



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



SECOND BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

"Second to None"

www.2ndbombgroup.org



Volume 26, No. 1, January 2010



President's Corner

Greetings from Ohio again! The reunion in San Antonio was refreshing. At this reunion we didn't have the quantity, but we had the quality. The tours were very interesting and educational, along with being scenic. That is the best way to describe the famous River Walk, which was most impressive. We took the boat tour on Friday evening, and there were thousands of people enjoying the sights, the sounds, and the food. Oh, so many nice restaurants. It is easy to understand how this area has become a world-wide attraction. And the San Antonio Shoe factory (SAS) we visited was an unexpected delight. Where else can you find so many types of shoes, \$0.05 cokes and \$0.10 for a bag of popcorn. Not only that, Richard Radtke won a free pair of shoes. Also, the little town of Fredericksburg, and The National Museum of the Pacific War, along with the Admiral Nimitz Museum, were very interesting.

One of the highlights of our visit was, unfortunately, experienced by just a few of us. Early on Thursday morning, the first day of registration, Sid Underwood drove Earl and Anne Martin, Loy Dickinson and me to the Brooke Army Medical Center complex. We were given tours of the Warrior and Family Support Center, the local Fisher House, and the Center For The Intrepid, a state of the art rehabilitation facility - built with private hands and donated to the Army. This building has every type of exercise and rehabilitation equipment possible, particularly suited for amputees and those with head injuries. This facility was just amazing, exactly what our returning wounded need to help restore them to a condition of useful activity.

As mentioned in the July, 2009 Newsletter, and to quote from their website, "Fisher House has been serving military families for years, offering temporary lodging in a 'home away from home' atmosphere for members of the armed services, veterans, and their families during a medical crisis". You can log on to m.army-fisherhouses.org for more information. I realize

everyone has their favorite charities, but I would ask you to consider a donation to Fisher Houses, or to the Fisher House Foundation.

To reminisce a bit, and to follow-up on the July Newsletter, I had the opportunity of meeting the oldest surviving Tuskegee Airman before our Springfield parade last Memorial Day. This was Lt. Colonel Charles Williams (Ret.) of Dayton, Ohio. I didn't get the pictures from the photographer until after our July Newsletter was printed. Mr. Williams and I chatted for a few minutes prior to the parade start, and I thanked him and his fellow aviators for their service, particularly those who flew cover for our B-17 Groups out of Foggia.

We continue to receive numerous requests for information about our missions, personnel, specific events and aircraft. Most of the inquiries are from relatives of 2nd Bomb Group veterans, but also from historians - both domestic and foreign. It is very satisfying to know that we have assisted a family member, or a historian, in answering questions regarding their relative or friend. Todd Weiler, Sid Underwood and Loy Dickinson have been most helpful in this endeavor. Two examples of these inquiries are cited elsewhere in the Newsletter. One of them is a real complement to Sid Underwood for his expansion of our website.

It is evident that the resort hotel location in Tucson is an exceptional site for our 2010 reunion. The description on their website is extraordinary, to which Loy Dickinson and Fred Fitzpatrick can attest. And Bonnie Hellums attended an AWON reunion at this resort, and it is her recommendation that we can thank for learning about these facilities. A description of the hotel and its amenities will appear elsewhere in the Newsletter. Keep the middle of October, 2010 saved for this event. Hope to see you in Tucson!

Best regards,
Lew Waters

THE VIEW FROM THE FARM

I am somewhat known by my unflappable nature. I do not panic easily and am sometimes called up as not being very interested in what is going on around me. That having been said I would like to say a few words about some of the things I see happening especially in the military realm.

Our Armed Forces have almost two million people on active duty in all parts of the world. We have been fighting two wars for almost a decade in far off strange places (to us) and no one seems to know how to finish them off or really what they are all about. We have been asking the brave men and women of the Armed Forces to serve in combat for long periods of time and to go back to face the enemy, second and third times in far off places away from their homes and families. Our smart bombs and stealth airplanes are marvelous wonders for destruction. Meanwhile those in the decision making regimes and the politicians argue over who will get the contracts to make the next generation of tankers and fighter aircraft.

In summary, our nation has not faced hardship or any collective sacrifice or any sense of ownership of our 'wars of choice'. The president deserves our support for attempting to show resolve in the current situation and the men and women of the Armed Forces fully deserve unqualified support and thanks for putting their lives on the line on our behalf and for our mostly unsupportive allies.

Our 2009 Reunion was a great success. Twenty-three 'VETS' were able to attend the San Antonio event. These men and sixty-plus of their families and friends had a wonderful time. It was to be the first ever experience of having the Reunion organized and managed by a professional in the person of Sherry Mills... we will see her again in the future! The day in Fredericksburg with its many interesting venues and the boat/barge trip to the Friday dinner on the famous San Antonio Riverwalk were enjoyable highlights. Col Steve Basham, Commander of the 2nd Bomb Wing, based at Barksdale, gave us a great overview of the modern Air Force.

Our Reunion for 2010 is being planned for the 13th to the 16th of October in the great old Southwest city of Tucson, Arizona. A lot of interesting venues and events are available in the area and it will be a great time for all. (Full disclosure: the author grew up 60 miles from Tucson, thus the area is well known to me.... No, I do not choose to live there now.) Our

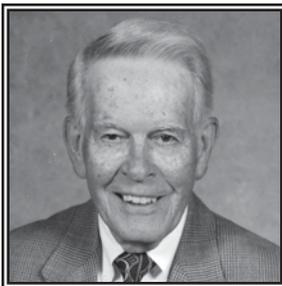
children, Rodney and Nancy, have attended the Reunions for the last ten years or so, and are always enthusiastic to go to the next one. They enjoy talking to the veterans. I think they want to keep tabs on the old man to be sure he is telling it like it was.

It is our good fortune that so many of the second and third generations maintain a high interest in our experiences of long ago. Many of our companions of WWII have died in the last few years, and many who remain are not able to travel. So, fewer of our 'VETS' have been present at the recent Reunions. Those who attend though, are usually anxious to be active in the tours and events. Thank all of you that do make it along with your spouses and youngsters. We are looking forward to seeing many of you in Tucson this coming October.

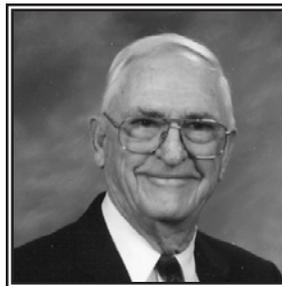
Special Note: It is a special pleasure to introduce Linda Gartz as the Assistant Editor of the Association Newsletter. Linda was with us in San Antonio and shortly after, she and her husband visited the Amendola air base where the 2nd BG was based during the last 18 months of the war. The first half of her report is elsewhere in this issue. We will all benefit from Linda's insights and quality reporting.



*Charles "CI" Williams, Tuskegee Airman
and Lew Waters
Last Memorial Day in Springfield, Ohio*



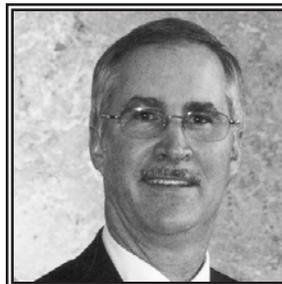
President
 Lew Waters
 1909 Wedgewood Cir.
 Springfield, OH 45503
 (937) 629-0897
 enon2212@sbcglobal.net



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



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



Historian
 Todd Weiler
 2761 N 37th St
 Milwaukee, WI 53210
 (414) 688-6401
 tjweil@pobox.com



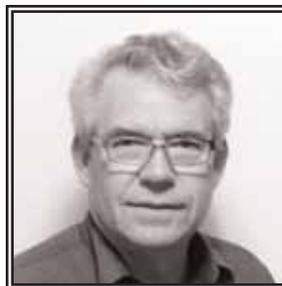
**Secretary &
 Past President 2007-08**
 Bonnie Crane Hellums
 3030 Eastside St.
 Houston, TX 77098
 (713) 521-4650 Hm
 (713) 397-0360 Cell
 bstith@ix.netcom.com



Co-Historian
 Donna Conway
 25 Clearview Rd
 Whitehouse Station NJ
 08889
 (908) 534-4198
 daconway51@comcast.net



Treasurer
 Matt R. Bryner
 8386 Fenton Way
 Arvada, CO 80003
 (303) 412-0030
 mrbryner@msn.com



**Agent to California
 Secy of State**
 Patrick J. Kennelly
 1628 N Mountain View Pl.
 Fullerton, CA 9283 1
 (714) 879-4076
 kennelly.patrick@att.net



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



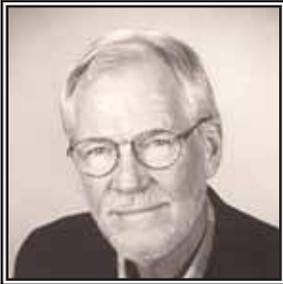
Linda Gartz
 2825 Lincoln Street
 Evanston, Il 60201
 847-328-5647
 lgartz@comcast.net



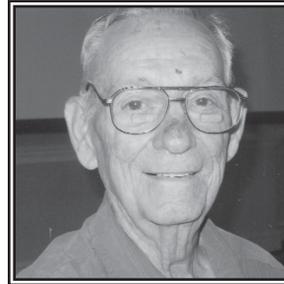
Past President 2004-06
 Loy A. Dickinson
 16685 Cielo Ct.
 Parker, CO 80134-3592
 (720) 851-9663 CO
 loy@denvertest.com



Past President 2002-03
 Richard K Radtke
 60 Villa Heights Ct
 Algoma, WI 54201
 (920) 487-3343
 ektdar@charter.net



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



Director at Large
 Jack Norwine
 575 Elm St.
 Calvert City, KY 42029
 (270) 395-7359
 Polly26@newwavecom.net



Director at Large
 Fred Fitzpatrick
 2334 E. Helen,
 Tucson, AZ 85719
 (520) 403-7682
 Fitz_robles1@msn.com



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



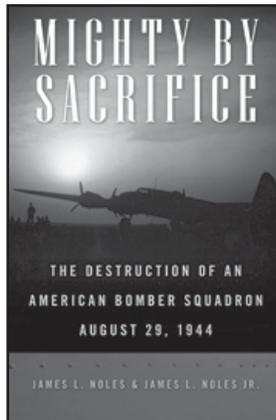
Director at Large
 Karen Nelson
 1300 Army Navy Dr. # 107
 Arlington, VA 22202
 (703) 892-5176
 karenwnelson@msn.com



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



Director at Large
 George H. True
 3518 N Graham Rd.
 Madison, IN 47250
 (812) 273-3938h
 (812) 701-1530c
 truegh@hotmail.net



“Mighty by Sacrifice”
 By James L Noles, Sr & James L Noles Jr

We previewed this book in the July Newsletter. It is a fine account of the destruction of nine of our B-17s over Morava-Ostrava, Czechoslovakia on mission #263, 29 August 1944.

More on the website:
www.2ndbombgroup.org

Order at - www.amazon.com - type in - james l noles - then scroll down to ‘Mighty by Sacrifice’

PILGRIMAGE TO AMENDOLA

Submitted by Linda Gartz

My husband and I arrived in Rome on Friday, October 30, 2009. The trip was originally planned to explore the historical sites in Sicily with another couple, starting on November 2nd. But as I studied the Italian map, I realized that across the peninsula from Naples (from where we'd take the ferry to Palermo, Sicily) lay Amendola, the airbase where my uncle, Lt. Frank Ebner Gartz, a member of the 2nd Bomb Group, had been stationed during World War II.

It was only in April of 2009, that I first learned about Amendola, even though I'm in possession of more than 230 letters written between my uncle and my parents, my grandmother and neighborhood friends. Because the airmen were not allowed to disclose their exact location, the letters only described his location as "Italy." But the envelopes held a clue, noting "49th Sq., 2nd Bomb Group" in the return address. After many dead ends attempting to locate former crewmates of my uncle through Air Force internet sites, I prevailed upon my brother, Paul, an aerospace engineer for Boeing, to come up with some ideas. He put me in touch with the Museum of Flight in Seattle, and through its representative, I learned about the 2nd Bomb Group website.

Todd Weiler, the 2nd Bomb Group's historian, helped me download the list of my uncle's missions and the crewmen with whom he had served. Sixty-four years after the end of World War II, I learned what no one in our family had ever known: that my uncle had successfully flown twenty-five missions between January 20th and May 1st, 1945, out of Amendola, Italy, near Foggia.

I determined that before meeting our friends in Naples, we would leave a few days early and make Amendola our first destination out of Rome. I knew there wouldn't really be much to see there – the airbase, a few runways—but an inner voice told me I should go. After reading all of my uncle's letters, I had come to know him—his quick wit, his easy-going, fun personality, his rascally nature (able to break a few rules—and a few hearts—to have a good time), and his achingly sweet side, unafraid to express feelings of love and loneliness.

I had flown in a B-17 back in June when the Liberty Belle came to the Aurora Municipal Airport, near Chicago. I had crawled under the pilot and co-pilot's

seats to get to the front of the plane, where my uncle had sat at the navigator's table, directly behind the bombardier. I had looked out through the Plexiglas nose, envisioning the "carpets of flak" that had engulfed the aircraft, peered down through the Norden Bomb site, and handled the machine guns that bristled on all sides of the B-17, thinking of each manned by a young crew member, defending their ship and their lives against enemy fire. I had attended



the 2nd Bomb Group Reunion in San Antonio and met many crewmembers, some of whom had flown with my uncle, but none remembered him. To complete the sense of "being there"—of seeing the area where my uncle had been stationed and served, I needed to go to Amendola—and this trip would probably be my last chance to do so. I looked at it as a pilgrimage of sorts, an opportunity to pay homage to all the men who served here so gallantly and to the young man whose death broke my family's collective heart.

Lt. Frank Ebner Gartz (everyone in the family called him by his middle name (ABE-ner) derived from my grandmother's family name) had spent two years training for his eventual deployment overseas. From January, 1943, to December, 1944, he had crisscrossed the country, training in Santa Ana, California; Boise, Idaho; Biloxi, Mississippi; and Miami, Florida. He had attended the College Training Detachment in Stephens Point, Wisconsin, and went to navigation

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school in Hondo, Texas. Like most of the young men who served in the Second World War, he had virtually never been out of the confines of his small community. Growing up on Chicago's West Side, knowing little of the rest of the country or the world, he, along with millions of other young American boys just out of high school, were being prepared to embark on an outrageously bold mission. Very simply, these "boys," as everyone called them, were being sent forth to save the world from tyranny.



Ebner graduated from Air Force Navigation School on September 18, 1944, and the next month finally got hands-on experience in a B-17 when transferred to Rapid City, South Dakota. The rumor going around was that they would ship overseas by Christmas—and that's exactly what happened.

He didn't know exactly where he was headed, but on Christmas Day, 1944, he took off for Africa, spending New Years Eve in Marrakesh. He wrote home about it:

We stopped off in Africa for a while and had the time of our lives. It was the start of a 2 week vacation in which all we did was eat, sleep, haul wood and coal for our fire and play cards, raise hell, get drunk, and have a hell of a good time....We had a lot of fun in the Medina of Marrakech. It was off limits, sooo we saw all of it.

A little rule breaking seemed in order before the reality of combat, but bad weather kept them in northern Africa for two weeks before they finally made their way to Amendola. Of course, he was not allowed to reveal where he was, so all of his letters simply note the date and "Italy."

His first mission was on January 20th, 1945, to bomb the oil storage at Regensburg, Germany, but he wasn't assigned missions fast enough for his liking. Requiring thirty-five missions under their belts before he could return home, my uncle was eager to get them over with, despite the dangers. At the end of February, he wrote his buddy, Ted Symon about his lack of missions in the graphic language he reserved for friends:

I haven't been flying much these days. I guess I'm on someone's shit list or I haven't been brownnosing enough. I'm through with that kind of crap. If they want to fly me, I could be back in the states in 4 mos. But I guess it will take me 7 or 8.

He would only have to complete twenty-five missions in the course of the next three and a half months, before the war came to an end. He navigated to targets in Austria: Vienna, Bruck, Trens, Linz and Salzburg; Italy: Verona, Bolzano, Malborghetto, Bologna (3 times between April 15-18), Germany: Ruhland and Regensburg again; Prague, Czechoslovakia; Maribor, Yugoslavia; and Sopron, Hungary.

He developed a philosophical attitude about death, as he wrote in one letter to my father about his mission on March 16, 1945:

Today I flew my 10th mission, and it was the hottest thing I have seen so far. There was more and bigger flak. We bombed an oil

refinery in North Eastern Vienna and those people don't like us to drop our presents to them.

Lt. Booms, my bombardier, had a rough time. He said that they threw everything they had at us including their kitchen sinks. Booms has to sit up in that Plexiglas nose where he can see all that stuff explod-



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ing around him. It sort of gets on his nerves. I was trying to explain to him that when your time comes it doesn't matter where you are...your number is up, and that's all there is to it."



He flew his last mission to bomb the marshalling yards at Salzburg, Austria, on May 1st. He had made it through the war unscathed. His time was not up. Yet.

When May 8th, VE Day, arrived, the family was overjoyed. The youngest son had made it through the war safely. He'd be coming home! But then he was presented with an amazing opportunity. He wrote his parents on June 8th :

I'm trying to get an appointment here in Italy flying for the 15th Air Force Headquarters, which will be flying Generals, Congressmen, and Ambassadors to various places in Europe. There's a lot of fellows trying to get in, but I may have a chance.

He landed the job, and it was a honey: great contacts, a chance to see the world on the government's dime. How could a twenty-one year old say no? He wrote:

The army is finally paying off for the times I flew

over Vienna on a carpet of Flak.

He was stationed in Caserta, Italy, navigating to deliver VIPs all over the Mediterranean and Europe. He flew to Athens, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Egypt, the French Riviera (...where the girls wear a handkerchief and call it a bathing suit.), Frankfurt—and seemed to have a girl in every port. By August he was preparing to come home, but was still hoping for a pass from the Russians to visit his mother's father in his home town in Romania.

His letters slowed down in late September and everyone assumed he was too busy to write, until my grandmother received a letter on October 17, 1945, dated October 5th, that stopped her heart:

Dear Mrs. Gartz:

The Hospital Command regrets to inform you that your son, 1st Lt. Frank E. Gartz, O-2071572, 4th Air Service Sqdn, 62nd Troop Carrier Group, who was admitted to this hospital October 5, is now considered to be seriously ill. Frank is in the early stages of Infantile Paralysis, [polio, infecting the spinal cord] and it is impossible at this time to say what the outcome will be.

The outcome became clear a few weeks later when all the family's letters, sent out in a flurry that horrid day, to console Ebner, came back with a bold DECEASED stamped across the front, a sickening reminder of what they couldn't have known: Ebner was dead on October 12th, five days before they even knew he was sick.

The airbase at Caserta is no longer in existence, but I was determined to see Amendola, where Uncle Ebner had thwarted death twenty-five times, only to be brought down by the deadly stealth of a virus. Trying to make sense of it, I could only turn to Ebner's own philosophy that he had shared in a letter to my father:

Having come to know my uncle through his letters, after having flown in a B-17, after meeting the men who had served in 2nd Bomb Group, I wanted to see Amendola--the very location – where Uncle Ebner had breathed the air, stared at the distant mountains, watched the sun sparkle on the Adriatic, climbed into his aircraft and navigated his crew to and from all those missions that helped bring World War II to a close.

The second half of Linda Gartz's article will be published in our next edition.

Honoring Russell W. Meyrick in the Czech Republic

By Michael W. Meyrick

My family traveled to the Czech Republic last August to visit the last resting place of my uncle, 2nd Lt Russell Meyrick, who was killed in action on August 29, 1944. My daughter, Kelly, her two children, Andrew and Cassie, and I were privileged to witness the reverence and solemn regard that the Czech and Slovak people have for the memory of the 41 American flyers that lost their lives in the Air Battle over the White Carpathian Mountains that fateful day.

The bombers that crashed on August 29, 1944, mission #263, were shot down over a wide area of the former Czechoslovakia in the fierce air to air battle. Five of the B-17's crashed in the area around Slavcin, a small town 4 hours east-southeast of Prague by auto. One of the B-17s, Tail End Charlie, ID #297159, crashed in the farm fields outside of Rudice, another small town near Slavcin. After the crash, the villagers rushed to the site to recover the body of Joseph Marinello, the ball turret gunner, from inside the wreckage. German soldiers recovered Meyrick's body in a field near another part of the wreckage. A young woman from the village, Marie Krivankova, intervened with the Germans to insist that Meyrick's and Marinello's bodies were buried behind the Rudice Catholic Church. Even more amazing, Maria persuaded the German soldiers to participate in the funeral as the honor guard. Maria also cared for the gravesite after the bodies were exhumed in 1946 by U. S. personnel. As I stood in the rain last August, I wished that I had been there before Marie passed away in 2003 to thank her personally for her selfless acts on behalf of Russell and Joseph. Today that gravesite is treated as a hallowed memorial and it is cared for by the people of the village, most of whom are too young to have experienced the war, and yet honor those they still refer to as "the liberators".

Every five years, on the last Sunday of August, the people of Rudice come to an open air mass held near the crash site of Russell's airplane. 2009 was the 65th anniversary of the 'Air Battle' and was commemorated with ceremonies in seven of the towns and villages of the Czech and Slovak Republics. The American Embassy in Prague was notably represented by military attaché US Air Force Col Walter Scales, who spoke at each of the ceremonies and met with the Meyrick's in a private meeting. A memorial was erected at the site that includes Russell Meyrick's photograph.

Our arrival in Rudice was nothing less than stunning. The main street of the tiny village was lined with people, young and old, as if they were waiting for a parade on a

national holiday. A full marching band led the walk up the hill to the ceremony where we saw the gravesite for the first time. It was surrounded by the Czech Army Honor Guard holding American and Czech flags. The military unit, the marching band, the fire department, two senior Czech Army officers, the Mayor, the American Colonel, three priests and 200-300 village people were all standing in the rain waiting for us to arrive. It had been raining most of the day, and yet, as if on cue the rain let up just as the ceremony began.

The ceremony began with the laying of the floral wreaths on Joe and Russell's gravesites by the Czech Army Officers. The national anthems of the United States and the Czech Republic followed the laying of the wreaths. The Mayor of Rudice presided at the ceremony and spoke movingly of the dedication of the American soldiers. The American attaché, Col Scales, expressed the appreciation of our government for the dedication and friendship of the Czech citizenry. It was difficult for me to hold the camera steady while my daughter Kelly made remarks thanking everyone for the hospitality we experienced. Another descendent of a downed aviator on the mission also attended the ceremony. Nick Mevoli, the grandson of Joe Owsianik (a waist gunner on 'Tail End Charlie'), was a guest speaker to the assembly, and made his remarks in the Czech language. The gravesite was then blessed by the parish priests, and a bugler played the Czech version of taps to close the ceremony.

The outdoor ceremony was followed by a High Catholic Mass held in the church next to the cemetery. Approximately 200 people crowded together for a mass that lasted one hour and fifteen minutes. The building was designed for a maximum of 100. Large portraits of Marinello and Meyrick were mounted on stands at the altar.

Because the war was fought in the skies over Czechoslovakia, the Czech people have a deep understanding of how different our world would be if the ultimate result of the war had been victory for the Nazis. The concept may be hazy to most Americans. After this experience, my family has a profound sense of the sacrifice made by the soldiers of World War II, and this far-off corner of a small country has become a significant part of our memory. I hope my grandchildren can participate in this meaningful event in the years to come, and my family will continue to increase the understanding and honor that the Czech and American people have for each other.

Mike Meyrick's full account of his visit will be found on our website. This is an abbreviated version.

2010 REUNION
SECOND BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION
WESTWARD LOOK RESORT
TUCSON, ARIZONA - OCTOBER 13 to 16, 2010

This year you are in for a big treat. Our venue will be one of Arizona's finest resort hotels – WESTWARD LOOK RESORT. This excellent property hosted the AWON (American World War II Orphan Network) reunion last year. Bonnie Hellums was thrilled to recommend it to us and we have found their management very receptive to having our Association. Their appreciation of the economic facts of today's world is reflected in the realistic prices in our contract.

Tucson is a wonderful southwest city with a wide variety of venues for us to explore. Number One of these is the Pima Air & Space Museum. Those of our members who have been to Wright - Patterson in Dayton, Ohio and/or the Smithsonian in Washington DC will be astonished by the way the 200 plus aircraft exhibit is laid out. We will be taken on a Tram Tour. The docent led tour covers all the of the outside aircraft exhibits and lasts about one hour. By this means we will see and learn about many types of aircraft (bombers, fighters, attack, cargo, commercial, helicopters, refueling, NASA and fire fighting) not only from the United States but also from Russia, Britain, France, Germany, Italy & Japan. This tour is scheduled for Friday the 15th

This year we will do some different things in differing ways. The most important change will be that your Association will rent 15 passenger vans to transport members and guests from Tucson Airport to the resort and then back to the airport. In addition you will be offered a smorgasbord of several venues to give everyone a variety of choices of sites and places of interest. The vans will be driven by a carefully selected cadre of talented, reliable, beautiful and handsome volunteers. (Applications will be accepted presently)

At this time there is no plan for tours on Thursday. On Saturday the plan is to provide options which will include:

- A) Tour of the Titan Missile Museum and a visit to the San Xavier del Bac Mission. This would be from approximately 10:00AM to 2:30PM.
 - B) Tour of the Old Tucson Studios and a drive through Saguaro (pronounced 'su wa row') National Park. Approximately the same time frame as tour 'A'.
 - C) Tour of the Tubac Art Community. Tubac is about a one hour drive south of Tucson and would provide a excellent opportunity to visit southwestern art galleries and shops of all variety. This would be a longer day – perhaps 9:00AM to 3:30 or 4:00PM
- Lunch would be on your own on each of the tours.

Most of all, however, there will be much time available for enjoying the beautiful surroundings of the resort and to relax in the Hospitality suite – enjoy a coke or beer or your favorite beverage.

The traditional banquet will be held on Friday evening and our very special guest at that time will be Major General Frank Carpenter, Commander of the Eighth Air Force, Barksdale, Louisiana. Those who have excellent to extraordinary memories may remember that (then) Colonel Carpenter was our speaker at the Las Vegas Reunion in 1997 when we joined many other outfits to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the United States Air Force becoming a separate branch of the services and to become co-equal with the Army and Navy. He accepted Lew's invitation with alacrity.

**DETAILS WILL BE INCLUDED
IN THE REGISTRATION
PACKET TO BE MAILED
IN MID MARCH.
SAVE THE DATES
OCTOBER 13 to 16, 2010**

REUNION 2009

San Antonio, Texas is a beautiful town and it became an interesting place for about twenty 2nd Bomb Veterans and around 70 of their families and friends the week of 15th through the 18th of October, 2009. The 2009 reunion was held there centered at the Crown Plaza Airport Hotel.

Registration began on Thursday at the hotel and the activities started with a welcome tour by bus of Randolph AFB and dinner at the officer's club known as the "Parr Club".

Dinner was followed by a very interesting lecture by retired Col. Marc Sager. About the 332 EMDG-ICD he had commanded and how the wounded are taken care of from the battlefield to the U.S. Hospital. Col. Sager stated he took on the job washing the dirty and bloody liters each morning in order to keep his bearings in a traumatic and stressful place.

Back for another bus ride Friday morning and a visit to the National Museum of the Pacific War. This museum is the only institution in the U.S. Dedicated to telling the story of WW-II in the Pacific Theater. The center includes the George Bush Gallery, The Admirable Ninitz Museum, Plaza of Presidents, Walk of Honor, Japanese Garden of Peace, Pacific Combat Zone, and the Center for Pacific War Studies.

The next event was the much acclaimed visit to the River Walk. This was a delightful ride in a boat (our group required two boats) along the river that flows through the center of the city. After supper in the local restaurants, the group was again on the bus for return to the Hotel to rest up for another day of adventure.



The boat/barge on San Antonio Riverwalk: Far back Earl & Bonnie (heads back to back), a few faces on the far side facing - Rodney Martin, Ben Carnes, George True and John Bryner

Saturday was city tour day. A guide took the group on a circuit of the city, emphasizing the history of the area.

A visit was made to The Shoe Factory, where a good many of the group were able to find foot covers that fit. A good amount of time was spent touring the beautiful San Fernando Cathedral, one of the five missions built by the early Spanish settlers. A visit was made to the Little Red Barn for a delicious lunch which did not leave much time for a visit to the Alamo. We only had time for a walk through before heading back to the hotel to prepare for the Saturday night Banquet.



Irene & Dick Radtke and Loy Dickinson at the Plaza of Presidents



Loy, Lew, Sid, Anne, and Earl visit Fisher House



Luncheon at The Little Red Bar

After the banquet, President Waters introduced the speaker Col. Steven L. Basham commander of the 2nd Bombardment Wing.

Col. Basham spoke about the current situation with the Air Force and about his command. He told about his experiences in flying the B-1, B-2 and B-52. His talk was very informational and entertaining.



Dining - Stokes Huntley, John & Irma Sisson, Lloyd & George True



Francyne and Sid Underwood



Col. Basham, Loy Dickenson, Ben Carnes



Mr. President Lew



THE VETS

FRONT ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT
Earl Martin, Jim Goodrich, John Sisson, Art Sauer

2ND ROW
Larry Ashley, Stokes Huntley, Lloyd True, Ron Dittrich, Dick Radtke

3RD ROW
Ben Carnes, John LeClair, Jack Norwine, Lew Waters, Bob Fredericks

4TH ROW
Carl Nastoupil, Loy Dickinson, John Bryner, 'JC' Speight, John Roberts

IN MEMORIAM

Gene E Kurz, 20th Squadron - October 20, 2009
M L 'Marty' Childress, 429th Squadron - December 4, 2009
Ernest O Roller - Nov. 12, 2009
George S Hill - 429th sqdn Nov. 26, 2007

Tony Zevenbergen, Jr. - 429th sqdn Jan. 23 2009
Ernest O Roller - 49th sqdn no date
Thomas E Ford - 49th sqdn no date
William Blalock - 96th sqdn no date
Thomas W Forbes - 96th sqdn no date.

TOKYO TANKS

Joseph Gardini was a radio/gunner in the 96th Squadron. Before he died in 2008, he did some writing about his experiences for his grand children and great grand children. Some of these stories have been sent to us by his family. Mostly they are in his words and language. Thanks Arlene Urbach. For this one.

In the 96th Squadron, because of our experiences, (30 missions or more), They would put two of us to fly with new crews. We were some of the most experienced in the squadron.

The missions were getting longer and longer. The fuel capacity of the B-17F was limited. To solve the problem, in the B-17G. they put extra fuel tanks in the outer wings of the new planes. If needed. They had a valve in the bomb bay. They called them Tokyo tanks

The new crews had these planes. On returns from missions, if the fuel ran low, the Engineer Gunner would turn the valve in the bomb bay and feed enough fuel to return home.

I was assigned to fly as extra Radio Gunner with a new crew in their new plane. It was their first combat mission. After more than sixty years, it is hard to place names and missions, but I know it was a long one. It was not a tough mission as missions go (no one aboard was wounded). On our return, half way back, the Navigator calculated it was time to use the Tokyo Tank gas. The Pilot told the Engineer, Top Turret Gunner, "Go open the extra tanks". To do this, one must go into the bomb bay. A short time later, "Top Turret to pilot, the valve is stuck. I can't turn it." Pilot "Get that damn thing open or we'll have to ditch". (The Adriatic Sea) Pilot, "How are your doing?" Gunner, "I have a wrench, I'll try that." Gunner, "The (SOB) knob and whole stem is broken from the valve. Nothing I can do." Pilot, "That's it Guys. Prepare for ditching". Navigator, "Pilot, no way we can get back even if we throw everything out". We were preparing to ditch. We had a little over an hour's fuel.

What could I lose? I might as well try something. I was trained as a crew chief. Get the brain working. "Left Gunner to Pilot". "What's up Smokey?" "Sir, I'd like to take a look at that valve". "OK Smokey, but be

ready to ditch when it is time to go". "Roger" Pilot to Radio "Get ready to send May-Day". Radio, "Roger, Wilco".

I went to the bomb bay, the belly of the plane. It had a foot wide path way the full length of the bomb bay, with nothing to hold on to. Spread-eagled one foot on the path way the other on the wall of the plane. (I thank God for long legs). One lurch of the plane could send me through the bomb bay doors "Like Bombs Away".

I looked at the valve. The stem was sheered, 1/8th inch left on the valve. Not enough for a plying tool to grab. I went back to my gunning position. I looked in my little bag of tricks. I had a little tool, saved from Aerial Gunner Training Days. I figured it may come in handy to service my guns. A Cotter Key Extractor is a piece of steel 7 Vi inches long 318 inches square, curved taper bend on both ends. One end a very sharp point, the other a wide sharp edge. It's worth a try. I went back to the bomb bay. Now, in the spread-eagle, with the sharp point, I tried to make a groove in the exposed part of the round brass stem of the valve. I made the groove deep as possible. I used the other end as an offset screw driver. It was not turning. It didn't want to move. I was unable to get a firm grip, because I had the heavy leather fleece lined gloves. Temperature below freezing. Heck with the cold: Off came the gloves. The tool in my right hand, my left hand on my right hand, the weight of my body against them. I was in a very awkward position. If I slipped, I would be "BOMBS AWAY" It started to move.

I turned the valve s far as it would go. "Smokey to Pilot, check fuel flow". "My God Smokey, what did you do?" God did deserve the credit. I was just a helper. Soon we got back to normal. I did resent some of the crew kissing me This is your first mission guys. You better be prepared, these things happen. You have 49 to go.

When we landed, the Pilot gathered the crew. "Guys, what Smokey did today saved the plane and maybe some of our lives". "Smokey, I'm putting you in for a Bronze Star9".

Letters

Gregg Ladislaw to Lew Waters

I wanted to thank all of you for the website and the information you have collected there. My name is Gregg Ladislaw and I recently got a copy of some of my grandfather's military paperwork. My grandfather, George Nelson Jarvis, Jr, passed away before I was born, but I have always felt a tie to him. After serving as a pilot 49th Bombardment Squadron in the Second Bomb Group he became a police officer. I am also a police officer and have a picture of him hanging proudly in my office. I live in Alexandria, Virginia and regret not finding your website until this month as your reunion in 2008 was a few blocks from my house. It would have been my honor to meet you and thank you in person.

The Database is fantastic and I have been reading about the different missions in "The Second Was First". I had never heard about Operation Reunion on August 31, 1944 to evacuate Allied POWs and have been sharing information with my Aunts, Uncles and cousins. With the help of your website I am educating my family on my grandfather's service. My interest in his service has caused the retelling of stories by my grandmother that she hasn't told in decades. At one point she started talking about when she lived in Texas before she had any of her eight children, which

my mother never knew. She is a strong woman who would rather talk about her children, grandchildren and great grandchildren, but has begun to retell some great stories. My grandfather's papers had her old address and she started telling me about the old neighborhood and the house she grew up in.

My grandmother is 89 years old and I am going to surprise her by making a shadow box with my grandfather's medals and photo. I also want to include patches for the 15th Air Force and the 2nd Bomb Group that I can purchase on the internet. Do you know of a place that I would be able to order the 49th Bomb Squadron patch?

The Database on your website was able to tell me every plane that he flew in. I am currently researching some of those planes in an attempt to find a picture to include in the shadow box.

Thank you for assembling a great website. The information has been invaluable to me and my family. I am compiling all of my research and will be giving copies to my entire family at Christmas. While it is a very small token of my appreciation, I have sent in my dues for the use of the information you have collected.

You are truly second to none!

Sincerely,
Gregg Ladislaw

AXIS SALLY

Members of the 2nd Bomb Group, as well as other Allied force personnel in the ETO were able to listen to propaganda broadcasts from Radio Berlin.

Probably the favorite such program of most Americans was that put on by "AXIS SALLY"

Every one who had a radio, which included those airmen on the way to targets, were able to listen to Sally. She played all the popular American music and talked to the military men like they were old friends. Her favorite theme was to pick out a certain man, by name, and tell a made up tale about his wife running away with his best friend. Her duty under the Nazi scheme was to try to make GI's as disturbed as possible. Most Americans who listened to her enjoyed the music and laughed at her jokes.

Some Second Bomb members will remember the day when the roof was finally finished on the new Officers Club. Sally made a special broadcast that day with the statement. " I see you guys at the 2nd bombardment group have finished your Officer's Club roof. Be sure, we will knock it off for you tomorrow." Sure enough, when the air-crews arrived over the field the next day and broke formation to land, a portion of the roof was missing. The reason, turned out to be a wind storm that struck in the afternoon and took away a portion of the poorly attached structure. Not a few men were taken aback for a time.

Others were sometimes called "Axis Sally", but the one most connected with the name was an American Citizen, Mildred Gillars. She was born Mildred Sisk

continued on next page

Letters

continued from previous page

in Portland Maine November 29,1900. Gillars studied drama at Ohio Wesleyan Univeristy and eventually arrived in New York where she dreamed of becoming an actress, but met with little success. In the 1930s, she went to Dresden to study music and later worked as an English instructor at the Berlitz school of Languages in Berlin. In 1940 she accepted an announcer and actress job with Radio Berlin where she remained until the Nazis fell in 1945. Gillars' last broadcast was on May 6,1945, two days before the German surrender. After the war, she blended into the large number of displaced persons in Allied occupied Germany. She was captured and eventually flown to the United States in 1948. She was charged with 10

counts of treason, and was tried on 8 counts. The trial was sensational for six weeks. It ended on March 8,1949. The Jury convicted Gillars on only one count of treason for making the famous "Vision of Invasion" broadcast in which she played an American mother who dreamed that her son died a horrific death in the English Channel. Gillars was sentenced to 10-to -30 years in prison. She was released from prison in 1961. She resided at a convent in Columbus, Ohio. She later taught English and German at the prep school operated by a Catholic order near Columbus. She died June 25,1988 at age 87, and is buried at Saint Joseph Cemetery, Columbus, Ohio (unmarked).

Col. Don Goulet to Lew Waters.

I would like to thank you for your assistance in helping me reconstruct the records of 1st Lt. Calvin C. Mclean, Jr. a member of the 49th bombardment squadron, 2nd bombardment group, who served as a navigator and Mickey Operator from October 1944 to April 1945. The info you provided steered me in the right direction. I found Calvin's pre-commissioning discharge certificate et al. In the office of the Registrar of Deeds in the Guilford County (Greensboro) court house. We found a few records in a mislabeled shoe box that had belonged to his late mother to include his commission as a first lieutenant and I obtained copies of the 15th Air Force General orders from the Air Force historical Research Office in the Pentagon awarding Calvin the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal, w/3 OLC, and a note stating that he was awarded the European Africa-Middle East Campaign Medal with w/ gold Battle Star. We even found an "onion skin" copy from the 49th Bombardment Squadron operations officer dated 5 April 1945 to the S-3, 2nd Bombardment Group , Subject; Battle orders , assigning Calvin to aircraft 48561, mission 392, target Udine, Italy which was his last mission.

I have sent copies of these records, to include your e-mails , to the National Record Center in St. Louis so they can serve in place of the records lost in the fire,

plus sending a copy to the DFC general orders to the DFC Society so Calvin can be included in their list of DFC recipients I have also assisted Calvin in applying for some VA benefits.

I purchased an Air Medal and Campaign medal from the Fort Bragg NC PX to go along with Calvin's 64 year old DFC and will have them mounted in a frame. It is our intent to recognize Calvin at our MOAA chapter's monthly luncheon in September now that he has official records of WW-II service. We do not want Calvin or any other WW-II veteran of the GI/Hero generation to pass into historical oblivion Don Goulet, Colonel USA (ret)

And reply from Lew:

What great news; Thank you so much for the very positive update. The Second Bombardment Association appreciates your effort to assist one of "our boys". You are to be congratulated for your dedication to locate the records and to assist the family in applying for VA benefits.

I am sure Lt. McLean and his family really appreciate your efforts. And,what a nice gesture to arrange a display case for his medals. Let's hope the VA benefits approach is as successful.

2nd Bomb Group's record unequaled

With the 15th AAF May 31

The 2nd Bomb Group (H) has the unique distinction of being the first heavy bomb group to bomb the enemy in World War I and the last to continue a strategic bombing in the entire European Theater in World War II.

Led by Col. Paul T. Cullen, Washington D. C., 27 B-17s took off May 1, 1945, to deliver their last death blow to the enemy with an attack on the main marshalling yards at Salzburg, Austria, sole important rail

center left to the Germans.

In a little more than two years of combat flying, the 2nd, with 412 combat missions to its credit, has established a record unequaled in the theater. Organized in Moulon, France in 1918, the 2nd used old French Breguet planes, and with eight or nine ships, was considered a large force at that time.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This item is from a scrap of a news paper. I am not sure of the source.

DID YOU KNOW?

1. That Jackie Robinson became a Cavalry Officer during WW-II, He was discharged as a First Lt. After the war.
2. That more than 300 heavy bombers and crews were lost in the Ploesti oil Field attacks.
3. That "Bob Hopes" was the name given by the British for the V-2 rockets. The only possible response was "Bob Down and Hope for the Best."
4. That the B-1 bomber crews and maintainers call their big airplane THE BONE?
5. That George S. Patton was a participant in the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm as the first American to enter the pentathlon. (He finished fifth)
6. That quonset huts were named after the town where they were manufactured, Quonset Point, Rhode Island.

Ninety Six Squadron still reaching out

The following is from the Daily Report, AF Magazine Newsletter, July 3 1, 2009

REACHING OUT, DOWN UNDER

B-52 bombers, currently stationed at Anderson AFB, Guam, completed 10 sorties to Australian training ranges and executed practice bomb runs while participating in Tallyman Saber 2009, a US, Australian military exercise earlier this month. "Our purpose was to demonstrate what we can do with the B-52," said Capt. Sean Stavelly, a B-52 commander with the 96th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron. This unit comprises elements of the 96th Bomb Squadron at Barksdale, AFB, La. That has been deployed on a rotation to Guam since the end of May as part of the US bomber presence there. The sorties consisted of 12 hour flights from Guam to Australia where the bombers worked with other US and Australian forces. Overall, the bombers tallied more than 110 hours. Said Stavelly, "Taking off from Guam, going somewhere a long distance away, putting our bombs on target, and then coming back to the base that we came from is a clear indication of the bomber's capability." (Anderson report by Ssgt Jennefer Redente).

And from the Sept. 29, 2009 Daily Report.

GOING DOWN UNDER BEFORE HEADING HOME

Three B-52H bombers stationed at Anderson AFB, Guam as part of the 96th Expeditionary Bomb Squadron from Barksdale AFB, LA, completed 13 hour training flights to an Australian training range Sept 21 and 22. The mission gave the bomber air crews the opportunity to practice long duration flights and cooperate with Australian joint terminal attack controllers in close air support bombing roles. "It was definitely a long sortie, but it was worth it in the end", said 1st Lt. Jason Duhan electronic warfare officer on one of the B-52s. He added, "I learned how other coalition forces operate, and I learned a good deal about crew coordination on a long sortie." The 96th EBS, on Guam since late May was scheduled to return to Barksdale on Sept. 26, replacing it is an expeditionary complement from it's sister unit, the 20th BS. (Report by Ssgt. Jennefer Redente)

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A Veterans Organization of the
2nd Bomb Group & Bomb Wing

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