

303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Might - In - Flight

“HELLS ANGELS” NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VII NUMBER 4

Editor: Bud Klint
5728 Walla Fort Worth, TX 76133

NOVEMBER, 1983

D.C. REUNION

Every 303rd get-together has been bigger and better than the one before. The fifth biennial reunion in Washington, D.C., September 22-25 was no exception: 174 registered members; 180 attended the seafood buffet dinner at the Andrews AFB NCO club on Thursday; 286 were present for the Friday night dinner and 313 enjoyed the Saturday banquet.

At the general membership meeting, Saturday morning, special recognition was given to the crews with most members present. Among flying crews, the Bob Moreman crew had 8 members in attendance. The Larry Poole and Bob Akers crews had 5 members each. The Alex Bourque crew led the ground crews with 5 members present.

The three and one-half days spent in Washington were a great time of sharing, reminiscing, story swapping, renewing old acquaintances, and making new friends. There is much more to a 303rd reunion than eating, drinking and sight-seeing. There is a spirit of comradeship which cannot be described, it must be experienced. If you have not attended a reunion, decide now to be a part of the next one!

FUTURE REUNION DATES

1984 - June 19-26 - Molesworth, England (See details elsewhere in this issue.)

1985 - September 12-15 - Omaha, Nebraska

1987 - September 11-14, Spokane, Washington

We also will hold a mini-reunion each year in conjunction with the 8th AF Historical Society.

OFFICERS 1983-1985

PRESIDENT - Joe Vieira

1st VICE PRESIDENT - Paul Barton

2nd VICE PRESIDENT - Howard Frohman

RECORDING SECRETARY - John Ladd

SECRETARY/TREASURER - Joe Vieira

ASST. SECY/TREAS. - Lawrence Peacock

NEWSLETTER EDITOR - Bud Klint

DIRECTORS

Three new directors, elected at the general membership meeting are:

Bob Hullar - 427th Squadron

Melvin McCoy - 444th Sub Depot

Ben Smith - 360th Squadron

Other members of the Board of Directors are:

Walt Mayer, Chairman

Bill Eisenhart*

Don Harrison*

Harry Heller

Charles J. McClain*

Bob Moreman

Mel Schulstad

Dick Waggoner*

*Indicates past president.

A WORD FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

"I am proud to assume the office of President and thank each of you for your confidence. Our association has grown, prospered and accomplished some very worthwhile things under the excellent leadership we have had. I will do my very best to continue to make the 303rd Bomb Group Association meaningful for every member. Please remember that all officers and directors are your representatives. Anytime you think we can help you or you can help us, please contact any of us. Complete addresses are in your 303rd roster, or you can contact any officer or director through me. My address always appears on the last page of the Newsletter.

At the D.C. reunion in September, I reported total membership of 989. As of November 5, we have 1,022! That includes 954 regular members, 38 Honorary and 30 Associate. One thing I would like to see us accomplish during the next two years is to increase our membership to, at least, 1,200. I will need the help of each of you if we are to do this. There are lots of 303rds out there who don't even know our organization exists. Will you help by contacting just one of our group who hasn't yet joined our association?

After the D.C. reunion, I attended the 8th AF Historical Society annual reunion in Houston, TX, October, 12-16. The 303rd held a mini-reunion there. We had 43 members registered. The 1984 reunion of the 8th will be in Los Angeles, Oct. 3-7 and, as usual, we will have a 303rd Group Rendezvous there.

As General Lew Lyle pointed out in his remarks at the W.D.C. banquet, we should be proud of what we accomplished as the 303rd Bomb Group. We compiled an enviable record and every one of us had a part in that record. We need to do things now, to remind future generations what we did and that we are proud to have served in such a distinguished outfit. We have done a little through our memorials at Wright-Patterson in Dayton and at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. There is a great deal more we can do if we all work together. I'm counting on your support and participation during the next two years."

Joe Vieira

MEMORIAL FUND

Father Skoner, trustee of this fund, issued the following report at the DC reunion:

Collected at 1981 reunion		\$3,360.00
Receipts since 1981		<u>1,277.00</u>
Total receipts		4,637.00
Dayton Memorial	\$1,646.16	
Colo. Spgs. Memorial	<u>1,667.25</u>	
Total Expenses	3,313.41	
Balance on hand 9/24/83		\$1,323.59

This isn't much money for a fitting memorial to be dedicated at Molesworth next June. In addition we hope to be able to aid the church at Molesworth with a Memorial Grant. This means it is again open season for contributions. We are nearing the end of the year. As you are doing your income tax planning, keep in mind that contributions to this fund are tax deductible. Send any amount you can, but be a part of this continuing Memorial effort. Do it, today, while it is fresh in your mind. Make checks payable to: 303rd BGA Memorial Fund. Mail them to:

Rev. Edmond J. Skoner
 2455 NE 51st St., Apt. 202
 Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33308
 All gifts will be acknowledged.

FIRST SCHWEINFURT MISSION STORY

The August 1983 issue of the SMITHSONIAN contains an interesting account of the mission to Schweinfurt, August 17, 1943. It is a 10-page article beginning on page 34, with lots of good illustrations. If interested, copies of the August issue may still be available. Send your request along with \$2.00 to:

Smithsonian Institution, Editorial Offices
 900 Jefferson Drive
 Washington, DC 20560

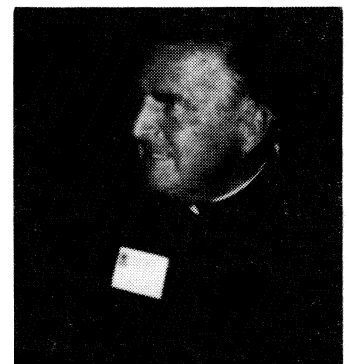
KEYNOTE SPEAKER



Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force, (Retired), Paul W. Airey was both interesting and challenging as our featured speaker at the WDC reunion banquet. Now Field Director of the Air Force Sergeants Association, he contrasted the state of the Air Force today with what it was 41 years ago when the 303rd took up residence at Molesworth.

(The first mission of the 303rd was a ride to St. Nazaire, 17 November, 1942.) Chief Airey reported the Air Force is "alive and well", staffed with intelligent, patriotic and skilled personnel. Lacking the incentive we had in 1942, the big job for the Air Force today is trying to train men to "get obsessed and stay obsessed" with the defense of America. He urged that we, as veterans, do all we can to help keep America strong.

CHAPLAINS, TWO



We were indeed twice blessed to have both Father Skoner and "Chappie" Slawson with us again in DC. These two Chaplains who did so much to keep us sane and on the right track in England still are inspirations to all who come in contact with them. Each held Sunday morning services to add a very fitting AMEN to another great 303rd reunion.

NOW, WE HAVE A GROUP HISTORIAN

Add to the list of Officers on page 1, the name of James Ferris (no relation to Keith). Since the reunion, Jim has agreed to take on the job of Group Historian. Joe Vieira has tried to keep up with this in the past, but he already holds two offices in the Association and is grateful for Jim's offer to help in this area. If you have any memorabilia relating to your service with the 303rd BG and would like to have it become part of the official Association history, send the items along to Jim Ferris. Papers, photos, diaries, insignia, souvenirs . . . anything that will help tell the story of the 303rd will be catalogued and preserved. If you have items you want returned, Jim will copy them and return the originals. Send all items to:

James H. Ferris 4381 Milan Court
 303rd BG Historian Riverside, CA 92505

The
United
States
AIR FORCE AIRMEN OF NOTE



AN ABSOLUTE "GAS"

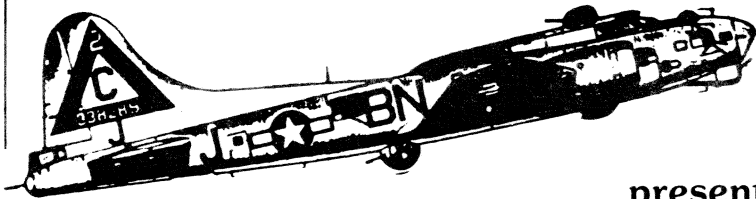
Many members had never head of THE AIRMEN OF NOTE when they walked into the ballroom for the WDC reunion banquet. It didn't take long to find out that this group of musicians was something special. They turned out in WWII Uniforms and quickly whisked the audience back to the early 40s as they played in the Glenn Miller style. Such numbers as String Of Pearls, In The Mood, Tuxedo Junction, Chatanooga Choo Choo, I'll Be Seeing You and more, really captivated everyone. It was a rare treat to hear such a fine group of musicians perform "our" music.

THE AIRMEN OF NOTE was formed in 1950 to carry on the goals of the late Major Glenn Miller. It had been his aim to give the troops the music they wanted to hear, and give it to them with that remarkable professionalism that was the Miller trademark. While they played for us in the Miller style, THE NOTE is equally at ease with current rock tunes. They actually have created their own new big band sound and have been acclaimed by music critics and musicians alike as one of the best.

THE NOTE Performs throughout the U.S. and, in fact, throughout much of the world, delivering their "in concert" sound to packed auditoriums wherever they go. Their schedule calls for spring and fall tours of the U.S. Each tour lasts about a month and typically covers 3 to 7 states. If you ever hear that THE AIRMEN OF NOTE are coming to your part of the country, make a special effort to hear them. You won't be disappointed. As Count Bassie once remarked, "They are an absolute 'gas' . . . one of the best I've heard . . . and I speak from more than a couple years experience. I don't care what kind of a bag you put them in, jazz or dance, the result will always be the same . . . great music!"



Sergeant Bobbie McCleary, featured vocalist with the AIRMEN OF NOTE. Bobbie has been with the band since 1978. Her unique vocal stylings have been featured on four albums recorded by the "Note".



303rd Bomb Group (H) Association

presents



Reunion in Britain '84

June 19-26, 1984



Come join us on an unforgettable trip to Britain for a reunion to take us back into time. We'll visit all of the old haunts including a trip to Molesworth, wander over the old drome and seek out those spots which hold special memories. In the evening a get-together with the villagers of Molesworth in the village hall and the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the 303rd's association with the village. And, of course, we visit to Madingly to the American War Cemetery. It will be a trip to live long in your memories. Join us now as space is very limited.

LET'S GO TO ENGLAND!

Our British friend, Ray Cossey, pictured at the DC reunion, will escort the 303rd tour of England next June. Those who have enjoyed Ray and his special sense of humor at our reunions know that having him as our tour guide will make this trip especially memorable. You should have received complete details before you read this. If not, you will receive them soon. This is a very special opportunity... take advantage of it. Block out the dates now... June 19-26. The tour package includes an option for longer stays in the U.K. with no increase in air fare. Extra tours of the continent also may be arranged. If you do not receive a tour packet, or if you need more information, write to:



Towson Travel Center, Group Dept.
Equitable-Towson Building
401 Washington Avenue
Towson, MD 21204

SEE YOU IN MOLESWORTH NEXT JUNE!!!

BEWARE OF THE RED DOT!

Look at your address label on the back page of this Newsletter. If a red dot appears thereon, YOU ARE DELINQUENT in your 303rd BGA dues! If you joined in 1978, you were due to renew this year. The class of 1979 will owe another \$10 in 1984. Where else can you buy anything for \$10, unconditionally guaranteed to last for 5 years? Take a look at your membership card now to be sure you are a paid-up member in good standing. If you can't find your card or have any doubt, send Joe Vieira a check for \$10. If you're paid up, he'll put the ten in the 303rd Memorial Fund!

EX-POWs



Dr. Carl J. Fyler forwarded this picture of a special group of guys who gathered at the WDC reunion. The ex-POWs pictured, from left, are: Carl Fyler, 360th, Gene Breitenbach, 360th, Fred Barnes, 359th, Joseph Fertitta, 358th, Gene Girman, 359th, Vince DeLiso, 427th, Bruce Connors, 358th, William Simpkins, 358th and Millard Boren, 360th. Two more ex-POWs who attended the reunion but missed the photo were: Carl Neilsen, 359th and Charles Grace, 360th.

Dr. Fyler is a National Director of the American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc. Carl reports that many Veterans Administration military records may be incomplete, creating difficulties when dealing with the V.A. Among other things, POW status may be missing. Fyler was a prisoner for 17 months, but the V.A. does not list him as an ex-POW. If you were a POW and have questions about benefits you may be entitled to, write to:

Dr. Carl J. Fyler
300 Yorkshire Road
Topeka, KS 66606

AIR FORCE ARTIST/HISTORIAN

Mr. Keith Ferris, the artist who painted the mural, "FORTRESSES UNDER FIRE" in the National Air and Space Museum was a guest speaker at our WDC reunion. Keith has been retained by the USAF to record in paintings the history of manned flight. His works include almost everything from the Wright brothers' plane to spacecraft.

Keith and his wife, Peggy, presented a slide show/lecture showing some of what goes into a Ferris painting. It's amazing! The research, including actual flight time, the geometric, skeletal drawings, the attention to the most minute details make his paintings more than art. They truly are Historical Art.

Keith showed the many steps in the painting of the 75'x25' mural at the Smithsonian. He never had attempted anything on such a scale until he was given that commission. He won't likely attempt another that large, judging from the problems he had to overcome in doing that one. It was interesting to learn that much of that mural was done with a 4-inch house painting brush!

The appearance of Keith Ferris at our reunion and his explanation of his art added new interest to the lithographic print offer that appeared in our July Newsletter. This print, pictured below, is the German side of the Ferris mural, "FORTRESSES UNDER FIRE". It pictures Lt. Klaus Bretscheider in his FW-190-8, Raubbautz, closing on the 3 Forts, Marie, Special Delivery and Bonnie B. This is a limited edition print (850), numbered and signed by the artist. It is, of course, in full color and does not include the inset photo of Keith.



Size: 24"x30". Cost: \$100. Order from:
Keith Ferris Galleries
50 Moraine Road
Morris Plains, NJ 07950
New Jersey residents, add 6% sales tax.

SPEAKING OF SPECIAL REUNIONS . . .

There was a unique "Gathering of Angels" (Hell's Angels, that is) at the Holiday Inn, South, Dallas-Ft. Worth International Airport, Texas, last Memorial Day week-end. The crew of "Lady Luck", 360 Squardon, 303rd Bomb Group held their very first reunion since being separated in 1943.

Attending were: Lloyd D. Griffin, Pilot, Walter C. Swanson, Co-Pilot, William M. Preston, Navigator, Robert L. Taylor, Bombardier, William E. Eason, Engineer/Top Turret, Vernon E. Schwartz, Radio Operator, Robert Plummer, Ball Turret, Paul Henderson, Waist Gunner, Lynwood Wiegand, Tail Gunner, Walter Melton, Crew Chief. Missing were the other members of the ground crew, the other waist gunner, Samuel L. Edwards (present whereabouts unknown) and the original ball turret gunner, Sgt. Rheume, deceased.

The crew flew missions from Molesworth from March 1943 to July 1943 for, then Squadron Commander, Lewis E. Lyle. Sgt. Rheume was shot down in May 1943 while flying with Lt. Plocher's crew. He was a POW for 23 months and died of a heart attack in 1978. Robert Taylor was shot down over Hamburg on July 25, 1943 while flying with another crew. He was a POW until liberated in April 1945. Another crew reunion is planned for 1985.

Thanks to Robert Taylor for sending this information. Anytime something happens to you that would interest other 303rdrs, send the details to the Newsletter editor. The address now appears on page 1. In checking the names above against the roster, it appears that only four are members of the Association. How about getting the rest of the crew to join? They might even consider moving the next reunion to 1984 at Molesworth! If anyone has any information about the missing waist gunner, Samuel L. Edwards, please contact Robert Taylor, 2703 Spokane Rd., San Antonio TX 78222.

TAPS

We extend our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of these former members of the 303rd who have passed away recently.

WARREN C. KOTZ, 427th Squardon
240 Boca Ciego Pt. Blvd., So.
St. Petersburg, FL 33708

JOHN A. CASTLE, 360th Squadron
875 Menlo Oaks Dr.
Menlo Park, CA 94025

Sometimes we don't hear about the death of one of our number. If you know of someone from the 303rd who has passed away, please notify Joe Vieira promptly. Joe needs to correct our membership/mailling lists and issue an honorary membership to any surviving wife.

GROUP CAPTAIN JEFORIE

By Nathan Smith

In 1942, aboard the Queen Mary, enroute to Greenock, Scotland, I became acquainted with a Royal Air Force Sergeant. He had just completed fighter pilot training in Canada. Along with about twenty other Sergeant Pilots, he was on his way back to England to report to an airdrome in Kent, northeast of London. He told me he would be flying a Super Marine Spitfire, the hottest fighter the RAF had.

We spent a lot of time together as the Queen raced across the Atlantic on her zig-zag course. By the time we docked, we each knew the other's life history and were fast friends. He gave me his address and telephone number in East Ealing, London. He made me promise to visit his parents on my first pass and as often as I could. Forty-one years later, I still remember the phone number: 1-3-5-7-9.

The 303rd ground echelon arrived at Molesworth on Sept. 12, 1942, after a hair-raising ride in English lorries driven by "nuts" who insisted on driving on the wrong side of the road. The air echelon got there a couple of weeks later and the 303rd settled down to life in "Merrie" England. Then, during the second week of October, I got a pass to London.

When the train arrived, I "rang up" Jeforie's parents. His father said they had been expecting me and gave me directions to get to East Ealing by subway and bus. I arrived about an hour later.

Jeforie's parents were delightful. They put me up in Jeforie's room. Then they introduced me to Kathleen, Jeforie's fiancée. She was twice as pretty as the snaps that Jef had shown me. She ran a small lathe in binoculars factory a few blocks away. She was staying with Jeforie's parents because her own home was on the west side of London, two hours away by subway. I made several return trips and always was received like one of the family.

Jeforie's father was retired from some position in Scotland Yard and, during my several visits, showed me the sights of London. There seemed to be as much below ground as there was above. I got to see things that most G.I.s never even knew existed. I visited the rooms under the Houses of Parliament and the mechanical room of the tower bridge that housed the huge machinery which lifted the bridge to let boats go up or down the Thames. I even climbed the stairs inside the clock tower at Parliament and patted "Big Ben". On a couple of visits, I took Kathern to stage shows in London. Once I took her to the famous Windmill Theatre on Great Windmill Street just off Piccadilly Circus.

Then, one day back at Molesworth, I got a letter from my wife's older sister who fancied herself a gourmet cook. She informed me that London had the largest Chinese community outside China and requested that I get a

Chinese cookbook for her. I put four one-pound notes and the letter in an envelope. I sent it to Kathern with a note asking her to get the book for me. On my next trip to East Ealing, Kathern handed me the book. It was second-hand and looked like it had been well used. It was a real Chinese cookbook with millions of tiny, what appeared to be, bird tracks . . . not a word of English!

I sent the book to my gourmet-cook sister-in-law. The return letter was so hot, it's a wonder it didn't set the mail sack afire. My sister-in-law hasn't gotten over that one yet!

The days, weeks, months and even years passed slowly. Jeforie and I communicated by notes left on his pillow. We exchanged occasional letters and a few phone calls. Then, in February 1945, he landed his Spitfire at Molesworth. We had quite a reunion. I was aware that he had gone slowly up the ladder in rank, but a few days before his visit, he had been promoted to Group Captain. There were a few eyebrows raised by people who saw a Master Sergeant and the equivalent of a Bird Colonel beating each other on the back. In fact, a couple of guys tried to break up what they thought to be a fight between an American Sergeant and an RAF Officer. I introduced Jeforie to General Travis who got quite a laugh out of Jef's stories about Kathern and me "dating" while he was fighting the War. The General was even more interested in Jeforie's tales of shooting down nine V-1 rockets (buzz-bombs), shooting up a pair of German locomotives and his encounters while flying escort for B-17s.

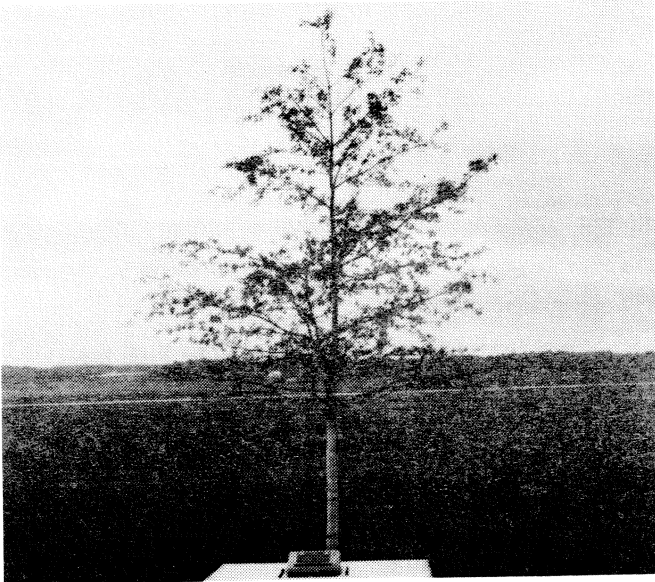
I didn't see Jeforie again until 1951. I was stationed near Oxford, on loan to the Royal Air Force for a year. On trips to London, my wife and I had the pleasure of visiting Jeforie, his wife and their two children. After 1951, we kept in touch by mail until 1969 when we made a trip to London and got to visit them once more.

By 1969, London had changed. The round-about street that made Piccadilly Circus had been closed. The Red Cross Club, where so many of us stayed, had been converted back into a hotel. The building had a large bronze plaque commemorating it as "Rainbow Corner" and telling of the millions of G.I.s who stayed there. The Red Cross snack room had been converted to, of all things a MILK BAR!

My wife and I went in to see what it was like. They were selling poor quality ice cream and frozen milk. They even had milk shakes made with frozen milk and some English-type sandwiches. I spotted a sign above the counter which read: "Hamburgers, Six Shillings". I jumped to the counter and ordered two. I paid for them and was handed a small paper bag. We each had two slices of coarse bread with a thin slice of ham between . . . nothing else. It was as big a disappointment as the first time I tried to buy a "Burger and Shake" in London in 1942. I got a CEREAL patty on a bun and POWDERED Milk whipped with an egg beater! Remember?

GREEN AND GROWING

Thanks to Gene Girman for these pictures of the 303rd Memorial Tree and Plaque at Dayton. This memorial was dedicated last year when we met with the 8th AF Historical Society in Cincinnati.



Gene took the photos shortly before the WDC reunion to show that the tree was doing well. It's doing so well, in fact, that Gene says "It's shaped just like Joe Vieira"!

HIGH FLIGHT

Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
 And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings:
 Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
 Of sun-split clouds - and done a hundred things
 You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and
 swung
 High in the sunlit silence. Ho'ring there,
 I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
 My eager craft through footless halls of air.
 Up, up the long, delirious, burning blue
 I've topped the windswept heights with easy grace
 Where never lark, or even eagle flew.
 And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
 The high untresspassed sanctity of space
 Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee, Jr.

We are indebted to Mrs. Helen Kirk for sending the poem reprinted above. Helen says she first heard the poem read by Jimmy Stewart as the sign-off for a TV station some 25 years ago. It so impressed her that she wrote to the station for a copy.

She believes that the author was a World War I flier.

You will recall that Helen Kirk is the sister of 303rd member Wm. (Bud) Lewis. She was kind enough to write the article, "The Way It Was" which was printed in our July issue.

COMING STRAIGHT IN

This painting of the B-17 "Hell's Angels" landing at Molesworth with one engine on fire was commissioned by Norfolk Art Publishers, Ltd. Of England. Many of you purchased prints of this fine painting. The original oil was presented to our association at the Dayton reunion in 1979. That original has now been sent to 8th AF Headquarters, Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. Look for it if you ever have occasion to visit Barksdale.





303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Might - In - Flight



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP PLEASE PRINT ALL INFORMATION

Name _____ Military Grade _____ Spouse's Name _____
 Street _____
 Address _____ Apt. # _____ City _____
 State _____ Zip _____ Home Phone () _____ Business Phone () _____ Ext. _____
 Crew and/ or Duty _____ Squadron _____ Pilot's Name _____ Retired Military Grade, If Any _____

- _____ \$10.00 Membership Dues (5 years)
- _____ \$1.00 Membership Roster
- _____ \$2.50 Official 303rd Patch
- _____ \$1.50 303rd Pin
- _____ \$1.00 303rd Decal
- _____ \$5.00 First 300 Mission Book (Includes Decal)

DO NOT SEND CASH THROUGH THE MAIL!
Make check or Money Order payable to:
303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Mail to:
JOSEPH VIEIRA
6400 Park Street
Hollywood, FL 33024

If you are already a member of the Association,
please pass this application along to another
303rder who is not a member. Thank you.

Signature _____ Date _____ Amount Paid \$ _____

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.
 P.O. Box 8531
 PEMBROKE PINES BRANCH
 HOLLYWOOD, FL 33084
 ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

