



99th Bomb Group

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Digitized Newsletter

Version – 8/6/2016

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Preface

As early as 1957, and perhaps earlier, crewmen of the 99th BGH would meet at predesignated locations to Muster, renew friendships, consume contraband rations, and otherwise reassess the miracle of their survival and honor those who served with them and were not as fortunate. A formal reunion was held in 1961 in Chicago. George F. Coen (GFC) was in attendance.

In 1981, GFC wrote the following pre-amble in the formal "Invitation for Membership, 99th BGHS, 9/20/1981";

"The Society was started in the following manner;

The 1961 Reunion in Chicago was so pleasant that I looked forward to the proposed 1963 Cleveland reunion with great pleasure. However this event was never held, so in 1973 I began an attempt to assemble a list of 99ers by means of Christmas Greetings. By 1978 I had only 24 names, and in 1979 I obtained only one additional name. Clearly that was not the way to go. So I next put a notice in the American Legion Magazine for any 99ers who were interested in a reunion to write to me. This did not produce a single answer, perhaps because the Editor put my name in bold print and the outfit name in fine print. So that didn't work either.

However, as a result of my advertisement, Leo Gallegos called me and told me that I was eligible to join the Albuquerque Chapter of the 8th AF Historical Society as an Associate Member. I joined at once, and subsequently learned from the 8AFHS Newsletter how to go about finding the Group. Incidentally, there are about 300 members in the Albuquerque 8AFHS Chapter, thanks primarily to Betty and Leo Gallegos.

So I charged in and set up a reunion for October, 1980 at Amarillo, TX. This enabled me to put notices in the DAV, VFW, and Legion magazines, and then the letters began to come in. Robert Wood, Frank English, Ed Zawila and many others contributed their mailing lists and we began the task of up-dating the addresses.

We expected a modest gathering of locals from the Southwest, but we got Ted Panek from New Jersey, Tom Read from Michigan, Joe Kenney from Wyoming, Mike Yarina from South Dakota, Rex Greathouse from Kansas, as well as Hank Parks, R.N. Daniels, Rich Bradfute and myself from the aforesaid Southwest.

So, in the midst of a bomb scare, we organized. Dues were set at \$5 for 1981. Joe Kenny was elected Secretary, and I was elected Chairman and was authorized to expend a maximum of

\$500 in the search for 99ers. Reunions were planned, committees were appointed, and the Chairman was directed to present by-laws and a constitution for consideration at the Albuquerque Re-union in April.

The April 1981 Reunion in Albuquerque drew about 40 members. The By-laws and constitution were amended and then adopted. The reunion was also a social success. Dues for 1982 were set at \$10.

A reunion was also held in Rapid City, SD in July, 1981, with Mike Yarina and his wife Lettie as hosts. This was a memorable affair.

The persistent search for 99ers has continued, and the mailing list now exceeds 400. Number One on our list is General Upthegrove, whom we located in January. Membership lists are furnished regularly, and a small newsletter is published six times a year.

Meanwhile the organization had begun to function as an aid to historians as well as a social club. The BBC, the Czech archivist, and an Italian engineer are all on our mailing list

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Our primary purpose is to act as a clearinghouse to put 99ers in touch with each other.

Our secondary purpose is to sponsor rallies or reunions for the members.

The 99BGHS is to be a non-profit organization and is actively seeking such designation with the IRS. “

The following is a digitized version of “99th BGHS” Newsletters that has been compiled from the personal collections of various members.

I have personally sponsored this effort for the sole purpose of preserving the “Stories” of true heroes of the Greatest Generation. It has been my Honor to have known a few of them personally.

No copyright is implied or intended!

George M Coen - 8/6/2016