

December 1, 2014

339th



Fighter Group Association

Station F378 – Fowlmere, England

NEWSLETTER

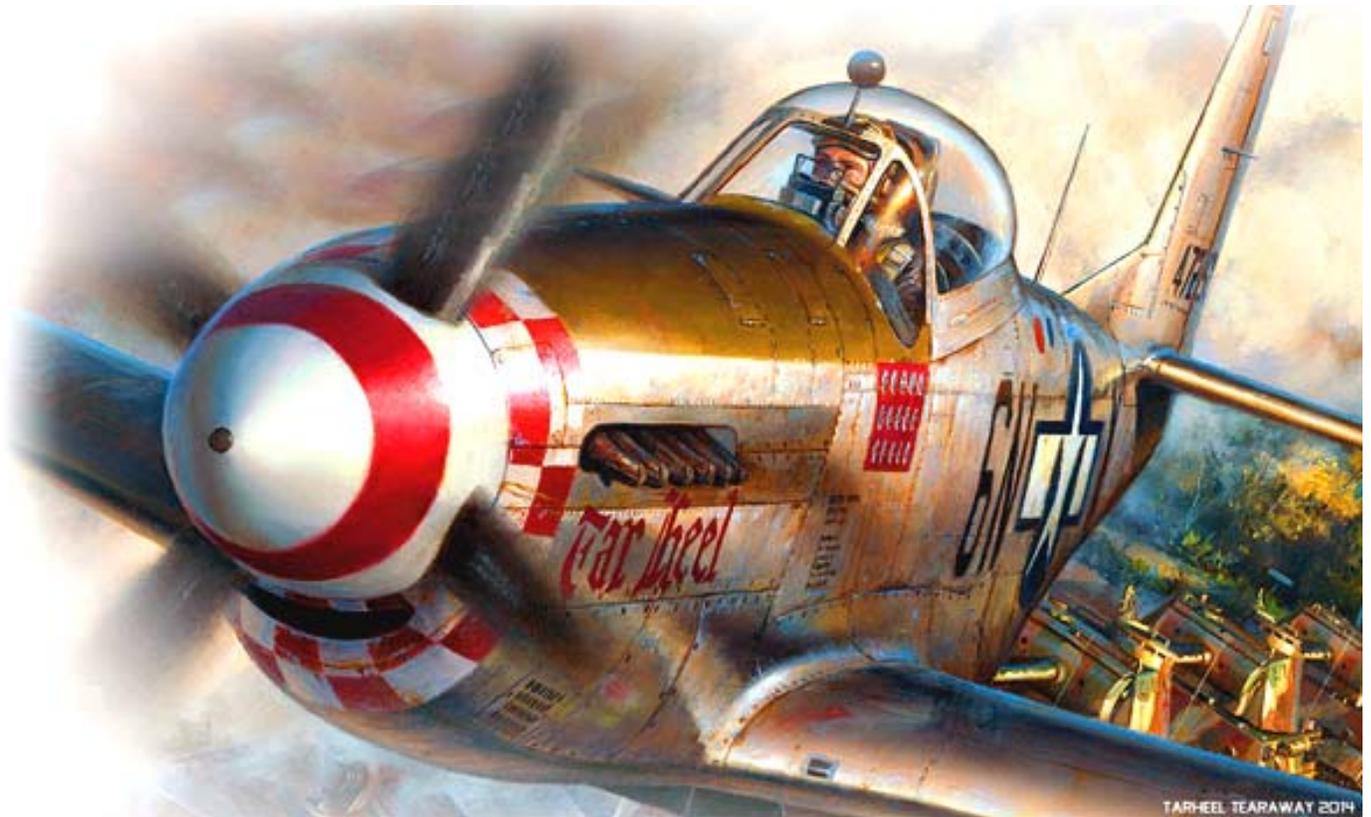
“The Lads from Fowlmere”



Volume 34, Issue 4

Editor: Stephen C. Ananian

Merry Christmas!



Above:- A portion of aviation artist Gareth Hector's painting of Jim Starnes' plane, "Tarheel"! I can still see Jim Starnes' smiling face as he led us in combat over Germany after all these years!

The original painting is for sale if anyone is interested!



And a Happy New Year!

Steve Ananian and the Board of Directors of the 339th FGA

Another Great Reunion!



Standing L-R Michael George pilot and owner of "Worry Bird", 503rd pilot Bill Perry 505th pilot Steve Ananian, 503rd pilot and the combat pilot of that P-51, Bob Frisch 505th pilot Jerry Graham and 505th pilot Bill Moore. Seated in front is 505th pilot Larry Powell.

Photo Ryan Wilkie

We Did It Again!

By William Clark
Reunion Coordinator

The decision to hold our 2014 Reunion for a second year in a row in Milwaukee, was a wise one. In fact the membership decided to do it yet again next year. Both the Board of Directors and members present at our Regular Annual Meeting agreed that it's hard to beat Milwaukee as a site! We were able to get seven of our veterans to attend and had a total of sixty-three attending. The hotel room costs are hard to beat anywhere. The members also voted to change the By Laws. Under the original By Laws only veterans of Fowlmere pay dues. Due to the declining amount of Veterans it was decided to change the By Laws so that all members are asked to pay the \$10 annual dues in the future.

It was great to see both Dick Thieme and Jerry Graham again and there were even more new people from the Milwaukee area that are now "Friends of the

Continued next page



William Clark is the Master of Ceremonies at the Banquet Dinner *Photo Sharon Clark*

339th. This year we had several First-Time Attendees as well. They were Paul Higbee, Louise's husband, Fred Perry and Scott Frisch sons of 503rd pilots Bill and Robert. Also Carlos and Barbara Saavedra and son "Chip" family friends of our President Steve Ananian.

Daughter of our CO, John Henry, Anne and Herb Bevelhymmer were again in attendance as we remembered John Henry and what he meant both to the Group and this Association.

We had two bus tours as the year before, but this time the city tour included a scenic boat ride of the river and lake followed by a tasty lunch in the Pabst Brewery. Our tour guide Kay, a walking compendium of all things Milwaukee, made the city tour especially memorable and we learned a lot more about the brewery business and history in Milwaukee.

Our second bus trip was the next day on Saturday where we again went south a few miles to the Kenosha city airport for our own Airshow and visited Chuck Greenhill's fascinating collection of aircraft. Honorary Member, Michael George joined us again with "Worry Bird" and we got two Mustangs up for a mini-airshow. The sound of those Merlin engines still brings back memories for quite a few of us. Many thanks to Chuck, Mike and the pilots who, at great personal expense, provide us with this opportunity to experience the aircraft once again that our veterans flew in England during the war. Food was again kindly donated by Cathie Wilke's sister and brother-in-law Teresa and Mike Tarling.

Our Unit Dinner was held again at the "Final Approach" *Continued next page*



Michael George in "Worry Bird" flies over in formation with Chuck Greenhill's P-51 "Lou IV"

Photo William Clark

restaurant and it is always gratifying how many people walk up to our veterans and want to shake their hands and thank them for their service and sacrifice. The food was good and the companionship exceptional. We had a good time.

Our Banquet Dinner was again the high point of the reunion. I, (Bill Clark) provided a travelogue of my and Sharon's visit to Fowlmere and the American Cemetery at Madingley on Memorial Day. Visits were also made to "The Chequers" Pub, the Manor Farm where the WWII airfield was located, the Eagle Pub in Cambridge, Duxford for an Airshow, and Twinwood Field and John Harris's Museum near Bedford. We visited with Ray Ellis, who was kind enough to run us around, Mark Donogain, the manager of Manor Farm owned by Martin Sheldrick, and of course our old friends John and Laurina Harris. The invitation is open for any and all if visiting that part of England to drop by, say hi, and enjoy their hospitality. The 339th FGA has good friends in England.



Louise and Susan Gibbs with Ruth Delisio at our Unit Dinner

Photo Emma Thieme

We owe much of the success of this reunion to the efforts of Cathie Wilke and her husband Bill. They again made all of the hotel, bus tour, and restaurant arrangements and provided Sharon and myself the means to shop for provisions. Thanks so much Cathie and Bill. We are looking forward to doing the same next year.





Flag Man!



Aircraft of the 339th FG waiting for signal to takeoff from the Runway Control Officer standing at the side of the grass runway at Fowlmere. Note how the nose of the P-51 is higher than the Canopy, thus blocking the forward vision of the pilot!

By Stephen C. Ananian, *pilot 505th FS*

In the Air the visibility in the P-51-D was great but on the ground, while taxiing this was not the case! Forward visibility was non-existent! The long nose of the Mustang, while on the ground, pointed skyward and blocked the pilot's forward vision. The pilot, goggles lowered over his eyes, canopy open, leaned out to see what was in front of him as he taxied. Some outfits had "Wing Walkers" sitting on the leading edge of the wing guiding the pilot with hand signals while taxiing straight ahead. We in the 339th chose instead to taxi "S"ing (turning from side to side) while constantly looking out from either side to see what was in front of the aircraft.

Taxiing accidents happened! One of our Mustangs, while taxiing, over-ran the car of a civilian North American Aircraft Technician driving along the perimeter strip! Fortunately Bill Schmeichel, the driver of the car survived! He was slightly injured but the car was totaled! Pilot Bill MacClarence (505th) tells how he ran into the Squadron leaders "Bird" while it was parked in its revetment. The ground



Car meets a taxing P-51

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The author, wearing the Starters Gear and Leather flying gloves! Must have been a cold day!

crew covered up the incident. They quietly changed the propellers of both planes and told no one! Taxiing was not easy due to the poor visibility on the ground!

Before a "mission takeoff" it was a magnificent sight that I will never forget! The sound of forty-eight Mustangs, Those powerful engines roaring, taxiing along the perimeter track toward the end of the runway to takeoff, weaving from side to side like Bees dancing in a Beehive.

In the late thirties there was a popular musical in which they performed a dance where they kicked from side to side, called "The Lambeth Walk". Our gyrations while taxiing was very much like that dance and I used to call it "The Mustang Shuffle"!

We at Fowlmere had grass covered Runways! This made takeoffs a little "Hairy" particularly on rainy days when you hit a puddle of rain water and the spray from the propeller splashed mud onto the windscreen. No windshield wipers then! Just a pilot's gloved hand to wipe off the windscreen.

We had one other major problem however at Fowlmere; the grass runways were not level! There was a rise in the middle of the main runway and it sloped down toward the end!

In order to get the planes off rapidly during a mission we took off in formation, - - - in elements of two! The first two planes would takeoff and when they were safely airborne the following two planes would proceed to takeoff! The first two planes would be Airborne but the planes that followed could not see those planes due to the dip in the Runway (and the mustangs long nose) until the planes that were airborne were several hundred feet in the air.

This was a serious problem! If it took one minute longer before an element could take off this was an additional twenty four minutes for the group to be airborne! The lead planes had twenty four minutes less fuel than the last planes taking off! Not only that but we had to rendezvous with our box of bombers we were to escort at a specific

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My Bird, "Baby Mine" parked in its spot at Fowlmere. Note the 75 gallon wing tanks. We could not use the larger paper tanks lest the extra weight of the larger 110 gallon tanks damage the wings, Due to the rough spots on the grass runways planes would bounce and the weight of the heavier tanks would cause the wings to flex unduly! This problem was solved in the winter of 1944 when Army Engineers leveled the grass runways and replaced it with steel matting!

time and place over the continent! We could not be twenty-four minutes late because the stream of bombers would have moved on! This meant we had to increase our speed to catch up and therefore use more fuel! This was serious!

The 339th's solution was to have an experienced fighter pilot who was not flying that day, stand on the side of the runway at a spot where he could see the planes at the end of the runway on take off! As soon as the two planes taking off were safely airborne, he would wave a "Starters Flag" at the next two planes waiting to take off, to proceed!

Since visibility was a problem this "Flagman" wore a red, yellow, white and black striped Jacket and a white baseball cap so he could be readily seen. Roger Freeman, Eighth Air force historian upon seeing the photo of me in the Flagman's gear wanted to know who my tailor was! I inquired and was told the outfit was a Horse-Racing Starters jacket and cap that I was wearing.

When I told Roger, he said he would have to recommend me to his tailor for a far better fit!



Dues for 2014 are only \$10



Newsletter Circulation is 445 – USA 182+ (215 Email), Overseas 24+ (24 Email)

Have you paid your \$10 Dues for this year?



Reunion Photos!



Michael George flies in for Reunion Air show

Photo by Bill Clark



Bob Frisch 503rd pilot who flew Worry Bird in combat. *Photo Fred Perry*



Michael George smiles as he taxis by

Photo Bill Clark

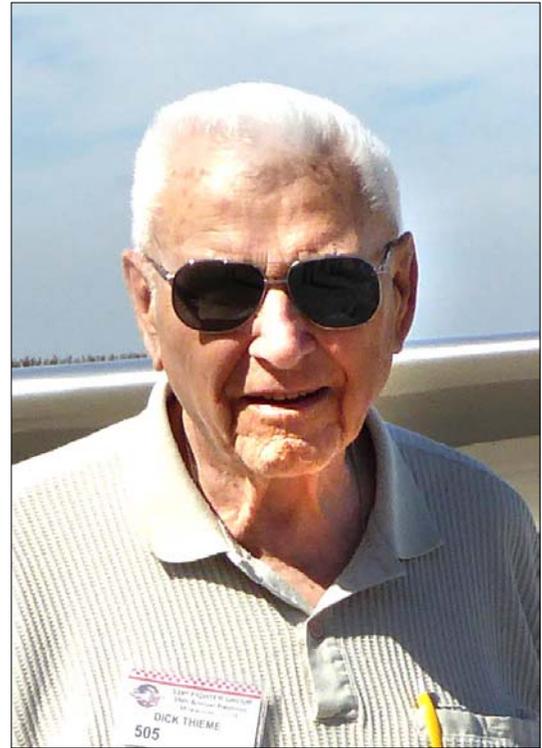


More Photos!



Linda Moore and Larry Powell dance at our Unit dinner!

Photo Amy Ananian



Our Treasurer Richard Thieme prepared with sun glasses at the Airshow.

Photo Fred Perry

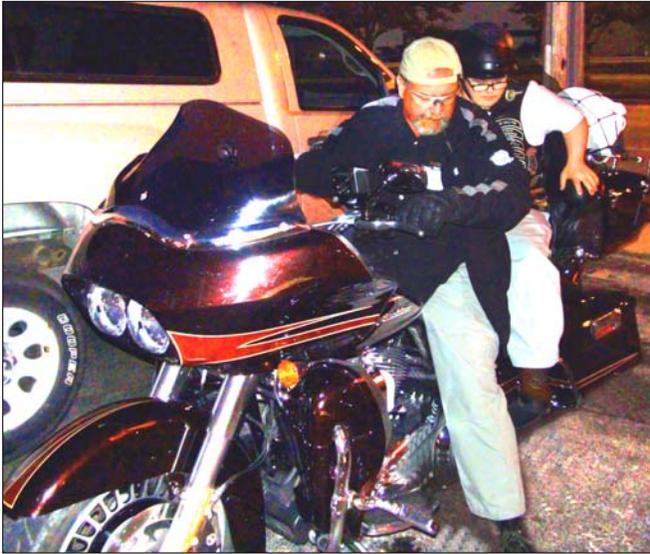


L-R Steve Ananian and good friend Barbara Saavedra, granddaughter Amy and Chip Saavedra watch Airshow at Kenosha Airport.

Photo Carlos Saavedra



And More!



Frank Knapp drove to our reunion on his motor cycle! Seen here with Thomas Roach in Jump seat. *Photo John Roach*



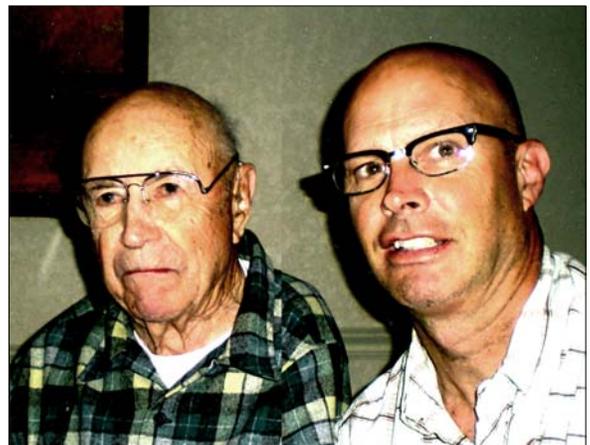
Thomas Roach with his Harley Vest. *Photo John Roach*



Pilots that flew in our Air Show show us their 339th "T" shirts! *Photo Bill Clark*



First-Time-Attendee Fred Perry and his Dad, 503rd pilot Bill Perry *Photo Fred Perry*



First-Time-Attendee Scott Frisch with his Dad, 503rd pilot Robert Frisch. *Photo Emma Thieme*



Editor's Corner

The National WWII Museum

By Stephen Ananian, *Editor/pilot 505th FS*



Stephen Ananian

As Bill Clark said, "We had another great reunion!" I returned home to find an invitation from the National WWII Museum to attend a three-day Air Show in New Orleans! So back to the airport and off to Louisiana I went!

The tour of the Museum was an experience that I heartily recommend to all! It starts out with a widescreen "Imax" type of Movie of WWII with live special effects! Floors that shake as tanks rumble by with falling snow and real smoke while watching a documentary video of the "Battle of the Bulge"! It was an unbelievable experience that used color and Black and White TV that explained clearly every battle of WWII to the visitor with documentary footage of actual combat scenes.

I was at the Air Show representing a P-51 fighter pilot of the 339th Fighter Group, signing autographs and telling stories of the accomplishments of the 8th Air Force during the war. They had WWII war birds including Brig. Gen. Regis F. A. Urshler's P-51 "Gunfighter", the B-29 "Fi Fi", two B-17s, two B-25s, a B-24, a Navy TBF, a Corsair, a Pt-17, a twin-engine Beech Craft trainer and planes too numerous to mention from the Commemorative Air Force.. People paid to go for rides in those War Birds with the money collected, going to the Museum and the Commemorative Air Force to cover its expenses.

My nephew Casper Puccio came with me to look after his "Old Uncle Steve". I had the pleasure of meeting 99 year old Col. Richard E. Cole, and his daughter Cindy. The Colonel was Jimmy Doolittle's Co-pilot in the number one plane on the famous Tokyo Raid! To top it all, seated beside me on the flight line, was my very good friend Karnig Thomasian. Karnig was a B-29 waist gunner that had to bail out when a faulty "Mixed bomb load" exploded beneath their aircraft and destroyed ten out of eleven B-29s killing eighteen airmen! He was one of the twenty nine airmen that survived and became a Japanese POW. I heartily recommend that you take your family to visit the museum! It is an experience that you will not regret!

Back to our Reunion! We had sixty-three people at our 35th Annual Reunion. With seven WWII veterans in attendance! Notably absent was our Vice President Bill MacClarence who tripped while climbing around in a closet and pulled a tendon in his leg! Bill is doing well recovering from surgery for his injury and promises to be there with us next year!

Again I was fortunate to have my granddaughter Amy in attendance including some long time friends from Chicago Carlos and Barbara Saavedra and their son "Chip". We had several first time attendees this year including Paul Higbee, husband of Susan the niece of 503rd pilot Robert Ammon. Also present was W. Fred Perry son of 503rd pilot Bill Perry! Fred is a veteran of military and commercial aviation. Read Fred's letter on page 13.

♪♪ Merry Christmas ♪♪

Stephen P. Ananian



We mourn our loss - - -



Judy Julianna Sirochman

DECEASED:-

Judy Julianna Sirochman, wife of deceased 505th pilot passed away on August 15th 2014. I wanted to share with you that my Mom passed away.
- Judy Sirochman May, daughter

Our condolences to the Sirochman family on their loss. 

In Memoriam

The following have donated monies in memory of their loved ones:-

\$122.50 In memory of 504th pilot Carol Bennett by his daughter Carolyn Benum

\$100 in memory of Valerie Puccio by her Uncle Steve and Cousin Stephen.

\$100 in memory of Isabel - Happy Birthday honey! 

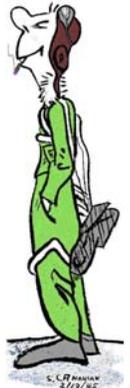
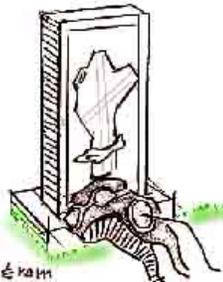
\$100 in memory of Lt. Arthur E. Tongue 505th pilot by his niece Lisa Kay Tongue

\$50 in memory of William C. Clark and John Henry by Joyce Eiswald.

\$50 in memory of 505th pilot Laird Travis by his sister-in-law Colleen Travis.

\$50 in memory of Carl V. Ashworth 505th Supply Officer by his wife Ann.

\$45 in memory of Richard Olander 505th pilot by his niece Cathie Van Treeck.



Donations

\$200 William MacClarence, \$100 Chester Malarz, \$100 Dorothy Steven, \$100 George Joe, \$83.39 Edward Purzycki, \$75 Lawrence Powell, \$70 Bayard Lawes, \$70 Richard Rohm, \$50 Bob Frisch, \$50 Jon Wallner, \$25 Donald Olander, \$35 Judith Langohr Ebeling, \$30 Patricia Solley, \$25 Christopher Olander, \$25 Susan Gibbs, \$20 Richard Lewey,

We thank you all for your generous donations. 



The Mail Bag



We received the following note from "First Time Attendee" Fred Perry, son of 503rd pilot, "Bill".



Fred Perry climbs into a T-38 for his pilot training in 1970 at Shepard AFB, TX

Dear Steve,

In my 35 year flying career where I flew commercially everything from the DC-9, B-747 and the B-777 and militarily the T-38, C-141 and the C-5A, well - - - I have met some incredible people including the likes of John Glenn - - - But I have never met such an incredible group of guys as the men from the 339th that I met at this reunion. I thank the Good Lord for the opportunity and will cherish it always.

Thanks for a great Week-End!

W. Fred Perry

Fred the feeling is mutual, looking forward to seeing you next year!



I received the following Email with a drawing from the niece of 505th pilot Arthur Tongue who was killed In Action.

Dear Stephen,

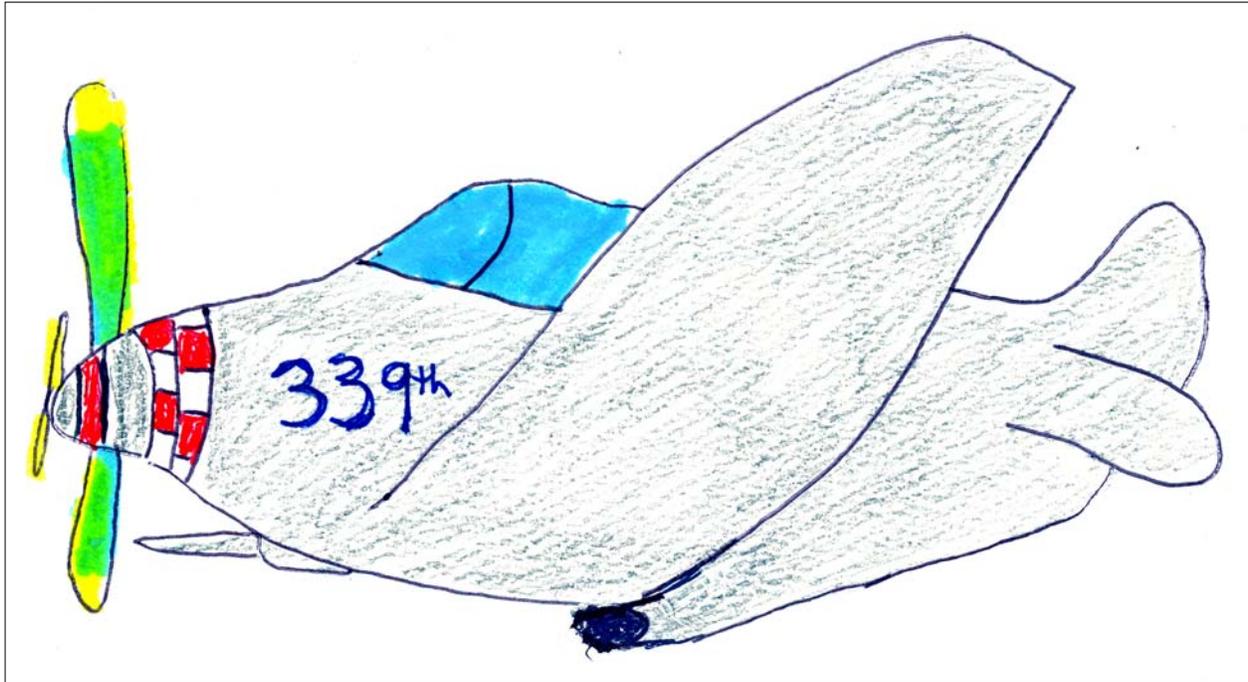
Thank you so much for all of the information about my uncle Ted (Lt. Arthur Tongue) I can't wait to visit him at Madingley in

Continued on next page

December. Your organization has helped me form a closer bond with my family and my roots. I cannot believe how much uncle Ted looks like my father. The resemblance is uncanny.

The enclosed check is in memory of 2nd Lt. Arthur E. Tongue – the uncle I never knew until now.

Sincerely, Lisa Tongue



Above drawing of 339th P-51 on Lisa's stationary.

Lisa thank you for your donation. We are happy to be of assistance!



Friend of the 339th, Ted Colonas writes:-

Sir:

I hope all is well with you and family and I wanted to let you know about this new print I saw by UK based artist Gareth Hector. It shows Tar Heel attacking a German trainsuper looking print. Here it is and the website of the artist! New Painting – Tarheel Tear away by Gareth Hector -



Portion of Gareth Hector's painting shows Jim Starnes in cockpit!

Tom Colonas

Thank you Tom, I found it! See the first page!



Continued on next page

From Fowlmere Mark Donagain reports to us on their Holiday, Remembrance Day (Our Veteran's Day – used to be Armistice Day)!



Mark Donagain in front of the 339th Memorial at Fowlmere

Hi Steve

Nov. 9, 2014

It's Remembrance Sunday, here in England

I've have cleaned the memorial and made it special for this day, It makes me feel so proud, that I can do this for the 339th FG and the RAF, because we should never forget, I'll will be thinking of you all past and present.

I've attached some photos, I hope you enjoy them,

Keep well Mark Donagain

Mark, we are grateful to all of you in England for helping keep the world safe for freedom loving people! Thank you Mark for all that you and Martin Sheldrick do for us. The Skies are bluer on this Remembrance Sunday!



Continued on next page

Mark also writes of their latest discoveries with the metal detector! I asked if they found gold yet. Mark answered:-



All the ammunition found to date photographed above on a double bed blanket!

Hi Steve

Fri 10/31/2014 6:34 PM

Sorry no gold, if I did the first thing I would buy would be a P-51 Mustang, because they will always go up in price. We've found a few Roman coins and some silver coins, but not worth a lot, Keep well

Mark Donagain

Roman Coins! Sounds exciting! Let me know if you find my Beer Mug!



Continued on next page

Massachusetts honors Greg Arabian, "Friend of the 339th" on Veteran's Day! Greg is a close friend of your Editor Steve Ananian. He has attended several reunions and has interviewed several of our Veterans!



**Major Greg Arabian,
"Friend of the 339th"**

On November 11, 2014, at 9:30 a.m., by election and determination of the ROTC cadets along with the compliance of Tufts University's Advocates for Tufts ROTC, classes will not be held in honor of the day and there will be a "Passing of the Flag" Ceremony performed by the Cadets honoring all veterans of all wars.

Cadets will pass a tri-folded flag from the bottom of the monument stairs to the top of the stone staircase, pausing at each of 10 landings commemorating the wars, and then hand the flag finally to an honored Tufts graduate with a solemn salute.

This year, Tufts graduate of 1954 and Air Force Major Greg Arabian, a 1954 Tufts ROTC Graduate, member of the Executive Board of The Advocates for Tufts ROTC and generous philanthropist to the University and MA AMVETS, Commander of Belmont AMVETS Post 2008 and Vice Commander of AMVETS

District 5, was chosen as the honored recipient of the flag and a final commemorative salute from the ROTC Commander.

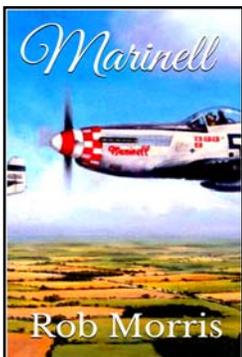
Following the ceremony, there will be a reception at Ballou Hall, the main administrative Building of the University, where, after a welcoming address by U.S. Marine and Tufts Graduate, Ben Sands, there will be a sumptuous buffet and welcome to the attendants and an opportunity to meet the honored guests.

Congratulations Major Greg Arabian on this Veteran's Day. 

Must Read - "Marinell"

By Rob Morris

Noted historical writer Rob Morris found this story by accident at a garage sale, the sale of personal effects from World War II Veteran Capt. Brad Stevens of the 339th Fighter Group. Brad had been a fighter pilot and through bad fortune had found himself riddled with Alzheimer's and his property was being sold to pay for his care. This book is a carefully researched and structured history of his story. It tells of his glorious service and of his saddening decline. Available from Amazon books in soft covered edition for \$8.99 and Kindle Edition for \$.99.



Roster Changes

Change: -

David Caddell *504 Grandnephew of pilot*
120 Diamond Head Drive, Hot Springs, AR 71913-2217

Carolyn Benum-Bennett, *504 Daughter of pilot*
5821 252nd Street East, Graham, WA 98338-8248

Patricia Solley, *504 Widow of armorer*
5260 Four mile Drive, Montoursville, PA 177754



Add:-

Clifton Brambaugh, *505 Great grandson of pilot Lt. Evergard Wager*
17 Reiman St, Buffalo, N.Y. 14206

Christopher L. Olander, *505 Nephew of pilot*
N7000 N Lost Lake Rd., Randolph, WI 53956

Fred W Perry, *503- Son of pilot, Bill Perry*
12900 Walden Rd. #1004J, Montgomery, TX 77356

Delete: -

Owen Farmer. Isadore Giveans, Jr., Newsletters returned marked "Not Deliverable"



339th Fighter Group Association Board of Directors

John B. Henry, *Commander -*

Stephen C. Ananian *President & Secretary -*

William R. MacClarence, *Vice President - Richard G. Thieme*, *Treasurer -*

William Clark, Jr., *Reunion Coordinator -*

Sharon Clark, *Hospitality Room Coordinator*

Chester Malarz, *Advisor - Dorothy Clark*, *Advisor*

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Newsletter Editor

Stephen C. Ananian - Phone (864) 288-2599

Email: - stephen.ananian@339fg.com

Linda Moore - *Staff photographer*



We are on the Internet

339th Home page:- www.339thfg.com

"Little Friends" at - www.littlefriends.co.uk

Ananian Family site - www.ananian.com





2014 Reunion Attendees-



Ananian, Amy	505	Roach, John	505
<u>Ananian, Stephen</u>	<u>505</u>	Roach, Nancy	505
Bashford, James	505	Roach, Thomas	505
Bashford, Michael	505	Rudolph, Bette	F-339.
Bashford, Gillian	505	Rudolph, Jim	F-339.
Bashford, Talicia	505	Rudolph, Warren	F-339.
Bevelhymer, Anne	HQ	Saavedra Barbara	505
Bevelhymer, Herb	HQ	Saavedra Carlos	505
Clark, Bill	HQ	Saavedra Chip	505
Clark, Sharon	HQ	Spear, Pete	PT-17
Delisio Ruth	503	Tarling Michael	505
Eiswald Joyce	HQ	Tarling Teresa	505
Fleming Gail	HQ	Thalman Joe	P-51
Fleming Thomas	HQ	<u>Thieme, Dick</u>	<u>505</u>
<u>Frisch, Robert</u>	<u>503</u>	Thieme, Emma	505
Frisch Scott	503	Thieme, Jeanne	505
Gibbs, Susan	503	Thomas Harold	HQ
George, Michael	P-51	Van Treeck, Cathy	505
<u>Graham, Jerry</u>	<u>505</u>	Van Treeck, Terry	505
Graham, Mary	505	Verhil, Jack	505
Graham Greg	505	Wilke, Bill	505
Greenhill, Chuck	P-51	Wilke, Cathie	505
Higbee Paul	503	Wilke, Reid	505
Higbee, Louise	503	Wilke, Ryan	505
Hammerle Tye	PT-17	Wilke, Mindy	505
Knapp, Frank	504		
Marbach, Tressa	503	Total Attendees	63
Moore, Linda	505	<u>Veterans of Fowlmere</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Moore, William</u>	<u>505</u>	<i>The dark names underlined</i>	<i>are the</i>
Olander, Donald	505	<i>Veterans of Fowlmere</i>	
Olander, Chris	505		
Olander, Jennifer	505		
Olander, Shirley	505		
<u>Perry, Bill</u>	<u>503</u>		
Perry, Lova	503		
Perry, Fred	503		
<u>Powell Larry</u>	<u>505</u>		



