



# 315th Newsletter

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

At the St. Louis Business Meeting, Past President John Andrews appointed a Committee (Bill Brinson, Bob Cloer and myself) to select an organization to make arrangements for suitable lodging, tours, meals, entertainment, and other services for the 1996 Reunion in Milwaukee. Following is a status report on plans for that event.

The Committee has chosen Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. of Norfolk, VA and a contract has been signed. This is an experienced company, in business for several years which arranges 80-90 military reunions annually.

Our reunion dates are September 4 -- 8. The hotel will be the Hyatt Regency with a double room cost of \$69, plus tax. Located downtown the hotel features a skywalk to the Grand Avenue Shopping Mall and is in walking distance to the theater district. The Hyatt will provide Hospitality Rooms and has agreed the Association can stock and operate such. Board meeting, Business meeting, and Banquet rooms will also be available.

Room reservations are to be made by Association members directly with the hotel. Armed Forces Reunions will handle pre-event and on-site registration, arrange tours, banquet, etc. Full information, including hotel and events registration forms, will be forwarded in up-coming *Newsletters*.

J. S. Smith

Because many of our readers took part in the GREEN PROJECT, we thought the following article which originally appeared in a San Juan, Puerto Rico newspaper would bring back memories of their participation in that great project. We're indebted to Len Zurakov who clipped the article so many years ago and sent it to your editor.

## Green Project Will Bring 60 Per Cent Of All Air Returnees Through Borinque

By Randy Fort, World Journal Staff Writer

BORINQUEN FIELD -- By August 1, this will be one of the busiest air fields in the world and the world's history.

By that date, the greatest air transport operation known to man is scheduled to reach its peak: the flying of about 50,000 troops monthly by the Army's Air Transport Command from the European and Mediterranean theaters to the United States for discharge or transfer to the Pacific.

Of that 50,000, some 10,000 will be flown by the North Atlantic route. About 11,000 more will be flown by a middle route from Casablanca in French Morocco, to Miami.

The remaining 29,000 -- or nearly 60 per cent of the total number -- will be brought across by the lower South Atlantic and Caribbean route.

Every one of these men will land at Puerto Rico's Borinquen Field, to remain approximately one hour before making the final non-stop hop to Miami and the mainland of the United States.

That means that European war veterans will be passing through this Island at the rate of almost 1000 a day, probably for many months to come in what has been termed by the Army the "Green Project."

### TERMINALS IDENTICAL

The middle and lower routes are identical as to terminals: Casablanca and Miami. Otherwise, whereas troops going the more direct of the two routes touch the Azores and Bermuda, those passing through this area go by Dakar, in Senegal, French West Africa; Natal and Belem, Brazil; Atkinson Field, British Guiana and Borinquen.

While the Azores--Bermuda route only is a little over half the distance of the one through the Caribbean -- 4000 miles against 7,600 -- the latter will

witness the passing through of well over two-and-a-half times as many men as the former: 29,000 monthly as against 11,000.

Why?

It boils down to the simple matter of getting more men home more rapidly and more safely.

The weather by the Caribbean "path" is better, the winds more favorable. The legs are shorter. Thus less gasoline is needed per hop, and when less gasoline has to be carried, more men can be.

### 50 HOURS OR MORE

Actually, it is possible at present for a unit of men to be transported by air from Casablanca to Miami over the Caribbean route in a little more than 50 hours, with perfect "connections". For the most part, however, in these pioneering days of the Green Project -- the first men came through here 10 days ago -- the time is considerably longer.

The flying schedule is: Casa to Dakar, 9 hours 30 minutes; Dakar to Natal, 9 hours 30 minutes; Natal to Belem 5 hours 55 minutes; Belem to Atkinson Field, 5 hours 30 minutes; Atkinson to Borinquen (the longest hop in this hemisphere), 6 hours 40 minutes; Borinquen to Miami, 6 hours 25 minutes.

That adds up to 43 and a half hours of flying, but there also are waits. In Dakar and Natal, thus far, they are indeterminate. But at Atkinson there is a four-hour layover which is to be reduced to one hour and at Belem and here at Borinquen, there are one-hour stops.

### TACTICAL CRAFT ATWORK

The men picked by the Army to be flown home are brought from various European and Mediterranean points to Casablanca by tactical aircraft which a short time ago were fighting the enemy and by Air Transport Command transport ships.

(ATC also handles the briefing, safety plans and servicing and furnishes celestial navigators when needed for the supplementary "White Project", by which tactical planes are flown westward across the Atlantic routes. Sometimes these combat planes have enough room to take a few additional combat veterans along.)

From Casa the ATC, which was thrown the gigantic job by the Army just after V-E Day, takes the troops in units of 40 first to Dakar, on the westernmost hump of Africa, and thence across the South Atlantic to Natal, on the easternmost hump of Brazil, which reaches out toward Africa.

Both Casablanca-Dakar and Dakar-Natal are shuttle runs, made by giant C-54 transports. South to Dakar and west to Natal, they carry their complements of 40 men with their luggage allotments of 35 pounds. On the eastern and northern, or return runs, the 54s carry such miscellaneous passengers and cargo as may be at hand.

Incidentally, the GIs devote most of their individual 35-pound baggage allowances to souvenirs, gifts for the home folks and the most personal effects. The bulk of their government issue possessions are taken up on the eastern side of the Atlantic; they can get replacements in the States, if and as needed.

A few C-54s and C-46s -- the latter large 30 man transports -- are used for that part of the route on the western side of the Atlantic, but the vast majority of the work on the South America-Caribbean-North American run is done by 20 passenger C-47 "Flying Mules", which have been Army workhorse planes throughout the world in this war.

### TRINIDAD IS BASE

The C-47s -- more than 250 of them are based at Waller Field, Trinidad, roughly half way between Natal and Miami. It is at Trinidad that each Green Project flight through the Caribbean Division begins.

The first C-47 to operate in the Green Project followed the same route subsequent planes will fly. First, it went southward, stopping at Atkinson and Belem, to Natal, where it picked up its load of 20 veterans. Then it turned north with its human cargo, pausing at Belem for gassing-up and leg-stretching, then to Atkinson.

At this great American Army base hewn from hitherto impenetrable jungles of British Guiana, the ship was given its 25 hour check, a quick though thorough inspection to see that everything about it was in perfect condition

### REST POINT

Here, too, the 20 soldiers, tired from their long jaunt, got a little time of their own. They were given a fine meal and a cigarette ration card, shown dispensary facilities, given a chance to wash up and to ship in a post exchange stocked with cold drinks, candies and South American goods.

Most important, they were shown to a tent with cots, where they could stretch out and sleep or just rest for most of their four-hour stop.

The Atkinson layover will be reduced to one hour as soon as a plane pool can be built up there. When that time comes, each incoming northbound plane will be pulled off the run there for its 25-hour check, and the returnees, after an hour on the ground, will board another "fresh" plane to continue their flight.

Medical officers at the dispensary, which has been set up solely for these returnees, say that they have very little work to do. Even a man who feels really bum hesitates to go there, for he fears the discovery of some ailment will bring about his being held there -- only a few hours away from his beloved States.

**AFRAID TO ASK**

Airsickness (treated with sedative) and headaches are the most frequent complaints and, one doctor-officer laughed, "They're scared to death to ask for an aspirin". Of course, a man has to be pretty sick before he's taken off the plane, and he's rushed northward as soon as he can travel.

Next came the run to Borinquen, where, for the first time in many months, usually running into years, the soldiers first set foot on U.S.-owned earth. Here they had time to grab a bite and unknot weary muscles.

And finally came the Borinquen-Miami flight, the last leg of the homeward journey. At Miami they could kiss Continental U.S. soil -- which a great many of them, even stretcher cases, insist on doing -- and get all the milk they wanted to drink for the first time since their departures, and telephone the home folks, wife or girl. Eighteen phones are reserved for this purpose.

The C-47 which carried the first men then returned to Trinidad by way of Borinquen for its 50 hour check which required six hours work by mechanics before they took to the air again. After they made a second circuit, each plane will be given a longer 100 hour check

**TAKE CARGO SOUTH**

Southbound, the C-47s carry passengers and cargo to Natal and way points, much of it connecting with the shuttling C-54s at Natal and later, in Africa.

As an indication of the enormity of the project, by Aug. 1, the scheduled peak date, the concrete runways on the island of Trinidad will be busier than were all world's commercial airfields combined before the war.

All along the aerial route leading to the States, the troops feel at home, for the men who get them there talk their own language.

The men piloting the planes in the Green Project were, in the main, transferred to the ATC from the Troop Carrier Command after V-E Day. They formerly flew hazardous missions dropping airborne soldiers and supplies into zones at the front or in front of the front.

The Crew Chiefs on these planes and the ground crews who service them formerly, for the most part, were with the Air Service or Troop Carrier Commands in the war zone. Even the soldiers who meet them at the various stops to guide them around, answer their questions or run their errands are usually men who have just returned from active theaters.

**SAFETY FOREMOST**

The one word "Safety" is all-important throughout all workings of the Projects. Precautions are doubled and quadrupled for no one -- least of all Col. Cortlandt S. Johnson, commanding ATC's Caribbean Division -- wants mishap to overtake any man who has survived so long a time overseas.

Pilots picked to fly the Project are the very pick of ATC and former Troop Carrier Command pilots, selected through a screening process to get these planes through. They are given special schooling by the ATC, and the first group chosen will go on to teach other pilots as the Project builds up.

Then the plane crews are given ample rest: the crew changes at each of the plane's stops.

The entire system is patterned after the Civil Aeronautics Authority in the States: pilots must keep their planes separated as to altitude to avoid the danger of collision, and they are kept minutely informed by flight control as to the weather.

Thus far, since June 15 "opening day," there have been no accidents

Homegoing veterans are asked at Atkinson and other points to offer frank criticisms of the service, principally as a guide to making things more pleasant for the GIs who will follow them. Sometimes they respond.

**GOT THE BLANKETS**

For instance, some of them wrote on complaint blanks that plane riding could get pretty chilly and that the issuance of a blanket to each man would be a big help. The blankets have been on hand ever since.

But, it's difficult to get even an earnestly-sought criticism from them, for they're about the

first non-gripping lot the American Army has ever known. They're practically speechless over their luck -- at surviving and at being unexpectedly flown home -- and they're just not in a squawking mood.

The returnees make the flight under the direct supervision of one of their number who is designated group leader. Occasionally, this man is an officer, but since few officers are being flown back, he usually is the ranking non-commissioned officer among the 20.

It is his job to keep the crowd together, relay instructions and orders, and preserve discipline.

The problem of misconduct, however, is almost non-existent. No man cares to breach even a minor rule when that act might retard his homeward progress.

And besides, they're too tired for that sort of thing.

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As our readers know, the 1996 Reunion of the 315th Troop Carrier Group Association will be held in MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN. Our President's letter on the first page of this issue provides the date and the name of the hotel and promises further details in upcoming issues of the *Newsletter*.

To start your salivating glands working (admittedly a little early) we're reproducing some suggestions from a recent issue of the *New York Times* which carried a feature "What's doing in Milwaukee". In the article, a few restaurants were mentioned. Here are a few:

Mader's 1041 North Old World Third Street, was founded in 1902 by a young German immigrant named George Mader. Old pictures of the establishment in the coat room show that the present medieval German castle esthetic was not cultivated from the beginning. While the restaurant's portrayal of Germany is stereotyped, the food is authentically central European. The wiener schnitzel is buttery and tender; the tafel spitz, a Viennese speciality of boiled beef

complemented with an apple-horseradish paste, is excellent. Mader's offers a large selection of foreign and domestic beer and wine. Dinner for two with wine or beer is \$60.

At Old Town (Stari Grad) 522 West Lincoln Avenue, the friendly staff serves Serbian and other Balkan specialties in an unremarkable dining room. The servings are so big that people always leave more on their plates than they eat. The burek spinach is a tasty pylo-dough pie of cheese and spinach. Spicy chevapchichi, a sausagelike dish served with raw onions, and the "Balkan peasant" salads of tomatoes, cucumbers and greens or marinated red peppers are delicious. Dinner for two with wine or beer is about \$55.

Elsa's on the Park, 833 North Jefferson Street, serves a nice salami-and-cheese plate and a good selection of burgers with appealing toppings, like the Greek Maiden Burger with feta cheese, black olives, onion and mint. Dinner for two with wine is about \$20.

Gil's Cafe, 2608 North Downer Avenue, an informal place with mismatched blond wood tables and chairs, bases a lot of its menu on the simple ingredients of central Italy. There's bruschetta with tomatoes and olive oil and a pesto pizza with parmesan cheese. The juicy Barcelona steak sandwich is also good. Dinner for two without wine is about \$20.

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Obviously, there are many more eating places in Milwaukee, many of them not too far from the Hyatt Regency hotel in downtown Milwaukee, so one can choose from literally countless places to enjoy a meal.

So, dear friends, please plan to be with us in September, 1996 because we know we're going to have a GREAT REUNION!!!!

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Glider Pilots and their performance in carrying out their assigned duties in the toughest possible combat situations have, never in the estimation of your editor (and very likely in the estimation of everyone who has ever known of them) been accorded fitting tribute anywhere in the public print. Those of us who had the privilege of serving with them and seeing them in action know from personal experience how courageously and competently they did their job.

Following is an article written by Kathleen McCauliffe which originally appeared in *Smithsonian* magazine. We are indebted to Robert S. Hogg who clipped the article and sent it to Bob Cloer who forwarded it to your editor.....who thanks them both.

## Crossing the lines on silent wings

*D-Day was their finest hour, but all through the war, unsung men of the glider service flew and fought risky and decisive missions*

"See this 'G,'" said Earl Shoup, pointing to the letter on the silver Air Force wings fixed to his lapel. "Do you know what that stands for?" His buddies, all sporting the same 'G'-wings beat him to the punch line: "Guts!" they chimed in unison, their battle cry since their beer-guzzling days back in the service.

Overhead F-18s swooped in for a 600-mile-per-hour flyby, dazzling the spectators who flocked to the airshow at McChord Air Force Base in Tacoma, Washington. As the rolling thunder of jet engines trailed off to a whisper, an official seized the opportunity to announce that 70 World War II glider pilots gathered as honorary guests at the VIP stand. "Let's give 'em a big round of applause!" he rallied the crowd.

"Glanders! You guys flew gliders in World War II?" The middle-aged Korean War vet couldn't believe his ears.

"Jesus!" boomed a voice from a neighboring bleacher. "I didn't know that---and I was there."

With supersonic warbirds crisscrossing the clouds this fine afternoon five decades after World War II, it was hard to imagine that dinky motorless craft ever set off in death-defying missions into enemy territory. But the men who volunteered to pilot those "flying coffins," to little or no fanfare during the war, have not forgotten. Though celebrated airborne divisions like the 82nd and 101st with whom they served are justly famous, glider men went largely unrecognized.

All these decades later they still resent the fact, and they have astonishing tales to tell -- of luck, terror, heroism, as well as plenty of snafus, aloft and aground. "We're still swapping lies about it," Shoup told me.

This was long after the fighting. Some old pilots each year inevitably tend to get subtracted from the group, among them Shoup who died not long after I met him in Tacoma to talk about the glider war. Embellishments aside, glider pilots suffered some of the highest casualties in World War II. As Walter Cronkite, who rode a glider during combat in Europe in 1944 as a young war correspondent, said of the experience: "It was a lifetime cure for constipation."

Although history relegated them to obscurity, glider pilots were at the vanguard of almost every major U.S. engagement of the war: D-Day in Normandy, the Battle of the Bulge, the liberation of Holland, the crossing of the Rhine into Wesel, as well as earlier assaults on Sicily, southern France and even Burma. Their sneak night landings north of Mandalay in 1944-45 kept Japanese troops on the defensive. There were only 6,500 glider pilots in all -- a tiny fraction of total Air Force personnel. But they were the only men who both flew aircraft and fought as infantry on the ground.

Glider pilots also pioneered an attack concept called vertical envelopment. After being borne aloft by a tow-line attached to a powered plane, the pilot would cut loose over the target and silently descend behind the lines in enemy territory where --with luck--his craft could be set down on a back road or a pasture amid grazing cattle, or even in five feet of standing corn. Basically, glider pilots served a function similar to helicopter pilots today -- transporting men, fuel, ammunition, Jeeps and medical supplies. Only once down, they were down for good. What they had to do then was fight.

On the ground, the commander in the air suddenly found himself taking orders from members of the airborne division which typically consisted of about 4,000 glider infantry and 8,000 paratroopers. Scattered all over the landing one, these mixed units assembled in small bands as best they could and launched attacks against enemy defensive positions to clear the way for the main invasion forces.

Their goal was to knock out artillery batteries and seize bridges, railways and airports. If all went well, the bulk of the Allied army would then join up with the airborne division a few days later relieving the glider pilots so they could be shipped back to the air bases from which they departed. At least that was how it was supposed to work. But often, former glider pilot Lee G. Hampson noted, "it was like flying a stick of dynamite through the gates of hell."

Imagine, Hampson said, floating at treetop level on a "flimsy, fabric-covered glider loaded with 13 infantrymen or cartons of highly explosive ammunition, gasoline and TNT, through a murderous barrage of heavy flak, and then crash-landing in a tiny field surrounded by 80-foot trees and planted with anti-glider poles. As you crawl out of the wrecked glider you are charged by big tanks and enemy soldiers tossing hand-grenades and firing small arms, mortar and machine guns at you."

If flying a glider into combat sounds like a fiendish idea, it should come as no surprise that the scheme was the brainchild of the Führer, Adolph Hitler himself. By early 1940, the German Army had swallowed up Austria and the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia, and had divided Poland with the Russians. Thus freed on the southern and eastern flanks, Hitler turned his attention to the conquest of Northern Europe. He quickly ruled out a headlong assault on France's Maginot Line.

The obvious solution was to punch past it near the Belgian border and sweep around to the north. But therein the direct path of his war machine stood the "impregnable" Belgian fortress of Eben Emael.

Towering over several key bridges at the juncture of the Meuse River with the Albert Canal, Eben Emael stood in the way of the

German force set to invade Belgium, Holland and France. The German high command estimated that it would take 6,000 crack ground troops months to seize the heavily armored installation. Unhappy with that timetable, Hitler conceived the daring plan of using a new, and untested weapon -- the glider.

Shortly before dawn on May 10, 1940, in one of the most brilliant small tactical feats of the war, ten gliders carrying 78 men landed on the grassy 1,000-yard-long roof of the fortress. Before stupefied Belgian machine gunners could stop them, the Germans burst out of their gliders and raced to the fort's steel cupolas, which they quickly piled with recently invented 100-pound demolition charges. Even the Germans were stunned by the force of the blast, which tore into the bowels of the fort, incinerating gun crews and other soldiers trapped below. Twenty-eight hours later, the 780-man garrison surrendered. The critical fortress had fallen to Hitler at a cost of only 6 Germans killed and 20 wounded.

Shocked by the news of Eben Emael's devastating defeat, the British raced to develop military gliders. They were followed a year later by the Americans whose initial reluctance to embrace the idea was rapidly overcome by Pearl Harbor and a second successful glider assault by the Germans during the capture of Crete. The top brass in Washington, however, could never quite decide just what flight qualities a glider should have, or even what exactly a glider group was to do. Eventually, the Army settled on the CG-4A. A boxy prototype designed by the Waco Aircraft Company of Troy, Ohio, it was better suited for hauling cargo than performing the kind of surprise tactical missions the German gliders had pioneered.

It did not inspire confidence in the men expected to pilot it. Resembling a flying crate, the fragile contraption consisted of a fabric-covered tubular steel frame with plywood flooring. With a wingspan of almost 84 feet, it could carry a pilot, copilot and 13 infantrymen. When the human payload was reduced, it could accommodate a 75 millimeter howitzer, a bulldozer or a Jeep. Some CG-4As later flown into Japanese-occupied Burma were even outfitted with mule stalls, since Jeeps were

considered unsuitable for mountainous terrain. Mulehands stood by with shotguns ready to dispatch the notoriously cantankerous beasts should they kick up a ruckus in flight, but this proved an unnecessary precaution. The mules took to the air like naturals -- leaning against the pitch of the craft and taking the shock of landing often with much more calm than the humans there to pacify them.

The British glider fleet mostly used the Horsa, a craft with almost twice the payload of the CG-4A. They also created the gigantic Hamilcar, which could actually bear a 20-ton tank aloft. These cumbersome contraptions had wing flaps to slow their speed at landing -- a feature the CG4A lacked. Till, they were much less maneuverable, and on rough impact their all-wood frames tended to collapse like a barn in a windstorm, sending deadly splinters in every direction. Most pilots -- if given the choice -- would take their chances with the CG4A. "Without a motor, maneuverability was everything," veteran Miles C. Wagner explained. "After all, you couldn't put your foot on the gas and take a second spin around looking for a bigger clearing."

All gliders had a yoke linked to the stabilizers to control up and down motion, and foot pedals that operated a rudder for turning, to provide control in three dimensions. Many pilots compensated for the lack of a gas pedal by using gravity to give them the extra push needed to clear unexpected obstacles. In a maneuver known as a "British blitz", the pilot would push the yoke forward, sending the glider into a nosedive. Sweeping within a few feet of the ground, he would then violently yank the yoke back, using the acceleration from his plummeting descent to hedgehop over fences, trees or any other objects that suddenly appeared in his path.

Such airmanship took considerable mastery; just learning to fly a glider in the first place was difficult enough. For one thing, despite the name, military gliders could scarcely glide, at least in the sense that sailplanes flown by sportsmen did and do. Burdened with their whole 4,060 pound payload, they lost altitude twice as fast as light sport gliders. "For that reason," said Floyd J. Sweet who headed one U.S.

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glider instruction program, "early glider training in sports planes turned out to be a poor substitute for the reality of flying a combat glider."

Much of the training was done in California, Texas and other Southern states. Two hundred pilots, volunteers from all branches of the service were in the first group with the first class graduating in December 1942. At least half of them went on to become instructors. With CG-4As in short supply, some pilots learned in regular aircraft whose engines were shut down sporadically in midflight -- thus intentionally creating an emergency situation dreaded by pilots. Veteran Ed L. Keys: "Today you couldn't pay me enough to shut off the engine of a plane and land in some of the stamp size South Dakota fields we set those planes down in. You kept your eyeballs peeled and your head on a swivel trying to spot the best place for a "dead stick" landing. And if you thought daytime landings were bad, think of the paranoia at night."

The situation hardly improved, even when the first gliders had rolled off assembly lines. Much less sturdy than training planes, the CG4A bounced off the rising thermals "like a brick hitting a wall," as glider pilot Rowell Houghton, a retired lieutenant colonel put it. During advanced training, the pilots also had to learn a hair-raising "snatch" technique for the retrieval of gliders on the ground. The glider's towline would be strung between two vertical poles in front of it. Then the engine-powered towplane would swoop down with a hook dangling below it on a long line reeled out from a revolving drum. The trick was to snag the horizontal rope and keep flying despite the initial dead-weight shock of the grounded glider you were trying to haul into the air. Within seconds, the tow craft was hurled from a standstill to 120 miles per hour. One glider pilot recalled, "It was a sensation unlike anything I had ever experienced, even on wild carnival rides." In actual combat, it turned out, most gliders were wrecked beyond salvage during their crash landings. If they survived impact, they were often torched by the enemy.

Accidents were common, even in training. The aviation industry was overburdened by the demand for warplanes, so production of gliders often fell to manufacturers with little knowledge



of aeronautical engineering. The largest builder - the Ford Motor Company -- at least had expertise in mass production. It turned out more than 4,000 of the 13,900 CG-4As made during the war. But many small sub contractors were skilled only at making pianos or wooden ice boxes, or, in one case, pickle barrels. They made serious glitches, many of which weren't discovered until too late. During a demonstration flight at Lambert Field in St. Louis in 1943, a glider built by a local manufacturer lost a wing and fell from the sky, horrifying onlookers and killing more than a half-dozen of the city's prominent leaders who had gone along as passengers. The cause of the crash turned out to be a defective part furnished by a former manufacturer of coffins.

Small wonder that the Air Force had to resort to razzle-dazzle recruitment tactics -- if not downright lies -- to get men to join the glider program. Initially volunteers were required to pass the rigid physical exams given power pilot candidates. They had to be between 18 and 26 years of age and could not have flunked out of a military flying school. But when glowing words in ads like "Soar to Victory" failed to generate a rush on the recruitment office, the Air Force drastically lowered entrance qualifications. "You could be a washed-out cadet, or be as old as 35," one glider pilot said, "or wear thick-lensed glasses and they'd take you." "We were the bastards nobody wanted," another pilot admitted.

Adding to a recruitment problem, the first Allied glider mission on the island of Sicily in the summer of 1943 was a fiasco. Glider-borne troops were supposed to take the Ponte Grande, a bridge near the ancient port of Syracuse -- and demolish nearby artillery batteries aimed at the shoreline where the amphibious forces of British general Bernard Law Montgomery would be invading the island. On the evening of July 9-10, towplanes hauled 144 gliders -- mostly CG4As into the sky for the four hour flight from Africa. In all they carried 1,300 British glider troops and supplies. Ill-prepared for navigating in the dark, many of the towpilots lost their way and mistakenly released their gliders off the coast far from their targets. By daybreak, only 54 gliders had landed in Sicily, only 9 at their designated

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landing zones. Although Montgomery's forces did eventually secure the bridges, the Allied commanders were appalled to learn that 300 glider troops had drowned at sea.

The tragedy in Sicily, which virtually coincided with the heavily publicized crash at Lambert Field, nearly brought an end to America's glider program. But at the last moment a world-renowned aerial stuntman, Mike Murphy of Findlay, Ohio, orchestrated a Hollywood-style demonstration that won over even the severest critics of the program.

As a high-ranking glider officer, Murphy escorted a team of top Air Force commanders to a bleacher in the middle of the training field at the Laurinburg-Maxton Army Air Base in North Carolina. It was dusk. Unbeknownst to the Air Force brass in attendance, more than a mile away a fleet of CG4As were getting to release from their towplanes. When dusk had deepened, making it almost pitch-black outside, Murphy's voice, as he gave a short talk on the virtues of combat gliders, was booming out of the loudspeaker. The gliders were then approaching the field, but Murphy's amplified voice successfully concealed the muffled thumps and whine of the skids as the planes touched down directly in front of the bleachers. Murphy yelled "Lights!" and to the amazement of the unsuspecting audience, there were ten menacing-looking gliders directly in front of them.

Thus converted, the military went ahead in many theaters of the war, where, through trial and error, they learned the terrain and conditions in which motorless aircraft could be used to the best advantages. Night missions gradually were phased out -- the damage from crashes proved worse than enemy fire in the broad light of day -- and much greater care was given to the preparation of pilots. Before the invasion of Normandy in June 1944, for instance, the men spent hours studying three-dimensional maps of the landing area, memorizing the terrain, the layout of houses and even the names of the farmers who occupied them.

In many ways that invasion was glider command's braves hour. The top-secret mission called for the deployment of 1,200 American CG4As and 300 British Horsa gliders. They were

to strike early in the dark dawn of D-Day, June 6, 1944 -- some five hours before the amphibious assault troops hit the beaches. From various airfields in England, gliders and paratroop carriers brought three airborne divisions several miles behind Nazi lines at points near Ste. Mère-Eglise, Carentan and Caen. Their task was to touch down on opposite ends of the Allies' wide Normandy beachhead and seize control of key bridges and roads to protect the landing troops from early counterattack.

In case they were caught behind enemy lines, glider pilots, like other pilots were given an escape packet that included a photograph ID on civilian clothes, along with a foreign alias. Lennie Williams, who flew into Ste. Mère-Eglise on D-Day, was glad to report that thanks to his comprehensive briefing, he did have an intense sensation of *deja vu* coming in to land. "I felt as if I was driving through my own farm," he recalled. "It was unbelievable. I knew where everything was -- every tree, every fence, every house and the names of the occupants to boot."

Intelligence information sometimes proved dangerously faulty, though. Trees in Normandy said to be 20 feet tall in fact towered to 80 feet. Hedgerows, which the pilots were told to plow through in an emergency, often hid centuries-old stone walls. Men who hit them paid for it with their lives.

Even in the air -- especially in the air, some pilots would say gliders were never really reliable. Many simply disintegrated in turbulent skies. On hitting a downdraft over the English Channel, one of Britain's behemoth Hamilcar gliders dropped a tank and its crew to a watery grave. Approaching a crowded landing zone during the invasion of southern France later in June, a glider pilot was astounded to see a Jeep tumbling down from the sky -- testimony to one of many midair collisions.

Landing was often a nightmare. Because the Nazis feared surprise landings, fields were flooded or impaled with the infamous anti-glider poles unaffectionately known as "Rommel's asparagus." Usually 12 feet tall, they were arranged in long rows 15 to 40 feet apart and tied together by wires which, when hit were intended to activate mines planted at their bases.

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Fortunately, the Germans rarely found time to fuse the mines. What's more, in their methodical zeal they often planted the posts at too-regular intervals. By shearing off the wings of his craft, a skilled or just lucky glider pilot sometimes brought down the plane more or less intact -- amid a field of stakes!

Of course, those who survived hedgerows, flying Jeeps and Rommel's asparagus had to worry about enemy fire. As they neared the landing zone, the pilots were terrified of groundfire shooting up through their legs -- and often placed their helmets in a strategic position. Although parachutes were routinely issued to fighter and bomber pilots, no such luxury was afforded the glider pilots. "The 13 infantrymen in the back of the glider had to do without them because of the excessive weight. Given the circumstances, a pilot wearing a chute would have been looked upon most unkindly."

With no way of bailing out, some pilots broke the rules and took additional protective measures against groundfire. Before the massive airborne invasion of Wesel, Germany, the morning of March 24, 1945, Earl Shoup fitted a piece of armor-metal plating to the floor under his feet. The mission, establishing a bridgehead on the far side of the Rhine, involved a staggering number of aircraft -- 1,346 gliders and 1,591 power planes. But less than 20 miles from Wesel, in an elevated and heavily forested area, 50,000 German troops -- including several panzer divisions -- stood guard with an estimated 100 tanks, self-propelled guns and a large number of anti-aircraft weapons. The heavy armor plating was strictly against regulations. But Shoup had no apologies. In the last few minutes of flight, the plate bounced up from the floor, thrusting his knees toward his chin, three times in a row--each one the result of a direct enemy hit.

Although Shoup came through unscathed, his glider did not. A phosphorous shell set one fabric-covered wing on fire, and while descending through the smoke screen for an emergency landing, Shoup suddenly caught sight of high tension power lines. "We'd been taught to go over the power lines," he told me, "but in a situation like that, who the hell cares! I slipped her right under and landed in a big field.."

Many glider pilots were not so fortunate. Severely injured by groundfire during the invasion of Holland in September 1944, George F. Brennan holds the distinction of being the only many to crash-land a fiery glider with just one hand, one leg and one eye -- and live to tell about it. Miraculously, he brought the crippled glider to rest in a small field, where the burly Irishman and a passenger managed to crawl into a ditch. There, they opened fire, killing or wounding a patrol of a dozen or more Germans who came to scavenge supplies from the burned-out wreck in which they assumed no one had survived. Eventually, a farmer in the Dutch Resistance came to their rescue and transported them -- hidden under a pile of hot manure in a creaky two-wheeled cart -- to a Catholic hospital. There, Brennan's body was bandaged like a mummy. The Sisters put him in a maternity ward and place pillows on his belly to make him look like one of the many pregnant women. The ruse worked long enough for him to survive -- even though, Brennan chuckled, "I never did deliver."

Just as vivid as these moments of terror were the cheering welcomes crews received from residents of Nazi-occupied Europe, many of whom first learned of their impending liberation when they heard the bewildering thud of a glider crash-landing practically on their doorsteps. On D-Day, an innkeeper in Benouville, Normandy, awoke to just such a bang in the night. The man, George Gondree, fled with his family to the cellar, but on hearing conversation overhead that lacked the guttural sounds of German, he finally summoned the courage to climb upstairs and confront two men with coal-black faces. "It's all right, chum," they said. Overjoyed at hearing English, Gondree burst into tears. Soon his wife and children were kissing the soldiers, becoming coated in black camouflage paint in the process. By daylight, a small detachment of glider troops overwhelmed German defenses at nearby Pegasus Bridge, a critical objective for the success of the entire Normandy invasion. To celebrate, the innkeeper began uncorking 98 bottles of champagne prudently kept hidden for just such an auspicious occasion.

Captured during the invasion of Holland, American pilot Marion Case may have received

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the most emotional welcome of any glider pilot during the war. Case arrived as a prisoner under guard at a war camp in German just after the Red Cross had complete an inspection to verify that the POWs were not being tortured or mistreated, in compliance with the Geneva Convention. While being hustled through the barbed-wire enclosure by a gauntlet of SS guards with snarling German shepherds, Case spotted the emaciated inmates -- mostly Frenchmen -- devouring chocolate bars distributed by the Red Cross. Suddenly someone pointed to the American flag on Case's sleeve, and riotous elation swept through the camp: at long last, here was living proof of the much-rumored arrival of American troops in Europe.

The starving men showered Case and the other captives in his group with their candy bars. The guards yelled "Halt!" But like the ticker tape in a parade, the candy bars continued to rain down on the American pilots. The Germans opened fire, killing two of the Frenchmen at point-blank range. Still the candy bars kept coming. "We screamed 'Stop! Stop' and finally they stopped," said Case, who 50 years afterward still flinches recalling this suicidal act of defiance.

Glider pilots made up far less than 1 percent of American military personnel in World War II, and the "bastards nobody wanted" are understandably piqued that the general public has still barely heard of them. Their many heroic deeds have gone unrecognized even within the military.

On December 26-27, 1944, for example, American glider pilots braved intense enemy fire to come to the aid of the surrounded troops of Brig. Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe during the Battle of the Bulge. When the Germans demanded he surrender or be annihilated, McAuliffe gained fame by replying "Nuts!" But despite his display of bravado there was precious little gasoline, and nearly 500 badly wounded U.S. parachute and glider troops were in desperate need of treatment. With Gen. George S. Patton's troops still hours away from a chance of breaking the German grip, glider pilots flew to the rescue, delivering surgical teams and gasoline through a blinding barrage of flak. Many pilots were wounded or killed. Their effort earned them little

more than a pat on the back, while some of the medical officers brought in ended up with individual decorations.

The men each have their own pet theory to account for this and other enduring snubs. "We fell through the cracks," said Brennan, who is still painfully crippled from his war injuries. "When we hit the tow release, we severed our administrative umbilical cord to the Air Corps. So you had this crazy situation in which the Air Corps thought the Army would be handing out the decorations, while the Army in turn thought the Air Corps would be taking care of us." Gerard Devlin blames the "mind set" of Air Force officials. "In their attitude," he says, "if you didn't fly a plane that could shoot down another aircraft or bomb somebody to oblivion, you weren't a real man." Indeed, out of eight thick volumes that the Air Force produced on its role in World War II, fewer than three pages are devoted to glider pilots.

This oversight notwithstanding, the old boys looked like a happy crew -- as cocky and irreverently as ever -- back at a motel bar after the airshow. Many still fly sailplanes and power planes for fun. And although the combat glider was eclipsed by the helicopter in the 1950s, the vets have been cheering its comeback in the guise of the modern space shuttle, which they are quick to remind everyone, *lands* without engine power. They had an especially good laugh over an autographed photograph that three astronauts sent to the glider pilot association. Penned across the top was the message: "At least the natives were friendly where we landed."

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Gerard Devlin, author of that great book about gliders and gliders in combat, *SILENT WINGS*, makes a couple of interesting comments in a letter to Bob Cloer.

"I'm writing you today for a couple of reasons, the main one has to do with one of my hobbies: stamp collecting. More to the point, I want to tell you and the readers of your excellent *Newsletter* about a very special -- and somewhat unique-- stamp just recently issued by the Marshall Islands to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. As you know, our troop

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carriers played a vital role during that epic battle by dropping supplies to the beleaguered defenders of Bastogne where the 101st Airborne Division -- along with scattered remnants of several other American outfits -- were surrounded by the attacking Germans.

The stamp is actually one of a 4-stamp block depicting various war scenes, all having to do with the Bulge. One stamp depicts both a C-47 troop carrier plus a fighter (P-47, I think). To my limited knowledge, this is the ONLY stamp ever issued by any country -- including the U.S. -- which pays tribute to you brave souls who flew those unarmored and totally defenseless C-47s during the Big War.

Now on to my second reason for writing you today.... I want to tell you how very much I enjoy each and every edition of your interesting newsletters. I got a real chuckle out of that "Gentlemen of the Air Force" thing about you guys not shooting back at those who were so extremely rude and uncouth as to shoot at you during the war. Not shooting back is surely the mark of a genuine gentleman. The acid test, one might say.

Speaking of not shooting back, I'm still wondering why the Americans didn't equip or arm their WWII troop transports and gliders with a .50 caliber (or at least a lighter .30 caliber) defensive machine gun. Clearly, the designers of both the C-46 and C-47 transports, plus all of the assault gliders, must have recognized that all, or at least some, of those aircraft would be in direct contact with enemy forces at some point during every combat operation. The battle-wise Germans made sure that all of their transports and gliders were armed and dangerous."

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**WITH DEEP REGRET WE RECORD  
THE DEATH OF THESE COMRADES:**

|                    |                |
|--------------------|----------------|
| Steve Bolling      | March 14, 1995 |
| Reginald Carnick   | Date not known |
| Guillford Collison | June 15, 1995  |
| Al Speer           | March 23, 1995 |
| William O. Witte   | March 14, 1995 |

## Grave Yesterday.....Arnhem Today...Nijmegen (Driel) Tomorrow

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(Ziggy Zartman's absorbing account of the Arnhem mission plus some background information to round out his story)

This war story begins back in March of 1990. The 315th Troop Carrier Group's much-traveled Recording Secretary, Robert "Doc" Cloer, received a letter from David McPhee, a kilt-wearing Scot veteran of the British First Airborne Division, 4th Parachute Brigade, H.Q. Defence Platoon, who met up with Doc at the 37th anniversary (Battle of Arnhem) reunion in 1981 (sometimes the gears grind "granny slow). Enclosed with the letter was an old photograph "taken by Lt. Gilson Taylor of the Brigade H.Q., who did not jump that day, but acted as Dispatcher." Taylor's widow found it among his papers, gave it to a friend, who passed it on to me" (David). It was a picture of the USAAF aircrew taken on the 18th of September, 1944 at Spanhoe Airfield, Lincolnshire, prior to takeoff for Arnhem.

Standing in front of the duct-taped cargo/passenger doorway (both doors removed) of a C-47 still wearing its D-Day "Overlord" stripes, were four, young, dapper, intelligent, trim, clever, grinning Yanks from the 310th Troop Carrier Squadron: me, in my frayed issue A-2, Don Hyder wearing a slept-in look, unbuttoned "Ike" jacket, Oakie McKim (RO) and Fred Drysdale (Crew Chief) both wearing rumpled double-layered GI ODs. Both Don and Oakie brandished (low slung) "45s" on their belts so we had plenty of firepower; (actually, to the blokes, we probably appeared kinda "motley."

KEEN-EYED CLOER SENT ME THE SNAPSHOT AND LETTER! Even if you haven't seen the final digital picture sent back to earth by a Voyager Space Probe as it departed the solar system for deep, dark space (the computer-generated photo showed several of the sun's planets, including a small blue dot -- Earth -- us) you still gotta believe "it's a small world. After forty-six years, a fading picture, the taking long forgotten, arrives on my doorstep...sent by a widow I never met whose

parachutist husband...having looked over the YANK aircrew, decided to be a photographer/dispatcher rather than a "jumper" that day!

To wrap up this war story "start" I wrote a response to David, thanking him for the picture. He replied, stating: "Monroe is a Scottish name, so there could be Scots as well as Krauts in your ancestry." [Anyone got a "used" kilt, clan Ziggy for sale CHEAP?];....."and while on holiday in the States with my wife, we toured the White House, FBI Building and Mount Vernon." [HEY! I've never been inside any of those buildings! There were more perks from that Boston Tea Party than I realized!] I had copies of the picture made for Drysdale and Hyder...still, unable to locate McKim.

Now, reverting to 1944, where, "standing on the bridge between my cerebral data banks," I recall that the Allies had cracked the German military code and should have been aware of the Boche movements, strategies and plans. Yet, with no such advantage, on September 18, as we cranked up our stalwart, streamlined trusty "Goonies", preparing to take off for the DZ located eight to ten kilometers west of Arnhem, Field Marshall Model, the Nazi guy in charge at the battle zone, *knew we were coming...even knew the time and place we were scheduled to drop* (probably even guessed that the C-47 with the tail number whose last three digits were 622, the one they wasted some ammo on yesterday, would be in the formation). We didn't know it then, but "yesterday" a persevering Kraut point-patrol had goose-stepped into a "treasure".....the Jerries had recovered a complete set of the *TOP SECRET* plans from a downed Waco CG-4A Glider: maps showing our route, ETAs and DZs. TWO SIGNIFICANT CONSEQUENCES: First,

hastily dispatched tanks, infantry and AA reinforcements, headed for any cover available near the designated DZs....dug in, and WAITED. Second, a substantial percentage of the residual "guard of the Fatherland" Luftwaffe were "posted" to greet the great airlift.

Moody (fog always does that to me), cussing and upset because our scheduled takeoff was delayed four hours, we should have been cavorting with joy. The FOG that held us up was about to SAVE our derrieres! Along for the "ride"....(the haloed" Command Pilot wearing the White A-2 Jacket)... listening to our tirade of GI expletives, still enlightened of broader scope, smiled "inexplicably" [I think.]

The Allied leaders (Monty, the signal-caller) for Operation Market Garden, code-breaker book in hand...."interesting" (only hours old) "recon" photos (featuring Panzer units" of the battle zone before them ....warnings by the Dutch underground still ringing in their ears, sent us forth "as scheduled," concerned mostly that the FOG was screwing up the time-table. The trigger weary, patient Jerries, lurking under camouflaged gun emplacements....elements of the Luftwaffe orbiting high overhead, WAITED! Listening and peering intently for the drone or sight of the airlift armada, their watches indicated the ETA for the DZ had passed. A long, quiet, perplexing hour ticked by...STILL NO DRONE IN THE WESTERN SKY. Then, well into the second hour...growing impatience beginning now to suspect a YANKEE ruse, abruptly, practical matters unavoidably intervened. The alerted overhead Luftwaffe, low on fuel, returned to bases; many of the hastily assembled ground troops were pulled out and sent to the battles underway nearby. The four-hour delay was sufficient to give the captured plans "decoy" status in the minds of the puzzled, disciplined Krauts, whose "brass", lacking the low key ingenuity of the typical GI, failed to check the forecast for England (a country well-known for its "great" weather)! FOG, usually an aircrew nemesis, would SAVE THE DAY; and

may, in fact, be the only reason I'm here, punching the keyboard of my compact Tandy laptop computer....finally getting the message of that "inexplicable" smile back in the Fall of '44!

AIRBORNE.....enroute to the Arnhem DZ, the twenty-some blokes in the back end of "622" were eager to join the elements of the 1st British Airborne Division that had dropped yesterday with the first airlift...the bloodied, battered troops that still tenuously held the buildings overlooking the Dutch end of the Arnhem bridge. Restless, time dragging, our formation long and slow, the anxious passengers dug decanters out of duffel bags and sipped on fluids...hot tea, we Yanks presumed (at least that is what they offered the aircrew). At the far end of the cargo/passenger compartment the Jumpmaster, standing near the duct-taped open doorway, yelled progress updates to the seated Red Devils.....two sticks of veteran, tense, yet eager chutists facing each other, hints of grins barely detectable. The Jumpmaster wore a borrowed headset so he could "chat" with the cockpit crew (staying abreast of en-route events) on the intercom channel. Over the cold, dark, choppy North Sea, approaching the Dutch offshore islands, Kraut "shootzenplatzen" like yesterday, began to HIGHLIGHT our course sporadically marking the way with gray/black puffs of smoke that emitted popping noises which, on occasion, made kinda round (sometimes larger and jagged) holes in the aircraft nose, empennage, or parts in between. Sitting on two folded flak vests, wearing one, and with a flak helmet pulled down over my head and ears, it still was kinda scary (make that "damn" scary!) Cool, though they are, I've never known a JUMPER who didn't go into the "CWTGOTDA" mood (Can't wait To Get Out of This Damned Airplane") at about this time! My tea gulped down, necessary,

because in GI canteens it quickly got cold...I squirm in my seat and ask Don to take the wheel while I blew some hot air into my moistening (sweaty palms for some reason) gloves. We, not unlike the blokes, too, exchanged barely detectable grins.

Over occupied Holland now, at least some of the planes in the long formation were cruising thru light groundfire most of the way (the only evasive action...gentle, brief turns by the lead aircraft). Ahead, viewed through the windscreen, ground fires and heavy smoke pinpointed Arnhem., though we were still too far away to see the battered, cluttered bridge spanning the lower Rhine. Our 4th Brigade troopers were to reinforce the fiercely embattled blokes (dropped yesterday) who still controlled (barely) the North end of the bridge.

Flying a wing-slot, our GREENLIGHT lit up only after receiving a signal from the Flight Leader...who got his clue from the Leader of the nine plane "V:...who relied on the Navigator (in the Serial Command plane) to pinpoint the DZ. For the jumpers, this usually meant "assembly" from a wide line (hopefully not too long) rather than a single cluster.

Retarding the twin throttles, we went into the "really low (700 ft.) and really slow (90-93 mph) drop mode. The frenzy of the DZ moments revved up our body rhythms...then, excited (Yeah! That's what we were....) making the quick transition from "sitting duck" (last jumper out, static lines in" into the DIVE for the ground....to hedge-hop our way to the North Sea (a more difficult target near the ground by the time they heard us at 170 MPH IAS, we were gone). Though we didn't have much time to "view the scene", as I recall, the Red Devils we dropped were (not unexpectedly) under ground fire during stand-up and hook-up and as they floated earthward; "targets" before assembling to become a "force" (some probably DOA as they hit the DZ's sod. WAR, regrettably at its finest!

Tomorrow, the third day, we were scheduled to drop the 1st Independent Polish

Parachute Brigade the troopers with the stenciled yellow eagle on their helmets, at a DZ near Nijmegen, (during the last couple of hours prior to takeoff, the "1st" had a DZ change to Driel). (I reported on that war story in a previous *Newsletter*.....the drop ultimately delayed two days because of inclement weather in England.) Days later, with landing fields secure, we'd be back to evacuate some of the mounting number of wounded...airlifting them to England's hospitals where dedicated war-weary medical teams labored to mend their bodies...then send them home, casualties of War's MADNESS!

Wrapping up the exasperating, drug-out liberation of the Holland OPERATION, permit me to comment (based on documentaries I have read) that the three key leaders involved with our DZs, each of whom jumped with , and led into battle the Regiments/Brigades of their veteran paratroopers, were of a very different demeanor...yet, in my opinion, equally effective in their combat roles. Brigadier General James M. Gavin who fought with the 82nd Airborne Division's 504th Parachute Regiment during the GRAVE mission (youngest of the three) was sharp, quick, set a rugged example and, was at his best under duress. Brigadier Shan Hackett who fought with the British 1st Airborne Division's 4th Parachute Brigade during the Arnhem mission was tradition-oriented, purposeful, and functioned best with his "walking stick" in hand for emphasis. Major General Stanislaw Sosabowski who fought with the 1st Independent Polish Parachute Brigade at the Driel DZ (the oldest of the three), doggedly pursued his fruitless dream to one day "drop" from the sky and liberate his Nazi-occupied homeland, Poland, and, he worried (like a father) about his "boys". Despite their diverse leadership merits and their high-ranking positions, NONE OF THE THREE ever had a ride in old "622". Only

random sticks from each of the General's units could make that claim....(a bragging right for a select few?) Wherever and whenever paratrooper survivors of the battle-for-the-bridges are sitting around telling war stories, you can bet "the ride to the DZ" is part of the lore! Reining the Pratt & Whitney "horses" that transported the load...paratroopers and parapacks, or single, sometimes double glider tows, was never dull; always a few surprises.

The 315th Troop Carrier Group Crew Chiefs whose trained hands made certain that the Pratt & Whitney "horses" would carry the load...the Radio Operators whose understanding of tubes, frequencies and codes assured a communications link (the lack of which "down" on the Dutch battlefield then created chaos)...and the "two drivers" who manned the cockpit and controlled the "fun" levers...the Navigators who, usually, pinpointed the DZs for the Serial, Group or Squadron leaders...and the airborne guys that left us with static line souvenirs; ALL WILL NEVER FORGET Operation MARKET GARDEN.

With England an unconquerable Island Fortress and the "48" United States and Canada, the arsenals for battle gear, the Allies won WWII. Some said...we, the invited YANKS, were "over paid, over fed and over here." Of course we were...immigrants by definition, we were back in ancestral lands; we equally savored SOS and Fish & Chips (still do)...and the jingle of coins in our pockets has always been a nice scound (still is.) The "piece de resistance," being "over there," a YANK IN THE 315TH, although ya know, we "bitched" just enough during the war that I'm not certain we knew this. C'est La Guerre!

Gotta go...for a long time after WWII, nightmares interrupted my sleep. Now, I rarely miss my post-prandial nap and I ate lunch an hour ago...ZZZZZ!

Ziggy

More fun stuff from an old issue of PUNCH the British humor magazine which is no longer published. You may recall that in the last issue we wrote about PUNCH staff people writing prayers to be said by air travelers after noticing that passengers on El Al were being given a card with an appropriate prayer. Here is another one a few of us might have used at one time or other:

**A PRAYER FOR THOSE HELD UP AT AIRPORTS**

*O Lord, waft us on the wings of the morning, or failing that the wings of the evening, or the morning after the first morning or the evening after the seventh evening.*

*Though knowest, Lord, we are but dross in the eyes of those that are set in authority over us, for they have tongues but speak not, and eyes that see not.*

*Yea, and when two or three thousand are gathered together, yet are their requests not granted.*

*But Thou, O Lord, shalt make these tyrants Thy footstool and suffer Thy servants to pass through the Departure Gates, and they shall rejoice exceedingly.*

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And, to fill the column, here's the last one we'll ever print. That's a promise. But, first a word of explanation: the places mentioned in the prayer -- Richmond, Twickenham and Kew lie directly beneath the landing path of aircraft coming into Heathrow.

**A PRAYER TO BE SAID BY RETURNING TRAVELERS**

*Lord, as we miserable sinners return from renewing our bodies in Thy life-giving sun, give ear, we beseech Thee, to the cries and lamentations of those who dwell on the flight-path beneath, yea, even by the very House of Sion.*

*Grant Thou, O Lord, the prime leaseholds in Thy Celestial Mansions to such as live in Richmond, Twickenham and Kew, for great have been their tribulations in this world, and let no man envy these their reward hereafter, lest he be cast into the Everlasting Bonfire.*

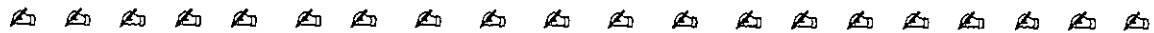


**AN APPEAL FOR HELP ADDRESSED TO OUR MEMBERS**

We're sure you have noticed that with each issue of the *NEWSLETTER* we have included a coupon which many of you have used to send your annual dues to our treasurer, Bob Davis. The coupon has been a reminder to readers that their help is needed to keep the Association's business operating in the black....to defray expenses for the mailings we send out, for postage charges (which keep going up every year) and for miscellaneous expenses required to carry on the activities of the 315th Association.

As a matter of record, we should tell you that none of the officers or directors of the Association receives any compensation for the work they perform, nor does the "editorial staff" of the 315th *NEWSLETTER* receive compensation for producing the piece. Of course, we have to pay for printing the issues and the copies of the 315th Roster (enclosed herewith) and the Pictorial Review produced after each reunion. It's safe to say that by far the greatest percentage of the Association's funds are expended for the printed materials and postage, and post office fees required to mail materials to our members.

An analysis of dues payments shows that the same people keep paying their dues year after year. Roughly 1/3 of our Association members are supporting the rest of us. We'd like to see more of you helping share the expense load by sending whatever you can to our Treasurer. Your help would be sincerely appreciated.



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

Dear Bob:

I want to help defray expenses of the Association. Here's my check or Money Order.

(Association dues are \$10.00 per year, but anything you can spare would be welcome.)

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

ADDRESS.....

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