



May 2015

GREETINGS TO EVERYONE

Here we are preparing for our next reunion already; this is our 40th Annual Reunion and will be held in St. Louis, Missouri. Once again this year, the 344th BG will be joining us and various members from within the 323rd BG. We are looking forward to seeing everyone again as we have created a special kindred and solid friendships.

Once again, our Directory has some more changes and additions, thank you to everyone with your input. With your assistance we can keep our directory current and we will continue to pass along all up-dates for our directory in the next newsletter. So, if you know of any information, in our current directory that's not correct please contact me preferably by email at kville93@centurylink.net or you can call me at 480-984-3676 and leave a voice message and I will return your call as soon as possible.

Our Mail Bag News

Robert & Helen Harwell – Enjoys our newsletters, can't attend reunions due to health issues.

Lisa Izdepski – Sends her regrets unable to attend but says hello to everyone

454th B.S. 40th Annual Reunion at St. Louis, MO

Here is the information and facts about our Reunion location, the Hotel we will be staying at this year is the Holiday Inn Express. We will have complimentary breakfast, shuttle service available to and from the airport. There will also be limited complimentary shuttle service when available.

Schedule of Events

(Register for tours in advance – Tour Reservation Form – **Attachment 1**)

Registration is 1st come 1st serve – cut-off date is Aug 26, 2015

St. Louis, MO. Reunion Tours and Events

(30 days Advance Reservation Recommended to Guarantee Your Tour Space

Discover St. Louis City Tour	Thurs, Sept 10th (11:00 – 5:00)
Grants Farm & St. Charles Tour	Friday, Sept 11th (10:00 – 4:00)
Special Dinner/Entertainment Evening	Friday, Sept 11th (6:30 – 8:30)
The Farewell Dinner Event	Saturday 12th (5:00 - 9:00)

(All of these included as part of your complete Reunion Registration Fee)

Registration is 1st come 1st serve, cut off date is Aug 26, 2015. Full refund if tour(s) cancelled for medical emergency. All tours require minimum 35 pax to operate (if space available, sales on site). Tour operators are not responsible for damage articles, accidents, death, injury, illness, delay, mechanical or electrical problems, any strike, lockouts, acts of gods, events beyond their control.

Discover St. Louis Tour Thurs, September 10th 11:00am – 5:00pm

This is a comprehensive driving tour starts right at our hotel, our guide narrates on the sites and history of this special city. Our ride to the downtown area will take about ½ hour where we first visit famous LacClede Landing area for lunch on your own, this is unique Historical area. Our professional guide joins us, to begin us a fully narrated tour. We will see such prominent sites as Union Station, Old Court House, St. Louis Arch, Bush Stadium, Historical Souldard Distract, the Lafayette Park Neighborhood with its beautiful Victorian era homes, next a drive though Forest Park (site of the 1904 World's Fair) where you will have a special photo opportunity, then do a stop to visit historical registered Cathedral Basilica with its

famous 84,000 square feet of mosaic tiles (Includes; Professional Guide, Fees, Motor coach, Driver, and limited walking).

Grants Farm and St. Charles Tour Friday, September 11th 10:00am – 4:00pm

The tour begins with a 30 minute drive from our hotel to Grants Farm where we will first take a narrated tram ride of the Farm's Gardens and Grounds, then you will have a little time to get a food snack in their Pavilion area, as well as, a free Beer. Next we will walk over to the stable area where you will see the famous Clydesdale Horses, these marvelous horses are so beautiful. We will then drive over to St Charles where we will do a stop at the Visitors Center for you to look about and pick up a booklet on the Historical significance of this town along Mississippi River and a walking map of the small downtown area. You will have time for lunch on your own and then a look about the town shops at your leisure before we return to our hotel (Includes; Motor coach, Driver, Fees, Group Leader, and moderate walking).

Special Dinner/Entertainment Friday Evening, September 11th 6:30pm – 8:30pm

Tonight you will be attending a special dinner / entertainment event right in our hotel. You will enjoy a pleasant dinner and then an entertainment event. We have enjoyed this special dinner event over the years. It's convenient and sure to be a good time for all. (Dinner and Entertainment at the Hotel).

Saturday Sep 12th -

10:00am	Annual Business Meeting
12:00pm	Hospitality Room Opens
3:00pm	Hospitality Room Closes
5:00pm	Cocktail Hour / Cash Bar
6:00pm	Farewell Dinner/Entertainment

Farewell Dinner Evening Saturday, September 12th 5:00pm – 9:00 pm

Tonight we will have our traditional farewell for this reunion; cocktails, a nice dinner, with music in the background. After a relaxing day around our hotel, we have this final event. The cocktail hour will start at 5:00pm, and our dinner (3 course, duet entrée meal) will be at 6:00pm. A wonderful event with all your friends, with the opportunity to say a farewell till next year, a night to remember, see you there in your dress ups (Dinner event at hotel).

9:00pm	Banquet Room Closes
9:00pm – 12:00a.m.	Hospitality Room Open

Reunion Registration 2015 – St. Louis, MO.

Mail to: 8250 E Obispo Avenue Mesa, AZ 85212-1618

Inquiries contact George Cornett at (480) 577-6299

Name _____

Group _____ Unit _____

Address _____

Name Tag Names (If Needed)

Phone _____

Wife's Name _____

Guest Name(s) _____

Arrival Date: _____

Departure Date: _____

Unit Registration Fee (Complimentary Hospitality Room) \$10 _____

Discover St Louis City Tour* Thu Sept 10 \$38 _____

Grants Farm & St Charles Tour* Fri Sept 11 \$39 _____

Special Group Dinner Fri Sept 11 \$39 _____

Farwell Dinner Event Sat Sept 12 \$39 _____

All included in Register Fee of \$165 each Total Enclosed # ____ x \$ _____ = _____

Make Checks to 454th BSA (Unit Registration waived if only attending Farwell Dinner)
(Full Refunds, if cancel prior reunion) * See Your Tour Description Information

Free Airport Shuttle Service (airport call board # 26 or call hotel 314-298-3400 # 2)

Southwest (1-800-435-9792), American (1-800-443-7300), many other services to St. Louis and complimentary shuttle service to nearby eateries when available.

454th / 344th Air Force 2015 Reunion (4 nights)
13735 Riverport Drive

Emergency Contact Person:

Name _____

Phone _____

St. Louis, MO. 63045

Our Room Rate Avail, Sep 6 to Sep 15

Hotel Direct 1-314-298-3400 # 5

Hotel Accommodation Reservation

– St. Louis, MO. 2015

(Holiday Inn Express Riverport)

454th AF (Code AFU) 1-314-298-3400 # 1

Hotel Reservation Cut Off Date (to secure \$89 rate) is August 26th, 2015

Hotel Room Reservation 314-298-3400 #

1; Hotel Front Desk 314-298-3400 # 5

Be sure to mention 454th Reunion,

Booking Code AFU – Main Dates Sep 9th – Sep 12th

Main Dates, Sept 9 Wed – Sept 12 Sat

Holiday Inn Express Riverport Hotel

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

Name _____

Address _____

of persons in Room ___ # beds, Rooms ___

Phone _____

Check in, at 3pm Check Out, Noon

Name, if shared room _____

Rate \$89 per room + 15.3% taxes

Arrival Date _____ Depart Date _____

A First Night's Deposit is Required

Credit Card # _____

Exp. _____

Parking at Hotel Free of Charge

Complimentary Breakfast

Final Flights & Obituaries

It is always a sad time when we lose loved ones. These are some more of our finest that we have the disappointing news to pass along to you. They will not be with us at our future reunions physically, but will be with us in spirit and their special stories they have shared with all of us. **GOD BLESS to all of them.**



Waller William Gunkel

May 2, 1921 March 17, 2015

Waller William Gunkel 93 of Eustis passed away on March 17, 2015. He was born in Chicago, Illinois and -moved to Eustis from Michigan in 1981. He was a retired aeronautical engineer having worked for General Motors for 32 years.

Waller was a Veteran having served in the United States Army Air Corp during WWII, as a pilot of the Martin Marauder B26 with the 323rd Bomber Group in the 454th Bomb Squadron and he completed 72 missions. A member of the First Presbyterian Church of Eustis and an active volunteer and guide at the Trout Lake Nature Center of Eustis. He is survived by his wife Jean; they were married for 72 years. Also surviving are his children; Ronald William (Joyce) Gunkel of Jacksonville, Florida, Susan (Gary) Kruchten of Broad Run, Virginia and Paul Steven (Barbara Bravos) Gunkel of Sacramento, California, three grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Memorial services will be held in the First Presbyterian Church of Eustis at 2 PM Sunday with Dr. Leon Bloder Officiating.

Additional Notifications without Obituaries received:

Name:	Date Received:	Date of Passing:
Stumpf, Ray	1-12-15	1-14-11

Directory Updates:

We have received the following changes since the publishing of our December 2013 Newsletter; please update your directory as follows:

Section 1 page 3 – Replace Old Address

Old

HAYDEN, Laverne
2112 Promontory Point Lane
Rancho Cordova, CA. 95670-7269

New

HAYDEN, Laverne
11390 Coloma Road Apt. A206
Gold River, CA. 95670-6319

Section 1 page 5- Replace Old Address

Old

KALLMAN, Ann
1207 Fuhrman Road
Cincinnati, OH. 45215-4001

New

KALLMAN, Ann
5868 Blair Town Hall Road
Grawn, MI. 49637-9670

Section 1 page 8- New Address

Old

STOBLE, Theodore
4301 Stoner Drive Apt. 220
Grove City, OH. 43123-3398

New

STROBLE, Theodore
56 S. Roys Avenue
Columbus, OH. 43204-2503

Missing Members

This is a section where we will list the names and addresses for newsletters mailed out and returned. If you know someone on this list please contact me with an updated address or have them contact me direct if they wish. Their name will only appear in one newsletter after that if they have not been updated then they will be removed from our mailing list.

None since our last newsletter.

Financial Report

Here is our financial report to date for 2015. We would like to thank everyone for their past contributions because that's what keeps us going strong with our organization. I'm sure our next report will be much longer because as the year continues so will our contributions and expenses.

Contributions Dec. 26, 2014 – May 22, 2015

Name	Amount
Harwell, Robert and Helen	\$25.00
Tycott, David	\$25.00
Izdepski, Lisa (Jan)	\$100.00
Graham, Michael (Dad - Harold)	\$200.00

If there were contributions from December 26, 2014 to May 22, 2015 sent that are not posted please contact me (George Cornett) at below address or call me at 480-984-3676.

If you wish to make a contribution to the 454th Bomb Squadron Association please send to 454th BSA c/o George Cornett 8250 E. Obispo Ave. Mesa AZ 85212-1618.

The below balance does not include postage, or printing for this Newsletter mailing.

Balance as of Jan. 1, 2015	\$11,095.37
Contributions	\$350.00
Reunion Monies Rcvd.	\$0.00
Total Received	\$350.00
Expenses	\$0.00
Balance	\$11,445.37

Our Elected Officials

President_____	Frank Johnson
1 st Vice-President____	Howard Cross
2 nd Vice-President____	Frankie Mancuso
3 rd Vice-President____	Robert “Bob” Johnson
Secretary/Treasurer_	George Cornett
Historian_____	Roy Bozych
Sergeant-at-Arms ____	Merlin McDonald
Previous President __	Brad Urey

George Cornett
8250 E Obispo Avenue
Mesa, AZ 85212-1618
480-984-3676
kville93@centurylink.net



HISTORIAN'S HANGER

Roy Bozych - Squadron Historian



Spring 2015

70th Anniversary



This year marks the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII. By the time you receive this newsletter most of the VE day, Victory in Europe celebrations will already have happened. Some of our Veterans and family members participated in these events.

This June Michael Graham is on his way to Earls Colne. He is going to meet with our friend John Camp from the Boxted Air museum. Michael is the son of Capt. Harold Gram Jr. who was a pilot with the 454th

Squadron. John will give Michael a tour of the Boxted Air Museum as well as show him some of the sights around Earls Colne.

July 10th thru the 23rd, Nathan Kline from the 454th Squadron, in conjunction with Specially Tours, is sponsoring a European Battlefield tour. Stops will include Churchill's WWII Bunker in London, The Flying Legends Air Show in Duxford, Utah and Omaha Beaches, Bastogne, Hitler's Eagle Nest in the Bavarian Alps plus other locations. Complete details can be found at their website; <http://spec-tours.com/>

Carleton Rehr wife of Louis Rehr from the 456th Squadron was in Samoussy, France for the 70th Anniversary of VE Day. Samoussy is where A-69 the 323rd BG airbase at Laon-Athies was located. Carleton and Louis were instrumental in helping to place a monument there dedicated to the 323rd BG and all the men who died for the liberation of France. She was asked to say a few words.

Louis Rehr was 456th Squadron CO from February to July 1945. He along with Carleton are the authors of the book "Marauder – Memoir of a B-26 Pilot in Europe in World War II". Louis passed in October of 2011 and was buried at Arlington National

Cemetery with honors. Carleton put together a beautiful little video to celebrate Lou's life. You can view it at <https://vimeo.com/43789494>

And of course I would be remiss if I didn't mention our good friend Vic Lewis from the UK who remembers all our Veterans every year when he places a wreath at the Earls Colne Memorial every March during the Operation Varsity Remembrance.

Come the fall newsletter I'll try to report more on these events and included some pictures.

Flak Bait



Work on the restoration of Flak Bait continues at the National Air and Space Museum in Washington D.C. All of her parts are being examined at the Mary Baker Engen Restoration Hangar. Flak Bait completed 207 combat missions while flying with the 322nd Bomb Group, 449th Squadron. This is more than any other Allied combat aircraft. The only other aircraft to have completed more combat missions was a De Havilland Mosquito which completed 213 missions. Unfortunately

this aircraft was destroyed in a crash at Calgary, Canada two days after V-E Day

Pictured above, Sharon Norquest of the NASM is working to preserve Flak Bait's cosmetic features. Picture is courtesy of the NASM. Additional pictures and information can be found at their website listed below. No completion date for the restoration has been given yet.

http://airandspace.si.edu/collections/artifact.cfm?object=nasm_A19600297000

323rd BG Documentary Film



We are close to wrapping up the 323rd BG documentary that we have been working on for the last several years. With any luck it should be done in time for this year's fall reunion.

After Lars Anderson from Victory Films had pulled all the 323rd BG film clips from the US National Archives he found that there wasn't a lot of film footage from the time the group was based in France at A-69, Laon-Athies. So a search was made to find as many good quality still

pictures from the archives of the National Museum of the USAF and the U.S. National Archives. Additionally Marjorie Spradling and her daughter Nancy were kind enough to allow us to copy the color slides that her husband George took during WWII. George was a pilot with the 454th Squadron and completed 63 combat missions. Some of you may already have seen a few of these fantastic color pictures in Roger Freeman's book "The Ninth Air Force in Colour". These color pictures are an exceptional record of the 323rd BG in action and an outstanding addition to our documentary. Thank you, Marjorie and Nancy.

Martin B-26 Marauder



There is a new B-26 book which recently came out on the market by William Wolf. It's called "Martin B-26 Marauder the Ultimate Look: From Drawing Board to Widow Maker Vindicated". The ISBN number is 978-0-7643-4741-2. It runs about \$56 and is available at Amazon.com as well as other sources.

This comprehensive B-26 book is not for the faint of heart. It contains 640 pages with over 900 photos and drawings plus 20 color profiles. Drawing on knowledge from the MHS archives, Akron archives, NMUSAF archives and personal papers of Peyton Magruder it is everything you wanted to know inside and out about the building of the Martin B-26 Marauder from its first inception to its production. The emphasis of this book is

the plane itself rather than the combat missions it flew.

This is the 5th volume in a series of William Wolf's ultimate look at the AAF bomber. A word of advice to you, if you intend to purchase a copy of this book do it sooner than later. His books tend to sell out fast and there usually isn't a second printing.

American Air Museum in Britian



Looking for some B-26 or 323rd BG pictures? I recently came across an excellent website from the American Air Museum in Britain. It contains about 120 pictures of the 323rd BG taken during WWII with a few that are in

color. Some of these pictures I've never seen before. There website is:
<http://www.americanairmuseum.com/unit/274>

Marauder Men



Without a doubt one of the most comprehensive books ever written covering the history of the 323rd BG was John Moench's book "Marauder Men – An Account of the Martin B-26 Marauder". It covers all the missions the 323rd BG flew during WWII and is loaded with details and pictures. Many of these pictures came from the personal albums of our Veterans which added greatly in the telling of our history. When second or third generations write to me enquiring about their fathers, grandfathers or uncles, this is usually the first book I recommend that they try to purchase. The book is currently out of print and there are no future printings planned.

Recently I have started to see copies of John's book starting to pop up more and more on e-bay. I would like to offer a suggestion. If you come across a copy of "Marauder Men" that someone in the family purchased and no longer wants might I suggest you consider donating it to the 454th Squadron Association? This would be a win – win situation! We could resell it to Veterans family member who was looking for a copy of John's book at a reasonable price. The proceeds of the sale would then go to fund future projects to improve the data base and archives of the 323rd BG for future generations.

There are also two other excellent books on the 323rd BG. They are "**Marauder a Memoir of a B-26 Pilot in Europe in World War II**" that I had mentioned earlier in this newsletter by Louis and Carleton Rehr ISBN 0-7864-1664-5 and "**Strikes 323rd Bomb Group in World War II**" by Ross E. Harlan ISBN 0-9766-463-2-3. Both books are currently available through Amazon.com.

Honor Flights

Our Veterans are becoming fewer and fewer in number. The time is rapidly approaching when soon they will no longer be with us. The WWII Memorial was built for them. If you know of any WWII Veteran who still have not seen the WWII Memorial I urge you to go to either your local or the national website for Honor Flights to see if a trip can be arranged for them. <https://www.honorflight.org/>

Until next Time...

Keep 'em Flying



Roy R. Bozych
49 E Lucas Dr.
Palos Hills, IL 60465-3100
708-870-6605
Historian@323bg.org
<http://www.323bg.org>



Pin



Patch

454th Squadron Order Form

Pins are 1 inch in diameter

Patches are 4 1/2 inches in diameter
and have an iron on backing

Prices include shipping

**Make Checks Payable
to
454th BSA**

Number of pins _____ x \$5 = \$ _____
Number of patches _____ x \$15 = \$ _____
Total \$ _____

Name _____

Street Address _____ **apt #** _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

Phone _____ **e-mail** _____

mail to: Roy Bozych
454th Squadron Historian
49 E Lucas Dr.
Palos Hills, IL 60465-3100

Phone: 708-870-6605

e-mail address historian@323bg.org