



# THE PYRAMIDIERS

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

May 2010

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## Message from Bill Seals . . . *Promises and Freedom of Speech*



I don't think this newsletter should ever be used as a political forum, and I have no intention of trying to do so. I do, however, think an expression of values that we all share is acceptable.

I doubt any of our members have ever broken a promise to a loved one when it was within their power to fulfill that promise. I'm also sure that we all believe the same principal should apply to our government. It is unfortunate, that we as a nation have

not always kept the promises we made. In some cases our failure to do so has resulted in grievous mistreatment of a segment of our population. You only need to review our history of broken promises made to the Native American Peoples to know this is a fact. There have been other broken promises that resulted in unfair treatment of a group of American citizens which are beyond the scope of this article. However, a recent debate at the national level has brought to the forefront broken promises to our veterans and retirees.

Our veterans were promised, both implicitly and explicitly, that their government would help heal the wounds (physical and non-physical) they suffered in the service of their country. We all know of instances when this promise was fulfilled extremely well. We also know of cases where fulfillment of the promise was not even attempted, or was a miserable failure. Sometimes these failures can be traced to severe under funding of the agencies tasked with providing the care. In others the bureaucratic procedures required to get help simply stymied the veteran in need. Neither of these situations would have occurred if more Americans had spoken out and made the welfare of our veterans a national priority.

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## Message from Bill Seals

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Another broken promise was one made to our retirees who entered service prior to December 7, 1956. These retirees were promised health care for life for themselves, their dependants and their spouses. This promise has never been completely met. After being combined with both Medicare and CHAMPUS at various times and in differing combinations, fulfillment of the promise has evolved into Tricare for Life (TFL).

Under TFL, retirees must be enrolled in Part B of medicare, and must pay the premiums. In return, TFL pays the amount medicare allows, but does not pay. Prescriptions are provided with a reasonable co-pay. Neither dental care, nor eyeglasses or lens are covered. All in all a pretty fair fulfillment of the promise. Not free, but not a bad compromise given the political reality of the times.

However, be aware that these benefits were not simply given to veterans and retirees—they were only won after many hard fought battles involving numerous groups, individuals and all three branches of government. Also, please be aware that these benefits are under near constant attack by groups who wish to reduce or eliminate them. In fact, a battle is currently raging in the debate over health care reform.

My plea to you is simply this. Let your voice be heard. It matters not whether you are for or against a proposed piece of legislation. Tell the President and your congressional representatives what you think. Join an organization that supports your views. Provide resources to those who are actively supporting your ideas. Speak out. Don't give away the freedoms you helped to protect. I may not agree with your views, but I'll always fight to protect your right to present them.

End of sermon. Hope to see you in Savannah.

With Warmest Regards,

Bill Seals

## Notes from the Treasurer

Hello, and a cheerful spring season to everyone. Up here in Lower Michigan, spring has arrived!! It arrived a little early, and that has people here a little worried, because the tulips are starting to blossom and Tulip Time doesn't begin for another two weeks at least. Some of the tourists might be in time for the stem festival this year. But what I really want to talk about is the reunion this September in Savannah, GA. Please don't wait until the last minute this year to register. We have to plan on the numbers attending, and the people in Savannah want to know the numbers ASAP. It may sound like we have a lot of time, but we all know how fast the time goes by and summer is gone. I still honor the rule that anyone who is registered and paid up, but has an emergency crop up, will have their money refunded. By emergency I mean **physical inability** to attend, and these things do happen. A change of mind because of Aunt Tilly's desire to visit all of a sudden does not count. Unfortunately our numbers are decreasing, and I realize that some who want to come just can't, but if you are at all able, please try to attend, there may be someone who wants to see you, and if you put it off for another time, it may be too late. If you don't want to take in all the tours, that's OK. We will have a hospitality room you can just sit and visit. The registration form is in the *Newsletter*; and you can send in your dues at the same time. Speaking of dues, they are coming in a little slow this year, and some still seem to think that the dues stay the same forever, but right now they are \$15 a year. Thanks for listening everyone and I hope to see you in Savannah, with or without bells on!!

Your Treasurer,

Ken L.

P.S. Please send Apps and Dues to me, Ken Laninga, 3616 Lincoln Rd., Hamilton, MI 49419.

Thanks, KL

## Comments from the Reunion Coordinator . . .

What is a comrade? What is camaraderie? Have you ever thought just what these words really mean? Old Webster describes camaraderie as "a close and personal association marked by a warm friendship; a spirit of friendly good fellowship." It sure does describe what we of the 98th Veterans Association have been attempting to do for all these many years.

I can only speak for myself, but rest assured some of these comrades I have served with or met at Association reunions have become some of my closest friends. The camaraderie at our reunions has served to enhance that relationship. We have become a brotherhood of sorts. But like any other relationship, it is not perpetual; it requires an effort, just like in any relationship, marriage, family, fraternity. Always remember the old saying, "Out of sight, out of mind." How often have you heard the words, "Just give me a call sometime?" Comrades, friends, and associates, we must do that: keep in touch. We must support and nourish these friendships. What better way to do it than to spend some quality time with those brothers who mean so much to you? You can do just that by attending the reunions. Don't just plan to attend yourself; pick up the phone, call your comrades and make plans to spend some time

together at the next reunion. You are the one that will keep us ALIVE.

[The 98th Veterans Association](#)

### Reunion Added Event

#### September 16th: Bus Departs 12:15 pm

Sometimes good things comes to those who are deserving, as in the case of the 98th Veterans Association. It has taken a while but now we have been granted a very rare opportunity to tour the factory that builds the worlds #1 Corp/Private Jet, "Gulfstream!" If you ever watch TV you have seen one! The new one can cruise at 50,000 ft., at almost the speed of sound, carry 14 passengers — with a crew of four; and it can fly 7,000 miles non-stop!

We are limited in the number for the tour, so the first **20** Reunion Registered (letter postmark) Association Members including those registered before you read this in the Newsletter are going (if they choose); after that we will draw for the remaining five opening spots! Cost \$20.00! Register Early !!!

## Mail Call

*Editor's Note: This is an interesting follow-up story from the February 2010 article on the Humanitarian Nazi.*

It was wartime and they were enemies. Franz Stigler, a German fighter pilot, and Charlie Brown, an American bomber pilot and Aircraft Commander. An unusual encounter by them in combat resulted in their ultimately becoming the best of friends.

Franz Stigler became an instructor pilot and joined the Luftwaffe in 1940. He flew 477 combat missions, was shot down 17 times, was wounded numerous times and bailed out six times. He amazingly continued to survive all his combat encounters. In December 1943 he was awarded the "Order of the Star of Peace" by the Federation of Combatant Allies in Europe for his act of compassion. At that time he refused to shoot



*Left to right: Franz Stigler and Charlie Brown*

down the severely damaged American aircraft which was struggling to return to their home base. Franz was also made an honorary member of the 379th Bomb Group Association. Charlie Brown, pilot and

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Aircraft Commander became his best friend when they met in America. Following Franz's retirement from the Luftwaffe he established a successful American business.

Charles Brown began his career as a pilot and aircraft commander. While participating in 29 bombing combat missions, he was wounded on more than one occasion. After retiring from the Air Force as a Lt. Colonel, Charlie was appointed as a Senior Foreign Service Reserve Officer. He served for six years in Laos and Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

Charlie became a C-54/C-87 pilot and flew in the China, Burma, India theatre until the end of the war.

Following his retirement from the Air Force and as a Senior Foreign Service Reserve Officer, he formed a successful combustion research company. He was awarded the "Distinguished West Virginia Award" for his outstanding military service. Former Florida Governor Jeb Bush also awarded him the "Governor's Medal." His most prestigious award however, "The Air Force Cross," was for bringing home his severely damaged aircraft and for saving the lives of a number of wounded crewmen.

History will remember these two former military enemies whose later years were spent together on fishing expeditions which they both thoroughly enjoyed.

## A Twist of Fate

*Reprinted with permission from the Military Officers Association of America*

*Charles Keutman filled in for a member of a World War II bomber crew, only to crash-land in Poland. Now a memorial in that country honors the crew's sacrifice.*

A memorial to a World War II bomb crew was dedicated Sept. 13, 2009, in the town of Jelesnia, Poland, where the crew's B-24 "Dina Might" crashed on that same date in 1944.

The town wanted to commemorate the sacrifice the crew made, during which two members lost their lives. Jan Suchon, who as a 10-year-old boy witnessed the crash landing and conceived the memorial's creation. Now a businessman in Krakow, Suchon still remembers what it meant for people in occupied Poland to see American aircraft bombing the Nazis.

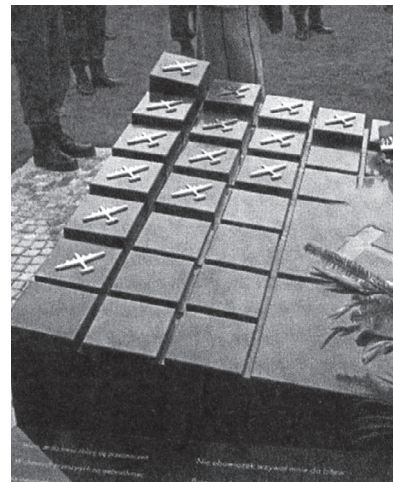
The memorial, made of black marble, depicts several silver aircraft as well as a damaged bomber, which symbolizes the view over Jelesnia, Sept. 13.

"Eyewitnesses remembered silver shining bombers above and one aircraft circling below, tracing smoke from some of the engines," said Szymon Serwatka, who spoke at the ceremony.

The crew, part of the 460th Bombardment Group, 761st Squadron, 15th Air Force, was on a mission to bomb a synthetic fuel refinery near Auschwitz. Before the plane could reach its target, it received severe

flak damage from antiaircraft artillery batteries and couldn't maintain altitude. The copilot, wounded by shrapnel, was unconscious in his seat; he was placed in a parachute and thrown from the plane but did not survive. Four crew members bailed out before pilot John Wegener performed an emergency landing in an open field with four other crew members still on board. Charles Keutman, a second lieutenant bombardier assigned to the mission to replace a regular crew member, recalls the landing:

"I put my back against the pilot's seat and my left foot on the upper turret. When we hit, I remember getting covered by dirt, but we landed fine," Keutman says. "There was a big hole where I was sitting, so I just got up and walked out."



*Polish citizens dedicate a memorial to B-24 "Dina Might" crew members for their bravery during a crash, Sept. 13, 1944.*

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The navigator was killed in the emergency landing. Keutman, Wegener, and the two other crew members who survived the landing quickly were surrounded by about 100 German troops with their rifles raised.

"We couldn't resist them. We didn't have any weapons," Keutman says.

Keutman spent eight months in prison camps and remained in the Air Force after the war. He became a pilot, served a year in Vietnam, and was assigned to the Pentagon. After 27 years of service, he retired in 1969 as a lieutenant colonel.

"I'm very appreciative for what they did," says Keutman of the people in Poland who erected the memorial.

## Historically Speaking by Herb Harper

*Covert Action by the 98th Bomb Group in The Korean Conflict?*

My microfilm "History of The 98th Bomb Group" is four reels of about 6,000 documents. The span of time covers only from 1942 to about early 1950. No Korean War documents are included. So in some cases, I have gone to some extensive research to try to clear unanswered questions, with meager results.

In my search for official documents from 1950 to 1953, often I run into blank walls. Often in my search, I am reminded that much of the 98th history for that period is "still classified."

Although the AF, DOD, State Department and other agencies will neither confirm or deny this fact, it is common knowledge the 98th B-29s did fly covert missions.

The limit of my access to classified data, during my time in the 98th, was as NCOIC 345th Flight Line Armament, I was given the Armament FRAG Order, by squadron intelligence, so I could configure the bombing systems for the daily mission.

Having an "FBI/CIA, FINAL Top Secret Background Clearance" and having completed the Basic Intelligence Fundamentals and Intelligence Officer courses through the USAF Extension Course Institute, I have never been assigned to nor worked within the intelligence community.

With all this being said, I will now get into some 98th history, which I find to be quite puzzling and incomplete from my investigation attempts.

After I was appointed 98th Association Historian, with some success I set up a network with individuals and

organizations to share data. Of course, I cannot confirm nor deny the accuracy of the data collected.

One case that is NOT that much of a secret, but certain aspects of the full details are still missing. RB-29, S/N 44-62217 of the 91st SRS was shot down in North Korea on 12 Jan. 1953. Some of the crew were KIA. Those that bailed out and survived were later taken to China, charged and convicted. Most of the crew were NOT released until 1955. Two years after BIG SWITCH. Two of the crew just disappeared. Official documents state they "died while MIA." However one of the surviving crew members maintains this is not the full story. They just disappeared from the POW camp in China. Facts Unconfirmed.

I have in my archives a manuscript written by a 345th Tail Gunner, (now deceased) who flew on a search and rescue mission for a missing B-29. He maintains that he spotted a B-29 in the water "just off the coast." He reported his sighting to his aircraft commander. They did NOT circle the wreck, nor was his report noted. They just continued onward. A few minutes later, he called the A/C and asked if his message had been received. He was told "Do not clutter the intercom." He was NOT questioned after they landed. Several years later, he decided to pursue the incident. Through some high ranking officers, he was put in contact with some intelligence organization (CIA). He went through several interviews but was never really told many facts of the investigation.

One of the most intriguing investigations, I have worked on is the case of Major Kassel M. Keene, 345th Bomb Squadron. Shot down on the night of 19 Nov. 1952, Major Keene was one of 14 members

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## Historically Speaking continued from previous page

aboard B-29, S/N 44-69392. It is not known what crew duties he fulfilled. He was not one of the regular crew. Why would this crew have 14 men aboard and a “spare pilot” as Major Keene was listed?

Major Keene was a pilot and had served in some capacity with the OSS during WW II. It is my understanding that he was fluent in the Russian language. Although all the crew had bailed out. Only the pilot and copilot were rescued. Parachutes and other equipment found, indicate several did land on or reached Cho-Do Island. One crew member was found with a bullet hole in his head.

Initial reports are that Major Keene was first reported as KIA, then as MIA and yet again he is reported as having been a POW. Further reports are that in 1953 he was convicted for “abuse of a fellow prisoner,” sentenced to two and a half years (or 21-1/2 years) (different reports list different times) “WITHOUT regard to repatriation.” In my search for details, I questioned a contact in the Pentagon. My questions were: “Who were his captors and who convicted him? What does *without regard to repatriation* mean? Who was the fellow prisoner? What was the specific offense and what had his fellow prisoner done?” The immediate reply I received was “Where are you

getting your information? and What is your need to know?” That pretty much ended one of my sources of information. My latest data is a government report that questions the validity of Major Keene’s status as a POW and this report suggests that Major Keene was not a POW at all. It goes on to suggest that the POW report was PROBABLY referring to ANOTHER (not identified) POW case. Still all unanswered questions.

One last case is that of LTC. Vance Black. LTC. Black was from 5th AF Hq. flying with the 345th when the aircraft he was on was shot down on 7 May 1951. Only four men were able to bail out, LTC. Black being one of them. Although badly burned, he did survive for a time and died in a North Korean POW Camp. I have reports with some names of Chinese and Russians, who interrogated him. So it is that we know the Chinese and Russians were very much involved with our Korean POWs. Of the four survivors of this shoot down, one man, whom I shall not name here is still alive. He did apply to accompany a DOD team that had permission, by the North Koreans, to search the crash site in about 1996. His request was denied. On this search, all four engines and twelve machine guns were found, however all the aluminum had been recovered. No crew remains were reportedly found.

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## The Longest Mission

*J. Francis Angier was born to fly. Raised on a Vermont farm, trained as a B-17 pilot and later as a jet and helicopter pilot, his aviation career spanned over thirty years. His love of flying was only exceeded by his love of family and country.*

*It was October 1944 when Major Angier was shot down on his 33rd combat mission. He was taken prisoner and spent over seven months as a POW before being liberated. He was assigned to the 457th Bomb Group, 8th AAF.*

The aircraft assigned to us on October 25 was 42-97899. I conducted the preflight inspection with my flight engineer T/Sgt Howard Lang and the ground crew chief as well as the communications and armament people until we were satisfied with the condition of the plane.

It was in excellent shape, nearly new, so we took off and climbed up through 23,000 feet of fog and weather to assembly altitude, where I assumed my position in the formation as leader of the high squadron.

As we approached the island of Helgoland, just north of the German coast, we turned right, according to the briefed route that would take us along the east side of the Weser River estuary. We saw the usual flak coming up from Helgoland, letting us know the enemy was awake, but too far away to bother us.

Our penetration of enemy territory was through reported light defenses over a cloud cover—according to weather forecasts—at about 2,200 feet. This cloud cover obscured the coastline, and when I observed the first anti-aircraft fire from the mainland, it appeared

to be eight to ten miles ahead. Another four bursts of heavy caliber fire appeared dead ahead of our aircraft, and I was flying to the right of and somewhat higher than the lead squadron led by Captain Bill Doherty, I moved the squadron slightly to the left to avoid subsequent fire.

Meanwhile we were conducting an oxygen check. I had advised the crew there was flak at our level at 12 o’clock. “Check your flak suits and oxygen and acknowledge, please.” Just as the tail gunner, S/Sgt Maynard Judson acknowledged, three bursts of flak appeared immediately in front of us and the fourth burst struck between No. 3 and No. 4 engines, blowing a large hole in the leading edge of the right wing approximately three feet by six feet and back into the wing as far as the main spar.

A small fire with a peculiar blue-green flame started in the No. 4 engine. We expended our fire extinguisher on the fire with very little effect. I found I had no control over the two starboard engines, with No. 4 revving to the red line and No. 3 shaking violently in the engine supports. The engineer called out, “The whole right wing is on fire.” And indeed, the fuel tanks were burning so intensely that we could see the internal structure of the wing glowing red. No. 3 engine was bending down, and vibration soon tore it loose from the mounts.

Realizing there was no way to save the aircraft, I called my deputy leader and asked him to move the squadron above and to the left of us to avoid any of our crew striking other planes in the squadron as they bailed out. I had just hit the bail-out bell and told the crew to leave the aircraft when the No3 engine and right landing gear fell away. Pieces of metal from the debris struck S/Sgt. Osborn, cutting his face as he bailed out the waist door.

Hoping everyone had left the airplane, I attempted to turn out of the formation, but the maneuver turned into a roll and a horizontal spiral due to No. 4 engine running wild and uncontrollable. I pushed No.1 to full throttle in an attempt to balance No. 4, No. 2 had shut down.

Lack of oxygen was beginning to blur my vision. I no longer had any control of the plane and was attempting

to leave my seat when the plane went into a steep climb. This caused heat from the fire in the bomb bay to rise into the cockpit, and although there was no fire around me the heat was becoming unbearable. The paint on the instrument panel was already blistering, and I thought it was all over, for sure.

When the aircraft reached a vertical nose-up attitude, all power stopped abruptly. The plane started falling tail first. Then it exploded—violently. Approximately two and one half minutes had elapsed since we were hit by the burst of anti-aircraft fire. It was generally agreed that a B-17 would explode in about 40 seconds after being on fire. I lost consciousness from the concussion but had the sensation of being ejected out the right side of the cockpit and remember

feeling the intense cold.

After falling about two miles, I came to my senses. My immediate concern was the condition of my parachute, I anticipated that it might have caught fire or been damaged in the explosion. Reaching around to examine the backpack, I was greatly relieved that although my leather jacket and flight suit were badly torn, the chute seemed to be intact. There was a light coating of ice on me, no doubt caused by the sudden change from intense heat to the minus 50 degrees below zero outside. The layer of ice began to fly off in the wind my fast fall was generating. I was bleeding from seven cuts and could hear absolutely nothing.

The sensation of falling lasts during the time a body is accelerating. After that it is a feeling of being supported by a strong rush of air. I had missed the initial feeling of falling because of my momentary loss of consciousness.

I was falling “like a log”—on my back, without spinning or tumbling—and looking about, I could see both east and west coasts of Denmark on my left and the Zeider Zee and Friesian Islands in Holland on my right. Because the plane had no forward motion when it exploded, the debris was falling with and around me.

The entire tail section of the plane was tumbling slowly, due to its comparative light weight for its size, about a mile higher. The bright yellow eight-man life

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*J. Francis Angier  
Major, (retired)*

## The Longest Mission

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raft had inflated and was floating down another half mile above me.

Directly above was the left wing, with both engines and the bomb bay still attached to it. The bombs, which had not been armed were still in the bomb bay. They were completely exposed and formed a pivot around which the wing was spinning quite rapidly, much like a maple seed spiraling down on its own wing.

There were other pieces of the plane that could damage the chute if it was open. The main part of the right wing was falling about a half mile away, still burning, and leaving a long trail of oily, dark smoke.

Remembering we had been briefed that the cloud layer over the coast was at about 2,000 feet, I decided to roll over and look at it, to help judge my altitude and determine how much time I had remaining to safely open my chute. Up to this point, I had difficulty breathing in the wind rushing past.

The wing was at this time less than 200 feet above me when, suddenly, I passed through the cloud layer and could see branches and a dark brown landscape. I pulled the ripcord with the feeling it was too late. But it functioned perfectly and struck the ground almost immediately. I felt the sequence of events as I hit the ground feet first with tremendous force. My shoulders struck my knees, dislocating both shoulders. My face hit the ground, causing a severe and permanent neck injury, while the jolt of the impact did considerable damage to all my joints and caused some internal injuries.

The wing with the bomb bay still attached landed some 200 feet away and was burning quite intensely as fuel drained down out of the wing, which was tilted at an angle against some trees. Other debris was still falling into the three-acre clearing in a woods where trees had been cut and left lying on the ground. The tail section of the plane floated down with an oscillating motion and landed in the upper parts of some pine trees.

The impact stunned me for a time, but the heat from the fire and the realization that bombs could go off when they got hot enough motivated me to begin the painful process of getting out of the parachute harness with two dislocated shoulders. My back pained me

so much I believed it was broken but it was due to damage to several vertebrae. Somehow, I crawled out and was sliding and rolling toward a little wood road nearby, when I saw a body laying face down in a small space between parts of the wreckage. It was Howard Lang, the flight engineer. He had not opened his chute, possibly due to injuries from shrapnel or not having cleared the plane when it exploded.

After identifying him, I continued my awkward travel away from the burning aircraft, and upon reaching the little wood road completely exhausted, I used my feet to push myself across the roadway into a shallow ditch on the other side. The intense pain triggered my memory enough that I realized there was morphine in my survival kit. With difficulty, I opened the satchel and gave myself a shot. The bombs went off perhaps 10 minutes later, uprooting and knocking over trees. I was unable to breathe for a time because the blast created tremendous pressure followed by a vacuum as it pushed and rolled me through the underbrush. I experienced excruciating pain in my lungs and stomach. When air rushed back into the vacuum, it dragged me back through the underbrush but, thankfully, enabled me to breathe again.

As I slowly recovered from this second explosion of the day, my hearing returned in my right ear, although I was experiencing a severe headache and considerable distress from my other injuries. Two boys about 16 years of age, were making their way toward me, one with black hair and the other blond. The blond boy reached me first and tried to shake hands with me. By this time my shoulders, elbows and knees were badly swollen and very painful. Shaking hands was not what I needed at that time.

"I'm a Dutchman," he said in fair English. I knew we were in Holland, but I asked him anyway, "Is this Holland?" The black-haired boy, probably a member of the Hitler Youth, answered arrogantly, "Nein! Das ist Deutschland!"

On a hill about three-quarters of a mile away, was a hospital, a convalescent home for burn victims from Hamburg. There was an inspection party there that day, and some of them had watched the pieces of the airplane falling into the wood through the overcast.

They had not seen my parachute as it had opened at tree-top level, and from experience they had learned not to approach shot-down bombers until the bombs had exploded or until they were fairly certain there were no bombs aboard.

A tall, very homely man in some type of uniform, probably Home Guard, approached me down the old wood road, slowing down as he struggled to get a large pistol out of its holster. He held the gun ahead of him and came up very close until the barrel of the gun was in my face. The man was shaking, obviously quite frightened, and I expected he would pull the trigger either by accident or by intention. "Pistol! Pistol!" he shouted with a trembling chin. I rarely carried my .45 and also advised my crew not to do so. If one crew member shot either a civilian or one of the military it would mean the death sentence for the rest of us. When he was satisfied I was unarmed, he uncocked his gun.

A party of about 20 people started down the hill after the bombs went off. The first people to reach me called me names and yanked me to a sitting position in the

road, kicked me repeatedly and when they had knocked me over, stomped on me. Some of them shouted with sarcasm and anger. "Liberator! Terrorflieger Gangster bastard!" while others kept asking, "Anglis? Anglis?" A woman pushing her bike close by said, "Don't tell them you are English, even if you are, or they will hang you." An old man with a long club struck me in the nose just as some of the military arrived and drove off the civilians at gunpoint. I do not remember the trip up the hill because of the hard blow to the nose. But I do remember my arrival there.

I was taken to the hospital on top of the hill where I was searched. Two medics put my shoulder back in place after an excruciating struggle. Thus began seven months of interrogation and life behind barbed wire.

### *Editor's Note*

*I have spoken with retired Major J. Francis Angier regarding his story of the bombing incident. He appears to be well and enjoying life with his family in sunny Florida.*

## Allierte Kriegsgefangene

WARNUNG AN JEDEN, DER FÜR IHRE  
BEHANDLUNG VERANTWORTLICH IST

PRISONERS OF WAR, ALLIED FORCES  
WARNING TO ANYONE WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR TREATMENT

The Government of Great Britain, the Government of the United States and the Government of the Soviet Union, in the name of all nations united in the war against Germany, herewith direct a plain warning to all commanders and guards in charge of allied prisoners of war in Germany or within German occupied territories, also to all members of the state secret police and to all other persons regardless of branch of service or rank, who are in charge of allied prisoners of war, in combat zones, on supply routes, or in rear areas. They herewith declare all these personnel, including the German supreme command and the competent authorities of the German army, navy and air force, to be personally responsible for the safety and welfare of allied prisoners of war in their custody.

Anyone, who mistreats or condones mistreatment of allied prisoners of war, regardless whether in combat zones, on supply routes, in hospitals, prisons or anywhere else, shall be pursued without mercy until prosecution leads to punishment.

They declare that this responsibility shall be binding under any circumstances: neither may this responsibility be blamed on any other authorities or individual persons.

Winston Churchill

Josef Stalin

Harry S. Truman



## Aviation Humor

Never let it be said that ground crews lack a sense of humor. Here are some actual maintenance complaints submitted by pilots (marked with a “P”) and the solutions recorded (marked with an “S”) by maintenance engineers.

P: Left inside main tire almost needs replacement.  
S: Almost replaced left inside main tire.

P: Test flight OK, except auto-land very rough.  
S: Auto-land not installed on this aircraft.

P: Something loose in cockpit.  
S: Something tightened in cockpit.

P: Dead bugs on windshield.  
S: Live bugs on back-order.

P: Auto pilot in altitude-hold mode produces a 200 feet per minute descent.  
S: Cannot reproduce problem on ground.

P: Evidence of leak or right landing gear.  
S: Evidence removed.

P: DME volume unbelievably loud.  
S: DME volume set to more believable level.

P: Friction locks cause throttle levers to stick.  
S: That’s what friction locks are for.

P: IFF inoperative if OFF mode.  
S: IFF always inoperative in OFF mode.

P: Suspected crack in windshield.  
S: Suspect you’re right.

P: Number 3 engine missing.  
S: Engine found on right wing after brief search.

P: Aircraft handles funny.  
S: Aircraft warned to straighten up, fly right and be serious.

P: Target radar hums.  
S: Reprogrammed target radar with lyrics.

P: Mouse in cockpit.  
S: Cat installed.

P: Noise coming from under instrument panel. Sounds like a midget pounding on something with a hammer.  
S: Took hammer away from midget.

*When the world pushes you to your knees, you are in a perfect position to pray.*

## More Military Humor

If the enemy is in range, so are you.

It is generally inadvisable to eject directly over the area you just bombed.

Five second fuses last about three seconds.

If you see a bomb technician running, try to keep up with him.

Yea, though I fly through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I shall fear no evil, for I am at 50,000 feet and climbing.

You’ve never been lost until you have been lost at Mach 3.

The only time you have too much fuel is when you are on fire.

Whenever one engine fails on a twin-engine airplane, you always have enough power to get you to the scene of the crash.

Without ammunition, The Air Force is just an expensive flying club.

If you hear me yell: “Eject, Eject, Eject,” the last two will be echos.

If you stop to ask “Why?” you’ll be talking to yourself, because by then you will be the pilot.

The three most common expressions (or famous last words) in military aviation are: *Did you feel that? What’s that noise?* and *Oh S--t!*”

The Piper Cub is the safest plane in the world; it can just barely kill you.

As the test pilot climbs out of the experimental aircraft, having torn off the wings and tail in the crash landing, the crash truck arrives. The rescuer sees the bloodied pilot and asks, “What happened?” The pilot’s reply: “I don’t know, I just got here myself!”





## Letters to the Editor

Dear Ms. Haritos,

In reference to the B50 article submitted by Bill Seals and published in the November 2009 issue of "The Pyramidiers," I thought perhaps readers might be interested in a little more information about the last flight of the last flyable B-50.

In the early 1980s airmen at Castle AFB were involved in the Air Force Heritage program and had many volunteer airmen involved in acquiring and returning aircraft to Castle AFB for their heritage museum. One such aircraft was a B-50D, tail #49-351, which they gave the nose art name of "Flight of the Phoenix." The plane was located at D.M. (Davis Monthan) in Tucson where Castle's volunteer maintainers went to put it (hopefully) in flyable condition. At this juncture there were not many old recip type aircrew folks left in the Air Force and fewer still with B-50 aircrew time. So the Air Force queried various organizations attempting to find some past crew members with usable recip aircraft experience. As I had experience in a number of Boeing Aircraft (i.e. B-307, B-377, B-29, C/KC-97, B-50), I was appointed by Major General Donald Owens as a point person to select an aircrew for approval by the Air Force to ferry the "Phoenix" to Castle AFB.

Although all of those selected had extensive (several thousand hours) experience in both recip and jet aircraft, only Lieutenant General Andrew Pringle (Vice Commander SAC) had B-50 time. He had trained at Biggs AFB in the 1950s.

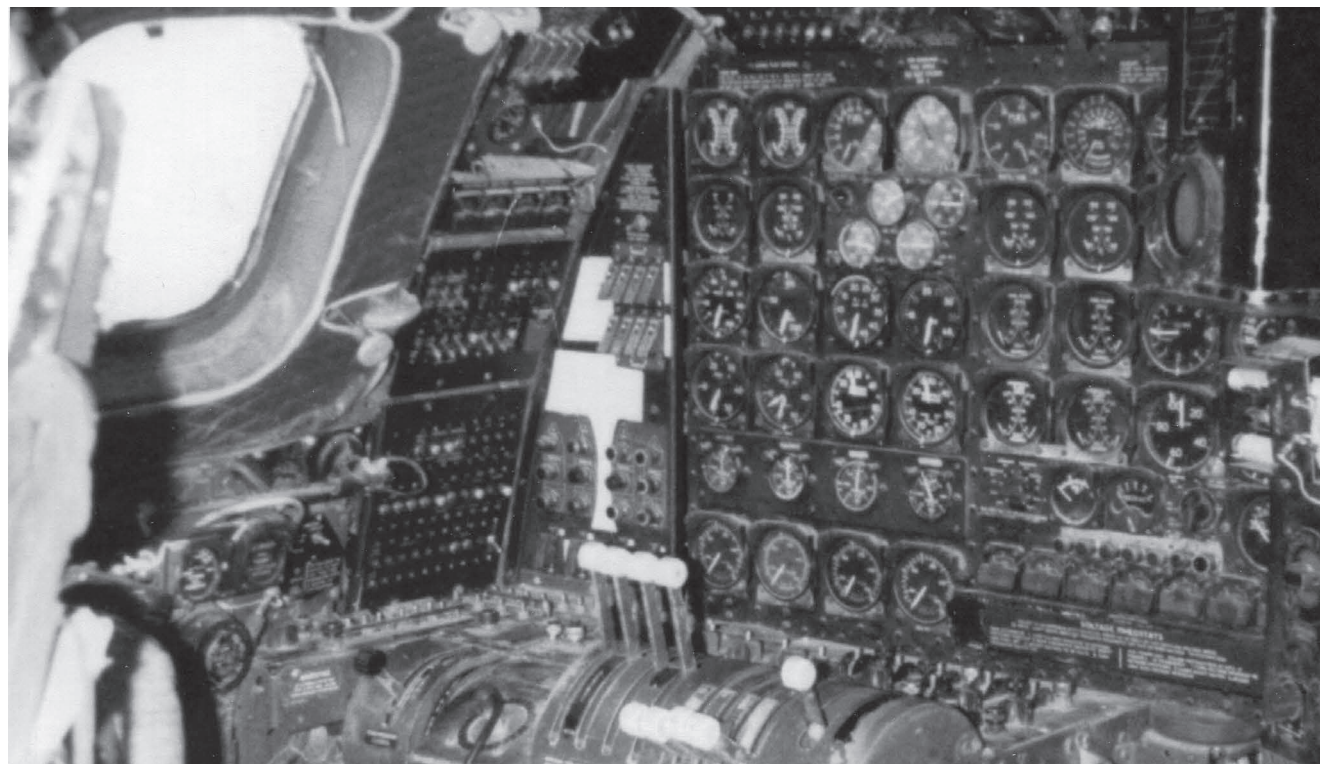
On December 15, 1980 after a thorough pre-flight and weight and balance check and a few ramp delays, we took off from D.M. and flew low and slow to Castle with no airborne problems and a nice smooth flight. We were met by the personnel of the base cheering as we taxied in and shut down. They should have been cheering themselves as it was a major undertaking on their part to bring the old bird to its last home.

As of a couple years ago, the Castle AFB Museum is still open (although Castle AFB is closed) and so the last flying B-50 still rests there waiting for any aficionados to visit.

Sincerely,

CMS (RET) Terry L. Kidd  
98BW, 345BS, B29

*B-50 D Flight Engineer Station*



*Above. Standing left to right: M/GEN D. Owens, (unknown; not a crew member), CMSGT T. Kidd, MSGT G. Encinas, L/COL T. Beam; Front: L/COL J. Floor and L/GEN A. Pringle*

*Below. Left to right: MSGT G. Encinas, 2nd F.E.; CMSGT T. Kidd, 1st F.E.; and L/COL J. Floor, Pilot . . . with B-50 D.*





## More Letters to the Editor

### Attention B-47 Alumni

Those who served in the B-47 era have become an endangered species. The thousands who served during one of SAC'S greatest expansions have all but disappeared. The many years that have gone by since over 2,000 B-47s took to the air, have taken their toll. Some of us went on to greater glories while some were glad that was behind them, but I bet that a great many still have some fond memories of those days gone past. My message in this reminder of the past is that you can still relive those memories with fellow 98th Bomb Wing alumni each and ever year by attending the 98th Group/Wing Veterans Association reunions. They are grand affairs, attended by upwards of 200 dedicated veterans of the 98th. The event coordinator sets up a great program over a five-day period that offers

something for every one. However, that is not the best part of the reunion; that is reserved for the camaraderie and memories shared by the veterans. I don't know about you but the older I get the more important those memories and relationships become. This is an excellent opportunity to renew old friendships while enjoying a nice vacation among fellow warriors.

I must confess that I have an ulterior motive and that is our representation has been, with the exception of John Murray and his merry band, poor. I am hoping that this plea will motivate some of you to make the effort to join us other B-47 Alumni.

Les Bartlett  
344th Bomb Squadron

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Mr. Philip Chinnery, author of *Korean Atrocity—Forgotten War Crimes* (Pen and Sword 2009) would like to hear from anyone who flew missions over North Korea in the B-29 between 1950-1953, for a book of aircrew experiences to be published by Pen and Sword Ltd.

Crew members included Majors Keene and Sawyer, 1st Lts, Swingle, Bird, Peck, Winchester, 2ndLt. Sestak, T/Sgts Tiller and Morton, A/IC Thompson and Whitman, A2/C Mctoughlin, Porter and Nichols. If anyone would like a copy please contact me.

Address is Mr. Philip Chinnery, 59 Pinkwell Lane, Hayes, Middlesex UB3 1PJ, England. E-mail NEXPOWA@fsmail.net.

I have a four-page report from the British National Archives on the loss of B-29 6392 from the 345th Bomb Squadron, 98th Bomb Wing in December 1952.

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I read with interest the article, *Into the Mouth of Hell*. I had a friend who flew with the 93rd B.G. on the raid. He used to kid me that Col. John Kane was responsible for the 98th losing so many planes over the Ploesti. That is until I read, *Those Brave Crews* by Ray Ward and learned that the 93rd of the 8th AF bombed the target assigned to the 98th and the 98th bombed its target flying through the 93rd's exploding bombs and flames. I told him Hitler should've awarded members of the 93rd who flew that day the iron cross 1st class for being responsible for the destruction of so many planes of the 98th. This took the wind out of his sails and he never mentioned it again.

the tragic blunder he caused. General Uzal Ent flew with the 376th B.G., the lead group. He, General Uzal Ent, over ruled his navigator and he, Gen. Ent, mistook Targoviste for Floresti. The 93rd and 389th followed blindly. As they say he let the cat out of the bag. After this magnificent blunder by Gen. Ent, the Germans were waiting for the 98th and 44th. Check this out in *Those Brave Crews* by Ray Ward.

The 98th and 44th continued towards the proper I.P. during their bombing runs. Both groups suffered needless casualties because the Germans were waiting for them, thanks to Gen. Uzal Ent's blunder.

Sincerely,

Joseph B. Rifkin, Lead Navigator/Bombadier  
345th B.S. 98th B.G.

## A Real Miss America

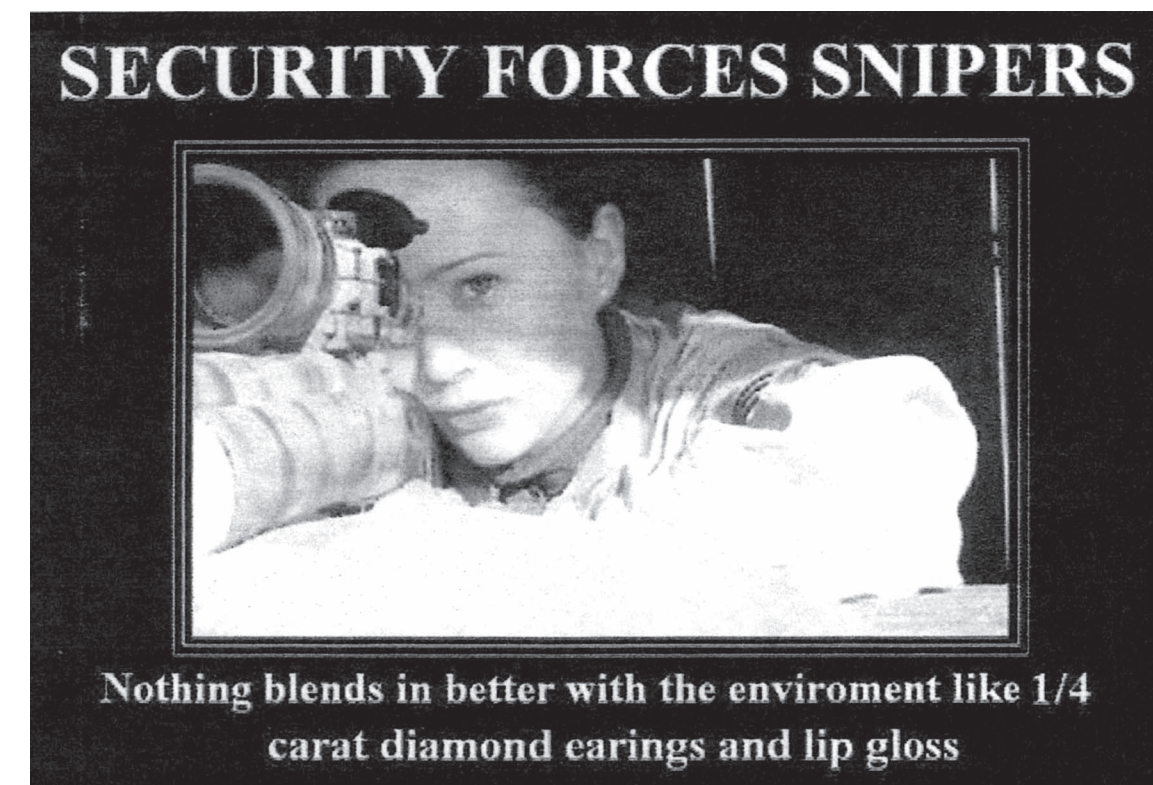
This 19-year-old ex-cheerleader (now an Air Force Security Forces Sniper) was watching a road that led to a NATO military base when she observed a man digging by the road. She engaged the target (i.e., she shot him . . . he was DRT . . . dead right there).

It turned out he was a bomb maker for the Taliban, and he was burying an IED that was to be detonated when a U.S. patrol walked by 30 minutes later.

It would have certainly killed and wounded several soldiers.

The interesting fact of this story is the shot was measured at 725 yards. She shot him as he was bent over burying the bomb. The shot went through his butt and into the bomb which detonated; he was blown to pieces.

The Air Force made a motivational poster of her:



### Editor's Note: Need Name and Address

The picture of the bombing of Ploesti Oil Fields is now available. If the member who requested it would contact me, I will forward the picture. *The Editor; Dolores J. Haritos*



## Memorabilia for Sale



### Caps

Available with **B-24**, **B-29** or **B-47**. The embroidered airplanes have been redesigned with more detail.  
\$10.00/ea



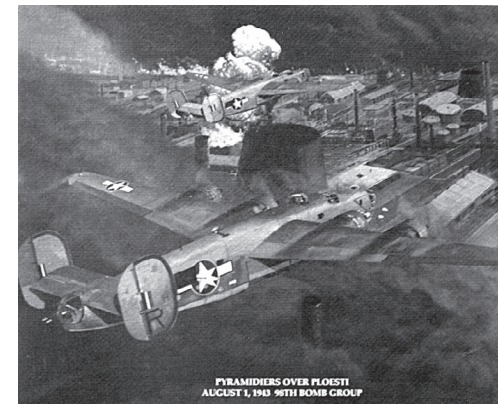
**98th Range Wing Coin**  
(Left is "heads," right is "tails.")  
\$8.00/ea



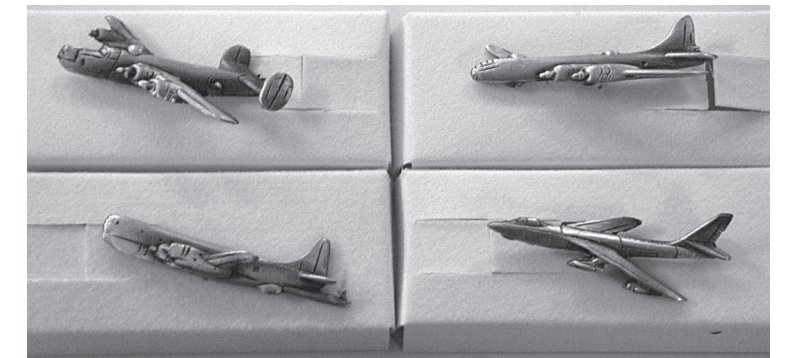
**Golf Shirts** – The embroidered airplanes have been redesigned with more detail (above, right). Available with **B-24**, **B-29** and now **B-47**, S-M-L-XL-2XL. Short sleeve only. The new golf shirt colors are **A**. Olive Green (B-24), **B**. Light Blue (B-29), **C**. Seafoam Green (B-47). The color of the golf shirts are identified by the specific airplane – \$23.00/ea



## Memorabilia for Sale



**Ploesti Low Level Raid Print**  
8.5 x 11 inches – \$5.00/ea



### Airplane Lapel Pin

Available in **B-24**, **B-29**, **B-47**, **KC-97** – \$8.00/ea



**Tervis Tumbler**  
*Force for Freedom*  
Has a lifetime guarantee  
\$10.00



### Golf Towel

Available with Bomb Group or Bomb Wing Logo – \$10.00/ea



### Patches

Bomb Group, Bomb Wing, Vets Assn.; 3.5 inches wide x 4 inches long; 4 inches round – \$8.00/ea



**Mail your order and check to: Gary C. Hensel • 2916 Halstead Lane • York, PA 17404**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity	Items	AC	Size	Amount
All items include mailers and postage.				Total:

All items include mailers and postage.

Total:



# 98th Reunion — September 12-16, 2010

**The Secretary/Treasurer will post registration times!!!**

Hilton Garden Inn • 5711 Abercorn St. • Savannah, GA 31405 • (912) 652-9300

**Day 1, Sunday September 12**

- 4:00 pm Association Officers Meeting with Hotel Staff
- 6:30 pm Cash Bar opens for our Welcome Dinner
- 7:00 pm Welcome Dinner

**Day 2, Monday September 13 – Tour (Narrated) and Lunch**

- 9:30 am Historic Savannah founded in 1732; Capitol of the last Original 13 Colonies; Birthplace of the Girl Scouts 1912; Chippewa Square (Tom Hanks on the bench in the movie “Forrest Gump”)

**Day 3, Tuesday September 14 – Tour and Lunch**

- 9:30 am Mighty Eight Museum – Established 1983  
Eight Air Force formed 1942 in Savannah, GA

**Day 4, Wednesday September 15 – Tour and Lunch**

- 9:00 am Ft. Stewart – Home of the 3rd Infantry Division; 3rd Infantry Division “Rock of the Marne”  
Established 1917; 51 Medal of Honor Recipients “Audie Murphy 1945”

**Day 5, Thursday September 16**

- 9:00 am Depart for Ladies Event
- 9:15 am Executive Board Meeting
- 9:45 am Association General Meeting
- 12:15 pm Tour (space is limited) – See where the Gulfstream is manufactured
- 6:00 pm Depart for Association Banquet at Hunter Field Club

**God Bless America! Have a great year! We will see you in Branson in 2011!!!!**

**DIRECTIONS TO OUR HOTEL (HILTON GARDEN INN)**

5711 Abercom Street., Savannah, Georgia 31405



Tel: (912)652-9300

Call the Hotel direct to make your reservations.

Our rate is \$99.99 Inc. these rates are guaranteed until July 1st, 2010.

Starting at the airport, take I-16 East towards Savannah to Exit #164A, at highway 516 continue approximately 5 miles to Abercom Street; turn right 3 blocks. Hotel is on your right.

# 98th Reunion — September 12-16, 2010

**Registration Fee: \$80.00**

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_

Name as you want it to appear on name badge \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Squadron \_\_\_\_\_ Aircraft \_\_\_\_\_ Duty \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Guest Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_

Name as you want it to appear on name badge \_\_\_\_\_

Address (if different) \_\_\_\_\_

**Banquet Food Request — One (1) Entree Per Person:**

- #1 Grilled Salmon / Lemon Sauce
- #2 Chicken Breast Marsala
- #3 Herb Roasted Tenderloin w/Wild Mushroom Bourbon Sauce

Your Choice: # \_\_\_\_\_ Guest Choice: # \_\_\_\_\_

September 12 Day 1 6:30pm • Welcome Dinner x \_\_\_\_\_ Persons

September 13 Day 2 9:30am • Depart Tour & Lunch  
Historic Savannah \$45.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

September 14 Day 3 9:30am • Depart Tour & Lunch  
Mighty Eighth Museum Bus \$35.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

September 15 Day 4 9:00am • Depart Tour & Lunch  
Ft. Stewart \$35.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

September 16 Day 5 9:00am • Depart Ladies Event \$25.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Ladies this one is “A Dress Nice”)

9:15am • Association Executive Board Meeting

9:45am • Association General Meeting

12:15pm • Gulfstream Tour \$20.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

6:15pm • Depart for Hunter Field Association Banquet

Registration Fee \$80.00 x \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Dues \$15 x \_\_\_\_\_ Persons = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL AMOUNT PAID \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: **98th Bomb Grp/Wing Veterans Association**

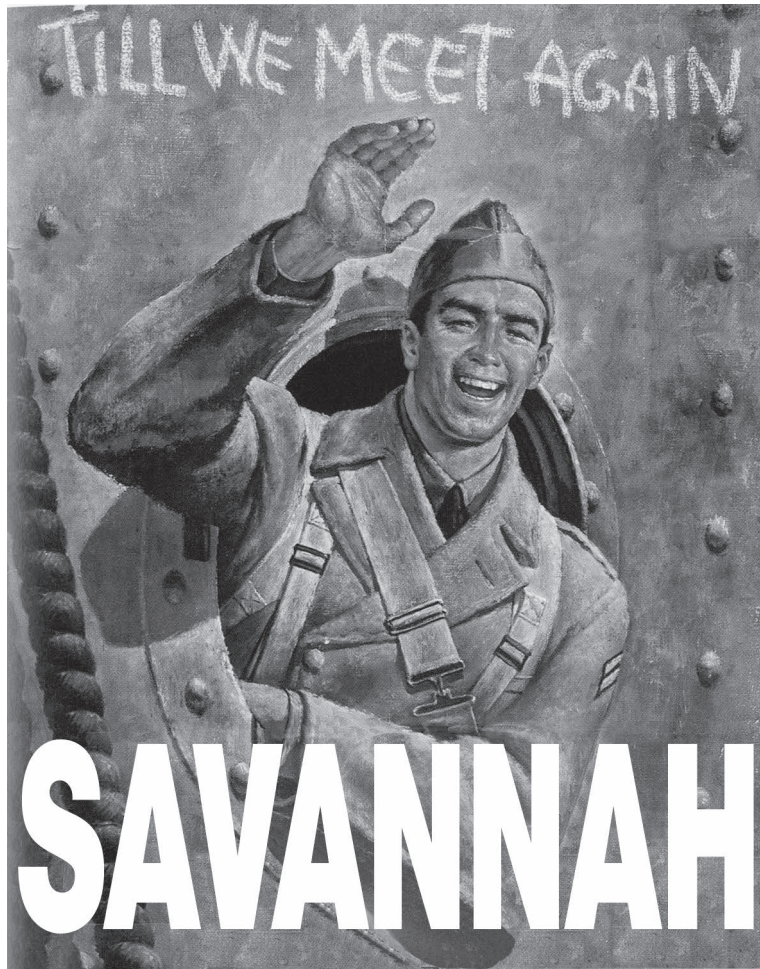
Please return completed registration form and check to:

**Ken Laninga • 3616 Lincoln Road • Hamilton, MI 49419-9642**

Questions? Contact: Dennis Posey (770) 509-7734 or (770) 826-7237

Ken Laninga (269) 751-8231





*The Pyramidiers* is the newsletter of the 98th Bomb Group/  
Wing Veterans Association. If you would like more information  
about our Association, visit our website at:  
<http://www.pyramidiers.com> or THE PYRAMIDIERS.