

## 451<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group Newsletter No. 14 May 2019



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451<sup>st</sup> Bomb Group  
c/o Susan Tudor Prince  
14 Reservation Road  
Andover, MA 01810

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### A MESSAGE FROM SUSAN:

Hello 451<sup>st</sup> and 455<sup>th</sup> Members, family and friends.

### 2019 ANNUAL REUNION



 **DALLAS, TX**  
SEPTEMBER 19-22, 2019

Spring has arrived and with it the information for the Joint Bomb Groups Reunion which will be held in Dallas, Texas Sept. 19-22.

The reunion is truly a special event.

I would like to thank Bob Parks for his drawing of the B-24 Patches. This was sent to the reunion in Dayton by Bob and appears in this newsletter.

The newsletter and maintenance of the 451<sup>st</sup> website could not be possible without the support of Marsha Morris and my brother Jonathan Tudor.

Jonathan has posted You Tube videos from the speaker presentations at the reunions. If you have computer access, these are terrific living history lessons. See the [Speakers at the Reunion](http://451st.org/Reunion/Reunion.html) links from the following: <http://451st.org/Reunion/Reunion.html>

Thank you all for the wonderful notes you send.

We hope to see you in Dallas.

Susan

**REUNION AGENDA****Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> September – Arrival & Check-In**

- 10:00 AM - 6:30 PM Early Registration – Hospitality Room will be open.  
Hospitality room will feature deli sandwiches, snacks and beverages.
- 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM Welcome Buffet Dinner. They mayor of Farmers Branch will likely be there to welcome our group.

**Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> September**

- 9:00 AM - 3:45 PM Optional Tour – AT&T/Cowboys Stadium, complete with a gourmet lunch and drinks in the fabulous Stadium Club.
- 5:00 PM - 7:30 PM Evening Sit Down Dinner including 451<sup>st</sup> & 455<sup>th</sup> B.G.s
- 5:00 PM - Cash Bar \*
  - 6:00 PM - Sit Down Dinner

**Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> September**

- 8:45 – 9:30 am Ladies Craft Demo
- 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Hospitality Room will be open
- TBD Veteran led presentations & discussions
- 5:00 pm Veteran Group Picture
- 5:15 PM - 8:30 PM Gala Banquet - All Bomb Groups.
- 5:15 PM - Cash Bar\*
  - 6:00 PM - Sit Down Dinner
  - 7:00 PM - Entertainment by Ladies Liberty

**Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> September**

- 8:30 AM Optional Church Service
- 10:00 AM Military Memorial Ceremony led by our reunion Chaplain, Captain/Chaplain Chris Cairns.
- 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM Optional tour of Frontiers of Flight museum
- 5:00 PM Optional “Farewell Fajitas” dinner

\*Registration & dinner fees do not include the tours or cash bars.

**REUNION HOTEL****Wyndham Garden Dallas North Hotel**

2645 Lyndon B Johnson Freeway  
Dallas, Texas 75234

The hotel website is:

[Wyndham Garden Dallas North Hotel](http://www.wyndhamgarden.com/hotel/dallas-north)

This is the same hotel where we received outstanding service and rates in 2016.

Due to the hotel's already low rate and an incentive from the municipality of Farmers Branch, we are receiving a **VERY SPECIAL ROOM RATE OF \$71.20** (per night + taxes) for single, double or ADA accessible rooms.

You may reserve by calling Reservations Manager Kharin Hanes at the hotel's in-house reservations desk. Call (214) 239-3654 Monday-Friday between the hours of 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM, Central Standard Time.

- Mention you are reserving with Bombardment Reunion 2019 to receive the group rate.
- If you have mobility issues, ask Kharin for a room with the shortest walking distance to the hotel lobby.
- If you need an ADA accessible room, be sure to ask.
- If you have these or any other special requests, you must ask otherwise they will not know how to help you.

Reservations **must** be made by **August 16, 2019**. Reservations after that date are NOT guaranteed at the group rate and are subject to room availability. Please make your reservations before that date and if you need to cancel for any reason, you may do so **WITHOUT PENALTY** if you cancel by 6:00 PM CST on the day before your arrival.

- The group rate is available between September 16 - 24, 2019.
- A full, hot breakfast buffet for two is included with each room. Additional persons in a room may purchase the buffet for only \$5 per person.
- Parking is plentiful and complimentary.
- The hotel shuttle is available for BOTH Love Field and DFW airports.

## REUNION EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

### Thursday, 9/19 Arrival and Check-In Day

Registration desk and hospitality room opens mid-morning.

There will be deli sandwiches, various snacks and drinks throughout the day.

During the evening there will be an optional informal welcome dinner followed by a short welcome and information meeting. The mayor of Farmers Branch will likely be there to welcome our group.

The hospitality room will reopen after the dinner meeting until ??

### Friday, 9/20

A tour of AT&T/Cowboys Stadium, complete with a gourmet lunch and drinks in the fabulous Stadium Club.



You will be amazed at this incredible facility which is arguably the plushest and expansive sports arena in existence. Many wheelchairs will be available for use.

*Information will be included in the registration packets regarding the Bush Presidential Center (8 miles from the hotel) and the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza in downtown Dallas. If you prefer to see one of these other attractions instead of the AT&T stadium, please be advised that transportation is on your own.*

Friday evening will feature the Individual Group Dinners.

### Saturday, 9/21

A Ladies Crafts Demo will be held, led by Nancy Clifton, 483rd BGA.

Veterans Presentations today. Fifteenth Army Air Force veterans and Historians are invited to share their experiences and stories. If you are a veteran or historian who is interested in participating in this event, please notify your group coordinator to make arrangements. This is always a very special time.



Veterans group picture will be taken place shortly before the banquet. (Veterans attending the 2018 Bomb Groups Reunion)





During the evening we will have the All Groups Banquet followed by musical entertainment provided by Ladies Liberty. (An Andrews Sisters type USO show - very good) The Hospitality Room will reopen following the evening's activities.



### Sunday, 9/22

First thing in the morning there will be an optional church service. Following the church service and a short break there will be a traditional Military Memorial Ceremony led by our reunion Chaplain, Captain/Chaplain Chris Cairns.

Chris Cairns.



Following lunch on your own (the hotel restaurant is planning some delicious lunch specials for us) we will tour the Frontiers of Flight museum.



During the evening, we will cap off the reunion with an informal "Farewell Fajitas" dinner.

## REUNION REGISTRATION

Please complete and return the registration form on the last page of this newsletter.

Return the completed form to:

451<sup>st</sup> B.G.  
c/o Susan Tudor Prince  
14 Reservation Rd.  
Andover, MA 01810

## DONATIONS

We truly appreciate your generosity and support – without it, we would not be able to provide this newsletter.

Should you desire to honor a crew mate or family member, please send the full name and duty position of the person being honored. Please send to:

451<sup>st</sup> B.G.  
c/o Susan Tudor Prince  
14 Reservation Rd.  
Andover, MA 01810

Tribute contributions recently received:

Donor	In Tribute To
Briggs, Blaine	451 <sup>st</sup> Bomb Group
Cary, Peter C.	In memory of Ronald V. Cary, Pilot with the 724 <sup>th</sup> Squadron
Emery, Leo (Nose Gunner)	Susan Prince & the 451 <sup>st</sup> Bomb Group
Newman, Linn	451 <sup>st</sup> Bomb Group
Pendleton, Andrew	451 <sup>st</sup> Bomb Group
Prince, Susan	451 <sup>st</sup> Bomb Group
Vorpahl, Wayne	451 <sup>st</sup> Bomb Group
Yates, Jane	First Lt. Robert M. Finehout

**LAST FLYBY**

Here are the death notifications received since our November 2018 Newsletter:

<b>451st Member</b>	<b>Squadron</b>	<b>Duty Position</b>	<b>DOD</b>
Burns, Leo	726 <sup>th</sup>	Waist Gunner	12.26.2018
Cunniff, Kevin	727 <sup>th</sup>	Maintenance	12.02.2017
Decaria, Albert	726 <sup>th</sup>	Ball Turret Gunner	11.27.2018
Erickson, Leonard H.	724 <sup>th</sup>	Tail Gunner	11.23.2018
Gilberts, Robert	724 <sup>th</sup>	Co-Pilot	06.24.2017
Grant, Hilliard T.	727 <sup>th</sup>	Control Tower Operator	02.23.2012
Kovalchik, Nicholas	725 <sup>th</sup>	Radio Operator/Gunner	06.03.2015
McKinney, Nathan	727 <sup>th</sup>	Line Chief	12.24.2018
Prock, Floyd	725 <sup>th</sup>	Radio/Mechanic	11.19.2018
Rohde, Harry O.	726 <sup>th</sup>	Pilot	07.18.2018

<b>455<sup>th</sup> Member</b>	<b>Squadron</b>	<b>Duty Position</b>	<b>DOD</b>
Ledbetter, Emmett J.	743 <sup>rd</sup>	Flight Engineer/Top Turret Gunner	12.08.2018

**LOCATING AIR FORCE BASES/ ARMY AIR CORPS FIELDS**

For history buffs, the link below provides access to a comprehensive document on how Air Force Bases and Air Fields were established.

[https://media.defense.gov/2010/Sep/28/2001330145/-1/-1/0/Locating AF Base Sites Final 2014.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3WYtzhrMP3MIZ80-po5co6m72RSwhv5HacRjsRKba76zpMV-E5H3a9mgo](https://media.defense.gov/2010/Sep/28/2001330145/-1/-1/0/Locating%20AF%20Base%20Sites%20Final%202014.pdf?fbclid=IwAR3WYtzhrMP3MIZ80-po5co6m72RSwhv5HacRjsRKba76zpMV-E5H3a9mgo)



**HAPPY 101<sup>st</sup> BIRTHDAY – PETER G. POLMEN**

Pete turned 101 on April 12, 2019 and although he has slowed down, his memory and determination are still very much there. He still talks of the 451st, Patches and its crew, the war, and he misses his buddies.



Peter Polmen at his 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday



## PROFILE OF HAROLD BENNETT

The following is an excerpt of an online article from WDVM TV station located in Hagerstown Maryland. The full article can be accessed at [https://www.localdvm.com/news/veterans-voices/world-war-ii-gunner-from-maryland-flies-again-on-b-24/1582741686?fbclid=IwAR1W40GvNtuCyvVkr6b5viVHkhditmWg\\_Y5ytwWypI09gILGLPKHghM7weY](https://www.localdvm.com/news/veterans-voices/world-war-ii-gunner-from-maryland-flies-again-on-b-24/1582741686?fbclid=IwAR1W40GvNtuCyvVkr6b5viVHkhditmWg_Y5ytwWypI09gILGLPKHghM7weY)

### “Harold Bennett left his family farm to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps”

DAMASCUS, Md. - Three days after Japan's sneak attack on the American fleet anchored in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii on December 7, 1941, a day that will "live in infamy," Adolf Hitler and his Axis ally, Benito Mussolini, declared war on the United States.

Two years later, Harold Bennett left his family farm in Damascus, Md., and volunteered to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps as a radio operator/gunner on a B-24 Liberator heavy bomber in the 451st Bomb Group, based at a captured Italian airfield east of Naples. Technical Sergeant Bennett and his crew completed 50 missions over German targets in Europe, and came home safely.

Last month, Bennett, who is 97, climbed aboard a B-24 like the one he flew in during World War II, and flew for a short hop from Frederick to Westminster. The plane was part of the "Wings of Freedom Tour," sponsored by the Collings Foundation.

### Harold Bennett inspecting Witchcraft



Bennett said the flight reminded him of the war.

"It was cold and windy," said Bennett, who rode in the back where his radio operation position was located within reach of a .50 caliber machine gun sticking out an open window. "It was cold on those bombing missions, 20 to 25 below zero, but it could be colder. I think on one trip, it was 40 below."

Bomber crewmen, especially those in the back of the bomber who were exposed to the elements, wore heated flight suits, heavy leather jackets, fur-lined boots and gloves.

"But the heated flight suits rarely worked," Bennett said, "because they burned out frequently."

On one mission, something hit the front sight of Bennett's machine gun and bent it.

"I think it was a piece of flak that hit it," Bennett said, "not a bullet with my name on it."

Flak is a shell fired by German anti-aircraft batteries that bursts in the air around the bomber stream. If it had hit Bennett instead of his gun, it might have killed him.

But Bennett said at the least, it would have made a big hole in him.

The B-24 Liberator that Bennett flew in during the war was nicknamed "Three Feathers." He said it got its name from a crew that ferried the aircraft from the U.S. to Italy.

Over Trinidad, the pilot had to feather three engines and land for repairs. When the plane landed in Italy, the crew had a local artist paint a naked lady on the nose of the bomber.

"And you can guess where the three feathers were," laughed Bennett.

After completing 50 missions, it was time to go home. None of the crew was injured during the war, but the ball turret gunner fell going down the rear stairs of the bomber and cut his head after the plane landed at Homestead Air Base in Florida.

The gunner didn't receive a Purple Heart, because the wound did not occur in combat.

Bennett flew home on a battle-weary B-24 that had flown early in the air war in North Africa. The desert-tan bomber is enshrined at the United States Air Force Museum in Dayton, Ohio.

After the war, Bennett returned to Damascus and married a fellow classmate at Damascus High School. He also attended the University of Maryland on the GI Bill, and graduated with a degree in financial administration. He later opened an insurance agency, and fathered three children.

His beloved wife, Carolyn, died this past May at the age of 93. He is not only the last man standing in his farm family, but also the last man standing in his aircrew."



**HAPPY 99<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY – JOSEPH JONES**

(The following tribute was submitted by Gene Joseph Jones, eldest son of Joseph Jones who was a Nose Gunner on the crew of the Devil's Duchess, 725<sup>th</sup> Squadron. Joseph turned 99 years old on January 1st, 2019.)

"...He was born of Italian immigrants Domenick Digavantonio and Mary Richuto. The Coal Company Domenick worked for "gave" him the name Jones, a common practice back then. Dad's crew called him 'Spaghetti Joe'!"

Dad met his "neighbor" Jimmy Stewart while training in the Midwest. Dad needed a pass to get off the base and Jimmy was Officer for the Day. He found Dad was from Saltzburg, only 20 miles from his hometown of Indiana PA. Hence the "neighbor" label.



Joseph Jones is pictured above in the 2<sup>nd</sup> row, third from the left.

**Crew of Devil's Duchess:**

Bert Brown – Pilot

Hugh Hedger – Co Pilot

Richard F Gould – Navigator

Joe McCaskill – Flight Engineer

Nick Kovalchik – Radio Operator

Charles Christy - Bombardier

Molford Harrison – Ball Turret Gunner

Joseph Jones – Nose Turret Gunner

Robert Perkins – Crew Chief

**DEVIL'S DUCHESS**

Joseph would like a close-up picture of the Devil's Duchess. If you have one, please contact Susan Prince or Jonathan Tudor.



**CONGRATULATIONS LEGION d'HONNEUR RECIPIENT - JOSEPH K. "JAY" MILNOR**

Congratulations to Joseph K. "Jay" Milnor on receiving the Legion d'Honneur. The Legion d'Honneur is France's highest distinction, created in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte. Jay was a waist gunner with the 451st, and the award is for extraordinary accomplishment and outstanding service rendered to France.



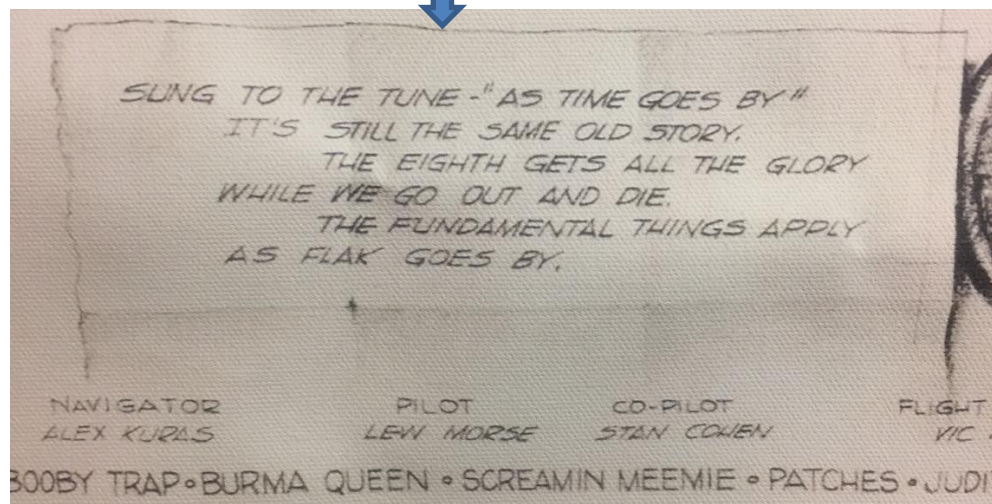
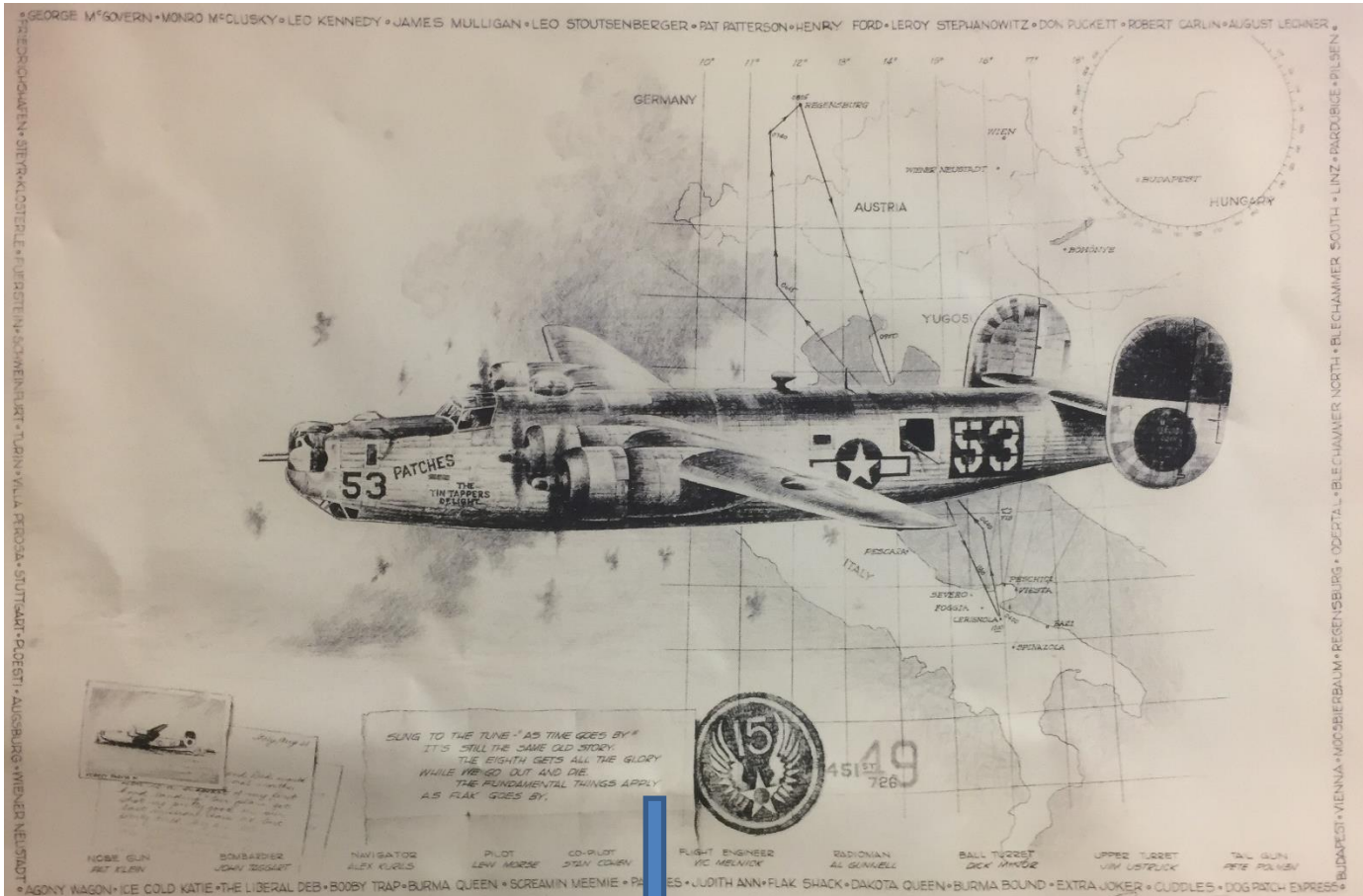
**Jay Milnor**



**Jay Milnor receiving the Legion d'Honneur medal from the Consul General of France, from the Boston office**

## ARTWORK BY ARTIST/AUTHOR ROBERTS PARKS

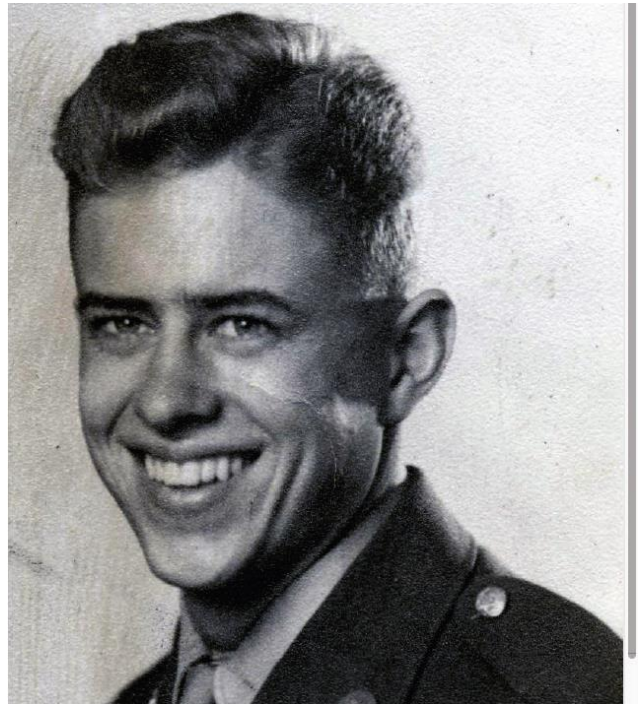
**Per Bob Parks,** "...The original resides in the 15th Air Force Museum in Castle Air Force Base, Merced, California. I shipped it there to be displayed and retained by the museum. The UPS delivery man was committed to deliver it to the addressee, Col. Ben Franklin. The col. was addressing the gathering of the 15th Air Force association and the UPS man carried the drawing to the stage to deliver it. I have a letter from Col. Franklin thanking me for the drawing and said that when he opened it on stage, there wasn't "a dry eye in the house." It always hurts me a bit that the 15th did the most and suffered worst of the operations against the German war industries and got the least glory for it."



**Introduction by Bob Parks**

"I'm not sure how to write a short introduction when I'm near the end of a very long life. Do I start at the beginning 92+ years ago and walk you through a long story or start near the end and wend the way back through something like a cluttered antique shop.

I enlisted in USAAC (U. S. Army Air Corps) at age 17. I went active at 18 but I was too late to get into flight school for which I had qualified. So, I was a crewman for a while on AT-7's, C-60's, and rode around in B-24's at Langley Field. And then they made me a base MP. That was scarier than any of the flying incidents, 145 pounds of a kid facing 230 pound mean drunks was more dangerous than skirting spinning props on the ramp.



I'm a retired Boeing designer who lived the life of an average American boy who was born just before the Depression, lived through it, then grew up in Florida, served in the Air Force in World War 2, went to Duke University and worked at Boeing for 48 years.

In between all this I flew in almost 50 different types of airplanes and performed as an air show clown in numerous air shows in the northwest. I also achieved some fame as an aviation artist and illustrated a book written by author, Ernest K. Gann entitled 'Ernest K. Glann's Flying Circus'. One of my paintings resides in the Smithsonian Institution and there are many in corporate offices.

One thing that I never tried was to write a book. So, I managed to write my memoir and put them in a book entitled 'From A Crystal Set to High Speed Jets'. It's probably destined to be in the best cellar's list (sic) but you might find a few things of interest folded in between some humor and my artwork.

With that said, I'll leave you with hopes that you read a bit of it, and are encouraged to gaze upon my artwork."

Note – Bob's book [From a Crystal Set to High Speed Jets](#) is currently available on Amazon.



## NATHAN FIRESTONE CELEBRATES HIS 100<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY

(The following article appeared February 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019 in the Chicago Daily Herald. Nate was with the 725th Squadron, is the last survivor of George Tudor's crew, and the author of "Extra Joker". A link to his book is available <http://451st.org/Books/books.html> )

"World War II veteran celebrates his 100th birthday with friends, family and congressman"



U.S. Rep. Brad Schneider, right, talks with Highland Park resident Nate Firestone during a gathering marking the World War II veteran's 100th birthday. (Russell Lissau | Staff Photographer)

[Buy Photo](#)

A World War II veteran from Highland Park was feted by his family, friends and a suburban congressman Friday ahead of his 100th birthday.

"Any chance I get to wish someone a 100th birthday is a good day," U.S. Rep. Brad Schneider said about the guest of honor, Nate Firestone.

Firestone turns 100 on March 4. Schneider, a Deerfield Democrat, hosted the small celebration in his Lincolnshire office.

Schneider and Firestone's three daughters, two grandchildren, other relatives and friends -- including several other veterans -- sang "Happy Birthday" to the soon-to-be-centenarian and enjoyed slices of cake that featured an American flag.

Firestone called the party "terrific."

"(I like) that I'm getting positive attention," he said.

Firestone was a navigator on a B-24 bomber in Europe during World War II. He and his crew flew 27 successful missions but were shot down in 1944 and captured by German troops.

When his captors asked why he dropped bombs on their countrymen, Firestone responded by telling them he is Jewish -- something Schneider said was particularly brave, considering Nazi Germany's persecution of Jews at the time.

Firestone escaped during a relocation march and was rescued by American soldiers. He returned home in 1945.

After the war, Firestone attended Northwestern University -- also Schneider's alma mater -- and became a certified public accountant. He retired in 1990.

Daughter Marilyn Rothschild said she was excited to celebrate her dad's birthday Friday.

"He's always been my hero and I am so proud of him," said Rothschild, of Highland Park.,,"



**BOMB GROUPS REUNION****September 19—22, 2019 Dallas, Texas**

Veteran/Fallen Hero \_\_\_\_\_ Group \_\_\_\_\_ Sqdn \_\_\_\_\_ Highest Rank \_\_\_\_\_

Registrant Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (One Form per Registration Packet)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name Tag Names (Include Veteran Relationship): \_\_\_\_\_

Registration fee	# people _____ @ \$25.00 each	Sub Total \$ _____
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**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH—Welcome dinner, Italian Buffet**

# people \_\_\_\_\_ @ @28.50 Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 20<sup>TH</sup>—Tour AT&T Dallas Cowboys Stadium with gourmet lunch & drinks**

# people \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$85.00 each Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Individual Group Dinners**

Grilled Filet 10oz. # people \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$37.00 each Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Grilled Salmon # people \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$28.50 each Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Eggplant Parmesan # people \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$28.50 each Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>****All Groups Banquet**

New York Strip 12 Oz # people \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$34.00 each Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Rosemary Lemon Chicken # people \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$28.50 each Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetarian Tart (Chef's Choice of Veggies) # people \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$28.50 each Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup>****Lunch on your own today. Tour in afternoon**

Tour Frontiers of Flight Museum # people \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$29.00 each Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Farewell Dinner—Farewell Fajitas # people \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$30.00 each Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Do you need a wheelchair? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ **GRAND TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Emergency Contact \_\_\_\_\_ Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form along with your check payable to 451st Bomb Group Reunion to:  
 Susan Prince | 14 Reservation Road | Andover, MA 01810