

SHORT BURSTS

Air Force Gunners Association

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MEMORIES AROUND HERE—COME AND COLLECT SOME OF YOURS TO KEEP FOREVER
RENO—SEPTEMBER 10-13, 2015



AFGA PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE - LARRY LEWANDOWSKI



Greetings to everyone from the thawing North Country. Hopefully it will start to thaw out soon. Next week we are supposed to get into the 30 degrees temperature zone!!

We have had quite a year in happenings. Our BX Officer, Neil Richards had to resign due to serious health problems. Neil worked hard for us and we wish him well. Our Vice President Rick Swain passed on, and our Chaplain Iggy Cruz suffered a heart attack, but is recovering okay. This leads me to make another pitch to many of you younger gunners (below 70 years) to step up and get into the action of the AFGA. We need volunteers to keep this organization functioning. Throw your name in the pot.

The new BX Officer I appointed was Robert Dick Jr. He volunteered and has a great deal of experience in this line of work. He will be up for election to this position at Reno in September. Bob will also handle our website duties.

Speaking of websites, we have just about completed our new one. Some minor things to clear up and then running full bore. Try it out (www.Gunners.us) it will connect you to our home page. Any problems with the site, please contact our Editor Bob Matherly or BX Officer Bob Dick. It was a long time in the making and kudos certainly go to Neil Richards and Bob Matherly for all their hard work to complete this project. At least now we are in the new digital age!

In 6 months we will be celebrating our 15th Reunion in Reno, Nevada. There are a number of programs we have for your entertainment. It is always a good time to share with old friends as well as make new ones. Get your reservations in to Dan Danish as soon as possible.

Have a great summer and we'll see you in Reno.

C'est la Vie

Larry

NEIL RICHARDS - RETIRING BX/WEBMASTER COMMENTS

Due to recent problems with my health, I have had to resign as BX Officer and Webmaster. To all those interested, none of my health problems have been life threatening, however they have profoundly affected my mobility and endurance.

I can walk only short distances, with a walker or cane, but use a scooter as my primary mobility device. I can't stand upright more than a few minutes without severe pain in my back, legs and feet. These issues have made fulfilling my duties nearly impossible.

During my tenure, I have been honored to serve as BX Officer, assuming that position from Parker Blake after the Omaha reunion. I put the BX into the computer age, finding a freeware program to inventory and invoicing. I have done my best to keep the BX stocked with items regularly purchased by members and acquired new merchandise requested by members when demand was sufficient.

In 2011, I volunteered to take over the Gunners Web Site from Joe Preiss. I had no previous experience in web maintenance, but our site was very simple and I had quite a bit of other computer software knowledge and experience. I was able to maintain the web site, and make updates, with some trial and error pretty effectively. However, in 2013 our website began experiencing constant injection of malware that made it impossible to access. Our Microsoft Front Page software was 10 years old and was no longer supported. It didn't have the features and security to ward off these attacks. Therefore we had to restore the site without some of the previous files and features to reduce the threat. A new site has been designed and is on line at www.gunners.us.

Fortunately, we had a new member, Bob Dick who is very competent in computer technology and especially web technology volunteer to take over as BX Officer and Webmaster. Bob is an 80s-90s gunner and active member of the Facebook B52 Gunners group and Administrator of the "Fans of the B-52 Stratofortress" group.

During the transition from me as a BX officer to Bob Dick, please be patient if you make an order and it takes extra time to fulfill.

Thanks for allowing me to serve you over these past years....hope to see you in Reno. NEIL

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QUICK NOTE: The AFGA BX will continue to closed until Bob Dick Jr. can get the inventory from Neil Richards who had to step down for health reasons. As soon as Bob gets the inventory, he will let us all know and open up the BX for order taking again. Keep watch on www.gunners.us for the announcement of it's opening.

EDITOR'S COMMENTS - BOB MATHERLY



March 1st...finally finishing this edition of the Short Bursts up and sending it off (via internet) to our printer for them to print a proof copy for me to see. Should be in the hands of our subscribers beginning in early April...hope that is when you are reading this —EARLY in the month.

Seems like there are numerous long articles in this issue occupying more than one or two pages. All were interesting to me so I figure they will be of interest to most (if not all) of our members. Our Final Fly By section seems to be growing—and as one expect—many names are beginning to appear that we all know. It is part of life and the part we play is in REMEMBERING our friends....I hope this continues to be one way of helping us to remember them.

We have had several MAJOR changes occurring this year in the AFGA beginning with the loss of our Vice President and now with Neil Richards having to step down as our BX Officer and Web Master for health reasons. We were very fortunate in having Bob Dick Jr. step up and assume this position. While the transfer of all the BX inventory is still in works today, hopefully by the time you get this edition of the Short Bursts, some, if not all of the inventory will be in Bob's hands and the BX is either open or about to be opened. Watch the web for announcements on this. If you do not have a computer, call Bob at the number provided and check in with him to see what the availability of items are that you might want. Our website is now available to view at www.gunners.us. It is much like our old one and has 5 years of Short Bursts on line as well as this most recent one. As usual, one needs the ID and password to access the most recent SB on line. Call me or Chuck Dean for password if you have forgotten yours.

The Reno Reunion information is available on line and in this issue as well. See that I left off the costs of the room in the previous editions but got it into this issue along with a couple of other updates on the reunion hotel amenities and banquet menu descriptions that were needed. Time to start making your reservations and getting your registration sent to Dan Danish so he can compile the information needed without having a last minute surge to work through—the earlier the better for him also.

Bob Dick is working up a reunion cup for this reunion. Shown is a 325th BS reunion cup he designed. He will take orders as soon as he gets the design up—it will be something on the order of this 11oz cup but have the Reno Reunion logo, your name, date, AFGA Logo, etc. on it. More details will be on line once he gets the final design worked out. Here is one he did for the 325th Bomb Squadron reunion to give you an idea—and one he did for me. He is offering a 15oz cup also—I have a personal one he made in 15oz size—like it much better. See more comments in BX Officer section about these cups as well as other personalized cups coming available.



Pete Karjanis and Bill Gaddes provided many inputs for this edition and these were greatly appreciated. I continue to look for more inputs from our WWII and Korean War veterans—we do value those experiences and like to share them with all. Getting the written word out to all is the only way we can document our history as bomber gunners. I can take it in any form you wish—hand written is fine - does not have to be typed or off the computer. Another major change coming up will occur when we have our Business meeting at the reunion. I will be stepping down as the Editor and I will recommend/nominate that Pete Karjanis be elected to the position. Pete has volunteered to step up and take on this important position. The new editor is going to really need inputs when he assumes the Short Bursts Editor's position after the Business Meeting in Reno....Going to be a fun time for him over the coming years as he settles into this position. I hope all of you continue to provide the support and inputs to him as you have provided to me these past years. Your inputs are what makes this publication what it is....without them, don't think there would be much interest in anyone reading it. My thanks to all who continue to provide these interesting notes, personal experiences and articles of interest to us.

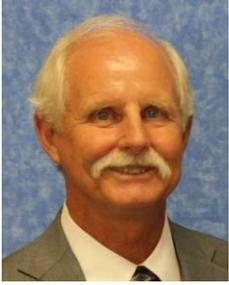
The 2015 Membership Roster was sent to ALL AFGA Members—Active and In-Active in hopes of touching as many as we could with the news of the Association and the upcoming Reno Reunion. I somehow “missed” a few obvious errors in this one. The most obvious one was the title block on page 7 where I put California in place of Nevada Don't know where I was when I did that one. A couple of duplicate pages, double addresses and some addresses that were no longer current got in there also. All in all, though, it was pretty accurate with the addresses THAT WE HAD...Chuck Dean does a great job in keeping the addresses current but can only do so long as you remember to notify him when moving so he can update the records. I think we had 59 incorrect addresses when our printer checked with the post office to “validate” them. Those 59 addresses were updated into our new listing in the roster. Next Membership Roster goes out in 2017.

We said good bye to one of our best known gunners back in the 60s and 70s - CMSgt Willie Hoff passed away this past February. I expanded the Final Fly By coverage for him because of who he was and what he meant to us. Editor's choice I guess because I don't do that for all...and know all are important. Hope none of you are offended for the expanded pages. We certainly will miss him.

That's about it for this issue...want to remind all to keep those cards and letters coming in (and yes, I said that above also) they are really important to me and allow so much more interesting article to appear that what I ever could come up with myself. This publication exists for all the members so I try to keep the stories as varied as possible.

Hope to see many of you in Reno in September.....John Stallings and Larry have worked hard on this—we thank them for their efforts! It should be a good one. Come join in the making of memories.....you just might enjoy it. **Bob**

MEMBERSHIP CORNER - CHUCK DEAN



Winter is here in the South as I type, we are getting freezing rain today. It will not be long and spring will be here. I'll be heading to Augusta, Ga in about 12 days to help get the course ready for 2015 Masters golf tournament. As we all know, our next reunion is only six (6) months away, so start planning to attend. Hope we have the best attendance ever for a reunion.

Our active membership is still around 1000 members with the majority being Life Members.

We have five (5) new members this quarter. Sad to say however, we have lost quite a few of our members in the past few months. It is important that we continue to actively solicit new members for OUR association as we lose our senior members. If you know of someone that was a gunner ask them if they are a member. If they are not, give them the Membership form out of your Short Bursts or have them get in touch with me.

Accurate address information still seems to be an issue. However, it has gotten a lot better in the past few months! Please remember if you are planning on moving (or have recently moved) make sure you make a note to inform me of your new address info so we can continue to keep in touch with you. You can send me an email with the update or if you don't have e-mail drop me a short note in the regular mail. Calling me directly is also an option.

Please remember that the SB Subscription fees are in addition to your annual dues if you pay annually and are additional fees if you are a life member.

Annual members, I will continue to send Membership renewal notices on a monthly basis. The renewal notices typically go out towards the last week of the month prior to your due date. Please review the information on the notice for accuracy and provide any changes as needed. Then, please return lower portion of the notice along with your check in the provided envelope. Also, sometimes your annual dues and SB subscription dates don't coincide, so you might get a renewal notice and a subscription card within a month or two.

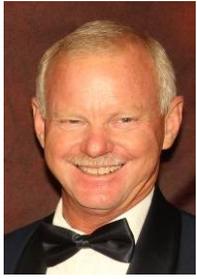
Please make your checks out to AFGA instead of a specific person. Also, include your membership number on your checks.

Let me apologize for your checks not clearing as fast as most would like. I'm out of town a lot and when I return home, I try getting checks to our Finance Chairman ASAP. However, in order to save on mailing expenses I only forward checks on to our Finance Chairman once or twice a month so if you have sent a check recently either for annual dues or for the Short Bursts Subscription please allow for this time delay if you see that your check has not been processed through your bank.

Chuck

NEW MEMBERS

James Collis	Chattanooga, TN	B-52F, G	4048
Robert Dick	Clarksburg, WV	B52	L4045
Kenneth Johnson	Douglass, KS	B36, B52	L4044
Nick Manzi	Rio Linda, CA	B52	L4046
Robert (Buck) Melton	Atwater, CA	B52G	L4043



The AFGA has many fine aviators in its ranks. I had the pleasure to be managed by many of them in my 23 years of service. From class room instruction by many including CMSgt Dave Sharpe (at that time a SSgt for basic electronics), to MSgt Scotty Burns for Mockup and T-1A training, to my flightline instructor MSgt Reggie Martin, who taught me all about the heavenly constellations due to being an enlisted EWO. One of many Wing Gunners that taught me pride and professionalism in the aerial gunnery field was CMSgt Toomer. I still have a hard time calling him by his first name due to the respect I have for the man. He's still trying to teach me grammar and the definition of a double negative. It is my privilege to share a small portion of his biography with the members of the AFGA.

JAMES L. TOOMER, was born July 7, 1933 in Cairo, Illinois and graduated from Douglass High School in Mounds, Illinois in May 1951. On 1 June 1951 he entered United States Air Force at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas and completed his basic training at Sheppard AFB, Texas in July of 1951. From that time until February 1952 he attended a technical training courses in Aircraft and Engines (43151), also at Sheppard AFB and Aircraft Electrician D/C and A/C courses, at Chanute Air Force Base, Rantoul, Illinois. In August 1952 he was transferred to Fairchild AFB, Spokane, Washington. Jim was selected for and completed B-36 Electrical Gunner Training (FTD) in May 1953 at Fairchild AFB. He flew on RB36s as an electrician gunner at Fairchild AFB through April of 1956. He was then transferred to Ramey AB, Puerto Rico where he flew on B36s as a chief gunner from May 1956 until December 1958. With B36s being phased out, Jim next went to Lowry AFB, Colorado where he completed the B-52 Turret Systems Course and then to B-52 Academics and Training at Castle AFB, California in June of 1959.



Jim flew as a B-52 gunner at Westover AFB, Springfield, MA (59-61); McCoy AFB, Orlando, FL (61-69); Griffiss AFB, Rome, NY (69-72); Mather AFB, Sacramento, CA (72-74); Robins AFB, Warner Robins, GA (74-79); and Barksdale AFB, Bossier City, LA (79-81). During the South East Asian Conflict Jim flew as a B-52 gunner out of Anderson AFB, Guam; Kadena AB, Okinawa; and U-Tapao AB, Thailand. He was assigned as an instructor/flight examiner standardization duties at all bases stationed and amassed over 1200 combat flying hours. Jim was the 28th Bomb Squadron gunnery program manager at Robins AFB from June 1975 through February 1977 then became the 19th Bomb Wing gunnery program manager from February 1977 through May 1979. His final assignment was as the 2nd Bomb Wing gunnery program manager at Barksdale AFB, LA from May 1979 till 31 May 1981.

Chief Master Sergeant James L. Toomer retired 1 June 1981 at Barksdale AFB, Louisiana. During his military career Jim was awarded the following medals: Distinguished Flying Cross, Meritorious Service Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Force Commendation Medal with one Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Commendation Medal, Combat Readiness Medal, Air Force Good Conduct Medal with silver clasp, and the National Defense Service Medal. His total flying time in RB/B36 and B52 D/G aircraft was 9237.7 hours. After his retirement, Jim graduated magna cum laude from St. Leo College, San Antonio, Florida with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science. He is married to Chief Master Sergeant Nancy G. Toomer (USAF, Ret.).

**AFGA BX OFFICER/WEBMASTER - Bob Dick Jr.
NEW OFFICER APPOINTED**



Just a little bit about me, After graduating high school in 1982, I was wanting to go to art school and was talked out of it by my parents due to what they felt was a limited career field. I worked retail sales until 1985 when I enlisted in the Air Force.

I enlisted under the Vehicle Operator Dispatch career field as the recruiter told me I would be driving a truck from high school to high school showing students about the Air Force.

After taking my first flight to basic training and being informed that I would be driving aircrews from base ops to the airplane and back to base ops I elected to choose from one of the several choices of career fields to change to. Defensive Aerial Gunner on a B-52 bomber. I'd be getting two week tdy's to Australia, England, & Guam, flight pay and wings. Funny, they left off alert & the only extended tdy I was to get... to Clinton Sherman OK lol

Let me also not forget to mention the rare experience to eat a rabbits eyeball during survival training, and to get jacked up, face in the dirt for taking pictures at Castle.

I served in the 9th BMS from 1986-1989 and was fortunate to have two aircraft commanders that their teachings have stayed with me through my life til this day, which I'd like to thank them for! Capt Charles Sutherland & LtCol Gene Gulick.

I left in 1989 for McGuire AFB to become a flight engineer on the C-141. I served as an engineer from 1989-1991. Probably the most memorable experience as an engineer was landing in Riyadh 12 minutes before Desert Storm kicked off and having to run to a bunker and don chem gear due to a scud attack. I also enjoyed seeing 20 different countries in that time span.

After the military I went to the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and found out why my parents had persuaded me not to go to art school in the first place. Lol

In 1996 I became a flight attendant with USAir which later turned into USAirways. It wasn't until 2000 that I came to my senses realizing all this time I had been flying in the back of the airplane doing all the work and decided to move up front and get my pilot license.

This career ended short due to the effect 911 had on the airline industry. I left the airlines to sell advertising for a newspaper and that ended in 2004 when I began my career selling yellow page advertising which I've done for the last eleven years.

I started getting reconnected with the people I had served with about a year and a half ago. They inspired me to start my artwork again, which I had done while in the Air Force and it developed from that to starting the business Crewdawgcreations.com.

My experience with that business will hopefully help to make me a very competent BX officer and to be able to serve the AFGA members well!

EDITOR'S NOTE: WELCOME ABOARD, BOB—BOTH AS THE NEW BX OFFICER AND OUR NEW AFGA WEBMASTER. Think you will find it an enjoyable challenge as you set up the new BX system and begin managing our new website once you get your feet on the ground. We look forward to seeing you at the AFGA Reunion in RENO in September. Bob

**AFGA TREASURER — RALPH STEARNS
END OF YEAR REPORT — 2014**



Ending balance as of December 31, 2014

Regular Checking Acct	\$2,579.63
Reunion Checking Acct	\$4,047.79
BXGA Acct	\$ 533.34
Savings Acct	\$13,864.52
AMR Foundation	\$ 381.20
One CD	\$ 4,381.34
Three CD's @ 5,452.85 ea .	<u>\$16,358.55</u>
Total Assets	\$42,150.37

AFGA NEWSREEL

Pete Karjanis' Inputs of Current News

The Air Force last week released the final environmental impact report on its proposed expansion of the Powder River Training Complex in several Great Plains states, [reported](#) the *Bismarck Tribune* of North Dakota. The Nov. 28 [posting at the Federal Register](#) that the environmental impact statement was available is one of the last bureaucratic steps in the expansion process and starts a 30-day period of public review that will conclude on Dec. 29. Thereafter, the Air Force may issue a record of decision codifying the expansion. The Federal Aviation Administration must also issue a ROD, states the *Tribune's* Nov. 30 report. The Air Force wants [to quadruple the size](#) of the complex's airspace, which covers parts of Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming, to improve training realism for B-1 and B-52 aircrews operating from Ellsworth AFB, S.D., and Minot AFB, N.D., respectively. This includes supersonic flight, employing defensive chaff and flares, low-altitude flying, and large-force engagements. "The new plan will make Powder River Training Complex the largest training airspace over the continental US," said Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) in a Nov. 28 [release](#). (EIS [executive summary](#)) (Visit the Air Force's [Powder River webpage](#) to access the complete EIS.)

A B-52 bomber touched down at RAAF Darwin, Australia, for a joint training exercise with the Royal Australian Air Force on Monday, RAAF officials [announced](#). "This purposed event is to highlight the intent for increased US Air Force training with the RAAF" following the Defense Department's enhanced force posture agreement signed with Australia earlier this year, according to a Pacific Air Forces [release](#). The B-52s will simulate strike missions over the nearby Delamere Training Range in Australia's northern territory, and practice intercepts with RAAF F-18 fighters of 75 Squadron flying from neighboring RAAF Tindal, according to PACAF. Air Force [F-16s deployed](#) to Tindal for Australia's largest air exercise—Exercise Pitch Black, for the first time in many years, this summer. The B-52, which redeployed from Andersen AFB, Guam, marked the third bomber deployment to Darwin since 2010, and "future rotations are still under discussion," according to the release. The bomber arrived in Australia on Dec. 8.

Air Force Global Strike Command will unveil a whole new training program for B-52 crews within the next month, said AFGSC boss [Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson](#). The changes are based on recommendations made during [the recently completed](#) Force Improvement Program within 8th Air Force, he told *Air Force Magazine* in an interview. "They saw some shortfalls in ... operations training. We pretty much revamped how we're training our B-52 crews," said Wilson, who noted that a "tiger" team looked at how the crews trained and improvements that could be made from the schoolhouse to the squadrons. "There was a big focus on aircrew training and how we do it," he added. "We'll see some really good improvements, not only to the nuclear mission, but across all the mission areas, [including] our dual-capable bombers. We're going to maximize the training that we do with the flying hours that we have. I think there will be some really good work there," he said during the Jan. 9 interview.

Volunteers completed restoration of the world's second airworthy B-29 Superfortress, and plan to test-fly the bomber from Wichita, Kan., early this spring, [reported](#) the *Wichita Eagle*. Doc's restoration team originally hoped to fly the WWII-vintage bomber to last summer's Experimental Aircraft Association fly-in at Oshkosh, Wis., and is shooting to fly formation with Fifi—the only other flying B-29—at EAA this July. "It's the first time in 60 years that two B-29s [would be] able to fly in formation together," restoration project manager T.J. Norman said, according to the press report. "We will make that, no doubt," he added. The team plans to conduct engine runs and taxi-testing as soon as the weather is warm enough that the B-29 won't require auxiliary heating. "We had some delays putting in the fuel system, and that was our biggest hold-up," said program manager Jim Murphy. "Now ... we could go outside anytime." Doc's first flight is tentatively planned for late April or early May.

The Air Force had 447 Minuteman III ICBMs on operational status in their silos, along with 10 B-2A stealth bombers and 77 B-52H bombers in deployed status as of Sept. 1, 2014, based on the counting rules used by the United States and Russia with the New START agreement, [announced](#) the State Department. There were an additional 251 Minuteman missiles, 19 silos, 10 B-2s, and 12 B-52s in non-deployed status, according to the State Department's Jan. 1 release, which reflects that most recent biannual data exchange between the United States and Russia on each party's strategic nuclear arsenal. Although the Air Force no longer operates the Peacekeeper ICBM, there are still 56 missiles of this type in non-deployed status, along with one launcher, that still count against the total number of strategic nuclear assets that the United States must declare. Under New START, the United States and Russia must [cap their respective strategic nuclear arsenals](#) by February 2018 at no more than 1,550 deployed warheads, 700 deployed launchers (i.e., heavy bombers, ICBMs, and submarine-launched ballistic missiles), and 800 deployed and non-deployed launchers. As of Sept. 1, 2014, the United States had 1,642 warheads, 794 deployed launchers, and 912 non-deployed launchers. Russia had an arsenal of 1,643, 528, and 911, respectively.

The Air Force's Long-Range Strike Bomber is a critical element of the nation's future strategic deterrent and the nation would fail future airmen "terribly" if it does not invest in the platform now, said Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Tuesday. "I think the Long-Range Strike Bomber is absolutely essential to keep our deterrent edge as we go into the next 25 years," he told assembled airmen during his visit to Whiteman AFB, Mo., home of the B-2A stealth bomber fleet. "You know, I was reminded here that the B-2 started flying 25 years ago, and the average [age of a B-2] is 20 years," said Hagel. "We have a B-2 today, because we had the foresight, the commitment, and the investment," he added. That same vision is necessary now with LRS-B, said Hagel. "We will have it in the budget. It's something that I have particularly put a priority on in the budgets and things that I've talked about with the Congress. I have confidence that the Congress will support us on this," he said. Hagel is on his last official domestic trip as Defense Secretary, thanking US military personnel for their service, before stepping down later this year.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
325th Bomb Squadron Get Together/Reunion

Looking for former members of the 325th Bomb Squadron who would be interested in attending a reunion at Fairchild AFB, WA Aug. 1, 2015. Friday, July 31, casual no-host gathering. Contact Dorene Hayner by leaving a message on this group. Please share this group with other former 325BS Alumni and plan to join the fun

325th Brothers and Sisters,

I know that some of you guys don't have Facebook, or aren't connected to me on Facebook, but Dorene Hayner is putting together a 325th reunion at Fairchild on 1 August 2015. It is for all alumni of the 325th. Here's a copy of the post on Facebook:



I was talking to Mandy about it this morning and I'm going to do my best to go. Hope to see you guys there. Dorene is working on getting rooms blocked out and as I get more information, I'll pass it to you via email or you can join the group



on Facebook.

You can search this in Facebook: B-52 Reunion - 325th Bomb Squadron - Fairchild AFB, Washington

Or here's a link: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/159968660842010/permalink/379099622262245/>

Dorene's email is: dhayner@cox.net and her phone number is: 520-777-8930. Her last post said she would have details next week so I'll refine my list and get them out as soon as I hear from her.

Please pass this on to any of the folks that I am missing from my list. I can't seem to find Kurt Schwake's email nor Brad Gutierrez but I remember having them in the past.

Sure hope all is well with everyone. Take care,

Gregory A. Barber
Tenant Tracker Inc.
Office: 806-722-0591 Ext. 603
Cel: 972-569-7495

LOTS MORE INFO ON THEIR FACEBOOK SITE IF YOU ARE INTERESTED:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/159968660842010/>

Ok you guys, listen up, Dorene needs some info if you want to go to the reunion on 1 August. Here's her note:

I NEED YOUR HELP! Many of you have already stated your intention to attend the reunion dinner Saturday, August 1. I have counted approx. 45 but I believe that is just the beginning. I am about to commit to a location and sign a contract within the next week or two but in order to do this I have to make an educated guess as to how many might actually attend that evening. I don't want to book a room and have to turn people away because I did not ask for enough space. Conversely, I don't want to book too large a space and end up writing a large personal check at the end!!!

IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY STATED YOUR INTENTION TO ATTEND PLEASE DO SO ASAP! This is not a definite commitment but gives me a number to base our reservation on. I realize we are 5 1/2 months out, but August 1 is a very busy weekend in Spokane and will creep up on us quickly and if we are to have a place to gather and available lodging now's the time!

Please leave me a message on this group, email me at dhayner@cox.net or call me at 520-777-8930. If I don't answer please leave a msg. on the machine telling me the number in your party who will attend Saturday night.

I had hoped to have a list of lodging available a couple weeks ago but their wheels don't turn as fast as mine. I will have that info to you by next week.

Greg Barber, will you please share this information with your email group? I really appreciate your help with this project as well as many of you who have offered to help and suggested places.

It was suggested to me to set up tee times for Saturday Aug. 1 for anyone who might like to play golf that day. If you are a golfer and live in the Spokane area and are interested in taking this on please let me know. This is not a tournament, just a courtesy of setting up tee times for those coming from out of town.

Again, thanks.

Dorene

Request to post information sent in by Ralph Stearns who plans on attending this informal get together.....wish I could go. Lots of get togethers this summer. Bob

GUNNER HISTORY
1ST MIG TO BE SHOT DOWN BY B-52 GUNNER

"676" Stratofortress static display stands proud

Posted 5/23/2012

by Scott King
 92nd Air Refueling Wing Public Affairs

FAIRCHILD AIR FORCE BASE, Wash. -- There's a story behind everything, and it holds true to the B-52 Stratofortress static display in the Heritage Park near the entrance of the base.

The B-52, serial number 56-0676, is a D model and has a long and impressive history. It was delivered to the Air Force in August 1957, and its first assignment was at Fairchild. During its service career, "676" transferred to numerous Strategic Air Command bases and even returned to Fairchild in the late 1960's.

The 92nd Air Refueling Wing historian, Dan Simmons, knows the importance and history of this aircraft.

"We are very fortunate to have such a historic aircraft in our Heritage Park," Simmons said. "Since it was stationed here in the 92nd Bombardment Wing several times during its active duty career [including its first assignment], this is its home - Fairchild is where it belongs."

However, "676" was not assigned here during its most memorable flight. On Dec. 18, 1972, during Linebacker II operations over North Vietnam, "676" became the first B-52 to shoot down an enemy MiG aircraft. The tail gunner, Staff Sgt. Samuel O. Turner, fired his 50 caliber machine guns at a MiG-21 as it moved in to attack the B-52. Turner reported a "gigantic explosion to the rear of the aircraft" and was credited with being the first tail gunner to log a confirmed kill during combat in a B-52.

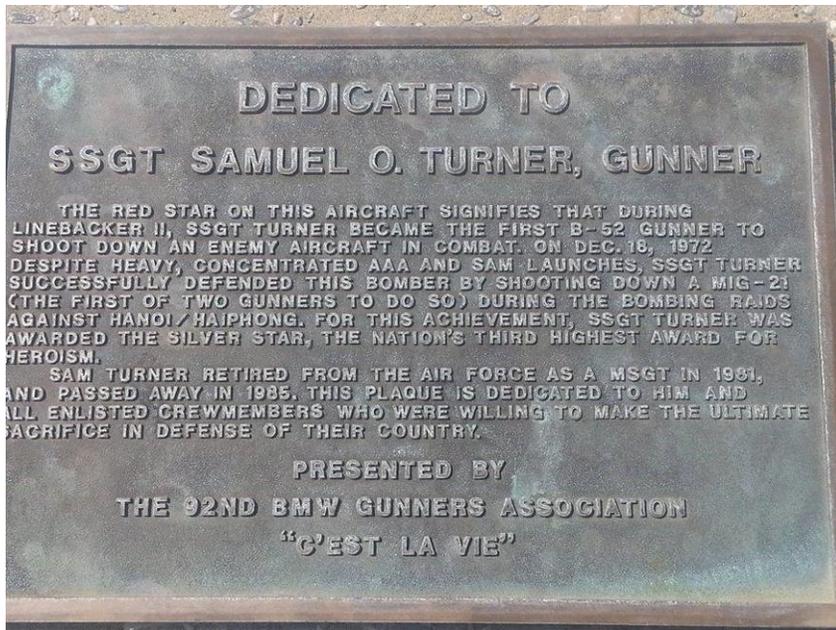
"I often say that '676' was the first B-52 to shoot down a MiG, but then I have to correct myself," Simmons said. "The aircraft didn't actually shoot down the MiG; a U.S. Air Force noncommissioned officer shot down the MiG. Although we often focus on aircraft because they're big, fast and powerful, we have to remember that it was the Airmen who flew, maintained and supported those aircraft who have defined our outstanding airpower legacy. That being said, I am still proud to have '676' at Fairchild, because it carried so many Airmen into battle and returned them home safely - it was a great warrior."



The red star on the side of "676" identifies it as a MiG killer. There have been only two B-52 MiG kills in history, the other one occurring on Dec. 24, 1972, also during the Linebacker II campaign. The second B-52 MiG killer is on display at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo.

On Oct. 12, 1983, "676" departed its last active duty base, Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, to fly here to its final resting place. This was the Air Force's last B-52 D model flight. B-52 D serial number 56-0676 served our nation well.

A B-52 Stratofortress static display, tail "676," sits dominantly at the Fairchild Air Force Base, Wash., Heritage Park May 8, 2012. On Dec. 18, 1972, during Linebacker II operations over North Vietnam, "676" became the first B-52 to shoot down an enemy MiG aircraft. The tail gunner, Staff Sgt. Samuel O. Turner, fired his 50-caliber machine guns at a MiG-21 as it moved in to attack the B-52. Turner reported a "gigantic explosion to the rear of the aircraft" and was credited with being the first tail gunner to log a confirmed kill during combat in a B-52. (U.S. Air Force photo/ Scott King)



MEMORIAL PLAQUE DEDICATED BY 92ND BMW GUNNERS ASSOCIATION IS DISPLAYED AT THE REAR OF THE AIRCRAFT BY THE GUNNER'S COMPARTMENT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Bob,

Here is a brief story that was part of the 2014 Air Commando reunion held at Fort Walton Beach, FL last October. My wife Loretta and I were in attendance and probably the only Aerial Gunner / Commando there that could 'Belly Up' to the bar with these modern day warriors. Believe me Bob, these guys are the real deal and have been for many years. Their shoulder patch is very definitive of their Air Force mission and it sort of tells it all, ANYTIME ANY PLACE. They are very secretive of when they deploy, where they are going, what they are going to do after arrival, and what kind of "HELL" they are bringing to our enemies. Loretta and I saw the brand new AC-130's parked on the hard stand at Hurlburt AFB, FL with the 105 mm cannon out the left side of the aircraft. Combined with the 40mm's and Vulcan Cannon 20mm revolvers its obvious, they have a brand new kind of Gunner in this dangerous world we live in.

On a Friday breakfast meeting to celebrate the 25th year anniversary of 'Operation Just Cause', Mr. Kurt Muse retold the story of his rescue by US Air Commandos. He was being held in General Noriega Federal prison in Panama City, Panama. Kurt had been held for many months on the third floor of that prison and sentenced to death for crimes against the Panama Government. The mission and its planners feared they would be too late to free him but gladly made the extra effort needed to plan a secretive night jump and priority entrance to the prison to spirit Muse out of the country. Mr. Muse knew nothing of this operation in advance of what was occurring, only there was a lot shooting, near-by explosions, and a Big Guy in battle field armor was blowing the bars off his cell and telling him they were from the US Air Force and there to take him home. The Special Operations wing of the USAF played an all important roll in the rescue of Muse while other participants included SEALs, Delta Force, regular Air Force, Army and Navy personnel concentrated on Noriega and his capture. The outcome was a success and now fully revealed after de-classification.

These guys party like the 'Grunners of Old' and we enjoyed a banquet second to none with over 500 commandos, including pilots, navigators, load masters, flight engineers, combat controllers, and the Generals that planned it all in infinite detail. If ISIS knew what these professional warriors were going to do to them they would (if they were smart) surrender. Look them up on the net or drop a line to: Air Commando Association P.O.Box 7, Mary Esther, FL 32569.

God Bless Grunners and Commandos

Gary GUNZ Heinz

Editor's note: Many thanks for the phone call and letter, Gary. Always good to hear from you. The full story of this rescue you describe can be found in the book 'SIX MINUTES TO FREEDOM' by Kurt Muse and John Gilstrap.

SHOULD THE AF GRUNNERS ASSOCIATION RECRUIT OTHER AIR FORCE AERIAL GRUNNERS?

Bill Gaddes

The position of the AFGA limiting membership to "offensive bomber grunners" is understandable, but needs examination and clarification. I was personally involved as an engineering manager at IBM's Federal Systems Division site at Owego, NY during development of the AC-130 avionics and weapon system. It was configured around the A-7D avionics system; and developed on an accelerated schedule. I heartily endorse the membership of SPECTRE grunners for AFGA membership; being familiar with their challenges, sacrifices, and heroic efforts during the Vietnam War.

This issue got me thinking about aerial grunners in general; particularly "offensive bomber aerial grunners"; as described by our fine Editor Bob Matherly. There are thousands of such aerial grunners who are eligible under this definition as follows:

- B-47 Co-Pilot/Tail Grunners (est. 2,500),
- B-58 Defensive System Operators (est. 175),
- B-36 Upper Forward Turret Grunners (est. 1000), and
- B-29 Bombardiers/Grunners (est. 5,000).

Granted, these grunner assignments were supplemental to their primary crew responsibilities. All were commissioned officers; with the exception of the second flight engineer on the B-36. All were trained as defensive aerial grunners; operating defensive fire control systems of which we are all so familiar. They had in their hands a sighting device with manual or automatic modes; but all had to depress a trigger to fire their respective machine guns or cannons. Perhaps we should open membership to these 8,500 or so "offensive bomber aerial grunners". What about the many tens of thousands of WW II "non-grunner" crew members who gripped the two handles of a Browning M2 .30 or .50 caliber machine gun in combat / Sadly these heroes are leaving us at a rapid rate. If not, perhaps we should define our organization as follows: US AIR FORCE OFFENSIVE BOMBER AERIAL GRUNNER: PRIMARY CREW ASSIGNMENT-ENLISTED.

This subject should be subject to discussion and review prior to the reunion in Reno in September of 2015. Bob, perhaps you could solicit opinions and dialogue on this issue perhaps the forthcoming April and August 2015 SHORT BURST publications.

Well let's see if anyone responds on this subject. We have had it a couple of times Perhaps it is time to review it again. Bob

AFGA NEWSREEL B-29 "DOC" TO FLY AGAIN

This summer, if the dreams of a nonprofit group in Wichita, Kansas, come true, two World War II-era B-29 Superfortress bombers will fly together for the first time in a half-century. *Doc*, originally one of a squadron of eight airplanes named for Snow White and the seven dwarfs, will finally take off and join *Fifi*, which has been flying since 1974. It's an unlikely event that almost didn't happen—two relics, loud and slow, each of them powered by four big finicky radial engines, restored and maintained by hundreds of volunteers. Together, they'll be an impressive sight, their polished aluminum skins gleaming in the sun, their long slender wings stretching 140 feet tip to tip, living ambassadors from the distant past.

"There was a good chance this airplane was never going to fly again," says Jim Murphy, leader of the restoration effort for Doc's Friends. "We weren't going to let that happen." The airplane, built in 1944, was decommissioned after serving in the Korean War, then used for target practice in the California desert. The bomber's technology was outdated. It was slow. Its military usefulness was gone. But a group of historians who dreamed to see the big airplane fly again rescued it in 1987, and in 2000, *Doc* was trucked to Wichita for restoration.

Murphy plans to roll the airplane out of the hangar soon, and start taxi and flight testing in the spring. "We're going to try hard to fly to Oshkosh [Wisconsin] in July," he says, where *Doc* and *Fifi* could finally meet. The two crews plan to fly together above the crowds at EAA AirVenture, the biggest air show in the world. The formation, though small, will evoke the memory of a sky full of the bombers, 1,000 at a time, flying above Tokyo in the final days of World War II.



AFGA NEWSREEL B-29 "DOC" TO FLY AGAIN

When the B-29 was designed by Boeing in 1939, it was a technological powerhouse. The guns could be fired by remote control using computerized sights. The crew areas were pressurized, so the men could tolerate long missions at altitudes above 18,000 feet. Eight turrets housed machine guns, and some versions carried a 20mm cannon beneath the tail. The cockpit instruments and radar gear were accurate enough to help the crews aim at targets through cloud layers and at night. Nearly 4,000 were built. The *Enola Gay*, whose crew dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, was a B--29.

"Most of Doc's parts are exact copies of the original parts," says Murphy, "but the engines have been upgraded. The original engines had lots and lots of problems." The front--row cylinders on the radials exhausted to the front, he says, causing overheating and fires. "Those engines were the most unreliable part of the airplane," says Murphy. "*Fifi* had already converted to a modified hybrid engine design that combines the original front end with the back end of an engine off an old Sky Raider, and adds 1,000 horsepower. We'll use that same modification, but the engines will look and sound just the same as the originals."

That look and sound is important to the few remaining veterans who still remember their WWII missions. "Last summer, we got a call from the 73rd Bomb Wing—they wanted to hold their final reunion in the hangar here with *Doc*," says Murphy. "Listening to those guys and the stories they told, it was a day I'll never forget. One guy had been shot down three times. Another was a gunner, and he'd been shot in the face—he lost his nose and part of an eye—and he only missed one mission. Those guys could have come home after 20 missions, but they all flew 35 or 40. 'We went over to win, not to go home,' they said. All the stories—it was like it was yesterday, when those guys saw the airplane."

The restoration's not done yet. "The airplane is still up on jacks. We're finishing up the gear doors and we should have those ready this week, then we'll be ready to test the gear. Then we'll come down off the jacks for the last time. We've got to do the finishing touches on the avionics, then we'll just be waiting for weather," Murphy says.

Once *Doc* is up and flying this summer, Murphy will face the next challenge—how to recruit and train the next generation of volunteers to keep the airplane in the air. It takes a crew of six to fly *Doc*: two pilots, a flight engineer, and three observers to monitor the flaps and gear and all the other moving parts. Dozens more are needed to maintain and provide support for the big bomber. Most of the current crew are retired workers from Boeing, including a few in their 90s who were there when the original fleet was built. "We've logged nearly 300,000 volunteer hours on this project," says Murphy. "The first time *Doc* takes to the air, there'll be a big celebration." With any luck, that day is coming up soon.

All images courtesy [Doc's Friends](#) via Flickr, unless otherwise noted.

Source: http://www.wired.com/2015/02/b29-doc-restoration/?mbid=social_twitter

This story is a follow-on of the "Doc" restoration beginning story covered in the April 2014 issue of Short Bursts.



US Air Force Boeing B-29 Superfortress bomber flying above the clouds and mountains, mid 1940s. (Underwood Archives/Getty Images)

**2015 AFGA REUNION
RENO, NEVADA
SEPTEMBER 10—13, 2015**



**PEPPERMILL
RENO**



We have an exceptional agenda in store for you at our upcoming event. It's been designed to ensure your time at the event is not only productive, but enjoyable. We look forward to hosting you and your colleagues! For more information on the Peppermill Reno, please [Click Here](#) or copy/type in the following web address: <http://www.visitpeppermill.com/> and click on reservation tab to make your reservations.

ADDRESS:

Peppermill Resort Spa Casino
2707 South Virginia Street
Reno, NV 89502

AFGA REUNION ROOM RATE IS: \$79.00/NIGHT (+ TAXES).
+25% off the breakfast or lunch at Island Buffet, valid 9/8/15 – 9/14/15
+10% off the regular menu Café Milano, valid 9/8/15 – 9/14/15

Phone: (775) 826-2121 / (800) 282-2444 FOR RESERVATIONS (USE GROUP CODE: LAFGA15)

REUNION DATES: 10—13 SEPTEMBER 2015 (Officers should arrive on 9 September for morning meeting on 10 Sept)

We are now accepting hotel reservations for your upcoming event. Through this website (below) you can book, modify or cancel your hotel reservations at any time and receive updated information about the event. We look forward to seeing you! https://resweb.passkey.com/Resweb.do?mode=welcome_ei_new&eventID=11180213&fromResdesk=true

ADDITIONAL HOTEL INFORMATION: Resort fee has been waived and below is what is included in the resort fee:

Resort fee includes internet access for hotel guests staying in the hotel in all public areas, sleeping rooms and the Internet Cafe with increased Internet download speed from 1.5 mbps to 30.0 mbps, complimentary business center access, incoming and out going faxes up to 5 pages, in-room coffee makers, use of the health club, pool, valet, access to the parking garage and surface parking, concierge, local and #800 phone calls, and shuttle service to and from the airport. Refrigerators, cribs and rollaways are available upon request. The Resort fee also includes complimentary live entertainment in the Terrace Lounge Sunday – Monday, Wednesday - Thursday, 6:00pm - 10:00pm and Friday and Saturday 9:00pm – 1:00am



**2015 AFGA REUNION
RENO, NEVADA
SEPTEMBER 10—13, 2015**



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2015

0900 – 1700(9:00 – 5:00 PM) - Registration
0900 – 2300(9:00 – 11:00 PM) - Hospitality Room Opens

FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER 2015

0915(9:15 AM) – Load and Depart for Virginia City
1430(2:30 PM) – Return from Virginia City
0900(9:00 AM) – Hospitality Room Opens
1730(5:30 PM) – Load Buses & Depart for Reno Tour with Banquet Dinner at the National Automobile Museum
2200(10:00 PM) – Return from National Automobile Museum

SATURDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2015

0900 - 1200(9:00 AM – 12:00 PM) – AFGA Business Meeting
0830—1030 (8:30—10:30 AM) – Ladies Private Morning Show – “Home Means Nevada” – at Hotel
1430 - 1630(2:30 PM – 4:30) – Picture taking for reunion book
1700(5:00 PM) – Cocktail Hour—(“**BOYS IN BLUE**” photo to be taken early before Banquet starts—be prepared)
1800 - 2100(6:00 PM – 9:00 PM) – AFGA Banquet

SUNDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2015

0800(8:00 AM) – AFGA Memorial Service at Hotel
0900(9:00 AM) – Tour Truckee - Donner
1500(3:00 PM) – Return from Truckee - Donner tour
1800(6:00 PM) – Meal and Open Mike
Open Mike will include wearing of any military uniform or any part of a military uniform.

ALL TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

PEPPERMILL SIDE NOTES

RV SITE INFORMATION FOR THOSE LOOKING TO BRING AN RV—CHECK OUT THIS WEBSITE FOR LISTINGS IN THE RENO AREA: <http://www.visitrenotahoe.com/reno-tahoe/accommodations?command=rv%20park> (Hotel does not allow overnight stays—check in at hotel to let them know you are parking only while attending a reunion and not “staying” in the motor home/camper).

Peppermill ships & receive boxes via UPS and FedEx. All UPS and FedEx same day shipments must be communicated with the staff and packages should be at the Bell Desk or Business Center by 9:00am, Monday-Friday. There is no UPS and FedEx pick up on Saturday and Sunday. UPS and FedEx will not deliver on Saturday unless specified on their package, and do not deliver on Sundays. Package pick hours at the Bell Desk: 9am - 7pm (Mon-Sun). You must show a tracking number to retrieve your package.

2015 AFGA REUNION SEPTEMBER 10—13, 2015

PLEASE CHECK ALL APPROPRIATE BOXES

NAME:				NAME FOR BADGE:				
ADDRESS:				CITY:		STATE:		ZIP:
TELEPHONE # ()				TYPE A/C FLOWN:				
E-MAIL :				DO YOU HAVE ANY DISABILITY OR DIETARY NEEDS THAT REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION? <input type="checkbox"/>				
				YES IF SO, PROVIDE COMMENTS ON BACK.				
REGISTRATION & BANQUET/OPEN MIKE <input type="checkbox"/>	BANQUET MENU CIRCLE ONE (CHOICES BELOW)	VIRGINIA CITY TOUR (FRIDAY AM) <input type="checkbox"/>	RENO AUTO MUSEUM TOUR (FRIDAY PM) <input type="checkbox"/>	LADIES MORNING SHOW (SATURDAY) <input type="checkbox"/>	DONNER TRUCKEE TOUR (Sunday) <input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDING BANQUET ONLY (SATURDAY PM) SEE NOTE <input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDING OPEN MIKE ONLY (SUNDAY PM) SEE NOTE BELOW <input type="checkbox"/>	SUB TOTAL ACROSS
\$130.00	1 2 3 4	\$45.00	\$80.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$

NAME:				NAME FOR BADGE:				
ADDRESS:				CITY:		STATE:		ZIP:
TELEPHONE # ()				TYPE A/C FLOWN:				
E-MAIL :				DO YOU HAVE ANY DISABILITY OR DIETARY NEEDS THAT REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION? <input type="checkbox"/>				
				YES IF SO, PROVIDE COMMENTS ON BACK.				
REGISTRATION & BANQUET/OPEN MIKE <input type="checkbox"/>	BANQUET MENU CIRCLE ONE (CHOICES BELOW)	VIRGINIA CITY TOUR (FRIDAY AM) <input type="checkbox"/>	RENO AUTO MUSEUM TOUR (FRIDAY PM) <input type="checkbox"/>	LADIES MORNING SHOW (SATURDAY) <input type="checkbox"/>	DONNER TRUCKEE TOUR (Sunday) <input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDING BANQUET ONLY (SATURDAY PM) SEE NOTE <input type="checkbox"/>	ATTENDING OPEN MIKE ONLY (SUNDAY PM) SEE NOTE BELOW <input type="checkbox"/>	SUB TOTAL ACROSS
\$130.00	1 2 3 4	\$45.00	\$80.00	\$30.00	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$50.00	\$

NOTE: Registration fee of \$130 includes, Banquet and Open Mike Meals . If you are "Not Registered", a fee WILL BE ASSESSED for Banquet and Open Mike

1 = PORK CHOP SAVANNAH 2 = ALASKAN HALIBUT 3 = BREAST OF CHICKEN NEPTUNE 4 = VEGETARIAN	PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORM AND SEND CHECK MADE OUT TO AFGA NO LATER THAN 15 JUL 2015 TO: DAN DANISH 9550 HAVILAND CT SAN ANTONIO, TX 78251 210-520-1517	GRAND TOTAL FROM BOXES ABOVE \$ _____
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PLEASE ADD ANY ADDITIONAL INFORMATION BELOW THAT WE MAY NEED TO KNOW THAT WILL REQUIRE OUR SPECIAL ATTENTION IN REFERENCE TO YOUR DIETARY NEEDS OR DISABILITIES.

Banquet Meal Choices:

Pork Chop Savannah - Pan Roasted Double Pork Chop Stuffed with Cornbread Dressing, Country Ham, Mushrooms and Onions with Bacon Sage Cream Sauce

Alaskan Halibut - Parmesan Crusted Alaskan Halibut , Roasted Fingering Potatoes and Artichoke Ragout

Breast of Chicken Neptune - Roasted Breast of Chicken stuffed with Dungeness Crabmeat , Bat Shrimp, Mushrooms, Cheese Risotto and Garden Chives with Lemon Butter Sauce

Vegetarian - Chef Choice

**2015 AFGA REUNION
SEPTEMBER 10—13, 2015
REUNION TOUR INFORMATION**

VIRGINIA CITY TOUR

**Friday, 11 September
9:15 am—2:30 pm**

“Relive the Old West, be a Pioneer for a Day” Your Ambassador will set the mood for the day, by sharing the history of the Great Bonanza Trail, and the gold-seekers who blazed the first trails for the white man into the area. Proceeding to Virginia City, the exciting history of Virginia City, Nevada, will begin to unfold. Once the richest place on earth, you will hear of the many “rags to riches”, and “riches to rags” tales. The gold and silver discoveries had a tremendous impact on the whole country - as an example, did you realize that Nevada was made a state because the Union needed Virginia City's riches to finance their Civil War effort? Everyone needs some time to explore their particular interests. Optional individual activities would include mansion tours, a ride on the historic Virginia -Truckee Railroad, or merely exploring the old-time shops and gambling halls still in operation. Your Tahoe Ambassador will be with your group throughout the day, not only to share their knowledge of the area, but to ensure that all the activities run smoothly, that your clients have someone along to answer all their questions, but more importantly, to make sure a “good time is had by all”.

Price \$45

RENO AUTO MUSEUM:

**Friday, 11 September
5:30pm—10:00 pm**

Enjoy a night of fun and entertainment while you dine on a sumptuous dinner buffet at the **National Automobile Museum** located in Reno. Experience more than 200 eye-popping cars with authentic street scenes and sounds. The facades bring displays to life; hardware store, and a movie theatre, which accompany artifacts from each era as you explore the museum at your own pace. A dinner buffet will be enjoyed by all as you experience this nationally recognized auto museum.

Price \$80



LADIES PRIVATE MORNING SHOW— “HOME MEANS NEVADA”

**Saturday, 12 September
(8:30 AM seating) 9:00 am—10:30 am**



“Home Means Nevada” is an up-beat, humorous 1 1/2 hour story of Nevada as told by Mark Twain (McAvoy Layne-Nevada’s top Twain impersonator)) with music that gives Twain’s words wings from Shiloh Band (Julie & Mark). The Shiloh Band is a fun and lively pair from Northern Nevada and when coupled with “Mark Twain” have put together a very entertaining and enjoyable show. Tim Gorelangton and Julie Machado play folk, country, ballads, blues, and bluegrass on guitar and bass. They enjoy playing just the right songs to get you in the mood and make you feel right at home. A special part of the show is an impersonation of Mark Twain by McAvoy Lane who gives a bit of Nevada history along with music & songs by Shiloh Band and has been quite a hit with local groups. Show times run around 1:30 hours and will held in the Hospitality Room at the Peppermill for those attending. Believe all will enjoy the morning with them.

2015 AFGA REUNION
SEPTEMBER 10—13, 2015
REUNION TOUR INFORMATION

DONNER - TRUCKEE TOUR

Sunday, 13 September
9:00 am—3:00 pm

As a crossroads of Western History, the Donner - Truckee area is rich in pioneer lore. For untold centuries, the Indians camped along the forested shores of Donner Lake and the high flat of Martis Plateau. This was the route of westward-bound emigrants who struggled with their wagons over the rugged Sierra passes. Chinese coolies blasted tunnels through the granite mountains as Irishmen laid down the miles of iron rails for the Transcontinental Railroad in the late 1860's. Originally called Coburn's Station, the town of Truckee was a "hell on wheels" railroad town in 1868. Little has changed since the turn of the century. Truckee still has the atmosphere of yesterday with the amenities of today. The community is still called the "Ghost Town which didn't Die". Your Reno Ambassador will relate the excitement of Old Truckee and the area to your guests. A visit will also be made to Donner Memorial Historic Park and its fine museum. It was here during the winter of 1846-47 that members of the famous westward-bound "Donner Party" played out their tragic rendezvous with destiny.

Price \$40

ADDITIONAL HOTEL INFO: The Peppermill is conveniently located two miles from the Reno Tahoe International Airport. We provide complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport:

Airport to Peppermill - The shuttle departs from the airport every half hour from 4:15am -11:45pm. Pick up is at the North exit of the Baggage Claim area.

Peppermill to Airport - The shuttle departs from the Peppermill every half hour from 4am - 11:30pm. Pick up is at the valet area outside the Hotel Lobby.

AFGA Golf Outing
AFGA RENO REUNION



September 10 at 0700

Captain's Choice/ Best Ball Format (3/4 man teams)

This format will make it fun for all participants. So bring your clubs and have a good time with old/new friends.

Cost is \$65.00 per person includes golf, cart, range balls, and sandwich/hot dog with chips lunch after the round.

Trophies will be awarded to the team with the lowest team score and a trophy awarded to the golfer closest to the pin on Hole #17.

Contact Chuck Dean if you are wanting to participate (before the event).

(846)947-4613

A710Jammer@AOL.com

THIS AND THAT B-52 FCS EVOLUTION HISTORY

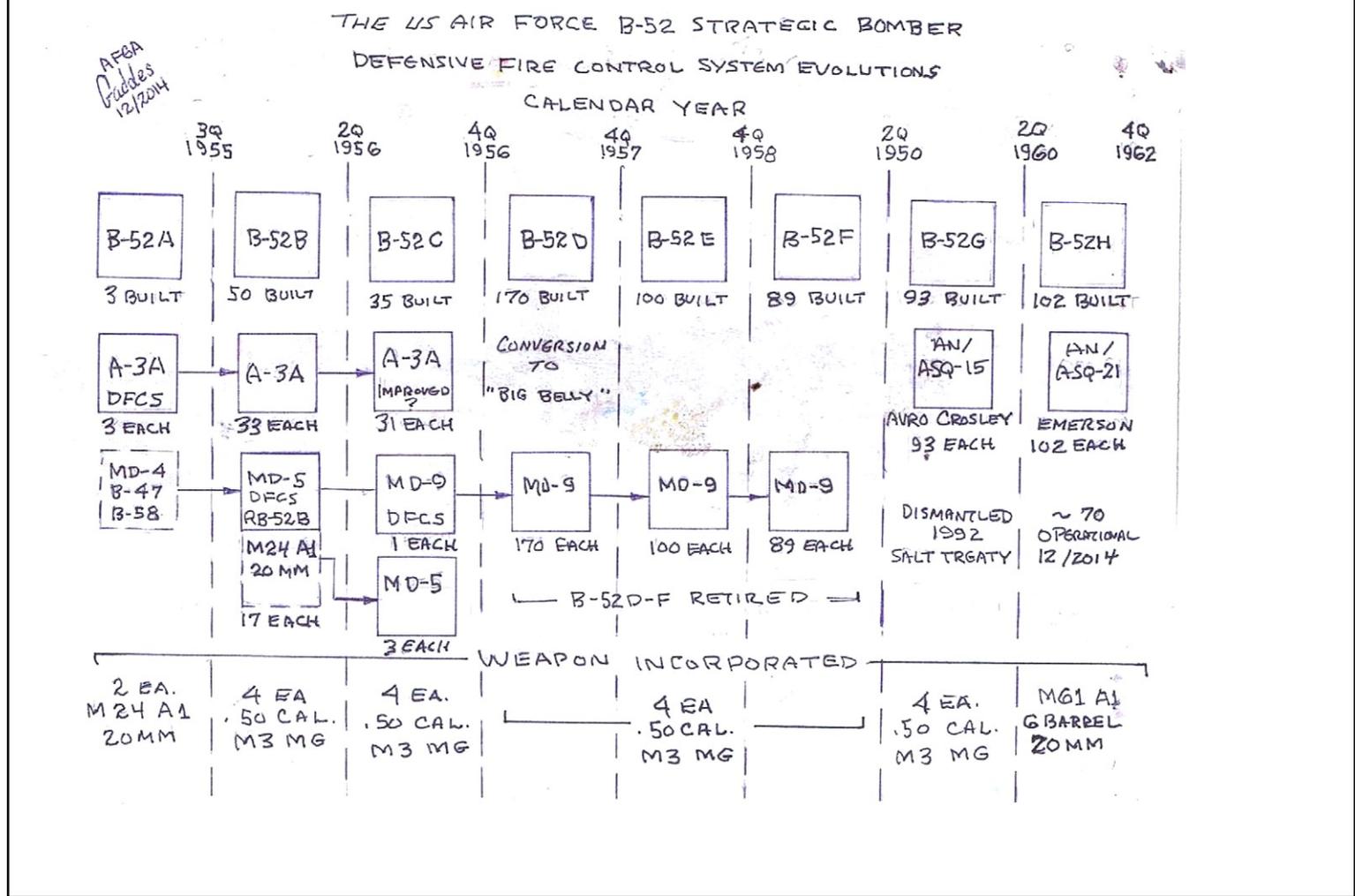
FIRE CONTROL SYSTEM EVOLUTIONS

Bill Gaddes

PURPOSE AND INTENT

The B-52 Defensive Fire Control System (FCS) evolved through four major configurations during the manufacture of the 744 Boeing B-52 strategic bombers. First deployed in 1956, the B-52 incorporated a gunner's station in the extreme aft of the aircraft. Defensive aerial gunners served honorably and effectively on B-52 combat crews for 35 years until November of 1991; when the USAF decided to remove the gunner's position and equipments. This represented a significant period of the 75 years of heroic service of the offensive bomber defensive aerial gunner. The evolution of the Fire Control Systems of the 744 B-52 aircraft manufactured is discussed.

Figure One describes the evolution of the Fire Control Systems.



MD-5 FCS



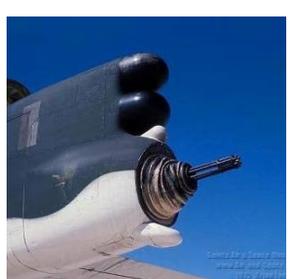
A-3A FCS



MD-9 FCS



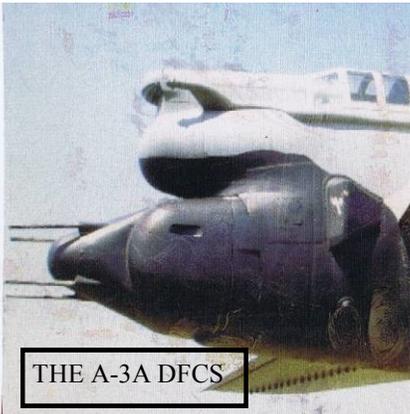
AN/ASG-15



AN/ASQ-21

THIS AND THAT **B-52 FCS EVOLUTION HISTORY (cont)**

THE B-52 B AND B-52C FIRE CONTROL SYSTEMS



There were fifty B-52B and thirty five B-52C aircraft built. Thirty three of the B-52B's incorporated the A-3A FCS. The aerial gunner, in the extreme aft of the aircraft, had both radar controlled and optical means of controlling the four Browning M3 .50 caliber machine guns. A reconnaissance version, of which seventeen were built, incorporated the MD-5 FCS; an improved version of the MD-4 which was used on the B-47 and B-58 fire control systems. This system incorporated twin M24 A1 20MM cannon (used on the B-36).



The B-52C initial production (31 aircraft) used the "Improved" A-3A FCS.

The USAF was not pleased with the reliability of the radar on the A-3A. The next three aircraft were fitted with the MD-5 FCS of the RB-52B. The final production aircraft of the B-52C incorporated the MD-9 FCS. The MD-9 would be installed in 359 B-52 aircraft in the D, E, and F series.

THE B-52 D, E AND F FIRE CONTROL SYSTEMS



The MD-9 FCS incorporated both radar acquisition and tracking, as well as optical sighting for the aerial gunner located in the extreme aft of the aircraft.

The system incorporated four Browning M3 .50 caliber machine guns with 600 rounds per gun; reversing the tradition of tail defensive systems of the B-36, B-47, and B-58 which utilized the M24 A1 20MM cannon. Wonder what the USAF did with all those tens of thousands of 20MM cannons?

THE B-52G AN/ASG-15 FIRE CONTROL SYSTEM



The B-52G incorporated a new Fire Control System designate the AN/ASG-15.

The defensive aerial gunner was relocated forward to the right of the Electronic Warfare Officer, facing aft. No longer "King of his domain", some of the former D, E and F gunners were not too pleased with the change. The optical sight was removed, and supplemented with a closed circuit television system and CRT display. Radar acquisition and tracking improvements were incorporated. The system was built by AVRO-CROSLEY. Ninety three B-52G's were built.

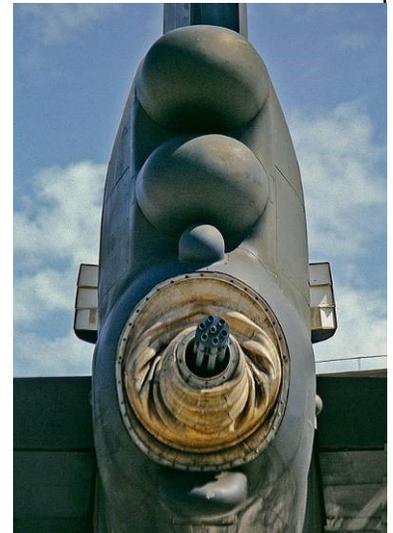
THIS AND THAT **B-52 FCS EVOLUTION HISTORY (cont)**

THE B-52H AN/ASG-21 FIRE CONTROL SYSTEM



The B-52H incorporated the AN/ASG-21 FCS built by EMERSON. Improvements in radar acquisition and tracking (dual search/track in the Ku Band) were incorporated; and reliability was improved. A major change was the addition of the M-61 A1 six barrel 20MM cannon. These cannon had a fire rate of 6,000 rounds per minute. Referred to as a “mini-gun”, the name “Mini-Gunner” soon became attached to the B-52D/G/H aerial gunners. The career field had become open to E-2 - E-5 airmen some-

what earlier, but the younger guys were referred to as Mini-Gunners.



THE B-52 DEFENSIVE AERIAL GUNNER'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HERITAGE

The B-52 defensive aerial gunner was the last of the “classical” aerial gunner to serve aboard US military offensive bomber aircraft. They carried on a heritage which began in 1916; culminating in 1991 when the USAF ordered the removal of the Defensive Fire Control Systems from all active B-52 aircraft. The B-52 aerial gunner served with distinction and not without personal and family sacrifice during the Cold War. They also served in the Vietnam War. Final combat service was seen in “Desert Storm”. The 75 year era of the offensive bomber aerial gunner was over by November of 1991 with a final “gunner aboard sir” flight was flown at Castle AFB. .

Bill Gaddes
gaddes@windstream.net
15 December 2014

AFGA NEWSREEL

Japanese Surrender—9-2-1945

This old newsreel is really interesting....thought you might enjoy a bit of history

This film is believed to have never been seen before, only shots of the surrender were known. If you are a history buff you will enjoy this. General McArthur's voice is a rarity in these old film clips. Japanese Surrender- Amazing Footage. This is a 'must see' for the WWII history buff or anyone interested in history. This is an actual film made of the surrender ceremony of the Japanese to McArthur in Tokyo Bay in September 1945.

Actual voice of the General. Never been shown to the general public before. We always saw the "stills" but never the film itself Click here: [Japanese Surrender](#) (or copy website address and paste into the address bar).

https://www.youtube.com/embed/vcnH_kF1zXc

HISTORY OF THE POW BRACELET



The first bracelets were made by a Carol Bates, who now works for the Defense POW-Missing Persons Office. The bracelets come in various finishes and on each bracelet is engraved, at a minimum, the name, rank, service, loss date, and country of loss of a missing man from the Vietnam War. Here is Carol's article on the origin of the bracelets.

HISTORY OF THE POW BRACELET

By Carol Bates Brown

In recent months, several individuals have contacted me looking for information on the origin of the POW/MIA bracelets worn during the early 1970s. The following is offered for those interested in learning the history of the bracelet phenomena.

I was the National Chairman of the POW/MIA Bracelet Campaign for VIVA (Voices In Vital America), the Los Angeles based student organization that produced and distributed the bracelets during the Vietnam War. Entertainers Bob Hope and Martha Raye served with me as honorary co-chairmen.

The idea for the bracelets was started by a fellow college student, Kay Hunter, and me, as a way to remember American prisoners of war suffering in captivity in Southeast Asia. In late 1969 television personality Bob Dornan (who several years later was elected to the US Congress) introduced us and several other members of VIVA to three wives of missing pilots. They thought our student group could assist them in drawing public attention to the prisoners and missing in Vietnam. The idea of circulating petitions and letters to Hanoi demanding humane treatment for the POWs was appealing, as we were looking for ways college students could become involved in positive programs to support US soldiers without becoming embroiled in the controversy of the war itself. The relatives of the men were beginning to organize locally, but the National League of POW/MIA Families had yet to be formed.

During that time Bob Dornan wore a bracelet he had obtained in Vietnam from hill tribesmen, which he said always reminded him of the suffering the war had brought to so many. We wanted to get similar bracelets to wear to remember US POWs, so rather naively, we tried to figure out a way to go to Vietnam. Since no one wanted to fund two sorority-girl types on a tour to Vietnam during the height of the war, and our parents were livid at the idea, we gave up and Kay Hunter began to check out ways to make bracelets. Soon other activities drew her attention and she dropped out of VIVA, leaving me, another student Steve Frank, and our adult advisor, Gloria Coppin, to pursue the POW/MIA awareness program. The major problem was that VIVA had no money to make bracelets, although our advisor was able to find a small shop in Santa Monica that did engraving on silver used to decorate horses. The owner agreed to make 10 sample bracelets. I can remember us sitting around in Gloria Coppin's kitchen with the engraver on the telephone, as we tried to figure out what we would put on the bracelets.

This is why they carried only name, rank and date of loss, since we didn't have time to think of anything else. Armed with the sample bracelets, we set out to find someone who would donate money to make bracelets for distribution to college students. It had not yet occurred to us that adults would want to wear the things, as they weren't very attractive. Several approaches to Ross Perot were rebuffed, to include a proposal that he loan us \$10,000 at 10% interest. We even visited Howard Hughes' senior aides in Las Vegas. They were sympathetic but not willing to help fund our project. Finally in the late summer of 1970, Gloria Coppin's husband donated enough brass and copper to make 1,200 bracelets. The Santa Monica engraver agreed to make them and we could pay him from any proceeds we might realize.

Although the initial bracelets were going to cost about 75 cents to make, we were unsure about how much we should ask people to donate to receive a bracelet. In 1970, a student admission to the local movie theater was \$2.50. We decided this seemed like a fair price to ask from a student for one of the nickel plated bracelets. We also made copper ones for adults who believed they helped their "tennis elbow." Again, according to our logic adults could pay more, so we would request \$3.00 for the copper bracelets.

At the suggestion of local POW/MIA relatives, we attended the National League of Families annual meeting in Washington, DC in late September. We were amazed at the interest of the wives and parents in having their man's name put on bracelets and in obtaining them for distribution. Bob Dornan, who was always a champion of the POW/MIAs and their families, continued to publicize the issue on his Los Angeles television talk show and promoted the bracelets.

HISTORY OF THE POW BRACELET (cont)

On Veterans Day, November 11, 1970, we officially kicked off the bracelet program with a news conference at the Universal Sheraton Hotel. Public response quickly grew and we eventually got to the point we were receiving over 12,000 requests a day. This also brought money in to pay for brochures, bumper stickers, buttons, advertising and whatever else we could do to publicize the POW/MIA issue. We formed a close alliance with the relatives of missing men -- they got bracelets from us on consignment and could keep some of the money they raised to fund their local organizations. We also tried to furnish these groups with all the stickers and other literature they could give away.

While Steve Frank and I ended up dropping out of college to work for VIVA full time to administer the bracelet and other POW/MIA programs, none of us got rich off the bracelets. VIVA's adult advisory group, headed by Gloria Coppin, was adamant that we would not have a highly paid professional staff. As I recall the highest salary was \$15,000, a year and we were able to keep administrative costs to less than 20 percent of income.

In all, VIVA distributed nearly five million bracelets and raised enough money to produce untold millions of bumper stickers, buttons, brochures, matchbooks, newspaper ads, etc., to draw attention to the missing men. In 1976, VIVA closed its doors. By then the American public was tired of hearing about Vietnam and showed no interest in the POW/MIA issue.

SOURCE: <http://thewall-usa.com/bracelet.asp>



My personal bracelet of missing B-52 gunner
SGT CHARLES BEBUS
 Wore it for a number of years

**MEMORIAL PAGE
 BY AFGA MEMBER
 JOHN A. BEIER
 WWW.VIRTUALWALL.ORG/DB/
 BEBUSCJ01.htm/**

ALWAYS REMEMBERED

BOB'S BITS Gunner Miscellaneous



Editor's Toyota van license plate holder – same as on my truck also.



Scot Washburn's plate



Louis Boyd—Buffy 6
RIP...9 November 2014



Bill Wardell's plate



Dave Austin's plate

WWII USAAF HISTORY

8th AF B-17 Schweinfurt Raid (cont)

The Cost of Schweinfurt

By John T. Correll

One of every five B-17s that set out from England was lost.

Had it not been for ball bearings, Schweinfurt might have remained a small town in Bavaria and escaped the notice of history. However, it was there in 1883 that a local mechanic, Friedrich Fischer, invented the machine that made possible mass production of ball bearings. In 1906, his son founded the Kugelfischer firm, which became the cornerstone of the industry.

World War II created a huge demand for ball bearings. The German aviation industry alone used 2.4 million of them a month. Production was concentrated in Schweinfurt, where five plants turned out nearly two-thirds of Germany's ball bearings and roller bearings. Between 1922 and 1943, the surge in manufacturing tripled the population of Schweinfurt to 50,000.

In the summer of 1943, US and British planners for the Combined Bomber Offensive identified the ball bearings industry as a key "bottleneck" target, the destruction of which could clog up war production and potentially shorten the war. The British Air Ministry since 1943 had been trying to persuade the Royal Air Force to bomb Schweinfurt, but Air Marshal Arthur T. "Bomber" Harris, chief of RAF Bomber Command, was adamantly opposed.

The RAF determined early in the war that it could not precisely hit individual targets and took heavy losses in trying. It switched in 1942 to area bombing at night, targeting German cities in support of a national policy of "dehousing" German citizens and workers. Harris dismissed ball bearings and other bottleneck objectives as "panacea targets." He claimed that RAF bombers would not be able to find a town the size of Schweinfurt at night, much less bomb the factories. His objections were more a reflection of what Harris did not want to do than of actual RAF capabilities and limitations.

On the other hand, Schweinfurt was exactly the sort of target the US Eighth Air Force was eager to strike to demonstrate the value of daylight precision bombing, to which the Army Air Forces was deeply committed. The British wanted the United States to blend its bomber forces into the RAF's night area bombing campaign.

To their vexation, "the Americans were determined to fight in an American way and, as far as possible, under American command," sniffed British historian Noble Frankland.

Without Excessive Losses

Eighth Air Force B-17s had been flying from England since September 1942, but seldom on large missions or with anything better than mediocre results. Maj. Gen. Ira C. Eaker, commanding Eighth Air Force, had been unable to mount big raids. Many of his aircraft and aircrews were diverted to operations in North Africa and more than half of his remaining resources were assigned to attacking German submarine pens—a high priority for the British—even though bombing had little effect on these hardened facilities.

Eaker was under considerable pressure to deliver a strategic success. In August 1943, he was at last able to put together enough B-17s for a large mission that would launch almost 400 bombers in a deep double strike against the ball bearings at Schweinfurt and the Messerschmitt factories at Regensburg.

The mission, postponed once for bad weather, was reset for Aug. 17. The strike force was divided into two parts. The Third Air Division, led by Col. Curtis E. LeMay, would take off first and bomb Regensburg, 430 miles inside occupied Europe.

The First Air Division, led by Brig. Gen. Robert B. Williams, would take off nine minutes later for Schweinfurt. Williams had the larger force, 230 B-17s compared to 146 for LeMay.

Both divisions would follow the same route for most of the way, but beyond Frankfurt, the First Division would swing off toward Schweinfurt. The plan was for both divisions to reach their targets about the same time, the nine-minute interval between them offset by the location of Schweinfurt, which was 75 miles closer than Regensburg. The first bombs were to fall on Schweinfurt at 10:12 a.m., and on Regensburg one minute later.



B-17s drop their bombs on Schweinfurt, Germany, on Aug. 17



As explosives hit the facilities at Schweinfurt, bombs from a higher-flying B-17 plummet past the photographer

WWII USAAF HISTORY

8th AF B-17 Schweinfurt Raid (cont)

Although the Messerschmitt plant was important—producing up to 400 Me 109 fighters a month—it was not the main target. By going first, LeMay’s division was supposed to lure away the German fighters to give Williams a better shot at Schweinfurt.

Williams would face the brunt of the German fighters on the return trip, while LeMay’s B-17s, carrying extra fuel in “Tokyo tanks,” continued southward over the Alps and the Mediterranean to land at bases in Algeria. US and British medium bombers would provide additional diversion by attacking targets along the Channel coast about the same time the B-17s were taking off.

Never before had B-17s ventured so deep into Germany, and they would be without fighter escort for most of the way. British Spitfires could go with them only as far as Antwerp in Belgium. American P-47 Thunderbolts would have to turn back at Eupen, about 10 miles short of the German border.

In the 1930s, the Army Air Corps had concluded that well-armed bombers could protect themselves. Development of a long-range fighter lagged. The P-51 Mustang, which could go all the way with the bombers to the most distant targets, would not be available until December 1943.

In October 1942, Eaker still held that “the B-17 with its 12 .50-caliber guns can cope with the German day fighter, if flown in close formation” and that “a large force of day bombers can operate without fighter cover against material objectives anywhere in Germany, without excessive losses.”

Most of the bombers on the Regensburg-Schweinfurt mission were B-17Fs. Their guns provided overlapping cones of fire from the waist and from the top, belly, and tail turrets, but the B-17F did not have the nose turret that came on the B-17G. Handheld guns firing to the sides from “cheek” blisters did not close the gap.

“We definitely lack firepower in the nose of the B-17,” LeMay said. The Luftwaffe knew this and exploited the advantage of the head-on, 12 o’clock attacks.

All of this was offset, according to the briefings, by the concentration of German interceptors in a “fighter belt” near the coast. The best fighters, single-engine Me 109s and Focke-Wulf 190s, were supposed to be there. Inland, the bombers should expect only slower and less-maneuverable twin-engine fighters like the Me 110, which was built for night operations. Eighth Air Force was unaware that the Luftwaffe had recently switched to a strategy of defense in depth and had brought back Me 109s and FW 190s from the Russian front to protect Southern Germany.

On the morning of Aug. 17, a thick fog covered East Anglia, where the B-17 bases were. LeMay’s division had been scheduled to launch at 5:45 a.m. At the insistence of VIII Bomber Command, takeoff was delayed for an hour, then for an additional half-hour. Further delay would mean running out of daylight before reaching the landing bases in Africa. Fortunately, LeMay had drilled his crews for a month in bad weather instrument takeoffs and the first bomber was in the air at 7:15 a.m.

The Schweinfurt crews, not proficient in instrument takeoff, were stuck on the ground. They finally launched five hours later than planned, more than four hours—instead of nine minutes—behind LeMay’s division, which was almost to Regensburg before the first Schweinfurt bomber took off.



Fires spread through the target city during the Oct. 14 raid.

LeMay flew as copilot in the lead B-17. His division formed up at bombing altitude before leaving England. Seven B-17s aborted and 139 crossed the Dutch coastline at 9:35 a.m. Enemy resistance was relatively light in the fighter belt, but when the fighter escorts turned back at Eupen, the Me 109s and FW 190s swarmed and kept coming, sometimes in packs of 25.

B-17 Losses: Regensburg and Schweinfurt				
	Initial Bomber Force	B-17s Across the Coastline	B-17s Lost	Pct Lost
Regensburg	146 B-17s	139	24	17.26
Schweinfurt I	230 B-17s	222	36	16.21
Schweinfurt II	317 B-17s 60 B-24s	291	60	20.61
All 3 Missions	693 B-17s 60 B-24s	652	120	18.4

Some B-17s aborted before reaching the continent. The 60 B-24s had trouble making rendezvous with the strike force and were diverted to other targets.

Lt. Col. Beirne Lay Jr., copilot on a B-17 named *Picadilly Lily*, drew on the experience to depict the harrowing losses of the big mission in the book and movie, *Twelve O’Clock High*, which he wrote with Sy Bartlett. “Near the IP [the initial point for the bomb run] one hour-and-a-half after the first of at least 200 individual fighter attacks, the pressure eased off, although hostiles were nearby,” Lay said in a December 1943 article for *Air Force Magazine*.

The relentless fighter attacks were difficult to bear, especially for those air-crew members who could not shoot back, said Hayward S. Hansell Jr., who in 1943 was a brigadier general and chief planner for Eighth Air Force. Gunners could relieve some of the pressure by firing back, but that “was entirely lacking to the pilots and bombardiers and navigators,” Hansell said. “They had somehow to rise above the personal danger surrounding them and place the accomplishment of the mission above personal survival.”

WWII USAAF HISTORY

8th AF B-17 Schweinfurt Raid (cont)

Speer Gets Nervous

The bombs began falling on Regensburg at 11:43 a.m., and they clobbered the target. They got not only the main factory buildings but also wiped out 37 Me 109s just off the assembly line. In addition, they destroyed most of the jigs for the secret Me 262 jet fighter then in development. Lost production amounted to 800 to 1,000 Me 109s before full output was restored several months later. The B-17s turned south and, after an average of 11 hours in the air, landed at their bases in North Africa.

The medium bombers made their diversionary attacks along the Channel coast at midmorning, too late to help LeMay and too early to be of much benefit to Williams.

Because of the five-hour fog delay, Williams and the First Division made a change that would have repercussions later. The original plan was for them to fly past Schweinfurt, turn, and attack from the east. This added 17 minutes to their approach, but it allowed them to make their bomb run at midmorning with the sun at their backs. However, because of the long delay, they would arrive at Schweinfurt in the afternoon rather than in the morning. The sun would be more to the west than to the east. If they stuck to the plan, they would spend 17 dangerous and unnecessary minutes in the target area and they would be attacking into the sun. Consequently, they switched directions to make the bomb run from west-to-east rather than east-to-west.

The first of the Schweinfurt B-17s took off at 11:20 a.m. and a procession of 222 aircraft crossed the coast of the continent. The German fighters were refueled, rearmed, and waiting. Williams lost only one bomber in the fighter belt, but the Luftwaffe shot down 23 between Eupen and Schweinfurt, and several more over the target.



German armaments minister Albert Speer (left), shown here with Field Marshal Erhard Milch (center) and German aircraft designer Wilhelm Messerschmitt, was sure the Allies would follow up the Schweinfurt-Regensburg raids with even more crippling blows to the industrial complex. (Photo via

Williams himself took over a machine gun in a cheek blister and fired it until the barrel burned out.

The strike force reached Schweinfurt at 2:59 p.m. Bombing accuracy was not as good as hoped for. Among other complications, the leading groups reached the initial point a few minutes late and the following groups were close on their heels.

Some of the crews were confused by the change in direction of approach to the target. The first three groups had clear bomb runs but the other six had problems and many of their bombs fell wide.

The division then had to fly back through the German defenses on the return trip, and was under sustained fighter attack for much of the way.

The strike on Schweinfurt is often characterized as unsuccessful. Most of the heavy equipment at the factories survived, and the damage done was temporary. Part of the problem, according to Hansell, was that less than a third of the bombs dropped were 1,000 pounders. The others were lighter and had limited effect on the targets. But even so, and despite the operational fumbles, the raid dealt Schweinfurt a hard blow.

The German armaments minister, Albert Speer, said in his memoirs that the bombing caused a 38 percent drop in ball bearing production. Speer could not relocate the industry immediately because he could not afford to stop production during the move. Output was so sparse that plants using ball bearings sent men with knapsacks to pick up as many bearings as were available each day. Stocks were sufficient to cover only six to eight weeks. After the raid, Speer said, “we anxiously asked ourselves how soon the enemy would realize that he could paralyze the production of thousands of armament plants merely by destroying five or six relatively small targets.”

Eighth Air Force had limited means of assessing the strike and had no real idea of how effective the bombing had been. In any case, Eaker did not have enough bombers to mount another mission right away. Official statements put an optimistic face on the raid but the War Department was alarmed by the casualties.

For the day, LeMay’s losses had been 24 aircraft, and Williams lost 36. Many others were so damaged they would never fly again. Of the 601 crewmen lost, 102 were killed. Most—381 of them—were taken prisoner, while others evaded capture, were interned, or were rescued from the sea.

B-17 gunners claimed to have shot down 288 German airplanes and the fighter escorts claimed another 19. In actuality, the Luftwaffe lost between 25 and 35 fighters.

“We destroyed a mere fraction of the German planes claimed and awarded,” LeMay said.

Intelligence reported that the Germans were rebuilding furiously at Schweinfurt and scrambling to obtain ball bearings from other sources, including Sweden. Eighth Air Force would be going back to Schweinfurt. LeMay, without doubt the best combat commander in Eighth Air Force, had been promoted and moved up. He would not be along this time.

WWII USAAF HISTORY **8th AF B-17 Schweinfurt Raid (cont)**

On the day of the mission, Oct. 14, there was again fog in the morning, but it lifted. At 9 a.m., a British Mosquito reconnaissance aircraft flying high over Germany reported that the weather was clear.

The strike force consisted of 317 B-17s in two divisions, commanded by Col. Budd J. Peaslee and Col. Archie J. Old Jr. Sixty B-24s were also assigned, but they had trouble in making rendezvous and were diverted to other targets in the Frisian Islands.

B-17s began taking off shortly after 10 a.m. and 377 bombers were soon in the air over England. However, aborts reduced the number to 291 B-17s before they reached the coastline of the Netherlands. The P-47 escort fighters turned back between Aachen and Duren, just inside the German border. The Luftwaffe attacked in large numbers and from all directions. The official Army Air Forces history described the Luftwaffe fighter attack as “unprecedented in its magnitude” and “in the severity with which it was executed.” The Allies estimated that the Luftwaffe had 800 fighters in Europe. In fact, there were 964, and they were still pressing the bombers as Schweinfurt came into view.

Out front in the leading B-17 was Lt. Col. T. R. Milton, operations officer of the 91st Group. He went on to become a four-star general and a longtime columnist for *Air Force Magazine*, but this day his thoughts were on whether he would survive. He led the bombers over Schweinfurt at 2:39 p.m.



Gen. Hap Arnold (left) and Gen. Ira Eaker (right) confer with British Air Marshall Arthur Harris.

Accuracy was much better than in August, and the three largest ball bearings factories were hit numerous times. According to Speer, the bombs this time destroyed 67 percent of Schweinfurt’s production capacity

Unfortunately, the Oct. 14 casualties were the highest yet. Of the 291 B-17s that left England that morning, 60 were shot down for losses of more than 20 percent.

At such a rate, an aircrew member on a heavy bomber would have odds of completing no more than five missions before he would be shot down. He had virtually no chance of finishing his 25-mission combat tour and going home.

That loss rate and level of risk to the aircrews were not acceptable. For the rest of the year, Eighth Air Force struck only targets that were within range of the escort fighters. It did not attack Schweinfurt again until February 1944, when long-range fighters were available.

For its part, RAF Bomber Command did not attack Schweinfurt until after the third raid by Eighth Air Force. By then, the Germans had dispersed the ball bearings industry and it was no longer a good candidate for bottleneck targeting.

Frankland, historian of the RAF Bomber Command, dismissed Schweinfurt as “America’s Waterloo.” Others have emphasized the shortcomings of the operation as well. US historian Alan J. Levine said that “ball bearings as a target system had proven a false trail and the fortunes of Eighth Air Force had reached their nadir.”

One of the most quoted lines from the US Strategic Bombing Survey said that “there is no evidence that the attacks on the ball bearing industry had any measurable effect on essential war production.” Less noticed was the judgment of the Survey that the outcome might have been different had Eighth Air Force been able to follow up on the 1943 attacks.

“The Allies threw away success when it was already in their hands,” Speer said. “As it was, not a tank, plane, or other piece of weaponry failed to be produced because of lack of ball bearings.” In Speer’s opinion, “The war could largely have been decided in 1943 if instead of vast but pointless area bombing the planes had concentrated on the centers of armaments production.”

Schweinfurt did not discredit either daylight precision bombing or the bottleneck targeting strategy. In regard to those issues, the evidence was more positive than negative. Despite some operational errors, the strikes—just two of them—had a dramatic effect on ball bearing production, and had the effort been sustained would have devastated the German industrial base.

What the Schweinfurt experience did disprove was the notion that bomber formations could defend themselves when confronted by a force like the German air force.

In early 1944, Eighth Air Force changed its strategic emphasis to an all-out effort to destroy the Luftwaffe, and within months, the Luftwaffe was no longer an effective fighting force. The Allies were able to conduct the D-Day invasion in June 1944 without interference from the air. British and American bombers were free to attack at will, and with that, the war entered its final phase.

John T. Correll was editor in chief of Air Force Magazine for 18 years and is now a contributing editor. His most recent article, “A Habit of Heroism,” appeared in the January issue.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER - IGGY CRUZ



If you drop something heavy, it WILL land on your foot and if you mess with it long enough, it will break. These are not universal laws of human existence, but there are days in which our experience leads us to believe so. You may be able to identify with the following story:

A young businessman was gone for a week, leaving his wife with three small children. It rained every day. Toward the end of the week, in desperation, she decided to take the children to the petting zoo. When she drove into the parking lot, it appeared that every other mother in town had the same idea. There was no available parking, but since she was driving a little red Volkswagen Bug, she was able to slip into a spot too small for other cars. When she returned to the car, she discovered the entire front end of her Volkswagen had been smashed. While inquiring if anyone saw the accident, one of the guards explained that he had seen the whole thing. He said that an elephant which gives rides to children at the zoo used to be in a circus act in which he was trained to sit on a little red tub. Apparently, when the elephant walked by the little red Volkswagen, it brought back memories of the circus act, and he sat on the car. Since the engine of a Volkswagen is in the rear, it did not prevent her driving the car home. Driving home on the freeway she came upon an accident where cars were backed up a long way. Once again, because of her small car, she was able to get on the shoulder of the road and drive past the wreck. No sooner she gotten back on the freeway than she discovered she was being pursued by a police car with siren and blue lights going. The officer pulled her over and gave her a ticket for leaving the scene of an accident.. She protested that she had not been involved in the accident, but had simply pulled around the cars. Then the officer asked, "How do you account for the smashed front end of your car?" Then she heard herself explaining that an elephant had sat on it. The officer then requested that she take a breath-analysis test for alcohol. There are some days in which nothing seems to go right. A good test of maturity is how well we get past days like that. You are not being singled out or not being punished for past sins, real or imagined. Days like this come now and then to everybody. Anger will not help. Patience and a sense of humor will. BLESSINGS TO ALL.....IGGY

FINAL FLY BY

DAVID A. STRETT, a resident of Oakhurst, NJ died on Jan 2015.—No other info available at this late date.
Bob

FINAL FLY BY



April 24, 1933-Feb. 23, 2015

HOWARD WILLIAM HOFF, CMSgt, USAF, RET., 81, a proud veteran, passed away Monday morning at Kitty Askins Hospice Center.

Born in Charles Town, W. Va., he was the son of the late Howard Campbell and Helen Elizabeth Crimm Hoff, and was the widower of Jenny Hoff.

He served in the United States Air Force for 30 years. He was the wing gunner with the 68th Bomb Wing. He served five tours from 1968 to 1973 in Vietnam, where he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross twice. He was also a member of the Air Force Gunners Association, the V.F.W. and the American Legion.

A funeral service will be held Wednesday evening at Shumate-Faulk Funeral Home at 7 p.m., with the Rev. Craig Langdon officiating. Committal services will be held Thursday at 2:30 p.m. at Wayne Memorial Park with full military honors.

The family will receive following the service at the funeral home.

He is survived by a son, Michael Hoff of Dudley; daughters, Vickie Long and husband, Doug, of Willow Springs, Sandra Gardner and husband, Greg, of Goldsboro, Terry Hinson and husband, Jimmy, of Dudley and Linda Rhodes and husband, Randy, of Leland; nine grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Legion or the V.F.W.

Shumate-Faulk Funeral Home is serving the Hoff family, and online condolences may be directed to www.shumate-faulk.com.

EULOGY – A MAN, A WARRIOR, A PATRIOT AND MOST OF ALL - A DAD - WILLIE HOFF



Some people find themselves in a storm and struggle to get out ; others search for a storm and get into it, knowingly.

History is full of both kinds of people; for those who seek to get into the storm.. are those who have volunteered themselves... for the sake of the people. This was our Dad.

In his mere youth at age 17, getting permission to join the service he pushed a wheel and his train of Life started to move... and it continued to move on, consuming his life with courage, commitment , devotion and bravery to the United States of America.

How shall I single out to your grateful hearts his pre-emanate worth ?... Where shall I begin?... Shall I speak of his war like achievements, all springing from obedience to his country's will, all directed to his country's good ?

Will you go with me to the Gunners position in the belly of a B-29 Bomber as my youthful Dad enters Aerial Gunnery in 1950 never having ever flown before.....That takes Courage !

Will you go with me as he flies over countless Chrome Dome missions around the Arctic Circle during the Cold War... Knowing if he is called to do the task he has ardently trained for... he may never see his family, friends and the World as he knows it

again.....That takes Courage and Commitment!

Will you go with me over the jungles of Southeast Asia on the 252 Combat missions to thwart the Communist forces coming down the Ho Chi Mein trail.....That takes Courage , Commitment and Devotion!

Will you go with me to the dark skies over Hanoi in December of 1972 in the solitude of the Tail Gunners position on a B-52 as an onslaught of SAM missiles are fired upon you...all for your demise....That takes Courage, Commitment, Devotion and Bravery !

My Dad was a Noble Warrior, a True Patriot, an American Hero..... but my Dad also was more than that. He was also a loving husband to his beautiful wife Jenny for close to 45 years. A woman he built his family and dreams around moving from base to base in his 30 year career with the Air Force before deciding to retire and return to Goldsboro and make it his home. (continued on following page)

FINAL FLY BY

EULOGY – A MAN, A WARRIOR, A PATRIOT AND MOST OF ALL - A DAD - WILLIE HOFF (cont)

A woman who he loved to travel with while going on many vacations around the United States and the Caribbean during and after his military career . He cherished his life with her and loved her for all eternity.

He was a father to 5 children who looked upon him as simply as "Dad". A father who loved them dearly and would always had their backs...but he always wanted them to have their front.... A father who made sure they got their first car but that they did this also by working. For he knew that by doing this... they would be able to stand upon their own two feet in life. He was a father who encouraged Education and a strong work ethic as a key to a successful life and all his children achieved that.

He was also a Grandpa to 9 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren whom he all loved and helped all in college.

My Dad was a man of quick wit and could say the funniest things. I remember a conversation he had with a neighbor who was a retired Officer and used to fly on a crew. He said to my Dad...Willy how can you have a bigger house than me with a pool and a beach house too ? Your an enlisted man and I am an Officer ? My dad said...You remember those flight lunches you Officers used to make us Gunners pick up before a mission....you don't think you had to actually pay for them did you ?



Son Michael and Willie at Orlando Reunion—2011

I guess you could also call him thrifty..... being born during the Depression in 1933 and growing up in West Virginia he learned how to conserve and sometimes to me it was in a comical way.....I walked in on him one day at his house and he was tying 18 inch pieces of string together and winding it into a ball....I said why are you doing that ...You can buy a ball of string for \$1.79 ? and he said.. Why go buy it when I have it right here, that would be wasting money. He was not a man of waste. That was our Dad.

Our Dad was a man of principle who believed in Truth and Right and tried to teach those virtues to us. He loved his family and he believed in us. He loved the United States of America more than any man I have ever known. He was a proud Gunner and I am a proud Son of a Gunner.

So may his memory forever rest upon us as he arrives at his final reward to be with his Lord and our beloved mother who I know.... anxiously awaits him.

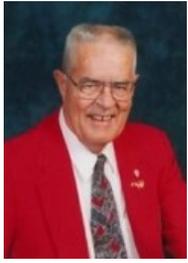
In lieu of flowers donations may be made to the American Legion or the V.F.W.

Shumate-Faulk Funeral Home is serving the Hoff family and online condolences may be directed to www.shumate-faulk.com

NOTE: Eulogy written by son, Michael H. Hoff. Well said, Mike, well said. Willie Hoff was well known, loved and respected by all who knew him. We were proud to call him our friend over these many years. Willie will be remembered by all.

"GUNNER'S LIFE CHECKLIST COMPLETE, LEAVING MEMORIES FOR ALL TO REMEMBER ME."

FINAL FLY BY



THOMAS EDWARD MILLIKEN, SR. Sept. 3, 1929 - Nov. 29, 2014

Warner Robins, GA- Warner Robins, GA: SMSgt. Thomas Edward Milliken, Sr., USAF (Ret) entered into rest on Saturday, November 29, 2014. A memorial service will be held on Wednesday December 3rd, at 3:00 PM in the chapel of Heritage Memorial Funeral Home. Burial will be private. Visitation will be held from 2:00 PM until 3:00 PM on Wednesday before the service.

Mr. Milliken was born on September 3, 1929 in Spokane, WA. He was preceded in death by his parents Russell and Mildred (Medford) Milliken, two brothers Robert and Howard Milliken and a sister Barbara House.

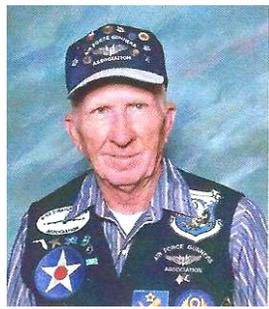
Mr. Milliken was a retired SMSgt. with 28 years of service in the United States Army, Army Air Corp and the United States Air Force where he was a tail gunner on a B52 during the Vietnam (2 Combat Tours) and Korean conflicts. Mr. Milliken was also a retired Avionics Technician from Robins Air Force Base.

He was a proud member of the American Legion Post 172 (Honor Guard) and Honor Society of Legionaries 40 and 8. He was the past "Grand Chef de Gare" of La Grande Voiture du Georgia (40 and 8) and past "Chef de Gare" of Voiture 1145 (40 and 8).

He was a member of the VFW Post 6605 (Lifetime Member) and the Air Force Sergeants Association, Gunner's Association and the Middle Georgia USBC.

His memory will forever be treasured by his loving wife Billie Ruth Milliken of fifty-six years, Warner Robins, GA, children Terry, Tom, Jr., and Jim and grandchildren Virginia and Matthew and numerous family and friends.

In lieu of flowers donation may be made to the [Boy Scout Troop 8](#) at the Riverside United Methodist Church in Macon, GA, in c/o William Jones, 124 Waterford Place, Macon, GA, 31210.



JAMES K. BAIRD, SR., 84, MSGT, USAF, Retired

Mr. Baird entered into rest January 17, 2015 after a short illness at his residence in Mayo, Florida. He was born in Jacksonville, Florida on January 21, 1930 to Joseph T. Baird, Sr. and Irene Bennett Baird. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1949 and during his career served as a Gunner on B-29's and B-52's. His tours of duty included Japan, Guam, Thailand and the Vietnam Conflict.

He honorably served his country for 20½ years until he retired while stationed at Columbus Air Force Base in Columbus, Mississippi on August 1, 1969.

After retirement he moved to Mayo, Florida in 1976 where he opened his own business repairing motorcycles, 4 wheelers, and lawn mowers. He looked forward to each Gunner's Association Reunion, a brotherhood he cherished.

He was preceded in the death by his wife of 49 years, Lois Mattox Baird, who passed away April 29, 1999; and brothers; Joseph T. Baird, Jr., and Buddy Baird.

He is survived by sons, James (June) Baird of Columbus, MS, and Larry "Keith" (Kathy) Baird of Columbus, MS; daughters, Karen (Mike) Daniel of Columbus, MS, and Linda (Steve) Storm, of Biloxi, MS. He leaves 11 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. He is also survived by sisters, Mary Ruth (John) Cowart Jacksonville, FL, and Edye Thrasher of Jacksonville; FL.

A memorial service will be held in Mayo, Florida on March 14, 2015. His final resting place will be at the Corinth National Cemetery, Corinth, Mississippi, with full military honors.

Obituary provided by family of James K. Baird



LOUIS RHODES BOYD, JR., 82, passed away on Sunday, November 9, 2014 at Willow Creek Nursing Home.

Mr. Boyd was born in Syracuse, New York on November 23, 1931 to the late Louis Rhodes Boyd, Sr. and Lillian Grace Cinnamon Boyd. He lived his dream proudly serving as a B-52 gunner in the United States Air Force. Mr. Boyd will always be remembered for his patriotism. He protected his country and her allies while serving during the Vietnam War. Mr. Boyd's valor and skill was recognized with numerous decorations.

No formal service will be held and his interment will be at a later date in Arlington National Cemetery.

Mr. Boyd is survived by his wife of 61 years, Margaret L. Boyd; daughter, Marylou Boyd of Goldsboro; son, Richard Louis Boyd and wife Jacqueline of North Syracuse, NY; four grandchildren and three

great-grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorials be given to the Disabled American Veterans, 112 N. Patrick Street, Goldsboro, NC 27530.

FINAL FLY BY

NEAL L. THOMAS JR. – 2 April 1932 - 28 September 2014 (MSGT, USAF, RET)

Neal Thomas Jr. shed himself of his earthly and sickly shell of a body and departed this world for one of life everlasting on 28 September, never again to suffer disease or sickness. He left this world as he lived it; on his own terms. Many people leave their mark by how they lived. Neal's legacy will not merely reflect how he lived, it will also be in the way he died. He did both with the utmost dignity and always putting the needs of others before himself.

Neal was born on 2 April 1932 in Colquitt, GA and moved to Fort Pierce, FL at the age of 7. He served with distinction in the [US Air Force](#) in Theater during the Korean and [Vietnam Wars](#). He retired as a MSGT after more than 26 years of Service to our Nation during a time



when it wasn't popular to be on active duty. This didn't matter to him. It wasn't to win a popularity contest that guided Neal to serve, it was to ensure the safety and a way of life for our country and to help protect those less fortunate. After Service, Neal worked for 22 years with the Colorado Department of Labor as a Veteran's Employment Representative and supervisor.

Neal got out of bed every day with the goal to make at least one Veteran's life better. At the end of most days he would lie down not even realizing he had positively impacted lives of many Veterans. Neal's more than 35 continuous years of service to The American Legion and the Veteran population are too many to recount. His American Legion roles included all Post positions, including Commander; he served as Commander of the Department of Colorado from 1988-1989; Alternate National Executive Committeeman, and on countless Boards at the Post, Department and National levels. He was also a life member of the DAV, [VFW](#), and TREA, as well as several other civic and professional organizations.

Neal helped start the Transition Assistance Program in the State of Colorado for Service members separating and/or retiring. He was honored for raising millions of dollars to help improve educational programs for the University of Colorado, Denver. He was a certified mediator and counseled many young active duty and Veteran personnel on everything from finances to marriage issues. He responded to all requests for assistance from Veterans, sometimes even reaching into his own pocket to lend temporary help.

There are generations of family; kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids that will keep Neal's memory alive for many years; his wife Lynn, children Brenda Wash (Curtis), Douglas, and grandchildren Lajuan, Cheryell, Michael, William, Stacy, Tailey, and Dougo. He was surrounded by his loved ones as he passed through the portal to eternal life. There are even more Legion family members and Veterans who will keep Neal's memory alive. There are Veterans today and for years to come benefitting from his work with the VA and his contributions as a Legionnaire. They may not know it was Neal who was instrumental in getting some of these benefits, but he wouldn't care. He is the reigning Department of Colorado Legionnaire of the Year; a prestigious recognition celebrating accomplishments honed by a lifetime of service to Veterans and our youth. He was a mentor to many and friend to all.

Most importantly, for those of us such as yourself who know Christ as their Savior, it's not over; it is merely the beginning. Neal moved from temporary life to life everlasting. We'll see him again.

In keeping with Neal's request, there will not be a funeral, but there will be a Memorial Service and Celebration of Neal's life at The American Legion, Centennial Post 209 at 3613 Jeannine Dr. on Sunday, 5 October at 2:00pm.

The family asks that in lieu of flowers please make a donation in Neal's memory to The American Legion, Centennial Post 209 at www.americanlegioncoloradosprings.org or PO Box 25334, CoS, CO 80936-5334.

Neal was a Life Member of the Air Force Gunners Association. Photo of young Neal Thomas Jr. provided by Charlie Damp (part of the Kincheloe AFB Gunners Photo group from 1967 - 1968 era – copied from August 2010 Short Bursts)

The Patriot Guard Riders have been invited by the family of MSgt Neil Thomas, to attend a Memorial at American Legion Post 209, 3613 Jeannine Dr., Colorado Springs, CO, 80917, on Sunday, 5 October, 2014.

MSgt Thomas retired from the United States Air Force after serving from 1950 to 1976, and is a veteran of both the Korean and Vietnam wars.

He was a past Colorado State Commander for the American Legion, as well as a past National Executive Committeeman.

Ride Captain: Daniel Cisneros

Editor's note: We just recently learned of Neal's passing and felt that, although late, this notice should be posted for all who knew him. He will be remembered.

FINAL FLY BY



DIEHL FRANK PICKETT, age 81, of Appleton, formerly of Gwinn, Michigan, passed away suddenly on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, at his home. Diehl was born December 5, 1933, in Madelia, Minnesota, the son of the late Diehl Frank, Sr. and Helen Emma (Wilkening) Pickett.

Diehl graduated from Truman High School in Truman, Minnesota, with the class of 1951.

He then went on and attended South Dakota State University, where he played football. In January 1952, Diehl enlisted in the [United States Air Force](#), serving in Korea. He retired after 23 years of service, as a Senior Master Sergeant. Following his military retirement, Diehl went on to work for American Eagle Airlines, retiring a second time in 1996.

On October 10, 1953, he married Marlys Peterson, his high school sweetheart, in Truman, Minnesota. After living in various areas during their marriage, Diehl and Marlys settled and made their home in

Gwinn, Michigan for 40 years. They recently relocated to Appleton to be closer to family.

Diehl was a member of the U. S. Air Force 13th Bomb Squadron Association and the U. S. Air Force Gunners Association. He was an avid outdoorsman and master fisherman, a member of the Pheasants Forever and an active member of Ducks Unlimited. Diehl will be fondly remembered as a classical handyman with perfection for detail.

Diehl is survived by his loving wife of over 61 years, Marlys; daughter, Dawn (Mark) Washatka of Appleton; sons, James (Letty) Pickett of Colorado Springs, Colorado and Ronald (Katharine) Pickett of Appleton; son-in-law, James Paris of Bethel, Minnesota; grandchildren, Graham (Erin) Washatka, Brooke (Tim) Hoel, Justin Paris, Terell Paris, Amanda (Darren) Harbeck, Melanie (Eddie) Allen, Amber Pickett, Ashley (Aaron) Dagenais, Arianna (fiancé Kyle) Pickett; great-grandchildren, Evan Washatka, Elliana Hoel, Eve Harbeck, Garrett and Emmet Allen, and Corbin Dagenais; and special feline companions, Mickey and Molly.

In addition to his parents, Diehl was preceded in death by his daughter, Kathryn Marie Paris.

Family and friends may call on Monday, January 19, 2015, from 10 - 11 A.M., at the Valley Funeral Home, 2211 N. Richmond Street, Appleton. A Memorial Service will be held at 11 A.M., in the funeral home chapel, with Pastor Vernon (Bud) Norman officiating, followed by Full Military honors.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the [Alzheimer's Association](#) (In memory of Diehl's daughter, Kathryn) or a Veteran's Association of choice.

FINAL FLY BY Remembered



[Raymond Ruetsch](#) Here is a little history before SAC was SAC - 70 years ago today my dad was flying his 43rd combat mission as a B-24 ball turret gunner. They bombed their target and were required to turn-around and take pictures of the target. They had a specially modified B-24 with a camera to take post strike recon pictures to assess the damage before the Germans could camouflage whatever damage had been done. The crew (except the pilot and the camera operator) did not know that they were to do this until after they were airborne. As lead crew they usually led the strike but that day they were tail-end Charlie. When the pilot told the crew what they were going to do someone came over the intercom and said if I have to fly over the same target twice, I want credit for 2 missions. After flying back over the target, they turned around and hightailed it out of there. The engines started to fail. One by one they quit because the fuel transfer pumps failed. They had to bail out because the B-24 glides like a rock. As he climbed out of the turret people up front were moving equipment away from the escape hatch. Dad yelled at them, don't throw that around - it is my parachute. He was the second to last out of the aircraft.

It was later discovered that over half of the modified camera aircraft from other bomb groups went down that day. The ones that made it back were inspected and it was discovered that the fuel transfer pumps had been sabotaged. As he told it, after he hit the ground the Germans offered better accommodations for the remainder of the war. In his autobiography he tells many stories that he had never told us before. He was a POW till April 19, 1945. He was a member of the greatest generation. I lost him in 2013. I miss him. He was my hero. Never forget these heroes. He got free license plates from Ohio for being a POW but he said he would not do it again for free license plates.

Editor's note: August 2010 SB has long story of this incident and the sabotaging of the B-24s – received from Bob Andrus and Raymond Ruetsch at the time.

FINAL FLY BY



Lester T. Rowley has completed his mission in life and flown to his reward to join his beloved wife, Patricia, and God on May 28, 2013. He was born on Nov. 13, 1921, in Lansing, Mich.

Growing up through the Depression, when duty called at the start of WWII, he was quick to respond. Joining the Army Air Corp in January 1942, he served with valor, honor, and distinction, flying as a turret gunner on 61 combat missions aboard B-25's in the Mediterranean. He received the Air Medal six times, the DFC, a Purple Heart and numerous other honors.

After discharge following the war, he reenlisted and spent time in Germany serving the Berlin Airlift. Following that he was sent to Korea where he received his second Purple Heart. After many other duty stations, Lester was assigned to duty in Vietnam in 1964 where he received his third Purple Heart. He was discharged from active duty from disability in 1966.

After discharge, he returned to his education, receiving his degree from University of West Florida.

Continuing his life of service, Lester proceeded to join the Coast Guard Auxiliary where he served with distinction for a further 32 years. One of the things he was most proud of was as a public education officer he was able to instill water safety in thousands of grade school children through the years.

His love of travel led him onward to make many trips to explore many places. He loved to drive the back roads and find new and exciting things to see.

Lester is survived in life by his loving family, sons, Steven P. Rowley, Noel L. Rowley and his wife, Petrice, and Bruce A. Rowley and his partner, Jeanne Jankowski; daughters, Linda J. Boone, and Susan G. Rowley and her partner, Jason Lynch; grandchildren, Brian Boone, Brandie Boone, Brooke Jones, Thomas Rowley, Chris Rowley and Matt Rowley; six great-grandchildren; and extended family and many friends.

A Celebration of Life took place on June 8, 2013, at Twin Cities Cremation Services & Funeral Home, 1404 E. John Sims Parkway Niceville, FL 32578.



Lester attended many of the AFGA reunions. This photo was taken at the 2011 Orlando reunion Open Mike dinner with Lester wearing his original WWII helmet, goggles and scarf.

Editor's comment: Did not learn of Lester's passing until I checked on him to see what he was doing. Sad note—he truly was a gentleman and historic character. He was featured in an article in the December 2011 SB. He will always be remembered by those who knew him. Bob



Retired Lt. Col. **WILLIAM E. ROSSER II**, 88, passed away Monday, November 25, 2013 at his home with his loving wife, Eleanor by his side. The son of William E. Rosser Sr. and Martha Rosser, he was born in Masury, OH, and moved to Brevard County in 1978 following a distinguished Military career.

Bill enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and served on bombers during World War II. Following the war, Bill earned a Bachelor's of Science degree from Youngstown College in Ohio and in 1950 returned to the U.S. Air Force as an officer. Bill continued his Air Force service throughout the Korean War, and into the Vietnam War as a Master Combat Systems/Electronics Warfare Officer, flying in B-52 bombers. After almost 28 years of service, Lt. Colonel Rosser honorably retired from the U.S. Air Force in 1975 as a highly decorated veteran of three wars. His medals include the Distinguished Flying Cross (two awards), Bronze Star, Air Medal (ten awards), Air Force Commendation Medal (two

awards), among many others.

Bill is survived by his wife, Eleanor "Ellie" Rosser; five children, James, William III, John, and Vicki Rosser, and Nancy Zevgolis; five step-children, Steven, Matthew, and Mark Ripley, Deborah Crossley, and Linda Seidel; fourteen grandchildren; and ten great-grandchildren.

Editor's comment: Note was sent to Chuck Dean, AFGA Membership Officer for inclusion in the SB. LTC Rosser was known by many of the B-52 gunners during Arc Light—Bullet Shot times.

Dear Chuck

January 28, 2015

It is with great sadness that I inform you that my husband, Lt. William E. Rosser II, (ret) passed away on November 25, 2013. I have enclosed a copy of his obituary for "Short Bursts". Final interment with full military honors was on August 15, 2014, at Arlington National Cemetery. Bill loved his country and was proud of his military service. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather, great grandfather and caring friend. He will be remembered and greatly missed by all who knew and loved him.

Sincerely
Eleanor (Ellie) Rosser

FINAL FLY BY



LYLE POUND, MSgt, USAF(Ret), 90, of Nampa, ID, died Tuesday, February 24, 2015 at his home. Lyle was a very good friend of mine; the friendship started in Feb57, when on my return from Ramey AFB, PR, and flying B36s for five years I was assigned to the USAF Gunnery School at Lowry AFB as an instructor in the B52 program. I was 22 years old and scared shitless just thinking about being an Instructor. Lyle was one of my first contacts at Lowry and he was a WWII gunner and a Master Sergeant and he made a great mentor of this young kid. After about a year or so of teaching in the classroom at Lowry I was assigned to the OQ range at Parker, CO as an instructor. Lyle was my supervisor out there and we became close friends. I will give you what I know about him:

Lyle is survived by his wife Edith and family. They were married for 71 years.

Lyle flew B24s, B29s, B36s and B52s (he flew B24s in the Pacific during WWII)

In ~1946 Lyle's crew was flying a B29 from the US to the UK when mechanical problems forced them to ditch in the North Atlantic. Two people were killed in the ditching. The survivors were in the water for five days/nights before they were rescued.

When the USAF gunnery school closed in 1959 I was transferred to the 4017th at Castle. A month or so later Lyle came to Castle for CCT and upon graduation he stayed at CAFB as an IG in the 329th BS. I believe Lyle retired from USAF sometime after 1965.

I visited Lyle and Edith in 1980 when I wangled a business trip to the Left Coast and attended a 329th BS reunion (while in 4017th I flew with the 329th BS) over the weekend before coming home.

Last fall Judy and I made a long trip out west and on our way to CO from San Francisco Judy and I went a couple of hundred miles out of our way to see Lyle and Edith at their home near Boise, ID. I am so glad that we took that detour to see them. Lyle and Edith looked great, especially for being in their 90s. Lyle was terribly hard of hearing [what former gunner isn't?] but he was still a lot of fun to be around and we had a very good, though short, visit.

NOTE: Sent in by his friend Stan Allen: Stan, can't THANK YOU enough for supplying this personal first hand information on one of our members. Know his friendship meant a lot to you. Better than any newspaper obituary that I could find and I know those that knew him really appreciate you sharing with all. **HE IS NOT FORGOTTEN - HE WILL BE ALWAYS REMEMBERED. May you Rest In Peace, Lyle.** Bob

FINAL FLY BY REMEMBERED



SEATTLE (AP) — Lt. Col. **EDWARD SAYLOR**, (March 15, 1920 - January 28, 2015) one of four surviving Doolittle Raiders who attacked Japan during a daring 1942 mission credited with lifting American morale during World War II, has died. He was 94.

Rod Saylor said his father died of natural causes on Wednesday in Sumner, Washington. He was a young flight engineer-gunner and among the 80 airmen who volunteered to fly the risky mission that sent B-25 bombers from a carrier at sea to attack Tokyo on April 28, 1942. The raid launched earlier than planned and risked running out of fuel before making it to safe airfields.

The 16 B-25 bombers, each carrying five men, dropped bombs on targets such as factory areas and military installations and headed to designated airfields in mainland China realizing that they would run out of fuel, according to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force.

Three crew members died as Raiders bailed out or crash-landed their planes in China, but most were helped to safety by Chinese villagers and soldiers. Of eight Raiders captured by Japanese soldiers, three were executed and another died in captivity.

Saylor told the AP in 2013 that he was one of the lucky ones. "There were a whole bunch of guys in World War II; a lot of people didn't come back," he said.

He grew up on a ranch in Brusett, Montana, and enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1939, Casey said. Saylor served in the Air Force for 28 years before retiring as a lieutenant colonel.

Last year, the Raiders received the Congressional Gold Medal for heroism and valor.

**FINAL FLY BY
Remembered**

In Memory Of "Spirit 03" Jan 31, 1991

0635 hrs. marked the 23rd anniversary of the shooting-down of a 16th Special Operations Squadron AC-130H Spectre gunship, with the call-sign "Spirit 03." It happened twelve days into Operation Desert Storm during the Battle of Khafji, a battle to stop Iraqi mechanized and armored divisions from moving south from Kuwait to cross the border into Saudi Arabia near a Saudi town named Khafji.

As part of a decisive demonstration of air power over ground forces, three AC-130 Spectre gunships joined the battle to provide air-to-ground fire and close air support. As the last of the three AC-130s still on station early on the morning of January 31, and about to end its mission, Spirit 03 "received a call from the Marines – they needed an enemy missile battery destroyed.

Despite the risk of anti-aircraft artillery fire, and the greater danger of the morning sun casting light on the circling gunship, the crew of 'Spirit 03' chose to remain and destroy the position requested." "Spirit 03" did what it had been asked to do, it destroyed the target designated by the Marines who were under fire, but that action came at a heavy cost. An SA-7 "Grail" man-portable surface-to-air missile was fired by the Iraqis at the now in-the-early-morning-light-visible AC-130 in the sky over Khafji.

"The missile found its target and at 0635 hours the aircraft sent out a "mayday" distress call and then crashed into the waters of the Persian Gulf," according to SpecialOperations.com. All 14 crewmembers were killed. The loss of the crew of "Spirit 03" was the largest single loss by any Air Force unit during Operation Desert Storm.

The bravery and dedication of Spectre resulted in the destruction of 21 enemy fuel trucks, 10 armored personnel carriers, and 2 antiaircraft artillery sites during the Battle of Khafji. The crew of Spirit 03 was awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart medals. The actions of the aircrews played a decisive role in the retaking of Khafji and its subsequent control for the duration of hostilities.

Overall, the 16 SOS was credited for destroying 21 fuel trucks, 10 armored personnel carriers, 9 23mm AAA sites, 6 electronic equipment vans, 3 Squat Eye/Flat Face radar facilities, 2 communication sites, and a command post complex. Numerous other targets, including large numbers of enemy personnel, were engaged but not confirmed destroyed. During the retreat of the Iraqi Army from Kuwait, one AC-130H gunship provided air cover over the Kuwait International Airport. The remainder of DESERT STORM saw the 16 SOS flying airborne alert. On 27 May 1991, the remaining gunships in Saudi Arabia returned to home station at Hurlburt Field.

"We will never forget this mission and the sacrifice that they made."

The crew members of Spirit 03, killed in action Jan. 31, 1991:

Maj. Paul Weaver
Capt. Thomas Bland
Capt. Arthur Galvan
Capt. William Grimm
Capt. Dixon Walters
Senior Master Sgt. Paul Buege
Senior Master Sgt. Jim May
Tech. Sgt. Robert Hodges
Tech. Sgt. John Oelschlager
Staff Sgt. John Blessinger
Staff Sgt. Tim Harrison
Staff Sgt. Damon Kanuha
Staff Sgt. Mark Schmauss
Sergeant Barry Clark

Blue skies always Warriors.

FINAL FLY BY REMEMBERED

Defense Department forensic scientists identified the remains of Army Air Forces 1st Lt. **James F. Gatlin**, 25, of Jacksonville, Fla., an airman missing in action since 1944, [announced](#) the Pentagon. He was interred on Jan. 30 in Bushnell, Fla., in a ceremony with full military honors. On Dec. 23, 1944, Gatlin was co-pilot of a B-26C Marauder that crashed due to enemy fire near Bettenfeld, Germany, during a bombing mission against enemy forces near Ahrweiler, Germany, states DOD's release. Gatlin and four other crew members died in the crash. A sixth crew member parachuted from the aircraft; German forces held him as a prisoner of war. Between 2011 and 2014, US recovery teams visited the crash site. Forensic identification tools, such as matching mitochondrial DNA with a family member, helped DOD to identify Gatlin's remains.

Sent in by Pete K.

TAPS

**Day is done ... Gone the sun ... From the lakes From the hills ...
From the sky ... All is well .. Safely rest . God is nigh ...**

**Fading light ... Dims the sight .. And a star Gems the sky...
Gleaming bright ... From afar ... Drawing nigh Falls the night ..**

**Thanks and praise ... For our days ... Neath the sun . Neath the
stars... Neath the sky ... As we go ... This we know ... God is nigh ..**

THIS AND THAT A HISTORY LESSON OF LOVE

The History of 'APRONS'

I don't think our kids know what an apron is. The principle use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she only ...had a few. It was also because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and aprons used less material. But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids..

And when the weather was cold, Grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove.

Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls.

In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men folk knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes.

Grandma used to set her hot baked apple pies on the window sill to cool. Her granddaughters set theirs on the window sill to thaw. They would go crazy now trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron.

I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron - but love...

COLD WAR VETERAN'S STORY SAC'S FIRST "BROKEN ARROW"

At 93, Dick Thrasher considers himself lucky.



Not only lucky to be alive, he said, but also lucky enough to have survived three harrowing events in the sky.

Sixty-five years ago, he was a gunner on the crew of an Air Force mission that was supposed to simulate a nuclear attack.

The B-36 Peacemaker would take off on Feb. 13, 1950, from Eielson Air Force Base in Fairbanks, Alaska, fly south off the Canadian coast, on a simulated bombing run over San Francisco before flying home to Carswell Air Force Base in Fort Worth.

It never made it.

Several hours into the flight, the plane began icing, three engines caught fire and it started losing altitude.

Before the crew could bail out, they had to fly out to sea and get rid of the plane's lethal payload — a 10,000-pound Mk-4 nuclear bomb.

It would become the United States' first "broken arrow" — code for a mishap involving a nuclear weapon.

Thrasher and 11 others survived by parachuting out of the plane. Five crewmen — Air Force Staff Sgt. Elbert W. Pollard, Capt. Theodore F. Schreier, Capt. William Phillips, Lt. Holiel Ascol and Staff Sgt. Neil A. Straley, did not survive.

While many details of the crash remained secret for decades, there have been news articles and [books](#) written and [documentaries](#) made recounting the events of that night as the bomber flew on autopilot for another 200 miles before crashing atop [Mount Kologet in a remote section of British Columbia](#). The crash site wouldn't be found until 1953, and the secrecy that surrounded the mission left a lot of questions.

At the time of the crash, the Canadians and the public weren't told what the plane had onboard. Thrasher would see the flash of an explosion beneath the clouds from the back of the bomber.

"We were carrying an atomic bomb," Thrasher said. "It didn't have the plutonium to make it work. It exploded in the air — a conventional explosion — not atomic. We turned around and went toward land."

Thrasher, who retired as a senior master sergeant in 1971, and the other survivors parachuted onto [Princess Royal Island](#), just off the

coast of British Columbia. They spent about 36 hours on the island before a Canadian fishing boat picked them up.

The mystery surrounding their mission would last for decades.

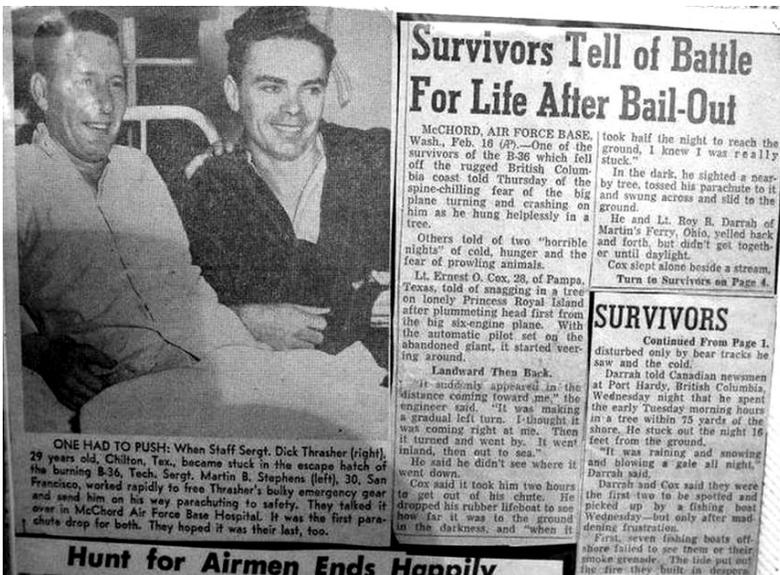
Thrasher would make a trip to the crash site in 1998 at the invitation of a writer to see it for himself.

And in 2012, some remains that were found inside a boot by a Canadian fishing boat in 1952 were identified, after multiple DNA tests, as belonging to one of his crewmen, Pollard. He was buried at San Francisco National Cemetery at the Presidio, near the Golden Gate Bridge.

Streets in an area of Westworth Village that was once part of Carswell are named after some of the missing men, including Pollard.

Thrasher has his own theory about why he survived and others perished.

"None of the rest of them bothered with a Mae West," he said in a 2012 *Star-Telegram* interview, referring to the personal



flotation device. "I was having trouble fastening my chest strap over the Mae West, then when I got out of the airplane, I couldn't find my D-ring. When I did finally find it, the chute made two oscillations and then I hit a tree."

He assumes high winds blew the five missing men out into the ice-cold waters while the rest landed safely on land.

Although the crash happened on Feb. 13, shortly before midnight, Thrasher always said that it happened on Valentine's Day since it was already the 14th back home in Fort Worth.

COLD WAR VETERAN STORY SAC'S FIRST "BROKEN ARROW" (cont)

The B-36 was world's 1st intercontinental nuclear bomber and a nuclear deterrent to the Cold War.



'Nothing but trouble'

In July 1949, he was on a B-36 that had an engine fall off. On [April 27, 1951](#), there was an even closer call.

He was on a training mission over Oklahoma in which P-51 Mustangs would be simulating attacks on the bombers.

During one pass, a P-51 flew too close and slammed into the nose of the B-36, breaking in two.

"I seen one pass under our right wing. ... I just got a glimpse of something," said Thrasher, who was in the back of the plane. "Right after that, all this debris went by and all six engines shut off, and we were out of control. I knew exactly what happened. His No. 2 man didn't make it. His wing man

didn't make it. Hit right into the cockpit."

Thrasher scrambled to the plane's entrance hatch and jumped to safety.

But he was seconds away from possibly tumbling to his death.

"They said as soon as I made it out, the tail broke off and just dumped everybody else out," Thrasher said. "All of them except one had a chute on. They made it. The one that didn't have it didn't have a prayer."

None of the 12 crew members in the front of the B-36 survived, including Capt. Harold Barry, who had also been on the ill-fated flight that crashed off of British Columbia a year earlier.

Barry and Thrasher had been placed on different crews after that 1950 crash but were together again on that deadly 1951 flight.

Thrasher said Barry believed trouble would follow whenever the two of them flew together. He said as much just before they took off.

"He said, 'We're bound to have trouble,'" Thrasher said. "Lord help him — he didn't know what trouble we were going to have."

Other crew members also believed they were cursed when they flew with Thrasher and would tell him so. He was never sure if they were joking or not.

"They would say 'You were a jinx on that crew because after you left we never had trouble,'" Thrasher said. "'Before that we had nothing but trouble.' But it was the airplane; it wasn't me. The first two years in the B-36 we had nothing but trouble."

'A very fortunate survivor'

During the height of the Cold War, Thrasher was taught enough Russian to ask for a cigarette in the event they were shot down.

Thrasher never took the idea of a bombing run into the Soviet Union as a real possibility.

"I just couldn't see us attacking Russia, and I couldn't see Russia attacking us," Thrasher said.



Once he moved from B-36s to B-52s, his close calls came to an end.

He would fly in that plane until his retirement in 1971, including 25 missions over Vietnam from June 1968 to June 1969.

Yet he was never convinced those bombs struck any targets.

"After you dropped the bombs, you would flip the optic sight to see if there was any secondary explosions," he said. "That's when you knew you had hit something. I never saw any secondary explosions. All I could see down there was trees in the jungle. Apparently it didn't do any good because we lost the war."

Thrasher, who served in the Army during World War II, retired after 30 years and bought a place in the country near Cross Plains. He still drives, mows his own lawn and does his laundry — but he never forgets how lucky he is to still be around. His military awards are shown in his shadow box hanging on his wall in his home.

"I tell everyone I'm a very fortunate survivor, and I know that," Thrasher said

BY BILL HANNA BILLHANNA@STAR-TELEGRAM.COM

Sent in by Dale Dillahunt—reprinted from the Ft. Worth Star-Telegram - 2/15/2015

Editor's note: A similar article in the April, 2007 Short Bursts sent in by AFGA Member Jay Ingle covers this aircraft loss, clean-up and recovery operations of SAC's first "Broken Arrow" conducted by the Canadian and Air Force personnel with a more detail on this accident. Additional details in following SBs were provided by AFGA Member Denzel Clark (who has since passed away) which added insight as to how this aircraft came to crash on that rainy cold night.

AFGA NEWSREEL

Pete Karjanis' Inputs of Current News

A B-52H bomber resurrected from the boneyard is slated for delivery to Barksdale AFB, La., this week in preparation to rejoin the operational fleet, Air Force Global Strike Command boss [Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson](#) said on Thursday. Serial number 61-0007 was held in type 1,000 storage at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz, and will be the first B-52H regenerated back into the fleet, officials at Tinker AFB, Okla., said in a [release](#) earlier this year. "We had an accident with one of our B-52s ... [and] we were not going to be able to use that airplane, so we pulled one out of the boneyard," Wilson said, speaking at AFA's Air Warfare Symposium in Orlando on Feb. 12. A cockpit oxygen fire caused severe damage to the aircraft, but no serious injuries to personnel, he said. Maintainers at Barksdale will upgrade 0007 to the fleet-wide standards before ferrying the aircraft to Tinker for full-up programmed depot maintenance later this year. The aircraft last underwent PDM in 2004, and will return to operations at Barksdale in summer 2016, according to the release.

Once a victim of sequestration and last year's government shutdown, Air Force Global Strike Command's Global Strike Challenge returns to Barksdale AFB, La., Nov. 3-5 for its capstone symposium and score-posting events. The events mark the end of the fourth iteration of the GSC, and include the score posting for competitions among the command's missile, bomber, helicopter, and security forces communities. There are about 350 airmen participating from eight air force installations. In addition to competitive events, a technology and innovation symposium is scheduled for Nov. 4 at the Bossier Civic Center in Bossier City, La. Speakers for the events include Air Force Secretary Deborah Lee James, AFGSC boss [Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson](#), CMSAF James Cody, and Madelyn Creedon, deputy administrator for the National Nuclear Security Administration. Awards are slated for the best ICBM team, B-1B Lancer, B-2, B-52, UH-1N Huey, and security forces unit.

Air Force Global Strike Command kicked off the four technology and innovation symposium on Nov. 4 at Barksdale AFB, La. The event is the culmination of the three-month Global Strike Challenge, during which security forces, maintainers, missile, and bomber crews competed to earn bragging rights as the "best of the best" in their given specialty. Teams from all six AFGSC wings, the Air Force Reserve, and Air Combat Command arrived at Barksdale for the official score posting and awards ceremony. "We are a big piece of our nation's strategic deterrence," said AFGSC boss [Lt. Gen. Stephen Wilson](#) during his opening remarks. "We've assembled some of the best and brightest from around the country ... Ask [them] challenging questions, think about what they say, and internalize it. Think about how we can make ourselves better." [Maj. Gen. Garrett Harencak](#), assistant chief of staff for strategic deterrence and nuclear integration, as well as former Commander-in-Chief of Strategic Air Command retired Gen. Jack Chain, former 8th Air Force Commander retired [Lt. Gen. Robert Elder](#) also spoke at the event. "For generations, the American people understood the value of what you do in the deterrence mission. They don't now. That is my fault— it's all of our faults— because we don't talk about it," said Harencak.

B-52s from Minot AFB, N.D., flew 40 conventional bombing sorties in four days without scrubbing a single sortie during Prairie Warrior in late November. "Just weeks after coming out of succeeding in a large-scale nuclear exercise, we accomplished our base's largest conventional exercise of the year, and we crushed it," said 5th Bomb Wing Commander [Col. Jason Armagost](#) in a Dec. 3 [release](#). With 16 available B-52s, Minot's 5th Bomb Wing flew 12 sorties the first day of Exercise Prairie Warrior, 10 sorties on both the second and third day, and eight sorties on the final day, dropping a total of 119 munitions, according to the wing. "A B-52's normal flying rhythm is every other day," said 69th Aircraft Maintenance Unit supervisor SMSgt. Paul Crisostomo. "Our ability to be able to fly a jet one day and turn around and fly it 12 hours later speaks volumes," he added. Prairie Warrior ran Nov. 17-20.



ARC LIGHT—YOUNG TIGER ASSOCIATION REUNION

Arc Light - Young Tiger Association

The mission of the Arc Light - Young Tiger Association is to honor, perpetuate, and ensure the historically accurate depiction and recognition of the achievements of the United States Air Force Strategic Air Command (SAC) bomber and tanker operations in the Vietnam War.

The Arc Light - Young Tiger Association is comprised of former members of SAC units that participated in B-52 Arc Light and KC-135 Young Tiger combat and combat support missions in the Southeast Asia (SEA) area of operations between 1965 and 1973.

The association's purpose is to recognize and preserve the memory of all those who served, maintain an active roster of known participants, and hold biannual reunions at differing locations in the United States. These reunions offer members the opportunity to share memories with fellow SAC warriors, memorialize lost comrades, and celebrate past and present strategic Air Force achievements. Reunion attendance is encouraged for members, their families and friends, active duty strategic bomber and tanker personnel and their families and friends, and all others who support the objectives of this association.

ARC LIGHT—YOUNG TIGER ASSOCIATION REUNION

June 15-18, 2015 *

The Arc Light-Young Tiger Association's 2015 reunion. This reunion will recognize the 50th anniversary of the first B-52 combat mission flown in the Viet Nam war. The reunion will also celebrate the numerous accomplishments of the KC-135 crews that occurred throughout the Viet Nam war.

*** THE DATE REFLECTED FOR THE TICKET (June 2) IS THE REUNION PAYMENT CUTOFF DATE. The actual reunion dates are JUNE 15 to JUNE 19, 2015. You need to purchase your ticket before the cutoff date.**



We have made arrangements with the Hope Hotel and Conference Center for a special rate for our reunion. The reservation line is 937-879-2696. Ask for the AL-YT rate of \$99 per night and that includes breakfast each morning. You need to make your own reservations.

REUNION SCHEDULE

MONDAY, JUNE 15, 2015

Reunion Check-in: 1300 to 1700

Hospitality Suite Open: 1300 to 1700

Welcome Reception: 1730 to 2030 (Cost included in reunion package) Southern Buffet. Cash bar and entertainment by "Tommy Towery" from 1800 to 2030.

Hospitality Suite Open: 2030 to 2200

ARC LIGHT—YOUNG TIGER ASSOCIATION REUNION (cont)

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2015

Reunion Check-in: 0900 to 1700

Golf 0900 to 1600 Wright-Patterson Course: Depart hotel at 0900 for a 1000 Shotgun Start.

Shopping Excursion to Dayton's Outlets: (Depart Hotel 0900 return 1500 or earlier at the discretion of the group) 6 hour Excursion, Transportation Cost Only.

Alternate Tour Wright "B" Flyer 0900 to 1500 (On your own. See www.wright-b-flyer.org for details)

Business Meeting: 1630 to 1730 Hospitality Suite

Dinner on your own

Hospitality Suite opens 1900 to 2200

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2015

Hospitality Suite Open 1000 to 1700

Group "A" 0830 to 1630 Special Hosted Tour of Dayton's Historic Aviation Venues with Wayne and Karen Pittman Note: The US Park Service limits groups to 150. This tour will be conducted on TWO days.

Group "B" Tour AF Museum 0900 to 1630

Dining on your own - 1700-2000

Hospitality Suite Open: 1900 to 2200

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 2015

Hospitality Suite Open 1000 to 1630

Group "A" Tour AF Museum 0900 to 1630

Group "B" 0830 to 1630 Special Hosted Tour of Dayton's Historic Aviation Venues with Wayne and Karen Pittman This is the second day of the same tour as above.

Arc Light – Young Tiger Reunion Banquet with Special Guest Speaker (Cost included in reunion package)

The reunion banquet will be held in the Air Force Museum "Under the Wings" of the B-52

Cash Bar (1730 to 1830).

Opening ceremony (1830 to 1900), A brief Welcome, Presenting the colors, the national anthem and missing man tribute.

Dinner (1900 to 2000).

Break (2000-2015).

Introduction of the Guest Speaker and speaker comments (2015 to 2100).

Recognition of distinguish guest. (2100 to 2115).

Closing ceremony 2115-2130 (Retire the colors).

Hospitality Suite Open: 2200 (Clean up/Pack up)

FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2015

Memorial Service (0730 to 0830)

Departure Breakfast (Buffet Breakfast, included for hotel guest) 0830 to 1000 (Cost for non-Hope Hotel guest is \$10).

RTB

Have questions about Arc Light-Young Tiger Reunion June 15 to 19, 2015? [Contact Russell Stephenson](mailto:Russell.Stephenson@arc-light.org) :

http://www.eventbrite.com/e/arc-light-young-tiger-reunion-june-15-to-19-2015-registration-14708139441?ref=ebtnebtckt#ightbox_contact



WWII VETERAN'S STORY

CHARLES W. BLANEY

Date: Nov 9, 2014; Section: Springs Military Life; Page: 61

VETERANS

TELL ABOUT THEIR TIME IN SERVICE WORLD WAR II: SHOT DOWN OVER GERMANY - CHARLES W. BLANEY

BY MICHAEL S. HUMPHREYS

Special to The Gazette

Tech. Sgt. Charles W. "Chuck" Blaney was seven missions from going back to his parents' home in Chicago when the B-24 he was in was hit by German fighters and crashed in a small German village near Hamburg.

The tide had turned for the Allies in early 1945, but Blaney would spend his 20th birthday in Stalag Luft I prison camp in Barth, Germany, on the Baltic coast where he would sit out the end of the war in Europe.

When the plane crashed, Blaney and the nose gunner were pinned beneath the top turret, which broke their legs. After treatment at a German hospital, Blaney and his fellow injured crew member joined the rest of the crew locked in a stable for the night. Though they would spend the next three months as prisoners of war, Blaney said he and his crew owed their lives to the German Wehrmacht officer in charge of the stable. He said Lt. Joachim Gruenhorst took command, rescuing the downed crew from an angry mob and SS officers determined to hang them.

Oddly enough, the crew of the downed bomber, like the other 7,700 Americans of Stalag Luft I, quickly became welcomed guests in German homes once the Russians came to town, said Blaney, 88. "All of a sudden, the Americans were gold, because we were just looking for eggs and something to eat," Blaney said. "At night, the Russians would come. If the dog started barking, they would shoot the dog and bust open the door. If we were there, they would say, 'Ah, American, American' and walk away.

"The Germans were flexible," Blaney said with a laugh. The American POWs made their way around the Russian-occupied town scavenging for food for nearly a month before Maj. Gen. Jimmy Doolittle's 8th Air Force evacuated them to tent cities in France to begin their repatriation.

"In camp, food was the main thing," Blaney said. "You just can't imagine. When you are really, really hungry, you become obsessed with it. When we went to town, there was no fooling around. We weren't looking for gals. We were just looking for eggs."

Though Blaney and his fellow POWs got fewer than 700 calories a day at Stalag Luft I, he said he held no ill will toward his captors, who lived on little more than the prisoners.

As the Russians advanced into northern Germany, Blaney said, German officials ordered the forced march of all POWs into central Germany, but Col. Hubert "Hub" Zemke, commander of the American POWs, told the German guards they would have to shoot all 7,000.

The next day, the doors were open and the German guards had fled.

After returning home from Europe, Blaney earned his electrical engineering degree from American University in Chicago and began a long career in aerospace corporations. He retired in 1983 from Northrop Corp. after 23 years with the company.

He met his wife, Austrian-born Friedericke Schweitzer, in Colorado Springs in 1960 while working at Ent Air Force Base for the then-recently created North American Aerospace Defense Command. She died last year. He had a son and daughter from a previous marriage, and his granddaughter and grandson live in Virginia.



Tech. Sgt. Charles W. "Chuck" Blaney and a crewmate were injured and stuck in the plane after the crash. Germans cut a hole behind the cockpit to get the crew out of the



WWII VETERAN'S STORY

CHARLES W. BLANEY (cont)



Tech. Sgt. Charles W. "Chuck" Blaney, back row and last on the right, with his fellow crew members. Blaney was seven missions from going back to his parents' home in Chicago when the B-24 he was in was hit by German fighters.



Charles Blaney received the French Legion of Honor from the French Consul at the U.S. Capitol building in October.

Bob,

This article is from our local paper about Charles W. Blaney who was at B-24 top gunner who was shot down during WW II. You may want to include it in the next Short Bursts. I saved in in PDF format since that was my only option. I don't know if I can covert it into Word but will try if that is needed. **Sent in by AFGA Member Eric Emde.** EDITOR'S NOTE: Many thanks for the story, Eric. Always glad to get a story regardless of the format....no problem converting most of them. Bob

INTERESTING WEBSITES – APRIL 2015

<http://www.greatamericans.com/video/Portraits-of-Valor-Roy-Benavide> - addressing the USAF Academy

<http://militaryhonors.sid-hill.us/history/hist-sub.htm> Submarine History – WELL WORTH LOOKING AT

<http://www.pigboats.com/> CHECK THIS ONE OUT ALSO

<http://www.myservicepride.com/> A place for memorabilia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boeing_B-52_Stratofortress B-52 History

<http://foxtrotalpha.jalopnik.com/so-what-were-those-secret-flying-wing-aircraft-spotted-1555124270> Interesting read on stealth aircraft and the upcoming new strategic manned (or unmanned) bomber

<http://navyseals.com/nsw/navy-seal-history> Navy Seal history – very good background

<http://eventful.com/bossiercity/events/2016-strategic-air-command-70th-birthday-celebr-/E0-001-079199189-6> Early information on the upcoming 2016 70th SAC Birthday

https://www.youtube.com/embed/vcnH_kF1zXc Rare video of the SURRENDER OF JAPAN signifying end of WW2 – HISTORICAL!!!! ALL SHOULD WATCH THIS VIDEO.

WWII VETERAN'S STORY A SOLDIER NOT FORGOTTEN—AND A HISTORY PRESERVED

Together We Served

A historic collection found in S. Phila. home

In a bedroom lay a white silk pillow - yellowed with age and emblazoned with the screaming eagle emblem of the Army's 101st Airborne Division.

On the walls were pictures and plaques telling the story of a World War II veteran; in another room was an adjustable hospital bed and, on a window-sill, a worn Bible.

That October day, Jim Bennett was looking for an investment, a house to buy, rehab, then rent or resell, as he has done with about 500 others over more than 20 years.

But Bennett found much more at the modest, two-story rowhouse on Winton Street in South Philadelphia.

A framed collage of photos revealed the name of the house's late owner: William "Wild Bill" Guarnere, a hero made famous by the best-selling book *Band of Brothers* and the HBO miniseries of the same name.



Tears welled in his eyes and he called downstairs to Realtor Linda Tosto: "Hey, Lin . . . this is Wild Bill's house!"

Tosto came upstairs.

"I could tell by the tone of his voice that it was something urgent," she said. "We were in awe."

The collage showed a photo of a solemn, elderly Guarnere holding a display of his medals. It was sandwiched between a picture of him as a helmeted young soldier holding a machine gun, and another of him in recent years, sitting on his couch as he often did, smoking.

Guarnere, who fought on D-Day during Operation Market-Garden in the Netherlands and during the Battle of the Bulge, died this year at age 90, and his family had placed the house on the market.

"I was so shaken," said Bennett, whose late father, Edward, landed in France shortly after the D-Day invasion. "You could see who it was.

"I don't tear up easily," he said. "But on this. . . ."

In a downstairs closet, Bennett also found a pair of crutches used by Guarnere, who lost a leg in 1944 trying to save a wounded comrade.

Tosto called the listing agent to ask whether the rowhouse actually belonged to Wild Bill. When that was confirmed, she said, she also "broke down in tears."

"We knew we had to do something different," said Bennett, 50, of Glenmoore, Chester County.

He parted from his usual pattern of renovating, then reselling or renting. He decided he would honor Guarnere's memory by preserving and updating the house for another disabled veteran.

Bennett, who owns Stonehedge Funding, which provides financing for small investment property deals, plans to find the new tenant through the Department of Veterans Affairs and offer an affordable rent.

He told Tosto he'd pay the full \$62,500 asking price with no contingencies, instead of the \$40,000 he was initially contemplating.

At the same time, Tosto, who had seen the *Band of Brothers* series, decided she would give up her \$2,000 commission to help pay for a planned 1,300-pound bronze statue of Guarnere.

The statue is being created by sculptor Chad Fisher at a reduced fee at his studio and foundry in Dillsburg, near Harrisburg. The Guarnere family wants to place it near the Philadelphia Vietnam Veterans Memorial and Philadelphia Korean War Memorial at Penn's Landing.

"We didn't give any of this a second thought," said Tosto, 46, of Honey Brook, Chester County. "There was no hesitation. We weren't doing this for recognition."

Tosto and Bennett hope to place a plaque inside the house to honor Guarnere.

"We consider this to be Wild Bill's home," she said. "We have the privilege of being the caretaker."

WWII VETERAN'S STORY **A SOLDIER NOT FORGOTTEN—AND A HISTORY PRESERVED (cont)**

Tosto and Bennett were not the only ones overwhelmed by the history that Guarneri's house contained. Tosto's daughter, Tina, a social studies teacher in Gulfport, Miss., had been given the HBO series by her mother and insisted on seeing the veteran's home during a Thanksgiving visit.

"She said, 'I need to be inside before I get on the plane,' " Tosto said. "You could see she was in awe.

"It was an empty house but she knew whose it was and it meant so much to her," she said. "She was like a little kid at Christmas."

The reaction of others to Guarneri's service has been touching, said Debi Rafferty, a granddaughter of the veteran.

"I started crying when I heard," said Rafferty, a nurse who lives in Broomall. "I thought it was beautiful, especially when I learned they contacted the Philadelphia VA to place a disabled veteran there.

"It's heartwarming that others would feel that way about my grandfather," said Rafferty, who often joined Guarneri during casino visits. "I was very close to him."

She was "upset when the house went up for sale" because she remembered it with affection.

"But he would be thrilled that it will be going to a disabled veteran," she said. "He always donated to veterans' causes. . . . I think my grandfather is up there with a big smile on his face."

The agreement of sale for the house was written Oct. 29 and the settlement was Nov. 25.

The sacrifices of men and women from the World War II era should always be remembered, said Bennett, who hopes to someday donate the house to a veteran.

"Every holiday, my dad put out the American flag at the front door," Bennett said. "There is less a sense of nation and patriotism" today.

"If we don't bind the country together with a common goal, everything falls apart," he said. This house "was not about money; it was preservation and a good cause."

'Wild Bill' Fund-Raiser

A fund-raiser to help for a statue honoring World War II hero William "Wild Bill" Guarneri will be held at 7 p.m. Jan. 16 at Popi's Italian restaurant, 3120 S. 20th St., South Philadelphia.

The event includes hors d'oeuvres, a cash bar, an auction of autographed memorabilia, and raffles. Tickets are \$50 per person. Contact: Debi Rafferty, 215-389-3094.

ecolimore@phillynews.com

FB entry by George Schryer

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bob,

Recently drove down to Houston to visit with Dagoberto Castillo, a fellow B-36 and B-52 Gunner we met at the Tucson and Charleston reunions. He's an Alzheimer's patient and we had a very memorable and positive visit. He was having a very good day, remembered who I was, and enjoyed talking about gardening, fresh vegetables (peppers), and his active duty time at Carswell and El Paso.

Pete Karjanis

Photos from Pete:



EDITOR'S NOTE: Many thanks, Pete, for taking the time to visit one of our AFGA veteran gunners. I know he appreciated the visit.....always great to be able to stop in and say hello and let them know they are not forgotten. He was a B-17, B-29, B-50 gunner as well as the B-36 and B-52. Not many left of those guys any more.



“THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THOR’S HAMMER”
A Requiem by Thomas R. Carlson

Story summarized by Tom Dillman - a U.S. Army Veteran (1958-1961) who traveled 13 months in South East Asia with a home base at the volatile Korean DMZ. He was hospitalized three times in the line of duty.

This is a story of a warplane, a mechanical and electronic hero known by its grateful advocates as a “Thud”, an F-105. This story is told by its first pilot, Thud driver Thomas Carlson. For news media brevity, I edited out some of the most technical parts, while keeping much of Tom’s drama—and he did a great job of putting us in a fighter pilot’s personal gut. His full requiem will hopefully be widespread for history’s sake. Thank you Tom Carlson, and thank you and Thor’s Hammer for your valiant service to our great country.



I was looking through a summary of the disposition of the Air Force’s F-105 fleet. Little did I know that it would start me on a journey into the past that I didn’t really want to make. I had been more or less content with leaving the past where it was and had long since come to grips with memories of decisions and deeds, some right and some fearfully wrong.

“Don’t look back unless you want to go there” is usually good advice, and still I was drawn into a place where I imagined that I heard the sounds, smelled the smells and felt the old gut feelings from times past. Inside me was a near physical presence of machines, places and people from the now long ago.

When I found the tail number that I sought, the message was terse, unequivocal and final. “1984 June Scrapped.” That meant that my faithful old #246 had been chopped into pieces and melted down to make beer cans! 246 had been the warhorse of my youthful days, my ride, my big afterburning, supersonic heavy metal. The aircraft had been a proud old war veteran that had once carried the name “Thor’s Hammer” and had met its end at the hands of scrappers, rather than a foreign enemy.

“THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THOR’S HAMMER”
A Requiem by Thomas R. Carlson (cont)

Enemies had tried to bring about its demise, and it wasn't for their lack of trying that it survived the Vietnam War only to meet its end at the hands of scavengers. The war in Southeast Asia had raged for years and Republic F-105D Thunderchief, tail number 62-4246 had been there from the beginning of the air war until the end and had survived against incalculable odds.

In keeping with tradition, pilots were allowed to have their names painted on the canopy rail and, with that done, it was “their” airplane. With my name on the left side of the canopy and Staff Sergeant Myers, the crew chief's name on the right, 246 was properly adopted. Other names would occupy those same rails over the years as pilots, crew chiefs and airplanes rotated from unit to unit or pilots were lost to accidents or combat. My good fortune was to be first. Fresh from the Republic factory on Long Island, “my” F-105 still had the distinctive new car smell and the crisp, clean look of a new machine. In Cold War livery, it was painted silver and had a dark blue stripe around the nose, just aft of the radar dome.

By comparison with other fighters of the day, the Thunderchief was a giant of an airplane and incredibly more complex. My contemporaries and I had originally viewed it with suspicion and admittedly some trepidation. For such a machine to be powered by a single engine and operated by a single pilot seemed optimistic at best. Twenty-five tons of machine when fully loaded gave some credibility to term “Fighter, Heavy.” This was almost comically noted in the designation FH that preceded the buzz numbers on the side of the sixty-four foot fuselage. The Thunderchief name would give way to the universally adopted term “Thud”. What was originally meant to be a put-down would eventually become an accepted and revered name. The term “Thud Driver” would be a badge of honor and respect that would be worn with pride by her pilots.

246 was initially assigned to the famed 44th Tactical Fighter Squadron on Okinawa. It would be more than a year before the war in Southeast Asia became heated up to the point that the authorities committed the unit to action and posted the 44th to Korat Thailand on temporary duty.

Far from being my personal chariot, 246 was a warplane. The existence of the machine and its presence in that part of the world was for a grim purpose. The Cold War mission was well defined and far too terrible for most to even contemplate. Much of the time, aircraft and pilots were on alert and loaded with the deadliest weapons ever devised. Republic had built the craft to carry and deliver those weapons and the pilots had been trained to carry out the nuclear mission. The duty was never taken lightly and yet, I doubt that most pilots, myself included, thought that such madness as a wholesale exchange of such weapons would ever happen. Carried to a logical conclusion, there was no logic to it.

The warplane role of the Thud played out in quite a different direction. The twenty millimeter Gatling gun in the nose of the craft fired projectiles at a hundred per second. The destruction wrought by such a stream of exploding shells was a new dimension in firepower. A one second burst, fired into a truck, a structure or an aircraft would tear the target to shreds. Hard points on the belly and wings carried the bomb load of a B-17 bomber from another era. Missiles of several types were carried, intended for airborne and ground targets alike. All the conventional weaponry available was to be employed by the Thud drivers in the years to come.

Wild Weasel, a concept started with the F-100, was soon transferred to the F-105. The Weasels tormented the enemy missile sites and destroyed them when their radar came up on the air sometimes even after the missiles had been launched. The Soviets reportedly believed the Weasel crews were on marijuana or other stronger drugs. The more traditional Thud drivers simply thought that the definition of an optimist was a Weasel crew that quit smoking. The Weasel pilots and their “Bears” (Electronic Warfare Officers) earned a revered and special status in the hearts of all who knew that they had performed the most dangerous task in an environment where all faced grave danger. No tale of the Thud could be told without acknowledging the role of the Weasels.

The spectrum of pilots sent to Asia to fly the Thud would be broad. Initially, the Wing and Squadron Commanders, Ops Officers and some Flight Commanders would be the veteran warriors from the skies of Europe and the Pacific in World War II and From MIG Alley in the Korean War. The younger pilots would be the Cold War era trainees from the fighter pipeline. The Thud drivers would be West Point, Air Force Academy and Annapolis graduates, from The Citadel and VMI as well as those from the ROTC programs and Aviation Cadets. Most would give a good accounting of their time in the airplane.

“THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THOR’S HAMMER”
A Requiem by Thomas R. Carlson (cont)

There would be Medal of Honor recipients, MIG killers, 200 mission survivors, future and former astronauts and future General Officers. As the war dragged on, and fighter pilot ranks thinned, there would be transport and other multi-engine pilots as well as some staff officers who were hurriedly trained to fly the Thud. While many of them distinguished themselves in their new role, they were, after all, in a new and far different element for which their previous training and experience had done little to prepare them. They would die in numbers disproportionate to the long-time fighter pilots but nobody would ever question the courage of those who flew. Thor’s Hammer would respond to the hands of pilots from all these backgrounds.

246 was transferred to Takhli Thailand after my return to the States. It was a successor of mine, Capt. Nels Running, a future Thunderbird Pilot and Major General, who named it. The legend of the Norse God who brought down thunder from the skies as he wielded his mythical hammer, was a well-chosen and appropriate nom de guerre. Memphis Belle, Old Ironsides, Glamorous Glennis, Enola Gay, Protestor’s Protector and Thor’s Hammer. Some of these names would be remembered in aviation and naval history, some forgotten. The little-known names of ships and aircraft would be remembered only by the generation that flew or manned them. The Thud would be legendary among aviators, aviation enthusiasts and historians as the workhorse of the Vietnam War.

Whether in combat or on a routine training mission, flying the Thud was always an adventure. It wasn’t trepidation as much as anticipation of the adrenalin rush which was sure to come. The culmination of boyhood dreams and fantasies of one day being a fighter pilot had been fulfilled. There was the thrill of advancing the throttle to full power for take-off. With that done, 26,500 pounds of thrust accelerated the Thud along the runway and into the air. The pilot’s cabin left the painful takeoff noise to torment those on the ground.

What were called “good” missions during that early phase of the war were hard to come by and eagerly sought after by most pilots. Escorting unarmed RF-101s on their low-level photo missions, interdiction sorties to Laos, armed reconnaissance along the Ho Chi Minh trail and the real plumbs, the initial “Rolling Thunder” strikes north of the DMZ, were considered good. There was a “Bitch Board” in squadron operations where missions were tallied in grease pencil to insure that no pilot got more “good ones” than someone else. It wasn’t as though they relished war and the possibility of dying. They were Fighter Pilots who lived on the edge even in peacetime. Going in harm’s way is what they had been trained for, what was expected of them. It was who they were and what they were there to do.

Each pilot has his own indelible list of remembered places, previously known only to cartographers and locals. The Plain of Jars, Vinh, Than Hoa, Sam Neua, Mu Gia Pass, Dong Hoi and Route 1 were the locations of early targets and were on my list. Those pilots who were there as the war intensified would be exposed to a far more dangerous and foreboding environment of air defenses and a new set of names. Thud Ridge, Downtown, Hai Phong, the Paul Doumer Bridge, Kep, Phuc Yen, the Red River, most of these in what was known as Route Pack Six, would be imprinted in their memories. A hundred times they were required to go where missions were no longer “good.” Surviving one hundred missions to those places, however unlikely that was, would earn those pilots a special status in the aviator’s pecking order.

Surviving one phase of flight was only a set-up for the next phase. There was always the heavyweight take-off where every available foot of runway was needed. The bomb laden Thud gained speed slowly at first. It seemed to have feet of clay. Clearing the arresting barrier at the far end often seemed in question. The struggling Thud felt as if it remained airborne only by virtue of the downward thrust vector of the blazing afterburner. As speed was gained the flaps were retracted to the subsonic flight position. The pilots breathing rate returned to somewhere near normal as the speed increased to a comfortable 400knots or so. A join-up with other flight members into normal four-ship formation preceded the tanker rendezvous. Fuel loads, lighter on take-off, were usually topped-off prior to entering the target area.

The refueling was a routine matter, but there were notable exceptions. One pilot, Gary Barnhill, suffered an internal aircraft fuel system failure. His Thud exploded in a giant fireball as he backed off the tanker’s boom. At the urging of John Betz his wingman, who observed a massive fuel leak, he ejected a split second before the fireball would have engulfed him.

Another pilot perished in a blinding flash that left only bits and pieces of his Thud fluttering and tumbling earthward. George Sasser, flying his wing, saw Ned’s limp form descending toward the undercast in his parachute.

“THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THOR’S HAMMER”
A Requiem by Thomas R. Carlson

The heavy weight of the Thuds made refueling more difficult than usual. Being late or not getting a prompt hook-up was undesirable. It was better to get there first.

Flying Col. Bill Craig’s wing one day, we arrived late on target because of a circuit with the tanker. Predictably, the flight scheduled to follow us was already there. A B-57 pulling off the target went between the leader and me going straight up. He didn’t miss either of us by more than what seemed like inches. I know that he didn’t see us and there wasn’t even time to tense. The episode was over in a fraction of a second but the indelible image remains.

After refueling, the target area was next. Lurking somewhere in the recesses of the mind was the knowledge that one could instantly be propelled from the comfort and familiar sounds of the cockpit into the unknown. The silent void of nothingness would only take a fraction of a second. Alternatively, transition to a grim and uncertain future in a primitive cage, far from home and far removed from the thin veneer of civilization, could take a lot longer.

On a dive bomb run at some long forgotten place, I marveled at the countless projectiles heading my way. There were bright colored tracers and those that were less visible shades of gray. The anti-aircraft guns usually focused on the plane presenting the most immediate threat and all of them seemed to be firing directly at me. It looked as if each round was destined to come through the center of the windshield. That none of them had hit me yet seemed impossible. At a speed close to 600 knots, I glanced out the side of the cockpit and it seemed as though tracers were actually arcing up and over my right wing, following the airflow around it. I dismissed this as an optical illusion and concentrated on the delivery of the bomb load. The ripple of the six thousand pounds leaving the aircraft meant that it was time for afterburner and lots of back stick. Vision grew narrow then dim as the G load increased, in spite of the functioning of the G suit and the tightening of body muscles. Acceleration to maximum speed and heading for relative safety away from the target followed. This same drama was to be repeated thousands of times by hundreds of pilots over the next seven years. Surface to air missiles (SAMs), MIG fighters, 37,57, 85 and 105 millimeter anti-aircraft shells and small arms fire filled the airspace where the Thud lived.

By rough count, some 423 Thuds were lost to combat or related accidents. Too many pilots and crews died in their prime and too many of them suffered and languished in the fetid torture camps of another culture.

One could debate the Vietnam War to infinity. Good war, bad war or no war at all. Wars throughout history represented the failure of diplomacy and were waged as instruments of national policy. Some wars were fought with final victory as the goal, and some weren’t. In my experience, they were neither initiated nor relished by the soldier since it was always the soldier who bore the heaviest burden. Those pilot soldiers who were ordered into battle and flew 246, always made it safely back to their base. On other days and in other aircraft, many of them were not so fortunate.

The heavy losses of aircraft and people were less due to any deficiency attributable to the Thud than because of the incredibly hostile environment where these aircraft and pilots were sent, day after day for some seven years. Thor’s Hammer was a survivor, as were those pilots who flew it on each individual mission. Perhaps a thousand times it went to war and a thousand times returned safely. It would be impossible to estimate the number of SAMs and the countless rounds of artillery and small arms that had been fired at this aircraft and failed to bring it down.

Following Nam, the then retired old fire horse, Thor’s Hammer, finally found a new, quieter fire station and waited for the bell. The bell appeared on the daily scheduling board in the squadron simply as “246, ferry, DMA (Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Tucson).

I would have wanted to be there to fly Thor’s Hammer on that last ferry flight to Tucson when it was time to go, much as a saddened owner would take a beloved dog on that dreaded last trip to the Tucson vet’s graveyard.

Many better men than me had challenged fate and survived, strapped in the seat of 246. It would be for them that I would advance the throttle, release the brakes and feel the gear walk for the last time. The afterburner would bark a final defiant insult to the earth-bound’s ears as we lifted off and headed west. In aviator’s jargon, “Gone West” means that one has flown the last sortie to that final and uncertain destination. The irony of geography dictating the direction of flight would not be lost.

***“THE LIFE AND DEATH OF THOR’S HAMMER”
A Requiem by Thomas R. Carlson (cont)***

This would be Thor’s Hammer’s judgment day but there was no uncertainty. After all, we wouldn’t be headed out to the chaos and carnage of battle, or outrunning a pursuing MIG, but bound for a vast graveyard for old, un-needed war machines. Guns that had once fired at the 105’s stiletto shape were far away and long silent. The scrappers patiently waited, assured of success where the enemy’s guns had failed. No need to hurry.

A New Mexico rancher astride his horse, who except for his clothing, might have looked like a knight or a cavalryman from another time, would have looked up briefly at the long thin contrail in the stratosphere and the barely perceptible dot pulling it along. He and his mount would return to their earthbound chores without knowing the meaning of the melancholy wisp.

The Captain of an eastbound 767 would have nudged his co-pilot and pointed upward as his airliner passed underneath the old fighter. With his face pressed to the glass, he would have recalled to his captive audience other days and times when he too had been strapped in the cockpit of the magnificent Thud. It wouldn’t have had much of an impact on his younger colleague who was most likely a new-age child of the magenta line. To him, old fighters would probably have been a historical footnote, of some significance to the old guys who lived in the past. The unmistakable silhouette of the needle nose and the forward sweeping intakes would quickly pass from view but not from The Captain’s memory, which would have been instantly at flood tide. He would watch until the contrail left by the Thud dissipated then vanished. He would turn again to the relatively mundane yet important matters at hand.

Of course, a good solid 4 G pitch-out to downwind from a 500 knot initial approach; to hell with it, make it 650! In for a penny, in for a pound! Stay just under the mach so I wouldn’t end up in jail for destroying the place with a sonic boom. “Black Matt” Matthews, a legendary Thud driver, former Thunderbird pilot and genuine good guy had already paid a price for slipping through the mach during a graduation flyover at the Air Force Academy. Much of the glass construction was reduced to rubble. Matt’s good name was cleared of any blame but still, no need to repeat that. Unlike Matt, I wouldn’t have been blameless.

The massive speed brake system, would slow Thor to the 275 knot gear down speed. The voids in the outer wing panels would shriek their high-pitched wail. Dogs for miles around would howl and the ground-bound folk would look up and take notice. Some would have known immediately without even seeing it. that this wasn’t just another aircraft in the pattern, this was a Thud!

Approach control would already be on the phone to the Airdrome Officer, making note of the speed violation to be filed. Screw ‘em! Thor’s Hammer’s last traffic pattern would not be one of the post-modern era but from another day, now far in the past when airplane and pilot were at the top of their game. Anything less could not be done nor would it be acceptable. Beyond that, the old war horse deserved no less than a full gallop to the ignominious end of a metaphorical glue factory.

Gear down, flaps down then the 200 knot final approach to a touchdown on the numbers. A few knots on the fast side perhaps, but a good comfortable speed and there would be plenty of runway. The canopy that had completed the cocoon of the familiar cockpit would open slowly, once clear of the runway. Even the sudden blast of hot Arizona desert air would feel good against the accumulated sweat and the deep imprint on the face that had been tightly covered by the now dangling oxygen mask. Time to jettison the drag chute and follow the yellow pickup with the “follow me” sign to the journey’s end.

The brakes would be set at the ground handlers stop signal and wheel chocks inserted. As a final, defiant and time-honored obscene gesture in the Thud driver’s repertoire, the refueling probe would be extended then retracted. The device, located in the nose of the aircraft forward of the cockpit, was not visible in the stowed position. When extended, it had the look of a large, middle finger. This absolute last mechanical movement would be a gesture to the unseen jury that had imposed the death sentence and those who would carry it out. The meaning of this would probably be lost on the intended audience, the toothless scrappers with their cutting torches at the ready.

The well- worn throttle, made shiny by the thousands of leather- gloved hands that had caressed it for two decades, would be slowly and reluctantly moved to the cutoff position. The clatter of compressor blades, as the engine wound down would be the death rattle of a warrior who had fought well but lost the last battle. An official notation, entered in the logbook, between the lines allotted for commentary would be added: “So long, old timer, well done.”

Reprinted from: <http://www.veteransnewsnow.com/2011/08/07/the-life-and-death-of-thors-hammer/>

EDITOR’S NOTE: Sent in by Cease Walker.—story of an aircraft that fought the good battle and now rests in the boneyard and shares a similar fate as the B-52 that we all flew and loved as it became a part of our family over the years even though it is just a mass of metal sitting in the heat of the desert now—a forgotten warrior forgot by mostbut not by us. Bob

AFGA NEWS REEL **B-52H "GHOST RIDER FLIGHT"**



1/16/2015 - **TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla.** -- With high demands on maturing aircraft, the Air Force is finding creative ways to save money on an aging fleet. With the chance of manufacturing a new B-52 out of the question -- because production ceased in the 1960s -- the Air Force is finding it more cost effective to regenerate it rather than repair it.

Calling on the 309th Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Group, or 309th AMARG, an aircraft that has been in storage for more than six years will soon be back in the fleet.

The original B-52 fleet had 744 aircraft; however, due to compliance with the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and Congressional mandates, the Air Force is left with just 76 in today's fleet.

Last year, a mishap at Barksdale Air Force Base, La., left a B-52 severely damaged. Immediately following the incident, Tinker's B-52 System Program Office (SPO) teamed with Boeing to conduct engineering analysis, along with cost estimates. They proposed a course of action to Air Staff to retire the damaged jet and replace it with one from 309th AMARG, also known as the Air Force's "Boneyard," at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz.

According to Capt. Chuck McLeod, a logistics career broadening officer and the B-52 SPO's team lead for the regeneration effort, "Salvaging a retired B-52 from the 'Boneyard' saves taxpayers money." He continued, "It's far too expensive to repair the damaged aircraft or manufacture a new bomber, not to mention there hasn't even been a new B-52 since 1962."

Choosing an aircraft

AMARG has maintained B-52H serial number 61-0007 in 1000-type storage, meaning it has the highest parts cannibalization restrictions requiring Headquarters Air Force approval for each part being requested. It is the most preserved level of aircraft storage with thin layers of strippable paint covering portions of the aircraft to protect it from the environment.

"Tail Number 61-0007, a former Minot Tail known as 'Ghost Rider,' was chosen after thorough inspections. It was a careful decision based on extensive engineering analysis. This aircraft has been exceptionally well preserved and maintained by the 309th AMARG team, which made the B-52 SPO's and Air Force Global Strike Command's recommendation to Air Staff to regenerate this tail number the obvious choice," Captain McLeod said.

Brenden Shaw, Air Force Life Cycle Management Center Logistics Branch chief, said, "61-0007 has fewer hours and is in excellent condition. In fact, according to one of the maintainers working at AMARG, this plane is in better shape than some of the ones currently in the fleet."

"This [re-commissioning of a B-52] has never been done in Air Force history," said retired Chief Master Sgt. Timothy Finch, a long time member of the B-52 community, who now works at Global Strike Command. "Everyone on the team is very excited."

Col. Keith Schultz, commander of the 307th Operations Group, 307th Bomb Wing at Barksdale AFB, will pilot the historic flight from the "Boneyard" to Barksdale. Colonel Schultz has flown the B-52 since 1980 and has a multitude of experiences in the Stratofortress. "I am the last of the Tall-Tail pilots (the old D model) who is still currently flying," he said, adding that, with more than 7,000 hours, he often volunteers for these challenging flights. "After delivering 18 B-52D and G models to the "Boneyard" over the years, it is about time I get to take one out."

Lt. Col. Darrel Hines, from Tinker's 10th Flight Test Squadron, will co-pilot and Capt. Carl Johnson, 2nd Operations Group, Barksdale, will serve as the navigator alongside Colonel Schultz.

AFGA NEWSREEL B-52H "GHOST RIDER FLIGHT" (cont)

Team effort

"This really is a cross-organizational team effort to get the plane operable," Captain McLeod said. "Air Force Global Strike Command, Defense Logistics Agency, 309th AMARG, 76th Aircraft Maintenance Group, AFGSC's 2nd and 5th Bomb Wings and AFRC's 307th Bomb Wing, are all working together to ensure the success of the mission."

Mr. Shaw credits Robin Benefield, a Logistics Management specialist at Tinker, with all of the initial coordination between Air Staff, Air Force Materiel Command, AFGSC, 309th AMARG and Tinker prior to the regeneration effort being approved to ensure the team was poised to begin work as soon as the word was given. "Ms. Benefield laid the groundwork for our success and will remain on the team until 61-0007 rejoins the fleet," Mr. Shaw said.

Senior Master Sgt. Gavin Smith, 307th Bomb Wing, AFRC, is leading regeneration efforts at the "Boneyard," in coordination with the B-52 System Program Office at Tinker and AFGSC.

SPO support includes engineering, technical orders, program management and a team of logistics professionals coordinating with their counterparts at Defense Logistics Agency to identify which parts are supportable and developing contingency plans for unsupportable items.

A diverse team is a tremendous value on a project this important. A shining example is when Karen Corley, a team member from the 76th AMXG, identified a Program Depot Maintenance (PDM) level task to remove and replace all fuel hoses, a safety of flight requirement only performed during PDM. While her input saved time and money for the regeneration effort, it more importantly prevented the potential of a catastrophic in-flight emergency. "Ms. Corley's involvement on the team is exceptionally critical to ensure we properly plan the work for 61-0007 arrival to the depot. Her efforts strengthen the team's relationship between AFLCMC and AFSC to ensure we deliver a reliable and viable weapon system back to the warfighter" said Mr. Shaw.

Melissa Alford, Logistics Management specialist in the B-52 SPO said, "prior to receiving Air Staff approval to go forward with the regen effort, the Logistics community took the initiative to look at all PDM Tasks that would need to be accomplished." She along with a team of logistics managers compiled a parts list for all PDM tasks and ran supportability assessments to determine if the Logistics Branch could support the requirements if the jet entered PDM today. Once those efforts were complete the lists were passed to engineering to verify all parts were accounted for so supportability could be determined, and forecast could be input. These efforts will ensure parts are available once the jet comes to PDM in 2015.

Flight worthy



"One of the biggest challenges is ensuring the aircraft is flight worthy for its flight to Barksdale," said Cody Boyd, lead engineer. "A lot has changed since 61-0007 last left PDM in 2004, so we had to be sure to catch everything to bring it up to configuration with the rest of the fleet." Mr. Shaw said, "Our team of engineers has looked at everything from a systems perspective and we're ahead of the game since we've integrated the entire community."

"The 309th AMARG is providing fantastic support to our team of maintainers working on 61-0007. While AMARG regenerates aircraft as a part of their day-to-day mission, their qualified personnel weren't current on a B-52H reactivation since there has never been a B-52 regenerated from AMARG," said Captain McLeod.

After the B-52 leaves the "Boneyard," it heads to Barksdale AFB where members from the 76th AMXG's Expeditionary Maintenance will salvage modifications from the damaged aircraft and install them on 61-0007 while Barksdale maintainers conduct routine inspections and repairs.

Tinker will accept the aircraft in late 2015 for a full PDM before it goes off into the blue to rejoin the active fleet in the summer of 2016. "We're working with AFGSC and 76th AMXG to determine which one-time through the fleet PDM tasks are supportable and required for 61-0007's first PDM since 2004," said Captain McLeod. He continued, "Regardless of what those tasks are we will be prepared thanks to the tremendous planning and support of the entire regeneration team."

Article sent in by Pete Karjanis. Published in "Tinker Take Off" base paper: <http://www.tinker.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123436624>

Strategic Air Command's nuclear mission," Mr. Shaw said. "It's an absolute honor to be a small part of this historic achievement!" Senior Airman Cody Grauel, Air Force Global Strike Command's 2nd Maintenance Squadron, left, inspects the No. 3 engine fuel pump on B-52H serial number 61-0007, the Ghost Rider, while Staff Sgt. Bradley Austin, with the Air Force Reserve Command's 917th Maintenance Squadron, inspects the No. 3 engine hydraulic pump. Tinker's B-52 System Program Office is one part of a team of units working together to get the B-52 back in flying condition to rejoin the Air Force fleet. (Air Force photo by Teresa Pittman, AMARG)

AFGA NEWSREEL
B-52H "GHOST RIDER FLIGHT" (Follow up)



On Friday, February 17, 2015, the lumbering jet made its way to the main runway at Davis-Monthan AFB, where it powered up and begun its takeoff roll. As those involved with the historic project pensively watched, within about half the runway's length Ghost Rider was airborne. Still, her ferry flight was no regular B-52 sortie. She had to fly below 250kts and 23,000 feet, with her gear down the whole way, for safety reasons. The flight was from Tucson to Barksdale AFB in Louisiana flying at 23,000 feet at a speed of 250 knots with a crew of three.

Col. Keith Schultz, who has the most B-52 time of anyone flying in the USAF today with 6,500 hours in the jet's Cold War era cockpit, and is also is the Commander of the 307th Operations Group at Barksdale AFB, was at the controls for the sensitive flight. Speaking to the [Shreveport Times](#), he described how austere the conditions were aboard Ghost Rid-

er:

"We had none of the traditional navigation equipment we're used to, the inertial navigation system, GPS, so I challenged my navigator, to do 'dead reckoning.' Basically he had a radar system and a doppler, so he could ground map with his radar system."

[After safely landing](#) at Barksdale AFB, 61-0007 parked alongside 61-0049 where the majority of -0049's components will be transferred to -0007. This process is planned to be finished by October, at which time she take to the air again, this time her destination will be Tinker AFB for a full depot-level maintenance overhaul. After which, Ghost Rider will be better off than most of the fleet that never saw the bone yard at all. She will be fully renovated, upgraded, seen a recent depot visit and she will have less hours than much of the existing B-52 fleet, with 17,000 hours under her wings. The fleet average today is 18,000 hours and growing by the day.



EDITOR'S COMMENT: This aircraft, 61-007, was delivered on 3 March 1962 to Homestead AFB, then to Minot AFB on 24 August 1964, then on to Wurtsmith on 25 October, 1969, back to Minot in January 1973, off to Grand Forks in January 1973, then assigned to Kincheloe AFB between 2 July 1974 and 8 March 1977 before being transferred to KI Sawyer in March 1977. From there it went to Carswell AFB in November, 1985 and then on to Fairchild AFB in January, 1986 before going to back one last time to Minot on 27 September 1991 (It's last base assignment I think). Last piece of data I have on the assignments before it went to the boneyard in 2008 where it has spent the last 7 years before being resurrected and flown to Barksdale AFB in February, 2015. I am sure a lot of us flew on this bomber over the 54+ years it has been around—47+ of which it was on active flying assignment . Bob

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AFGA NEWSREEL WWII AIRCRAFT RECOVERED

WWII Junkers Ju 87 Stuka found 70 years after its last dive



A rare, well-preserved German World War II bomber has been found in Croatia's central Adriatic more than seven decades after it was shot down, the national conservation institute said.

The wreckage of the Junkers Ju 87 or Stuka (Sturzkampfflugzeug) 'dive bomber' was discovered not far from the southern coast of the island of Zirje, institute official Igor Miholjek told a news agency.

Only two bombers of that type, out of some 5,700 that were produced, have been preserved and are now on show in London and Chicago, according to the institute.

'The engine, which was most likely ripped off when the plane hit the water, was missing and was found nearby, but the rest of the aircraft is complete and in very good condition,' he told AFP. 'The plane is lying on its wheels as if it smoothly landed on the seabed,' he said, adding that it was still unclear when

it would be recovered.

The bomber was most likely an Italian plane hit by Yugoslavia's navy in April 1941 during the invasion by the German-led Axis powers at the start of World War II.

Two more had been found in the sea waters of Norway and Greece, but apparently in much worse condition than the one near Zirje, which is some 340 kilometres (210 miles) south of Zagreb.

It is the second WWII plane found almost complete in Croatia's Adriatic. The first, a B-17 Flying Fortress, was found in 1998 in the waters of the southern island of Vis but was not recovered.

'Stuka' bombers were designed for a dive-bombing technique which consisted of diving on the target at a steep angle and releasing the bombs at a low altitude for maximum accuracy.

A tiny propeller by the undercarriage leg produced the stuka's intimidating scream when it dived.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2779157/Found-70-years-rare-German-dive-bomber-shot-World-War-Two-discovered-preserved-coast-Croatia.html#ixzz3FqlacL00>

WWII VETERAN STORY
B-17 GUNNER RICHARD WILLIS



Richard "Dick" Willis thrives on handshakes. His favorite is the "hard country squeeze," which seems to make the Georgia native even more animated than usual. "I'll bet you were a country boy," Willis told a fellow veteran in June, after a handshake that brought a smile to both men.

Willis is a handshake expert of sorts. He's likely shared a million of them in the last 88 years, and doesn't plan to quit anytime soon.

Willis offers them freely to the residents of the Richard M. Campbell Veterans Nursing Home in Anderson, SC. Three times a week, Willis makes the 8-mile, 15-minute drive to the home just to visit the residents, room to room.

For Willis, the frequent routine is just as important as his two years of Army duty in World War II.

"If I can make 'em laugh," Willis said, "I feel like I've given them a pill. Or maybe even better. You'd be surprised what a laugh will do for them."

The idea for the Campbell visits came to Willis about 13 years ago, during a round of golf, one of his favorite pastimes in his first decade of retirement.

"I was playing golf one day, and I used to enjoy it, but the thought hit me that there was surely something more important that I could be doing with my time," Willis said. "I want to do something worthwhile."

A few days later, Willis, who built a successful textile business after relocating to Anderson in 1962, went to the Campbell Veterans Nursing Home searching for a new purpose in life.

"I thought I'd see if they needed a volunteer to push a wheelchair or something — I didn't know what," Willis said.

He discovered that the Campbell officials wanted him to push his personal touch rather than the wheelchairs. And Willis has discovered that the social need is almost as great.

"They said it wasn't good to have me lifting things or pushing people. They said, 'Just talk to them,'" Willis recalled. "So I did. I've never been appreciated as much in my life."

Willis' connection with the military began in December 1943, when he was drafted into the Army at age 18. He was assigned to the crew of a B-17 bomber as an engineer.

On March 23, 1945 — only about six weeks before the German surrender that ended the European portion of World War II — Willis' plane was shot down over Germany.

Forced to bail out, Willis remembers reciting the 23rd Psalm as bullets whizzed past his parachute on the slow procession to earth.

When he landed, Willis was captured at gunpoint by a crew of Russian soldiers. Although supposed allies, the Russians eventually sent him to a camp in Poland, where he was kept for 40 days.

In late April, with the war winding down, he and his crewmates repaired a B-24 and were permitted to leave. They used it to reunite with his 416th Squadron in Foggia, Italy.

The odyssey left Willis with a keen interest in flying. He earned a pilot's license, flew for about 20 years, and helped start the Anderson Flying Club. He served 12 years as a captain in the Civil Air Patrol.

The missing-in-action experience provided plenty of interesting war stories. But Willis rarely uses them at the Campbell facility.

"We don't talk much about the war," Willis said of his visits to Campbell, "but we talk a lot about everything else — planes and military bases and military life in general."

Shortly after the war ended in Europe, Willis was reassigned stateside. In August, he was on a train bound for Iowa, to receive more military training, when he learned that the Japanese government had surrendered.

"I think the Japanese heard I was coming," Willis jokes, "and they gave up."

After the war, Willis went home to LaGrange, Georgia, at age 20. He worked briefly in a textile mill and used the GI Bill to earn a degree at Auburn University. That started a career in textile management for Willis, who in 1962 started a business (Allstate Textile Machine) in used textile machinery sales. Son Jeff operates the business today.

Willis also served as an Anderson City Council member from the mid to late 1960s. He has two children, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

"I've had a very interesting life," said Willis, who chose Anderson for the site of his business because he fell in love with the town as a visitor in the 1950s. Willis frequently attended the Southern Textile Show, held annually in Greenville. He usually booked a room in Anderson.

"I just liked the town," Willis said. "When I started my business, it seemed like a good spot."

The love for flying and travel helps Willis connect with veterans like Wilson Stringer, a B-17 pilot, and anyone who served on an air base.

An active member at Trinity Methodist Church, Willis also loves to talk about spiritual matters.

"I've been blessed with good health, and I firmly believe that this body I have belongs to God," Willis said.

When it comes to that subject, he "doesn't pull any punches," he said.

"Some of these guys are not going to be here long, but I'm not going to be here much longer, either," Willis said. "That enables you to talk about anything. Where we go next is an important discussion. That's my mission in life."

The MIA experience aside, Willis said his military career was interesting but not particularly noteworthy.

That makes today's mission more important, he said.

"I never did much, other than get shot down. All my life, I've asked the Lord to put me somewhere that I could do something important," Willis said. "When I visit these veterans, I feel like I'm doing something to help. This is the best thing I've ever done in my life."

(Sent in by Chuck Dean)

AFGA EXCHANGE OFFICER - BOB DICK JR.



I'd like to start off by saying "Thank You" to Neil for taking care of the BX and send him well wishes and prayers for a speedy recovery. For those of you unaware, Neil resigned as BX officer due to health reasons. We have temporarily closed the BX until Neil can get well enough to get the BX merchandise packed and shipped to myself to make available for purchase. I'd like to thank everybody now for their patience during this time and I will post any updates to the progress on Facebook as they make themselves available.

I've set a few goals that I hope to be able to accomplish over the next year. I'd like to have a shopping cart available on the site to make it a pleasant and easy shopping experience. I also want to be able to take credit cards for payment. I will also be opening up an Ebay store for the merchandise which will bring in extra revenue as well as give the opportunity to connect with fellow Gunners not knowledgeable of the www.gunner.us site. I would also like to make available various new items of interest for purchase. I welcome all ideas of any items that anybody would like but please keep in mind that usually orders require a

minimum purchase and may require adequate prepaid orders before having the item produced. None of the above will be able to be accomplished overnight but one step at a time they will be able to be achieved. We have already made progress in updating the website and now own both domain names: www.gunners.net and www.gunners.us, which either address will take you to the Gunner's site where one can access info on joining the AFGA, view Short Bursts, Info on the upcoming reunion and much, much more. If you haven't seen it yet, stop by and check it out.

Thanks goes to Larry Brooks for helping us get there!

Keep tuned to the Gunner's Facebook page for future updates!

C'est La Vie!

RENO reunion cup to be designed and ready for pickup at the reunion. Cup can either be an 11 oz (\$15) or a 15 oz (\$18) size and will be designed with Reno logo, as well as other items on it including your name. Bob D. will have info on website soon. My personal cup shown—not reunion cup. Those ordering a reunion cup can contact Bob D for more info. Costs to be paid before reunion to him and will be delivered at the reunion. Check FB also for info when available. Keep eye on FaceBook for more info. A portion of these sales goes to the AFGA (these are crewdawg company sales). Cup design not available in time for this issue of the Short Bursts—view on line when design is completed. Ordering information will also be there at that time.



Red/white/blue B-52 cap - \$15 (ck availability with Bob D.)



Coming soon? Customized 15oz coffee cup—contact Bob Dick Jr. for \$\$\$ and how to order. You can put just about any AF patch, ribbon bar, photo, art that you desire. Seem to be dish washer and micro wave safe (I put mine in both with no issues)



Gunner Beer Mug—\$40—price includes shipping #28



Magnetic Bumper Sticker \$9 (a few left yet (3-4)) size: 8"X 3 7/8" #29

AFGA EXCHANGE

ITEM #	SIZE/COLOR	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	QTY	POSTAGE	TOTAL \$
13		BASEBALL CAP – AFGA, Navy Blue, White (Note new price)	\$15.00			
14		BASEBALL CAP – White, Camouflaged B-52 CLEARANCE	\$9.00			
15		BASEBALL CAP – White, "C'est La Vie" emblem	\$13.00			
16		BASEBALL CAP – White, B-52 Gunner emblem	\$13.00			
16A		Baseball Cap, B-52 front silhouette (Circle choice) Black Body w/Silver embroidery Red Body w/Silver embroidery Blue Body w/Silver embroidery Blue Body w/Black embroidery	\$15.00			
16B		Baseball cap, 80s style, Gunners Emblem vertical red stripes w/white text	\$16.00			
17		DECALS (circle choice) <u>B-52 SAC Bulldog (3 per order)</u> <u>AFGA "Biplane"</u> <u>AIR FORCE GUNNERS ASSOCIATION</u> inside rear window application - wide) <u>USAF Enlisted Chevrons</u> (set of 4 per sheet, Current USAF Style) MSgt/SMSgt/SMSgt-1 st Sgt <u>"Son of a Gunner" (NEW)</u> Small – 4-1/2" Large – 6-1/2" LARGE DECALS – 8" x 10-1/2" <u>B-52 SAC Bulldog</u> White Background Exterior White Background Interior Clear Background Exterior <u>AFGA</u> White Background Exterior White Background Interior	3/\$1.00 \$1.00 \$1.00 \$1.00 \$1.00 \$3.00 \$5.00 ALL \$7.00 ALL \$7.00			
18		REPLICA OF ORIGINAL GUNNER'S WINGS 2 3/4" wide	\$8.50			
19		MEMBERSHIP LAPEL PIN Miniature AFGA Gunner Wings	\$7.00			
20		GUNNER WINGS LAPEL PIN Same as #20 without AFGA Logo	\$7.00			

AFGA EXCHANGE

21	PATCHES – Circle below B-52 Gunner's Patch (#1) AFGA Patch (#2) Served with Distinction (#3) End of Era--Aerial Gunner Patch (#4) Air Force Gunner's Association (#6) B-36 patch (#7) B-52 Gunner's Patch (#8)	\$5.00			
	Son of a Gunner Patch	\$7.50			
21A	Large Gunners's Patch, 12" x *-1/2"	\$39.00			
	PATCHES: 200 Mission B-52D Vietnam 100 Mission B-52 Vietnam (awaiting delivery)	\$5.00 \$9.00			
22	Strategic Air Command, California, Louisiana., Texas	\$5.00			
	PATCHES: 10 th Air Force (WWII round) 15 th Air Force (WWII round)	\$5.00			
23					
25	GOLF BALL/SLEEVE (3 balls per sleeve)	\$3.00			
27	COFFEE MUGS – B52D Design, plus: SAC Crest "Someone over 30 You Can Trust" "Peace The Old fashioned Way"	\$9.00			
28	Gunners Beer Mug , ceramic, 32oz. SAC Bulldog emblem one side, SAC emblem on reverse. (Priority Mail Included)	\$40.00		INCLUDED	
29	Magnetic Sticker – "PROUD TO HAVE SERVED – FREEDOM IS NOT FREE"	\$9.00			
30	BOOK – "C'est La Gar" by Pete Larsen	\$20.00			
31	KNEE/SEAT PAD – 1" foam rubber, Blue w/AFGA logo	\$2.50			
	LAPEL PINS, PEWTER – Circle Choice B-17, B-24, B-25, B-52 (Max order one of each)				
32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small (17.24.25.26 only) \$4.00 • Large (including B-52) \$700 				
34	LAPEL PIN, AFGA Reunion (Circle Choice) 2003 (Tucson), 2005 (Charleston) 2009 (Spokane), 2011 (Orlando)	\$4.00			
35	SAC BULLDOG LAPEL PIN 1"	\$5.00			
36	LAPEL PIN, AFGA Round - ¾ inch Silver wings with blue background	\$4.00			
37	LAPEL PIN, AFGA B-52 Gunner with aircraft silhouette and wings (1" wide by ¾" tall)	\$5.00			
38	AFGA "Biplane" Round 1-1/2" Pin	\$5.00			
39	LAPEL PIN, Bulldog "Angel"	\$7.00			
40	Audio Recording Disc – Linebacker II, Opal 03, 26 Dec, 1972 Specify DVD/MP3, CD/MP3 or CD Audio	\$7.00			
41	Gunners Wings License Plate	\$17.00			

AFGA EXCHANGE

42	SAC Bulldog Banner, vinyl, 20" x 24" with grommets at ach corner	\$25.00			
43	SAC Bulldog Shield printed on 1/8" backboard, 20"x 20" Sculptured edges	\$25.00			

We also have 3 Ft. Worth Memory Books for sale—\$40 each includes the mailing—contact Bob Dick Jr.

Jackets, Shirts, Mugs = \$11.00 ea Each additional Jacket, Shirt or mug= \$2.00 ea Hats = \$6.00, each additional \$2.00 Small Flat Goods (Wings, Pins, Patches, Decals, etc) = \$3.00 Belt Buckles = \$6.00 1 st Item, plus \$2.00 each additional Item All other Goods = \$3.00 1 st Item, plus \$1.00 each additional Item (if in doubt or with large orders, call/email for an estimate)	(Priority Mail) (Priority Mail) (Priority Mail) (1 st Class Parcel) (Priority Mail)	SUBTOTAL SHIPPING CHARGES TOTAL	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; height: 100px;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table>						

1. Please include your phone # and **email address**.
2. Make all checks payable to **AFGA**.
3. Send all correspondence to:

Bob Dick Jr.
 2089 Sardis Rd
 Clarksburg, WV 26301-6581
 302-844-8678
 gunnersbx@gmail.com

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: _____

Signature *Date*

AFGA NEWSREEL RARE WWII AIRCRAFT RECOVERED

Rare WWII American bomber of 'exceptional value' retrieved from the bottom of the Baltic Sea



A rare Second World War American bomber has been retrieved from the bottom of the Baltic Sea. Hidden for over half a century off Poland's northern coast, the near-perfectly preserved Douglas A-20 was initially discovered by chance in June 2013 by researchers examining the sea bed, but bad weather prevented it from being excavated. The Americans made almost 7,500 A-20s, but after the war they were phased out of service and scrapped. By the early 1960s, only six remained in existence. But since then several relatively complete airframes have been recovered from the jungles of New Guinea, as well as Russian crash sites. However, experts say the almost perfectly preserved Polish example, retrieved over the weekend, is still of 'exceptional value'.

<http://www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles/rare-wwii-american-bomber-exceptional-value-retrieved-bottom-baltic-sea.html>

A DAY TO REMEMBER

Michael Marks

In crimson hue the missiles flew and cracked the sky asunder,
while mortars tolled, explosions rolled and shook the ground like thunder.
Yet in the midst of rockets roar a figure stood alone,
a grizzled sergeant gazing on the field with eyes of stone.

He'd heard before the mortars roar in jungles far away,
and left his blood there in the mud where fallen comrades lay.
And when it seemed the gates of hell itself had opened wide,
when every fiber of his being had screamed to run and hide,
he held his ground and duty bound to country and to Corps
he faced the final sacrifice as many had before.

A sudden movement in the night broke through his reverie,
to drive away old memories he'd just as soon not see.
On trembling legs a breathless figure dashed across the street
collapsing on the ground before the grizzled sergeant's feet.

"Oh Grandpa did you see 'em?" asked the boy with shining eyes,
"the fireworks are really cool, they almost fill the skies!"
The sergeant smiled and hugged the boy, a moment most sublime.
"You bet I did" the sergeant said, "I've seen them many times."

Then with a kiss on Grandpa's cheek he jumped and dashed away
Returning to the magic that was Independence Day.
And with a gentle sigh the sergeant, flanked on either side
by sons and daughters, hugged his wife, now thirty years his bride.

He raised his eyes to heaven where the flag now proudly flew,
majestic in her billowing of red and white and blue.
With hand upon his brow he stood once more in proud salute,
His love for God and Country ever strong and absolute.

And thinking back upon those nights so full of pain and fear,
when locked in mortal combat he was sure his end was near;
He said a prayer of thanks that God had seen to pull them through
And given him a life that those who'd fallen never knew.

With humble heart he took his place with patriots of lore,
And shared an oath with every soldier that had gone before.
Should e'er the call arise to stand for nation, God and friends ...
He knew from deep within his heart he'd do it all again.

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Author's Note: While Independence Day is a celebration of the patriotism and sacrifice that first gave birth to the United States of America in 1776 it reminds a day for all Americans to remember the ongoing sacrifices of our Armed Forces personnel in their defense of our nation.

The Fourth of July is a time of great celebration, yet the images that bring such delight - the "rocket's red glare" - harkens back to times of war and struggle. This poem was written for my Grandpa, who served with distinction in WWII yet reminded quiet about his own achievements; we never knew he had been awarded the Bronze Star until after he had passed away. He remains one of the great examples in my life, a quiet and loving man who put his service to God, country and neighbor before his own needs or recognition. This poem is a tribute to all of our veterans, who give us the right to rejoice in our Independence Day . Michael Marks

Back Cover Art Work by Larry McManus— My studio is located in Colorado Springs. I take great pride in the execution, creative process and quality of all my work. While shooting aircraft over the years, I came to the realization that shooting air to air and getting the right angle, the right background and the most detail in the aircraft consistently was impossible. So, calling on my skills as a designer, I created a photo illustration technique that allows me to create beautiful large format detailed aircraft images just the way I envision them. <http://fineartamerica.com/art/all/boeing+b-52+art+framed+print/greeting+cards>

BOEING B-52D STRATOFORCESS

