



THE PYRAMIDIERS

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

November 2013

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Pieces of My Mind

Greetings to All,

If you were unable to attend our reunion in Charleston, you missed a great time. In case you don't believe me, just see Susie's description of the events and the photo gallery in this issue.

I am again honored to have been elected to serve another year as president of our association. Dennis and Susie consented to serve another year and were unanimously elected. Lura Hayes "volunteered" to continue her valuable services as

de facto treasurer. Our Historian Emeritus, Herb Harper, continued to serve as our historian this past year and generated huge amounts of goodwill for the association through the work he performed. Hopefully, his family situation will allow him to continue his services as historian. I am indeed fortunate, as we all are, to have such a super team to work with. My heartfelt thanks to all of them.

At our annual business meeting on September 19, 2013, the membership voted to increase our annual dues to \$20.00 per year effective January 1, 2014. This increase in the dues allowed us to increase the scholarship award to \$2,000, and to begin planning for the installation of a memorial bench at the Air Force Museum. We will keep you updated on the bench as our plans develop.

With a bit of good fortune, you will be reading this prior to Thanksgiving. Therefore, on behalf of your staff, we wish you a Happy Thanksgiving. We also extend an early Merry Christmas, and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

With Warmest Regards to All,

Bill Seals



Message from the VP/Reunion Coordinator

Thank you and a thought !!!

Yep, another Reunion has come and gone. It certainly doesn't seem like a year and it is truly hard to believe. But, what's that old saying about time flying and fun? Let's just be thankful for the memories and friendships that come with each passing year.

Once again I think we all had a great time in Charleston. I was humbled and proud by all the nice things y'all said about the Reunion this year. After my head size got back to normal I started thinking about something to write about this year's Reunion. I remembered something I had read several years ago that in many ways describes the way I feel about all of you and myself . . .

"Happiness is something you decide on ahead of time."

It's a decision you make every morning when you wake up. You have a choice: you can spend the day in bed recounting the difficulty you have with the parts of your body that no longer work, or get out of bed and be thankful for the ones that do.

Each day is a gift and, as long as my eyes open, I'll focus on the new day and all the happy memories I've stored

away—just for this time in my life. Old age is like a bank account. You withdraw from what you've put in. So, my advice to you would be to deposit a lot of happiness in the bank account of memories. Thank you for your part in filling my Memory Bank, I am still depositing!!!

Remember the five simple rules to be happy:

1. Free your heart from hatred.
2. Free your mind from worries.
3. Live simply.
4. Give more.
5. Expect less.

I also remember something about friendship and marriage that both are wonderful, but are always a work in progress. Everyone needs to hear "I love you" be it friend or spouse!!!

I do love you and look forward to hearing from you and seeing "all y'all" in South Dakota!!!

Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your life!!!

Dennis Posey

For The Record . . .

ADDRESS CHANGES

L NAME	F NAME	M.I.	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIP	MBSHIP	CRAFT	SQD
Hamilton	Mrs. Esther		8012 Geranium Ln	Fort Worth	TX	76123	Honorary	B-47	344
Heath	Mrs. Anna Mae		2 Wedgewood Dr	Willard	OH	44890	Honorary	B-24	343
Kiser	Douglas	C.	6501 Booher Rd	Corryton	TN	37221	Associate	B-24	343
Kmeck Sr.	Joseph	J.	107 Victoria Garden Dr	Kennet Square	PA	19348	Member	B-24	343
Lightfoot	Genett	H.	2110 Fleischmann Rd, #109	Tallahassee	FL	32308	Honorary	B-47	344
Lindell	Daniel		7012 N Five Mile Rd	Spokane	WA	99208	Schlrshp '07		
O'Hagan	Clark		PO Box 801	Congress	AZ	85332	Member	B-29	344
Rosenblum	Mrs. James	W.	135 Craigie St	Portland	ME	04102	Honorary	B-24	344
Schinsing	Lily		201 Clarence St, #102	Point Richmond	CA	94801	Associate	B-29	345
Skoug	Clarence (Casey)	I.	485 So Ave, Apt 215	Tallmadge	OH	44278	Member	B-47	OMS
Young	Mrs. Judy		6641 Manley LN	Brentwood	TN	37027	Honorary	B-24	415

Message from the Secretary

Today as I write you, it is once again with a heavy heart, because another of my dearest friends is gone from our group. My weekends will now be forever lonely without the calls from my favorite football buddy: Capt. William W. Seitz Jr., 98th Bomb Group, 344 Squadron or just plain Bill to those who knew him well. Bill passed away on October 1 in Portland, Oregon at the age of 90. To his wife, Sara, and children we send our deepest sympathy.

Bill enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in 1941 and served until 1945 in 15th Air Force as a B-24 pilot. He was awarded the Silver Star for "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action" while serving in the Mediterranean Theater during World War II.

A mainstay in our Group, Bill was a true and loyal friend. He faithfully kept in touch with many of his crew, friends, buddies and their widows and children. Just ask Bill Lowery, Art Plouff, Paul Warrenfeltz's

daughter, Goady Zink's widow, Lu Helen, or Marty Feldman who wrote me last week that a "nice man" had died. Week after week when he called, he would first ask me "how's your sister" and then fill me in on all the people he had talked to and how they were doing; books he had read and thought I should read; how his garden was doing . . . then we would talk football. We would end with him telling me what Sara was doing, and I would say to give her my best. How I wish we had spoken longer that last call . . .

Since I received the news of Bill's passing, I kept returning in my mind to the poem you'll find on page 4. We used it for my Dad's service. He was another plain 'Bill.'

Please see page 4 for the full poem.



NEW MEMBERS

L NAME	F NAME	M.I.	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIP
Hulsey	Dale	G.	3901 Westerly Rd	Benbrook	TX	76116
Emily	Carol	A.	2601 Carolyn Cir	High Ridge	MO	63049
West	Linda		621 Autumn Creek Dr	Fairborn	OH	45324

DECEASED

L NAME	F NAME	M.I.	ADDRESS	CITY	ST	ZIP	MBSHIP	CRAFT	SQD	DOD
Evans	Mrs. Edward	N.	3827 Connon Place	Bronx	NY	10463	Honorary	B-24	415	
LaCroix	George	V.	10 Heather Lane	Gilford	NH	03249	Member	B-29	344	08/30/2013
Seitz Jr.	William	W.	1624 NE 51st Ave.	Hillsboro	OR	97124	Member	B-24	344	10/01/2013
Webendorfer	Douglass	B.	167 Fairway Dr	Sequim	WA	98382	Member	B-24	343	04/18/2012

Just A Common Soldier (A Soldier Died Today)

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast
 And he sat around the Legion Hall, telling stories of the past.
 Of a war he fought in and the deeds that he had done,
 In his exploits with his buddies, they were heroes every one.

And tho' sometimes to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
 All his Legion buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke,
 But we'll hear his tales no longer, for old Bill has passed away,
 And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.

He will not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
 For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life.
 Held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own way,
 And the world won't note his passing, though a soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lay in state,
 And thousands note their passing, and proclaim that they were great.
 Papers tell their whole life stories, from the time when they were young,
 But that passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of the land
 A guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow man?
 Or the ordinary fellow, who in times of war and strife,
 Goes off to serve his country and offers up his life?

A politician's stipend and the style in which he lives
 Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives.
 While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all,
 Is paid off with a medal and perhaps, a pension small.

It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago,
 That the "Old Bills" of our country went to battle, but we know
 It was not the politicians, with compromises and ploys,
 Who won for us the freedom that our Country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,
 Would you want a politician with his ever-shifting stand?
 Or would you prefer a soldier, who was sworn to defend
 His home, his kin and Country and would fight until the end?

He was just a "Common Soldier" and his ranks are growing thin,
 But his presence should remind us we may need his like again.
 For when the Countries are in conflict, then we find the soldier's part
 Is to clean up all the troubles that others often start.

If we cannot give him honor while he's here to hear our praise,
 Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.
 Perhaps just a simple headline in a paper that would say,
 Our Country is in mourning, for a Soldier died today.

A. Lawrence Vaincourt



Bill Seitz at
 WWII Memorial /
 Washington, DC
 2004 98th BGVA
 Reunion

98th Bomb Group/Wing Veterans Association Income Statement for Year Ending: June 30, 2013

Income:

Membership Dues	\$3,860.00
Scholarship Fund	\$2,281.00
Memorial Fund	\$524.00
Memorabilia Sales	\$1,166.00
Reunion Fees	\$14,910.50

Total Income:

\$22,741.50

Expenses:

Reunion Expenses	\$12,397.87
Postage	\$898.53
Office Supplies	\$645.94
Reunion Refunds- 2012	\$570.00
Reunion Expenses- 2013	\$2,127.55
Scholarship	\$1,000.00
Internet Expenses	\$2,307.55
Memorabilia Purchases	\$3,110.41
Memorials	\$204.50
Miscellaneous	\$109.84
Reunion Expenses- 2014	\$473.60

Total Expenses:

\$23,844.94

Surplus (Deficit) for the Year:

(\$1,103.44)

98th Bomb Group/Wing Veterans Association Balance Sheet as of: June 30, 2013

Assets:

Cash in the Bank	\$30,686.93
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Total Assets:

\$30,686.93

Liabilities:

Scholarship Fund	\$8,111.05
Memorial Fund	\$832.50

Total Liabilities:

\$8,943.55

Retained Surplus Funds:

\$21,743.38

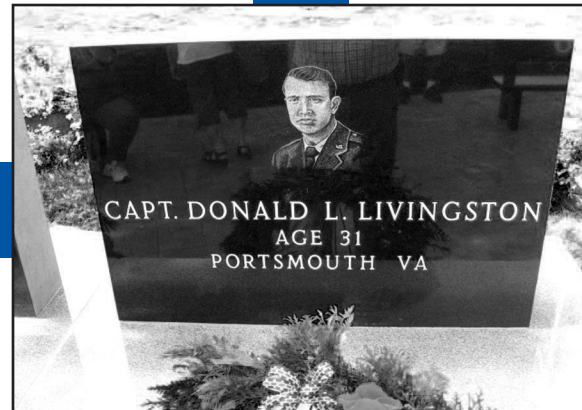
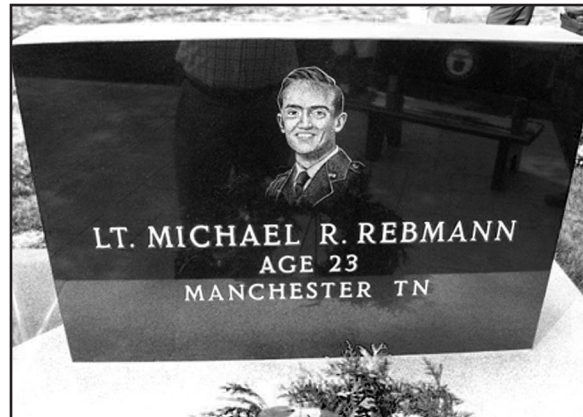
Total Liabilities and Retained Funds:

\$30,686.93

Memorial Completed in Comfrey, Wisconsin

When the citizens of Comfrey, Wisconsin first conceived the idea of a memorial to a 98th B-47 crew lost near their small community 70 years ago, LtCol. Karol Franzyszen learned of the project and quickly took the lead in contacting the veterans of the wing and other organizations. As you see here, his efforts were highly successful and, together with the hard work of the dedicated people of Comfrey, the beautiful memorial shown resulted.

I'm sure all of you join me in extending our heartfelt thanks to Karol for the significant role he played in making the memorial a reality. *Bill Seals*



B-47 Refurbishment Project — Near Savannah

The National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force displays a SAC B-47 that is visible from busy I-95 north of Savannah. The aircraft represents all the airmen who flew, maintained, pulled nuclear alert worldwide, or supported those who did.

Unfortunately, the aircraft desperately needs painting. The museum has plans to completely refurbish the exterior of the bomber, but currently lacks the \$15,000 required for the project. **You can help.**

To make a contribution to this worthy cause, your check should be payable to the museum and mailed to the museum at P.O. Box 1992, Savannah, GA 31402. **Please note on your check that the funds are for the B-47 project.** Our association is making a contribution and we hope that you will also.

Thanks to Perry Nuhn, a docent at the museum, for bringing this project to our attention.



“For the Freedom of Ones

“On February 20, [1944] the Allies embarked on what came to be known as Big Week, an intense six-day offensive (RAF at night, U.S. 8th and 15th Air Forces during the day), dropping nearly 20,000 tons of bombs on factories and other facilities involved in German aircraft production.

“A vital part of the Allied strategy against Germany, the Combined Bomber Offensive was a costly endeavor: the British lost 57,000 airmen (killed or missing), and 64,000 American airmen were killed.”

**The Library of Congress
World War II Companion**

“I guess we all feel something strange or some little incident whenever things are apt to go wrong. Well, that morning I felt it inside. Of course, it was only after everything happened that they came to me.

“After briefing at the Intelligence Office, usually George, Kandy, Spic, and Joe arrived at the plane together, but that morning Joe was by himself. Joe told us that the target was Regensburg, the furthest point ever hit in Germany by the 15th Air Force, and before we had a chance to say anything George called us together.

“He said, ‘Boys, it’s Regensburg and you can expect the worst. No fighter escort so keep your guns working and your eyes open at all times. Check them often and report if anything goes wrong. Okay check them before we kick off.’

“He appeared a little nervous for the first time since I’ve known him. That may be on account of ‘Little Skipper’ (his little baby girl he would never see).”

Ray Noury’s letter to the crew’s families, June 19th, 1945

This morning no one was smiling.

Five days before the crew walked together across the muddy field . . . They laughed and smiled while four photos were taken. The first one was of the pilot 1st Lt George Goddard and 2nd Lt Haig Kandarian, co pilot, followed by a photo of 2nd Lt. Charles Spickard, the bombardier and navigator 2nd Lt. Joseph Altemus.

Next was a group photo of the S/Sgts. Waist Gunner Ray Noury smiled and wrapped his arm around the tail gunner, Wayneworth Nelson, who Ray liked to call “Lord Nelson.” Next stood Harold Carter from Illinois, then Melvin Adams from Maryland, and finally the tall Texan, Roy E. Hughes. (Photos on opposite page.)

Only S/Sgt Oscar Houser was not in any of the photographs. Oscar had replaced one of the original crew, William Boyce, who had been badly wounded on the Augsburg mission two months earlier. That Sunday morning, Oscar was still back in the tent simply because he had overslept. The last photo was taken of all nine of them standing and kneeling by their beleaguered B24.

Their plane had none of the inspiring nose art that B24s were becoming famous for displaying. No “Pleasant Surprise” or “Rat Poison.” No “Miss America, Crew Chief or Flak Ducker.” Their replacement B24 J had been named “Butch” by a previous crew; Ray would rather have called it “Miss Fortune.”

By February of 1944, this crew had flown together for only six months. Although they came from different parts of America and lived very different lives before the previous summer, they were now bonded together by their resolve to do their duty and return home to their loved ones.

Pilot George Goddard’s father was a conductor on a steam train in Texas, while his son had been to college and enjoyed acting. Top Turret Gunner Roy Hughes’s father worked as a car salesman and Roy pumped gasoline. CoPilot Haig Kandarian’s parents had

Foreign and Far Away”

immigrated from Turkey only 25 years before, while bombardier Charles Spickard’s 4th great grandfather fought for our freedom in the Revolutionary War. Waist Gunner Ray Noury grew up in Manville, Rhode

Island speaking French with his family and working in the Cadillac Silk Mill with his mother. Ball turret gunner Harold Carter’s father was a carpenter, building bridges in Illinois while navigator Joseph Altemus

Photos described, opposite page, top of second column.



Photos taken Sunday, February 17, 1944 at Fortunato Cesare Airdrome, Lecce, Italy

and his father worked in the Bethlehem Steel Co. in Pennsylvania, and tail gunner Wayne Nelson's father delivered mail in rural Valders, Wisconsin.

All of them probably wanted to become pilots but they all had accepted their assigned positions. Wayne Nelson's vision was not good enough to be trained as a pilot, besides the AAF needed men of "small stature" who could get into the tight confines of the tail and ball turrets.

Ray Noury was the smallest member of the crew standing 5'3" and weighing only 120 lbs, but he was one of the oldest and had the most flying experience. Ray said, "I was 18 years old, I just turned 18. I thought I wanted to go and be a pilot. I thought that I was going to join the US Army Air Corp in July 1941. Then try to transfer, [to the Canadian Air Force] not realizing that the second world war was coming."

Ray was assigned to the AntiSubmarine patrol flying up and down the East Coast from Massachusetts to Florida. But after December of 1942, he became part of a three-man crew that transported new B24s from Pennsylvania to Virginia.

By the summer of 1943, the crews for the B24s were being assembled at Battista Field, outside of Havana.

The Army Air Force needed heavy bomber crews for the air assault on Rommel's troops in North Africa. Between training exercises there was time to frequent the local bars, smoke their fine cigars and drink countless \$.15 rum and cokes under the Cuban sun.

As the summer ended and the crew prepared to leave for their mission overseas, they were still missing their final man. So while they waited for William Boyce to arrive at Langley Field, Virginia, most of the crew attended the quickly planned wedding of Joe Altemus and beautiful Grace Malloy, August 30, 1943.

Grace loved to dance, and she had her choice of dance partners. She was the only woman working in the Engineering Department of the Bethlehem Steel Company. She was a "steno" who passed out time cards to the other 250 male employees. Joe worked as one of the hundreds of draftsman. Grace saw him every morning, but she didn't seem that interested until after he returned from California and officers' training. Grace would later say that when she saw him walk through the office door in his uniform, "He humbled me, and we were engaged that night." They would talk for hours, ride the train to Philadelphia and dance to the music of Glenn Miller and Cab Calloway. There would be only days before Joe was sent to off Cuba.

Soon he called and "told me to be at Langley, with our parents, to be married." Grace and Joe would only have one month together before the crew would leave to fly across the North Atlantic in September. Grace said, "He wrote to me using the first initial of the country they went to, as my middle initial. So I learned they were in Italy." In one of his letters, Joe told her about the night they were all playing, "Where are you from?" and one guy said, the only girl he ever knew in Bethlehem was Grace Malloy and Joe answered, "I just married her." Even sixty years later, Grace would never forget their last goodbye and his walk across the Virginia tarmac to get into his plane.

The crew named their first new B24 "Skipper" after pilot George Goddard's baby daughter. But after nearly crashing into the mountains surrounding the landing strip in Greenland, "Skipper" would be taken away from them by the 8th AAF in Ireland because of their desperate need for new heavy bombers.

By December of 1943, the crew had flown together on ten missions, across North Africa and into Greece, Yugoslavia, and Italy. There were several missions that went badly. On a mission to northern Italy, the crew was flying a modified B24 with new electrical superchargers. On their return to base, the superchargers failed, and the plane went into a steep dive and lost 1000 ft. before George was able to pull the plane back and make a return to base successfully. On another return from a mission to Athens, one of the plane's engines was already hit by flak. As they flew through a rough storm, the damaged engine's propeller started to 'windmill,' spinning faster than the other props. With the increased vibration throughout the plane and the fact that the damaged propeller could come off, all the crew was prepared to bail out at any moment. Somehow they made it back to base and after a rough landing, the propeller did fall off.

Life, even back on base, was challenging. The fields were muddy except for the runways where steel mats were stretched out the necessary one-mile length. Food was always a problem until the supplies caught up: only one slice of bread a day, Crations and Krations for their missions, powdered eggs and milk, jerked beef (called Bully Beef) until, finally, a delicacy arrived—SPAM. Their tents had leaky roofs, with no heat, and

were crowded with 68 guys. But there was plenty of vino. The good wine was \$5/gallon and the wine that was almost sour cost \$1/gallon, but it was known as the "Purple Death."

The crew's mission on December 19th to the Messerschmitt factory in Augsburg, Germany could have easily been their last. They were flying "tailend Charlie" in the last assault wave and low, so they were "perfect sitting ducks" without any fighter escort. Ray described the mission as "54 bombers against the outnumbering German Luftwaffe of about 150 fighters. We lost 6 or 7 bombers. Nearly all of us looked like swiss cheese. Don't know how we made it back."

Again they lost their beleaguered B24, this time because it was so heavily damaged. Waist gunners William Boyce and Ray Noury were injured. Bill's right leg was shattered when flak tore a gaping hole in the plane's floor beneath him. Bill almost fell through the hole, but Ray was able to pull him back onboard. Ray's legs and arm were ripped by shrapnel, but in the frigid air his wounds quickly froze and prevented too much blood loss. Despite his injuries Ray carried and pulled Bill through the open bombay into the forward compartment, so that radioman Mel Adams and navigator Joe Altemus could try to control the bleeding of Bill's leg where the bone had twice punctured through the skin. Ray then returned through the bombay along the narrow six-inch walkway and released two bombs that remained hanging in their harness.

By Christmas, Bill was sent to a hospital in North Africa and later back to the states for nearly two years of operations and rehab to rebuild his shattered shin bone. Ray would spend the rest of 1943 in the hospital back in Foggia, Italy.

January and most of February seemed to Ray like wasted months of waiting. In January the crew became part of the 98th Bomb Group. They moved to a landing ground in Manduria, Italy and, on January 14th, to the airdrome at Fortunato Cesare in Lecce.

"Finally in February from the 2nd to the 9th we went on Flak leave in Bari, Italy. Had a swell time but not many places to go to. Italy is poor. It's pitiful. Hardly anything to eat. Only wish I could have bought more

HAVANA

Ray Noury is seated at the table on the far left side while Joe Altemus is standing second from the left.

Roy Hughes is seated third from the right (next to Wayne Nelson, second from the right).



for our “Little Skipper.” George was so proud and so were we. He got a rassing from all of us quite often, but he took it swell. We came back on the night of the 9th and the next morning we made our 1st mission since December. Another the 15th, and on the 19th we had an all out mission to help the boys out on the Anzio Beachhead. The flak was terrific and we came back full of holes.”

But still by the morning of Thursday, February 22, their battered B24 was patched up and ready to go. Ray would awake to thoughts of his mother, knowing it was her birthday. He prayed that he would make it through his missions and see her again, but soon he knew that everything seemed different.

“First, it was (Mel) Adams, who was taken sick at the last minute. Had a lot of confidence in him and never flown without him.

“So [T/Sgt. John Goldbach] replaced him. I noticed he was a little nervous but knowing what had happened the mission before after a close call when a big piece of flak knocked the flashlight out of his hands when trying to fix a generator and getting close to the end of his mission, it was natural for him to be nervous.”

Then in a surprising decision, S/Sgt Rexford “Dusty” Rhodes chose that day to come along, in order to complete his last required mission. Dusty was a

decorated crew member who had received the DFC medal for his participation in the Ploesti raid. He was an experience waist gunner who had flown with “Northern Star,” and had been looking for crews to fly with since his B24 was decommissioned in December of 1943. Ray always felt that it was strange that Dusty wanted to come along on this long and dangerous mission, rather than choosing an easier “milk run.”

“That day was Regensburg and believe me, we were all saddened, so once we got inside, everyone got into their position...”

The crew of now eleven, scrambled into their B24J, No. 4273138 “Butch” or “Miss Fortune” headed north by northwest through the sheltering sky above the Italian coast, climbed to 28,000 ft., crossed over the Alps, and never returned.

That afternoon, the villagers would find Ray lying in the snow, clutching his crucifix. Ray never saw the plane crash, but he remembered the smell of gasoline, falling, looking up and seeing his ripped parachute, still holding the rip cord, and then the blinding snow.

“Then the flak started to come up, and we were hit pretty bad. Holed all over but we kept flying and the weather did not look any too good. Just as the fighters started to come up I called Nelson (tail gunner) to keep

his eyes open . . . then Carter our ball turret man called up saying his guns were frozen and George answered, ‘Do your best and get them working.’

“About half minute later Carter said he had one working. The I heard Spick call up and said, ‘Bombs away.’ Nelson was firing away and reloaded his guns. It was then that I smelled gas through my oxygen mask so I took it off and my interphone too. Wanted to check the Bombay and realizing the danger—gas was flowing in the Bombay. Having just dropped our bombs, went back to waist gunner to help Goldback put his chute on, then went to the tail to tell Nelson. Flak was still hitting us so when I returned it was Goldback who gave me the sign to check ball turret. It had been hit. Tried to bring it up hydraulically but no success. Tried the door, it was jammed so wanting to call George up, I returned to waist gunner to get on telephone. As I looked out left waist window, 8 freighters ME-110 were ready to attack . . . hollered for him (Goldberg) to shoot, let ‘em have it . . . I noticed that the 20 mm. balls of fire were heading for us.

“Realizing I was getting weak from lack of oxygen, I turned around to put my mask on, started to fire at a fighter. My mask fell off as I started to check No.3 and No.4 engines—they were on fire. All of a sudden I noticed the wing peeling off the plane and was going into a dive on the right. I told myself it was the end. Reached for my crucifix—couldn’t find it—blacked out and finally woke up at about 3 or 4000 ft. My chute full of holes. The grip handle still in it’s place. It had opened by itself. I had no shoes on at all, and my microphone was still tied to me.

“Landed in about 3 ft. of snow. I didn’t even see the plane go down or anything. Don’t know if the word ‘Bail out’ had been given until I received a letter from mother. I thought probably the ship had gone back and I was thrown out or dumped out in the dive. So that’s the story till this day and will probably never know what happened to the gallant crew.”

From Ray’s 1945 letter to Grace Altemus and the crew’s families.

Ray spent the next fifteen months as a German POW in Stalag III, IV, and VII, and after surviving the winter “death march” to Stalag III, he was finally liberated

in May of 1945. But Ray always wondered about the crew and if any of them had somehow survived.

Stateside, Grace listened all winter to the shortwave broadcasts to hear if she could learn more about the crew’s location, but on St. Patrick’s Day, March 17th, she received the dreaded telegram, stating that Joe’s plane had not returned from the Regensburg mission and that the crew was now listed as MIA. Grace immediately sent letters to other crew families along with copies of the crew photo of 2/17/1944 that she had just received in a letter from Joe. Over the next months, words of encouragement and reassurance, along with the news that at least Ray was a POW, were sent between the worried families. Evelyn Goddard would receive George’s Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and, on October 19, 1944, Grace Altemus would again ride the train to Philadelphia to receive Joe’s Air Medal at the Third Command headquarters.

Soon after Ray returned home in June of 1945, he went to visit Bill Boyce while he was still in the VA hospital in Washington, DC. They talked for hours about their days together, about the crew, and about the official MACR that stated that witnesses saw their B24 shot down in Germany, fifteen minutes before reaching Regensburg. Ray didn’t understand how that was possible, but it would be years before Ray would learn the truth.

Ray did not know that the Czech villagers had buried his crew’s remains in a single casket in Pradlo’s “Peace for Souls” cemetery. He did not know that in 1945 General Patton’s troops moved the crew’s casket to Nurnberg, Germany or that their remains would later be disinterred and relocated to the St. Lorraine Cemetery in France. And finally, he was not told that his crew’s final interment was in Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery, St. Louis on June 16, 1950 with full military honors.

It would not be until 1992, when Ray received letters from the Czech Republic, that he would begin to learn the fate of his crew and how the Czech villagers had always remembered and honored their liberators.

Please look for “the rest of the story” in the next issue of THE PYRAMIDIERS.

CREW TOGETHER AT AN IRISH PUB

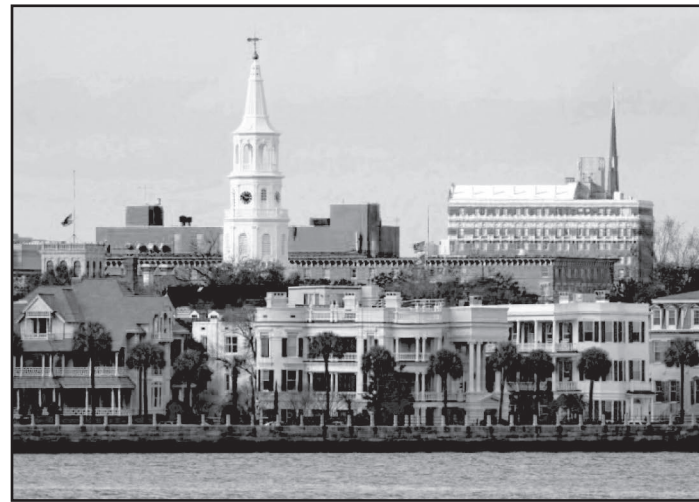
Ray Noury, William
(Bill) Boyce, Roy
Hughes, Mel Adams,
Harold Carter,
Wayne Nelson



98TH Bomb Group Veterans

Charleston, founded in 1670, is the oldest and second-largest city in southeastern South Carolina. It lies just south of the midpoint of South Carolina's coastline and is located on Charleston Harbor, an inlet of the Atlantic Ocean; and is the fastest-growing municipality in South Carolina. Known for its rich history, well-preserved architecture, distinguished restaurants, and mannerly people, it is understandable why Charleston was once again selected for our reunion destination. And what a great turnout we had for this reunion—eighty attendees strong! It was so good to see many friends and familiar faces, as well as a few newcomers and 'kids.' And that's exactly what we need to keep this organization vital and ongoing! We owe to those who have gone before us to keep their legacy alive.

We had many families with us this year—Bob Schinsing, his son Gary and granddaughters, Lily



and Simone. Stan Siberski with his lovely wife Regi who celebrated their 55th wedding anniversary along with their children, Doug, Linda, Duane, Laura and granddaughter Cayley. Phil Tarpley with his daughter Linda and son-in-law Bill. Judith Rawlings and daughter Melinda. The handsome Ralph Donnelly with his 'boys,' Tim, Michael and Kevin. Joe Abbondonelo with Joe Jr. The nicest Southern gentleman you will ever meet, Hubert Clemmons, this year with son Rusty (come with them next year, Tom!). The DiPietro Clan—Tony, the lovely Louise and Elisa, and Lou and Millie Moretto. Pete and Dolores Haritos and friend Tim Phelan. Gary Lambertson and son James who is stationed at Charleston AFB. And the Hensel girls (with lots of new memorabilia) and the Simons sisters!

On Day 1 we toured the USS Yorktown, an aircraft carrier built during World War II for the United States Navy, commissioned in 1943. Initially to have been named Bon Homme Richard, she was renamed Yorktown while under construction to commemorate USS Yorktown, lost at the Battle of Midway in June 1942. She participated in several campaigns in the Pacific Theater of Operations, earning 11 battle stars and the Presidential Unit Citation.

Decommissioned shortly after the end of the war, she was modernized and then re-commissioned in the early 1950s, too late to participate in the Korean War but she served for many years in the Pacific, including duty in the Vietnam War, in which she earned five battle stars. Late in her career she served as a recovery ship for the Apollo 8 space mission. Yorktown



Association Reunion 2013

was decommissioned in 1970 and in 1975 became a museum ship at Patriot's Point, and a National Historic Landmark.

An interesting note, the Yorktown is also home to the Congressional Medal of Honor Museum and features exhibits that tell the stories of brave Americans who displayed remarkable courage from the very first Medal of Honor recipients in the Civil War to the War On Terror, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice in Iraq and Afghanistan.

It was interesting to see the inner workings of a ship this size, where their personnel lived and worked. There were many planes on display including an Avenger, like the one former President George HW Bush was shot down in. The veteran volunteers there were interesting to talk with, including the one Bill Seals spoke with who was a radio operator on a B-17. When this veteran resumed his college education after the war, he took some classes that were taught by Colonel Kane's wife. What a small world!

Later we visited and had lunch at The Citadel, The Military College of South Carolina, a state-supported, comprehensive college in Charleston, founded in 1842, which combines academics, physical challenges and military discipline. It is one of the six Senior Military Colleges in the United States, with a program that consists of military cadets pursuing bachelor's degrees who are required to live on campus for all four years.



The South Carolina Corps of Cadets is one of the largest uniformed student bodies in the United States and the school is one of only two colleges where all full-time undergraduates are required to be cadets and participate in ROTC.

The mission of The Citadel is: to educate and develop our students to become principled leaders in all walks of life by instilling the core values of The Citadel in a disciplined and intellectually challenging environment

Tuesday was a free day (or as the women like to call it 'shopping day'). Many went sightseeing—seeing plantations, Fort Sumpter, or taking tours of the city; ending the day with more stories and spending time together in the hospitality room.

On Day 4 we visited Charleston AFB which is a joint civil-military airport where Charleston Field shares its runways with Charleston International Airport for commercial airline aircraft operations on the south side of the airfield and general aviation aircraft operations on the east side.

It is home to the 437th Military Airlift Wing (and 315th Military Airlift Wing) who operate the C-17 Globemaster III strategic airlift aircraft in support of its mission to provide airlift of troops and passengers, military equipment, cargo, and aeromedical equipment and supplies worldwide from the base, which has also maintained an alert site for fighter-interceptor aircraft.

Charleston Field is also home to the 628th Air Base Wing, the host wing for installation support whose primary duties are to provide installation support to 53 DoD and Federal agencies, servicing a total force of over 79,000 Airmen, Sailors, Soldiers, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, civilians, dependents and retirees on Charleston AFB and Naval Weapons Station Charleston. Additionally, they also provide expeditionary Airmen to combatant commanders in support of joint and combined operations.

The base has a long history with WWII efforts: after the Pearl Harbor attack on 7 December 1941, the 56th Pursuit Group based at Charlotte Airport,

North Carolina, and its 61st Pursuit Squadron's P-39 Airacobra and P-40 Warhawk aircraft provided coastal defense operations for the Southern Defense Command. In 1942 the 16th Antisubmarine Squadron operated B-34 Lexington bombers helping defend the eastern seaboard from possible attack. In 1943 the base served as the final phase of training to B-24 Liberator crews. In 1944 the 113th Army Air Field Base Unit activated and took over as Charleston's host unit, but the need for B-24 crews ended with Germany's defeat and end of the war in Europe. In their place, however, the Army Air Force required a large number of transport crews. Consequently, the base was transferred to Air Transport Command on 1 June 1945 and began C-54 Skymaster crew training that lasted until late August 1945.

We were fortunate to have had several displays of current equipment set up in stations and staffed with military personnel in one of the hangars. As the group traveled the stations asking questions, I think there were, in turn, more questions for them. Herk Streitburger played "Stump the Stars" when he asked about a current model PFD, asking if it was still called a "Mae West!" Of course the young Airman had absolutely no idea who Mae West was, nor why they would ever call a PFD by her name!

We were then bused onto the tarmac to a C-17. We were allowed to board and look around the cargo bay (which was gigantic) and, if able, climb into the cockpit. It was something to see in person! A group picture under the wing and then we were off to the Officer's Club for lunch and a question-and-answer session with several crew members who, in turn, had many questions for our 98th guys.

On Thursday morning, as we have come to look forward to, the ladies were surprised with a brunch, (including



Mimosas), hosted in the absolutely elegant, luxurious setting of the exclusive Country Club of Charleston, whose origins go back to 1911. Afterwards the Club's Current Manager gave us a bit of its history. It features a course originally designed in 1924 by Sam Raynor, one of America's famous architectural giants of early 20th century golf courses. In 1989 Hurricane Hugo caused major damage there, destroying the clubhouse and taking down 1,000 trees, requiring the course to be redone the next year. It was redone once again in 2005. This time the restoration was based on a 1939 aerial photo of the course. Inside Charleston's stately clubhouse history is everywhere, along with fantastic antiques and decor. On one wall is a 1919 aerial photo of Belvedere (its predecessor), along with a framed newspaper clipping reporting a visit by William Howard Taft, America's first golf-crazed president. Black-and-white photos in the bar show Sam Snead playing in 1937 in the club's Tournament of the Gardens, forerunner to its current Azalea Invitational, an amateur event. Since no one wanted to join and pay the \$50,000 initiation fee, we all got back on the bus and headed back to Charleston . . . and reality!

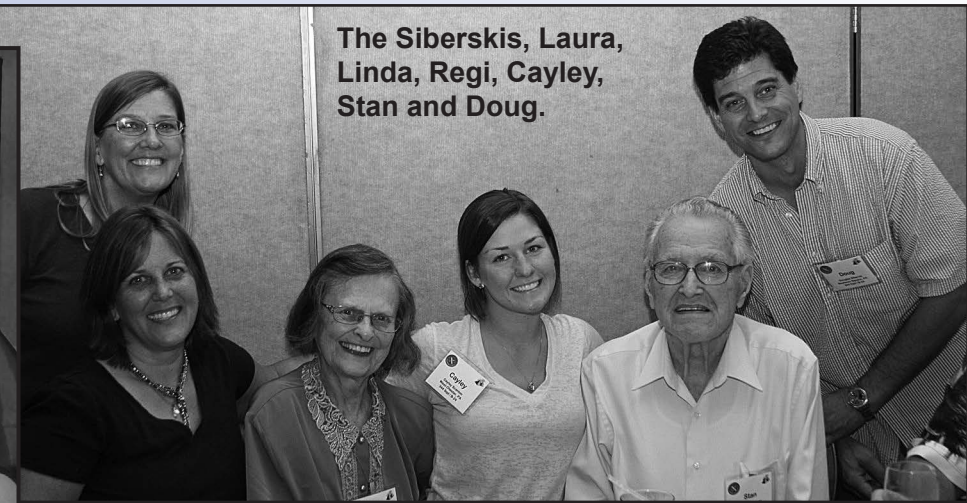
The Banquet is always a bittersweet event, as we spend our last evening together. As the colors are posted and we hear the words of the POW-MIA Table Ceremony, remembering those who have gone before us, those who cannot be with us, and those who serve today; and we all say a silent prayer that we will be together again in Rapid City. These together times are a gift and one not to be missed if can be helped.

Thanks again to Dennis and Bill for your work in making this happen. Thank you to Peggy and Connie for sharing 'your time' with us.

Scenes from the 2013 Reunion



Above: Joan Hensel asks, "Hey Dennis, where do you want this?"



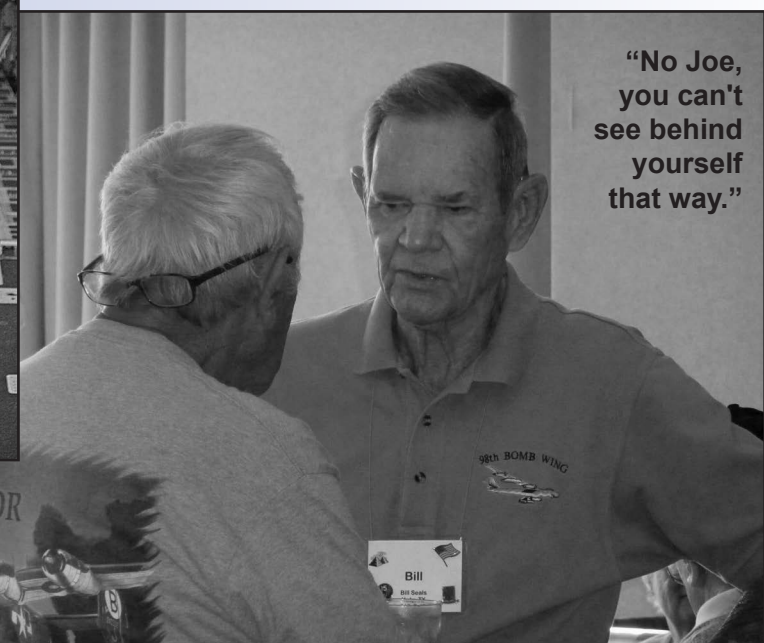
The Siberskis, Laura, Linda, Regi, Cayley, Stan and Doug.



Kevin, Michael, Tim and Ralph Donnelly.

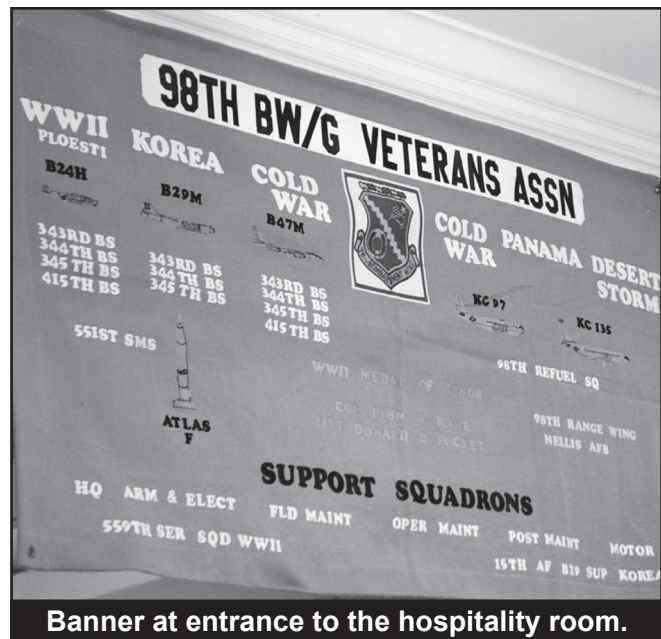


Above: Pete Haritos and friend Tim Phelan.



"No Joe, you can't see behind yourself that way."

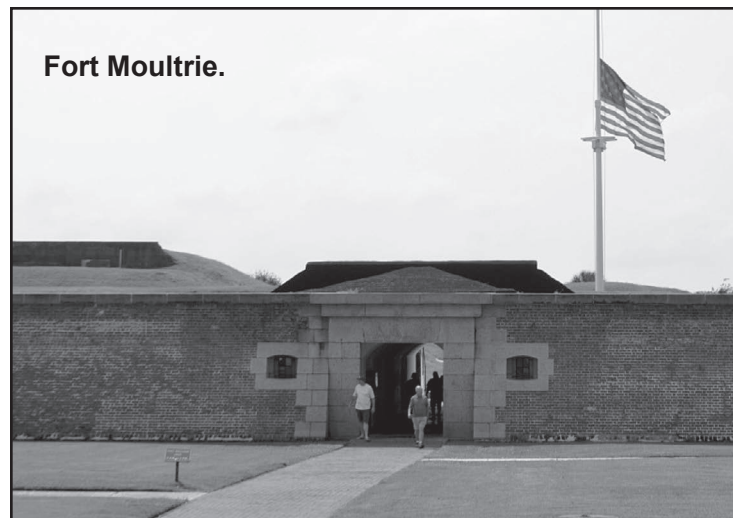
Ladies brunch at a ritzy country club.



Banner at entrance to the hospitality room.



A Charleston historic site.



Fort Moultrie.



Stan and Regi Siberski celebrate 55 years of marriage.



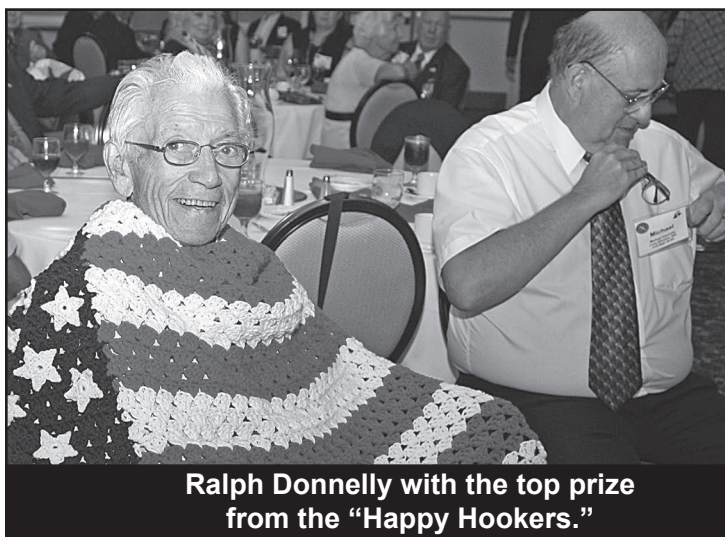
Fire when ready!



Seats on C-17. Looks comfortable, but try flying to Asia on them.



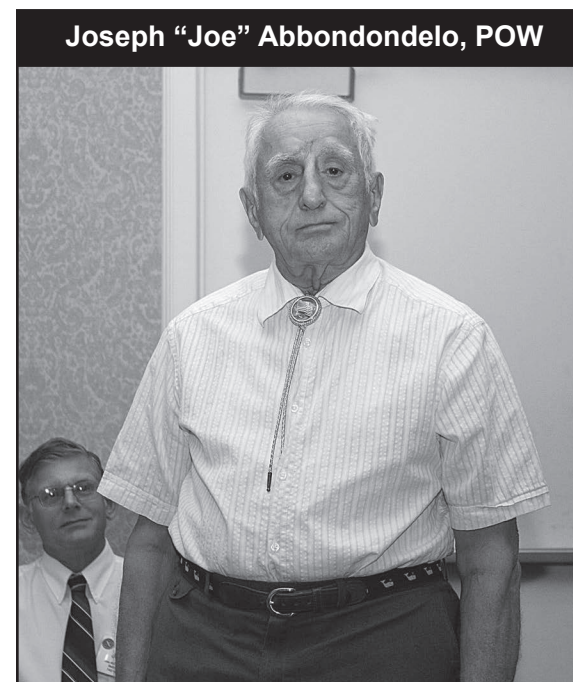
The memorabilia "girls" Bonnie and Joan Hensel.



Ralph Donnelly with the top prize from the "Happy Hookers."



Herman "Herk" Streitburger, POW



Joseph "Joe" Abbondonelo, POW

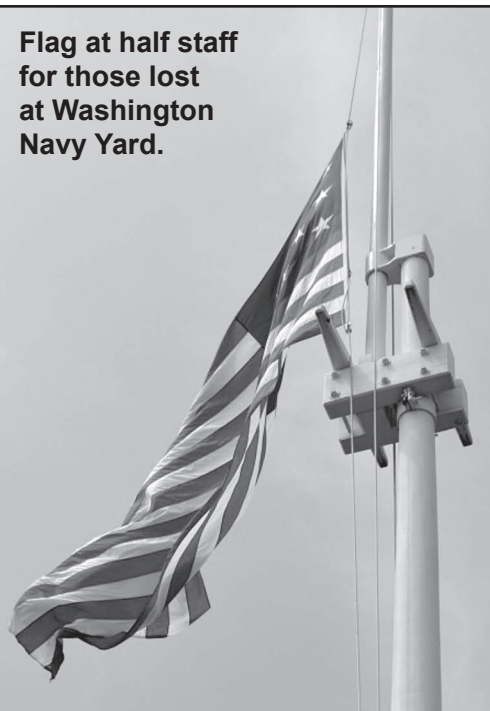


Very interesting. But can it do windows?

The 98th goes to sea—"sorta."



Flag at half staff for those lost at Washington Navy Yard.

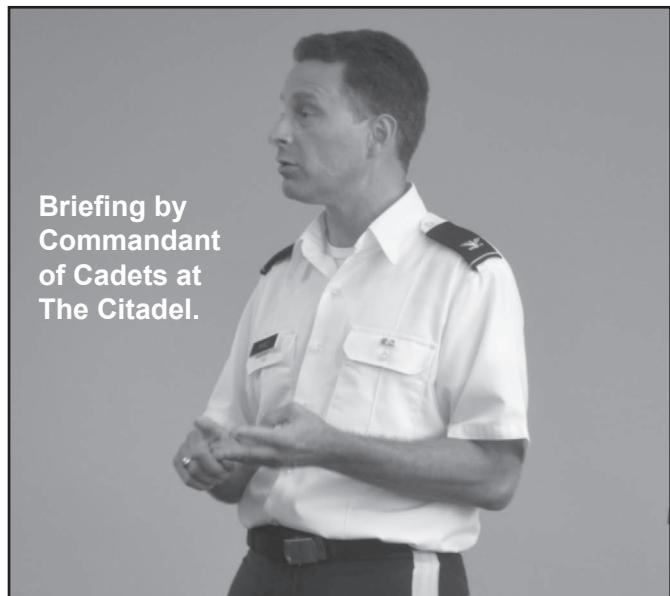


That's good. Thank you.



C-17 tour at Charleston AFB

Oh My! You're much prettier than my navigator.



Briefing by Commandant of Cadets at The Citadel.

Bob Ladislav with "stuff." Gary Lambertson, Regi and Stan.



Cute Bonnie, but try wearing that "Brain Bucket" for ten plus hours straight.



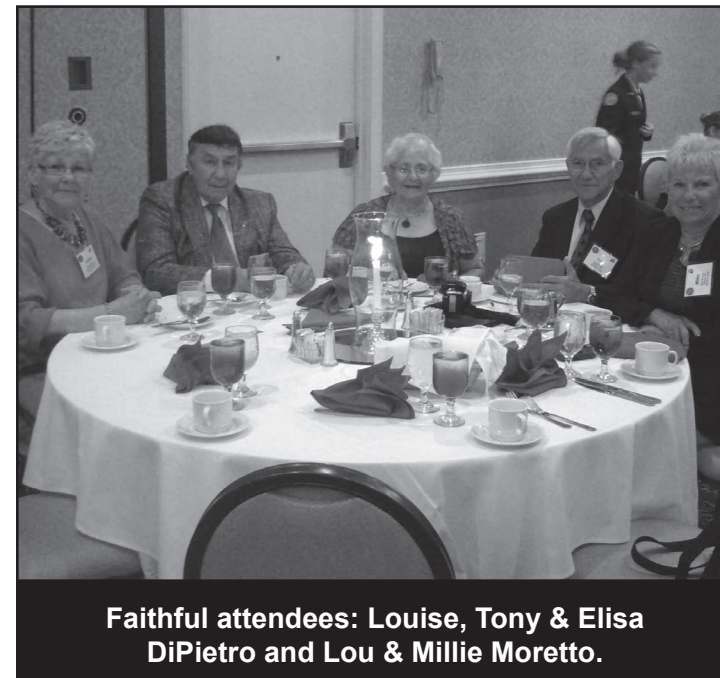
Open wide and say, "Aahh."



Airman 1st Class Anderson and Chief Pete Haritos, USAF Ret.

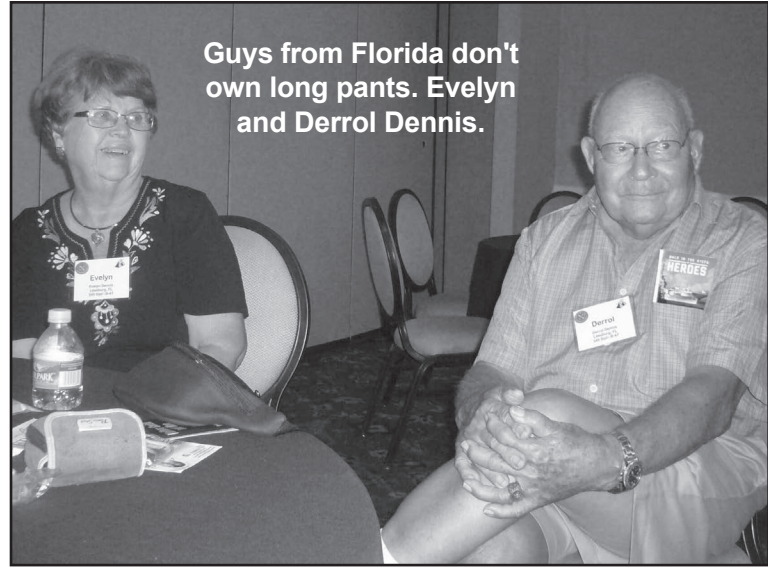


Faithful attendees: Louise, Tony & Elisa DiPietro and Lou & Millie Moretto.





Historic home on an historic street in Charleston.



Guys from Florida don't own long pants. Evelyn and Derrol Dennis.



Norman Carver and Tom Gray just hanging out in hospitality room.



"Birthday Boy" Ray Lundquist and wife Marian.



Can't you just feel the love?



Lunch at The Citadel.



The MIA Table



Our fearless leader and his long time roommate.



The Citadel



Jerry and Marilyn Strickland. Nice of you folks to stay for the banquet.

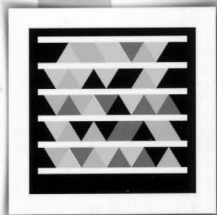


"One for the road. See ya'll next year."



The City of Presidents

Historic Downtown Rapid City, SD



www.CityofPresidents.com

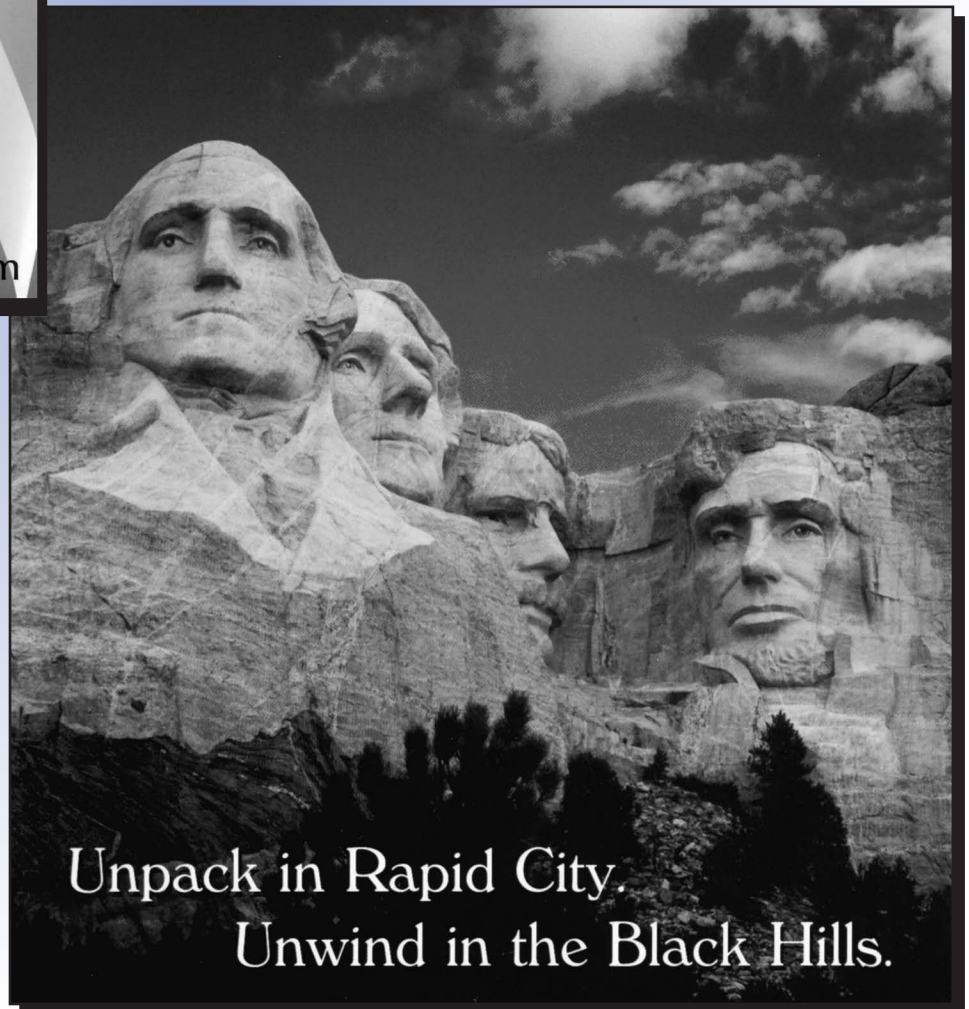
More from the VP/ Reunion Coordinator . . .

I have just returned from our 2014 Reunion site—Rapid City, South Dakota. I feel confident you would agree that we have had some great Reunions and been to some great places. I think you may also agree that had it not been for our Reunion, you and I might never have seen some of these places. Our next Reunion site will be another of those great places.

If you're interested in history, come join us in South Dakota. You will learn how Rapid City, "Gateway to the Black Hills," began as a mining town and grew to be a leading trade center for the upper mid-west. In the 40s the Rapid City Army Air base—later to become Ellsworth Airbase, an Army Air Corp training base, was established. As a result, the population nearly doubled. Of course Rapid City is also home to Mount Rushmore. But there is so much more you'll discover when you visit our next Reunion site.

Details regarding the 2014 Reunion will follow in the next newsletter! . . . until then . . .

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



**98th Bomb Group
Wing Veterans
Association**

2014 Reunion
Rapid City, SD
Aug. 24 - 28, 2014

*Unpack in Rapid City.
Unwind in the Black Hills.*