



Historian's Update



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Lt. "Dud" Crouchley Memorial Ceremony

During the first week of May, Mark LaScotte and I attended Lt. Crouchley's memorial ceremony in Bristol, Rhode Island, where he was laid to rest with family members. No fewer than five families of crewmen Lt. Crouchley saved, attended. Mark and I both spoke at the reception, following the ceremony. Dan Crouchley, Dud's nephew, and his family accompanied the remains on a flight to Rhode Island.



JD Crouchley and Autumn Williams, Lt. Crouchley's grandchildren with flags and medals at ceremony.

Other MIA cases and Investigations

I am currently compiling a list of MIA's from the 485th Bomb Group. It's not as easy to do this as it might appear and it requires a lot of cross-referencing of various files. I'm hoping to have a fairly complete list for inclusion next year in this update. I'm guessing there are more than one would think, likely 50+, excluding the 150+ who were lost when the SS Paul Hamilton was sunk in the Mediterranean. There are still more than 72,000 missing from WWII, with more than 20,000 still missing from the European theater. The numbers are staggering. I am working on one of the cases, involving two airmen from Lt. Jake Disston's crew, lost over Yugoslavia on the June 26, 1944 mission to Vienna. As with the Crouchley case, the official records may not be correct about the location of the crash.

485th Veterans we lost this year

Although we no longer maintain a list of Vets lost, I know of two 485th Vets we lost this past year, Bill Williams and Henry George Williams (no relation). Bill was a ball gunner in the 828th and Henry was a mechanic in the 831st. I had the honor of speaking at Bill's ceremony in December. May they both rest in peace.



Keith and Bill Williams



Henry George Williams

2020 Reunion To Be Held in Albuquerque

The 2020 reunion will be in Albuquerque. The dates are September 10th-September 13th. The preliminary information is posted on the 485th website.

Other Ramblings

I know of two book projects in the making about the 485th. Philinda Hutchings, daughter of 828th Sqdn pilot Ray Smith, is working on a book about her father's experiences in the 485th, based on a manuscript her father prepared years ago. I tried unsuccessfully to persuade Lt. Colonel Justin Budd to write a book on the Crouchley investigation. He was in charge of the excavation that resulted in the recovery of remains. Instead, he persuaded me to write the book, offering his knowledge and assistance, so hopefully it will happen. Frenchman Claude Gilles is writing a book on the bombing of Pont Saint-Esprit, a bridge bombed by the 485th and other groups on August 15, 1944. The 485th will be referenced, but the book is about the bombing and not specifically about the 485th. Hope to hear from many of you in the coming year.