Dutch civilians watch as food-laden 388th BG B-17s make their way to Schipol Airport during Operation Chowhound
From the President’s Desk

Dear 388th Bombardment Group Members,

How do we assure the future of our Association? As the number of original members diminishes, maintaining, and if possible, increasing the membership becomes a major objective for all members.

We must secure the heritage that our veterans so gallantly and heroically fought for.

The 60th Reunion 2009 in Kissimmee, Florida, will most likely attract many children, grandchildren and even great grandchildren of all members. It would be rewarding, if the major objective to attend would be to experience the rewards of meeting the veterans, learn of their days in the battle for freedom, and to profit from their wisdom. That would make the other attractions of the Reunion – The Kennedy Space Center, lunch with an astronaut, the Fantasy of Flight Museum - so much more valuable. Add to this the abundance of other alluring theme parks – Disney World, Universal Studios, Sea World, to name some of the major ones, and impressionable and formable minds will have a lot to digest.

Let us impart upon the younger participants, the importance of history, the value of heritage and the fact that freedom has a high price.

Some members have already signed up children and grandchildren as members. Let us all do our share to add to the ranks. Family ties is not a prerequisite! Many people show an awakening interest in World War II. Let your friends know about our unique Association, and encourage them to join. We will be happy to welcome them!

All the best!

George Sundblad

A Changing of the Guard

Beginning with the summer issue, there will be a new team of editors producing Fortress for Freedom. Tom Dennis Sr. (formerly of the 562nd Sqd) will be taking the helm, with his son Tom Jr. assisting.

All articles and Mail Call letters should be sent directly to Tom Dennis, Sr. at 801 Magnolia Ave, Apt 225, Corona CA 92879-3191; or at dennis388@sbcglobal.net. Taps items may be sent either to Tom or to our secretary Linda Soo.

Please join the Board in welcoming the Dennises as they assume their new roles in service of the 388th BG (H) Association, Inc.

Correction

In the winter 2008 issue, the rank of Col. Scott Dennis, Commander of the 388th FW at Hill AFB, was incorrectly listed as Lt. Col. Our apologies to the Colonel.
388th BG Association Treasurer’s Report 2008

Carried Forward January 1, 2008

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Income

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Total General Income **1,249.88**

Ogden Reunion

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<td>07 Ogden Reunion Expenses</td>
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Actual Ogden Reunion Income **-1,809.68**

Utah Reunion Income (2008 Expenses) **-1,547.42**

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Other Ogden Reunion Income **1,052.03**

CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE 12/31/08 **31,233.69**

Fund Balances

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Other Assets

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Total Other Assets **10,950.54**

TOTAL ASSETS **42,184.23**
The Diary of Ranold Musolf  PART 2

T/Sgt. Ranold Craig Musolf was engineer/top turret gunner on the Jack Sarten crew in the 561st Sqd. On the August 16, 1944 mission to Zeitz (printed incorrectly as “Leitz” in the winter 2008 issue), the Sarten crew was killed following a mid-air collision.

July 11  Target—Airplane Jet Propulsion Engine Plant or Town Itself
Went to Munich, German. Took off 7:30 in the morning. Saw flak on both sides of us on way there. Target had so much flak over it that it looked like a cloud. The most bombed city of all Europe was covered solid with clouds. Saw rockets on bomb run. Most planes I’ve seen since D-Day. We saw a weather balloon over France. One crew said they saw a basket on it. Everybody laughed at them. Mission about 7 hours. 1,100 heavies participated. Lost 20 heavies and 2 fighters. Results unknown so far. Saw white flak also.

July 12  Same as July 11
1,200 heavies—planes spread out more. About nine hours. 26 heavies lost. Results unknown. One of our group’s ships blew up. 2 guys got out. Hit by another ship.

July 13  Same as July 11
Saw weather balloon over target. I passed out over I.P. Results unknown. Dropped half of bombs with screw driver. Had a runaway prop over target. 1,000 bombers participated. Lost 10 heavies and 5 fighters.

July 14
Got up at 12:30. Got shot at by flak from Limeys. Got lost. Was flying weather ship. Landed at 5:00.

July 19  Target—Ball Bearing Plant
Went to Schweinfurt, Germany. Didn’t have any sleep. Had 1:00 briefing. Had flak on way in but not near us. Target area looked like a black cloud. Tail gunner Baur got hit in shoulder. Had 2 pieces hit right under right waist window and just missed waist gunners. One piece just came between the pilot, co-pilot and myself. 13 holes in ship. Tail gunner was not badly hit. Shot red flare just before landing. Ambulance was ready. About an 8-hour mission. Was a fair job of bombing. 1,200 bombers in air. Lost 18 heavies and 7 fighters. Heard of bandits. Didn’t see any though.

July 20  Target—Camera Works
Went to Wetzler, took primary target. Went through thick flak. Didn’t bomb the oil refinery so we bombed the camera works. No flak there—7-1/2 hours. One flak hole in wing. 1,200 heavies participated. Lost 19 and also lost 9 fighters. Whole Eighth Air Force participated. Primary was Merseburg. Target we bombed was at Wetzler, Germany.

July 21  Practice Mission
Took pictures. Played poker in radio room.
Had a new crew’s co-pilot ride with us. We didn’t drop our bombs—they wouldn’t release. Group ahead of us got hit by fighters. Fighter support was poor. A crew from this field went down. Pilot said he wouldn’t fly formation except at target—fighters got him. We saw two heavies go down and one fighter. Must have been Jerry fighter. Got all tangled up in oxygen lines when Jerry appeared while cranking bomb bay doors. Dropped bombs in North Sea. I dropped crank extension in North Sea. I did everything wrong today. One of the pilots in our squadron belly landed a ship that was assigned to us awhile back. We landed with bomb bay doors open. 1,000 heavies participated. Lost 17 heavies and 6 fighters. Had a bomber from another field crash on this field and hit one of our ships. Could see smoke for 75 miles. Crew all got out but burned to a crisp, as well as two gas trucks. Smoke rolled a few hundred feet in the air.

[The ship that was shot down was #42-39866, flown by Lt. Russel Boyce. The collision on the field was that of an incoming Fersfield B-17 and the unoccupied #44-6096, which was being refueled. Two ground crewmen were killed.]

July 30
Flew engineer for Major Pearce. Fighters buzzed through formation at 200 miles an hour, head-on. Feathered three engines at a time.

July 31  Target—Engine Works for FW-190s
Went to Munich, Germany. Fighter support was good. Had flak on both sides of us. Lots of flak and some rockets at the target area. One hole in right wing. Just as we left target a ship in formation behind us got hit. Started smoking and went into a dive. One chute we saw get out. Two minutes later another ship from same formation went up in smoke, then seemed to melt into a ball and was all burned up before it hit the clouds. Burned up in 45-seconds. A ship that took the place we were flying got hit and went to Switzerland. A bombardier from this squadron got killed. Was his 33rd mission. One ship on this field had its tail wheel fail and skidded off runway. The ship that blew up was from this squadron. First ship we have lost since I have been here. The engineer was on his 2nd tour. Swell fellow. Was his first mission on his second tour. Had silver star for one close call before. Co-pilot was left waiting after mission, sitting by runway waiting for his crew who would never return. One enlisted man of the crew also didn’t go. They picked up their stuff a few hours after mission was over. Results of target unknown. A radio operator went nuts and tore out all the radio equipment in P.F.F. ship and hit tail gunner on head. One ship near the ship that blew up put a hole in the stabilizer a man could crawl through. 1,200 heavies and 1,000 fighters in air. Losses unknown. Time of mission 8:55.

[Lt. Ora Castrup’s a/c 42-32030 "Devil’s Luck", was hit by flak over the target and blew-up. He was flying Tail-End Charlie in the Low Group. Lt. James Crider in a/c 42102435, was hit over the target and asked for a heading for Switzerland. With two engines on fire, the crew bailed out near Memminger, Germany.]

August 1  Target—France
No Flak—fighter support good. Saw Mt. Blanc. Also saw Lake Geneva. It was a beautiful blue. Dropped our load at 500 ft. Ships were going all ways. 200 ships participated in our mission. Eighth Air Force for the day put up large force on numerous targets. Mountains in our bomb area had houses and villages on side of them. Houses had red roofs.

[This was the third and final mission in support of the Maquis.]

August 2  Target—Robot Supply Depot
Went to Mery on the Oise River near Paris. Fighter support good. Flak intense and accurate. Got 30 holes. One of the ships from our group went down. Five chutes went down. Rowe, flying our right wing, got fabric torn off right elevator and also hole in tail. Saw ship blow up over target. Went down in 2 balls of fire. Lead ship got hit and we took over group lead. We were leading high squadron. Before that we could hear flak burst for six minutes. Thought the ship was afire for we could smell the smoke from the burst. Three holes were so close to tail gunner that we couldn’t see how they missed him. 500 heavies took part. Hit target. Good job. Also had some holes just in front of my turret.

[The lead ship mentioned was a/c 42-97666, flown by the Ray Campbell crew.]

August 3

August 4  Target—Oil Refinery
Went out to Hamburg, Germany. Fighter support good. Our group was the first into the target. Flak was heavy and intense. Saw ship go into dive. Four chutes opened. Ship blew up and went into a ball of fire to the ground. Sky was full of black smoke over Bremen. Bremen had smoke pots and so did Williamshaven. Saw a lot of German shipping. Got four holes in our ship. One cut a gas line on No. 4 engine. If it had hit turbo we would have blown up by the gas hitting hot turbo. Flak hit Rowe in the foot. Results of our mission couldn’t be seen because of a cloud. Everybody was praying when we went through the flak.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10
Between April 29 and May 8, 1945, one of the greatest humanitarian endeavors of the 20th Century occurred and, just as quickly, became largely overlooked in the annals of World War II. Dubbed “Chowhound” by the Americans and “Manna” by the British, this series of food drops over western Holland saved the lives of countless thousands of Dutch people, who were literally starving to death.

And although they were not given combat credit for the food drops, the men of the 388th BG who participated in five Chowhound missions received so much more … the opportunity to bring salvation rather than destruction – and, the undying gratitude of the Dutch people for generations to come.

This, then, is the story of Operation Chowhound.

Ever since its occupation had begun in May 1940, The Netherlands and its peoples had been a constant thorn in the side of Nazi Germany. With Queen Wilhelmina and her government safe in England, the country refused to accept a Vichy-like government (such as that established in France), forcing the Nazis to impose their own regime under Reichskommissar Arthur Seyss-Inquart.

This greatly disappointed Adolf Hitler, who saw the Dutch as part of the Aryan “Herrenvolk” (master race), and believed that they could be absorbed into his greater Germanic nation.

Despite the “Gleichschaltung” (enforced conformity), the Dutch people listened on hidden radios to the voice of their true government via broadcasts from the BBC and Radio Orange, and answered its calls for resistance.

A nationwide workers’ strike occurred in February 1941 following the first deportation of Jews. Though quickly suppressed, it still showed the Nazis just what kind of people they were up against.

Although deportations were to continued throughout the war, people began hiding Jews at great personal risk.

The tightening of the screws began. The “Arbeitseinsatz” (drafting of civilians for forced labor) soon began. With all men between ages 18 and 45 forced to work in German factories, thousands now went into hiding rather than comply.

Nazi control over the Dutch populace now moved to the next level … rationing. By issuing ration cards, the Germans could ensure that anyone who violated the law would forfeit his weekly food ration. Those now in hiding from the Arbeitseinsatz were among these.

Still, small-scale resistance groups forged ration cards, counterfeited money, and attempted to distribute food and goods. Assassinations of German officials led to swift reprisals.

Thus was life in The Netherlands, up to September 1944. No one could have foreseen what would happen next.

As with all occupied countries, the Allied landings in June 1944 had raised the hopes of the Dutch people. On September 17, Operation Market Garden – Field-marshal Bernard Montgomery’s plan to advance from the Dutch-Belgian border across the rivers Meuse, Waal and Rhine into the north of the Netherlands and Germany – was launched.

In support of this operation, Queen Wilhelmina’s government called for a railroad strike. Within a single day, the majority of railroad personnel disappeared underground, stopping all train traffic and hampering German operations. These men, too, went underground, losing their rations.

Eight days after it began, Market Garden failed. On that same day, September 25, the Germans began a six-week embargo of all food shipments to Western Holland.

On October 8 Queen Wilhelmina appealed directly to President Franklin Roosevelt for help. The President replied that everything would be done to help after liberation.

On October 9, all electricity to civilians was ordered cut off. On October 25, gas supplies to Amsterdam ceased.

Though of little immediate comfort to the Dutch Queen, President Roosevelt’s “after liberation” pledge was based on the Allies’ anticipation that the beleaguered country would be freed sooner rather than later, and were already drawing up plans to feed the people.

Despite the failure of Market Garden, Allied advances into Holland continued. In October, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF), for strategic planning purposes, had divided the country into three sections. Area “A,” south of the River Waal, was soon to be liberated. Areas “B” and “C,” to the north, were designated to the west and east of the River Ijssel.

Furthermore, Area “B” was subdivided into parts 1, to the east, and 2, along the coast of the North Sea. It was Area B-2, where only dykes stood between the reclaimed land and the sea, that the Allies identified as being in the most dire need. To this end, the 21st Army Group was ordered to begin stockpiling food to feed 3,600,000 people on a daily basis. Soon, near the Dutch town of Oss, 30,000 tons of food were amassed.

Of course, there was no way to get the food into the hands of the people. Even worse, there was ample evidence that the Germans
were beginning to undermine some of Holland’s dikes.

Hitler had ordered that “Festung” (fortress) Holland be held at any price, and so the population in Area B-2 became hostages, totally dependent on their captors.

The change of seasons brought more misery. By early December bread rations had been reduced to two pounds per week; the daily food intake was now at 500 calories per person.

And so began what the Dutch now call “the Hunger Winter.” The weekly rations provided by the Germans were cut back still further. While farmers in the West could continue to feed themselves, food in the cities became increasingly scarce. Black market prices soared, and when their money ran out, people traded jewelry and other valuables for something to eat. “Famine tours,” sometimes hundreds of miles long, were made into the eastern provinces to beg or barter for food. Coal supplies were used up, and soon, despite curfews, city parks were denuded of their trees. Bombed-out buildings were stripped of anything that could be burned. Even tulip bulbs were roasted and eaten.

Malnutrition was widespread, and death rates among children and the elderly shot upward.

In mid-January 1945, Queen Wilhelmina once again appealed to the Allies for help. In identical letters to President Roosevelt, King George IV and Winston Churchill, she wrote: “Conditions have at present become so desperate that it is abundantly clear that if a major catastrophe, the like of which has not been seen in western Europe since the Middle Ages, is to be avoided in Holland, something drastic has to be done now, that is to say before and not after the liberation of the rest of the country!”

The Dutch government also turned to neutral Sweden for help. In no time at all the Swedes managed to load 3,600 tons of food onto two transport ships, and on January 24, negotiations with the Germans cleared the way for the ships to leave port for the four-day voyage to Delfzijl. Additional shiploads arrived in late February.

Neutral Switzerland, urged on by the International Red Cross, began building food supplies in Lisbon, Spain and Basel, Switzerland. Their plan to transport food down the Rhine was stymied by the British, who planned to mine the river. The food stored in Basel eventually went to liberated areas of Holland. The Red Cross then bought food from Germany, which they managed to transport by train to Rotterdam in February 1945. The foodstuffs stored in Lisbon were delivered by sea to Sweden, where medicines were added to the cargo. That ship, with 6,000 tons of supplies, reached Delfzijl on March 8.

By that time, an estimated 20,000 people had already starved to death.

In mid-March, General Dwight D. Eisenhower was directed by the Combined Chiefs of Staff to prepare a defensive for the liberation of the western Holland. But knowing the Germans’ hold over the areas west of Utrecht, and with aerial photos demonstrating their willingness to flood the country, he demurred. Also in March, the British Air Ministry released a plan, codenamed “Placket-C,” to airlift food to the starving Dutch. The plan calculated that 2,200 tons of food could be delivered each day. Much of this food could be re-allocated from stores being kept for freed POWs.

The success of Placket-C was entirely dependent on German cooperation. Fortunately, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, had signaled a willingness to negotiate. The Reichskommissar, sensing the end of war was at hand, was looking to save his own skin.

There were, however, conditions – chief among which was the immediate cessation of Allied advances into western Holland. In exchange, Seyss-Inquart would not only allow the airlifts, he would also agree to stop further destructions, executions, and all actions against the Dutch resistance.

On April 14 Prince Bernhard, son of Queen Wilhelmina, met with General Eisenhower in Reims, France. The western advance by General Montgomery’s troops had been halted a few days earlier. But before he could contact the Reichskommissar, Eisenhower first needed permission from the combined governments of the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

Permission was received on April 24, with another condition – that negotiations not interfere with the Allied Command’s insistence on Germany’s unconditional surrender.

The Allies issued a directive, broadcast that day over Allied-operated Radio Luxembourg, ordering the Germans to cooperate

Taken from a 388th BG plane, this photo demonstrates how low the aircraft were flying enroute to their drop zones.
fully or lose their POW status at war’s end. Any German interfering with the air drops would subsequently be treated as war criminals.

German reaction was swift. The following day their response was broadcast via radio Hilversum in Occupied Holland; simply put, there would be no cooperation without negotiations.

The next day, the Dutch Government in London received a transmission from the Dutch Resistance in Holland. Seys-Inquart, now under the impression that he could come to a separate peace with the Western Allies, was still open to negotiating the food drops. Undaunted, Eisenhower ordered the drops to begin on April 27.

Now talks began in earnest. Over the next few days at Achterveld, Holland, a series of meetings was held between representatives of SHAEF, Seys-Inquart’s government, the Dutch Government, the Dutch Committee of Confidence and the Dutch Resistance.

During the frequently contentious meetings, an agreement was slowly hammered out. Within the free fly zone established, there would be three “sperrgebiets” – prohibited coastal areas – at Brielle, Ijmuiden and Den Helder. Planes wandering into a sperrgebiet would be greeted first by a red flare, to be followed by flak barrages if departure was not immediate.

Airdrops were to be made at 11 sites. Drops would be made between 0700 and 1500 only. Drop “targets” would be marked by large white crosses. Green flares would indicate that drops were being made correctly; red flares would, again, signal that planes were off course and about to enter danger areas.

Flak batteries would be positioned at each location, and would open fire immediately should the presence of Allied paratroops be detected. German military police would take samples of the supplies dropped to ensure they did not contain weapons intended for the Dutch Resistance.

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**A Sight Not to Be Forgotten**

by Kase Dekker

Early May 1945 was, for a 14-year-old boy, a very interesting time in the German-occupied province of north Holland. Everyone knew that the war was coming to an end; the only question was when.

Fortunately, food was no problem for my family. My parents owned a grocery store, my father’s eldest brother had a large dairy farm and one of my brothers-in-law worked at his father’s dairy.

But that one day, the date long forgotten, stands out as the day that signaled the beginning of the end.

It was on that day that we saw the B-17s coming from the southwest at altitudes that we had never seen before, only hundreds of meters up and some with the bomb bays still open.

A few ration boxes, still left on board, were dropped on my uncle’s land and then chased down by people with an enthusiasm that had not been seen for a long time.

On that day I had my first cracker and smoked (or tried to smoke) my first cigarette, not smart as I promptly got sick.

To this day all I need to do is close my eyes, think back and see it all happen again. It was a day that I will never forget.

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The Germans also agreed to allow food deliveries by land. Beginning May 2, 200 Allied trucks would head west from liberated Holland to Rhenen, just across the line of occupation.

There, the cargo would be transferred to Dutch-driven trucks which would complete the journey to the distribution centers in the west. In this way, an additional 1,000 tons of food could be transported daily.

It was also agreed that supplies could be delivered at certain ports, and that inland waterways the Hollands Diep to Rotterdam, from Arnhem to Utrecht, and from Kampden to Amsterdam would be cleared of mines to allow ship transportation of the foodstuffs.

With negotiations under way, Allied and Dutch authorities began plans for implementation. Plan Placket-C evolved into two distinct operations: Manna (RAF) and Chowhound (USAAF). Faust, a third operation, would be overseen by the Royal Canadian Service Corps.

The Dutch authorities were faced with logistics challenges never before encountered. For one thing, many of the agreed-upon drop sites were partly underwater. Lack of electricity in the western regions had put the pumping stations out of commission; and dikes in disrepair coupled with heavy rains had caused flooding.

They also needed, very quickly, to determine a manner in which
the foodstuffs could be safely collected, sorted and distributed.

Lastly, fearing that civilians might be injured by falling food, the Dutch representatives needed to arrange for first aid stations to be posted at each drop site.

Negotiations were concluded on April 28, but there was one last hitch – they had yet to be ratified by Seyss-Inquart. But with the truce still not official, the British decided to proceed.

Radio broadcasts announced the coming of the planes – and cautioned residents to stay clear of the drop zones for their personal safety. These cautions, on the whole, went unheeded once the first sounds of engines overhead were heard.

On April 29, Operation Manna began. In risk of being fired upon, the RAF dropped a total of 526.5 tons of food at various locations. The following day they returned with an additional 1,005.3 tons.

On May 1 the official truce began, and the Eighth Air Force launched Operation Chowhound.

The foodstuffs loaded into the bomb bays of the B-17s were largely 10-in-1 rations. Developed in 1943 to provide hot meals for ground troops, these were combined cans and boxes containing meats and stews, butter spread, powdered coffee, pudding, jam, evaporated milk, vegetables, biscuits, cereal, beverages, candy, salt, and sugar. One set of 10-in-1 rations could feed 10 men for one day – or, conversely, one man for 10 days.

Operation Faust began the following morning, with truckloads arriving regularly at Rhenen.

The food deliveries were quickly overshadowed by world events. Adolf Hitler had committed suicide on April 30. On May 2, the last Germans in Italy surrendered. On May 4, Bernard Montgomery accepted the German surrender at Lüneburg. On May 6, Germans troops in western Holland signed an unconditional surrender. And on May 7, General Alferd Jodl, Chief of the Operations Staff in the German High Command, signed the document of unconditional German surrender at General Eisenhower's Headquarters in Reims.

And on May 8 (the last day of Operation Manna), Victory in Europe was celebrated.

By the time the combined operations Manna, Chowhound and Faust ended, roughly 25 million pounds of food had been delivered to the starving Dutch in western Holland. The deliveries had not been without mishap – an estimated 10 percent of food was lost when packages sank out of reach or burst open on landing. There were some injuries from falling food parcels. It took at least 10 days before food could be distributed in an organized fashion. And many people, deprived of protein and other nutrients for so long, were initially sickened by the rich foods sent to save them.

Malnutrition does not disappear overnight. In the weeks after war’s end easily 250,000 people were hospitalized, with another 200,000 needing daily home care.

To this day, the people of the Netherlands still consider it a miracle that only 20,000 of its population was lost during the Hunger Winter. And men of the Eighth AF and RAF are still embraced and honored, sometimes with great emotion, by survivors and their children.

In addition to the 388th BG Archives, sources used for this article were Operation Manna/Chowhound: The Allied Food Dropings April/May 1945 by Hans Onderwater © 1985 Romen Luchtaart, Uitboek bv, Weesp; and the website www.operationmanna.secondworldwar.nl/hungerwinter.html.
Musolf Diary, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 00

Missed target because the lead ship had bomb rack malfunction four miles short of target. Bandits reported.

[The use of smoke was occasionally used to obscure targets. The lead ship with the bomb rack malfunction was that of the Calvin Samson.]

August 5 Target—Tank Factory
Went to Magdeburg, Germany. Fighter support good. Had bandits in area where we entered Germany. Saw fighters make contrails high in the sky and attack the wing behind us. About 12 of them. Had 15 FW-190s slip up on us. Just kept between me and the wing so I didn’t see them until O’Grady called them out. Was flying a Fortress formation so they could slip in as close as possible without us suspecting they were fighters. Attacked the group behind us. There was a bunch of 38s to our right—only reason they didn’t attack us. The group ahead of us had a ship blow up over target. No chutes. We were all scared. I guess we all prayed. Flak was heavy and accurate. Had flak for six minutes. After we left target two more ships blew up and no chutes got out. Could hear flak pop again today. Shacked target. Saw black smoke and brown smoke rise from target. Saw four other targets smoking and were shack jobs. Could see smoke from our target for a hundred miles. At Dummer Lake we could still see smoke rising from our target. As we came across the Zuider Zee we could see Forts struggling. Had one hole in ship. Had inspection plate come off behind No. 3 nacelle and was in the wing. 1,100 bombers were in area. 13 heavies lost. Lost 6 out of 500 escorts, 29 Nazis shot down.

August 6
Swung compass of ship pilot, navigator and engineer. Lost Rowe’s crew today.

[With pilot Robert Rowe recovering from a flak wound suffered two days earlier, his crew flew with Lt. Donald Kluth. Their a/c 44-6088 "Fortress Nine" was hit by flak just after bombs away.]

August 8 Target—Troops
Went to Bretteville near Caen, France. 500 bombers took part.

Fighter support good. Saw lots of boats in channel. Also saw a lot of boats off invasion coast. Saw bomb craters, leveled towns and long columns of American vehicles. Had a lot of flak at target. Was accurate and good. Think we bombed British instead of Jerries because one dropped his bombs by mistake. We didn’t drop ours although all other ships did. The head ship dropped theirs. Saw artillery in action for miles. British artillery. Saw a lot of British equipment on ground.

August 9 Target—Tank Factory
Went to Nurnburg, Germany. Got half way there and found bad weather. They took us through flak on the turn, then brought us right back through it. It was the most accurate flak I have seen. Could hear it explode real loud. Mills saw one Jerry fighter but he didn’t attack. Got 13 holes in ship. Third Tokyo tank and third wing that’s had to be changed on our ship.

August 14 Target—I.G. Farben Chemical Plant
Went to Ludwigshaven, Germany. Fighter support poor. Only saw 10 P-51s and no P-38s. Only 150 heavy guns at target. Flak was so thick we could have landed on it. It covered miles. Had flak for eight minutes. Shacked target. Everybody was praying. 950 bombers were in area. Lost three bombers and one fighter. Eighth Air Force lost in southern Germany.

August 15 Practice Bombing Mission

Although Ranold Musolf wrote down the date and purpose of the August 15 practice mission, he did not live to fill in the details.

The following morning, August 16, the 388th BG was part of the 8th AF maximum effort attack on synthetic oil plants in the Madgeburg-Leipzig area. The 26 388th BG planes were directed to Zeitz. On the left turn at the IP, lead aircraft 42-97760, flown by Johnnie Colburn, turned too sharply to allow his wingman, Elroy Gierach in a/c 42-97328 "Heavens Above," to follow in formation. Gierach, attempting to correct course, was caught in Colburn’s prop wash. Now in an aerial skid, Heavens Above slammed into Jack Sarten’s a/c 44-6123 Girl of My Dreams, shearing off its stabilizer. All aboard Sarten’s plane, including T.A. Bussy, a mission photographer, were killed.

It was Ranold Musolf’s 31st and final mission.

Witness to Tragedy

By Richard Timberlake

I was flying with the Larry Locker crew on August 16, 1944 mission to Zeitz. It was our third. We were flying off the left wing of Sarten, who was directly below and behind (about 20 or 30 feet) the lead ship. The Gierach crew was flying off the left wing of the lead, and just above and slightly ahead of us. In the same sense that the Sarten plane was below the lead ship, we were below the Gierach ship.

Suddenly, but without seeming to be “sudden,” the Gierach plane was sliding down toward us. Nothing seemed to be wrong – no flak (yet), no clouds or other weather, no fighters, no turns, nothing. Yet here it came. Without discussing the problem with Locker because there was no time, I took the controls out of his grasp very forcibly, and sent our plane down and to the left out of the path of the rogue ship.

I expected the rogue plane to straighten out, and then I would get a remark from Locker for being so jittery. But the Gierach plane did not correct. It kept sliding through the spot we had just vacated, and then in an attempt to avoid the “Big Bang,” the Sarten plane saw it and tried to dive. Its nose went down, but it was too late. The Gierach plane skidded across the back of the Sarten plane, shearing off the fin-and-rudder assembly en bloc, and sending it all thrashing back in the slipstream.

The Sarten plane started down, not wildly out of control, but in a flat spin, and apparently it could not remain airborne. The crew must have bailed out and got down safely, only to be met by German vigilantes who were taking no prisoners. I mourn their subsequent fate, because it could have been any of us.

When we got back to Knettishall, we found out that the Gierach crew had reported that our ship was the one they had collided with. We all hoped for the best for the Sarten crew, but they perished at the hands of their captors.

Editor: Richard Timberlake is a past president of the 388th BG Association and author of the book "They Never Saw Me Then."
A Serendipitous Find, Just in Time  By Dick Henggeler

I would like to think of this story as an Historian's Fairy Tale. This summer I decided to do some research in the movie section of the National Archives. I was not sure what I was going to find among the 50,000 reels of World War II footage. What ever it was would be the result of sorting by hand through 5x7 cards having only sketchy information. I was pretty confident that I would come away with nothing.  

Half way through the first box I found a card titled “Russian Air Base” which made me think of the Poltava mission. When I saw the date of June 1944, I knew I was onto something. I filled out the request slip, and after about 20 minutes, was handed the reel of 16mm film and shown how to use a film editing machine nearby.  

The footage was a decent quality, black and white, silent movie showing B-17s landing on a grass strip. The camera was setup right beside the runway so recognizing the tail numbers was very easy. Mostly Square C and then some Square L aircraft landed one after the other. (I was to learn later that these were from the 96th and 452nd BG which were in the same combat wing as the 388th.) Finally at the very end of the reel a couple of Square H aircraft landed. Bingo – I had hit pay dirt. This was the kind of moment that historians seldom get to experience.  

There were six other reels in the set but I ran out of time before I could view them. I submitted the request to get a DVD copy made. Weeks later when it came, it occurred to me that I should try to get copies of the other six reels for the reunion in Utah only a few weeks away. I expedited the order but was resigned to the fact that I had missed the boat.  

As luck would have it, the DVDs arrived the day before we left for Utah.  

The footage is not edited and is even spliced together out of sequence. This raw footage may be interesting to an historian but quickly gets boring. I would imagine that if Poltava had not been such a disaster this all would have reduced to 30 seconds for a Movie Reel showing the folks back home the great working relationship between Russia and America. In addition to planes landing, the footage also shows planes taking off, men in an outside chow line being served by Russian women, a mission briefing conducted in the open air inside the shell of a bombed out building and some crews getting out of their aircraft and being greeted by a Russian welcoming committee and also the wreckage of B-17s bombed by the Germans the night before.  

At the reunion, we were very fortunate to have two veterans of the Poltava mission present. Bruce Muirhead was the pilot of a/c 42-31973 which was destroyed by German bombers. Charlie Meyer was the bombardier on the Douglas McArthur crew which flew Inside Man (a/c 42-102493).  

On Thursday evening of the reunion, we showed the Poltava film to everyone in the Hospitality Room. All the time kept watching Bruce and Charlie; however, it seemed that they were having a hard time recognizing anything. They were very silent as they studied every detail of the film. Nothing seemed to ring a bell from the memories of over 64 years ago.  

At one pointing the footage, men were climbing out of their B-17 and stretching their legs after their grueling mission. The whole crew stood there trying to figure out what to do next. in the middle of Russia. At that moment Charlie broke the silence with “Is that Zades?” “Hey, that’s my crew!” At this point the audience broke into applause as Charlie stood up. He pointed out each of his crewmates one by one. At the end someone in the audience asked him if he was in the scene and Charlie rather sheepishly pointed to one of the men and said “Well maybe that’s me right there.” Again the crowd applauded and Charlie grinned.  

Charlie who had been so quiet up to now, started to open up and amaze the everyone with little stories from that mission. Memories seemed flood him including one embarrassing story about a US service man coming up behind a Russian woman and greeting her in an ungentlemanly like manner. Then Bruce joined in with his own recollections. By the end of the evening everyone had gotten a treat that they had not expected.  

Now back to the Historian’s Fairy Tale. A historian stumbles onto a set of movies in the first 20 minutes of searching and has them copied just in time to take to the reunion where two of the men on the mission happen to be present and one of them recognizes his entire crew on the film taken 66 years earlier.

Knettishall Tales  

By James Zographos

A Tricky Maneuver by the Luftwaffe  
On the way back to our air base after one of our missions, we were pretty close to the English Channel. Once reached we were quite safe from enemy retaliation and we could relax a bit.  

At one time I looked to 3 o’clock level (at our altitude) when I noticed a B-17 flying in the same direction (west) as ours. Upon more observation I surmised that this airplane was separated from its group and flying close to us to reach the English Channel and safety. I reported my observation to the pilot and crew.  

Just about this time our group encountered anti-aircraft fire too close for comfort. The group started evasive action and suffered no casualties. This burst of anti-aircraft fire was quite rare and I was very surprised that it came from this location on the coast.  

Not forgetting the lone B-17 that was observed, I looked at its location. All of a sudden it made a 180-degree u-turn and headed east, back to Germany. Then realized what the situation was and knew what the strategy of the lone B-17 was. It was a captured plane that probably had made a forced landing in enemy territory at one time. The Germans checked it out to be able to fly it again.  

This lone B-17 with a German crew was able to report our speed and altitude among other information to be used by the other crews on the anti-aircraft battery. This information was then entered into the settings of their guns and therefore would be very accurate.  

Fortunately the burst was very short and we escaped unscathed.  

Another lesson learned!
Reservation Form for 388th Bomb Group (H) Assn. Reunion, Sept. 2–5, 2009

NAME___________________________________________________________________________________
STREET ADDRESS________________________________________________________________________
CITY_______________________________________  STATE____________   ZIP_______________
TELEPHONE(_____ )__________________________  E-MAIL ADDRESS_____________________________
GUEST(S) First and Last Name(s)_____________________________________________________________

Registration Fee (includes Saturday breakfast) FEE IS REQUIRED FOR ALL ATTENDEES
Registration Fee  (Received before July 1st)  $50.00 x ________ = _______________
Registration Fee  (Received after July 1st)  $60.00 x ________ = _______________

Thursday NASA Kennedy Space Center: Tours, Exhibits, Buffet Lunch with an Astronaut
Adults $62.00 x ________ = ________________
Children (ages 3 – 11) $45.00 x ________ = ________________

Friday Fantasy of Flight Museum: Exhibits, Demonstrations, BBQ Lunch at Museum
Adults $42.00 x ________ = ________________
Children (ages 6 – 15) $32.00 x ________ = ________________

Saturday Banquet (includes tax, service charges, gratuity)
Grilled Marinated Chicken Breast $34.00 x ________ = ________________
Marinated Flat Iron Steak $34.00 x ________ = ________________

Memory Book $14.00 x ________ = ________________

Donation to the 388th BG Assn. General Fund

TOTAL _______________

Make Checks Payable to 388th Bomb Group Assn. Mail reservation form and check to:
Henry and Betty Curvat, 1624 Hammond Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32221
Telephone: (904) 783-4442 E-mail: Henry@388th-ReunionPlanners.org

To cancel and receive a full refund, contact Henry and Betty Curvat, Reunion Organizers, before the
cut-off date of August 24, 2009. No refunds will be made for cancellations received after August 24.

*Bring your Name Badges from last year’s Reunion in Ogden! Let Betty know if you need new ones!

*Suggest a location in the Western United States for our 62nd Reunion in 2011:
388th BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION 60th ANNUAL REUNION
Kissimmee, Florida
September 2 - 5, 2009
CUT-OFF DATE FOR REGISTRATION is August 24, 2009
Any Reservation Received After 8/24/09 Will Be Accepted on a Space Available Basis

Thursday, Sept. 3
8:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. NASA Kennedy Space Center Tour: Includes access to Visitor Complex shows, exhibits, and IMAX films; Bus Tour to Apollo/Saturn V Center; U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame; Shuttle Launch Experience, Lunch with an Astronaut

BRING YOUR TICKET TO BOARD THE COACH

Friday, Sept. 4
8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Fantasy of Flight Museum: Includes daily flight demonstrations, flight simulators, BBQ lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

BRING YOUR TICKET TO BOARD THE COACH

Saturday, Sept. 5
7:30 a.m.-10:00 a.m. Association-Sponsored Breakfast Buffet
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. Annual Business Meeting
5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m. Cocktail /Social Hour (Cash Bar will remain open through dinner)
6:00 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Opening Ceremonies, Dinner, Guest Speaker, Raffle, President's Address and Passing of the Gavel, Closing Remarks

The Hospitality Room Daily Schedule Will Be As Follows:

Wednesday–Friday: Open daily until 11 p.m.
Saturday: Immediately following the Annual Meeting (approx. noon) to 4 p.m. and after the Banquet to 12:00 midnight

Westgate Resorts Ramada Gateway Hotel Information
The Ramada Gateway is located in Kissimmee just a few short miles from Disney World, SeaWorld, Gatorland, Orlando Premium Outlets, and many other attractions. Parking is complimentary.

ROOM RATES: All 388th BG Assn. members will receive the preferred rate of $53 per night for double occupancy + applicable taxes. The preferred group rate is good for 7 days before and 7 days after the Reunion for early arrival and if you would like to extend your stay.

To reserve a room online, www.ramadagateway.com, select “reservations” from the Hotel's website menu and use 388 as the promo code to receive the 388th BG rates.

Reservations can also be made by telephone, 1-800-327-9170, between 9 a.m.-5 p.m. EST. Use the rate code, G/388/0901, when making your reservation.

An upgrade to Plaza Tower Suites on a space available basis ($10 extra, or $63 per night + applicable taxes) can be requested by calling the hotel directly.

CUT-OFF DATE: Friday, August 21 is the cut-off date for guaranteed reservations. After that date, the Ramada will only be able to offer members reservations on a space-and-rate available basis.

ORLANDO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (MCO):
Mears Motor Shuttle offers transportation between MCO and the Westgate Ramada Gateway Hotel. Use the round-trip coupon, printed in this newsletter, to receive the 388th BG Assn. member discount and present it to the Mears Motor Shuttle at the airport. Make reservations for the shuttle online, www.mearstransportation.com OR call 1-800-759-5219 and use the priority code 349437044. The shuttle may make stops at other hotels along the way.

Taxis may cost between $50 and $60.

All major car rental companies are conveniently located at MCO and it is an easy drive to the Ramada Gateway.

IMPORTANT REMINDER
Detailed information for the Reunion activities and the Thursday and Friday activities will be in your packet, which you will receive upon checking in at our registration table at the hotel. Please take time to read through the information and time schedules and do verify that you and all members of your group have tickets to all the activities for which you reserved.

PLEASE BRING YOUR TICKETS TO ALL THE ACTIVITIES.
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- Upon your arrival at Orlando International Airport, proceed to one of the Mears Motor Shuttle ticket counters and present this coupon to the Mears Counter Attendant.
- After redeeming your coupon below for a round trip ticket, please present your ticket to the Mears "Starter" located on the curb.
- The Starter will direct you to a designated shuttle servicing the hotel. Our shuttles run 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, departing the curb approximately every 30 minutes.
- Plan to allow three hours prior to your flight time for your transfer to the airport.
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- If flying from central Florida, please dial (407) 423-6666.
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388th Bomb Group Association

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- Trip prices subject to change without notice.
Loyd P. Humphries passed away Oct. 23, 2008, in Fort Worth, TX, at age 89. A pilot and operations officer in the 562nd Sqd., he became aide-de-camp to Col. Roy Forrest, commander of the top-secret Aphrodite project operating out of Fersfield. He retired from the service as a Lt. Colonel. Interrupting his college education to join the Army Air Corps, he eventually received a degree in Geology from Texas Christian University in 1952. He retired after 29 years as a geologist and evaluation engineer with Pritchard and Abbot, Inc. Mr. Humphries is survived by Jane, his wife of 66 years; daughter Jane Ann; three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Burial was held at Greenwood Memorial Park in Fort Worth.

The Most Reverend Melvin F. Larson, 87, passed away Nov. 13, 2008 in Lynnwood, WA. From November 1943 to July 1944 he flew 30 combat missions as a bombardier on George Little’s crew in the 560th Sqd. He received the DFC, Air Medal with three oak leaf clusters, the French Croix de Guerre, and is featured in the book *GI Joe in France* (2008).

In 1944, Rev. Larson married his wife Gladys in Thetford, England. Their union lasted 64 years. He stayed in the US Air Force for 23 years, then worked 15 years for the Post Office.

He earned a paralegal degree, and would later be ordained a priest. He earned a Bachelor of Religion from Geneva Theological College, became an Archbishop in the Free Protestant Episcopal Church and received a Doctor of Divinity from their Theological University in Biel, Switzerland.

Survivors include his wife Gladys, their four children, six grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

He was laid to rest with military honors at Floral Hills Cemetery in Lynnwood.

Kermit Lofdahl
Kermit Foster Lofdahl, passed away Oct. 31, 2008. the longtime Wichita, KS resident was 86. While at Knottishall he served as a mechanic in the 1751st Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Co.

Mr. Lofdahl was buried with military honors at Rose Hill Cemetery in Axtell, KS. Survivors include his wife Nina Margueritte, daughters Virginia and Connie; five grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Monna B. Pack
Monna Belle Pack died Jan. 23 at her home in Monrovia, CA. She was 79.

Mrs. Pack was the mother of Jan Pack Singer, Association Newsletter Editor; and had been married to Arthur B. Pack, a pilot in the 562nd Sqd. Survivors include her daughter and her son-in-law Richard Singer; two step-grandchildren and seven step-great-grandchildren.

Mae Ryan
Mae Ness Ryan, 88, died Jan. 25 in Melbourne, FL. She was the wife of John J. (Pat) Ryan, former 388th BG navigator. Shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor, Ms. Ness joined the Treasury Department, transferring to the Office of Strategic Services (forerunner of the CIA), and served in Italy in World War II. At war’s end she was sent to Nuremberg, Germany to manage OSS personnel at the Nazi war crime trials. After returning to the US she was recruited to join the CIA and in 1950 was sent to Japan during the Korean War, where she met Pat Ryan, then in the USAF piloting CIA aircraft.

In 1952 she was transferred to Frankfurt, Germany. The couple married in 1954 and moved to England. They returned to Texas in 1958; then moved to Bonn in 1962 where Pat Ryan was assigned as Assistant Air Attaché.

In 1966, they returned to the US on assignment to Tacoma, WA. In 1972 on her husband’s retirement, Mrs. Ryan became office manager of a dental clinic. In 1990, both retired and moved to Melbourne, FL.

Survivors include Pat, her husband of 54 years; son Tim; and three grandchildren. Mrs. Ryan will be buried in Arlington National Cemetery in Virginia. Her life story, *A Woman Ahead of Her Time*, was published in February.

Don T. Wonderly
Don T. Wonderly, 86, of Erie, PA, died Feb. 27, 2008. A pilot in the 562nd Sqd., he flew 35 missions between July and December 1944 after first ferrying a B-17 from Newfoundland to the British Isles.

Following the war Mr. Wonderly worked on the Pennsylvania Railroad and attended Ohio State University, from which he graduated in 1948 with a degree in mechanical engineering. Hired by General Electric in Erie, PA, he became manager of GE’s offshore locomotive manufacturing division, a position which took him to 27 different countries before his retirement in 1984.

Mr. Wonderly helped establish the GEER (General Electric Exempt Retirees) organization. Other memberships included the Elfun Society, Lawrence Park Golf Club, and East Eari Turners.

Survivors include Jeanne, his wife of 62 years; daughter Sandra Wurst; sons Michael, Thomas and James; eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Mr. Wonderly was buried at Calvary Cemetery in Erie.

Ivan P. Woodburn
Ivan Paul Woodburn passed away July 2, 2008 in Aiea, HI at age 91. A pilot in the 563rd Sqd., he flew 25 missions between Sept. 17, 1944 and Feb. 20, 1945, when his aircraft was downed by flak over Nuremberg, Germany. One of his squadron’s aircraft, *Miss Karen W*, was named after his infant daughter.

Following the war, Mr. Woodburn remained in the Army Air Corps Reserve. After moving his family to Hawaii in 1961 to manage Holsum Bakery, he became an Air Force Reserve advisor to the Civil Air Patrol. He retired from Holsum in 1980.

Mr. Woodburn was buried at National Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu. Survivors include daughters Karen and Marsh; sons George and Brent; nine grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his wife Lois.

Wallace Yeager
Wallace Yeager of Waverly, Ohio passed away on April 13, 2007 at the VA hospital in Chillicothe, Ohio after an extended illness. He was 85. Mr. Yeager was an engineer in the 560th Sqd.

A member of the VFW and American Legion, Mr. Yeager was predeceased by his wife Mildred and a son. He was buried with full military honors at Evergreen Cemetery in Waverly. Survivors include sons Wade and Bruce; and three grandchildren.
DATE__________________ NAME__________________________________________
WIFE/HUSBAND________________________ PHONE__________________________
STREET_________________________________ CITY________________________ STATE_____
ZIP CODE__________________________ EMAIL ADDRESS________________________
SQUADRON______ POSITION____________________ AIRCRAFT NAME____________
PILOT ________________ NO MISSIONS_____ POW (DATE) __________ STALAG LUFT____
ANNUAL DUES ($10.00)_________ LIFE MEMBERSHIP ($50.00)_________ DONATION__________
ASSOCIATE ANNUAL DUES ($10.00)_________ ASSOCIATE LIFE MEMBERSHIP ($50.00)_________

IF APPLYING FOR ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP:
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RELATIONSHIP TO YOU________________________________________
(Please fill in known information above, SQUADRON through POW information, for relative.)

MAIL TO: LINDA SOO, SECRETARY
388TH BOMB GROUP ASSN.
3013 MOUNT BAKER CIRCLE
OAK HARBOR, WA  98277

EMAIL: linda388@fiddlybits.com

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