



N 96TH BOMB GROUP NEWSLETTER

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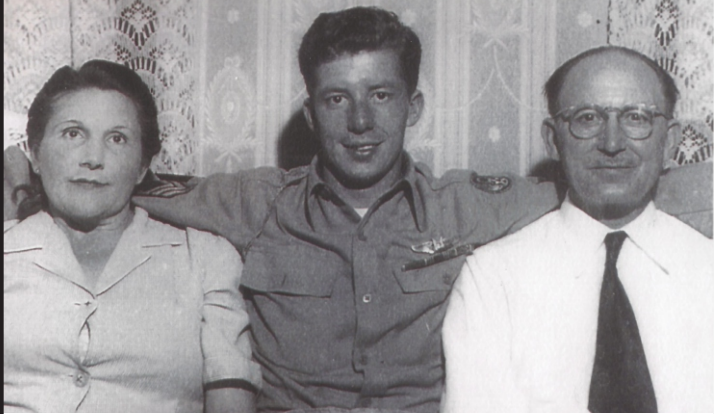
AUGUST 2018

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Joe on leave with his parents before deployment



Saint Andrews, Quindenham



Joseph R. Garber

May 6, 1923

March 18, 2018



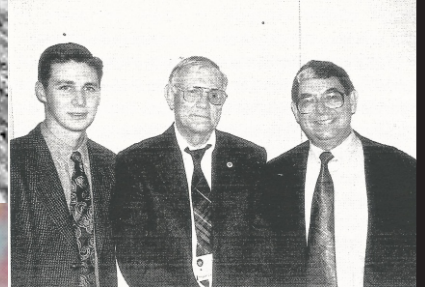
Joe and Geoff Ward



Joe and Col Stan Hand

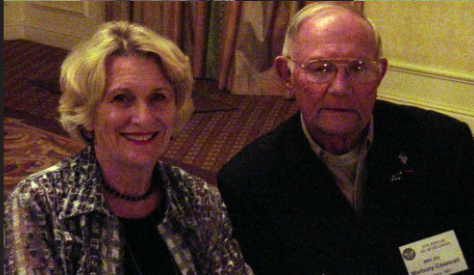


Frank Wiswal, Joe Garber and Jim Davis



2 Man Crew Marbury Council and Frank Bush

In 1998, Markus Gonser and his father Heinz located Marbury. Heinz was only a boy when Marbury's plane crashed almost in his family's back yard.



Marbury L. Councill

September 17, 1925

June 11, 2018



Carolyn, granddaughter Courtney Morgan, and Marbury in Charleston.



Linda and Cathy Fiene the daughters of Bill Fiene, Tail Gunner on Marbury's crew.



David and Cyndi Councill Marbury's son and daughter-in law.

President's Corner

Hello again everyone

I hope your summer is going well! Here in Texas we like to brag about the heat in summer, and this year we are getting our bragging rights really fulfilled...maybe we'll be quieter next year?

First off, I wanted to remember three men who have said goodbye to us in 2018. All three were 96th BG WWII veterans and also past Board members of the 96th BGA.

George Bonitz – George and his wife Bernice both died in January of this year. George was memorialized very nicely by a pictorial and article about his service in the last 96th BGA newsletter. Thank You to Dan Bradley for putting that together.



Joe Garber – Joe left us in April of this year. There is a page of pictures of Joe in this newsletter. Joe was the President of this group when I was asked to consider being a part of the Board. He was a good friend to me and a mentor for me while I was Vice President. I enjoyed his joviality and that look of surprise he could show. I miss him very much.



Marbury Councill - Marbury passed away in June after a brief hospitalization following a fall. Marbury was President of the 96th BGA prior to Joe Garber. I had the privilege of being in a tour group with Marbury and his lovely wife Carolyn in England in 2013. Visiting Snetterton Heath with him was an honor that I won't forget. Marbury is also remembered in this issue with a page of pictures.



As I mention each newsletter, if you'd like to connect with someone, please visit or call a veteran. Certainly, if you know a WWII veteran, please give them a call or pay them a visit but don't limit yourself to just WWII veterans – anyone who has served certainly has a story to tell. I am sure most would like to know that someone cares and is interested. They may not all want to tell everything, but you can express your thanks for their service and go from there.

Now, on to other things – The 2018 8th Air Force Historical Society Reunion is fast approaching – October 10th through the 14th in Dayton, Ohio. I hope you have already registered, but if not, now is a great time to do so! The 96th BGA always has a great turnout, and we have a lot of fun together. Please know that the reunion hotel (Crowne Plaza Dayton) is full – the reunion folks are now working with a Holiday Inn Express that is 1-1/2 miles away to accommodate the overflow attendees. Please see the 8th AFHS web site for all the info on the reunion and the hotels: www.8thafhs.org.

A main attraction of the reunion is a trip on Friday, October 12th, to the USAF Museum. We visited this museum in 2009 as a part of the 8th AFHS reunion that year and it was fabulous. They have since expanded, and I expect it is even better now.

I also need to get to the business side of things - If you haven't paid your 2018 dues for the 96th BGA, would you take a moment to do that now? The dues are \$20 per year.

Please make your checks payable to **96th Bomb Group Association**, and send them to:

Susan Hinchman
706 Miami View CT
Loveland, OH 45140

Thank You for your time, and I hope to see you in Dayton!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "McIlraith".

Mike McIlraith
President – 96th BGA



Meanwhile Back at the Old Base



Hello and back here we have been experiencing one of the hottest summers we have had for a long while. We do not normally have these extreme temperatures in England, although looking at some of the old photographs that were taken in the war time of the base and surrounding area, it seems that the weather was one thing that the servicemen had to get used to especially the very cold ones in the winter. I suppose it was easier to deal with depending on what state you came from in the US.

I suppose because I live right in the middle of what was the old base it a very poignant to see the aeroplane trails across the skies here and look out from my window and see the fields of corn that hide the remains of what was a hard standing for the B17's and try and imagine what it was like to have lived here in the war time. A few days ago, the last remaining flying B17 (in England) flew right overhead of the old runway on its way to an air show and it was enough to make you catch your breath as it flew by.

So, what's been happening here.

In March six members of the administration staff of the Aurora School visited the Museum. They were delighted to have the opportunity to see what the museum contains and were shown the film of the base during the war.

Open days for the Museum are being held during August when the Aurora school is on Summer holidays. Therefore, no DBS checked member of the group will be required to escort visitors.

We are pleased to have had several visitors to the Museum. Last month Lauren and Jim Ott came to have a look around. Lauren's grandfather was Martin Zuckerman who was based here. Lauren is hoping that later in the year her family, who are planning a trip will also be able to visit.

David Brown will also be visiting on the 29th August. David's Great uncle T/ Sgt Charles Brown was killed along with all of Lt. Hargett's crew when their B17 crashed at West Harling after taking off for a mission, which had been cancelled in November 1943.

Finally, Scott Wilcox and his father will be coming over on the 10th September and they will be trying to fit as much as they can into their time here, going to the Museum the Memorial and hopefully the Church at Quidenham. Rounding this all off, with a look around the Museum at Duxford.

We are looking forward to seeing some of the plaques on the railings around the Memorial and I have been keeping my eye on the roses that we planted in the corners of the surrounding garden.

My son Steve is currently sourcing a padlock to the Museum main door, as additional security, we have never had any problems but just to be on the safe side. Steve is also responsible for the flags on the memorial site. They have been flown for special occasions and when we know we are having visitors.

Almost missed out saying that Dale Budde also came to London but his time here was cut short by a heart attack at Heathrow while picking up his rental car. He assures us that after open heart surgery here he is on the mend. We here all hope that you are. Dale hope that you can make it another time.

Talking of being on the mend I am pleased to say that Margaret Ward, Geoff's wife who many of you will know and have met, has recently had a heart bypass operation. She has made a good recovery and is doing well. Geoff and Margaret send their sincere thanks for all the get-well messages.

All is well at the old base.

All the best Jean Wills

Beech Cottage, Eccles Quidenham

Norwich, Norfolk

NR-16-217 United Kingdom

Email:- jean@onepresspublishing.co.uk



Jean Wills



Lauren and Jim Ott in front of Mission Board at our Museum. Lauren's grandfather was Martin Zuckerman who was based here at Snetterton.

A Chat From Your Chaplain

To the best of my knowledge, since our last Newsletter, Final Missions were made by Bernice and George Bonitz, Gerry Kester, Joe Garber and Marbury Councill!!! Please continue to pray for and lift up the families as well. They go way back in time with our original formation of our beloved 96th BGA. Our President Mike and his bride Terri make frequent trips to see Dorothy and I and bring us delicious doughnuts.



Bill and Dorothy Thorns with Terri McIlraith on one of their frequent stops and it looks like they brought more than doughnuts.

My bride Dorothy and I have great care here and have a wonderful battery of doctors.

For all of you attending Dayton, Ohio, you'll be in our prayers and thoughts for health, safety and traveling mercies there and return. We will be with you in spirit. My bride and I and I'm sure you too are thrilled to be a part of the Square "C" 96th BGA. We were a viable WWII, Low Key Bomb Group and as such, have bragging rights to a wonderful, and outstanding History. We have a proud niche in the annals of the Mighty Eighth Air Force!!! On behalf of the entire 96th BGA I want to give our maximum effort thanks to our precious English families, Margaret and Geoff, the Patricks Bert and Sombra, Jill and Alfie, The Holmes's and so many more, were instrumental in all facets from

our history, to the hosting of reunions, to hosting individuals, and on and on down to the nuts and bolts of our precious Museum

Blessings and Love to All

Bill Thorns

THE TRUTH ABOUT GRIEF

- Grief is a normal human response to loss-not just the loss of a loved one, but the loss of unfulfilled dreams, broken relationships, failure and change.
- Don't suppress the pain you feel; it will only resurface later. Experience it, feel it, and resist the temptation to ignore it or "stuff" it.
- You don't "get over" grief; you get through it.
- People will say stupid things. Count on it. Most people just don't know what to say and often feel awkward.
- Although it is unpleasant, you may resent those with "normal" lives. Such resentment is common.
- Try not to make major decisions or changes when you're grieving. Grief leaves emotions too raw and judgment too clouded to make good decisions.
- Allow time, *lots of it*, to heal. If possible, work part time and limit outside activities and commitments.
- Grieving is not a sign of weakness; it's a sign of integrity. Grief means you are being honest about the feelings in your heart.
- Talk about your loss instead of trying to protect your friends and family by your silence.
- Grieving is hard work. Take care of yourself through a good diet and exercise.
- Seek out people who understand what you are experiencing. Perhaps join a grief support group or see a grief counselor.
- No two people grieve alike. Everyone needs the freedom to grieve in his or her unique way.
- Grief is random; you never know when or where an emotion will surface.

Pathways Through Grief Handout 4

Adventa Hospice

*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 (850)-660-1805
Mobile (850)-842-1923
E-mail b17fertilemyrtle@att.net





96th Bomb Group Recipients French Legion of Honor

Marbury L. Councill Jr.	337th	Stanley A. Peterson	338th
Salvatore "Sal" Cracolici	338th	Jesse A. Reese	337th
Paul R. Frank	338th	James A. Rich Jr.	338th
Joseph Garber	338th	Henry "Ed" Tessien	413th
George A. Gorman	339th	William M. "Bill" Thorns	338th
Glenn A. Harrison	339th	Rudolph Villalobos	413th
Joseph O. Ingram Jr.	337th	Frank A. Wiswall	413th
Lloyd Mitchell	413th	Richard P. Woodson, III	337th

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 www.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 Bill Thorns, an award recipient, would be glad to assist. His contact information can be found on the last page in "Where to Call or Write."

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



B-17, 42-3535 from the 339th. All 10 members of the crew walked away from this crash landing and safely evaded capture with the aid of the Danish underground it is a story to remember.

A TIME TO REMEMBER

11 APRIL 1944

By
Raoul A. de Mars
Lieutenant Colonel
US Air Force, Retired



The day started at 5:00 A.M. when the duty clerks made the rounds and woke up the crews scheduled for a mission that day. I was the co-pilot of a B-17 in the 339th Bomb Squadron, 96th Bomb Group, Third Air Division, 8th Air Force, based at one of the multitude of Air Bases which dotted the English countryside. Our base was located at Snetterton Heath which was a rail stop in the countryside of Suffolk County. We were about thirty (30) miles from Bury Saint Edmunds and approximately 100 miles N.N.E. of London.

Breakfast was great. As on all mission days, you could have as many "fresh" eggs as you wanted, plus bacon, ham or sausage (or all of these), and even steak and potatoes if you so desired. Days when you weren't scheduled for a Mission it was dried eggs, et cetera.

Breakfast over, we went to the Briefing Room, a fairly large room with the whole of one end taken up with a huge map of Europe, including England. This map was covered with a curtain and it was a very dramatic moment when the Briefing Officer drew back the curtain and revealed what was to be the "Target for Today". "Today's" target was Poznan, Poland, about one hundred and sixty (160) miles due east of Big 'B'-Berlin. The lines drawn in grease pencil on the Plexiglas cover of the map elicited a lot of "Oh my God, how damn far is that?", and "Hell, we'll never make it back" comments from the crews. After a few "at ease" calls from the C.O., we were given the gist of what the long lines meant. Instead of flying over the North Sea (Denmark and the Baltic Sea), and being subjected to very little anti-craft fire and fighter attacks, we were routed over land, across the northern most tip of France, Belgium and the long haul across Germany, past Berlin and on to Poznan. This was an attempt at diversion; to make them think we were going to some other target. Weather was to be our ally, with a lot of cloud under us most of the way and clearing up slightly when we reached Poznan. If it were undercast at Poznan and our Pathfinder (Radar) Aircraft couldn't make out the primary target we were to fly to our secondary target Stettin, Poland, on the Oder River about forty (40) miles inland from the Baltic Sea. I'm not sure how many groups were in the force assigned to bomb Poznan, but our plan was to be part of a composite group, made up of planes from several different Squadrons and Groups within the Third Air Division.

(A note of explanation: a Squadron consisted of four flights of three planes each, with spare crews and planes; a Group was made up of three Squadrons and so on up the chain of command thru Wing, Division and numbered Air Force). The route we were to fly and the other factors controlling the mission, assembly, climb to altitude, rendezvous with other groups, air speed, et cetera, gave us an estimated time in flight from takeoff to landing at home base, of just under twelve (12) hours. This was stretching it just a bit, and asking allowance for a very small fuel reserve. We (the whole Poznan bomber force) were forced to maintain a slower than normal air speed to conserve fuel. This meant that any time we were over anti-aircraft batteries they would have a longer period of time to zero in on us, and it also meant that many of the fighter planes which came up and attacked us on our way to Poznan had ample time to return to their bases, refuel, rearm and then come back up and press their sustained attacks again on our way home from the target.

We only knew one other crew in the Composite Group, Lt. John W. Ziegler and his co-pilot Joe Gold and the rest of their crew.

On the first leg of the flight we ran into a few scattered areas where there was concentrated flak! but our main concern was the incessant fighter attacks which dove right thru the B-17 formation and it appeared that some of them were committed to crashing a B-17 to take it down. This caused several of the pilots to take drastic evasive action. Three of our 17's were shot down, and the one flying my left wing got a direct hit in the Bomb Bay and just disintegrated. We didn't have time to worry about it or anything, but that was the slot John Ziegler had been flying.

Over Poznan the Pathfinders could not pick up the targets so we were routed to Stettin. On the way to our secondary target we had more vicious fighter attacks, and the closer we got to Stettin, the heavier the flak. We lost one engine (No.3) over the target, and shortly after "Bombs Away" and before we had the Bomb Bay doors all the way closed, we got a near miss just below the plane, which sprung the doors and did some minor structural damage so the doors wouldn't

close completely. The extra drag, and only three engines, made it impossible for us to keep up with the formation and we started falling behind.

By the time we were flying over Northern Germany, headed for home via Denmark and the North Sea, Bethe, the pilot, and I decided we would be better off at a lower altitude as we would be able to maneuver better in the denser air (we were at about 28,000 ft. then), and if we went down to tree top level there would be less chance of ground observers or fighters spotting us. We started to let down as fast as we could, given the condition of the aircraft, when we spotted more fighters coming at us. They made several passes at us and it was on one of those passes that I got hit. They also knocked out our No.2 engine and hit an oil line on our No. 4 engine. That left us with one good engine (No.1) and No.4, which was not much good, as it started to overheat almost immediately due to loss of oil. We had managed to partially feather the No.2 engine when it went out but No.3 could not be feathered, so it just kept on wind milling, causing even more drag. We knew we would never make it to England and decided to head for Sweden, which was neutral.

About that time I was beginning to feel kind of weak and the pain was really getting to me. Apparently the fighters had either run out of armament or were too low on fuel to press in for the kill as they just peeled off and left. Maybe they saw the smoke from the oil leak on #4 and figured we were done for.

Our crew, on this one flight, had five Nazi fighters shot down and confirmed. Bethe decided I was in no condition to keep flying co-pilot, so he ordered me back to the radio room to have Johnny put some proper bandages and some sulfa powder on my wounds and possibly give me a shot of morphine for the pain. (Up until this point I had just had a pressure bandage over my eye, which I was holding in place with my hand).

The plane was extremely hard to hold on course, which we had calculated to be toward Sweden. (I say calculated because the 20 MM shell which exploded on entry over my head and wounded me had also wiped out the only compass we had left the magnetic compass). We were flying on only the No.1 engine now, the No.4 engine having gotten so hot from lack of oil that it froze. We were



The crew of 42-3535 (top, left to right): Ssgt. Stan Segalla, Sgt. Russ Lauer, Ssgt. Stan Mrozek, Ssgt. Al Esler, Sgt. Everett Morgan, and Sgt. John Hamlin. Bottom, 2nd Lt. Raoui delMars, 2nd Lt. Ken Bethe, 2nd Lt. Hy Juskowitz (now Howard Justin), and 2nd Lt. Bob Smith.

steadily losing altitude, having come down from 28,000 ft. to just a few hundred. The crew had jettisoned everything possible, all 50 caliber machine guns, all remaining ammo, all ten parachutes, as several of them had been rendered useless by enemy fire, and every crew member elected to "ride it down all the way", though the risk of a crash landing was very great shot up as the plane was. Anything that wasn't fastened down got thrown out, and I can still see our Bombardier, Smitty, scrambling around on his hands and knees in the nose picking up waxed paper discs about 3 inches in diameter (used in the sextant) and throwing them out. We didn't know until after we had landed that he had left the ammo belts for his nose turret in and had 800 rounds (400 each) left when we crashed. Could have killed him at the time, but it hadn't made much difference. When I went back to the radio room I had to go thru the Bomb Bay on the catwalk and I could see what the near miss had done to the Bomb Bay doors. They were very nearly closed except in the front, which were sprung open about three or four inches. I lay down on the floor in the radio room and Johnny (an ex-medic who had volunteered for gunnery school) took charge. His main duty was waist gunner, but we had not been bothered by any fighters for some time and the guns had been jettisoned, so he could tend to me. He cleaned out the wound as best he could with cold water from a canteen and poured sulfa powder in and all around the wound. Then he bandaged it and tried to give me a shot of morphine for the pain. There were at least six first-aid kits per plane and each had a small tube (with needle attached) of morphine. Johnny tried the first two kits and had no luck; one tube had leaked and had no morphine, while the other one wouldn't work when the needle broke off at the tube as he tried to open it. He quickly gathered all the other first-aid kits and tried again. One more had a broken needle and another had leaked dry. Two kits had no tubes of morphine in them (probably stolen), so I didn't get a shot. I'm glad that they weren't all that reliable, because had he been able to give me the shot, I would have been out cold when we crash landed, and being unable to run with the rest of the crew, would probably have spent the rest of the war in a POW camp.

Tony Segalla, our Engineer and top turret gunner got into the co-pilot's seat as soon as I went back to the radio room. He had to help Bethe hold the plane on course by pushing on the left rudder pedal as hard as he could with both feet as the No.1 engine was the only one still going and both No.3 and No.4 engines were creating so much drag by wind milling. The pressure to try and turn to the right was very difficult to overcome. From where I was sitting on the floor of the radio room I could look out of the waist windows and by rising up a little I could see that we were very, very

low. About that time Bethe called over the intercom to brace ourselves, we were going to touch down.

Ten, maybe only five seconds before we touched down I felt a shudder go thru the plane and thought for sure it was going to break up. We all must have been doing something right though, as the shudder was the result of striking a telephone pole about six or eight feet in from the wing tip, which slewed the plane around enough to prevent it from crashing through a farm house which had been directly in our path. At that low an altitude and that slow a speed there was no way Bethe and Tony together could have turned the aircraft without dropping a wing and cart wheeling, instead of landing level, straight ahead.

Bethe did a superb job of landing that plane - a lesser pilot could have killed us all. When we touched down the weakened plane opened up just ahead of the radio room and acted like a plow. Dirt was forced up into the radio room so much that it lifted us, Johnny, Al Esler and me, about three feet. All we had to do to get out was take one step up through the open hatch and jump onto the wing and down to the ground. I will never know where they all came from, but within minutes after the plane came to rest there must have been at least six or eight people there, all trying to talk at once, and all trying to tell us what to do. We couldn't understand the language and as more people showed up, a man who identified himself as a Canadian, who was working with the underground, came and told us what we should do.

We were to cross a ditch between the field we had landed in and the one next to it, which had been plowed. Then we were to run about 300 yards to a small stand of trees, which were back across the ditch. We ran, I mean RAN as we were told, and as we went down the plowed field, Johann Nessin came behind us with a harrow and wiped out our tracks. The trees were very dense and with so much undergrowth that we had to crawl in on our hands and knees. When we got to the center of the woods, at least as close to the center as we could judge, we just lay down and stayed quiet. This little stand of trees and underbrush could not have been more than a couple of hundred feet in diameter.

There were a few spots in the middle where some of the crew could sit up, but most had to lie down. Mr. Nessin came past with his harrow and told us to stay quiet as they could hear the Nazis coming. He gave us a password, which I wish I could remember but can't, and said he would be back after dark when the Germans



Our Pilot Ken Bethe

were gone and tell us what their (the underground) plans were for us. Very shortly we heard the Nazis over by the plane questioning the Danes. We couldn't understand them but were sure they were trying to find out what happened to us. We found out later that the Danes told them we were gone when they got there. They even told them they had heard another plane and maybe it had picked us up.



The Germans inspect our Air Craft as curious Danes look on.

It wasn't very long before the Nazis, who were all older non-combat types of the occupation army, were at the edges of the woods, looking for some clue as to whether or not we were in there. About this time, Smitty, the Bombardier got out his pocket knife and started to cut a small branch off the tree he was lying under, as it was brushing his face. The whole damn tree was shaking, no noise, just movement, but if all the Nazis hadn't been probing around the edges they would surely have seen it waving. Tony reached over and grabbed Smitty's wrist to make him stop. He really got the point across, because Smitty complained of a sore wrist for days. Looking back on it, none of us were surprised that Smitty would do such a stupid thing; after all hadn't he been throwing out paper discs to lighten the aircraft and then left 400 rounds in each of his nose guns?



We waited in silence for the Germans to finish their inspection.

The Nazis finally tired of poking around the edges and left. I don't blame them for not entering the woods - I

don't think I would have if there was a possibility of there being ten armed men in there. We stayed as still and quiet as possible until dark when it was safe to move around a little. It was getting colder with darkness, and lying on the ground wasn't helping any. I thought I would freeze. I started shivering and Stan Mrozak and Hy Juskowitz crawled over and lay as close to me as they could to warm me up. They thought I was going into shock, but I wasn't. I was just cold (I think). We took off all of our insignia and all identification except our dog tags and buried it. (It may still be there).

It seemed like an eternity and we were beginning to speculate as to what could have happened that would stop the Danes from coming back. Nessin and two other men came to us about midnight and led us to his farm/ where we went up into a hayloft. It was a welcome change - hay to lie on and a lot warmer than the cold ground. Soon we were brought something to eat and drink, and though I can't remember what it was, I do remember thinking it was the best food I had ever eaten. It had only been about 24 hours since breakfast the day before, but what a long 24 hours.

They told us they were sure the Nazis would be conducting a building by building search of the area in the morning, so we would have to be moved before daylight. Plans had been made to move us in a truck, piled with straw, but as yet they didn't know where. They told us to try and rest for a few hours and they would be back for us before dawn. We were all far too nervous and scared to sleep, especially our navigator, Hy. His full name was Hyaan J. Juskowitz and the fact that he was Jewish caused him great concern, as it was well known how the Nazis treated the Jews. We still had our side arms and Hy vowed they would not capture him alive.

In a short while that seemed endless to us we heard a truck stop in front of the barn and Mr. Nessin called for us to come down, and hurry. We all went out by the truck and were told then that we would be taken to Copenhagen. We were to be staying in an apartment on the top floor of the apartment building which, I think, was ten or twelve stories high. We climbed into the back of the truck and were covered with straw. I don't know how far we were from Copenhagen, but it couldn't have been far as it seemed to be a short trip under the straw. The truck stopped several times and each time I thought it was Nazi patrols wanting to search, but it must have been only stop signs as we immediately started again each time. Finally the truck stopped and we heard the door open and the driver (I never did know his name), told us to get down from the truck, one at a time.

The truck was parked on the side of the street next to an alley and they guided us, one by one, into an elevator which was being held on the basement level. When we were all in the elevator they took us to the top floor and went into the apartment of one Tom Robert Jensen and his wife. He was very active in the underground and was later caught by the Gestapo and killed.

I don't remember for sure whether we stayed in the apartment for two, three or four days, but I do remember we were treated like royalty. We had to be very quiet, walk around in our stocking feet, talk in whispers and only go to the toilet before they left in the morning or after they came home in the evening.

Neighbors might wonder who was in the apartment and call the police. Food for a mob like that was sure to be a problem, or so we thought. They brought hot meals for us in the evening and we had ample supplies of sandwiches and drinks during the day. I don't know where they found it, but they even brought us a small American flag on a stand and American Cigarettes. We all crowded around the radio in the evening and listened to the BBC (British Broadcasting Corp.) news of the war. We also listened to the English broadcast of "Lord Haw Haw" from Berlin Radio. Lord Haw Haw, as he was called, was British and had gone over to the Nazi cause. He broadcast propaganda beamed at Allied troops and obviously had quite a few spies in England.

To digress a bit, I recall one night several weeks before being shot down when the crowd at the Officer's Club was larger than usual, as the next day was a "stand down" and no mission was scheduled. It was time for the Berlin Radio and Lord Haw Haw, so nearly everybody got quiet so we could hear. Well, he gave his usual spiel about how well the Axis powers were doing and how badly the Allies were doing and what terrible losses the Air Force was sustaining. We didn't believe it all but it did have a sobering effect. Then something that left most of those present in total disbelief. He said "A bit of advice for you chaps of the 96th Bomb group. I know you don't have anything on for tomorrow, but if you want to be on time for your next mission, the clock over the bar should be reset. It is now five minutes slow". All eyes went to the clock, then wrist watches and back to the clock. Sure as hell, it was five minutes slow. How much else did they know? Scary.

As I have said, I am not sure how long we stayed in the apartment in Copenhagen. You could figure it out from the date on the Visa from Sweden which is in my scrap book, as that date was the day after we left Copenhagen. On the evening we were to leave Copenhagen, they told us we should be ready on a moment's notice, as they were not positive about exactly what time the truck would be there to pick us up. Nazi patrols had a habit of arbitrarily stopping any truck to inspect the cargo and it's driver's papers, so we had to expect that this might happen. It didn't, and when the truck arrived sometime after dark we all went down in the elevator to the same building entrance we had used before. We were sent out to the truck one at a time and each of us was put in what must have been tanks for carrying fish. They were about 2 1/2 feet wide, 3 1/2 feet deep and 3 1/2 feet long. They were made of fairly heavy gage steel and each one had a cover. There was no fish odor but I couldn't think of anything else they

could have been used for and when we arrived at our next stop on "The Underground Railroad", it more or less confirmed our suspicions; it was a small fishing village on the coast of Denmark, across from Sweden. We were taken to an inn of some sort where they once more fed us. They also had a Doctor there who checked my wound, cleaned it up again and put on new bandages. The Doctor had the highest praise for the job Johnny had done cleaning, treating and bandaging me up. He (the Doctor) did not speak English, and I had the devil of a time convincing him that I had had a tetanus shot not more than six weeks ago and didn't need one now.

We sat around waiting for the rest of the night until just before dawn. We were to be put on board a fishing boat which was to rendezvous with another fishing boat from Sweden. Finally it was time to leave and we were all taken outside, down a short street and told to crouch down behind a kind of sea wall about three feet high. "Don't make a sound." We heard footsteps and peering over the wall could see, a few feet away, a Nazi soldier walking on patrol. He went a short way east of our position did an about face and marched back the way he had come. When he was out of sight two of us at a time went over the wall and ran to the boat where we were put into the small cabin. Each time the patrol marched to the other end of his beat two more of our crew made it to the boat. Five times, and each time the tension was so high as to be almost unbearable. It must have been far worse for those poor Danes than it was for us, for if they had been caught they would have been shot whereas we would only have been taken prisoner.

Almost immediately, the "crew" of the boat came down the street talking and laughing as if this was just another fishing day. They walked over to the boat, and even stopped on the way to give the patrol a light. It seems he had run out of matches very soon after going on duty. The boat crew came aboard and without any fanfare set out for the rendezvous. This was a very ticklish operation as Denmark was an occupied country and Sweden was neutral, and the territorial waters of each country met in a well-defined line between the two. German patrol boats were operating in the area and would fire on any Danish boat going into Swedish waters or stop and search any Swedish boat in Danish waters, but the rigid discipline of the Nazi armed forces worked in our favor. Their patrols were so regular you could set your watch by them, and the Danes and Swedes had the rendezvous timed to coincide with a period of time when there would be no patrols in the area. They shoved off the dock and we were on our way to Sweden and safety. It seemed an eternity before they cut the engine back to idle, and we thought we must be close to the Swedish boat but it was a patrol boat checking out our boat. They just wanted to know what boat it was and make sure it was authorized to be out. The skipper of our boat knew and was known by all the patrol boat crews so they didn't bother to come aboard, or even get very close. We were all glad they didn't or

we were all set to go over the side and hold onto a handrail that had been added to the side of the boat just below the water line. It was not yet quite full daylight, and the skipper told us later that had it been light the patrol probably would not have questioned them at all. We started moving again and before long we were out of sight of the patrol boat. We changed course and before very long we spotted the Swedish boat, apparently just sitting waiting for us. The skipper pulled alongside and we were told to GO. As fast as we could we jumped into the Swedish boat and hid below the rail. In a matter of seconds the two boats separated and we were in Swedish territorial waters and safe.

I don't remember how long it took us to get to Malmo, but that made no difference, we were safe. As soon as we landed we were met by the American Consulate, who arranged for the Swedish Visas for each of us. Almost immediately they took me to the hospital to check out how serious my eye wound was, Bethe and the rest of the crew were taken to temporary quarters, as they were to go to Stockholm the next day. When I got to the hospital they cleaned me up and I was admitted. The Chief of Surgery told me (thru an interpreter) that they would have to operate on my eye to remove shell fragments in the eyeball and to repair the damage done to my eyelids. Also, some stitches had to be taken in a small laceration in my right cheek just below the eye. (This was where a shell fragment had entered and gone down thru the roof of my mouth and broke my upper plate, which they also fixed).

Bethe and the rest of the crew came by to tell me they were leaving for Stockholm around noon and told me where they would be staying. They didn't know and, because of security, couldn't find out when there would be a flight to England, so they didn't know whether or not I would get out of the hospital in time to catch up with them.

They operated on my eye the next day and that was a weird experience. The doctor used a local anesthetic and I could see everything he did. It was kind of scary lying there and watching the instruments get closer and closer, but there was no pain at all and all I could feel was a slight pressure as he took the pieces of 20 MM out of my eyeball and sewed up my eyelid and cheek. It didn't take very long and I was pleasantly surprised that there was relatively little pain as the anesthetic wore off just a slight discomfort. The doctor that did the surgery told me there was very little damage to the eyeball and if there was any change in my vision it would be almost unnoticeable. He also told me that the first-aid (Johnny's cleaning, sulfa powder and bandaging) had in all probability saved the eye from infection and possible loss of the eye. Thanks again, Johnny. The doctor told me he didn't think there would be any complications but was going to keep me for a couple of days to make sure. He was great. He came to visit me several times a day and we had some interesting talks. He told me there were only a few of the staff at the hospital who spoke

English and he enjoyed talking to an American. I told him it was a mutual feeling, as it was difficult to communicate with the nurses in sign language. He also told me a bit about Sweden and the socialized society. For instance, the Chief Surgeon at the hospital was not earning as much as I was as a 2nd Lieutenant. Taxes were very high also but their standard of living was also very high. He seemed to have few complaints about the system.

I don't remember how many days I was in the hospital at Malmo. On the day I was released Lt. King from the Air Attaché's office picked me up and took me to the train for my trip to Stockholm. Some train. I went first-class coach and it was really first-class; huge windows and a swivel recliner at each window. There was a diner car on the train, and the waiters all spoke English, as well as French and German and, of course, Swedish. One of them told me, when I asked, that most people in any way employed in the tourist endeavors; transportation, lodging, restaurants, etc. spoke several languages. It was about 300 to 350 miles from Malmo to Stockholm and we made very good time. It seemed to me that the train was going very fast, though it was one of the smoothest train rides I had ever had.

Bethe and the rest of the crew met me at the station and took me back to the hotel where they were staying; the Continental. It was a very nice hotel and I really enjoyed the three or four days I spent there. Only one mishap, which I probably shouldn't mention. The first time I went into the bathroom I made the mistake of using the bidet instead of the commode and got the surprise of my life when I "flushed" it. They took me shopping for clothes the next day, which the Air Force paid for, and I got everything from skin out; underwear, socks, two shirts, shoes, necktie, suit and a topcoat. I also got shaving gear, including a mug and brush. The clothes I turned over to the Air Force when I got back to our base but I still have the shaving brush, which is pure badger bristle and cost \$9.00 even then I don't know why it was so expensive. It was just luck, fate or something that the rest of the crew was still in Stockholm. They had left on a flight for Scotland the day before I got there, but foul weather and unexpected head winds over the North Sea forced the plane to turn back. The flight was rescheduled and we were taken out to the airport late in the afternoon. The plane we were to be going in was a B-24 Bomber, which had been modified to carry people instead of bombs. A platform had been built in the Bomb Bay with four benches the length of the bay; one on each side and two back to back in the middle. The Bomb Bay doors on the B-24 opened by rolling up along the inside of the fuselage (like a roll top desk) and we got in thru a trap door in the platform. Our crew was not the only passengers, as there were a lot of Jewish refugees who had made their way thru Denmark to Sweden, and also quite a few Norwegians. Norway was occupied by the Nazis and for some reason they were far more lenient with the Danes than the Norwegians. We took off just

before dark, and there were so many passengers in the plane that a few of them had to move to the nose of the plane so it could keep the nose wheel on the ground to taxi to take-off position. By holding the brakes on and using about half throttle the pilot could hold the nose down while the passengers could make their way back to the rear of the plane.

When we were airborne we immediately started climbing, as we had to get high enough to clear the mountains in Norway. We also had to take a longer than "as the crow flies" route to avoid anti-aircraft guns and the fighters based in Norway. It was cold - there was no heat in the Bomb Bay and a frail old man from Norway (he told us he was 78) was in a very bad way. Several of us gave him some of our extra clothes but he couldn't seem to get warm at all. His fingernails started to turn blue and we were afraid he was going to die. Again Bethe proved his worth - he figured that the plane crew would have hot coffee so he crawled up to the pilot's compartment, told them of the old man's predicament, and came back with a thermos full of hot coffee. We gave some to the poor fellow and in a matter of minutes he was O.K. He stopped shaking and the color in his hands came back. The rest of the coffee was given to several other people who seemed to be in the greatest need for it. After we landed, the pilot told us that he would personally see to it that any future flights would have the hot coffee available. He couldn't promise cream and sugar, as they were rationed, but the important thing was the hot drink. I think it saved the old man's life.

We landed at a field in Scotland and our crew were the first ones out of the plane. I stood beside the plane and counted them as they came out, and there were 78 passengers and a crew of four, including our crew of ten. That made 82 people on that B-24. I still find it hard to believe. We were taken in hand by boys of G-2(Intelligence - it was still the Army Air Corps then)and delivered to 63 Brook Street London for "de-briefing". We figured it wouldn't take long and were anxious to get out and explore London. What a surprise we were in for. We were restricted to the premises "until further notice" and informed that the de-briefing would start in the morning. It lasted for several days; they interrogated us individually, in two's and three's and then as a complete crew. We were rather unique, being one of the very few crews who escaped from enemy territory as a complete crew during the war. They wanted to know about everything, and I mean everything we saw or heard while in Denmark. One thing that made us feel that we had a pretty good intelligence force was this; when we told them about the crash landing, and the Canadian who was there with the Danes, they said "oh yes, that would be "so and so" naming him. I can't remember his name now, but we knew it then. After the first few days our restriction was lifted and we were given passes to go out on the town - London.

The whole crew went together and were seeing the sights when one of the crew (I don't remember which one) let out a yell. "It can't be". Almost simultaneously we heard a yell from up the street. We all turned to look and all hell broke loose. It was John Ziegler's crew - every last one of them, safe and sound. We were so sure that theirs had been the plane on my left wing which got the direct hit and exploded. What happened was that in some of the violent maneuvering to avoid the German fighters, several planes in the group had rejoined formation in different positions. John's crew saw us drop behind, and when we didn't make it home, they were sure we were either dead or captured. Needless to say, we were twenty happy guys and had quite a celebration that night.

After a few sight seeing tours we were sent back to our base to get our personal belongings before being returned to the States. As escapees or evades we were placed in what was called category "R", which meant we were restricted from any more combat flying. Having been in enemy territory, if we were shot down and captured we could have been shot as spies. Good news - we all wanted to go home. Lady luck had sailed on us so many times in the past little while and nobody can have good luck forever.

We chose to fly a war-weary B-17 back to the States for modification and our first stop was Prestwick, Scotland, where we were to pick up the B-17 and took off for Reykjavik, Iceland, which was the only stop we would make before landing at La Guardia in New York. The ground crew asked us if we had any scotch (I guess every war-weary crew that came through had the same idea) and told us we would have all our baggage checked by customs when we landed and would have to pay duty on each bottle. They also told us that the plane would be parked in a special area reserved for the Air Corps.

Well, before we took off from Reykjavik, we hid bottles of scotch all over that plane. The majority of it was wrapped in our wool socks and placed in between the braces of the partially lowered flaps. Then the flaps were raised completely and we were ready to go. Not being able to lower the flaps 30 degrees (which was standard take-off procedure) we held the brakes until we had almost full power on and the plane just kind of leaped down the runway. No problem. We were airborne with a third of the runway left.

We had an uneventful flight to La Guardia, all be it peppered with smart remarks about being sure to make a "no-flap" landing or that would be the first time in history it had ever rained scotch on New York. All went well on the "no flap" landing, and after checking in thru customs, we went back down the field to the Air Corps area and retrieved our scotch. We were all sent to a processing center to be given new assignments stateside, said lengthy and emotional good-byes to each other, and were truly on our way home.

The Story Behind A Time To Remember 11 April 1944

By Dale Budde

Always on the lookout for new and interesting stories for the Newsletter when Geoff Ward forwarded this amazing story. I reached out immediately to Raoul A. de Mars, believing him to be the author, and asked for permission to print it and if he had any more photos besides the one of the nose included in the story. Imagine my surprise when I received the following reply.

Subject:Re: A Time to Remember
Date: 5/28/2018 12:21:38 PM Central Standard Time
From: oneshot1946@gmail.com
To: dlbudde@aol.com

Dale:

Yes, actually I am Raoul A. de Mars Jr. (and proud of it). Nicknamed Randy since I was a little kid.

I was always interested in my dad's military background as I was an "Air Force Brat" and loved seeing all of the planes on bases where we were stationed.

I am a retired Sergeant First Class (E-7) from the US Army (1971-1991). Dad used to give me grief about being in the Army, but I always reminded him that he originally joined the Army Air Corps! He'd laugh and smile.

My dad died in January 2004. He and Howard Justin (changed his name from Hyman J. Juskowitz), both belonged to the Air Force Escape and Evasion Society and met several times at their reunions. Howard died in 2015. He was the last living member of the Bethe Crew.

While I was stationed in Frankfurt, Germany in the 1970's I started doing research about my father's experiences and was able to contact several of the Danish Underground people that had aided in the crew's evasion to Sweden.

Johan Nissen was still alive and provided me with several photographs and additional contacts for information.

Seems like Europeans never move so that was a blessing and aid in tracking them down.

Once I had gathered the photographs and stories I approached my dad with the information.

He was amazed to see the photographs. I remember distinctly him saying, "Damn. Didn't think I'd ever see that again."

He was then focused to sit down and write the story that you have, which he called, "A Time To Remember."

He contacted Martha Bethe, Kenneth Bethe's widow, and shared the photographs and story with her and she then shared it with her children. She said, "Kenneth never talked about it."

I sent the story to Geoff because I thought he would be interested as a historian for the 96th BG, and because I

LOVE his book, Snetterton Falcons, 96th Bomber Group.

I have enjoyed tracking down each member of the crew and have shared this story with their descendants when possible.

I have a younger half-brother, Michael de Mars, that is a Navy veteran. He and I have talked on the phone about our father and we share e-mails but health circumstances have not allowed us to physically meet. I'm 72 and he is 50.

What a wonderful story to have and to share with family, friends and future generations. Pictured here top to bottom are a few of those in the Raoul deMars family:

Raoul and Randy's son Adam deMars

Raoul with his daughter's (Dianne de Mars) two sons, John and Greg Grimsley

Randy with two of Raoul's four great-grandsons, Trey Claridge on the right and Adam Claridge on the left. They are two of his granddaughter's three boys.

If the sharing of this memorable story was not enough consider my surprise when we received a PDF copy of the *Snetterton Falcons II* from Randy and his instructions in the e-mail below to see that it was shared for all to have an insight into life at Snetterton Heath during the war.

From: Randy de Mars [<mailto:oneshot1946@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, August 07, 2018 5:36 PM
To: Mike McIlraith, PE, LEED AP
Cc: Dale L Budde; Rebecca Lutz; Bill Thorns; MERTON THURSTON; Richard Hill; Sue Hinchman
Subject: Re: Snetterton Falcons II

Mike, and all:

As far as using the Snetterton II PDF, of course it should be made available to as many as want it. I had that scanned for several reasons.

1. To honor the memory of my father and the many aviators that gave the ultimate sacrifice;
2. To provide access to a great book that costs too much now that it is out of print.
3. To keep the memory of what Snetterton Heath was to so many alive for others to better understand and appreciate.

So, no strings attached. My way of "paying back" the warriors of the Mighty 8th, and particularly the 96th Bomb Group.

Raoul A. de Mars Jr. (Randy)

(See the Bulletin Board on page 22 for how to view the *Snetterton Falcons II* on our web page www.96bg.org.)



Rum Boogie

Crew Members:

The Co-Pilot



Lt. Lloyd J. Fickler

By Vicki Ekmark

Rum Boogie Crew Beginnings, printed in the August 2017 issue of the 96th Bomb Group Newsletter, told of my search for information about my dad's B-17 crew during World War II. My goal was to find a living relative for each crew member as well as tell their individual and collective stories.

Rum Boogie-Crew Members: The Pilot, the second article in the February 2017 issue began the stories of the crew. This third article continues with the Co-Pilot.

Lloyd J. Fickler was born on August 21, 1919, in Wallace, South Dakota, one of five children. He married Luverne Nelson on June 28, 1942, and then headed off to fight in World War II. He served as flight officer and co-pilot of the Rum Boogie. His squadron flew missions out of Grafton Underwood, Andrews Field and Snetterton Heath in England.

During bombing missions, the B17 bombers flew in formations during daylight hours and were at the mercy of German fighter planes and intense ground fire because supporting Allied fighters could not fly the long distances to German targets. His 25th and final raid was over Bordeaux France, a tiring 11 1/2 hour flight, and the longest he had made. He said the return



Rear L/R Sgt. George T. Gant, Gunner, Sgt. Richard J. Postier, Radio Operator and Waist, Sgt. Charles F. Goyette, Assistant Radio Operator and Gunner, Sgt. Ellis P. Savoie, Engineer and Gunner, Sgt. George P. Wyherek, Ball Turret Gunner. Front L/R Lieutenant Lloyd J. Fickler, Co-Pilot, 2nd Lt. Harry J. Miller, Navigator, 1st Lt. James H. Sanders, Pilot, Sgt. Alvin Neff, Tail Gunner, Not pictured the photographer 2nd Lt. William H. Spencer, Bombardier
Rum Boogie Crew Snetterton Heath England 1943

to base was one of the happiest days of his life. He felt fortunate to complete 25 missions when so many others did not (the mortality rate of crew members on B17's in 1943 was about one in five), but also said he felt terrible that so many innocent civilians were killed in the bombing raids. The 96th Bomb Group received two Presidential Unit Citations, and Lloyd was awarded the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, a Distinguished Flying Cross, and commissioned a Lieutenant.

Lloyd returned to Webster in 1943, where he received a hometown hero's reception, and then joined his family in California. In 1944, he was deployed as a flight instructor in the states. Later that year, he was sent to Tinian Island in the Pacific as an assistant operations manager where he watched the Enola Gay leave for Japan with the atomic bomb aboard. He was assigned to fly to Guam where he picked up a top-secret package that contained the medals and citations for Enola Gay crew members.

Lloyd remained in the Army Air Corps and then the USAF and inactive National Guard until retirement as a Captain in September 1953.

Lloyd also was with the Day County Sheriff's Department and served a term as Sheriff in the late 1960's before the family relocated to Garden City, Kansas where Lloyd was employed in the family Hardware business.

Both Lloyd and his wife Luverne are buried in Valley View Cemetery in Garden City, Kansas. He is survived by his sons John and Ron, his daughter Donna, and niece Kathy Sigdestad.

You can follow Rum Boogie Crew on the sites below
 Web Page www.rumboogieweb.com
 Facebook www.facebook.com/rumboogieweb
 Twitter twitter.com/rumboogieweb
 Instagram www.instagram.com/rumboogieweb

Here are excerpts from some newspaper articles which were published after Lloyd returned home courtesy of Kathy Sigdestad (retyped for readability). Quotes from Lloyd in the articles reflect the American will to win and can do attitude which helped us win the war.

Lloyd Fickler Awarded D.F.C.

Flight Officer Lloyd J. Fickler of Webster was one of five South Dakota members of the Eighth Air Force, based in England to receive awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross, according to an announcement Monday by the U.S. War Department.

Lt. Fickler, now returned to this country after completing 25 bombing missions over occupied Europe, is now at Dyersburg, Tenn., where he is serving as an air corps instructor.

LLOYD FICKLER

October 7, 1943

Lt. Lloyd Fickler is home from the battle front in Europe. He said the Keil raid was the roughest one in which he has participated. The raid on Paris, in which 200 bombers took part, met the stiffest opposition with a lot of flak and German fighter planes pounding them. Five planes failed to return from that raid.

"On the whole," Lt. Fickler said, "losses of our planes are light considering the enemy defense. If the boys can keep on getting this type of equipment, they will do the job. My survival was miraculous, but I am ready to return whenever they need me."

Lloyd Fickler Home

After 25 Bomb Raids on Europe

Back from 6 months overseas during which he participated in 25 bombing raids over Hitler's Europe, Lt. Lloyd Fickler arrived home by train Tuesday afternoon.

Looking very fit despite the strain of the concentrated Flying Fortress bombing attacks in which he has taken part, Lt. Fickler talked briefly of some of his experiences and his pleasure in being home.

Among the daylight raids over Europe in which he took part, the toughest was the bombing of Kiel, a strongly protected Nazi submarine yard, Fickler said. The squadron was attacked by upwards of 200 Nazi planes. The Nazi pilots had been given orders to stop


the attack at all costs and even before the Americans reached the German coast, they were attacked by droves of enemy fighters. The sky was a melee of diving, twisting planes, blazing with all their guns.

Fickler also took part in four raids over Paris, the bombing of the airplane factory at Regansberg, a shuttle flight to North Africa as well as others. He has a record of more than 700 hours in the air during these raids. He is particularly grateful that no members of the crew were lost on any of the raids.

Asked about the report that German pilots flying captured American planes had attempted to join an American raiding squadron, Fickler said it was true but Americans had been warned of such an attempt and that their own planes had secret identification marks which the enemy didn't have. "When we got the signal and opened up on them, we simply mowed them down," he said.



Proud South Dakota Ficklers



Remembering Captain Edwin J. Fickler

The Cousin of Lloyd J. Fickler, Edwin J. Fickler was born in 1943 and was serving in the military as an A6 Intruder Pilot in Viet Nam.

He went down in the A Shau Valley on January 17, 1969 with his bombardier/navigator, Lt. Robert Kuhlman.

No remains of them or their plane were ever found, and they are still missing in action in Viet Nam.

Please keep them and their families in your thoughts and prayers.



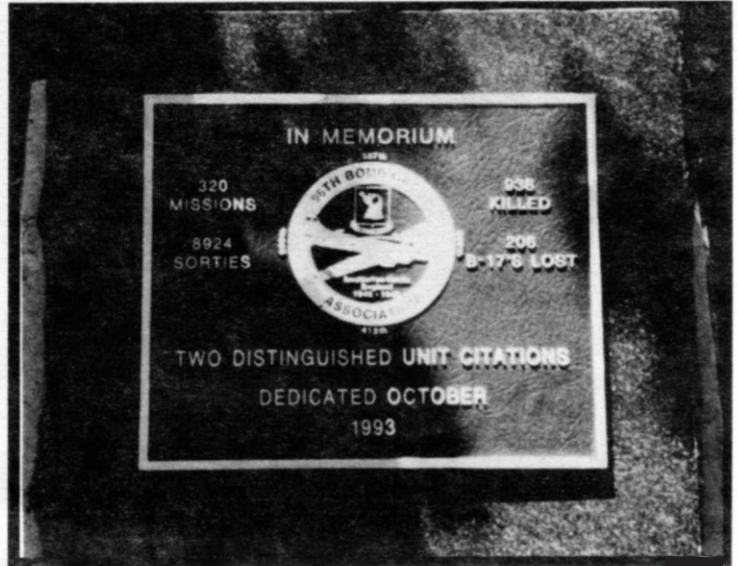
THE RIGHT STUFF AT WRIGHT-PAT



*Plaque dedication speech written by Bob Doherty; delivered by Geoff Ward
at Air Force Museum, Wright-Patterson AFB.*

4 October 1993

Six months after Pearl Harbor, when we were still in or just out of our teens, Congress authorized another appendage to the Army Air Corps. It was only a written OK to fill in a Table of Organization And Equipment. This added appendage carried a numerical designation, an unimpressive *nomme de guerre* known as the 96th Heavy Bombardment Group and it was entrusted to the mercurial disciplines of Colonel Archie Old for its care and feeding.



OUR PLAQUE

States aviation. Compared with the 3000-plus men who populated Snetterton Heath when the unit was in its wartime prime, we are a small group. But we are certainly qualified. Though only 50 or so men, we have come from each coast, even from East Anglia, to pay homage. We are truly representative because we include support personnel as well as flyers. There are veterans here from Regensburg, from Schweinfurt, from Berlin, from Mersberg, from Brux and from Brunswick. And among us there are countless Air Medals, DFCs and Purple Hearts. We represent those who were interned and those who were captured. Indeed, one of us was the Lead Pilot who won the 96th's second Distinguished Unit Citation by leading the Group to Posen, Poland, April 9, 1944 in spite of overwhelming enemy opposition.*

To summarize, this small representative group has gone to great lengths to demonstrate this manifestation of love and respect for our absent comrades both living and dead - because once upon a time, we knew them, we were them and by virtue of this Group Memorial, we are all as one again - forever. ■

*Frank Berry



Geoff Ward addresses 96ers at Wright-Patterson AFB

Before a year had passed, Colonel Old introduced the 96th to combat in Europe. The unit hit the ground running and delivered crushing blows to the enemy for the next two years. In 321 missions it pursued enemy targets as far north as Norway, as far south as Africa and as far east as the Ukraine. It not only survived great air battles during Blitz, Big and Berlin Weeks, but it inflicted irreversible damage to the Nazi's will to sustain the fight. The 96th won two Distinguished Unit Citations. Yet, on the other side of the ledger, the 96th paid dearly - before VE-Day, the Group had sustained the second highest casualties in the 8th and the highest casualties in the Third Air Division.

And so today, this small group who represent the unit's survivors, have assembled to pay tribute to the 96th at this place which is hallowed ground in the annals of the United

Reprinted from ISSUE NO. 24 FEBRUARY 1994 For those attending the 44th Annual Reunion of the 8th Air Force Historical Society October 10 - 14 take time to locate our plaque and remember all those who served in the 96th and its Distinguished history.



8TH AIR FORCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OCTOBER 10 – 14, 2018

CROWNE PLAZA – DAYTON, OHIO



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 10

- 1:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration**
- 6:00pm - 7:00pm Welcome Reception with Cash Bar and Snacks, followed by dinner on your own
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm 8th AFHS Board Meeting
- 7:00pm - Until Hospitality Suites open

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11

- 7:00am - 8:30am Complimentary Breakfast Buffet for 8AFHS overnight Crowne Plaza Hotel guests
- 8:00am - 11:30am **Reunion Registration Open**
- 9:00am - 2:00pm DAYTON CITY TOUR
- 1:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration Open**
- 2:10pm - 2:50pm Curator's Corner
- 3:00pm - 5:00pm Seminar on Crash Site Excavations, Uwe Benkel & Maj Arie Kappert
- 6:00pm - 9:00pm Cash Bar Reception
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm Buffet Dinner and World Premiere, "The Cold Blue" by Erik Nelson & Peter Hankoff

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12

- 7:00am - 8:30am Complimentary Breakfast Buffet for 8AFHS overnight Crowne Plaza Hotel guests
- 8:00am - 11:30am **Reunion Registration Open**
- 8:00am - 9:15am Group Meetings
- 9:30am - 2:30pm NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
- 1:00pm - 6:00pm **Reunion Registration Open**
- 3:00pm - 4:30pm Q & A WWII Vets
- 6:00pm - 9:00pm Cash Bar Reception
- 7:00pm - 9:00pm Rendezvous Dinners

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13

- 7:00am - 8:30am Complimentary Breakfast Buffet for 8AFHS overnight Crowne Plaza Hotel guests
- 8:30am - 11:30am **Reunion Registration Open**
- 8:45am - 10:15am General Membership Meeting
- 10:30am - 11:30am Heritage League Meeting
- 11:30am - 12:00pm Box lunches available for pick up (pre-purchase only)
- 12:00pm - 3:30pm 8th AFHS Board Meeting
- 12:30pm - 4:45pm CARILLON HISTORICAL PARK / PACKARD MUSEUM
- 5:00pm - 5:30pm **Reunion Registration Open**
- 5:30pm - 7:00pm Cash Bar Reception
- 6:30pm - 6:45pm WWII Veteran Group Photo (Tentative timing. Please check final schedule for update.)
- 7:00pm - 10:00pm Gala Dinner and Program

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14

- 7:00am - 8:30am Complimentary Breakfast Buffet for 8AFHS overnight Crowne Plaza Hotel guests

The **Schedule of Events** and the **Reunion Registration Form** have been reprinted here for those who may not have registered yet. Complete information was in the last *Newsletter* and is available on line at www.8thafhs.org.

Be aware that the registration deadline is September 7, 2018. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. This applies to meals and tours. General registration and participation can be accomplished in Dayton at your arrival during the times Registration is open as listed in the schedule.

The National Museum of the US Air Force can be visited on your own and admission is free if the bus tour has filled up. It is not too late to join us in Dayton. Hope to see many of you there.

8th AFHS ACTIVITY REGISTRATION FORM OCTOBER 10– 14, 2018

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will participate in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order. Your cancelled check will serve as confirmation. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.afr-reg.com/8afhs2018 (3.5% will be added to total). All registration forms and payments must be received on or before September 7, 2018. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. Your contact information will be shared only with reunion attendees.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
322 Madison Mews
Norfolk, VA 23510
ATTN: 8th AFHS

OFFICE USE ONLY

Check # _____ Date Received _____
 Inputted _____ Nametag Completed _____

<i>CUT-OFF DATE IS 9/7/18</i>	Price Per	# of People	Total
DUES			
The principal attendee must be a member of the 8AFHS to register for this reunion. If you are not a member, please pay your yearly dues here.	\$40		\$
REGISTRATION FEE			
Includes meeting expenses and other reunion expenses.	\$45		\$
Reg. Fee for children ages 8-16 attending more than 1 function & staying at hotel	\$30		\$
MEALS			
Thursday, 10/11: Dinner Buffet (Chicken w/ Honey Brie Dijon Sauce & London Broil w/ Chimichurri sauce)	\$42		\$
Friday, 10/12: Rendezvous Dinner (Rosemary Lemon Chicken)	\$38		\$
Saturday, 10/13: Box Lunch (sandwich, chips, cookie, water)	\$16		\$
Saturday, 10/13: Banquet (Please select your entrée below)			
Herb-Roasted Prime Rib	\$45		\$
Grilled Salmon w/ Creamy Leek Sauce	\$45		\$
Chef's Choice of Vegetarian Entrée	\$45		\$
TOURS			
Thursday, 10/11: Dayton City Tour	\$38		\$
Friday, 10/12: National Museum of the US Air Force	\$38		\$
Saturday, 10/13: Carillon Historical Park / Packard Museum	\$54		\$
Total Amount Payable to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

Please Print. If a WWII Veteran is registering on this form, please list his name first.

MEMBER NAME (for nametag) _____

8AF VETERAN OTHER VETERAN NEXT GEN HERITAGE LEAGUE OTHER

IF A VETERAN, PLEASE CIRCLE: WWII Cold War Era Korea Vietnam Gulf War Desert Storm Iraq Other _____

WWII GROUP AFFILIATION FOR UNIT TOTALS & SEATING ARRANGEMENTS (please list BG/FG, not BS/FS) _____

SPOUSE NAME (if attending) _____

GUEST NAMES _____ NEXT GEN

PHONE # (____) _____ - _____ EMAIL ADDRESS _____ @ _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

DISABILITY/DIETARY RESTRICTIONS _____

MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? YES NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).

HOTEL RESERVATIONS SHOULD BE CONFIRMED BEFORE SUBMITTING THIS FORM. PLEASE CHECK YOUR CONFIRMED HOTEL:
 CROWNE PLAZA DAYTON OTHER _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT _____ PH. NUMBER (____) _____ - _____

Memorial Plaques for Veterans at the Silver Dream

Because the Silver Dream is such a beautiful icon dedicated to the men who served at Snetterton during World War II, there was a suggestion made at the last reunion that we place commemorative plaques along the fence which now surrounds the Memorial.

We have made arrangements with a sign company in Texas to make these plaques, which will be 4x6 inches and engraved with name, position, squadron, and if the Veteran was a Prisoner of War or Killed in Action. The plaques will be anodized aluminum with the background in black with white engraving and will be weatherproof since they will obviously be outside.

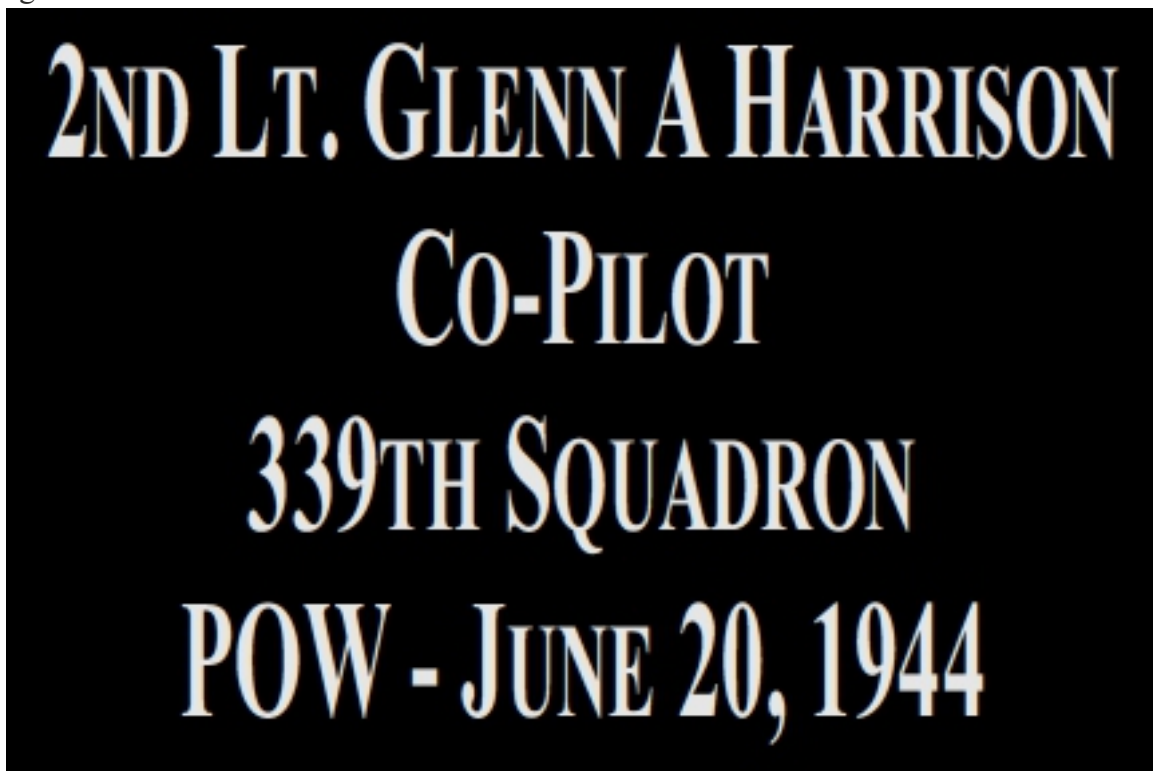
We have developed a form to be filled out for each plaque, which will cost \$20.00, which will include the shipping cost. The forms and payment should be sent to Rebecca Lutz, who is working with the sign company to produce these plaques. The plaques will then be sent to Geoff Ward in England. He has made arrangements with Stephen Wills and Jamie Hopper to install the plaques along the fence.



We have included a picture here of the Silver Dream, with the fence, to show where the plaques will be located. We have also included samples of what the plaques will look like.

The order form is on the next page (22). Please include your personal information so you may be contacted about any questions about your order.

If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Lutz at twolutz@att.net or call 512-238-8581.



CPT. THOMAS H. BARTON
PILOT
339TH SQUADRON

Above the sample plaque for Glenn A. Harrison is actual size 4x6 inches. The other two pictured here complete the examples of how content will be arranged though not actual size.

S/SGT. CHARLES P. WILDER
WAIST GUNNER
337TH SQUADRON
KIA - DECEMBER 16, 1943

BULLETIN BOARD



NOW AVAILABLE ON OUR WEB PAGE

SNETTERTON FALCONS II IN THE NEST AND ON THE WING

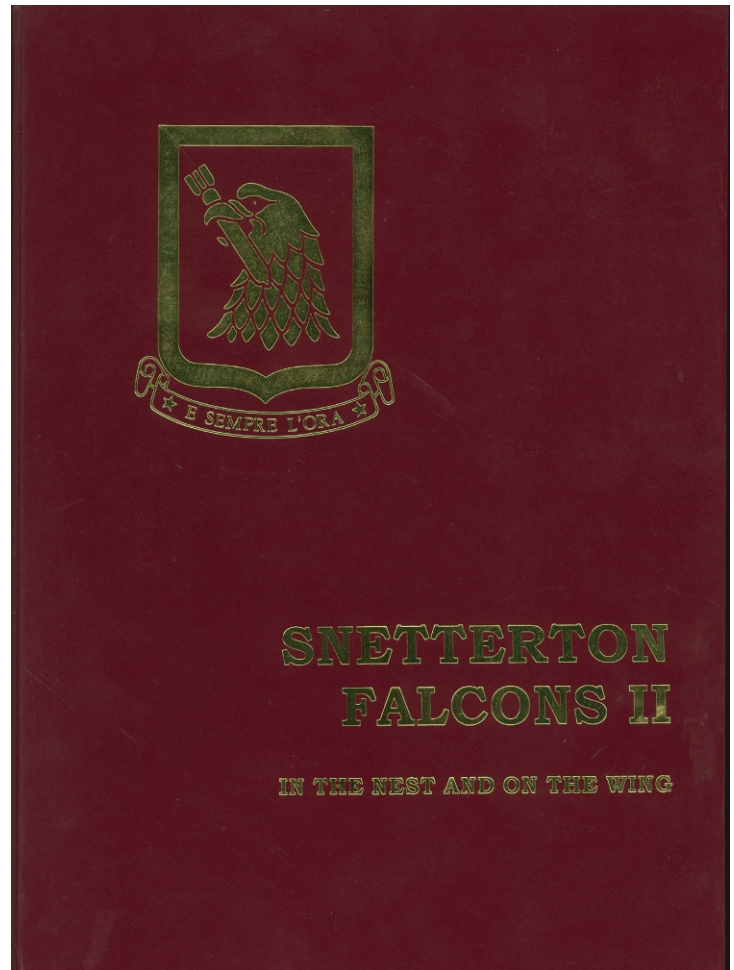
Randy de Mars, the son of Raoul A. de Mars who's story *A Time To Remember 11 April 1944* on page 8, has sent us another unexpected gift. He had found and purchased the *Snetterton Falcons II* book, and he had it scanned into a PDF. That amazing gift has now also been added to our website. You can view it from a link on the lefthand side of our website homepage www.96bg.org

The book has an amazing number of photos and other good information. It is 133 pages, and the PDF is almost 80 MB, so it takes a minute to come up on the screen.

We all agree with our President Mike McIlraith's reply to this gift on Aug 7, 2018 when he wrote:

Randy:

Thank You so very much for your message – all I can say is Wow! What a generous gift you have given to us, and to everyone who may want to see this book but cannot find a copy.



Veteran's Information for the Silver Dream Plaques

Please print clearly and legibly

Rank and Name of Veteran: _____

Position: _____

Squadron: _____

POW----Date: _____

or

KIA ----Date: _____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Relationship to Veteran: _____

Mail this form with a check for \$20.00 to the 96th Bomb Group Association at the address below:
Rebecca Lutz, 2104 Saint Andrews Drive, Round Rock, Texas 78664

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Since August, 2017



Cherry, Edna
Brown, David D.
deMars, Raoul A. Jr.
Donovan, Robert (Bob)
Hood, J. Randall
Hood, Vonnie and James
Wake, Victoria

PO Box 667, Lorenzo, TX 79343
79 Harden Dr., Ringgold, GA 30736-7471
PO Box 183, Monitor, WA 98836
120 Commonwealth Road, Lynn, MA 01904
2514 Field Stone Drive, LaGrange, KY 40031
1125 S 2nd Street, Louisville, KY 40203
2445 Carmel Street, Oakland, CA 94602-3013

All of our members are encouraged 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.

96th Bomb Group Association Membership Application / Dues Remittance

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, 706 Miami View Court, Loveland, Ohio 45140

YOUR 2018 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: Susan Hinchman
96th Bomb Group Association
706 Miami View Court
Loveland, Ohio 45140

(Make checks payable to 96th BGA)

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

SNOWBIRDS, VACATIONERS BEWARE
BE SURE TO LET Susan Hinchman KNOW
YOUR WHEREABOUTS.
To Insure YOU RECEIVE YOUR
NEWSLETTER



UPCOMING MEETINGS



96th Bomb Group Reunion 2018
with the
8th Air Force Historical Society
44th Annual Reunion
Dayton, Ohio
October 10 - 14 2018

Crowne Plaza Dayton
33 East 5th Street
Dayton, Ohio 45402
(937) 224-0800

www.cpldayton.com/

Complete program and reunion information
also on line at: www.8thafhs.org

WHERE TO CALL OR WRITE



PRESIDENT (2018)
Michael (Mike) McIlraith (Terri)
1801 Bolton Street
Fort Worth, TX 76111
(817) 834-4620
mmc@flash.net

VICE PRESIDENT (2018)
Stanley Hand (Joanne)
1016 Ridgecrest Road
Orlando, FL 32806
(407) 855-4244
stanhand@bellsouth.net

SECRETARY/TREASURER (2018)
Susan Hinchman (Ben)
706 Miami View Court
Loveland, OH 45140
bhiv@one.net

RECORDING SECRETARY
Rebecca Lutz (Jerry)
2104 St. Andrews
Round Rock, TX 78664
(512) 238-8581
twolutz@att.net

ENGLISH CONTACT/HISTORIAN
Geoffrey Ward (Margaret)
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IP22-4PW England
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gdmh.w33@gmail.com

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Beech Cottage, Eccles Quidenham
Norwich, Norfolk
NR-16-217 United Kingdom
Phone:- 01953 888688
jean@onepresspublishing.co.uk

WEBMASTER
Michael (Mike) McIlraith
1801 Bolton Street
Fort Worth, TX 76111
(817) 834-4620
mmc@flash.net

Web address:
<http://www.96bg.org/>

LIBRARIAN
Janet Strizic
10303 N. Ellendale Road
Edgerton, WI 53534-8405
(608) 290-3611
rainorshine101@yahoo.com

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Pasadena, MD 21122
(410) 437-5474
Caramarb@aol.com

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(386) 672-5359
PalJoe2@aol.com

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Caramarb@aol.com



Final Mission

Those Who Served Their Country
With Honor and Distinction

Ayer, Cleon A.	337th	TG
Colvin, Donald E.	339th	TT
Councell, Marbury	337th	BT
Daley, Charles J.	339th	R
De Lorbe, John T.	338th	R
Ganyu, Alexander	339th	P
Garber, Joseph R.	338th	R
Holmbeck, Daved C.	339th	INTL
Huskey, Gene H.	413th	TG
Keyser, William J.	339th	CP
Litty, Stanley	338th	P
Mitchell, Lloyd Brooks	413th	N
Miranda, William	413th	SHMM
Moore, Lawrence L.	339th	ENG
Robb, Vernon R.	413th	WG
Small, Sherman M.	339th	TG
Solt, Clinton R.	413th	BTG
Steinberger, Robert A.	413th	R
Stelzriede, Elinor	<i>Spouse of Marshall E. Stelzride 338th N</i>	
Tharratt, Robert	338th	BTG
Tony, Joseph	413th	BTG
Travis, Charles M.	339th	P
Von Sternberg, Robert A.	413th	ENG
Wagner, John A.	339th	B
Wagner, Pauline (Polly)	<i>Spouse of John A Wagner</i>	

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: Susan Hinchman Secretary/Treasurer., address on this page.

Texts and/or photos are sincerely solicited. If requested, photos will be returned. The Editor reserves the right to edit text. December 31, 2018 is the deadline for the February 2019 issue.

96th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION
706 Miami View Court • Loveland, OH 45140



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