



# 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.

Volume 2 Issue 3

November 2013

"Justice with Victory"

## 13 Veterans in Orlando for 2013 Reunion



95<sup>th</sup> veterans had their group reunion photo taken at the dinner dance on Sunday.  
(L to R): "Dub" Vandegriffe, Herb Wilkov, Ben Roujansky, Irv Rothman, Bob Fay, Ed Yursky, John Walter, and Jim Galbraith

Photos of all the "Lucky 13" on page 5

Reunion photos on pages 22 & 23

(Newsletter photos by Laney Baltazar, Linda Endris & Becky Wright)

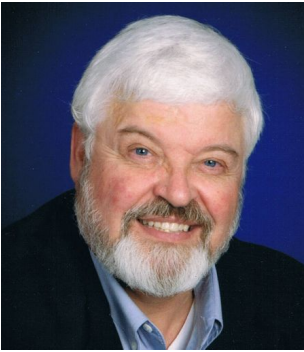


## "Mission Tucson"

Mission briefing on pages 10-13



# Meet Your Board Members



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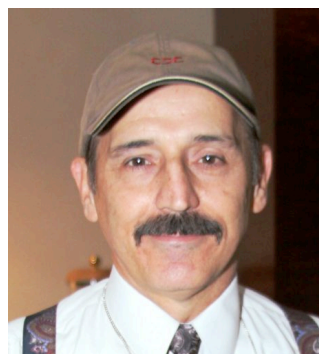
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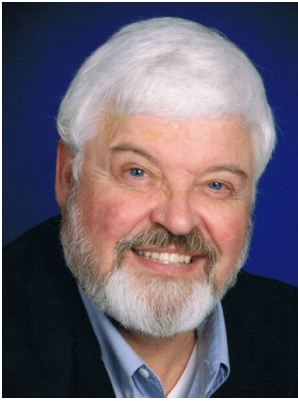
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Jim May, 390<sup>th</sup> Memorial Museum  
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# Notes from the President...

What a lovely 2013 reunion of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation in beautiful Orlando, FL!

We had the opportunity to enjoy the company of 95<sup>th</sup> BG veterans Richard Farden, Bob Fay, James Galbraith, Harry Hull, George Lukens, Keith Murray, Irv Rothman, Ben Roujansky, William “Dub” Vandegriff, Freeman Walker, John Walter, Herb Wilkov, and Ed Yursky. These 13 veterans’ service with the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group spanned the period from May

1943 through May 1945—what an honor to spend time with each and listen to them tell of their experiences at the Fireside Chats! It was also a wonderful time to visit with some of the extended family of the 95<sup>th</sup> BG Memorials Foundation membership.

Our membership has been well served the last two years by Tom Cozens, immediate past president of the Foundation, whose leadership provided direction and strategic vision for the future of our organization. I am honored and humbled to now have the opportunity to serve the 95<sup>th</sup> BG veterans and the Memorials Foundation membership, at the pleasure of the Board of Directors, as your incoming president.

The 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation was challenged with both a tactical and a strategic mission at our membership briefing in Orlando. I believe our Foundation’s first priority is the tactical mission of completing the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group memorial room in Tucson, AZ, within the 390<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group’s Memorial Museum. This effort will require a major fund-raising activity by the Foundation, as well as our thoughtful input, in order to complete the memorial’s design.

I ask that each of us interested in honoring the legacy of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group veterans, each family or interested party, consider a financial contribution to the 95<sup>th</sup> BG memorial room; that individual contribution might be \$9.50 or \$95.00 per month, or a memorial gift of \$950 or \$9,500, or a gift in any amount to help our organization reflect the legacy of these brave veterans in their stateside memorial room. The more rapidly we accomplish this goal, the greater the opportunity for our 95<sup>th</sup> veterans to visit this memorial to their service and sacrifice in World War II.

Our second priority is the strategic mission requiring each of us to help in expanding our membership, including our collective willingness to be personally committed and fully involved supporting the operations of the Foundation. Please reach out to others you know—friends, family, organizations—to share your passion for the 95<sup>th</sup> BG legacy and ask them to join our membership. If you’re a “Next Generation” member and not currently serving on a committee at this time, I urge you to consider volunteering now.

I am committed to doing all I can to help focus our activities to achieve these objectives. Thank you for honoring our 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group veterans and their legacy!

**Justice with Victory!**

Gerald Grove, President  
95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation



# A 1944 Christmas Tale



**Editor's Note:** Jonathan Walsh wrote: "Going through some papers, I re-discovered two letters my brother received in 2004 from the navigator of the plane my dad co-piloted in 1944-45, the Kimmie Kar (after I'd tracked him down through the 95th Bomb Group website)." The following are excerpts from those letters written to a son of Kenneth Walsh.

(22 October) It was scary times and thrilling times for us young guys. Your dad and I always got along great. He was fun to be around, always upbeat and ready to go. We depended on him a lot—when the pilot was "under the weather." As I recall more events, I'll pass them along...

(13 December) Christmas. I'm reminded of the Christmas Eve 1944 that your dad [Kenneth B. Walsh, co-pilot, died 1980] and I and our [Kimmie Kar] B-17 crew were weathered out of our Rome airfield at Alexandria, LA, and had to land in Dallas, Texas.



**Front row** (L to R) 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Francis J. B. Markey—Pilot, F/O Kenneth B. Walsh—Co-Pilot, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Richard E. Manley—Navigator, (Unidentified)—Bombardier  
**Back row** (L to R) Sgt. Reginald A. Meunier—Engineer/Top Turret Gunner, Sgt. Don R. Tuck—Radio Operator, Sgt. A. B. Verba—Togglier, Sgt. Robert J. Nelson—Ball Turret Gunner, Sgt. Edward J. Popham—Waist Gunner, Sgt. Gustavo Chavez—Tail Gunner

There we were: no money, no identification, dressed in our flight coveralls and fleece-lined leather jackets. Our pilot, Frank Markey, went to see if the Red Cross could loan us some money for the crew. He came back to us with the promise of \$10.00 apiece! Pitiful!

Your dad and I scouted around and met up with a dear little WAF who had decided not to go home to Pennsylvania for the holidays and, hence, had a little extra money that she loaned to us until we could return to Alexandria (\$20.00 each). Then we had money, but were restricted from going into town in our flying clothes. So, we got up with the Charge of about our sizes. Unbeknownst to the pilots, cap (on the cloakroom shelf), which we procured for the night.

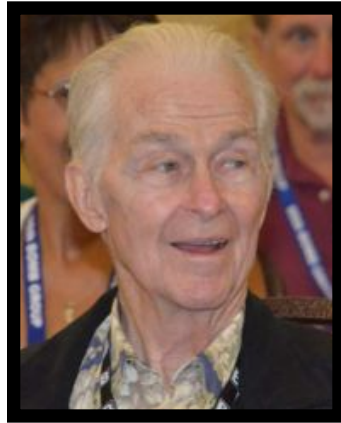
We took off for downtown Dallas and celebrated Christmas Eve 1944 at the Quarters at the Officer Transient Quarters, we donned their uniforms, which fit pretty well, but we still were without caps. So off we went to the Officers' Club and located each of us a who told us that there were two pilots away on temporary duty and just happened to be Adolphus Hotel—the "hot spot" of the city. Got back rather late to the base—in fact, it was early morning—went to return our borrowed clothes, and found that one of the pilots had unexpectedly returned early from his trip. But he was dog-tired

and sound asleep. So we quickly went in, hung up his uniform, and slipped out. He never budged.

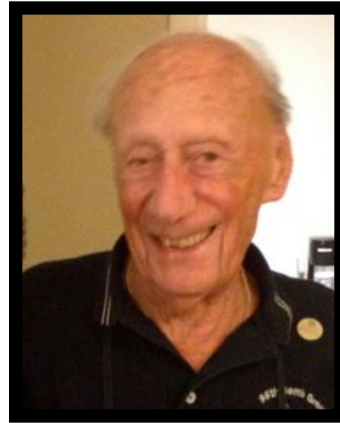
The next morning we went to breakfast at the Officers' Club, returned the borrowed caps, and all was well. Later that day, Christmas Day, we flew back to Alexandria after the fog had cleared. Thanks to several generous souls, what looked like a bum Christmas turned out to be an adventure that I'll never forget—and we did send that nice, dear, sweet little WAF a check for the loan, along with a sincere letter of thanks!

All the best to you,  
Dick Manley (Navigator)

# The Orlando “Lucky Thirteen”



Wm. “Dub” Vandegriffe



Irv Rothman



Harry Hull



Ben Roujansky



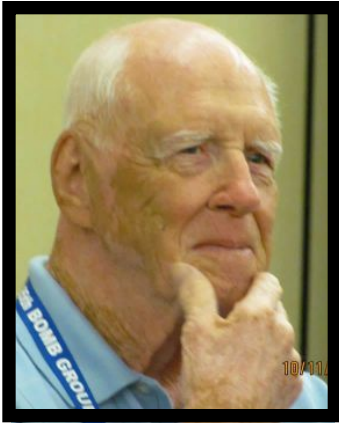
John Walter



Keith Murray



Bob Fay



George Lukens



Freeman Walker



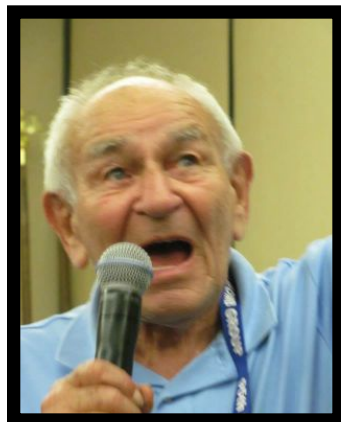
Jim Galbraith

## Veterans Attend Reunion for First Time

Three 95<sup>th</sup> veterans attended their very first reunion in Orlando this fall. Jim Galbraith, George Lukens, and Freeman Walker were first-time attendees who all live in Florida. Dick Farden, also a Florida resident, had not been to a 95<sup>th</sup> reunion since the 1980's. We happily welcomed several new family members as well this year. Looking forward to seeing everyone again in San Diego next May!



Ed Yursky



Herb Wilkov



Dick Farden

# “Fields of Honor” in Belgium and the Netherlands



The “Foundation United Adopters American Wargraves” is a Dutch non-profit foundation whose goal is to research and honor the fallen American soldiers and airmen, buried at the overseas American War Cemeteries in Belgium (Ardennes and Henri-Chapelle) and the Netherlands (Margraten). The foundation’s main project is the “Fields of Honor Database” of information on American servicemen buried or commemorated on the Walls of the Missing at these cemeteries. The database can be accessed at [www.fieldsofhonor-database.com](http://www.fieldsofhonor-database.com).

Luc van der Sterren is one of the research members working for the Fields of Honor Database project.

He writes, “We are a group of people with a common interest; we all adopted one or more graves of American WWII servicemen. Back in 2007 the idea arose to create a database that one day would contain information on all 24,250 American soldiers and airmen buried and listed at the three cemeteries; first of all to honor these brave young men, who fought and died for our freedom, but also as a source of information for anyone looking for more information on the respective fallen hero. Meanwhile information on over 14,000 fallen heroes has been made available for the generations to come. And we will continue until all 24,250 soldiers are commemorated on our website. After all, their sacrifices may never be forgotten!”

Luc has been a caretaker for many years of two graves and two names on the Walls of the Missing at the Netherlands American War Cemetery.

Earlier this year he adopted three more graves at the Ardennes War Cemetery.

He continues “The Ardennes graves contain the remains of three crew members of a B-17, assigned to the 100<sup>th</sup> BG, which was lost during the major strike on Berlin on February 3, 1945. While doing research on this ship and its crew, I connected with Phil Samponaro. It turned out that one of the graves was that of his uncle. I am thrilled about our connecting! It already adds a dimension if you can add a face to the name of the hero whose grave you adopted, but it’s even more thrilling if you can exchange info and photos with a family member.”

His special interest in the 100<sup>th</sup> and his connection with Phil made Luc decide to join the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation and to start researching the fallen heroes of the 13<sup>th</sup> Combat Wing (100<sup>th</sup> BG, 95<sup>th</sup> BG, and 390<sup>th</sup> BG) that are not yet listed in the Fields of Honor Database.

“A total of 590 airmen, who served in the 95<sup>th</sup>, 100<sup>th</sup>, or 390<sup>th</sup> BG, are buried or commemorated at the cemeteries in Belgium and Holland. 175 of them served in the 95<sup>th</sup>. I am pleased to confirm that all of these heroes are listed on our database. Each and every one of them has a personal ‘remembrance page’ on our website. Unfortunately though, the majority of pages show only a photo of the headstone or name on the Walls of the Missing of the respective person. It would be great if we could personalize the pages and include a personal photo or info. I would therefore like to invite people to share any available information or photos of these men and/or the crews they flew with. It would be great if we could add a face to each and every hero!”

Luc van der Sterren

[Luc.vandersterren@adoptiegraven-database.nl](mailto:Luc.vandersterren@adoptiegraven-database.nl) or  
[Luc.vandersterren@gmail.com](mailto:Luc.vandersterren@gmail.com)

**Editor’s Note:** In Orlando the Board voted to support Luc in laying wreaths at the memorials in Belgium and Holland on Memorial Day and other special events. Thank you, Luc, for helping us honor the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group veterans—may we never forget the sacrifices they made.

# YOU TOO: From our Members & Friends

Hi all,

This year the U.S. reunion coincides with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of one of the most eventful weeks in 95<sup>th</sup> BG history. Between October 8<sup>th</sup> and October 14<sup>th</sup>, 1943, the 95<sup>th</sup> flew missions to Bremen, Marienburg, Munster, and Schweinfurt. (This week has become known as the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force's "Black Week" because of the number of aircraft lost and crew casualties.)

Under the leadership of **Maj. Gale House**, on Oct. 8<sup>th</sup> the 95<sup>th</sup> returned to Horham unscathed from the Bremen mission. On this mission, 95<sup>th</sup> aerial gunners shot down 24 enemy fighters. However, the 95<sup>th</sup> suffered 20 KIA, 9 WIA, and 50 POW on the next three missions.

Under the leadership of **Maj. Harry Mumford**, the Marienburg mission on Oct. 9<sup>th</sup> to the "Polish Corridor" was the deepest into Germany to date, and the low level attack completely destroyed the target, an FW-190 fighter plant.

Under the leadership of **Col. John Gerhart**, the 95<sup>th</sup> led the 3<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Division on Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> against rail and waterway targets at Munster. Despite attack by over 200 fighters during the bomb run and heavy losses, the 95<sup>th</sup> pushed on and hit the target "on the nose," while at the same time 95<sup>th</sup> aerial gunners shot down 41 enemy fighters. For this, the 95<sup>th</sup> received its **second Distinguished Unit Citation**.

Under the leadership of **Capt. Robert Cozens**, the 95<sup>th</sup> mission on Oct. 14<sup>th</sup> to attack the ball bearing factories at Schweinfurt played an important part in the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force daylight strategic bombing campaign.

This week's reunion might be a good time to remember "Black Week," and recognize some of the many leaders that the 95<sup>th</sup> was blessed with during the war. I also believe that it would be appropriate at some point during the reunion to recognize, perhaps with a moment of silence, the men who gave their lives, were wounded, or were taken as POWs 70 years ago this week.

Best to all,  
Russ Askey

**Editor's Note:** Russ does our daily 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Twitter updates with Missions from 1943. It isn't necessary to have a Twitter account to enjoy this taste of history. Simply log in to [www.95thbg.org](http://www.95thbg.org) and click on the Twitter button at the bottom of the home page.



Russ Askey,  
with the beautiful fields  
of Horham in the  
background.

**Check out our website at  
[www.95thbg.org](http://www.95thbg.org)**

# The Sky Was Never Still

By Roger A. Freeman, Historian  
(Submitted by Herb Wilkov, Navigator 336<sup>th</sup>)

The old man sat in the English pub  
As he had for many a year  
And listened to the stranger's talk  
As he sipped a temperate beer.

A stranger asked how long he'd lived  
In the village here and about.  
"Why all my days," the old man said  
"An age, without a doubt."

"I envy you" the stranger sighed  
Your tranquil village life,  
The gentle fields, the muted sky,  
Devoid of urban strife.

The old man smiled a wistful smile,  
"That's just a townie's dream.  
For I have seen the sky aflame  
And heard the meadows scream."

"I've known a thunder at each dawn  
That shook the very ground  
As warplanes sought to gain the clouds  
From airfields all around."

"They called some Forts and others Libs  
And there were fighters too  
I've counted hundreds at a time  
Yes, what I tell is true."

"They'd climb and soar like flocks of rooks  
And round and round they'd mill  
From north and south, from east and west  
The sky was never still."

"Sometimes there'd be a wondrous sight  
A sight beyond compare  
The bombers going out to war  
Forging the frigid air."

"Four miles above, just silver specks  
Like sunshine on the dew  
And trailing lines of cloud-like white  
Across the cosmic blue."

"They set the heavens all a-throb  
That did not fade away  
For others rose to meet the night  
Invisible to stay."

"And when was this?" the stranger asked  
"And who were those you saw?"  
The old man drank and then replied  
"It happened in the war."

"They were but boys and many died  
Some lost without a trace  
For then the sky in foreign parts  
Could be a violent place."

"Yes, they were boys and me a child  
But I remember well  
And if you have the time to spare  
There's more that I can tell."

The stranger said that he must go  
"Perhaps another day."  
Indifferent to the old man's tale  
He quickly slipped away.

The old man turned to inward thought  
His memories to tend  
He knew that those who were not there  
Could never comprehend.

Those who'd not known the crowded sky  
The sounds that drenched the land  
Or stood in awe and wonderment  
Would never understand.

The old man left the English pub  
And stood awhile outside  
The evening vault was milky blue  
Cloud-free and stretching wide.

He raised his head and scanned the sky  
That held so still and clear  
And in his mind a memory  
And in his eye a tear.







# Mission Tucson



The unexpected call came in early October 2012. A sacred home to the 95<sup>th</sup> family in the United States was soon to be changed as the 390<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Museum embarked on major renovations to its outstanding museum. The 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorial Room could never be the same again. This stateside home of the 95<sup>th</sup> has proudly occupied a corner of the 390<sup>th</sup> BG Memorial Museum at Tucson, Arizona since 1996.

Blessed with a generous endowment from a former commander, Colonel Joseph Moeller, and coupled with a vigorous capital campaign, the 390<sup>th</sup> charted a course that has resulted in a magnificent upgrade to their already world-class museum. The campaign raised over one million dollars and the 390<sup>th</sup> Memorial Museum reopened to public acclaim at the end of September 2013 (see diagram on previous page).

It is with this backdrop that the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation board of directors rose to the challenge necessitated by this change to undertake a full review of the 95<sup>th</sup> Memorial Room in Tucson. In light of the mission to honor our veterans, educate future generations about the accomplishments of the valiant men of the 95<sup>th</sup>, and give the 95<sup>th</sup> a fitting home in America, we quickly assembled a committee made up of

Margaret Blagg, daughter of navigator Joe Blagg; Brad Petrella, son of Brad Petrella, the “father” of the Red Feather Club bar; and Tom Cozens, son of pilot Bob Cozens. John Mollison, son-in-law of tail gunner Ted DeHart, has also joined our “crew.” Margaret, a professional in the museum field, encouraged us to consult with DCI, the firm that originally designed the memorial room, and Gene Vasconi, who designed the original oral history kiosk. During the last 12 months they have graciously donated hundreds of hours of their time and made multiple trips to Tucson.

Originally we thought we would save what we could and just add a few new pieces as needed. Soon, however, we realized we had an opportunity to take our story to a new level. We could create a place to tell the story of the valiant men of the 95<sup>th</sup> in a way that is uniquely personal, and to creatively transport visitors to the Red Feather Club Museum in Horham via displays of 95<sup>th</sup> artifacts and state-of-the-art audio-visual technology. This new vision perfectly complements our stated purpose: *“The exclusive object and purpose will be to educate the public regarding the history of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group (H) and its role in the air campaign over central Europe during WWII.”* The design will respectfully incorporate the memorial aspects of the

original room while, at the same time, telling the timeless story of the heroes of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group.

With our direction charted, we developed a story line using Rob Morris’s unit history, *The Wild Blue Yonder and Beyond, the Story of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group in War and Peace*. A simple story that unfolds clockwise around the room was developed. *A Gathering of Men* tells of the formation of the 95<sup>th</sup> and the training of the crews. *Home Away From Home* gives insights into life at Horham with emphasis on the ground crews and the English hosts. *Memorable Missions* covers the early lessons, the missions that earned presidential unit citations, and concludes with the humanitarian missions. Facing *John Rayson’s mural painting* of the first daylight raid on Berlin will be a bench where visitors may pause to contemplate the Missing Man Chair and the names of the KIA and MIA. *Remember Them Well* honors those who made the ultimate sacrifice, shares stories of the POWs and evaders, and closes with the lessons that the 95<sup>th</sup> has to teach us. In the center of the room there will be an area with touch screens where visitors can call up oral histories and archival photos. Other touch screens will be strategically placed around the room.



Display cases with artifacts will add a personal touch and link to the men. *Please take a look at the renderings that follow.*

If you have been to Horham, you know firsthand the overwhelming impact the artifacts and buildings have. For the family and friends of the 95<sup>th</sup>, the Red Feather Club Museum in England inspires and connects us with our past. We can—and should—have a sacred place in the United States, and that place will be 95<sup>th</sup> Room in the 390<sup>th</sup> Museum at the Pima Air Museum.

We have before us the opportunity to honor, in a meaningful way, our fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and brothers who served with the 95<sup>th</sup>. While we educate the public about the rich and heroic history of the men who fought for the freedoms we enjoy today, we can tell a story that is never out of date. It is a story that each new generation needs to learn—a story that will inspire them to achieve the greatness of this “Greatest Generation.”

This dream and this vision will take hard work and financial commitment. We have set a goal to raise \$200,000 over the next 12 months for the redesign and installation of state-of-the-art technology that tells the story of the 95<sup>th</sup>, adding depth and bringing to



life the compelling personal story of the men of the 95<sup>th</sup> at war. While we plan to apply for grants and seek corporate sponsors, we need to first demonstrate how important this vision is to our members. We need every member of the 95<sup>th</sup> family to help in any way you can. **We need your support.** It can come in the form of a monetary donation (essential to get this effort started), donation of equipment or artifacts, or making a connection to a person or business with the passion and commitment to become part of our quest. I am pleased to say that we are off to a good start, with donations already exceeding \$15,000. I suspect that the momentum we gained at the Orlando reunion will help us to move toward \$50,000 by Christmas.

Mission Tucson is, in the words of Janie McKnight, past president and daughter-in-law of David McKnight, 335<sup>th</sup> Squadron Commander, the most important mission of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation. Once we complete this mission, we will have taken a huge step in repaying the men of the 95<sup>th</sup> for their sacrifices to preserve our freedom.

While we all enjoy reunions and reading the newsletter, our true mission is to memorialize the men of the



95<sup>th</sup> and educate the public regarding the history of the 95<sup>th</sup> in World War II. Let us all reach deep and make this happen! Just as hundreds of planes joined together to take on overwhelming odds in World War II, we too must join the formation for this mission to be successful.

All monies will be held in trust for the completion of this project. You will receive confirmation from our treasurer and all donor names will be listed in upcoming newsletters. Please let us know how you would like your name to appear. Contributions may be sent to:

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

Make checks payable to 95<sup>th</sup> BG Memorials Foundation with "Mission Tucson" noted on the check.



**Justice With Victory**

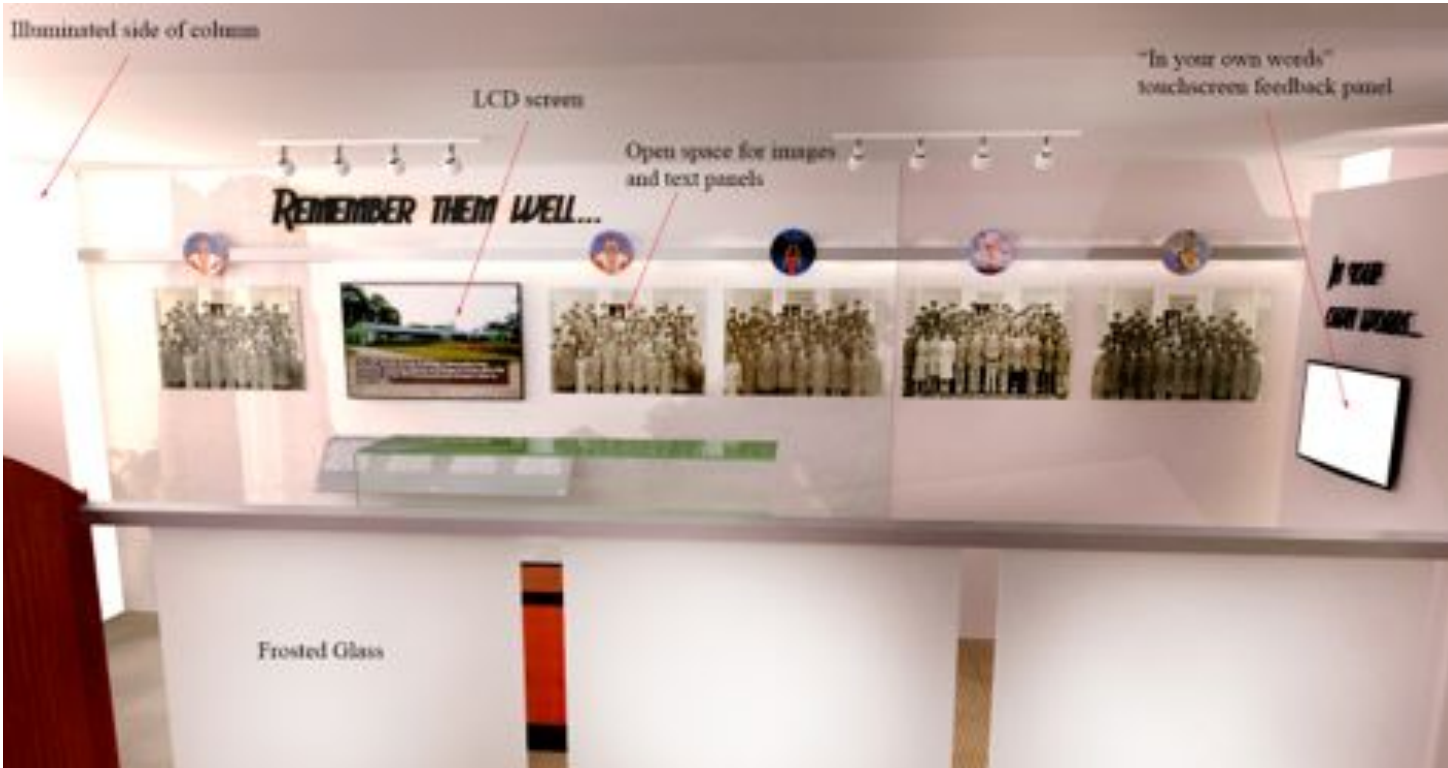


## “Mission Tucson”





Note: All pictures shown are for illustration purposes only and do not represent the final display decisions.



# 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

Jesse Edgar  
Richard E. Farden  
Bob Fay  
James Galbraith  
Charlie Gallagher  
Harry Hull  
George Lukens  
Keith Murray  
Irv Rothman  
Ben Roujansky  
William "Dub" Vandegriffe  
Freeman Walker  
John Walter  
Herbert Wilkov  
Lloyd Wilson  
Ed Yursky

## In Loving Memory

Patsy Ann Cozens  
S/Sgt Eugene F Darter  
Ted DeHart  
Eugene Fletcher  
Robert G. Johnson  
Lloyd Krueger  
Harold Lippert  
Raymond M Olsen  
Bill A Vasquez  
Lou Westerburg  
Kenneth Wright



## Help Keep the Legacy Alive!

- Remember a veteran every day
- Include the Foundation in your estate plan
- 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

## Hebrew Hymn of Remembrance

There are stars up above  
Whose light we only see  
Long after the stars themselves are gone  
So too it is  
With people who we loved  
Our memories do guide us  
They lead us through the darkest night.  
And the stars that shine  
Bring back the lives we've lost  
As we remember, we remember  
Their memories will guide us  
As we remember.

*From Nina*



## LEFT FORMATION

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

Harold E. Baker	412th	Ground Crew	June 14, 2013
Stuart E. Bouley	336th	Waist Gunner	April 20, 2013
Wyren B. Eason	334th	Operations	October 31, 2012
Robert A. Gabrelcik	412th	Top Turret	September 4, 2013
Harold E. Garmong	336th	Togglier	April 3, 2013
Larry Gilbert	336th	Pilot	July 11, 2013
William R. Gunning	334th	Navigator	May 12, 2013
William Kalfa	412th	Ball Turret	March 8, 2013
Frederick R. Kopke	335th	Radio Operator	July 13, 2013
Robert H. Nolan	336th	Radio Operator	October 10, 2013
James E. Powell	334th	Ball Turret	July 22, 2013
Willard W. Ropers	336th	Armorer	July 6, 2013
Charles L. Verschuuren	412th	Bombardier	June 4, 2013
Milton A. Walls	412th	Togglier	December 20, 2011
Kenneth F. Wright	334th	Co-Pilot	October 7, 2013



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

# California Dreamin' in 2014

The U.S. Reunion will be in sunny southern California—finally! That's right; we will be visiting the always-inviting city of San Diego over the Memorial Day holiday, Thursday, May 22 through Monday, May 26, 2014. We'll stay at the lush DoubleTree Hotel Circle in nearby Mission Valley, only a short 10-minute taxi or shuttle ride from the San Diego Airport and 5 miles from Balboa Park.

We have secured a fantastic hotel rate of \$129/night, plus 13% tax, that includes many perks: free hot breakfast for two each morning (additional breakfasts may be purchased for \$12/person), free Wi-Fi for both in-room and meeting space use, free parking, two days of complimentary shuttle to Old Town and shopping at Fashion Valley Mall, not to mention those famous Doubletree cookies!

**BOOK YOUR ROOMS** in two convenient ways:

**By phone: 1-800-486-5315** (Be sure to mention the 95th BG Memorials Foundation!)

**Online with this special booking link:** <http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/S/SANCLDT-BG5-20140518/index.jhtml>

**IMPORTANT NOTE!** *It is imperative that you use ONLY these two booking channels for reserving your room(s) or we will not receive credit for your stay! The amenities above only come with our Group Reservation and not with outside websites.*

The hotel is extending these rates for 3 days prior and 3 days following our event, subject to availability. Hotel cancellation policy is 72 hours prior.

**BOOKING DEADLINE is April 14, 2014.**

This is going to be a popular destination, so book early!

## **REUNION HIGHLIGHTS:**

A day at the San Diego Zoo

A visit to the San Diego Air and Space Museum and the Veterans Museum and Memorial.

A day to explore on your own, for whatever your heart desires, whether it's visiting more of the 14 museums in Balboa Park, visiting the USS Midway, taking one of the "Bite San Diego" food and walking tours, or taking in the Classical Melodies back in Balboa Park.

And don't forget those amazing Fireside Chats and Red Feather Club evenings!



Vanna Walker  
Reunion Chair  
[reunions@95thbg.org](mailto:reunions@95thbg.org)

So, make your reservations and be on the lookout for a detailed itinerary and registration form. We'll get more information to you after the holidays, or check our website at [www.95thbg.org](http://www.95thbg.org). In the meantime, we'll keep working on more amazing things to do, and look forward to seeing you there in May!



# The Domino Effect

Before Christmas, Harry Easey, aged 13 and the grandson of a local farmer, came to see me at the Red Feather Club to see if I could help him do his history project. He had chosen Horham airfield, as his father's and grandfather's farm is part of it!

Ironically enough, he was the same age as I was when I attended the same school, and doing the same project to enter the same Senior school, Framlingham College. Of course I was happy to oblige. Alan Johnson also told him his schoolboy recollections of the 95th and the airfield, as he did for me in 1976!

## 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



[www.95thbg.org](http://www.95thbg.org)

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Malcolm Easey, the grandfather, was 4 years old in March 1945. A Captain W.G. Warren gave him a domino set contained in a small box with his name in it. Malcolm tells me his father used to sell Captain Warren eggs, and had done so for a while before. I have seen this box. It is totally complete and in good condition, considering its age.

I have looked on our personnel list to find him. We do have a George Warren. Malcolm Easey does not know if Captain Warren was flight crew or ground crew, but he was definitely based at Horham with the 95th.

So I am on a mission. I wonder if you can shed any light or can help me?

I look forward to any information you may have or could find out.

James Mutton. Chairman  
95th BG Heritage Association



## SAVE THESE DATES!

**May 7, 2014, 2014**  
Last Plane Down  
Dayton, Ohio

**May 22-26, 2014**  
Annual U.S. Reunion  
San Diego, CA

**September 4-11, 2014**  
Annual Horham Reunion  
Horham UK

**Be there and B Square!**



## Member Dues Made Easy

You can now pay your annual dues by using the 95th PayPal account. It is safe, secure and easy to use. An additional feature is that you can schedule your annual payments to recur each and every year at the same time and avoid the hassle of having to fill out another form, write a check and mailing it to the treasurer. Thanks to Brad Petrella and Nancy Freemantle for this innovation in the membership area. (We still love getting those membership renewals in the mail!)



# 30 Missions of the Hansen Crew

by Jesse Edgar, Lead Bombardier, 335th Squadron

We flew our first mission on December 11, 1943. We, the George Hansen Crew, had gone over on the Queen Elizabeth as one crew of a contingent of twenty-one replacement crews for the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, stationed at Horham, England.

After our twelfth mission an order was issued by Third Division HQ that each Group was to send their best lead crew to the 482nd Group Base to undergo training to become a lead Pathfinder Crew. We were told that the Hansen Crew had been selected for this assignment. On February 21, 1944, we transferred from the 95th to the 482nd. While we were gone for almost a month training to be a Pathfinder Crew, we learned that a complete combat mission tour was raised from 25 to 30.

Fifteen crews from various 8<sup>th</sup> AF bomb groups reported to take Pathfinder training. While at the 482nd, of the fifteen crews the Hansen Crew was selected to stand by our Pathfinder Plane in our Class A's because some "brass" was coming out to look over a Pathfinder Plane. General Jimmy Doolittle, 8th Air Force CO, General Carl Tooley Spatz, former 8th Air Force CO, General Curtis E. LeMay, and General Fred Anderson all came sauntering out. We felt quite honored as we shook hands all around. Mac showed them his equipment in a curtained-off

section of the radio room. The ball turret had been removed and a radome installed. General LeMay rather embarrassed Hansen when he asked George what missions he had led prior to training to be a Pathfinder Lead Pilot. George had to confess that we had never led the Group or even a Squadron. General LeMay asked, "Isn't that rather unusual?" George replied that "Col. Truesdell ordered us to be here and I'm simply obeying orders."

When we finished our original Pathfinder training we were assigned to the 96th BG base at Snetterton-Heath, as it was the only 3<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Division base capable of servicing Pathfinder planes at the time. This meant that each time we were assigned to lead the Group we would have a pre-briefing and then have to fly, usually in the dark near midnight, to the base whose Group would be leading the mission. We got two or three hours of sleep and then had to get to the regular briefing.

On our first mission as a Lead Pathfinder crew, 11 April 1944, we actually flew as Deputy Lead with the 95<sup>th</sup> BG. The target was to be Posen in Poland and the weather was terrible and kept getting worse. We could barely see the wingtips of our plane. It soon became apparent that we could not make it to Posen so Col. Mumford turned the formation around and we headed back. The colonel called us and asked us to take over the Lead since it became obvious that it could not be a visual drop but would have to be by radar. As we took the Lead and got nearer to what had been chosen as a secondary target, which was the city of Rostock on the northern coast of Germany, the

clouds out in front of me began to break up and I could see much of the ground and the city. I called Mac and told him I would be able to make a visual drop and would take over. I had no maps of Rostock but I could see what looked like factory buildings on the northern edge of town. I placed the crosshairs on the buildings and it was "bombs away"! We got an excellent hit on the target.

From then on we flew as a Lead Pathfinder Crew leading the Group, the Wing, or the Division on the missions. On D-Day I was in the hospital with what the doctor said was nasal pharyngitis. Another bombardier flew in my place. Hansen was assigned to lead the 3rd Division bombing the target of the Invasion. Upon landing on the return he was told he was to lead a second time as part of the Invasion. Protocol had established that no pilot was to lead Division twice in succession, but they made an exception for Hansen and his crew.

By June 11<sup>th</sup>, 1944, we'd been transferred back to the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1944 Hansen was assigned to lead 3rd Division to the target: the Volkswagenwerks at Fallersleben, Germany. The 8th Air Force had tried for several months to get to that target without success. They were capable of laying down an extremely dense and vast smoke screen, and weather had interfered. Now it became our turn to try. As we approached the target the smoke screen completely obscured anything on the ground. But the sun was at just the right angle to be reflected from glass skylights

in the roofs of the buildings. Seeing those reflections, I placed the crosshairs on them, for they proved to be exactly where the MPI was designated. As a lead plane, we always carried a standard bomb load of six 500-pounders plus two smoke bombs. For this mission the rest of the planes carried 2,000-pounders. When those bombs hit, it gave off a tremendous explosion, starting fires. I received my first DFC for this mission. The Citation read in part that because of my getting my bombs on the target, the planes following were able to locate the target and do the same, completely destroying the Volkswagenwerks.

A few days prior to this mission, the Hansen Crew had been called to a special meeting and we were informed that we had been selected to lead the historic Shuttle Bombing mission that would fly to Russia, down to Italy, and return to base in England. It was the very next day after the Volkswagenwerks mission that we took off for the Shuttle mission. At the briefing prior to takeoff Hansen had been asked to stand by. Col. Wittan, CO of the 13th Wing, came in to meet Hansen. He said to Hansen, "I hear you have an exceptionally good crew." Hansen stuttered a bit and replied, "I think I do, Sir." Whereupon Col. Wittan said, "Well, by God, you better have; this is a very important mission and I don't want any foul-ups." Prior to takeoff they had Mac, Smiley, and I sign applications for promotion to Captain.

We had Capt. Durr, Group Navigator, and 2nd Lt. Arno Krause from Intelligence riding with us. We also carried two wing tanks in our waist for the

P-51's that were escorting us. On the first leg of the mission we bombed an oil refinery fifty miles south of Berlin. Only the 13th Wing and the 45th Wing were flying on to Russia. The rest of the 8th Air Force was bombing Berlin. After our bomb drop we dropped down to 15,000 feet to conserve oxygen. A formation of nine German ME-109's suddenly came on in a head-on attack. Capt. Durr had been sitting in my bombardier's seat doing pilotage. I yelled at him and pointed to the oncoming "bandits." He scrambled out of the way but by the time I got to the triggers of my 50 caliber machine guns the fighters had zipped on by. They didn't hit any of us and we missed them entirely.



**George Hansen Crew - 1944**

**Front Row** (L-R): Peter R. McTavish, Navigator and "Mickey" Operator (Radar); Jesse B. Edgar, Bombardier; Joseph Wilkins, Co-Pilot; George Scott Hansen, Pilot; Fredrick F. Smiley, Navigator  
**Back Row** (L-R): Charles J. Forman, Right Waist Gunner; Herbert Easton, Tail Gunner; Philip M. Fisher, Radio Operator; Joseph T. Hayes, Top Turret Gunner; Eugene Katona, Left Waist Gunner

As we neared the City of Kiev in Russia we had dropped to 5,000 feet. Several P-39's with red stars on their sides came up to greet us and to escort us to our landing field at Mirgorod, our destination. As we approached the field, Col. Wittan told Hansen, "Now we have about 3,000 feet of steel mat to land on. I don't want you halfway down that mat; get as close to

the approach end as you can when we touch down." Hansen prefers to make power-on landings, so he came in low and when we were over the end of the mat he chopped the power and we touched down. We bounced a bit and the mat rippled out in front of us. Col. Wittan squinted at Hansen and said, "I know I said close but I didn't mean that close!"

The base at Mirgorod was manned by American personnel, with a nice barracks to sleep in and decent food. The 45th Wing had landed at another base, Poltava. That night the German bombers came over and bombed that field. They missed our field completely but they destroyed all but five B-17's at Poltava. The next day we flew 150 miles

farther east to Kharkov, which was a Russian-manned base. It had both male and female soldiers in the same barracks. Col. Wittan had difficulty contacting HQ back in London but when he did he was told to get out as soon as conditions would allow and get on down to Foggia, Italy. We were at Kharkov six days before we could get out and we headed down to Italy. We bombed an oil refinery at Drohobycz, Poland with excellent results. As we headed south I noticed three unmarked silver B-17's flying with us just out of range. I called Col. Wittan to tell him but he

was already aware of the three unmarked planes. He turned to Hansen, told him of the three planes, and told Hansen to tell our gunners to keep their eyes on the planes and if they got within range to shoot them down. But the three planes stayed with us another ten minutes then veered off to the right and soon disappeared.

At Foggia we landed at the 99th Bomb Group base of the 15th Air Force. We landed on gravel runways, raising quite a dust. Our barracks were large square tents with open sides. While there we flew one mission to bomb the marshalling yards at Arad, Romania, again with excellent results. The Colonel called us one morning to meet at the flight line. When we went down, Col. Jeffrey of the 100th Group and Col. Moeller of the 390th Group were already there. We got aboard our ship with Col. Wittan at the controls. We flew up to Rome. He had two staff cars take us into town and he had reserved two rooms at a swank hotel, one for the three Colonels and one for the Hansen Crew. The Colonel said it was so we could freshen up a bit. Two weeks prior to our being there the hotel had been occupied by German troops. The three Colonels rode around sight-seeing in a staff car. We walked. We got to see the various tourist attractions: Vatican City, the Colosseum, the Viaduct, and other attractions.

At five o'clock we were ready to return to base at Foggia. Two days later we took off for the last leg of the shuttle mission. We bombed some submarine pens on the southern coast of France. Halfway home our P-51 escort had to leave because they were low on fuel. Immediately after a call by Col. Wittan, a group of British Spitfires appeared and brought us the rest of the way back to base.

On landing Col. Wittan shook hands with each of us and thanked us for a job well done. We learned that the promotion to captain for Mac and Smiley had been approved, but for some unexplained reason mine had been delayed. Col. Truesdell told

me he would check on it immediately. We also learned that the number of missions one had to fly for a tour now had been raised to 35. Col. Truesdell told us 3rd Division HQ was insisting that we fly the full 35 missions. Capt. Danziger of intelligence told us we had become too good for our own



The Hansen crew on the first shuttle mission to Russia and Italy in June 1944

good. The colonel offered us a deal. We would each fly one more mission to give each of us at least 30. Then he would send us home on a 90-day R&R but we had to return to the 95th and volunteer to fly 35 more missions. He assured us by that time the war would most likely be over and at most we would have only 3 or 4 missions to fly. We agreed to that.

For our thirtieth mission, 25 July 1944, we were assigned to lead 3rd Division to a target that consisted of 130,000 German troops stationed around the St. Lo area on Normandy. These troops had General Patton's 3rd Army bottled up. Patton had tried twice to break out and was unsuccessful, with severe loss of troops. We wondered why the Hansen Pathfinder crew would be selected to lead this mission since bombing had to be visual, not by radar because American troops were within 1,500 yards of the German troops. We had

Group Navigator, Major Scripture, up in the nose with me to make sure we identified the target correctly.

We headed out across the Channel at 16,000 feet but we were in the clouds. As we descended we found it clear at 13,000 feet, so the Colonel called me to tell me we would bomb from 13,000. With each change of altitude I had to put new data into the bombsight. By this time flak was coming up heavy and accurate. I could hear the shrapnel from exploding shells tearing through our sides and the ship was being rocked rather violently. I saw number 1 engine being feathered. Col. Truesdell reported number 4 engine was leaking fuel badly and may have to be feathered. Immediately after "bombs away," George racked us over, increased our speed to 200 mph, and headed for the Channel.

As we were on our final approach Col. Truesdell called the control tower and asked that Col. McKnight have a clean pair of trousers ready for Major Scripture—he was going to need them. Upon landing we were ordered to stand by our plane until our strike photos were developed. One of the Groups had dropped short. Their bombs killed over a hundred of our own troops, including General Leslie McNair, a ground force commander. As we waited we walked around our plane surveying the damage it had sustained. We were truly amazed that we had survived. Col. Truesdell turned to us and said, "I think you boys have had enough. I'm going to finish you all at thirty missions." Photos showed we had hit the MPI proper.



## Widow Liaison

Just a short acknowledgement to all our lovely ladies. I would really like to hear from more of you and also see you—like maybe at our reunions! Speaking of which: it's really not so bad attending them alone if you have no other choices. I have been doing so (to Horham and statewide) for a few years now. It is not too difficult and can be fun. I enjoy getting in touch with you at your birthdays and holidays, but let some of us hear from you!



Jackie DeHart  
Widow Liaison  
Widow of Ted DeHart  
Tail Gunner, 412th

My love to you all,

*Jackie*

teddehart1@cox.net  
242 W. Calle Frambuesa  
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502-207-0957

## HOW YOU GET TO HEAVEN

By Paul Dillon

I dreamt I was given a glimpse of heaven...  
All immaculate and pristine.  
Saw mom and dad up there...  
And a lot more others I was glad to have seen.

I asked ol' St. Pete how they all got here...  
Way up where the air is so rare and clean.  
He said, "Son, it's quite simple really...  
We fly 'em all up here in a B-17."



In recognition and honor  
of all the 95th Bomb  
Group veterans whose  
stories we never heard.

## Member News

Exciting things are in the offing for the 95<sup>th</sup>, and what better way to be a part of them than by being a member! Membership keeps our organization growing and gives each of us a chance to be part of the great mission of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation.

The **2014 Membership Roster** is ready for those who would like a copy. We have made an electronic version that can be e-mailed and will be updated quarterly. If you would like a printed version you can get one that will be updated on an annual basis. The Membership Roster is available to active members of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation. Please contact John Mollison at [membership@95thbg.org](mailto:membership@95thbg.org) or write to me at: 996 Pelham Drive, Keswick, VA 22947.

## Member Liaison

Linda Endris is our Member Liaison, sending out periodic emails with birthdays and news about our veterans and widows. If you have news you'd like to share, or would like to be on her email list, please contact



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[ljendris@att.net](mailto:ljendris@att.net)

Linda Endris  
Member Liaison  
Daughter of Ed Charles  
Navigator, 336th



# The 95th shines bright ...



The 95th Mermaids and friends



Nancy Freemantle, James Mutton, Gerald Grove, and Linda Woodward admiring George Lukens' scrapbook of 95th treasures



Our photographer, Laney Baltazar, with reunion registrar, Michele Behrens



Mary Griffin, Laura Balthun, Sherry & Jim Givens, Gloria & Bob Fay



Veteran Jim Galbraith with Philip Mutton and Robert Galbraith



Square B **B**arbecue



# ...in the sunshine state



Our PX team, Ann Cook and Deb Roberts



Paul Dillon showing UK friends Linda & Paul Woodward one of the bases he gave to the Wallopers softball team



Dottie Mattina



Drix

The Red Feather Club managed to pull off a winner yet again at our Orlando Reunion. Despite being crammed into very close (and unique!) quarters, everyone had a great time each of our three open nights. In fact, the fun lasted waaaay into the small hours on Saturday night! We were also able to continue our tradition of contributing, after expenses, all money donated by our most generous partygoers. Thank you all so much and see you in San Diego!



It's always a fun time in the Red Feather Club!



Enjoying a good story at the Fireside Chat



The famous Fireside Chats



Front Row: June Bickmeyer, Nadean Thornhill, Mandy Thornhill  
Back row: Bunny & Paul Dillon, David Vandegriffe, Michael Baltazar



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

*SHARE THE LEGACY...GIVE a GIFT MEMBERSHIP*

If you are a veteran or a widow, please talk to your children and grandchildren about the legacy of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group. The connection to each of you valiant founders of the 95<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Memorials Foundation is one that will be lost if not passed down to following generations. With the holiday season upon us, there is no better gift you can give than to make them a member of this proud and historic organization.



Simply fill out the form below and mail with your check to:

**Nancy Freemantle, Treasurer**

**P.O. Box 6154**

**Eureka, CA 95502**

(Make checks payable to 95th BG Memorials Foundation)

(Please print)

This is a gift from: \_\_\_\_\_

Recipient's Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount enclosed:    \_\_\_ \$25/Individual    \_\_\_ \$45/Household

**Memberships keep us flying...  
 Thank you for helping to keep the legacy alive!**