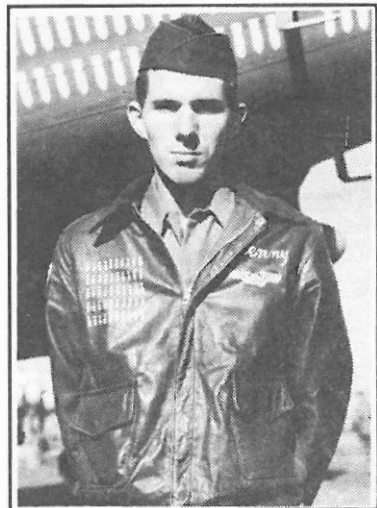
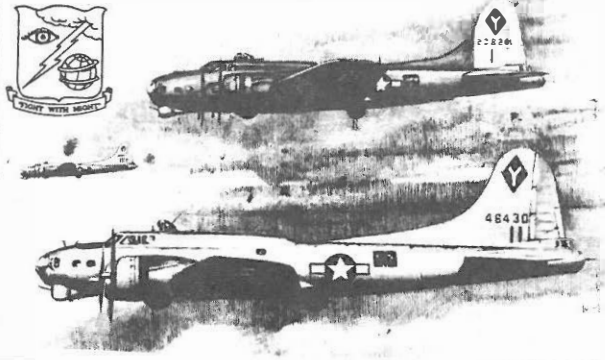




2nd Lt. Norris Domangue
347th Squadron Lead
Navigator
(Look for his interesting
letter)

THE 99TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

The Group Flew B-17 Flying Fortresses
For A Total Of 395 Combat Missions From
North Africa & Italy To Bomb European
Targets During 1943, '44 & '45



Tech. Sgt. Len Hopen
Radio Operator
346th Squadron
(50 Missions Completed)

Vol. 18, No. 3

AUGUST 1998

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another great Reunion is over, and it was a great success thanks to the tireless efforts of Jim and Marge Smith.

I also thank Arkie Clark for the great job he did running the Hospitality Room. It isn't an easy job. With different tastes from different parts of the country, and advanced age creeping up on us it's more or less what our pills let us drink. Before a jug of corn squeezing and a jug of wine was all we needed. I also thank the Site Committee for picking a very nice Springfield hotel. The members complained of too much food served. One spouse would order the food and an empty plate so the food could be split to share the large food servings. Jim and Marge arranged some good entertainment. One night they presented a fine Magic act in the Hospitality Room. For our banquet night we enjoyed a young ladies' Twirlers & Drill Team from Edwardville, Ill. American Legion Post. These young ladies were age 13 & 16 years. Their theme was a salute to the Armed Services. Very touching.

The following members were elected to the Board of Directors for four (4) years: Art Knipp, Edmond Marlow, Victor Fabiniak, Francis Grantz, and Robert Bacher. Fred Leiby was appointed to the Board for one year to replace Arthur Pearce who resigned for poor health in the family. The following Directors were elected by the membership to the following offices: Robert Bacher, President, Francis Grantz, Vice President, Walter Butler, Treasurer, and Chris Christiansen, Secretary. Fran Grantz accepted my appointment to Group Chaplain for another year. I will appoint other members to key positions as soon as I talk to them.

Our Reunion for 1999 will be May 4-9 at the Tucson Arizona Double Tree Hotel. Our Host is William Somers. More later in the Newsletter.

Robert Bacher

Dear Members:

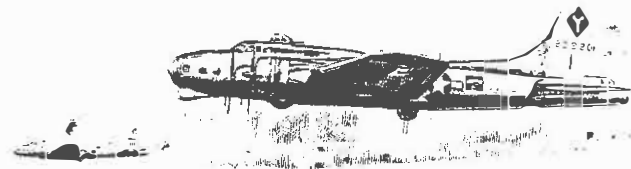
June 17, 1998

Looking back over our conventions, I feel the success of each one is due largely to the consistent excellence, the variety of programs, unusual locations and special people volunteering to accept the responsibility.

I want you to know how much I appreciate your tireless efforts to keep these conventions going. Each person working to provide these get-togethers deserves the gratitude of each member of the association for contributing so much interest and valuable time to them.

Thank you for honoring me at the Banquet as the last wartime Commander of the 99th Bomb Group. It was a very privileged assignment made possible by the personnel of the 99th Bomb Group.

It was good to see you again, and the visits most enjoyable. Again another great convention, thanks to tireless, hard workers.



I'll be seeing you,

Col. Raymond V. Schwanbeck, Ret.

%%%

If you plan to make a trip to New York City you can stay down town for \$25 to \$40 a day or \$150 to \$240 a week at the SOLDIER'S, SAILOR'S, MARINE'S, and AIRMAN'S CLUB located at 283 Lexington Avenue, NY 10016. Phone 1-800-678-8443.



IN MEMORIAM



WILLIAM B. (Bill) BLAKEMORE II
Midland, TX



XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

ELLA JOFFRION
Sulphur, LA

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

CARL D. MITCHELL
Shreveport, LA



Members send sincere prayers and sympathies to the families and friends.
MAY OUR COMRADES REST IN PEACE.



THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Everybody these days is talking about the ST. LOUIS CARDINALS! and MARK MCGWIRE. Why? Mark's handling of the bat is producing! Home Runs! From here it looks as though some records are headed for breaking! Lots all shout hooray! Great things are happening at the "Ball Park"!

Another team comes to mind. The New York Yankees were probably the classiest team in the 30s and 40's, and even in sports history. David Halberstam tells the story behind the old Yanks.

"Manager Joe McCarthy was 'an old fashioned man', and is largely credited with making the Yankees the elite organization of baseball. They traveled first class; they always wore jackets and ties. McCarthy wanted them to look like professionals whenever they were in public. 'You're a Yankee', McCarthy would say, 'Act like one.'"

Joe DiMaggio, a well-remembered Yankee, was always conscious of his obligation to play well. Late in his career, when his legs were bothering him and the Yankees had a commanding lead in the pennant race, he was asked, why he played so hard. DiMaggio's answer was, "Because there might be somebody out there who has never seen me play".

McCarthy made the Yankees aware that someone was watching them, on the field and off. It is the mark of heroes - in sports and in life - to be conscious of their role as a model for others.

Each of us is ...a role model, an example!. The Future is always watching us, taking notice of the way we live our lives, how we act out our faith, in progress or adversity, the way we make use of our gifts God has given. And from what they see in us, they form a lifestyle of their own. The kind of lives we lead, the example we show, as our forefathers have shown us, pretty much depend on how the future will have its effect on those others, who step in and out of our lives. Even in those times when we are not aware someone is watching us, we are influencing the life of the future. Joe DiMaggio's words ring loud and clear!

"THERE MIGHT BE SOMEBODY OUT THERE WHO HAS NEVER SEEN ME PLAY"

Have you read about "THE MAN IN THE GLASS"?

"When you get what you want in your struggle for self
And the world makes you 'King for a Day',
Just go to a mirror and look at yourself And see what THAT man has to say.

For it isn't your father or mother or wife
Whose judgment upon you must pass,
The fellow whose verdict counts most in your life Is the one staring back from the glass.

Some people might think you're a straight-shooting chum
And call you a wonderful guy,
But the man in the glass says you're only a bum if you can't look him straight in the eye.

He's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest
For he's with you clear to the end,
And you've passed your most dangerous test If the guy in the glass is your friend.

You may fool the whole world down the pathway of years
And get pats on the back as you pass,
But your final reward will be heartache and tears if you've cheated the man in the glass."

Until next time, God walk with us and keep us strong! My love to ya'll!



Chaplain Fran



NEWS, NOTES, LETTERS & IMPORTANT INFORMATION

FLAK FROM EDITOR BERNIE: . . . THANKS to Jim and Marge Smith for a GREAT Springfield reunion in May. All enjoyed the hotel, food, Branson, MO shows, and especially the bull sessions in our Hospitality Room. . . A time for remembrances of years ago when we were young and called upon to do a man's work. Combat crew members could go home after completing 50 missions, but the GREAT ground support men and women were required to remain year after year. Many heartfelt THANKS from the flying members!! . . . Fran Grantz asked me to present a plaque to Ray Schwanbeck the last combat Group Commander of the 99th. My remarks went something like this. "Friends, this is Colonel Ray Schwanbeck who was not programmed to be the 99th Commander, but through unusual circumstances he became boss January 2, 1945. Colonel Pete Glassford was assigned to the 99th, and had flown locally several times. He was combat ready to take over from Colonel Ford Lauer who had completed his 50 missions on December 27, 1944. I finished my 50 missions on December 28, 1944 which made my 100th combat mission when added to the 50 missions I'd flown in the South Pacific. On December 29, 1944 Colonel Glassford as Group Commander led the mission to Insbrook. Through some screw up he got in the nose of the lead airplane of Al Schroder's Squadron to help the navigator and bombardier find the target and everything went wrong . . . There was havoc, disaster, etc. The next day Colonel Glassford was gone! The 99th needed a new Commander! On January 2, 1945 as I checked out to return home I met Colonel Ray as he checked in as the new 99th Commander. We said hello, I had known Ray with the 19th Bomb Group in Australia in 1942. Ray did a great job with the 99th, I said a bunch more". Ray responded with thanks, etc. for remembering him with the plaque. . . .Ray had been in Italy as Vice Commander of the 463rd Group for about four months and had flown several combat missions as group leader. He was, therefore, available, able and qualified. He had known Colonel Lauer before. He was called to report. He did.

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If you like cruises get in touch with Jules Horowitz. He wants to plan a 99th BGHS cruise. 3507 Oaks Way, #911, Pompano Beach, FL 33069

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For a family get together get in touch with our current president, Bob Bacher. 692 N. Abbe Road, Elyrin, OH 44035.

New member Michael J. Bucci, 347th Squadron Bombardier known then as ORLANDO would appreciate your getting in touch with him if you knew him or any crew member. Address is 1319 Walnut St., South Connellville, PA 1525

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The Mighty MO (Battle Ship Missouri) is being towed to Pearl Harbor, Hawaii where it is to be moored next to the Battle Ship Arizona Memorial to show the beginning and end of WW II.

NEWS, NOTES, LETTERS & IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Norris Domangue, Jr.
17016 Traverse Circle
Jupiter, Florida 33477

June 19, 1998

Dear Roy,

This cropped photo was taken in front of El Diablo, when I returned from debriefing in Bari. I was the squadron lead navigator on Warren Christiansen's flight to Weiner Neustadt, (suburb of Vienna). Ten of the eleven man crew bailed out over Yugoslavia on August 23, 1994. We were rescued five days later, thus the debriefing and this PR photo. Warren as you probably remember, flew the plane back to Foggia, solo!! I don't know what, if any, data you want, but here is a capsule.

2nd Lt. Norris Domangue, 347th. Squadron Lead Navigator, originally navigator for Capt. John Plummer's original crew. Bailed out over Yugoslavia, August 23, 1994, on 22nd mission. Returned to duty and completed 47 missions. I was recalled to duty in 1951, sent to Guam, and as navigator for a weather Squadron, penetrated the "eyes" of fourteen typhoons.

Norris Domangue

UPCOMING REUNIONS

TUCSON in 1999. Plans are afoot with Bill Somers, Len Smith and their committee for a great time together in Tucson. In a related article in this issue, they need your input on some of the opportunities they have found available for us in that area. Get your responses to them and let's have a great time at the 1999 Reunion. The dates are May 4 - 9, 1999. Year 1999 Reunion of 99th BGHS in Tucson!

SEATTLE in 2000. Mary Ann Bannick and her Committee are working up plans for a return to Seattle. We were there 15 years ago for the 50th anniversary of the B-17. Plans are underway for a great celebration in honor of the milestone of the 65th of the Flying Fortress. The folks in the Northwest will have a fine program to welcome us. Tentative plans are for our Reunion to be held the third week in May. The plans are fluid at this time, as contacts and follow-ups are being made. We can tell you there are some excited folks in the Pacific Northwest who are looking for our return. Year 2000 Reunion of 99th BGHS in Seattle!

SOUTHEAST UNITED STATES 2001. Ed Marlow has graciously consented to head our Site Committee and be the Host for the 2001 Reunion. Ed is open to location suggestions and will talk to anyone about the Year 2001 Reunion of 99th BGHS in the Southeast! Some interesting possibilities lie ahead for this second millenium reunion. We'll talk more as plans continue being made.

Fran
Fran Grantz, Vice President

Dear Bernie:

June 6, 1998

In one of our conversations, you requested a photograph of me which might be used in the Newsletter. I've located one that was taken by the Squadron photographer as I and others were boarding the plane for Naples; having finished my missions.

At the Springfield Reunion, we were reminiscing about our experiences in Naples as we were preparing for our return to the US. I recalled having four photos taken during missions which were passed by the censor; much to my surprise. You asked if I would send them to you. The picture taken on the Vienna mission was the same as used in Dick Drains book. The targets are listed on the back, however, I do not know what target was hit in Rumania. It appears to be a railroad marshalling yard.

There is no need to return any of these photos, I have made copies of them.

Mercedes and I are gearing up for our 50th wedding anniversary celebration which our children are having at Lake Wawasee in northern Indiana at the end of this month. It should be a memorable occasion. We understand that there are 108 friends and relatives planning to attend.

Our best wishes for an enjoyable and pleasant summer season.

(The aerial mission photos Len mentions in his letter, above, can be found on page thirty following.)

M & L.

Mercedes and Len Hopen

Belated 50th Wedding Anniversary greetings to Mercedes and Len. Sounds like it was quite an affair! . . . Roy Worthington, fellow crew member.

Dear Walter: . . . I'm legally blind so please excuse the writing which I do using a large magnifying glass. I'm adding a postscript to the SWEATER GIRL article recently printed in our newsletter. When we moved to our first combat base the construction was not quite finished, so we flew to another B-17 base about 9 miles away. We slept under the wings and & were to fly to our new base the following morning. I picked up some order from the Colonel, and by the time I was ready to land all others had already landed. A service road crossed the parallel runways from S.E. to N.W. I was landing to the west. A canvas covered 6x6 approached the runway and stopped as it should have. Just as we were about to stall out for the landing the truck pulled out onto the runway. With full power I made a shallow turn to the right lifting the # 1 engine barely a foot over the 6x6 truck and staggered to the right. I still vividly remember the first man out of the truck diving head first to the runway surface. So SWEATER GIRL made it into combat by no more than 2 seconds. The men in the nose don't even remember it!!! . . . Sincerely, s/Keith Windrum, Original Pilot of Sweater Girl.

Dear Bernie: . . . I'm sure you will not remember me at the Baltimore reunion, but will possibly recall my wife Feren who helped you keep the money straight while you sold emblems. . . . None of the 3 known crew members of our crew (Bob Neeley, 348th Pilot) could make it to the Springfield reunion. I hope we can all make it to Tucson. Bill Somers, Jack Patterson, and I are the only ones of our crew that we know about. We know that 4 are deceased. We cannot locate our copilot, navigator, or ball turret operator. . . . I received my copy of the 99th Group recently published book which brought back alot of memories. I noted one error, however. The report on the April 25, '45 mission to Lenz stated that no bombs were dropped. I know ours were dropped, however. . . . Two years ago Fern and I met a former Austrian anti-aircraft gunner who was stationed at Vienna. Lucky he was a bad shot! We were visiting his home one evening. He got out a German book which showed the picture I'm enclosing of Lenz on April 30, '45. It sure appears that we did some damage. Another photo which I had showed the smoke rising from the explosions. On that particular mission we thought Jack Patterson our tail gunner was killed. As soon as we got off the target Bob N called and asked me to check on Jack as he did not answer our intercom check. Just as I got to the tail wheel Jack waved to me that he was OK. Flack had knocked out his intercom so he could not receive or transmit. Jack attended Michigan State after the war and knew an American who was a German POW. On that mission he was on a hill above Lenz and could see the bombs drop, and said it was awesome. He had seen other Lenz bombings and said this one topped them all. . . . Bernie, you are welcome to use this photo for anything you think would be interesting. Possibly the book publisher did not use it since the printed copy said that the April 25th mission did not drop bombs. . . . Sure was good to see you in Baltimore, hope to see you in Tucson. . . . Don Power, 348th Squadron, 1st Mission 11/18/44, Last Mission (30th)4/25/45.

NEW MEMBERS

FR. MICHAEL J. BUCCI (Formally Known as ORLANDO) 347th Squadron
1319 Walnut Street, S. Connellville, PA 15425

JOHN DODDRIDGE, P.O. Box 1328, Rancho Santa Fe, CA 92067

PAUL A. HAZELTON, 541 North Spruce Street, Traverse City, MI 49684-1441
346th

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

DELBERT D. LAUDNER, 3105 Jamacha View Drive, El Cajon CA 92019

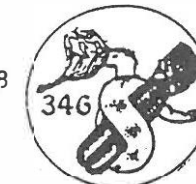


Walter Butler presenting a copy of the recently published Diamon Back History Book to George Coen, long time, capable 99th BGHS historian. Presentation was authorized by the 99th Board of Directors at the Springfield reunion. Walter volunteered to drive to Durango, CO to visit Geo. at his daughter's (Pattie) home in Durango, CO. George was surprised and pleased. Thanks to Walter for a very kind mission!

Dear Bernie: . . . I joined the 99th at Rapid City (I think!) and was joined by Lts. Germain, Bernius, Anderson, and Capt. Chuck Zalonka. We arrived in Tortorella in autumn of 1944. . . . I was in class 43-J as an aviation cadet, but in Basic (BT-13s) I was eliminated for "Dangerous flying at low altitude." . . . I had been a crew chief on a B-25 at Columbia, SC so I was sent to Harlingen, TX for gunnery school. That's how I ended up as an engineer, upper turret gunner. I had 47 missions (counting doubles) when the Germans surrendered. I had the good fortune to fly home thus, avoiding the luxury of a troop ship. . . . I have a story which seems to amuse everyone I tell it to, so following the suggestion on the cover of our 1998 May newsletter, here goes! . . . This saga starts in Philadelphia in 1939. . . . I was invited to a party by my best buddy who told me, "There's gonna be a couple of nice looking girls there." . . . He wasn't lying about that because I saw a gal sitting with her uncle so pretty that I couldn't take my eyes off her! One thing wrong however, she couldn't speak English. . . . She was from Lucca, Italy, and if she wasn't the last Italian to leave Italy before the war, she was close to it. . . . The Romans said, "Amo vinci omnia" or something like that, and without knowing a word of the Italian language, I talked her into marrying me. . . . She came to Tampa, and we were married in Chapel #2 on Drew Field three years after I first saw her at the party. . . . She hadn't heard from her family for about four years so she didn't know whether they were still alive. The front had passed right through her home town and the Germans were still dug into the Po Valley. . . . We had worked out a secret code so I could tell her where I was stationed (censors, you know). She immediately sent me a letter to her mother written in Italian explaining that her little girl was now married, and the letter bearer was her "Marito". . . . Well, I got through twenty-five missions and was sent to Capri for rest camp. When we landed at Capodacchino instead of taking the ferry to Capri I hopped a C-47 courier headed north to Rosignano. From there to the little town of Lucca wasn't very far measured in miles, but in travel time it seemed to be somewhere in outer space! . . . I rode mule carts, motorcycles, a jeep when very lucky, but mostly I walked. I got to Lucca at dusk and those huge gates which had been isolating that city from the rest of the world for centuries were just being closed by the MPs. "Hey, Sarge, you better get your ass in here!" one of them shouted at me. And that's exactly what I did. . . . I went to the "Croca Rossa" and they gave me a bunk for the night. I showed them my letter and the local girls who worked there were all excited about the coming reunion of the Americano and his wife's family. They showed me the route to Valdottavo which was my ultimate destination. In the morning I headed up the south bank of the Serchio river. All the bridges were blown to pieces, a fact I related to Chuck Zalonka when I returned to Tortorella. He smiled from ear to ear when he heard. (Incidentally he was killed in a B-36 crash at Carswell AFB after the war.) I crossed the river at Pont A Moriano on a rope bridge shortly before the main bridge was rebuilt. . . . Then it became "Dove La Signora Alice Bini?" in broken Italian and manual gestures until I reached Valdottavo. I was led to an old mill with two huge picturesque water wheels spinning slowly and driving two huge stones which must have weighed over a ton each. They were grinding chestnuts and olives. . . . The man who was running the mill I learned was my wife's uncle. When he saw me he stopped his work and pulled out the old fiasco di vino. This was a custom the American Infantry had taught him when they passed through prior to my arrival. I accepted the glass and felt the adrenalin flowing as I tried to figure out the most appropriate way to tell "La Signora Alice Bini" that her little girl

was my wife. . . . As I drank the good, pure, home made Chianti my host led me to a large picture on the wall of the living room. It was a family photo and my wife, at the age of seven, was front row center! He proudly pointed to her and said, "Essa e' in America." I quickly responded, "Essa mia moglie." Immediately a woman who was apparently listening from an adjacent room walked in and said, in Italian, of course, "Then you are married to my daughter." I handed her my wife's letter, we embraced and the tears started to flow. We Italians are an emotional people. . . . I stayed about ten days. I think half the population of Tuscany came by to see "Il marito della Zita". I took photo of the entire family except uncle Gelfo who had been taken prisoner by the Germans before they evacuated the area. He later walked all the way home from northern Germany! . . . The whole town started teasing my mother-in-law because she would shake her fist at the B-17s as they passed overhead on the way to German targets. Before I left she promised to stop that. . . . I hitched back to Naples from Rosignano in an RAF single engine plane made of canvas and wood. That scared me more than combat missions! From Naples to Tortorella I was forced to hop a B-24, (against my better judgement) but I was running out of time. (Forgive me, Bernie!) . . . I next wrote a 36 page letter to Zita telling her all about her relatives & friends. This was the talk of the neighbor for many weeks. . . . After the war we brought her entire family to the States where they settled in and became hard-working Americans! . . . Bernie, I thought this story might be a diversion from the combat stories we see in most of the newsletters.

Ulysses F. Biffoni
2349 Dover Avenue
Fort Myers, FL 33907-4218



Ciao!
Bill

Dear Ulysses: Yours is a super story! I'm glad you took the time to send it to Bernie. It was worthwhile typing so it would print clearly in our newsletter. Your copy was too light to print clearly.

Roy Worthington
Composition Editor

5/26/98

Dear Roy: . . . Enclosed is the photo I promised to send you. . . . Mort (Magee) had just finished Basic Training in Miami, and was so proud of being in uniform (1942). . . . It was great to see you in Springfield. We have missed a few reunions these past few years. We don't fly so California and Arizona are too far to drive. . . . Ours is a big country and it's impossible to make an 'easy' trip for everyone, that's why we love to run a mini. here. The folk who come always enjoy themselves. . . . We enjoyed meeting all our old friends!

Love you all,



Mort & Virginia

Dear Magees (Mort & Virginia): . . . Thanks for the photo. We'll use it one of these days. We wish more of our members would send photo taken during their WW II service, preferably while serving with the 99th. . . . s/Roy Worthington

Helen M. Schauler, 770 Island Way, #205, Clearwater, FL 33767
Dear Mr. Barr: . . . I'm the wife of Vincent A. Schauler. Vince was "called up" on September 21, 1942. The newsletter published his passing. . . . We had been attending the reunions up until that time. . . . I see by your May 1998 Newsletter you are looking for WW II personal photos. I have Vince's very large Picture Album which he would carry to the reunions. I would be happy to share it with the Historical Society. . . . Vince was a T/Sgt. Radio Operator/Gunner with the 346th Squadron when the 99th was a part of the 12th and then 15th Air Force. He completed 50 mission from North Africa and Italy. He was credited with 292 combat hours and 700 operational hours. Vince was awarded "The Distinguished Flying Cross" among other citations and medals. His service dates were 1942 to 1945. . . . Enclosed are 6 photos (Vince, 2 crew photos, and their plane "El Diablo"), and a copy of his Army experience before combat. . . . In May of this year I visited "Jefferson Barracks" the National Cemetery where Vince is buried. President & Chaplain Fran & Mrs. Grantz live nearby. . . . I'm sorry to have missed the Springfield Reunion, but there will be others. . . . If there is anything I can do please contact me. Thank you for your dedication.

Helen Sincerely, s/Helen M. Schauler, June 98

Helen & Vince Schauler, Clearwater FL, June '97

Hello Jules: . . . You have an excellent idea! Starting e-mail activity for those of us fortunate enough to have a computer. . . . I'm Vince Schauler, and I was the Radio Operator/Gunner for Colonel Upthegrove on crew eight. Remember old "El Diablo"? Remember the Eight Ball painted under the radio operator's window? When Jose Berrellez & I painted it on our new B-17 we didn't know if it would be acceptable to the pilot. We figured it could be removed. . . . The "El Diablo" as you know translates to the devil or death, which is fitting for the B-17 that truly is an instrument of death. . . . The Eight Ball, well, the entire 99th was behind the eight ball, and maybe it did bring us luck, if there is any such thing. We were always the first plane over the target and Uppie truly "lead and commanded" the group that followed him. . . . Our regards,

Vince and Helen Schauler



T/Sgt. Vincent A. Schauler
Radio Operator
&
Gunner
346th Squadron

ARMY CAREER OF T/SGT. VINCENT A. SCHAULER, JR.

29 July 1944

This write up of my Army experiences will not be exacting, but I will try to make it as accurate as possible. Most dates will be approximate. So on with my story. . . . I was inducted into the Army April 7, 1942 at Newark, NJ. On the same day I was sent to the Army Reception Center at Ft. Dix, NJ. . . . About a week was spent there getting accustomed to Army ways. Of course we were told that there is only one way to do anything and that, of course, is the "Army Way". I did my share of K.P. & various other duties such as picking up butts, putting up tents, working in the warehouses, etc. On the 14th or 15th of April I got the happy news that I was shipping out. . . . My transfer was a long, tiresome train ride of four days and nights to Keesler Field Mississippi. We were all very happy when told we were in the Air Corps. We all had visions of airplanes, but soon found out airplanes came later. We would be taking Basic Training, and take it we did! Our training was plenty rough. We started drilling around 7 a.m. and finished about 4 p.m. With drilling, 14 hours plus of K.P. and other squadron duties we were kept mighty busy. We took tests while there to determine which technical school we would attend. I was lucky and made grades that made me eligible for all schools. . . . I picked Radio Operators school which was at Scott Field, Ill. . . . I left Mississippi around May 2nd and 3 days later arrived at Scott Field. I got a very good impression of Scott, it was beautiful country there, and everyone seemed to be very friendly. On arrival we got the usual physical and were assigned to barracks. I started school on 6 May '42. My class was 42-41C. I spent 22 very enjoyable weeks at Scott. St. Louis was only 22 miles away so every weekend was spent in St. Louis. On July 7th, '42 I met the girl who is now my wife! . . . September 12, '42 was graduation for our class. The next day I received orders to the Interceptor Fighter Command at Orlando, FL. Five long days later I arrived by train to find that no one seemed to know what we were there for. Finally we were told we were going back to school. The school had courses on Very High Frequency (VHF) equipment, Direction Finding, and British Bendix Radio. After a week of this an order came saying our assignment was all a mistake that we should have been ordered to Salt Lake City, Utah. So we packed again for another long train ride to Utah. We stopped at St. Luis for a couple of hours. I, of course, called Belle and we went for a ride in her brother's car were I asked her to marry me. No date was set. I got back on the train feeling a little different than when I got off. The remainder of the trip was very tiresome. I arrived at Salt Lake City Army Air Base on Sept. 25, '42. It was pretty rough there but I only stayed two days, two days too long! I spent another day on a train to Gowen Field, Boise, Idaho. This place was really haven. It was a B-17 base. We were only on the base a few hours when we were told we were assigned as aerial radio operators. We were told we would fly eight hours a day and go to ground school for 6 hours. The remainder of the time would be our own, no furloughs and only one pass a week if they could spare us, most of the time they couldn't! It was pretty interesting. Flying got pretty tiresome, but everyone was swell. I was flying with a swell bunch of fellows. Ground school was very interesting. Generally we had two hour of aircraft radio. Classes were very informal. We could smoke and bring cokes and sandwiches, quite different than Scott Field. The second two hours were spent on gunnery training which consisted of firing on the range with 30 caliber machine guns and 50 caliber nomenclature & stripping. The last two hours were spent on aircraft recognition, map reading, first aid and training films. The days were all on this order. We spent one month there and on October 30th we took another train ride to Walla Walla,

Washington. On arrival it was raining like the devil so the first impression was a bad one. . . . After a better look at the field the next day we decided it wasn't too bad. The flying field was pretty nice, and it was good to find they were using B-17F's a big improvement over the E's we were flying at Boise. We were assigned to combat training crews for overseas duty. . . . I ended up with a swell bunch of fellows. The States were well represented. Our crew goes as follows:

Pilot - - - - - Lt. Frank J. Fovinci - California
Co-pilot - - - - - Lt. W. Lowrry - New York
Bombardier - - - - - Lt. Albert Berinsmith - Illinois
Navigator - - - - - Lt. Floyd Chaffin - Washington
Engineer - - - - - T/Sgt. William C. Danner - Oregon
Radio Operator - - - - - T/Sgt. Vincent A. Schauler - New Jersey
Waist Gunner - - - - - S/Sgt. Guy Youngblood - Texas
Ball Turret Gunner - S/Sgt. Jose Berrellez - Arizona
Tail Gunner - - - - - S/Sgt. - Joe Hume - Ohio

The days at Walla Walla went by about the same as Boise only the flying was only 6 hours instead of 8. Weather grounded us most of the time. Ground school was about the same except we had air to ground firing. We did plenty of skeet shooting. It was fun on the gunnery targets. We would generally fire from the waist positions at altitudes of 50 to 500 feet. . . . The bad weather finally forced the supervisors to order us to Sioux City, Iowa. On the 15th of November, '42 we loaded up our airplanes for the flight to Sioux City. Even from the air we felt Sioux City was going to be swell and that it was! We stayed at Sioux City until December 30, '42. We did plenty of flying there, flew most every day as we had plenty of time to make up. We were up at all hours for night formation, night bombing, high altitude formation and bombing, radio fixes, QDM's, ground gunnery, air to ground gunnery, air to air firing, mock combat missions, all this in addition to ground school. We didn't mind too much since we knew we were getting ready for the big show. We were a pretty eager bunch of guys. . . . We had one tragic night. We were all up for night bombing and formation. I was flying with Capt. Aspergan who was our Operations Officer. My pilot was grounded with a cold. We had the Flight Surgeon as copilot. Our regular copilot, Lt. Lowrry, was flying with crew #9 that night. We were out about an hour when I got a radio message that the field was closed and that we should land at the Omaha Neb. airport. We landed at the field and a couple of planes came in after us. Some of the other planes went to other fields as Omaha closed shortly after we landed. We waited until morning for the weather to clear. Operations then told us that we lost one of our planes and crew. We were pretty broken up about it and were broken up even more when we found it was crew #9. It was tough but we finally got over it and resumed our flying schedules. A very important thing happened at Sioux City. On December 3rd I asked the C.O. for a pass as Belle was coming to see me. He said he could only give me a 24 hour pass. . . . To make a long story short, we were wed, and I over stayed my pass four days. I was a buck sergeant when I started my pass and a private when I got back, but the C.O. was a good guy and gave me the rank back the 15th of January, '43. We left Sioux City the 30th of December, and sure hated to leave the place. . . . We left by train as we were picking up new planes at Salina, Kansas. The train to Salina was fun since everyone knew everyone. We got to the Army Air Base at Salina January 2, '43. The base at Salina was not pleasant. We were issued our overseas equipment consisting of, among other things, "Mae West's", Oxygen Masks, Parachutes, Heat Suits, Extra Coveralls, Helmets, Goggles, Flying Glasses, Pistols - 45 Caliber, Etc. On Jan. 6th we were given a six day furlough. I, of course, went to St.

Louis and had a very nice time with my new bride. I returned to Salina on January 13th. . . . We didn't do much flying there. Only some test flights on the new plane we had been assigned. We were very proud of it with all the latest improvements. We were a very happy bunch of fellows. . . . On the 17th of January with a Colonel as pilot we flew to De Ridder, LA to fly our Gulf Missions. We didn't do much at that base. On the last of January we left for Morrison Field, FL which was really heaven. We stayed at the Breakers Hotel at West Palm Beach. The only thing wrong was the short 3 day stay. On Feb. 3, '43 we departed for our overseas trip, it was 9:30 in the morning. I'll never forget it, we were all wondering if we would ever see the States again. . . . The flight to Borinquen Field, Puerto Rico was uneventful. I sent position reports every 30 minutes. When we were 200 miles out I sent an estimated time of arrival (ETA). We landed around 3 in the afternoon. The island looked very beautiful. The fellows there really had a nice setup. A swell PX, a beautiful outdoor swimming pool, nice buildings for barracks. They still gripped. I guess no one is ever satisfied with the Army. We only stayed overnight. Some of the gang went to town a short ways away. . . . I helped Bill, our engineer, fuel the plane. I had a little work on the radio to change frequencies, check with the tower, etc. We then had a couple of beers at the PX and hit the hay about midnight. I couldn't sleep much thinking about the trip ahead of us. . . . We left at 8 o'clock the morning of Feb. 5th. The trip was about the same, position reports, ETA's etc. We arrived at Atkinson Field, British Guiana at 2:30 in the afternoon. It was really in the jungle. I sure did feel sorry for the fellows that had to stay there year after year. I was glad we only had to stay there one night. The next morning we left at 9 a.m. On this trip Jose our Ball Turret operator had some bad luck. I couldn't get any radio reception so I asked Jose to check to see if the trailing wire antenna was out. He came back to the radio room a short time later to report the antenna was out. He said it was a very expensive look. He told me that while looking out the waist window his wallet with \$38.00 and some pictures fell out the window. I ask him if he was sore at me for asking him to check for me. "Hell no", he said, "Its just one of those things". Other than his loss the trip was boring and very hot. We arrived at Belam Air Base, Brazil at 2:30 in the afternoon. Belam was another jungle base, really hot and humid. Our crew decided to see the town. We all piled into a cab for a wild ride. The dirt road was only wide enough for one car. We must have been going 80 mph when another car came in the other direction. We thought sure we would have a head on collision and closed our eyes. We missed by a couple of inches, however, and were very relieved when we got to town. . . . Our stay was short lived as the Major, our C.O., came right after us and gave us the devil for leaving the field, and made us return in a hurry. . . . At 8 a.m. the next morning, Feb. 7th, we departed for Natal, Brazil. It was a hot boring trip. Most of the fellows slept most of the way. I was busy sending position reports every 30 minutes and our ETA. We arrived at Natal at 3:30 p.m. Natal seemed to be a pretty busy place, with quite a few airplanes of varied types, i.e. C-47's, C-54's, B-17's, B-25's, B-24's, A-20's, and a number of Navy planes. . . . We worked all that afternoon and evening 'til 8:30. I had to put all new antennas on our plane, and gave the equipment a good going over. Our Engineer, Bill, and Youngblood, his assistant, worked on the engines, and gave the plane and accessories a general going over, then we all gave our guns the business. We also worked the next day cleaning the plane, and spent a couple of hours getting briefed for our over water hop. We hit the sack about 4 p.m. and were awakened about 7:30 p.m.. We had something to eat

and went to our plane around 9 p.m. We preflighted our plane and radioed the tower. At 10 p.m. we took off for our 1860 mile over water hop. Our trip was made in the dark so we didn't mind being over water so long. The pilots, navigator, and myself had to be on the ball all night. I had contact with Natal most of the night. about 4 a.m. we were about half way along. I finally contacted the RAF station at Bathurst, British Gambia Africa. I worked both stations for awhile. Around 5 a.m. or so I checked out with Natal. The British radio operators at Bathurst were very good. I sent in our ETA as 1125 GMT. We arrived 5 minutes late. I called that pretty good navigation. The landing strip at Bathurst was cut out of the jungle and was metal planking. The landing was rough and very noisy. We didn't care much, it was too good to be on the ground. Two of our planes were missing at Bathurst. Later we got word that one crew was OK. They had crash landed on a small island. The second crew was never heard from. . . . Bathurst was like you see in the movies with lots of natives. Most of the ground troops were British. We had a run in with the so called Limeys. We started to cross the runway and one of the Limey officers told us to stay off the strip. We told him to "Blow It"! He got mad as the devil and started to chew us. We told him to "Blow It" again and walked away. In the afternoon a native came into our barracks to offer us a trip to the native village. We were amazed with the Village sights. Our guide could sure put away the cigarettes we paid him. We could never figure out where he carried them. The Village sights were out of a movie. We saw the Village Chief who offered us something to eat. We were not suppose to eat anything off the field, but we couldn't refuse his offer so we took some fruit and said we would eat it at chow. He seemed satisfied. After giving all our cigarettes away to the natives we started back to the field. . . . We used mosquito netting that night, hot as hell! It was too darn hot to sleep much that night. The mosquitoes were thick. I was lucky to have good netting. Some of the fellows were not so lucky and got many bites. I could hear them cussing most of the night. We took off about 8 a.m. the next morning for another very hot trip. The only saving grace was "Radio Silence". We could only use radio in case of an emergency. I was able to get some sleep on this trip. I went to sleep and didn't awake until we landed at Marrakech, French Morrocco. The field held plenty of French planes, old bombers, fighters. Seeing these planes gave us a clue why the French lost to the Germans. While we were there the Free French solders caught about 8 German spies and executed them. These people didn't fool around. We stayed at Marrakech from the 10th to the 22nd of Feb. '43. We did plenty of guard duty on our planes, officers and enlisted alike. Sometimes we went into the lousy town and drank some of their terrible wine. . . . We were briefed for the trip to Plymton, England. One night we were taxing out to fly to England when we got a call from the tower that called off the flight. We were all pretty mad. . . . A couple of days later another group called the 18th Provisional Group with 20 planes landed at the field. In a few days they went to England which made us all the madder. We found out later that the Lord must have been watching out for us because we learned the 18th Group lost 18 out of their 20 planes on their first flight over France. . . . On the 22nd of Feb. we left Marrakech, and were glad to be going. The trip was only three hours, hot as hell, to LaSenia Army Air Base close to Oran, Algeria This was a modification base for airplanes going into combat. We stayed there for a month, had some advanced training and a few informal talks with fellows already in combat. We gave our plane a good going over, had the Glycol tanks taken out, the power turret got a complete going over and the flexible guns were checked out. Our plane

was then given an altitude test flight, bomb racks checked, AFCE (Auto Pilot) was checked, and lots of other things done to the plane on the ground i.e. added more armour plating for the waste gun positions, plating for the Navigator and Bombardier positions in the nose was installed. Our Engineer, Bill, installed new spark plugs in our four engines and gave them a 100 hour check. . . . On March 22, 1943, 30 days after arrival at LaSenia, we left for Chateau Dun, Algeria only three hours away. The 97th Bomb Group was located on this field. When they saw us they thought we were going to relieve. They had seen action in England and now North Africa, and had been overseas for some time. We did not relieve them, however. We worked with them. They were pretty well discouraged. They were a good outfit, and we learned a lot from them in the three days we stayed at Chatteau Dun and left for our own field about 10 minutes away which was finished. It wasn't much of a field, just some ground leveled off for a runway, and some airplane dispersal places made. We put up our tents that afternoon. The tent area was situated about a mile from our planes. We had quite a bit of work to do because there was no ground crew compliment. They were coming by ship. We dug latrines, did our K.P., serviced our planes, dug our fox holes, did guard duty, and many other details. We ate at a general mess, and it was a mess. I could never understand how we lived on the food we got over there. My pilot, the group C.O., dug his own fox hole, and he was a full Colonel. . . . We finally got the outfit set up, and now we were ready for combat. . . .



Vince in his B-17 Office
(Radio Room)

99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)

Col. Fay R. Uptegrove Pilot	Lt. F. Chaffin Group Cndr.	Lt. O. Bernich Navigator	Maj. Thurman Bombardier	Co Pilot
<i>Front Row</i>				
Sgt. A. Foriss W. Gunner	T/Sgt. W. Danner Flight Engineer	S/Sgt G. Youngblood Tail Gunner	T/Sgt. V. Schauler Radio Operator	S/Sgt J. Berrellez Ball Turret

This is the crew with which Vince flew his missions. Note his hero 'Uppie' was pilot.



EDITOR'S NOTE: Vincent mentions his pilot, Group C.O., full Colonel digging his own fox hole, he is referring, of course, to Colonel Fay R. Upthegrove the first 99th Group Commander. Vincent's widow, Helen M. Schauler, reports that Vincent flew his 50 missions as Radio Operator, Gunner on "El Diablo" with his respected hero Colonel "Uppie", the man he most admired. . . . Vincent died September 21, 1997 as published in our November 1997 newsletter. His widow, Helen, sent his "Army Experiences" story you have just read. She reports taking over his computer, and hopefully she will find more of his story and send to us. Thank you Helen for what you have sent.

8

EL DIABLO

CREW 8, 1942-1943

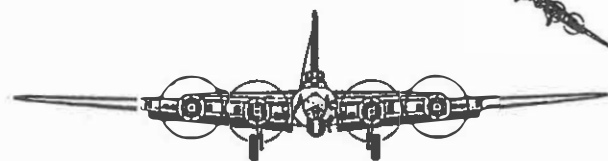
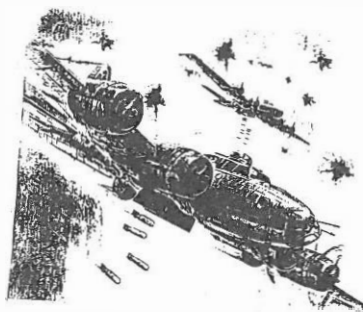
Original Crew 8 formed in Boise ID, 1942



Left to Right

Back Row - Lt. Fovinci, Pilot; Lt. Chaffin, Navigator
 Lt. Berinsmith, Bombardier; Lt. Vernon, Co-Pilot
 Front Row - S/S Guy Youngblood, Waist Gunner
 S/S Jose Berrellez, Ball Turret; T/S Bill Danner,
 Engineer; T/S Vince Schauler, Radio Operator

This is the crew with which Vince trained Stateside & flew to Africa with.



May 17, 1998

Dear Bernie,

A request for photos for the front of our NEWSLETTER: I've enclosed mine for consideration. My first mission was September 28, 1943. My last mission was April 3, 1944. I was in the 416th Sqd and flew as radio gunner.

The photo I've enclosed was by Bob Braungart. WE flew several missions in MISS FURY before we inherited SWEATER GIRL. Bob flew copilot to Bill Osborne and later flew as first pilot of our crew when Bill finished his fifty. Bob was an original 99th-er. Bob is now living with his son, Bob, at 10886 Green Lake Trail, Chisago City MN 55013.. Bob and Juanita were at Chisago when the reunion was at Rapid City. He planned to be at the reunion and we would have had six of our crew there. Hurricane ANDREW damaged his house in Florida requiring him to return home just before the reunion. After that Bob had a stroke and became partially paralyzed. He was in a nursing home in Florida and later he and Juanita went to live with their son in Chisago City. Juanita is now deceased. Bob's condition is still not good but he can talk on the phone. Before she died Juanita called me after I sent Bob a photo of our crew I composed. Bob talked to me at that time. Juanita sent several photos Bob had in his possession. She also sent copies to you, one of which was MISS FURY. I don't know MISS FURY'S first crew. There is a story of Bob which George Coen planned to write and publish in the NEWSLETTER. He never did but he may tell it to you in person.

There's something about the photo of MISS FURY that holds my attention for ten minutes at a time. I don't know what it is. It is the only photo I've seen with the bomb load spread out below the plane ready to be loaded. They're obviously frags. I'm going to have a photo made of three B-17Fs with 883 in the foreground and MISS FURY behind her. This will be in a later envelope.

Bill Osborne wanted to know what happened to Sweater Girl. I've enclosed a copy of WALNUT RIDGE ARK just after WW II. Sweater Girl and Miss Fury are there somewhere in the photograph I kept from a magazine in 1945 or '46. Dick Drain has the destination of all our planes. Just ask him. He has it in his laptop computer.

I've also enclosed a map that shows many of my missions. It won't fit the NEWSLETTER but may be of interest to you personally. I've sent copies to sever people. I found the war map back in the middle forties. The round trip to Wiener Neustadt took three days. WE brought the bombs back home. WX obscured the target. This was my last mission in the 12th AF. The 99thBG flew the first mission in the 15thAF back to Wiener Neustadt. The bombing this time was successful.

At Ontario I asked you about the old fellow of 82 who was the oldest 99th-er at the reunion at Albuquerque. I'm now an old guy of 82 years coming up on 83 the 2nd of August. You told me the other old fellow was deceased. ***** Ben Warmer, who distinguished himself by shooting down seven e/a over Gerbini, is buried at Ontario. REsearch I did years ago produced this information. Simultaneously someone else using a different method found him.



Best regards

Wally Bush



SORRY WALLY but your copies of pictures etc will not print clearly. So they had to be left out. Perhaps you knew they would not print-thanks.

bernie

Dear Wallace: . . . The personal photo you furnished will print OK. We will be using it for one of our future issues. Thanks.

RW

Dear Bernie,

June 1, 1998

On Tuesday May 26, 1998, I was saddened to hear that my good friend and one time navigator on my flight crew, passed away after an extended illness. William B. (Bill) Blakemore II and I flew with the 346th squadron. Our first three missions were flown out of Navrin, Algeria in late July of 1943 and we completed our 50 missions flying out of Foggia, Italy in late January of 1944. I was fortunate to have had my R & R after returning to the states, in Miami Beach, Fla. with Bill along with Bob Bjork the bombardier on our crew and with Robert Frazier, our radio operator.

I lost touch with Bill Blakemore and did not see him again until our reunion in McAllen, Texas where he became a member of the 99BGHS. I learned at that time, that Bill was a successful cattle rancher along with being deeply involved in the oil business, a law enforcement advocate and was a community leader. I knew then that the skinny young man I once knew, who often wore high top G.I. shoes which made his feet seem too large for his slender body, made a most successful transition from the military to civilian life.

I was fortunate to visit with Bill on two different occasions in the past two years when he was in the early stages of his illness. The first time was at his home in Midland, Texas and the last time at his 11,000 acre Stone Mountain Ranch in West Texas. Even though Bill was bed ridden on both visits, he seemed to enjoy talking about our earlier days, recounting events during combat crew training, the very eventful trek across the Atlantic with later stops in Scotland, St. Mawgans, England and finally across North Africa. Although his body was ailing, I found his mind and memory, as sharp as it ever was. More than once, he was able to fill in the blanks of my memory and set me straight on certain details. I will miss my friend and Buddy who had to be one of a kind.

I knew that Bill became very successful in all his endeavors, but I did not know the scope of his activities nor the seemingly endless examples of his generous giving of his time and resources until I read the Midland newspaper announcement of his death on the intranet. He has given generously to countless hospitals, medical centers, schools and colleges, museums, medical research programs in cancer and cerebral palsy and rehabilitation centers. To name them all, would require many pages. His record of positions as trustee, director or board member are also too numerous to include in this letter. Fortunately, Bill has been recognized many times for his good deeds by the many awards which have been bestowed upon him, not the least of which was his being written up on the entire front page as: "Bill Blakemore Day." We all can be proud that Bill was a fellow 99er.

Bill will be buried in his family plot on his ranch. He is survived by his daughters, Margene Blakemore Kenny and Virginia Blakemore Freeman and three sons, James M., William B, Jr. and Bruce A. of San Antonio. Our fellow 99er was 75 when he passed away.

WPC
Bill Church



SUMMARY OF SPRINGFIELD REUNION - MAY 5 - 10, 1998

200 attended this reunion. The University Plaza Hotel was fine. We had a great Hospitality Room where lots of visiting and reminiscing went on. Many enjoyed some of the Branson, MO shows:

- 102 to Andy Williams Show
- 235 to Tony Orlando Show
- 79 to Bobby Vinton Show
- 49 to Lawrence Welk Show

Each show recognized our 99th Group. Bobby Vinton had attendants stand while the band played the Air Corps Song. He also sang to the Chumleys on their 55th. Every one enjoyed the "thrown rolls" and good food at Lamberts on Wednesday night even though they were caught in a terrific rain storm. We had good reports on all shows and the after show meals at the College of the Ozarks and McGuffeys.

The Springfield Tour with 124 attendants consisted of a ride through downtown, a guided walking tour of the National Cemetery; a visit to Wilson's Creek Battlefield (National Park Service) where a short but hard fought Civil War Battle occurred. Our tour ended at the Bass Pro Shop for lunch and visiting their nature exhibits, huge aquariums, and sales areas.

The Magicians in the Hospitality Room on Thursday night were great fun. Bob Johnson's birthday and the Chumley's 55th Wedding Anniversary were celebrated.

92 attended the Business breakfast.

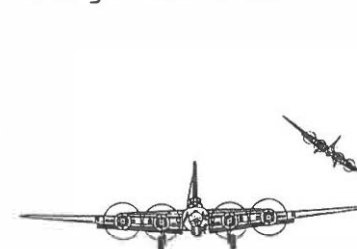
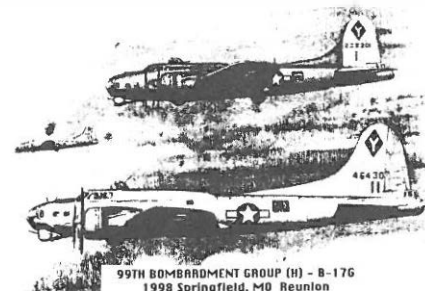
180 attended the Saturday night banquet. Bernie Barr presented an impressive plaque award to Colonel Ray Schwanbeck, last wartime 99th Group Commander. . . . The Eagle Elite Drill Team sponsored by Post 199, American Legion of Edwardsville, Illinois provided our entertainment and won our hearts. The all girl team, ages 10 to 18, were very professional. (Their director had called us last Fall after our reunion notice has appeared in the service magazine and offered to preform.) We didn't know what to expect, but we were well pleased. Their final number, a memorial to those "Post Everlasting" was very touching. The team hopes to perform at the opening of the WW II Memorial in Washington, D.C. in 2000 A.D. (If they raise enough money.)

Banquet door prizes were: Jim Bruno's book "Beyond Fighter Escort", a Dimondback Cap, a sack of Art Knipp's popcorn (best you'll ever have), a 99th Crest, and a one night's FREE lodging for this reunion. . . . Several "First Timers" attended, and we missed many "regulars" due to illness and other reasons. We recognized POWs, Evades and Internee's. (Jim would like to add that he is sorry for not recognizing our ground crew members, and those of us completing our missions.)

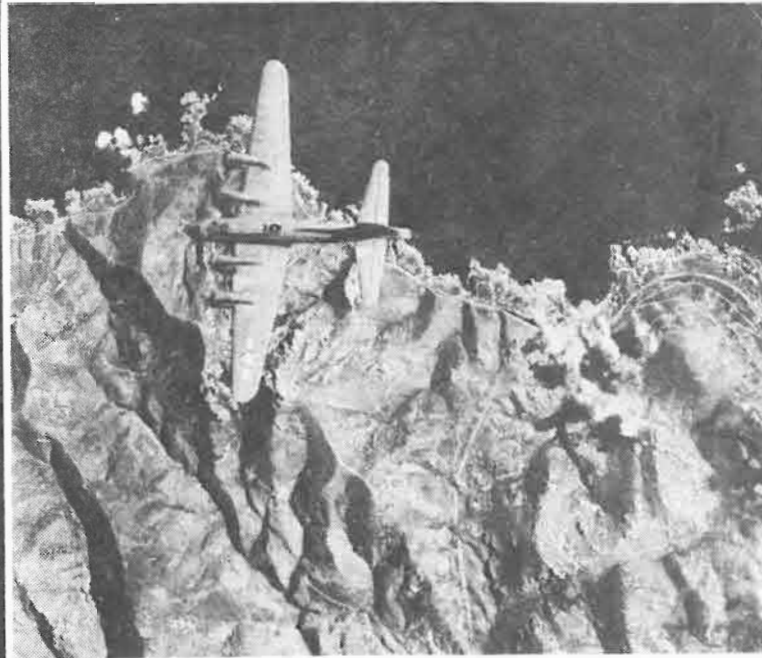
Many, many thanks to Arkie, Bob Bacher, Art Knipp and to all those who helped in the Hospitality Room and on the buses. We needed and appreciated each one of you!

This was a "labor of love" and we enjoyed doing it, and of course, we enjoyed your kind words and notes. Thanks so much! . . . Hope to see you in Peoria and Tucson!

Marge and Jim



99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) - B-17G
1998 Springfield, MO Reunion



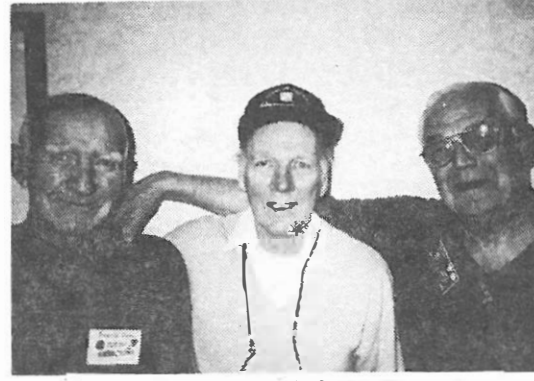
On the 31 of October of 1943 the 99th hits another R/R Viaduct in FRANCE



99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)



DIAMONDBACK ATTACK NEW BOOK CHRONICLES HISTORY OF THE 99TH BOMB GROUP



1998 Springfield, MO Reunion
May 7 - 12, 1998
Bernie Barr, Dick Drain, and
Jim Grizell



Paducah, Kentucky -The Front Line of Military History- Turner Publishing Company's latest release chronicles the exhilarating successes of a most respected combat unit of the 12th and 15th Air Force. The 99th Bomb Group's combination of "Sight with Might" was twice recognized with Distinguished Unit Citations for their role during World War II. The first such distinction followed a brave mission to Gerbini, Italy, whereby a small task force of the 99th successfully fought off an onslaught from 100 enemy aircraft who failed to deter them from reaching their target. The devastation upon military installations, fuel supplies, and ammunition dumps was so immense that historians have credited that mission with facilitating the Allied invasion of Sicily.

The History of the 99th traces the groups activation and training from Macdill, Pendleton, and Gowen Fields on through to the furious skies over Italy, Austria, Germany and occupied France. The 99th confronted not only the enemy, but also the elements. From the heat and dust of Africa to the cold and mud of Europe, the 99th Bomb Group would prove superior in mission after critical mission. Contents include a complete listing of mission dates and targets, historical photographs, biographies, and compelling stories of combat written by some of those men who are among our nation's greatest heroes.

The book is dedicated to the ground personnel who serviced the aircraft, cooked the meals, manned the air traffic control towers and performed countless other duties in order to assure the efficiency of the group. And while the History of the 99th sheds new light on the perils encountered by the men during World War II, it also accounts for a chapter of aviation history as related to the B-17 Bomber. Dreaded and despised by the enemy, these same aircraft were so loved by their crews as to be given names...everything from "Dirty Gerie" and "Chief Wahoo" to "Restless Bess". The History of the 99th reveals the fates for much of those aircraft assigned to the group while photographically documenting many of the pilots, planes and crews.

The book is now available and ready for immediate shipment. Copies may be obtained by sending \$54.95 plus \$6.00 shipping/handling (check/money order) to Turner Publishing Company, P.O. Box 3101, Paducah, KY 42002-3101. Telephone orders may be placed by calling 1-800-788-3350 or by fax at (502) 443-0335; VISA and Mastercard are accepted.

This story of the 99th was put together by DICK DRAIN-Our thanks to DICK for his WORK OF LOVE for our Bomb Group. Dick's son FRANK R. DRAIN did the art work for the front and back cover. Our special THANKS TO FRANK.

MINUTES OF THE 99TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

UNIVERSITY PLAZA HOTEL, SPRINGFIELD MISSOURI

07 MAY 1998

OFFICERS

FRANCIS W. GRANTZ, PRESIDENT
WALTER BUTLER, TREASURER
CHRIS CHRISTIANSEN, SECRETARY

DIRECTORS

ROBERT J. BACHER	VINCENT BELL	DENZEL CLARK
JOSEPH D. GREELEY	JULES HOROWITZ	ART G. KNIPP
DON LAWHORN	JIM LA VEY	FRANK PEARCE
LEONARD SMITH		

PAST PRESIDENTS

BERNIE BARR	L. T. BOATWRIGHT	JOE CHANCE
GEORGE COEN	LEONARD HOPEN	JULES HOROWITZ
BILL SMALLWOOD	JIM SMITH	ROY WORTHINGTON

HISTORIAN

DICK DRAIN

1. OPENING and WELCOME

President Fran Grantz had provided Board Members with his agenda for conducting the 1998 Board meeting which is attached at the back of these minutes.

President Fran asked those attending to introduce themselves.

Those attending the morning session were:

Jim Smith, Vincent Bell, Fran Grantz, Chris Christiansen, Walter Butler, Don Lawhorn, Art Knipp, Bob Bacher, Len Smith, Joe Chance, Roy Worthington, Leonard Hopen, Bernie Barr, Jules Horowitz, Dick Drain, Arkie Clark and Jim La Vey.

Vic Fabianack and Fred Troy were present as prospective board members.

Jerry Buckingham was present as an Associate member of the 99th BGHS.

Those unable attend were: Lou Boatwright, George Coen, Joe Greeley, Fran Pearce and Bill Smallwood.

Fran stated that since some people would be leaving for trips he was changing the order of business as set forth in the agenda. First though, Fran expressed his thanks to all who were able to complete their missions as he only completed one-half missions being shot down on his first mission. Fran asked for a moment of silence with each one offering a prayer in his own manner after which he offered the following prayer. *"Our father our hearts are filled with gratitude because you have given us the privilege of being alive after war and combat with all of its conflict and of its disastrous effects. Now we are here to do business on behalf with the society we flew with. We ask for your guidance and direction upon us and receive our thanks and our gratitude for being Americans. We pray in Christ's name. Amen".*

Fran asked that we only cover the agenda down to OLD BUSINESS but first asked to have a report on Item 3 SECRETARY'S MINUTES.

Chris Christiansen, secretary, advised that minutes had been provided by mail after the last reunion and if there were any questions, he would answer them. John Lawhorn moved that we approve the minutes as received in the mail. Jules Horowitz seconded the motion.

Fran then asked for Item 4- TREASURER'S REPORT.

Walter Butler presented the status of the 99th Finances. Walter stated that we

had incomes of \$10,048.35; expenditures of \$9499.30 and a balance of \$30,755.69. Arkie moved that the report be approved as presented and seconded by Bob Bacher.

ITEM 5A-OLD BUSINESS-report on Springfield Reunion-Jim Smith

Jim thanked Fran for rescheduling our meeting so that board member attendees could go on tours. Attendance at this session was approximately 200 with some additions and some cancellations. Reports back to Jim from our Branson trip the day before were good. Plans for the banquet were going smoothly with all trips moving well with no pushing and shoving. There would be door prizes and the numbers we were issued will be used at the drawing. This concluded his report.

Other board members expressed their thanks to Jim for the preparation and smooth operation of the reunion. There were some comments that the music at Branson was loud with a lot of flashing lights. Overall though, the attendees were pleased.

After the board's morning session people will be boarding busses to take a city tour, visit the national cemetery, and then a trip to a battle field and then to dinner. Upon return, the board would meet for its afternoon session at approximately 1530 hours.

Item 5B. Report on Research Funds-Dick Drain

Dick first stated that he has done nothing with \$2000 entrusted to him as he has been working on the 99th's history book for four years. The books were just released and he had brought a few to the reunion. Dick hopes to accomplish his task within a year but the important thing is to get the data from the national archives into the computer before it shreds as the data is very old. The archives has moved and has a new staff which will be working closely with him.

Dick's main challenge was getting the book out. Dick related his many problems with the publisher but after being assigned a new editor and with

Arkie wanted know if the information would be in a historical place like Maxwell. Dick said when he gets done, he'd give the computer disks to someone in the 99th and what they want to do with it is up to them. Jerry said the information could be in archives 2 and not particularly Maxwell. Arkie was satisfied that the data would be in some archives located somewhere.

This concluded Dick Drain's report.

Fran wanted to go back to a previous discussion on the presentation of an award by Bernie to Colonel Schwambeck. This brought to his attention that recognition be given to George Coen-one of the 99th's founders. Fran stated that George had moved to Durango Colorado but he had not had the pleasure of meeting him. Fran opened the discussion to the floor.

Bernie Barr reminded us that Jules Horowitz had given recognition to George at Ft Lauderdale with a large plaque in recognition of George's services. The following year Bernie had been the recipient of a plaque and the year after that, Walter Butler too received a plaque. Following that certificates had been given to Roy Worthington and Betty Wamser for her work on our roster.

Jules reminded the board that after the last awards that the board decided not to continue the practice.

Bernie suggested that maybe some other means, such as a card signed by us, could be used. At this point Dick Drain suggested a copy of our 99th history book be presented. Don Lawhorn seconded the motion. Bernie volunteered himself and Walter Butler to deliver the book to George. All approved the motion.

Fran wanted to know if there was anything that constituted old business that anyone wanted to bring up. Jules stated that it was not a subject of old business but did not want board meetings to be conducted on Wednesdays. Bernie felt that it was the duty of the host to determine the meeting day. Jules made the motion seconded by Bob Bacher that board meetings be held on Thursday or later. Motion defeated. Fran reiterated that the reunion host and the president at the time work out an appropriate schedule.

his son doing the art work, numerous phone calls, proofing, and trips, success was attained.

Going back to the 99th history, Dick said we are lacking the details of the first hundred missions and suspects that General Uptegrove had taken them with him and that they are probably stored in some garage somewhere. Since General Uptegrove's wife is dead, and since Dick does not know about family members he does not know where he make contact. It was feared that some family members might have found the mission data and probably did not know what to do with it. Some of the board members thought they might help, as Dick needs the operational records of the first hundred missions. Dick thought General Uptegrove had a daughter but did not know her name or how to get in contact with her. Jules thought that Warren Whitmore might know how to contact the daughter. (Jules is being assigned this task as noted by this record). Jim LaVey suggested we contact the funeral home or do some genealogical type searching to help find the daughter.

At the conclusion of the above discussion Bernie Barr questioned Dick on the value of the information to him as an individual of the information from the archives. Dick replied that if a person was desirous of mission information of a particular day that there would be at hand crew listings, their position on the mission, the target and serial number of the aircraft. Also listed would be missing in action (MIA) information-just everything about a crew and its members.

Bernie then asked after this gets into the computer how would he get it. Dick said he would provide the information to anyone in the 99th who has a computer. Bernie then wanted to know if Dick was going to distribute the information to all of the members. Dick said he'd distribute a copy to anyone with a computer who wants it.

Fran wanted to know if a written report would be provided. Dick said he would. Fran thought this probably answered Bernie's question.

Dick cautioned that this information not get on the internet as another bomb group's information did get on line.

Jerry Buckingham added that the information could be a good source for searching an individuals.

Fran next moved to NEW BUSINESS Item 6B.-Use of Society's Funds for Members' Benefit-Vincent Bell

Fran as an introduction to the subject reminded us that we are not immortal but as it now stands any residual funds from the 99th after its closing will be going to Maxwell's Museum.

Vince stated that our purpose of fund distribution was to honor permanently the achievement and memory of the enlisted men and officers of the 99th. Keeping that in mind Vince came up with three possibilities. But first Vince related that the 97th BG who is wealthier donated \$30,000, with \$15, 000 for a memorial wall and the other \$15,000 to restore a B17 at March AFB Museum. The wall is finished. March gave Vince copies of suggestions of plaques on the wall. Plaques are not that expensive but similar to the one we had the Air Force Academy. Vince said it was not a good idea to spend all of our funds anyway. Vince said it is Walter's responsibility of advancing funds. Walter has to be careful-for instance if we have to keep a reserve of \$10,000 for reunions we can't take the remainder of our funds down to zero. Vince had with him a copy of a revised plaque policy from March. He stated that March's museum is better organized. The plaque was one solution. The next possibility was to reduce our annual dues. We presently pay \$15.00. Some have paid life memberships. The third possibility was to reduce reunion costs. Reunions are too expensive for some folks especially if they have more than one to attend.

There are other possibilities-memorials. Vince cited the monument that we have at Wright Patterson AFB. Invest funds in treasury bonds. Maybe do something at 5th Wing. Perhaps a plaque at West Point in honor of Uptegrove. Maybe honor past CO's of the 99th. Since we have our books maybe we could send some to historical places. Pay an honor to General Twining of the 15th AF as he was the Air Force's first Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Vince's overall suggestion was to have a plaque at March and reduce dues.

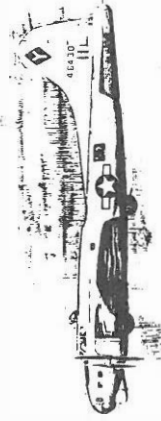
Perhaps others have ideas but we are to remember that the treasurer has the responsibility of operating our organization.

Jules asked for Walter's comments. Walter stated that in the past we had some bad years where we were short. Jules needed to know how much we

needed now to operate. Walter remarked "all of it". Arkie suggested that Walter reestablish registration fees. The point brought up was that the fees pay for the reunions. Registration fees are for those attending whereas reducing dues would affect every one. Jules pointed out that we have been carrying a \$30,000 balance since 1983. Jim Smith noted that some of the \$30,000 is restricted for persons (16-17) who have paid life memberships. Roy Worthington pointed out that the Air Force Association has an educational fund. Roy thought that at some point in time we could invest \$20,000 with AFA to provide an educational fund.

Fran advised the group that the purpose of this discussion was a fact finding session and not to make a disposition of funds today. Roy Worthington still thought an educational fund would be more appropriate as there is always the danger of a base being closed. Jim Smith said we did not want to forget the museum at Wright Patterson AFB. Vince thought Roy's suggestion of \$20,000 was too much as it would reduce it down to the cost of running a reunion. Roy said it was only a suggestion.

Bernie Barr made a motion that we table the discussion until next year. Roy Worthington seconded the motion. Arkie asked that we look at the statement outside of "B" that says use of Society's funds for the members benefit. Roy Worthington said education would be for the member's benefit. The discussion ended. Fran asked for a vote on Bernie's motion. All approved.



AFTERNOON SESSION

The board reassembled after our return from the morning and early afternoon tour of Springfield and vicinity.

A roll call was conducted.

6 New Business

A. Recommendations



May through Sunday 09 May being considered. The proposal from Doubletree was 04 through 09 May. A vote was taken with the proposal as submitted by Doubletree being accepted.

The second proposal, Item 6A 2. 2000 Reunion-Seattle with Site Committee: Mary Ann Bannick and George Perry, was then presented by Fran. The dates were 10-15 May 2000. Location was Seattle. The site committee is working. The year 2000 is the 65th anniversary of the B-17. Don Sachs, who is a Boeing representative, was contacted and has agreed to help. Don has already contacted Boeing to see what they can do for us for the year 2000. Fran has already contacted George and Mary Ann. The floor was now open for discussion. Our last Seattle meeting in 1985 was at the Hyatt but Mary Ann is looking for another motel. All Fran was asking for today was authority to remain in contact with Mary Ann. A motel near the airport at reasonable rates would be desirable.

The question of two west coast reunions in succession was questioned. Some felt San Antonio should be considered or even going back to Wright Patterson. Fran reminded us that there is a proposal on the floor and to proceed. Roy Worthington moved and Don Lawhorn seconded the proposal allowing Fran to continue contact for the Seattle reunion in year 2000.

Others still wanted to consider the possibility for a second site proposal for the year 2000. The question arose as to what part of the United States our members reside. It was the consensus that California and Florida ranked highest. Also asked was the amount people were willing to spend for lodging at a reunion. \$75-85 was the range that would be most reasonable. Fran suggested that a mail-in ballot for Seattle could be used before our next year's reunion. Regardless of where we go, advanced planning is necessary. Fran asked for a vote on the Seattle proposal year 2000. The motion carried.

Next to be discussed was Item 6. A. 3. 2001 Reunion-Atlanta. Site Committee: Ed Marlow. Fran had talked with Ed Marlow and he was willing to head up the possibility of having a reunion in the Southeast, not necessarily Atlanta, as someone remarked that Atlanta, New York and Washington are out of reach financially. Fran asked for the group's approval to have Ed Marlow look into the Atlanta area possibility. Bernie moved and Jim LaVey seconded the motion. All approved.

1. 1999 Reunion-Phoenix Site Committee: Bill Somers

Fran spoke for Bill Somers and provided information on Mesa Arizona. The proposed dates were 11-16 May 1999. Rates were: \$85 plus tax for single/double; \$99 plus tax for a suite and \$175 plus tax for a double bedroom suite for 4 persons. A complimentary room for host provided 50 or more persons attend. Transportation from airport was \$21 per person each way.

Fran then presented an unsolicited proposal from the Doubletree in Tucson. Proposed dates were 4-9 May 1999. Transportation from the airport was \$10.50 per person. A two room suite with complimentary breakfast was \$69.00 plus tax for single/double. Also included was a two hour complimentary cocktail reception. Many other amenities were included. Complimentary transportation within 3 miles. The group was deeply impressed.

Dick Drain had attended a reunion with another bomb group at the Doubletree and was quite satisfied. Roy Worthington cautioned that it was very hot in May in Tucson. The problem facing the 99th was that the University of Arizona had reserved all hotel rooms in the area after Mothers Day.

Bill Somers advised Fran that he would help us with Tucson should we select Tucson.

Fran asked if we were ready for a vote. All agreed. Don Lawhorn moved that we accept Tucson which was seconded by Jules.

The floor was open for discussion as some had concern about Mothers Day conflict again but if we met after the University activities, the heat later in May would be unbearable.

Then there was conflict of airline travel especially for those that were using frequent flier privileges. The setting of the dates for meeting next year was discussed with Monday 03 May through Saturday 08 May or Tuesday 04

Fran then directed our attention to Item 6. C. Under New Business-Other New Business-Special Recognition Award will be presented to Colonel Raymond Schwanbeck. Presenter: Bernie Barr at Saturday Evening Banquet.

Fran pointed out that Colonel Schwanbeck was our last war time Commander and asked a committee to go Phoenix to make a special award but subsequently Fran had talked to Colonel Schwanbeck's wife and found that they would be attending this reunion. Bernie will be presenting a plaque to Colonel Schwanbeck at the Saturday night banquet.

Item 7. Other Business

A. Acceptance of Frank Pearce Resignation

Fran related that Frank Pearce who lives in Vero Beach Florida has been in ill health and does not feel that he can adequately support the group and therefore asked to resign. Fran asked that the board honor his request. Roy Worthington moved and Jules Horowitz seconded the motion. All approved.

Item 7. Other Business

B. Report of Nominating Committee-Len Smith

Fran directed our attention to Len Smith. Len first placed in nomination Fran Grantz and Bob Bacher. Len said he had a total of seven (7) names. The other nominees were: Fred Troy, Vic Fabianack, Bill Somers, (Bernie pointed out that a person must be present to be placed in nomination-Len agreed and withdrew Bill Somers), Ed Marlow, and Fred Leyby. Roy Worthington said he had placed Fred's name as a nominee, stating that Fred lives near him and is a retired CPA and ex-prisoner of war.

Arkie moved that the nominees be approved, seconded by Don Lawhorn.

Chris read the names of the nominees.

Fran asked that we vote to receive the report. All approved.

Fran announced that there was another matter left over from the morning discussion which pertained to the use of the Society's funds. The matter was tabled at the time. This item is something that needs to be brought back into consideration. Fran asked that the board vote to bring the item back. All approved.

Another question that was brought up was helping the treasurer upgrade his computer. The current computer is 14 years old and the 99th needs a computer with current configuration. After several inputs by the board all agreed to set aside \$2500 for a new computer and its support equipment. Arkie moved, and Art Knipp seconded the motion. All approved.

Fran announced that this was his last meeting, and his duties as a minister made it necessary for him to leave for St Louis in the morning. He has enjoyed being our president and chaplain and wishes our continued success during this reunion, the upcoming Tucson reunion and Seattle and hopefully the Atlanta area.

The final order of business was setting a time for the business breakfast at 0830 hours on Friday was scheduled with a board meeting following at approximately 1000hours.

Fran called for adjournment which was moved by Jim Smith and seconded by Arkie with all approving.

Respectfully submitted,



Chris

H.E. "Chris" Christiansen

Note: Last year I had to leave our Baltimore meeting the day before the business meeting to attend a wedding. Believe it or not, the same thing happened this year as we left on Friday morning, drove to St Louis and flew to Allentown PA. Since I did not attend the business meeting this year, I am giving you the information I found. If there are changes, I'll send an addendum to these minutes.

FRIDAY SESSION

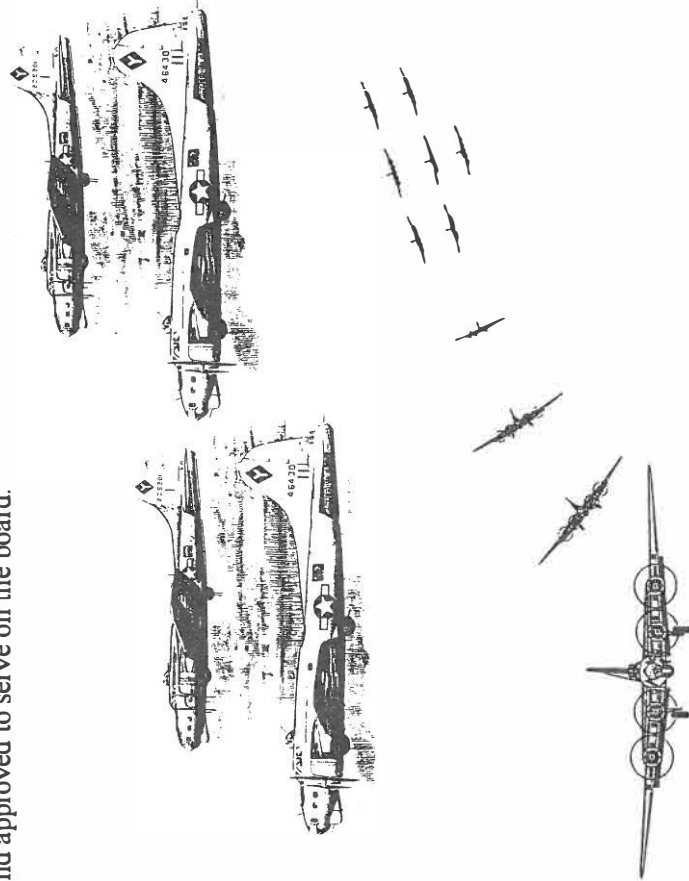
The Breakfast Business meeting was held 0830 hours. Attendees were told of the upcoming reunions and the slate of new board members were presented and approved.

The election of officers to the 1000 hours board meeting was conducted with the following results:

President-Bob Bacher
Vice President-Fran Grantz
Secretary-Chris Christiansen
Treasurer-Walter Butler

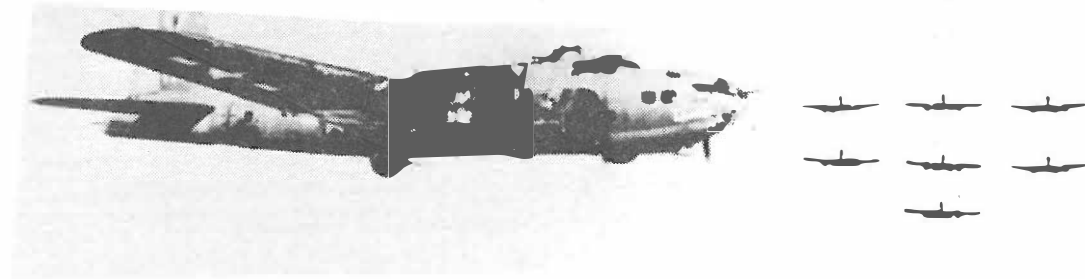
New members approved at the business meeting were:

Vic Fabianack, Fred Leibe (1 year replacing Frank Pearce), Ed Marlow and Fred Troy. Art Knipp whose term was expiring was nominated and approved to serve on the board.



99th B.G.H.S.
Statement of Income and Expenditures
Second Quarter Year 1998

Balance 31 March 1998		
General Fund		30181.76
Reunion Fund		9623.65
Total:		39805.43
Income:		
Dues and Donations	463.00	
Interest Gen.Fund	213.97	
Interest Reunion Fund	40.44	
Total Income:	717.41	40522.84
Expenses:		
Postage		196.83
Printing		1233.56
Gen. Supplies		87.50
Reunion Springfield		600.33
Total Expenses:		2778.22
Balance 30 June 1998		
Gen Fund		28685.86
Reunion Fund		9058.76



VA Health-Care Eligibility Process

In 1996, VA health-care eligibility reform was enacted, allowing VA to modernize its healthcare delivery and provide a more complete package of health-care services to those it serves. Part of this effort required VA to establish an enrollment process for its health care system. VA directed its medical facilities to implement a "test" enrollment system which began Oct. 1, 1997.

Rumors that many veterans' access to VA health care is endangered by enrollment are rife among veterans. Here are the facts:

- On Oct. 1, 1997, VA began a test-pilot for enrollment. Veterans will be enrolled according to their priority to health care starting in February or March, 1998. If you used VA health care at any time in the 12 months before VA begins to enroll veterans in your priority group, you will be automatically "enrolled" for health care for the next year. VA expects to roughly follow this schedule for enrolling veterans.

- VA will continue to treat unenrolled veterans on a space and resources available basis during this test (Oct. 1, 1997 through Sept. 30, 1998).

- VA will use a "rolling enrollment" system. This means veterans may submit an application for enrollment in the VA health-care system at anytime. Veterans with the highest priorities for healthcare will be enrolled first. **VA will continue to enroll veterans by priority group as long as VA has the space and resources to treat them.**

- If you think you will use VA for health care in the next year, you should apply for enrollment. You may be able to receive VA health care before you are enrolled but remember that until VA sends you notification, you are not enrolled at VA.

- You should enroll in the Veterans Health Administration facility from which you choose

to receive primary care. VA clinics or hospitals will accept applications for enrollment. So if you intend to receive your care in a clinic, you should file your application for enrollment there.

In most cases, if you are enrolled, you will be assigned to a primary care provider or a team that works out of that facility.

- If you do not enroll this year and want to enroll next year, you may submit an application for enrollment next year. The acceptance of your application will still be contingent on your priority for care and VA's space and resource availability.

- Veterans who have a service-connected disability rated at least 50 percent, veterans who are seeking medical care for a service-connected condition; and veterans who were discharged within the last year with a service-connected condition **are requested, but not required, to enroll** in order to receive health care. VA may enroll these veterans automatically if they used VA care in the last year.

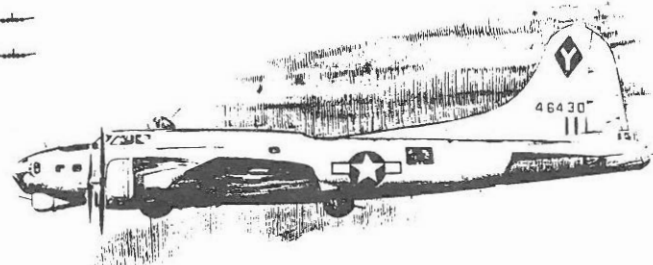
- All other veterans, including those who qualify for health care based on financial need and other special considerations, will be required to enroll at VA in order to determine their eligibility and priority for care. If you used VA

Priority	Classification	Enrollment Date
1	Service-connected 50% or more	Feb-March 1998
2	Service-connected 30-40%	March-April 1998
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service-connected 10-20% Former POWs Discharged from active duty for service-connected condition Special eligibility classification 	April-May 1998
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Veterans receiving aid and attendance or housebound Veterans with catastrophic disability 	May-June 1998
5	Non service-connected veterans and those service-connected at 0% who fall below the income threshold*	Summer 1998
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WWI and Mexican border veterans Veterans receiving care for radiation or toxic substance or environmental hazard exposure Veterans with compensable 0% disabilities 	Summer 1998
7	All other veterans (COPAYMENTS REQUIRED)	Summer 1998

*Effective Jan. 1, 1998, for veterans with no dependents the threshold is \$22,064.

health care within the last year, before your priority group is enrolled. VA will automatically enroll you, and you need not apply for care. If you have not used VA health care in the last year, VA is now accepting applications for enrollment at all sites where the Veterans Health Administration offers care.

For more information, call 1-800-827-1000 to reach your local VA regional office or visit its website at [HTTP://WWW.VA.GOV/health/elig](http://www.va.gov/health/elig).



KEEPING OLD BIRDS NEW

Lone woman has job of restoring March's vintage planes

By Marlowe Churchill
The PressEnterprise

MARCH AIR RESERVE BASE
Instead of being filled with Barbie dolls and posters of Bobby Sherman and David Cassidy, the room Shayne Meder slept in as a young girl was decorated with Korean War B-47 bomber models and pictures of the World War II B-17.

Now, as the person in charge of restoring planes at March Field Museum, Meder's mobile home at March Air Reserve Base is packed with plane models, photos, books and memorabilia.

"I love planes," Meder said. Good thing. Meder, who was hired 18 months ago, oversees a priceless collection of 50 vintage aircraft visited by 80,000 persons each year.

"She's such an energetic and outgoing person," said Museum Director Steve Clark. "She has turned out to be the ideal

person for this job because of her expertise with planes."

Soon after she graduated from high school in Battle Creek, Mich., Meder joined the Air Force. She spent 20 years as an aircraft maintenance expert and was chosen to work on F-16s with the Air Force Thunderbirds aerial demonstration team.

After retiring from the Air Force as a master sergeant, Meder moved onto a 35-acre March site to lead a crew of volunteers on restoring the museum's aircraft.

"I'd rather work all day out here in the broiling sun than sit behind a desk," said Meder, 39.

Climbing tall ladders in temperatures that can soar past 100 degrees on a summer day, Meder washes, sands and paints planes that have deteriorated from the pristine condition they once displayed decades ago on military flight lines.

She deadens the sound of passing aircraft from March's flight line and the noisy

paint compressors by listening to the likes of Bryan Adams and Pink Floyd through her cassette player's headset.

So far, Meder has restored the museum's B-17 and C-123 and has worked in stages on a handful of other planes parked outside the main exhibition hall. She figures that even at her pace Mach 1 pace, it will take up to 10 years to finish the 40 planes on her list.

Meder's love affair with planes stemmed from her parents. They assembled B-47s in Battle Creek.

Meder, who never had time to earn a pilot's license, quips that her favorite plane is always the one she is working on. On days off, she likes to take her two children to air museums around Southern California.

"I like to research the plane and learn its history," she said. "If they could only talk and tell what they have done."

Please see PLANES, B-3

PLANES

Continued from B-1

Her current project is a 1968 FB-111 that she is painting with an \$1,800 donation from San Diego plane buff Steve Bosang. The plane, which was retired by the Air Force in 1984, is one of only 72 that were built and one of only nine on display at air museums nationwide.

The plane is so fast that if it exceeded Mach 3, three times the speed of sound, "the windshield would melt," Meder marveled.

Painting outside in the heat is tricky because the paint cures too

quickly on the plane's surface, which can reach a blistering 120-degrees, she said.

Meder's job will be easier when a \$120,000 restoration hangar is built at the end of the year where she can paint without interference from heat, wind and blowing sand.

But it isn't all hard work. A fun part of the job, she said, is taking a break to talk to visitors who watch her restoration projects.

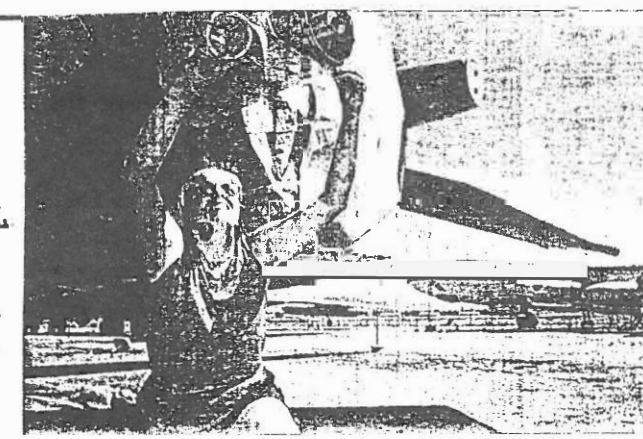
The most frequently asked question by people unfamiliar with planes is the purpose of a row of prickly wires placed atop the tail sections of all aircraft parked outdoors.

They keep birds from roosting and pooping.

"This guy asked me how fast this one plane could fly," she recalled. "I told him about 250 knots. He paused and thought about it. 'I didn't know birds can fly that fast.'"

For once, Meder, who has a memory bank of aircraft statistics, said she was stumped.

"I'm serious. That really happened. What could I say?" she laughed.

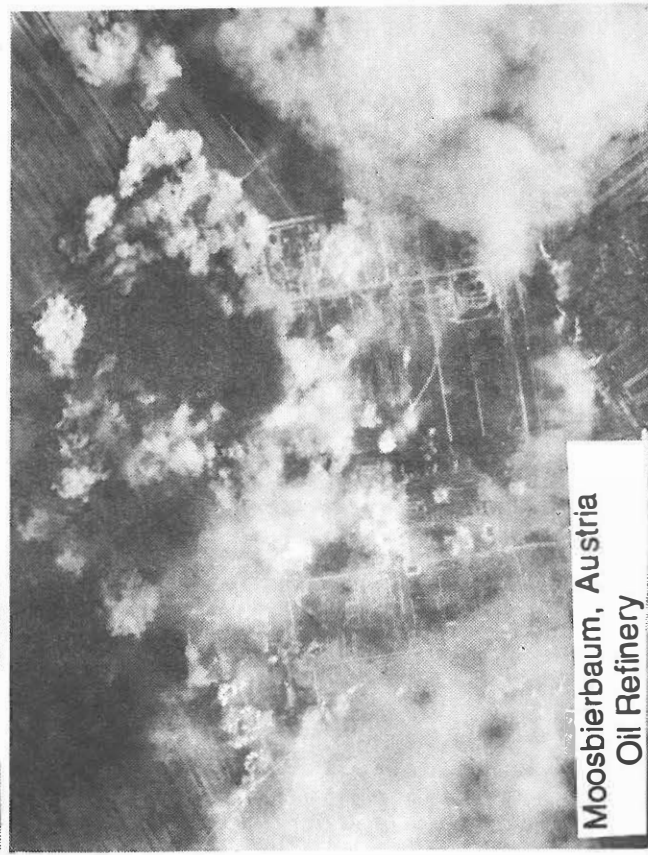


The caption under the photograph at right reads: **Shayne Meder, a retired Air Force master sergeant, masks surfaces on a plane before painting at the March Field Museum. M/Sgt. Meder is in charge of aircraft restoration at the museum.** This newspaper photo isn't suitable for printing, but thought we'd best try.

Shayne Meder, a retired Air Force master sergeant, masks surfaces on a plane before painting it at the March Field Museum. Meder is in charge of aircraft restoration at the museum.

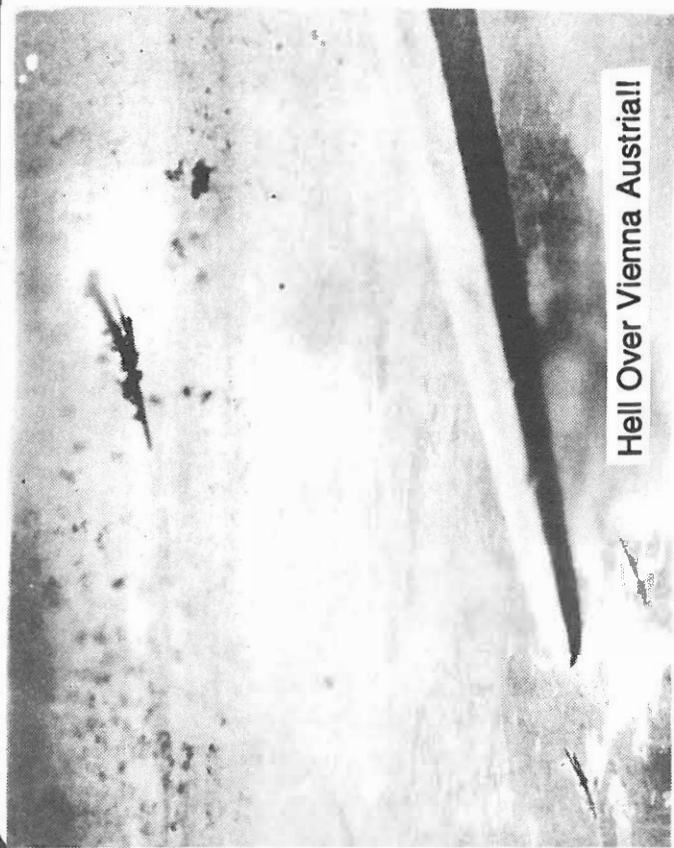


An unknown target over Rumania. Bombs are just released. The area appears to be a rail road marshalling yard.



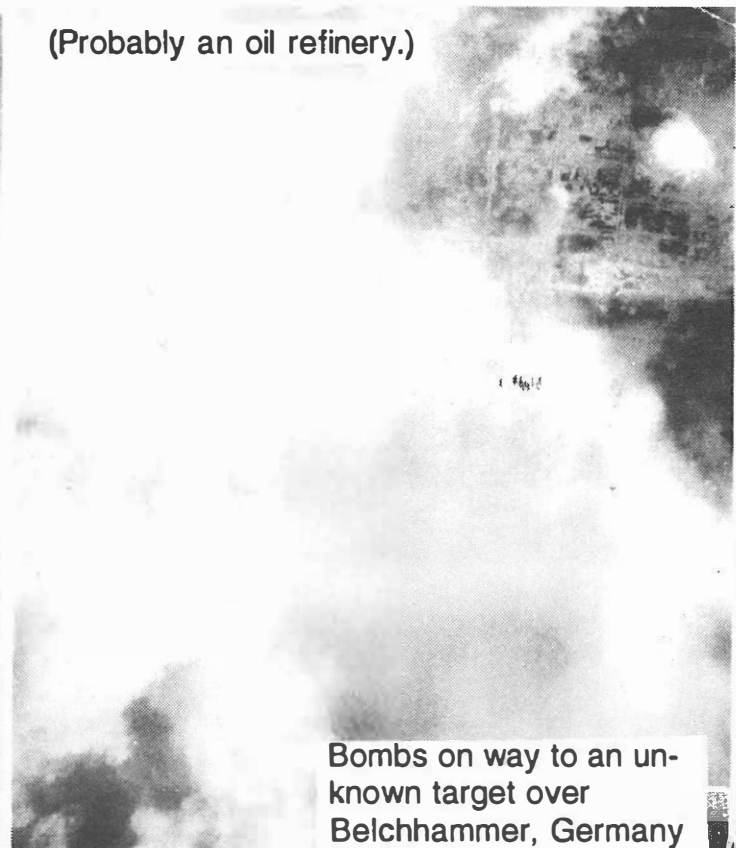
Moosbierbaum, Austria Oil Refinery

Len Hopen's aerial photos. His letter is printed on page 6.



Hell Over Vienna Austria!

(Probably an oil refinery.)



Bombs on way to an unknown target over Belchhammer, Germany

99th BGHS REUNION - MAY 4-9, 1999 OPINION SURVEY

We have an ideal location for our '99 Reunion... TUCSON, ARIZONA - known for blue skies and sunshine, dry air and rich desert vegetation. Located in a high desert valley, Tucson is surrounded by 4 mountain ranges - Santa Catalinas, Rincons, Santa Ritas and Tucsons. It is a diverse city with something to offer everyone. It is a city served by most major airlines - American, Delta, United, America West, Southwest.

Our hotel, DOUBLETREE GUEST SUITES, is a lovely property - 2-room suites, large pool and patio area with beautiful landscaping - the perfect place to be as active or relaxed as you choose. We will also enjoy a delicious full breakfast buffet each morning compliments of the hotel.

Your host committee would like to get an early start so each of you can enjoy the '99 Reunion. Knowing that each of us has different tastes and desires, WE WOULD LIKE TO ASK FOR YOUR INPUT IN SELECTING THE ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK. We have explored the various opportunities and NOW it is your turn. Give us your thoughts and suggestions indicating your interests ... though 8 months away, it is NOT TOO EARLY to make our plans so we can offer the best values to our group.

PLEASE TAKE A FEW MINUTES NOW TO REVIEW THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS AND GIVE US YOUR OPINIONS. We would appreciate hearing from you NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 15, 1998. Mail responses to:

99thBGHS Host Committee
c/o Ien Smith
14171 Desert Glen Drive
Sun City West, Arizona 85375
(602) 546-3643

NOTE---You may answer this SURVEY by letter to LEN by indicating your response as item 1 (give your response) -item 2 (response)-item 3-etc. Or cut the survey out of your newsletter-BUT PLEASE GIVE YOUR ANSWER TO LEN EVEN IF YOU DO NOT NOW PLAN ATTENDING_PLEASE.

1. PIMA AIR AND SPACE MUSEUM - 20 minutes from hotel

200 aircraft on display, from a replica of the Wright 1093 Flyer to the SR-71 Blackbird, fastest in the world, plus the 390th Memorial Museum with its B-17G, and 95th Bomb Group exhibit and, open for touring, the plane used by Pres. Kennedy. Museum runs a close 2nd to Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum.

Requires walking but there is a tram that can accommodate those who have the need.

2. TITAN II MISSILE MUSEUM - 45-60 minutes from hotel

The only remaining of 54 Titan II complexes that had been held in the ready over 20 years during the Cold War. Designated a National Historic Landmark April 6, 1994. Guided tour including the silo. Awesome experience.

Tour takes approximately 1½ hours... 55 steps descending/ascending into the silo. Arrangements will be made for those requiring use of the elevator.

3. MISSION SAN XAVIER DEL BAC -

Founded in the late 1600's by Father Kino, it is an excellent example of mission architecture.

Mission is located off I-19 enroute to the Titan II Missile Museum and could be combined with the Titan II trip and/or Tubac.

4. ARIZONA-SONORA DESERT MUSEUM - scenic 30 minutes from hotel

One of the renowned natural museums in the world with 300 animal species and over 1200 species of plants indigenous to the Sonoran Desert alive in their natural habitat. An outstanding museum.

Requires walking but wheelchairs are available. Drinking fountains, shade ramadas and restrooms are located throughout the grounds. All indoor exhibits are cooled.

5. OLD TUCSON STUDIOS - scenic 30 minutes from hotel

1939 saw an unprecedented set built for the epic motion picture "Arizona" and Old Tucson Studios became a familiar site for many motion pictures and TV productions. After a destructive fire in 1995, it has been rebuilt and is again a recognized leader in theme park entertainment and movie location - bank robberies, shootouts, train ride etc.

Requires some walking. ¼ mile from Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum.

6. DAVIS MONTHAN AIR FORCE BASE - 15 minutes from hotel

Active pilot training base for the A-10 "Wart Hog" and home of the largest aircraft storage facility.

Business luncheon at the Officers' Club. Bus tour.

7. SABINO CANYON - 10 minutes from hotel

In the Catalina Mts., part of Coronado National Forest. Informative narrated scenic tour through the canyon via shuttle tram buses ... stops along the way for those interested in walking all or part of the canyon. An unforgettable experience.

Could be combined with Mt. Lemmon trip.

8. MT. LEMMON - 1 hour from hotel to peak

Highest peak in the Santa Catalina Mts. Spectacular views. A ski lift could provide unusual sightseeing for the adventurous.

Could combine with the Sabino Canyon trip.

9. BIOSPHERE II/ operated by Columbia University - 1 hour from hotel
Encompasses 5 Biomes:rainforest, ocean, savanna, desert
and marsh. A learning, teaching and research center.
Tour involves a film presentation and a 3/4 mile walking
tour - allow 2 hours. (Mixed reviews)

10. De GRAZIA GALLERY IN THE SUN - 20 minutes from hotel
Paintings, bronzes and ceramics by artist Ted DeGrazia.
Next door to the Gallery is his open-air chapel, Mission
in the Sun, decorated with frescoes.
Time spent depends on interest. Popular tour stop.

11. Nogales/Tubac - All day bus trip
Nogales is the gateway to Mexico and a shopper's paradise.
Tubac, oldest village in Arizona is today an art colony.
Could be combined with Nogales and/or the Mission OR
scheduled separately.

12. TOMBSTONE,AZ - All day bus trip
"The Town Too Tough to Die". Visit the O.K. Corral,
Boot Hill - tour an 1882 courthouse and view the
26-minute multimedia presentation narrated by Vincent
Price offering a look at the history of Tombstone.

13. TANQUE VERDE RANCH - 20/30 minutes from hotel
An evening in the desert - outdoor western cookout
and entertainment.

14. SAVOY OPERA HOUSE in TRAIL DUST TOWN - 5 minutes from hotel
Savoy Opera House is a recreation of turn of the century
charm. Located in Trail Dust Town, a western 19th century town
where you can stroll and see authentic western buildings
of that period. A unique southwest experience combined with
a fun evening of dining, dancing and entertainment.

15. ** SPECIAL OPTION - elegant dining in the mansion once the
home of the heiress of Parke-Davis Pharmaceuticals.
Excellent food and service at moderate prices.
Arrangements could be made for small groups.

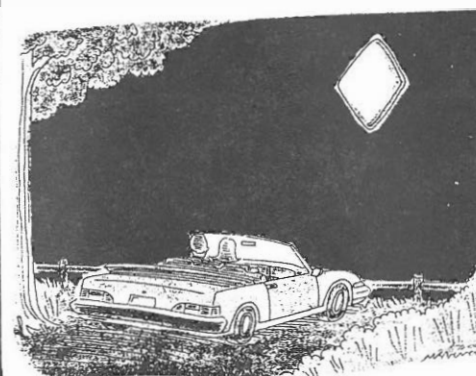
Sure hope we have sparked some interest, tickled your
fancy or whatever... PLEASE LET US HEAR FROM YOU. We will
do our very best to assure everyone has a great time at the
Reunion of 1999.

THANKS!

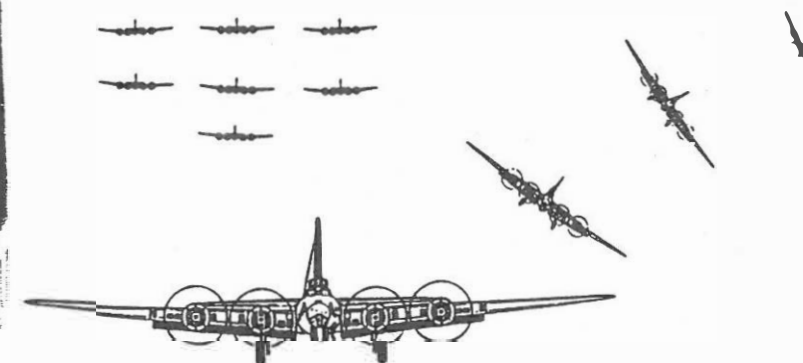
Your host committee...

Note: Costs have not been included since the number of
participants would determine transportation costs.

Having helped plan the San Diego reunion a few years ago I very much understand
the request for members to provide the information requested in the questionnaire
printed on the preceeding several pages. I personally encourage members to
complete these pages and forward to Len Smith without delay. The pages were
placed at the end of this issue for your convenience. If you do not wish to cut them out,
they will be easy to photo copy in this position. Thanks for your cooperation!!



TIME, MAY 4, 1998



99th Bomb Group Historical Society
Walter H. Butler, Treasurer
8608 Bellehaven Place, N.E.
Albuquerque, NM 87112

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DEAR MEMBERS: . . . JIM & MARGE SMITH, OUR SUPER SPRINGFIELD REUNION HOSTS, ARE LOOKING FOR ANY PHOTOS TAKEN OF THE GIRL'S DRILL TEAM THAT DELIGHTED EVERYONE AT THE SATURDAY NIGHT BANQUET. ANYONE HAVING PHOTOS OF THE PERFORMANCE COULD DO JIM AND MARGE A BIG FAVOR BY SHARING THEM. THEIR ADDRESS IS:
1507 West Stone Blvd., Raymore, MO 64083



I, Roy Worthington, am sincerely upset that this issue of our newsletter is a month late in being produced and mailed to members. Our Editor, Bernie Barr, furnished me with the contents very early in our production cycle since he had an appointment for some surgery for his aches and pains. I was on schedule to get this issue to you the first week of August even though the type setting required to print a suitable issue was more than normal. Before I could get every thing in order, however, I came down with a strange illness that put me out of commission for some time. The past week (8/19/98) I have returned to something like my normal self and I plan to get this in the mail by the end of August. Should I have a health problem in the future I'm making arrangements to have an associate carry the load to prevent a delay of this length. At age 79 I guess I can't expect to be healthy every day!



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

