



A few words from our Leader

By Kathy Cluff

Planting Marigolds

Last year at the reunion in California, each person received a packet of Marigold seeds. These were both decorative but also symbolic. These yellow flowers are pretty hardy and with a little bit of care and luck they come back each year ... just like the Checkertails. Don't forget to plant yours!

Our Checkertails Organization was formed in 2010 to carry on the tradition of the "World Famous" Checkertail Clan. We are dedicated to preserve, promote, and protect the legacy of these men. This year, as we do each year that passes, we feel the loss of survivors and supporters. However, we also feel the joy of the new ideas, interest, and enthusiasm for the group as our numbers grow. At least once a month I receive email or call from someone whose father, uncle, or grandfather was in the unit. They want to connect with us and grow with us to continue the legacy. The reunions are not attended by just *Original Members*, but also by children and supporters who are driven to share their interest and connect with others who share the same. I am truly awed and inspired by others.

This year we see movement by a supporter from Canada who is working on building a Checkertail memorial at the site of the 325th Airfield in Lesina, Italy. We received notice that the Legend of the Checkertails will be a trilogy. And a young boy from France, while researching the history of the P-51, found new friends across the sea.

Our numbers continue to grow, like the marigolds. I planted mine right outside my front door step where I can watch them grow, and they remind me of my dad, Jack Evans. No wonder yellow was his favorite color.

Keep the Checkertails Flying!

Visit our website at www.checkertails.org and click the **Donate** button for electronic payment.

Send check payable to "Checkertails Organization" to
1004 Foulk Road, Wilmington, DE 19803

For further information please contact any board member
or email checkertail325@verizon.net.



318th Squadron has its own web site!

From P-40s to jets. A new web site for the 318th Fighter Squadron has been established, and, judging by its proposed content, when completed the site will include a huge amount of good information, including all commanders, top NCOs, pictures of aircraft flown, personnel photos, and much other material.

During World War II, 71 318th Fighter Squadron pilots scored 175 aerial victories, of those pilots, eight achieved "Ace" status while with the Squadron, downing 56 aircraft.



On 2 June 1944, Col. Chet Sluder led 64 P-51 Mustangs from the 325th Fighter Group in the first shuttle mission to the Soviet Union in a 15th Air Force operation titled "Operation Frantic Joe." The P-51B he flew was *Shimmy III*

It's Concord in '13!

AUGUST 8-11

2013 Checkertail Clan Reunion

See page 7
for more
information.





317th Commanding Officer, Ground Officers and Enlisted Men / May 7, 1945

If the date is correct, Major John R. (Shorty) Burman commanded the squadron from 3 April 1945 to May 1945

Military nicknames did not always describe the guy they were attached to

There was “Murph” who was William Murphy, and Hank who was “Henry Greve” and “Herky” who was Herschel Green; but some nicknames given guys in the military were selected because they were the exact opposite of the person that answered to them. That was the case with a major who was assigned to be my tent mate in late summer 1944.

Bill Murphy, my tentmate, recently had gone down to finish the war as a German-held POW. He had shared the tent with me from the time we reported for duty with the 317th Squadron in April 1944. Bill and I had devoted many hours improving our “home”. Now I was solo in a very nicely arranged tent. It was understandable that when a new major reported for duty with the 317th, he would be assigned to my tent.

I had to stand tall and look up when Major John R. Burman brought his baggage to the tent. He was the tallest fighter pilot I ever saw. He would look down at a 6’4” guy. He had problems with the canvas cots that were our beds, and a full length mosquito net failed to protect his head and feet at the same time. Naturally, his nickname was “Shorty”.

And, bless his heart (as Southerners say), Shorty Burman thought flying the P-51 Mustang with its bubble canopy was pure Heaven! His previous assignment required that fly a P-39 Airacobra, which had a cockpit so small that even my 5’9” frame was cramped in it. Shorty told of flying a P-39 through extreme turbulence. His head had banged the canopy, first one side, then the other, and then the top. He was bruised to the extent that a trip to the Flight Surgeon was required to get him fit for flight again. Shorty absolutely loved the Checkertails and his new steed. Shorty was 317th Commander in April and May 1945. I believe he is in the center of the first row in the photo above.

An early Checkertail member checks in

“Thank you for the latest Checkertail Clan newsletter. It was much appreciated. There needs to be a couple of changes in the information concerning me, David D. Campbell. The correct phone number is 513-376-6694. I was one of the original members of the 318th Fighter Squadron, 325th Fighter Group. Starting in September 1942, after 51 missions I returned to the US. Later I was commissioned in the Regular US Army Air Corps and then the USAF, retiring in 1970. I am requesting info as to whom I might send a contribution to help defray some of the expenses associated keeping the records/maintaining a newsletter/etc.”—
DAVID D. CAMPBELL, 3939 Erie Avenue, #1070, Cincinnati, Ohio 45208.

About 20 June 1943, Flight Officer David Campbell was credited with shooting down a 6-engined Me-323, a huge German transport with a 181-foot wingspan.

The dangers of strafing trains

Ray Woodstock wrote from Hawaii to tell of one of his experiences strafing trains: “I remember well the day when Tom Batey and I were flying together in Chez and I attacked a rail train between Praduce and Polin. Close to the ground just above the trees, I waved to a couple leaving their house stooped over and running towards a forest in the back of their house. Then I turned and started strafing a train from the box cars to the engine. In the middle of the train the walls of a box car came down and a mounted gun from the train started firing at me. As I flew over the engine, I was engulfed in smoke and thought the engine had exploded and the train metal was rising and would hit my plane. I squeezed my body up thinking metal would hit me, but after I got through flying through that large ball of smoke, I realized that I had not been hit.”

Thomas Ricci wants information on bases

"Hi, all! I am trying to confirm two AF bases that the 325th called home. The first home when the Fighter Group was activated on 3 August 1942; and the second or current AF base being Tyndall AFB, Florida. I am struggling trying to identify the first home. I would appreciate your help. Thank you."

Herky Green's book, "Herky," tells that the 317th Squadron and 325th Group Headquarters originally were located at Hillsgrove, Rhode Island; the 318th Squadron was at Manchester, New Hampshire; and the 319th Squadron was at Hartford, Connecticut. Chain of command was through the Boston Air Defense Wing to First Fighter Command to First Air Force.

"I have been making regular trips to Italy on a personal quest to learn more about the 325th FG in Lesina. I have stirred more than just an interest in photographs, but more and more of the 325th and its daily activities. The Mayor's office and my team, made up of local residents only, have positively and without argument confirmed a request to approve a memorial to the men of the 325th FG. I will be in Lesina in August to review the next steps to bring the 325th sites to restoration along with the buildings."—TOM RICCI.

Remembering fathers on Memorial Day

Today is one of those days that I miss my Dad so much. He loved putting up the flag on Memorial Day and always told me that he was one of the lucky ones. I can't bear to replace that flag because it was the one that he touched with honor. I know that he would be proud of the way that we have carried on the Checkertail Clan.—KATHY EVANS CLUFF.

Seen by many: Gayle Bolek and all others like this.

Visited him, my Dad, and the Cortilesoes today. They are fine, it is we who are left behind who have an especially heavy heart today.—JANICE SHELLAR WATSON.

I so can understand this for my father flew the red, white & blue daily! When time came that he wore the nation's flag out, we would have to send it off the right way and then buy the next glorious USA Flag!—JULIE MCPHERSON.

Happy Memorial Day!—DAMON ERIC WOODSON.



Honoring those not here

Happy Memorial Day Weekend! Remembering Damon's Dad and all other brave heroes who have fought/are fighting for our freedom. Thanks y'all—at Andersonville National Historic Site.—JENNIFER STOUDI.

Not many WWII Checkertails left. I hope this one still gets to fly in the clouds with his wife and his middle son.—DAMON ERIC WOODSON,

Warren Knox has "gone west"

We were deeply saddened to receive word from his son, Tom, that Warren Knox, 317th Fighter Group pilot, "went west" on 8 June 2013. He was a resident of Reo Rancho, New Mexico.



Warren, a Flight Officer pilot, went down in a P-47 Thunderbolt on 11 March 1944 and became a POW. After the war, he accepted a commission in the Army Air Corps and served with distinction until his retirement from the US Air Force. He enjoyed numerous Checkertail Reunions.

What happened to our tandem Mustang? What caused the damage to this airplane?

In summer of 1944, a 325th Mustang suffered damage during a combat mission that barred it from combat. It returned to Lesina with its wings showing rivets popped and the skin wrinkled. Captain Warren Cook, the 317th Engineering Officer, asked me to take the plane for a test hop, during which he hoped I would find it good reason it was unsatisfactory for combat.

The Mustang surprised me by flying beautifully, but my job was to find problems that barred it from combat. So I began acrobats. The P-51 rolled nicely, left and right. It managed a chandelle as neatly as my own Mayfair 24.

Then I tried a loop. The first half was perfect; but when I was upside down, that Mustang rolled top-side up despite my walking the rudders like crazy. Three more attempts brought the same result—an Immelmans every time! How was I going to describe this in a written report to 15th Air Force?

Then, in a last attempt to find problems, I dived with wide open throttle from 12,000 feet. The air speed indicator needle passed 450 mph and headed toward 500. Then there was an explosion like a stick of dynamite! Wind battered my head. The canopy had exploded, and the wind stream was trying to tear me from the cockpit. I pulled out of the dive and flew straight and level back to the field at Lesina. No more test flight for me!

I devoted two hours to a report of my 40 minute flight. I do not remember today what I wrote that afternoon, but it must have satisfied higher headquarters that this was one P-51 that should see no more combat.

It required only a couple of days for crew chiefs to rip out all the guns, the armor plate, and the 85-gallon fuel tank behind the seat. A second bucket seat was installed in place of the fuel tank, and the canopy was replaced. So far as I know, the Checkertails had to first tandem seated Mustangs in existence. It served beautifully for administrative purposes, took Dr. Marquardt on his single combat mission, and provided rides for every crew chief that wanted to fly.

All that leads up to this question: **What damaged that P-51?**

The story told to me was that its pilot had tried to take a short cut through the base of a thunderhead over Yugoslavia in an attempt to catch up with his squadron, and the big thunder-bumper grabbed hold of it. The pilot aborted the mission and flew home. Others had different and more colorful explanations of what had caused the damage.

Can you recall our tandem seated Mustang? What's your version of what caused the damage?—BARRIE DAVIS.

The TO&E of a Fighter Squadron, Single Engine

My first three months overseas were devoted to ferrying aircraft across North Africa and to combat outfits in Italy. It was fun, but everyone in the group of 18 pilots who were cabin mates on the boat ride across the Atlantic from Norfolk to Casablanca was chomping at the bit to join a combat unit. It was more than just wanting to fight those Huns. We were on detached service to a unit that had no Table of Organization. That meant, we were told, no efficiency reports, no real chain of command, and no promotions. In late April 1944, when we finally were assigned to the famed 325th Fighter Group, all that changed. Each squadron had a TO&E. There was a chain of command! There were efficiency reports. We had to straighten up and fly right!

But I never cared about a TO&E. I was a Second Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps and belonged to the Checkertails.

The following year, 1945, I was back in the States trying futilely to get an opportunity to fight the Japanese. My many letters requesting assignment to the Pacific went for naught. "Davis," a personnel officer told me, "They've got more captains than they can use out there. If an outfit takes you, some good first lieutenant won't get a deserved promotion."

I could understand that.

It was only during the past few years that I obtained a TO&E for a Single Engine Fighter Squadron. It is as interesting to me today as it would have been during 1944 when I was a member of the 317th. This information came from a TO&E dated 22 December 1943.

A Squadron had two echelons: Air and Ground with a combined total complement of 121 men. (Sorry, guys, but in those

days we had no females flying combat for us.)

All of the 35 officers in the Air Echelon were rated pilots. There was a Squadron Headquarters, containing a Lieutenant Colonel as Squadron Commander, and a Major who was Operations Officer. There were 9 captains, four of whom were Flight Leaders. A Captain served as Adjutant, another as Flight Surgeon, one as Engineering Officer, one as Intelligence Office who also handled public relations, and one managed a combined job as Assistant Operations Officer and Gunnery Officer.

Flying the fighter planes were the 4 Flight Leaders, 8 First Lieutenants, and 12 Second Lieutenants. The squadron was authorized 25 airplanes; with 24 pilots in the four flights, that left a single airplane to be shared by the Squadron CO, the Operations Officer, and possibly the Group CO, if he had been reassigned from one of the squadrons. It did not matter how many pilots and how many airplanes were assigned to the 325th, Col. Chet Sluder flew nothing but the number he had taken when he first joined the Checkertails. With 24 pilots assigned to four flights, during a busy time they could count on taking to the air nearly every day.

It is interesting the number of weapons that were authorized a fighter squadron. A full complement included 228 carbines, 4 .50 caliber machine guns, 24 .45 caliber submachine guns, and 28 .45 caliber automatic pistols. The pistols were issued only to field grade officers and pilots. All other officers were armed with carbines.

Pilots preferred shooting machineguns carried by planes, but braggad of being experts with hand guns.—BARRIE DAVIS.

Eleven 20mm shells in a B-17 fuel tank!

E-mail from Barry Horne to Joseph L. Tart

from Alex Kvassay Report, Algiers, April 2013

I read Bendiner's book *Falling Fortresses* many years ago and consider this the most bazaar aviation story I ever read ... wanna set the odds on the note ever being found ... ??

He found out about it from his pilot 35 years after the event when comparing log books at lunch ... it was classified immediately after the shells were recovered.

This was published in an AF Village monthly news publication. Elmer Bendiner was a navigator in a B-17 during WWII. He tells this story of a World War II bombing run over Kassel, Germany, and the unexpected result of a direct hit on their gas tanks:

"Our B-17, the Tondelayo, was barraged by flack from Nazi anti-aircraft guns. That was not unusual, but on this particular occasion our gas tanks were hit. Later, as I reflected on the miracle of a 20 millimeter shell piercing the fuel tank without touching off an explosion, our pilot, Bohn Fawkes, told me it was not quite that simple.

"On the morning following the raid, Bohn had gone down to ask our crew chief for that shell as a souvenir of unbelievable luck. The crew chief told Bohn that not just one shell but 11 had been

found in the gas tanks... 11 unexploded shells where only one was sufficient to blast us out of the sky. It was as if the sea had been parted for us. Even after 35 years, so awesome an event leaves me shaken, especially after I heard the rest of the story from Bohn.

"He was told that the shells had been sent to the armorers to be defused. The armorers told him that Intelligence had picked them up. They could not say why at the time, but Bohn eventually sought out the answer.

"Apparently when the armorers opened each of those shells, they found no explosive charge. They were as clean as a whistle and just as harmless. Empty? Not all of them! One contained a carefully rolled piece of paper. On it was a scrawl in Czech. The Intelligence people scoured our base for a man who could read Czech. Eventually they found one to decipher the note. It set us marveling. Translated, the note read: '*This is all we can do for you now*'."

MARK IT ON YOUR CALENDAR TODAY!

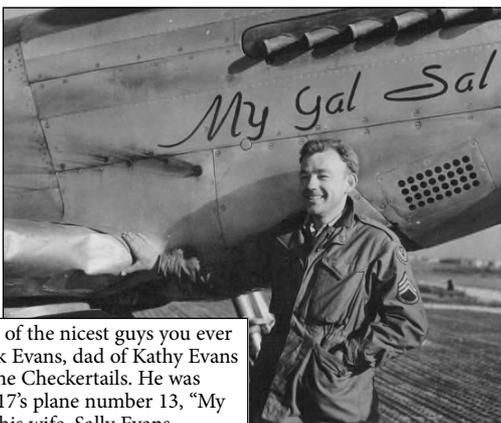
Concord, Aug. 8-11



AFTER THE BIG FIGHT: All the 318th pilots in the picture scored at least one victory: Front: Voss, Bradley, Bevan, Fotsythe, Aron, Barton; Back: Mau, Selenger, Pace, Henry, Parker, Chamberlain, Burns.



At left: Major General Nathan Twining, flanked by Colonel F. L. Videl, addresses those who received medals and other recognition at Mondolfo, Italy, in May 1945.



MY GAL SAL! One of the nicest guys you ever met was the late Jack Evans, dad of Kathy Evans Cluff, president of the Checkertails. He was Crew Chief of the 317's plane number 13, "My Gal Sal," named for his wife, Sally Evans.

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Help keep the Checkertails flying!

We do not charge any dues and the reunion fees barely cover the cost of the reunion. We rely on your tax-deductible donations to fund our operating costs such as website, merchandising, postage, and bank fees. It is simple to make a donation to support our efforts!

Visit our website at www.checkertails.org and click the **Donate** button for electronic payment.

Send check payable to "Checkertails Organization" to
1004 Foulk Road, Wilmington, DE 19803

For further information please contact any board member or email checkertail325@verizon.net.

Mondolfo Airfield

Mondolfo Airfield, 12 aprile 1945, il 325th Fighter Group è arrivato a Mondolfo solo da pochi giorni quando giunge dagli Stati Uniti la notizia della morte del Presidente Franklin D. Roosevelt. Nei giorni successivi numerose cerimonie commemorative si celebreranno in tutti i fronti di guerra. Questa foto è stata appunto scattata il 14 aprile 1945 nel campo di Mondolfo, dove il Capitano T. Mitzner, Cappellano militare del 325th FG, conduce, dalle scale della torre di controllo, un servizio memoriale in onore del Presidente Roosevelt alla presenza di personale del gruppo.

(Foto AFHRA Maxwell Air Force Base, USA. Collezione Edi Eusebi)

The death of U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt is announced to assembled members of the 325th.



Foto AFHRA
Maxwell Air Force Base,
USA

Extracts from notes by Sgt. Edward Doss of military experiences April '43 to Sep. '45

Edward H. Doss, whose USPS address is P.O. Box 1607, Aransas Pass, Texas 78335, sent a very interesting packet of information on his life with the 319th Fighter Squadron, 325th Fighter Group, from the time he reported for duty in early 1943 until his release from Active Duty 2 September 1945.

Sgt. Doss had twin brothers, Richard and John, serving also. Richard Doss joined the Navy, and John Doss was in the Merchant Marine. All three left Elmwood Park, Illinois, to join the military. The twin bothers both later graduated from Johns Hopkins University with M.D. degrees.



Edward Doss
Crew Chief
1943-1945
from a newspaper
clipping

Following the U.S. invasion of Southern France, during which the Checkertails flew from an airfield north of Rome and provided escort for transports and troop-carrying gliders, Sgt. Doss received a commendation written by the commanding officer of a veteran C-47 Troop Carrier Group for his excellent work supporting the Mustangs of the 325th Group.

The sergeant kept a detailed list of missions flown by his assigned planes, which included P-40s, P-47s, and P-51s, beginning with the first mission on 17 April 1943. The missions included escort for B-25 North American Mitchells and B-26 Martin Marauders. In addition, the P-40s did excellent work dropping 500 pound bombs on targets in Tunis, Sicily, and Sardinia.

The first Thunderbolt mission recorded in Sgt. Doss's notes was on 19 November 1943 when the Checkertails flew escort for the plane carrying U.S. President Franklin Roosevelt to the Cairo Conference.

The first P-51 Mission took place 26 May 1944. It was an escort mission to Marseille, France.

July 1944 was a busy month for the 325th and its Mustangs. Missions were flown 2-9, 13-16, 18-28, and 30-31 July. Just after the middle of the month was the busiest time, with a missions flown for 11 consecutive days. A mission was flown on all but six July days. It kept Sgt. Doss and all the maintenance people busy making the certain the Mustangs were ready for combat.

Be in Massachusetts in August and hear Ed relate some of the experiences of the Checkertails at our 2013 Reunion. He's a great story teller. Like those of most of the Clan members, his stories get better with every passing year.

A summary of what happened with the Checkertails during his time with the group shows 128 P-40 missions, 97 P-47 missions, and 342 P-51 missions, totaling 567, during which its pilots scored 534 aerial victories, 281 aircraft destroyed by strafing, and 52 probable aerial victories with a loss of 148 planes. Total sorties was 18,212 with 70,772 combat hours.

According to Ed's notes, the 325th also destroyed by strafing 264 locomotives, 159 motor cars, and 148 rail cars. The Group also was credited with 137 locomotives probably destroyed.

Ed continued making daily notes until 22 August 1945 when he arrived at Boston, and then ended his recording 2 September when he was discharged.



Svengali. Art Fiedler found himself in a quandary during a mission in 1944 when he lined up to knock a Bf-109 out of the sky and found his guns would not fire. With few other options, he pulled up beside the German plane, and he and the enemy pilot stared at each other. Then, without really thinking, Art pulled his .45 automatic from its holster. His opponent instantly jettisoned the Messerschmidt's canopy and hit the silk. Art used his gun camera to record his enemy's trip to earth via parachute, and was credited with one of his eight victories. For his magical victory, he was given the title of the master hypnotist, Svengali.

Bad news! Tom Batey can't make reunion!

"Thanks for the notice of the Checkertail Reunion. Doubtful if I will make it as I had a stroke on 4/11. I am doing well with my recovery and only minimal physical damage. Still going through rehab and doing OK.

"Will forward to Kevin (my youngest son) in hopes he can attend.—Mahalo nui loa, **TOM BATEY.**"

...and neither can Neil Pugh from the UK

"Holy smokes, Tom! Wishing you a speedy recovery, take care! Sadly I cannot attend this year as money really is too tight." Yours sincerely, **NEIL PUGH.**"

Neil is planning to produce Part 3 of the Checkertail Documentary! He had this to say to Tom Ricci about a 325th monument in Lesina:

"Please keep me/us informed should this memorial actually happen and when it would be unveiled. It may make a great intro to the 3rd and final part of my Checkertails Trilogy. Cheers, **NEIL.**"

THE ROLL CALL

Assembled and mailed occasionally by Barrie Davis, 307 Nostalgia Lane, Zebulon, NC 27597, to known members of the Checkertail Clan for edification of members of the Clan, their families, and friends, from material collected from many sources, some not mentionable!

WANTED!

Stories, photos, other information of the 325th Fighter Group in World War 2

For publication, send to: rotaryfriend1@bellsouth.net

SAVE THE DATE!

The 68th Annual Reunion of the 325th FIGHTER GROUP CHECKERTAIL CLAN



Thurs. Aug 8 - Sun. Aug 11, 2013 in the Boston, MA area

- ❖ Location, travel arrangements, and events have all been designed with the unique needs of the original Checkertail veterans in mind – ease of access and economically friendly!
- ❖ We expect many attendees to be driving or renting vehicles but we will pick you up at the airport if you like.

Tentative Reunion Itinerary:

- **Thurs Aug 8:** Registration, Early Bird Activity & Kick-Off Dinner
- **Fri Aug 9:** Boston Harbor Lunch Cruise, on your own afternoon & dinner
- **Sat Aug 10:** Annual Business Meeting
Memorabilia Show & Dinner - American Legion Post, Bedford
- **Sun Aug 11:** Farewell Breakfast: The hotel has a fabulous Brunch buffet

Headquarters Hotel:

Concord's Colonial Inn (built in 1716) Phone: (978) 369-9200
48 Monument Square Fax: (978) 369-2170
Concord, MA 01742 www.concordscolonialinn.com

**Our Checkertail Room Block Rates apply from Thurs 8/8 to Sun 8/11
Ground floor rooms in the Prescott Wing are for our veterans.
Please request them specifically.**

- **Queen or Double Bed:** \$149 + 11.7% tax per night.
- Roll-away beds available at \$15 per night.

- ★ **RESERVE EARLY!** The Checkertail Room Block rate expires **7/8/2013**.
- ★ Make your reservations by calling the hotel directly at (978) 369-9200
Identify yourself as a member of the Checkertails to receive our special room rate.
- ★ **NO RISK!** Reservations may be cancelled up to 48-hrs before arrival at no penalty.

For more info: visit www.checkertails.org / email checkertail325@verizon.net
or contact Patrice Manget (406) 253-2471 - pmanget@centurytel.net.

See You in HISTORIC Concord!



Colonial Inn

Concord, MA



2013 Reunion Agenda

Registration & Activity Fees ONLY \$180!
...covers Registration, Kick Off, Lunch Cruise, and Memorabilia Show Dinner

Thursday, August 8—

Early bird event: "Liberty Ride" Trolley Tour of Lexington & Concord

- 90 minute tour operating from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- This is an optional personal choice activity
- Adults \$25, Student 5-17 \$10, under 5, free

Kick Off Dinner: Papa Razzi Trattoria, Concord

- 5:30 pm arrival; 6:00 pm Buffet
- Adults \$40; children 3 to 10 \$6

Friday, August 9—

Lunch Cruise Boston Harbor

- Noon to 2 pm Cruise
- Adults & children \$50
- Personal option to stay in Boston and visit other tourist sites

—Dinner on your own

Saturday, August 10—

Annual Members' Business Meeting

- 9:30 am to 11 am
Lunch on your own

Memorabilia Show & Dinner hosted by American Legion Post in Bedford

- Adults \$40; children 6 to 10 \$15
- 2:30 pm arrival and memorabilia display set up meeting and mingling with Reunion attendees and personnel from Hanscom AFB, the Air Force Association, and the American Legion Post
- 4:30 pm: Welcome by Kathy and Checkertail Memorial Ceremony by Chaplain Joan Mier
- 5:00-6:30 pm: Dinner and after-dinner mingling and farewells.

Sunday, August 11—

Colonial Inn Brunch

- 10:30 am - 2 p.m.
- Adults \$30.95+tax / \$15.50+tax for under 12
Reservations recommended
- An optional but encourage personal choice activity



Luncheon Cruise of Boston Harbor

With BHC's Luncheon Cruise, you not only enjoy a sumptuous buffet, it's the only cruise that also lets you feast on the sights and sounds of Boston's Historic Past.

An engaging narrator will join you onboard this two-hour tour through Boston's Inner and Outer Harbor. After you've had a chance to take in our menu, they will regale

you with all kinds of fun, informative anecdotes of the city's history.

Throughout the cruise, you're invited to explore the vessel and its three spacious decks for the best views of Boston and its many high-lights, including the USS Constitution, Old North Church, Boston Light, and the Boston Harbor Islands.

Sad but True

Nick Palmisciano, founder of "Ranger Up"

I remember the day I found out I got into West Point. My mom actually showed up in the hallway of my high school and waited for me to get out of class. She was bawling her eyes out and apologizing that she had opened up my admission letter. She wasn't crying because it had been her dream for me to go there. She was crying because she knew how hard I'd worked to get in, how much I wanted to attend, and how much I wanted to be an infantry officer. I was going to get that opportunity.

That same day two of my teachers took me aside and essentially told me the following: "Nick, you're a smart guy. You don't have to join the military. You should go to college, instead."

I could easily write a tome defending West Point and the military as I did that day, explaining that USMA is an elite institution, that separate from that it is actually statistically much harder to enlist in the military than it is to get admitted to college, that serving the nation is a challenge that all able-bodied men should at least consider for a host of reasons, but I won't.

What I will say is that when a 16-year-old kid is being told that attending West Point is going to be bad for his future, then there is a dangerous disconnect in America, and entirely too many Americans have no idea what kind of burdens our military is bearing. In World War II, 11.2% of the nation served in four years. In Vietnam; 4.3% served in 12 years. Since 2001, only 0.45% of our population has served in the Global War on Terror. These are unbelievable statistics.

Over time, fewer and fewer people have shouldered more and more of the burden, and it is only getting worse.

Our troops were sent to war in Iraq by a Congress consisting of only 10% veterans with only one person having a child in the military. Taxes did not increase to pay for the war. War bonds were not sold. Gas was not regulated. In fact, the average citizen was asked to sacrifice nothing, and has sacrificed nothing unless they have chosen to out of the goodness of their hearts. The only people who have sacrificed are the veterans and their families. The volunteers. The people who swore an oath to defend this nation. You stand there, deployment after deployment, and fight on. You've lost relationships, spent years of your lives in extreme conditions, years apart from kids you'll never get back, and beaten your body in a way that even professional athletes don't understand. Then you come home to a nation that doesn't understand. They don't understand suffering. They don't understand sacrifice. They don't understand why we fight for them. They don't understand that bad people exist. They look at you like you're a machine—like something is wrong with you. You are the misguided one—not them. When you get out, you sit in the college classrooms with political science teachers that discount your opinions on Iraq and Afghanistan because YOU WERE THERE and can't understand the macro issues they gathered from books, because of your bias. You watch TV shows where every vet has PTSD and the violent strain at that. Your Congress is debating your benefits, your retirement, and your pay, while they ask you to do more. But the amazing thing about you is that you all know this. You know your country will never pay back what you've given up. You know that the populace at large will never truly understand or appreciate what you have done for them.

Hell, you know that in some circles, you will be thought as less than normal for having worn the uniform. But you do it anyway. You do what the greatest men and women of this country have done since 1775—**YOU SERVED**. Just that decision alone makes you part of an elite group. "*Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few.*"—WINSTON CHURCHILL.

Thank you to the 0.45% who have and continue to serve our Nation.



John Mier remembers...

First Lieutenant Edward B. A. Walton, Jr.

The Checkertails remember and honor one of our lost brothers in arms, First Lieutenant Edward B. A. Walton, Jr. He was lost 7 May 43 during a strafing mission. His P-40 was hit by flak and he crashed into the sea near La Goulette. If you have any memories, photos or stories about LT Walton, please share.

Private Daniel J. McCabe



Daniel J. McCabe is the only Private from the 325th buried overseas. To honor him, I had flowers placed on his grave 11 March, the 69th anniversary of his death. He is from the same state, and buried in the same cemetery as my Uncle Ray, 317th pilot. Thank you to the ABMC for placing the flowers and providing the photo.

Flight Officer John W. Smallsreed

The Checkertails honor and remember one of our fallen brothers in arms, Flight Officer John W. Smallsreed. He was lost 28 May 1943 on an escort mission over Trapani /Milo airfield. If you have stories, photos, or memories of Flt. O. Smallsreed, please share. He had been awarded the DFC and Air Medal with 4 clusters.

First Lieutenant Charles D. Housel, Jr.

The Checkertails honor and remember one of our fallen brothers in arms, 1LT Charles D. Housel, Jr., from Ohio. He was lost 19 May 1943 during an escort mission over Decimomannu, Sardinia. He is buried in a military cemetery in Carthage, Tunisia.

First Lieutenant William R. Hemphill

The Checkertails honor and remember one of our fallen brothers in arms, 1LT William R. Hemphill. He was lost 27 May 1943 on the way home from an escort mission over Decimomannu, Sardinia. He entered service from Tennessee.

First Lieutenant Charles R. Brown

The Checkertails honor and remember one of our fallen brothers in arms, 1LT Charles R. Brown. He was lost 19 May 1943 during an escort mission over Decimomannu, Sardinia. He entered service from Nebraska.