



303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Might - In - Flight

"HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER



VOLUME X, NUMBER 2

Editor: Hal Susskind
2602 Deerfoot Trail, Austin, TX 78704

DECEMBER, 1986

BOMBING BONN

A Cold and Unusual Mission

We were on our fourth mission over Germany. It was January 10, 1945. We had been rousted out of our warm sacks about 4 am. We made our way through the darkness to the wash house where we shaved and washed before going to breakfast where we would be entitled to have two fresh eggs instead of the usual powdered egg goo. You have to fly to get fresh eggs.

As we passed through the chow line we all took a few sulfa pills from the bowl provided. The flying mechanics (Flight Surgeons) said they would reduce the chances of infection.

After eating we went to the large Quonset hut in which the briefings were held. The target of the day was Bonn, Germany which is now the capital of West Germany. Our target was on the Rhine River and was not far from Koln (Cologne). We were the 360th Squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group. We flew in B-17s.

The mission had been uneventful until we reached the initial point (IP) and began the bombing run to the target. We began getting moderate to heavy flak. We dropped our bombs from an altitude of about 25,000 feet.

We went into the usual hard spiral turn in the hope of getting away from the flak which by now was accurate and well on target. As if struck with a huge hammer our B-17's tail shot up high and we were in an nose down position for a minute. The whole plane shuddered. I thought we had taken a direct hit from an 88mm shell. We lost our oxygen and our intercom.



Pilots Dave Schroll and Roy Stratton kneel in snow in front of what was once the tail gunner's position.

When Pilot Roy Statton and co-pilot Dave Schroll got the plane leveled out in flight I crawled back for a look to the rear of the plane where Cpl. Mooney our tail gunner had been sitting. Now there was only a huge gaping hole.

In order to keep the plane flying in a level attitude the pilots had to put the autopilot on in the full down position and practically stand on the controls. The ailerons had been severely damaged. Without the oxygen supply we had to let down to about 15,000 feet. We headed for an emergency landing field at Meriville, France near Lille.

It was now getting dark and snowing furiously. I stretched out in the prone position in the nose hoping to spot the runway. We had been told at briefing that there were no landing lights at the field. We flew over 100 foot high

brick smokestack. We cleared it by about 15 to 20 feet.

Visibility was down to about 100 feet and Yank ingenuity on the ground went to work. They lined the runway with oil drums filled with gasoline and lit them. Our two cool pilots made a wonderful landing, especially when you consider the condition of the plane and the weather conditions. They were both awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and surely they well deserved it.

When we got out of the plane and got a look at the outside of it we knew what had happened. The B-17 following us in the formation had turned inside of us and had overrun us. It's props had chopped away the tail position and chewed up the rudder and the vertical stabilizer. It passed under our port wing and that was when it's

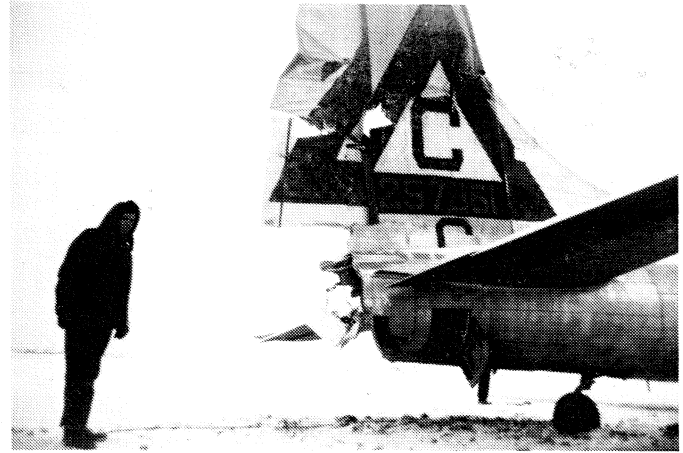
(cont'd on page 2)



A cold and tired crew.

props chewed up the wing and the ailerons.

Cpl. Mooney, was the only one on the crew who was married and had children. He was 34 years old. His body was found by a German farmer who buried it. Eight years later a graves registration team came through the area and his body was returned home.



It was Bombardier Lt. Bays' final mission.

Pilot Roy Statton is an eye surgeon who lives in Lincoln, Nebraska. Co-pilot Dave Schroll later got his own crew and remained in the Airforce for 31 years. He retired as Lt. Col. to his home in Riverside, California with his lovely wife Mary. On October 22, Dave passed away. The three of us, the pilots and the Navigator, got

together for the first and only time since the war at a 303rd Bomb Group reunion in San Diego in 1982. Dave and I got together two more times before he passed away. May he and Cpl. Mooney rest in peace.

by Thomas R. Donahue
The Navigator

HELL'S ANGELS FORUM:

HOLIDAY GREETINGS

This joyful Holiday Season is a good time to count our many blessings even as we contemplate what awaits us in the new year ahead.

The bonds between us, forged in the fires of war, shall ever be strong. We know we can do whatever, together, we set out to do. And much remains to be done.

Your Board of Directors joins Sue and me in wishing you and your families the very best ---
A Happy and Fruitful New Year!

Al

Me 163 vs. Me 262

I received my copy of the September issue of the "Hells Angels" newsletter. Of the five planes pictured in the photos in the back of the issue one is identified as being a German Jet, a ME 262. It looks to me like it is actually a ME 163 and is a rocket powered plane. I spotted one over Germany in the spring of 1945.

Granted, it's been a long time but as I remember the ME 262 had

two wing mounted jet engines. Let us hear some feedback from other members of the 303rd.

Thomas R. Donahue
10525 Compton Blvd. #14
Bellflower, CA 90706

P.S. I don't expect to win the grandchildren contest but for what its worth number 10 is on the way.

I know you'd never make an error like this. Under Friend or Foe (page 11) in Hells Angels Newsletter it is true that the ME262 was the first German operational jet, but it never looked like the ME-163 rocket powered tailers affair you have pictured. Tsk, tsk.

Keep trying.

Hal Orenstein
19 Amalia Lane
Commack, L.I., N.Y 11725

I noted in your last newsletter that you asked for fill. Okay, I'll bore you with some information.

First off, the picture of the Me 163 (of course, you knew it was not an Me 262 didn't you?) brought some nostalgia. I was fortunate to know the original design test pilot for both the Me 163 and the Me 262, one Herr Doktor Zinram of the German Luftwaffe and later of the Lufthansa German Airline. Herr Dr. Zinram is now a retired Lufthansa Captain. So in German parlance he would be known as Herr Doktor Captain Zinram...

How did I get to know him? Well, let's go back a bit. Immediately after separation in late 1945 I signed on with TWA which then owned 39% of the Philippine Air Lines and I was sent to Manila as a Captain on DC-3's and flew all over those 7,083 Philippine Islands. In early 1949 I was sent to Rome, Italy as Chief Pilot of the European Division in DC-6's with my Operational Division spanning from Karachi via the Middle East then to London via various routes which included Zurich, Frankfurt, Hamburg,

Amsterdam and Madrid with some Paris flag-stops. When TWA pulled out of Philippine Air Lines by the end of 1954, I took some awarded leave.

In 1955 the German airlines, Lufthansa, was again allowed to operate and TWA was awarded the operational contract. This put me back into Europe and I was a Lufthansa Captain and also Check Captain and also a Flug-Check-Kapitan with the Luftfahrtbundesamt (German FAA). I stayed nine years with Lufthansa flying all their routes. But I go too fast. I first had to get a German Airline Transport License. Herr Dr. Zinram was both my Instructor and Examiner for my written exam for the German ATR #47. It was during this time he told me about his exploits in the ME 163 and 262.

Imagine, Hal! NINE years working with all the fellows against whom we flew in WW#2! It was a most interesting experience and I met some of the finest men who are still today my fast friends. One of the German Luftwaffe pilots even knew my two cousins who were in the Luftwaffe and who were shot down. Richard Heller, from Breunsdorf (our little town) in Germany, flew 152 missions prior to being lost on the eastern front. The other cousin was also lost in battle in North Africa.

When TWA pulled out of the Lufthansa operation I also did but did not accept the offer of a desk job in NYC and looked up some old friends who had been operating a charter airline which was to become the first such airline to go all-jet. It was TIA later to become Transamerica Airlines. I knew all the fellows who built the company and was quite comfortable with them and retired from Transamerica in 1980 having reached the magic age of 60 when our benevolent government, which is against age discrimination, took my license because that is the Law! Thank you, General Quesada.

Flying the world-routes of Lufthansa on the Connies up through the 707's with the pilots against whom we flew was a great

and rewarding experience.

Hal, it just came to me that many 303rd members might not know who is writing this letter to you - and in that context, I have what I think is an interesting aside. My younger Brother, Emerson Heller, who was a copilot on Marvin Richeson's crew, was assigned to the 359th Squadron during the time I was Operations Officer of the same Squadron. Bringing my Brother to Molesworth was a favor for which I will forever thank General Travis and my dear friends, Mel Schulstad. I recall when General (then Colonel) Rader found out about it he blew his stack! I was riding with him in a command car behind one B-17 just returning from a mission. We were enroute to the Flying Control Building. The B-17 did not have its tail wheel locked. He asked me to jot the number of the ship down. I told him, "I don't have to, Colonel. It's my Brother - he's on his second mission as First Pilot."

Rader blew his stack! But he calmed down.

You see, Hal, Brother Emerson stayed in; became a Lt. Colonel; flew in two more wars and was killed in the Viet Nam conflict in 1969. He now lies in Arlington. It was you who paved the way for his interment there when it seemed we would have to wait for months to get him in.

To further identify me, I took command of the 360th Squadron when my dear friend, Colonel Walt Shayler left. This, too, was a great thrill. For when I first came to Molesworth, I was assigned with my crew to the 360th and Walt Shayler was my Commanding Officer.

Three of my crew are known dead. They are: Jack Coppom, Copilot. Jim Zwayer, Navigator, who was killed in the SR71 crash near Tucumcari, N.M., around the later 60's. He was a pilot for Lockheed at the time. And then the Radio-Gunner, Felix Spoerri, who died just a few years ago in his 70's.

I still maintain contact with some of my crew, namely Leo Lanier and John De Sousa. I have lost

contact with Bill Huston, Tony Laurintis, George Payne and Melvin Schultz the ball turret expert.

I think that brings you up to date. I live on a golf course in Half Moon Bay, California right on the Pacific Ocean. Am a poor 14 handicap. Dabble in real estate and the market and still have my lovely wife, Ruth Younghe whom I met (you were along) in San Francisco when we all returned from North Africa in late 1945. We have two children. Lorelei, age 38 and married with one son, Sean Yoon McDevitt and Carl, age 36, divorced, no children, and assistant Director, U.C. Medical Center, San Francisco.

Have authored a few books. One, MR. PRESIDENT another, AIRLINE SAFETY: A VIEW FROM THE COCKPIT. Then two articles, one published, the other not. The unpublished one is NO APOLOGIES FOR DRESDEN. The other is THE JET LAG MYTH. All written over my name. If they flop, I want to be identified as the one who caused it...

Bill Heller

"Snap-Krackle-Pop"

In your next publication could you please ask anyone who knows the location of any member of "Snap Krackle Pop" crew to contact Gil Murray, at 6908 Sesame St., Paradise, CA 95969.

If it helps--we were in the 360th and were the first crew to finish 25 missions, although not together, the Kellogg Company painted "Snap Krackle Pop" on our ship while we were in Battle Creek--would sure like to see everyone in Fort Worth in June 1987.

Gilbert Murray
6908 Sesame St.
Paradise, CA 95969

Please pay your 1987 dues, then if our treasury can support it, I hope to put out a 24 page reunion issue in March; including a long story on Jack Mathis and also an article looking back at the first reunion in New York City almost 40 years ago.

- Editor

Paging W. D. Kidd

It's always a thrill to receive the "Hells Angels" newsletter even if I don't recognize a name or face. Thanks for your good work.

Here is some "filler" to help you with the next deadline; however I am sure it will pay off in membership, if successful. For sometime now I have been trying to locate a lost buddy by the name of W. D. Kidd (not to be confused with Bob Kidd of the 427th.) W. D. Kidd was co-pilot in the 360th and arrived in, I'd say, June or July, 1944. He was from Roanoke, Virginia and was a former school teacher. The Air Force cannot help unless they have a serial number or other identification. If any member has a copy of orders that contain his name and serial number or remembers him and can help with his previous or current address, please contact me.

See you in Fort Worth.

Ralph M. Sudderth, Jr.
7402 L Street
Little Rock, Arkansas 72207

"Buzz Blonde" Alumni

Enclosed you will find a check for \$20.00 for 1986 and 1987 dues. Had been unclear in my mind as to whether or not I had paid up--checked through my checkbook for the year--found no record of payment.

One minor annoyance: somehow you folks have me recorded as a member of the 360th Sqd. Wrong! I was navigator on Lt. Grafton Smith's crew of the 'Buzz Blonde' 427th SQD. She unfortunately came to a sad end on the 13th mission, and I waited out the end of the war at Stalag I. Our crew has been in close contact since the end of the war--we have had reunions every five years since. But we have switched to a two year schedule beginning in 1987 at my summer home near Interlochen, MI. By the way The Veterans Administration put on an excellent POW-MIA recognition day luncheon and meeting in the

Chicago area in September. I hope other States did as well.

Edward W. Gardner, Jr.
425 N. Rohl Wing Rd.
Palating, Il. 60067

About Crew 20

I have been a member of the Association since 1981 and I enjoy the "Hells Angels" newsletter very much and look forward to the next issue.

In the September, 1986 issue the story about Crew 20 was very interesting especially about the mission on January 11, 1944 as we were on that mission also. We were in the 358th squadron and our crew, which James B. Taylor was the pilot and I was the Radio Operator, was the only plane of the 358th squadron to return to Molesworth, England that evening.

Lt. Taylor, the pilot was the man that the author of the Sept. article questioned about the whereabouts of his plane and the crew.

Lt. Kyes, mentioned in the same article, flew with our crew on our first five combat missions.

James Taylor, the Pilot and Hobert Steely, the Navigator live in California, Douglas Jones, the Engineer lives in Vermont and I

live in Nevada. We are all members of the association and all except Jones attended the reunion in Seattle and thoroughly enjoyed it.

The Bombardier and one Waist-Gunner were killed in Combat. The Ball-Turret gunner passed away several years ago.

We are trying to locate the Co-Pilot, Charles M. Hall, the Tail-Gunner, James B. Cox and the other Waist-Gunner, William H. Loveland.

The last time that the crew was together was in June, 1944 and if possible would like to get together again some day.

Woodroe G. Dulin
1218 South 15th
Las Vegas, Nevada 89104

More About Crew 20

Let me begin by thanking you for giving us such a fine newsletter. I know it is a "load," so you and the editors that preceded you deserve high praise.

I am writing to add to the Story of Crew 20 published in the September newsletter. In the crew picture the "dude" standing left rear (instructor pilot) is Walter R. (Wally) Kyse. He was our original crew co-pilot from stateside. A few days ago my pilot, Don Gamble, called from

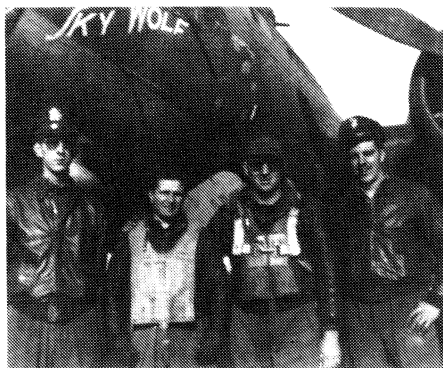
Crew #20



Leadville, Co. to confirm that it was Kyse. The four handsome warriors in the picture below are L to R: me (McSween) - navigator, Coburn - bombardier, Kyse - co-pilot, Gamble - pilot.

Let me hasten to add that as of last year Kyse was alive and well and lived at the following address: 1200 Bloomfield Ave., Sebastopol, CA 95472. Tel.: (707) 823-6276. This info was collected by Charlie Schmeltzer (waist gunner) when he put forth a max effort to locate our crew for the Seattle reunion. Through the years only Coburn and I had stayed in contact. Charlie saw the notice and a phone number to contact for the Seattle reunion in the Spokane newspaper(s), so he obtained a roster, found my name and Coburn's name, called us and went from there. He found Gamble, Kyse and Richard (Dick) Sarch--ball turret gunner. Sarch's address is 2368 Placifita San Leandro, Camarillo, CA 93010; Tel: (805) 987-6121.

Back to Crew 20: Their first mission was my #20. We led the high squadron--the 303rd led the wing. I recorded a few facts: it was one of the coldest days recorded at 27,500 ft. (our altitude)--the free air temperature gauge hit the stop at -50 degrees Centigrade. Bill Fort got the nose of his plane shot out killing his navigator, Rocketto, who was on his first mission. His bombardier, Spencer, stayed in the nose, resulting in the freezing of his hands, throat, face and ears. I believe he received the Distinguished Service Cross. My crew didn't fly the 29 Nov. Bremen mission (Crew 20's 2nd), but I



noted that the 360th Bomb Sqdn. lost two planes.

My crew flew old 562 (Sky Wolf) so often we felt like we owned it. As of the Seattle Reunion, Sky Wolf's crew chief, Carino Colancecco, was alive and well. He and his wife were also at the Dayton Reunion. On 11 Jan. 44 (Oschersleben) Emerson and his crew went down in Sky Wolf; also, Campbell, Swable and DeSheil and their crews went down. Let me add that all the people mentioned belonged to the 358th Bomb Sqdn. Sky Wolf was a real fort: Colancecco had put a sheet of 1/4 inch steel on the floor at the navigator's position with a thick plank over it so the nav's feet wouldn't freeze; 1/4 inch plate in front of the pilots' feet and legs (bulkhead behind Nav.) and a sheet in front (window) of the two waist gunners. The B-17G that took Sky Wolf's place just happened to have tail #562.

During the first or second week of Sept. 1943 my crew aborted old 577 (Hell's Angels) on its 41st combat mission (consecutive). EVERYBODY had big plans for that airplane to be the very first to survive 50 straight combat missions without an abort. We were not welcome back at Molesworth, even though the right wing was covered in engine oil.

William D. McSween
3900 Sunset Drive
Shreveport, LA 71109

Those Grand Guys on Crew 20

(See feature story in September 1986 Newsletter)

Crew 20 went down on its eighth mission--Oschersleben, January 11, 1944. Only the unknown tail gunner seems to have survived. He had been grounded that day by a back injury suffered four days earlier.

Almost coincident with this story's appearance in our Newsletter Ed Miller sent me more of his good work, a roster of 348 "Lost souls", with names and sketchy but key facts largely gleaned from microfilm he has been researching. From this roster it has been possible to reconstruct

DaShiell's Crew 20 on that fateful January day, save for the Bombardier.

Glen Mabie supplied a crew picture taken at Molesworth before the DaShiell crew flew its first mission. Three of the men in the photo were not flying with DaShiell on January 11, 1944:

Kyes, ___ Lt (rear, left), evidently killed over Germany on a mission unspecified.

De Laura, Don J. 2nd Lt.
(rear, right),
purportedly flying
squadron lead in another
aircraft; also MIA on
the Oschersleben raid.
___ ___ (Front, right), the
unnamed, grounded tail
gunner.

The remaining eight men in the crew photo went down together:

3 OFFICERS.

DaShiell, William C. 2nd Lt.

Co-pilot (back row, second from left)

Mabie, Hilton C. 2nd Lt. Co-pilot
(back row, middle)

Sutherlandt, Thomas 2nd Lt.

Navigator (back row, fourth from left)

5 CREWMEN. (front row, the five men from the left).

Unfortunately I am not able to match their names with faces, but here are their names:

Stevenson, Robert J. S/Sgt.

Radebaugh, Bernard J. S/Sgt.

McKinney, Clifford M. Sgt.

Owen, Robert J. Sgt.

Robinson, Arthur H. Sgt.

I think it likely Stevenson and Radebaugh were crew chief and radio operator, or vice versa. These two crew positions were manned by people with somewhat more technical training than gunners, and thus typically had a bit more rank.

We know, from the published story, that a substitute tail gunner, Parker, Robert A., Sgt., went down with DaShiell's crew. As for the bombardier (or possibly toggler) flying with DaShiell that day, I could only speculate, with a probability of less than one in ten of coming up with the right

name given the less than complete information presently at hand. Missing Air Crew Reports available at Maxwell, should supply the name.

January 11, 1944 was a black day. My limited information shows these eleven crews, maybe all from the 358th, were lost:

Capbell, Paul W.	1st Lt.
Corothers,	Lt.
DaShiell, Willaim C.	2nd Lt.
Eich,	Lt.
Emerson, Aubrey L.	1st Lt.
Hallden,	Lt.
Mc Clellan,	Lt.
Purcell,	Lt.
Schwaebe, Harry A.	2nd Lt.
Simmons,	Lt.
Watson, Jack W.	2nd Lt.

On January 10th the 303rd had 44 aircraft in fully operational status. After Oschersleben, 13. And 16 were down for battle damage repairs. It took two weeks to get 44 operational again. But that's another story. Disguised beneath the surface above lies another great story. I hope some of you will trip me up.

Is this the end of the DaShiell crew's story? By no means! Which crewman's name matches which face in the crew picture? Do I have the names right? Who flew in the bombardier's spot on that day? Who was the grounded tail gunner who sent the story to Mrs. Mabie?

That's where you, the readers, come in. Somebody out there knew these brave souls. They did not go through training in isolation. Someone flew with them. They stood in mess lines with some of you. Likely they enjoyed a beer and a cup of tea, too. Help fill in the blanks. Send anything you know about these people to your Editor, Hal Susskind. Let's try to wrap this thing up.

Al Lehmann

What're the Odds?

Early this year my son, Dr. Gary Birken met with Dr. James Lynch at Loyola University in Chicago. Both these physicians are pediatric surgeons. A very rare specialty in the field of medicine. Somehow during the course of their conversation, they discovered that both of their fathers had been members of the 303rd.

Dr. Lynch told his father, Robert Lynch, who remembered my pilot, Verner Nafiers (sp?), about the conversation. Capt. Lynch, if it's the pilot, I remember, was very well known in the 303rd. His was a lead crew and he was quite a guy.

I've asked my son to contact Dr. Lynch and to give him Ed Miller's address. I'm sure Lynch will want to become a member of the 303rd Association.

I wouldn't like to quote the odds on the fact that both Lynch

and I survived the war and that each of our sons became pediatric surgeons. Truth is surely stranger than fiction.

Irv Birken
8502 N. W. 82nd St.
Tamarac, FL 33321



The photo above was taken May 22, at Stone Mountain, GA., during the Air Forces Escape and Evasion Society reunion with 40 helpers from Belgium, Holland and France. Pictured are: (r to l) William E. Wolff, Clayton C. David, Louis Breitenbach, James H. Hensley, and Lee I. Fegette. Breitenbach and Hensley evaded but were later captured. David, Fegette and Wolff successfully evaded to return to their units. According to Lenora "Scotty" David who forwarded the photo it was an emotional reunion of more than 100 Air Force veterans with 40 helpers they had not seen for 42 years.

GETTING MEMBERS IS AN ALL-OUT EFFORT

We spend a lot of time each month trying to find former 303rd personnel who up to now have not joined our association. Here's how two old friends got together because of a column in a magazine. Here's a segment of that column written by Jack Douglas Mitchell which appeared in the American Hunter Magazine.

When my kids were little, but old enough to be smart alecks, they would say, "What war is

that, Daddy, that you're talking about?"

"World War II," I'd say. "You must have heard about it. It was in all the papers.

Not long ago I was poking through a stack of really old National Geographic magazines and found a January 1947 article by J. Frank Dobie (now a famous writer) about post-war Germany entitled "What I Saw Across the Rhine." One of

the things he saw was the city of Old Heidelberg with its world-famous museums, art galleries, and ancient university still intact. The caption beneath the photo reads, "Spared the devastation of war, Old Heidelberg remains a citadel of learning." And then, "Because of its cultural and historical importance and lack of major industry, the venerable university city was not

bombed by the allies."

And now for a statement never written before. Heidelberg was saved from destruction and not "bombed by the allies" because of my brother Bob, and 15 seconds. He was First Lieutenant Robert C. Mitchell as one of the lead bombardiers of the 303 Bomb Group, Hells Angels, 8th Air Force, flying B-17 bombers and based in Molesworth, England.

Here's how it happened. In the spring of 1945, about March 1 as Bob recalls, enemy targets for the day were listed as No. 1 Primary and No. 2 Secondary. At the preflight briefing early that morning, the German city of Heidelberg suddenly showed up as a secondary target. Up to then it was considered a nonmilitary target, but now it was listed as an enemy target to be bombed.

Obviously, no one openly questioned this change in Heidelberg's status. No one questioned the possible destruction of this "citadel of culture and learning." (There were no suggestion boxes in the United States Air Force at that time.) The rules said that a primary target had to be bombed visually, not through cloud cover. The target had to be seen through the Norden bombsight--Bob's bombsight to be specific because as a lead bombardier he took full command over the target and the other bombers released their loads when they saw him drop his bombs.

The secondary target, however, could be bombed through cloud cover using radar to locate it. So if

the primary was hidden by clouds you went to the secondary target regardless of cloud cover.

As the squadron of 36 B-17 bombers, each carrying 3,000 pounds of high explosives, approached the primary target--a railroad marshaling yard near Heidelberg-- they found it socked in with a heavy overcast of clouds. Bob started down the bombing run and stared down through his Norden bombsight to the solid clouds below. He told me, with some urging because he's usually been reluctant to talk about his war experiences, "I took them as far as I could, right up to the last. I had already depressed my mike button to end the run and go to Heidelberg when suddenly the thick cover opened for about 15 seconds and we dropped our bombs."

The next day Heidelberg was scratched from the target list.

**Now read the exchange of letters which the column inspired.

Dear Bob:

I was reading an article in the August issue of The American Hunter. Imagine my surprise to see a reference to the 303rd Bomb Group and, in particular the name Robert C. Mitchell.

I believe we both alternated lead crew assignments in those days, I finished up a bit ahead of you, the Berlin Mission of February 3rd, 1945 was my final lead mission. I was a member of Haynes Crew and I cannot remember the name of your pilot.

I found a set of orders in my old WWII files which indicate that you and I were both promoted to 1st Lieutenant on the same day.

After 28 years of not seeing any of our crew, we decided that we should start to have our own Reunions, and so, since 1971 we

have been having one every two years. Until this year, our entire crew attended and was intact. However, our pilot, Charles D. Haynes, passed away in December, and the status of future get-togethers is in doubt.

Charlie Haynes and I did attend the last 303rd Group Reunion in Seattle where we joined with many other 8th Air Force Groups in celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the B-17. It was a great experience and we did meet several people who were at Molesworth during our tour of duty. Among them was Bryant Sharp who was copilot on Embrey's crew. Were you the bombardier on that crew?

The story your brother recounted in his article was very interesting, if I ever get to Lake Elmo I will certainly look you up, and of course, would welcome hearing from you if you are ever in this area.

Charles A. Dando
616 Bridle Road
Glenside, PA 19038

Dear Charlie:

What a pleasant surprise after all these years! I was a little reluctant to okay my big brother's telling of the "we almost bombed Heidelberg" story. I thought the Air Force might deny that the city was ever on any target list. But now I'm glad it was printed.

Yes, I went overseas with Hank Embrey's crew, and Bry Sharp was the co-pilot. After 10 or so missions with Hank, I started flying as a lead bomb airmen just as you did. I flew the 30th on April 16.

Sorry to say, our crew has never had a reunion. I did see Hank before the end of the war in the Pacific and did hear that he stayed in service. We used to say that he was the only pilot who had to stand up to fly a B-17. Did you know that he got the DSM for pulling a 17 out of a spin? Quite a guy.

Sorry to hear that Charlie Haynes passed away. If my mission notes are correct, he was the pilot on the mission where Heidelberg was the secondary target. We bombed

Bruchsal's marshaling yards at the last second.

Bob Mitchell
3394 Lake Elmo Ave. North
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

- Ed. Note: According to the Mighty Eighth War Diary by Roger A. Freeman, on March 1, 1945, 115 B-17s of the IAD bombed the primary target, the Bruchsal M/Y. However, according to the diary 25 B-17s of the IAD were not as patient as Mitchell and bombed the secondary target at Heidelberg. Damage unknwn. That was the only mention of Heidelberg as a target in the diary.

Do You Have an Award Coming?

Things were pretty hectic during those combat days in WW II and in some instances paperwork supporting an individual's act of heroism or valor was sometimes misplaced. If you were one of those unfortunate ones or know of someone else who was short changed, here's an opportunity to correct the 40 year old blunder.

It is hoped that if anyone has an award coming, we can correct the apparent oversight and have the award properly presented at the

Reunion in Fort Worth, Texas in June of 1987.

Major General Lew Lyle has volunteered to honcho the project.

In applying for the award, make sure you have complete documentation of the act of valor. If you have any questions or want more information on what type of documentation is needed you can contact General Lyle at Belvedere Country Club #207, Hot Springs, AR., telephone (501) 321-1956.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

TAXES, DEDUCTIONS, AND YOU

It's said, and we've all heard it, that two things in life are inevitable. I feel duty-bound to address one of them.

I am not an expert on taxes--in fact I specifically disclaim any expertise in the matter. And, as others often do, I advise you to consult your tax adviser on what I am about to suggest.

I have always felt Association and contributions to the the 303rd Memorial Fund are legitimate deductions from income for tax purposes. Now, I can tell you I am not alone in this feeling. There is a letter dated December 6, 1979 in our Association's files stating that the IRS has determined the 303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc. is exempt from Federal income tax under the provisions of Internal Revenue Code section 501(c) (19)--Veteran's Organizations. The final line on said letter, beneath the Jacksonville District Director's signature, follows in quotes: "Contributions to you are deductible as provided in section 170 of the Code."

During a working session at the recent 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion, I was handed a folder full of "how to" goodies. Among those papers were several pages of vital Federal Income Tax

information which I've arranged below, cut and pasted so as to be verbatim.

So what does all this mean? I suggest we, members and officers, are entitled to deduct as charitable contributions:

- (1) Our membership dues--annual or life.
- (2) Contributions to our Memorial Fund.
- (3) Our travel expenses to reunions, and in some circumstances our wives' travel expenses.

Furthermore, considering I was handed the material cut and pasted here at an official function of the 8th Air Force Historical Society, I believe dues, contributions, and travel to 8th AFHS reunions are deductible. Check it out with your tax expert.

I asked several questions of Robert Kuhnert, Secretary-Treasurer of the 355th Fighter Group Association. Kuhnert raised this issue at the 8th AFHS Reunion. He told me members of the Flying Tigers of the 14th Air Force Association have been filing for these deductions for many years. Also, a friend of Kuhnerts' in the Tigers has been audited without any question about his deductions even being raised.

Here's a timely issue not to be overlooked as 1986 comes to a close. (Assuming our newsletter

makes it through in a seasonally loaded mail system.) The Federal tax law passed by Congress before adjourning impacts charitable contributions in at least these ways:

(1) After 1986, taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions will no longer be able to take deductions for charitable contributions. This would seem to mean one must file the long form, starting in 1987, to take such deductions.

(2) If your taxable income will put you in a lower rate bracket in 1987, a deduction you take in 1986 will be worth more (i.e., save more taxes).

So consider a last minute contribution to the 303rd Memorial Fund. Father Skoner will accept and acknowledge your contribution. You can be sure it will remain segregated for use only on a memorial project you will be proud of. And do check out your tax situation with your tax advisor.

E. C. Lehmann
President

Ed. Note - Because of lack of space and time we omitted the verbatim portion of the tax information. However, we have made extra copies. I will be happy to forward a copy to anyone requesting it.



303rd Bomb Group (H) Association, Inc.

Might - In - Flight

"HELLS ANGELS" NEWSLETTER



VOLUME X, NUMBER 3

Editor: Hal Susskind
2602 Deerfoot Trail, Austin, TX 78704

MARCH 1987

PREDICT DOPPLER RADAR CAN DETECT WIND-SHEAR

Since the airliner crashes at Moissant (New Orleans) and Dallas-Ft. Worth, the weather phenomenon called wind-shear has been cited as the culprit. The branches of the media have reported that a Doppler Radar could be developed, and deployed around airports. Theoretically, this type of radar would be capable of detecting wind-shear disturbances.

Doppler effect is not something new. It is named for its discoverer, Christian Doppler (1803-1853), who was an Austrian Mathematician and Physicist. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary defines it as the apparent change of frequency of sound waves or light waves, varying with the relative velocity of source and the observer: if the source and the observer are drawing closer together, the frequency is increased. The laws governing electromagnetic radiation are the same laws that govern light radiation.

Doppler effect was used to determine drift through undercast, by the 303rd in WW II. By plotting these drifts on the E6B Navigation Computer, it was possible to determine a wind on 2 headings, or even up to 7 or 8 headings. By comparing these winds to the briefed winds during assembly, departure times could be corrected to make good control times, on the continent.

Let me digress to my own career. After completing B17 Phase Training in January, 1944, I was sent to Langley Field for two months training as a Mickey Operator. In April, 1944, I navigated a Mickey plane to Alconbury, with a partial crew. The Aircraft and I stayed at Alconbury and the rest were sent on as individual replacements. I went through Bovingdon as an individual crewmember, and then through the Mickey School at Alconbury, and then I stayed there as an instructor, even though I had no combat experience. After teaching two one month classes, I asked to be sent to the First Division. I arrived at Molesworth in early August, 1944, and Lew Lyle assigned me to the 360th as that Squadron's first Mickey Operator. I flew combat missions at a rather leisurely pace. Usually, when our squadron led the group. I went on 10 day leave to Edinburgh, the day the Battle of



Lead Crew Bremen (11 Mar 45) Back Row (l to r) Charlton, Rape, Davis, Heller (Rest Unknown).

the Bulge started. I had 18 missions then.

In February, 1945, I was sent back to Alconbury for a course in MH (Radar Beacon Bombing) using modified Mickey sets. While at Alconbury, I renewed my friendship with Capt. Andrew L. Pierson, III, the 812th Sqdn. Mickey Maintenance Officer. Pierson and I had worked for the same company in Houston. He is now a retired Electrical Engineer.

Pierson told me that his people had modified the clockwise-counter clockwise antenna drive circuit of the APS-15 (Mickey) Set. This circuit controlled the rotation of the parabolic antenna, which was mounted in the former ball turret position. This modification was done by stacking three heated suit rheostats, with the lower two on full high, and the top one left adjustable. They were wired in series, and this allowed the mickey operator to move the antenna in increments as small as 1/2 degree, at a time.

The APS 15 had two scopes. The main one was a 5 inch "PPI" (Plan Position Indicator), with the aircraft position being at the center of the scope. The second scope was an "A" scope, which was a profile view of the sweep of the main one. The aircraft

track over the ground was the position of the slowest sweep motion (least frequency change), in the "A" scope. By comparing the heading marker in the "PPI," which was the repeater indicator of the aircraft's Gyro Flux Gate Compass, with the azimuth of the stopped antenna, yielded the drift angle. The sweep was stopped on the track, which was read on the "PPI" Compass Rose.

Upon returning to Molesworth with the wiring diagram, I convinced Walt Shayler that this modification was needed. He overcame the resistance to change, and we were able to get a 360th aircraft modified. On March 1, 1945, with Bill Heller as Command Pilot leading the Group, we put the Doppler to the acid test. We were briefed to hit the submarine building yard, approximately seven miles northwest of Bremen, near Vegesack. At this time, it had not been proven that jet streams existed. Upon turning to a south-southeasterly heading at the Initial Point, a wind determined by using Doppler drift on two headings, was westerly at 220 knots. The Bombardier (Sylvester Rape) preset 20 degrees of left drift into the Norden Bombsight. It had become standard procedure for the Bombardier to set radar determined drift and sighting angles into the Norden. If the weather broke clear this had the

bombsight looking near the Aiming Point. The bombsight was used to drop the bombs either visually or blind. In this case the release was blind, and at release the drift angle was 31 degrees left. The rest of the First Division, being unable to cope with this large drift angle, attempted to bomb the center of Bremen.

Back at Molesworth that evening, Intelligence Chief "Mac" McQuaid told me that the radar plot showed we had a real good run. Several days later,

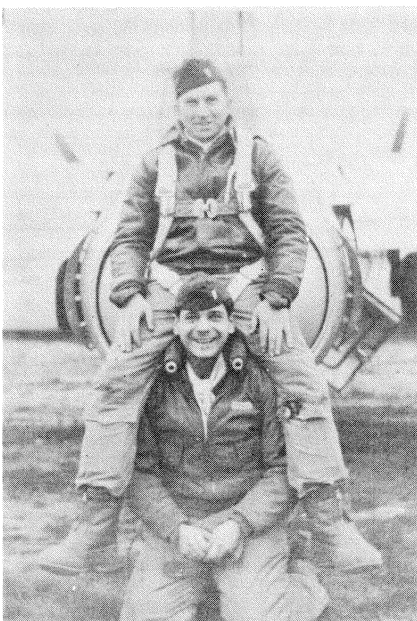
McQuaid informed me that the photo reconnaissance pictures showed that the Aiming Point had been hit, with the Main Point of Impact of the lead squadron measured at 592 feet from the Aiming Point. In spite of the undercast and the jet stream, the 303rd had scored another winner. This was a masterful example of crew coordination, especially the accurate heading corrections of Bill Heller, and the bombsight operation of Sylvester Rape, Jr.

The first instrument designed for

using the Doppler effect was the APN-89. This was a part of the AN/ASQ 38 Bomb Nav System, the first of which were in the B52E. The first aircraft delivered to SAC was in October, 1957. In this case, peace slowed progress. The APN-89 was used to supply information for a Drift and Ground Speed Meter in the KC-135 and the Boeing 707.

By Rufus Charlton
360th Mickey Operator

MICKEY BOMBING PAID DIVIDENDS



(Top) Lt. Hal Susskind, Nav. and Lt. Frank Weil, Mickey Operator.

When American troops stormed the beaches of France on D-Day, their invasion was preceded by one of the most deadly and intensive bombings ever inflicted on the enemy. Destruction of enemy fortifications on the beach was complete. Nazi troops were stunned by the waves of bombs which cascaded onto the shore line, only a few feet ahead of the assault boats.

The fact that practically all the bombing on June 6 was done through a heavy undercast, with navigators and bombardiers relying on instruments for accuracy, and the fact that not one American soldier storming those beach strongholds was killed by one of our bombs, indicates that the long days of experimentation with the so-called mickey technique paid off in the end.

Since its introduction to the ETO November, 1943, mickey has played an

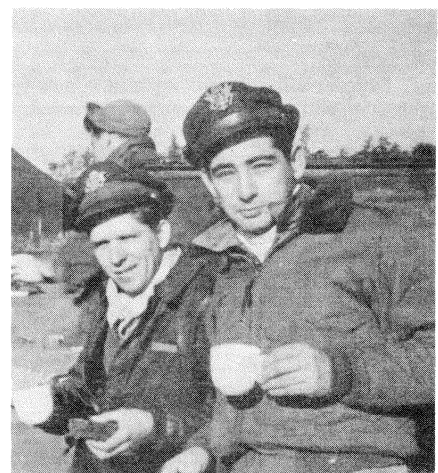
increasingly important role in the strategic bombing program of the 8th Air Force. After proving its feasibility in those first few missions in the Winter of 1943, it became an important part of the division's SOP for bombing. That it helped sap Germany's ability to wage war is indisputable, for it made possible the saturation bombing of important Nazi installations on the many days in 1944 when visual bombing was impossible.

The division established its first pathfinder group in March, 1944.* A small unit of 13 inexperienced mickey operators formed the nucleus of our now formidable pathfinder force. At that time the instrument bombing was done entirely by the mickey operators. The method of synchronous bombings with the bombardiers was not yet in use. Mickey maps, when available, were not always accurate, and scope photos did not exist for many of the targets. Today a complete scope coverage of Germany is available to all H2X operators; new methods of bombing are being employed, and bombing accuracy is increasing.

Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Dresden, Nurnburg, Kiel, Cologne, and other enemy cities have felt the weight of our bombs dropped by instrument. In the past five months, rarely has a Fort formation flown to attack a target in Germany without a mickey ship in the lead spot, even when visual sightings are anticipated.

Reprinted from 1st Air Division's First Over Germany Vol. 1 No. 5 - May 12, 1945.

* Ed Note: In March 1944, the 303rd Bomb Group sent two potential lead crews on temporary duty to the newly established Pathfinder PFF Squadron based at the 305th Bomb Group at Chelveston. Don Stoullil's crew from the 359th and Bert Bordelon from the 360th were the selectees. I was the navigator



(l to r) Lt. Bill Hoover, Bomb. and Lt. Larry Lifshus, Mickey Operator.

with Stoullil's crew. On deep penetrations into Germany we were alerted at about 10 p.m. the night before and had to fly over to the group we were to lead because of our radar a/c. We usually arrived in the wee hours of the morning. We weren't always popular when we arrived at the briefing because we were a dead giveaway that the mission was going to be a long one and that the weather was going to be marginal. Most of the time we flew with the 303rd where we picked up additional personnel for that particular mission, like Gen. Robert Travis who received the Purple Heart on one of the missions he flew with our crew. The 303rd's two PFF crews also flew on the 384th's mission to Oberpfaffenhofen. Unfortunately we flew in the number two and three positions. Like Oschersleben, it was a rough one. The 384th Lost about 8 a/c and our tail gunner was wounded on this one. I believe the 384th personnel received the Distinguished Unit Citation for this mission. As far as I know, the two 303rd PFF personnel crews were never recognized.

HELL'S ANGELS FORUM:

How About A Mickey

I have belonged to the 8th AFHS and the 303rd Bomb Group Association since Labor Day weekend of 1975, and I have never seen a thing about Mickey Operators. To my knowledge Frank Weil and I are the only ones in the 303rd Association. I remember Mickey Operators named Clark, Garrett, Desmond, Estes, Lifshus, Weinstein, Caldwell and Beyerler. The 360th had a Willson who was killed with Duffield's Crew in early 1945. I don't know where they are. One named D'Amico asked me for experiences in a book he was going to write, but I didn't even know him.

I have written an article that I think might be appropriate in today's world. I hope I have not been too egotistical with too many capital I's, but you must remember that I was never on a crew in the 303rd. I also hope it is not too long, but it could be run in two editions, if it is.

We are planning to go to Ft. Worth, for the June Reunion. I enjoyed the article about Statton and Schroll, as they lived in the same hut I did.

I enjoyed Bill Rader at the London Reunion in 1984. I think I took his constant riding better, when his rank didn't mean anything.

Looking forward to seeing you in June.

Rufus S. Charlton
Houston, Texas

Ed. Note: Look for Rufus' story on page 1.

Shoo Shoo Baby

I have been an honorary member of Hell's Angels since the death of my husband Lewis E. Kelley in 1981. I very much enjoy the newsletter and as a history buff I also enjoy any items on the "8th" as my husband was stationed in Molesworth during the war.

I have a picture and news release that was sent to Lewis' home town paper in 1944 of him and six other men in front of the airplane, "Shoo Shoo Baby." I thought you might be interested in the picture. My question is: Was this the same "Shoo Shoo Baby" that Nathan Adams wrote about in the "Song of a Valiant Lady" which was condensed in Readers Digest March 1986 issue?

My husband was very upset when he saw the picture because he had lost a bet and had to have his head shaved as a penalty. He forgot to put his hat on for the photo.

I would appreciate any information that would prove this was the plane written about in Adam's book.

Phyllis Kelley
De Kalb, Il.

Ed. Note: *Wish I could say it was the same plane. The B-17 mentioned in Adam's story, serial number 42-32076 was picked up by a crew from the 401st Sqdn., 91st Bomb Group, (Bassingbourne) on March 5, 1944 at Burtonwood Air Depot in Cheshire and named "Shoo Shoo Baby." It flew its first combat mission on March 24, 1944 and the primary target was Schweinfurt but bad weather forced the 1st A.D. to go to the secondary target at Frankfurt. On May 29, 1944, the renamed "Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby" was shot up pretty badly at Posen in Poland and had to land at Malmo's Bulltofa Airport in Sweden. The aircraft and crew were interned for the remainder of the war. "Shoo Shoo Shoo Baby" was later converted for transport use and operated in Scandinavia and France post-war. The aircraft was eventually secured by the USAF museum.*



AN EIGHT AAF BOMBER STATION, ENGLAND-- The transportation problems of the ground maintenance crew of the B-17 Fortress "Shoo Shoo Baby" was solved when they purchased a tandem bicycle for trips around the widely-dispersed English airfield. Although they have put a lot of miles on the bicycle, they say it still can't compare with their bomber, which has just completed its fifteenth mission, four of which were to Berlin.

Shown here left to right are: Sgt. Othmar P. Sahl, Lonsdale, Minn.; Pfc. Ed Kumer, Saint David, Ill.; Cpl. Lewis E. Kelley, Elgin, Ill.; Cpl. Ival B. Salisbury, Howard, Kansas; Pfc. Milton Grove, Lost Altos, Calif.; M/Sgt. John H. Simpson, Richmond, Virginia, crew chief of the ship and Sgt. Roy E. Tingley of Farmington, Minn.

Lest We Forget

Concerning our pilot Lt. Thomas Kahler, perhaps you did not notice on my application, in the area "Retired Military Grade, if Any," I marked, "KIA" pertaining to him.

You see when we were shot down and captured, the civilians and S.S. beat Kahler and Smitty, our tail gunner, to death and hanged their bodies in a tree.

I and the rest of the crew landed in a different area, were taken prisoner by Ermacht soldiers and put in the town jail in Bilin, Czechoslovakia. Three days later, Les Latz, our radio operator and I were sent to a makeshift POW hospital since we were both wounded. We remained there until the end of the war. The rest of the crew were sent to a Stalag somewhere in the area. I have never known exactly where.

It is hard remembering and writing about this; even after forty plus years, so I will say so long for now.

William A. Broughton
Chalfont, PA.

This and That

Enclosed are some filler items and some information on Bill Heller.

I arrived at the 303rd BG, 360th Squadron, 25 June 1943 and my first Mission was 15 August 1943 to Amiens (airfield-France), Mission #2, 16 August 1943, LeBourget (airfield France), Mission #3, 17 August 1943, Schweinfurt--my bomb tag says, "What A Day." My second Mission to Schweinfurt was 14 October 1943, Mission #12, my first mission as First Pilot and it was very rough--ask "ole" Bill Heller.

I believe I am just one of a few who got in on both Schweinfurt Missions. I finished a tour of 25 Missions with the 360th Squadron and went back to the USA--to Miami, Florida for R&R and 30 days later the Gulf Coast Headquarters sent Jack Coppom (Heller's Co-Pilot) and me to Lockbourne AFB (Columbus, Ohio) to B-17 School because we had never been officially checked out on the B-17. Jack got out and went to work for United Airlines. I was then sent to Greenville, NC for processing and back overseas and finally to the 303rd Bomb Group. Captain Robert Lynch was then Operation's Officer of the 358th Squadron. He was sent back stateside to the Pentagon. I was made the 358th Operations Officer and flew 27 more missions for the 358th Squadron. I believe I am the only one in the 303rd

Bomb Group who finished a Combat Tour (25 Missions) and then sent back to the 303rd Bomb Group to fly more missions. I told Colonel (Bow Your Neck) Stephens that I came back because the States was chicken----!

I am a little bit annoyed at Bill Heller's article in the December newsletter. He told about his crew in the 360th Squadron but did not say that my crew was in the same barracks--his crew was at one end and my crew was at the other end. The two crews in the middle were always being shot down and we had to packup the belongings. Also, he did not mention the "Coal Bin" he built in our barracks?

In the December letter, page 6, "What're the Odds", Dr. James Lynch is the son of Robert Lynch, Pilot, 358th Squadron. If you have Bob Lynch's address, I would like to hear from him or get his address so I can correspond with him. He was from Redondo Beach, California when I knew him in 1944.

See you in Fort Worth on June 3-7.

Bill Bergeron
San Antonio, TX.

Ed. Note: *Anyone know Capt. Lynch's address?*

The Day The Blivit Hit the Fan

In the December issue of the newsletter we decided to incorporate some changes, e.g., we hoped that by adding a four page wrap-around cover which would include membership applications, members could cut out the application blanks and mail to former members of the 303rd without cutting up the newsletter per se. Our intentions were good but the execution got all screwed up. Some gremlins sneaked into the works with the result that the 303rd newsletter took on the appearance of a combination of the 91st and 96th Bomb groups. Eugene McMahan suggested that maybe it was one of the "German B-17 Ghost Sqdn."

Everything is back to normal, thanks to quite a few letters, questioning my senility and even suggesting that I might have done it on purpose to see if anyone would catch the "goof."

I appreciate the letters because it means we are communicating and as long as the lines of communication stay open we are going to have one fine newsletter. It's your newsletter so feel free to fire in your comments.

Here are some of the letters;

The newsletter, vol. X, no. 2, December, 1986 is great. One of the best yet. However I want to take issue with the change in the artwork on the B-17 in that letter's logo. "The red coloring that was used on the tail did not belong to the 303rd Bomb Group. It belonged to the bomb wing (40th, I believe) to which the 91st Bomb Group, based at Bassingbourne was assigned. Likewise the squadron letters on that aircraft are not those of any squadron of the 303rd."

For your information, a red border around the triangle on both the fin and the wing identified the 41st Bomb Wing, stationed at Molesworth and commanded by that famous swashbuckling General Robert F. Travis (the general Custer of the 8th Air Force), for whom, at a later date, Travis Air Force base at Fairfield, California was named. The 41st Bomb Wing consisted of the 303rd--triangle C--at Molesworth; the 379th--triangle K--at Kimbolton; and, I believe, the 384th--triangle P--at Grafton Underwood.

The 303rd Bomb Group squadron identifying letters were:

- VK for the 358th,
- BN for the 359th,
- PU for the 360th, and
- GN for the 427th. The third letter on the sides of the aircraft as the airplane identifier.

When we were shipped and flown to England in 1942 there were only 4 or 5 heavy bomb groups in the 8th Air Force so the squadron and airplane identifying letters were all that were needed. Soon the B-17 Air Divisions needed their own mark. The triangle designated the 1st Air Division, and the square the 3rd. Memory fails me so I can't remember whether the 2nd Air Division had an identifier or not.* Those twin tailed, potbellied brutes didn't need much identification other than their silhouette. In late 1943 or early 1944 as the 8th Air Force grew into the largest air armada the

free world had ever known, further improvement in command channels and consequently identifiers were established. Thus the Air Division Bomb Wings came into being, and a distinctive tail and wing marking evolved. This to facilitate air assembly over England before departure to the continent mainland. The big wide red border around the triangle of each B-17 identified Gen. Travis' airplanes. My 444 Sub-depot painters helped the squadrons paint the initial airplanes and many of the subsequent newly assigned replacements.

Please Hal, do get that logo back on track for the next issue of "Hells Angels Newsletter".

Mel McCoy
Director, 425 Air Service Group.

*Ed. Note: *2nd A.D. had a circle.*

My first reaction on seeing the newsletter head aircraft was; (Boy he sure will get some letters on that one) but then it occurred to me that many of us didn't know a lot about our Group markings and have forgotten a lot we did know.

I am sending a few things I have done regarding "our" Group over the years. Use them or not as you wish.

I would recommend contacting Col. W.K. Shayler for information and stories about the Group. He was with it from start to finish--2nd Lt. to Col.

Eugene A. McMahan
Belden, MS.

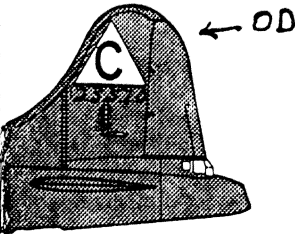
Ed Note: *I'd like to thank McMahan for all the valuable info he sent. Portions of it follow. The rest will be included in subsequent issues.*

The drawing of the B-17 on the newsletter vol. x, no. 2 has the wrong call letters R-AW belonging to 96 B.G, 339 SQD. having a square C, Snetterton Heath, Norfolk.

I was going to ignore that, maybe a misprint, someone goofed or some other logical excuse.

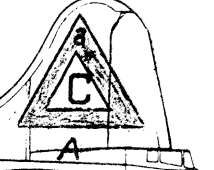
I get my membership card and the same plane is printed on the card. I get a letter from President E.C. Lehmann discussing dues and trip to Molesworth and they finally found the right plane

303rd BG
41st CBW



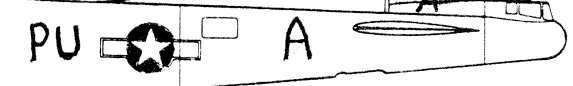
COMBAT: 17 Nov 42 to 25 Apr 45
364 Missions
MOLESWORTH

from Aug. 44



SQUADRON CODE & SQUADRON NO.

VK	358th BS	1
BN	359th BS	2
PU	360th BS	3
GN	427th BS	4



with the proper call letters printed on the letter.

Just put me on the list of others that called your attention to that "goof" or any other name you may want to call it.

Maybe you did it on purpose to see (that's a good excuse) how many would catch the mistake and take time out to write.

I had to write after it was printed on my membership card.

Why am I writing to you about it? So the whole mess will be explained in the newsletter.

Otherwise keep up the good work. Enjoy the newsletter, always looking forward to the next issue.

Christ M. Christoff
"358th"

Hell's Angel Honored

I was really honored June 27-29 to be a guest of the Yakima (Washington) Air Fair along with Pappy Boyington, Franz Stigler (German WW II Ace), Sabiero Sakai (Japanese WW II Ace) and many other aces of WW I, WW II, Korea and Vietnam. In talking to Franz Stigler (whom I like very much) we decided his ME-109 and Hell's Angel's shot at each other many times.

Also invited in the bomber department was the entire crew of the Lucky Penny II (B-24) shot down over Belgium in WW II. Made me mad. Only Rodriguez, top turret and engineer; Godwin, tail gunner; and myself have survived to the present, although we all survived the 25 missions in 1942-43.

Irl E. Baldwin
Albuquerque, NM

Crew 20 and the Big "O"

The enclosed paper will give you all the details of the Jan. 11, 1944 raid to Oschersleben as far as losses are concerned. Note that Dashiell's crew had a nose gunner that day--no bombardier.

The crew I was on sat down that mission. I believe we were at a Red Cross rest home at the time, but I'm not sure.

I was Robert Hullar's tail gunner. Our crew was as follows:
Pilot - Robert Hullar (Dec.)
Co-Pilot - Wilbur (Bud) Klint
Nav. - Elmer Brown
Bomb. - James McCormick
T.T. - Dale Rice (Dec)
Radio - George Hoyt
B.T. - Norman Sampson
L/W - Charles Fullem (Dec)
R/W - Charles Marson (Dec)
T/G - Merlin D. Miller

Hope to see the surviving members of our crew at Ft. Worth.

Merlin D. Miller
Dugger, Ind.

Ed. Note: Below is a list of all the aircraft and crews lost at Oschersleben. As you can see the 303rd lost 11 crews and 10 aircraft. The 358th lost five crews, the 427th, three; the 359th, two and the 360th, one. Sgt. Parker flew as waist gunner on the Dashiell crew with Sgt. McKinney in the tail. SISgt. Fee flew as nose gunner. Lt. DeLaura, the original bombardier with crew #20 was shot down on the same mission flying in the Sky Wolf. But that still leaves the big unanswered question. Who was the original tail gunner on crew #20--the author of the article in the September 1986 issue of the newsletter?

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
41-24587	427th A/C	"358th Ace"	AC-MIS-45
PILOT	1st Lt	G S McLELLAND, JR.	18
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	W A FISHER	1
NAVIGATOR	2nd Lt	J C KALIHER	18
BOMBARDIER	2nd Lt	M L CORNISH	17
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	D TEMPESTA	17
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	G A CALLIHAN	17
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	R G YARIAN	16
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	B S HEATON	14
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	A B CHILES, JR.	17
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	C E DUGAN	15

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
41-24562	358th A/C	"Sky Wolf"	AC-MIS-60
PILOT	1st Lt	A L EMERSON	20
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	M L KIDDICK	8
NAVIGATOR	1st Lt	J B L HALIBURTON	14
BOMBARDIER	2nd Lt	D J DE LAURA	8
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	G C MULLINS	13
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	J C ZUPPLE	14
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	H H ZEITNER	12
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	J G WISZNESKI	13
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	J H PLEASANT	13
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	B J SUTTON	12

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
42-5360	358th A/C	"War Bride"	AC-MIS-35
PILOT	2nd Lt	H A SCHWABE	7
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	H F DUMSE	4
NAVIGATOR	2nd Lt	P T DEGNAN	7
BOMBARDIER	2nd Lt	W W WILEY	7
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	R FOREMAN	7
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	M E TUDOR	5
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	B F HARVEY	6
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	J F MALCOLM	7
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	R W HESSELL	3
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	G F IOTT	8

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
42-3131	427th A/C	"Flea Wolf"	AC-MIS-40
PILOT	2nd Lt	J W CAROTHERS	3
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	C E ROYST	3
NAVIGATOR	2nd Lt	A LINNENHAN	7
BOMBARDIER	2nd Lt	H W BARBARISCALE	4
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	H E SCOTT	4
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	G S RAJICULA	4
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	R T PEAVY	4
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	W A ROGERS	4
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	F J MORNEAU	4
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	R R ZIEGLER	5

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
42-37996	360th A/C	(NO NAME)	AC-MIS-3
PILOT	2nd Lt	R H HALDEN	3
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	K L GENTRY	2
NAVIGATOR	2nd Lt	G N LIMON	4
BOMBARDIER	1st Lt	J W HUBBENSCHMID	4
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	H M BINBEN	4
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	D R HUTCHINS	4
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	C E MOORE	4
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	R B ROBINSON	4
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	H G HAYS	4
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	C H CHATOIAN	4

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
41-24619	427th A/C	(NO NAME)	AC-MIS-52
PILOT	2nd Lt	T L SIMMONS	4
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	F E REICHEL	3
NAVIGATOR	2nd Lt	W L CLYATT, JR.	5
BOMBARDIER	2nd Lt	R W VAUGHN	5
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	W S ELLIOT	4
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	J A BENNETT	4
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	D C DI PIETRA	4
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	R F LIVINGSTON	4
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	R D STEWART	4
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	W L HASTY	4

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
42-39794	358th A/C	(NO NAME)	AC-MIS-10
PILOT	2nd Lt	W C DASHIELL	8
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	H C MABIE	5
NAVIGATOR	2nd Lt	T A SUTHERLAND	7
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	G H FEE	8
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	R L STEVENSON	8
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	B J RADEBAUGH	8
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	A H ROBINSON, JR.	8
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	R A PARKER	4
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	R J OWEN	8
REMARKS	-- SHOT DOWN BY ENEMY FIGHTERS		

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
42-29864	359th A/C	"Lorraine Anne"	AC-MIS-15
PILOT	2nd Lt	W A PURSELL	5
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	F D KROHN	4
NAVIGATOR	2nd Lt	M H MUSSETT	5
BOMBARDIER	2nd Lt	J B KYNE	5
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	P C CASTRICIANO	5
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	J C BEENEY	5
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	L M FANER	5
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	K W NYE	5
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	H R EASTBURN	4
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	J W SWANSON	4

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
42-30865	358th A/C	(NO NAME)	AC-MIS-9
PILOT	1st Lt	P W CAMPBELL	16
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	J C DOTY	3
NAVIGATOR	1st Lt	J P D NOTHSTEIN	16
BOMBARDIER	2nd Lt	W J MILLNER	7
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	S J BACKKILL	19
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	D DI MARTINO	4
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	J W BROOKS	16
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	J F HOY	14
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	A WISNIEWSKI	16
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	E J CASSIDY	18

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
42-3448	359th A/C	(NO NAME)	AC-MIS-13
PILOT	2nd Lt	H J EICH, JR.	8
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	W F WOODSIDE	8
NAVIGATOR	2nd Lt	J E CARROLL	8
BOMBARDIER	2nd Lt	W G STEIN	9
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	H LENSON	8
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	D S HARVEY	8
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	J P CELONI	8
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	E A MAGGIA	9
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	D C ERDMAN	8
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	R M GILSTRAP	8

11 JAN, 1944	NR98	OSCHERSLEBEN	GERMANY
42-29524	358th A/C	"Tear Found"	AC-MIS-25
PILOT	2nd Lt	J W WATSON	6
CO-PILOT	2nd Lt	C C DAVID	3
NAVIGATOR	2nd Lt	J G LEVERTON	8
BOMBARDIER	2nd Lt	Y R CALVIN	6
ENGINEER	1st Sgt	S L ROWLAND	6
RADIO OP.	1st Sgt	H ROMANIEC	6
BALL TURRET	1st Sgt	F H BOOTH	6
L WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	E H STEWART	6
R WAIST GUNNR	1st Sgt	W H FUSSNER	6
TAIL GUNNER	1st Sgt	R P KOSINSKI	6

Heidelberg: In or Out?

As more than a thousand other members do, I look forward to, and enjoy receipt of the *Hell's Angels* Newsletter. It sure brings back a lot of memories.

I was a member of the 427th Squadron, and came in as a replacement in June of 1943. Shelhamer was the pilot, and I was the Bombardier.

Our first raid was to Huls, Germany, on June 22nd, and my last raid was to Knaben, Norway, on Nov. 16th. With my "25" under my belt, I was one of the very few fortunate ones who was able to spend Christmas at home that year.

For the most part, we flew in the "Vicious Virgin" and she carried us through such raids as both Schweinfurts of Aug. 17th, and Oct. 14th, the raid on Hamburg, on July 25th, which was part of the famous "blitz" on that city by the RAF and ourselves, and the raid on Wilhelmshaven on Nov. 5th, which was billed as the first "thousand plane raid" by the 8th Air Force--450 Bombers and 550 Fighters. By comparison, I recall that we went to Huls about 150 or so of us, with no fighter escort, of course. Times did change.

However, my point in writing. In the most recent issue of the *Hell's Angels* Newsletter, of Dec. 1986, under "Getting Members is an All-Out Effort," I read the letter from Charles Dando with interest and it struck a vague chord in my mind.

In the article, in reference to the City of Heidelberg, it says "Up to then it was considered a non-military target, but now it was listed as a target to be bombed." This was in the spring of 1945.

However, according to my memory, we had the city of Heidelberg as a secondary target on one of our raids in 1943. Unfortunately, I can't recall which raid it was nor the primary target. Suffice to say that we did not bomb it--but our aiming point was between the University and a Cathedral close by.

Perhaps some of the members who were with the 303rd in those days can either verify or correct me--but it sure sticks in my mind.

Have you had any similar responses to that statement?

I don't mean to dispute Charlie Dando's statement from his brother Robert Mitchell--and I don't have anything to back up my statement, but just my vague memory.

Thanks to all of you who are working so hard on the Newsletter--it adds interest to one's life. I wish I were able to do more than just write.

William Lewis
Walnut, Calif.

Ed Note: It was an exchange of letters between Charles Dando and Bob Mitchell re: a story in the American Hunter by Bob's brother Jack Mitchell about the listing of Heidelberg as a target.

You'll Find It Here

Yesterday the postman had just brought the December '86 issue of Hell's

Angels Newsletter. I was browsing through its pages when I was astonished to see a heading "Paging W. D. Kidd."

I felt certain that this could not be concerned with my co-pilot, but as I read further everything checked perfectly that it was. Ralph Sudderth, whose name didn't ring a bell with me, was asking for help in locating "Doug".

I immediately looked in the 303rd Assn. Roster, found Sudderth's phone number, and placed a call. Ralph was most happy to get the information he wanted. We had an enthusiastic conversation during which I learned that he had flown with me. Also, he said he has pictures of my crew, of which he will send copies, and I am to send him material that I have.

I phoned Doug Kidd after talking with Sudderth and he remembered Ralph from the old days at Molesworth. I also mentioned that he (Doug) was the only member of our crew who is not a member of the 303rd B.G. Assn.

Enclosed is a picture taken 6 August 1944 shortly after return from a mission to Berlin. It will be noticed that we have been back at base long enough to have regained somewhat of an appearance of confidence.

Members of our crew who belong to the 303rd B.G. Assn. are: Em Barder (TG), Myself (P), Lysle LeRoux (FE) and Dan Whitney (BT).

William C. Crawford
Marietta, Georgia 30066

"Above And Beyond"

A few months ago I received a copy of the Hell's Angels Newsletter. It said something about anyone having any newsworthy stories to submit them.

I am enclosing some stories of my experiences in the Army Air Force. I guess I had three real hard trips, the one to Bremen, (covered on page 6 of this newsletter); the Schweinfurt trip, our plane was the only one of our squadron to return that day and the Oschersleben trip, Jan. 11, 1944, on which we were shot down. It was my 13th trip.

We bailed out and had the usual 8 to 10 day trip in box cars, ending up at Stalag 17B in Austria. We were there until sometime in March 1945 when they took us on the road, marching away from the Russians. We marched until about May 4th or 5th, when we were released by the American Army. If I live to be a hundred, I'll never understand how a single one of us survived on that march, just staying out in the cold, the rain, the snow, very little food, or shoes or blankets to keep warm or nothing, but somehow we made it. At least some of us did, there was a terrible lot of them that didn't make it.

Grover C. Mullins
Windsor, Mo.

Ed. Note: Following are newspaper accounts of the Bremen raid: classic example of the "above and beyond the call of duty" gallantry for which the 303rd was famous.

Crawls Back To Man His Guns

Bombardier Whose Sense of Duty Made Him Cripple For Life Named for Highest Award

by Douglas Werner
United Press Staff Writer

AN AMERICAN FLYING FORTRESS BASE IN ENGLAND, Jan. 14-- This is the story of a bombardier who may never walk again because his sense of duty kept him at his guns in the torn nose of a Flying Fortress in a freezing hell over Bremen.

Army's doctors told Lt. Charles W. Spencer, Peoria, Ill., today that he will spend the next two years on a hospital bed and will be crippled for life.

They told him too, that his bombardment group had recommended him for America's highest military award --the Congressional Medal of Honor.

It was over 40 degrees below zero that day over Bremen when a 20-millimeter cannon shell ripped open the glass nose of the Flying Fortress "Stardust." The "flak wind" streamed over Lt. Spencer at 150 miles an hour, a

wind so cold the flesh turns black in a matter of minutes as if it had been seared by a hot iron.

Wind Kills Quickly

Doctors who have seen men exposed to that wind before say most men would not live through it for even a few minutes.

The blast of the German shell ripped off Lt. Spencer's head gear, slashed his face, and left him unconscious and without oxygen.

The "StarDust" navigator, Harold J. Rocketto, New York City, was killed instantly.

When Engineer Tech. Sgt. Grover C. Mullins, Windsor, Mo. entered the nose to check the damage, he found Lt. Spencer on the floor, bleeding and frozen. He dragged him into the passage

beneath the pilot's compartment and tried to give him oxygen.

Sergeant Was Busy

But Sgt. Mullins was a busy man. He had to assist the co-pilot, whose oxygen had been shot away, too, and he had to drop the "StarDust's" bombs himself, because the release mechanism had been smashed. So he left Lt. Spencer in the passage semi-conscious and apparently close to death.

"He seemed to have one main idea in the back of his mind," Sgt. Mullins explained. "He thought he ought to release his bombs and man his guns."

"He was still conscious enough to crawl back, and after we landed I found him unconscious beneath his guns."

The co-pilot, Lt. Donald Riddick, Beaumont, Texas, said Lt. Spencer

insisted on getting back to his guns, "and he even struggled to get there, although all he could do at first was to roll over."

Above and Beyond Duty

That was on Nov. 26. Lt. Spencer's

superiors decided to recommend him for the highest award--for gallantry "above and beyond the call of duty."

Doctors hope to make Lt. Spencer a new man with plastic surgery, but it will be a long slow process, and it will never

fully restore the use of his crippled hand and foot.

"Nothing but grit and courage enabled this man to live," was the report of the flight surgeon.

WHAT IT'S LIKE TO FIGHT THE NAZIS AT 67 BELOW WITH THE NOSE OF YOUR FORTRESS SHOT AWAY

By Leo Branhan
AP Features

AT A BOMBER STATION, Eng. The marrow-chilling subzero temperatures found by American heavy bomber crews storming over Germany these wintry days is bad enough, but when it's 67 below and the nose section of your Flying Fortress has been shot away...Br-r-r.

It happened to 10 men in the Fortress "StarDust" piloted by First Lieutenant William C. Fort, 26, of Fort Meade, Fla., on a Bremen raid. On that day British based American daylight raiders ran into the coldest weather they had yet encountered over Europe. The winds ripped through the battered bomber with twice the ferocity of a North Atlantic winter gale. They blew away all the navigator's maps and some of his instruments. But he couldn't have used them anyway. He lay dead from enemy fighter attacks.

The rest of the crew lived to tell the story. But the bombardier, Second Lieutenant Charles W. Spencer, Peoria, Ill., will never fly again. When he came back that day his frozen face was swollen the size of a basketball. Now he's in an American Army hospital for series of delicate skin grafting operations.

A straggler from her formation, the crippled bomber probably would never have returned but for a stroke of luck.

As she wandered, hopelessly lost, over the cloud covered English channel, "Star Dust" encountered a plane on an air-sea rescue patrol which guided her to the nearest RAF airdrome.

Three German fighters had pounced on "Star Dust" just as she began the bomb run. Their 20-millimeter cannon blasted out all the plexiglass in the Fortress' nose, destroyed half her oxygen system, knocked out one engine, partially wrecked her communication equipment and left a gaping hole in one wing.

Second Lieutenant Harold J. Rocketto, 27, Brooklyn, N.Y.--on his first mission--was killed instantly by machine gun bullets. It was the eighth operation for the other crew members.

"StarDust" was knocked out of formation but Pilot Fort maneuvered her into another and gallantly continued over the target. He didn't know the bombardier was unconscious. The latter, cut about the face by broken glass, his helmet and oxygen mask torn away, lay gasping for breath as frigid winds whipped about his unprotected face and head.

So no bombs dropped. Later Sergeant Grover C. Mullins, 23, Windsor, Mo., top turret gunner and engineer, struggled valiantly to salvo

them into the sea. But his efforts were largely futile, and the bomber, her stubborn bomb bay doors still swinging wide open, landed with one-third the bomb load.

The crew gave Mullins a large share of credit for returning safely.

"It was chiefly due to him that we got back," declared Second Lieutenant MacDonald Riddick, 26, Beaumont, Tex., co-pilot. "He was all over the ship. He helped the bombardier, ran from end to end of the bomber rounding up oxygen bottles to make it possible for me to fly, assisted the pilot with his mask and tried to thaw out his frozen hands.

All the time he was in and out of his turret, keeping a lookout for enemy fighters. Then he had to take time out to transfer gasoline from our No. 4 engine (shot out) and distribute it equally among the other three."

"The pilot," related Mullins, "called me forward when the co-pilot passed out. I revived Lieut. Riddick with a walk-around bottle. I tried to put a walk-around bottle on the bombardier but his face was swollen so badly I couldn't even see his nose."

Riddick flew the plane while Mullins rubbed the pilot's frostbitten hands, so stiff from cold he could not manipulate the throttles. Fort, however, made the landing and as he did so another engine went dead. It was out of gas.

Ed Note: Lt. Charles W. Spencer was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and Sgt. Mullins was awarded the Silver Star. Sgt. Mullins was injured when he bailed out on the Oschersleben Mission.



(l to r) Rear Row Lt. C.L. Wise, Pilot; Lt. W.C. Fort, C/P; J.P.D. Nothstein, Nav; Lt. C.W. Spencer, Bomb; S/SGT. G.C. Mullins, Eng.; S/Sgt. J.H. Pleasant, Gunner; S/Sgt. J.P. Supple, Radio; Sgt. H.H. Zeitner, Gunner; S/Sgt. J.G. Viszneki, Gunner; Sgt. B.J. Sutton, Gunner

TAPS

Cerzosimo, Bernard
Evans, Harry D.
Kuykendall, Roger L.
Botton, Pius L.
Jarroll, Charles P.
Daniel, Herbert
Stout, Burl G.
Schroll, David A.
Deffinger, John P.

THE EXPLOIT OF THE BOMBARDIER

Mortally wounded, through sheer will power Lt. Jack Mathis made death wait while he fulfilled his mission.

By Paul Gallico

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The mystery about First Lieutenant Jack Mathis, bombardier of the Flying Fortress, The Duchess, is not how he died, but when he died. The "How" is answered simply; in the performance of his duty. It is the "When" that takes us into the wonderful unfathomable realm of the spirit of man.

Texan Jack Mathis had earned the title "hero" long before his last ride over Germany, depicted in this second canvas of the epic series of the men of America at war. He had already flown fourteen missions over enemy territory. It was on the fifteenth that he achieved immortality.

When the Duchess smoked the English runway with her big wheels after the punishing raid on the U-boat works at Vegesack, near Bremen, Germany, the body of Bombardier Lieutenant Mathis was taken from the battered nose of the huge battle bird. A burst from a "Flieger-Abwhere-Kanone," the dreaded "Flak," had knocked him away from his bombsight just as Pilot Captain Harold Stouse guided the ship in the steady bombing run over the sprawling target below.

The doctor who examined the dreadful wounds in chest, side and back, of which he had died, said that they must have killed him instantly, that he could not have survived the impact of the metal that struck him down. The boy, he deduced, never knew what hit him. One moment he was bent over his bombsight weaving the cross hairs into the target; the next, a black burst, a searing blow and eternal darkness.

Medically, and perhaps factually, the diagnosis was correct. But spiritually and equally factually there is another story, and the story has a witness, First Lieutenant Jesse H. Elliott, the navigator of the Flying Fortress, who occupied the nose compartment with Lieutenant Mathis.

And there were still other witnesses.



(l to r) S/Sgt. T.S. Tupper; Sgt. H.B. Brown; T/Sgt. R.K. Roberts; Lt. H.L. Stouse, Pilot; Lt. S.T. O'Connor; Lt. J.W. Mathis, Bomb.; Lt. J.H. Elliott; T/Sgt. E.W. Audiss

There was Pilot Captain Stouse who heard a word sing through his ears on the interphone. And there was the crew of the Fortress next in formation who saw the deadly spawn come tumbling out of the belly of Mathis's ship to split the target and sent it heaving in chunks up into the smokey air.

And that was seconds after Bombardier Mathis had been struck and knocked backwards out of his shattered bombing seat.

During those seconds, Navigator Elliott watched Mathis roll himself over into his hands and knees and crawl forward again to his unharmed bombsight. His movements were slow, almost reflective, and had about them a kind of irritated, dogged stubbornness, the resentful movements of a man who has been unreasonably interfered with in the performance of an important and interesting piece of work.

Mathis reached the bombsight. He knelt and squinted through the eyepiece. The navigator thought it was queer that he worked the control and sighting knobs with his left hand until he noticed the right hanging limp.

The target was in line. The navigator glanced at his watch to time the flight of the bombs. The bombardier removed his left hand from his knobs. His fingers reached for and found the solenoid switch. His head took the characteristic little bombardier's, hunch forward at the kill as he pressed his eyes still tighter to the finder. He touched the switch. The Duchess bucked, freed from the ton load.

"Bombs...", said Lieutenant Mathis

over the interphone. The pilot and the co-pilot heard him, the navigator at his side, the gunner parked in the tail and the gunner in the belly blister, the engineer and the radio operator. "Bombs..." but not "Bombs away!" which is Air Force and Regulation.

Only the navigator at that juncture knew what had become of the missing word and too, what had become of Bombardier Mathis. He looked up in time to see him reach for the lever to close the bomb bay doors, push on it and fall over backwards.

The enemy cannons on the ground had killed him. But Bombardier Mathis had also destroyed his target and completed his mission.

Heroism is natural to war. During those mysterious seconds from the time that he was struck his mortal blow until his dead or dying finger pressed the switch, this twenty-two year old boy transcended heroism, for in what he did was no longer heroism, but only the purest manifestations of the indomitable will and spirit of an American.

Into the broken nose-cubicle of the bomber swept not only the winds from enemy skies, but the divine breath that animates the youth of our country.

No man can tell the thoughts of young Mathis in the greatest and most beautiful moment of his brief life, but one may guess that perhaps there were no thoughts at all, but only that rising gorge at being balked at the moment of accomplishment and victory, the instinctive reaction to the inextinguishable flame of competition,

the same unconquerable will to win that brings a fighter up from the floor, that hurls an exhausted, fatigue-blinded runner five more strides to the tape, that sees the downed ball carrier fight for that last forward inch of ground.

In the slow, agonizing progress he

made back to his post, in the will to deny the death that had come to him until he had rung up the score for his team, Mathis was speaking for his kind, the millions upon millions like him, the men of this country.

The "How" and the "When" of his

I noticed in our last newsletter that the March issue will have a Jack Mathis story.

I was the engineer and top gun on the Duchess who found him and removed him from his bombsight after he dropped his bombs on Vegesack, March 18, 1943.

Always following the bomb drop, Jack would respond over the mike--"Bombs Away." This day over the mike he started to say, "Bom" and trailed off with a thump.

Following the bomb release the German fighters were keeping me busy. Pilot Stouse said, "Audiss, as soon as these damn fighters leave, I wish you would go down and check on Jack, I think he's in trouble."

As soon as I got a chance I went down. He was face down, slumped over the bombsight; the gears still running and his chest harness entangled in the gears.

J. Elliott, our navigator, was sitting at the navigator table, face white in shock. He had also been hit with a smaller piece, later found to be not serious. I rushed to Jack, rolling and lifting and with my knife, cut as necessary his parachute harness that had pulled into the bombsight mechanism. I checked for pulse. There was none. I opened his jacket and found the wound on his side, four to five inches across that was full of clotted blood. At this

time I knew that he was dead. At first glance I had thought so as he had the white gray color of death.

When we returned to Molesworth we shot a red flare over the field and landed. We were greeted by Jack's brother Rube who was waiting anxiously to greet him. It was a bitter welcome.

Rube had just come to visit him and even requested to fly with us that day. But of course he was refused. Now here he was waiting to greet Jack and continue their reminiscing.

**Eldon Audiss
Endeavor, WI.**

P.S. I was unable to give this account at earlier briefing. At that time it was the roughest experience of my life.

Your reference to a possible story on Jack Mathis in the March issue brings back memories of my first contact with Jack Mathis when we were aviation cadets at Ellington, early 1942.

I was a "green cadet" bombardier hopeful and Jack was a cadet officer. We had been instructed to salute a cadet officer as far as we could see them. One day in the barracks area Jack and I were walking on intersecting streets and I recognized him as a cadet officer a half block away and immediately snapped him a hard salute and held it for quite some time. He evidently didn't see me as he didn't acknowledge my salute, so I dropped my hand.

passing in the light of this story somehow becomes less important or what the doctor said, or where he lies today, for perhaps the truth might well be that young Mathis did not die at all, nor ever will...

When we neared the street intersection, I failed to try again and he "braced me" and proceeded to "eat me out" for failure to salute a cadet officer.

I was at Molesworth when Jack was killed and his brother changed groups to take his place in the 303rd, and was subsequently also lost. A sad but interesting story.

**Bob Taylor
San Antonio, Texas
303rd, 360th Sqdn.**

There are many good things I remember about Jack Mathis, but I was almost on the Vegesack mission during which Jack was killed. Jack's brother Mark who was a B26 bombardier came to the base to visit Jack. They would have a couple of days to visit together. Jack came to me bearing a bottle of rum, and asked me if I would take his mission for him so he could be with Mark. I said "Yes," and he thanked me leaving me the bottle of rum.

I hit the sack, and a little while later I was awakened by Jack who said the "old man" would give him 2 or 3 more days to be with Mark if he could take the Vegesack run. He thanked me again and recaptured his rum...that's the last time I talked to Jack. I had been made squadron bombardier (Jack probably should have) and he was very friendly and helpful to me.

**Robert Yonkman
303rd, 359th Sqdn.**

EDITORIAL: THE DUCHESS COMES BACK

This is the story of a fancy lady who had a lot of boy friends and got around a great deal. It can be told in three chapters, and somehow we know that this slightly battered lady, The Duchess, will warm your heart, just as she did so many others. But, to the tale:

Chapter I

The story began in August, 1943, issue of Esquire. There was a painting there, reproduced on this page, of a U.S. bomber in action, and the text with it, by Paul Gallico, told of the young bombardier, fatally wounded, who coolly looked Death in the eye and made this last enemy stand off, too, until the mission was fulfilled.

Chapter II

Several months ago, Mr. Gallico received a letter from another airman,

Harold A. Susskind, who served in this same plane--The Duchess. Let the airman tell his story:

Dear Mr. Gallico,

Back in August, 1943, when I was a 2nd Lieutenant, just graduated from navigation school, I passed the time on board a train to Washington leafing through a copy of Esquire. One picture, in particular, caught my eye. It was the picture of a bombardier kneeling over a bombsight; the Plexiglass nose of the plane was shattered and the big black puffs of smoke were swirling around it. The picture intrigued me, so I started to read the story which was written by a fellow named Paul Gallico. The story, entitled The Exploit of the Bombardier, told about the bombing of Vegesack and the heroic death of Lt. Jack Mathis.

After I closed the magazine, I sat back in my seat and wondered what my tour overseas would bring. Would I go to Italy, the Far East, or England?

Two months later, my question was answered when, having arrived in England, I was assigned to the 359th squadron of the 303rd Bomb Group--the same squadron as Lt. Jack Mathis.

I got my first taste of aerial warfare on Christmas Eve when we bombed the rocket installations in the Pas de Calais area of France. But my acquaintance with The Duchess--the plane that helped Lt. Mathis make history at Vegesack--began on January 11, 1944, when, after the four a.m. briefing, our crew made our way to the flightline in the darkness and got a look at our plane for the day. It was The Duchess. The ground crew crowded around us as we prepared to enter the

plane. This was the "old lady's" fiftieth mission. She was one of the very few planes in the E.T.O. to run up that total at that time. Cameramen were going to be on hand when we landed to take pictures of the event. We promised the ground crew we would bring her back and ourselves with her. While the pilot was revving up the engines, I started to study my maps. What I saw there made me whistle! Today we were feinting at Berlin and bombing Oschersleben. To my way of thinking that was like feinting at Joe Louis and hitting a flyweight--that is, if you recovered in time to hit the flyweight.

The group formed over England and departed from the coast on time and on course. We hit the enemy coast at Egmond and picked up our fighter escort of P-47's, as the weather started closing in. It was hard going from then on. As we passed over the Zuider Zee, the Luftwaffe seemed to be sending every plane it could muster through our formation. The Duchess rocked and shuddered as her upper and lower turrets started to answer the Luftwaffe, which seemed determined to stop us from reaching Berlin. Hours that seemed like days dragged on and finally the target came into view. We turned on the I.P. and started on the bomb run. Finally, the words "Bombs Away" sounded over the intercom, and The Duchess bucked as the bombardier hit the toggle switch that released our load of bombs on an aircraft plant at Oschersleben. It was a direct hit!

As soon as we left the target area, the German Air Force, which hadn't tried to come through the flak to attack us, took up where they had left off. They seemed angrier than before and came at us like a swarm of bees. We made it, though, through the bad weather and through all the fighting. When we finally landed at our home base, in rain and semidarkness, it was too dark to take pictures; but we had brought The Duchess home. We got out of the plane and looked it over. The tail was chewed up from flak and lead from the German planes. The wings and fuselage were battered. When they took the "old lady"

to the hangar for a beauty treatment, they found an unexploded 20 mm. cannon shell in the gas tank. So you see, Mr. Gallico, it was this grand old lady of the air, The Duchess, that had brought us home instead.

Maybe I should end my story here, but The Duchess wasn't finished. She seemed to be having a private war with the Nazis. While she was still having her war paint restored, I was transferred to a Pathfinder Group, but I kept hearing about The Duchess. After our Oschersleben mission, she flew seven more before she was at last retired from combat in April, 1944. And she had two famous offspring--The Duchess's Daughter and The Duchess's Granddaughter. I saw both those planes in action; and, I can tell you, they helped even the score for Vegesack!

On May 7th, the 303rd is going to hold a reunion here in New York. As the fellows from all over the country get together and relive the battles of the war, I'll hear three planes roar overhead--The Duchess, her daughter, and her granddaughter. Wherever she may be, I would like to salute that grand old lady--The Duchess--and her immortal bombardier, Lt. Jack Mathis.

Sincerely yours,
Harold A. Susskind

Chapter III

Harold Susskind has just sent us a P.S. to his letter. Here again, the story is all his:

On a rainy, windswept evening, in weather reminiscent of some that they had flown through during their bombing missions, the Hell's Angels Group held their first annual reunion on V.E. Day eve, May 7, 1948, in New York City. The reunion was dedicated to the memory of their buddies who failed to return.

Over four hundred members of the 303rd gathered from all parts of the country for their first briefing since those hectic days in England, and, as the evening wore on, there was plenty of talk about planes--their relative merits and records. Famous planes came out of the past to roar through the night in fond memories: "Hells' Angels," after

which the group was named; the "Knockout Dropper," first in the E.T.O. to finish seventy-five missions; the "Eight Ball," the plane that carried Clark Gable on a few missions; "Jersey Bounce, Jr.," which helped one member of the 303rd to win a Congressional Medal of Honor.

But to me the best plane in the E.T.O. was The Duchess. The Duchess and Jack Mathis--what a combination! And later Rhude Mathis. To many, Rhude Mathis is a stranger. To the 303rd, he is a hero just like his famous brother. Rhude was a young shavetail, a bombardier, and just over from the States when he first came to the 303rd. He came over first, as a visitor from another group, to see his brother who was a lead bombardier. Jack was leading a raid that day; and when the lead plane returned and fired red rockets, Rhude hurried to the dispersal area just in time to see them carry out his brother's body. Rhude asked for and received a transfer to the 303rd. He flew many missions in The Duchess, but one day he took off on a mission in another plane. That night Rhude Mathis, too, was listed as missing in action.

Out of all our memories and reminiscences of last May 7th grew a determination in us fellows of the 303rd to keep our old spirit alive. We discussed plans for holding an annual reunion in different parts of the country. And, too, we discussed plans to erect a memorial in Molesworth, England, to honor the members of the group who died for their country.

With 364 bombing missions and one successful reunion to their credit, the members of the Hell's Angels Group have resolved that those of us, like the Mathis brothers, who never came back shall not be forgotten. And we won't forget the Duchess either--nor her daughter, nor her granddaughter, nor any of her valiant sisters.

A toast, then, gentlemen, to Lt. Mathis, to the Hell's Angels Group, and to the old Duchess!

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THERE ARE NO EIGHT HOUR DAYS IN COMBAT

My wife Ruth and I were invited by a couple of long acquaintances to join them for supper at a very popular dinner club to celebrate Valentine's Day 1987 and our forty-fifth wedding anniversary.

As we enjoyed the delightful atmosphere of the club, memories of a long forgotten Valentine's Day of more than forty years ago came flooding back; events which over a forty-eight hour period made world history and became a cause for constant controversy as to its

merits.

By February 13, 1945, the Allied armies had pushed to the outskirts of Leipzig, Berlin and Dresden. A Command decision was made to support the Russian military efforts on the Eastern Front by using the might of the Allied strategic air power. These efforts began with a massive night attack by the RAF on the City of Dresden. The following morning, February 14, Valentine's Day, the 303rd was briefed to

join in the maximum effort of the Eighth Air Force in a "round the clock" attack on Dresden. Our crew was alerted for that mission.

The takeoff and assembly was accomplished without incident and as we joined the bomber stream headed for the Continent, we settled down for a long flight. It wasn't long before we realized that we had troubles. We had yet to reach the English Coast outbound when it became apparent that we were losing

oxygen and could not survive at altitude to the target and return, so we made the decision to abort and return to our base.

The following morning's briefing disclosed that a return trip to Dresden was the order of the day. Although Dresden had suffered considerable damage, the decision to continue the attack was made. We were briefed that we would face "fanatic resistance from the German fighters and flak that you could walk on over the target area."

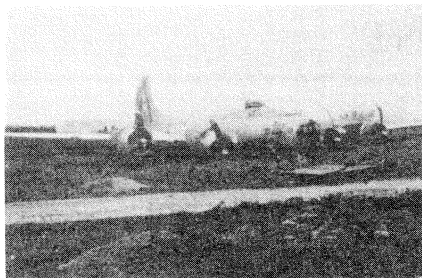
February 15 was a bright and clear day. The bomber formations reached the English coast outbound in perfect order and started the long climb to their assigned altitude entering enemy territory. By the time we crossed France into Germany we knew that we were favored with an unusually friendly tailwind approaching 100 miles per hour, giving us the amazing ground speed of about 350 mph while on the bomb run and over the critical flak zones.

"Bombs Away" occurred without mishap and the group swung off the target and headed for home. As the formation headed west toward the friendly sky over France, we soon found out that the wind that was our ally going into the target had become a beast at our throats. We were barely averaging 150 mph ground speed and we were consuming gas at a devastating rate, practically forcing us to use fuel we would need to reach Molesworth.

We were flying a brand new B-17G, #J-065 and since it was the first time we had it on an operational mission we had not become familiar with its gas consumption record. We leaned our fuel mixture as far as we dared and stayed with the Squadron across the channel although some planes pulled out and landed on the continent for refueling. The original group of 13 ships had now become a formation of five as we approached Molesworth at 2200 feet and over a solid undercast. We tried to get a radio report on visibility but we discovered that we had no communications--our radio was out.

Lt. Poole, the pilot and I, the co-pilot were alarmed as we watched all the gas gauges register empty. But we made the decision that we could make it and approached the landing pattern zone in formation and prepared to let down through the overcast.

We figured we had it made, when I felt a tap on the shoulder from our flight engineer Sgt. Rayford Pullen. He pointed to our right in-board prop which was windmilling. Pullen was ordered to transfer gas that might be in our Tokyo tanks, so as to restart the engine--but no luck. I then feathered the prop to reduce drag. At this moment, Pullen pointed to the left in-board engine. It too, was windmilling in the slipstream. This was immediately feathered to save our air



speed. Poole and I decided not to try an instrument let-down in formation with only half power and no visibility in the event having to make a go-around before we could set it down.

We turned and headed east towards the Channel area on two engines hoping to find a visual hole in the overcast that we could let down in. After about ten minutes we knew we would not be so lucky and made the decision to bail out, rather than attempt a blind crash landing with all the crew aboard.

I punched the bail-out alarm and the crew lost no time in getting out of the ship. Poole set the autopilot and we started for the hatch. I went out first. After the initial shock of the chute opening, I was startled by the sudden quiet. I was in a world of grey and seemed to be suspended in time. As I came through the cloud cover I saw the other chutes below and was surprised to see what seemed to be two chutes on one man. We were so low it only took a moment before we hit the ground.

The two chute man turned out to be our tail gunner, Sgt. Beryl Kindred whose chute shroud line had fouled over the canopy which visually made it look like two chutes. Radio operator Marvin Hoke had a close call as another plane in the soup nearly cut into him, but the pilot pulled away in time to miss his chute. We all finally assembled on a nearby road. All were OK except Lt. Harold Smith who had been busy plotting a route to an emergency field that we could get into when he heard the bail-out alarm. He hastily grabbed his chute and jumped with only his chest straps buckled. He took seven stitches in his chin where the buckle had caught him and saved him from going through the harness. Our Bombardier, Lt. Charles Mott fell into a farm pond where two English farm hands spotted him but instead of helping him they turned and left him to struggle out of his harness and get ashore by himself. Charlie's opinion of England at that moment was that it should be cut off from Europe and left to sink.

We had assumed that everybody had gotten out of the aircraft, so after waiting for Lt. Poole and Sgt. Pullen to show up and not knowing where we were, we started down the country lane to find help. We soon came to a small grocery store at a crossroad and learned from an

elderly lady, who turned out to be the postmistress, that we were in the small community of Pidley. She had a phone and I made a call to our base and checked in. We were told to sit tight and they would see that we were picked up.

I think at this point, the most gracious gesture of English hospitality was offered to us since we arrived in the UK. Our elderly hostess who was very much concerned over our well being, came out to the bench where we were sitting, cold, dejected and tired and offered us hot tea and biscuits. I am certain nothing could have been more welcome. I only wish I could thank her once again!

Poole and Pullen had still not joined us by the time an RAF lorry came and picked us up. We were taken to "Warboys" an Australian pathfinder group's base. They had us checked over for injuries, fed us and in general made us feel welcome as their guests for the night. Our money was no good at their bar.

The following morning Lt. Poole and Sgt. Pullen were brought in and we finally learned the final sequence of events. After setting the auto pilot and starting for the exit, Poole found that Pullen had been too busy trying to transfer fuel that he had not noticed everybody bailing out, so they had to get his chute and buckle it on. It was then that they spotted a clearing through the overcast and a possible area to land. Pullen got into the right seat, Poole cut out the auto pilot and they headed down. Wheels up, they bellied onto the grass at an English fighter base at Lakenheath. The plane slid to a stop at the brink of a quarry, safe and sound.

That day we were trucked into Molesworth and requested to report to the C.O., expecting to really get chewed out for wasting a beautiful new bomber worth half a million. Instead, we were warmly welcomed back, but since I had listed my 45 cal. pistol as being lost with the armament on the ship, I was told to file a statement of charges and I had to repay the government 35 dollars for its loss. I was told that side arms were to be worn on your person, not left with your luggage. It was truly our longest day!

Crew for the Longest Day

1st.	Lt. Lawrence Poole	Pilot
2nd	Lt. Harley E. Cannon	Co-Pilot
2nd.	Lt. Harold E. Smith	Nav.
2nd	Lt. Charles Mott	Bomb.
T/Sgt.	Rayford Pullen	Eng.
T/Sgt.	Marvin Hoke	Radio
T/Sgt.	A.L. Sage	
T/Sgt.	Beryl Kindred	Tail
T/Sgt.	Harry Kinsland	Waist
T/Sgt.	Norman R. Sexton	Ball

by Lt. Harley E. Cannon

FROM THE PRESIDENT

OLD ADDRESS BOOKS

I was rounding up some papers to take along to the recent 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion in Florida. Just under the front cover of an old address book was this OPERATION REUNION clipping I had just after the war torn out of what is today *Air Force* magazine.

I then realized our newsletter editor, Hal Susskind, had been active in organizing that long ago reunion!

Over dinner in Florida I told Hal and Rae I had found this clipping. Hal passed it off with, "Oh ya. That must have been about 1948."

Knowing Hal as the modest guy he is, it was clear he wouldn't mention this in the newsletter; so I decided then that I would.

In November, while researching Those Grand Guys on Crew 20, I was sorting through the 303rd historical materials entrusted to my care. My attention focused on the photograph you see here. I marveled at how some of you never look any older.

Upon turning the photo over, I discovered this notation: 1st Reunion, 303rd, NY 194__." Then written in the __space, clearly with a different pen, the figure 6. 1946 it was! And you're under the impression all this began in Orlando in the 70's.

Do you recognize any of these young men? Somebody tell us all their names. Let us have the story of that first reunion.

Since we have so many important items to discuss which will affect the future of our organization, I trust that we will have a standing room only crowd at our reunion in Ft. Worth in June. Please make every effort to attend the business meeting at 13:30 on June 5.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of our association for their outstanding support they have given me for the past two years.

I also need to know the number of people who are planning to make the trip to Molesworth on July 4.

Al Lehmann

Please keep those letters coming. We hope to go to 24 pages in the next issue.



Who Can Name All Five At First Reunion, May 7, 1948?

The First Reunion

The year, 1947; the scene, a coffee shop in New York City. Sitting around a table, discussing the war which had ended two years before, are three men.

The three all readjusting to civilian life are: John Tulloss, David Schwartz and Harold Susskind.

"It has been three years since the first Berlin mission. Why don't we see if we can get the fellows together for a reunion," was the remark that started the ball rolling.

To make the story short and sweet, we parlayed twenty names and addresses into a mailing list of 691 by Jan. 1 of 1948. David was a printer, he printed the letterhead, letters, envelopes and tickets. But he was never paid.

Four hundred plus people showed up for the reunion at the Henry Hudson

Hotel on May 7, 1948. It was a typical English evening. It rained.

Financially speaking it was far from being a success. In fact it was my first introduction to deficit spending. We had planned to put out a souvenir journal for the amazing price of one buck. With an advance sale of \$35 we decided to cancel the project. But somewhere in a footlocker is the list of contributors and their \$35. When I locate the list, I'll return the money.

Soon after the reunion it became John Tulloss, pilot, Eastern Airlines. About a year later, it became Capt. Harold Susskind, USAF. I got recalled to active duty. Unfortunately we haven't heard from "Red" Schwartz since.

The reunion was written up in *Esquire Magazine* as part of a sequel to the Jack Mathis story.

Shall We Meet In Space in '89?

Where do we go from Ft. Worth. We'll be there for the "Cowtown Round-up" in June. The next National Reunion of the 303rd BGA is tentatively scheduled for sometime in 1989. The location is up to YOU!

We were in Seattle in '85; will be in Ft. Worth in '87. Our '89 get-together should logically be somewhere in the eastern 1/3 of the country. But we should not be hidebound by this logic. We should only be bound by the parameters of our imagination. I believe we should go where we would be the most welcome and get the best deal for our members. But that's my opinion.

Would you like to have the "Angels" (Hell's, that is) gather in your city or your part of the country in 1989? If you would, you should be prepared to make your pitch at the membership meeting to

be held during the "Cowtown Round-up."

Here are a few things to check out:

- Suitable accommodations for 400-500 people, including adequate meeting facilities.
- Local sights and activities that will appeal to a majority of our members.
- Other members in your area who will be willing to help plan and host the reunion.
- What assistance is available from your local Convention/Visitors Bureau and Chamber of Commerce.

Put a proposal together (your Visitors Bureau will help). Be prepared to tell the membership what your area has to offer and why your town is the most likely spot for our 1989 reunion. Let's have several locations to choose from when we meet in Ft. Worth in June!