



LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



No. 48

March 2014

Dallas will be the Target for Our 50th and Final Reunion

by Mark LaScotte

It has been seventeen short years since the 485th has been to this gracious and hospitable city and this reunion promises to be a memorable one. It will be held September 17th to 21st at the newly remodeled Night Hotel (part of the Wyndham Hotel Group) located in North Dallas.

The location for this final gathering will help provide pleasant weather as well as aid with all travel logistics. Both Love Field and DFW International are hub airports with free shuttle services offered by the hotel. Our discounted group room rate in this newly remodeled hotel is \$89.00 per night plus taxes and will include up to two free guest breakfast buffets per room per day.

There is a low cost light rail (DART) transit hub available not far from the hotel that one could take downtown to shop or to visit the Sixth Floor Museum near Dealey Plaza. A \$1.75 midday pass allows unlimited travel between the hours of 9:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. Monday through Friday throughout the local DART rail system. If you would like to extend your stay while in Dallas, arrangements have been made with the hotel on either side of our reunion dates to secure the same discounted rate.



As all good things come to a close we should remember that the 485th has had a very proud run of 50 GREAT REUNIONS –not many bombardment groups can lay claim to that kind of longevity. If you have ever thought of attending one of these reunions in the past –this will be your last chance.

Because this is our final reunion, a lot of thought is being spent to prepare for this event. Many activities will be hosted daily at the hotel along with an exclusive Thursday afternoon-early evening dinner outing that will prove to be enjoyable. Please look for more details on this and the other activities planned within this newsletter.

Let's all do what we can do to make this, the final reunion, a huge success. As always, these reunions are not only attended by the Vets themselves, but by the second and third generations as well. Please bring your friends and relatives to this great affair and let's enjoy this time together. Remember everyone is welcome –see ya there!



Fantasy of Flight by Joe A. Crabill

On 10 October 2013, members of the 485th Bomb Group Association boarded a bus for Polk City, Florida to visit The Fantasy of Flight. It seemed to me that The Fantasy of Flight was a pretty bold title to live up to; but as it turned out, they did that and more. This facility is a privately owned collection which houses in excess of one hundred aircraft. Many of these aircraft are on static display. There are also a great many that are operational and airworthy. For Fantasy of Flight founder, Kermit Weeks, the opening of this aviation-themed attraction has been a natural extension of a lifelong, unbounded passion for aviation and aircraft. Upon arrival, we entered the Fantasy of Flight immersion experience display. As you make your way through a B-17 Flying Fortress, you hear sounds that were recorded inside a genuine flying B-17.

Mr. Weeks employs a sizeable team of diverse technicians who possess many talents. These talents consist of, but are not limited to, entertainment upon your arrival, admin personnel, and technicians who are responsible for logistical support. The majority of the aircraft acquired are done so by working under the premise that, at some time, they could be restored to an airworthy condition. This is Mr. Weeks' intent for the 1944 Consolidated B-24J Liberator which our veteran crew members were allowed to view up close. Also in the mix are some technicians and mechanics who would have to be very talented given the diversity of

the collection. The airframe and power plant technicians must be extremely knowledgeable in the specifications and design of various aircraft produced by numerous manufacturers, both foreign and domestic. As another example of this diversity of craft, the pilot that gave us a flight demonstration with the 1937 Fieseler Fi-156 Storch (Stork) is also an instrumental contributor in the wood shop which fabricates and repairs early flight and WWI aircraft.



The flight demonstration of the 1937 Fieseler Fi-156 Storch had many of us in awe of the capabilities of this aircraft. Being a STOL (short takeoff and landing) aircraft, the pilot rotated in five seconds. The pilot told us that with the Stork's wing configuration a 20 mph head wind would allow the aircraft to remain aloft and stationary.

As we proceeded through the hangars, we were able to view this very diverse collection at a close range. This collection spans the years from early flight through WWI, the Golden Age of the 1920's and 1930's, WWII, Korean War and

Post WWII. Many of our crew members have experience in one or more of the aircraft on exhibit. One of these crew members is Bueford Cooper. My father and Bueford flew ten sorties and 12 missions in the Consolidated B-24J Liberator. As we approached the Martin B-26 Marauder, Bueford told me that he had not been next to a B-26 since he flew them in Texas prior to being assigned to a B-24 crew. Both the B-25 Mitchell and the B-26 Marauder are operational. Mr. Weeks flew the B-25 Mitchell to a reunion celebration of Doolittle's Raiders a few years back.

It is not possible to comment on every aircraft in the collection. I would like to add Mr. Weeks and his team's attention to detail and their demand for excellence can be seen in the 1944 North American P-51C Mustang. It is my hope that we may return to The Fantasy of Flight when the Consolidated B-24J Liberator is restored.

As I observed the faces of our group during our visit, I don't think I'm alone in saying that we had an extraordinary visit to this wonderful facility. This is a one of a kind collection and I would like to thank Mr. Weeks and his team for their hospitality. I would also like to thank those responsible for organizing this tour. Also thanks to Jerry Whiting and Mark Leslie for getting us into the B-24 hangar.



Bob Hanson, George Chaplin, Bueford Cooper, Alex Gilbert & Jack Yates



B24 Nose in the room where the 485th attendees enjoyed lunch

Lunch Cruise Onboard, the StarShip

by Lynn & Frances Fundling

It was a beautiful sunny day when we boarded the bus for our Lunch Cruise. On the way, our tour guide, Alex Charehjoo, told us that he had served with the Israeli Commandos and how much he enjoyed being a tour guide for military groups. After boarding the beautiful yacht, StarShip, we were invited into the dining room where we were offered a wonderful lunch which included several entree options. We were cruising on Hillsborough Bay which leads to Tampa Bay. From the dining area we could view million dollar homes, dry docks, Citgo storage tanks, and the Victory Ship, SS American Victory. This ship, built during WW II, was

due to be scrapped when rescued in 1998, and upgraded to a floating Museum and Memorial. It is still seaworthy. This is the largest ship of its type docked on the East Coast! But, we were all anxious to go up on deck where we could get a better view and enjoy some of “our” kind of music provided by the Star Ship. The highpoint of being out on the deck was taking a photo of all of the veterans on board (all 8 of them)! Everyone was enjoying themselves and it felt like the cruise ended all too soon! We arrived back at the hotel at the appointed time so we could grab a bite to eat and get ready for the Friday evening historical program.

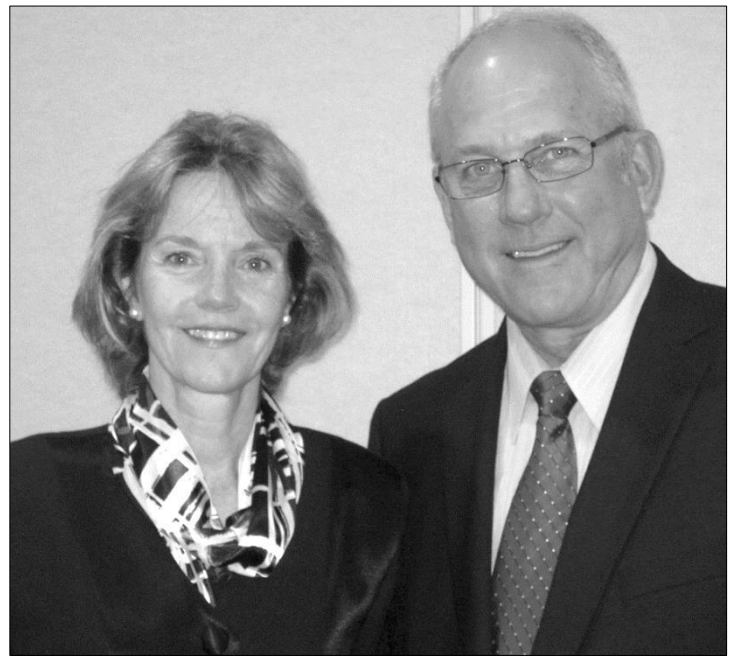


Left to Right: Bueford Cooper, Alexander Gilbert, Charlie Taylor, Henry Williams, Jack Behunin, Cliff Studaker, Wayne Smith, & Red Kempffer

Meet Mark LaScotte, Our New 485th Chairman

Phil Cummings decided to step down this year, after having done a wonderful job for several years as 485th Chairman. Mark agreed to replace him. Mark is the son of Eugene “Scotty” LaScotte, an 828th Sqdn gunner, and has worked behind the scenes for several years, helping with historical research and stepping in to help wherever necessary at reunions. He and Bulgarian professor, Stan Stanev, recently co-authored the book “289 Days Near Shumen”, which chronicles the experiences of approximately 300 Allies (mostly airmen) who were imprisoned in Bulgaria during WWII. It’s no coincidence that Mark’s father was one of these prisoners.

Mark and his wife, Carol, live in Blaine, Minnesota where they’ve raised five sons. Mark dived into his new assignment and is actively planning our final reunion.



Carol & Mark LaScotte

How I Was Misled Into Joining the Air Corps

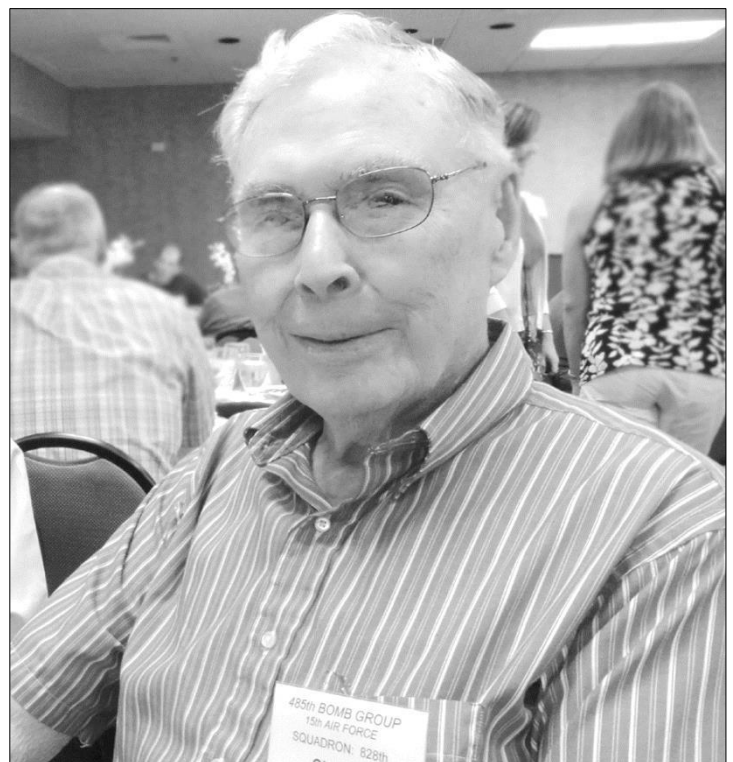
By Charlie Taylor

When WWII came along I was sure to be involved, so while trying to decide which branch to volunteer for, I met an Air Corps pilot home on leave. I thought his uniform with the wings and gold braids was the snappiest things I had seen. But when he told me that the wings attracted girls like a dog attracts fleas, I was hooked. So I joined up and got the wings that were supposed to bring the girls running. Didn’t work for me. When I finally got a girl to go out with me, and trying to be a true southern gentlemen, I offered her a chew of tobacco, which she scornfully declined and got up and went over and sat with a bunch of sailors. They found something she said awfully funny.



I was later to learn that in other parts of the country, the girls, at least them that chew, preferred something called Dentine. I was never able to find it in any of the tobacco shops that I visited. Must not have been much to it I thought cause none of them girls ever had to spit.

While at the reunion, someone asked if I could remember where I was when the Pearl Harbor attack was announced. I do not recall where I was but do remember thinking that this gal named Pearl must be quite a looker and ain’t it just like a woman to start a dang war.



Charlie Taylor

Friday Night Historical Presentation by Jerry Whiting

This year our 485th history lesson was about 485th Bomb Group airmen who were lost on over Rumania and Bulgaria, focusing on those imprisoned in Bulgaria during the war. 100 guests gathered on Friday night and listened as our four presenters told the stories of these men.

The presenters were Jerry Whiting, George Chaplin, Mark LaScotte and Dan Crouchley.

After a brief introduction of speakers, there was a moment of silence for our two

485th airmen who are still MIA over Bulgaria, 828th pilot John "Dud" Crouchley and 831st gunner Jack Robbins. A personal video greeting by Bulgarian professor/retired colonel Stan Stanev followed. Stanev is a friend of the 485th and has done extensive research on the air war over Bulgaria. He and Mark LaScotte recently co-authored a book on the topic, entitled *289 Days near Shumen*.

Jerry provided an overview of the air war over Bulgaria, emphasizing that the air war in this region really targeted Rumania and was all about oil- the production, transportation, storage, and protection of oil for the German war machine. The oil refineries were at or near Ploesti and the 485th flew a total of 10 combat missions to Rumania. Several Vets in the audience had participated in missions to these targets.

Mark identified and gave a brief summary on the 485th crews lost on these missions. Six 485th crews were lost on these missions, all 10-man crews. 15 men were killed (including the 2 MIA's), 35 became POWs, and one entire 10-man crew, (Lozito-829th) evaded capture. The 485th flew no missions to Bulgaria, yet men from three different crews were imprisoned in Bulgaria, because they bailed out over Bulgaria.

Lt. Robert Lynn's 831st crew was shot down over Rumania on the June 23, 1944 mission to Guirgiu. MIA Jack Robbins was on this crew. Another member of this crew was Tech. Sgt. George Chaplin, our next speaker. Their plane was shot down near the Danube River, which forms the border between Rumania and Bulgaria. Some of the survivors landed after parachuting in Rumania and some, including George, landed in Bulgaria.



George Chaplin, Mark LaScotte,
Jerry Whiting & Dan Crouchley

For the next hour George provided a very personal account of his crew, the mission that day, the shoot down, life in the Shumen POW camp, and ultimately, his release and return to Italy.

Although it was a difficult act to follow, Jerry gave a summary of another crew lost over Bulgaria. This was the Major Walter Smith

and Lt. Bobier's 829th crew. The

entire crew bailed out on the June 28th mission to Bucharest and survived, with Major Smith becoming the senior ranking officer in the Shumen POW camp.

Mark continued, telling the saga of Lt. Crouchley's 828th crew. Lt. Crouchley stayed with the plane so that his crew would have time to get out, ultimately giving his life. Mark's father was the nose gunner on this crew. Mark described their imprisonment, release and the former POWs' train ride out of Bulgaria.

Jerry told about the Hall mission, a mission that returned several of the POWs to Bulgaria shortly after their release in an attempt to locate individual Bulgarians who had committed war crimes against some of the American POWs. Although several were located, identified and temporarily imprisoned, none of the suspects were ultimately tried as war criminals.

Dan Crouchley followed with a very personal family story that focused on his uncle, Lt. John "Dud" Crouchley. Dan and his wife visited the crash site near Churen, Bulgaria in 2010, accompanied by the U.S. Ambassador to Bulgaria, James Warlick and several embassy staff and Stan Stanev. He described the visit, showed several slides of the crash site and of a subsequent ceremony that took place in Sofia. We are still waiting for our military to excavate the site, find Lt. Crouchley's remains and bring him home. (More info on Dan's trip to Bulgaria can be found in the 2011 *Lightweight Tower*.)

The presentation ended with a prayer by George Chaplin. Many of the attendees retired to the hospitality suite to visit with the presenters. From feedback received, it was another memorable night.

Our Next Reunion: Why Dallas, Texas?

Many wonder how we decide on locations for reunions. It wasn't easy for the Board to decide that this would be the final formal 485th reunion. Although we had approximately 100 at this past reunion, it is becoming more difficult for many of our Vets to join us. 50 missions was a completed tour for the original flight crews, so we decided that 50 reunions would also be a completed tour.

This year the Board developed specific criteria for the host city as we narrowed down the possibilities for the general vote at the business meeting, keeping in mind that the goals were to get the best attendance and make it as easy as possible for our Vets to attend. Criteria used included ease of travel to the host city (with direct flights from many locations), moderate hotel, tour and event pricing, a location that is not at great altitude (which creates health issues for some), and a city that is more centered in our country. The finalists were Minneapolis, Las Vegas, and Dallas. Dallas won.

One Board consideration was doing the legwork ourselves, to reduce costs and make for the most personal and memorable experience possible. Now we developed additional criteria, focusing primarily on costs, location and the hotel itself. Many of the 30+ considered met most of the criteria; few met all. Meanwhile, we began negotiations with the hotels, wanting a good-sized hospitality suite as part of the contract and one that allowed us to bring our own snacks and beverages into the hospitality suite. We wanted the same favorable room rates for a few days before and after our event, for those who chose to spend extra time vacationing in Dallas. When the smoke cleared, we realized that by doing this event on our own there truly would be substantial savings for everyone.

We chose the Night Hotel, with a negotiated room rate of \$89 per night (plus taxes). This hotel has just undergone a \$20 million renovation. In addition to this low room rate, there will be two free buffet breakfasts each day per room rented. The hotel meets our other criteria, as well: free airport shuttles to Love Field and DFW airports, free guest parking, free shuttle to local shopping, free Wi-Fi, a hospitality suite where we can have our own snacks and beverages, and the same low room rate for three days before and after our reunion.

Since this is our final reunion, this reunion will focus less on touring and more on bringing the events to the hotel. We will have one tour, to the Cavanaugh Flight Museum, a mid-afternoon tour. The museum has four hangars

filled with vintage aircraft. The Commemorative Air Force B-24, "Diamond Lil", is housed at this airport and will be there if it is not on tour (<http://www.cavanaughflightmuseum.com/>). Those with limited mobility are welcome to stay in one hangar and just visit or view the aircraft in that hangar, since we will also enjoy a catered early dinner in the hangar before returning to the hotel. You'll be pleasantly surprised at the low cost of this event. We are also scheduling a Friday afternoon country music concert at the hotel. Texas has its own style of country music and you'll get a sample. This is a free event for all reunion guests.

At past reunions, people have been on their own on Friday night for dinner. This year we have negotiated an inexpensive dinner at the hotel, since many of you would prefer not to have to go out for dinner before attending another no-cost event, the Friday night historical presentation. We are finalizing a couple of other presentations at the hotel, which will be of no-cost to our guests.

Of course Gerry Weinstein will be bringing his terrific display of 50+ poster-sized 485th photos for viewing in the hospitality suite with other 485th memorabilia. (If you haven't seen these photos, you're really missing something.) We're anticipating that several of our European friends will join us. There will be a substantial reduction in registration fees for all and NO registration fee for 485th Vets, widows and international guests.

We sincerely hope you'll consider joining us. We've done everything possible to make this event personal, memorable, and affordable. This is all for, and about, honoring our 485th Vets. It's also about making everyone feel welcome. There are many of you who have been saying for years that you'll try to attend "next year". This is your last opportunity. If you're one of our Vets and haven't attended for a while, please join us so we can honor you. If you haven't asked your children to attend in the past, at least tell them about this reunion and give them the opportunity to join us. If you're a son or daughter of a Vet and it's difficult for the Vet to get around, most of our events are at the hotel so bring Dad to this one. If your father or loved one from the 485th has passed on, join us and meet others who are still with us, while honoring your loved one and his buddies who gave so much for our freedom. If you haven't attended due to the high costs, this one will cost much less than recent past reunions. We'll see y'all in Dallas.

Bandits, 10 o'clock

by Charles Schaffer, Flight Engineer on Alvin Riddles Crew

Submitted by Charles Schaffer III

The sky is blue; not sky-blue; a hard cold blue, hinting at blackness; blackness, hard-bright with light. It's filled with nothing. Nothing but an almost visible cold. Far below, snow covered peaks and valleys, with picturesque little villages tucked here and there, look like scattered pieces of picture postcards. Beautiful. Peaceful.

The intercom crackles; a filtered voice, sounding far away, demands, "0 check. I swing my body left, tilt my eyes away from the sun, and look at my oxygen regulator. The phosphorescent eyelids of the flow indicator wink with each inhalation of breath rasping through the mask covering my face, from the heated goggles to my collar. The pressure indicator is, in-the- green. The intercom has been filtering familiar responses and, in my turn, I squeeze the mike button, and hear my voice on the intercom, "Chuck, OK". These brief responses, a litany to life's continuance, have been the only interruption to the drone and slow asynchronous beat of the four P & W engines, in the last four hours. Four hours of sky filled with nothing, and minds and bodies filled to bursting with very private thoughts, and tension.

A new filtered voice invades my helmet, the pilot's cryptic, "Turning IP". The airplane sways as it turns from the heading that brought us to this identifiable place on a map, called the initial point, to one which will take us to our target. Not a city, a target", my mind reminds. Again, voices almost in my head, the bombardier's, "I got it" and the pilot's simple, "OK Mo". Now the bombardier is flying the airplane. Each change in bombsight settings can be felt as the plane follows the sight commands. "Bomb doors open." There is a rumbling rush of air and,

almost simultaneously, the emptiness that filled the sky disappears. Black smoky dumbbells, with puffy smoke-rings at their bases, appear almost instantly, and then drift aft. Check the temperature, check oxygen, check the airplane inside, outside; do anything; but don't look at, don't think about those bursts! It's 58 degrees below zero, and sweat crawls down my back like insects. There it is! That sound, like pebbles against the plane, and the muffled, almost instantaneous, WHUMP! The filtered voice, "Check in". Again, that litany of names, a prayer for nine responses. Now the sky is thick with ugly black dumbbell-shaped

bursts. There're the pebbles again, whump WHUMP! The last, not so muffled, shakes the plane. I look forward and see light shining into the plane, in places normally dark. "Check in". The names start "Bombs away!" The airplane seems to leap as it rids itself of tons of steel and high explosive. "Doors closing", one voice reports, "Damage Reports", another demands. Cryptic comments and names, voices straining to sound calm. The rumbling

air has stopped, the sky is clearing as the flak becomes dispersed. Thank God a few small holes, everything operating, and no one hit. "Impacts looked good, smoke black and up to about 1000 ft.", that was the tail gunner, an anonymous, "Good" is added. The sky, except for a few contrails is empty, the sun is on the other side of the airplane, we're headed home!

"Bandits, 10 o'clock! High! Holy hell! There's six of 'em!" The airplane vibrates as the four 50's in the top and nose turrets open up. "Two more, 10 level!" I drop my sight line below the wing. There they are! Blurred by the exhaust from our engines, but making that rolling motion



This replacement crew arrived in Italy in early September 1944.

Standing: Ralph P Cox, Assist. Eng.; Charles W Schaffer, Flt. Eng./Gun;

Leonard J Gnat, Radio man; Lloyd D Henderson, Tail Gunner.;

James J. Bassett, Armourer Gun.; Alexander E Struich, Nose Gunner.

Kneeling, Elmer L. Kiesewetter, Navigator; Michael Fish, Co-Pilot;

Alvin Riddles, Pilot; Murad S Piligian, Bombardier

as they bring their guns on target. I open fire and feel the floor vibrate as the ball's two 50's join my fire. "They're pictures on the trainer wall! They're not real! Watch the target! Don't look at the tracers curling in! I'm talking to myself-- squeeze the mike, "Two at 5 coming level to 6". Almost at once, I feel the tail shake as that turret starts to fire. The pilots voice, "See anything?" "They all broke right and down." "Hit any?" "Don't think so, no smoke." "Tex, did you see eight?" "Yep. Right and down." "Keep awake!" "Two - 4 o'clock high !" The nose and top guns are shaking again. "Coming to-ye ball!" Top & forward guns go silent, the floor starts to shake. "Did you SEE those bastards? Right through the formation!" "Didn't hit either one, got out clean!" "They got *Spring Green A*, Alpha, dropping back and down at 8 o'clock, smoke on their right side." "Smoke and fire!" "They're jumping!"

"Got six chutes. Come on! Come on! Three more! Come on damn it! She blew!" The thought occurs to me that we won't even know who made it. "I got ten chutes! One way low! You see'um Tex?" "Yep, I do now." "Three and three, 12 level!" "Heads up ball!" The vibration forward, "Hey ball!" stops, and the floor shakes again. "Smoke, second wave!", drawls Arky the ball gunner, "Don't know who, but somebody hit the bastu'd bad!" I step closer to the window for a better look. My foot slips. I look down; the floor is covered with belt links and shell cases. When in the hell did I fire all those rounds? "Check in." Nine answers, no serious damage reports, the sky is full of nothing, the engines drone. We must be almost home by now. I twist my wrist to see my watch. "My God ! Just seven minutes since we turned IP! I'm sweat wet, cold, and there're four hours to go. "0 check", that little filtered voice demands. I look at the oxygen regulator, the flow indicator winks. I smile. I know what that wink means.



Howard & Shirley Boxley



Margie & Wayne Smith



Lee Cristelli, Frances Fundling & Lynn Gallo



Mark Leslie, Dianne & Bill Leslie

What a Coincidence by Jerry White

Life brings some really interesting coincidences - or are they “really” coincidences. In just under a years’ time, I have experienced so many small world connections and coincidences, it is just amazing. I believe there must certainly be unexplained forces guiding our lives and bringing us together. And I just spent the past five days engaged in my first 485th Bomb Group Reunion. I met so many kind people, heard so many touching stories, and learned things that brought a closer connection, understanding, and heightened respect for the veterans involved in that era of history, WWII. I never really knew much about my father’s experiences during the war as he never talked about it. He was a pretty quiet guy. After this weeks’ reunion, now I understand better why he and so many others simply prefer to suppress it. So, when asked to contribute to the Lightweight Tower, I hesitated. I don’t consider myself a writer but after thinking about it, and the experiences I have had with members of 485th, my Dad and his crew, I figured why not give it a go and share.

My first connection with the 485th started by accident with a simple Internet search for the USAAF logo used in WWII for a completely unrelated design project. The search resulted in seeing photos of B-24s and aircrew nose and patch art. I immediately thought of my father. I thought, you know, Dad never really spoke of his experiences during the war and I never learned much about the group and squadron he had flown with. Dad passed away over 32 years ago so my family and I are very interested to learn more about that part of his life.

As an artist and creative professional, I have scanned, retouched and reproduced my family’s estate photo collection for years and this included my father’s effects and photos from the war. So this simple search started a fascinating journey that continues to be very special to my heart and that of my family, my mother Ruth, and sisters, Ruth and Deborah. My mother seemed especially happy to see this renewed interest about Dad’s life after so many years. All of us really wanted to attend the 485th reunion this year together however due to multiple circumstances, they could not attend. I am grateful at least that I could. My mother bless her heart, has just recently passed away Nov, 27th 2013 the day before Thanksgiving. She will be helping me write.

Back to my internet search, I accessed my old files and came across photos and this patch shown on some of the crew’s jackets - the Grim Reaper with a bomb in his arms. What great patch art - my search for this image brought me to the 485th Bomb Group organization’s website. Soon I became engrossed looking for any information or image about Dad. I looked through the rosters and found my father listed with his crew “3” under Pilot Tom Kastello. However there was no crew photo or information in the site’s crew pages. I thought, well I have photos of Dad and some of his crew, and also scans of patches and bomber art that I was curious about. I sent an email to the site and included some background and a few images and crew to see if they could help. The very next morning I got a very nice reply from Jerry

Whiting (funny his name is so close to mine) He confirmed my father’s inclusion in the group’s roster, and provided some information with contacts that may be able to help. Several email communications later, he revealed in fact there are two of my father’s crew members still around, and one or both are in Florida! Boy, that’s a real coincidence! So now these events have gotten my attention and I start emailing, and calling to learn more. We communicated many times by phone and emails. Jerry sent me phone numbers of people to help me in my quest to learn more about my father’s life and experiences during the war. He sent resources for

publications and videos. I’ll get to coincidences in regard to the book “This Is How It Was” later on.

I called Bill Williams who spoke with to me for over 30 minutes and was so very nice and helpful. Bill recommended I contact Tom Tabor, as he was the radio operator on my Dad’s crew and has many records and documentation. I called Tom and he seemed very glad to hear from me. He started our first conversation, “I knew your Dad and I can tell you lots of stories about him and his crew”. Wow, this is great I thought. We have had several very informative phone chats. He recommended I contact Jake Barnes, the Tail Gunner. Tom thought maybe he was even in my area of Florida, the west coast. I decided to send Tom a little family history summary to share what my father did after the war, marriage, career etc. and a little about my own life and family. We had a couple phone chats where he shared his memories of the



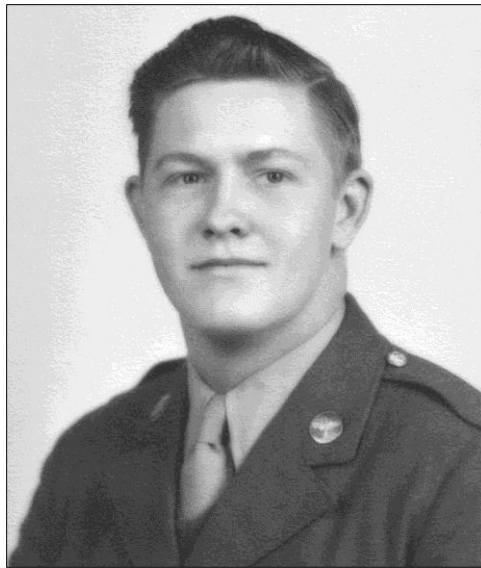
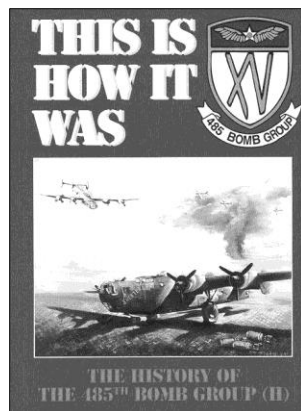
Jerry White

crew, barracks life and specifically my dad. I also called Jack Yates in Naples. He told me he did not know my dad but also thought Jake Barnes may be in my area and I should try calling him.

I called Jake Barnes and It turns out they happened to be nearby in St. Petersburg Beach and were driving to the Tampa airport on I-275. Boy they could be just a few miles away this very minute. What a coincidence, who would have thought? Then his wife Mary Anne got on the phone. She had read my email I had sent to Tom Tabor summarizing my family's history, Tom had forwarded it to them. She asked about my son who plays saxophone in a middle school Jazz band. What school does he go to? She asked. I told her, Thurgood Marshal Middle School, the phone went silent, then she said, our grandson goes to that school and plays trombone in that Jazz band. SO these two boy's grandfathers flew in the same plane together during WWII over 60 years ago. And we have just reconnected what an unbelievable small world coincidence! I visited Jake and his wife MaryAnn a couple times before they left to return back to their home in New Jersey. Jake shared many great stories. It is just incredible what they all endured at such a young age.

The Book "This Is How It Was"

Jerry Whiting recommended this book specifically as it has a chapter that includes my father's plane, "Ole Maude" or Red "K" on the tail. The chapter depicts an event on a mission where a plane right next to theirs got a direct hit by flak and went down in flames with only a few of the crew bailing out. Some of the crew survived and spent time as POWs. Jerry Whiting mentioned the book is out of print but can be found online. So I quickly searched and found one on Ebay - then I contacted the seller to inquire if more were available for my family. I soon met Scott Cary the owner of the books and learned he was right here in St. Petersburg, FL about 3 miles away. It turns out, Scott worked with the publisher and helped put the book together years ago. I knew of the publisher which was a half mile from my home. It went out of business and he bought the stock of books. Wow another coincidence!



John A. White,
Staff Sargent, 828th
Crew 3, Castello,
Ole Maude, Nose Gunner

The Reunion - Tampa, Florida

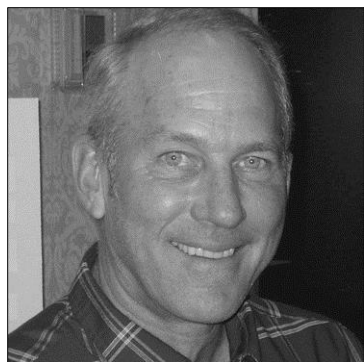
I met Jerry Whiting and Gerry Weinstein, son of 485th BG photographer on opening day. I helped Gerry set up the photo displays in the lobby. I shared a story with Gerry from Jake Barnes where the bottom nose of the plane was blown off by a direct flak hit. My father was in the nose gun position just above was unhurt but endured many hours stuck there with only open sky below him; the only thing left keeping the nose from falling off the plane was the side rails of structural frame. Gerry noted he knew of only two photos in his father's files where a plane returned with the lower portion of the nose blown off. One plane and crew was not identified. Maybe that could be Dad's plane. We are anxiously awaiting to see this photo. Another interesting connection.

Looking at display photos in the lobby, I met Alexander Gilbert, his wife and daughter Laura. I, for some reason, thought of a story Jake had told where a large 1000 lb bomb became stuck in my father's plane during a mission. They had to return to base with this huge live bomb still in the bay. When they landed the bomb broke free and tumbled down the runway as everyone on the ground ran for cover. The man smiled, and said "Yes, I was there and that's a true story". Wow! Another coincidence. I've made another friend. I very much enjoyed my time with Alexander and his family.

I met Jack Yates who I had contacted earlier. We agreed to get together sometime during the event. He said he had a couple books he wanted to give to me. During the business meeting, I watched Jack receive a machine gun part that had been retrieved from the crash site of his plane in Austria. I learned of his experience bailing out of his burning plane, being captured by the enemy and held as a POW. He and his family invited me to lunch. Here, I learned it was Jack's plane that was mentioned in the book "This Is How It Was". In the chapter narrated by Tom Tabor who was in my father's plane next to it. I had not put the two stories together - and now I'm sitting right here next to Jack having lunch with him. It's just a very small world - and getting smaller every day.

I will keep trying to communicate with Jake, Tom and any others who want share their knowledge of this era in history. It is a gift of knowledge that is important to record for future generations to come. Who knows what coincidence I'll run across next?

485TH BOMBARDMENT GROUP



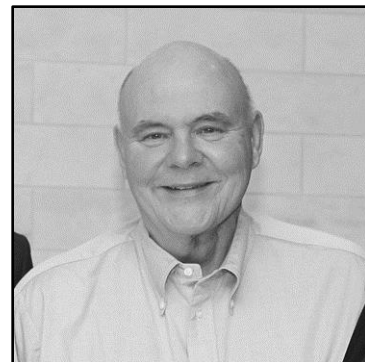
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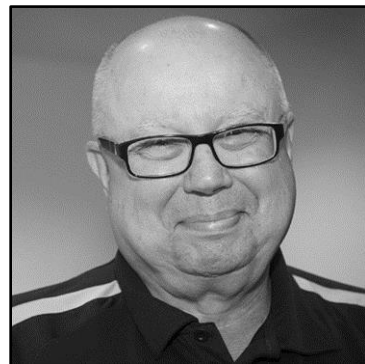
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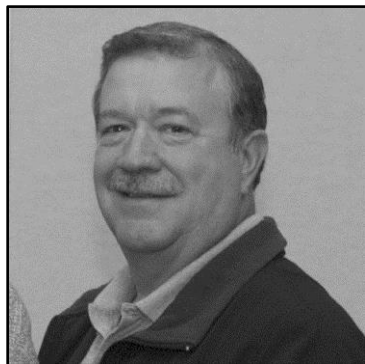
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HEADQUARTERS



Kathleen Arnold
Gerry Weinstein & Mary Habstritt

REUNION ATTENDEES GATHER IN THE HOTEL



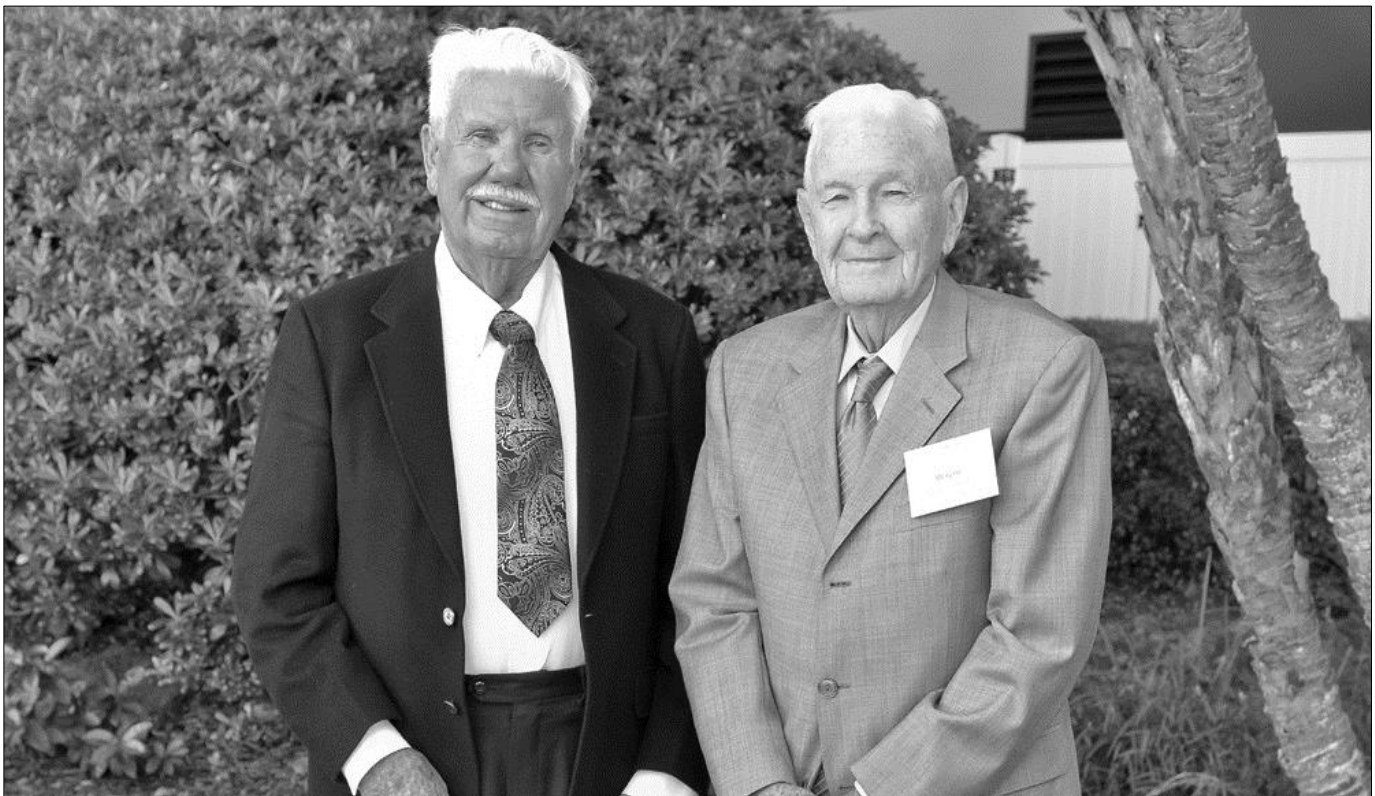
Special thanks to Robert Boxley for this photo as well as filling in for our absentee photographer

828TH SQUADRON



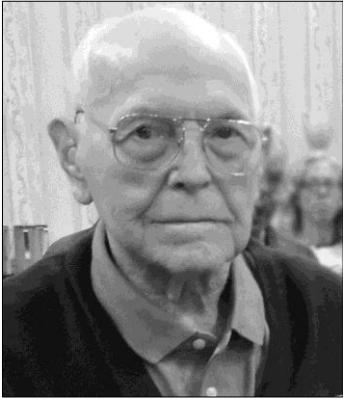
Charlie Taylor Alexander Gilbert, Bill Williams & Jack Yates

829TH SQUADRON

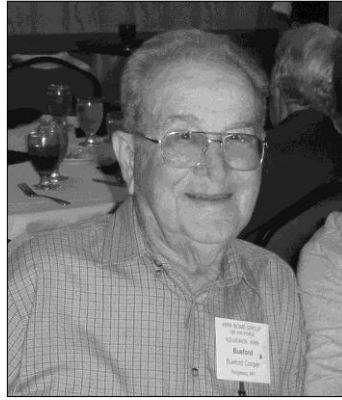


Jack Behunin & Wayne Smith

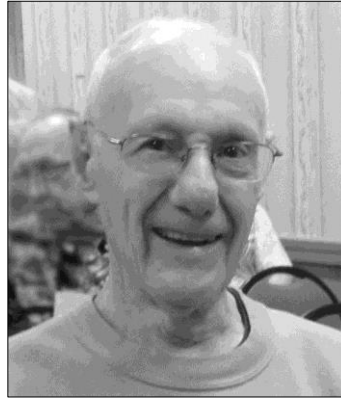
830TH SQUADRON



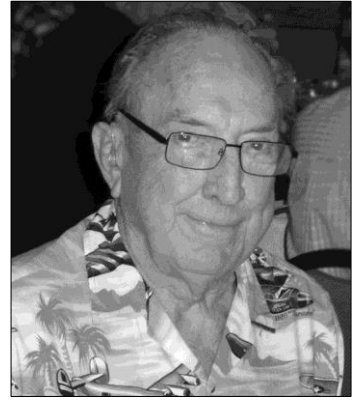
Howard Boxley



Bueford Cooper



Red Kempffer



Cliff Studaker

Apologies to the 830th Squadron, due to issues with the Tampa photographer we were unable to get a group photo this year

831ST SQUADRON



Henry Williams, George Chaplin, & Bob Hanson

828TH SQUADRON GUESTS



Left to Right: Russell Brook, Jack Yates, Carol Yates, Walt Hendrickson, Martha Yates, Patricia Kieseewetter Pettersson, Kathy Kieseewetter Hendrickson, Ginny Wilson, John Wilson, Ronnie Taylor, Catherine Gilbert, Patricia Och, Laura Trainor, Eugene Taylor, Dean Taylor Sr., Gail Higdon, Katy Doran, Mary Rabenstein, Keith Williams, William Rabenstein, Greg Butchko, Harriett Hays Butchko, Patricia Bain, Jonathan Tuttle, Tammy Bain, Chuck Bain, Karen Bain, Joe Boldiga, Candice Smith & Mark LaScotte

829TH SQUADRON GUESTS



Left to Right: Eric Sims, Jakob Mayer, Donald Magness, John Bertram, Lee Cristelli, Lynn Gallo, Frances Fundling, Margie Smith, Mary Ann Behunin, Kathy & Steve Lindsay

830TH SQUADRON GUESTS



Left to Right: Dick Keating, Phil Cummings, Michele Cummings, Joe Crabill, DeDe Crabill, Randy Cooper, Mickey Kempffer, Mike Kempffer, Carol Studaker, Steve Sharpe, Hannah Wehner, Scott Wehner, & Heide Wehner

831ST SQUADRON GUESTS



Left to Right: Tim Redington, Ted Goddard, Curt & Jill Christensen, Susan Chaplin, Russ & Mari Christensen, Mark & Beth Leslie, David Williams, Kay Brown-Gary, Bill & Dianne Leslie, Robert Gary, Donna Hanson, Robert Hanson Jr., Pam Hanson-Phillips, Bill Phillips, Renee & Russ Hanson, Mary Ann Gworek, Corey Hanson, Paul Gworek, Bob Hanson, John Hanson, Kathy Hanson-Carder, Patty Hanson-Brewer, Scott Clifford, Dave Brewer, & Erica Clifford

POWS / MIAs



Red Kempffer, Jack Yates, and George Chaplin

ALL VETERANS IN ATTENDENCE



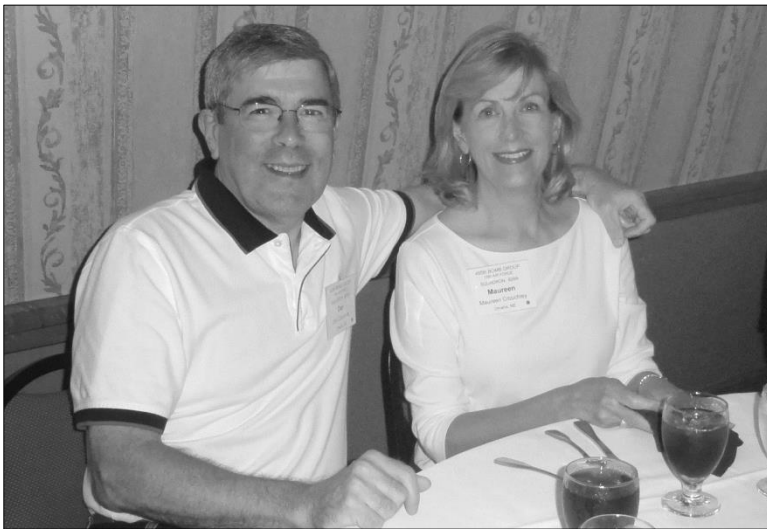
Left to Right: Bueford Cooper, Charlie Taylor, Alex Gilbert, Jack Behunin, Cliff Studaker, Henry Williams, Bill Williams, Red Kempffer, Bob Hanson, Jack Yates, George Chaplin, Wayne Smith. Seated: Howard Boxley



Cliff & Carol Studaker



Mary Ann & Jack Behunin



Dan & Maureen Crouchley



Bueford & Randy Cooper



Gerry Weinstein & Mary Habstritt



Mary Ann Gworek & Paul Gworek

MINUTES OF THE 485TH BOMB GROUP

Business Meeting Saturday, October 12th, 2013 Tampa, Florida

The 49th Annual Reunion Business Meeting was called to order by Chairman Phil Cummings. Phil led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance. Phil recognized Kathleen Arnold and Tony Siller for undertaking the design and production of the souvenir drinking glasses. Kathleen relayed greetings from Tony and spoke of Tony's labor of the love that he puts into the design.

Phil made a motion to accept the Secretary's report as written in last year's LWT, the motion was approved.

In Jolene Stockton's absence, Phil read the Treasurer's report. The beginning balance was \$6,676. After expenses, income, and contributions, the final balance for the year was \$7,415. Phil thanked contributors, who wished to remain anonymous. The Treasurers report was approved.

First time attendees to the reunion were asked to stand and be recognized. Renee Hanson, Eric Sims, Dee Crabill, Robert Boxley, Jerry White, Bill Rabenstein & Charles Brower.

Our oldest veteran attending was Henry Williams at 93 years old. In lieu of the traditional "Oldest Veteran" ball cap, he was awarded a leather aviator hat.



Henry Williams

For this year's reunion, we had 13 veterans attend. Twelve veterans

were present at the business meeting the break down per group were as follows:

828=3 829=2 830=4 831=3

Phil then announced that Jerry Whiting would give the historian report. Jerry shared recent website connections. The majority of newcomers to the group are through the website. Jerry receives up to 10 emails a day requesting information. Many requests come from Europe. Requests from Slovakia have been particularly heavy with groups trying to identify crash sites on the Slovakian border. Szymon Serwatka and his family came from Poland for the Tucson Reunion for a medal presentation to the family of a 485th crew member, Lewis Kaplan, lost on a bombing raid to Auschwitz. This year Szymon sends his greetings to the group. Szymon let Jerry know that a museum has been created in Blechhammer to honor the 15th Air Force, and that much of the museum is specifically about the 485th Bomb Group. Unfortunately, the museum had a flood this year. Please contact Jerry if you would like to make any type of donation to help restore the museum. In addition to requests from family members and international researchers, Jerry also receives requests from our own military. A recent example was a request for additional information of 7 individuals at a 485th grave site in St Louis.

Jerry then introduced international guest Jakob Mayer from Innsbruck, Austria for a special presentation. Jakob's relationship with the 485th started when he was contacted about 8 years ago to help locate and thank

Austrians who helped group member Bill Ryan survive after his Feb. 1945 crash. Another survivor of that crash was Jack Yates. Jakob was able to locate the 50 caliber machine gun that Jack operated on the aircraft. At some point, it was recovered from the crash site and placed in a private museum. Through Jakob's persistence and perseverance, he was ultimately able to purchase the machine gun. Unfortunately, no way has been found to ship the non-functional gun back to the United States. In lieu of bringing the entire gun back, it was decided to cut out the section of the gun that had its identifying serial number stamped in it, bring it to the reunion, and present it to Jack Yates.



Jack Yates & Jakob Mayer

After over 60 years, Jack was reunited with a piece of his personal past left on a mountainside in Austria. Jakob and the 485th are still interested in finding a way to bring the rest of the gun back to the U.S. If anyone has contacts that may be able to make this happen, please contact Jerry. Jakob continues to work not only with the 485th, but also other groups in investigating crash sites in Europe. He was recently in northern Italy at a crash site where a memorial was placed honoring the sacrifices of those American crewmen. Jerry ended Jakob's presentation by

describing how Jakob is instrumental in getting monuments placed, as well as taking veterans and families to crash sites. Jerry followed up with a story of how Jakob accompanied him several years ago to a crash site in Chiusaforte, Italy.

Phil then opened the floor to individual squadron business. Phil noted the absence of Marvin Lindsay. Bob Hanson recognized the attendance of his three daughters and three sons, six of his eight children. Phil emphasized that the LWT was the primary way that we communicate and keep in touch with people who cannot make the reunions. Kathleen Arnold added that this year's souvenir glasses have the image of the Light Weight Tower in honor of the newsletter that has kept the 485th BG informed and connected through the years. Mark Leslie sent greetings from Jesse and Marie Ledbetter. Mark left multiple copies of Jesse's story "Mission to Vienna" in the hospitality room and noted that there were only a few copies left. The Ledbetters celebrated their 70th anniversary last October. Jerry White had a few more copies of "This is How It Was" for sale.

Phil then moved to new business and made the emotional announcement that he was stepping down as Chairman. He announced that Mark LaScotte was going to fill the position. Phil recounted how, several years ago, Bob Hanson had approached him to take over as Chairman and how he has enjoyed serving in that role.

Lee Cristelli announced that that her father and mother, Milton and Frances Fundling, were able to attend 38 reunions together and that this makes her mother's 40th reunion. She expressed what a pleasure it has been to be part of the organization.

Phil and Jerry then discussed next year's reunion. Jerry explained on

how the Board comes up with the reunion candidate cities. The three states with the most vets are Florida, Texas, and California. After having low attendance at the San Diego reunion and now a decent turnout in Florida, it was decided that the candidate cities for next year need to be centrally located, a major airport hub, and affordable. It was also decided that this next reunion would be the 50th and final formal reunion of the 485th Bomb Group. This decision was arrived at with the sad, but honest, fact that our vets (the very reason we have these reunions) are decreasing in number and the remaining are less able to travel. The idea of ending with fifty reunions echos the group's 50 missions requirement. Future get-togethers after the 50th will be smaller and more regional. The 485th Bomb Group Organization will focus on other ways to honor those who served and preserve their place in history. The three cities that were selected for voting were Dallas, Minneapolis, and Las Vegas. The first round of voting eliminated Minneapolis. The final vote was for Dallas with the following tally:

Dallas = 37 Las Vegas = 27



Mark LaScotte & Phil Cummings

Russ Christensen shared special greetings and thanks on behalf of Eva Mozes Kor. Eva Mozes Kor is a survivor of the Holocaust who, with her twin sister Miriam, was subjected to human experimentation under Josef Mengele at Auschwitz. Both of her parents and two older sisters were killed at the camp; only she and Miriam survived. In 1984 Kor

founded the organization CANDLES (an acronym for "Children of Auschwitz Nazi Deadly Lab Experiments Survivors"), through which she located 122 other living Mengele twins, as the experiment survivors came to be known.

Russ had the opportunity to meet Eva Kor and asked if she remembered the aerial bombing of targets near Auschwitz on September 13th, 1944. Eva Kor stated that she did, in fact, remember the bombings and that the Jews in the camp wept. They wept because for the first time in Auschwitz, they had hope; hope that they may live through their ordeal. She later found out that these planes with their white star markings were American and recounted the love that the Jews in the camp had for those American flyers. Russ got to tell Eva that his father was on that bombing mission and there were also two Jewish crewmembers in the plane with him, one of which was killed when they were shot down 20 miles from Auschwitz.

Phil announced that photos would be taken out by the pool at 5pm and that the banquet dinner would be held in the event tent next to the pool at 7pm. The Memorial breakfast would start up at 9am the next morning.

Michelle Cummings performed some memorial breakfast coordination and announced that Neal Swann, who has run the Memorial breakfast in the past, was not able to attend this year and was greatly missed.

Phil announced that they would take a short break and that upon everyone's return Kathleen Arnold would facilitate a meeting for veterans to share stories.

The business meeting was then adjourned.

The Mystery Ring: Resolution

by Katy Doran

It is my privilege to let everyone in the 485th Bomber Group who may still be curious, to know that I have accepted the honor of becoming the *caretaker* of the Mystery Ring.

When that 1941 class ring was anonymously delivered to the 485 BG's friend, Dr. Jakob Mayer, along with the note "*From the crash site,*" it was a stunning and momentous thing to happen. It had been 60 years since



Lynn Cotterman, on his first mission, witnessed, and later shared his memory for the website stories, the tragic midair of planes from the 828th and 829th squadrons on March 2, 1945. There has been interest and curiosity within the BG since.

Serious efforts were made to find a surviving family member of the Langley crew from that tragic March 2, 1945 midair over Austria that took the lives of 19 young men of the 828th & 829th squadrons. That search was complicated by the fact that the ring was generic – no high school designation, no initials inscribed. Don Magness, younger brother of 829th crewman, John Magness, joined the search after concluding the ring did not come from any member of his brother's crew. Don was the first to successfully post a message that brought forward a likely candidate to inherit the ring: Sgt. Leegrand Koller's daughter, Katy Doran. Other than the 828th pilot, "Dixie" Langley, who survived, my father was the only other crewmember married with a child.

A six-month-old infant at the time of my dad's death, I found Don Magness' posting on Ancestry.com during a random Google search of my dad's name in the fall of 2009. And so, the ring's recent history, combined with a vigilant search, joined a compelling oral history passed to me by my mother.

Marriages between an older woman and a younger man were simply "not done" in the 1940's. So when a very young Lee Koller, who left high school after his junior year to sign on to the war effort, stationed at Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis, met and fell in love with a young nursing school graduate, Lucille, it required the ruse of Lee's proving to be older to meet social acceptance. Lee Koller's 1941 class ring provided the unquestioned "proof" for Lucille Robinson. They were married in October, 1943 and I was born in September, 1944.

While my father Sgt. Leegrand Koller shipped out after Christmas, 1944 and joined the 485th BG, 828th Squadron, Venosa, Italy, Mom took me from Missouri to my father's family in Paradise, Pennsylvania for the duration of Lee's overseas service. It was there that a conversation revealed that my dad had never graduated from Paradise High School. When Mom declared "But he has a class ring," my grandmother's laughing response was "Oh, he had one made." Sadly, Mom cannot make a positive identification of the 485th mystery ring; she passed away in 2005.

While there will never be definitive proof that the very visible ring worn by Lee Koller in the Langley Crew photo is THE ring, the compelling oral history, coupled with the fact that the search has produced no one else who might have a claim, has brought about this inconclusive but comforting resolution. As caretaker of the ring, I believe it has meaningful symbolic significance: representing all the young men of the 485th BG who lost their lives on those missions and a come

lately conscience among the people of Austria.

Perhaps, one day, there can be a permanent memorial for the 485th Bomber Group (in the Castle museum in Venosa, perhaps?) displaying photos, mementoes and artifacts that might include the ring and its history. Until that time, this is The End of the story . . . for now.



Katy Doran & Don Magness

HEADQUARTERS / MY JOURNEY CONTINUES

By: Kathleen Arnold, HQ Reporter

Daughter of Pop Arnold, First 485th Group Commander

It was good to see all your smiling faces this year in Tampa & I am looking forward to our 50th reunion in Dallas although it saddens me to know that it is our last mission together. Just as the Group had to do so long ago in Italy, it's time to say Finito. But that in no way means it is the end to the many friendships we've made & will continue to have.

Every year I like to report on what's been happening with some Group members that I keep in touch with, but who are not able to attend reunions. Colonel Bill Herblin, the first Deputy Group Commander, is now 96 years old & had been living in his home in Georgetown, Texas, until this past summer when circumstances resulted in him going into Assisted Living in Georgetown. It has taken some time but he is adjusting to his new environment but misses the freedom & privacy of his own home. He accepts that, at his age, he is where he needs to be & has many years of wonderful memories in the home he shared with his dear departed wife Kathryn. Bill sends his regards & best wishes to all 485th members.

I also spoke with Bill's son (Bill Jr.) who expressed his desire to come to the 50th reunion and, with any luck, he can accompany his father. Even if Bill Sr. is unable to make the trip, I really hope Bill Jr. will be able to join us. I know he would be warmly welcomed by all.

Hank Hancock is now 92, but he was only 23 & my Dad's Waist Gunner when he was shot down over Blechhammer & became a POW. Hank & I talk several times a year. I am so uplifted & amazed at his strength, spirit & humor. He & his wife, Althea, are getting along in their second year in a lovely senior residence in Manhattan, Montana. Hank is adamant about living independently & jokes about not going across the street "to the big house, where all the old folks are." Hank still hunts, fishes, & enjoys mile long walks every day & he strongly reminded me he does not use a cane or walker! Given that Hank once walked nearly 600 miles as a prisoner of war, I respect the fact he is still out there adding more miles to his walk of life. Once I called & Hank was busy clearing 6 inches of snow off the outdoor grill to cook some fish he just caught. When I asked wouldn't it be easier to use the warm stove inside, Hank just laughed & said they were better cooked outdoors, even if it was just 30 degrees outside. Hank's children live close by & they recently enjoyed a happy family Thanksgiving together. Hank & Althea are coming up on their 73rd anniversary in January 2014. So, keep on

hunting, fishing, cooking, walking, and living happily ever after you guys!

Bill Killian was my Dad's Radio Operator & also shot down with Hank & Pop on August 27, 1944. He lives in Mattituck, New York with his wife, Mary, & one of their sons, who is now retired. Bill is 93 years old & in relatively good health all around. He was very upbeat & enjoyed talking about his children. His other son is a Lt. Colonel & Deputy Group Commander in the Air National Guard in New York. Their daughter is a successful business woman & lives nearby. I told Bill the Group would love to see him & his family in Dallas.

Warren Sortomme, the Group Mickey Operator, went down with my Dad over Blechhammer & ended up in the same POW camp with Pop. I spoke with Warren earlier this year & the big news was he turned 90. His kids threw him a big party with lots of family & friends present. He was afraid that his & Joyce's traveling days may be over & indeed their Christmas letter confirmed that they sold their beloved trailer & it was a tearful goodbye. Warren still enjoys good health & lots of energy, but Joyce has battled health issues for the last few years that have taken its toll. They both miss going to the reunions, but I'm hoping they can muster the energy to get on a plane & head to Dallas & bring as many of their 13 Great Grandkids that can fit in their luggage!

Tony Siller, a Cook with the 828th, lives in Denver with his wife, Gertie. We get together regularly to visit or go out to lunch, most recently to celebrate Tony's 89th birthday. Tony likes to brag that he never killed anyone during the war with his cooking! Tony & I have been working on the 485th glass designs for several years & we will put our heads together again & come up with a final glass to complete the set. I'm wondering how many total glasses have been made over the years & who has the largest collection? Let me know! Tony & Gertie are getting along still living in their Denver home of 40+ years. Health issues occasionally rear their ugly heads, but the couple always seems to bounce back, thank goodness. They send their love to all.

Well, to everyone out there, this past year I so enjoyed seeing you at the reunion, talking with you on the phone, getting your friendly & funny e-mails, or seeing you when you passed through Denver. On behalf of myself & all HQ personnel, I wish to express heartfelt wishes for good health & blessings for all our fellow 485th crewmembers & family. See you in Dallas!

Notes from the Historian by Jerry Whiting

Much of my recent work has centered on the planning for our final formal reunion. You'll read about it elsewhere in this publication.

I'm working on two other big projects. One is the preparation of another documentary about the 485th. This one will include actual 16mm film of the 485th. I'm hoping to have it completed by next summer. If completed in time, I intend to use it during the historical presentation at the reunion. The other project is a book about the June 28th mission to Bucharest. It was a day of large losses, acts of individual heroism and inspirational accounts of men working together. I'm hoping to have it finished for the final reunion.

I've exchanged several emails with John Malecki recently. John is the son of Walter Malecki (deceased), tail gunner on Stanley Ash's 830th Sqdn replacement crew. John has done a superb job of honoring his father, the crew and the 485th by creating a website. I encourage you to take a look at it and I'm sure you'll agree with me. The website is: www.b24crew7151.com.

Our Austrian friend from Innsbruck, Jakob Mayer, joined us again at our reunion in Tampa. It was great to see him again and his presence reminds me of the European friends of the 485th who have assisted us over the years, with several of them joining us at past reunions. All of them will be invited to join us for our final reunion. Several already plan to attend.

We continue to get questions about the 485th from Europe. Just as one example, I recently received an email inquiry from Gianni Ferraro in Milan, Italy. Gianni acquired a piece of B-24 wreckage that was found about 25 years ago on a mountain near the Italian/French border and identified it as coming from 42-78243. He said the aircraft had been identified as Dallas Lady and he thought it was a 485th plane. I found no record of this plane being assigned to the 485th, but what I found was interesting. The pilot was Earl DesJardin. Apparently Earl was assigned to the 831st Sqdn, but was on temporary assignment to the 885th Bomb Squadron in Algiers. This group flew clandestine missions into Occupied Europe, dropping supplies and agents. The crew was on a mission to drop supplies on the night of September 12-13, 1944 when it crashed into a mountain. I have no additional information about Earl DesJardin and most of the crew, except that they were originally assigned to the 831st

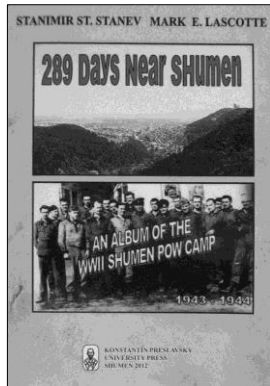
Sqdn. This research takes time, but I find it fascinating. Gianni now has a great interest in the 485th and hopes to join us in Dallas.



Front Left to Right: Anthony Skarl, gunner, Joseph Boone, gunner; Lewis Kees, gunner; Wright (unknown first name) gunner, Stephen Levick, flight engineer and Stanley Gluckmen, radio operator. Standing, Left to Right: Robert Hermans, bombardier; Mel Olsen, navigator; Dale Marston, copilot and Earl Desjardins, pilot.

In the past, we have received many inquiries about the 485th book, *This Is How It Was*. This book was originally published in the early 90's and quickly sold out. The publisher, Southern Heritage Press, did a reprint about 10 years ago of a few hundred copies. It has been out of print for many years & used copies are occasionally found on the internet, going for upwards of \$200. Several months ago, Scott Cary, a former employee of Southern Heritage Press, contacted me and told me he acquired several new copies of the book when the publisher closed its doors. Scott wondered if there was any interest and I told him I get regular inquiries about the book. I invited Scott to join us at the Tampa reunion and offer his books for sale. Attendees were thrilled to be able to purchase a new copy of this out of print book. Scott is a U.S. Navy Veteran himself and enjoyed chatting with some of us during his visit. I contacted Scott in early January and he still had a few copies of the book available at that time. The original cover price of the book was \$39.95. Scott is offering the remaining copies at a price of \$35, which includes shipping. The 328-page hardcover book is filled with 485th photos and stories. It was a good deal in the early 90's at \$39.95 and it's a book I strongly recommend to anyone interested in 485th history. You can contact Scott Cary directly via email at jscary@gmail.com.

Our new chairman, Mark LaScotte, has co-authored an interesting book about American POWs held in Bulgaria, entitled *289 Days near Shumen*. Extensive



research went into the making of this book. It was printed in Bulgaria, but it's in English. His research for this book formed the basis for some of our Friday night Historical Presentation. Mark's father was one of the POWs held at the Shumen camp. If you're interested in getting a copy of this book, you can email Mark at lascotte@comcast.net.

Over the past few years I've received many unpublished or self-published stories about and/or from some of our Vets. I wish they could all be included in this publication, but we simply don't have the room. People like Harold Kempffer, Cliff Studaker, Jess Ledbetter, Alex Gilbert, John Duntley, and Fred Irving are just a few of these men. In addition, I receive information and photos from wives, widows and children and grandchildren of our Vets. An example of that are photos sent to me a few months ago by Mabel Craig, wife of Lee Craig (now deceased), an 831st gunner. Sometimes I'm a little remiss in thanking people, but I want all of you to know how important this is to the 485th research and history. These items are often used to provide specific firsthand info to people researching history of the 485th, including family members, authors and historians. I'm in the process of cataloguing this information and will eventually provide copies to the appropriate museum or research facility. I also use it myself for reference purposes in books I'm writing or have written.

A couple of items of great historical significance of which I don't have many are navigator's logs and pilot's logs. These items are particularly helpful in my research, especially the navigator's logs. They often contain information that isn't available anywhere else and I'm always happy to get copies of these documents.

I'm hoping to see many of you in Dallas. For those of you who can't make it, I'm grateful for the letters, emails and calls I've received from some of you. This is what makes it worthwhile for me.



Jerry Whiting & Mark LaScotte

MAIL ROOM 828th SQUADRON

By Terry Boettcher

Son of Donald E. Boettcher 828th Gunner

At our past reunion in Tampa the 828th had four Vets along with 31 guests. There were no individual squadron meetings. No collection hat was passed, but as a squadron we received several donations & financially appear to be in pretty good shape, with a balance of \$429 after the Christmas postcard mailing. These donations are greatly appreciated.

This past Christmas, we reached out to everyone on our mailing list in the form of a postcard rather than a traditional Christmas letter. The postcard was mailed to the entire bomb group, with date & city of the reunion.

We hope to draw new faces along with returnees from previous reunions.

This gathering will be our last & we are trying to make it the most successful ever. With what I have heard is in store for us, I truly believe it will be. If you have ever thought of attending or are wondering what it would be like to attend, please check out the photos in



Keith & Bill Williams with Frances Fundling

this newsletter & of our past reunions on the 485th web site. It is a great family experience & tremendous tribute to these men who, along with countless others, sacrificed their youth for our world's freedom. I hope you will attend.

The World's Greatest Air Force Base

By: Kathleen Arnold, HQ Reporter

Daughter of Pop Arnold,
First 485th Group Commander

This year in Tampa I had the pleasure of reminiscing with Dan Crouchley about Portsmouth Air Force Base (AFB), renamed Pease AFB, New Hampshire, in 1957. Dan and I lived there as children, my family from 1956 to 1959. We were both too young to know each other but ours were the first families stationed at the newly constructed Air Base and home to the Strategic Air Command (SAC) 817th Air Division. Officially active with one runway open as of January 1, 1956, General Walter E. "Pop" Arnold arrived as the base's very first Division Commander. Pop's mission was to complete construction of the entire base and once complete, the military mission was to maintain a combat-ready force capable of long-range bombardment operations with emphasis on nuclear deterrence and nuclear strike. The 817th provided the nation with an unequalled facility from which SAC could launch a significant portion of the retaliatory capabilities in the event the Soviets should be so rash as to attack us.



The 817th Air Division included 2 Wings; the 100th and the 509th Bombardment Wings equipped with thirty B-47 bombers and KC-97 refueling tankers. We arrived along with 2,000 other personnel and since no base housing had been built, families were forced to rent quarters and live among the local population, who were somewhat hostile and extremely opposed to the military's presence in their coastal community. At full strength personnel totals were expected to reach 7,000 and one of Pop's first priorities as Commander was to approve \$13 million for the construction of 1,600 base family housing units. Pop told the base engineers to build our quarters last, which they did, and we finally moved on base 3 years later in 1959.

On April 19, 1956, General Pop Arnold flew the first B-47 Stratojet, named The State of New Hampshire, into Portsmouth Air Force Base and the air base officially became operational. The base had more airplanes than found in the entire fleet

of any major commercial airlines at the time. In Pop's opening speech at the official dedication ceremony on June 30, 1956, before a crowd of 120,000 military and civilian attendees he described Portsmouth AFB as "The World's Greatest Air Force Base."

At the all-day opening ceremonies the crowds were thrilled by the biggest air show ever put on by the Air Force; including a formation flyover of B-47s and KC-97 refueling tankers and an in-flight refueling demonstration. Another interesting demonstration was a B-52 Stratofortress bomber making a Ground Control Approach (GCA) with the GCA controller's instructions and pilot's responses on the public address system for all to hear. But the highlight of the air show was the precision-formation acrobatics team of the famed Air Force Thunderbirds. This was their first public performance since they switched to the North American Supersonic F-100 Super Sabres.



Pop Arnold and Sec. of Air Force Donald Quarles watch the air show at opening dedication of Portsmouth AFB

Hundreds of thousands of visitors came from near and far and thronged through every hangar and static display of military aircraft. There were a dozen aircraft industry exhibits including an Aerobee Rocket built by Aerojet General Corp. Every base support installation from the fire and police departments, to medical and parachutists

had displays and exhibitions. Even the Officer's Wives Club had an exhibit of "International Souvenirs." Two Air Force bands played throughout the day and shiny military honor guards greeted and escorted distinguished guests to the parade stands.

Local organizations were exhibited, including the New England & Army Corps of Engineers, Chamber of Commerce, Air Force Association, the Plymouth Civil Air Patrol, Ground Observer Corps, & local service organizations of the Boy Scouts, Mason's, Lion's & Kiwanis Clubs.



Pop Arnold and B-47 crew land the very first B-47 into Portsmouth

Beginning with the opening ceremonies in 1956 and continuing after the base was renamed Pease AFB after Medal of Honor recipient, Harl Pease Junior in 1957, there was a constant flow of visiting VIPs who came to see, as New Hampshire Senator Styles Bridges said, “the crown jewel of the Air Force.” There was Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Secretary of the Air Force Donald Quarles, Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson. The Secretary of the Navy Charles Thomas came along with a few Admirals. New Hampshire Senators and Congressmen, New Hampshire Governors and Mayors and even government representatives from Omaha, Nebraska, home to the Strategic Air Command, visited the base. Not to mention the many distinguished civilian executives, contractors and tradesmen who all had major roles in building the base.

The Chief Engineer of the Army Corps of Engineers came with a team of Generals to inspect the facilities and every top General in the Air Force and SAC came, including General Nathan Twining, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, and General Curtis Lemay Commander of SAC. The guest book at the base Visiting Officer’s Quarters, nicknamed “The Castle” read more like a Who’s Who book and their combined star power could form their own constellation. Pop greeted and hosted them all in New England style and with military flare.

But the base had a vital military mission, and one of the notable historic events that took place during 1957 was the B-52 around-the-world Power Flight and Pop’s Division was part of it. Three B-52 Bombers circled the globe January 16-18, 1957 demonstrating SAC’s capability of striking anywhere on the face of the earth. The Power Flight covered 24,325 miles in 45 hours and 19 minutes. SAC selected their top performing refueling squadrons to participate in the operation and under Pop’s command, the 100th Bomb Wing refueling Squadron was chosen to do the second of the four in-flight refuelings.

The operation required a maximum effort and 21 airplanes plus all the maintenance, electrical, refueling and their crews left Pease AFB finally landing at Dhahran Air Field in Saudi Arabia and awaited orders. They got the call at 2:00 am and all 21 planes took off to intercept and refuel the three B-52s in the clear star lit night skies over the Arabian Desert. They did their

refueling without any problems and headed back to England to join a 100th Bomb Wing B-47 Squadron deployed at Brize Norton. Pop flew a B-47 from Pease to England, gathered the crews in the hangar and presented the refueling squadron with a SAC commendation for excellence in performance. He stayed on in England and in accordance with SAC’s

policy of always being combat ready, Pop prepared the squadron for a 3-day war profile mission. Pop flew with his squadron around the clock and he did not fly a B-47, but was at the controls of the KC-97 refueling tanker and in a friend’s word’s “Pop never missed a lick.” I was told that Pop once flew the most perfect approach pattern in a B-47 at Pease AFB which amazed quite a few people at the time, especially since he did it after flying a particularly long mission. Very few pilots were able to do that at Pease.



Pop Arnold and New Hampshire Senator Styles Bridges passing through honor guard at renaming dedication of Pease AFB (1957)

There is no doubt as a family, and for Pop personally, Pease AFB was one of the more memorable of his assignments.

The Air Force awarded Dad his second Legion of Merit for his time served at Pease. The citation read in part; “General Arnold’s outstanding skill, knowledge of strategic air power, and leadership ability in commanding a vitally important strategic air division were major factors in the combat ready status attained by his command.” We left the New England cold and snow behind in 1959 and headed to the warmth of Norton AFB, California where Dad would become Director for Flight and Missile Safety.

The mighty Pease AFB officially closed in 1991 and today is home to the Pease Air National Guard. News of the closure brought sadness and nostalgia to my Dad who built the base from the ground up and brought it to peak combat readiness in 3 short years. Pease AFB represents significant beginnings and endings for Pop and he chose Pease to retire at in January 1968. Many of their civilian friends from the towns of Portsmouth and Newington came to his retirement ceremony. All shared a history, and a lifetime of friendships were made at Pease when what began as a hostile relationship ended when civilians and the military united together and broke ground to build “The World’s Greatest Air Force Base.” I will always think of my Dad and Mom as the First General and First Lady of Pease and although it may have been the Air Force’s greatest base, as long as I can remember, my Dad always referred to Pease as “My base.”

Banquet Dinner and Entertainment

Our Saturday night banquet dinner was once again a big hit enjoyed by all. It began at 5pm with group photos. Our photographer, Tampa Joe Photo, arrived two hours late but thankfully Howard Boxley's son, Robert, lent his photographic talents to the group. The Doubletree staff upgraded our dining arrangements to a beautiful setting by the pool. Everyone enjoyed drinks and company by the pool while the Florida sun set in the distance. The dinner was followed by dancing and late evening visits in the hospitality room. Special thanks to Phil Cummings for another magical evening of dinner, dancing and memories! We appreciate you Phil!



Jack Yates &
Jakob Mayer



Mary Habstritt &
Jerry Whiting



Left to Right: Scott Wehner, Cliff & Carol Studaker Hannah & Heide Wehner

Memorial Breakfast Sunday, Oct. 13th 2013

Michele Cummings did a wonderful job filling the shoes of Neal Swann by hosting our annual Memorial Breakfast. We missed Neal's presence at the reunion this year. The US Flag Folding Ceremony was narrated by Kay Brown-Gary with the flag folding done by

Joe Crabill, Dan Crouchley, Mark Leslie, Scott Wehner, Steve Lindsay and Lee Cristelli. Bob Hanson conducted the Missing Man Table ceremony. George Chaplin led the memorial portion of the ceremony. The reunion was adjourned with hugs & good-byes until we meet in Dallas.



Flag Folding Ceremony



Walt Hendrickson, Kathy Kiesewetter
Hendrickson, & Patricia Kiesewetter Pettersson

JOURNEY'S END - MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Walter Barrett	831	2009	John M. Jones	831	2013
Earl Beatty	829	2011	Leonard Kraus	828	2012
Ambrose Borgetti	828	2013	Carl F. Lange, Sr.	485	2007
Billy F. Cottingham	830	2013	William F. MacLean	828	2013
E. J. DeVane	828	2009	George Petroff	828	2012
Philip Fielder	828	2004	Dan A. Petrogallo	829	2013
Charles J. Heringer	830	2008	James J. Schaefer	831	2014
James M. Hunter	830	2013	A. L. Sulski	829	2003
Theodore Jacobs	831	2013	Lt. Col. Jack Whatley	828	2013

Special THANKS to Frances Fundling & Carol Yates for sharing their photos for our newsletter

Additional Reunion photos may be viewed at http://www.485thbg.org/Reunion_Info.htm

and

Our photographer at the Saturday Banquet dinner was Tampa Joe Photo



<http://www.joephoto.com/>

select **view photos** then **10/12/2013 485th WWII Reunion**

Phone: 813-777-6031

Email: joephoto@yahoo.com

COOK	POP ARNOLD	CORNETT	CAIRNS	NETT	SAMMY
HANCOCK	SORTOMME			MONROE	PARLI
BUNDY	TOWERS			ICK	LASSEIGNE
FOWLER	HUCKEY	SIMS	TRINCHE	AKINS	HERRINGER
WOODYARD	COTTERMAN	GEYER	CARLSON	SHELOR	KEELE
ROBERT BAKER	ANDERSON	BROWN	LLOYD ARNOLD	CHOATE	BENSON
TUNSTALL CREW 45	GREENWOOD CREW 45	ROFIELD CREW 45	RICHMOND CREW 45	FROHLING CREW 45	SJODIN
OLIVER CREW 45	DYER CREW 45	COTTINGHAM CREW 45	WESLEY CREW 45	TOWNE CREW 45	SWANN
CATHCART CREW 35	MCGEEHEE CREW 35	ROHN CREW 35	LINDSAY CREW 35	WOLF CREW 45	FUNDING
BIG ALICE FROM DALLAS CREW 24	SKELTON CREW 24	KOPCHA CREW 24	HUBER CREW 24	FURGUESON CREW 24	LONG CREW 24
BEHUNIN CREW 24	JAY BAKER CREW 24	WILLIAMS CREW 24	CARTER CREW 24	CAMDEN CREW 24	HADEN
BROKAW	ABBOTT	WHITEMAN	HALL	MORGAN	SCHLICHTER
HANSEN	HICKMAN				

PERSONAL TILES

15th Air Force Wall - March Field, California

Personal Tiles can still be made and be set at our 485th plaque on the 15th AF Wall. The cost is \$50.00 for one line of 20 spaces and \$75.00 for two lines of 20 spaces. here are two examples of tiles that have been set on our island

MCGEN WALTER E ARNOLD CPT ROBERT B SKELTON
CMD 485 BOMB GP POW PILOT CREW 24 829 SQ

To order a tile, send the lettering to me with no more than 20 spaces for each line.

Warren D. Sortomme, 3490 Turquoise Lane, Oceanside, CA 92056-4866, (760) 945-8439, Sortomme@dslextrame.com

Check made out to: The March Field Museum Foundation
485th Vets Tiles - January 1, 2004

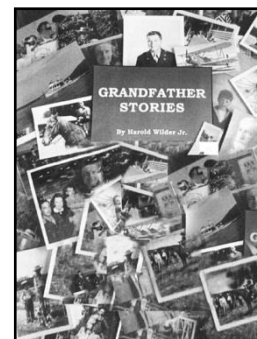
Headquarters - Walter E. Arnold, Robert M. Benson, Douglas M. Cairns, Ben B. Cook, John B. Cornett, S.W. Hancock, Hadley M. Huckey, Warren Sortomme and Loyd F. Towers.

828th SQD - Jess Akins, Karl Anderson, Lloyd Arnold, Arlynn Brown, Horace Choate, George Ick, Lionel L. Lasseigne, Roger Monroe, Edward Nett, Clifford L. Parli, Sammy Schneider, Ben O. Sims and Albert Tranche.

829th SQD - Big Alice from Dallas - Jay T. Baker, Gerald Behunin, Earl L. Bundy, Robert J. Camden, Allen W. Carlson, Kenneth L. Carter, Joseph W. Cathcart, Arthur J. Fowler, Milton Funding, William G. Furgueson, Harvey H. Huber, San A. Keele, Michael I. Kopcha, Marvin H. Lindsay, William G. Long, Slayton M. McGehee, Donald P. Roen, Marion E. Shelor, Robert B. Skelton, Donald R. Whiteman, Wallace Williams and Irvin N. Wolf.

830th SQD - Robert E. Baker, Bill Cottingham, George Dyer, M. Greenwood, Chuck Heringer, Joseph H. Morgan, Bill Oliver, Joe Richmond, Paul Rofield, W. Schlichter, Everett H. Swann, Bob Towne, Fran Tunstall and R. Wesley.

831st SQD - C.A. Abbott, William Brokaw, Lynn Cotterman, William Geyer, R. Oliver Haden, Earl A. Hall, David T. Hansen, Robert W. Hickman, Dan Sjodin and Howard P. Woodyard.



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485TH BOMB GROUP BOOKS & DVDS

I'M OFF TO WAR, MOTHER, BUT I'LL BE BACK

By Jerry and Wayne Whiting

This newly revised edition, released in June 2007, is now a hardcover book. This expanded; collector's edition 250+ page book has nearly 100 photos. This is the true story of a 485th BG tail gunner, enhanced by excerpts of more than 200 letters he wrote home. It includes:

- The survival tale of an 831st Squadron airman and his buddies who were shot down over enemy territory, but eluded capture and returned to Italy six weeks later.
- The story of the 485th Bomb Group's unique relationship with the Tuskegee Airmen.
- The saga of one of the last bomber crews shot down over Europe on the final mission flown by the 485th, and their "capture" by the Russians.
- The capture of a Messerschmitt pilot and his fighter by two pilots and a navigator from the 830th Squadron.
- The miraculous account of a navigator's survival after he was blown out of his bomber and fell 10,000 feet without a parachute.

The continuing search today for a 9-man crew lost over Blechhammer.

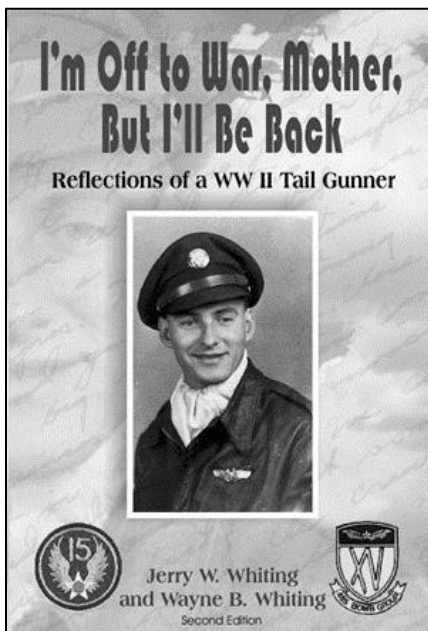
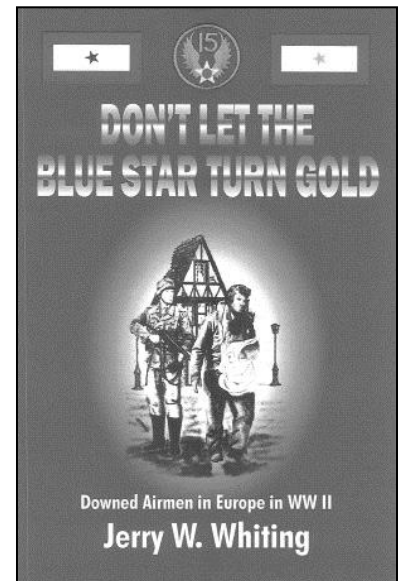
JUNE 2007 REVISED HARDCOVER
COLLECTOR'S EDITION!

DON'T LET THE BLUE STAR TURN GOLD

By Jerry Whiting

These are true stories of 485th Bomb Group airmen who didn't return from bombing missions. The 250-page hardcover book has 65 photos. The stories are about the struggle to survive, so that blue star proudly hanging in the window at home wouldn't be replaced by a gold one.

There are accounts of love, duty & courage. Included are stories of the families at home & their efforts to cope, after receiving that dreaded telegram advising them their loved one was Missing In Action. There are accounts from Europeans who witnessed the bombers falling, including recent stories from some who aided the airmen. Each story is placed in the context of what was happening elsewhere in the world. The author shares background history of how each story came to be, often with surprising revelations. This is a book about captures, escapes, evasions & sometimes death. Painstakingly researched & inspirational, it's a must read for anyone interested in WWII history, particularly for those interested in the 485th Bomb Group.



BOOK AND DVD ORDER FORM

Books and DVDs	Price	# of books/ DVDs	Total
<i>Don't Let the Blue Star Turn Gold</i>	\$ 20.00		\$
<i>I'm Off to War, Mother, But I'll Be Back</i> (hard cover)	\$ 20.00		\$
<i>I'm Off to War, Mother, But I'll Be Back</i> (paperback)	\$ 15.00		\$
<i>Mission By The Numbers</i> Edited by Sammy Schneider	\$ 20.00		\$
<i>In the Shadow of Mt. Vulture DVD</i>	\$ 12.00		\$
<i>New Year's At Ramitelli DVD</i>	\$ 12.00		\$
\$5 for 1 book, \$10 for 2-8 books Shipping/Handling			\$
(All books shipped 1st class or Priority Mail)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Total amount enclosed			\$

(Check or money order payable to: Jerry Whiting)

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Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Mail order form to:

Jerry Whiting 2576 Fox Circle Walnut Creek, California 94596

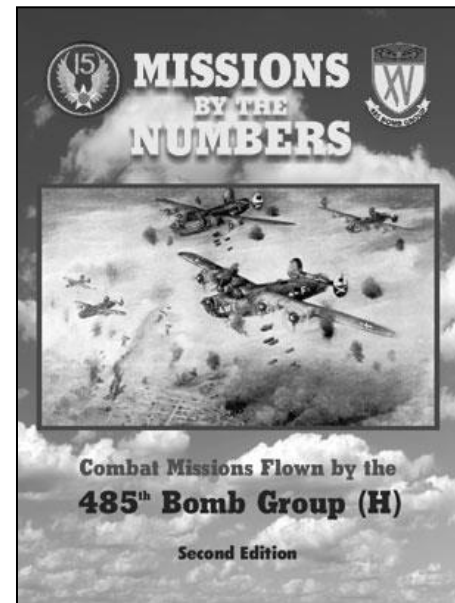
Phone: (925) 934-5204 Email: EAJWWWhiting@aol.com

MISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS Edited by Sammy Schneider

This book includes mission summaries of 187 combat missions flown by the 485th Bomb Group. Included are stories written by several members of the group that tell the complete story of a mission, from the minute the coded message was received until the mission was completed. Also included is the story of a gunner who was shot down and captured and the story of a crew that struggled to make it safely through the Brenner Valley, also known as “flak alley”, with severe battle damage.

There are 20+ photos in this 190–page, quality paperback book, including several photos of bomb strikes, damaged B-24s, escort fighters and reconnaissance photos, as well as maps and charts. There is also reference information on group losses and bomb types, a sample of a pilot’s “flimsy” (secret plan for the mission) and much, much more. This is a book about the 485th Bomb Group, told by the men who lived it. This is a very limited edition.

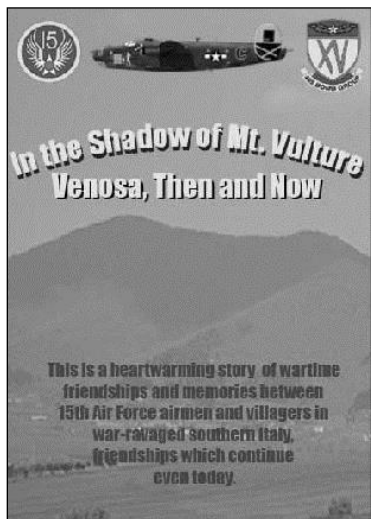
Only 300 copies have been printed, so get your copies now
\$20+ shipping. See order form on page 34



In the Shadow of Mt. Vulture Now Venosa, Then and Now

Does anyone in Italy remember the 485th Bomb Group? Many 485th Vets have asked this question. Jerry Whiting felt this question must be answered. He had photos and amateur video he shot on two research trips to Venosa and the surrounding area, the former home of the 485th Bomb Group. He juxtaposes the photos and video with wartime photos taken by the American airmen to produce this 24-minute DVD, which answers these questions. The answers may surprise you, but be prepared for an emotional ending that will make you feel proud.

This video also contains more than 100 wartime photos, taken by the men of the 485th Bomb Group. Profits, if any, will be used for future maintenance of the 485th website. The price is \$12, which includes shipping.



To receive a copy, send a check for \$12 to:

Jerry Whiting
2576 Fox Circle
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

email:
eajwwhiting@aol.com

New Year's At Ramitelli: A Safe Haven for Change

This 28-minute DVD tells the story of the unique relationship between the 485th Bomb Group and the “Red Tails” of the 332nd Fighter Group. The two groups made history, not in the air, but on the ground, when 17 planes from the 485th landed at the 332nd fighter base at Ramitelli in late December 1944. Colonel Benjamin O. Davis Jr. later wrote about the meeting: “Such a mixing of races would never have been allowed to occur in the United States.”

Two 485th airmen tell the story in their own words in this documentary and several others provided background information. Many 485th family members were also involved in the production of this film. This was an event in which all those associated with the 485th can be proud. The video debuted at the 2011 reunion in San Diego and was written and produced by Jerry Whiting.

To receive a copy, send a check for \$12 to:

Jerry Whiting
2576 Fox Circle
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

email:
eajwwhiting@aol.com



485th Memorials



White Crew 829th Squadron
Target: Munich, Germany 9 June 1944 Flak Attack
Monument: Near Innsbruck, Austria



Larkin Crew 830th Squadron
Crashed after take-off 15 April 1945
Monument: Mt. Vulture, Italy

Tomhave (HQ) &
Stockdale (829th)
Crews
Target: Regensburg,
Germany
16 Feb 1945
Flak Attack
Monument:
Mt. Belepeit, Italy



Sandall Crew
829th Squadron
Target: Munich
19 July 1944
Flak Attack
Monument:
near Munich
Germany



Langley (828th) and Pooley (829th) Crews
Target: Linz, Austria 2 March 1945
Mid-air collision
Monument: Austrian Alps



Lawrence Crew 831st Squadron
Mission: Oswiecim (Auschwitz) 13 Sept 1944
Shot down & Flak Damage
Memorial near Zygodowice, Poland