



JULY, 1990

315TH NEWSLETTER

WORLD WAR II 315th TROOP CARRIER GROUP ASSOCIATION

FROM OUR PRESIDENT, BERNIE PLEASANT.....

GREETINGS:

July 15, 1990

A letter I recently received from the Commander of the 2nd Bomb Wing concerning the memorial for Duncan McRae, is quoted in its entirety.

Dear Mr. Pleasant:

I have received your "Offer of Gift" dated 4 April, 1990, on behalf of the WWII 315th Troop Carrier Group Association USAAF by which you transferred a memorial to the 315th Troop Carrier Group USAAF to the United States of America as a gift.

By authority of the Secretary of the Air Force, I accept with pleasure your gift of the memorial, pursuant to 10 U.S.C. 2601.

Thank you for your kindness and generosity.

Sincerely yours,

JOSEPH F. MUDD, Col. USAF
2 BMW, Commander

Harry Black, will you update all the prices and data you gave us in 1988 so we may possibly consider Albuquerque as a possible site for our 1992 reunion?

Anyone else who is interested in hosting the 1992 reunion in a city of their choice, do likewise. This time we want enough data with which to make an informed selection for a 1992 reunion.

Please come to the business meeting this year prepared to state what changes you would like to see made or what new things you would like our organization to undertake. Should we reduce or increase the yearly dues for our members? I will ask Bob Davis for his opinion during the business meeting and we can discuss the matter at that time.

Leonard Thomas, will you and Ed Papp brief us on the status of our request for a memorial at the Air Force Academy Cemetery?

I will have all the data on costs for the 315th T. C. G. memorial at the 8th Air Force Museum in case someone wants to discuss that subject.

I honestly believe the reunion in September will be the best one we have ever had. Bob Cloer and his committee members have worked diligently planning the affair. A lot of our members live within 4 or 5 hundred miles of Norfolk, and I expect a good turnout. We are not getting any younger and we shouldn't miss an opportunity to see and visit our friends. If you haven't made your reservations, please do so as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

over, please

IT'S REUNION TIME -- 1990

By the time you receive this July newsletter the time will be very short till old friends meet again at the **OMNI HOTEL** in **NORFOLK**. I just hope that you are one of those that we will be greeting. We have received quite a few registrations again this year from some of our old buddies who will be making their first 315th Reunion. At the last reunion in San Antonio, I think that we had over 30 members who were first timers - lets beat that this year ! !. This should be the largest reunion yet.

NOW WE NEED YOUR HELP ON A COUPLE OF DATES. I have signed a contract for the reunion committee with a cruise ship for up to 250 seats. If we need more - we can probably get more - if we let them know 30 days in advance. **THAT** is the problem. I have to pay the company for the seats we are going to use 30 days before the cruise. I have to call them on the 28th of **August** and let them know the numbers of seats we will use and send a check at that time. This means that I need your registration forms and fees in hand no later than the 27th of **August**. **PLEASE** help us with this !

NEXT: Remember - YOU make your hotel reservations with the **Omni International Hotel** and to get the \$65 room rate, you must have your reservations in by the 5th of **Sept**. Reservations may be cancelled without penalty up to 48 hours before arrival date.

WIVES & WIDOWS -- Please come to the reunion. You are all part of the old 315th and we all welcome you. We have things planned for the women to enjoy and there is plenty of free time for the men to take you places, "after they have won the war, one more time"!

As you all know, our reunion dates are Sept. 27th thru the 29th. As many of our people make this sort of a combined vacation every two years, they seem to come a few days early and stay a few days after the reunion. This year we will be in operation from the 26th thru the 30th. We recommend that you try to arrive at least by noon on Thursday the 27th, as we have a "WELCOME TO NORFOLK" tour that will be departing the **Omni Hotel** at 2:00 PM. If you do not have time to check into the **Hotel**, you can always do that after you return from the tour.

About half of the registrations we have received so far have indicated that they are going to stay over for the Navy tour on Sunday the 30th. As we will be having lunch with the Navy, we have to give them numbers in advance. If you have already sent in your registration but did not ask for the tour, you can still sign up by sending me your check for \$21.00 for each person.

REUNION INFORMATION

For those flying in commercial or private, you should use Norfolk International Airport. Limousine rate to the Omni is \$7.50 and cab fare is \$12 to \$13. For those in RV's - There are two great RV Parks in Virginia Beach, which is about 21 miles from the Omni. They are the Holiday Trav-L-Park (800/548-0223) and the KOA. The rates are about the same for both. The KOA rate for full hook-ups is \$23.00 - but if you tell them you are part of the 315th Reunion, they will reduce it to \$16.00. Reservations will not be required after Labor Day for either Park. For those who do not wish to make this drive, Charles Rex has made arrangements with the city for RV parking about two or three blocks from the Omni for those staying at the Omni. There is ongoing hiway construction in Norfolk and the city gave him this number to call for information on how best get to the RV Parking area - 804/441-2561.

AIRLINES -- Make your reservations early - USAIR has offered the 315th an exclusive low fare for those attending the reunion in Norfolk. Call USAir's Meeting and Convention Reservation Office, 1-800-334-8644. Tell them you are a member of the 315th Troop Carrier Group Reunion and refer to GOLD FILE NO. 389552. If USAir does not fly out of your airport, contact some of the others right away and check for their Senior Citizens rates , some have some great deals.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS - - The Reunion Committee has tried to make this an interesting reunion by scheduling events for each day - but still leaving you free time to do your own thing!!

SEPT. 26th (Wed.) 3:00 PM Will open registration desk in the lobby. Hope to have hospitality room open from noon Wed. thru noon on Sunday.

SEPT. 27th (Thur.) 2:00 PM "WELCOME TO NORFOLK TOUR" This will be a 3 hour tour to show you things of interest in the Norfolk area. There will also be a short stop at two Museums.

SEPT. 28th (Fri.) 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM Board of Directors and Officers meeting. - - 11:30 AM We will all board the Spirit Of Norfolk Cruise Ship. (This is about a two block walk from the Hotel) You will have lunch and entertainment aboard and return about 2:00 PM.

SEPT. 29th (Sat.) 9:00AM to 12:00 Business meeting for the men - and - pictures will be taken for reunion book. 9:30 to 1:30 PM Tour for the Ladies. Cocktails 5:30PM to 7:00PM Banquet 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Program from 8:30 till - - .Sqdn. & Group pictures will be taken during Cocktail Party. Big Band will Play 5:30 till 8:30 PM.

Sept. 30th (Sun.) For those staying over for Sunday and taking the Navy tour - The tour will leave the Omni at 10:00 AM and return at 3:00 PM. If there are enough people that wish to take a tour of Colonial Williamsburg on Sunday, we will set that tour up after you check in. It would leave the Omni at 9:00 AM and return at 4:00 PM and the cost would be \$27.00 per person.

This area on the east coast (Virginia - Delaware - Maryland - Pennsylvania - D.C. and etc.) is where it all began. Many of our members plan to make this an extended vacation and take in the many things of interest not far from Noefolk. **CALL THAT OLD BUDDY RIGHT NOW - - GET HIM TO THE REUNION - - LETS MAKE THIS ONE THE BIGGEST ONE YET - - IT MAY BE THE LAST ! ! ! !**

Our President, Bernie Pleasant, and your Recording Secretary, both have been asked - where is the next reunion going to be - how are the Officers and Board Members selected - who are they - and etc. THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION that the WW II 315th Troop Carrier Group Association U.S.A.A.F is incorporated under, spells this all out. A copy is always available at each reunion and one will be posted on the bulletin board in Norfolk along with the minutes of the last Board of Directors Meeting and the Biennial Business Meeting. As I am sure that many of our members have never read the Articles Of Association, the following information will answer some of the questions.

ARTICLE VII MEETINGS (Reunions) The biennial meeting of the membership of the Association shall be held at a time and place to be designated by the Board of Directors at least 180 days in advance. - - In the past, the next reunion site has been selected two years in advance. **ANYONE** can suggest the site and time for the next reunion. THE MAN THAT SUGGESTS THE LOCATION FOR THE NEXT REUNION MUST VOLUNTEER TO BE THE REUNION CHAIRMAN AND SHOULD HAVE ONE OR TWO OTHER MEMBERS IN THAT AREA WHO HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO HELP HIM WITH THE REUNION. Come to Norfolk with all of the information so you can make a presentation to the Board of Directors meeting on Friday morning. Have a commitment from a Hotel for a date and room rates in 1992 - things of interest in the area - who will help you with the reunion - any other info that would make the B of D want to select your site. We hope that we will receive two or three such presentations this year. At the reunion in San Antonio, most of the members indicated that after this east coast reunion, they wanted future reunions to be held in the central part of the US. This would make travel more equitable to all.

ARTICLE V DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS Sec.2 The Vice-President shall automatically succeed to the office of the President on the expiration of the President's term of office.

The following are the Officers and Board Members who have served the 315th for the past two years:

- * Edward M. Papp - - - - - Past President
- * Bernie E. Pleasant - - - - - President
- * Jack D. Alexander - - - - - Vice - President
- William L. Brinson - - - - - Corresponding Secretary
- Robert L. Cloer - - - - - Recording Secretary
- Robert M. Davis - - - - - Treasure
- Marty F. Dean - - - - - Assistant Treasurer
- * Allen Saunders - - - - - Term Expires 1994
- * Jack Mancinelli - - - - - Term Expires 1994
- * William C. Conine - - - - - Term Expires 1992
- * Fleetwood L. Guthrie - - - - - Term Expires 1992
- * William N. Walsh - - - - - Term Expires 1990
- * Lloyd E. Talich - - - - - Term Expires 1990

* Members of the Board of Directors

Here are a couple of things to think about: I have been contacted by a few men who were in the 315th Troop Carrier Group during the Korean "Police Action" and the fellows who were in the 309th and 310th Squadrons of the 315th during Viet-Nam. They wanted to know if they could be part of our outfit.

Some of our members have said that they would like to have Mini-Reunions at different locations in the off years. I think this would be great - if - they were planned far enough ahead of time so the word could get out to all of our members in the states near by. They would not need to be any big production - just a couple of days with old friends. Would give me a excuse to fly back to Florida or Texas or etc. Here are the states with the greatest number of our members - CA (87) FL (68) OH (47) PA (46) TX (45) IL (42).

Peg and I attended the WW II Glider Pilots Mini-Reunion for Northern California and Nevada in Reno on the 31st of May thru the 3rd of June. The old 315th was well represented. Dave Trexler, their National Chairman, from Boulder, CO. was there. As were Past National Chairmen, Lee Hampson and Dick Kennedy, all good 315th men. Ted Herman was the oldest man there - 84 they said. He looks about 65 ! Earl Shoup from the 34th and a few more.

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Addenda to a brief item in the last issue of the NEWSLETTER: Bill Brinson dropped your editor a note to remind him that it was Joe Henderson, one of the three 315th men who live in West Point, Georgia who had called the coincidence to Bill's attention. Joe and his fellow townsmen could have a mini-reunion anytime they had the notion!

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FROM BILL BRINSON§.....Several people at previous reunions who were not present at the first ones, have asked how our Association began. The following article attempts to answer that question.

**HOW THE WORLD WAR II TROOP CARRIER GROUP ASSOCIATION
ORIGINATED AND WHAT HAS HAPPENED SINCE**

One evening during the Fall of 1976, I was looking at a film clip on one of the television network news programs that showed a group of middle-aged men debarking from a bus and wandering among semi-demolished buildings that had once been living quarters and work sites for a USAAF bomb group that had been stationed in England during World War II.

The news item continued with views of the old runways and taxi strips, the village pub which was nearby, and other sights which were familiar to those of us who spent part of our youth in that part of the world during that war.

"It might be interesting," I said to my wife, "if enough of the World War II 315th Group could be located and something such as that organized."

"There must be others out there somewhere who would be interested," she replied. "Why don't you write or telephone the ones that you know?" I did neither. The thought of a reunion lingered, however.

I recalled that I had heard that some members of the Group who lived in the New York-Boston-Philadelphia area had met once or twice in the late 1940s; and Bob Cloer, who had been in the 34th Squadron wrote to me about the same time about a get-together planned for Kansas City. I would think that there could have been other small groups of 315th members who assembled during this period, but for one reason or another, the meetings were not continued. (See notes at end of this article.)

It so happened that not over ten days after I saw the bomb group reunion film on television, I received a telephone call from Bernard H. Coggins, of Baldwin, Mississippi, whom I had last seen on a March day in 1945, an hour or two before he and the other members of Col. Lyon's crew bailed out of their damaged aircraft near Wesel, Germany. I knew that he had been wounded, captured, freed, stayed a couple of years in a military hospital, but little else. After discussing another matter that "Cog" called about, the subject of a reunion arose. The TV program I had seen recently was mentioned, and "Cog" thought something should be done "to get the old 315th together." When I

pointed out that it had been over 30 years since the members had been together as a group, I was informed by my friend, the self-styled "World's Greatest Navigator" that "if our Group planned to have a reunion in this world and not the next, we didn't want to put it off too long."

I waited several seconds before replying. "You've convinced me." I said. "Send me the names and addresses of former members of the Group that you have. I'll add it to my list and we'll go on from there."

The following letter (parts omitted) was sent to each addressee we had:

SUBJECT: Reunion of the 315th Troop Carrier Group

TO: Any Former Member of the 315th Troop Carrier Group (World War II) who Might Be Interested In a Reunion.

....the purpose of this letter...is to learn if there is sufficient interest to justify going ahead with planning a reunion..during the Spring or Summer of 1977. Each addressee probably has other names he can contact. If a sufficient number of people like the idea, I will begin organizing the project. We will probably need 30 or 40 people as a minimum.

The general plan will be to arrange a group tour to fly from the U.S. to London, and, while there, go up to what is left of Spanhoe Airfield with, probably, a night at Stamford, Kettering, Oakham, or another nearby town.

If the proposal interests you, will you reply and include any idea you have.Bill Brinson

Over half of those contacted were interested, but most, for good reasons, could not make a positive commitment until firm dates and prices could be provided. Most tour groups with whom the subject was discussed, were unwilling to handle a tour, however, unless a reasonable number of participants could be guaranteed.

It was then decided to try for a reunion in the "ZI". "Cog" said he didn't care where we had it, as long as we had one. Because the majority of the names we had on our list were from the East and Southeast, I first made inquiries in Atlanta, but could not obtain any favorable rates at an acceptable hotel. I next tried Savannah. I knew Savannah to be a historic old town with the DeSoto Hotel right in the center. I went to Savannah, met with the hotel manager, and outlined the proposition. Perhaps fifteen people might show

(over, please)

up for the reunion, I told him--perhaps fifty. Would he provide us with what we needed under those circumstances? "Yes" he would.

A few days after my meeting with the hotel manager, the notices were sent out (around July, I believe) that in September 1977 there would be a reunion in Savannah.

Thirty-six men attended: Dick Adams 34th, Jack Alexander 43rd and 34th, Steve Bolling 43rd, Bill Brinson Hq., Joe Campbell 43rd, L.T.Campbell Hq.,Reginald Carnick 43rd, Roger Chapman 34th, B.H.Coggins 43rd, Ed Connelly 34th, Sam Crowder 34th, Marty Dean 43rd, Jim Drummey 310th, Bob Eiden 34th, Al Estrumse Hq., Carl Fittkau 43rd, Lee French 309th, Vic Guebard 310th, Don Glover 310th, Sollie Grasmick 34th & Hq.,Fleetwood Guthrie 310th, Joe Hardin 34th & 310th, Ted Heller 310th, Joe Lemberg 34th, H.B.Lyon Hq., Duncan McRae 43rd, Ed Papp 43rd, Rowan Perkins 43rd, B.E.Pleasant 34th,Aubrey Ross 310th, Allen Saunders 43rd, J.S. Smith 34th, Ted Stewart 310th, Paul Sewell 43rd, Leonard Thomas 310th, and Charlie Wilson 34th. (Nine of these men have since died.)

The sign-in desk, the welcoming cocktail party, the business meeting, and the Saturday night dinner, set a pattern for subsequent meetings. At the Savannah business meeting, those attending were informed that the length of the meeting would depend upon the answer to a question. If the answer of the majority present was "No", we would adjourn the meeting and return to our socializing; if the answer was "Yes", the meeting would have to continue a while longer. The question put before the men was: "Would those present like to have subsequent reunions and set up a World War II 315th Troop Carrier Group Association?"

All present said "Aye."

The Dallas-Fort Worth area was chosen as the site of the 1978 meeting when Leonard Thomas and Duncan McRae volunteered to make the necessary arrangements. Seventy-six men met at the headquarters hotel (can't recall the name) in Dallas the following September and brought into realization the idea conceived at Savannah. The WWII 315th Troop Carrier Group Association was formed and plans were made to convene every two years. Bob Gibbons was chosen as the President of the Association and has been succeeded on turn byBernie Coggins, Carl Fittkau, Joe Krysakowski, Ed Papp and Bernie Pleasant. Jack Alexander is President-elect for the period Oct.1990-Sept.1992. Reunion sites have been determined by volunteers willing to arrange the accommodations and set up a program at cities where they live..or cities nearby. At New Orleans in 1980, these were Bob Gibbons and Bernie Pleasant (assisted by an old 313th TCG

member, Ed Christianson, who is in the hotel business there); in Chicago, Ed Papp, Don Glover, Marty Dean and others had an excellent reunion at the Radisson Hotel with 153 men attending; in San Francisco during October 1984, Bob Cloer, with the assistance of Bill Hoff, Lloyd Perry, Cal Enderlin, Bob Hogg, Lee Hampson, Roger Matzdorf, Ira Lazarus, Dick Kennedy and other Bay Area members hosted 132 members who attended, with the Marine Memorial Club serving as headquarters. Jake Sternoff and Bill Conine were responsible for bringing 86 members to the beautiful Northwest in 1986 when the Madison Hotel in Seattle served as our meeting site. Trips to the Boeing Aircraft Company and dinner at the Indian Village on Blake Island were among the highlights of this meeting. Gordon Tull and Charlie Cox from San Antonio chose the historic Menger Hotel as our most recent meeting ground in 1988. A visit to Kelly AFB, an outdoor dinner and dance at the Lone Star Brewery, and boat trips on the San Antonio River contributed to all present having a most enjoyable week-end.

During the thirteen years since we first met in Savannah, many members have gone out of their way to make the Association a success---some whose names I have unintentionally omitted in this article. In addition to the Presidents and the reunion hosts mentioned above, the late Duncan McRae was invaluable when we were getting started, using his time and his WATS Line trying to locate 315th people throughout the country. Ed Papp brought his excellent camera and expertise in advertising to the first meeting (and who, ever since, has published our NEWSLETTER and reunion brochures--the latter the next best thing to being at the reunion itself); Leonard Thomas and H.D.Liddle who have rounded up many 310th and 309th comrades and Bob Cloer, who in addition to locating scores of members for our organization, has volunteered to be a work-horse for the Norfolk meeting this year.

I look forward to our upcoming meeting in Norfolk Va in September to seeing old (more so every year, unfortunately) friends, and again exchanging wartime stories.

My wife once said "Now that you have met a few times and exchanged all the stories of those wartime days, what do you talk about?"

"You don't understand, my dear girl," I said, "no one is listening to your story. He is waiting to tell his!"

If you haven't attended a reunion before, come along to Norfolk in September. You won't regret it and I can promise you will have a wonderful time.

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NOTES.....

Twenty-four members of the 315th were photographed at the Parker House in Boston on 22 March 1947. Among those I recognize in the 43 year old picture sent to me were: Ed Connelly, John Conquest, Bob Crone, Jim Crumbie, Marty Dean, Cosmo DeBonis, Bob Gibbons, Norman Greene, Bill Messenger, Dick Payson.

In May 1950, a meeting was held in New York City. Joe Krysakowski has told me that about 16 were present. Some attending were H.B.Lyon, Joe Krysakowski, Larry Ison, Duncan Hatton, John Conquest, Joe Siskowski, J.S Smith, Ted Stewart, Jim Crumbie, Norman Greene, Ed Connelly and Don Kaffenburgh.

While the Air Force Association Convention was being held in Washington D.C. in June 1953, eight or ten "315thers" reserved a table one evening at a convention dinner at the Mayflower Hotel. Present were Smylie Stark, H.B.Lyon, Al Estrumse, Bill Brinson, Bud Mauger, Reginald Carnick, Ted Steward, Bill Mandt and Jim Crumbie. All were living or stationed in that general area.

Bob Cloer has since informed me that reunions were held in Kansas City at the Phillips Hotel in both 1947 and 1950. He said the first reunion was planned for the 34th Squadron only, but that a few members from other Squadrons also came. There were about 75 people who attended the banquet at the 1947 meeting and a slightly larger number, he estimated, at the second one.

"We set up an executive committee in 1950 and we all chipped in with a few bucks...and that's the last I heard about a reunion until you called me in 1977. That is when I started to try and locate men again...I guess why we did not get organized was all the fellows were just too busy and times were rough" as Bob recalls it. Bill Adams worked some with Bob on the 1947 meeting.

During this period, Bob sent out several interesting newsletters, not only promoting the Kansas City reunions, but consolidating and passing along the latest information he received in letters from his many correspondents.

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AN INTERESTING LETTER FROM GLENN ULRICH.....

2425 Strawberry Lane
Port Huron, Michigan 48060
July 12, 1990

Dear Ed:

Bob Cloer asked me to drop you a note on the trip we took to London, England in April.

As a follow up on the "Gathering of Eagles" in Montgomery, Alabama last year to meet with General Sir John Hackett, Jim Wilson and I were invited to join the 4th Para. Brigade dinner club. This group of officers meets once a year in London. There are 75 members, 25 of whom were present for this years dinner.

My wife and I arrived at Heathrow, London, on April 25th after a fine flight with British Airways. General "Shan", as his associates call him, called our hotel on the 26th and asked me to join him at the Cavalry Club at 6:45 on the 27th prior to the dinner. I joined him

for a tour of the Club with its history, military art, and Oliver Cromwell's walking stick (he was a good General, but a miserable politician, to quote the General). We sampled some champagne and caviar, then joined the others at the Army-Navy Club for a social period at the bar prior to dinner. I was especially pleased to meet Jasper (Major H. B.) Booty with whom I had some correspondence prior to the trip. (I would guess he's their Bob Cloer.)

Dinner was served with red and white wine, followed by Port. I had to behave as I sat to General Hacketts right, with Major General Frank King on my right. After dinner and toasts I was called on for a speech. I extended greetings from the 315th and expressed Jim Wilsons regrets at not being able to be there this year.

Back to the "social hour" at the bar, then General Shan took me back to the hotel (we were staying at the Park Court, across from Kensington Palace). He asked if Della and I could join him and his wife at their home later in the week. We agreed on May 5th for our visit.

Della and I spent the next few days being tourists. We attended church in Westminster Abbey, toured the Tower of London, Tower Bridge, the Zoo, and the RAF Museum at Hendon. The museum has an excellent collection of aircraft ranging from a 1913 Bleriot to the Vulcan bomber and Lightning fighter (also a B-17, gift of USAF). A special "Battle of Britain" exhibit is on display for the 50th anniversary year.

This promises to be a year of planned celebration for the airborne as well, as it also celebrates a 50th. One event planned is a "leaping 70s" paradrop on an RAF base (into water). One must be over 70 to jump. General Shan declined the honors on this one. I have asked Jasper Booty to brief me on the outcome.

On May 5th, Della and I took the train to Kemble where the General met us. He took us on a tour of the back country enroute to Cheltenham. pointing out old Norman structures (1099), churches, pubs, etc. He said "If I sound too much like a tour guide, tell me to shut up!".

We joined Mrs. Hackett (Margaret) for quick tour of the house which was a 16th century mill converted a few years back to a home. It was still milling grain in the 1940s! The house is complete with a mill pond and stream (well stocked with trout). A herd of sheep is maintained (Australian heritage of the General).

We repaired to the garden for some "Pimms" mix and relaxation, then went to the Colebourne Inn for lunch (actually early dinner) with two bottles of wine (Gen. Shan likes white). The original building dates to 866. After several fires, the "modern" structure was built, with the last addition 200 years ago. The stables were recently converted to twelve rooms so that it could again function as a roadside inn and country pub.

We returned to Coberley Mill, partook of some more wine and pleasantries. We viewed a Video on the Profession of Arms that Gen. Shan had made, and I was presented with a dedicated copy of his book on this subject. He is working on a six hour miniseries for TV based on this book. Della

was given a dedicated copy of "I was a Stranger" based on his experiences in Holland with the underground. It is a tribute to the Dutch people rather than autobiographical.

After expressing our thanks to Gen. Shan and Margaret we were driven to the Kemble station. As we were parting, Gen. Shan said "If we are still alive, we'll meet again." He is a strong believer in fate as well as a Bible scholar who reads "Paradise Lost" for relaxation and still is involved in teaching.

This was a great way to end our visit to London. We had ten days of sunshine, no fog, smog, or smoke--London has surely changed. We departed via BOAC on May 6th to Toronto and home.

We hope to see you in Norfolk in September.

Sincerely,



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RECOLLECTIONS OF SPANHOE AIRFIELD.....

Written by Bill Brinson in 1987 for a British publication "THEN & NOW"

My first view of the airfield at Spanhoe was on 11 March 1944, when most of the aircraft of the 315th Troop Carrier Group arrived there from St. Eval, Cornwall. I recall the exact date because it was my 23rd birthday.

Seeing the green English countryside again after almost a year of duty in the Mediterranean area provided a decided change from the shades of beige and brown prevalent at our previous location.

Circling Spanhoe before landing, I noticed many of the landmarks with which we would later become familiar---three runways surrounded by an oval perimeter strip laid out on a small plateau a bit higher in elevation than the immediate surrounding countryside, a railway viaduct with tall brick archways west of the field, a small stream running through a valley to the north, and several villages to the east and west--later identified as Laxton, Harringworth, Corby and Uppingham. Looking back, the two most recognizable landmarks to me from the air were the Welland Canal Viaduct and, much farther away, the church spire in Boston--the "Boston Stump." The latter always seemed to be a turning point when assembling for a formation.

In one sense, this was our flying group's second arrival in the U.K. Aldermaston RAF Station in Berkshire received us in December of 1942, and we remained there for several months before we were ordered to North Africa for what was described as "about six weeks." Ten months later, it was to Northamptonshire we were returning to, not Berkshire. It was this area of England which I believe that most of the members of our group later identified.

Spanhoe had only recently been completed when we arrived. I was told later that the planned name of the airfield was Wakerley, after the Wakerley Great Wood to the east, but Spanhoe it became because there was another airfield whose name was too similar to Wakerly.

Whatever the name, our group settled in. Aircraft, vehicles, and support equipment were located on the operational site north of the Harringworth-Laxton road, and all living quarters were on the sides of the road heading south to Deene with "Nissen Huts" and other buildings occupying much of Spanhoe Woods and the area near Harringworth Lodge.

The Spring of 1944 seemed to have had its share of days with low clouds and rain---days when training exercises and formation flights were cancelled. The mission of our troop carrier group, as was the mission of similar groups stationed at nearby Cottesmore, Folkingham, Barkston Heath and Saltby, was to provide airlift for American and British paratroops and other airborne forces. When the weather was flyable, our planes were usually in the air, and the sound of hundreds of engines became a common noise in the area.

During the following months as the men of the 315th became accustomed to their new home, friendships were begun with people who lived nearby. I recall how friendly and generous many British people were to us sometimes brash "Yanks" who often disturbed the peace and tranquillity of their shire.

Most visits to nearby places were by bicycle of "Shank's Mare". Those who chose to wander farther afield could climb aboard trucks that departed the base most afternoons around six for the towns of Kettering and Leicester. The only times I remember the trucks not leaving the base for their nightly run was in December 1944, when for over a week, the fog was so thick that practically all vehicular traffic in the area came to a halt.

A family living near Oakham was extremely hospitable to both a close friend of mine, who had been my navigator on our flight to England, and me. Possibly they never realized how relaxing it was for us to do nothing more than sit in their living room on a Sunday reading newspapers, or walking about parts of their farm for an hour or so, or riding bicycles down country lanes with someone who had explored those paths before. Many of us received hospitality from the local people that we have not forgotten.

D-Day (6 June 1944), a date few, if any of us, who were there will ever forget, came and went. Fortunately, our group's losses were far less than expected. Several training accidents took lives during the summer, including a particularly bad one near Easton-on-the-Hill, when two of our planes collided in mid-air. The several missions flown to Arnhem in September were not without casualties.

By the middle of the summer of 1944, there were over 2000 Americans based at Spanhoe, and approximately 100 aircraft. Most of the aircraft were twin-engined C-47s (Dakotas); however, several were four-engined Liberators, modified to be flying fuel stations and used to deliver fuel to advanced airfields on the Continent.

The view from the air of Bulwick Hall, Deene Hall, Seaton, Harringworth and the River Welland, which ran almost parallel to our longest

(over, please)

runway at Spanhoe became familiar identification points as we made an increasing number of flights to the European Continent delivering supplies for the Allied Forces.

Winter came, and with it came snow and frost. The newspapers reported that Christmas 1944 was the coldest experienced in London for over a half century. It must have been even colder in our section of Northamptonshire. Icicles covered the wire fences on the base as if they had been painted on for holiday decorations. The sun finally appeared that Christmas afternoon and brought with it scores of our aircraft that had been delayed at airdromes in Belgium and France.

Quite a few of the friendships made earlier between 315th men and local girls resulted in marriage. (I stood up with my navigator friend at the church in Oakham.) It was with regret, therefore, when we received orders to move to France in March of 1945. Our visits to the nearby homes, pubs, villages and towns were over, and by the end of that month, the stay of the 315th at Spanhoe had ended. Less than two months later, so had the war in Europe.

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POSTSCRIPT: As much as I observed the River Welland from the air, I never learned where it began or ended.

I next saw Spanhoe in early 1949 when I made a short detour to pass over it on a flight from an airfield in Germany to Burtonwood, Lancs. The runways seemed to be lined with vehicles as if it were a vehicle park. In September 1964, I returned with my wife, and she and I walked about for half an hour or so. There were a few buildings left on the operational site--none at the former living sites. Subsequent visits in 1971, '74, '82, and '85 revealed changes made by time, nature, and man. Parts of the crumbling runways exist now. That is about all, and there is no reason that it should be otherwise.

In 1984, a small monument of Weldon stone was erected on land provided by Mr. G.T.G. Conant, the owner at the site of the former Spanhoe airfield. The stone indicates more than the site where an American flying group operated during World War II; it is also a reminder of the close association of the members of the unit stationed at Spanhoe and the local people who offered us their hospitality forty-plus years ago.

WLB

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**AUTHOR OF FORTHCOMING BOOK NEEDS "TAIL LETTER" INFORMATION
ON TWO 315TH AIRCRAFT THAT CRASHED IN LEICESTERSHIRE**

Mr. Brandon John White who lives in Leicestershire, England, is preparing a book "Leicestershire Crashes" which will deal with all air crashes that have taken place in his county since around 1940. Our two 309th Sqdn. aircraft that crashed shortly after takeoff on the evening of July 8, 1944 after locking wings, were the only two USAAF aircraft to crash in that

county. Through the Air Historical Branch at Maxwell AFB, Mr. White has learned that the serial numbers of the two aircraft were 43-15341 and 42-108773. One of the two aircraft had the tail letter "L". It is not known which of the two aircraft was designated "L", and the tail letter of the other aircraft is unknown. In his forthcoming book, Mr. White wants to illustrate the two aircraft, and, as he states, "It is absolutely imperative that an illustration depict the tail letter."

Mr. White understands that the RAF used tail letters in radio transmissions much more than the USAAF. They would contact the control tower using "S" for Sugar" etc. whereas the USAAF would usually transmit the last three digits of the aircraft serial number, such as "063." Nevertheless, he hopes that someone in the 315th might have kept a personal log book that might contain the tail letters of the two aircraft with serial numbers mentioned above. If you locate the tail letters of these aircraft, would you please send them to me, Bill Brinson 4733 Ivanhoe Road, Jacksonville FL32210 for transmittal to Mr. White—or, send them directly to Mr. Brandon J. White, 61 Crescent Rd. Lutterworth, Leicestershire, LE 17 4NR, England.

THE ARTWORK ON THE POSTERS OF THE 315TH COMMISSIONED BY DAVE BENFIELD WAS DONE BY THE SAME B.J. WHITE WHO IS REQUESTING THIS INFORMATION. HE IS ONE OF THE LATER GENERATION ENGLISHMEN WHO HAS TAKEN AN INTEREST IN OUR WORLD WAR II GROUP.

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We are indebted to Joseph D. Bryan, formerly of the 310th Squadron and a retiree SMSG of the USAF for the following story which was carried in the Port of Spain, Trinidad paper. Joe thought our readers would be interested in reading about the Open House at Waller Field on Air Force Day.

CROWDS ATTEND AIR FORCE "OPEN HOUSE"

Trinidad's civilians witnessed one of the world's greatest military achievements yesterday. They saw at Waller Field, Fort Read, the one and a half-mile long maintenance line---the longest of its kind in the world-- which is capable of accommodating more airplanes than the combined commercial airlines of the United States.

Big motley throng visiting Waller Field on the occasion of the 38th anniversary of the United States Air Force answered the "open house" invitation sent out by Brigadier General O.B. Bueher. It was the first of its kind since the establishment of American bases here four years ago. Most distinguished among the visitors were His Excellency the Acting Governor, Mr. A.B.Wright and Mrs. Wright. From midday, a steady stream of visitors paraded the runway examining the various types of planes: P-40s, B-17s, Mitchell bombers and C-47s-- troop carriers--and other aircraft. Inside some of the troop carriers, sightseers playfully sat in the pilots' seat, probably with the object of capturing the thrill of airmen carrying out their tasks of "vital responsibility" as they tore through the skies on their perilous missions.

Welcoming the guests, Colonel Robert Lewis told the gathering of the enjoyable time he spent in Trinidad and the co-operation which he received from its people. The ground forces and air forces of the U.S.A., he said, worked and fought side by side with the British and Allied armies in administering the unconditional surrender of Germany.

Over please

Colonel Karl Truesdell Jr., Commanding the Air Transport Command, expressed pride over the important responsibility in the great project--- the greatest troop movement by air in the history of civil or military aviation.

On the maintenance base at Waller Field they had a flight of more than 260 speedy C-47 transport planes, comprising the largest group of aircraft based on any airfield in the world. These 'planes, he added, landed at Miami, Florida every 45 minutes by day and night and transported American soldiers from Natal, Brazil to Miami, the last and most important leg of their long air journey from Europe to the U.S.A.

"No day," he stressed "can be more fitting than Air Force Day, to have you people with us to see for yourselves the important part your island is playing in this mission."

His Excellency the Governor expressed appreciation for the privilege accorded by the presence of those airmen who were on their way home to the U.S.A., and thanked the U.S. Army Air Force for the opportunity of allowing the people of Trinidad to see the "manifestation of air power" of the United States of America.

"It is good," he added, "that today we are privileged to see not only so many different types of aircraft, but something of those by whom they are operated and maintained."

Throughout the afternoon visitors toured the maintenance lines and even after 4 p.m. many were still arriving in vehicles to enter the base.

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A letter from Aubrey Ross with an enclosure of an article for the NEWSLETTER HAS THE SENTENCE "I read Bill Brinson's account of how he ended up in Troop Carrier and that got me to thinking about my own assignment to Troop Carrier. I have enclosed a short note about that experience if you care to use it in a future issue.

From Aubrey Ross...310th Squadron.....

I just read Bill Brinson's account as to how he was assigned to Troop Carrier Command and it took me back to May, 1943 when this "Hot" fighter pilot received some strange orders along with his wings, instead of P-47s he got C-47s.

My ambition throughout high school had been to become a pilot in the Army Air Corps. Since two years of college was required at that time, I enrolled in the University of Florida for the sole purpose of getting the necessary credits so I could qualify for the flying program. Well, World War II began before I finished my second year, so I entered, as many thousands of others did, by passing the written exam.

From the minute I checked out in the Stearman PT-17 and until graduation, I could picture myself in aerial combat flying a P-51 or a P-47 against a ME-109 or FW-190 or even a Zero. Even when I was told that my height of six feet two inches might be disqualifying I never gave up the dream

that I would somehow get fighters. After much effort and some good rides in the Vultee "Vibrator", I convinced my basic flying instructor that I was fighter pilot material, so I headed for single engine advanced at Napier Field in Dothan AL.

Flying the AT-6 was probably the most fun I had during training since much of the flying consisted of maneuvers that fighter pilots used in combat. We were constantly reminded that being assigned to fighters after graduation would depend to a large degree on how well we scored at gunnery school. Those who scored poorly could be assigned to tow targets. My squadron was fortunate to be scheduled for gunnery school during the last two weeks of the training thereby giving us a lot of time in the aircraft which was a definite advantage in gunnery. I was very lucky to score among the top in both aerial and ground gunnery so I was certain that I was a born fighter pilot and headed for P-51 training. I had it made.

Orders were handed out after graduation and to my surprise, mine read "twin engine fighters" at Bergstrom Field, Texas. What a disappointment, but P-38s were better than bombers. Imagine how I felt when I arrived at Bergstrom and could find nothing on the flight line but DC-3s, C-47s, C-53s, etc. and "NO" there was no mistake in my orders and to get back in line and to continue my incoming processing. I had never heard of Troop Carrier before.

Looking back now, it was probably the best thing that ever happened to me because that rugged old "Bird" forgave many mistakes I made as a pilot. Thanks to the old C-47, I survived the war and many more hours of flying afterwards. Anybody asks me today how I came to be in Troop Carrier, I too would have to say "just lucky."

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"GREEN LIGHT, JUMP!"

Any member of our Association who is really interested (that means \$145.00 interested) in obtaining a color print (35 1/2" x 19 1/2") of troop carrier planes dropping paratroops over Normandy early on the morning of June 6, 1944 might write AEROPRINT, South Shore Road, Spofford N.H 03462 or call them at 1-800-222-6788. Their catalogue states that their prints are returnable if you are not satisfied, within two weeks of purchase. While the catalogue picture depicts planes with squadron letters that did not belong to any 315th Squadron planes, "Green Light, Jump!" does appear to be an interesting print of a painting of a WWII historical event in which the 315th Troop Carrier Group took part. Aeroprint also has an excellent color print of a DC-3/C-47 with the title "CLASSY LADY" for \$30.00

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RESTRICTED

HEADQUARTERS
 315th TROOP CARRIER GROUP
 34th TROOP CARRIER SQUADRON
 APO 133, U.S. ARMY

17 September 1944

SPECIAL ORDERS)

NUMBER 000000001/2)

1. By direction of the Commander, there will be a formation at 1330 hours on 27 September 1990 at the OMNI INTERNATIONAL HOTEL in NORFOLK, VIRGINIA. All AC OFF and AC EM will be in their seats 10 minutes before formation time. Roll call will be taken and those absent or tardy will be disciplined as follows: Officers will pull Convoy Escort Duty Officer, on all foggy nights, to Kettering, Stamford or Leicester. EMs will be required to take the train from Kettering to London and will be assigned to the Battle of Piccadilly Circus. Flashlights and matches will be issued before departure.

2. Uniform for this formation will be: Pith Helmet, Jock Strap, G. I. Boots and Web Belt with Canteen Cup. Any 34th troops out of uniform will pull the following extra duty: At 0400 hours each day of operations you will be required to awaken Major Pleasant and Capt. Ciskowski. Have tea and crumpets ready for them so they will be in a good mood when they can not wake up Frank Klucsarits, Scotty Davis, Merl Krueger, Elmer Weekley and about a dozen others. NUFF SAID - JUST BE THERE !!!

SIGNED

THE BIG # 1 (ONE)

This will be the first reunion on the east coast since they started again in Savannah, GA in 1977. We think that it will be the largest yet and know that the old 34th will be there in great numbers. It would be great, if we could get many of you who have never made a reunion to make the effort this year. The old 34th always has the most men there and we would like to see our old buddies. Unfortunately, many of them have made their last flight. DON'T WAIT FOR THE NEXT REUNION ! If you will note the date of the above order - it was 46 years ago that the 34th Squadron lost the first crew in combat out of the 315th Group. Capt. Bohannon - Lt. Felber - Lt. Martinson - S/Sgt. Epperson, Sgt. Carter was able to bail out just before the crash. If they and the ones who followed could only join us .!!!

CALL THAT OLD BUDDIE !

SEE YA IN NORFOLK

Doc Cloer

As long as we're recalling old times, and after reading Aubrey's account and remembering Bill Brinson's story, I want to add my bit.

HOW I BECAME AN AIRCRAFT MECHANIC....by Ed Papp

After reading how Bill Brinson and Aubrey Ross came to be assigned to Troop Carrier Command, your editor thought you might be amused by how he got sent to Chanute Field to undergo training as an AM (MOS 750-- aircraft mechanic).

On the day following my enlistment in the Army here in Chicago two days after Pearl Harbor, I was sent together with a few hundred other young men, to Camp Grant, Rockford, Illinois which was the reception center for recruits in this area. The first few days there were spent getting uniforms, listening to lectures and so on. On the fourth or fifth day we were told that on the morrow we were to be put through "classifying examination."

By "classifying" I assumed was meant being assigned to a branch of the army---infantry, coast artillery, armor, etc. I'm not sure I knew at the time what the air arm of the army was called, but that was the part of the army I wanted to get into. The reason was this: I thought, what branch of the army can I get into that would teach me more and do me the most good in my chosen profession (industrial advertising agency) if I was lucky enough to survive the war? After a little more thought, I figured out how I would manage to get assigned to the Army Air Corps. My reasoning went like this: airplanes have internal combustion engines, hydraulic and electrical systems, along with a lot of other mechanical stuff all of which are involved in an automobile.

So, on the following day, we were marched over to a building and were told to stay in line until our name was called (it was colder than h--l because it was January). Upon entering the building, I saw a row of narrow cubicles on each side of the aisle. In each cubicle sat a uniformed person. I was directed to a place down the aisle and upon arriving there, I saw my "classifier" was a Corporal. He had a pad of forms in front of him on which he entered the information I supplied in answer to his questions. Name, address, age, dependants, education, etc. THEN, came the KEY QUESTION! "What are your hobbies?" And here's where I got careless with the truth. I told him I had a car that I used to take apart every week-end and put together...that my hobby was mechanics. And that, I am convinced was the reason I was put into the USAAF and sent to Chanute Field after spending 5-6 weeks at Jefferson Barracks near St. Louis. Now, if the truth be told, I had absolutely no mechanical aptitude whatsoever...didn't own a car until 1947 and scarcely knew one end of a wrench from the other. It's saying a lot for the AAF training methods at Chanute that I was able, with not too many serious mistakes, to become a Crew Chief. Ever since that day at Camp Grant, I've told the story how a Corporal controlled my destiny and did me the favor of starting me on the way to the 315th Troop Carrier Group at some field near Florence, North Carolina.

(over, please)

Hal Liddle sends us a little nostalgia in the form of a clipping from THE MIAMI HERALD of Wednesday, 13 June, 1945.....

MIAMI TO HANDLE BULK OF LOAD IN TRANSFER OF VETS

by Jack Thale, Herald staff writer

Miami will become the greatest air terminal in history within the next few weeks.

Disclosing for the first time the full scope of the Army's re-deployment program, Col. Joseph C. Mackey, commanding officer of Miami Air Field, said Tuesday more planes will be used to fly combat veterans here from abroad than were used by all the commercial airlines put together during peacetime.

A sky fleet of some 300 twin engine Skytrains and Commandos and four engined Skymasters will be used in the Miami operation, he explained.

A round-the-clock schedule calls for them to land at the local Air Transport Command base, change crews, be serviced and refueled, and take off again within the space of two hours.

One of the C-47 Skytrain planes making up the bulk of the fleet will land at Miami Army air field every 45 minutes, 24 hours a day, Col. Mackey explained.

The Army plans call for the ATC to bring back a minimum of 50,000 men a month by air from Europe. Miami is expected to carry the bulk of the load.

A Niagara of gasoline and oil will keep the ATC transports flying. It is estimated that the skyfleet will use more than 1,000,000 gallons of gasoline and 55,000 gallons of oil in a single month.

More than 300 men from Camp Luna, N.M. have been transferred to the Miami field to help handle the returning veterans.

Col. Mackey said a large tent and hutment city is now being erected to accomplish the housing of more than 2000 men. By the middle of July it is contemplated that 250 hutments and 124 tents will be available to handle the stream of returnees to be held here for less than 24 hours.

Two special trains a day will carry returnees from Miami to Camp Blanding. From there they will be sent to 22 reception centers nearer their homes.

Eighteen telephone booths are being installed in the returnee area at the Miami field so the homecoming vets can make an immediate dash to let loved ones know they are safely back from the wars.

Three mess halls will be provided. Post Exchange and Red Cross facilities will be open 24 hours a day to serve the battle-weary troops with fresh milk, ice cream and other long-forgotten luxuries.

A medical dispensary likewise will be open night and day. An open-air theater is being constructed where "live" talent will feature the shows.

Debarking from the ocean-spanning planes, returnees will be passed quickly through customs, a medical exam and intelligence briefing. Each man will be issued a blanket, two sheets and a pillow cover.

Now ATC is doing its biggest job said Col. Mackey. "It is helping in re-deployment of our forces. It is supplying the Army of Occupation in Europe. It is delivering the goods to battle zones in the Pacific. Schedules are being stepped up and the ATC is preparing to break all records in air transport."

The re-deployment operation has been hailed by Col. Cortlandt S. Johnson, commanding ATC's Caribbean division as the greatest air transport operation ever attempted in the history of civil or military aviation.

(In the upper left corner of the page was the following:

The Weather: Partly cloudy, Miami temperature 8 P.M.: Air, 83, ocean, 88.)

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OKAY, YOU GUYS, HERE'S AN OFFER FROM AUBREY ROSS GUARANTEED TO BRING BACK A LOT OF MEMORIES OF YOUR TIME IN BRITAIN AND N.AFRICA....

Letter from Aubrey Ross dated July 1 1990

Dear Ed:

In looking through some of my old record collection, I discovered a recording by **Vera Lynn**, the sweetheart of the G Is in England during World War II. It brings back many memories for me; don't know about you and other members of the 315th. Anyhow, here is a copy for you if you care to listen to it.

You may wish to mention in the NEWSLETTER that I have the record and will make a cassette tape for any members of the 315th who would care to have one. I would ask that they send me a blank 60 minute tape. I hope you enjoy it.

Best regards,
Aubrey

(I listened to the tape the day I got it and boy, did it bring back a flood of memories! Aubrey Ross' address:

P.O. Box 448
Gulf Breeze FL 32562-0448

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DUES PAYMENT....DUES PAYMENT....DUES PAYMENT....DUES PAYMENT....DUES PAYMENT

Robert M. Davis, Treasurer
WWII 315th Troop Carrier Group Association
7025 Wind Run Way
Stone Mountain GA 30087

Dear Bob:

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

20.00....2 years' dues

(Please make your check payable to: WWII 315th Troop Carrier Group Ass'n.

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

ADDRESS.....

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

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

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- END -