

99TH BOMB GROUP

Volume 33 Issue 1

March 2013

2nd Vice Presidents Message

Thank you, for your continuing support and interest in the 99th BGHS. ***Our 2013 99th BGHS Dues of \$30 were due in January; please send in your check to help us continue to preserve and spread the history of the 99th BG Veterans.*** The 99th BGHS is a not-for-profit 501(c) (19) Veterans organization of about 400 members that is run 100% by unpaid volunteers. There are about four of us who do 99% of the work. We handle hundreds of requests each year from Veterans, families, friends, historical researchers, etc. and all of this is done at the sacrifice of our personal time. We have been working to add new materials to our 99th BGHS Website as this is now the primary source along with contacts from the Army Air Forces website for most of our new 2nd or 3rd generation members.

99th BGHS Mini Reunions!

Inside this newsletter you will find details for two upcoming 99th BGHS Mini Reunion opportunities. Our 99th BGHS "Mini Reunions" are informal get together's where "two or more" of our Members plan to meet at a scheduled event with one or more of our members acting as a POC or informal coordinator. This year we are having a "Mini Reunion" at the Mid Atlantic Air Museum in **Reading PA** the weekend of **June 8-9, 2013** when they have their annual air show. **Rich Walzak** (email: getrich2_1@juno.com phone: 480-248-4208) is the coordinator for this event and his contact information and details on the Mid Atlantic Air Show are provided on pages 9 -11.

We are also doing a "tag a long" with the 451st Bomb Group which is sponsoring a WWII 15th Air Force Reunion in **Tempe, AZ October 17-19, 2013**. **Winson Jones** (email: WinJones@comcast.net phone: 425- 223-2101) has put together an outstanding program and a great deal with the Tempe Embassy Suites Hotel (1-480-897-7444) for special \$89 per night rate if you mention the 15th Air Force Reunion by March 31, 2013! Check out the 451st BG website (<http://www.gordons.ws/reunion>) for all of the details on the Reunion Agenda. The preliminary Activities and Registration Form are provided on pages 12-14.

Challenges

The 99th BGHS has taken the lead in trying to preserve, organize and share our 99th BG history with a wider and new audience. Working closely with and building upon the outstanding historical research done by Dick Drain for the 99th BG and the 5th Bomb Wing we are trying to fill in some of the gaps and we are pressing forward with great ideas as demonstrated by the 99th BGHS Historical Calendar and the recent additions to our Website. ***Do not wait until later, do it now, send in your material or contact Gary or Jerry and they will work with you to preserve your materials and your history for posterity, and for the 99th BGHS.*** Allow us an opportunity to discuss with you all your options (e.g. pass on to family; donate to a local museum; donate to the Friends of the 99th; or work with you to make copies if you wish to sell it and give you an idea of the items value, etc.), and some of our members may be interested in directly purchasing some of your WWII memorabilia. During the last several reunions our members have brought in photos, scrapbooks, orders, patches, letters, and other memorabilia that we have preserved for our history. Some of this donated material has already been shared with you in our Newsletter and calendar, and much more is on the way. We take painstaking care of these original materials and where requested they are safely returned to the owner after duplication.










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

Announcing Friends of the 99th



Under the umbrella of the 99th Bombardment Group Historical Society (a tax-exempt not-for-profit 501 (c)(19) organization), we are pleased to announce the formation of the **Friends of the 99th** to enable our members and other parties to more easily make financial and material donations to the 99th BGHS. The Friends of the 99th will provide an acknowledgment of your donation, for tax purposes and as a permanent record of your contribution.

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

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



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

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

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

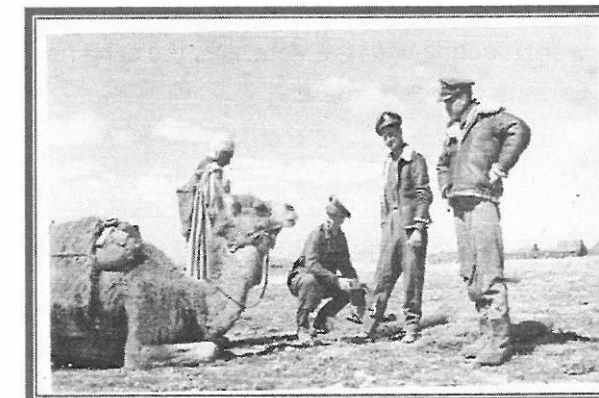


If you would like to **make a material donation** of books, photos, articles, memorabilia or other items pertinent to the 99th BG, you can make arrangements through:

Gary T. Staffo, 99th BG 2nd Vice President
6226 Garden Road
Springfield, VA 22152-1504
202-586-9577
gstaffo@verizon.net

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

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



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

98th Bomb Wing Reunion and 99th BGHS
Honor Ploesti Veterans, Shreveport Louisiana, October 2011

By Lorraine Henning Kiewiet*

Over a four-day period in October 2011, in a Holiday Inn on the "Other Side of Louisiana," I continued my journey to hear the stories that my father (James Henning 99BG 416BS, with 4232074 OH! JOSIE photo below) didn't tell me about being a member of a World War II Army-Air Force B-17 bomber crew. The more I hear, the more I understand why he did not want to talk about it! And the more I want to connect with these wonderful veterans and keepers of America's captivating WWII history. It's a miracle that I'm here today based on research I have done. My dad has passed on, but the affinities I share with these others somehow bring me closer to the side of my dad I never knew.



The combined reunion highlights were meeting with the Veterans, the exhibits provided by the Air Force Historical Society, and the trip to Barksdale Air Force Base.

The exhibit in the hotel ballroom was organized by Robert Coalter, a director of the Army Air Corps Library and Museum. You can contact Robert at (214) 957-1393, or rc@armyaircorpsmuseum.org. Visit their website at www.ArmyAirCorpsMuseum.org. The museum accepts donations of uniforms, medals, equipment, personal items, paperwork, books, photos, etc. from the era of the Army Air Corps.



The ballroom exhibit included different uniforms worn by the men, as well as enlarged photographs of the different Ploesti raider groups. There were several scrapbooks of memorabilia—photos and diary pages.

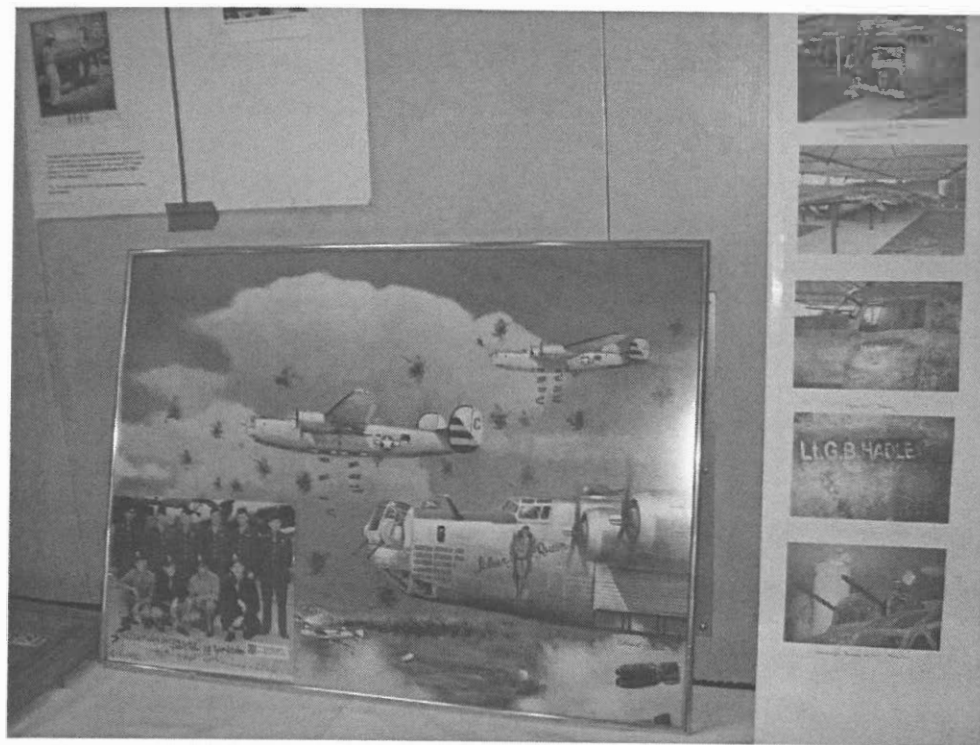
The purpose of the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society (BGHS) is to preserve and spread the history of the 99th BG and the critical role they played in helping to preserve our freedom during WWII.

Under the umbrella of the 99th BGHS (a tax-exempt not-for-profit 501 (c) (3) organization), there is the **Friends of the 99th** to enable members and other parties to more easily make financial and material donations to the 99th BGHS. The Friends of the 99th will provide an acknowledgment of your donation, for tax purposes and as a permanent record of your contribution.

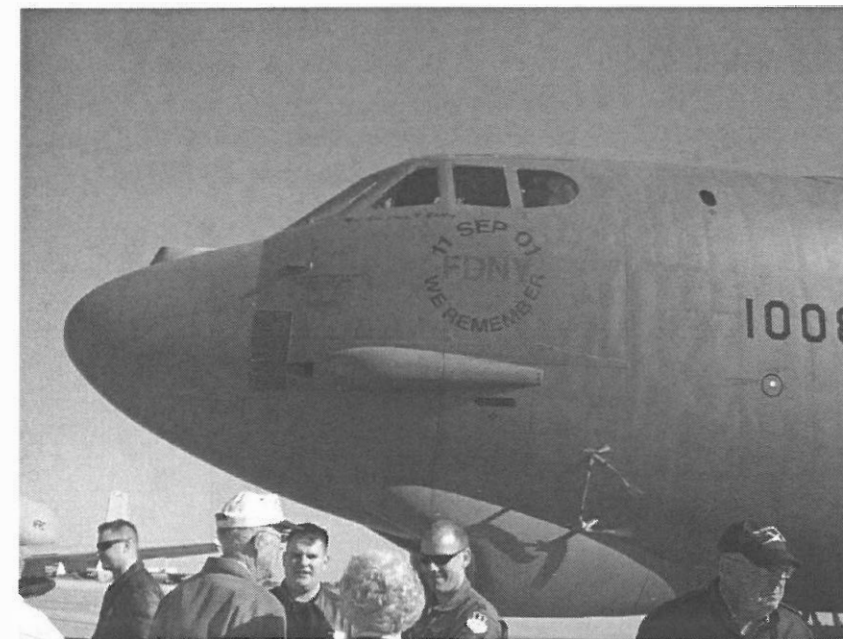
Contact the 99th BGHS for an opportunity to discuss all your options (e.g. pass on to family; donate to a local museum; donate to the Friends of the 99th; etc. and they will work with you to preserve your materials and your history for posterity, and for the 99th BGHS. The website for the 99th Bomb Group Historical Society (BGHS) is www.99BombGroup.org

A souvenir pin I received at the reunion shows the B-17s above and the B-24s flying low. There were many souvenir tee shirts, jackets, caps, etc. available for B-24 group. The web site for the B-24 Ploesti raider group is <http://www.459bg.org/>.

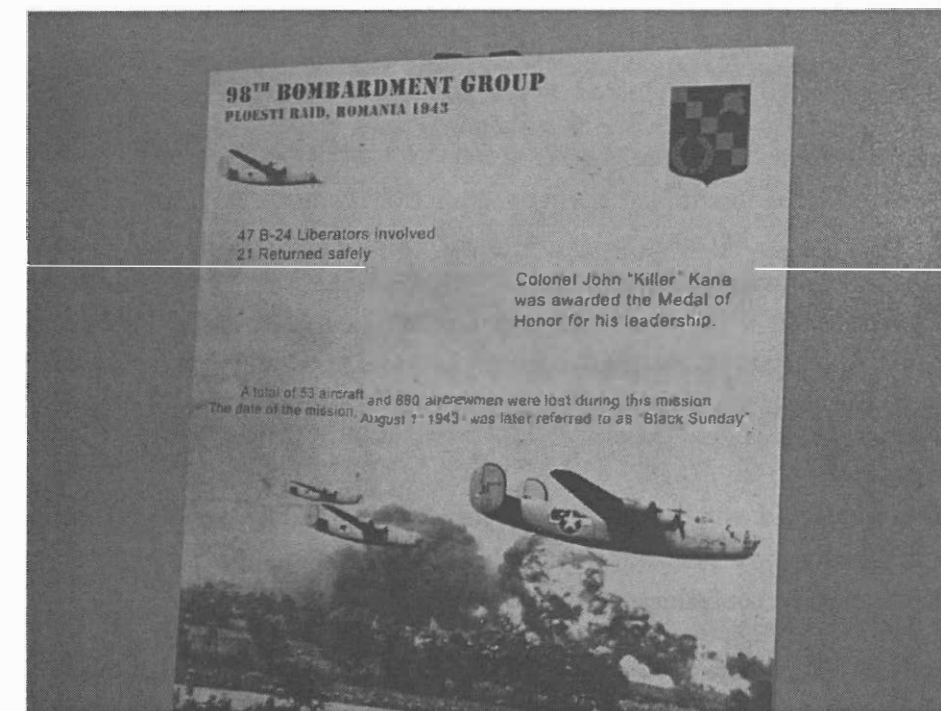
The 99th BGHS also sponsors mini-reunions, and subsidized member prices for various 99th BG memorabilia such as hats, squadron patches, bumper stickers, and the 99th BGHS Historical Calendar. They also are selling for \$50.00, to members only, the last copies available of "**The Diamondbacks - The History of the 99th Bomb Group (H)**".



Then we gathered in the ballroom for presentations and impromptu sharing of stories from the veterans. After that, a group photo as partially shown above. Only two 99th BGHS veterans were able to be there, Charles Steffens (348BS) and Hal Grant (346BS). In the photo above, Charles is in the top row, third from the left. Charles attended with his daughter. He is pictured in the 99th BGHS book "The Diamondbacks" on page 53.



The Barksdale Air Force Base tour was a windy one! The weather was sunny and bright, but few of us could withstand the high winds for very long to enjoy the up-close look at the B-52 that was available to us. We were offered the opportunity to climb into it, but frankly, most of us just wanted to get in out of the windy weather. There were 57 B-52's lined up or in hangars at Barksdale AFB. They can fly around the globe without refueling, and their young crew is fully trained to carry nuclear weapons. But they also enjoy doing "fly-overs" (unarmed) for sports events. After the B-52 tour, we had lunch in the enlisted men's banquet hall. At each table, young Air Force men and women were welcoming and so happy to meet the vets. For our departing night, Barksdale AFB invited us back for a BBQ at the Officers' hall. Air Force servicemen grilled beautiful steaks to order! Inside, there was the salad bar, adult beverage bar, and such great companionship.



Historical note: Ploesti, Romania was where the commercial refinement of oil began in 1857. Ploesti was the first city in the world to tap into the earth's oil riches. After the first year of WWII, Ploesti refineries were producing nearly a million tons of oil a month—40% of Romania's exports and the highest octane (90) aviation fuel in Europe. This refinery supplied Hitler with anywhere from one third to two-thirds of what was needed to

fuel the Nazi war machine. Hitler had a huge oil refinery and oil reserves. This oil was brought up from Libya and stored here to help Hitler's troops in southern Europe.

A side trip for our group included visiting the music hall where Elvis Presley made his debut, and all of the country western stars of the radio era could be seen live, on-stage, for 25 cents. After that, we had an authentic Cajun lunch.



Hal Grant (99BG 346BS) and his wife Bertgie can be seen seated on the right end of the first table at the left of the photo above.

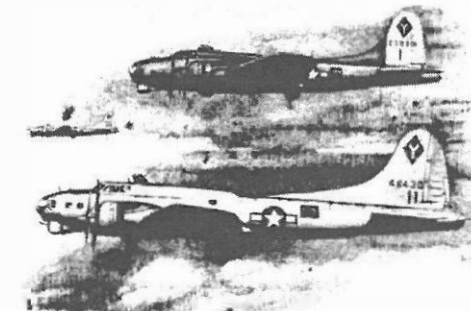
The Ploesti raiders were charged with departing from their base in Benghazi (the hometown of former Libyan dictator Moamar Khadfi) and flying more than 2,100 miles to take out the Ploesti targets. The objective was to eliminate Hitler's energy supply and stall the Nazi war machine. When the Allies had bases in Italy, the 15th Air Force was based in Foggia, Italy. The 99th BG flew 13 missions from Tortorella Field to Ploesti starting on April 5, 1944 and the final mission was on August 18, 1944. During this period a review of our 99th BGHS database lists seven aircraft lost (4238207, 42107000, 4232035, 42106991, 42106995, 4232028, 4232068) on these missions over Ploesti.

The combined Ploesti raids were first conducted with the 98th Bomb Wing of early B-24 low level flights close to the ground in 1943, and later in 1944 with the B-17s flying at altitude high above. Thus, the early low level flights hoped the Nazi ground defense could be confused as to how to defend the site.

When we watch the movie "The Longest Day" and we watch the Nazi high brass scrambling to find out why the tanks are not being moved around to get to Normandy, the answer is, "they were out of gas!" because of the Ploesti Raiders, because of our B-17s from the 99th Bomb Group.

***99th BGHS Editor's Note: This article has been edited to provide additional information on the 99th BGHS.**

THE 99TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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

99th BGHS Mini Reunion Reading PA June 8-9, 2013
Mid Atlantic Air Museum (MAAM) Air Show

Dear Members,

Thank you, for your help to preserve and spread the history of the 99th BG. On behalf of the 99th BGHS it is my great pleasure to serve as your Host to provide you information, coordination, and assistance with the 99th BGHS Mini Reunion at the Mid Atlantic Air Museum in Reading PA during the weekend of June 8-9, 2013.

I look forward to working with you on the 99th BGHS Mini Reunion at the Mid Atlantic Air Museum in Reading PA during the weekend of June 8-9, 2013. **Please contact me directly by email or phone ASAP to coordinate your attendance and help you with any questions you have concerning hotels, transportation and the MAAM Air Show.** The next two pages provide some brief highlights about the MAAM Air Show, but you really need to go online to see all the details of what goes on at this fantastic show.

NOTE: 99BG Veterans if you plan to attend please contact me ASAP so that we can coordinate with the MAAM Staff to ensure you receive "special guest" recognition and support.

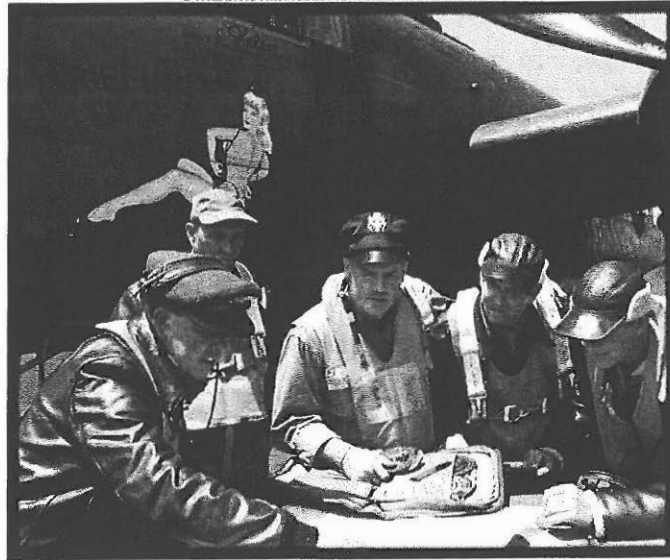
We hope you are able to take advantage of this upcoming opportunity for our members to get together at the "Mini Reunion". We hope the success of this and other projects will encourage even more members to send in to us additional 99th BG photos for consideration for the calendar, and more importantly, for cataloging in our 99th BGHS historical archives. We can always use more pictures for the archives and any letters, orders, articles etc. can help us with our research and also provide more information for the many requests we get each month. We are especially interested in WWII 99BG aircraft photos, crew pictures and those taken in theater.

This Mini Reunion provides another living memorial to help preserve and spread the history of the 99th BG and the heroic men who made our freedom possible today. Your continuing contributions and support for the 99th BGHS are deeply appreciated. May God bless you and your family with good health, good friends, and good times.

Edward Walzak 416
566 Greenwood Court
Harleysville, PA 19438-3093
Phone: 480-248-4208
email: getrich2_1@juno.com

99th BGHS Website: www.99BombGroup.org

MID-ATLANTIC AIR MUSEUM'S 23rd ANNIVERSARY WORLD WAR II WEEKEND A GATHERING OF WARBIRDS JUNE 7-8-9, 2013



EXTRA THE STARS AND STRIPES EXTRA THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE FRONT!

(Hit your browser's refresh button to read the latest news.)

OH HELLDIVER!

The Commemorative Air Force's West Texas Wing is offering a whopping \$150 discount for pre-show reservations to fly as the gunner on their beautiful SB2C-5 "Helldiver" at our WWII Weekend. All you have to do to take advantage of the deal is call the MAAM Office (610) 372-7333 between 9:30 AM - 4 PM before June 6 to make your reservation.

PILOTS MAN YOUR PLANES!

Reservations are now being accepted for the Mustang, Dauntless, Helldiver, Mitchell, and Flying Fortress. Call the museum at (610) 372-7333 between 9:30 AM - 4 PM to sign up for your seat aboard your choice of one these historic warbirds. But don't wait too long, or that entry on your bucket list may go unfulfilled, because many of the schedules will fill before the show.

Reservations for the B-24 and B-29 are not taken by the museum (see the bulletin below).

Flights aboard MAAM's quartet of trainers, the Stearman, Cornell, Valiant, and Texan, are not reserved, so sign up for these at the show.

All together, that's eleven different legendary aircraft from which to choose! Wahoooo!



WWII Weekend Web Latest Updates

3-13 New Special Guest Posted

3-2 All Warbird Ride Reservations Open

2-18 B-24 & B-29 Ride Reservations Open

1-9 Airshow Roster Posted

1-14 Special Guests Posted Spitfire & Liberator Added

1-15 B-25 "Georgie's Gal" Added

1-17 Online and Mail-Order Tickets On Sale

1-25 B-29, B-24 & C45 confirmed for show.



Music, Music, Music!

There are lots of great old songs and period radio broadcasts scattered throughout the WWII Weekend web pages. Almost every page features something for your listening pleasure. Just look for and click on the music symbol...



Play the Background Music



Some Tips on Playing The Audio Files



webmaster and developer Bill Rainbow



Web hosting services by...



SIGN UP NOW FOR THE HEAVIES

The Commemorative Air Force is now taking reservations for flights aboard their B-29 Superfortress "FIFI" and B-24 Liberator "Diamond Lil". Please note this change in procedure over past years - the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum is NOT taking the reservations for these two planes. You must sign up directly with the CAF, and you will receive a discount for signing up on-line. Direct links and all the information will be found on the B-24 and B-29 ride pages - just follow the Warbird Rides bomb link on the right.

THE BIG GIRL IS COMING!

The world's only flying B-29, "FIFI", has confirmed and will, along with her hangar-mate, the B-24 "Diamond Lil" will be selling rides at World War II Weekend. All the details can be found on the Warbird Rides Page. The bomb link will take you there, then click on the aircraft photo or the Price-Details-Schedule link for information. The CAF will be taking all reservations on these two planes, so please don't call the museum. To sweeten the deal, you'll save money by reserving with the CAF online - from \$100 to \$25, depending on your seat selection. So don't wait to long, because the best seats sell out fast.

Also travelling to Reading with the CAF will be the beautiful Beech C-45F "Bucket of Bolts" in RAF livery, and one of their many AT-6 "Texans".

23rd ANNUAL WWII WEEKEND ADVANCE TICKETS ON SALE, NOW!

The time to order your discounted advance tickets for this year's big show and save some cash has arrived! No price increase, and you will save \$2 on single day adult and children's tickets, and a whopping \$8 on the 3-Day Pass, your best bargain! Here's the timetable:

On-line and Mail-Order Ticket Sales are open now!

Telephone Orders will be accepted beginning on February 1st.

Walk-In sales at the Museum Office and Remote Walk-In Ticket Sales at your local Boscovs and Redner's Markets will commence on April 1st.

Don't wait until the last minute to order to reduce the possibility of tickets getting delayed in the mail. Please see all the details and conditions on the WWII Weekend Show Ticket Page.

WEEKEND AIRSHOW PAGE POSTED

A list of this year's Airshow Performers for the 2013 Mid-Atlantic Air Museum World War II Weekend has been posted. As usual, we have an exciting mix of WWII aircraft on both flying and static display, some of which you can tour, and at least nine of which you can fly aboard! Please hit the Airshow Roster bomb link to see who's confirmed, so far.

Flight schedules will be posted and reservations for warbird rides will be accepted beginning March 1st.

WWII WEEKEND OFF THE BEATEN PATH

There's a video on YouTube with some great highlights of last year's big show. Give it a look-see.

WWII WEEKEND ON FACEBOOK

The Mid-Atlantic Air Museum is on Facebook! Please check it out and become a fan, then invite all your friends to do the same. You are welcome to post your own WWII Weekend comments, photos, and videos on the page. Pass it on, buddy!

HERE ARE THE DATES FOR FUTURE WWII WEEKEND SHOWS





**451st Bombardment Group (H) - 49th Bomb Wing
 99th Bombardment Group (H) - 5th Bomb Wing
 455th Bombardment Group (H) - 304th Bomb Wing**
together with
The Arizona Liberator Group
 Are Jointly Sponsoring a 2013
Reunion of Survivors of the Air War in Europe

2013 Joint Reunion	Information and Program	Registration Form	Contact Reunion Coordinator
------------------------------------	---	-----------------------------------	---

Planned Reunion Activities and General Information
 Joint Reunion of the 451st Bombardment Group (H) WW II
 with other European Air War Units
 Tempe Embassy Suites Hotel, Phoenix, Arizona
 17th-19th October 2013

2013

*Th
 all sur
 Europe*

Thursday, 17th October

1:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Early arrival and registration
-------------------	--------------------------------

**2013 Re
 2013 Re
 Embass
 Comme
 99th Bo
 455th B
 Arizona**

Friday, 18th October

Optional Bus Tour and Luncheon at the Commemorative Air Force Museum.

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Registration
6:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Evening Sit Down Dinner in honor of Bomb Group Members with informal speeches and entertainment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6:00 PM - Cash Bar* • 7:00 PM - Sit Down Dinner

Saturday, 19th October

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Morning Meeting about the 15th Air Force
2:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Afternoon Meeting about the 15th Air Force
6:00 PM - 10:00 PM	Gala Banquet (Semi-formal attire requested; sport coat with or without tie) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6:00 PM - Cash Bar* • 7:00 PM - Sit Down Dinner • 8:00 PM - Big Band music and dancing

Registration Fee: \$100 per person

(* Registration Fee does not include the cash bar or the optional bus tour on 10/18)

Attire: Casual dress for all events with the exception of the Saturday Night Gala Banquet for which semi-formal attire is required.

Travel: Phoenix is served by a number of airlines including Southwest, a carrier that generally offers quite favorable ticket prices. Embassy Suites provides a free airport shuttle service as well as free parking for guests traveling by automobile. The hotel service includes a free breakfast bar

Hotel:

Embassy Suites Hotel
 4400 S. Rural Road, Tempe, Arizona 85282
 Hotel Direct Line: 1-480-897-7444
Mention the 15th Air Force Reunion to obtain the special \$89 room rate.

<!--[if !supportMisalignedColumns]--><!--[endif]-->

Use your Browsers "Print" function to print this form on your printer.

2013 Reunion Registration Form

Return To: 451st Bomb Group Reunion
c/o Winson Jones
18502 NW Montreux Drive
Issaquah, WA 98027

From: (Print your return address in the space below. Please print clearly in dark ink.)

winjones@comcast.net Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Registration Information:

Basic Registration Fee	_____ X \$100 per person =	\$
Optional Bus Tour - 18 October 2013	_____ X \$ 20 per person =	\$
Total (Make checks payable to : 451st Bomb Group)		\$

Arrival Information:

Are you staying at the Embassy Suites Hotel ? Yes ___ No ___ Your Arrival Date: Thursday 10/17 ___ Friday 10/18 ___

I plan to arrive by: Plane ___ Car ___ RV ___ If by plane, will you need transportation to/from the Airport? Yes ___ No ___

Meal Selection:

For the dinner entrees, I/we have selected the following: (Please select one entrée for each attendee)

Friday Dinner: Chicken Breast ___ Salmon ___ Steak ___ Saturday Dinner: Chicken Breast ___ Salmon ___ Steak ___

Specify how name should be listed on the name tag:

My Name Tag	_____
Spouse's Name Tag	_____
Guest's Name Tag	_____

Service Information:

If you were an air crew member:

Were you shot down: Yes ___ No ___ Were you a prisoner of war: Yes ___ No ___

Number of Missions: _____

If you are a Survivor of the air war in World War II, what was your group number? _____

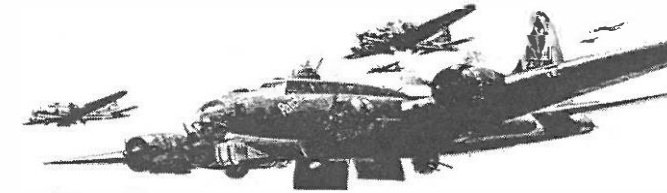
List your duty position (pilot, tail gunner, mechanic, etc.): _____

List Medals awarded: _____

Attach your Air Force history (write-up) if available.

If not a Survivor, describe your relationship to a Bomb Group Member: _____

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
 When: _____ Where: Stalag Luft ___
 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

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

E-mail: Gstaffo@verizon.net

MEMBERSHIP NOTE

2013 99 BGHS Membership DUES \$30 Please Send In ASAP!

Inside this issue:	Page
99th BGHS NOTE: We Need Your Support 2013 Membership Dues \$30!	1
Friends of the 99th	2-3
99th BGHS and 98th Bomb Wing Honor Ploesti Veterans, October 2011	4-8
99th BGHS Mini Reunion, Mid Atlantic Air Show, Reading , PA June 8-9, 2013	9-11
15th AF 451st BG and 99th BGHS Mini Reunion, Tempe, AZ October 17-19, 2013	12-14
99th Bomb Group Historical Society (BGHS) Membership Information	15