

March 1, 2009

*339th*

# Fighter Group Association

Station F378 – Fowlmere, England

## NEWSLETTER

“The Lads from Fowlmere”



Volume 29, Issue 1

Editor: Stephen C. Ananian

# Farewell to a Patriot



Maj. Gen. Francis R. Gerard  
1924 - 2008

# New Jersey Lowers Its Flags

By Donald Gerard



Adriana and Frank at a recent reunion.

It is with deep sadness that I inform you of the passing of my father, Major General Francis R. Gerard. The General born July 11, 1924 passed away at 4:25 PM on Saturday November 1, 2008. He left us peacefully in his own bed overlooking the Manasquan River with his loving wife Adriana (the Doctor) taking care of him till the end. We all love him and admire him deeply. He will be sorely missed.

On Thursday morning Nov 6, 2008 mass was held at St Peters in Point Pleasant. We then went on to the Brigadier General William C. Doyle Memorial Veterans Cemetery in

Wrightstown, - not too far from McGuire Air force Base and Fort Dix.

The service and funeral were beautiful. The air guard paid my Dad a great tribute by their stirring and emotional dedication. There was an honor guard present throughout all the viewings - - - with many military people of all ranks, politicians, family and friends paying their respects. The church service was led by Father Alphonse, Colonel in the Air Guard and good friend of my Dad. He gave a beautiful talk about my Dad. My brother gave a short eulogy, and then I gave a longer one. I then had the honor of introducing the former Governor of New Jersey, Thomas H. Kean who also gave a beautiful eulogy.

At the end of the service as we were leaving the church the organist played the Air Force Song - "Off we go into the wild blue yonder" and there wasn't a dry eye in the church.

We then had a State Police escort halfway across the state from Point Pleasant to the Brig. General William C. Doyle Memorial Cemetery in Wrightstown. Lyndhurst, the town where my Dad grew up also sent two police-officers down to participate in the escort.

The service at the cemetery was also stirring with all the military lined up. General Cosgrave, General Morgan and General Paschon (all good friends) gave fitting and moving eulogies. My daughter Stacey also gave a short eulogy that again started everyone crying. Unfortunately, it was raining so they had to cancel the flyover in the missing man formation. But other than that it was most beautiful and fitting. I've never seen so many grown men cry in my life.

And then as a final tribute, the New Jersey Governor's Office issued an executive order for Flags to be flown at half-staff on Wednesday November 12 in tribute to my Dad.

We have lost a great American Icon.

As my Dad would say, "Blue Skies"



# Maj. Gen. Francis Gerard

## Military Biography



1/Lt Francis Gerard. WWII

Francis Robert Gerard was born in Belleville, New Jersey, on July 11, 1924. After graduating from Lyndhurst High School in 1941, he enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in October 1942 as an Aviation Cadet. He graduated from the Aviation Academy of the Army Air Force with class 43-H at Craig Field, Alabama, on August 1943. He was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant and rated as a pilot. During combat service in WWII, he flew the P-51 Mustang while serving with the 503<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron of the 339<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group of the Eighth Air Force based in Fowlmere, England. During the war, he completed two combat tours consisting of a total of 420 combat hours in 91 aerial missions.

Francis earned the title of "Ace" after having destroyed eight German fighters in aerial combat - four of which were shot down near Leipzig, Germany on Sept. 11, 1944 during one furious 12-minute air battle. Francis with 14 other 503<sup>rd</sup> fighter pilots of the 339<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group was defending their B-17 bombers against an onslaught from over 150 German fighters. There is a museum in Kavarska, Czech Republic dedicated to this aerial battle with a special showcase of Francis Gerard as the most successful fighter pilot of the battle.

After the war, Francis attended Lafayette College and John Marshall Law College. He became an Attorney at Law and joined the New Jersey Air National Guard where he eventually rose to the rank of Major General in 1977. Francis Gerard was recalled for active duty for the Korean Conflict and again in response to the Berlin Crisis where he flew cargo planes supplying food for the people of Berlin to break the "Berlin Blockade".

During his illustrious career, he commanded the 108<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, was Special Assistant to the Commander in Chief, Strategic Air Command; Commander, New Jersey Air National Guard; and Special Assistant to the Chief of Staff (Adjutant General), New Jersey Department of Defense; he served as The Adjutant General of New Jersey under Governor Thomas H. Kean from 1982 until his retirement from both military and state service in 1989.

Among Francis's major awards and medals are: The Air Force Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star, Defense Superior Service Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with 11 Oak Leaf Clusters, American Campaign Medal with six Battle Stars, National Defense Service Medal, and Presidential Unit Citation.

He was also awarded the New Jersey Distinguished Service Medal in 1983 and an Oak Leaf Cluster in 1988. In 1983 Francis Gerard was inducted into the New Jersey Aviation Hall of Fame.



# A Tribute to an Ace

*By Donald Gerard*



*By Heinz Krebs*



*The flag flies high for those that soar  
To protect our Freedom from shore to shore*

*The roar of the engines up high overhead  
Love of God, Country and Family; red, white and blue he bled*

*Major General Francis R. Gerard, our hero who recently died  
But whose examples have left us all with so much pride*

*On November 12th in the year of two thousand and eight  
New Jersey issued an order throughout the state*

*The order read that whereas we shall honor  
A man that used to fly through the wild blue yonder*

*And much more that man did for his country and state  
Demonstrating morals and integrity and other great traits*

*To honor a man that so many knew  
As honest, caring, kind and intelligent too*

*For New Jersey lowered the flag down to half-staff  
To honor our hero who had recently passed*

*And then the next day we raise the flag once again  
To represent freedom and pride for all women and men*



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**Dues for this year are still only \$10**

Your \$10 (tax-deductible) dues help cover the cost of this newsletter.

Newsletter Circulation – 496 – (452 USA, 44 Overseas)



be scrunched-up into tiny wads and unfolded as many times as needed, and makes no noise whatever.

At that time, there was only one manufacturer in Great Britain that had perfected the technology of printing on silk, and that was John Waddington, Ltd. When approached by HM Government, the firm was only too happy to do its bit for the war effort.



The Game Monopoly

By pure coincidence, Waddington's was also the U.K. licensee for the popular American board game, Monopoly! As it happened, "games and pastimes" was a category of the items qualified for insertion into "CARE packages" dispatched by the International Red Cross to prisoners of war of all belligerents.

Under strictest secrecy, in a securely guarded and inaccessible old workshop on the grounds of Waddington's, a group of sworn-to-secrecy employees began mass-producing escape maps, keyed to each region of Germany or Italy where Allied POW camps were located. Red Cross packages were delivered to prisoners in accordance with that same regional system. When processed, these maps could be folded into such tiny sizes that they would actually fit inside a Monopoly playing piece.

As long as they were at it, the clever workmen at Waddington's also managed to add:- A playing token containing a small magnetic compass, A two-part metal file that could easily be screwed together, Useful amounts of genuine high-denomination German, Italian and French currency hidden within the piles of Monopoly money!

*(I was told by an FBI agent that some of this money was obtained by actually sending in criminals from our prisons to rob banks in the occupied countries. Other currency came from the American Bank Note Company located in the Bronx, New York City that had the printing plates since they had originally printed the money. Editor)* British and American air crews were advised, before taking off on their first missions, on how to identify a "rigged" Monopoly set - by means of a tiny red dot, one cleverly rigged to look like an ordinary printing glitch was located in the corner of the "Free Parking square"! Of the estimated 35,000 Allied POWs who successfully escaped, perhaps one-third were aided in their flight by the rigged Monopoly sets. Everyone who did so was sworn to secrecy indefinitely - HM Government might want to use this highly successful ruse again.



Monopoly game pieces

This story wasn't declassified until 2007, when the surviving craftsmen from Waddington's, as well as the firm itself, were finally honored in a public ceremony.

It's always nice when you can play that "Get out of Jail Free" card.



# Thank You Owen

A letter to Owen P. Farmer, 505<sup>th</sup> pilot

From Robert E. Irion, 505<sup>th</sup> pilot

*On October 25<sup>th</sup> 1999 Payne Stewart, famous golfer was killed in a plane crash. It was reported that the plane lost cabin pressure at altitude and all aboard passed out due to a lack of oxygen! All aboard perished! Editor*



Robert E. Irion

Dear Owen,

Nov 18, 1999

Ever since I heard the news about Payne Stewart's plane crash, I've been thinking I should write to you. Hearing that news on TV brought back memories of a similar event which happened almost exactly 55 years ago.

On Nov 21, 1944, after you had left Fowlmere for your leave between tours, I was flying White Three with Tom Rich as flight Leader. Boyd Jackson led the Squadron that day and the mission was a bummer from start to finish. While forming up in scattered cumulus above the base, we almost collided with the 503rd Squadron, when they popped out the other side of a cloud. Then as the mission got into Germany and ran into the main part of a weather front, the bombers kept flying higher and higher, to stay out of the clouds. Finally they issued a recall order for the mission and the whole bomber stream was trying to turn around in that terrible weather. At one time we were right under a box of B-17's who had their bomb bay doors open, ready to jettison their bombs.

Shortly after that, at about 27,000 feet, I had a choking sensation in my chest and I couldn't breathe. When I looked at the oxygen gauge it was sitting on Zero and I popped the nose down and headed for Mother Earth as fast as I could go. Then I called Tom Rich to tell him why I was going down. In the middle of the transmission - - - (momentarily I couldn't think why I was going down!) - - - Then I finally said "Oh yeah, I lost my oxygen." (I don't know how long I had been out of oxygen before I saw that gauge at zero.)

At about 15,000 feet I actually tore the oxygen mask off my face, as I figured anything I could breathe would be better than the nothing I was getting from the mask. We were probably about 10,000 feet when Tom told me to make a left turn so he could join up on me. I promptly turned right instead of left! (By this time we had probably used about 20 seconds getting down to that altitude and I think things were getting a little fuzzy in my head.)

Then while we were still about one half mile from joining up, Tom spotted a Me-109 diving down toward a hole in the cloud layer below us. He broke after him and split-essed down through the hole. I dived for the hole and when I came out underneath I couldn't see Tom and didn't get much time to try and find him, as there were red balls of flak coming up from below. They were either from a town or an airfield, and my wingman

*Continued over*

Bert Stiles was screaming for us to get the Hell out of there! We pulled up into that low cloud layer and shortly Bert is screaming "109's"! Sure enough, there's a flight right behind us and I turned into them. I got one high deflection shot which probably missed and then we were in



Owen P. "OP" Farmer

behind them and Bert is yelling again about getting out of there and I couldn't quite understand why he sounded so panicky until I realized there were 20mm shells exploding just outside my canopy, and we were right in front of another flight of 109's! A hard uncoordinated "snap roll" got us out of there, but also separated Bert and me in the process. I was relieved to hear him call for a heading home a little later.

Boy If you ever wanted to be at your sharpest, with a pack of 109's in the area, that was the time for it, but I have to say due to the lack of oxygen, I felt like I was sleepwalking through those critical moments.

I reacted to what Tom did and said, and to Bert's panicked calls, but I don't think I had much independent thought in my own head until it was all over.

A few minutes later I heard Upper Red Leader Boyd Jackson say he was going down to strafe an airfield and then in less than a minute I hear Johnny Johnson tell Blue Flight to break off the attack. As you will see in the 339th History book for that day, Boyd Jackson and Leland Stoudt were shot down on the initial pass over that airfield and one other member of Red Flight Capt Dowell was hit by flak. He bailed out and was later reported KIA.

Now I know you wonder why in hell I am writing all of this to you.

Well Owen, it all goes back to that moment when I saw that oxygen gauge on Zero and immediately popped the stick forward to head straight down! - - When I first joined your flight and you were briefing me about how to fly in combat, one of the things you said was "If you ever lose your oxygen at altitude, don't waste time trying to figure out what's wrong, just pop that stick forward and get down as quick as you can! - - Then you can start trying to figure out what is wrong."

Belatedly, I want to thank you for telling me that in clear, sharp language! And thank God I remembered it when that time came! I have told this story to my family and friends over the years, but it took the Payne Stewart's accident to make me realize that I had never told you! Nor had I thanked you for that valuable piece of advice.

Thanksgiving Day is getting pretty close and I'll give a little prayer on that day for a flight Leader who gave me the advice that gave me an extra 55 years of life!

Thanks Owen! *Robert E. Irion*

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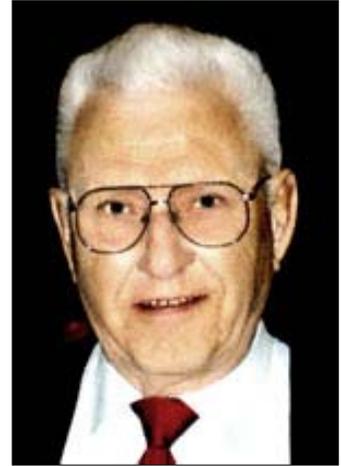
*Your newsletter editor remembers this mission well. I was flying on Tom Rich's wing, (White two) along side of Bob Irion and Bert Stiles, who was flying Bob's wing, (White four).*

*Bert was KIA a few days later. The rest of us survived the war. Tom Rich died December 14, 2006 and Bob died less than a month later January 8, 2007.*

*Owen Farmer attended our reunion in Nashville and lives in Florida. Editor* 

# Annual Treasurer's Report

Although my report does show a loss for the year from our reunion I can report our finances are healthy. The Board of Directors decided to subsidize some of the Reunion expenses due to the high costs of travel and prices in the Washington area to make our reunion more appealing thus creating the loss shown.



**339<sup>TH</sup> FIGHTER GROUP ASSOCIATION  
TREASURER'S REPORT  
(Period 1 Jan 08 thru 31 December 08)**

**INCOME FOR THE PERIOD**

Interest	\$ 321.25
Dues Collected	1,360.00
Pin Sales	360.00
Donations Received	3,220.13
Memorials Received	435.00
Reunion Income	<u>10,170.00</u>
	<b>\$15,866.38</b>

**EXPENSE FOR THE PERIOD**

Florida Dept. of State	\$ 61.25
Postage	33.60
Faxing	12.60
Newsletter & Secretary Expenses	6,000.00
Reunion Expenses	12,699.64
Reunion Refunds	<u>820.00</u>
	<b>\$19,627.09</b>

**SUMMARY**

Income	\$15,866.38
Expense	<u>-(19,627.09)</u>
	<b>\$ (3,760.71) Loss for the year.</b>

Balance as of 12/31/07	\$22,953.62
Loss for the period	<u>3,760.71</u>
Total Association funds on 12/31/08	<b>\$19,192.91</b>

**DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS (12/31/08)**

Checking Account Balance	\$ 1,240.61
Money Market Account Balance	<u>17,952.30</u>
	<b>\$19,192.91</b>

Richard G. "Dick" Thieme

*Richard G. Thieme*  
Treasurer



# REUNION SNAPSHOTS



L-R Richard Thieme, Steve Ananian, Larry Powell and our CO John Henry. Larry is telling us a great fighter pilot joke!

Photo J. Mankie



Seal of the Vice President on the speaker's podium. Photo J. Mankie



L-R John Henry claps as V.P. Dick Cheney praises the 339<sup>th</sup>. Bill MacClarence, our V.P. smiles in approval. Photo J. Mankie



On the left- Bill Clark sings a ballad that he wrote honoring our CO John Henry. Larry Powell and the rest of those present join in and sing along with Bill. Photo Tim Ferrell



**Bill Raines 505<sup>th</sup> Control Tower Communications.**



**Dave and Jeff Williams sons of Red Cross Director.**



**Greg Arabian and Treasurer Dick Thieme. J Joe**



**Paul and Kimberly Vallantini. J Joe**



**Tim Ferrell and George Joe. All photos by J Joe**



**Megan Ananian and her Grandfather Steve pose in front of the Air Force Memorial.**



# Annual Report of the Secretary / Editor . . .

By Stephen C. Ananian

I wish to start my report by thanking Martin Sheldrick, the official 339<sup>th</sup> "Wreath Bearer", for his unselfish dedication to our Group. Over the years Martin has regularly attended Memorial Day services honoring our fallen comrades by placing a wreath for the 339<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group Association at the base of "The Wall of The Missing" at Madingley, the American Military Cemetery in Cambridge. Martin designs and donates the beautiful floral wreaths for these events and has attended in fair weather and foul. We must also thank Peter Randall who also attends regularly and filled in as wreath bearer one year. Our thanks to John and Laurina Harris and Nick and Julie King, who also attend these Memorial Day services at Madingley to honor our lost comrades.

Where do we get such devoted friends? How fortunate we are to have their loyalty to the 339<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group! These dedicated "Brits", attend Memorial Day services usually in the cold and often are "soaked to the skin" in pouring rain. Just where do we find friends such as these? They are more than friends, they have become family! We thank you all!

We were in DC this year for our annual reunion and to attend the Military Funeral of two of our admired members Maj. Gen. William E. Bryan, Jr. and his wife Olive. We thank the Bryan family for inviting the group so that we could also pay our respects and bid farewell to our beloved friends. Bill and Ollie were loved and respected by all and shall be missed greatly.

Again it is sad to report that we have lost thirteen of our Veterans of Fowlmere in the past year. On November first 2008 we heard of the passing of Major General Francis R. Gerard, the 339<sup>th</sup>'s leading ace and one of our greatest supporters. The state of New Jersey paused to honor one of its heroic sons, a great American Patriot and one of "The lads from Fowlmere" by lowering flags to half-staff! He will be missed by all of us!

Amazingly the continued loss of our veterans has been offset by new family members joining our organization. According to our roster, 143 Veterans of Fowlmere are still on our mailing list and 305 of our members are either families of veterans or are veterans themselves. Our total membership including "Friends of the 339<sup>th</sup>" is about 400. I must again point out that in all probability, some of our members are on our roster of members but may have passed on without our having been notified of their death.

The Newsletter continues publication with a circulation of 489 for this issue. 445 copies were mailed in the United States with 44 more being distributed overseas. In addition to these "hard copies" we transmitted 40 "soft" copies via the internet (Email). These electronic newsletters are in full color and go to veterans in service and to certain members

in our organization that have the facilities to receive them; these are at no monetary cost to us. This is an experiment on my part as a forerunner to future possibilities when and if printing and mailing become too expensive. The December stateside issue cost us \$1.96 each including postage and the overseas mailing was \$3.26 also including postage.

I can report that the interest in our organization from the public at large continues to grow as indicated by our mailings and continued requests for information and memorabilia. My expenses for the printing and mailing of newsletters and also secretarial costs will be about \$6,000 this year. These costs are well within our budget at this time.

We continue to send the rosters of members free of charge and via mail to dues-paying members only! These cost us about \$2.00 to print and mail.

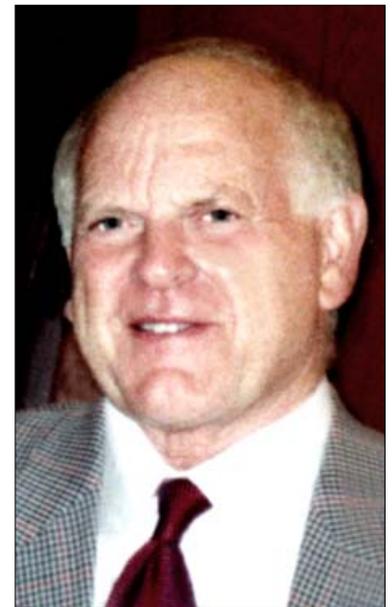
The turnout for our reunion was about 101 registered members and guests. This in spite of the high cost of air fares as well as the steady decline in the health of our membership.

I am also pleased to report that I have completed scanning all the copies of our newsletters and have preserved them on two CD disks. That includes 20 years of Jim Starnes' Newsletters as well as the last eight years of mine since I became editor. These are in digital format and allow one to view any of our newsletters by inserting a CD disk into a computer. These newsletters are now preserved in an archival format and available for future generations to read the anecdotal history of the WW II Air War and the 339<sup>th</sup>'s role in that historic event.

May I continue the list of those who contribute to our success? We are so fortunate to have the talents of Dick Thieme as our Treasurer! He is of invaluable assistance to me and the organization. I consult with him constantly as well as with Larry Powell our President and Reunion Coordinator. We must also recognize the contributions of Bill and Sharon Clark, and Joyce Eiswald for their hard work in helping us run our reunions. This year we had the added assistance of Terry Tarling and Cathy Wilke, who made all the arrangements to have the Vice President as our guest speaker!

I wish to also thank Jim Starnes and Chet Malarz for their invaluable assistance, support and guidance. They are always there when I need them! Further thanks go to Tim Ferrell who runs our Web Site and has recorded our reunion banquet dinners on videos over the years. Thanks also to Jim Sterling in Alaska for his Web Site called "Web-Birds" and Peter Randall's site in the UK called "Little friends". Their great library of pictures and data of 339<sup>th</sup> personnel is invaluable to us as a source of photographs and stories of members for use in our newsletters.

Many thanks to Bill Jaskelainen who has created a library of 339<sup>th</sup> "gun-camera" films. Bill distributes them and answers questions on combat information for us to



**Martin Sheldrick,  
Official 339th Wreath Bearer!**

*Continued over*

those who ask. Bill Jaskelainen, Tim Ferrell, Jim Sterling, Peter Randall, John Harris, and Nick King expend their own time and monies for our organization and for the accurate recording of "The History of the Air War".

The success of our Newsletter is due in a large part to the regular articles of Jim Starnes and Ron Miller. Jim and Ron write their experiences that were a unique part of the "Air War". Jim the editor, founder of the 339<sup>th</sup> FGA, "Ace", and top combat pilot in two wars, tells us his experiences of the war as he fought it. Ron, the artist, ex-Marine, Master Sergeant, aerial gunner and armorer gives us the enlisted man's point of view of what it was like Stateside as well as in Fowlmere. Both were part of the Group early in its inception and both are talented writers. Recently we have acquired the artistic talents of Dave Ails who creates those wonderful computer illustrations for our Newsletter.

There are some (not I) that feel the time has come to distribute our funds to a museum or charity, fold our tents and close the organization and our newsletter. I would like to share with them and you the following letter I received a few months ago from the daughter of one of our ailing Veterans.

*Dear Mr. Ananian, I was in touch with you last year to ask you to send the newsletter to me instead of my father because he was unable to respond to any mail due to ill health.*

*Am I glad that I did, because just about the only thing he seemed interested in, during his last days of advanced Alzheimer's was his memories of the names and faces in your newsletter, which I would read to him and showed him on my visits.*

*I think he remembered them all!*

*He died in peace. - I was at his side.*

The above letter illustrates what we are all about! We are pleased to have brought pleasure to our aging comrades. That is our prime objective. I have received quite a few letters such as this one from relatives of our veterans who tell me of the comfort we have given their loved ones during their times of illness.

This is what we, as an organization, are meant to do! Why would we give up now and cease our operations just when we are succeeding? Our Group has become the envy of most Veteran's organizations - we will continue serving the "Lads from Fowlmere" in their old age!

Larry Powell has just informed me that the reunion site has been changed from Boston to Richmond, VA due to the extremely high costs in the Boston area. More news later!

Those are the years when one relaxes and enjoys the company of family and friends. Unfortunately it also means being in the doctor's office regularly for all our medical treatments that keep us going in our old age! In spite of that I can safely say that although the "Flesh" may be deteriorating, the "Spirit" of our members is "willing", even "enthusiastic!"

The over-all size of our membership remains about the same, As our treasurer has told us our finances are healthy (see page 9) and if you keep sending in those great stories and letters and with the Good Lord willing, the newsletter will still be in the mail this year!

♪♪ Blue Skies - - ♪♪

*Stephen C. Ananian* Secretary / Editor, 339<sup>th</sup> FGA



# We mourn our loss . . .



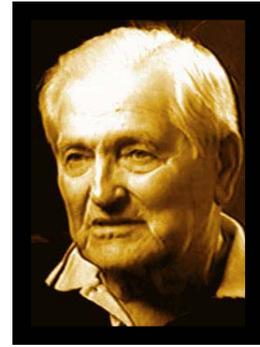
Marshall Cole



John Murray



John C. Withers



Col. Don Blakeslee

## Deceased

**Marshall Cole** passed away on November 16, 2008. He would have been 95 on Dec. 4. He always enjoyed the reunions and looked forward to them each year. He had developed a blood condition in the last couple of years that prevented him from attending. He always hoped he would get well enough to attend. My family and I want to thank you for your kindness and friendship throughout the years, you are a special group of men. - *Ronnie Cole, son* -

**Gordon Lusky**, 504<sup>th</sup> - It is with regret I inform you of the passing of my father on September 29, 2007. It was discovered that he contracted leukemia early that summer, and lost a valiant battle. - *Russel Lusky, son* -

**John D. Murray**, 505<sup>th</sup> Armament Superintendent. We have just learned that John passed away on July 11, 2006 after a short illness. - *Joseph Giglio grand son-in-law* -

**John C. Withers**, 505<sup>th</sup> pilot, 87, passed away Thursday, January 29, 2009, at Rockingham Memorial Hospital in Harrisonburg. - *Lu Dean Withers, wife* -

**Col. Donald Blakeslee**, 4<sup>th</sup> FG died September 3, 2008 of heart failure at his home in Miami. He was 90. Donald was one of WWII's greatest aces who is said to have flown more missions than any other USAAF airman (almost 500), and was one of the most highly decorated fighter pilots of WWII. - *New York Times Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> 2008* -

Our condolences to all the families on their loss



Actual size!

## 339<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group Lapel Pins

This polished pewter four-colored Cloisonné lapel pin is a thing of beauty! Only 7/8 of an inch in diameter it looks like a piece of fine jewelry.

While we still have a few left! When they are gone that will be it! The price is \$10 each plus \$2 shipping per order. Just drop me a line with a check to the return address on this newsletter (back page).



## In Memorium

The following have donated monies in memory of their loved ones:-

\$200 in memory of pilot M/G Francis R. Gerard by John B. Henry, Jr.

\$100 in memory of his father 505<sup>th</sup> pilot Robert H. Paul by his son Robert.

\$100 in memory of 504<sup>th</sup> pilot Lee "Dutch" Eisenhart by his friend, Brig. Gen. Regis F. A. Urschler (Pilot/Owner "Gunfighter").

\$80 in Memory of her father 505<sup>th</sup> pilot Tom Marvel by Nancy Roach.

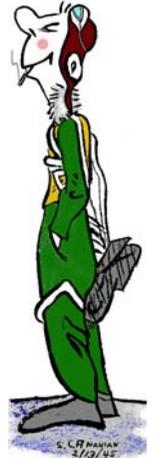
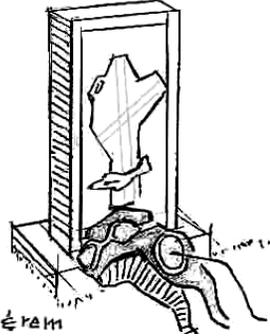
\$60 in memory of her husband 505<sup>th</sup> pilot Robert E. Irion by Beverly Irion.

\$60 in memory of her husband 503<sup>rd</sup> FS Homing Station operator Primo Zambardo by Hilda Zambardo.

\$50 in memory of Lee Eisenhart by his good friend Richard Yoder.

\$25 in memory of her husband Royal by Constance E. Little.

\$25 in memory of 503<sup>rd</sup> pilot M/G Francis Gerard by James and Ruth Delisio.



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## Donations

\$100 Phillip M. Loveless, Jr., \$75 James Delisio, \$60 William Perry, \$60 Cordell Shaw, \$50 E.E. Shirey, \$45 David C. Delisio, \$25 Rocky Finlayson, \$30 Jack Verhil, \$30 James Davidson, \$25 William Raines, \$20 Hal Fulton.

We thank you all for your generous donations.



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## The Mail Bag

504<sup>th</sup> C/Chief Bill Courtney replies to our question in September issue:-



Bill Courtney in front of plane with Shark's Teeth

*Hi Steve,*

*August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008*

*What a pleasant surprise opening the Newsletter and finding my picture. It also gives me an opportunity to thank you and Jim Starnes for the hundreds of hours you must have spent putting the newsletters together all these years. You both did a terrific job.*

*I am nearly sure that the P-51 in the picture was one I crewed for Vernon Blizzard, (by the way, didn't we all call him Bob)?*

*According to my bronze star award, which was possible because "Bliz" very seldom aborted a mission, the airplanes were 44-14208 and 44-*

15499. The missions were between 5 December 1944 and 21 April 1945, so I don't know whether the plane in the photo without the D-Day paint is one of the same.

Another pilot I remember helping quite a few times was Gil Cohen. He was another pilot which I was very fond of.

I hope this info helps. If it doesn't let me know. I've been downsizing the last several years but my sons in Oakland and Minnesota have my pictures and souvenirs and I could e-mail them for assistance.

Thanks again. *Bill Courtney*

Bill Courtney succeeded in having his plane fly thirty missions without having to "Abort". He was awarded the "Bronze Star" for his excellent work.



Alan J. Russ 503<sup>rd</sup> Armorer writes:-



Steve,

Aug 22, 2008

I've seen a lot of pictures of a P-51 Mustang from the 339<sup>th</sup> FG But none that tops this one. – This picture was taken in the 503<sup>rd</sup> Sq. area.

*Al Russ, 503<sup>rd</sup> FS*

Who am I to dispute Al? Note the prominent invasion markings and the unpainted silver tail; picture must have been taken close to D-Day. Was that your plane Al?



This note from Michael George owner and pilot of several WW II "War Birds" including Bob Frisch's Mustang, a Navy Corsair and a Yugoslavian Jet trainer the Soko Galeb (Seagull)!

Enclosed are some photo cards of "Worry Bird" to pass out at your reunion. Sorry I can't attend this year. I took "Worry Bird" to Oshkosh this year. Since it got wet we have been polishing it for the last 4 weeks getting it back in shape.

Worry Bird will be the star attraction at the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 183<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Squadron next weekend. It will be on display at their big party with an F-16

*Mike George*

Continued over



PS - Here is one of the photos from a recent Air Show I did.

Thanks for the photos! Any reader that would like a free 5½" x 8½" color print of Michael George's P-51 "Worry Bird" drop me a line! **Editor** 

## FlyPast Magazine

The January Issue of the FlyPast Magazine (by Key Publishing, a British Publication) features a cover photograph of Maurice Hammond's reconstructed 339<sup>th</sup> aircraft, 5Q-B. The magazine also featured an article written and illustrated with photographs by Jarrod Cotter on 5Q-B, the 504<sup>th</sup> aircraft Marinell. There are color photos of the airplane taken by Jarrod throughout the magazine. This issue also included a double-page spread of Marinell suitable for framing.

On page 36 the magazine is running a contest with a "Limited Edition" "Desk-top" model of Marinell as the prize! I do not know which is better, Jarrod's photographs or his article!

I can not praise it enough. This is an issue that every member will want!



## A Free Wall Calendar!

FlyPast magazine also publishes a "Wall Size" annual calendar that features a photo of the 339<sup>th</sup> P-51, 5Q-B on the cover as well as for the month of March! They have donated 15 calendars to our group which are yours for the asking!

Just send \$3 to cover cost of shipping to your newsletter editor whose address is on page 20 for a free 8¼" x 11 ½" wall calendar for the year 2009!

## Roster Updates

Make the following additions or changes to your new mailing list: -

**Change: - Donald H. Quale**, 503<sup>rd</sup> Amazement Officer

1125 Raymond Street, N. Tonawanda, NY 14120-2217

**John B. Henry, Jr.**, HQ- Group CO,

311 W. Nottingham Drive, Apt. 210, San Antonio, TX 78209-1827

**Jon Wallner**, Friend of the 339<sup>th</sup> FG,

1750 Pulaski Drive, Blue Bell, PA 19422

**Jeff Rich**, 505<sup>th</sup> Son of pilot Tom Rich,

106 Coolmore Ct., Spring Hill, TN 37174-2850

**James Davidson**, 503<sup>rd</sup> Armament Supt.

4213 E. Brookwood, Ct., Phoenix, AZ 85048-8810

**Helen Seifts**, 503 Widow of medic.

2617 Carlisle Road, Transfer, PA 16154-8563

**Judy Sirochman**, 505<sup>th</sup> Widow of pilot,

Contact through daughter Judy Mey, at 131 Jacob Street, Berea OH 44017

**Add: - Ronnie Cole**, GRP Son of Marshall Cole Supply officer

251 Bonura Road, Sour Lake, TX 77659

**Lynn Finlayson**, Grandson of Allen Goertz Medic.

629 Conestoga, Alliance, NE 69301

**Rocky Finlayson**, Grandson of Allen Goertz Medic.

421 1/2 G. Street, Central City, NE 68826

**Steve Finlayson**, Grandson of Allen Goertz Medic,

464 W. Easter, Littleton, CO 80120

**Joseph Giglio**, Grandson of Jon Murray 505<sup>th</sup> Armament Superintendent

422 Dalzelle Ave., Wall PA 15148

**Mike Mey**, 505<sup>th</sup> pilot Andy Sirochman's grandson,

4601 Amberly Court North, Atlanta GA 30360

**Jack Verhil**, 505<sup>th</sup> Nephew of Gerald Graham pilot,

1931 Sherwood Dr. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49506-5041

**Delete: - Lee Eisenhart, Marshall Cole, Mrs. Allen Goertz, John Murray**



### Larry Wants to Know - - -

Where would you like to have our Annual Reunion held next year (2010)? As your Reunion Chairman I would like your opinion. Please drop me a post card with your suggestions addressed to me at:-

Larry Powell, 17270 Devonshire Street, North Ridge, CA 91325



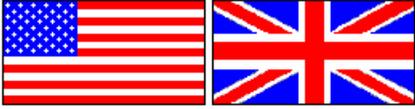
March 1, 2009

**339<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group Association, Inc.**

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



US  
POSTAGE



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

To: -



Clip here

*By Pat Gousie*



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

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

- Please accept my donation of \$10 for my dues for the 339<sup>th</sup> FGA. (Tax Exempt)
- Please add my name to the mailing list.
- Please send me a free Wall Calendar. I enclose \$3 to cover shipping costs
- Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ 339<sup>th</sup> Lapel Pins @ \$10 each plus \$2 additional for shipping  
(Number)
- Please mail me the latest Membership Roster of members

**339<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group Association, Inc.**

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

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

First Middle Last

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (if you wish) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (if you wish) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_