



THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Vol. 4, No.1 Jan.1, 1984

Society Officers:

President: Bernice Barr
 Vice-Pres: L.T. Boatwright
 Secretary : Joe Kenney
 Treasurer : George Coen

Joe Chance
 Jim Flex
 Rex Greathouse
 Hank Parks
 Mike Yarina

THE PRESIDENTS CORNER.....

The 99th BGHS was well represented at the FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE 40th ANNIVERSARY REUNION, March AFB, CA in early November. It was a pleasure to see old friends and meet new ones. Ben Franklin, 15th AF Association Executive, is to be commended and congratulated for the excellent get-together. Thanks Ben. Of great pleasure and importance to us is the fact that one of our own members, FRANK ENGLISH, was elected to the Board of Governors of the 15thAF Association. Congratulations Frank and knowing you I'm sure that you will keep our organization in mind and well represented at your meetings. We wish you success and hapiness in your new endeavor.

George Coen, June B. Fowler and I took the oportunity while at March to visit the March Field Museum. As we were looking at the collection of items of history of the Air Force you can imagine our surprise when we saw a copy of our 99th BG 300 Mission newspaper, time yellowed with age, safely placed under glass, well preserved,

THE MARCH FIELD MUSEUM FOUNDATION



Application Form

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

- Regular Member \$ 10.00 Patron Member \$ 50.00 Memorial Member \$1000.00
 Sponsor Member \$ 25.00 Life Member \$ 125.00 In name of _____
 Volunteer: Skills _____ Day Available _____ Telephone _____

Please make checks payable to March Field Museum Foundation

Volunteers are urged to call (714) 655-3725

March Field Museum Foundation March AFB, CA 92518



AIR FORCE Magazine / November 1983

March Field Museum

The March Field Museum is rapidly developing a facility depicting Air Corps and Air Force history from World War I to the present.

The Museum needs additional memorabilia and photographs of aircraft and flight operations, especially if they pertain to March AFB or Fifteenth Air Force units. Hopefully, Air FORCE Magazine readers will be able to offer items for display. Photographs that are loaned with the request that they be returned will be returned after display copies have been made

(The March Field Museum Foundation will acknowledge the tax-deductible receipt of all [donated] items.)

Please send items and photographs to the address below.

Maj. Michael A. Freitas,
 USAF
 Director
 March Field Museum
 March AFB, Calif. 92518

paying great tribute to the record of our proud unit. I was happy to give them a couple of the new ones that George had just reproduced—the staff was well pleased to get them and requested that if we—including each of you—had any item they would be happy to receive it or them and make proper display for it. I'm in process now of boxing up some of my active duty uniforms and will mail to the Museum soon. If you have anything this is a great place to have it displayed. As this is being prepared for the press I have just received my copy of the Air Force Magazine and to my pleasant surprise I found the following item re the Museum. The application form came from the Museum.

THE barbarous Soviet leaders, both civil and military, made a serious miscalculation when they authorized the missile firing that murdered 269 innocent persons aboard the unarmed Korean Air Lines civil flight 007. Or perhaps the wanton massacre was not a miscalculation at all, but was instead a deliberate and calculated move in the eternal chess game that they have been playing since 1917.

The world may not know for years—if ever—which scenario is the real one. The fog that obscures Soviet intentions is real, and is seldom penetrated by Westerners. After all, Westerners begin with different assumptions, different backgrounds, and different perceptions of the world than do the paranoid Soviet leaders and their cadres.

One need not wait for years, or be able to pierce the Soviet miasma, to realize that the Korean airline massacre is one more reminder that it is terribly unsafe to believe that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics plays by the same rules as the free world does. Look at the massive brainwashing the Soviet regime performed on its citizens—and tried to foist upon the world—in the aftermath of the murder. Were it not for the tapes provided by Japanese monitors, the Soviets might have beaten the rap in world opinion. Even the Soviets haven't disavowed the transmissions from the aircraft that killed 269 innocent, unarmed persons, although they have tried to divert attention from the reality of the mass murder by making the usual allegations about US spying being the cause. Of course, that's consistent with their deep-seated paranoia.

Contrast their air defense actions with those of the professionals who protect the United States. Despite repeated provocative violations of US airspace by Soviet ferret aircraft, occurring more than a dozen times each year, the USAF warriors who go up to intercept and identify don't blast the Soviet warplanes out of the sky. Instead, they follow international law and rules for such situations. They don't murder the young Russians in those crews violating US airspace.

Therein lies the difference between murderers and warriors. Warriors must be prepared to kill, but are able to discriminate between combat and murder. Indeed, warriors must be prepared to exercise extreme degrees of patience and tolerance in the face of severe provocations, and not pull the trigger. This is especially true when noncombatants are in range of the warriors' lethal power. It is the American way of fighting, and sometimes results in unwanted military casualties while preserving civilian lives, as in Beirut just now. On the other hand, murderers shoot, or bomb, or send surrogate terrorists to do their bidding, as the Soviet leaders have once again demonstrated.

For a while—at least as long as the admittedly short institutional memory of world opinion—the Soviet leaders have once again by their own actions shown themselves to be callous murderers. The tragedy of the massacre of 269 innocent civil air travelers is bad enough in its own right. The larger, global tragedy is that the world needs prompting such as this to remember again that with the Soviets, it is dealing with murderers, and always has been.



F. CLIFTON BERRY, JR.
EDITOR IN CHIEF

AIR FORCE Magazine / October 1983

I've just talked to Jim Flex about our Reunion in Houston May 4-6, 1984. He will include more general info in this letter and final details in our March issue. He is enthusiastic and will put on a great program—so make your plans now to be there.

Jim Sopp sent me a note with an article about a B-17 being flown to England and George will publish when he finds space. Since this is the issue that we have agreed should include an up to date membership list—space will be limited. But not so limited that I have asked him to publish an Editorial from the October issue of the Air Force Magazine. This article expresses my thoughts and ideas better than I. You may agree with me after you have read it.

To Ernest Wrenmore—What is this that you want me to get involved with? You know that there is no free lunch! But if anyone makes a fortune let me know and I'll pass the word along. Ernest said that he was writing to each of you also.

As we come to the close of 1983 and open a new calendar I hope that each of you have had a great year and in the coming year you have health, happiness, and all of the best for you and your family and friends. I thank everyone that has helped ^{make} this year a great one for ^{our} organization. We are working hard to keep up with all the goings on and put ^a newsletter that is of interest. If you have ^{ideas} that you want included pass them on to us.

George and I have just made a resolution that before too long we will get to the library, read the unit reports, pass along useful info if we find it, and try to keep our heads above water.

Bye for now. See you in Houston in May. God Bless!

wtf/BSB (wtf—with two fingers)

Your Friend, *Bernie*
Bernie

99er's:

Welcome to Houston, Texas, on May 4-6th, 1984. I can assure you a memorable occasion as chairman of the event. We will have many activities for each of you. The Houston Astros Baseball Team will not be in town; however, here is what you can do:

- 1) V.I.P tour of National Aeronautics & Space Administration
- 2) Dancing and visiting with old friends
- 3) A trip to Gilley's (if you so desire)
- 4) Astroworld is fun
- 5) Fishing can be arranged (good time of year for this)
- 6) Sea-Arama Marineworld in Galveston
- 7) Of course, a trip to the lovely beaches of Galveston, if you wish
- 8) Plus other doings in the planning stages.

Convention headquarters: Nassau Bay Resort Motor Inn
1600 NASA Blvd.
Houston, Tx. 77098

(Located at main entrance to Johnson Space Center). Doubles are \$40.00 per room and singles are \$35.00 per room. Cards will be sent to you in March, 1984, for your reservations, along with other information.

Looking forward to seeing all of you.

Sincerely,



Jim Flex

p.s. Would appreciate hearing from all my fellow Texans. Let me know if you can help!

AN EDITORIAL

A Malicious Miscalculation

DUES, NEWS AND VIEWS by George

My compliments to General Bawater, 'Ben' Franklin, and to all the many others of 15th Air Force whose hard work, thoughtfulness and courtesy made the Reunion such a memorable event for all, including us paunchy Old-Timers. Fellows, they even had the 99th's big diamond on the display B-17. Thank you, March Field, thank you 15th Air Force; thanks to all concerned. George

99th Bomb Group Historical Society
Membership Roster

Several of the fellows have furnished us lists of their missions, and these lists are proving to be very helpful in checking and revising the previously-published Mission List. We will welcome more copies of these personal mission lists. gfc

We are slowly working toward a Group History into which we will incorporate the personal accounts of escape, evasion, bail-outs and other routine operations. We have begun to obtain Missing Air Crew Reports from the Archives, a project in which we have received valuable advice from Bill Baird, Bob Karstensen, and others. This information is being computerized for easy access. gfc

We have furnished Author Lawrence Cortesi a number of photographs for possible use in his forthcoming book, "April Massacre", so do not be surprised if you find yourself featured. Mr. Cortesi has already returned our photos. He is planning next to write about the Rome campaign, and I have promised to send him photos taken during that period.

The March Field Museum had Bernie's picture on display (in the 300-mission Log, that is), and of course they agreed that none of us had changed a bit in 40 years.

Stand by, don't go to the 98th or 100th, and we'll have some good stories for you in our next issue. gej

BOOK REVIEWS

Target Ploesti: View from a Bombsight, by Leroy W. Newby, Presidio Press, \$15.95

This book records faithfully and well the destruction of the productive capacity of the Ploesti oil fields. It also records the day-to-day events of 50 missions, including the trivia that kill as effectively as the weather or the flak. I could not put the book down after I had opened it. It is well-crafted and has been selected as a Military Book-of-the-Month. Highly recommended. gfc

The Wild Blue Yonder: Songs of the Air Force, by Bill Getz, Redwood Press, \$15.95

This book is a treasury of songs sung by airmen from 1914 to 1984. The 660 songs range from genuine hymns to familiar bawdy ballads and include such songs as "Roll Me Over", "The Po River Valley", "Republic's Ultra Hog", "The Pilot's Lament", "Sidi Slimane", "I Wanted Wings", "Early Abort", "My God, How the Money Rolls In", and so forth.

Martha and I found ourselves belting out Number M-6, "The Mission", to the tune of Phil Harris' "The Thing", to wit:

"I took a look at six o'clock, and much to my surprise
I discovered a MIG-15, right before my eyes"
There's more - I'll bring the book to the reunion.

Highly recommended gfc

Membership directory has been removed for privacy.

Membership directory has been removed for privacy.

One of my favorite stories has been shot down at the 15AR Reunion by none other than genial Reynolds Boggio. My version begins with Winston talking Franklin into converting B-17's into night bombers and continues to "and I even flew one practise night formation mission, more dangerous than most combat raids, in June, 1943."

Boggio says that the night formation flying was practise for the Sicilian invasion. He has more details which I hope the rascal will share with us all.

And then, upon my return from Riverside, I received the following letter. Geo

30 November 1983

Dear George and Bernie-

I have written up the night mission of 9 July 43. My memory is lacking about some of the details but the main story is correct.

I wrote to Wayne Thurman to see if he remembered the wingmen and his memory was as hazy as mine so I decided to skip that part and maybe some participants will furnish the answers. (Like Jack Abrams)

Also, I dont remember the four planes used, whether they were all 99th or part from AirForce. I believe the pilots chosen used their own crews or parts of same. I remember ~~Asst~~ Schauler was my RC.

I had so many worries connected with the safety of our 4 planes in the path of dozens of C-47's, British Glider tows and Naval ships below that each crew had to be responsible for their plane and crew.

All turns were to be gentle and made to the left to keep our flight as simple as possible. I just had to trust the Troop Carrier and Glider people to keep the 500' and 1500' altitudes assigned and agreed to (Burrell saw a Glider tow pass close to him but that was all)

I dont remember the number of c-47's lost and men killed by our Navy nor the number of Gliders and men lost but they were considerable.

I had a large scale map of Sicily with all the Zones and approaches laid out but I can't find it and perhaps it was thrown out as no longer of interest.

I was so tired from loss of sleep and the running around that the mission was about the worst that I flew in the entire time- much more nerve wracking than Gerbini or Palermo

I hope some of the guys who flew ~~that~~ that night can fill in the gaps that I dont have as regards planes and people etc.

Hope this is some help,

F. R. Upthegrove
Fay R. Upthegrove

Secret Night Mission

Tunis 1943

9 July 1943

Due to the many questions that crop up at reunions about the Night Mission that was flown by the 99th on 9 July 43, and to which none seem to have the answer, I believe it is up to me to supply the story since it was to be sort of secret and I was selected by the 5th Wing to lead, plan and coordinate the mission with the other forces concerned. Namely the Airborne element of paratroopers using C-47 planes, the Glider elements of the British, and the US Naval forces. This was to be the initial landing of ground forces on Sicily at night and for the first time the use of radar jamming against the German radar by four B-17's equipped with the black boxes and technicians furnished by Hq North African Air Forces.

I chose Wayne B. Thurman as my co-pilot and Harry Burrell as pilot of tail end Charlie, with co-pilot of his choice. The wing men I am not sure of but they were selected in conference with the Sq Cos. All had to be excellent formation men and good at night flying without lights. I scheduled a practice session at night and found that with only a tiny red glow from the superchargers and a dim shape of planes silhouette we could maintain formation.

My instructions were to come from Gen. Doolittle and I had to go to the coast south of Tunis to confer with the CG of troop carrier contingent, the British Commander of the Glider forces and the Naval Commanders involved. All units were to approach from Malta and fan out, the gliders at 1500' to veer right and launch and land on the East Coast. Our jammers to fly at 1000' and after hitting the beach take up an elongated oval pattern on the south, making all left turns and jamming for 2-3 hours. The C-47 carriers flying at 500' would swing left up the SW shore and drop at an area up the SW shore. I was concerned about air collisions unless each contingent adhered strictly to their altitudes and the Naval ships below not fire on our planes. These points I stressed until all agreed.

On 9 July we had to fly to a grass strip S of Tunis, top our gas tanks from 50 gal drums and wait for Doolittle's signal take off for Malta. About 5 o'clock a "go" message came and we took off and headed for the area and arrived about 7 p.m. - quite dark at the south shoreline. We turned on our jammers and commenced the monotonous circling in our area at 1000'. We could see considerable fire from shore to our right towards the glider drop zone and a much larger area SW in the direction of the paratroop drop zone, but were too far removed to tell what was going on. After a while the firing died down and we kept up our circling for 2 hours, taking turns flying and the other timing the turn and elongated ovals. About 9 p.m. a radio message from Doolittle said to stop the jamming, terminate the mission and go home. We made haste to do. Turned the lights on and departed individually for Navarin.

I was so tired from the previous 48 hrs activity and lack of sleep that we failed to equalize the fuel remaining in the tanks and it sloshed around causing the wings to roll from side to side and the windshield fogged up. I made a poor pass at the runway and pulled up to go around. I asked Wayne if he thought he could land it and he nodded yes, so I got out of my seat. We changed positions and Wayne was able to do a good job of setting it down. As we started down the runway I finally remembered to turn on the windshield wipers and the visibility improved immediately - my first real contact with Pilot fatigue which caused pilot errors. I guess I slept for 15 hours or more as I was bushed.

When I began to function again, I learned that the jamming was very effective for the first 30 to 60 minutes and it took the Germans quite a while to figure out a clear channel for their radar to be effective. Also learned that both the troop carrier and the British glider forces ran into bad luck. One trigger happy gunner on a navy ship mistook the C-47's to be German, and several were shot down by our own Navy. Likewise, glider tows ran into a wind blowing offshore instead of inshore as predicted and when they cut the gliders loose many were unable to reach land and a lot of men drowned in the sea. My memory fails to recount the number of troop carriers and gliders involved and their losses, but they were considerable.

Jan R. Upthegrove

Compadres, the General wrote the above while convalescing from an attack of appendicitis.

Thank you, General Upthegrove, and best wishes from all of us for a speedy recovery.
geo

PROGRESS REPORT

Balance, 31 Jul 83	\$ 1970.44
Office expence, Aug-Nov.	-393.60
September Newsletter	-379.23
November Newsletter	-467.37
300-Mission log	-531.74
Dues and donations, Aug. - Nov.	1337.50
Balance, 30 Nov. 1983	\$ 1536.00

Our thanks to all who have sent in dues and donations. Remember that your dues status will be shown by the year in the upper right corner of your address label. And we are still eager to obtain addresses, no matter how old, of 99ers. We process them en masse and we do locate them. If the addresses have a Zip code we send the Newsletter at once

REUNIONS

99th Bombardment Group May 4-6, 1984
Jim Flex, P.O.Box 1185, Dickinson TX 77539

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

John Casley 42350 Proctor Canton MI 48188

FOUND

428 John L. Pradel	MD 20772	41
429 Jesse King	OK 74462	34
430 Peter Forres	AR 72116	
431 G.L. Danielson	IA 50310	41
432 Daniel Vernon Ives	IA 51501	41
433 Bill Avant	TX 75228	34
434 Lee M. Cook	GA 93618	41

TAPS

Robert H. Creo, passed away Dec. 12, 1979 of a heart attack while at home in Pittsburgh. By Robert A. Creo, 4606 Winthrop St., Pittsburgh, PA 15213, his son.

Jim Funnell, Asst. Flight Engineer on Cotton-Eyed Joe, 1971.
Sidney Blaine Gast, Jr.

Sid is my brother, and he has been dead since 1950.

Sincerely
J.S.Gast, 562 Windsor
Marion, OH 43302

General C.W.Lawrence.

It is with great regret that we report that General C.W.Lawrence passed away Nov. 10, 1982 at San Antonio Texas. I knew him personally as Commander of the 5th Wing in Italy, and I express the sympathy of all members of the 99th Bombardment Group Historical Society to Mrs. Lawrence and to all other members of the family.
Sincerely, Bernie Barr

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP- 99BGHS- 1984 Membership, \$10 ___
Old Newsletters, '81, '82, '83
\$5 per year

99th BOMB GP. HISTORICAL SOCIETY
2908 Aliso Drive, N.E.
Albuquerque, N. Mex. 87110

NAME _____ SQUADRON _____ NEW _____
ADDRESS _____ RENEWAL _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____



Gino Kunzle of Como, Italy has sent us the picture, opposite, of two of our men being interrogated in Switzerland. I will try to publish Gino's account in the March Newsletter. Meanwhile, can anybody identify the men? Pratt, Carroll, or King of the 347th? Gino thinks so. George.

We are proceeding with the research that will give us the whole story, with the help of Gino and our other European correspondents.

THE 99th BOMBARDMENT GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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