



344TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

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MILK RUN

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER/344TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

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From the President, Ed Horn: Remembering Jack Havener - 15 Sep 1920 - 16 May 2011.....

I guess I knew Jack as well as anyone and have kept in contact with him over all these years. We first met in San Antonio, TX, at the Aviation Cadet Classification Center in Dec 1943 and then assigned to the cadet class of 43-I. We continued our training together in preflight, primary, basic, and advanced flight training graduating as pilots and 2nd LTs at Ellington Field, Houston, TX, on 1 Oct 1943.

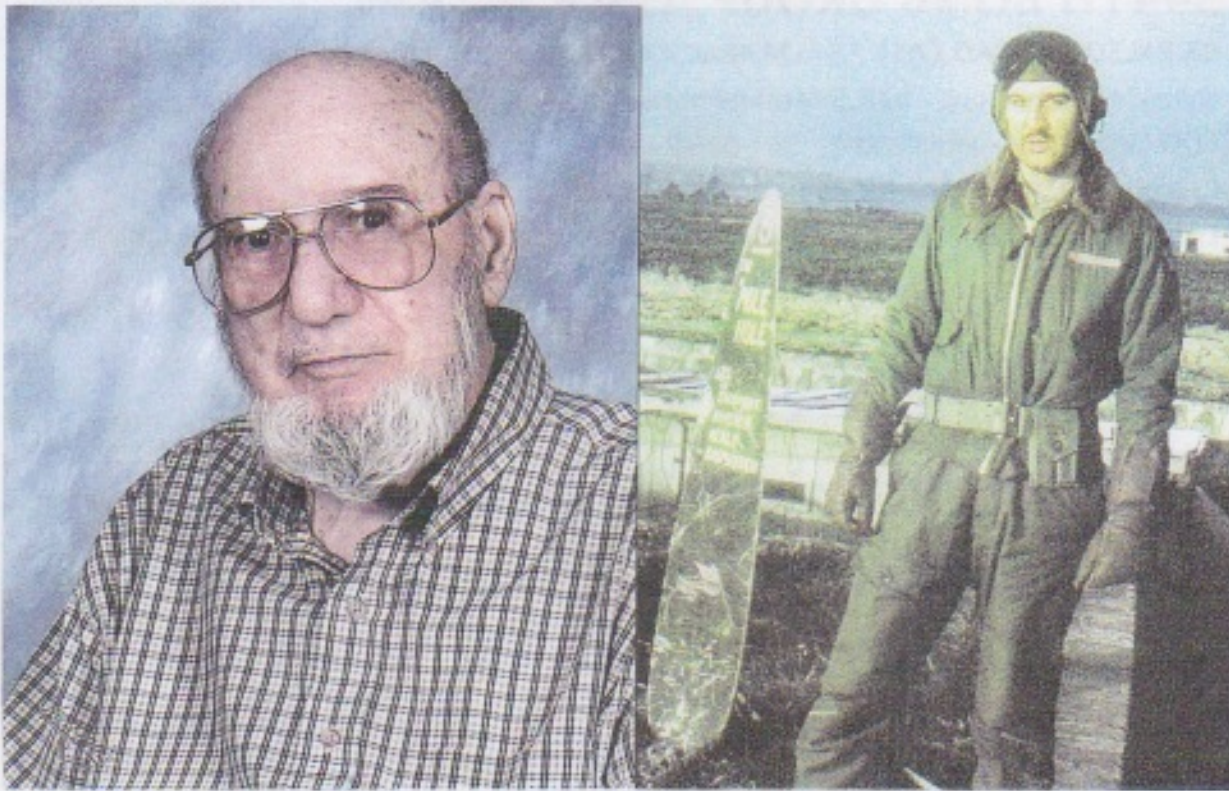
Jack in full dress uniform and with his mustache was a handsome young man and reminded me of "Smilin' Jack", a famous comic strip character back in our time period; maybe this why I always called him Jack.

When we graduated we got our orders and all of us whose names started with the letter "H" had orders to report to the 344th Bomb Group Operational Training Unit at Lakeland AAF, Florida: (Havener, Horn, Healy, Hollinger, Hunter etc.) When we learned that it was a B-26 base we all said, "Oh! No, not the "widow maker", "a plane a day in Tampa Bay", and the "B-Dash-Crash", "we are too young to die". We all showed up on Oct 15, 1943, at the 344th Bomb Group, 497th Bomb Squadron and were assigned to specific crews as co-pilots. None of us had the option of being assigned to a B-26 Transition Flying Training Unit and would not make first pilots until we were overseas several months later.

In Dec 1943, Jack and the rest of the "H's" were shipped to Savannah AAF, GA, where we all received brand new Martin B26-B50-MA aircraft. I remember I had to sign a voucher for one Martin B-26 and two Pratt and Whitney R-2800 engines at a cost of \$192,000. This frightened the hell out of me and I asked the Sgt., "Am I responsible for this airplane?" He told me "not to worry about it as the airplane was expendable and so was I". Little did I know how right he was when I was shot down and became a German POW.

Jan 1944 found the 344th at Morrison Field, West Palm Beach, FL, where we all started our sojourn via the southern Atlantic Route on a 9000 NM trip to England, arriving in Feb 1944. Combat started in March 1944. I believe Jack had 68 missions when he finally got orders to return home. I wasn't there, but after the war I found out he had many harrowing experiences in combat. I also remember that he had quite a pipe collection and also had a camera with color film (note: many of the best B-26 photos were taken by Jack).

After the war, Jack returned to work for International Harvester, and went to the Middle East as their overseas representative until he retired. He stayed in the USAF Reserve and retired as a Lt Col. For many years he was a representative for the USAF Academy to find suitable young men for candidates to the academy. Also after the war, he was in a movie theater, and while watching a news-real about post-war disposition of surplus planes, he saw his beloved "Terre Haute Tornado" being chopped apart. He stood up and yelled: "My God! That's my plane!" His military decorations included the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with 2 silver and 2 bronze oak leaf clusters, Purple Heart, Distinguished Unit Citation with one cluster, European Theater Medal with one battle star, Air Force Outstanding Unit award, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with hourglass device and Air Force Longevity Service Ribbon with a silver oak leaf cluster.



He was a Life Member of the Air Force Association, the American Defense Preparedness Association, the Daedalians, the Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Military Order of the World Wars. He was a Charter Member of the Air Force Academy Athletic Association, the Ninth Air Force Association and WWII Memorial. He was a founding member of the American Air Museum in Britain and the National Air & Space Society and an active member of the Air Force Museum Foundation, Arizona Aerospace Foundation, Aviation Cadet Association, BPOE, B-26 Marauder Historical Society (of which he was Public Relations Director from 1993-2003) and the Distinguished Flying Cross Society. Jack was an active member and publicity director of the B26 Marauder Historical Society for many years and contributed greatly to its relocation to the Pima Air and Space Museum in Tucson, AZ which houses B-26 archival materials and other related collections.

Jack Havener was a noted and authoritative author of "The B26 Marauder" and many magazine articles for which he has been honored.

He passed away on May 16 and will be sorely missed by his family and members of the 344th Bomb Group.

V-MAIL

William (Bill) Whitney – still flying a tail dragger Cessna 170B with his son. A trip to Alaska is on the following website: <http://www.toandos.com/Alaska20101.html>

Robert Stonum – is 86, a friend of Jack Havener, replacement co-pilot for John Catlin, July 44 to Fall of 45 at Schliesheim.

Septer G. Working – sent a cover of a B-26 Pilot's Flight Operations, a photo of "MARY ANN" and "DEKE'S DEFIANT".

Robert Bertelsem – moved from his house of 40 plus years; e-mail at Brkbrt1sn@aol.com

Carl Carrazzo – reported that his Father, Frank passed, and has also updated the website: <http://www.shopwornangel.imaginarynumber.net>. Another website is: http://www.b26marauder.info/B-26_NamesAndNumbers.htm

Carol Robinson, widow of Sterling (497th), sent us his remarkable 176 page WW2 Service Diary for the archives.



Crew of "Terre Haute Tornado" April 1944

In cockpit: R.E. Wilson, Pilot
 Back, L-R: J.K. Havener, Copilot
 J.T. Preston III, Navigator
 R.F. Humes, Bombadier
 Front, L-R: J.E Smith, Armourer-Gunner
 John Skowski, Engineer-Gunner
 R.C. Sanders, Radio-Gunner



August 1944: Jack's tomfoolery helped to relieve combat jitters. The "snake charmer's flute is a bicycle pump and the "snake" is a length of insulated electrical wiring. Jocko, the monkey, joined the group in Africa.



Original occupants of Hut #10 in 497th Squadron area at Stanstead, England during 21 Feb 1944 snowstorm:

Back, L-R: Copilot Hollinger, Bombardier Wroneski, Bombardier Curley, Copilot Healy, Copilot Borresen
 Front, L-R: Copilot Havener, Bombardier McLaughlin, Copilot Horn, Pilot Nemeth.
 Absent: Intelligence Officer Wood.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Checking Balance Beginning \$4726.10 Checking Balance Ending \$4736.39
Income: \$1310.27 TOTAL Dues & Donations \$808.19 Interest \$1.18 Hats \$501.00
Expenses: \$1299.98 TOTAL \$126.10 - Printing \$603.40 - Edward Horn Expenses
Reimbursement \$382.96 - Postage \$187.52 - Supplies

Dues and Donations: \$278.58 Edward Horn (Cap Donation), \$200 Janice Griffith (2010),
\$100 Robert Ahern, \$50 Bill Whitney, Julius Murr, Septor Working, Robert C. Bertelsen, \$43.61
Chris Horn, \$40 Col. W.A. Whittle, \$30 Marilyn Jones, \$26 Don Teeter, \$25 Edward F. Hillis, Larry
C. Alberts, \$20 Theresa V. Poquette, Ivan Hansen. THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

LAST FLIGHTS

GRIFFIS EARL DE NEEN	8/12/2010	SEVIERVILLE, TN	495	PILOT, KOREA
JOSEPH A CONNOLLY	1/9/2011	ROCK ISLAND, IL	496	STAFF SGT
FRANK PETERNEL	2/1/2007	PITTSBURGH, PA	495	
JOHN NEMETH	1/30/2011	PORT CHARLOTTE, FL	497	
ROBERT M BOSS	9/16/2006	EMPIRE, MI		
JOHN (JACK) HAVENER	5/16/2011	MEMPHIS, TN	497	
FRANK P. CARROZZA	5/13/2011	LEVITTOWN, NY	494	
JOSEPH A VANO	5/8/2011	WESTERVILLE, OH	494	

OFFICIAL 344TH BASEBALL CAPS FOR SALE

The main color is Tan, with Black High-lites. Front design: B-26 Marauder W.W. II, 344th Bomb Group, Silver B-26 w/ White Triangle and 7I-F. Right side: 494th BS 495th BS 496th BS 497th BS. Left side: 1ST Group to Bomb on D-Day. Photo available on the 344th Website.

Price, including shipping & handling (48 States): \$ 15.00

Send orders and checks to: 344 BGA, 46 Balfour Rd East, Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33418

"MY LIFE IN THE SERVICE", excerpts from the Diary of Sterling Robertson

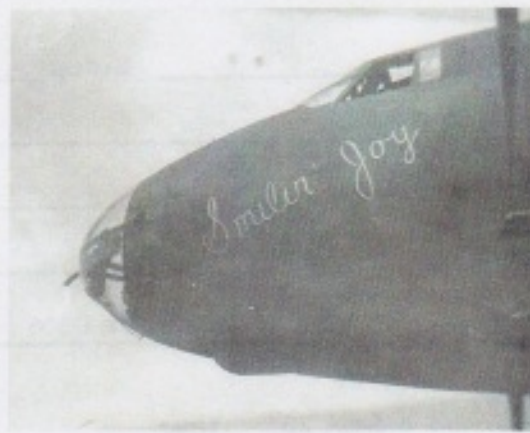
By April 23, 1944, the pilots of the 497th Squadron were becoming veteran combat pilots. Lt. Sterling Robertson and crew and their B26 "Smilin' Joy" were on their 14th mission over "Flack Alley" at St. Omer, France, when all 18 of the squadron's ships were hit by enemy flak. Lt. Ralph Leone and crew went down, with six parachutes observed, the first loss for the squadron. "Smilin' Joy" had 14 flak holes.

On May 28, 1944, Lt. Robertson was on R&R and it was a black day for the Squadron. On the morning mission, while bombing the Seine River near Paris, five of the planes were shot down over the target. (Ed Note: 2nd Lt. P.J. Laux & crew 496th, 2nd Lt. Jack C. Shewell & crew 495th Y5-T, Lt. Henry C. Woodrum & crew 495th Y5-H, CP J.W. Seale & crew 495th Y5-R, Lt. S.W. Peterson & crew 496th N3-O).

"Smilin' Joy" survived. The afternoon mission was the 41st and last mission for "Smilin' Joy". Lt. Jim Reynolds was at the controls when she received a direct hit in the right engine while flying over Amien, and the plane crashed near Abbeville, France. Four parachutes were seen (2nd Lt. E. W. Horn (POW), 2nd Lt. Joseph Johnson (RTD), Sgt. George Coon (RTD), Sgt. Samuel Gold (POW), Cpl. Leonard Pew (MIA). On August 21, Lt. Johnson, bombardier of "Smilin' Joy" when it was shot down, arrived back at HQ after escaping from the Germans (Ed Note: last month, we received detailed reports on the escape and evasion of Johnson and Coon from a source in Belgium). Johnson reported that Lt. Jim Reynolds had been killed by enemy fire while descending by parachute. Lt. Johnson had been shot in the leg. "Smilin' Joy" had been a "sweet aircraft" and her loss was hard for the pilot and crew to accept.

On June 2, 1944, Lt. Robertson and crew returned from R&R and they were issued a used B-26 known only as #5902 in which they flew three mission on June 4th and 5th. That made for 33 combat missions for Lt. Robertson and pilots with 35 missions were to be rotated back to the United States. But D-Day would change all that.

(Ed Note: At one Reunion, Ed Horn arrived and was greeted by Sterling Robertson yelling: "Horn, you got my plane shot down!"). (Plane #5902 was "The Bad Penny", 7I-G, Ed Horn's plane).



Crew of Smilin' Joy II
Back, L-R: Lt. Joe Lane - CP
Lt. Sterling Robertson - P
Lt. David Gerling - BN
Front, L-R: Sgt. Oliver Lane - RG
Sgt. Robert Holder - TG
Sgt. Donald Lane - Crew Chief WG

Smilin' Joy - Shot down 28 May, 44

**Minneapolis, MN Sept 29 – Oct 1 Reunion - Tours, Events
(Register for the tours in advance – Tour Reservation Form)**

St. Paul/Minneapolis Highlights Tour – Thurs, Sept 29th 11:30 – 4:30 \$37pp

This tour includes a great sampling of both St Paul and Minneapolis. We'll visit sites such as Summit Avenue, its Victorian mansion including Governors Mansion, the Capitol building and Minnesota War Memorial on its front lawn, St Paul Cathedral, downtown Guthrie, and Landmark Center. In Minneapolis see Foshay tower, St Anthony locks, and Minnehaha Falls. This will be mostly a driving tour, narrated and with a few stops (bring an apple or a snack with you). A snack bar is at the Falls (Includes: Motor Coach, Driver, Professional Guide, Fees, Light Walking).

Minnetonka Lake Area Tour - Friday, Sept 30th 11:30-4:30p \$35pp

On the tour, we will go to one of Minnesota's beautiful lake areas. For years, first the Minnetonka Indians, present days locals, and visitors go to the lake for its scenic marvels and get away activities. We'll first visit lake town of Excelsior, have time to get some lunch and walk some of it's downtown sites. When we get to the other side of the lake, the quaint town of Wazata will be our other stop, time for you to explore its' main streets and perhaps get an ice cream cone. (Includes: Motor coach, Driver, Tour Leader, Moderate Walking)

Special Dinner/Entertainment Evening - Friday, Sept 30th 5:30 – 8:30p \$39pp

Tonight you will be attending a special dinner / entertainment event right in our hotel. You will enjoy a nice 3 course dinner followed by our special musical entertainment. It's convenient, and it's sure to be a good time for all. (Dinner, Entertainment, in the Hotel)

Banquet / Farewell Dinner - Saturday, Oct 1st 5:00 – 9:00pm \$38pp

After Group Business Meetings in the morning, we have our grand finale event. Tonight we will have our traditional farewell for this reunion. The cocktail hour will start at 5:00pm (cocktails purchased at cash bar separately), and a nice (3 course meal, duet entrée meal) dinner will be a 6:00pm. A wonderful time to see all your friends, take some pictures, and say farewell till next year, it's sure to be a night to remember, see you there in your dress ups (Dinner event in Hotel).

*The tours require minimum of 30 participants, fully refundable if minimum number not achieved or a medical emergency occurs within 30 days of reunion. Operators not responsible for delay, injury and/or cancellation due to mechanical problems and/or "Acts of God" incidents and conditions.

Reunion Registration 2011 – Minneapolis, MN

**Mail to: 454th BSA
C/O George Cornett
8250 E. Obispo Avenue
Mesa, AZ 85212**

Inquiries, George Cornett (480)-984-3676

Name _____ Group _____ Squadron _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Wife's Name _____

Guest(s) _____

Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____

Unit Registration Fee			\$ 10 X _____ = \$ _____
Minneapolis Highlights Tour*	Sept 29 th	Thur	\$ 37 X _____ = \$ _____
Lake District Tour *	Sept 30 th	Fri	\$ 39 X _____ = \$ _____
Farwell Dinner Event	Oct 1 st	Sat	\$ 38 X _____ = \$ _____
	TOTAL		_____ = \$ _____

-OR- THE ENTIRE PACKAGE \$ 159 (PP) X _____ = \$ _____

Note- No Registration Fee for members or guests who only attend the Banquet.

"Complimentary Hospitality Room For All"

Emergency Contact Name _____ Phone Number _____

(Full Refunds, if cancelled prior to reunion)

Free Airport Shuttle Service (Go to airport hotel call board #14, request pick up)
You can call hotel direct at (952) 854-9000

Hotel Accommodation Reservation – Minneapolis, MN 2011
(Crown Plaza – you can mail it in or call the hotel direct)

Main Dates, Sept 28 Wed -Oct 1 Sat (4 nights)	Crown Plaza Hotel **
454 th /455 th /344 th Air Force Reunion	Attn: Nancy Solinger
Room Rate Avail, Sept 26 – Oct 3	3 Appletree Square Minneapolis, MN 55425

The following information needed to make a reservation - up to 4 in room, same rate

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

of persons in Room _____ 1 Bed _____ or 2 Beds _____ # of Rooms needed _____
Check in, at 3pm Check Out, Noon

Name, if shared room _____ Rate \$89 per room + 14.28% taxes

Arrival Date _____ Depart Date _____ A First Night's Deposit Is Required

Credit Card # _____ Exp _____ ** Signature _____

Parking at Hotel Free of Charge
with convenient access to hotel lobby ** (if mail reservation in to hotel)
(Complimentary Shuttle to Mall of America)

* Hotel Reservation Cut Off Date (to secure \$89 Rate) is Sept 12, 2011
(If book by phone, call the hotel direct (952) 854-9000, ask for reservations)

(Be sure to mention Code AIR; 454th / 455th / 344th Air Force Reunion – Available Dates of Sept 26 to Oct3)