

GROUP



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

WING



SECOND BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

"Second to None"

www.2ndbombgroup.org



Volume 24, No. 1

January 2008



President's Corner

Happy New Year! I hope you all had a wonderful holiday. Ours was filled with the joy of three new granddaughters born in the last four months. If 2008 goes as quickly as 2007, we will be seeing each other very soon.

I hope those of you who were able to join us in Houston in October left with happy memories and a good impression of our city. I have gotten many sweet notes from those of you who were here that confirmed that hope. I have to tell you that I had many tears watching several of our WWII heroes flying in that B-17 again. The hotel was very accommodating and comfortable and we had the weather that I ordered! We missed those of you that were not able to join us but trust you will make every effort to join us in Washington, D.C. in August 2008.

Karen Nelson is the Local Chair for the 2008 reunion. At the reunion in Houston, we were delighted to have many children and grandchildren of the vets joining us and anticipate that many more will join us in D.C. The information on the reunion is included in this newsletter. Please send in the information for security clearance NOW for anyone who wants to go. That is not the same as reservations for the reunion. This is so that Homeland Security can clear you in case you decide to come. This must be done by May or anyone wanting to be admitted to some of the secure sites (White House, Pentagon, etc.) will be denied admission. There will be NO LAST MINUTE clearance.

Because we expect more kids and grandkids, we have quite a few activities planned. If you are the Greatest Generation, do not panic. There will be a way to pick and choose the activities that you wish to participate in at the level of your interest or physical capacity. There are some things I know we will all do together, like visiting the WWII Memorial. The hotel Karen has selected is lovely, very reasonable and right in the middle of all we want to see.

Please try to join us and bring your family. They love hearing your stories.

Enjoy the pictures Earl Martin has put in this edition and remember all the joy I felt while you were here with me. I miss you all and so enjoyed showing you the hospitality Houston is known for. Onward to D. C. and a new year!

Fondly, Bonnie Hellums

Notice

For those of you who received the 2008 reunion packet in Houston, please add \$25.00 per day, per person for the bus tours. A line item for the bus charge was inadvertently omitted but the \$25.00 per day does need to be paid in advance.

Thanks to those who have already submitted their security information. George True was first and should get some sort of prize.

The View from the Farm

The annual gathering of the 2nd Bomb Association at Houston in the month of October demonstrated two things that stand out in my mind.

The very few veterans of the old 2nd Bomb who were able to attend demonstrated the fact that more than sixty years has taken a toll. There are not many of us left, and many of the lucky ones who are left are just not able to travel and participate in the meetings as they once were. We are told that one thousand to fifteen hundred WWII veterans pass on to their great reward every day. Of the 16 million veterans who participated in the war, only a fraction of that number survive.

The other "thing" that was demonstrated so well, was the energy and interest of the younger generations. The children and grandchildren of the old vets have been taking hold of the operation of

(continued on next page)

the Association and have been attending the reunions and lending their enthusiasm and devotion to the interest of the old vets.

Sadly, not many 2nd Bomb Vets are able to participate any more. But gladly, their descendants are keeping the Association active. I know each of the old timers appreciates what the youngsters are doing.

The plans being made for the 2008 reunion promise another great and exciting experience for the members of the Association and their children and grandchildren. Whoever can possibly go, should. It will be a chance to participate in some events that will not be available at any other time. Karen Nelson, daughter of Vet. Art Winkler and Bonnie Hellums, whose father was Newton S. Blackford, (KIA) have worked long and hard to get everything set up in the capitol city.

Be sure to pay attention to all the notices you get about the D.C. reunion. The security forms must be completed and approved on a timely basis.

Thanks to everyone who has sent information and articles for the newsletter. Keep those cards and letters and pictures, coming.

Earl Martin, Editor

Did You Know?

1. That present Air Force airplanes average 25 years of age?
2. That the 6,000 active Air Force airplanes use about 7 million gallons of fuel every day.
3. That the year 2007 marks two important dates in the military history of the U.S. August 1, 1907 was the date the Air Arm was established and Sept. 18, 1947 was the date the Air Arm was separated from the U.S. Army and became the U.S. Air Force.
4. That the people that fly and maintain them call the B-1B bomber the BONE?
5. That in WWII the 8th Air Force alone lost more people (killed) than the entire Marine Corps lost in the war. (This is not to denigrate the contributions of the World's greatest Marine Corps.)
6. That the President's budget request for Department of Defense for FY08 was \$459B. The request of the Department of Health and Human Services was \$700B.

In Memorium

John F. Adams, 429th Sq. ✓

January 2007

Maruice A. Johnson, 96th Sq. ✓

June 18, 2006

Robert K. Oliver, 20th Sq. ✓

July 20, 2007

Reunion 2008

May be the best yet !!

**Great events in
Washington, D.C.**

Find the information along with this newsletter. This will be a historic time for the old Vets of the Second. Bring all the children, grandchildren and others you can round up. Consider treating them all to a great time in the capital.

Caution: Be sure to get the clearance papers in for all who will go. Can't see the sights we will see unless they are cleared.

Air Force's New Airman's Creed

I am an American Airman
I am a Warrior
I have answered my nation's call
I am an American Airman.
My mission is to fly, fight and win.
I am faithful to a proud heritage.
A tradition of honor.
And a legacy of valor.
I am an American Airman.
Guardian of freedom and justice.
My nation's sword and shield.
Its sentry and avenger.
I defend my country with my life.
I am an American Airman.
Wingman, leader, warrior.
I will never leave an Airman behind.
I will never falter.
And I will never fail.

Our Business Addresses

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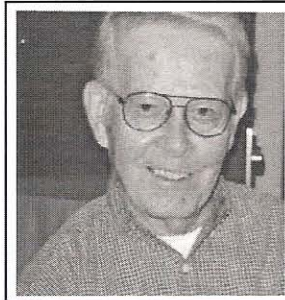
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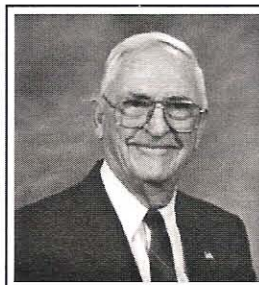
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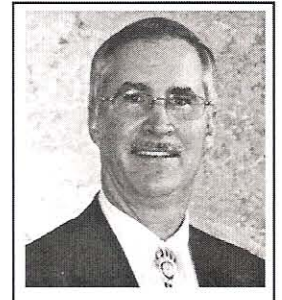


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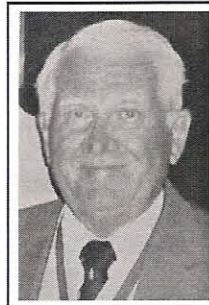
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Hall of Fame

John Kochanski attended the recent meeting of the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame and submitted the following report.

As you may or may not know, a member of the 2nd Bombardment Association was recently inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame. His name is Charles N. Beecham. He graduated pilot training in 1943 and piloted 50 missions with the 2nd Bomb Group in the B-17. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Five Air medals.

He went on to fly 212 missions as a C-54 Commander in the Berlin Airlift of 1948-49. Then became an instructor in the B-47 and B-52 Flight Programs. He was Sr. Rep. and Test Director at Eglin A.F.B. before retiring in 1969. He has a Fine Arts Degree from the University of Northern Colorado. Some of his art is exhibited at the U.S.A.F. Museum in Dayton, Ohio. Some of it was also on Governor & Mrs. Keating's Christmas cards in 2001. He is also an actor, he did some acting in the TV series, "Dallas," and "Walker Texas Ranger." And also the movie "DOA."

He was named El Reno, Oklahoma's Citizen of the Year - twice; was selected to represent the United States at an exhibition at the Institute of Study of the Consequences of War in Austria in 1995; and, in 2001, Cameron University awarded him it's Distinguished Alumni Award. And, on November 8th, 2007 he was inducted into the Oklahoma Military Hall of Fame. A remarkable man indeed!

New Friends

Jack Myers who wrote the book, *Shot at and Missed*, submitted this story about a chance meeting that turned out to be very interesting. Thanks, Jack.

I made a new friend last week. I met him kind of accidentally you might say, but isn't that the way most new friends are made?

Ya' know, most of us old timers, and I am an old timer, we just sit around on our duffs waitin' for the grim reaper to come along and put us out of our misery. Well one day my old lady got sick and tired of tellin' me to move my butt so she could vacuum

under my crummy Lazy boy chair. She insisted I get up and write that damn story about my World War II experiences I had been talkin' about doin' for the last ten years since I had retired.

I thought, that's not a bad idea. It sure as hell beats sittin' here watchin' those old "Gunsmoke" reruns on the old Zenith. On top of it, most of my old buddies from the Second Bomb Group have gone to their just reward, as they say, so I really don't have anyone to blitz anything I write. I think the reason most of us WWII veterans have never written our memoirs is because we are scared to death one of our old comrades will contact us and say, "What a bunch of bull-crap, that ain't the way I remember it."

Well be that as it may I sat myself down at the old lady's computer and started to pound away and I'll be darned if I didn't come up with a pretty good story, if I say so myself. It was good enough to get published by the University of Oklahoma, and all of a sudden I'm walkin' around town and people are treating me with a lot more deference than in the past.

"There's that old guy who wrote that book '*Shot at and Missed*'," I hear them say. Well I sure as hell ain't gonna' argue with that, it's about time I got a little respect around this burg. Every Saturday morning I have breakfast with an old buddy at the "*Around the Corner Cafe*" in Edmond, Oklahoma and up until now the owner would barely give me the time of day. Now as soon as I come in the door she meets me at the front and escorts me to a clean table. I'm tellin' ya' she can't be more nice to me and the service is really first class and on top of that she has my book hangin' on the wall in full sight. You can't beat a deal like that can you?

Well anyway I'm gettin' way ahead of myself. Let's see, we were gonna' talk about the new friend I made weren't we? Well last week the famous B-17 *Aluminum Overcast* comes into town on a national tour and because of my new found celebrity they invited me to ride on the so called "Media" flight as the local B-17 authority. After the flight I am sittin' in the lobby of Wiley Post Airport, regaling some young admirers with my tales of der-ring-do flying bombing missions over Germany back in '44. I tell ya' I had 'em entranced. The flak was bursting, planes were goin' down, German ME-109s and FW-190s were sailin' through the bomber formations. You could almost smell the cordite from the anti-aircraft fire it was so realistic.

Just then, through the door, bursts a wild-eyed old guy shouting, "Where the hell's that B-17 I seen fly over my house?"

That kinda' irritated me being interrupted just as I had these young guys eatin' outta' my hand. "The B-17s parked out back, but no one's there until tomorrow morning," someone replied.

The old timer's rheumy, blood-shot eyes were dancing in his head like ping-pong balls. It was apparent he was extremely excited as if he was anticipatin' some great event that was about to happen. "I was a radio-operator on one of them B-17s back in WWII," he exclaimed.

"What Air Force?" I asked right off. "Fifteenth." "What bomb group?" I shot back. "Second Bomb Group," he replied.

That got my attention right away because that was my old outfit. I just sat right up in my chair and took a good hard look at the guy. He was a tall, lanky fellow with a squished in nose and wispy gray hair that looked like it hadn't seen a comb in some time. He didn't look familiar but that didn't mean anything, after all it had been 63 years since those glorious days of my youth.

"What Squadron were you in?" I asked the old fellow. That's where I had him, he started mumblin' around and it was apparent he didn't know what he was talkin' about, he couldn't come up with an answer.

"Was it the 20th, 49th, 96th or the 429th?" I asked. "It was the 96th," he answered right back. "Who was your pilot," I asked. "I flew with Ryan," was his reply.

Here we go again, I'm thinking. This sounds like what every G.I. that served in Northern Europe in WWII says. "I was in the Third Army and fought in the Battle of the Bulge with General Patton." You know damn well that guy was never closer than 60 miles from George Patton and probably was drivin' a truck haulin' cigarettes and soda-pop to the PXs back in France, a hundred miles from any action.

"Are you talkin' about Colonel John Ryan?" I asked. "That's right, 'Three Finger Jack' Ryan, I was his radio-man."

Well now he really had my attention, I was sittin' on the edge of my chair. "You mean to tell me that you flew in Colonel 'Three Finger Jack's' crew?" "That's what I been sayin' ain't I?"

First you gotta' know who "Three Finger Jack" Ryan was. In the Air Force he was almost as famous as George Patton. He became a four-star General and Chief of Staff of the Air Force in 1969 and his son Michael followed him as Chief of Staff in the late '80s. When I knew him in 1944 he was the Commander of the Second Bomb Group, a full Colonel at the tender age of 28 and a graduate of West Point. He led the group on a mission February 28, 1945 to bomb the bridge at Verona, Italy. The flak was fierce. His plane was hit several times, the navigator and upper turret gunner were killed, the bombardier was wounded, the co-pilot was wounded and Ryan had a finger shot off. Thus the name 'Three Finger Jack'. The radio-man had also been wounded by the way.

I knew all about that, in fact I had written a

chapter in my book about that very mission and now I was meeting a guy who claimed to have been the radio-man on that crew. "What's your name buddy?" I asked. "Richard Forst," he shot back.

I couldn't believe it. What are the chances of runnin' into someone from your old outfit like that? Pretty darn slim I'd say.

I just happened to have a copy of my book with me so I just whipped it out and opened it up to the story about Three Finger Jack.

"Here's your name right here buddy," I said, "I wrote a whole chapter about that mission." "The hell you say," he says. "I don't care about that, what I wanta' see is that damn B-17. I was sittin' in my girlfriends kitchen when I heard that Fort fly over the house. I couldn't believe my ears. I couldn't figger' where it came from until a couple hours later a friend popped in and tells me there is a B-17 out at the Wiley Post airport. So I hopped in my car and came out here."

Well anyways I got acquainted with Richard Forst who really was on one of the most famous missions the 2nd Bomb Group flew and I would like to report he is alive and well in Oklahoma City. We talked to each other for over an hour about those bombing missions we flew back then and I really enjoyed the guy. He was especially proud of the fact that his girlfriend was 100 years old. He seemed more proud of that than that he flew on the famous mission that gave "Three Finger Jack" his nickname.

Now that impressed the hell out of me!

Hearing Loss

Medical science has determined that all crew members who flew in B-17s suffer hearing loss.

Dick Radtke has reminded me that the VA has made provision for that hearing loss and a certain amount of service connected disability may be available to members of the association.

We have some supporting information for anyone wanting to apply to the VA and will be glad to provide copies for anyone who wants them.

A Bit of the Air Force

According to the latest demographics from the Air Force, the active-duty service comprises 65,722 officers and 263,372 enlisted personnel. There are 13,065 pilots, 4,234 navigators and 1,262 air battle managers in the rank of lieutenant colonel and below. Women make up 19.58 percent of the active force including 559 pilots, 229 navigators and 151 air battle managers. About 60.6 percent of the active force are married.

Air Force Magazine

Letters

from Bob Coalter, Executive Director, Army Air Corps Library Museum

1. I want to thank the association for allowing us to put up a display at your recent reunion in Houston. It was a pleasure and honor to meet you all.

If we could get a copy of some of the photos taken at the reunion Saturday night in the hospitality room, we would like to display them on our website.

2. I am doing research for a book that I intend to write on the Rigor Mortis #25233 B-17 that flew 20 Missions with the 2nd BG. Thanks to all of you that have provided me information to date. If you flew on this plane or know somebody who did, I would very much like to speak with you. If you flew on any of the following days/missions, I would also like to speak with you about your recollections about the mission.

The Rigor Mortis flew over 120 missions while attached to the 301st, 2nd and 483rd Bomb Groups.

Some of my research has been posted on www.b17rigormortis.com and it includes the name of 2nd BG crewmen who flew on this plane.

3. Harold K. Cox. The Army Air Corps Library and Museum is proud to display some memorabilia on this member of the 2nd BG. Harold flew with the 429th Sq. as a tail gunner on missions from August 17, 1943 until December 20, 1943 when he was wounded in action. According to some of the papers we have he remained with the group serving in the 2nd BG HQ for at least one year after his last mission. If you knew Mr. Cox, please contact me.

Bob Coalter
Executive Director
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(214) 957-1393

B-15

A recent letter asked if the Boeing B-15 had been assigned to the 2nd Bomb Group at one time. The following may answer that question.

The XB-15 (only one was built).

Boeing took up the challenge of the Air Corps to build a big bomber in 1934. The company built the largest airplane in the world at that time. It was known as the XBLR-1 for Experimental Bomber Long Range.

It was finished in 1937. It had a range of 3,300 miles and could carry a bomb load of about

2,500 pounds but was greatly underpowered with the small engines of that day.

In August of 1938 it was assigned to the 49th Squadron of the 2nd Bomb Group and set several records for altitude, payload and distance.

Boeing and other manufacturers went on to build other four engine bombers and the B-15 ended as a cargo carrier throughout the war.

B-19 (only one was built)

I had the honor to have participated in the manufacture of the B-19 because I was an employee of the Douglas Airplane Company at Santa Monica, CA at the time it was built, before the war.

Like the B-15, the B-19 was a huge airplane, but was built before the production of radial engines large enough to make a practical bomber.

I remember that the Army, probably the 49th Squadron, brought the B-15, to test take-offs and landings at the rather short Santa Monica, CA airfield (Clover Field) before the Douglas test pilots were willing to try with the B-19.

When the dramatic time came, all hands at the factory lined the flight line to watch the great machine taxi to the end of the field, run the engines up and finally lumber into the air. The B-19, like the B-15 was relegated to non combat roles during the war.

The B-15 and B-19 were huge airplanes of their day. They were not practical bombers, but they gave the manufacturers and the airmen of the day some experience that would be valuable when the B-29s, B-36s and B-52s came into being.

The B-15 had a wingspan of 149 feet. It was the largest airplane until the B-19 came along with a wingspan of 212 feet making it the largest airplane until the post war B-36 came on the line with a wingspan of 230 feet.

Reunion 2007

And what a great time was had by all.

Only 22 veterans of the old WWII 2nd Bomb Group were able to attend the 2007 reunion at Houston, Oct. 11, 2007 but they took along a goodly number of second and third generation relatives and they all had a wonderful time.

The gathering centered at the Marriott Greenspoint Hotel in Northern Houston where registration began Thursday afternoon. The hospitality room was open at all hours and the bar was open at appropriate times.

Association President, Bonnie Hellums began operations at 16:00 Thursday with the Board of Director's meeting. The high point of the meeting was a report by Karen Nelson on the 2008 reunion site, Washington D.C. Karen emphasized the importance of getting the Security Information form completed for all who will attend.

Todd Weiler was appointed as Co-Chairman for the position of Historian to assist Historian Paul Skalney.

The day was finished with an informal cocktail party and dinner at 19:00.

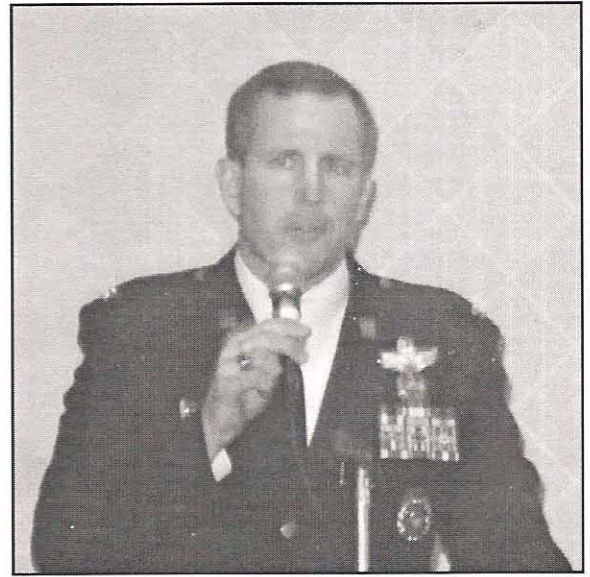
A big day was planned for Friday. A short tour of the city was by bus before going to NASA to visit the museum. Then to the Lone Star Museum. The Lone Star is one of the outstanding air museums in the country and all enjoyed seeing the airplanes and air equipment on display. The big event, however, was the flying B-17-G out in the backyard. Time was spent by all, admiring and picture taking with the big bird. Then it was flown twice with some members aboard. They had the privilege of seeing how the Flying Fortress flew with the old vets many years before. The buses took all to dinner then back to the hotel ending a long day of fun.

The main event Saturday was a visit to the Port of Houston and a boat ride aboard the "Sam Houston" along the long water front. Another fine banquet finished the day at the hotel.

Sunday was departure day with all leaving by boat, bus, air or car for their homes across the nation.

Although very few of the old vets were able to attend this reunion, all of them and all of the relatives and friends who were there declared it was a very fulfilling and exciting experience. Thanks Bonnie, Kemp and the others who did the "heavy lifting," you did a great job welcoming us to your hometown.

Some of our members enjoying the reunion



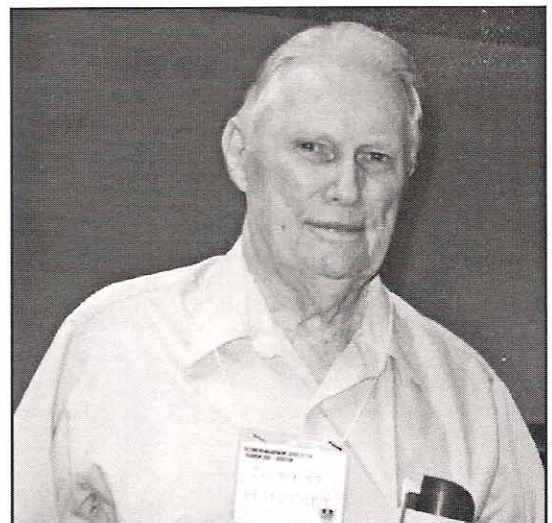
The Colonel Speaks



Mr and Mrs Ron Dittrich



Her Honor: Madam President Bonnie



Stokes Huntley

Some of our members enjoying the reunion



Art Winkler and Sid Underwood



Past President Dick Radtke

*John Kochanski
and Don Komendo*



James Goodrich and Family

Some of our members enjoying the reunion



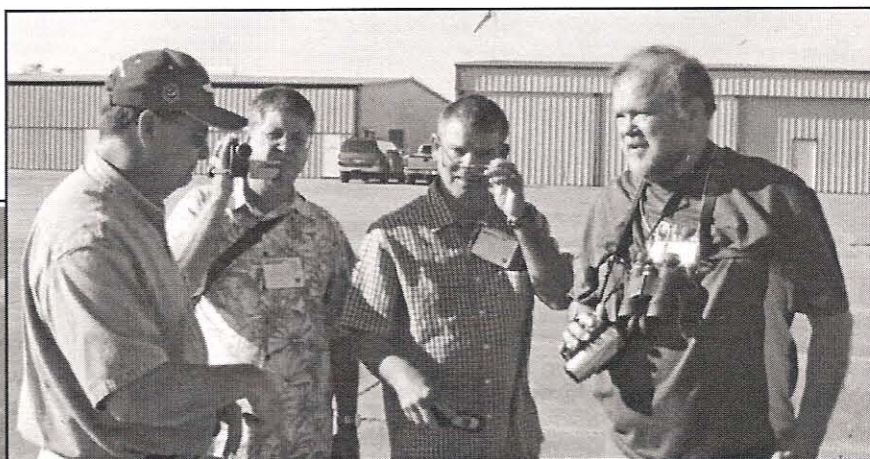
Old timers and younger guys



Cranking the engines, beautiful roar



Museum



B-17 pilot and crew (Sid Underwood, Steve Hamm and Mark Hamm)

Some of our members enjoying the reunion



The Board Members from L to R; Matt Bryner, Todd Wexler, Lewis Water, Kemp Martin, Loy Dickinson, Bonnie Hellums, Dick Radke, John Sisson, George True, Karen Nelson, Roy Tuwalski, S.D. Underwood



Attention Ladies

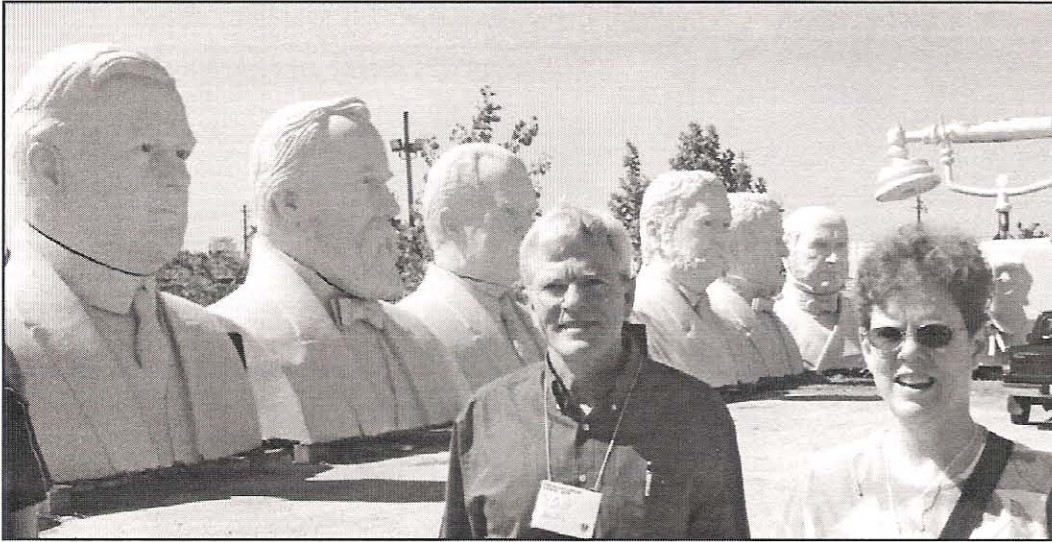
True Family, "My Baby"



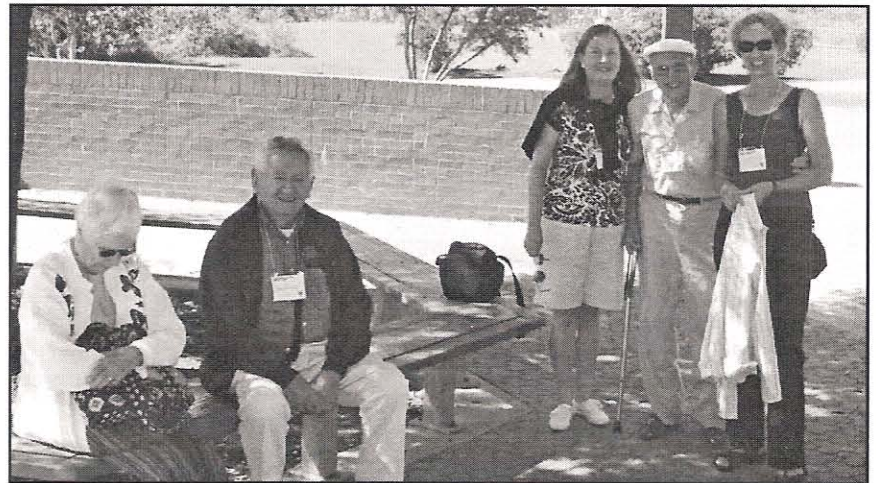
Some of the "Hat" crowd



Some of our members enjoying the reunion



*The Heads with
Rodney and Nancy Martin*

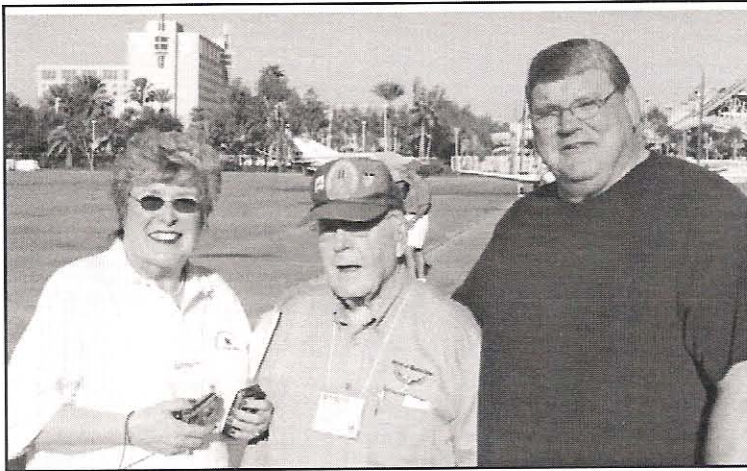


Waiting for the "Sam Houston"

Old Vets and Their Airplane



Some of our members enjoying the reunion



*Our President and husband
surround Charlie Beecham*



The Hamms Steve, Jon, Mark



George True

Bonnie's favorite doll



The Medical Situation

Raymond Tuwalski's article in the July 2007 Newsletter about Doc Ihle leads us to more information about the medical situation in the 2nd while it was in combat during WWII.

General: The good health of any military combat unit was important to make it able to carry out the mission for which it existed. The maintenance of healthy men in a heavy bomb group was somewhat complicated by the fact that not only must the ground men be looked after medically in the normal sense, but about one forth of the compliment of personnel were combat crews.

The men who flew were subjected to conditions not usually experienced by those who stayed on the ground. The long tiring missions, at high attitudes, breathing oxygen, placed unusual stresses on their bodies and the dangers of combat day after day, placed abnormal stresses on their minds.

Each Army Air Forces group during WWII was assigned medical officers (Flight Surgeons) who had the responsibility of looking after the health of all personnel in the organization. Those flight surgeons were usually very dedicated doctors who took great pains to keep the men in the organization as healthy as possible. Their authority extended to every phase of the life of the group that might affect the health of the personnel.

Second Bomb Group Medical Personnel

The Second was fortunate to have six good

doctors assigned to it as the group was being organized, before it moved to Africa in 1943.

Major Herman W. Gaddis Group Surgeon

Capt. Jame H. Broderickol Group Dentist

Capt. Lyman E. Ihle 20 Sq. Surgeon

Capt. Julius Levine 49 Sq. Surgeon

Capt. Richard F. Kuhn 96 Sq. Surgeon

Capt. William M. Hall 429 Sq. Surgeon

Most of these men stayed with the group until the war ended.

In addition, three medical enlisted men were assigned to medical headquarters and eight medical enlisted men were assigned to each squadron. These men were trained as medical technician, surgical technician, ambulance driver, clerk or section leader. They worked under the directions of the doctors.

The medical sections stayed with the group as it was moved to the bases in Africa and Italy, caring for the health of the men all the way. The sanitation of living quarters, mess halls, and latrines was of prime concern. The surgeons constantly inspected these facilities. In the campgrounds of Africa and Italy, malaria was a constant threat and a battle was always in progress against the deadly mosquito.

The bases at Chateadun, Ain Milila and Massicault were described as being very inadequate as far as living conditions were concerned. Diarrhea diseases were the chief problem. In most cases, no screening or fly spray equipment was available.

When the group arrived at Amendola in December 1943, a more permanent base began to be established and the surgeons were able to oversee a steady improvement in sanitation, living facilities, food, entertainment and recreation. One area that distressed them was the increase in venereal disease as the troops were able to visit the Italian towns in the vicinity.

One thing the surgeons remarked about was the camp site being four miles from the airfield, and thus probably not subject to air raids even though it was less than fifty miles from the front lines when established. In fact, the group did report several air raid warnings during 1944, but the campground was never attacked. The German Air Force was being kept busy in other areas.

At Amendola, the medical section had what they considered an ideal set-up for their facilities. Because the campground was compact, with the squadron and group areas close to each other, the group and squadron medical facilities were located side by side. A group infirmary was constructed with the accommodation for twelve patients. Hence, with four squadrons working in close proximity, they could be of great help to each other when needed. The group infirmary, close to the squadron dispen-

(continued on next page)

saries, made it easy for the squadron surgeons to treat their own confined patients. Also, being close to the officer's mess, the meals for patients could be carried from there easily.

The medical officers found that the factors affecting those who flew, and those whose duties confined them to the ground, were not all identical.

Combat crew men often had to be treated with "kid gloves." They expected much and at times their requests and complaints were unreasonable and selfish in the eyes of the ground personnel. The majority of those who flew combat had one thing uppermost in their minds. They wanted to fly their required missions and get back to the United States. They protested any major or minor discomforts. The medical officers believed them to have been the "fair haired boys" because they had obtained their wings. The surgeons found that a sensible way of keeping peace and harmony, was to give those who flew every request and at the same time, give the same benefits to the ground echelon.

The ground personnel were reasonably happy as long as they had good food, good living quarters and ample privileges. The morale of the flying personnel was more complex since the fatigue and hazards of combat affected them in different ways.

After difficult missions where many aircraft and crews were lost, anxieties appeared in certain men. With experienced and understanding flight surgeons, using various and sometimes devious methods, the group had very few men who could not finish their required missions.

The medical personnel were always on hand when the bombers returned to base from a mission. If wounded were aboard, the crew would fire a red flare as they entered the airport pattern, and the ambulance with medical people aboard would chase the airplane down the runway to get to the wounded as soon as possible. At times, the doctors were very busy removing wounded and sometimes, dead men from shot up airplanes. Wounds varied from mere scratches to very serious body damage. The surgeons had to be ready to handle any situation. At Amendola, the base was fifteen miles from the nearest hospital and patients could be transported there quickly over good roads. If wounded men were in bad shape, pilots could land at an airfield quite close to the hospital. As the battle front moved northward in Italy, other such facilities became available nearer the air battle areas.

The Squadron flight surgeons were usually on hand when the crews reported to interrogation to give each returning airman a shot of *medicinal* spirits if it was desired.

The flight surgeons took the first part of their titles seriously and sometimes flew missions with the combat crews. They were not required to do so

but felt they could better understand the mental state of the flying people if they had that experience.

"Doc" Kuhn reported that he flew ten missions and accumulated about 200 hours combat time. He received a purple heart on mission 121, January 10, 1944 when flak fractured his skull. In his terms, he "had no residual symptoms".

When the POW rescue missions were organized August 31, 1944, Dr. Kuhn and Dr. Levine were selected to accompany the mission to take care of any of the former POWs that might need medical help. Dr. Kuhn relates, "we packed the penicillin we had in iced jugs and as much first aid equipment as we could carry". After checking with the former POWs at Popesti, they began inquiring about other Americans that might be confined in hospitals in the area. Sure enough, they found shot down crewmen in different places and set about treating them and getting them fit to return to Italy. They both spent several weeks in Romania using their medical skills before returning to Amendola.

The Second Bomb Group was fortunate to have skillful and dedicated doctors and their associates to care for it's medical needs. These men continually demonstrated their ability to provide for the personnel. Sometimes that took a pat on the back, sometimes a stern lecture and sometimes a sewing up of a gash in a body, caused by German metal.

Information for this article was obtained from microfilm reel number B0040, 2nd Bomb Group History, AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, Alabama and 2nd Bombardment Association Newsletter, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 1993.

Missing In Action

During WWII, 139 crews and airplanes from the 2nd bomb Group were classified as lost to enemy action.

Many others ditched in the sea or crash landed in friendly territory and the men returned to Allied control. Other airplanes and crews were lost in training accidents, take-off and landing accidents and other occasions not associated with combat with the enemy.

In most cases of missing airplanes, the only information available to the group were the reports made at debriefing by the returning combat crew members. The men that observed the downing of an airplane were seldom able to see what finally happened to the plane or the crew members. The group usually obtained no further information about the lost men unless one or more of the crew evaded and returned. Thus, the missing men were carried on the group records as MIA.

While the group was flying combat missions from Italy, Dec. 1943 until May 1945, 895 crew members were listed as MIA. Of these, 239 were

killed in action, 49 listed as dead from various causes, 487 were prisoners of war, 95 evaded, and 25 were interned in Switzerland. These numbers were gathered from various sources and may not be exact.

Almost every mission was fraught with hazards as the defenders fought with fighter aircraft and deadly anti-aircraft fire. Mechanical failure also sometimes made returning to the home base difficult. The B-17 was a rugged airplane, however, and many returned in such condition the crews and ground personnel were amazed they could even fly. The "Sweet Pea" story is a good example.

If an airplane was damaged in combat to the extent the pilot determined it would not get the crew safely home, he had to decide whether to order the crew to bail out, make a crash landing, ditch at sea or try to get as near to friendly territory as possible. Many crews bailed out or crash landed behind enemy lines in Yugoslavia or Italy where help was available from friendly Partisans. Many evaded this way and were returned. In late 1944 and early 1945, the Russian front was close enough that a crew in trouble could go to the East, land behind the lines and be helped by friendlies. On deep penetrations into Austria and Germany, the crews knew that Switzerland was nearby and they knew they could receive sanctuary there. Many heavy bombers from the 15th and 8th Air Forces landed in Switzerland including three from the 2nd Bomb Group. The men who landed there were generally interned for the duration of the war.

Most MIA combat crew members are accounted for as having evaded, been killed or were prisoners of war. Some, however, were simply missing and could not be accounted for, (when an airplane blew up in flight, for instance).

Friendly forces in Yugoslavia, especially Tito's Partisans and the Chetniks, fought against the Germans. They protected and sheltered the British and American fliers that went down in their territories. They made every effort to return them to Italy. Daring American and British pilots flew across the Adriatic Sea at night and landed at secret airfields to pick up evaders.

About half of the men that went down in enemy territory became prisoners of war. Some were held in each of the enemy countries, but most were transferred to prison camps in Germany. The Germans maintained two main prison camps for officers, Stalag Luft 1 at Barth, and Stalag Luft III at Sagan. Some enlisted airmen were in each of these camps but most were kept in camps in northeast Germany and Poland.

When a man was captured, he was usually sent to the interrogation center, "Dulag Luft" at Oberusall near Frankfurt. He was kept in a solitary cell there for whatever time the interrogators deemed he could be useful to them. The interroga-

tion teams were very clever, using various methods to extract information. The methods ranged from promises by smooth talking Harvard educated officers, to threats by brutish appearing corporals and promises to be turned over to the dreaded Gestapo. Violence was seldom used, but subtle punishment, such as an almost starvation diet and long confinement in a cold, dark cell was common. Most airmen adhered to their orders that only "name, rank and serial number" were to be given as information to the enemy. Confinement at Dulag Luft ranged from one day to as much as two weeks. Some high ranking officers were kept for much longer periods, the Germans supposing they had more information to give, which of course, they did.

Some of the interrogators stated, after the war, that they were able to extract some information from every man that went through Dulag Luft. Most former POWs wondered what information they had given.

United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration

After flying several missions with his crew in September and October 1944, and some as squadron bombardier, Raymond Tuwalski was given orders to report for additional training at the PFF school in Bari. His accommodations were to be at the Oriente Hotel where the training took place.

Ray says, "I was provided transportation in the company of a Captain whose name I cannot recall, nor his function in the Bomb Group, or the reason he was reporting to the 15th Air Force Headquarters. He did inform me that on my future journeys to Bari, I would be responsible for my own transportation."

After spending the night at a small town named Trani, the captain and the lieutenant traveled on to the small village of Giovinazzo where they stopped at a cluster of buildings. The captain removed a large bundle from the back of the jeep and sauntered into one of the buildings with Stan following. He was welcomed by a bevy of English speaking young ladies in civilian attire.

Ray was introduced and learned these ladies were volunteers working for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. They were a mix of British, South African and American nurses with various skills in nursing. The captain broke out the bundle which contained enough black market nylon stockings to serve the staff many times over and lingerie of all types. The bag of contraband was handed over to the woman who seemed to be in charge of the organization. They were invited for a light lunch after which the captain seemed to have

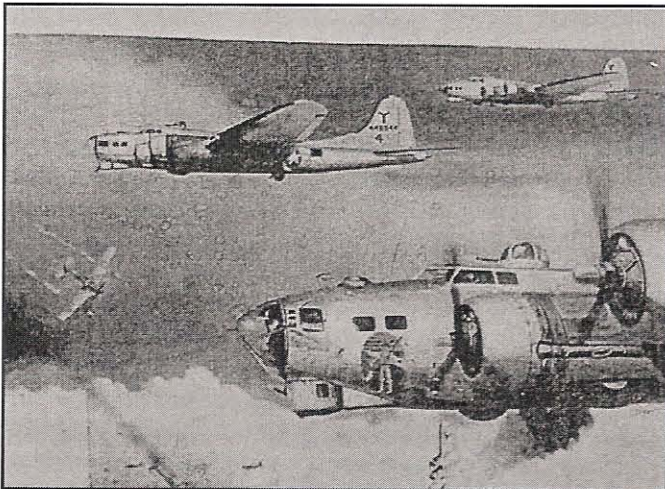
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more to discuss with the woman in charge. Ray was invited by one of the staff if he would like to tour the place. "I agreed. I was not prepared for what I was about to see. Each of the buildings, and I walked through three of them, had rooms filled with cribs, each holding a baby and pens with tiny tots up to no more than toddler stage. All were being attended by these volunteer ladies. I was told they were the surviving children from Yugoslavia that were taken by the Germans and abandoned in the woods after the townspeople were killed in retaliation against killing or sabotaging the German efforts. The Partisans would search the woods to recover these children. The survivors were collected and transported across the Adriatic Sea and delivered to this location. The children were chattering like magpies upon seeing us enter. This left me with a sad memory of what war can bring upon the innocent."

Ray continues, "At this point, I would like to move briefly to the 1950's when I met a client working for the Arthur G. McKee Company. During a luncheon meeting some individuals brought up their wartime experiences. I mentioned what I had experienced at the UNRRA hospital in Giovanzo. They were amazed at what I described and one of the project engineers named Les Ong at the table remarked, 'It's all true, my wife was one of them'. Later, he brought his wife to visit. We shared old memories of the 2nd Bomb Group 300 Mission party and the good work the volunteers did for the unfortunate war orphans. Sadly, I cannot recall her Christian name."

"There were forty four nations participating in the UNRRA program. The U.S. paid 72% of the cost. All food and other supplies were from farms and factories in the U.S."

Editor's note: Ray's story will be continued in the next issue.



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Brig. Gen Paul W. Tibbets

Paul Tibbets died Nov. 1, 2007. He is best known as the pilot of the B-29 "Enola Gay" which carried the first atomic bomb into combat.

He was commander of the 509th Composite Group which had the responsibility of dropping the only two atomic bombs ever used.

Tibbets, however, had many other military credits, some of them associated with the 2nd Bomb Group during WW-II.

He was sometimes called, "The best pilot in the US Air Forces." Gen. Eisenhower thought so and used him as his pilot at times. Tibbets was commander of 340th Bomb Squadron, 97th Bomb Group and flew the lead B-17 on the first heavy bomber mission in Europe in August, 1942. He moved to North Africa with the 97th, which became the sister group with the 2nd at Amendola when the 15th AF was in Italy. After flying many combat missions he was recalled to the US and participated in the development of the B-29 as a usable combat airplane.

After retirement from the Air Force in 1966, Tibbets led business enterprisess. He died at the age of 92.

REX MISSION REPLAY: A bit of Air Force Nostalgia

Almost 70 years after the famous "Rex Interception Mission" flown by the 2nd Bomb Group on May 12, 1938, the 2nd Bomb Wing flew a

similar mission to intercept a ship in mid Atlantic. Three massive B-52s flew the mission this time, (August 2007) rather than the giant (at the time) B-17s of 1938.

Lt. Col. Robert Norberg, commander of the AFRC's 917 Operations Support flight at Barksdale AFB, LA, led the three airplane mission which used modern equipment to locate the target ship about 700 miles east of Charleston, SC.

Great controversy abounded in 1938 about whether, or should, the budding Air Corps fly out over the oceans to intercept dangerous ships approaching our shores.

Maj. Gen. Frank Andrews arranged with an Italian shipping line to use one of their inbound vessels as a practice target. Lt. Col. Ira Eaker was in command of the Air Corps Information Division. He was in charge of the publicity for the mission.

Three B-17s departed Mitchel Field at 8:30 A. M. The crew of the lead airplane included Maj. Vincent J. Maloy, flight commander, Maj. Caleb V. Haynes, pilot, and 1st. Lt. Curtis Lemay, navigator. The other airplanes were piloted by Capt. Cornelius W. Cousland and Capt. Archibald Y. Smith.

The three B-17s had to penetrate a weather front on course, but found the Rex exactly as LeMay estimated at 12:25 P. M. Maj. Goddard photographed two of the B-17s over the ship and that picture has become one of the most well known airplane pictures of all time.

General H. H. Arnold described the aftermath of the 1938 mission as follows. "Somebody in the Navy apparently got in touch with somebody in the General Staff, and in less time than it takes to tell about it, the War Department sent down an order limiting all activities of the Army Air Corps to within 100 miles of the shoreline of the United States".

Most of us flew well beyond the 100 mile limitation when war came and we were needed to bomb the enemy well away from our shores.

Information obtained from Air Force Magazine and Defenders of Liberty.



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

William A. PARSONS New telephone (330) 678-0012

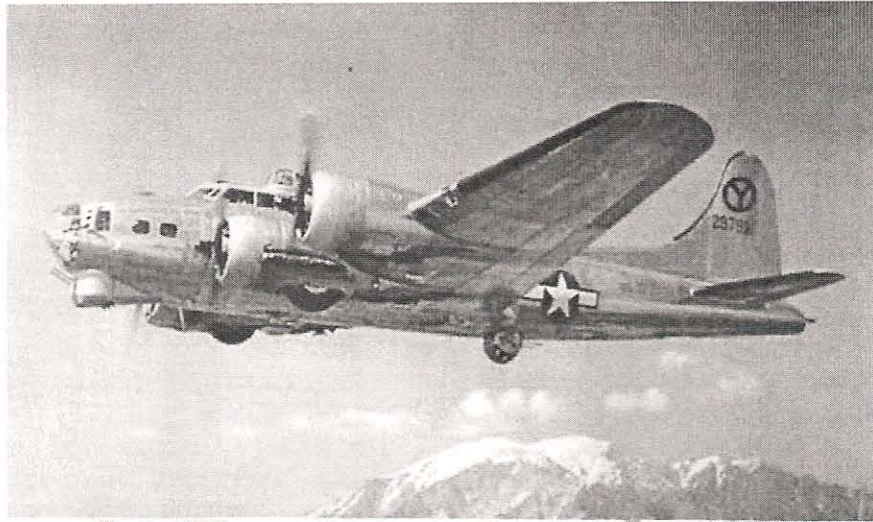
Jennie ROBERTS new last name ALLEN
 spouse is Craig Allen

Part 2 - Change of Address

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	Nathan J. JUTSON	19806 Satinwood Tr.	Humble, TX 77346-1698	
	Nancy C. MARTIN	7941 Footman Way	Raleigh, NC 29615-7735	
	Aloysius M. SEBIAN	408 Briertwood Trl.	Hamstead, NC 28443-2027	
	Vincent R. WERNER	2364 Village Square	Missoula, MT 59801-2100	

Part 3 - New Members

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96	Paulette DONOVAN		318 Pineview Dr.	Santa Clara, CA 95050-6508	(408) 260-1769
429	John FITZPATRICK	Cathy	17697 Beech St.	Fountain Valley, CA 92708-4507	(714) 964-8111
	Ken HIGH		601 Howard Ln.	Trimble, MO 64492-9106	(816) 357-2500
	Donna HURT		348 Rolling Park Dr.	Lexington, NC 27295-6850	(336) 956-6302
20	John KOCHANSKI		5686 County Road 917	Nevada, TX 75173-6136	(972) 977-7052
	Timothy J. MAHAR		123 Village Cir.	Jupiter, FL 33458-5507	(561) 747-1543
	J.R. MAY		1705 Broadway St.	Pearland, TX 77581-5603	(281) 482-7406
	Daniel NELSON		907 Evans St.	Ottawa, IL 61350-1361	
96	James OLIVERI, Jr.		34 Culver St.	Melville, NY 11747-1624	(631) 423-2014
20	Richard (Dick) Schweinfurth		32719 Antietam Rd.	Lillian, AL 36549-5508	(251) 961-3329
20	Daniel SHAW		1433 E GlennHaven Dr.	Phoenix, AZ 85048-4739	(480) 704-4319
20	Esther SHAW		23618 S Rosecrest Dr.	Sun Lakes, AZ 85248-0812	(480) 895-1114
20	Howard SHAW		PO Box 1472	Arizona City, AZ 85223-1472	(520) 494-8057
20	Chris STANLEY	Karnon	1108 S Hoff Ave.	El Reno, OK 73036-4842	(405) 262-8331
	Liam URBACH		34 St. Anthony Dr.	Hudson, NH 03051-5066	(603) 598-1316
20	Mark D. Waters	Carol	PSC 103 Box 5391	APO AE 09603-0054	
	Todd N. WEILER		2761 N 37th St.	Milwaukee, WI 53210-2530	(414) 442-1047



2nd Bomb Group

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

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