



315TH NEWSLETTER

Published by
WORLD WAR II 315th TROOP CARRIER GROUP ASS'N.

February 2006

Bound for Branson, Missouri! May 18, 19 & 20, 2006

Plan now to join us for our bi-annual 315th reunion. We have selected exciting, entertaining, Branson Missouri. Nestled in the Ozarks it promises to be a wonderful site for us to gather.

We are hoping for a record turnout, especially of the second generation. We have been pleased to see more and more of them at each reunion. They always seem to enjoy it as much, or more than their Dads! All widows of members are encouraged to join us and celebrate their husband's commitment to his country. You will be our honored guests.

If you are flying you will arrive at the Springfield/Branson Airport in Springfield, Missouri. The airport is about 45 miles from Branson. From there you can rent a car, have a friend already there pick you up, or take a shuttle to Branson. We are encouraging everyone to wear their 315th caps so we readily know each other at the airport.

We will be staying at the Settle Inn in Branson (see pages 4 & 5). Your room price includes three days lodging, deluxe continental breakfast along with a morning show. The breakfast show runs from 7:30 A.M. to 8:30 A.M. and includes songs, comedy and music.

The schedule set up is very flexible. We have arranged for three group outings that are offered at a discounted rate when bought as a package deal. They are in **bold** print in the schedule below. You can go to all three, some, or none of them. You may want to independently choose activities since there is so much to see and do in Branson. You have options galore!

Thursday Day of arrival. Registration. Hospitality Suite open. Dinner on your own.
5/18 **8:00 P.M. Pierce Arrow Show (Patriotic Tribute, Gospel and Country)**

Friday There will be a 315th meeting either in the morning or afternoon.
5/19 **11:00 A.M. Visit to Veteran's Memorial Museum**

5/19 Hospitality Suite open. Dinner on your own

Saturday 315th Meeting morning or afternoon

5/20 **Noon: Showboat Branson Belle Lunch Cruise (Broadway Tribute)**

5/20 Hospitality Suite Open

5/20 315th Banquet Dinner

Sunday Farewells. However, you may want to stay in Branson for a few more days!

There are many activities to choose from. Among them are: Dolly Parton's Dixie Stampede, Broadway - The Star-Spangled Celebration, Legends in Concert, Ozark Mountain Jubilee, Silver Dollar City, Ride the Ducks, Welk Music Theatre Show....the list is too long to print on this page! If you can, check the website: www.branson.com/ for more information.

Armed Forces Day is May 20th. It just doesn't get any better than celebrating it with your troop carrier buddies and their families in Branson!



2
315th TROOP CARRIER GROUP ASSOCIATION
Olmsted, Florence, Aldermaston, Blida, Spanhoe, Amiens

OFFICIAL NOTICE BOARD

Message from the President:

It's amazing!

Think back 64 years ago, when thousands of us were young men and women, raised in a peaceful period of time, in a country that had not seen war during our lifetime. We were looking forward to adulthood, full of ambition and dreams for our future.

Wars concerned us not. They were for other nations, somewhere across vast oceans, but not in our backyard. Our military consisted of an army and a navy, neither of which had much concern for airplanes or for their place in combat. Then, suddenly, the possibility of war was thrust upon us, and our lives were changed forever.

The Japanese and Germans had been fighting for years and were making good use of airplanes as fighters and bombers, and also as transports for supplies and paratroopers, and for towing gliders. In America, airplanes had been used only for air travel, and only since 1935, a mere seven years.

Traditionally, long lasting friendships develop from growing up in the same neighborhood, attending the same schools, or from workplace associations.

Our friendships began by being co-mingled with strangers from other cities, far away states, people of varied ambitions, occupations, religions, etc. From these diverse backgrounds, we entered the armed forces to receive training in occupations totally foreign to our dreams or desires, and subsequently, to train for a mission that had never been tried before by our military.

Despite the odds, the 315th Troop Carrier Group persevered and accomplished the task with honor. And now to think that we have continued our close friendships for 64 years is truly "amazing!" Let's hope that our memories will continue with our future generations.

See you all in Branson! - Tommy



*The WW II 315th Troop
Carrier Group Association
publishes this newsletter
irregularly
1318 N. 126th St., Omaha,
Nebraska 68154*

*Leonard Thomas, President
Jamie Zartman, Vice-President
Mary Lynn Schwietz, Editor
Cathy Beck, Asst. Editor*

Taps

**With deep regret we record the loss
of these comrades.**

(If you were close friends a letter to their family
would be truly welcome.)

Phillip K. Shute 54th Sqdn. 7 Oct. 2005
Ernest S. Henner 34th Sqdn. 22 Oct. 2005

Donations

Donations are gratefully accepted whether
in memory of former comrades or in support
of the Association. Families are notified
when appropriate.

From	In Memory Of
Beth Glover	Don Glover, 310 th
Eleanor Guthrie	Fleetwood Guthrie, 310 th

Russ Lane, 310th
Charles Voegeline, 43rd
Don Orcutt, ex-440th

**Donations given in support of the
315th TCG Association**

Treasurer's Report 2005

Bank balance as of Jan. 1, 2006	\$6274.45
Income	\$275.00
Expenses	\$390.11
Secretary 2005 Expenses	177.31
25 315th TCG Caps	212.80

Bank balance as of Jan. 31, 2006 \$6159.34



1st Lt. Schmotzer at Cambridge
American Cemetery.



Memorial
Service,
Spanhoe.

Dues

Just a reminder, if you haven't paid your \$20
dues yet this year you can send them to Dick
Ford (address on back of newsletter).

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**315th WWII Troop Carrier Association
2006 Reunion – Branson, Missouri May 18-21**

It is time to make plans and reserve your rooms. No forms to fill out. Just call 1-800-268-4014, ask for Cari Carley and tell her you are with the 315th Troop Carrier Group.

All reservations are to be paid in advance by credit cards or checks. Have your credit card available when you call. All payments are refundable up until 2 weeks prior to the start date.

Prices include all 3 nights at the Settle Inn, your banquet dinner, and all taxes and gratuities.

Per Person Prices
Single \$225.00 Double \$127.00 Triple \$94.00

Also included is a daily continental breakfast.
Be sure to let Cari know if you prefer *steak* or *chicken* for your banquet dinner.

Branson has a wide variety of shows and activities available to you. You are free to go to any shows you want. Some may want to go as a group. In that case we have a proposed itinerary with three events and special pricing. We need at least 15 people to sign up to get this pricing. I don't think that will be a problem.

PROPOSED ITINERARY

Thursday, May 18, 2006

Pierce Arrow Show at 8pm (Patriotic tribute, gospel and country)

Friday, May 19, 2006

Veteran's Memorial Museum at 11am (National tribute to all our soldiers from WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars)

Saturday, May 20, 2006

Showboat Branson Belle Lunch Cruise at 12pm (Broadway tribute, dancing and comedy)

All taxes & gratuities included in prices

Per Person Pricing: \$70.00 (includes all three events)

If you would like to join in with this prearranged group schedule, just let Cari know and she will take care of purchasing your tickets and delivering them to you in Branson. Please remember that transportation is not included.

\$1 272 lodging
cruise
banquet

AIRPORT INFORMATION

Springfield/Branson Regional Airport is 45 miles north of Branson

Airlines that fly into the airport- Delta, US Airways, American, United Express
Airport transportation:

A! Shuttle 417-335-6001 (prices 1 or 2 people \$70 total, 3 people \$35 each, 4-6 is \$30 per person, can't carry more than 6)

Jerry's Shuttle 417-334-5678 (prices 1 person \$70, 2 people total of \$90, 3 or more \$35 a head)

Gray Lines- 417-334-5463 (call for prices)

Call and reserve your shuttle at least 48 hours in advance. Shuttle transportation will not provide you with transportation while in Branson (unless arrangements are made with them to do that). Renting a car with one or two other couples would keep costs down and be more convenient.

Phone number to contact the airport is 417-869-0300

CAR RENTAL INFORMATION

Alamo	417-865-5311	800-327-9633	
Avis	417-865-6226	417-865-6226	
Budget	417-831-2662	800-527-0700	
Enterprise	417-862-0753	800-736-8227	Discount #51E4276 315TCG Acc't
Hertz	417-865-1681	800-654-3131	
National	417-865-5311	800-227-7368	
Thrifty	417-866-8777	800-367-2277	

HOTEL

The Settle Inn is located on Green Mountain Dr, one block from the main strip in Branson. Phone number is 800-677-6906. Pictures can be found on their website: www.bransonsettleinn.com/

Directions: Take Hwy 65 south to Branson, take the Hwy 76 exit and go west, turn left on Glory Rd, then take a right on Green Mountain, the hotel will be on the left hand side.

WEATHER

You will need a light jacket in the evenings, but short sleeves are great during the day. The average temperatures in May Highs in the lower 80's and lows in the upper 60's.

ANY QUESTIONS?

Call, write or e-mail:

Len Thomas
445 Maplecroft Ct.
Cincinnati, OH 45255
513-528-0709
lenjean@cinci.rr.com

Jamie Zartman
42 Buffalo Lane
Carbondale, CO 81623
970-704-1857
jamiezeez@comcast.net

Letters to the 315th

My father, William "Deleno" Simpson passed away on May 6, 2005. He was a staff sergeant and crew chief on a C-47 with the 315th, 34th Sqdn. We have found pictures and an autograph book from his friends before he left the service. His nicknames were "Red" (he had carrot top red hair) and "Suitcase" (came from a baseball player about that time). The nickname we know nothing about is "The Original Mountain Ape." It sounds like it should have a good story to go with it. If anyone remembers anything about him we would love to hear from you.

Please email me at sweltner10se@aol.com and please put a 315th in the subject line of I may take if for Spam. Thanks, Shirley Weltner

Thanks for a copy of the 315th Newsletter. Although I am not a 315th TC member, I'd like to know what is going on in the rest of the TC world.

Have you heard of the new history publication titled: Utah Beach: The Amphibious Landing and Airborne Operations on D-Day, June 6, 1944 by author Joe Balkoski? It is purported to be an unbiased coverage of Troop Carrier performances on D-DAY. About time!

I was a pilot in the 440th TC, 95 Sqdn. We unloaded on DZ-D.

Sincerely yours, Donald M. Orcutt
9x-908k@earthlink.net

I received the 315th "Return to Spanhoe" Newsletter and before I forget I want you to know the big viaduct (bridge) is called "The Haringworth Viaduct." My late husband, Roger Chapman was stationed at both Colteshw(?)... and Spanhoe. He was a navigator and flew most of his missions with Bill Brinson. I got to know him at that time, and had 45 years of being happily married to him, but sadly he died in 1989.

I enjoy receiving the newsletters. Thank you for sending them to me.

Sincerely, Cornelia Chapman
4000 Cuervo Ave. Santa Barbara CA 93110

I am sending the article on gliders from a periodical most of us don't read, "Invention and Technology." A friend who is a research engineer, and who happened to see my name mentioned sent it to me. So you could say I am spreading the article around to get a bit more glory for my book, Green Light! You might want to pass it on to a WWII glider pilot.

Sincerely yours, Marty Wolfe

(The article Marty sent is called "The Planes With No Engine" by Kevin L. Cook from the Fall 2005 issue of Invention and Technology. It is a GREAT article. I wish I could reprint it here but it is nine pages long. I will bring copies to Branson.)

A Blessing from Groesbeek, Holland

Honorary member Fr. F. G. Thuring sent this holiday message to the 31th:
"Dear 315th C-47 TCG Veteran Friends:

Your 2006th flights to Branson, MO or whatever flights you will make in 2006: They may be peaceful and happy, and glorious, when it would be a "finale". 315th will keep on to have a warm place in our hearts - and in our history (and the Poles!) It was a surprise to meet again "my" bassoon angels 2006 in your newsletter. God bless you all."

Sint Antoniusweg 2
6562 GM Groesbeek-Breedeweg
Holland

From Don Glover's Daughter

This note is long overdue. My dad, Don Glover, spoke of his wonderful trip to Colorado (1998) until he could no longer speak. That 315th Reunion was his last adventure. Thanks for taking care of him and making the trip a good one.

Enclosed is a donation to the 315th. Please add my brother to the mailing list. He has two children and they would benefit from reading about the 315th.

I am hoping to attend the Branson Reunion in 2006 and meeting my father's friends.

Sincerely, Beth Christensen

From England

I received the 315th magazine in the UK and was very impressed by Operation Spanhoe. I worked at the airfield in the late 80's and early 90's. During that time veterans came over and we have been in touch ever since. Dave Trexler, Bob Cloer and Dick Ford and their friends at Spanhoe are among them.

I've compiled a disk of S cuttings. Some of the cuttings are of the 82 Airborne and how life was back in 1943-1944 in Leicester for the G.I.'s. You can read about Clark Gable who was stationed in Northamptonshire and James Stewart who flew bombers from Norfolk.

I hope this disk will be of use to you.

(You will find some of John's contributions on pages 9 & 13)

Many thanks John!

Good Luck!
Avid Reader of the 315th Magazine
John Stevenson
17 Gelert Ave.
Thurnby Lodge
Leicester LE5 2NS
(Phone) 0116 2433058

4

Memories from Charles G. Voegelin in a Letter to Dick Ford

I have just received the August 2005 315th Newsletter. It's difficult to believe that you have just attended the 60th anniversary of VE-Day; where has the time gone? You and many others should be commended for the great work that has been done to keep us together as an organization. When I look at the roster of World War II 315th TCGp. Association and the flow of newsletters that provide constant updating, I am amazed. Each time that I receive one of those notices, I think back to sixty years ago and remember my friends as they looked then.

A brief story...back in early May 1944 at an Army Air Force base in Indiana, myself, Bob Cook, pilot, Airman Lynch, radio operator, and Sgt. R. Johnson, crew chief, took possession of a brand-new C-47 aircraft. We departed for West Palm Beach, Florida. There, we were assigned a navigator, Lt. Sousa, and given sealed orders to be opened after takeoff. Our aircraft had additional fuel tanks in the cabin that would allow us to stay aloft for 12-13 hours. Once we were at cruise altitude of 8,000 feet and on course for Puerto Rico, we opened the sealed orders and learned that we were to deliver ourselves and the aircraft to Army Air Forces in England. Daily flights took us through the Caribbean, South America, across the southern Atlantic Ocean to the African Ivory Coast up to Marrakech, Morocco. Along the way, our radio operator adopted a young dog; his name was "Static" and he became an honorary member of the crew.

The major and most dangerous leg of our journey was still ahead of us – a nonstop flight from Africa to a base in southern England. We waited for the favorable winds needed for the flight. During the wait, our crew chief, Sgt. Johnson, accidentally shot a hole in one of our cabin fuel tanks as he cleaned a weapon, so we were forced to wait even longer.

Finally, we received notice to depart. The plan was to take off just before sunset, fly out over the ocean, and intercept a specific line of longitude. This would keep us out over the ocean off the coast of Spain, Portugal, and France. The flight would take about twelve hours – almost all at night. No radio transmissions were allowed, and there were no aids to navigation.

Our success depended solely on Lt. Sousa, our navigator. He spent the entire flight with his sextant and tools up in the glass canopy shooting stars and giving us course headings and corrections. Dawn came, and we were in the clouds, very tired yet very tense. The navigator gave us instructions for the turn and a heading that should direct us to landfall in southern England. With some apprehension, we took up the new heading and began a slow descent. We knew that aircrews before us had attempted the same flight, made the turn, and discovered that they were over Ireland or – worse yet – over occupied France.

While descending, we slowly became aware of a piercing sound in our headsets. All of a sudden in the distance was the very green and lush shoreline of southern England. We were ecstatic! We located our destination airfield and called in for landing information. The control tower returned our call giving specific instructions and concluded with the question, "Who is the captain of the kite?" We had never heard that term before, but in the next years we would hear the word "kite" for aircraft many times.

After landing, we were led by a Jeep on the runway to an area where A-20, B-25, C-26, C-46, C-47, B-17, and B-24 aircraft were parked. I noticed during the parking of our plane that the tail section of one of the B-17's was damaged from gunfire. We shut down our aircraft and disembarked. After receiving warm welcomes, I mentioned the irritating noise that we had heard in our headsets. We were told that the noise was an indicator of the presence of large balloons that trailed cables intended to ensnare low flying enemy aircraft. I asked what had happened to the damaged tail of the B-17. I was told that the plane had arrived from Marrakech a few hours before us. The Germans patrolled that route with JU-88's. All of a sudden, we felt very fortunate!

We spent almost a year at Spanhoe, then we were moved as a unit to a new field at Amiens, France. During this time, we participated in the Normandy Invasion, the airborne invasion of Holland, and the Battle of the Bulge. On March 25, 1945, we flew our last combat mission in Europe; it was the largest airborne mission ever planned and executed. The 43rd Squadron was the lead flight of aircraft to cross the Rhine River near Wiesel, Germany. Col. Lynn led our squadron; he was shot down, as were seven other aircraft of the 43rd.

Shortly after this mission, VE-Day arrived. Most of us were assigned to the Air Transport Command and told to fly our aircraft and crews to Waller Field, Trinidad, which we did. Then came VJ-Day and it was back home to civilian life. I flew with the Air Force Reserves at Mitchell Field, Long Island, New York. We were all recalled to active duty for the Korean War. This time, I was back to Troop Carrier flying C-119's. I decided to make a career out of military flying and stayed on until retirement in August 1968. I'm still in contact with Bob Cook and some members of the 43rd Squadron.

Sincerely,
Charles G. Voegelin

Enclosed is a small donation to our organization's treasury in honor of Doc Cloer. In my opinion, he has been the key person and the foundation of what we have today. Thanks, "Doc!"



Today's Air Force is a Bit Different Than Our Old Gooney Bird Days!!

NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE -- Six days a week, Shannon Rogers kisses his wife and two young kids goodbye and wheels his battered 1989 Chevy Cavalier out of the driveway of his suburban Nevada home. The houses here are cookie cutter, done in beige stucco. Like most of the other dads and some moms in this traditional middle-class community, Rogers heads down Interstate 215, toward his job near Las Vegas, using the 30-minute drive to make the mental transition from family man to workplace professional. But Rogers will end up in a place far different from that of his fellow commuters: when he arrives at work, he will be at war in Iraq.

Rogers, an Air Force major and experienced fighter pilot, is part of an elite group of U.S. troops playing a crucial role in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan from the U.S.'s most notorious playground. From Nellis Air Force Base, outside Las Vegas, Rogers controls a Predator, a flimsy drone that has been transformed from a spy plane into one of the wars' most lethal weapons. Predators played a key part in catching Saddam Hussein and have killed al-Qaeda suspects in Pakistan and Yemen. In September a Predator tracked 11 insurgents who had attacked a U.S. base in Iraq, then killed them as they fled.

What makes the Predator mission--and Rogers' job--so unusual is the 7,000 miles between pilot and plane. Basing the crew members at home rather than at the front keeps them out of harm's way and saves the military money. Still, "for us, it's combat," says Rogers, 34, who has been deployed to battle zones twice, most recently Iraq this summer. "Physically, we may be in Vegas, but mentally, we're flying over Iraq. It feels real."

Certainly the decisions they face are life and death, as TIME observed when it was recently granted exclusive access to operations of the Air Force's 15th Reconnaissance Squadron, which commands 25 Predators from Nellis. It was 10:30 p.m. in Nevada, 9:30 a.m. in Iraq, and after two hours of watching insurgents fire a pickup-truck-mounted .50-cal. machine gun at U.S. troops in western Iraq, Rogers and the sensor operator with whom he works were given the command to shoot the truck. Both developed a case of what Rogers calls the "trembles"--the nervousness of wanting to kill the enemy but injure no one else, combined with the enormity of taking human lives. Just as Rogers pushed the button to let fly one of the Predator's Hellfire missiles, a car appeared and started to drive toward the pickup. His partner's job is to keep the missile locked on target or, if necessary, divert it to a place where it would cause as little damage as possible. "What do we do, sir?" the partner asked in a shaky voice. "Stay on the target and hope he drives fast," said Rogers coolly. The car passed, and the truck exploded violently when the Hellfire struck. Rogers let out a whoop and exchanged high fives with his partner.

The Predator is an unlikely star. In military terms, it is an unmanned aerial vehicle, or UAV. It was first flown a decade ago and for years was armed with only an unsophisticated camera for intelligence gathering. After the fall of 2000, when Osama bin Laden was spotted in Afghanistan by an unarmed Predator, the U.S. government sped up a program to fit each aircraft with two Hellfire missiles. Awesome sounding but benign looking, the 27-ft.-long Predator is painted a dull gray and shaped like an upside-down spoon with wings. The drone

11

is made of lightweight composite plastic and metal and has a tiny, propeller-driven engine—adapted from a snowmobile's—with a decidedly unimpressive top speed of only 150 m.p.h. Rogers' previous craft, the supersonic F-15 jet fighter, can fly up to 900 m.p.h.

The Predators commanded by the 15th Reconnaissance Squadron are launched and landed by troops at the front, but while they are in the air, up to 24 hours straight every day, they are controlled by Air Force crews sitting in six grounded cockpits at Nellis. Each cockpit consists of two large armchairs set in front of banks of computer screens with keyboards, control joysticks and live video images. Video is relayed from a camera mounted on the bottom of the Predator not only to Nellis but also to troops on the ground, commanders in the region and the Pentagon. The crew consists of a pilot who flies the plane and launches missiles and a sensor operator who controls the camera and the laser targeting device for the two Hellfires. The crew members communicate with troops and commanders in the war zone through secure instant-messaging systems as well as radio transmissions routed through a mission controller who sits in a command center at Nellis and issues orders to the crew.

The conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan have proved the worth of unmanned aircraft—which are cheaper and, because there is no pilot to be shot down, politically more palatable than traditional airplanes. The thousand-plus UAVs in the military's arsenal range from tiny craft that can fit in a soldier's palm to ones the size of business jets. Military analysts are predicting that within two decades, UAVs may even take over the jobs of pilots flying fighter jets. It makes economic sense; the \$4million Predator is a bargain compared with the Air Force's newest fighter, the \$354 million F-22.

The effectiveness of the Predator in war zones, however, has translated into stresses in an unlikely place: back home. The operational tempo puts intense pressure on the small group of men and women who deliver death from a distance. The 180-person Nellis unit runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with no holidays. The unit has logged more flight hours than any other squadron in the Air Force yet is only 65% staffed. Crew members are so tightly scheduled that when on duty, they have to ask permission to go to the bathroom and cannot leave their chairs unless there is someone to replace them. The troops call the Predator compound Shawshank because it reminds them of a prison. The schedule demands that the men and women change shifts—days, evenings and overnights—every three weeks, which makes fitting into normal civilian life off base nearly impossible. Morale, say many crew members, is suffering. Crew members are experiencing more problems in their personal lives, including separation and divorce.

One may expect that being home would be a plus for the troops, but actually it's often a complication. Soldiers in the field have to cope with danger, but at least they live in one world, whereas their counterparts at Nellis commute daily from war to civilian life. "How many people can say they went to work today and killed or captured a few terrorists?" says Lieut. Colonel John Harris, commander of the 15th. "Our people are proud they contribute to the war from home. But being at home brings some additional stresses. We're very close to a crisis."

Round Aircraft Engines

DEDICATED TO ALL THOSE WHO FLEW BEHIND ROUND ENGINES

We gotta get rid of those turbines, they're ruining aviation and our hearing...
A turbine is too simple minded, it has no mystery.
The air travels through it in a straight line and doesn't pick up any of the pungent fragrance of engine oil or pilot sweat.

Anybody can start a turbine. You just need to move a switch from "OFF" to "START" and then remember to move it back to "ON" after a while.
My PC is harder to start.
Cranking a round engine requires skill, finesse and style.
You have to seduce it into starting. It's like waking up a horny mistress.
On some planes, the pilots aren't even allowed to do it...

Turbines start by whining for a while, then give a lady-like poof and start whining a little louder.
Round engines give a satisfying rattle-rattle, click-click, BANG, more rattles, another BANG, a big macho FART or two, more clicks, a lot more smoke and finally a serious low pitched roar.
We like that. It's a GUY thing...

When you start a round engine, your mind is engaged and you can concentrate on the flight ahead.
Starting a turbine is like flicking on a ceiling fan: Useful, but hardly exciting.
When you have started his round engine successfully your Crew Chief looks up at you like he'd let you kiss his girl, too!

Turbines don't break or catch fire often enough, which leads to aircrew boredom, complacency and inattention.
A round engine at speed looks and sounds like it's going to blow any minute.
This helps concentrate the mind!

Turbines don't have enough control levers or gauges to keep a pilot's attention. There's nothing to fiddle with during long flights.

Turbines smell like a Boy Scout camp full of Coleman Lamps.
Round engines smell like God intended machines to smell.

Pass this on to an old WWII guy (or his son, or anyone who flew them, ever) in remembrance of that "Greatest Generation".

A Note from Doc Cloer

13

At one time I had 92 e-mail addresses in my 315th address book of members or friends who were interested in the old 315th TCGrp. The last time I sent out a message to all with information on the coming reunion - eight of them came back, with the notations "no longer in service". I know that some of you have changed servers or changed your address. I am also sure that there are some who have not sent in their e-mail address.

Please send me a message so I have your correct address - - I will not be forwarding you a lot of junk - - it's just a way to get important information out to all in a hurry. My address is: RLCLOER@SYIX.COM (only all in lower case) rlcloer@syix.com - I might even send you a joke or two!

If you have a new ZIP code or phone number - please send it so I can keep the roster up to date. I know that at this stage of life, if you have to move to a new place to live, sending me your change of address is not the most important thing in your life. When each of the newsletters comes back to Mary Lynn with your new address (the PO will not forward bulk mail) the Post Office charges her 90¢ to \$1.40 per letter. She then sends them all to me and I have to send you another newsletter at 1st class rates.

For the past 29 or 30 years I have served as your secretary, it's been my hobby and I have really enjoyed it. With being a fulltime caregiver now, and getting a bit slower on the use of my old computer - - I need a replacement at our Branson Reunion. I will help as I can and I hope that we can get one of our great second generation members to take over this job. They are the future of the 315th Reunion Assn.

See ya in Branson,
Doc Cloer

1943: GIs ON PARADE AS YOUNG BILLY TAKES THE SALUTE



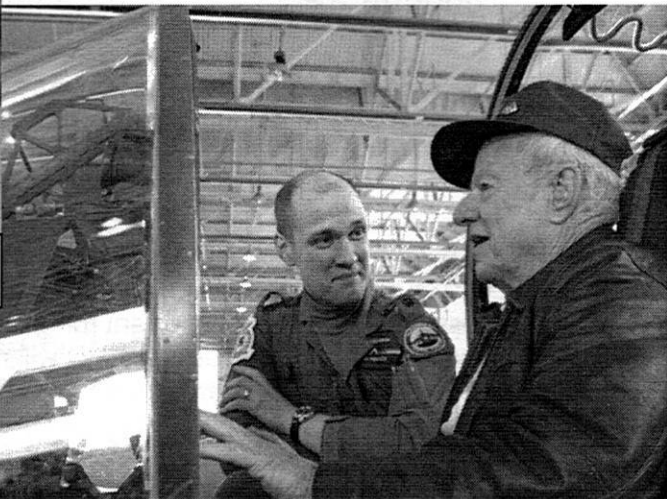
ATTENTION! Warm-hearted American soldiers were always looking for a practical way to show their appreciation of the welcome that Leicester people, in the main, gave them during the Second World War. This picture, taken in November 1943, shows seven-year-old Billy Smith, of Guthlaxton Street, taking the salute at a special inspection of US troops that was laid on for him. Billy had lost a leg and was barely able to struggle round on crutches. The Americans bought him an artificial leg and, when he was able to stand and walk on it unaided, they provided a special uniform made by the army base's tailor and gave him his own guard of honour.

Spanhoe Revisited

14



Wreaths being laid at the entrance to Spanhoe Airbase.

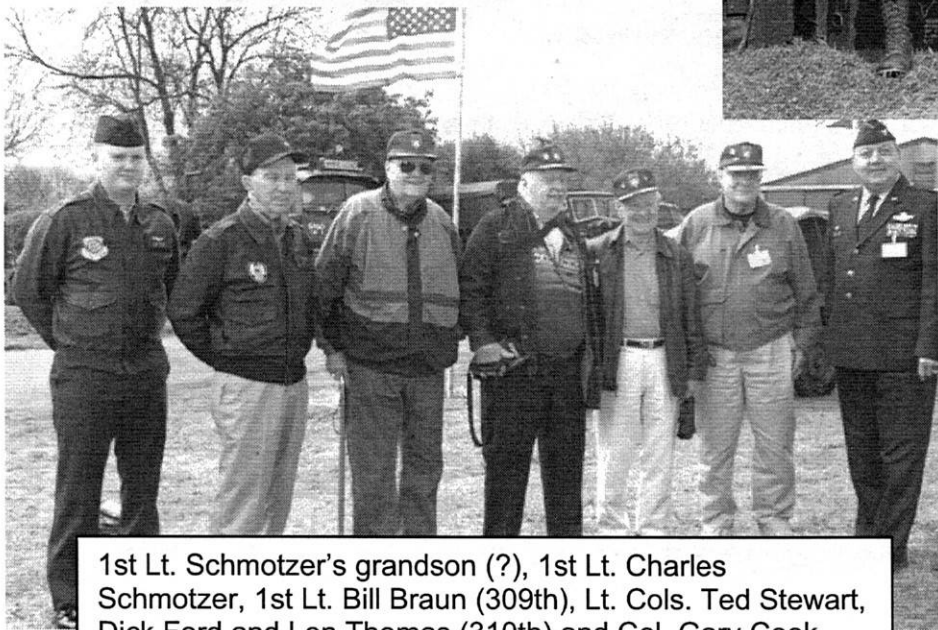


Dick Ford getting a "crash" course on jetfighters.

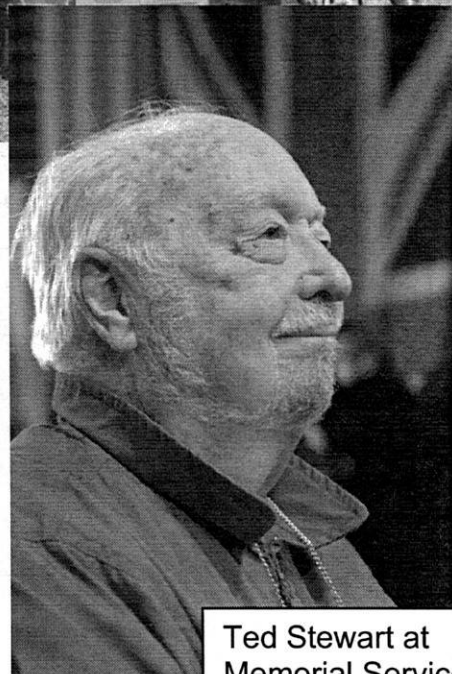


Ceremony honoring those killed in action.

Re-enactment at Spanhoe.



1st Lt. Schmotzer's grandson (?), 1st Lt. Charles Schmotzer, 1st Lt. Bill Braun (309th), Lt. Cols. Ted Stewart, Dick Ford and Len Thomas (310th) and Col. Gary Cook



Ted Stewart at Memorial Service.

LEGENDARY C-47: A GOONEY BY ANY OTHER NAME

GEN. DWIGHT EISENHOWER DIDN'T HESITATE WHEN ASKED TO NAME THE ALLIED weapons that helped the most to end the War. In no particular order, he listed, "The bazooka, the jeep, the atom bomb and the C-47."

The bazooka turned lowly GIs into feared tank killers. The jeep gave Eisenhower's commanders incredible flexibility when moving around the battlefield. The atom bomb saved many thousands of GI lives by ending the whole thing. The C-47, however, instantaneously gave GIs what they needed to fight, when and where they needed it. Before there were beachheads, before there were roads, before there was any other way to move men and equipment, the "Gooney Bird" was there.

When military brass ordered the first of nearly 10,000 C-47s in 1940, they envisioned it as a freighter, large cargo doors and a beefed-up floor were added. Shortly thereafter, they realized that as many as 27 fully equipped paratroopers could be loaded into it and dropped wherever needed. These aircraft not only had smaller doors and provisions for seats along the sides, but they also had - are you ready for this? - a round hole in the middle of each passenger window so that troops could stick their gun barrels out and fire at attacking aircraft.

The feats of the C-47 during WW II are legendary: 4,800 troopers dropped during the invasion of Sicily and an amazing 60,000 dropped at Normandy, in addition to towing several thousand gliders. In the Pacific, as soon as runways had been secured or hacked out of island jungles, endless streams of the old birds supplied embattled troops. The C-47 was the Huey of its day; it brought men and equipment in and left with the wounded.

Pilots had a real love/hate relationship with the old bird. On the one hand, it was a slow, plodding beast (170 mph on a good day); on the other, pilots knew it would take care of them. Its long wing and big control surfaces let it fly easily on one engine, and its crews knew it could handle whatever the weather threw at them.

In many ways, the C-47 was an aerial jeep because it was used in so many ways that it wasn't designed for. It flew on skis and floats, and during the 1947-'49 Israeli/Arab conflict, Egyptians even tried using them as bombers; they rolled bombs out through the open doors, only to find that they were dog meat for the Israeli-flown, Czech-built Messerschmitt 109's.

(continued on next page)

16 During the Vietnam War, Gooneys - armed with a trio of 7.62mm Gatling guns-became "Spookies" or "Puff the Magic Dragons." Troops on the ground said a Gooney's 18,000 rounds a minute hitting the jungle sounded like a gigantic bug chewing on the trees.

Of all the types of aircraft built during WW II, the C-47 more than any other is still actively working for a living in far corners of the world. The old airplane will probably outlast every single person reading this-a sobering thought. But then, that's how legends are made. - Budd Davisson

(Budd Davisson was kind enough to let us reprint this article. Check out his website airbum.com to find more of his articles and books. You will find it very interesting!)

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