

86TH FIGHTER-BOMBER GROUP ASSOCIATION

JULY 2009 NEWSLETTER



HOUSTON

OCTOBER 29, 30, 31, 2009

STAYBRIDGE SUITES-HOUSTON/CLEAR LAKE

501 W. TEXAS AVENUE, HOUSTON, TX 77598

PHONE (281) 338-0900 FOR YOUR RESERVATION

INTRODUCTION

We are **very** pleased to tell you that, after considerable negotiating, we have contracted with the Staybridge Suites to handle our October reunion needs. The Staybridge is a practically new hotel, having opened its doors in April this year. It is located in the Houston/Clear Lake area near NASA and the Johnson Space Center, heading south to Galveston.

There are three room configurations from which to choose:

- Studio suites that have a King size bed, full kitchen, love seat and desk.
- One-bedroom suites with choice of one King size or two Queen size beds, full kitchen, bar with two stools, and a couch that makes into a bed.
- Two-bedroom suites with a king size bed in one bedroom and two Queen size beds in the other, **two bathrooms**, and the same amenities as the one-bedroom suites: full kitchen, bar and convertible couch. This choice can easily accommodate three couples.

We want to stress that these are suites, not the typical hotel rooms. Those who attended the 1999 Reunion in Lompoc, CA will remember how nice those suites were. Prices for the three levels are \$109.00, \$119.00 and \$129.00, all plus 15% tax; no extra charge for more than one person in a suite.

Before you start blowing your stacks over these prices, simmer down, and listen up. The room rate in San Antonio was \$91.00 plus 16.75% tax, and they could not hold a candle to, or offer, the amenities at the Staybridge. **Now get this—ALL FOR FREE:**

- 1)...A full, hot breakfast (not just coffee and sinkers) will be included throughout our stay.
- 2)...The managers cook dinner for all guests Wednesday and Thursday nights.
- 3)...For Friday night, Texas barbecue is cooked by Ellen Massey (with the Clear Lake area Chamber of Commerce who deserves kudos for her invaluable service with reunion hosts Rick and Peggy Fitzpatrick), with her husband Curtis and friends.
- 4)...Transportation to and from all outside activities, to include Hobby Airport. This item alone saves us \$750.00 to \$1,500.00 for buses, a cost we would otherwise have had to include in your ARF (Activities Reservation Form).
- 5)...Some of Ellen's delicatessen friends are providing finger sandwiches and cookies for our Hospitality Room.

In summary, your only expenses for food throughout your stay are luncheons (don't forget the kitchens in your suite) and the Saturday night banquet at a very reasonable price.

86th FIGHTER-BOMBER GROUP ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER

July 2009

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We as veterans of WWII are organized to perpetuate the history of our fight to retain our American freedoms, to meet once a year for a reunion with the purpose of maintaining close ties with the Association and our comrades, and to encourage the heirs of our veterans to join with us in a united effort to hold on to our legacy.

(Continued from page 1)

The Staybridge has a media room to watch movies, wartime CD's, etc with surround sound and leather theatre seats. There is an impressive swimming pool right off the Hospitality Room and a huge hot tub to soothe your weary bones, so remember to pack a swim suit. You hackers might want to bring along your putters to check out the putting green.

If you are flying to the reunion, you want to be sure that you land at Hobby Airport, located fairly close to our hotel. George H.W. Bush International is, believe me, **a long way** across town. I believe that Southwest is the only major airline operating out of Hobby, but their air fares are very competitive.



ONE-BEDROOM WITH KITCHEN/BAR



STUDIO SUITE



MAKE A NOTE

Deadline for making your hotel reservations is **October 8, 2009**. Cancellations will be accepted up to 24 hours prior to your reservations.

POTPOURRI

✿ The last page of this Newsletter is the ARF (Activities Reservation Form) for the Houston reunion. There is a lot to tempt you to come back to Texas this year: great tours, new hotel with suites, reasonable food prices, and, best of all, the Group hospitality. Note that your completed ARF and a check payable to 86th FBG Assn are to be mailed to Debbie ROSE, our Executive Assistant. This is a departure from the procedure we have followed since the Association's inception.

✿ Here's an excerpt from a letter to me from Tim SNIDER. Everyone who went to the Las Vegas reunion will remember Tim and his brother Ken, the offspring of the late J. Martin SNIDER, 527th pilot. They brought their restored 527th Jeep that Debbie Reynolds fell in love with.

"BTW here's a little story about George Gobel (*one of the funniest comedians ever for my money - Editor*) some may not have heard. He was a multi-engine instructor pilot at Frederick Army Air Field in OK while you guys were in Italy and France. Frederick is 45 miles from where I live. On the Tonight Show when asked about his service, he proudly stated that not a single German plane got past the Red River during his tour in Oklahoma."

(Editor's note: On the Johnny Carson show, with Bob Hope and Dean Martin, Gobel observed, "Did you ever have the feeling that the entire world was a tuxedo, and you were a pair of brown shoes?")

Tim went on to say, "Now, if you have a few minutes, look into wwiadt.com. This is a civilian, non profit group that puts people thru airborne training in period uniforms, using two C-47's. Same training used in 1943. Housed in the same Frederick airfield hanger used by George Gobel and the multi school. We have set up a barracks with army cots upstairs, a mess hall and classrooms downstairs, parachute packing tables on the main hanger floor, wooden bunks and footlockers in the

cadre barracks. Reveille at 0600, lights out at 2030. All students get a turn at KP and latrine duty and at least a little close order drill and daily flag ceremony.

"Jump school is held in Jan and July each year with a jump/requalify/workweekend about every month. I'm over there every week restoring the hanger, keeping the jeeps and trucks running and crewing the C-47's. My son went thru jump school last year. One of the worthwhile, fun things I get to do. Of course you are welcome any time. Come and see the signed photo of George Gobel we have."

✿ Your reporter is in possession of two CD-R's of 86th Group Intelligence Mission Reports and Daily Operations Reports for 1944-45, received from a WWII Italian researcher. Anyone interested should contact the Secretary.

✿ I have several copies of group pictures taken at past reunions. These will be distributed on a first come, first served basis.

Branson (2004): Veterans (2)
Family/Guests (1);

Minneapolis/St. Paul II (2005):
Family/Guests (1);

Indianapolis (2007): Family/Guests (1).

527th Squadron pilots taken at Meridian, MS before we shipped out to Africa (4).

✿ Our Executive Assistant, "Debbie" ROSE, has taken the lead in a campaign to add new family members and friends (the Next Generation) to the Active Roster. At the same time, she wants to encourage those already on the roster to take a more active part in the Association that will be theirs to operate before very long if we are to continue as a viable group. An important first step might mean signing up for the Volunteer Pool from which future members of the Board of Directors are elected as openings occur.

IN MEMORIAM



ARMFIELD, George J. (527 Engrg.) – Passed away 02/15/09 after a coma of a few days duration, as advised by Bill and Peggy Wilson. George and his wife Myrtle (died 06/15/02) were early, enthusiastic supporters of the Association, were Lifetime Members, and attended 19 reunions. He was at Oklahoma City II in 2006, but ill health prevented his attendance the past 2 years. Memorial flowers in the name of the Association were part of the funeral services held on 02/19/09.



BAHR, Harvey J. (527 Armament Chief) – Mail addressed to Harvey marked "Return to Sender – Deceased.". Exact date unknown; Social Security Death Index shows 2008. Harv was a good personal friend, a Lifetime Member who attended three early reunions, but was unable to come in later years due to his wife Grace's health. She passed away two years ago.

BENEAR, Bert (526 Pilot) – At the end of March, I received a recent newspaper article (undated) from Eli SETENCICH reporting Bert's death and describing his war career, including the fact that he was an "Ace" with seven German planes shot down to his credit. Eli describes him as a "wild and crazy guy, arguably the best pilot in the unit."

BENEDICT, William P. (526 C.O.) – Bill is carried on our Deceased list, but without a date. I recently heard from an associate that he was killed fighting forest fires in Northern California when his tanker aircraft crashed on 08/31/74. His widow Mary passed away in July 2007.

BRINK, John E. (525 Pilot) – Deceased 11/28/08 following "a serious illness with his lungs" according to information received from David COVINGTON, Jim's son. John never attended a reunion but he was a Lifetime Member.

CLARK, Jerry T. (GHQ Supply) – Deceased 2008 per Social Security Death Index (SSDI). He was carried on our Inactive Roster.

DIEHL, JR., Joseph (525 Mess Hall) – Deceased 2008 per SSDI. He was carried on our Not Located list.

FANSLER, Jr., Fred I. "Fritz" (525 Pilot) – Billie, his wife of 64 years, writes that he passed away on 01/29/09. He had been in ill health for several months but died quickly and peacefully. "He was the love of my life from the time we were 13 years old. I used to tell him we raised each other."

FULTON, Bruce W. (527 Pilot – POW) – Deceased 03/19/09 at Thomson-Hood Veteran Center in Kentucky. Bruce attended our reunion in Omaha in 1992, but had been on our Inactive Roster for a number of years. I had been in touch with some Italian researchers who were attempting to locate Bruce's P-47 at the site where he was shot down in the Po Valley on 12/10/44. Ironically, they were successful in recovering the plane's engine and machine guns just nine days prior to Lt. Fulton's death.

GAINES, James R. (525 Pilot) – Deceased 1999 according to SSDI. He was carried on our Not Located list.

GAITHER, Gene E. (526 Arcft. Mech.) – Deceased 2009 according to SSDI. He was carried on our Not Located list.

GLOECKLER, James R. (526 Operations Ofcr) - Deceased 2009 according to SSDI.

HICKS, Ernest M. (526 Pilot) - Deceased 08/29/08 according to an obituary notice sent by his wife Dianne.

HIGGS, Harold D. (527 Crew Chief) - Deceased 2008 according to SSDI. Harold attended one of our first reunions but, at his subsequent personal request, was carried on our Inactive Roster.

HOHENSTEIN, Milton L. (526 Engrg.) - Died 08/31/08 after a long bout with COPD according to a letter from his wife Mary Catherine. He would have been 90 this year and they would have celebrated their 60th anniversary. He was a Lifetime Member (LM-6058) and attended three of the early reunions.

HOLMBERG, John B. (527) - Deceased 06/15/09 after being diagnosed with terminal prostate cancer. His wife, Lucille, preceded him in death on 06/10/04. They were both early and strong advocates of the Association and attended 17 consecutive reunions from Oklahoma City I in 1981 to Las Vegas in 1997. Health problems prevented them from attending in recent years. The Association sent a floral wreath for his funeral service.



HURLBUTT, Paula (Wallis 525 Pilot) - Passed away 03/07/09 according to information received from John SENNEFF.

MAZUREK, Ben F. (527 Commun.) - Deceased 04/08/09 after a lengthy illness, including the last three years in a nursing home as reported by his wife. She wrote that Ben always looked forward to the Newsletters,

read and reread them, and kept them in a file. He had a graveside military service at the conclusion of which the pastor's grandson played "Amazing Grace" on his bagpipes.

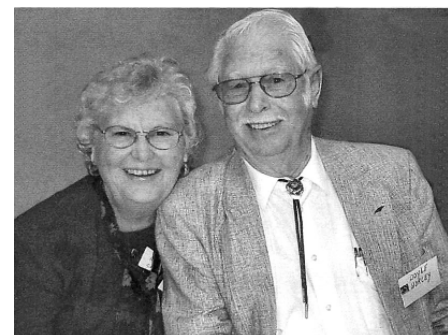


PASCOLINI, Spartaco (525 Intelligence) - His wife advised that he had died unexpectedly on 05/29/09 of unknown causes. He was finally located last year and had no opportunity of attending a reunion.

SCHRACK, Doris E. (John P. 527 Pilot) - Mail to her had been returned by the P.O. as undeliverable. Now, she is reported deceased by the SSDI.

SHUFF, Bertha (GHQ) - Herb Shuff reports the death of his wife of 66 years on 04/02/08. Those in attendance at our Meridian reunion may recall that she slipped in the bathtub at the motel where we staying, injured her back, and underwent a long convalescent period.

WORLEY, Doyle D. (525 Pilot) - An e-mail message from Marge Carroch and Doyle's kids advises Doyle's sudden death on 02/05/09. He had been hospitalized for a procedure to open a clogged artery, made it through surgery, then his heart just decided to stop. Doyle and Marge were Lifetime Members and stalwarts of the Association with 15 reunions attended.



ROSTER MAINTENANCE

This section intentionally omitted.

Seen on an automobile license holder recently.

OUTTA MY WAY

I GOTTA PEE



My Kinda Humor

FINANCIAL REPORT—FIRST QUARTER 2009

BALANCE AT CLOSE OF YEAR 2008 (123108)		\$4,620.10
Receipts for First Quarter		
Annual Dues (3 @ \$10.00)	\$30.00	
Lifetime Membership (1 @ \$100.00)	\$100.00	
Bank Copy Fee Reversal/Bank Adjustment.....	<u>\$16.32</u>	
	\$146.32	
		\$4,766.42
Disbursements for First Quarter		
Printing & Postage	\$308.50	
Phone (for 2008).....	\$13.50	
Office Supplies	\$16.46	
Computer Supplies	\$75.76	
Funeral Flowers.....	\$76.98	
Memorial Donation.....	\$79.00	
Bank Charges	<u>\$23.00</u>	
	\$593.20	
BALANCE AT CLOSE OF FIRST QUARTER (033109)		<u>\$4,173.22</u>

FOOTNOTES TO FINANCIAL REPORT

\$10 Annual Dues, \$100 Lifetime (Cumulative)
 VC = Voluntary Contribution

- * Dues payers since last Newsletter: Allen M. HANSEN (526), Harold G. SIMPSON (526)
 Richard SINGLETON (527)
 Life Members: Milton L. HOHENSTEIN (LM-6048), Rick WORLEY (LM-5112)
- * We have some 14 members who have contributed \$70.00 or more toward the \$100.00 required for Lifetime Membership (on the active roster, those identified by the initials LM and 4 digits in Assignment space following member names). Contact the Secretary if you are not a Lifetime Member and would like to know the status of your dues payment.
- * Don't forget, all contributions are tax deductible if you itemize deductions on your tax return.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



John RICE, our Webmaster, reports that the **War Diaries** (daily activities reports by Intelligence officers) for all three squadrons and Group Headquarters have been posted to our website. This was no easy undertaking and John rates a big round of applause. Everyone, and especially those who have never seen these historic documents, should check them out. They'll bring back a lot of memories. John's next project will be posting group pictures for most of our reunions, plus a bunch of "candid."



k1441954 www.fotosearch.com