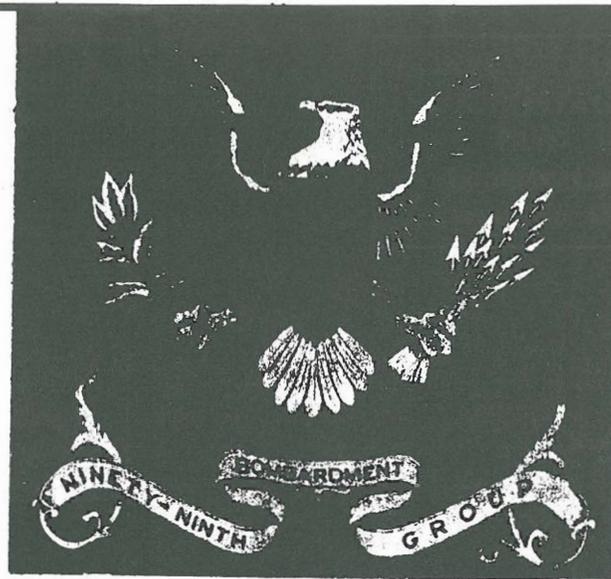
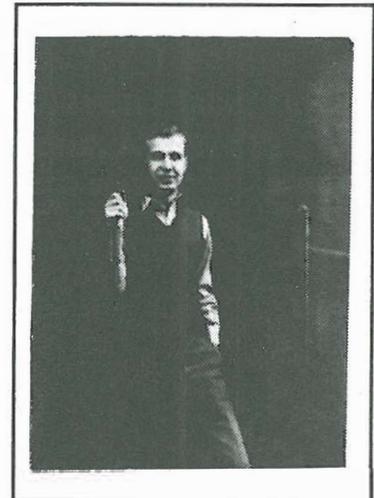




**PETER HUREY**  
 First Sgt. of 416th Sq.  
 Killed by Wimpy  
 Explosion at Foggia



**The Group Flew B-17 Flying Fortresses  
 For A Total Of 395 Combat Missions From  
 North Africa & Italy To Bomb European  
 Targets During 1943 & 1945**



**JOHN R. REPKA**  
 First Sgt. of 347th Sq.



**Vol. 17, No. 1**

**February 1997**

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Those "good looking young men" appearing in our newsletters our editor, Bernie, is finding in files and archives deserve our thanks! How young they are!

REMINISCES Remember when the B-52 came from Ellsworth AFB to Albuquerque? The crew arrived in their flight uniforms from Desert Storm, and were now dressed in civvies for the Banquet. We were so impressed - with their great AF enthusiasm, good looks, great friendly ways, and above all, their 'YOUTH'! Dwight Reigert, sitting at the table seeing all this - the terrific impression made upon us all, turned to his wife, Allene, and said: "They're so young!", his wife responded: "So were you, once!"

Thanks, Roy, a bundle of thanks for the terrific job you're doing as publisher of this Newsletter!

COMING! CHECK THE CALENDAR!

IN APRIL, DAYTONA BEACH will be the site for a Mini-Reunion. Check Mort & Virginia McGees, hosts, and check the last news letter for details.

IN SEPTEMBER, BALTIMORE will be the site for our 1997 Reunion. Check with Jim McVey and check the last news letter for details. A Great Program is planned! Jim and his committee have put together, especially for all 99ers a great time for a Reunion!

IN 1998 SPRINGFIELD - BRANSON, MISSOURI is the site of our 1998 Reunion. We return to the Midwest - a special place where entertainment and great surroundings welcome us May 5-10, 1998. We'll be staying at the University Plaza H I. More later!

COMMITTEES APPOINTED

NOMINATING Don Lawhorn chairs the Nominating Committee and looks for your help for the selection of officers for the 99th. Please contact him with names for members on the Board of Directors.

SITE Len Smith, Don Lawhorn, William Hayman, Jerry Buckingham, Bob Bacher are members on Site selection.

HOSPITALITY Bob Bacher, our gracious Hospitality chair in the past, has said o.k. to help bring a warm Hospitality Spirit to the University Plaza Holiday Inn for our stay!

I read about a visitor to the Officers Club at Elmendorf AFB in Alaska. On the wall he saw a large painted sign, reading:

"ISN'T AMAZING HOW MUCH CAN BE DONE TOGETHER,  
WHEN NO ONE IS CONCERNED WITH WHO GETS THE CREDIT!"

Last fall, we stopped to say hello to Ed and Marguerite Marlow at Stone Mountain, GA. Ed had sent me a copy of the Army Service Book. Marguerite told us the story, how she found the book, and the conversation with the book store owner. She ended by saying something like: "they picked this out of the sea!" Quite a story I'll tell next time! The book was one used in Chapel Services. I value it and thank the Marlows for their hospitality, the book and great memories!

I saw an Eagle yesterday, and thought of you! I'm glad to live among eagles, who soar!

*Jean*



## IN MEMORIAM



**RICHARD DICK DEMPSEY** ∞ **THOMAS GARSIDE**

**JOSEPH F. MICEK** ∞ **ESTHER SUEMNICHT**

**MARGARET W. BOATWRIGHT**

Members send sincere prayers and sympathies to the families.

**MAY OUR COMRADES REST IN PEACE.**

George Perry sent me a copy of his very well written and illustrated story of his WW II experiences. It was too long to print in the newsletter, but I used a few interesting parts in our November '96 issue concerning his POW experience.

I feel sure many members would enjoy reading the entire 88 page publication. It is very worthwhile reading.

He recently called me to say he has had 100 copies of his story printed and bound.

Should anyone want a copy send George \$20.00 to cover his cost and postage.

Write to George F. Perry, 6236 SW 47 Place, Portland, OR 97221-2826

(Roy Worthington)

Cover Page Continued



## THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Soon after Jules Horowitz appointed me to be your chaplain, my first thought was 'What have I got to say to my friends in the 99th?' I know now that question was heard by the 'Master Command Pilot', who said 'Leave that to me! I'll help you!' I sat down to write that afternoon, and now, early in January 1997, I'd like to excerpt some of that article. Maybe the 'Master Command Pilot' has something to say to us again!

"I taped a clipping in the flyleaf of a Bible my mother had sent me. That Bible came back with some of my things when I was MIA. The clipping I found in the Air Force Association Magazine, called "The Airman's Psalm".

"The Lord is my Pilot. I shall not falter. He sustains me as I span the heavens; He leads me, steady, o'er the skyways. He refreshes my soul. For He shows me the wonders of His firmament For His Name's sake.

Yea, though I fly through treacherous storms and darkness I fear no evil, for He is with me. His Providence and Nearness they comfort me.

He open lovely vistas before me in the presence of His Angels. He fills my heart with calm. My trust in Him brings me peace.

Surely, His Goodness and Mercy Shall accompany me each moment in the air, and I shall dwell in His matchless heavens forever.

From the Office of the Air Chaplain"

One Sunday I was listening to the sermon, while my mind was reviewing substance for an article in our 99th Newsletter. I heard the minister read the 23rd Psalm. When he came to the part that reads:

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever",

he explained that the word in the text "shall follow me" should be translated "shall pursue me". As I thought about this my thoughts traced back to the "war stories" I'd heard - those verbal snapshots from our yesterdays in North Africa and Italy, and over the targets of Europe. Those stories you've all helped write!

"...Goodness and Mercy pursues us all the days of our lives"! This is true for each of us as members of the 99th. In whatever part we played in wartime operations, we were in Harm's Way. In the divine mystery of God's love, He comes, reminding us that 'His Goodness and Mercy pursues us'! His promise is "I will be with you!"

Brothers in the 99th, the God who flew beside us, guarded our safety, directed in time of danger, is the same God who "pursues" us all the days of our lives, and is with us now! When last did you thank Him?

I think of you each often and pray God for your welfare and peace! Until next time, God's best to you and yours!



*Jean*



Page 2

## NEWS, NOTES, LETTERS & IMPORTANT INFORMATION

99th Bomb Group Historical Society Reunion . . . Baltimore, MD . . . September 9th - 14th, 1997  
HOST JAMES R. LaVEY reports that everything is on schedule for our September reunion. He will provide a detailed schedule for the MAY '97 NEWSLETTER. Review page 4 of the November '96 issue for the tentative schedule.

**SOUTHWEST AIRLINES WILL PROVIDE DISCOUNT FARES BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 6 & 17, '97 FOR OUR BALTIMORE REUNION. CALL OR HAVE YOUR PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL AGENT CALL THE SOUTHWEST AIRLINES GROUP AND MEETING DESK AT 1-800-433-5368, MONDAY THRU FRIDAY, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. BY NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 1, 1997 AND REFER TO I.D. CODE H2087 TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OFFER. (I, Roy Worthington, called the 800 number Jan. 22 and quoted the I.D. Code H 2087. I was told it was too early to get a fare quote, but to try again in late March or early April, '97.) IF INTERESTED KEEP CALLING THE 800 NUMBER AFTER THE MIDDLE OF MARCH TO GET AN EARLY RESERVATION AS RATES ARE ALWAYS SUBJECT TO TERMS AND AVAILABILTY. TRAVEL IN OR OUT OF DALLAS LOVE FIELD IS SUBJECT TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE WRIGHT AMENDMENT. (Call the 800 number to determine the requirements if you will be using Dallas Love Field.)**

### NEW MEMBERS

HOWARD J. BLUM, 1810 Major Drive, Golden Valley, Minnesota 55422  
BENJAMIN MEEKER, 3128 Boulder Park Drive, #D, Nashville, TN 37214

### OUR 1998 REUNION PLANS

YES, PLANS ARE WELL UNDER WAY FOR OUR 1998 REUNION. President FRAN GRANTZ and Site Chair LEN SMITH have visited and selected SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI as our gathering location. BRANSON, MO is, of course, near by which will furnish us many hours of entertainment.. The Holiday Inn University Plaza in Springfield will provide all accommodations and support. Details will be included in future newsletters. . . MARK YOUR CALENDERS NOW AND PLAN TO BE THERE. DATES: TUESDAY, MAY 5 - SUNDAY, MAY 10, 1998

### PROPAGANDA LEAFLET & LIST OF COMBAT MISSIONS

I, Roy Worthington, received about two dozen requests for the documents Art Knipp sent me. Most folks asked for both documents. I'm still willing to have photo copies made and send same to interested members. If interested please send me your address and a dollar bill for one or both documents. It turns out the postage for either one is 64 cents and the second does not add any extra postage cost. A dollar just covers postage and copying costs. My address is 16786 Thomas White Drive, Air Force Village West, CA 92518-2918

### SPRING FAMILY GET TOGETHER - APRIL 30 - MAY 4, 1997

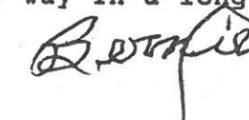
HOST MORT MAGEE reports all is ready for his get together in ORMOND BEACH, FL  
Refer to page 5 of our Nov. '96 issue for details. Please let Mort know if you will be there.  
Telephone: (904) 673-8549

### GEORGE AND MARTHA COEN HAVE RELOCATED

The Coens now live at the WEST MESA HEALTH CARE CENTER, 9150 McMahan Blvd, NW, Albuquerque, NM 87114. Telephone: (505) 898-7986 .

## BERNIE BARR REVISITS FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

In Sept of 1949 I was assigned as Professor of Air Science and Tactics at Florida State to open up a new ROTC Program at a school that had just become a co-educational institution in 1947. This had been an all girl school before. Doris and I liked the assignment and conducted a very successful program from 1949-1953 when I was transferred. Last fall I had a chance to visit Tallahassee and called Col Mike Smith the current Professor of Aero Space Studies if I might visit him. He was enthusiastic that the first AFROTC Professor would like to visit. Col Smith arranged a courtesy call on Dean Donald Foss of the College of Arts and Science, under whose jurisdiction the ROTC is operated. As I bid farewell to Dean Foss he stated that he had something to give me. To my complete surprise and pleasure he read an engraved bronze plaque from his college to me to commemorate the years that I had been Professor of ROTC at Florida State and dated Nov 1, 1996-the day it was presented. WHAT A WAY TO GET YOUR MORALE IMPROVED!!! After that surprise Col Smith and I returned to the ROTC building where I informally talked to a class of seniors(men and women) ROTC students. At the end of the class period Col Smith asked me to stand with him since he had an important document to read to me and the cadets. To my complete surprise he read and presented me with the following letter from the Chief of Staff, General Ronald Fogleman. I did my best to express my thanks and gratitude for such an honor. At lunch Col Smith closed and locked his building and with all his staff escorted me to a fancy restaurant for a great lunch and conversation. I do admit that this was one of the best events that has come my way in a long time. I shall remember it forever!



CHIEF OF STAFF  
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
WASHINGTON

31 October 1996

Dear Colonel Barr

Welcome back to AFROTC Detachment 145, Florida State University. A grateful nation and its Air Force thank you for the commitment you made to the selection and leadership development of its officers as FSU's first AFROTC Detachment Commander.

Your legacy of excellence has kept the Air Force in good stead. The AFROTC program you established at Florida State nearly 50 years ago continues to produce officers of the highest caliber and potential. FSU graduates have answered our nation's call to arms with distinction in Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf War.

As we prepare to celebrate our 50th Anniversary, it is important that we acknowledge the warrior-pioneers who helped shape the world's greatest Air Force.



RONALD R. FOGLEMAN  
General, USAF  
Chief of Staff

Colonel Bernice S. Barr, USAF, Retired  
7408 Vista del Arroyo  
Albuquerque, N.M. 87109

JIM BRUNO author of "BEYOND FIGHTER ESCORT" sent this letter that Gen Fay Upthegrove had written to him way back in 1970.

4 Oct. 1970

Dear Bruno,

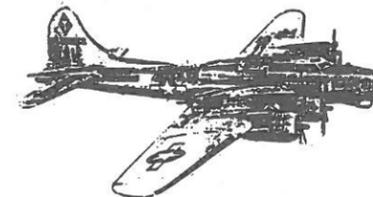
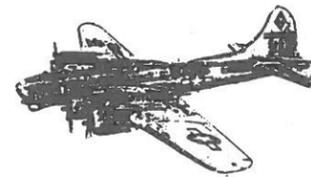
Received your material and letter of 20 August. I apologize for taking so long to reply but a lot has happened since last Spring. Mrs. Upthegrove had another heart attack while we were visiting her sisters and others in Olean, N. Y. and she lived only a couple hours after we got her to a hospital. This happened 27 June and she was buried in St. Bonaventure Cemetery in her family plot. My daughters got there from Andrews AFB and one from Okinawa. The later came home with me 9 July and left 20 July to go back to Kadena. Both husbands are Majors in the USAF.

Since I have been living alone trying to get caught up with my yard, weed out years of accumulation, cook etc. It has kept me rather busy. Maybe next summer when the Washington SOL goes to the 7th. AF for a year the daughter and four girls will come here while he is away. Hectic, but a least I'll not be alone.

I've looked through your material and there are a few errors, if my memory is correct about the Gerbini raid. I could be mistaken about the Spitfires, but I didn't see any until after the turn off the target and my gunners shot at them thinking they were German planes. It was correct about Whitmore getting lost the first time and returning to base. I led the next day and the 97th. was to follow me closely. They didn't and when we hit the coast our escorts from the 14th fighter group took off and tacked on the 97th. The 97th. did what the 348th. did before, got lost in the haze and went too far south. We hit all the check points and on the button and just before the IP the navigator and bombardier reported they couldn't see the target. So I got out of my seat, looked out the right window and immediately picked it up and pointed it out to them on the interphone. I got back in my seat, buckled up just in time to start a right turn

at the IP and start the bomb run. Just as I got about 45 degrees in the turn either 9 or 12 fighters made a frontal attack at one thousand or two thousand feet up and dropped bombs on us fused to explode in the air. Thanks to our turn the bombs fell off to our left and exploded harmlessly. Then the battle began and all guns fired throughout the bomb run and a bit after. For some reason I was completely relaxed and the bomb run was one of the best ever. The PDI hardly wiggled off center all the way in. Photo recon credited us with 20 planes on over half of the field. Twenty minutes later the 97th wandered in covered by the 14th Fighter group and Spitfires (maybe) and didn't get a shot fired at them. They did plaster the other half of the field and got about 20 more planes.

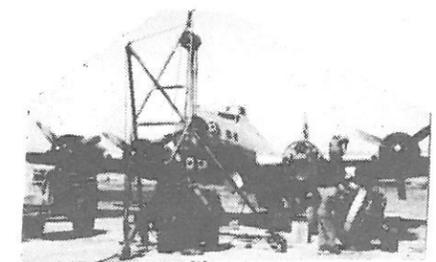
Shortly after the turn for home Elliot broke radio silence and informed me in a quivering voice that he had only three planes left. I said "keep coming, you can't do anything about it now!" The claims are correct, 36-14-1 and were confirmed by the two wounded men who were returned to us in a few days. I have the story they told and can send it to you. I went over the claims several times and could find no duplications, so although it seemed unbelievable, we put it in as 36-14-1 (36 confirmed kills, 14 damaged, 1 probable).



Thanks For Smoking



Your Local Undertaker



JULES HOROWITZ (now recovering from knee replacement surgery) asks that credit for this article be given to BILL SOMERS of 348th.

### Ghost Rider In The Sky

#### B-17 In War; Air Combat

(Picture yourself in the author's shoes. He'll be describing his 31st combat mission to Weiner Neustadt, Austria, 40 miles from Vienna. In this episode, you will be his ghost rider over alien skies. You will be him, the pilot. So hold on to your seat and let's go to war.)

One doesn't go to war without some preparation. Let's assume you've had your flight training and graduated from B-17 transition school. As airplane commander, you spent three more months with nine other crew members in many practice missions before being ordered overseas to North Africa. The crew that you will fly with consists of co-pilot, navigator, bombardier, engineer, radioman, two waist gunners and a tail gunner. They have thirteen fifty caliber machine guns among them to ward off enemy fighters.

Now that your job description has been spelled out, you should feel confident as you go into battle. You are part of a crew of ten men who have trained and fought together. You are ready for action.

#### H-Hour

The klaxton horn sounds over the loudspeaker at 3 a.m. It's H-hour. It's time to rise and shine because your crew was listed to fly this day. It's a clear November morning on the outskirts of Tunis, N.Africa. You dress, wearing wool O.D.'s, coveralls and your thin leather flight jacket. Oh, and while at breakfast keep coffee to a minimum, you know what happens if you're up there and you have to go and with -40 to -50 degrees F. temperatures. You can't even find it. After briefing you are trucked out to the flight line. Everyone then checks their equipment, oxygen mask, mae west, outer garments and some with flak jackets, and helmets. You can't wear fleece lined boots or jacket because you need freedom of movement. After the ground crew chief o.k's the plane, you check the wheel struts and tires, then a walkaround. This will be your 31st combat mission, you are flying ship# 393, you've flown this plane a number of times previously. You are a plane commander with the 348th Sqdn, 99th Bomb Group in the 15th Air Force.

#### Prepare for Takeoff

You toss your gear aboard and you swing up into the forward escape hatch, which is just behind the plexiglas nose compartment. You then climb up to the narrow confines of the cockpit. When all are aboard you start preflighting the engines. Soon you're rolling off the hardstand and into line for takeoff. You're ready for takeoff. You dread the always testy ride down the matted steel runway with the heavy bomb load. It's always a scary beginning of every mission. You're carrying six 1000-lb bombs. Brakes are off and you begin your run. Slowly you build up speed. The co-pilot is 999ling off the speed 85, 90, 95, 100, 105 -come on with this

load you need another 5 mph to get off the ground. The weight is frightening. Engine noise is deafening. You need to lift off now. Will this lumbering giant ever get into the air? It will and it does. You breathe a sigh of relief as your aircraft begins its laborious climb up into formation. After you join your squadron, you rendezvous with the 21 other planes in your group and at a higher altitude your group joins other groups in the wing until you are all collected. You are now an armada of B-17's on the way to war over Austria.

#### Target; Weiner Neustadt ME Factory

This is what you know about your target for the day- the day being Nov. 1, 1943. It will be located 40 miles south of Vienna. Flying time will be twelve hours, 1007/906 miles to and from the target. You will land at Ponte Olivio, near Gela, Sicily, ETA 1725. It will be an uncomfortable flight since there is no heat and you will be on oxygen for a long time. You will spend the nite in or about the plane and receive enough fuel in the morning to enable you to reach your home base. The 97th and 301st BG will bomb at 26,000ft, the 2nd and 99thBG will bomb at 24,500ft, and following you will be 54 B-24 bombers. The target time is 1225 and the axis of attack is 62 degrees, rally to the right off the target. You will lead the third element in your Sqdn.

#### Expect The Worst

Don't forget. You're flying this mission, not me. You're the ghost rider on this flight. The word at morning briefing was to expect 50 to 75 enemy fighters. To my ghost rider. You're airborne now, no turning back. More from briefing: enemy ground defenses at the target is an estimated 90 heavy guns.

You've had briefing reports. Now the real thing. You're over the target. Intense, heavy and accurate flak peppers your 99th BG formation of 28 planes. The flak is predominantly of the tracking type, and it was tracking you very accurately. The plane directly in front of you was hit in the bomb bay and exploded, it evaporated in mid air with pieces and parts all over the sky, you went through the debris about one second later. You looked at the co-pilot, his face was green. Your plane dropped its bomb load and you followed your formation off the target and during the rally. You were under extremely heavy fire for seven to eight minutes. Eight of your aircraft sustain major flak damage and seven receive minor damage. In all, your group loses two planes to flak, fifteen were damaged. Twenty one men are missing, many wounded. The 2nd BG flying near you also lost two planes. Two of your gunners each claimed an enemy fighter shot down. Total losses for the day; four B-17's and 8 B-24's down. The bombers were attacked by 75 ME109's and FW190's.

At the same time those B-17's were hit you were having trouble with #3 engine oil pressure and #2 supercharger, but you were lucky that they continued to function. I guess you were pretty traumatic in the heat of battle, being your first exposure to enemy action but because you're only a ghost

rider on this mission you really won't have to worry. Tonight you'll sleep in a nice comfortable bed at home.

#### End Of Mission

After you've arrived back at base you went to briefing and recounted what you saw during the flight. Your ghost ride is at an end. You've experienced a Flying Fortress on a wartime mission. The storied legends of this 4 engine bomber in World War 2 are many. It played a decisive role in our victory over Germany. It's strategic use in daylight raids deep into the German heartland had a devastating effect on German resistance on land, sea and air. An estimated 4,750 B-17's were lost in this punishing air war over Europe.

I hope friend, you enjoyed the ride in my place. You gotta admit it's a helluva story.

#### Ellicombe's Sad Legacy

A strange tale emerged from the battlefield during the Union Army's attempt to capture Richmond in the summer of 1862. In what has become known as McClellan's Peninsular Campaign, there were six weeks of fighting around Harrison's Landing on the James River.

On one moonless night during that time, the Union and Confederate armies were face-to-face and separated by only a narrow strip of land. Just after midnight, Union Captain Robert Ellicombe heard the pitiful moaning of a soldier who lay mortally wounded in the field between the armies. The agony in the soldier's cries touched Ellicombe's heart. Not knowing whether the man was a Union or Confederate soldier, Ellicombe decided to risk his life to bring the wounded man back within his lines. Crawling on his stomach through a hail of heavy cross fire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When he finally reached the safety of his own lines, he discovered that he had rescued one of his enemy and that the man had died during the slow, treacherous struggle toward safety. A lantern was carefully brought near the body and when its halo brightened the dead man's face, Captain Ellicombe was horrified and began to cry. The dead man was his own son! The boy had been studying music in the South when the war erupted and joined the Confederate army without telling his family, who lived north of the Mason-Dixon Line.

The next morning, Captain Ellicombe asked his commander if his son could be buried with full military honors. In a decision worthy of Solomon, the commander granted the mourning father's wish. He did not, however, allow the full regimental band to play for the sad ceremony, reserving that honor for the Union dead. Instead, he gave permission for one member of the band to play. Ellicombe chose the bugler and asked him to play a series of notes he had found on a piece of paper in his son's pocket, the last music young Ellicombe ever composed. As the somber, haunting notes of the melody drifted over the young Confederate's grave, soldiers heard, for the first time, the heart-wrenching melody known as "Taps". The memory of young Ellicombe and his father's noble act are preserved for all time by this strange tale of a melody composed by a gentle Confederate warrior. (A great item from Charles Boggs, pilot of "Sweater Girl".)

This account of crew 19 flying "PATCHES" by GENEVIEVE S. MCGEE

This is a saga of Crew 19, a flying Fortress crew of ten average American boys who had a job to do and in doing that job brought fame and achievement unto themselves.

Some of these boys had never met until that day in November of 1942 when they were brought together for the first time as a crew.

First there was the pilot, Captain Max E. Davis, of Pasadena, California, who at that time was a 1st Lieutenant. He had formerly been a basic flying instructor at the famous West Point of the Air, Randolph Field near San Antonio, Texas. There followed a transition flying course on the B-17 at Sebring, Florida, and subsequently an instructor pilot himself on the Fortress at Boise, Idaho.

Second in command was co-pilot Flake Casto of Los Angeles, Calif., a newly wed who couldn't see how under the sun he was ever going to leave his wife behind when he went to the wars. Lieut. Casto was an exceptionally adept co-pilot which was proven later in combat after which he was to receive his own combat crew and airplane.

Lieut. Vernon F. Schoedinger of Miami, Florida, was the "Guiding Light" of Crew 19 in his capacity as navigator. It was he who was responsible in steering the pilot over a course of tractless oceans and impenetrable jungles to their destinations in North Africa.

Then there was Lieut. Edward J. Cadjer of Patterson, New Jersey. "Eagle Eye Cadjer" the crew called him. His was the firm belief that the only reason the B-17 had ever been built was to carry him, personally, over the target in the capacity of bombardier for the sole purpose of losing his load of destruction on the enemy below.

The backbone of Crew 19 was made up of six enlisted men, all experts in their own particular job on the airplane. The engineer and top turret gunner was T/Sgt. William M. Campbell of Cuba, Illinois. In the eyes of the crew he was the best flight engineer in the business. This was all too soon proven, for it was under his guidance that the crew repaired and rebuilt their own airplane after a near fatal mid air collision in South America.

The radio operator and center gunner was a cocky, chunky, little man from Boston, Mass., T/Sgt. Edward J. Jackson. He was 33, the oldest man on the crew, and one whose sole ambition was to own a bar back in Boston after the close of the war.

The belly turret gunner, who doubled on the radio as assistant, was a farm lad and newly wed from Elcon, Mo., S/Sgt. Emmett R. Worthey. Worthey was the musician of the crew, Chief guitar player and violin player. His was the desire to fiddle over Rome on the first raid there, as it burned below.

Crew 19 was proud of the fact that flying with them was the largest combat aerial gunner in the air forces, 6 foot 4 inch, 220 pound S/Sgt. Benjamin F. Warmer III of San Francisco, California. Warmer, an attorney and former Secret Service man, was armament and turret specialist for the crew. His was the job to see that the guns and turrets were in tip top shape for all missions.

Also serving as a waist gunner with Sgt. Warmer was S/Sgt. Carlton J. McGee, a slender chap with black curly hair, stiff as a wire brush, coming from Laurel, Delaware. He was self appointed moral booster and keeper upper of good spirits. McGee was the man always ready with a wise crack and a bit of humor at the right time.

Last man, but far from least was tail gunner S/Sgt. Leo E. Robin of Los Angeles, California. Robin was a shy chap who was always reluctant to claim his own aerial victories. More than once the crew had to brow beat him into claiming an enemy fighter shot down.

This was Crew 19, a determined bunch of boys who were always ready and willing for the next job ahead.

It was at the Sioux City Army Air Base in Iowa that the crew shook hands that day in November, 1942. They were to train there for two months as a crew. Flying at least eight hours of each twenty-four, the crew was soon to become an efficient fighting unit. Cross country flights prepared the navigator for his future job in plotting a course from the States to North Africa. Gunnery practice at both stationary and moving targets put the edge on the gunners that was to give them the name of being the best shooting Fortress crew in combat. High altitude formation flying and bombing practice brought out the best there was in pilot, co-pilot, and bombardier.

In January, 1943, the heavy bombardment group, of which crew 19 was a unit, was transferred to Salina, Kansas. There the crew came into possession of their first airplane, a Flying Fortress which they named "Gremlin Castle". The crew, each man, worked on that plane for an entire week before they could say, "Well, it's ready to go!" There was the job of loading her for that long ferry hop of several thousand miles. On completion of all loading, the group moved from Salina to Florida, on the 23rd of January, 1943, the 24th birthday of the pilot.

After a short stay in Florida crew 19 moved on with the group for overseas combat duty. On the morning of Feb. 4, 1943, Capt. Davis rolled the "Gremlin Castle" down the long runway, lifted her gracefully into the air and headed her nose out to sea.

On Feb. 8th, four days later, the crew was to have its first brush with death. Flying only 700 feet above the jungle, through rain so heavy it beat down as hail onto the windshields, the pilot suddenly had to go on instruments upon meeting a low hanging cloud formation. On instruments in the overcast the crew was unexpectedly jarred by a sudden rending of metal and flying debris. The plane had been struck by another B-17 colliding into it in mid-air. Stunned but still confident the pilot and co-pilot brought the ship back under control at an altitude of 200 feet, slightly above the tree tops of the Brazilian jungles. Sgt. Campbell, the engineer, climbed to his top turret and seeing the ship without its big vertical fin and rudder said calmly, "Captain, we've lost our tail!" Tail gunner Sgt. Robin, who had been sleeping back in his position crawled forward and nervously exclaimed, "Damn thought I was a gonner."

Regaining control of the plane, Capt. Davis carefully tested all controls with shallow, slow, easy banks and turns. Finding that control could be maintained except for the rudder, the plane circled back over the approximate position of the collision, hoping against hope, that the other aircraft and crew had not crashed. Finding no evidence of a crash the plane continued on its way.

For two more hours Capt. Davis and Lt. Casto took turns flying the plane ever so carefully while the other rested. Approaching Belem, Brazil, Lt. Schoedinger pointed out the airdrome to the pilot. Circling the field the radio tower was informed of the "Gremlin Castle's" condition. Below the crew could see ambulances and fire trucks racing to the edges of the runway, prepared for any emergency. The wheels were lowered, and the pilot began his approach for landing. Maintaining the plane on an even keel and in a straight line with the two outboard engines, Capt. Davis lost his altitude and landed the plane safely. After parking her the crew crawled from the plane, shaken but unhurt, to inspect the remains. She was in great shape but alas, no tail!

For two months Crew 19 was to remain at Belem after the rest of the Group had proceeded on. Waiting, waiting, waiting, the crew sweated out a new fin and rudder assembly. Finally at the end of the sixth week the parts arrived. Then for two weeks under T/Sgt. Campbell's supervision the entire crew repaired and assembled the replacement parts. The "Gremlin Castle" was once more ready to fly on. But she was no longer the "Gremlin Castle" -- superstition had come upon the crew so they re-christened her "Borrowed Time" -- a name which later proved to be too true.

Exactly two months to the day, on April 9th, "Borrowed Time" and crew 19 set forth again. A few days later the plane rolled to a stop at the end of the runway at the airfield in Dakar, West Africa. It was there that the crew found out where they were to join their organization. Upon leaving the States everyone had expected to see action in England, but they found that their Group had been assigned to operational duty in North Africa. Happy with the news of their group, Crew 19 took off for Casablanca and then on to the air base in North Africa where their group was located.

On April 20, 1943, old friends shook hands again upon the crew's landing at their new home base. They well remember how they stood on the ground looking up at a magnificent formation of Flying Fortresses roaring in from completion of the Group's tenth bombing raid. Those boys above were veterans now -- Crew 19 yet had their first mission to come.

For almost two weeks Crew 19 "sweated out" their first raid. Then it came, May 3rd, a raid on shipping in Bizerte harbor. Unaware that their first mission was to make veterans of them in more ways than one and that it was to cost them "Borrowed Time", the crew took off with 23 other planes, full of anticipation and eager for their first taste of the real thing.

Re turning from the target the group ran into bad weather. Unable to land at their home base because of an extremely low ceiling the group was ordered to land at another airdrome which was supposed to be open. However, darkness over took the group and the planes became separated from one another.

"Borrowed Time" flew on towards the open airdrome under Lt. Schoedinger's patient navigation work. Arriving over the field in the dark it was found to be also under a low overcast. Fearing to let down on instruments over unfamiliar and mountainous terrain the pilot changed his course back in the direction from which they had come and civilization.

Flying in pitch black darkness through rain and clouds, with gas becoming ever more precious, the crew of "Borrowed Time" could only hope for a break in the clouds. Down in the nose Lt. Schoedinger was bust with his dead reckoning problems. Lt. Cadger was sitting in the plexiglass nose constantly on the watch for a hole or a glimmer of light. He really earned

his nickname of " Eagle Eye " that night for it was he who spotted the first break and through it a long string of lights. Calling over the interphone he pointed it out. The pilot went down into the nose, while the co-pilot let down through the hole, and he and the navigator attempted to fix their position on the map before them.

Locating themselves Capt. Davis found that due to the shortage of gasoline " Borrowed Time " would never be able to make it back to her home base even had the weather been clear.

With less than thirty minutes flying time the co-pilot instructed the crew to prepare to bail out. Upon completion of their preparations the crew gathered in the bomb bay and radio room awaiting the signal to jump. Calm and confident they dropped one by one out into the darkness below through the bomb bay doors. Finally there remained only the pilot and the co-pilot; holding the plane level the pilot waited while the co-pilot made his leap. Then taking one last glance at the instruments Capt. Davis found that both one and two engines were out of gas. Hurriedly he steadied the plane and grabbing his old beat up garrison cap he made his way to the bomb bay and bailed out in the night. Floating down in their chutes Crew 19 heard their " Borrowed Time " crash below them. Alas, no plane.

The following day they joined one another and returned to their base. After a wait of ten days Crew 19 had a new airplane --- ready to start anew with high hopes for future good luck. But it wasn't long until the crew was having a rough time again. For on their fourth raid in their new plane they were once again looking at the now familiar face of death.

On a raid over Messina in July, 1943, the new plane was severely damaged by enemy flak and fighters. During this raid the Group was attacked by enemy fighters three different times. It was during those attacks that Crew 19's plane received four hits in the nose and bomb bay from 20 mm cannon fire. Then while on the run over target it was again struck repeatedly by heavy flak making more than a hundred penetrations. It was one of these flak bursts that struck the propeller governor of #3 engine and made it necessary to feather that prop. The electrical harness of number one engine was severed by flak reducing the power by 50%. The propeller of this same engine was hit setting up a very dangerous vibration. The supercharger of #4 engine had a large hole blown in it which greatly reduced its efficiency at the high altitude we were flying. To top this all off the elevator control cables were severed, making it almost impossible for the pilot and co-pilot to maintain level flight. With their feet braced against the rudder bars Capt. Davis and Lt. Casto pulled on their control wheels and only in doing that did they keep the plane from going into a fatal dive.

Disabled as she was Crew 19 stuck by the plane fighting off attacking enemy fighters and finally returned to base safely with none of the crew injured.

After landing and inspection of the many holes Lt. Casto announced, " I think we ought to name her "Patches." " So now Crew 19 were the proud possessors of " Patches ", a Flying Fortress that had proven herself and received her name in battle.

In spite of the experiences of Crew 19 it had one yet in store for it which surpassed all previous three mentioned.

Up to the time of about July 5, 1943, the crew had participated in approximately 24 raids, and Crew 19 and " Patches " were becoming veterans as veterans go in the business of war.

Lt. Casto had proven himself an exceptional co-pilot and as Squadron Operations Officer, Capt. Davis had decided he was more valuable as a first pilot with his own plane and crew. On July 5 it was decided that Lt. Casto would fly as pilot of " Patches " and Crew 19 with Capt. Davis remaining behind. It was on July 5th that Lt. Casto and Crew 19 and " Patches " made their previous training in the States pay dividends.

On the fifth the Group, consisting of 36 Fotts, made a raid over the Gerbini Airdrome in eastern Sicily. On that day the Group, and in particular the Squadron of which Crew 19 was a unit attached, were attacked by an estimated hundred and ten enemy fighters consisting of FW 190's, ME 109's, and 210's and Italian Machi 202's.

The Squadron that day lost three B 17's, everyone of which carried pals and buddies of Crew 19 to their death and destruction. With vengeance and determination in their hearts the men on " Patches " fought gallantly along with the other crew in the Group against overwhelming odds.

That day three new records were set. First, the largest number of enemy aircraft were destroyed that one raid by a single group than at any previous time; a total of forty-one enemy aircraft shot down. Second, S/Sgt. Ben Warmer destroyed seven enemy aircraft on that one raid, the greatest number ever destroyed on a mission by an individual gunner in the Air Forces today. And third, Crew 19 set a record of thirteen enemy fighters destroyed, better than any previous crew record. On that memorable day Sgt. Warmer got seven, bringing his total to nine, Sgt. Worthey shot down three, which made his total five, Sgt. Jackson shot down his first, Lt. Cadger got his first also. The rest of the crew did justice to themselves with Sgt. McGee claiming two probables and two damaged. Sgt. Campbell claimed one probable and one or two damaged, Sgt. Robin claimed his second victory that day, and Lt. Schoedinger added another probable to his record. Lt. Casto did all the flying and by his smooth and efficient piloting made it possible for the gunners to do their jobs.

The outstanding achievement of Crew 19 and each of its members in the raid of July 5th instantly brought world wide attention. The Newsreels came and took shots of the crew and " Patches ". S/Sgt. Warmer was requested to make a broadcast for the famous radio show " Army Hour ". Newspapers showered parents and wives of crew members with telephone calls and interviews for press releases.

With this sudden burst of publicity the crew doubled their efforts. Now Crew 19 and " Patches " had 35 missions to their credit. Both had more than proven themselves.

" Patches " has four Wright engines, the same engines with which she came to Crew 19. Those engines have 346 hours total time on them of which 205 hours are the roughest and toughest kind of time --- combat time.

The crew is determined to put fifty missions of " Patches " with 500 hours total time on her engines. She and the crew have eighteen enemy aircraft to their credit. How many more will fall before her guns no one knows.

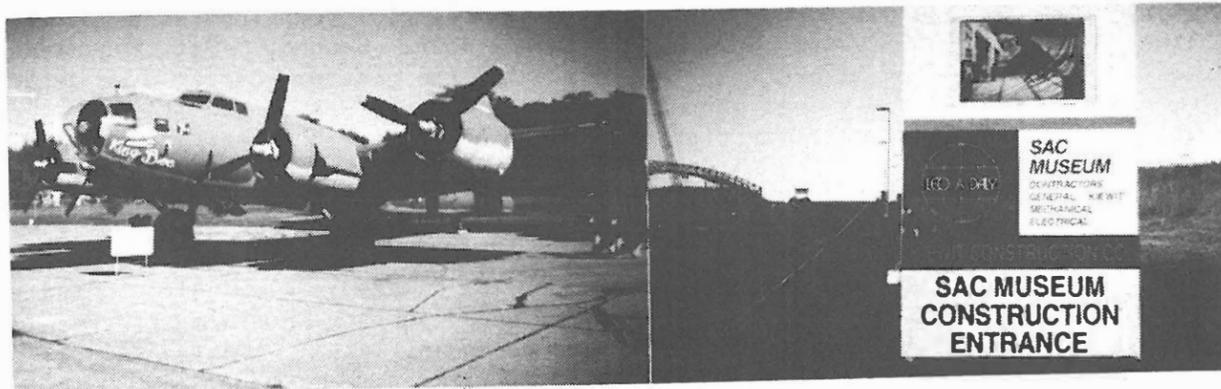
There is Crew 19 ---- a determined bunch of American boys who believe in doing the job they have to do!

Mike Hayman, a very interested and active associate member, wrote me (Roy Worthington) late last year about an interesting business trip that took him to Offutt AFB. While there he was introduced to a James McCoy, a retired Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force. He served under the Air Force Chief of Staff at the Pentagon during 1979-81. He is a past president of the Air Force Association, and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the SAC Museum Foundation.

Mike was given full access to all the planes being prepared for the move to the new SAC Museum to open in the Fall of 1997 off I-80 between Omaha and Lincoln, NE. Museum planes include a B-17, B-25, B-29, B-36, B-52, etc. as well as an SR-71 and a Russian MIG.

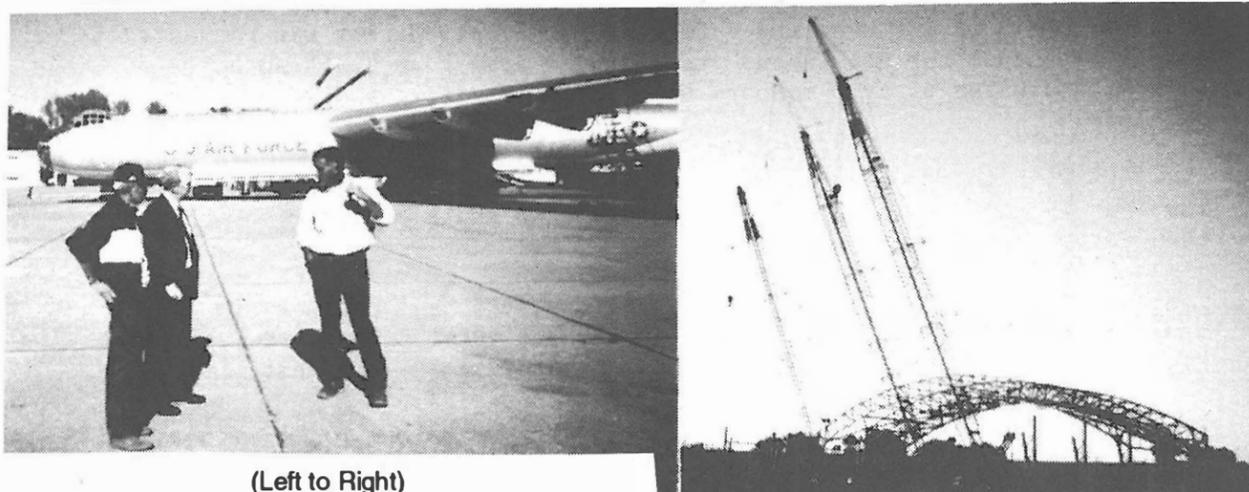
Mike was given a briefing of the several state highway and overpass closings required to move to the new location which is about 25 miles west of Omaha. A Ben Natrass, world renowned aircraft recovery expert, was most interesting for Mike. According to Mike he has moved, disassembled, transported, etc. more aircraft worldwide for governments, military units, & private owners than anyone. He is responsible for the entire move of the SAC Museum.

Mike saw the new site under construction. He said the hangars are huge enough to hold the B-36. He saw the site plan blue prints and talked to the construction crew. According to Mike it was a great way to finish off a business trip. Included below are some photos of his experience.



SAC Museum's B-17 with wing tips off being readied for 25 mi. move to new museum site.

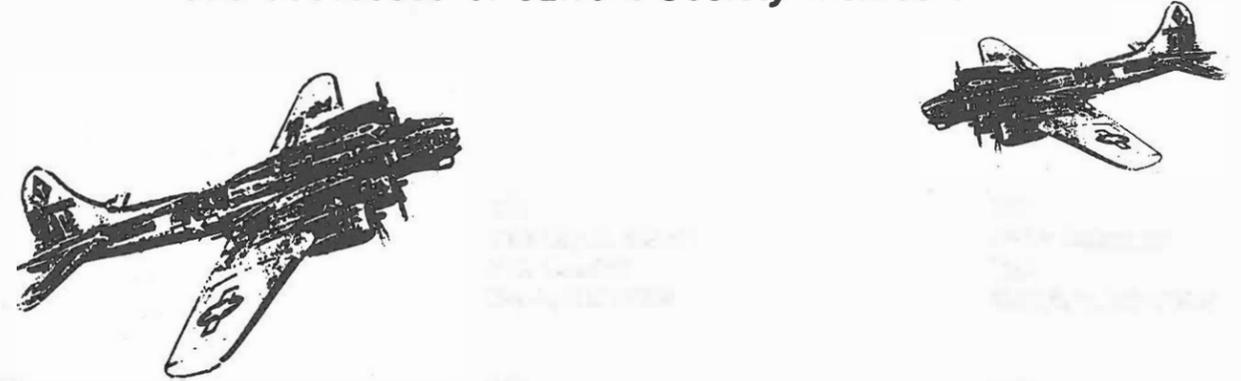
New museum construction site.



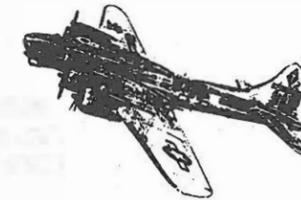
(Left to Right)  
 James McCoy, Chairman of Board of Directors of SAC Museum Foundation.  
 T. Needham, ITT employee reporting to Mike Hayman.  
 Ben Natrass, In charge of museum aircraft move.



The following 17 pages hold the alphabetical list of names and addresses of current Society members.



Membership directory has been removed for privacy.



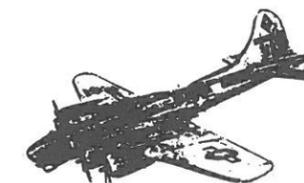
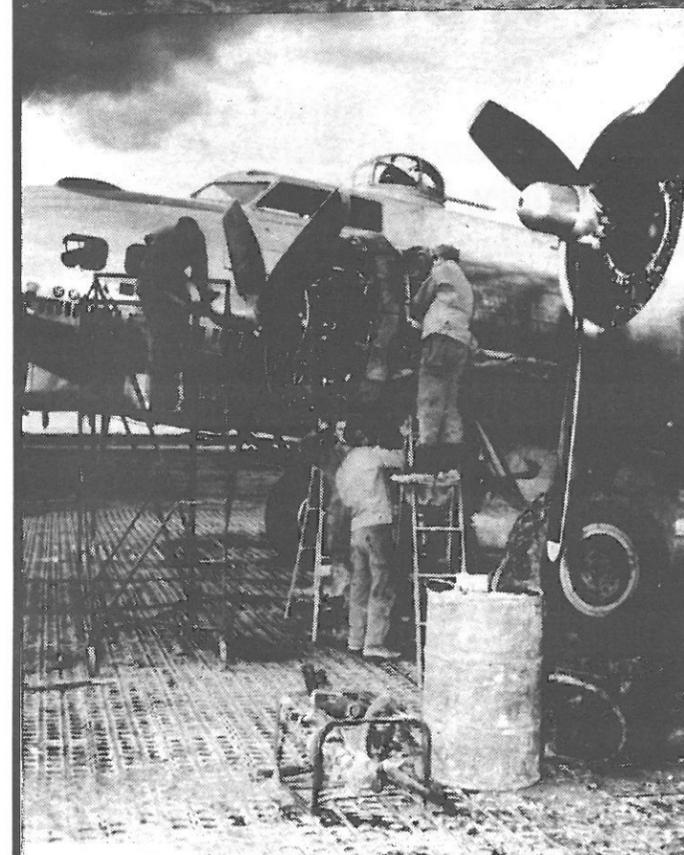
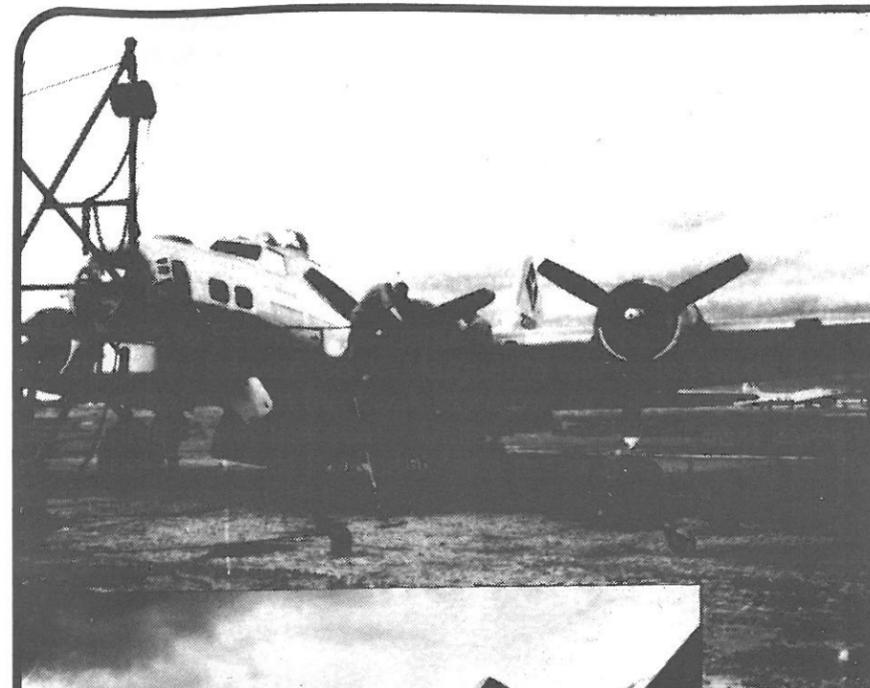
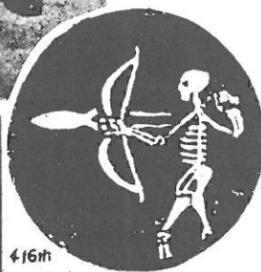


**'WILD BUNCH'** — In 1944, the crew of B-17 Flying Fortress number 543 — which dubbed itself "the Wild Bunch" — gathered for the photo above. Some of them got together again for a reunion in Cookeville recently, and they posed for another group photo, left. In the WWII photo are, standing, from left, Mac McClow of Colorado, engineer gunner; Jap Bailey of Cookeville, radio gunner; John Gibson of Oregon, waist gunner; Al Brodsky of Florida, waist gunner; Ed Levy of Washington, ball turret gunner; and Lou Claralla of New York, tail gunner (deceased). Standing, from left Don Thorsen of Wisconsin, pilot; Jim McDougale of California, co-pilot; Terry Holt of Pennsylvania, navigator; and Bill Wall of Texas, bombardier (deceased). In the reunion photo are, kneeling from left, Thorsen, McDougale, and Holt. Standing, from left, McClow, and Bailey. The crew flew 50 combat missions over Germany in 1944 and as a group received 3 Distinguished Flying Crosses as well as numerous other air medals. Their mission was to

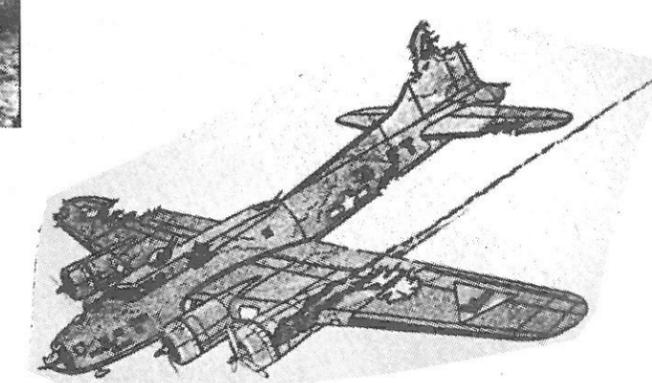


destroy targets deep behind enemy lines in daylight, something that had not been tried before by other types of WWII bombers.

JAP BAILEY would like to hear from anyone that knew or remembers their crew 543 !! They were members of the 416th Sq. and Don Thorsen led many of the combat missions.  
 Jasper N. Bailey, Jr., P.O. Box 328, Cookeville, TN 38503



This engine change and all other day to day maintenance was done outdoors. Our technicians worked long and hard, day and night, rain and shine under the conditions shown in these photos. Without them on our team we would not have had the victorious end of WWII 52+ years ago. It is hoped one and all realize the contribution made by our technicians.



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Information to be included in your quarterly newsletters issued February, May, August, & November must be sent to Bernie Barr or Walter Butler no later than the first of January, April, July or October.

Member information and stories are needed regularly to keep the newsletter interesting. Everyone has a story or information that will be enjoyed reading. Keep it coming! If at all possible send type written information, the darker the better.

Walter's address is in left corner. Bernie Barr's address is:  
7408 Vista Del Arroyo, Albuquerque, NM 87109

## THE 99TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

