



315th Newsletter

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

REUNION PLANS NOW FINALIZED FOR SEPTEMBER GATHERING IN SAN DIEGO

Volume 23, Issue 1

March, 2002

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This coming September 18-22 are the dates for the 315th Troop Carrier Group Association to meet once again for a biennial reunion. Another opportunity for the Group's veterans along with families and friends to share time together in a warm and sunny setting on the Pacific Ocean's shore, in a city which claims to be the nation's sixth largest and California's second largest metropolis.

San Diego's attractions are multiple, with the famed San Diego Zoo as perhaps the most well known. The city boasts of its multiple arts offerings that include opera, repertory theatre, museum of arts, natural history museum and others.

The city is served by Interstate 5 coming up from Mexico and extending north along the California coast. Interstate 15 feeds in from the north and Interstate 8 from the east. All major carriers serve the San Diego International Airport. Temperatures in September vary from 77 to 65 and days are typically sunny and mild with low humidity.

Included in this Newsletter are sign up forms for both the reunion and related tours as well as hotel registration. Note that after 8-16-02 Armed Forces Reunions (AFR) will only accept registrations on a space available basis. The same cut-off date applies for reduced hotel rates.

At every reunion the Association welcomes more of members' daughters, sons, siblings, grandchildren, relatives and guests who attend and become a part of our expanding 315th lineage. It is an opportunity for families to gather. Special hotel rates are available, tours can be selected, the traditional banquet shared. At each reunion first timers appear, old friendships can be renewed, new stories told (*some believable*).

If you are unable or unwilling to travel on your own, sign up an offspring or a friend to come along.

The San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau can be contacted by e-mail at <www.sandiego.org> or by phone at: 619 236-1212

Sign up **NOW**

for San Diego

Sept 18-22

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

OFFICIAL NOTICE BOARD

Message from the President:

Everything for San Diego is arranged -- except for your reservations! We don't know how many more reunions we will be able to support, so, if you want to get together with all your WWII buddies, this is the time and place to do it. The spouse (for those of us who are so fortunate) and the kids need to come along to meet, in person, those they have heard about all these many years. Also, when you look over the program and tours, I think you'll know you'll have a great time. Plan to arrive on Wednesday, September 18 and there are activities through Sunday if you want to stay the full weekend.

Hopefully, the expanded book "*Three One Five Group*" will be published and copies available. Extensive details, maps and photos of our Market Garden missions and Spanhoe will be displayed. The banquet speaker will be Dr. Bill Oldson of Florida Sate University, director of the Institute on WWII and the Human Experience.

The accommodations are great! So is the water (except for drinking). I drink only bottled water. However, bring your swimsuit. The pool is adjacent to a great hospitality room and the sandy, ocean beaches are uncrowded and beautiful.

Incidentally, there are openings for a vice president, two (Board of) directors and a corresponding secretary. Seriously think about offering your services.

Plan on seeing everybody in San Diego September 18-22.

Richard T. Ford
President

*American Theater *Naples-Foggia *Sicily *Normandy *Northern France *Central Europe *Rhineland

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George Doll has contributed both sketches and stories to previous Newsletters. A pre-war musician he was initially assigned to the 315th Medical section then later transferred to a GI entertainment unit called the "Sky Blazers." Asked by the editor to recount some of his experiences with them, it turns out he kept a diary. Part 1 was in the September Newsletter. Here is part two

SKY BLAZERS....part 2 UK, France....D-Day

by George Doll

June 17th, 1944 I landed in Normandy with the SKYBLAZERS GI entertainment group. Beside my bass violin and sundry clothes, etc., I had a "B" bag loaded with trade items; Scotch (I don't drink), cigarettes, (I don't smoke), candy, soap, razor blades, all the items that the British land army and our own American infantry would find hard to come by in the forward areas, but give their eyeteeth to have!! (Or, if not their eyeteeth, enemy arms, bayonets, swastika flags - in short, SOUVENIRS!

At last briefing our colonel in charge told us that inasmuch as there was no T.O. for our group, he could not assign us military vehicles legally to move our instruments, props, and us but....he was certain we could scrounge what we needed. He then gave us rotors for various army vehicles: Jeeps and six-bys.

Normally, all vehicles in a forward area did not need keys to start them, having off/on switches. The enterprising Yank then devised his own way of keeping his vehicle safe when he was away from it. He simply removed the rotor! Hence Colonel Hingcliffe had in effect given us access to every American military vehicle on the continent of Europe.

We acquired vehicles, loaded up, and proceeded on muddy, truck filled roads from Cherbourg, through Bayeaux, and finally arrived at Lion Sur Mer which was in the British held sector. The English soldiers fighting at Caen, about seven miles from where we were, came back in small groups for R & R to our town where they received hot meals, a good nights sleep in safety, new

equipment, and attended the show we put on for them in a partially bomb damaged theatre before going back to the hell of warfare.

In between playing for British troops just behind Caen, and ducking Jerry's nightly bombing from Dieppe across the way, I began a thriving trading business.

One British commando, who traded a fine Luger for a bottle of Scotch, after the transaction said, "Blimey, but I can't imagine why anyone would trade a valueless Luger for a fine bottle of Scotch."

"Oh," I replied, "but a Luger is a beautiful piece of machinery, built like a fine Swiss watch." Tommy looked at me for a long moment, then with experience gained from being there said, "Yank, when you're out in the hedge rows on a rainy night, crawling with your sidearm through the French mud, go over a hedgerow and land on some one who exclaims, "Vas vils due haben," you want a weapon that will forcefully answer him and not a beautiful piece of machinery that will clog up with all the mud you're in and the damn gun won't fire.. It's your life that's at stake, mate."

Scene closes with one young American feeling very thoroughly foolish and out of touch.

Enemy arm dumps were organized by the invading soldiery for consolidating all weapons, bayonets, and ammunition in central areas, cordoned off and patrolled by guards. We found several and with the permission of the MPs helped ourselves to whatever ammo we needed for our Schmeissers, Mausers, Lugers and P. 38s that we had, one way or another, liberated; bayonets, too.

For a carton of cigarettes I got a .45 caliber army Colt, reportedly owned by an American correspondent (they were not suppose to be armed) the soldier who gave it to me went on to say that the Colt turned up one morning by the side of a hedgerow - the correspondent was never found.

Then General Brereton, commander of the 9th Army Air Force European Theater had a New Years eve party, naturally the SKYBLAZERS

(see SKYBLAZERS next page)

(SKYBLAZERS)

dance band played for the event.

It was December 31, 1944, Chantilly France. A year of great successes for the Allies; the Normandy invasion on June 6th, American forces reaching up the Italian peninsula, Paris liberated and then the Battle of the Bulge!

Hitler's last great effort to turn back the Allies deadily advance, aided so much by the ground zero fog that lay like a heavy blanket over England, France, and Belgium. So dense that the Allies great air armada had to stay on the ground, unable to assist the beleaguered Allies who were falling back in the face of Hitler's Panzers. And then reports of enemy troops speaking English disguised as American in captured uniforms, with captured weapons and Jeeps infiltrating behind the front lines to harass, massacre, and bomb the confused Allies.

In the midst of all this the SKYBLAZERS had been told to pack up and prepare to leave. "You're going home, Man!" So pack up I did, all side arms disassembled and hidden (the better to get them back to the states)). Ammo too was stashed away as were German "liberated" bayonets. Then plans for Monique Pussieu, my French teacher from Paris to join me for News Years eve at our bombed French Chateau we call home. All the great plans shattered by General Brereton's News Years Eve dance.

The dance over, I acquire a midnight repast complete with two very, very large turkey drumsticks and hurried back to my guest. We had just settled down for our midnight supper with French brandy when scattered shots rang out not too far away. Then more! Recognizing them as coming from German rifles and Schmeissers, I thought, my God, Germans have infiltrated the Commanding General's 9th A.F. Headquarters. More firing.

"Damn," I thought. "Three years of war, I've never even been shot at, and now, when I'm scheduled to go home the damn Germans have to attack headquarters." Quickly I searched through my packed "B" bag, musette bag, trumpet case and other luggage. "Gotta protect Monique." I found 8mm ammo - can't find the rifle; found the barrel of the

dismantled Colt .45 - can't find the rest of it; found .45 ammo - doesn't fit the Luger; found the Walther PPK pistol - what the hell did I do with the 7.65 mm ammo? And so it went on - for what seemed like ages while the firing around me grew in intensity! Finally I pieced together the Colt - with ammo, found 9 mm ammo for the Luger and, with Monique by my side quietly opened the door and ventured quietly into the moonlit night - scared to death! "Gosh, but its beautiful tonight, moonlight on the snow and here I am just hoping the morning won't find Monique and me dead as hell!" Guns still going off. We sneaked to the chateau entrance where two four-foot square columns guarded the road. We hid behind one of them, looked out into the night and listened to more shots being fired from German weapons. I jacked a shell into the Luger, another into the .45 and prepared to sell my life dearly. As we waited behind the column, I heard another burst of fire follow by a "Happy New Year you bastards," in beautiful, beautiful English. Then another series of shots from a different direction with more suggestions as what could be done with the old year. Again in American English. Spouting good wishes and kissing my French teacher, I emptied my own German pistol in to the moonlit sky and shouted:

"HAPPY NEW YEAR"

315th WEB PAGE

Thanks to "Chip" Hamby's creativity, the 315th's Internet site is up and running. Viewers can click on information as to individual squadrons, reunions, the *Newsletter* and other sections. Chip is open to any suggestions for site content and format. The site is at <<http://315group.20megsfree.com>>. His e-mail is ATCMiles@aol.com, home address: 6505 Hillside Lane, Alexandria, VA 22306, and phone 703 768-1553. If you don't have a computer, ask one of your grandchildren to call up the site on theirs, or visit your local library where computers are usually available along with someone to guide you in their use.

A HISTORIAN'S LOOK AT OPERATIONS "MERKUR" AND "VARSITY"

*This article originally appeared in the April 2001 Official News Bulletin of the 17th Airborne Division Association.
The author was John Kormann, past president of the association and is reprinted with his permission.*

There have been battles involving airborne forces which have had outcomes with far-reaching results not fully contemplated by the generals planning those operations. In my view two such battles were "Operations Merkur," the German capture of the island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea in May, 1941 and "Operation Varsity," the combined British and American airborne invasion over the Rhine River into Germany in March 1945. Both had consequences shaping the future use of airborne troops by their respective countries. Although in each case they were victories and in a sense stunning successes, they were so costly in the loss of men and material that procedures embodied in them were never used again.

The Germans had successfully used airborne troops in Poland, Holland, Belgium and Greece by mid-1941. German General Kurt Student, the father of the German Airborne, after the highly successful capture of the bridge across the Cornith Canal in Greece in April 1941, persuaded Adolf Hitler that the strategic Allied-held island of Crete could be invaded by airborne forces. With the Fuehrer approval and 22,500 troops at his disposal, including the elite 10,000 man 7th Parachute Division, he proceed to do so. He was audacious indeed, since Crete was defended by 30,000 British and Commonwealth troops, as well as 10,000 Greek soldiers and some local militia. The defenders were aware of the German potential, reasonably well armed and had the power of the Royal Navy off-shore to support them.

The Germans attacked using planes shuttling back and forth in three waves. The first wave consisted of 2,900 paratroopers and glider-landed infantry to take the key airfield at Maleme. In subsequent waves airfields elsewhere on the island at Retimo and Heraklion were similarly taken. Some 5000 men were landed in air transports and an addition 7000 Germans came in by sea.

Given the Allies superior numbers and all the

advantages of an island defense, why were they defeated? The Germans initially came close to catastrophe, but the early capture of a hill overlooking the Maleme airfield delivered without a real fight by a confused New Zealand unit, proved the turning point. In the final analysis the elite German airborne, imbued with a sense of previous victories was no match for a tentatively led, dispirited opponent.

Despite the spectacular success, Crete was a pyrrhic victory for the German airborne. The losses were excessive, 4000 killed, one out of every four paratroopers. Many more were wounded. Appalled by this, Hitler was led to take a dim view of further large-scale airborne operations and many of those troops were sent to fight as infantry in Russia. General Student later lamented that "Crete was the grave of the paratroopers."

Many of my readers participated in or are familiar with "Operation Varsity," involving 17,000 men of the 6th British and the 7th Airborne Division, so I will not go into the details of that struggle. Like Crete, it was highly successful, well planned and executed, taking advantage of much that had been learned from previous airborne operations in Sicily, Normandy and Holland. The drop over the Rhine was conducted in one thrust in two and a half hours in an area only four by six miles. This contrasted with previous airborne operations which extended over days, using landing areas many times larger. Not only were our forces dropped according to airborne doctrine near their objectives, they were dropped right on top of them.

However, the element of surprise was missing; anti-aircraft fire was perhaps more intense than expected, and in the final analysis, despite being dispirited, the German were defending their homeland. Furthermore a go-for-broke attitude and a paucity of transport aircraft led to many planes towing two gliders at once, in some cases with fatal results.

see "Airborne" page 10

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A BRITISH CREW REPORT ON ARNHEM SHOOT DOWN

REPORT ON ACCIDENT TO DAKOTA KG 570
18.9.44

(forwarded by Eric Pepper)

Twenty-four aircraft took part in the reinforcement operation "Market 2". Towing Horsa gliders carrying Jeeps, gun and supplies. The operation was successfully carried out. More flak than yesterday, one of our planes failed to return from this operation to its base of 512 Squadron, RAF, Broadwell, Oxfordshire. The crew members were S/Ldr. G. T. Southgate, AFC., Pilot, F/Lt. A. E. Saunders, co-pilot, F/Lt. S. W. Bryant, Navigator F/O. J. H. Parry, w/Operator.

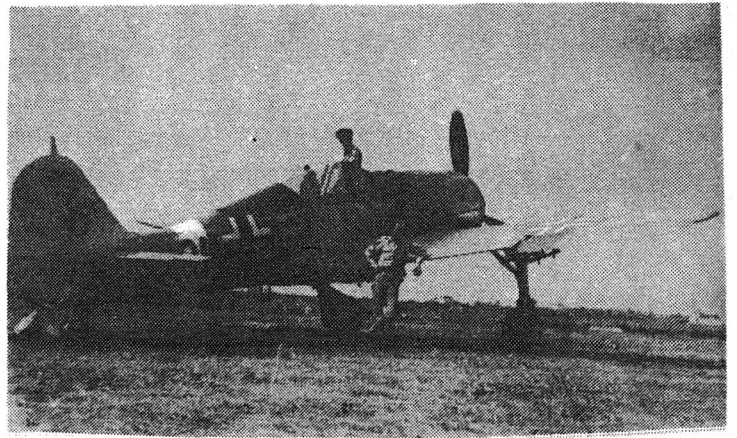
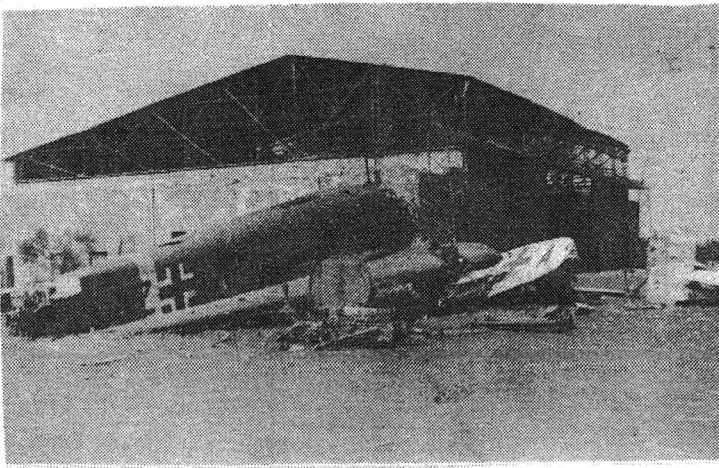
"We were detailed for a glider towing operation on 18 September 1944 to an LZ near Arnhem. We ran into flak after crossing the island of West Shouwen and saw the flak barge sunk by Typhoons. At 14.21 hrs, about 5-6 minutes from the LZ and at 2000 ft., there were four or five loud reports and immediately the W/Operator reported that the aircraft was on fire. The aileron controls were unserviceable and so the glider release was pulled. F/Lt. Saunders and F/O Parry tried without success to jettison the pilot's escape hatch; Parry then tried with an axe but still no success.

I went to remove the fire extinguisher form behind the 1st pilot's seat, but the Captain told me to leave it alone. By now we were down to a 1000ft and the Captain ordered all to "Abandon Aircraft". The W/Operator, myself and the Captain went to the rear of the aircraft which was now well alight under the floor below the crew compartment door. The Skipper was removing the parachute door at the rear when I realized that F/Lt. Saunders had not come back with us. By this time the aircraft was well alight at the main bulkhead and flames were licking around the fuselage tanks. It was obvious that F/Lt Saunders was attempting to land the machine as it was far too low to bale out. We braced ourselves for the impact and the aircraft belly-landed and then swung violently to Starboard and came to rest. Immediately on impact the fuselage tanks burst and S/Ldr. Southgate was flung across the fuselage. F/O. Parry went back

towards the crew compartment to assist F/Lt. Saunders but was beaten back by the flames. The Skipper was now back on his feet so all three of us left by the main door. The aircraft was now a blazing mass, we ran round the tail and Starboard wing to the front to find Saunders still in the cockpit. We made a further effort to get him out but it was impossible because of the fire. Saunders made an attempt to come out of the pilot's escape hatch, failed and then tried to go through the flames around the bulkhead but was turned back by the heat. He then broke the windshield, and while he was struggling through, the front of the aircraft disintegrated and he fell to the ground. He was very badly burned about his hands, arms and face, had deep cuts over his right eye and below his right ear. These were bleeding profusely. I then saw two farm workers approaching the burning plane and being able to speak some Dutch asked how close the German soldiers were. We were told to get into the nearby wood and hide. By now Saunders was in a bad way. Within fifteen minutes the workers returned to say that the woods were now too dangerous to stay in and we should move by night-fall. Despite injuries and loss of blood Saunders was willing to attempt a four mile journey on foot to a new location and had to be half carried over ploughed land at night. We were now in the care of the Dutch Underground Movement and were looked after by them until at 8:30 hrs on Sunday 24.9.44 we made contact with a British armoured car. S/Ldr. Southgate had his right elbow dislocated but an X-ray as the CCS Nijmegen revealed he had a broken elbow. Both he and F/Lt. Saunders were detained in the hospital at Nijmegen. The Dutch Underground informed us that our glider, 759, with its two pilots, Jeep, gun and two troops had made a perfect landing approximately one mile to the North of us. They arrived at the LZ with twelve German prisoners! On behalf of the crew I would like to say that our safety was directly due to the outstanding performance of F/Lt. Saunders in landing a flaming and crippled aircraft and it was an epic of heroism, which could hardly be surpassed.

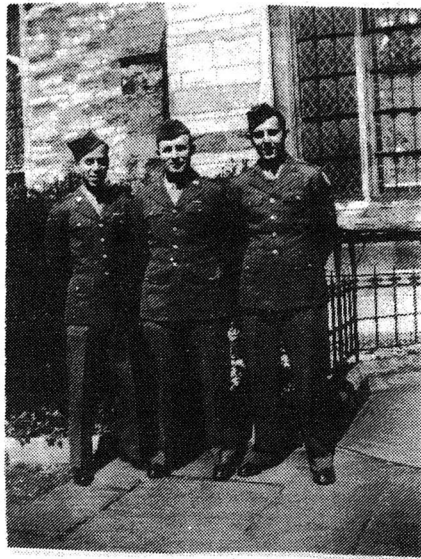
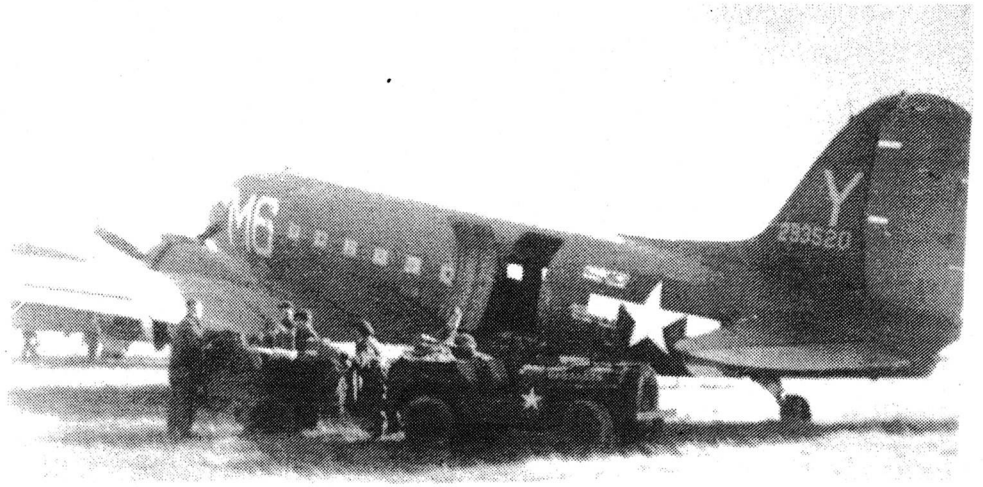
Signed,

F/Lt. S.W. Bryant, Navigator, 512 Sqd. RAF



THE WAY WE WERE

Jake Wilson sent in the top three photos. Above is a destroyed JU-52 at Tripoli; upper right a FW-190 fighter with FO Harper at the cockpit and FO Halverson on the wing. To the right is the C-47 Jake flew into Grave, Holland in support of "Market Garden." He estimates the "A Bridge Too Far" was only 5 or 6 miles from their landing area.



These surrounding photos arrived with surname identification only. They are from above left and clockwise: Andracek, Andracke & Deeker & Renger, Paulus, McDonough, Sites & Reinstein



REVISED THREE-ONE-FIVE HISTORY NEAR COMPLETION

One unique feature of the San Diego Reunion will be the presentation of the newly revised history of the *THREE-ONE-FIVE GROUP* by Bill Brinson. Edited by author and publisher George F. Cholszczynski, the new edition will be a greatly expanded version.

After each of the original chapters written by Bill Brinson, there will be a lengthy section, as George calls them, "Voices." These "Voices" were compiled from past *Newsletters*, from taped interviews conducted over past reunions, and of course, from the new stories and materials supplied to George by Association members. The "Voices" may be as short as a sentence, or as long as several pages, and will tell the life of the Troop Carrier men as they lived it, during the period covered by that chapter.

Although the final format has not been decided, George hopes to produce a hard cover book of usual trim size. The final decision will be based on his ability produce a book, with illustrations, that will cost in the neighborhood of \$30.

MEMORIAL FUND FOR US AIRBORNE FORCES

A RAF service man and one of his fellows have recently set up a fund to establish a memorial in the village of Cottesmore. The memorial will commemorate the AAF Troop Carrier Squadrons and the 101st and 82nd Airborne divisions that served at bases in Cottesmore, North Witham, Langar, Fulbeck, Balderton, Saltby, **Spanhoe**, Folckingham, Barkson Heath and Bottesford during WW II.

According to a letter received from JT Mike Cotton, RAF, as of October 2001 they had already raised 1100 English pounds. They held a display of US Airborne items at the Cottesmore Station education center which featured a visit by a WW II, US 505 PIR veteran. The display was attended by military personnel and children from the local school.

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They also did a re-enactment display at the Royal International Air Tattoo involving over than 40 re-enactors portraying paratroopers as they would have looked on the week proceeding D-Day.

In his letter, Cotton said they had been in contact with some US veterans groups but are attempting to further spread the word on their efforts. They intend to unveil the memorial in June 2002, providing adequate funds have been raised. The memorial will be placed outside of the camp, and hopefully in the village of Cottesmore, making it accessible to the public.

(Any interested individuals can reach Cotton at RAF Cottesmore, Oakham, Rutland, LE15 7BL, England.
E-mail <mchl cotton@aol.com>

MEMBER HELP NEEDED IN MAINTAINING ROSTER

Accompanying this *Newsletter* edition is an up-dated roster for use by all Association members. It is the result of much effort by your Recording Secretary "Doc" Cloer. It is also sent at considerable expense along with the hope that readers will find it of value; and, further, that they will assist in assuring its continued accuracy and currency.

The request is that readers review it and send any needed changes to Doc (see "*Where to send stuff*" p. 2). In the future, if you change in any way your address/phone number send Doc the information. And, Doc asks, type or print it out and be sure the change is complete.

As for e-mail, the same thing goes: let Doc know of any change. And if you are not receiving an occasional e-mail from him either you've failed to sent in an address change or you've never sent your address to be added to the list. And, guaranteed, NO SPAM.

Finally, thumb through the roster, find two or three old friends, get on the phone, tell a few stories, talk about your health, then agree to meet in San Diego in September for some libations and one-on-one reminiscing.

OFF THE GRAPEVINE

(AND OTHER QUESTIONABLE SOURCES)

A BIT of HISTORY

(from winter 2001 edition of *Daedalus Flyer*)

Four months after Pearl Harbor, on April 18, 1942, Jimmy Doolittle and his Raiders bombed Japan in one of the most heralded accomplishments in U. S. military history. The year 2002 will mark the 60th anniversary of the event.

MORE LEGAL STUFF

(from the Internet) *Things people actually said in court, word for word, taken down and now published by court reporters.*

Q: How was your first marriage terminated?

A: By death.

Q: And by whose death was it terminated?

+++++

Q: Is your appearance here this morning pursuant to a deposition notice, which I sent to your attorney?

A: No, this is how I dress when I go to work.

+++++

Q: Do you recall the time that you examined the body?

A: The autopsy started around 8:30 p.m.

Q: And Mr. Dennington was dead at the time?

A: No, he was sitting on the table wondering why I was doing an autopsy.

+++++

Q: Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for blood pressure?

A: No.

Q: Did you check for breathing?

A: No.

Q: So, then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy?

A: No.

Q: How can you so sure, Doctor?

A: Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar.

Q: But could the patient have still been alive nevertheless?

A: Yes, it is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law somewhere.

+++++

THE GOOD OLD DAYS!

(from the June 2001 BOTNA Bulletin)

When, on December 11, America declared war on Germany, Japan and Italy, average prices in the USA were:

- Average income \$1770.00
- New car \$850.00
- Loaf of Bread \$.08
- Gallon of Gas \$.12
- Gallon of milk \$.04
- Life expectancy 62.9 years

MORE BON MOTS

(thanks to Leonard Zurokov)

- You can preach a better sermon with your life than with your lips. (Oliver Goldsmith)
- Think like a man of action; act like a man of thought (Henri Bergson)
- Better than a thousand days of diligent study is one day with a great teacher. (Japanese proverb)
- Walking is man's best medicine. (Hippocrates)
- Tact is the ability to describe others as they see themselves. (Abraham-Lincoln)
- The secret of life is honesty and fair dealing. If you can fake that, you've got it made. (Groucho Marx)
- To understand your parents love, bear your own children (Chinese proverb)
- It is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong. (Voltaire)
- Work saves us from three great evils: boredom, vice and need. (Voltaire)
- The trouble with life in the fast lane is that you get to the other end in awful hurry. (John Jensen)
- War is God's way of teaching Americans geography. (Ambrose Pierce, writer.)
- Never confuse motion with actions. (Benjamin Franklin)

Though my soul may set in darkness
It will rise in perfect light;
For I have loved the stars too fondly
to be fearful of the night.

S. Williams

(from 93th TCS, 439th TCG Newsletter)

SENIOR MOMENT

(from Gp. Hdqs Assn., 435th TCG newsletter)

An elderly couple had dinner at another couple's house, and after eating the wives left the table and went into the kitchen. The two elderly gentlemen carried on chatting and one said, "Last night we went out to a new restaurant, and it was great. I would recommend it very highly" The other man said, "What's the name of the restaurant?" The first man thought and thought and finally said, "What is the name of that flower you give to someone you love? You know, the one this is red and has thorns." The other man said, "Do you mean a rose?" "Yes," the man said as he turned toward the kitchen and yelled, "Rose, what's the name of that restaurant we went to last night."

PONDER THESE

(from 436th TCG Assoc. Newsletter, Summer 2000)

- Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, the Ark was built by an amateur. Professionals built the Titanic.
- In just two days tomorrow will be yesterday.
- I always wanted to be a procrastinator, but never got around to it.
- I started out with nothing and still have most of it.
- Conscience is what hurts when everything else feels good.

NOTAMS

(Notices to Airmen)

AND STILL WELCOME: The Association has extended a join-up welcome to spouses, sons, daughters, siblings and grandchildren of both current members and those former members for whom taps have been sounded. Send the names to Doc Cloer and they'll be added to the mailing list and will receive the *Newsletter*. No dues, but donations welcome.

THANKS FROM FRANCE (reprinted in case you missed it earlier):

The VA has announced that the French Government will be presenting a "Thank-You-America Certificate" to World War II veterans for their participation in the liberation of France. The certificates will be given at sites and in ceremonies to be arranged by French authorities. To be eligible a veteran must have served in French territory, in French territorial waters, or in French airspace between June 6, 1994 and May 8, 1945. The certificates will not be issued posthumously. The application form is on the Embassy of France Web page <www.info-france-usa.org/news/statmnts/ww2/index.htm>. or may be obtained from a French Consulate or local veterans organization. The completed application should be sent to the French Consulate of jurisdiction for the veteran's place of residence. A jurisdictional listing is available on the web page. Veterans are being asked to submit proof of service in France along with the application. A statement of service indicating the veteran served in France, between the dates indicated above, from the VA, the State Director of Veterans Affairs, or a Veterans Service organization will be acceptable.

MORE ON CAPS

Cap-man Sandy Friedman remains in business. If you still haven't got yours, or need more, he asks that you get the order into him soon either for mail delivery or to pick up at the San Diego reunion (see *"Where to Send Stuff"* p. 2). That will help Sandy decide how many extras to bring along. Sandy suggests wearing your cap at the reunion sign-in to identify you as one of the good guys.

WHERE GOEST WE

If you have thoughts comments, suggestions on how the Association should plan for the future, now is the time to let someone know. Call, write or e-mail President Dick Ford, P.O. Box 4399, Sun River, OR 97707-1399, ph: 541.593.6310, e-mail <dickford/fire@aol.com>; or Vice President Bernie Brown, 10501 Lagrima de Oro, NE#280, Albuquerque, NM 87111, ph: 505.291.3280, e-mail <bbar3@yahoo.com>, or Recording Secretary Bob "Doc" Cloer, 1417 Valley View Dr., Yuba City, CA 95993, ph: 530.674.3681, e.mail <rlcloer@syix.com>.

A LITTLE HISTORY

(from 47th TCSq Fall/Winter 2000 Newsletter)

In WW I, the Air Force was the step child of the Signal Corps. By WW II, the Air Force was a step child of the Army. After WW II the Air Force won independence. On September 18, 1947 the US Air Force became a separate service with Stuart Symington as first Secretary. Carl Spaatz, Commanding General of the Air Force, was the first Chief of Staff, September 26. In 1997 the Air Force celebrated its 50th anniversary.

"Airborne"

Then, too, the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment was flown in basically untried larger C-46 aircraft, which because of their exposed fuel lines proved to be "flaming coffins." As in the case of Crete, the casualties were high, 1070 killed and thousands more wounded. In all, 77 planes were shot down, including 15 heavy bombers, and 475 damaged, many severely. Of the 1305 gliders used, some crashed on take-off, while others were shot down over the target or destroyed on landing. Of the 1305 gliders in the operations, only 172 were later salvageable.

Many analysts subsequently questioned whether "Varsity" was worth such losses, considering that the Americans had already crossed the Rhine elsewhere. Some asked whether it was an outgrowth of a political decision, a sop to assist British General Montgomery in his desire for a second chance to drive across the German plain after having failed earlier in Holland. In the final analysis "Varsity" was a watershed for the airborne and as such it occupies a unique place in military history. It spelled the end of large-scale use of gliders as a means for delivering heavy equipment directly into the battle zone, and indeed, placed in doubt aspect of airborne doctrine. Coming so close to the end of the war, one can understand why the military leadership wanted to gloss over "Varsity" and its losses. Less understandable is why military historians have not focused on it more or picked up on the definitive action that it was.

(Editor's note: Bill Brinson's "Three One Five Group" cites "Varsity" as the most costly single mission in which the 315th participated. Battle losses were 19 of 81 aircraft destroyed, or beyond repair, and 36 others with varying degrees of damage.

TAPS

WITH DEEP REGRET THE ASSOCIATION RECORDS THE LOSS OF THESE COMRADES AND EXTENDS OUR SINCERE SYMPATHY TO THEIR LOVED ONES

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

Joseph G. Gusky	34th Sq	Aug 2001
Harvey Pohlman	34th Sq	Mar 2000
Mrs. W. P. Ward	34th Sq	Nov 2001
Leverne D. Franciscus	309th Sq	Apr 2000
John Sorokacs	309th Sq	unk
Raymond H. Tudor	309th Sq	Sept 2001
Larry Justin	309th Sq	unk
Richard Ireland	309th Sq	Sept 2001
Harry Randle	310th Sq	Apr 2001
Mike J. Iovanella	310th Sq	Mar 2001
Bernard Berman	310th Sq	Dec 2001
John Wackeen	unk	Dec 1996

DONATIONS

The Association gratefully accepts donations whether in memory of former comrades or in support of the Association. Families are notified when appropriate. Donations have been received *(since the November, 2001 Newsletter)* from:

- G. Baroody-Byrd
- Russ Lane
- Mike Ingrisano, Jr. (316th TCG)
- Richard Kithcart
- Ruth Pohlman
- Richard Adams
- Kayoko Conine

Given in memory of: Bill Brinson, Art Plough, Bill Conine, Lloyd Perry, Harvey Pohlman, for all who died for their country, those for whom taps have sounded and general use.

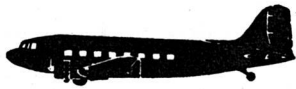
FROM THE MAIL ROOM

Jake Wilson wrote from Alaska to say he is working on the final chapter of his third book, and.... *"I am in the Fairbanks Pioneer home now which is where I belong since my body is pretty well wore out, but I can still write and gripe and laugh and enjoy things. It has been such a wonderful life, you bet!*

Jan Bos e-mailed from Holland to wish Troop Carrier veterans a happy holiday season. Jan continues with his outstanding efforts to record Troop Carrier history. He is widely recognized as one of the premier researchers and recorders of WW II Troop Carrier activities.

John & Sue Stevenson of Windmill Aviation Spanhoe also sent best wishes for Christmas and the New Year. Their card bears the 9th Troop Carrier Command logo as well as the 315th TCG logo and identifies Windmill Aviation as at the *"home of the World War II 315th Troop Carrier group 1944-1945"*.

David McPhee wrote "Doc" Cloer on behalf of the Arnhem 1944 Veterans' Club regards Sept. 11. *"It is with great sadness I write to say how appalled we all are at this horrendous act of terrorism struck at the heart of America. We watched the whole horror unfold with total disbelief and shock, now we have grasped the whole enormity of it we grieve and ache for the unaccounted thousand of people missing and dead, and for families shattered, it is something from which they will never recover.* He asked that his message be conveyed to *"our friends"* in the 315 TCG Association.



THE REUNION

by

Rachel Firth

*Autumn leaves rustling, together to the
appointed place the old warriors come.
Pilgrims, drifting across the land they fought to preserve.
Where they meet is not important anymore.
They meet and that's enough for now.
Greetings echo across the lobby.
Hands reach out and arms draw buddies close. Embraces, that as young men they were
too uncomfortable to give, too shy to accept so lovingly.
But deep within these Indian Summer days, they have reached a greater understanding of
life and love.
The shells holding their souls are weaker now, but hearts and minds
grow vigorous, remembering.
On a table someone spreads old photographs, a test of recollection.
And friendly laughter echoes at shocks of hair gone gray or white, or merely gone.
The rugged slender bodies lost forever.
Yet they no longer need to prove their strength.
Some are now sustained by one of "medicines miracles," and even in this fact,
they manage to find humor.
The women, all those that waited, all those who loved them, have watched
the changes take place.
Now, they observe and listen, and smile at each other; as glad to be together as the men.
Talk turns to war and planes and foreign lands.
Stories are told and told again, reweaving the threadbare fabricate of the past.
Mending one more time the banner of their youth.
They hear the vibrations, feel the shudder of metal as engines whine and whirl,
and planes come to life.
These birds with fractured wings can be seen beyond the mist of clouds,
and they are in the air again, chasing the wind, feeling the exhilaration of flight
close to the heavens.
Dead comrades, hearing their name spoken, wanting to share in this time, if only in
spirit, move silently among them.
Their presence is felt and smiles appear beneath misty eyes.
Each, in his own way may wonder who will be absent in another year.
the room grows quiet for a time.*

(The above was received via e-mail and reportedly was written by a Navy Wife
on the occasion of a squadron of Naval Aviators gathering for a reunion)