FORCE FOR FREEDOM-

E PYRAMIDIERS

The Newsletter of the 98th Bomb Group/Wing Veterans Association

June 2017

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Message from the President

Special Note: The first part of Bill's message was "penned" much earlier this year; please be sure to read his "Late Breaking News" on page 2.

Happy 2017! I know you will be reading this much later, but I write this during the second week of the new year. A new year always seems to bring change—for Dennis, it will be a new home and new address, and for me it will be a new left knee, and we are expecting a new grandchild in August. All of us have a new calendar, and I'm sure many of us start the year missing a family



Bill West

member, friends or loved ones. Our country has a new commander-inchief and our association has some new leaders.

As much as we look towards the new, and ponder the ramifications of change, we should also spend some time in reflection. If you look at the photos from our San Antonio reunion published in our last newsletter, there is one of me at our banquet with a pensive look on my face, as if I am concerned about my new position as your association president. Well, I was, but not because of fear of leadership, but because I knew what a great leader I was replacing. Our association has been SO blessed by Bill Seals' leadership these past nine years! He devoted himself 100% to his goal of making the Pyramidiers one of the best military alumni associations in our country, donating countless amounts of hours and money towards that goal. He has served as editor of our newsletter, and is working on restoring our web site. For those of us lucky enough to attend our Dayton reunion in August, 2015, Bill led our association in the dedication of the 98th Bomb Group memorial on the grounds of The National Museum of the United States Air Force. You should have seen

Message from the President continued from page 1

him, looking so sharp in his dress blues, voice quivering with emotion at the culmination of a long, difficult task that was finally, and very successfully, complete. On behalf of all of us blessed to be associated with the 98th, thank you Bill so much for all of your efforts!

Speaking of the Air Force Museum, because Linda and I live within five miles of the museum, we receive news you may not have seen. The headline in the Dayton Daily News, January 19, 2017, issue was "Museum will unveil 'Memphis Belle' in 2018." After more than a decade of restoration efforts, the famous WWII B-17 Flying Fortress will be unveiled on May 17, 2018, the 75th anniversary of the crew's 25th mission over Europe. You probably already know this, but the Memphis Belle was one of the first United States Army Air Force B-17s to complete 25 combat missions over Europe with her entire crew intact. They returned home to help raise funds for the war effort, and a Hollywood movie was produced about her in 1990 (I saw it at the base theater on Randolph AFB). To make way for Memphis Belle, the B-17 "Shoo-Shoo Baby" will move out of the Museum and eventually be housed at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Washington, DC.

We transferred to Wright-Patterson in 1994 and Shoo-Shoo Baby has always been there. I shall miss her, but replacing her with the *Memphis Belle* is a definite upgrade!

LATE BREAKING NEWS:

As many of you know, Dennis announced at our reunion in San Antonio that our next reunion would be in Washington, DC. Unfortunately, we will not be meeting there this year. You may know of Dennis's illness and untimely death. In addition to this loss, our new reunion coordinator, Gary Schinsing, is currently helping his wife fight a difficult medical condition. These circumstances have caused us to move the reunion close to Gary's home in Arizona. I am proud to announce our next reunion will be in Tucson, Arizona, October 30th through November 3rd. Details will follow in a separate letter, but Gary has done a superb job organizing this reunion under the most difficult conditions. Hope to see all of you in Tucson!

Best wishes,

Bill

Message from the Secretary/Treasurer

As many of you may have come to realize, much has taken place since I first composed this message for the February newsletter, not the least of which was the delay of its publishing. This will be a special "double issue" (February-May), as they say, that should get us back heading in the right direction, and on schedule once again.

"As we look forward to a new year and new beginnings. it is not without the memories of the past and the people we have been fortunate to know." And so ended the first part of that February message. Little did I realize that this was going to hold so much meaning for our membership, as we lost four additional members, three within weeks of each other.

Art Plouff / October 14, 2016

Another of our own from the Greatest Generation, Art was a fixture in this organization, and a sort of self-appointed 'historian' when I first started coming with my Dad. As with so many other young men



responding to the call to serve their country, after Ken was a very spiritual man, as evidenced by the the unprovoked attack of our military base at Pearl wonderful family he and his wife raised. Many of you Harbor on December 7th, 1941, Art joined the United will remember two of his 'boys' helping people on State Army Air Corps. He was a Staff Sergeant (Main and off the busses at reunions in addition to loading Chief) of a ground crew responsible for keeping the scooters and wheel chairs. We miss you Ken... B-24 bombers flying in the European North African Hubert Clemmons / February 10, 2017 Middle Eastern Theater, and the Italian campaigns Another of our own, a hero, during World War II. Art was a member of the 344th and a member of the Greatest Bomb Squadron, and the legendary 98th Bomb Group Generation is gone from us. After acknowledged for their heroism in the famed Ploesti graduating from Lebanon High low level bombing missions to wipe out Hitler's oil.

In June of 1996, Arthur was an honorary pallbearer Heights Military Academy for for the funeral in Arlington National Cemetery of his one year before enlisting in the commanding officer, Colonel John R. "Killer" Kane, United States Army Air Corp recipient of the U.S. Military's highest award, the serving during World War II as Medal of Honor. Art loved his country, his family, and a co-pilot of a B-24 in the 98th Bomber Group, which this organization. flew sixteen missions in the European Theatre.

Becky Wysocki (Mrs. George) / December 8, 2016

A delightful man, and a true southern gentlemen, Hubert Another 2016 loss and person we will greatly miss Clemmons was a 'regular' at reunions, coming often Becky, wife of George (who always read the MIA poem with his sons and daughter. Even as the progression at our reunions). She was always a barrel of fun-the of Parkinson's made it more difficult for him to get life of the party. Can anyone who was at our Cincinnati around unassisted, he was a trooper and went with the Reunion ever forget her doing the 'Chicken Dance' at group as much as possible. Towards the end, he was that beer garden?! She was a hoot! We are so glad that even still talking about going to Washington D.C.! she was able to attend a few more reunions with us in Dr. Stanley Siberski, DDS / February 21, 2017 the past few years.

Ken Laninga / January 31, 2017

He served his country during the Korean War as a proud member of the US Air Force, serving as a radio operator. When Ken came to us at a reunion in Tucson we needed a Secretary/Treasurer, and I suspect when he



needed us to help fill his life after the loss of his wife. And it turned out to be a match 'made in heaven.' He was very meticulous about his duties and devoted to the group. Until later years he never missed a reunion and was a faithful member of that group of 'crazy kids' who stayed out late and laughed way too much!

School, Hubert attended Castle



You may remember Stan from past reunions including

one where we, along with his children, helped to celebrate he and his wife, Regi's, anniversary. He served in the United States Army Air Corps during World War II in the 98th Bomb Group, as a B-24 tail-gunner and was honorably discharged in 1945



with the rank of Staff Sergeant. He enjoyed seeing the B-24 Liberator warplane when it came to Chester County, and was able to give the tour of the plane and a few war stories along with it.

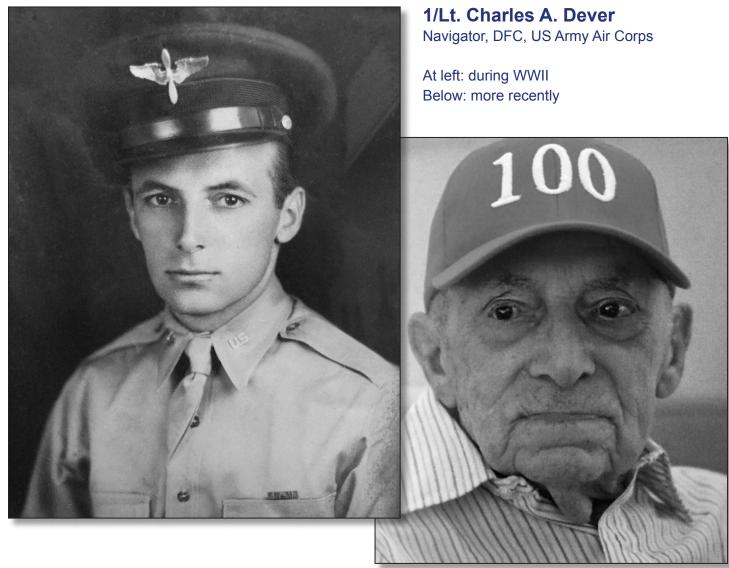
His son Doug wrote: "Unfortunately we all knew this day would arrive..... Realizing his joy from attending 'The Bomb Group Reunion' and how much fun we had being there with him on some of the years,

For The Record

Address Changes

		- 3 -							
L-NAME	FIRST	МІ	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIP	MBM	AC	SQD
Andrew	Mrs. Elizabeth Ann	Day	1814 Round Spring Dr	Kingwood	ТΧ	77339	Н	B-24	344
Cheche	Mrs. Margaret		11 Secretario Way	Trenton	NJ	08690	Н	B-24	343
Duncan	Mrs. Charlotte		123 Sunnybrook Circle N	Ormond Beach	FL	32174	Н	B-47	A&E
Dupuy	Mrs. Jorene	W	173 Grey Eagle Dr	Shreveport	LA	71115	Н	B-47	344
Henry	Mrs. Mary (Seldon)	E.	241 Reister Dr	Hamilton	ОН	45013	Н	B28	345
Jenkins	Mrs. Mavis (Frank)	R.	PO Box 171	Brownfield	ME	04010	Н	B-24	345
Johnson	Mrs. Nanette (Ramo	ond)	1001 Plantation Island Dr S, #334	St Augustine	FL	32080	Н	B-24	
Kendall	Mrs. James		6021 Grand Lodge Ave, Apt 316B	Papillion	NE	68133	Н	B-47	345
Scroggins	Mrs. Kenneth		16721 Mc Phearson Ave	Lake Elsinore	CA	97124	Н	B-24	344
Shryock	Mrs. Dee		G Rivertrail Ct	Whitefish	MT	59937	Н	B-24	415
Bidwell	Jason		346 Congress St, Unit 501	Boston	MA	02210	ASSOC	B-24	343
Schinsing	Simone	М.	2263 Wilmar Ave	Oceano	CA	93445	ASSOC	B-29	345
Schinsing	Gary	R.	14713 W Doll Ct	Surprise	AZ	85374	ASSOC	B-29	345
Strauss	Suzanne	R.	5715 Highway 85 N, #753	Crestview	FL	32536	ASSOC	B-24	344
Taylor	James	Α.	PO Box 14	Allyn	WA	98524	ASSOC	B-24	344
Chrispin	Grant	W.	5607 Chippewa Falls St	Dublin	ОН	43016	ASSOC	B-24	345
Lindell	Daniel		7808 N Morton St, Apt 735	Spokane	WA	99208	ASSOC		
Cotter	Edmund	W.	3755 Peachtree Rd NE	Atlanta	GA	30319	MBR	B-24	343
Daniels	James	L.	2179 Campbell Rd	Montgomery	AL	36111	MBR	B-24	415
De Palma	Leonard	J.	67 Tadmuck Rd, Apt 219	Westford	MA	01886	MBR	B-29	345
Geiger	Floyd	J.	520 E Holland Ave, Apt E102	Spokane	WA	99218	MBR	B-29	343
Hartel	Robert	W.	619 Sappington St	Centrailia	МО	65240	MBR	B-24	345
Magon	Arthur	G.	6927 N Cincinnati St	Spokane	WA	99208	MBR	B-29	344
Pitts	Denny	L.	303 E William David Pkwy	Metairie	LA	70005	MBR	B-29	345
Pladars	Zigurds		707 Sunrise Ave, Apt 356	Roseville	CA	95661	MBR	B-47	345
Pressley	David		1288 Rockcut Rd	Forest Park	GA	30297	MBR	B-47E	OMS
Sells	Thelmon (Roy)	L.	500 Coit Road, Apt 248	Plano	ТΧ	75075	MBR	B-47	343
Stauffer	Robert	E.	34 Hobart St, Apt 104	Southington	СТ	06489	MBR	B-29	343
Victor	Donald	В.	414 Charlescarn Dr	Powell	ОН	43065	MBR	B-29	345
White	Van	Н.	9560 Keeneland Dr	Brentwood	ΤN	37027	MBR	B-29	345
Seal	Kenneth	В.	399 E Los Rincones	Green Valley	ΑZ	85614	MBR	B-29	343

Our Thanks to a Recent Contributor...





For The Record continues on page 10

If you had the opportunity to read the previous issue of **THE PYRAMIDIERS** (December 2016), you would have seen 1/Lt Charles A. Dever's account of "*THE ARMADA*." At the time of the previous publication, we had yet to receive the photos above which show the author during his WWII days as well as more rectently—on the occasion of his 100th birthday.

Thank you, Mr. Dever, for sharing your story!

Reunions

I look forward to our reunions, held each and every year, By a group of men who fought in a war, With a most fabulous plane called a B-24 To listen to their stories, of how it was to fly, To bomb a target in a foreign land, after hours in the sky. Bringing it back all shot to hell, with dead and wounded men, Knowing that tomorrow, you do it all over again. Some stories are told by ground crews, Of what happened way back then. And there's a pride that swells within me, For I was one of them. Many of these men were PRISONERS OF WAR. Who crash landed with their B-24, They have some wonderful stories to tell, Of the many months they spent in hell. We had the best of leaders, and one was JOHN R. KANE. A product of old BAYLOR U. who brought us all our fame. Of all the stories that's been told, There was none so daring, or so bold, As the August 1st raid in forty three, By the 98th BOMB GROUP from BENGAZI. The target was PLOESTI, deep on Rumanian soil, And we paid one helluva price, to deprive them of their oil. As I sit among these heroes, of mighty WORLD WAR II, It's hard to even imagine, what they've all been through.

Each one has a different story, about what they did in the war, But the subject always comes back to the love of their B-24. Their wives seem to enjoy these reunions. They must be SAINTS from above. To hear their men talk of their B-24s, And know that they share in their love, Their MEDALS are all tarnished, their RIBBONS worn and frayed, These men are getting old now, but their memories never fade. On the third of February in forty two, The 98th was created with out much ado. It went on to become the best in the war, Flying that fabulous B-24. It's coming up on FIFTY YEARS, since the 98th was born. We even had a role to play, in a war called DESERT STORM. We wind up with a big banquet, and toast with a glass of cheer, With a blessing from GOD for good health, So that we'll all be back next year. And when we have our moment of silence, And bow our heads to pray, I hope GOD will hear my plea, And reunite us all some day.

Dedicated to the Legendary 98th Bomb Group Arthur Plouff, 344th 1992

$\bullet \quad \bullet \quad \bullet \quad \bullet$

My First Mission

On boarding the plane, as I closed the camera hatch, I discovered the plane had no camera. Lining up for take-off was no time to try to correct the mistaken crew assignment. So, I became a photographer without a camera, but I did have a gun. With no camera to operate, my job was cut in half I was now free to concentrate only on manning the gun, the more important half. The plane with the camera, I was told later, had been shot down.

On our way, climbing to altitude, standing in the open hatch of my gun position I had a sightseer's view of an early morning sunrise. The horizon, made of thin layers of translucent clouds, was just beginning to light up with the colors of the rising sun, like a painting, tranquil, peaceful, a grand beautiful panorama.

My sightseeing was cut short by the drone of our engines bringing me back to the real and grim purpose of this, my first mission. Here I was, by choice, in harms way, and wondering what lay ahead. From a relatively safe office job I had volunteered for combat duty. I traded my typewriter for a huge camera, a 50 caliber machine gun, plus a 45 caliber pistol. I was trained to operate the camera that was used to photograph the trajectory of the bombs as they fell and their impact on the target. However, having had no formal aerial gunnery training, I was concerned about my ability to perform as a gunner. My only aerial gunnery training had consisted of flying low, skimming the Adriatic Sea and firing at the water surface ahead of our flight to create geysers that served as targets as we flew by. As Sergeant Major of the IV Bomber Command HQ in San Francisco, I did receive rifle training. I also went through a course of skeet shooting at Hamilton Field, across the bay from San Francisco. The skeet instructor was Andy Devine, the movie actor, who was an expert skeet shooter.

What lay ahead was all too soon evident by the muffled, near-hit, black bursts of a heavy and accurate barrage of anti-aircraft fire. Minutes from the IP (Initial Point of bomb run) we lost an engine. On three engines the plane could not keep up with the formation and we were left behind. We were so close to the target that it was decided to complete the bomb run alone. Going into the target I was wounded by flak on my left leg below the knee. After "Bombs Away," going out through a sky full of exploding shells, I was wounded three more times; on my left thigh and knee, and a small wound on the back of my neck. Unable to use my left leg I was still able to keep standing on my right leg by holding onto my gun.

As we emerged from the flak barrage we suddenly found ourselves being escorted by six Focke-Wuff-190 fighters, three on each side, but out of gun range and showing no intent of attack. A seventh fighter, initially undetected was hiding up in the sun. We flew along with our German escort for several long and tense minutes. The Germans were clearly letting us take our time to consider that in our condition, damaged and limping back to base alone on three engines, our only hope for survival was to surrender. Also, they probably assumed that we had dead and wounded aboard needing immediate medical attention that only they, at this point, could provide. Their objective, in addition to taking prisoners, was to gain possession of our plane. Expecting us to surrender, they were waiting for us to do so by lowering our landing gear so they could then lead us to their airfield. (The German Luftwaffe used our captured airplanes to fly up to our formations and radio our location, course, altitude and speed to their fighters and antiaircraft gunners below.)

When they realized we were ignoring their offer and had opted instead to fight our way through, the first

TARGET: Oil Refineries, Bucharest, Romania May 7,1944

to attack was the fighter waiting unseen up in the sun. As I cleared the jammed gun the waist gunner beside His fire knocked out our radio, disabled the top, tail, me stood up looking for his parachute. Preparing to and ball turrets, and severely wounded the ball turret bailout he snapped his parachute onto the front of his gunner in his right thigh. damaged harness. With our radio shot out I had a hard time using sign language to finally make him aware The three fighters on my side then peeled off in a close of his useless harness. He had narrowly escaped from line formation. I opened fire, but not in short bursts as being hit by a 20 mm shell that went down the full required. Instead, I fired without stopping and kept a length of his back without touching him. However, steady stream of tracers on the targets. From their flight the clothing on his back was torn to shreds and his position, and lined up on a trajectory they had to follow parachute harness was left hanging by threads. Also, for a successful attack, there was no way those fighters the severed wires of his heated suit gave him a burn could avoid flying into my line of fire without being that earned him the Purple Heart medal. Crouching on hit. Hit they were and down the three went, having the floor saved his life. Had he been standing he would practically shot themselves down. have been hit in the chest.

I then looked back behind me and found the other waist With no gun fire from our three turrets the two remaining gunner crouched on the floor appearing wounded. fighters continued their attack from six o'clock low, Looking up, in the distance, still out of gun range, I shooting up and flying into a loop showing us their spotted the other fighters just peeling off to attack, armored bottoms. Standing on one leg alternating on so I hopped over to the other side to man that gun. the two waist guns, I could barely bring fire to bear on These fighters followed the same tactic of formation the fighters from that angle. The guns were almost out and trajectory that the others had and flew right into of ammunition, and I was beginning to have trouble the 50 caliber stream of my tracers, shooting down the standing. When I finally collapsed I felt it was only a first two fighters. As the second fighter went down, matter of time before we would be shot down. Lying my gun jammed. Those frantic seconds facing the fire on the floor, still holding onto the gun with one hand I of the third fighter, with my hands on a hot and silent looked up through the gun hatch and spotted two P-38s gun, were the height of frustration of not being able high up at about 10 o'clock swaying their wings for to shoot back, not a single shot. That fighter made his recognition. Then they dove down on the FW-190s that attack in complete safety, but fortunately with poor were still trying to shoot us down. I didn't see it, but I marksmanship and no further harm to me or the plane. am sure the two Germans didn't stick around to put up While firing at the second group of fighters I fully a fight. FW-190s were no match for P-38s.

expected to get shot from behind by the fighter that had With our way back to home base, now relatively safe, been hiding up in the sun. Flashing through my mind, the other crew members came to the aid of the wounded of all things, were the letters I would leave behind ball turret gunner and me. I remained conscious until unanswered, including the latest one from my mother, we crossed the Adriatic Sea and prepared to land. and the unmailed lessons of a correspondence course I After pulling out the severely wounded gunner from had been studying.

the ball turret, the damaged ball turret could not be raised back up into the plane. In addition to the loss of one engine, the protruding ball turret on the bottom of the plane was an extremely dangerous hazard, with the possibility of a crash landing. However, in spite of these circumstances, our pilots made a smooth and safe landing that only the very best are able to accomplish. They were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross medal.

Unconscious, I was taken to the field hospital, an abandoned farm house without doors or windows. Two pieces of shrapnel were removed from my leg, but a small piece in the back of my neck was overlooked, and remains there still. When I awoke the next day I found a Purple Heart medal pinned to my hospital gown. Crew members, bringing me the medal, had come to visit while I was still under the anesthetic. The next day I was transferred to the 26th General Hospital at Bari. There I was told I was through with flying and scheduled to be shipped to a hospital in the States for further care and recovery. Instead, I requested to be allowed to remain in Italy, hoping to recover well enough to be able to go back to my squadron.

Several weeks later, still limping on a stiff leg, I was able to rejoin the 98th. I learned then that I had been awarded the Silver Star medal, although a higher award had been proposed. I also received some photographs of the crew and plane taken after we landed. One of the photographs I received showed a section of flooring I had been standing on during the mission.

Back at take-off time the more experienced crew members had advised me to use my flak suit as an area rug to stand on at my gun station. This, they said, was for the purpose of providing some protection for the "Family Jewels." I thought they were joking. But on second thought, I did as advised realizing that there are no fox holes in the sky. The rug idea worked, at least for its intended purpose. The section of flooring under my flak suit rug was peppered with shrapnel, and effectively stopped by my little area rug. The crew told me they had counted more than 500 holes in our plane.

When the Russian armies finally occupied Romania they reported that the oil refineries at Bucharest and Ploesti had been defended by three fighter airfields and 640 anti-aircraft gun batteries. (The target for my second mission was the oil refineries at Ploesti.)

Through it all, damaged and wounded, but undaunted, we made it back, thanks to our pilots and those two timely-appearing P-38s.

One down-forty nine to go.

S/Sgt Alexandro M. Tejeda 98th Bomb Group • 415th Squadron Base • Leece, Italy

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I wanted to be sure to let you folks know. As I expect is And when the loving husband had to become a true for many-and especially those of his generationcaretaker he never missed a step and never complained. he was so strong through to the end enduring constant Because of that, I don't think any of us realized what a overwhelming pain. We are fortunate that we had the toll it took on him and his health the last few years with opportunity to say our goodbyes-very sad but also Peggy. Together they truly set an example of how to relieved that he is no longer in pain. He really was a live life to the fullest, support each other ("in sickness great man. God Bless." and in health"), and to never give up hope-that love really does conquer all. Dennis Posey / March 1, 2017 / Reunion

Coordinator Emeritus

Patriot, Friend, Father, Loving Husband, Entertainer,

'Microphone Man' ... where to start and where to stop when speaking about the man we all loved and would follow to the ends of the earth (and I think we may have even done that!!). He lived life to its fullest and gave his all in everything he did, not the



least was his dedication to the 98th and its members

Members of the 98th Bomb Group Veterans Association

May we take this opportunity to thank yo for your friendship and support of our Da Dennis Posey. The years he spent working of the Reunions were a true labor of love to hir He delighted in your support, attendance an gracious appreciation for the events, venues ar activities at each reunion. He especially enjoyed the time spent in the Hospitality Rooms when memories of long ago times were fondly retol Your acceptance of his microphone obsession was a true testament of your friendship. (course, he held a special love for all those, to many to list, that he worked side by side with to ensure the 98th would continue to be part of all of your lives. He was overwhelmed at the

For The Record

continued from page 2

Deceased

L-NAME	FIRST	MI	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIP	AC	SQD	DOD
Clemmons	Hubert	D.	6 Bradley Ct	Lebanon	ΤN	37087	B-24	415	02/10/2017
Frede	Raymond	V.	2011 Chapa St	Columbus	IN	47203	B-24	415	
Laninga	Kenneth	G.	11899 James St	Holland	MI	49424	B-29	345	01/31/2017
Plouff	Arthur		1270 Wampanoag Trail	Riverside	RI	02915	B-24	344	10/14/2016
Posey	Dennis		Woodruff Farm Rd	Columbus	GA	31907	B-29	344	03/01/2017
Sandborn	Maxine (Mrs.	Riley)	731 Starkweather	Lansing	MI	48917	B-24	345	
Seng	Joseph	F.	4308 Moxley Valley Dr	Mount Airy	MD	21771	B-29	345	
Siberski	Dr. Stanley	W.	410 Timber Lane	Newton Square	PA	19073	B-24	344	02/10/2017
Wysocki	Becky (Mrs. (George)	1101 San Remo Ave	Clearwater	FL	33756	B-29	415	12/08/2016

Message from the Secretary/Treasurer

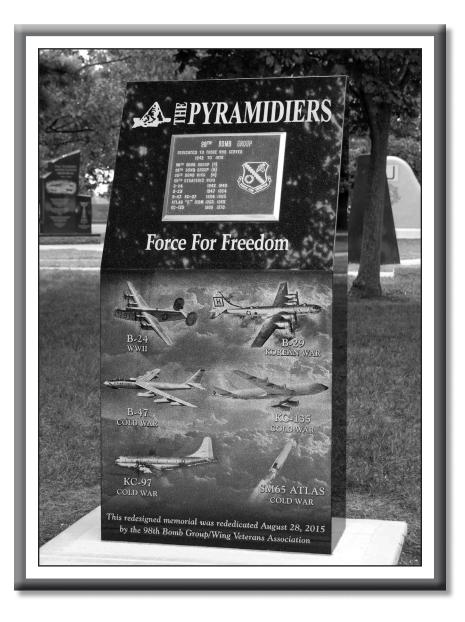
His pride as a father was recognizable whenever he spoke of his children and the tears would come to his eyes. He was so proud to have them all with him last fall in San Antonio...it was really a perfect ending for him. And I am sure there are many of us who were there that wished we could have only known it was our last time to be together...to have hugged him a little longer and told him we loved him.

Dennis-you will always be missed, but remembered with love and laughter.

ou .d, on	number of family members of 98th Veterans who attend the reunions and who hold vital positions in continuing this honorable Association.
n. nd nd ed re d. on Of oo th	His family would also like to thank you for the phone calls, flowers, cards and support since his passing. The wreath at his Commitment Service was beautiful and thoughtful. He would also be very pleased at the memorial donations to the 98th Scholarship fund. His joy in being an active member of the 98th was evident in every conversation he had about it. It is a certainty that he is enjoying a 98th Reunion in Heaven.
	Larva and Many Thanks

- Love and Many Thanks,
- The Family of Dennis Posey

E PYRAMIDIERS



FORCE FOR FREEDOM