



315th Newsletter

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

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THE UNDERSIGNED:

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315th Newsletter
200 Bryant Avenue
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November, 1994

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

From all of us who gathered at St. Louis, to all of those who worked and arranged it: WELL DONE! A special thanks to Past President John Andrews whose leadership and commitment made it possible.

True, we are two years older. Two additional years to savor the past and appreciate more the relationships and events which belong only to those who were a part of the 315th. Rather like old wine that becomes more precious with age.

Speaking of old and wine, I'm told the Hospitality Room turned a profit.

One of the more refreshing aspects of St. Louis was the children (now adults) and grandchildren who joined us. So, the tradition continues.

Next stop on the 315th's journey: Milwaukee, WI in 1996.

Be There!

J. S. Smith

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REPORT FROM YOUR RECORDING SECRETARY:

Well Reunion 94 has come and gone and I think all had a great time. Thanks to Jim & Audry Fidler for all of their work to put it all together. Our great President, John Andrews, ran all of the meetings and Banquet with a great sence of humor. Jake Sternoff can still sing as great as ever ! It reminds me of the many times that we were marched to the mess hall after briefings by the M P's and we would keep Jake signing for hours. I still about cry every time he sings " Danny Boy". I hope he can do it for many years to come.

As some get a bit older, we have trouble traveling, but the turn out was great. In 1990, we had 223 for the Banquet - in 1992 we had 197 and in St Louis we had 185. Health problems caused 10 to cancel out at the last minute, or we would of been about the same as 92. We had 10 members who were making their first reunion. All enjoyed meeting old friends and I think all will be back for Milwaukee.

Thru the notices published about our reunion, we located four more members who never knew the 315th was having reunions. They are - Eugene Wheeler, 43rd Sqdn. - Ira Hieger, 43rd Sqdn, - George Waldron, 34th Sqdn. - and James Pippert, 34th Sqdn. There are still a lot out there to locate and many probably would say the same as Jim Pippert, "Sure wish I had of know about this years ago". When you think about our morning reports that at one time show a high of close to 2,000 men, the 850 or so on the roster leaves many still missing.

We have three honorary members of the 315th from Holland. We were honored at this reunion to have Tonny Winkler make her first visit to the U.S.. Father Thuring has made one of our reunions in the past, this leaves only Jan Bos, our other member from Holland who we have not been able to have as a guest. Hope Jan will be able to make one soon. Dave Benfield and James Flavell from England have both been to our reunions in the past. Dave Benfield spent so much time this past year showing members of the 313th, 314th and 315th around their old bases in England that he had no vacation time left to come to St. Louis. Dave now has a phone number - 0778-348849. He said that if any were coming over, give him a call ahead of time and he will program some time off to show you around the Spanhoe area.

Some wanted to know where they could get the 315th Grp. or the 34th, 43rd, 309th or 310th Sqdn. pins that we wear on our caps. I checked and they are still available. Send \$3.50 for each pin ordered, plus .50 cents postage to; Ken Sparks, 1813 Sereno Street, Honolulu, HI 96817-2318. I am still checking on the caps and will have the info in the next newsletter.

At the Board of Directors meeting in St. Louis, we agreed that we should encourage Mini-Reunions in different parts of the

country in the off year between our 315th Group Reunions. This would allow some of our members who can not travel long distances to meet with and enjoy their old buddies. As any of you who have been involved with hosting one of our reunions knows, there is a bit of work involved. These Mini's would be more of a laid back, visiting type, with maybe one tour, banquet, and etc. Before anyone starts to do all of the work, we need to know if there is enough interest in this ? In most cases the Hotel rooms and your registration costs should be less on these small reunions.

Leonard S. Thomas (who put on our great Dallas Reunion) is considering a Mini-Reunion in Ft. Worth, Texas for our members in the Southwest (and from anywhere else). If Len does it - it will be done right. Its up to you - - ! Most hotels will require 30 to 35 rooms to be utilized, at a minimum, before they provide a free hospitality or meeting room. Dates must be made right away to get anything for next year. If you are at all interested, get a 19 cent post card, or spend a buck and give him a call TODAY!! His address; 6855 Shorecrest Ct., Ft. Worth, TX 76132. His phone number is: 817/294-0156. If you are not that interested - he will forget all about it.

I will consider a Mini-Reunion in Reno, Nevada for all on the westcoast (and anywhere else) if you are interested. Rooms and meals and shows are very reasonable in "THE BIGGEST LITTLE TOWN IN THE WORLD". Its up to you, I will be glad to do it, but I need to get started on dates right away. Drop me a card: Robert L. Cloer, 1417 Valley View Dr., Yuba City, CA. 95993. Or give me a call: 916/674-3681. What ever date is selected, it will not interfere with those wanting to go to Holland for the Commemoration of the Battle of Arnhem. (September 17th + or - 7 days or so) Let me know RIGHT AWAY ! !

Well I had better stop and leave some room or ZIGGY will be mad at me ! Looking forward to seeing all in Milwaukee in 1996 !

ROBERT L. "DOC" CLOER

ST. LOUIS REUNION WAS GREAT!

The 1994 (tenth) reunion of the WWII 315th TCG Association held in St. Louis MO on Oct 6-9 at the Radisson Airport Hotel was, by popular acclaim, the "warmest, nicest, most friendly reunion we've ever had."

91 Association members attended, and with the addition of 13 guests, we had a fine turn-out. For 10 of the 91 Association members present, this was their first reunion and they were given a rousing welcome at the Saturday morning Business Meeting.

Among the guests were Mr. and Mrs. Fritz (John's son) Andrews, Pat (Mrs. Gene Blase and her son James, Bill Bremmeyer and H.B. Lyons' son and daughters, Tom, Melissa and Pat, Joan Money, Garland and Mavis Rickman, Robert and Linda Speak and our Honorary Member from Holland, A.W. (Tonny) Winkler-Koert, who has worked with the "Lest We Forget" Committee for many years to arrange accommodations with host families in Holland who open their homes and hearts for those American and Allied veterans who return to Holland for the annual commemoration of the Battle of Arnhem.

Tonny asked if she could speak a few words at the banquet on Saturday evening and, in the words of one of our members (Ziggy Zartman) "could any medal, any commendation, any Unit Citation *ever have more meaning for us* than that Dutch-accented, simple warm and sincere message of Tonny Winkler's who traveled all the way from Holland to thank us for our role in the liberation of her country from the occupation of the repugnant armed forces of the Nazi Third Reich? To me, that was a very special moment in my life. And, one of the finest things ever to happen to the 315th Troop Carrier Group."

When she finished speaking, a hush came over the assembly and then came minutes of thunderous applause for her heartfelt words of thanks. It's safe to say there were tears in the eyes of everyone who heard Tonny speak.

MILWAUKEE IS SITE OF OUR 1996 REUNION

At the Saturday morning Business Meeting called to order by President John Andrews at 9:20, the assembled members, having a choice between two proposed 1996 reunion sites---Dayton, Ohio and Milwaukee Wisconsin--- in a close vote chose Milwaukee. The members also agreed to the proposal that we hire an outside specialist organization to handle the details of our next reunion. The president asked Bob Cloer to explain how these companies work. Cloer said there are many such companies all over the country, but he has talked with only one of them. They all operate pretty much the same: they will put on a reunion in any city we name. Cost to the unit, if we have 50 or more hotel rooms, is \$3.00 per person which is paid when we pick up our name tag at the

registration desk. The companies make all arrangements and negotiate the contracts with the hotels, bands, tours, etc. Their profit derives from the commission paid by those businesses...much the same way that travel agencies operate. It is said they do such a volume that they can negotiate a better price than we could. Once contracts are negotiated by the company's central office, details of the reunion are turned over to a local company they work with in each city. In addition to the local on-site people, if the reunion uses 100 or more rooms, an additional person from the home office is sent to help during the reunion. Cloer stressed the point that when a unit retains such an organization, the unit (in this case, our Association) tells the company exactly which of the features, tours, etc. available in the reunion city we wish to offer our members. President Andrews appointed our incoming president, J. S. Smith, Bob Cloer and Bill Brinson as a committee to select and work with the outside organization and to set parameters for reunion events.

Bob Davis made his Treasurer's report. He reported that during our 1993-94 fiscal year which ended in August, he had collected \$2,410. in dues. Bob explained how the 1994 reunion registration forms and fees had been directed to his attention rather than to the reunion chairman as it has been done in the past. He reported turning over \$21,839. to reunion chairman Jim Fidler to cover reunion expenses. Bob also told us there was \$4,756. in the Association's NOW checking account and \$100. in the Registration Account. In closing, Bob reminded the members that he and Marty Dean, Assistant Treasurer, would be collecting dues after the meeting. The Treasurer's Report was unanimously accepted.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

Bill Brinson made the committee report which proposed Julius H. "Bert" Peterson for Vice President and to fill two Director's seats, Monroe "Ziggy" Zartman and John E. McClain. The report was accepted by acclamation. The following officers and directors will serve the 315th Troop Carrier Group Association for the next two years:

- *John Andrews.....Past President
- *James S. Smith.....President
- *Julius H. Peterson.....Vice President
- William L. Brinson.....Corresponding Secretary
- Robert L. Cloer.....Recording Secretary
- Robert M. Davis.....Treasurer
- Marty F. Dean.....Assistant Treasurer

Directors

- *John E. McClain.....Term expires 2000
- *Monroe Zartman.....Term expires 2000
- *Gordon Tull.....Term expires 1998
- *Joseph G. Terebessy.....Term expires 1998
- *Bernard C. Brown.....Term expires 1996
- *Ray M. Schwartz.....Term expires 1996

*Members of the Board of Directors

At one point during the Business Meeting, Bernie Pleasant rose to give us a report on the C-47 in the 8th AF Museum at Barksdale AFB. He reported that the bronze Memorial Plaque honoring Duncan McRae had been mounted in front of the aircraft and that, though the Squadron letters NM (for the 34th Squadron) had not yet been painted on the aircraft, they would soon be added.

Bill Brinson, Corresponding Secretary, told the members that, if we could find an appropriate staff, we would be displaying the American flag that occupied a place of honor in our Group Commander's office all during the war. The flag was rescued from some of the cartons that were piled on the dock at Trinidad before they were broken into by people who shall be unknown. (A staff was found and the flag was displayed in the banquet room.)

Bill also commented that anyone who had helped put on one of our reunions in the past knew that it involved an awful lot of work and that we should all rise and give Jim and Audrey Fidler, John Andrews, Jack Mancinelli and Bernard and Bette Brown a big hand in appreciation. So done!

Finally, our Group Commander, H.B. Lyon, rose to say that John Andrews had been a great president of our Association and that he should be given a rousing ovationwhich followed immediately.

The President asked if anyone had anything else to bring up for the good of the Association; there being none, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 10:46.

After the conclusion of the meeting, individual pictures were made of each individual for use in the reunion picture book.

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In the first paragraph of the story on our St. Louis reunion, you saw mention that this was our tenth meeting. In case some of our readers aren't aware of where our earlier reunions were located, we list them and the year below:

1977 Savannah, Georgia (our first)
 1978 Dallas, Texas
 1980 New Orleans, Louisiana
 1982 Chicago, Illinois
 1984 San Francisco, California
 1986 Seattle, Washington
 1988 San Antonio, Texas
 1990 Norfolk, Virginia
 1992 Albuquerque, New Mexico
 1994 St. Louis, Missouri

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Thoughts from the Past President:

In point of time, two years is a short span...as time is measured. However, it represents a period in my life that will long be remembered. First, and foremost, will be the cooperation I received. There was no request from me that was not readily accepted -- whether it was by mail or personal contact. Also, offers of help were most welcome, needed and accepted. All of this made the past two years a period of pleasant experiences -- and, hopefully, will help to perpetuate the memories we all shared.

And in this regard, our personal thanks to those who attended the reunion for the first time in St. Louis. We hope they enjoyed the reunion as much as we enjoyed having them. Please continue your attendance.

One of the pleasant aspects of the reunion was the number of guests -- sons, daughters, etc. -- who attended. It was most gratifying that we had the opportunity to share with them our mutual endeavors in WWII. And from what I gather, those guests are looking forward to Milwaukee in 1996. Let's increase this area of attendance -- as well as all others.

And now, a salute to the ladies who attended. What a sincere tribute to them, as evidenced by the applause after their picture was taken. What a great asset they are!!!

And, finally, I accepted this position with reluctance and leave it gratefully. Reluctantly because I did not feel comfortable in the position and the responsibility it involved. Gratefully for the opportunity to serve the members of the WWII 315th Troop Carrier Group Association.

One last thought: I wish the best to our new president J.S. Smith. Please give him the same cooperation and help you have given me. With that in mind, the future of the WWII 315th Troop Carrier Group Association will be secured for years to come.

WHAT A GREAT GROUP OF PEOPLE!!!

With many thanks,

(Signed) J o h n
John F. Andrews

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Ziggy Zartman comes through with another piece for the *Newsletter*, this one (partly) built around Command Pilots...those guys whose wings were topped by a wreath and a star. Once he disposes of Command Pilots, Ziggy launches into a marvelously heart-warming reminiscence of life after the Service and flying a rented PT-19 and buzzing his Dad's store.

COMMAND PILOTS.... ACES.....OR "ASSES"

In the November '93 *Newsletter*, two of our crafty 315th fly-boys took a "shot" at Command Pilots...hinting that "they" were OLD BRASS who were dangerous when occupying the LEFT (Pilot's) seat in the cockpit, especially so, when the weather was "stinko!"

This generalization kinda raised the hair on my noggin (well, if I still had my shiny black curls, it would have). Anyhow, since I (like numerous other 315thers) am a retired USAF Command Pilot, I felt the "picture" painted (done a long time ago and in a wartime mood) needed some background touch-up by another "artist."

Assuredly, just as Steve and Cog lamented, some Command Pilots (and Senior Pilots too)...invariably, those whose higher echelon assignments kept them behind a desk (out of the cockpit) much of the time, were, indeed, not too "swift" when controlling their craft! And for Cog and Steve...I've read their war stories, they are my kind of guys...like me, always eager to "target" the "brass" when having fun! Still, my circadian rhythms, vibrating excessively, needed a response.

Military rated (cockpit) upgrades.... Pilot to Senior Pilot (SP), SP to Command Pilot (CP) were awarded (I can't remember the exact data) on the basis of total flying hours -- several thousand -- and years of rated service; eight years for "Senior," fifteen years for "Command" (I think). Insignia for the SP included a Star mounted over the shield of the aviation badge; for the CP, a Wreath, (not a Halo as stated -- tongue in cheek, I think in Steve's article) was added around the Star. Show me a line pilot with a CP rating (one whose principal duty was flying airplanes) and I'll introduce you to a highly experienced, sharp aviator (guy or gal) who had the "right stuff." whether displaying Army, Navy, Marine Corp, Coast Guard or USAF insignia! The first pilot to fly faster than the speed of sound, Chuck Yeager, is a retired USAF Command Pilot and

he plans to go through the "barrier" again in '97 (50 years later). Jimmy Doolittle at the time he led the aircraft carrier-launched B-25 bombing raid on Tokyo was a Command Pilot. Pap (Ted) Stewart and Len (Tom) Thomas (310th Squadron) are retired Command Pilots. Many others from the 315th Group are also retired military pilots (Gibbons, Hamby, Brinson, Baysinger, Pleasant, Cloer pop into my right cerebral half...all of whom, IF THEY REMAINED ON FLYING STATUS, marched in their last parade wearing Command Pilot insignia. At Spanhoe, Hamish McClelland, who led us on the D-Day missions over the Normandy peninsula, was THEN a Command Pilot (I think, the only one in our Group). The rest of us, including me, Cog and Steve, were still "wet behind the ears"...maybe excepting a few guys, like Willet Messinger, Doc Hatton and others who were already showing signs of advanced age (spots of gray hair). Finally, the "Chief Aviator who wears the White A-2 jacket, too, is no doubt a Command Pilot.

Brigadier General Robert Scott, author of *God Was My CO-PILOT*, thought differently, but then, it wouldn't be the first time a General didn't get the message. The German General at Bastogne didn't get the message when, after requesting the Americans to surrender, the reply was "Nuts!" General MacArthur didn't get HST's message until it was too late. During Desert Storm, Saddam Hussein never got any messages. Heck! Back at Spanhoe, I didn't get the message the "brass" kept reciting even tho they kept me standing at rigid "attention". As a fourteen year Captain, I can assure you that the OER'S (Officer's Efficiency Ratings) "they" gave me did MAKE THEIR POINT!

Nuf said...stand back and view the big (touched-up) picture! Finally, to kinda answer the question posed in the title to this postwar tale, Gloria, the five kids, nine grandkids and one great-grandson (the countdown continues), all believe that I was an "Ace," (aren't families great?)...and, the time (maybe it was more than once) that the Squadron "old-man" called me an "ass," I wasn't yet a Command Pilot, so that didn't count.

"They" say that you can't turn back the clock, especially when you've journeyed 'round the sun as many times as we WWII veterans have on our "terra firma" satellite; however, my cerebral timepiece is the old rewind kind and the "spring," every once in a while, will work...thus, I've sprung this postwar story (1947) which doesn't have anything to do with Command Pilot ratings...hopefully, getting me, Steve and Cog off the hook.

Just separated from the Army Air Corps, Gloria and I were marking time in Shamokin, waiting for the enrollment date at Bucknell College..staying busy filling in GI Bill application forms, to pay for my college courses (including texts) and to get us a \$90.00 check each month that I remained in school.

With \$1200.00 in the bank and a monthly paycheck on the horizon, we decided to splurge and rent a Fairchild PT-19 airplane (fabric covered, open cockpit, tandem seating) for one hour...to surprise my Dad by buzzing his Depression (Thirties) survival enterprise (no job available as a miner or carpenter), the combination grocery store, pool hall, gas station that he had self-built in the front yard. The two foot thick walls were made with furnace cinders dumped into a mud-box, then, not too liberally, mixed, using hand shovels, with cement...also lots of rocks tossed into the forms as filler. The ceilings were covered with painted mattress-box cardboard. A pre-NRA, WPA innovation, the "store" enabled Dad to keep us out of the soup kitchen lines, which, then, you may remember, got pretty long! The bank's equity in the project was a negotiated interest-payment-only plan (6% max...remember the usury law) for several of the term years. Some of your folks may have had similar loan payment plans, common during the depression years. Where else do you think I learned to rack pool balls, tend store, pump gasoline and start my collection of gas caps (if the customer didn't remind me, I often forgot to put back the gas cap). Seven days a week, Dad was there from 0600 to 2230...never without a Rosa Cuba (Havana) cigar in his hand or mouth...always humming some kind of a tune from the twenties...forever yakking with his gang of regulars (whom my Mother more accurately labeled as "the loafers"). A little noise out front and Dad'd be hustling to investigate.!

The airfield was located on an island in the Susquehanna River about 25 miles from

Shamokin. After fitting Gloria with a seatpack parachute, she climbed into the front bucket, strapped herself to the seat, and sans helmet put on an old pair of my ski glasses...to keep the wind and hair out of her eyes. Of course, I was wearing my war-torn A-2 jacket and the same helmet & goggles that I wore to fly "the Spitfire" in Sicily (the one lens still cracked). Our home and Dad's store was located on a hillside, just Mountain Laurel and Huckleberry bushes, downhill, across the street...no problem buzzing by at eye level.

The plane, similar to the one that I had soloed in at Hicks Field, Texas, when an Aviation Cadet, was a nifty machine to roll, loop and spin. At Penn State, Gloria had acquired a student license and had had some flying lessons, so enroute to Shamokin, we went thru at least one of each maneuver, Gloria lightly holding the front stick, following me thru the procedures. She was upset, when during the slow roll, most of the cockpit debris from the deck dumped into her hair (remember, that was one of the hazards when flying the early crates), I didn't know it at the time, but this just doesn't happen in jets. Albeit, she abruptly ended the aerobatics.

We didn't have much time to enjoy the variegated, beautiful foliage of the Appalachian Fall...quickly the landmark water tower appeared. With Gloria controlling the rudder and stick, she nosed it down toward Dad's store...me "sawing" the throttle back & forth, to make some noise, as we zipped by. Sure enough, as we circled one time, we could see Dad and the resident loafers gathering on the street in front of the gas pumps. Hillside buzzing doesn't require you "to cut the grass"...just to be wary of any power lines. Wide open, we went by one more time, Gloria deciding to "wave". Her hand shoved into the slipstream, it flew backward, banging hard against the fuselage...slightly tearing the fabric and causing blood to trickle from her fingers. My wounded mate, almost in tears, we headed back to our island landing strip (grass), taxied to the parking spot and shut down...5 or 10 minutes (non-refundable) still remaining on our hour!

Back to earth, we drove over to Lewisburg (Bucknell's campus), hunting for a place to park our trailer. Later, with mini loans from both Dads, we bought a lot on which we could live in our trailer while building a small

house....the trailer, our collateral for much of the building materials. As I recall, we had about \$3800. in the lot and materials, and three years later sold it for \$5900....a neat profit, but then, with three kids to feed, clothe and treat to an occasional drive-in movie, it disappeared fast. Gloria and I (both) still wearing the surplus olive drab GI issue boxer shorts (she. saved by the draw strings)...still finding more important ways to spend our money than to get out the Sears catalog and order new underwear! The good old days !?!

Gotta go. Gloria's yelling. I'm wanted on the phone; probably my old Squadron Commander calling to apologize for calling me an "ass" when I tormented him back at Spanhoe! Actually, to be perfectly honest with you (I've got witnesses...check with Jim Kevan or Len Thomas), his memorable words were "Zartman, if you're not going to use that head of yours, you may as well have an ass on both ends!"

One more reason for me to keep "testing" the upper tier of the military hierarchy!

Ziggy

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Bill Brinson sends us an interesting item for this issue and we're sorry we couldn't follow through on the idea Bill had for presenting the material (an aircraft propeller with various countries superimposed on it). Bill had sent us a list of countries, cities, airfields and various places some of us had visited during 1942-45. But, we've thought of a way to use the material Bill sent us: a travelogue check list which would allow each of our readers to check the country, city or airbase they had personally visited while on duty with the 315th TCG.

We start with countries. If you had ever been in the country, circle the number.

1. Labrador
2. Greenland
3. United Kingdom

4. Morocco
5. Algeria
6. Tunisia
7. Libya
8. Egypt
9. Sicily
10. Corsica
11. Italy
12. Malta
13. Pantelleria
14. Sardinia
15. Gibraltar
16. Senegal
17. Belgian Congo
18. Gabon
19. Mauretania
20. France
21. Belgium
22. Holland
23. Germany
24. Liberia
25. Ascension Island
26. Brazil
27. Trinidad
28. Puerto Rico

Now, how about these:

29. Casablanca
30. Cazes
31. Oujda
32. Blida
33. Maison Blanche--Algiers
34. Constantine
35. Teiergma
36. LaSenia
37. Oran
38. Monastir
39. Tripoli
40. Castel Benito
41. Fez
42. Port Lyautey
43. Meknes
44. Bizerte
45. Tunis
46. Palermo
47. Catania
48. Syracuse
49. Cairo

50. Marrakech
51. Naples-Pomigliano
52. Capodochino
53. Pompeii
54. Bari
55. Sfax
56. Ajaccio
57. Chrea
58. Benghazi
59. Cottesmore
60. Saltby
61. Folkingham
62. Barkston-Heath
63. Kettering
64. Leicester
65. Stamford
66. Nottingham
67. Boreham
68. Chipping Ongar
69. Colchester
70. Chelmsford
71. Amiens/Glisy
72. Brussels
73. St. Mere Eglise
74. Celle
75. Paris
76. Cannes
77. Frankfurt
78. Weller

And here are more to circle:

79. Olmsted
80. Bowman
81. Florence
82. Pope
83. Brookley
84. Lawson
85. Daniel
86. Kelly
87. Kellogg--Battle Creek
88. Presque Isle
89. Goose Bay
90. Bluie West One
91. Keflavik
92. Stornoway
93. Prestwick
94. Aldermaston
95. Hendon

96. Burtonwood
97. Langford Lodge
98. Reading
99. London
100. Belfast
101. Warrington
102. St. Eval
103. Colerne
104. Boscombe Down
105. Heston
106. Northolt
107. Upayon
108. Netheravon
109. Croyden
110. Turnhouse
111. Greenham Common
112. Edinburgh
113. Newbury
114. Ramsbury
115. Wantage
116. Newquay
117. St. Mawgan
118. Bovingdon
119. Bassingbourne
120. Welford Park
121. Portreath

That's quite a list, isn't it? And to think, many of us saw some or all of those places courtesy of the USAAF and Uncle Sam! If any of our readers was able to circle any more than 100 numbers, they can claim to be real "world travelers"!

We hope you enjoyed studying the list. Our thanks to Bill Brinson.

We are indebted to Marty Dean who sent us a copy of the following story which appeared in the September 15, 1994 issue of the *Chicago Tribune*. We've read many stories about the battle of Arnhem and this one, told to Ray Moseley, a *Tribune* staff writer, by a young British paratrooper who jumped into the Arnhem melee has to be one of the best we've ever read.

Veteran recalls horror at "a bridge too far" Arnhem battle's 50th anniversary

ARNHEM, Netherlands -- When Henry McAnelly, a 21-year-old British paratrooper, set out to play his part in the greatest airborne operation in history, he and most of his fellow soldiers expected a quick, easy victory.

It was Sept. 17, 1944, and across the Netherlands the German army, driven out of France and Belgium, was in headlong retreat. The roads were jammed with soldiers and their Dutch collaborators, fleeing for the German border.

"Everyone was under the impression the German army was totally defeated and had taken flight," McAnelly said. "We were told we would land 12,000 yards from the Arnhem bridge, and we would only have to march in and seize it in 4½ hours."

Five days after he dropped from a C-47, McAnelly lay in a field outside Arnhem, his left arm nearly sliced away by shrapnel and his body pierced by 46 wounds, many from machine gun and small arms fire. He thought he was going to die.

He did lose his arm, and he still carries a bullet in his head. But a courageous British army medic saved his life.

Four days later, the surviving forces, running out of food, ammunition and medical supplies, began a retreat. The Battle of Arnhem, conceived as a bold gamble to open an invasion route to Berlin and bring the war to an early end, instead had turned into the final German victory of World War II and a terrible winter of suffering for the Dutch people.

"What the hell was it all about?" asked McAnelly as he wandered amid the white marble grave markers of the British War Cemetery in the adjoining town of Oosterbeek, reading off the names of men who died alongside of him.

"I don't think it achieved anything. What happened here was not the fault of the fighting soldier, but a lack of good generals.

Unfortunately, the Germans had excellent generals, quick thinkers.

"We came with a well thought-out plan. The Germans had no plan, but in one hour they had one. They would surround, compress and destroy us. And that's what they did."

On Saturday, with Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands and Britain's Prince Charles in attendance, the Dutch and the British will commemorate the battle, one of the most controversial of World War II.

Veterans, the oldest 84, will make a parachute drop along with modern-day paratroops. But the mood will be different than the celebration of the invasion of Europe that took place in Normandy in June. Here, many will ask themselves the question that haunts McAnelly: What was it all about?

The Arnhem operation, codenamed Market Garden, was conceived by British Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery after Allied forces had liberated Belgium. U.S. Gen. George S. Patton's 5th Army was then rolling through France toward the German border.

Montgomery, anxious to reach Berlin before Patton, drew up a plan to drop 10,000 British and American paratroopers nearly 65 miles ahead of a British armored force moving in from Belgium. The paratroops would seize vital river bridges and hold them until the ground forces could catch up.

The Arnhem Bridge across the Rhine River was the last, and the most important. From there the combined force would push into Germany outflanking the defenses of the Siegfried Line and race the 270 miles to Berlin.

In an awesome display of air power, the allies mobilized almost 5,000 transport planes, bombers and fighters for the operation, and used more than 2,500 gliders to bring in men and equipment.

Montgomery told Lt. Gen. Frederick Browning, deputy commander of the 1st

Airborne, that it would take two days for his armor to reach the Arnhem Bridge. Browning replied: "We can hold it for four. But, sir, I think we might be going a bridge too far."

"A Bridge Too Far" became the title of a celebrated history of the battle by the journalist Cornelius Ryan, and the title of a Hollywood movie.

The British, brimming with confidence, ignored their own intelligence reports indicating that two German SS Panzer (Tank) divisions were in the area.

They also made a major mistake in dropping troops 4 to 10 miles from Arnhem instead of close by. Only Lt. Col. John D. Frost's battalion managed to reach and capture the north end of the bridge before the Germans recovered and organized their defenses.

Frost's men held out for four days before the survivors were forced to abandon their posts. Just 2,400 men were evacuated. The division left 1,500 wounded behind.

The British also found that most of their radios didn't work, so the forces could communicate neither with each other nor with bases in Belgium and England. Confusion reigned.

Early on, the Germans captured the complete British battle plan, enabling them to spring a trap for troops parachuted in later and to seize most of the supplies dropped to British troops.

Finally, the British under-estimated the difficulty of moving tanks along roads built atop dikes in the face of tank and artillery fire. They ignored Dutch advice about how to fight in the Netherlands' peculiar terrain.

"We were simply cut to pieces," McAnelly said. Of 600 men in his battalion, fewer than 20 returned to England. The rest were killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Five won the Victoria Cross, their nation's highest military honor. Most of the awards were made posthumously.

After McAnelly was wounded, a medic came to help him. He found a wheelbarrow in a garden and hauled McAnelly to a medical aid station. From there he was taken to a German-run hospital in Arnhem, then moved to Germany as a prisoner.

He wound up marrying a Dutch woman who had nursed him in the hospital. He has lived in Oosterbeek ever since and acts as a volunteer guide for people coming to the British

cemetery in search of the graves of family members.

More than 17,000 troops on both sides, including 3,794 Americans were listed as killed, wounded or missing after the nine-day battle. The Germans lost an estimated 3,300 men in the Arnhem-Oosterbeek area, and possibly three times that many overall.

The U.S. Air Force bombed the Arnhem Bridge on Oct. 7, 1944, but it was rebuilt after the war to its original design. Even now, bodies from the battle are being recovered as developers dig up the ground for new buildings. Two were found last January.

After the battle, Montgomery insisted it was 90 percent successful.

Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands said: "My country can never again afford the luxury of another Montgomery success."

German Field Marshal Walther Model, evicted the entire population of Arnhem and Oosterbeek, about 152,000 people, because they had welcomed the Allies as liberators. Then German troops looted their abandoned homes.

"What they couldn't take, they smashed," said Adrian Groeneweg, an official of the Airborne Museum in Oosterbeek. "They dropped pianos out of upper-story windows."

The Dutch, many wandering the country in search of shelter, faced what became known as the Hunger Winter. Reduced to eating tulip bulbs and sugar beets, 35,000 died of starvation. The Netherlands would wait for liberation until May 1945.

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|--|--------------------------|
| With great regret, we record the death of these comrades: | |
| Leon E. Bills | January 27, 1994 |
| Giles Dawson | May 18, 1993 |
| John Davidson | September, 1994 |
| Alan Saunders | September 4, 1994 |

Here follows an account of a "happening" your editor has been aware of for some time, but only recently has NORM GREENE come forward with his account of the "happening."

Norm prefaces his account with the following:

Ziggy Zartman writes the greatest "war stories" I have ever read but, I've got one I have been saving all these years!

While we were stationed in Blida, Jim Crumbie and I were on orders to go on rest leave and 75 other enlisted personnel were going with us. As the ranking officers, we were in charge. We left early in the A.M. by truck to go to Algiers and, although it was barely dawn, we were all smiles and some guys were singing. Arriving at Maison Blanche, the airfield at Algiers, we had a long wait for our plane, so Jim and I went into the coffee shack and, while we sipped our coffee, in came Major Sutter, the Base Commander.

"Where are you fellows off to today?"

"The Isle of Capri" we happily replied.

"Oh, don't go over to that place. There's nothing there."

I looked at Crumbie and he looked back at me. Sutter said "If you want good Scotch and a good time, go to Gibraltar."

To make this part of the story short, we rounded up the enlisted personnel and put the ranking Master Sergeant in charge; off they went to Capri and we hopped a plane to "Gib."

The last night we were in the hotel, into the bar came two plane loads of English entertainers who had toured North Africa and were going back to England the next morning at 6 A.M.

All of a sudden, I see Jim talking to a tall, beautiful blonde -- her name was Dorothy Carlos and she was made for Jim Crumbie. He, around 5'7" and she 5'10" and with high heels, a couple made for each other.

Time to go to bed (hit the sack). Crumbie won't leave the bar, so I go alone. Our flight back to Maison Blanche leaves at 8 A.M. I wake up; no Crumbie; he left a note: "I've left for England with Dorothy Carlos."

Wow! What am I in for now. I go back, pick up the enlisted personnel and report back to the Colonel. I thought he would bust a gut when he heard my story.

"Greene, you are going to be court-martialed. You are confined to your room for 30 days. And if we ever find Crumbie, he'll go with you.!"

About three weeks later Crumbie shows up. He hopped a B-17 coming to Algiers and he arrived with two cases of Scotch. The word spread like wildfire that Crumbie was back. All of a sudden a jeep pulled up to our room and, out jumps Jim. He hands two cases of Scotch over the railing and the jeep takes off.

We sit down on a cot -- open a bottle -- comes a tap on our door. I jump up, and there's the Colonel standing there. He sees Jim standing with a bottle of Dewars in his hand. He doesn't say a word, turns around and stalks off to his room, promptly returning with his canteen cup.

Of course the story ends with two bottles empty, the Colonel leaving our room with one of the cases of Scotch and, all was forgiven.

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"POLES APART"....

by George F. Cholewczynski

As many of our readers know, George is an Honorary Member of the WWII 315th TCG Association. He attended the recent reunion in St. Louis where many of us had an opportunity to chat with him. His book is a meticulously researched chronicle of the record of Polish paratroopers in that ill-fated Operation Market Garden. A recent review of *Poles Apart* states "This is a thorough, balanced and poignant account of an epic military failure, and it corrects the historical record by relating the professionalism and bravery of the men who wore the gray berets and silver eagles". *Poles Apart* has been placed on the reading list at the Command and General Staff College in Fort Leavenworth Kan.

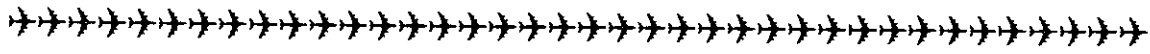
Copies are available to our readers for \$21.00 postpaid. Checks to:

George F. Cholewczynski

P.O. Box 56307

New Orleans LA 70156

This book is highly recommended to our readers. It should be in your personal library.



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

Dear Bob:

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

20.00.....2 year's dues

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

ADDRESS.....

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

