

# 344TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION



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FLORIDA 33418

## MILK RUN

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER/344<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

Volume XIX, No. 1

June 2009

### 65<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY "344<sup>TH</sup>, FIRST TO BOMB UTAH BEACH"

At first light on 6 June, the Ninth Air Force launched its B-26s to hit three coastal batteries in group strength. Among the first American airmen to witness the incredible armada of ships with their disgorging landing craft, were the crews of the 56 344<sup>th</sup> Group Marauders, which took off at dawn to be over the target at precisely 06.09 – 21 minutes before the first landing-craft grounded on the beaches. Roaring off behind formation leader Maj. Jens A. Norgaard (flying Marauder 'Mary Jo', named after his wife), the 'Silver Streaks' set course for Cherbourg. Their objective was the gun batteries at Beau Guillot, La Madelaine, and St. Martin de Varreville – one gun emplacement to each box of bombers.

On the target approach, flak claimed the B26-B (42-95902)\* flown by 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. James B. McKamey; hit in the right engine and with a fire in its full bomb bay, the aircraft was pulled out of formation and turned to head back across the Channel. The pilot's aim was clearly to ditch and give his crew the chance of being picked up, but fate took a hand and the B-26 exploded in mid-air. Despite this, three 'chutes were reported before the Marauder's sudden, violent demise, as the rest of the group turned for home, taking a course between the islands of Guernsey and Alderney. As they did so, the most amazing sight most of the airman would ever see began to unfold on the sea below. Landing-craft ploughed toward the shore, which was soon being pounded by naval shellfire.

Thanks largely to the almost total Allied domination of the airspace above them, only 12 men were killed during the landings. Six Marauders took flak damage. No fewer than 3,342 tactical sorties were launched by the Ninth Air Force during the day, these including 823 by Marauders and A-20s. –Excerpted from US Medium Bomber Units of WW2: Northwest Europe, by Jerry Scutts; ISBN 0 7110 2876 1, 2001, pps 79-83.

\*Editor's note: the B26-B (42-95902), was the Bad Penny, flown from Florida to Stansted by Lt. James Reynolds and Lt. Edward Horn. Lt. James B. McKamey, from Tennessee, is listed on the Tablets of the Missing at Normandy American Cemetery.

A Note from President Ed: Since our first Reunion was in Harlingen, Texas, in October 1988, we have had many enjoyable reunions since then. This year will be our 20th reunion, and will be at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs this October, along with the 323rd BG. Thanks to our dear friend Lambert, we have had "Milk Runs" since 1989. Last year's reunion in San Antonio was exceptionally enjoyable. Although few in number, we hope that many more can join us this year. Please let us hear from you with a post card, letter, or e-mail, so that we are up-to-date with your information. Any monetary contribution is also appreciated.

This day proved to be the costliest day of the war for the 344<sup>th</sup>, with a total of 6 planes lost due to Flak, over a two mission day.

28 May 1944, AM Mission, Paris Railroad Bridge – P-47 escort. 38 Aircraft dispatched, 20 attacked target    Box I – No attack, Box II, Flt 1 – Fair; Flt 2 – Good, Flt 3 – Fair.

5 Planes shot down at the target, 31 crew members missing.

495<sup>th</sup> Capt J.W. Seale, Pilot; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt E.D. Moffett (POW), Nav; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt C.A. Forrester, Co-Pilot; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt R.P. Gilmore, Bom; Sgt M. Young, Eng/Gun; Sgt D.M Wagner, Radio/Gun; Sgt F.B. Cessna, Arm/Gun  
#42-95913

495<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Lt H.C. Woodrum, Pilot; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt I.R. Morgan (POW), Co-Pilot; Sgt C.L. Griffith (POW), Bom; Sgt R.E. Burton (POW), Eng/Gun; Sgt T.J. Zagorski (POW), Radio/Gun; Sgt E.L. Hickey (KIA), Tail Gun  
#42-107608

495<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Lt S.W. Peterson, Pilot (KIA); 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Buck Wilson (POW), Co-Pilot; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt H. Harvey, Bom; Sgt C.S. Maddox (KIA), Radio/Gun; Sgt C.E. Davis (KIA), Eng/Gun; Sgt E.R. Traves, Tail Gun  
#42-95858

495<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt J.C. Shewell, Pilot (KIA); 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt W.D. Bradford, Co-Pilot; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt J. Johnston, Bom; Sgt M.W. Cave, Eng/Gun; Sgt T.E. Joyner, Radio/Gun; Sgt J. Forsythe, Tail Gun  
#42-107691

496<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt P.J. Laux, Pilot; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt M.T. Ritchey, Co-Pilot; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt W.A. Boyce, Bom; Sgt P. Ruiz, Eng/Gun; Sgt R.W. Henry, Radio/Gun; Sgt E.W. Butler, Tail Gun  
#42-95895

28 May 1944, PM Mission, Amiens Marshalling Yard – P-47 escort. 37 Aircraft dispatched, 29 attacked target    Box I Flt 1 – Fair, Flt 2 – Gross, Flt 3 – Good; Box II Flt 1 – Poor, Flt 2 – Poor, Flt 3 – No attack

1 Plane shot down at the target, 6 crew members missing.

497<sup>th</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> Lt James F. Reynolds, Pilot (KIA); 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Edward Horn, Co-Pilot (POW); 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt James Johnson, Bom; Sgt George Coon, Radio/Gun; Sgt Samuel Gold, Eng/Gun (POW); Cpl Leonard Pew, Tail Gun (MIA)  
#42-95920, 7I-L, Smilin' Joy

### V-Mail

P.H. & Agnes Faver, 497<sup>th</sup> (4-10-2009) – Sent a nice note with a bombing photo from 14Feb 45, (#31)

Target – Bridge, 4 x 1000 bombs. Heavy flack, 128 guns at the target, all shooting at us in our lead ship. One engine shot out, had to land. Lt. O'Brian, my old bombardier, went down in another plane. I saw the plane blow up and go down burning. We lost 5 ships today, they really hit us hard. (#34), 23 Feb 45, hit a fortified town, with moderate flak. We flew as the lead window ship. Capt. Chapman went down, got a direct hit in the engine and went down. I saw one chute open. Stoney went down today. He had been our bombardier. That makes two now we lost.

- Grace Sugarman, 494<sup>th</sup> (5-26-2009) – Was sorry that she couldn't attend the last reunion, but had some fond memories of other reunions, with friends such as Ashley Smith, Tom Bond, Harold and Janice Griffith, and my husband Irving. I wish to continue receiving the Milk Run. In addition to my dues, I am also enclosing a check in memory of our friend Harold Griffith, who passed away this month. John Lingley, 497<sup>th</sup> (3-24-2009) – Although I have been in and out of the hospital, I am looking forward to the Colorado Springs Reunion in the fall.
- Russell M. Freeman, 497<sup>th</sup> (3-15-2008) – Sent change of address: 7454 Newcastle Golf Club Rd, Newcastle, WA 98059.
- Owen & Elvora Lansdowne, 495<sup>th</sup> (2-9-2009) – Sent change of address: 1905 S. Lakeview Blvd, Apt 118, Cedar Park, TX 78613.
- Dick Fowler (3-26-2009) – Doesn't have e-mail but uses Son's: refbioprof@yahoo.com. He and his son went to the Akron reunion in 1995.
- Jack Finkle, 494<sup>th</sup> (10-22-2008) – Sent a copy of a mission report from late in the war, showing all 4 squadrons in action.
- Septer G. Working, 494<sup>th</sup> (2-21-2008) – Sent photos of a crash that looked like a botched takeoff at Stansted.
- Ronald Mac Arthur Hirst, MSC (12-6-2008) – Sent an article concerning POWs from the 344<sup>th</sup>. He made D-Day on Omaha, served on an ALG in Normandy with 354FG, and wrote a history of the 9<sup>th</sup> AF ALG's in Normandy.
- Edna M. Christ, 494<sup>th</sup> – She sent photos from Carl's WW2 Album (see photo page). She says that she does her traveling on TV and won't be able to attend any more reunions. (note: her photos will be at the reunion).
- Robert Turner, 497<sup>th</sup> – He sent photos of Moe's Mauler crash on 12-27-44 (see photo page). He was one of the crew members who jumped out of the plane fearing it would catch fire. He was 19 at the time.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Dues & Donations – John H. Robinson (\$100); Henry F. Albonesi (\$40); Larry Johnson (\$50); John Lingley (\$100); Richard Foulk (\$40); P.H. Faver (\$25); Marilyn C. Jones (\$25); Grace Sugarman (\$50).  
 THANKS TO ALL OF YOU FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE 344<sup>TH</sup> B.G.

Expenses – \$674.73: Stamps (\$202.03); Website Dvlpmt (\$418.72); Flowers for Kathy Jangard (\$53.98).

Income – Including transfer of funds to Wachovia in Florida: \$4,801.88 Checking Balance: \$4127.15

## LAST FLIGHTS

- Sterling Robertson, 91, 497<sup>th</sup>, 11-11-2008, Martinsburg, WV; Pilot of Smilin' Joy 42-295920  
George W. Lyon, Jr., 91, 12-9-2008, Branford, CT; copilot, ferried plane from Fl to England, 22 missions  
John V. Pikula, 494<sup>th</sup>, 7-23-2007, Beacon Hill, MA; pilot on same plane with George Lyon  
Kathy Jangard, 1-16-2009, Lakewood, WA; father was in the 344<sup>th</sup>, attended reunions with husband Mel Victor "Dinky" Curtis, 80, MSC, 4-20-2009, Bishop-Stortford; 15 y/o local lad watching 344<sup>th</sup> in England  
Melvin Griese, 495<sup>th</sup>, Newburg, IN, 2008  
Rudolph J. Casciotti, 495<sup>th</sup>, Buffalo Grove, IL 12-19-2006  
N.B. Northcutt, 497<sup>th</sup>, Durant, OK, 2008  
Lt. Col. Leland Embrey, 494<sup>th</sup>, Frederick, MD 11-18-2007  
Col. William C. "Scotty" McLaughlin, 497<sup>th</sup>, San Antonio, TX 5-9-2007  
Jack B. Ackers, 495<sup>th</sup>, Charlestown, WV, 11-8-2007  
Samuel M. Gold, 89, 497<sup>th</sup>, Huntington, WV, 2-7-2008; POW and turret gunner on Ed Horn's crew  
Victor K. Syphers, 496<sup>th</sup>, Pepperel, MA  
Walter E. Zelenka, 495<sup>th</sup>, Addison, IL 6-27-2007  
Gordon G. Cordsen, 91, 496<sup>th</sup>, Ft. Collins, CO, 1-3-2008; Bom/Nav, 25 missions and 30 in A-20's  
Paul F. Shorts, MD, 494<sup>th</sup>, Lake Charles, LA, 3-9-2009; pilot with medical wing in the 494<sup>th</sup>  
Harold Griffith, 494<sup>th</sup>, Hillard, OH, 5-1-2009



**BOOK REVIEWS – 9<sup>TH</sup> AIR FORCE:** American Tactical Aviation in the ETO 1942-1945; Gregory Pons, 192 Pages, ISBN 978-2-35250-077-3. A wealth of photos and personal stories. Has a 24 page chapter on the 344<sup>th</sup>. Also has chapters on Fighter Gps, Liaison Sq, Troop Carrier Gps, Night Fighter Sq, and Engineering Aviation Regiments. Available through Amazon.com.

**BATTLE OVER BAVARIA:** The B-26 Marauder versus the German jets – April 1945; Robert Forsyth w/ Jerry Scutts, 200 Pages, ISBN 0-9526867-4-0. A well documented history viewing both the American and German sides. Has a 4 page chapter on the 344<sup>th</sup>.

**WEBSITE UPDATE – [www.344bg-b26.org](http://www.344bg-b26.org)**

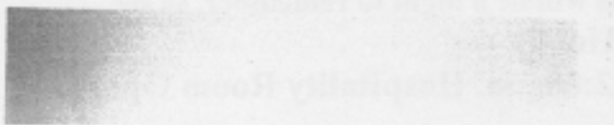
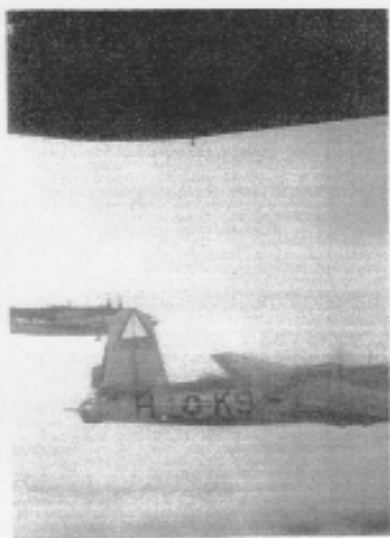
Our Website is still in its infancy, one page old so far. This summer, I will devote more time to learning and increasing the complexity of the site. E-mail addresses are very important, also. We are sending out 449 envelopes with the Milk Run and the Reunion Forms, and sending it to an e-mail address or on the Website is more cost effective. We will continue to publish two Milk Runs per year.

We are also hoping that more of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generations would want to become involved and attend the reunions.

**THE MARTIN B-26 'MARAUDER'**  
*'THE FLYING PROSTITUTE'*  
 (IT HAD NO VISIBLE MEANS OF SUPPORT)

FLYING AT MURDEROUSLY MEDIUM ALTITUDES,  
 26'S ATTRACTED FLAK LIKE A MAGNET -





## 344th Annual Reunion at Colorado Springs (with the 454<sup>th</sup> BS)

Here is the information and facts about our Reunion. Our Hotel is Best Western, The Academy Hotel. It is located just off Interstate 25, is a 100% non-smoking Hotel with free parking. There is airport shuttle available to and from Colorado Springs airport from 5:00am to 10:00pm local time, shuttle service also available from Denver Airport (60 miles away) for \$50.00 one-way or \$90.00 round trip (for this service please call 877-587-3456). We are within walking distance to additional restaurants, movie theatres, Wal-Mart, .5 mile to pharmacy and a shopping mall about 1 mile away. Has complimentary full breakfast between the hours of 6:30am – 9:30am and an on-site full service restaurant (Garden Terrace) which opens 6:30am to 10:00pm for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

### Registration Mail In Deadline Sept 18, 2009

Wednesday Oct 7<sup>th</sup> 2:00pm Registration/Hospitality Room Opens

344<sup>th</sup> & 454<sup>th</sup> Tours and Events (All included in our registration)

Thursday Oct 8<sup>th</sup> 12:15pm Meet at Bus Loading Area

2:30-5:30pm Olympic Training Center / Manitoba / Seven Falls

Today we will travel to the rustic town of Manitobe Springs, a historic town of healing history and hot springs; you will have time for lunch on your own and to explore about, then to Seven Falls, a wonderful scenic experience. We next head back to Colorado Springs to visit world renowned Olympic Training Center where you will see the visitor center with many exhibits and interactive features, and also a short film on Olympic History (Coach, Driver/Escort)

6:00pm-12:am Hospitality Room Open

Friday, Oct 9<sup>th</sup> 11:45am Meet at Bus Loading Area

Noon - 5pm Garden of Gods and AF Academy

This tour begins with a short trip out to the Garden of the Gods, one of the most scenic sites in Colorado as framed by the Colorado Rockies; you will have time for lunch at their visitors center and to explore the many unique exhibits; next it's on to the AF Academy, there you will see their visitors center with its many historic exhibits of the Air Force, and get to see their famous glass chapel (Motor coach, Driver/Escort)

6:30-9:00pm Special Dinner/Entertainment Evening

Tonight you will be attending a special dinner / entertainment event right in our hotel. You will enjoy a special/unique musical experience by group of ladies who will recreate a past era and its songs (similar to Andrew/Lemon Sisters – a real treat). We will have a nice 3 course meal then followed by this special singing group. It's convenient, and sure to be a fun time for all (Dinner, Entertainment, at Hotel).

6:00-12:00am Hospitality Room Open

Saturday, Oct 10<sup>th</sup>

9:00am Business Meeting

6:00pm Cocktail Hour / Cash Bar

7:00pm Farewell Dinner/Entertainment

Tonight we will have our traditional farewell for this reunion, dinner and musical evening. After a relaxing day around our hotel, we will have this event. The cocktail hour will start at 6:00pm, dinner (a 3-course, dual entrée meal) will be at 7:00pm, and then there will be entertainment for our listening pleasure. As always, this will be a night to remember, so see you there in your dress ups. (Dinner, Entertainment, at Hotel).

10:00pm Banquet Room Closes 10:00pm – 12:00a.m. Hospitality Room Open

**Hotel Accommodation Reservation – Colorado Springs 2009**  
 (Contact Best Western Academy Hotel as listed below address)

The Main Dates, Oct 7<sup>th</sup> Wed - Oct 10<sup>th</sup> Sat  
 454th/ Air Force Reunion – 2009  
 Room Rate Avail, Oct 4 – Oct 12  
 (Ask 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Rm, No Elevators except in Tower Bldg)

Best Western Academy  
 8110 N. Academy Blvd  
 Colorado Springs, CO 80920  
 (719) 598-5770

The following information will be needed to make a reservation

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ # of persons in Room \_\_ # beds, Room \_\_  
 Name, if shared room \_\_\_\_\_ Check in, at 3pm Check Out, Noon  
 Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Depart Date \_\_\_\_\_ \* Rate \$79 per room + 9.4% taxes  
 Cd Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp \_\_\_\_\_ First Nights Deposit is \$86.43  
 Parking at Hotel Free of Charge \*\* Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
 with convenient access to hotel lobby \*\* (if mailing reservation in to hotel)

**\* Hotel Reservation Cut Off Date (to secure \$79 Rate) is September 18, 2009**

(If booking by phone, call the hotel direct (719) 598-5770, ask for reservations)  
(Be sure to Mention, 454<sup>th</sup>/455th Air Force – Avail Dates of Oct 4<sup>th</sup> to Oct 12<sup>th</sup>)

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**454<sup>th</sup> Air Force Unit Registration – Colorado Springs, 2009**

Mail to: 454<sup>th</sup> BSA C/O George Cornett (480-984-3676) 8250 E. Obispo Ave Mesa, AZ 85212

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Group \_\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wife's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 GuestName(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date \_\_\_\_\_

Registration Fee		\$10	x	_____	=	_____
Olympic, Manitohe Tour	Oct 8	\$29	x	_____	=	_____
AF Academy, Garden Gods	Oct 9	\$29	x	_____	=	_____
Special Group Dinner Event	Oct 9	\$38	x	_____	=	_____
Farwell Eve, Dinner/Event	Oct 10	\$38	x	_____	=	_____
<b>Total</b>						_____

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

Person Contact, Emergency Complimentary Hospitality Room Total \_\_\_\_\_  
 (If include all - is \$144 ea)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Make Checks to 454<sup>th</sup> BSA  
 (Full Refunds, if cancel prior reunion)  
 Registration Mail In Deadline Sept 18, 2009