



# 315th Newsletter

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

June 1998

## SEPTEMBER IS REUNION TIME

Registrations for the Colorado Springs Reunion began arriving in early May, according to Armed Forces Reunions (AFR), the management firm handling arrangements. Also, phone calls and correspondence between members reflects a seeming high interest in the September gathering and supports President "Bert" Petersen's forecast of a "good turnout." (see President's message on the Notice Board, page 2.)

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**Included in this *Newsletter* are sign up forms for both the reunion and associated tours as well as hotel registration. Note that after 10 August AFR will accept registrations only on a space available basis. For hotel accommodations at reduced rates, reservations must be made on or before 9 August.**

As reported in an earlier *Newsletter*, for those driving, Interstate 25 is the primary connection, bolstered by U.S. 85/87 and 24. Arriving by air, service is provided by American West, American, Continental, Delta, Mesa, Northwest, Reno Air, TWA, United and Western Pacific, Air 21. The Radisson Inn offers complimentary transportation from the airport. Taxis are also available.

At the Saturday morning business meeting among other items under consideration will be selections for the office of Vice President and two Board of Directors members who are completing their six year terms. Active members willing to serve are urged to contact either Bill Brinson, appointed by President Petersen as Chairman of the Nominating Committee, or committee members Gordon Tull and Joseph Terebessy.

Colorado Springs is noted as a city offering diverse attractions in a picture like scenic location. So round up the family, podner, and we'll see you there.

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

**OFFICIAL NOTICE BOARD**

**Message from the President:**

Interest in the upcoming Colorado Reunion appears high and a good turnout expected. At least enough to qualify for the free hospitality and complementary rooms. But as Bob Cloer recently stated, future reunion planning will require more changes as our group ages and shrinks. The last major change was at St. Louis where attending members voted to engage the Armed Forces Reunion, Inc., (AFR) to plan and handle the Milwaukee and subsequently the Colorado reunions.

Another major change may be necessary, and soon, that being to join up with another T. C. Group, Wing or other 9th Air Force unit for future reunions. In Milwaukee we voted that down but may have to reconsider that as well as other changes. Hopefully, we can come up with a format for the year 2000 and beyond. A lot will depend on this year's attendance as well as the minimums the AFR will require in the future. No longer can we depend on a member volunteer host as he might not be around in two years.

As H. B. Lyon once said, "He didn't realize how much talent this group had." Let's put some planning talent to work and come up with some ideas for the future at our next business meeting. Other reunion changes we might want to consider are best time of year, number of days, type of banquet, number of tours, etc.



Colorado Springs will be our last reunion of the century, let's make it a good one.

Sincerely

J. H. "Bert" Petersen

**STANDING ORDERS**

All Fit and Able 315th Troop Carrier Group Association members are ordered to assemble during the period 9-13 September, 1998 at Colorado Springs, Colorado 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 required.

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

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

# LISTEN UP...*ALL YOU HAMBY ROUGH RIDERS*

(the following directive pertains)

Col. Hamby's Office  
Williamsburg, VA

Bill Nagle's Office  
Bellefonte, Pa

TO: All surviving members of the squadron

1. There will be a mandatory attendance formation on 13 September '98, at Colorado Springs, CO. Roll call will be taken by 1st Sgt. Bill Nagle.

2. In case the word mandatory doesn't faze you let me give you an additional incentive to attend. Did you know that Bob (Doc) Cloer has had the unmitigated gall to tell the 34th Squadron members that 9th Troop Carrier Command thought the 34th was the best Troop Carrier Squadron in the ETO. I'm sure Hamby's Rough Riders still have the spirit that made us numero UNO in the whole USAAF. Let's prove it to ourselves and everyone else in the 315th Group that we can outnumber reunion attendees from any other squadron in the Group. It may very well be the last charge of Hamby's Rough Riders, but let's go out with that old 310th "can do - will do" attitude that made us the best of the best.

3. There will be no trophy awaiting you in Colorado. There will be just that warm comforting feeling that we can still outdo the rest.

4. I've been in contact with Henry via AT&T. He assures me he will be present if he is still breathing and can still walk. So-o-o get out your canes, walkers, bicycles or whatever and head for Colorado Springs to arrive by 13 September '98.



HE'S.....

THE

MAN

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*Charles G. "Jake" Wilson was an original with the 34th Squadron, joining at Florence, S.C. as a S/Sgt Pilot, corrected after D-Day into commissioned status. In 1951 he ferried a Norseman to Alaska, became fascinated with the state and settled there in 1952. A well know Bush pilot and registered guide, he has authored two books on his experiences. Now living in Colorado but still an Alaska resident, he will be heading there in September for a visit after the Springs reunion.*

## **A BAD DAY IN NORTH AFRICA**

by "Jake" Wilson

Early assignees to the 315th will recall that the 43rd and 34th squadrons went at it hot and heavy quite some time before we were formed up into a really working Troop Carrier Group in England in 1944.

We started at Florence, S.C. in the summer of 1942, training in a big way. However, transports were needed for other places in the global war. One squadron was wafted away to the South Pacific, never heard of again. Another struck their tents and went to Alaska where they became famous in the 1000 mile Aleutian Islands campaign.

This reduced the 43rd and 34th squadrons to "fetch and carry status" and looking for a job somewhere. They were easy to find, so we jumped in our airplanes and headed across the North Atlantic in December to help our British allies with transport service in the smoke and fog of an English winter.

In the Spring of 1943 we were invited to join the war in North Africa. On May 25th off we went across the Bay of Biscay at night to avoid the German fighters. We landed at Casablanca then moved to Blida, a French air base near to Algiers.

General Rommel, CG of the Afrika Korps had crossed the Mediterranean, taken a hard left and charged up the coast intent on reaching and taking the Suez Canal. He almost made it, stopped finally by the British and Australians at El Alamein. Then the Americans came along and jumped on his back. All hell broke loose. The fighting was hot and heavy with the Americans badly whipped at Kasserine Pass. They recovered and Rommel realized he was not able to cut the mustard. A retreat started. The main reason: Navy ships in the Mediterranean cut off his supply lines. Rommel was done for but it took a long time to run him and his fine mechanized army off for good.

Back at Blida we went right to work flying all kinds of freight imaginable to the front. Combat Engineers built many an airstrip overnight. We landed our loaded C-47s the next day. Priority was mostly food, clothing for the infantry, medical supplies or gasoline in five gallon Jerry cans. We hauled about everything, including actors and actresses and movie stars to entertain the troops.

It was wonderful for us young pilots. With little rank but commanding an aircraft, we gloried in it and flew our hearts out. Pretty safe, except being shot at occasionally. My log book shows I flew 136 hours in July. I loved every hour. The log lists visits to exotic places: Monastir, Tripoli, Sfax, Tunis, Tifariti, Mateur, La Senia, Foch, Souk El Arba, Telergma, plus many other unnamed airstrips.

Early on we lacked support crews at Blida so it was touch and go. With no cooks we regularly ate K rations, stole coffee and sugar, and from the local Arabs bought eggs and boiled them for breakfast along with the coffee. Later we got Italian POWs to run the kitchen. Fine cooks, but damn poor soldiers; lovers, not fighters.

I can't recall the exact date which became a sad one for me, but it was after the defeat of the Afrika Korps and their retreat to and past Tunis to the Cape Bon Peninsula where they sought escape across the sea to Italy. Most ended as POWs.

Three of us were to fly to a new dirt strip in Tunisia close to Cape Bon. We carried heavy loads, but I don't recall just what. On return we were to bring to Algiers General Hospital as many wounded we could cram aboard. As flight leader, I had a Red Cross nurse aboard. She may not have been the most beautiful girl in the world; but she was to us. Any molester would have been in the damnedest fight he'd ever seen.

Nearing our destination the right engine began running rough. We found the right magneto deteriorating. The crew chief looked worried. I could have aborted and returned to Algiers, but being close wanted to go on. The crew chief reported no spare mag on board, explaining with a general strike back in the States parts were scarce.

There were some spare mag parts on board and he thought the other planes might have others. We decided to proceed and worry about the engine when we got there. The mag quit before touch down; the engine continuing to run, but very rough, on the single remaining mag.

Our destination revealed the biggest junkyard ever seen. An entire German army had abandoned their equipment. Stretching for miles were tanks, cannon, trucks, weapons carriers, vehicles of all kinds plus piles of supplies. In the midst of this the engineers had bulldozed a long dirt airstrip. We went in and landed.

Trucks picked up our loads and we waited for the wounded to arrive. The three crew chiefs went to work, removed the right engine cowling, pulled the faulty mag, dissembled it and spread the parts on a tarp under the wing. Temperature must have been 90 plus. The mag's distributor block needed replacement, and fortunately one was aboard another plane. Installation required taking the mag completely apart, a job normally done in a shop on a bench where it could be fine tuned. The crew chiefs improvised.

A platoon of combat infantrymen, bewhiskered and dirty, were nearby poking at the German junk. Three had managed to get a still loaded tank truck running and were busy trying to wreck it. All looked mighty scary, carried their weapons at the ready, walked with a swagger, said they were waiting from a convoy to bring fresh clothing and portable showers. I was glad they were on our side.

A truck arrived carrying warm beer. A sage, old sergeant told the men to cut the top out of a gas drum. With a stentorian voice he yelled at the guys in the truck to come over.

They filled a drum half full of gas, put in about three cases of beer, found a German air compressor, started it going with an air hose leading to the drum. Rapid evaporation causes gasoline to cool rapidly and would do the job.

They stood around the drum, smoking, waiting for the beer to cool. One of our pilots hollered to get away from the gas fumes. A GI shouted, "f--- you, Lieutenant." That was that!

A convoy of ambulances arrived, followed by trucks with walking wounded. Stretchers were unloaded near the planes. I instructed the other two pilots to load up and head for Algiers. They needed no urging. That left our crew chief and radio operator to finish the mag. I stayed clear, knowing they'd do the job as quickly as possible.

The Red Cross nurse was a Godsend. She comforted the wounded and even found items to put as pillows under their heads. She brought water and for those too weak held up their heads and put the cup to their lips. They were British, American and German. A wounded soldier no longer able to hold a weapon ceases to be enemy...just another human being in need. The British and Americans thanked her by voice, the Germans with their eyes.

A bearded, dirty infantry lieutenant came over, carrying an M1 carbine in the crook of his elbow, looking as if he could use it with deadly efficiency. He was pleasant to talk with, and asked if I wanted to see some new German Mauser rifles. We walked a short distance up the road, marked by ribbons signifying the area was clear of mines and booby traps. The cosmoline covered rifles were in a wooden box. He said they had been built prior to 1942 with manufactured parts, not stamped, and that the action was the best in the world. He asked if I wanted one. I said, "Heck. let's take them all," telling the crew chief he could have one of the six rifles and to stow the box wherever he wished.

Glancing at the nurse I saw she was not her smiling self, tears were in her eyes. I was puzzled.

The crew chief and radio operator installed the rebuild mag, timed it on the engine but left the cowling off. We fired it up. It ran rough, dropped RPMs but worked.

*See North Africa" on page 12*

James Terry was a clerk in Hdqs. Squadron. Now 80-years-old and living in Geneva Illinois he completed a long career with Federal Civil Service in the Department of Agriculture, retiring in 1979. He and wife, Marion, have one son and two granddaughters.

### A FRIENDLY GAME OF DRAUGHTS

by Jim Terry

While stationed at Spanhoe in the Fall of 1944, one day I came into my Nissen hut to find a small book, "How to Play Winning Checkers" lying on my bunk. I never learned where it came from or where it went. During off duty hours I read the book, found it offered some great strategy.

A few days later on a pleasant evening, I and my friend, Joe Henderson from West Point, Georgia, decided to take a bicycle ride into the countryside. We rode about four miles northeast of the Base, if my memory serves correctly, and stopped at a pub for a mug of mild and bitters. We found it nearly empty of customers. An elderly gentleman sat at a small table in the corner with a checker board in front of him. He challenged Joe to a game of draughts. Joe declined, explained he did not play the game. The elderly gentleman extended the same challenge to me. I accepted. His name was Harry, with the "H" silent and in the local dialect came out "-arry."

The pub was quiet as we began. It was a tough game. At the end a whisper went around "Ole -arry lost." More patrons arrived, the scene became more lively. We began a second game. Another tough one. When it ended the crowd announced more loudly "Ole -arry won." The crowd grew. Beer flowed. We began a third. When it ended, the crowd roared "Ole -arry lost again." Several spectators congratulated me for taking two out of three. They explained "-arry" was the township champion.

He was a good sport. "I've played draughts with a lot of you American chaps," he said, "but I never met one who can play like you." Then he invited me to come back for rematch sometime.

Bicycling home I credited my victory to the book "How to Play Winning Checkers." And I never did find out where it came from or where it went.

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### EIGHTY

*Today dear Lord, I'm 80 and there's much I haven't done.  
I hope dear Lord you'll let me live until I'm 81.  
But then, if I haven't finished all I want to do,  
Would you let me stay awhile...until I'm 82.  
So many places I want to go, so very much to see..  
Do you think that you could manage to make it 83?  
The world is changing very fast, there is so much in store.  
I'd like it very much to stay until I'm 84.  
And if by then I'm still alive I'd like to stay 'till 85.  
More planes will be up in the air, so I'd really like to stick....  
And see what happens to the world when I'm 86.  
I know dear Lord, it's much to ask (and it must be nice in Heaven)  
But I would really like to stay until I'm 87!  
I know by then I won't be fast and sometimes will be late;  
But it would be so pleasant to be around at 88.  
I will have seen so many things, and had a wonderful time.  
So I'm sure that I'll be willing to leave at 89....maybe.*

Author unknown

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*From one of our favorite contributors, Ziggy recalls a routine flight that turned into an eventful test of Hamilton Standard propellers a test that no rational engineer would ever have contemplated.*

## **R & R TO BLACKPOOL**

by "Ziggy" Zartman

Another old memory just lit up a rusty neuron cell. All 310th Squadron air crew members surely recall Len (Tom) Thomas' R & R mission to Blackpool, when "inadvertently" (don't want to get old buddy Tom angry with me) a misinterpreted hand signal resulted in a Hamilton Standard phenomenon!

Aboard and buckled up was a load of R & R troops, eager to get in a little rest and recreation. Taxi and takeoff clearance were routine... Tom slipping on his gloves before popping the tail wheel lock lever after turning onto runway 08/26. All seemed normal and copacetic as the takeoff roll began. Tail in the air, airspeed needle moved toward the 70-mph indice when Tom hand-signalized the right seat occupant to trail (or check?) the cowl flaps.....or so Tom thought. The alert, eager crew chief, manning his normal position on the cockpit stool, reacted to the signal and quickly reached down and retracted the gear handle.

Heart beat rapidly increasing, Tom instinctively exerted more back-pressure on the control yoke....heard a little "clicking" sound, proceeded to CLIMB out, turning Westward as he retarded the firewalled console levers to lower setting. All seemed normal, no vibration, no unusual instrument readings, no unusual "feel" in the seat-of-his-pants. Despite a call from the Spanhoe Tower...saying they saw some "sparks" during takeoff, all systems performed normally. Thus, the 310th Squadron "Skytrain" proceeded onto Blackpool and made a routine landing. After taxiing to the parking ramp - as directed by the "Follow Me" jeep - then shutdown, it didn't take long to discover the cause of the "clicking." With flushed faces (air crew members) and wide-eyes (Passengers) they quickly observed that all six propeller blades (three each engine) were bent FORWARD approximately

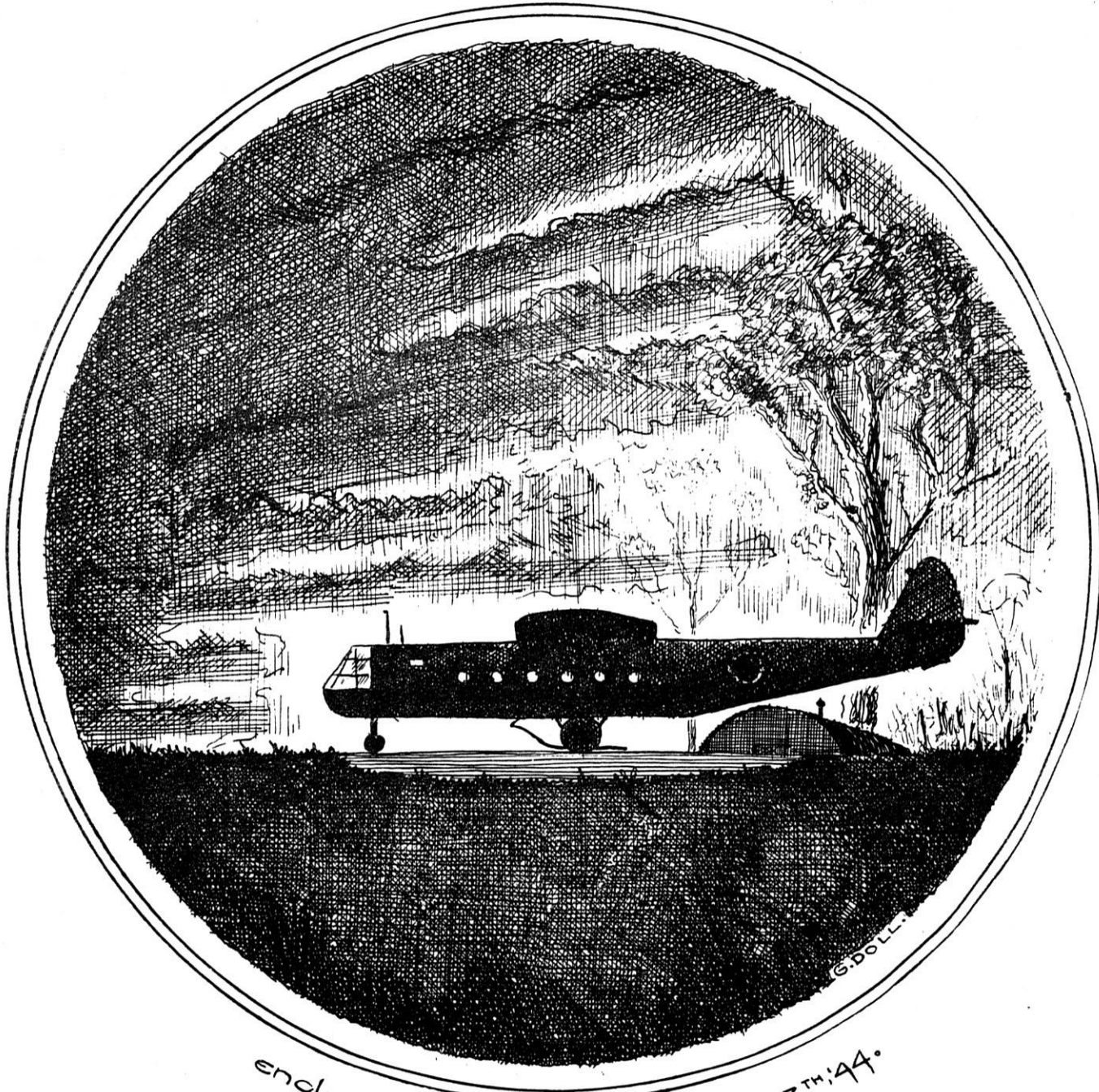
five or six inches as symmetrically as if they had been calibrated into the new position

Unbelievably, both engines responded normally to all tests: the Hamilton Standard constant speed propellers cycled perfectly through the pitch ranges, manifold pressure checks were normal, ignition (magneto) switch "drops" within operational ranges. With all system "GO" Tom elected to return to Spanhoe for repairs. He gave the return flight (rested) passengers (315th pilots, navigators, crew-chiefs, radio operators and non-rated techs) the option of riding with him (parachutes aboard) or waiting for another aircraft. ALL, if I recall correctly, decided to climb aboard; albeit, the prop tips bent to a new thrust position, similar to the way air-foils are bent upward on some modern aircraft to provide stability and lift. The flight home was uneventful.

For two or three days Hamilton Standard technicians took pictures and tested the engines and props...baffled by the results. Summing up...Tom's alertness and aviation savvy during the original takeoff probably averted a belly landing and major damage. Also, those of us who flew the "Gooney-bird" gained new HOPE that our stalwart, sturdy aircraft (even with damaged propellers) would return us to our side of the line. Tom didn't make a "big-deal" out of the incident and for some reason I don't recall that the "brass" did either....BUUUTT, had I been the Squadron Commander, with all that responsibility, I would have called him in and said: "Lieutenant, if you're not going to use that head of yours, you may as well have an ass on both ends" (a refrain, you'll recall, I'd heard more than once)! C'est La Guerre!

Gotta go, wondering why rumors persisted thereafter (in the 310th) that air crew members flying with "Thomas"...occasionally reported to "sick call" complaining about busted knuckles with combat boot sole prints on their fingers...having somehow gotten their hand too soon, too near the landing gear lever on takeoff.

# SKETCHES BY



G. DOLL

england

MORSA

Jan. 7<sup>th</sup>:44.



# GEORGE DOLL



YORK, THE SHAMBLES

PFC. G. DOLL 2/7/43, ENGLAND.. AAF.

Prior to WW II George Doll and his brother opened a musical career as a harmonica duet, enlarging to "Ned and Bud and the Melody Rangers" and playing one night stands throughout the mid west. The Army interrupted in 1941 and George became a Dental Technician with the 315th in Aldermaston. Later, transferred to a GI entertainment unit called the "Sky Blazers" he entertained at RAF and AAF installations in England, France and Belgium. Peace reunited he and his brother to form "The Dollodions" and play supper and night clubs, and radio. Tiring of the road he turned previous art training into a vocation, focusing on commercial interior design and office furniture, eventually forming his own business, "Doll House Interiors." Today he and his wife reside in San Jose, CA.

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"Ziggy" brings us some unusual insights gleaned from encounters, recollections and log books of those "who were there".

## FACTOIDS FROM TWO 1944 WAR STORIES

by "Ziggy" Zartman

A neighbor in Parachute, Lee Spruill, is a retired pilot (40 years with TWA), who was a crew member on the HOMEFRONT in 1944 when Howard Hughes set a new cross-country speed and distance record...flying a four engine TWA Constellation...6 hours, 57 minutes, 51 seconds (Lee has the logbook)...Burbank, CA to Washington, DC.

Later, stopping at Wright Patterson Field, Dayton, OH, Orville Wright was taken aboard for a local area "ride." Briefly at the controls, the famous brother of Wilbur (killed in a plane crash in 1912) was asked by Hughes what he thought of the plane. Orville replied: "They just don't build them like they used to!" Wish I had been there to hear the "cutting remark," but you'll recall we were busy at a place in Britian's Midlands called "Spanhoe!"

And now a war story with which we 315 types are more familiar. I've discovered some interesting commentary (theirs...not mine) from several "warriors" who found themselves in the flak-cluttered sky near Arnhem (Ginkel Heath DZ) on 18 September, 1944. Aboard old "622" that foggy Fall day was a veteran Scot paratrooper, David McPhee (British First Airborne Division, 5th Parachute Brigade, HQ Defence Platoon). The always cold and dark Channel was unusually calm that fateful day, cruising at 1500' altitude, when through the wind-screen Holland's shore began to take shape. QUOTING David: "We finally took off four hours late (fog), the flight uneventful until we were crossing the Dutch Coast when we came under AA fire from flak barges moored along the shore line. It sounded like pebbles being thrown against the fuselage. The trooper sitting next to me was wounded by shrapnel coming up through the seat. I had just been issued a new type of body armor, it was quickly removed and sat upon.

"Luckily the wounded guy was sitting opposite the M.O., Captain Bonham Carter, and his medical Corporal, Reg Wiltshire, both of whom soon had him sorted out and told him to remain in the aircraft when the rest jumped. The drop was bang on target. The drop zone was burning and we landed in the midst of a fire fight between our own Glider Troops (Kings Own Scottish Borders) and SS from a nearby training school. We heard later from a Pathfinder Company who had marked out the DZ, that had we dropped at the appointed time, we would have encountered a Wing of ME 109s patrolling the area of the Heath for about twenty minutes or more before flying off." (Danged if I can remember where we dropped off the wounded Scot, but I believe we were briefed by "Red" Mandt - Group Executive Officer - NOT to return to Spanhoe with any wounded paratroopers.)

NOW SOME COMMENTARY FROM CHUCK LOVETT'S LOG (I received a copy from his son, Charles Junior, after TAPS sounded for his dad). "September 18, 1944...took off from Spanhoe at 1145 hrs....approached the DZ from the SW ..heavy flak encountered near town of EDE that continued to DZ. Dropped our troops at 1418 hrs. Two of our Groups's planes were shot down...the paratroopers and all of the crew bailed out of the 34thSq. ship before it crashed in flames ...the pilot, Tommy Tucker, I had know for about a year...he and crew all came back via "underground"...the other ship was from the 43rd Sq. piloted by Lt. Spurrier. (He and his radio operator, Cpl Hollis were killed)...Lt. Flumer, co-pilot and Cpl Smith crew chief survived...back at Spanhoe we found out that only two ships in our Sq. (310th) had not been hit...our plane had a bullet hole in the right engine nacelle, a hole in the star insignia on the right side, and holes in a window on the right side of the cabin....Lt.Drummey had a large hole in his ship just in back of his head...Lt. Zartman's plane needed an entire new wing...despite the damage to our planes, the mission was complete and successful."

'Gotta go!

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*Association Past President Jack Alexander, 43rd Squadron, was one of the original cadre of navigators who guided the 315th air echelon overseas. It was his second such journey, having in mid-July, 1942 flown the Northern Route with the 60th Troop Carrier Group. A native of Spencer, WV., he retired from the Air Force in 1964 after various assignments and also earning a PhD in International Relations. He subsequently headed the Business Department at University of Lowell, MA. In April, 1998, he underwent major surgery. Now recovering well, he looks forward to being at the Colorado Springs reunion.*

## A DAY TO REMEMBER

by Jack Alexander

It isn't luck, I guess...it's just being in the right place at the right time.

For me "the right place" was the campus of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, MA where I had been assigned, following two years of residency at the University of Notre Dame, to complete studies for a Doctorate in International Relations. All that remained was completion of the dissertation on my selected topic, "The Role of Spain in World War II." I was assigned to MIT as Professor of Aerospace Studies, to head the AFROTC.

Happily for me, this was "the right time." It was the early 1960s and President Dwight D. Eisenhower had retired to his "farm" in Gettysburg, PA., after his term in the White House.

Arriving one morning at my office on the campus, there waiting for me was a young Major, who happened to be under me for administration only. He said he recalled my mentioning that I was interested in information on the role Spain had played in the war. "Sir," he said, "I was down at West Point last weekend and ran into an fellow classmate and good friend, John Eisenhower, son of the General. I mentioned your interest in Spain's role in the War, and John said he bet his dad would probably love to discuss the subject with you. John had said, 'Matter of fact, I think Dad is getting a bit bored with retirement at the farm'. Then he gave the Major a slip of paper with the name of his dad's Aide, and the telephone number to call for an appointment.

Be assured no grass grew under my "Number 9s" before I made that phone call. I recall it was a Friday. I got through to the Aide, who said David had already alerted him to the possibility of my call.

When I said I would most certainly like to have an appointment with the General, he said he would get back to me.

The hours seemed to drag while I waited. Finally, as the end of the business day approached, I decided to wait no longer but get on home where we were expecting some MIT staff as dinner guests. We were having the usual pre-dinner drinks when I heard the phone ring in the hall, adjacent to the living room. One of our young daughters (then about age 12) answered the phone and came rushing wide-eyed into living room announcing, "Daddy, President Eisenhower is on the phone!" (Our guests were "properly impressed", you may be assured) Then, once on the phone, I found I was talking with the Aide, who asked whether I could make an 8 a.m. appointment at the farm in Gettysburg the next Wednesday.

I could indeed and to make matters better, a friend on the staff, hearing of my good fortune, said he had to get in some flying time and would be happy to get me, in a C-47, to Gettysburg on his way to Wright-Patterson.

We made the trip in the late afternoon on the eve of my appointment. After checking into the hotel, I contacted a former buddy from Okinawa days, and we spent the evening reminiscing, which help relieve the tension. He was good enough to lend me a car for the next morning's drive a few miles out of town to the Eisenhower estate.

I arrived well before eight and met the Aide, who escorted me to a reception room adjacent to the President's office. The President arrived promptly at eight, and I soon found myself standing at attention before him as he seated himself at his desk, wearing that famous warm smile. Then began our conference.

*See "Remember" on page 12*

I grinned at the crew chief and told him, "If the damned thing keeps running until we get off and at altitude we won't worry about it." With the cowling back on we were ready to load the wounded. Then I learned what had effected our nurse: two or three of the wounded had died waiting mag repair. Just perhaps, had we been able to load at their arrival we might have gotten them to the hospital alive.

And why couldn't we? The reason - in my mind - the lack of parts because of the strike in the States for higher pay and improved working condition. Damn them! Even with our own meager pay and working conditions far from the best, we could not and would not have considered striking.

Loading got underway. First the stretchers, mounted on the cabin wall brackets. We pilots and the radio operator went forward as the crew chief directed the walking wounded to sit in the aisle facing the rear, knees up to their chins and crowded in as tight as possible. He kept packing them in until they were back to a certain point, then held up his hand and closed the cargo door.

Now, we all know a C-47 was a wonderful airplane. You could carry almost any kind of weight if loaded properly. As Bill Brinson wrote, a C-47 was not loaded until it was "about full, just don't put it all in the tail." We might have overlooked weight but never balance. That was critical.

I fired up the engines and we took off, the rebuilt mag working fine even if the engine was rough. Leveling off at a cooler 9000 feet, we left the throttles at METO power. That 'ol C-47 got its tail up. You can make close to 200 mph if you lay the whip to it. Our goal was to get the wounded to a hospital before losing any more. We made it to Algiers with all still alive.

As for the German Mausers, I brought one of the actions home in a barracks bag. After being re-barreled and re-stocked it became a fine hunting rifle, one that my youngest son has to this day with the Mauser action good as new.

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I had previously submitted four questions on Spain, and we got to them at once, the General answering completely and crisply, filling in adroitly the information I had requested.

"Now, is there anything else?" he asked. I told him that I had read his book on the war and one thing puzzled me.

"General," I said, "I know your original plan for the invasion of the European continent was to approach from two sites, the Channel coast of Europe and the southern coast of France. But the invasion through southern France was canceled. Could you tell me what happened to that plan?"

"Well," he said, "you Air Force men did a good job bombing the railroads in the north of France, so the Germans couldn't get supplies to their men. With neutral Spain protecting our right flank, we had hoped to be able to get supplies up to General George Patton by way of southern France. George could then have made it to Berlin by Christmas and thus shortened the war."

There followed a brief pause while I watched a scowl come across his countenance, and his face reddened as he said, through almost clenched teeth, "...then they gave MY landing craft to THAT OTHER FELLER!" (While he did not say so in so many words, I've always assumed he meant his landing gear went to the Pacific.)

The flush subsided and he continued.....  
"Now, young man where do you go after this assignment...would you like to teach at West Point?"

I replied, "Thank you sir, but as you know the Air Force has its own academy now, and I have been selected to go there." (Footnote: WAS appointed but never got there.) He smiled and said, "Yes, I had a little something to do with getting that academy underway." I assure him I knew that, and that we in the Air Force were most grateful.

By this time, the Aide was on his third "sticking-head-in-door" attempt to get the General moving, and this time said, "General, they are impatiently holding the train for you!"

There followed the big smile, a warm handshake, and the close of a day I'll never forget.

\*\*\*\*

# OFF THE GRAPEVINE

(AND OTHER QUESTIONABLE SOURCES)

## SURVIVING SPOUSES

- Mrs. Eugene Blase has agreed to be the contact point for widows who may be interested in attending the Colorado Springs reunion. The Association welcomes her participation, having always considered widows of former 315th members an integral part of the organization. If you are considering attending or wish to know of those who will attend as well as any special activities planned, please call or write Mrs. Blase, 35 Hobart St., East Islip, NY 11730, ph: 516 581-5302. (Eleanor Jean Guthrie writes: "It is a great idea and one I favor immensely.")

\*\*\*\*

### MORE ON THE ORIGIN OF TAPS

According to a "Dear Abby" column, several military history buffs have written to say a well published story (including the February Newsletter) was nice and sentimental, but untrue. They say the true origin of Taps was from a French bugle signal called "tattoo." It was revised by a Civil War general and used to call the end of the day. It was made official in 1874 and given the name "Taps."

\*\*\*\*

- Charles Rex writes that the glider photos included in September's Newsletter were taken by now 90-year-old Sigmund Granacki, 34th Sq. Of the glider mechanics shown he identifies as standing adjacent to him S/Sgt Robert Alford, next in line Sgt Prentiss, and next in line Cpl Williams.

\*\*\*\*

- From the February, 1998 Y 9 News: **The DC-3 was nicknamed "Gooney Bird," since the plane lacked sufficient hydraulic pressure to lift both sides of the landing gear at the same time. One wheel would raise, then the other.**

\*\*\*\*

- Bernie Coggins reports undergoing triple by-pass surgery in January, making a full recovery after rehab including shedding unneeded weight. He's looking forward to Colorado Springs, promising to bring along your favorite stories.

- The American Air Museum in Britain at Duxford Airfield, Cambridge, England was officially opened on August 1, 1997 by Her Majesty The Queen. A glass sculpture outside the museum commemorates the 30,000 American airmen and 7,031 aircraft lost in WW II from British bases.

\*\*\*\*

- W.W. "Bill" Fry, Hdqs Sq., lives in Tacoma, nearing 86 years old, unable to make the reunion but says, "I'm always very thankful to have been in the 315th. I don't think there was a better outfit."

\*\*\*\*

- The Arnhem Veterans' Club has updated their constitution to include within the organization: "All ranks of the undermentioned formations who took part in the Battle of Arnhem during the period 17th to 26th September 1944." Among those listed are flying crews of 315th Troop Carrier Group. David McPhee (who Ziggy dropped at Arnhem) is the new head of the AVC.

\*\*\*\*

- Walter S. Stout writes that poor health prevents him from attending any more reunions. He does want to be told what went on and to "tell everyone I said hello."

\*\*\*\*

**MOVING, NEW PHONE NUMBER????**  
**If your address or phone number changes, help us keep the roster up-to-date by telling either Sandy Friedman or Doc Cloer (See "Where to Send Stuff").**

\*\*\*\*

-Len Thomas is reportedly being checked out in a C-47 to become a member of the Confederate Air Force.

\*\*\*\*

**REMEMBER WHEN???????????**  
A new 6 passenger Dodge cost \$937.  
A second hand Dodge went for \$196.  
A new six room house cost \$3800  
A 12 day, \$150 cruise included stops at San Juan, St. Thomas and Port Au Prince.

\*\*\*\*

**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.)*

Leroy R. Brown	309th Sq	1981
Joel L. Crouch	unk	1997
Gilbert W. Daney	310th Sq	1997
Vernon M. Dronen	unk	unk
Frank S. Clark	43rd Sq	1993
Thomas G. Colley	309th Sq	1998
Truman Fear	309th Sq	1995
Raymond Gearhard	34th Sq	1995
William Herbert	43rd Sq	1994
Willard Huffman	309thSq	1995
Merlin L. Jacobs	34th Sq	1997
Thomas K. Kramer	309th Sq	1994
Roger E. Matzdorff	43rd Sq	1998
John Onila	309th	1996
Charles A. Patterson	309thSq	1995
George L. Priest	unk	1994
Wm. R. Rassel	309th Sq	unk
Lawrence Tapper	310th Sq	unk
Norman West	43rd Sq	unk
Kyle E. Wittell	309th Sq	1993
Tyrus L. Woodward	43rd Sq	unk

**DONATIONS**

A number of members have expressed the desire to provide a donation in memory of former comrades or acquaintances. The Association has agreed to accept these through the organization's treasurer and to also inform the families of such donations.

We gratefully acknowledge donations received (*since publication of the February 1998 Newsletter*) from the following:

- Bernie Coggins
- Harriette & Sandy Friedman
- Judith Johnson Stark.

*Mrs Robert (Pauline) Yeckley writes: "Bob was always proud of being a member of the 315th and he loved reminiscing about WW II."*

*Mrs Gilbert (Joyce) Daney writes: "Gil was proud to be a veteran and always looked forward to the reunions of the 315th Troop Carrier Group."*

*Mrs John (Vicki) Onila writes: "We enjoyed all the reunions we attended and hope I can one day again attend one"; and she asks "if any of his (John's) friends and fellow officers remember him would (they) let me hear from them."*

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ROSTER CHANGES June 1998

The following changes have occurred since publication of the February Roster and its accompanying errata sheets. Retain as part of the February Roster. Names/data listed here can be lined-out on previous rosters. The "active" and "inactive" reflect shifts to those categories. Inactive \* indicates latest mailing was returned with the Postal notation "Moved, Forwarding Order Expired"

Allemand	Randall	14000 State Rd #28	Marysville	OH	43040	937 642-5861	309	active
Autunez	Ruben	419 Delgado St.	San Antonio	TX	78207	(not listed)		
Barbata	Roy	1435 Bellevue Ave #206	Burlingame	CA	94010	650	34	
Barrett	W.H.	177 Whispering Wind	Georgetown	TX	78628	512 864-0397	43	
Bowman	Lawson	<i>Add to Post War Deceased</i>						
Bowman	Mrs. G.	1923 S. 2nd. St.	Ironton	OH	45638	(not listed)		active
Bremerkamp	Robert	2780 N. 85th West	Angola	IN	46703	219 833-1910	309	
Colbath	Carl	147 Thompson Rd	Aliquippa	PA	15001	412 378-7025	43	active
Chambers	Raymond	6908 S. Valentia	Englewood	CO	89112	(not listed)	43	
Crouch	Joel	<i>Add to Post War Deceased</i>						
Crouch	Mrs. J	3056 Kalakau Ave	Honolulu	HI	96815	(not listed)		active
Dean	Maurice	c/o Trisha Dean	Schaumburg	IL	60193	847 506-3566	43	
Decker	Leo	4728 Taft Rd	Algonac	MI	48001	810 794-4229	34	active
Diamantakos	John	3525 Lynngate Cir.	Birmingham	AL	35216	205 823-4747	60th TCG	
Doughitt	Mrs. C.	204 W. Central Ave	Fort Worth	TX	76106	(not listed)		
Dzielak	Al	272 Babb's Rd	West Suffield	CT	06093	203 668-7137	43	
Ford	Richard	2 Quartz Mt Lane Box 3299	Sunriver	OR	97707	209 251-5790	310	
						FAX 541 593-3632		
Germain	Joseph	1500 Bishops Estate Rd Unit 24B	Jacksonville	FL	32259	904 287-7150	309	
Gower	Mrs. Wm	<i>Delete from Roster</i>						
Graham	Reis	112 Delaware St	Newcastle	DE	19720	302 328-0930	309	inactive*
Greite	Bob	466 Meadwood Blvd	Fern Park	FL	32730	305 831-3081	34	inactive*
Hardin	Wm	Rte 1, Lake Carroll	Shannon	IL	61078	815 493-2707	309	inactive*
Hildebrant	Earl	1911 E. 53rd St.	Tulsa	OK	74105	918 749-1594	43	inactive*
Holden	Harold	3250 N. Lakeshore Dr.	Deckerville	MI	48427	313 376-4072	310	
Jelken	Leon	5020 N. 132nd St	Omaha	NE	68164	402 493-1075	309	inactive
Kennett	Richard	PO Box 1175	Tahoka	TX	79373	(not listed)		
Knopp	Harold	8051 Acacia Ave #2	Garden Grove	CA	92641	714 894-9200		inactive*
Lemaire	Joseph	6434 Ailohde Court	North Port	FL	34287	941 426-9575	43	active
Long	John	1333 Lincoln Woods Dr.	Catonsville	MD	21228	(not listed)		
Lueck	Roger	1664 Thunderbird Dr. Apt 173	Seal Beach	CA	90740	562 598-0856	309	
Mattausch	Keith	PO Box 474	Bellevue	WA	98009	425 827-2129	310	
Matzdorff	Roger	<i>Add to Post War Deceased</i>					43	
Matzdorff	Mrs. R.	906 Golden Way	Los Altos	CA	94024	415 961-1100		active
Mettalo	Dominick	1 Sharon Ct.	Waterliet	NY	12189	518 235-7339	309	
Onila	John	<i>Add to Post War Deceased</i>						
Onila	Mrs. J.	3496 Hamilton St.	West Lafayette	IN	47906	317 462-2427		
Papenhausen	John	2706 W. Ashlan Ave Space 164	Fresno	CA	93705	209 243-1171	43	
Parker	William	1004 N. Fox Rd.	Spokane	WA	99206	207 626-1407	310	
Pugh	Thomas	45-867 Frontage Rd	Palm Desert	CA	92260	206 459-2714	43	
Secor	Donald	180 Ship Shoal Way	Virginia Beach	BA	23451	(not listed)		
Smith	Alan	533 Wordsworth Circle	Purcellville	VA	21032	(not listed)		
Sternoff	Irving	10115 NE 62nd St #401	Kirkland	WA	98033	425 828-0662	309	
						FAX 425 827-7273		
Watkins	Douglas	702 Hundred Oaks Dr	Ruston	LA	71270	318 255-4963	309	
Watts	William	2108 Golf Links Dr.	Prescott	AZ	86301	520 771-9743	310	
Wilson	Jake	717 Country Club Dr	Craig	CO	81625	970 824-5096	309	
Young	James K	PO Box 51	Perryville	MO	63775	573 547-5157	43	
Yuhasz	Joseph	6926 So. 725 East, Unit "B"	Midvale	UT	84047	801 566-5752	15TCS/61TCG	



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Colorado Springs, Colorado