

303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Might - In - Flight

“HELLS ANGELS” NEWSLETTER

VOLUME IX NUMBER 3

Editor: Hal Susskind
2602 Deerfoot Tr., Austin, Tx. 78704

DECEMBER 1985

303rd Mounts Maximum Effort

It was the first ME (maximum effort) mounted by B-17 Groups of The Eighth Air Force since April of 1945 and as usual the 303rd Bomb Group did its part.

I'm referring to B-17, 50th Anniversary Veteran's Day Program hosted by the Boeing Company in Seattle, WA, on July 26, 1985. More than 10,000 veterans—flight crews as well as ground personnel—from 27 Flying Fortress Groups made the pilgrimage to Boeing Field to relive the glory days of World War II and also to see the three B-17's that were still flying.

Mostly, they wanted once again to walk through the aircraft that withstood the Nazi war machine's most vicious attempts to prevent them from bombing their assigned targets. No mission was ever aborted due to enemy action.

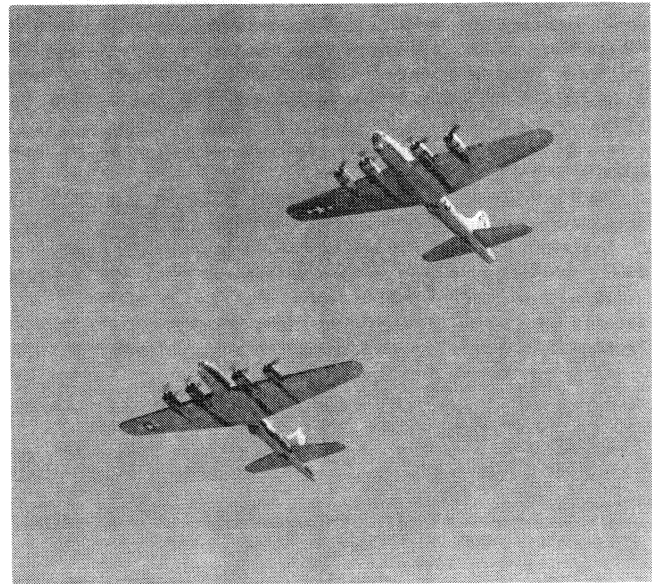
It was indeed a pilgrimage as the veterans, showing the same determination they displayed in flying combat missions, came on canes, on crutches and in wheelchairs to once again relive and talk about the airplane that kept coming back, sometimes in pieces and sometimes with blood on the floor several inches deep.

"They are here for love of an aircraft that saved their butts," said a veteran who piloted a 10-man crew through 30 missions.

That enduring love affair - it lasted for more than 40 years - resulted in so many requests for "one more ride" on one of the B-17's that a lottery had to be held to select 12 veterans for that ride.

Start engines time for that day's mission was 14:00 hours. At precisely that time, the B-17s which had been on static display, started their engines and taxied out to the runway prior to takeoff. The large crowd surged forward to get a better view.

A mighty roar went up as the first B-17 started its takeoff roll, followed seconds later by the second Fortress just as they did decades ago. As the Forts lifted off the runway, their "little friends" - a P47,



followed by a P-51 - also took to the runway and started their takeoff roll.

Soon they were airborne and both Forts and their fighter escort disappeared from view.

Moments later a mighty roar went up as the Forts reappeared in formation and buzzed the field; the Forts flying in close formation
(continued on page 2)

303rd ADOPTS BY-LAWS, ELECTS NEW OFFICERS

For the first time in more than 10 years of its existence, the 303rd Bomb Group Association is now operating in accordance with a set of by-laws which were introduced and adopted at the membership meeting held on July 27, during the recent reunion in Seattle.

The by-laws, which are printed in their entirety on page three of this newsletter, were drafted and presented to the membership by Judge Ben Smith. After a lengthy discussion period, the by-laws were adopted by the more than 250 members present. One significant

change calls for dues to be set at \$10 per year, payable in January.

Other pertinent business covered at the meeting was the election of officers to serve the Group for the period 1985-87. Elected were: President, E.C. Lehman; Vice President, Howard Frohman; Treasurer, John Ladd, and Secretary, William Heller. Elected Directors were: Walter Mayer, Ralph J. Reynolds, Ben Smith, Ed Giering, Mel Schulstad and Melvin McCoy.

Forrest Vossler, Congressional Medal of

Honor winner and member of the 303rd BG (H) Association, spoke on the responsibilities and joys of being a Medal of Honor recipient. He was given a standing ovation by those present.

A representative of a group which is restoring a B-17 gave a short talk soliciting donations for this purpose.

Father Skoner closed the meeting with a prayer. Minutes of the meeting are covered on page four of this newsletter.

MAXIMUM EFFORT (Continued)

escorted by the two friendly fighters criss-crossing over the formation as they did many years ago.

For one brief moment, the clock was turned back 40 years and there wasn't a dry eye in the crowd of more than 15,000.

The plane's legendary durability earned it a special place in the hearts of the thousands of veterans who flew it, as well as among the support crews on the ground.

It was the Air Force's first aircraft designed to fly high above enemy flak, to drop 5,000 pounds of bombs and to defend itself with turret guns.

The fliers are the first to say they couldn't have done it alone. They credit ground crews not only for getting damaged planes ready to go again but for moral support as well.

"Those people had great, great pride in their airplanes," said a former 303rd bomber pilot. "They were the backbone. When the B-17's were off on their five- to 11-hour long missions, the maintenance crews would stand on the runway and 'sweat it out', waiting to see if their people would come back."

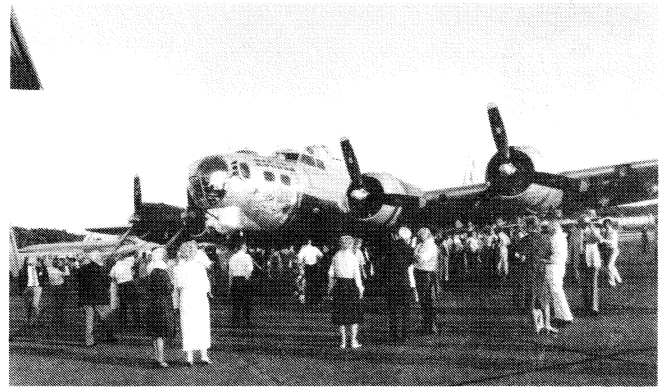
When the planes came back firing red flares, meaning there were wounded on board, the ground men would hop on their bicycles to see who could get to the hospital first to give blood to whomever needed it.

An illustration of how they cared for each other was brought out in this latest reunion. A 303rd crew chief of a plane that was lost some 40 years ago had been trying over the years to get in touch with the pilot who flew the aircraft that eventful day. This year they were reunited and the ground crewchief's first words were: "Was the plane lost because of something I failed to do?" Imagine his relief when the pilot answered, "The plane was in perfect shape. Two Me-109's shot us down."

That widespread concern about their colleagues has survived with the veterans and is a part of their interest in reunions.

Seven hundred and fifty people showed up for this year's reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group. As one veteran ably put it, "Now I'm 70 years old and I'm not sure how many of these I'm going to see. I keep looking for a lot of men that aren't here. Somehow I never forget those guys that didn't make it home."

I don't think any of us should.



Molesworth Front Gate, August 1985

Letters

Dear Reverend Slawson,

While I was the 3rd Air Force DO, one of my responsibilities was to oversee preconstruction at Molesworth RAF. On one of my visits in February 1982, I met an elderly gentleman by the name of Alex Jamison. He appeared to be about 90 years old. In my discussion with him, I found he had been involved in the original site planning and construction of Molesworth prior to WW II. As we walked around the base, I saw a piece of lumber sticking out of the ground where some excavation had started. Mr. Jamison remarked that the area where the lumber was located was the old 303rd Bomb Group operations building. The lumber was moldy and discolored, however, no rotting had taken place. Being a history buff, I asked him where he thought that piece of lumber might have been. We removed some of the outer covering and found the planking (4" x 16" x 7") to be Philippine mahogany. He said the only place where Philippine mahogany had been used was in the roof structure of the operations building. I subsequently recut the piece into smaller pieces (which were salvageable), laminated it, and put a smooth finish on it. I have retained one small piece for my own personal collection of memorabilia; however, I feel the remainder should go to all

of you — who fought so hard to maintain our freedom.

Thank you so much for allowing me the opportunity to walk through history for these few moments.

Hubert C. Place, Colonel, USAF
Vice Commander

Dear Joe:

Driving down the English Midlands during the past summer, we took a detour over to RAF Molesworth and were surprised by the security that halted our expectation of going on base. As the enclosed snapshot of the main gate indicates, the entrance is heavily secured and the base perimeter completely covered by new fencing topped with rolled barbed wire. The perimeter road is patrolled by a good sized contingent of police. Entrance any longer for individual visitors is out!

Also stopped by the Memorial at the Brington Village Church - a very nice setting for the 303rd plaque.

I thought your "Newsletter" readers would like to see what the new Molesworth gate and the Brington plaque look like today.

Best regards,
Humphrey P. O'Leary

THANKS FOR EVERYTHING

There are no words to express how much the honor you bestowed upon your Chaplains meant in presenting to us the Plaque and its inscription. During those dark days I cried myself to sleep many times feeling that I was doing so little and you wonderful guys were doing so much. I am thankful to God that some of my efforts to give you strength and faith were not in vain.

In addition to that however, I am grateful for the many occasions during the Reunion when you shared your strength with me. It has not been easy for me to live with my infirmities, though they could be much worse. It infuriates me when I lose my balance, struggle to get to my feet from a sitting position and the many simple physical things that used to be so easy. I felt a new strength though when on the many times you shared your strength with me and helped me over or around some obstacle with a helping hand. Thank you for lifting some of the burden from Mama. Your helping hands made me comfortable in trying situations. God bless you.

Chappie Slawson

BY-LAWS

303RD BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

Article I - Organization

- A. The name of this organization shall be: The 303rd Bomb Group Association, Inc.

Article II - Purposes

- A. To perpetuate the history of the 303rd Bomb Group, Eighth Air Force, during World War II, in training and combat, and to memorialize the same by appropriate memorials.
 B. To arrange for reunions of the surviving membership at the pleasure of the membership.
 C. To memorialize and perpetuate the memory of lost comrades.
 D. To provide social, educational, patriotic and recreational activities for its membership.
 E. To publish a newsletter for the information and pleasure of the membership.
 F. To seek out and reunite former 303rd Bomb Group members.
 G. To carry on the business of the corporation.

Article III - Membership

- A. Membership in the association shall be open to all who were members of, are attached to, the 303rd Heavy Bombardment Group during World War II either in training or overseas.
 B. Spouses, widows or widowers of those who served in the organization during World War II are entitled to be members upon the death of the original member.
 C. Persons interested in the history, aims and goals of the association may become associate members with all privileges of regular members but may not vote.
 D. Honorary membership may be granted to others upon approval of the Board of Directors.

Article IV - Voting

- A. Any member in good standing may vote either in person or by proxy (where proxy vote is appropriate).
 B. At all meetings voting shall be viva voce for the conduct of business.
 C. For the election of officers and directors voting shall be by secret, written ballot.
 D. Associate members may not vote.
 E. Honorary members may not vote.

Article V - Meeting

- A. A membership meeting of the association shall be held sometime during the National Reunion. A notice shall be mailed to every member in good standing, and a like notice shall be placed in the Newsletter, stating the time and place of the meeting.
 B. A majority of the members in good standing present at the membership meeting shall constitute a quorum. A quorum shall be necessary to conduct the business of the association. A simple majority of those present shall carry the motion.
 C. A member is in good standing when he has paid his current dues, meets the requirements for membership in the association and is regularly enrolled on the roster of the association.
 D. Only questions stated in the call may be voted on at Special Meetings.
 E. At any regular membership meeting any question may be voted on if a majority of the membership so requires. Otherwise business shall be conducted according to an agenda furnished by the Secretary in advance of the meeting.
 F. Roberts Rules of Order shall govern the conduct of all meetings. The Board of Directors shall appoint a parliamentarian who shall hold office at the pleasure of the Board.

Article VI - Order of Business

- A. Call to order
 B. Reading minutes of preceding meeting
 C. Reports of officers
 D. Committee reports
 E. Unfinished business
 F. New business (Agenda)
 G. Invocation
 H. Adjournment

Article VII - Officers

- A. The elected officers of the association shall be: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.
 B. Terms of office shall be two years. An officer may be re-elected for one additional term.
 C. No person may hold more than one elective office at the time.

- D. Officers shall attend all Board of Directors meetings and are ex-officio members of the Board of Directors with right to vote.

- E. The President or his designate (officer) shall preside at all Membership Meetings and Board of Directors Meetings.

- F. The President shall be the chief executive and shall exercise general supervision over the affairs of the association.

- G. The Vice-President shall exercise the functions of the President, in his absence or upon his incapacity. The Vice-President shall carry out special assignments from the President, and shall serve on the Executive Committee with the President and Secretary.

- H. The Secretary shall keep the minutes and official records of the association. He will file all certificates required by law and shall be responsible for giving all notices necessary to the conduct of the business of the association. He will be the custodian of the records and seal of the corporation. He shall mail copies of all minutes, agendas and financial statements to the Board of Directors. He will conduct all correspondence of the association except special messages from other officers or directors. He will serve on the Executive Committee.

- I. The Treasurer shall have the care and custody of all monies belonging to the association. He shall pay routine bills and make such other expenditures as may be authorized by the Board of Directors. He shall make deposits of monies and invest the funds of the association with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors. He shall render annually, or at such other times as the Board of Directors may direct, a written accounting of the finances of the association, which accounting shall be affixed to the minutes of the Board of Directors meetings. He shall make certain the President has a signature file card from the depository in which association monies are deposited so that the President can carry on the fiscal affairs of the association, temporarily, in the event the office of Treasurer is vacated or the Treasurer is unable to carry out his duties.

- J. The Board of Directors shall appoint an association membership officer who shall serve an indeterminate term at the pleasure of the Board of Directors. He shall be primarily responsible for seeking out and enrolling former 303rd Bomb Group personnel for membership and shall maintain a complete and up-to-date membership roster with all pertinent data including name, former rank, address, squadron or unit, telephone number, spouse's name, and membership number.

- K. The Newsletter Editor shall be appointed by the Board of Directors and shall prepare and publish the official organ of the association. He shall also serve as the Press Secretary of the association to handle news releases and publicity. He shall serve an indefinite term at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

- L. The Historian shall maintain the history of the association and shall collect all pertinent data, articles, memorabilia, photographs and other documents pertinent to the history of the 303rd Bomb Group and its component organizations. He shall serve an indefinite term at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

- M. The Chaplain shall be responsible for all spiritual matters and religious observances pertinent to the affairs of the association and shall serve for an indefinite term at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

- N. The Board of Directors shall appoint a Unit Contact for the 303rd Bomb Group Association who will be the liaison person between the association and the Eighth Air Force Historical Society and for all other inter-organizational purposes. The Unit Contact shall attend National reunions of the 8th AFHS and will be the representative of the 303rd Bomb Group Association on the Unit Advisory Council of that organization. He shall serve for an indefinite term at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

- O. The Board of Directors shall appoint a PX Manager to carry on the business of the PX. The PX will sell articles and merchandise of interest to our membership during reunions and by mail. He shall serve for an indefinite term at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

- P. The Board of Directors shall appoint a Reunion Manager. He shall have the responsibility of seeking out and visiting prospective reunion sites for the purpose of determining the suitability of such sites and providing the Board of Directors with appropriate information. Reunion sites are subject to final approval of the Board of Directors. The Reunion Manager shall serve at the pleasure of the Board of Directors.

Article VIII - Elections

- A. The President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected during the National Reunion Membership Business Meeting. Elections shall be by the membership. A nominating committee shall submit a

BY-LAWS (Continued)*Article VIII Elections (continued)*

slate of candidates to the membership for election. Nominations may be made from the floor by any member. Nominations from the floor shall not exceed three (3) for any office. The nominee receiving the highest number of votes from the membership shall be elected. Written ballots shall be prepared and used for all elections with a write-in space.

- B. Elections to Board of Directors shall be conducted in the same manner as elections for officers but shall be conducted on the unit level, and voting shall be confined to the membership of the unit. The units who may elect Directors are: the 358th, 359th, 360th, and 427th squadrons, the 444th Sub Depot and Headquarters for election purposes.

Article IX - Board of Directors

- A. The business of the association shall be managed by a Board of Directors consisting of the elected officers, and at least one representative elected from each of the combat squadrons of the 303rd Bomb Group (358th, 359th, 360th, and 427th), one representative elected from the 444th Sub Depot and one representative from Headquarters (303rd). Membership of the board shall not exceed twelve (12) persons. Term of office shall be two years. A member of the Board of Directors may serve successive terms if re-elected. At least one Director shall be resident of the State of Florida.
- B. Candidates for Board of Directors must have been members of the 303rd Bomb Group Association for at least one year prior to the election.
- C. The Board of Directors shall have control and management of the business of the association and may establish rules governing its meetings, conduct of business and procedure as it may determine necessary, not in conflict with the Articles of Corporation and By-Laws.
- D. The Board shall commission an independent audit to be conducted during the National Reunion.
- E. Board of Directors meetings shall be held in conjunction with the general membership meeting at the National Reunion, and may be held immediately prior and/or subsequent to the general meeting.
- F. Each Director shall have one vote and voting may be by written proxy.

Article X - Combat Squadron Representatives

- A. Combat Squadron and Service Organization Representatives shall be selected in squadron/caucus meetings prior to the general membership meeting.

Article XI - Salaries and Compensation

- A. No officer or director shall receive a salary or compensation for his duties.
- B. The Board of Directors shall hire and fix compensation of all employees which they deem necessary to the conduct of business of the association.
- C. Officers and/or directors may be reimbursed for expenses directly related to the conduct of their office.
- D. No officer or director may engage in any conduct which represents a conflict of interest between his office and his personal affairs.
- E. Salaries and compensation paid for any service to the association must not be in conflict with the tax exempt status of the association.

Article XII - Committees

- A. Committees of the association may be established by the President and may be dissolved at the conclusion of their business by the President.
- B. Standing committees may be established by the President with the advice and consent of the Board of Directors. Members of standing committees are appointed for indefinite terms, but may be dissolved or changed by the President with the advice and consent of the Board. Standing committees will include but not be limited to the following:
A nominating committee, Constitution and By-Laws Committee and an Audit Committee.
- C. Ad Hoc Committee may be appointed as appropriate by the President. Such committees shall cease to exist at the expiration of the term of the President making the appointment unless reappointed by the incoming President.

Article XIII - Dues

- A. The dues of this association shall be \$10.00 per annum, payable on January 1st of each year. Dues may be changed by majority vote of members in good standing at the business meeting of the National Reunion.

Article XIV - Amendments

- A. The Board of Directors may propose or recommend changes in the By-Laws to the membership.
- B. By-Laws, or changes proposed, may be passed, amended, or rescinded, in part or in toto, by a three-fifths, (3/5) majority of the membership in attendance at the business meeting held during the National Reunion, or at any regular meeting of the association.

Minutes of the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association Meeting**Held on 27th July 1985****at The Red Lion Inn, at Bellvue, Washington**

Meeting was called to order at 1032 hours, PDT, by the President, Joe Vieira, presiding.

The chair requested dispensing with the reading of the minutes of the last meeting and this was unanimously agreed to by those in attendance.

Forrest Vossler, Congressional Medal of Honor Winner and member of the 303rd BG(H) Association spoke for a short while on the responsibilities and joys of being a Medal of Honor recipient. He was given a standing ovation by those present.

The Association (new) By-Laws, were read by Ben Smith. These are our first By-Laws and were put together by Ben Smith and others for the acceptance of those attending. Many questions were fielded ably by Ben Smith. It was inferred that certain enabling legislation within the By-Laws, when necessary, would be utilized by the Board of Directors in the interest of the Association. It was also inferred that machinery for amendment would be sufficient to make such required amendments in the interest of the Association. After lengthy reading and fielding of queries, a motion was entertained for approval of the By-Laws. Bill Brown of the 359 moved the By-Laws be accepted. This motion was seconded by Chuck Mainwaring of the 359th. In question the By-Laws were unanimously approved. It is the intention of the Association to see that each Member receives a copy of the By-Laws at some future date.

Walter Mayer led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Chaplain Slawson read a letter he had received anent the construction of Molesworth and reference to a piece of lumber which came from the Headquarters Building and which was presented to the 303rd.

Joe Vieira read the financial report, and up to the date of this meeting the funds on hand were in the amount of \$57,912.91 but this figure did not include some reunion expenses which had not as yet been paid. Report approved unanimously.

Present membership was shown at 1,202 with 8 more who just showed up. Gene McCutcheon moved to accept Membership report and Harley Cannon seconded same. Approved unanimously.

Several members were recognized for their work on behalf of the Association. They were Al Lehman, Bud Klint and Joe Vieira and several others, to include Walter Mayer who did a splendid job of handling the reunion logistics. More may have been overlooked but the gesture was one of recognition for all.

Toni Quint, daughter of Ralph Quint who was shot down in 1944, requested information from ANYONE who could shed some light on the situation when her father was shot down. Bill Heller mentioned from the floor that perhaps all those who were on that mission and who remembered it, make up a little sheet of paper with their observations and failing any specific information, these bits of paper could be put together in a folder for Toni Quint — Pappy Flowers was asked to shepherd this for Toni.

MINUTES (Continued)

Keith Ferris, who painted the B-17 Thunderbird Picture which has become so famous — spoke to the Group for a short while and explained how prints of this painting could be obtained. Later, circulars were available for those interested in purchase of same.

President Joe Vieira spoke briefly about the condition of his dear wife, Thelma, who had fallen and broken her hip the previous Thursday and was in the hospital for surgery. She was reported to be doing fine.

Jake Good said that Jess J. Jesse of Cour d'Alene died. He never was a 303rd BG(H) Association member, but was from the 303rd.

Lew Lyle, our former Group Commander and retired General, along with Ed Snyder the 427th C.O., were acknowledged.

The 1987 reunion site was approved by voice vote to be the DALLAS-FORT WORTH area. Bud Klint, upon resignation as Newsletter Editor, accepted the challenge of organizing that 1987 reunion. No other sites or dates were set, but geographical areas were tossed about. A general feeling for a 50th Anniversary 303rd Bomb Group reunion in Boise (where the Group was formed) was evident. (NOTE: A reunion there in 1992 would either delay the 1991 event or be an acceleration of the 1993 event).

The election of new Officers and Directors followed. Here are the results:

Nominated for President were: E.C. Lehmann and Walter J. Mayer

Walt Mayer could not accept nomination so nominations were closed and by virtue of this move, E.C. LEHMANN was elected president.

Nominated for Vice President were: Howard Frohman and Sam Maxwell

The nominees left the room and upon return learned that Howard Frohman had been elected Vice President.

Nominated for Treasurer was: John Ladd

Nominations closed and John Ladd elected Treasurer.

Nominated for Secretary was: William Heller

Nominations closed and William Heller elected Secretary.

The Squadrons having elected their respective representatives as DIRECTORS, listed the following:

358th Walter J. Mayer
359th Ralph J. Reynolds
360th Ben Smith
427th Mel Schulstad
425th Melvin T. McCoy

Harold A. "Hal" Susskind was appointed NEWSLETTER EDITOR vice Bud Klint, who resigned and will be the key man in the Dallas-Fort Worth area for the 1987 reunion.

Walt Mayer gave a short spiel re: restoration of a B-17 for the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field. Donations for this purpose are being solicited and leaflets circulated on the subject.

Lloyd Hanks, National Official of Veterans of Foreign Wars outlined advantages of his organization and encouraged 303BG members to join it.

The Board of Directors suggested as sites for the 1987 reunion Fort Worth and New Orleans. In question, Fort Worth received the majority vote and Bud Klint will head the reunion committee.

New member acquired at this meeting was:

Morton Luman
3015 S.W. Underwood Drive
PORTLAND, OR 97225

Father Skoner closed the meeting with an appropriate prayer.

Motion for adjournment carried and the July 27th Meeting of the 303rd Bomb Group (H) "Hell's Angels" Association was adjourned at 1300 hours PDT on same date.

**OFFICERS ELECTED IN SEATTLE, WASHINGTON
ON 27 JULY 1985**

President: Joseph Vieira, presiding

President: E.C. LEHMANN
29844 Knoll View Drive
RANCHO PALOS VERDES, CA 90274
Tel: (213) 832-5830

Vice President: HOWARD J. FROHMAN
2846 Mission Blvd.
SAN DIEGO, CA 92109
Tel: (619) 488-2712

Treasurer: JOHN M. LADD
26 W. Main Street
MOHAWK, NY 13407
Tel: (315) 894-3490

Secretary: WILLIAM C. HELLER
P.O. Box 235
HALF MOON BAY, CA 94019
Tel: (415) 726-6686

Directors: 358th Bomb Squadron
WALTER MAYER
Rt. #2, Box 118-A
CHENEY, WA 99004
Tel: (509) 299-3250

360th Bomb Squadron
BENJAMIN H. SMITH
107 Albany Avenue
WAYCROSS, GA 31501
Tel: (912) 285-8040

359th Bomb Squadron
RALPH J. REYNOLDS
7109 Northwinder Row
NEW PORT RICHEY, FL 33552
Tel: (813) 863-3630

427th Bomb Squadron
EDWARD J. GIERING
47 Long Hill Road
CLINTON, CT 06413
Tel: (203) 669-5204

Headquarters
MEL SCHULSTAD
300 Glenwood Cir.
Suite 314
MONTEREY, CA 93940
Tel: (408) 373-7667

425th Air Service Group
(444th Sub Depot)
MELVIN T. McCOY
655 Rogue River Highway
GOLD HILL, OR 97525
Tel: (503) 855-1712

Editor
of Newsletter: HAROLD A. SUSSKIND
2602 Deerfoot Trail
AUSTIN, TX 78704
Tel: (512) 441-6475

For the 303rd BH(H) Association,
William Heller, Secretary

A PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

July 27, 1985

The following presentation of Distinguished Service Awards was made in Seattle, by Col. Mel Schulstad, USAF, on the occasion of the 1985 Reunion of the members of the 303rd Bomb Group - the famous Eighth Air Force B-17 Flying Fortress Bomb Group which flew more than three hundred missions in 33 months of combat operations. Schulstad was the Group Operations Officer and served 33 months on combat duty, flying 44 combat missions, from the bomber base at Molesworth, England.

The awards were made simultaneously to the Group's two distinguished Chaplains. The Catholic Chaplain-Father Edmund Skoner served the 303rd from the time of its formation until it was disestablished in June 1945. Reverend Merritt O. Slawson served the Bomb Group during its entire Combat Operations in England.

We come now to a time in our Program I know you will greatly enjoy - deep down in your hearts - and I will enjoy this moment too, even if I am very conscious of my inadequacy to meet the high demands of the task before me.

I am highly honored to have the great pleasure - and indeed joy - of making a presentation of not one but two awards to two of **our** members who - by their outstanding performance - far and above the call of duty - have more than earned the high regard, respect and honor we attempt to show them tonight.

You will note that I said "**our members**" - they are "ours" because they gave themselves to us - totally - completely - unstintingly - one hundred plus percent - gave themselves to us as individuals and to us as a bomb group.

I now ask Bill Eisenhart to bring to the podium Chaplain Merritt O. Slawson and his beloved wife Katherine - and I ask Al Lehman to bring to the podium Chaplain Edmund Skoner. Please hold your applause.

If we were to take hours this evening we could not begin to chronicle the accomplishments of these two distinguished men and their careers, so I will not even try. Many of you here tonight and perhaps hundreds who are not with us tonight - and many who have gone on before us but are here in spirit - each could give individual testimony about these two faithful servants of God and their ministry to us - and of their many works and deeds of compassion, care and love.

Both of our beloved chaplains had - as individuals and in their own right - shining and successful careers in the chaplaincy. They both served the 303rd during our combat duty in England - Chaplain Skoner having joined the group in Boise when it was created and Chaplain Slawson coming to us in England in 1942 from another combat outfit. They were there with us through it all!!

Both are separate and unique persons and personalities - even as you and I are each of us different - one from another. Each brought to his personal ministry his own personal gifts, competencies and special character.

But! Together they were **one** in their indomitable and untiring self sacrificing devotion and ministry to each of us - and every one of us.

And we needed them!!! We needed them sorely! We needed them often - and around the clock - twenty four hours a day and seven days a week. And they were always there!!! Wherever and whenever we needed them - even when they were worn and worked to the brink of exhaustion.

They prayed **for** us and **with** us. They heard our confessions at two o'clock in the morning and gave us absolution. . . sometimes just before a last flight. They sweated us out and greeted us when we returned. They went with our wounded and battle casualties as comforters, to the emergency surgery. . . to the hospital. . . and sadly - with many to their final resting ground where they presided with dignity and compassion giving up the fallen to the care and love of his maker. . . and then - they went and wrote the letter - home.

But they also helped us celebrate - our twenty-fifth mission. . . our thirtieth mission. . . our last mission. . . the group's one-hundredth mission. . . our two-hundredth mission and our three-hundredth mission - and many personal triumphs, joys and victories. They were there then too, thank God.



Kathleen and "Chappie" Slawson

They were a part of us. . . all of us. . . ground and air. Their contributions to our morale and spiritual well being were and continue to be incalculable. They gave us strength, support - and most of all love, the greatest gift of all.

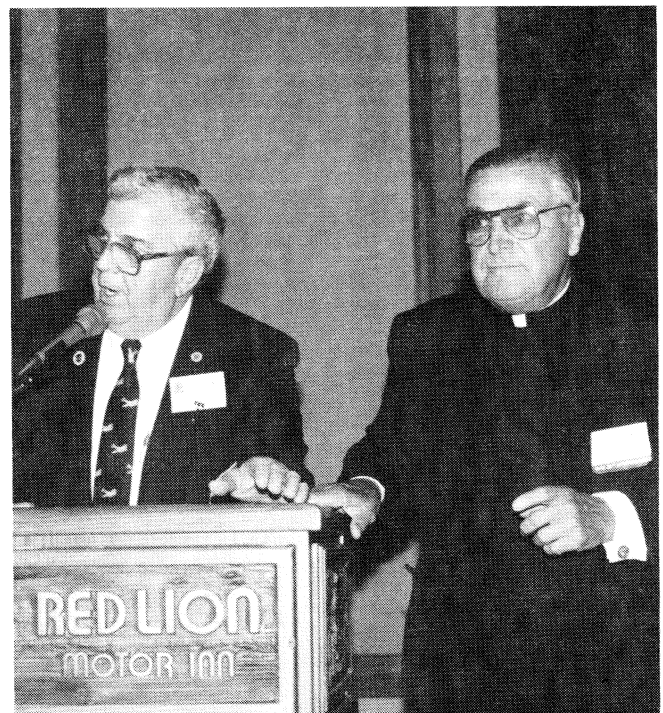
And so it is tonight that we present our distinguished service award to each of these beautiful friends - with a citation which reads:

This distinguished service award is presented to Chaplain Edmund J. Skoner/Chaplain Merritt O. Slawson for his outstanding commitment and devotion to his God and his country through his loving ministry to the officers, men and families of the 303rd bomb group.

1942-1945

Given in Seattle July 1985

By these awards we are trying to say to you, we respect you, we honor you, we cherish you and we love you.



Joe Vieira and Father Skoner

'85 REUNION IN RETROSPECT

The '85 Reunion of the 303rd Bomb Group was billed as a Seattle Spectacular. It was all of that and then some. The Red Lion Inn, the Reunion Headquarters for the 303rd, was not only a magnificent structure but it was manned by the most courteous and accommodating group of personnel that I have come across in a very, very long time. Joe Vieira, Walt Mayer and whoever else had a hand in selecting the Red Lion should be congratulated. If you liked the service, drop a line to Tod Maclaskey, President, Red Lion Inn, P.O. Box 1027, Vancouver, Washington 98666.

How about the huge crowds of people who showed up for breakfast every morning? Those breakfasts were a far cry from the powdered eggs we used to get at Molesworth in the mornings; except of course if you were going on the day's mission. Then you rated a fresh egg. I'm also happy to note that a brussel sprout didn't pop up in any of the meals served during the period.

The Flying Fortress Weekend in Seattle boasted a lot of pleasant surprises; among them were: the Indian Salmon Dinner on Blake Island, the evening dinner at the Sandpoint Naval Station and the "Salute to Glenn Miller" extravaganza at the Boeing hangar.

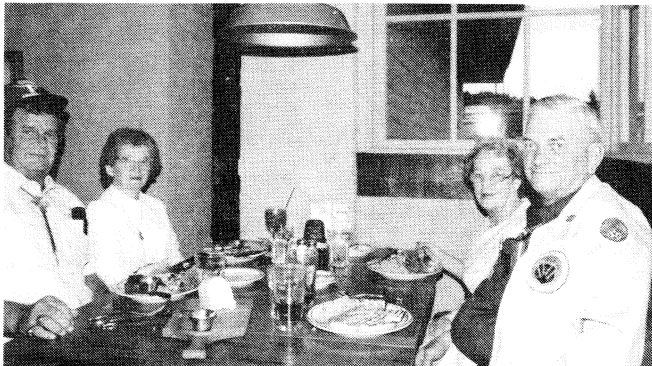
Although the publicized highlight of the weekend was the invitation to visit Boeing Field to see the last three flyable B-17s take to the air followed by their "little friends," a P-51 and a P-47, my own personal highlight was the reunion with the members of my original 359th crew, some of whom I hadn't seen since D-Day, 1944.

I'm sure this also was the main reason most people attended the reunion: to be reunited — after 40 years — with old friends and crew buddies to swap war stories and to relive the glory days at Molesworth. I don't think anyone who attended the 50th Anniversary of the first flight of the B-17 was disappointed that they made the trip to Seattle.

One of the most popular spots at the Red Lion Inn was the 303rd's Hospitality Suite. It gave "Hells Angels" grads an opportunity to swap photos and memorabilia from the 1942-1945 era. A very interesting presentation was the showing of a film taken during the '84 Reunion at Molesworth.



303rders at sit-down breakfast.



303rd Reunion. A night out at the Keg — Al and Eleanor Stiel, Kay and Roy Westfall.

Although small in comparison to the big blast put on by Boeing featuring the Glenn Miller Band, the Reunion Banquet of the 303rd was attended by more than 700 people. For the many who did as much table hopping as they did Lindy Hopping, it was a happy finale to a wonderful reunion.

There was, however, a sad note added to the festivities. Norman Tressler, 60, of Northumberland, Pa., suffered a coronary attack in his hotel room after the banquet dance. He died at a later date at the Overland Hospital Medical Center. He was remembered in the prayers of all who attended the Catholic and Protestant Services held on Sunday morning at two of the small banquet rooms in the hotel with Chaplains Slawson and Skoner conducting the services.

Originally it was hoped that Tressler could be flown back to Pennsylvania in a Lear Jet specially equipped for heart patients. Because of the extraordinary expenses incurred by the family in making the trip, a Norman Tressler Fund was set up by the community at Seafirst Bank, P.O. Box 907, Bellevue, Washington 98009.

I'm happy to report that Joe Vieira's wife Thelma is up and about again in Florida after suffering a broken hip from a fall during the reunion.

Many group, squadron commanders and operations officers attended this reunion; to name a few: Lew Lyle, Ed Snyder, Walt Shayler, Bill Heller, William Eisenhart, William Calhoun and Mel Schulstad.

With the adoption of the by-laws, the 303rd should become an even more viable organization. The immediate goal is to locate and sign up 200 more members by the 1987 reunion in Fort Worth. Bud Klint has already started the ball rolling.

Starting with this issue, we plan to publish an eight page newsletter, four times a year: March, June, September and December. Pictures and stories are welcomed by the editor. Our thanks to Humphrey O'Leary, Roy Westfall and Joe Wilkinson for supplying some of the photos used in this issue.



303rd Banquet. Lew Lyle, Ed Snyder, Mary and Bud Klint.



The PX was open.

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 () _____ Bus. 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 Bomber Group (H) Association, Inc.

Mail to: **EDGAR C. MILLER**
2116 Terraza Place
Fullerton, CA 92635

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 \$ _____

..... CLIP - OR COPY ABOVE FORM

303rd BOMB GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION, INC.
c/o HAL SUSSKIND
2602 DEERFOOT TRAIL
AUSTIN, TX 78704
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



FIRST CLASS MAIL

