



303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Might - In - Flight

"HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VI NUMBER 2

APRIL 1982

MINI-REUNION - CINCINNATI, OH -
OCTOBER 7-10, 1982 - BE THERE!!

The 303rd BGA mini-reunion will be held in conjunction with the 1982 reunion of the 8th Air Force Historical Society.

Highlight of the 8th AF meeting will be the dedication of the 8th AF memorial at the Air Force Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio on Sat., Oct. 9, 1982. At the same time, the 303rd BGA will dedicate a Living Memorial Tree and Plaque.

These dedications are a once-in-a-lifetime event. We hope the 303rd will be well represented. YOUR attendance and participation will add significance to the ceremonies.

This reunion is a "mini" only because it will be held concurrently with the larger, 8th AFHS reunion. You may be sure it will be a "maxi" for those who attend. Our Association will have a hospitality room at the headquarters hotel.

Make your reservations NOW through the 8th AFHS. It will help our planning if you also will let Joe Vieira know that we'll see you in Cincinnati in October. There's good reason to make your reservations NOW. Our Association will receive a "rebate" for each member who registers prior to September 1. If you register now, we get \$3 per

head. The later you register, the less we get, so DO IT NOW! The money we receive will be used for our hospitality room.

If you are not a member of the 8th AFHS, you may join by sending \$8.00 (one year's dues), along with your name, address and 8th AF Wartime Unit to the following address:

8th Air Force Historical Society
495 NE 157 Terrace
Miami, FL 33162

While you are signing up to attend the mini-reunion, make sure you have blocked-out the dates for our National Reunion to be held in Washington D.C. - September 22-25, 1983.

ARE YOU CURRENT???

Joe Vieira reports we still have a few delinquents from the class of 1975 - membership numbers 1-120. Everyone from the class of 1976 was due to renew last year (Nos. 121-277). Did you remember to take care of it? The class of 1977 (278-418) must renew this year.

Check your 303rd Membership Card. The expiration date is the date your next dues payment is (or WAS) due. If that date has passed, you are a delinquent. Don't let your 303rd BGA membership expire! Dues remain at just \$10.00 for 5 years. What else can you buy for 2 bucks a year?

REQUESTS FOR HELP

We have several letters asking for help from our Association in documenting certain aspects of 303rd history. Please read the following excerpts from these letters. If you have any information that might be of interest, please forward it to Joe Vieira. Joe will make copies for 303rd files and forward the material to the interested parties. Should you correspond with any of the letter writers directly, please send a copy of your correspondence to Joe for his records.

DETAILED STUDY OF THE 303RD

Whilst investigating a crash site near Covington, involving two B-17s, I became very interested in the 303rd Bomb Group. It appears that one of these aircraft may have been piloted by a Lt. Burkitt of the 360th. Serial number of the aircraft was 42-31441. It was on a mission to Kiel on 5 January, 1944 when it was involved in a mid-air collision with a B-17 from the 379th BG at 0745 hours.

This information may not be completely correct. Whilst checking the 379th BG crash report, discrepancies were found. Any information on this particular crash would be most appreciated.

However, the main reason for this letter is that I now wish to undertake a detailed study of the 303rd BG. Although a very famous group, it is not well documented, at least in this country.

I am aware of a book "Hell's Angels The First 300", but as far as I am aware this is no longer available. Other publications include "Chick's Crew" and "Cowboys and Indians" of which I have copies. These are the only publications I have found.

There is some other, very brief information, in books on the 8th Air Force, such as Roger Freeman's "Mighty Eighth", but nothing that lists Unit and Squadron missions.

I would be most grateful for any information; photos, stories from ground or flight crew members, from the activation on 3 Feb., 1942 until the Group was inactivated on 25 July, 1945, with particular emphasis on the period whilst stationed at Molesworth. Any material furnished will be handled with care, returned after copying and postage refunded.

Ron Houghton
166 Sywell Rd., Overstone
Northamptonshire, England

INTEREST IN SAME MID-AIR

I am researching the history of the 379th BG and am seeking assistance in obtaining information about an incident that occurred on 5 Jan., 1944. It involved aircraft from the 303rd and 379th. Shortly after take-off these aircraft collided and both crashed. There were two survivors from the 379th ship. The only information I have on the 303rd ship is: Serial No. 42-31441, Pilot, 2nd Lt. Burkitt, 360th Bomb Squadron.

I have contacted one of the survivors from the 379th ship and he has been able to tell his version of the story. What I would like to have is someone from the 303rd to tell me what he remembers as there is a certain amount of confusion as to what really did happen.

Philip T. Walpole
23 Shelsley Drive
Northampton, NN3 1ET.
England

MORE CRASH INFO SOUGHT

I'm gathering information on air accidents, to write a book on aviation in my home County of Leicester, England. Hope you can help. I am currently engaged on 200 plus, incidents. I should mention that this was a very busy training area in WWII. Occasionally, more illustrious aircraft came to grief, namely RAF heavies and B-17s from the 8th AAF.

So far, I've identified four B-17s of the 401st from Deenethorpe, one B-17 from the 384th at Grafton Underwood and an interloper from the 490th at

Eye on a scheduled training mission.

To the best of my belief, a pair of 303rd B-17s collided on 9 Nov. 1944. Geographical co-ordinates for the incident, 52°42'N x 00°55'W, suggest a point within my home county. Members of the 8th AAF Enthusiasts and Historians, UK have "suggested" a couple of pilots' names as being connected; Lt. Davis, Lt. Pursell or Lt. Oliver and the possibility that the 427th Bomb Squadron had B-17Gs, 43-37666 and 43-38057 collide on this day.

Any help and facts would be gratefully received.

Brandon John White
1 Lower Leicester Rd.
Lutterworth
Leicestershire,
LE 17 4NF., U.K.

WHO BOMBED ROTTERDAM???

I am doing research to write a book about the air war over Rotterdam. I would be grateful if you could help me get in touch with men of the 303rd who participated in the mission against the docks of Rotterdam on 31 March, 1943.

If they could send me their memories and their photographs for reproduction, I would be very grateful. Of course the photographs will be returned immediately after copying.

Hans Onderwater
4, Gentiaan,
2992 VD Barendrecht
Netherlands

ENGINEER/WRITER NEEDS B-17 PHOTOS

This request comes from a Boeing Engineer who has published several aircraft books:

"In 1983 we are going to have a color schemes and markings series. In that series, I will be doing a volume on the B-17 and another on the B-29.

We are planning to cover every operational Bomb Group. A one-page history of the group will be followed by several pages of photographs of representative aircraft with names/nose

art which can be identified by serial number and unit codes.

I have photos of several 303rd B-17Gs for which I need additional data. One is YARDBIRD II for which I have a pair of over-exposed shots of the right nose and most of the right side. I need the serial number and squadron. All that can be seen on one photo is the individual airplane letter "A". No. 3 and 4 engines carry the names Repete and Pete, respectively.

Another interesting one is TWO BEAUTS with a gal lying on a bomb above the ball turret between the squadron codes VK. She belonged to the 358th and had the old national insignia, without the bars straddling the star.

The other shots which I suspect are of 303rd BG aircraft are OOOLD SOLDIER with a dog on the right nose, and ELI'S SON with a rabbit wearing a striped sweater and a pair of gloves on the left nose. The serial number of the latter is 41-24---

Any data on the above aircraft would be most welcome. Also, I would like to borrow, review and copy any photos of B-17s which might assist me in my writings. My turnaround time is three to four weeks.

Alwyn T. Lloyd
17465 NE 11th St.
Bellevue, WA 98008

YOUR NEWSLETTER

This is your newsletter. Use it if you have a need or desire to communicate with the membership of your association. Use it to share experiences and anecdotes pertinent to the organization. If you have a story to tell or a request, send the facts to the newsletter editor:

Bud Klint
5728 Walla
Fort Worth, TX 76133

Next issue - July. Deadline for information to be included - June 1.

STRANGE, BUT TRUE

Our Jan. Newsletter included a story about the Air Museum being built at Barksdale AFB, LA. The story included this note: "There is a wood splinter and tail light from the plane which claimed the life of the base's namesake, Lt. Eugene H. Barksdale." This sparked the following account from James A. Wood of Suitland, MD., former member of the 359th Squadron.

"After retiring from the AF in 1964, I began teaching Basic Aviation Science at the Pittsburgh (PA) Institute of Aeronautics. I was working with a retired Navy Aviation Machinist Mate, Victor J. Vendetti. One morning Vic brought in a box of aeronautical junk - worn out instruments and sundry other parts. I noticed a streamlined-shaped position light - the kind they used to mount on top of vertical stabilizers. It was of aluminum alloy with a white lens and an aluminum base. There appeared to be some engraving on the base. After removing the oxidized coating, we found the inscription indicated that this tail light was from the plane in which Lt. Barksdale had been killed. I wrote to the Public Information Officer at Barksdale AFB to see if they were interested. They were and I shipped the light off to Louisiana. Somewhere in my memorabilia is a letter I received thanking me for the contribution.

It's just mighty strange to find the write-up in the 303rd Newsletter making mention of this light when it is there because a 303rd happened to be in the right spot at the right time and recognized the light for what it was. Not only that, but according to the article, Barksdale's chute hung on the rudder. This was the little jewel that killed him! Had it been a flush-mount or set into the trailing edge of the rudder, his chute might have slid off. No, it had to be a tear-drop shaped light which stuck up possibly three inches above the rudder. That's all it took! See you in Cincinnati next October and DC in '83."

Jim Wood

CALLING ALL EX-POWS

Carl Fyler was a pilot in the 360th Squadron. He also spent 17 months in a German prison camp. Today, he is Doctor Carl J. Fyler of Topeka, KS. He is Special Advisor to the American Ex-POW Commander and a member of the Governor's Veterans' Advisory Commission of Kansas. Carl calls our attention to a new law, "Former Prisoners of War Benefits Act of 1981", adopted by Congress last August.

This law, PL 97-37, established an Advisory Committee on Former Prisoners of War. It requires the Administrator to "seek out" former prisoners of war affected by this Act and to provide them with information regarding applicable changes in law, regulations, policies, guidelines, or other directives affecting the benefits to which former prisoners of war are entitled by virtue of the amendments made by this Act.

"Seek out" seems to be the problem. According to Carl, there is no official list. It is estimated that there were 80,000 ex-POWs from WWII living in 1981, but nobody seems to be sure just who they are or how to contact all of them.

The Veterans' Administration is attempting to compile a list, but it is up to you as an ex-POW to register. If you are an ex-POW, contact your local V.A. office. Register your name and address and ask about the provisions of this new law.

FINANCES AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1981

Checking Account	\$7,882.89
Savings Certificate . . .	1,104.74
Total	<u>8,987.63</u>

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Joe Vieira does a heck of a job in maintaining our mailing list. You can help by letting Joe know if you plan to move. Please don't make him find out the hard way!

FINAL TAPS

We extend our deepest sympathy to the families of these 303rders who have answered their final roll call:

FELIX SPOERRI 785 N. 25th St., Baton Rouge, LA 70802

DONALD SAAM 903 Woodland Blvd., Fremont, OH 43420

WILLIAM SAUCIER 315 Meadow Dr., Washington MO 63090

JOHN KENNEDY 2824 Alsace Court, Orlando, FL 32812

JOHN A. GARRIOTT 28460 Floral, Roseville MN 48066

RICHARD COLE Former 359th Squadron Commander - Sorry, no family address available.

HELL'S ANGELS - THE FIRST 300

At our reunion last August it was announced that we would reprint this historical record of the 303rd BG. The last Newsletter contained an order form and the response has been pretty good. We are reprinting the order form below.

The book is in process now. It should be ready to mail before the end of April. Remember, only 1,000 will be printed. You can still order yours at the pre-publication price; \$5.00 per copy. Clip the order form and mail it today, along with your check or money order.

Mail to: Joe Vieira
6400 Park Street
Hollywood, FL 33024

Please reserve ___ copies of the FIRST 300 MISSION BOOK for me at \$5.00 per copy.

My check (Money Order) for \$ _____ is attached. Copies are to be mailed to me when completed at the address shown below:

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State/Zip _____

AIR FORCE ACADEMY MEMORIAL

The Memorial Fund for the 303rd Plaque to be installed on the Memorial Wall in the AF Academy cemetery is growing. Father Skoner reports that we now have a total of about \$3,500.00. Draftsmen are working on a design which will be submitted to the Academy sometime this month. Dedication should take place in late summer or early fall. We should be able to give you a firm date in the July Newsletter. It is hoped that many members can arrange to attend the dedication ceremony in Colorado Springs.

Father Skoner is compiling a list of donors. If you aren't already a part of this important project, use the coupon below - Last Chance!

303RD BOMB GROUP MEMORIAL FUND

Mail to: Edmund J. Skoner
P.O. Box 24118
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33337

Dear "Chappie",
My check (Money Order) for \$ _____ is attached. Count me in!

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State/Zip _____

303rd BOMB GROUP(H)ASSOCIATION, INC.
MIGHT-IN-FLIGHT

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

Name _____ Military Grade _____ Spouse's Name _____
Street _____ Apt. Number _____
Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP CODE _____
Home Business _____
Phone: () _____ Phone: () _____ Ext: _____
Crew and/or Retired Military Pilot's
Duty _____ Sqd. _____ Grade if Any _____ Name _____

_____ \$10.00-Dues (5yrs) _____ \$2.50-Patch _____ \$1.50-Pin _____ \$1.00-Roster

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

Signature _____ Date _____ Amount paid: \$ _____

DO NOT SEND CASH THRU THE POSTAL SERVICE: IF you are a member, please pass
this application on to another 303rder that is not a member, THANK YOU.

MAKE CHECK PAYABLE TO: 303rd Bomb Group(H)Association, INC., and Mail to:

JOSEPH VIEIRA
6400 Park Street
Hollywood, FL 33024

303rd BOMB GROUP(H)ASSOCIATION, INC
P. O. Box 8531
PEMBROKE PINES BRANCH
HOLLYWOOD, FL 33024
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED
RETURNED POSTAGE GUARANTEED

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HOLLYWOOD, FL
PERMIT NO. 1129
