

# 99<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP

Volume 32 Issue 1

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Presidents Message

Our apologies to all of you for the problems we have had in providing this Newsletter on a regular basis the last few years. We regret that at times due to competing priorities of work and personal obligations, we sometimes cannot get all of our 99th BGHS volunteer functions accomplished. Thank you, for your continuing support and interest in the 99th BGHS. The 99th BGHS is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) Veterans organization of about 400 members that is run 100% by unpaid volunteers. There are about four of us who do 99% of the work. We handle hundreds of requests each year from Veterans, families, friends, historical researchers, etc. and all of this is done at the sacrifice of our personal time. We have been working to add new materials to our 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Website as this currently is the primary source along with contacts from the Army Air Forces website for most of our new 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation members.

### Challenges

We need to get your individual WWII histories on video or audio tape and get your memorabilia gathered together in order to preserve it. Our greatest concern in this area is that if we do nothing, most of it will be lost forever, as our Veterans fly their final missions, many younger spouses and children unfortunately do not appear to have a great concern or understanding of the value of old items pertaining to an era they know little or nothing about as most high school history books have very little reference to WWII. During this past month alone we have seen several sales on eBay of the WWII 99<sup>th</sup> BG items of some of our former members, and one involving a current member who had no idea his personal letters sent back home from WWII were being sold on eBay. We are grateful to say that in this case we actually had a seller who when informed that the writer of these letters was still alive returned them to the family!

The 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS has taken the lead in trying to preserve, organize and share our 99<sup>th</sup> BG history with a wider and new audience. Working closely with and building upon the outstanding historical research done by Dick Drain for the 99<sup>th</sup> BG and the 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing we are trying to fill in some of the gaps and we are pressing forward with great ideas as demonstrated by the 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Historical Calendar and the recent additions to our Website. ***Do not wait until later, do it now, send in your material or contact Gary or Jerry and they will work with you to preserve your materials and your history for posterity, and for the 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS.*** Allow us an opportunity to discuss with you all your options (e.g. pass on to family; donate to a local museum; donate to the Friends of the 99<sup>th</sup>; or work with you to make copies if you wish to sell it and give you an idea of the items value, etc.), and some of our members may be interested in directly purchasing some of your WWII memorabilia. During the last several reunions our members have brought in photos, scrapbooks, orders, patches, letters, and other memorabilia that we have preserved for our history. Some of this donated material has already been shared with you in our Newsletter and much more is on the way. We take painstaking care of these original materials and where requested they are safely returned to the owner after duplication. **We have purposefully held several Reunions at locations of several major WWII military museums including the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum near Savannah GA, the US Air Force Museum in Dayton OH, and the WWII Museum in New Orleans LA where we met with the curators to discuss their collection policies and how we might work with them to possibly create a 99<sup>th</sup> BG exhibit.** Call us and we can tell you about these collection policies and what they mean to you.

Best wishes to all of you 99ers. Gary T. Staffo

## 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS NOTE: Another Year Has Passed!

Another year has passed for the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Historical Society (BGHS) and looking back we have a number of accomplishments of which a few are highlighted below:

**The 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Diamondbacks Historical Calendar** – In 2007 for the first time we made a “99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Diamondbacks Historical Calendar” available to our members at a reduced cost, totally dedicated to the 99<sup>th</sup> BG using the photos provided to us by our members or through other public sources such as the National Archives. We are now working on the next Calendar and we hope you will contact us and send us copies of your 99<sup>th</sup> BG photos, letters, papers, etc. for consideration.

**The Diamondbacks – The History of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (H)** - We were down to our last 4 copies of “The Diamondbacks – The History of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (H)” but as part of our “Friends of the 99<sup>th</sup>” fund drive, we are pleased to announce that we were able to have 100 more copies printed. We will continue to fill orders for our membership and provide for future donations to Libraries and other locations where the 99<sup>th</sup> BG history can be perpetuated. The cost is \$50 which includes shipping. If you would like to donate a copy to your local Library, School, Veterans Post, etc. please contact Gary T. Staffo ([GStaffo@verizon.net](mailto:GStaffo@verizon.net) or call 202-586-9577) for details. We also have BS patches at \$10 each.

**99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Member Reunions** - The 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS regrets that we can no longer independently sponsor an Annual Reunion for our Membership. These 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS events were very well received and deeply appreciated by all who attended and left with not only great memories of good times shared with comrades, but also a greater appreciation and understanding of our 99<sup>th</sup> BG heritage and contribution to WWII. The last few Reunions were held at sites of major WWII Museums: the Mighty 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Museum near Savannah GA, the US Air Force Museum in Dayton OH, and the WWII Museum in New Orleans LA. **Please contact us if you have any 99<sup>th</sup> BG WWII items to discuss with you the options you have available for helping to preserve your personal history and that of the 99<sup>th</sup> BG.**

**99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Member Services** – Jerry Buckingham continues his outstanding job of providing services to our members that include the Annual Membership Directory, careful management of our Treasury (including collection of Dues, payment of bills, and providing Quarterly Reports), and working with the 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS database compiled by Dick Drain to help provide many members with detailed information on their mission list, the aircraft, and crew’s they flew with. George Hilton, Jr. personally contacts many of our 347<sup>th</sup> BS Veterans and responds for the 99<sup>th</sup> BG on each request for information concerning the 347<sup>th</sup> BS. Credit should also be given to James Peters, Jules Horowitz, and Marty Upchurch who monitor the ArmyAirForces.com website for 99<sup>th</sup> BG questions and steer them to us for information and 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS membership. You may not realize that from this site and our 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Website we average one or two requests per week for detailed information about 99<sup>th</sup> BG personnel, aircraft, missions and related topics. Requests for 99<sup>th</sup> BG information from overseas average about one or two requests per month and come primarily from Italy, Poland, Germany and the areas formerly known as Yugoslavia and Hungary.

**99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Website** – We have a new 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Webmaster to support the website. The future of the 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS is moving to the Website as we lose more of our Veterans and our second and third generation new members contact us through the Website and expect us to provide regular updates and new features. We are working on upgrades to the Website and we welcome your feedback and constructive comments for continuous improvement. The 99<sup>th</sup> BG website address is: <http://www.99bombgroup.org>










On behalf of the Officers and the Board of Directors for the 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS we extend our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to all our members for your participation and contributions to help us with our mission to preserve and spread the history of the 99<sup>th</sup> BG.

## Announcing Friends of the 99<sup>th</sup>



Under the umbrella of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group Historical Society (a tax-exempt not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) organization), we are pleased to announce the formation of the **Friends of the 99<sup>th</sup>** to enable our members and other parties to more easily make financial and material donations to the 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS. The Friends of the 99<sup>th</sup> will provide an acknowledgment of your donation, for tax purposes and as a permanent record of your contribution.

The purpose of the **Friends of the 99<sup>th</sup>** is to support our efforts to further develop, preserve and share the history of the 99<sup>th</sup> BG with our membership and a wider audience. Of course all ideas to this end are most welcome. Your financial contributions will be used for specific projects *possibly* including:

-  Re-Issue of The Diamondbacks – The History of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (H).
-  Transfer of the NARA II 99<sup>th</sup> BG motion picture film to DVD.
-  Publication of “The 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Calendar” including 99<sup>th</sup> BG photos
-  Purchase of memorabilia, other artifacts, books or records of historical significance
-  Publication of a “99<sup>th</sup> BG Missions Map”, with bases and targets of all 395 missions.
-  Publication of The Diamondbacks – The History of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group (H) Volume II.
-  Creation and purchase of “99<sup>th</sup> BG Memorial Plaques” to be presented to organizations and museums where the 99<sup>th</sup> BG are honored.
-  Reproduction and printing of commissioned works of art
-  Further development of our web site to share photos and personal narratives and perhaps to sell items of interest to 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS members.



To make a tax-deductible donation to Friends of the 99<sup>th</sup>, please complete a check or money order to:

**99<sup>th</sup> BG Historical Society**  
 (Notation: Friends of the 99<sup>th</sup>)  
 c/o Jerry Buckingham, 99<sup>th</sup> BG Treasurer  
 20 Flathead Dr.  
 Cherokee Village, AR 72529  
[jabuck@centurytel.net](mailto:jabuck@centurytel.net)

Unless otherwise specified, donations will be placed in an unrestricted fund for the general purposes of developing, preserving and sharing the history of the 99<sup>th</sup> BG. If you desire to make another kind of financial donation, this can be arranged through our Treasurer. You will receive an acknowledgment receipt of your donation.



If you would like to **make a material donation** of books, photos, articles, memorabilia or other items pertinent to the 99<sup>th</sup> BG, you can make arrangements through:

Gary T. Staffo, 99<sup>th</sup> BG 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
 6226 Garden Road  
 Springfield, VA 22152-1504  
 202-586-9577  
[gstaffo@verizon.net](mailto:gstaffo@verizon.net)

Every effort will be made to place items in the most appropriate and accessible exhibit, venue or museum with written acknowledgment of the donor. We will keep you informed as to progress.

Thank you in advance for your support and commitment to the 99<sup>th</sup> BG Historical Society.



(Navarin, April '43; Down, Driscoll, Samuelson - Courtesy of ME Caraberis)

**SO CLOSE: THE LAST FLIGHT OF THE DAISY MAE**

By David J. Kinsey [rundik@yahoo.com](mailto:rundik@yahoo.com)

In World War II, there were 1050 aircraft crashes onto what was then Yugoslavian soil.<sup>i</sup> One thousand and fifty American airplanes. And that's the reported number; the ones accounted for - shot down, mid-air collisions, engine or mechanical failure, and other catastrophic stories. All of those planes had pilots, most had several other crew, many were transporting troops or prisoners or supplies. All of those people had stories, and families, and dreams. Dropping out of the sky and crashing to the ground was their biggest nightmare, and yet they went up, again and again, to do their jobs, because that was their mission. Thousands perished. Even if



you parachuted to safety your future was a crapshoot. The country below had its own problems – torn asunder by politics and ethnic tensions, you could be captured by Germans or Fascists, rescued by Partisans or Chetniks; who knew what any of that would bring. This is the story of one such crash, and a crew of lucky and unlucky men – kids, really, all in their 20s – who flew one last mission together on May 18, 1944, and crashed into the rocky hillside of what was then Yugoslavia, what is now Bosnia-Herzegovina, near Mostar. This is the story of young, Polish-American, Staff Sergeant Meceslaus T. Miaskiewicz from Essex County, near Salem, Massachusetts, and his death on that hillside.<sup>ii</sup>

Fast-forward to July, 2011, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina. U.S. Ambassador Patrick Moon passed a letter from the town of Ljubuski to the Defense Attache, Colonel Mike Schleicher. The letter related the story of a small village, Stubica, that had protected and honored the grave of an American serviceman for over sixty years. A committee from the town of Ljubuski in that area was searching for graves of their own unknown dead in the area, those that had perished in mass killings after World War II, and had come across this story of the lone American accepted as one of the fallen heroes of the war by people he never knew. The villagers found the young man, dead and crumpled on the hillside, after the fiery crash of yet another American plane, with his parachute still attached, unopened. They carefully and reverently wrapped him in his parachute and gave him a proper burial on that hillside. They would periodically come to visit, and honor the young man, with flowers or a candle, and kind words and blessings. This was a devout Catholic community and his last rites were, prophetically, performed in that fashion. They did not know he was a young man of Polish descent from a staunchly Catholic family in Essex County, Massachusetts.

COL Schleicher reacted quickly to contact the town of Ljubuski and arrange a meeting for the following day, then got the proper military authorities from EUCOM involved. Our team made the drive to Ljubuski the next day amid considerable excitement about what we would find and the validity of the claims. The letter had a photograph of a dog tag, which we quickly ascertained to be of World War II vintage due to the notch required for making the tags in those days. The name stamped into the metal was Miaskiewicz, M T, his service number, a woman's name, and Salem, Mass. Were the remains actually of a U.S. service person? Did the tag actually belong to the remains? Were the remains of more than one person? How complete were the remains? What else had survived? Why had it taken so long to get the word to the U.S. government? Dealing carefully with political-military situations was right down our alley, but the rest was new ground.



We were met at the town hall by the committee which included politicians and archaeologists and others with an interest. COL Schleicher expressed the gratitude of the American government and military for their careful handling of the remains and their notification to us. Our intent, he noted, was to determine if the remains were indeed American and, if so, recover them properly and notify the family. Those steps, he noted, were largely the legal realm of other organizations within the military and our function was going to be mostly reporting and liaison in nature, to get the right people involved. Toward the end of the meeting it became apparent that the box containing personal effects was in the town hall and the remains were not far away, in the town clinic. Shortly we were looking at the dog tag, wallet, pocket watch, crucifix and a few clothing items ostensibly belonging to young Miaskiewicz. At the very least, that was indeed his dog tag. A half hour later we became the first Americans to view the remains of a fellow American serviceman in 67 years. It was a reverent and humble moment of reflection on “the greatest generation” and their sacrifices. Ensuring that both remains and effects were secure until we could return, we thanked the committee and promised prompt action. The following morning, our visit was in the regional newspaper with the headline, “Americans Never Forget Their War Heros.”<sup>iii</sup> Planning began for the follow-up trip as we drove back to Sarajevo.



A flurry of internet research turned up a few stories and tantalizing clues as to what had likely happened that day over what was then Yugoslavia. From a seemingly unlikely source, a newsletter, “The Motor Pool Messenger,” by the Military Transport Association of North Jersey, a World War II organization dedicated to the preservation of cars and trucks and jeeps of that vintage, came a very detailed description of the crash, including crew names and aircraft squadron and serial number.<sup>iv</sup>

“On the morning of May 18th 1944, members of the 347th Bomb Squadron gathered for briefing instructions as part of a mission to bomb the oil fields in Ploesti, Rumania. Following the briefing, Pilot 2nd Lt. Herschel N. McLain of Chillicothe, Illinois, Co-Pilot, 2nd Lt. Hilliard S. “Smitty” Gilroy of Elberta, Michigan, Navigator 2nd Lt. John E. Lindquist from Rockford, Illinois, Bombardier 2nd Lt. James F. Corcoran of Philadelphia, PA, Engineer S/Sgt. Meceslaus T. Miaskiewicz of Salem, Mass., Assistant Engineer Sgt. Carlisle D. Jones from Powhatan, Virginia, Radio Operator S/Sgt. George H. Newman of New Rochelle, NY, Assistant Radio Operator Sgt. Hubert L. Downs of Alta Vista, Virginia and Aerial Gunner Sgt. Carl H. Confer from Redondo Beach, CA gathered their gear and headed for their plane, B-17G, S/N 2106991. Also, on board was Photographer, Sgt. John M. Nolan and Tail Gunner, Sgt. William H. Flye Jr..

Once in the air, B-17G, S/N 2106991 joined the rest of the 347th and took the No. 3 position in the E Box of the group’s flying formation. The long flight to Rumania was uneventful with little or no enemy flak or fighters. Before reaching the target area over Ploesti, the decision was made to return to base without dropping any bombs because of weather. On the return trip, the formation flew into heavy enemy flak over Yugoslavia. Flying at an altitude of 16,000 feet, B-17G, S/N 2106991 was hit by flak under the top turret. The nose section was blown completely off with a blaze of fire erupting at the break. With all four engines running, the main part of the plane flipped sharply into a steep spiral to the right. The pilot in an adjacent plane, 2nd Lt. John Hammer, reported that he saw objects falling from the break of B-17G 2106991 and could not tell if it was a person or a piece of turret. Crew members Corcoran, Lindquist and Tail Gunner\* Flye were able to bail out during the steep spin and survived. The rest of the crew were either killed when the plane exploded or perished when the plane crashed near Mostar, Yugoslavia.” (Ratzburg, 2010) (\*Note: Flye’s account notes a switch to waist gunner.)



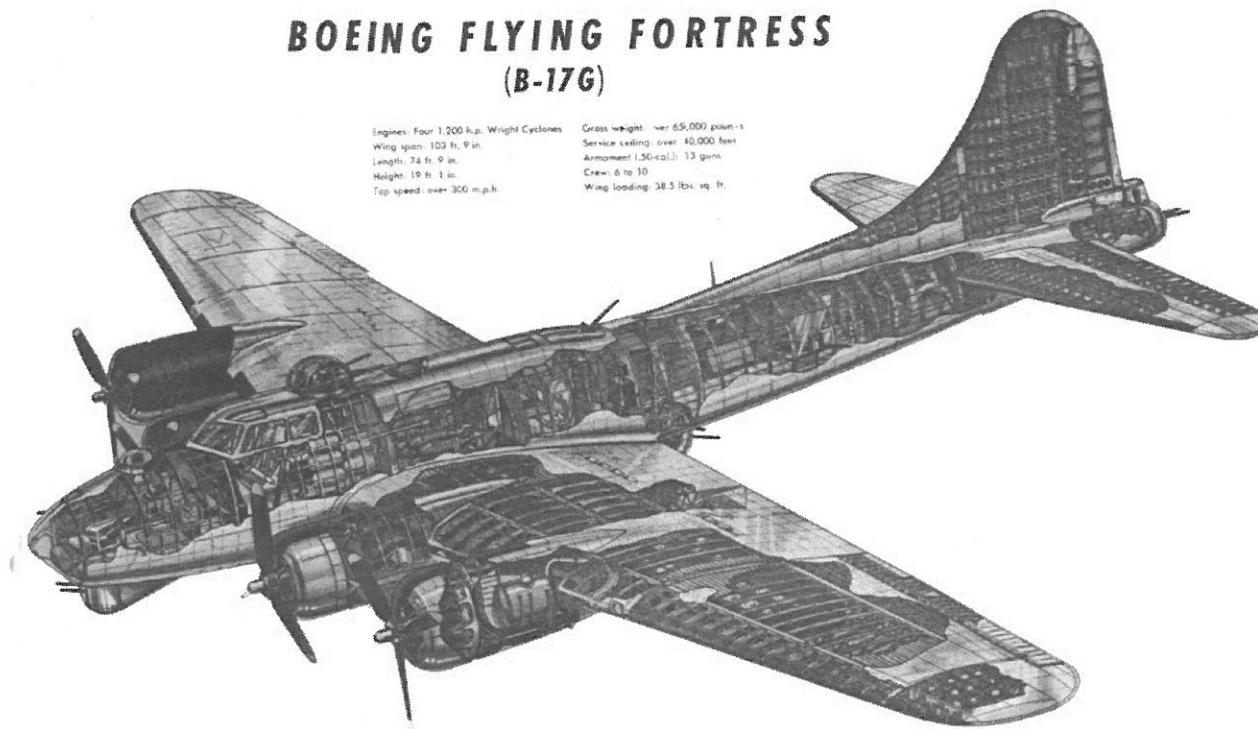
99th Bomb Group

The B-17-G they were flying was part of the 347<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force, stationed at the U.S. Army Air Corps airfield in Tortorella, Italy, in December, 1943.<sup>v</sup> It was common during large bombing missions in WWII for several squadrons and even different bomb groups to come together with bombers and fighters to comprise a very large group of aircraft for the mission. They would assemble in the air from different airfields (“...number 3 position in the E box...”) for the mission and then disassemble after the mission and return to their respective airfields. Fighters took positions to protect flanks and attacks by enemy fighters from below and above. Here’s what a battle-ready B-17G looked like:<sup>vi</sup>

## BOEING FLYING FORTRESS (B-17G)

Engines: Four 1,200 h.p. Wright Cyclones  
 Wing span: 103 ft. 9 in.  
 Length: 74 ft. 9 in.  
 Height: 19 ft. 1 in.  
 Top speed: over 300 m.p.h.

Gross weight: over 65,000 pounds  
 Service ceiling: over 40,000 feet  
 Armament: 1.50-cal. 13 guns  
 Crew: 6 to 10  
 Wing loading: 38.5 lbs. sq. ft.

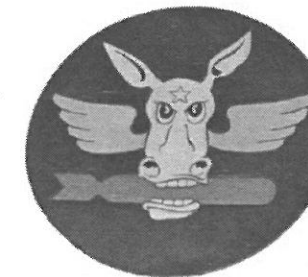


Space was very cramped. Eleven people were in the aircraft that day. It was also very cold at flying altitudes and the crew was typically wearing insulated clothing and still freezing the entire trip, except for take-off and landing. Note the location of bombardier and navigator in the seats in the mid-section and the small space for the tail gunner. The ill-fated nose area contained the pilots and the radio operators who may have doubled as nose gunners. The engineer and assistant engineer would likely have been in the cargo area and the waist gunner in the small bubble beneath. The photographer may have been in the nose or top gun position or any number of places. It was also common to switch crew around – navigators were often pilots as well – and gunners took different positions based on where their aircraft was to fly in formation.

The 347<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, as were other WWII squadrons, was made up of aircraft assembled from different

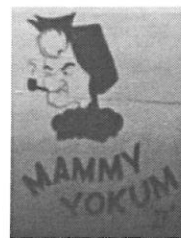


original groups and squadrons. Air missions over Europe in enemy territory in WWII commonly suffered a 30% loss of aircraft. The B-17G-35-DL Flying Fortress that crashed near Mostar that day was serial number 42-106991 (shown left with unidentified crew member), one of the original 15 aircraft from the “Mammy Yokum” squadron, now part of the 347<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron (symbol right).<sup>viii</sup> It was typical in WWII for aircrew to choose a nickname for their planes and often paint a picture of a woman (usually wearing very little if any clothing) or a fictional character on the nose of

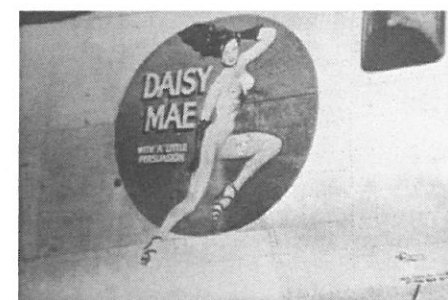
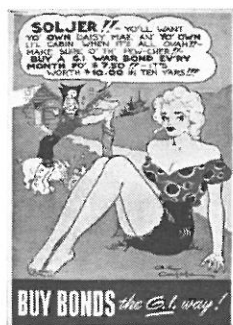


the airplane. World War II “nose art” is the stuff of legend and recalls a time when mostly young men went to war and longed for their wives and girlfriends with only the rare letter to spark their memories – no Skype, no e-mail, no phones.

The Mammy Yokum Squadron was named for the matriarch of the 1940’s - 1960’s cartoon strip called “Li’l Abner,” written and illustrated by the late Al Capp, which told tales of a backwoods mountain clan somewhere in the U.S. (likely Appalachia) and included many colorful characters and characteristic lingo of the mountain folk. In addition to Mammy Yokum (sporting a corn cob pipe) and Li’l Abner (the young, strapping bachelor), other characters included blonde Daisy Mae (who was constantly after Li’l Abner in pursuit of marriage), Pappy Yokum, Moonbeam McSwine and Sadie Hawkins, the woman who spawned the Sadie Hawkins Day tradition of the girl asking the guy to the dance. It was not until reading an article



about the surviving gunner, SSgt William H. Flye, Jr., that it was discovered that S/N 42-106991 was indeed the “Daisy Mae.”<sup>ix</sup> Another internet search supplied the nose art image (left) which was painted on a B-17 during WWII. Whether or not this is a photograph of the actual nose of 42-106991 is unknown, but the image’s likeness to the cartoon version of Daisy Mae appears to have taken a turn toward a more accurate depiction of what most flight crews had on their minds from day to day.



A week later two representatives from the office of the Armed Forces Regional Medical Examiner for Europe, LTC (Dr.) Ladd Tremaine and Chad Persells, Physician Assistant, both forensic pathologists, and SSG Kendall Walker from EUCOM Mortuary Affairs, joined us on the journey back to Ljubuski and the hike into the hills around the village of Stubica. We had all the tools to do more excavation, if that was required, but we did not know how complete the remains were and needed to look at those first. We did not expect to be inventorying and assembling skeletal remains at 9:00pm that night but that’s what local politics sometimes brings to a complex mission. Once we got situated in the clinic the work progressed smoothly. Just as you’ve seen on television, the construction of the skeleton slowly took place on a table in the clinic – every section and sometimes individual bones photographed. Dr. Tremaine provided educational descriptions along the way. The remains were remarkably complete and we even found the rosary necklace that went along with the silver crucifix that had already been identified. This find gave additional credence to our supposition that the “C” on the dog tag meant young Miaskiewicz was Catholic. This was very satisfying to the strongly Catholic community in Ljubuski and Stubica, lying in the Herzegovin region of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Research had also indicated that Miaskiewicz was unmarried, so the name of Anna Miaskiewicz on the dog tag probably belonged to his mother. His first name, from enlistment records, turned out to be Meceslaus<sup>x</sup>, for which a likely nickname has eluded us. The remains inventory included enough material that the forensic pathologists believed either a dental records check or a DNA analysis would render a conclusive finding of identity, though we already felt we knew this was Staff Sergeant Meceslaus T. Miaskiewicz, from Essex County, Massachusetts.



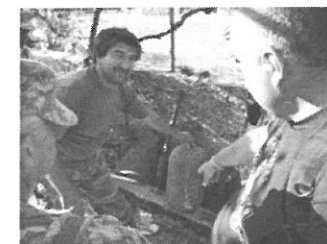
The following very hot morning we embarked on the journey to the former grave site. We were met in the village of Stubica (lower right on the map below) by the grandson of the man who had found and buried SSgt Miaskiewicz in 1944. Mr. Vinko Pehar (right, center), nicknamed “Vintola”, and his family lived a couple of kilometers from the site. He and members of the archaeology team that had brought back the remains and effects a month prior joined us on the hike. The terrain was forbidding – steep, rocky, hot and full of briars. We stopped along the way as Vintola pointed out the crash site that was a few hundred yards away in thick underbrush, at the bottom of this small valley (left), to the left of the small hill, situated between two ridges that no doubt held the anti-aircraft artillery which shot down the Daisy Mae on May 18. As the skeletal remains were relatively complete, we did not need to do further excavation, but needed to photograph the site and get a grid point coordinate for the record.

The site itself was halfway up a hill, in scrub-brush so low we had to crawl under it in spots. Vintola had been shown the spot by his grandfather, who was also involved in the initial burial within the small village of the other seven victims. After the war, word eventually got to the U.S. military about the crash and the fact that victims were buried in the village. The U.S. military came and Vintola’s grandfather helped get the victims remains, by horseback, to a place the U.S. military could take possession of them. It seems the village people told the military there was one more set of remains on a hillside that was very difficult to traverse, but either the story was not conveyed in a verifiable manner or the word never quite reached the right organization. Regardless of the reason, the rocky gravesite of SSGT

The following very hot morning we embarked on the journey to the former grave site. We were met in the village of Stubica (lower right on the map below) by the grandson of the man who had found and buried SSgt Miaskiewicz in 1944. Mr. Vinko Pehar (right, center), nicknamed “Vintola”, and his family lived a couple of kilometers from the site. He and members of the archaeology team that had brought back the remains and effects a month prior joined us on the hike. The terrain was forbidding – steep, rocky, hot and full of briars. We stopped along the way as Vintola pointed out the crash site that was a few hundred yards away in thick underbrush, at the bottom of this small valley (left), to the left of the small hill, situated between two ridges that no doubt held the anti-aircraft artillery which shot down the Daisy Mae on May 18. As the skeletal remains were relatively complete, we did not need to do further excavation, but needed to photograph the site and get a grid point coordinate for the record.



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Miaskiewicz remained undisturbed until June of 2011 when the Ljubuski committee and its archaeologists came to excavate and, shortly thereafter, contacted the U.S. Embassy. As the villagers relate, there is a tradition that goes along with lingering illnesses in which the family members are advised to visit the gravesite of a person who had no family and pray for healing of the sick individual at the same time they are saying kind words about the person for whom there was no family upon burial. This was the honored fate of the Miaskiewicz gravesite among the villagers of Stubica. Our team, along with two of the local archaeologists, Mr. Tihomir Glavas and Mr.

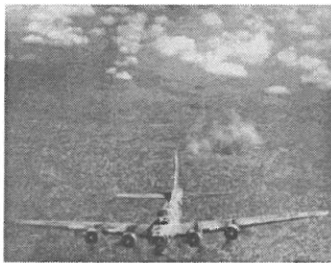


Ante Cuvalo, the Ljubuski Clinic Director, Mr. Weber, and Mr. Vice Nizic, the President of the Ljubuski Municipal Council, made the difficult trek to the site, measured and photographed it, used a GPS to determine location, took a moment of silence and then returned to the home of Vintola Pehar for fresh-made bread, home-grown tomatoes and hard cheese. Even though the Pehar family has very little, it is the custom for them to share their best with guests. We returned our hosts hospitality by sharing with them various coins and military patches, as is our own military custom.

Everyone in the village knew of the story but none were as close to it as an elderly woman named Ivanka Pehar, (shown in this photo, wearing a traditional scarf) who was 12 years old when she and her family heard the explosive crash of the B-17G a few hundred yards from the village that fateful day in May of 1944. They were in church that Thursday, 19 days before D-Day, when they heard the plane coming out of the sky and rushed outside in time to witness the fireball. The villagers all rushed to the site but the burning wreckage, as well as wise elders and parents, would not allow them near. Mrs. Pehar remembered the Germans coming to take 2LT Lindquist away and interrogating him in a nearby house.

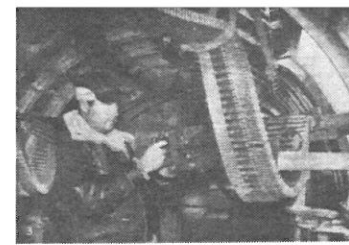


The Daisy Mae was flying at 16,000 feet and in sight of the Adriatic Sea, within minutes of leaving enemy air space and a safe flight to home station.<sup>xi</sup> (actual 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group photo below) Instead, she fell victim to “very accurate” anti-aircraft artillery, nicknamed “triple A” and fell to the ground



suffering several large explosions along the way. Some reports indicate some of the ordnance exploded shortly after the plane took a direct hit to the nose and more as it was dropping. In fact one of the reports indicates one of the survivors was, “blown free,” after the triple-A struck the plane.<sup>xii</sup> “With all four engines running, the main part of the plane flipped sharply into a steep spiral to the right.” (See the last 30 seconds of this WWII video – 2:37 to the end – this is eerily close

to what happened that day: <http://youtu.be/Pe36UMRkRbk> ) It is relatively certain that those in the nose, including the gunners and pilots and maybe the photographer, lost their lives instantly. Two of the survivors were the bombardier and the navigator, just aft of the bombs – they were both blown free and were luckily wearing their parachutes and alive enough to deploy them. The two engineers, including Miaskiewicz, were most likely killed by flack from the initial or subsequent explosions. The remaining survivor, SGT Bill Flye – who had switched to waist gunner that day (photo below) in an amazing stroke of fortune and was on his 13<sup>th</sup> mission – described getting out of his insulated suit while the plane was falling, first putting his parachute on upside down, and then righting it before barely getting out of the rapidly dropping airplane. He so narrowly escaped that his chute did not slow his descent quite enough and he broke his ankle upon landing on a rocky plateau. He actually attributed his recovery from that injury to the medical care given him in the first German



POW camp, Stalag 13.<sup>xiii</sup> The mid-air explosions also apparently blew SSG Miaskiewicz some distance from the crash site. He was very likely already dead as his parachute never deployed. Vintola’s grandfather and others, who came upon the grave site while hunting, pulled the young man’s silk parachute out of the bag and, though silk was an extremely valuable commodity, especially in a poor village, buried the young man in his chute.

The navigator, 2LT Lindquist, was conscious upon landing and apparently had either some language training or had family history from the Balkans because the villagers attest that he held a conversation with an elder for some time prior to the arrival of the Germans. He and SGT Flye were taken from the village to German POW camps. Though the family of SGT Flye said their father did not speak much about the war, they had kept the text of an article written about him a few months afterward:<sup>xiv</sup>

“...this is the way the sergeant told his story:

On April 20, 1944, he arrived at Foggia, Italy. Nine days later he made his first mission and discovered why tail gunners sit in a kneeling position - "so they will not have to take the trouble to kneel to pray" It was on his 13th mission, just 19 days later, that "it" happened. The "Daisy Mae," Bill's fortress, was hit near Mostar, Yugoslavia, on her way to the Ploesti oil fields.

Flying as waist gunner because of a last-minute change in positions, Bill jerked off his heated flying suit, got on his chute - at first upside down - and bailed out by the time the plane dropped to almost 800 feet. I seemed only a second later that the "Daisy Mae" exploded in mid-air. Landing on a rugged Yugoslavian mountain side, Bill was trying to drag his broken ankle, suffered in the jump, to the other side of the mountain to look for crew members when a Partisan farmer approached. Both his and the farmer's arms went up together. The Partisan took Bill to his home and "tried to feed me but the last thing I could have done was eat."

Soon Bill and the Partisan started for the coast. They were almost there when "some German civilians got me. When I came to I was in a prison cell. It wasn't long before the German military authorities took over. If they hadn't, there wouldn't have been much left of me."

The first thing they did when they arrived at the camp was make calendars. Raveled wool and shoeshine rags went into baseballs and chewing gum boxes became decks of cards, dominoes and "almost anything you can think of." Bill made himself a hood and a pack out of GI blankets and a cigarette case from a peanut butter can and a cheese box.

They left Nuremberg, where they were treated a "little worse" and fed "a little less," on April 2 on a 105-mile march, to Moosburg. It took 12 days but "the weather was just right for marching."

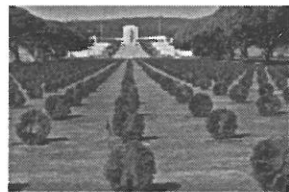
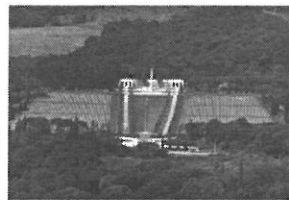
Life at Moosburg meant sharing a hospital-size tent with about 400 men. The tent was set in a river bed and when it rained "we woke up the next morning with jokes like 'Bail Out!'"

On April 29 "it" ended, just one day before, it was rumored, executions were to take place. At 9 A.M., shortly after morning roll call, "the fireworks started." It was over by noon. The boys had heard artillery fire getting closer for several days. That morning they could see the tanks of General Patton's Third Army headed their way "and nobody knows how good they looked." (Worth, 1945)

Navigator 2LT John E. Lindquist, the one who apparently conversed with townspeople after the crash, died in 1970 and is buried in the National Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu. SGT Bill Flye just passed away last year, January, 2010, and is buried near Jacksonville, Florida, near the homes of his children. The bombardier, 2LT James F. Corcoran, an unseen survivor by Bill Flye because he was blown further away from the plane, landed on the western side of the hills, very close to what is now the Croatian border and only a few kilometers from the

Adriatic Sea. Partisans there took him to safety where he was somehow reunited with Allied troops who got him back to the Tortorella airfield he had taken off from. He continued to fly missions over Yugoslavia and his current status is unknown.

In 1947, the remains of seven of the victims, which were at that point counted as eight because the resting place of SSG Miaskiewicz had remained unreported to higher headquarters, were moved to an Allied cemetery in Belgrade (then Yugoslavia). From there, in 1949, four of the victims, 2LT Herschel McLain, pilot, SSG George Newman, radio operator, SGT Carl Confer, aerial gunner and SGT Carlisle Jones, gunner, are buried in American cemeteries in Italy. The co-pilot, 2LT Hilliard "Smitty" Gilroy is buried at a local cemetery in Benzie, Michigan. It was the grave marker and story of Smitty Gilroy that generated the Motor Pool Messenger article. SGT Hubert Downs, another radio operator, is buried in his hometown of Alta Vista, Virginia. The presumed remains of SGT John Nolan, photographer, and SSG Meceslaus Miaskiewicz, gunner, were given an administrative determination of killed in action because no remains had been definitively determined as belonging to them – burial ceremonies and markers for them are in the National Cemetery on Long Island, New York. Now, with the combined efforts of The U.S. Defense Attache Office in Sarajevo, the Armed Forces Regional Medical Examiner for Europe, the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office and the townspeople of Ljubuski and Stubica in the Herzegovin region of Bosnia-Herzegovina, what had been uncovered has indeed been identified as the remains of one Staff Sergeant Meceslaus T. Miaskiewicz, one of Massachusetts' finest, and will soon be returned to the hundreds of Miaskiewicz relatives in and around Essex County and Salem, Mass. We are honored to bring you his story and that of the Daisy Mae, B-17G Flying Fortress, 347<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, 99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group, 15<sup>th</sup> Air Force, United States Army Air Corps.



<sup>i</sup> (www.shrani.si, Unknown)  
(Ratzburg, 2010)  
(Worth, 1945)

<sup>ii</sup> (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 6/1/2002 - 9/30/2002)

<sup>iii</sup> (Dnevni List, 2011)

<sup>iv</sup> (Ratzburg, 2010)

<sup>v</sup> (99th Bomb Group Historical Society, Unknown)

<sup>vi</sup> (Turner Publishing Company, 1998)

<sup>vii</sup> (99th Bomb Group Historical Society, Unknown)

<sup>viii</sup> (Upchurch, Unknown)

<sup>ix</sup> (Worth, 1945)

<sup>x</sup> (U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, 6/1/2002 - 9/30/2002)

<sup>xi</sup> (Missing Air Crew Reports of World War II, 1946)

<sup>xii</sup> (Missing Air Crew Reports of World War II, 1946)

<sup>xiii</sup> (Worth, 1945)

<sup>xiv</sup> (Worth, 1945)

99th Bomb Group Historical Society. (Unknown). <http://www.californiabiota.com/society.html>. Internet: 99th Bomb Group Historical Society.

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Ratzburg, H. (2010, Augus). World War II V-Mail. *Motor Pool Messenger*, pp. 3-5.

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U.S. National Archives and Records Administration. (6/1/2002 - 9/30/2002). *World War II Army Enlistment Records*. Washington, DC: <http://aad.archives.gov/aad/record-detail.jsp?dt=893&mtch=1&cat=all&tf=F&q=miaskiewicz&bc=&rpp=10&pg=1&rid=2267629>.

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www.shrani.si. (Unknown). [www.shrani.si/ff/1a/dK/CUQg7HD/yucrashes.xls](http://www.shrani.si/ff/1a/dK/CUQg7HD/yucrashes.xls). . Unknown: www.shrani.si.

99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Reprint with permission of the Author David J. Kinsey [rundjk@yahoo.com](mailto:rundjk@yahoo.com)

99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Editors Note: Our deepest appreciation to David J. Kinsey for all the work he did to help return the remains of our 99th BG 347th BS Veteran, Staff Sergeant Meceslaus T. Miaskiewicz to this country and to help provide his family with closure over 60 years later.

## 99th Bomb Group Historical Society NARA File & Film Records

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) II  
8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, MD 20740-6001  
<http://archives.gov>

The following is a summary listing of film records available at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) II, in College Park, MD that include some reference or relation to the 99th Bomb Group. Most of these were located under the research subject heading for the Army Air Forces (AAF), 99th Bombardment Group (99BG). At the time that this research began in late 2008, these records were located on the 4th floor in Room 400 under Record Group 18.

This information was summarized from the Index Cards which included more fields. A copy of one of the better quality Index Cards is available on this site for reference. A Table has been created to capture the key information off of each of these AAF 99BG Index Cards, and for expediency some of the fields are left blank to be completed at a later date. No claim is made that these are all of the 99th BG film records, only those that were located during research over the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday period back in 2008.

If you are interested in this project or if you plan to visit the NARA II facility yourself please contact Gary Staffo or the NARA Website for information concerning the rules and requirements to obtain a NARA identification that allows records access. The 99th BGHS is exploring the possibility of having a copy of each of these 99th BG film records made and indexed on DVD if we can get significant contributions through our "Friends of the 99th BGHS" campaign. This list is a starting point to help us seek out competitive business proposals from several professional firms to determine the cost for this project.

I would appreciate if each of you who do visit the NARA II please share with us your research findings for publication for our 99th BGHS members and for our historical research. Please contact Gary Staffo by email at [GStaffo@verizon.net](mailto:GStaffo@verizon.net) if you have any questions or would like to discuss the project or volunteer to help us with the work.

 99BGHS NARA II Film List

 99BGHS NARA II Film Record Example

 99BGHS NARA II File List

|  |   |                         |        |
|--|---|-------------------------|--------|
| ARMY AIR FORCES. 99th BOMBARDMENT GROUP  |   | 18;20 Sept 1944         |        |
| SUBJECT HEADING<br>NUMBER(S)   |   | DATE(S)                 |        |
| 18 CS 2336   |   |                         |        |
| DESCRIPTIVE TITLE  |   | SPONSOR AND/OR PRODUCER |        |
| "Bombing Mission to Hungary" - 15th Air Force  |   | Army Air Forces 1st CCU |        |
| PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION   | POS.  | NEG.                    | MASTER |
| 369 ft., si., b&w, 35mm  | PPSA  |                         | MPSA   |
| ORIG.  | SO TRACK  | PRODUCTION              |        |
| NOTES  | COMBAT FILM SUBJECTS. AAFCS caption sheet available.<br>QUALITY: FAIR TO GOOD   |                         |        |
| SCENE DESCRIPTION  |   |                         |        |
| 99th and 98th Bombardment Groups strike railroad bridge at Szob, near Budapest, Hungary. |   |                         |        |
| AVs (MLS)-MSs  | Target, heavy smoke; AIR-TO-AIR: B-24 drops bombs; smoking target; bombs drop from camera plane; heavy smoke from target; explosions; bomb cluster drops from unseen plane below camera plane; explosions hidden by medium cloud cover. |                         |        |



## National Archives and Records Administration

8601 Adelphi Road  
College Park, Maryland 20740-6001

4 September 2008

NWCTM-08-11094

Denzel L. Clarks  
10506 ESTATE CN  
Dallas, TX 75238

Dear Denzel L. Clarks,

This is in reply to your inquiry concerning records of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group.

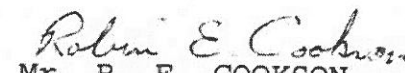
I am enclosing a listing of our collection of records of the 99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group. The mission reports include "Interrogation Forms" which list the aircrew on each aircraft.

We regret that we cannot undertake the extensive research necessary to identify the exact documents in which you are interested. We are staffed to assist researchers with their work, but not to undertake substantive research for them.

We will be pleased to make the records available to you or your representative in our research room at the National Archives in College Park, MD.

Alternately you may wish to employ a researcher for hire. Please see our web site at: <http://www.archives.gov/research/hire-help/>.

Sincerely,

  
Mr. R. E. COOKSON  
Archivist,  
Modern Military Records, NWCT2R



Mission Reports - Folder List

| ID    | Box Number | Unit Designation | Folder Title                                      | Target City |
|-------|------------|------------------|---|-------------|
| 50633 | 728        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report August 12-22, 1944                 |             |
| 50634 | 729        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report August 23-30, 1944                 |             |
| 50641 | 736        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report December 11-25, 1944               |             |
| 50615 | 711        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report December 1-20, 1943                | r           |
| 50616 | 712        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report December 25, 1943-January 9, 1944  | ✓           |
| 50642 | 737        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report December 26, 1944-January 15, 1945 |             |
| 50621 | 716        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report February 10-22, 1944               |             |
| 50645 | 740        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report February 19-25, 1945               |             |
| 50622 | 717        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report February 24-March 7, 1944          |             |
| 50646 | 741        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report February 27-March 8, 1945          |             |
| 50644 | 739        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report February 8-18, 1945                |             |
| 50617 | 713        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report January 10-17, 1944                |             |
| 50618 | 714        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report January 18-24, 1944                |             |
| 50643 | 738        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report January 19-February 7, 1945        |             |
| 50620 | 715        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report January 27-February 4, 1944        |             |
| 50631 | 726        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report July 19-28, 1944                   |             |
| 50632 | 727        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report July 30-August 10, 1944            |             |
| 50630 | 725        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report July 7-16, 1944                    |             |
| 50628 | 723        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report June 2-23, 1944                    |             |
| 50629 | 724        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report June 25-July 6, 1944               |             |
| 50623 | 718        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report March 11-29, 1944                  |             |
| 50648 | 743        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report March 20-25, 1945                  |             |
| 50649 | 744        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report March 26-April 7, 1945             |             |

99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group

Mission Reports - Folder List

| ID    | Box Number | Unit Designation | Folder Title  | Target City |
|-------|------------|------------------|---|-------------|
| 50659 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | 127 Reports April - December 1944                           |             |
| 50660 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Aircraft Assigned March 1944 - September 1945               |             |
| 50661 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Aircraft Gains and Losses March 1944 - April 1945           |             |
| 50662 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Aircraft Maintenance July 1944 - July 1945                  |             |
| 50663 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Aircraft Operational April 1944 - April 1945                | ✓           |
| 50664 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Combat Crew Status March 1944 - April 1945                  |             |
| 50665 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Consumption Table June 1944 - October 1945                  |             |
| 50666 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Daily Operations, Form - 34 July 1943 - April 1944          | ✓           |
| 50619 | 715        | 99th Bomb Group  | Daily Status Report, Dead File, August 1943 - December 1944 | ✓           |
| 50667 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Daily Status Reports January - April 1945                   |             |
| 50668 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Early Returns March 1944 - April 1945                       |             |
| 50669 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Form 108 January - September 1945                           |             |
| 50670 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Form 110 May - August 1945                                  |             |
| 50653 | 748        | 99th Bomb Group  | Form 34 May - September 1945                                |             |
| 50654 | 748        | 99th Bomb Group  | Form 34's January 4, 1945                                   |             |
| 50655 | 748        | 99th Bomb Group  | Form 34's October 1943 - December 1944                      |             |
| 50656 | 748        | 99th Bomb Group  | Form 34's October 1943 - December 1944                      |             |
| 50625 | 720        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report April 13-28, 1944                            |             |
| 50651 | 746        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report April 15-21, 1945                            |             |
| 50652 | 747        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report April 23-26, 1945                            |             |
| 50626 | 721        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report April 29-May 12, 1944                        |             |
| 50650 | 745        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report April 8-15, 1945                             |             |

**Mission Reports - Folder List**

| ID    | Box Number | Unit Designation | Folder Title                                      | Target City |
|-------|------------|------------------|---|-------------|
| 50624 | 719        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report March 30-April 12, 1944            |             |
| 50647 | 742        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report March 9-19, 1945                   |             |
| 50627 | 722        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report May 13-29, 1944                    |             |
| 50614 | 710        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report November 16-29, 1943               |             |
| 50640 | 735        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report November 17-December 8, 1944       |             |
| 50638 | 733        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report October 13-28, 1944                |             |
| 50639 | 734        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report October 28-November 16, 1944       |             |
| 50613 | 709        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report October 31-November 10, 1943       | ✓           |
| 50636 | 731        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report September 13-21, 1944              |             |
| 50637 | 732        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report September 22-October 12, 1944      |             |
| 50635 | 730        | 99th Bomb Group  | Mission Report September 3-12, 1944               |             |
| 50657 | 748        | 99th Bomb Group  | Operation July - October 1943                     | ✓           |
| 50658 | 748        | 99th Bomb Group  | Operation Summary March 1943 - April 1945         | ✓           |
| 50671 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Personnel - SCU 112 July 1944 - October 1944      | ✓           |
| 50672 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Personnel Reports January 7, 1945                 |             |
| 50673 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Sorties and Bomb Tonnage August 1944 - April 1945 | ✓           |
| 50674 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Victories and Losses April 1943 - April 1945      | ✓           |
| 50675 | 749        | 99th Bomb Group  | Weekly Status and Operation Reports 1943          | ✓           |

| REMARKS | NUMBER     | DESCRIPTIVE TITLE  | 99BG SCENE DESCRIPTION   | PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION          | QUALITY      | DATE        | SEEN |
|---------|------------|--|--|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------|------|
| COPY    | 18CS585    | Red Cross service for B-17 Bomber Crew Returning Missions - North Africa | 99BG Crew served coffee and doughnuts by Red Cross, B-17 formation over Oudna Field land and taxi  |                               | Good         | 15 Oct 1943 | Y    |
|         | 18CS1025   | Fliers Decorated 15th AF, Italy, May 1944                                | 99BG Col Lawrence awards Lt Col W Thurman, TSGT M Colbert, Lt D Frye, Capt J Whalen                | 100ft, si, b&w, 35mm          | Good         | May 1944    |      |
| COPY    | 18CS1109   | Happy Birthday Hitler  | 99BG Moving bombs painted various "Happy Birthday Hitler"  | 580ft, si, b&w, 35mm          | Fair to Good | Apr 1944    | Y    |
|         | 18CS1154-7 | Easter Services  | 99BG Chaplain H Whitlock at Altar with men during service  | 1555ft, si, b&w, 35mm 2 Reels | Good         | 9 Apr 1944  |      |
|         | 18CS1154-8 | Easter Services  | 99BG Chaplain H Whitlock at Altar with men during service singing                                  | 1555ft, si, b&w, 35mm 2 Reels | Good         | 9 Apr 1944  |      |
|         | 18CS1187   | Awards and Decorations   | 99BG Gen Atkinson and men to receive awards with B-17 Formation flying low across area             | 300ft, si, b&w, 35mm          | Good         | 14 Apr 1944 |      |
|         | 18CS1197   | Ground Crew - Tortorella Air Base, Italy                                 | 99BG Ground Crew anxiously await return of aircraft from combat                                    | 493ft, si, b&w, 35mm          | Good         | 12 Apr 1944 |      |
|         | 18CS1344   | Mission to Somewhere - Flight over Italy and Corsica                     | 99BG based at Tortorella Airfield, Italy en route from scrubbed mission pas over the Mediterranean | 210ft, si, b&w, 35mm          | Fair         | 10 May 1944 |      |

| REMARKS | NUMBER   | DESCRIPTIVE TITLE   | 99BG SCENE DESCRIPTION  | PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION            | QUALITY      | DATE             | SEEN |
|---------|----------|---|---|---------------------------------|--------------|------------------|------|
|         | 18CS1348 | Bombing Mission, General Kesselring HDQS.                 | 99BG B-17 formation and single  | 500ft, si, b&w, 35mm            | Good         | 12 May 1944      |      |
|         | 18CS1419 | Missions to Rome, Port Marghorn and Genoa, Italy          | 99BG drops bombs  | 276ft, si, b&w, 35mm            | Fair         | 23 May 1944      |      |
|         | 18CS1458 | Armed Reconnaissance for the 5 <sup>th</sup> Army - Italy | 99BG drops practice bomb on water, flared bomb burns on surface of water                              | 571ft, si,b&w, 35mm             | Poor to Good | 21-24 May 1944   |      |
|         | 18CS1467 | Bomb Run - Avignon - France                               | 99BG based at Tortorella Airfield, Italy bombs locomotive works                                       | 96ft, si, b&w, 35mm             | Fair         | 27 May 1944      |      |
|         | 18CS1472 | Mission to Bihac Yugoslavia - 15 <sup>th</sup> AF         | 99BG based at Tortorella Airfield, Italy strikes Bihac Air to Air footage                             | 396ft, si, b&w, 35mm            | Fair         | 26 May 1944      |      |
|         | 18CS1601 | Shuttle Bombing - Russia - Preparations                   | 99BG Crews prepare B-17s, Col C Lawrence CO 5 <sup>th</sup> BW and LTG Ira Eaker, MGEN Nathan Twining | 1912ft, si, b&w, 35mm 2 Reels   | Fair to Good | 2-18 Jun 1944    |      |
| COPY    | 18CS1602 | Shuttle Bombing - Russia - 15 <sup>th</sup> Air Force     | 99BG Operation Frantic Joe LTG Ira Eaker, MGEN Nathan Twining, 99BG Col Ford Lauer, Col Lawrence      | 11845ft, si, b&w, 35mm 14 Reels | Fair to Good | 31May 2 Jun 1944 | Y    |
|         | 18CS1668 | Allied War Cemetery                                       | Cemetery In Foggia Italy, 3 WACS walk through many markers, pick flowers, visit grave                 | 300ft, si, b&w, 35mm            | Good         | June 1944        |      |

| REMARKS | NUMBER     | DESCRIPTIVE TITLE   | 99BG SCENE DESCRIPTION  | PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION          | QUALITY      | DATE           | SEEN |
|---------|------------|---|---|-------------------------------|--------------|----------------|------|
|         | 18CS1865-7 | Production 1057   | 99BG High altitude bombing of railroad bridge in Tarascon, France                       | 3790ft, si, b&w, 35mm 4 Reels | Fair         | 25 June 1944   |      |
|         | 18CS2008-3 | RAWINS  | 99BG Weather observer and meteorology   | 2210ft,si, b&w, 35mm 2 Reels  | Good         | 24 Jul 1944    |      |
|         | 18CS2164-3 | Production 1056   | 99BG B-17 landing, crew piles out, Col F Lauer greeting 8 <sup>th</sup> AF Col E Wittan | 1000ft,si, b&w, 35mm 2 Reels  | Good         | 28 June 1944   |      |
|         | 18CS2259   | Bombing Missions - Austria  | 99BG heavy flak by camera plane, B-17 formation, bombs dropped Moosebierbaum O/R,       | 386ft, si, b&w, 35mm          | Fair to Good | 28 Aug 1944    |      |
|         | 18CS2293   | Operation Reunion - American Prisoners of war Return from Romania | 99BG Band greets returning POW's at Tortorella Airfield, Italy                          | 636ft, si, b&w, 35mm          | Good         | 6 Sep 1944     |      |
|         | 18CS2336   | Bombing Mission to Hungary - 15 <sup>th</sup> AF                  | 99BG strike railroad bridge at Szob, near Budapest                                      | 369ft, si,b&w, 35mm           | Fair to Good | 18,20 Sep 1944 |      |
|         | 18CS2337   | Missions to Greece and Yugoslavia - 15 <sup>th</sup> AF           | 99BG strike railroad bridges at Novsad, Yugoslavia                                      | 268ft, si,b&w, 35mm           | Good         | 15-19 Sep 1944 |      |
|         | 18CS2390   | Chute Landings of B-17s at Tortorella Airfield, Italy             | 99BG Damaged B-17 makes safe landing by deploying parachutes from waist windows         | 186ft, si,b&w, 35mm           | Good         | 22 Sep 1944    |      |

| REMARKS | NUMBER     | DESCRIPTIVE TITLE   | 99BG SCENE DESCRIPTION   | PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION            | QUALITY           | DATE                | SEEN |
|---------|------------|---|--|---------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------|
|         | 18CS2391   | Mission to Kalamaki, Greece                                       | 99BG bombing mission over Kalamaki AD  | 190ft,si, b&w, 35mm             | Fair              | 24 Sep 1944         |      |
|         | 18CS2392   | Escort Mission to Munich, Germany                                 | 99BG bombing mission over Munich, Germany  | 197ft,si, b&w, 35mm             | Poor to Fair      | 21, 22 Sep 1944     |      |
|         | 18CS2413   | Presidential Citation for 99 <sup>th</sup> BG - Marcianise, Italy | MGEN Nathan Twining presents DUC to 99 <sup>th</sup> BG, Streamer pinned on Guidon, B-17 buzzes field and Band | 388ft, si, b&w, 35mm            | Poor to Fair      | 27 Sep 1944         |      |
|         | 18CS2418   | RR Bridges at Pinzonno Raided - Italy                             | 99BG smoke rises, terrain, roads, bombs fall, air-to-air   | 98ft,si, b&w, 35mm              | Good              | 4 Oct 1944          |      |
|         | 18CS2568   | Bombing Raids - Obertal, Germany and Lintz, Austria               | 99BG Aerial bombing, smoke rises, clouds, bombs drop.  | 427ft,si, b&w, 35mm             | Fair              | 14,16, 23 Oct 1944  |      |
|         | 18CS2700-1 | Thanks  | 99BG Chaplain greets B-17 crew exiting from plane, truck passes sign "99 BOMB GROUP"                           | 4000ft,si, b&w, 35mm<br>2 Reels |                   | 20 Nov 1944         |      |
|         | 18CS3306   | Raids on Marshalling Yards - Austria and Germany                  | 99BG strikes Worgl, Austria, explosions and burning targets; 99BG hits Kitzbehl, Munich, wounded gunner        | 694ft,si, b&w, 35mm             | Very Good to Good | 23 Feb 1945         |      |
|         | 18CS3326   | 15 <sup>th</sup> Air Force Raids - Austria and Germany            | 99BG Graz M/Y, Lintz M/Y, Augsburg M/Y, Moosebierbaum O/R  | 1099ft,si, b&w, 35mm<br>2 Reels | Poor to Good      | 24, 25, 27 Feb 1945 |      |

| REMARKS | NUMBER   | DESCRIPTIVE TITLE                                    | 99BG SCENE DESCRIPTION   | PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION             | QUALITY | DATE                       | SEEN |
|---------|----------|--|--|----------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|------|
|         | 18CS3393 | Bomb Marshalling Yards and Benzol Plant              | 99BG Linz, Austria and Sopron, Hungary   | 549ft, si, b&w, 35mm             | Fair    | 2, 4 Mar 1945              |      |
|         | 18CS3395 | B-17s Landing in Cross Wind                          | 99BG 15 <sup>th</sup> AF two B-17s land in 90 degree cross wind blown off runway         | 64ft, si, b&w, 35mm              | Good    | 2 Mar 1945                 |      |
|         | 18CS3642 | 15 <sup>th</sup> Air Force Raids - Italy             | Aerial bombing missions over Gorizia, Verona, Bressanone and Brescia M/Y                 | 671ft,si, b&w, 35mm              | Fair    | 5-8 April 1945             |      |
|         | 18CS3645 | Air Support for British 8 <sup>th</sup> Army - Italy | Operation Buckland   | 3562ft,si,b&w, 35mm<br>5 Reels   | Good    | 8,9Apr 10Dec 1945          |      |
|         | 18CS3659 | Air Support for British 8 <sup>th</sup> Army - Italy | 99BG B-17s dropping bombs, air-to-air, flak, "T" markers and smoke pots                  | 906ft,si, b&w, 35mm              | Good    | 10 Apr 1945                |      |
|         | 18CS3700 | Bombing Raids - Italy                                | 99BG Padua RR Bridge, Malcontento Ammo storage, Aviglianna, Ammo Factory, Bologna Troops | 1144ft, si, b&w, 35mm<br>2 Reels | Good    | 11,12, 14, 15, 17 Apr 1945 |      |
|         | 18CS3752 | Bomb Marshalling Yard - Austria                      | 99BG Attnang-Puchiem Marshalling Yard and Industrial Area bombing                        | 474ft, si, b&w, 35mm             | Fair    | 21 Apr 1945                |      |
|         | 18CS3770 | Bombing Bridges - Italy                              | 99BG Albaredo Rail Bridge  | 437ft, si, b&w, 35mm             | Fair    | 23 Apr 1945                |      |
|         | 18CS3771 | Bomb Railroads - Austria                             | 99BG Linz, Austria railroad marshalling yards south and Drauberg RR Bridge               | 277ft, si, b&w, 35mm             | Poor    | 23,25 Apr 1945             |      |

## Books



### **THE DIAMONDBACKS: THE HISTORY OF THE 99th BOMB GROUP (H)**

by the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society  
War stories, mission lists, and biographies. Loaded with photographs.

99<sup>th</sup> BGHS  
Limited Number Available  
Only to 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Members \$50



### **BEYOND FIGHTER ESCORT**

by James F. Bruno  
A diary of the 99th BG, as told by a member who flew combat missions with it during 1943. Also contains information about other 99th BG members throughout the war.



### **AIRCRAFT DOWN - EVADING CAPTURE IN WWII EUROPE**

by Philip D. Caine  
This book is an excellent collection of eight stories about evasion and survival by airmen in WWII. Chapter 7, "I Was So Close" is of special interest as it tells the story Sonny Fassoulis, a member of the 99th BG 348th BS, John Caraberis crew of the B-17 number 4230396 that was shot down on September 2, 1943 over Italy.

Brassey's  
22841 Quicksilver Drive  
Dulles, VA 20166



### **STARDUST FALLING**

by Ret. Capt. Wes Coss  
A story of a young man's love of flying that takes him in to combat with the 99th BG 347th BS flying a B-17 in bombing raids routinely until January 27, 1944. On this day the 20 year old pilot has his aircraft shot down and faces the harsh reality of war attempting to evade capture behind enemy lines. A tribute to those in War and especially those of the underground who risked everything to save downed air crew men.

Wesley G. Coss  
PO Box 6133  
Denver, CO 80206-0133  
Email: stardustfallingbook@yahoo.com



### **BROTHER BOB'S WAR**

by Ralph W. Ekwall  
A memoir in tribute to a 99th BG 346th BS B-17 Ball Turret Gunner with combat action taken directly from his War Diary. The book provides some background on his family history and home life. Additional background information is included about various topics of interest to all WWII Veterans and others who want to know more details about the air war and the men who fought in the skies. Available in softcover or hardcover.

Willard's Books  
P.O. Box 45804  
Omaha, NE 69145-0804



### **ADVENTURES UNDER FIRE - WORLD WAR II MEMOIRS AND 50 - MISSION DIARY ABOARD THE B-17 FLYING FORTRESS 1942 to 1945**

by Albert C. Henke  
This book covers the 50 missions Henke flew as a tail gunner with the 99th Bomb Group, 416th Bomb Squadron, out of bases in North Africa and Italy to bomb German targets in the Mediterranean Theatre of operations, and also his Army Air Force training and family history. It is built around his Diary which he kept hidden throughout the War as at the time this was a forbidden practice under war time security. In this hidden Diary he recorded each mission within hours of his return, while the emotions and reality of the War were still felt throughout his body and in his mind. The book goes beyond the Diary and includes V-mail letters written home, information obtained after the War, and is illustrated with copies of his actual Diary entries as well as photos taken during and after the War. ISBN 978-1-58597-418-4

Leathers Publishing  
4500 College Blvd.  
Overland Park, KS 66211  
913-498-2625  
1-888-888-7696



### **FOR YOU DER VAR IS OFER**

by George F. Perry  
An autobiography of a 99th BG B-17 pilot. Tells of flight training, air combat, and life as a prisoner of war in a German POW camp.



### **TOMLIN'S CREW**

by J.W. Smallwood  
A diary by a 99th Bomb Group, 346th Bomb Squad Bombardier of his training, combat missions and experience as a POW during World War II.

Sunflower University Press



### **FROM FOGGIA TO FREEDOM - FIRST-HAND ACCOUNTS OF THE AIRMEN OF THE 15TH AIR FORCE DURING WORLD WAR II**

by Brandon Soale  
This book covers the events leading to the creation of the 15th Air Force, the establishment of bases at Foggia, Italy and stories of the men who flew missions from there during WWII. I believe this will be of interest to all 99th BGHS members as the subject areas include the background on the development of the 15th AF, the B-17, how the 99th BG got to Italy at Tortorella, and the description of the related airfields and organizations at Foggia. Although the stories are not from men in the 99th BG, the author has used information obtained in interviews with 99th BG Veterans and additional sources are well referenced throughout the book which does include an index. Many of the 99th BG Veterans shared similar experiences during AAF training and flying missions from Foggia. The soft cover book is illustrated with black and white photos, copies of documents, diagrams, a few

sidebars, excerpts from Diaries and letters written home, and other information. ISBN 978-0-578-08663-7

CrabApple Books  
P.O. Box 12  
Camden, OH 45311



**FORTRESS FIGHTERS**

by William F. Somers  
An autobiography of a B-17 Engineer/Gunner with a collection of stories of men of the 15th Air Force who flew the heavies from North Africa and Italy to smash the formidable German underbelly during World War Two.

ABOVE REPRINTED FROM THE 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Website

**NOTE: We do not have current information for availability of several of the above books written by our Veterans who have flown their final missions.**

Please contact us at the 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Website if you have any additional 99<sup>th</sup> BG related Books or other information that we should consider sharing with our Members.

We also have several 99<sup>th</sup> BG Veterans personal Diary's' and Books that have been donated to the 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS and are available through us by specific permission.

We are currently in the process of reviewing each of these donations and contacting our Veterans or their families to establish the terms by which we can make these items available for research or other legitimate purposes, and to ensure the protection of the material for the 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS and from commercial or other misuse.

We currently have permission to provide the following document(s) upon written request agreeing to the terms and conditions of the 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS:

**The WWII Diary of Col Harry Burrell (99BG 347BS Commanding Officer)**

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**2013 Membership Directory Update – PLEASE HELP!**

This newsletter includes the 2013 Membership Directory. Please provide us with any changes and we especially seek current e-mail addresses and phone numbers. 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, and respond to your emails, letters and those written by others seeking long lost 99<sup>th</sup> BG crew members and friends. **PLEASE COMPLETE AND MAIL CHANGES TO:**

**Jerry Buckingham, 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Treasurer,**  
20 Flathead Drive,  
Cherokee Village, AR 72529-1805 e-mail: [JABuck@centurytel.net](mailto:JABuck@centurytel.net)

99<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Historical Society  
**Membership Application/Address Change**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron: 346 347 348 416 (circle)  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates in 99<sup>th</sup>: \_\_\_\_\_  
City,State,Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Crew Position: \_\_\_\_\_  
Prisoner of War/Interned : \_\_\_No \_\_\_Yes When: \_\_\_\_\_ Where: Stalag Luft \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Class – Check one of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Charter Member (A veteran or member of the Armed Forces)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Member (Related to Member (circle one): Spouse, Brother, Widow, Other, \_\_\_\_\_)  
Member name: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Associate Member (A research historian or individual interested in 99<sup>th</sup> BG)  
Check one of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Address Change/Update  
\_\_\_\_\_ Membership Application Date Completed: \_\_\_\_\_

**REMINDER: Annual dues \$30 per calendar year payable January 1<sup>st</sup> each year**

**PLEASE COMPLETE AND MAIL YOUR CHECK TO:**

**Jerry Buckingham**  
99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Treasurer  
20 Flathead Drive  
Cherokee Village, AR 72529-1805  
[JABuck@centurytel.net](mailto:JABuck@centurytel.net)

**YOUR 2013 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS DUES ARE DUE NOW!**

The 99<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Group Historical Society  
Gary T. Staffo, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President  
6226 Garden Road  
Springfield, VA 22152-1504

E-mail: [Gstaffo@verizon.net](mailto:Gstaffo@verizon.net)

## MEMBERSHIP NOTE

### SPECIAL EDITION - Membership DIRECTORY ENCLOSED!

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