

GROUP



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

WING



SECOND BOMBARDMENT ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

"Second to None"

www.2ndbombgroup.org

Volume 27, No. 2, July 2011



President's Corner

This has been a year of remembrance and reflection, beginning with the annual Springfield, Ohio Memorial Day Parade. Again, this is the largest parade in Ohio celebrating this particular holiday. Hopefully, many of you were able to either participate, or at least attend, an activity on this patriotic day.

On Easter weekend, Ann and I visited the Garland Brook Cemetery in Columbus, Indiana. We located the gravesite of S/Sgt. James W. Thompson, a neighbor of mine in the 20th Squadron at Amendola, who was killed on December 29th, 1944, on a mission to Castlefranco, Italy. I didn't find out where Jim was buried until 2009. We finally were able to locate the cemetery, and stopped to pay our respects this past April.

The week of June 19 was a very solemn, but inspiring week. Ann and I drove to Cedar Rapids, Iowa for the funeral services, and internment, of S/Sgt. Marvin J. Steinford, a member of the 429th Squadron, who was killed while parachuting from a disabled B-17 on March 24, 1945.

Unfortunately, Sgt. Steinford was M.I.A. until 2005, when his daughter was notified that remains of an American soldier was located in Hungary thought to be her father. It wasn't until 2009 that DNA tests confirmed that fact. This amazing story is described later in the newsletter, along with a newspaper article from the Vinton Today News describing the mission in detail. John and Barbara Bryner were able to join us in Cedar Rapids. It was very satisfying to have two veterans from the 2nd Bomb Group to attend the services for our fallen comrade. The Steinford family were very appreciative of the efforts of our association to pay their respects.

Honor Flight, the non-profit entity dedicated to transporting W.W. II veterans to Washington D.C. to visit their memorial, is or has been, the center of attention for two of

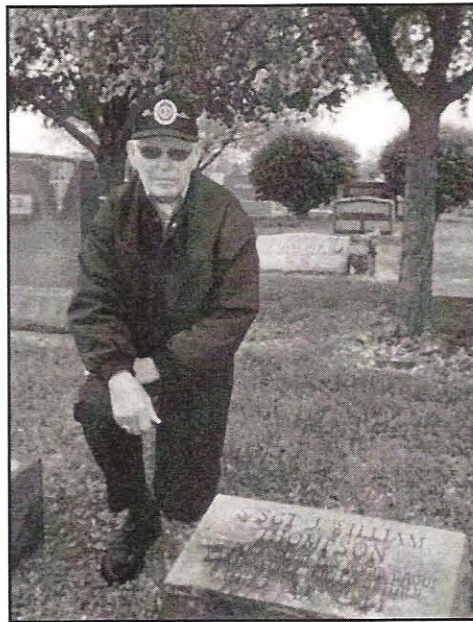
our members recently. Chuck Childs flew to our nation's capitol, via Honor Flight, and was really impressed with the organization and dedication of the volunteers involved. Chuck felt honored to be a part of such an inspiring visit. His group of W.W.II veterans were escorted by paratroopers, including a Major General. And Carl Nastoupil is scheduled to fly with Honor Flight this coming October. Hopefully, this plan will come to fruition for Carl. Log on to www.honorflight.org for additional information regarding this wonderful organization.

The association has planned a fine reunion for our members and guests. Loy Dickinson has organized an interesting set of tours, and we are privileged to have General Michael Ryan, Retired, to be our speaker for the Saturday evening banquet. General Ryan, a former Air Force Chief of Staff, is the son of Colonel John D. Ryan. Col Ryan had been Deputy Commander, then Commander of the 2nd Bomb Group from July to September 1944. After an assignment at 5th Wing Headquarters he returned

as Commander in February 1945. On February 28, mission 368 he lost a finger. Attempted reattachment was not successful and the Colonel became (aka) "three finger Jack." General John Ryan was the 7th Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, from 1969 to 1973.

We continue to receive many requests for information on 2nd Bomb Group veterans, and for information on the group in general. It is very rewarding to be able to assist family members, and historians, in their quest for information regarding group history. With the able assistance of Todd Weiler and Sid Underwood, we have tried to answer the many inquiries.

Best regards,
Lew Waters



Editor Notes

ROCK SLIDE ON BERTHOUD PASS

It is summertime in the Rocky Mountains and it is marvelous. The Air Force Academy class of 2015 checked in for basic training in mid-June and runs through to July 30. Classes for the Academy and its 1,159 newcomers on, start on August 4. Just 9% of the 13,000 applicants made the cut to enroll in one of the five prestigious service academies. The first class, 1959, began in the summer of 1955 at temporary quarters on Lowry Air Force base in Denver. Housing was in renovated WWII barracks.

The 18,000 acre campus is immediately north of Colorado Springs. Maximum enrollment is 4,417. The current Superintendent is Lt. General Michael C Gould. The Academy is one of the largest tourist attractions in Colorado, attracting more than one million visitors each year. It has been a long time goal to have our reunion in the Springs. We will visit the Academy, of course. While there we will pay our respects to General John Dale Ryan,

who is buried at the cemetery on the grounds. John was commandant of the 2nd Bomb Group. His son, General Michael E Ryan, will be the featured speaker at the Saturday banquet. Michael and his dad are both former Chief of Staff of the U S Air Force.

We will be honored with the presence of Charles P Huntington, dig back in your memory bank. "Pres" is a past president of this outfit and one of its founders. He and Dale live just a few miles north of the Academy. In addition we will have special guests from the Czech Republic visiting with us. Vlastimil Hela, who was with us in Washington DC and Jirik Fleischer. Jirik was five years old when he and his father witnessed the parachute descent of this old warrior dropping near his town of Rudice, Czechoslovakia in August of 1944. I want to assure them and everyone else that the Pass has been cleared and traffic is running smoothly again at Berthoud.

Loy Dickinson

STAFF SERGEANTS JAMES W THOMPSON & MARVIN J STEINFORD

Staff Sergeant Thompson was in the 20th Bomb Squadron and was KIA on December 29, 1944. He also happened to be a close neighbor of Lew Waters at Amendola. Lew and Ann Waters paid their respects by attending the service at the Garland Brook Cemetery in Columbus, Indiana on Easter weekend in April 2011. Thompson was the last mortality in the Bomb Group for the year 1944. There would be 34 more KIA and 4 MIA in the 2nd Bomb Group in the remaining four months of the war.

The 22 year old Marvin J Steinford was to be one of the 34 KIA. He was on a crew which was in the 429th Bomb Squadron and less than seven weeks from the end of the war. Their target was the Daimler-Benz tank works in a suburb of Berlin. This was to be the longest mission in the 412 missions that the Bomb Group flew during the entire war. This mission was deemed a success since three fourths of the plant was deemed to be destroyed. The cost included the loss of two bombers and the life of Staff Sgt Marvin Steinford. Steinford's body was buried, inexplicably, in a cemetery with Russian soldiers in the town of Zirc, Hungary.

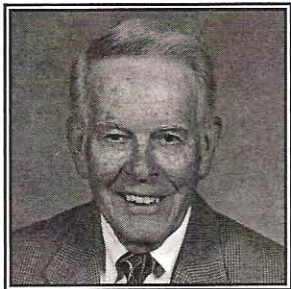
It took the US government one day less than 65 years to positively identify his remains. The Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office positively identified Steinford's remains on March 23, 2010. This followed from notification by Hungarian authorities of the potential remains of an American service man on November 16, 2004. During the excavation of a WWII Soviet war memorial, workers noticed a dissimilar wooden coffin among the Soviet style coffins. Finally they discovered

remains and a set of identification tags that bore Steinford's name. Trilateral negotiations involving American, Hungarian and Russian officials began in early 2005.

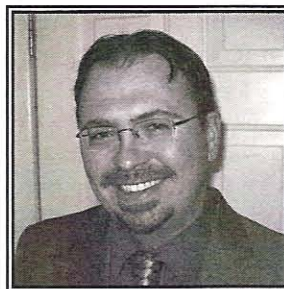
After repeated diplomatic efforts approval was obtained from Russian Federation leaders to allow the exhumation of Steinford's remains. The tripartite agreement to exhume the gravesite was signed on September 9, 2008. The actual work began on July 21, 2009.

The memorial service for Steinford took place on June 21, 2011 at Christ Episcopal Church, Rapid City, Iowa. Steinford married Rosalie Behrends on October 21, 1943, and had one daughter. He is survived by his daughter Carol Ann Sansenbach, four grandchildren, ten great-grandchildren and one step-great-grandchild, as well as several cousins.

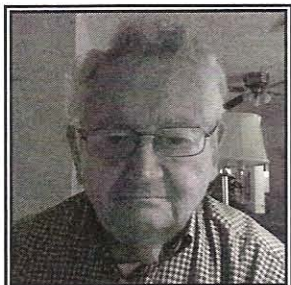




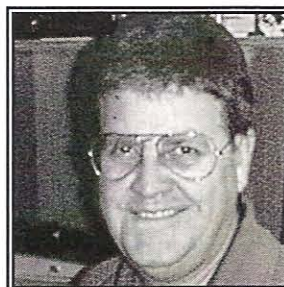
President
 Lew Waters
 1909 Wedgewood Cir.
 Springfield, OH 45503
 (937) 629-0897
 (937) 408-0336 cell
 enon2212@sbcglobal.net



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



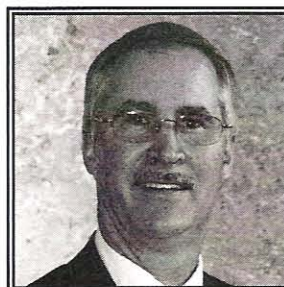
Vice President
 John D. Sisson
 The Dam Site Box 242
 Mill River, MA 01244-0242
 (413) 229-6638
 jsisson242@aol.com



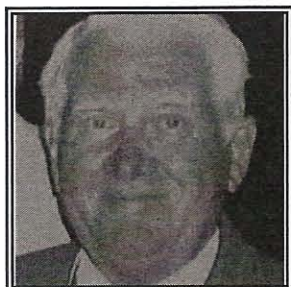
Web Master
 Sid Underwood
 7920 Garden North Dr.
 Garden Ridge, TX 78266
 (210) 651-5666 Hm
 (210) 355-1560 Cell
 sidunderwood@prodigy.net



**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



Historian
 Todd Weiler
 2761 N 37th St
 Milwaukee, WI 53210
 (414) 688-6401
 308m14@gmail.com



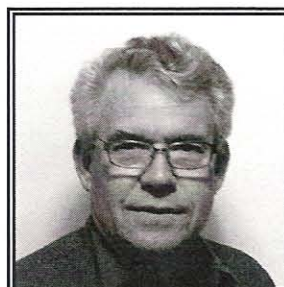
**Editor &
 Past President 2004-06**
 Loy A. Dickinson
 16685 Cielo Ct.
 Parker, CO 80134-3592
 (720) 851-9663 CO
 (602) 402-7194 Cell
 loy@denvertest.com



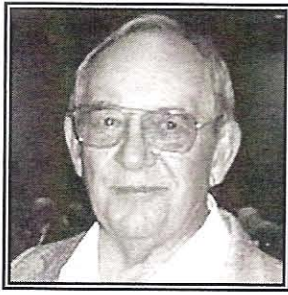
Co-Historian
 Donna Conway
 25 Clearview Rd
 Whitehouse Station NJ
 08889
 (908) 534-4198
 daconway51@comcast.net



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

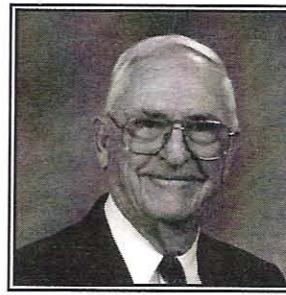


**Agent to California
 Secy of State**
 Patrick J. Kennelly
 1628 N Mountain View Pl.
 Fullerton, CA 9283 1
 (714) 879-4076
 kennelly.patrick@att.net



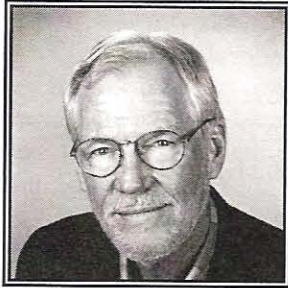
Past President 2002-03

Richard K Radtke
60 Villa Heights Ct
Algoma, WI 54201
(920) 487-3343
ektdar88@charter.net



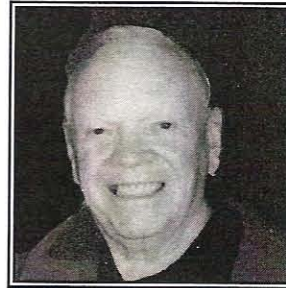
Editor Emeritus

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



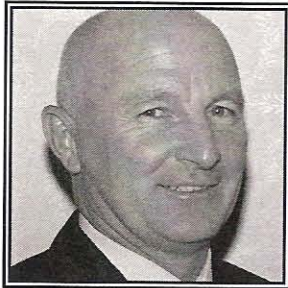
Director at Large

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



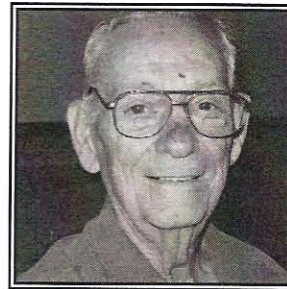
Director at Large

Charles L. Childs
4201 Elm Ave. #312
Rapid City, SD 57701
(605)721-1800
drummer@rushmore.com



Director at Large

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



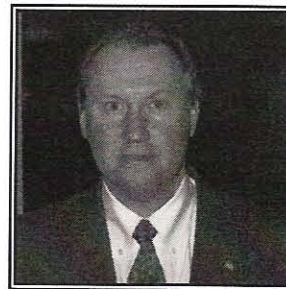
Director at Large

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



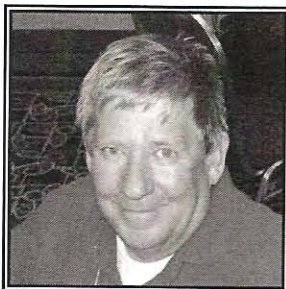
Director at Large

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



Director at Large

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



Director at Large

George H. True
3518 N Graham Rd.
Madison, IN 47250
(812) 273-3938h
(812) 701-1530c
george1999@live.com



Director at Large

Burton Thorman
7101 Bay Front Dr. #122
Annapolis, MD 21403
(410) 626-1351
BThor@netscape.net

LT. FRANCIS W. FLYNN

On November 29, 2010 at 10:45 a.m. my father, 1st LT. Francis W. Flynn, POW, Purple Heart recipient, Air Medical and 2 Oak Leaf Cluster was buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors...what a day to remember!

The weather that weekend was less than desirable...rain, wind, and cold; except for the day of the burial. The day of the burial opened up to blue skies and 60 degrees a more than perfect day to honor our father.

We celebrated a short mass in the Chapel and as the doors to the Chapel opened there in front of us was a full Military Band waiting for us. As we left the chapel and followed the caisson and the Military Band they starting playing The Battle Hymn, how fitting... that was my dad's favorite hymn. We walked a mile and half to his gravesite in a very overwhelming atmosphere taken with horses, caisson, full band, the POW flag holder and all for one man that day...my father and as we took that slow walk of honor it was amazing to witness the people who were just visiting

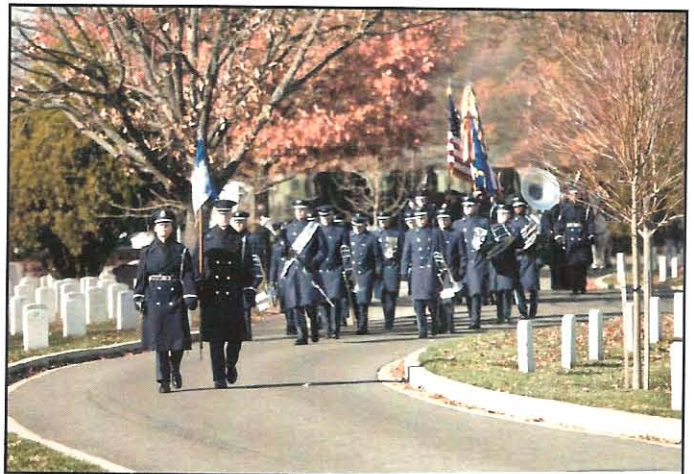
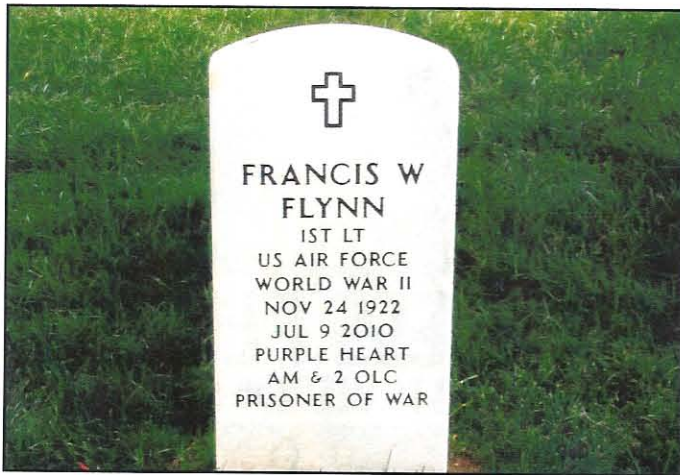
Arlington that day that stood tall and saluted my dad...people who didn't even know him.

As we reached the grave site his location was right under an old oak tree. The Chaplain said to me, "Your dad must be a very special man?" and I said, "Yes he is, but why would you say that?" The Chaplain said, "He has the best seat in the house". As Taps played and the 21 gun salute went off...it is a feeling like no other, it warms your heart to witness how an American hero is honored, and as they should for all that they went through.

I thought I would struggle with the idea of "leaving" my dad behind in Arlington so far away from all of his family and friends who would not be able visit for a long time, was I wrong! My dad is in the most beautiful and peaceful place in the world and will be honored every day with the men and women and children who walk those grounds.

My dad is finally at peace and FINALLY HOME!!!

Lisa Sellari



PLOESTI, ROMANIA

Winston Churchill and Adolph Hitler both knew the importance of Ploesti to the German war effort. Churchill described it as the “taproot of German might.” At the Casablanca Conference of January 1943, demolishing the refineries of Ploesti, Romania was designated to as a key objective and planning got underway almost immediately. This was seen as a small concession to Stalin who was adamant that the Allies open a second front to relieve the pressures on his forces. At the time Western allies were working to push German and Italian forces out of North Africa The Ninth Air Force under Major General Lewis Brereton were assigned the Ploesti mission.

The development and preparations were extensive and would take eight months to execute. The most unusual aspect of the mission was that it was to be flown at low level, “minimum altitude.” This meant that heavy, awkward bombers would fly over the target at less than two hundred feet. The primary purpose was to evade radar detection. Radar cannot see below the curvature of the earth. Another advantage inherent in a low-level attack was the increased accuracy it promised.

The choice of the Liberator B-24 bomber as the airplane to perform this mission was based primarily on its range, bomb load and airspeed (just barely vs the B-17). This was an inelegant airplane that demanded a strong and competent pilot. It was said that one didn't so much land the B-24 as much as got it headed towards the earth and then did his best to minimize the effect of the impact. Flying in formation was a challenge for pilots since it was difficult to hold in tight formation. This difficulty was no small matter as tight formations were necessary in order to concentrate the defensive gunfire of all the aircraft of the formation against attacking enemy fighters. The B-24's fuel system was a constant headache throughout its service. There were 18 self-sealing fuel tanks, 9 in each wing. Flight engineers were required to work continuously to ensure a steady and balanced flow of fuel to the four engines. It should be noted that the B-17 and B-29 had their problems also.

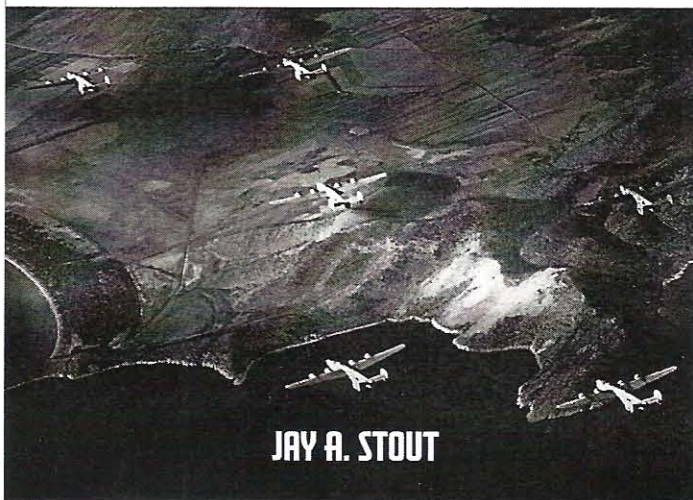
The 1,700 men who would crew the bombers were awakened by 0400 and fed a hurried breakfast. The bulk of them were airborne by 0730. It was Sunday, August 1, 1943. They were embarking on a 2,400 mile

round trip. It was a day that would become known to history as Black Sunday. The five bomber groups involved were stationed at air bases in the area of Benghazi, Libya (has a current ring to it!). Their course took them over Corfu, across Greece, Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria to Ploesti, not far from Bucharest. Over Bulgaria Col John “Killer” Kane, head of the 98th, lost touch with the two lead groups.

The two groups (the 93rd & 376th) behind his group were trapped. The distance between the two leading groups increased. It was not planned that way. After crossing the Danube, the planned route was to continue in an easterly direction. Wrong turns were made and history does not provide total accuracy about how the lead groups went forward. As the bombers approached the outskirts of Ploesti they experienced heavy ground fire of every type.



FORTRESS PLOESTI THE CAMPAIGN TO DESTROY HITLER'S OIL



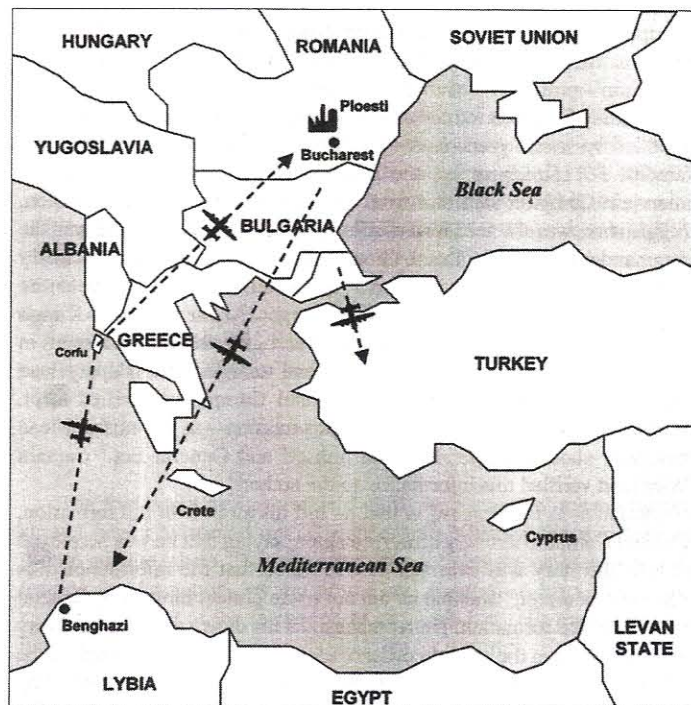
JAY A. STOUT

The two lead groups experienced heavy losses and were reforming after their run when the groups Col Kane was leading started their run. They would be attacked by heavy anti-aircraft cannon of heavy and light calibers which operated from a railroad flat car that raced along their path. The American bombers were so big, so close and so low that they were hard to miss. The speed of the train made with the relative speed of the of the bombers preposterously slow. The duel with the train was a slow motion nightmare. It was a duel because the gunners aboard the big bombers fought back with their 50 caliber machine guns. Finally the locomotives boiler was blown, and the Train from Hell was left behind.

Severe damage was done to the Ploesti oil refineries. There remained one question: was it worth it? The question will never be answered to everyone's satisfaction. Within a few weeks it was estimated that 40% of the refining capacity at Ploesti had been taken out of service. However, in a matter of weeks Ploesti was producing more fuel than it had before the strike. The Romanians and Germans went to work with brilliance and energy that underscored the Axis's priority on petroleum production. Of the 177 bombers that flew on this day, 54 would not find a friendly field. 41 or 42 were lost to enemy fighters and anti-aircraft fire. Seven found their way to a field in Turkey. 310 American airmen were killed, 108 were captured by

the enemy and 78 were interned in Turkey. Nearly 500 trained crewmen were lost on the mission. This number does not include airmen who did not return to service. Many of the aircraft that did return were absolute wrecks and never flew again. Their only use was for the spare parts bin.

to be continued...



SWORDS

The vernacular of a rapier wit.

Here are the winners of the Baker College submissions to its yearly neologism contest, in which students are asked to supply alternative meanings for common words. The winners are:

1. Coffee (n.) the person on whom one coughs.
2. Flabbergasted (adj.) appalled over how much weight you have gained.
3. Abdicate (v.) to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.
4. Esplanade (v.) to attempt an explanation while drunk.
5. Lymph (v.) to walk with a lisp.
6. Gargoyle (n.) olive flavored mouth wash.
7. Balderdash (n.) a rapidly receding hairline.
8. Negligent (adj.) describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nightgown.

The Washington Post Style Invitational also asked readers to take any word, alter it adding, subtracting or changing one letter and supply a new definition. This year's winners:

1. Giraffiti (n.) vandalism spray painted very, very high.
2. Glibido (v.) all talk and no action.
3. Caterpallar (n.) the color you turn after finding half a grub in the fruit you're eating.
4. Decafalon (n.) the grueling event of getting through the day consuming only things that are good for you.
5. Osteopornosis (n.) a degenerate disease. (This one got extra credit.)
6. Innoculate (v.) to take coffee intravenously when you are running late.
7. Sarchasm (n.) the gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the Person who does not get it.
8. Hipatitis (n.) terminal coolness.
9. Dopeler effect (n.) the tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.

REFLECTIONS ON PEARL HARBOR

By: Admiral Chester Nimitz

Sunday, December 7, 1941 – Admiral Chester Nimitz was attending a concert in Washington DC. He was paged and told there was a phone call for him. When he answered the phone, it was President Franklin D Roosevelt on the phone. He told Admiral Nimitz the he (Nimitz) would now be the Commander of the Pacific Fleet. Admiral Nimitz flew to Hawaii to assume the command. He landed at Pearl Harbor on Christmas Eve, 1941. There was such a spirit of despair, dejection and defeat – one would have thought the Japanese had already won the war. On Christmas day, Nimitz was given a boat tour of the destruction wrought on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. Big sunken battleship and naval vessels cluttered the waters everywhere you looked. As the tour boat returned to dock, the young helmsman of the boat asked, “Well Admiral, what do you think after seeing all this destruction?” Admiral Nimitz’s answer shocked everyone within the sound of his voice. The Admiral said, “The Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could ever make or God wasn’t taking care of America. Which do you think it was?”

The young helmsman shocked and surprised and asked the Admiral to tell us what he meant.

Nimitz explained. Mistake number one: the Japanese attacked on Sunday morning. Nine out of ten crewmen of those ships were ashore on leave. If those same ships had been lured to sea and been sunk—we would have lost 38,000 men instead of 3,800.

Mistake number two: when the Japanese saw all those battleships lined in a row, they got so carried away sinking those battleships, they never once bombed our dry docks opposite those ships. If they had destroyed our dry docks, we would have had to tow every one of those ships to America to be repaired. As it is now, the ships are in shallow water and can be raised. One tug can pull them over to the dry docks, and we can have them repaired and at sea by the time we could have towed them to America. And, I already have crews ashore anxious to man those ships. Mistake number three: Every drop of fuel in the Pacific theater of war is in top of the ground storage tanks five miles away over that hill. One attack plane could have strafed those tanks and destroyed our fuel supply. That’s why I say the Japanese made three of the biggest mistakes an attack force could make or God wasn’t taking care of America.

This story is still an inspiration and if you are from Texas you could mention that Nimitz was born in Fredericksburg, Texas which we visited during our San Antonio reunion a few years ago.

A born optimist, Admiral Nimitz was able to see the silver lining in the situation that would transform a dire situation into one where there would be hope and optimism for a better outcome.

This suggests there is a reason that our national motto is
IN GOD WE TRUST.

BOMBSIGHT & AUTOPILOT SPECIALIST

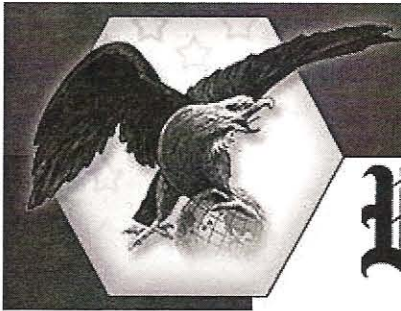
Gerald (Jerry) Wilson graduated from Washington High School (west of St Louis) Missouri in 1942. Before enlisting for military service he worked for a beverage company and at his mother’s insistence went to night school to learn how to use precision inspection tools. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps on 30 November 1942 and was sent to Miami Beach for basic training. The Jerry was quartered in the Tides Hotel and now understands it is a retirement home. Basic turned out to be pretty easy and he was rated quite highly as was his mechanical aptitude. Then he is off to Lowry Field in Denver where he absorbed Norden Bombsight and Honeywell Automatic Pilot schooling. After graduating he was kept on as an instructor where he taught Sperry Bombsight and Sperry Autopilot. (This is when Jerry learned the meaning of “that’s how the military works.”)

“As an Instructor, I had more free time for going to town, etc. I met Harriett. About September or October I was sent to Midland, Texas to teach at the Bombardier school. I also did maintenance on the AT-11 training

planes. Harriett followed me and got there in late November. We married 30 November ’43.”

Jerry was off to Italy in September 1944. He was assigned to 2nd Bomb Group at Amendola between Foggia and Manfredonia. To this day it is still Amendola Air Base. There were four of us Bombsight and Autopilot men in our squadron. We were the only people with a special building which was air conditioned. We did maintenance to the bombsight and autopilot equipment. If, as an example, the bombardier could not find the target, it would require recalibration. Other parts had to be removed from the aircraft for calibration and repair. The crude electrical relays that operate the flight control servos come to mind. “We were considered elite. We did not have to load bombs or do a lot of that manual labor.”

“I stayed in the service after the war and in 1947-48 was in the reactivated 2nd Bomb Group. Later served in Japan, ’51 –’53, a total of 27 years including Air National Guard. Harriett and I lived in Arizona ten years a like number of years in Florida and found Colorado in 1989.”



Brooklyn Daily Eagle

RESIDENTS OF CZECH TOWN SEEK RELATIVES OF FALLEN WW II PILOT FROM BROOKLYN

Joseph Marinello's Plane Crashed While on a Mission Against Nazis

By Maura Gaffney

Special to Brooklyn Daily Eagle

BROOKLYN — "Please Help — Searching for Relatives of Sgt. Joseph Marinello Jr., who was killed during Mission 263." This bulletin was posted recently on the website of the 2nd Bomb Group by a young Czech man named Roman Susil.

Susil lives near the place where Joseph Marinello's B-17G crashed during World War II. Susil and many people from his hometown in the Czech Republic have been trying to locate Marinello's relatives for decades. The Czech people want Marinello's family to know that his sacrifice and the sacrifice of the other airmen who died during the air battle that took place over their town in 1944 will never be forgotten.

Joseph Marinello came from 60th Street in Brooklyn. During World War II, he was stationed in Italy serving as a ball turret gunner with the 2nd Bomb Group, 20th Squadron.

On Aug. 29, 1944, Marinello and hundreds of his fellow airmen from the 15th Army Air Force set out on Mission 263 to bomb a German oil refinery and railroad depot. The bombers were over Czechoslovakia when they were ambushed by more than 80 German fighter planes (Me-109Gs and FW-190As).

Forty-one Americans were killed during the air battle that ensued. Joseph Marinello never made it out of his airplane. His body was found in the wreckage by a local Czech woman. He was buried in a local cemetery in the town of Rudice along with his crew member Russell Meyrick.

Before the burial, the Czech woman who found Marinello's body removed a small cross from around his neck. She hoped to return the cross to his family one day, but her attempts to locate his family were never successful. Still, she prayed for him for more than 50 years. Although Marinello and Meyrick's bodies were eventually exhumed and moved to the United States, their original gravesite in Rudice has been continually well kept and attended since 1944.

The bodies of 28 other Americans were found in the area as well. They were buried by German soldiers in a mass grave in the nearby town of Slavicin. "The German commander said that the Americans were buried in a mass grave because they were terrorists," explained Susil. "The Germans had forbidden anyone to put flowers on the grave, but every night new flowers appeared on the grave."

The Germans had also marked the grave with a small sign that said "Twenty-eight American Flyers. Died August 29, 1944. Buried August 31, 1944." After the war, the Czech people tracked down the names of these Americans and built a stone monument in their honor. The monument was engraved with the names of all 28 airmen.

As with Marinello and Meyrick, the bodies of these 28 Americans were eventually moved to other locations in Europe or in the states, but the local people continued to hold ceremonies in their honor each year. Susil remembers attending these ceremonies with his father when he was a child, and now he attends with his own children.

The Czech people have also established two museums dedicated to the 1944 air battle. They've contacted many veterans of Mission 263 and have visited with family members of those who didn't survive the battle.

Recently, relatives of Russell Meyrick traveled to the Czech Republic to attend the ceremonies, to see the gravesite and to visit "Meyrick's Tree," a makeshift memorial at the place where the young man's body was found. "Every year, a holy Mass is celebrated at Meyrick's Tree," said Susil. A cross and a portrait of Meyrick are posted on the tree.

"These commemorations are a matter of passion for all of us," said Susil. "There's no better feeling than to let our American friends know that our people haven't forgotten their role in liberating Europe and that the sacrifice of those who have perished will never be forgotten."

Susil and his neighbors will continue to search for Marinello's family members. "Joe Marinello still belongs among the flyers to which we have no family connection," said Susil. "So Marinello's story is still open and will not be closed until we will find his relatives."

“WHAT WE FOUGHT FOR”

This is the title of an upcoming documentary being created by a Slovak film maker, Dusan Hudec, in Bratislava. It will tell the story of 56 US bombers and 15 fighter planes which were shot down during WWII over Slovakia which was a satellite of Nazi Germany. Approximately a dozen of these were

2nd Bomb Group B-17's. During the raids on strategic targets, these bombers were hit by artillery shells and others were attacked by fighter planes. Some of them blew up in the air, ejecting their aircrews, while others were forced to make emergency landings or for the crews to bail out before crashing.

Dead flyers were buried by Slovaks in local cemeteries. The local population expressed great sympathy toward the young Americans, which infuriated the Germans. Those who survived were either captured or escaped. Many of the latter were concealed and fed by Slovaks, who in doing so risked their lives. In order to recover airmen an OSS (Office of Strategic Services,

later to become the CIA) set up a mission to fly these men out and back to Italy. There were three men from mission #263 who were in fact repatriated on 17 September 1944: Thayne Thomas, Robert Donohue and Clarence Jackson.

This took place after the Slovak National Uprising which took place on 29 August 1944. Over the next two months the Germans bloodily suppressed it, forcing flyers to flee into the mountains to hide out with hundreds of rebels and impoverished civilians. As winter closed in their fate became utterly intolerable due to freezing conditions, fleas, frostbite, dysentery and lack of food. The last contingent of the OSS operation was finally captured on 26 December 1944. On Hitler's order they were cruelly tortured and executed at the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria.

Hudec's documentary should prove to be of great interest to historians and to the public which has little knowledge of this aspect of WWII.

HIGH FLIGHT

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings:
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds, - and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of - wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air. . .

Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or ever eagle flew -
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The **high** untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee, jr

John Magee was an American, born in Shanghai, China in 1922. At age 18 he crossed the border into Canada in order to enlist in the Royal Canadian Air Force. Within the year, he was sent to England and posted to the newly formed No 412 Fighter Squadron, RCAF, which was activated at Digby, England, on 30 June 1941. In September Magee flew a high altitude

(30,000) test flight in a newer model of the Spitfire V. As he orbited and climbed upward, he was struck with the inspiration of a poem -

“To touch the face of God.” After landing he rushed to finish the poem and sent it along with a note to his parents.

Just three months later, on 11 December 1941 (and only three days after the US entered the war) Pilot Officer John Gillespie Magee, jr. was killed. The Spitfire he was flying collided with an Oxford Trainer. At the enquiry a farmer testified that he saw the Spitfire pilot struggle to push back the canopy. The pilot, he said, finally stood up to jump from the plane. John, however, was too close to the ground for his parachute to open. He died instantly. He was 19 years old. John's parents were living in Washington DC at the time and the sonnet was seen by Archibald MacLeish, who was Librarian of Congress. He included it in an exhibition of poems called 'Faith and Freedom' in February 1942. After it was widely copied and distributed.

VETERAN PHOTO • 2010 REUNION

Group photo of Veterans at the Tucson Reunion – October 2010.

Picture taken by Rebekah Clark-Bryner at 390th Bomb Group Museum - B-17 "I'll Be Around"



Standing L – R Howard Johnson, Tex Binford, Harold Kronenberg, Ben Carnes, Milton Zamboni, Ray Tuwalski, Lew Waters, Robert Fredericks, & unidentified.
Seated 2nd Row – Ron Dittrich, John Roberts, Loy Dickinson, Kingman Loomis, Earl Martin, Chuck Childs (top of head) Richard Forst, John Bryner, Art Winkler.
Front Row – Preston Bransky, Vic Metz, Lloyd True, John Sisson, Jake Killian

IN MEMORIUM

Arthur W Maurer 96th Squadron
January 30, 2011

John F Rice 49th Squadron
June 16, 2011

Richard W Wood 20th Squadron
June 27, 2011

SPECIAL NOTE: We receive returned newsletters marked variously;

- No forwarding address
- Not at this address
- unable to deliver

Please, if you have knowledge of the passing of a veteran or member please let us know about it with a note

VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

Web site: www.loc.gov/vets • Toll Free: 888-371-5848

A few years ago we published an item about the Veterans History Project. This is to remind any veterans who have not been interviewed for this project - to get with it !

The Library of Congress was charged by the US Congress the mission to collect oral histories, interviews, memoirs, photographs, letters, diaries which bring wartime experiences to life in a very personal way. Veterans are sought from WWI through current conflicts. The VHP is also a repository for the personal histories of non-combatant wartime civilians, including war industry workers and medical volunteers whose valiant work supported our Armed Forces.

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