



*** We were the 1st, and still serving ***

SECOND BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

"Second to None"

www.2ndbombgroup.org



Volume 22, No. 1



January 2006

President's Corner

Energy and Enthusiasm

This characterizes our St. Louis reunion. Perhaps it was the altitude. We were, after all, on the 12th floor of the Renaissance Hotel and up in the Arch on one of the tours. It most certainly was evident among the 53 veterans and 41 spouses who came for fun and fellowship.

Adding to the sparkle were 23 or 24 offspring and a few other Boomers. One hundred twenty-seven delegates in all attended, including our very special friends Giancarlo and Silvana from Venice. There was so much energy and enthusiasm that it was quickly determined that we should do it again in 2006! Yes, ladies and gentlemen, we will not wait two years to meet again. Mark your calendars for:

September 28 to October 1, 2006

Holiday Inn - Dayton, Ohio
and Wright Patterson AFB

Conference co-chairs Dick Radtke and Kemp Martin are diligently planning and conniving to come up with an unforgettable program - such that you will not want to miss it. Make your plans now, to be with us.

New Officers

Noted in these pages is the election of Bonnie Hellums to be Secretary of the Association, succeeding Frederick Rice III. Sid Underwood (more new blood) will become Webmaster, taking over from our loyal, longtime master and originator of the website, Dave Carlock. Out special thanks go to Dave. Burt Thorman will become Assistant Treasurer.

We recognize Pat Kennelly who has served for some time as our Agent, representing our association to the California Secretary of State. Added as directors are

longtime members and Past Presidents Kemp Martin and Dick Radtke. Joining them as Directors at Large, are veterans John Bryner, Jack Norwine, Ray Specker and Lew Waters. Rounding out the slate of directors are Fred Fitzpatrick and George H. True.

With five new young members, (Hellums, Underwood, Kennelly, Fitzpatrick and True) joining Historian Paul Skalny on the board, they now represent one third of the officers and directors of your association. The expanded board will be better able to carry out the leadership activities of your association. One example of this is the "telephone contact" program that will have reached out to every possible member by the time you have read this message.

Please note that the nominations for the office of treasurer are still open. Incumbent Bill Parsons, wants to be and needs to be relieved of the duties of this office. If you are or know of a promising candidate, contact me.

Website Info

How many of you have pulled up the "Database" on our website www.2ndbombgroup.org? If you do not have a computer, contact your sons and daughters who do. Better, try the grandkids. They will be thrilled to do this and provide you with printouts of your personal mission list. You may also print out "Entire Crew Report" that will list every man you flew with on each and every mission you flew. There are many other features in the database. Dick Drain of Springfield, Ohio was kind enough to share it with us. There are over 119,000 bits of data in this base. One thing I have not figured out is how to count the number of men who flew at least one sortie with the Second BG. It is in there somewhere. If any one figures it out, I've got a Churchill cigar for him or her. Dig into this information. It has much that you can share with your family and friend.

Loy Dickinson

Notice: The Roster will be re-issued every other year only.
So save the Changes of Addresses and New Members listing in the back of this newsletter.

The View from the Farm

I think it probably is impossible to attend a reunion such as our September/October gathering in St. Louis without realizing what a great bond we have as survivors of more that 60 years since the days we spent together doing our parts in the great battles against those who would take away the freedoms of others and cause such havoc in the world.

What a great privilege we have to meet together knowing each of us has a different story to tell, but all of us have somewhat the same story to tell, as well.

We have had the privilege to meet five members of one crew and four of another crew still gathering, when they can, to celebrate together. Lifelong friendships and companionships that have meant so much to us for so many years.

And, as well, to see members of the baby boomer generation taking part in the activities of the association with great energy and anticipation. We are fortunate to have members of the next generation taking part, even to the point of accepting positions as officers in the organization. Thanks is due to them for their interest and enthusiasm.

Have you ever had a thought about the many World War II airplanes that were left on the battlefields of the world. Our USAAF lost more than 5,000 heavy bombers in the European Theater alone, to say nothing of the medium and light bombers, fighters, gliders and transports. Our Second Bomb Group left almost two hundred B-17s where they fell. My crew and I even left one pile of wreckage in Yugoslavia.

Other theaters of operations showed similar airplane losses though the battles of the Pacific were not as concentrated and fierce as the contest in Europe.

This does not take into account the other air forces engaged in the great war, both our allies and our enemies. The British RAF and the German, Japanese and Russian air forces were engaged longer than the US forces and their losses, too, were comparable.

Since almost the end of the war, historians and other interested parties have been busy finding these wrecks. Some members of our association have been contacted by natives of locales where their airplanes went down to honor them and show them parts of their airplanes that have been recovered. Others have uncovered airplanes and pulled them out of ice caps, jungles, lakes and swamps and even deep oceans to show them and in some cases make them fly again. (Remember our visit to the "My Gal Sal" restoration project during our 2003 reunion?)

You may think "what a waste." These complicated machines that were so carefully engineered

and put together, to be scattered about the world and left for the elements. War is a most wasteful enterprise, not only in the tools that are used but more importantly in the lives that are lost. We will always remember and honor the 586 men in the 2nd who gave their lives while fighting beside us in World War II.

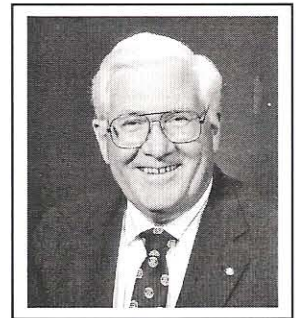
Remember: Keep us up to date concerning any change in your address, phone number or any other pertinent information. If you do, we will try to keep the roster and mailing list current.

Earl Martin, editor

Our Business Addresses

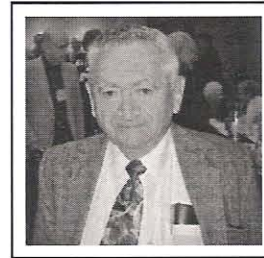
President

Loy A. Dickinson
16685 Cielo Ct.
Parker, CO 80134-3592
(720) 851-9663 CO
(480) 895-9212 AZ
loy@denvertest.com



Vice President

John D. Sisson
The Dam Site Box 242
Mill River, MA 01244-0242
(413) 229-6638
jsisson242@aol.com



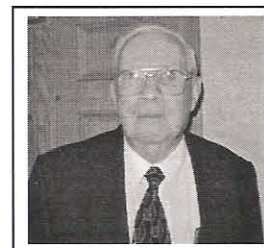
Secretary

Bonnie Crane Hellums
3030 Eastside St.
Houston, TX 77098
(713) 521-4650 Hm
(713) 397-0360 Cell
Bonnie_Hellums@justex.net



Treasurer

William A. Parsons
815 Frost Rd., Suite 301
Streetsboro, OH 44241-4732
(330) 653-8684
wparsons1@alltel.net



Assistant Treasurer, Burton Thorman
PO Box 4312, Annapolis, MD 21403
(410) 626-1351 BThor@netscape.net



Historian
Paul F. Skalny
56340 Copperfield Dr.
Shelby Township, MI
48316-4808
(586) 781-8486
secondhistory@yahoo.com

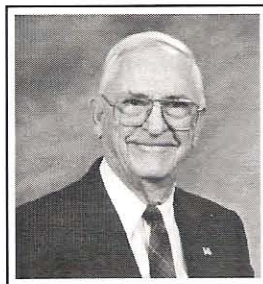
Web Master
David F. Carlock
6620 S Jamestown Ave.
Tulsa, OK 74136-1423
(918) 492-9239
dfcarlock@cox.net



Asst. Web Master
Sid Underwood
7920 Garden North Dr.
Garden Ridge, TX 78266
(210) 651-5666 Hm
(210) 886-3260 Ofc
sidunderwood@prodigy.net



Newsletter Editor
Earl W. Martin
508 Mountain View Rd.
Williamston, SC 29697-9601
(864) 225-4605
ewebmartin@aol.com



Immediate Past President, Richard K. Radtke
60 Villa Heights Ct., Algoma, WI 54201-1463
(920) 487-3343 ektdar@charter.net

Past President, Kemp F. Martin
806 Oak Valley Dr., Houston, TX 77024
(713) 464-0401 Hm (800) 467-5405 Ofc
kmartin1@pdq.net

Agent to California Secy of State
Patrick J. Kennelly
1628 N Mountain View Pl., Fullerton, CA 92831
(714) 879-4076 patkennelly@adelphia.net

Directors at Large
John H. Bryner
PO Box 2207, Ames, IA 50010
(515) 388-4550 jbzpvf@yahoo.com

Fred Fitzpatrick
2334 E. Helen, Tucson, AZ 85719
(520) 403-7682 Cell fitz_robles11@msn.com

Jack Norwine
575 Elm St., Calvert City, KY 42029
(270) 395-7359 polly26@charter.net

Ray Specker
3225 Southdale Dr. #11, Dayton, OH 45409
(937) 298-7580 specker@aol.com

George H. True
3518 N Graham Rd., Madison, IN 47250
(812) 273-3938 Hm (812) 701-1530 Cell
ghtrue@peoplepc.com

Lewis H. Waters
1909 Wedgewood Cir., Springfield, OH 45503-1764
enon@voyager.net

In Memorium

John F. Boyle, 96th Sq.
William M. Daly, 429th Sq.
Oct. 11, 2005
Samual A. Dum, 20th Sq.
March 1, 2004
Roland Kelley, 20th Sq.
January 28, 2005
Orville W. Olinghouse, 49th Sq.
Feb. 25, 2005

Reunion 2006 Rather than 2007

Great news!!

The Board of Directors has decided that the next reunion of the Second Bombardment Association will be September 28, 29, 30, October 1, 2006.

This is a departure from the former tradition of holding a reunion every other year.

Further news from the board!! A decision was made to hold the reunion in Dayton, Ohio, the home of the Wright Brothers and the location of Wright Patterson AFB and the Air Force Museum. We will gather at the Holiday Inn, Dayton.

This will be a great gathering of the old eagles and many of the younger generation who are becoming interested in the organization.

Look forward to further information which will come to you soon.

E-mail Addresses

All e-mailers: Please send us your e-mail address. We will add it to the list for more efficient communication.

Michael L. Adamslgzygmla@yahoo.com
 Donald W. ApplegateDWapple@aol.com
 Bud Branskybudzema@aol.com
 John Brynerjbzprf@yahoo.com
 Mathew Brynermrbyrner@msn.com
 David Carlockdfcarlock@cox.net
 John Carlsonjcarlson83@comcast.net
 Thomas R. Cochrantcochra7@bellsouth.net
 John Collensjohncol@directcon.net
 Jim De Lutesjdphotos@earthlink.net
 Loy A. Dickinsonloy@denvertest.com
 Orv DoughtyOldmmd@cox.net
 Stephen D. EdsonSedson1@charter.net
 Giancarlo Garelogiancarlo garelo@virgilio.it
 Bill GarlandBillgarland@wildapache.net
 Sanford Goldingsangolding@hotmail.com
 Jim Goodrichjuneo@homerelay.net
 Bill Grossw3tam.bill@juno.com
 Al Grossmanmrsqtype@sbcglobal.net
 Don R. Hayesb17assndhayes@bmi.net
 Bonnie HellumsBonnie_Hellums@justex.net
 Ken Highmanymustangs@charter.net
 Edwin Hodgesefairoaks@2extreme.net
 James L. Howelljhowell1@airmail.net
 Lawrence L. JenkinsLjenkins946@aol.com
 Bill Johnsonwjohnson@midssouth.rr.com
 Rolland C. Kelleyrodlikel@earthlink.net
 Pat Kennellypatkennelly@adelphia.net
 Morton L. Klauberb17ball@adelphia.net
 Stanley M. Korellstan1919@webtv.net
 Vic & Roxa Kreimeyervicroxakrei@verizon.net
 Gene Kurzenga20@aolcom
 Gerry Langeneggerlangenegger@yahoo.com
 John LeClairjal4824@aol.com
 Greg Lehmaneagleacres@bellsouth.net
 Merle Lorenzenanmr7@newnorth.net
 Tim Mahartjpita@adelphia.net
 Farley Mannfarleymann1@cox.net
 Earl Martinewebmartin@aol.com
 Kemp Martinkmartin1@pdq.net
 Victor Metzmvmtz@aol.com
 Andy Millermilleroilcompany@hotmail.com
 Mike Millermichealmiller@bellsouth.net
 Tom Monroetmonroejr@charter.net
 Jack Myersjrsmeyers@worldnet.att.net
 Carl Nastrolupilcarlnastropil@evl.net
 Willard NetzleyCCNETZLEY@aol.com
 Jack M. Norwinepolly26@charter.net
 Joe Owsianikjerseyjoeows@aol.com
 Bill Parsonswparsons1@alltel.net
 Petersonwww.psln.com/pete/pow.htm
 Howard Plunkett ...HHP10184@wmconnect.com

Dick Radtkeektdar@charter.net
 Frederick V. Rice IIIfrice1@midssouth.rr.com
 John Robertsjohnroberts@sbcglobal.net
 Gen. Charles Robertson, Jr.reach01@earthlink.net
 Fredric Rosemorefmrosemore@aol.com
 John D. SissonJSisson242@aol.com
 Paul Skalnysecondhistory@yahoo.com
 Ed Smithaedsmith@msn.com
 Gaither A. SpeaksGAPS@SC.rr.com
 Ray Speckerspecker@aol.com
 Joe Speightjohnyczar@cs.com
 Elliot SpiessELSpiess@aol.com
 Terry SullivanTmsul@aol.com
 Burt Thormanbthor@netscape.net
 George H. Truegtrue@peoplepc.com
 Robert Underhillunderh@iastate.edu
 Sid Underwoodsidunderwood@prodigy.net
 Sidney P. UpsherSPupsher@aol.com
 Gerald Vosskanjoo@charter.net
 Lewis H. Watersenon@voyager.net
 Vincent S. WernerSterlmyrt@aol.com
 Richard "Woody" Woodwoodhouse@yahoo.com
 Arthur Worthawnewport@yahoo.com
 Lyman F. Worthington...worthington2873@msn.net
 Leo Zupanleoz@ccountry.net
 2nd Bomb Web Sitewww.2ndbombgroup.org
 Heavy Bomberswww.heavybombers.com
 Army Air Forceswww.armyairforces.gov
 National Archiveswww.archives.gov
 USAFUSAF.com
 B-17 Flying Fortress Assoc.www.airwarb17.net
 Honor Flightwww.HonorFlight.org

Did You Know?

1. That Andrew Toti invented the "Mae West" when he was 16 years old. The War Department paid him the grand sum of \$1,600 for this great invention that saved so many lives.
2. That Col. John Ryan, 2nd Bomb Group Commander during 1944-45 became Commander of the Air Force in the 1960s and that his son, Gen. Michael Ryan became Commander of the Air Force 1997-2001.
3. That Tim Holt (remember him in the western movies?) was a B-29 bombardier and completed 22 missions against Japan.
4. That Richard Bong (American Ace of Aces with 40 kills) died flying a new jet powered fighter, P-80.
5. That Navy flyers from the Aircraft Carrier Hornet destroyed 742 Japanese aircraft on the ground, 688 in the air, one Japanese cruiser, one carrier, ten destroyers and forty-two cargo ships. The Hornet did not receive any damage from enemy attacks.
6. That commander of the 15th Air Force in Italy, Gen. Nathan Twining, spent 5 days in a life raft after his B-17 ditched in the Pacific.

Reunion 2005

St. Louis, MO was the site of the Second Bombardment Association's reunion, Sept. 29, 30, Oct. 1 and 2, 2005. The Renaissance Hotel, adjacent to the airport (Lambert Field), was the location at which about 130 Second Bomb Group Association members and families began to gather on Wednesday, Sept. 28.

A meeting of the Board of Directors was first on the agenda, Wednesday night.

Registration for the reunion began Thursday afternoon as most of the membership began to arrive in time for the 6:30 pm welcome buffet. This was the first of several delicious meals the group enjoyed during the reunion.

The 12th floor of the large hotel was nearly all dedicated to the presence of the association. Meeting rooms were occupied and the large hospitality room was in use at all times. Many gathered around the tables to discuss old times and new. Association Historian Paul Skalny prepared panels of pictures and placed them on stands around the room and notebooks of pictures and articles for the tables. These were put to use by all those in attendance.

The bar was opened at 4:00 pm each day so those who wished a light libation were accommodated.

The large ballroom with a panoramic view of the airport through floor to ceiling windows was the scene of meals provided by the hotel. Many wished to linger there to enjoy the views while reminiscing with old friends.

A Welcome Buffet supper was the first event for all, Thursday evening. Most had arrived in time to get in line for the delicious food and the supper was well attended.

Friday morning two buses were loaded for a trip called Soaring Splendor. This tour took us through Forest Park, the location of the famous 1904 World's Fair. ("Meet Me in St. Louis Lewy")

The next stop was at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis. What a magnificent structure, featuring 83,000 square feet of mosaics adorning the walls and ceilings. The knowledgeable guide explained the meanings of each as the group toured this marvelous creation.

Lunch was next at Bevo Mill, a favorite hangout for some of the Busch family in times past. A tour of the historic place was also included.

Most of the members are familiar with some



2nd Bomb Group

2nd Bombardment Association

2005
REUNION

St. Louis, Missouri



September 29 - October 2

Renaissance Hotel Airport

9801 Natural Bridge Rd.
St. Louis, Missouri



of the products of the Boeing Aircraft Company, so a visit to the manufacturing plant across the airport from the hotel was quite appropriate. Here, a lecture by a company historian, delved into the past of Boeing and several other aircraft manufacturing companies that have merged with this giant. The group was also privileged to spend time in the Boeing Prologue Room where hundreds of airplane models, pictures and paintings are displayed.

All too soon we returned to the hotel for visits to the hospitality room and another delicious buffet supper.

Saturday morning, the buses were again loaded at the hotel and the gang was off for something of a tour before ending at Grants Farm. This place, Mr. Busch's Country Estate, was once known as Hard Scrabble Farm when owned by the yet to be famous U.S. Grant. It is now known as the home of the famed Busch Company Clydesdale Horses, and is where they are bred and cared for. Many other

continued on next page

animals live there and they were viewed by all from the comfort of the little trains that traverse the property.

Lunch was obtained from several shops on the farm and free beer in various Busch varieties was available to all who wished.

The tour then took the group to the nation's tallest manmade monument, the 630 foot Gateway Arch standing on the bank of the Mississippi River. This magnificent structure along with the Museum of Westward Expansion is a tribute to the growth of the United States as it burgeoned to the West.

Some enjoyed the vast displays in the museum while others took the ride to the top of the arch for a spectacular view of the city and surroundings.

Some also visited the Old Cathedral, the oldest church west of the Mississippi River.

The highlight of the reunion was the traditional Saturday Night Banquet. A delicious meal was enjoyed by everyone and time was spent visiting with old friends and new. Reminiscences were spoken about by some of the members.

The last event of the reunion was the traditional Sunday morning brunch. Though some of the attendees had needed to leave, quite a few attended this event before heading for home.

President Loy Dickinson called a meeting of the Board of Directors before they departed Sunday morning.

The ones attending this, the 12th Association Reunion, showed a great deal of enthusiasm and interest in the events of the reunion and enjoyed the company and companionship. They seemed to enjoy the gathering of Eagles and the ganging together of all the 2nd Bomb Veterans for group pictures.

The 97th Bomb Group Association, (our companion group in Africa and at Amendola) held their 2005 reunion at the Renaissance Hotel on the same dates as the 2nd. It was good to visit with those warriors at times while we had time during our stay.

Many pictures were taken during the events of the reunion and as many as possible will be shown in this edition of the newsletter. Many pictures will also be shown on the website as they become available to David Carlock.

Reunions

2nd Bomb Group

1983 - San Antonio, TX
1985 - Sacramento, CA
1987 - Norfolk, VA
1989 - Tucson, AZ
1991 - Dayton, OH
1993 - Houston, TX

1995 - Kansas City, Mo
1997 - Las Vegas, NV
1999 - Orlando, FL
2001 - Omaha, NE
2003 - Covington, KY
2005 - St. Louis, MO

429th Squadron

1983 - Colorado Springs, CO
1985 - Atlanta, GA
1986 - Seattle, WA
1988 - Branson, MO
1990 - Lafayette, LA
1992 - Wisconsin Dells, WI

1994 - Albuquerque, NM
1996 - Nashville, TN
1998 - St. Louis, MO
2000 - Lafayette, LA
2002 - Dayton, OH



Gathering of the Eagles. We salute you!!



Let us check in and register for the event.



The Hospitality Room was a busy place.



Get your drink tickets here.



The bar was busy.



Deep discussions took place.



Loy Dickinson, President, hard at work.



What Stories!!!



Touring the Basilica of St. Louis.



Jake Killian enjoys the Boeing tour.



The Arch to the west. Some rode to the top.



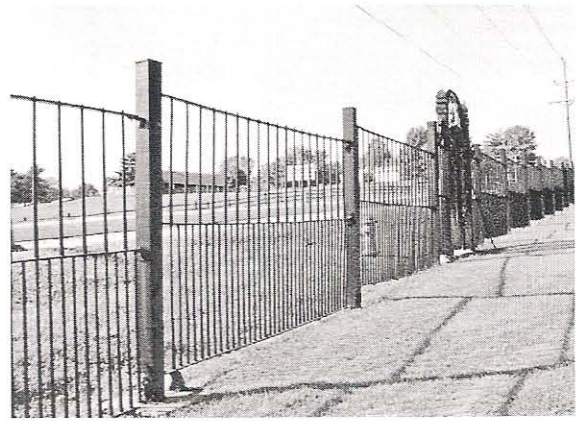
Andy and Pauline Miller



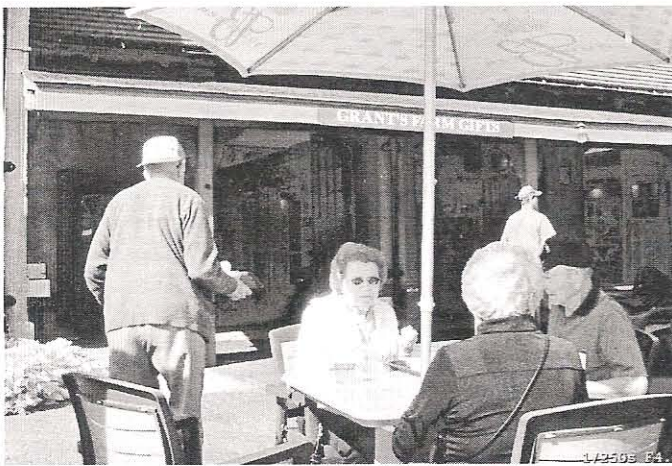
Eliot and Luretta Spies



Ride the rails - see the sights - Grant's Farm



The Rifle barrel fence - Grant's Farm



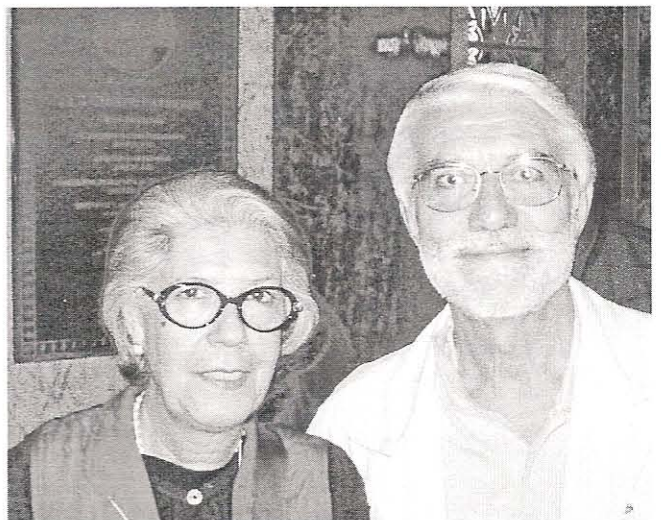
Lunch at Grant's Farm



A Budweiser Clydesdale colt



Bevo Mill for lunch



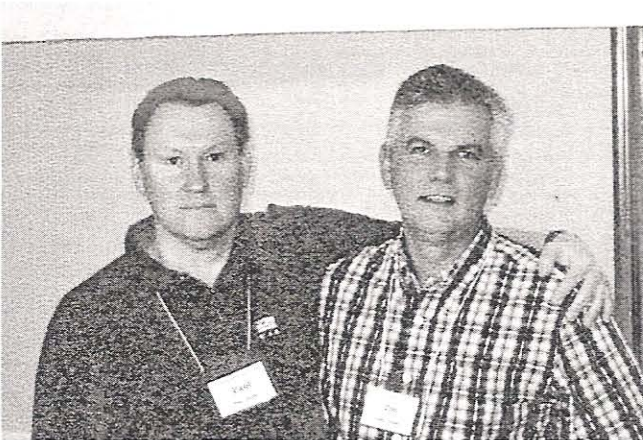
Mr. and Mrs. Giancarlo Garello,
our Italian companions



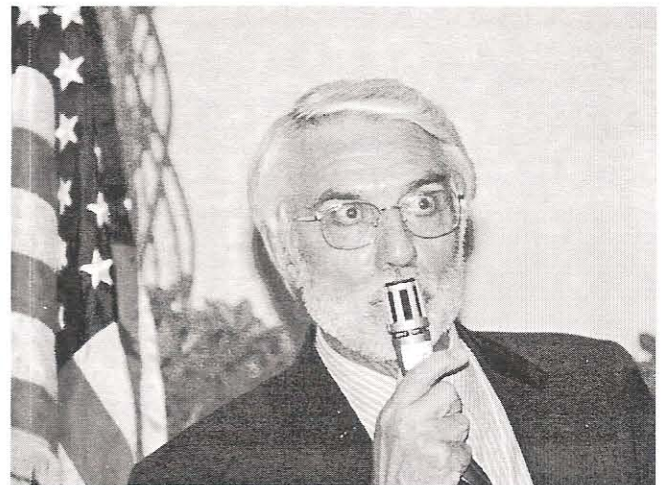
Past Presidents and wives;
Dick and Irene Radtke, Kemp and Mary Martin.



Mr. President in his Czech hat.



Paul and Jim Skalny



Giancarlo and greetings from Italy



Nancy, Rodney and Anne Martin



Bonnie and Carel Hellums



Mr. and Mrs. John Sisson



The Spies Crew

Robert Merino, co-pilot; Andy Miller, Ball Turret;
Jerry Voss, radio; Eliot Spiess, pilot; Johnny
LeClair, tail gunner.



Arthur and Leona Winkler with their daughter.



3 crew members -

Arthur Worth, Ray Tuwalski, Jim Goodrich.



Ron and Bea Dillrich



96th Squadron



Mary and Kemp Martin, Amelia and Bill Parsons



The Lorenzens



Dick and Irene Radtke



Lew and Anne Waters



Burton and Rose Thormon



Everyone's Gone!
The Board of Directors must plan.

Honor Flight

Honor Flight! This describes a wonderful name for an inspiring program! Honor Flight was created in 2004 by Earl L. Morse, a retired Air Force pilot who flew helicopter search and rescue missions. Mr. Morse has worked as a Physicians Assistant in the V.A. Clinic in Springfield, Ohio, where he assisted many WWII veterans. And his father is a WWII veteran, so the completion of the WWII Memorial was an influential event in his life.

The purpose of Honor Flight is to fly America's disadvantaged, elderly veterans to Washington D.C. to visit the WWII Memorial and other memorials as well, that have been dedicated to honor their sacrifices. The program originally had about 18 volunteer aircraft (4 and 6 passenger), and 20 pilots participating. The volunteers pilot the aircraft and personally escort each veteran to one or more memorials in Washington D.C. The planes fly to an airport in Maryland, where buses or vans drive them to the District of Columbia. The flights, shuttle service, wheelchairs and meals are free to all veterans.*

At the beginning the pilot volunteers were using their own personal funds, as well as donating their time, to help our veterans realize their wish of visiting the WWII Memorial. During the year there have been many donations, but more help is needed. The program does not receive any government or corporate funds, but is operating on individual donations.

On Veterans Day our local D.A.V. Chapter 13 donated \$400.00 to Honor flight and this past August 7, Purple Heart Day, the Department of Ohio Military Order of the Purple Heart donated \$1000.00 to the program. All donations to this charitable organization are tax deductible. Honor Flight was itself honored on May 30, Memorial Day, by CBS's "The Early Show," with a segment describing the program.

In this first year of operation there were seven flights from the Springfield, Ohio Municipal airport, involving 32 small planes, flying 132 veterans to the District of Columbia. In addition, two flights from the Dayton International Airport involved Air Tran's 717's, each of which was able to fly 35 veterans and 15 chaperones. Currently there are 270 veterans on the waiting list, hoping to make the journey in 2006.

Inquiries about the program can write to Honor Flight, PO Box 214, Enon, OH 45323; e-mail to: HonorFlight@aol.com; Telephone: (937) 864-7261; or website: www.HonorFlight.org.

** Information obtained from brochure published by Honor Flight. article sent in by member, Lewis H. Waters*

"Before You Go"

*provided by Bonnie Hellums
Association Secretary*

Veterans of WWII are now dying at a rate of about 2,000 per day. I encountered the following article in the Union-Tribune this morning and checked out the referenced song (link in the article). It is a legitimage link, virus free and an outstanding song in memory of our WWII veterans.

Note: If the link in the article doesn't work, just go to www.beforeyougo.us. It will get you there.

"The elderly parking lot attendant wasn't in a good mood.

Neither was Sam Bierstock. It was around 1 am and Bierstock, a Delray Beach eye doctor, business consultant, corporate speaker and musician, was bone tired after appearing at an event.

He pulled up in his car and the parking attendant began to speak. "I took two bullets for this country and look what I'm doing," he said bitterly.

At first Bierstock didn't know what to say to the WWII veteran. But he rolled down his window and told the man, "Really, from the bottom of my heart, I want to thank you."

Then the old soldier began to cry. "That really got to me" Bierstock says."

Cut to today:

Bierstock, 58 and John Melnick, 54 of Pompano Beach - a member of the Bierstock's band, Dr. Sam and the Managed Care Band - have written a song inspired by that old soldier in the airport parking lot. The mournful "Before You Go" does more than salute those who fought in WWII. It encourages people to go out of their way to thank the aging warriors before they die.

"If we had lost that particular war, our whole way of life would have been shot," says Bierstock, who plays harmonica. "Every ethnic minority would be dead. And the soldiers are now dying at the rate of about 2,000 every day. I thought we needed to thank them."

The song is striking a chord. Within four days of Bierstock placing it on the web, www.beforeyougo.us, the song and accompanying photo essay have bounced around nine different countries, producing tears and heartfelt thanks from veterans, their sons and daughters and grandchildren.

"It made me cry," wrote one veteran's son. Another sent an e-mail saying that only after his father consumed several glasses of wine would he discuss "the unspeakable horrors" he and the other soldiers had witnessed in places like Anzio, Iwo

continued on next page

Jima and Omaha Beach. "I can never thank them enough," the son wrote. "Thank you for thinking about them."

Bierstock and Melnick thought about shipping it off to a professional singer, maybe a Lee Greenwood type, but because time was running out for so many veterans, they decided it was best to

release it quickly, for free, on the web. They've sent the song to Sen. John McCain and others in Washington. Already they have been invited to perform in Houston for a Veteran's Day tribute - this after just a few days on the web. They hope every veteran in America gets a chance to hear it.

This picture was taken right after we landed after returning to our base in Foggia, Italy. This crew had spent 23 days behind Russian battle lines. We had just left our Intelligence Officer who was absolutely amazed by our story. We had spent all of our time during those days with a squadron of Sturmovik fighter pilots, their officers and crews. The Russians helped us find a crashed B-17 that had good parts on it that we needed. Our crew fixed up our two disabled motors. The Russians then filled up our gas tanks and we were able to fly to our own base. It was 23 days after we had landed there on Christmas Day, 1944.

*Crew members:
William R. Myers, pilot;
Liberio P. Casaccia, co-pilot;
Walter R. Stone, Nav.; John T. Dunlap, Bombardier; William N. Carruthers, U T; Richard L. Greiner, L T; Joseph Waladkewics, R W; William S. Gutmann, L W; Herbert W. Wendt T G; James B. Miller, RO.*



A Day to Remember!!

Christmas Day 1944

by Richard L. Greiner, 49th Squadron

December 25, 1944 started out at 4:00 am with a pounding on the makeshift door of our tent. Our names were called out along with a statement that it was 4:00 am and that briefing would be at 5:15 am. I rolled over in my sack and told my four friends that I thought the mission would be "scrubbed" today since it was Christmas Day and the weather was so bad. In the Air Force it is well known that you get two good meals a year - one on Thanksgiving and one on Christmas. I said "I think I will just stay here and save all the trouble of getting ready to go and then having the mission scrubbed."

My fellow airmen then jerked me out of the sack and said "You are going." I then dressed in a

hurry because it was really cold out of the sack. During our walk to the mess hall for breakfast, I pointed out that we had ten-tenths cloud coverage. You could see about eight feet any way around you, and nothing beyond that. I again stated that I knew the mission would be scrubbed.

As we ate our breakfast of powdered eggs, bacon and coffee, we discussed the make up of our assigned crew that we had found out about the night before. None of us were happy about the assignment. This mission would be our fifteenth and we were considered to be an experienced crew. We had been assigned three crewmen flying their first mission and a very good first pilot. Lt. Myers had been a commercial pilot prior to joining the Air Force. He had many more flight hours than any other pilot in our squadron. However, he was looked upon as a "hard luck pilot". It seemed that about every time he flew a mission something happened. He had ditched in the Adriatic three times and had returned to base several times with dead or wounded aboard. In fact, on his last mission, he and his crew had to ditch their plane in the Adriatic Sea and they

spent three days in a small life raft before being rescued. He darn near died from pneumonia. He had just returned from rest camp and been placed on active duty. We were not a happy crew.

As we talked over our briefing for today's mission, I again felt and told the guys that this mission would be scrubbed. They did not respond. We arrived at our briefing area, which was a large cave, and sat down on the board seats. Soon the curtain that covered the large mission map was pulled. "Target for today" the operations officer announced - "is Bruz Czechoslovakia". If the six of us had any hope that today might be a "milk run" it was gone. At this time the Germans were being beaten by the Russians in the East and the Allied Army was pressing hard from the West. Germany pulled practically all their anti-aircraft guns into the three or four areas that were most important to them. One of these areas was the oil refineries at Brux, our target for today. There was one loud groan from the audience. We all knew the flak would be intense and accurate. Two things were in our favor. First, we would be flying at an altitude of thirty thousand feet and the weather officer said that there would be ten-tenths cloud coverage over the target.

Outside the cave trucks were lined up to take us to the storage building where our B-15 bags were stored. The bags contained our oxygen mask, parachute, electric flying suit and our fleece lined pants, jacket and boots. Also other articles that might be useful. We climbed aboard a truck and were soon outside the storage building. As the other guys were jumping off the truck, I announced that I was not going to waste my time getting my bag because then in an hour or so when the mission was scrubbed, I would have to drag it back to the storage area. Soon the guys were throwing their bags into the truck and they jumped on board. The truck started to move out when my friend yelled at the driver to stop. The driver stopped and Bill Carruthers jumped off the truck, ran into the building and soon returned carrying my B-15 bag. He had realized that I actually had not gotten my bag. The truck driver then drove us to our assigned B-17 sitting on the tarmac.

We loaded our bags on board and began checking out the plane. Soon the officers arrived and when we were all introduced to each other we chatted for a while. Walt Stone was our navigator, but we actually had not met the pilot, co-pilot and bombardier. Also, we met the waist gunner who was flying his very first mission. It wasn't long before the engines were being started up and it was not long before we were in line for the take off. Right after take-off I announced that I was not going to suit up because even though the tower had not fired a red flare before take-off time, there was still time left before formation of the group. As I laid down on

the radio room floor, I told Jim Miller our radio-man to let me know when the mission was scrubbed. As we were climbing for altitude over the Adriatic Sea, I did climb down into the ball turret to test fire the two fifty caliber guns and see that the turret and gun sight were operating as they should. Our ground gun maintenance crew was excellent. At ten thousand feet I realized we probably were on our way to Brux, Czechoslovakia.

It is mandatory that all crew members go on oxygen when the airplane reaches ten thousand feet. All crew members must stay on oxygen then until the plane is again flying at ten thousand feet. I quickly put on my electric flying suit which included heated socks and gloves, then I put on my thick fleece lined pants, jacket and boots. Making sure my parachute was placed right by the turret door on the floor above the turret, I grabbed my thick gloves and oxygen mask and climbed down into the ball turret. I plugged in my oxygen mask and hooked up the heated suit. I knew we were on our way. I thought about how fortunate that Bill Carruthers had stopped that truck driver and got my B-15 bag for me. I dreaded to think what trouble I could be in had we come this far without me having all the life saving equipment with me. Of course, I guess they could have flown on and let me freeze to death, but most likely we would return to base and everyone would have lost a mission. Heaven only knows what could have happened to me. I think my flying days would have been over for sure.

At twenty-five thousand feet all planes started to locate their squadrons and get set in their seven plane formations. Then the four squadrons would form their group formations. My job was to keep everyone informed about anything important happening beneath the plane. That is important especially if the formation is having trouble keeping the planes flying real close to each other. Of course it is nice to have firepower from the ball turret if enemy fighters try to come at you from below.

We were at thirty thousand feet and as the weather man had said, it was clear, bright and beautiful. The ten-tenths cloud coverage was thick below us. In fact we could only see the highest tips of the Alps mountains as we flew over them. It was a beautiful sight. When you are flying up high with sights like this, one can not help but realize there is God somewhere up there. Everything is so white and clean and beautiful. I am sure there were many prayers being said about this time. In just a few minutes it would be time to make a turn and shortly thereafter we would be on our bomb run over the oil refinery at Brux, Czechoslovakia.

We were now at the I P (Initial Point) where we make a quick turn and begin our bomb run. I had been looking backwards up to now in case German

continued on next page

fighters might show up, but since we had not seen any and they never bother bombers on their bomb run (they could be shot down by their own flak) I decided to see what was happening up front. As I turned around, my heart skipped a couple of beats. There was ten-tenths cloud coverage everywhere except for a big circle of wide open clear sky right over Brux and the oil refineries we were to bomb.

Right away I saw two planes go down from the group ahead of us. The German gunners were just waiting for us to cross over into the clear sky and they were right on target. I sat there watching our approach to the area where I had seen the two planes in the group ahead of us go down and thinking - I bet we get it today. Right then we did get hit and hit bad! Two engines had to be feathered as the plane started down in a steep dive. Our plane went from thirty thousand feet to around five thousand feet before it was miraculously pulled out of the dive. We quickly talked things over and all stations checked in. Only the tail gunner was wounded. He said he was all right, he still had four fingers left on his hand. We had lost a tremendous amount of gas as it streamed over our wings as we dove toward the ground. Oil also streamed all over my ball turret window. I could not see out very well. However, the wind stream now was clearing the oil from the window and in about five minutes I could see out of it.

We were on our own now. We decided we had two options. One, we could probably fly back towards our base in Italy. However, our navigator, Walt Stone, told us we would probably end up ditching the plane in the Adriatic Sea. In fact we did not think we had enough gas to even get that far. (The gas tanks had finally sealed themselves.) We then discussed flying East 'til we were behind the Russian battle lines and land the plane close to Russian troops. Lt. Myers, the pilot, stated that he had experience floating in a small raft in the middle of the Adriatic, that it was not much fun and that he would vote for trying to reach behind Russian lines. The waist gunner, flying his first mission, S/Sgt. Joseph Waladkewics, spoke up and said if we went behind the Russian lines he knew the Russian language if that would be of any help. That decided it - behind the Russian lines we would go.

After we set our course due East, we realized we had other problems. We knew exactly where we were but we did not know where the Russian battle lines were. Even at our morning briefing our Intelligence Office could not be sure of where they were.

After flying for a half hour or so, one of the crew yelled over the intercom "bandits at three o'clock" I swirled around to that position. They were there, all six of them, and they were fighter planes. None of us could make out what they were -

friend or enemy. We talked it over - six of them, one of us. It was a no win situation if they are German. We could not have much of a chance. We decided to show them we would not fight by dropping our landing gear, locking our guns in a stowed position and rocking our wings. About then they started peeling off in a fighter attack manner. It was pure stress on our crew for a minute. Then we all realized they were not coming down behind us on a regular pursuit curve, they were coming across our nose. Then we saw the big red stars on their wings and realized they were Russian. The pilots actually waved as they all crossed our nose. About then someone spotted six fighters flying at nine o'clock off our other wing. I spun around to that position and sure enough, six fighters started their pursuit curve. Thank god it was same song, second verse. They were Russian Yaks and they came across our nose from the left side. They also waved at us as they passed by.

About that time I spotted white smoke coming up from the ground and I called Lt. Myers on the intercom and told him there was white smoke at two o'clock. I also stated that where there was smoke, there had to be fire and where there was fire there was a pretty good chance people were there. He decided to drop down and look it over. When we dropped to three thousand feet, I could see aircraft everywhere. They were all under camouflage netting. They were all Russian. We flew over the smoke. It appeared to be at the end of a dirt runway and there were people standing by the smoke area waving at us. We decided to land. The runway was not long enough for us, but the ground was frozen everywhere so we landed. After we stopped we turned around and taxied back toward the smoke area. When we arrived we pulled off the runway and shut down the engines. We hoped for the best. After we had secured everything and were ready to get out, we looked out a window and there stood a Mongolian guard with a machine gun pointed right at our rear door where we were about to get out. One of our guys said, "Waladkewics, since you are the only one that speaks Russian, you go out there and tell them we are friendly Americans." Much to our surprise, he walked back to the door, slowly opened it and stepped outside. He had his hands in the air. About that time a Russian jeep type car came rushing up to the back of the plane. A Russian colonel walked towards our back door and when he was close enough Waladkewics said something to the colonel. The colonel responded and then gave Waladkewics a big bear hug. This sure made the rest of us feel better and we started getting out of the plane. (The Mongolian guard now had his gun pointing at the ground.) The Russian colonel asked Waladkewics if all the crew spoke Russian. Waladkewics told him that he was the only one that

spoke that language. The Russian said that is alright, we can all speak German. Waladkewics turned around and asked if any of us could speak any German. We all shook our heads. I wish I had a picture of the expression on the colonel's face. It was one of utter disbelief. He said, "you fight these people and you cannot speak their language? Not even your officers?" We found out later that he spoke seven languages. The colonel then asked Waladkewics if we have any wounded on board. He replied that we had one, and turned and motioned for Herb Wendt, our tail gunner, to come forward. The colonel then put Wendt in his car and told the driver to get Wendt to their hospital.

It turned out that we had landed on the runway of the Sturmovik fighter planes which had been the first six planes to cross our nose. They were trying to turn us toward their field. We, of course, had not figured that out. They were now returning and landing. Their landing skills could use some improvement. It seemed to us that two or three bounces was considered good. No perfect three point landings did we see.

The pilots all came over to welcome us. They were really thrilled to have American airmen at their base. Later in the day as I was thinking about all that had happened since I had awakened early in the morning, it dawned on me that God really does plan ahead. We asked what the name of the nearest town was. We were told it was Carason. It is the Hungarian word for Christmas.

Letters and Notes:

From: Giancarlo Garelo in Italy. He is a long time member of the association and has attended most of our recent reunions.

I read with great interest the account of Mission 169 in the July 2005 Newsletter. As you remember some years ago I wrote a book ("Centauri au Torin" i.e. "Centaur over Turin") in which a whole chapter is dedicated to Lt. Wronkoski's crew ordeal. As a young boy I eyewitnessed their combat of March 29, 1944 that resulted in the shooting down of plane 42-97152. The ill fated B-17 from 20th Squadron came down near my hometown and I went to see the wreck. Later in the day I had a glance at the crew piled in a German truck.

Here is an excerpt from my book from which additional facts about Mission 169 can be learned:

On March 29 four "Centaurus" (that's how FIAT G 55 fighters equipping a Fascist Republican Air Force unit based in Turin were called) clashed against some 100 USAAF B-17s from the 2nd, 97th, 99th and 301st bomb groups. Although they did not succeed in breaking up the formation, with their repeated daring attacks, Cpt. Bonet, Lt Biron, W/O

Jelici and Sgt Biagini scored many hits on the bombers. Bonet and Biagini then noticed that a B-17 (serial 42-97152) had taken hits from flak and become isolated from the main formation. Concentrating their efforts on the lone straggler, Bonet and Biagini were able to shoot it down. Its ten crew members bailed out of the stricken bomber and touched down near Cairo Montenotte (Savona province), hometown of Giancarlo Garelo. The author of this book was just ten years old, but the event became engraved in his memory. It was this that lead him to want to reconstruct it in every detail and to meet Italian and American participants in the action.

The arrival of the American fighter escort - 44 checkertailed P-47s from the 325th FG-proved fatal for the Italians. Four thunderbolts went after W/O Jellici and after a dramatic pursuit forced him to bail out of his burning G.55. Jellici landed almost unscathed, but Capt. Bonet was not so lucky. Attacked at low level on the return leg by Maj. "Herky" Green, CO of the 317th FS and an MTO ace with 18 air-to-air victories, both pilot and aircraft disintegrated in a walnut copse near Alba, about 60 km from Turin.

I have many letters from crew members relating their experiences, and I also met many of them personally. Only one man eluded the Germans, Sgt. Maurice LaRouche, who joined the Italian Resistance and eventually was decorated with the Silver Star for his bravery while attached to a partisan unit in Northern Italy.

Norman Stockstill passed away some time ago. I lost touch with Maurice LaRouche a couple of years ago.

Look forward to seeing you in St. Louis.

Editor's note: Thanks Giancarlo for this bit to add to our group history.

From Harold Plunkett:

My name is W. Harold Plunkett. I was a ball turret gunner on the "Wiley Witch", from April 43 to October 43, in the 49th Sqd 2nd Bomb Group. "12th Air Force". I want to personally thank you for your article in the July Newsletter about the "12th Air Force."

Of all the books and articles that I have read over the last 60 years, very little was ever said about the 12th Air Force. So I appreciate the article.

From Jake Killian:

It was good to talk to you and remember some of the things that came up as Kregies. I was in camp at Nuremburg after interrogation at Wetzlar and remember when a group of guys came in that had tried to rescue Gen. Patton's son-in-law. I also remember Nuremburg as the Germans had an old

continued on next page

horse they used to pull a wagon around camp and one day the horse was gone. Next day the infamous grass soup had little bits of meat in it. We asked the guards what became of the horse, because we saw them rolling the stuff around without the wagon and horse. They said, "you had meat in your soup, didn't you?"

We also remember how the fighter planes would check us every day after the time they attacked us while on the road from Nuremburg to Mooseburg. And the show the P-51s put on the day we were liberated.

Also, I remember grown men crying when the American flag went up over the camp, and I get real mad when I see disrespect for that flag.

Thanks Jake.



GENERAL HENRY H. ARNOLD EDUCATION GRANT

Second Bombardment Association
2005 - 2006 Education Grant Recipients

Brittany V. Wilson

Brittany V. Wilson will be a freshman at Louisiana State University, Shreveport Louisiana. In high school, Brittany earned a Grade Point Average of 3.1077 while participating in school activities: Vice President of the Student council, Yearbook committee, Honor Roll Club, Octagon Club (community service), Art Club, Ring Staff, Chess club, Softball and SADD. Brittany was recognized for the following: Honor Graduate of the class of 2005 and chosen as a Who's Who Among High School Students for Chemistry. Brittany's father, CMSGT Charles Wilson is an Active Duty Air Force member stationed at Barksdale AFB.

Anna L. Ball

Anna L. Ball will be a senior at University of Nebraska, Lincoln Nebraska. Anna currently has earned a 3.9 Grade Point Average and was on the Deans list for the last three years. Anna's father, SMGT William B. Ball Jr., is an Active Duty Air Force member stationed at Barksdale AFB.

2ND BA Checking 2000

10/8/05

STATUS REPORT

9/1/05 Through 9/30/05

Page 1

Date	Num	Description	Memo	Category	Clr	Amount
		BALANCE 8/31/05				21,437.01
9/3/05	1544	Carpender Jay	Audit	Fee		-275.00
9/8/05	1545	Discover St Louis Tours	Prepayment for Tours	Reunion		-2,800.00
9/14/05	S	Adams Michael L		Dues		25.00
			TSWF	Hbook Sls		45.00
9/14/05		Reunion Deposit 4	13 Checks	Reunion		3,197.50
9/14/05	1546	Garland WT		Dues		25.00
9/20/05		US Bank	Checks Deposit #5	Reunion		3,363.50
9/26/05	S	Nigborowicz	TSWF	Hbook Sls		45.00
			Membership	Dues		25.00
9/26/05		Reunion Deposit 6	4-Checks Deposit #6	Reunion		1,210.50
		TOTAL 9/1/05 - 9/30/05				4,861.50
		BALANCE 9/30/05				26,298.51
		TOTAL INFLOWS				7,936.50
		TOTAL OUTFLOWS				-3,075.00
		NET TOTAL				4,861.50

THE FOLLOWING ADDENDUM ARE ALL CORRECTIONS TO THE ROSTER
Part 1 - Minor Changes Part 2 - Changes of address. Part 3 - Listing of New Members.

Part 1 - Minor Changes

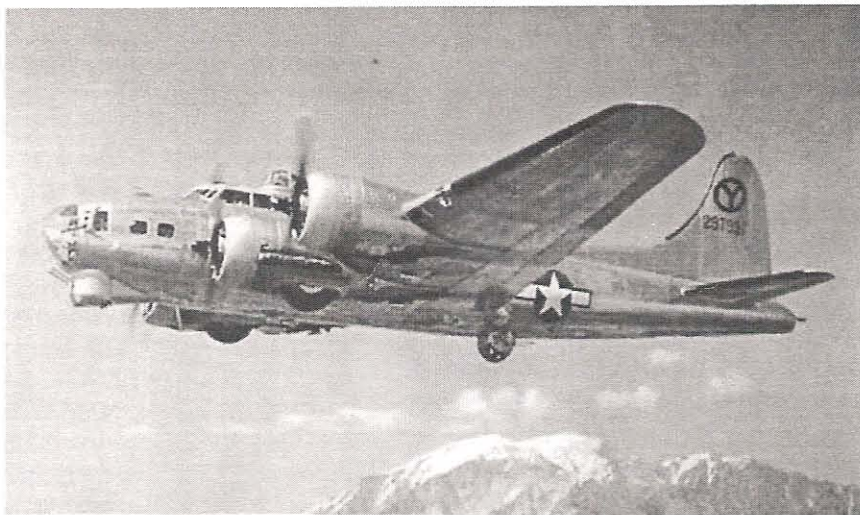
Victor T. METZ Tel: (720) 214-4683

Part 2 - Change of Address

Unit	Name	Street Address	City, State, Zip Code	Phone
	Stanley L. ANDERSON	10 Chestnut St., Apt. 8F	Exeter, NH 03833-1832	
	Thomas A. BENEDICK	PO Box 665	Lolo, MT 59847-0665	(406) 251-3444
	Ronald E. DITTRICH	3115 US Highway 2/41	Bark River, MI 49807-9790	(906) 446-2215
	Francis W. FLYNN	50 Howard St. Apt. 112	Fredonia, NY 14063-2153	
	Arthur A. JASKIEWICZ	4149 French St.	Erie, PA 16504-2076	
	Edward A. J. MROZ	547 Central St.	Winchendon, MA 01475-1268	
	Sidney P. UPSHER	2406 NW Grand Cir.	Oklahoma City, OK 73116-4118	
	Jason O. YOUNG Sr.	4832 Claude Tucker Rd.	Union City, TN 38261-7904	

Part 3 - New Members

Unit	Name	Spouse	Street Address	City, State, Zip Code	Phone
	Harold L. BOOTZ	Melba	171 Hartin Dr.	Evansville, IN 47711-3159	(812) 421-8010
	Mathew BRYNER		8326 Fenton Way	Arvada, CO 80003-1828	(303) 412-0030
	James F. MILLER	Mary	1013 Scenic Ct.	N. Augusta, SC 29841-0115	(803) 202-0322



2nd Bomb Group

Second Bombardment Association
A Veterans Organization of the
2nd Bomb Group & Bomb Wing

Earl Martin
Editor
508 Mountain View Rd.
Williamston, SC 29697-9601

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