

June 1, 2004

339th



Fighter Group Association

Station F378 – Fowlmere, England

NEWSLETTER

“The Lads from Fowlmere”



Volume 24, Issue 2

Editor: Stephen C. Ananian

Sixty Years Ago - - -



1st Lt. Evan M. Johnson, V, on July 8, 1944, poses in front of THE COMET just before Takeoff.

The Saga of THE COMET

The story as originally written by Charles Nethaway, then James Starnes and now updated by me, your editor - Stephen Ananian

In spite of its close proximity, as a New Yorker, I guess I never knew much about New Jersey before the war. While in school I worked as an errand boy and was familiar with the New York City Subways and the Hudson Tubes, - thereby giving me access to Jersey City, Hoboken and the beaches of the Jersey Shore. Once I walked across the George Washington Bridge to New Jersey and back, but that was the extent of my out-of-state travel. So the location of Hackensack New Jersey or its high school was unknown to me!

On Saturday 8th of July 1944 the pilots gathered at the Officer's Club on the Air Base at Fowlmere in England. They were preparing to attend ceremonies at the flight line. A brand new Mustang model P-51D was about to be given a 'test hop'. It was to be some sort of public relations event and several truckloads of personnel departed to witness the festivities at the field.

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1st Lt. Evan M. Johnson, V, was one of our hot pilots at the time. He was credited with having destroyed four enemy aircraft and two "½ kills" were pending confirmation. "Johnny" was on a roll! His P-51 was an old model with four "fifties", so the "Brass" decided to reward him with a brand new model "D" with bubble canopy and six fifty caliber machine guns in the wings. After all, if you could down 6 planes with four guns think of what you could do with six! In the cockpit of this magnificent silver bird was a type written letter. It read: -

*HACKENSACK HIGH SCHOOL
Hackensack, New Jersey*

June 5, 1944.

To the pilot of this P-51 "Mustang":

During the past school year, the students of our school have worked very hard in order to sell enough War Bonds to purchase your new plane. You see, we have always wanted to feel that, though we can't fight, we have done our utmost to aid in the war effort. This plane is our humble contribution.

We would like to ask as a personal favor to us if you will name your plane "The Comet." The reason we chose this name is not only because it is such a fitting title for a plane of this type, but "Comet" is our school emblem.

All of us have a personal interest in this plane and we might say, a personal interest in you. In fact, we would be highly honored if we could call you "our Pilot," or, in other words, we would like to adopt you.

We fervently hope this plane will be as powerful and as dependable as it looked to us, and to you we wish "God Speed."

Students of Hackensack High School.

The High School students were, "right on the money," in their estimate of the power of that airplane. It had been built at the North American plant in Englewood California. With the name "THE COMET" stenciled on its nose, it flew from California to New York in six hours and 39 minutes, setting the speed record for piston driven aircraft. That record has remained unbroken until just a few years ago. Upon its arrival in New York the wings were removed and the aircraft was prepared for shipment overseas to the United Kingdom. There it was assigned to our outfit, the 505th Fighter Squadron, of the 339th Fighter Group.

The 339th was what they called a "hot" outfit and was setting records on nearly every mission. The 505th alone had destroyed over 100 enemy aircraft in the first 100 days of combat. An accomplishment never heard of, either then or since.

Because of the Group's record, we were assigned the task of testing the new Secret "G" Suits. These pressure suits prevented pilots from "blacking out" in tight turns and gave us a decided advantage over the enemy. 1st Lt. Johnson wrote the kids at Hackensack High and thanked them for his brand new silver bird. Late in the afternoon, he climbed into the Mustang as the crowds watched! Flash bulbs flashed, shutters clicked and off roared Evan into the "Wild Blue." He pointed that nose straight up and in just a few minutes he was at

twenty thousand feet performing aerobatics. Suddenly a P-47 Thunderbolt from the neighboring airfield at Duxford (the 78th FG) pounced on The COMET in an attempt to engage it in a mock "dogfight."

Evan Johnson, being the experienced fighter pilot that he was, pulled the Mustang into a sharp turn to avoid the Thunderbolt. There was a loud sickening K-E-E-R-R-A-C-K and the wings of that beautiful bird peeled off, narrowly missing the pilot and nearly trapping him in the cockpit!

Johnson's chute got tangled in the falling wreckage as he "Hit-the-Silk", with his chute oscillating violently, it took the pilot ten full minutes to come down to earth. He hit the ground in a heap ten miles north of the field and was hospitalized for a week with a broken ankle and minor injuries.

"Johnny" told the kids back in New Jersey there would always be a COMET, and indeed there was! The next replacement P-51D was again named "THE COMET". Evan Johnson, however, never flew it. Fighter pilots tend to be superstitious and he figured it was just bad luck! He completed his 'combat tour' flying in another P-51D and named it after his first bird, "Pistol Packin' Mama!"

Evan Johnson destroyed an ME 109 on November 18th '44! It was his final Kill!

Where do I fit in this story? Well, after the war, Isabel and I married and moved to New Jersey. No - not Hackensack! But pretty close! We moved to the town of River Edge, just two miles away. My brother-in-law, Albert Tfrank was the president of the Hackensack Chamber of Commerce and a former student of the High School. He, or his brothers probably sold bonds for the purchase of THE COMET. As far as Albert was concerned, "The sun rose and set over Hackensack New Jersey." Al and I watched the Comets of "Hackensack High" play baseball many times through the years and of course we always rooted for "our" team. He died many years ago, while still the president of the Hackensack C. of C. - I never told him this story! Just did not have the heart to tell him of the Comet's demise.

So - - What did happen to that beautiful silver Mustang called THE COMET?

What made that aircraft shed its wings and hurtle through the sky like its namesake?

There are three suppositions on this but no one will ever know for sure. Almost certainly the wing mounts were probably damaged in the shipment across the ocean. It is also possible, but not at all probable that it was not reassembled correctly upon its arrival in England. Our ground crews were just too good for that to have occurred.

Continued next page



This newspaper article was recently sent to me by Nick King, Honorary Member of the 339th FG. Clipping states, "One of the 310th ferry pilots receives the paperwork for a P-51D before delivery. For some reason the words 'THE COMET' had been stenciled on the nose of the new aircraft. It was unusual for an airplane to be named before delivery."

Could that be the letter from the Hackensack High School students being handed to the pilot?

The third reason is interesting to say the least. There are some that believed the settings for the "G" suit (still experimental at that time) were improperly set and the pilot, not feeling the "Gs" just pulled the wings off.

The Mustang was a sturdy aircraft Red-Lined at 575 mph in a dive. I have chased enemy jets and hit "compressibility" (the Speed of Sound). It burned nearly all the paint off the airplane and elongated the rivet holes from nose to tail, but those wings stayed on!

They say, "Every cloud has a silver lining," and in this case I believe it does! Evan Johnson was lucky! He was lucky those wings did not come off while he was engaged in a dogfight with the enemy over "The Third Reich".

The students of Hackensack High School were also fortunate! They not only had acquired a "fighter pilot", as they wished for, but they ended up with a whole fighter group! Many of us flew THE COMET in combat at one time or another.

Ten years ago I donated a copy of the 339th's History to the High School library on our behalf. We enclosed a copy of this story and conveyed our gratitude for THE COMET. This story has been told before and will be repeated over and over! It's a part of history that should be recounted on this, the 60th anniversary of the occasion! Thanks Hackensack!

Thank you Comets, unknown to you, you had indeed achieved your ambition. You succeeded in doing your utmost to aid in the war effort. Freedom is ours! 



Lt. Evan M. Johnson and "Pistol Packin Mama"



Evan M. Johnson, V

IT ALL STARTED IN 1775

From the files of Capt. Charles Nethaway, P. R. Officer 339th F. G.

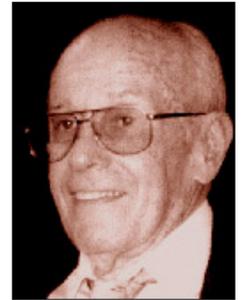
1st Lt. Evan Malvone Johnson the 5th, came from a long military line. A chaplain named Evan M. Johnson served troops during the Revolutionary War and started it all! Captain Evan M. Johnson, II, served as a Union infantry officer in the Civil War and General Evan M. Johnson, III, was the general officer who brought the First Army overseas in the first World War. In WW II Major Evan M. Johnson, IV, served with the Engineers in India while First Lieutenant Evan M. Johnson, V, was a fighter "Ace" credited with destroying six enemy aircraft while serving with the 505th Fighter Squadron of the 339th Fighter Group.

We understand that 1/Lt. Evan M. Johnson, V, stayed in the Air Force at war's end and passed away a few years before our association was formed in 1980. 

THE 339TH MEMORIALS

From The Desk of Jim Starnes

Staff Columnist, pilot 505th FS



In announcing the recent loss of Maye Hawley (ORD), her daughter mentioned that Maye had wanted a memorial established to her husband Joe for his service with us during World War II.



M/Sgt Joseph Hawley

Joe had died several years ago and played a key support role as superintendent of automotive maintenance at Fowlmere. It has not been our practice in this association to make a memorial to individual members. The closest thing to that was the printing of our 339th group history largely due to G. P. Harry's efforts. In it we have included many photos and accounts of individual members' contributions to the group. Sterling Conley had submitted a section on missions and functions of the 1786th Ordnance Supply and Maintenance Company. In it is an account of M/Sgt Joseph Hawley's leadership in organizing and managing the automotive section, the largest section in the 1786th. Sterling included two photos of Joe Hawley, one of which shows Joe receiving the Bronze Star for his great contributions to the success of that section. Joe and Maye

attended several 339th reunions as long as his health permitted, and we miss them.



Our 339th memorials began in 1984 when we dedicated a plaque at the Air Force Academy's Memorial Garden in Colorado Springs. Joe Hawley was among the ten Ordnance personnel attending that dedication.

While not a 339th memorial, we did contribute \$500 toward the large bronze Mustang which graces the grounds of the Air Force Academy. The 339th Fighter Group Association is listed on the plaque at the base of this P-51 as well as the name of Lt. Col. Ralph Dearey whose wife Ila contributed on his behalf.



Air Force Academy



339ers placed a wreath at the Fowlmere Memorial on a recent visit. They are L-R Bill Perry, Gil Cohen, Dutch Eisenhardt and Carl French.

When one looks at the reunion attendance list, many veterans that were there are no longer with us. Including members of the reunion committee, Al Harte, Betty Wyatt and Fred Scroggin.

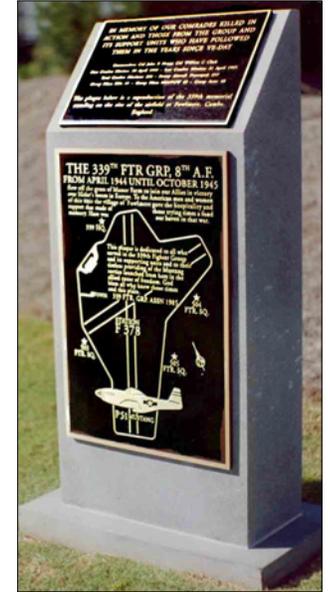
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339th Memorial tree and plaque at AF Museum

Our next memorial was the 1986 memorial at Fowlmere, England, which was designed by Hervey Stockman. Hervey contracted for the large bronze plaque's manufacture, and it flew across the Atlantic aboard an aerial tanker from the NJ Air National Guard arranged by Frank Gerard. Fowlmere airfield owner Martin Sheldrick had it placed at a prominent site on his land where we had served during the war.

The third memorial was placed at the Air Force Museum in Dayton, OH, in 1991. Designed by Hal Kotora, this plaque is in the memorial garden at the base of a crimson maple tree obtained and planted through the efforts of Dale Shafer. The plaque shows a P-51 Mustang and in large words

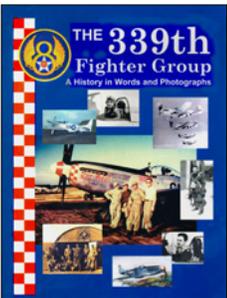


339th memorial at the Eighth Air Force Museum in Savannah, GA.

“A TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO SERVED” plus unit numbers and the total missions flown as well as the number of aircraft destroyed.

Our final group memorial is located at the Mighty Eighth Museum in Savannah, GA. This one was also designed by Hervey Stockman and is similar to the one we dedicated at Fowlmere. Dedication ceremonies were conducted during our Savannah reunion late in August 1998 and is one of the better memorials in that facility.

A second edition of our group history was printed in 2000, which included many color photos, and updated with the photos of personnel that were not included in the first edition. This edition was the effort of our historian Slick Penrose and his son Tom, who assisted after his father's terminal brain tumor, limited his activities. It will remain like the other memorials as a lasting tribute to our wartime organization and its outstanding personnel.



339th History

All copies of the second edition of our history have been distributed. Both editions are in demand and are now being sold in the secondary market to collectors.

Through the years the 339th has donated funds, in memory of our fallen comrades to the village school in Fowlmere. We have also donated \$1,000 in their memory to the National World War II memorial. Most recently we have been receiving memorial donations to our Association in memory of our deceased members (see page 13).



Jim Starnes

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR DUES FOR 2004?

Remember, your \$10 dues are tax-deductible!
Newsletter Circulation - 432, 402 - USA, 30 - Overseas

24th ANNUAL REUNION in Washington DC!

Reunion dates – September 16th to 20th

By Lawrence J. Powell

Reunion Chairman, pilot 505th FS



Lawrence "Larry" Powell
Reunion Chairman

Finally! After all these years of planning we are going to meet in Washington DC! Just in time to visit the newly completed WW II Memorial!

It nearly did not happen! Hotels were not available with our reunion needs. Prices were out of sight (\$150-\$200 a night)! What were we going to do? So we called on our old reliable Chet Malarz to solve the problem.

Chet writes, "Location for our reunion? It had to be a compromise - - if it is closer to Reagan National Airport, the hotel rates are higher; they also charge for parking cars. If closer to Dulles, the rates are still high, and transport to DC is higher."



Chester "Chet" Malarz

THE SOLUTION!

After much searching and negotiating Chet came up with a few of his ingenious solutions! By changing the meeting dates and getting out of congested Washington DC he was able to come up with **The Marriott Fairview Park Hotel** (noted for its excellent cuisine!) in Falls Church Virginia. It is convenient to all the sights and the Metro transportation system as well. In addition the hotel has Van transportation service available for it's customers.

The dates we have chosen are Thursday September 16th to Monday September 20th. The price is (now hold your hats) only **\$74 a night** plus local taxes (currently 6.5%). To top it all, adequate parking is free! Do not let the prices fool you! This is probably one of the finest accommodations we have had!

REGISTER NOW! September issue might be too late!

1. Call now and make your hotel reservations at **The Marriott Fairview Park Hotel**, 3111 Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church, VA 22042 For hotel Reservations call toll free 1-800-228-9290. Tell them you are with the 339th Fighter Group and want their special rates. Check into hotel on Thursday Sept. 16th at 4:00 PM. Check out 12:00 NOON Monday, Sept. 20th. The rates for the 339th FG are as we said before only \$74 per night plus local taxes (currently 6.5%).

2. Fill out and mail in your reunion reservation form (page 18) with a check to our treasurer (name on form). If you wish to dine with your unit, fill out and *Continued next page*

mail in the appropriate forms and mail with check to your unit director (names listed on page 18.) See the tentative schedule of events on page 19.

3. Save time and call before your departure for transportation to hotel from airport. "Super Shuttle", phone- (703)-416-6661 the one-way rate from Dulles International Airport is \$17.00 for the 1st person and \$10 for each additional person. The one-way rate from Reagan National Airport is \$13 for the 1st person and \$8 for each additional person. "The Washington Flyer", phone- (703)-661-6655 Taxis or sedans from Dulles (IAD) or Reagan (DCA) and the cost is approximately \$35 one-way. "Yellow Cab", phone- (703)-534-1111. Taxis or sedans from Dulles (IAD) or Reagan (DCA) and the cost is approximately \$35 one-way.

Aug. 26th is the Deadline Date for your hotel reservations!

All reservations must include one night's rent to be binding! Don't Delay! Make your reservations **NOW!** LARRY 

SCHEDULED REUNION SIDE TRIPS

#1 - Sept. 18th Saturday - Washington DC tour – with stops at The WW II Memorial and Smithsonian – lunch on your own at Smithsonian, self-destruct food court. Leave hotel at 09:30 – return by 14:30. Bus charge only is **\$15:00** a person.

#2 – Sept. 19th Sunday – Air and Space Museum – Lunch on your own at self-destruct food court. Leave hotel at 09:30 – return 13:30. Bus charge only is **\$15:00** a person.

Sunday BANQUET DINNER ARRANGEMENTS

Entrées- **Fish** - Vegetable Stuffed Flounder with Lemon Thyme, or - **Beef** - Grilled Strip Loin with Tomato Olive Ragout, or - **Chicken** - French Chicken Breast with Honey Thyme Jus. Dessert- New York Style Cheesecake Served with Strawberry Sauce - Freshly Brewed 100% Columbian Regular and Decaffeinated Coffee Assorted Herbal Bigelow Teas Assorted Regular and Diet Soft Drinks

\$40.00 per person (Includes 20% Taxable Service Charge (Tip) and 4.5% State Sales Tax)

CHILDREN'S DINNER MENU

SALAD - Tossed Garden Salad, ENTRÉE - **Chicken Tenders**, Served with Steak Fries,

DESSERT - Ice Cream Sundae - Regular and Diet Soft Drinks, Milk, or Juice

\$22.00 Per Child (12 and Under) – Includes 20% Service Charge and 4.5% State Sales Tax

Monday FAREWELL CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

A Variety of Chilled Fruit Juices to include Orange, Apple, Grapefruit & Cranberry, A Selection of Seasonal Fruit & Berries, Assorted Dry Cereals and Whole, Skim and 2% Milk

An Assortment of Breakfast Pastries to include Croissants, Danish, Muffins, Bagels, Fruit and Nut Breads Served with Butter, Margarine, Fruit Preserves, Regular & Light Cream Cheeses, Assorted Regular and Diet Soft Drinks, Chilled Sparkling and Still Mineral Waters,

Freshly Brewed Columbian and Decaffeinated Coffees, Assorted Bigelow Herbal Teas

\$14.00 per person, (including 10% service charge and 4.5% sales tax) 

THE SPIRIT OF THE 339TH!

It Won The War!

By William Mac Clarence, *pilot 505th FS*

The winning spirit, the spirit of cooperation, the camaraderie achieved and maintained in the 339th Fighter Group has been a model of inspiration to me ever since I experienced it during the war.

Let me tell you about a personal experience at Fowlmere. I had just arrived at the 339th Fighter Group as a replacement pilot. I was assigned to the 505th Fighter Squadron; Col Joe Thury was the Squadron CO. This was my second flight in a Mustang. I was taxiing on the Perimeter Track between parked P-51s while making my way to the end of the runway for takeoff. Suddenly, the brakes failed and the plane ran into a parked P-51. It wasn't just any Mustang but it was the Squadron CO's P-51!

It was Colonel Joe Thury's beautiful bird!
6N-C, Pauline!

The propellers on his and my aircraft were ruined! Both planes were out of commission and would require major repairs before they could be flown!



S/Sgt Tom Miller, Col Thury's Crew Chief. Tom is our oldest living member. He will celebrate his 96th birthday this August!



1/Lt. William Mac Clarence. Note fighter pilot's "Beaver like" suntan!

Needless to say, I was embarrassed and scared. I was a replacement pilot, my second checkout in a Mustang and two planes were out of commission. Not the enemy's but ours. At this rate the Germans would be awarding me the 'Blue Max'.

Nothing much was said at the flight line and I headed back to an empty Quonset hut to sulk and hide in shame. The Sergeant saw me coming and told me that I would be flying with "the colonel" in the morning. It was obvious to me that the Squadron CO was now concerned about my competence. It was a very, very long evening and I did not sleep well - - - if at all!

Continued next page

The next morning, at the flight line, I was amazed to find that both planes had been repaired and were ready to fly. I could not believe it. The flight with Joe Thury went well and when we landed, there was no mention of the accident of the previous day.



From left to right – Three of our (505th) engineering master sergeants at the Norfolk reunion 1985. Warren Kuhnert, chief inspector, John Franz, maintenance chief and Milo Briggs, line chief

The real meaning of that 'spirit' hit home forty years later in 1987 at our reunion in Cambridge, I told my former Squadron Commander, Joe Thury this story. Joe just smiled and said that no one had told him of the accident.

His crew chief Tom Miller, John Franz and the other maintenance personnel had obviously decided that "the colonel" wanted his plane in the morning and that the "lieutenant" deserved another chance. These men had simply worked all night to assure both planes would be ready to fly in the morning.



Bill Mac Clarence and Crew/Chief inspect hole in wing that anti-aircraft shell created.

We were a team. No one was out to individually score points. The Maintenance staff did not go running to the CO! Instead they covered up for me by working all night, knowing that we were working together to fight the enemy. They on the ground and I in the air!

It's that winning spirit that we had as a group that won the war! What a Team! 

Editor's Note: - Bill and I flew many missions together. The above incident he relates was due to pure mechanical failure and not due to any error on his part as a pilot, yet he felt some sort of guilt.

Bill is a "Ground Ace"! At wars end William Mac Clarence was credited with having destroyed eight planes on the ground.

The Germans' not ours!

THE WOODCARVER!

A Man of Marvelous Talent!

By Ron Miller

Armorer 505th, staff writer



This morning while rummaging thru my tools I encountered an old-fashioned woodcarving angle chisel that was given to me as a friendship token. By the man who did the woodcarving of church pews etc. in what once was the Congregational Church in Fowlmere. Nowadays it is a church of some other denomination.

Many years later while doing an auto-bio for the family of mine I wanted to include a story about that carver, but for the life of me, couldn't recall his name. An inquiry to the church at Fowlmere failed to identify him but they forwarded it to Martin Sheldrick.

Martin and his family could not come up with a name but they thought it was two brothers who also did much of the building construction in the community.

And, of course, Martin suggested contacting Jim Starnes and I became no longer a "lost member" relative to the 339th FG association.

If I ever frame the tool to be displayed with its story it would go on into perpetuity. (Have often thought of doing just that)

But if that doesn't come about, then, when I die, it will become discarded along with much of my other "junk"

That would be regrettable because the carver who gave it to me was a man of marvelous talent and should be long remembered. Unfortunately he seems to have already been much forgotten. Sorry 'ole boy' - not all stories end with a "glorious ride off into the sunset". Aloha

Ron Miller

So, - - you were looking for the name of a friend that carved church pews in Fowlmere and never found him, but you discovered us instead! Because of that quest for the woodcarver - we now enjoy these regular tales of those years gone by.

When you frame that tool Ron, - - include this story!

Sure sounds like "a glorious ride into the sunset" to me! **STEVE**



Congregational Chapel drawing by Ron Miller - 1944



by Ron Miller

Editor's Corner

By Stephen C. Ananian,
Editor, pilot 505th FS

I recently received this letter from Dr. David Williams, PhD,
son of our Red Cross Director, Mary Kopius Williams.

Steve,

3/23/2004

Mary passed away Friday March 19 in the morning. She had her final stroke 12 days earlier that left her semi-conscious and unable to swallow. She moved back to her room at Knollwood Tuesday of last week. I have just returned to my home in Knoxville.

I saw her the Saturday before her stroke. We had a wonderful day, visiting our old neighborhood, seeing the schools she worked in. The last thing I did on that Saturday night was read her the 339th newsletter. She was so happy to hear me read the newsletter - she really loves you guys.

Graveside service will be conducted at 11am on Saturday, March 27, at the Lexington Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be directed to The Army Distaff Foundation, 6200 Oregon Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20015 or to the American Red Cross.

Please pass this news on in the appropriate manner to the 339th family.

Thanks, DAVE WILLIAMS

Mary and Jeanne were our good friends during the war. We often joked and discussed our lives back in the States. Their presence in the group lent that touch of home that we needed to remind us of what we were fighting for!

Mary, Jeanne and their "Red Cross Commandos" were such a comfort to all of us!

Mary, you will be missed!!

Our condolences to her family!



Left Red Cross Director Mary Kopius Williams and lucky me (in the middle) and Jeanne Mulquin Wood Asst. Director, on the lawn in front of Cambridge University.

A personal note

On March 5th, I had a "medical incident". I experienced a slurring of my speech, which led me to believe I was possibly having a "Stroke". We rushed to the E.R. of our local hospital and after many examinations and tests they came to the conclusion that I had experienced a "TIA" and possibly an irregular heart beat (Arrhythmia). I suffered no pain, discomfort, dizziness or fainting! My speech is nearly normal and I am on a 'blood thinner'. The prognosis is good, and I feel great! God willing, I'll see you in September! **STEVE** 

We mourn the loss - - -

Deceased



Leonard Kassik

Mary Williams

Harry Ziegler

Leonard "Lena" P. Kassik, 503rd – Tech. Supply, Leonard passed away on Nov. 14, 2003. Arlene writes, "He had a good life and kept in touch with his buddies."

Maye Hawley, ORD – Widow of Joseph E. Hawley Auto maintenance chief. Maye passed away on Dec. 29th 2003 in Tuscaloosa, AL.

Mary Kopius Williams, Red Cross Director, died on March 19, 2004. Appropriately the roses from Mary's stationary frame the pictures above! We will continue this practice in the future in her memory!

Harry D. Ziegler, 505th Pilot, POW. Harry was diagnosed with having an inoperable brain tumor, and passed away on April 28, 2004.

Our condolences to all the families - - -



IN MEMORIAM -

Barbara Chenez has donated \$30 in memory of her husband, 504th pilot Gordon Chenez who passed away on March 2nd 2003 after a long bout with Diabetes.

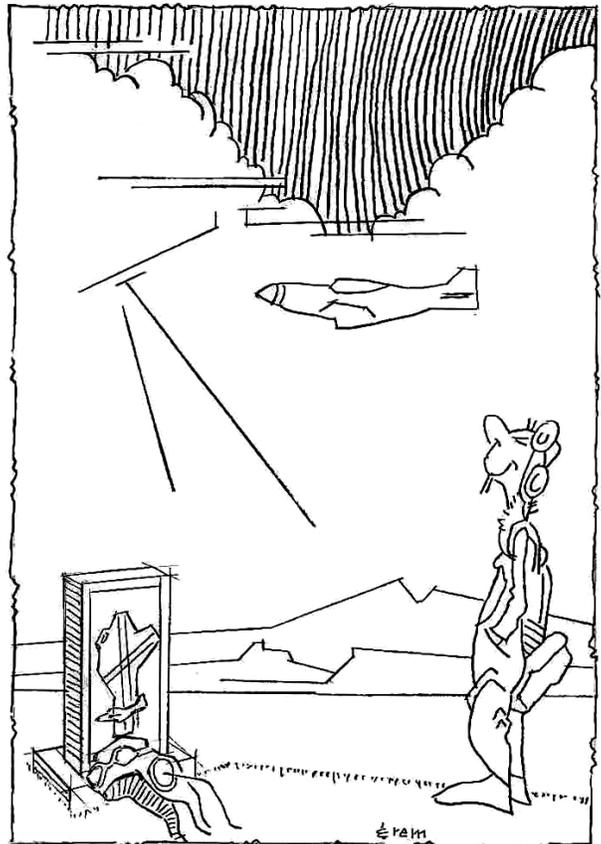
J. Scott Woolery, son of our Hospitality Room chairman and 505th pilot Jim Woolery, has donated \$200.

Jim died on January 14th, 2004. Scott asks that we drink a toast to his dad at our next reunion. He has donated \$100 for the drinks and has requested that another \$100 be donated to the Newsletter.

We thank you!

"WE WERE SHOR 'NUF REAL GOOD BUDDIES"

Our thanks to Ron Miller 505th Armorer, for the drawing at the right, it pretty much says it all.



WE WERE SHOR'NUF REAL GOOD BUDDIES

The Mail Bag



The Grandson of our CO William Clark has been in Iraq for the past year. I wrote Bill Clark Jr. asking him for any news from his son Curtis. His reply follows: -

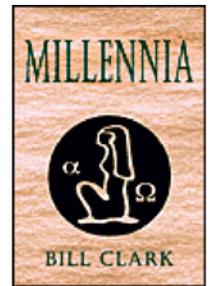
Steve,

3/18/04

Thanks for asking! Curtis has been back about a month and we are looking forward to a visit from him here in Texas in about two weeks. He's well and starting to pick up the rest of his golf game. I understand he has had a lot of practice with his sand shots but not much else. His wife, Carolyn and the kids are doing great as well.

Sharon and I are both still teaching at the local colleges. A little scuba diving and golf fills up the slack. Right now we are planning on making DC in September. I hope your proposed date is being received favorably by the members. It fits in very well with our schedule and we hope Curt and family will be able to attend as well. I know Mom is planning on being there.

I wasn't sure if you knew that my novel has been published and is available online at barnesandnoble.com and amazon.com. It's also available in a limited set of retail stores, but it's far easier to get and cheaper online. You might spread the word. The title is "Millennia", the author is Bill Clark, and the ISBN is 1-58736-190-6. It's partly science fiction, some futuristic political commentary, biblical history, and is somewhat Christian in its outlook. -I could even bring a box of them for sale if you think 339th members would be interested.



We enjoyed the last newsletter and are looking forward to seeing you in September.

P.S. I forgot to tell you in my last email that one of the things I have done recently is write a song about the 339th. I am hoping to write something serious in the next few years and did this for practice. I would be glad to perform it with guitar at the next reunion banquet. The title is "The 339", and it's sung to the tune "The MTA" by the Kingston Trio, which I think most people know. We could even get some handouts of the lyrics and make it a sing-a-long if you like. Talk it over with the other officers and let me know what you think about the idea. I would be glad to send along a copy of the music if you like. Blue Skies, Bill

What a great Idea! We are looking forward to that! – SCA



The following news from Chris Bundgaard, nephew of 505th pilot, Carl - -

Hi Steve,

3/28/04

I wanted to update you on our family's plans for this summer. My father Axel, stepmother Ann, brother Mark and myself are heading back to Buzancais, France. This was the village that Uncle Carl parachuted into on July 4, 1944. Since it will be the 60th anniversary, the Bundgaards have decided to "officially" thank the town and local members of the French Resistance. Most likely, the thanks will be some sort of engraved plaque. The town mayor wants to have a celebration where he will unveil another plaque outside the home where Carl landed. I am wondering if anyone from the 339th would like to join us there. Our family plans to leave Paris either July 2 or early on the 3rd to travel to the Buzancais area. The commemoration will be on the 4th. Our plans are to travel back to Paris on the 5th. My

apologies to getting this to you so late, but I am wondering if anyone would be interested in joining us.

- - - There's barely a day that goes by when I don't think of you guys. That beautiful 339th plate that sits in my living room helps. *CHRIS RUNDGAARD*

If any of you wish to join Chris on a trip to France, here is your opportunity! *SCA*



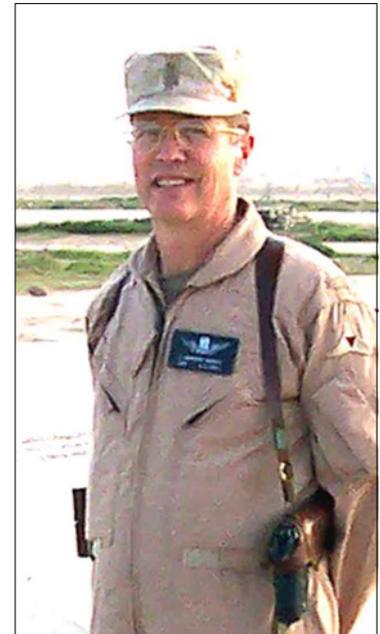
Jim Mankie 503rd pilot and former POW, shares with us this note from his son Andy, flying helicopters in Iraq; -

Dad, 4/6/2004

The e-mail communications have been a problem the last few days --- I'm doing well trying to stay busy with flying and other things. The office problems seem insignificant as I see what is going on on the ground. The Marines will be severely tested in Fallujah as the rest of our forces are throughout the country. Everyone is doing a great job rising to the challenge. Lots of stuff going on right now, there is no doubt in my mind we are still at war. I believe the opponents are a small part of the population.

I passed a 1,000 hour combat flight milestone on my last flight. I have 800 in the jungle and 200 in the desert, 50 on this deployment. Our flight was transporting combat casualties between treatment facilities with an 'add-on' mission of delivering 15 tons of small arms ammunition for the upcoming fight. - - - I'll keep in touch as long as the server is up.

Love, Andy



**CW5 J. Andrew Mankie,
the combat Grandpa!**

Thanks Jim, for sharing the news from Andy. – *SCA*



We received this request from aviation historian, Bill Hess: -

Dear Mr. Ananian, 4/21/04

My name is Bill Hess and as an old ex-aerial gunner out of the 15th AF I have been an aviation writer for many years and have been the Official Historian for the American Fighter Aces Association for over 20 years.

I moved about two years ago and my copy of the original 339th got a bit damaged. Talked to my old friend Jim Starnes a couple of days ago and he told me that all your copies of the new edition of the history are gone. Wonder if you could give me any clues as to where I might find a copy of the new book.

I am willing to pay premium price to anyone willing to sell a copy. I know that over the years seeking copies of unit histories there are usually a few who bought copies for family members who did not desire them. As 339th has long been a most helpful unit to assist me in some of my writing subjects

I would very much like to get a copy of this book. In my recent book for Osprey Publishing out of England I was able to get a bit about the 339th and color plates of a number of your aircraft included in "Down To Earth, Strafing Aces"

Continued next page

Would appreciate any clues you might be able to pass along. Thanks.
Bill Hess, 4316 Linda Ln., Alvin, TX 77511 phone (281) 824-8760 email - idgaswilly@ev1.net

If any of you out there have extra copies of the History of the 339th First or Second Editions, please let us know! They are very much in demand! – SCA



The following note from John Roach, son-in-law of 505th pilot Tom Marvel: -

Dear Steve, 3/20/04

On St. Patrick's Day, We took the grandchildren into DC to check on construction of the World War II memorial. It is proceeding apace and should be ready by the time the 339th swoops into town. The workmen are placing some of the last stones in place. Two towers representing the Atlantic and Pacific theaters lie on opposite sides of a basin that straddles the mall. A wall of stars tallying those who paid the ultimate price for victory girdles the basin. It seems a solemn and fitting memorial even in its unfinished state.



Attached is a picture of workmen placing stones near one of the entry points.

The skies are blue today for the first time in a week. I hope yours is a good day.

JOHN ROACH

Thanks for the report; we are looking forward to seeing you all this fall! – SCA



Finally Joe Noah 339th FGA member writes: -

Dear Steve, 4/12/04

Thought you folks would like to put a note in your newsletter about the honor being bestowed upon George Preddy, our top Mustang ace!

The American Combat Airman Hall of Fame (ACAHOFF) was established in 1997 by the Commemorative (Confederate) Air Force (CAF). Seven individuals and a combat unit are inducted annually. George Preddy has been selected as an inductee for 2004.

The induction will take place on the evening of October 1, 2004 in conjunction with CAF's AIRSHO 2004 in Midland, TX. The other inductees who have accepted are Col. Donald J. Blakeslee, USAF; Col. R.E. Cole, USAF; The Flyboys of Chichi Jima; Brig. Gen. Robin Olds, USAF; Capt. Paul Stevens, USN and the 95th Bomb Group. - - -

- - - The American Combat Airman Hall of Fame Induction Dinner will feature a video presentation of each inductee, dinner and entertainment. A plaque commemorating each inductee will also be placed on display in the ACAHOFF area of the American Airpower Heritage Museum.

PS -- Someone should nominate the 339th Fighter Group.

Joe Noah, Founder/Treasurer, Preddy Memorial Foundation

Thanks for "The Heads Up" Joe! – SCA



Donations

We thank the following members for their generous donations: -

\$30 David MacKenzie, \$25 Henry Pence, \$25 Dutch Eisenhart, \$20 John Bogart, \$50 John Withers, \$65 Lillian Knisely, \$40 Edward Purzycki, \$60 Gilbert Cohen, \$25 Frank Guernsey, \$20 Harold Fulton, \$260 Lawrence Powell, \$25 James Delisio, \$40 Frank Swinand, \$60 William Bryan, \$20 Roland Smith, \$100 Wade Harry, \$50 Frank Tropea, \$20 Claire Griffith, \$60 Richard Thieme, \$100 Joe Noah, \$20 Joseph Pennell, \$20 Dennis Rawls, \$50 Duane Larson, \$20 Leonard Kunz, \$50 Robert Irion, \$50 Jim Davidson, \$35 Herman Mondschein, \$20 Gary Weinhold, \$25 George Johnstone, \$20 Lybi Hauss, \$25 John Wilson, \$30 Andrew Gager, \$30 Charles Steffen, \$25 William Guyton, \$35 Jeanne M. Wood, \$100 Cordell Shaw, \$50 Thomas White, \$50 Kenneth Willard, \$50 George T. Rich, \$20 Donald Quale, \$20 Phillip Petitt, \$50 David Williams, \$35 Maria Howard, \$30 Rachel E. Grandy, \$30 C. Bud Martin, \$50 William Perry, \$60 Andrew Gager, \$50 James Starnes.



Roster Updates

Make the following additions or changes to your latest mailing list.

Change: - GUYTON, WILLIAM R., 505th – Pilot, Change Zip Code to VENICE, FL 34285

GENSHEIMER, Mrs. FLORENCE, 503 – Widow of operation's clerk,
St. MATHEW MANOR, 227 BROWNS Lane, LOUISVILLE, KY 40207

SMITH, Cpt. JEFFREY R., 504 - Grandson of pilot Roland,
1988 Bahama Drive, Navarre, FL 32566

CAMINITI, PETER A., GRP Physical Training Tech.,
6152 Verde Trail North, A-213, Boca Raton, FL 33433

JOHNSON, 504th – family of Bertil Communications,
25611 ARBORETUM Road, GLEN ELLYN, IL 60137-7156

GOUSIE, CLAIRE M., 505th – Widow of pilot,
154 First Street, Pawtucket, RI 02861.

Add: -

BOGART, JOHN A., Friend of 339th B-24 Pilot,
1 CANDOR PLACE, Simpsonville, SC 29681

ZIEGLER, HOWARD W., - 505 - Brother of pilot,
1790 Doe Ray Rd. Fairbanks, AK 99712-3062

TURNAGE, JOHN W., Friend of the 339th (Commemorative Air Force)
P.O. Box 12953, Raleigh, NC 27605

Delete the following: -

GRAVETTE, CHRIS, Newsletters returned, whereabouts not known.

HEIMERDINGER, MILTON EDWARD, No forwarding address

WILLIAMS, MARY KOPIUS, deceased

HOLDEN, JEFF, No forwarding address



The 339th Reunion Registration Form

Please fill out your Name

First _____ Last _____ Unit _____ Number attending _____

Please list additional guest names separately for Name Tags.

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Registration Fee	\$15.00 each _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Washington DC City Tour	\$15.00 each _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Air Space Museum	\$15.00 each _____	_____
Sunday Night Banquet Dinner		
<input type="checkbox"/> Fish	\$40.00 each _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Beef	\$40.00 each _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Chicken	\$40.00 each _____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Childs Menu (Age 6 to 12)	\$22.00 each _____	_____
Monday Morning Farewell Breakfast		
<input type="checkbox"/> Farewell Continental Breakfast	\$14.00 each _____	_____
	Total	_____

Make your checks payable to **the 339th Fighter Group Association**

And mail with this completed form (or photo copy) to: -

Richard G. Thieme, Treasurer, 2732 South 7th Street, Sheboygan, WI 53081-6802



503rd Unit Dinner - Fill out unit form below and mail with check made payable to: -

Robert J. Frisch, 503rd Director, 16312 N. AUSTIN Road, SPOKANE, WA 99208, Phone:
(509) 466-0875 **Please see menu** on lower portion of page 19 for your food selections. - - ►

504th, HQ & ORD Unit Dinners - This year our CO, HQ & ORD are invited to join the 504th Unit Dinner. Fill out unit form below and mail with check made payable to: -

Gilbert G. Cohen, 504th Director, 9110 Grinnell St., Indianapolis, IN 46268
Phone: (317) 334-9810

505th Unit Dinner - Fill out the form below and mail with check made payable to: -

Robert F. Burns, 505th Director, P.O. Box 91, Oden, MI 49764. Phone: (231) 347-6777



Unit Dinners

First _____ Last _____ Unit _____ Number attending _____

(NAME above)

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Indicate number of each	<input type="checkbox"/> Beef _____	@ \$40.00 per person \$ _____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Chicken _____	@ \$40.00 per person \$ _____
		TOTAL \$ _____

Mail this coupon (or photo copy) with checks to the appropriate unit directors listed above.

Schedule of Events - Reunion 2004, Washington DC

(Tentative Schedule of Events)

Sept. 16th Thursday All Units will Host Bar!

12:00noon – Registration at 339th Hospitality Room

5:00pm – 6:00pm Welcome meeting

Socialize and refreshments at “339th Hospitality Room ”

Sept. 17th Friday 503rd will Host Bar!

8:00am – 10:00am Board of Director's Breakfast meeting \$16.00 each.

10:30am – 12:00noon General Membership meeting, free schedule for rest of day.

6:30pm – 503rd Unit Dinner at this Hotel! Other possible Unit Dinners may be planned!

Socialize and refreshments at “339th Hospitality Room ”

Sept. 18th Saturday 504th will Host Bar!

9:30am – 2:00pm - Washington DC Sightseeing tour with stops at the WW II Memorial and Smithsonian, Self-destruct Food Court. Bus charge only \$15:00

6:30pm - ?? Possible Unit Dinners.

Socialize and refreshments at “339th Hospitality Room ”

Sept. 19th Sunday 505th will Host Bar!

9:30am – 1:30pm Tour to the Air and Space Museum. Bus charge only is \$15:00

6:00pm - Cash Bar, followed by Banquet dinner

7:00pm - Banquet Diner. After dinner socialize at “339th Hospitality Room ”

Sept. 20th Monday

6:30am – 9:30am - Farewell Breakfast Buffet

12:00noon Checkout. We say farewell - - **“SEE YOU NEXT YEAR”**



503rd Fighter Squadron Unit Dinner - Friday, Sept. 17, 2004

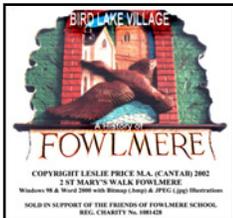
6:30 pm No host Bar - **7:00 pm Dinner** - Assorted Gourmet Breads – **Salad** - Field Green and Endive Salad – **ENTRÉE - NY Strip Steak**, Maple Gorgonzola Jus Char Grilled Asparagus and Macaire Potato – Or - **Herb Roasted French Chicken Breast** Maple Apricot Glaze Brie Mashed Potatoes And Green Beans

\$40.00 per person (Includes service charge and sales tax)



Bird Lake Village, A history of Fowlmere South Cambridge –

A CD containing the equivalent of 538 pages A4 size.



The history of Fowlmere from the earliest times to present day, is now available on a CD-ROM. This is a Computer program, not an audio disk!

Price of CD is \$10, which includes shipping and handling.

Just send your check. to your editor.



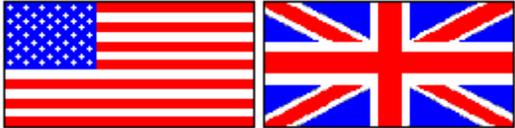
Happy Birthday -- to Tom Miller who will be 96 years young this August! 🎂

339th Fighter Group Association, Inc.

C/o Stephen C. Ananian
4 North Orchard Farms Avenue
Simpsonville, SC 29681-4866, USA



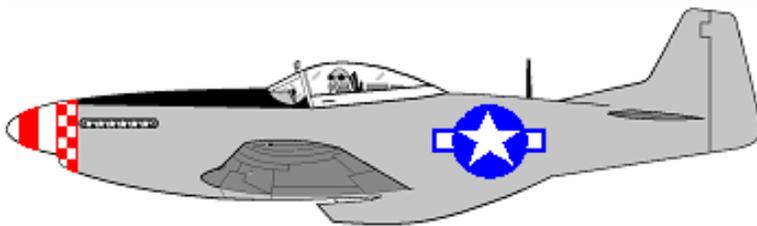
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----- MAILING LIST UPDATE FORM -----

Mailing List & Dues Update

Check your name and address on the mailing label. Make certain it is correct. If not, fill out this form and mail to me at the address below. If you wish to pay dues you may also use this form.

Please accept my donation of \$10 for my dues payment to the 339th FGA.
(All donations are 'Tax Exempt'.)

Please add my name to the mailing list.

339th Fighter Group Association, Inc.

C/o S. C. Ananian
4 North Orchard Farms Ave.
Simpsonville, SC 29681-4866

NAME _____

First

Middle

Last

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Phone (if you wish) _____

Email _____