

MEN OF

*Official Journal of the Men and
12th Air Force, United States*

VOL XXXII #1



THE 57TH

*Women of the 57th Bomb Wing,
Army Air Force in World War II*



340th Bomb Group
319th Bomb Group
310th Bomb Group
321st Bomb Group

The 57th Bomb Wing consisted of the 310th, 319th, 321st and 340th Bombardment Groups who fought in the European-African-Middle Eastern (EAME) Campaign from 1942 to 1945. This issue's cover features a 1993 painting by Joe Kline illustrating some of the different models and markings of B-25s in the 57th Bomb Wing. Joe's dad (same name) was a bombardier with the 340th BG in 1944.

57TH BOMB WING ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2020

Title	Name	Phone	Email
President	Richard (Dick) Reed - (340th/486th)	(772) 546-0247	cdreed8@yahoo.com
1st Vice President	Gregory Wichtowski Jr. (310th/381st - Leonard Wichtowski)	(917) 828-6828	greggles327@gmail.com
2nd Vice President	Carol Nyczak (340th/489th - Harry DeBoer)	(630) 986-5026	caroldbn@att.net
Secretary	Patty Koenitzer (310th/380th - James Moffitt)	(978) 369-1041	p_koenitzer@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Denise Emler (321st/445th - Richard Emler)	(661) 303-9274	denise.emler@att.net
Assistant Treasurer	Louise Bourg (340th/489th - Harry DeBoer)	(269) 674-3155	louisej@hughes.net
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Reunion Coordinator	Tim Jackson (340th/486th - Alvin Jackson)		
Membership Chairperson	Linda Buechling (340th/489th - Millard E. Rives)	(540) 856-3699	gapoova@yahoo.com
Wing Chaplain	Steve Buechling (340th/489th - Millard E. Rives)	(540) 856-3699	gapoova@yahoo.com
Wing Historian/Archivist	Dan Setzer (340th/HQ - Hymie Setzer)	(443) 421-5554	dhsetzer@comcast.net
Wing Historian	Barbara Connolly (321st/447th - Edward C Ennis)	(928) 717-1058	princessbarbi_b25@msn.com
Sales Directors	Jim and Penny Fouse (321st/448th - John Montoro)	(408) 927-9984	pfouse@sbcglobal.net
Past Presidents/ 57th Mentors	Mike Fedirko - 340th/489th	Contact Editor for Information	
Honorary President	Brigadier General Robert D. Knapp	12/26/1897 - 4/25/1994	
Honorary Vice President	John Dillin - 57th Headquarters	Deceased 8/27/1998	
Honorary Wing Coordinator	Robert E. Evans - 340th/487th	Deceased 10/12/2010	
Honorary Treasurer	Tom Sullivan - 340th/487th	Deceased 10/01/2012	
Wing Editor Emeritus	Victor Hancock - 321st/445th	Deceased 09/13/2018	
2019/2020 Reunion Committee			
Dianne Ambrosino	Patricia Koenitzer		
Linda and Steve Buechling	Jerry Lester, Reunion Liaison		
Pam Cosby	Julie Martin		
Denise Emler	Tim Jackson, Reunion Coordinator		
Penny and Jim Fouse	Greg Wichtowski Jr.		
Tim Jackson, Reunion Liaison	Son of Al Jackson (340th/489th)		

Special thanks to Corsican historian, Dominique Taddei, for his labor of love that went into the montage featured in this issue!

To avoid using the German sounding name ‘hamburger’ during World War II, Americans used the name ‘Liberty Steak.’

**57th Bomb Wing Association
Minutes of General Membership Meeting
Seattle, Washington Sunday, 15 September 2019**

Meeting called to order at 10:22 AM by Dick Reed, President. Meeting was led by Greg Wichtowski Jr, 1st VP. There were approximately 61 members in attendance, including 4 veterans:

Al King, Frank Pehrson, Bernie Peters, and Dick Reed.

Greg introduced the Executive board, thanked the Reunion Committee for their great work, and thanked everyone for attending.

Old Business:

Discussion on the newsletter There is a goal to have a digital issue within two years.

Members are encouraged to submit stories, even just information, and others can write the story.

Membership Report:

Linda Buechling presented her report. As of August 29, 2019 there are 616 total members who receive the newsletter. Since June 3, 2018-date of the last reunion- we have added 10 new members with 18 renewals, with the \$975.00 total dues and donations transactions having been processed.

Treasurer Report:

The final bank balance ending 2019 was \$ 28,564.80

Here is the final accounting for the Reunion

Registration	\$9,103.00
Donations	\$3,684.00
Expenses	\$(11,133.29)
Total Reunion 2019	\$1,653.71

Sales Report:

Penny Fouse reported \$1100.00 in raffle ticket sales, and thanked everyone for the donations.

New Business:

Greg extended a thank you to Paul and Maria Satterthwaite for doing a terrific job in organizing the 2019 national reunion.

Thank-yous were also extended to Julie Martin and Dianne Ambrosino for their efforts in organizing a fabulous Eastern-mini in June 2019.

*Slate of 2019-2020 Officers

Executive committee members have agreed to remain on board for this year. Greg opened the floor for nominations, and as none were made, Greg Wichtowski Sr motioned to approve, Julie Martin seconded. The general membership unanimously voted to accept the officers.

September 15, 2019

Membership Report by Linda Buechling

57th Bomb Wing Membership Coordinator

57th Bomb Wing Association Membership Totals (as of August 29, 2019)

616 – Total Members who are on active list receiving newsletter. Last year's total was 643.

204 – Life Members (WWII Veterans) Last year's total was 226.

121 – Complimentary Life Members (widows of WWII Veterans) Last year = 132.

178 – Dues paying members (These are family/friends who pay yearly dues.) Last year = 168

109 – Associate or Family Life Members (Most are children of WWII Veterans.) Last year = 112.

4 – Honorary or Guest members (Corsicans and WWII Museum Curator) Last year = 5.

Membership Transactions

From June 3, 2018 (last reunion), to the date of this report, August 29, 2019:

10 – New Members

18 – Member renewals

28 – Total membership transactions

TOTAL DUES AND DONATIONS

From **June 3, 2018** (date of 2018 reunion), through August 29, 2019, I have processed a total of **\$975.00** in membership transactions.

Respectfully submitted,
Linda J. Buechling

There are more than one hundred surviving North American B-25 Mitchells scattered over the world, mainly in the United States. Most of them are on static display in museums, but about 45 are still airworthy.

2019 REUNION MINUTES (CONTINUED)

President	Dick Reed
1st VP	Greg Wichtowski Jr
2nd VP	Carol Nyczak
Secretary	Patricia Moffitt Koenitzer
Treasurer	Denise Emler
Assistant Treasurer	Louise Bourg
Membership	Linda Buechling
Wing Administrator	Vinny White

***2020 Reunion Location Proposals:**

The Executive Committee discussed combining the national and Eastern-mini reunions to keep a high attendance at the national. All were in agreement.

Tim Jackson offered to organize the 2020 reunion in New Orleans. The WWII Museum has a new hotel attached which would be convenient for all members, and since our last reunion in New Orleans, the museum has added an exhibit on the Mediterranean Theatre.

Staying at this hotel would eliminate cost/need for bus transport to venues. Dates are TBD based on hotel and museum availability.

Terri Tokaz presented her choice for Columbia, SC. Attractions include Owens Airfield where a B25 is being restored; Curtiss-Wright Hangar which is now a brewery; a military museum; lake dinner cruises; a botanical garden, and zoo. The Nearest airport is Charlotte, NC.

Forrest Wells will investigate possibilities for a future reunion in Oshkosh, WI.

New Orleans won the majority vote of the members.

Closing:

President Dick Reed adjourned the meeting at 11:00 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Patty

Patricia Moffitt Koenitzer, Secretary

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our 2020 52nd national reunion has been postponed. 2021 reunion details can be found later in this newsletter.
Thank you for your support and understanding!**

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER—DICK REED 340TH/486TH

Twenty-odd years ago, wife Claire and I were bike riding out around the North Fork of Long Island, NY. Pedaling around the village of Mattituck we came upon an official roadside marker located on a not very busy street. We stopped for a look and were amazed to read about a fatal WW2 airplane crash that happened right upon this very spot. The plane was a B-24 Liberator, known to some during the war as the “Flying Coffin”, and names of the entire crew of eleven, all fatalities, were listed thereon; Pilot, Co-pilot, etc., and when I came to Bombardier, I gasped; it was Lou Panella, a friend from Bombardier School! It was shocking! And sad! Leaving the area, I kept thinking about Lou, and the way he used to brag about his hometown of Duluth, Minn.



Chris Gilley Photo

Claire and I now live in Florida, but return to NY for the summer months. Last summer, for some reason, perhaps because it was approaching the 75th Anniversary of the end of the war in Europe, I thought of Lou again and decided to bike out again and take another look at the road marker- it was gone, but perhaps I just could not find it. The local Mattituck Librarian was glad to help, knew nothing of the marker, but came up with a few old newspaper articles of the time. According to the stories, the crash occurred on December 27, 1944, and due to a blinding snowstorm and impossible visibility trying to find the assigned military airfield close by at the Town of Westhampton Beach, they flew too low, could not recover, and smashed into a farm scattering debris over a couple of hundred yards. All eleven bodies were recovered and sent home to their respective families. No service was held, a few local newspaper articles appeared regarding the crash, the case was closed, and that was the end of it with the exception of the road marker put up at a later date. And of course now, the marker gone forever. At the time I contacted the local VFW and American Legion commanders and the local newspaper people and we were in agreement that some sort of memorial should be held for these forgotten souls in conjunction with the war's 75th anniversary. We all thought that it would be the right thing to do and would want these unsung heroes to be somehow remembered. Well, of course now, with COVID-19 upon us, our plans have to be placed on hold.

Conversing with our 57th Historian Dan Setzer. at the time, he remarked at the fantastic number of Air Corps accidental air crashes and deaths that had occurred during the war. Dan sent along to me official Air Corps statistics of these crashes and deaths which are absolutely breathtaking and almost unbelievable. For instance, 15,000 airmen were killed in training. In 1944, just in US stateside alone, there were 29,853 plane accidents; 5,616 planes wrecked beyond repair resulting in 5,387 fatalities.

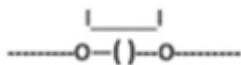
During World War II, more US servicemen died in the Air Corps than the Marine Corps.

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER—DICK REED 340TH/486TH

65,169 US planes were lost during the whole course of the war; 22,583 in combat , 21583 lost due to accidents in the US, 20,632 lost in accidents overseas. There were 52,173 air crew combat deaths. In addition, 25,844 died in accidents overseas and more than half of that lost in accidents in the US. Regarding the trainees and regular crew accidents, their sacrifices were as real as those shot down in combat – they were there to do a job and they did not die in vain! Long should we remember!

In previous President Corner pages, I asked and hoped for some individual and private stories which occurred to you while in Service. To date, I have not received a single one. I've had a few of my own which I have already recounted. Certainly every Vet must have an interesting short story or tale to tell re the war years. It doesn't have to be funny, just something that if you think would be of interest would certainly be of interest to every one of us. Give it a try guys, we are all ears!

Hope to see all in New Orleans & please, COVID-19, give us a break!
DICK REED, 340th, 486th



FROM THE 57TH BOMB WING FACEBOOK GROUP

Paco Mora posted this photo on the 57th Bomb Wing Association's Facebook Group page:

I made this for my father in law, C.J. Navarette, Top Turret Gunner/ Mechanic for the 489th. He was proud of and enjoyed showing this piece to his family and friends. His 1st mission was on the 20th of March 1945 and final 27th mission was April 26 1945. He told me that his main plane was named Daisy Mae from Lil Abner, but the only mount I have found with the 489th is Daisy C (9-M) Could be the years clouding his memory back then. He is in the 489th book under the gunners last page.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

VJ (Vinny) White, son of Joseph P. White (310th, 381st)
vjwhite57@gmail.com



So much has happened since our last publication. I don't even know where to begin. But I'll leave the new world problems aside and focus on our treasured 57th BW veterans. This year has been personally devastating for me and our association. Some of my best friends have past on into, what I believe is, our eternal reward.

I first became aware of my Dad's 310th Bomb Group through an internet post titled, "The History of the 310th Bomb Group." Before that, I had no idea what my Dad did in the war. I only knew that his older brother, my namesake, was killed with his entire B-17 crew on October 9, 1943. I never heard of the 57th Bomb Wing until George Underwood (310th, 381st) came into my life. With George's encouragement, I joined the 57th Bomb Wing Association in 2001. I gained instant friends that included Tom Sullivan, Bob Evans, Jerry Rosenthal, Nick Loveless, and later, Red Martin, Bernie Peters, Paul Gale, Fred Lawrence, Mike Fedirko, Sterling Ditchey, Victor Hancock, their family members, and many others. I was welcomed into the 57th family with open arms.

Jerry Rosenthal sent me the microfiche tapes from some of the 57th's Bomb Group's squadron diaries. I used my local library to scan copies of pages of interest. This led me to contact the Air Force Human Resources Laboratory (AFHRL), requesting digitized copies. I was in the right place at the right time, because I was sent Adobe Acrobat (pdf) files of all the 57th squadron diaries. This led to the formation of the 57thbombwing.com website. I was asked to put together a business plan to submit to the Bomb Wing Association (BWA), which I did. I found it funny that many of the veterans did not know what a CD was. It was a struggle for me to convince the membership into generating a website. Donations were contributed by interested members to easily cover the cost, most of which ended up in the Wing's general fund. But I persevered and eventually received the first year's cost. If anyone out there knows how to run a website, we can use your help. My children do not and I worry about the website continuing when I'm gone.

With the recent passing of several of my friends named above, I was uncertain about what to say in this column. I am so sad about the losses of these fine men. I know that words alone cannot express our grief. We're left with photographs and memories. But these memories can never die. And the photographs are still here to remind us of our cherished family members and friends. What can be more important than family and friends? Especially when our family and friends sacrificed for the freedom and gifts we've been born into in this great country of ours.

This edition of the newsletter is dedicated to all the 57th BWA family members who are no longer with us. We still have pleasant memories to remind us how they brightened our lives, influenced our value systems, and inspired us to keep their memories alive. If you have memories, or stories, of your 57th loved ones, please share them with us by contacting me by phone or email.

I wish you all the best and encourage you to attend our 2021 reunion in NOLA! -VJ White -

BOMBS AND ASH

By Franklin Pehrson (340th, 489th)

As told to Dan Setzer

During the reunion in Seattle I was pleased to have a chance to meet Frank Pehrson for the first time, and to spend time with him in the hospitality suite.

Frank stands ramrod straight and moves with a sure and steady step that belies the fact that he was only a few days short of his 99th birthday. He comes from sturdy Scandinavian stock (which explains the unusual spelling of his name) tempered by the harsh winters of Chinook, Montana. He is hard of hearing but makes do. The wonderful, unique sound of those powerful 1,600HP Wright Cyclone engines which is music to our ears when we hear them from a distance warming up on the runway at air shows, destroyed the hearing of most of the vets who flew in them.

He had a hard childhood. His father was a hard-working man whose financial ups and downs mirrored the hard-times of the Depression. He eventually settled into the construction business and brought his son, Frank, in as a laborer. Frank first worked as an oiler on a construction crane, and eventually as a crane operator.

When the war broke out, Frank was working on a construction project in Washington, DC helping build a new home for the War Department. That building is now known as The Pentagon.

Frank didn't want to miss the Big Show in Europe, but the construction contractor told him that his work was essential to the war effort and wouldn't release him. It took some time and cajoling, but eventually Frank got his release and was able to enlist.

Toward the end of his basic training, his platoon was called out into formation and told to line up in three rows. The Sergeant yelled, "Everybody in the first row take two steps forward! OK, all you guys are in the infantry, the rest of you are in the Air Corps."

Frank's experience in construction and the operation of heavy machinery was known to the army so he was assigned to the Engineering unit and sent overseas.

He joined up with the 340th Bomb Group, 489th Bombardment Squadron when they were stationed in Italy south of Naples.

Frank was there when Mt. Vesuvius blew its top. He and his tent buddies took shelter under the wings of a B-25 bomber. Staying in their tent was not a good idea, since the weight of the ash falling out of the sky was collapsing the tents and the hot lava clinkers risked setting the tents on fire.

As the ash and cinders continued to fall, building up to 3-feet in depth, he and his buddies took shelter under the wings of a bomber. They stacked oil drums one on top of the other under the tail of the aircraft to prevent it from tipping down under the weight of the volcanic ash.

Frank lost all of his belongings in the tent and had to go to the quartermaster to get completely kitted out again.

In April 1944 all of the Squadrons of the 340th Bomb Group moved to the airfield at Alesan, Corsica.

By this time Pehrson realized that if he remained in the Engineering unit, he would never get a chance to rotate out and go home. He would be overseas for the duration. So, he got himself qualified as a gunner and began to fly combat missions.

BOMBS AND ASH (CONTINUED)

On the night of May 12, 1944 the skies to the north of Alesan lit up with flashes of light and then settled into a glow that remained on the horizon. Everyone figured out that one of the airfields to the north of them was getting a shellacking. There was nothing they could do about it, so the boys turned in to get some sleep to be ready for the day to come.

However, in the early morning hours they were awakened by the sounds of detonations and anti-aircraft fire.

Emerging from his tent, Frank could hardly believe his eyes. The whole airfield was bathed in a bright, white light. Not the soft light of the sun filtered through the atmosphere, but the ghostly, brilliant, pure white light of the magnesium flares dropped by the German bombers.

The bombers first made a pass on the anti-aircraft batteries on the ridge guarding the airbase, silencing them. The lights in the sky earlier were from these same German aircraft, which had bombed the airfield at Poretta. That airbase was the home of the British Spitfire fighter squadrons.

Once the Luftwaffe had neutralized the fighters, and silenced the anti-aircraft guns, they were able to take their time making their bombing runs on Alesan. After they had dropped all of their bombs, they continued to come back around making strafing runs. It took them a full hour and a half to exhaust all of their ammunition and ordnance.

After Frank and his buddies got over the initial shock, they took off running toward the ridge and away from the airfield. Before they got too far they fell into a deep hole. It was a newly-dug latrine. They were fortunate in two respects. First, the hole was about five feet deep and provided them with good protection. Secondly, it was so new that it had not been used for its intended purpose yet.

The area occupied by the 489th got the worst of it. According to the HQ War Diary:

“Heaviest hit was the 489th squadron; this unit had both its airfield area and squadron bivouac area saturated with fragmentation bombs. Even some men in slit trenches were killed or injured...”

Frank admits that he, and the other occupants of that latrine ditch, were terrified out of their wits. They were all certain that they were going to die that night.

Once again Frank lost all of his belongings and had to go to the quartermaster again to get kitted-out.

My father, Sgt. Hymie Setzer, was also there that night. For some unaccountable reason I never asked him to describe the air raid in detail, so it was a real treat for me to get a first-hand account of that night from Frank.

Twenty-two men were killed in the raid, and 118 wounded. The seriously wounded were evacuated to the army hospital about five miles away at Cervione.

Frank, along with many other GI's went to the hospital Cervione to donate blood. After giving his blood the nurses offered him a generous shot of whiskey as a restorative.

Frank and his pals got back in the line, and managed to get past the nurses without being recognized, and traded another pint of blood for another stiff shot.

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EMAILS TO THE EDITOR

Editor's note: The original 8th AAF email, which was part of this thread, has been snipped out. Those guys get enough press, and deservedly so.

Jerry Rosenthal <b25gunner@comcast.net> Feb 4, 2013, 3:13 PM

This could properly be called "Sweating out take-off."

Interesting forward from an 8th Air Force Pilot. Down our way, Corsica and Italy, the procedure was about the same, except only Pilots, Co-pilots Bombardiers (not toggliers) went to the briefings. The Pilot collected the daily radio frequencies and call signs and handed them out when they got to the planes.

After breakfast, we returned to our tents to dress for the mission. Once ready, we assembled at Squadron Ops for transportation to the hard-stand where our plane was waiting.

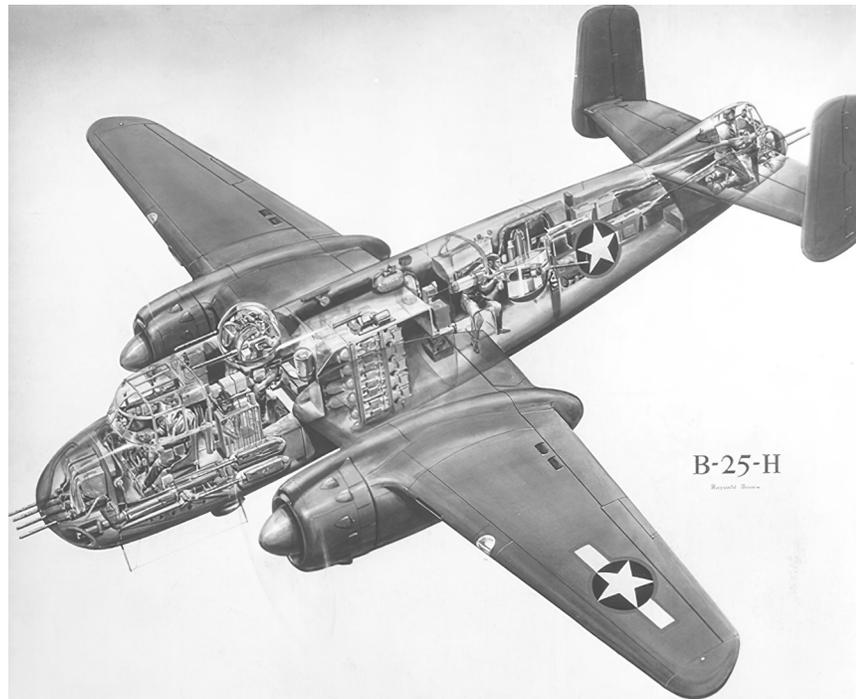
We lost several planes during joining up – pilots hot dogging or not paying close enough attention - so the joining up process was something that we sweated out for sure. The forming up always took place over the sea where we test fired the guns to make sure that they were in working order.

General Spaatz in several letters noted that the 'on time over target' was one of the most important skills that a lead pilot possess. When we dropped, there couldn't be anyone below. Many times the high formation was late and dropped on the middle and low groups. Spaatz noted that.

The "heavies" were notorious in dropping on others while he specifically mentioned the 57th Bomb Wing – our outfit of mediums – was always on time!

I did not strip the source names as maybe some of you would know the providers.

Jerry (340th, 488th)



MORE EMAILS TO THE EDITOR

My name is Tim Pag and I am a grandson of a veteran (Staff Sgt / Gunner) who flew for the 310th Bomb Group and 380th Bomb Squadron, Wesley Marquis. My grandpa was shot down over Italy on September 22nd, 1943 while flying a mission in Italy.

I am writing this as I am trying to help my family not forget about what my grandpa sacrificed for WW2 as well as all of his fellow airmen who flew alongside him. All 3 of Wesley's children, are alive (Bob Marquis, Pam Jaques (my mom), and Penny Halonen). I am taking on a lead role for re-searching all that my grandpa did during the war. We want to finally document and put on paper on what he did so all of the following generations of family can see just what a brave family "war hero" he was and how he helped save this world from such a horrid dictator. We do not want to lose that important part of history to just "passing through the cracks."

I found this amazing website and many pieces of information about my grandpa in the released .pdf documents on this website. Just incredible. Thank you. I found excerpts that he actually shot down 3 ME109's in one mission. I found Sgt Loy's interview / account of how he bailed, was captured and made it back to friendly lines. He was one of the 3 men who bailed out on this mission (LT Hanlon - Pilot) with my grandpa. One man was killed, my grandpa captured, and Lt Loy was liberated and back at the base a week later. Just incredible to read all these years later. The B-25 crash landed safely by Lt Hanlon with "wheels-up" SAFELY. Just incredible.

My grandpa passed away in 1983 from heart and kidney complications. He suffered both physically and mentally after the war. All of his ailments took a major toll on his body over the years since Wesley was captured that horrible day in Italy on September 22, 1943. We have very little formal information about what happened after that from him. He told his children stories of being shot and captured but no details really exist. The AAF POW records state he was taken to Stalag Luft III in Poland. This is where the Great Escape took place even though we know he was not part of this event. He told my Uncle Bob (his son) that we was also in Stalag 17B near Austria as well. See, he had his own amazing escape take place and was re-captured and tortured during his years as a POW. Wesley spoke fluent French which a big part of his escape being successful. Patton finally liberated him and the POW camp in 1945 but we are not sure from where. I am not sure how to proceed to get more information from this point forward. We would welcome any links or sources that might be very useful or suggested. My thinking is that Germany POW camp records might be a next step.

In summary, we would love to join the 57th Bomb Wing group (become members). I would also love to see how I could collect all of the insignia /patches of his exact groups/squadrons or anything else (links) that might have this available. We do have Wesley's war medals and a few other keepsakes (Kriege Book from the POW Camp). Would there be anyone still alive in the group that might remember him (nickname was Frenchie)? I understand a lot of veterans are dying everyday but will there be more reunions (this year)?

Thanks to all that have put so much time into this website. It is truly a treasure to read and experience all of this information. Any information or direction you could provide would be great. In summary, I am just looking to see if I can gain that next level of direction to continue on the research trail.

Thank you all in advance.

Regards, Tim Pagac, 1/25/2018

MORE EMAILS TO THE EDITOR

A FINAL NEWSLETTER ... GEORGE UNDERWOOD

MARCH 24, 1923 - JULY 9, 2019

George had started putting together ideas for his August newsletter, so we are including them in this, his last message to friends and family. He enjoyed planning each letter and started a new one right after he sent one out. Anything written in quotes is taken directly from his notes.

"Yep, again the last week of June the gardener arrived and neatly blew the leaves back under the bushes and hedges, ran the edger mower and blower in a light rain and departed in less than twenty minutes." (p.s. we are now looking for a new gardener)



"Violet has become a bookend or something....now has a new perch in our bookcase and looks just great there. She is a delight and much loved by us all."

On Saturday, June 29, Bev, George, Mike and Bonnie went to the Skagit Airport for a 'fly day.' We were all excited for George to see a B-25 and a B-17, but had no idea that George would be

presented to the crowd and announced as a hero. He was asked to sign the plane, as pictured here. It was an exciting day for all of us and plenty of happy tears were shed.



"... after the CAF accepted the donation of the 319th Combat B-25, they settled her under a batch of shade trees, at the Falcon Field Airport. They started out calling her 'Made in the Shade' They quite literally took her apart and cleaned the pieces up under the shade of the mature citrus trees that had graced the runways at Falcon Field. It would be later that they adopted the official "Maid in the Shade" name and chose the nose art for her! We know that she had 15 combat missions and apparently she then did administrative duty in the MTO. The B-17 in company with the B-25 named Sentimental Journey. A beautifully restored B-17."

George made sure we had plenty of decorations for the fourth of July on both the house and the red truck.



Mike and Jackson drove the truck in the Anacortes parade, then made a detour to the hospital so great grandpa could see it from his window. Friends and family gathered that day to celebrate with him.

This photo was captured of George during his last haircut. To quote him, "it was a doozie." They couldn't have chosen a better cape for him. He loved his country, his family, and his friends. It was his pleasure to

write to each of you every month and share a little bit of his life with you. He will be missed by all who knew him.



Editor's note: George Underwood helped me tremendously with the 57th newsletters I've generated so far. He constantly critiqued my use of "white space," actually lack thereof. I'm new to this gig, but I finally figured it out. I know GU is up there smiling this time around ;-)

WHAT'S NEW AT 57THBOMBWING.COM/ BOOK CORNER

12th Air Force, 57th Bombardment Wing (M) 310th Bombardment Group (M) 321st Bombardment Group (M)

This comprehensive “History of the 310th Bomb Group” and “History of the 321st Bomb Group” were made possible through the extensive and combined work of our “310th and 321st Bomb Group Historical Research Team.” Highlighting the abilities of each member... our Team comprises of;

*Barbara Ennis Connolly (Historian), in honor of dad:
447th BS, T/Sgt Edward C. Ennis 1914-2005*

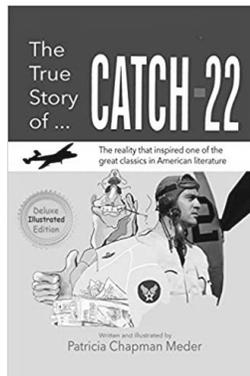
*Patti Johnson, in honor of cousin:
446th BS, T/Sgt J. Raymond Orechia, KIA 1921-1944*

*John T Fitzgerald, in honor of dad:
446th BS, Lt Jack Fitzgerald, Pilot 1922-2008*

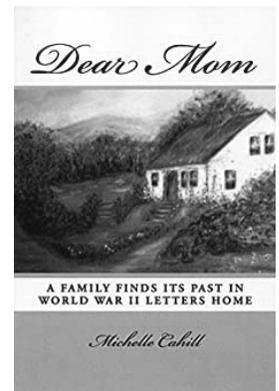
Because of this well-matched partnership of dedicated and diverse members, we were able to combine the History from the War Diary, Mission Reports, MACR's, Roster, special accounts, events (thoroughly documented) and photo albums, etc. This then was recreated into a “Day-Month-Year” format... all aspects verified for accuracy (to the best of our ability). It has been an honor for us to have known many vets, communicating with them through thru speaking, e-Mails, letters, family and etc.

The Vets themselves told of their personal experiences and verified many of the details that we would not have had but for them. Families, friends and other researchers also contributed to the over-all picture. While the MEN all experienced the same war, each experienced it differently. It was a long and arduous labor-of-love and well worth the countless hours of research it took to make it as complete as possible. God bless our brave men.

The True Story of Catch 22: The Reality that Inspired one of the Great Classics in American Literature, by Patricia Chapman Meder
Available on
Amzon.com,



Dear Mom: A Family Finds Its Past in World War II Letters Home, by Michelle Cahill
Available on
Amazon.com



MORE INFO FROM 57THBOMBWING.COM

Esteemed Gentlemen,

I would like to make you aware of an exciting new project that we have been asked to participate in. John Northrop (ret. US Air Force) is working on an advanced degree at U of S. Florida. He read Tom Cleaver's book "Bridgebusters" and was inspired to make the 57th Bomb Wing the subject of his dissertation.

This will not be a dry list of missions and events. His vision is innovative. He assures me that the result will be a unique and groundbreaking method for recording historical information and telling the story of a combat unit.

Here is a paragraph from the email exchanges below:

"My plan was to select a particular unit, and map out its role in the course of the conflict, including such things as sub-units, time in combat, casualty figures, etc. The overriding goal is to create a web based platform that other historians can use to enter information about other units, with the hope that historians can pool their resources and knowledge to create a database for the entire theater (and, indeed, to other historical applications as well, such as immigration, trade, just about anything where there is historical movement). Thus, I would start with a single unit like the 57th in order to create the software and the analytical tools to really dig into the numbers. What I would propose to do is map out the data mission by mission, to include aircraft tail numbers and crewmembers. Thus, each mission would be plotted on a digital base map of the Mediterranean that includes 3 dimensional terrain. The software available now makes it possible to actually generate video fly-through effects, so we would be able to see what things are like from the point of view of a bombardier looking out the nose. Additionally, we could easily create a look-down view similar to what would be seen through a Norden bombsight."

Frankly, I don't think I have fully grasped the totality of the concept yet, but loading Wing data into a true database would at a minimum make information retrieval much easier.

We are going to start with the 321st BG because John Fitzgerald has already organized the relevant data so well with his comprehensive transcriptions of the war diaries. Northrop will use a machine learning program to mine data from the diaries.

He estimates the project will take two years to complete.

I think this is pretty exciting news, and I wanted to make you all aware of the work in progress.

Dan

U.S. Army Air Corps Lieutenant General John MacCready asked Bausch & Lomb to make glasses for his pilots that would block the rays of the sun and reduce their nausea and headaches, and thus the company Ray-Ban was formed.

MORE INFO FROM 57THBOMBWING.COM

Vinnie,

Just so you know...

I finished cleaning up the war diary files for the 310th BG. I deleted the blank pages, rotated the pages that needed it, and ran OCR software against each file to enhance searching for keywords. I also took advantage of handling each file to catalog all of the photos found in the diaries. Some of the captions were hand written and wouldn't respond to OCR.

This should considerably speed up searches for people, places and planes.

--

Dan Setzer

Hymie's War www.dansetzer.us

Mork's Memoirs www.dansetzer.us/Mork

Yiddish Translations www.dansetzer.us/yiddish



HARD LUCK BEGINNINGS IN NORTH AFRICA



When the elements of the 57th Bomb Wing first arrived in North Africa they had a number of things working against them.

Pilots and crews were “green,” they had few hours flight time, and no combat experience. For the officers commanding the troops, it was all new to them also. Procedures for managing a busy, forward airfield close to the enemy lines were being worked out as they went along.

Add to all of that the fact that the German Luftwaffe had not yet yielded air superiority to the Allies. Both their fighters and their bombers were still very real threats.

Our B-25's began by flying under command of the British as a means of getting our men accommodated to warfare as it was being fought in this theater. Our ships also flew with the 12th Bombardment Group (The Earthquakers) who were already on the scene and had some combat experience.

12th Bombardment Group Insignia Our Digital Archives contain an interesting document covering this time. It is a fragment apparently taken from a book or manuscript written by someone in the 12th Bombardment Group.

A few extracts from that document will give you a good idea as to how dangerous that time was as our officers and men learned the art of war:

“On the 31st of March [1943] we watched our formation return minus three planes. Losses like these were beginning to tell. At one time we were unable to put a 9-ship formation in the air. It was soon learned that although 2 ships had been forced down in the sea both the crews were safe. The other plane had landed at one of our forward fighter bases.

Two of these planes belonged to the newly arrived 340th Bomb Group, who had sent up five planes with crews to gain combat experience. The Colonel sent the 340th a wire...”Lost two of your planes. Crews safe. Send us two more. So sorry.””

* * * *

“The 340th Bomb Group had plenty of hard luck after arriving at Sfax [Tunisia]. On a mission to Zaghouan on the 23rd [April 1943], they lost a plane and crew. On the 25th on a mission over Enfidaville two planes ran together shortly after taking off, killing both crews, destroying the two planes and severely damaging two more. They lost one plane the 26th on a raid over Solliman south landing ground and another bellied in at the field. These accidents all happened while they were flying with the 12th Group and as you might imagine we did not get by too easily. Two of our planes collided on the field when they landed from opposite directions. It all happened so fast that it was hard to believe but the consensus of opinion was that three planes were landing from one direction, one coming in at right angles, and they met at the junction of the two landing strips. The tail of the single plane was cut off directly behind the gunner. The plane that hit him was washed out completely. No one got hurt in the

HARD LUCK BEGINNINGS IN NORTH AFRICA (CONTINUED)

accident but it was certainly a miracle that they weren't all killed.

On the 29th three planes landed in formation from a mission on Enfidaville. One of them had a 250-pound bomb hung up on the wing rack. Upon landing the bomb fell off and exploded, blowing the plane up and setting it on fire. Two of the crew were killed and another died later. It was a miracle that the other two members survived. The C.O. then instructed the pilots that in cases where a bomb was hung up and could not be shaken loose, they were perfectly free to land with the crew in the plane or to let the crew bail out and try to land alone, or to all bail out and let the plane crash.

The very next day a pilot brought in a plane with a hung bomb. Although it dropped off it failed to explode.”

* * * *

“The following day was just as bad. It was a real “flub dub” to put it mildly. One plane returned shortly after taking off on one engine. One engine caught fire, burning the wing spar nearly in two. The pilot took the plane out over the sea, dropped the bombs and landed on a single engine. The Commanding Officer of the 340th Bomb Group, Colonel Mills, got shot down over the target. (He was presumably killed by a close burst of A.A.) One of our own aircraft ran out of gas just as he landed and crashed.

One of the 340th planes was unable to drop any bombs or lower landing gear so the crew bailed out, the controls set to head the plane out to sea and the pilot left the plane. The pilot-less plane turned around and came back over the field flying a pretty fair course except for some up and down tactics. While this was going on, another plane belly-landed on the field. The pilot was dead and the co-pilot was flying. This one had just gotten down when another plane came in for a belly landing. To add to the excitement and confusion, red and green flares were shooting out every few seconds. What a day!”

The Crew Chief

**They tell me when they cut the ready wheat
The hares are suddenly homeless and afraid
And aimlessly circle the stubble on scared feet
Finding no place in sunlight or in shade.**

**It's evening and the Mitchells have returned.
The crews are home, have stretched, laughed and gone.
A truck replaces fuel which was burned
The sun completes its journey from last dawn.**

**He walks distraught, circling the landing ground
Waiting the last one home that won't come back,
And like those hares, he wanders round and round,
Lost and desolate on the steel mat track.**

**Anonymous
(Contributed by John Sutay, 486th BS)**

MORE FROM THE 57TH BOMB WING FACEBOOK GROUP



Thomas Johnson

January 30 at 10:55 AM

Anyone recognize the men in this photo. My dad Lt. Eric W. Johnson is pictured standing in the middle. I believe he was in the 486th, 310th stationed in Corsica.



Chris Gilley

Visual Storyteller · July 1 at 5:04 PM

Here's another one from Art "Rick" Richenbach of the 486th. Pretty sure those are his tent mates. Rick is 2nd from the left and that looks like Nick Loveless 3rd from the left.



FINDAGRAVE.COM

Clarence E Smith
(1918-1979) - Find...



Like · Reply · 23w



Faye Smith Sinclair Greg, I have requested your dad be linked to your mom and to his parents. Hopefully that will be done in a few days by the creator of his memorial. I added his picture. If you are not familiar with the Find-A-Grave website, it is a wonderful FREE site. You can become a member and ask that your family memorials be transferred to you, then you can add pics, obits, etc as you wish. It can become addictive. !!

My dad was Clarence A. Smith, Jeff Davis Co. Ga. I have a nephew named Greg Smith. But the most unbelievable thing is.. I had a 1st cousin, Sgt. James Franklin Smith, (1922-1943) who was MIA/KIA in WWII in the North African campaign. He was also in the 57th Bomb Wing, 310th Bombardment group, and the 381 Squadron. For 72 years our family did not know what happen to him.

After much research my sister and I found him. His B-25 bomber was shot down into the Mediterranean Sea. His body was never recovered.

We had an awesome memorial service with full military honors, in his memory, as we placed a military marker beside his parent graves.

We have a book about his life on file at the WWII Museum and the 57th Bomg Wing. The 57th and members, Mr. George Underwood (deceased 2019) and Mr. Fred Nelson were very helpful in our search.

Many thanks to them. 🇺🇸🇺🇸



Write a comment...



HEAVEN WAITED

In this tender and loving memoir, “The House Daddy Built,” a son reconnects with a father who died too soon. The son is now older than his father was when he died at the age of 68.

The primary focus of this memoir is his father's service during WW2. As the son looks back from his current viewpoint in life, he realizes that WW2 was a transformative experience for his father just as it was for all of the young men impacted by this world-shaking historical event.

Joe McFatter served in the 321st Bomb Group, 445th Bombardment Squadron which in turn was part of the 57th Bomb Wing operating in the Mediterranean Theatre of Operations (MTO).

Imagine the magnitude of the life changes that McFatter underwent as he transitioned from being a rancher in a tiny Texas community, to becoming the pilot of one of the most effective war machines of the era, the B-25 Mitchell twin-engine bomber. From small-town rancher to officer and commander of a bomber crew, with full responsibility for fulfilling a combat mission against the enemy while doing everything in his power to bring his crew back safely.

1st Lieutenant Joe McFatter faced that challenge 70 times, flying out of bases in Corsica and Italy.

We often forget that, although going to war was a great challenge, going home to peace was an equal challenge. McFatter had seen aircraft in his formation blasted out of the sky by the German guns. He knew men who did not get to go home to their loving families.

He often flew an aircraft, that carried nose art of a beautiful pin-up girl. The ship was named “Heaven Can Wait.” This ship with that name was considered a lucky ship, and McFatter flew his last ten missions in it. Heaven did wait, and Joe got home safely. However, like many other crewmen who had cheated death 70 times, they thought they may have used up all their good luck. Even after all of his training as a pilot, he never flew in an airplane again.

In fact, McFatter almost never even mentioned the war. The author used the extensive documentation made available by the 57th Bomb Wing Association to piece together his father's war experiences.

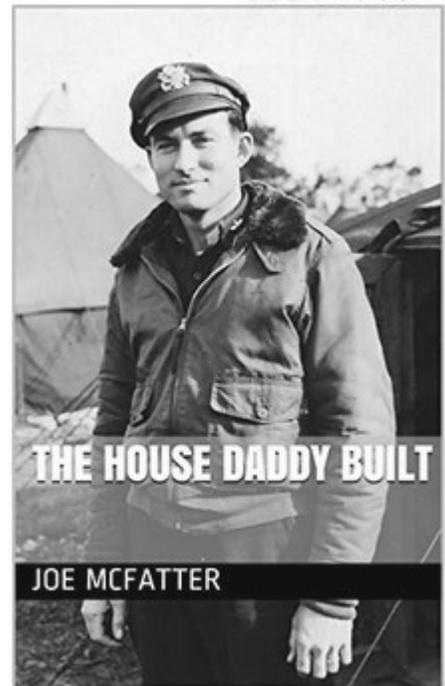
McFatter's son describes how his father returned to civilian life. It was a hard life trying to scratch a living out of a desert ranch. He tried and failed more than once. Gave it up and worked for the military, but went back to ranching when the chance arose.

At the end of a hard day's work on the ranch, he would sit on the porch of the house he built with his own hands and look out over the flocks as they grazed. For him, it was heaven, and it had waited for him.

Dan Setzer

57th Bomb Wing Historian

“The House Daddy Built” by Joe McFatter, Jr (Independently Published 2019) is available on Amazon.com.



THE CRASH OF SEATED LADY

On April 25, 1945 in one of the last missions flown by the 446th Bomb Squadron an aircraft was lost in a spectacular crash.

The ship with the serial number 43-4074 featured nose art painted by T/Sgt. Rocco “Rocky” Milano. The nose art featured a pin-up based upon a Vargas girl. The aircraft was not given a name, but was often referred to as “Seated Lady” due to the sitting pose of the model.



We received an inquiry from an amateur historian in Italy asking for additional details surrounding the crash. This led to a couple of mysteries.

First, we were surprised to see how little information we had on this significant event. We know that the ship was part of a formation on a mission to bomb the Cavarzere Road Bridge. The town of Cavarzere is located about 26 miles southwest of Venice.

The target was hot, and Seated Lady took a direct hit from the flak. The crew consisted of:

Roland B. Jackson	-	Pilot
Unknown	-	Co-Pilot
Robert M. Lattin	-	Bombardier
Joseph N. Dalpos	-	Flight Engineer
Henry J. Nichols, III	-	Radio-Gunner
George W. Darnielle	-	Gunner

Here is what the War Diary of the 446th BS had to say about the incident:

“Capt. Kendall led the formation. Shoran used. First flight only dropped, bombs concentrated W of bridge. Second flight did not bomb due to heavy, intense, accurate flak which forced them off the run. Lt. Jackson’s aircraft received direct hits damaging it severely. Three men bailed out, one of these Sgt. Darnielle, was killed when his chute failed to open. The other three men stayed with the plane and crash-landed it at a friendly base where it exploded after the crewmen had escaped safely with minor injuries.”

Enzo Lanconelli, the Italian historian, contacted us asking if we knew which “friendly base” the aircraft reached for its crash landing.

We made a search of our archives and were not able to find a mention of the incident in any of our records. We could not find a MACR report on the loss of the aircraft.

Continued on page 29







One of the greatest gifts we can give to another generation is our experience, our wisdom.
- Desmond Tutu -



57TH BOMB WING ASSOCIATION 2021 NATIONAL REUNION



THE NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM NEW ORLEANS



FEB 25–MAR 1, 2021



Join us in New Orleans for the 52nd National Reunion
for 57th Bomb Wing Members and their Families/Guests

*Enjoy special events and entertainment at the National WWII Museum
and explore sights around historic New Orleans.*

Dear 57th Bomb Wing Friends and Family,

The Reunion Team had planned and scheduled the 2020 reunion to take place in New Orleans in August 2020. In an effort to provide the safest reunion gathering possible, we have made arrangements with the hotel and the museum to reschedule to February 2021. Please note that there may be changes in activities based on the status of COVID-19. Rest assured that we are monitoring the situation and guidelines closely, and will update you with any further news or cancellations.

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST

We encourage you to join our Email List for all the latest updates.

Please send your info to: Membership Chair Linda Buechling: gapoova@yahoo.com

REUNION SCHEDULE

NOTE: Hospitality Room will be open Thursday 3 PM to 10 PM, and Friday-Sunday, 7 AM to 10 PM. Hotel Restaurant and bar onsite.



THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2021

Arrival—Hotel check-in and dinner with friends
Hospitality Room open afternoon and evening.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2021

Morning Complimentary Continental Breakfast in hospitality room

10 am—5 pm National Museum of WWII

The museum is just a short walk across the street from the hotel. Spend the day touring the museum, experience the 4D movie "Beyond All Boundaries," and explore the many exhibits, aircraft, and vehicles.

Noon Box lunch at the WWII Museum with the 57th group

Evening Dinner with friends at the hotel or area restaurants.



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2021

Morning Complimentary Continental Breakfast in hospitality room

10 am—5 pm National Museum of WWII

Tour the museum on your own—catch all the exhibits you missed on Friday.

Evening Dinner Show at the WWII Museum with the 57th group

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2021

Morning Complimentary Continental Breakfast in hospitality room

57th Bomb Wing General Business Meeting
Reunion Raffle Drawing & Group Photos immediately following meeting

Afternoon Activities on your own—explore—or rest and relax.
Hospitality Room at hotel open 7 AM to 10 PM

Evening Reunion Banquet at Higgins Hotel

MONDAY, MARCH 1, 2021

Morning Complimentary Continental Breakfast in hospitality room
Check out—See you next year! Safe travels!

Tour New Orleans on Your Own Throughout the Weekend
City Sightseeing Hop-On-Hop-Off Bus Tours

Visit: www.citysightseeingneworleans.com
for updated opening status
in February and advance tickets.





HOTEL:

Higgins Hotel

The Official Hotel of the National WWII Museum

1000 Magazine Street · New Orleans, LA

Call for Reservations:

844.442.8746

www.higginshotelnola.com

HOTEL RESERVATION DEADLINE – February 4, 2021

57th Bomb Wing Association Reunion Rate: \$149.00 (plus tax)

(Included in a 4-day Higgins Hotel reservation: One free one-day Museum pass per single occupancy room, OR two free one-day Museum passes per double occupancy room.

Additional museum and film passes can be purchased on site or online.)

Continental breakfast included. You may book 3 days before or 3 days after at this rate.

Mention Group Reservation Name: 57th Bomb Wing Group

Online, go to: [HOTEL BOOKING LINK](#)

(Please mention Group Name when making reservation to receive discounted rate.)

TRAVEL LOGISTICS:

Louis Armstrong New Orleans Airport

About 20 minutes from the hotel.

Airport transportation options:

- Airport Shuttle: ~ \$24.00 1-way per person; \$44.00 RT per person
- Taxi: ~ \$36.00 for up to 2 passengers, \$15.00 each for 3 or more passengers
 - Uber/Lyft: ~ \$35.00



• * IF YOU ARE A WWII VETERAN * * * *



FREE transportation to and from the airport will be provided by the Wing for all WWII vets and companions.

[NOTE: There is also a possibility of the Gary Sinise Foundation helping with WWII Vets' air travel expenses.]

Contact Linda and Steve Buechling for more information or to arrange veteran transportation needs.

540/856-3699 or email: gapoova@yahoo.com

QUESTIONS About Reunion Activities and Accommodations?

CONTACT: Tim Jackson, Reunion Host, tjack153@cox.net 504/231-3062

QUESTIONS About Registration?

CONTACT: Denise Emler, 57th BW Treasurer, denise.emler@att.net, 661/303-9274

JOIN THE EMAIL LIST: Send your info to Membership Chair Linda Buechling: gapoova@yahoo.com



The 57th Bomb Wing Reunion Registration Form

New Orleans, Louisiana February 25th – March 1st, 2021

Wing Registration Deadline January 30, 2021

PLEASE MAIL THIS ENTIRE PAGE WITH YOUR CHECK. (Retain a copy for yourself.) No transportation is required to and from the events

Service Member Name: _____

Group _____ Squadron _____

Your Name: _____ Service Member
 Associate or Family Member

Address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Home Phone/Other Contact Number _____

E-mail: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

The following people will be with this group – if needed, please list additional guests on a separate page.

1) Guest: _____

Address/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

2) Guest: _____

Address/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

3) Guest: _____

Address/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

4) Guest: _____

Address/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

E-mail: _____

Place number of attendees for each item in left column. Multiply the price and add right column for total amount. Forward check payable to The 57th Bomb Wing.

Registration – per person (WWII Vets - exempt) _____ x \$15 = \$ _____

1- National WWII Museum Friday

(FYI - Included in a 4-day Higgins Hotel reservation:
 One free one-day Museum pass per single occupancy room, OR Two free one-day Museum passes per double occupancy room. Additional museum, film, & lunch passes can be purchased on site or online.)

Friday 57th group lunch and "Beyond All Boundaries" film
 Adults _____ x \$27 = \$ _____
 (Children under 5 free) Children 5-12 _____ x \$15 = \$ _____

Friday lunch choice:

_____ Ham Sandwich _____ Turkey Sandwich _____ Roast Beef Sandwich

2- Victory Belles Dinner Show at WWII Museum Saturday 2/27

Bomb Wing Vet _____ x \$42 = \$ _____

Adults _____ x \$68 = \$ _____

3 - Wing Banquet Sunday 2/28 (Choose Below)

_____ Chicken _____ Beef _____ Vegetarian

Adults _____ x \$55 = \$ _____

Children (5-12) _____ x \$20 = \$ _____

(Children under 5 free)

Additional donation: \$ _____

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Mail registration form with check payable to:

The 57th Bomb Wing Assoc
 C/O Denise Emler
 3404 Reedsport
 Bakersfield, Ca 93309

Questions or comments to:

Denise Emler (Dick Emler 445th)
 (661) 303-9274
 e-mail: denise.emler@att.net

OR

Tim Jackson (486th)
 (504) 231-3062
 e-mail: tjack153@cox.net

Note: Based on contract agreements, every effort will be made to honor refunds for cancellations due to extenuating circumstances.

Reminder:

Higgins Hotel registration deadline is February 4th. Please contact the hotel directly at 844-442-8746 and request block reservation for 57th Bomb Wing Group.

Please contact Steve and Linda Buechling, for more information on transportation needs for WWII vets. They can be reached by email at ga@oova@yahoo.com or by phone at 540-856-3699

THE CRASH OF SEATED LADY (CONTINUED)

Continued from page 21

This was mystery enough, but Enzo had located a report from a British source that seemed to describe the incident, however it was dated April 21st, not April 25th as stated in our War Diary.

Nevertheless, the description of the event is so similar to what we know about it, that we have simply concluded that one or the other diarist got the date wrong. And at any event it is very interesting to read a report from an outside source about an event involving the 57th Bomb Wing.

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Nevertheless, the description of the event is so similar to what we know about it, that we have simply concluded that one or the other diarist got the date wrong. And at any event it is very interesting to read a report from an outside source about an event involving the 57th Bomb Wing.

Here is what the British report had to say:

“On the 21st an aircraft accident took place on the landing ground close to the camp, with dire results to tents and messes and narrow escapes from injury of personnel.

Cpl. J. R. Smailes (Storeman 'T') was severely injured by being hit by flying metal and an American from the 79 Fighter Group was killed. A Mitchell Bomber belly landed with a full load of bombs, the aircraft caught fire, the crew got out and ran away, and the bombs exploded. The aircraft vanished completely. Where it landed there was a ten foot deep crater in the P.S.P. Runway. Pieces of metal were hurled far and wide, some at least half a mile away. One engine, the largest and only intact part of the aircraft was hurled two hundred yards, landing on and demolishing a E.P.I.P tent of our Headquarters Flight.

Another large piece of metal destroyed a ridge tent in the Officers Lines. The glass windows and wooden ends of a number of the Nissen Huts were dislodged and broken; bottles and glasses in the Officers Mess Bar were hurled from the shelves. A large number of aircraft were damaged. Needless to mention that the small village adjoining suffered grievously.”

Enzo identified for us the airfield in question. It was an RAF field occupied by the 15th Squadron of the Royal Air Force (RAF), 500th Squadron RAF and the 454th Squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF), among others.

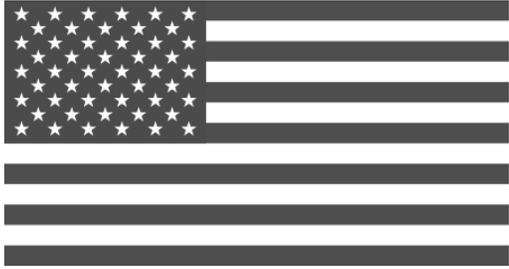
That airfield was located near the town of Cesenatico on the east coast of Italy just north of Rimini.

Enzo Lanconelli and his group are making an attempt to document all of the aircraft lost in the Romagna area of Italy. They have put together a really good website containing the results of their research and finds.

The English version of their site can be found here:

Lost Aircraft in Romagna

<https://www.baaa-acro.com/zone/emilia-romagna>



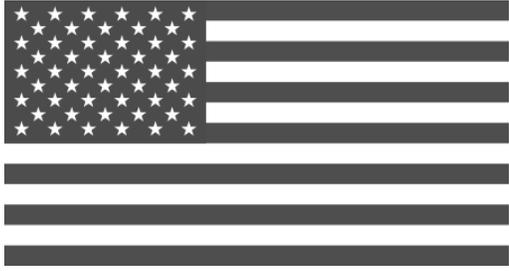
TAPS



This list includes Veterans of the Wing who have died since our last reunion along with the names of those Veterans about whose deaths we have been notified. List is alphabetical.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Group/Squadron</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>
Raymond J. Bathurst	310/381	August 15, 2018
Frank Devereaux	310/380	March 25, 2015
Sterling Ditchey	310/380	October 04, 2019
Fred Hitzemann	310/381	April 01, 2020
Nicholas R. Loveless	340/486	October 19, 2019
Ralph Lower	12/83	November 24, 2018
Leroy Ludwig	310/380	April 29, 2014
Norma Milano (Rocky's wife)	321/446	July 01, 2019
Bernard T. Peters	310/379	March 08, 2020
Gerald Rosenthal	340/488	November 09, 2019
Russell L. Scott	340/489	November 19, 2019
Walter Eugene Souders	321/445	January 14, 2011
Clarence E. Smith	310/380	April 25, 1979
Paul Spencer	340/487	November 26, 2019
William "Bill" Tarter	340/488	March 21, 2010
Frank Clarence Tenente	340/489	July 30, 2017
George Underwood	310/381	July 9, 2019
Fielding West	310/379	August 29, 2007





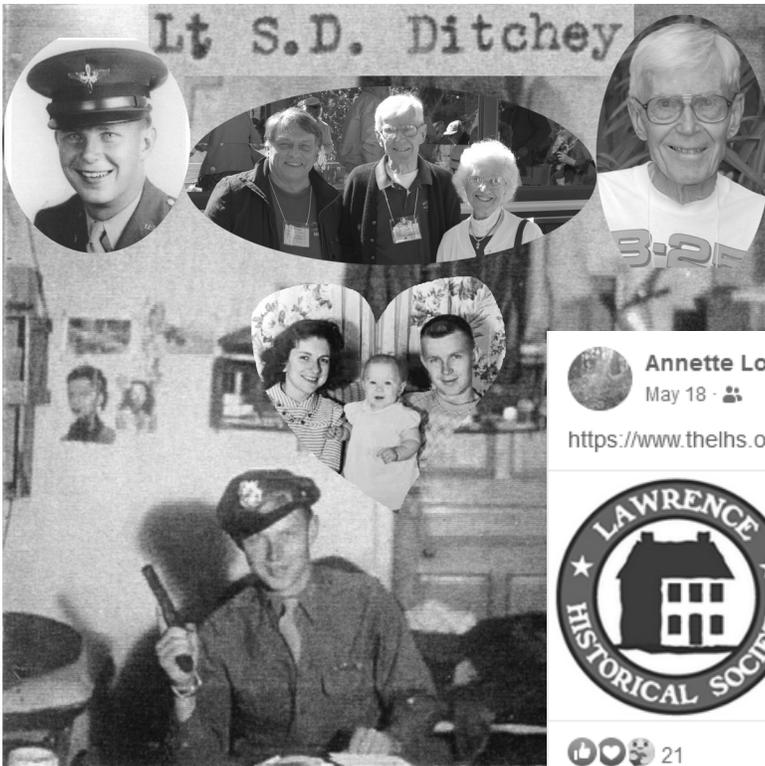
TAPS



Norma & Rocky Milano



**Sterling & GU
Fred & Florence
Hitzemann**



Russell Scott

Annette Loveless
May 18 ·
<https://www.thelhs.org/veteran-profiles...>



THELHS.ORG
Veteran Profiles | thelhs
In October 2019, longtime Lawrence resident and Lawrence Historical Society lifetime member Nicholas Loveless passed away. Nick was a fixture at Society events and was very active in the Lawrence

21
9 Comments 1 Share
Love Comment Share

<https://www.thelhs.org/veteran-profiles>



Paul and Bet Spencer (1922-2019)

We celebrate the lives of Greatest Generation members Paul Newman Spencer (aged 97) and Beatrice Reading Hassan Spencer (aged 96), married for 73 years when they passed away within weeks of each other at the end of 2019.

PAUL: Paul was born on February 26, 1922, in Newcastle, Wyoming, to Glen and Clara Ruth Spencer, the third of seven children. The family moved to Akron, Colorado and, in the early 1930's, to Silverton, Oregon. While at Silverton High School, Paul worked various jobs to help support the family. In his rare free time, he was the radio announcer for the Silverton Red Sox minor league baseball team, which featured the future great Boston Red Sox player Johnny Pesky.

After graduation, as war was brewing in Europe, Paul deferred college and joined the Oregon National Guard. When the U.S. was attacked at Pearl Harbor, he applied to the Army Air Corps and was soon a proud Sergeant Pilot. While in flight school Paul served as a warrant officer and, later, a Second Lieutenant. He flew the B-25 bomber and shipped out for North Africa where he joined the 487th Squadron of the 340th Bomb Group. Another member of the 340th was Joseph Heller, later author of the novel *Catch 22*, ironically portraying incidents that Paul was sure he recalled from the war. From 1943-1945 Paul flew 75 missions over North Africa, Sicily, Italy and Corsica. He was promoted to Captain and, at age 22, became Operations Officer for his squadron.

Home from the war in 1945, Paul met his life-long love Beatrice ("Bet") Hassan and they were soon married. Continuing his service as part of the U.S. Air Force, Paul made many moves from Washington State to Ohio, to Maryland, to Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu, Hawaii, to Norfolk, Virginia, to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and to Alexandria, Virginia (when Paul worked at the Pentagon in Washington D.C.). Along the way, he earned degrees in Mechanical Engineering (B.S.) and International Affairs (M.A.).

In the early 1960s, Paul was honored to serve as the U.S. Air Force Research Associate at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in California, returning afterward to the Pentagon and working closely with the Office of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He later transferred back to Hickam Air Force Base and then to Canberra, Australia as the Armed Force's representative to the Australian Government, under direction from Admiral John McCain, Sr.. In this role, he worked directly with the U.S. Ambassador, Australian leaders, and the Royal Australian Air Force.

One of the great highlights of Paul's Air Force career was when, at age 46 and flying the state-of-the-art F-111 fighter jet, he broke the speed of sound three times, gaining membership in the prestigious Mach Buster's Club.

In the early 1970s, after two years in Australia, Paul and Bet moved to Brussels, Belgium, where Paul worked with an international team of senior officers and officials at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). After 34 years of service, he retired from the Air Force in 1974, a highly decorated full Colonel.

Paul and Bet Spencer (continued)

Paul and Bet then moved to the San Francisco Bay area, where Paul pursued his interests in engineering and metallurgy, earning a Masters of Science Degree in Materials Science from the University of California, Berkeley. For a number of years thereafter, Paul worked at U.C. Berkeley as a Research Scientist and Principal Development Engineer, with Department Chair and Professor Robert Ritchie and others within the Department.

Throughout his life, Paul was kind, considerate and attentive to all he met. He loved his many friends and family.

BET: Beatrice ("Bet") was born on July 22, 1923, in Woodbury, New Jersey, to John Hassan and Beatrice Reading Hassan, the fourth of four children. After high school, she attended Rutgers University until the Great Depression dictated that she work to help the family. She worked out of San Francisco as a United Airlines stewardess.

After WWII, Bet met her future husband, Paul, on one of her flights, where he was a passenger (and immediate admirer!). With unflinching enthusiasm for life and everyone she met, Bet was the perfect life-partner for Paul. She was a real trooper when it came to the many moves they made during Paul's Air Force career. She was tireless, joyful, funny, and a great hostess of parties and events, ranging from informal barbecues with their colleagues, friends and families to formal dinners with dignitaries from around the World. Bet was also a wonderful and supportive mother to her children Scott and Kim, her grandchildren, her great-grandchildren, and a succession of long-haired dachshunds.

While living in Hawaii, she learned to play ukulele and dance the hula. While in Washington, D.C., she took the family to all the museums and historical monuments. In Australia and Belgium, she led travel expeditions and helped to represent American values overseas. In Berkeley, she swam laps for exercise into her mid-80's and discovered the arts and crafts scene, becoming an accomplished quilter. Bet also enjoyed the San Francisco ballet, opera, and theater.

Most of all, she enjoyed their many friends and large extended families. She was always ready to extend a sympathetic ear, a place to stay, a meal, and good cheer.

BET and PAUL: Both loved the ocean and spent as much time as they could throughout their lives visiting Hawaii, as well as in Carmel and Pacific Grove, CA, where they would soak up the sun and the sea.

Bet and Paul were pre-deceased by Paul and Bet's siblings: Robert, Josephine, Francis, Carol, Mike and Jim Spencer, as well as Phillip, John ("Jack"), and Ned Hassan. They are survived by: son Scott Randall Spencer (Mary H. Cook), daughter Kimberly Spencer Ware (Tim E. Ware), grandson William Cook Spencer, grandson Aaron Paul Davenport (Kelly Davenport), great-grandsons Shane Davenport and Carter Davenport, sisters-in-law Esther Hassan and Marjorie Hassan, Joanne Spencer and Pat Spencer, many nieces and nephews, grand- nieces and nephews, and other extended family members.

Paul and Bet were generous and loving parents, grandparents, great-grandparents, in-laws, uncle and aunt, and friends to many. We will miss them sorely.

Our Thanks: To the many family members, friends, and neighbors who visited and assisted Bet and Paul in their later years. A special thanks to Luz Hoover, Jill Waters, Amy Pieri, and Gina D'Adamo for their insights, advice, cooking and loving caretaking of Mom and Dad, and to the Silverado Memory Care and Assisted Living facility in Berkeley, CA. Anyone wishing to honor Paul and Bet's passing is encouraged to donate to the Wounded Warriors organization or another charity in their memory.

To Plant Memorial Trees in memory, please visit our Sympathy Store.

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SUNDAY JOYRIDE IN CORSICA

**by USAAC Crew Chief Frank B. Dean
57th Bomb Wing, 310th Bomb Group, Squadron 380
Permission to Publish via Dominique Taddei**

During WWII, Dominique Taddei lived in the Corsica, France, village of Migliacciaru, the location the American Army chose for its 57th Bomb Wing Mediterranean Theater headquarters. Though only six years old, he remembers when the planes and soldiers were on the island.

In 1998 Dominique began researching the men, missions and planes of the 57th Bomb Wing and compiled his findings in a book, U.S.S. Corsica, a title that compares the island to an aircraft carrier on land. Crew Chief Frank B. Dean, an aircraft mechanic who was stationed at Ghisonaccia Gare airfield, was the first of Dominique's research contacts.

Frank was a poet and writer, and upon returning home to Warner Robins, Georgia, he wrote Sunday Joyride in Corsica from notes he made after an unforgettable wartime experience. In 2002, Dominique traveled to Georgia to see the U.S. Air Force Museum of Aviation and to meet Frank Dean, who volunteered there for twenty years. They remained in contact until Frank died in 2006.

Many members of the 57th Bomb Wing Association are in contact with Dominique, and some have traveled to Corsica to meet him and visit the island where he helped establish a monument to the American airmen who were stationed there.

In one of Frank's letters, he urged Dominique to continue conservation of 57th Bomb Wing history: "Dominique! Don't let our history die with us!"

Though Frank gave his essay to the association for newsletter publication in 1980, Dominique agrees that it is time for another printing for those of us not connected to the association at that time.

Sunday Joyride in Corsica

April 1944 came to Ghisonaccia Gare, Corsica, and nothing had changed as far as we aircraft mechanics were concerned. We were still responsible for the maintenance, repair and guarding of our assigned bombers in the midst of combat operations.

Even when most of the B-25s of our 310th Bomb Group were out on combat missions the rest of the remaining aircraft were not always idle. There were other flight requirements for training, test hops, freight runs, and sometimes just because some of the pilots felt like flying.

Some of these latter flights offered us mechanics, who normally remained on the ground, a chance to see the country from the air. One such opportunity came when Major Clyde Grow arrived with a co-pilot to fly Tissyprissle for a while. I chose to go along. I crawled through the aluminum tunnel to the Plexiglas enclosed bombardier's compartment where the view was virtually unobstructed.

SUNDAY JOYRIDE IN CORSICA (CONTINUED)

Preflight inspection complete, we idle down the dirt taxi strip to the end of the runway. Maj. Grow talks to the tower, makes the required power checks and pushes the throttles forward. The brakes are released and the plane hurtles down the steel-matted runway at ever-increasing speed. The two engines turn three-bladed propellers, set at full pitch.

The nose rises and the main wheels tiptoe prior to liftoff. The plane flashes over the end of the runway, nose high and climbing steeply. The solid clunk of the landing gear locks and the slamming of the nacelle doors lets me know that the gears are “up and locked.”

We level off about two-hundred feet above the ground and make a gentle downward turn. The nose of the aircraft points east, down the asphalt highway. The tips of the telephone poles seem close enough to touch as they file past at almost two-hundred miles an hour. The slate roofs of the houses of Ghisonaccia Ville flash into view then vanish behind us. The silent shadow of our aircraft follows us across the green of the salt marshes.

The water of the Mediterranean Sea stretches before us like a sheet of blue glass. We streak above it, the slipstream of the propellers rippling the calm water as we pass. From my vantage point I gaze through the clear Plexiglas panes. The sunlight dances on the blue surface of the water as we bank slowly to the left. The lower wingtip hangs just above the blue of the water as we turn. The line of foam where the shoreline is married to the sea rushes to meet us and is lost behind.

We laze over the level ground, just above the top of the thick brush. Their branches nod at our passing. There is a freedom and a wonder. We are not hindered by obstacles. Rocks and trees do not impede our flight. The rush of the wind and the muted sound of the engines are the only distraction.

We glide over the hills and sneak into the valleys. We are never more than a hundred feet away. We flash from the valleys into the sunlight and duck back into the shadows. We seem suspended in space as the sides of low mountains rush past our wingtips. The freedom of flight is intoxicating.

We climb into the mountains, through the passes, and past villages clinging to mountain slopes. Towns like Vezzani, Venaco, and Ghisoni quickly display their gray slate roofs then quickly snatch them away.

We skim over the tops of tall pine trees, shaking their topmost boughs. We ride on wingtips down mountainsides and soar upwards toward the top of the peaks where only eagles dare to fly. We ride the winds with carefree abandon. We climb the slopes and slide down the mountainsides. The smooth, easy, lazy turns and gentle rise and fall of the plane as it follows the exact contour of the land show the hand of a master craftsman at his best. Maj. Grow pushes me into vistas of scenic pictures unwinding. The ever-changing, ever-moving kaleidoscopic views rush to meet me and unveil their beauty for a brief glimpse as we hurry past: Blue skies; swaying trees of oak, beech, chestnut and pines; towering majestic mountains; nodding fields of wildflowers; glints of silver streams leaping rocks or plunging off stone ledges; small stone houses

SUNDAY JOYRIDE IN CORSICA (CONTINUED)

hiding beneath leafy boughs and peering at us through glinting window eyes; ribbon-like roads clutching tenaciously to steep, rocky mountainsides; open-mouthed children standing startled in village streets; rolling green hills; and sunlight and shadows that shift and change and blend, and separate and blend again, in a symphony of colors and delicate hues.

We descend the mountain, cross the low hills and move toward the sea over dense thickets of arbutus, heather, juniper, lavender, myrtle and rosemary. I watch as nature paints a panoramic view with brush strokes of sky azure, sand white, Mediterranean blue and marsh green, as we head out to sea.

The tip of the wing is again suspended over the blue waters as we turn the nose toward our base. We slide across the shoreline, the salt marshes, and the low, dense undergrowth. To our left, in the distance, the bulk of Mount Incudine, with Furgigula, Punta della Cappella and Pointe Tintennaja, rises more than two thousand meters above the level of the plain.

We climb gently and the long steel-matted runways, the dirt taxi strips and the olive drab colored bombers standing in their circular dispersal areas come into view. The plane shudders as wing flaps and landing gear are lowered, and the slowing of the plane as the throttles are retarded shakes me back into the present.

The main tires feel for the runway, touch and roll. The nose tire touches seconds later. The aircraft lurches and dips as the brakes are applied. It continues to nod its head until the speed reaches an acceptable level. We wheel off the runway onto the taxi strip and head for the dispersal area. Harry Drake waves us into place. The engine dies in a final burst of power and the propellers coast to a halt.

The honeymoon is over and it is now time to pay the piper. There will be refueling, replenishing the oil tanks, checking, cleaning, inspecting and all the other chores that follow a flight. However, this time I am content.

Whatever the cost, it was worth it.



Frank Dean (310th, 381st)

The B-25 required 8,500 original drawings and 195,000 engineering man-hours to produce the first one, but nearly 10,000 were produced from late 1939, when the contract was awarded to North American Aviation, through 1945.

FLAK FODDER II – JULY 12, 1944

By Burton Blume (son of Lt. Wilbur T. Blume, 9th Combat Camera Unit)

Wilbur T. Blume of Lancaster, Ohio volunteered for service in the Army Air Corps upon graduation from Ohio's Miami University in June 1943. He was sent to flight school in Midland Texas and graduated in July. He returned to Oxford, Ohio to marry his college sweetheart, Mary McQueary. The two of them moved to Greensboro, South Carolina, where Lt. Blume awaited his deployment.

In early March 1944, Lt. Blume received his orders. His flight hopped up the eastern seaboard to Newfoundland, crossed the cold Atlantic to the Azores, then made for Casablanca and Algiers. On April 21, he was deployed to the French island of Corsica which had recently been liberated from Nazi German occupation. He was assigned as a bombardier to the 321st Bomber Group, 448th Bomber Squadron which flew B-25J medium bombers out of Solenzara field.

Corsica was more authentic than anything Lt. Blume had seen in Hollywood movies. His camera was his calling card, on and off the base. He loved exploring the island in his free time shooting photos of the people and places he visited. Intrepid and resourceful, Lt. Blume discovered much about himself in this foreign land. He also found the Dektol, Shortstop and Hypo in the base darkroom.

Lt. Blume shot photos of his friends in the 488th, sometimes posed, other times candid and fun-loving. But the war was serious, and every day flights of B-25s would fly over the Italian peninsula to cut the roads and railroads used by the retreating German armies.

Antiaircraft "flak" and enemy fighters harassed the American bombers. But their raids were accurate and effective, and succeeded in bottling up the enemy as the allied armies battled their way north through Italy.

Lt. Blume Discovers a New Vocation

Aerial combat photography contributed to bombing precision and accuracy. The Army had recently formed combat camera units in all major theaters of the war. Lt. Blume, a camera enthusiast, was transferred to the 9th Combat Camera Unit at Alesani field in June 1944. Now he would have two responsibilities in the Plexiglas nose of the B-25. He would drop bombs and photograph damage on the targets. He would also point cameras at American servicemen, shooting footage for newsreels and training films. A new career was opening up before him.



Wilbur T. Blume & sweetheart Mary McQueary

FLAK FODDER II (CONTINUED)

Throughout July of 1944, B-25s from the 340th Bomber Group flew missions against “hot” targets in the area around Ferrara. They began with a raid by the 488th on fuel dump north of the city on July 3. One ship (8L) was lost over the target and seven others badly shot up. “Heavy, moderate and accurate” flak was reported over the target. It was Lt. Blume’s first combat mission for the 9th CCU and a trial by fire. He shot 300ft of film during the mission and another 200ft of a crash-up on the field at Alesani.

The Mission – July 12, 1944

On July 12th, Lt. Blume and Sgt. Karner from the 9th CCU were assigned to another combat mission, this time with the 487th. The target was a railroad bridge near Ferrara. Everyone knew it was going to be “hot”. The Germans had made defensive preparations, with concentrated anti-aircraft batteries and smoke pots along the Po river to obscure the target.

For its first mission of the day, Flak Fodder II (9N) and its crew from the 489th joined the formation from the 487th. It was designated as a camera ship, flying in the rear of the last box. Instead of personalized nose art, the Flak Fodder II wore the insignia of the 489th — a lion hurling bombs from a cloud.

The Box Formation

“The standard formation was boxes of 6 aircraft, in 2 "V" formations. Grouping of aircraft in this manner provided the most effective defense against enemy fighters by the concentration of firepower. This same box formation was held throughout the bombing run, 5 of the aircraft dropping off the lead ship. The lead aircraft in each box was generally the only aircraft containing a Bomb Sight and release of the bombs in the remaining 5 aircraft was either by visual toggling or radio signal release. The crew of each ship consisted of a Pilot, Co-Pilot, Bombardier, Engineer-Top Turret Gunner, Radio Operator-Waist Gunner and Tail Gunner. The lead ship in each formation carried as an additional crew member, a Navigator. The last ship in the formation generally carried an additional crew member of a Photographer.”

— *History of the 310th, 321st and 340th Medium Bombardment Groups 1944 to 1945*



Wilbur T. Blume

FLAK FODDER II (CONTINUED)



From the War Diaries

“The morning we sent one plane along with a formation of other planes from the group. It carried a full crew and two photographers who photographed the bombing. Just before reaching the target, our plane, which was tailing the formation, was attacked by sixteen enemy fighters. At least one of the fighters was shot down by our waist and turret gunners.”

— *July 1944 489th Bombardment Squadron War Diary*

“There were two targets for twelve planes of the 487th Squadron this morning. Ferrara Road Bridge was the primary and Chivari the alternate. The first box laid down a compact pattern which crossed the center of the primary target scoring several direct hits. 2nd box bombed beyond and to the right of the alternate possibly crossing the east approach of the bridge. Smoke screen was used quite effectively at the primary. Approximately 10 FW-190's were observed in the vicinity of Porto Maggiore which attacked the last box in the flight. Heavy, moderate but inaccurate flak of the barrage type was encountered although it only holed one plane.”

— *July 1944 487th Bombardment Squadron War Diary*

From Lt. Blume's Notes:

“Flew in a special camera ship today, and enjoyed it a lot. The Germans evidently didn't want their bridge blown up for they had smoke pots along the river and beaucoup flak. Today, too, there were fighters. First time for me. FW-190's shot after us as we were a separate ship by ourselves. Our gunners were on the ball though and got one and another probably. After that they let us alone. None got closer than 400 yds though. Altogether there were 16 of them although only 8 attacked us. We didn't get to bomb the primary though some ships did. Instead we went on to the alternate, a bridge at Zoaglia and did a beautiful job on it uninterrupted. Everyone got a big thrill out of it and we're glad to be on old Terra Firma again.”

FLAK FODDER II (CONTINUED)



S/Sgt. Harold Winjum

Exactly what kind of fighters attacked Flak Fodder II is unclear. Corsican historian Dominique Taddei believes they were most likely Bf-109s or a mixed formation including a few FW-190s, as well.



**Sgts. Harry D. Yohe &
Robert J. Hertel**

Every man on Flak Fodder II was thrilled to touch down at base after their brush with death during the bomb run. News about the fighters spread around the camp; One, maybe two enemy planes shot down. Lt. Blume shot portraits of the three gunners who were credited with the kill: Sergeants Winjum, Yohe, and Hertel

9B Ditches At Sea

On the afternoon of July 12th crews from the 489th were mustered to strike at a railroad bridge in the Venice area. Although six men had already flown on the morning mission of Flak Fodder II with the 487th, they re-joined their own squadron for the afternoon run. Will Witty was the pilot on 9E, Joe Marzulla was the bombardier on 9P, Bob Martin and Harry Yohe flew on 9X, and gunners Bob Hertel and H.E. Winjum took their positions on 9B which was piloted by Lt. Mitchell.

“In the afternoon eighteen planes from the squadron flew to the Venice area of Italy to strike at a railroad bridge at Chiavari. Possible hits were made on the bridge. Shortly before reaching the target, Lt. Mitchell's plane developed left engine trouble. He proceeded to the target and the bombardier dropped the bombs. Just after turning off the bomb run, the right engine failed. The left engine continued to miss badly, finally making it necessary for the pilot to ditch the plane at sea. Five members of the crew of seven got out before the plane sank. They climbed into their raft which the plane carried and undoubtedly will be picked up by the Air Sea Rescue Command.”

— *July 1944 489th Bombardment Squadron War Diary*

No other World War II twin-engine bomber saw greater production than the North American B-25 Mitchell.

FLAK FODDER II (CONTINUED)

“On 12 July 18 crews of the Squadron were briefed to bomb the R.R. Bridge at Ferrara, Italy, but bad weather necessitated that they bomb the alternate, the R.R. Bridge at Chiavari, Italy. The target was missed but the near-by marshaling yards were hit. Lt. Mitchell's plane developed engine trouble just before reaching the primary target, and shortly thereafter it was necessary for him to ditch the plane. T/Sgt. H.E. Winjum, radio operator, and S/Sgt. W.E. McRitchie, tail gunner, parachuted from the plane before it was brought down on the water; with the exception of these two men, the crew was rescued, and was returned to the field the same day.”

— *The War History, 12th Air Force, 489th Bombardment Squadron*

Lt. Blume Earns the DFC

“For extraordinary achievement while participating in aerial combat as motion picture photographer of a B-25 type aircraft. On 12 July 1944 Lieutenant Blume flew in an attack upon a railroad bridge at Ferrara, Italy to photograph the results of the formation's bombing. Upon the approach to the target, sixteen FW-190's attacked his airplane. Courageously remaining at his post in the face of repeated enemy attacks and intense anti-aircraft, Lieutenant Blume accurately photographed the bombing results and assisted the gunners in driving off the hostile planes. His selfless devotion to duty and outstanding proficiency in combat reflects great credit upon himself and the Armed Forces of the United States.”



Later photos of Flak Fodder II show its nose decorated with many bombs signifying missions over Italy. There are also two small swastika flags -- symbols of enemy planes shot down on combat missions. Were these trophies of the July 12th encounter over Ferrara?

There is another history of the air war over Italy based on the flight reports of the Axis Air Forces. German and Italian pilots tried to defend occupied Italy and prevent the bombers of the 12th Air Force from inflicting greater damage on strategic targets.

FLAK FODDER II (CONTINUED)

Allied air superiority and scarce fuel supplies made this increasingly a rear guard action. Strikes against targets in the Po River Valley continued through the summer of 1944, and airborne challenges from the Axis dwindled.

“The 340th Bombardment Squadron's B-25's (36 strong), after attempting unsuccessfully to raid a target in Ferrara, were intercepted in the Comacchio (FE) area by ten 11th Gr.C. Fighters with others from JG 77 (and perhaps JG4: 59 were up altogether). Before battle was joined, ten Fissore of a 1 A Sq. was seen to dive in his undamaged airplane into the Adriatic. It was believed his oxygen had failed. The Italians claimed two 'Bostons' shot down, though their HQ communiqué spoke only of three damaged. In fact the Americans lost none but I./JG77 had a BF-109 damaged in combat and FW. Ullrich (W. Nr. 441320) of 6./77 was wounded.”

— *Air War Italy 1944-45* by Nick Beale, Ferdinando D'Amico and Gabriele Valentini. *Airlife Publishing Ltd. 1996.*

Above Avignon, Bologna, or the Brenner Pass, Flak Fodder II continued to fly missions for the 489th bomber squadron. No doubt other airmen experienced their own moments of truth, fear, valor and the thrill of combat inside its cold aluminum fuselage. Many certainly felt the giddy happiness of those who have come through alive when they returned to Corsica and placed their feet on terra firma again.

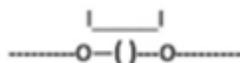
Lt. Blume survived the war and became an academy award winning filmmaker. Lt. Witty, Lt. Marzulla, Sgt. Yohe, and Sgt. Hertel also survived. Sgt. Winjum and Sgt. McRitchie, the tail gunner who bailed out over the Adriatic with him, were never found. Lt. Martin was listed as MIA later in the war.

We know little at all about the German pilot, FW. Ullrich, who was wounded in the attack on Flak Fodder II. Perhaps he saw the armistice and lived to tell his tale.

All were heroes in their own way, in a war long ago that will not soon be forgotten.

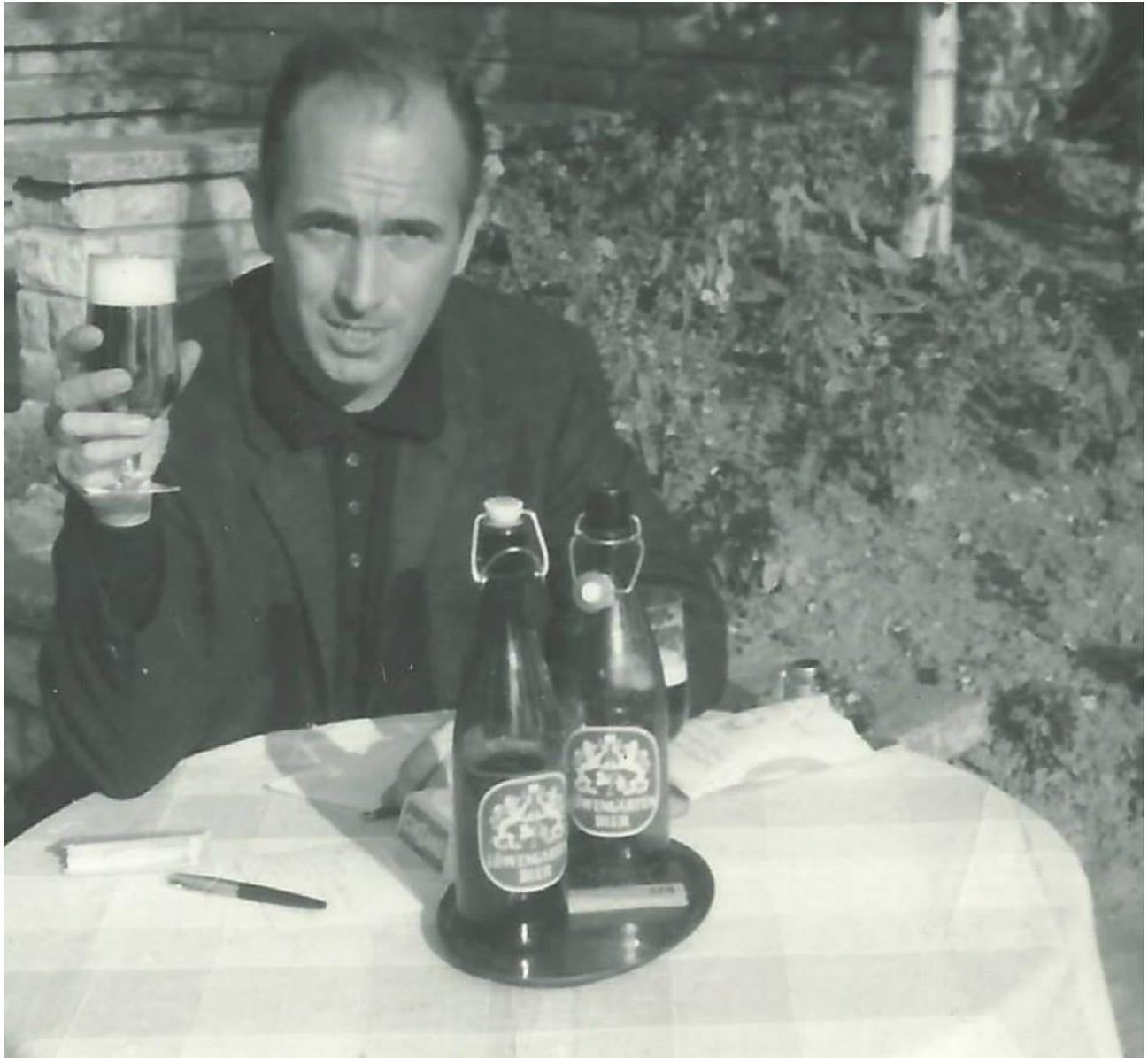


Crew (L to R): Pilot 1st Lt. Will Witty Co-pilot 2nd Lt. Bob Martin Photographer 2nd Lt. Wilbur T. Blume Gunner: S/Sgt. Harold Winjum Photographer Sgt. Valentine Karner Bombardier 2nd Lt. Joe Marzulla Gunner T/Sgt. R. L. Hertel Gunner S/Sgt. H.D. Yohe



FROM NICK LOVELESS AND ALL OF US AT THE 57TH

Cheers! Skål! Na zdrowie! – Vivat! – Sto lat!



Santé! – A votre santé! – Tchin Tchin! Salute! – Cin Cin!

Sláinte! Na zdraví! Prosit! – Prost! – Zum Wohl!

UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN

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Restored B-25 Mitchell Bombers soar above the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force during a Doolittle Raiders anniversary event in 2017. Joy Bissett posted, “I was there that day, so emotional seeing those B-25s flyover, like a WWII newsreel.”