

344TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

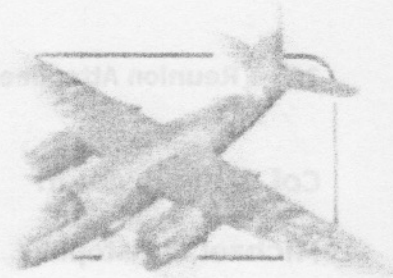
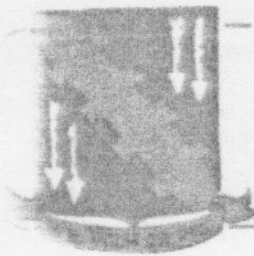
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OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER/344TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

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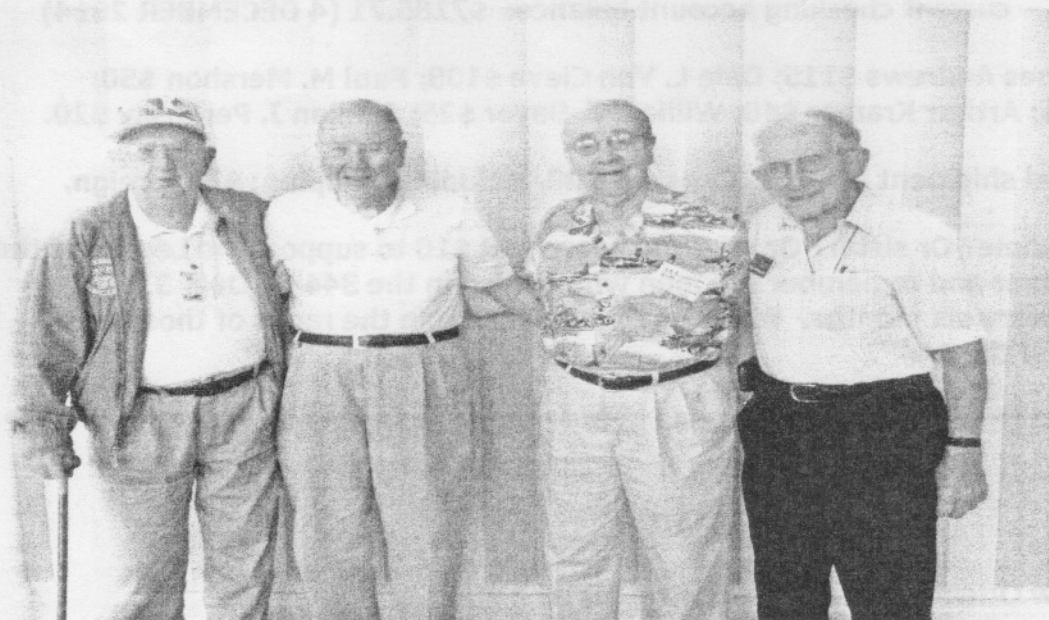
HAPPY HOLIDAYS, MERRY CHRISTMAS, HAPPY HANUKAH

A Message from the President

REUNION REPORT – This past September, the 344th Bomb Group Association and the 454th Bomb Group Association held their annual reunion in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Hilton New Orleans Airport Hotel opened their arms to our members with nice rooms and wonderful banquets. We took a bus tour of the city of New Orleans; visited the WW2 Museum; cruised down the Mississippi in a real Steamboat; toured the French Quarter. Thanks again to George and Mary Cornett and the members of the 454th.

We had 16 attendees from the 344th: Mel and Joan Jangard; Santo Endrizzi (495th Veteran) and daughter Marion Whelpley; Edward (497th Veteran) and son Chris; Robert Cummins (494th Veteran); Lynda and Eugene Bass and their son Taylor and wife Angela; Don Korkowski (494th Veteran) and Pat Rigenbach; Shirley Fowler and her daughters Carol Fowler and Mary Ellen Gregorich.

The 2015 Reunion will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, from September 9 to 12.



2014 Reunion Attendees: (L-R) Ed Horn, Robert Cummings, Santo Endrizzi, Don Korkowski

LAST FLIGHTS

Col. Vane Hugo, Jr. 494th 2/28/2014 San Antonio, TX.

Michael Christopher 496th 2009 Granville, OH.

Richard P. Ellinger MSC 4/17/2013 Washington, DC.

Lewis Reese 494th 3/29/2013 Fairview, OK.

Edward F. Hillis 497th 11/15/2014 Rupert, ID.

Started at Barksdale Field in March, 1944. Crew picked up new airplane at Hunter Field, GA, and flew to Stansted via the northern route. Moved to Cormeilles-en-Vexin in France on Sept. 30, 1944. Moved to Belgium in April, 1945. Completed 48 combat missions as a pilot.

Don Chaney 496th 10/1/2014 Chester, WV.

On Dec. 30, 1944, while stationed in France, First Lt. Clyde D. Chaney was given additional duty as mess officer. He flew from Stansted and Cormeilles en Vixen airfields, participated in the Normandy invasion and went on to complete 65 missions. He and his crew survived a midair collision with another B-26 in the winter of 1945. He spearheaded the effort to have a monument placed at the airfield in Cormeilles, with the dedication being held in April 1997.

Alvin C. "Jack" Watson 496th 8/31/2014 Middlefield, OH.

Howard F. Krayenbuhl 496th 7/20/2013 Birmingham, AL.

Started out with 344th BG, 496th BS, in Florida, as a bomb-nav. Went to Africa, where he flew missions with 318th BG, 438th BS in B-26s. Then to 99th BG in B-17s, 346 BS in African and Italy. Recalled 1950 to 1955 during the Korean War and was Staff Officer of the 25th Air Division, McChord Air Base.

FINANCIAL REPORT – current checking account balance: \$7185.71 (4 DECEMBER 2014)

Dues and Donations: James Andrews \$115; Dale L. Van Cleve \$100; Paul M. Mershon \$50; Katherine Morehouse \$45; Arthur Kramer \$40; William E. Bayer \$25; Emilian J. Perkosky \$20.

344th Baseball Caps – Final shipment arrived. Caps are \$20, including shipping; \$30 foreign.

Brother, can you spare a dime? Or sister? Or, can you spare just \$10 to support the Legacy of the 344th Bomb Group and honor and remember the men who served in the 344th? Over 370 MILKRUNS are sent out every six months. We hope that you can join the ranks of those who contribute to the Legacy of the 344th.

V-MAIL

Carl Carrozza has the New Orleans reunion photos on his website:

<http://shopwornangel.imaginarynumber.net>

Edna Christ (Carl Christ 494th) sent a photo of Carl Christ and Al Freiberger from 1991. Said that seeing the movie "The Big Airlift" starring Montgomery Clift and Paul Douglas reminded her of Al Freiberger piloting a C-54 during the Berlin Airlift.

Janice Griffith (Harold Griffith 494th) wrote to say "Thanks" and that she enjoyed the MILKRUN and shared it with friends and family.

Dorothy Schickendanz (Ray Schickendanz 497th) sent a newspaper clipping about her husband, Ray. "Working on a B-26 Marauder in the ETO is a far cry from operating a farm in Gage, OK, but Sgt. Ray M. Schickendanz is a good example of the transformation that technical training can effect.

Sgt. Schickendanz is a propeller specialist at the home base of the Silver Streaks Marauder group commanded by Col. Reginald Vance, of San Antonio, TX. His forte is keeping in proper condition, the props of the powerful engines which daily carry the bombers over enemy targets for precision bombings. His favorite Marauder is "Bad Penny II" which is piloted by Capt. John Catlin, a West Pointer from Lindsborg, KS.

This bomber has run up 67 operational missions in attacks on Nazi railroads, bridges, robot bomb launching sites, ammunition and fuel dumps, and flying in support of the advancing ground forces on the Western Front. At no time has it been forced to return because of mechanical failure – a high tribute to the technical skill and maintenance of such ground crew men as Sgt. Schickendanz.

He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. August Schickendanz and husband of Dorothy. He enlisted at Fort Sill in January, 1942, and attended the propeller specialist school at McDill Field, Tampa, FL."

Elizabeth Mandeville-Stryjewski wrote about the 70th D-Day Anniversary:

"My father, Ernie Mandeville, was a waist gunner aboard the B-26 "Blasted Event" in the 495th BS of the 344th BG. He and I have attended 344th BG reunions over the years but have not recently as his health has prevented it. Unfortunately, those same health issues prevented him from attending the 70th anniversary of the D-Day invasion with my family and me this past June.

When we first scheduled our trip to Normandy, we did not even entertain the idea that we would be able to attend any of the events. One event we did plan to attend was a parachute jump by the Round Canopy Parachuting Team near Utah Beach. On our way there, many WWII era American jeeps, motorcycles, and trucks driven by people dressed in US army uniforms drove along with us as we headed to a field outside Carentan. Nearly every house along the way flew the American flag. Upon arrival, I introduced myself to several of the groups of American GIs. It didn't take me long for me to realize that not only were these people not Americans, they didn't even speak English. Women were dressed in 1940s attire and they mingled with soldiers of the Scottish Highlander Brigade, English infantry and American GIs. We soon found a group of "American soldiers" that had traveled down from Kent to attend the week-long celebration. Since their English was pretty good, we settled in with them and waited for the C-47s to fly over. They did a spectacular fly-by, some painted in D-Day invasion strips, others silver. Unfortunately the winds were too strong that day and the jump was canceled. I thought that would be the end of our participation in the events of the week, but I could not have been more wrong.

We were staying with a delightful French couple, the Cantel's, just outside of Caen and upon hearing that my father had taken part in the invasion, they took it upon themselves to help us celebrate. We attended a commemorative concert, complete with an orchestra and 200 person choir in a 12th century cathedral in the nearby town of Falaise. After enjoying the concert on the night of June 5th, we headed for Benouville and Pegasus Bridge. Fireworks were scheduled to begin at Utah Beach just after sun-down and continue down past Omaha, Gold, Juno, and Sword Beaches, finally reaching Pegasus Bridge in the early hours of the morning of June the 6th. What an honor it was to be at this place marking the 70th anniversary of the invasion. Following the fireworks display, a band of Highland pipers headed across the Pegasus bridge.

Over the next few days, we found that many events opened their doors to us dimply at the

Next issue, a photo of Robert Cummings (if you send us your WW2 photos).

BASTOGNE, 1944

I jam the throttles to the wall and stand upon the brakes.
My ears are hammered by the noise; the Bomber shudders and shakes.
The Padre stands upon his Jeep, a grin from ear to ear,
He pokes his thumb up in the air, a Sign that calms my fear.

Maffry's run is airborne now; to-day I'll fly his wing.
My chest sticks out; pride fills my heart, I made it to First String.
The brakes are free, I start my run, the props are biting now.
The tarmac slips beneath my wings; the Earth falls 'way below.

"Lead him like a Mallard duck," they told me once at Briefing.
That's what I did; the flaps are milked, as nose to tail I'm seeking.
And then, as Maffry levels off, halfway through his Downward,
I pop up there in Number Two, he grins and waves, I'm starboard.

Today, as cold Bastogne awaits where Screaming Eagles suffer;
it snowed all night and the night before, when McAuliffe said, "Go stuff it!"
The weather, it is clearing now as Marauders rise to fighting,
to help the "Battered Bastards" there..... and end the savage dying.

At Battle's End, in a month or so, as airmen swarm to Brussels;
in Bistros where the Eagles roost, so safe from Wermacht muscle,
"The drinks on us, Marauders bold. Drink up! Drink up!" they say,
"and thank you guys for what you did; in Spades for Christmas Day!"

By..... John Christopher Dinou, author of "Fading Wings / Faded Glory

