



# 315th Newsletter

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

November 1998

## WE GATHERED IN THE SPRINGS

In a refreshing and reassuring large turn out, 179 members, family participants and guests gathered on September 9-12 in Colorado Springs for the Association's biyearly reunion. Of note was the number of daughters and sons attending.

Mixed in with an Air Force Academy visit, a wranglers dinner at the Flying W, a Garden of the Gods tour and a trip to the Royal Gorge Bridge were a Board of Directors meeting, the annual Business session, and the looked-forward-to Saturday evening banquet.

Highlighting the four day event was a commemoration ceremony held at the Academy cemetery adjacent to the 315th Group's memorial plaque. A fly over by a WWII Spitfire was a poignant reminder of the heritage all share.

*(Board of Directors meeting:* Candidates for officers and Board members were reviewed and a list approved for presentation at the Business meeting. Unanimously agreed to accept Richard Kenton, who for years has voluntarily maintained the membership roster, as a Honorary Member of the Association. After lengthy discussion on criteria for retention on the Active/Inactive roster was decided no changes to be made. The Treasure listed income/expenses for the past year with a remaining balance of \$6,399.25. Bill Brinson was requested to contact other ex-European-based Troop Carrier organizations to determine whether joint reunions were desirable or feasible. Three potential sites for the 2000 reunion were selected for presentation at the Business Meeting.)

*(Business meeting:* Nominations of Officers and Board members were approved [see page 8]. The Treasurer reported on income/expenses, balance on hand and that dues would be collected after the meeting. Members were told of the Honorary Membership of Richard Kenton. Bill Brinson was named as project officer for placing a Memorial Plaque at the 8th Air Force Museum, Savannah. Cost not to exceed \$600 without Board approval. Dayton, Ohio was chosen as the site for the year 2000 reunion; further, that alternate dates i.e. April/May vs September be explored as a cost saving means.)

*Official Minutes of the Board of Directors and Business Meetings can be obtained from "Doc" Cloer.*

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**PUT DAYTON  
IN YOUR FUTURE**

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

**OFFICIAL NOTICE BOARD**

**Message from the President:**

Our reunion in Colorado Springs was a huge success. We had a very large group of members, their wives, children and friends totaling approximately 180 according to one count. The credit for this excellent get-together must go to our Past President Bert Petersen who had to make the necessary arrangements with Armed Forces Reunion, Inc. Some came in wheel chairs, other walked with canes but all came with happy smiles on their faces to meet old friends who arrived from all parts of our great country. For me, it is always a pleasure to greet old comrades and be with them again. My only regret is that several friends did not attend. I hope that they will be able to make the next one. After all, who knows how many more reunions we can possibly have?

The tour of the Air Force Academy and the program at the site of the 315th plaque was most inspiring. The weather we experienced in Colorado in the late summer could not have been better. Many snapshots were made all over the large campus.

As we look forward to our next reunion to be held in Dayton, Ohio, sometime in the year 2000, we are extremely indebted to our Past President "Stan" Smith who, in my opinion, is single-handedly keeping our organization together through his work of being Editor and Publisher of the 315th Newsletter.

It also goes without saying that the interest, dedication and work of Bob Cloer, our Recording Secretary, who maintains communication with numerous other Troop Carrier Groups can not be ignored. There are also other hard working members who, in their quiet way, are contributing to the life of the 315th and without whose participation we could not exist. We thank each and every one.

Ray M. Schwartz,  
President

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

*Newsletter of the WWII 315th Troop Carrier Group Association*  
*Ray M. Schwartz, president Richard T. Ford, vice president J. S. "Stan" Smith, editor*

*Byron J. Sharp was a glider pilot...and C-47 co-pilot... in the 309th Squadron. The youngest of five brothers (three now deceased) he was the son of a physician who served on the Western Front in WWI. Prior to WWII, at his father's urging, Byron joined the U.S. Army Reserve. He reported initially as a 2nd Lt., Infantry, then in July, 1942 volunteered for the Army Air Corp glider pilot program. Shortly before D-Day he was transferred to the 434th TC Group and participated in the Normandy invasion; after, returning to the 315th. Post war he attained a PhD in Geology and was a long time member of the Atomic Energy Commission (later, Dept. of Energy) as a uranium geologist. A widower, he is retired and living in Salt Lake City.*

## GLIDING INTO NORMANDY

by Byron J. Sharp

Approximately 300 gliders left Southern England in a driving rain storm on the night of June 6, 1944 crossing the English Channel, and arriving at Utah Beach at daybreak on June 7th at about 300 feet altitude over the largest concentration of Allied war ships this world has ever produced. The sight was awesome. The ships extended in a north-south direction over the horizon as far as the eye could see.

Besides transporting about 6,000 troops inland, the gliders carried all the heavy equipment (jeeps, small trucks, 155 mm howitzers, 90 mm anti-tank guns, and small bulldozers) for the troops dropped by parachute, as well as those brought in by gliders. These 300 gliders were the last of about 1,000 gliders used in the invasion. The first 350 were sent in early June 6th in the dark and another 350 at daybreak June 6th.

This last group of gliders (ours) arrived at daybreak on June 7th and proceeded to the town of Ste-Mere-Eglise about 15 miles from the Normandy peninsula coast. We were suppose to land in the hedgerows north of town. Those hedgerows were every glider pilot's nightmare. Deep ditches were dug on each side of the hedge with a mound about 5 feet high in the middle, and no passage from one field to the next. The fields were small and surrounded by tall trees. After a somewhat hazardous landing, involving an intentional ground loop and an unintentional cart wheel, my glider ended up tail first through the hedgerow at the far end of a field.

As the troops began to exit the glider, a U.S. airborne staff sergeant greeted them. We had almost landed on the temporary command post of the 82nd Airborne. We no sooner assembled at the command post, when a captain from the airborne infantry called for all glider pilots to follow him. We were to gather survivors from our right hand glider column, as we had split just before landing. They had taken heavy casualties, having landed where the Germans held strong positions. Glider pilots took turns escorting the wounded back to the aid station.

The first hedgerow where we tried to cross brought a command from the captain, after he looked over the embankment, to "fix bayonets." At that moment, a light American tank rumbled up the road. It was the first armored vehicle to get that far inland from Utah beach. The captain ran over to talk to the tank commander and the tank shot about five rounds into the hedgerow ahead of us. The Germans disappeared, but the tank took an 88 mm round and began to burn. The crew got out safely, and a glider pilot took them back to the command post aid station. We continued on our rescue patrol past some shot up and burning gliders.

About eight glider pilots and I were at the aid station when orders came from all glider pilots to march to Utah beach, so that we could transport more glider troops from England. We walked through Ste-Mere-Eglise and started down the road toward Utah. There was constant mortar fire and intermittent sniper fire. About half way, however, we met the first U. S. armored column advancing inland. The tanks and armored vehicles were bumper to bumper for about five miles. I thought the war was over!

*See "Gliding" page 10*

*What better time than following a reunion to hear from one of our favorite contributors, "Ziggy" Zartman, as he recounts some old memories and matches them with refreshing hopes.*

## OLDE MEMORIES TRIGGER NEW HOPES

by "Ziggy" Zartman

It's hard to build "sand castles" with coal dust, but in Shamokin, PA...sons of anthracite miners tried! Then Nazi blitzkriegs and a sneak Japanese attack forever changed our lives.

As I begin this old MEMORY, I'm humming a refrain from fifty-plus years ago...when, often, low over the cold, dark, white-capped waters of the English Channel, the cockpit crew especially alert for Jonathan Livingston Seagull and his low-flying friends, we northbound with a Spanhoe ETA, seeing in the windscreen the first sliver of the Island's shores. My circadian rhythms piqued as low on the horizon the white cliffs took shape ....HUMMING: "There'll Be Gooney birds Over the White Cliffs of Dover, Just You Wait and See?" A little back pressure on the control wheel and we'd zoom up and over the famous chalk and limestone wall of fortress England ...waving to the coastal spotters barricaded behind a double row of barbed wire (the bloke civilian and Boy Scout observers , binoculars hanging from their necks, waved back with clenched fists...EXCITED because they were surprised...caught unawares) as we gained altitude to cruise home (VFR)...going around the Bedford barrage balloons and their dangling chains.

Another time, crossing the Channel farther West, I remember having the Isle-of-Wight in sight ...the port of Cowes visible, where in the summer of 1728 my Great (plus several more) Grandfather, Alexander Zartmann (not a great speller, that's the way he signed the oath of allegiance to King George II upon arrival in the colonies), his wife Katherina and son Jacob, were passengers aboard the sailing vessel *Albany* (taking on supplies) enroute (from Rotterdam) to colonial Philadelphia to start "life" anew....his former occupation as a stone mason and farmer in Rheinland Palatinate soon to be an OLD Memory.

For you American history buffs, it would be another fifty years before Admiral Richard Howe, Commander of the British fleet during the Revolutionary War, would lead his gunships into the same waters. Alex would purchase the initial homestead...a near two hundred acre tract of Penn's Woods near Brickerville in the province of Pennsylvania ...Thomas and Richard Penn (William's boys) signing the sheepskin deed using quill pens ...creating the nucleus of the Zartman family's NEW HOPE. No wonder I smile easily...my memories are high-lighted with many such wondrous days from WWII ...freed (probably) by the war's madness from a rough-tough job as an anthracite coal-cracker!

One final thought on the English Channel. Good thing it doesn't freeze. The radio altimeter that we used when low over it's waters (I learned while flying to the DEW Line radar/research sites in the northern island of Ellesmere, Greenland and Iceland) does not work accurately over snow and ice....the radio waves penetrate the frozen stuff; dangerously indicating that you are "higher" than actual altitude. A little "factoid" I gleaned as a crew-member on Douglas C-54s, Gooney Birds and Boeing C-97 "Stratocruisers" in the Arctic, flying in and out of bases/camps such as Thule, Alert, Frobisher Bay, Keflavik and Akureyi! To get better traction on those Arctic landing strips, we used special tires with embedded metal shavings. Playing with Uncle Sam's "toys" under the Northern Lights meant awesome heavenly displays and created many colorful, flashing memories. I'm thankful to all you old 315thers (taxpayers) who funded the missions; but, you know, it's pretty dang cold up there and (shivering) I believe you got your money's worth! With triple windows on the barracks at Thule; 'follow me' vehicles that were necessarily kept running as long as they remained outdoors on the ramp.

Heavy parkas replaced A-2 jackets and specially insulated winter flying suits went over heavy long johns; even a simple call-by-nature (too much coffee) could be a problem with all the layers of clothing. Blowing lots of frost from our nostrils...we coped, gloved hands often tucked into parka pockets...real "cool" duty!

We "315thers," then (early forties in Span-hoe), only recently teen-agers (not all ...remembering some of the "old" guys...Hamish McLelland, Doc Hatton, Bill Messenger, pop into mind) still recalled our "dream years" when newspaper headlines about our heroes gave us HOPE. Most of my "Walter Mitty" guys were aviation's top four: Lindberg, Doolittle, Earhard, Post. REALITY...as we exited the long depression years, made my "main guy" a baseball player ....Stanley Coveleskie. Sometime just before or after 1920, Stanley "spit balled" the Cleveland Indians to the World Series title...winning THREE games as they battled the Brooklyn Dodgers. A Major League icon, he returned to Shamokin that year as the "Dodger Destroyer," heralded as such in the baseball headlines of New York papers....later inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame! A Shamokin legend. I (born in 1922) would not meet Stanley until after his stint as a professional ball player. He was an uncle to two of my school mates....John and Ed Coveleskie. Most school days we walked past their home on the way and to and from the traditional red brick place of learning. Ed, the better athlete of the two nephews, idolized Stanley and whenever the "legend" visited, he'd entice him to "throw a few" on the street in front of the house. That's how I met the "Dodger Destroyer." Ed and I often played on the same team...both of us handy with bat and glove and we did HOPE one day to be playing in the big leagues....now, of course, just an old MEMORY.

BUTTTT! While WWII evaporated my baseball dream, though unforeseen, it did provide an opportunity for an aviation career. The war and the risky, exciting, maturing call to "duty" impacted significantly on our futures.

Rapidly assembled as the 315th Troop Carrier Group with a unique "transport" mission, the "brass" ordered more than enough training to give us "operational ready" status. Unexpectedly, we learned techniques and values from each other as lifetime friendships shaped up midst the turmoil of "operations." Farm boys taught truck drivers who related to teachers kids who got the attention of coal miners sons, etc...as we quickly jelled into a "force." Strangers, we proved compatible....eager to achieve the military objectives ordered by the "brass"....and, we did!

A veteran warrior now...cherishing the comradeship formed midst the madness of WAR, we meet biennially to share "the good old days!" It was at the Milwaukee reunion I finally got to embrace Ed Born...the crew chief aboard old "622" when my Kraut cousins shot us down on the Wesel paradrop. Ed and Larry Bassett (other pilot) mending the severely wounded radio operator (a substitute RO whose name none of us can recall). We were able to keep old "622" aloft long enough to get to an Allied base just beyond the front line...one with medical services. The wounded RO was aboard a GI ambulance within 20-30 minutes of being maimed by shrapnel from an 88MM shell that exploded in the compartment where were stowed the parachutes and life raft....the blown, heavy chutes and raft absorbing much of the blast and no doubt saving the rest of the crews' lives. It happened just as we left the DZ....starting our dive for the Rhein River.

Indelible MEMORIES and new HOPES sustain us! With TAPS sounding all to frequently for old buddies whose souls have already found the LIGHT that all seek, we now sense the inevitable "big transition" (bigger even than the upgrades from the Vultee BT-13 "Vibrator" to the Douglas C-47 Skytrain)...when, as earth bound "troops," we "fade away" as old soldiers do, to join the ethereal "Soul Forces" out there in the vast, dark beyond to finally meet the halloeed Pilot who wears the White A-2 jacket...the great Command Pilot who came along for the "ride" more often than we realized it.

*See "Memories" page 10*



LOOK  
WAS

*Hdqs*



*34th*

*43rd*



Photos courtesy of Len Thomas

# WHO THERE



*309th*



*310th*

*Ladies*

*Professional photos taken at the Academy ceremony can be purchased from Faingold Studios, 20 S. Elm, Denver, CO 80222, Ph. 303 393-0802. Group photo: \$20; individual squadron: \$10. Send check or money order.*



## JUST IN CASE YOU WANTED TO KNOW WHO IS RUNNING THINGS

*The following Officers and Board members  
will be serving your Association*

\*Ray M Schwartz, president  
\*Richard T. Ford, vice president

*J. H. "Bert" Petersen - Past President	*William S. Perkins - Term Expires 2002
William L. Brinson - Corresponding Sect'y	*Newman Riechman - Term Expires 2002
Robert L. Cloer - Recording Sect'y	*John E. McClain - Term Expires 2000
Sanford Friedman - Treasurer	*Monroe Zartman - Term Expires 2000
Harold Slack - Ass't Treasurer	
*J. W. Way - Term Expires 2004	*Bill Trau...alternate Board member
*Lawrence Ison - Term Expires 2004	(*Member, Board of Directors)

AND WHO IS DOING THE WORK

(clip and save)

### WHERE TO SEND STUFF

Address Information  
(changes, deaths, new members,  
drop from mailings, etc.)  
Robert L. Cloer  
1417 Valley View Dr  
Yuba City, CA 95993  
916 674-3681  
E-mail: rlcloer@syix.com

Newsletter Articles  
(true or false)  
J. S. Smith  
1967 Iowa Ave NE  
St. Petersburg, Fl 33703  
727 527-0587  
E-mail: jsstan@compuserve.com

Dues and Donations  
(annual dues \$20)  
Sanford Friedman  
2425 Buckhurt Dr.  
Cleveland, OH 44122  
216 464-1528



## OFF THE GRAPEVINE (AND OTHER QUESTIONABLE SOURCES)

### INSIGNIA

For the many of you at the Colorado Springs reunion who received a distinctive squadron insignia pin, thank "Doc" Cloer. He located a supplier, placed the order, brought the pins to the reunion, AND then generously donated them to the members.

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If you found the dues paying line to long at the reunion—or didn't know there was a line, or missed the reunion—you can send your check (or a donation) directly to Treasurer Sandy Friedman (see Where to Send Stuff, page 8 ).

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### ASSOCIATION OF JEWISH EX-SERVICE MEN AND WOMEN

Martin Sugarman (Ass't Archivist AJEX Jewish Military Museum) is seeking names of Jewish personnel who fought at the Battle of Arnhem. He would appreciate any information on Jewish personnel who were either killed or survived, today alive or deceased, and any details about them such as date and place of birth, full name, rank, serial number, unit assigned, whether wounded, killed, POW, etc? Contact Sugarman at: Headquarters, AJEX House, East Bank, Stamford Hill, London N16 5RT.

\*\*\*\*

Jan Bos attended a 24 May 1998 Memorial Day in Holland as a member of the Groesbeck Airborne Friends. A yearly event he reports there were speeches, a playing of the National anthems of Holland and the United States, placing of wreaths, playing of taps and a fly over by six F-16 fighters in a double "missing man formation."

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### LOOKING FOR SPANHOE?

If you're planning a trip to England and want to visit Spanhoe, contact "Doc" Cloer. He'll not only send local maps which will guide you to the airfield site but will also provide information on the area.

### From the Arnhem 1944 Veterans' Club

Newsletter: Last year some twenty veterans took part in the jump at Ginkel Heath, all aged between 72 and 84. An appeal based on the jump, along with sponsorship raised over 105,000 (English pounds) for the Royal Star and Garter Home for disabled former ex-Servicemen and Women.

The letter added: "In 1998 the number jumping will be some-what reduced as there are those who will not be able to jump again, but the team carries on!"

\*\*\*\*

### DOCTOR SPEAK

From the Vail Daily: The following quotes were taken from actual medical records as dictated by physicians

- the patient was in his usual state of good health until his airplane ran out of gas and crashed.

- the patient had waffles for breakfast and anorexia for lunch.

- the patient experienced a sudden onset of severe shortness of breath with a picture of acute pulmonary edema at home while having sex which gradually deteriorated in the emergency room.

- she slipped on the ice and apparently her legs went in separate directions in early December.

- coming from Detroit this man had no children.

- when she fainted, her eyes rolled around the room.

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On the Internet the Veterans Administration address is <http://www.va.gov/>. The Air Force's address is: <http://www.issues.af.mil>.

\*\*\*\*

### FIDO

(fog, intensive dispersal of)

From the Yacht Club Letter, April 1998 (62nd TCS) on returning from Arnhem to a foggy England 21 September 1944: after finding a glow in the sky, seven C-47s from the 310 TCS and the 62nd TCS landed at FIDO equipped Bradwell Bay. Descending through the heat of FIDO was like flying in rough air and crossing the approach box tended to float the aircraft with the heat generated

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*Evelyn "Chappie" Kowalechuk was a flight nurse in the 818th Medical Air Evacuation Transportation Sq., attached to the 315th. She and fellow nurses were the designated "Angels" by the wounded being flown back from the front. Post war she returned to New Jersey with a career in private and school nursing. Now retired she lives in Virginia. If you were at the Colorado Springs reunion and encountered "Chappie" chances are you got a hug. If you didn't, next time for sure. And the reason, she says, is that:*

## HUGGING IS HEALTHY

*It helps the body's immunity system....it keeps you healthy  
It cures depression....It reduces stress  
It induces sleep....It's invigorating  
It's rejuvenating....It has no unpleasant side effects  
HUGGING is nothing less than a miracle....HUGGING is natural  
It is organic....Naturally sweet  
No pesticides....No preservatives  
No artificial ingredients...One hundred per cent wholesome  
HUGGING is practically perfect....There are no moving parts  
No batteries to wear out....No periodic checkups  
Low energy consumption....High energy yield  
Inflation proof....non-fattening  
No monthly payments....No insurance requirements  
Theft proof....Non taxable  
Non polluting....And fully returnable*

### *Gliding*

We arrived at the beach at dark. A German fighter plane began a strafing run to our south and headed straight for us. Moments before his tracers reached us, all the Allied guns on the beach and nearby ships opened fire. He zoomed out of harm's way.

The beachmaster got us aboard an LCT landing craft to take us out to a larger ship, an LST, for the return to England. Although pitch dark, a German dive bomber dropped a bomb near the LCT, knocking everybody down and covering us all with water. Thinking that the bomber pilot had seen the wake, the LCT commander decided to stay motionless for the rest of the night.

In the morning the LCT made its way to the nearest LST troop ship. We were all near the top of the cargo net, climbing up the side of the ship, when the ship's crew came running toward us abandoning ship. The LST had struck a magnetic mine, which the Germans had laid during the night. The ship sank in about ten minutes.

We finally got aboard another LST which took us back to England, to learn the return glider mission had been scrubbed. Allied troops had secured the Normandy beachhead, the turning point of the war.

### *Memories*

I believe LIFE was created on many planets, orbiting numerous stars in uncounted galaxies; planet EARTH being just one of the "labs" in the Milky Way....earth's flora and fauna revealing, rather than eliminating, a CREATOR. Albeit, the transition provides a golden opportunity to check on the veracity of my war-stories (so far only friend Stew McElyea has ruled out "a vivid imagination," and he did it tongue-in-cheek....a lingering GAO habit). I've witnesses for every war-story, unfortunately though TAPS has sounded for many of them.

\*\*\*\*

*(from the editor)*

### **LOST TOUCH?**

If an old friend, with whom you've lost touch, is not on the latest roster, call or write "Doc" Cloer and he'll scan his roster collection which goes *WAY* back. He'll need the complete name (correctly spelled) with the last address you had.

### 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.)*

Maurice Dean	43rd	1998
W. Thurston DeGroff	43rd	unk
Warden J. French	43rd	1996
Marion G. Hill	309th	1996
Raymond C. Hoersch	310th	1991
Donald McBride	34th	1998
Clement L. Naylor	34th	1998
James C. Pomeroy	310th	1998
Jerry Sheldon	unk	1998
Lester M. Sneed	34th	1991

### DONATIONS

Members have expressed the desire to provide donations in memory of former comrades or acquaintances. The Association will accept these through the organization's treasurer and also inform the families of such donations.

We gratefully acknowledge donations received (since the June, 1998 Newsletter) from:

- Barbara Papp
- Evelyn (Chappie) Kowalchuk
- Bernie Coggins

Given in memory of: Marty Dean, Howard Beagle, Richard Bohannon, Joseph Campbell, John Conquest, Robert Crone, George Dornberger (CO, 818th MAETS), Joseph Lemberg, Sigurd Matson, Edward Papp, Jack Smiley, and William Thornbury.

## RE-DEDICATION CEREMONY AT SCENE OF 1944 CRASH

Twenty six Polish paratroopers and eight 315th crew members lost their lives.

On July 8th, 1944, two planes of the 309th Sq. collided shortly after take off on a practice paradrop and crashed just west of the village of Tidwell, Northhamptonshire. Cpl. T. Chambers, radio operator on one of the planes, standing near the open cargo door, parachuted out and was the only survivor.

A hand drawn and framed memorial of that fatal accident has hung in All Saints Church, Tidwell since 1945. It was recently moved to a museum in Cracow. In its place, installed in a moving rededication ceremony on 6 June 1998, is a brass plaque bearing the names of all 34 lost.

Among those attending were: Ambassador R. Stemplowski of the Republic of Poland; USAF Col A. J. Parrington, Air Attache; Mr. Zbigniew Gasowski, President of the Polish Airborne Forces Association; other notables; some 80+ Polish paratroopers, and a large number of local residents. Through "Doc" Cloer's efforts, the 315th was represented by two of our Honorary members, Capt. James S. C. Flavell and Dave Benefield.



**SPRINGS REUNION  
PHOTOS INSIDE**



*A Happy Holiday Season  
from  
the Officers and Directors  
(and the Editor)*

