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483RD BOMBARDMENT GROUP (H) ASSOCIATION

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

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NUMBER 3

President's Message

Hello 483rd BG Family,

I hope you all got home safely from Albuquerque. We all recognize it has been a tough couple years so it was nice to get together again.

There is a proposal to select Wichita Kansas as the destination for the 15th Air Force Reunion in 2022. Please read the correspondence below from Dave Blake, Reunion Committee Chair. I appreciate your feedback.

It is with great sorrow that we lost Leon Waldman on September 17th. Leon was our treasurer for many years. It was always a pleasure to hear his stories, talk current events, and just enjoy his company. He will be greatly missed.

Take care,
Jay Clifton



Message From the Fifteenth Air Force Bomb Groups Reunion Committee Chairman

All,

I'm blown away by the level of participation and enthusiasm this year given all of the circumstances. Given that, I am looking forward to a 2022 reunion. I have had several inquiries as to what the plan is for 2022.

Although we usually don't work this way, this year I am strongly suggesting that we select

Wichita, Kansas as our 2022 destination for reasons outlined below. They are offering things that make it an easy decision for people in my position. Read on.....

Over the years I have been to this city twice for destination site visits. Most recently about five weeks ago I was there to meet with Hughes Glantzberg for another reason. Hughes and I made it a day of touring the city and interested hotels with reps from Visit Wichita and I know he agrees with me that this is a delightful city with some fun and interesting tour possibilities. Toward that end, I am strongly proposing that we go to Wichita next year on September 15-18th and here's why:

- Air travel is easier than you would think. You can get there from anywhere with only one plane change; I'm finding that with all airlines, stop overs with plane changes are the rule rather than the exception these days. Don't look for that to change. The Visit Wichita rep has traveled the country promoting Wichita and says she has never had more than one plane change.
- The airport is served by all major airlines and is new, user friendly and because it's a smaller airport than some, is VERY easy to get in and out of on travel days.
- Wichita is as centrally located as you can get.
- There are many aviation related things to see and do in Wichita. The city has a rich history in aviation. Most notably is the home of "Doc", a newly restored and one of only two flying B-29s. Doc is an absolutely beautiful aircraft and is available to tour assuming their schedule has it at "home" when we are there. If the a/c is out on tour at that time, there is a museum at the

hanger where Doc lives and is available for tour visits.

- There is a great museum in the Old Town (a destination within a destination) area of Wichita that is very interesting to see. I've been there twice over the years and recommend it. There are numerous other things to see and do depending on what the desires are.
- The city is SAFE. No protests downtown and is clean, well-kept and lovely to visit. People are friendly and Midwestern hospitality is on full display wherever you go.
- Hughes and I toured three interested hotels while there and agreed that one stood out in terms of price, quality and enthusiasm about hosting our group. The Wichita Marriott put forth a proposal that screams out "please come here". There was one other, a Double Tree hotel that was lovely and could accommodate us, but the room rates are significantly higher. The third hotel, a full-service Holiday Inn although a nice place, just couldn't realistically handle our need for a large hospitality space. The Visit Wichita rep told me privately that she has never seen a proposal that strong to any other group from the Marriott; plus, its newly renovated and is very beautiful with a good floor plan for our group.
- Last but NOT LEAST, there are some "inside baseball" reasons why this city is a great choice. The concessions offered by the participating hotels in the email below, which is Marriott is a participant, offers a
 - no penalty 21-day reunion cancellation time frame (which in the age of COVID is HUGE). Typically, by about 90 days out if you cancel you would pay 100% of the agreed to food and beverage guarantee and possibly something on the room block. This is ZERO penalty down to 3 weeks out.
 - no minimum number of hotel rooms to guarantee (an "attrition" clause means if you don't fill your room block the group must pay for anything under about (typically)80% of the room block),
 - plus, no banquet food and beverage minimum! No dollar amount to guarantee

to attain complimentary meeting/banquet room rental. Although more favorable minimums can sometimes be negotiated, most places ask between \$15,000 & \$20,000.

- These concessions are HUGE; I've never seen an offer like this before. Sometimes elements of these concessions can be negotiated to a lower level but I've never seen it all just laid out on the table like this. These people are (as is the staff at the Marriott) absolutely serious about hosting military reunions!

One last thing: One reason these concessions are Important to me is because if our group were to have to cancel unexpectedly or come up short on either the room block or food and beverage minimums, I personally along with the 461st BGA are at the head of the line when reparations are demanded by the hotel. I get sued first and the 461st is in line right behind me if the hotel feels the need to recover "damages". The contract is in my name along with the 461st. No one else bears any responsibility.

Therefore, I'm asking for your support in selecting Wichita as our destination for 2022 and the Marriott hotel specifically. I think you'll be surprised as I was at the attractiveness of this city as a destination. "Fly-over country" ain't all bad folks! Other destinations could be considered in subsequent years when this offer is not necessarily on the table but for next year, In my thinking, these concessions cannot be ignored.

Dave Blake
461st Bomb Group Association
Fifteenth Air Force Bomb Groups
Reunion Committee Chairman



TAPS – Deceased Members Not Previously Reported in Newsletter			
Name	Squadron	Date	Reported By
Clark, Dr. Curtis Basil	840	3/21/2021	Jay Clifton
Jones, Charles W	840	8/18/2020	Carole Jones
Waldman, Leon	840	9/17/2021	Sandee Maeda

From the Publicity Chairman

2021 Reunion -

Ken “Hoff” Hoffman from the 816th, the only veteran from the 483rd Bombardment (H) Group able to attend the 15th Air Force Reunion this year, received a rendering of a B-17 and a hand written letter from noted military artist Ray Waddey at a special ceremony on September 11. Six other veterans from different groups received renderings of a B-24. The letter from Mr. Waddey read as follows:



“To the B-17 Group / 15th Air Force,

We as a nation owe you our freedom, paid for in service and blood. Never before and most likely never again will America have men and women such as you. Everyday will fill our hearts with pride and freedom that your service made possible. From the bottom of our hearts we say “Thank you and God Bless”!

Sincerely –

Ray Waddey”



*To the B-17 Group / 15th Air Force,
We as a nation owe you our freedom, paid for in service and blood. Never before and most likely never again will America have men and women such as you. Everyday will fill our hearts with pride and freedom that your service made possible. From the bottom of our hearts we say “Thank you and God Bless”!*

*Sincerely –
Ray Waddey*

2022 Reunion -

It looks like our Fifteen Army Air Force Bomb Groups reunion may be in Wichita, Kansas next year. The dates being considered are September 29 to October 3, 2022 or October 6 to 10, 2022. We will keep you posted on the exact date when it is determined.

As outlined in Dave Blake’s article (see page 1), there are many good reasons why Wichita is the city being considered:

- Air travel is easier than one might imagine. You can get there from anywhere with only one plane change. (It looks like the airlines are using stopover flights more and more rather than non stop flights.) The airport is served by all major airlines and is new, user friendly and easy to get in and out of on travel days.
- Wichita is as centrally located as it can get.
- There are many aviation related things to see and do in Wichita. The city is rich in aviation history. Most notably it is the home of “Doc.” It is newly restored and one of the two B-17’s that are

still flying. Doc is an absolutely beautiful aircraft and is available to tour assuming their schedule has it at home when we are there. If the aircraft is out on tour when we are in Wichita, there is a museum at the hanger where Doc lives and is available for tour visits.

- Old Town has a great museum (a destination in a destination) that is very interesting.
- The city is SAFE and clean, free from protests and well-kept. And, Midwestern hospitality is on full display no matter where you go.
- The hotel being considered is the Marriott which has given our group unbelievable concessions that will reduce the cost of the reunion considerably.

The 483rd has never been to Wichita so the tours that get scheduled will be a new experience. So stay tuned for the final decision....

Sandee West Maeda

Did You Know?

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

Mission: April 10, 1945, Bologna Troop Concentration Area

*Briefing by Sgt. Ben Adams, Group Chaplain 1996
(reprinted from 483rd Newsletter, Vol 16, No 1,
March 1996, pages 3, 7, & 10)*

We took off about 5:00 a.m. from Sterparone. We were all together with Capt. Richard Wilson's crew: Dusty Rhoads, co-pilot; Wally Briggs, navigator; Donald Rice, bombardier; Bob Plough, top gun and engineer; John Meakim, radio man; Ben Adams, ball-turret; Dean Plan, left waist gunner; Augie Frederick, left waist gunner; and Gerrit Van Dyk, tail gunner.

Our target was a Wehrmacht troop concentration area near Bologna, and we carried two tons of anti-personnel frag bombs. Little were we to know that this mission would turn out to be unbelievable, frightening, and miraculous!

We flew in at only 18,000 feet, which was low for us. Our purpose was to soften up the enemy in

advance of the British Eighth Army under the command of General Montgomery.

The British had huge white arrows on the ground and shot up red smoke at 10,000 feet pointing the way. From 18,000 feet, our target looked like an innocent big green field. We dropped our anti-personnel frags and I barely saw the sparking flashes on the ground. Then we headed off toward our squadron rendezvous, little realizing that we were still over enemy territory. After perusing the scenery down below from my vantage point, I turned my ball turret to point forward toward the nose. Suddenly I saw ahead a huge black puff just forward of our plane's nose and then heard a huge sound - WOOMP! Then I became aware of two more black puffs off both the left and right wing tips - WOOMP! WOOMP! Believe me, I know that one's hair can literally stand on end! My helmet actually stood up on my head! The German 88 antiaircraft had us perfectly bracketed with their salvo.

Then there was silence, except for the beautiful sound of our four engines still roaring. Then there was a babble of voices over the intercom. Our pilot, Dick Wilson, screamed, "Shut up!" and then asked every position to report in. Miraculously, all nine from tail to nose reported as all OK. No one was even slightly wounded. I could tell that our plane, the Sky Wolf, was limping, struggling to keep up with the squadron.

At 10,000 feet, I got off oxygen and climbed out of my ball turret to the waist. I was dumbfounded at what I saw. It was a shambles! The rudder lines were severed and hanging in the waist in big lazy loops, "that's why our ship was struggling - we had no rudder control until we flew using the ailerons and engines for direction. And the lookout over Gerrit Van Dyk's tail section was totally shot out, as he had his head down examining his twin fifties!

A thumb-sized piece of flak went through Dean Plank's flying clothing, leaving a huge purple bruise. Later we told him he should have pricked it so that he could have put in for a purple heart!

Right waist gunner Augie Frederick was OK. Flak hit my ball turret shaft, severing the ground cable, but my turret still worked!?

Radio man John Meakim was OK. So was top turret Bob Plough. Co-pilot Dusty Rhoads had a groove dug in his right flying boot. Flak went into most of the 50 caliber ammunition boxes but it didn't

go off! Red hydraulic fluid spurted out of the lines above navigator Wally Briggs' head and all over him. He thought he was dead and looked a bloody mess, but he was OK too!

We landed back at Sterparone in formation. As the planes dropped down on the runway one after the other, Wilson suddenly became aware that we had no brakes because of the loss of hydraulic fluid. In order to avoid chewing up and running down the ship ahead of us, he screamed over the intercom to brace ourselves and ran the B-17 over the side of the runway into a ditch. Our plane stood up on its nose and then slammed down, never to go up again. We all scrambled out like rats from a sinking ship. It never even burned!

It certainly seemed as if Someone-Up-There was looking out for all of us.

Such was the saga of the Sky Wolf on April 10, 1945, and maybe that had something to do with Ben Adams deciding to become a sky pilot minister and going to seminary after the war??

Down Memory Lane—Southern France Invasion

By Clyde Barnes

*(reprinted from 483rd Newsletter, Vol 16, No 1,
March 1996, page 4)*

With the Allied invasion landing in Normandy, France, on June 6, 1944, it was evident that a second landing would be made in southern France to provide support for those armies driving the German forces away from the Normandy beachhead. An invasion in southern France would prevent the German Army from sending units to aid the hard-pressed units at the beachhead.

The Allied forces that would be used in an attack on the southern French coast would be taken from the U.S. Army and British 8th Army fighting in Italy and the 15th Air Force. The Allied Navy would provide infantry units with assault training prior to the invasion and transportation to southern France before joining in the pre-invasion, off-shore bombardment. The invasion code name would be "Anvil."

The 15th AF began its missions against targets in southern France on July 5, 1944, with the 483rd Bomb Group attacking a marshalling yard at Montpellier, France. The Group continued its missions as "D" Day approached. Additional support

was provided on "D" Day (August 15, 1944) when St. Tropez and its beachhead was the target. A follow-up mission was mounted the following day when highway and rail bridges were bombed.

On "D" Day, "H" Hour was set for 23:00 (August 14) with take-off scheduled for 03:00 on the 15th. It was a very black night with vision rated at near zero. One plane failed to pull up in time to avoid crashing into the mountains across the valley at the end of the runway. There were no survivors.

The 483rd was not the only B-17 Group to have an accident this night. Two planes from the 301st BG collided in midair.

The reason for the night take-off was to have the planes over the invasion beaches at daybreak. The sea below the air armada was filled with ships, so many that a 483rd radar operator on his return to base said, "On the sea approach, the radar was useless, it reflected a solid mass of steel."

The Air Fleet included every type of aircraft used in the Mediterranean Theater, all taking part in the "D" Day assault, including heavy bombers, medium bombers, fighters, fighter-bombers, carrier aircraft, and many air rescue planes, including the Navy's well-known Catalinas.

On Assault Day, the 483rd Bomb Group delivered 100 pound fragmentation bombs from 15,000 feet between 07:15 and 07:30 while landing barges were 1,000 yards off the landing beaches. "The coordinated operation was a sight to remember for a lifetime" was the comment of a combat crew member when he reported at interrogation after returning to base. He also reported, "The sky was filled with planes, there were bombers above the 483rd formation, and below the boxes on the bombing run, with fighters and dive bombers below the 10,000 foot level. Occasionally the Navy's big guns could be identified by the white smoke clouds as the salvos hit targets."

The second assault wave was noted closely following the initial landing as the bombers headed back to base for an ETA of 10:00 hours.

***** Fundraising Appeal *****

The 483rd Bombardment Group Legacy Fund is dedicated to preserving the memory & the legacy of the heroic men who bravely comprised this B-17 bomb

group during World War II. Without their determination and sacrifice the World War II may not have had the same outcome as it did.

We are asking you to consider contributing to the 483rd Bombardment Group Legacy Fund to help us continue their legacy.

The 483rd Bombardment Group Legacy Fund is an IRS recognized 501(c)3 organization that will provide a long-term vehicle to continue the goals and purposes of the already existing 483rd Bombardment Group (H) Association. These goals and purposes include, financially supporting the wonderful 483rd display at the Museum of Aviation at Warner Robins Air Force Base in Georgia and providing annual scholarships to college students who are pursuing a future career in military aviation.

Please help us perpetuate the memory of the 483rd Bombardment Group! There are two ways that you can make a charitable contribution:

You can write a check for the 483rd Bombardment Group Legacy Fund and send it to: 3820 NE 91st Terrace, Kansas City, MO 64156.

You can also go to: www.483rdLegacyFund.org/ and contribute using your credit card.

Please feel free to share this appeal with your family and friends through e-mail and social media. If you have any questions, or want more information, contact David at 913-709-3382.

*** Donations are tax-deductible. ***

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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 (Deceased) 1990
Harry P. Millnamow (Deceased) 1991
William P. Dunn (Deceased) 1992
Edward T. Cotton (Deceased) 1993
Harry D. Whye (Deceased) 1994
Ray H. Whitaker (Deceased) 1995
Harold D. Leveridge (Deceased) 1996
William I. Jeffs (Deceased) 1997
George F. Stovall 1998 (Deceased)
John A. Campbell (Deceased) 1999
Verne H. Cole (Deceased) 2000
Benjamin H. Adams Jr. (Deceased) 2001
Robert W. Mitchell (Deceased) 2002
John P. Nobel (Deceased) 2003
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Fredric A. Hicks (Deceased) 2005
Wilfrid Hebert (Deceased) 2006
Stanton "Mike" Rickey 2007
Ellis Maxey (Deceased) 2008
Jim Ashley (Deceased) 2009
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Sandee West Maeda 2013, 2014, 2015
Harold Chubbs (Deceased) 2016
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Mark Halebsky 2019
Jay Clifton 2020