



# 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation

The 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)3 organization whose purpose is to educate the public regarding the history of the 95th Bomb Group (H) and its role in the air campaign over central Europe during WWII.

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## Finding the Missing from the 95th

by Terry duSoleil, © 2013

From the moment I arrived, I was swept away by the amazing community of people in Horham, a village which is the heart and soul of the English countryside like no other. I came to participate in the 2012 reunion of the 95th and film the site of the old air field of Station 119.

I planned a few interviews and some shots of the place where the 95th was based for most of their time in the UK. I was making a documentary based on a story my father (Bob Fligor, pilot, 412th) wrote on the humanitarian missions the 95th flew in May 1945. By the time I left Horham on May 27, 2012, I'd begun a new quest: find the families of the 95th BG's missing and investigate the possibility of recovery.

At Heathrow I met Michael Darter and Vivien Prince. We drove straight to Madingley, arriving at the Cambridge American Cemetery shortly before closing. The caretakers knew Michael as the brother of Eugene, whose name appears on the Tablets of the Missing. Spontaneously, they prepared a special

honor for Eugene Darter and the other two Missing in Action (MIA) from his crew, Donald Neff and Frederick Delbern.

In the twilight of the setting sun, one of the caretakers rubbed sand from the beach at Normandy in the stone highlighting the name of Eugene Darter on the Wall of the Missing. He then played taps on the intercom, paying special homage to Eugene and all named on the Great Wall. Mike stood solemnly, hand over heart, before the Wall near the names of his brother and the two pilots from the last flight of the Lonesome Polecat II.

The caretaker noted that for each of the 5,127 names on the wall there is a family who never was able to lay to rest their loved one. Mothers, wives, fathers, brothers, sisters, cousins never knew the circumstances of their deaths.

As I photographed the names, I came across one of the six missing from the last Chowhound mission flown out of Horham on May 7, 1945. George Waltari's name reminded me that James Mutton had told me he knew the location of the aircraft crash site and that he would take me there during my visit to the UK. I did not quite understand what might come of it then, but I was about to find out.

During the outstanding 95th BG reunion, a new memorial to all the fallen of the 95th was dedicated in the Red Feather Club. Another honoring the Kenneth Rongstad crew who crashed on take-off from Horham was also dedicated near the site of the old airfield.

Both memorials honor the men of the 95th that made the ultimate sacrifice in the fight to free the world of Nazi hatred and tyranny.

*(continued on page 18)*



# Notes from the President...

## Board Members & Committee Chairs

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Meg Brackney, Last Plane Down  
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It has been four months since our reunion in Cleveland and your board and committees have been busy. To be more effective, we have been holding conference call board meetings about every 45 days, and numerous committee meetings. At our first board meeting we reviewed the surveys that many of you filled out in Cleveland. From your comments we learned that we need to do a better job of keeping you informed of the business side of the Foundation and that many of you would like to be more involved.

Here is an update on some key items of business. We now have a Planned Giving Policy that we hope will raise sufficient funds over the next decade to ensure that the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation has consistent income to allow us to continue our mission of educating the public about the history of the 95<sup>th</sup> and its role in the air campaign over central Europe during WWII. Key elements of this mission are the preservation and improvement of our memorials (Air Force Academy, Dayton, Tucson, Savannah, and, with the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Heritage Association, the Red Feather Club Museum in Horham), our newsletter, publications such as

Contrails and The Wild Blue Yonder and Beyond, website and social media, PX, ongoing research, acquisitions of historical materials, and annual reunions.

We have established an acquisitions committee that can respond quickly to opportunities to purchase and preserve historical materials specific to the 95<sup>th</sup>. Our sister organization, the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Heritage Association, with James Mutton at the helm, has consistently taken the lead in finding and acquiring priceless artifacts. Last year we contributed \$2,500 to their purchase of two large collections that were being offered for sale to private collectors. Photos will be scanned and then added to our joint digital collection. Other artifacts will be donated to the Heritage Association for display at the Red Feather Club Museum in Horham. To ensure that we do not lose valuable historical materials such as photographs, flight jackets, and letters, we ask our veterans, widows, family members, and others who may have access to such material to consider either donating such items to the Heritage Association, or giving it the "right of first refusal" if it becomes necessary to sell them.

For more information, please contact Brad Petrella, Vice President of the 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation, at [vicepresident@95thbg.org](mailto:vicepresident@95thbg.org) or 440-937-9663.

We invite any member who has an interest to attend our board meetings, including the conference calls. If you want to receive a copy of the minutes or sit in on a board meeting, please contact Rosie Livesay at [secretary@95thbg.org](mailto:secretary@95thbg.org).

Like most small non-profits, we are an all-volunteer organization. We need your help and participation. Please contact the individuals listed below if you have skills or an interest in helping with the following:

- If you want to help veterans and their families have access to their service records and historical information, please contact Rod Hupp at [research@95thbg.org](mailto:research@95thbg.org).
- If you would like to serve on the board of directors, please contact Tom Cozens at [president@95thbg.org](mailto:president@95thbg.org).
- If you have the skills to help with website maintenance and/or monitoring our Facebook and Twitter accounts, please contact Brad Petrella at [vicepresident@95thbg.org](mailto:vicepresident@95thbg.org).
- If you can help with preservation of our US memorials, please contact Margaret Blagg at [memorials@95thbg.org](mailto:memorials@95thbg.org).
- If you have an interest in developing and maintaining a small PX with an online presence and selecting items for sale at the reunion, please contact Brad Petrella at [vicepresident@95thbg.org](mailto:vicepresident@95thbg.org).
- If you enjoy assisting with the planning and logistics of future

reunions, please contact Vanna Walker at [reunions@95thbg.org](mailto:reunions@95thbg.org).

- If you have time to help support our membership efforts, including outreach to veterans and widows, please contact John Mollison at [membership@95thbg.org](mailto:membership@95thbg.org).
- If you have marketing skills and want to help promote the 95<sup>th</sup>, please contact Tom Cozens at [president@95thbg.org](mailto:president@95thbg.org).
- If you have education skills and want to help develop programs for our reunions and/or schools, please contact Tom Cozens at [president@95thbg.org](mailto:president@95thbg.org).
- If you are interested in starting a youth committee or just helping develop strategies to keep our mission relevant to the younger generations, please contact Tom Cozens at [president@95thbg.org](mailto:president@95thbg.org).

Thank you in advance for caring enough to serve.

*Tom*



Tom Cozens, President  
Son of Bob Cozens  
Pilot, 335th Squadron

# You Too: From our Members & Friends

## "Breadcrumbs"

Mae Kerlec, widow of Garland Kerlec, lives in New Orleans and volunteers regularly at The National World War II Museum. She has donated most of Garland's artifacts to the museum, and sent us a copy of his handwritten Bomb Tag list, with the originals being held at the museum. She writes, "His A-2 jacket ('Breadcrumbs') now has a prominent place in the Boeing Center near where the B-17 is suspended from the ceiling." Here is a description that is posted by the jacket:

"Garland Kerlec of New Orleans, Louisiana enlisted in the Air Corps in April 1943. After training in the United States, Kerlec was assigned to

be a gunner with the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force. He had his A-2 flight jacket personalized while serving in England. The title is a reference to his boyhood. According to his widow Mae Kerlec, 'A block and a half from his house was a grocery store, and at that time the bakeries would bring bread very early in the morning and most groceries had a big wooden box, maybe two and one-half, three feet high, three feet long, and the bread would be put in there until the grocery opened. Well, the neighborhood kids hung around that box and the grocery man...encouraged it so they named themselves 'The Breadcrumbs' because Mr. Tracey called them his 'Breadcrumbs.' Kerlec



Garland Kerlec  
Top Turret/Engineer 335th

counted his missions by painting a bomb to represent each one. There are 35 bombs. Kerlec returned to the United States after his 35<sup>th</sup> mission and to New Orleans after his military service. (Collection donated by Mae Kerlec)"



I came across this photo (L) while going through the files I took off Dad's computer when he died. It's a great photo and what makes it even better is that the signatures of most of the men in the photo are on the sheet below. There is also another photo that he says is 64th Service Squadron Mobile Unit 3.



Nancy Freemantle  
Daughter of Ray Olsen  
457th Sub Depot



# Planting our Future: The 95th Legacy Squadron

*One day, a very long time ago, a pious man was walking on the road and saw a man planting a carob tree.*

*He asked the man, "How long will it take this tree to bear fruit?"*

*The man replied, "Seventy years."*

*The pious man then asked, "And do you think you will live another seventy years and eat the fruit of this tree?"*

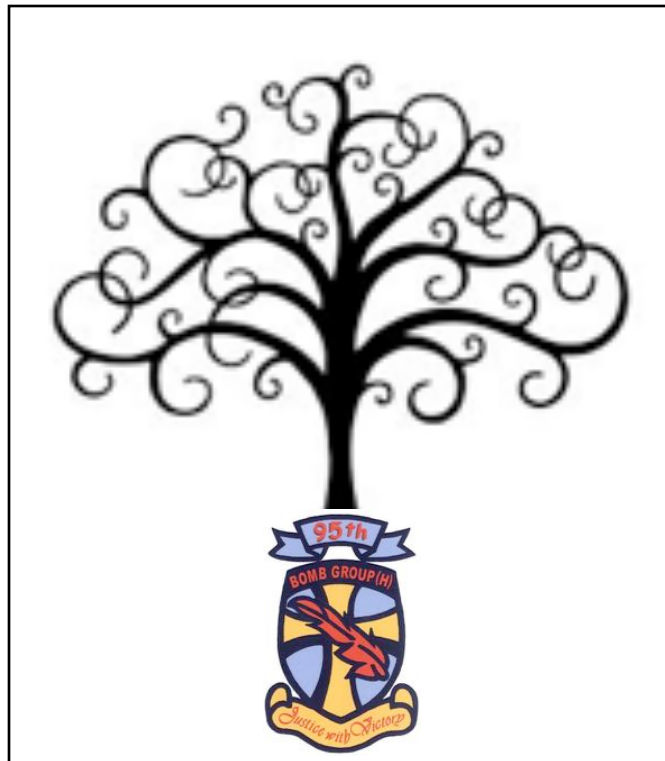
*The man answered, "Perhaps not. However, when I was growing up I found many carob trees planted by my father and grandfather. Just as they planted trees for me, I am planting trees for my children and grandchildren, so they will be able to eat the fruit of these trees."*

Now the families and friends of the 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation have the opportunity to "plant very special trees" in honor or in memory of their loved ones. These very young men of unmatched bravery and selfless commitment helped our United States of America to victory in World War II.

The recently established 95th Legacy Squadron of the Memorials Foundation is a Planned Giving Program. Through planned giving you have a powerful opportunity to express your regard for our heroes. You can provide for the needs of our 95th family to maintain the memorials established in the United States and England. You can also incorporate gifts to the 95th Legacy Squadron to help with effective

estate planning and tax reduction strategies. Most of all, you will be ensuring that the unique and magnificent history of the young men who maintained and flew the B-17 Flying Fortresses will live on through the generations.

Planned giving does not have to be complicated, nor is it reserved only for those with great wealth. It can be as simple as adding a bequest for a dollar amount or a percentage of your estate to the 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation in your will. Your gift will underscore your long standing commitment to the 95th over the years. Reaching beyond yourself, you can tell others about the 95th Legacy Squadron and invite their



participation.

Together we will educate and inspire people we will never meet with our most important historic message. We will plant trees of understanding for all time.

Watch for more details on the 95th Legacy Squadron and what you can do to educate and inspire future generations.

*Nina*

Nina Rothman  
Wife of Irv Rothman, POW  
Top Turret/Engineer 336th

# THE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY REUNION TOUR

Horham, England

Thursday, June 20–Wednesday, June 26, 2013

*Sponsored by the 95th BG Memorials Foundation (US) and the 95th BG Heritage Association (UK)*

## TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

*(A detailed itinerary is at [www.95thbg.org](http://www.95thbg.org). One will also be sent prior to departure.)*

**Wednesday:** Travel day flying “across the pond.”

**Thursday:** Assemble and depart for Suffolk with a stop in Cambridge to visit the US Cemetery at Madingley.

**Friday:** Casual day of leisure around town or with hosts, then a Welcome Reception in the evening at the Red Feather Club Museum.

**Saturday:** Airfield and encampment tours on the airbase; 1940’s softball game, and a 1940’s dance at the Red Feather Club’s Blue Lounge.

**Sunday:** Open Day at the Red Feather Club Museum followed by an evening service at St. Mary’s Church in Horham.

**Monday:** Bus trip to Ickworth House & Gardens, an 1800-acre Italianate-inspired estate, then on to Bury St. Edmunds and Rougham Airfield, home of the 94th Bomb Group. We end the day with an English pub dinner.

**Tuesday:** Bus trip to Sheringham Steam Railway for a Norfolk seaside excursion, then a farewell evening at the Red Feather Club.

**Wednesday:** Departure to Heathrow or Premier Inn and points beyond.

## FLIGHT/HOTEL ARRANGEMENTS

**Arrivals to Heathrow:** If you plan to arrive in England earlier for touring, or if you are planning a “red-eye” flight, please arrive no later than 8 a.m. on Thursday, June 20<sup>th</sup>, allowing time to go through customs and catch a shuttle or cab to the Premier Inn at Bath Road. The coach will depart the Premier Inn for Horham at 10:30 a.m.

**Departures from Heathrow:** Flights should not be booked any earlier than 2 p.m. on Wednesday, June 26<sup>th</sup> to allow time for traffic and check-in. The alternative is to depart the next morning after a stay at the Premier Inn.

**Heathrow Premier Inn at Bath Road, Hounslow:** Make your reservations via the web:

[www.premierinn.com](http://www.premierinn.com), or call 011-33-0871-527-8508.

Rooms are approximately \$130/night, depending on the exchange rate. There is a dinner and breakfast option available for \$35/person. (Note: They’ve got great food at this hotel!)

## ACCOMMODATIONS

**With Friends:** For those wishing to stay with friends in the Horham area, please contact them directly to make your own lodging arrangements. For those wishing to enjoy the warm and friendly “Suffolk Hospitality,” there are a very small number of homestay host families welcoming guests to their homes. Please contact Beverley Abbott to help make this arrangement. E-mail:

[beverley1960@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:beverley1960@hotmail.co.uk) Phone: 011-44-1379-678-581

*Please note: as in past years, it is customary to compensate host families via a stipend to offset the cost of food and fuel. Single: \$25/night (\$150 for 6 nights) Double: \$40/night (\$240 for 6 nights).*

*Any payment is to be agreed upon and settled between the guests and their hosts.*

# THE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY REUNION TOUR

**Hotel:** The hotel we've selected again this year is the Park Hotel ([www.parkhotel-diss.co.uk](http://www.parkhotel-diss.co.uk)) in the market town of Diss. Many of you commented on how nice it was to all be together, as well as the convenience of being just around the corner from the heart of town, with its lovely shops, quaint town green, and mere (pond). Nearby there are many conveniences, such as a grocery store, pharmacy, and the rail station with access to London and Norwich. Room rates are approximate, depending upon the exchange rate at that time, and include breakfast and taxes:

Single occupancy: \$114 per night; Double occupancy: \$130 per night; Family Room for up to 4 people: \$190 per night

The hotel has 12 king rooms, 4 twin rooms, 1 single room, and 1 family suite.

For reservations, contact Andy Paine via e-mail at: [info@parkhotel-diss.co.uk](mailto:info@parkhotel-diss.co.uk). at Park Hotel or phone 011-44-1379-642-244. To get our special rate, be sure to mention that you are with the 95th Bomb Group reunion.

**Bed & Breakfast:** For those preferring this option we recommend the lovely Hill Farm House in Horham. They have 2 rooms available: Small - \$115; Large - \$130 (includes breakfast). Reservations may be made online ([www.hillfarmbb.moonfruit.com](http://www.hillfarmbb.moonfruit.com)) or phone directly: 011-44-0137-938-832.

## REGISTRATION

We encourage you to book early! Availability is limited to 45 because of coach limitations to and from Heathrow. Deposits or payments are refundable until May 1, 2013, and later in the case of medical emergencies.

\$100 minimum deposit per person is due with your registration, with the balance payable by the May 1st booking deadline.

## QUESTIONS?

Contact Vanna Walker at [reunions@95thbg.org](mailto:reunions@95thbg.org) or by telephone at 214-725-1942.

### HELP BRING OUR VETS, WIVES, AND WIDOWS TO HORHAM!

The 95th BG Heritage Association in Horham is generously offering special grants (minimum \$500 and maximum \$750) to 95th veterans, spouses, and widows who have a financial need and would like to come to Horham. These will be given on a first-come, first-served basis until the available funds are exhausted. Funds will be credited to UK lodging, meals, and excursion expenses, with any remaining funds being given in British pounds for travel reimbursement. Confidential requests can be made to our Member Liaison:

Linda Endris  
225 Buffalo Drive Indianapolis, IN 46217  
Phone: 317-881-0219 e-mail: [ljendris@att.net](mailto:ljendris@att.net)



# 70<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY REUNION TOUR

Horham, England

June 20-26, 2013



NAME	ADDRESS	E-MAIL	PHONE
Guest 1			
Guest 2			
Guest 3			
Guest 4			

Please note any special needs or requests, including dietary/medical requirements, and indicate which guest:

DATE	ACTIVITY	COST	GUEST 1	GUEST 2	GUEST 3	GUEST 4
Thursday June 20	Coach from Premier Inn to Horham/Diss	\$50				
Friday June 21	Welcome reception at Red Feather Club Museum	\$20				
Saturday June 22	1940's Dance at the Red Feather Club's Blue Lounge	\$20				
Sunday June 23	Open Day at the Red Feather Club	No charge				
Monday June 24	Bus trip to Ickworth, Bury St. Edmunds & Pub Dinner	\$55				
Tuesday June 25	Bus trip to Sheringham Steam Railway & Seaside	\$50				
Tuesday June 25	Farewell drinks at the Red Feather Club Museum	\$15				
Wednesday June 26	Coach from Horham/Diss to Heathrow/Premier Inn	\$50				
Daily coach for those staying at the Park Hotel in Diss (required)		\$40				
Registration Fee for all reunion attendees (required)		\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$50
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT DUE (by May 1)</b>		<b>\$350</b>				

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** Please check one below:

- I have made arrangements to stay with UK friends  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_
- I have made reservations at the Park Hotel in Diss
- I have made reservations at the Premier Inn  
Bath Road Heathrow for Wednesday, June 19
- I have made reservations at the Premier Inn  
Bath Road Heathrow for Wednesday, June 26

Make a copy of this form and mail with \$100 deposit per person to:

**Nancy Freemantle, Treasurer**  
**95th BG Memorials Foundation**  
**P.O. Box 6154**  
**Eureka, CA 95502**

Make checks payable to 95th BG Memorials Foundation



**ORLANDO, FLORIDA – HERE WE COME!**  
**October 10–14, 2013**

This year's US reunion will be held in warm and sunny (we hope) Orlando, Florida. This makes for a great opportunity to bring the extended family for this long school holiday weekend. We will be staying at the beautiful and newly renovated Sheraton Lake Buena Vista Resort only minutes away from Walt Disney World Theme Parks. A free shuttle is provided to and from Walt Disney World!

We have reserved a block of rooms at a rate of \$129 plus taxes. Book your rooms early by calling 1-800-325-3535. Be sure to mention the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group when you make your reservation. You may also book online with our special booking link:

[https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/  
StarGroupsWeb/res?  
id=1301177757&key=6F173](https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/StarGroupsWeb/res?id=1301177757&key=6F173)

Highlights of our trip include the beautiful 50-acre Harry P. Leu Gardens, and the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art. We will also be visiting the Fantasy of Flight Museum that features the only known B-17 with 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group insignia! This museum displays over 40 airplanes including the P51 Mustangs, Curtiss-TP40, and the only B-26 still flying in the world.

Details are still being finalized at this writing, but check our website, [www.95thbg.org](http://www.95thbg.org), for the latest updates. Our next newsletter will have all the details and registration forms.

For questions and inquiries, please contact:

Vanna Walker, Reunion Chair  
reunions@95thbg.org  
Phone: 214-725-1942

**Last Plane Down Ceremony**  
Hosted by Kevin and Meg Brackney

**May 7, 2013**

**9:45 a.m.**

**95<sup>th</sup> BG Memorial in the  
Memorial Garden  
Wright Patterson USAF Museum  
Dayton, Ohio**

Each year we gather to honor the last B-17 lost in World War II, a 95<sup>th</sup> plane on a Chowhound mission to the starving Dutch. Please join us if you can for this moving ceremony. Following the ceremony, lunch will be held at the Comfort Inn and Suites Hotel across from the Museum.

Please RSVP to Meg and Kevin Brackney at [meggyjb@aol.com](mailto:meggyjb@aol.com) or phone 937-532-3972.

**HOTEL RESERVATIONS**

Comfort Inn and Suites  
5220 Huberville Ave.  
Dayton, OH 45431  
Phone 937-425-6498  
Fax 937-252-5724

[ComfortHotels@aol.com](mailto:ComfortHotels@aol.com)

Hope to see you there!

*Meg*

**Save these dates!**

**May 7, 2013**

Last Plane Down Ceremony  
Dayton, Ohio

**June 20–26, 2013**

95<sup>th</sup> BG Reunion - UK  
Horham, England

**October 10–14, 2013**

95<sup>th</sup> BG Reunion - US  
Orlando, Florida

*“Every day is  
Veterans Day”*

# The 23rd Mission

by Bob Bright, POW  
Ball Turret Gunner/412th Squadron

EAST ANGLIA, SUFFOLK, ENGLAND  
January 10th 1945

The day began as usual in Horham, the home of the 95th Bomb Group. Up at 5:30 a.m., we dressed and walked a quarter mile to the combat crew mess hall. After breakfast we went to briefing, which was held in a nearby building. The next stop was the equipment section where we checked out our parachutes and escape kits. While in the equipment area I met a friend of mine from my hometown, Lt. M. F. Carter, a bombardier from the 336th Sq. We were discussing the flight plan and noted that he was flying in the low squadron and I was flying in the lead squadron. Lt. Carter said that being in the low element he would be in a position to watch our aircraft during the mission. After our conversation we checked our equipment and I found a bent pin in the release handle of my parachute. I said to Lt. Carter that I was going back to supply to get another parachute, not knowing I would use it later in the day. Trucks were waiting outside to take us to the hardstand where our aircraft was parked.

At about 12:20 p.m. the aircraft was hit by anti-aircraft fire on the left side where the wing joins the fuselage near the radio compartment. I was in the ball turret and felt the jolt of the explosion. In a few seconds flames were shooting down the left side of the aircraft. I immediately disconnected my radio plug and oxygen line, came out of the turret, put on a portable walk-around bottle of oxygen, and snapped my parachute into the harness I was wearing. The whole side of the radio room was blown away and all the equipment was gone as well. I then continued to exit through the waist door on the right side of the aircraft. On the way I found the waist gunner [Mason] lying on the floor. I leaned over to help but had no response. Arriving at the waist door I immediately pulled the emergency door release handle. The door blew open and fell from the plane. About the time the door opened the tail gunner [Bell] came from the rear of the aircraft. He looked fine, spoke, and had his parachute on but no walk-around oxygen bottle. At this moment he collapsed in front of me while standing next to the open door. The only way to help him was to pull the ripcord on his parachute and push him out of the aircraft. About this time the aircraft blew apart. I did not know until after the war that Lt. Carter saw the aircraft go down and watched until it went out of sight. He wrote to his parents that he did not see any parachutes come out of the aircraft.

The following is the official Missing Air Crew Report [MACR] recorded by the 8th Air Force for our aircraft and crew.

January 10th 1945 At 1222. 51degrees 09 minutes North, 06 degree 21 minutes South, and with number 2-engine smoking, aircraft left the formation in a steep dive, under control and with the landing gear extended. MACR 11743.

P POW R. G. Rand	CP KIA W. E. Setterfield	N POW I. R. Pliskin	B KIA C. S. Mullins	TT KIA E. L. Adcock
RO KIA E. V. Everett	BT POW R. P. Bright	WG KIA G. W. Mason	TG KIA C. R. Bell	

Evidently, during the explosion my gloves, helmet, flight shoes, oxygen mask, and bottle were blown away. A few moments later I worked my hand into the pull ring and opened the parachute. What a beautiful sight to look up and see a white silk umbrella over your head. While falling, I noticed that the exposed areas on my body were pitted with molten metal from the fire. A large cut above my left ear also resulted from the explosion.

I hit the ground very hard in an open snow-covered field. My left knee was twisted and sprained. No one was around so I gathered my parachute and sat down, took the escape kit out of my flight suit, and tended to my injuries.

In a few minutes, five children belonging to the Hitler Youth organization appeared. After receiving the butt end of a rifle a few times, I decided it was best for me to lie down in the snow until everyone settled down. Fortunately, in a few minutes two soldiers from the Wehrmacht appeared and took charge. The two soldiers walked me to the local Gestapo headquarters in Grevenbroich, Germany, where I was questioned. Later in the afternoon I was taken to the basement of a local church. When I arrived at the church, the pilot [Rand] and the navigator [Pliskin] were waiting. Only then did I realize that we were the only crew members that survived the explosion.

The next morning, along with two guards, we began our trip to a POW camp. In about a week we arrived at the Dulag Luft in Wetzlar. With nothing to do, most of our time was occupied by talking, playing sports, and watching the Allied fighters strafe and bomb the rail yards. We stayed in Wetzlar about two weeks.

I left Wetzlar for a short drive to the Luftwaffe Intelligence and Evaluation Center in Frankfurt. Here at the Evaluation Center you were photographed, interrogated, and your personal file brought up to date. I had an interview with a member of the International Red Cross who said they would notify my next of kin as to my status. After the paperwork was completed I was put in solitary confinement for ten days. The cell was about twice the length of the bed and five feet wide. A small painted window located at the end of the room was the only light. No electricity or heat was available. For breakfast we had a piece of bread which was ninety percent sawdust with some sort of sweet mixture and in the evening a bowl of broth and a slice of potato. My main activity was sleeping but after a while that became boring. Some days I would spend hours writing menus on the cell wall with the pencil the Red Cross official had given me. I am thankful this confinement lasted only ten days.

On February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1945 we left the interrogation camp. As the train was about to leave, the air raid sirens began to sound. The POWs hated to hear the sirens because the Frankfurt rail yards were a favorite target for the 8th Air Force. In a few minutes bombs were falling everywhere. After the all clear was sounded the guards came back and tended to the wounded.

Stalag XIII D was a permanent camp located just outside of the city of Nürnberg. Our quarters were very meager, consisting of wooden bunk beds, wood shavings or straw mattress, straw pillow, and one blanket. A small wood stove for heating was located in the center of the building. Each POW was issued a bowl, cup, and spoon. Our only meal was served in the middle of the day and consisted of a bowl of clear soup, a slice of bread and sometimes a boiled potato. At intervals we received Red Cross parcels. They contained sweets, canned goods, and cigarettes. The only problem was the Germans would open all the cans and everything had to be eaten very soon. This was done to prevent storing the food to use during an escape.

At night the German guards would turn attack dogs loose in the compounds to keep everyone in the buildings. Each morning the guards would come and get the dogs, but in the Russian compound the guards would find nothing but the hides nailed to the side of the building. This would upset the Germans, and to retaliate for killing the dogs, the soldiers would open fire with their automatic weapons, killing many Russians. Each night we would occupy our time by putting together a small crystal radio set. After assembling the set we would listen to BBC's nightly news that was broadcast for POWs and other resistant groups in Europe.

The march from Nürnberg to Moosburg would last twelve days. Approximately 70,000 men from the Allied nations, including officers and enlisted men, would make the trip. In order to identify us to the (Allied) fighter pilots we gathered all available materials and constructed the letters POW in the open fields. After the fighters saw our message they flew protective cover for us the rest of the way to Moosburg. The march ended on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

After arriving it seemed everything was disorganized, no one was in command, and rumors ran wild throughout the camp. Things began to happen on the night of April 28<sup>th</sup>, 1945. Just before dark we could hear faint noises to the west of the camp. In the early evening we saw a few flashes in the sky. Also, the guards were acting different and some were seen leaving with their personal belongings. I had one guard approach and ask me to sign an affidavit indicating that he had never mistreated POWs. The next morning the first thing I saw was a P-51 fighter plane flying low over the camp. Then by midmorning the silence was broken as the Germans began firing 88mm guns over the camp into the American lines. Then the Americans began shelling Moosburg with 105mm howitzers. While this was going on we were busy digging foxholes to get in until the fighting was over. Later in the day the artillery stopped and the Third Army began moving through Moosburg. This was a great sight to see as we came out of our foxholes. When we saw the American tanks we knew we had finally been liberated.

Our first thought after being liberated was food. Our group was fortunate enough to be near one of the tanks that carried cases of ten-in-one field rations. One case was designed to feed ten men for one day but there was enough food to feed our group of fifty. Most of the guards were gone but those still trying to get away were caught and executed by some of the uncontrollable POWs who had been persecuted for so long by the Germans. Later in the afternoon the commander of the Third Army, Gen. Patton, entered the main gate of the camp. He spoke a few words and then moved on with the combat units. Things quieted down after the military police moved in and took control of the camp. The next few days were spent trying to get organized and waiting for orders on our next move.

We decided to go to the headquarters building and get our personal records the Germans kept on each POW. We had been liberated about a week when orders came for us to move by truck to an airstrip near Regensburg, Germany. Here C-47's were waiting to fly us to Reims, France, which was about forty miles northeast of Paris. This was a temporary airfield with steel matted runways constructed by the Corps of Engineers. We spent the night, and the next day boarded trucks to transport us to Le Havre, France.

The trip to camp Lucky Strike, near Le Havre, covered about seventy-five miles over rough roads. Lucky Strike was a city of tents, built especially to process POWs for their return to the States. When we arrived we were told to strip and deposit our clothes in open pits for burning. We were deloused and sent to the shower tents for our first hot shower since leaving England. New uniforms and shoes were issued. The Red Cross gave us shaving kits, which contained a razor, toothbrush, and other accessories.

I left France May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1945 on a hospital ship and arrived in New York on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945. After processing, we were granted a sixty-day leave and then ordered to report to AAF Headquarters in Miami Beach, FL on or before August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945. Arriving in Miami for R&R [Rest and Recuperation] I was assigned to the Rony Plaza hotel that was located on the beach. Here we underwent more evaluation and testing. Our schedule was relaxed with very few official duties. The food was very good and the planned entertainment was great. This lasted for about six weeks, and then I was transferred to Cochran Field, GA, an Air Force base near my hometown. I was there about a week before being discharged on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

# In Loving Memory & In Honor Of

Our treasurer, Nancy Freemantle, reports that since our last newsletter, the Foundation has received donations "In Honor Of" living veterans, and "In Loving Memory" of those who have Left Formation.

## In Honor Of

Jack Bertram  
Edward G. Cunningham  
Frank R. Dean, USAF ret.  
Charles Gallagher  
Frank P. Hawk  
Lt. Phil Janney  
John Walter  
Lyle Wilcox  
James M. Wood



## In Loving Memory

Harry P. Aslagson  
James E. Baker  
Joe W. Blagg  
Eldon Broman  
Eugene F. Darter  
Ted DeHart  
SSgt. Raymond W. Detweiler  
Red Dillon  
Vincent L. Fox  
John E. Funck  
Alex C. Gonzales  
Sidney G. Gracen  
Lt. Theron Helwig  
Adam Hinojos  
William E. Hobbs  
Charles E. Hughes  
Edward F. Kelly  
James W. Kiser, Sr.  
Dr. Billie Bob Layl

Edwin A. LeCorchick  
David T. McKnight  
Grace & Dave McKnight  
Robert P. McMurtry  
Col Harry Griffin Mumford  
Raymond M. Olsen  
SSgt Anthony Pitasi  
Harold M. Powers  
SSgt. Carlo Prince  
Harry R. Rivenbark  
Richard Robinson  
Francis A. Ruh  
Bob Spinnenweber  
Col. John A. Storie  
Leo E. Trent  
Alex Von Stade, Jr.  
Carl Voss  
Leo E. Whalen  
Maxine Ziegler

## Help Keep the Legacy Alive!

- Remember a veteran every day
- Donate B-17's Over Berlin and/or Into the Wild Blue Yonder and Beyond to your public and school libraries
- Give your loved ones a Legacy Gift Membership to the 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation (see back page)
- Notify the Foundation of any photos or memorabilia you are willing to donate or share
- Include the Foundation in your estate plan



Military Funeral Honors is a way of expressing the nation's gratitude to our veterans who gave so much to defend our freedom. To make arrangements for Military Funeral Honors, call your nearest Air Force Base. They will be happy to connect you to their Honor Guard. More information can be found at:

[www.dmdc.osd.mil/mfh](http://www.dmdc.osd.mil/mfh)



# LEFT FORMATION

Since our last newsletter, we have learned of the following 95th veterans who have Left Formation:

William P. Austin, Jr.	457 <sup>th</sup>	Sub Depot Company	07/15/2012
John G. Banks	334 <sup>th</sup>	Pilot	01/14/2013
Robert N. Carter	336 <sup>th</sup>	Navigator	06/09/2012
Ordway B. Gates	336 <sup>th</sup>	Bombardier	01/12/2011
Lawrence E. Grunwell	336 <sup>th</sup>	Pilot	10/10/2012
Verne J. Guion	412 <sup>th</sup>	Co-pilot	12/15/2012
Leo M. Higgins	336 <sup>th</sup>	Bombardier	01/14/2013
William H. Isbell	336 <sup>th</sup>	Waist Gunner	12/14/2012
Edward F.P. Kelley	335 <sup>th</sup>	Radio Operator	06/16/2012
John H. Kimpel	336 <sup>th</sup>	Waist Gunner	10/31/2012
Leslie A. Lennox	336 <sup>th</sup>	Pilot	12/18/2012
Charles Luciano	335 <sup>th</sup>	Waist Gunner	01/22/2013
George V. MacIsaac	412 <sup>th</sup>	Ground Crew	11/24/2012
John W. Melcher	412 <sup>th</sup>	Navigator	10/11/2012
William Mowbray	334 <sup>th</sup>	Ground Crew	09/30/2012
Carlton M. Parsons	336 <sup>th</sup>	Co-pilot	11/14/2011
Benjamin B. Ramos	412 <sup>th</sup>	Radio Operator	10/15/2012
Robert T. Renner (POW)	335 <sup>th</sup>	Co-pilot	12/12/2012
Arthur W. Schuessler	334 <sup>th</sup>	Bombardier	11/22/2012
John M. Shepard	334 <sup>th</sup>	Pilot	07/31/2012
Silvio A. Simi	412 <sup>th</sup>	Waist Gunner	11/18/2012
Robert T. Spinnenweber	334 <sup>th</sup>	Bombardier	09/03/2012
Charles A. Stein	336 <sup>th</sup>	Top Turret Gunner	10/28/2012
William T. Williams	335 <sup>th</sup>	Tail Gunner	07/02/2012
Hyman Wishkin	335 <sup>th</sup>	Top Turret Gunner	07/09/2012



“...we honor all when we honor the Missing Man flag.”

# Research News

*Editor's Note: The 95th BG Memorials Foundation is fortunate to have a dedicated research team under the leadership of Rod Hupp. The recent updates to our online databases contain almost 100,000 data entries of information largely secured from the Mission Reports that have been scanned at the National Archives. This outstanding achievement represents thousands of volunteer hours. Many thanks to Rod and everyone who helped in achieving this admirable goal!*

The research committee continues to track down 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group veterans and their relatives as part of our efforts to locate new photos of crews, aircraft, and Horham. In the past few months we have hit a significant milestone on the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group website ([www.95thbg.org](http://www.95thbg.org)), posting our 400<sup>th</sup> flight crew photo. We have also started a new page which contains wartime photos of individuals of the 95<sup>th</sup>.

We recently updated the website with the latest updates to the 95<sup>th</sup> BG missions database which is searchable online. At this point we feel we have the missions database 98% complete. One or two more visits to the National Archives should provide the final missing information.

We continue to work to identify the men in both the flight and ground crew photos on the website. Here are two crew photos that we need assistance matching crew names to the crew photo.

Here is the Jonathan Bullard crew photo.



Lt	Jonathan H. Bullard	Pilot	KIA
2Lt	William J. Moore	Co-Pilot	KIA
2Lt	William (NMI) Holmes	Navigator	KIA
2Lt	Darrell L. Stevens	Bombardier	KIA
T/Sgt	Pierre L. Bordelon	Radio Operator	KIA
T/Sgt	Everett M. Casselman	Top Turret/Engineer	KIA
S/Sgt	Philip M. Reed	Ball Turret Gunner	KIA
S/Sgt	Austin N. Herten	Right Waist Gunner	KIA
S/Sgt	John E. Gioiosa	Left Waist Gunner	KIA
S/Sgt	Lorenzo (NMI) Jarrett	Tail Gunner	KIA

Here is the Leslie B. Palmer crew photo:  
Only the waist gunner, Stanley Lepavsky, has been identified.



**Back Row – Second from right (Stanley L. Lepavsky – Waist Gunner)  
per George Kaforski**

Here are some men that were probably on this crew:

Leslie B. Palmer	Pilot
William J. Parker	Co-Pilot
Warren E. Jones	Navigator
Beuford W. Todd	Bombardier
Delcie E. Geisler	Radio Operator
W. W. Quackenbush	Top Turret Gunner/Engineer
James T. Hightower	Ball Turret Gunner
Clarence O. Leslie	Waist Gunner
James S. Tait	Waist Gunner
Stanley L. Lepavsky	Waist Gunner
Robert L. Bickford	Tail Gunner

*Rod*

Rod Hupp, Lead Researcher  
Son of Doral Hupp, POW  
Ball Turret, 412th Squadron

## Research Help Needed

The Research Team is in need of dedicated volunteers to assist in tracking down 95th veterans and their families. No prior research experience is necessary—just a willingness to persevere in the search for historical information while our greatest resources, our 95th veterans, are still with us.

**If you would like to assist in this  
endeavor, please contact Rod at  
[rodhupp52@verizon.net](mailto:rodhupp52@verizon.net)  
703-966-0949**

# The Red Feather Club Museum

The 95th Bomb Group Heritage Association at the Red Feather Club Museum in Horham is continuing to foster its links with USAF personnel serving in East Anglia.

Autumn's vintage softball game, between the 95th's own Wallopers and the 1285th Military Police's Snowdrops, was umpired for one inning by Justin Shaffer from the 100th Air Refueling Wing and the whole game was called by Drew Wilder, from USAF Mildenhall.



The Red Feather Club also played host to USAF personnel from Lakenheath twice in December. USAF 48th Fighter Wing, Wing Chaplain, Ch, Lt Col Gary Snyder, who addressed the service of thanksgiving at St. Mary's Horham during the 2012 reunion, and is now an Association member, brought his staff to the Red Feather Club in November for an away-day, and they were back in December with their families in tow for a Christmas party.

On Remembrance Sunday, Glenn Miller with Christine and James Mutton laid a poppy wreath at the memorial in the grounds of the Red Feather Club at 11 a.m. At the same time Mike Ager laid a poppy wreath on the Redlingfield Memorial. On November 19th, the anniversary of the Redlingfield crash, a further wreath was laid to commemorate the ten young men who died there in 1943.

A small dedicated crew will be working at the Red Feather Club during the winter readying the 95th's UK home for the 2013 season. 2012 saw events nearly every month with open days, film shows, quizzes, dances, guided tours, and educational visits by groups of local Cub Scouts and schoolchildren. 2013 looks as if it will also be another busy year with dance workshops, the UK premiere of *On the Wings of a Mighty Fortress*, dances, open days, and softball games already penciled in to members' diaries.

We welcome you all to see our museum at the reunion in June. Our museum is totally dedicated to the 95th and maintained by our team of volunteers. We have been fundraising all year to preserve and give all our visitors an insight of Horham Airfield Station 119 during WWII. Again this year our Association will help a veteran, his spouse, or a widow toward their travel costs to England in June.

On behalf of our Association I would like to wish all our friends of the 95th family a happy and healthy New Year, and to see as many of you as possible in 2013.

*James*

James Mutton, Chair  
95th BG Heritage Association  
Horham, UK



Local Cub Scouts get a history lesson at the Red Feather Club Museum



# Our Memorial Room in Tucson

Many of you have seen our serene Memorial Room at the 390<sup>th</sup> Memorial Museum in Tucson, Arizona. The late Ron Webb, former 95<sup>th</sup> BG Foundation Board member and officer, and his team at Design Centre in Red Lion, PA designed this quietly spectacular room. It is fitting in its simplicity while being informative. Entering the room from the large hangar-like space of the museum's main gallery, a visitor immediately senses the hushed contemplation the room invites. In 1998, the Foundation installed an oral history kiosk just outside the entrance to the Memorial Room that plays excerpts from the first two years of the Legacy Committee's oral history project with the veterans.

This year, the 390<sup>th</sup> Memorial Museum is undergoing a major renovation to provide more exhibits and updated spaces. As part of the renovation, our Memorial Room will get a simple refurbishing. Gary De Bruin, Ron's

partner in the original design, will recommend new lighting and other subtle changes to enhance the room. In the process, our oral history kiosk will also get brushed up. In fact, the kiosk itself will get the boot as we move to the new technology of a flat-screen presentation of the histories.

The changes to the museum, and to our Memorial Room, are exciting. Visitors to the "new" museum are sure to gain a deeper understanding of the contribution of the 13<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing (95<sup>th</sup> BG, 100<sup>th</sup> BG, and 390<sup>th</sup> BG) of the Eighth Air Force to the outcome of WWII. Stay tuned . . . there is talk of meeting in Tucson for a reunion in a year or two so that we can see these changes for ourselves.

*Margaret*

Margaret Blagg, Chair  
Memorials/Repository Committee  
Daughter of Joe Blagg  
Navigator, 336<sup>th</sup> Squadron



95<sup>th</sup> Veteran Bud Porter named "Veteran of the Year."

## "Veteran of the Year"

On Veterans Day, November 11, 2012, the West Chatham American Legion Post 322 honored Eighth Air Force Veteran, Bud Porter, as its veteran of the year. Bud served as a ball turret gunner on a B-17 in the 412<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group. He was surprised by the honor and humbly stated, "All I do is represent those who didn't make it back." Bud helped start the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum, volunteers as a mission experience guide on Sundays, and serves on the Museum Board of Trustees. He is also very involved with the Birthplace Chapter of the Eighth Air Force Historical Society.

## Finding the Missing (continued from page 1)

After the reunion, I continued my sojourn to Holland, where I was to interview Henk Dijkxhoorn, who dedicated 10 years of his life to building a monument commemorating the Manna-Chowhound missions. Mike Darter also invited me to Texel Island, where his brother's plane went down on December 16, 1943.

In Texel we visited the cemetery where another crew from the 95th had been temporarily buried during the war, the Richard Morris crew, lost February 3, 1945. During my research back state-side I found the family of Leroy Hansen, MIA. Arthur Collby and his wife Jerry Hansen, Leroy's niece, have spent years searching for his remains. They travelled many times to Europe and the National Archives in search of clues surrounding his death. To this day Sgt. Hansen's fate remains a mystery, although all other crew members are accounted for.

We trekked the island for 3 days as Mike pointed out the exact locations where the plane had flown over the island, where the crew bailed out before crashing in the North Sea. We visited a roadside memorial to Eugene, an exhibit in a small museum, and met the family of Cornelius, who as a teenager saw Eugene parachute from the stricken Lonesome Polecat II landing just off shore in the frigid North Sea. Cornelius and a friend tried to save him, but Eugene was dragged out to sea, never to be found. Visiting the places that Mike found during years of searching for his brother was powerful proof that the missing live in the memories of people who witnessed the events from WWII and in the hearts of families who long to lay them to rest peacefully. Cornelius told Mike, "I've been waiting 60 years to tell this story." Many others like Cornelius may be waiting to tell what they saw at crash sites of the 95th across Europe. Their stories can provide valuable information that may lead to the recovery of missing airmen.

Back in the UK, James Mutton drove me to the site near Lowestoft where B-17 48640 went down on May 7, 1945. From that moment forward my "orders" were clear: investigate the possibility of a recovery of the six missing from the aircraft lying on the seabed of the North Sea. If the crash site is found, the remains of the missing might be recovered.

On Memorial Day at the American Cemetery at Madingley, I filmed Colin Stearn (pictured above right) in the wreath presentation ceremony. Colin places a wreath honoring members of the 95th each year at the Tablets of the Missing. At this solemn and deeply emotional event, the scope of the challenge ahead became clear. Over 120 wreaths were presented, each one representing a group honoring their WWII



missing. I later learned the number is staggering: 73,677 Americans still unaccounted for from WWII.

The US State Department performs recovery missions through the Joint Personnel Accounting Command (JPAC). The Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) is the agency that interfaces with families of the missing through the personnel accounting office of the Army for WWII Army Air Corps. Their goal is to keep families of the missing apprised of the efforts being made to account for their loved ones.

The DPMO provides extensive information on their website about recovery and accounting for the missing. As the site states, "The mission requires expertise in archival research, intelligence collection and analysis, field investigations and recoveries, and scientific analysis." Locating families of the missing is central to the current recovery methods. Traditionally dental records and forensic tests were used to identify recovered individuals. Today family reference sample DNA is the best method for identifying remains. See <http://www.dtic.mil/dpmo/> to learn more.

The DPMO provides information on recovery efforts to families of missing individuals in eight annual meetings held at various locations in the US. At these briefings, family members have the opportunity to meet with numerous civilian and military specialists of the government whose expertise includes foreign government negotiation, formulation of national policy, remains recovery and identification, DNA science, archival research, and intelligence analysis. The next one is scheduled for February 23 in Albuquerque, NM. Families of the missing within a 350-mile radius are invited to attend.

## Finding the Missing (continued)

January 12 in San Diego, CA, Joyce Barrier, sister of Gerald (Derry) Lane, one of the Chowhound mission missing, attended a DPMO meeting. The day included an emotional memorial ceremony and presentations by the scientists and researchers. Topics included a general explanation of the extensive stages of research, recovery, and identification of remains of the missing. Joyce also received an individual report on the progress of Derry's case.

The DPMO gathers and passes along pertinent information on the possible location of the remains of individuals to the JPAC, who perform field investigations and recoveries. In 2012 thirteen recovered WWII US servicemen were identified. JPAC has recovery missions planned for the Netherlands and Germany in 2013. The one in the Netherlands is an underwater mission. They are also sending archival investigators to the UK this year. Two additional briefings are held annually in the Washington D.C. area for Vietnam War families and for Korean and Cold War families. Senior government officials attend and families have access to Washington-based offices related to POW/MIA matters. WWII families are not currently included in these annual briefings.

The recovery of human remains in the case of underwater crash sites like B-17 48640, are the domain of marine science and underwater archeology. Mark Alan of Underwater Admiralty Science, based in



This photo is a released photo from JPAC during an underwater recovery mission in October 2012.

Description: Navy divers, assigned to a Mobile Diving and Salvage Unit, and the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, stand with the American flag and the POW/MIA flag on the wreckage of a B-17 bomber that was shot down and sank during World War II.

Photographer: Petty Officer 2nd Class Martin Carey

Seattle, has recovered WWII aircraft while working with the JPAC. Mark stated that what once was thought impossible is now in many cases probable. Marine science has progressed dramatically over the past seven decades. Mark explained that a four- to five-mile area of seabed can be searched in a day given good weather, a trained team, and proper equipment. Non-profit organizations often assist JPAC or perform recoveries themselves. Rob Rumsby, Lead Archival Researcher with Moore's Marauders (MIA Charities), a non-profit that recovers WWII MIAs, is an expert in the 8th AF. He studies Missing Aircrew Reports (MACR) and Individual Personnel Files (IDPF) of the missing to determine the circumstances of their deaths and if there is a possibility of recovery. MIA Charities, Inc. funds recon and expeditionary missions throughout Europe, Asia, and the Pacific. They rely on private contributions to fund their work.

Before I left the UK, a few members of the 95th BG Heritage Association and I formed a research group. Our goal is to locate families of the missing and information on the location of B-17 48640 off the Suffolk coast. In the past 6 months we have located 5 families from the Chowhound mission. The one we have not found is Joseph Repiscak, a passenger on the day of the food drop. He was from Chicago. We are moving forward with the effort to locate the aircraft in the North Sea and investigating the possibility of recovery.

The MIA research group has expanded to include all of 95th BG missing. If you are the next of kin of a 95th BG MIA or have information about the family of one, please contact me, Rod Hupp, or the Army personnel accounting office.

The task is huge and we need help finding families of the missing. Anyone with internet access can assist. We are searching MIAs by home state at the time of enlistment. Researchers may want to choose a state and work on finding families of the missing with roots in that state. Edith Von Stade is working especially on her home state of Nebraska and on California. We have names of MIAs from states across the US and will provide instructions on how to locate individuals.

**Terry duSoleil**

[B17story@gmail.com](mailto:B17story@gmail.com)

276-8VEARTH (883-2784)

### A Special Note to Families

Because the Army Air Corps (AAC) was part of the Army in WWII, the Army Past Conflict Personnel Branch handles 95th Bomb Group MIA cases. Families wishing to open a case should call (800) 892-2490. Cherri Lawless, a WWII specialist, works on many of the cases for the 95th BG.

# Veteran Outreach Project

*Editor's Note: This came from our Member Liaison, Linda Endris. Linda sends out periodic emails with birthdays and news about our veterans and widows. If you would like to receive these monthly updates, please contact Linda.*

Since last August, I have been working with the principal and teachers at St. Barnabas School to reach out to our 95th BG veterans. I sent the addresses of our veterans to the school secretary, who divided the names among all the teachers (kindergarten through 8th grade). The children sent a Veteran's Day card to every veteran on the list. (The children volunteered to bring in the stamps themselves!) They are also sending birthday cards to the veterans. The response was so overwhelming from the veterans that the school printed their responses to the children in the school newsletter over the course of a month. The teachers received a couple of checks to use as they saw fit for the school, and the children received letters, pictures, books, and other memorabilia from the veterans.

I want to share one response from the school:

**"We just received the nicest letter from Arthur Schuessler's daughter. She was so thankful that her**

**father received our letter on Veteran's Day. She said he was in a rehab hospital at the time. He put the letter on his bulletin board and was so grateful to receive it on a day that she said was often overlooked. Unfortunately, she said Arthur passed away 11/22/12. She said that they put the letter on display at his funeral."**

Veteran Harvey Cox made a phone call to the school. The teacher of the child who sent him the letter put him on speakerphone so he could talk to all the children. It was a very rewarding experience for the children and for Mr. Cox, who answered several questions the children had prepared. He has called me more than once to thank me for putting him in touch with the children, and wants to call them once a month to see how they are doing.

Veteran John Walter, who lives in Columbus, Indiana, is going to be a speaker at the school on Career Day. They wanted the parents of the children to come into the classroom and talk about their jobs. When I suggested having John come, they said they want him to speak to the whole school about his experiences because all the children are now familiar with the 95th BG.

I know this is long, but I am so excited about this venture in getting the kids involved. I am sure there are many, many more people who know an organization or school (the veterans love to hear from the children!) that would like to start some kind of correspondence with our wonderful veterans. It takes a little time to get started, but the rewards are so gratifying, especially for the kids. Many of the children at St. Barnabas now have a 95th BG veteran for a pen pal and are exchanging letters, cards, pictures, etc.

*Linda*



Linda Endris, Member Liaison  
Daughter of Ed Charles  
Navigator, 335th Squadron

Linda Endris  
225 Buffalo Drive  
Indianapolis, IN 46217  
Phone: 317-881-0219  
[ljendris@att.net](mailto:ljendris@att.net)

# Membership News



John Mollison, Membership Chair  
Son-in-law of Ted DeHart,  
Tail Gunner, 412th Squadron

## CHANGES?

*Help us keep our records up to date. If you have a change in address or status, please let John know.*

**John Mollison  
Membership Chair  
996 Pelham Drive  
Keswick, VA 22947**

**membership@95thbg.org**

**Phone: 402-650-4135**

Membership in the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation continues to grow and I am thrilled with the early response we have received for the 2013 membership drive. What is most rewarding to note is that many of the veterans and widows are giving the gift of membership to their children. This is the best way to help ensure the longevity of the organization and to pass on to the next generation the mantle of responsibility for keeping the memory of the courageous veterans alive.

Your membership in the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation allows us to continue to publish this newsletter three times a year, operate the 95<sup>th</sup> website, accomplish research on the missions and veterans of the 95<sup>th</sup>, and help maintain the six

memorial sites in the United States and England.

If you have not yet joined I encourage you to read through this newsletter and see the kinds of things that your 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation is doing to further the mission of the 95<sup>th</sup> and to educate future generations about the extraordinary contributions made to freedom by its courageous veterans. You will find a membership application in this newsletter; please fill it out, mail it in, and join your fellow veterans and their families as we all work to accomplish the mission of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation.

Please don't hesitate to contact me at [membership@95thbg.org](mailto:membership@95thbg.org) or just call me at 402-650-4135 if you have any questions.

## Correction

My apologies to Mr. Oran D. Evans for listing him as having Left Formation in the last newsletter. It was an error on my part while I was reorganizing the database.

Thankfully, he is still with us and I appreciate the help in correcting this error.

John Mollison  
Membership Chairman

## Obituaries

We have begun posting Veterans' obituaries on our website at [www.95thbg.org](http://www.95thbg.org). Please send to our Membership Chair, John Mollison, and include a photograph, if possible.

## Welcome New Members!

Jill M. Bakken  
Roger A. Carlsen, Jr.  
Buster K. Davis  
John A. Foulk  
Steve C. McRaney  
David S. Owen  
Nancy Schloss  
Brian D. Thompson

# Reflections on my Grandfather

By Sean Gates



The last time I saw my grandfather, he was gaunt and pale, his blue eyes seeing whatever lies beyond the veil of the world, blind now to the wife, children, and grandchildren at his bedside. He was barely recognizable as the stoic, broad-shouldered man I knew in my youth, a grim reminder that time takes no prisoners, and that even the Greatest Generation must one by one cross that last battlefield from which there is no return.

But that's not the way I remember Ordway Benjamin Gates, Jr. He was a tall, strong man with a boyish smile and a penchant for speaking his mind. My uncle Ernie once said that growing up, he and his brothers (including my father) saw in my grandfather "the face of God—sometimes in anger, but always in love." I can think of no greater epitaph. He taught us all about honor, decency, and love.

Like most men of his generation, he didn't talk often about his experiences in World War II, but when asked he would share a few anecdotes, or tell the story of his experience when the B-17 on which he served as bombardier was shot down over Luxembourg on return from a mission to Regensburg on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1944. He was the last man out of the plane—he opened the bomb bay doors and stepped out into space, parachuting into the woods, where he was found by the resistance and hidden for two months until he could be safely returned home. It was his seventeenth mission.

On October 15th, 2011, my father and I had the opportunity to take a ride on a B-17 Flying Fortress, an aircraft called Nine O Nine, which belongs to the Collings Foundation and is part of its Wings of Freedom Tour. It was a truly amazing experience, and gave me a deeper understanding and appreciation of a man who was already a hero in my eyes.



When someone calls an aircraft a "flying fortress," you expect it to be enormous. The Boeing B-17 is just over 74 feet long and has a wingspan of nearly 104 feet. To put that in perspective, a Learjet 85 is 68 feet long and has a wingspan of nearly 57 feet, and Boeing's own DC-10 commercial aircraft is 180 feet long—nearly two and a half times the length of the Flying Fortress—and has a wingspan of 165 feet. Enormous would be a drastic overstatement.

Inside the aircraft, there are very few places where a man can stand upright. To get into the tail gunner's station a man would have to crawl on his belly. To get from the waist of the aircraft up to the radio room requires edging around the ammo boxes on top of the ball turret, on a narrow platform less than a foot wide, and then crossing the catwalk through the bomb bay. The catwalk is also less than a foot wide, and is framed by narrow V-shaped supports that require a man to turn sideways to slide through. The chairs in

the radio room, and in the bombardier's station, which is in the nose of the aircraft, look like they were made for children. This narrow, claustrophobic tin can would carry ten crew members on missions that usually ranged from six hours to upwards of ten hours.

That's about the time I realized that these things really were operated by kids. My grandfather was just 22 years old when he flew his seventeen missions in Europe. I guess when you're that age you can do anything. To access that bombardier's station, you have to clamber through the flight engineer's gun turret, then slither down under the cockpit. The navigator's table is bolted to the port bulkhead, and the bombardier's chair and the Norden Bombsight that he would use to line up his targets are sitting out in a glass bubble that makes up the nose of the plane.

My grandfather would have ridden right out front like that, with a full hemispherical view, the rumble of the engines vibrating the deck beneath his boots, as antiaircraft fire exploded around them in puffs of black smoke and burning shrapnel while single-prop fighters zipped around like insects, and machine gun fire carved jagged, dotted lines through the sky. I can see the images in my mind's eye, but I can't begin to understand how it must have felt. But I think now I understand what made him the kind of man who once jumped out of the car and chased burglars off his property. The kind of man who didn't mince words and who understood in full measure the value



of life, love, and family. Men like that may be a dying breed, but we would do well to remember them and pass on the lessons we have learned from them. We owe it not only to them, but to ourselves, and most of all to future generations.

Sean Gates  
Grandson of Ordway Benjamin Gates, Jr  
Bombardier, 336th Squadron

## Do You Have News You'd Like to Share?

We'd love to hear from you!

Send your stories, photos,  
and notes to:  
[editor@95thbg.org](mailto:editor@95thbg.org)  
or mail to:

Janie McKnight  
1231 Brockie Drive  
York, PA 17403

## HELP WANTED!

We have a pressing need for an individual with website maintenance skills to help with our website [www.95thBG.org](http://www.95thBG.org). If you have the skills and a few hours a month to help with website maintenance and/or monitoring our Facebook and Twitter accounts, please contact Brad Petrella at [vicepresident@95thbg.org](mailto:vicepresident@95thbg.org) or Tom Cozens at [president@95thBG.org](mailto:president@95thBG.org). Transition training will be available.



95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation, Inc.  
 6000 East Valencia Road  
 c/o 390th Memorial Museum  
 Tucson, AZ 85756-9403 USA

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**Memberships keep us flying...**  
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