

NEW NEWSLETTER EDITOR

I just wanted to take up a little bit of this newsletter and introduce myself as the new Newsletter Editor. My name is Marty Upchurch, and I am the nephew of Fred Eulert. Fred was the ball turret gunner on the Jim Koehne – Perk Chumley crew that was shot down on the April 2, 1944 mission to Steyr, Austria. For those of you who have made it to either of the past two reunions, I was the guy who brought the big box of B-17 pieces from *Ole Mose*, the plane they were shot down on.

I have been involved with the 99th BGHS for a couple of years now, and am trying to help the group continue by working on getting these newsletters going again. Hopefully I will be able to help with the reunion this fall. Anyhow, I know we were not able to get these newsletters out regularly for the past few years, but I am going to try and do my best to get them out on a quarterly basis. So, if you would like to continue getting the newsletters and did not pay dues last year or yet this year, please send your dues to Jerry with a completed copy of the membership form included in this newsletter.

The next edition will hopefully have more information on the next reunion. If any of you would like to send me an article to use in a future newsletter, please feel free to do so. I'm kind of starting from scratch here so please be patient with me as I work to get the newsletter going on a regular basis again. Take care, and for those of you who want to hear a little more about how I was able to obtain some pieces of *Ole Mose*, you can look forward to reading more about that in the next newsletter.

Sincerely,



Martin E. (Marty) Upchurch

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99th Bomb Group Historical Society
Marty Upchurch - Newsletter Editor
10025 Miranda Circle
Fishers, Indiana 46038

Spring 2009

99TH BOMB GROUP



99th Bomb Group Historical Society Membership information

Name: _____ Squadron: 346 347 348 416 (circle)
Address: _____ Dates in 99th: _____
City, State, Zip: _____ Crew Position: _____
Phone: _____ Prisoner of War: ___ No ___ Yes
E-mail: _____ Interned: _____

Membership Class – Check one of the following:

___ Charter Member (A Veteran or member of the Armed Forces)
___ Member (Related to Charter Member (circle one: Father, Spouse, Brother, Widow, _____))
Charter Member name: _____ Please provide 99th BG
information above if known
___ Associate Member (A research historian or individual interested in 99th BG)

Check one of the following:

___ Address change or update
___ Membership Application Date Completed: _____

Annual dues \$30 per calendar year payable January 1st each year.

Please complete and mail to 99th BGHS Treasurer:

Jerry Buckingham

20 Flathead Drive

Cherokee Village, AR 72529

Phone: 870-257-5535

E-mail: jabuck@centurytel.net

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2008 REUNION – Dayton, OH

A great time was had by all the attendees of the 2008 reunion in Dayton, OH. This reunion had been advertised as possibly the last official reunion of the group, so everyone was glad to get together for what could have been the last official gathering of the group. Highlights of the reunion included a visit to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, with original group members being granted the privilege of entering the B-17G Shoo Shoo Baby, and getting a special tour of the restoration hanger where two more B-17's are being restored, the *Memphis Belle* and *The Swoose*.



One highlight no one will forget was a very memorable trip to the Kettering, OH American Legion Hall. The vans used to transport the group were given a full police escort to the post, and were greeted by the post's band and members cheering and waving flags. The post gave the group a great meal, and also great entertainment with their orchestra performing. Thanks so much to the Kettering American Legion for the great reception and hospitality!

Another highlight for the group was dinner at the Wright-Pat officers club where General Bruce Carlson greeted the members.



Thanks to everyone who attended and assisted with the 2008 reunion!

FUTURE REUNION NEWS

First the good news, yes there will be at least one more reunion! Although the number of our WWII veteran members who are able to attend reunions gets a little smaller each year, those still able to attend have expressed the desire to continue having reunions along with “the kids” for at least a few more years. It was decided to have our next reunion down in New Orleans, a beautiful, historic city that has fought back from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

Now for the (not really too) bad news, because of concerns about possible future hurricanes, the exact time for the next reunion has not yet been established. The best options are to wait until really late in 2009 until after hurricane season has passed, or wait even longer and have the next reunion early in 2010. We also still need someone to host and coordinate this next reunion. Any volunteers?

On a related note, it has also been discussed having future joint reunions with other 5th Wing Group associations. Messages have been bounced around between the boards of the six groups, with some groups being more open to the idea than others. Currently, the 463rd and 483rd associations have shown the most interest in possibly having future joint reunions. The earliest a joint reunion could possibly take place would be in 2010, but neither group has shown much desire to have a reunion in New Orleans. It is envisioned that joint reunions would help the groups to get better rates for rooms and tours due to the larger attendance, but each group would still have their own meetings. More details on this will be included in future newsletters as the plans take better shape.

PHOTOS FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A great number of WWII Air Force photos from the National Archives have been scanned and are available for download from a website called Footnote.com. I have been digging through the photos looking for ones pertaining to the 99th BG, and will be including some of them in the newsletters. I hope you all enjoy them. – Marty



Three men from the 99th BG share a song with their dog, Bigfoot. The dog came from North Africa with the group. The men are (L-R) George Kellett, Herbert Fabry and Everett Strunk.



Six gunners from 99th BG crews hold up fingers indicating how many enemy planes they each have shot down. They are (L-R) William Campbell, Leo Robins, E.R. Worthey, Benjamin Warmer, Edward Jackson & Carlton McGee.

PHOTOS FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Here are some more WWII Air Force photos from the National Archives from Footnote.com. Both photos have been published before with incorrect identifications as planes from the 301st BG. In fact, these photos show the short-lived markings that were to be applied to all 5th Wing planes for a short period starting in May of 1944. All 5th Wing planes were to have a black Y in a white square on the upper tail, and a black number in a white circle on the lower tail. The numbers assigned were 1 for the 2nd BG, 2 for the 97th BG, 3 for the 99th BG and 4 for the 301st BG (the 463rd and 483rd had not joined the wing yet)



Wongo from the 99th shows what conditions on the base in Italy were like in May of 1944.



My Baby was also photographed in May of 1944 flying over the Alps.

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99th BOMB GROUP



99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Marty Upchurch - Newsletter Editor
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Fishers, Indiana 46038

Summer 2009
Addressee
Address
City, State Zip

2009 Reunion is a Go!

The 2009 99th BGHS reunion will be held this November from the 4th through the 8th in New Orleans, Louisiana. We will be staying at the Four Points Sheraton in Metairie. The hotel is just a few miles from the airport, has free parking and a free airport shuttle. It has a café and a restaurant, and will be providing a hospitality room for the group during the reunion. The cost for the hotel, including taxes is \$111.62 per night, and reservations should be made by calling the hotel at 504-885-5700.

The following is the schedule for the reunion:

Wednesday the 4th – Travel to New Orleans & check in at the hotel. The address is:

Four Points by Sheraton
6401 Veterans Memorial Blvd.
Metairie, LA 70003

Thursday the 5th – Morning visit to the WWII Museum. The cost per person will be \$37, which includes transportation from the hotel to the museum and back.

Friday the 6th – Morning steamboat harbor cruise with lunch followed by an afternoon bus tour of New Orleans. The cost per person is \$60, which includes transportation from the hotel and back.

Saturday the 7th – Banquet dinner at the hotel. The cost per person is \$35.

Sunday the 8th – Check out from the hotel and travel home

Please make your reservations with the hotel as soon as possible, as the room rates are only guaranteed until October 22. After that, rooms might still be available but likely not at the group rate. Please make your reservations directly with the hotel, and complete the enclosed form and return it with your check to the following:

Marty Upchurch
99th BGHS Reunion Coordinator
10025 Miranda Circle
Fishers, IN 46038
Phone 317-727-8538

I hope to see you all in New Orleans!

Items from Our Members

After the Spring newsletter went out, a number of you took the time to write me, e-mail me or call me. Several of you even sent me some copies of the memoirs you had written on your time in the service. Although other members of the 99th BGHS may be familiar with the stories contained in the memoirs, others like myself was not.

Among those who sent me information on their service was Lt. Colonel Jack B. Abrams, USAF, Retired. Jack sent me a copy of his service memoirs, and after reading them I asked if he would allow me to reprint sections in the newsletter. The following is an excerpt from Jack's memoirs. Hopefully Jack won't mind that I did a little editing to squeeze in onto two pages.

Sicilian Invasion – July 9, 1943

Three crews were picked from our Group for another special mission. We flew to Sfax, Tunisia, a small town on the east coast of Tunisia. Once there we were transferred to specially equipped planes. There were extra “black boxes” in the radio room. We had no idea what it was and no one volunteered any explanations. Secrecy was paramount. In fact, this mission was so secret that upon returning it was removed from my logbook.

We flew east from Sfax out over the Mediterranean Sea then turned north toward Malta. From there we headed to Cape Passero where our instructions were to circle until 2100 hours then fly back toward Malta. As we were circling over Cape Passero, we noticed that the enemy’s anti-aircraft search lights were just bouncing up and down, down and up. We finally figured out that the extra “boxes” in the radio room were radar jamming equipment. Since the searchlights were connected to the enemy radar and since our equipment was jamming their radar, their searchlights were bouncing around aimlessly. This meant that they would not be able to find our planes that were carrying the paratroops and towing gliders.

At 2200 hours we flew back toward Malta, turned around and headed back toward Sicily. This time we were leading in hundreds of gliders for the Sicilian invasion. Unfortunately, the wind had changed.

Earlier, as we were leaving the coast of North Africa on our outward leg, I did a couple of things. I happened to notice some C-47 troop carriers at a landing strip on the sea side of the mountain range on the coast. For some reason, none that I was aware of anyway, I marked an “X” on that location on the map. No reason, I just did it.

As we got out over the water, I took a reading on the waves – a drift meter reading. This provides an estimate of wind speed and direction based on the direction and size of the waves. Unfortunately, the reading I got was 180 degrees different than what they had given us in the briefing – the wind was coming from the north, not the south as we were told – and pushing 40 knots. A very strong wind from a completely unexpected direction. While I wanted to pass this information on to the rest of the squadron and units involved in this operation, radio silence prevented me from any communication.

We were flying at 700 feet above the Mediterranean Sea where huge waves were being generated by the fierce winds. As we headed toward Sicily, we passed over 3,000 ships in the Mediterranean – the landing forces for the Sicilian invasion.

To interfere with possible enemy fighter planes, the ships had barrage balloons tethered to them. The balloons – at the end of steel cables – reached up into the night sky like quills on a porcupine. Because of the giant waves and the relentless rising and falling of the ships, barrage balloon cables were snapping, sending the balloons skyward. While several loose balloons flew up very near our plane, it was the cable of one that must have snagged our right outboard engine and presented the biggest issue.

At first the problem was dragging this balloon and its cable with only three engines. When the balloon finally freed itself, we found that it had damaged the mechanism for “feathering” the prop – turning the blades so they don’t cause air resistance by “windmilling”. Since they’re not being powered, they need to be turned so they slice through the air rather than creating drag pushing against the air and slowing you down. Without being able to feather the prop, we weren’t going to be able to climb high enough to clear the coastal mountain ranges on our return.

The good news was that feathering the prop wasn’t our immediate issue. We still had to lead the invasion forces to Sicily. As we led the troop carriers and gliders toward Sicily, there was still the situation of the wind coming from the other direction. Unfortunately, when the planes turned on their

ETA, they were many miles south of where they would have been if the wind had been coming from the other direction – the direction we were told it was in the briefing. Tragically, when they turned on their ETA, they were directly above the 3,000 ship armada. Mistaken for enemy planes, 22 were shot down by Allied forces as we would learn later. Sadly, many gliders and the men in them were lost at sea. People die in war. The winner is the side that makes the fewest mistakes.

This brings us back to the situation with the prop that wouldn't feather and our inability to climb high enough to clear the mountains and get back to our base. As we headed south, the clouds started rolling in. We were "socked in"; I was unable to get a fix on any star. I stood in the "bubble", waiting and waiting for a break in the clouds so I could "shoot" 3 stars and get a fix on our position – a necessary component of plotting a course for home (Now GPS-technology can give your position to within 50 feet).

Finally, after what seemed an interminably long time there was a small break in the clouds. I got a shot at Polaris – the North Star, and one other star. And then the clouds closed. Usually, we try to take fixes on 3 stars, plot them on the chart and take their mid-point as our position. Averaging 3 stars this way gave a reasonably good approximation of one's position on the planet. Well, I had only one shot, one fix on one star and Polaris. When the Captain, Harry Burrell, asked if I had plotted a course for home, I told him I only had a rough estimate of where we were. He said that was more of an idea than he had so we should go with it.

I drew a line from where we thought we were to the "X" I had drawn on the map when we passed over the coast and gave the heading to Harry.

Then we waited. It's dark. It's night time. There are clouds. There is no moon, no stars. The only sound, besides the pounding of your heart, is the droning of the engines. There we were – suspended between heaven and earth, between the sky and the sea. In total darkness. Time stops. Your world suddenly becomes very narrow. There's just you, 9 other guys you can't see, all encapsulated in a chunk of flying aluminum, focusing on nothing.

There is an option – we could focus on how this flying chunk of aluminum with all of us in it is going to miss the mountains you hope are somewhere in front of you. "Nothing" quickly becomes the number one option.

We're on a course from where we weren't sure where, to a place we're not sure we're heading for, dangling in the black air 700 feet above the sea.

While you may have guessed that we finally made it (or I wouldn't be writing this now) there is a bit more. As we hoped we were nearing the "X" on the Earth that corresponded with the "X" on the map, we sighted flare pots. It turned out to be the air field we had passed on the outbound leg of the mission – the place I put the "X" on the map.

We radioed; they verified we were friendly, and then we lined up with the landing strip lights. Two of the prettiest parallel lines I have ever seen.

After we landed, I found out that the outfit stationed there was my old outfit – the 60th Troop Carrier group. Besides being happy to be back on solid ground, there was the added positive excitement of seeing people I knew. Bonds form quickly in war. Later in the morning, we manually feathered the propeller so we could reach sufficient altitude to clear the Atlas Mountains at the north end of the Sahara. As we were leaving, someone from the 60th Troop Carrier group yelled out "Take care of Jack." To which Captain Burrell replied "Hell, he takes care of us."

PHOTOS FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

This month's photos from the National Archives illustrate some of the fine artwork that adorned the tails of many of the group's planes in North Africa. The photo on the left is somewhat puzzling though. Group records indicate that plane 23189 was named Superstitious Aloysius, and plane 23018 was named The Red Ass and Sad Sack, but this photo shows plane 23189 with art and the name "The Red Ass" on its tail. Does anyone have any other photos of Superstitious Aloysius or The Red Ass that could clear this up?



Original Caption: Algiers, Algeria – 2nd Lt. Orlof Duker, Los Angeles, California points to the flak damaged tail of B-17 Flying Fortress flying with Northeast Africa Air Force.

Richard Valleau was photographed beside the Sweater Girl after completing his 50 missions.



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Spring 2010
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2009 Reunion Highlights

The 2009 99th BGHS reunion was held November 4th through the 8th in New Orleans, Louisiana. During the reunion we visited the National WWII Museum, and took a bus and steamboat tour of the city. The food was good, the weather was great and the time spent together was fantastic. Along with the sightseeing and socializing, we also conducted the usual business of the group, including electing officers. After serving for the past five years, Dr. Warren Burns has passed the reigns of the 99th BGHS to Jim Levey. We all want to thank Warren for his guidance and leadership for these past years, and look forward to the group continuing on for many years to come.



Dr. Warren Burns (left) and Jim Levey in front of the Steamboat Natchez

The other officers elected during the meeting were Gordon Marshall, Jr. (Vice President), Jerry Buckingham (Treasurer), Howard Christiansen (Secretary), David Hill and Gary Staffo. Additional board members continuing to serve include Marty Upchurch (newsletter). Howard's son Dick has also agreed to continue filling in for his father until Howard's health improves.



Members of the 99th BGHS waiting to board the Steamship Natchez for lunch and a tour along the river front.



Riding the Natchez on the Mighty Mississippi.



Members of the 99th BGHS waiting to enter the WWII Museum.



Veteran members of the 99th Bomb Group in the WWII Museum.

Items from Our Members

Earl Reed's father, Cleofus Reed was in the 99th BG from the spring of 1944. He believes his father was a ground crew mechanic. If anyone remembers Cleofus or has any other information about him, Earl would love to hear from you. Earl's contact information is:

Earl Reed
P.O. Box 1124
Fletcher, NC 28732
Phone: 828-684-7679

1st Lt. Wes Coss Shoot-Down and Escape

In his book, "Stardust Falling," Lt. Wes Coss tells of being shot down on the Salon de Provence, France airdrome mission and his escape. Luckily he was picked up and sheltered by the underground for months before beginning his guarded escape through cities and then in the winter crossing the Pyrenees Mountains to Spain and Portugal. One of his escapee group froze to death.

While awaiting his escape Lt. Coss had an unbelievable, once in a life time experience. He was told to meet a young lady (who spoke English) and follow her. They walked through Salon de Provence to a large home which was elegantly furnished. There they met the young lady's grandfather who wanted to meet the 20 year old recently shot down Army Air Corp pilot. The grandfather was significant to those of us who remember WW I pictures. You will recall having seen pictures of the Armistice, where General "Black Jack" Pershing was shaking the hand of a French general beside a narrow gauge 40 & 8 boxcar. That French General was the grandfather. After WWI he retired to his comfortable home in Salon de Provence

An aside. Wes Coss was flying on the left wing of 3rd element leader Ralph Campbell. I was J. P. Wheeler's copilot and we had been on Ralph Campbell's left wing until an at altitude oxygen check got no response from our ball turret gunner, Ken Bradt. J. P. peeled off immediately and dove down ASAP to get below 12,000 ft. Waist gunners LeRoy Gardner and Joe Miller immediately cranked the ball turret around to get the cover opened and reconnected Ken's oxygen mask.

Ralph Campbell and I have been friends from way back and within the last 6-9 months we were discussing Wes Coss's shoot-down. With serious damage to a wing spar Ralph was undoubtedly hit on the same fighter pass that got Wes Coss. He made it back to our Tortorrello, Italy base. Finally after 65 years I realized that when we peeled out of formation, Wes Coss who was flying 4th element lead took our place on Ralph's left wing and he was shot down. It was likely we would have been the unlucky ones. - J. O. Grizzell

My Austrian Adventure

My tie to the 99th BGHS is through my mom's eldest brother, Fred Eulert. Fred was part of Perk Chumley's crew that joined the 99th BG, 347th BS in 1944 as a replacement crew. On Fred's 5th mission, April 2, 1944 the crew was assigned to a new B-17G named *Ole Mose* and the target for the plane's first combat mission was Steyr, Austria. The plane was hit by flak over the target, and with the controls damaged and at least one engine damaged, they couldn't keep up with the rest of their squadron. After they cleared the flak, they were set upon by a swarm of fighters. The pilots, John Koehne and Ernest "Perk" Chumley managed to keep the plane in the air for about 20 minutes, but the gunners couldn't hold off the fighters and the crew finally had to bail out. Shortly after the last crewmember bailed out, the plane exploded and crashed near a small village in Austria.

In doing research about the loss of the plane, I was able to make contact with a school teacher in Austria whose hobby is researching crash sites. Using information I sent him, my new Austrian friend Roland was able to locate where the plane had crashed and even found several witnesses to the crash and even the capturing of some of the crewmembers, including my uncle Fred. Roland scheduled a visit to the site in the summer of 2006 and met the witnesses. The witnesses had all been children at the time of the crash, but they all had very vivid memories of the event. One of the witnesses was Josef Stoutz, and it was on his family's farm that the wreckage landed. Mr. Stoutz now owns the farm, and he still had photos of the wreckage and even some pieces of the plane.



When Roland made his first visit, Mr. Stoutz forgot he was coming and wasn't able to show him the plane pieces, but he did have several photos of the wreckage taken the day of the crash. About a month later, Roland was able to visit Mr. Stoutz again, and he was then able to see and take photos of the items Mr. Stoutz still had stashed away in his barn.

After his second visit to the site, Roland sent me another CD with photos of the plane pieces. Although I had no idea what most of the pieces were, there was one item that I could identify, a section of engine cowling. The cowling section appeared to be completely intact and the most surprising thing was one photo showed the serial number of the plane stenciled on the inside of the cowling! I know there had been some doubt that this had been the actual site where *Ole Mose* crashed, but now there was absolute proof.

As I continued to exchange messages with Roland over the following year, the desire to go to Austria myself kept growing. I wanted my parents to go, but the trip was too far for them so they said it was up to me. I asked Roland if he would be willing to play tour guide, and he gladly agreed. We checked schedules and found that the end of April to beginning of May was the best time to visit, and Roland had a holiday from teaching at this time as well. Roland checked with Mr. Stoutz and the other witnesses he had met, and they were all available then as well. So on April 27, 2007 I began my journey to Austria.



After flying all night from Indianapolis through Chicago and Frankfurt, Germany, Roland and his wife Elizabeth met me at the airport in Klagenfurt, Austria and we then drove to meet his uncle and some of his family. They were all very warm and gracious, and I learned that Roland's uncle had flown Ju-52 transports for the Germans during the war. After a nice visit with Roland's family, we drove to his hometown of Lienz where I spent the night.

The following day, Roland, Elizabeth and I drove to the crash area. We first went to the home of Mr. Stoutz. Through Roland, he told me he had been in the house that day in April 1944 and had heard the sound of the fighters and the bomber shooting at each other. He had gotten his father's binoculars and ran outside to watch the fight. There were two fighters attacking the B-17, which was on fire and leaving a trail of smoke across the sky. As the planes circled above he could see the crew as they bailed out, and he watched the parachutes drifting down.

After the plane exploded, a couple of laborers working in one of the farm fields ran into the adjacent forest to try and get some protection from the falling debris. Much to their surprise, one of the plane's engines crashed down just a few feet from where they were standing. Fortunately, neither they nor anyone else on the ground was injured.

After we chatted for a while and enjoyed some of his very fine apple cider, Mr. Stoutz took us down into the nearby village. The first house we visited was near the area where Fred reportedly had landed. A woman in this house said she was 16 at the time of the crash. She remembered that Fred had landed in a pine tree near the edge of the forest, and the villagers had to get him out of the tree. As Fred was wounded and couldn't walk, they wrapped him up in his parachute and then carried him on a ladder to a house in the village. While talking with this woman and her family, Mr. Stoutz was showing them a picture of a B-17 I had given him and was pointing out the cowling, which was like the one he had in his barn. He was enjoying telling them about the serial number of the plane being on the cowling. He also had copies of the photos of the wreckage that he was showing everyone, and I noticed he also had another small photo that I had not seen before. It was of a different piece of the wreckage, the rear section of the fuselage. For the rest of our visit in the village I was very anxious that this tiny photo not get lost before I could get a copy of it.

Mr. Stoutz then took us to another house in the village, to see another gentleman. He said his mother had been one of the ones to help Fred, and according to him, Fred had asked for a drink of water which his mother gave him. Later when the German soldiers arrived, they were very angry with her for giving comfort to the enemy. He said she told them she had two sons serving in their army (he had been one of them), and she hoped if they were ever injured and captured, someone would at least give them a drink of water.

The next house we visited was right next-door, and this was the house where Fred had been taken after they got him out of the tree. Of the ten men on the crew of *Ole Mose*, we knew it was Fred that had landed near this village because after he was captured, someone had taken a photo of him in the yard in front of this house. The current residents of this home didn't know anything about the plane crash or Fred having been cared for in their home.



Me (left) in the village, eyeing the small photo I had not seen before. The woman was a witness to the crash and capture of my uncle Fred.



This is a copy of the small photo, and it is about the same size as the original. When enlarged, two of the guns removed from the wreckage can be seen.

They were all amazed at what they were learning talking with Mr. Stoutz, and were somewhat puzzled as to why exactly I was there. As everyone was chatting, I asked Mr. Stoutz (through Roland) if he knew who had taken the photos of Fred and the plane wreckage, and was told there had been a veterinarian in the village who had taken them. The veterinarian also reportedly spoke English and had talked with Fred while he was being cared for.

After visiting with this family for some time, we returned to Mr. Stoutz's home where his wife had prepared a wonderful meal. After lunch, Mr. Stoutz took us into the nearby city of Volkermarkt. After Fred had been in the house for a few hours, German soldiers had brought the crew's pilot, John Koehne in a truck to get Fred, and they then drove him to a hospital in Volkermarkt. We saw the building that had been the military hospital in the city during the war which was where Fred would have been taken. Unfortunately, Fred's internal injuries were so severe that he died later that day. We also visited the church of St. Ruprecht in Volkermarkt, which has a military section in the cemetery that surrounds the church. It was in this cemetery that Fred was initially buried.

After the visit to Volkermarkt, we returned to Mr. Stoutz's farm where he led us to his barn. On a small bench was a box full of pieces of the plane. I was surprised to see among the items were a number of spent 50-cal shells, and even two intact bullets that still had parts of the links attached to them. I couldn't tell what most of the items were, but they included parts of motors, and what appeared to be a fuel tank filler neck and cap, still connected by the chain. The one item I immediately recognized was the cowling section sitting on the ground beside the bench. It still amazes me that a part such as this could survive so long intact, and that the serial number of the plane would be found on it. Mr. Stoutz said he had thought about cutting it up at one point to use on one of his tractors!

After viewing the items, we went out to the field where the wreckage had fallen. Roland had a metal detector and we scanned around for a while to see if we could turn up any more bits of the plane. We did manage to find four or five small fragments of the plane, mostly little bits of aluminum. Mr. Stoutz said it had been years since anything had been turned up while plowing the field. After searching for what seemed like just a few brief minutes, it was time to say goodbye to Mr. Stoutz and his wife. Before we left, Mr. Stoutz generously offered me some of the parts from the wreckage.

Through Roland I tried to express how grateful I was for his hospitality and generosity, and how excited everyone back home would be to see some bits and pieces from *Ole Mose*. I was trying to pick out a few things to take when I finally had to stop and have Roland tell Mr. Stoutz that I would love to have anything he was willing to part with. Without hesitation, he said go ahead and take the whole box of parts. Then he asked, did I want the cowling too? Words couldn't describe how amazed and grateful I was at his offer, and without hesitation I said yes. I had no idea how I was going to get everything home, I just knew that I wasn't going to pass up this incredible offer. We managed to squeeze everything into Roland's little station wagon and then headed back to his home for the night.



Building in Volkermarkt that had been the military hospital. It is now an apartment building.



Church of St. Ruprecht with the military cemetery in the foreground.

The next day Roland, Elizabeth and I drove to the city of St. Paul to meet a couple more witnesses to the crash. Near the city live two sisters, Frieda and Christine, who also witnessed the downing of *Oie Mose*. The sisters were around 7 or 8 years old in 1944, and lived on a farm near the city. Through Roland, they described seeing a group of American bombers flying over their valley, being attacked by fighters. One of the bombers was leaving a trail of smoke across the sky, and as it was trailing the other planes the fighters were really going after it. They also saw some of the crew bailing out of the plane, but the wind blew them in their parachutes over the ridge behind their farm (which is toward the Stoutz farm).

Some time later, they saw someone coming down out of the forest on the ridge. Since they were home alone, they ran down the road to a neighbor's house. The neighbors, including one man with a large rifle, went out and brought the man back to their house. He was one of the American airmen who had bailed out of the burning plane, and he had been wounded in his back. They helped him take off his layers of clothes so they could clean his wound, and the girls were fascinated with his coveralls, as they had never seen a zipper before. The neighbors took him into the house and had him lay facedown on a bench in their kitchen so they could clean his wound.

Before very long, Nazi officers showed up and demanded they turn the man over to them. The neighbors convinced the Nazis to leave him for the time being as he was very weak from his wound, so they left him but sent word back that he had to be delivered into town in a short while. When they finally took him into town, they said they put him on a horse-drawn cart and delivered him to a doctor in the town. Later they saw one of the Nazis walk up into the forest on the ridge, and when he came back he had the parachute from the American airman.

When I met Freida and Christine, it was at Christine's home on her farm outside of St. Paul. This was the very house the girls had run to and where the American had been cared for. They were both curious as to whether I knew who the airman was, and I had an idea it was Donald Perkins based on their description of his wound. I had a copy of the crew's photo taken while they were in training, and when I showed them the photo, they both immediately pointed to the same man, Donald Perkins. I told them I had spoken with Mr. Perkins, and I asked them if I should say hello to him for them when I got back to the United States. They both laughed and said I should.

We chatted for a while, sitting in the same kitchen area where Mr. Perkins had been laid out while they cleaned his wound. Christine's husband was there also, and I learned he had been drafted into the German army during the war and had been sent to Italy to fight. He had been captured by the Americans and spent the last part of the war as a POW. He said although they made him work, it was easy work compared to the farm where he had grown up, and the food was better and more plentiful than it had been in the German army.



Sisters Frieda and Christine, who saw Donald Perkins on April 2, 1944.



Christine's home outside of St. Paul, which had been their neighbor's house in 1944.

After saying goodbye, we drove on into St. Paul. The city is dominated by a huge, old cathedral and monastery. We took a brief walk through the cathedral, and then had a wonderful lunch at an outdoor café. After lunch, we walked through the town to the city office building to meet one more person. Mr. Herrman Primus is the Bürgermeister (mayor) of St. Paul, and his father had assisted Roland in identifying and contacting the witnesses to the downing of *Ole Mose*. Because his mother had suffered a stroke a few months ago, she and his father were away at the time of my visit so I wasn't able to meet him and thank him for all his help. I asked him to thank his father for me, and before we left we exchanged some gifts. He gave me a gift box with some locally made sausage and schnapps. I gave him a flag from the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

The next day I had to pack up to return home. I was able to put a few of the bits from *Ole Mose* in my luggage, but had to leave most of the pieces behind for Roland to ship to me. Before we left, Roland drove me to a farm above Lienz. He had researched the crash of a B-24 on the site and had helped to get a small memorial placed at the site. Roland has helped several others like myself research crash sites, and to then place memorials at the sites. Hopefully someday I will be able to go back and see Roland again, and visit Mr. Stoutz again and the others.

I hope you have enjoyed reading a little bit about my brief Austrian adventure. In the next newsletter, there will be an article about Perk Chumley, and what he has been doing with the pieces of *Ole Mose* I was able to get.

By the way, I did call Donald Perkins when I got home, and he was very tickled to hear I had met the sisters, although he didn't remember seeing them. He mainly remembered a man with a very big gun.

Marty Upchurch
Nephew of Sgt. Frederick Eulert, 347th BS, KIA April 2, 1944

2010 Dues

Just a reminder, if you are not a Life-Member of the 99th BGHS, your 2010 dues were due back in January. They are still \$30 per year. If you have not already done so, please send your dues to:

99th BGHS
c/o Jerome Buckingham
20 Flathead Drive
Cherokee Village, AR 72529

Our next newsletter will contain information on the planned 2010 reunion in Springfield, Illinois. We will also include articles sent in by several of our members. If you need to reach me, my address is on the front of the newsletter, or you can e-mail me at martyjhawk@aol.com or call me at 317-578-3642. – Marty Upchurch