

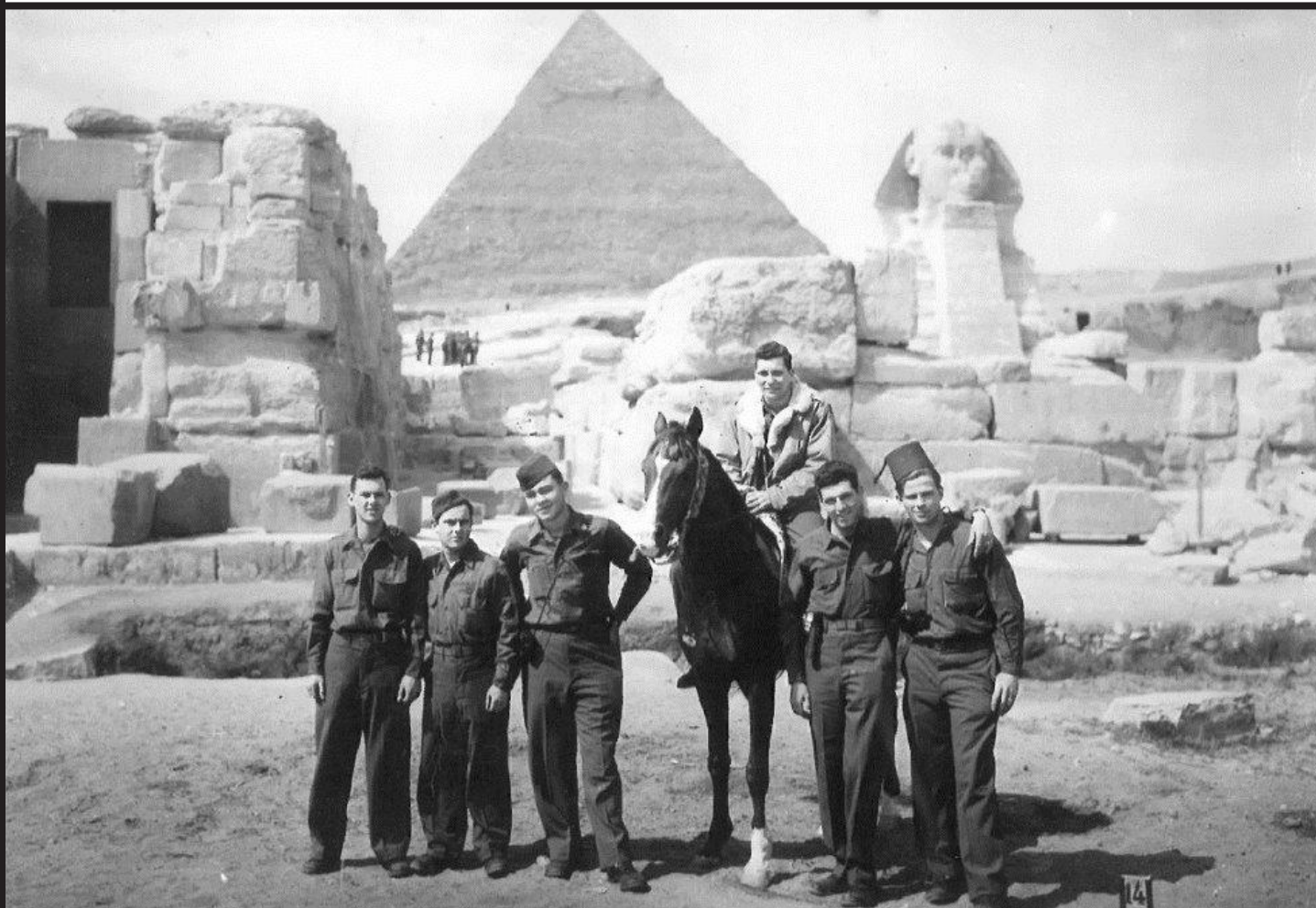


# N 96TH BOMB GROUP NEWSLETTER

413th

AUGUST 2016

ISSUE NO. 67



Waist Gunner James A. Rich Jr., third from the left, and his fellow traveling companions at the Great Pyramids on their return trip to Snetterton via Tehran, Baghdad, Istanbul, Cairo, Naples, Rome, Marseilles and Paris in 1945.

*See the story of his Grand Tour on pages 6 and 7.*

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# President's Corner



## Greetings

It is hard to believe that half of 2016 has already gone by. The 42nd Annual 8th Air Force Historical Society reunion October 19th to 23rd will be here before you know it. If you have not made your reservations yet the deadline is September 15, 2016. Let's make a "Maximum Effort" to be number one in registration again.

Unfortunately, time marches on. It saddens me to report the loss of our own Stan Peterson and Marvin Rector, as well as, Darrel Lowell, a past president of the 8th AFHS.

The 96th Bomb Group wishes to recognize recent Legion of Honor recipients, Lloyd Brooks Mitchell and James A. Rich Jr.. I would encourage others to apply or report their receipt of this recognition to the Newsletter and the 8th AF News. I am available to help qualified veterans receive the Legion of Honor. You can E-mail me at [paljoe2@aol.com](mailto:paljoe2@aol.com) or call 386-672-5359 if I can be of assistance to you.

Our friends in England have been busy too since our last report from the Old Base.

Once again we are indebted to Sean Simington and his New Eccles School staff for not only hosting our Museum but providing us with the best in upkeep and maintenance anyone could ask for. Thanks for the painting and moving in preparation for the Summer Open Days.

Jean Wills one of our English members has really helped put us our history and memorials before the public eye. She planned and produced an informative brochure that is truly a piece of art. Thank You Jean!

Last but not least Geoff Ward and all the other English members thank you for your continued help. We look forward to hearing about the Summer Open Days, the reception of the improvements and the informational brochure.

Janet Strizic, our librarian, asked that I remind you that the books you have signed out can be returned in St, Louis at the reunion in October. If you are not attending they should be mailed back to be available at the reunion for others to select from.

My wife Joan and I have also been busy since February assisting in fund raising and preparing our local Ormond Beach Veterans Museum & Educational Center for its opening.

Our reproduction of The Roll Of Honor arrived from the 8th Air Force Historical Society and was set up in the museum. The large print donated by Doris Davis in her husband Jim's memory is hung above it.

The much awaited opening took place on July 7, 2016, but there is still much work to be done.

The Volusia County schools will have day tours to the museum starting in September. Local area veteran volunteers will be on hand to interpret the exhibits and teach students about the role our veterans from all branches of the Armed Services have played in defending our freedoms.

See you in St, Louis,

*Joe Garber*  
Joe Garber  
President



Jim Davis print displayed over The Roll Of Honor with the logo of the Veterans Museum & Educational Center imposed in the right corner.

# Meanwhile Back at the Old Base



It has been a busy time at the museum during early spring and our members have been putting in some extra work in readiness for the summer open days.

The interior of the museum has been repainted by the school maintenance team, which entailed the removal of all the pictures and displays in preparation for the repaint.

We have been able to obtain some professional information boards from the local model shop, which was situated on the airfield. Unfortunately the shop has had to close and the boards were available to us at no cost. The displays have been reorganized and the interior is now looking very smart.

Not only has the interior been repainted, the exterior frontage has also been done. As had been reported, it was showing signs of age. The murals have been left untouched and the surrounding area has had a new coat of white paint, which has made a great improvement. Again we must thank Sean for his effort in getting the work done.

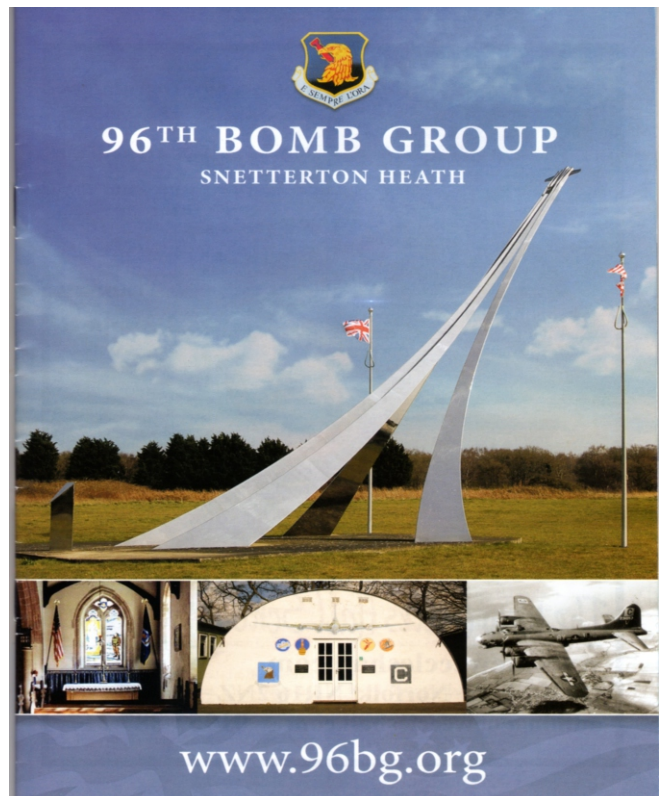
Jean Wills, who is one of our new members, has had a set of brochures printed telling the history of the group and its museum and memorials. Jean has made an excellent job producing these and the cost has been covered by advertising by local business in the area. We have had 5,000 printed and we have been distributing these to local 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force Bomb Group Museums, Tourist Information Offices, local Libraries and other commercial outlets. We have also sent copies to the American Air Museum at Duxford and the Second Air Division Library in Norwich. So now we are getting the information on the 96<sup>th</sup> out to a much wider coverage, thanks Jean for all her hard work.

We have mailed Dale a package of the brochures, which he has informed us he will bring along to the reunion in St. Louis. So those who are attending will be able to pick up a copy and perhaps an extra copy for friends and relatives in the USA.

Jean's son Steven and grandson Lewis have also joined our group and it is great to get some younger members, which we hope will carry on the dedication toward the 96<sup>th</sup> in future.

I have to report a sad occasion that happened recently. I was contacted by a tour group who were bringing a party of Americans over on a World War Two tour. As they would be visiting Bomb Group museums in East Anglia, they asked if they could visit our museum primarily as a veteran on tour was ex 96<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group and, whose wish it was to make a return visit to his old base again since he was last there in 1945. Melvin Rector was a 339<sup>th</sup> Squadron Radio Operator who was assigned to the 96<sup>th</sup> in

March 1945. Three days before the tour was due to arrive at Snetterton, they were visiting the Battle of Britain Bunker at Uxbridge near London. Melvin was climbing the stairs on the way out when he suddenly collapsed with a massive heart attack and died. We were so saddened by the news and even more that he didn't get the chance to return to his old base. A funeral was arranged in London for Mel which was attended by members of both British and American armed Forces. Part of the funeral ceremony was broadcast on local TV news. The party did visit the museum and they presented us with a rose bush to be planted in his memory. The name of the rose is "In Loving Memory" and it has now been planted at the foot of the museum flag pole.



Brochure cover designed and produced by Jean Wills

From all the British members of the 96<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association, we send our sincere condolences to Mel's family for their sad loss.

The New Eccles Hall School held an open day on 22<sup>nd</sup> May to raise funds for pupils to visit Peru to help out at a needy school out there. We opened the museum and there were many visitors who came in and we received many complimentary remarks on how they were impressed by what we have achieved.

We send you all our good wishes for a happy reunion in St. Louis.

To the 96<sup>th</sup> !

*Geoff*  
Geoff Ward



## Melvin Rector

By Travis M. Andrews May 26

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix>

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Melvin Rector was in his 20s when he helped defend Britain 70 years ago during World War II.

This month, at age 94, Rector decided to leave his home in Barefoot Bay, Florida, to visit the region that he hadn't visited in seven decades.

Through a program conducted by the National World War II Museum in New Orleans that helps people visit war sites, Rector signed up to visit the Royal Air Force Station 138 Snetterton Heath, in Norfolk, England.

It was there that he served with the 96th Bomb Group in 1945 as a radio operator and gunner on B-17 Flying Fortress bomber, flying eight combat missions over Germany during the spring of the war's final year, The Washington Post reported. During many of the missions, his plane took hard hits from dozens of bullets.

Rector was excited to visit the site once again.

"He planned it for like, the last six months," Darlene O'Donnell, Rector's stepdaughter, told Florida Today "He couldn't wait to go."

On May 6, while on the Europe-bound plane flight, the plane's pilot invited Rector to the cockpit, where the two took a photo together.

"The flight attendant stopped us and said, 'Mr. Rector, the captain would like to meet you,'" Susan Jowers told Florida Today.

Jowers, a woman who The Washington Post reported had become "almost a daughter" to Rector, had served as his guardian during a 2011 Honor Flight trip to Washington, D.C.. She accompanied him on the trip to England.

After touching down, the first site the group visited was RAF Uxbridge, a former Royal Air Force station in the London borough of Hillingdon.

Rector toured Battle of Britain Bunker, an underground command center where fighter airplane operations were directed during D-Day.

Right after the tour, he told Jowers he felt dizzy.

"He walked out of that bunker like his tour was done," Jowers said.

Then Rector died peacefully.

"He couldn't have asked for a better way to go," Rector's daughter, Sandy Vavruich, told Florida Today, "It was quick and painless. He had just gotten to see two planes, and he passed away between them."

Rector never got to visit RAF Snetterton Heath.

Before repatriating his remains to the United States, a small service was planned for Rector in Britain -- but the service was anything but small.

"They just wanted something very simple. And when I found a little bit of background out about Melvin, there was no way we were going to just give him a very simple service," Neil Sherry, the British funeral director in charge of Rector's service, told ITV London News. "I wanted it to be as special as possible."

The U.S. Embassy donated a flag to drape over Rector's coffin, and servicemen and women and British historians attended the service to pay their respects to Rector.

"Representation from the Royal Air Force and the British Army I saw here was phenomenal," U.S. Army Maj. Leif Purcell told ITV London News. "I was expecting just to see myself and maybe two or three other U.S. service members and a priest, and that was it. So it was very delightful to see."

"I do know of his sacrifice and his family's sacrifice, so you do him and his family a great honor by being here today," one U.S. serviceman said at the May 18 funeral.

"He certainly got a beautiful send-off," Jowers told Florida Today. "People everywhere, from Cambridge to London, heard his story. He completed his final mission."

Rector is survived by six children. His family will pay their respects and celebrate his life June 9 at First Baptist Church in Barefoot Bay.



Crew C-J20 339th March 1945 - Herbert W. Jacobsen (P), Fred L. Schapler (CP), Nicholas Lopushansky (N), John A. Wagner (B), Melvin W. Rector (R), (Back row 3rd from Left), Albert T. Nock, Earl R. Gilbert, Frank Mendez and Bobby F. Paris. *As listed in Snetterton Falcons*



# 96th Bomb Group Recipients French Legion of Honor

Marbury L. Councill Jr.	337th
Joseph Garber	338th
Joseph O. Ingram Jr.	337th
Lloyd Mitchell	413th
Stanley A. Peterson	338th
James A. Rich Jr.	338th
William M. "Bill" Thorns	338th
Frank A. Wiswall	413th
Rudolph Villalobos	413th

Listed above are those members of the 96th Bomb Group known to have received the French Legion of Honor. If you have received this award and are not listed please let the Newsletter Editor know so you may be included in the future.

If you believe you may be eligible for this award you can find more complete information on the 8th Air Force Historical Society web page link at <https://8thafhs.org/reunion/french.htm>. You will be able to download the actual application forms from this link and begin gathering the information you will need to apply. Should you need help with where to find the information that you will need Joe Garber our President and award recipient would be glad to assist you. He can be e-mailed at [paljoe2@aol.com](mailto:paljoe2@aol.com) or phoned at 386-672-5359.

Read the stories of our two most recent recipients on the following pages.

## How to request being awarded the French Legion of Honor

The Legion of Honor is France's most distinguished decoration and it can be bestowed to recognize the special contribution and act of bravery while fighting for the liberation of our country during WWII. The decision to honor World War II combatants applies only to living veterans who served on French territory and in French territorial waters and airspace from 1944-1945.

The medal will not be awarded posthumously.

In order to study your request you must provide the following documents:

1. Proposal Memory Form - Attach the form completed in block letters and print legibly (with a detailed personal narrative related to your campaigns in France in which you participated, indicating the dates and locations where you fought, the divisions or units you belonged to and your functions).

2. Honorable Discharge Papers — Attach a copy (do not send originals) of both sides of yours showing proof of service in France between June 6, 1944 and May 8, 1945.

3. A copy of any of the following decorations you or your unit may have been awarded is also required: Bronze Star, Silver Star, Purple Heart, Congressional medal, French Croix de Guerre/French Fourragere.

4. All information (newspaper articles, books, etc describing your actions in France during WWII.

5. Mail to one of the French Consulates on the list below. Please note that upon receipt of these documents your file will be submitted to our Embassy in Washington DC. and then to the Grand Chancellery of the Legion of Honor in Paris, France, for a final decision after a close study of the veteran's record by a committee. The review of application for the Legion of Honor may take over a year. Please don't call: applicants will be contacted directly if any questions or problems arise.

If your request is accepted you will have to go to one of the French Consulates to receive the medal.

### FRENCH CONSULATES IN THE U.S.

Consulat Général de France  
4101 Reservoir Road  
Washington DC 20007

Consulat Général de France  
934 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10021

Consulat Général de France  
Park Square Building, Suite 750  
31, Saint James Avenue  
Boston MA 02116

Consulat Général de France  
The Lenox Building  
3399 Peachtree Rd NE, Ste 500  
Atlanta, GA 30326

Consulat Général de France  
Espirito Santo Plaza, Suite 1050,  
1395 Brickell Avenue  
Miami FL 33131

Consulat Général de France  
205 North Michigan Avenue, Suite  
3700  
Chicago, IL, 60601

Consulat Général de France  
777 Post Oak Boulevard, Suite 600  
Houston, TX 77056

Consulat Général de France  
1340 Poydras Street- Suite 1710  
New Orleans LA 70112

Consulat Général de France  
10390 Santa Monica Blvd. Suite 410  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Consulat Général de France  
88 Keamy St. Suite 600  
San Francisco, CA 94108

# James A. Rich Jr. World War II veteran bestowed France's highest distinction

By Susan Elzey *Special to the Register & Bee*

May 27, 2016

At the age of 90, James A. Rich Jr. remembers clearly his days as a young man in Europe during the World War II.

The French government remembers too. It recently awarded Rich the French Legion of Honor for his role in liberating France in the war.

The distinction was first awarded by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802.

Rich received the award and medal in a ceremony along with 15 other World War II veterans at the French embassy in Washington, D.C., on April 15. French Consul General Michel Charbonnier presented the award and praised the men for “their demonstrated devotion to freedom, brotherhood and democracy.”

Rich speaks plainly about his role in the fight: “We freed the French from the Vichy government because they were siding with the Germans and we had to get rid of them.”

He volunteered for the Army while still in high school and after being promised he would be allowed to finish school. He joined the same month he turned 18.

Although he makes it sound easy in the retelling, he has quite a harrowing tale to relate.

## Crash landing and rescue

Stationed in England, Rich was a waist gunner, manning the mid-section of a B-17 bomber, known as a “Flying Fortress,” with the 96th Bomb Group.

He started out bombing southern France, but in February 1945, was near Berlin when his plane was shot down.

“My plane was hit over Cottbus, which was the marshalling yard where the trains went into Berlin. We crash landed and all nine men survived,” he said. “The Russians captured us. They had never seen an American.”

Before crashing, however, the crew had thrown out all the extra weight in the plane after getting hit to try and get over the mountains. They had even dropped the ball turret, which was a spherical turret under the belly of the plane that housed two machine guns.

“The ball turret weighed 1,700 pounds. We sheared the bolts off as the pilot screamed to get rid of something else,” Rich recalled. “I’ve often wondered where it landed.”

Out of gas and with only one engine left, the pilot saw a little pasture.

“As he touched down, the last engine went out. He jumped the road and we went into a farmer’s field. We headed for the trees, which would have killed the pilot and co-pilot, but the right-hand wing hit a pile of manure and twisted the plane around,” said Rich.

The hole in the bottom of the plane from the missing ball turret was a good thing too, according to Rich, because the mud started coming up through the hole and helped stopped them.

“Then the Russians started coming out with AK-47s and we thought we were going to die. They had never seen an



“The biggest thing is you sit around and remember,” said World War II veteran James A. Rich Jr. It goes over and over in your mind, but I’m proud of what we were able to do.”

American plane, but the radio operator jumped out and shouted ‘Amerikansty, Amerikansty’ and pointed to the stars on the side of the plane,” he said.

They put their guns down and welcomed the crew.

“The pitiful thing was that we were put up in a farmhouse that night with a woman and her daughter-in-law. The day before the Germans had lined up all the men against a wall in the town and shot them. There was blood on the wall of the house outside. The woman had lost her husband and son the day before,” said Rich.

## Finally found

The crew stayed in the town for about three weeks and gave their K-rations to the people in the house.

They also found one old man in the town who had been a caretaker in the Roman Catholic Church and been allowed to live because he was so old, Rich said.

“He could speak a little English and we went to see him one night. He wanted to take us out on parade because they were so proud to have Americans there. I’ve never seen such a parade,” he said.

Then one day the men were eating dinner in the house and a pack of Lucky Strikes landed on the table.

“We looked up and there stood an American major in full dress. I’ll never forget that,” he said. “He had been flying around with a Russian pilot looking for downed planes.”

The crew was about to start their long, circuitous trip back to England.

“Those Russians were crazy, I don’t mind telling you,” Rich said with a quiet laugh. “The pilot took off from that muddy place and then circled back and the crowd had to scatter. Some of the people had to fall on the ground so the wheels wouldn’t hit them.”

They spent two nights in Poland where there were banquets every night, then flew to an American base in Russia. After two weeks they got a B-24 — “Becky” — and flew to Tehran to get around Germany and picked up three American POWs and flew them to Cairo.

“We stayed there two or three days and saw the pyramids it was kind of a vacation,” he said. “On our next plane we stopped at Athens, Rome, Naples and then landed at Paris on March 5, 1945, on my 19th birthday. I celebrated by going to the Moulin Rouge. Then I left and went back to England and started flying again.”

## After the war

After the war ended, Rich's pilot asked if he wanted to go to Frankfurt as part of the occupying troops and he said, "Yes, I want a dachshund."

When they landed in Frankfurt two two-seater Cubs were parked under their wings, one of which was Gen. George Patton's.

"We asked where he was and were told he was on a Jeep coming there," Rich said. "We asked if he would let us take a picture and (the aide) said, 'If you've got a camera, he'll stay all day.'"



Though not printed with the story originally Rich even has the photos to show after some searching at home. *photo by James Rich Jr.*

Rich and his friends visited with Patton and Rich said he'll never forget the last thing Patton said to them: "Gentlemen, don't let this [the war] happen again."

With his voice shaking, Rich added, "But it might. If we get a wild dictator, it could happen again."

Rich said he had a good time in his remaining time in Europe.

"We flew nurses all over to show them the devastation and we flew ground crew personnel to Casablanca to catch ships home," he said.

Coming home

He returned home to Danville in December 1945 and settled down to a career, mostly selling industrial and mill supplies to the tobacco and cotton industry.

He married Dollie Ann McCubbins, who died in 2014, and they are parents to four children.

"It's not much of a history," Rich said. "I just served like the rest of them. I took the chance of getting killed, but that's just what you did."

He doesn't remember being afraid.

"I was too busy doing other things to be afraid, like when we dropped that ball turret. I think most would say the same thing," he said. "You knew your job and you did it."

He keeps up with his 96th Bomb Group, even though he said it's "right sad" when he gets the newsletter because it is so full of deaths.

"I was the youngest one on my crew and the rest are all gone," he said. "The biggest thing is you sit around and remember. It goes over and over in your mind, but I'm proud of what we were able to do. When you look at the pictures of the concentration camps ... my goodness."

If he doesn't forget, France also doesn't. On the award he received are written these words:

"The French authorities have decided to award you the highest French distinction, the Legion of Honor, as a recognition of your participation in the liberation of France. We are forever grateful to the men and women who fought for our freedom and to whom we owe it today."

## Mission Report Reprinted from Snetterton Falcons #272 FEBRUARY 15, 1945: COTTBUS, GERMANY

Bad weather over the primary obscured the Bohlen and Ruhland oil refineries so the attackers hit these marshalling yards at Cottbus. A 3/10ths condition made for partially visible bombing. Strike photos showed bombs had fallen 1/2 mile south of the MPI but they were truly on the choke point of the freight yards.

ME-163's and eight FW -190's with yellow noses and black fuselages threatened but were chased off by P-51's. Flak and rockets were accurate over the target. Several Fortresses were hit. Lt. Arnold Tillman's 338th A/C 687 was hit and he reported two engines shot away over the VHF. Tillman left formation and headed east over the Russian lines. His waist gunner S/S Armand Eschola writes of what happened.

"We soon lost all fuel on the left-side tanks and ran into a weather front. This included snow, freezing rain and severe turbulence. We were losing altitude and had no radio contact."

Straggling low over Soviet territory, Tillman's crew began jettisoning everything. When the ball turret kept hanging up, Eschola rammed it loose with a .50 caliber. For the better part of an hour they continued limping east in a blinding snow storm until the plane threatened to become uncontrollable. Besides, they had constantly lost altitude. If they were going to bail out with a chance for the chutes to open, they had best get on with it. But suddenly they broke out of the clouds and spotted an airfield.

Sgt. Eschola continues: "The pilot made a wheels-down landing. The field was too small for a B-17. We plowed across a field, and into a manure pile and bounced into a ditch just before a grove of trees."

No one was injured and the crew immediately destroyed all classified material including the Norden sight. Scrambling from the plane they could hear artillery fire to the west. Any doubt that they were behind Soviet lines vanished when they were cautiously approached by a squad of Russian women walking toward the front.

Motivated by hostile gestures and pointed Soviet rifles, Tillman's crew stood in line with their hands held high.

"*Amerikanski! Amerikanski!*" we smiled and shouted, Eschola recalls.

With an inexplicable abruptness, the Russian women turned away and continued toward the front.

"They looked us over," Eschola recalls with a laugh, "I guess none of us met their fancy."

Thankful to be alive but somewhat stranded, the crew, communicating as well as they could, stayed in a small town for a week before heading in the general direction of Moscow.

"About three weeks later," Sgt. Eschola writes, "we were in Lwow, Poland when we were picked up by a C-47 with Russian markings but with an American navigator. They took us on to Poltava where we had our first good meal in a month. We were flown back to Snetterton via Tehran, Baghdad, Istanbul, Cairo, Naples, Rome, Marsailles and Paris!"

Returning to the base, Tillman's crew found that they'd been listed as MIA. All their belongings were gone!



# Captain Lloyd Brooks Mitchell

## 96th Bomb Group

### 413<sup>th</sup> Squadron



One of four brothers who wore their country's uniform during World War II, Captain Lloyd Brooks Mitchell displayed exceptional courage against enemy forces, completing twenty-five air missions over occupied and hostile territory. Twelve of those missions were flown over France in 1943 when there was no fighter protection. His bomb group suffered a 66% casualty rate. Lloyd and the crew of his B-17 plane, *Kipling's Error III*, lost one plane in training in the States and two planes that were so badly damaged in combat over Europe they could not be flown again. In September of 1943, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross with three Oak Leaf Clusters. He is recognized today as being a man of uncommon character, a reputation that had its early beginnings in the navigator's seat of a B-17 flying fortress.

Before enlisting in the United States Army Air Corps, Mitchell spent his boyhood days in southwestern Oklahoma. He was the son of a share-cropper, learning the meaning of giving a full day's work for a paycheck. Determined to improve his economic status as an adult, Mitchell pursued an education, finishing some of the course work prior to his enlistment in the military. Upon returning to the States, he completed his college degree at Oklahoma State University.

Captain Mitchell returned to civilian life where he spent four decades as a professional appraiser in the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Active in his church, Mitchell served as an elder for more than thirty years and has been an avid supporter of Christian education. He is a patriot and a Christian who is widely recognized as a man who lives the faith he professes.

Lloyd Mitchell is the father of three sons and two daughters. His eldest son was born while Captain Mitchell was serving his country in the skies over Europe. Sixteen grandchildren call him "Great-Pa," as do twenty-four great-grandchildren. They all adore him.

Married to Mabel Grace Apple Mitchell for fifty years, Captain Mitchell was widowed in 1993. He has since married Nancy Huffs Schmidt and they reside in Moore, Oklahoma.

Capt. Mitchell is a direct descendent of James Davis (six times great-grandfather) who served with George Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette at the Battle of Yorktown, and the surrender of Lord Cornwallis.



Thursday, June 16, 2016 in Oklahoma City, Lloyd Brooks Mitchell is Awarded the French Legion of Honor by the Houston Consul Général de France. His son reports that he has been very adamant that he is accepting this not for himself, but rather for the crew that he served with, *Kipling's Error III*. Here is a link to the video of the ceremony.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhoo\\_d0ztgE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhoo_d0ztgE)



*Kipling's Error III*, A/C 42-5885

Back L/R Laky, Leo J. -Waist Gunner, Malinowski, Steve J-Ball Turret Gunner, White, Clarence, E -Top Turret, Nelson, Lowell E.-Waist Gunner, Haseltine, Richard S.-Radio Operator, Kotlarz, Joseph F. -Tail Gunner. Front L/R Mitchell, Lloyd B.-Navigator, Mendelson, Manuel-Bombardier, Asper, Orlando C.-Copilot, Neie, Reuben W.-Pilot



*Kipling's Error III* On A Disastrous Raid To Oschersleben, Germany, July 28, 1943

While these four excerpts from the Snetterton Falcons mission reports do not represent all 25 of those flown by the crew of *Kipling's Error* they give a good view of the conditions these men endured. They are representative of what the Legion of Honor signifies.

#### #5 MAY 21, '43: EMDEN, GERMANY

Determined to minimize the U-Boat threat in the North Atlantic, the 96th attacked Emden for the second time in 5 days: But this time the Luftwaffe attacked the 4th Bomb Wing with 75-100 interceptors. The enemy began his assault over the North Sea as the Wing approached the continent and pursued the formations to the target and then resumed attacks until the Fortresses were well out over the sea on their return. There were no aborts and all 22 planes bombed well. But the Luftwaffe claimed its second victim in the crew of Captain Gilbert Stephenson. It was a telling loss for Captain Stephenson had led the Group on most of its 5 missions. His AC 42-29734 of the 337th had been flying in the #2 slot in the Lead Squadron when it was attacked. Witnesses saw it catch fire and although a consensus of opinion at the debriefing reported nine chutes, the plane exploded at 4000 feet and just as it was about to hit the water, a wing came off. Actually everyone perished. Stephenson's bombardier, Lt. Bob Grover, washed ashore at Spiekeroog Island. It was discovered by a Sgt. Schmidt while he and his men had been charged with recovery and salvage of Allied planes. Lt. Grover was buried that same day in the local cemetery on Wangerooge Island.

Later tonight Sergeant Leo Laky would record his impressions of this 4th mission for the crew of *Kipling's Error*. But before reviewing Laky's comments, a few words about his famous 96th aircraft. The literary buff in Lt. Ruben Neie's crew was radio gunner Dick Haseltine. Noting that the crews' home states were evenly divided by the Mississippi River, Haseltine took issue with the opening line to one of Rudyard Kipling's poems.

"East is east and West is west, .. Kipling contended, "and never the twain shall meet."

Not true, Sgt. Haseltine protested. And he had the crew to prove it. According to their ground crew chief, Howard Breson. Haseltine then proceeded to supply the nose art. The foundation for the drawing was a large white star for the pilot, Lt. Neie, came from Texas. Within the star, Haseltine fitted all sorts of images. There was a keystone representing Pennsylvania, a pine tree for Maine, corn for Iowa and a beaver for Oregon. Whether a buffalo or a plow, a flower, a bird - no matter - every image symbolized a crewman's home state thus testifying to Kipling's error.

Now back to Sgt. Laky's diary entry:

"Plenty of flak, plenty of fighters. FWs really thick. Some all black, some yellow - tipped wings, tail and nose. We had hard time coming home. White claimed 2 hits (Clarence White, top turret) and tail gunner Kotlarz claimed one. Saw one of ours go down over target - 3 chutes. Saw plane burn over North Sea. 9 hit silk. Our right wing hit by 20mm. Missed gas tank. We flew home expecting to burst into flames. Land 1515. Captain Jack Ford comes in with all engines cut off to crash land *Ole Puss*. 4 go to hospital. Our plane, we're told, is out of commission."

From his left waist window, Sergeant Laky observed some terrifying panoramas of the air war. It is remarkable that he took time every night to record these impressions.

#### #6 MAY 29, '43: RENNES, FRANCE

One week ago Lt. Reuben Neie's plane had been damaged beyond repair trying to return from its 4th mission. Today diarist waist gunner Leo Laky records what the crew of *Kipling's Error* faced on their 5th raid.

"Fired 700 rounds! Hit two. FWs gave us hell. Saw several E/A burn up and go down. Our ship hit all over #3, Knocked hole in #4. Other holes #2, left wing, nose, radio room, tail and right wing. This ship, our second, out of commission. I burned out my barrel!"

When any gunner burns out his barrel with 700 rounds you just know the battle was furious. But burning out a barrel was nothing.

Just think, in two consecutive missions, Lt. Neie's crew lost two Flying Fortresses to battle damage!

*Kipling's Error III* was to be next and it would prove an awesome weapon against the Reich.

#### #8 JUNE 13, '43: KIEL, GERMANY

The attitudes recorded in Sgt. Laky's diary are worth noting here because they show how closely knit a crew was and how deeply the men detested being cannibalized to service other crews.

"Our crew (*Kipling's Error III*) was split to service others," Laky writes. "White and I flew with Lt. Dick Jerger. Steve (BTG Malinowski) flew with a crew from the 339th. Joe and Nelson flew with Lt. Tanner. Mitch (navigator Lloyd Mitchell) flew with Capt. Jack Ford and Mendelsohn (bombardier Manny Mendelsohn) flew with Capt. Walt Flagg. We were all hot under the collar to be so sacrificed and we all expressed our feelings to the operations officer."

#### #40 SEPT. 23, '43: KERLIN BASTARD,

#### FRANCE

Today's target was home base for German long-range bombers which constantly harassed Allied shipping. There was an unusually high number of aborts after take-off, seven of them! One aircraft, 42-3318 *Shack Rabbit II* went MIA. It was flown by Lt. E. Wilcox of the 413th and was last reported circling over the sea on fire until it turned back inland over France. Several chutes were observed but from a distance too far away to be counted.

On the brighter side, this was the 25th mission for one of the charter crews - that of Lt. Reuben Neie and the men of *Kipling's Error III*.

Leo Laky describes their preparation and celebration.

"We got a bunch of flares and two extra flare guns.

Lt. Neie brought out his English flying suit and we stuffed it with two blankets and half an Ammo box. Then we filled the rest of it with empty brass shell cases and other junk. We tied a chute to it. Lt. Spencer from the 339th flew in Mendelson's place. (Editors' Note: Bombardier Mendelson and BTO Malinowski finished up a week ago.) This was Spencer's last mission too. Joe Tony flew in Malinowski's place. Anyway, as we got within 3 miles of Snetterton, Lt. Neie broke formation and dove on the control tower. Everyone there hit the deck. We buzzed the field for about 20 minutes and on our last pass Nelson dropped the dummy through the bomb bay - coming in to land to shoot off all different colors of flares - looked like the 4th of July!"

# A Chat From Your Chaplain

As time passes and another Reunion approaches I am reminded that we are all aging and I am most grateful that time and our Lord have been so kind to me. I will be JUST 93 this October while you are all in St. Louis. Dorothy and I are settling in at our new home in Santa Rosa Beach, Florida and will not be attending this year but wish you all well.

The two short pieces that follow, one by George Carlin and the other by an unknown author, are both amusing and insightful.

## George Carlin on Aging

Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids? If you're less than 10 years old, you're so excited about aging that you think in fractions. "How old are you?" "I am four and a half"

You're never thirty-six and a half. You're four and a half going on five! That's the key. You get into your teens, now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, or even a few ahead. "How old are you?" "I'm gonna be 16! And then the greatest day of your life you become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony YOU BECOME 21 - YES!!!!

But then you turn 30, Oooooohh, what happened there? Makes you sound like bad milk. He TURNED, we had to throw him out. There's no fun now, you're just a sour-dumpling. What's wrong? What's changed?

You BECOME 21, you TURN 30, then you're PUSHING 40. Whoa! Put on the brakes, it's all slipping away. Before you know it, you REACH 50.....and your dreams are gone.

But wait! You MAKE it to 60. You've built up so much speed that you HIT 70. After that it's a day-by-day thing; you HIT Wednesday! You get into your 80s and every day is a complete cycle; you HIT lunch; you TURN 4:30; you REACH bedtime.

And it doesn't end there. Into the 90s you start going backwards; "I was JUST 92." Then a strange thing happens; if you make it over 100, you become a little kid again. "I'm 100 and a half!

May you all make it to a healthy 100 and a half!!!!



## YOU KNOW YOU'RE GROWING OLDER WHEN...

The car's battery has more get up and go than you do.  
The twinkle in your eye is from cataract surgery.  
You wait in the lobby for the bank to open.  
You make new friends and all their names end in M.D.  
The children who drove you crazy have given you grandchildren you're crazy about!

Every driver on the road, except you, is a fool.  
You spend \$143.27 for exercise equipment that collects dust in the basement.  
Two a.m. is now the official potty patrol time.  
You go to the bathroom at two a.m. and while you're gone the Mrs. makes up your bed.  
Your kitchen cabinets are decorated with stickum notes.  
You can't make it through the ten o'clock news.  
Your glasses and keys walk around the house hiding themselves.

The dog goes out more than you do.  
You curse the guy who invented child proof medicine caps.  
Unless you have a free hour, you never ask a friend, "How are you?"

You've struck it rich!  
There's silver in your hair and gold in your teeth.  
You have aches and pains in places you never knew you owned.  
You're going to arrange photo albums, file cabinets and storage closets "someday."  
He asks, "How about a little \_?"  
and she answers, "coffee or tea?"

You've spent your life worrying about money. Now you're spending your money worrying about life.  
Dear Heart, You're older but wiser than perhaps you know it's true, as long as love is in your life the greatest blessing belongs to you!

In closing, I ask all of you to keep love in your life as you count your blessings.

Remember there's power in prayer, and kindly pray for all of our membership and their families.

A number of our members and associate members have made their "Final Mission" and their families should also be remembered in our prayers.

In God we trust, and take our refuge!

Bill Thorns

*Bill as our Chaplain tries to write a personal letter on the behalf of the 96th Bomb Group to the family of all our members that have flown their **Final Mission**. You can help him and the 96th Bomb Group by letting him know in a timely manner of a members passing and the address to which he might send the letter.*

Address your correspondence for our Chaplain to:

William (Bill) Thorns  
164 West Hewett Road #241  
Santa Rosa Beach, FL 32459

Phone (708)-408-8066  
E-mail [b17fertilemyrtle@att.net](mailto:b17fertilemyrtle@att.net)





**42nd ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION**  
**Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO**  
**October 19-23, 2016**

**REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS**

**STOP! RESERVE YOUR HOTEL ROOM FIRST!**

The reunion hotel has a liberal cancellation policy-in the event you are unable to attend the reunion, you will be able to cancel your reservation without penalty within 48 hours of your scheduled check-in time. However, if you wait until the last minute to book your room reservation, you may not receive the reunion rate or rooms may no longer be available at the reunion hotel. Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that our vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less a \$5 processing fee.

*Canceling your hotel reservation does **NOT** cancel your reunion activities*

**HOTEL RESERVATION INFORMATION**

**314-878-1500 or 888-627-7066**  
**(Reference 'CHALET' and 8th AFHS)**

**Group Name:** 8th Air Force Historical Society **Reunion Dates:** October 19-23, 2016

**Rate:** \$109 + tax (currently 15.363%) Rates are offered 3 days prior and 3 days post reunion based on availability.

**Cut off Date:** 9/15/2016

**Cancellation Policy:** All reservations have a 48 hour cancellation policy, or you will be charged one night room rate + tax.

**WHEELCHAIR RENTALS**

**ScotAround:** (888) 441-7575 or [ScotAround.com](http://ScotAround.com)

**Location**

The Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet is located in Westport Plaza, (191 Westport Plaza, St. Louis, MO 63146) which features 18 shops, popular restaurants, and entertainment venues. Guests will enjoy convenient access to popular destinations and attractions. We're located just 10 minutes from historic St. Charles, 15 minutes from Forest Park, home of the Saint Louis Zoo, Science Center, Art Museum and the History Museum. We're also close to the world-famous Gateway Arch, the St. Louis Cardinals baseball stadium, Six Flags© and Missouri's Wine County.

**Shuttle Service**

For those of you flying into St. Louis, there is complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport to the hotel. Go to Baggage Claim/Hotel Shuttle exits-the shuttle runs every half hour.

**Upscale Amenities**

Enjoy complimentary wireless High Speed Internet in all public areas, concierge service, plus signature amenities you'll only find at Sheraton. Wake up energized after a restful night's sleep in a plush Sheraton Sweet Sleeper® Bed. Stay connected at our lobby's connectivity hub, the Link@Sheraton™ experience with Microsoft®. Stay fit with a visit to our Sheraton Fitness center, programmed by Core Performance™.

**Dining Options Abound**

The Terrace Restaurant and Lucerne Restaurant feature a wide variety of menu items served in a friendly, casual atmosphere. There is also a private dining area perfect for intimate gatherings. We also offer guests the convenience and privacy of in-room dining service.

**COMPLETE THE REGISTRATION FORM**

Please fill out the registration form on page 17 completely.

- Fill out your name as you wish it to be on your name tag-and for any others registering with you. If you are a WWII veteran, and/or affiliated with a bomb or fighter group, please indicate which group.
- Meal packages include either seven [7] hotel meals [package #1] or five [5] hotel meals [package #2]. If you purchase a meal package, do NOT select separately priced meals. If you plan to attend some or all of the dinner functions, but do NOT wish to include breakfast, simply select the dinners you wish to attend in the area indicating "Separately Priced Meals." Be sure and select your entree if you plan on attending the Saturday evening gala.
- There are three [3] tour options available during the reunion. Please read the information [here in this issue] on each tour and then make your selection on the form. The Military Heritage Tour INCLUDES a box lunch.

**MAIL IN YOUR REGISTRATION FORM**

Once you have completed your registration form, please total up the amount owed and include a check, money order, or complete the credit card information on the form, payable to the 8th AFHS and mail to:

**8th AFHS**  
**POBox 60369**  
**Savannah, GA 31420-0369**

ALL registration forms **MUST** be received by September 15, 2016 in order to guarantee your place. If you have any questions or problems in completing your registration, please contact:

**Debra Kujawa**  
**Managing Director 8th AFHS**  
**912-748-8884**  
[ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org](mailto:ManagingDirector@8thAFHS.org)

ALL reunion information and forms are available on the website: [8thAFHS.org](http://8thAFHS.org)



# 42nd ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION

## Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO

### October 19-23, 2016

#### Wednesday, October 19

1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion registration open
1:00pm — until	Memorabilia/Gathering room open throughout reunion
1:00pm — 4:00pm	8th AFHS Board Meeting
6:00pm — 7:00pm	Welcome Reception, followed by dinner on your own

#### Thursday, October 20

7:30am — 8:30am	Continental Breakfast for Package #1 participants
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion registration open
8:30am — 9:45am	Individual Group Meetings
10:00am — 11:30am	American Indians in WWII
11:45am — 4:00pm	<b>Our Military Heritage Tour*</b>
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion registration open
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Rendezvous Dinners

#### Friday, October 21

7:30am — 8:30am	Full Breakfast for Meal Package participants
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion registration open
9:00am — 1:00pm	<b>Gateway to St. Louis City Tour*</b>
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion registration open
2:00pm — 3:30pm	Presentation on AAM Duxford
3:45pm — 5:00pm	Q & A WWII Vets
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 9:00pm	Dinner Buffet—Donald Miller Presentation

#### Saturday, October 22

7:30am — 8:30am	Continental Breakfast for Meal Package participants
8:00am — 12:00pm	Reunion registration open
8:45am — 10:15am	General Membership Meeting
10:30am — 11:30am	Researchers/Webmasters Meeting
11:30am — 4:30pm	<b>Anheuser-Busch Brewery/Grant's Farm Tour*</b>
12:00pm — 4:00pm	8th AFHS Board Meeting
1:00pm — 6:00pm	Reunion registration open
6:00pm — 9:00pm	Cash Bar Open
7:00pm — 10:00pm	Gala Dinner and Program

#### Sunday, October 23

7:30am — 8:30am	Full Breakfast for Meal Package participants
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\*It is important that you be in the bus boarding area at least ten [10] minutes prior to the scheduled departure times. All tours require a minimum of 40 participants, unless otherwise stated. Driver and Staff gratuities **ARE** included in the tour prices.



**REGISTRATION FORM**  
**42nd ANNUAL 8th AFHS REUNION**  
 Sheraton Westport Lakeside Chalet, St. Louis, MO  
 October 19-23, 2016

CUT-OFF DATE IS September 15, 2016	Price Per	# of People	TOTAL
<b>REGISTRATION FEE</b>	\$ 40	#	\$
Registration fee for children ages 8-16	\$ 25	#	\$
<b>MEAL PACKAGES</b>			
#1 Includes 7 hotel meals beginning with breakfast Thursday, Oct 20	\$ 212	#	\$
#2 Includes 5 hotel meals beginning with breakfast Friday, Oct 21	\$ 148	#	\$
<b>Please select your entrée choice for the Gala banquet Saturday, Oct 22:</b>			
Sliced London Broil with Bordelaise Sauce		#	
Pan Seared Salmon w/Balsamic Reduction		#	
<b>SEPARATELY PRICED MEALS (If not purchasing a meal package)</b>			
Thursday, Oct 20 — RENDEZVOUS DINNER Chicken Marsala	\$ 46	#	\$
Friday, Oct 21—EVENING DINNER BUFFET Roasted Pork Loin & Grilled Chicken Breast	\$ 46	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 22—GALA BANQUET (Please select entrée)			
Sliced London Broil with Bordelaise Sauce	\$ 46	#	\$
Pan Seared Salmon with Balsamic Reduction	\$ 46	#	\$
<b>TOUR OPTIONS:</b>			
Thursday, Oct 20: Military Heritage Tour— <b>INCLUDES BOX LUNCH</b>	\$ 45	#	\$
Friday, Oct 21: Gateway to St. Louis City Tour—Lunch on your own	\$ 25	#	\$
Saturday, Oct 22: Anheuser-Busch Brewery/Grant's Farm Tour	\$ 37	#	\$
<b>Total amount payable to: 8th AFHS</b>			\$

MEMBER NAME (for name tag): \_\_\_\_\_

WWII Veteran \_\_\_\_\_ BG or FG Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_ POW: \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd Gen \_\_\_\_\_ Gold Star Family Member \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

SPOUSE or PERSON attending: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDITIONAL GUESTS: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

DAYTIME PH #: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

EMERGENCY CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_ PH #: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE INDICATE ANY PHYSICAL OR DIETARY RESTRICTIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

IF PAYING BY CREDIT CARD:

CARD #: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ *Your contact information will only be shared with attendees.*



## TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

### ***Our Military Heritage Tour***

*Thursday October 20, 2016 11:45am - 4:00pm*

Our Military Heritage Tour includes the Missouri Civil War Museum and a driving tour of Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. A boxed lunch is included.

Your first stop of the day is the Missouri Civil War Museum. Originally designed and built as an athletic and activity center for soldiers, it was later transitioned into a troop barracks for World War I and World War II. After abandonment in 1964, it took 60 years for a restoration project to transpire. Through grassroots efforts of fund-raising and hard work, the Civil War museum came to fruition. Enjoy viewing the artifacts significant to the Civil War efforts in the Missouri Area.

Enjoy your boxed lunch while driving through the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery. The 4th largest cemetery in the nation, it was established after the American Civil War in an attempt to put together a formal network of military cemeteries. It started as the Jefferson Barracks Military Post Cemetery in 1826 and became a United States National Cemetery in 1866. The cemetery is administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs on the former site of Jefferson Barracks. It covers 331 acres and the number of interments as of 2014 is approximately 188,000. The cemetery is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Cost is \$45 per person-includes box lunch.



### ***Gateway to St. Louis City Tour***

*Friday October 21, 2016 9:00am - 1:00pm*



Your Destination St. Louis certified tour guide will trace the history of St. Louis beginning with the city's original settlement, Laclede's Landing. It is now a nine-block historic district filled with renovated turn-of-the-century buildings housing shops, eateries and offices. See the famous Gateway Arch, the Nation's tallest monument, which commemorates the gateway to the west for thousands of 19th century pioneers.

Enjoy a view of the Old Cathedral, the oldest cathedral west of the Mississippi. Across the street is the Old Courthouse, the setting for cases involving slavery, the fur trade and equal rights. Of these cases, the Dred Scott Freedom Trial is the most notable. You will pass Busch Stadium, home of the

2011 World Champion St. Louis Cardinals. Continuing west on Market Street, you will pass several of St. Louis' civic buildings and plazas, as well as City garden, a unique urban oasis blending art, architecture and landscape. St. Louis Union Station, once the busiest rail terminal in the world. Today, Union Station has undergone a magnificent renovation and is home to a luxury hotel and restaurants.

Next, enjoy a stop in the Central West End for lunch on your own. The Central West End is filled with century-old homes, sidewalk cafes, shops and galleries.

Cost is \$25.00 per person.

### ***Anheuser-Busch Brewery/Grant's Farm Tour***

*Saturday October 22, 2016 11:15pm - 4:30pm*

Experience a visit to Grant's Farm, the 2S1-acre estate of the late August A. Busch, Jr., which is operated by Anheuser-Busch Companies. The adventure begins at Grant Station where you will board a tram for a tour of the grounds. The 20-minute tram ride will wind through the Deer Park - a game preserve where antelope, buffalo and other animals roam in a natural 160-acre habitat. Pass Grant's Cabin, a log home built by Ulysses S. Grant, 18th President of the United States, and former owner of the land where Grant's Farm is today.

Your tram will then stop at the Tier Garten where you may enjoy elephant and bird shows. Then stroll to the historic Bauernhof which was built in 1913. Here you will have a chance to enjoy refreshments while viewing the elegant stables and the Busch family's world-renowned carriage collection. A visit to the Clydesdale stallion barn will complete your visit.

En route to the King of Beers - the Anheuser-Busch Brewery, your Destination St. Louis tour guide will familiarize you with the rich history of the colorful Busch family. Situated in a 100-acre complex with over 70 red brick structures, the Brewery buildings are known for their unique architecture and several are National Historic Landmarks.

During the 45-minute walking tour you will see the World Famous Clydesdales, the Beechwood Lagering Cellar, the Brew House, and the Bevo Packaging Plant. After visiting the Bevo Packaging Plant, a trolley will take guests back up to the tour center. No visit would be complete without sampling the family of Anheuser-Busch products during the tour!

Cost is \$37 per person.



# U.S. War Bonds

The last time the United States issued war bonds was during World War II, when full employment collided with rationing, and war bonds were seen as a way to remove money from circulation as well as reduce inflation.

Issued by the U.S. Government, they were first called Defense Bonds. The name was changed to War Bonds after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941. Known as debt securities for the purpose of financing military operations during war time, the bonds yielded a mere 2.9 percent return after a 10-year maturity.

Living in the United States with a median income during World War II meant earning about \$2,000 a year. Despite the war's hardships, 134 million Americans were asked to purchase war bonds to help fund the war. Stamps also could be purchased, starting at 10 cents each, to save toward the bond. The first Series 'E' U.S. Savings Bond was sold to President Franklin D. Roosevelt by Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau. The bonds sold at 75 percent of their face value in denominations of \$25 up to \$10,000. The war bonds actually were a loan to the government to help finance the war effort.

The War Finance Committee was in charge of supervising the sale of all bonds, and the War Advertising Council promoted voluntary compliance with bond buying. The work of those two organizations produced the greatest volume of advertising in U.S. history. In the name of defense of American liberty and democracy, and as safe havens for investment, the public was continually urged to buy bonds.

An emotional appeal went out to citizens by means of advertising. Even though the bonds offered a rate of return below the market value, it represented a moral and financial stake in the war effort. The advertisements started with radio and newspapers, then later added magazines to reach the masses. The bond campaign was unique in that both the government, as well as private companies, created the advertisements.



Those who contributed advertising space felt they were doing even more for the war effort; then there were organizations that made up their own war bond advertisements to reflect their patriotism. The government recruited New York's best advertising agencies, famous entertainers, and even used familiar comic strip characters to further their appeal to America. More than a quarter of a billion dollars worth of advertising was donated during the first three years of the National Defense Savings

Program. Massive advertising campaigns used any means of media possible, and the campaign was a huge success. Polls indicated after only one month that 90 percent of those responding were aware of war bonds. Bonds became the ideal channel for those on the home front to contribute to the national defense.

Bond rallies were held throughout the country with famous celebrities, usually Hollywood film stars, to enhance the advertising's effectiveness. Free movie days were held in theaters nationwide with a bond purchase as the admission. Such popular Hollywood stars as Greer Garson, Bette Davis and Rita Hayworth completed seven tours in more than 300 cities and towns to promote war bonds. The "Stars Over America" bond blitz, in which 337 stars took part, surpassed its quota and netted \$838,540,000 worth of bonds.

One promotional cardboard had slots for 75 quarters, to equal \$18.75. When it was full, one could turn it in to the post office for a \$25 war bond that matured in 10 years. Local clubs, organizations, movie theaters and hotels also did their part with their own advertisements.

Then there was the Civilian D-Day on June 6th, 1944, when thousands of ads flew from the sky over Chicago to capture the attention and hearts of potential contributors. Even the Girl Scouts became involved with each scout donating one stamp. Those stamps, starting at 10 cents each, were then traded into the national organization for the purchase of war bonds.

Norman Rockwell created a series of illustrations in 1941 that became a centerpiece of war bond advertising. The Saturday Evening Post reproduced and circulated them, much to the public's approval. While Rockwell was the most notable artist of war bonds, Irving Berlin was the most celebrated composer. Famous for his "God Bless America," he wrote a song entitled "Any Bonds Today?" and it became the theme song of the Treasury Department's National Defense Savings Program. The famous Andrew Sisters were among the primary performers of this historic song.



One of the most successful single events was a 16-hour marathon radio broadcast on CBS, during which nearly \$40 million worth of bonds were sold. The marathon featured singer Kate Smith, famous for her rendition of "God Bless America." Patriotism and the spirit of sacrifice could be expressed with war bond purchases. Millions jumped aboard the war bond effort.

The sports world did its part as well, holding special football and baseball games with a war bond as the price of admission.

At the end of World War II, January 3, 1946, the last proceeds from the Victory War Bond campaign were deposited into the U.S. Treasury. More than 85 million Americans — half the population — purchased bonds totaling \$185.7 billion. Those incredible results, due to the mass selling efforts of helping to finance the war, have never since been matched.

The Series E bond was withdrawn on June 30, 1980, when the Series EE bond replaced it, and the War Bond became history.

As adapted from [u-s-history.com](http://u-s-history.com)

# Lane Tech Bond Sales & the Mystery of the *Lane Tech of Chicago*

Today nearly 73 years later the search has been picked up again by Tom Kane (see his e-mail on page 21). It seems after some searching we have been able to bring some of the pieces together and answer some of the questions. See what we have learned. It is hoped, while there are still some with us who might remember the *Lane Tech of Chicago* aka *Wacky Woody*, that you can provide us with some more information or leads as to how we might get more details on this aircraft. The aircraft number A/C 42-39856 should be traceable in the military archives and records at Maxwell Field with some detail. We and Lane Tech look forward to hearing from you.

February 2, 1943 Chicago Tribune

## **LANE TECH BOND GOAL: WANT TO NAME WARPLANE**

### ***Hope to Reach \$300,000 by 'Doolittle Day.'***

Anxious to sell \$300,000 in war bonds and stamps in order to have a Flying Fortress named after their school, the students of Lane Technical High School, who have sold over \$250,000 since Pearl Harbor, hope to reach their goal by Doolittle Day, April 18, first anniversary of the American raid on Tokio.

Russell Christian, student war coordinator, who lives at 2151 Bradley place, believes the mark will be passed. Until last June only \$50,000 in bonds and stamps had been sold. Sales since that time, however, have soared. During the week commemorating the first anniversary of America's declaration of war \$40,000 in cash was converted into bonds. In an average week \$10,000 is taken in.

#### **Faculty Man Is Agent**

The faculty has helped in the drive. In September a faculty member agreed to become an issuing agent for bonds. Sales were much accelerated when the students found they could bring their money in the morning and take their bonds home in the evening. The office is open all day. Christian works two periods there and then helps make out the report and the bank remittance.

The salesmen have formed an "army." Enlistment in the army cost \$1. Promotion depends upon sales of bonds and stamps. Soldier salesmen who account for \$750 in purchases become generals.

Commander in chief is Donald Fertel, 931 Gunnison street. Among the members of his family, relatives, neighbors, and friends he has sold \$15,360 in war securities. And he has bought \$100 worth for himself!

#### **War Mother Buys**

A mother of a former Lane student now serving with the navy in the Pacific bought \$125 in bonds and stamps from Fertel. Hearing of the student bond drive, she called him and asked to buy her share from him.

Four people interested in the school have bought \$1,000 bonds.

Christian and Fertel wish that the 50 bonds that they sell on an average every day could be of the same denomination.

June 10, 1943 Chicago Tribune

## ***Lane Tech School Exceeds \$500,000 War Bond Quota***

The sale of a \$1,000 war bond yesterday at Lane Technical High sent the school's bond sales over its \$500,000 quota, it was announced by Charles E. Lang, principal.



***Three Hundred Thousand Dollars  
FOR FLYING FORTRESS Students of LANE TECH H.S.***

Chicago Daily Tribune September 17, 1943

## **HUNDREDS VISIT AIRPLANE SHOW IN CITY AIRPORT**

Despite cold weather, hundreds of Chicagoans visited the big air show at Chicago airport yesterday. The show opened Friday and will conclude today at 6 p.m.

Among the planes on the field yesterday were a Douglas Skymaster; a Liberator bomber, *Wash Tub*, and its heroic crew that took part in many air raids over Europe, Gruman Hellcat, Wildcat, and Avenger planes, a Martin Marauder, a Lockheed Lightning fighter, and a North American bomber.

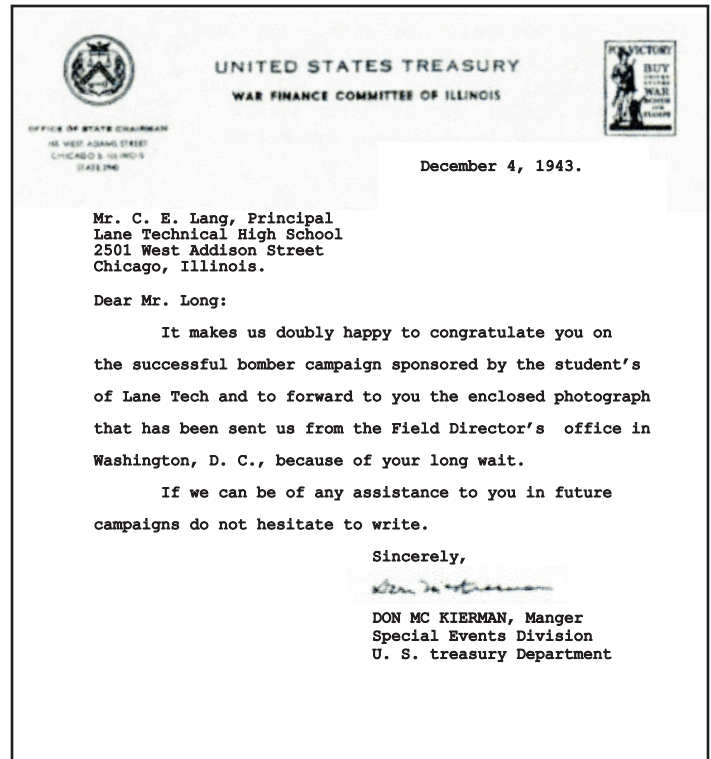
Besides the planes, there are exhibits of block buster bombs, flying suits, parachutes, jungle kits, emergency rations, and flying equipment. Admission is free. The only requirement is that adults buy \$1 in war savings stamps and children 25 cents worth of stamps, which they retain.



This is the Boeing B-17F Flying Fortress, latest model of the famous high-altitude, day-light precision bomber which is operating in war theaters throughout the world. The Boeing Flying Fortress has four engines and a wingspan of approximately 104 feet. It has a top speed well in excess of 300 miles an hour, carries a bomb load up to ten tons, has a service ceiling considerably above 35,000 feet, is heavily armed and is capable of operating over a long range. The flying Fortress was designed and developed by the Boeing Aircraft Company, with plants located in Seattle, and Renton, Wash., Kans, and Vancouver, B.C.

Pictured above is a photo that purports to be the *Lane Tech of Chicago* and the letter of congratulations sent nearly six months after the successful completion of the bond campaign and a month after the ceremony at the Municipal Airport (Midway). It appears that the contact Aircraft 42-39856, a B17G-1-VE was in Chicago but was rushed out the 16th of September to fill the urgent need to replace the 60 MIA and 138 damaged B17s lost to the war effort in the Second Schweinfurt Mission on October 14th.

Below is the story of Ted Szalinski's search for the history of the *Lane Tech of Chicago* that went unsatisfied in 1983. The search was renewed again in 1991 by Howard Soehrman a 1941 graduate of Lane Tech and an Army Air Corp Veteran of WWII. (See page 19).



Section 3 Chicago Tribune, Sunday, March 27, 1983

## He takes flier to find plane school "bought"

**By John O'Brien**

THEY ONLY met once, 40 years ago, at what is now Chicago's Midway Airport. He was 15, a student at Lane Technical High School who rode his bicycle 11 miles from home to join the curious crowds at a military air show.

She was a spanking-new Army Air Force B-17, the only World War II bomber entirely paid for by students of one high school-Lane, at 2501 W. Addison St. During a six-month period ending in March, 1943, they raised \$300,000 and, turned the money into war bonds with one goal: To send their own blistering message to the Axis.

"We all gave up a lot of movies and candy to accomplish that," said Ted Szalinski, the Lane student who pedaled the long haul to the old Chicago Municipal Airport on Oct. 17, 1943, to see for himself what he and the others had paid for.

HE WAS NOT disappointed. There on the tarmac was the proud new Flying Fortress, camouflaged in olive-drab paint. Emblazoned on its nose was the name, "Lane Tech of Chicago."

My friend, fellow student Bob Dady and I Look a long good look at that B-17. Like a lot of kids, I was an airplane nut at the

time and I had money invested in that bomber," said Szalinski, now a Lane teacher and head of the school's art department.

On the afternoon of that Indian summer day school and military officials broke a bottle of champagne to dedicate the Lane bomber, which promptly flew off to a rendezvous with history. The rest of the story was never learned. No one knows what happened to the aircraft after its departure from Chicago.

YEARS PASSED. Then in 1975, while preparing material for a Lane Bicentennial story for the school newspaper, Szalinski was seized, by what has since amounted to an obsession with the air-plane and its fate.

He has written hundreds of letters, researched public library files and newspaper morgues, pored over records in the national archives, visited the Pentagon and interviewed former students and faculty members in his quest for information about the plane. "All that gave me a lot of information about B-17s, but nothing about the 'Lane Tech'-the only one I was interested in" said Szalinski, noting that most of those bombers had a high casualty rate in Europe. Military records show that at least one in four was

lost in combat.

The big hitch was that no one not even the controllers at Chicago Municipal, recorded the serial number of 'Lane Tech.' The Pentagon has told Szalinski he must have the number. If he finds it, the rest should be easy.

SZALINSKI SAID he has narrowed his search to about 800 B-17s-that is, those of the late "F" or early "G" series, which were more sophisticated versions of the famed Allied workhorse. The "christening" of the airplane was a model of the confusion that often reigned at military ceremonial events in those days.

A student carrying the champagne bottle was thwarted in his efforts to christen Lane Tech's pride and joy. He was shunted instead to a battle-worn B-24, another four-engine bomber that didn't even look much like a B-17. He bashed the bottle against a landing-gear strut, christening the "Lane Tech" in absentia.

BUT SZALINSKI is hoping against hope that someone managed to take a picture, and that it might turn up. Such a photograph could reveal the serial number which was stenciled on the nose and vertical tail surface.



Lane Tech's Ted Szalinski: A man in search of a resolution for a boyhood memory.

# **LANE TECH of Chicago**

aka

## **WACKY-WOODY**

**The mystery goes on.**

*96<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Newsletter February 1991 No. 18 p.13*

### **47 YEAR MYSTERY ON OUR DOORSTEP & KNOCKING HARD**

After searching for almost a half-century, Howard Soehrman has come to the men of Snetterton. He needs our help and he deserves it. Soehrman, a 1941 grad from Chicago's Lane Tech, served with the 20th AF in Guam. But he has plenty in common with the 8th in general and the 96th in particular.

It seems that a B-17 belonging to Lane Tech is missing. It also seems that the 96th had it - and lost it.

To quote a 1981 Lane Tech letter to their alumnae: "This is an appeal for your assistance. You will recall the great War Bond Drive at Lane when we bought ourselves a Flying Fortress. It cost us \$300,000 which we got together in less than a year. Our Fortress flew in to the Municipal Airport to be christened LANE TECH OF CHICAGO during an air show October 17, 1943. Then it flew off into both history and mystery." Howard devoted the rest of that letter - and many similar letters since - urging the alumnae to try to recall *anything* about the event. But to no avail. Never mind recalling the serial number, no student or faculty member even saw the plane. But we'll come back to that.

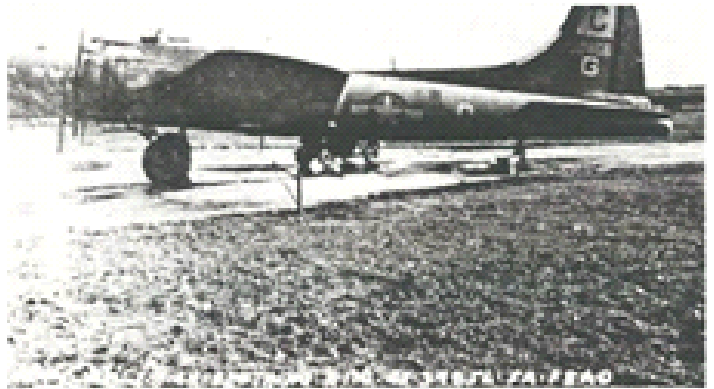
Let's pause here to better appreciate Lane Tech High School's war effort. This patriotic Chicago high school conducted enough war bond drives to provide the nation with six Red Cross ambulances, over three million dollars in war bonds and one Flying Fortress. In addition to all that, the high school's various vocational workshops produced small boats for the Navy and gliders for pilot training. The Lane Night School trained workers for war plants and maintained an active squadron in the Civil Air Patrol. A total of 8700 Lane graduates fought in WWII.

But it is the nature of WAR not to be nice and so it cheated Lane Tech. The cheating took place during a patriotic air show when the student body and faculty rushed joyfully to the Municipal Airport to see the Fortress which they had purchased. But when they arrived, the Fortress had already flown the coop and over the Loop. Rumor was that it had to be summoned overseas because of an emergency. (Schweinfurt which happened on the 14th, only three days prior, certainly qualified as a magnet for emergency replacement aircraft.) Then, worse still, the powers-that-were, in an attempt to placate the disappointed Laneites, wheeled out a B-24! (And, indeed, Maxwell Field records note that a Liberator nicknamed LANE TECH OF CHICAGO did exist.) But the Lane Tech people were not placated - not

then, not ever. As Howard writes to this editor, "We purchased a B-17, not a B-24. The B-24 cost \$272,081; about \$60,000 less than our Fortress."

Over the years the search went on. The light at the end of the tunnel appeared last July. Howard had supplied Maxwell Field with the serial numbers of three Fortresses which, according to Chicago records had been possibilities considering time and place. Archie DiFante, archivist for Maxwell's Inquiries Division, xeroxed those three Aircraft Record Cards and sent them to Howard apologizing for the fact the cards did not reflect any nicknames.

It didn't matter. Of the three aircraft only 42-39856 had been in Chicago at the time of the air show. Furthermore, the corresponding Aircraft Record Card noted that it was once attached to a Contract Folder, a usual indication of purchase by war bond. Finally, the Card showed that after leaving for overseas, the plane was assigned to the 96th Bomb Group.



We assigned it to the 337th where someone renamed it WACKY WOODY!

So now comes the 96th's turn to help Howard Soehrman and Lane Tech. Who recalls the plane? We know that member Frank Deason of Yuma was shot down in it 4-8-44 (SF 122 & 130). However, the plane was at Snetterton months before Frank and the rest of Russ Gueck's crew arrived. Who, for instance, crew-chiefed it? Who made up the original flight crew? Who nicknamed it WACKY WOODY and why? Who recalls anything?

Lane Tech is now 92 years old and is rated the #1 vocational school in Chicago.

Hang in there all you Laneites: We 96ers owe you one.

*96<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Newsletter August 1991 No.19 p 20*

### **MAIL CALL**

#### **MORE ON WACKY WOODY:**

Enclosed is a copy of my missions during the period of August 31, 1943 to December 31, 1943. Note that I flew 8 missions on A/C 42-39856. All information I've uncovered so far indicates that my crew and I received the B-17 in question and named it

Billie J. Smith

Regarding *Wacky Woody* and The Lane Tech story, my late father, Leonard H. Brown, was the crew chief for this plane among others. My dad was on "early on" with the 96th and served until late '45. His final rank was Master Sergeant. He passed away in 79 at the age of 61. I've enclosed a photo of him posing in front of *Wacky Woody* ~ art-work; also sending a photo to Mr. Howard Soehrmann.

Darwin Brown



337th Squadron ground Crew Chief M/Sgt Leonard H. Brown Right and two of his crew Left, Robert Plott Center, unknown pose in front of plane bearing **Wacky Woody's** name and nose-art.

(D. Brown)

I flew on aircraft named *Wacky Woody* for 5 missions. The serial number of that plane was 42-39841. When my crew flew overseas, that plane was with us. We stayed overnight in Syracuse and then went on to Presque Isle. Our orders out of Presque Isle (enclosed) are dated Oct. 6, 1943 and that plane is not listed. So it is possible that 42-39841 was diverted to Chicago.

On my 16th mission I flew ship 42-39856, but it had no nose-art. A/C 42-39841, on the other hand, did have a woodpecker of some type painted on the nose. I don't know who the original crew chief was, nor do I know the original crew.

Bob Dennisen

Editor's note:

And so the "Wacky" file grows. Were there two **Wacky Woodys**?



#### WACKY WOODY DOES NORWAY

With the stark beauty of Norway's Fjords and mountains below, the 337th Squadron's 42-39856 *WACKY WOODY* heads for the world's largest hydroelectric station at Rjukan, Norway, which was the target for the Group on 16 November 1943. *WACKY WOODY* survived for many missions after this before being shot down by flack over Holland on 8 April 1944.

*Mufic, Snetterton Falcons II page 81*

Report of the Gecks' crews arrival at Snetterton only the month before they were to go Mia

New Crews March 1944

CREW L95. 337th Sqdn.  
 2/Lt. Russell H. Gecks. (P)  
 2/Lt. Frank N. Dawson. (CP)  
 2/Lt. James J. Cramer. (N)  
 2/Lt. Peter V. Lovero. (B)  
 S/Sgt. Richard E. Denny.  
 S/Sgt. Peter N. Miskins.  
 S/Sgt. Clifton E. Hanley.  
 Sgt. Howard F. Jones.  
 Sgt. Leon H. Redemacher.  
 Sgt. Sam A. Polito.



Photo last **Wacky Woody** crew taken in Rapid City, South Dakota  
 Rear L/R: 2nd Lt. Russell Gecks, (P), \*2nd Lt. Gregow, (CP), \*2nd Lt. James Cramer, (N), 2nd Lt. Peter Lovero, (B), S/Sgt. Peter Miskinis. *Kneeling* -L/R: S/Sgt. Leon Rademacher, T/Sgt Richard Denny, T/Sgt. Clifton Hanley, S/Sgt Howard Jones, S/Sgt Sam Polito

\*Co-pilot 2nd Lt. Gregow and Navigator, 2nd Lt. Cramer were replaced not on 8th April 1944 mission.

# The Final Mission of Wacky Woody

## Two reports

The first account is from Richard E. Denny's in *The Greatest Generation Of Silver Wings* a book by Don Ward (pages 57-59). Richard was the waist gunner on *Wacky Woody* on that final mission and was one of five to evade capture. He tells about that in great detail also in his full account of his war time experiences in the book

Second is the mission report taken in its entirety from the Snetterton Falcons (page 122).

### RICHARD E. DENNY (DICK)

"My April 8, 1944, mission started like many of the previous missions with a light mist and clouds, and if I had known it would be my last, I might have attended sick call. We were headed for an airfield located south of Hamburg, Germany, and after the usual forming up of the group, we were on our way to our target. As we neared the objective, we could see the large "box barrage" of flak that we had to fly through with no deviation to our course. It was the blackest and thickest flak I had ever seen, and we were going to fly straight through it. After we had dropped our bomb load, our bomb bay doors failed to close, so I crawled out into the bomb bay to try and crank the doors shut, which was futile. While I was attempting this feat, flak was exploding all around the plane, and the pilots were fighting to maintain control. We had taken so many flak hits I was amazed that no one was wounded. Number two engine had its controls shot away and was running wild, with no way to shut it down. I knew that it would either blow up or the propeller would come off, possibly cutting into the cockpit. Suddenly it disappeared, as it had fallen off. Now the number one engine was hit, losing oil pressure and smoking badly. Number two engine, without its propeller now froze up, so we threw everything we could out of the plane to try and salvage altitude, which we were losing fast. We headed for the North Sea, where we hoped we might be picked up by the Air Sea rescue boats that were monitoring that area. As we entered Holland, number four-engine started to fail, so we were now flying a four engine bomber on one engine. We were flying at 10,000 feet and discovered that we had thrown out our life rafts in our attempts to lighten the plane.

As we flew over the Zuider Zee to the North Sea, it became apparent that we would not make it to the other side, and the pilot made a 180-degree turn at 8,000 feet and gave the order to "bailout". The men in the rear of the plane already had their chutes on, so they jumped. I had to head back to the top turret to get my chute, and by this time the crew in the front of the plane had already jumped, leaving me the lone occupant. I hesitated for a moment and then discretion took over and out I went, and I remember the unbelievable noise of the 100-mile-per-hour wind rushing by, ripping off my helmet. I had

been told to free-fall as long as possible, but I was below 7,000 feet at this time and I pulled my rip cord. The noise ceased and I felt as though I was in a vacuum as I observed the plane hit the ground and explode. I had made a successful landing, quickly rolled up my chute and covered it with brush. The jump was completed and I was alive."

### #104 APRIL 8, 1944: ACHMER RHEIN, GERMANY

Some imply that there were no missions for seven days because it took that long for key personnel to sober up from the 100th Mission party. But others insist that it was bad weather that kept 96ers ground-bound for a week. At any rate a total of 28 planes were dispatched in two groups. The A Group hit the Luftwaffe field at Achmer with one hundred pound bombs. The rest of our planes helped make a Composite Group which dropped 226 one thousand pounders on a sister air field at Rhem/Salsbergen. Flak was very accurate in the target areas and two Forts did not return.

2/L Merle Stinnet's 338th ship 42-30360, *Lady Millicent*, took a flak hit while she was between the IP and target. She turned out of formation with # 1 engine on fire, feathered and under control. But a German fighter did her in over Holland. *Millicent* was disabled further with 3 engines out, two of which were on fire. With the exception of the pilot and co-pilot, the rest of the crew bailed out and were captured. Stinnet and co-pilot Carl Glassman managed to crash land near Auiweja 30km east of Arnhem. The two pilots set fire to the plane and successfully evaded capture.

The second loss came from the 337th and was also a flak/fighter one-two punch. 2/L Russ Gecks and his 42-39856. *Wacky Woody*, were hit by flak but remained in contact with the formation until the *Zui-der Zee*. Here it was shot down by a German fighter. Everyone bailed out and landed near the Dutch island of Urk. The A/C crashed near the Ijssel Sea. Five of the crew evaded but the other half became POWs.

### AIRCRAFT STATISTICS APRIL 1944

#### Apr. 8th

A/C 42-39856.

B17G-1-VE. 337th Sqdn. AW-G. WACKY WOODY. Damaged by flak. Crashed Polder near Ijssel Sea, Holland. Crew landed near Island of Urk.

P. 2/Lt. Russell H. Gecks. EVD

CP. 2/Lt. Frank M. Deason. EVD

N. 2/Lt. Peter B. Bovers. POW

R. S/Sgt. Leland F. Welch. POW

TT. T/Sgt. Clifton E. Hanley. EVD

BT. S/Sgt. Peter E. Miskins. EVD

WG. T/Sgt. Richard E. Denney. EVD

WG. S/Sgt. Howard F. Jones. POW

TG. S/Sgt. Sam A. Polito. POW

MACR 3651.

*Snetterton Falcons page 130*

### SEPTEMBER 8, 1944

Doc Hartman's diary tells us that Lt. Russell Gecks returned today. Gecks, shot down on the April 8th mission to Archmer- Rheine, had evaded capture and had been returned via the Underground.

# E-Mail



**From:** tom kane [lionelloco@hotmail.com](mailto:lionelloco@hotmail.com)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 13, 2016 2:17 AM  
**To:** [PalJoe2@aol.com](mailto:PalJoe2@aol.com); [B17fertilyrtle@att.net](mailto:B17fertilyrtle@att.net);  
[Dlbudde@aol.com](mailto:Dlbudde@aol.com); [rainorshine101@yahoo.com](mailto:rainorshine101@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** #42-39856 B-17 Lane Tech

My name is Thomas Kane I am a graduate of Lane Tech High School Chicago, IL.

I live in Richmond IL and I am A US NAVY Veteran.

In the March 2016 issue of the Lane Tech Alumni Newsletter is an article about how the school, through the sale of \$300,00 in War Bonds, Lane Tech was able to underwrite a B-17 "Flying Fortress". The Plane was christened at Midway (Municipal) Airport Chicago, IL October 17, 1943.

"Despite the effort of many no one has been able to learn the fate of this Plane.

The nose was emblazoned with "Lane Tech of Chicago".

What I have learned from the School, the internet and several books is:

# 42-39856 B-17 G, LANE TECH of CHICAGO aka "WACKY WOODY"

96BG/337BS Snetterton 29/10/1943

MIA Achmer 8/4/1944

The 10 crew members are listed in the report in "THE GREATEST GENERATION of SILVER WINGS" by Don Ward.

What I want to do is to make a complete report and a display for the school library. Any and all information would be most appreciated. A picture of this Plane would be OUTSTANDING.

Thank You  
Tom Kane

## **Editor's Note:**

The material in this issue on pages 15 through 20 are all that could be found at this time. They represent what Tom Kane provided and what could be located in the Snetterton Falcons, Snetterton Falcons II, back issues of the Newsletter and Geoff Ward's archives of the 96th Bomb Group in England.

Using the A/C 42-39856 - B17G-VE-1 it may be possible to find more detailed information regarding missions flown, crews and maintenance of the aircraft.

Just maybe some of you may also have some insight that you could share with us Tom Kane and Lane Tech

**Subject:**Fench: Legion of Honor for Lloyd Mitchell  
**Date:**6/3/2016 11:11:57 A.M. Central Daylight Time  
**From:** [bmitchell@snowfly.com](mailto:bmitchell@snowfly.com)  
**To:** [Dlbudde@aol.com](mailto:Dlbudde@aol.com)

Mr. Budde,

I am pleased to tell you that on Thursday, June 16 at 2 PM in Oklahoma City, Dad Will Be Awarded the French Legion of Honor. He has been very adamant that he is accepting this not for himself, but rather for the crew that he served with. Kipling's Error III. Dad is in amazingly good health, almost 98 years old, still drives (which drives me nuts) reads three books a week, and occasionally gives algebra lessons to kids trying to get their GED.

I plan to have a professional photographer in attendance, and if you are interested, I will forward you some photographs of the ceremony.

Also, although I have not yet made reservations, my two brothers, Dad and myself will be attending the reunion in St. Louis in October. I hope to meet you then.

Warm regards, Brooks Mitchell  
Brooks Mitchell, Ph.D.  
COB, Snowfly Inc.  
[bmitchell@snowfly.com](mailto:bmitchell@snowfly.com)  
970-221-4353

Here is a link to the video of the ceremony. Brooks  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhoo\\_d0ztgE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhoo_d0ztgE)



Lloyd Mitchell and the French Legion Of Honor that he accepted "for the crew of Kipling's Error III."

## **Editor's Note:**

Thanks for sharing with us. Hope to see you all in Saint Louis in October.

# BULLETIN BOARD



**WWII Vets attending the St. Louis reunion are eligible to receive a \$250 rebate to help cover registration and meals. Rebate available at reunion check-in.**

This is great news. We had only 4 Veterans in Omaha from the 96th Bomb Group. This incentive and the central location in St. Louis should make the turn out much larger this October. Make your reservations now and let your fellow crew members and other friends in the 96th know you are coming. No excuses this is an excellent opportunity to all get together. Help uphold our tradition of the group with the largest attendees.

## 96th Bomb Group Library

Our Library is coming to St. Louis. Janet Strizic, our librarian, is transporting it to the reunion. Be sure to check out the many titles and valuable resources that are available. You might just like to check one out and take it home. If you have books that you borrowed in Omaha please bring them with you and exchange them for another.

A complete list of our holdings was printed in Issue No.64 February 2015 of the Newsletter and can be viewed on line at [www.96bg.org](http://www.96bg.org). To borrow your choice by mail contact

Janet Strizic  
10303 N. Ellendale Road  
Edgerton, WI 53534  
(608) 290-3611  
[rainorshine101@yahoo.com](mailto:rainorshine101@yahoo.com)

## WANTED OLD ISSUES 96<sup>th</sup> BOMB GROUP NEWSLETTERS

Issue # 20 February 1992      Issue # 23 August 1993  
Issue # 22 February 1993      Issue # 24 February 1994

These are needed to provide a complete set for the Newsletter Files. If you could donate or loan them to be copied it would be greatly appreciated. The process of putting all of the back issues into a printable PDF format that can be posted to our web page or made available on a CD to the membership has begun and needs only these issues to be complete.

Please send them to or contact our Editor to arrange for their loan.

## Veterans Museum and Educational Center

166 South Beach Street  
Daytona Beach, FL.

We are open at long last it has been worth all the effort. Many thanks to all who have made this possible through their giving of time, money, materials and items for display.

The Roll of Honor has a special place in our Museum. Doris Davis donated a very large picture of B-17s in the sky. It is beautiful and will be hanging above the Roll of Honor.

The museum is located on the ocean in the heart of Daytona Beach, Florida. Stop in and visit if you are in the area.

If anyone would like to donate articles to the museum, contact Joe Garber at:

[paljoe2@aol.com](mailto:paljoe2@aol.com).

## The Roll of Honor



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Since April, 2016



We have no new members to list with this issue of the 96th Bomb Group Newsletter but encourage all of our members to invite their family members, relatives and friends to join us. They will receive two issues of our Newsletter each year. We hope they will find them informative as well as give them an understanding of what the 96th Bomb Group and its members contributed to World War II.

Membership is open to anyone not just our veterans and families. The only requirement is an acceptance of our stated purpose:

TO PERPETUATE THE HISTORY OF THE 96<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP AND THE MEMORY OF LOST COMRADES. TO ARRANGE ANNUAL REUNIONS AND TO PROVIDE SOCIAL RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR IT'S MEMBERS.

Sign them up and bring them to Saint Louis in October.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Phone # A/C \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Missions \_\_\_\_\_ Position \_\_\_\_\_ Ground Crew \_\_\_\_\_

Other crew members or information that you feel might be useful to the 96th: \_\_\_\_\_

Dues are \$20.00 per year payable to: 96th Bomb Group Association, 31 Brinckerhoff Avenue, New Canaan, CT 06840

## YOUR 2016 DUES SHOULD BE PAID NOW



This may be your last *Newsletter!* if not unless you are a Life Member  
Send your **\$20 annual dues**

To: Daniel Bradley  
96th Bomb Group Association  
31 Brinckerhoff Avenue  
New Canaan, CT 06840

(Annual Dues were raised to \$20 at General Meeting September 2002)  
Due January 1st each year.

**SNOWBIRDS, VACATIONERS BEWARE  
BE SURE TO LET DAN BRADLEY KNOW  
YOUR WHEREABOUTS.  
To Insure YOU RECEIVE YOUR  
NEWSLETTER**



## UPCOMING MEETINGS



**96th Bomb Group Reunion 2016  
with the  
8th Air Force Historical Society  
42<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reunion  
Saint Louis, Missouri  
October 19-23, 2016**

**Sheraton Westport Hotel Lakeside Chalet  
191 Westport Plaza  
Saint Louis, MO 63146  
(888) 627-7066 - (314) 878-1500  
<http://www.sheratonwestport.com/>**

Complete program and reunion information in this issue on pages 11-14 or in June 2016 *8th Air Force News* also on line at: [8thAFHS.org](http://8thAFHS.org)

# WHERE TO CALL OR WRITE



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Texts and/or photos are sincerely solicited. If requested, photos will be returned. The Editor reserves the right to edit text. December 31, 2016 is the deadline for the February 2017 issue.

# 96th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

31 Brinckerhoff Avenue • New Canaan, CT 06840



## Final Mission

Those Who Served Their Country  
With Honor and Distinction

Dalsey, John T	338th	B
Graves, Pat		Spouse
(Graves, Donald 2014)	339th	R
Lowell, Darrel	Past President	8th AFHS
Pearce, William F.	339th	B
Peterson, Stanley A.	338th	N
Rector, Melvin W.	339th	R
Sass, Mrs. Grace		Spouse
(Sass, Paul L.)	338th	E

*We will print the names of all deceased 96th airmen sent to us whether or not they are current members of the 96th BGA.*

*We will also print the names of members of other Bomb Groups if they are current members of the 96th BGA. Written notification is required. Send to: Daniel Bradley, Secretary/Treasurer, address on this page.*

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