



CONTROLS



Jerry McLaughlin at the controls of the B-17 restoration project for the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force. 45,000+ hours later all agree, job well done!

RE-STORE THIS! We review Jerry McLaughlin's book: *B-17 Flying Fortress Restoration*

President's Remarks

On December 12, 2008, Dr. Dik Daso, curator of the National Air and Space Museum emailed Dr. Walter Brown, then president and CEO of the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force: "Come and get her". He was referring to a plane, B-17G tail number 44-83814. Thus began an extensive six-plus year restoration project.

Jerry McLaughlin, a retired executive level manager in the intelligence community from the Washington D.C. area, was chosen as project manager. Having no experience in restorations, he was chosen for his executive and leadership skills. Jerry and Marshall Brooks, a longtime friend and museum volunteer, went to Virginia to make arrangements to bring the plane to the 8th AF museum.

Jimmy Grismer, the assistant project manager was due to make the trip as well but was ill. The fuselage arrived at the museum on January 15, 2009.

Bob Mikash, a friend of Marshall and retired curator at the National Museum of Air and Space, had written a book on aircraft restoration listing four fundamentals for a successful restoration. **1** The plane needs to be inside. **2** A system of firm and stable management needs to be established from beginning to end, and a chain of command needs to be put in place. **3** There must be a process to raise money. **4** Local aviation, industrial and technical resources need to be available and recruited.

With these fundamentals in mind, Jerry and his first group of volunteers started the project. Two—and eventually four—teams, each with a crew chief were organized with each

**The Eighth Air Force
Historical Society
The Birthplace Chapter**

P.O. Box 15714
Savannah, Georgia 31416
Since 1985/2001



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Board

Charles Sitrin, *President*

Al Pela, *Vice President*

Bob Buck, *Treasurer*

Sonny Koski, *Secretary*

Class of 2016

Sonny Koski, Marvin Ray

Charles Sitrin

Andy Steigmeier

Carolyn Steigmeier

Class of 2017

Steve Bowman, Bob Buck

Jim Grismer, Bill Murdock

Al Pela, Loretta Ray

Susie Stephens-Harvey

Director Emeritus

Ken Hoddinott, Bud Porter

Frank Paro, *Chaplain*

CONTRAILS

Creative Director:

Andy Steigmeier

Sales Manager: Dick Evans

Distribution: Dick Evans,
Jim Donatelli

Web Master: Hank Reed

www.mighty8thbirthplace.org

B-17 FLYING FORTRESS RESTORATION

The Story of a WWII Bomber's Return to Glory
in Honor of the Veterans
of the Mighty Eighth Air Force

Foreword by Lt. General E.G. Shuler, Jr. (Retired), Former Commander Eighth Air Force



Jerome J. McLaughlin

Save
the Date
July 20
1:00pm

BOOK RELEASE EVENT

American Legion Hall
1108 Bull St., Savannah, GA

Paperback, \$24.99

Kendle or eBook, \$7.99

Also available are
a limited number of
hard cover editions
for \$30.00

Bulk discounts
available.

Contact publisher
or shop at:

www.dudleycourtpress.com

having specific projects and goals. The first job was cleaning the B-17 that had been stored in a drafty hanger for more than 25 years. Using hard labor and sophisticated cleaning machinery it took 40 people a full year.

Jerry details in his book subsequent parts of the reconstruction, covering how each area of the project was tackled and the problems that arose from 2009 until 2015. He discusses as well the companies who provided expertise, material and skilled technicians. Those private individuals who helped with special problems and lent their unique talents to the restoration are mentioned and their contributions fully discussed.

At its dedication on January 28, 2015, Jerry noted that during the six-year restoration, 150 volunteers had served and 45,000 hours were needed. Our bird, "The City of Savannah" is the only static restoration with all working turrets including the upper turret. We arguably have the best static display B-17 restoration in the world.

I found Jerry's book to be well organized, extremely interesting, well written and easy to follow. The many photographs illustrate various parts of the restoration. I especially appreciated how volunteers or technicians who worked on the plane told in their own words the story of how a part was replicated or repaired. I recommend this excellent book to anyone interested in B-17s, aircraft restoration, or World War II history. – *Charles Sitrin, B. C. President*

June Chapter Dinner



Chapter President **Charles Sitrin** (right) with dinner speaker, **Jim Dunigan** who presented a very interesting history of the light cruiser, U.S.S. Savannah.



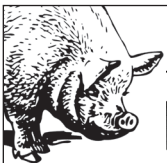
(Top) **Robert Middleton** and his brother-in-law **Craig Hoelbinger** are Vietnam vets. Robert, from NJ has been visiting Craig at his Sun City home, they are still on speaking terms. Job well done. OO-RAH! **Jeannie Paro** graced us with her participation in the candle lighting ceremony.

(Top) **Col. Ed Wexler** with his bride **Catherine**. Congrats to the newlyweds. **Linda and Bob Reeves** (above) are the picture of a happy couple. **Frank Anderson** • a WWII vet served in the 412th Signal Company, 95th BS, 17th BG and was part of the B-26 ground crew. Thank you for your service.



MISS SOPHIE'S

Located inside the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force
175 Bourne Avenue, Pooler, GA 31322 (912) 330-0778
Open Weekdays 11am–2pm www.sophiesmarketplace.com



SMITH BROTHERS
BUTCHER SHOP

Quality Meats & Provisions
EST 1924
535 E. LIBERTY STREET
912-239-4512

PARKING
AVAILABLE

WHO AM I?

I was born July 24, 1941 in Pittsburgh, PA. A University of Pittsburgh grad with a degree in Mechanical Engineering I worked for North American Aviation, working on the nose shock-wave and wing interaction of the X-15; eventually graduating from USC with a PhD in Aerospace Engineering. After 25 years with Celanese Corp I retired, moved to Savannah and joined the Birthplace Chapter where I served on the Executive Committee. Who am I?

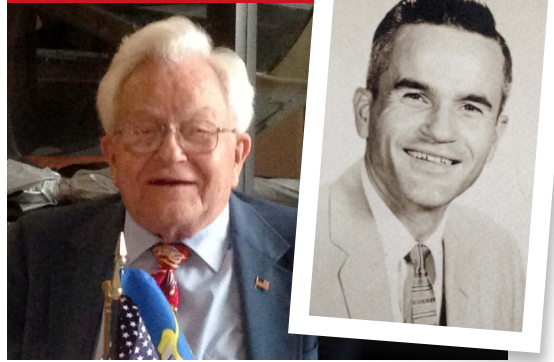


See **August Contrails** for this hero's bio and another "WHO AM I?" from the membership of The Birthplace Chapter.

If you would like to be included in the "Who am I?" series, please email your photo and a short bio to:
andy.acsdesign@gmail.com

Frank Paro

Last month's
"Who Am I?"



Last month's "Who Am I" is our own Birthplace Chapter Chaplain, Frank Paro. Most of us know him for his heartfelt invocations at our monthly dinner meetings he regularly attends with his wife Jeannie. They have been members of our Chapter since 2003.

Frank's life started in an orphanage in a tiny town in upstate New York before the Army and Air Force introduced him to life all over the world. When he was drafted in 1945 he had Basic Training in Fort McClellan, AL and Fort Dix, NJ before serving as a clerk in Japan and then Germany. In 1951 when he changed over to the U.S. Air Force, he became Chief Clerk in Wiesbaden, Germany and Oslo, Norway before coming back to the U.S. at Craig Air Force Base in Alabama. Six years later, a short time in Korea before a lucky move to Donaldson Air Force Base in South Carolina, where he met Jeannie in 1963 and got married the following year. Their son was born in 1968 and they now have two granddaughters.

Two more moves to New Jersey and Greenland before retiring with the rank of MSgt E-7 in 1966. Next time you see Frank at



the
Marshes
OF SKIDAWAY ISLAND

Savannah's Only Resort-Style
Senior Living Community
1-800-889-6238 1-912-598-5030

our dinner, be sure to ask him about his long list of Ribbons and Awards.

Choosing to live in Savannah, Frank worked for Southland Life Insurance Company. He also served as Music Director in De Renne Avenue Baptist Church until 1971 when he was called of the Lord to full time ministry in the field of music. Frank and Jeannie moved to Springfield, MO so he could attend Baptist Bible College. After graduating in 1977 with a Bachelor of

Arts in Music, they moved to Buffalo, MO, settling in for over 25 years where he served as Music Director for two Baptist churches. In 2002 they found their way back to Savannah, and he continued his calling as a volunteer Music Director until 2014.

It's our Chapter's blessing that Chaplain Frank was called to the ministry, eventually found his way to Savannah, and chooses to share his prayers to the Lord with all of us. ●

God's Co-Pilot

Darrel Lowell

March 3, 1933 - June 21, 2016

Our dear friend Darrel has taken off on his final mission—this time as a co-pilot. It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye. Our path forward will be a little less fun and a bit less zaney, but we carry with us the wisdom of this extraordinary man.

Loving husband, father, grandfather, Air Force veteran, B-47 pilot, past president of the Mighty Eighth Air Force Historical Society and the Birthplace Chapter, museum docent, elder at the Skidaway Island Presbyterian Church, avid golfer, mentor, and storyteller.

An old pilot says, "There are three simple rules for making a smooth landing. Unfortunately no one knows what they are." Well buddy, I have a feeling you're in for a smooth landing. —AS



**National Museum of the
Mighty Eighth Air Force**
Celebrating freedom . . . one visitor at a time.
www.mightyeighth.org



Chatham Steel
c o r p o r a t i o n

Chapter Dinner

@Mighty 8th
Museum

July
19th

Cash Bar • 5:30pm

Dinner \$15 • 6:30pm

Reservations required, please contact Carolyn Steigmeier at 914-787-9542 or steigmeier@aol.com by July 17th.

GUEST SPEAKER

William J. Daugherty, PhD

Not just anyone can be a consultant for Warner Brothers Studio on the movie *Argo*, as well as participate in the documentary, *Our Man in Tehran*. The headline getting reason for Dr. Daugherty's role is that while serving in the US Embassy in Iran in 1979, he was one of the 53 American diplomats held hostage for over a year by Iranian militants. Further supporting his expertise are numerous credentials, years of experience in national security and intelligence, as well as a background in military and general aviation.

His route started at Oklahoma Military Academy where he received his high school diploma in 1965 then enlisted in the Marine Corps. As a Naval Flight Officer he flew in the F-4 Phantom II; flying 76 missions over North and South Vietnam and Laos. He left active duty in 1974, completing his Reserve obligation in 1986 with the rank of Major.

By 1979 Dr. Daugherty had a PhD in



Government, with a focus on Executive-Congressional Relations, particularly foreign policy and relevant Constitutional law; and was working with the CIA. His final position in 1996 as

Senior Officer was Chief, Covert Action Group/Special Activities Division that included overseeing an \$85 million budget.

The next stop was Armstrong Atlantic State University where he taught a fascinating array of courses including foreign policy, defense, government, law, and politics; and wrote extensively. His book *Executive Secrets: Covert Action and the Presidency* is an informative read. He became Professor Emeritus of Government in 2013. ●



River Street Sweets
Voted Savannah's Best Candy Store
13 East River Street
Savannah, GA 31401
1-800-793-3876



John B. Rourke
GENTLEMEN'S CLOTHIERS

7135 Hodgson Memorial Dr.
Savannah, GA 31406

Phone: 912-355-1211
Fax: 912-355-4411

THIS MONTH IN 8TH AIR FORCE HISTORY

First 8th Air Force Operations.

12 A-20s hit 4 Dutch and French airfields.

July 4-12, 1942

Six 31st Fighter Group Spitfires

from Biggin Hill fly sweep mission over Gravelines, St. Olmer and Abbeville. One aircraft was MIA.

Group marking adopted for 8th Air Force aircraft.

July 26, 1942

Early July, 1943

13 B-17 groups put 237 aircraft over three French targets, dropping 542 tons of bombs, with losses of eight aircraft. 51 enemy aircraft were destroyed.

July 1, 1943

129 P-47s of the 4th, 56th, and 78th Fighter Groups carry out sweeps. The 56th FG claims three victories. Eaker exhibits displeasure at the lack of long range tanks needed for fighter escort, indicating he recognizes nature of fighter escorts.

July 4, 1943

3 BW is now in Air-Ground Support

Command (ASC). 323rd BG (M) flew its first mission. 14 B-26s dropped 17 tons of bombs on Abbeville rail yards. Medium bombers from the 323rd and 386th BGs become active in July and were joined by the 322nd BG (M) in August 1943.

July 10-26, 1943

VIII BC send 955 B-17s against German Targets, dropping 2,024 tons of bombs, with 57 MIAs.

July 16, 1943

July 28, 1943

202 B-17s dispatched

against Kassel and Oschersleben, drop 177 tons of bombs. Losses were 22 MIA. This date marked the first known German success in launching rockets against B-17 formations. Fw-190s and Me-110s launched 250lb rockets from outside 50 cal range. One rocket scored a hit on a 385th BG aircraft, causing it to hit two other aircraft. All three went down.

VIII BC attacks Kiel,

Warnemunde, and Kassel with 227 sorties and 703 tons of bombs. 22 aircraft were MIA. On 30 July, 107 P-47s of the 4th, 56th and 78th Fighter Groups downed 25 enemy aircraft with a loss of 7 MIA.

July 29-30, 1943

July 6, 1944

A major mission to central

Germany was launched to destroy oil, bearing and aircraft plants. 28 B-24s and 7 B-17s were MIA. 656 fighter escorts reported 6 MIA.

July 7, 1944

1,140 B-17s and B-24s, escorted by 1,027 fighters, drop a total of 3,102 tons of bombs on V-weapons sites in Pas de Calais, bridges south of Paris, and the shipyards at Kiel. 375 bombers were damaged and 3 were MIA.

July 18, 1944

1,082 bombers,

escorted by 670 fighters, drop 2,780 tons of bombs on targets in west and southwest Germany. 17 bombers were MIA.

July 19, 1944

644 492nd BG B-24s attack

tactical targets in direct support of ground troops. 291 3BD B-17s attack oil targets at Kiel. 459 1BD B-17s hit Luftwaffe at Peenemunde and Zinnowitz. In all, 1,220 bombers dropped 3,074 tons of bombs with 4 aircraft MIA. 419 escort fighters claim 21 kills with 3 MIA.

July 20, 1944

1,077 bombers,

escorted by 476 fighters, drop 2,667 tons of bombs on targets in western Germany. 19 bombers were MIA.

July 24-25 1944

8th Air Force executes Operation Cobra, the breakout from Normandy.



Best Western Plus

155 Bourne Avenue (next to Mighty Eighth AF Museum)
Pooler, Georgia 31322

Phone: (912) 330-0330; Fax 912-748-5670

For reservations call 866-360-0330



RENEW NOW!
**AND IF YOU ALREADY HAVE,
THANK YOU**

Last call to renew your membership for 2016.

Dues for 2016 remain at \$15. Your membership, plus any additional donation is tax deductible, and is vital to keep alive the memory and spirit of the men and women who served. Your dues are our primary source of revenue.

You may pay your dues at the monthly dinner or by filling out the membership form below and mailing it with your check to:

The Birthplace Chapter, P. O. Box 15714, Savannah, GA 31416.

2016 Birthplace Chapter Membership

\$15 ANNUAL DUES ADDITIONAL DONATION \$25 \$50 \$100 \$ _____

NAME

SPOUSE'S NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

HOME PHONE

CELL PHONE

EMAIL