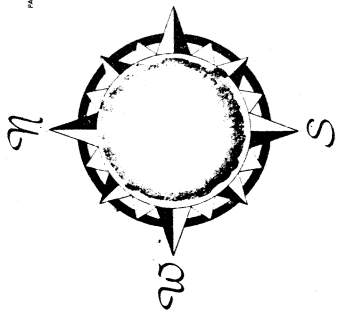
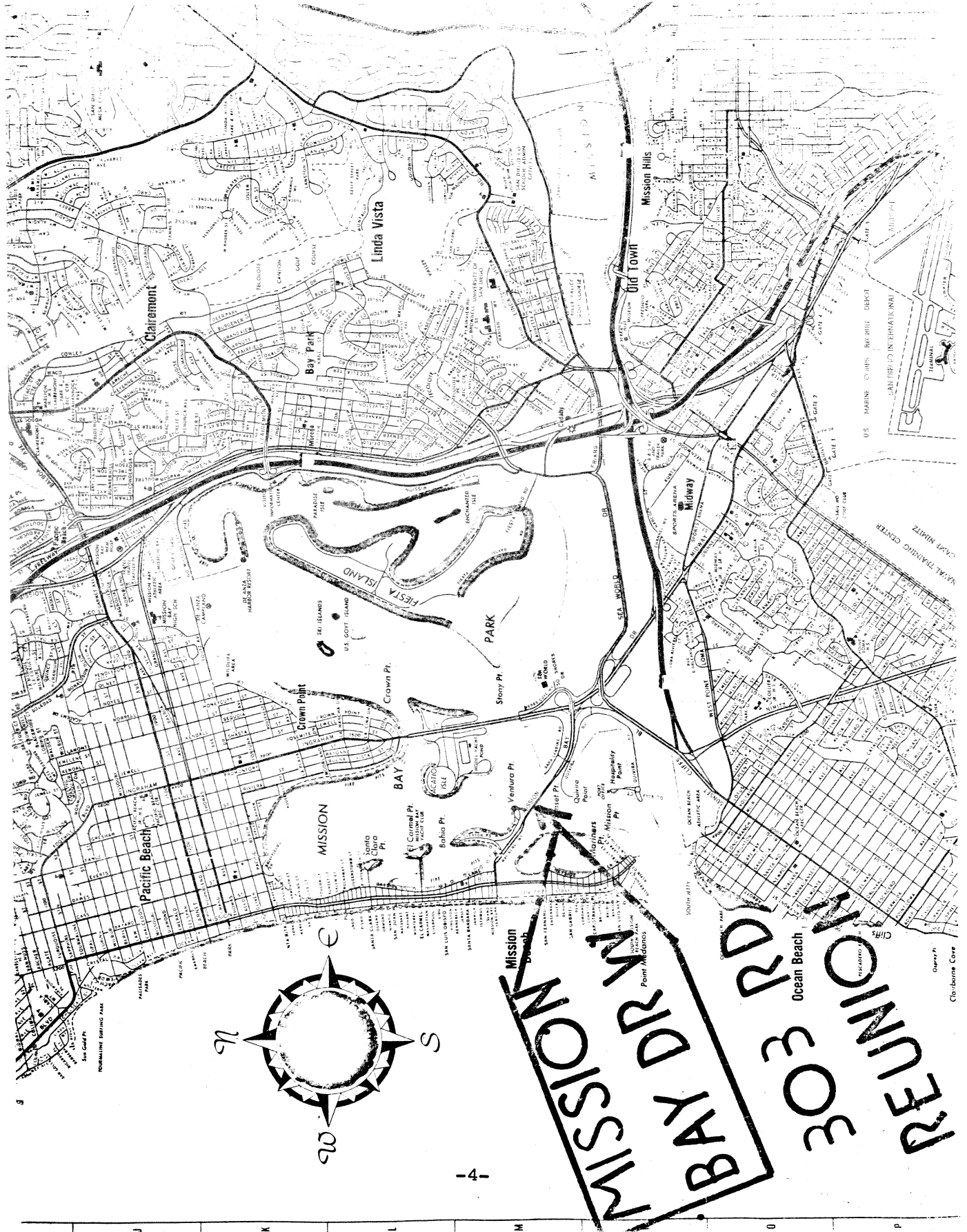
Several of our members have passed away since our last newsletter. We wish to express our sincere sorrow to their loved ones at their passing:

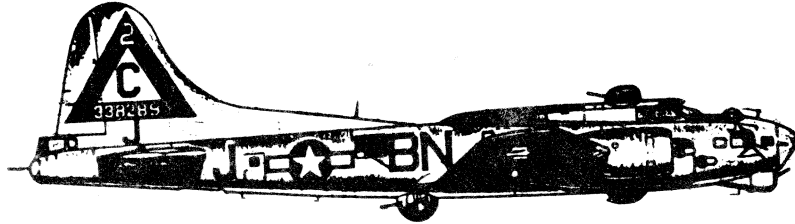
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303RD BOMB GROUP(H)ASSOCIATION
SAN DIEGO-REUNION


You are cordially invited to attend our fourth reunion to be held in San Diego, California from the 20th thru the 23rd of August 1981.


Our program should be a pleasant one for all. Various options for your entertainment are available when you arrive, For Instance:

- Thursday (Aug. 20) Registration and get Re-acquainted.
3:30 PM Tour (Old Town, Coronado Naval Base and Hotel)
Remain on Station.
6:30 PM Cocktails and Dinner (Coronado Officers Club)
PAY AS YOU GO.
- Friday (Aug. 21) Late Registration
7:30 AM Coffee and Danish
9:30 AM Tour (to be announced)
1:00 PM Tour-Naval Ships
5:00 PM Hospitality Room-Tell your WAR Tales
7:30 PM Dinner-Where-ever-PAY AS YOU GO.
- Saturday (Aug. 22) Late Registration
7:30 AM Coffee and Danish
9:00 AM General Business Meeting
12:15 PM Tour of City, Harbor Cruise-1 hour, \$3.50, 2 Hour
\$5.50-PAY AS YOU GO, Tour Naval Ships, or Tour of
Tijuana, Mexico.
7:00 PM Happy Hour-PAY AS YOU GO.
8:00 PM Banquet
- Sunday (Aug. 23) 9:00-11:00 AM-Brunch
Mission Briefing, Religious Services (to be announced)
11:59 AM END OF REUNION-HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME-See you all
in 1983

Transportation to various San Diego Tours will be available at \$5.50 per person, PAY AS YOU GO.

Registration Fees: Thursday thru Sunday-\$40.00 per person, Saturday thru Sunday-\$35.00 per person. Registration fee includes Banquet, Coffee and Danish, Hospitality drinks and treats, Sunday Brunch, Musical entertainment, Prizes, Name Tags, Gratuities, and Taxes. (Hotel Not Included), you must make your reservations directly with the Hotel. For those who fly into San Diego, Limousine Service is available from airport to Hotel.


William E. Eisenhart
President


Joseph Vieira
Secretary Treasurer



8th AF Memorial Museum Foundation, Inc.

P O Box 4738, Hollywood, FL 33083

(305) 961-1410

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

22 May 1981

Hollywood, FL - The 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation, Inc., has announced the awarding of a research grant to Russell A. Strong, Kalamazoo, MI, for the preparation of an 8th AF biographical directory.

The project, which is expected to take two years to complete, will include data on officers serving in the 8th AF in England from July 1, 1942 to May 31, 1945, who were commanders of air divisions, wings, groups and squadrons, as well as those in the higher headquarters of the fighter and bomber commands and the various service and support organizations. Staff officers in the rank of Lt. Colonel and higher will also be listed.

Lt Col John H. Woolnough, president of the Foundation, said in his announcement of the grant that it was expected that about 4,000 names would be included. No such comprehensive biographical directory has ever been produced, nor is there any listing of the commanders of the various organizations.

Strong is now completing the history of the 306th Bombardment Group. He was a navigator in the 306th in 1944. Strong also edits a quarterly newspaper that is mailed to 1,500 former members of the 306th. Strong is a graduate of Kalamazoo College, with a master's degree from Western Michigan University, where he is now the Director of Alumni Relations.

Persons interested in providing information for this important study are asked to contact Mr. Strong at 2041 Hillside, Kalamazoo, MI 49007. Please provide the name, rank (highest rank in 8th AF in WWII), unit and job assignment of each individual you propose for inclusion in the directory. Mr. Strong will provide the format for other required data.

The 8th AF Memorial Museum Foundation, Inc. has been established by the 8400 member 8th Air Force Historical Society for the purpose of perpetuating the history of the 8th AF, the largest air war force ever committed to combat. This mission is carried out by collecting, storing and displaying artifacts, photographs and related documents in several repositories in the United States and England.



8th AF Memorial Museum Foundation, Inc.

P O Box 4738, Hollywood, FL 33083
(305) 961-1410

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Hollywood, FL - Plans for a Symposium on the conflict between the Luftwaffe and the 8th Air Force has been announced by the 8th Air Force Memorial Museum Foundation. Dennis R. Scanlan, Jr., Co-Chairman for the project, reported that the Symposium is slated to take place on 15 October in St. Paul, Minnesota. This date was set to coincide with the beginning of the annual 8th AF Reunion, 15-18 October 1981. At least 1500 8th AFers are expected to be in St. Paul on that weekend. Scanlan believes that many air war historians will be attracted to the symposium.

The panel will include General Adolph Galland, commander of the Luftwaffe's fighter forces and the author of "The First and the Last;" Philip Ardery, commander of the 564th Bomb Squadron and author of "Bomber Pilot;" Cass Hough, chief of the 8th AF Technical Operations Section; and Francis S. Gabreski, highest scoring 8th AF Ace. Roger Freeman, eminent air-war historian and author of "The Mighty Eighth," will moderate the panel sessions.

The Symposium will consist of two sessions. The morning session will include discussions of combat actions between the 8th AF and the Luftwaffe in the 1942-1943 period. The afternoon panel discussion will cover the 1944-1945 period. There will be opportunities for questions from the floor during both sessions. We also plan to have the Commander of the present day 8th AF address the group during the luncheon. A separate program is planned for wives of attendees.

Interested parties should write 8th AFMMF Symposium, P O Box 4738, Hollywood, FL 33083 for program details and schedules.

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.
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HOLLYWOOD, FL 33024
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