



95th Bomb Group Newsletter

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.



◀ © Gina Savoca

The Savoca family wearing the 95th hoodies for their group Christmas photo.

(L to R) Lily Savoca Rose (30), Jamie Savoca Rose (20), Charlene Savoca (Tony's Wife), Logan Savoca Rose (24), Tony Savoca, Antonio Savoca Rose (18), Molly Savoca Rose (15), Joey Savoca Rose (29), and Tony's great-grandson Liam.

Read Gina's story about her father, Antonio Savoca, on page 8.



95TH BOMB GROUP

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8TH
AIR FORCE



13TH COMBAT
WING



334TH
SQUADRON



335TH
SQUADRON



336TH
SQUADRON



412TH
SQUADRON



TOBY MUMFORD
PRESIDENT

Notes from the President

Wow, what a winter for most of us. I hope all is well for you and getting better as spring rolls in to replace much of the poor weather we have endured.

Your 95th BGMF continues to improve with each year. We have a couple of new faces on the Board and our Committees promoting our Mission, enhancing our reach and ensuring that our fiduciary responsibilities to our members and the brave men who served in the 95th remain focused. Russ McKnight stepped up to become our newest Board member and our new Treasurer. Many thanks to Nancy Freemantle who served us very well for years as our Treasurer. Ann Cook has stepped down as our very able PX Chairwoman and has been replaced by Afton Moore, Dick Westerborg's daughter. This engagement of the next generation is what we need as an organization to ensure the continued good work of the 95th. Thank you Ann for your dedication and great work ensuring we have patches, shirts, stickers, etc. for our members and friends of the 95th.

To our members who have children and grandchildren interested in the gallant efforts of their forefathers, let's get them involved. What better way to engage these young people than to invite them to join you at the upcoming 95th Reunion in Savannah, Georgia from November 7th through the 11th? Mark your calendars.

The development of a new 95th BGMF website is progressing. We have engaged a designer and with the help of a couple of young sets of eyes, we are making some aesthetic and functional navigation changes we hope will be more appealing and engaging for the younger generation. An ad hoc committee of current

and former Board and Committee members will shortly review the work done to date and I'm certain will add their own edits/suggestions.

The Tucson 95th BGMF Memorial Room at the Pima Air and Space Museum was recently visited by Margaret Blagg and Janie McKnight. A number of issues were addressed and changes implemented to the electronic equipment in the room as well as a couple of minor modifications to the physical plant itself. They also had the opportunity to visit with Wally Scales, Executive Director of the 390th Museum and Building. Wally has been very supportive of our efforts and the 95th Memorial Room and has communicated with us regarding our room and operating issues that occasionally arise. If you see or speak with Wally or Allan Moller, Chairman of the 390th Organization, please, let them know how much we appreciate their support.

The 95th BGMF continues to periodically receive requests to accept donated items from the families of our departed veterans. While we appreciate the offers to accept these items, please remember that the Foundation is not a collecting museum and as a result we do not have the space or technology to properly house artifacts. We are happy to consult with families as to where they might best donate these items. If, however, you have photos you wish to share, let us know so that we can at least have first right of refusal.

I look forward to seeing all of you at the November Reunion. For those who were able to attend the Horham Reunion in late April—I trust you had a great time. Cheers!

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Sara R.W. Olson
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Granddaughter of Ray B. Waters
Tail Gunner, 335th Squadron



We Need You

To help in updating and refreshing the 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation website

A new and improved site will help educate and inform younger members and prospective young members about the Mission and history of the 95th Bomb Group at Horham, England, during WWII

We Need Website Design and Build Savvy
Sons/Daughters/Nieces/Nephews and Grandchildren of Vets or any 95th BGMF member with those skills
We Want YOU and We Need Your Help!!

Contact the BGMF President - Toby Mumford at toby.mumford@gmail.com
or call 415-887-8556, to learn more about how you can help.

**NOTICE: PRINTED
NEWSLETTER FEE
ELIMINATED**

During the board meeting on March 25th, the 95th BGMF Board of Directors voted to eliminate the \$10 annual charge for a printed newsletter. If you paid to receive a printed newsletter, your \$10 payment will be refunded unless we are directed otherwise. Please contact Russ McKnight at treasurer@95thbg.org to confirm if you would like your payment returned or kept as a donation. Thank you for your continued support of the 95th and our collective mission to do all that we can to honor the legacy of our brave veterans.

**LOOKING BACK:
2004 REUNION INTERVIEW
WITH ARL CROSS**

JM: This is Janie McKnight with the 95th Bomb Group Legacy Committee. This morning we're with Arl Cross. Arl, for the record, would you state your name, today's date, and where we are.

AC: Arl Cross. 9/12/2004, and we're in Washington, D.C.

JM: And what were your dates of service with the Army Air Corps?

AC: From November in '43 until November in '45.

JM: And with the 95th?

AC: Yes, with the 95th.

JM: What squadron were you in?

AC: 336th.

JM: And your principal job with the 95th?

AC: I was a waist gunner.

JM: And where and when did you enlist?

AC: In Little Rock, Arkansas. And it was in November of '43.

JM: And did you have any memorable training experiences?

AC: I took gunnery training in Kingman, Arizona. And we did our flight training in Avon Park, Florida. We flew as a crew—we made up as a crew in Avon Park. We started our flying there, training for overseas.

JM: And when did you go to England?

AC: Must have been, probably, the first of November in '44.

JM: Now you had a particularly memorable experience with the 95th. Can you tell us about that?

AC: OK. We were returning from a raid over Uma. We had a photographer on board, so our plane usually left the formation early, so film could be developed. And as we were pulling out of the formation, the vertical stabilizer of our airplane hit the underside of the leave, about the bomb bay,

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95TH BGMF 2019 REUNION

Savannah
GEORGIA

HOME OF THE
MIGHTY EIGHTH AIR
FORCE MUSEUM

NOVEMBER 7TH - 11TH
HOTEL INDIGO
SAVANNAH HISTORIC DISTRICT

under the pilot compartment, or somewhere along in there. I was in the top turret at the time. Of course, when I could see we were going into the other plane, I got out of the top turret because it was getting too close up there. Anyway, when I got out of the turret, I looked out through the pilot's compartment, and all I could see was the ocean, so I knew we were in a dive. So I got the pilot's chute and gave it to him. And I got the co-pilot's chute, and then of course I put my own chute on. The co-pilot went to the nose of the airplane, you know, getting ready to jump out. And by this time I looked out and noticed we were flying straight and level. But the control stick was going back and forth, violently. And so I thought, well, I'll kind of help the pilot a little bit, so I got in the co-pilot's seat. The two of us couldn't hold that control. So I thought, well, if I just prop something up against that, you know, it would hold it. So I had an extra parachute, so I propped the parachute between the co-pilot's seat and the control stick. And when I did, of course, cables went everywhere. Something, a pulley I guess, came loose up front. But anyway, the plane was still flying straight and level. So I don't know exactly what happened in there, but a short time later I just happened to look out the window, and there was land coming up. So I remember turning to the pilot—I knew the answer, but anyway, I asked him, I said, "Do you think you can land it?" He said no. When we got over land, I got up out of the co-pilot's seat and went back to the bomb bay. When I got to the bomb bay, I could see the guys

had jumped from the nose. I could see them going down. So I jumped out of the bomb bay. And I guess that's about...

JM: So what happened next?

AC: Well, (chuckle) I had been told, you know, don't open your chute until you're laying on your back, they said, when you can see the sky. But when I went out of the bomb bay, of course I was rolling, and I didn't know how to stop from rolling. I couldn't tell whether there was sky or earth I was looking at. So I just pulled the cord. That parachute stops you in a hurry. It gives you a pretty good jerk. Of course I was coming down in England in Camp Sea Ash, I believe was the location. And anyway, as I got closer to the ground, I could see that I was going toward a pretty good sized tree. I'd heard that you could slip

those parachutes, and I pulled on the cords, but that didn't seem to do much good. I just jerked real hard on those cords, and when I did, I just went straight down and stopped just before I hit the ground. Just stood up, you know. It was no big deal. Just like stepping off of a chair.

To read more of Arl's interview, along with other interviews from the 95th BG archives, visit:

<http://95thbg.org>

Select the HISTORY tab and follow the dropdown menus to VETERANS' STORIES and VETERANS' INTERVIEWS.

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BACK ROW: (L-R) William N. Dunwoody–Pilot, Max E. Burrows–Co-Pilot, Paul L. Facticeau–Navigator, Arden L. Quisenberry–Togglier **FRONT ROW: (L-R) Clarence R. Bitner–Ball Turret Gunner, Ray W. Detweiler–Top Turret Gunner, Arl B. Cross–Waist Gunner, Gabriel B. Chupra–Radio Operator, Wilfred B. Cullerne–Tail Gunner**



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From Our Members & Facebook Friends



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James E. Hamilton, 335th Pilot, celebrated his 103rd Birthday on March 9th, 2019. It's very likely that he is the oldest living veteran of the 95th Bomb Group. The 95th BGMF wishes James and his family a very happy, healthy 2019.



Glenna Jones Carlton: This excerpt is from an interview with my stepfather, Dave Taylor, a pilot in the 95th at Horham, about his worst mission. This incident is from March, 1945. My dad is Jones in the story. They both survived the war. The waist gunner mentioned was Richard Munro.

"We had a radio operator on board who spoke German. We usually referred to them as Mickey operators. His job was to listen to the German fighters and disrupt their attacks by inserting himself into the stream of shouted warnings, sightings, and commentary by giving out fake information in German as if he was one of them. The flak was really heavy that day, ripping numerous holes into our aircraft. A large piece of shrapnel hit below the Mickey operator, tearing a large hole into the fuselage under his legs, knocking out the central oxygen supply, and severing electrical cables. More shrapnel forced me to shut down the engine. I had my hands full flying the airplane and analyzing what I had lost and what still worked. The Mickey operator was terrified, looking down the gaping hole between his legs, ice-cold air rushing up at him. His electric suit had failed and he wasn't getting any oxygen. He thought

he was dying—and he was. He started screaming over and over again on the intercom, "I'm dead. I'm dead. I'm dead..." totally blocking the intercom so I couldn't talk to the rest of the crew. I had to make a choice. I went first to check on Jones, the ball turret gunner. He didn't have portable oxygen because of the lack of space in the turret; the Mickey operator did. I donned a portable oxygen mask and rushed to the rear of the plane to see if Jones was alright. It was the job of the waist gunner to get oxygen to the ball turret gunner. The waist gunner had pulled Jones out of the turret and given him oxygen. Except for exposure to the cold and a bad headache, Jones suffered no lasting effects. After I got back to my seat, I dropped the plane down from twenty-five thousand to ten thousand feet so we could breathe. I had to leave the formation and returned to England alone. The Mickey operator survived."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

Honoring Antonio Savoca

Dear Sara,

I am enclosing a photograph with some information which I hope you will publish in your next newsletter. It features my father, Antonio Savoca, proud member of the 95th Bomb Group. I'd like to tell you about my father's life, and at the end of the story I will let you know how the photo of our entire family wearing 95th Bomb Group hoodies came about. My father is an extremely modest man, so the stories of his military career have come to me (the only child) very slowly over my 59 years of life. We all are so proud, honored, and appreciative of the brave men of the 95th!

In March 1942, my father had not yet graduated from high school, and at 18 years of age he volunteered to join the Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program. On March 6, 1943, at 19 years old, he was commissioned a 2nd Lt. Bombardier.

On the first maximum effort bombardment mission of Berlin, on March 6, 1944, my father's aircraft was attacked head on by German FW-190s and was heavily damaged. The crew heeded the bailout order by James Conley, the pilot. My father had been transferred from his original crew to lead bombardier of Conley's crew. His original crew, piloted by Mitchell Russell, was now flying right wing position to Conley's lead, and witnessed the bailout. Shortly after, my father's original crew was also shot down with the ball turret gunner and one waist gunner dead. When my father went to the nose escape hatch, he met Colonel Lewis Parker, Conley's co-pilot, at the open hatch. Since the colonel was there first, my father motioned for him to jump first, but the colonel insisted that my father should bail out first, which he did. Colonel Parker was flying co-pilot on Conley's crew in order to gain

five combat mission experiences before being sent to the Pacific Theater to head B-29 bomb groups against Japan.

Both my father's crew and his original crew were captured and spent fourteen months as German prisoners of war in Stalag Luft 1 at Barth on the Baltic Sea. My father participated in three failed tunnel escape attempts while in prison camp. In May 1945, Russian troops driving eastward liberated Stalag 1. 95th Bomb Group B-17s flew in to Barth fitted with boarded bomb bays to be able to carry ten more POWs, and evacuated the liberated prisoners to Camp Lucky Strike in Le Havre, France. Eventually, they were loaded onto Liberty Ships and sailed to New York.

My father elected to continue to serve in the Air Force and had stateside tours of duty, one of which was March Field, Riverside, CA, as a navigator radar operator in K-Systems equipped B29s of the 22nd Bomb Group. In June 1950, when the Korean War broke out, the 22nd was sent to Okinawa to start the bombardment of North Korea. My father flew 26 B29 combat missions out of Okinawa, each averaging eleven hours. On October 24, 1950, the 22nd Bomb Group received a letter of appreciation and commendation from General MacArthur. Since the 22nd was the first stateside group to be sent TDY to Okinawa, in November 1950, General MacArthur reassigned the group back to March Field where my father met, courted strongly, and in September 1952, married his one and only, and still very beautiful wife, Charlene Henson.

Mather Field, Sacramento, CA, was my parents' first tour together, where my father was an instructor teaching K-systems classes to generals, seven in each class, who were returning to war duties from administrative positions. Two generals wrote personal letters of commendation through military channels, citing the expertise of my father's teaching abilities.

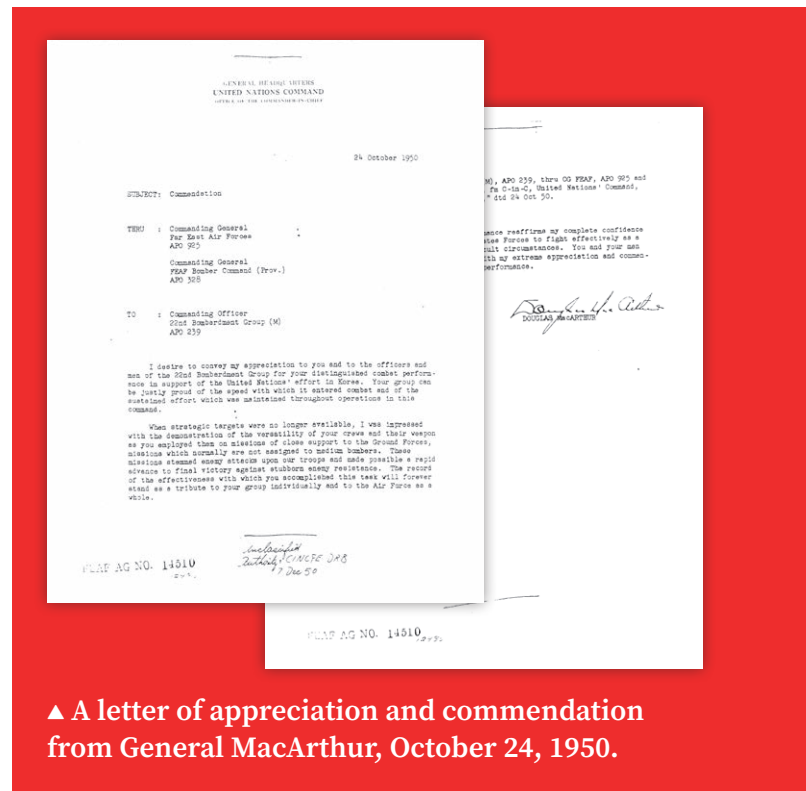
While at Sacramento, and at my mother's strong urging, my father decided to apply to the Air Force Institute of Technology to further his education. Acceptance to the program required 30 semester hours of college credit in order to be sent to a university for two years to complete a baccalaureate degree. My father attended night classes at Sacramento Junior College to earn those credits. In June 1956, my mom and he went to Norman, Oklahoma where my father earned his degree in Management from the University of Oklahoma and also completed nine semester hours of credit toward an MBA before his two-year time allotment ended in June, 1958. My father was a good student and was awarded Beta Gamma Sigma honors.

My father's next and last tour of duty was as the head of the Professional Branch of the Air Force Institute of Technology at Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. This involved sending selected Air Force Officers to tours of duty in aerospace companies and universities for baccalaureate degrees, and advanced degrees through PhD for those officers who were slated to become professors at the Air Force Academy. During this tour he was promoted two grades from Captain to Major and then to Lt. Col.

In July 1963, my father retired from the Air Force with 21 years and three months service. He was 39 years old and wanted a civilian career. He interviewed with all the major aerospace companies and they all offered employment as liaison manager with the Air Force, except one. At Thiokol's Wasatch Division, he met with all six of the managers who reported directly to Wasatch's Vice President and General Manager. At the conclusion of all the interviews, the VP&GM asked my father to go home and reflect on the interviews and respond on where he wanted to work and what he wanted to get paid. My father responded that he wanted to work in the proposals department and that he would work for an exempt salary of \$12,000. This was much less than what the other companies had offered, but it was a job in

which opportunity to grow was only as great as your ability. In nine years, he was promoted to heading the proposals department, internal audit, assistant to the General Manager, procurement, information systems, finance and administration, and finally to the Vice President and General Manager of Thiokol's Wasatch Division.

As VP&GM, he was responsible for the first and third stages of the Minuteman System, the intercontinental ballistic missile system in silos today. My father was known as the savior of this system when in the early 70s, long lead funding for the system was discontinued and the Minuteman was scheduled to end. My father developed a presentation which justified the continuance of the system and presented it at senior levels in the Pentagon, resulting in approval of long lead funding, and the Minuteman System is still our first line of defense today. He was responsible for many propulsion systems such as the standard missile system used in cruise missiles on carrier ships, the HARM missile, and others. In a joint venture with Hercules Corporation, he was



▲ A letter of appreciation and commendation from General MacArthur, October 24, 1950.

responsible for entering the submarine ballistic missile effort with Poseidon and D-3 submarine systems. He was also responsible for the development and the manufacture of the solid rocket motors used on the Space Shuttle. For this work NASA presented him with its Distinguished Public Service medal. He also won the Collier Trophy for Thiokol for his work on the Shuttle.

In addition to propulsion, he entered Thiokol's Wasatch Division in the airbag program by developing a gas generator without using the noxious agent sodium azide. Wasatch's gas generators were the first to be used in German Mercedes airbags and are in wide use in many automobiles throughout the world. Partnered with Bendix, Thiokol and Bendix built two airbag divisions in Knoxville, Tennessee.

My father retired in 1981, when Thiokol Corporation was purchased by Morton Salt Corporation. My father left and became the President and Chief Executive Officer of Transpace Carriers Corporation, organized to take the Delta space launch vehicle to the private sector. My father headed the winning NASA competitive proposal to do so. However, in spite of then-President Reagan's Executive Order to transition the Delta launch vehicle to the private sector, the order was politically overturned.

After another retirement period, during which he worked as a consultant, in 1991 my father was recruited by Sequa Corporation, a public company with many wholly-owned subsidiary companies, to be the President and Chief Executive Officer of Atlantic Research Corporation, dedicated to development and manufacturing solid propellant rocket motors for tactical weapons systems, liquid propellant rocket motors for space satellite station keeping, and inflators for automotive airbag safety systems. My father's management expertise was quickly recognized by Sequa and subsidiary Sequa companies were added for him to manage. CASCO Corporation, an automotive products company, was added, as was Kollsman Corporation, and Professional

Services Group. After managing the latter two to efficient operating status, he was responsible for their profitable sale. He was also responsible for the purchase of an automotive company in Turin, Italy, and for building a plant in Colleferro, Italy, to manufacture those automotive products.

My father retired for good in 1997. In addition to the President and Chief Executive Officer titles of subsidiary companies for which he was responsible, he was a Senior Vice President of the parent company, Sequa Corporation. My father was 74 when he retired for good. He is now 95 years old, is in good health, works out regularly, and manages his own investments daily.



The story of this picture of the Savoca family wearing the 95th hoodies unfolds like this: Not too long ago, I admired the hoodie my dad was wearing, and he offered to order one for me. As soon as mine arrived and I started wearing it, my 15-year-old daughter borrowed it and started wearing it to school. Her two oldest siblings were so envious of the hoodie—and I was demanding its return—so my dad decided to order one for each of his grandkids (six in all), because at this point, everyone had voiced their rightful ownership of one! We decided to take our group Christmas photo with all six of my children and my parents proudly wearing this iconic garment!

Sincerely,

Gina Savoca

Hanging by Leg 4 Miles in Air Georgian Unsticks Live Bombs

U. S. EIGHTH AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS IN ENGLAND, July 10.—(AP)—He didn't teach such subjects as how to remove live bombs from a Fortress bomb bay while flying four miles in the sky, but Second Lieutenant Dewey W. Johnson, a former Georgia school teacher, demonstrated how during the June 22 attack on Huls, Germany.

Lieutenant Johnson, 21-year-old former school teacher in Denton, Ga., was navigator of the Flying Fortress "Princess" during the raid.

While flying peacefully home, the crew was startled by a frantic shout from Sergeant John E. Tierney, Penacook, N. H., radio operator-gunner: "Hey, two live bombs with us!"

Johnson slipped off his parachute and started for the two bombs, with spinner fuses revolving, in the bomb bay. He went through the narrow catwalk to the bomb bay, placed one foot in the compartment doorway, and told Sergeant George J. Shamas, of Bristol, Ga., waist gunner, to grasp

his ankle and hold the door closed against it.

Then, as the door bit painfully into his left leg, he slid headfirst into the bomb bay and released the bombs. The earth was four miles below, through the yawning bomb bay doors. The temperature was sub zero.

John pulled himself back to safety.

HANGING BY LEG 4 MILES IN AIR GEORGIAN UNSTICKS LIVE BOMBS

Atlanta Journal, July 10, 1945

U.S. EIGHTH AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS IN ENGLAND, July 10.—(AP)—He didn't teach subjects as how to remove live bombs from a Fortress bomb bay while flying four miles in the sky, but Second Lieutenant Dewey W. Johnson, a former Georgia school teacher, demonstrated how during the June 22 attack on Huls, Germany.

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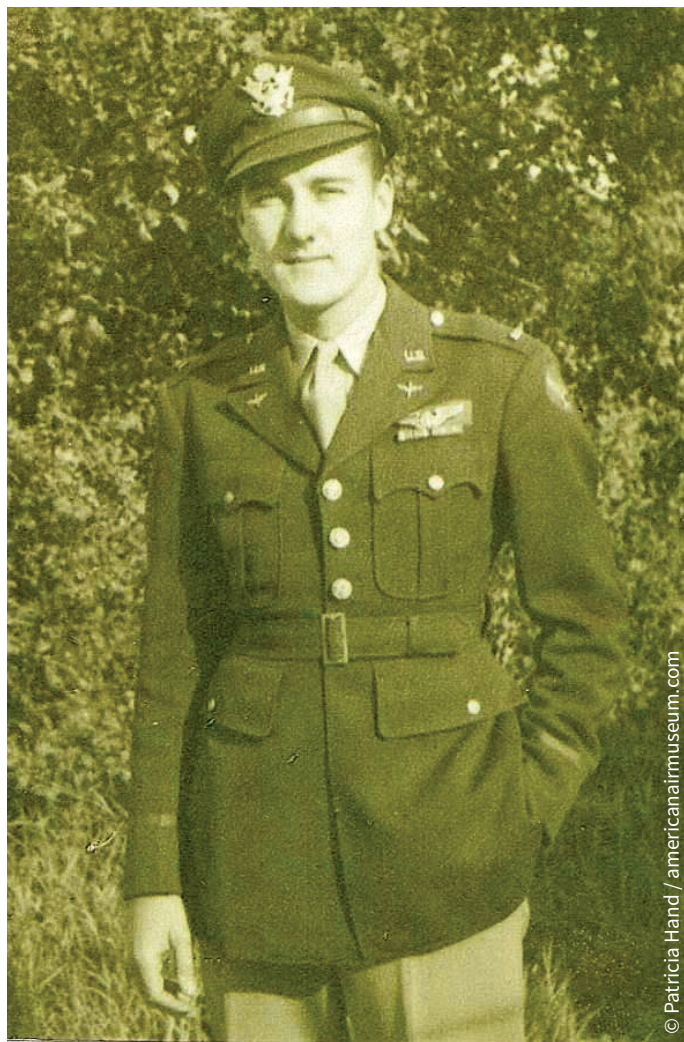
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FROM THE RESEARCH TEAM

SUBMITTED BY Diana Vickery and Pat Hand



© Patricia Hand / americanairmuseum.com

Dewey Wilcox Johnson

HIGHEST RANK

Lieutenant Colonel

SQUADRON / POSITION

336th / Bombardier

AWARDS

Air Medal with 7 oak leaf clusters (1 silver, 2 bronze)
Distinguished Flying Cross with 2 oak leaf clusters
Distinguished Flying Cross (British)
Air Force Commendation Medal
European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with 4 bronze stars



LOREN HARMAN'S WWII STORY

BY DENNIS HARMAN

This is the story of Loren Terrell Harman before, during and after World War II as best as I can piece together all the information I have heard and can remember. Some of it will not be completely accurate as time and age plays tricks on the old memory.

Dad was born on July 2, 1925 to Charles Leslie (Army WW1) and Tressa Hattie Terrell Harman in Nikkelton, Kansas. I think he weighed in at around four pounds, and considering that medicine wasn't what it is today, was very lucky to have survived. He was just a kid when the Great Depression was in full force. Dad always said they didn't even realize that there was a depression, because they lived on a farm and didn't have much money anyway, but they always had enough to eat and had a pretty good life on the farm.

Dad always enjoyed playing sports as a boy and he must have been a pretty tough kid. His brothers said he always wanted to be the catcher in baseball. One time they

were playing ball and they threw two balls to him at once, he caught one ball but the other one hit him on the nose and broke it. They said he was bleeding from the nose but he didn't want to quit playing ball, so he just kept playing. They said he was still pulling small pieces of bone out of his nose years later. Sounds pretty tough to me and I think that toughness got him through some of the things that happened later in his life.

Dad went to school in Nikkelton for the first five years, then for three years at a school four miles south of Gridley. He was always telling us we had it so easy because we got to take a bus to school. He had to walk a mile or more to and from school every day. He said he had no love for horses because they were too contrary and said he preferred the mules any day. Dad said when he got his first car that he was so poor that when he had a flat tire out in the farm that it had to sit there all winter until he could make enough money the next year to fix the tire. The family moved to

a place north of Burlington where Dad attended high school for three years. Dad went to Bloomingdale, Ohio before his senior year of high school. I think he went to stay with a relative and to work there.

It was while he was there that he took a test for the Army Air Corps. This should have been just before the United States entered World War II.

Upon passing the test, Dad entered the U.S. Army Air Corps at the young age of 18. He was sent to Fort Hays in Columbus, Ohio, in 1943. Then on to basic training at Jefferson Barracks, 22 miles south of St. Louis, MO. After completing basic training, Dad was sent on to Kingman, Arizona, where he received special gunnery training. From there, he went to Lincoln, Nebraska, where he was assigned to a crew.

The crew was sent to Rapid City, South Dakota, to take advanced flight training. After completing the training, the crew was sent

to Lincoln, Nebraska, where they were assigned a brand-new plane, a four-engine B-17 bomber, in the spring of 1944.

Dad was then officially a part of the 95th Bomb Group, Eighth Air Force, 335th Squadron. The crew flew the new bomber to Horham, England, where it was assigned bombing missions. Dad's gunnery training was put to good use, as he was either a tail gunner or the ball turret gunner on most missions. His luck held out for a lot of missions. On one mission they couldn't get back to base and had to land in allied territory because of damage to the plane. On the crew's seventh mission they had 37 holes shot in the plane and had the tires shot out. They had no choice but to land the plane on its belly on foam. Dad said they never lost a man on that mission.

Another time they had heavy flak in the air from German artillery and one of the pieces came right through the glass and hit the machine gun that Dad was

shooting. It slammed the gun back into his chest but he just suffered some bruises. Luck would have it that the gun took most of the force or it would have gone right through Dad's chest and I wouldn't be writing this right now. As I said, he was very lucky for quite a while.

One of Dad's best army buddies was John Kelley from Boonville, Indiana. John and Dad were on a scouting mission on the ground one time and came upon a German post in an old church. They were both just young men and probably scared half to death. Anyway, Dad said he would go around to the back door and John should go in the front. John went in the front and looked in the door and when he did, he saw a German soldier with a machine gun pointed toward the back door.

John heard Dad coming up the back steps and knew if he didn't do something that his best friend was going to get shot down. His knees were knocking so bad that he could hardly move, but



▲ (L to R) John E. Kelley and Loren Harman, 1945

he opened the door and fired about six rounds from his service revolver. He hit the German about three times, he thought. Dad came running in the back door to find out what was going on and saw the German soldier dead on the floor. The biggest shock they got was when they checked on the German soldier, they found out that he had been dead before they got there. Apparently, he had died from exposure and had been dead for some time. But it was a very

frightening experience for both of the young men.

Another experience Dad used to tell, was of the times they would go to the canteen to have a beer and relax with the other men. They usually went with their own squads and hung out with their own service. He said there was one of the guys, that was just a little bitty guy, who always went with them. The trouble was that he would get to drinking and after a while he would get to feeling ornery and just have to cause some trouble. He had a habit of finding the biggest, meanest and toughest guy in the bar, waiting until he got an opening, then sucker punch the guy and get a big fight going. As soon as he got the fight started, he would get out of the middle of the fighting and just watch. Dad said the guy thought it was great fun but after a few of these fights the other guys wouldn't go with him anymore.

Dad had flown in 17 missions between 11/1944 and 02/1945, been shot down or forced to land twice, and his crew was considered one of the best crews in the squadron. It was a series of bizarre circumstances that finally brought Dad's luck to an end on his 18th mission on 2/15/1945. First, because his crew was considered one of the best crews, their

plane was to be the lead plane on the bombing run on German industrial plants in and around Dresden, Germany. Now since they would be the lead plane, they didn't need a tail gunner since the only thing to shoot from the tail gunner position would be friendly planes. Dad may have still been assigned as the ball turret gunner, which I think is located in the belly of the plane, except that about this time, one of the other crew's tail gunners was injured in a freak accident. While sitting around the plane one of the crew accidentally leaned against a machine gun and it went off and hit the tail gunner in the groin area. Naturally, he was out of commission and probably out of the war. So, this second circumstance set the wheels in motion for Dad to be assigned to this new crew that he had not flown with before. He was assigned to be their waist gunner.

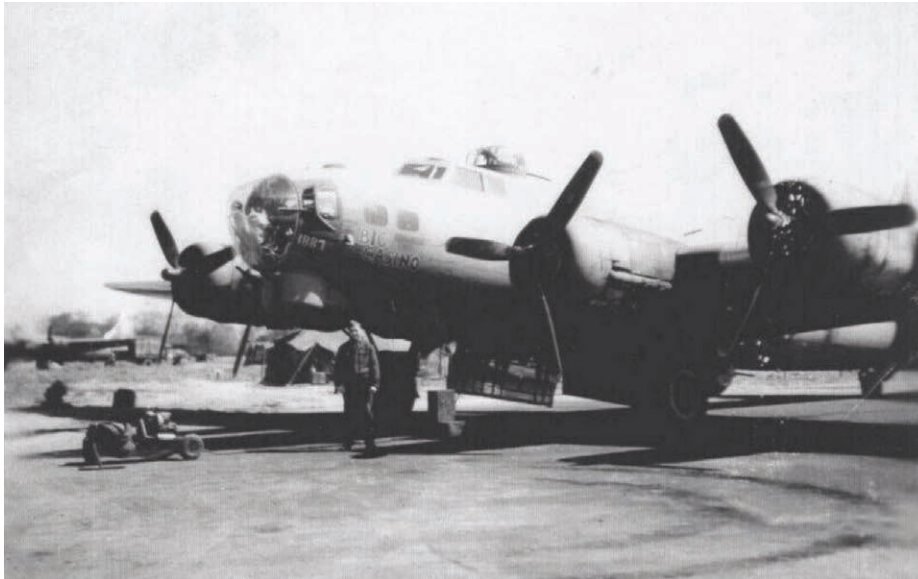
Now, he had left one of the best planes to be assigned to one of the other planes called "The Big Casino" and with a fresh and not very experienced crew, the records show most were on their 5th mission. The record also shows that 38 planes left on this mission to bomb Cottbus, Germany on 2/15/1945. Two planes landed with problems and Dad's plane was the only one lost. One of the other men on the crew was also assigned

from another crew and he would play a very important role in Dad surviving the mission at all. His name was Emery Hemingway.

Emery was on his last mission before he was to be shipped back to the States. So, he wasn't very happy to be assigned to this crew, as it was not very experienced. But experience had nothing to do with the plane having problems. Apparently, it had seen better days.

On the fateful day, after takeoff the trouble started. First the flight indicator went inoperative, which caused them to lose the formation. The next problem was the number three engine failed, which left them with three engines. Then the number four engine showed low oil pressure, so it was down to two good engines. At this time, they were back in the formation but now with two engines they couldn't maintain their position in the formation and were starting to lag behind. At this point in the mission they lost contact with the formation again.

Then just when they probably thought it couldn't get much worse, the number two engine developed an oil leak. With the number two engine feathered to help keep the plane airborne they lost contact with the formation again. At this



▲ Big Casino (42-31887)

point the crew of the plane were trying to decide what they should do. Dad and Emery Hemingway voted to go back as they knew the plane was in bad shape and Emery said he sure didn't want his last mission to end badly. Well, most of the crew voted to go on and deliver the bombs to the targets. That turned out to be a very bad choice.

As they flew on toward the target the plane started to lose altitude at the rate of 500 ft. per minute. They realized now that they were not going to make it to the target and they were too far into enemy territory to make it back. At this point, with the plane losing altitude and the crew probably scared to death, Dad and Emery Hemingway decided to parachute from the plane. The rest of the

crew followed suit as they had two choices, jump or go down with the plane. (There were reports that other planes saw the plane going down and saw a few men parachute out before the plane blew up in a ball of fire, but according to the record all nine crew members were POWs. So, it looked like they all got out.)

On the jump, the crew were scattered over quite an area and came down in different places. Dad said he came down in a stand of trees and his chute got hung up in one of the trees and he was hanging from the tree by his parachute. I don't know how far he was from the ground but he had to release from the parachute and drop to the ground. I don't think he was too far up as he didn't get hurt apparently. Dad didn't know if the

other men were okay or where they were so he hid his chute and started looking for them.

At this point I have several versions of what happened next. The version I remember the clearest is that Dad was walking along looking for the other men when he walked into a German camp. The Germans were all asleep or not paying attention and all the rifles were stacked in one spot. Dad had his gun and one of the Germans saw him with his gun and threw up his hands and surrendered to Dad. He thought he was a Roosky or Russian soldier, and he thought that if Dad just walked into the camp they must be surrounded by Russian soldiers.

So here was Dad with one gun and a whole bunch of German soldiers with their hands in the air. Well, Dad knew they would find out that he was by himself and that they would be able to capture him then. So, he told them he was an American and turned over his weapon to the Germans. Another version was that he came upon a French farm and that the farmer took him in and fed him and helped him out. But when a German army came by, he got scared that they would find out he was giving help to the enemy and he turned Dad over to the Germans. Dad never did think



much of the French people when it came to fighting or courage, so this could be true, but no one is sure. And one other version similar to the last one had Dad being helped by some friendly people who led Dad right into the German's hands after telling him they could get him back to the allies. At any rate, he was captured, as well as all the crew that had flown with him.

Back home in the States, Dad's parents were told that Dad was missing in action and that they had no way of knowing if he was dead or alive. So, I am sure it was a very sad and nervous time for Dad's parents and all his family and friends. As it turned out they didn't find out Dad was alive for a few months. I am sure that it was not a happy time for a lot of people. The war was a frightening thing and it was hard on the people that had to wait for their loved ones to return as well as on the men who were trying to make it back alive.

Back to Dad in Germany. He was taken in for interrogation at Lomstrff, Germany. Dad reported later that the Germans knew more about him and his family and probably the United States than he did. They knew things that he couldn't believe they knew. He said the interrogation was a waste of time as they already knew more than he did. This is pretty amazing

as they didn't have the computers and the internet like we do today. Yet, they had all this information about everyone from their intelligence reports. It is pretty scary when you think about how much these people knew about everyone thousands of miles away.

After interrogation was over, he was taken to Wetzler, Germany. They tried to move the prisoners on trains, but the Americans and Allies were bombing the trains and tracks at that time. The German people would try to throw rocks and bottles at the prisoners when they were being marched along as they had killed a lot of the German soldiers and many civilians also. So, they were not really happy to see these prisoners alive while their families were being killed. So, the German army had to try to keep the train cars between the prisoners and the German people to keep them from stoning them.

Once they were on the trains, they still had to worry about the American and Allied planes strafing the trains with machine gun fire all the way down the line. Seven men were killed and thirty-seven men were wounded by American and Allied fire. After a while the prisoners wouldn't get on the trains because they were being shot like fish in a barrel. So, someone thought of putting a sign

on the top of the train that said, POW, and they said that the planes wouldn't bomb them or shoot them after that.

Next came the "Black March." The Americans and Allies were closing in on the German army and they were trying to keep the prisoners away from them. So, since they couldn't move them by train because of the bombing and the tracks being torn up, they marched them from one camp to the next. It was 300 miles to Nuremburg, about a three-week march for the prisoners. Dad said it wasn't bad at first, at least they were outdoors and not in a prison. But after a while with all the walking and very little food or supplies they started losing weight and getting sick. Dad said he lost about 50 pounds.

At Nuremburg he was a prisoner at Stalag 7-A, a POW camp, for about a month. Then they were on the march again, this time 200 miles further to a camp in Moosburg, Germany, which took another two weeks. I think this is the march that was harder because of cold weather and bad conditions. Also, the Allies had planes out shooting at the German army with machine guns. Nearly to their destination, Dad fell into a hidden machine gun nest, trying to keep from getting shot by friendly fire. He hurt his

hip falling into the hole. He didn't know it was fractured at the time, just that it hurt bad. The Germans immediately told him they would take him to the hospital. Dad told them no way was he going to any hospital, especially since all the men knew that any man that was taken to the imaginary hospital never returned. Dad said anyone that they took away was taken out of sight and after a few minutes you would hear a gun shot and that would be it. This was where that old stubbornness and toughness came in handy.

I don't think very many men could have moved, let alone managed to limp along to the camp. At this point they were about 10 miles from the prisoner camp. Emery Hemingway came over and helped Dad and told him not to worry. He said they were both going to make it home and he would get Dad there if he had to carry him all the way. So, if there ever was anyone that Dad owed his life to it was probably Emery Hemingway.

You have to remember Dad was not with his regular crew but this man went out of his way to help my Dad. He will always have a special place in my heart! As the story goes Dad limped along holding on to Emery all the way to the camp and when he couldn't walk Emery carried him. I am

very thankful to this man named Emery Hemingway. I connected with his niece a few years ago and it was great hearing some stories about him. Thank you, Mr. Emery Hemingway!

After they got to the prison camp the conditions were anything but good. Dad was suffering with his hip and there was very little food and almost no medicine. The POWs would get one Red Cross parcel a week, consisting of some cheese, crackers and Spam. He said the prisoners were so hungry that they would eat just about anything that was edible. He said that they would have beans or soup and it would have bugs in it and the prisoners would eat it anyway, they were so hungry. They were eating bugs, rats, mice or anything edible at that time. The Germans didn't have enough to even feed their own men and not much at all in the way of medicine. By this time, they were putting any male in the military who was old enough to hold a gun. Hitler was trying to hold it all together and was running out of all resources. He wanted to kill as many of the people as he could, that he considered inferior.

Dad said if anyone ever said that the reporters just made it up about Hitler killing the Jewish and Polish people, that he could

tell them first hand that he was a witness. He said you don't ever forget the smell of people burning in the ovens and the smell of lime in the open graves. I think this was one of the worst things that he had to try to forget after the war was over. He had actually seen the ovens and the gas chambers that the Germans were using. He always said that the only thing that saved him was that he was a white Christian and not Jewish. The Germans ran out of time before they could do all their dirty work killing everyone that they considered not of the Master Race.

On the morning of April 29, 1945 Dad said they could hear the tanks coming from about 5 miles away. By noon Patton's Third Army stormed the gates and the Americans came in! The German soldiers threw down their guns and weapons and surrendered. The prisoners were all released and given food and help with their injuries. The German soldiers were all lined up and Patton's soldiers asked the prisoners if any of the guards were mean to them or hurt them in any way. If any guard was pointed out they were shot on the spot.

Dad said that there were atrocities on both sides and he felt sad to see these German men shot down like dogs. He said most of the German

guards treated them pretty well. A lot of the prisoners kind of protected the Germans because the war was over for them and they didn't want to see any more killing. Dad said the Germans just threw down their helmets, belts, uniforms and other things and just started walking back to their homes. All the prisoners picked up things to take home with them, but most of it was taken away from them when they got on the ship to go home.

Dad had been a POW from February to the end of April and was now a free man. Dad went in to the prison camp weighing in at around 160 pounds and at the time of his liberation he weighed in at 107 pounds. He suffered from malnutrition and his teeth were in bad shape from loss of calcium, his hip had started to mend on its own (he didn't find out it was actually fractured until many years later when they x-rayed it and told him it had been broken) and the doctors told him they had patients a lot worse off than him, with missing legs, arms, etc. so all in all he came through his ordeal as well as could be expected. He was on a plane out of Germany on May 15, 1945. He was taken to Camp Lucky Strike in LeHavre, France. Here, he was debriefed, deloused and given fresh clothes. Five days later on May 20, he

was brought back to the States on a passenger ship, "the Marine Angel," docking in Massachusetts eleven days later.

Dad served as a staff sergeant for 18 of the 37 months in his military career. He earned the Air Medal, with three clusters, for bravery above and beyond the call of duty; two bronze stars; the Good Conduct Medal and the P.O.W. Medal. Dad was discharged from the Corps on November, 1945 and returned to Kansas to his family.

Dad went back to Ohio and married Erma Mae Merryman. He had sons, Dennis Alan, Thomas Loren, Larry Charles and a daughter, Judith Ann. He was a farmer in Indiana for a few years then got into the concrete business as a cement finisher. He worked as a union finisher before he started his own concrete construction company. He employed several relatives over the years and my brothers and I all learned how to finish concrete. We were all a lot younger than Dad but until the day he retired I think he could still out finish all of us!

He finished concrete for around 40 years in Indiana and Illinois, until he retired to Yates Center, Kansas, in 1989. He was divorced and remarried to Barbara Jean Brewer in 1966. He had sons Brian

and Brent with Barbara.

Dad was a good father who had his faults like all of us, but he went through more in his younger years than most of us will ever go through. He loved playing cards, especially euchre and Kansas pitch. He passed this love on to his kids as we all love to play cards. He lived in several states in his lifetime, loved his beer, loved his Kansas sunflowers, loved sports and loved his family and friends!

He was overweight in his later years, over 300 pounds and I think most of that was because of the war and not wanting to go hungry again and after hip surgery he couldn't walk or exercise much. He always was a big eater and never missed a meal that I know of. He was not without sin and I pray that the Good Lord will overlook his sins and give him a place in Heaven where we will all meet again someday. I think he got as close to hell on earth as you can possibly get and survived it and I can't see how it could be worse where he is at now.

Dad passed away on August 25, 1999 in his sleep. He had been having trouble breathing and had not been feeling well. But just as he wouldn't go to that hospital with the Germans, he wouldn't go to the doctor this time, either. He

had an appointment for the next week and he was too stubborn to go early.

He had a very moving military funeral at Fort Scott cemetery in Kansas with the honor guard and the 21-gun salute and the Taps. There was a long funeral procession to the cemetery and we had to go on a 4-lane highway to get there. As a sign of respect almost every car and truck on both sides of the highway pulled off and stopped while we passed. I had never seen that before and was really touched. I had gone to funerals in Illinois where the people were passing the procession... they were not taught the respectful thing to do.

As his preacher friend said at the funeral, Dad was his own man and he did what he wanted. The preacher said that after Dad had his hip replacement surgery he didn't know if he would be able to walk again. The first time he came to the coffee shop after the surgery he was in a wheelchair, a few days later he was using a walker, then he just used a cane and finally after a couple of weeks, he said he walked in without any help. So even then he was still showing the same strength that served him well his whole life. He said Dad always talked about how he liked Kansas, but that Indiana and

Illinois had better crops, better land, better water, better sports teams, etc. He said that Dad is probably in Heaven talking to St. Peter about Heaven. He is saying "Yes, Heaven is really nice but I still think Indiana is nicer!"

Besides the previously mentioned people, Dad is survived by all his brothers and sisters. Russell Harman (Army Air Corps), Emery Harman (Navy), Paul Harman (Air Force), Verna Riley and Jean McCormick. Also, daughters-in-law, Carol Harman and Julie Harman. Grandson, Gregory, granddaughters, Angela, Kelly and Laura, great granddaughter, Cassandra and great, great grandson, Roman (and one more on the way). And many other relatives too numerous to mention. He was preceded in death by a great granddaughter, Leah. He is missed and we love him very much! God bless you, Dad!

PS: If anyone reading this has any information to add let me know. Like I said at the beginning of the story, a lot of the information is from other people so it might not all be perfectly accurate. God bless our service men and women and the United States of America!



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- PICTURES & STORIES
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- UNSOLVED MYSTERIES
- PROJECTS OF REMEMBRANCE

Contributing a submission to the newsletter is a great way to memorialize your loved one and create lasting connections with the 95th Bomb Group community. We are happy to assist with editing stories, scanning pictures or documents, etc.

2019 SUBMISSION DEADLINES:

SPRING: **MARCH 1ST**

SUMMER: **JUNE 1ST**

FALL/WINTER: **NOVEMBER 15TH**

Sara R. W. Olson,
Newsletter Editor
editor@95thbg.org



Left Formation

IN RECOGNITION AND HONOR OF ALL THE 95TH BOMB GROUP VETERANS WHOSE STORIES WE HAVE NEVER HEARD

| VETERAN | SQUADRON | POSITION | PASSED |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Warren Wylie, Jr. | 335 th | Waist Gunner | 17 Nov 2018 |
| Donald R. Hayes | UNK | UNK | 11 Jan 2019 |
| Robert L. Fay | 334 th | Ball Turret Gunner | 2 Feb 2019 |
| Richard Farden | 336 th | Bombardier | 10 Feb 2019 |
| Arl B. Cross* | 336 th | Waist Gunner | 18 Mar 2019 |

*Page 5: Read an excerpt of Arl's 2004 Reunion interview with Janie McKnight



Military Funeral Honors express our nation's gratitude to the veterans who gave so much to defend our freedom. To make arrangements for Military Funeral Honors, call your nearest Air Force Base and ask to be connected to their Honor Guard. More information can be found at:

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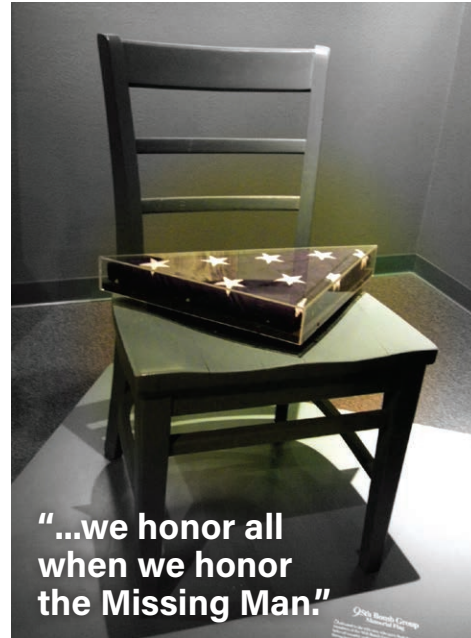
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