



315th Newsletter

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MAJOR TURN OUT SOUGHT FOR DAYTON REUNION

Efforts are underway to assure a major turn-out for the Association's first reunion in the new century at Dayton, Ohio August 25-28. President Ray Schwartz has Officers and Board members actively contacting members; "Sandy" Friedman, through cap sale correspondence, is urging attendance; and "Doc" Cloer's computer, phone and assistants are working at the max.

The efforts seem to be paying off. At mid-May, according to Molly Dye, AFR Project Officer, an "encouraging" 25 plus early registrations had already been booked.

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Included in this Newsletter are sign up forms for both the reunion and related tours as well as hotel registration. Note that after July 21 Armed Forces Reunions (AFR) will only accept registrations on a space available basis. As for the hotel, the cut-off date for reduced rates is August 2.

The Holiday Inn, the official gathering place, offers full amenities, including pool and a highly rated restaurant. Other dining spots are within walking distance and still others require but a short car or cab ride. Dayton is easily accessible via Interstates and is served by multiple airlines.

For the visit to the Air Force Museum, wheelchairs and electric carts are available. *(If a member requires such, contact Sandy Friedman who will try to make prior arrangements.)*

Association business will be conducted at a Board meeting at 4:30 p.m. Friday, August 25 and a general membership meeting at 4:30 p.m. Saturday, August 26. Among business items, a vice-president and two Board Members are to be elected. Bill Brinson and the two retiring Board members (John McClain and "Ziggy" Zartman) have been named as a nominating committee. Members interested in serving in these positions or nominating someone (with prior concurrence) should inform a committee member.

Attendance at this year's reunion is expected, as in the past, to include increasing numbers of daughters, sons, grandchildren, relatives and friends, all welcome as a part of an expanding 315th lineage. So, alert your troops, make plans for Dayton to be a family get-together.

**REGISTRATION
FORMS ENCLOSED**

**AUGUST 25-28
DAYTON
BE THERE**

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

OFFICIAL NOTICE BOARD

Message from the President:

By now everyone should have received the schedule of events and the registration forms to Armed Forces Reunions. Our next Reunion will be held August 25-28, inclusive at the Holiday Inn in Fairborn, Ohio (a suburb of Dayton). Fill out the forms and put them in the mail as time will be running short when you read this message.

The visit to the Air Force Museum is the predominant reason our members selected this site. No one will be disappointed. The Museum contains the entire history of mechanized flight from the airplane of the Wright Brothers in 1903 to the space capsule of recent times. It is amazing to realize what has transpired in the span of nearly 100 years. For those who might be interested in acquiring a memento either for themselves, for their children, or for others there is a wonderfully complete shop on the premises to accommodate you.

All of our past Reunions have been outstanding successes. These Reunions provide us with the opportunity to come together from all parts of the country and even from distant shores to meet again and reminisce not only about old experiences but also to engage in friendly discourse. The current Officers and Board Members have worked diligently to continue the same trend. It is hoped that everyone who can will make the effort to come to this Reunion.

With best wishes to all, I remain sincerely,

Ray M. Schwartz,
President

STANDING ORDERS

All Fit and Able 315th Troop Carrier Group Association members are ordered to assemble during the period 25-28 August, 2000 at Dayton, Ohio for the purpose of joining their comrades at the Association's biyearly reunion. Full equipment will be carried, to include pictures, memories and memorabilia, prescriptions, reading glasses, and such other glasses as may be useful.

Failure to appear will be so noted on the Group's Morning Report.

*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 the March, 2000 Newsletter, Jake Wilson wrote of "Rebecca", a system developed by the British and used to guide paratroop loaded Troop Carrier aircraft to precise drop zones. Jake's article told of attempts to use the "Rebecca" as an instrument landing system. His article brought memories to Association member Fabian Chiasson of his post-war experiences in the development of such landing systems. Here are extracts from a Chiasson letter.)

MORE ON REBECCA

by Fabian Chiasson

Though I was only in the 315th a matter of six weeks in early 1945 I have always been interested in the Group and, at my request, you have kept me on the mailing list for many years. My heartfelt thanks.

After being transferred to Grove in England near the end of March, 1945 - assigned to a "bastard" wing of Troop Carrier (we flew for 8th and 9th Air Force and SHAEF) and snapped on the proper shoulder patch after reading the bulletin board in the morning. In that wing for nearly a year I logged about 850 first pilot hours.

The latest Newsletter (March 2000) article by Jake Wilson really was interesting, because having seen those antennas on the "Gooney Bird" fuselage and not knowing anything about "Rebecca," the article brought back memories about instrument flying at Grove.

One of the duties I handled at Grove for a period of time was to flight check all C-47s that had been in the shops for work on the ILS (Instrument Landing System). While that assignment was mine during the summer of 1945, and the war had ended, we heard the news of the latest instrument landing system called GCA (Ground Controlled Approach). We also learned that the US Navy had installed such a system in Wales and I was sent there to learn and submit a report to the CO.

I learned, I reported, and Lo! we had such a system installed at Grove. Later, a GCA was installed in Berlin and I was sent to shoot the first landing at Templehof!! I had not previously been to Berlin and after shooting the landing under the hood, got out of the plane, looked at the height of the buildings around the airport and damned near fainted.

(See "Rebecca", page 7)

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(The March, 2000 Newsletter's excellent article by "Ziggy" Zartman on Troop Carriers C-109 Tanker spurred some reminiscing by "Doc" Cloer on his experiences aboard that waddling gas hauler.)

MORE ON THE C-109

by "Doc" Cloer

The 315th had six of those big 4 engine Mothers: You Call --- We Haul. Of the six, the 34th Squadron likely had two. Howard Beagle and Merl Krueger were checked out as first pilots and several crew chiefs had received some formal training. As for copilots, little training was needed, there was not much to know - gear and flaps, up and down...and a knob to turn to different numbers that controlled the turbos power settings.

I flew a few trips as copilot with Merl Krueger and Ray McManus as crew chief, whose main job was to keep us out of trouble. (On reflection, I'm puzzled as to how I became a copilot. Merl was a friend, but I thought I was smart enough back then to not volunteer.) Here are some things I remember about the C-109.

- Getting aboard required a climb up through the bomb bay, squeezing between huge tanks. One crew member went up first and the rest handed up the parachutes. You couldn't wear a chute and fit between the tanks. So the chutes ended up as back cushions; there was little chance of ever being able to bail out.

- The tanks apparently lacked baffles, at least sufficient baffles. When you taxied out, set the brakes for run up, that C-109 would sit there rocking back and forth.

- Merl always had a cigar in his mouth and a Zippo in his pocket. After reaching altitude, power set, we'd call a "Stand By?" OK, stop sweating, another successful cigar light--we were living right.

- One vital piece of equipment on any C-109 mission was large, filled, CO 2 bottles. They were to purge the tanks after off loading the gas. The danger level rose markedly when flying with fume filled empty tanks as opposed to gasoline filled.

(See "C-109", page 7)

(As we approach the Association's first reunion in a New Century/Millennium it seemed an appropriate time to look back on the closing episode in the life of the 315th Troop Carrier Group. Following is an extract from the final chapters of Bill Brinson's well written "Three One Five Group," an account of the Group's wartime activities.)

AIRFIELD IN FRANCE

After more than one year at Spanhoe, the Group received orders in early April to move to France. Four groups in the 52nd Wing were to be situated in the Picardy Area - the 61st at Abbeville-Drucat, the 313th at Chiet, the 314th at Poix and the 315th at Amiens-Glisy. The fifth group in the Wing, the 316th, was scheduled to return to the U. S. from its base at Cottesmore in the United Kingdom.

Sixteen officers and 121 enlisted men were transferred to the ZI bound 316th. Many of those transferred had come overseas in 1942 with the Group or with the 60th and 62nd Groups and joined the 315th in 1944. Some were aircrew members, some ground support personnel - maintenance, communications, transportation, medical, administration. Assigned to the 315th in turn were 65 officers and 122 enlisted men who were recent arrivals in the theater.

Spanhoe had become home for the 315th, for the Group had remained there a longer period than at any other location. The towns of Kettering, Leicester, and Nottingham had become quite familiar to "regulars" on the nightly convoys so there were not a few who packed for the next destination with reluctance. Many of the officers and men had met and married English girls from the vicinity. The last "Anglo-American" wedding before the Group departed was that of Lt. Chapman to Miss Kessler in Oakham on 7 April.

Advance parties from the squadron left for Amiens/Glisy on 6 April, and the remainder of the Group moved between 7-11 April. Everything that could be transported by air went by plane or glider. A motor convoy, under the command of Major W. L. Parker, the Group personnel officer, crossed the Channel on LSTs. By 13 April operations were under way at the new location. Amiens/Glisy (Airfield B-48) was four miles east of the city of Amiens and 60 miles north of Paris.

Since 1940, the airfield had been used by the French, German and British. Extensive damage to the field and the buildings had occurred during the course of the war as a result of bombing attacks. As a result of this damage, there were few permanent buildings in any state of useable condition. A few Nissen huts were available, but the majority of the offices were set up under canvas. Each squadron, plus the 477th Air Service Group, which accompanied the 315th from Spanhoe, was assigned areas, and within ten days after the unit arrived, "Tent Cities" covered part of the landscape. Glider packing cases proved to be invaluable, supplementing the tents as working and living quarters. Group Headquarters officers were billeted at 15 re Edmond Lebel in the City of Amiens. The House had been taken over from the owner, Monsieur Lucien Gueudet, by the Germans, used by the Gestapo while Amiens was under German rule, liberated by the British and turned over to the 315th.

Chilly mornings followed by bright sunshine and mild temperatures was the weather most of the days in Northern France that spring. The amount of hours flown increased accordingly, flights went farther and farther into Germany as airfields near Frankfurt, Celle, Gotha, Fritzlar, and Stuttgart became almost daily destinations. There were many flights westbound to Britain as the occupants of German P.O.W. camps were freed and returned home. Crewmen reported heart-warming and moving scenes as many of these men set foot in their homeland for the first time in years.

There were rumors, as always, of future airborne missions which were "just around the corner,". It was later learned that the First Allied Airborne Army did, in fact, have plans to place paratroopers in the city of Berlin - the 82nd AB Division at Templehof Airfield, the 101st AB Division at Gatow Airfield, and the British Airborne Brigade at Oranienburg Airfield, northwest of the city Center.

Other airborne-troop carried missions considered were a drop at the naval base at Kiel, a series of drops on various prisoner-of-war camps and an airborne envelopment of Hitler's supposedly mountain redoubt in Bavaria. None of these missions went beyond the planning stages, even though on the last day of April the 315th sent a large formation back to Spanhoe to participate in a practice mission. The actual mission was never ordered. By early May, it was evident to almost everyone that the war in Europe would soon be over. "The Stars and Stripes" news-paper and the Armed Forces Radio reported a wide-spread collapse of the German forces, and bets were being made on what date the war would end. The main topic of conversation was, "what is planned for the 315th when its over here?" Some had the Group returning to the U.S. others had the 315th being retained in Europe to be part of the Army of Occupation, while a third group recommended that khaki uniforms be pulled out of barracks bags for the 315th was Pacific bound.

When word was finally received on 8 May of the German surrender, there was excitement, but not as much as some expected. The news had been diluted too much by false communiqués for several preceding days. Nevertheless, numerous bottles of champagne were consumed; all the flares the Group possessed were used up overnight, and those who could visited the restaurants, hotels, and bistros of Amiens, where festivities were at a higher peak than on the airfield.

The month that it was all over in Europe was the month the 315th Troop Carrier Group was probably at its greatest strength than any other month during the war. Assigned to the unit on 1 May were 657 officers (including Flight Officers and Warrant Officers) and 1430 enlisted men - 2087 U. S. Army Air Force servicemen (250 over authorized strength). On the same date, the 315th possessed 81 C-47 aircraft, four C-46 aircraft, six C-109 aircraft and 59 CG-4A gliders.

LAST DAYS

Several days before the German surrender there was talk that the 315th was scheduled to move again. This was confirmed on 7 May when, at a meeting held in Amiens, L/C Gibbons was informed by Hq. 52nd Troop Carrier Wing that 80 men would leave for Waller Field, Trinidad, British West Indies by C-54 aircraft within two days. Those who had hoped that the next move would be to the U. S. A. expressed their disappointment, but there was little time for complaints since the ground echelon was scheduled to be at the port, ready to depart, on 13 May, and the aircraft were to leave on the 15th. Major Alfred Cromartie's detachment of the 477th Air Service Group was ordered to move from Amiens along with the 315th.

Tents were pulled down, bags were packed, the six C-109 tankers, the four remaining C-46s, the 59 CG-4A gliders, and 17 C-47s were tied down and transferred to other units for later pickup; and on 15 May, to the men of the 315th, Amiens/Glisy became another memory. While most did not realize it at the time, when the last plane took off from Amiens, the 315th's days as a World War II troop carrier group were over forever.

Because of the two long over water route segments across the South Atlantic, each aircraft was restricted to a basic crew of four (on some crews, 5); therefore with the exception of the party flown out in advance on the 9th or 10th, all other personnel were scheduled to travel by ship. This group of 1166 officers and enlisted men went first to Camp "Lucky Strike," near Le Havre, and sailed to Trinidad on the USS General Gordon.

There were 64 aircraft in the air movement - 16 in each squadron. From the list of 69 pilots who went to England in 1942 with the 315th there were 21 remaining when the unit departed for the Caribbean and eleven of the original crew chiefs.

CAPS CAPS CAPS

Sandy "Cap Man" Friedman reports more than 100 caps have already been purchased by members, many of whom expect to arrive at Dayton wearing this distinctive 315th headgear. Specially designed, the caps display a 315th TCG Airborne Patch on the front and chicken tracks on the bill. In Royal Blue, made in the USA, the caps are designed to last for years. Sandy will bring a supply to the reunion. Or you can order now. They're great for wives, friends and offspring. Cost is \$15 including delivery. The Association receives no benefit.

OFF THE GRAPEVINE

(AND OTHER QUESTIONABLE SOURCES)

YOU WERE THERE

Advertising a series of World War II histories, Time/Life calls it "the story of this century's greatest event."

BEST NEWSPAPER HEADLINES OF 1998

- Include Your Children When Baking Cookies
- Something Went Wrong in Jet Crash, Experts Say
- Drunks Get Nine Months in Violin Case
- Iraqi Head Seeks Arms
- Panda Mating Fails; Veterinarian Takes Over
- Plane Too Close to Ground, Crash Probe Told
- Miners Refuse to Work After Death
- Two Sisters Reunited After 18 Years in Checkout Counter
- War Dims Hope for Peace

MORE EXTRACTS FROM "GREEN LIGHT" by Martin Wolfe.

(History of the 81st TC Squadron, 436th TC Group)

re Operation VARSITY (Rhine crossing): The 315th TC Group, ferrying British para-troopers from England, had ten planes shot down in the air in the few minutes after they had dropped their sticks and were making their turn, seven others were damaged so badly they had to make forced landings west of the Rhine.

re Operation VARSITY (Rhine crossing): Squadrons of the 313th TC Group, which had been given the task of flying those dreadful C-46s, proved only too tragically that these planes deserved the label "flaming coffins" that we pinned on them. One of these C-46s crashed on takeoff. Nineteen of the seventy two C-46s in these four squadrons that made it to Wesel were shot down; and out of these, fourteen went down in flames.

FITNESS STUFF

From Headquarters, 50 Troop Carrier Wing Newsletter

- My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was 60 She's 97 now and I don't know where the heck she is.
- The only reason I would take up jogging is so that I could hear heavy breathing again.
- I like long walks. Especially when they are taken by people who annoy me.
- If you are going to try cross-country skiing, start with a small country.
- I don't jog. It makes the ice jump right out of my glass.

NINTH AF CONVENTION

Ninth Air Force Association convention and unit reunions, September 28-30, 2000 Ridgeway Inn, Memphis TN. Contact Fern Mann, 135 Riverwalk Place, Memphis, TN 38103-0846. Ph: 901 578-5333, FAX 901 578-9999

BEING HIGH

Excerpt from January/February, 2000 *Modern Maturity* interview with Dr. Andrew Weil

MM: Didn't you once say, "I am a great believer in the value of being high?"

Weil: Yes, but by "high" I did not mean being under the influence of a drug. I meant being in an altered state of consciousness where you feel elevated, expanded, connected. There are many spontaneous highs that people have, and you can get there through meditation, exercise, sex, as well as psychoactive drugs. While in that state, you can see potentials and ideas you don't normally see. These states are doorways to the nervous system that might lower your blood pressure, help you deal better with pain, improve your sleep, or even extend your longevity.

COWBOY TALK

- There's two theories about arguin" with a woman. Neither one works.
- If you find yourself in a hole, the first thing to do is stop diggin'.
- When you give a lesson in meanness to a critter or a person, don't be surprised if they learn their lesson.
- The quickest way to double your money is to fold it over and put it back in your pocket.
- Never miss a good chance to shut up.
- Don't squat with your spurs on.
- Good judgment comes from experience, and a lot of that comes from bad judgment.
- Lettin' the cat outta the bag is a whole lot easier 'n puttin' it back in.
- If you get to thinkin' you're a person of some influence, try orderin' somebody else's dog around.
- Never kick a cow chip on a hot day.

BEEN THERE BEFORE

The German controllers at Frankfurt Airport were a short-tempered lot. They not only expected you to know your parking location but how to get there without any assistance from them. So it was with some amusement that we (PanAm 747) listened to the following exchange between Frankfurt ground and a British Airways 747 (radio call: Speedbird 206) after landing: Speedbird 206: "Good Morning Frankfurt, Speedbird 206 clear of the active."

Ground: "Guten morgan, taxi to your gate."
The British Airway 747 pulls onto the main taxiway and stops.
Ground: "Speedbird, do you not know where you are going?"
Speedbird 206: "Stand by, ground, I'm looking up the gate location now."
Ground (with typical German impatience): "Speedbird 206, have you never flown to Frankfurt before."
Speedbird 206 (coolly): "Yes, in 1944. But I didn't stop."

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.)*

Ralph Baysinger	310th Sq	Sep 1999
Robert H. Brothers	309th Sq	Jun 1999
Robert C. Harrold	43rd Sq	Jun 1999
Harvey Hicks	34th Sq	unk
Albert H. Lorenz	309th Sq	Nov 1999
Alexander Prima	34th Sq.	Oct 1999
Loren A. Swanberg	309thSq	Aug 1999
John W. J. Wright	unk	Jan 2000

DONATIONS

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

Donations have been received
(since publication of the March Newsletter) from the following.

- Ira Heiger
- Mrs. Pat Johnson

Given in memory of Russell Hayford, W. L. Johnson; in support of the Association, and in remembrance of those for whom Taps were sounded.

ROLE OF HONOR

Honorary Association member Jan Bos is assembling a 315th Role of Honor listing all who gave their lives during wartime operations. He is seeking more information on those lost in the crash of a 43rd aircraft on 19 September 1942, prior to the Group's overseas deployment. He presently has only family names and ranks, no first names or Serial Numbers. If you have any information on the individuals and/or the circumstances of the crash please forward to Doc Cloer who will pass to Jan.

C-109

- Late in the war the 315th received several single engine pilots who had been flying school instructors or had just finished fighter transition. The Group was too busy for check outs in the C-47s, so they had time on their hands. One - after a hard sell - convinced 34th Ops Officer Bernie Pleasant to authorize a flight in one of the Glider pilots L-4s.

The pilot, a Lt. Corpi, taxied behind two C-109s doing their run up,. Reports are that L-4 did an impressive.....ground level.....snap roll.

Rebecca

Before being TDY'd to American Graves Registration for my last 6 months in Europe I had logged 49 hours of instrument flight -- missed The Green Card by an hour.

During the six weeks I was in the 315th at Spanhoe, I lived in a hut named "The Snake Pit." Roomies in the Pit were Ed Connors and a chap from Ohio who occupied the bunk on the right just inside the door. The only other pilot I remember is Cal Enderlin.

Please keep the *Newsletter* coming. I read every word.

DAYTON REUNION
AUGUST 25-28



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

J. S. Smith, editor
WW II 315th Troop Carter Group Assoc.
1967 Iowa Ave NE
St. Petersburg, FL 33703

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where is everyone heading?



.....why the 315th reunion in Dayton, of course!