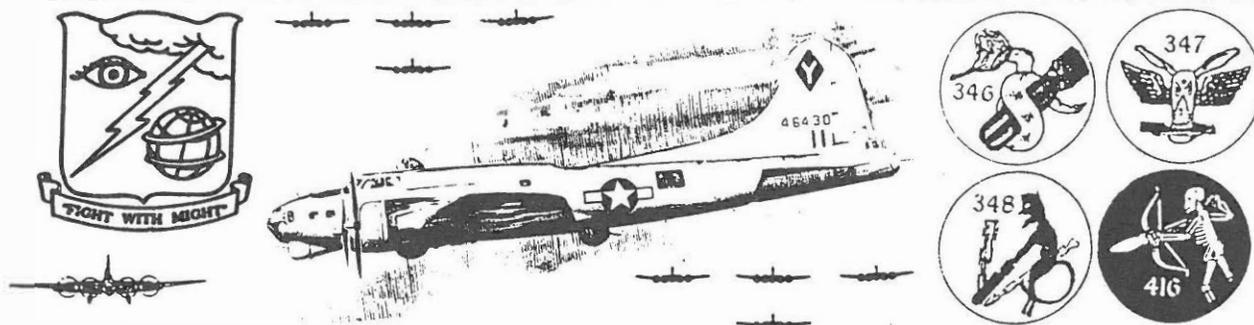


# 99TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY



*Members and Guests Are Most Cordially  
Invited To Our Society's Annual Reunion In  
Jacksonville, Florida*

*Tuesday, May 2nd thru May 6th, Y2K*

*Our Member Hosts Have Planned A Most  
Interesting and Exciting Time For  
Attendants, Including The Opportunity To:*

- 👁️ Tour An Active Duty Atomic Submarine.*
- 👁️ Visit Historic Saint Augustine, Florida.*
- 👁️ Enjoy A River Boat Dinner Cruise On  
Jacksonville's Saint James River.*
- 👁️ Visit Okefenokee Swamp and Wildlife  
Refuge.*
- 👁️ Attend Our Annual Saturday Night  
Banquet Featuring A Scholarly Speaker  
On WW II History.*

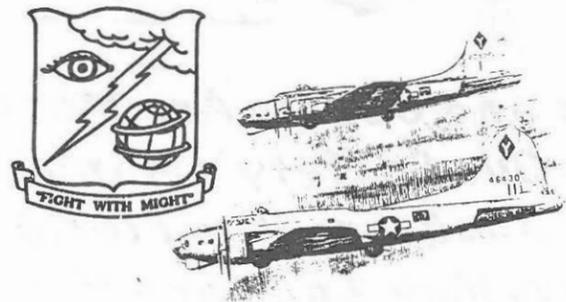
*See Pages 18 Thru 21 For More Details & Hotel &  
Reunion Registration Forms.*

Please RSVP By Sending Ed Marlow The Reunion Registration Form (Page 21)  
No Later Than April 1, 2000 To Help Ed Finalize Arrangements For The Exciting  
Reunion Functions Planned and To Provide For All Members Planning To Attend.

**THE 99TH BOMB GROUP  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
NEWSLETTER**

We need your WW II personal photos for future publication in this spot. Please give rank & job title.

The Group Flew B-17 Flying Fortresses For A Total Of 395 Combat Missions From North Africa & Italy To Bomb European Targets During 1943, '44 & '45



We need your WW II personal photos for future publication in this spot. Please give rank & job title



Vol. 20, No. 1

Published Quarterly By The 99th BGHS

FEBRUARY 2000

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

Well another year has pass, and I hope the Y2K pass smoothly for you, and you didn't get caught up in the doom and gloom that they predicted. So may I wish you all a belated Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Good Health.

The Family get together at Covington, Ky was a real success, we had over Fifty application to attend. I know Don Lawhorn did a real good job. He really sweated it out. I would like to ask the members please send you application in early as they help the host a lot. Don order a bus then he cancel it because he didn't figure enough people where going to Wright-Patterson Museum. Then a few weeks before the reunion everybody wrote and said they were coming and wanted to go to WPM, so he had to rent the bus again, lucky the bus company had one on hand, so please get your application in early..

ONE OTHER THING PLEASE SEND IN YOUR DUES, WALTER BUTLER IS WAITING FOR THEM.

This is a side note, those that want to go to Wright-Pat Museum and figure the walk is to much the Museum has Electric wheel chairs to use at no cost. Speaking of the Museum. The memorial grounds since our dedication June 28 1986 has really became full.



So I will see you all in Jacksonville, Fl. in May if the good lord willing and the creek don't rise.

I was glad to see Marge Cepparulo and her two sons Joe and Edmond, Joe has been to our reunion before but this is a first time for Ed, hope he had a good time even if he got stuck as our bartender. Thanks, also thanks to Arkie Clark and Al fleese who help at the reunion. Arkie said he has San Antonio just about ready for 2001.

Edmond Marlow is ready for Mays Reunion Jacksonville, Fl. Marge Cepparulo said she like to try a Mini or Family get together in Mephis, Tenn. in the fall of 2000.

DON'T FORGET THE DUES



Good Health

*Bob*

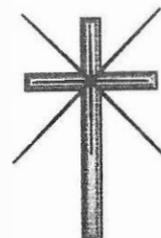


I (Roy Worthington) goofed real good concerning the photos of the two gentlemen on either side of this paragraph. I've had them for some time awaiting an opportunity to publish them on our newsletter cover, but, alas, I can't find their names, ranks, & jobs.

I would very much appreciate a note from these gentlemen giving me the information I need so I can place their photos on the cover of an issue in the near future.



**IN MEMORIAM**



GORDON FLETCHER

JAMES C. MOORE

LEONARD KAHN KIRSH, SR.

DORIS MARY KIRKPATRICK

Beloved Wife of James D. Kirkpatrick



Members send sincere prayers and sympathies to the families and friends  
**MAY OUR COMRADES REST IN PEACE**

# NEWS, NOTES, LETTERS & IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## NEW MEMBERS

Ford J. Lauer, Jr. 107 NW Hills Road, San Marcos, TX 78666, Associate

Lucy Nesbitt 402 Cole Drive, Meadville, PA 16335, Associate

## CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Rex Greathouse c/o Gran Ville, Fredona, Kansas 66736

%%%

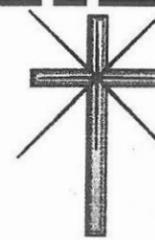
## 99th BGHS Financial Statement 1999

<b>Balance 31 Dec. 1998</b>		
General Fund		26510.19
Reunion Fund		9223.38
<b>Total</b>		<b>35733.57</b>

<b>Income:</b>		
Dues and Donations	4328.50	
Interest Gen Fund	711.42	
Interest Reunion Fund	319.12	
Reunion Income	4799.14	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10158.18</b>	<b>45891.75</b>

<b>Expenses:</b>		
Postage	947.77	
Printing	7017.64	
Supplies	66.58	
Reunion Expense	459.36	
Misc	1143.74	
<b>Total</b>	<b>9635.09</b>	

<b>Balance 31 Dec. 1999p</b>		<b>36256.66</b>
General Fund		22374.05
Reunion Fund		13882.61



## THE CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



The other day I was reminded of a clipping I had attached years ago to the flypage of a Bible my parents sent to me shortly before leaving the US, when I was to join the 99th at Foggia. I had found it in the Air Force Association Magazine. It is entitled "The Airman's Psalm". Let me share this with you from over 50 years ago!

"The Lord is my Pilot. I shall not falter. He sustaineth me as I span the heavens; He leadeth me, steady, o'er the skyways. He refresheth my soul.

For He showeth me the wonders of His firmament For His Name's sake.

Yea, though I fly through treacherous storms and darkness I shall fear no evil, for He is with me. His Providence and Nearness they comfort me.

He openeth lovely vistas before me In the presence of His Angels. He filleth my heart with calm. My trust in Him bringeth me peace.

Surely, His Goodness and Mercy Shall accompany me each moment in the air, and I shall dwell in His matchless heavens forever.

From the Office of the Air Chaplain"

I was listening to the sermon one Sunday. My mind was searching for the substance of an article for our Newsletter, which awaited my writing at home, when I heard the minister read the 23rd Psalm. When he came to the part that reads:

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever",

he went on to explain that the word in the Hebrew text "shall follow me" should be translated "shall pursue me". I thought about this and related my thoughts back to the "talk" and visits of the Reunion...you know the "war stories"!

Suddenly the text made more sense than ever before! "...Goodness and Mercy pursues us all the days of our lives! And we shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever"! Certainly this is true for each of us as members of the 99th. In whatever part we played in the scheme of our wartime operations, we were in Harm's Way. Then and now, in the wonder and mystery of the love of God, He comes to us in the words of the Shepherd reminding us that, in His Goodness and Mercy He pursues us! His promise, and He pursues us with it, always is "I will be with you!"

Let's be reminded again that the God who flew with us, guarded our safety, assisted in the time of danger, is the same God who "pursues" us all the days of our lives, and is with us now!

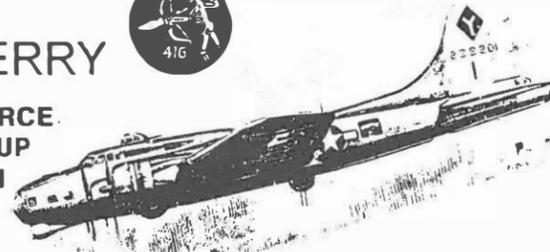
God bless you, my comrades! Let the New Year be filled with the fulfillment of God's gracious pursuits for us!

Chaplain Fran *Fran*

# "FOR YOU DER VAR ISS OFER"

By  
GEORGE F. PERRY

FIFTEENTH AIR FORCE  
99TH BOMB GROUP  
416 SQUADRON



This is the third installment of George's well written, exciting adventure.

Dedicated to the airmen who flew the B-17 and the ground crews who made it possible.

To refresh your memory you may want to review the prior installment of this story printed in our November '99 issue.

All was quiet after six hours of the droning engines and two minutes of intense excitement. Quiet that is, except for the sound of bullets ricocheting off the water followed by the sounds of machine guns firing from shore with the bullets arriving faster than the sounds of guns firing them. It seems that the Germans who were in control of the harbor where sub pens were located, perceived us as making a low-level attack. They had been firing at us as we approached, had shot us down, and were now trying to prevent us from launching an amphibious landing by boat. Since the life rafts were what they could see to shoot at, we moved away from them taking Hy and Ernie with us and allowed the target practice to proceed.

After what seemed a lifetime, but which we later figured to be forty-five minutes to an hour, a well-armed reception committee put out from shore in a fishing boat and approached us warily with rifles at the ready. After it was determined that the cold water had rendered us harmless and that we were not planning an armed invasion; we were pulled from the water more dead than alive and stacked on deck like so many logs. By this time one of the rafts had fully inflated and was pulled in behind the boat, but the other appeared to have been the victim of target practice. The cold indeed had penetrated us to the extent that we had no control of our limbs, even speaking was difficult. Hypothermia was extremely painful.

We had ditched the plane at the entrance to the harbor of Pola, Italy, later to become Pula, Yugoslavia. Although this was Italy, the Germans were in control. We were taken from dockside to a heated room and given some tepid "Koffee." It wasn't the coffee we knew, but perhaps their supply of Columbian beans had been interrupted.

One of the German soldiers pointed to Hy and Eddie and said, "Juden." With as stern a look on my face as I could muster, I shook my head and said, "American." No more such reference was made of that. Another German soldier made a comment that we were to hear often in the future, sometimes boastfully as our conquerors and sometimes wistfully, "JA, FER YOU DER VAR ISS OFER."

From dockside we were trucked up the hill to an imposing gray, stone building that looked like an ancient dungeon, which it was. A crowd of peasant women and children were in front of the large gate that appeared to be the only break in the wall. We learned that they were not our welcoming committee but were family members of prisoners incarcerated there. They had come with food to augment the miserable fare provided in the lockup. On the inside of those gray, stone walls it seemed even colder and more foreboding than from the outside.

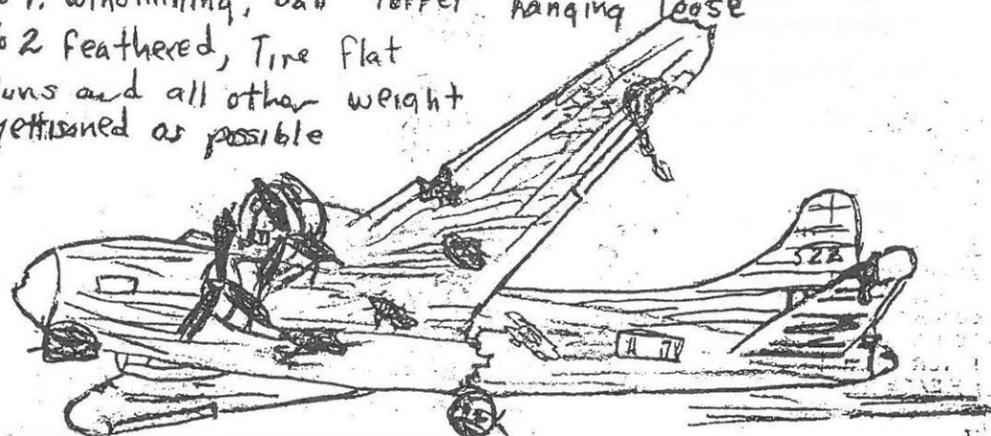
This wing of the prison had a large, open, center area, six stories high, surrounded by balconies which were the access to the cells. All ten of us were put into one large cell on the sixth tier. We immediately noticed that the cell didn't appear to be too secure. The ceiling, roof, and top corner of the cell were missing allowing the sky to show through. We thought about the possibility of escape, but were warned that any head showing through the hole would be blown off. We decided to keep our heads. There was no glass in the windows, but there were bars. The wind seemed unhampered as it whistled and moaned through our air-conditioned quarters that February night. The other wing of the prison was a pile of rubble; not all bombs we dropped on the 9th of January, aimed at the sub pens, had found their intended target.

In the cell were two or three bed frames with the same degree of resiliency as the floor. There was no great rush to reserve one for personal use, and as I recall, we all slept on the floor and used the bed frames more for sitting. Being February in the vicinity of the Alps, it was cold in that cell exposed to the elements, but cold does not quite cover the situation. We were each issued a blanket made of a hard, heavy material that reminded us of a suit of chain-mail armor, and about as effective for retaining heat. After our earlier dunking in the liquid ice and still wearing damp-to-wet clothes and shoes, we found it expedient to crowd our ten bodies into a space that would normally be occupied by five or less. After the first night when we were not quite so damp, we crowded our ten bodies into a space normally occupied by five or more.

During our stay at Pola we were fed once a day. Each man received about a pint of vegetable soup, the main vegetable being cabbage, and a small loaf of bread which might have weighed in at four to the pound. Family members of prisoners came to the gate daily with food for their loved ones. On the last day of the week each man received in his soup allotment, a finger-sized piece of hard-to-identify meat. We were told that early in the week a goat was cut up and used as soup stock for the ensuing week after which the pieces were rationed to the inmates. Through a small hole in the wall between our cell and the next our Italian neighbors learned who we were and shared some of their better food with us, including a bottle of very sour, red wine.

On the second day we were offered the opportunity to trade shoes for dry ones. The shoes we received were of such poor quality that we immediately understood their rationale for the trade, and it wasn't for our comfort. Fortunately, for me, they didn't have any size-13 shoes to trade for mine so they offered to take mine to the kitchen for drying. Unfortunately,

No 1. windmilling, Ball turret hanging loose  
No 2 feathered, Tire flat  
Guns and all other weight  
jettisoned as possible

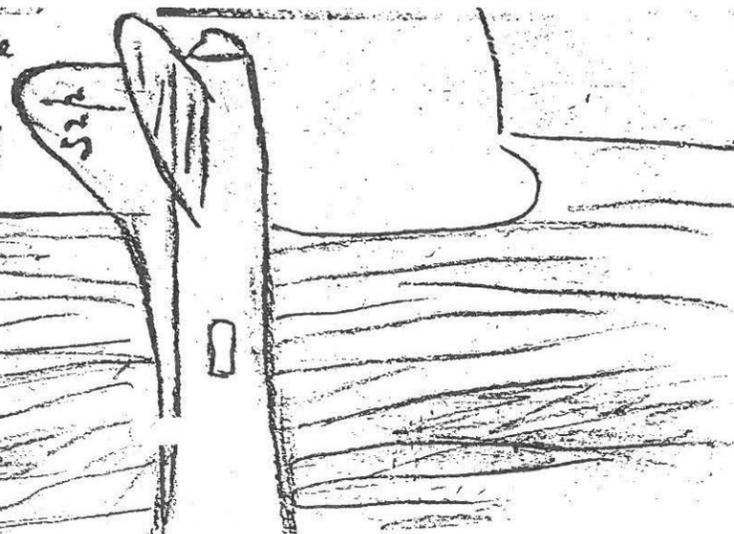


My Sad Tale: Out of guns, ammunition, gas, engines  
altitude and Luck simultaneously. Ditched  
Pola; Italy 2-22-44

She settled about wing deep  
and rested a minute or two  
before sinking completely



with a sigh she  
pointed her nose  
down and followed  
it



because my shoes were left too long too near the heat, the toes burned and curled up which had the same effect as my wearing size-12 shoes.

On our second night we were awakened by gunfire outside the prison. Perhaps a hundred shots were fired in what could have been an attempted rescue or break. The next day we were unable to get any information about what had happened.

We were given the opportunity to exercise outside our cell by walking around the balcony of our tier. On one such walk I was signaled by an old gentleman to come into his cell. He was a millionaire who spoke excellent English and told me he owned a resort hotel on the small island just out of Pola harbor. He mentioned being acquainted with the Gillette brothers of razor-blade fame because it was their favorite retreat. The next time I saw him he handed me a small 2" X 4" desk plaque with a medallion of the Virgin Mary that he said he had since childhood. He indicated its value was to keep its owner from harm. He believed his life was over now as he expected to be executed any day and he wanted me to live to a ripe old age as he had done. The plaque carried its charms because I brought it home with me after my incarceration.

During our week at Pola, a beautiful young prostitute was brought into the visiting area and I was invited to give her a message to be transmitted by partisans to my home base. She wore a fur coat over her expensive clothes that were available only to collaborators. This, of course, was an attempt to get information other than name, rank and serial number. I told her, "The rattlesnake 522 has landed and ten are safe." She asked who the message was for and I told her that any member of the Allied Forces would direct it to the appropriate people. She got no other information and left in disgust.

After a week we were taken to the prison gate and handed over to a squad of German soldiers who turned out to be members of the Afrika Corps on their way home after being driven out of Africa. We were escorted to the local train station by those soldiers whose hauptman (captain) in charge was a doctor. I believe they knew the war had been lost and, therefore, treated us in a more kindly manner. They did keep an eye on us most of the time, but there were times when their weapons were within our reach and their attention was elsewhere. We discussed the situation among us and decided not to try anything foolhardy. As we traveled we saw several telephone poles along the tracks decorated with the bodies of resistance fighters who had been caught and strung-up on the spot.

#### FROM THE DIARY OF AL HENKE

#### MISSIONS #34 & 35

DATE: FEBRUARY 22, 1944  
TARGET: AIR CRAFT FACTORYS  
LOCATED: REGENSBURG, GERMANY  
HOURS: 6:55

SHIP: A NEW MODIFIED "G"  
NUMBER: 889  
PILOTS: CAPT. SHAW - CAPT. MORRIS  
POSITION: TAIL GUNS

"My roughest raid so far. Started out with eight ships in our squadron, one turned back with engine trouble, four more turned back due to bad weather. Ended up over target with a right- and left-wing man. We were flying tail end of the wing

and were attacked by 35 ME-109's and ME-210's. They hit our right wing man's left-wing tank and he slid over us and went down over the target. The left wing man was hit later and went down. We were the only one to return in our squadron. Our ship was shot up so bad it went to the bone yard. The top turret and radio gunner each shot down an ME-109. The ball turret and I knocked down an ME-210 a piece.

"I hit several others and fired 1,100 rounds of ammunition. Had a lot of trouble with the new tail turret. They sure threw the rockets at us today. We lost 52 out of 177 bombers on this raid. Combined raid with the 8th Air Force we received credit for two missions on this one. The Armament Major and a group of Boeing factory men met me as I crawled out of the plane and were all excited about their new tail turret. I told them if they would saw off that tail and give me a shotgun I would feel safer. That was the one and only tail of that type."

SQUADRON DIARY 416 SQ, 99TH BOMB GROUP, 15TH AIR FORCE FEB 22, '44

"145th Squadron mission . . . Six B-17G's led by Capt. B.E. Shaw, C.O. departed for Regensburg, Germany; three a/c returned early and three went over the target. No bombs were dropped due to bad weather over the target. The formation was attacked by approximately ten enemy aircraft. One of our aircraft, #439 piloted by Lt. McGee, was hit and exploded over Augsburg, Germany. #522 piloted by Lt. Perry is missing. One of our aircraft returned but was damaged in the encounter. S/Sgt A.C. Henke credited with one e/a probably destroyed."

PRESS RELEASES: (exerpts)

London, Feb 22, 1944: Forty-one British based 8th Air Force bombers are missing.

London, Feb. 23, 1944: The 15th Air Force bombers from Italy blasted two Messerschmitt factories at Regensburg and bombed freight yards at Petershausen, twenty miles north of Munich. South of Regensburg, flying fortresses engaged in a 55 minute battle with a score of ME-109's, ME-210's and FW-109's Staff Sgt. A.C. Henke, tail gunner, . . . destroyed an ME-210. Today's German communique asserted 119 Allied planes destroyed . . .

Feb 28, 1945 American Bomber Command HDQ, Italy

Major General Nathan Twining led his formation of nearly 1000 planes on a strike at central Germany, demonstrating how far our Air Power has progressed in one year. Over Regensburg in Feb. '44 we suffered the greatest losses ever inflicted on an American Air Force. At that time our Fighters were based so far from central Germany they did not have the range to get at the German Fighters. They loaded each fortress with 10,000 rounds of extra ammunition, and tackled the pride of the Luftwaffe. From the Alps to Regensburg and back, the bombers battled 300 German Fighters. We lost fifty-two bombers in 100 minutes; 390 American Airmen were

lost; 190 bailed out onto German soil. "That was the turning point of the Air War in Europe," said General Twining.

-20 PAGES.

PRICE: In Kansas City . . . 2 Cents  
Elsewhere . . . 3 Cents

## CAN CRACK WALL

Germany Now Admits Atlantic Coast Defenses Are Not Impregnable.

## MORE WORKERS RUSHED IN

Taylor Henry Says Nazis Are Busy Strengthening Coastal Fortifications.

## GOEBBELS IN A TIP-OFF

Claims of Air Superiority Are Dropped by the Newspaper Das Reich.

This dispatch was written by Taylor Henry, former chief of the Vichy bureau of the Associated Press, on the eve of his departure from Biarritz, France, with American repatriates being exchanged for German nationals at Lisbon. He brought it with him by train to Portugal, where it was filed to the United States.

Biarritz, France, Feb. 22 (Delayed). (AP)—The much-touted Atlantic wall designed to protect Europe from an Allied landing is not impregnable and a landing to establish the western front is possible, the Germans themselves admit.

After a year-long propaganda effort to convince the German people that it would be suicide for the Americans and British to attempt landing in force in Europe, the

More Than 1,000 Fighters in Regensburg Escort.

At a Fighter Base in Britain, Feb. 26 (Saturday). (AP)—The greatest United States army air force fighter group ever dispatched from British bases—estimated at more than 1,000 planes—escorted heavy bombers on a round trip of 1,100 miles to Regensburg, Stuttgart and other German industrial targets yesterday to complete the deepest American fighter penetration into enemy territory.

The fighters, three of which are missing, destroyed twenty-seven enemy fighters.

R. A. F. dominion and other Allied fighters also took part in the escort mission.

In five such jobs this week the army fighters have shot down 217 German planes against a loss of thirty-four.

## M'NARY IS DEAD

End Comes to Oregonian, Senate Minority Leader, at Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

## AFTER A LONG ILLNESS

But He Was Believed to Have Been Recovering From Brain Operation.

Washington, Feb. 25.—(AP)—Charles L. McNary of Oregon, the 69-year-old leader of Senate Republicans, died today in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., where he had gone several months ago to rest after an operation to remove a brain tumor.

The death of McNary, who had been reported to be recovering, came as a shock to many of his colleagues

## AN AIR SQUEEZE

For First Time, U. S. Bombers From Italy and Britain Hit Same Target.

## SMASH REGENSBURG PLANTS

Widely-Separated Forces Are Welded Into Single Weapon by Simultaneous Attacks.

## TAKE HEAVY NAZI TOLL

More Than 52 Planes Are Downed by Escorts—31 U. S. Fortresses Lost.

(By the Associated Press.)

American heavy bombers from both Italy and Britain dealt a smashing 2-way blow on the German airplane factory at Regensburg yesterday where the Allies estimate from 200 to 250 Messerschmitt planes are made monthly for Hitler's air force.

Early today Berlin reported that R. A. F. night bombers struck Frankfurt, carrying into the seventh day the mightiest aerial assault of the war.

The Regensburg raid marked the third time this week that British-based planes and Italian-based planes have hit at enemy targets at the same time, but it was the first time they both have hit at the

HEADING FOR THE "FODDER" LAND FROM POLA

V III

After a week of one meal a day, we were feeling deprived and hungry. When our German escorts broke out the food boxes, they had bread and cheese, sausage, and other goodies. The sausage looked different from any with which we were familiar but that didn't stop us from eating our fill and spoiling our appetites for at least the near future. I am not sure which came first, the knowledge that what we had eaten was blood sausage or the reaction of our deprived stomachs to the richness of the cheese-and-sausage diet. At any rate, there were ten American airmen gasping for air with heads hanging out of the coach windows, decorating the roadbed and the sides of the train. From then to our destination in

Venice, we ate sparingly, if at all, and only bread would stay down.

In Venice we changed trains, walking from one station to another across a bridge over a canal. Twenty-five years later, son Dale brought home some pictures he had taken in Venice and there was the canal, the bridge, and the train station just as my memory pictured. Even before he told me where it was taken, I recognized it. I realize there are many canals with bridges over them and many buildings that look like train stations in Venice, but it was a thrill for me to recognize that particular scene. We boarded another coach headed for Verona in Northern Italy, still under the supervision of the Afrika Corps. Verona, at the Southern end of the Brenner Pass, was the location of an Interrogation Center and a focal point for Prisoners of War being sent North. With half of Italy already taken by the Allies and the other half about to fall, Hitler didn't want to lose his prisoners and wanted the remnants of the Afrika Corps home to defend the Fatherland.

At Verona, about March 1, I asked the Germans to dress the untreated wounds of Hy Koffler and Ernie Hettinger. I felt it was time the Germans recognized their responsibility to medically care for the two men. They responded by giving both men tetanus shots. Ernie did fine but Hy started swelling up like a poisoned pup. He turned red and his tongue began to swell. We were able to get a guard's attention and a doctor was summoned who administered an antidote to stop the swelling. It was explained that with the great wartime demand for tetanus serum, horses were used to produce it. Hy was allergic to the horses.

For a week at Verona we were bullied, coerced, threatened, and questioned . . . name, rank, and serial number was all they got from the crew. It took me years to recognize that my talking to the prostitute was the breach of security that provided the interrogator with the last three digits of our plane's serial number, 522. My interrogator knew more about the 99th Bomb Group than I did and told me many accurate things about my own 416th Squadron, indicating that he had inside information. I don't know how he knew we were in the 416th . . . maybe he was a good guesser or was able to read our body language in response to his questions.

About a week later we were put aboard a train headed north, this time through the Brenner Pass. As this was the only year-around, open road between Italy and Germany, it was frequently under attack from American and British planes in an effort to stop the flow of troops and supplies. Again we saw bodies of freedom fighters hanging from telephone poles along the track. We did not come under attack enroute, but on several occasions it was necessary to change trains which we did by walking around areas of damaged track or blown-out bridges. Our mode of transportation changed from time to time as the rolling stock permitted . . . from coach to cattle car . . . whatever was available. The trip through the pass required about three days and, when we arrived at the north end, our route took us through Regensburg . . . what was left of it.

Here was the target that cost us our wings! Although we had been unable to drop our bombs on it, the 15th and 8th Air Force had concentrated on this home of the Messerschmitt airplane factory and the railroad yards for several days after our February

22 adventure. We would like to think the later raids were in retaliation for shooting us down.

Our train traveled over endless rubble on the only set of tracks to be seen. The area was devastated, not a building standing within sight.

We were joined with many other prisoners and herded into old French 40 & 8 boxcars. Forty of us were crowded into one end of the car and six German guards into the other end. We would like to have shared some of their ample space, but they had guns as well as the space, also, they had a heating stove and food.

On the way we made many stops and changed trains occasionally. At one such stop we were herded, a small group at a time, through the station rest room. An "old" woman, perhaps 45 years old, was busy cleaning the rest rooms, none of which were shielded by stalls. She continued her cleaning as we continued our business, neither bothered by the other. At some stops the guards left the car which was then locked. Their leaving generally coincided with air-raid alarms and a couple of times bombing and strafing were heard. Our train was never hit.

The next stop was Frankfurt, Germany the location of Dulag Luft Interrogation Center and distribution point for downed airmen. It may have been the busiest area of Hitler's Reich at that particular time. Several sources have identified the "Big Week" as that which included February 22, 23, 24, and 25. More than 1,000 Allied planes were shot down on those four days, with the result that as many as 10,000 American fliers were killed or captured. They were assembled here before being sent off to one of the numerous prison camps scattered around the Third Reich. Indeed, it was such a busy time at Dulag Luft that we were there only three days before being separated and sent to different camps. The six Sergeants, Armando Ruiz, Hyman Koffler, Dudley Segers, Ernest Hettinger, Don Gregory, and Eddie Goldstein, were sent to Stalag Luft IV at Keifheide, Pomerania, in Northeastern Germany. Lieutenants Perry, Kyrouack, Bigley, and Andrzejewski, were once more crowded into cattle cars with many other downed airmen and shipped off to Stalag Luft I, "Beautiful Barth on the Baltic."

In the car with us were several injured flyers. I remember most clearly Lt. R. D. Vollmer. He was badly burned about the face and had been hospitalized in Germany long enough for some healing to take place. We did what we could to make him comfortable, such as keeping a damp handkerchief over his eyes and mouth while he tried to sleep. Later on a wrapper from a cigarette package, I recorded . . . "The first time I saw Pop Volmer, he was a pathetic sight. He had a badly wrenched knee and was burned so severely about the face that his mother could not have recognized him. A loose bandage was wound around parts of his face but his lips and eyes were left uncovered. They showed raw flesh around his eyes and scars around his lips which were extremely hard for us to look at.

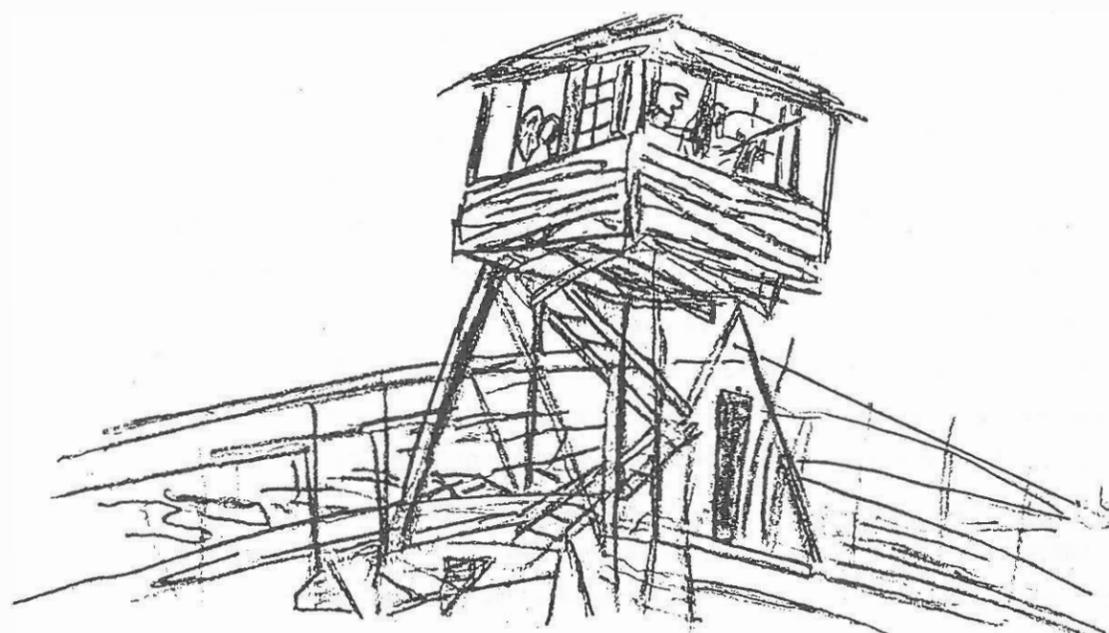
Forty-eight years later as I was preparing to write this account, I came across the cigarette package on which I had recorded my experience with Pop Volmer. Wondering if he was still alive I looked for him in the roster of the American Ex-POW Organization and found his address in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. We enjoyed exchanging letters and pictures; his

face showed no trace of those horrible wounds.

When I arrived at Barth on March 13, the snow was falling and the weather was wet, cold, and nasty. The days were very short. The sun came up about 8:30 and set at about 4:00 p.m. with very little twilight. The red carpet rolled out for us was snowy slush on the station platform and we marched the two miles from the station to the camp in two inches of mud. What a sad-looking military organization we must have been after several days in those boxcars, unbathed, unshaven, dirty, some limping, some being carried, and some in bandages.

As we approached closer we could see those inside were lined-up at the warning wire and could hear them shouting greetings and questions. When we got close enough, I called out to ask if anyone had seen a pilot named McGee from the 99th. Sure enough, McGee himself called back and I was able to ask about his crew. All ten men had survived. He was rather surprised to see me as his last view of us had us flying off into the blue yonder with the formation. He was in North Compound 1 and we were assigned to South Compound, so that was the last we saw of each other until 1985 when we met at Boeing Field in Seattle for the 50th Birthday of the B-17.

The camp was rather imposing looking with double barbed-wire fences, ten-to-twelve feet high, separated by eight feet, filled with tangled barbed wire. At each corner and at irregular intervals between were towers manned by guards armed with rifles and each tower had large spot and flood lights. The buildings were weathered, gray clapboard that reminded me of cattle sheds. Again we were greeted with the now familiar "Fer you der var iss ofer". Somehow I got the impression that the statement was not one of gloating, but rather wistful congratulations by the war-weary Germans who were beginning to see the handwriting on the wall.



Inside camp we discovered an active military organization. There was a Senior Allied Officer in each compound who, in most cases, was a Colonel. He was in command of all Allied POW's as long as his orders and organization did not openly oppose those of our captors. The key word was "openly." We were still at war and soon learned that our part was not over when our wings were clipped. Our job was to occupy as much German manpower and equipment as possible and to do whatever we could to destroy their morale.

The rest of the crew was separated; I saw very little of Bernie and our new navigator and bombardier. I think one reason for my not working at staying close may have been a sense of guilt; i.e., I didn't get my crew home and I didn't give my parachute to Dudley Segars whose chute had been destroyed.

We were assembled at least twice a day for roll call, rain, shine, snow or mud. There were occasions when, as a punitive measure, we were held in ranks for prolonged periods, or called for additional Roll Calls. And then there were times when we intentionally caused a miscount to annoy our captors or engaged their attention from some other activity. I particularly remember Roll Call on Easter Sunday, 1944. After the count was completed we remained in formation for the Easter service. I don't recall any grumbling in the ranks, even though we were standing in mud and it was snowing gently from a heavy, gray sky. About halfway through the service we heard the unmistakable thunder of many aircraft. From that moment on we just stood and cheered as wave after wave of what we knew to be B-17's and B-24's passed overhead. They were under attack from German fighters because we could hear the chatter of machine guns and a few shell casings fell into the compound. After that we were required to be in our dorms with the shutters closed whenever Allied aircraft were in the vicinity.

Even though I had my military dog tag, I was issued another. The second one was stamped "Stalag Luft 1, 3298" on a rather heavy piece of metal that appeared to have been hand stamped, as the letters and numbers were poorly aligned. The numbers indicated there were 3,300 prisoners in camp. There were a few British airmen but the population was predominately American flying officers, a few were fighter pilots and the rest were bomber crews. Considering the facts that there were many Stalags beside Stalag 1 and the stories of crews whose planes went down when no parachutes were seen, it was evident that the American Air Force had sustained substantial losses. Before the war ended fourteen months later, there would be more than 8,000 men in this one camp. Records show that 4,688 B-17s of the 12,600 built were lost in combat in Europe.

Naturally one of the first considerations after being assigned a bunk was food. Not to worry . . . Germany belonged to the Geneva Accord and American Red Cross was sending in food parcels. The plan had its drawbacks. Our fighter pilots were strafing Hitler's rolling stock to the degree that he was having trouble transporting his war machines, much less,

food for the "terrorfliegers" who were shooting them up. Furthermore, the German army was not on a regular diet of steak and potatoes and the civilian population was, also, on a lean diet. It was intended that each POW would receive one food parcel per week. That would have kept us happy and well fed. The reality, at best, was one parcel per week for four men down to one parcel per a sixteen-man room. Of course, there were weeks at a time when the fighter pilots did their job so well that no parcels came through and then we had to get along on German rations.

Somehow I had forgotten to pack my toothbrush for this trip, and my mouth was beginning to feel fuzzy. Someone found twigs from a bush that could be chewed, Boy Scout style, to fill the void. One of the critical shortages was that of toilet paper; it was especially critical when I arrived with a case of diarrhea. My roommates were a bit less than sympathetic when it appeared the new man was using more than his share of the precious tissue.

In the South Compound each room prepared its own food with the cooking chore being passed around the room on the basis of, "If you don't like it, you do the cooking." Preparing meals without any input from a parcel was not easy. Unbelievably heavy, black bread was supplied on a regular basis. It was soggy and sour, made from rye flour and ground straw. The ration though regular was not in large quantity and, for some reason, the demand was not heavy. Potatoes, though not abundant, were supplied along with carrots, cabbage, and rutabagas and rutabagas and rutabagas. Shortly after Dorothy and I were married and living on our meager income, she found a great bargain at the grocery store and prepared a nice dish of the "R" vegetable. She didn't do that again in the next fifty years!

On occasion we were treated to barley soup prepared in the communal kitchen. This was only prepared in the complete absence of parcels when hunger was a real factor. There were a few who found it hard to stomach, even when hungry, but most of us considered the fully cooked little worms who dwell in the barley were just added protein.

There were bad times and there were worse times, or there were good times and better times; it all depended on one's attitude. All in all, the morale was quite good. After all this was only temporary; we knew who was winning the war. Our captors supplied us with daily news broadcasts which were primarily propaganda with fictionalized news being fed to the German population. We knew how far off this news was because we had the straight scoop from BBC, the British Broadcasting Company. The guards knew we had a radio and there were many times we were tapped out for Roll Call and then locked out while a thorough search was conducted of the entire compound. Our radio was never found.

I was never privy to the logistics of our secret radio but understood it was disassembled when not in use and carried on the persons of several men. With information from the BBC, a paper was published almost daily. The one or two copies made for each compound were carried from room to room where interested parties gathered to hear it read, after which it was destroyed.

Shortly after the big invasion began in June of '44, someone painted a large map of Europe on the end of one of the barracks. A rope strung around nails was used to indicate

the battle lines according to the German news we were getting. Frequently their news lagged a week or more behind what we were getting on BBC with the exception of the Battle of the Bulge, at which time they took the offensive. After awhile another rope appeared showing the true battle lines according to BBC. At first the guards would argue and deny the new rope information, but the truth was hard to deny when their own news would confirm it a week or so later.

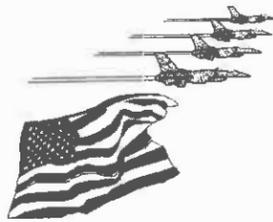
Each barracks was a long building with a door at both ends and a hall running down the middle. On either side of the hall were four rooms occupied by sixteen to twenty men. We posted our own guards, one at each end of the building, to warn the approach of German snoopers. The cry of "Goon Up" indicated the approach of a guard usually one who tried to be friendly with us and checked in to see what was going on. In reality he was looking for evidence of tunnel digging, radio, or other clandestine activity. Some guards spoke English and some pretended not to speak hoping to pick-up information. It became a contest to see if we could make them blow their cover. One jovial old guard was always greeted in our room with a high-pitched chorus of "Vas ist Lose Midt?" (What's wrong with?), to which he would answer, "Nix ist Lose Midt" (Nothing is wrong) and laugh.

A Red Cross parcel would contain canned meat, margarine, a pound of sugar cubes, powdered milk called "klim"(milk spelled backward), cheese, a D-ration bar, crackers, or cigarettes, among other things. Since the Germans would do almost anything for American cigarettes, they became a sort of currency among the men. The D-ration bar was another highly prized item because of its chocolate flavor and nutritional value. It traded for many cigarettes. Every parcel was opened and inspected by the Germans and all cans were opened to prevent stockpiling for escape attempts. We were allowed to keep the empty cans and Yankee ingenuity came into full bloom as stoves, blowers, pans, ovens, models, and many other useful items were crafted from junk.

Being a non-smoker I became a very crafty trader and was able to save all my sugar rations until I had a full pound whereupon **PERRY'S KRIEGY KANDY KITCHEN** was born. With the addition of one sixth of a D-ration bar, klim, margarine, salt and water, the pound of sugar would become eight fudge bars each of which would then be traded for another pound of sugar or a D-ration bar. The demand was overwhelming and the profits were high as long as fuel was available for cooking to the soft ball stage.

One of my most prized possessions today is a plaque which includes replicas of pilots wings of several nations; i. e., U. S., British, French, Polish, Russian, Czech, and American Paratroop, and an original design of clipped wings showing a man descending with a parachute. As I recall, the cost was fifty D-ration bars.

**A few pages in our May letter will complete George's adventure which includes candy making, tunnel digging attempts, being left without German guards as the Russians closed in, walking through the German country side toward the advancing Americans, and making it home. I (Roy Worthington) say again we need more of your wartime experiences. You repeat them at our reunions to a few friends and acquaintances but many members have not heard your stories, so write them down and send them along to Bernie Barr for all to read.**



Holiday Inn

Airport~Jacksonville



Welcomes

99TH BOMB GROUP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May 2-7, 2000

Your Special Group Rate Is:

\$68.00 (Single or double Occupancy) – Room Only

Deadline for Group Reservations is April 18, 2000

To insure availability and obtain the group rate, your reservations must be received by the above date.

Call 1-904-741-4404 or return this application prior to the reservation deadline.

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_

Holiday Inn requires either a one-night deposit or credit card to guarantee your reservations.

Individual cancellations may be made without penalty up to 48 hours prior to arrival.

Guarantee with:  AMEX  VISA  MC  Diners  Discover

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate your room preference or any special needs. Please note that room types are based on availability.

Smoking  Non-Smoking Number of people \_\_\_\_\_

Special Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

1-95 @ Airport Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32229
1-904-741-4404

INFORMATION ABOUT THE Y2K JACKSONVILLE, FL REUNION: PLACES, ACTIVITIES, ETC.

Holiday Inn, Jacksonville Airport (Our Reunion Hotel)

Our hotel is located on the north perimeter of Jacksonville, FL at the intersection of I-95 and Airport Road. This is the first exit north of the intersection of I-95 & I-295. For those arriving by air, the hotel provides, on request, a free shuttle service from and to the airport. There is ample free parking for members arriving by auto.

Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, GA

This base is located approximately 30 miles north of our hotel. At Kings Bay we will be given guided walking tours through a Ohio-class/Trident ballistics missile submarine & the Trident Training Facility which is the technical education center where Trident sailors learn every skill necessary for the safe, reliable operation of Trident submarines. Each walking tour is 1 1/2 hours long and entails the use of numerous stairs and some ladders during the submarine tour. The Ohio-class/Trident ballistics missile submarines are the largest and among the quietest nuclear powered submarines ever built in America. The 18 Tridents (each carrying 24 missiles), carry 50 percent of U.S. strategic warheads. Two weeks prior to our Kings Bay tour a list of all our members desiring the tour must be submitted to the base authorities. On arrival at Kings Bay on the day of the tour all guests must show a picture ID. Unfortunately, because of tight security our group must stay together at all times. This precludes another activity for some while others go aboard the submarine. You must be capable of negotiating one story height of steep stairs to take the submarine tour. On navy ships one faces the steps both going up and down, holding to the hand rails. Photo taking is not allowed during either tour.

Suwannee Canal Recreational Area, Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Folkston, GA

The Recreational Area and Wildlife Refuge are located approximately 35 miles northwest of our hotel. One group will take a one or two hour boat ride on canals into the Swamp. The other will visit the Chesser Island Homestead and a boardwalk for observing wildlife. After lunch the groups will be switched for the afternoon.

Since Kings Bay security limits us to 100 guest a day, and since that is also about a maximum for our Okefenokee tour, both tours are planned on each of two days. Tour Groupings for each day will be assigned after all registration requests are received and total planned attendance for each tour is known. An activity in the Jacksonville area will be planned for consideration for those not desiring or physical able for the three hour walking tour and stairs/ships ladder situation at Kings Bay.

River Boat Cruise

We will embark from a pier in downtown Jacksonville for a three hour cruise on the St. Johns River. We will have a buffet dinner aboard, with music of our vintage provided by a disc jockey.

River Boat Buffet Menu

- Tossed Salad With Assorted Dressings
Sliced Roast Beef in Gravy
Baked Chicken Leg Quarters
Greenbeans
Mashed Potatoes
Rolls & Butter
Peach Cobbler
Coffee & Ice Tea

**BUSINESS LUNCHEON**

Friday will be a free day except for the business luncheon which will be at the hotel. Since the business of the SOCIETY concerns subjects for which it exists, your input is helpful for decisions by your Board. PLEASE make an effort to attend.

Business Luncheon Menu

7 oz. Baked Grouper Filet sprinkled with Oriental seasoned bread crumbs, baked gently 'til tender.

Served with vegetables du jour & Rice pilaf.

6 oz. Charbroiled Petite Filet Mignon.

Served with Demi Glaze, Twice baked potato, Vegetable du jour & Rice pilaf.

Garden Salad  
Rolls & Butter  
Carrot Cake  
Coffee & Ice Tea

**SAINT AUGUSTINE**

St. Auguatine is located approximately 40 miles south of our hotel. The tour as planned will include an hour trolley train tour of the city, an hour tour of the Fountain of Youth , an hour tour of the Lightner Museum and an hour's free time in the Spanish Quarters (old village) with many shops and restaurants. Because of our anticipated number, we will split into four groups as follows:

Time	Trolley Tour	Lightner	Fountain	Free Time
10:00	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
11:00	Group 2	Group 1	Group 4	Group 3
12:00	Group 3	Group 4	Group 1	Group 2
1:00	Group 4	Group 3	Group 2	Group 1

**BANQUET**

The banquet will be served buffet style at our hotel. The guest speaker at our banquet will be Dr. William Oldson, Director, Of The Institute on WW II, and the Human Experience. Dr. Oldson is a member of the History Department at Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL

Banquet Menu

Mixed greens with choice of Toppings and dressings.  
Pasta Salad, Marinated Cucumbers & Onions.  
Tomatoes & Onions in vinaigrette.  
Fresh Fruit Compote.

Baron of Beef carved by the Chef, Marinated Chicken, Seafood Newburg.  
Medly of garden vegetables, Honey glazed carrots, Rice pilaf, Oven roasted potatoes.  
Fresh Rolls & Butter.  
Assorted Cakes & Pies.  
Coffee & Ice Tea.

PLEASE MAKE AN EFFORT TO MAIL YOUR REGISTRATION REQUEST BY THE END OF MARCH TO MINIMIZE LAST MINUTE SNAFUS BY YOUR HOSTS.

THANKS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**REGISTRATION**

**99<sup>TH</sup> Bomb Group Historical Society Annual Reunion  
Jacksonville Airport Holiday Inn  
May 2-6, 2000**

Please refer to the following pages for details for all activities.

TUESDAY, MAY 2nd:

Register in hotel lobby. There is no registration fee this year.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3<sup>rd</sup> & THURSDAY, MAY 4th:

Kings Bay Naval Submarine Base, GA or Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge Suwannee Canal Recreation Area, Folkston, GA (**see page 20 for groupings & days**)

KINGS BAY (picture IDs reqd. for all) 8:00am - 4:30pm \$19.50PP\* x \_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

\*does not include lunch which you may purchase @\$3.00/person/cafeteria-style.

Attach list of names and business titles (if any) of any accompanying you.

OKEFENOKEE 7:30am - 5:00pm \$29.00PP\* x \_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Including a one hour boat tour: \$37.00PP\* x \_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Or, including a two hour boat tour: \$37.00PP\* x \_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

\*does not include lunch which you may purchase at rec. area.

THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 4th

RIVER BOAT CRUISE: 6:15pm - 11:00pm \$34.00PP\* x \_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

\*includes on board buffet dinner (**see meus on pages 19 & 20**).

FRIDAY, MAY 5th:

BUSINESS LUNCHEON: 12:00pm - 3:00pm \$14.00PP x \_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Baked grouper filet: \$23.00PP x \_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

Or, charbroiled.filet mignon

SATURDAY, MAY 6th:

ST. AUGUSTINE 9:00am - 4:00pm \$33.00PP\* x \_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

\*does not include lunch.

SATURDAY EVENING, May 6th:

BANQUET 6:30pm - \$23.00PP\* x \_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

\*buffiet Prices are per person (PP). Total \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: 99<sup>th</sup> BGHS Reunion Fund

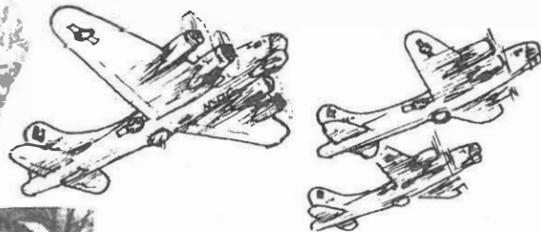
Mail this registration form and check to: 99th BGHS Reunion, c/o Ed Marlow, 1992 Gunstock Drive, Stone Mountain, GA 30087.

*Squadron color coded name badges help aging eyes to better socialize. You and your wife or guest can have a permanent, color coded badge for \$5.75 each by supplying your host, Ed Marlow, the following information and \$5.75 for each badge needed: 1.) Your name(s), including nickname(s); 2.) Your squadron number; 3.) Month & year you arrived at the 99th & month & year you departed; 4.) Wife's or guest's name if a name badge is desired.*



President Bob Bacher sent these photos taken at the Kentucky mini-gathering on a trip to W-P Air Force Base, OH

### 99TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H)



**\*\*\*\*\*PLEASE READ & HEED\*\*\*\*\***

For the next 12 pages you will find, in alphabetical order, the names and addresses of our current paid membership totaling a little less than 400 members, down from approximately 700 to 800 paid members 7 years ago. You will note that **approximately 45%** of the names published have not send our Treasurer dues for the year 2000. It was decided, however, to mail this issue to all 400 members listed herein. However, unless **167 members** who have not paid year 2000 dues send their checks for \$15.00 to Walter Butler before the end of March 2000 **they will not receive further newsletters.** If you are interested in continuing your membership please don't wait 'til the end of March, consider sending Walter dues for three or four years so time doesn't sneak up on you. If the number 2000 or higher does not appear on your address label your dues are delinquent.

Membership directory has been removed for privacy.

Membership directory has been removed for privacy.

These words will bring back memories to many members.

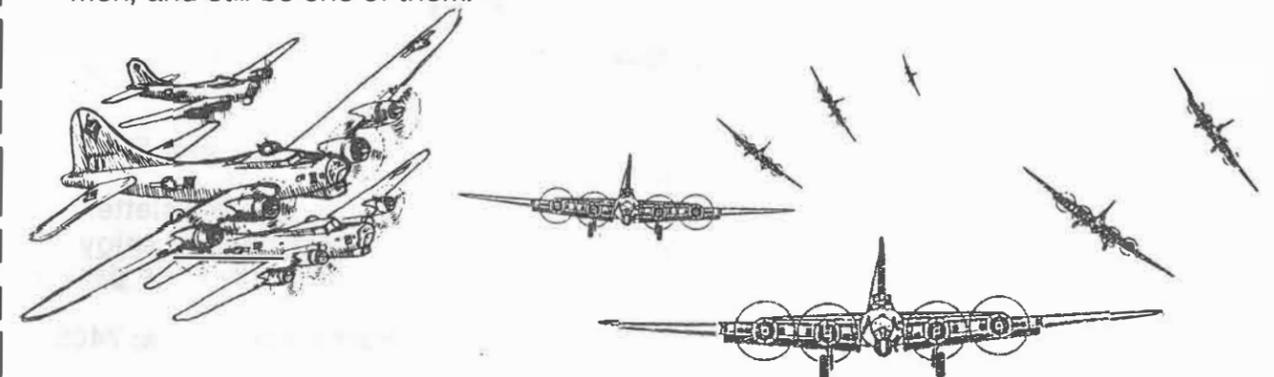
### THE AIRPLANE COMMANDER

Your assignment to the B-17 means that you are no longer just a pilot. You are now an airplane commander, charged with all the duties and responsibilities of a command post. . . . You are now flying a 10-man weapon. It is your airplane and your crew. You are responsible for the safety and efficiency of the crew at all times--not just when you are flying and fighting, but for the full 24 hours of every day while you are in command.

. . . Your crew is made up of specialists. Each man--whether he is the navigator, bombardier, engineer, radio operator, or one of the four gunners--is an expert in his line. But how well he does his job, and how efficiently he plays his part as a member of your combat crew, will depend to a great extent on how well you play your own part as the airplane commander. . . . Get to know each member of your crew as an individual. Know his personal idiosyncrasies, his capabilities, his shortcomings. Take a personal interest in his problems, his ambitions, his need for specific training. . . . See that your men are properly quartered, clothed, and fed. There will be many times, when your airplane and crew are away from the home base, when you may even have to carry your interest to the extent of financing them yourself. Remember always that you are the commanding officer of a miniature army -- a specialized army; and that morale is one of the biggest problems for the commander of any army, large or small.

#### Crew Discipline

Your success as the airplane commander will depend to a large measure on the respect, confidence, and trust which the crew feels for you. It will depend also on how well you maintain crew discipline. . . . Your position commands obedience and respect. This does not mean that you should have to be stiff-necked, overbearing, or aloof. Such characteristics most certainly will defeat your purpose. . . . Be friendly, understanding, but firm. Know your job; and, by the way you perform your duties daily, impress upon the crew that you do know your job. Keep close to your men, and let them realize that their interests; are uppermost in your mind. Make fair decisions, after due consideration of all the facts involved; but make them in such a way as to impress upon your crew that your decisions are to stick. . . . Crew discipline is vitally important, but it need not be as difficult a problem as it sounds. Good discipline in an air crew breeds comradeship and high morale, and the combination is unbeatable. . . . You can be a good CO, and still be a regular guy. You can command respect from your men, and still be one of them. "



**99th Bomb Group Historical Society**  
Walter H. Butler, Treasurer  
8608 Bellehaven Place, N.E.  
Albuquerque, NM 87112

Non-Profit  
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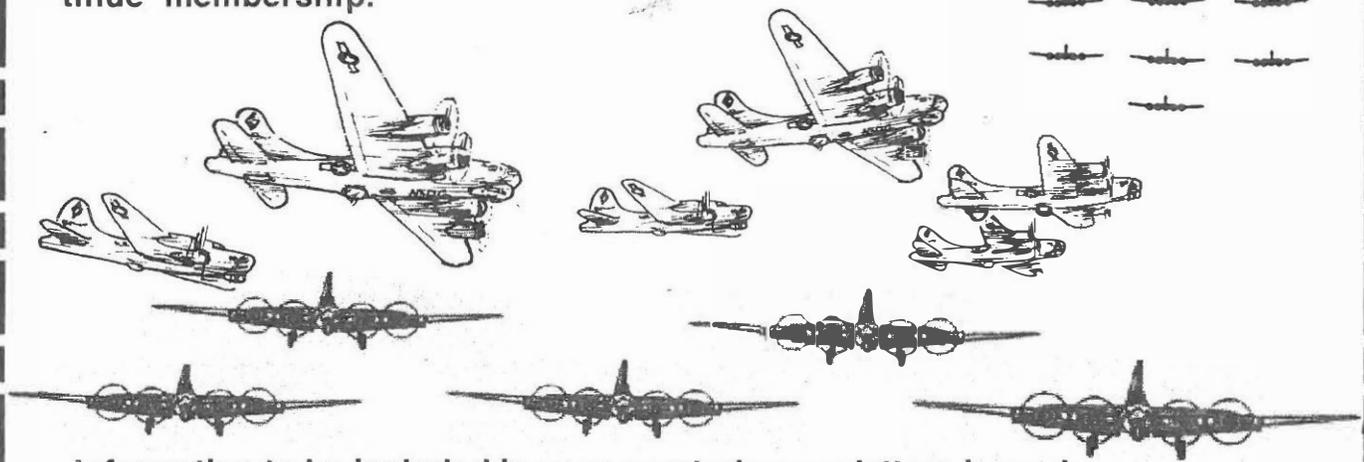
Assoc 1999  
George M. Coen  
559 Old Squaw Pass  
Evergreen, CO 80439



To keep our issues interesting & historical we need more & more personal stories & photographs. **KEEP THEM COMING!** It's nice to have your personal photo in WW II garb (work or dress) for the front page of future issues. Don't worry about size as they can be reduced or enlarged without damage to fit the space. Your originals will be returned. Your name, rank, & ground or crew position are needed, of course.

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In case you missed the 'READ & HEED' notice on page 22 please turn back to page 22 and review it. If you read it please reread. In either case please give the information your attention and action if you desire to continue membership.



Information to be included in your quarterly newsletters issued February, May, August & November must be sent to Bernie Barr or Walter Butler no later than the first of January, April, July or October.

Member information and stories are needed regularly to keep the newsletter interesting. Everyone has a story or information that our members would enjoy reading. Keep it coming! If at all possible send type written information, the darker the better.

Walter's address is in the top left corner above. Bernie Barr's address is: 7408 Vista Del Arroyo, Albuquerque, NM 87109