Save the Date!

REUNION: 10-13 September 2009
SAN ANTONIO, TX

At the El Tropicano Hotel
110 Lexington Ave.
San Antonio Texas 78205
http://www.eltropicanohotel.com/index.html

Reservations: (866) 293-1842 or reservations@eltropicanohotel.com
Be sure to tell El Tropicana that you are from the 355th Fighter Group Association when you make your reservations and also be sure you CANCEL with 72 Hours advance notice if your plans change. Otherwise you will be charged for a one-night stay!
(Please see page four for more details)

A Gathering of Eagles
At Davis-Monthan Air Force Base during the Tucson Reunion in April 2008

Visit and Join the 355th Fighter Group Association web site at
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/355thFA/
Mustang is the official publication of the 355th Fighter Group Association. Unless otherwise noted the opinions expressed are those of the contributor or of the editor.

355th Fighter Group Association

Executive Committee

President: Bill Marshall  
2nd Vice President: Bill Lyons  
Treasurer: Bill Cook  
1st Vice President: Bruce Kinner  
Secretary: Bill Barnhart  
Chair, Nominating Committee: Fred Roberts

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Bruce Kinner  
Julius Moseley  
William Barnhart  
Charles Klein  
Fred Roberts  
Al Bruno, Jr.  
Col. Paul T. Johnson, C.O.  
Glenn Severy  
Robert Coleman  
355th Fighter Wing  
Ray Shewfelt  
Bill Cullerton  
Walter Lister  
Col. Kent Laughbaum (Ret.)  
Robin Douglass  
William Lyons  
Ward Douglas  
David Mellen  
John Fortier

Mustang editor: Bill Barnhart, 13557 Den Hollow Ct, Manassas, VA 20112-5545  
Phone: 703-791-2197  
Email: bill.barnhart@alumni.duke.edu

Taps

Since the last issue of the Mustang, we have learned of and are saddened by the following deaths:

Please send notifications of members, relatives or friends of the 355th FGA passing to the association’s Secretary, Bill Barnhart, at 13557 Den Hollow Ct, Manassas, VA 20122 or bill.barnhart@alumni.duke.edu. This information will be put in Mustang (unless otherwise requested) so that all of us can be notified.

Constance Hunter Greenwell (Connie)
Passed away on Feb 8, 2009 in Knoxville, TN, widow of 357th Squadron Pilot Gene Greenwell (deceased), who joined the Scouting Force after a stint flying with 357th. Connie was a church organist. Connie added to the last UK Reunion when she gave a memorable concert on the St. Catherine’s Church organ in Litlington, which has the stained glass “355th FG “Window”.

Noble Peterson
Passed away in March 2009. Captain, 358th Squadron. He flew the P-51 "The Dakota Kid", other side painted "Long Island Kid" for his Crew Chief, Board Member Bob Coleman. Noble was a quiet farmer all his life. Not until his last years did the people in his farming community know the extent of his war record and, when they did, put on an event in his honor. Reunion attendees will remember Noble flying in Dr. Hank Reichert’s dual-seat P-51 to the 2005 Tucson reunion.

Ward Douglass
Passed away on November 24, 2008. Pilot, 358th Squadron, Board Member to the end, wit and great storyteller. Year after year at Reunions, Ward would personally supply watches and/or pins inscribed with our 355th insignia to all members attending. Ward is survived by son Robin, who now serves on our Board.
Albert Postma
He was long-time friend/member of the 355th FGA. Albert was a member of the WWII Dutch underground who risked his life in sabotage efforts against the Nazi conquerors of Holland and in Allied pilot's rescue operations. His reunion addresses to the Group were known for their emotion and pride in our mutual efforts to free the Netherlands from Nazi Germany. Ray Leach, Secretary, UK Committee, represented the 355th FGA at the funeral and gave a Royal British Legion (RBL) poppy wreath with a card from the 355th FGA. Lord Carrington wrote that "Albert Postma was a remarkable man and throughout his life kept in touch with so many friends and comrades of the War." Willem Baggerman wrote that Albert "was a stalwart, true friend of our 355th organization. His joyful presence at our Reunions was special."

Gerald Thompson
Passed away on January 6, 2008. He was with the 354th FS. He is survived by his children.

Alfred “Al” Bruno, Sr.
Passed away on February 1, 2008. He radiated his joy and warmth at being with us at so many of our Reunions. He is survived by his wife Joanne, his son, Al Jr. (a Board Member), and daughter-in-law, Joannie.

Passed away on February 19, 2008, in Honolulu. He was a pilot with the 358th Squadron and is survived by his son Burl.

Kay McNeff
Passed away on March 16, 2008, after a valiant seven-month struggle with leukemia. She is survived by her husband, Major General Ed McNeff, USAF (Ret.), 357th Squadron Pilot, son Mike and grandchildren.

Lt. Gen. Gordon Graham, USAF (ret.)
Passed away on March 22, 2008. General Graham commanded the 354th Fighter Squadron from October 1944 until June 1945. He flew 73 combat missions in P-51 Mustang and became a triple ace with 16 1/2 enemy airplanes to his credit. He also flew 146 combat missions in Vietnam, and ended his career as the Commander of the Sixth Allied Tactical Air Force. Included among his many medals is the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star; Legion of Merit, Distinguished Flying Cross with oak leaf cluster; Air Medal with 27 oak leaf clusters; Joint Service Commendation Medal; Air Force Commendation Medal.

Paul D Pjesky
Passed away on November 22, 2006. He enlisted in the Air Force in 1938 and later was assigned to the 355th Fighter Group. He served at several stateside bases and was transferred overseas to Steeple Morden. Paul retired from the USAF Reserve in 1970. He is survived by his wife and daughter.

Mary Kay Seymour
Passed away on March 3, 2009. She is survived by her children, many grandchildren, and husband, Paul (Col., USAF, Ret.), who flew an F-105D with the 354th TFS at Takhli RTAFB, Thailand. Her name is emblazoned on the replica of Paul’s F-105 #284 proudly on display at Davis-Monthan’s Heritage Park. A memorial service was held for her at there.
Message from the President and Executive Committee

Contents:

1. Update
2. 2009 Reunion, San Antonio, TX
3. Activities of Exec Committee since 2008 Tucson Reunion
   (a) Name change and why
   (b) Correction of Steeple Morden Memorial Trust terms

Summary: We have good news to report! Read on…

Membership Growth

Through the good efforts of Secretary Bill Cook and 1st VP Bruce Kinner, facilitated by the gracious donation of the 355th Fighter Group Association website from Gene Carlson, the Association membership has soared in the last year. Importantly, Lifetime Memberships have come from both our Viet Nam 355th Tactical Fighter Wing and current 355th Fighter Wing veterans. It is heartwarming to see the fruits of Bud Fortier and Bill Lyons leadership, along with the support of so many other key 355th Fighter Group veterans…to see us mature and grow from 2004 into a vibrant Association surrounding the heritage of one of the United States Air Force's finest combat units - ever!

Website

Our 355th Fighter Group Association website now provides a central on-line communication and storage repository to serve all the Association members. The purpose is to provide easy communication between members, keep track of Board Meetings and provide all Members with transparency to Board Discussions and activities.

It also provides for easy subscription, ability to pose questions to any member signed up, storage for Association By-Laws/Constitution plus Board and Member Meeting Minutes. As more important events occur we shall update the website with the information and documents.

Our website address: [http://groups.yahoo.com/group/355thFA/](http://groups.yahoo.com/group/355thFA/). Please go to this address and sign up!


- **Hotel:** The El Tropicano – Riverwalk. Contact now for reservations at (866) 293-1842 or by email at reservations@eltropicanohotel.com
- **Say you are with the 355th Fighter Group Association to receive our Group Rate!**
- **Our 355th rate is** $102/night plus tax, approx. $120/night for Double or Single. Breakfast included.
- **Contact Hotel BY AUGUST 10 to get 355th special rate.** (To cancel without penalty, notify within 72 hours prior to arrival date. The 355th group rate is available two days before and two days after the Reunion
- The earlier we make advance reservations the better chance we have to book everyone into the Hotel.
- Shortly we will have finalized the events and you will be sent an Invitation with details as soon as possible.
- Tentative details: Kick-off dinner Thursday evening (9/10) and close with breakfast on Monday (9/14)

Activities of the Exec Committee since 2008 Tucson Reunion…

(a) Association Name Change to 355th Fighter Group Association

The 355th Fighter Group Association Board and Members approved a name change to the 355th Fighter Group Association last April. It will be executed, once we have finalized the changes with the IRS, to include the founding name of the 355th Fighter Group, and our direct the 355th Tactical Fighter Wing and the current 355th Fighter Wing but provide continuity for all our generations’ remembrance throughout the exceptional 355th history. Thanks to former 355th Fighter Wing Commander, Colonel Kent Laughbaum (USAF-Retired) for the suggestion!
(b) 355th Steeple Morden Memorial and Memorial Fund

Background - The 355th Board of Directors discovered after the 2006 Board Meeting in Philadelphia that our entire US 355th Treasury been moved secretly by our former Secretary-Treasurer, without approvals from your Board of Directors as required by our constitution and by-laws, from our US 355th account to the UK Charities Aids Foundation (CAF) which manages our Memorial Fund. He also secretly transferred without approvals by your Board of Directors all Executor authority over the Memorial Fund from the 355th Board to the former UK Committee Chairman.

It must be strongly emphasized that prior review and prior approval by the Board of Directors is required before disbursement of funds for any purpose. Under no circumstances does any authority other than the Board of Directors apply.

The CAF had no idea that anything was amiss and were misled. We believe the CAF was innocent in its acceptance of the funds as well as accepting the Trust Agreement without a formal Resolution of the Board showing approval.

Net Result – The above actions meant, as far as our 355th Fighter Group Association (FGA) was concerned, that neither the 355th FGA nor our Board of Directors was recognized by CAF as Executor having oversight of our own Memorial Fund! This included having no say in the replacement of the UK Committee in the future should it stand down, and having no oversight over funding issues concerning our memorial at Steeple Morden. Obviously, this was not acceptable.

Making things right…

The Board reviewed the proposal at the 2008 Tucson Board Meeting and after a thorough discussion, approved the motion to 'fix' the Trust, if possible.

Since that time the Executive Committee of the Board has worked to resolve the problem.

The Breakthrough…

In January, 2009, Dr. John Low, Managing Executive for CAF, came into the picture. Following the presentation of documents including constitutions and by-laws plus a personal appeal by Bill Cullerton, Bill Lyons, General Ed McNeff, Fred Roberts and Brady Williamson, Dr. Low called your President and said, "How may I help?"

Encouraging News and Actions going forward…

We have submitted a Trust draft that was first started by former President Bud Fortier in his last days and are engaged as this Newsletter is being published.

We have asked for a.) Formal recognition of the Board's Executor authority over the Memorial Fund, b.) Continuation of the UK Committee as Local Administrator, and c.) Formal processes for communication (requests, name and address changes of officers, etc), and Selection of Successors for 355th FGA, for the Local Administrator, and for the CAF Trustee,

We have specified that the UK Committee consult with the Board for maintenance expenditures above a 'to be determined' level as well as for proposed charitable contributions they may wish to make from the Fund’s excess annual interest. We also request to be consulted if the Fund drops below the capital base when a proposed expenditure is contemplated.

Finally…

If successful in the re-write we will first submit the Trust to the Board for approval and then to the Membership at San Antonio. We will also post updates as they occur in our 355FA website http://groups.yahoo.com/group/355thFA/.

We will be fully prepared to discuss this situation at the Reunion, but please do not hesitate to contact any of us at any time with your questions. In the interim, we believe the Memorial Fund is still fully funded despite the drop in our fund balance.

The Mustang 5 June 2009
As a side comment, this experience caused the Board and Membership to forever split the duties of the Secretary and Treasurer.

We thank all of you and look forward to seeing you in San Antonio.

Bill Marshall, President
Bruce Kinner, 1st VP
Bill Lyons 2nd VP

Bill Barnhart, Secretary
Bill Cook, Treasurer
Fred Roberts, Chairman, Nominating Committee

355th Fighter Group Memorial
Steeple Morden, Cambridgeshire, England

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Fun Facts — Comparing Thunderbolts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>P-47 Thunderbolt</th>
<th>A-10 Thunderbolt II (“Warthog”)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maximum speed</td>
<td>433 mph at 30,000 ft</td>
<td>439 mph at sea level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>800 mi combat, 1,800 mi ferry</td>
<td>290 mi combat, 2,580 mi ferry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service ceiling</td>
<td>43,000 ft</td>
<td>45,000 ft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate of climb</td>
<td>3,120 ft/min</td>
<td>6,000 ft/min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Big Thank You

A big “thank you” goes out to Mike and Kelly Cochran. They have taken care of making and mailing out the new membership cards. A new batch is being mailed as this is written. If you do not get yours within a couple of weeks, please check your membership status with the Treasurer whose address is on page 13 of this issue.
President Emeritus’ Message

Dear Friends,

I thank you for the opportunity to serve our 355th Association.

When first elected President, I had two goals:

(1) To have the names of our fallen comrades, American and RAF, inscribed on our Steeple Morden Memorial;

(2) To assure that a specific money amount be set aside from our Memorial funds that would guarantee our Memorial’s care in perpetuity.

No. 1 was done. Resolution of No. 2 is being sought by our Executive Committee. President Bill Marshall and Secretary Bill Barnhart are spearheading the effort – in the context of asserting our Memorial Trust’s terms and their review and approval by our 355th Board and Membership, neither obtained in the past. (Stay tuned…)

At our 2004 Reunion in Corning, it was our Group’s good luck to meet Chief MSgt Bruce Kinner (Ret) who lived in the area, and several other Vietnam vets from our direct-descendant 355th Fighter Wing unit. There was instant rapport – the generation gap melted away – we connected in outlook and mutual 355th interest. It was agreed with then-President Bud Fortier that it would be a great idea if we joined in future reunions as a unified 355th association.

That became my third goal: to help Bud do that, which Bud managed to achieve in the last valiant days of his life. At the pivotal 2005 Tucson Reunion there was enthusiastic Board and Membership unanimity (less one) to welcome post-WWII 355th Unit members into our group…and accord voting rights to widows and our vital 2nd Generation. In fact, our organization is unique in its multi-generation continuity and official link with our great Active-duty USAF 355th Fighter Wing.

2008 Tucson Reunion further solidified the special relationship with our 355th FW, at nearby Davis-Monthan Air Force Base. Bill Cullerton proposed that the Commander of the 355th FW be a 355th Board Director. To our pleasure, that is now Col. Paul Johnson. We are gratified that Col. Kent Laughbaum, predecessor Commander of 355th FW, continues on our Board. We also thank Col. Brian Maas, former CO 357th Squadron, who first reached out to us years ago. Much credit for 2008 Reunion’s superb events and arrangements was due to Bruce Kinner, our new Vietnam vet members and Active-duty 355th FW base personnel.

As a Fighter Pilot, the best people I knew outside my family were my fellow pilots and ground crew. They were really good when it really mattered. Sometimes, out of nowhere, a face or an incident out of 1944 will flash in my mind. Often it’s of two friends whose names are inscribed on our Memorial. And I pause in thought…I owe them my life.

I firmly believe in our Association’s fraternal continuity and our Constitutional mission: to perpetuate the history and achievements of our USAF 355th Unit and remembrance of our fallen comrades. I enjoy the good fellowship of our men and women of every 355th era -- from WWII through 2nd Gens, to Vietnam, to today’s Active-duty 355th Fighter Wing who now defend our nation. I hope our valued relationship with our UK Committee friends remains as long as our 355th lives…

My special thanks to Bill Barnhart, our buttoned-up Secretary, Protocol Master and Newsletter Editor… to David Mellen, our Treasurer during a challenging renewal period… to Gene Carlson for setting up our Web Site and our new Treasurer, Big Bill Cook, whose efforts have been helpful in reunion and improved membership administration.

Last but certainly not least, please join me in Congratulations to our new President Bill Marshall, a standup guy committed to the interests of our Membership. May he be carried into the next Reunion Banquet by winged cherubs.

Until then, warmest wishes for the New Year from Carol and me, and hope to see you all in San Antonio!

Sincerely,

William “Tiger” Lyons, President Emeritus
OLD MEMORIES

On a later EB-66 mission I was supporting one of our own F-105 strikes on Hanoi. I was assigned an orbit just west of Hanoi. On my second time around in my orbit area, as I turned left to head back north, I spotted a pair of Mig 17s at my 7 o’clock starting a typical pursuit curve. Then I noticed cannon fire from the lead Mig. At that moment my brain reverted back to my Air Combat Training in the F-86. I was no longer flying a B-66 -- I was mentally flying an F-86! I jammed both throttles to 100% and yanked that airplane into a tight turn right into them. The next thing those Mig pilots saw was me head on at them! Suddenly, they both yanked into 180 degree turns in opposite directions, cut in their afterburners and headed north into China. I was shaking my fist and hollering at them, “Come on back and fight!” Man! I got the worst case of shakes I’ve ever had! Then I realized the only thing I had to shoot with was a .38 caliber Police Special with a two inch barrel. Yep! Another “boomerang” – flying actual ACM unarmed!

-- Art McAninch

355th TFW Thuds at Takhli AFB

New Memories

Ace Cullerton Honored at Davis-Monthan

Bill Cullerton, the 355th’s fourth highest WWII scorer, is honored at Davis-Monthan AFB by having a street named after him.
Giving 'Em H*ll (on the D-M Bombing Range)

Dr. Hank Reichert's dual-seat P-51 (Tucson 2008 Reunion)
Markings are those of Noble Peterson (pilot) and Bob Coleman (crew chief)
Dragon Heroes (and other guys) at banquet in Tucson 2008

355th's Rides!
Davis-Monthan Flight Line (Tucson 2008 Reunion)
Group Photo with F-105 (Tucson 2008 Reunion)

Group Photo with A-10 (Tucson 2008 Reunion)

You too can be in our next 355th FGA Reunion photo! See page four for details on your 2009 San Antonio Reunion
More Photos from the Tucson 2008 Reunion

Lt. Col. Jill Long, USAF

Lt. Col. John Piowaty, USAF (Ret.) and Friends

Bob Coleman, Brady Williamson and Julius Moseley

Lt. Col. Ray Shewfelt, USAF (Ret.) and Friend

A presentation at the hotel

Ace Bill Cullerton and Col. Kent Laughbaum, USAF

These pictures and more from the 2008 Tucson Reunion held at Davis-Monthan AFB are available from the Treasurer; his address is on page 13. The DVD version costs $12 and the CD version costs $19.
355th Fighter Group Association Membership Application

If you want to join or renew your annual dues, please use this form. **Reminder:**
Annual dues are good for 1 Oct-30 Sept. If you are not sure if your dues are paid for this year or your membership status, please contact our Treasurer at the address below.

(Please Print)

NAME: __________________________    ______________________   __________________
                  (Last)                                    (First)                           (Middle)

ADDRESS: _________________________________________________________________

CITY: ________________________________  STATE: _______  ZIP: ______________

PHONE: ________________________________  (Optional)

I also desire membership in the 355th Fighter Association web site. (YES / NO)

E-Mail Address: ________________________________________________________________

DATE: ____________________________

(1) Check Box that applies to you:

   A (_____ ) 355th Fighter Group / WW II
   B (_____ ) Son, Daughter, or Widow of 355th FG / WW II Member
   C (_____ ) 355th USAF Unit since WW II (e.g.: 355 FG(AD), 355TFW, 355TTW, 355FW, 355 Wing and assigned support squadrons, detachments, etc.)
   D (_____ ) Son, daughter, or widow of (C) above.
   E (_____ ) Support Member - you wish to help perpetuate the memory of the 355th

(2) Attach check made out to "355th Fighter Association" for:
   (_____ ) Annual Dues $10 per year (valid 1 Oct - 30 Sept)
   OR
   (_____ ) Life Membership, $100 - no further dues

______________________________  __________________________
Signature  Date

(3) Mail To:  William D. Cook
             355th FGA Membership Committee
             811 Old Forge Road
             Kent, OH, 44240
355th Fighter Group Association Memorial Update

Here is an update on the 355th FG Memorial from Ray Leach, Secretary of the 355th UK Committee:

“We have always been unhappy with the etched Bomber Command badge, when comparing it to the coloured 355th crest. So, after much searching, I found a company that would produce what we wanted. Pictures 1 and 2 show the result. However, this was a personal project on behalf of four of the UK Committee, and as such the Association funds were not touched. However, picture 3 shows the cleaned paving and the replacement grouting between the slabs. Much of the old filler had deteriorated, so we put it to the CAF and they agreed. Picture 4 is a shot of the rear of the memorial. We have had it completely re-weather-proofed. It had never been done since the memorial was built, and we were beginning to see signs of water ingress. This too was put to CAF and again they agreed.”
Return Service Requested

**P. William Barnhart Jr., Secretary**
13557 Den Hollow Ct
Manassas, VA 20112-5545