



315th Newsletter

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READERS ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO SUBMIT MATERIAL FOR THE *NEWSLETTER*. PLEASE ADDRESS ALL SUBMISSIONS TO THE UNDERSIGNED:

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Our march to Milwaukee in September 1996 is underway. The agenda will offer interesting tours and activities from Thursday through Sunday. You can choose all, some or none. What's important is to come, for a day, two days, or whatever. Look for details in the Spring *NEWSLETTER* along with registration forms.

We extend a special invitation to the widows of former 315th members. You are a valued part of our organization. Come join us in Milwaukee.

I recently read Stephen E. Ambrose's book *D-Day*. If you enjoy touching the past it will take you back, along with a mention or two of the 315th.

J. S. Smith

COMMEMORATION OF THE BATTLE OF ARNHEM 1995

There were just going to be too many in Arnhem last year for the 50th, so I passed it up. Was a good thing that I did as it rained and flooded for the five days. Wanted to make the trip at least one more time and as I am not getting any younger, thought I might as well do it this year.

Aubrey Ross had a note in one of the newsletters about a good place to stay while in London. I contacted him in April to get some information on the Victory Service Club. He said that he had never been back to Europe since WW II and would like to join me if I was going over. Lew Johnston, who is secretary of the 61st T.C.Sqdn. of the 314th Group, heard that I was going over and said that he would like to join me.

I started planning a three week trip to leave on the 7th of Sept. and return on the 27th. As all you travelers know, Hotel prices in London and all of the big cities in Europe are just out of this world. I joined The Victory Service Club (If you served in England and the ETO during WW II, you can join as a member for 12 pounds. It is open to all ranks, just send them a copy of your old DD214 Form or something that shows you served over there during the war.)

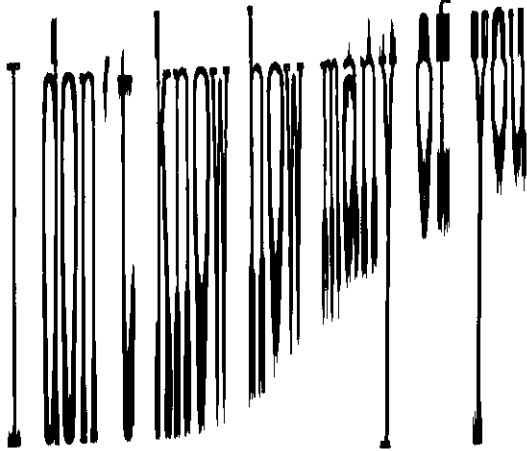
Lew Johnston's son flies for Continental Airlines, so he got a cheap flight. I flew over on Virgin Atlantic (a great Airline that I would recommend to anyone). Aubrey had a hot deal in escrow that he could not leave so had to cancel his trip. Lew beat me to London and was at the Club when I arrived.

THE VICTORY SERVICE CLUB is not the HILTON but it is a very adequate. The location is great, just a couple of blocks from Marble Arch and Oxford St. All of the staff were most helpful with travel info and etc. The club has 2 bars, lounge, dinning room, Grill room and Buttery. Some of the double rooms have modern baths while most of the single rooms, the facilities are down the hall. I shared a double room and bath with Lew and my bill for four nights was \$172.36. If you are going over and are interested, drop me a note and I will send you all of the info. On my past stays in London I have ended up paying from \$100-\$125 per night for not a great single room. (Any of you who travel overseas and have some good travel tips, pass them on to Ed so he can have them in the newsletter)

We spent four days in London seeing the RAF Museum, Imperial War Museum, Churchill's War room, tour of London and all of the other things that tourist do. I had made reservation for two nights in Amsterdam so we flew over on British Midlands.

We were met at the airport by Eric Smit, a young college student who had spent the past summer here in California working in the film industry in Hollywood. Eric took us to our Hotel and then a tour of Amsterdam. We did the canal tour and then were walking down town. Thank God for Eric - We were in a closed off street used only for pedestrians - Lew was about three steps behind us when we heard a crash and moan. We looked around and he was on the ground, bleeding like a stuck pig. He had been hit by a bicycle and all were in a big pile.

Eric called the Police and an ambulance. Off we went to the Hospital where Lew spent the next two days and nights and where I spent a lot of my time.



have travel insurance when you go over seas - I never thought about it before - but sure will in the future, it could just as well of been me.

Can't say enough about the great Dutch medical system. From noon till 11:30 that night a total of five different doctors had given different tests and examined Lew. Not a word was said during this time about who or how are you going to pay for this. Here you can die while they are filling out all of the papers for you to sign.

There was no way Lew could carry his bags or get off and on a train. Our great gal, TONNY WINKLER, drove up to Amsterdam and took Lew to her home in Oosterbeek. The next day she got a wheel chair for him and his son arrived from the states. With the help of Tonny and her friends, Anne & Roekie de Vries, and Eric - and by keeping Lew full of pain pills - he did get to see quite a bit of the Commemoration.

There are so many things planned for all of the visiting vets by the Dutch "Lest We Forget" Committee that there is no way you can take them all in. All of our aircrews who dropped British or Polish Troops at Arnhem

Tanno Pieterse, the head of the committee, told me that they had over 450 applications this year for host families. From the looks of the crowds, I am sure there

WERE MORE VETS WHO CAME

14th Sept. At 8:00 pm We attended the Annual General Meeting of the AVC with a reunion of Veterans afterwards at Westerbowing.

15th Sept. Visited the Airborne Museum in Oosterbeek and toured the area. Met with some of my old British buddies down at the Schoonard Hotel for a few cold ones. At 6:00pm we all meet at the City Hall in Arnhem for the Silent March of the Veterans down to the foot of the bridge for wreathlaying at the monument. This is something that you will never forget. All of these old British and Polish vets - with their metals and berets on - the only sound you hear are the feet hitting the street, all in step. Behind them come the vets in wheel chair pushed by the Dutch Boy Scouts. This is a very emotional service as each outfit lays a wreath for his old buddies who were lost trying to take this bridge. You see many wet eyes as they remember the over 10,000 who were dropped here - and only about 2,000 came out. Afterwards we all met for coffee in the Town Hall.

Thanks to Tanno Pieterse, our old Stars & Stripes was flying at the base of the bridge this year. This had been missing on my

“CROSSING THE POND”

Beginning in the next column we have the pleasure of printing an account of a somewhat extended flight from the ETO to Trinidad sent to us by Ziggy Zartman who needs no introduction to our regular readers.

GOING HOME!!! Amiens to the States (labeled the ZI...Zone of the Interior, during the war), driving WWII's prima, most versatile, most rugged (and forgiving) flying machine, the plane that gave the albatross a new claim to log in the bird book, our beloved "Gooney Bird," the Douglas DC-3 (C-47), twin-engined, low wing monoplane, named the "Skytrain"...A FUN TRIP I'VE NOT FORGOTTEN!

VE Day, celebrated just days earlier on the muddy street between the opposing rows of pyramidal tents called the 310th Squadron area. As I recall, it was getting dark outside when we received the news that "our" war was history....the victorious Allied Forces had pushed "Der Fuhrer's master race", the goose-stepping, ruthless Nazi invaders of Europe's language and culture-bounded communities, back into their fatherland where TOTALLY AND UNCONDITIONALLY DEFEATED (their leader dead), they SURRENDERED....THE ATROCITIES OF HITLERISM THEIR LEGACY!!

The madness ended, we dashed toward the Gooneys" to get Very Pistols and flares for the victory "fireworks;" then, raiding our canteens filled with cheap French wines or other stuff....frenzied, screaming, yelling and jumping...."Tap" and "Moe" still conjuring up vivid, lush, images 'tho both have already found the light we all seek out there in the vast, dark beyond! Maybe we drank too much of the rot-gut that night....still, it had been a long scary tour starting with the radio reports of the sneak attack at Pearl Harbor...FDR's "day of infamy" declaration of war....my induction into the Army at New Cumberland Barracks, while down the Susquehanna at nearby Olmsted Airbase (Middletown), empty buildings awaited the activation of the 315th Troop Carrier Group, the organization which later would intersect with this soldier's ORDERS...beginning an allegiance to the

country that, for me, would be fulfilled as a member of the 310th TC Squadron.

Yeah! There was reason enough to celebrate! Strangely, Bill, Bob and Norm, who continue to toast the ETO victory at each of our reunions, are mysteriously blank on my memory screen....probably because they had accumulated a limited stock of the "good stuff," thus, demanding a higher level of decorum. Late the next morning, creeping unsteadily and painfully from our cots, RUMORS that we were going home started...amidst uncertainty as to our final destination (a WAR still island-hopped toward Japan in the Far East.) The GREEN PROJECT (Uncle Sam's hastily organized airlift to get the troops home from the ETA) beckoned and, the 315th Troop Carrier Group had EARNED the "choice" route...Puerto Rico to Miami. USA, we're on our way!! It was 50 years ago, mid-May 1945.

Me and the "elderly" member (six years senior to the other three residents) bunking in the same four-man tent (Len Thomas and Sanford Provin the other two), Ted (Pap) Stewart (the two pilots)...Ed Born, the same Crew Chief who flew 622's final sortie on the Wesel mission....a sharp, reliable radio operator named Herb Glass who never lost a trailing-wire antenna weight despite extensive hours on the HF Liaison transmitter/receiver and, a Navigator who must have been "quiet, shy and slept a lot" (why else would I forget his name?)....the CREW for our final WWII adventure!. Anxious, eager and ready for the flight across the South Atlantic "pond", we manned our Bird (C-47A 42-108912 -- info sent to me by Bill Brinson), patched and repaired with such artistry that the dudes who flew it after the 315th deactivated. thought it to be a "milk run" transport. But we knew better, didn't we?

Supplementing the four wing tanks (total capacity of MAINS and AUXS 802 gals, remember?) were a series of valves, pipes, a

wooden framework and four fuel tanks hastily installed in the cargo compartment..."insurance" av-gas [time to fly a search pattern if the island beacon, or the overhead panel navigation radio malfunctioned; or, if the navigator didn't control his "bubble" and got us lost] during the two "tension" legs of the flight plan --- Liberia to Ascension Island and AI to Recife, Brazil. In the remaining cargo space, we carried some of the Group's records, miscellaneous supplies and my beat-up reverse Lend-Lease English issue bicycle.

ALBEIT...at the last minute (the base deserted) with scrounging Frenchmen showing up to "confiscate" everything the Yanks left behind, some brazenly displaying new Franc notes (wrappers intact) I bartered the bike for several of the crisp bills....the bike dented, bent and with one tire leaking badly. One of those bills was attached to the Short Snorter that I brought home. ABOARD...weather not great, but no precip....Pap manning the left seat, me warming the right; for the last time, every lever on the control pedestal fire-walled, we roared down Aeroport D'Amiens-Glisy's runway, Pap, both hands on the wheel, eyes glued to the scene in the windscreen (rare glances at the instruments), OBVIOUSLY, was already relishing the "bargains" that we'd pick up along the way so much so, that I had to reach over, retard slightly and synchronize the still noisy props. Then, unStewart-like, still in Full Rich, pulling at least 33"HG, he racked it around and buzzed the field. SURPRISED...still, I liked the idea and gave him a big smile and a rub on his bald noggin...at the same time noticing, as Pap zipped by wagging the wings, that "my" bicycle now lay near one of the old latrine structures (the tent canopies gone earlier, hauled off by the US Army...remember?). The new (French) owner of the two-wheeler sitting there, nonchalantly pondering his battered, leaky acquisition, trousers around his ankles. I

asked Pap for the controls for a minute, and headed for the Frenchman. Passing in front of him (discreetly higher than Pap's buzz), I waved and flashed him a toothy grin. He, reacting, throwing a roll of toilet tissue toward the plane as we zoomed by, adding, of course to his problem! C'este La Guerre, Frenchman...the Yanks are going home!

Pap, again taking the controls, pointed us South...a few hours flying time, and Marseilles, on the Mediterranean shore of France, should be visible in the windscreen...our planned RON (Remain Over Night) for the first day. We made it early enough to go into town, where I, with the last of the bicycle Francs, treated all to savory (hard to find) Chateaubriand with Bearnaise Sauce and a bottle of sparkling Burgundy (maybe two). Life was Gooooood! An uplifting start for our ferry mission to Trinidad.

An early rising crew, by the time the panel clock showed 0800 hrs we were cruising at "b" or "6" thousand feet over the Mediterranean...pointed toward Algiers on Africa's northern shore. After fifteen minutes or so of this, Ed asked if we could try the supplemental fuel tanks. Assured that it was a good idea, he turned one "ON" and I turned "OFF" the wing MAINS. We tested each of the extra tanks for long periods, while gradually easing up (climbing) to "8" thousand...everything was copacetic. Then, some time later, some of the crew napping, with Africa's northern shoreline visible in the foreground, SUDDENLY BOTH ENGINES SPUTTERED....PROPELLERS WINDMILLING. I was in the left seat for this leg of the journey, so while I switched back to the MAINS. Ed scooted to run "OFF" all the extra tank valves...meanwhile, Pap burned at least ten calories per second furiously working the hand-actuated panel-mounted wobble pump (post WWII C-47s had electric booster pumps). The situation persisted long enough that I had time

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to ask for my gloves, alert Herb and the Navigator to unstrap the life raft bundle from its storage position, and ponder whether we could make a landfall. BUT, with Pap not missing a beat, the engines shortly sputtered one last time and then began to purr...somewhere around "6 or 7" thousand feet on the altimeter. More than likely, we exhausted the fuel from the supplemental tank that we had 'ON" and began sucking air. A half hour or so later, we were on the ground at Aerodrome Maison Blanche (a few months short of two years since I had last landed there), Algiers, PARKED and a fuel truck moving into position to fill us up; or, did we taxi to a central refueling point (I'm not certain, but it seems to me one of the Algerian airports had central refueling....Blida, maybe? Like the saying goes, FLYING can be long hours of MONOTONY which on rare occasions, becomes HECTIC! If I recall correctly (a lesson learned) on the two long over-the-Atlantic flights, Ed (with Herb and the Navigator looking over his shoulder at the wet-line) dip-sticked the supplemental tanks to be certain not to run them dry again. They had no gauges.

The next morning, with the sun barely above the horizon, we were airborne, cruising around 2000 feet, westbound, pretty much paralleling the Mediterranean shoreline to Oran (Algeria)...maybe once or twice dropping down do 50 feet to wave at some beachcombers or a fisherman); then, turning southward, CLIMBING to 8000 feet, bouncing like a military sing-along ping-pong ball (lots of CAT....clear air turbulence) along the windward side of the Atlas Mountains (peaks above 12, 13 thousand feet) to Marrakech, Morocco where we would RON TWO nights. Here in the land of the Berbers (formerly the Moors) we wanted a full day to shop for trinkets. (If the "brass" questioned our extended stay, we agreed on magneto problems). Trekking the narrow, crowded

streets between winding rows of adobe-like buildings (the scurrying people, working donkeys, carts, dogs, open-ended shops and mixed aromas , added enough Arab intrigue to send our body rhythms up a notch) we "cruised" the mysterious Medina seeking bargains for our loved ones back home. Tired, shoes "shined" by pesky Arab kids, we returned to our billets with Moroccan leather (goatskin) wallets, odd items fashioned from spent brass shell casings, some Arab headdresses, and, me only a Moroccan wool rug and a camel saddle (great footstool) conversation pieces.) Gloria, later unhappy with the now-"aromatic" rug, I sold it to Floyd Livingston (310th pilot). He later wrote me that his Mom, after a few days with the rug in the warm ranch house, said "Son, you can stay, but the rug goes in the barn". Improperly tanned, it began to really smell!

Bill (Brinson) Hqs. tells me that most of us left Amiens in three plane flights, but I have no recollection of other crews disrupting our homebound excursion. Probably, because we had a Navigator aboard, we, like "Lindy," went alone; also, we were one of the last planes to depart Amiens. Actually too, since we "planned" some enroute "engine problems" (now it can be told) at key RONs where, if the local vehicles had had bumper stickers, one might have read ADVENTURES HAPPEN, we felt better without another crew of witnesses! I kinda smiled inexplicably each time that I sent an RON message to our destination at Waller Field, Trinidad, British West Indies...keeping the "brass" up to date on our "progress".

One night in Dakar, Senegal, Africa's most western point (I think), was sufficient. Nothing special there that we were aware of, tho it would be as close as I'd ever get to fabled Timbuktu, located a thousand miles or so to the East. I do remember that I made the landing at Dakar, Pap shaking his head in disbelief (it was terrible)...my mind already envisioning the

special treats that awaited at our next stop, Liberia.

The next day, with Roberts Field, located on or near the Firestone Rubber Plantation in Liberia, now visible near the shoreline in the windscreen, Pap "greased" us onto the runway, the start of our planned four or five day RON. First, we toured the groves of natural rubber trees...broke open some seed pods...stuck our fingers in the latex gathering cups laced to the trees...and, observed the mounds of crude rubber "biscuits" stacked for processing or shipment. I'm not certain of the order of the next events, but our meals, whether served at the "Club" or sack-packed for a jungle venture, were American style and good. We played several rounds of golf, coached by our young, perpetually smiling, happy native caddies as to how "best" to play the sand greens and quietly reminded to rake the "greens" before heading for the next tee. The Navigator kept all scores and didn't lose many holes. Our visored uniform caps and ocean breezes saved us from the scorching sun, and the bugs didn't bother us until our JUNGLE JOURNEY. How or why Pap did it, I don't know, but on one special day we wound ourselves in an unstable, ancient dugout boat, rocking up a jungle stream searching for alligators. We observed, shot at, but never killed any alligators. The headnets we wore bothered us almost as much as the mosquitoes that picnicked on our arms and legs. We had Pap to thank for arranging the "treat"...and someday, maybe I will ! I did notice that thereafter, every time we wore civvies, Pap had on an alligator belt. A couple of beers in nearby Monrovia, the Liberian capitol, was sufficient to quaff our "thirst" for the big city escapade. Luckily, Ed quickly found the "cause" of our engine problem, early in the morning on our departure date. Jim Lineham, Line Chief and Charles Terhune, Engineering Officer (310th) would have been proud of him.

Ascension Island, tiny dot where the mid-Atlantic ridge reaches the ocean surface, is not the type of place to which you "someday" would like to return. Once is enough....and is NOW OUR DESTINATION, somewhere beyond the horizon. After hours and hours of nothing but ocean in the windscreen, some of the guys got kind of fidgety....including the Navigator; but, I knew how to boost their spirits (and let the Nav resume his nap). Removing my headset, I'd let them listen to the British-operated radio beacon...its signal loud and clear, and the ADF needle homing on its island ridge location. We spotted the island before our ETA was up and headed for its lone runway....plenty long, but no overruns if you goofed. My turn to land; this time I did it slow and smooth, canted one wing low, one wheel at a time (stiff cross breeze, not unusual at Ascension) unlocking the tailwheel to turn off the runway at mid-point. PARKED, REFUELED AND TIED DOWN (windy place) we quickly ate a snack, then headed for the beach where the sea turtles --- giant, toothless (we were told) long-living creatures, surviving hatchlings from this mid-Atlantic island breeding place, nested and rested. Pap has a picture of me standing on top of one of the greenish monsters. I'm no longer certain, but I think our meal later that evening included a turtle egg concoction.

Up with the sun, eager to get the second leg of the "pond" flight behind us (seven or more hours, depending on winds aloft...hopefully tail winds in this latitude)...and a brisk breeze stirring the warm air, we "ask" the half-awake Navigator to join us in the plane; then, launched into the western sky, leveling off at 8000 ft., set up a lean CRUISE and turned on "George" who "drove" most of the way to South America. The routine was: short, somewhat uncomfortable (in seat) naps...perk up cups of Ed's hot GI brews (choice of coffee or bouillon), leg and arm exercises

while climbing over and thru the supplemental fuel apparatus enroute to the head...at least one alert guy watching the panel gauges...occasional periods of "Gonna be great to be home" conversation; then, repeating the process. A little fuel management and EUREKA....just about the time the Navigator said that it would, a sliver of land took shape on the horizon. Brazil straight ahead! We landed at Recife.

The Navy, usually makes a big deal out of Equator crossings...for us, crossing it enroute to Ascension Island and again before we reached Georgetown in British Guiana, it was a non-event. The "Nav" didn't alert us either time and the rest of us never thought much about it.

Several of the guys wanted Natal boots, so the next day we decided to eat lunch in Natal and get in some quickie shopping. We all looked good in our new "shoes". Then, onward, toward our destination, Belem, delta land for several major rivers and not too far from the Amazon. Later on, on the ground, we learned about a nearby aquatic park featuring sea cows (manatees), so we elected to have our last "engine problem" before reaching Trinidad. None of us, then, had ever seen one of these hefty plant-eating mammals that found habitat in tropical coastal waters. The handouts stated that "these mammals were responsible for the legends concerning mermaids." Years later, when I first saw the "Little Mermaid" in Copenhagen harbor (Hans Christian Andersen's fabled character) I figured Hans had never seen a manatee!

Departing Belem, shortly crossing the awesome Amazon delta land, then cruising up the French and Dutch Guiana shorelines at 500 ft. (fantastic view) we headed for Georgetown, British Guiana, our last RON before adding our transport to the growing GREEN PROJECT fleet. The only thing I remember from our RON in Georgetown...somehow, I got to fly as co-pilot on a Navy amphibian (Grumman, twin

engine air rescue plane) that was shooting landings in the bay. A surprising learning experience. I quickly discovered that water landings (and bounces) with hulled aircraft are far more rough and severe than landing on gravel, grass, PSP, macadam or cement strips....the stuff we were restricted to.

Finally, airborne, enroute to Waller Field, Trinidad, our "cross-the-pond" venture down to one more landing -- one of us, can't recall who, made it a squealer, leaving tire streaks on the runway! ! GREEN PROJECT...LET'S GET GOING! ! During my career in the Army Air Force, I got to play with lots of Uncle Sam's "toys" (the old Army Air Corps, now the USAF) and I must confess the "Gooney Bird" has always been my favorite!

Gotta go. Those of you hand-picked (rewarded) by the "brass"...scheduled to fly to Trinidad aboard the C-54 , prima, four-engine transport of the era, only now know, that (really) you were, as we used to say, "shafted"...missing out on an exciting, memorable adventure with those of us who got to ferry the 315th planes to Trinidad. If you ask, I feel certain, that the Colonel (Lyon) or the General (Gibbons) we still punch your "TS" card. But, if they refuse, send it to me for authentication!

.....ZIGGY

Gerard M. Devlin, well-known author of that great book *Silent Wings* -- the story of gliders and glider pilots during WWII -- wrote Bob Cloer earlier this year to tell him of stamps issued by the Marshall Islands to commemorate the Battle of the Bulge. Of special interest is one of the stamps which depicts a C-47 aircraft plus a fighter (Devlin thinks it's a P-47). Devlin thinks this is the only stamp ever issued by any country that pays tribute to (as he says) "you brave souls who flew those unarmored and totally defenseless

C-47s during the Big War." Then, he goes on to say.....

"I want to tell you how very much I enjoy each and every edition of your interesting Newsletters. I got a real chuckle out of that "Gentlemen of the Air Force" thing about you guys not shooting back at those who were so extremely rude and uncouth as to shoot at you during the war. Not shooting back is truly the mark of a genuine gentleman. The acid test, one might say.

Speaking of not shooting back, I'm still wondering why the Americans didn't equip, or arm, their WWII troop transports and gliders with a .50 caliber (or at least a lighter .30 caliber) defensive machine gun. Clearly, the designers of both the C-46 and C-47 transports, plus all of the assault gliders, must have recognized that all, or at least some, of those aircraft would be in direct contact with enemy forces at some point during combat operation. The battle-wise Germans made sure that all their transports and gliders were armed and dangerous. In a Postscript to the letter, Devlin writes "I'm sure the courageous and hapless combat glider pilots will be disappointed that they've literally been left out of the picture in this Battle of the Bulge commemorative stamp set. Two extremely dangerous and critical glider missions were flown into Bastogne while the fighting was still at its worst; both missions bringing in badly need ammo and medical supplies to the surrounded 101st Airborne Division. In *Silent Wings* I've written considerable information about each of those glider missions which suffered greatly from German ground fire of all calibers. On that second glider mission, no fewer than 17 tow planes and 15 gliders were shot down. Fourteen other tow planes suffered extensive damage and were grounded indefinitely for repair. All of those downed glider and C-47 crews were either KIA or taken prisoner. Again, the glider pilots have been slighted. But, what else is new? Happened throughout WWII, and even thereafter."

In this issue we have the pleasure of printing a contribution from a new correspondent -- Chuck Lovett -- who, responding to a question from Ziggy Zartman as to why he never submitted a "war story" to your editor, sent Ziggy not one, but three different stories, the first of which is herewith. Our thanks to Chuck for his stories and Ziggy for his "prompting."

WE MUST HAVE BEEN
"STORCH" RAVING MAD

In late September, 1944, one of my missions involved delivery of 5,000 lbs. of gasoline (in Jerry cans) to A-94, a landing strip at Toul, near Nancy, in France. This was a single plane mission with no other planes from the 315th involved. After delivering our cargo we started back toward England, but as we approached the English Channel we could see that the weather was really bad with zero visibility clear down to the water. Being low on fuel and not knowing what the conditions were over England, we decided to land at Paris. (Where else? As Bill Brinson said in his Book *315 Group*, more planes landed at Paris because of "engine trouble" than anywhere else. In our case it was a low fuel problem). We landed at A-54 (Le Bourget) but discovered that fuel was not available there. We were advised to go to A-42 (Villacoublay) on the other side of Paris where fuel was available. At Villacoublay our airplane was refueled but, despite good weather there, weather over the Channel was still bad. We were told it was expected to clear up somewhat in a couple hours and we would then be cleared to return to Spanhoe. By coincidence, Randy Morgan (pilot with 34th Squadron) had also flown to Villacoublay under similar circumstances. (Randy and I were old friends, having gone through transition training together at Grenada, Mississippi, before going overseas). Having time to kill, Randy and I decided to look at some of the various planes parked in the area. We came across a Fiesler Storch, a German observation plane which now had French insignia on its sides. We climbed into it and found that it still had the German instruments in it, but despite this, it wasn't too hard to figure out what most of them were for. We fiddled around with it for a while and found out how to start the engine. We decided it

might be fun to fly this thing around the traffic pattern. I didn't say anything to Randy, but I harbored the thought that once in the air we might break from the traffic pattern and perform an "observation" flight over Paris. There were no gendarmes around to stop us and, even so, we were only going to borrow it for a while -- not steal it!

We taxied about a mile to the end of the runway and were about ready to take off when we noticed the fuel gauge was flickering near the empty mark. Here our story becomes anticlimactic. We chickened out and taxied the thing back to where we had found it. Thinking about it later, I realized that what we had done was not too smart. We had assumed the plane was airworthy, but it might not have been. Also, what if we had run out of fuel over Paris -- maybe a dead-stick landing in the Place de la Concord or on the Champs Elysees?

Anyway, even if it isn't recorded in our log books, Randy and I can say we had some time behind the controls of a German military plane.

+ + + + +

Here is some information on the Fiesler Storch, in case some of our readers aren't familiar with this aircraft. This was Erwin Rommel's favorite liaison aircraft while he was commanding the Africa Korps in Africa. It could land and take off from very small (or non-existent) fields. A Storch was landed on the Tiergarten during the final days of the German capitol by Hanna Reitsch who took the controls after the pilot, the general who commanded Luftflotte 6 in Munich had been wounded by antiaircraft fire. The general had been ordered to report to Hitler in the Bunker. Some accounts say Reitsch offered to fly Hitler out of the city but Reitsch was ordered to fly the wounded Luftwaffe general out in an Arado 96 trainer which had been secreted near the Brandenburger gate.

Ray Schwartz who used to "pound the key" as a radio operator in the 315th Group and who later turned to the law (now an attorney) keeps on top of things in the radio world by reading a publication called *WORLDRADIO* found the following story in the September issue of that publication and passed it on to your editor with the thought our readers might be interested in seeing it. How right he was!

The old frequency meter

by Harvey W. Lewis, W7JWJ

Not long ago, I was busy at my workbench trying to rub out a little dent and touch up an L-shaped scratch on the front panel of a military surplus LM-221 frequency meter. The XYL [Editor's note: XYL is radio ham jargon for "wife"] passed by and asked "Aren't you going to get rid of that old thing? You never use it." I responded, "No, I like to keep it in good repair. You never know when I might need it again."

It was at a flea market a few years ago that I spotted it on a table full of junk. I knew that I just had to have it. It was mine! I don't even remember the price. What had caught my eye was this little dent on the front panel and that little L-shaped scratch. As I drove home from the hamfest I thought back to a time and place nearly fifty years in the past.

It was Christmas Eve 1944 and shortly after midnight. I was chief radio operator and instructor for the 11th Troop Carrier Command flying the North Pacific. Our aircraft was three hours out of the desolate island of Adak and enroute back to home base, Elmendorf Field near Anchorage, Alaska. The weather was impossible and expected to get worse. The prop driven engines of the old C-47 groaned in and out of synchronization as we struggled to reach an altitude of 13,000 feet. We carried no Navigator as we usually flew in overcast, never saw the stars and seldom the ice of the cold Bering Sea below us. Navigation by radio was a responsibility shared by the pilot and the radio operator. I rotated the dial on the Bendix direction finding receiver and made another plot on the map. We were on the beam to the Iliamna range station. The windshields were now frozen over. Out the port window I could see ice forming on the wings. We were now steadily losing altitude. We had to make it through Iliamna Pass. We could be in trouble.

The corrected altimeter reading indicated that we were now only 500 feet over the canyon floor of the pass. We were nearly at full throttle. In a moment the BC-314 receiver went silent. We had lost the 250 foot trailing wire antenna and the 5 pound lead weight at the end. I reported over the intercom that it had apparently hit a tree top. We were lower than we thought -- much lower. The trees on the valley floor were reaching up for us. I quickly switched to the short topside antenna. Control cable in the tail section were now collecting ice. The ship was slow to respond and I was dashing back and forth from the radio position to the tail section to beat the ice off the cables -- much to the concern of the terrified GI passengers. All heat was being pumped to the carburetors. Cabin temperature plummeted to minus 40 degrees.

Suddenly the cockpit was filled with acrid smoke. The circuit breaker panel was on fire! A blast from the fire extinguisher and it was out, but so were all lights. All radios were dead -- completely silent. Now the pilot only had the magnetic compass and the turn and bank indicator to rely upon for navigation. It was deathly cold. The outside air was turbulent. The aircraft pitched and creaked in anticipation of what was yet to come. The fumes from the fire were suffocatingly thick. We wondered if we would be overcome by nausea.

It was then that I remembered the black box stored in the tail of the aircraft, an LM-221. It was a heterodyne frequency meter -- an early form of DC receiver that radiated a few milliwatts at the same time as it received. It was used for measuring the frequency of nearby transmitters. Another dash to the tail and an attempted return. However, as I scrambled over the

piles of barracks bags I tripped and went fanny over tea kettle crashing down on the instrument and impacting my right side just where I wore my sidearm. As I groped for my flashlight I realized my bruised side must be of no concern. What about the meter? It was none the worse for wear. Just a small dent and an L-shaped scratch on the front cover.

I quickly clipped a wire from the antenna terminal located on the meter to the overhead antenna and dialed in the Iliamna range station. We were directly over the first marker generator. Over the head of our pilot I slipped the HS-23 headphones and without any acknowledgment he made a two degree compass correction.

Soon we were a few feet above water over Cook Inlet and shedding ice. The last of the isopropyl alcohol was used to clear the windshields. As we skimmed over the approaching bluffs we could dimly see through the heavy snowfall a parallel row of lights dead ahead. We dropped in for a touch down and immediately roared into a staggering, near-stall pull-up. We had almost made Front street in Anchorage.

I spun the dial of the LM-221 frequency meter to the Elmendorf control tower frequency and began tapping the clipped-on antenna wire against the terminal of the meter - sending in code the "Q" signal which meant, "Turn on the landing lights."

And then there they were! In a moment we were on the runway.

The pilot lifted the phones from his head and for the first time glanced down at the black box on the floor beside him, and said "Sergeant! Keep that thing in good repair. You never know when you may need it again."

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Bill Brinson sends the following bit of information which, we're sure, will be of great interest to most of our readers. Our thanks to Bill for the contribution.

How many of our current generation of airmen to whom terms such as Mach Speeds, Afterburners, Terrain-Following Auto-Pilots and Variable

Swept-Wings are probably commonplace have heard of many of the words in the glossary below?

In Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker's book "Fighting The Flying Circus" published in 1919, he provided his readers with a list of expressions and terms used by flyers during World War I. It seem unbelievable to have to explain what a biplane was, but the aviation knowledge of most Americans of that period was scanty. Many of the terms of French origin had passed from the scene by World War II; some survived.

Archy: Anti-aircraft shells

Bank: To tilt an aeroplane sideways in rounding a corner

Biplane: Aeroplane with two sets of wings, an upper and a lower. A monoplane has but one set of wings. A triplane has three.

Contact: To put on the spark

Coupez: Cut off the spark

Renversement: A sudden reversal of direction of flight...is usually executed by suddenly zooming up, then throwing the aeroplane over on one wing and kicking the tail around to the rear.

Sauce: Gasoline or petrol

Virage: A bank or circle in the air

Zoom: To pitch the aeroplane suddenly upwards at great speed. Usually accomplished after a dive has given the aeroplane additional momentum

ANOTHER THOUGHT: HOW MANY OF OUR JET JOCKEYS COULD TALK ABOUT TERMS COMMON TO OUR WORLD WAR II GENERATION -- TERMS SUCH AS MANIFOLD PRESSURE, LOW FREQUENCY RADIO RANGES, PIERCED STEEL PLANKING (PSP) RUNWAYS, "REBECCA-EUREKA" RADAR SETS AND OTHERS? WORDS, ESPECIALLY TECHNICAL ONES, CHANGE AS TIME MARCHES ON.

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Stewart McElyea sends an interesting account of a happening involving a P-51 and a trailing length of glider tow "rope" that, luckily turned out OK for all concerned. Our thanks to Stewart for his story.

The 315th Troop Carrier Group and The Battle of the Bulge

For several years, I have enjoyed reading the 315th Troop Carrier Group Newsletter and, beyond paying dues, have contributed nothing to the Association's activity. During all this time, the most remarkable (and for me, enjoyable) part of the News has been the opportunity to observe Ziggy (less well known as Monroe) Zartman's astounding recall of the minute details of some of his exploits (escapades?) over the last 50 years. He either has a non-fading photographic memory or a great diary -- I have ruled out a vivid imagination as contributing to his tales.

I came late to the 315th Troop Carrier Group having arrived at Spanhoe shortly before Christmas in 1944. I did not know Ziggy in England or France since I was assigned to the 309th Squadron; nor did I meet him later when we moved to the Green Project in Puerto Rico. I only came to know him in Denver, Colorado when he was stationed at the Air Force Accounting and Finance Center and I was manager of the Denver Region of the U.S. General Accounting Office, (GAO) in the 1960s. I cannot remember how he connected me to the 315th of 1944-45, but considering his oft-demonstrated powers, it is not surprising that he did. Anyhow, I am most grateful because through him I learned of the 315th Association.

All of which finally brings me to my reason for this communication; and that is that earlier this year when the Battle of the Bulge was again much in the news, I recalled a connection with 315th history which has not (to my knowledge) been placed in the printed record.

I refer to the time while we were still at Spanhoe that a number of our aircraft and crews were deployed to an abandoned German field (I believe somewhere close to Laon, France) to give the glider troops of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions their flying time while they were back from the front in rest camp. Considering that they were just recently out of active combat, it is now almost beyond belief that they needed to fly to be paid, but that is my memory of our reason for being there. I do not recall whether we took gliders (good old CG 4-As) with us or obtained them on the Continent. I do remember that our glider pilots were with us and we did full days of pulling double tows. I was flying co-pilot for Lee French and I know that Steve Stevens and Bob Barker were among the contingent from the 309th.

Undoubtedly my recall of their presence is reinforced by the fact that the three of us borrowed M-1 30 Cal. rifles from the Army kitchen crew and went deer hunting one afternoon in the surrounding hills -- no deer but we enjoyed the hike through the woods. Also as to the local scenery, etc., I also recall that some number of us quickly discovered the single small bar in an adjacent village. Its stock in trade seemed to be limited to vin rouge, vin blanc, and a tricky concoction they called creme du prunelle. Even after 50 years, I can still remember the intensity of a prune brandy hangover.

On the day we finished giving the troops of one division (my memory is the 101st) their flying time, Lee French, after the day's last tow, and with my full support,

enjoyment and attention, chose to buzz the village's only church steeple. (With our tow ropes still attached.) Earlier in our stay, we had noticed a beautiful P-51 across the field from our operation which we understood was being repaired. I suppose our timing was perfect in some way because, as Lee did our buzz job on the church steeple, the P-51 buzzed us from the left rear. What that P-51 pilot failed to see was our double tow rope and he hooked one strand on his right wing. Surely, his and our guardian angels were with us that day since the rope slid off his wing while we watched in helpless horror. He left the neighborhood (probably at full throttle) never to be seen by us again, and we returned to the field and dropped our ropes. It is likely that we had an extra long session with the essence of prunes that night. I have wondered if the P-51 pilot and his crew chief didn't have an unusually difficult cleaning job with his trousers and the cockpit later that day.

The next morning when we staggered out to begin hauling the other division, we discovered that the Army troops had gotten emergency orders during the night and had returned to combat -- possibly somewhere in Belgium, we thought. History discloses, of course, that they had joined the Battle of the Bulge. I sometimes still ponder the irony of one division going back to war having earned their flight pay and the other not.

My reason for mentioning Ziggy at the beginning is, in part, that this venture seems like his kind of do and, if he was there with the 310th, he will be able to correct, clarify, and embellish my account. However that may develop, I hope this recitation will add a useful anecdote to the recorded history of the 315th.

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Stewart apparently sent a copy of the above story to Ziggy Zartman at the same time your editor received it. Here's Ziggy's comment on the story: *Stew...thoroughly enjoyed your war story! In the role you "cast" me..."to*

comment, clarify and embellish, I can only say that "it was my first flight in a P-51 and I should have remembered the ropes; actually, the rope snagged on the right aileron, just briefly, releasing as soon as I leveled off." BELIEVE THAT Stew, and Elmer B. Staats will stop the flow of your retirement checks. (Wasn't Elmer the Director when you were a GAO "big shot?")

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As our president wrote in his letter on the first page of this issue, 315th wives "are a valued part of this organization" and coming to know "our ladies" has been one of the benefits and joys of attending our reunions. Because we have come to know many of our comrades' wives and look forward to seeing them again at the next reunion, we believe we should take notice of the death of a 315th lady in our obituary. Thus, beginning with this issue, it will be our sad duty to include the names of any of our ladies who; we have learned , have passed away.

**WITH DEEP REGRET, WE RECORD
THE DEATH OF THESE COMRADES AND
315TH LADIES**

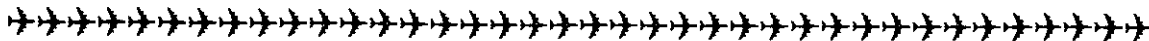
Robert S. Kendrick

Otto Molden

Oscar Reed

Shirley (Mrs. Marty) Dean

Eleanor (Mrs. Len) Zurakov



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.....

