

99TH Bomb Group Historical Society Newsletter

99TH BOMB GROUP

Volume 22 Issue 2

August 2002

Presidents Message

After attending our reunion in Nashville we were immediately saddened to learn of Bernie's passing away. Although we had been forewarned of his very serious condition, we are seldom prepared when the inevitable does occur. To those of us in the 99 BGHS the unit was Bernie, he was the leader and without him there probably would not be the organization we have today. I flew on Bernie's last mission, when he led the group to Regensburg, and while on the bomb run he was faced with a group of B-24s on our level and intersecting our course. Because of his great skill as a pilot and leader we avoided what could have been a major catastrophe, and still dropped on the target. To me, that was typical of Bernie and he applied the same courage, skill and tenacity in his everyday living. When it appeared that the Newsletter was not going to be published he took it over and got it to the publisher with the finished product. These examples of Bernie in action are the memories I will remember and cherish regarding one of the true leaders of the 99th Bomb Group (H). May he REST IN PEACE.

The reunion in Nashville was another great success. The river cruise and the Grand Ole Opry remain in my memory very well. For those of you who could not attend, the proceedings will be briefed elsewhere in this Newsletter. We appear to have had some success in attracting new associates (who are regular members for all practical purposes, except for the IRS). They are taking over some of the duties which will be explained later in the Newsletter.

Since the Nashville reunion my wife, Luciann, and I have taken trips to Las Vegas, the State of Alaska, and to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway (in a relatively short span of time) as a result of which all of the sightseeing seems to run together. The two of us hope to attend the 99th BGHS mini Reunion in Omaha, NE September 4th - 8th, 2002 at the DoubleTree Inn. We have stayed there; it is a good hotel, centrally located downtown. It should be a great reunion, with Offut AFB nearby as well as the SAC Museum. It is not too far from Sioux City, IA, which was the 99th's last stateside base prior to going overseas early in WWII. As we get older it would be nice to attend more of these reunions. Bob Bacher has done a good job on these minis over a span of several years. As I say this I do not intend to detract from the great jobs done by many of you in managing other ones. Nashville and Tucson come to mind as good examples of returning funds to the group as well as having a memorable reunion. Best regards to all of you 99ers,
Vince Bell

Nashville Reunion Another Great Memory for All 99th BG Attendees

Everyone who attended had a great time at the 99th Bombardment Group Reunion in Nashville, TN April 16 – 20, 2002. As usual many old friends got together to catch up on the latest news and to remember the fond memories of the past. The special bond that each of these veterans share is obvious to all and visibly displayed in the great joy and laughter among these comrades throughout the week. This friendship was truly sincere and contagious as all who attended, and especially many of the new family and friends of the 99th BGHS, were made to feel at home and welcomed with open arms and smiles to join in with the group. Several of the first time attendees and new Associate Members agreed that attending this 99th BGHS Reunion was very unusual for it's truly warm and welcoming reception that was more sincere and relaxed than many of their own Class or family reunions! Another sign of this care and concern was the attendance by the surviving widows and other family members of 99th BG veterans who have passed away. There were also the quiet moments and the grief upon hearing of the recent loss of friends who survived the War and who now are passing away all too quickly as they move into their 80's.

The Nashville Reunion Committee did an outstanding job and everything went very well all week as the Maxwell House Hotel catered to all of the attendee needs and the Nashville weather cooperated with warm temperatures and sunny blue skies. A special "thank you" is due to Mary Belle & Walt Montgomery, and Edith & Bob Johnson who were the four co-hosts for the reunion and spearheaded all of the efforts needed to make this event a success. Quite a few attendees arrived early and staked out their favorite chairs in the lobby to help greet the 99th BGHS old and new members and friends as they arrived. As usual, Arkie Clark and Bob Bacher were on top of the hospitality bar arrangements and helped to serve the refreshments in the Hospitality Room which was always jumping throughout the Reunion as attendees came and went to the various scheduled and impromptu events.

On Wednesday morning April 17th many of the attendees boarded buses at the Hotel and made the short trip for the tour of President Andrew Jackson's estate "The Hermitage". This trip back into history was not only educational and informative, but also very interesting and enlightening as our tour guides helped describe how life was conducted during the time "Old Hickory" lived there and showed us the fine décor of that time and lifestyle. The tour of the home, garden, family cemetery and grounds followed by lunch was a delightful day and many upon returning early that afternoon enjoyed a brief rest before returning to the Hospitality room to continue conversations from the previous day.

On Thursday April 18th as the attendees continued their socializing in the Hospitality Room, the 99th BGHS Board of Directors Meeting took place with a morning and an afternoon session. Highlights are provided in another article in this Newsletter and a copy of the 8 page Minutes are available upon request from the Newsletter Editor.

Nashville Reunion (Continued)

The Annual Business luncheon was conducted and the Board of Directors presented to the membership the Change in the Constitution Bylaws to permit Associate Members to be elected to the Board of Directors, the list of new board members, and the plans for the Colorado Springs Reunion, September 17-23, 2003. The Membership by voice vote approved and passed the recommendations of the Board.

Later that afternoon the attendees gathered in the Hospitality Room to view two presentations by two new 99th BGHS Associate Members attending the Reunion for the first time. The first presentation "A Bomber Crew's Story – The B17-F Bomber Crew of 4230446, Mission # 95 – Tatoi Aerodrome, Athens, Greece" was made by Gary T. Staffo. Gary is the nephew of Lt. John C. Staffo who was a Bombardier with the 99th BG 348th BS and was killed in action on this mission. Using overhead transparencies, photos and letters provided by crew families and others Gary told the touching story of the 10 men who were on board aircraft 4230446 on October 10, 1943 flying from Oudna Field Tunisia. The presentation provided an introduction on how Gary got started on this journey and covered the typical events of a crew on a mission day using first hand information from the only crew member to survive the mission, official reports for the mission, interviews from other 99th BG personnel who were in that flight, and other related materials. Major Jules Horowitz who flew on the wing of 446 and Colonel George W. Brandt, Jr. who flew in the squadron lead ship with 446 on his wing provided details to describe the setting for Oudna Field and the crew activities for that fateful day. A brief paragraph summary of the tragic mission was included in the February 2002 Newsletter along with the names of the entire crew. The second presentation was made by David O. Hill the nephew of Sgt. William B. Hill who was the Radio Operator on 4230446. It was his contact of the Staffo family in the early summer of 2001 that resulted in Gary and David getting in touch on September 5, 2001 and joining forces to mutually pursue the crew story. David's presentation using detailed color slides provided the background and history for many examples of aviation wings, with special attention to the wings earned by the veterans of the 99th BG as crew members, aerial gunners, navigators, bombardiers and pilots. As a retired 747 pilot and wing expert with one of the best collections of WWII wings, David's presentation was interesting, informative and highlighted by his personal insight as to the value, prestige and pride of accomplishment each crew member felt upon personally receiving their wings.

On Friday April 19th the attendees loaded up the buses again and headed for the "General Jackson" paddle wheeler for a 4 hour trip up the Cumberland River with lunch on board and an absolutely fantastic floorshow which many felt was one of the highlights of the week. The food was good and the entertainment was outstanding with a variety of musical and comedic talent that had everyone laughing and joining in where necessary as part of a great performance. There also was ample time for everyone to get outside on one of the decks to view the scenic riverside and to get together with friends and enjoy the company of old and new friends.

Nashville Reunion (Continued)

Friday evening was the main event as the buses were loaded again and headed to Opryland to take in "The Grand Ole Opry Show". Here the 99th BG was given a special honor as they were recognized for their patriotic contribution to our country by an announcement to the live and radio audience and was immediately followed by a standing ovation from the full house audience. This truly was a memorable and moving moment for all in attendance to know that the personal sacrifice of the men and the families of the 99th BG was deeply appreciated by this audience and this country. The program was recorded and can be listened to over the internet by checking out the Opryland website for the 04/19/2002 performance.

The Reunion finale was the Saturday night April 20th banquet where the Army Band blew everyone away with a fantastic evening of great dance music filled with the memories of more youthful days. As people arrived the Reunion photographer provided the opportunity for free photos to be included in the Reunion Book and we all look forward to seeing the final product. After the Passing of the Colors and blessings for the dearly departed, there was an excellent dinner followed by some brief remarks, door prizes and auction for special items. The bidding was colorful and entertaining and thoroughly enjoyed by all who were touched by the wit and humor of all involved. Watching the dancers float around the dance floor it was hard to believe that anyone in this crowd was over 40! Everyone was dressed sharply and moving freely from table to table to catch up with old and new friends as the night went on. It truly was an enchanted evening filled with laughter, smiles and as the evening came to a close strong handshakes, embraces and promises to stay in touch and to hopefully meet again at the next reunion, if not sooner.

Chaplain's Corner - Rev. Michael J. Bucci

Everyone of you is a Hero! That's why we won. A special prayer for those who were shot down and lost their lives or were wounded and those who were Prisoners of War. God Bless All of you as Heroes! I want to thank all of the crews I flew with, and most important of all, the ground crews who kept our B17's flying. By their maintenance, loading our planes with bombs, maintaining the fields, and all the other ways they helped us get ready for each mission, they all played a crucial part in our mission success. I went along for the ride and I must admit I enjoyed every mission. Thank you! Father Mike

In Memoriam

Daniel E. Axtell	346 th	08/ /01
M. J. "Lark" Larkin	346 th	04/17/02
Joseph P. Ribley	416 th	04/ /02
Col. Bernice Stone Barr	416 th	05/18/02
Clare C. Kaschinska	348 th	05/31/02
William B. Shaw	347 th	08/02/02

99th Bomb Group Airborne Intercept Operations

In May 1944, Hallicrafter S-27 receiving radios were installed in selected aircraft assigned only to the 348th Bomb Squadron. This was a general purpose receiver which covered the 3 MHz to 30 MHz spectrum. The set was installed in the radio compartment. The first aircraft to receive this installation was 2107016. The intercept operator was T/Sgt. Jakob Gotthold who, prior to this time, was a ball turret gunner. The first mission flown with this modification was Group mission 192 on 14 May 1944. T/Sgt. Gotthold logged any ground to air and air to ground enemy transmissions. An example of what he heard occurred at 1206 when the ground controller said "Alle Fahrer mit dem Tirolern Lucie Anton Machen, Frage Victor, bitte kommen, bitte kommen". Translated it said "All planes together with the Tirol fighters are to land, did you understand, over, over."

The log was written in long hand. When the plane returned to base, it was typed and turned over to Intelligence. Nothing of significance occurred on this mission and Gotthold went off watch at 1400.

These radios were not installed in the lead aircraft since they were equipped with PFF and the Mickey Operator equipment was installed in the radio room. The aircraft modified for the S-27 Hallicrafter were 46268, 46376, 46664, 46665, and 2107016. Installation would only require a 24 volt power source and an antenna which were already available. With a minimum of effort, the radio could be installed in any other aircraft.

Jakob Gotthold (11), M. D. Enzinger (1), J. P. Gumm (21), Gerhard Nellhaus (23), M. Roth (1), and S. Weingarten (29) were the Intercept Operators. The numbers in parens are the intercept missions flown by these airmen. Gotthold received a direct commission later for his service. The last mission flown was 20 April 1945. The intercept operator was S. Weingarten.

There was no intercept operator on board when 2107016 was shot down on 24 July 1944.

Dick Drain
Historian

99TH BOMB GROUP REUNION

SEPTEMBER 4th to 8th 2002 OMAHA, NE.

DOUBLETREE HOTEL
1616 DODGE STREET
OMAHA, NE. 68102
PHONE: (402) 346-7600

The hotel has **FREE** shuttle to & from (**EPPLEY AIRFIELD**)

The Doubletree also has **FREE** shuttle to and from the **OLD MARKET** WHICH IS SIX BLOCK from the Hotel, There are more than thirty restauances and over seventy small shops. It is in a six block area. It is also about six block from the hotel.

The casino said they would send Transportation to pick up those that want to go **FREE**. if we have ten or more people, otherwise maybe the Hotel will Take you?

REGISTRATION:	PER PERSON	NUMBER OF PEOPLE	TOTAL
		\$15 _____	\$ _____

TOURS:

SAC AIR MUSEUM 1½ to 2hours & SAFARI 1hour (NO WALKING)		
SEPT.5th lunch on your own at the state park 1hour		
This price includes Bus fare	\$ 24.00	_____ \$ _____

SEPT. 6th Tour; DURHAM WESTERN HERITAGE MUSEUM (good)	\$ 4.50	
ZOO and IMAX is very good	\$ 10.75	
LUNCH ON YOUR OWN at ZOO	BUS	\$ 15.00
	TOTAL	\$ 30.25
		_____ \$ _____

BANQUET:	\$20.00	_____ \$ _____
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TOTAL	\$ _____
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SEND CHECK; ROBERT J. BACHER
692 N. ABBE RD.
ELYRIA, OH 44035-3044

YOUR NAME _____ SPOUSE, or FRIEND _____

ADDRESS _____ PH. _____

PLEASE BRING YOUR NAME TAGS if you have them SQUAD. _____

THANK YOU

I just got back from Omaha, Ne. the 16 of May and only received one bid on hotel had to rush this to get it in NEWSLETTER by the 28th

Please mail early need the count. for bus cost
if you can't make it, I will send money back.
Thank you
Bob

Doubletree Hotel Omaha • Downtown

- Complimentary Transportation to and from the Airport and the Old Market Area
- Warm Chocolate Chip Cookies Upon Arrival
- Indoor Heated Pool, Sauna, & Fitness Center
- Signatures Restaurant Serving Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner, or Room Service
- Newly Renovated Guestrooms with King & Queen Bedrooms
- Located near the Historic Old Market, Henry Doorly Zoo, and the World's Largest Desert Dome.



99TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY Wednesday, September 4, 2002 – Sunday, September 8, 2002

RESERVATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY Friday, August 16, 2002
IN ORDER TO INSURE ROOM AVAILABILITY AT THE GROUP RATE.

PLEASE RESERVE THE FOLLOWING :	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 King Bed (1 – 2 People) \$67	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Queen Beds (2 – 4 People) \$67 @ TAX \$77.45
* Rates are subject to local taxes	
OTHER REQUESTS:	<input type="checkbox"/> SMOKING <input type="checkbox"/> NON-SMOKING
NAME 1	ARRIVAL DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____
NAME 2	ARRIVAL DATE _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____
ADDRESS	
CITY/STATE/ZIP	PHONE
CREDIT CARD NAME:	EXPIRATION DATE
CREDIT CARD NUMBER:	
NAME AS IT APPEARS ON CARD:	

FIRST NIGHTS DEPOSIT OR CREDIT CARD GUARANTEE MUST ACCOMPANY THIS RESERVATION. RESERVATIONS MAY BE CANCELLED UP TO 4:00PM (CENTRAL STANDARD TIME) ON THE DAY OF ARRIVAL WITHOUT PENALTY.

Check in time after 3pm

Check out time is 12 Noon

YOU MAY MAIL THIS RESERVATION FORM OR CALL US DIRECT
MENTION THAT YOU ARE WITH **99TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
TO RECEIVE THE SPECIAL RATE!!!

DOUBLETREE HOTEL OMAHA • DOWNTOWN
ATTN. RESERVATIONS
1616 DODGE STREET
OMAHA, NE 68102

Phone (402) 346-7600 / 1-800-222-8733 / Fax (402) 346 - 5722

over

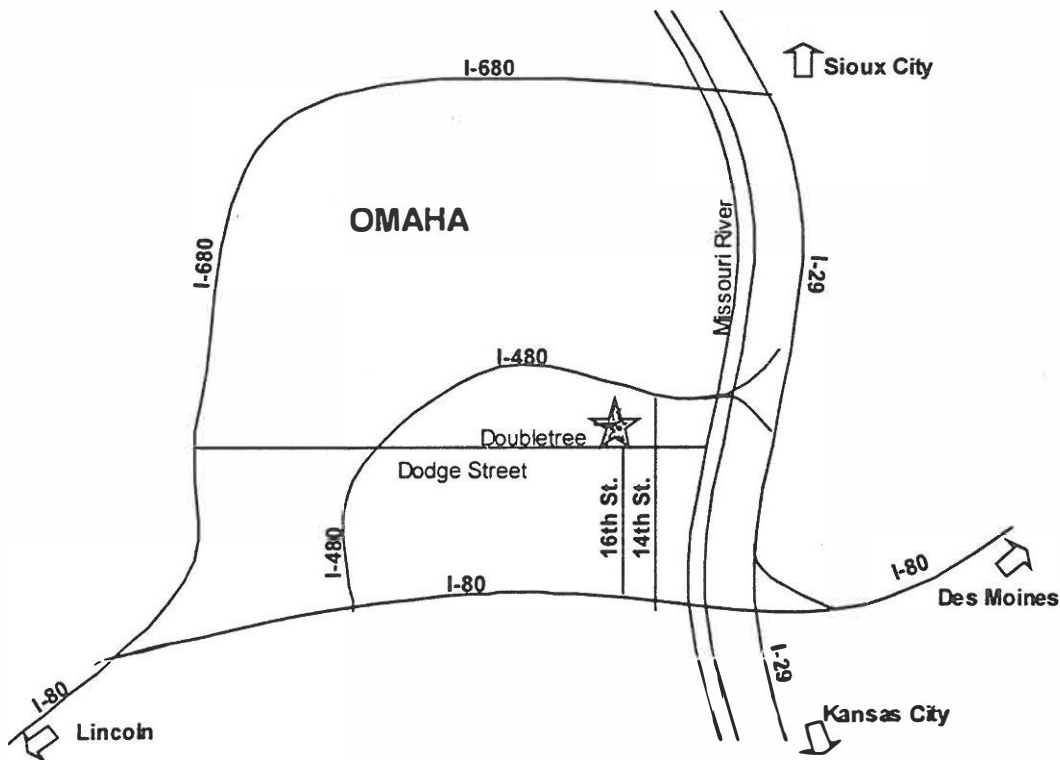


DOUBLETREE HOTEL

OMAHA • DOWNTOWN

1616 Dodge Street
Omaha NE 68102
Phone: (402) 346-7600
Fax: (402) 636-4936

DRIVING DIRECTIONS



FROM THE EAST:

I-80 West to I-29 North (Approx. 2 Miles) to I-480 West into Omaha. Take the Downtown, Dodge Street Exit for the airport. Proceed Approximately Six Blocks to 16th Street. Turn Right into DoubleTree Hotel.

FROM THE SOUTH:

I-29 North to I-480 West to Omaha. Take the Downtown, Dodge Street Exit for the airport. Proceed Approximately Six Blocks to 16th Street. Turn Right into DoubleTree Hotel.

FROM THE NORTH:

I-29 to I-480 West to Omaha. Take the Downtown, Dodge Street Exit for the airport. Proceed Approximately Six Blocks to 16th Street. Turn Right into DoubleTree Hotel.

FROM THE WEST:

I-80 East through Omaha to I-480 East. Take I-480 East to 14th Street Exit. Straight-ahead on 14th Street to Dodge Street. Turn Right on Dodge Street to 16th Street. Turn Right into DoubleTree Hotel.

Board Approves Associate Member Change

The 99th BGHS Board of Directors (BOD) met on April 18th. During the morning session the Minutes from the 2001 BOD meeting were approved, as was the Treasurers Report. The Nominating Committee presented the names of the candidates and they were approved by the Board, and elected by the general membership at the noon Membership Meeting. The Reunion Site Committee discussed the potential sites and Colorado Springs was recommended for September 17-23, 2003 and approved by the general membership at the noon Membership Meeting. Under Old Business, the Board discussed the change to the Constitution and ByLaws to allow Associate Members to hold office as part of the BOD. This change was presented to and approved by the general membership at the noon Membership Meeting. After the Membership Meeting was completed the Board convened and the new Officers were elected. The new 99th BGHS Officers are: President - Vincent Bell; Vice President – Warren Burns; Treasurer – Jerry Buckingham; Secretary – Chris Christiansen; and 2nd Vice President & Newsletter Editor – Gary T. Staffo

Membership Directory and Records Being Updated – PLEASE HELP!

We are currently updating the Membership Directory and the 99th BGHS Records to include in our new computer database so that we might better serve and respond to our membership needs and inquiries we receive about 99th BG personnel. With an updated computer database we will be able to efficiently and promptly keep our Newsletter mailing list current, ensure annual dues are properly recorded upon receipt, and respond to your letters and those written by others seeking long lost 99th BG crew members and friends. PLEASE COMPLETE AND MAIL TO: Jerry Buckingham, 99th BGHS Treasurer, 20 Flathead Drive, Cherokee Village, AR 72529 JABuck@centurytel.net

99th Bomb Group Historical Society Membership Information

Name: _____ Squadron: 346 347 348 416 (circle)

Address: _____ Dates in 99th: _____

City, State, Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Member/Associate (circle one) Are you a veteran or member of the Armed Forces?

Associate relationship to Member (circle one): Spouse Brother Widow Other _____

E-mail: _____ Member name: _____

Annual dues \$15 per calendar year payable January 1st each year

The 99th Bomb Group Historical Society
Gary T. Staffo, Newsletter Editor
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Springfield, VA 22152-1504

E-mail: Gstaffo@gis.net

EDITORS NOTE

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Membership Directory and Records Update -- HELP!

99th Bomb Group Airborne Intercept Operations

99th BGHS Mini-Reunion September 4th – 8th , 2002 Omaha, NB INFO!

My apologies to all for the delay in completing this Newsletter. I accept full responsibility for this and all complaints should be directed to me, and not to the Board or your Mini-Reunion volunteers who are working in your service.