



O.D. NEWS
THE FUEL LINE
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WEBSITE:



Lt. John F. Ketchum

Today we lost another WW2veteran, just one of the 1200 or so who die everyday. This man was not a hero to the world. Just one of the 16 million humble Americans who served in that war. But, he was a hero to me. I owe him my life and the lives of my children and grandchildren. This man was my father.

I want to share with you his story in WW2. Like so many of our Veterans he did his job and did not seek any praise or recognition for it. It is ironic that that the day he was shot down in Europe was April 28, 1944, a day God was with him, that on April 28, 2009, the date he dies, he was with God. - *Tim Ketchum*

Narrative of Lt. John F. Ketchum, navigator, B-17G, serial number 42-3571, 342nd Bomb Squadron, 97th Bombardment Group, 15th Air Force.

“It was the 28th of April 1944, exactly two years after I had joined up. The crews of the 97th Bomb Group assembled in the briefing room at our base in Foggia, Italy and noted the location of the target. This would be my 28th combat mission. There was a general exclamation of “Milk Run”. However, there was a general change in the attitude when the briefing officer outlined the route to the target (across central Italy, at the altitude of 17, 000 feet; to a point south of Piombino, Italy; turn north to bomb the marshalling yards;

and then return to base using a reverse route. The primary purpose of the mission was that our Group was to decoy enemy fighters to attack us and then be engaged by our fighters who were scheduled to be flying cover for us at a higher altitude.

I was flying with my normal crew since for this mission I was made the squadron lead navigator and was flying in the lead plane, a brand new B-17G.

The route to the target and successful bombing was completed without event. However, on our return flight, at a point southeast of Florence, our aircraft received a direct burst of anti-aircraft fire. I notice the bombardier (Lt. Richard Giberson) grab his upper left thigh and I immediately leaned forward to ask if I could help him. His only response was to rise up and ask me "If I heard a bail-out call over the interphone". My answer was "No" and he then brushed past me and headed for the flight deck. Simultaneously I heard a call over the interphone saying, "I've been hit". I answered "Hold on, the Bombardier is on his way back".

Hearing no more, I released my flak vest, picked up my parachute, and headed for the flight deck. The first thing I saw was that the bomb-bay doors were open. I turned and saw that the pilot and co-pilot (Lt. Tom Curlin and Lt. Ralph Pitts) were trying to start the number 3 engine and noted the pilot's throat mike was severed below the connector plug by flak. I approached the co-pilot and asked, "If I could help" and after a moments hesitation, he told me to manually close the bomb-bay doors. I proceeded to the doors, located the crank and started to position it for closing the doors. Then I received a tap on my right shoulder. It was the co-pilot who told me we would have to bail out. I asked if all members in the rear of the aircraft had been told and he said "yes". I fastened my parachute to my body harness, walked out onto the bomb-bay cat-walk, sat down with my legs dangling out into space, prayed 'Father be with me', placed my head against the bomb-bay door and slipped off into space. I started to count to 10 but realized I was over mountainous terrain without reliable knowledge of my altitude; I pulled the ripcord when I reached the count of 6. I was greatly relieved when my chute billowed out smoothly, without any jolting action, and gently lowered me down to a clearing in the mountainside below. The landing was on uneven ground causing me to fall backwards and bump my head on the ground. I immediately got up, dumped my chute, and disengaged it from my body harness.

Upon reviewing the area, the first thing I saw was about 20 villagers cultivating a larger clearing about 50 feet away. My arrival caused quite a commotion; the women started crying and the men made no effort to approach me. I wanted to ask if they had seen any other parachutes but then noticed a person in priest gowns standing about 50 feet further up the mountain to my left. I approached him and tried my 13 year-old high school French to identify myself. As we were talking, another native, smaller than myself, with a rifle approached us. I asked the priest if he was a friend and was told that he was and to go with him. The native gunman then asked if he could have the parachute and I agreed and he thereupon retrieved the chute. I followed him some distance further up the mountains to what turned out to be the headquarters of a Yugoslavian guerilla group. There I was reunited with the pilot, co-pilot and one of the waist gunners of the crew. There the co-pilot told me that I scared him when I approached him in the aircraft because the bleeding from my forehead caused him to think my face had been shot up. That was the first time I realized I had been wounded and I was given an opportunity to wash-up and clean my bloody face. The three other crewmembers seemed to be in good physical condition. However, the waist gunner bailed out in his electric thermal flying gear and lacked walking shoes. Our rescuers were able to supply us with civilian clothing, with the exception of shoes for the waist gunner.

We spent the balance of the 28th of April trading information concerning events of the day. Eating and sleeping in a bed large enough to accommodate all four of us. On the morning of the 29th, we rose and further discussed plans for present and future actions. The leader of the rescue group arrived early and brought additional information from the crash site, including the death of the tail gunner, who apparently was the one whom I heard over the interphone saying, "I've been hit". The balance of the morning was spent discussing our options: to stay with the local guerilla unit or to start on a journey back to our base.

Studying the only map we had, (the one we found in our escape and evasion kit) and an offer to be escorted to a nearby Italian partisan group (who would be able to supply further contacts in route to our destination), we decided to attempt to journey back to friendly lines and our base. We then returned to the bedroom to relax and prepare for an overnight journey to our next destination. We arose at dark, ate dinner, and departed under protection of an armed patrol for the camp of the Italian partisan group. Unfortunately for me, my right leg, which had tightened up during our two-day layover, turned lame and was to cause me to slow the progress of our foursome once we started on our journey to our base.

The 56-day journey where we traveled from village to village, receiving help and food from many Italian people, a few of which had relatives in the States. Sometimes we slept in homes, abandoned buildings and even out in the open. We avoided any contact with Germans and were warned off on several occasions by the local people.

On the 5th of June the allies had captured Rome and were moving north. By the 21st of June we were able to meet up with the advancing American units and were taken back to our base by ambulance on the 22nd. A little after that, we were sent back to the States and I was reunited with my wife, Mary. My combat in this war was over. I did remain in the Air Force for 21 years spending a lot of my time as a navigator/bombardier in the Strategic Air Command”.



Inside this issue:

Next Club Meeting
Rally
President's Message
Treasurer's Message
Transcontinental Convoy

April 2009 Meeting Minutes
Honor Flight Network
Classifieds
Events Schedule

President:	Anja Taylor	301-821-3398,	president@wacbgmvt.org
Vice President:	Tim Clark	410-833-4442,	vice president@wacbgmvt.org
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Editor:	Bob Taylor	301-345-5350,	newsletter editor@wacbgmvt.org
Events Coordinator:	Tim Ketchum	703-590-4960,	TimK.43mb@verizon.net
Website Administrator:	Bob Buker		webmaster@wacbgmvt.org



NEXT CLUB MEETING...

The next club meeting will be June 21, 2009 at Peter Lee's, 10519 Marriottsville Road, Randallstown, MD 21133 at 11:00AM. Since this is catered you MUST RSVP to Peter lee.

If you have any agenda items, please let Warren know.



RALLY

Still looking for volunteers to help at the Rally.

Please contact Anja at 301-821-3398, or abtaylor2@verizon.net. Thank you, **Anja**

PS- Set up is Tuesday, May 19th at 9:00AM.

President's Message:

To all members: it is with my deepest regret that I will be resigning as President of WAC/B&G MVT effective September 26, 2009 (the Wilson Meeting), where at this time a new President will be elected.

I know I have resigned before, but I returned with the hopes that I would have the Board's support, or at least their input. While I am not perfect, I am a good person and feel that my heart for this hobby is not going in the direction where I would like it to be.

I do not want to continue to cringe and get upset over e-mails I have received, I will not be told what I am **not** doing for the club, and I will not abide club members passing on distortions of what I have said at meetings that aren't true. I have tried and have done my best for the club in every way that I know how. I just can't abide certain members conduct towards me anymore. I am tired of always hearing the excuse, "Well, you know how he is".

This is a hobby that both Bob and I have always enjoyed, and this is no longer the case.

Of course, I will be there to help at the Rally this year, and also help with the Wilson picnic set up.

My participation after that time with the 2010 Rally or any other events that may arise is uncertain and will depend on circumstances. I will however continue to help Bob with the Club newsletter.

For those of you that have helped me, given me advice, and supported me, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Sincerely,

Anja Taylor
President

Treasurer's Message

Treasurer's Report as of 19 April 2009

Club Assets

Checking balance \$28,599.08
Petty Cash \$340.00
CD \$31,863.74 (as of 5 Dec)
Total \$60802.82

Major Income Sources

Membership Dues est. \$2,200
Rally Flea Market Spaces est. \$27,500
Interest est. \$763 (note in 2008 was \$1,066, lower bank interest rates)
Parades (Thank you Tim Ketchum!) \$550
T-shirt and Hat Sales \$3,000

Summary of major expenses expected next 2 months \$17,585

Rally examples -

Lease Stadium \$4,500
Portapots \$2,810
Dumpsters \$600
Golf Carts \$2,600
Vender Badges \$1,000
T Shirts \$3,275
Plaques, Awards, certificates, supplies \$600
Misc Home Depot supplies \$500
Judges Shed \$200
Trailer transportation \$300
Advertising \$600
Benfield Electric, BGE and permits \$600

Other Annual Expenses \$9,100

Printing, Copies, Postage, Newsletter \$4,000
Phone Verizon \$200
Parade and Trail Ride reimbursement \$1,000
Two Picnics (\$3,000 Sep 09 + \$600 Jun 09) = \$3,600
Web Site Domain Craftix \$300

Total Expenses Checking Balance \$28,599 -
Est. Expenses \$26,685 = \$1,914

Treasurer Recommendation for Donations 2009
is \$2,000. Give your recommendation to Bob
Shawn.

Donations for 2007 & 2008, Capitol Airing,
USO, SS John Brown, Hagerstown Aviation

*Transcontinental Convoy Message
From Tim Clark*

I'm sure you're aware of the upcoming recreation of the 1919 Transcontinental M/V Convoy that starts at the Wash, DC Ellipse. You might want to send out the following information though: The recreation of the 1919 Transcontinental M/V convoy from Wash, DC to San Francisco, CA will start at the DC Ellipse on Sat, 13 JUN. More info can be obtained at the MVPA website and click on the convoy link. Prior to that though, the group will marshal at Laurel Racetrack starting on WED 10 JUN. All participating vehicles will gather there and visitors are welcome. Laurel Racetrack is just off MD Rt.198, on the North side, just East of I-295 (Bal-Wash Parkway). Additionally, the Army's Birthday celebration at both the Pentagon and Ft Belvoir is FRI 12 JUN. They have invited a few vehicles from the TMC-09 group to participate so there will be two small convoys going there from Laurel Racetrack on Friday morning. I would encourage any WAC/BG members who have an interest to stop by the Laurel track and see the vehicles and meet with participants questions can be directed to WAC/BG member Tim CLARK (glengar@verizon.net) who is coordinating the DC start of TMC-09 along with overall Coordinator Terry SHELSWELL

**WAC B&G MVT MEETING
APRIL 19, 2009**

Aboard the SS JOHN BROWN Liberty Ship

Call to Order 1107 hours

Members Present Robert Amos, Art Buker Sr., Tom Buonaugurio, John DePasquale, Larry Heaton, Tim Ketchum, Fred Lutes, Vince Lutes, Don Marshall, Richard McCommack, Denis Mengele, Lanny Moore, Tony Norton, Don Rollette Sr., Clive Rowley, Bob Shawn, Woody Shenk, Terry Smith, Anja Taylor, Bob Taylor, Mike Tiderman, Larry Voight, Warren Watt.

Pledge of Allegiance The pledge was recited to the ship's vintage US Flag.
We were welcomed aboard by club member and ship volunteer Denis Mengele.

Welcome by President Taylor

President's Report

Presentation of awards President Taylor presented Special and Team awards to acknowledge member's efforts during the 2008 East Coast Rally.

New Award The President will present a \$50.00 gift certificate to the Volunteer of the Year at the September club meeting.

Vice President's Report VP Clark was unable to attend today.

Treasurer's Report Treasurer Buonaugurio passed out copies and reviewed the latest financial report. He also explained the details surrounding the three insurance policies that the club is involved with.

Secretary's Report Secretary Watt reviewed the latest membership numbers.

Event Coordinator's Report Tim Ketchum passed out copies of the latest event schedule and reviewed it. The next major parade is the Memorial Day parade in DC. He encouraged members to submit any event that the club can participate in. He spoke about the opportunity to be a volunteer for the "Honor Flight" program established for WWII veterans.

Review of European Battlefields A computer-based slide show was available for the members after the meeting.

Webmaster's Report: Bob Buker was unable to attend. All members are encouraged to visit the new website www.washingtonbluegray.com and participate in the forums.

Newsletter Editor's Report Editor Taylor said that there will be a small newsletter sent out before the 09 Rally. There is also a need to obtain a new color printer. There may be one donated by the club treasurer at this time.

Old Business There was some discussion on the convoy.

New Business

2009 East Coast Rally The 2009 ECR was discussed at length. Subjects covered were Security, Insurance, Layout, Signage, Food, Hotel, Parking, Judging, Registration, Volunteering, Clean up, Dumpsters, etc.

There are 11 spaces left to sell. Some large vendors have downsized their space rental amounts. One space is listed on EBAY as a means of advertising. We **NEED** a **Chief Judge**. It was suggested to have a short judges training class before the judging begins. Judging criteria was also discussed. There will be a new food vendor this year.

A discussion on procedural issues regarding individuals making decisions for the club ensued. A motion was made to have VP Clark go back to the Boy Scouts to renegotiate failed for a

lack of a second.

A motion was made and carried to table the discussion until a teleconference could be established. (This occurred on April 23rd) Denis explained that the T-Shirt vendor would be "Tidewater" again. The pricing is comparable to last year. The artwork is very well done featuring last years Best of Show vehicle. The majority of the shirts (green) are made in the USA per our request. There are a limited number of pink (ladies) and yellow (staff only) shirts. These are sourced offshore due to the colors. There will also be 50 yellow staff only hats. These are not dated so the spares can be used at future Rallies.

2010 East Coast Rally Several new sites were discussed. It may take several years to research and reserve a new site. If a new site is chosen, there will need to be a new overall coordinator to take Tom B's place. Search committee members are Anja, Bob Taylor, Rich McCommack, Tony Norton, and Scott Johnson.

Tom B. is going to speak to the Ripken staff about reservations for 2010.

There will be a poll taken at the 09 Rally to get vendor reaction regarding moving the Rally.

Life Member application: Ronald E. G. Davies A motion was made and carried by the members present to give Mr. Davies this membership based on his WWII experience.

Other Business George Hopkins has some information regarding a shady vendor he has dealt with (not at the Rally). Hopefully it can be posted on the website.

Next Meeting Location and Date

June 21 2009 @ 1100 hrs, Peter Lee farm

Adjourn 1250 hours.

Respectfully submitted,
Warren Watt
Secretary
WAC/B&GMVT

Honor Flight Network by Tim Ketchum

I have started volunteering for the National Park Service at the WW2 Memorial on the Mall in Washington, DC. I find this to be an honor and privilege to meet and greet veterans and visitors to this memorial. While working there, I was made aware of an exceptional charitable organization and I want to tell you a little bit about it. Below are some excerpts from their website <http://www.honorflight.org/>.

"Honor Flight Network is a non-profit organization created to honor America's veterans for all their sacrifices. We transport our heroes to Washington, D.C. to visit and reflect at their memorials. Top priority is given to the senior veterans – WW2 survivors, along with those other veterans who may be terminally ill.

The inaugural Honor Flight took place in May of 2005. Six small planes flew out of Springfield, Ohio taking twelve World War II veterans on a visit to the memorial in Washington, DC. In August of 2005, an ever-expanding waiting list of veterans led our transition to commercial airline carriers with the goal of accommodating as many veterans as possible. Partnering with HonorAir in Hendersonville, North Carolina, we formed the "Honor Flight Network." Today, we continue working aggressively to expand our programs to other cities across the nation.

Honor Flight Network has established an aggressive goal for 2009 — we want to transport 25,000 veterans from across the United States to the World War II Memorial. The program presently has 71 hubs in 30 states. By the end of 2009, Honor Flight Network hopes to have a hub in all 50 states. Due to the senior age of our heroes, and the prediction that we are losing approximately 1,000 of them daily, we are committed to do all within our power to make their dream a reality. Our current focus will remain on World War II veterans and those veterans from any war who have a terminal illness. However, our vision goes beyond World War II. "

I have personally witnessed the joy and honor on the faces of these humble veterans during my volunteering at the Memorial. This service is free to the veterans. Funds are provided thru charitable donation of time and money. If you feel moved to contribute your money, go to their website. But there is another way to contribute and that is with your time. Many of these veterans are in wheel chairs and need help at the memorial to get around. There is a local Honor Flight Network, which organizes volunteers to assist in this area. I have included below some information on this volunteer group.

"There are several ways you can play an important role in keeping the veterans safe and adding even more pleasure to their special day.

1. Meeting them at the airport and/or seeing them off at the airport. We gather a welcoming committee to be right at the gate and clap and

cheer and say "Thank You!" The veterans are very moved by their (justified) heroes' reception. Some say they could turn around and get right back on the plane and consider it an incredible day! We also help them to/from the buses; take their pictures with their cameras and some of their enthusiastic fans, etc. We have flights to BWI, Reagan National, and Dulles.

2. Assisting at the Memorial – keeping an eye out for veterans getting tired, passing out water, helping set up chairs and pass out lunches, taking their pictures, asking about their experiences and saying "Thank You!"

3. And then there's a special class of volunteers who already have some experience with Honor Flight. These volunteers will act as "Ground Guardians" who meet the veterans either at the airport or the WW II Memorial, and spend the day with them. This requires a special dedication because Ground Guardians can free up a seat on the plane to bring an extra veteran. Because Ground Guardians are directly responsible for a veteran's safety they MUST commit to being there and they must be in good physical condition – pushing wheelchairs up hill is not as easy as it may appear.

To learn more about our activities you can visit the Ground Crew website at <http://www.ancpgr.org/index2.html>

Please know that ANYTHING you do truly adds to the veterans' enjoyment – and yours, too!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions. Thanks again!

Shannon Collins
Honor Flight Ground Crew
Home: 703-299-5021
Cell: 703-298-3097
email: shannon.g.collins@gmail.com



CLASSIFIEDS
(All Ads are Free)

From Fred Lutes:

For Sale: BRITISH 2in knee mortar, 50mm, WW2 era, demilled, excellent condition, very impressive, \$300.00. Call Fred Lutes any time 301-910-0783.

For Sale: British PIATS (2) in original wooden crate, with all accessories and extra springs!! A spectacular collectors item. \$1800.00. Call Fred Lutes any time at 301-910-0783

For Sale: Browning Air Cooled Machine Gun dummy. Made from 100% original parts!! Impossible to tell apart from an automatic. Very impressive machine work! \$850.00. Call Fred at 301-910-0783.



A follow-up to the article "Who the heck was KILROY" from issue #53 December '08

It seems that among Kilroy's extensive travels has been a visit to the WWII Memorial on the Mall. Here we have carved in stone a reminder of another less serious, but entirely genuine aspect of the War. Thanks to Tim K. for the observation and the photo!



Above is a photo of a prototype weapon system in development. This appears to be an excellent reflection of the new, enlightened, policy in dealing with our enemies.

