



# LIGHTWEIGHT TOWER CALLING



No. 47

March 2013

## St. Petersburg, Florida 2013 by Phil Cummings

The 49th Annual 485th Bomb Group reunion will be in St. Petersburg/ Tampa, Florida area. St. Petersburg and the Tampa Bay area was used as convalescent centers during WWII. After the war it became a vacation destination for many each year. The Loews Don CeSar Hotel in St. Pete Beach was used as a hospital for soldiers during World War II and now is an elite hotel. The area has many white sandy beaches and Tampa is just across the bay with Bush Gardens.

As of this time the dates and hotel arrangements have not been finalized. As soon as they have are they will be put on the 485th web site at [www.485thbg.org](http://www.485thbg.org)  
Come and enjoy the sun ,sand and the 485th family on Florida's west coast!



## Washington, DC Memorials Tour by Mark Swann

Thursday, September 27, 2012 was a beautiful day in Arlington, Virginia. We boarded the buses for a tour of some of our Nation's memorials. Shortly after departure, our tour guide directed our attention to one of the newest memorials located near the Arlington Cemetery. It is the Air Force Memorial, honoring millions of men and women who have served in the United States Air Force. The memorial is situated to overlook the Pentagon, the Potomac River and Washington DC. It was designed by James Ingo Freed. "It symbolizes flight and the flying spirit with 3 stainless steel spires that soar 270 feet high and represent contrails of the Air Force Thunderbirds as they disperse in a 'bomb burst' maneuver." It was so beautiful to me. The memorial was dedicated Oct. 14, 2006.

After crossing the Potomac River, we were given the opportunity to walk around "The Mall" to visit the Lincoln, Korean War, Vietnam War, and World War II Memorials. These tributes to the American men and women who fought face to face with an enemy are awe inspiring reminders of the sacrifices that were made. There are 4,000 gold stars on the WW II Memorial's Freedom Wall which commemorate the more than 400,000 Americans who gave their lives. The World War II Memorial also honors the supporters of the war effort at home. It represents the spirit and commitment of American people everywhere who uphold our freedom.

Watching as groups passed through and by the memorials was something I will not soon forget. There was a quiet respect shown by

visitors as they read names and quotes etched in stone, names that will remain forever etched in loved ones' hearts.

After another short bus ride, we entered the Ronald Reagan Building for lunch at the Reagan Building food court. Yumm! We were then able to enjoy a maritime movie at the U.S. Navy Memorial and Naval Heritage Center. The movie helped us understand the strength of the Navy and how they help preserve our Nation.

We were then back to the buses again and to the hotel where we relaxed and heard more great stories from members of the 485th. It was a good day.



US Air Force Memorial  
Arlington, Virginia



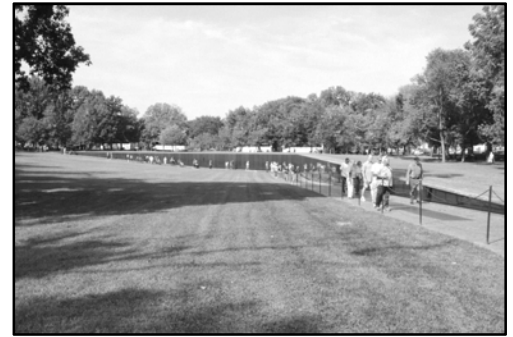
Lincoln Memorial



Arlington - Tomb of the Unknowns



Korean War Veterans Memorial



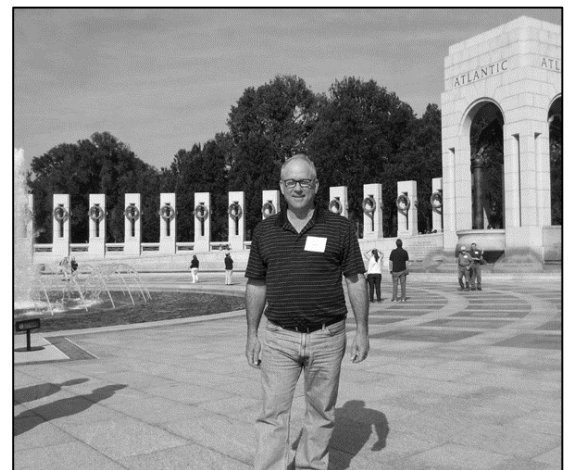
Vietnam Veterans Memorial



National World War II Memorial



Susan Morrison, Art & Valerie Kain with Jacquie O' Sullivan



Mark LaScotte

## Notes from the Historian by Jerry Whiting

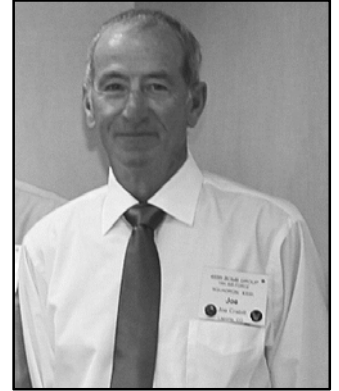
Once again, inquiries from the website kept me quite busy this year. 485th Vets and their relatives continue to find us. In addition, inquiries from Europe seem to be increasing. This past year I've been contacted by researchers in France, England, Germany, Poland, The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria and Rumania. To say there is an avid interest in WWII in Europe is an understatement.

The reunion was again one of my personal highlights for the year. I was pleasantly surprised to see an image of "Tail Heavy" on the complimentary glasses provided to all attendees. Since my dad flew many missions on that plane, it was a real honor to see the plane memorialized on the glass this way. Again, Tony Siller came through with the glass design, aided by Kathleen Arnold. Thank you both.

A few weeks before the reunion, I was contacted by Megan Matousek from Lucasfilm. Megan, as you may have read last year, is my niece and was instrumental in getting Lucasfilm involved in our 2011 reunion. Megan and Lucasfilm decided to provide us with a DVD that summarized the 2011 reunion. The DVD has a short summary of the reunion, as captured by Lucasfilm at the reunion. This was prepared for George Lucas after the reunion, so he could see what occurred there. The DVD also included the Tom Brokaw tribute (that you can view on our website) and the NBC News segment of the event. Enough copies were provided that each family attending could receive a complimentary copy. It was a very nice gift for all who attended the reunion and a very nice gesture from Lucasfilm.

After our Saturday business meeting, many of us went to the hospitality suite where we continued to visit. We also showed the raw 16mm film footage taken by Curtis R. Charles, the Consolidated Aircraft tech rep who was stationed for several months with the 485th at Venosa. Tracy Shenkman, her daughter and her two sisters attended the reunion and graciously allowed us to see the footage. Although it is the raw footage and some of it has deteriorated, it is still very interesting; showing planes landing and taking off, including a couple of crash landings. There is also footage of other parts of the base, Naples, Foggia, and other towns. No, it's not available at this time, but perhaps we can view it at the reunion again next year. It was a real treat for the group to see it.

This past summer, I loaded my old motor home with books and DVDs to sell and followed the Collings Foundation and their WWII planes to stops in California, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa and Minnesota. The last part of my voyage lasted a month. I met several of you at stops along the way and sincerely enjoyed the opportunity to visit with you. As a special note, Joe Crabill took his 10th ride last summer on the Collings Foundation B-24. Each year he does this to honor his father.



Great job, Joe!

Another great way to honor our fathers (or relatives who served in the 485th) is to join us at a reunion. Each one is special and unique and there is one main purpose, to honor the men who served in the 485th Bomb Group. Hope you can join us this year. Thanks to all of you who help out in various ways; whether it be tending the bar, setting up chairs, taking photos or video, writing an article for this publication, acting as a greeter, helping in some other way or just being there to support us. You are the reason we're still having these successful reunions when most other similar groups have disbanded.



Hospitality room screening of 16mm film

# Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum (NASM) by Mark Leslie

We departed the hotel Friday morning for the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center located at the Dulles International Airport in Virginia. Named after a major donor, the museum is an annex of the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. In the 1980's the curators decided they needed a much larger facility to restore and display the large amount of aircraft and they needed access to an airport. They chose this location on the southeast corner of the Dulles airport and in 2003 the immense facility opened. The aviation artifacts housed in both locations comprise the largest air and space museum in the world.

Upon arriving at the museum we went through security screening and then divided into smaller groups for our guided tour. Our introduction began in the entry hallway where "Little Stinker," a beautiful Pitts Special aerobatic biplane, hung suspended inverted overhead. As we entered the main hangar, we were on a balcony with an expansive view of the central exhibit area. From this vantage point we could see the task at hand was a bit overwhelming. Suspended at eye level to our left and right were a P-40 and a F4U Corsair. Directly below us was the SR-71 "Blackbird". Further to the right were the Korea, Vietnam and modern era fighters. The distant view to the left was dominated by a B-29 surrounded by Allied and Axis WWII era planes. Beyond them we could glimpse the supersonic Concorde amongst many other commercial airplanes. Behind the SR-71 a hallway leading to the space hangar allowed us a peek at the nose of a space shuttle. We realized quickly the value of our tour guide.

Our groups departed in different directions in an "attempt" to see the museum and eat lunch in our allotted timeframe. One group proceeded first to the James S. McDonnell Space Hangar. The prominent display in this section is the Space Shuttle Discovery. For most of us it was the first time to see a space shuttle up close--quite an impressive sight! After 27 years of service, the Discovery completed its 39th and final mission on March 9, 2011 and arrived at the museum in April of 2012. Surrounding the shuttle were various missiles, satellites and space exhibits including a mock up Apollo Command Module used for astronaut training and actual Mercury and Gemini space capsules. One of the most interesting exhibits was the visor and gloves Neil Armstrong wore when he walked on the surface of the moon. Departing the space hangar, our docent led us back into the large Boeing hangar to the section where human fixed flying wing "took off."

The Pre-1920 Aviation section displays many examples of the dawn of "heavier than air" flight. A reproduction of the Wright Model A airplane shows the true birth of manned flight not involving balloons. This airplane design won the first military contract with its ability to fly 125 miles with two people on board at a speed of 40mph. Through their research, the Wright Brothers truly solved many aeronautical problems of lift, drag and three dimensional flight control. Interestingly they shipped this type plane to Germany in 1909 where it was also mass produced and helped German engineers get their aviation programs advanced. Typical of many areas of engineering and science, wars rapidly speed up progress. WWI induced many advances in aviation and some prime examples were on display. Two examples were the SPAD XVI which Gen Mitchell flew over the fronts lines for observation flights near the end of WWI and the Nieuport 28C.1 which was the first fighter aircraft flown by American squadrons in support of American troops. Transitioning to the WWII section there were two prime examples of planes designed and built in the 1930's which the military used as trainers, the PT-13 "Kaydet" (displayed in Navy camouflage as a N2S-5) and the PT-22 "Recruit."

Dominating the WWII section was the B-29 Superfortress "Enola Gay" which delivered the first atomic bomb on Japan. This aircraft shows the rapid advances in technology during wartime when compared to the B-24. Surrounding the bomber were many allied and axis aircraft including a P-38, a P-47, a P-61, a , a Grumman F6F Hellcat and a Focke-Wulf Fw190 fighter. Other WWII type aircraft were found in the next section which was devoted to commercial and sport aviation.

Painted in its racing colors, a magnificent red P-51 nicknamed "Excalibur III" greeted us. Hanging next to it was a Piper J-3 Cub (military L-4 Grasshopper). Other planes included a modified Grumman F8F Bearcat and the Grumman G-22 (civilian version of Navy F3F of 1930's.) The twin engine Beech 18 on display was known to many WWII navigators and bombardiers as the AT-7 or AT-11 and was also used during the war as a transport designated C-45. Three large planes dominated this section of the hangar: a Lockheed Super Constellation (C-121), a Boeing 367-80 (prototype of the B-707) and a Concorde supersonic airliner. My personal favorite in the commercial aviation section was the Falcon 20 business jet used on the first night of FedEx operations in 1973.



On the opposite end of the hangar we finished our guided tour in the modern era military section. The exhibit included two Russian MIGs as well as the American built F-86, F-105, F-4, A-6 and F-14. A potent reminder of the Vietnam War was the UH-1 "Huey" helicopter on display. Of note is the fact that Bell produced more Hueys than any other aircraft for the military except for one . . . the Consolidated B-24 (over 18,400 B-24s manufactured). We finished our tour at the X-35 Joint Strike Fighter display. The Marine version requires "short takeoff/vertical landing" capability like the AV-8 Harrier. Known as a "lift fan propulsion system" the entire engine section of the plane was on display beside

the X-35. It was impressive to see how far technology has advanced in the one hundred years since Kitty Hawk. After profusely thanking our knowledgeable docent we were free to eat lunch in the cafe style McDonald's, shop in the souvenir store and revisit areas of the museum as we pleased. Some people took advantage of the IMAX theatre presentation or took a ride in one of the flight simulators.

If you're interested in more information about the museum please visit: <http://airandspace.si.edu/museum> Links on the website have photos and background information on all the exhibits.



Focke-Wulf Fw 190 F-8/R1



North American P-51C, "Excalibur III"

## Cellmates Reunited at Reunion by Carol Yates

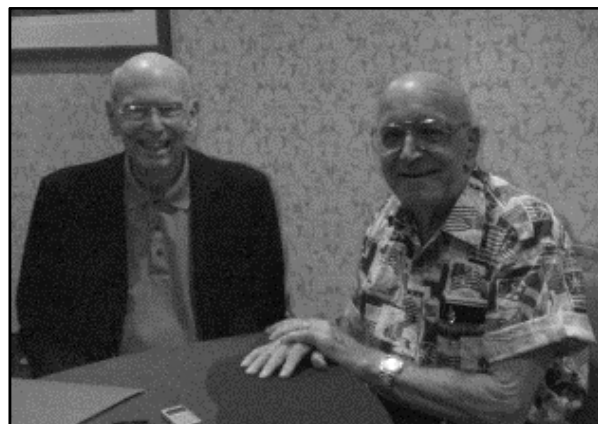
On February 23, 1945, Robert Jack Yates, 828th tail gunner on Robert Ware's crew, was shot down & taken to the Luftwaffe jail at the Graz airfield. He was soon joined by others from his crew and, within a few days, airmen from other crews downed in the region joined them. One of these airmen was a copilot by the name of Mac Moore.

Moore's pilot joined him in the cell. Sadly, several others from their crew had been murdered. Although held in the same cell with Jack, the airmen didn't speak to each other. Jack spoke to his own crew, but was somewhat suspicious of the other airmen, not knowing if they were really Americans, or spies trying to obtain information. Mac felt the same suspicions & only communicated with his pilot.

In the middle of March, all of these downed airmen who shared the cell together were taken to Frankfurt by train, where they were separated & taken to different camps. Jack was taken on a forced march & was eventually liberated by General Patton's 3rd Army on April 1, 1945 near Kassel, Germany. Mac was liberated at a different location.

More than 67 years later Mac & Jack were reunited at our 485th reunion, after Georg Hoffman's research on atrocities revealed the two men were in the jail together. Georg contacted Jerry Whiting, who contacted Jack & located Mac to confirm some of the details of their experience.

Mac, his wife & several of his family met with Jack & his family. Three generations were present to share in the experience & listened as the men shared stories of their shared nightmare. Prior to this reunion, neither man had talked much about that specific experience. Several of Mac's family joined us at the Friday night presentation. Special thanks to Jerry Whiting, Nicole Goll & George Hoffman for making this mini-reunion possible!



Mac Moore & Jack Yates

# Friday Night Historical Presentation by Jerry Whiting

485th Bomb Group airmen had little knowledge about the political situations in Germany and occupied countries. Events occurring within these countries had a direct impact on the treatment of American airmen shot down over these countries. This year we had two special guests from the University of Graz, Austria who joined us, Georg Hoffman and Nicole Goll. Georg is a lieutenant in the Austrian Army, but he and Nicole are both completing their PhD's. Both are experts on Allied Airmen shot down in Austria and

Hungary during the final months of WWII, including the fates of all these airmen, and military and political factors that impacted their fate. Both graciously agreed to join us at our reunion and to provide the group with a 90-minute presentation on this topic, assisted by 485th Historian Jerry Whiting. Over several years, they developed a data base that identifies 534 crash sites in Austria involving 5,000 airmen. In Hungary, they have identified 459 crash sites involving 4,000 airmen.

The 485th crews lost over these two countries were identified at the beginning of the presentation:

Lloyd Proudlove crew (831st) May 29, 1944-Vienna, Austria  
Hugh White crew (829th) June 9, 1944-Innsbruck, Austria  
Parke Bossart crew (828th) June 26, 1944-Vienna, Austria  
Robert Peterson crew (829th) July 8, 1944-Vienna, Austria  
Randall Bearden crew (828th) July 8, 1944-Vienna, Austria  
James Hogan crew (831st) July 8, 1944-Lake Balaton, Hungary  
Jasper Johnson crew (830th) July 30, 1944-Budapest, Hungary  
Richard Erhardt crew (831st) August 7, 1944-Magyovar, Hungary  
James Mulligan crew (831st) August 24, 1944-4 near Zwettl, Austria  
Oscar Rambeck crew (830th) October 10, 1944-Vienna, Austria

Richard Hardman crew (831st) October 16, 1944-Ebanthal, Austria  
Robert Ware crew (828th) February 23, 1945-Bruck, Austria  
Carl Langley crew (828th) March 2, 1945-Habersauer, Austria  
Earl Pooley crew (829th) March 2, 1945-Habersauer, Austria  
Charles Watson crew (828th) March 4, 1945-Szeged, Hungary  
Lloyd Allen crew (829th) March 22, 1945-Austria/Hungary border  
Joseph Cathey crew (830th) April 25, 1945-Parndorf, Austria  
George Manuel crew (830th) March 26, 1945  
Austrian/Slovakian border

The first allied bombings began in Austria in August 1943 and the first bombings in Hungary began in April 1944. Strafing attacks began in December 1944. By the end of WWII there were nearly 850 attacks on these two countries, 60% of them occurring during the final two months of the war (March and April 1945).

From the earliest of times the mountains had protected Austria. Long-range bombing changed the face of war for Austria and the mountains no longer offered safety. When the attacks on Austria began, a system was in place in which downed airmen became the responsibility of the Luftwaffe (German air force) and procedure dictated that airmen captured by civilians and local police would be immediately turned over to the Luftwaffe. The Luftwaffe arranged for POWs to be taken to Germany for interrogation and imprisonment. With the Russians knocking at their door from the east, the war progressed and intensified for the Austrians. Most of the military forces in Austria were called away to fight the war directly, in many cases, leaving POWs in the hands of civilians. This created an extremely dangerous situation for the POWs, as the Luftwaffe was no longer in charge and local Nazis had control.

In eastern Austria, several 15th Air Force crews were shot down near Graz during the last three months of the war. The air attacks centered on railway and traffic centers used by German troops retreating from the south and Hungarian troops retreating from the east.

The German propaganda machine had already painted a portrait of allied airmen as criminals targeting the civilian population. They were portrayed as murderers of children and terror fliers trying to destroy the culture of innocent civilians. The propaganda machine was aimed at the civilian population and, in many cases it was successful.

One crew shot down in this dangerous environment was Robert Ware's 828th Sqdn crew, downed near Bruck on February 23, 1945. One of the crew, copilot Bill Ryan, credits his civilian captors with saving his life by getting him off a mountain and to a hospital for treatment. Tail gunner Jack Yates was captured and also received good treatment. However, recent Austrian records revealed that one local official incited civilians to shoot Merl Shields, the radio operator. Before the threat could be carried out, an SS Officer intervened and stopped the execution. Although several of the men died from this crew, none were executed. Other 15th Air Force crews were not as fortunate.

Executions of airmen were being carried out throughout the region, many supported by local written orders of political officials. In some cases, the SS troopers were executing airmen after they landed. Case examples were provided of several crews, or members of crews, who suffered this fate. Some of these cases made it to war crimes tribunals; many did not.

What clearly surfaced was that most of these executions were not random killings by irate farmers angry over being bombed. They were a result of carefully orchestrated Nazi propaganda, carried out under the direction of local Nazis. This was new information and a surprise to many of us. What it also clearly showed was the good fortune of the surviving members of the Ware crew.

At the end of the presentation, Joe Russell, an 828th Sqdn copilot who was flying on the wing of Lt. Ware's plane, provided the group with a firsthand account of what he observed when Ware's plane was hit. After the formal presentation, Georg and Nicole answered questions and visited with our guests. Jakob Mayer, our historian friend from Innsbruck, Austria (who did much of the original research on the Ware crew), joined us for the evening and visited with attendees. Another special guest at the presentation was Marcus Carney, a film maker from Vienna, who produced a documentary showing the impact of WWII on his family. Many of us stayed late into the evening visiting with our presenters and honored guests. We estimate that 140+

attended the event, several more than were actually registered for the reunion. Jack Yates, a member of the Ware crew, attended with his family. There were several in attendance whose relative was shot down over Austria. All of this made for a memorable event and a very enjoyable evening.



## 485th Crews Honored by Plaque at Crash Site

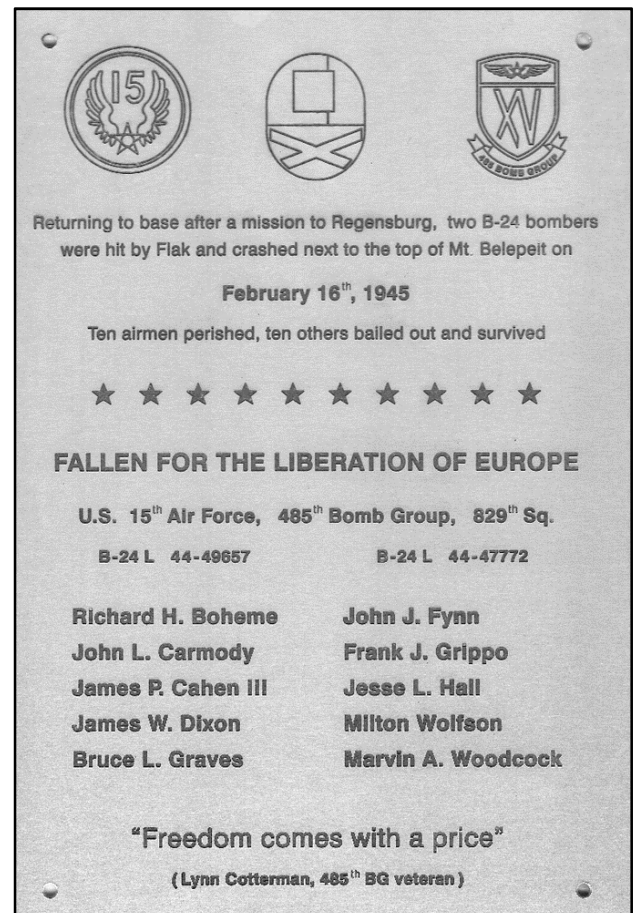
by Jerry Whiting

We recently learned the 485th will be honored once again. A plaque will be placed on Mt. Belepeit in northern Italy where Col. Tomhave's and Lt. Stockdale's planes crashed. The aluminum 30" X

22" plaque is inscribed with the names of the airmen who lost their lives at this location on February 16, 1945. The plaque is being donated by our Italian friends and was made by a local artisan. It will be attached to a large



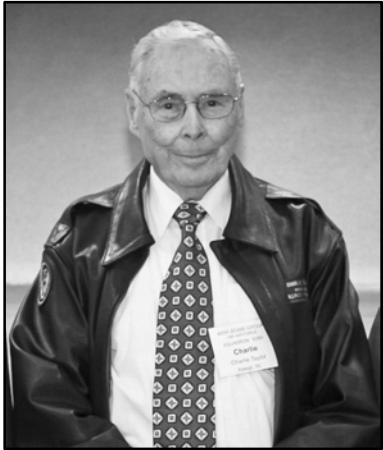
rock on the mountain. Fabio Stergulc & Fabio Orlando, two of the men who wrote the book about these crews, along with Tiziano Scarsini, plan a trek up the mountain on February 16th of this year, weather permitting, to mount the plaque.



## How I Became an “Ace” in WWII

by Charlie C. Taylor, Jr.

During my somewhat less than brilliant career as a B-24 pilot in the 828th Squadron, 485th Bomb Group, I did



however, manage to attain a degree of fame. I am perhaps the only pilot in the 15th Air Force who can lay claim to having completely destroyed one of our aircraft on the taxi way. In all modesty, I cannot take full credit. I was greatly aided by the infamous Venosa mud.

Our airfield was laid out in a wheat field, just outside the small town of Venosa. The soil was such that, given enough moisture to wet a postage stamp, it became the sticky, gooey clutching scourge of the 485th.

Our aircraft were parked in a staggered row on either side of the single north to south runway; thus, the taxiways were a series of S turns. These strips were lightly graveled dirt, barely wide enough to accommodate the wheels of a B-24. The strips were bordered on each side by a drainage ditch, which, when moistened, became a lurking menace to any pilot who strayed from dead center of the strip.

The B-24 was known as one of the hardest planes to fly, and twice as hard to taxi. We had several missions scrubbed because one of the planes at the head of the line would get stuck; leaving the remaining planes no way to get to the runway. And getting a B-24 out of the mud took hours, and often required unloading all the bombs and pumping out most of the fuel. A few years ago, I was talking with an old pilot who was stationed at a nearby field. He remembered flying into Venosa one day and seeing a long line of planes sitting on the taxi strip while a wrecker tugged at a B-24 which had forced that day's mission to be called off. We were perhaps the only group in the 15th Air Force who once took a whole day off to hold taxi practice.

One afternoon, I was flown to a nearby field with orders to bring back a radar-equipped aircraft for the next day's mission. My bad luck began when the plane was not ready. It did not become ready until both the night and a steady rain were falling. There are only three things I truly do not like, and flying, at night, in the rain, covers them all. With no radio aids, I was faced with the task of finding a black-out airfield on a dark and rainy night.

After almost landing in a lake, I found the runway and made a decent landing using only landing lights, onto our rain slickened steel mat runway. I was too relieved to even think about the mud which lay ahead. I tried to taxi using landing lights which caused a blinding glare on the now soaked and soggy soil. We made it around the first turn only to have the right wheel slip into the ditch. Already having missed supper, I was in no mood to be defeated by a little mud. I applied almost full takeoff power to both right side engines, which might have worked had I not encountered a six foot deep culvert. Another mission scrubbed. I radioed the tower for transportation back to the squadron area, supper; and by the way, you might want to send a wrecker.

Had I known what the next day held in store, I might have stayed hidden in the culvert. My little misadventure earned me an invitation to visit the office of the deputy group commanding officer, Lt. Colonel Herblin. I wanted to reply with regrets only, but his silver was higher than mine, so I decided to honor him with my presence. Hoping to make a good impression, I showered, shaved, combed my hair, and applied a dab of aftershave. It didn't work. The man was livid. He demanded to know if I was aware that I had completely destroyed a three hundred thousand dollar, scarce radar equipped airplane! It seems that my full-powered drop into the culvert had so twisted the airframe that the only way that aircraft would ever fly again would be sideways. Therefore, it was now in the bone-yard to be used for spare parts. I almost fainted as I contemplated life in debtors' prison. Three had dubbed me the Jack Ace of the 485th; at least I think he said Ace. I don't remember all of his words of destructive criticism, but his parting shot will be with me forever. He said, "Lieutenant, if you really wish to contribute to the war effort, you will resign your commission in the Army Air Corps, and join the German Air Force and tear up their airplanes.

**DISMISSED!**



Venosa Mud



## Dear Friends of the 485<sup>th</sup> by Carmine Carlo Briscese

As much as we would love to join you again this year, my family and I will be in Venosa while you all are reuniting in Washington, DC. We are celebrating my 80th birthday, my sister and brother-in-laws' 50th wedding anniversary, and a few other family milestones that only happen once. So, as much as we would love to be there with you all in person, our hearts are there with you instead.

Please know we think of you and speak of you all often and with affection. You've embraced our family as part of yours from the first time we joined the reunions, and we can't say what this means to us. Especially, for the little boy in the picture, never did I think that I would see the men I met as a child and saw as heroes, let alone enjoy a drink or two with you and exchange stories so many years later.

Sixty Eight years later, please know, you all are still my heroes. Jerry and Laura and Steve Sharpe are the ones to thank for getting us out to the reunions to begin with. If it wasn't for Laura's research and finding my daughter, and then Jerry (who is now, for me, part of my family) following up and discovering my story that I had kept inside, we wouldn't be able to say that we had met the wonderful family that is the 485th. For this, we are beyond grateful.

We hope to join you again soon for another reunion, but for now, please enjoy Washington DC for us! We will be thinking of you as you walk the streets of DC and we walk the streets of Venosa.

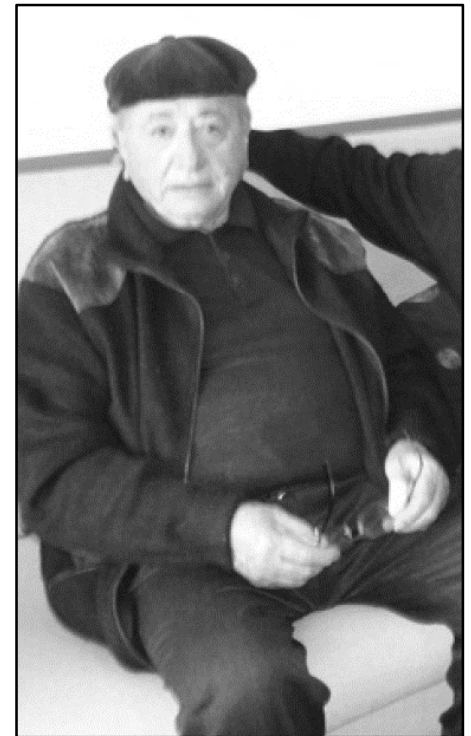
Have a glass of wine for us and we'll be seeing you all very soon.

Carmine Carlo & Lina Briscese,  
Emanuela Briscese,  
John & Rae Mollica

*Ciao!*



1944 - Carmine in Venosa



Tony Preite  
Carmine's friend  
that also met  
Wayne Whiting  
& Sam Schneider



2011 – Carmine in  
San Diego at the  
485<sup>th</sup> Reunion

## MY JOURNEY CONTINUES

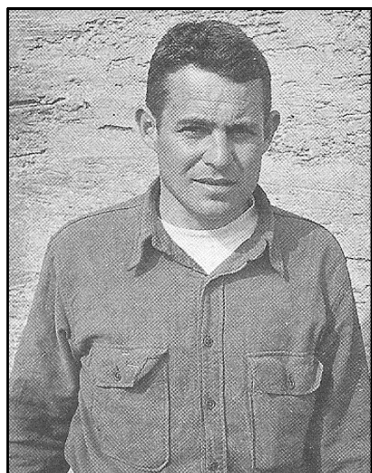
By: Kathleen Arnold, HQ Reporter

Daughter of Pop Arnold,  
First 485th Group Commander

There comes a time when there are no more new tales to tell about my Dad's 485th history. So this year, I'd like to tell you a bit about Pop's military history after his service with the 485th ended, starting with his liberation.



The massive POW camp at Moosburg, 35 miles NE of Munich, was organized into battalions & when the war was over Colonel Good, the Senior Commander at Stammlager VII, decided the best way to evacuate the Americans was to leave the camp one battalion at a time. Pop was battalion commander No. 7 and by the luck of the draw, Pop's battalion won the privilege of leaving the camp first. He flew on a C-47



from Landshut, bound for Camp Lucky Strike. Pop did not stay long at Lucky Strike. He was standing in line waiting for a cup of coffee and a meal when a soldier found him with immediate orders to report to an intelligence unit in Paris. A car was waiting to transport him & another Colonel there. Pop said some hurried goodbyes and he was off.

When Pop got to Paris, he quickly arranged for several of his closest staff to be brought to Paris from Camp Lucky Strike, claiming they had vital intelligence information. One of those recipients was Major Bob Cox, who was Pop's assistant on the forced march from Nuremberg to Moosburg. Bob Cox told me he thought he'd seen the last of Colonel Pop Arnold, but when he arrived in Paris there was Pop waiting for him. He told Bob, "I didn't want you sitting around in another crowded old camp in some dirty, lousy tent so I made something up to get you here."

Dad's good friend, Colonel Irvine "Bull" Rendle, flew to Paris to pick up Pop, along with other POWs, and brought them back to London. He and Bull checked into the Savory Hotel where they ran into an old friend from

the 29th Bomb Group, Jimmy Stewart, Hollywood actor turned Bomber Pilot. Pop had been Jimmy's Group Commander, flew with him many times, and was the one responsible for getting Jimmy a combat assignment in England with the 445th Bomb Group; a bold move considering Headquarters had specifically ordered no combat duty for the Hollywood actor! Years later when asked about his decision to defy, disobey, or ignore the HQ order Pop said, "I knew Stewart well, promoted him to captain & squadron commander. I knew he was mature, experienced, and dependable. He was an excellent pilot and instructor, extremely capable. I felt he would be an asset to any group commander. Of course, I knew he wanted to get overseas. And, I felt that if he wanted combat duty, to fight the war, that badly, I'd help him."

In Jimmy Stewart's biography as a Bomber Pilot, it was written, "In taking this pivotal action on Stewart's behalf at a critical point in his career, Colonel Pop Arnold became the first of five Army Air Corps/Army Air Force officers to shape & mold Stewart's wartime service, and counsel, advise, and guide him in the fields of battle and airplanes of war."

At the Savory in May 1945, Jimmy Stewart was elated to see his former Commander and mentor. He insisted Pop attend a party he was throwing at the hotel. Though Dad tried to beg off, Jimmy would not take no for an answer and in a matter of days, Pop had gone from a filthy prison camp in Bavaria to a swanky star-studded party in London. He was a bit overwhelmed and humbled by it all.

On May 19, 1945, Colonel Pop Arnold sailed from England aboard the medical ship MS John Ericsson and arrived in New York on May 29, 1945. He immediately set about tracking down all of his crew members, making sure they were all accounted for. Once he knew they were all home and their welfare being looked after, his service with the 485th was over.

But as one chapter closes, another begins. He reunited with his family, took a month's R&R at Laguna Beach and then jumped around serving as Base Commander at Smoky Hill AFB in Kansas, then Sioux City. In October 1945, he went to Dibble General Hospital in Menlo Park to begin rehabilitation on his injured leg and get healthy again. His goal was to re-qualify for flight status and make a career in the Strategic Air Command. In 1946, he was reinstated as a Senior Pilot and appointed a Colonel in the regular Air Force.

He was accepted as a student member of the first class of the Air Command Staff School at Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama and after graduating in 1947, he made a life-changing decision; one that ultimately ended up giving me life! He went to Kadena AFB, Okinawa, became a Wing Commander there and met my mother, Lonnie Catherine Snider. They came home from Okinawa, married in 1950, and had five children together; four daughters & one son. Sadly, their only son, Paul Andrew Arnold, died in infancy & they buried him in Dad's hometown of El Paso, Texas.



Lonnie Catherine Snider with friends in Okinawa

And that is where I will end this chapter. Our family would go on to other military assignments, and our life in the Air Force really was quite remarkable; one I would not trade for anything in the world. Although Pop's command of the 485th effectively ended once he became a POW in 1944, the friendships he made & the camaraderie he shared with the men of the 485th would continue for another 57 years. The bonds he made then are now eternal.

## 485<sup>th</sup> Vets and Red Tails Meet at Riverside by Jerry Whiting

Dr. Ruth Jackson at the University of California, Riverside, learned about the 485<sup>th</sup> reunion last year from Zellie Orr, former National Historian for Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. Each year Dr. Jackson holds a Tuskegee Airmen Archive Celebration at the university, honoring the Tuskegee Airmen. When she heard about the unique relationship between the 485<sup>th</sup> and the Red Tails, she decided to invite a few members of the 485<sup>th</sup> to participate in a panel discussion between the two groups. She chose Bill Williams (828<sup>th</sup> Sqdn), Harold Kempffer (830<sup>th</sup> Sqdn), and Jim Scheib (831<sup>st</sup> Sqdn) to be on the panel; along with Jerry Whiting, who represented the next generation.

The event was held at the U.C. Riverside campus on November 17, 2012. Nearly 400 were in attendance. Zellie Orr served as moderator. Each 485<sup>th</sup> Vet answered questions and provided input as to his personal experiences with the Red Tails, in the air and/or on the ground. The Red Tails answered similar questions about their relationship with the bomber crews. It was the 8<sup>th</sup> annual event and was described by many as one of the best ever held. As would be expected, the 485<sup>th</sup> panel participants did a wonderful job representing the group.



U.C. Riverside Panelists (Back Row) with Distinguished Guests





Lee Cristelli, Frances Fundling, Lynn Gallo



Terry Boettcher & Gail Higdon



Catherine Gilbert, Laura Trainor & Patricia Och



Michele Gange-Pelton & Paul Pelton



Steve & Kathryn Lindsay



Katy Doran & Bill Williams





Steven & Cathy Yates, Carol Yates, Russell Brook  
Jack & Martha Yates



Joe Russell Jr., Joe Russell,  
Patricia & Dick Evans



Marie & Jesse Ledbetter



Barbara Lafferty, Mike Kempffer, Andy Leet, Mike Lafferty,  
Betsy Leet, Patrick & Marian Kempffer, Steve Leet  
Mickey & Harold "Red" Kempffer

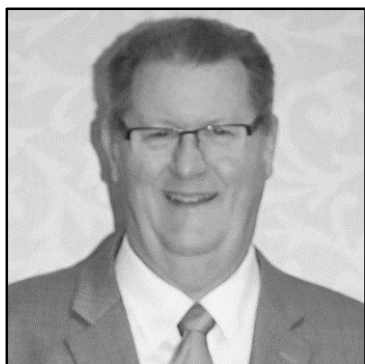


Standing: Cynthia Charles & Tracy Shenkman  
Seated: Pamela Nasworthy & Suzan Spiekerman



Patti Ledbetter-Haley & Gail Eamon

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



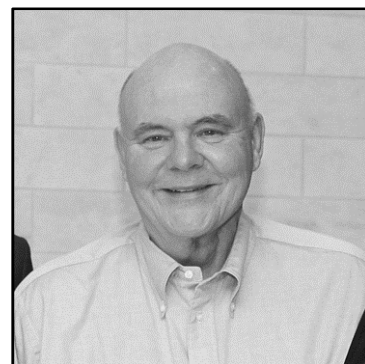
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Son of William P. Cummings 830<sup>th</sup>  
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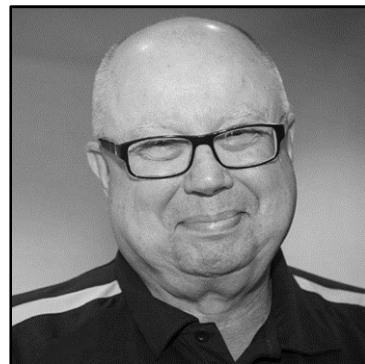
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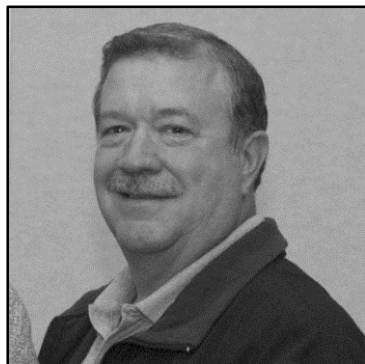
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830<sup>TH</sup> SQUADRON REPORTER

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Lightweight Tower Calling Newsletter  
& 485<sup>TH</sup> SECETARY  
Steve & Laura Sharpe  
Son of James F. Sharpe Jr. 830<sup>th</sup> - LIFE  
1816 Hawthorne Road  
Wilmington, North Carolina 28403  
E-mail: [lightweighttower@gmail.com](mailto:lightweighttower@gmail.com)

## HEADQUARTERS



Gerry Weinstein &  
Mary Habstritt

## SPECIAL GUESTS

Left to Right:  
Marcus J. Carney,  
Jerry Whiting,  
Nicole Goll &  
Georg Hoffman





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



Back Row: Alexander Gilbert,  
Charlie Taylor & Joe Russell

Front Row: Jack Yates &  
Bill Williams

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

Back Row: Harry Johnson  
& John Duntley

Front Row: Wayne Smith,  
Ira Helms, Jack Behunin





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



Back Row: Harold Kempffer,  
Oscar Knight, John Sellers

Front Row: Charles Porter,  
Bueford Cooper

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



Back Row: Jim Scheib, Jesse  
Ledbetter, George Chaplin

Front Row: Bob Hanson,  
Arthur Kain

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



Standing: Terry Boettcher, Mark LaScotte, Patricia Kieseewetter Pettersson, Walt Hendrickson, Kathy Kieseewetter Hendrickson, Dean Taylor Sr., Cathy Yates, Ronnie Taylor, Carol Yates, Russell Brook, Steven Yates

Seated: Suzanne Wall, Candy Miles, Gail Higdon

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



Standing: Rose Jenkins, John Duntley Jr., Jodie Duntley, Steve Lindsay, Kathryn Lindsay, Tom Duntley, John Bertram, Margie Smith, Dean Smith

Seated: Lee Cristelli, Lynn Gallo, Susan Duntley

Inset: Gail & Robert Fried

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



Standing: Mike Kempffer, Andy Leet, Steve Sharpe, Patrick Kempffer, Steve Leet, Marian Kempffer, Mike Lafferty, Ann Sellers, Phil Cummings, Scott McIntier, Michele Cummings, Robert Porter, Randy Cooper, Joe Crabill  
Seated: Betsy Leet, Carol McIntier, Barbara Lafferty

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



Standing: Kay Brown-Gary, Bob Gary, J. Patrick Flannigan, Paul Pelton, Mark Leslie, Michele Gagne-Pelton, Beth Leslie, Bill Leslie, Dianne Leslie, Mari Christensen, Russ Hanson, Curt Christensen, Ted Goddard, Patti Haley, Tom Haley, Russ Christensen, Gail Eamon, Sandy Flannigan, Jim Eamon, Ann Scheib  
Seated: Jacquie O'Sullivan, Susan Morrison, Valerie Kain, Jill Christensen



## POWS / MIAs



Jack Yates, Red Kempffer, George Chaplin

## WIVES & WIDOWS OF VETERANS



Standing: Helen Wall, Dorothy Hill, Frances Fundling, Margaret Duntley,  
Mary Ann Behunin, Margie Smith, Valerie Kain  
Seated: Martha Yates, Mickey Kempffer, Marie Ledbetter





Molly & Warren with Phil & Michele Cummings  
Lucy, William & George Cummings



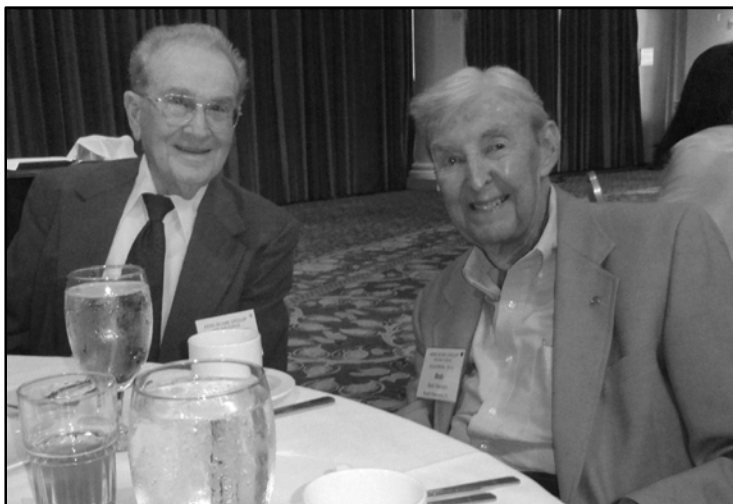
Cummings kids enjoying Saturday night music  
William, George & Lucy Cummings



Bill & Dianne Leslie



Carol & Scott McIntier, Evaun & Mark Swann,  
Debbie & Neal Swann



Bueford Cooper & Bob Hanson



Seated LtoR: Georg Hoffman, Nicole Goll,  
Brooke Williams, Bill Williams  
Standing LtoR: Keith Williams, Griffin King Hope &  
Marcus J. Carney

# MINUTES OF THE 485TH BOMB GROUP

Business Meeting Saturday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, 2012 Washington, DC

The 47th Annual Reunion Business Meeting was called to order by Chairman Phil Cummings. Phil led the group in a moment of silence for those who could not join us this year; and to those who served our country and paid the ultimate sacrifice. Phil then led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and then thanked everyone in attendance for coming.

Phil's first order of business was to announce the retirement of Frances Fowler as secretary and to ask for nominations for a new secretary. Laura Sharpe was elected secretary.

A question was asked about non-profit status for the organization. Phil explained that due to reasons such as our size, bookkeeping, and tax issues that it was not cost effective to pursue non-profit status. This led to a discussion of the mailing list and the desire to keep it as accurate as possible to minimize mailing costs. It was also made known that people could opt out of the paper copy and received the newsletter via email; or download current and past copies directly from the 485th website. Phil made a motion to accept the Secretary's report as written in LWT, the motion was approved.

In Jolene Stockton's absence, Phil read the Treasurers report. The beginning balance was \$6,891. After expenses and contributions for the year, the final balance is \$6,676. The Treasurers report was approved.

## SQUADRON REPORTS

829th - Steve Lindsay stated that the beginning mailing fund balance was \$373, and that after mailing expenses, the current balance was \$160. He had also received word of Robert Haugen passing in 2011.

828th - Terry Boettcher stated that the current balance was \$161, and that there are 173 people on the mailing list; 56 of them are veterans. Terry discussed that he enjoyed receiving mail from veterans and seeing them at the reunions.

830th - Phil stated that the 830th had money in the account.

831st - Jerry Whiting stated that the current balance was \$128, and that there are 180 people are on the mailing list. Mailing costs average about \$250 per year.

Phil stated that there was a discussion to consolidate the mailing of next year's reunion info to a single person. Phil stated that he would take responsibility to send out the reunion information.

We had around 13 first timers this year, many of which were 2nd & 3rd generation. Among the first timers were: Pat Pettersson & Kathy Hendrickson, daughters of Elmer Kiesewetter of the 828<sup>th</sup>; Tracy Shenkman and Susan Shenkman daughters of Curtis R. Charles, the Consolidated Aircraft technical representative; and Bob and Gail Fried. Bob's uncle was Milton Wolfson of the 829th.

John Bertram spoke about John Scotty Jackman, a veteran in Boston, who after reading his 2012 LWT article about his great uncle, contacted John to discuss his memories of his great uncle. Bertram visited Mr. Jackman in person in early August. Health reasons prevented Mr. Jackman from attending this year's reunion.

When it came time to recognize the oldest Veteran at business meeting, Mark Swan spoke emotionally about his trip around the country and thanked the vets for protecting the country that he now has the pleasure to see. Mark provided the award, a die-cast B-24 model. The oldest veteran to attend the business meeting was 91 year old Charles Potter (830<sup>th</sup>). Charles expressed his love and gratitude to his son and his family for taking care of him and



taking him to events like this.

For this year's reunion, we had 20 Veterans and a total reunion attendance of 130. The squadron breakdown was:

828=5 829=5 830=5 831=5

Jerry began the Historian's report by telling about being contacted by Tracey Shenkman. Tracy was in possession of 8mm color film of 485th in Venosa. As a special treat, the film had been transferred to DVD and would be shown in hospitality room after the business meeting.

Jerry then read a beautiful letter received from Carlo Briscese & immediate family. The Briscese and Mollica families were in Venosa celebrating Carlo's birthday. Carlo's letter can be found on page 9.

Greetings were received from Enzo Vinzi, Fabio Stergulc & Fabio Orlando. These three Italians worked to locate Col. Tomhave's and Lt. Stockdale's crash site in northern Italy. Enzo then wrote a book in Italian about that fateful mission. Enzo had asked for signatures of Veteran's at the reunion. Jerry accommodated by putting 3 copies of a photo of the plane that Tomhave's was flying that day in the hospitality room for Veterans to sign. These three Italians are now working on a Memorial to crews of the crash. (See page 7)

Pasquale Libutti from Venosa also sent greetings. Jerry was assisting another bomb group and sent Pasquale information on one of their crew's crash sites in the Foggia area. Not only did Pasquale locate the crash site, but then wrote a book about the mission and the crash. Pasquale's intention is to write a book on every crash site he is able to locate.

Jerry then spoke about how Mark LaScotte worked with Stanimir St. Stanev, a Bulgarian Army Colonel, to write a book titled "289 Days Near Shumen". The book is about Air force crews shot down in Bulgaria. These crews were primarily from 15th Air Force. George Chaplin of the 831st was among one of those crews who were shot down. This English language book is currently unavailable in the US, but they are hoping to make it available in near future.

Attendees of the reunion this year received a DVD in their registration packet that was provided by Lucas Films. It contains Tom Brokaw's tribute to the 485th and the Tuskegee Airmen, as well as the NBC News segment about their reunion. Because George Lucas and Tom Brokaw were unavailable to attend the reunion in

person, Lucas Film prepared short video for George and Tom. This video is also included in the DVD. Finally, Lucas Film provided a Redtails movie poster signed by George Lucas and to be used in a silent auction at the reunion.

Jerry continues to be contacted concerning the 485th. Four contacts were from the Czech Republic. Several inquiries came from Slovakia. An example of how the sacrifices of the American people are not forgotten is demonstrated by the fact that Slovaks continue to look for our Missing in Action.

Terry Boettcher suggested to Jerry that some type of memorial should be placed in Venosa commemorating the 485th Bomb Group. Jerry spoke to his contacts in Venosa and they are interested in doing this. In addition, the 485th Association is looking into the placement of memorials in the US, possibly at Arlington.

Aperture Films is creating a Tuskegee Airman documentary to be shown at Tuskegee Park in Alabama. The 485th is represented in the film through an interview with Jim Scheib.

In mid-November, the University of California, Riverside will hold a panel discussion of the Tuskegee Airman. Representatives from 485th will participate in this panel discussion. See bottom of page 11.

At the end of the Historians report, Jerry spoke of his summer trips in his motorhome named "Bertha" following the Collings Foundation's WWII Aircraft tour. On occasion, Jerry meets 485th Bomb Group members at the event. Jerry noted that Joe Crabill took his 10th ride on the Collings Foundation's B-24. One of our experienced Veterans brought laughs to the room by asking the simple question "Why"?

John Bertram passed around a commemorative B-24 tin for reunion attendees to sign to give to Jerry in appreciation for what he has done for the group.

Phil made another request for participation in the LWT articles and urged people to share stories. Laura added that there's also interest in finding out what our veterans did after the war.

Phil discussed the future of reunions. He stated that as long as we can keep the participation high enough and get veteran turnout, the organization would like to try to make it to 50 held reunions to match the requirement of 50 missions.

Three cities were voted on for locations of next year's reunion. Bill Leslie gave the pitch for Atlanta, Bob Hanson for St. Pete's Beach, and Phil for New Orleans. After the votes were counted, St. Pete's Beach was announced as next year's location. Below is the vote breakdown:

Atlanta-24  
St Pete's Beach-31  
New Orleans-19

Phil thanked all the people who helped run the bar and hospitality room, as well as recognized Armed Forces Reunions for their work. Phil was also thanked Tony Siller and Kathleen Arnold for their work on the reunion glasses each year.

Jerry mentioned other bomb groups have combined their reunions to keep up their attendance numbers. For example, the 484th has combined with 461st. Their last reunion had around 100 attendees. Our reunion had over 130 attendees. Jerry stated that participation is the key to keep the reunions going and thanked everyone for coming.

The meeting was adjourned.

## **HEADQUARTERS / MY JOURNEY CONTINUES**

By: Kathleen Arnold, HQ Reporter

Daughter of Pop Arnold, First 485th Group Commander

Another year has passed and 2013 is here already. Since I was unable to attend the 2012 reunion in Washington DC, I don't have any reunion news to report on but I do have some updates on Headquarters personnel that I keep in touch with but who also were not able to attend the reunion.

When last I spoke to Bill Herblin, former Deputy Group Commander, he was anxiously waiting to move to an Assisted Living resident in Georgetown, TX. Colonel Herblin, is now in his upper-90s and his large home in Georgetown is too much for him. The problem is selling it in this lousy housing market and the monumental task of getting moved and downsizing. What to do with a home full of antiques and treasures collected by Bill and his wife Katherine from all over the world is a daunting dilemma. Plus, there is a waiting list at the senior facility he is interested in so, he is just taking it day to day. He is always glad to hear from me and asks about the remaining 485th crewmembers with fondness and good wishes for all.

Hank Hancock and his wife Althea will celebrate their 72nd wedding anniversary on January 24, 2013. Congratulations Hank and Althea on your long life together and many more! Hank and Althea moved from their long-time home in Sheridan, Montana to a delightful Senior Resident in Manhattan, Montana, in 2011 and are enjoying their life there with one of their sons just 10 minutes away. Although Hank is now in his 90s and has lost vision in his "shooting" eye, he told me he recently got a Buck on his first shot with his bum eye! Hank and I have several long conversations throughout the year and each time I speak with him I feel so uplifted and amazed at the strength in his voice, the sharpness of his mind, and his remarkable physical abilities. You Rock Hank! Keep on Hunting!

Bill Killian also sounds amazingly young when I talk to him on the phone. He lives with his wife Mary in New York and, fortunately, their home was spared any damage from Hurricane Sandy. Bill also has a sharp memory and told me a great story about Colonel Bob Smith, the Group Operations Officer, and also my Dad's co-pilot. It was after they were captured from being shot down over Blechhammer. It was night time and they'd been brought to a bunker to wait out an air raid that was going on. Col. Smith was being guarded by a German

Sergeant who spilled hot tea on Col. Smith's uniform. Col. Smith immediately dressed that Sergeant down who jumped up, stood at attention and took his admonishment from a superior officer with respect, despite the fact that officer was an enemy prisoner of war! Bill said it was a glorious thing to watch and a proud moment for all of them. Bill said Col. Smith was an officer to the core.

Warren Sortomme, Group Mickey Operator, and his wife Joyce are slowly getting back to normal after a couple of tough years of botched surgeries on Joyce's knees. They are looking forward to her total recovery so they can hit the road in their RV and start travelling again. Since they have family living here, I hope they will get out to Colorado and plug in the ole "Land Yacht" at my house. However, being a San Diego Charger fan is extremely risky coming into hostile Bronco nation! But, since Peyton Manning and the Denver Bronco's whipped the Chargers pretty bad and are possibly on their way to the Super Bowl, I promise not to rub it in too bad Warren! I hope all continues to go well with both of you.

That's the report from Headquarters for 2012. On behalf of myself and all HQ personnel, I wish to express our heartfelt wishes for good health and blessings for all our fellow 485th crewmembers and family. I hope to see many of you in 2013 in St. Pete!

Many Happy Landings!

## **MAIL ROOM 828th SQUADRON**

By Terry Boettcher

Son of Donald E. Boettcher 828<sup>th</sup> Gunner

The end of the year 2012 found the 828th Squadron with a mailing list of 169, down from 180 in 2011. Within the current active list there are 57 veterans, which is down from 64 in the prior year.

We have been very fortunate to have the good will of the members through their generous donations. We find ourselves with a balance going into the 2013 year of \$519.45. This balance is also after our normal December mailing expense.

It has been decided that the mailing of the reunion documents, usually sent out by each squadron reporter in late spring, will be done by the 485th Board President. As always, these registration documents are also on the 485th web site. This will cut our expense in half and we are in very good shape financially for the foreseeable future.



Our web site continues to be a great tool in the addition to our ranks of the sons and daughters of veterans along with the 3rd generation. Last year we added Kathy Kieswetter Hendrickson and Patricia Kieswetter Pettersson via our website and both attended the DC reunion. They are the daughters of Elmer Kieswetter who was the navigator on the Riddles crew. In just the first two weeks of January, 2013 we have been contacted by William Rabenstein who is the son of Roland Rabenstein from the original Beilstein Crew 16.

This past year's Washington, DC reunion found the 828th with 5 veterans in attendance. These veterans along with family and friends of the 828th totaled 34. Out the total of 29 friends and family, 12 were representing husbands, fathers and uncles who have reached journey's end.

We hope to see you in St. Petersburg in 2013 and I look forward to hearing from you during the year.

## MAIL ROOM 831st SQUADRON

By Jerry Whiting  
Son of Wayne B. Whiting 831st

Once again this year, we didn't have individual squadron meetings at the reunion. Although we didn't have a separate meeting, I still received several donations for the 831st Squadron fund, which covers primarily stamps and supplies for our squadron mailings. These donations are appreciated. After our Christmas mailing we have about \$110 in our squadron fund, which should cover us until our next reunion. Thanks to those who have contributed this year and in the past. As of January 2013 we have 157 names on our 831st mailing list.

As a reminder to all, if you move, please remember to provide your new address. Every year several mailings are returned, with no forwarding address. At that point your name is removed from the mailing list. I hate to do this, but I don't really have much choice.

Several of you keep in touch with me regularly, either by phone calls or emails. I enjoy these contacts and the updates on you and your families. Thanks for continuing to support the 831st Squadron.



Walt Hendrickson, Kathy Kieswetter Hendrickson  
and Patricia Kieswetter Pettersson



Sandy & J. Patrick Flannigan with  
Kay Brown-Gary & Bob Gary



Beth & Mark Leslie



Bueford Cooper with Leslie Uslan

## A Final Mission to Wadowice, Poland by Russ Christensen

On May 4, 2012, my dad, Vernon Christensen passed away after a valiant fight with cancer. He died as he lived, courageously. He was the strongest, most honest and decent man I have ever known. As he lay dying those last few weeks, we often talked about the



war and his friends who have gone before him. He said, "I have experienced everything in my life that I have ever wanted to and more, now I get to experience death." He wasn't afraid of dying. He was a Christian and he knew he would be able to see us again.

I made a promise to him that I would take some of his cremated remains back to Poland where his plane crashed in 1944. I would spread them where his dear friends were buried by the Polish people. He was surprised and asked "you would do that for me?" I said of course I would, a part of you has always been there and I know you would want that. He was touched.

A month later, I talked to Jerry Whiting and he told me he was going to Billings where the Collings Foundation planes would be and they had a B24 we could get a ride in. My brother, my wife Mari and I met Jerry Friday night. Saturday morning Curt and I flew on the Witchcraft. What a ride! Jerry told me that when I take that flight, everything that happened in the plane when it was hit and all the confusion that went on would make some sort of sense to me. Boy, was he right!

I sat below Dad's turret (we were not allowed in the top turret). As I moved around the plane, going from the flight deck to the nose turret back along the catwalk to the tail, I could sense

somewhat what those brave men who flew those missions must have felt (they, however, saw it in color). I realized how little room there was to maneuver in those planes. I just can't understand why the men in the tail didn't get out. There was plenty of room from the waste windows and they had to see the wing on fire and knew they had to get out. A mystery that had haunted Dad all these years. It breaks my heart to think of the horror those men must have felt when they realized they would not be able to get out. After the flight, I have a better understanding of what might have happened.

On September 10, 2012, Curt, Jill, Mari and I left Billings for Denver then a straight shot to Frankfort and finally to Krakow. I had a container from the funeral home with the proper paperwork and had spoken to the airlines about taking Dad's remains but I didn't have any paperwork from the Polish government. I didn't have time to go through the red tape. I took another container but I wasn't going to take a chance by getting over there and having the remains confiscated because of not enough paperwork. I was sweating bullets at the Krakow

airport but I was never checked.

After checking into our hotel, we arranged for a tour of Krakow the next morning. What a wonderful day. I made sure we went to the Jewish section where so much of Schindler's List was filmed. We also went to Schindler's factory as well as the ghetto. We went to many historical places such as the horrible Plaszow concentration camp outside Krakow, again, seen in Schindler's List.

The next morning, Szymon Serwatka, a good friend of Jerry's and of the 485th, met us at our hotel and drove us to Wadowice where we met Zygmunt Kraus at the museum which he put



Curt & Russ Christensen with nephew / son of Skrzynska flower girls

together to honor the crew of the plane that crashed that fateful September day. After a nice lunch, we drove a short distance to Zygodowice. On the outskirts of this small village is the beautiful memorial

to the crew members who died fighting Nazi oppression. At the memorial, we met several villagers. One gave me a remnant of the plane that he found at the crash sight. Another gentleman remembered seeing the plane crash. He was just a small boy but it left such an impression on him. Another man was the son and nephew of the two beautiful flower girls Maria & Janina Skrzynska, who, after the men were buried, put flowers on the graves of

the fallen airmen. The German soldiers were so angry at those girls that they told them if they continued to attend to the graves; they would send them to Auschwitz. If you were Polish and were on 20 miles from Auschwitz, that was not an idle threat. Those two beautiful girls defied those orders and came out at night under cover of darkness and continued to put flowers on the soldier's graves!

In 1994, Dad and I met one of the flower girls by accident. Time stopped when they met and realized who each other were. The tears and emotions shown by both were so touching. Now, we got to meet the other sister. She is now 89 years old. With Szymon interpreting for us, this was very emotional for all of us. When she realized who were and why we were there, tears, hugs and kisses of thanks flowed. We were so fortunate to have met her. She told us "I remember they were such handsome boys."

After spreading Dad's remains on that cold and rainy morning, we returned to Wadowice. After touring Pope John Paul's boyhood home and his church, we went to the museum where a ceremony took place. There is a ceremony every September 13 honoring the men of that crew. Many dignitaries were there including the American ambassador to Poland. Jerry

and Bill Williams have been there when Jerry was doing research for his excellent book "Don' Let the Blue Star Turn Gold." Our dear friend Leslie Kaplan Usan, whose uncle Lenny, died on the plane has also

been to the memorial and met both flower girls. Jerry's book tells in great detail of the mission that day as well as the story and picture of those beautiful girls.

I would like to mention that we received a special treat the next day when we toured Auschwitz-Birkenau. Jerry set up a very special private tour for us with Dr. Piotr Setkiewiz who is an historian and researcher at the Auschwitz-Birkenau museum. He has written many articles and

contributed too many documentaries and movies on Auschwitz I, II and III. Dr. Setkiewiz gave Curt and me a private tour of Auschwitz III, Monowitz. This camp is closed to the public. It is the location of the slave labor camp which provided the workers who built the I. G. Farben factory. This factory produced synthetic fuel and rubber which was the target that fateful day. We were shown where some of the bombs landed, etc. I purchased Dr. Setkiewiz great book on the I. G. Farben work camp. It is so well documented. He writes of the mission and of the number of missions flown against Monowitz, (I.G. Farben). Sept 13, was the third of four times that target was bombed.

We spent several more days in Krakow before we left for Budapest, Hungary, then off to Vienna, Austria and finally to Prague, Czech Republic. We then went to the 485th reunion in DC before heading home where we saved a few of dad's remains to put in Arlington National Cemetery. He would have liked that.

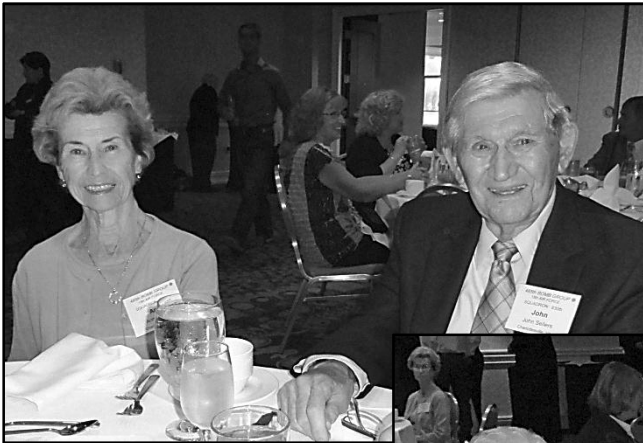
We made many wonderful friends in Poland and continue to be in contact with some of them. The Polish people will never forget what the Americans did for them and my family will never forget what they have done for us.



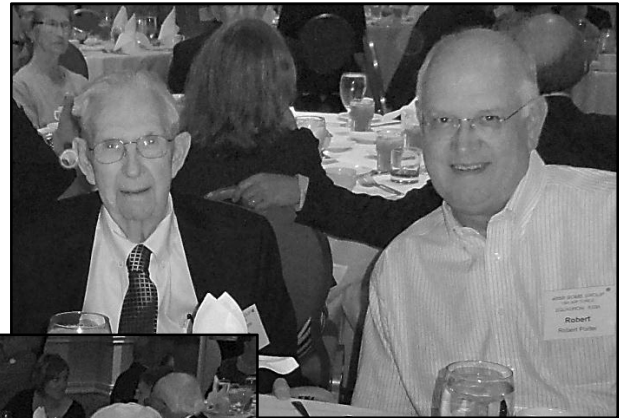
Russ with Ms. Skrzynska

## Banquet Dinner and Entertainment

Our Saturday night banquet dinner was once again a big hit enjoyed by all that attended. It began at 5pm with group photos. Our photographer, Robin Altice, stayed well into the evening capturing wonderful professional pictures of the event. When the meal was served, the delicious dinner selections accommodated a wide variety of tastes. Phil Cummings booked a great DJ who kept the party going with a staple of 40s music. It was a magical to look across the tables and see the generations of 485th families enjoying a good meal and each other's company.



Ann & John Sellers



Charles & Robert Porter



Margie, Dean & Wayne Smith

## Memorial Breakfast Sunday, Sept. 30<sup>th</sup> 2012

Neal Swann hosted our annual Memorial Breakfast with help from several 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation attendees as well as George Chaplin and Bob Hanson. The ceremony included a reading by Carol Yates & Michele Gagne-Pelton. The US Flag Folding Ceremony was narrated by Lynn Gallo with the flag folding done by Joe Crabill, Mark Leslie, Steve Lindsay and Bill Leslie.

Brooke Williams and Paul Pelton both sang for the attendees with Bob Hanson leading the group in the Missing Man Table ceremony. George Chaplin led the memorial portion of the ceremony. The reunion was adjourned with many hugs and good-byes until we met again in Florida in 2013.



Neal Swann



Brooke Williams



## JOURNEY'S END - MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

Van Anagost	830	2012	John Joseph "Scottie" Jackman	831	2012
Karl L. Bay	828	2011	Richard Kane	831	2012
Glen Begley	830	2012	Wilson F. Leon	829	2013
W. R. (Buzz) Boling	830	2008	Clark Miller	829	2012
Sherrill Burba	828	2012	Charles O. Morgan, Jr.	485	2012
Jerry W. Byers	830	2010	Leo Prince	831	2004
Vernon O. Christensen	831	2012	Roy L. Reeve	829	1983
Clyde Corbett	830	2012	Paul Robinson	485	2007
Leo Gagne	831	2012	John V. Schill	830	2013
Joe Hackler	829	2013	Walter Schneuer	828	2011
Robert Haugen	829	2011	John T. Waldeyer	828	2012
Elmer M "Tex" Holl	830	2012	Monte B. White	830	2006
Warren E. Irelan	830	2011			

Special THANKS to Mark LaScotte, Mark Leslie & Mark Swann for sharing their personal photos for the newsletter publication.

Additional Reunion photos may be viewed at [http://www.485thbg.org/Reunion\\_Info.htm](http://www.485thbg.org/Reunion_Info.htm) and

Robin Altice was our very talented professional photographer at the Saturday Banquet dinner



<http://www.robinalticephotography.com/485bomber>

Phone: 757-651-3033 Email: [info@robinalticephotography.com](mailto:info@robinalticephotography.com)

PERSONAL TILES					
15th Air Force Wall - March Field, California					
COOK	POP ARNOLD	CORNETT	CAIRNS	NETT	SAMMY
HANCOCK	Sortomme			MONROE	PARLI
BUNDY	TOWERS			ICK	LASSEIGNE
FOWLER	HUCKEY	SIMS	TRINCHE	AKINS	HERRINGER
WOODYARD	COTTERMAN	GEYER	CARLSON	SHELOE	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	MCGHEE 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

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

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

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

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

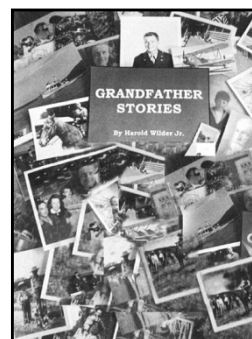
Headquarters - Walter E. Arnold, Robert M. Benson, Douglas M. Cairns, Ben B. Cook, John B. Cornett, S.W. Hancock, Hadley M. Huckey, Warren Sortomme and Loyd F. Towers.

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

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

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

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



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# 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.

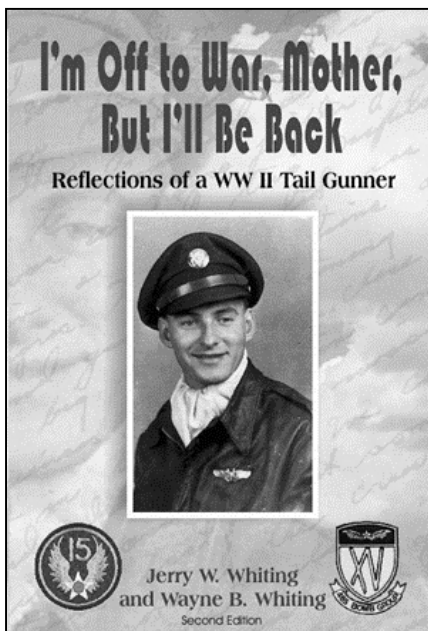
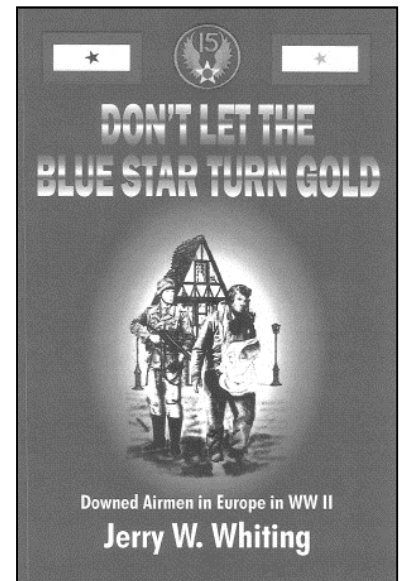
JUNE 2007 REVISED HARDCOVER  
COLLECTOR'S EDITION!

## 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>	\$ 20.00		\$
<i>I'm Off to War, Mother, But I'll Be Back</i> (hard cover)	\$ 20.00		\$
<i>I'm Off to War, Mother, But I'll Be Back</i> (paperback)	\$ 15.00		\$
<i>Mission By The Numbers</i> Edited by Sammy Schneider	\$ 20.00		\$
<i>In the Shadow of Mt. Vulture DVD</i>	\$ 12.00		\$
<i>New Year's At Ramitelli DVD</i>	\$ 12.00		\$
\$5 for 1 book, \$10 for 2-8 books Shipping/Handling			\$
(All books shipped 1st class or Priority Mail)			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Total amount enclosed			\$

(Check or money order payable to: Jerry Whiting)

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: EAJWWWhiting@aol.com

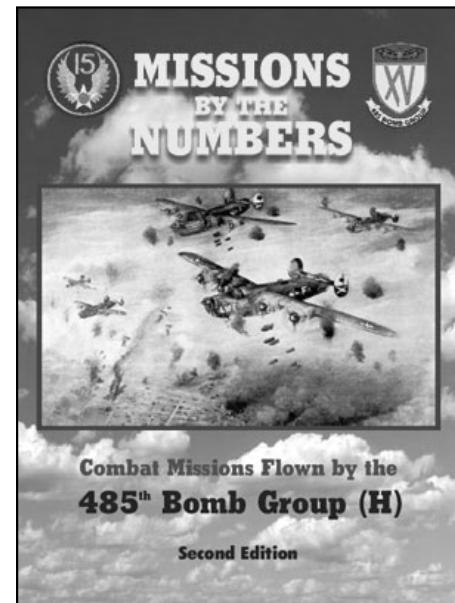


## MISSIONS BY THE NUMBERS Edited by Sammy Schneider

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

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

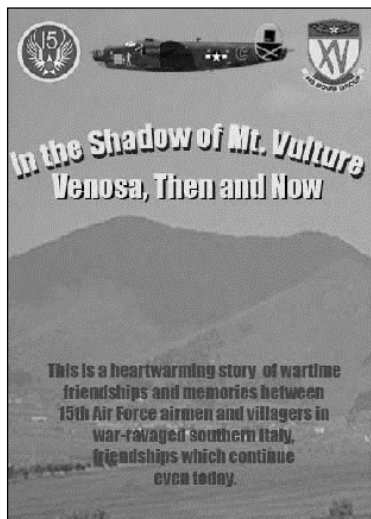
Only 300 copies have been printed, so get your copies now  
\$20+ shipping. See order form on page 34



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

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

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



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

Jerry Whiting  
2576 Fox Circle  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

email:  
[eajwwhiting@aol.com](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.”

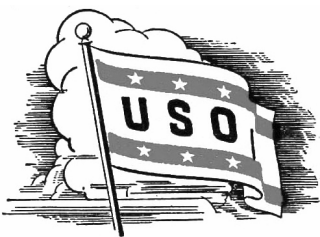
Two 485th airmen tell the story in their own words in this documentary and several others provided background information. Many 485th family members were also involved in the production of this film. This was an event in which all those associated with the 485th can be proud. The video debuted at the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

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

Jerry Whiting  
2576 Fox Circle  
Walnut Creek, CA 94596

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





## 485th Entertainment



**Joe Louis**  
**World Heavyweight Champion**  
**visits the 485th**

