

483RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION

(1943) Ephrata, WA – MacDill Field, Tampa, FL – Steparone, San Severo-Pisa, Italy (1945)

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President's Message



Wow, can you believe we are beginning the month of June, 2013 already? It seems like just yesterday we were celebrating the New Year, doesn't it? So if you look at how quickly the time has gone by since January 1, just think how quickly September will be here. What does September mean? Why September means San

Antonio of course and the 483rd Bombardment Group Reunion. Our 35th Reunion to be exact. I believe the activities that have been planned for us are going to make for another fantastic time of seeing old friends, "talking story", meeting new friends, sightseeing and remembering.

I'm looking forward to being in San Antonio partly because my family and I lived there for a few months when my dad was recalled into the Korean Conflict and I've not been back since. One of my most favorite memories from that time was the fabulous smoke house that was a couple of miles from our house. The meat from there was some of the best meat ever! Of course, that was long ago and San Antonio has had many changes since then and I am excited to see what they are.

I'm also looking forward to all of the sightseeing trips we are going to take. I am looking forward to us visiting the LBJ Ranch, Nimitz Museum and Fredricksburg. All three of these places will be very different and I have heard nothing but good things about all three. The other day of sightseeing I am looking forward to is Wednesday when we will be taking "The Grand Tour." All of the places we will visit that day...The Alamo, Riverboat Cruise, Mission Concepcion, Mission San Jose, Buckhorn Saloon & Museum, Japanese Sunken Gardens, Texas Ranger Museum, and the El Mercado... sound like they will give us some history, some relaxation and some fun!

I hope you are looking forward to our 35th Reunion as much as I am. Last year was so much fun (in fact, it seems like every year just gets better and better) and I trust this year will follow suit. If you haven't already, please start

planning now for our Reunion in San Antonio, Texas! When you are making your reservations be sure to let the Hilton DoubleTree know that you are with the 483rd Bombardment Reunion Group so you get the reduced rate. And, if you have any problems at all please call Laurie West at 303-949-8352 or me at 760-213-5022 and let us know.

May you stay well and be safe! See you in San Antonio!

Sandee

DoubleTree
San Antonio Downtown Hotel
502 W. Cesar E. Chavez Blvd.
San Antonio, TX 78207
Telephone: (210) 224-7155
Fax: (210) 224-9130

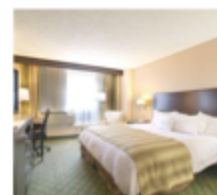


Special Concessions Package

- Complimentary self-parking in the covered parking garage
- Complimentary high speed internet in the guest rooms and in the IT Oasis
- Complimentary DoubleTree Cookie at arrival
- Group rate available 3 days pre and post group arrival and departure, based upon availability.

Room Rate is \$99.00 per night. We also can check in 3 days before and stay on for 3 days after the Reunion in case you want to come early or stay later to do more sightseeing.

Be sure to tell the reservationist that you are with the 483rd Bombardment Group to get your special rate. Otherwise you will be booked at the prevailing rate.



483rd Bomb Group Reunion Schedule, September 17–21, 2013
DoubleTree San Antonio Downtown

Registration is ongoing in the Day Room, 8 am to 5 pm

Tuesday, September 17

11 am	Depart Hotel for La Villita Historic Arts Village
11:30 am to 2:00 pm	LaVillita Historic Arts Village and lunch on your own
2:00 to 3:15	Villa Finale
3:30 pm	Return to Hotel
6:00 pm to 7:00 pm	Welcome Reception - Cash Bar and Mixer
7:00 pm	Deli Buffet

Wednesday, September 18

9:30 am	Depart Hotel for Grand Tour
9:30 am to 4:30 pm	San Antonio Grand Tour <i>(The Alamo, Riverboat Cruise, Missions Concepcion & San Jose, Buckhorn Saloon and Museum, Japanese Sunken Gardens, Texas Ranger Museum & El Mercado)</i>
4:30 pm	Return to Hotel
6:00 pm to 7:00 pm	Conversation Hour - Cash Bar
7:00 pm until ...	Memories Night <i>(Entertainment, Dinner & Open Mike)</i>

Thursday, September 19

8:45 am	Board Bus for Texas Hill Country
9:00 to 4:30	Texas Hill Country Tour <i>(Fredericksburg, Nimitz Museum & LBJ Ranch)</i>
	Lunch on your own in Fredericksburg
5:30 pm to 7:00	Dinner on your own on the River Walk
7:00 pm to 7:45 pm	POW Meeting, Clipped Wings Meeting
7:45 pm to 9:00 pm	YounGuns Dessert Reception

Friday, September 20

8:00 am to 11:00 am	Ladies Brunch
8:00 am to 9:00 am	Squadron Meetings and Pictures
9:01 am to 10:00 pm	Squadron Meetings and Pictures
10:15 am to 11:30 pm	Board of Directors Meeting
11:30am to 3:00 pm	Lunch on your own and enjoy the River Walk
3:30 pm	Depart Hotel for HemisFair Park
3:45 pm to 5:00 pm	HemisFair Park / Institute of Texan Cultures
5:00 pm to 6:00 pm	Tower of the Americas <i>(Flags Over Texas Observation Deck & 4D Theater Ride. No-Host Happy Hour in Bar 601)</i>
6:00 pm to 8:30 pm	Dinner at the Top of the Tower of the Americas (revolving restaurant)
8:30 pm	Return to Hotel

Saturday, September 21

9:00 am to 11:00 am	Business Meeting
11:00 am to 1:00 pm	Lunch on your own on the River Walk
1:30 pm to 3:00 pm	Memorial Service
5:45 pm to 6:45 pm	Cash Bar / Happy Hour
7:00 pm	Banquet Dinner with ROTC Scholarship Presentation

Note from the Editor:

Each month I print and mail about 500 copies of the newsletter at a cost of about \$1.00 per copy, including the cost of postage. If you would like to help the 483rd save on this cost by receiving an email version of the newsletter (with color pictures rather than the printed black & white version) please send an email to me requesting the electronic (PDF) version. My email address is: bcoogler@comcast.net



TAPS - Deceased Members not Previously Noted in Newsletters							
Name	Squad	Date	Reported By	Name	Squad	Date	Reported By
Adams, Benjamin H Jr	816	2/22/2013	Dennis West	Kilgore, Winfield	815	3/4/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)
Aitken, Hugh W	817	12/24/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)	Mansfield, William J Jr	817	7/24/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)
Alexander, Earl B	816	5/14/2011	Guy Venier (Obit)	Marko, Louis L	815	3/25/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)
Bibo, Robert M	817	12/16/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)	Marlin, William M	817	8/2/2010	Guy Venier (Obit)
Brick, William J	815	12/26/2003	Guy Venier (Obit)	Marsh, Alex J	815	11/27/2008	Guy Venier (Obit)
Briggs, Wallace G	816	8/11/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)	Marsh, William H	HQ	12/27/2005	Linda Marsh
Briscoe, Charles N	815	4/2/2006	Guy Venier (Obit)	Martin, Edward W	NF		Guy Venier (Obit)
Britland, Marie C	NF		Guy Venier (Obit)	Mathison, Harold B	816	00-00-00	Guy Venier (Obit)
Brogan, Joseph A	NF	2/7/2011	Guy Venier (Obit)	May, Loren A	815	8/19/2006	Guy Venier (Obit)
Brown, John W	817	5/27/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)	Melillo, Orlando A	816	11/9/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)
Brown, L Dwight	815	1/24/2010	Guy Venier (Obit)	Mickelson, Walter	566	00-00-00	Guy Venier (Obit)
Buckwalter, Marvin W	817	6/16/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)	Mitchell, Edwin L	HQ	9/2/2009	Guy Venier (Obit)
Campbell, David U	840	11/27/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)	Nance, F Gayle	840	3/29/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)
Chang, William W	817	12/28/2011	Guy Venier (Obit)	Neuman, Arthur N	NF		Guy Venier (Obit)
Click, Austin A Sr	816	3/4/2013	Julie Austin	Benavente, Stanley P	840	6/1/2011	Guy Venier (Obit)
Covell, William G	815	3/11/2011	Guy Venier (Obit)	Pugh, James W	815	3/6/2013	Karla Reynolds
Dancho, Cyril P	815	5/28/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)	Reynolds, Robert J	840	3/9/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)
Decker, Forrest R	483	3/7/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)	Robbins, Howard E	840	4/15/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)
Dekovic, Gene K	815	11/4/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)	Rose, Merle B Jr	840	6/2/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)
Ellis, William R Sr	NF	9/19/2006	Guy Venier (Obit)	Roth, Leslie W	816	2/17/2010	Guy Venier (Obit)
Farran, Merle E	815	2/2/2010	Guy Venier (Obit)	Rudolf, Richard E Sr	566	8/11/2011	Guy Venier (Obit)
Foster, Charles K	816	5/8/2010	Guy Venier (Obit)	Rutland, William E	NF		Guy Venier (Obit)
Fresia, Armand L	840	3/25/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)	Sanders, Allen H Jr	NF	2/27/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)
Frost, John A	HQ	00-00-00	Guy Venier (Obit)	Schaefer A D	NF		Guy Venier (Obit)
Galvin, Marvin G	840	05/01/2013	Harold Leverage	Schildmeyer, Richard C	483	8/7/2008	Guy Venier (Obit)
Garik, Raymond J	816	3/3/2011	Guy Venier (Obit)	Schwark, Paul M	817	8/2/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)
Goody, Edward J	817	1/11/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)	Simonelli, George J	840	11/12/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)
Harris, Glynn L	817	9/28/2011	Guy Venier (Obit)	Skinner, Alfred F Jr	817	2/10/2008	Guy Venier (Obit)
Heaney, Charles R	817	2/21/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)	Stephanoff, Louis J	817	1/31/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)
Higgins, Joseph W	HON	01/07/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)	Stone, A C Royden	815	6/29/2007	Guy Venier (Obit)
Jackson, Alex G	817	2/14/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)	Stor, Wallace M	815	1/18/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)
Jesue, Anthony	840	7/11/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)	Walker, Clayton M Sr	NF		Guy Venier (Obit)
Johnson, Miles B	817	6/12/2010	Guy Venier (Obit)	Wolk, Cornelious	817	10/12/2011	Guy Venier (Obit)
Kelsey, James L	840	7/16/2007	Kelsey, James L				
Kerestic, Anthony M	HON	12/26/2012	Guy Venier (Obit)				
Kern, John D	816	2/23/2013	Guy Venier (Obit)				

Membership News

Comrades, it was decided at the last reunion to print an addendum to the roster this year and then print the complete roster next year. So if you have any changes you might want to make to your roster file, send them in to me as soon as possible. The addendum will be found in the December newsletter with all of the changes and corrections. I will also be sending the complete list of members who have passed since our last reunion to Bruce, our newsletter editor, who will mail them out with the newsletter. If you wish to track the members which have passed, be sure to save the list and insert it with last year's roster.

Guy



Publicity Directors Report

"Remember the Alamo"
The Rallying Cry of Texas

Though the 13 day siege of the Alamo was a defeat and death for the brave souls who gave up surrender, the Alamo defines the spirit of early Texans.

Members of the 483rd who begin arriving in San Antonio on the second week of September are going to tour the Alamo and do the River Walk. I have never been to San Antonio, I eagerly look forward to seeing you all there this September.

Most of my publicity effort now come in my monthly letters to those on my 'Clipped Wings' list, which I've added several names who aren't laid up. I enjoy writing this monthly letter about goings on here in Corvallis that are real and some stuff that isn't real. You have to be the judge.

Wishing you a warm and wonderful summer,

George

PX Report: The PX is always open. Orders are few now, mostly CDs of the history of the 483rd. We do have lots of 483rd caps. Order one: just \$5.00 + S&H.



Doolittle Raiders' Last Reunion

[Following article was compiled from several articles recently published by Associated Press, CNN.com, The 2nd Air Division Memorial Library, and other sources]

The final four surviving Doolittle Raiders recently gathered publicly for the last time. Out of the original 80, only four Raiders remain: Dick Cole (Doolittle's co-pilot on the Tokyo raid), Robert Hite, Edward Saylor and David Thatcher. All are in their 90s and they have decided that there are too few of them for the public reunions to continue. Since 1946, the surviving Raiders have held an annual reunion each April to commemorate their historic mission of April 18, 1942. The reunion is held in a different city each year. In 1959, the city of Tucson, Arizona, as a gesture of respect and gratitude, presented the Doolittle Raiders with a set of 80 silver goblets. Each goblet was engraved with the name of a Raider. Every year, a wooden display case bearing all 80 goblets is transported to the reunion city. Each time a Raider passes away, his goblet is turned upside down in the case at the next reunion, as his old friends bear solemn witness. Also in the wooden case is a bottle of 1896 Hennessy Very Special cognac. The year is not happenstance: 1896 was when Jimmy Doolittle was born. There has always been a plan: When there are only two surviving Raiders, they would open the bottle, at last drink from it, and toast their comrades who preceded them in death. The men have decided that after this final public reunion they will wait until a date later this year to get together once more, informally and in absolute privacy. That is when they will open the bottle of brandy. The years are flowing by too swiftly now; they are not going to wait until there are only two of them. They will fill the four remaining upturned goblets and raise them in a toast to those who are gone.

In advance of the final reunion, the group's "sergeant at arms," Brian Anderson, has sought to get Congress to award the Raiders a single Congressional Gold Medal — similar to one awarded other groups, such as the Tuskegee Airmen and the Navajo Code Talkers — that will be displayed at the National Museum of the Air Force at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. So far, 12 senators of the necessary 67, and 82 representatives of the required 290 are onboard.

The Doolittle Raiders were once among the most universally admired and revered men in the United States. There were 80 of the Raiders in April 1942, when they carried out one of the most courageous and heart-stirring military operations in United States history. After Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, with the United States reeling and wounded, something dramatic was needed to turn the war effort around. Even though

there were no friendly airfields close enough to Japan for the United States to launch a retaliation, a daring plan was devised. Sixteen B-25s were modified so that they could take off from the deck of an aircraft carrier. This had never been tried before: sending big, heavy bombers from a carrier. The 16 five-man crews, under the command of Lt. Col. James Doolittle, who himself flew the lead plane off the USS Hornet, knew that they would not be able to return to the carrier. They would have to hit Japan and then hope to make it to China for a safe landing. But on the day of the raid, the Japanese navy caught sight of the carrier. The Raiders were told that they would have to take off from much farther out in the Pacific than they had counted on. Because of this, they would not have enough fuel to make it to safety, but they went anyway.

They bombed Tokyo, and then flew as far as they could, but their luck ran out. On their way to China they encountered bad weather and darkness. With no way of finding the landing fields they were supposed to use, one by one they bailed out or made crash landings. Two planes landed in Japanese-held territory where three crewmen were executed and the others placed in a prison camp where one of them died. The Chinese had been alerted to look for the Doolittle fliers as soon as it became apparent they weren't going to be able to reach their designated landing strips. Sixty-four men made it back with Chinese help. One crew made it to Russia.

The Doolittle Raid did little actual damage to Japan, but it sent a message from the United States to its enemies and to the rest of the world: we will fight, and no matter what it takes, we will win. It rattled Japanese confidence and gave a boost to the morale of the United States.

Doolittle Raiders Tie to the 483rd:

Major General James H. Doolittle was the first commanding officer of the 15th Air Force. He served in this position from November 1, 1943 through January 2, 1944.

Deputy Group Commander Edward Joseph York was perhaps the most celebrated member of the 483rd Bomb Group. He participated in the historic Doolittle raid on Tokyo. On that mission, his B-25 ran out of fuel and he made a forced landing in Russia where he was interned for more than a year. He joined the 483rd during training in the States and became the first deputy group commander. He flew about 25 combat missions with the 483rd then returned to the United States in July 1944. For his performance with the 483rd in Italy, he was awarded the Air Medal with two clusters and the Bronze Star. He made his home in San Antonio, Texas where he died in 1984.

Did You Know?

This section contains reprints of selected stories and other interesting information from newsletters published during the past 34 years and other 483rd BG publications.

Flak Jacket

Ludwig Hauber of Bad Tölz, Bavaria recently sent J.D. Coogler, Jr. a small piece of metal two inches square. Ludwig wrote that the small piece is from inside a flak vest and there are hundreds of them in one jacket. When the crew was over flak area, they put it on. He found the metal at a B17 crash site.

History of Flak Jacket

The first usage of the term "flak jacket" refers to the armour originally developed by the Wilkinson Sword company during World War II to help protect Royal Air Force (RAF) aircrew from the flying debris and shrapnel thrown by German anti-aircraft guns' high-explosive shells (flak itself is an abbreviation for the German word *Fliegerabwehrkanone*) (anti-aircraft gun). The idea for the flak jacket came from Col. Malcolm C. Grow, Surgeon of the U.S. Eighth Air Force in Britain. He thought that many wounds he was treating could have been prevented by some kind of light armor. In 1943 he was awarded the Legion of Merit for developing the flak vest. Unfortunately, flak jackets proved to be too bulky for wear within the confines of the RAF's standard bomber aircraft, the Avro Lancaster. The Royal Air Force subsequently offered the jackets to the United States Army Air Forces, which adopted them as a Defense Standard.

Col. Grow's request to the Wilkinson Sword company was to develop a vest that could stop a .45 caliber round fired at close range. Although flak jackets offered some basic protection against small caliber bullets and shell fragments (which was obviously welcomed by their users), ultimately they proved to be less effective than hoped. Flak jackets are now generally considered to be inferior to body armor.

The flak jacket consisted of manganese steel plates sewn into a waistcoat made of ballistic nylon (a material engineered by the DuPont company); flak jackets functioned as an evolved form of plate armor or brigandine. The first flak jacket weighed 22 pounds.

Here's some more 483rd trivia for you:

Two times is enough

(From "Heroes of the 483rd", page 44)

Herbert M. Bentley, a radar navigator, HQ, was the only 483rd member to go down twice on "Lone Wolf" missions.

5000th B-17

(From "Heroes of the 483rd", page 19)

Robert A. Bohyer of the 817th Squadron had the good fortune to be part of the crew that flew "5 Grand" to England. This was the 5,000th B-17 built at the Boeing plant in Seattle, WA. In addition to the name painted on the nose, the plane carried with it into combat the autographs of thousands of workers at the Boeing plant.

Cold Feet

(From "Heroes of the 483rd", page 15)

Rolland Sherfy of the Eugene Bissinger (d. 00-79) crew, 840th Squadron recalled a mission when he was flying in the ball turret, switching positions with Alvin Bethers (d. 03-89) who took over at left waist. "While I was in the ball turret I realized that my heated boots were not working. I could not come out of the turret, of course, until we were out of enemy territory. Everyone encouraged me to keep moving and stomping my feet, which I did. When I was able to come out of the turret, Bill Crum (co-pilot) stuck my bare feet under his jacket and his armpits. I believe this prevented permanent damage to my feet. I feel Bill should be recognized for this deed."

Honors and Service

(From "Heroes of the 483rd", page 52)

Howard M. Dallman (d. 08-00), 840th pilot remained in the Air Force and was awarded the Air Force Cross for extraordinary heroism while serving in Viet Nam. The Air Force Cross is second only to the Medal of Honor.

Charles W. Sandman, Jr., 840th navigator on the Howard M. Dallman crew dedicated his life to public service. He served 10 years in the New Jersey Senate and eight years in the U.S. Congress. He ran for governor of New Jersey on three occasions and was serving on the New Jersey Superior Court at the time of his death. (d. 00-85)

Joanne

(From "Heroes of the 483rd", page 14)

The nose art on B-17 #42-102849, "Joanne", was painted by talented artist Casimer L. Zielinski (d. 00-00) of the Lamar P. Bently crew (d. 02-91) of the 840th Squadron. "Key's" (Zielinski) great-grandfather wrote "The Star Spangled Banner". The Dunn crew crash landed "Joanne" 18 December 1944. ("Heroes", page 65)

815th, 816th, 817th, and then 840th. Why?

(Reprinted from 483rd Newsletter Volume 17, No. 4, December 1997)

Many of us have blanked out when asked why the original 818th Squadron was renamed the 840th. After all, there is a big gap in sequence from the 815th, 816th, and 817th to the 840th. Here is a résumé of when and why the redesignation took place.

A letter from the Adjutant General's Department to the Commanding General of the Army Air Force dated 15 February 1944 states:

"The 840th Aero Squadron which was organized at Waco, Texas, 1 February 1918, and later demobilized, is hereby reconstituted and consolidated with the present 840th Bombardment Squadron.

"The 840th Bombardment Squadron is entitled to the history, battle honors, coat of arms and insignia of the 840th Aero Squadron at the time of its demobilization."

(The 818th Bombardment Squadron (H) of the 483rd Bombardment Group was redesignated 840th Bombardment Squadron (H) on 15 February 1944.)

During the middle of December 1917 many men left their various homes to enter the service of their country. By way of Fort Slocum and Columbus Barracks, they eventually arrived at Kelly Field, Texas. They were transferred to Waco, Texas on 5 January 1918. On 4 February 1918, 150 of the best of these thousands of men were formed into the 840th Aero Squadron under the command of 2nd Lt. Raymond L. Hiles.

On 15 April 1918, the Squadron was ready with full packs for a 24-mile hike when embarkation orders were received. Within three hours all men were aboard a train enroute to Long Island City. There they boarded the liner Canopic. The ship was tugged out of the harbor on 16 April 1918.

On 28 April 1918, after 12 days at sea, the Canopic berthed at Liverpool, England, and the Squadron proceeded by train to Ramsey Hants, a so-called American rest camp. They left Ramsey 4 May 1918 and arrived at Yate, England that same afternoon.

The Number 3 Western Aircraft Depot of the Royal Air Force was stationed at Yate and the 840th trained there. While in Yate, the Squadron organized a red hot jazz band, baseball team and track team and also held a volleyball and basketball tournament. It was a very sports minded outfit and the officers, particularly the Commanding Officer, were

enthusiastic supporters of every sporting effort of the Squadron.

The 840th left Yate on 13 August 1918 for Southampton, England, and boarded the ship King Edward VII at 5 p.m. that same afternoon. They unloaded the morning of 15 August 1918 at LeHavre, France.

They left LeHavre on 17 August 1918 and had their first experience with the French "Side Door Pullman" . . . 38 men to a car. The Squadron arrived at Courban on 20 August 1918, where the Number 3 Aircraft Depot of the Independent Air Force was located. There were only three American squadrons attached to the Independent Air Force and the 840th was one of these.

The Independent Air Force was organized by the British to operate independently of the Royal Air Force and appears to have been the Strategic Air Force of the Allies. The IAF sent squadrons of from 5 to 100 planes day and night to bomb the Rhine Valley as far inland as Essen and Heidelberg. The targets were ammunition dumps, marshaling yards, gas works and communications networks.

Depot 3 at Courban was cleverly concealed and was never bombed by the Germans. As a matter of fact, on more than one occasion British pilots with full information as to its location were unable to find the field.

The Squadron left France by way of Letracey on 20 January 1919, this time in U.S. box cars in a train manned by U.S. crews. They arrived at Brest on 1 February 1919. On 11 February 1919, they boarded the U.S. battleship Rhode Island and weighed anchor on 12 February . . . homeward bound.



D-Day 6 June 1944

(Article submitted by Stanton (Mike) & Addie Rickey)

On 6 June 1944 the largest amphibious invasion in history was executed. 160,000 Allied soldiers landed on the beaches of Normandy, preceded by an early morning air assault by 24,000 paratroopers and glider airborne soldiers. Some 9000 Allied troops suffered battle casualties; killed or wounded. Their gallant sacrifice should be memorialized forever.

On this memorable date in 1944 aircrews of the 483rd Bomb Group were temporarily stationed at Mirgorod Airfield, near Kiev in the Ukraine. Mike Rickey and Fred Hicks got the invasion news while playing volleyball with some Russian women soldiers. The 5th Bomb Wing of the 15th AF launched 168 B-17s from Italy on the First Shuttle Raid to the Soviet Union. The operation lasted from 2 June thru 11 June. Our inbound target was a Railroad Marshaling Yard at Debreczen, Hungary and they landed at Mirgorod. We bombed a Luftwaffe Airfield at Galati, Rumania and returned to Mirgorod, then struck another enemy airfield at Focsani, Rumania on the return trip to Italy.

Rickey stated that the 483rd were part of the first combat force in history to ever operate on Russian soil as an ally. The primary reason for this effort was a feint to keep segments of the Luftwaffe busy on the Eastern Front during the Normandy Invasion.

Other Allied bombing raids and fighter sweeps against Nazi occupied French airfields effectively suppressed the Luftwaffe. History reveals that the German Air Force failed to place any aircraft over the beaches to challenge the invasion.

Thoughts from the Chaplain . . .

Last night I dreamed I died and stood outside those pearly gates, when suddenly I realized there must be some mistake! If they know half the things I've done, they'll never let me in! Then somewhere from the other side I heard these words again: "Let Me tell you a secret about a Father's love. A secret that My Daddy said was just between Us. You see, Daddies don't just love their children every now and then, it's a love without end! Amen!"

It will soon be Fathers' Day and like so many other seasonal special days, the culture will soon be drowning us with its ideas for celebrating: cards, gifts ideas, music, tv specials, and advertisements to help you make this day special for your Dad. Well, let me suggest that, unlike Valentines' Day or some other day wherein the focus is how special so-and-so is to us, Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day are really more about how special we, the children, are to them! True, it is a great time to thank Mom and Dad for their love, but it is their love for us that we are really celebrating, isn't it?

Many of you have no doubt realized that I replaced the usual Bible verse with a verse from a country music song. I call it, "the Gospel according to George Strait." Some of you might even recognize the song, but that doesn't really matter.

What does matter is that George gets it right! How many times have we thought of God's love and our destiny after death and felt, even said, "I sure hope they'll let me in!" How easy it is for us to focus on our own works, either good or bad, and have doubt.

We are wired (in our sin-fallen natures) to think in terms of fairness, balances, debts, and justice. And we most naturally think of our own balance sheet with uncertainty, not really knowing if we've done enough good to outweigh the bad we know, with enough left over to also erase the sins we've forgotten. Truth be told, we never really do believe there's enough, do we? Of course, Holy Scripture often tells us that truth: "There is no one righteous, no not one." And "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God." And "All our righteous acts are as filthy rags." Etc. But we don't really need God's word to tell us that, because we know it down deep in our bones! And so we have doubt. And we worry. And we fear. And we might even try not to think about it at all, but then our dreams give rise to it all when our guard is down.

So what are we to do? Try all that much harder tomorrow? Tried that yesterday, didn't you? Didn't work out so well, did it? And what if tonight's dream isn't a dream at all, but the real thing! What will we have to say when we really do stand outside those pearly gates? Somehow, there's not a lot of comfort in hoping they don't know half the things I've done. But there is something firm to cling to, something which will outweigh all we have done, no matter how much or what kind: the love of our Father as shown to us in His only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. John 3:16 tells us not just how much God loved us (His love is infinite!) but it also tells us in what way He showed His love: He gave His Son into human punishment and death in exchange for us! And because He died in our place, taking our sins and our punishment, then our balance sheets are not only wiped clean, they are filled with His righteousness! That's the whole secret of the Father's love for us: we don't get what we deserve (justice) and we don't merely get a temporary reprieve from judgment (mercy), but we do get what we do not deserve (grace). The result is life in place of death, entrance in place of rejection, and wedding garments, banquet, and everlasting joy in place of naked exposure, gnashing of teeth, and eternal weeping.

Is it fair? No! Of course not! And that's precisely the point of love. Love doesn't seek fairness, it gives generously, sacrificially, not of its excess but of the very heart and core of being. That's what moms and dads try to do, sometimes better than others. But that's what our heavenly Father does every time, perfectly. So, this Fathers' Day, in addition to telling Dad how much you love him, how about telling him thanks for how much you know he loves you. And while you probably shouldn't forget the cards, gifts, and cookouts, try to remember that he loves you not for the things you do, or have done, but simply because of who he is, your daddy. And your heavenly Daddy's love is a love without end! Amen!

Blessings,

Your friend in Christ,
Pastor Bryan Jones



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