



483RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION

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

VOLUME 36

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NUMBER 4

President's Message



First of all I want to take a little space here to thank all of you that attended the reunion for the many kindnesses shown me when my right ankle gave out on me and I took that nose dive (so to speak) in front of the hotel. I never expected the resulting painful ankle sprain. I don't know when I felt so watched

over and cared for. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Next I wanted to give you some statistics from our San Antonio Reunion. We had 17 veterans, 6 spouses, 4 widows, 25 friends and 29 guests in attendance for a total of 81. We probably could have called this reunion the Coogler, Rickey, Wagner Reunion. The J. D. Coogler family had 12 family members registered for the reunion and 10 were able to attend. The Stanton "Mike" Rickey family had 9 family members who attended (including two adorable great grandsons, Steven and Michael). The Ken Wagner family had 6 family members in attendance. So cool! One of the highlights of the Reunion for me was when we all were privileged to witness Mike Rickey induct his granddaughter, Helen, into the Air Force at the Saturday evening banquet. She will serve as a member of the Judge Advocate General Corp and is stationed in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Congratulations Helen!

As you know we were hoping our next reunion would be a joint reunion for the reasons we discussed at the General Meeting in San Antonio. Unfortunately, I have to report that it will not happen in 2014. The 2nd Bombardment Association wanted to have their reunion on the West Coast in 2014 and even though the 683rd told Dennis they were open to a joint reunion, they called him to say they chose not to go to New Orleans for their 2014 reunion. We will continue to reach out to see if a joint reunion can happen in 2015.

Mike Warwick, a second generation friend, took pictures throughout the reunion and has captured some great informal shots. He has compiled them all on a disk and will make them available for anyone who would like one. Each disk will only be \$5 which covers the cost of the disk, mailer and postage. You can contact Mike directly either by email, jwwarwick@msn.com, or by phone, 505-722-4972, if you'd like your own copy. Thanks so much Mike for making the disk available!

Last but certainly not least, I want to wish you all a Happy Holiday Season from my family to yours!

Sandee

Membership News

Dear Comrades:

You will find the roster and taps addendums in this newsletter. You should save them to your roster. The roster addendums are changes which have been made during this past year, such as phone number and address changes.

The taps addendum is a list of deceased members which have died this past year. Next year and thereafter, the TAPS section will not be printed in the new rosters since the deceased are printed in every newsletter. If interested, you should save those names to your present roster.

Next year, starting with the 2014 edition, a new roster will be published every year with the front section only.

A special note to our Life members, many of the life members have held that status for many years. Since our Association is dwindling, a donation of some sort will be greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions, or would like any information which I may have, please feel free to contact me.

Guy Venier

Guy483rd@comcast.net
(586) 268-3126



TAPS – Deceased Members Not Previously Reported in Newsletter			
Name	Squad	Date	Reported By
BARTON, THOMAS E	816	05-27-13	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
BREWER, HAROLD K	817	07-11-13	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
DOMASCO, GEORGE W	817	08-18-13	MICHAEL J BARNEY
GILLIAND, ARNOLD W	815	03-24-00	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
HOWE, GEORGE G	816	01-18-12	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
KROOS, ELWOOD F	817	10-07-13	TOM KROOS
NATIONS, MANTON A	840	03-21-09	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
PELLEGRINI, LOUIS L	840	10-05-13	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
PFIRMAN, EDWIN D	817	01-21-??	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
SHILDT, ROBERT A JR	815	04-02-12	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
SIEVERS, WARREN L	840	04-18-13	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
TRAPP, WAYNE C	816	10-07-04	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
WELTER, RICHARD A	816	04-13-10	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
WERME, CARL P	483	07-16-13	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
WIGGILL, DERRAH BYBEE	840	09-29-13	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
BAUGHER, JACOB JR.	817	07-16-13	JOYCE KREIMER
SEFKO, GEORGE JR.	816	08-26-13	GUY VENIER (OBIT)
STERN, JACOB	815	08-27-13	MARILYN STERN
SAUER, JOHN G.	816	11-00-12	GUY VENIER (OBIT)

483RD 1944 DEPLOYMENT

(Speech presented by Mike Rickey during Memories Night at this year's reunion in San Antonio)

In March 1944 the 483rd Bombardment group deployed to Italy to join 5 other B-17 Groups of the 5th Bomb Wing of the 15th AF. We were one of the last heavy bomber groups to deploy to Europe as a complete unit. About 1900 of our ground personnel traveled in 3 Liberty ships in a 128 vessel convoy. They proceeded at convoy speed of 8 knots and were about a month at sea. In the Mediterranean Sea the convoy was attacked by German bombers, which damaged two cargo vessels and gave our people a wild couple of nights assisting with the anti-aircraft defense. When they arrived at Sterparone it wasn't much more than a barren wheat field and a partially completed 6000 ft steel mat runway. Over a 13 day period of maximum effort they finished the runway, taxiways and hardstands, and setup other primitive but adequate facilities, and were ready to receive our aircraft. On 22 April, the bombers arrived from temporary quarters at the 99th Bomb Group, and the following day 32 aircraft were launched to strike the Messerschmitt factory at Wiener Neustadt in Austria.

The aircrews completed training at McDill AFB, Tampa, FL and proceeded to Hunter Field, Savannah, GA for overseas processing and pickup of brand new B-17 G Models, fresh from the factory. My shaky memory says each of the 4 Squadrons were equipped with 12 bombers, however I have seen references to as many as 16 each. The 817th Sqdn was commanded by Lt Col William Lanford, who was probably the only member of the entire group who had European combat experience. Bill had been a B-

17 squadron commander in the 8th AF in early 1943. He preached a doctrine of tight formations to concentrate firepower, and continually stressed this aspect of our training. He also believed in unit cohesion and morale and came up with the idea of naming all of our aircraft after those outlandish characters in the LIL Abner comic strip.

That's how the 817th Sqdn insignia became a feisty Mammy Yokum in a pugnacious pose. Old Man Mose Aint Dead, Moonbeam McSwine, Earthquake McGoon, Lonesome Polecat, Fearless Fosdick, etc. Somehow we acquired a talented artist who painted those characters and names on the nose of each plane . . . I selected a fat old pipe smoking hillbilly woman named Widow Fruitful, who was always portrayed carrying a twin baby under each arm with their naked posteriors forward. We thought use of the word Widow had a negative connotation, so the name was changed to Baraz Twins. Sadly when we arrived in Italy a HQ decision was made on 31 March to confiscate all of our brand new planes and transfer them to the 99th Bomb Group, which was hosting us newbies while Sterparone was being made operational. Of 12 aircraft transferred to the 99th, 7 were eventually shot down, 1 crashed on takeoff and 1 suffered a mid-air collision. Only 3 made it to the end of the war. In return we received a bunch of war weary, dirty and tired B-17 F Models, which lacked the chin turret guns and turbo-charged engines, and had 300 gallons less fuel capacity. I ended up with a plane named Never Satisfied, which was a patched up survivor of nearly 100 combat missions. Most disheartening! But eventually over the next couple of months we were gradually

equipped with G models taken from individual replacement crews as they arrived in the theater. And it was their turn to be pissed off.

The air echelon left Georgia in early March, flying our own planes on the southern route to Europe as single ship flights over a period of 8 days. We stopped at bases in West Palm Beach, Puerto Rico, British Guyana, Belem and Natal, Brazil. At Natal we were fitted out with extra fuel tanks for the 12 hour flight across the Atlantic to Dakar, West Africa. Then we went north to Morocco and Tunisia. In Tunisia, the Group gradually assembled and flew several practice missions and conducted Mediterranean Patrol flights before arriving on 29 March at our temporary home with the 99th Group near Foggia.

During the overseas flight there was time for levity. After all most of us were a crazy bunch of youngsters about to embark on the greatest adventure of our lives. Certain key staff personnel were assigned to fly in various planes, and regular crew members were bumped and went by sea with the ground echelon. My co-pilot, bombardier, and 4 gunners went with the surface convoy. They were replaced by Squadron Communication and Engineering personnel. I functioned as co-pilot with Captain John Gorman, 817th Operations Officer, and later 817th Squadron Commander, as pilot. We were both about the same age and got along well, although he was a West Point graduate, while I was a very junior 1st Lt and had spent my formative years as a grunt in the US Marine Corps.

While flying over the vast stretches of the Amazon jungle, we spotted a B-24 below us. Now the B-24 is known to have a faster cruising speed than a B-17, and Jack decided to play a trick on them. We feathered one engine, and dove to pick up excess air speed and passed them up on 3 engines. That was good for a laugh at the Belem bar that night.

Another time we got pretty hammered at the bar in Georgetown, British Guyana, and I bought a stuffed but realistic looking alligator and had it crated and shipped to Helen, my very pregnant wife in San Francisco. She later related that she almost miscarried when she opened the box and saw this frightening creature with open red mouth and sharp teeth. For years, each of my 5 children took that alligator to school "show and tell", informing the gullible class that their Daddy had shot the alligator in South America.

In Puerto Rico we found that rum was not rationed and lacked a viable market, so passing

aircrews bought up cases of the stuff. We loaded every empty space on that airplane with quite a supply.

Despite our collective lack of experience all arrived safely, EXCEPT for one major mishap. The Richard Combs Crew of the 816th Sqdn was forced to ditch in the Atlantic about 500 miles east of Brazil. Around midnight an engine caught fire, the wing began to burn, and the engine dropped from its wing mounts. Combs ditched successfully in total darkness. The 10 man crew barely got out in time before the plane sank. In their haste only one of the two 5-man rafts were released from the amidship overhead hatch in the radio room. All night long they were 5 men in the raft and another 5 alongside in the water. An encounter with a shark caused the 5 man raft suddenly to become a 10 man raft! Twelve hours later a search seaplane spotted them but could not land because of rough seas. After another 24 hours they were rescued by a Navy destroyer escort and returned to Brazil. A couple weeks later they rejoined the Group, however 8 of that crew were shot down and Killed in Action at Memmingen, Germany on 18 July 1944. Of the original aircrews that arrived in Italy, 40% were shot down. Of that number typically about 1/3 were Killed in Action and 2/3 either became POWs or evaded with the help of Yugoslav Partisan Guerillas. Of course many were wounded.

Commencing 12 April 1944 the 483rd flew our first 6 missions from the 99th base, before moving to Sterparone. On 7 May I was flying on the wing of Lt Col Lanford at Belgrade, Yugoslavia (tight formation as usual), when his bomber took a direct hit from Flak and almost collided with me. My crew reported that no parachutes were seen evacuating his plane and we thought all perished. However, I was reunited with Lanford in Paris after VE-Day and was relieved to see he survived. 6 of his crew perished that day, but 4 survived to become POWs.

I was later one of 14 B-17s shot down during the air battle at Memmingen. Of my 10 man crew, 5 were Killed in Action and 3 wounded. The survivors spent 10 months at Stalag Luft One as POWs.



Thoughts from the Chaplain . . .

(Genesis 41:14) So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was quickly brought from the dungeon. When he had shaved and changed his clothes, he came before Pharaoh.

"But, pastor, what does the story of Joseph and his dreams have to do with the holidays?" That's what you are thinking about now, isn't it? Well, just think for a moment, about the predicament Joseph was in: He had dreamed of being exalted above his brothers and for that they sold him into slavery. Then his master's wife falsely accused him of sin and had him thrown into prison. And there he sat, wondering about his dreams and **waiting** for someone to do something. During his *waiting* he helped in whatever way he could, interpreting dreams for others as God had given him understanding. And he **waited** for his own deliverance even when the cupbearer forgot him.

Oh, have I mentioned that he *waited*? You see, that is the connection to this holiday season: waiting. That's a major part of our celebration of Christmas, isn't it? We wait for the sales to begin. We wait in lines. We wait for the cards to arrive. We tell the children to wait for Santa, or Grandma, or for just the right time to open the presents. We wait for the credit card bills. It seems we find ourselves waiting for just about everything this time of year. Trouble is, though, with all this waiting we often forget to wait with joy in our hearts. Maybe that's the real reason for Advent, to help us not merely to wait with our

patience growing thinner, but to wait in joyful expectation of the real gifts of God: cold noses and warm hearts (could be family, friends, or puppies); good food and good friends and time to spend with each; songs of children and familiar stories played out for new eyes and ears; and a mighty God who comes to be with His people anew in the manger of wooden, splintered hearts.

This Christmas, why not slow down a little and wait? Let's wait for things to happen in God's chosen time. Let's wait for Him to work His miracles in our lives, just as He worked in the life of Joseph the dreamer (both the one in Egypt and the one in Nazareth). Let's wait for God to come to us with His life-giving Spirit, the Holy Spirit of Christmases past, present, and future. And while we wait, let's enjoy the predicament we find ourselves in: freed slaves lifted up by the power of God to thrones right by His just for the sake of the One who took our flesh and sins upon himself as he lay humbly in the manger in

Bethlehem. Join with all the company of heaven and earth as we sing praises to our King who was, and is, and is to come. Merry Christmas!! Happy waiting!!

Your servant in Christ,
Pastor Bryan Jones



2013 San Antonio Reunion Revenue & Expenses

Revenue		
Date	Description	Amount
6/1/2013	Beginning Balance	\$123.38
6/6 to 9/13/2013	Reunion Registration	\$18,302.00
9/24/2013	Misc Deposit-Day Rm Donations, Necklace Sales, Add'l Meals/Tours	\$392.36
10/7/2013	Refund from T Jackson - LB Entertainer	\$50.00
10/10/2013	General Fund Ck for shortfall	\$750.00
TOTAL		\$19,617.74
Expenses		
Date	Description	Amount
7/29/2013	Deposit Villa Finale	\$52.50
7/31/2013	Deposit City Tours	\$2,467.50
8/23/2013	Necklaces/Womens Brunch	\$98.21
9/11/2013	City Tours	\$2,467.50
9/16/2013	Printing Solutions (Daily Schedule)	\$32.40
9/19/2013	City Tours	\$1,794.00
9/19/2013	Villa Finale	\$45.00
9/20/2013	Natl Museum of Pac War	\$264.00
9/20/2013	Tom Jackson (L B Entertainer)	\$200.00
9/23/2013	Uptown Florists (Carnations)	\$243.29
9/23/2013	Institute of Texan Cultures	\$200.00
9/23/2013	Tower of America's Rest	\$3,146.79
9/26/2013	Refund Reunion Reg - Sidney Smilo	\$316.00
10/2/2013	Reimburse Dennis West for Day & Night Room Costs	\$240.31
10/21/2013	DoubleTree Hilton San Antonio	\$7,636.62
10/22/2013	Reimburse Velma West for Costco Day Rm Food	\$315.48
TOTAL		\$19,519.60
Ending Balance		\$98.14

**483rd Bomb Group 35th Annual Reunion
Minutes of the Business Meeting
September 21, 2013
San Antonio, Texas**

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by President Sandee West Maeda

II. Invocation

President Sandee West Maeda gave the invocation.

III. Pledge of Allegiance

IV. Treasurer's Report

Leon Waldman reported as follows:

As of August 31, 2013,	
Vanguard Mutual Fund	\$20,660.00
Vanguard Prime Money Market	\$4,604.00
Treasurer's Checking Account	\$1,741.00
Membership Checking Account	\$3,340.00
PX Cash Account	\$1,106.00
PX Inventory	\$200.00
Clipped Wings	\$400.00
GRAND TOTAL	\$32,051.00*

*The above does not include the reunion account.

V. Approval of the Minutes of 2012 Meeting

Minutes approved as published in December 2012 Newsletter

VI. Committee Reports

A. Chaplaincy

No report

B. Membership

Chairman Guy Venier reported as follows:

Reporting Period: September 1, 2012 to August 31, 2013

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$3,533.19
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Income:

Life Member Dues	\$700.00	
Regular Member Dues	\$725.00	
Account Interest	\$0.00	
Misc. Donations	\$300.00	
TOTAL INCOME		\$1,725.00

Expenses:

Stamps	(\$56.00)	
Postage	(\$37.21)	
Supplies	\$0.00	
Misc.	(\$178.02)	
Roster Printing	(\$1,360.00)	
Bulk Mail Permit Fee	\$0.00	
Bulk Mail Postage	(\$287.79)	
TOTAL EXPENSES		(\$1,919.02)

ENDING BALANCE	\$3,339.17
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Membership Totals:

Veteran/Spouse Life Members	298
Veteran/Spouse Active Members	42
Veteran/Spouse Semi-Active Members	26

Veteran/Spouse Inactive Members	289	
TOTAL VETERAN MEMBERS		655
Friend Life Members	150	
Friend Active Members	9	
Friend Semi-Active Members	7	
Friend Inactive Members	81	
TOTAL FRIEND MEMBERS		247
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP		902

C. Clipped Wings

Chairman Sheryl Norton reported as follows:
There are ten clipped wings writers and 29 recipients.

BEGINNING BALANCE	\$567.50
Stamps	(\$167.50)
ENDING BALANCE	\$400.00

D. Publicity, PX, Archives

Chairman George Stovall reported as follows:

Publicity:

George wrote two articles about San Antonio for the newsletter, one about tour locations and one fictitious story.

PX:

PX stock includes caps and "Heroes of the 483rd" cds. George has sold three caps and 24 cds this year.

ENDING BALANCE	\$1106.00
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E. 2013 Reunion

Chairman Sandee West Maeda reported that there are 81 attendees at this year's reunion of which 17 are veterans, 10 wives/honorary members, 25 friends and 29 guests. Sandee stated that last year's reunion would have been \$80 in the black, but since we did not meet the room block requirement, the hotel charged the group an additional \$1,000, which put the reunion in the red.

F. Newsletter

Chairman Bruce Coogler reported as follows:

The cost of printing and mailing the newsletters this year was \$2,231.27 (\$1.18 each). Over the past year, 2,027 newsletters were distributed, of which 1,897 were printed and mailed and 130 newsletters that were e-mailed. If you would like to be added to the electronic newsletter distribution list, please contact Bruce.

VII. Old Business

A. Combined Reunion

Sandee West Maeda reported that members of the 483rd are still in contact with the 2nd Bomb Group for potentially combining reunions and that the 99th Bomb Group is not interested in combining reunions. Dennis West reported that he is in contact with the 463rd Bomb Group and they are open to combining reunions in 2014 in New Orleans, LA. Combining reunions will help with meeting hotel room requirements for group rates.

VIII. New Business

A. Roster Printing

The full roster is printed on the even years and an addendum is printed on the odd years. The Board of Directors suggested that we not send out the deceased portion of the roster for cost savings. Don Robinson motioned to discontinue printing the deceased members in the roster, Leon Waldman seconded. **The motion carried; deceased members will no longer be printed in the roster.**

B. Reunion Structure

The Board of Directors suggested setting a 30-day prior reunion registration deadline, with a \$25 late fee for registering after the 30-day prior deadline. This is to help plan tours and schedule busses. Mike Rickey motioned to impose a \$25 late fee for registering for a reunion after the 30-day registration deadline with the understanding that there will be exceptions for health issues, Leon Waldman seconded.

The motion carried; for future reunions, a \$25 late fee will be imposed for registering after the 30-day prior registration deadline with special exceptions for health issues.

C. Location of 2014 Reunion

Reunion locations for 2014 were discussed. Addie Rickey suggested going to Albuquerque, NM in September for the balloon festival. Dennis West suggested going to New Orleans, LA in the September/October timeframe to visit the new World War II Museum. In addition, the 463rd Bomb Group has preliminarily chosen New Orleans, LA for their 2014 reunion location, so there is a possibility to co-locate and save money on hotel costs. Carrie Davis suggested going to Salt Lake City, UT to visit the Hill AFB aerospace museum. Sandee West Maeda called a vote on the 2014 reunion location. **The 2014 483rd Bomb Group reunion will be in New Orleans, LA.**

D. 2015 Reunion Planning

From the remaining 2014 reunion locations, Sandee West Maeda called a vote on potential 2015 reunion locations so that tour ideas can be researched for presentation at the 2014 reunion business meeting. **Albuquerque, NM was elected as a potential 2015 reunion location.**

E. President Elect

Dennis West nominated 840th veteran Bill Gibson as president-elect. Bill Gibson declined for medical reasons. Mike Rickey nominated Sandee West Maeda as president-elect, Harold Chubbs seconded. **The nomination carried; Sandee West Maeda is the new President-Elect.**

F. Donation to Warner Robbins Museum

The Board of Directors has received disconcerting feedback regarding Warner Robbins Museum archives and their treatment of 483rd Bomb Group memorabilia and records. The Board has elected to only donate \$1,000 instead of the normal \$2,500 to Warner Robbins Museum this year and will investigate the comments. Don Robinson has visited and likes the museum display. However, the issue is not with the museum display, but with the archives.

G. Scholarship Awards for Cadets

Leon Waldman motions to give the cadets \$1,000 each at this year's banquet, Harold Chubbs seconded. **The motion carried; the cadets will be given \$1,000 this year.**

H. J.D. Coogler's Book

J.D. Coogler is compiling a book of information on the Memmingen mission. Pre-order sale of the book is \$30 which will simply cover the cost of printing; the book should be available by the end of the year. There was a sign-up sheet at the business meeting. Mike Rickey attests to the quality of J.D.'s book.

I. Fundraisers

The Heroes of the 483rd book is selling for as much as \$650 on the internet. The group would like to sell the Heroes of the 483rd cd on the internet. Leon Waldman motions to sell the Heroes of the 483rd cd on the internet, Dennis West seconded. **The motion carried; the Heroes of the 483rd cd will be sold on the internet. Sheryl Norton will take the lead.**

Prior to selling the cd on the internet, the group needs to determine who owns the copyright to the Heroes of the 483rd book. The copyright question will be taken to the group's attorney prior selling the cd on the internet.

J. Newsletter Subscription Fee

Bruce Coogler suggested collecting a newsletter subscription fee for a printed version of the newsletter to help defer the cost of printing and mailing the quarterly newsletter. Leon Waldman motions to collect a voluntary donation of \$5-\$10 to receive a printed version of the newsletter, Mark Halebsky seconded. **The motion carried; members can voluntarily donate \$5-\$10 to Bruce Coogler for a year's subscription to the printed version of the newsletter.**

Members can also elect to receive an electronic version of the newsletter instead of a printed version, which also defers the publishing cost of the newsletter. To switch to an electronic subscription to the newsletter, contact Bruce Coogler.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned by President Sandee West Maeda at 10:07 A.M.

YOUR 2013 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

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PAST PRESIDENTS

Phillip A. Luetke (Deceased) 1980
William A. Haskins (Deceased) 1981
James V. Reardon (Deceased) 1982-83
Lynn M. Borders (Deceased) 1984
Joseph W. Gawthrop (Deceased) 1984
M.L. "Bob" Hottman 1985 (Deceased)
Harry K. Keller (Deceased) 1986
Donald R. Speegle (Deceased) 1987
James "Russ" Heflin (Deceased) 1988
Evan M. "Jack" Edwards (Deceased) 1989
Ralph H. Simpson 1990
Harry P. Millnamow 1991
William P. Dunn (Deceased) 1992
Edward T. Cotton (Deceased) 1993
Harry D. Whye (Deceased) 1994
Ray H. Whitaker 1995
Harold D. Leveridge, D.D. 1996
William I. Jeffs (Deceased) 1997
George F. Stovall 1998
John A. Campbell 1999
Verne H. Cole 2000
Benjamin H. Adams Jr. 2001
Robert W. Mitchell (Deceased) 2002
John P. Nobel 2003
Curtis B. Clark 2004
Fredric A. Hicks 2005
Wilfrid Hebert 2006
Stanton "Mike" Rickey 2007
Ellis Maxey 2008
Jim Ashley 2009
Dennis West 2010, 2011, 2012



483rd Bombardment Group (H) Association

Membership Secretary

Guido "Guy" Venier
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Sterling Heights, MI 48312

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL