



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 99th Bomb Group Historical Society

Jan. 1, 1982

Published bi-monthly. Editors, Frank English and George F. Coen  
Society officers;  
President, George F. Coen  
Vice-president, Michael Yarina  
Secretary, Joe Kenney

REUNION NOTES

99th BG April 24-25 Albuquerque, NM  
Contact Thomas J. Gamma, 12225 Victoria Falls NE, Albuquerque, NM  
Phone 505-296-7075 87112

99th BG Muskogon, MI  
Contact Earl Silvis, 7540 Old Channel Trail, Montague, MI, 49437  
Phone 616-894-4601

PROGRESS REPORT

Membership, Dec. 5  
Members, 278  
Prospects 164

Finances  
Balance 15 Oct. 32.89  
Misc. supplies -5.46  
Newsletter printing -213.94  
and mailing  
Dues & donations 781.00  
Balance Dec. 5 594.49

Thanks to the 70 members who have sent in their 1982 dues. Receipt will be acknowledged by the number 1982 in the upper right corner of your address label.

Special thanks to Kiciak, Herrmann, Bruno, Parks, Bradford, Sieczynski, Dunaway, Kramer and Chance for their donations in addition to dues.

NEWS

Mike Yarina is up on crutches and a cane and hoses to avoid further surgery. He sends thanks to all who called him up during his convalescence.

And now a word from our sponsor.

21 Dec. 1981

Dear General Upthegrove;

Your most interesting letter brings back the memories!

I sure am glad that we didn't lose our trusted ground crew. And, yes, I was thankful to get to see Africa instead of "England. We just were lucky all the way.

The 17 BG (B-26's) did lose their payroll in the crash-landing of a B-26. And speaking of the pay, I liked that idea of figuring the payroll in 1-cent francs and paying off two months later in 2-cent francs. I have since tried to promote the idea of 14 months' pay per year, but have had no success at all. Incidentally, that episode has not increased my respect for those who manage currencies; my banker thinks I am overly suspicious.

We are all hoping that you can get to one of our reunions, because we all would like to see you again.

Best wishes

George

Amigos;

We are presently receiving some lovely orders, pictures, and mission lists. It is our intention (when the rush is over) to find out what items the AF Museum lacks and needs and obtain as many first-hand accounts as possible to fill the needs. The official records were lost and damaged in a big fire some years past. We also plan to make the Museum our beneficiary. Meanwhile we must index our files so that historians can see what we have available. All this awaits more leisure than we now have. Or is there a 99th Historian out there?

Meanwhile we ask all of you to submit escape stories. The following account was copied at the Rapid City reunion. We will be ready to copy at each reunion, so bring your cherished items along.

Some of you remember the mission of Aug. 25, 1943 to Foggia. The P-38's went under the radar screen, proceeded undetected on the deck, and arrived at Foggia some 30 minutes or so before the ETA of the high-flying heavies. The P-38s squirted the gasoline trucks and the mechanics who were fueling the German fighters and generally discussed politics up and down the field, making it somewhat smoky around the edges.

Meanwhile, up at 27,000 feet, the 99th came in on schedule under aggressive fighter attack. One aircraft of the 416BS was badly hit during the bomb run. This plane, flown by John Norris, was one the left wing of the B.T.O., on which the writer was navigator. Both the plane and Lt. Norris were lost. So here is the account of this routine mission as seen and sensed by the radio operator on the badly-hit aircraft. Carl Miciak, the radio operator, is now living in Los Angeles where he is in politics. Here's his story:

PRESS RELEASE FROM 99th Bomb Group THRU: 5th Wing (US) Sept. 28, 1944  
By Technical Sergeant Carl M. Miciak as told to Staff Sergeant William Brink

(On Aug. 25, 1943 Technical Sergeant Carl M. Miciak, 23, of 1250 Taylor Ave., New Kensington, Pa., leaped from a flaming Flying Fortress which was attacked and shot up by 30 enemy fighter planes over Foggia, Italy. A jump through a solid wall of flame, unconsciousness, a parachute providentially opened, nightmarish weeks in Italian hospitals, pajama-clad escape and shelter by friendly Italians, rescue by British Commandos, a hitch-hike by air and truck to his North African base--these were some of Miciak's experiences. Today, unshaven, 25 pounds lighter, hungry and tired, he reported that four others of his crew are safe somewhere, three are dead, one probably went down to his death with the ship, and of the pilot nothing is known. Treated for injuries at the base dispensary and paying a call on the dentist ("I had an appointment for August 31st. Guess I'm a little late Miciak related the following story, as told to Staff Sergeant William Brink Jr.)

Bradford Penna  
Sat 27 June 1981

Dear George-

It was very nice to hear from you, busy as you are these days. I too have been busy trying to get the place in shape and start a garden while at the same time my wife is remodeling the kitchen and we have to dodge all the workmen, carpenters and painters and the messes they make.

Your mention of the BBC researching the raid on the Auschwitz oil refinery in August 1944, and interest in 99ers who participated. I can't help any there as I left the 99th in January 44 to go to Gerignola and take command of the newly formed 304th Bomb Wing (B-24) 454, 455, 456, & 459th Gps. I have a 304th History covering June July August & Sept 1944 with a list of all missions flown in August and Auschwitz is not among them. I have no list of 99th missions for that period nor any memory of it as I wasn't in the group.

I do have an item that might interest you, that you might never have heard. On the day we took off from West Palm Beach for Puerto Rico to start over seas, as I was sitting in old Diablo warming up, the Base CO came to the plane and told me that he had received word that our ground echelon might be diverted to the Pacific and we might get an entirely strange ground echelon eventually. Needless to say that was quite a shock and one which I kept to myself and told no one until long after we reached North Africa. Also I carried the payroll money for the crews for February in a canvas bag across the Atlantic with me so if I hadn't made it you wouldn't have gotten paid. Of course the bad weather in UK that kept us grounded for several days in Marrakech was the best break we ever got as we escaped the turmoil of the Eighth Air force and were assigned to the North African Strategic and eventually to the 15th which probably changed the future of all us 99ers.

I have a good friend who was stationed in Alaska and retired there, in 50's and early 60's. I went up and hunted with him in 1957 and 61 for Dall Sheep in the Brook Range above the Arctic Circle in Aug 57 for 9 days during which time we never saw another human and only heard a plane fly over occasionally. In 61 we hunted out of Seward by boat for goats and out of an inland lake. No luck.

I can't make the Rapid City deal but will try if they get one nearer.

Happy Landings in the Yukon,

*Gen. Uppie*

"We were on the bomb run and there were approximately 30 fighters attacking us. They came in so close that they almost scraped the plane with their wing tips. There were so many tracers that the inside of the plane and all around it was glowing just like a gold picture. I was plenty busy with my gun in the radio compartment (Miciak was radio operator on the ship).

"I didn't hear many guns firing, so I opened the door to the top turret and Sergeant Walker (Technical Sergeant Clarence A. Walker, 415 Roberts Lane Bakersfield, Cal.) the engineer, was lying on the floor on his stomach and he just gave a feeble laugh. I closed the door and commenced firing again at the attacking planes. While going through the bomb bay I noticed we had dropped all but six frag bombs.

"The first time I realized that we were in trouble, or out of formation, was when the alarm bell rang. I knew that the bell didn't work in the waist section, so I went down there to tell the rest of the fellows to bail out. When I got there all the fellows were in the waist section, Malaga (Staff Sergeant Steve Malaga, Pricedale, Pa.) had come up out of the ball turret and Bernat (Staff Sergeant Paul V. Bernat, Box 203, Latrobe, Pa.) had come up from the tail guns. Barthel (Technical Sergeant Jason D. Barthel, 58 Locust Hill Rd., Darien CT, Waist Gunner) and Martignetti (Staff Sergeant Edward F. Martignetti, 24 Ferrine Ave., Jersey City, N.J., the other waist Gunner) were sitting there also. Bernat and Martignetti were wounded. Malaga looked stunned. He didn't have his parachute on and I yelled for him to put it on and bail out. He nodded his head.

"Barthel then bailed out, but his foot caught in the waist door and I kicked him out. Then I bailed out, and just as I jumped a blinding sheet of flame from No. three engine came by, and I passed out.

"I don't remember pulling the ripcord, but came in the air and my chute had opened. I put my hand up to my neck and it came away bloody. I could feel a big cut there but I don't know how I got it. Maybe I banged something in the ship because it was rocking plenty. I passed out again and when I came to I was on the ground. The plane had crashed about 100 feet away. It was burning and the machine gun bullets were shooting all around and the frag bombs were exploding.

"About 20 feet away I saw Malaga all crumpled, and he had apparently jumped without his chute. Just a little way off I saw Bernat and Martignetti, and it appeared to me that their chutes hadn't opened, or that they hadn't jumped and had been thrown clear when the plane crashed. I doubt if Walker ever got out of the top turret.

"I heard someone yelling and crying out as if in pain, but I was too sick and too much in pain to investigate. Later I found out it was Barthel. I was burned all over the head and arms and I was losing a lot of blood from my neck. There were several bullet creases on my arms, and I had wrenched my knee so I couldn't walk.

"I dragged myself to a woodcutters shack about a half mile away and there was no one there so I laid down on some rags on the floor. A little while later two Italians came in and told me to get out but I told them I couldn't and then passed out again.

"When I came to I was alone but they had stripped me of everything but my clothes. An hour later some Italian soldiers came with some police officers, and after a long conference they half-carried me six miles down to a main road and there met an Italian convoy. They gave me first aid there and took me to a little town about 15 miles away and I was put in a small hospital there.

"About midnight a doctor gave me treatment for my wounds. I had lost a lot of blood in all that time. He put 14 stitches in my neck.

"An Italian civilian came to see me while I was in this first hospital and asked me some questions as to what sort of plane I was flying in. He showed me a piece of paper with Lt. Dahl's (2nd Lt. Eldon H. Dahl, co-pilot, 31 S. Wilson Ave., Bozeman, Mont.) name and serial number on it, and said that Lt. Dahl had come down all right but had tried to escape and the soldiers had beaten him up, but he was otherwise all right.

"Italian soldiers who could speak a little English tried to question me and also civilian interpreters. They all said they had lived in the States. I was too sick to talk, even if I'd wanted to. The civilians questioned me every day and asked me if I was from a Liberator or not. They also asked me how many planes were in my formation and where they were from, but I couldn't talk. The Italians thought all the planes that were raiding them were Liberators.

"On September 1st a German officer took me to Potenza and put me in a hospital there. It was a big place. I was given treatment and put in a ward with five other Americans. Barthel was there and four B-24 men who had been shot down the day before we raided Foggia. Barthel had a broken leg. I guess I broke it when I kicked him out of the plane, but it saved his life.

"Barthel thought I was a ghost and I thought he was a ghost. He said he had seen Kidwiler (2nd Lt. William W. Kidwiler, bombardier, 43k5 (sic) 52 St. NE, Seattle Wash.) and that Kidwiler was all right and had been captured. Kidwiler had told Barthel that he and Lt. Seila (2nd Lt. Claude F. Seila, navigator, 411 Boulevard, Westfield, N.J.) both bailed out together and he presumed that Seila landed all right. He didn't know whether Seila had been captured or not.

"We had very good treatment in the hospital. Italian soldiers were very good and gave us cigarettes out of their five-a-day ration. People in Potenza were very curious. At least 2,000 came to look at us. They just stuck their heads in the door, stared and jabbered some and then went away.

"The Germans and Italians seemed to have some sort of agreement on prisoners. Barthel and I were German prisoners because the Germans said they had shot us down. The B-24 boys were claimed by the Italians.

"When the news of our landing in Italy was heard the Italians didn't seem so friendly. But when the news of the armistice was heard the Italians all rushed into the ward and gave us cigarettes and shook hands with us.

"On September 9th there was an air raid and our medium bombers were coming right for the hospital. Rothrock (Sergeant Clarence Rothrock, Spokane, Washington) one of the B-24 boys, went out the window on some sheets he tied together. I went down into the second cellar, as far down as I could get.

"The bombs hit the hospital. One came right through into the cellar and landed about ten feet away from me, but it didn't explode. I went up to it, and then I thought "What the hell am I doing here?" and ran out of the building.

"The Italians were all excited and running every which way. I met up with Rothrock back in the hills and we tried to escape, but there were too many Italians around and they brought us back to the hospital.

"The center section of the hospital had been hit and about half the occupants killed. Our ward where Barthel had to stay because of his leg, wasn't touched. Maybe I should have stayed there.

"Many civilians were killed in Potenza and some Italian barracks were hit and many soldiers killed.

"Pretty soon some more of our bombers came and Rothrock and I ran again, but we were only 200 yards away when we were captured. We were outside the hospital under guard by two Italian soldiers when another raid came. The guards were scared and began to run away, so we ran the other way.

"This time we got back into the hills and hid in a dry creek bed. They didn't find us. We walked for a day and a half until we were so weary that neither Rothrock nor I could walk any more. We were still in our pajamas.

"We stumbled onto an Italian farmhouse and the farmer gave us food to eat and let us sleep in the barn. Next morning he took us to a little town (Brindisi d'montagna, about ten miles from Potenza, and acted as lookout for us on the way so that German patrols couldn't find us. We stayed for five days in this little town and were living in a schoolhouse. The people were very good and brought us food and warned us to hide when German patrols were near.

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"Two Catholic sisters about 30 years old were particularly good. They brought us good food and one who was a nurse in Catania before the war gave me first aid. The people told us that in one of our raids on Naples 30,000 people were killed, and in a raid on Foggia 12,000 were killed when a munitions dump blew up. But they were anxious for the Americans to come.

"Italian soldiers who had escaped from the Germans were always coming in to see us. They were running away from the Germans. They told us that all the Italian officers had been taken up North by the Germans.

"After five days a British commando outfit of five men came to town. They had gone up to Potenza in search of German patrols and were mad because they hadn't run into any Germans to kill. Some of the Italians in our town had gone up to Potenza to tell the commandos about us. When they came they looked like angels.

"The town was 65 miles behind the German lines at the time. The commando got with us on an Italian train and travelled all the way to Taranto. They had on their battle uniforms and had hand grenades, tommy guns and all sorts of arms. We still had our hospital pajamas.

"The train was loaded with Italian soldiers and civilians. In the distance, out of the train windows, we saw German camps and convoys all the way up to the line, and the Italians pointed them out to us.

"It was the craziest war I ever saw. The Italians told us that the Germans used the train one day and the British the next.

"In Taranto the British gave me an American shirt, Limey pants, a Limey tank coros beret, and their intelligence officers interrogated me. There was a B-25 field nearby and I got on a C-47 transport to Catania. I couldn't seem to get any transportation at Catania so I went out to a C-47 that was warming up and climbed in when the pilot wasn't looking. The plane went to Tunis and from there I hitch-hiked home.

"It feels good to get some G.I. chow in me. I'd give anything to see my folks when they hear about me being safe. That goes for the folks of the other boys who are safe. I wish I could know that Lt. Norris (1st Lt. John R. Norris, Jr., pilot, 3995 Dalton Ave., Los Angeles, Cal.) is okay."

*Thank you, Carl!*



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5140 S. Tallwood Circle  
W. Melbourne, FL 32901 (Hdqtra)  
May 9, 1981

Dear George,

Enjoyed the chance to talk with some of the Members of the 99th, and catch up with some of the exciting experiences. Your list of those who attended totaled 40, now it's 41; my name was inadvertently omitted. No problem, your job is a tremendous effort, and I'm sure, appreciated by all.

It was great to see and talk with our first OPP. OFF. in Walla Walla, Iou Boatwright, and say a few words with Bernie Barr. All in all, it was worth the long drive from South Fla.

I am rather disappointed that there weren't more from Hq., other than those listed above. (Walt is referring to the list at the top of the May Newsletter.)

I missed perhaps a couple of meetings, had to see a chiropractor for the aching back. I think my name was No. 17 on the original list. The only thing is, my wife asked the question, well, "where did you go," jokingly, of course.

Best regards  
Walt Fletcher

Dear Walt,

It was great to be in Albuquerque with you, also, in April. I say this on behalf of George, and all the rest who did attend. Like you, we all got a 'doze' of nostalgia, seeing some of the old gang, not to mention hearing about experiences, and seeing some pictures that took us back over the years.

Quite truthfully, I was not that thrilled as regards the turnout we had, but hopefully, as can be seen from George's comments, etc., in the Newsletters, our Roster is really building up. So, being an optometrist, I am looking forward to a much larger reunion this coming April. Sure do hope you will make it again, Walt. (Keep the old back in shape!) I told you to stop picking up old cigar butts--that'll do it every time! Ah Reserve for this time, and take care!

Nothing but the best--  
Frank E. (347th)

1032 Marion Ave.  
Highland Park, IL 60035  
Dec. (?), 1980 (346th)

George F. Coen (etc.),  
I received the TROA Magazine 12/1980--to see for the 1st time a Reunion of the 99th Heavy Bomb Group.

I joined the Group in Africa in April 1943, 346th Bomb Squadron and was in the Group until Oct. 1st, 1943 when I was severely wounded over Augsburg, Germany on this date.

I have not had any info or have talked to or have even met anyone of our Group since those long ago days. Would be interested in more information.

Thank you  
Marvin C. Charak  
Capt. (retired) USAF

I am also enclosing information on the 99th which you may or may not have which is my personal file. Also: It is possible to get more information as per GO order --(?) etc. (Can't make this last part out--(fhe).

Dear Marvin,

I have seen your name on a couple of George's Rosters so I am assuming you have joined our 'elite' outfit, and no doubt you have received Newsletters, and other info in the past. Hope you are OK and will join us next April in New Mexico. We look forward to meeting you! Thanks for your file, etc. (fhe)

122 TF Group  
Fort Wayne MAP IN NG  
Fort Wayne IN 46809

George:  
Received your Newsletters, and I read them all, but my memory is a little fuzzy on the names and places. However, my association with the 99th is still a fresh gleam in my eye.

I was a member of the 416th, during the last year of WWII. I flew tail gunner and completed 29 missions. That was a long time ago.

I just retired from the Military in Nov. 1980, with 35 years of service. My tour during WWII led me to take an Aircraft Mechanical Course under the G.I. Bill.

In my hometown, the Indiana Air National Guard was starting up, the year 1947. I joined, and became an Air Technician in 1948 Feb. I've been with the outfit, in and out of Active Duty, ever since.

The old B-17 is a love never lost and I remember some of the last days, before they were phased out of service. The Coast Guard used some for Survey, and painted them yellow. Some Fire Fighting Outfits used them and they appeared in the movie Toro, Toro, camouflaged paint and all. I saw them in Boise, in years back.

But most of my Military life has revolved around fighters from the P-51's to the present F-4's. I'm still an Air Technician with the Air Guard, just waiting for my retirement from Civil Service to become effective.

I have a well worn scrap book of WWII photos, and my Diary. Most of the men in my outfit have spent time looking at them. Somewhere in my house is an old address list, I will dig it out and send a photo fax of some.

Will keep in touch and plan to be present at a future reunion get-together.

Sincerely  
Donald G. Chandler SMSgt (Ret.)

P.S. My thanks to Ped G. Magness of England, Ark., 97th Bomb Gp. Reunion Assoc. for forwarding my address to you. It so happened, that when I received word from him, the outfit, the 122nd T.F. Wing, was in a tour at Kirtland AFB. Two of my three sons were on that tour and Larry called you on my behalf. I'm proud of the fact, that my family's aviation roots were seeded during WWII with the old 99th.

Dear Don,  
As there was no date on your letter I am assuming it was written in the latter part of this year. I note, as per our Sept. 1 Newsletter, that you are a member in good standing. As an old 99er, we welcome you into our fold, once again! Your letter was most interesting, and to say the least, you sure have paid your dues! Sure do hope by now, that retirement has set in, and all goes well, Don. It's wonderful to hear about your sons, also. Hope you can make it to our reunion in Albuquerque this coming April. In regard to your Air Guard, the son of Good (but recently deceased) former co-worker of mine is a Lt. Col. in charge of Maintenance, at our local Van Nuys, Calif. base. He also has 2 other bases to look after--one in Alaska, and one in Wyoming. His name is Manuel Macias, and he has been in now over 26 years, and is 44. He started as a MSgt and worked up. Anyhow, Don, take care, and thanks for your all!  
Frank English (347th)

41 Willow St.  
Guilderland, NY 12084  
March 27, 1981 (346th)

Enclosed is a money order for 5.00.

I would like to join your Historical society. I flew with the 346th bomb squadron. All of my 53 missions were out of Foggia, Italy. Most of my missions were flown in planes named 'Heaven Can Wait', and 'Weary Willie.' I enjoyed your newsletter. I'm enclosing an address of another 99'er. I was an engineer-gunner and this fellow was a tail gunner.

James Mullen  
73 Union St.  
Marshfield, Mass. 02050

I will be looking for your next newsletter. Bob Schell

Dear Bob,  
As you probably know by now, George Coen has been forwarding the letters to me, which he receives, and I am now endeavoring to answer same. I see in the Sept. 1 Newsletter that James Mullen is mentioned, but not yours. This is just an oversight, I'm sure, as your application is in your letter. Your name should be on the next Roster as I see your Application Form is with your letter. I send all the mail back to George when I get through, so bear with us in the meantime. (Pardon the duplication above re the 'Form'.)

From your letter, we gather that you really put in your time! At least you also made it back OK, thank goodness. For now, all of us 'oldtimers' thank you, and Jim for 'reupping'! It's old hat, but all being equal, as they say, we hope to see you both in Albuquerque this coming April.

Our best to you, and yours  
Frank English (347th)

40 Richard Rd.  
Reading, Mass. 01867 (346th)  
July 7, 1981

Dear Sir: (Meaning Trigger Coen!)--

I just recently heard that the 99th had this organization, and would like to become a member of the society.

I was a pilot in the 346th Sq. I believe I arrived in Foggia in October, 1944.

I was told that the dues were \$5.00, which is enclosed, if that is not correct please let me know.

I am still an active pilot and have my own Cessna 170B. I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely  
Bill Flynn

Dear Bill,  
Welcome aboard! Especially on our next mission to Albuquerque, we hope. I checked and saw your name on our Sept. 1 Newsletter, so assume you are up to date regarding our activities. In regard to the dues, you are OK for 1981. However, due to rising costs (postage, etc.), dues for 1982 are \$10. Anything extra would be greatly appreciated, and I am not directing these remarks just to you, Bill, but to all 99ers.

Glad to hear you are still 'sky-bound'! Correct me if I'm wrong, but isn't your Cessna a 'tail dragger', or am I thinking of the earlier, earlier, models (in-line, and radial engined)?

So long for now Bill. I don't care what anyone says--the 346th was almost as good as the 347th!

Kindest regards  
Frank English

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228 Wilder Place  
Shreveport, La 71104  
July 15, 1981 (416th)

Dear George,  
Boy, you sure seem to get around a lot. More than I do anyway, but I did a lot of traveling before I retired so we are happy to just sit. I make a yearly pilgrimage to western Kansas every June for the wheat harvest and that takes care of any desire to travel.

This year, on my way back from the harvest, I stopped in Fredonia, Kansas, and had a delightful visit with Doc Beale. He hasn't changed a bit. He had a heart attack about ten years ago but no problems since and appears to be in good shape. He's semi-retired. He's the first 416er I've seen since Orance in '44 and Buck in '47. Oh yes, I served under Upthegrove at Chanute in '53. Forgot about McDonald. I had run into him in Germany, Japan, and some place here in the states, Biggs AFB, I believe.

Received a letter from my tail gunner, Paul Peterson, last month. It was the first contact with any of the old crew since leaving North Africa. He lives in Sarasota, Fla. but spends his summers in Hot Springs, S. Dak. and plans to attend the Rapid City reunion, so you may run into him. Would like to be there but can't make it.

As regards the reunion in the south during the winter, sure I'm interested. What do I do? Is this one later than Harlingen or what? Like that statement that you do most of the work.

Am enclosing a picture. I'm the one with both feet on the ground. The other guy we found in my son-in-law's yard in Ruston, La. He had already taken about six inches off that stick. (Ed's note, a snapping turtle).

If you ever get in the vicinity, look me up.

Here's hoping to see you and some of the old gang at one of the reunions.

Sincerely  
Mitch (Carl D. Mitchell)

Dear Mitch,  
Although a lot of us don't know you, as yet, let me assure you that going by this letter alone, you appear to be one dandy guy, and it will be a real pleasure to catch up with you! By the tone of said letter, I assume that you, George, Doc, Paul, etc., are old flying buddies. Anyhow, I note that you, Doc, and Paul are listed on George's Roster. Regarding Doc, I note you spell his last name with an 'e', while ours has it 'Beal'. Which is correct, not trying to be a 'spoilsport'!

Anyhow, Mitch, we thank you for taking the time to write, and filling us in. In regard to reunions, I'm sure you are up to date and have seen that the next one will be in good old Albuquerque, again, in the latter part of April. Hope you can make it. By the by, I hope Paul did make the one in Rapid City. I couldn't make it, but George said it turned out just great. I'd like to see those pictures you mentioned, Mitch. Real darb's, I'll bet! Bombs away, for this episode. Take care, and the best to you, and the family.

Best Regards  
Frank English

P.S. Note how I spelled Albuquerque, above! George will kill me! Thank the Lord I live in Whittier--I'll have a chance to get out of town.  
fhe

11  
Bldg. West Apt. #2  
177 Loudon Rd.  
Concord, N.H. 03301

Dear George,  
I received your letters from the old 99th, 15th A.A.F. some time back, but due to moving around so much...(waited?) until I had a permanent address. My old address was

Robert J. Ravlin  
Box 1082  
Lake Charles, LA

(new)

Robert J. Ravlin  
Bldg. West Apt. #2  
177 Loudon Rd.  
Concord, N.H. 03301

I'll tell you a little of my time with the 99th.

I was a walet gunner on a B-17. Took my combat training in Pyote, and Dalhart, Tex. My pilot was Lt. Gordon Wiren. Our crew was stationed outside Tunis, No. Africa, near the water point. We were on the same field as the B-25 crews(?).

We flew missions to So. France, and No. Italy before moving to Foggia, Italy. Our last mission was the Monte Cassino raid. I believe this was in March of '44. We also went to the Island of Capri for a 2 week R&R.

We were transferred out of the 15th to the 8th AAF, 94th B.G. the same month. This was Bury St. Edmonds, England.

I am very glad to have the opportunity at this time to join the 99th Society. Please find \$5 for dues. Hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely  
Bob Ravlin

Dear Bob,

Thanks for your letter, and the '81 dues. If you received the Sept. 1 Newsletter, you will see that George Coen has you listed on the inside front cover. By the way, I also saw your name, and old address in the Dec. 1980 Newsletter. Good to have you back, and hope it's for keeps! Moving around so much puts a dent in keeping up with mail, right?

Bob, you do not mention what Sq. you were in, and your pilot's name doesn't wring a bell, either, to orient us. Also, as one who joined the 99th (347th) in Sioux City, in Nov. 1942, and went through Algeria, Tunisia, and Italy, I am confused about your mention of 'B-25 crews' at our base in Tunisia. If memory serves me correctly, it was called Oudna. We were back in off the main road several miles. The main attraction was the old Roman aqueduct that used to bring water into Tunis, right? The year would be 1943, but again, you do not mention specific dates. The only other outfit to come to our field there were British Wellington medium bombers. If you were there at the time they arrived, you would remember 2 of them piling up on landing. (Two separate crash landings, I'm referring to.) These crews were not British, Bob, but Aussies, and New Zealanders, I might add.

If you remember, they were also on the opposite side of our field at Tortorella (Foggia), Italy. After awhile, they then got rid of the 'Wimpies' and used B-24 Liberators. They were earlier models--no nose turret. All of their flying was done at night, as you well know.

I well remember the Monte Cassino missions. Our Group flew 2 a day, most of the time, while that lasted. As I am also a Life Member of the B-17 Combat Crewmen & Wingmen, I know several men who were in the 94th. One was a Crew Chief in the 332nd (Hugh Crawford), in the 333rd, also the same, was Zeke Lopez. Also, Ross A. McClintock, who was a pilot (no Sq. given); not to mention Irving Shapiro, in the 410th, an engineer-gunner, and last, Jentry N. Southard, 333rd, a tail gunner. Am I boring you, Bob?

I'll close this volume for now. Hope all goes well with you, and yours. If possible, let's get together in April, and swap lies at the reunion. Bet I can tell bigger ones than you! Bomb Sour for now.

Yours truly  
Frank English

Apt. 407  
545 Oaks Lane (348th)  
Pompano Beach, FL 33060  
July 15, 1981

Dear George,

I want to thank you for sending me the roster (thru 26 Jan.) and the newsletters (thru Mar.). I also want to commend you for undertaking a difficult and time consuming job, and doing it well.

My tour with the 348th Sq. was from July '43 to March '44. In the Dec. newsletter I noted Bob Elliot's name mentioned. My first mission was as his copilot in "Queenie" over Rome, Italy, on July 19, '43; my 50th was a day or two after we bombed the Abby at Monte Cassino.

I'm looking forward to attending a reunion one of these days (hopefully in Fla.). I have 10-20 pictures of bombing raids taken by Group photographers. I also have the briefing notes of all the 50 that I was on, probably will bring back memories to some of the fellows.

My tentmates during most of my tour were Stanley Samuelson (killed on a B-29 mission over Japan. I have a copy of a diary that he kept of his missions), Cliff Ericson, Cleveland--Don Frye--Lawrenceville, Ill.--Kermit Mack (sp?)--Omaha, Neb.

Am writing to one of my crewmates to send in an application (the only one I'm still in touch with).

Kindest regards to you and thanks once again for sending me the newsletters.

Julie Horowitz

Dear Julie,

You can see how far behind we are in the letter answering department! However, as I always say, better late than never, right! Thank you for your most informative letter. It appears that you went through the 'mill', also.

I just saw your name on the Sept. 1 Roster (for one). Thanks for the additional names, Julie; every bit of such info helps to swell our ranks, once again. General Coen sure is the sparkplug of this organization, and deserves all the credit in the world. I see the dates of your tour, and I'm curious. How come it took so long for you to finish your 50th? I was overseas 28 mo. and noted that the normal tour was up to maybe 6 mo. at most.

As can be seen, you will have to wait for a southern reunion, Julie. George has tried in the past, and I'm sure he is still putting out 'feelers' in regard to finding one of our members who will 'ramrod' a reunion, or mini-reunion, down your way, and in other places as well. In the meantime, sure wish you could see your way clear to come to our '82 shindig, the latter part of April, in Albuquerque. With the names we now have, you can be sure of a goodly crowd. Look at it this way, Julie--just think of all the tall tales you can tell, not to mention bringing along the pictures you spoke of! During my sentence in the 99th (347th), I flew 33 missions as a Combat Photographer/Gunner and have some dandy photo's in 2 albums, myself. (I was down on the line, before, and after, 1st in Hdqtrs Tech Supply, then back to the 347th Tech Supply, etc. I'll knock this off for the nonce. Good to hear from you, and don't take any wooden nickels!

Sincerely  
Frank English

Lightings In the Sky

Oh, Heddy Lamarr is a beautiful gal  
And Madeline Carol is too.  
But you'll find, if you query, a different Theory  
Amongst any bomber crew.  
For the loveliest thing of which one could sing  
(This side of the Heavenly Gates)  
Is no blondes or brunettes of the Hollywood set;  
But an escort of P-38's

Yes, in days that have passed, when the tables were massed  
With glasses of scotch or Champagne.  
It's quite true that the sight was a thing of delight  
Us, intent upon feeling no pain.  
But, no longer the same, nowaays in this game,  
When we head north from Messinas Straits  
Take the sparkling wines everytime, just make mine  
An escort of P-38's

Bryon, Shelley and Keats ran a dozen dead heats  
Describing the view from the hills  
Of the valleys in May when the winds gently sway,  
An army of bright daffodils.  
Take the daffodils. Bryon; the wild flowers, Shelly;  
Yours is the myrtle friend, Keats.  
Just reserve me those cuties, American Beauties,  
An escort of P-38's

Sure we're braver than hell; on the ground all is swell  
In the air it's a different story.  
We sweat out our track thru fighters and flak  
We're willing to split up the glory.  
Well they wouldn't reject us so heaven protect us,  
And until all this shooting abates,  
Give us courage to fight 'em and one other small item--  
An escort of P-38's

*Courtesy of Jesse N. Hobbs*

21 Gourdon Court  
Lake Saint Louis (346th)  
Missouri 63367

Dear George:

Many thanks for sending me the 99th BG Newsletters. I enjoyed reading the correspondence and observed many familiar names.

I was the Radio Operator for General Upthegrove with crew 8 of the 346th squadron. Our first mission was flown on March 31st, 1943, and my last mission (50th) was flown on September 5th, 1943.

You are doing a fine job with the society, keep up the good work.

Enclosed is my application for membership with the \$10.00 membership fee attached. Thanks again.

Cordially  
Vince (Vincent A. Schauler)

Dear Vince,  
 You are as welcome as the 'flowers in May', to use an old cliché I must say, on behalf of all of us 99th 'oldtimers', that you sure travelled in the best of company. We are all proud to have served under the General (a lot of us, anyhow). My 'answering service' is not up to the same par as George's, you will notice, but what do you expect from a private, 23rd class! Seriously, though Vince, we are all glad you joined; you won't be sorry. How you too can attend our next reunion--and tell us how that 'big one' got away, or other 'whoppers' that come to mind. Glad to hear that you do enjoy the Newsletters, etc., as George puts his 'all' into same.

Don't you wonder sometimes how we ever made it home? I'm talking about all of us. I was able to see it from both sides, as compared to some. What I'm trying to say is, there were a few times when it was dangerous on the ground. Enough, already. I'll close my big yap for now. The best to you, Vince, and we all hope to meet you in the not to distant future.

All best wishes  
 Frank English

#### BOOK REVIEWS

The Rise and Fall of the Luftwaffe,  
 The Life of Field Marshal Erhard Milch, by David Irving  
 Little, Brown & Co.

An excellent account of the power struggles within the Nazi hierarchy which allowed so many of us to survive. Milch remarks, on page 297 "The interrogations (at Nuremberg) were of a military nature, unassociated with the war crimes trials proceeding elsewhere. Milch's assertion that the American daylight attacks on transport and oil plants had defeated Germany was an evident embarrassment to the British interrogators. 'I think they are annoyed at me for speaking this obvious truth,' recorded Milch. 'Again and again I have been interrogated on this point. I can only repeat, the British inflicted grievous and bloody injuries on us - but the Americans shot us in the heart.' " so now you know. GFC

FLYING FORTRESS Edward Jablonski  
 The definitive book about the design and construction of the B-17. From p. 77, an account of the 43rd BG in New Guinea. "While Britton appeared his feet to the rudder pedals, Zeamer guided the plane down with his good hand. There was no time for a correct landing pattern as they hurriedly brought in the B-17 before they might lapse into unconsciousness again. All they could see was the runway before them as they rushed in. They did not even check for wind direction and brought the plane in with the wind id used up all the 7000-foot runway before the plane stopped rolling. The five wounded men were removed from the plane and it was then that Pugh, still dazed by the experience, looked up at the wind cone. It pointed in the same direction as the B-17. That couldn't possibly be right, so he stormed into the control tower demanding to know why the wind sock was pointed in the wrong direction.

Gently he was assured it would be fixed, for no one wanted to discuss this with the obviously distraught and tense Pugh. He, along with the rest of the crew, was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross. Sarnoski received, posthumously, the Medal of Honor; Zeamer, who recovered also received the Medal of Honor!"

I think we all know too well how Pugh felt.

gfc

To Tom Gamm- 99BGHS Reunion Chairman- 12275 Victoria Falls NE, Albuquerque NM 87112

Dear Tom; I plan to attend the April 1982 Reunion in your fair city. There will be \_\_\_\_\_ of us.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name Squadron Jan. 1982

Boys, Tom needs your help in organizing the Big Bash. You may send the above notice to either of us; he'll get it either way.

#### LOST AND FOUND

A check of the roster shows some inexcusable omissions which we hereby make good. We will get out an alphabetical complete membership list about March, after we get everybody onto a word processor. Meanwhile:

#### TAPS

Independence, Mo.  
 November 24, 1981

Dear Mr. Coen,

It is with great sadness that I have to inform you that Wayne D. Crutcher of the 346th passed away September 6, 1981 of Cardiac Arrest.

He had been on disability retirement since June 1976 and he really enjoyed reading the newsletters. He had hoped to attend some of the reunions and I'm sure he would have enjoyed a get-together with all the guys from the 346th.

Good Luck with your reunions.

Sincerely,

*Mrs. Wayne D. Crutcher*  
 Mrs. Wayne D. Crutcher

Application for Membership.

1982 Membership \$10.00  
 1981 Newsletter 5.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Squadron \_\_\_\_\_  
 New \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

The 99th Bombardment Group  
Historical Society  
2908 Aliso Dr. NE  
Albuquerque NM 87110



James O. Grizzell, Jr.  
15 Mohican Cove East  
Lake Waynoka  
Sardinia OH 45171