

PROGRESS REPORT

234 Members as of June 28th.

The Society books have been audited by Bernie Barr and Tom Gamm.
Balance as of May 10, \$235.27

* * *

REUNION SCHEDULE

Rapid City, S. Dakota July 17 - 19

Chairman, Mike Yarina, Fairburn S.D.

Ph. 605-255-4238

The October reunion will not be held. We just could not get it organized at this distance, but that still leaves us 3 meetings for the year.

The reunion scheduled for the South during the Winter is still on, but there are no further details.

Albuquerque, NM, April 1982. Annual Membership Meeting and Reunion.

* * *

Have located a 2nd B.G. contact.

* * *

LETTERS

I received the newsletters regarding the old 99th. Bomb Group and was pleased that you saw fit to send them to me. Unfortunately I was only with the 99th. Bomb Group, 416th. Squadron for a short time. I arrived in January and was shot down and taken prisoner on February 22, 1944 and spent the duration of the war as a P.O.W. in Stalag Luft I at Barth, Germany.

I was part of a replacement crew which ferried a new B-17 over the Southern route to Foggio, Lt. Henry Schmaltz, pilot, Gerald Briggs, co-pilot and Lorber as bombardier. I was not with my crew when shot down. We were split up for a few missions at first and I was with another crew. I cannot remember the pilot's name, but the co-pilot was Bernard Kyrouac from Chicago and the bombardier was A. J. Andrzejewski from Dunkirk, NY. All of us officers were at Stalag Luft I, but the pilot was in another barracks from the rest of us so I very seldom saw him, but the other two and I were in the same barracks and were together for the duration. I talked to Kyrouac in the early 50's in Chicago by phone onetime, but other than that, have had no contact with them.

I will retire from the Postal Service in August and would try to make any reunions that the 99th. might have after that. I work in Corpus Christi, but have a home in Ingram, Texas, a distance of 220 miles. I come home on weekends, so don't have much spare time, now, but will when I retire.

I look forward to the next newsletter and all the happenings. Thanks again for sending me the back copies.

Sincerely

Roland P. Bigley
Hunt Star Rt. Box 215-X
Ingram, TX 78025
512 367-5825

Welcome to the Group.

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION
C. B. S. BUILDING, 2020 M STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

TELEPHONE 220-2080
CABLES: NEWSCASTS, WASHINGTON

June 9th 1981

Dear Mr Coen,

I hope this letter does not arrive too late for all the details I have included to miss getting into your forthcoming Association Newsletter. As I mentioned in our telephone conversation over a week ago, I am looking for combat aircrew who served with the 99th Bombardment Group in the summer and autumn of 1944 when it was based with the rest of the 15th US Air Force's 5th Bombardment Wing around Foggia, Italy. I am particularly interested in talking to those members of your association who took part in the August 20th 1944 mission against the synthetic oil production plant at Oswiecim, then in Upper Silesia, Germany, and now in southern Poland.

The BBC's interest in this very small part of the 99th Bombardment Group's combat record stems from the fact that this Oswiecim refinery was situated in the middle of the infamous Auschwitz extermination and labour camp complex, where over two and a half million people from all over German held Europe were done to death by the Nazis. The BBC intends to screen a documentary on the camp at Auschwitz (Oswiecim) next year and would hopefully include testimony from any of your association members who participated in the August 20th mission and who would wish to be interviewed on the subject. You may like to know that the raid made a tremendous impact on the inmates who witnessed it; normally, they were not used to seeing the Nazis on the receiving end of the punishment.

I also enclose a short list of names of officers who appear in various records. Thanking you and wishing you a happy reunion in South Dakota.

Best Wishes,

James Barber

THE BRITISH BROADCASTING CORPORATION
C. E. S. BUILDING, 2020 M STREET, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20036

WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT

TELEPHONE 823-2060
CABLES: NEWSCASTS, WASHINGTON

Lt-Colonel James A. Barnett - both men commanders of 99th Bomb. GP
Colonel Ford J. Lauer
Captain Philip L. Phillips - S-2; Headquarters 99th Bomb Group
Lieutenant-General Charles Lawrence - 5th Bomb. Wing commander.

As I am based in London, it would be best if you contact my colleague
Peter Foges, who works at the BBC New York office, if you should have
any luck with my appeal. His address is:

BBC New York
630 Fifth Avenue
New York
NY 10020
Telephone: 212-521-7100

Dear Mr. Barker;

As I said during our telephone conversation, the 99th will be pleased to
cooperate in your work. We have not yet located the four men whom you list,
but we hope to locate them.

Please accept my personal thanks for your fine documentaries.

Sincerely

George F. Coen



Mediterranean AIR TRAILS

MORE THAN 24,000 TONS of bombs have been dropped on enemy
targets by Flying Fortresses of the 15th AAF's 99th Bomb Group which,
last Saturday began its third year of operational bombing. The group,
now under command of Lt. Col. Raymond V. Schwaback, Albuquerque,
N. M., in two years of combat has destroyed 460 enemy aircraft
in the air, more than any other 15th AAF heavy unit, which added up
to the number knocked out on the ground totals more than 1,000 Ger-
man planes. In more than 370 missions, the 99th has a loss record of
only seven-tenths percent. It has earned two Distinguished Unit Citations—the first for bombing the Gerbini, Sicily, airdrome in 1943, and
the second for an attack on aircraft factories at Wiener Neustadt, last
April.

From Dave Smith's file

Mr.
George F. Coen
2908 Aliso Dr.,Ne,Albuquerque
N.M. 87110
U.S.A.

Pardubice, 16. 6. 1981

Gehrter Herr,

ich arbeite schon zehn Jahre auf dem Buch "Der Luftkrieg über Ctechoslovakia 1939-1945". Bis heute hatte ich schon fast 60 Studien, Artikel und Beiträge mit dieser Thematik in verschiedenen Zeitschriften, Zeitungen und Jahrbüchern publiziert.

Die grösste Studie mit Titel "Der amerikanische Luftangriff auf Pardubice 24. August 1944" wurde im "Jahrbuch der Beiträge der ostböhmischen Archive" /Sborník prací východočeských archivů/, Band 3/1974/, Seite 141-195 abgedruckt /herausgegeben vom Staatsgebietsarchiv in Zámek, Bezirk Ústí n. Orł., 565 43, Czech./.

Pardubitzer Flugplatz wurde an diesem Tage durch 167 B-17 Flying Fortress des 5. Bomb Wing angegriffen a schwer beschädigt. An diesem Angriff hatte auch die 99. Bomb Group teilgenommen. Sie bombardierte den Flugplatz um 13,31 Uhr aus der Höhe 24 000 feet mit 500 lb GP Bomben. Keine Maschine wurde verloren.¹ Ich bekam vom Archive der amerikanischen Luftwaffe drei Photo aus dieser Aktion /Nr. 62250 AC - 483. Bomb Group, Nr. 62251 AC - 97. Bomb Group, Nr. 61936 AC 2. Bomb Group/. Leider fällt mir Photo der 99. Bomb Group.

Ich interessiere mich um ev. weitere Photo aus dieser Aktion, um Erlebnisse der Besatzungen und Photodokumentation über den Luftkrieg. 1939-1945.

Kennen Sie mir bzw. etwas anbieten ?

1/ Siehe auch Zdeněk Bičík, Der Angriff auf den Flugplatz in Pardubice den 24. August 1944 /Berichte des Klubs der Freunde für Pardubice-Zprávy Klubu přátel Pardubicka/ 1975, Nr. 2, Seite 8-9, Nr. 3, Seite 9-11 und Nr. 4, Seite 6-8.

Mit Gruss

Archivar
Zdeněk Bičík
Pasáž 60/A

530 02 PARDUBICE, Czechoslovakia

Archivar Zdeněk Bičík
Pasáž 60/A - Pasáž
530 02 Pardubice

Herr Zdenek Bicik
Pardubice, Czechoslovakia

Dear Herr B icik;

There has not been time to get a translator to write this in German, so I must use English.

We are printing your letter as recieved, and any of our members who have pictures taken during the action of August 24 1944 will then be able to get in touch with you.

With best wishes

George F. Coen

* * *

Dear George;

Please accept my application for membership in the "Ninety Ninth Bombardment Group Historical Society". - I've enclosed a check for \$10.00. Surely have enjoyed your newsletters.

I was a pilot in the 348th. Seems I can remember some of the names on the list. (in addition to the names I sent to you), but am only sure of one!

Bernice Barr flew left seat and I flew right side on the 2 June 44 shuttle raid to Poltawa, etc.

Some of your comments indicate you were with the 99th rather early- Africa- etc.. We arrived at foggia on or about 1 Jan 44 and flew 52nd on return trip from Poltawa (still with L/C Barr in left seat.)

We were at Kirtland in '45 and again in '51- 26 years active duty and 15 more as civilian in AFCS.

Best to you and yours

Warren "Paul" Hoover, Jr.

Dear Paul;

It was a treat to be present at the reunion when you stepped up to Bernie Barr and reminded him of the flight to Poltawa. Makes it all worth while.

Bernie has been both encouraging and helpful, and my thanks to you also,

Sincerely

George

* * *

Mr. George Coen:

Thank you for your response to my letter requesting information concerning the 99th B.G.Ass'n. I will be looking forward to more information concerning the proposed reunion 11 April 1981.

I read your newsletter with interest and dropped a line to Frank English because it was such a coincidence that on 16 July 1944, the day he flew his first mission was the same day I and my crew were shot down over Vienna, Austria and crash-landed in Yugoslavia. I received a fine answer from him and certainly look forward to meeting him.

Richard E. George

Dear Richard;

It was a privilege to meet you and Frank English both at the reunion.

I heard somebody saying "That must have been your parachute we saw as we turned off the target".

I became intensely interested in your accounts of escape and evasion and would like very much to obtain accounts from each of you for the files. There is some interest in the truth these days, and it might serve posterity to have it on file.

Best wishes

George

* * *

The following is the story of Kenneth Titus' escape from Vicki during the raid on Foggia. That is the plane pictured in our March Newsletter.

Our thanks to General Upthegrove for the account.

HEADQUARTERS
NINETY-NINTH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ARMY AIR FORCES
Office of the Intelligence Officer

NATOUSA, APO 520
13 November, 1943.

SUBJECT: Narrative of Escapee T/Sgt. Kenneth E. Titus, 346th
Squadron, 99th Bomb Group (H).

TO : Commanding General, Fifth Wing (US), APO 520.

(NARRATIVE AS TOLD TO MAJOR V.E. FAIRBANKS, S-2)

We had started out to bomb the marshalling yards at Foggia (Italy) and we were flying lead ship in the second element of the first squadron over the target. I was in the top turret looking ahead. Our interphone had gone out about five minutes before we hit the target. About three minutes after bombs away. I saw an Me109 up ahead of the first element. He was above us. He dove down head on at the first element and came up underneath us. He must have shot while he was under us. I saw fire start on the right wing near No. 4 engine. I tapped the pilot on the shoulder and pointed. He and the co-pilot started getting on their parachutes. I had my harness on, but I had not buckled the leg straps. I hooked on the chest pack. I don't exactly remember how everything happened because it happened so fast. I remember I got ready to go forward to the escape hatch (between bombardier's compartment and cockpit). I saw Lt. Dickel (co-pilot) trying to get the door open. He had his chute on. Lt. Creeden (bombardier) must have passed out because he was lying on the catwalk with Lt. Andrews (navigator) bending over him. Just then I was blown out of the airplane. It must have been an explosion although it might have been the airplane breaking up. The next I knew was that I was floating down in my parachute. The chest strap came up under my arms and wore off all the skin and hair. No one should go on a mission without his harness on or his parachute on if he can put it on in his position.

We were at 22,600 feet when this happened and it took me 13 minutes to fall. I would have enjoyed it if those leg straps had been fastened. It was so calm and peaceful up there floating down. There was no noise. I fell about six miles southeast of Foggia. I got away from my parachute about two blocks before the Ghetos came hunting for me. They couldn't find me because I hid in a gully among some bushes. They seemed angry when they couldn't find me and they started machine gunning all the bushes around. They started fires in the bushes about every 500 feet. I just stayed there in the gully for about six hours. About four o'clock I got up and started up a nearby road toward Foggia. Crowds of civilians came running toward me. They had some old rusty knives and guns. Each one tried to get a hold on me. They spit on me. That was hard to take. They threw stuff at me too, but I didn't get hit. Then the Italian soldiers came and put me in a basement in Foggia. I didn't have any food or water and they wouldn't give me any until I told them I was an American officer.

An Italian officer then questioned me. He said he had lived in America for 14 years. I asked him why he hadn't stayed there. He didn't answer. After the questioning (details in Paragraph 7, attached report) they took me to Bari where I stayed for 17 days. We had no blankets and we slept on the floor. We were fed once a day---water, macaroni and cheese. There were 17 American flying officers there. I didn't get acquainted with them. Then we were taken to a prisoner of war camp about 40 miles north of Rome. Two of us were put in one room for 20 days. We were exercised one hour every two days. We had macaroni and cheese. After that they took us to Camp No. 21 at Cheiti where we were until September 11. While we were there we heard about the Armistice. An RAF officer had built a radio set out of parts smuggled into the camp by friendly Italian soldiers. When the Armistice was announced on September 8 there was a hell of a celebration. All the Italian soldiers just piked up and left for their homes or farms. There was an American colonel in the camp. His name sounded like Colonel Gruer. I don't know how he spelled it. He ordered us not to escape or leave the camp. I don't know why. On September 10 some German paratroopers took over the guarding of the camp. We had set up our own guard after the Italians left.

On September 15 we were loaded into trucks and taken to Sulmona. There must have been about 3500 of us. They started moving them out of Sulmona on trains. They took about 800 a day. They said they were taking us to Germany. On September 16, 1300 British, American and Canadian officers were loaded on a train and we were headed north. While we were at the station a few officers tried to escape and they were shot. They just dropped their stuff and ran toward some bombed buildings.

There were 29 of us in the car I was in. It was a good sized steel freight car. I had a hack saw about three inches long. An Italian soldier had given it to me. A Lt. Southward---he was a B-26 pilot--- had a can opener. I don't know what outfit he was with. At one end of the car was an air vent which came up from the floor of the car. It had a steel bar over it and was covered by a strong wire mesh. Lt. Southward and I worked for 18 hours until we had made an opening big enough to get through. The other officers didn't help us and didn't seem anxious to escape. I don't think they wanted to escape.

At Vernona the train stopped at about 2 A.M. September 17. Our hole was completed. We (Titus and Southward) climbed down through it and layed down between the tracks. We had about a foot clearance over our heads. We just stayed there and let the train roll over us. As soon as it had passed we got up and ran for cover. I don't know if any of the other officers tried to escape or not although some of them were getting their stuff together when I left.

That night we slept in a haystack not far from the tracks. At dawn we went to a nearby farmhouse and got some food. We traded our uniforms for civilian clothes. I got an old pair of rubber-tired shoes. The soles were made from old automobile tires. I had a black coat and an old hat. We hung around Vernona for one day and then decided to separate so we wouldn't both be caught at once. We figured one of us would get away, at least.

I stole a bicycle at Verona and started out. That was about 4 P.M. I headed out the main road and went through Mantova and Bologna. I slept in another haystack at Mantova. I rode until about nine o'clock that night. Leaving Mantova about six o'clock in the morning I started out on the main road again. There were many German soldiers and trucks moving along the highway, but no one paid any attention to me. I just rode along in my old clothes. At times I caught hold of the German trucks for a lift. They didn't even suspect me. I got to Bologna about 10:30 that night and found another haystack to sleep in. I stopped at farm houses and begged food and water. The people gave it to me without trouble as soon as I told them I was an American. From Bologna I followed the Main road to Rimini. At one time I caught the rear end of a truck-trailer combination and coasted for about 175 kilometers. That was the longest ride I caught. There I found another haystack. That is the best place to sleep---in a haystack. The bugs are bad and bite pretty hard but it is warm. At times I went into town and drank from the fountains. No one seemed to have any interest in my comings and goings. Maybe it was because I was riding a bicycle like nearly everyone else does. Some of the farmers were scared they would get caught by the Germans if they helped me, but they did anyway. I didn't get any of their names. At Bologna I shaved. I left Rimini about eight o'clock the next morning and headed for Ancona, which I reached about seven o'clock that night. The Germans were hauling their supplies and equipment out of Ancona by truck because the railroads were destroyed. I followed the coast from Ancona to Pescara. The railroad was all shot up all the way. There were about 1,000 dead horses along the tracks. Some of them had their heads or legs sticking out of the cars. The smell was pretty bad. The civilians had evacuated Pescara when I arrived and there were only German soldiers in the town. A German soldier took my bicycle from me there. He stopped me and pointed to a flat tire on his bicycle and said; "Caput." He made me trade bikes, but he didn't suspect I was an American. He must have figured I was an Italian farmer and he couldn't talk Italian. I took his bike and had it fixed. A woman at Bologna had given me 70 lira so I paid for it.

I headed for Fossioesia and then I was stopped by the Germans. They took me and a lot of Italian civilians and soldiers to dig trenches and machine gun nests. Evidently they wanted to hold a hill there. We were forced to work two days and two nights without stopping. We were given three meals in that time. They gave us black bread, rice, beans and water. There were about 1,000 Italians working. I got hold of one Italian soldier and told him who I was. He stayed near me so he could answer any questions. I knew a few words of Italian so I got by. The third day we were there Mitchell bombers came over and bombed hell out of us. The Germans all ran for bomb shelters. I just walked off down the valley toward Estonia. The front lines were about 15 miles south of Estonia at that time. There were so many soldiers around I didn't figure I could get through so I went to the beech. I found some bamboo poles about seven feet long. They were about like our fishing poles in America. I bound a big bunch of them together with some barbed wire I found and made a raft. Then I got a pole and fixed up a double bladed paddle. I pushed out into the Adriatic about seven o'clock at night. I straddled the poles. I took off my shoes and tied them to the raft.

About eight o'clock that morning I came even with the front lines. I could tell by the sound and flashes. Then the raft sank when I was about five miles off-shore. The tide was going in so I just kept afloat and it drifted me in. I was in the water all night before on the raft and all that day. British destroyers were not far away shelling the shore. The Germans were shelling back. I tried to attract the attention of the destroyers, but no one saw me. Finally I lauded about three miles south of Termoli. I was weak and cold, but I walked up the sandy beach in my bare feet. My pants were wet and my clothes were all wet, but I was so happy to be free that I just busted out singing. It was moonlight and I sang as I walked up the beach to Termoli. I found some British Engineers and they gave me some whiskey, cigars and a bed. Next morning they took me to Foggia. I got first aid treatment there. The places where I had been bitten while sleeping in the haystacks were infected and the salt water didn't do any good. The rubber-tired shoes had worn a blister on my right foot. The big toe was infected. My hands had blistered so badly from working in the trenches that they also had become infected. The salt water was tough. From Foggia I got an Air Transport Command airplane to Bari. I just went up and asked the pilot where he was going and got on. At Bari Colonel R.H. Haag of the cavalry gave me some clothes and a travel order to get to Africa. Colonel Aage of the 301st Bomb Group also had escaped. We landed at El Quina airdrome near Tunis and I caught a ride with a 301st pilot. We landed here at this base at 4 P.M. November 12.

At one place a German soldier said he didn't want to fight but he feared he would have to. They don't have any cigars and some of them don't have field boots. They make their own tobacco out of weeds. They don't feed good either. It would be a good idea for any crew to learn a few words of the language so if he is forced down over Germany, Italy or France he can ask for food and water. I can't understand some of the American officers who wouldn't help Lt. Southward and I when we sawed our way out of the box car. Anyone should try to escape. You can't lose. The British and Canadian Red Cross parcels were about all that kept us from starving. They had meats, cookies, milk, cheese, raisins and other food. The first letter I wrote to my mother I told her to give \$25 to the British Red Cross. The Canadian parcels were the best and we used to draw straws to see who would get them. They came about every two weeks. An English officer who had been a prisoner last winter said that 80 British officers died of starvation at Fossioesia.

I don't know what happened to any of the other members of our crew except an Italian officer brought Lt. Frank Hunter's Form 1 (log book) in and showed it to me. He claimed that they had found nine bodies in the wreckage of our plane. It was Lt. Hunter's book because he had entries in there that the Italians couldn't have known about.

VERNON E. FAIRBANKS,
Major, Air Corps,
S-2, 99th Bomb Gp (H)

11 February 1981

Dear George,

Sorry I have taken so long to respond to your newsletters. I have enjoyed them. I had hoped to attend the Albuquerque reunion but with gasoline and airline costs increasing, I doubt if I will be there in body but will in spirit.

I had occasion to be in Cairo, Illinois last fall and attempted to contact Thistlewood but was informed he had died some time ago. I couldn't verify this as his family had moved to Arkansas.

I have been wondering if you knew the origin of the #16th emblem. The original ones were designed by the prisoners at Walla Walla State Prison, also manufactured by them. In return they were given the privilege of naming our first two B-17's, Hunk o' Hell and Hell From Heaven.

I am sending some photos under separate cover which some of the fellows at the reunion might enjoy. Have some more I will send at a later date. Also I am enclosing my application for dues and membership. Sorry, I got that backwards. Am sending the dues and application for membership. I was assigned to the 99th Bomb Gp, the 3rd of October, 1942.

Thanks again for all the newsletters and please excuse my typing as it has gone downhill considerably in the last 20 years.

Sincerely

Mitch

aka "Bathless"

CARL D. MITCHELL
L/C (Ret) USAF
228 Wilder Place
Shreveport, La.
71104

Dear Carl;

It was good to hear from you and to hear your voice on the phone. We missed you at the April reunion.

Maybe you can ramrod a reunion there at Shreveport where more of the Easterners can attend.

Best wishes

George (aka Trigger) Coen

99th. Bomb Gp. Historical Society
2908 Alliso DR. N.E.
Albuquerque, N.M. 87110

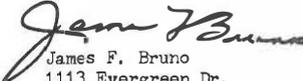
Feb. 10, 1981

Dear George,

Thank you for the 99th. Bomb Group newsletter. It was very good to know where the many members are now located. It does seem a good of them went back to their home states.

Enclosed is my membership dues. Please note my new address. I moved from the New Berlin, Wi. address five years ago and purchased a home in the home town of Waukesha, Wi. at that time. The old address may have been sent you by Gen. Upthegrove with whom I was corresponding at the time. He sent me many photos and articles that I made copies of for a book I was working on. At this time I do plan to make the reunion in Albuquerque and will bring much of the material and Photos of the original 99th. Bomb Group.

Very truly yours,


James F. Bruno
1113 Evergreen Dr.
Waukesha, Wi. 53186

Encl: Dues

Dear James;

Sorry that you couldn't make it to the reunion, and thanks for calling me.

We are getting inquiries from a number of potential historians, about half of them from Europe, and of course prefer that our history be written by a genuine 99er.

We look forward to meeting you and meanwhile pledge our full support.

Sincerely

George

* * *

Signor Gaffarelli Alessandro of Viale Mantegazza 51 - Rimini, Italy 47037 is interested in personal recollections of flight crews referring to war-flights over Northern Italy and especially over Rimini. Signor Alessandro has offered to reimburse his correspondents. His letter will be in the next issue. He says " All the inherent news shall be very interesting for me (targets, number of aircrafts engaged, bomb-loads, flight durations, times and dates, losses, enemy interference and results of the operations). "

George

George F. Coen
2908 Alliso Drive
Albuquerque, N. Mexico

Dear George,

Can't say I know you by name, only by purpose.

I received the enclosed blank application and am returning it to you.

By my address you see I reside in Watertown, S.D. having returned here in 1949, married to a Watertown girl, a Service romance, meeting her while two squadrons, 347th and the 346th (I may have this last number incorrect, time does not help the memory). Squadrons 348 and 416 were located at the satellite base of Mitchell, S. D.

The squadron's stay in Watertown was during the coldest part of a South Dakota winter and the only aircraft activity was a CAP Piper Cub flying communications. The Base at Watertown later became a ferrying stop for aircraft being shuttled through Alaska to Russia.

Only two old barracks buildings still exist from the old Base and these have been remodeled as the airstrip now serves as the local Watertown Municipal Airport and only the older people recall the activities of WWII.

I have several pictures, one I believe shows a large replica of what was to have been the squadron insignia, I'm not sure as to whether or not it was ever officially adopted although some were made up of a colored tooled leather patch suitable for an A-2 jacket, unfortunately I lost mine in the shuffle of returning from overseas.

Enough ancient history, you are the historian...Good Luck!

Sincerely yours,

Harry B. Goose

Dear Harry;

Welcome to the Group.

Maybe you can work up a Watertown reunion some day.

GFC

* * *

Dear George;

Received my first 99th Newsletter today and certainly appreciated the information. I would especially like to receive one of the lists of 99ers referred to in your correspondence.

I am a former 346th guy was relieved from active duty in '45, then recalled in '51. I then elected to make a career of it and remained Air Force until Oct. of '73, when I retired. I then went with Page Airways and stayed until open-heart surgery forced retirement from there. Now all I do is play golf and do a little work around the house.

The Hunter mentioned in the Foggia raid was Frank Hunter. His co-pilot was John Wylie but Wylie was shot up over Messina and wasn't on the Foggia raid.

Keep up the good work
E.L. (Kirk) Kirkendall

Dear Kirk;

The roster is becoming a popular item. It is now bulky enough to rate a separate mailing.

Best wishes in your retirement

* * *

George

Dear Mr. Coen:

Thanks for the 99Bg Newsletter and the attached roster. Enclosed is my application for membership with check attached.

I was in the 347th from January through August, 1944. Our Squadron Commander was a Major Sheaffer. Our medical officer was a Captain Newman and I assume that he is the doctor listed on the roster. Both were very fine fellows. The highlight of my tour was participating in the opening of allied bases inside Russia. Went to Poltava for a week, returned to Foggia and never went back to Russia. However, the Eight AF boys began flying into Russia, reloading, then down to our bases around Foggia.

Its great to hear from and about the fellows who served in the 99th. Am looking forward to more,

Sincerely,

Bill Shaw

W. B. Shaw
441 Plymouth Avenue
Winston-Salem, N. C.
27102

Dear Mr. Shaw;

Welcome to the Group. We hope to meet you at the reunion,

Sincerely,

George

Dear George;

- 15-

The recent notice in the AF Times concerning the 99th Bombardment Gp. was the first I had ever seen of the old outfit. The two newsletters you sent have been most welcome. It was nice to read the letter from General Upthegrove and to learn that he is hale and hearty.

I joined the 99th and was assigned to the 416th Squadron in May of 1943. I had been a B-25 copilot, lost my tonsils in Marrakesh, and hooked on as copilot to a B-17 crew enroute to the 99th. Joe Trentadue was the pilot, Frank May the bombardier, and Jerome Lesney the navigator. Because I had zero hours in B-17s, I rode along as a fifth wheel on several missions and was given flying time to and from the targets. The fifth mission I made was to Gerbini, Sicily on 5 July 1943 and I can assure you that when I got back safely from that one I wasn't sure that I wanted to get checked out in B-17s. But I did, was glad I did, and completed my 50th mission from Poggia on 28 December 1943.

In addition to General Upthegrove, I recognize only a few familiar names on the roster. Doc Beal was our flight surgeon in the 416th and was a good friend. William W. Henderson Jr. and Danny McDonald (Was sorry to hear of his death.) were in the hierarchy with Albert Orance, who was squadron Commander. Some other people that I remember are John Thistlewood, Sidney Buck, Reynolds Boggio, and Frank Was. Sorry to read in your response to Sam Dunn's letter that Frank died in a plane crash.

Speaking of a history of the "Fighting 99th", does anybody know what happened to Vernon "Doug" Fairbanks? He had plans to write a book about the 99th and said he was going to give it the title "Hannibals Elephants take Wings".

All for now, and it's nice to know that an organization is in being that will keep alive our memories of a fine organization.

Best regards,
Bill Osborne

Dear Bill;

Your letter brought back a few memories. You may have spent your first night at Navarin in our tent. I was Henderson's navigator, and we usually hosted the new crews. I was the one who always slept on the ground and kept his belongings on a cot. Somebody told me that "Mongibodo" Boggio went down in the Pacific after the War. Sure would like to see Jerry Lesney. Orance died of a heart attack at Thanksgiving Dinner in the 60's. He hadn't planned to come to the 1961 Reunion in Chicago, so the fellows got me to call him from the Hilton and he did come down. I have always been glad that it worked out so, for he died shortly thereafter. Henderson, I am told got mixed up with the law. He has been seen at Judges' conferences here and there, but has not otherwise been heard from. Doug has just plain disappeared. Sure would like to hear once more how the 1918 fighters would break off combat when their opponent's ammo gave out, and Doug could make it almost believable.

Welcome to the Club

George

* * *

TAPS

No casualties this period, thank the Lord.

See you all in Rapid City. Maybe in Little Rock too.

Application for Membership. \$5 for 1981

Name

Address

City

Zip

Squadron

George

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J.O.Grizzell

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