



# 315th Newsletter

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## AS THE MILLENNIUM NEARS - A TIME TO LOOK BACK

Some experts say the next Millennium more accurately arrives on January 1, 2001, and not the commonly accepted January 1, 2000. For World War II veterans the wisest choice is clearly 2000. Whichever date chosen this may be time to take a brief look back before moving on to whatever destiny waits ahead.

We grew up amidst a deep depression within a rural society that today few could comprehend. The nation struggled to find its economic well being. A struggle which brought forth the country's tenacity and determination and the concern of its people for each other.

We watched a mounting threat to freedom in foreign lands. When our nation committed itself to the challenge, we committed ourselves to the nation. Our privilege was to serve. All, soldiers and civilians, acted as one in single, fundamental cause. Freedom was preserved for at least a few generations.

When the atom bomb decided WW II many of us saw it only as the war's end. Few comprehended what had been opened: The Atomic Age.

We flocked by the thousands to colleges and universities, helped by a grateful nation's offer of the GI bill. We became the most educated generation the country had ever attained.

We produced the "boomers." And what a production! Later, our grandchildren came along as "Boomers 2". All, surprisingly, considering their parents, remarkably bright.

When the Korean conflict began many of us were called on again, and we responded as before - but perhaps not so willingly.

We saw astonishing advances in the sciences. Penicillin saved comrades lives, radar gave warning, life spans increased.

We saw the country grow from 160 million to 260 million and change from the age of steel to an age of computers and information technology.

Within our active life span pilots who soloed in open cockpit biplanes moved to C-47s and later giant, jet powered 747s.

We were a part of much, much more. So much that newsman Tom Brokaw dubbed us the "Greatest Generation." Perhaps.

But that's the past.....we're ready for the next Millennium.

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**DAYTON in 2000  
AUGUST 24-29  
BE THERE**

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

**OFFICIAL NOTICE BOARD**

**Message from the President:**

Since my last report the Directors and officers have been working on the plans for our biennial Reunion for the Year 2000. The exact dates have now been established to be August 24 - 28, inclusive. The place will be the Holiday Inn Conference Center in Fairborn, Ohio (a suburb of Dayton). The hotel offers complimentary shuttle service to the airport and parking at the hotel is free. The tours, the entertainment and the camaraderie that develops when we meet should be sufficient motives to encourage everyone to attend. Be sure to mark your calendars and reserve that period.

An excellent suggestion came from Richard Ford, vice-president, to the effect that we should think about the location of our next biennial Reunion for 2002 so that he can commence the planning necessary for a successful Reunion. If any of you would like to suggest a city for consideration, please write directly to him at P.O. Box 4399, Sunriver, OR 97707.

With best wishes to all for a Happy Holiday season, I remain sincerely,

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

**WHERE TO SEND STUFF**

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*This is the second in a series in which First Sergeant William S. "Bill" Nagle recalls the birth of the 315th Troop Carrier Group, its relocation from Middleton, PA to Louisville, KY, to Florence, S.C. and in this chapter the movement of the ground echelon to England.*

## CHAPTER #2, ON TO FT. DIX

by "Bill" Nagle

At Florence, S.C. the 315th's Hq Sq orderly room was located in a two room building at the edge of the base farthest from the flight line. I don't know whether it was to the north, south, east or west. I had my office in one room and the other comprised the orderly room under the management of Raymond J. Armstrong, a native of Zanesville, Ohio. The Hq Sq was commanded by 1st Lt. Wm. Grimes, a WWI retread

Smitty's restaurant, a log cabin building, was approximately 300 yards down the road. His specialty was fried chicken dipped in buttermilk and honey. It was a favorite hangout for 315th members.

On the evening of 17 October '42 (date courtesy of Bill Brinson's *"Three One Five Group"*) the war in Europe suddenly became very close to the members of the ground echelon as we assembled at the railroad station in Florence for departure to Ft. Dix. The seriousness of the situation came to us with a reality that had been buried just under the surface. Our steel helmets, leggings, gas masks and weapons made it very real. Each man had his own thoughts about what was in his future.

The departure was presumably secret. However, when we arrived at the station it seemed the entire city of Florence had turned out to say good-bye and good luck. Some of them, I'm sure, heaved a big sign of relief. The troops boarded their assigned coaches for the trip to Ft. Dix.

It was dark as we left the station, the blinds on all the coaches pulled fully down. The mess car was well stocked with both liquid and solid nourishment. I have no idea where the liquid nourishment came from. I do know that canteen cups were very popular items on the trip. Not too many of them had coffee stains (unless coffee smells like 80 proof). Initially at Ft. Dix we were billeted in WW II type barracks. Just before departure for Merry Ole England we were moved to pyramidal tents, six to eight men to a tent.

Sanitary facilities consisted of a field latrine with 18 wooden seats covering the trench, all also covered by a tent. In November. B-r-r-r-r!

Lt. Grimes told me he had received notification that one of the Hq Sq personnel, who shall remain nameless, had gone AWOL and turned himself in at New Cumberland Army Depot just outside of Harrisburg, PA.

He asked me who should go to New Cumberland and "pick him up"? Naturally, I said it was a job for the First Sgt., and one other troop. I chose an individual I felt would be ideal for the task ahead. We departed Ft. Dix that afternoon. When we reached Harrisburg I said we should have dinner and catch a movie (knowing where the 315th was headed). I planned on spending the night in Harrisburg, the stomping ground of us old Middletowners. As we came out of the movie I suddenly got one of those "don't do it" feelings. To make a long story short we signed for the prisoner and left for Ft. Dix that night. We got into Trenton about 0100 hours. That evening we began going aboard the QE. Had we waited there would have been three AWOLs miss the boat.

You could tell the Queen Elizabeth was a luxury liner. I know that sailors call steps 'ladders', but to me they were beautiful stairways. The next morning we left New York harbor and joined a convoy with hundreds of other ships of all sizes. One of the troops came down to C deck where I was berthed and said, "If you want to see the lady with the torch you better get up one deck." I got there just as the torch was sinking below the horizon. Suddenly, I was overcome with a horrible empty feeling. I guess it was a combination of home-sickness and wondering if I would ever again see New York.

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(NEXT: SCOTLAND AND ALDERMASTON)

*Association Past President Jack Alexander last appeared in the June, 1998 "Newsletter." He was one of the original group of navigators who guided the 315th air echelon overseas. It was his second such journey, having in mid July, 1942 flown the Northern Route with the 60th Troop Carrier Group. He retired from the Air Force in 1964 and subsequently was head of the Business Department at University of Lowell, MA. He holds a PhD in International Relations. Now retired he resides in Rye Beach, NH, spending the summers in Myrtle Beach, S. C.*

## **ALL BUT ONE**

by  
Jack Alexander

Part of the fun of attending 315th biyearly Reunions is swapping "Remember When" tales. So, we aren't at a reunion, but let me share one of my unforgettable memories of our activities during WW II.

The time was March, 1945. We knew there was a plan to drop British paratroopers across the Rhine, with Col. H. B. Lyon leading the group. Although Bill Brinson and I - pilot and navigator - had flown together on other missions, I did not think I was scheduled for this one. However, to fill the Groups' commitment of 81 planes, a "Squadron X" was formed consisting of flights from the 34th, 309th and 310th. We were to fly behind the first serial of 36 aircraft, and in front of the second serial. Bill was leading, and I found myself again as navigator. Lt. Gribling was co-pilot and Sgts. McConnell and Tobler were crew chief and radio operator.

"Omigosh, Bill," I said bravely, "we ought to be UP FRONT, like always...not at the REAR?" Bill replied, "Get a couple of extra flak suits to stand on, Alex. We'll be OK in the rear." (And we were more than OK....ours was the only flight of nine in the first serial not to lose a plane down east of the Rhine.)

So, the mission got underway, and with Bill's deft maneuvering we crossed the Rhine and dutifully began dropping those gallant young paratroopers....*all but one.*

We were taking heavy small arms fire and flax from the Germans and one shell hit one of the lined-up troopers in the back so hard the blow knocked him to the floor. The jump chief immediately unhitched him and dispatched the rest.

Now, on combat flights there were no nurses; the navigator usually doubled as a nurse. So back I went to see what happened to the young trooper. There he lay, sobbing, trying to reach to his own back to find any bleeding. From my textbook studies, I'd say he was a prime example of what the book described as the condition of shock....face colorless, weeping, eye wide open with pupils enlarged, and a blank stare on the countenance. I kept trying to examine him, looking for blood. One of the crew got to his back pack and found the bullet, which had pierced the pack but had NOT entered his body. And there was no blood.

There was no convincing the lad, however, and he would not budge, much less jump. There were only his moans and sobs with outpourings of "I've been shot!"

Meantime, I had reported to Brinson that the young man had been hit, and suggested that if he was indeed injured we perhaps ought to head for the hospital at Brussels, according to plan. Bill came back and gave the trooper the once-over, smiled at me and said, "Alec, I believe this soldier can make it back to England." The young man acted as though he couldn't care less when we tried to warn him that there were mighty serious consequences over a refusal to jump.

We and others in the flight had taken many hits, but as I remember we were the only flight to get back across the Rhine intact. (As an aside, this was the mission during which Col. Lyon, Bernie "Cog" Coggins and others bailed out in Germany. They were seriously injured, taken prisoner, and later freed.)

*see "All But One" page 10*

*This is the Larry Ison's second appearance in the Newsletter. He was one of the 34th Sq's. original radio operators, who later became Communications Chief. After leaving the service he earned a BA and MA from Columbia University and spend a career in the oil business including time in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait as well as New York City.*

## "LE PRESIDENT EST MORT"

by Larry Ison

The day was a Thursday, and the date was April 12, 1945 only a few days after our arrival in France from England. Early that morning I had been supervising the stringing of electrical wires through rows of tents set up as our living quarters in a bombed-out air base just outside of Amiens. All of us in the 315th TC Group had been using all our spare time between flying missions trying to make life more comfortable in a place where, without exception, no buildings or other ground installations were usable. They had all been destroyed by shelling and bombing. We had some portable electricity generators, and I had been assigned the task, among other duties, of seeing that we had electric lights in our tents.

The project was well under way, but sometime around mid-morning I found that we did not have enough light switches to complete the job. Because of previous needs I had already learned of the existence of an electrical supply shop in Amiens, and decided to go into town to buy the necessary switches. We had requisition forms available which enabled us to purchase material from local suppliers without using money.

I took a jeep assigned to the communications division and drove the four miles or so from the base into Amiens and located the store. It was a shabby little place, and rather dark and dingy inside. There was absolutely no display of materials for sale, but there were shelves visible behind a long service counter that ran the width of the room. It was apparent that not much was available, but an assortment of rolls of wire and other electrical items could be seen on the shelves. Of course, France was poor in those days, especially after a long war and a harrowing occupation by the Germans.

A middle aged woman approached the service counter from somewhere in the back. She was crying.

She looked in real distress. Her eyes were puffy, and she was dabbing at them with a handkerchief

In my poor French I said to her, "What's the matter, Madame? Is there anything I can do to help?" She shook her head, her eyes lowered, and she murmured softly, "Le President est mort."

I was taken aback and confused. What could she mean "The President is dead?" I then asked her, "Whom do you mean? General DeGaulle?"

She answered, "Non, Le President Roosefeldt", pronouncing the name in the way the French do. She added that she had just heard the news on the radio.

I was simply stunned. For a moment I thought I was going to join her in shedding tears. After all, she had just told me that we no longer had a Commander in Chief, and I felt as though the world was shaking.

I calmed down, as did the lady, and I completed the purchase of the light switches. By the time I returned to base, everybody knew the President had died, and genuine sadness prevailed.

It is widely know that the French have not always been admirers of Americans, particularly in the post-war period. Since that day in Amiens I have had many occasions to travel in France, and I have frequently noted what I felt to be genuine anti-American bias expressed by some French people. When I have seen this, I always remember the French lady who was crying because, "Le President est mort."

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"Doc" Cloer's story on Glenn Miller in the July Newsletter produced a phone call from Alva L. Biggs confirming he was the radio operator on C-47 #733 from the 310th.

*Morris Harrell Barber, now 88 years old, recalls his adventures as crew chief on a C-47 bound for England via the South Atlantic route. A native of St. Clair, MO he returned there after WW II and separation at Scott Field in January, 1946. Along with his brother they owned an electrical contracting firm and he remained with the business until retirement. Married in 1935 he was widowed in 1991. He remembers with pride and fondness his service with the 315th TC Group.*

## NEAR TRAGEDIES...FUNNY THINGS

by Morris Harrell Barber

The temperature hung at a minus ten degrees that December day in 1944 as I stood beside the plane, fire bottle in hand waiting for engine start. We were leaving Bear Field, Ft. Wayne, IN on the first leg of our way overseas. I didn't know it then but the pilot's sealed orders directed us to the 315th TC Group at Spanhoe, England.

The left engine started fine; the right flooded and set the oil cooler on fire. Spraying at the fire I almost walked into the prop, not realizing how close I was until the co-pilot stuck his head out the window and hollered at me.

Four hours later we landed in West Palm Beach, FL. Exiting the plane in the 75 degree temperature we began shedding clothes down to our shirtsleeves. That ended the first leg of our trip. We found the next two uneventful.

On the fourth, from Georgetown (British Guinea) to Belem (Brazil), my instructions were to fly thirty minutes on the cabin tanks then switch to the wing tanks. We were warned: *don't let the cabin tanks run dry!* Once in the air I climbed up on the top litter of the four in the back (resembling hammocks) thinking I would just lay there for a while. I fell sound asleep. The next thing I knew the radio operator was shouting, "The left engine's quitting on us." In a second I rolled off that litter and hit the floor. The co-pilot said I'd forgotten to turn the cabin tanks off. I started turning valves. He hit the booster switch. The prop was windmilling when the engine fired back up.

Incidentally, one of our tasks had been to keep looking for people who had been forced down in the jungle. We came close to being there ourselves. You can bet I never again climbed into a litter before the tanks were switched.

The next leg from Belem to Natal was routine. From Natal we hopped to Ascension Island, about half way between South America and Africa. I still remember the Gooney birds hooting all night and keeping us awake. The next morning we took off for Roberts Field in Liberia. After ten or fifteen minutes we heard a "May Day, May Day" call on the radio. Then came a report a B-25 had gone into the drink. They were making same flight as we. Not long after that we hit a tropical storm which turned us every way but loose.

I was standing in the door (behind the pilots compartment), holding on, watching the instruments. The altimeter would bounce at least 1,000 feet in what seemed one or two seconds. First I would feel as if I was going through the top and the next almost ramming my feet through the floor. Seeking clear air we went up to 15,000 feet, although our designated altitude was 9,000. We were still in it at 15,000 and the airspeed dropping to 105. So back down we went and started flying around in the valleys of the clouds. It was really pretty to see those clouds mounting high above us. Finally, we flew into sunshine. We had been crossing the equator and I understand they had those tropical storms about every day. We crossed the equator twice in two days.

Landing at Roberts Field I opened the cargo door and the natives started invading us (scared the heck out of me). They were yelling "clean trine". I could not understand them. The guy gassing the plane said they wanted to clean the latrine. About that time, the crew exited the plane and the co-pilot said, "I'll be damned, I've needed to go all day." (In those days, the rule was whoever first used the bucket had to clean it.) The natives were glad to do the job for 10 cents.

*see "Tragedies" page 10*

*One of the most important and more satisfying tasks of the 315th TC Gp was the evacuation of wounded from forward bases, often simply a grass strip. On board for those missions were the Flight Nurses. Here, Evelyn "Chappie" Kowalchuk tells us of the Flight Nurse Squadron which became such an integral part of our operations.*

## A SPECIAL GROUP

by  
"Chappie" Kowalchuk

We converged on Bowman Field, KY in March, 1944 for flight nurse - air evac training - graduating magna cum lots of nerves. Then, as the 818th MAETS (Medical Air Evacuation Transport Sq.), it was on to Camp Kilmer, N.J. *(The author's home state: she asks a reverent salute while at attention)* to join a group of fighter pilots and sail the ocean blue aboard the S.S. Saturnia.

The "crew," consisting of 25 nurses, 5 doctors and 25 medical technicians, arrived at Glasgow, Scotland April 3, 1944, then sent on to Maghaberry, Ireland, next to Spanhoe, England, and finally permanently stationed at Cottesmore, England -- to which all will forever be beholden.

Many missions were flown with the 34th, 43rd, 309th and 310th Sqds., transporting supplies to forward bases and carrying the wounded back to England. Later, to fly the rehabilitable back to the USA. in C-54s.

We don't have to tell you what we saw there, because YOU WERE THERE TOO. The happiest times were when one of the nurses married. Then we had a real celebration. Five of the 818th were united in marriage during our "visit" at Cottesmore. Later, after returning to the States, another five married "fly boys" they had met while in England. I don't know of any other outfit which could match that score. Most of us were state side by 1946, the same year the 818th was deactivated. Some of us were married and starting families.

For twenty five years we were not too "reunion oriented." During those years we re-located all over the U. S., many changing maiden names for married ones. But we were a special group - both then and now - and an effort began to find one another. Call it stubbornness or just plain determination, but in 1971 all were found or accounted for and we held our first reunion at McGuire Air Force Base. Fifteen of the original twenty five met -- what a feeling!!!, we had a ball. Beginning in 1985 we began meeting for our special reunions every two years, meanwhile staying in touch in-dividually. So far we've visited New Jersey, Florida, Arizona, Montana, Iowa, Louisiana, Rochester NY and the state of Washington.

Thanks to the 315th rosters, Ray and Goldie Tudor were located as were Cliff and Maggie Adams. Barbara Beard Stout was finally found last year in Oregon. Nine of the originals are no longer with us; but we remaining 16 are still hail and hearty and ready for fun

The 1999 reunion was held September 17, 18, and 19th at Queenie's, better known as Anne Beneshunas Altemose, at Delaware Water Gap, PA. Seven of the 818th were there along with 3 husbands, 2 sons and friends. A great time was had by all....but we always do!

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(In a future Newsletter "Chappie" will briefly recount each nurse's post war activities.)

### CAPS CAPS CAPS

Sandy "Cap Man" Friedman reports a great response to the offering of specially designed caps which display a 315th TCG Airborne Patch on the front and chicken tracks on the bill. In Royal Blue the caps, made in the USA, are designed to last for years. They may be the "in" item at the Dayton reunion. Members tell Sandy they intend to appear proudly "capped." Cost is \$15 including delivery. The Association receives no benefit. Get yours now by sending a check or money order to:

Sanford Friedman  
2425 Buckhurst Dr.  
Cleveland, OH 44122



AT SPANHOE.....

THEY REMEMBER

The 315th TC Gp. continues to be remembered at Spanhoe Airfield by local residents and military veterans. Through the efforts of Honorary Member Dave Benfield (right) plus Carl and Julia (above) Tyers, who operate Windmill Aviation at Spanhoe Lodge, a 2' x 4' sign identifying the airfield as the former home of the 315th TC Gp. has been approved for placement at the airfield entrance.



Also, each year, members of the Gretton Legion gather on their Remembrance Day (Nov. 11th) at the airfield's permanent memorial to pay tribute to those of the Group who gave their lives (see below).





## OFF THE GRAPEVINE (AND OTHER QUESTIONABLE SOURCES)

### KEYS TO HEALTHY AGING

In the May 23, 1999 *Parade Magazine*, Dr. Isadore Rosenfeld says "Live Now, Grow Old Later." His key factors to healthy aging are: (1) Contentment, (2) Exercise Is Extremely Important, (3) Avoid Being Overweight, (4) No Smoking, (5) Limit Your Alcohol Intake, (6) Find a Good Doctor, and (7) Don't Take Yourself Too Seriously.

\*\*\*\*

### MORE PILOT STUFF

- Take offs are optional: landings are mandatory.
- Learn from the mistakes of others. You won't live long enough to make all of them yourself.
- The only time you have too much fuel is when you're on fire.
- Try to keep the number of your landings equal to the number of your takeoffs.
- If you push the stick forward the houses get bigger; if you pull the stick back they get smaller. If you keep pulling the stick back--then they get bigger again.
- It's easy to make a small fortune in aviation. You start with a large fortune.

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### COLD WAR RECOGNITION

(from the Associated Press)

How to apply for the Defense Department's new Cold War Veteran Recognition Certificate:

**ELIGIBLE:** All members of the Armed Forces and federal government civilian personnel who faithfully served the United States during the Cold War era - Sept 2, 1945 to Dec. 26, 1991; Individual requesting a certificate will certify that the character of their service was honorable.

**PROOF OF SERVICE:** Any official government or military document with recipient's name, Social Security number/foreign service number and date of service is acceptable.

**HOW TO REQUEST:** Mail or fax a letter with proof of eligibility to "Cold War Recognition, 4035 Ridgetop Road, Fairfax Va. 22030-7445; Fax: 800-723-9262.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Telephone 703-275-6279, or use the WEB site <http://coldwar.army.mil/>

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### MORE ON THE C-17. GLOBEMASTER III

News reports say the USAF accepted its 50th Boeing C-17 in May. After acceptance the aircraft took off for Charleston AFB, home of the 315th Airlift Wing, a descendant of the 315th TC Group. The C-17s have amassed an impressive reliability record in the Balkans operational area. In Kosova they are credited with more than 1,000 missions, 98 million lbs of cargo including tanks, troops, helicopters, blankets, food and medicine operating 24 hours a day with engine running on-load/off-load.

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### AF CHIEF APPEARS WITH PLAQUE

The July Newsletter contained a photo of the 315th plaque at Savannah's "Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum." Member "Bill" Bennett, who had been to the Museum several times, reports that during a visit there by AF Chief of Staff Ryan while being interviewed on local TV the plaque was clearly visible over his shoulder. Bennett writes "I spotted the plaque immediately and howled!"

\*\*\*\*

### WHAT'S THAT, ANN?

Aphorisms of our times

- Deja Moo: the feeling that you've heard this bull before.
- If at first you don't succeed, skydiving is not for you.
- Comforting law of gravity for heavy drinkers: You cannot fall off the floor.
- The average woman would rather have beauty than brains because most men can see better than they can think.

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### TROOP CARRIER WINGS

From an issue of the 62nd TC Sq Newsletter.

There were 10 Troop Carrier Wings in the American, Mediterranean, European, CBI and Pacific Theaters. Assigned to these Wings were 40 Groups, with 129 Squadrons.

At the time of the report there were 9 former WWII Groups, now designated Wings, in the Air Force Reserve. They were: 349th, 403rd, 433rd, 440th, 446th, 434th, 315th, 439th, and 459th. Some are called Associate and use the base and same type aircraft as active Wings based at the sites.

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### DO YOU BELIEVE?

A male pilot is a confused soul who talks about women when he's flying and about flying when he's with a woman.

Helicopters can't really fly. They are so ugly that the earth automatically repels them!

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### EXTRACTS FROM "GREEN LIGHT" by Martin Wolfe.

(History of the 81st TC Squadron, 436th TC Group)

...Military historians often comment on the fact that troop carrier's war was different because we flew unarmed, unarmored, slow-moving aircraft into combat on a pre-set course. They should also recognize that the extreme tactical rigidity under which we operated marked us off from most other outfits...

Re Operation MARKET- GARDEN(Arnhem) ...Meanwhile, at the Spanhoe base of the 315th TC Group, the clouds were so thick that the planes had to climb up to 10,000 feet before they could assemble - an astonishing operational altitude for troop carrier missions. Many of them, unable to find their formations, gave up and returned to base. The rest did drop their Polish troopers fairly close to the target, a skillful as well as a courageous performance...

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Once back in England, our young British trooper was released to his officers, who took him to the hospital. The following morning, a British Paratroop Major, who was Liaison to the 315th, asked that Brinson and I accompany him to "Sick Quarters" to see the young trooper, who had the rank of Br. M/Sgt. He surely didn't look like the same bulging-eyed, shocked fellow I had last seen.

The officers naturally wanted to know what we knew of the non-jumping trooper. In all honesty, all we could say was that after the heavy blow to his back which knocked him to the floor that to us he exhibited every evidence of severe shock. The Major told us later that our signed statement had saved the young man's life. He was "broken" to Private and sent to the front as a replacement. Of course we have no way of knowing how he fared from that point on.

Back at Spanhoc our plane was getting the usual post-mission inspection, with yellow circles being placed around bullet holes. When the young crewman doing the count got to 100+ holes (and he hadn't even reached the plane's rear section) the order was given to retire the aircraft.

Now at day's end it was time to get our tired bodies into the sack, for if there was another mission scheduled the next day, Brinson was slated to lead a squadron and I to serve as his navigator. It was late. I was tumbling and tossing, unable to shake thoughts of tomorrow.

The phone rang. It was Brinson. "You might as well relax, Alec. We just got a wire from General Patton saying 'I don't need your damned help: I'm already across the Rhine!'"

I can honestly say that our last combat mission was for me an unforgettable memory, and I should add that I've always felt I owe my very life to Bill Brinson's superior flying skill and judgment.

When that day was over...the young trooper taken care of....our bullet-riddled plane scraped .....we back from the mission unscathed, Brinson's observation in that soft Southern tone of his was, "Alec, someone up there was looking after us."

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The next leg took was to Natal, capital of Senegal, where one of the ground mechanics told us there was a lions' den near the end of the runway. We took his word for it.

Then it was on to Marrakech in French Morocco where we had to lay over for four days and nights due to bad weather in England. Before leaving they gave us a crate of oranges, twelve dozen, and told us to take them to England. There, after years of war, people seldom had such luxuries. We took off at 3 a.m. to arrive hours later at Land's End on the southern tip of England. We laid over there for a couple of days. As we were taxiing out to leave, our pilot bumped wingtips with another plane. The Air Transport Command would not let us proceed in that plane, so we ended up going by train to Stone-on-Kent. As for the oranges, I gave them to locals working on the base. One man actually had tears in his eyes and said, "that's the first orange I've seen in four years."

Finally, in a GI truck, we made it to Spanhoc.

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#### TAIL NUMBERS

Dave Benfield and cohorts are in the process of listing tail numbers of all aircraft ever assigned to the 315th. This includes C-47, C-53, C-109, C-46, B-24, L-4 and, if possible, CG-4A. They have 1942-43 a/c but need any a/c from North Africa, England and later arrivals. Details wanted are: squadron assigned, tail number, tail letter, crew (if possible) and any nose art (including name). Especially needed are photos or tail letters of 42-108873 and 43-15341 (collided 8 July 1944) and 42-93790 (now on display at Ft. Benning). Send whatever you have or can recall to Mr. D. R. Benfield, 77 Churchill Rd., Stamford, Lincs, England PE9 1JG.

(from the editor)

#### WE'RE LOOKING FOR

Stories: We have great contributors: but more would be better. Tell us one of your memorable experiences involving the 315th, either serious, humorous, sad, rewarding, what-ever. Set the scene and circumstances. With whom, your squadron members or others? Where, on base or off? The effect on you? Let's hear from you.

**TAPS**

**WITH DEEP REGRET WE RECORD  
THE LOSS OF THESE COMRADES**

*If you were close friends or an acquaintance a letter or call to the family would truly be welcomed.*

Clifford J. Adkins	309th	unk
Francis H. Benson	309th	1999
Vernon T. Fogelson	34th	1999
Russell G. Hayford	43rd	1999
Norris C. Jensen	78Svs Gp	1999
Edward H. Lorance	43rd	1992
Joseph Schertler	34th	1997
Luther P. Scott	309th	unk
Oliver J. Smith	310th	1999
Mrs. Judy (Smylic C.) Stark		1998
David C. White	309th	1990

*Mrs Francis (Nicole) Benson wrote of her husband: "He always enjoyed your newsletters and attended some reunions. He was buried in Arlington."*

*Mrs Norris (Jeanne) Jensen wrote of her husband: "He was so excited about finally connecting up with the 315th a few years ago....He was so proud of our older son who graduated from the Air Force Academy in 1971."*

*Mrs. Joe (Mildred) Hardin wrote of her husband: "Joe loved the 315th Group. I thoroughly enjoyed attending the reunions with Joe and meeting such a wonderful group of people."*

**DONATIONS**

The Association gratefully accepts donations given in memory of former comrades or acquaintances and to inform the families of such. Donations have been received (since publication of the July Newsletter) from:

- Ann Oakes
- Bernie Pleasant
- Len Zurakov
- William Walsh
- Mike Iovanela

Given in support of the Association and in remembrance of all for whom Taps were sounded



*For those who have not had the opportunity to visit the Air Force Academy and view the plaque placed in honor of the 315th members who gave their lives during WW II, a photo is opposite. It was originally dedicated on 24 September 1991. Ed Papp handled the design and production. Len Thomas arranged for the ceremony and placement in the Academy cemetery. A rededication organized by Jack Mancinelli occurred as part of the Colorado Springs 1998 reunion.*



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

100 N. Main Street  
Dayton, Ohio 45402  
Tel: 513/263-1111

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**DAYTON in 2000  
AUGUST 24-28  
BE THERE**