



# LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



No. 49

March 2015

## As the Lights Went Out in Dallas, a Star Began to Twinkle in Kansas City

by Mark LaScotte

What a special reunion this was. As the past chairperson of this event I thank everyone for taking the time to attend. It would not have been successful without the enthusiasm of the 347 attendees at this final reunion, honoring the 25 veterans in attendance & remembering those who made the ultimate sacrifice during the war. And to those veterans reading this who were unable to attend, I salute you as well. For it was you during that dire period who sacrificed your youth for the freedom we have come to know & enjoy today. May we never forget!

I personally thank Jerry Whiting for teaming up with me on this project, for the countless weeks he used his negotiating skills and follow-ups, and for his hosting of activities and excellent presentations throughout the reunion. Our group has been blessed to have a man of his many talents, and committed devotion as our historian. This reunion would not have been as successful without him. He made my job this past year very easy.

Though it may have appeared smooth on the surface, even Jerry wasn't able to do it all. We both leaned heavily on those behind the scenes. Our sincere thanks goes out to Kathleen Arnold, John and Mary Brooks, Chris Cairns, Jan Campbell, Lee Cristelli, Phil and Michele Cummings, Katy Doran, Bob and Kay Brown-Gary, Kimberly Johnston, Mary Habstritt, Michael and Barb Lafferty, Mark Leslie, Steve Lindsay, Steve & Laura Sharpe, Jolene Stockton, Neal Swann, Gerry Weinstein & Jerry White. And to everyone who made the new attendees feel very welcome, thank you.

I would like to share my feelings about our reunions and bring to your attention plans for a gathering in 2015. I regret that I did not attend more reunions. The few I attended were special to me and I enjoyed visiting with the veterans and their families. To sit down at any table and have so much in common with people who are strangers has always amazed

me. Everyone seemed like an extended family member. I am saddened for the 97 people for whom this was their first and last formal reunion, because I always looked forward to attending another & seeing my new and old acquaintances.

As the reunion approached the final week, the air was thick with emotions. Nobody wanted this to be the last official 485th reunion, but in truth it was time. It was decided at the close of the 2013 reunion in Tampa, FL that the 2014 reunion was going to be the last organized reunion affiliated with the 485th Bomb Group Association. The main reason was our repetitive low attendance over several years making us not profitable in the hotel's point of view. In order to have access to the hospitality and additional meeting rooms within the hotel we had to guarantee at least 50 rooms per night for four nights, and \$5,500 to \$7,500 committed for meals depending on the host hotel.

On the surface you might say, "But wait, weren't our numbers strong this past year?" the short answer would be yes, but then this was the FINAL REUNION and was marketed as such. I was approached by several of the larger families after the general meeting on Saturday who stated they only made the trip this year because it was the last one & they could not see themselves making the trip again. More than one vet commented that he would not want to be the last one attending one of these reunions & thought it was fitting to bring it to an end.

Those present on Saturday morning at our last general meeting experienced firsthand what was being emotionally felt by many. Several second generation people spoke strongly about keeping some form of the reunion intact. They spoke individually and collectively that morning that they wanted to meet again in some central location.

(Continued on Page 2)

Suggestions ranged from meeting informally at a hotel to meeting at one member's farm for an informal get together, to meeting again somewhere in a few years. Their suggestions were welcomed but as a group we cannot support it financially as an association anymore. I trust everyone will understand.

## **An alternative reunion that should fit our group's future needs**

Due to experiencing low reunion numbers, the 484th, 451st, 455th and 461st associations – all former B-24 bomb groups out of Italy – merged together in 2011 for a combined 15th Air Force type reunion and continue to maintain an annual turnout of 200+ attendees. I made contact with both the 461st bomb group association's reunion chairman and group president and they have warmly invited the 485th to become a part of this group as well. This has been successful for them and has allowed them to secure favorable rates with the hotels.

For those who would like to meet up again this would provide a comfortable, friendly, reasonably priced venue. You are still welcome to bring your scrapbooks and memorabilia to share. Gerald Weinstein has promised to return with his father's enlarged historical

photographs along with a new 15th Air Force theme that the other attending bomb groups are sure to enjoy.

As time goes on, I envision that these reunions will become more about the second and third generations attending. We need to continue to keep the vets' service to our country alive. All lives are short; but the memory of these men and their service can live on as long as we continue to remember. Please "Keep 'em Flying!"

I would also like to make it clear that this will not be a standalone reunion for the 485th –that ended with our last reunion in 2014. There will no financial support available from our group association and we will not be mailing any additional information out regarding this reunion. Noticeably different on the surface of this new venue is the absence of Jerry Whitings' outstanding historical event night.

To attend you must download the forms from our group website. The event is planned by the 461st bomb group, but we still maintain our own group identity and have our own group dinner on Friday evening. I think we will all blend in quite nicely. The \$15 registration fee solely covers the alcohol, snacks and soft drinks in the hospitality room enjoy.

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### **2015 Combined Reunion Itinerary**

B-24 Bomb Groups of the 484th - 485th - 451st - 455th & 461st  
Hilton Kansas City Airport Hotel      Kansas City, Missouri  
September 24 –27, 2015

Room rates at \$99+ including two hot breakfast buffets and two drink coupons per day per room  
Hospitality Room (alcohol, soft drinks and snacks)  
Complimentary airport shuttle  
Free Parking      Registration Fee \$15

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#### **Offsite Tours and Lunches Available**

- **Thursday** –Registration
- **Friday tour**-The Truman Presidential Library & Lunch
- **Saturday tour** -The National World War One Museum & Lunch
- **Sunday tour** -Steamboat Arabia Museum & Lunch
- **Friday evening** –Separate dinners for each bomb group (*for group autonomy*)
- **Saturday Night's Banquet** all groups combined and will feature guest speaker Roger Locher\*
- **Sunday Morning** – "Missing Man Table & Honors Ceremony"

\*Roger Clinton Locher is a former F-4D Phantom weapons officer and pilot who during the Vietnam War and during Operation Linebacker was shot down only 39 miles from Hanoi, North Vietnam. The 23 days Locher spent behind enemy lines evading capture was a record for downed airmen during the war.

(Friday and Saturday afternoons will feature veteran led stories and round table discussions)

**NOTE:** No additional group mailings of postcards or registration forms will be sent out announcing this event. The cut off for the group registration is September 1, 2015 –Please continue to monitor the 485<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Association web-site at: [WWW.485THBG.ORG](http://WWW.485THBG.ORG) for additional updates and for the downloading of the necessary forms to attend this reunion.



1972-General John Vogt (L) with  
Capt Roger Locher on his return to  
Udon Rozyal Thai Air Force Base





Keith & Leanne Williams



Ron & Cindy Carter



Raymond, Tom & Michael Ryan



Mary Ann Gworek & Paul Gworek



Bob Friend, Tuskegee Airman, Red Tail pilot &  
Bob Zoller, Nephew of Vet KIA from the  
44th Bomb Group, 66th Bomb Squadron



Vincenzo Vorrasi, Leslie Usan & Pasquale Libutti



## **An Event-filled Reunion** by Jerry Whiting

You'll read about many of the reunion events elsewhere in this publication. This past reunion had more events than in the past, but most were hosted in the relaxed atmosphere of our hotel. Following are the highlights.

### **Documentary "13 Juni"**

The first official reunion event was on Thursday morning, the U.S. debut of "13 Juni, a German documentary about the Herbert Frels 831st Squadron crew, shot down on the June 13, 1944 mission to Munich. The morning started out with the mayor of Farmers Branch (the suburb of Dallas where the hotel is located) greeting everyone and welcoming us to Dallas. Jerry Whiting introduced Marcus Siebler, the German film producer who made the documentary, along with Sarah Schoenacher, Marc's girlfriend who helped with the production of the film and Katharina Huber, who is a German actress and Marc's cousin. Marc gave a brief intro of the documentary, which is in German with English subtitles. The film describes what happened to the crew after being shot down. Several of the crew were murdered by local Nazi officials and some of the witnesses were interviewed in the film. After the film Marc answered questions from the large audience. It took courage to produce this film and all appreciated the efforts that went into making it.



Marcus Siebler presenting 13 Juni

### **Documentary "WWII B-24's in Italy"**

831st Squadron engineering officer was a camera buff and took his camera with him to Italy, along with a couple rolls of slide film. Hank passed away several years ago, but was always a faithful reunion attendee and supporter of the 485th. When Hank was in his late 80's, he put together a documentary, using photos he had taken while at Venosa, to tell a story of his service in the 485th. On Friday morning, Jerry Whiting introduced Hank's 23-minute documentary, providing background information on Hank and his service. The documentary was enjoyed by all in attendance.



Bob Cairns

### **The history of our first and last 485th Bomb Group commanders**

Our second event on Friday morning was a learning experience for all present. Most of our Vets present knew and respected the four different commanders of the 485th, but few, if any, knew them personally or knew about their lives before and after their association with the 485th. Through this presentation we learned more about Colonel Pop Arnold, through his daughter Kathleen, and about Colonel Doug Cairns, through his son Bob. Through Bob and Kathleen we learned more of the personal side of both of these commanders and their careers before and after their association with the 485th. Both Bob and Kathleen had PowerPoint slide presentations as a backdrop.



Hank Dahlberg

## Mission to Auschwitz, September 13, 1944 presentation

An unexpected, unscheduled, unplanned treat was our third event on Friday morning. The 485th was honored that our good friend from Poland, Historian Szymon Serwatka, joined us in Dallas. Szymon and his wife and son joined us in 2005 at our Tucson reunion and Szymon wanted to be with us for the final formal reunion. Szymon met with Jerry Whiting and, during their conversation, mentioned that he actually brought many of his research materials with him. Szymon is well-known in Poland and the U.S. for his thorough research and Szymon has previously consulted and worked with MIA investigators with the Dept. of Defense. When we learned that Szymon brought materials concerning the September 13, 1944 mission to Auschwitz, where Captain Lawrence's 831st Sqdn crew was lost, we persuaded Szymon to tell us about his research. We added Szymon to the schedule and Szymon gave a great synopsis of what occurred that day and his subsequent research of the mission, complete with a PowerPoint presentation. All of us were amazed at Szymon's thoroughness and his presentation gave us a clear understanding of what happened that day.



Szymon Serwatka

## Country Western Music Concert

On Friday afternoon we were treated to a concert of Texas style music by Dale Riley and his father, Bill Riley Sr. Bill is a Vietnam Vet and, although he wasn't in the best of health, he didn't want to miss the opportunity to play for our Vets. Dale has traveled extensively across our country with his own band, but the past few years he has stayed closer to home in Texas. The original plan was for them to play for about an hour, but once they got going and saw how much the audience enjoyed their music, they just kept playing, taking occasional requests from the audience. At one point Dale's mother even sang a song for us. Their performance lasted nearly 2½ hours. Dale later commented that he hadn't had this much fun in years. He and Bill sincerely appreciated the opportunity to play for our group and Dale said it's much nicer to play for an attentive group like ours, instead of the more common venues like dance halls and bars.



Bob & Kay Brown-Gary



# Cavanaugh Flight Museum and B-24 Flights

Thursday afternoon Reunion participants visited the Cavanaugh Flight Museum in nearby Addison, Texas. The museum boasts four hangars filled with aircraft from WWI to the Vietnam era and contains 20+ WWII vintage aircraft. Following a self-guided tour, a special treat was in store. Any interested Veteran was given a free ride on The Commemorative Air Force's B24 named Diamond Lil. Other Reunion guests also flew along for the ride of a lifetime. A very special thanks to Neal Swann for his leadership in organizing the B24 rides along with Mark Leslie for organizing the flights for eager attendees. Please see Joe Crabill's article in this newsletter for a personal account of this event. Following the B-24 flights, the group was treated to a Texas Style BBQ Buffet in an open hangar including an awards ceremony for some of our International guests.



The Commemorative Air Force's Diamond Lil prepares for flight



Left to Right: Carol & Mark LaScotte, John Wilson, Maureen & Dan Crouchley



485<sup>th</sup> Reunion attendees enjoy dinner & festivities in an open hangar at Cavanaugh Flight Museum





The 485<sup>th</sup> Group receives preflight instructions



Dale & Wayne Smith following Wayne's flight



The Swann Family loved their first B24 Flight  
Darin & Wendy Swann with Mark & Evaun Swann



Mary Ann & Jack Behunin following Jack's flight



Dianne, Mary & Mark LaScotte enjoy a visit  
with Bob Johnson of the  
449<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group



Kain Family celebrates Art's B24  
Flight aboard Diamond Lil  
George, Valerie, Art, Susan and Jacquie



## MY JOURNEY CONTINUES

By: Kathleen Arnold, HQ Reporter

Daughter of Pop Arnold, First 485th Group Commander

In my HQ News article I mentioned I'm frequently asked questions about Pop's personal life, so I'd like to continue with that and tell you how my Dad got his nickname "Pop." To understand the story of his name I need to start with his family history and his ties to Mexico. Mexico, its people and culture, helped define Dad's character beginning with his name. If you think that's strange, even more strange is that my story about Pop's name is a good segue into another story I wanted to tell, the Saga of Big Alice from Dallas.

Pop lived an interesting life growing up in El Paso, Texas with his family. He was very proud of his Texas heritage but often referred to himself as a "Tejano" part Texan and part Mexican. His grandparents and parents homes were a mixture of Tex-Mex and Pop grew up surrounded by his loving family and he was co-raised by beloved Mexican housekeepers who were considered more like extended family. As a little boy he learned to speak Spanish which was spoken in his home as frequently as English was. Juarez just across the border was as familiar to Pop as his own backyard. In 1920, his family moved to Tampico, Mexico, on the Gulf coast and stayed there 3 years before returning to El Paso. Pop loved those years living among the locals in Tampico and his adventurous wild spirited-side flourished there. Beginning at age 10 he spent every summer of his youth on a 200,000 acre cattle ranch owned by family friends in Chihuahua, Mexico. His years on the Hacienda de Atotonilco Ranch turned him into a skilled "vaquero" and inspired him to become a cattleman himself. Pop dearly loved his hometown of El Paso, but it would be the times he spent growing up in Mexico that left the most indelible impressions on him for the rest of his life.

His grandparents followed a cattle drive to El Paso in 1880 and became one of the most prominent families in town. His grandfather had financial and social ties with Mexican livestock and mining companies. By 1910 many American and foreign businesses had strong economic ties to Mexico as well and, when foreign interests in Mexico became threatened during the Mexican Revolution, Pop's grandfather was appointed

Vice Consul to Great Britain in charge of protecting its commercial interests and its citizens who were trapped in Mexico. For his service, he was knighted by the British crown becoming Sir Homan Chevalier Myles. But to Pop, his grandfather was simply "Papa Grande" and he idolized him.

Dad's mother Kathleen Myles grew up privileged and met and married Walter Erath Arnold who was a clerk in the El Paso National Bank where her father did business. Their first child was born in 1912 and was named Alice after her grandmother. The following year their son was born and they named him Walter Erath Arnold, Jr. after his father. Although his given name was Walter, the instant their Mexican housekeepers laid eyes on him they called him "Poppy" meaning "little father" in Spanish. The name stuck and from the day he was born for the rest of his life, no one EVER called him Walter, not even his parents or grandparents. As he grew older Poppy was eventually shortened to Pop so by the time he started school, his friends & even his teachers, all called him Pop.

At my Dad's funeral in 2002 his dear friend, a military buddy, reflected on how important that nickname was in defining Pop's character throughout his life. He said, from the moment he was born, Pop Arnold carried a lot of authority and was a natural born leader. He also said one of Pop's admirable attributes as a Commander was that he put his men first; he took care of them, officers and enlisted men alike, and he led by example, just like a protective father would. Pop wasn't a big man but he carried a larger than life charismatic personality and those of us who knew him believe the stage was set for his strong persona the day he was born and given a Mexican nickname.

Coincidentally, Pop's family history also played a role in selecting Big Alice from Dallas as the theme plane for our 50th reunion this year. When we chose Dallas as the location for the

final reunion, I immediately recalled my Dad telling me one of his favorite planes to fly during the war was named Big Alice from Dallas, from the 829th Squadron. His fondness for Big Alice came from the fact that it was from his home state of Texas plus his beloved grandmother, his aunt and his sister were all named Alice. With three Alice's in the family, they came up





with nicknames to differentiate between them. His aunt was called “Big Alice” and Pop’s sister was called “Lita” meaning “Little Alice” in Spanish. According to Jack Behunin, a Big Alice crew member, Alice was named after his pilot’s mother. Although, one does wonder why a man would paint a picture of his shapely mother in a bikini on the side of his plane? Perhaps there’s another story behind who the pretty woman named Big Alice on Jack’s plane really was!

Big Alice’s original crew was formed at and flew with Pop Arnold from Fairmont Army Air Field, Geneva, Nebraska leaving on March 1, 1944, arriving in Venosa, via Morrison Field, Florida, and Tunisia, Africa, in April. Big Alice was piloted by Lt. Robert B. (Ben) Skelton who coincidentally also had the nickname “Pop.” One of Big Alice’s original gunners was a young Gerald E. Behunin (Jack). Upon examination of Big Alice from Dallas’ nose art I noticed the word “Pop” painted under the pilot’s window. There was also a big “50” painted on her indicating the crew flew 50 successful missions earning them the right to go home. Since the reunion in Dallas would be our 50th and final “mission” before we all went home, I felt it would honor Jack as well as Pop, by having Big Alice on the last commemorative glass.

Although Jack and the rest of his crew went home in the summer of 1944, Big Alice’s saga continued and she flew many more missions with replacement crews. One of those replacement crews was pilot Lt. Laverne Foran and co-pilot Lt. Howard Boxley of the 830th Squadron. In a letter dated December 1974, Howard Boxley wrote to Ben Skelton thinking he might like to know what happened to Big Alice from Dallas after Ben left Venosa.

According to Howard, his regular plane had been shot up and indisposed on a previous mission to Vienna and when scheduled to fly to Bologna on October 12, 1944, the 830th was short on planes and had to borrow one from the 829th Squadron. That plane was Big Alice from Dallas. The mission didn’t go as planned and a number of mishaps by the lead plane from Wing HQ resulted in them dropping their bombs unsuccessfully in the wrong field, or as Howard put it, “we did their fall

plowing for the winter wheat crop.” On the way back they encountered unexpected flak over Ravenna on the Adriatic coast and Big Alice took a burst right under the right wing and lost Engine No. 3 and subsequently their hydraulics. Having no pressure for the landing gear and brakes they tried multiple maneuvers to get the brake system to work to no avail. They decided to have the two rear gunners tie a parachute in each rear window to use for brakes. Big Alice was the last plane to land at their field and after touching down they slowed normally for a while then the plane started to pull to the right. Howard hollered for the gunner to pull the left chute and it slowed the plane more but the right wing started to drop and they hollered for the other chute. The plane ran off the runway to the right and the wingtip touched the ground. Between the chutes and the wing digging in they quickly stopped almost in front of the control tower. Upon inspection they saw the drag strut had been shot two-thirds through. When the weight of the plane came down on it the strut gave way. No one was even shaken up. Big Alice had very little damage due to ending up in the soft dirt, and Howard

felt she could have been patched up and flown again however, with the increased number of replacement planes available, it was not prudent to spend the time repairing the plane.

Thus, it was the untimely end of Big Alice from Dallas, and she was eventually towed to the boneyard and stripped for spare parts, which to me, seemed like such a violation to a great lady like her! Big Alice was one of the few original drab olive green planes still left in the Group and in the end, flak may have

been her demise but it did not bring her down. She brought all her crews safely back home and I take some solace knowing that a little bit of Alice was left behind in other planes. Perhaps she helped bring them home safe as well. To Big Alice, who left her mark in the fields of Venosa, we salute you Mom!

You can read Howard’s full account of the mission on page 205 of This Is How It Was.

To all of you out there, I won’t say so long, I’ll say see you later as My Journey Continues! Happy Landings!



Front Row, Left to Right: Warren Irelan, ball gunner; James Parsons, nose gunner; Lloyd Brinkman, tail gunner; Leroy Daniels, radio operator/Panther operator and Herman Martin, flight engineer. Back Row, Left to Right: Edward Pawlicki, bombardier; Laverne Foran, pilot; Earl Schiffmaker, navigator, and Howard Boxley, copilot. This crew arrived in Italy in September 1944.

## Notes from the Historian by Jerry Whiting

I have to say that I was pretty exhausted by the end of the reunion. Mark La Scotte really did a fantastic job leading the effort, assisted by his wife, Carol. I had confidence that it would be a big one, but wouldn't have ever imagined that nearly 350 people would join us. Thank you all for making it an event to remember. I had the opportunity to go to Munich this year, as mentioned in the story about the Friday Night Historical Event. It was a meaningful trip for me, a time to reflect on all those men from the 485th who were lost during the war. I'm so glad I found Fran Hurley Doherty, daughter of Clement Hurley. I put out some feelers through a volunteer for a rural historical society in Nebraska where Lt. Hurley lived. Just a couple of days later I received a voicemail message from Fran Hurley Doherty, Clement's

daughter, in Kansas City. It was an emotional message and I returned her call immediately. I had only known that Lt. Hurley was married and had no knowledge he had an 18 month-old daughter or that his wife was 6 months pregnant with their son when he was killed. Fran also told me her mother was still alive and that it was a very emotional time for her when she heard of my search, bringing back many memories.



Clement Hurley  
holding daughter Fran

Fran had little knowledge about what happened to her father. There were vague rumors about him reaching the ground safely, but then being killed. During my initial conversation with her I was able to give her additional information from my research and told her my investigation revealed that her father had helped the bombardier get out of the plane safely and that it was likely that he was helping the nose gunner with his parachute when the plane broke apart. Lt. Hurley and the nose gunner, along with several others, never made it out of the plane.

I also told Fran of the respect the Germans in Vaterstetten had for her father and his crew and how they had built a monument to honor them, dedicating it in 2009. I told her the community wanted to honor

the 70th anniversary of the crew going down and that I had been invited to speak at a ceremony there and tell the story of the crew. I told her I thought she should go to Munich. Almost immediately Fran said that she wanted to go. There was little time to plan this, but Fran, her husband, her nephew and his girlfriend met me in Munich. I had been in touch with Heike and Bernd Schmidt-Pfeil, the artists who built the monument and they asked me to stay with them and assisted with the planning. Georg Reitsberger, who originally commissioned the monument, was recently elected mayor (burgermeister) and was thrilled that family members would be there to represent the crew. Needless to say, it was an emotional time for all of us, but more so for Fran and her family. Fran and other relatives planned to join us at the reunion, but were ultimately unable to make it. I'm glad that Fran and her family now have some answers.



Left to Right: Mayor Georg Reitsberger,  
Jerry Whiting, Fran Hurley Doherty and  
Major Jeff Marler, USAF  
In front of monument honoring Sandall crew

I finished another book this year. Off and on I've researched the story for about 10 years, ever since I met Bob Hickman at a reunion and heard the story of him and his crew, Wiggins' 831st crew, on the June 28, 1944 mission to Bucharest. In the book I told the story of Bob's crew and told the equaling compelling stories of some of the other crews on that mission. I rushed to finish it to make it available for the reunion. The book, *Of Broad Stripes and Bright Stars: Gallantry over Bucharest*, is available through Amazon.com.



People are still finding us through the website and I continue to get requests for information. Many of those who found us this past year joined us at the reunion. Something that has really helped people find us is that we've listed the names of most of our Vets on the website. It was tedious work when Lynn Cotterman and I started compiling this list before we had our current website, but many people get a hit on our website when running their loved one's name on the internet. This project took several years, but it sure has proven its worth. I think of Lynn every time someone finds us. I'm not sure he or I realized just how important it was to compile this list.

People have asked what will happen to the website and 485th research if we don't have any more reunions. I made a promise several years ago to Lynn Cotterman, Bob Hanson, and Marvin Lindsay that I would continue my historical research and would continue the website, regardless of what happened with the 485th Bomb Group Association in the future. I will keep that promise. In the next couple of years I'd like to get all of the 485th documents and photos in my possession scanned and organized. Sammy Schneider (former historian) and I discussed many years ago what should happen to the 485th documents and where they should be kept in the future. Neither he nor I had a good answer and there are several places they could be kept where they'd be available to others. If they are scanned and digitized, they could be held in more than one place.

The 485th website can still be used for important notifications of interest to all. Facebook is also available for those of you who want to keep in touch. I don't plan to use Facebook, so you'll have to contact me via email, [EAJWWWhiting@aol.com](mailto:EAJWWWhiting@aol.com). I'd personally like to see some sort of regular, abbreviated yearly publication on the internet, but we'll have to see what happens regarding that.

Although we had our last formal standalone 485th reunion this past September, we have the opportunity to meet again this year in Kansas City, as part of a larger combined 15th Air Force reunion group. We don't have a role in the planning of this reunion, but I've been in touch with a couple of the organizers for years and they're good, like-minded folks. They have been very successful and follow a similar format to that which we experienced under the Armed Forces Reunions at past reunions. This will allow attendees a well-organized and structured venue. (Further information regarding this event is available elsewhere

in this newsletter and on our 485th BG website along with downloadable registration forms).

I really appreciate the friendships I've made with many of you over the years. I expect these friendships to continue. As I look through the photos of our past reunion, I realize that I didn't have the opportunity to spend time with anyone. If I have any regrets about the reunion, it would be this. One of our very special guests this year was Bob Friend, Red Tail pilot who flew more than 140 combat missions in Italy, most of them escorting the heavy bombers. Bob joined us for the first time in San Diego and wanted to be with us and I know our Vets felt honored by his presence. I wanted more time to visit with Bob and our many European guests. I also wanted to spend time with friends I've made at past reunions and to get to know those of you who attended for the first time. There just wasn't time. Let's keep in touch.

**Website:** <http://www.485thbg.org/>



**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/485thbg/>  
Select *Join Group*, once added, you will be able to participate in the 485<sup>th</sup> Online Community



## Friday Night Historical Presentation by Jerry Whiting

This year the historical presentation actually had three different segments. Jerry Whiting presented the first segment, which was about the John Sandall crew, shot down over the Munich suburb of Vaterstetten, on July 19, 1944. Jerry provided the brief story of the shoot down, but the segment focused on how he originally wrote a story about the crew in *Don't Let the Blue Star Turn Gold*. He was contacted by Bernd and Heike Schmidt-Pfeil in 2008. They were commissioned by Georg Reitsberger to build a monument at the crash site in Vaterstetten and wanted more information on the crew. Jerry was initially suspicious about why these Germans were building a monument honoring a crew that was bombing them that fateful day, but gladly cooperated when he realized their efforts were sincere and the monument was dedicated in 2009. Georg Reitsberger, now mayor of Vaterstetten, accepted an invitation to join us at the reunion. The Schmidt-Pfeils were also invited. Bernd couldn't attend, but Heike gladly joined us. Jerry brought these distinguished guests, Georg and Heike, into focus, explaining what they had done to preserve this history and asking them questions about the monument. Georg doesn't speak English, so Heike served as his translator. A main question was why Georg Reitsberger wanted the monument built. Georg answered, telling the audience that the Americans were destroying Fascism and they wanted to honor this and know more about the men. Jerry spoke about his invitation to Germany in May to attend a 70th anniversary ceremony honoring the crew and of finding the daughter of the navigator on the crew, Clement Hurley. You can read more about this in "Notes from the Historian".

The second segment of the presentation was an 8-minute video, prepared by Jerry Whiting, featuring video footage of several past reunions, combined with actual rare film of the 485th Bomb Group, shot during the war at the Venosa airfield. The WWII footage was shot by Curtis Charles, the Consolidated Tech rep assigned to the 485th and his daughter Tracy Shenkman provided it for viewing. It brought back memories of Venosa for the Vets and memories of past reunions for all.

The third segment of the presentation was a video made by Neal Swann and his son Jeremy to honor the 485th. The video was based on a poem written by a B-24 navigator, Lt. Joseph Newton Quigley, Jr., of the 98th bomb group stationed in Benghazi, Libya –who was shot down after the August 1, 1943 low-level Ploesti oil field raid and imprisoned in Bulgaria for 405 days. The documentary included footage and photos of the low-level raid, as well as other combat footage. Neal introduced the video before it was shown and told the audience how he learned of the poem and how it influenced him to make the video.



Jeremy & Neal Swann

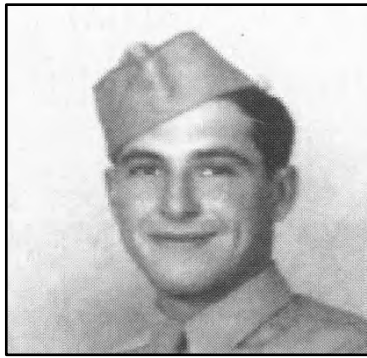


Jerry Whiting & Georg Reitsberger



# Honoring My Uncle, Staff Sgt. Milton Wolfson by Robert M. Fried

My late uncle, Milton Wolfson, was with the 485th Bomb Group. I did not know this until 3 years ago, and this was entirely by accident. I was at my computer and Googled his name: "Staff Sergeant Milton Wolfson." The first link was to a book written by three Italian authors. It described a midair collision and crash of 2 planes returning from a bombing mission to Regensburg, Germany. The collision took place on February 16th, 1945, over northern Italy. Among ten airmen killed was flight engineer/waist gunner, Milton Wolfson.



Staff Sgt. Milton Wolfson

with me, to share the story and photographs of the Uncle I never knew.

It is an honor for me to have learned of my uncle's service with the 485th Bomb Group, and to have met those who served alongside him on those dangerous missions far from home some 70 years ago. This past July I visited Chiusaforte, Italy, where the planes crashed, and met 2 of the Italian authors. I also visited the American Military Cemetery in Florence, Italy, where my uncle and 2 of the other airmen killed on the mission are buried. My heartfelt thanks to the brave men of the 485th Bomb Group.



Jerry's book I'm Off to War Mother, but I'll be Back, in addition to Missione 139, by Enzo Vinci, Fabio Orlando and Fabio Stergulc. Both have been invaluable. With those sources, I have assembled a remembrance booklet about my uncle, and also presented this story to several audiences here in New York.

I have attended two 485th Bomb Group Reunions, including the 50th Reunion this past September in Dallas. At both Reunions I felt greatly welcomed and also deeply emotional, hearing first person accounts about Venosa and the missions. I always had with me a copy of Missions by the Numbers, and when an historian or airman described a mission on a particular date, I would take out the book and confirm the information. The memories shared by the airmen were always compelling and often extremely humorous.

I was aware of being a member of a group of descendants of airmen who never made it back home to attend a reunion. One attendee was a child of an airman killed in action. It felt good meeting these other descendants, and I admired their strength of character. I kept a copy of my remembrance booklet



Robert M. Fried - B24 flight 2012



Robert M. Fried visiting the Florence American Cemetery near Florence, Italy July 2014

# 485<sup>TH</sup> BOMBARDMENT GROUP



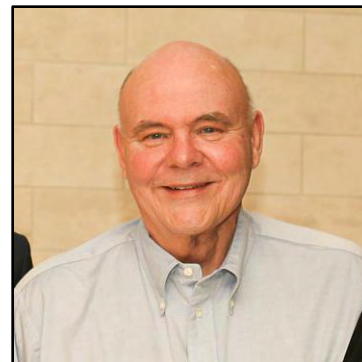
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& 485<sup>TH</sup> SECRETARY  
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## SPECIAL GUESTS



Seated(LtoR): Janet Bartels, Lt. Col. Robert J Friend, Heike Schmidt-Pfeil Standing (LtoR):  
Georg Reitsberger, Pasquale Libutti, Sherrie Paige, Vincenzo Vorrasi, Szymon Serwatka

## POW / MIA



Left to right:  
Jack Yates,  
Red Kempffer,  
George Chaplin,  
Warren Sortomme

## 828<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON



Standing:  
Charlie Taylor,  
Jack Yates,  
Ben Sims

Seated:  
Bill Williams,  
Alex Gilbert,  
Maynard Nelson

## 829<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON



Standing:  
John Duntley  
Jack Behunin  
Harry Johnson

Seated:  
Wayne Smith  
Russ Arthur



## 830<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON



Left to right: Red Kempffer, Cliff Studaker, Bueford Cooper & Millen Wetjen

## 831<sup>ST</sup> SQUADRON



Standing:

Jim Scheib  
George Chaplin,  
Cliff "Woody"  
Woodbury

Seated:

Tom Merrell,  
Arthur Kain,  
Bill Brokaw

Absent:

David Hansen

## 828<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON GUESTS



Seated (L to R): Katy Doran, Lisa Walker, Candy Miles, Franque Nelson, Helen Wall, Suzanne Wall Standing (L to R): David Ballengee, Mary & Bill Rabenstein, Kathy Kiesewetter - Hendrickson, Walt Hendrickson, Maureen & Dan Crouchley and Sarah Anderson



Seated (L to R): Terry Boettcher, Patricia Och, Catherine Gilbert, Laura Trainor, Lavina Platt Standing (L to R): Bob Vanderpool, Beth Forton, Jerry Forton, Jerry White, Anthony Kajawa, Kate Sandusky, Theresa Prince, Leanne & Keith Williams, and Jim Platt



# 828<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON GUESTS



Seated (L to R):  
Dianne LaScotte  
Mary LaScotte  
Janine LaScotte Jungbauer

Standing (L to R):  
Kate Sandusky, Theresa Prince,  
Dan & Maureen Crouchley,  
Carol & Mark LaScotte

Seated (L to R):  
Misty Taylor,  
Charlie Taylor Jr.,  
Charlie Taylor

Standing (L to R):  
Ronnie Taylor,  
Gail Taylor Higdon,  
Dean Taylor,  
Madison Taylor



Seated (L to R):  
Rory Yates,  
Jack & Martha Yates  
Blake Yates

Standing (L to R):  
Patty Bain & Scott Angell,  
Janet Campbell,  
Russ Brooks & Carol Yates,  
Charles & Karen Bain,  
Cathy & Steve Yates



## 829<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON GUESTS



Seated (LtoR): Alice Arthur, Karen Johanson, Mary Ann Behunin, Francis Fundling, Lynn Gallo  
Standing (LtoR): Sarah Butler, David A. White, Elizabeth Arthur, Don & Karla Peschka, Ardyth & Steve Redfern, Lee Cristelli, John Bertram, Anne Johnson, Marty Militello, Zachary Militello



Seated (LtoR): John Duntley, Margaret Duntley, Jodie Duntley, Becky Brown Marlin, Charlie Brown, Emma Carter  
Standing (LtoR): Robert Fried, Jeff Baker, Courtney Love, Libby Baker, Mike Baker, Eric Sims, Naomi Ann & Arthur Hernandez, Cindy Carter, Ron Carter & Brian Carter



## 829<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON GUESTS



Seated (LtoR): Steve Lindsay, Cheryl Lindsay, Michael Lindsay  
Standing (LtoR): Kimberly Johnston, Kathy Lindsay, Andre Jackson, Stefanie Reasoner, Parker Umpleby, Sarah Umpleby, Jennifer & John Umpleby, and Dixie Lindsay



Seated (LtoR): Wayne & Margie Smith, Lynnae Smith-Dougherty, and son, Nash Dougherty  
Standing (LtoR): Colleen & Dale Smith, Dean Smith, Peter Dougherty, 1<sup>st</sup> LT. Paul Smith USAF



## 830<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON GUESTS



Seated (LtoR): Nancy Rowland, Irene McCabe LeFebvre, Peg McCabe, Charlotte Gorman, Shannon Anderson Standing (LtoR): Lloyd Rowland Sr., Steve Sharpe, Don Brower, Abbey Brower, April Brower, Charles Brower, Wanda Brower, John Malecki, Dave Gorman, Lloyd Rowland Jr.



Seated (LtoR): Carla Ramberg, Sharon Ramberg, Kathleen Koecher, Deb Daleske, DeDe Crabill Standing (LtoR): Randy Ramberg, Michael Worth Hodge, Patty Wilks, Richard “Armen” Alman, Phil & Michele Cummings, Randy Cooper, Joe Crabill, Sharlot Parker, Mary & John Brooks



# 830<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON GUESTS

## Seated:

Mickey & Red Kempffer

## Standing:

Patrick Kempffer,  
Mike Kempffer,  
Steve Leet,  
Barbara & Michael Lafferty



## Seated:

Carol Studaker, Landon Wehner,  
Cliff Studaker, Jolene Stockton

## Standing:

Scott Studaker, Brett Wehner,  
Rod Studaker, Andrew Studaker,  
Marc Morrison, Santi Stockton

## Seated:

Wendy Swann, Evaun Swann,  
Carol McIntier, Laura Keate

## Standing:

Ben Swann, Mark Swann, Neal  
Swann, Jeremy Swann,  
Scott McIntier, Craig Keate





## 831<sup>ST</sup> SQUADRON GUESTS



Seated (LtoR): Mary Ann Gworek, Janet Chaplin Skenfield, Dee Lynn, Linda Cotterman, Mindy Merrell  
Standing (LtoR): Paul Gworek, Susan Chaplin, Ted Goddard, Bill Cotterman, Gene Merrell



Seated (LtoR): Cindy Brown, Marie Hansen, Beth Leslie, Dianne Leslie, Kay Brown-Gary  
Standing (LtoR): Mark Leslie, Tom Brown, Dave Brokaw, Warren Maxey, Bill Leslie, Bob Gary, and Jerry Whiting



# 831<sup>ST</sup> SQUADRON GUESTS

## Seated (LtoR):

Jim Eamon,  
Russ Christensen,  
Leslie Uslan, Mike Lee

## Standing (LtoR):

Gail Eamon,  
Mari Christensen,  
Szymon Serwatka,  
Carrie Christensen



## Seated (LtoR):

Kent Woodbury,  
Lei Woodbury  
Kriss Woodbury

## Standing:

Woody Woodbury

## Seated (LtoR):

Arthur & Valerie Kain

## Standing (LtoR):

Jody Kain  
George Kain  
Jacquie O'Sullivan  
Susan Morrison  
Len Madsen





## 831<sup>ST</sup> SQUADRON GUESTS



Seated: Ann & Jim Scheib Standing (LtoR): Jim Scheib, Jr., Jeff Scheib, Randy McCabe, JoAnn McCabe, Judy McCaleb, John McCaleb



Seated (LtoR): Donna Hanson, Patty Hanson Brewer, Kathy Hanson Carder, Pam Hanson Phillips  
Standing (LtoR): Bob Hanson Jr., John Hanson, Russ Hanson, Bill Phillips



## HEADQUARTERS GUESTS



Left to right: Gerry Weinstein, Don Huckleby, Ron Huckleby, Kathleen Arnold, Warren Sortomme



Seated (LtoR): Mimi Cairns Brooks, Terry Cairns, Gerry Cairns Baker  
Standing (LtoR): David Brooks, Bob Cairns, Stuart Baker, Chris Cairns

# MINUTES OF THE 485TH BOMB GROUP

Business Meeting Saturday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Dallas, Texas

The 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion Business Meeting was called to order by Mark LaScotte. Mark led off with the Pledge of Allegiance. Mark acknowledged the passing of Marvin Lindsay & Bob Hanson & remarked on how they were instrumental in keeping the reunions going through the years. Mark noted that there were over 80 first time attendees to the reunion & asked that they stand to be recognized.

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



Mark LaScotte

Jolene Stockton read the Treasurer's Report.

Income:	\$39,583.10
Expenses:	\$33,203.30
Ending Balance:	\$ 6,379.80

Jolene gave a special thank you to those who provided financial gifts. Details of the transactions were available for review during the reunion. The report was accepted & approved.

Laura Sharpe reminded attendees that past newsletters are available on the website. Phil Cummings asked for articles from first timers on their reunion experience. Laura asked that both Mark LaScotte & Jerry Whiting to be recognized for all of the long hours & hard they work they put into creating such a wonderful reunion.

Mark recognized John & Mary Brooks for providing the wine in the hospitably room. Recognition was also given to Phil & Michele Cummings, along with Kay & Bob Gary for providing the refreshments & snacks in the hospitality room.

Kathleen Arnold announced that the 485th received a letter from Representative Mike Coffman as well as a letter signed by both the Secretary of the Air Force, Deborah Lee James, & the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Mark Welsh, thanking our vets for their sacrifices to their country & their patriotism.

Mary Brooks announced that Congressman Pete Sessions & Representative Jeb Hensarling sent letters honoring the 485th. Additionally, Congressman Jeb Hensarling on Thursday the 113th Congress, Second Session entered into the Congressional a statement recognizing the 485th Bomb Group as they celebrate their 50th & final reunion this week in Dallas, Texas. Former President George W. Bush also sent a letter of recognition & appreciation.

Jerry Whiting began the Historian's Report by explaining how the board decided to make this the last formal 485th reunion, how this reunion would have activities that would be more group related, & how Dallas & the hotel were selected. Last year's reunion was attended by about one hundred people. Because this reunion was announced as the last one, we had over three hundred attend. Jerry was also able to finish his latest book & provided a copy to each vet attending. Concerning interest on the 485th; on some days, Jerry gets six to eight inquiries through the website. A great many of the inquiries come from Europe. There were not many U.S. government inquiries concerning MIAs this year, but Jerry thinks that will pick up after some reorganization within government departments. Many of this reunion's first timers contacted Jerry through the website. The 485th website has served us well. Jerry recognized the late Lynn Cotterman, who helped to start the current website with its easy to understand format & information. Jerry recognized that there are still about 300 people missing from the website, most of them ground personnel. There was no comprehensive list of all 485th personnel kept by the U.S. government. The current list was created from Lynn & others combing through 485th records & extracting names.

We had 23 485<sup>th</sup> veterans in attendance with a total of 347 attendees at the reunion.

828th Squadron – 6	829th Squadron – 5
830th Squadron- 4	831st Squadron- 7
Headquarters – 1	



Oldest Vet in attendance this year was David Hansen at 96 years.

Jerry presented the following awards:

Gerry Weinstein: Preserving Photographic History. Gerry Weinstein spoke of spending five years with his father, Sy Weinstein, getting the oral history of each photo & another five years restoring the photos. The next phase would be to get all these photos on the bomb group website. Jerry Whiting spoke of how Jerry Weinstein ships the poster sized photos to each reunion & then mounts them for the enjoyment of attendees.



Gerry Weinstein & Jerry Whiting

Steve & Laura Sharpe: Production of Lightweight Tower Newsletter. Jerry Whiting recognized the work of Steve & Laura Sharpe in the production & mailing of the Lightweight Tower newsletter. Laura recognized the late Bob Hanson for his years of work on the newsletter before handing it off & thanked those who provide the content of the newsletter.

Phil Cummings: Dedication & Leadership as Chairman 2010-2013. Phil spoke of how his involvement got started when Bob Benson called his father, Bill, & recruited Phil & his brother to run the bar. Phil has enjoyed serving the veterans & hearing stories.

Tony Siller: Design of Commemorative Reunion Glasses

Fran Fowler: Appreciation of Secretary Duties

Jerry Whiting: Commemorative shirt for being the Group Historian. Mark LaScotte ended the awards portion by presenting Jerry with an embroidered 485th shirt for his work as group historian.

The issue was raised about this being the last reunion & how there were those that were interested in continuing on. Ideas that were raised included visiting vets to prevent them having to travel to having informal, regional mini-reunions. It was announced that the Board would meet to consider the topic & make an announcement later in the reunion.

Jerry Whiting has brought up the idea of a trip to Venosa, Italy sometime in the future. The 485th have made Italian connections. Pasquale Libutti has arranged visits to crash sites, farmland that was once the airfield & tent camps, as well as the farmhouse used as the headquarters building. In addition, we have friends such as the Briscese & Mollica families that have offered assistance in the past. Such a trip would require a lot of coordination, but may be something to consider in the coming years.

The idea of a memorial to the 485th in Venosa was brought up. Since the airfield is located 3 mile outside the town center, a memorial in the town would get more attention. Getting a memorial of any type would be a long process due to the obtaining permissions from the required Italian officials.

Following the business meeting, T-shirts & Memorial Posters were made available for sale in the Lobby. Vets provided signatures for these memorabilia items.

A recommendation was made to set up a Facebook page for the group. Note: since the reunion, this page has been established.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/485thbg/>

The 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion Business Meeting was adjourned.



Phil Cummings & Jerry Whiting

## HEADQUARTERS REPORT

By: Kathleen Arnold, HQ Reporter  
Daughter of Pop Arnold, First 485th Group  
Commander

There was such a wonderful representation from HQ this year with 14 members from Group Headquarters present. One veteran, Warren Sortomme, Group Mickey Operator, and his wife Joyce came from Oceanside, CA. Warren was my “Wing Man” and graciously shared his shoot down experience during my presentation on Friday. I came in from Denver, Colorado and represented my Dad, Col. Pop Arnold, the 1st Group CO. From San Antonio, Texas, there were 7 family members from 2 generations of the Cairns Clan who gloriously represented Col. Doug Cairns, the 4th Group CO. Father and son Don and Ron Huckleby came from Eckert, Colorado and Butte, Montana to represent their father and grandfather, Major Hadley M. Huckleby, Group Aerial Photo Interpreter, and Gerry Weinstein and Mary Habstritt came from New York City representing Gerry’s father, Sy Weinstein, Group Photographer. The hotel walls were “a flight” with Gerry’s magnificent enlarged photos originally taken by his father and by Major Huckleby while in Italy.



Warren & Joyce Sortomme

Thank you all for coming! I enjoyed meeting many of you for the first time and of course seeing many of your familiar faces again. I only regret that I did not have the opportunity to meet and mingle with every single person there. Although this was our last official 485th reunion I was reminded in a Christmas card I received this year from Bill Killian, my Dad’s Radio Operator, “The 485th will never die!”



Kathy Doran & Kathleen Arnold

Over the years I’ve written stories for the Lightweight Tower Calling about my Dad’s military life and his official Air Force biography can be found online by searching his name but whenever I attend reunions, many people approach me with questions about Pop’s personal life. There are a couple of frequently asked questions that I’d like to write about in this final edition, beginning with how Pop and I first got involved with the 485th reunions.

My Dad attended his first 485th reunion in 1985 at the “Reunion of Contrast” held at Rancho Viejo Resort located between Brownsville and Harlingen, TX. It was held October 9-13, 1985 and hosted by Dan Sjodin, 831st Sq. CO and Jack “Fireball” Whatley, 828th Sq. I remember giving Dad “the business” when he showed us the January 1986 edition of the Lightweight Tower Calling with him hamming it up in all the photographs. After that, he was noticeably absent in the photo coverage at subsequent reunions, preferring to remain elusive. Pop didn’t like standing around and he usually hit the bar while waiting to be called for the official group photos. A few of the guys followed him and more times than not they missed the photo session all together.

Pop was on the ranch in Wyoming and unable to attend the 1986 reunion in Nashville. But he did stay in touch with the Board and that year he proposed an idea that was voted on at the Nashville business meeting. Don Webb, the editor of the Lightweight Tower at the time presented Pop’s plan for a 485th memorial plaque be made and placed on a wall at the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs. Pop agreed to take care of all the plaque details and did all the ground work necessary at the Air Force Academy. The Group decided to schedule the plaque dedication ceremony in Colorado Springs two days after the end of the 1987 Scottsdale reunion.



Many 485th members left Scottsdale and arrived in Colorado Springs by Monday, September 28th and the dedication ceremony took place, Tuesday, the 29th. Pop arranged for hotel and transportation in Colorado Springs and met the group at the Raintree Inn “watering hole” Monday afternoon. The next morning, a bus picked up the group for the trip to the Air Force Academy. On the way they toured the city, got a look at Pikes Peak and visited Cheyenne Mountain where NORAD Command was housed. They arrived at the U.S. Air Force Academy Cemetery and my whole family came for the dedication ceremony. Pop was the “MC” and he welcomed the group, introduced us and all the attending dignitaries from the Academy. A Color Guard presented the colors, Pop gave a short dedication, and then Earl Bundy gave a brief history of the 485th. It was a particularly emotional day for us because just 3 days prior, Dad was released from the hospital after having cancer surgery. After the dedication, the group proceeded to Arnold Hall on the Academy campus for a tour, then lunch at the Officers Club. After lunch we went to the beautiful Cadet Chapel and then many had to leave to catch flights home and missed viewing more of the Air Force Academy campus.



U.S. Air Force Academy 485<sup>th</sup> Plaque & Dedication Ceremony 1987



Following the 1987 event, Dad attended 6 more reunions and in between the 485th ones he attended his Flying Class of 1938 Reunion, the 50th Anniversary of Stalag Luft III POW Reunion, and a 15th Air Force Reunion. His last 485th reunion was 2000 in St. Louis. He wanted to attend the 2001 in Harrisburg but had bad flight connections from Colorado Springs and he had to close up the ranch in Wyoming. Pop passed away the following year in 2002 and my Mom attended the Reno, NV, reunion in his absence.

I attended my first reunion in Tucson in 2005, and just showed up unannounced and unregistered. They let me stay and treated me like a celebrity! I wrote about what motivated me to attend in the March 2006 edition of Lightweight Tower Calling so I won't rehash that. If anyone wants to know, you can read My Journey Begins article found on the website. I attended the next reunion in Columbia, SC and after that Warren Sortomme passed the ball to me as HQ Reporter and I became a Board Member. Being involved with the 485th Bomb Group has been the most rewarding experience of my life. I truly believe my Dad's spirit guided me to the Group and it was meant to be. As long as we have breath in our bodies we will continue to keep the Groups spirit and legacy alive. Like Bill Killian said, “The 485th will never die!”



Gerry Weinstein & Mary Habstritt

# A Fantastic Trip! by Heike Schmidt-Pfeil & Georg Reitsberger

Massive bombing raids were flown over Munich in July 1944. The city of Munich was burning. A firestorm blew ash clouds, pieces of textile - and scraps of paper into the village of Vaterstetten. The people of Vaterstetten were helpless in the face of the daily attacks. The sudden wail of sirens, humming aircraft engines, anti-aircraft fire and explosions could be heard when hundreds of airplanes were on approach to Munich. People took shelters in bunkers.

All of a sudden, a burning airplane hit by anti-aircraft fire flew over Vaterstetten, and crashed into close woods. Only the old citizens of Vaterstetten could remember the crash of the American bomber on July 19th of 1944. Nobody had a detailed knowledge about this matter and also they avoid talking about that time. 60 years later the local historical group interviewed eye witnesses. Now they were able to reconstruct the crash in detail. At the crash site many parts of the crashed airplane could be found.

The committed artist couple Heike and Bernd Schmidt-Pfeil created a memorial and established the contact with America. Surprisingly, it turned out that the crash was described in a chapter by in a book by the historian and author Jerry Whiting. On the occasion of a visit to Germany by Jerry Whiting, the warriors and soldiers club Vaterstetten celebrated a worthy memorial service at the war memorial. A few surviving family members of the crew were in attendance. Even the American Consul General Bill Moeller was present. The public also took great interest in this commemoration celebration. Through these events, it was a pleasure for me, Georg Reitsberger, First Mayor of the municipality of Vaterstetten, and Heike Rose, builder of the memorial, to recognize that seven decades after the terrible events of the WW II, our nations are living in a friendship with each other.

We were happy and surprised to receive the invitation of the 485th Bomb Group to the 50th and final Reunion in Dallas and accepted it with great pleasure.

With Jerry Whiting as the organizer of our USA trip, we were sure to learn a lot about history, landscape and people. We were heartily welcomed in the United States. We felt very comfortable in the hotel in Dallas. The events in the program were varied and informative. We were particularly deeply impressed by the discussions at the Hospitality Room. The Veterans described their thoughts and feelings about their dangerous military deployments. Far away from

home, they fought heroically and with deep conviction for peace, freedom and democracy; values for which the United States still stands. The flag ceremony and the singing of the national hymn demonstrated the unity and pride in your country. A worthy conclusion at the end of the Reunion was the Memorial Ceremony.

We remember with great pleasure all the reunion events, which showed us the American way of life. There was plenty of food and it was very delicious. Even the Texas beer tasted excellent:

As beer connoisseurs of Bavaria, we know a lot about tasty beer. The flight on the restored B-24 Liberator was an absolutely highlight for us and unforgettable. During the flight, some of the combat-experienced Veterans described very impressively their activities on board their bombers in WWII. We were able to get an impression under what conditions and harsh deprivations such missions were accomplished.

We were deeply impressed and moved by the entire Reunion. An important chapter of our burdened past was brought back into our memories. The Second World War was and still is a cautionary tale about the cruelty of which human beings are capable. Events of this period of time should not be forgotten. The Reunion makes an important contribution to keep history alive. We were very proud to be a part of it. We would like to thank you wholeheartedly for having been a guest at this great Reunion. We can count ourselves extremely fortunate that we got a gift like that in our life.



Georg Reitsberger, First Mayor of Vaterstetten  
& Heike Rose Schmidt-Pfeil, Artist



## Reunion Reflections by Bill Cotterman

I would like to offer the following candid reflections on this year's Final 485th Bomb Group Reunion in Dallas. First, though, I must tell you something about my father, Lynn Cotterman.

My mother passed away in 1981, the same year that I was married. My father ended up moving away to Hawaii, then eventually to Albuquerque, while I raised my family. We had a distant relationship, but I was aware that he had become very involved in his WWII Bomb Group. His military experience was not something that he talked much about when I was growing up. He gave me & each of my three daughters a copy of the book "Missions by the Numbers" which he said he helped to research. He told me that he was connecting relatives with stories of what happened to their fathers, uncles, & grandfathers. He was always a very organized man; he was a B-24 navigator turned engineer, having graduated from Purdue University on the GI Bill.

Dad returned to Indiana for the final years of his life, after receiving some bad news on the progress of his prostate cancer. I offered to take him to his reunion in Cincinnati in 2009, but he declined. He didn't want to be seen in a wheelchair & viewed as being the next one to go. I drove him back & forth to his appointments at the VA Hospital in Indianapolis. I lost my Dad, & what felt like half of my life, on September 29, 2011.

When my wife & I attended this year's reunion, I know there were people who may have wondered why I was



Linda & Bill Cotterman

there. You may have thought that I never bothered to attend any of the other reunions with my Dad, so why now. So, with that as a little background, I can now begin my reflections on the Dallas reunion.

Having made the decision to attend, I thought perhaps I could be somewhat invisible, a kind of impartial



Lynn Cotterman  
2005

observer, collecting some feeling of what the reunions were like. However, Jolene Stockton immediately identified me at the registration table & excitedly told me she took over treasurer duties after my Dad. In the elevator, Michele Cummings spotted my nametag, & explained that my Dad thought I didn't have an interest in his military background, but she wouldn't judge anyone by what someone else said. Later, we met siblings Charlie Brown &

Becky Marlin. Our Dads together had planned the Albuquerque reunion in 1993, & we became fast friends for the duration of the reunion. At the Air Museum, several of the Hansons found me on the tarmac, and I joined them in a group photo. There were many other such unexpected encounters throughout the weekend.



Bill Cotterman, Bob, Pam,  
Russ & Patty Hanson

Then there was the reality aspect of the reunion. The film "13 Juni 1944" was an amazingly detailed account of the fate of the Herbert Frels crew over Munich. It was vivid & disturbing. It was also exciting that filmmaker Marcus

Siebler, who has no first hand memories of the war, would have such a great passion for documenting this shared history. The pictures Steve & Laura Sharpe took of what remains at Venosa were equally as absorbing, & gave me a tangible sense of the landscape at what was the edge of the world. And, as further evidence, we watched as a B-24 Liberator taxied & took off carrying many of the men who flew them some 70 years ago.

In short, the reunion caught me off guard, & it became a much more emotional experience than what I was prepared for. We have this common bond that makes us instantly related. I learned that we are all searching for our fathers, uncles, and grandfathers, in one way or another.



Charlie Brown and Becky Marlin

## Flight with a Friend by Joe A. Crabill

On September 18, 2014 I took a flight which would be the pinnacle of my flying career. I was fortunate to fly on a B-24 Liberator with my dear friend Bueford C. Cooper. Bueford, a true warrior, flew with, and fought alongside, my father George Alfred Crabill.

In July 1944, they formed a crew in Lincoln, Nebraska. They were two of a ten man crew who proceeded to Pueblo, CO where they trained for formation flight. As newly trained pilots, they disembarked from Manchester, NH with new gear & aircraft with a long journey ahead of them to Gander, Azores, Marakesh, Morocco, Tunis, Goia & finally Venosa, Italy. The eight other crew members were, Robert G. Magee, navigator; William E. Deats, bombardier; William D. Gullickson, radio operator; John A. Gumbold, tailgunner; Donald A. Kogos, top turret; George A. Montri, nosegunner; Robert L. Schlotman, flight engineer; & Melvin C. Chenoweth, ball gunner.

The Lt. Crabill-Lt. Cooper crew was assigned to the 55th Wing, 15th Air Force, 485th Bomb Group, 830th Squadron under the command of Major Pruitt. As a very skilled crew at formation flying they were placed alongside captains & majors in the box formations. Flying a mission, loaded with frag bombs to Bratislava Ranger Marshalling Yard in Czechoslovakia on March

26, 1945, they were on Major Pruitt's left wing when it was hit with flak bursts creating a whole belly fire. Bueford recalls he thought his crew was doomed. Helpless, they watched Major Pruitt's aircraft crash. After the lead aircraft went down, Captain Famiglietti, who was flying Deputy Lead, dropped his ordinance, then Bueford & Dad dropped theirs. They then returned to their air base in Venosa, Italy after inflicting extensive damage to the Marshalling Yard.

During 1945, the Crabill-Cooper crew flew ten missions & twelve sorties. One mission was a top secret mission, briefed by a Brigadier General, to spearhead an invasion in the North Adriatic Sea. At the conclusion of the briefing the General raised his fist & said, "Gentlemen, give them a lick". This

mission was unpublished in the *Missions by the Numbers* book, edited by Sammy Schneider. This mission so devastated the enemy ground troops that the commanding officer of the United States Army spent his R&R time by coming to visit the 485th Bomb Group to thank them for the excellent execution of their mission. He stated the enemy troops were so wounded & incoherent that the Captain's infantry was met with little resistance.

On that September morning, as we departed the hotel in Farmers Branch, Texas, in route to Cavanaugh Air Museum in Addison, Texas, the skies were about 2,000 feet & obscured. The conditions didn't look good but I tried to maintain a positive & hopeful outlook that we would be able to fly that afternoon. At the museum, we toured many aircraft on static display, such as a Stearman PT19, British Spitfire,

Messerschmitt ME-109, Russian Migs, F4 Phantom & a B-26 Marauder. Bueford flew B-26's in Texas prior to joining the B-24 Liberator Crew.

Flight conditions improved & we were all "go" to fly. I intently watched Bueford as the pilots performed pre-flight checks. When they started turning engines, Bueford's eyes & ears closely followed the activities & procedures on the flight deck. He told me later that some of the Commemorative Air Force

pilots' procedures were different than those of the United States Army Air Corps. As we taxied, Bueford was buckled in but that wouldn't last! As they ran up on the engines, I began to get excited for what was to come.

As we were getting ready to rotate, Bueford freed himself from his belt & was watching over the co-pilot's shoulder. When we rotated a much larger thrill came over me than the ten previous flights I had taken on the Collings Foundation B-24J Liberator. I was now airborne with my father's closest comrade in arms. Many thoughts & scenes rushed through my brain as I tried to process this glorious experience. I tried to imagine the scale of intensity & anxiety that would have occurred on board as their aircraft



Joe & Bueford following their flight



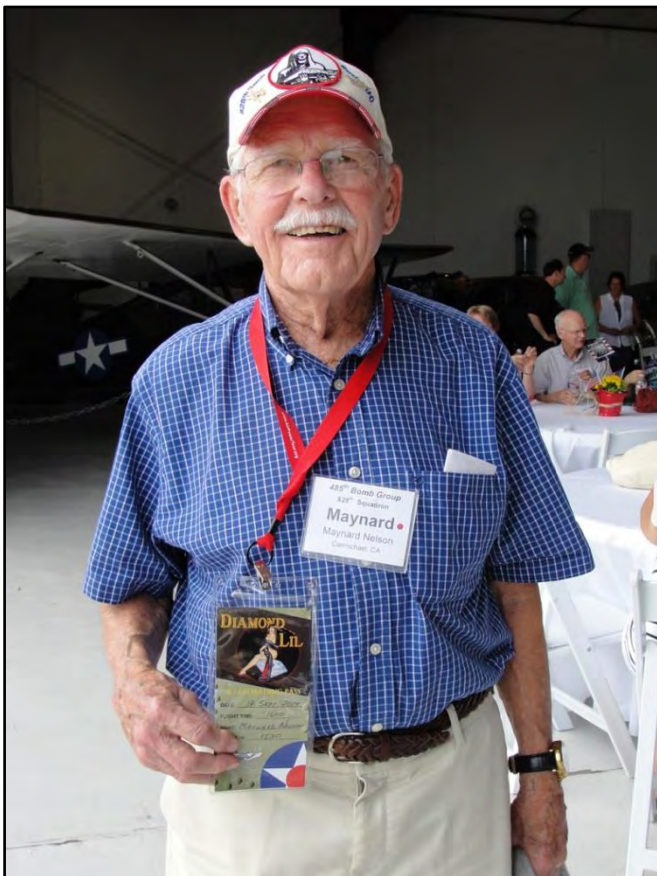
approached the IP (initial point). Words cannot express the elation that I experienced when I flew with Bueford that day.

As he came off the flight deck to go aft, you could never tell that he had not been on board a B-24 since 1945! He never missed a hand hold as he moved to the starboard waist gunner's position. When he grabbed the 50 caliber machine gun, there was a twinkle in his eye & a big Bueford grin on his face. Bueford's son, Randy, was behind Bueford enjoying his dad & the entire flight.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to all who made this 50th reunion of the 485th Bomb Group a glorious & successful celebration, including Mark LaScotte, Jerry Whiting, Steve & Laura Sharpe and many more. A special thanks to Neal Swan & Mark Leslie. Without your relentless commitment to bring the Commemorative Air Force B-24 flight to fruition I may not have achieved my dream of flying with Bueford Cooper on a B-24 Liberator. Thanks to all my 485th family for making me and my wife, Dede, feel welcome & feel truly like family members.



George Chaplin joyfully returns from his B24 flight



Maynard Nelson - Has his ticket to ride!



David Hansen with Daughters  
Susan Shelden & Marie Hansen

# Final Reunion: A Polish Perspective By Szymon Serwatka

When Jerry told me about the reunion in Dallas, I hesitated if I should go or not. It is a long trip to Dallas from Kraków, Poland. On the other hand, I have so many friends in the 485<sup>th</sup> that I have not seen for so long. And, it was supposed to be the final reunion, although I never really believed it would be the last one (I still don't). So, a month before this event, I booked my flight and sent the registration.

The fun started right at the DFW airport. I called the hotel and they told me they are sending a van to pick me up. I boarded it and, since I was alone, I thought we would go straight to the hotel. But no, we kept circling the winding roads at the airport, and soon I figured out we are going to visit all terminals. I was not sure if I am in the right car, but I noticed a 485th reunion card next to the driver, so I was reassured I am OK. The first group of 4 people joined me, and one person looked somehow familiar. It was Jim Scheib, and the other people were his family. They recognized me too – we met in the 2005 reunion in Tucson, AZ. The next terminal, Kathleen Arnold gets on the car. The party started!

We got to the hotel and joined the crowd at the registration. Soon I swapped standing in the queue for handshakes, hugs, tapping on the shoulders. It was an incredible feeling to be confronted with so much friendliness, and being recognized and greeted by so many people, with whom I thought I exchanged just a few words in the 2005 reunion, or a few e-mails, so how could they possibly remember me?

Among the people I met there was one special friend, Bill Williams. Bill's pilot, Avery Gilliland, was shot down over Blechhammer, which is today in Poland. Avery and the crew perished in the crash, and neither their bodies nor graves were ever found. They are still officially declared MIA and I and my friends continue to look for clues where they could be buried. We were lucky several years ago, because we managed to locate the crash site. Bill visited it with Jerry Whiting in 2004, and he could finally pay respect to his pilot. A year later, I took my family to the US, and we stayed at Bill's place for a couple of days. He appreciated so much that he could go to Poland, and I felt honored that I could help to organize the trip. I keep thinking of him, and I was particularly happy to see Bill in Dallas.

Another special person was a newcomer to the reunions, Jim Platt. He is one of thousands of MIA families. Avery Gilliland was his uncle, and the family

never knew what really happened to their loved one, until Jerry Whiting found them shortly before the reunion. Jerry inspired me to bring a piece of Avery's B-24 to Dallas, and I was honored to hand this piece to Jim in one of the sessions. I knew this would be an emotional moment, but never expected we would be so overwhelmed with emotions. We exchanged e-mails after the reunion, and I know he gave this piece to his mother, who was Avery's sister. I am so happy Jerry found them and created an opportunity for my history research to provide closure for the family.

I am also happy that I had an opportunity to make a presentation about the September 13th 1944 mission to IG Farben factory at Oświęcim (aka Auschwitz). I think it was important to provide some wider context to the veteran stories, and I was happy Bill Brokaw was in the audience, for whom this mission was his very first one.

The reunion was a wonderful event, and I was so happy to meet everyone, particularly the veterans. I felt so honored to be there during the Flag Folding ceremony, and the Memorial Breakfast. Upon departure to Poland, I said good bye not to just reunion attendees, but to a large loving family. Thank you! Szymon.

If anyone wants to visit Poland, 485th targets like Blechhammer and Auschwitz, and B-24 memorials and crash sites, I am organizing two 7-day tours this year, one in July and one in August. Contact me at [sserwatka@yahoo.com](mailto:sserwatka@yahoo.com) for details.

Please check the 485<sup>th</sup> Website and Facebook page for updates regarding this tour!

<b>485<sup>th</sup> goes to Poland!</b>	
<b>2 historical cities</b>	Kraków Wrocław
<b>+ 2 USAAF targets</b>	Blechhammer Oświęcim
<b>+ 2 B-24 memorials</b>	Zygodowice Jeleśnia
<b>+ 2 Nazi camps</b>	Auschwitz-Birkenau Stalag Luft III (Sagan)
<b>= 7 days</b>	





Timberlee Tamraz-Grove & Ronald Grove



Dianne & Bill Leslie & Art Kain



Richard "Armen" Alman, Pasquale Libutti  
Vincenzo Vorrasi, with Bill Williams



Mari & Russ Christensen



Marc Morrison, Santi Stockton &  
Jolene Stockton



Steve & Michael Lindsay



# The Lindell Crew Revisited by Jim Platt, nephew of Lt. Gilliland

Today is December 26, 2014, exactly 70 years since the ill-fated flight of the Lindell Crew where my uncle, Lt. Avery M. Gilliland was co-pilot on his orientation flight to the bombing run experience. As described by Mr. Bill Williams, my uncle's Ball Turret Gunner, this was common so there wasn't an entire crew in a B24 without experience. Each member of a new crew would be selected at random to fly with an experienced crew before they were allowed to fly together. It was on my uncle's orientation flight, the plane experienced a direct hit with flak & broke into two pieces. The bodies were never recovered as far as my family knew.

As a child, when I would go to my grandmother's house, I would look at four pictures that hung proudly above my grandmother's living room chair. These pictures were of her 4 sons, in uniform, who served in the armed forces. The oldest, Lt. Gilliland who the family called "Mike" since his father was also Avery. Next to him, was his younger brother Ralph, who was an E-5 in the 82nd Airborne 504th PIR (Parachute Infantry Regiment) & died during Operation Husky, Invasion of Sicily, July 11, 1943. The third son was a Navy veteran of the Korean War & the 4th son was in the Army after Korea & before Vietnam.

I attended the 50th & final 485th BG reunion in Dallas. My purpose was to honor my uncle who died in service to our country, meet the last living member of his crew, Mr. Bill Williams & to possibly bring some closure to what was a profoundly painful event in my family. Since there was no body found, my family never could bring closure to his death. In the death of my other uncle who perished in WWII, his body was buried in Sicily, then Algiers & later brought back to the United States & now rests at the Fort Bliss, Texas cemetery. My mother would say, "It was as if Mike left for war & hasn't come back yet." I am told my grandmother, who died in 1986, would pray every day that his body would be recovered & the family could give him a military burial on US soil. I am in possession of old family letters & within those letters was a letter sent from my uncle to his father (a WWI veteran) in December 1944 telling him the weather had been bad, but he was hoping to be able to find his brother's grave in Sicily & pray over his remains. This never happened due to the fateful flight of December 26th. I also have another letter my grandfather wrote to a friend in Tucson, AZ telling him the intense grief from the loss of his son Ralph & his deeply held worry over his son who was in harm's way as

a pilot of a B24 in Italy. My grandfather asked his friend to pray for his son's safety. My uncle who was a Korean War vet told me my grandfather died with the grief of the loss of his two sons in WWII. He died in 1950, six years before I was born & took that grief to his grave.

Within the family, stories circulated about my uncle & the events of his death but it was hard to substantiate. One story was my uncle had a 3 day pass he gave to another crew member before the flight of December 26th. This was clarified by Mr. Bill Williams, his Ball Turret Gunner who said, my uncle did not have a 3 day pass. Bill had asked his Lt. for a pass after they arrived in Italy in late November since Bill's brother was stationed only 50 miles away. My uncle was able to get that pass for Bill.



Jim Platt & Jerry Whiting  
Memorial Dinner Event

Then, Bill told me he went to his pilot (and my uncle) & asked for another pass so he could spend Christmas with his brother. My uncle said, "Bill, I think I can do that." My uncle came back with the 3 day pass which according to Bill was unheard of to procure 2 passes in less than 1 month. I know from what my family has told me, my uncle was very close to his younger brother who had been killed in Sicily, 1 ½ years earlier. It is my deeply held belief the reason Bill was able to get 2 passes in less than a

month was that my uncle was still mourning the loss of his own brother & Bill's request touched my uncle personally. I believe in such a manner that my uncle went to extreme measures to procure that Pass.

Prior to the reunion in Dallas this year, I had been in contact via email with Jerry Whiting. He was very helpful in getting me registered. He was also helpful in giving me information about my uncle prior to the reunion. I can say without reservation, all of the attendees of the reunion, both the 25 WWII veterans of the 485th BG & their families were kind, friendly, engaging & helpful. Rarely do you get 335 people in a room & everyone be genuinely nice people. The 485th is a special group of people. Attending the reunion was an experience that my wife & I will never forget. The living history stories were amazing. I was able to visit with Jerry Whiting & Szymon Serwatka at one of the book signings. They shared more information about my uncle. I asked Szymon if I were to travel to Poland, would he be able to show me the crash site. He agreed with the caveat, I had to feed him, of which I enthusiastically agreed & we shook hands to seal the deal. He explained that the chances of finding a piece of the wreckage at the crash site were probably impossible at this point. I told him I would really like find



a part, even a small part of the wreckage to bring closure for my 91 year old mother. I wanted to give her a 'point of contact' as her piece of her brother who never returned from the war. Szymon reiterated the impossible chance of finding a piece but promised to take me to the crash site if I were to come to Poland.

At the Memorial Dinner Saturday evening, my wife Lavina & I sat with Bill Williams, his son Keith & daughter-in-law Leanne. When Jerry Whiting began to speak about how there are many stories & those stories are not only personal, they are still fresh in the minds of family

members even though it has been almost 70 years, I thought to myself "He is so correct. That is what our family feels." At the same time, my wife turned to me & said; "He is speaking about your family." Then Jerry invited Szymon to come to the microphone. They both invited me to join them up front. The first thing Szymon did was look at me and say; "when I said it was impossible to find part of the wreckage, I was lying to you." It was then he presented me with a small beautiful statue created by a Polish artist who had used material from the wreckage to fabricate this tribute. I was flabbergasted at what I was hearing. How could this be? I have never experienced this kind of humanity, generosity & thoughtfulness.

I was numb from what had happened & was thrilled to be able to take the statue back to my mother in Arizona who is the only living sibling of Lt. Gilliland. My mother was the third oldest behind Avery & Ralph. My mother who has dementia has difficulty with short term memory, but her long term memory is very good. When I returned home to Yuma, Arizona, I was excited to meet with my mother. I started by telling her about the 485th reunion & what all I had learned about her brother. I told her I had met the last living crewmember & he has said wonderful things about Mike (Avery). Then I told her about the presentation of the Polish Statue that was done to honor the Lindell crew that her brother was the co-pilot, she said, "You know Mike's crew came back from the War!" I told her yes I did. I explained that the statue was made from the actual B24 her brother died in. I explained the wreckage was found about 10 years ago after a lot of work from a Polish gentleman named Szymon Serwatka. She was very pleased to hear that the wreckage was found. She didn't ask about her brother's body. I told her I learned the Germans took the airmen, gave the bodies to the local people who buried their bodies at a local church



Jim Platt, Virginia Platt & Bill Williams

cemetery. She actually was visibly pleased to hear his body was placed in a church cemetery. I chose not to tell her the bodies had been moved by the U. S. government after the War without accurately documenting the names or locations of reburial. After I told her about how the

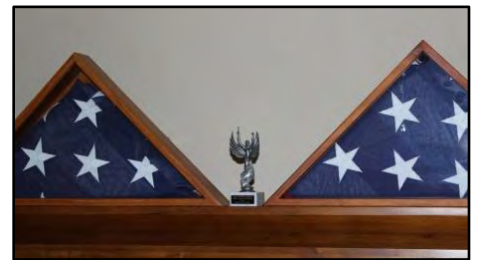
people of Poland even today, are very grateful for the sacrifices of U.S. Airmen & soldiers & how the beautiful artwork I was holding in my hand was made to show their gratitude for their sacrifices. At this point, my mother took the statue from me & started rubbing the raw piece of the wreckage with her right index finger. She then started talking about her brother. She

talked about the lack of closure since his body wasn't found & as she talked about him, Lavina & I realized before our eyes, she was having that memorial service for so many years she had been denied. She talked about her brother & it gave her great comfort to have that piece of the B24 in her hands.

When we were ready to leave, my mother said, "I want you to take the piece! It will be better that you have it in your safekeeping than if I keep it here." I agreed & told her that I promised to give it a place of honor at my house.

Today, the statue stands in my living room, between two folded U.S. Flags. The flag to the left is my father's flag from his funeral. He was a WWII veteran of the Army & was in the Battle of the Bulge who was fighting the day my uncle died.

The flag to the right is from my father-in-law's funeral & who also was a WWII veteran of the U. S. Navy

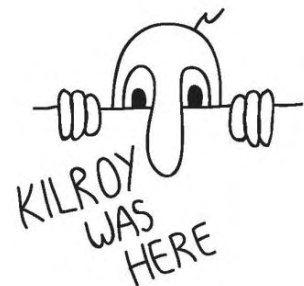


& was flying as a Tail Gunner in a Grumman TBF Torpedo Bomber off the USS Bunker Hill in the Pacific the day my uncle died.

Due to the generosity of Szymon Serwatka & Jerry Whiting along with information given to us from Bill Williams & Anthony Kujawa, our family has an Heirloom & the story that goes with it, that will be told for generations to come so the men of the 485th Bomb Group will never die. They will live in the hearts & minds of our family & will be a source of humble respect & honor for the men who have been accurately described as "The Great Generation".

## 485<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group Trivia Quiz

- 1) How many men served in the 485<sup>th</sup> in Italy?
  - a) 1800
  - b) 2300
  - c) 3000
  - d) more than 3600
- 2) How many men became POWs from the 485<sup>th</sup>?
  - a) fewer than 180
  - b) 220
  - c) 230
  - d) 260+
- 3) How many men from the 485<sup>th</sup> were killed or died overseas?
  - a) 224
  - b) 275
  - c) 330
  - d) 475+
- 4) How many men from the 485<sup>th</sup> are still considered MIA (Missing in Action)?
  - a) 14
  - b) 21
  - c) 192
  - d) 250
- 5) How many from the men were shot down, captured and later escaped?
  - a) None
  - b) 2
  - c) 13
  - d) 22
- 6) How many men from the 485<sup>th</sup> went down, but evaded capture?
  - a) 17
  - b) 61
  - c) 93
  - d) 134
- 7) The 485<sup>th</sup> returned to which city at the end of the war?
  - a) Sioux City Iowa
  - b) Boise, Idaho
  - c) Sioux Falls, South Dakota
  - d) Wendover, Nevada
- 8) When a 485<sup>th</sup> pilot called "Big Fence" it meant
  - a) He was bringing ice cream from Bari
  - b) He was in trouble and needed help
  - c) He was announcing he had finished his 50th mission
  - d) His bombs wouldn't release
- 9) "Panther" was a code word for
  - a) Radar-jamming equipment used on bombing raids
  - b) A night mission
  - c) An enemy fighter attack
  - d) An in-flight attack of the stomach flu
- 10) A "Mickey Operator" in the group was a
  - a) Man who ran illicit gambling operations off-base
  - b) D.J. at Armed Forces Radio
  - c) pastry chef
  - d) radar-navigator
- 11) The 485<sup>th</sup> flew several "lone wolf" missions. These were:
  - a) Unauthorized flights to the French Riviera Capri
  - b) Single-plane night or bad weather harassment missions
  - c) Jeep trips into Venosa for cherry brandy
  - d) Trips to rest camp at the Isle of Capri
- 12) The 485<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group was disbanded in
  - a) 1946
  - b) 1953
  - c) 1975
  - d) 2003





## 485th Bomb Group Trivia Quiz Answers

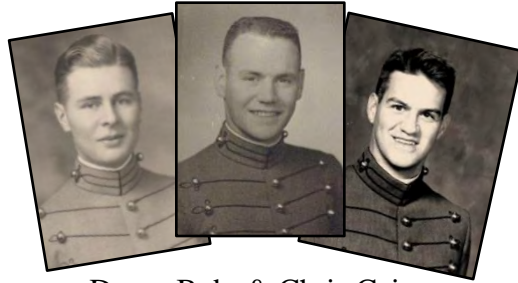
- 1) How many men served in the 485<sup>th</sup> in Italy? D.) 3600 This is only an estimate, based on careful examination of the group history records. We have identified approximately 2535 men who were on flight crews; the remainder were non-flying personnel.
- 2) How many men became POWs from the 485<sup>th</sup>? D.) 260+ From Missing Air Crew Reports and other records, we've identified approximately 260 men who were shot down and survived the war as prisoners.
- 3) How many men from the 485<sup>th</sup> were killed or died overseas? D.) 475+ The records reveal this many men were lost overseas. The vast majority were lost in combat, but this also includes one suicide and one airmen killed by a sniper in North Africa. The losses are very high for a single bomb group that was in combat for less than one year, but this can be explained by the 154 men who were killed in the sinking of the liberty ship Paul Hamilton.
- 4) How many men from the 485th are still considered MIA? C.) 192 Again, the list of MIA's is extraordinarily high for the group, since remains of 153 of the 154 men lost on the Hamilton were never recovered. We haven't determined the exact number of others who are still considered MIA, but have confirmed at least 39.
- 5) How many from the men were shot down, captured and later escaped? C.) 13 Eugene Brittin (McNulty crew), 831<sup>st</sup> gunner, was shot down on June 9, 1944 over northern Italy. He was immediately captured, but escaped from his German captors during his first night in captivity. He managed to evade capture for 9 ½ months before he returned safely. On September 24, 1944 two 829<sup>th</sup> Sqdn planes went down over Salonika, Greece. From Lt. Hegmann's plane there were two survivors, Dale Morrison and Joe Hackler. Both were captured, along with nine men from Lt. Cameron's plane including William Meeks, Alex Vroblesky, Wilson Leon, William McLean, Orville Kingsberg, Robert Burling, Homer Jones, Ed Czakoczi and Reginald Lyons. These men escaped en masse in Yugoslavia, aided by Chetniks, in early November when they were being taken north and made it safely into Bulgaria. On October 16, 1944, Lt. Boehme's 829<sup>th</sup> Sqdn crew was shot down over Yugoslavia. One gunner, Bill Culver, was captured but managed to escape during the night and made it safely to the coast, with the help of Partisans and was taken back to Italy.
- 6) How many men from the 485<sup>th</sup> went down, but evaded capture? D.) 134 Escape Statements reveal that at least 134 airmen evaded capture in Yugoslavia, aided by Partisans and Chetniks. This does not include the many crews who landed safely at the Partisan-held Island of Vis.
- 7) The 485<sup>th</sup> returned to a base in which city at the end of the war? C.) Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- 8) When a 485<sup>th</sup> pilot called "Big Fence" it meant B.) He was in trouble and needed help. When a crew was in trouble returning from a mission and didn't feel they could make it home they called "Big Fence" on the emergency radio channel. When they gave their position, they would be given a heading for the nearest friendly place to land and Air-Sea Rescue would be alerted.
- 9) "Panther" was a code word for? A.) Radar-jamming equipment used on bombing raids. Some radio operators in the 485<sup>th</sup> were given specialized training in how to operate secret radio-jamming sets that were placed on some B-24's, usually in the "slot" or #4 position.
- 10) A "Mickey Operator" in the group was a? D.) radar-navigator. Radar was used on some lead and deputy lead planes. Specially trained radar officers operated the sets and were called "mickey operators".
- 11) The 485<sup>th</sup> flew several "lone wolf" missions. B.) Single-plane night or bad weather harassment missions. The 485<sup>th</sup> flew several of these secret missions, most of them in late 1944. They were only flown at night or in bad weather. Unlike the strategic missions, these missions were flown with the intent of keeping factory workers in their bomb shelters where they could not contribute to the war effort. Some of them were recorded in the group's official unit history, but from diary entries it appears there were at least two missions which were not recorded, the last one being flown in April 1945.
- 12) The 485<sup>th</sup> Bomb Group was disbanded in? A.) 1946 The 485<sup>th</sup> was disbanded in 1946 after having been transferred to a couple of different bases. There were few, if any of the men in the group at that time who had served overseas with the group.

## Banquet Dinner and Entertainment

Our Saturday night banquet dinner was preceded by photos, music and visiting. Red Kempffer's Daughter & Son in Law, Barbara & Michael Lafferty volunteered their talents to take the group photos. Jan Campbell, beloved Aunt of the Yates family, entertained attendees with her piano talents. With over 250 guests in attendance, the photo lineup called for smaller groups, as seen in this newsletter's numerous group photos. As with the entire reunion, the staff at the Wyndham Garden Dallas North treated our group with the best service! Admittedly, the décor of the hotel was different but the staff and accommodations more than made up for the bright colors and modern furniture. Following our dinner, Szymon Serwatka & Jerry Whiting presented Jim Platt with part of the wreckage from his Uncle's Plane. Chris Cairns shared his *Legacy of Service* presentation, tracing his family back to his Grandfather, Colonel Doug Cairns. The group was also serenaded by Don Peschka, who channeled Louis Armstrong with his rendition of What a Wonderful World. Jim Scheib shared his 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration & cake with the group. Following dinner, attendees returned to the hospitality room to share stories and friendship late into the evening.



Jan Campbell



Doug, Bob, & Chris Cairns



Karla & Don Peschka  
with Frances Fundling

## Memorial Breakfast Sunday, Sept. 21<sup>st</sup> 2014

Neal Swann hosted our annual Memorial Breakfast. Former Navy SEAL and war veteran Clint Bruce, Co-Founder and Chairman of *Carry the Load* gave a very moving speech. His organization was established so that Americans would remember, honor and celebrate Memorial Day in dedication to those who sacrifice for us daily. The US Flag Folding Ceremony was narrated by Steve Lindsay. The flag folded this year, was from Marvin Lindsay's funeral & was folded by Andrew

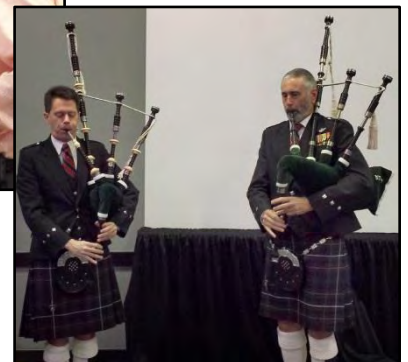
Jackson, Parker Umpleby, Michael Lindsay & 1<sup>st</sup> LT. Paul Smith USAF. Don Harris of the North Texas Caledonian Pipes and Drums (NTCPD) played a haunting version *Amazing Grace* followed by Chris Cairns reading of the Missing Man Table ceremony. George Chaplin led the memorial portion of the ceremony. The 50<sup>th</sup> 485<sup>th</sup> Reunion adjourned with the NTCPD Bagpipers marching out playing *Scotland the Brave* which echoed in our hearts & minds.



Flag Folding Ceremony



Clint Bruce



North Texas  
Caledonian Pipers



# JOURNEY'S END    MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Donald E. Crouch	828	2014	Robert I. McCullough	828	2014
Ralph Curcione	831	2013	Allen Meister	828	2014
William A. Deobald	828	2014	Odell Meredith	830	2010
Norman Garner	830	2014	James Mulligan	831	2014
Robert V. Hanson, Sr.	831	2014	Thomas R. Tabor	828	2014
Ben Karoly	829	2015	Gordon Tuttle	828	2012
Marvin H. Lindsay	829	2014			

Special THANKS to Frances Fundling, Mark Leslie, Mark LaScotte, Kay Brown-Gary, Joe Crabill, Bill Cotterman & Alice Arthur for sharing their photos for our newsletter! Additional photos may be accessed via a link at [http://www.485thbg.org/Reunion\\_Info.htm](http://www.485thbg.org/Reunion_Info.htm)


Karen Johanson's Photos may be viewed online: <http://bit.ly/485thgroup>

## Banquet Evening Photographer

Michael Lafferty  
5844 Grand Av. South  
Minneapolis, MN 55419-2218  
Email: [mlafferty@usiwireless.com](mailto:mlafferty@usiwireless.com)

You can also call Barb Lafferty at  
952-261-2676  
to order by credit card

Facebook page can be found by searching: *485th 50th reunion photos* within Facebook

PERSONAL TILES					
COOK	POP ARNOLD	CORNETT	CAIRNS	NETT	SAMMY
HANCOCK	SORTOMME			MONROE	PARLI
BUNDY	TOWERS			ICK	LASSEIGNE
FOWLER	HUCKEY			AKINS	HERRINGER
WOODYARD	COTTERMAN			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	ROEHN 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

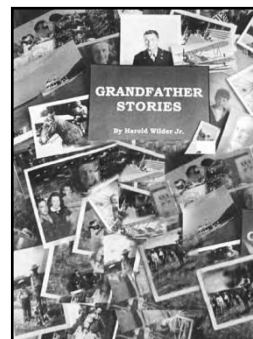
Headquarters - Walter E. Arnold, Robert M. Benson, Douglas M. Cairns, Ben B. Cook, John B. Cornett, S.W. Hancock, Hadley M. Huckey, Warren Sortomme and Loyd F. Towers.

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

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.



### GRANDFATHER STORIES

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## Awards Presented at Reunion by Jerry Whiting

Those of us associated with the 485th Bomb Group have been fortunate to be surrounded by people, here and abroad, committed to honoring and/or serving the group in various ways. We felt it was important to honor some of these people for their contributions, so we presented plaques to several of these guests at different events during the reunion. Those who received plaques were:

- Phil Cummings-for his past service as chairman of the 485th Bomb Group Association
- Steve and Laura Sharpe-for their continuing work in producing Lightweight Tower, our newsletter
- Gerry Weinstein-for preserving the 485th photographic history and for bringing his photo displays to our reunions
- Marcus Siebler-for preserving the history of the 485th in his documentary “13 Juni 1944” about the Frels crew and the June 13, 1944 mission
- Szymon Serwatka-for his continuing research on 485th BG and 15th AF activities in Poland during WWII
- Jakob Mayer-for his continuing research into 485th BG and 15th AF crash sites in Austria
- Pasquale Libutti and the Venosa Airfield Association-for Pasquale’s and the group’s research into the 485th BG history in and around Venosa, Italy
- Georg Reitsberger-for commissioning the monument in Vaterstetten, Germany honoring the John Sandall, crew, shot down on July 19, 1944.
- Heike Rose Schmidt-Pfeil and Bernd Schmidt-Pfeil-for building the monument honoring the John Sandall crew, shot down over Vaterstetten, Germany on July 19, 1944. (Bernd was not in attendance.)

We also had plaques for two people who were unable to join us. Tony Siller, 828th Sqdn cook, has designed the reunion glasses for many years and we gave him a plaque honoring his service to the 485th. After the reunion Kathleen Arnold personally presented the plaque to Tony in their hometown of Denver, Co. Fran Fowler, widow of Art Fowler, served as the 485th secretary for many years. We mailed Fran a plaque, honoring her for her service.



Marcus Siebler & Jerry Whiting



Jerry Whiting,  
Heike Rose Schmidt-Pfeil  
& Georg Reitsberger



Jerry Whiting & Jakob Mayer



Jerry Whiting & Szymon Serwatka



Jerry Whiting & Pasquale Libutti



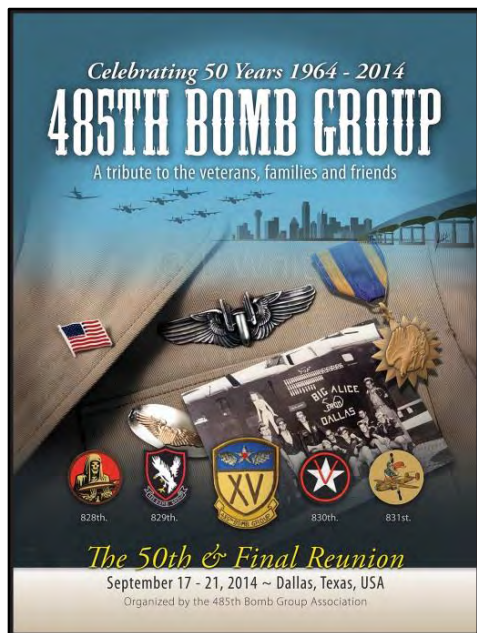
## 485TH BOMB GROUP 50TH REUNION COMMEMORATIVE POSTER

The artwork featured below is available as a limited edition fine art print.

If you missed the Dallas reunion or for those who didn't get a chance to get a commemorative poster at the reunion, prints are still available for purchase. This beautifully reproduced 18" x 24" print is ready for framing, featuring archival fade resistant inks, printed on premium grade 80# Silk cover weight paper. The poster design commemorates 50 years of reunions of the 485th Bomb Group and all the memories shared with the veterans, widows, family and friends. Remember this proud generation with a lasting tribute and salute for the many sacrifices these men and women endured. This final official reunion organized by the 485th Bomb Group Association was an event to be remembered. The artwork was designed and produced by illustrator and designer, Jerry White, son of the late John A. White of the 828th squadron. Prints will be available for sale while they last. There will be no reprints. Price is only \$20.00 each. Pass on the memories of the 485th Bomb Group for generations to come. Save in shipping costs if bundling your purchase with multiple prints at one time.



For information contact: Jerry White  
1501 24th Ave. North St. Petersburg, FL 33704  
Contact via Email: [jdwhite01@gmail.com](mailto:jdwhite01@gmail.com)  
727-798-3918



## OF BROAD STRIPES AND BRIGHT STARS GALLANTRY OVER BUCHAREST

By Jerry Whiting

This is a story about one day in the lives of some of the Ploesti raiders, the men charged with the destruction of Hitler's oil. On this day, June 28, 1944 the target for the 485th Bomb Group was not Ploesti, but an oil refinery and storage facility nearby, in Bucharest, Rumania. Some of the men had a bad feeling about this one, a feeling they wouldn't return. Their experience taught them things rarely go as planned. This mission was no exception, but on this one day, things went terribly wrong, changing the lives of many, but bringing out the best in these men. This is their story. 115 pages. \$10+ shipping. See order form.



# 485<sup>TH</sup> 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.

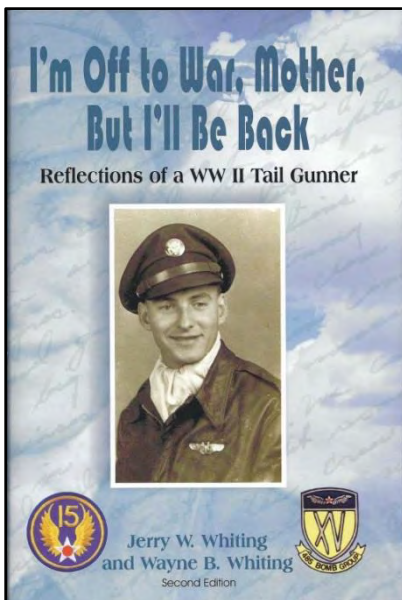
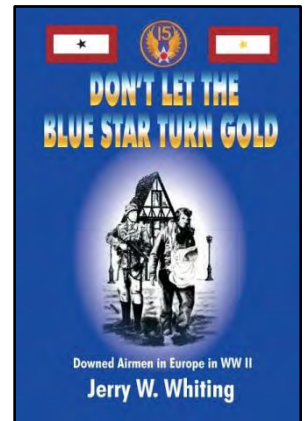
JUNE 2007 REVISED HARDCOVER  
COLLECTOR'S EDITION!

## 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> (hard cover)	\$ 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 By The Numbers</i> Edited by Sammy Schneider	\$ 20.00		\$
<i>Of Broad Stripes and Bright Stars</i> (paperback)	\$ 10.00		\$
<i>In the Shadow of Mt. Vulture DVD</i>	\$ 10.00		\$
<i>New Year's At Ramitelli DVD</i>	\$ 10.00		\$
\$5 for 1 item, \$10 for 2-8 items Shipping/Handling			\$
(All items shipped 1st class or Priority Mail)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Total amount enclosed			\$

(Check or money order payable to: Jerry Whiting)

Ship to:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Mail order form to:

Jerry Whiting 2576 Fox Circle Walnut Creek, California 94596  
Phone: (925) 934-5204 Email: EAJWWhiting@aol.com

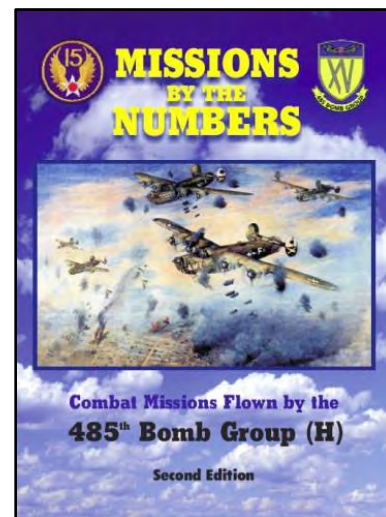


## MISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS Edited by Sammy Schneider

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.

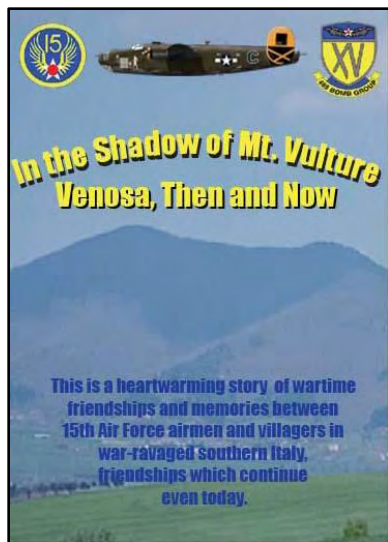
Only 300 copies have been printed, so get your copies  
now \$20+ shipping. See order form!



### In the Shadow of Mt. Vulture 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.



\$10 + shipping  
See order form

Jerry Whiting  
2576 Fox Circle  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

email:  
[eajwwhiting@aol.com](mailto: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.





# Venosa...Then 1944 & Now 2014

