



The WOLF HOWL-L-L

December, 2014

GREETINGS TO EVERYONE

Hello everyone, our 39th Annual Reunion (2014) in New Orleans, Louisiana was absolutely fantastic. This year once again we enjoyed the company of the 344th Bomb Group (494th, 495th, 496, and 497th Bomb Squadrons) and a couple of 455th Bomb Squadron members.

Most of our members arrived on Wednesday at our Hotel (The Hilton at New Orleans Airport) where once again we started up our conversations just like we had left each others company yesterday.

Our Hotel (The Hilton) staff were an absolute dream to work with from the very moment we arrived to the end when everyone was going back home, they took care of everyone's needs very quickly. All the staff from the sales department, catering department and set-up crews went above and beyond for all of us. There were many compliments passed to us about the staff as well. We were very glad to hear that everyone had a great time too.

We have confirmed the dates for our 40th Reunion in St. Louis, MO and they are Sep 9-12. We will have all the information in the May 2015 Newsletter.

This year at our Reunion we passed out new Squadron Directories dated September 2014. This is our first update since September 2010. All updates to our directory going forward (May 2015) will reflect only the page locations in our new directory. So, once again, please look at the Directory Updates Section to receive the latest information on new addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, and new members who have recently contacted us. All new emails addresses that we receive will be shared with our

Historian (Roy Bozych). This is very important because this will allow us to provide you with instant information. Once again, we were very pleased to hear that everyone who attended our New Orleans Reunion had a great time and arrived home safely.

On Wednesday (September 17th) we had our registration down at the Hospitality Room which opened 2:00 pm and as the day continued all our members came in as scheduled. Again this year our Hospitality Room opened on time fully stocked and ready to see old friends, listen to stories and share laughs with each other since our last reunion. We also got the hotel to provide us transportation over to an Italian restaurant where we had a great meal with some happy moments included.

On Thursday (September 18th) we asked if we could start our first tour earlier than scheduled since we were going to the World War II museum. We were very fortunate, we got the approval, and started at 10:30. Once we arrived at the museum we were very surprised they let our veterans enter at no cost. We saw the movie which is 45 minutes and in 4 dimension, it was a great film/presentation. It is definitely a must see, it was great! While we were at the museum we had lunch on our own. There were many exhibits there to see and yes, you guessed it, we just didn't have enough time to see everything. I recommend to anyone going in the future to plan on getting there when they open and spend the entire day, so you can see everything.

Next, we were off on the city tour, where we saw downtown, the street where all the prominent citizens used to live, the Superdome, trolley cars in use and the French Quarters and on the way back to the hotel we stopped by a cemetery. We then returned to our hotel and our day was over. Most of us went to a restaurant where we had a great dinner and a lot of fun too!

On Friday (September 19th) we departed the hotel at 11:00 heading to the French Quarters and the Market place. Once we arrived at our destination, in front of Jackson Square with The Cathedral – Basilica of Saint Louis (named after King Louis of France) in the back ground we disembarked our bus. We had about 2 hours of open time to explore the French Quarters and the Market Place. Most of us made our first stop at Café DuMonde to try the infamous beignets. Once we had our beignets, off we went exploring. We all met back at our return point; where we got back on the bus and headed over to enjoy our Riverboat Cruise. When we arrived at our location we boarded The Steamer Natchez. It is one of only two steam powered sternwheelers plying the Mississippi River today. Along our cruise we saw the emergency ships they use that can be deployed anywhere needed, due to catastrophes. The second major point was where a memorial was erected for the Battle of 1812 which was led by Major General Andrew Jackson who defeated the British and went on to become our seventh President of the United States. And our third point was the Dominos Sugar manufacturing plant, the number one producer of sugar in the United States. It was a really enjoyable ride which was about 2 hours. Once again, we loaded up on the bus

and returned to our hotel and refreshed up for our dinner in the hotel. Upon completion of our dinner, the hospitality room once again open up until the last person left.

On Saturday (September 20th) at 10:00am, our Annual Meeting was called to order by our 2nd Vice-President Mr. Howard Cross, and we started the day with the Pledge of Allegiance. Preceded by the reading of our friends/family members we had lost since our last meeting followed by a moment of silence and the playing of Taps. Then, we recognized our members who could not attend (listed below in the Letters and Phone Calls Section). Next, we asked about new attendees, this year our new attendees were Bradford and Di Urey. They are the son and daughter of Brad and Dottie Urey.

President's Report – Howard stated he was presiding over the meeting today since Brad had passed and our 1st Vice-President had resigned prior to our meeting. There were no additional information to report this year.

Secretary/Treasurer Report - discussed was our financial report which will be seen later in our Newsletter.

Historian's Report - (Roy Bozych) who reported that there is someone working on a documentary of the 323rd / 454th and he is not sure when it will be completed. He is not pushing the project due to the fact that the person producing the documentary is also, funding the project. Second, Roy also informed us that our web site is still getting over 500 hits per day. Wow, that's really incredible for us and once again another reflection of the great work Roy has done for the 454th.

OLD Business – ***First Item***, we discussed our dates for our 2015 reunion in St. Louis, MO. We didn't have confirmed dates but we are trying to keep it as close as we can to the same dates. Looking for Sep 9 to Sep12 or Sep 16 to 19, or Sep 23 to 26, or Sep 30 to Oct 3) our confirmed dates will be in our May 2015 Newsletter.

Second item, we voted on purchasing a couple of dozen caps for Roy to pass along at his discretion to people who provide us with new information or items that was directly a part of the 323BG / 454th BS. Roy received those caps at our reunion.

Third Item – Our committee for the challenge coins (Roy Bozych and Scott McEachin) followed-up with a couple of options for them and were addressed at the meeting and information will be posted on the web site for everyone to review and give the committee your input. We are going to have 300 coins made and they are in the process of getting proposals as well.

NEW Business - OK, now onto our new business.

First item, we had was our selection for our 2016 reunion which is scheduled in the Eastern Region. We opened the floor up for proposals and they were: Baltimore, MD., and Myrtle Beach, SC. We opened up the floor for voting and Myrtle Beach was the winner.

Second Item, it was election time, upon completion of our voting the results are listed on page 12 after the financial report.

Third Item, George and Mary Cornett had some “Wolf Head” patches made, they are 4 ½ inches in diameter. These are replicas of the patches that our original 454th BS members wore on their jackets. This can be seen in the original picture posted on the our web site. All members who attended were given one. The balance was given to our historian (Roy Bozych). The patches are available for purchase from our web site.

Fourth Item – A proposal was made that the association allocate \$100.00 for door prizes. Previously Roy was asking for freebees and purchasing some out of pocket. A vote was taken and it was passed unanimously.

Drawing - next, we had our annual raffle that Roy conducts (numbers were pulled by Dottie Urey our first lady) and we had some very nice prizes again this year. Thanks Roy for all the hard work and prizes you acquire for us.

In closing, Howard also stated that if anyone wanted to contribute a donation to the 454th BSA that our secretary/Treasurer will be available to accept your donations following completion of our meeting. Then made a motion to adjourn the meeting, and officially opened the Hospitality Room until 4:00pm.

Once again this year there were some members who did a lot of work to make our reunion a great success either setting-up & maintaining, or working in the hospitality room. They were – Dan & Linda Richey, Howard and Caroline Cross, Scott & Debbie McEachin, Merlin McDonald, Debbie Polanko, and Mary Cornett; we would like to take a moment to say thank you for your dedication which is greatly appreciated. Thanks again for making this a great reunion for everyone to meet and reminisce with each other.

Letters and Phone Calls

Lisa Izdepski – Unable to attend Reunion, tell everyone hello, thanks for newsletter

Olga Amber – Unable to attend Reunion, health issues and no travel partner

George Boyer – Unable to attend Reunion, health issues

Robert Keister – Unable to travel due to wife’s health issues

David and Tess Garvin, unable to attend Reunion, says hello and looking forward to next year in St. Louis

Attendees at our 39th Reunion

This year the 454th BS had 1 veteran, 455th BS had 2 veterans and the 344BG had 4 veterans attend they are identified in photo below and named below in bold print.



In photo above left to right Don Korkowski (344th BG / 494th BS) Robert Cummings (344th BG / 494th BS) Santo Endrizzi (344th BG / 495th BS) Ed Horn (344th BG / 497th BS) William "Bill" Gear (323rd BG/455th BS) Frank Johnson (323rd BG / 454th BS) and not in photo Robert "Bob" Mims (323rd BG / 455th BS).

We had a total of 47 attendees this year; what a great turnout and wow some of the stories once again shared! Of our 47 attendees we had 7 veterans and 40 family members / guests. The list below identifies all attendees:

454th Attendees were:

Frank and Bob Johnson
Dottie Urey
Dan & Linda Richey
Roy Bozych
Frank Mancuso

344th Attendees were:

Ed and Chris (son) Horn
Don Korkowski and Patricia
Riggenback (Guest)
Santo Endrizzi and Marion
Whelpley (Santo's Daughter)

454th Attendees cont:

Scott & Debbie McEachin
Debbie Polanko
Hannah Polanko-Baker
Mary Evans
Ann Southard
Howard and Catherine Cross
Merlin McDonald
Scott Nance
Darlene Johnson
Donna Stowman-LeVan
George & Mary Cornett
Jean Bakka (Guest)
Merry Keith (Guest)
Bradford and Di Urey (son and daughter)
Shelby Jackson (Guest of Dan & Linda Richey)
Ryan (Guest of Shelby Jackson)

344th Attendees cont:

Robert Cummings
Shirley and Carol Fowler
Mary Ellen Gregorich
Mel & Joan Jangard
Eugene R. & Linda Bass
Taylor & Angela Bass

455th Attendees were:

Robert Mims
William (Bill) Gear
Ginger Mims (Daughter of Robert)

Directory Updates

We received the following changes since our May 2014 Newsletter. Please update your directory as follows:

Old Directory (September 2010):

Section 1 page 7- Replace old address

Old

Miller, Luther & Elise
3419 Solano Drive N.
N. Phoenix, AZ 85017-1930

New

Miller, Luther & Elise
13840 Desert Harbor Dr. N # 136
Peoria, AZ 85381-3621

Section 2 page 1- Insert new address

Old

BRAGG, Rick & Paula
7801 LaVista Drive
LaVista, NE 68128-3029

New

BRAGG, Rick & Paula
9810 Edwards Street
LaVista, NE 68128-2517

Section 2 page 5- Add

Section 2 page 2- Add New member

Old

New

HARNED, Judy
1705 Windingridge Drive
Richmond, VA 23238-4134

queenrb@earthlink.net

Ernest Pollard

Section 2 page 3 – Insert email address

Old

McDONALD, Merlin
Go-a66ay@hotmail.com

New

McDONALD, Merlin
rx2@hotmail.com

New Directory (September 2014):

Section 2 page 3 - Insert new email address

Old

NANCE, Scott
scott@abjcpa.com

New

NANCE, Scott
jsnance@gmail.com

All updates forward will refer only on the corresponding pages in our new 2014 Directory.

Missing Members

Here is our latest list of newsletters mail 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.

Mrs. Lou Sobczynski
700 Bradwell Road
Inverness, IL. 60010-5651
Reason – Unable to Forward

Mr. Willard Loh
6471 North Graham Road
Madison, IN. 47250-8464
Reason – Unable to Forward

Mr. Thomas Jimmerson
5300 W. 16th Avenue Apt. 239
Hialeah, FL. 33012-2104
Reason – Deceased – if anyone has an
obit or Date of Deceased please let me
know so we may update our directory.

Ms. Audrey Burt
901 Greenlawn Drive
Hammond, LA. 70401-1706
Reason Unable to Forward

Final Flights”

It is always a sad time when we lose loved ones. These are some 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 will be discussed about their special stories they have shared with all of us. **GOD BLESS all of them.**

Joseph Hauser

Col. Joseph A. Hauser, USAF, Ret. died May 23 at home. Colonel Joe was a veteran of World War II. He was part of the Elite Path-finders, a group that lead the bombers in Europe during the early development of RADAR. His military career spanned from 1942-1965, three war times. He started his career as an instructor pilot. After his retirement he worked for the National Security Agency from 1966-1984. He enjoyed racing cars with the Sports Car Club of America. He won four national championships and 130 races. He raced the Austin Healy Sprite and the Datsun 1600 sports cars. Joe also enjoyed trap shooting with the Prince George's Trap Center in Greenbelt. He was preceded in death by his wife, Lois Marie Hauser, whom he married September 5, 1942 and who died in 2004. Surviving are four children, Joseph A. Hauser II of Naples, FL, William E. Hauser of Detroit, MI, Carol Ann Zimmerman of Springfield, VA and Judith M. Hauser of Hillsborough, NC; two sisters, Edith Marie Hauser of Great Bend, KS and Angela Scanlon of Wichita, KS; nine grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

DOLORES MARIE JOHNSON

1931 - 2014



NAPERVILLE - Dolores Marie Johnson passed away peacefully surrounded by her family on July 19, 2014. Dolores was born in Chicago, IL on June 8, 1931 to Edward G. Gavin and Stephanie M. Gavin (nee Myszkowski). Dolores graduated from Visitation High School in Chicago. She married Frank A. Johnson on April 21, 1951 and lived in Midlothian, IL for 9 years before moving to Naperville, IL in 1960. Dolores was a wonderful, caring mother who enjoyed spending time with her family, spent many family fun summers in Higgins Lake, MI and enjoyed her pets, crafts, cooking, travelling and following politics. Dolores is survived by her husband, Frank A. Johnson, three children, Charlene M. Johnson, Robert E. (Candice) Johnson, and Judith A. (Daniel) Piszczek; the pride of her life were her six grandchildren, Brandon Johnson, Stephanie Johnson, Michelle Johnson, Bradley Johnson, Ryan Piszczek, and Tyler Piszczek; and her brother Jerome Gavin. She was preceded in death by her son, Kenneth F. Johnson and her brother, Edward Gavin.

Notified of Additional Members without obits:

Popvich, John R. 4-19-14	Notified May 24, 2014
Radlein, Robert M. 4-18-2014	Notified May 24, 2014
Jimmerson, Thomas 2014 (no date provided)	Notified June 6, 2014

Financial Report

Here is our financial report to December 26, 2014. We would like to thank everyone for their past contributions because that's what keeps our organization going strong.

Contributions May 16 – December 26, 2014

Name	Amount
Petrasek, Virginia In memory of Fred Petrasek	\$100.00
Schwartzberg, Barbara In memory of Edwin Stewart Jr.	\$100.00
Tycott, David & Goldie	\$25.00
Buffalo, Kenneth	\$50.00
Horned, Julie Pollard	\$100.00
Spradling, Marjorie	\$50.00
Izdepski, Lisa & (Jan)	\$100.00
Lindeberg, Bernice	\$25.00
Mancuso, Frankie	\$30.00
McLeod, R Stan	\$40.00
McLeod, R Stan	\$10.00
Garvin, David	\$25.00
Southard, Ann (in memory of C.B. Bragg)	\$100.00
McDonald, Merlin	\$100.00
Southard, Mary	\$150.00
McEachin, Scott & Debbie	\$200.00
Total	\$1,205.00

Expenses

Debit	Amount	Date	Addl. Comments
Expenses			
Tempe Trophy Shop	\$312.21	3/24/2014	Reorder Unit Hat Pins (Hat Pins 104 ea)
USPS	\$5.80	3/25/2014	Postage - mailed Hat Pins to Roy Bozych
Staples	\$32.39	5/19/2014	9" x 12" envelopes - 2 boxes of 100 for newsletter mailing
Americopy	\$134.65	5/20/2014	Printing, collating and stapling newsletters - 175 ea.
USPS	\$238.00	5/20/2014	Postage for newsletters 175 ea @ \$1.40 ea.
Refund 2014 Reunion (533)		8/5/2014	Wentz, Connie & Tony 344th BG Fam. Med. Issue(CK # 533 - \$378)
Queensboro Shirt Co.	\$342.93	8/26/2014	24 caps ordered for Historian (Roy Bozych) per last meeting
Americopy	\$64.70	8/29/2014	Printing of New Directory (25 Each)
Refund 2014 Reunion (534)		9/13/2014	Otto & Rick Kirkpatrick 344BG Fam. Med.I Issue (CK # 534 - \$378)
Sam's Club	\$341.94	9/16/2014	Refreshments for Hospitality Room

Walmart	\$157.14	9/16/2014	Refreshments for Hospitality Room
Roy Bozych	\$274.04	9/17/2014	Refund for 2013 Historian Expenses (CK # 535)
Steamboat Natchez Gift Shop	\$14.99	9/19/2014	Purchase Nachez Riverboat sketch for meeting door prize
SCCS	\$5,660.00	9/19/2014	Reunion tours (38 and 40) and Friday Dinner (44)
Walmart	\$11.43	9/20/2014	Additional Refershments for Hospitality Room
The Hilton Hotel	\$1,398.86	9/22/2014	Banquet dinners (41) and Audio Visual (\$169.00)
Refund 2014 Reunion	\$17.00	10/4/2014	Refund forDon Korkowski WW II Museum (CK # 538)
Refund 2014 Reunion	\$17.00	10/4/2014	Refund for Robert Cummings WW II Museum (CK # 539)
Refund 2014 Reunion	\$17.00	10/4/2014	Refund for Frank Johnson WW II Museum (CK # 540)
Refund 2014 Reunion	\$0.00	10/4/2014	Refund for Bill Gear WW II Museum (CK # 541) check returned as donation (\$17.00) voided check (10-17-14)
Refund 2014 Reunion	\$17.00	10/4/2014	Refund for Edward Horn WW II Museum (CK # 542)
Refund 2014 Reunion	\$17.00	10/4/2014	Refund Santo Endrizzi WW II Museum (CK # 543) to Marion Whelpley
	\$0.00		
Total	\$ 9,074.08		
Credits			
SCCS	\$102.00	10-Oct	Refund for veterans WW II museum admission (6 x 17)
Total	\$102.00		
Total Expenses	\$8,972.08		

The above information does include printing and postage for December 2014 Newsletters for mailings.

Balance as of Jan. 1, 2014	\$11,635.01
Contributions	\$1,205.00
Reunion Monies Rcvd.	\$7,699.00
Total Received	\$8,904.00
Expenses	\$8,972.08
Balance	\$11,566.93

If there were contributions from May 16, 2014 to December 26, 2014 that are not posted please contact me (George Cornett) at email kville93@centurylink.net ,or call me at 480-984-3676 or write me at address below.

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.

Please make all checks out to 454th BSA.

Our Elected Board Members

Current Board Members:

President _____ Frank Johnson
1st Vice-President _____ Howard Cross
2nd Vice-President _____ Frankie Mancuso
3rd Vice-President _____ Robert “Bob” Johnson
Secretay/Tressurer _____ George Cornett
Historian _____ Roy Bozych
Sergeant-at-Arms _____ Merlin McDonald

Previous Board Members:

President _____ Brad Urey
1st Vice-President _____ Dan Richey
2nd Vice-President _____ Howard Cross
3rd Vice-President _____ Rick Bragg
Secretary/Treasurer _____ George Cornett
Historian _____ Roy Bozych
Sergeant-at-Arms _____ David Garvin

**We hope everyone had a Merry
Christmas and we also wish everyone
a Happy and prosperous New Year!**

George and Mary

C.

454th Bombardment Squadron

Association Reunion Dates and Locations

1-July, 1976	Myrtle Beach, SC
2-July, 22 nd to 24 th 1977	Fairborn/Dayton, OH
3-July 20 th to 22 nd 1978	Cocoa Beach, FL
4-July 19 th to 22 nd 1979	Tampa, FL
5-July 17 th to 20 th 1980	Hampton, VA
6-July 15 th to 18 th 1981	Colorado Springs, CO
7-July 8 th to 11 th 1982	Gettysburg, PA
8-July 13 th to 17 th 1983	San Francisco, CA
9-April, 10 th to 15 th 1984	Charleston, SC
10-May 15 th to 18 th 1985	San Antonio, TX
11-Aug 13 th to 17 th 1986	Oshkosh, WI
12-Sept 2 nd to 6 th 1987	Arlington, VA /Washington D.C.
13-Aug 31 st to Sept 4 th 1988	Dayton, OH
14-Sept 6 th to Sept 10 th 1989	Las Vegas, NV
15-Aug 29 th to Sept 2 nd 1990	Bellevue/Seattle, WA
16-Sept 18 th to Sept 22 nd 1991	New Orleans, LA
17-Sept 9 th to Sept 13 th 1992	Scottsdale, AZ
18-Sept 15 th to Sept 19 th 1993	Orlando, FL
19-Sept 7 th to Sept 11 th 1994	Natick /Boston, MA
20-Nov 1 st to Nov 5 th 1995	Nashville, TN
21-Sept 18 th to Sept 22 nd 1996	Omaha, NE
22-Sept 24 th to Sept 28 th 1997	San Diego, CA
23-Aug 26 th to Aug 30 th 1998	New Orleans, LA
24-Sept 22 nd to Sept 25 th 1999	Savannah, GA
25-Oct 4 th to Oct 7 th 2000	Tucson AZ
26-Oct 17 th to 21 st 2001	Houston, TX
27-Oct 2 nd to Oct 6 th 2002	Myrtle Beach, SC
28-Oct 8 th to Oct 12 th 2003	Tampa, FL
29-Sept 22 nd to Sept 26 th 2004	Branson, MO
30-Sept 1 st to Sept 5 th 2005	Baltimore/MD-Washington DC
31-Oct 2 nd to Oct 7 th 2006	Las Vegas, NV
32-Oct 3 rd to Oct 6 th 2007	Dayton, OH
33-Sept 10 th to Sept 13 th 2008	San Antonio, TX
34-Oct 7 th to Oct 12 th 2009	Colorado Springs, CO
35-Sept 22 nd to Sept 25 th 2010	Norfolk, VA
36-Sept 28 th to Oct 2 nd 2011	Minneapolis, MN
37-Oct 24 th to Oct 28 th 2012	Tucson, AZ
38-Sep 25 th to Sep 28 th 2013	Charleston, SC
39-Sep 17 th to Sep 20 th 2014	New Orleans, LA



HISTORIAN'S HANGER

Roy Bozych - Squadron Historian



Fall 2014

Good Things Come to Those Who Wait



Bob Laudie is having a very good year. For starters, Santa came early this year for Bob. On Thursday December 18th Santa delivered a very wonderful present with the help of a Fed Ex delivery person.

A few years ago Bob submitted his information for the French Legion of Honor to the French Consulate in Chicago. Well the wheels of bureaucracy grind very slowly. Then one day Fed Ex rings the doorbell. Bob opened his package and enclosed was his French Legion of Honor. Normally the medal is presented at a very lavish ceremony either in France or at the nearest consulate here in the US. However Bob is 95 now and it is not as

easy to get around as it used to be. So in Bob's case they made an exception and sent it to him. That's Bob above with the Medal. In the background are Bob other medals from WWII as well as a drawing of his B-26 "Little Lulu" 41-31879 RJ-Q done for him by Christian Dieppedalle and very talented artist from France.

Congratulations Bob! The French Legion of Honor is crowning compensation for exemplary service to our country during the war.



There has been another episode in Bob's life that we have been working on for quite some time now. Finally, we have been able to close the book on that matter. You may remember some stories I did in past newsletters about Bob trying to find the family of Ben Wilson to return a Christmas card Ben had given him during the war. That's Ben to the left and a copy of the Christmas card is on the next page. Ben was a lead Navigator with the 322nd BG.

He also was a friend from Bob's home town of Kansas City. They would meet on leave whenever they could in London. On one leave Ben didn't show. It wasn't till after the war Bob learned he had been shot down on July 7th, 1944 while on a mission to take out the German HQ for the V-1 sites in France.

With Wilson being a very common name it was very hard to find any current family members. While the research yielded a lot of facts about what happened to Ben we just couldn't make that final connection to the family.

Getting pretty frustrated, one day last fall I read an article about Jackie Flannery, a volunteer from the Lacy-Davis foundation who helped a boy from France return some dog tags from a WWII veteran he had found in France, back to his family in the US. It turns out the Veteran; a WWII fighter pilot had misplaced them while serving in France.

Figuring I had nothing to lose I sent Jackie an e-mail requesting her help. She was kind enough to quickly respond and agree to help. In a few weeks she was able to accomplish what I had been trying to do for a few years. Find Ben's family or as we found out Andy's family. That is what in his family called him. Excited e-mails were exchanged and phone calls made. Information was traded and finally after 70 years Bob was able to return a treasured memento to Andy's family.



Several Iowa newspapers did some nice stories about the event. Attached at the end of the newsletter is one from the Iowa City Press-Citizen.

Boxted Airfield Museum Visits

It's been a busy year for the Boxted Museum including three separate visits from family members of the 323rd Bomb Group. The first was from Jan Foster. That's Jan pictured left next to the tail section of "Mr. Shorty" 41-35253 RJ-S. Her dad, Walter was a lead Bombardier with the 456th Squadron. Jan was in the UK doing research for a historical novel that she wants to write about B-26 Marauder Crews. John Camp from the museum was also able to arrange a visit for her to the

airfield at Earls Colne and a visit to the grounds of Marks Hall. All were very valuable visits for Jan's research.



The next visit was by Patty Gray the wife of Dick one of the pilots of "Mr. Shorty". That's Patty on the left with her hands on the throttles of RJ-S. It must have been quite a thrill to have been able to handle the same B-26 throttles that her husband did during the war. She was accompanied by her son Ken and his wife Wanda. Wanda set up this remarkable trip for the family. They too visited the



airfield at Earls Colne and the Marks Hall Estate. An enjoyable time was had by all.

Finally in November Dick Gray's daughter, Sherry and her husband Tom, pictured above right were also able to visit the Boxted Museum and Earls Colne. Again what a thrill it must be to be able to see and touch a plane your dad flew in during WWII.

Avon Park Airfield and Bombing Range Needs You Help



Kathy Couturier, Cultural Resources Manager and archaeologist for Avon Park airfield and bombing range is working on a book for the 75th anniversary of the base and is looking for any pictures or stories about the base and bombing range that you might have. If any of our Veterans were initially based there or if their family members have any pictures or stories about their Veterans who were there during the war she would sure like to hear from you. Her contact information is listed below.

Kathy Couturier
Cultural Resources Manager, Archaeologist
Avon Park Air Force Range
29 South Blvd
Avon Park, FL 33825
863-452-4288
kathy.couturier.ctr@us.af.mil

The 323rd Bomb Group Documentary Film



The 323rd BG documentary film is still a work in progress but we are getting close to the end. Lars from Victory Films found so many great movie clips of the 323rd BG, many of which are in color, in the National Archives that he was finding very hard to edit the film footage down to a single DVD disc. So rather than have to leave a lot of that excellent film footage on the cutting room floor, Lars is going to make this a 2 disc project. In addition he has a special secret bonus that he is going to add to the DVD set

for us. When completed not only will this be an exceptional historical record of the 323rd BG but also marvelous representation of the part the B-26 Martin Marauder played in WWII.

454th Squadron Jacket patches



Every so often we've been asked if we were going to ever get any more 454th patches. So George went to a jobber and had some made for us. It's a very nice cloth embroidered patch four and a one half inches in diameter with an iron on backing. So you have the option of stitching or ironing it to you jacket or shirt. Cost is \$15 per patch and that includes shipping. There is an order form attached to the back of the newsletter.

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>

WWII veteran finds friend's family after 70 years

Josh O'Leary, Iowa City Press-Citizen 11:53 a.m. CDT May 26, 2014



Bob Laudie has kept a fragile Christmas card tucked away with his war mementos for 70 years. On the card, which at some point was cut into four segments, are photos of a smiling woman and a baby, alongside a picture of their husband and father — a grinning serviceman superimposed over a formation of warplanes in the clouds.

Every so often, Laudie would come across that card from Christmas 1943 and for a moment wonder what became of that woman and child, whom he never met. And he would remember the man who gave him the card, his friend Ben "Andy" Wilson, who, like Laudie, was a bomb navigator for the Army Air Forces during World War II.

Laudie made it home from the war. Wilson did not.

Laudie, now 94 and living in Iowa City, has been trying for years to track down Wilson's family with the hope of passing along the card and sharing with them his memories of his friend.

Last week — just a few days before Memorial Day, fittingly — Laudie finally found them. With the help of two Illinois-based World War II historians, Laudie connected with Claire Bottero, the baby in the photo, now 71 and living in Washington State.

"I had that card all these years, and I often thought, 'I bet that baby would love to have this card,'" said Laudie, who today lives at Oaknoll Retirement Community in Iowa City. "I wondered where she is now and what she's doing. I'm so excited now." Laudie, a bombardier and navigator aboard a B-26, flew 73 missions across Europe during World War II. Among his many decorations are 13 Air Medals, a Distinguished Flying Cross and the Purple Heart he earned after surviving a mid-air shelling and crash landing.

He met Wilson in 1943 while both were officers with the Air Force and stationed in England. Both were natives of the Kansas City area and they became fast friends. Though they served in different bomb groups — Wilson was in the 322nd

and Laudie in the 323rd — the men would get together whenever they were both on leave.



Bob Laudie, a captain with the Army Air Forces, is pictured in London during World War II

On one such 24-hour pass in July 1944, Laudie and Wilson had made plans to meet up at a west-end London pub called the Goat and Compass, their usual place to toss back a pint before heading to dinner. But, on this day, Wilson didn't show up. Laudie waited and waited at the pub, he remembers, and after a few drinks left fearing the worst. It wasn't until after the war that Laudie learned his friend was classified as missing in action and presumed dead.

After the war, Laudie settled into a career as a school administrator in California. He had two daughters with his wife, Mildred, who died in 2012, several years after the couple moved to Iowa City to be closer to their daughter, Judy.

But Laudie never forgot about Wilson, and over the past decade or two, often thought about tracking down his friend's family. But without knowing the name of the daughter, and with Ben Wilson not exactly a unique name to search for in records, he didn't have much luck.

Several years ago, he enlisted the help of Roy Bozych, a World War II historian from Chicago whose father served in Laudie's bomber group. Bozych, in turn, recently reached out to Jackie Flannery, another World War II historian from Aurora, Ill., and a researcher with the Lacey Davis Foundation, a group that works with veterans' families to arrange trips to war memorials. After Bozych contacted her last month, Flannery used grave records and online obituaries to track down several of Wilson's relatives across the U.S., eventually connecting last week with Bottero herself — the daughter pictured on the Christmas card — in Washington state.

Bottero said she was surprised when she received an email this week from Flannery, with a scanned photo of the Christmas card attached. Bottero said she had that same picture in her baby book, but the album had been stolen six years ago.



A collection of several, but not all, of Bob Laudie's medals hang on his wall in his Iowa City home

"I will be delighted to have the card," Bottero said in an email. Bottero said her mother remarried after Wilson's death and rarely spoke about her first husband. Bottero, who was adopted when she was 9 by her Stepfather and learned more about her

birth father only when she wrote an autobiography for a class.

"I will look forward to talking with Bob Laudie at some point," Bottero said by email. "It is a very rare opportunity to get to know the man who was my father."

It's yet to be determined how or when Laudie will get the card back to the family. Ideally, Flannery would like to coordinate a meeting between all involved, though it might be difficult given Laudie and Bottero's ages and the distance between them, she said.

"The most compelling thing to the Wilson story was that there was this postcard, and the 94-year-old veteran wanting to connect to a friend's daughter he didn't know, how long he searched and how many people he tried to get to help," Flannery said. "It's beautiful" said Laudie's daughter, Judy Pfohl of Iowa City: "Suddenly everything is just coming together. Dad is just bouncing."

Through military records, Bozych and Flannery also have been able to shed further light on Wilson's death for Laudie.

According to a missing aircrew report, on July 8, 1944, enemy fighters shot down the B-26 in which Wilson was the navigator during a night mission over a German-occupied part of France. Wilson was able to parachute out of his plane, but was shot dead by a 17-year-old German soldier, Flannery said. Wilson was initially buried by the French in a cemetery in Drucat, France, but was later moved to the American Cemetery in France, Flannery said. His body was moved a third and final time after the war to Arlington National Cemetery, where he rests today.

"It's so important to keep these stories alive and the memories of these men who lost their lives," Flannery said. "Our world would be very different if it wasn't for that greatest generation." For Laudie, returning the Christmas card to Wilson's family will

mark a sort of closure for him all these years after leaving the pub that night without his friend.

"I'd always wondered what happened to him," Laudie said.

(All Photos: Josh O'Leary/Iowa City Press-Citizen)

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