



315th Newsletter

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

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READERS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO SUBMIT MATERIAL FOR THE *NEWSLETTER*. PLEASE ADDRESS ALL SUBMISSIONS TO THE UNDERSIGNED:

Edward M. Papp, Editor
315th Newsletter
200 Bryant Avenue
Glen Ellyn IL 60137

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

This *Newsletter* includes information on what awaits in Milwaukee at our September reunion. We hope you find it attractive and intend to be there. Consider turning it into a family affair; bring sons, daughters and grandchildren. More do so each get-together. It makes for a great experience.

As for the reunion:

- . Tours are optional (the Saturday tour is complimentary for the ladies. Early sign-up requested.)
- . Six major airlines (Delta, Northwest, TWA, US Air, United and Midwest Express) provide direct service to Milwaukee from their respective hubs.
- . Special arrangements will reduce parking fees in the hotel's adjoining garage (details forthcoming).
- . Your arrival packet will include a name label which you will-affix -- at a Saturday p.m. time to be announced -- designating your banquet table preference. You may want to make prior arrangements with friends to share a tale. Invite a first-timer or single to join you.

J. S. Smith

00? 681-215-1

HYATT REGENCY

MILWAUKEE

414-276-1234

1996

HOTEL LOCATION

The Hyatt Regency Milwaukee is located at 333 West Kilbourn Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53203, in the heart of the city. A soaring atrium greets guests in a city where festivity and hospitality are a way of life. The hotel is 10 minutes from Mitchell Airport, within walking distance of the Performing Arts Center, Milwaukee Center Theatre District, Bradley Center, and is connected by skywalks to the MECCA (Milwaukee Exposition/Convention Center and Arena), the Federal Plaza, and the Grand Avenue Shopping Mall.

Directions:

- From the North: I-43 south into downtown Milwaukee. Exit Wells Street/Civic Center. Turn left onto Wells, go 6 blocks to 4th Street. Turn left onto 4th. Go 1 block to Kilbourn, turn right to the Hyatt.
- From the Northwest: Take Hwy. 41 south to Hwy. 45-south. Follow 45-south to Milwaukee and connect onto 94-east into downtown. Continue onto 794-east. Exit onto Plankington Avenue. Curve left onto Plankington, go north 4 1/2 blocks to Kilbourn. Turn left onto Kilbourn, go 1 block to Hyatt on your left.
- From the West: I-94 east into downtown Milwaukee and continue east on 794-east. Exit in the right lane onto Plankington Avenue. Curve left onto Plankington, go 4 blocks north to Kilbourn. Turn left. Go 1 block to the Hyatt on the left.
- From the Southwest: From Rockford: 90-north to Beloit, WI 43-north. From Beloit and Lake Geneva into Milwaukee area. Take left lane onto 45-north/894-north. Follow to 94-east. Take 94-east into downtown Milwaukee. Continue onto 794-east. Exit in right lane onto Plankington Avenue. Curve left onto Plankington, go 4 1/2 blocks to Kilbourn. Turn left onto Kilbourn. Go 1 block to Hyatt on the left.

HOTEL EXTRAS

The Hyatt Regency Milwaukee has 483 luxurious guest rooms. Each room features a kingsize or two double beds, color television, an ironing board, and numerous bath/toilet amenities. The hotel gift shop in the lobby features a newsstand. For relaxation and fun, guests can take advantage of the fully equipped health club.

Handicapped accessible and non-smoking rooms are subject to availability. Please request when making your reservation. Check in time is 3pm and check out is 12noon.

The hotel offers dining in three restaurants:

- The Pilsner Palace which serves breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Open 6:30am 'til midnight. Opens at 7:00am weekends.
 - 333 An American Restaurant (fine dining.) Open for dinner.
 - Polaris which serves lunch and dinner. Open for cocktails at 4pm. Dinner 5pm 'til 11pm.
 - Room service is available 6:30am until midnight.
- Many other restaurants are available within walking distance of the hotel. The front desk will assist guests with suggestions.

AIRPORT SHUTTLE

Limousine Services provide shuttle service from Mitchell Airport to the hotel from 5:15am until 5:15pm. The shuttle is available outside Baggage Claim Area 3. The current fare is \$7.50/per person, one way.

NEARBY RV PARK

Listed below are several campgrounds which offer hookup services. Please contact directly for information, reservations, and directions:

- Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park, 8425 Hwy. 38, Caledonia, WI 53108, (414) 835-2565
- Happy Acres Kampgrounds, 22230 45th Street, Bristol, WI 53104, (414) 857-7373
- Wisconsin State Fair Park, (414) 226-7035 (open April 1 through October 31)

315th TROOP CARRIER GROUP
HYATT REGENCY MILWAUKEE, MILWAUKEE, WI

SEPTEMBER 4 - 8, 1996

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4

03:00 Arrival and Registration until 7pm. Hospitality Room open.
Evening on your own.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

07:00 Registration continues until 8am.
08:30 Board bus at hotel for Basler Turbo Conversions in Oshkosh, Wisconsin.
10:00 Arrive at Basler for a tour of the factory where DC-3's are remanufactured to meet the standards set by today's technology.
11:00 Reboard bus for the Experimental Aircraft Association's Air Adventure Museum.
11:15 Arrive at the museum and enjoy a deli lunch buffet served until 12:30pm.
12:30 Take a self-guided tour of the museum. See one of several films and explore the many different exhibits at the Museum: Antique/Classic, where you will see a replica of the Wright Flyer and the Spirit of St. Louis; Homebuilts, an innovative display of aircraft built by enthusiasts for personal use; Aerobatics and Air Racing, where you will explore limits of aerial maneuvers and see the craft that led us to faster, safer air transportation. See the Air Challengers, a display which expands our horizons in aircraft design and records; and the Eagle Hanger, which memorializes those men and machines who fought beneath the stars and stripes in defense of freedom - a magnificent panorama of WWII aircraft, events, and activities.
03:30 Reboard bus at the museum to return to the hotel by 5pm.
\$36/Person includes bus, escort, lunch, and admission.
02:00 Registration continues until 5pm.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6

09:30 Board of Directors meeting until 11am.
01:30 Board bus at the hotel for a narrated driving tour of Milwaukee's landmarks and attractions. See the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan and witness the distinctive architecture in the ethnic communities of Milwaukee. As you enjoy the mixture of 19th and 20th century buildings, your guide will tell the hilarious stories of Milwaukee's early pioneers and bring you up to date on the city's present. Visit the Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory, otherwise known as the Domes. Tour the only horticultural structure of its kind in the world, with three magnificent glass domes. Each dome features a distinct type of plant life: tropical, desert, and one with a changing display of flowers.
03:30 Back at the hotel.
\$19/Person includes bus, guide, and admission.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

09:30 Business meeting until 11am.
09:45 Board bus at the hotel for a ladies' trip to the Pabst Mansion, home of Captain Frederick Pabst.
10:00 Disembark and tour the Mansion, which was built by the beer baron between 1890 and 1892. An exquisite example of Flemish Renaissance Revival Style, this house is on the National Register of Historic Places. Finish your tour with a trip to the gift shop.
11:15 Reboard bus and proceed to the Pabst Theater.
11:30 Arrive at the theater. Built in 1895, this historic landmark is world famous. Many believe it to be one of the most beautiful Victorian theaters in existence.
12:30 Reboard bus to return to the hotel by 12:45pm.
06:30 Cash bar until 7:30pm.
07:30 Banquet dinner is served, followed by dancing.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

09:45 Board shuttle bus at hotel for the Edelweiss River cruise. A second shuttle will leave the hotel at approximately 10am.
10:00 Arrive at the pier to board the Edelweiss. Enjoy a delicious brunch as you cruise through downtown Milwaukee and into Lake Michigan. The dining room is fully glass enclosed, affording passengers an unsurpassed view of historic monuments and the city's gorgeous skyline.
12:30 Reboard the bus to return to the hotel by 12:45pm. Second shuttle will leave the Edelweiss at approximately 12:45pm.
\$44/Person includes shuttle bus, escort, and brunch cruise.
Farewells and departures.

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THE GLENN MILLER STORY: a mystery wrapped in a mystery that has intrigued hundreds, even thousands of people for over a half century. As many of our readers are aware, two 315th TCG aircraft ferried members of the Miller band to France but Miller himself did not accompany the band. Previous issues of this *Newsletter* have carried stories and references to the mysterious disappearance of Miller. Dale M. Titler, a friend of the 315th Association, has invested a great deal of time and effort researching the disappearance of Miller for a book devoted to the subject. Recently, Charlie Vogelien, who served in the 43rd Squadron of the 315th TCG sent your editor a copy of a story about the Miller mystery which appeared in the Winter, 1994 issue of a publication called *THIS ENGLAND* a quarterly magazine published in Britain. We reproduce the story plus a "sidebar" story which appeared at the end of the main story. Our thanks to Charlie for this fascinating and bizarre addition to the story of Miller's disappearance.

The Glenn Miller mystery: Did he crash in the Fens?

It remains one of the world's classic mysteries -- perhaps the greatest unsolved riddle of the last war. After 50 years the question still lingers....*what really happened to Glenn Miller?*

The bare facts are well known. Just before two o'clock on December 15th, 1944, as the mists gathered on a gloomy afternoon, a small Canadian wood-and-canvas plane took off from a grass-strip airfield in the heart of England -- and vanished off the face of the earth. On board were three Americans: the pilot, Flight Officer John "Nipper" Morgan -- known to be inexperienced in instrument flying -- and two passengers, Lt. Col. Norman F. Baessell, executive officer with the US 8th Air Force Service Command based at Milton Ernest, Bedfordshire -- and Major Glenn Miller, the world's most popular bandleader.

Glenn's Army Air Force Band, which had been based in Britain since the previous June, was preparing to fly to newly-liberated France to give concerts in the wake of the Allied advance. Glenn had tried several times to get to Paris ahead of his men to make final preparations but flights had been delayed by bad weather; so when he was offered "a lift" by Baessell (a friend of the band's) he gratefully accepted. He was driven from London to the small airfield near Bedford by his deputy, Lt. Don Haynes.

The plane was an eight-seat single engine "Norseman" and Baessell, who was known to be involved in the "black market",

was bound for Bordeaux to pick up supplies. The plane was believed to be carrying several crates of empty wine bottles (champagne included) to be exchanged for a fresh consignment. A considerable sum of money was on board and Baessell also carried a gun. There were no parachutes: "You wanna live forever?" were allegedly Baessell's last words to Glenn Miller -- who had a constant fear of flying -- as they boarded the aircraft.

It has always been assumed that the "Norseman" took a direct route from Twinwood Farm Airfield, Bedfordshire, to Paris, but no flight plan was ever logged. One theory, that the plane must have been struck by bombs being discarded over the Channel by an RAF Lancaster bomber returning from an aborted raid on Germany, can be discounted. Other stories, such as that Glenn Miller had landed in France but died shortly afterwards in a car crash near Paris, are unrealistic. No one seems to have considered the possibility that the plane did not take a direct track to Paris but flew in a completely different direction.

With tight coastal defenses, barrage balloons and intensive air activity over London and the South-East corner of England, it would have made more sense for the plane to fly east from Twinwood and round the Norfolk/Suffolk coast, before setting a southerly track for Paris. This coupled with bad weather and a south-

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easterly wind, means the plane could have been way off the assumed track.

Two years ago, *This England* received vital information which is so far largely unknown. Stephen Wilde, who presents a records programme on a hospital radio station in the North of England, was traveling from Leeds to Manchester in the early 1980s when he picked up a hitch-hiker. The two men were chatting about music when the hitch-hiker suddenly adopted an American accent and told Mr. Wilde that Glenn Miller's plane had crashed in the Fens district of South Lincolnshire! Mr. Wilde's recollection of that startling message are printed in the accompanying panel. [Editor: the sidebar story mentioned above] He admits it was a meeting that changed his life and that since then he has felt a responsibility to make the world think again about the famous band leader's disappearance.

The hitch-hiker had taken on the persona of Glenn Miller and salient points in his message indicated that the plane could be found near "the Black Horse" in the Fens, with a family called Appleby or Applewhite living nearby. Over recent weeks, *This England* has been making its own enquiries in the area, speaking to aviation experts and local people. Their opinion confirmed that it would have been quite possible for a small aircraft to have crashed and disappeared in an isolated part of the boggy Fen district, which stretches from the Wash to the Wolds. But though the aircraft would almost certainly have broken up into a thousand fragments on impact, the engine would have survived and may still lie sunken deep within the boggy ground.

Clues referring to the "Black Horse" have been investigated. There is a small wood called "Black Holt" near Coningsby, which was an American air base during the war; but after 50 years we were unable to trace anyone called Appleby or Applewhite, although there is a White House on the road near Mareham le Fen and "Black Horse" pubs all over the area, from Old Bolingbroke

to Spalding. There was also a "Black Horse" pub at Thorpe Fen, but it closed before the war.

The area is one of England's most sparsely populated regions -- flat and largely featureless, crisscrossed with dykes and wide ditches. The Lincolnshire Fens were drained in the 17th century, before which they were largely covered in shallow water; but the land remains boggy to this day.

The "Norseman" aircraft was a monoplane powered by a 600 hp air-cooled Pratt & Whitney engine, and with a 50 ft wing span. It could seat two in the pilot's compartment, with room in the cabin for up to eight passengers or two tons of freight. The air temperature on the day was 34 degrees Fahrenheit -- just two degrees above freezing. There was steady drizzle and almost total cloud cover at only 200 ft. Freezing point would have been reached soon after take-off. Carburettor icing could have been a problem -- did the pilot forget to switch on the carburettor de-icer?? Or was Lt. Col Baessell planning a short stop at a US airbase further up north to pick up supplies?

Even a slight error in navigation could have put Morgan on the wrong track. A former pilot has told *This England*: "It is unlikely that the "Norseman", carrying passengers in wartime, would have received clearance to pass directly over London and the Kent coast. His route would more likely be due East, say a course of 090, flying via Ipswich or an airfield near the Suffolk coast, then taking a southerly track to avoid the highly active south-east corner. However, if the pilot was inexperienced in instrument flying and made the error of setting a course of 009 degrees instead of 090 degrees the track from Twinwood would take him directly towards the Fens."

Someone, somewhere, may be able to solve the jigsaw puzzle that could lead to the Miller plane being discovered. Today's sophisticated technology -- such as satellite photography and the subterranean radar device recently used by police to unearth

murder victims -- could perhaps locate the plane's crash site if it is in the Fens.

There are, more sinister aspects. Baessell was known as a buccaneer who lived life close to the edge, and Glenn Miller was intolerant of delay; did a suspected change of course spark an argument on board? And why was no distress signal ever received? Was whatever happened to the plane so sudden as to leave Morgan no time to use his radio? Then there's the extra enigma of Glenn's missing briefcase; just what did it contain?

We make no judgment but feel that the theory resulting from Mr. Wilde's encounter could, even now, be investigated by the authorities. Glenn's wife Helen, died in 1966 and beside her resting place in a California cemetery, a memorial tablet to Glenn Miller has been erected over an empty grave. The message received by Mr. Wilde included a request for a Christian burial. That is the least the world can do to thank Glenn Miller for the beautiful music he gave to us all.

BRIAN MARTIN

Here is the sidebar story which appeared at the end of the text reproduced above.

The hitch-hiker's message

It was a sunny day about ten years ago when van driver Stephen Wilde of Stockport (Cheshire) stopped to pick up a hitch-hiker on the Leeds to Manchester road. The man, who was slim, dark-haired and in his late twenties, spoke with a Lancashire/Northern accent. The two men began chatting about music for Mr. Wilde explained that in his spare time he acted as a disc jockey for the local hospital radio station.

Mr. Wilde (now 45) recalled "We were approaching the roundabout where the road toes off in the general direction of Bolton and Heaton Park, and were discussing a particular record which was doing well in the Top Twenty when, to my

amazement, the man suddenly began speaking in an American drawl:

He said: "I'm glad you like my music."

I asked: "Why? Who are you? -- and the hitch-hiker replied: "I'm Glenn Miller."

Mr. Wilde stared at him in astonishment. "I could have fallen through the floor with shock," he recalls. "I had difficulty in concentrating on my driving." The man continued to look straight ahead and speak with an American accent. His voice was a monotone, as if repeating instructions, but his message was remarkable and Mr. Wilde resolved to write down as much of it as he could. It was, as he remembers it:

"The aircraft came down in the fens near the Black Horse. The people nearby are called Appleby, White Thorn House, Blackfriars Road...Mare (or Mayor)...pub...Gate. We sank in the fen. There's a briefcase."

The man continued: "I must warn you, there'll be a bit of a stink about this....I know the area mentioned is not in the direction of Paris.

"It has been a long time...I would like a Christian burial."

Then, reverting to his normal voice, the passenger asked Mr. Wilde to set him down at the next roundabout. When he stopped, the man got out and walked away in the direction of Bolton. Mr. Wilde never saw him again but says he jotted down the message as soon as he got home. Explaining why it was some years before he made it public, he said "I hesitated because I thought no one would believe me."

He contacted *This England* and related the story to us. Asked who he thought the mystery man was, he added: "I believe he was a psychic contact, perhaps a medium relaying a message from Glenn Miller. In his own way, Glenn may have chosen me in an attempt to solve the mystery of his disappearance.

"I just feel I have a duty to make it known so that this thing can be cleared up once and for all."

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Here follows the latest contribution from our favorite correspondent, Ziggy Zartman. Ziggy is, as usual, a fascinating story-teller and together with interesting memories of experiences he had during his years of service, we're privileged to have some of Ziggy's introspective thoughts about what was going on at the time. Enjoy!

Adventures within (and beyond) the clouds

The TV "look-backs" to commemorate the 50th anniversary of D-Day, 6 June '44, focused briefly on one salient event at the Omaha Beach military cemeteries in Northern France. It featured a gray-white-haired, clean-shaven, freshly showered, nattily garbed English Leather doused, wide-eyed old American soldier who, while SOME YEARS BACK, wandering around the hallowed grounds marked with white stone crosses, met and greeted a clean-shaven, freshly showered, loden dressed, Old Spice doused, wide-eyed, gray-white haired old German soldier who had been wandering around similar grounds marked with GRAY stone crosses. They had exchanged greetings and conversed about their war roles (when unshaven, disheveled, crummy, smelly, exhausted and squinting, they first saw "Ami" and "Kraut" over gun sights). Wiser now...SCHOOLED IN THE MADNESS OF WAR, old hatreds subdued, they became friends!! Over the years they enjoyed visits with each other's families in their respective homes and countries. The TV documentary featured them meeting again during the anniversary events, embracing...genuinely happy to be with each other. I hope the Arabs and Jews (of Palestine), the Serbs, Croats and Muslims (in Tito land), the North and South Koreans.....were all watching. Maybe the poignancy of this event, to me, relates to my German ancestry; I honestly don't know. This "war story's" message (violence everywhere) *THERE IS HOPE FOR MANKIND!*

Reminiscing....not an uncommon mood for olde-troop-carrier-guys (all 315th TCG members now qualify). My flight instructor in Primary, civilian Group

Commander, J.S. Barnard, was already a face-weathered, mustacheod, old-time aviator. He first "took off" around 1911 (if my right cerebral half is still "tuned") when Wilbur and Orville still shared the skies with the early aeronauts. Before turning me loose SOLO, he thrilled me with more than a few buzz-jobs...skimming nearby ponds and racing amidst the cumulus canyons which featured the skies above the warm sod of Hicks Field, Texas, a WWI Aviation Training Station, reopened in 1940. For me, he personified my youthful heroes...Lindy (Lindbergh), Wiley (Post), Amelia (Earhart) and Jimmy (Doolittle), their feats often reported in the *Shamokin News Dispatch*.

With several months of ground school and military hazing at the San Antonio Aviation Cadet Center now history, I met my intrepid PRIMARY instructor while displaying the best Ziggy grin I could muster; tho, a moment later, "JC" was giving me the dickens for dropping the parachute which had been loosely slung over my right shoulder (nervous as I reached out to grasp his extended hand.) Soon, nevertheless, I would cherish the air on which "JC" soared. With me in the front seat of the primary trainer, a single engine, fabric-covered, open cockpit monoplane, Fairchild PT-19A we took off on my introductory ride....he pointing out significant terrain features and the knobs, levers, pedals etc. that made the plane perform. I liked him; he seemed to like me. Very soon I changed my mind. HE DIDN'T LIKE ME! Repeatedly he banged the control stick against my bruised knees and yelled embellished instructions thru the gosport that reddened my face every time we went

up together. But he did have a fun side too. Invariably, when I was really concentrating on a maneuver, perhaps a figure eight around a barn and the nearby ranch house....keeping the needle a steady full width and the ball centered (high tech stuff then, remember?), the wing pivoting on a building and the altitude steady at maybe 500 feet, he'd abruptly pull the throttle to the stop and yell (into the gosport) "EMERGENCY LANDING". After numerous such surprises, I ultimately learned to find a sign of the wind direction while trying so spot a suitable landing site (no big deal in Texas). Each time, as I approached the touchdown point, he'd yell "I've got it"....ramming the throttle forward, but keeping the nose down, a mini buzz job before the next lesson. When he finished with me (Primary...ground school and flying school lasted about 100 days), I COULD FLY (lingering teen-age logic)! His patience, skills, aviation savvy and teaching "technique" may be the reason I survived WWII...WHO KNOWS (the haloed Command Pilot in the White A-2 jacket ain't saying)! My last words to J.C. were "I'll see ya," but I never did. Whatever his essence out there in the vast, dark beyond, I'd bet he has found a sanctuary where billowing clouds create canyons...passage-ways, where Souls experience speed and ecstasy....the ethereal buzz-job. WOW!

Now, musing "beyond the clouds." Unless, as a passenger on one of my commercial airline flights to a 315th reunion the aircraft was above "angels 39 or 40" (39000 or 40000 feet), that's as aloft as I've ever been....PHYSICALLY. On reverie tangents, I've been to the periphery of the Milky Way, light years away, PEERING, PONDERING, WONDERING....despite uncountable Light sources (millions of other galaxies, too far away to see their individual stars), there is a lot of DARKNESS out there! Yet, communications experts on numerous radio bands, spend endless hours recording and listening to the sounds emitted from space, hopeful that other beings OUT

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THERE will say something that "we" can detect and maybe encode. Actually, "out there", the message that I kept "hearing" was twofold: FIRST...."hey, Ziggy, we other life-forms, we're OUTHERE, and one day we'll touch base (we need *Intercourse*....the redesigned Gooneybird with its special and biiig JATO bottles (NASA's Space Shuttle) just won't hack it: SECOND...."Ziggy, the "truths" that you (and most of humankind) seek are not OUTHERE. Planet Earth is already OUTHERE....orbiting your favorite STAR, which in turn, orbits the dense center of the Milky Way which is just one galaxy (of an un-numbered quantum) moving "out" astride the fabric of space-time...in the midst of an eight to sixteen billion year old universe (current conflict: stars older than the predicted age of the universe).

Soooo, to find "life's highest truth," which most of us ponder (sooner or later), you've got to go INSIDE, deep, deep WITHIN to the depths of the SOUL...where an innate spirit implicates a Greater Power. Inexplicably, WITHIN is a vast area of Light where you can find yourself, your Maker, real peace and a measure of immortality!! Gandhi (Mahatma) Einstein (Albert), the Wrights (Wilbur and Orville), Campbell (Joseph), Hawking (Stephen), others less known, my "olde buddies" (including Mom, Dad and Gloria).... all of whom walked the earth during my time, gave my life: FIRST the UPDATE.....Mom and Dad's "answers" were based on their "exposure" (grand traditions, rituals, myths, more or less "inherited" and accepted,) but, in my opinion, deserving more thought. Earth is no longer "flat". Earth "now" rotates around the sun; Earth's mountain tops no longer harbor the Gods that released lightning bolts; etc, etc. Our unique blue and white planet really is round and beautiful; not a lifeless sphere, but a laboratory for life-forms. Observed from a space probe departing our solar system, it became a small, blue dot. Cosmic chaos is somewhat predictable, evolutionary markers exist, INEXPLICABLE EVENTS PERSIST; and

only when TAPS mournfully sounds the SOUL'S marching orders, do we CROSS THE BRIDGE to TRUTH ! It matters not that the Creator , the haloed Command Pilot wearing the White A-2 jacket (if you will)...whatever "his"? essence, may not be among the Gods which the world's religions have conceived (generally in our image). All the fussing (violence) over sacred rites, holy scripture and "fundamental" interpretation, from any "bridge", is not exactly a "do unto others, do unto you" approach. SECOND: a PURPOSE...maybe, to assure that "faith, hope, charity and peace" remain guiding vows during humankind's quest on EARTH ! (or, was it me giving "purpose" to the careers of the "brass"? It would really have been great to have you with me on my various escapades. I like second opinions!!

Back to real time. I still remember my "highest" flight. It was a field-grade night to fly...a few scattered orographic "cbs" (cumulo nimbus, mountain induced thunderstorms) off in the distance...otherwise a clear sky. I was "up" only to get in at least four hours flying time so I'd qualify for the monthly USAF "hazard" dividend added to the paycheck. Although practically all of my jet time was in the T-Bird (T-33, tandem-seated trainer) the plane "they" scheduled me to fly was the Lockheed P-80 Shooting Star, the USAAF's second production jet fighter (Sixty-six Bell P-59A Airacomet's were briefly #1, but couldn't outfight the P-51 Mustang) the single seat predecessor to the T-Bird. I departed Fairchild AFB near Spokane, WA (nearby Mt. Spokane's snow cap glistening in the late day sun) , enroute via some dog-legs to Chanute AFB, Rantoul IL. Having cruised eastward (altitude round "angels 36") for the allotted time, once doing a "360" just to kinda put a knot in the contrail, the sun setting behind me...with Air Traffic Control's "cleared to" , I retarded the throttle, popped the dive brakes and watched the altimeter whirl in reverse as I dove for (descended to) Chanute ...leveling off (in the clear)...passed to the LOCAL CONTROL channel....the TOWER reporting

no other traffic...with a slight turn, cleared straight in....gear down, landing light on, threshold runway markers zipping by underneath the wings, the nose right on the centerline...a tire-squealing grease job and I'm braking hard for an intersection turn-off (shortcut) to the parking ramp (*Ziggy, you're "hot" tonight*) ; THEN, UNBELIEVABLY STUPID (if you've flown the T-Bird or P-80, you know it's the proper word) I punctured my ego balloon by letting the free-wheeling nose gear COCK (while holding),...looking for the ramp tech with the lit-up wands, (unable to move...were his 99 cent batteries dead?)....I required ground crew help just to park the plane ! Red-faced but undismayed (you don't become a skilled sailor on smooth seas, ya know), while the ramp guys refueled the plane, I headed for the nearest place with chow to recharge my "low" cells.

Then, "full" and having dispensed with the fly-boy's routine pre-flight visit to the head, I set about finding the weatherman to confirm the clear sky all the way back to Fairchild. I refilled (flight plan) and headed for the P-80. PREFLIGHT, STARTUP, TAXI, CLEARANCE (despite clear skies, my flight plan was IFR), TAKE-OFF and CLIMB were routine. Leveling off at, I think, "angels 39 or 40" retarding the throttle to CRUISE, I reported to Air Traffic Control, loosened my safety harness a smidgen (shouldn't have eaten that hot dog after the cheeseburger), folded back the top of a glove to check my chronometer against the panel clock, wiggled the oxygen mask to eliminate an itch, noted the altitude and heading....then hummed two repetitions of the first stanza of a "thirties" juke box tune *Begin the Beguine*. Shortly, all needles pointing within operational ranges, I turned the panel lights as low as I dared, checked the spotlight focused on my strapped-on leg chart (turned it off) then, helmet visor stowed, glanced up thru the canopy at the high altitude, moonless (very dark, very clear) specially sparkling, panorama of the Milky Way...this was flying with the Muses ! If you

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read enough science, philosophy and astronomy (a variety of sacred pages, too) and blend it with nights like this...only the dull, mesmerizing rumble of the engine and an occasional voice in the headset creating sound, you surmise that you are in the cat-bird seat to the cosmos. Stars by the "millions" seemed to flicker (actually, we see less than 3000 of the brightest stars with the naked eye) most of them with potential for orbiting planetary systems, not unlike the solar one with sporadic flares that we see every day as the Earth turns ...and that is just within our galaxy, the only one whence we can view stars with unaided vision. The haloed Command Pilot in the White A-2 never told me so; yet, I'd bet my bankroll (not exactly a wad of big bills) that out there in the vast darkness, a Greater Power knows that other life-forms, on other planets revolving around other stars, are coping, praying to the mysterious Forces that create inexplicable events, and wondering what spheres (if any) are out there orbiting that dull, distant star, our Sun....us! As the Native Americans say, to really KNOW, you've got to wear "the other guy's A-2 jacket"...well, it was something like that!

Back at Fairchild, Gloria and the kids met me at OPS. Another day, another flight, another special moment for a fly-guy whose Captain's insignia was beginning to rust. Yet, boy, did it ever beat mining coal!

Gotta go...still moody. I remember a pottery course at Colorado Mountain College...to give my mind some "space" after the bout with thyroid cancer that forced me to retire. I was taught to knead, then "throw" clay and create "stuff." When not kicking the wheel, I kinda became aware that God's clay (stardust), the basis for nature's clay (the cell) created body and soul...us!

Finally, guys, this "war story" reveals me; it does not fault you...whatever your ideas about our "future".

.....ZIGGY

Here's some additional input from Ziggy who recalls a few of the important flights we flew during the war and finishes by urging our readers to get to the 1996 reunion

TWENTY-FIVE MINUTES WHEN WE BONDED

St. Mere Eglise...Grave....Arnhem...Driel... Wesel: just five minutes on the outskirts of each of these ETO towns; one French, three Dutch, one German...IP (Initial Point) to the DZ (Drop Zone) to the DIVE for the tree tops (300 seconds of tense "flying" near each town that culminated the long, sometimes tedious, sometimes exciting, often dangerous hours (months) of training at Spanhoe.

Three hundred "clock ticks" when there were no "fun- levers" in any 315th Troop Carrier Group transport or glider cockpit...no one counted these minutes as the panel clock hands ticked, the machines-of-war now at 700 feet, slowing to 110 mph. On the ground, sauer-essen "stuffed" enemy gunners fired at the "sitting Gooney -Bird silhouettes. Seated on folded flak vests, wearing one, a flak helmet protecting heads, nothing but thin alclad aluminum separating the aircrews and paratroopers from the projectiles of war...nausea or diarrhea no problem now (sphincter muscles at both ends of the GI tract unnaturally tight)...body rhythms revved up....DUTY at its finest.

Until the troopers jumped ACTION meant only one thing: HOLDING YOUR FORMATION POSITION; static lines pulled in REACTION meant GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE! On night drops, tracers and shell bursts created a keenly observed, scary 4th of July display...during daylight missions (4 out of the 5), popping gray/black puffs of smoke (also scary) highlighted the course.

Back at Spanhoe, the non-flying personnel who kept us flying...every last one of them adept at a necessary specialty, scanned the skies for the first signs of returning aircraft...the haloed Chief Pilot in the White A-2 jacket listening to their prayers. Just twenty-five minutes between 6 June 1944 (St. Mere Eglise and 24 March 1945 (Wesel) when

some of our buddies flew their final mission; when others returned to base disable; when every member of the 315th TCG fulfilled their commitment to Uncle Sam and the Yanks back home who worked overtime to send us the supplies and machines from the ZI arsenal.

WE DID GOOD GUYS! Sooo, don't just sit on your derriere reading the NEWSLETTER. SHOW UP AT MILWAUKEE and give your old buddies a hug. IT'S A GREAT FEELING. Remember too, gals (nurses, wives, widows,) "guys" means you too !!

Gotta go. It's time to LIMP over to the mailbox (after total left knee replacement surgery that's not mending like the Doc said it should).

.....Ziggy

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In the last issue of the *Newsletter* we ran a story received from our newest correspondent, Chuck Lovett, recounting an experience trying to fly a German aircraft, the Fiesler Storch. In the story that follows, Chuck tells a story about an incident during which a Piper aircraft was involved. Goes to prove the point that when a couple of young Yanks with nothing else to do at the moment decide to fill in their time, *anything* might happen!

A "MOO"VING EXPERIENCE

Sometimes, between missions, there wasn't much to do at Spanhoe. During one of these lulls Randy Morgan (34th Squadron pilot) and I decided to check out one of the L-4 Piper Cubs and buzz the countryside. After buzzing several farms -- well out of sight of Spanhoe, of course -- it was decided to land on one of the farms just for the hell of it. This was Randy's idea, but I thought it would be fun, so went along with it. We spotted a farmer's field what we thought we could set down in and came on in for a landing. The field was quite small and the ground was bumpy, but we made it OK. We taxied over to one corner of the field, shut

off the engine, and then proceeded to turn the plane around (by hand), backing it into a corner of the field so that we'd have the maximum amount of room to take off. While we were doing this, several cows strolled over to within a few feet of the plane. I had heard that cows like to eat the fabric on airplanes -- or, maybe it's the dope that the fabric is coated with that attracts them. Whether this is what attracted them or if it was just curiosity about this strange thing that had landed in their grazing grounds, I don't know. Anyway, Randy and I tried to shoo the cows away, but they seemed to want to mill around right in the area we needed for takeoff. Finally we decided to locate the farmer and have him round up his cattle so we could get out of there. I don't think he was too happy about this. After a pretty bumpy takeoff run we bounced into the air, barely clearing a fence enclosing a pigpen. Everything turned out all right, but it would have been highly embarrassing if we had had to explain to our C.O. how it had happened that we had a collision with a cow, or ended upside down in a pigpen!

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A BRIEF "FILLER" ABOUT THE C-47 FROM NOVEMBER, 1995 AIR FORCE MAGAZINE

C-47 Skytrain/Li-2: First flown as the commercial DC-3 prototype in 1935, the military C-47 version and its Soviet License-built counterpart, the Lisunov Li-2 (NATO "Cab") have outlived many of their modern successors on day-to-day operations in the Far East/Pacific area. China has the largest fleet, with about 30 Li-2s still flying with the PLA Air Force and nine with Aviation of the People's Navy. More than 20 in Vietnam are thought to be a mix of Li-2s and C-47s. Other C-47 operators are Indonesia's Army and Air Force with a total of nine, the Air Force of the Laotian People's Liberation Army (seven including at least three AC-47 gunships), and Taiwan's Republic-of-China Air Force (nine) which also uses an EC-47D for nav aids calibration. (*Data for C-47B except where indicated.*)

ROBERT M. DAVIS

b. November 11, 1918 d. November 16, 1995

I have never before tried to write an obituary, and aside from noting the details -- date of birth, date of death, etc. I don't know where to begin writing about our good friend and comrade, Bob Davis.

That he was a very good C-47 aircraft commander and an excellent pilot is well known to everyone who served with the 315th TCG in World War II. Those of us who flew with Bob respected his piloting skills and appreciated his sound judgment; and, always, whenever he and his crew landed at a "strange" airbase or field, Bob's first concern, after concluding the required formalities of filling in flight and engineering forms, was the well-being of his enlisted crew members -- if they had transportation, where they would be quartered, where they could mess and, when appropriate, how his men could get leave passes to visit nearby towns.

In short, we enlisted men were always glad to be assigned to fly freight/passenger trips with Bob and when the mission might prove more serious (D-Day, etc.) his crew knew they were in good hands.

Though I knew Bob Davis during the war, I think I came to know him best and to admire his dedication to the 315th when he took on the job as Treasurer of our Association. Never did a veterans' group (or for that matter, any other group) have a better, more dedicated officer than we had in Bob as our Treasurer.

Bob's death leaves an unfilled void in the lives of all who knew him. I know every one of us joins in extending sincere condolences to Sue, his wife and to his sons John and Ross and daughters Barbara and Debra.

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A note from Sue Davis to our readers:

I want to thank all of you who have expressed to me messages of sympathy and regret upon Bob's death in November. His association with the WWII group gave him such great joy, and his duties as treasurer were a pleasure rather than a chore. His fellowship with you men meant so much to him, and the many words and acts of sympathy I have received mean to me more than I can put into words. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Suzanne Davis

Sandy Friedman sends us an amusing story that solves a problem about the "bite". Our thanks to Sandy.

In 1941, when Pearl Harbor sent us to war, I was 21 years old and about to be drafted. I immediately enlisted in the Air Corps.

After my initial examination, I was rejected because of Mal-occlusion. I asked the Medic: "what is that?" and he informed me that I had a bad bite, my front upper and lower teeth did not meet, therefore, I could not be accepted. When I inquired about what would happen next, I was told that I would be returned home and drafted, as Mal-occlusion was acceptable for draftees. However, if I signed a waiver, I could go thru with the enlistment. I signed and was accepted.

In 1985, stopping at Yorktown VA, we visited an encampment re-enacting the Revolutionary War in that area. When they showed us how soldiers loaded the muskets, using powder (wrapped in a paper tube), shot, (bullet) and a ramrod to tamp it into place, they casually mentioned that unless the soldier had teeth that met in the front (no Mal-occlusion) and could tear the powder tube with the one free hand and his teeth, they were rejected from military service.

Now that we no longer use muskets, I wonder if that 1776 regulation has finally been removed from the books?

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From Bill Brinson:

David Javorsky, 232 E. Southgate #3, Salt Lake City UT 84115, whose brother Carl Javorsky, was killed when the plane on which he was the radio operator was shot down in Holland on Operation Market/Garden in September 1944 has written to Bill requesting information concerning the crash. Bill has provided him with as much information as he has from official reports, including date, approximate time of crash, other crew members, location, etc. If any 315th member has additional information concerning Carl Javorsky's death, Bill requests that you write David and give him what information you have. Carl Javorsky was a radio operator who was in the 34th Squadron initially, but was in the 310th Squadron after it was formed and was assigned there at the time of his death.

Len Zurakov, a 315th member who lives the greatest distance from the U.S. (Israel) and seldom misses a reunion, sent your editor a letter which gave me a real chuckle. We're sure our readers will have a similar reaction.

December 9, 1995

Dear Ed:

Having just finished reading your October '95 *Newsletter*, I suddenly got an urge to tell a story. I'm willing to bet that no one had a similar experience. Anyhow, here goes.

The day before we were due to leave France, I was informed that the Communications officer had decided to fly as Radio Operator and, of course, he had decided to take my place. That meant, of course, an ocean voyage for me.

Feeling plenty p____d [Editor: after all, this is a family newspaper!] I gathered a few of my buddies who were also not flying, and off we went to the village. We must have had quite a snootfull, because all I can remember is walking (or trying to walk) down that country road three abreast, and singing very loudly. I remember two bottles of wine in my flight jacket pockets, just in case. Do you remember the little incline leading up to the tent area? Imagine three drunks trying to make it up the little hill! At last, we did it and I went to sleep. The next morning I awoke with the sun shining into my eyes, and no tent overhead. I looked around and found no tents anywhere. The whole bloody outfit had moved out and left me behind! They had deserted me!

I decided to wander down to the field to see if there was any way I could get a ride to LeHavre (we had been told we would sail from there). Sure enough, a friendly ambulance driver offered me a ride, so I got into the back, lay down on a cot and went back to sleep.

I woke up in LeHavre a few hours later. The next day (I think) the outfit showed up, looking pretty tired and haggard after riding around in those box-cars (or so they told me). I went out to greet them, clean and fresh and feeling pretty good. The C.O., a Captain, I think, spotted me and roared "Where the hell have you been?" "Right here, Captain, just waiting for you."

After chewing me out for about 10 minutes (not letting me get a word in about having been deserted?) he finally told me I would be on KP on the ship for the whole trip back. I accepted this graciously (he also told me I would be busted down to Private if he got to Trinidad while I was there). As luck would have it, he was pretty sick during the voyage and I brought him orange juice every morning.

When I went down to report to the Petty Officer in charge of the kitchen, he took one look at my five stripes and told me I couldn't possibly do KP in his kitchen. So, he

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found me a tough job -- running the elevator up and down from the holds to the kitchen. Needless to say, I found food on this ship I hadn't seen for two years! Fresh milk, Jello, sliced ham, ice cream. You name it, they had it. As a result, I gained about 15 pounds in the 8 or 9 days it took to get to Trinidad and the Captain never found me again because we went on to Puerto Rico and he didn't.

One day I tried to help one of the guys by lifting a heavy case for him. Unfortunately, it had a steel band around it and I ripped open my hand, requiring 5 or 6 stitches and a tourniquet for the arm. (That was my Purple Heart). He, the Petty Officer, wanted to take me off the job, but I would have none of that! "I can run the damned elevator with one hand!" I told him. "I'm not giving up this job." and so it was.

Not a very exciting story, but true and I'll bet no one else had a similar one.

.....Len Zurakov

Re-reading Len's letter about waking up and finding the tent gone reminds your editor of a story....an honest-to-goodness true story that gives me a chuckle every time I think of it.

There was a guy in my squadron (43rd) who did a fantastic business in selling government property to the natives wherever we were in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and especially France. The stuff I can remember his doing a land-office business in were mattress covers. He'd cut three holes in one end of the mattress cover and lo! it was a full length garment such as those the Arab men wore. One hole for the head, the other two for the arms and no further alterations required. But the greatest coup this guy carried out was selling (yes, actually selling) two of those 25 ft. square pyramidal tents we lived in when we were at Amiens--- Glisy. I heard the story from one of the MPs who were based in the tent area: after most of the air echelon had left in their planes, the place was pretty well deserted, but most of the tents were still standing.

Then, here came one of those weird French trucks, powered, believe it or not, by a charcoal-fired boiler. Three citizens, presumably from Amiens or one of the small villages around the base, got down from the cab and began walking up and down the tent streets, all the while referring to sheet of paper they had. When the MP approached to learn what they were up to, they told him they were there to collect two tents they had bought and paid for! Then, showing what purported to be an official bill of sale for "two 25x25 ft. OD pyramidal tents, complete with center pole, fittings, wood floor, etc" they pointed to the diagram of the company street which located their newly purchased property.

Needless to say, those poor Frenchmen were quickly apprised of the fact that they had been swindled by someone who had no authority to sell any government property, let alone those two wonderful pyramidal tents. Running them off the base, the MP couldn't help feeling sorry for them and just wished he could identify and collar the guy who did the deed. That guy was well on his way to Waller Field in Trinidad by that time, so he was safe!

'98 SITE SELECTION 98 COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee already is getting suggestions for the '98 Reunion. Sounds early but will be coming up for vote this Fall at the '96 Milwaukee Reunion Business Meeting.

The Cincinnati site with its side bus trip to Wright-Patterson will probably come up again for a vote. Colorado Springs has been suggested and other Troop Carrier Groups have had a great time there. Atlanta is a possibility as it's centrally located with Value Jet Airlines flying in direct from over 80 cities. Will also have some new hotels and attractions following the Olympics.

New idea from Ziggy Zartman...a three to five day boat cruise, probably down the Mississippi. Ziggy is getting information on that possibility.

We'll end up someplace, but what's important is that we propose sites that the majority could favor and would attend. If you're even just contemplating attending, we'd like your suggestions and input. If you favor any of the ones mentioned, contact any one of the committee: Bill Brinson, Bob Cloer, Ziggy Zartman or myself. And the members' vote decides. Do you have a place you prefer?

We've received conflicting views on the importance of a central location which are said to give a maximum number of our members the most direct road and best possibilities for air travel. Your views on this point are also important in site selection.

We will also be soliciting ideas from the professionals handling the Milwaukee Reunion. If all goes well as expected with the '96 Reunion, no doubt we will be using them again.

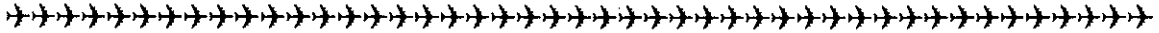
Let us hear from you. Three years in the future may seem a long time, but the decision must be made in less than a year.

J.H. "Bert" Petersen, Committee Chairman

ADDRESSES AND PHONE NUMBERS OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| "Bert" Petersen
221 E. Hewitt
Marquette MI 49855
Phone: 906/225-0028 | Bill Brinson
4733 Ivanhoe Road
Jacksonville FL 32210
Phone: 904/389-8325 | Bob Cloer
1417 Valley View Drive
Yuba City CA 95993
Phone: 916/674-3681 | Ziggy Zartman
181 E. Tamarisk Cir.
Parachute CO 81635
Phone: 970/285-7333 |
|---|---|--|--|

Due to the death of our Treasurer, Bob Davis, Marty Dean, Assistant Treasurer of the WWII 315th TCG Association, is taking on the duties and responsibilities of the treasurer's office.



Maurice F. (Marty) Dean, Assistant Treasurer
WWII 315th Troop Carrier Group Association
618 S. Chestnut
Arlington Heights IL 60005

Dear Marty:

Here's my check for \$10.00.....1 years' dues to the Association

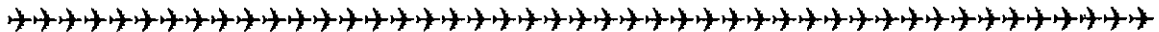
20.00.....2 years' dues

NAME.....SQUADRON.....

ADDRESS.....

CITY.....STATE.....ZIP.....

THANK YOU.....THANK YOU.....THANK YOU.....THANK YOU



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: NINTH AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION Inc.

Details on the Ninth Air Force Association's 1996 Convention:

DATE; Sunday, March 10 through Thursday, March 15

PLACE: Rio Suites Hotel, Las Vegas NV

THEME; Celebrating Fifth Anniversary of Victory in Desert Storm

HONORED GUEST AND SPEAKER:

General Charles A. Horner, USAF (Ret)

POINT OF CONTACT; Convention Chairman George Wagasky, Jr.

1005 Grammy Drive

Las Vegas NV 89128-5999

Telephone: 702 242-5632

Members of the 315th Troop Carrier Group can be assured of a warm welcome and an enjoyable time.