

# “Late Pass!”



THE CALL SIGN FOR GROTTAGLIE TOWER

449TH “FLYING HORSEMEN”

WINTER 2011 ISSUE

449TH BOMB GROUP ASSOCIATION

19TH REUNION REPORT

## The President’s Report

The 449th Bomb Group Association’s 19th Reunion at Reno, Nevada Sept 17-21 was one of the best reunions ever. Reno is a beautiful city in one of the most scenic areas of our great country. Our room and reunion accommodations were terrific in the iconic Silver Legacy Casino and Hotel. The scheduled activities and reunion programs seem to have been thoroughly enjoyed by our 196 attendees (41-449th Veterans and 155-2nd Generation and family members). Twenty-six families from all squadrons came to honor their veteran relatives. The 449th was well recognized in the press and on TV during our stay in Reno thanks in great part to Sandra Latta (2nd Generation) who prepared and issued an excellent Press Release on the 449th and its reunion in Reno.

The Get-Acquainted Reception on the first evening was well attended. Shirley Priest did an excellent job of planning and leading this event (See separate article). The sightseeing trips to Virginia City, Carson City and Lake Tahoe were also well attended and all who participated were privileged to see the interesting Nevada countryside and learn many historical details about the area.

The highlight of the reunion special events was our attendance of the Reno National Air Races as the honored guests for the opening ceremony on Thursday, September 15th. We had special seats in front of the grandstand very near where the next day a racing P-51 crashed into the seats killing the pilot and several spectators. Certainly, fate was with us since we were originally scheduled to attend the races on Friday, the day of the crash. Our Friday schedule included the Memorial Service at which more than 185 of our deceased 449th comrades were honored, the business meeting at which the next reunion location for April/May 2013 was selected and Association Officers for 2011-2013 were elected (See business meeting minutes on page 4).

The final event, the Reunion Banquet was held against the backdrop of the terrible accident which occurred that afternoon (Sept. 16) at the Reno Air Races. Unfortunately, the airmen we had scheduled to be the Honor Guard for the evening program were rescheduled for duties at the race site. Consequently, the Honor Guard duty was taken over and performed professionally by Rodney Miller, son our beloved former President, Jim Miller. Our guest speaker for the evening, General Chuck Yeager presented a movie of the major events in his life including his most famous accomplishment, the first person to break the sound barrier. Subse-

(Cont’d on page 3 -- “President’s Report”)

## Song, Sparkle, and Spirit of the 1940s Highlight Get-Acquainted Night

After President Floyd Trogdon’s warm welcome, veterans Ed West, Ed Kolek, and Bud Rosch along with 2nd generation gals Judy Carpenter, Denise Riegel, Linda Holley, and Shirley Priest initiated the evening’s festivities by performing “Sentimental Journey.”

In keeping the purpose for the reunion in the forefront, each veteran of the 449th Bomb Group present was recognized by name, squadron, and home state.

The very talented Ed West, Ed Kolek, and Bob Hathorn revived memories of the war years singing special selections throughout the evening. The 449th Singers as well as Jeremy and Darlene Ray, great grandchildren of Chet Ray, led in a sing-a-long of favorites from the 1940’s.

Rachel Coffee, Navy veteran, was recognized for her service in WWII, and emcee Shirley Priest gave a special tribute to all women of the war years, highlighting their contributions to family and the home front that has inspired generations of Americans with their spirit of patriotism and their “We can do it!” attitude.

Notable recognition went to Cliff Denny, first veteran to

(Cont’d on page 7 -- “Get-Acquainted”)

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## 20th Reunion Set for Louisville

If you attended the 19th reunion in Reno then you were witness to what a lot of attendees said was the best reunion yet. Louisville, being the 20th gathering, is setting up to outdo Reno. If you did not make Reno because you were worried about getting around, know that everything was located with minimal walking and we had adequate wheelchairs and helping hands.

The reunions of late have become a source of “Living History”, comradery, and sharing of WWII memorabilia. It is exciting for the younger generations to learn firsthand about the 1940’s era. Equally important is the representation of families honoring their deceased fathers, uncles, and grandfathers. We believe it is imperative for reunions like these to continue to preserve the 449th BG legacy.

Come celebrate the 20th reunion in Louisville. For those more adventurous we are looking into side trips to Churchill Downs, the Louisville Slugger Factory and historical Fort Knox. Leave it up to the 2nd Generation to lend assistance and make this a memorable event for all who attend.

-- Lloyd Rosen, 2nd Gen, 719th

**The 449th Veterans At the 19th Reunion**



**716th Squadron**

Back Row (L to R): Ken Blake, Al Ilzalurri, Vernon Petersen, Bud Rosch, Ted Beale, George Henry. Front Row (L to R): Paul Farrell, Eugene Gordon, Chester Ray, Bernard Bowers, Fred Movey



**717th Squadron**

Back Row (L to R): Lynn Kinnamon, John Aulner Jr., Wally Green, Leroy Compson, Robert Kubiak. Front Row (L to R): Clif Denny Jr., Ed Kolek, Jack Hartle, Ed West, Ray Bohn



**718th Squadron**

Back Row (L to R): Harvey Gann, Jim Cady, Leo Alpert, Bob Hathorn. Front Row (L to R): Morris Coffee, Al Hewett, John Bloomingdale, Matt Mathieu



**719th Squadron**

Back Row (L to R): Floyd Trogdon, Rudy Acosta, Iggy Garcia Jr. Front Row (L to R): Walter Bynum, Harold Strack, Bill Hamill, Robert Geisert, Jack Meyer, Max Minton, Walter Dillon, Ted Bratzler



**"A Wing and a Prayer" Group**

(Left to Right): Ed West (717th), Ken Blake (716th), Paul Farrell (716th), Leroy Compson (717th), Bob Hathorn (718th) and Ed Kolek (717th). (Not seen is Lynn Kinnamon (717th))



**The "449th Museum" Exhibit**

Dan and Carol Livingston's private collection exhibit -- a major attraction for the media and for 449th BGA members



The 449th Veterans with the Oak Ridge Boys (back row) and General Chuck Yeager (center, back row)

(Cont'd from page 1 -- "President's Report")

quently, he answered questions ably assisted by his wife, Victoria. But General Yeager did something earlier which resulted in a great addition to our evening program. He is a long-time friend of the Oak Ridge Boys who were entertaining at another Reno Hotel. General Yeager told them about his schedule with the 449th and their manager called me and asked if they could come over and meet our veterans at our Banquet. I obviously said yes and they came, sang us one of their famous songs and their leader presented an appreciation speech to the 449th veterans. Before they departed for their evening performance at another hotel they stood for the above photo with the veterans and General Yeager. We were indeed honored and pleased by their visit with us. Obviously, I sent a Thank You note to the Oak Ridge Boys. Their response is in the adjacent column.

To sum up: The 19th Reunion was Great! If you missed it, we will have another one in 18 months. But it will be difficult, if not impossible, to have a more enjoyable one than the 19th thanks to the fantastic job done by the 2nd Generation in doing most of the "heavy lifting" in the planning, preparation and major duties in running the reunion. I will not attempt to name all of the 2nd Generation people as most were deeply involved. Certainly, Mary Crowley, who provides the major supervision and guidance for the 2nd Generation and who did the administrative duties for the reunion, is to be highly commended for another outstanding job. Running her a close second was Denise Reigel who backs up Mary on most everything. Also, a very special thanks to the Rev. Denise Trogdon who took time out of her impossible schedule to act as our Chaplain for the reunion since our Chaplain Harry Snyder was unable to attend. Lastly, we cannot thank Dan and Carol Livingston enough for their tireless effort for once again bringing and setting up their "449th Museum" in our exhibit room at the Silver Legacy.

Best wishes to all. I look forward to seeing you in Louisville in April, 2013.

-- Floyd Trogdon, President, 449th BGA

### Oak Ridge Boys Visit Reunion Banquet

Below is an email from the Oak Ridge Boys' Lead Singer in response to our Thank You note for their visit:

B/General Trogdon,

Thank you for your kind note to the Oak Ridge Boys. I can assure you that we were the men who were honored in your presence. The Oaks are a very patriotic group of men. We support our troops, all branches, and we will forever be grateful to all of you who put your lives on the line for our country. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I am the youngest of a large family with three brothers and two brothers-in-law. All of my family answered the call. One of my brothers served two terms. I was called to service during the Vietnam era. Due to a "heart" issue that I have had all my life, I did not have to go to Vietnam. However, I was drafted, and I did answer the call to serve.

So, please accept my thanks and sincere appreciation for your service. You will always be honored guests at our shows. Please let us know if you are in our area. You will always be welcome.

Duane Allen, Oak Ridge Boys, Inc.

### Preserving The Legacy – The 449th Archives

Our Oral History project is moving along nicely. As of the 19th Reunion in Reno, we have a total of 79 Oral Histories recorded! Thank you to each and every one of you for sharing your story with us. We feel so honored. Big thanks to Elaine Trogdon Martz and Linda Trogdon Donahue for taking on the huge job of interviewing at both the 18th Reunion in Washington, DC and the 19th Reunion in Reno. You and your sisters are a very welcome addition to our fast-growing 2nd Generation reunion planners. This year we had more and more of the 2nd generation members picking up duties before, during and after the reunion. This is a big help as each year our programs grow.

Our PX and Gathering Area was home to a wonderful addition this year from Dan and Carol Livingston. Along with their guest Jose Lara, they set up part of their personal WWII collection in the back of the room. The "mini-museum" con-

(Cont'd on page 7 -- "Archives")

## 449th BGA 19th Reunion Business Meeting

The Business meeting was called to order at 8:30 AM on September 16, 2011 at the Silver Legacy Hotel in Reno, NV. There were two major items on the agenda of the meeting chaired by Floyd Trogdon, 449th BG Association President.

1. Election of Association Officers. Chairman Trogdon reported that all the current officers except the Historian (Clay Henry) had agreed to continue to serve until the 20th Reunion. Accordingly, the Nomination Committee recommended the following slate, which includes new positions, be elected as the Association Board for the period September 2011-2013:

President	Floyd Trogdon, B/Gen USAF (Ret) (719th)
Vice President	Lee Kenney, LTC USAF (Ret) 718th
Asst. Vice President	Richard Lapham (2nd Generation)
Secretary	Mary Crowley (2nd Generation)
Treasurer	Wally Green (717th)
Chaplain	Rev. Harry Snyder (717th)
Asst. Chaplain	Rev. Denise Trogdon (2nd Generation)
Historian	Mark Coffee (2nd Generation)
Memorabilia Officers	John & Jean Aulner (717th)
Reunion Chairman	Lloyd Rosen (2nd Generation)
Archives Manager	Denise Riegel (2nd Generation)

The Nomination Committee's recommendation was approved by voice vote of the approximate 145 members present. Accordingly, the Association Board for 2011-2013 is listed above. Chairman Trogdon congratulated the new Board and thanked Clay Henry for his outstanding service as the organization's Historian. Trogdon also reported that Devin Cress (3rd Generation, grandson of Patricia Latta) volunteered to rework our website to make it more user friendly. Bill Shepherd has been carrying the current 449th material on his Norfield website and will work with Devin and Mark Coffee as the 449th sets up its own website. The new website is now being established.

2. Decision on the Location for the 20th Reunion in the Spring of 2013. Trogdon introduced Lloyd Rosen who reported that the following cities had been researched as possible sites for the 20th Reunion: New Orleans, Orlando and Louisville, KY. Rosen discussed the pros and cons of each and the selection of one of these was put to a vote of the membership. Louisville, KY won by a wide margin and accordingly will be the location of our 20th Reunion. In due course, Lloyd will start detailed research on Louisville hotels and sight-seeing or functions that might be offered for our 3-4 day reunion which will probably be held in late April 2013.

There being no further business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 AM. -- Floyd Trogdon, Pres. 449th BGA

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### Treasurer's Report -- December 2011

The 19th reunion was most successful thanks to the 2nd Generation's decadent ideas to generate added donations and funds for the reunion. We have the healthy sum of \$14,801.54 to start the 20th Reunion. See you there.

--Wally Green, Treasurer, 449th BGA, 717th

## The Secretary's Corner

Although I receive hundreds of emails a year requesting information about the 449th BG, every once in a while one of those emails stands out among all the rest. The following email was not a request, but a thank you to our veterans for their service.

Dear Ms. Crowley:

I have an interest in WW2 history but it doesn't involve air-planes. However, since I worked with so many WW2 vets and have an interest in history, I know a little about the 8th and 15th Air Force heavy bomber groups that served in Europe.

I live in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio and Tuesday morning I stopped in a Dunkin Doughnuts to get a cup of coffee. I wasn't having a great day and figured a cup of coffee wouldn't hurt. There was no one in the store except one man sitting at a table with a ball cap on with what looked like an airplane on it. On the way out I looked closer and saw it was a cap with a B-24 on it from the 449th Bombardment Group.

I was in a hurry but I thanked him for his service which is something I started doing with veterans and I asked if the group was based in England. He said no they flew out of Italy as part of the 15th Air Force. In the quick conversation we had, I learned he was the radio operator on a B-24 that went down over Austria. He was one of 6 crewmen that survived and ended up a POW.

I'm sad to say I didn't learn the man's name since I had to go. The day I was having turned better because I realized my problems didn't match bailing out of a B-24 and becoming a POW. It was a great reminder to me of how much is owed to the people of my parents' generation and what they did. I was glad to be able to know some of them.

Now, I really wish I had gotten his name. I can tell you the Dunkin Doughnuts was in the shopping center at Broadview and Snow Roads in Parma, Ohio and I assume he lived in the area or was visiting nearby. I hope the airman gets to see the e-mail and my appreciation of what he and his fellow airmen went through. Also, please express my thanks to the original members and to their sons and daughters of the 2nd Generation.

Sincerely,

Gerry Chapek

The Mystery Airman: Sgt. Albert J. Yano, 716th Squadron, Radio/Operator on Foote's Crew. Bailed out of "Shamrock" on 24 May 1944; taken German POW, Orig. 449th.

-- Secretary, Mary Crowley, 2nd Gen, 717th

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### Chaplin's Corner

It was a great pleasure for me to fill in at the 19th Reunion for Chaplain Snyder who could not be there. Thank you all for welcoming me so and making me really feel a part of the 449th. I particularly appreciated the opportunity to lead the Memorial Service for your fallen comrades -- that is such a poignant service which I know comforts the families so much. I was also pleased to see the 2nd Generation taking on so much of the duties of the reunion and for "Preserving the Legend" of the 449th. I feel proud to be one of them. Thank you all for electing me as Assistant Chaplain. I am indeed honored.

-- Rev. Denise Trogdon, 2nd Gen, 719th

## Edith

The story of Edith starts some two years ago. I had printed copies of my dad's war diary "Patches" and was making every attempt to contact remaining crew and relatives of the crew to send a copy of "Patches". With a great deal of help from Mary Crowley, I was able to make several contacts. I was saddened to find that all of the crew had passed on but I was able to contact several relatives. Among the relatives was Edith Van Lier, widow of Don Van Lier, navigator on Patches.

Edith and I kept contact and talked every month or so. I sent her a copy of "Patches" which she read with great interest and shared with her children and grandchildren. Over the many months we talked of my dad, her husband and our respective families. It seemed that we had formed an invisible bond, based on events that had occurred almost 70 years ago. I consider myself to be lucky to be her friend.

Edith received information about the upcoming Reno reunion. Although she ran into several obstacles, including her daughter that didn't think she should make the trip, costs involved, illness of a close relative, and making travel arrangements and registration, she would not be deterred! I have found that her steel resolve and positive outlook toward life to be her greatest traits.

I finally met Edith in person at the reunion. It had never even occurred to me that she was 90 years old. In all of my conversations with her over the past two years, age never entered my consciousness. I suppose the fact that she is as sharp and quick on the uptake as someone half her age, I pictured her a much younger person. However after meeting her at the reunion, with a twinkle in her eye, razor sharp mind and seemingly endless energy, I now think of her as 90 years old going on 30!

We, that is my son, brother-in-law and nephew, joined Edith for the squadron dinner and she was the center of attention at our table. Always involved and interested in what everyone had to say. She relished in recounting the events of the day. Never ever a negative word, she always would have something positive to say.

She did a bit of gambling with her grandson, Michael. I suspect that gambling might not be her favorite activity, but as with everything else, she was up to try it. She told me that Michael had won at 21 and went home with a couple of hundred bucks stuffed in his back pocket. Mike had taken leave from his Naval duties and accompanied his grandmother to the reunion.

Some of us had occasion to witness Edith, the party girl, on the second to last night of the reunion. There was a get-together in one of the rooms with a few of the veterans and several second-generation types. After a long day of charging for one place to another, Edith was right in the thick of things, trading quips with vets and 2nd generation members alike. Edith seems to redefine the word "trooper".

I talked to Edith after she returned home from the re-

union and asked her if she had a good time. Her response was fabulous. She was very excited with all of the fine people she met. She loved the trip to Virginia City, even talking about the excitement of the bus ride and how much she enjoyed the view of the mountains. Ditto for the Tahoe trip. She very much enjoyed watching the Thunderbirds and air races, but expressed her sorrow for the crash the following day and for the people that lost their lives. For Edith it was all good and she had nothing to say but good things about the reunion.

I've learned this from Edith. Always look to the positive side of life, no matter your age. As she has shown us, often times you don't need to look that hard, it's all around us! And I know this. She is cut from the same bolt of cloth as the rest of the 449th veterans and their wives. Patriots all, a generation that sacrificed so much and asked so little to serve this great country.

And for her grandson, Ensign Michael Grimes currently serving in the U.S. Navy.....as they say "the apple don't fall far from the tree"

PS: Edith is excited about attending the next reunion along with her daughter and Michael.

-- Richard Lapham, 2nd Gen, 719th

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## The 2nd Generation Raffle

The idea of a 2nd Generation Raffle was born in Rapid City, South Dakota. Of course that being our first raffle it was small but it did raise some extra monies to help offset some unexpected expenses.

The 19th reunion was our third raffle and it was a great success. All of the items were donated by members of the 2nd Generation. John T. Johnson donated a bomber jacket with a B-24 Liberator painted on the back. There was a replica of P-51 signed by Chuck Yeager along with a picture of him standing by the plane. Carol Livingston hand crafted two shadow boxes using the 449th Flying Horsemen patch and pin and also the patches and pins from each of the four squadrons. A most appropriate item was the B-24 US postage stamps, donated by Deborah Meek Hill. There were also Honey Baked Ham gift certificates, metal signs, a Rosie the Riveter tote, and Ronald Regan jelly beans just to name a few of the many prizes.

The winner of the bomber jacket was Chris Collins. The best part -- it fit him perfectly! Rick Rodgers won the P-51. I had Chuck Yeager draw the winning ticket.

Along with all of the Veterans and 2nd Generation members I cannot thank everyone enough for those items you donated for the raffle. To those of you who bought tickets I thank you also. The raffle took in approximately \$700 dollars. Again thank you all for your generosity. It made the raffle a great success.

-- Lynn Moran, 2nd Gen, 718th

Visit the 449th Bomb Group Website at:  
<http://www.449th.org>

## Historian's Corner

The 449th is one of the better documented bomb groups from WWII. Most bomb groups are fortunate if they have a single history book about their service. The four volumes produced by the 449th Association are without peer and represent much effort by numerous individuals. The numerous other books about the 449th written by veterans and family members add to the knowledge base. There is still work to be done in preserving the legacy of the Flying Horsemen.

The answer to the inevitable question: "What did my father/uncle/grandfather do during the war?" is still not readily available in most cases. My own interest in the history of the 449th began the same way in the late 1990's. My dad, Morris Coffee, was a gunner on the James G. Allen crew of the 718th Squadron. He only had his "Form 5" sheets showing mission dates for the last two months of his tour, the rest unknown. Digging through the microfilmed mission records from the Air Force Historical Research Agency was the only way to complete the record of his tour. My effort to reconcile the aircraft numbers from the mission data with the known 449th aircraft in the history books led to an extensive aircraft database that has been expanded and modified over time. The long-term goal is to create a searchable database from the mission records so that the answer to the question above is more easily answered.

A recent inquiry from George Ditzhazy of the 718th Squadron provides an opportunity to correct a long-standing error in the aircraft data. Mr. Ditzhazy was co-pilot on the Bills/Stewart crew that was shot down on 26 July 1944 in the aircraft 41-28600, #34 reported as "BUCKET OF BOLTS". George is writing his memoirs and requested information about the location they bailed out over Yugoslavia. Combat #34 became the assigned aircraft for the James Allen crew during the latter part of their tour. The Allen crew had flown #34 16 times from mid-June up to July 21st, just before it was lost. Photos from the Allen crew prove this aircraft was named "HOPPY" rather than "BUCKET OF BOLTS".

We were able to provide George with both the Missing Aircrew Report and the Escape and Evasion Report related to the mission on which he and the Bills crew bailed out.

-- Mark Coffee, 2nd Gen, 718th

## Betty's Tent

On September 13, 2011 the 19th Reunion of the 449th Bomb Group Association commenced in Reno, Nevada. One of the highlights of the reunion was the day spent at the National Championship Air Races and Show. The veterans were honored guests on opening day.

As we boarded the buses at the hotel I noted the weather was perfect -- blue skies, slight breeze and about 85 degrees. What more could we ask for. Upon arrival the buses were escorted onto the tarmac so our veterans would not have far to walk. There was a whole section roped off for us along with a huge white tent. Comfortable folding chairs, tables,

coolers filled with water and everything decorated in red, white and blue were there waiting for our arrival.

Reno is normally very warm in September and also considered a high-desert area. Shade and water are a must. Betty Johnson Wolak, daughter of John T. Johnson, a Ball Turret Gunner from the 719th Squadron, thought a lot about this. She decided a tent would be the perfect solution for our veterans so they wouldn't have to sit all day in the sun. The rental cost for the tent was over \$800 dollars.

Betty was on a mission. She spoke with friends, family members, co-workers, bosses, small business owners, anyone who would listen to her plight for the tent. Then Betty followed up with letters and phone calls. In all Betty raised a total of \$1,350 dollars.

Betty did not get to enjoy the comforts of the tent. She and her dad, John, were unable to attend the reunion because of her father's health. Betty is proud to be a member of the 449th BG 2nd Generation and she unselfishly gave of her time and energy so that all those attending the air show could be a little more comfortable. As we left the air show I looked back at the tent and knew a part of Betty was with us that day -- her kindness and thoughtfulness, truly one of God's special people.

-- Lynn Moran, 2nd Gen, 718th

## The Presidential Unit Citation Missions

### History Note

#### *The Presidential Unit Citation (PUC) Criteria*

*"The unit must display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission as to set it apart from and above other units participating in the same campaign."*

The 449th Bomb Group received Presidential Unit Citations for two missions: 4 April and 9 July 1944. The 4 April mission was against the marshalling yards at Bucharest, Rumania. The 9 July mission was against the Concordia-Vega oil refinery at Ploesti, Rumania. These missions were costly as shown in the following table. The 4 April mission resulted in the almost total destruction of the Bucharest Marshalling Yard. In addition, the 449th was credited with downing 40 enemy fighters during the horrific air battle. It was the single

(Cont'd on page 7 -- "PUC")

### Summary of 449th Losses on PUC Missions

Mission Date	Squadron	Losses			Crew Pilot
		KIA	POW	Evaded	
4 April	716th	2	8		R. Kendall
	717th	2	8		Bontly
	717th	10			Tyler
	719th	8	3		Thieme
	719th	7	3		Garrison
	719th	5	5		McCormick
9 July	719th	3	7		Polink
	718th			9	Driggers
	716th	5			Westbrook
Totals		76	34	9	

Ref: Bk4, P44 and Bk3, P407

(Cont'd from Page 1 -- "Get-Acquainted")

register for the 19th reunion. John Aulner, Paul Ferrell, and Patricia Lattee (wife of J. Edward) were recognized for attendance at all 19 reunions. Fred Movey, Iggy Garcia, Jr., and Allen Hewitt were recognized as veterans attending their first reunion.

A hearty welcome and special recognition went to sisters, brothers, sons, daughters, and family members of veterans of the 449th attending their first reunion: Jim Collins, John Colson, Greg Cooper, Patricia Gavalas Roney, Robert and Paul Gross, Jeannie Kaess, Barbara Kennelly, Tom and Jeff Kern, Tracey, Elisabeth McKinley Price, Clothilde Metz, William Nettekoven and sister Cindy, Gary Oien, Terry Rodefer Cloud, Laura (Rogers) Eft, Patricia Rye, Edith Van Lier and Sheldon Zimmerman Schwartz. Many came alone, but as Barbara Tracy pointed out: "Hey, I've been here just one day and have met my new best friend Al Ilzalurri already!"

Floyd Trogdon's family, as well as Wally Green's family, had the most family attending, with each having ten family members present. Ed Kolek and daughter Loretta had traveled the farthest distance, flying from Buffalo, NY, to Chicago with a re-route through San Francisco to finally arrive in Reno. One observer noted: "They look pretty darn good after 18 hours in the air." Chet Ray was recognized as the veteran traveling the greatest distance by car. Chet's granddaughter Cody had driven from Pt. Charlotte, FL, bringing Chet, Jeremy and Darlene to Reno. Most senior veterans present were Jim Cady (93) and Vernon Peterson (93), and three-year-old Owen V. Brown was recognized as the youngest present. V is the grandson of Becky Burgess Hutcherson.

Ladies this evening sparkled in authentic 1940's dress, some donning nurse and military uniforms, factory worker outfits, glamorous accessories, including fabulous hats, and hairstyles straight from a 1940's fashion magazine. Many of our men sported military ties, flight jackets, fedoras, and casual attire of the era. Our youngest little guy even sported a flight training suit. Upon capturing the Woman's Best Hat recognition, Thelma Movey modeled the whimsical creation, taking a walk and a pirouette on the runway. Georgia's own Jimmy and Patricia Gavalas Roney were recognized as Best Dressed Couple.

All men and women who had served in any branch of the armed forces were recognized, as well as those presently in service, grandson of Donald Van Lier, Michael Grimes, USN.

Setting an appropriate tone for the reunion, Rev. Denise Trogdon offered a prayer of gratitude and blessing at the close of this wonderful evening.

Special thanks are due to our 449th veteran consultants (Ed West, Ed Kolek, Bud Rosch, and Bob Hathorn) and all participants who made the music happen. A very special thank you goes to Darlene and Jeremy Ray who led us in "Mairszy Doats"; they had learned the song earlier in the day. As always, nothing would happen without the encouragement and support of our President Floyd Trogdon or 2nd Generation leader Mary Crowley. -- Shirley Priest, 2nd Gen, 716th

(Cont'd from page 6 -- "Archives")

sisted of B-24 parts and equipment, mannequins in a variety of uniforms and many mementos and assorted memorabilia such as Norden and Sperry bombsights, and a B-24 instrument panel. Because of the TV news coverage, we had many outside visitors coming to see the 449th BG WWII display.

The memorabilia collection in the PX has grown from previous years. We received many items from Association members to display. Some of the veterans who could not attend sent their pictures, books and mementos for display. One particularly interesting display was from Walter Maich (718th Sq). Prior to the reunion, we were able to visit the spry 91-year old Walter in his home in Camarillo, CA to record his oral history. He was downed on 31 Jan 1944 over Aviano in "Brady's Gang" with Brady's Crew. He evaded capture for nine months. On display were Walter's boots that he walked over 500-hundred miles through the mountains of northern Italy. Another display was brought by the son of Sheldon Zimmerman (719th Sq) KIA 4-4-44. His son, also named Sheldon, never knew his father. Among the items he brought were his father's Purple Heart medal and smoking pipes.

The PX/Memorabilia Room has grown to become a great place for people to gather and share stories or just hang out and visit. This special space provides an opportunity to meet new people and visit old friends. It allows all of our members, old and new, to become more involved with each other and in the process helps our Association grow stronger.

We still need your pictures in our archives. Each month we get closer to our goal of acquiring a picture of each man and crew from the 449th. If you have not forwarded yours, please feel free to email me at redriegel@yahoo.com, or call me at 714-716-6317. I would be delighted to help you forward any and all pictures you would like to share. Many of our members have mementos from their Grottaglie experience but have decided they no longer have space to store them. We have facilities to collect both documents and memorabilia. Please contact us if you would like to donate anything for the 449th Bomb Group to the Association. We'll make arrangements for your donation.

-- Denise Riegel, 2nd Gen, 718th

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(Cont'd from page 6 -- "PUC")

most costly combat mission of the entire war for the 449th as seven B-24's were lost with a total of 71 men. The 9 July mission resulted in the almost total destruction of the Concordia Vega oil refinery despite the fact that Ploesti was defended by an effective smoke screen, fighters and perhaps the heaviest concentration of flak guns of all the targets attacked by the 449th. On 9 July, the 449th, in the midst of a tremendous flak barrage, attacked this target using only PFF ground-attack radar to identify the target through the dense smoke screen which completely obscured the target area from visual observation. Post-mission photographic reconnaissance revealed heavy damage to the oil refinery.

-- Bill Shepherd, 2nd Gen, 718th

**“LATE PASS!”**, a publication of  
**The 449th Bomb Group Association**

Mary Crowley, Secretary

2nd Generation

16292 Content Circle

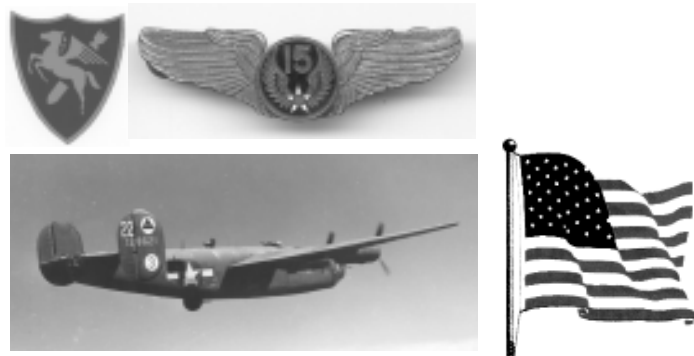
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**FIRST CLASS MAIL**



**WINTER 2011 NEWSLETTER**  
**449th Bomb Group Association**  
**716 - 717 - 718 - 719 Bomb Squadrons**

**“LATE PASS!” -THE 449TH BGA NEWSLETTER**

**Mary Crowley, Secretary and 2nd Generation**

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Please send your stories, photos, letters to the editor, poems, cartoons, jokes, etc. for “LATE PASS!” or call her

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**French Legion d’Honneur Medal**

The French government would like to honor US veterans who helped in the liberation of France during World War II. The 449th BG flew eleven missions to France between February 4, 1944 to August 15, 1944. Any airman who participated on one of those missions is eligible to receive the French Legion of Honor Medal.

The following is the criteria to receive this medal: 1) The airman must be living, 2) Provide a picture of himself in uniform during WWII, 3) A copy of DD Form 214 or WD AGO 53-85-reverse side of their Honorable Discharge, 4) Additional information and proof that the airman participated on a mission -- the 449th BG will provide this mission information.

Veterans of the 449th should note that the application process will be expedited if the applications for the French Legion d’Honneur Medal are submitted and processed as a

group. Debra McKeever, 2nd Generation (Rudy Acosta’s daughter, 719th) has volunteered to assist any 449th Veteran who is interested. She will also provide the flight log crew list for additional proof of participation. Veterans can also apply independently. For assistance and questions, please contact Debra directly as soon as possible. The deadline for the 449th application process is February 14, 2012. Contact: Debra McKeever, 13425 Farmington St., Oak Hill, CA 92344. Phone: (760) 963-0967. E-Mail: dmckeeverusa2@yahoo.com

**Updating of Mailing List**

Mary Crowley, our 449th BGA Secretary, maintains the mailing-list database for the Association. Please send any mailing address corrections and reports of any deceased veteran to Mary at the address shown in the Newsletter return-address box . These actions will help to ensure that our mailing-list database remains up-to-date and accurate.