



315th Newsletter

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

ATTENDANCE NUMBERS SHIFTING AT REUNIONS

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One of the more pleasing changes in the attendance at the Association's biyearly reunions is the growing presence of daughters, sons, grandchildren and guests. Not in overwhelming numbers, but sufficient to indicate that the gatherings are an opportunity for families to share time and memories together. Some of which may explain the increase in attendance at the Colorado Springs reunion compared to the past two or three.

Data provided by Armed Forces Reunions - Inc., the management agency used by the Association - shows the Springs reunion official attendance included 90 members, 59 spouses, and 28 guests. These are registration data. It is likely that additional attendees were present for a day or so, but never officially registered and did not attend the Saturday evening banquet.

Several members commented on the evolving and changing mix of those on the tours and at social events. Old photos displayed on the notice board in the Hospitality Room drew interest from members' offspring. Further, descendants/ siblings/widows of deceased members sought insights into the role he may have played while a part of the 315th. "Tell me," was asked, "what was he like then. What did he do?"

At the banquet, a representative of the daughters and sons, introduced by Past President Bert Petersen, offered his thanks and that of his contemporaries for the chance to share our memories.

Contributing to the change is an organized effort, initiated by Pat Blaise, to encourage attendance by widows. Separate get-togethers can be arranged and tables shared at the annual banquet.

Overall, the changing mix offers opportunities for families to reunite from their often scattered locations. Reduced hotel rates, arranged tours and social events offer a convenient and friendly blend of past and present.

So, next time, bring 'em all.

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*PUT DAYTON
IN YOUR FUTURE*

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

OFFICIAL NOTICE BOARD

Message from the President:

When you read this message, the thoughts of our last Reunion in Colorado Springs last September will have become a pleasant memory. Those who attended can vouch for the good times shared by all. The tours, the entertainment and, especially, the camaraderie of associating with old friends who came for all parts of the United States and even from foreign countries were all designed to remind us of the real pleasures of life. Of course, we missed those who, for reasons best known to themselves, were not able to attend.

We are now well into the year 1999. Already plans are underway for the preparation of our next Reunion in the year 2000 to be held in Dayton, Ohio. A committee is planning to visit Dayton in May in order to personally view the hotels and study the recommendations of Armed Forces Reunions, Inc., who will be assisting in the management of the Reunion.

It is hoped that all of you who are reading this message will seriously consider attending the next Reunion. It has been said many times in the form of hints, which are true, that we are all getting up in years and that we may not be able to have many more Reunions. Therefore, it behooves each of us to make every effort to come to Dayton in 2000.

Ray M. Schwartz,
President

*Naples-Foggia *Sicily *Rome-Arno *Normandy *Northern France *Central Europe *Rhineland

*This Newsletter is published irregularly by the WW II 315th Troop Carrier Group Association, 1967 Iowa Ave NE, St. Petersburg, FL 33703.
Ray M. Schwartz, president Richard T. Ford, vice president J. S. "Stan" Smith, editor*

In a letter (5 June 1998) to "Doc" Cloer, Eric Richards, Hon. Secretary, 4th Parachute Squadron RE Club, reflects on the squadron's 18th annual week-end reunion held in the Falcon Hotel, Uppingham, Rutland, England.

4th PARACHUTE SQ. REUNION

"Yes, we are getting fewer each year. When we first starting tracing old squadron members back in 1977, via our commercial radio station, etc., we only traced 28, which is now dropped to 16. Several have died since or not physical about to drive up or attend.

"In 1944 our squadron was around 150. We had 20 killed at Arnhem, many like myself were wounded and taken POW. I was hit on my way down to the Rhine when we withdrew on the Monday, 25th September, 1944, spent over a week in a German hospital in Holland, then in early October in cattle wagons to Stalag X1b near Hanover, Germany. I did escape in February, 1945 but was recaptured a week later only 10 miles from the British lines. Evidently a British bomber was shot down, the crew bailed out, the two of us were caught in a woods by the German Military Police who were looking for the bailed out aircrew, so spent 6 weeks in solitary confinement to the end of March of '45, then the camp was liberated on April 16th '45.

"By-the-way, although it was now 54 years ago, I would like to take this opportunity to thank your group for dropping our squadron spot on the DZ of Ginkel Heath near Oosterbeck, Holland. There is a memorial on Heath to that drop where each year they hold a memorial service to all.

"I have been over to Arnhem on and off since 1965, including for the great 50th Anniversary. When my own time comes I have requested my ashes to be interned in our military cemetery in Oosterbeck. In 1994 they found two of our members still buried in their fox hole at our defense area near Oosterbeck. They were reburied in our military cemetery."

(After retiring from the Army, Sec. Richards became involved in activities of the Parachute Regimental Association. With 4th Squadron numbers decreasing he reports they will end their reunions in 1999.)

THE VENERABLE C-47

From *Air Force Magazine*, Feb., 1997

The C-47 transport was one of four weapons singled out by Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower as the most instrumental in helping the US win WWII. Having great longevity, it was also used in Korea and in Vietnam where it took on additional roles of attack as the AC-47 "Spooky" gunship and for psychological warfare missions. The need to take supplies over the Himalayas led to the C-47B version with higher horsepower engines. Among the unusual variants of the C-47 was one where the engines were removed and it was converted into a glider and another that was equipped with floats. The C-47 towed gliders and dropped 4,381 paratroopers in the invasion of Sicily on July 10, 1943. C-47 crews dropped 60,000 paratroopers and towed several thousand CG-4 gliders at Normandy on June 6, 1944.

C-47s were used extensively in the Berlin airlift. In one notable action in Korea, C-47 crews flew 4,689 casualties out of the Chosin Reservoir area in five days. In Vietnam, the AC-47 gunship effectively suppressed enemy ground forces and picked up the secondary nickname of "Puff, the Magic Dragon." On February 24, 1969, while flying in a AC-47, A1C John L. Levitow, stunned and wounded by shrapnel, flung himself on an activated, smoking magnesium flare, dragged himself and the flare to the open cargo door, and tossed the flare out of the aircraft. For saving his fellow crew members and the gunship, he was awarded the Medal of Honor. The last C-47 was retired from the Air Force in 1975.

(from the editor)

WE'RE LOOKING FOR

Stories: We have great contributors; but, more would be better. Tell us one of your memorable experiences involving the 315th, either serious, humorous, sad, rewarding, whatever. Set the scene and circumstances. With whom, your squadron members or others? Where, on base or off? The effect on you? Let's hear from you.

Larry Ison was one of the 34th Squadron's original radio operators, later becoming Communications Chief. Leaving the service in 1945 he entered Columbia University finishing in 1950 with a BA and MA, his thesis on the economics of the petroleum industry. After a stint with the New York Authority he joined The Arabian American Oil Company in Saudi Arabia, working as an Associate Economist and later moved into "line" positions. Leaving ARAMCO in 1969 he joined Mobil Oil headquarters in New York City, and then to the American Independent Oil Company in Kuwait. A widower, now retired, he resides on a farm in Albemarle County, Virginia. He has two sons and a nine year old granddaughter.

MY BRUSH WITH THE FOREIGN LEGION

by Larry Ison

When the thirty-fourth and forty-third squadrons were in North Africa we were stationed at a French air base at Blida, a town located some thirty miles south of Algiers. The base was operated by Free French forces, and there was consequently a considerable contingent of French soldiers living and working on the base. *(I mention these facts for the benefit of members the 315th who where not there.)*

In the course of my duties as communications chief of the thirty-fourth I had a rather frequent contact with a French sergeant, one of many Frenchmen on the base who provided various services to our squadron. His name was Jean-Jacques. *(The French are fond of double first names. From this long distance in time, I can no longer remember his surname.)* Pronouncing Jean-Jacques was awkward for me, so after we became friends I routinely called him Jack. He didn't mind me Americanizing his name.

Because Jack did not know English and I did not know French, we at first had to talk through various people on the French side who knew English. At a certain point Jack suggested that we enter into a cooperative arrangement wherein he would teach me some French and I would teach him English. We agreed. After that Jack would each day amble into our communication shack carrying his lunch, where I would be waiting for him to proceed with our studies. His lunch invariably consisted of a huge chunk of bread, a somewhat smaller chunk of yellow cheese, and a metal canteen cup of red wine. *(Can you imagine American soldiers being permitted to drink wine for lunch??)* From time to time I saved some small item or other from our mess hall to supplement Jack's monotonous lunch.

After several weeks we found that we could, with some difficulty, communicate with a broken and ungrammatical combination of French and English. One day Jack unexpectedly appeared in the middle of the afternoon. He seemed rather diffident and somewhat embarrassed, and after some urging from me he muttered that he had "une probleme". After further prodding, I discerned that the "probleme" involved "une femme", as well as an urgent need for transportation. I wondered what in the world he was up to. He went on to let me know that he was aware that I had control of jeep which was assigned to the communication division. He wanted me to help him out by using the jeep to carry a woman to some distant place.

I told Jack I was not authorized to take the jeep off the base except for strictly official business. He then explained that the woman was at a house with a family he knew in Blida, and that if I could go to town with him by taxi, she would explain everything, because she knew English. I said OK.

When I met the woman, it turned out that she was a nurse, and an officer in the Free French forces based in Casablanca. She was young, probably no more than twenty-five, and very attractive in her lieutenant's uniform. She explained that she was on leave, and had been able to fly from Casablanca to Algiers on a military aircraft. She had then taken a bus to Blida the day before and stayed over-night with the family of the house where we were meeting. She has been referred to them by mutual friends. She said that her husband was a Captain in the Foreign Legion and was based at a place called Sidi something or other *(I forget the other part.)* at some indefinite distance to the south-east of Blida.

She had no way to communicate with her husband, and that in any case he did not know she was coming, and she wanted to surprise him. She said that taxi drivers would not go such long distances into the country and that she couldn't afford it even if they would (*gasoline was extremely scarce in North Africa for civilians.*) The family she was staying with knew Jean-Jacques, and they had contacted him to see if he could help.

I believed her. Here it was: a true "damsel in distress" situation. Not only that, but a very pretty damsel.

I told her that I could make no promises, but that I would return to the base and try to arrange something. If I was unsuccessful, Jack would let her know. Otherwise, he and I would return together. She thanked me sincerely and emotionally for trying.

At the base, my communications officer at that time was an amiable Texan who never took life, or war, or anything else too seriously. I explained the situation to him and requested that he authorize me to take the jeep off the base for this obviously worthy humanitarian purpose. The Captain's blue eyes twinkled and his lips formed a slight enigmatic smile as if to say, "Ison, I never expected this of you." But he answered me, still with that ambiguous smile, this time accompanied with a wink. "Sure, you can take the jeep, Ison, but I'll expect you back on the job tomorrow morning."

By this time it was fairly late in the afternoon. I serviced the jeep with gas and oil and added two extra jerry-cans of gas plus one of drinking water. I picked up Jack at his barracks and we headed for town. I asked Jack if he knew where we were going and the distance to the Foreign Legion base. He admitted never being there but knew the location in a general way. He had a map of the area and said he thought the road junctions would have signs. He did not know the distance.

When we pulled up to the house where our damsel was staying, she heard the jeep and rushed out to greet us with a radiant smile, her face flushed with excitement and eyes filled with relief and gratitude.

She murmured over and over, "merci, merci, merci bien." Jack sat in the back with her single suitcase. She sat with me in front. We left Blida heading south on a pot-holed asphalt road. It was almost sun-down and after only a few miles darkness closed in and we were driving in open, almost empty country. We would occasionally see lights of a farmhouse or a small village off the road. An open jeep, with the sound of the motor and the whistling wind is too noisy for talk. We remained silent.

After driving about two hours we came to the end of the pot-holed asphalt. The paved surface simply petered out, faded away. I stopped and could see in the headlights a high post with several attached hand-painted signs pointing in various directions. I could also see that the terrain was quite barren, with little vegetation and faintly I could see unpaved but well-traveled tracks wandering off the main road in directions indicated by the signs. Jack got out to scrutinize the signs. After a moment he pointed to a track bearing south-eastward and then got back in. I drove off on the selected track. The ground was hard, with a marled, gravelly surface. While it had been graded in the past, it was now "washboarded". The jeep began to shudder and shake violently. It was also dusty and we could smell and taste the dust. However, the graded borders of the road were quite distinct, and it was not difficult to follow the track.

I heard our lady passenger several times exclaim, "Mon dieu, mon dieu, quelle route" (My God, what a road!) She complained no further, but held tightly onto the side of the jeep.

Finally, after bouncing along for more than an hour, we saw distantly a collection of lights directly in front of us. Jack leaned forward, and speaking loudly so we could hear over the noise, said, "Ah-ha, nous sommes arrive!" (We made it!) After a few more minutes we could make out the dim outline of the walls of a compound.

The road led directly to the main entrance, which had a pivoting iron pole across the road. Two sentries were at the gate, one on either side. Jack got out and spoke to them, one of whom came over and looked into the jeep with a flashlight.

See "Legion" page 9

(We occasionally offer an "Après le Guerre" story when it relates to the 315th Group. Here is one from Jack ("Jake") Mancinelli, one of the original assigned navigators. He was the sole remaining one when the Group departed Amiens for the Caribbean. The unusual circumstances on his departure from the Air Corps is related here.

and now -- THE REST OF THE STORY

by "Jake" Mancinelli

After "Green Project", our pre return-to-America, Bob Gibbons (then Colonel, later Maj. General) and I were transferred to Dover, Del., where Air Transport Command launched flights to Europe, Africa and Asia. One day, while preparing for a flight to Asia, I was summoned to Group Headquarters and told that unless I immediately signed certain papers signifying an intent to remain in the service that I would be released post-haste.

Earlier that week I had received a letter from Harvard University notifying me that I had been selected for "interview" and, subject to the interview, to take the entrance exam and compete with over 10,000 others for 1,200 entrance spots. This came as a great surprise. My sponsor was Lady Berkeley, the very gracious gray hair lady who ran the Jules Red Cross Club in London. She was a Bostonian, allegedly a one time girl friend of F. D. Roosevelt and the aunt of the dean of the Harvard medical school. He became "mentor" of several of us who had at one time visited the Jules Club.

Decision??? Sign to remain in the service or take a 100 to 1 shot at a very competitive exam (more than 80% of the 1,200 openings had pre-qualified).

I did not sign and was promptly released from the Air Corps. And now -- the rest of the story.

Concurrently, Col. Gibbons was reassigned to Westover Field, near Boston, to head ATC's North Atlantic flight operations. He had selected me and J. S. Smith to be assigned to his staff and put us on orders, unaware of my release from the service. A month or so later, on my way to Harvard to be interviewed - still in uniform enjoying accumulated leave time - I stopped at Westover to see the former troops. Col. Gibbons greeting was: "***Where in the hell have you been? I was about to report you AWOL!***"

Recovering, I explained what had and was happening. "Harvard," he said, "you never mentioned that to anyone." (*This former South Philly boy was not about to tell of my Don Quixote dream.*) I had assumed they knew of my release and transfer to the inactive reserves, where, incidentally, I remained "active" for the next 15 years. My "AWOL" solved, he congratulated me and we spent a pleasant half hour reminiscing. I visited Westover several times while at Harvard. Enjoyable reunions.

THE COPILOT

*I am the copilot, I sit on the right,
It's up to me to be quick and bright:
I never talk back for I have regrets,
But I have to remember what the Captain forgets.*

*I make out the flight plan and study the weather,
Pull up the gear, standby to feather'
Make out the mailforms and do the reporting,
And fly the old crate while the Captain is courting.*

*I take the readings, adjust the power,
Put on the heaters when we're in a shower.
Tell him where we are on the darkest night,
And do all the bookwork without any light.*

*I call for my Captain and buy him Cokes;
I always laugh at his corny jokes.
And once in a while when his landing are rusty,
I always come through with "By Gosh, it's gusty!"*

*All in all I'm a general stooge,
As I sit on the right of the man I call "Scrooge".
I guess you think that is past understanding
But maybe some day he will give me a landing.*

(Written in 1941 by Keith Murray, at that time a Captain with Colonial Airlines.)

**AMERICAN
AIR
MUSEUM**



Last August, Tom Fahey, 34th, and wife Elinor toured England and Scotland, including a visit to the recently opened American Air Museum. In the above photo, inside the massive main structure, Tom points to a plaque describing the C-47s WW II role. In the left photo Tom and Elinor are outside standing adjacent to a long, lucite-like wall displaying hundreds of etched B-24s, B-17s, C-47s, B-25s, P-51s, etc. Each one represents a combat loss of planes that flew out of England. Tom counted 96 C-47s. The largest array is for the B-17s: some 1,400. In the lower photo, the Faheys examine the wall along with niece Carol and her daughter Caroline, temporary residents in England.



**DUXFORD AIRFIELD
CAMBRIDGE
ENGLAND**



OFF THE GRAPEVINE

(AND OTHER QUESTIONABLE SOURCES)

STILL GOING

Sandy Friedman sent a December, '98 newspaper clipping relating how an "ice covered cargo plane" wiped out some approach lights plus an antenna while landing at a nearby airport. Result: runway closed for several weeks.

Seems the pilot reported an in-flight emergency due to ice and low fuel. During landing approach he clipped several towers shattering 20 lights, then sheared off an antenna of the instrument landing system. The antenna remained stuck in the wing. The 71-year-old pilot taxied to a parking area and he along with the co-pilot headed for a nearby hotel - not saying a word.

The cargo plane: that's right --- a C-47.

WORLD WAR II TRIVIA

Aircrews lost: Germany, 80,588; Britain, 70,281; U.S., 79,625.

Bombs dropped on Axis by Allies: 2,790,000 tons.

Troop Carrier: by war's end there were 29 TC Groups with more than 96 TC Squadrons.

GLIDER PILOT POEM

From 29th TCS Newsletter:

Oh, give me a fast flying glider
With wings long, graceful and slim
Set me loose in the air over Dover
And we'll win in the streets of Berlin,
And after we capture Herr Hitler
And have Goering sewed up in a sack,
There's only one question unanswered,
How the hell are we going to get back!

LIBERATION MUSEUM

Father Thuring advises it is likely the museum will soon acquire a "real" C-47, one built in 1942. Funds are being sought, the plane is to be flown, and will carry 1944 colors and signs. The Dutch Royal Air Force has promised full co-operation.

HOMILIES

(thanks to Leonard Zurakov)

- Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but it doesn't get you anywhere.
- People take different roads to seek fulfillment and happiness. Just because they're not on your road doesn't mean they've gotten lost.
- Too many people spend money they haven't earned, to buy things they don't want, to impress people they don't like.
(Will Rogers)
- Talk doesn't cook rice. (Chinese proverb)
- I often quote myself. It adds spice to the conversation.
(George B. Shaw)

GREATEST GENERATION???

TV newscaster Tom Brokaw has written a book titled "The Greatest Generation" about Americans who lived through the Depression and World War II (that's us). He says, "Their generation didn't fumble it. And they had such an extraordinary generosity of spirit, whether it was rebuilding their enemies, taking care of each other, not doing any of this kind of public self-examination.....the World War II generation was all about authenticity"

FUTURE FLIGHT

From the Internet

Aviation journals are predicting that future airliners will only require one pilot -- and a dog. It will be the pilot's responsibility to feed the dog. It will be the dog's responsibility to bite the pilot if he tries to touch anything in the cockpit.

From Honorary Member Jan Bos, Nijmegen:

In a letter to Doc Cloer, Bos tells that he, Father Thuring and three others are at work on a book containing the names of all para-troopers and glidermen of the 82nd Airborne who lost their lives in WW II. The book will have chapters on the history of the division. They plan similar books on the 101st Airborne and the 50th and 52nd Troop Carrier Wings.

CHURCH BULLETIN BLOOPERS

- 1) The Ladies Bible Study will be held Thursday morning at 10. All ladies are invited to lunch in the Fellowship Hall after the B.S. is done.
- 2) For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

HEARING AIDS

From a MacDill AFB newsletter: "Veterans Administration is considering the addition of organic diseases of the nervous system as an amendment to their regulations that recognize service-connected disabilities. When this change becomes effective, high frequency neural hearing aids can be authorized as a presumption of service-connected hearing loss.

LONG FLIGHT

Two "first time" airline passengers on a weary old 4-engine airplane were on an economy flight from Los Angeles to Miami. One by one, the engines started to quit, until there was only one left. Each time, the captain announced that there would be another hour delay in arrival time. When the third engine failed the one guy looked at the other and said, "You know, if that last engine quits we'll be up here all night."

The President of the 62nd T. C. G. said in a newsletter: "to express it in pilot talk we are all on base leg turning to final and I'm sure that most of us are hoping for a long final approach."

I'M FINE, THANK YOU
(attributed to Pete Segar)

*There's nothing the matter with me, I'm as healthy as can be.
I have arthritis in my back and knees, and when I talk, it's with a wheeze
My pulse is weak and my blood is thin, but I'm awfully well for the shape I'm in.
The moral of this as my tale unfolds, that for you and I who are growing old
It's better to say "I'm fine" with a grin, than to let folks know the shape we're in.
How do I know that my youth is all spent? Well my "get up and go" has got up and went.
But I really don't mind when I think, with a grin, of all the grand places my "get up" has been.
"Old age is golden" I've often heard said, but sometimes I wonder, as I get into bed
with my ear in the drawer and my teeth in a cup, my eyes on the table until I get up.
E're sleep overtake me, I say to myself, "Is there anything else I can put on the shelf?"
When I was young, my slippers were red and I could kick my heels right over my head.
When I was older, my slippers were blue and I could dance the whole night through.
Now I am old and my slippers are black. I walk to the store and puff my way back.
I get up each morning and dust off my wits, pick up my paper and read the "obits."
If my name is still missing, I know I'm not dead so I have a big breakfast and go back to bed.*

Thanks to Leonard Zurakov

Legion

He then swung open the gate, saluted, and we entered the compound. Inside were several buildings, some were small bungalows, while others appeared to be long, low barracks. Jack directed me to one of the bungalows. The door opened and a uniformed officer stepped out onto the porch. Jack saluted and spoke to the officer, and while he was speaking our lady passenger, recognizing her husband had jumped out and rushed up to the porch.

The husband let out a shout of unrestrained joy and swooped his wife into his arms. He covered her face, lips and neck with kisses. Both were laughing and crying at the same time. I was glad I did not have to speak just then because the lump in my throat was as big as an orange.

After the ecstatic couple calmed down they invited us into the house. The husband called a servant and instructed him to set the table for an impromptu dinner of sandwiches, fruit and wine. He offered to provide quarters for us to sleep over-night, but we declined.

We retraced our route to Blida and arrived as dawn was lighting the eastern sky.

NEW 315th CAPS

The Association is now accepting orders for a newly designed cap with a full 315th TCG Airborne Patch on the front and Chicken Tracks on the bill. The color is Royal Blue, of a high quality designed to last for years and made in the USA. Members should be proud to wear on a casual basis and, of course, at coming Reunions.

Custom made, at least 50 pre-paid orders are needed before processing. Cost is \$15, including delivery. The Association receives no benefit. If interested, send check or money order to:

Sanford Friedman
2425 Buckhurst Dr.
Beachwood, OH 44122

TAPS

WITH DEEP REGRET WE RECORD THE LOSS OF THESE COMRADES

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

Lynn H. Child	310th	1998
Oliver W. Cliver	34th	1998
Alan F. Crowley	34th	1997
Leo W. Decker	34th	1998
Kenneth R. Ford	Hdqs	1986
Thomas Frisbie	43rd	unk
Thomas C. Jenkins	43rd	1997
W. L. Johnson	43rd	1998
Thomas C. Kerans	310th	1998
H. B. Lyon	Hdqs	1999
Bernard L. Malay	34th	1994
Herbert C. Metcalf	309th	1998
James M. Terry	Hdqs	1998
Dr. Lillard L. Noland	310th	1994
Andrew G. Rengert	34th	1996
Harry D. Scott	43rd	1998
Stanley Snidow	34th	1998
Norman H. Zschiesche	43rd	1998

DONATIONS

The Association gratefully accepts donations given in memory of former comrades or acquaintances and to inform the families of such. Donations have been received *(since publication of the November Newsletter)* from the following:

- Irv Sternoff
- R. Kitchcart
- Ted Chase
- Glen Davis
- Doris Cliver
- Barbara Papp
- Sandy Friedman
- B. E. Pleasant
- Leonard Zurakov

Given in memory of: Marty Dean, Wally Sitarz, Rowan Perkins, Stanislaus Stakish, Orville Cliver, H. B. Lyon and also in support of the Colorado Springs Reunion.

WE HEAR FROM YOU ON THE SPRINGS AND DAYTON

Shortly after the Springs event., Leonard Zurakov wrote from Israel that he is already looking forward to the year 2000 Dayton reunion. He sends everyone his, "all the best."

George Doll wishes Dayton could be moved up 1999. Seems he was enroute to the Springs reunion, stopping along the way to visit friends. Then, in Salt Lake City, a Shirley Temple drink (he says) in one hand, camera in the other, he missed a step and landed on a concrete patio with a hand full of broken glass. An enclosed diagram of the hand shows some 25 stitches. The surgeon insisted he remain in town a few days for a follow-up look. Ergo! Missed the reunion. A "major disaster," he says, prompting the 1999 wish.

After the Springs reunion, Ray Middleton wrote Doc Cloer to say "...a note to tell you how much Jane McBride, her daughter Pat, myself, my son Miles and the Spitfire pilot, Bill Greenwood enjoyed being with the 315th Group....I personally felt it a privilege and a great honor to be amongst you wonderful people who gave so much to make life worthwhile for my generation and future generations....you folks may be getting on in years but to me it seemed that you all still have the spirit of youngsters...."

Norm Greene missed the Springs get-together after Legionnaires Disease put him into intensive care for 14 days, dropping his weight by 25 pounds. Now the weight's returning, as is his golf game and he's looking forward to Dayton.

H. B. LYON, FORMER COMMANDER

H. B. "Howard Britton" Lyon, beloved and admired former Commander of the 315th Group died the 18th of January, 1999. He was 82 years old.

In poor health for several years, he was a nursing home resident at Southern Pines, NC the city to where he and his wife, Mary Jane, had moved in 1974. She preceded him in death.

Friends recall H.B.'s quiet demeanor, masking a rugged determination able to carry him through the most challenging and adverse circumstances. A trait that served him well in early 1945 when he was shot down, captured, suffering severe wounds that led to a medical retirement after a long hospital stay.

He was born in 1916 in Burnsville, a small mountain town in Western North Carolina. Driven by the "Great Depression" the family moved to Asheville where H.B., at age 12, found his first job, "Page Boy" in a resort hotel. Fascinated by airplanes his goal was to become a "flyer" in the U. S. Army Air Corps. Needing two years of college, he worked multiple jobs while attending Asheville's Biltmore College and playing trumpet in a "jazz" band.

In 1937 he enlisted as a private in the USAAC. After basic training came an assignment to Panama; next to Langley Field and in 1939 acceptance into pilot training in Class 39D at Randolph Field. He recalled, "this enlisted service proved invaluable to me in later years."

After receiving his "wings" in November, 1939 the next stop was Middletown Air Depot, Middletown, PA flying C-33 and C-39 transports. In addition to a heavy flying schedule he served at various times as squadron adjutant, mess officer, supply officer, engineering officer, and operations officer. All excellent training for the days ahead.

It was at Middleton, in February 1941, he met Mary Jane (Kennedy). They married the following June 23rd, She later wrote, "we were blessed with three beautiful children, Patricia, Melissa, and Thomas. Despite the war and the toll it has taken we have been blessed."

When the 315th Transport (later, Troop Carrier) Group was formed in February, 1942 H. B. was part of the initial cadre and one of the officers who moved the group to Bowman Field, Kentucky, and then to Florence, South Carolina where he was first a Squadron C.O and then the Group Operations Officer.

From Florence the odyssey began: Battle Creek, Presque Isle, Greenland, Aldermaston, Blida, Welford Park, Spanhoe, Amiens and Trinidad. H.B.'s promotions followed: Florence, Captain; Greenland, Major; Blida, Lt.Col.; Spanhoe, Colonel. In 1944 he was acting C.O. of the 315th for several months due to the illness of the Commander and then assumed command on 1 November. He led the Group on Operation "Market Garden," the Holland airdrop, and was lead of an 81 ship formation on Operation "Varsity", the Rhine crossing. Heavy ground fire set his plane afire. Severely wounded, as were navigator and co-pilot, the crew parachuted safely but were quickly taken prisoner.

That shoot-down ended H. B.'s career with the 315th, and ultimately, the Air Force. The Group itself was disbanded a few months later. In the minds of most, however, H.B. has remained "C.O." His impact permanent.

Reminiscing about him, Bill Brinson, of Headquarters, said: "In my thirty years in the Air Force, I can say without hesitation that I had no commanding officer for whom I had greater admiration. Openness, frankness, candor were part of his nature. He was dependable. His word was his bond. He had character, distinctive qualities impressed upon him by birth, education, habit, or self discipline. He did what every good military commander should do -- he set a good example."

(Funeral and burial were at Southern Pines. Bill Brinson represented the 315th Association, which sent a remembrance wreath.)

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