If you are a veteran, or know a veteran, of one of these campaigns – contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or coldpatton@yahoo.com

Welcome to the April meeting of the Dr. Harold C. Deutsch World War II History Round Table. Tonight’s speaker is Gregg Jones, author of The Last Mission and Last Stand at Khe Sanh. Together with veterans of the European air war, he will discuss the dangers of bomber missions to destroy German armaments.

According to the air power theorists, strategic bombing would bring the enemy to its knees by destroying either its will to fight by terror bombing (British doctrine) or its means to fight (US-AAF). Americans wanted to target railroad marshaling yards, refineries, ball bearing factories, and other key economic targets to destroy Germany’s ability to create the tools of war. This was driven in part by ethical concerns about “collateral damage” – civilian casualties. To bomb these targets required developing the ability to do precision bombing. One key to this was the Norden bombsight. Another was daylight bombing so bombardiers could actually see the target.

Because high altitude bombing was very inaccurate, they had no fighter aircraft capable of reading Berlin, protecting its bombers, and returning to base, and because of the high casualties sustained the in daylight without escorts, the British Royal Air Force (RAF) chose to bomb Germany at night. Target cities were too large to miss, and the great numbers of civilian casualties would (theoretically) produce chaos and break the Germans’ will to fight.

When the USAAF arrived in Britain and began flying missions over Germany, we flew daylight missions. The losses of aircraft and of aircrews (more precious than aircraft) were staggering. No one dreamed of such loss rates. The 8th Air Force gave up on daylight bombing until long range fighters (P51s with drop tanks) became available, and began night bombing, in which the Norden bombsight was not accurate. Despite this, our attacks on strategic targets were more focused that the British, but most strategic targets were in or on the edge of cities, so our “precision night bombing” was little better than the British blind blanket targeting.

Jones’ “Jerk’s Natural” is both a family story (his uncle was the radio operator) and a microcosmic story of the 8th Air Force heavy bomber crews, especially during the “Combined Bomber Offensive” campaign, except that its (328 BS) squadron and two others from the 93 BG were sent to Libya in support of 12th AF operations, returning to England late in 1942. The 328 BS was sent to Libya again in 1943, and participated in the 1 August 1943 Ploesti oil fields mission (54 of 177 B-24s were lost—the highest loss mission), and for the “Jerk’s Natural” crew, its last and fatal 1 October 1943 Wiener Neustadt mission.


Neil Halloran's "The Fallen of World War II." https://vimeo.com/128373915 provides a graphic 18 minute visual documentary of the human costs of World War II. Highly recommended.

Announcements:
Twin Cities Civil War Round Table - 16 May 2017 - “Overrun with Free Negroes” Reconstruction & Resettlement - www.tccwrt.com - info@tccwrt.com

St. Croix Valley Civil War Round Table - 24 Apr. 2017 – Longstreet’s Modern Military Methods - 715-386-1268 - rossandhaines@comcast.net

Cannon Valley CWRT - 20 Apr. 2017 – Embalming in CW – dlh1.peterson@gmail.com

Fort Snelling Civil War Symposium - 8 April 2017 - info@tccwrt.com


Minnesota Air Guard Museum - www.mnangmuseum.org - 612-713-2523


www.wotn.org - 952-746-6100

History Floor Book Club, Har Mar Barnes & Noble: - Zetter, Stuxnet and Cyberwar - 19 Apr. - sdaubenspeck52@gmail.com

Honor Flight - Jerry Kyser - crazyjerry45@hotmail - 651-338-2717

CAF - Commemorative Air Force - www.cafmin.org - 651-455-6942

Friends of Ft. Snelling, www.fortsnelling.org

Doug Bekke, WWI Uniforms, noon 15 June 2017, “Annex” New Ulm Historical Museum and again 7 PM Legion Hall, Springfield, MN

We need volunteers to drive our veterans to and from meetings. Please contact Don Patton at cell 612-867-5144 or coldpatton@yahoo.com

Round Table Schedule 2017

See our programs on YouTube at http://youtube.com/ww2hrt

B-24D Liberator bomber ‘Jerks Natural’ of 93rd Bomber Group, 328th Bomber Squadron at an airfield at Gambut Airfield (now Kambut), Libya, Feb 1943.

The American Air Museum in Britain notes that the bomber had flown 30 successful missions at the time: 14 day raids and 2 night raids in the Mediterranean theater, and 14 over Europe. They claimed to have sunk one U-boat (in the Gulf of Mexico) and to have shot down 5 fighters. Assigned to 328th BS, 93rd BG, 8th AF, TDY 9th Benghazi, Libya. This aircraft flew the 1 Aug. 1943, Ploesti mission, diverting safely to Sicily. A/C was damaged over Austria on mission to Wiener Neustadt Bf 109 factory and crashed in Yugoslavia on 1 Oct 1943. 9 KIA 1 POW. MACR 3301.

ww2dbase (http://ww2db.com/image.php?image_id=9951)(USAAF Photo)

Route of Planned 1 August 1943 Ploesti Raid