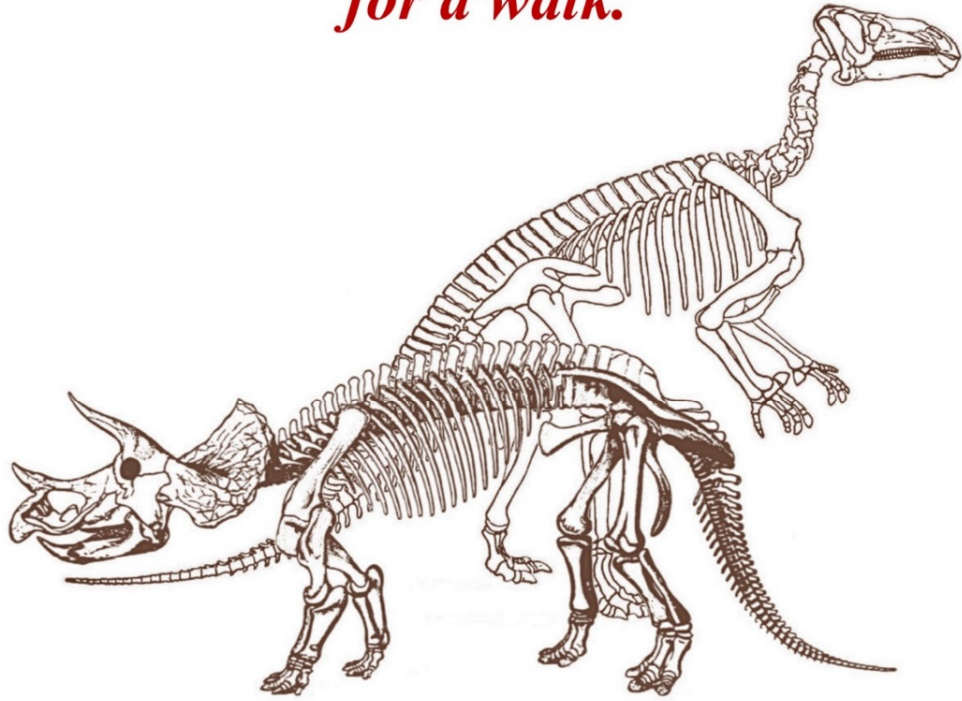


*Any family skeletons  
hidden in the closet?  
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to coax them out and take them  
for a walk.*



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*Illustrations from "The Dinosaurs of North America," by Othniel Charles Marsh. 1896 edition.*

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## *Twenty-Six Missions: The Robert Willis Grove Story*

by

*Wally Lee Parker*

*With the assistance of Gordon Grove, Mike Paulick,  
Charles Stewart, Ken Westby, and many others.*

*(Part Five)*



*... against the odds ...*

For every 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force airman engaged in combat, there were approximately 20 ground personnel working in support. Which is to say, the mass of paperwork, fuel, hardware and human labor needed to place each warring airman and his munitions over enemy held Europe was truly herculean. Once there,

that airman had two objectives. One was to obliterate the enemy's ability to make war by pounding his webs of ground-based infrastructure to dust. The other was to swat with lethal force any of the enemy's young men rising in opposition to that intent.

Bomber crews fought in an environment incapable of supporting life for a meaningful period of time without artificial assis-

*Illustration above from 1944's "Pilot Training Manual for the Flying Fortress B-17,"  
United States Army Air Forces.*

INDIVIDUAL SORTIE RECORD  
(PAGE 1)

FULL NAME	ASN	RANK		
Robert W. Grove	19060476	Staff Sergeant		
ORGANIZATION	DUTY	ONE MONTH'S PAY		
407th Bombardment Sqdn.	Waist Gunner and Bombardier			
HOME ADDRESS	ADDRESS OF NEAREST RELATIVE			
Deerpark, Washington	FATHER: Roy R. Grove, Deerpark, Washington			
AWARDS				
ENLISTED AT: Spokane, Washington				
DATE RECOMMENDED	TYPE	FOR	DATE AWARDED	AUTHORITY
	Air Medal	5 Bomb Sorties	10 April 1943	G.O. 43, 8 A.F.
5 April 1943	Oak Leaf Clust.	5 Bomb Sorties	22 April 1943	G.O. 47, 8 A.F.
2 June 1943	Oak Leaf Clust.	One (1) E/A	10 June 1943	G.O. 62, VIII B.C.
16 June 1943	Oak Leaf Clust.	5 Bomb Sorties and 20 Sorties and	21 June 1943	G.O. 72, VIII B.C.
15 July 1943	D. F. C.	one (1) E/A	27 July 1943	G.O. 110, 8 A.F.

Sortie Report page 1.

Document from the Gordon Grove Collection.

tance. They often fought so high in the air the only trace of moisture was an occasional dusting of ice crystals — the same dusting that gives sunrises and sunsets their luminous hues and the midnight moon its pale halo. These boys fought where a folded wing or disabled pair of pilots meant a long and often wide-awake spin into the ground miles below. And considering they could see with their own eyes how abysmal the odds were that any one of them would survive this war, it's perplexing that they'd carry on with such determination.

The source of that resolve was one of the topics covered by Lieutenant Colonel Mark Wells in his 1992 thesis, *Aviation and Air Combat: A Study of the U. S. Eighth Air Force and R. A. F. (Royal Air Force) Bomber*

*Command.*"

The Colonel suggests the primary motivation for newly inducted airmen begins with a sense of patriotism and duty — bolstered among air corps enlistees by an almost universal love of flying, or at least a fascination with the idea of flying. Most often that initial attraction weathers away during combat, evolving into something much more personal; a stubborn refusal to forsake the expectations of their comrades.

Colonel Wells also suggests the latter is the cohesive element for almost all soldiers facing prolonged combat, regardless of the era in which their war takes place, and subsequently the technology their war uses.

For most 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force airmen, the

**Robert Willis Grove's Individual Sortie Record:**

*Left: This first page of a three-page memo detailing Willis's combat history is a list of decorations received as a result of his service in the European theater of war.*

*The two pages to follow outline the 25 missions flown that qualified him for rotation out of frontline service — in this case earning his return to the United States to prepare for flight school. The last page of the document is signed by Captain Joseph R. Harmon, the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group's security officer; in effect testifying to the document's accuracy.*

*In the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, during Willis's term of service, an award was earned each time a bombardment airman completed five sorties through airspace controlled and defended by the enemy or used the bomber's guns to down an enemy aircraft. The first device awarded was the Air Medal, a ribbon with a pendant medallion. Additional decorations in the form of oak leaf clusters could be attached to the ribbon portion of this device. For bombardment aircrew, the Air Medal plus four oak leaf clusters would be recognized by a Distinguished Flying Cross — which Willis received after his 20<sup>th</sup> mission due to the additional cluster awarded for the downing of an enemy aircraft during the May 19<sup>th</sup> 1943 sortie against Kiel, Germany.*

constant stress of anticipating the next mission — punctuated by periods of absolute terror during those missions — was further aggravated by the sight of empty bunks upon return from those missions. Such things inevitably eroded that "initial period of thinking it will never happen to me" into a fatalistic acceptance of the math.

And the math was nothing short of brutal.

In rounded terms, statistics suggested only one out of four of America's combat airmen would manage 25 missions unscathed. Of the three quarters wounded, over half would either die instantly or, worse yet, linger into death.

For reasons of morale, it was apparent to all that emulating the Luftwaffe's practice in which airmen flew until they were either dead or broken beyond salvage was unacceptable. As noted by the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force's chief flight surgeon, Brigadier General Malcolm Crow, "Morale of crews is primarily influenced by their having a reasonable chance of survival."

In his thesis, Colonel Wells noted, "By the spring of 1943, 25 missions was the universal standard within the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force." Army Air Forces operating within other thea-

ters of war could have different accumulated sortie standards depending on the degree of hazard usually encountered on missions within that area of operation. For the 8<sup>th</sup> in Europe, the standard was set and remained 25 missions until the lessening lethality of the enemy's resistance suggested it could be raised.

As a footnote, the person responsible for assuring the accuracy of the individual sortie records of every crewman within the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Squadron was the group's security officer, Captain Joseph R. Harmon. That was the same Captain Harmon who flew as observer on Lieutenant Eugene Wiley's bomber for the October 9<sup>th</sup> 1942 strike on Lille, France (*see part four of this article in the July issue*).

The term sortie can be defined as an incursion into enemy territory from a defensive position for the purpose of doing damage to said enemy. Within aerial bombardment groups the successful completion of a sortie would most likely require actually dropping bombs on the assigned target or a designated alternate or otherwise permitted target. If a particular bomber in some way failed to meet that requirement, a determination as to whether the flight would be listed on the sortie records of the individual crewmen on that bomber

NAME	Robert W. Grove	RANK	S/Sgt.	ASN	19060476	ORG	407th Bombardment Sqdn.
'SORTIE NUMBER'	DATE OF SORTIE	TARGET	'HOURS OF SORTIE'	E/A 'DESTROYED'	'WOUNDS'	'OTHER ACTION'	
1	14 Feb. 1943	Hamm	4:30	0	0	0	
2	4 Mar. 1943	Rotterdam	3:45	0	0	0	
3	6 Mar. 1943	Lorient	7:15	0	0	0	
4	8 Mar. 1943	Rennes	4:15	0	0	0	
5	12 Mar. 1943	Rouen	4:30	0	0	Air Medal	
6	18 Mar. 1943	Vegesack	6:15	0	0	0	
7	22 Mar. 1943	Wilhelmshaven	5:15	0	0	0	
8	28 Mar. 1943	Rouen	4:15	0	0	0	
9	4 Apr. 1943	Paris	5:10	0	0	0	
10	5 Apr. 1943	Antwerp	4:20	0	0	Oak Leaf Cluster	
11	14 May 1943	Kiel	6:35	0	0	0	
12	17 May 1943	Lorient	5:10	0	0	0	
13	19 May 1943	Kiel	6:20	(PW-190) 1	0	Oak Leaf Cluster	
14	29 May 1943	St. Nazaire	6:00	0	0	0	
15	13 June 1943	Bremen	6:20	0	0	Oak Leaf Cluster	
16	22 June 1943	Huls	5:10	0	0	0	
17	25 June 1943	Oldenberg	5:50	0	0	0	

Sortie Report page 2.

Document from the Gordon Grove Collection.

would be the responsibility of that bombardment group's commanding officer. In making that judgement said officer would be at liberty to consider all relevant circumstances.

Regarding the October 9<sup>th</sup> Lille mission, it's probable it was not added to Willis Grove's sortie record because enemy airspace was not sufficiently penetrated before turning back to England, because no bombs were dropped on designated or permitted targets, and because the damage that forced Lieutenant Dempsey's aircraft to return to base was not inflicted by enemy action.

For Willis Grove, that made the February 14<sup>th</sup>, 1943 mission to Hamm his first recognized combat sortie within the European theater — and the start of his personal war.

... into the line of fire ...

On January 9<sup>th</sup>, 1943, the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group detached from the Combat Crew Replacement Center at Bovingdon and moved to an airfield about 60 miles north of London near the ancient town of Alconbury — the small village from which the airfield took its name. In the three months to follow, the group was reformed as an operational combat group and refitted with B-17Fs freshly painted with the group's newly acquired 'Triangle B' tail code. This was also the place where the group took the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s longstanding moniker, "Fame's Favored Few."

As a matter of record, the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bom-

bardment Group only returned to the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force's active roster as of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943. But Willis Grove's sortie record indicates he began flying combat missions on Valentine's Day, some two and half months earlier. The reason for this apparent disparity is that as of February 9<sup>th</sup> at least four of the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s aircrews had been placed on detached service with the four squadrons of the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group stationed at the Molesworth airfield just eight miles west of Alconbury.

Among those detached crews was one piloted by First Lieutenant Earl A. Shaefer. The other nine men in his crew included Lieutenant Arthur M. Stone, copilot; Lieutenant F. Stugard Jr., navigator; Lieutenant A. D. Fec, bombardier; Tech Sergeant G. F. Murray, flight engineer; Tech Sergeant D. B. Penley, radio operator; Sergeant M. L. Harris, ball turret gunner; Staff Sergeant Robert Willis Grove, left waist gunner; Staff Sergeant R. C. Lentz, right waist gunner; and Staff Sergeant F. S. Vance, tail gunner.

As a result, the first ten missions on Willis's sortie list would be flown with the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group's 427<sup>th</sup> Squadron. While some confusion could be expected due to the similarity of the number designation for Molesworth's 427<sup>th</sup> Squadron and Willis's 407<sup>th</sup> Squadron back at Alconbury, confidence is high that the details of Willis's detached time with the 427<sup>th</sup> are correct.

According to the records of the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group, on February 14<sup>th</sup> the flight crews took breakfast at 4:30 in the morning in the Molesworth mess hall. The briefing was scheduled for 5:20, engine warmup to begin at 8:10, taxiing into the queue at 8:20, with the first plane to lift off at 08:40.

The intended target was the marshaling yards — the railroad yards and surrounding infrastructure — at the city of Hamm in northwestern Germany. A force of 74 B-17s was dispatched; 17 of them from the 303<sup>rd</sup>, with three of those from the 427<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

Hamm, with a population of just over 50,000 at that time, was located east of Molesworth some 360 miles. The intended flight

from Molesworth appears to have traced a route slightly north of east toward the town of Dokkum near the northern coast of the Netherlands, then southeast to Hamm. The flight time there and back was expected to take between 3½ and 4½ hours. Willis's sortie record indicates it turned out to be the latter.

The 427<sup>th</sup> Squadron took lead position in the 303<sup>rd</sup>'s formation. Willis's assigned bomber for this flight was nicknamed "The Duchess." It was piloted by Lieutenant Ralph Hayes. This turned out to be the only sortie with the Molesworth group Willis didn't fly on a ship commanded by Lieutenant Shaefer.

According to the assembly-point chart, The Duchess flew on the left wing of the formation's lead ship.

As fate would have it, the entire mission was recalled short of Dokkum due to reports of a solid cloud cover over the intended targets. Despite that, the mission appears on Willis's individual sortie record, possibly because both light flak and German fighters were encountered — the destruction of one said fighter credited to one of the 303<sup>rd</sup>'s ball turret gunners.

The 303<sup>rd</sup> flew its next mission eighteen days later, that being another attack on Hamm's marshaling yards. Four bomb groups had been assigned to the task, from which a total of 71 bombers were utilized. Eighteen bombers were dispatched by the 303<sup>rd</sup>, but two had to turn back early.

For this March 4<sup>th</sup> mission, Willis flew on a bomber nicknamed "The Devil Himself." The plane, piloted and crewed by his regular teammates, was positioned on the far right and rearward side of the bombardment group.

The briefing's weather report suggested conditions would deteriorate over the English Channel but begin to improve once the Dutch coast was crossed. This was based on the belief that a high-pressure area was centered over Germany. That said, the accuracy of weather predictions is highly dependent on current information, such being very hard to get when the technology used to gather such

is current to 1943, and the area under study is under enemy control. As a result, the approaching groups found no improvement in the weather once in enemy airspace. One of the four groups turned back. Two others, including Willis's 303<sup>rd</sup>, diverted their 28 combined bombers toward the shipyards at Rotterdam in the southwestern Netherlands. One B-17 of this cluster was downed during the attack. Fifteen more were damaged. The nine crewmen on the downed aircraft were classified missing in action, while no injuries were reported among the returning crews. Three enemy fighters were claimed downed.

Separated from the other groups due to poor visibility after crossing the coastline, 16 B-17s of the 91<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group continued on to strike the primary target at Hamm. Four of those bombers were shot down, and nine were damaged. Known casualties were one killed and seven wounded. Another thirty-three men were classified missing in action.

Considered a taste of things to come, it's estimated the 91<sup>st</sup> Bombardment Group drew up over 150 German fighters in response to their incursion into Germany proper.

*... very close ...*

Two days later an equally large flight of B-17s was launched against the power plant, bridge, and port area of the French city of Lorient, on the northern reach of the Bay of Biscay. Three B-17s were lost during this raid, one of these was from the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group's 360<sup>th</sup> Squadron.

According to a diagram outlining the Molesworth's group's order of formation at the first assembly point, the four 427<sup>th</sup> aircraft assigned to this mission were to have clustered just behind the three aircraft constituting the flight's lead element. Early in the flight, one of the 427<sup>th</sup> Squadron's aircraft couldn't stay in formation due to engine trouble and had to turn back, leaving the remaining three planes in the standard vee configuration.

The diagram indicates Willis's air-

craft for this flight was nicknamed "*Luscious Lady*." It was positioned behind the left side wingman of the lead element — an aircraft piloted by First Lieutenant Martin E. Plocher. Immediately after the group had made its bomb run, 20-millimeter cannon fire from a Focke-Wulf 190 fighter took out both engines on the left side of Plocher's bomber. The attack left the copilot and left waist gunner dead, and the navigator and tail gunner seriously wounded. Plocher dropped out of formation and flew toward England until the loss of a third engine forced him to ditch in the Channel. The survivors became prisoners of war — though the tail gunner was soon repatriated to England, assumedly due to the severity of his wounds.

Out of the 71 B-17s attacking, three were downed — their crews killed or captured — and eight others were damaged.

*... and on it goes ...*

On March 8<sup>th</sup> the 91<sup>st</sup>, 303<sup>rd</sup>, 305<sup>th</sup>, and 306<sup>th</sup> Bombardment Groups struck the railway facilities near the French town of Rennes about a hundred miles south by southeast of the Channel Island of Guernsey and 30 miles inland from the coast. Bomber Command staged a simultaneous strike against the municipality of Rouen. Both cities were considered major supply lines for servicing Hitler's submarine bases along the French coast. After seven of Molesworth's bombers turned back due to mechanical and other issues, the remaining 12 struck the target at Rennes.

Lieutenant Earl Shaefer's crew, Willis among them, flew on the left wing of the 303<sup>rd</sup>'s lead element. Shaefer's craft for this mission carried the moniker "*The Witches Tit*."

After the action, the 303<sup>rd</sup> reported several kills or probable kills of enemy aircraft, while noting that the fighters — both Messerschmitt 109s and Focke-Wulf 190s — attacked "*mostly from eleven to one o'clock (essentially from directly ahead), level or slightly below*." Flak was reported as light.

Regarding damage received, no report has been located.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of March, 18 crews from the 303<sup>rd</sup> were dispatched toward the marshaling yards at Rouen, some thirty miles inland in northwestern France. Six of the craft turned back, all due to mechanical problems — in one case such being the failure of the tail gunner's electric flying suit which resulted in frostbitten feet. The remaining 12 — including Shaefer's crew aboard the *Luscious Lady* — joined the 51 other B-17s that managed to reach the target. Due to excellent fighter escort coverage and ineffective flak, no losses are suffered.

The very next day the group lifted again, this time to bomb the railroad marshaling yards at Amiens, about 60 miles northeast of Rouen. In this instance it was Shaefer's ship — nicknamed "*Pappy*" — that broke an oil line and had to turn back. Per protocol, this mission is not reflected on Willis's sortie list.

*... a growing price ...*

The March 18<sup>th</sup> raid on the coastal submarine construction yards at Vegesack, some 380 miles from Molesworth on the north coast of Germany, proved memorable. One hundred and three heavy bombers were dispatched. Of that, 73 B-17s and 24 B-24s were still in formation to make the run on Vegesack — each intending to deliver six 1,000-pound bombs.

Bombing by squadron, the 303<sup>rd</sup> began its run with the group's entire complement of 20 B-17s. The Luftwaffe began swarming the group while they were still some 40 miles out over the North Sea. One of Molesworth's bombers fell to the intense flak encountered over the target, and two more crash-landed once back in England — one within three miles of home base.

Lieutenant Shaeffer and his regular crew once again flew aboard the "*Luscious Lady*." Since most of the returning aircraft suffered some type of battle damage, and approximately 45,000 defensive machine gun rounds were fired by the group's gunners, it's

likely Willis from his position on his aircraft's left flank had a workout.

The most upsetting loss of the mission was the death of the bombardier aboard "*The Duchess*" — lead aircraft for the 359<sup>th</sup> Squadron. That was the craft Willis was assigned to for his first mission with the 303<sup>rd</sup>. During the last few seconds of the bomb run, a shell exploded near the Plexiglas nose of "*The Duchess*," the concussion throwing the bombardier, First Lieutenant Jack W. Mathis, to the back of the bombardier's cabin. The Lieutenant, horribly wounded, managed to crawl back to his bombsight and release the bombs on time — after which he quietly slumped over his bombsight in death. For this action he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The Lieutenant's age at death, twenty-one years, five months, and twenty one days.

The after-action report states 268 tons of high explosives were released, and "*Seven U-boat hulls appear severely damaged*."

"*The Duchess*" went on to complete a total of 59 missions before being retired from service, after which it was returned to the United States and, as was the fate of most of the war's surplus machines, sold for scrap.

Willis's seventh mission occurred on March 22<sup>nd</sup> — a raid against the seaport at Wilhelmshaven some 360 airmiles from Molesworth on the north coast of Germany. Eighty-four heavy bombers made the strike. One B-17 and two B-24s were lost. Fifteen of the 303<sup>rd</sup>'s bombers dropped their ordinance on the target from an altitude of just over five miles. Fighter resistance was considered intense.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of March, Bomber Command went back after the marshaling yard at Rouen, France, with 70 B-17s. On that mission one B-17 was lost.

Since flak was light and harassment by enemy fighters "*desultory*," it was considered an easy run for the group. That said, a mechanical problem prevented the "*Luscious Lady's*" bomb bay doors from opening, and she returned to Molesworth with her ordinance

still aboard. Having faced sufficient jeopardy, the sortie counted for the bomber's crew.

The Molesworth group lost one of its aircraft during the April 4<sup>th</sup> attack on the Renault Motor Works at Paris — that being one of the four B-17s Bomber Command lost that day. Regarding *"The Luscious Lady,"* Lieutenant Shaefer stated, *"My crew claimed that our bombs landed right on the aiming point."* His copilot, Second Lieutenant Stone noted *"We had a good view of Paris,"* adding he wouldn't care to visit the city as long as the Germans were there.

The very next day the 303<sup>rd</sup> was up again, this time as part of a mass attack on aircraft and engine factories in Antwerp, Belgium. Of all the planes Bomber Command dispatched to Antwerp that day, four were lost to Luftwaffe fighters, and thirteen others damaged.

One of those damaged and forced to turn back before making the bombing run was from the 427<sup>th</sup> Squadron. On the return home, while still over a mile up and crossing the coast of England, antiaircraft batteries opened fire on the damaged warbird — friendly fire being just another wartime hazard for the Army Air Forces. The bomber's crew fired a flare to suggest their identity and the flak ceased.

After completing the April 5<sup>th</sup> mission with the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bombardment Group, First Lieutenant Shaefer and his crew were ordered to return to the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group at Alconbury. Willis's next mission was over a month later, that with his old unit, the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s 407<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron.

... *"Fame's Favored Few"* ...

From this point forward the research as it relates to Willis loses some of its clarity. While we know which missions he flew, we have less definitive information on the specific part he played within those missions. We can assume he continued flying as waist gunner — probably left waist gunner. As to his ships and crews; we know he flew under the com-

mand of at least one pilot other than Lieutenant Shaefer during his remaining time with the 407<sup>th</sup> Squadron — that being Lieutenant Stafford Webb.

What we can say with certainty is that on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1943, the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group was officially reactivated as a combat unit. As such it flew its first mission out of the Alconbury field on May 14<sup>th</sup> as part of a massive force of over 200 bombers striking four designated targets in occupied Europe — with the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s B-17s among those slamming Germany proper.

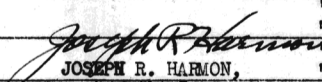
This mission, on which the 407<sup>th</sup> dispatched seven of its aircraft, was designated as number eleven on Willis's sortie record. The raid was against the submarine yards and naval installations at Kiel — a place Willis would see from the air several more times before his tour was over. One of the 407<sup>th</sup>'s bombers turned back early, and one was lost due to enemy fire over a cluster of islands on Germany's North Sea coast — with all ten members of that crew becoming prisoners of war.

As for losses by all the forces dispatched that day, six B-17s were downed, and 52 damaged. Five B-24s were also lost, and ten damaged. Ten B-26 medium bombers were damaged. As for the human toll, four airmen were killed in action, 20 were wounded, and 118 declared missing in action after their aircraft failed to return.

On May 17<sup>th</sup>, 118 B-17s hit the U-boat base at Lorient, France. Six were brought down, and 28 returned home damaged. The 407<sup>th</sup> puts eight of its bombers over target, and all return. This was Willis's second visit to Lorient — the first having been with the 303<sup>rd</sup> Bomb Group.

Two days later, on May 19<sup>th</sup>, the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group was up again; this being their second attack on the submarine shipyard at Kiel. The specific target, the turbine engine facility.

In total 103 of the B-17's dispatched by Bomber Command reached the target. On that mission six were brought down and 28

NAME		RANK		ASN		ORG	
Robert W. Grove		S/Sgt.		19060476		407th Bombardment Sqdn.	
'SORTIE NUMBER'	DATE OF SORTIE.	TARGET	'HOURS OF SORTIE'	E/A 'DESTROYED'	'WOUNDS'	OTHER ACTION	
18	26 June 1943	Paris	5:50	0	0	0	
19	28 June 1943	St. Nazaire	6:45	0	0	0	
20	10 July 1943	Caen	4:45	0	0	Distinguished Flying Cross	
21	17 July 1943	Hannover	4:30	0	0		
22	24 July 1943	Herøya (Norway)	7:55	0	0		
23	26 July 1943	Hannover	6:45	0	0		
24	28 July 1943	Kassel	5:10	0	0		
25	29 July 1943	Kiel	6:20	0	0		
I certify that this is a true record of sorties accomplished by S/Sgt. Robert W. Grove while participating in combat operations with the 92nd Bombardment Group (H).							
 JOSEPH R. HARMON, Capt., Air Corps, S-2.							

Document from the Gordon Grove Collection.

Sortie Report page 3.

damaged. With no fighter escorts to draw the German attackers away, the aerial battle was categorized as *"relentless,"* continuing out over the English Channel on withdrawal. It was during this ongoing brawl that Willis claimed his one German fighter — that a well-armored and otherwise formidable Focke-Wulf 190. For that Willis was awarded his second Oak Leaf Cluster.

On May 29<sup>th</sup>, 147 B-17s hit the submarine pens and locks at Saint Nazaire, France, 350 airmiles south of Alconbury. Fifteen B-17s and 7 B-17 variants called YB-40s were the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s contribution to the raid. Eight B-17s were lost during the mission, none from the 92<sup>nd</sup>.

As an experiment, beginning late in 1942 a handful of B-17s were converted from bombers to heavily armed and armored gunships intended to protect bomber formations during deep penetration missions reaching beyond the range of the allied escort fighters

then available. The twelve machines deployed with the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force were attached to 92<sup>nd</sup> Bomb Group's 327<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron upon the group's move to Alconbury. Comparatively heavy, these aircraft struggled to keep up with the regular bombers. And, having proven less effective in combat than hoped, the experiment was closed when suitable long-range fighters became available toward the end of 1943.

If there was any question regarding the B-17's vulnerability, that was settled during Willis's fifteenth mission. One hundred and twenty-two B-17s struck the U-boat yards at Bremen, Germany. In what was reportedly the *"heaviest fighter attacks to date,"* four of those bombers were lost. At the same time a second force of 60 B-17s raided the submarine facilities at Kiel. Twenty-two of those were brought down. Combined, the two prongs of the raid suffered a 14 percent loss. It was something of a wakeup call for the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force.

The chemical works and synthetic rubber plant at Huls, located just a dozen miles inside the western border of Germany, came under attack by 183 B-17s on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The entire force dispatched consisted of 235 bombers. The other target for that day's raid was in Belgium's Antwerp.

One of Alconbury's planes was lost during the Huls attack, and there was "*considerable flak caused battle damage*" among the rest of the group.

Snafu might be one term applied to the June 25<sup>th</sup> mission. Bomber Command dispatched a force of 275 B-17s toward primary targets in Hamburg and Bremen in northern Germany. Once there, the various groups found both cities "*obscured by clouds.*" Following orders, they then went in search of targets of opportunity.

For this foray, records indicate the 407<sup>th</sup> Squadron took point for the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s 20 B-17s and three YB-40s. While we don't know if Sergeant Grove was still in Earl Shaefer's crew, it does appear the pilot and copilot of the lead bomber were Lieutenant Shaefer and Major James Griffith. As to which was pilot, it has been pointed out that regardless of rank, the person in the cockpit's left seat was the plane's commander.

Some confusion exists in the available reports, but it appears the group, having observed a break in the clouds, were making a run on Oldenburg, located a few miles inland from Germany's North Sea coastline. That said — possibly due to a lone bomber from another group crossing under the flight at the same time the lead bombardier was preparing to drop his bombs — the ordinance actually fell on a small town to the east of Oldenburg.

It appears all of Alconbury's planes returned that day, though 18 of Bomber Command's other B-17s were lost.

The 407<sup>th</sup> Squadron's targets for the June 26<sup>th</sup> raid were several airdromes near Paris. All the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s aircraft returned.

Two days later, ten B-17s and six B-17s modified into YB-40s were the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s contribution to the 158 bombers once again sent

to drop 2,000-pound bombs on the sub pens and locks at Saint Nazaire, France. The flak over the target was described as heavy and accurate — resulting in seven of Alconbury's bombers being damaged, but none downed.

The statistics for all the bombers sent to Saint Nazaire that day were eight lost and 57 damaged. Three airmen were killed, 14 wounded, and 50 missing in action. It would be some time before the fate of those missing was fully known.

One of the airmen killed during this attack was Lieutenant Shaefer's navigator — struck when a piece of shrapnel sliced through the plane. We've no idea whether Willis was part of the Lieutenant's crew for that flight. As noted, we have evidence Willis flew with at least one other Alconbury pilot — said evidence being two photographs of Willis with Lieutenant Stafford W. Webb and his crew.

Two and a half months after Willis flew his last mission in the European theater, Lieutenant Webb and crew were shot down — that during the infamous second raid on Germany's Schweinfurt ball-bearing plant. Just over a quarter of the attacking force of 291 B-17s failed to return from what might be characterized as October's error in judgement. The Lieutenant — just two months past his 24<sup>th</sup> birthday — died, along with five members of his crew.

On July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1943, the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group contributed 14 aircraft to a raid on an airfield near the French town of Caen. Due to a solid overcast, all 14 brought their bombs back to base.

According to Willis Grove's sortie list, this mission, his twentieth — when added to the Oak Leaf Cluster he was awarded for knocking down a German fighter — this qualified him for the Distinguished Flying Cross. His sortie record indicates such was awarded.

... *five sorties left* ...

On July 17<sup>th</sup>, Bomber Command ordered a two-prong attack. One hundred and twenty-five B-17s were directed toward vari-

ous aviation industry targets at Hamburg, in northern Germany. At the same time 205 B-17s and two YB-40 gunships were dispatched toward rail related targets in Hannover, some 80 miles south of Hamburg.

Regarding the Hannover mission; in his book "*The Mighty Eighth in WWII: A Memoir*," then Lieutenant James K. McLaughlin, at that time a pilot with the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group's 326<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron, recalled, "*Our group (the 92<sup>nd</sup>) was leading the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force*" ... and ... "*The 407<sup>th</sup> Squadron was leading our group.*" Records suggest the pilot of the 407<sup>th</sup>'s lead ship was Captain (at that time possibly still Lieutenant) Donald G. Parker.

Reportedly the lead plane crossed the Dutch coast at an altitude of just over four and a half miles. Over Holland, on route to Hannover, the mission was recalled due to weather over the targets. All the groups in the column began simultaneously turning back toward England, leaving the 92<sup>nd</sup>, which had been at the front of the column, in the rearmost position — a prime position for the thirty or more Messerschmitt-109s McLaughlin states immediately pounced.

Being the last group in the homeward bound column by three or four miles, the 92<sup>nd</sup> was subjected to wave after wave of frontal attacks. The lead ship was immediately hit and an oxygen-fed fire set inside the fuselage. Fighting both that and the continuing fighter attacks, the lead ship stayed on course, eventually bringing the fire under control while guiding the rest of the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s ships home.

Someday records may surface detailing which aircraft Sergeant Grove crewed for this mission. All we can say at this point is that he was doubtless in the thick of it, as were all the 407<sup>th</sup>'s airmen.

It was the 24<sup>th</sup> of July. Fourteen B-17s and one YB-40 from Alconbury joined a strike force consisting of 167 aircraft in the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force's first raid on Norway, and its longest mission to date — about 1800 miles and eight hours there and back. The target was the magnesium mine and reducing plant at

Herøya, near Norway's southeast coast. All the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s ships returned to Alconbury, 12 with some battle damage, two carrying crewmen with minor wounds.

Two days later, the target was once again Hannover — this time the city's synthetic rubber works and tire factory. With the 407<sup>th</sup> leading, the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s placed eleven B-17s and one YB-40 over the target. Of the 16 B-17s Bomber Command lost on this mission, one belonged to the 92<sup>nd</sup>.

As a footnote to the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s part in the Hannover mission: After the pilot of a bomber attached to the 326<sup>th</sup> Bomb Squadron was disabled by what proved to be a fatal wound, the copilot, Second Lieutenant John C. Morgan, took control of the plane under the most dire of circumstances. As the official report summarizes, his actions constituted a display of "*conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty*" that resulted in "*the successful completion of a vital bombing mission and the safe return of his crew.*" For said actions, the Lieutenant was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

On July 28<sup>th</sup>, Robert Willis Grove flew his next to last mission. The target was an aircraft assembly plant located in north central Germany at Kassel. Hampered by weather, only 58 of the 182 B-17s originally dispatched were able to drop on the target. Among those, seven were lost and most of the rest damaged — several beyond repair.

Twelve of the 92<sup>nd</sup>'s bombers were able to strike the target area from an altitude of five and a half miles. One B-17 from the 407<sup>th</sup> Squadron — this on its first mission — was downed along with another, that from the 325<sup>th</sup> Squadron. Of these two crews, two were killed, eighteen became prisoners of war.

July 29<sup>th</sup>, 1943. Eleven aircraft from the 92<sup>nd</sup> Bombardment Group participated in a strike against the shipyards at Kiel, Germany. According to his sortie record, this is Sergeant Grove's second flight over this target. All the planes returned to Alconbury, a number with damage caused by either flak or fighters. Three airmen are wounded, none seriously.

FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H), AIR FORCE  
OFFICE OF THE GROUP GUNNERY OFFICER

FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTH BOMBARDMENT SQUADRON (H), AIR FORCE  
OFFICE OF THE OPERATIONS OFFICER

31 July, 1943

31 July, 1943

SUBJECT: Recommendation

SUBJECT: Recommendation

TO : Whom it May Concern

TO : Whom it May Concern

I have known S/Sgt. ROBERT W. GROVE, for one (1) year and during that time have had an opportunity to observe him as a combat gunner as well as an Armament maintenance man. On all occasions he diligently applied himself and his work has always been of the highest calibre.

I wish to highly recommend ROBERT W. GROVE for pilot training.

I therefore wish to highly recommend this man for Pilot Training and believe he has all the qualifications necessary to become a pilot and officer.

I have personally known S/Sgt. Grove for the past nine months during which time he has been a member of the B-17 crew of which I was pilot. He shows great willingness and satisfactorily carries out all his duties.

I know him to be honest and trustworthy and a man of excellent character. I believe that he has the necessary attitude and abilities to become a pilot and an officer.

*John C. Prosch*  
JOHN C. PROSCH,  
Captain, AC,  
Group Gunnery Officer.

*Earl A. Shaefer*  
EARL A. SHAEFER,  
1st Lt., AC,  
Pilot

Document from the Gordon Grove Collection.

Document from the Gordon Grove Collection.

*Letter of Recommendation for Pilot Training from Captain John Prosch.*

*Letter of Recommendation for Pilot Training from First Lieutenant Earl Shaefer.*

The above letter makes note of Staff Sergeant Grove's experience as "combat gunner as well as an armament maintenance man." Having received army schooling in both aviation mechanics and flexible gunnery, the above seems a natural fit for Willis's duties when not involved in preparations for or executions of combat missions. As for Group Gunnery Officer Prosch, he appears to have completed 32 combat sorties and rose to the rank of Major before he left the service at war's end. He passed away in 1996.

Since we don't have complete records, we can only verify that Willis Grove flew nine of his twenty-five missions as a part of Earl Shaefer's crew. Though photographic evidence implies Willis flew at least a few missions with Stafford Webb's crew — and one document indicating one mission with Lieutenant Ralph S. Hayes — the above would suggest the majority were with Shaefer. After the war Lieutenant Shaefer stayed with the Air Force — retiring as Lieutenant Colonel after 28 years of service. He passed away in 2010.

And with the completion of his twenty fifth mission, Willis could honorably turn his back on the hazardous life of an aerial combatant. But the evidence suggests Willis was intent on taking a different path — one sure to draw him back into the line of fire, with the math once again against him.

... but that's a story for another day ...

Like most of the once young men who fought in the skies over Europe during the first half of the 1940s, Robert Willis Grove is no longer with us. He passed away on the

29<sup>th</sup> of March, 1992. Tracing his story after his last mission in the European theater will take us back to the United States, through the college courses required to meet the military's definition of an officer and gentleman, and on through flight school.

became convinced war with Germany and Japan was inevitable, he set his heart on becoming a fighter pilot. Learning to fly over Deer Park's dusty airport was likely undertaken with that intent. Joining the Army Air Corps eight weeks before Pearl Harbor was likely with flight school in mind. And his

We believe that as soon as Willis

decision to apply for pilot's training upon completion of his 25 combat missions with the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force was clearly with that design. And yes, several months after the fall of the Japanese empire he did earn both his commission and his pilot's wings.

In the summer of 1945, most everyone with a realistic understanding of the situation expected the war in the Pacific to drag on for another year and cost at least a million American casualties — those beyond the sacrifices already made. And most everyone was completely stupefied when singular scalding flashes over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought it all to a sudden halt. At that point it appears Willis became a Reserve Officer, retaining that designation at least until the Army's air branch transitioned

into the independent Air Force in 1947.

Willis Grove's son, Gordon, said his father seldom talked about his part in the war. What we've been able to piece together here has been drawn by following the clues found in the documents Gordon has on file — photos, scraps of military orders, various certificates and documents — all augmented by a wealth of data drawn from books, magazines, and various military related internet sites. To continue beyond this point will require more of the same. While we intend to do exactly that as sufficient time becomes available, right now it seems best to draw this thread to a close. Be watching for the rest of this story in a future edition of the *Mortarboard*.

— end —

## Notes from the Office

### Happenings In & Around the Society's New Home

by

The Editorial Group

... *finding your way to our place* ...

This last January the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society signed a lease on the Deer Park City Hall complex's former teaching module. Ever since that most welcome event the group has been vexed by this free-standing building's official address. Located on the south side of the north facing complex, the module has never had an independent street address of its own. Its official address is for the City Hall building fronting Crawford street, while its physical location is facing the 300 block of East 'A' Street. It appeared the best remedy was to direct people to that particular hundred block of East 'A' Street, then indicate our specific building with a sign clearly visible from the street.

In an email dated May 14<sup>th</sup>, the socie-

ty's point man on the sign project, Mike Reiter, wrote the following. "I talked to Roger this morning about our sign and what we would need to get his blessing" — the "Roger" mentioned being Roger Krieger, the city's Community Services Director. After Mike outlined what he had in mind, he and the director "walked over and looked at the site." Roger said he thought "it would be okay," but noted the area should be checked for underground utilities before any digging was done.

Over the next several weeks quite a bit of discussion occurred as to the general appearance of the sign — something simple, perhaps just the group's name and website address. Those ideas were taken to Rachelle 'Shelly' Fletcher of Deer Park Printing.

Shelly's various design proposals were presented at the society's June meeting



#### Creating a Base for the Sign.

Rick Broadrick (upper left) and Mike Reiter were largely responsible for working out the details of the design and gathering and installing the materials. Bill Sebright donated the "original" Clayton bricks used to pave the base and did most of the cutting and laying of said bricks..

(Images courtesy of Mike Reiter.)







*Signage in Front of the Clayton ♦ Deer Park Historical Society's Home.  
— July 2019 —*

*(Photo by Mike Reiter.)*

as half a dozen pictorial layouts. By group consensus a two-foot-high by four wide dome-crowned sign with a green background and gold lettering was chosen.

Special thanks to Mike Reiter, Rick Brodrick, Bill Sebright, and Shelly Fletcher for this excellent piece of workmanship.

*... Betty Burdette's donations ...*

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of April Betty Burdette's younger son, Michael, sent Bill Sebright an email stating Betty had left notes on items in her house she wanted donated to the historical society in the event of her death. Among those items were a player piano and a pump

organ. Bill recalled having "played" (making noise) on this pump organ when it was the property of the Clayton Community Church back in the 1950s. We've yet to confirm the piano's background within the community but suspect there's is an equally deep one.

Recognizing that the society currently doesn't have a suitable place to keep these objects, society member Chuck Lyons formulated an agreement with the North Spokane Farm Museum in which that organization would hold the artifacts on our behalf until the society could properly care for them.

Regarding the age of the two items, Bill Sebright contacted Dan Brown, an expert on vintage pianos and organs. Dan reported



*Photo by Chuck Lyons.*

*Kimball Pump Organ — circa 1911.*

*Donated at the bequest of Betty Lu Burdette (1928 — 2019).*

“The Kimball organ is called a piano-cased reed organ because of the relatively simple design (no tall shelves, mirrors, or candleholders). This was a later design and that fits with the serial number, which indicates it was manufactured in 1911.”

Information as to the design and date of manufacture of the player piano (image to the right) is pending.

If anyone has information such as anecdotes surrounding the prior life of these artifacts within the community please contact the society. Personal stories and recollections associated with these objects are exactly the kind of thing needed to bind them firmly into the community’s history.

— end —



Photo by Chuck Lyons.

## Minutes of the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society July 13, 2019

In attendance at the society’s meeting hall, 300 block East ‘A’ Street, Deer Park: Eleanor Ball, Marilyn Reilly, Bill Sebright, Wally Parker, Pat Parker, Mark Wagner, Tom Costigan, Rachelle Fletcher, Flo Moore, Mary Jo Reiter, Lorraine Nord, Pete Coffin, Judy Coffin, Roxanne Camp, Bill Phipps, Tim Verzal, Rick Brodrick, Mark Bryant, Diana Bryant, Jeff Clark, Chuck Lyons, Betty Deuber, Don Ball, Elaine Ball, and Wey Simpson.

Society President Bill Sebright called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He reported: 1) That he received an email from Gene Bovermann. The email included a picture of Ella Edington and her second-grade class taken in front of the Deer Park Elementary School in the early 1930s. 2) Anni and I enjoyed Heritage Day at the North Spokane Farm Museum where Betty Burdette’s pump

organ and player piano were on display. 3) The Heritage Network will be meeting in our building at 9:30 Monday.

Society Treasurer Mark Wagner reported the main checking account ended the month at \$8,980.60. There were deposits of \$865.00. One check was written for \$168.00 to Mike Reiter for supplies and one for \$465.99 for Brickyard Day hats, and one for \$366.33 to Jeff Lilly for the printing of the Brickyard Day flyer. The web hosting account ended the month at \$639.34 with a withdrawal of \$30.24 for web hosting. The Brickyard Day account is at \$863.15. I have submitted our 2018 990 federal tax return.

Society Vice President: No one has stepped forward to become Vice President.

Print editor Wally Parker reported: 1) One hundred and twenty copies of the July

Mortarboard (#135) have been printed for general distribution. An extra 30 copies have been prepared for booth distribution during Settlers and Brickyard Day events. A PDF has been forwarded to the C/DPHS website for posting. A printable PDF has been sent for onsite replication by the Loon Lake Library. This 20-page issue features part four of “Twenty-Six Missions: The Robert Willis Grove Story.” Also included is an article titled “Leno and the Sleeping Angel.” 2) Test examples of six possible posters advertising the C/DPHS have been printed for the Society’s consideration. Intended for placement on community bulletin boards in venues such as grocery stores, community halls, and the like, these have been formatted as 11x17 inch mini posters. That said, they can easily be downsized to 7½x11 inches or 5½x8 inches — these last two sizes chosen because they are likely more acceptable on community boards with limited space, and because both can be printed on most any color capable inkjet or laser printer using standard 8½x11 inch brochure paper. Bulk printing of these posters is unnecessary. Held as image files on computers or memory sticks, they can be printed in runs as small as a single copy as the opportunity for posting arises. The issue of designing at the professional level can be bypassed to a great extent by the creative reuse of images clearly in the public domain, or for which permission has been obtained. The same lighthearted and hopefully humorous approach seen in these examples can be used on future posters announcing upcoming events in which the Society is either the sponsor or otherwise participating. 3) Anyone looking for a project might consider forming a committee tasked with the creation of an image catalog of Leno Prestini paintings. As far as I know no such comprehensive catalog currently exists, and such is sorely needed. The primary objective of creating such should be distribution to libraries and educational institutions. Of specific emphasis should be the task of obtaining high-quality digital images of the artwork held by both private parties and institutions to ensure the preservation of

those images should the originals be lost or destroyed. Other possible uses of the images could be negotiated on a case by case basis. This would not be a small project since numerous interpersonal and legal issues are likely to arise — such having been touched upon by the past decade’s largely unsuccessful Prestini Project.

Webmaster Marie Morrill reported by email: 1) I have uploaded the July Mortarboard. I’ll get the posters, the Deuber paintings video link, and DP School picture on the website after I get home from Ohio.

Pete Coffin reported: 1) Visited the eagle in Clayton on June 28. There is a fairly large area of paint on the tail that is peeling and will need professional attention. If the rumor is true that the Clayton Burger is for sale the Society may need to make arrangements for care of the eagle lot with the new owners. 2) Purchased a copy of the book “Wandermere, Legacy on the Little Spokane River”. The author has assembled much information on the early settlement of the area through which many of the settlers in our area passed. 3) I have committed three convertibles for use in the Brickyard Days parade. I will need two drivers able to drive manual transmission cars. 4) Permission has been given to the *Deer Park Gazette* to reprint the Mortarboard article on “Drag Racing in Deer Park.” 5) The book “Welcome to Nine Mile Falls” has been digitized. The authors of this book have summarized and referenced much historic detail about the early Spokane Indians and the very early exploration of northwest Washington. Of special interest is the detail about land ownership and schooling in the Nine Mile area.

Mike Reiter by email reported: 1) Bill Sebright and I got the sign installed Wednesday with some help from Glenn Wainwright. 2) Rachelle is also printing up some drag strip posters we can display at our booth at Settlers. 3) We are planning on packing down our TV to the booth to show drag movies. If we use some of our canopy space for chairs we will have to figure how much of our

Deer Park & Other Locations Currently Carrying Print Copies of the Mortarboard:  
City Library, City Hall, Gardenspot Market, Standen Insurance,  
Odyanski’s Accounting, the Deer Park Chamber of Commerce, the Deer Park Library and the Loon Lake Library.

other items we want to pack down there. 4) Rick and I installed the TV.

Don Ball reported that he is having a 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1 to 4 PM. It will be at the Deer Park Eagles Lodge. If you have questions call or text Elaine at (509) 276-0606.

Wally brought up the idea of cataloging Prestini paintings. No one volunteered. Bill will bring up the topic at The Heritage Network Monday to see what Stevens County Historical Society has done toward this.

It was decided that Rachelle Fletcher would print 5 sets of Drag Strip posters. Two are already sold.

Clayton Brickyard Day planning is moving along. Flyers, T-shirts, and hats are

out.

Chuck Lyons reported that the turn out for Heritage Day at North Spokane Farm Museum was smaller than hoped. They did give a lot of tours of the museum. Chuck gave lessons on driving the crawler tractor that he brought over.

Marilyn said that someone gave her a lettering set. She offered it to the Society if needed.

Next meeting Saturday, August 10, 2019, at 10:00 AM at our new building.

Meeting adjourned at 10.55 AM.  
The Society meeting minutes submitted by Mark Wagner, acting Secretary.

— end —

Volunteer proofreaders for this issue: Rick Hodges, Mike Reiter, Bill Sebright, Chuck Stewart, Lina Swinn, and Ken Westby.

### Comments Policy

*We encourage anyone with observations, concerns, corrections, divergent opinions or additional materials relating to the contents of these newsletters to write the society or contact one or more of the individuals listed in the "Society Contacts" box found in each issue. Resultant conversations can remain confidential if so desired.*

### Society Contacts

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### Editorial and Copyright Policy

*Those contributing "original" materials to the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society retain copyright to said materials while granting the Mortarboard and the Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society durable permission to use said materials in electronic and print media — including permission to reprint said materials in future Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society publications. Under certain conditions proof of ownership of submitted materials and/or a signed release allowing use may be requested. No compensation for materials submitted is offered or implied. All materials submitted are subject to editorial revision for content, language, legal exposures and so forth. Any material published as an exception to these general understandings will be clearly marked as to the nature of the exception.*

### Permission to Reprint Policy

*When requests to reprint C/DPHS materials are received, such will be granted in almost all instances — assuming of course that we have the right to extend such permission. In instances where we don't have that right, we will attempt to place the requester in contact with the owner of the intellectual property in question. But, as a matter of both prudence and professionalism, in all instances a request to reprint must be made and must be made in writing (letter or email), before any C/DPHS materials are reprinted.*

From "The Coast" magazine,  
April, 1907



### See Yourself in Print.

*The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society's department of Print Publications is always looking for original writings, classic photos, properly aged documents and the like that may be of interest to our readers. These materials should be rooted within, though not limited to, northern Spokane County, southeastern Stevens County, and southern Pend Oreille County. As for types of materials, family or personal remembrances are always considered. Articles of general historical interest — including pieces on natural history, archeology, geology and such — are likely to prove useful. In other words, we are always searching for things that will increase our readers' understanding and appreciation of this region's past. As for historical perspective; to us history begins whenever the past is dusty enough to have become noteworthy — which is always open to interpretation. From there it extends back as deep as we can see, can research, or even speculate upon.*

*Copyright considerations for any materials submitted are stated in the "Editorial and Copyright Policy" dialog box found in this issue. For any clarifications regarding said policy, or any discussions of possible story ideas or the appropriateness of certain types of material and so on, please contact the editor via the email address supplied on the same page.*

— the editor —

### About our Group:

*The Clayton/Deer Park Historical Society was incorporated as a nonprofit association in the winter of 2002 under the title Clayton Historical Society. Our mission statement is found on the first page (upper left corner) of each issue of our newsletter, the Mortarboard.*

*Our yearly dues are \$20 dollars per family/household.*

*We are open to any and all that share an interest in the history of our region — said region, in both a geographic and historic sense, not limited to the communities in our group's name.*