



# 95TH BOMB GROUP HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

HORHAM • ENGLAND



Charity Registration 1119769

## Newsletter Autumn 2012

### 95TH BOMB GROUP REUNION:

Every year I try to attend the 95th Bomb Group Memorial Foundation's reunions in the United States – finances permitting!

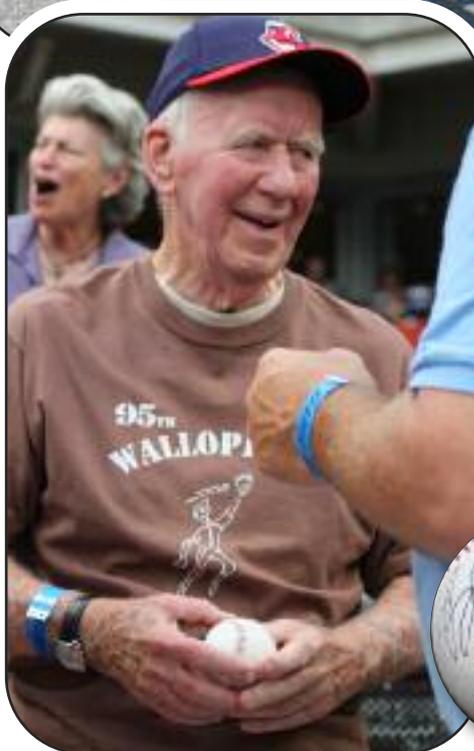
And this year along with fellow 95th Bomb Group Heritage Association members Alan Johnson, Terry and Jacky Spink, and Mick and Sylvia Cracknell I made the trip to the States.

Each year the reunion is held in a different city, moving between the east coast, middle states and the west coast, this year the reunion was in Cleveland, Ohio, beside Lake Erie. The reunion was attended by 150 people including 14 veterans, several widows and their families.

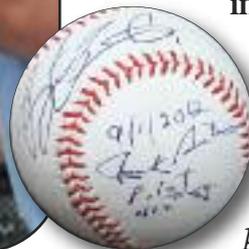
Brad Petrella and his team planned an enjoyable itinerary, including a visit to see the B17 Yankee Lady and the opportunity to take to the air in the Queen of Skies! I was invited by veteran Bob (334th ball turret gunner) and Gloria Fay and family to join them on a flight fulfilling a long-time dream to fly in a B-17! This is an experience I will never forget and would recommend it to all of you.

The Yankee Lady, from the Yankee Air Museum in Michigan, was in town for Cleveland National Air Show at Cleveland's Burke Lakefront Airport.

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Above: 95th Bomb Group veterans, from left: Jack Bertram; Keith Murray; Ben Roujansky; Harry Hull; Irv Rothman; Bob Fay; John Walter; with Charlie Gallagher in front. Left: Jack Bertram gets ready to throw the first pitch at a Major League Baseball match and the signed ball which is now in the Red Feather Club Museum.



*Many thanks to Terry and Jacky Spink for the reunion pictures.*

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Above:  
James  
Mutton &  
Terry Spink  
in the  
cockpit of  
Yankee  
Lady. Right:  
Jacky Spink  
in Yankee  
Lady.



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Also on the itinerary was a baseball match between the Cleveland Indians and the Texas Rangers. Veteran Jack Bertram (412th pilot) had the honour of throwing the first pitch wearing a 95th Wallowers t-shirt, which had travelled all the way from Horham. The ball was signed and is now in the Red Feather Club museum at Horham. Among the other tours was a visit to the Ohio Federal Reserve and the 95th Gala Ball at the impressive; 100th Bomb Group Restaurant with its views of the arrivals & departures of Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

It is always special when the 95th “family” reunite, many friendships have been forged over the years, and to meet up with our veterans and their families is always special. The fireside chats, when you get to hear the veterans’ stories, and the Red Feather Club bar are always particularly well-attended in the evenings.

The 2013 reunion will be in Orlando, Florida, in October. Make sure you put it in your diaries and start saving. It is an experience you will treasure forever. **James Mutton** ■



Above: 95th Bomb Group veterans, back row, from left: Curtis Stone (215th finance disbursement office); Bob Fay (334th ball turret gunner); Joe Cihon (336th top turret gunner); Ben Roujansky (336th radio operator); Irv Rothman (336th top turret gunner); Herb Wilcov (336th navigator); and John Walter (412th pilot); front row: Charlie Gallagher (336th top turret gunner); Ed Yurskey (336th tail gunner); Jack Bertram (412th pilot); Harry Hull (412th bombardier); Bob Inman (334th navigator); Keith Murray (335th bombardier); and Dub Vandergriff (412th radio operator). Among the 14 veterans there were two sets of crewmates – Bob Fay flew with Bob Inman and Harry Hull flew with Jack Bertram.



**COZENS VISIT & NEW MEMORIAL:** Tom and Peggy Cozens' first trip to Horham proved an emotional one for the 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation president and his wife.

They had hoped to visit the Red Feather Club with Tom's father Lt Col Robert "Bob" C Cozens, a man who is credited with saving the 95th Bomb Group twice, during WW2 and during peacetime (see page 4 for an in-depth look at Bob's career with the 95th). However, his father's sad passing earlier this year meant they made the emotional pilgrimage without him.

But Tom and Peggy got to see the Red Feather Club at its best sampling a school visit, getting an aerial view of the base, enjoying a 200th Mission Dance and unveiling a new memorial to Bob Cozens.

The surprise unveiling of the shining black marble bench commemorating Lt Col Robert "Bob" C Cozens leadership proved an emotional surprise for a tearful Peggy and Tom.

James Hollington, of H.L.Perfitt stonemasons in Diss, who made and engraved the new memorial, is the son of Red Feather Club regulars Steve and Jayne Hollington. Steve is also the Red Feather Club's resident electrician.

A flight with Andrew Castleden, former chairman of the 95th Bomb Group Heritage Association, gave them idea of the scope of the base.

They also saw the visit of youngsters from Yoxford Primary School (see page 9).

And to prove that the Red Feather Club is a museum that is alive they had a great evening as a full house enjoyed the 200th Mission Dance with the Red Feather Club's in-house band Skyliner. ■



**Top:** A tearful Tom & Peggy Cozens after unveiling the memorial to his father Bob. **Top right:** the crowd gathers for the unveiling before the 200th mission Dance.

**Above:** the tuneful 95th crew chiefs at the 200th Mission Dance. **Below:** James Hollington who made and engraved the memorial.



**THE MAN WHO SAVED THE 95TH:** Lt Col Robert “Bob” C Cozens is remembered as the man who saved the 95th Bomb Group twice. First when he rallied their B-17s during the disastrous raid over Kiel and again with his work for the 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation.

Robert Cozens enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps as an aviation cadet, less than a month after the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

A star American college footballer, nicknamed the “Encinitas Express”, he met his future wife, Patricia Ann “Patsy Ann” Hamrick, at a dance after a game. But country came first and he reported for duty on January 2, 1942 at Fort Rosecrans, California. Later that month he was off to Minter Field, Bakersfield, but by the end of January, he had been transferred to King City for Primary flight school in Stearman biplanes. Two months later he was flying BT-13s at Moffett Field.

The risks of training were made painfully clear on Bob’s first night solo landing. A classmate made a perfect landing, except he dropped onto the runway from 50 to 75 feet up. Bob said: “There were three of us up there, waiting until they cleared the wreckage off of the runway, waiting to see if any of us were capable of doing any better.”

Chico was Bob’s next stop, to ferry BT-13s on the way to Advanced Flight Training at Stockton Army Air Base. That is where he met, by alphabetical assignment, Harry Conley and Dick Cordell. The three lived together, daily flying AT-6 trainers up and down the San Joaquin Valley.

On the morning of July 26, 1942, they became 2nd Lieutenants and received their pilot’s wings and that afternoon Bob and Patsy Ann married. The closeness of their relationship was measured by the fact Harry and Dick joined Bob and Patsy Ann on their honeymoon.

“The fact that Harry had the car dictated part of this,” Bob said. After that “the four of us headed off to Salt Lake City, and in typical Army sequence, we went to Salt Lake City so they could assign us to Spokane, Washington. We did lose Dick Cordell along the way. He got assigned somewhere else.”



**Above: Patsy Ann and Bob Cozens. Below: Bob’s crew - back row, from left: Bob (pilot), James Reed (co-pilot), Willard Brown (navigator) and “Basie” De Wolf; middle row: John Webb, Decker, Nicholson and S/Sgt Roy Ballard; front row: Nicholas Bitcliffe and John Burkot.**



At Spokane’s Geiger Field, the pilots were restricted to base 24 hours a day for six days a week while wives stayed in local hotels.

Training’s next phase put Bob Cozens and Harry Conley in B-24s. But after a month or so, they were replaced by B-17s. Next came the formation of the 95th Bomb Group, with Bob and Harry appointed flight leaders in the 334th Bomb Squadron. Before the pilots and their wives could settle down in Spokane though, came a move to Ephrata, Washington. Bob said: “We were assigned to Washington state’s central desert. The base was an airstrip and some tarpaper shacks. I don’t know why we moved there from Spokane, and then back.”

Bob always delighted in telling the story of

Harry Conley's pratfall when leaving for the desert airfield from Geiger Field. "We were going through the gate to the flight line carrying our B-4 bags. We were saluting the sentry as we went through and the walkway was a little icy. Just as Harry started to salute, his feet went out from under him. He slipped on his butt, holding his bag, and on his back he went through, saluting the sentry."

In September of 1942, Bob's older brother, was caught by a thunderstorm and went down on an advanced training flight out of Roswell, New Mexico.

By December the 95th had moved to Rapid City, South Dakota. Patsy Ann returned to San Diego, since the 95th's commander had suggested it best not to bring wives along to the remote base at Rapid City.

Training that winter in Rapid City, at the edge of the Black Hills, proved a challenge. The 334th Squadron was sent to Pueblo, Colorado where there was meant to be better weather. However, on its first day there, a crew was lost to a snowstorm, so the 334th returned to Rapid City.

After Rapid City the 95th moved on to Kearney, Nebraska. Even though the B-17s of the 95th Bomb Group had never flown all together in formation, they were then sent off to the war zone.

The first stop was Gulfport, Mississippi, where his first B-17 nicknamed "Patsy Ann" had problems and was left behind for another B-17 which he named "Patsy Ann II." That B-17 flew the 14-day southern route to England, via West Palm Beach, Waller Field (Trinidad), Brazil, Senegal and Morocco.

It was April 17, 1943 when he landed in

England. That same day in San Diego, Patsy Ann gave birth to their first child.

The 95th's first base in the UK was Alconbury where an accident by a B-17's ground crew showed everyone the unforgiving risks of handling a bomber's payload.

Bob said: "They were loading bombs for a mission, and the thing that couldn't happen, did happen. The whole bomb load – ten 500-pound bombs – exploded, killing 19 of our men and wounding 20. It destroyed the aircraft they were loading and aircraft parked nearby. It was rather devastating."

The 95th then flew a few missions from Framlingham, including the infamous June 13th trip to bomb the submarine yards at Kiel in Germany. Mission planners had combined targets at Kiel and Bremen in the hope of dividing enemy fighter forces.

Brigadier General Nathan Bedford Forrest III was the 95th's new commanding officer and he proposed flying a new type of formation. Instead of the "Combat Box" with planes at staggered altitudes developed by General Curtis LeMay, he

came up with the idea of a flattened formation, with planes wingtip to wingtip. He was convinced it would concentrate firepower ahead, below, above and to the rear. For two weeks the 95th practiced the formation, and then came Kiel. On this mission General Forrest rode as an observer in the lead B-17.

The 76 aircraft on the Kiel mission encountered as many as 200 enemy fighters, and the Luftwaffe downed 20 of that formation's B-17s. Of the other 152 aircraft sent to bomb Bremen a half hour behind the first group, only four were lost.

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**Bob Cozens and Patsy Ann III on the ground and in action.**



*Continued from page five*

It was clear the scheduling scheme had worked, but success came at heavy expense to the crews in the group targeting Kiel. Lieutenant Bob Cozens, who was deputy leader for the group reported: "I was instructed to keep the nose of my B-17 tucked up under the tail of the lead aircraft. The Forrest formation was subjected to the 'true test' when, just as we completed the bomb run, the formation received a massive diving frontal attack from the German FW-190s and ME-109s.

"In our position in the formation, as well as that of our wingmen, we were unable to clear any of our guns on the attacking aircraft because of the line of sight through our lead echelon aircraft. Consequently, the lead aircraft was raked with enemy fire from one end to the other and immediately fell out of the formation."

Bob added: "I moved into the lead position, but I will have to say that the whole group was in disarray, so to speak, at that time."

The B-17 carrying Forrest went down making him the first US general to become a combat casualty in Europe.

"By the time we got some semblance of togetherness, we missed the turn after crossing the target area, and the wing behind the 95th got ahead on the way home." Bob said the



**Top: Bob Cozens is third right back row and Harry Conley is far right front row. Above: Bob and crew make a picnic out of a watermelon.**

group flew too close to the coast on its return and was in a weak defensive formation, which the Luftwaffe exploited in a second attack.

The B-17s had hit the target at about 26,000 feet, where the air temperature was 50-60 degrees below zero. Bob said that after the bomb run he was in the nose of "Patsy Ann II", trying to get warm, when the enemy fighters returned. "What caused the Plexiglas above the pilot's compartment to shatter, I don't know, but that didn't help the climate in the cockpit."

He climbed back onto the frigid flight deck to re-take control as the Luftwaffe struck again. 11 of the 95th's 26 aircraft didn't get back. Among the missing B-17s that evening was Harry Conley's. He nursed his B-17 back on a single engine and it crash landed on the English coast. Although the bomber suffered a broken back and was riddled with bullet holes, neither Harry nor his crew was injured beyond a few scratches.

After the Kiel mission, the 95th relocated to Horham. On August 17, 1943 the target was Regensburg, with Cozens leading the Group. "We



got to the target and bombs were placed on the target extremely well. We turned and headed south over the Alps, across the Mediterranean and landed in North Africa, so we didn't have to fight our way back home. That 11-hour mission provided an extra challenge

when Bob, preparing to land at the North African airbase, realised his B-17 had no brakes. "I went through my pre-landing check and let the other aircraft land first."

The stay in Africa also proved memorable as the crew got to eat real instead of powdered eggs and watermelon. On the return trip to England, the 95th bombed a target in southern France.

Soon after, he became commander of the 335th Bomb Squadron, leaving behind "Patsy Ann III" and the crew he had been with since training in the US.

While with the 95th group, one of the most embarrassing times he faced came after he and

Harry Conley flew a B-17 to London on business. All of England was under blackout and on their return night flight they could not find home base. Bob said: "We had to give the distress call 'two squadron commanders lost, who can't find their base'."

On October 10th, 1943 the 95th Bomb Group's mission was Munster and "Patsy Ann III" was lost. Four days later, and the first Schweinfurt mission, offered the heaviest flak he believes any of those in the 95th ever saw. 60 B-17s from all units fell to the German guns that day, and those losses were repeated on the second mission to the city.



**Bob Cozens at the 95th memorial in Dayton, Ohio.**

On December 22, 1943 Bob Cozens flew his 25th mission to Munster and got a Christmas gift in his promotion to the rank of Major.

After the war he once again rallied the 95th. He instrumental in taking the US organisation on from veterans group to the present day 95th Bomb Group Memorials Foundation and ensuring the group's future stateside. ■

*Information and pictures from the 95th BGHA archive and by kind permission from an article by Col John Crump for the Golden Gate*

*Wing CAF newsletter Prop Talk after a talk by Lt Col Robert C. Cozens in 2007.*

**PILOT'S GRANDSON VISITS:** The grandson of 412th pilot Harold "Pappy" Dulle pilot visited the Red Feather Club during the June open day. T/Sgt Paul Tichelkamp, based at RAF Mildenhall in the USAF reserves on a Crash Crew Fire Fighter training exercise, took time out to visit the RFC with friends. Capt "Pappy" Dulle, a pilot with the 412th BS from Jefferson City, Missouri, completed 20 missions from March 12th to May 7th 1945. Capt Dulle's first mission on March 12th was to Swinemunde in 42-38140 "The Pregnant Goose". He went on to pilot 43-38826, 44-8331, 44-8741 "Winged Warrior" and 42-107154 "Puddles"



**Above: Paul Tichelkamp. Right: Harold "Pappy" Dulle and "Goin My Way".**

before 43-38288, "Goin My Way", became his crew's regular aircraft for the rest of their tour. Their last operational mission took them to Oranienburg on April 20th after which Capt Dulle took part in three "Chowhound" missions on the 1st, 3rd and 7th of May supplying food to the Dutch. Paul told us his grandfather was proud to have taken part in the "Chowhound Missions" and talked about them quite often. ■



**RAY STEPS DOWN:** Ray Howlett, our vice chairman, museum mastermind and modeller extraordinaire – he is the man responsible for the gigantic scale model of Horham airfield in the Red Feather Club and most of the museum exhibits, has stepped down due to personal problems. Everyone at the 95th Bomb Group Heritage Association wishes him well and hopes that he will make a speedy return to his place at the Red Feather Club. ■

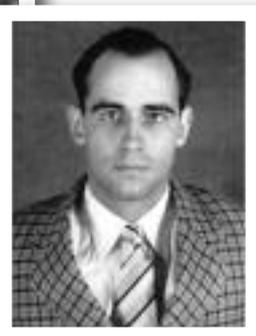
**REDLINGFIELD CRASH:** A further relative of one of the young US airmen who tragically lost their lives when their B-17 crashed at Green Farm in Redlingfield has been in touch. When Tracey Mogan Googled the name Richard Diete – her grandmother’s brother – she was “shocked and honoured” to find the memorial had been set up for the ten airmen who died in the crash. She wrote: “My great grandmother (Richard’s mom) would be so honoured and proud”. Redlingfield’s website has now put the village, and the 95th in the UK and US, in touch with relatives of six of the crew – 2nd Lt Kenneth B Rongstad, pilot; 2nd Lt Warren Franklin Mansfield Strawn, co-pilot; 2nd Lt Richard E Diete, navigator; S/Sgt Gail A Richmond Junior, top-turret gunner/flight engineer; Sgt Charles E Phinney, ball turret gunner; and S/Sgt Kenneth Cosby, tail gunner. Marcia Moyer, the niece of 2nd Lt Strawn, has sent us a wealth of new pictures which chart the life of Warren Mansfield Strawn from his early life with his mother Lura, brother LB and sister Reynolda, him during training in the US, his mass grave in the UK and his reburial in the States. Many



**Above: John Reinhold, left, and Frank Hale from Kalispell. Below: Mansfield Strawn reburial in the US. Below right: “Roarin’ Bill” and Harry Redding.**



thanks to Marcia Moyer. The pictures are online at [www.redlingfield.suffolk.gov.uk](http://www.redlingfield.suffolk.gov.uk). And in September a duo of American visitors from pilot Kenneth



Rongstad’s home town visited the Red Feather Club. John Reinhold also has ties to the 95th as his mother’s husband is Harry Redding, co-pilot on George W. Austin’s 412th squadron crew, which flew “Roarin’ Bill”, on 25 missions. He was accompanied by Frank Hale, a B-17 pilot with The Collings Foundation, a private non-profit educational foundation based in Massachusetts. Frank flies the foundation’s B-17 “Nine-O-Nine” on its Wings of Freedom Tour. Both are from Kalispell, Montana, in Flathead county, the home of Kenneth Rongstad. It was their first visit to Horham, they both visited Redlingfield to see the memorial having read about it when it was unveiled in 2010. ■



**OCTOBER EVENTS:** October is a busy month at the Red Feather Club with a general knowledge quiz night, a film night, the final open day of the year and the 95th Bomb Group Heritage Association’s annual general meeting. On Saturday October 13th there is a general knowledge quiz starting at 7.30pm. Contact John Kirkum on 01379 384559 to book team tables of up to four people (£5 per person). Food included and the bar and museum will be open. On Wednesday October 17th the film night feature is a 90-minute colour WW2 film taken by William E. “Doc” Furniss of the men and B-17s of the 92nd Bomb Group – known as “Fame’s Favored Few” – who were based at RAF Podington. The event starts at 7.30pm and admission on the door is £3 for Association members and £4 for non-members. The bar and museum will be open. The final open day of the year will be on Sunday October 28th (10am to 4pm) with stalls, re-enactors and military vehicles. On Wednesday October 31st the agm starts at 7.30pm – all association members welcome. ■



**SCHOOL VISIT:** Youngsters from Yoxford Primary School visited the Red Feather Club. Alan Johnson, Reg Bradley, Scott Bradley, Steve and Trixie Clark, Carmel Hannant, Ray Howlett, Roy Monro, Glenn Miller, George Roper and James Mutton quizzed the youngsters, took them on a tour of the airfield in military vehicles and simulated 95th BG missions. Class teacher Judy Andrews wrote: "Thank you so much for giving us such a wonderful day ... you'll see from the children's letters [all 16 wrote enthusiastic thank yous] that they found it most informative and very enjoyable. We feel privileged to have been able to visit, and will most certainly recommend you to other schools." ■



**Above right: On a chowhound mission. Above: Scott, Glenn and George with some of the youngsters.**



**95TH BOMB GROUP CALENDAR:** Red Feather Club regular Carmel Hannant is producing a 2013 calendar for the 95th Bomb Group Heritage Association PX. The wall calendars, featuring a mix of historic 95th Bomb Group pictures, modern shots of the Red Feather Club and 1940s style glamour shots taken at a recent photoshoot in the Red Feather Club, should be on sale on the last open day of the year on Sunday October 28th. The calendars will list important dates in the 95th's history and 2013 events at the Red Feather Club. Pictured left is one of the images from the calendar. ■

**BASE PICTURES:** Red Feather Club regular Linda Woodward has unearthed some unusual photographs of Horham air base taken by her father after the war. The pictures by well-known Stradbroke photographer Geoffrey Smith, who sadly passed earlier this year, show new views of Hangar One and an unusual use the airfield was put to.



The airfield was used to store what, in those times of austerity and rationing, would seem like an impossibly large amount of sugar. The sugar mountains are pictured here. Stacked in impressive rows, sacks of sugar covered in tarpaulins and corrugated iron seem to stretch to the horizon. When her father left school as youngster he worked on the construction of the base before doing his national service in Aden where he got his first camera. Linda has close 1,000 further films to look through and between the weddings portraits she hopes will be some other gems. Also among her father's belongings she found some Lieutenant's insignia which Linda believe he may have been given when as a youngster suffering chronic toothache base medical staff came to his rescue. ■

## RED FEATHER CLUB EVENTS 2013

**Sunday February 17th:** Dance workshop – learn the Foxtrot with Sasza Zargowski who is back by popular demand. A nice social afternoon to welcome you back to the Red Feather Club 2013.

**Saturday March 23rd:** Swing dance – a selection of different DJs to suit all tastes.

**Saturday May 18th & Sunday May 19th:** 1940s Weekend – Strictly 40s dance on the Saturday evening and 1940s re-enactments on Sunday.

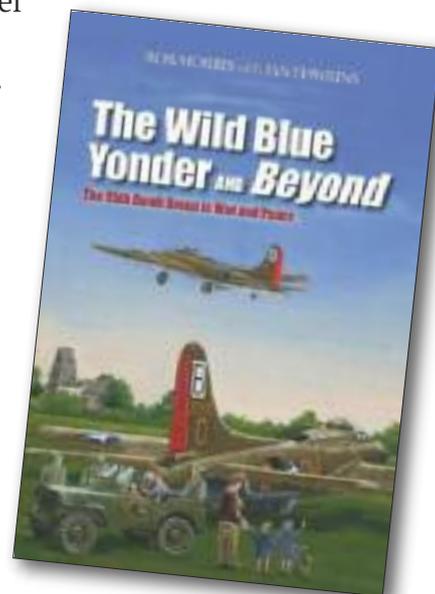
**Thursday June 20th to Wednesday June 26th:** 95th reunion visit to Horham including a dance with big band on Saturday June 22nd and members only day on Sunday June 23rd.

**Saturday September 28th:** 200th Mission dance with the 95th's own band Skyliner.

**Sunday September 29th:** Open day & softball game – Wallopers vs Snowdrops.

*Opens days are the last Sunday of every month from April to October.*

**UNIT HISTORY PUBLISHED:** Untold Valor author Rob Morris and 95th Bomb Group Heritage Association president and war historian Ian Hawkins' and new history of the 95th is out. The Wild Blue Yonder and Beyond: The 95th Bomb Group in War and Peace charts the bomb group from its inception through to the present day. It uses interviews with nearly 100 veterans, dozens of unpublished crew memoirs, the group's official mission reports and nearly a hundred other sources. It also includes the stories of the veterans' wives and families, who fought a different kind of war at home, and the residents Horham. Michael P. Faley, 100th Bomb Group historian and 13th Combat Wing historian, said: "The 95th Bomb Group was one of the most distinguished outfits in the whole Mighty Eighth but has lacked a definitive biography—That is, until now! Crafted by noted historians Rob Morris and Ian Hawkins, this book shows that the 95th's legacy is not cold statistics, but flesh and blood, laughter and tears, flak and fighters—and the survivors. All these years later, they tell a story you will never forget. I dare you to put this book down!" The Wild Blue Yonder and Beyond, published by Potomac Books, has a cover price of US\$39.95 and is available online at Amazon and other retailers. If you want to order it from your local bookshop the ISBN numbers are ISBN-10: 1597977128 & ISBN-13: 978-1597977128. The original artwork for the cover hangs in the Red Feather Club. ■



**VETERAN VISITORS CORRECTION:** Jackie DeHart, who visited Horham as part of the 2012 reunion, is the widow of tail gunner S/Sgt Ted DeHart not Ed DeHart as stated in our last newsletter. We apologise for this mistake. ■



### IN LOVING MEMORY AND IN HONOR OF

The Association has received donations "In Honour Of" members and "In Loving Memory Of" veterans and others who have left the formation



#### IN LOVING MEMORY OF

**Eldon Broman**                      **Carl Voss**  
**Lou Westerburg**      **Mary Belle Blagg**  
**Robert C. Cozens**      **Ernest Faircloth**  
**Sidney Goldstein** **Gracen**  
**Grace & Dave McKnight**  
**J. D. Waddell Jr**



#### IN HONOUR OF

**Lou Westerburg's 412th crew:**  
**Jack Bertram & Harry Hull**  
**Patrick & Beverley Abbott**  
**Vi & Gordon Allum**  
**Brian & Jenny Chapman**  
**Michael & Jill Critien**  
**Frank Sherman**