The B-26 Marauder Historical Society

The Marauder Thunder

Reunion news

The 2025 B-26 MHS reunion is to be held in the Omaha Nebraska area the beginning of November.

Current plans are to visit these:

DPAA Nebraska lab: Offutt Air Force Base is home to one of three Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency labs in the U.S., one of the things that stands out about the roughly 50 employees is most of the forensic anthropologists are women. DPAA's forensic anthropologists analyze and inventory skeletal remains, identify bones, and determine a biological profile in an effort to identify unknown service members who died in previous wars. They also work as scientific recovery experts, helping excavate sites around the world. The DPAA lab at Offutt is located in what was once the Glenn L. Martin – Nebraska Bomber Plant, which employed many pioneering women in STEM known as "Rosie the Riveters."

"It becomes a full-circle story when you think about the fact that those women were here working on building the planes that ended WWII and we're in the same building identifying not only the men and women who died in WWII but also, for example with the USS Oklahoma, the individuals who died on the very first day of [U.S. involvement in] WWII," Brown said. "So thinking about that every day when you walk in to work…it's really an amazing historical circle that we get to be in this place."

Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum: Our museum was built as a state-of-the-art center for housing the aircraft and artifacts used by the Strategic Air Command during the Cold War. With careful restoration efforts and impressive displays, we've been sharing this critical time in our history with the next generations for 25 years.

Now, we aim to honor our heritage while looking toward the bright future of air and space innovation. The museum remains a significant historical resource while also using its collection to ignite the imagination of tomorrow's scientists and explorers. Specializing in science and space exploration, technological innovation and a genuine commitment to sharing and preserving our nation's history, we're uniting our past and future to secure our spot as the Midwest's premier museum and science center.

Please watch out for further details on our Facebook page and website in the June time frame.

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President's message

Hello Fellow Marauders! 2025 is upon us. We are planning a reunion this year in Omaha, Nebraska. Hope to see many new faces! Our overall membership is getting smaller over the years. But we still strive to bring value to our members! If you have any ideas, please share. If you have requests, please let us know.

May 8th will represent the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe! And of course the B26 had significant role. There are many plans for celebrations that can be found on the internet.

Aug 15th will be the 80th anniversary of Victory over Japan. And yes, there are many records of B26s from Midway to the Aleutians and the stories of the 22nd BG in Australia!

All of us are connected through people or plane - memories or interest - of the great B26 Marauder! Let's keep the memories alive and we shall never forget!

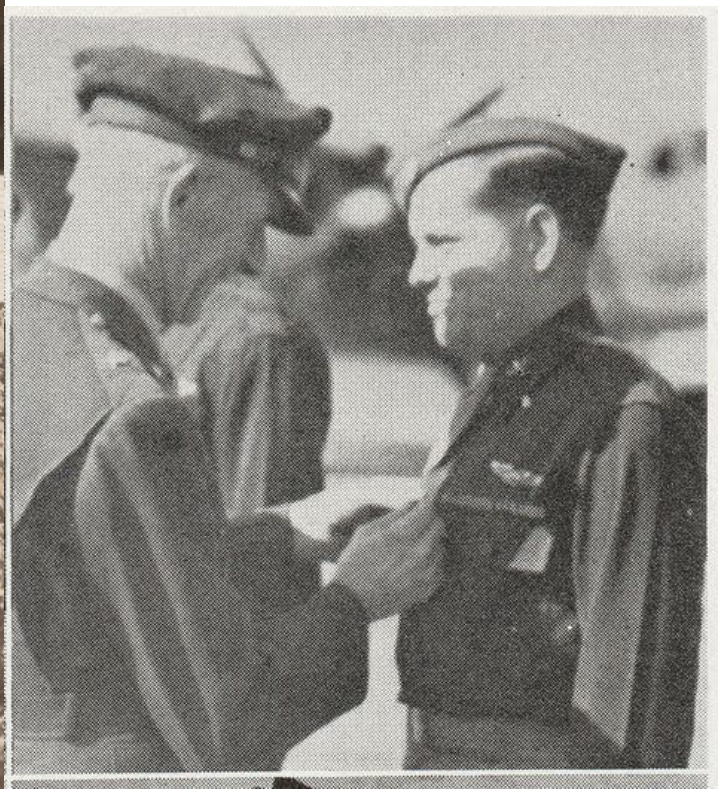
Joshua Muri President B26 MHS

From Brian Byer relative of Major John E "Jack" Criswell

My name is Brian Byer and I would like to share the biography of Major John E "Jack" Criswell who was a B-26 Marauder pilot with the 17th Bomb Group, 34th Squadron. Major Criswell is my grandmother's younger brother. A native of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania Jack Criswell enlisted with the US Army Air Corps in Sep 1940. He graduated from Ellington Field in April 1942 and served at McDill Field until February 1943 when, with the rank of Captain, he was assigned overseas with the 34th Bomb Squadron joining the Squadron in Telergma, Algeria in April 1943. He distinguished himself as a B-26 pilot. On the 11th of July 1943, his B-26 which was named after his sweetheart Millie, returned from the raid on the Milo-Trapani Airdrome, Sicily with more than 200 holes. His bombadier, Captain Thomas Elliot was grievously wounded but managed to overcome his wounds and drop a devastating pattern of bombs on the airfield. Captain Elliot was awarded the Silver Star for his actions. Two gunners were also wounded on this mission and Technical Sargent George P. Corl died from his wounds after returning to base. In October 1943, Capt. Jack Criswell assumed command of the 34th Bomb Squadron from Major Joe Klein. He was promoted to Major and led numerous raids. Major Criswell was awarded the Distingushed Flying Cross by General Webster in March, 1944. After flying 53 missions and serving as Squadron Commander for the 34th BS, Major Criswell returned home to Pittsburgh in May of 1944 and married his sweetheart Millie Rowley. The photos include General Webster awarding Major Criswell the DFC, The "Millie III" which was landed by Lt. Carlson "without the aid of the nosewheel" which had been shredded by shrapnel on the 18 January 1944 raid on the Piambino Steel Works in Italy. (Maj Criswell was aboard as formation commander). Major Jack Criswell and his bride Millie Rowley 27th of May 1944. This is a brief summary as I have several more photos of Major Criswell as well as multiple newspaper clippings. I wish I could join you all at the B-26 Marauder Reunion!
Brian

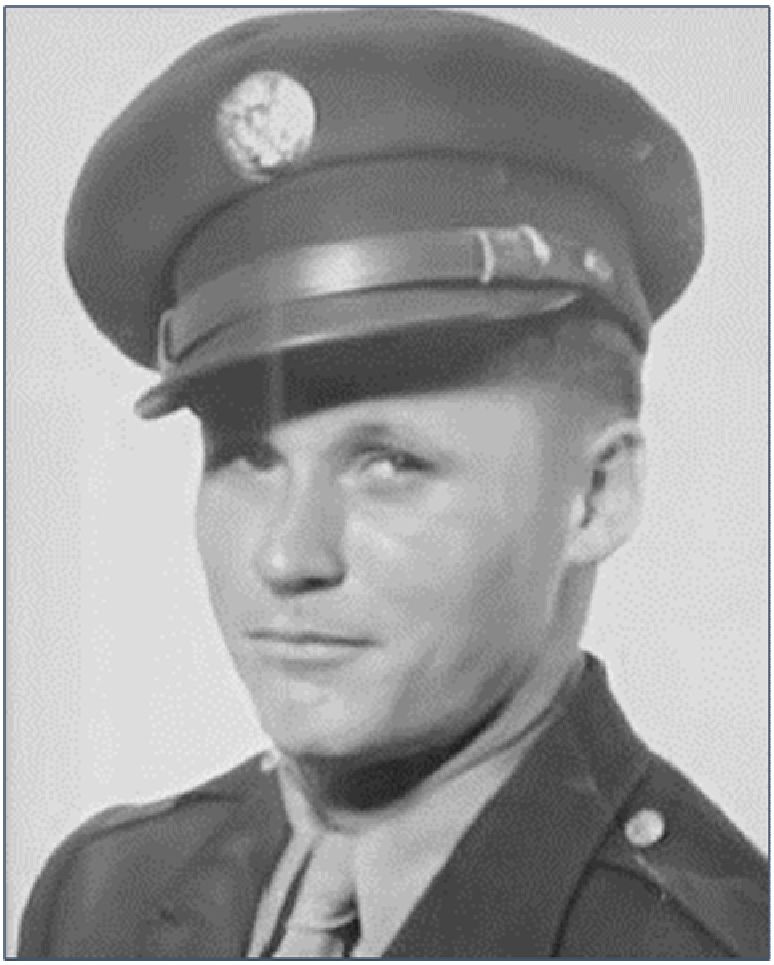






This is a story of Charles Peterson's Dad, about one of his missions:

Here is information about my Dad - George E. Peterson. He served in the 322nd/450th from March 1943 - September 1945, flying his first mission in Europe on July 25, '44. He was the turret gunner/flight engineer on Fightin' Cock when it crash landed on Aug 12, 1944.



Here is a picture of Dad -

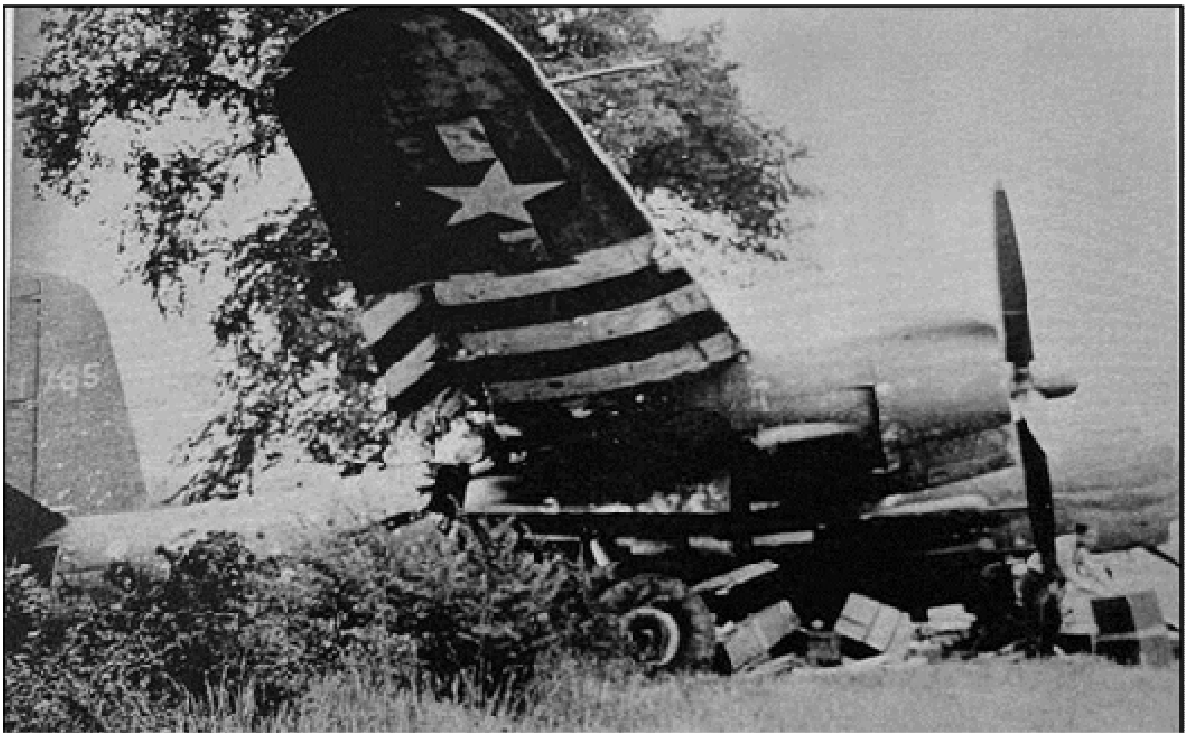
From the notes he wrote: the Fightin' Cock mission: Fightin' Cock (ER*X S/N 41-31765 - plane "written-off" after crash landing)

Pilot – Lt. Walker, other crew – Sgt. Peterson – Sgt. Vogt
Falaise Gap France – Altitude 10,000 – 16–100lb fragmentation bombs

On this mission I was wounded. We just got over the target and got a direct hit in the right nacelle. Tore half the engine and wing off. I got hit in the hands and leg; radio man was hit bad in leg and hind quarters; tail gunner got hit in the shoulder. Took off for

home, couldn’t land until every other ship was down. Couldn’t get left main gear down or the wing flaps. Came in downwind about 200 mph. Swerved off the runway when the left wing hit the ground; ran into the tower. Pilot and co-pilot were killed. I’m glad I am alive; was three feet behind the pilot. Was in the hospital for almost 3 weeks. It was really rough.

Here is a picture Dad took of Fightin' Cock:



Cyrus D. Kirk Obituary

FEBRUARY 4, 1922 – FEBRUARY 21, 2025



Cyrus D. Kirk passed away peacefully on February 21, 2025, at the age of 103. A private family graveside service will be held 11 a.m. Thursday, June 12, 2025 at Resthaven Cemetery.

Cyrus was born Feb. 4, 1922 in Des Moines, IA, the son of Frank and Lena (Popple) Kirk. He was married to Rosaline Stickler in April, 1951 in Centerville, Iowa. Cy was a retired Vice President of La Salle National Bank of Chicago, IL. He had previously worked for International Harvester Co. and spent 31 years in banking both in Des Moines and Chicago. Cy was a veteran of World War II flying the B-26 Marauder and the Korean conflict, where he served as an Air Force Pilot. He retired after 20 years as a Lt. Colonel in the 132nd Fighter Group of the Iowa Air National Guard, flying the P-51. He was also a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity, Golden K Kiwanis and the Des Moines Golf and Country Club. Cy credited his survival in WWII to the excellent flight trainers he had in B-26 flight school, and the healthy longevity of his life to the words his Father taught him…. “Never put something in your mouth that will steal your brain.” Cyrus is survived by his two daughters, Diane (Rick) Hickman of Des Moines, Barb (Jim) McDonald of Rockford, IL, and his son Brad (Lisa) Kirk of Cincinnati, OH, seven grandchildren and two great grandsons.

Surviving B-26 Aircraft

We currently know of seven B-26 Martin Marauders:

The B-26 at the MAPS museum in the Akron Ohio area called Charlys Jewel. Their descrition and history: Martin B-26 “Marauder” (S/N 40-1459; MSN 99) ~ Our Marauder was built at the Glenn L. Martin Company factory in Baltimore, Maryland and delivered to the US Army Air Force on June 30, 1941. She was one of the first 100 built (#99). Here is her very short “flying” history:

October 1941 – Sacramento Air Depot, California for Winterization

- January 1942 – 77th Bombardment Squadron, 4th Air Force, Elmendorf Field, Alaska. On her way to its first assignment, she crashed, en route to Alaska, near Smith River, British Columbia, Canada on January 16, 1942, with the crew being rescued on January 19.
- February 1942 – Aircraft is abandoned in place. Listed as “Condemned per Budget Report” on February 17.
- April 1942 – Army Air Force salvage teams remove engines, landing gear, radio equipment, and radios from wreck
- September 1971 – Recovery started by Military Aircraft Restoration Corporation (MARC), Chino California and placed in storage.

MAPS Air Museum undertakes its biggest challenge in its short life by obtaining the B-26 from MARC on indefinite loan in August 1994. Over 14000+ hours have went into her restoration. She is currently maintained and occasionally tweaked by Crew Chief Dave Pawski.



In 1994, this was the starting point for our volunteers. 14,000+ volunteer worker hours went into bringing this Marauder back to life. Museum display note: Our B-26 has the “Susie-Q” name in honor of Pilot Jim Muri who attacked the carrier Akagi during the Battle of Midway. After dropping the torpedo, the Akagi turned into his flight path. He had no choice but to fly up the flight deck.

Fantasy of Flight near Polk City Florida. The B-26 was another rescue from the Alaska crash in 1942. Comments from Kermit Weeks the current owner: This is the only one capable of flight. Because of its small wing area, the B-26 was nicknamed the “Widowmaker.” MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa was the main training base for B-26 crews during the War. As a result of a short series of training accidents after take-off, the undeserved phrase “One a Day in Tampa Bay” came about. In 1998, I flew this aircraft into MacDill for their annual airshow and back to Fantasy of Flight without incident. This was the last B-26 to ever leave a MacDill runway, so hopefully the curse has been broken.

The National Air and Space Museum B-26B-25-MA named "Flak-Bait" (AAF serial number 41-31773) is on display in Mary Baker Engen Restoration Hangar at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, VA. survived 202 combat missions over Europe, more than any other American aircraft during World War II. Workers at the Baltimore factory completed "Flak-Bait" in April 1943, and a crew flew it to England. The AAF assigned it to the 449th Bombardment Squadron, 322nd Bombardment Group (nicknamed the 'Annihilators'), and gave the bomber the fuselage identification codes "PN-O." Lt. James J. Farrell of Greenwich, Connecticut, flew more missions in "Flak-Bait" than any other pilot. He named the bomber after "Flea Bait," his brother's nickname for the family dog. This is currently under going preservation and will be on the display floor in a few years (hopefully during our reunion!)

Pima Air and Space Museum will have a B-26 shortly it will not be on display until a space for it has been allocated. It is a B-26B serial number 41-31856.

Musée du Débarquement Utah Beach, Normandy France. The only surviving B-26 outside the USA, Once flown by Captain Robert Harris, the Dinah Might exists today because it was recovered from a crash during military action. On a mission targeting a storage dump in St. Wendel, Germany, the plane was taken down by enemy flak, resulting in its crew members being taken by the Germans as prisoners of war.

The National Museum of the US Air Force in Dayton Ohio. The Marauder on display was flown in combat by the Free French during the final months of WWII. It was obtained from the Air France airline's training school near Paris in June 1965. It is painted as a 9th Air Force B-26B assigned to the 387th Bomb Group in 1945.Serial number 43-34581.

Aircraft Restoration Services LLC in Murrieta, California is working on the restoration of a B-26, they have learned that restoring aircraft now roughly 80 years old — especially those rescued from the rubble of a crash — is a time-consuming process. If you’re interested in a more in-depth look at the elbow grease it takes to bring an old Marauder to life, this is the stop for you.

George Whitehouse Obituary

Obituary published on Legacy.com by Cantelmi Long Funeral Home - Bethlehem on Nov. 13, 2024.

George Washington Whitehouse passed away peacefully on November 10, 2024 surrounded by his loving family. He was 104 years old. He was predeceased by the love of his life Doris L Whitehouse (nee Allen) and brother Benjamin Whitehouse and sister Marion Palmer. He is survived by his sister Audrey Zeiss of Clarks Summit, PA., children George A. Whitehouse and his wife Kathy of Silver Spring, MD., Thomas J Whitehouse and his wife Marilyn of Roseville, CA. Lynn Birney and husband Allan of Coopersburg, Pa. and David W. Whitehouse and wife Debra of Bethlehem, Pa. Grandchildren include Dawn Quesenberry and husband Jonathan of Roseville, Ca., granddaughter Courtney L. Mochan and husband Tim of Charlotte, NC. and grandson Thomas M. Whitehouse and wife Katey of Middletown,MD. He is also survived by 6 great-grandchildren, Jonah, Nolan,and Riley Quesenberry, Caroline and James Mochan, and Griffin Whitehouse.

George was a long time resident of Bethlehem and Emmaus, PA., but he cherished his extended summer stays over 60 years at his cottage on Lake Ariel, PA. He was always working in the yard, tending his beautiful flowers and greeting all the other cottagers who passed by as the "unofficial" mayor of West Shore Drive. He spent his last two years at Sacred Heart Senior Living in Center Valley, PA. He loved the residents and staff members. He engaged in many activities like Bocce and could very often be found dancing to a musical group or recording with staff members or residents.

Born in Taylor, PA.to Benjamin Whitehouse and Emma(Bray) Whitehouse. He attended a one room schoolhouse until high school. Growing up in the depths of the Great Depression, jobs were virtually non-existent. After a long effort he found employment at the Lackawanna Plant of Bethlehem Steel in Buffalo, NY. He began training in Metallurgy.

Then the war came. Though draft deferred due to his national defense work, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He became a flight engineer on B-24 and B-26 bombers. After training, his first assignment was at Millville Army Airfield in New Jersey. It was the first National Defense Airfield in the U.S. His bomber towed targets for P-47 pilots training in advanced gunnery. He was subsequently assigned to the Pacific Theater and completed his service in 1946 at Kahuku Airfield on Oahu, HI.

He married Doris (Dottie) Allen of Scranton, PA. on April 6, 1946. They were married 57 years until her death on January 14, 2004.

George used the WWII G.I. Bill to earn a B.A. in Accounting from Syracuse University. He worked many jobs during this time, from selling baked goods to students in the dorms and fraternities to driving a snow plow in the winters. On April fools day 1947 Doris presented him with the first born of four children, George. Subsequently they had two more boys, Thomas and David and their favorite daughter Lynn. She remains the boys favorite sister

Although he was accepted to the University of Michigan M.B.A. Program, he accepted a job offer from the U.S. Internal Revenue Service. His experiences in the depression taught him that a bird in the hand is worth more than two in the bush. In 1954 he became the I.R.S. Regional Director of a new field office he opened in Bethlehem, PA.

He had responsibility for audits of large businesses including major corporations such as Bethlehem Steel.
He was also assigned to overseas projects. In the early 1960's he worked on a project in Japan, and on assignment in the Caribbean during the Cuban missile crisis. Attached to United States Agency For International Development, his assignment in Viet Nam ended abruptly in 1975 as he and all other Americans and key allies evacuated the country. Later he was assigned to a project in Egypt during the unrest that ended in the assassination of President Anwar Sadat.. He was a "go to" for complex and challenging situations.
After his formal retirement he continued working assignments on contract with the U.S. Government in Egypt, Jamaica and Tanzania. He worked annually into his 90s training volunteers to prepare tax returns for seniors and low income filers for AARP and audited each of hundreds of returns himself. In between his assignments he found time to teach Tax and Accounting courses at Northampton Community College in Bethlehem, PA, where a scholarship is endowed in his name. He also taught at Moravian College in Bethlehem and at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica. He was a 70 year member of Wesley United Methodist Church in Bethlehem, where he taught Sunday School and served on the Finance Committee. He did all this while lovingly fulfilling the role of husband and father, supportingly engaging his family, church and community.
George's generation faced and fought a world war. They have spent the post-war years building the greatest country on earth. If patriotism is defined as love, pride and sacrifice for the sake of your family and your country and its people, George embodies it. His mother would be proud of the boy who lived up to the values of his namesake.

Articles Needed

We know that you have stories to be told! Please think about submitting an article we would love to hear about your family member or friend’s stories and remembrances.

Upcoming Marauder Men Birthdays

April Ellis "Willie" Williamson, Born Apr. 16, 1923

B-26 Real Stories based on mission reports from the archives and interviewed first hand participants.

From the book *"Back From 44, The Sacrifice and Courage of a Few"*

Submitted by Nick Cressy

The Twelfth Air Force Commander Major General Cannon is presenting the 320th Bomb Group with the Distinguished Unit Citation for outstanding performance of duty in enemy action at Fondi on May 12, 1944. This parade had a lot of brass attending from the U.S., British, and French forces; there were also nurses in formation from the nearby hospital unit. The citation is a gold framed blue ribbon that was worn over the right pocket, it is presented in the name of the President of the United States.

The 320th successfully bombed the Pisani Bridge in the Po Valley, the Brenner Pass rail lines, and the Ossining railroad bridges… the 19th of October missions turned out to be a good day for the Allies. The Germans really got a beating and suffered some severe losses. Recon photos taken after the attacks indicated that the bombings caused a huge tie-up of German southbound traffic to supply its forces in Italy.

The rain has been relentless, and it has prevented some mission from getting off the ground. The rainfall flowing down from the mountain developed into a river that ran through our tent area and most of our stuff got soaked… what a mess. All crew worked hard at getting gravel in places to help make paths through the small lakes and ponds that seemed to be everywhere. Most of the tents had to be moved to higher ground.

Planes that could take off through the clouds and rain looked shaky. Finally, a break in the rain, starting to put up missions again.

2024 B-26 Marauder Historical Society

Omaha, Nebraska Selected for the 2025 MHS Reunion!



We're excited to announce that **Omaha, Nebraska** will be the proud host city for the 2025 B-26 Marauder Historical Society Reunion, taking place **Thursday, November 6th through Saturday, November 8th**.

Omaha offers a unique blend of Midwestern charm, military history, and cultural attractions. This year's reunion will center around a visit to **Offutt Air Force Base**, a site rich with historic ties to U.S. military aviation, as well as a special experience at the **Strategic Air Command & Aerospace Museum**—home to an impressive collection of Cold War-era aircraft and space artifacts.

In addition to these highlights, Omaha offers scenic riverfront views, historic Old Market dining and shopping, and friendly hospitality we know our members will enjoy. Whether it's your first reunion or you've been with us for years, we invite you to join in the camaraderie, storytelling, and shared appreciation for the legacy of the B-26 and those who flew and maintained her.



Save the dates: November 6–8, 2025.
More details, including hotel information and possible post-reunion excursions, will be shared soon.

We look forward to seeing you in Omaha!

Follow us on our website and Facebook for more information.

https://b-26mhs.org/
https://www.facebook.com/B26MHS/



Special Group rates at the Magnolia Hotel $119/night.

Book your room: Magnolia Hotel Omaha | B-26 MHS Reunion

Veteran Salute Wymer Gene Vogel

The Nebraska native was born August 12, 1921 in the rural community of Stanton the son of Carl & Martha (Schilling) Vogel. Baptized St. John's Lutheran Church in Stanton in 1921 and Confirmed St. John's Lutheran Parochial School rural Howells. Attended Stanton County Dist #49 and St. John's Lutheran Parochial School rural Howells, Graduated Stanton High School 1939. He was brought up in a devout Lutheran family. While in elementary grades, Gene and his two brothers rode horseback to attend classes in a one room school house. During middle school years the Lutheran minister was his teacher. A high school teacher encouraged his interest in aviation.

The graduate left the farm to attend aviation metals classes. Employment with the Glen L. Martin Airplane Co. followed. Gene resigned to become a cadet in the U.S. Army Air Corps. During World War II he served as a bombadier. With the cessation of war he transferred to the U.S. Air Force Reserve.

After receiving a degree as an aeronautical engineer, Gene spent a total of forty five years in development of air progress, from propeller aircraft to the super jets and even involvement with the space program. The dream of a Nebraska farm boy had come true. His efforts remain notable in the aviation industry. Married to Ruby Young on June 21, 1975 at Wichita, Kansas

Gene became an active member of The Retired Officers Association, McConnell AFB, Wichita, KS. He was elected to several offices and served on numerous committees. The National Aviation Hall of Fame, Dayton. Ohio, appointed him to their Board of Nominations, a position he continued to hold until his death. In 1986 Gene retired from the Boeing Aircraft Co., Wichita, KS. He and his wife, Ruby, moved to Parker, Florida to be near Tyndall AFB, where he had been stationed in 1944. He soon became actively involved in military related activities serving with Bay County Chapter of the Military Officers
Association of America as an Officer, on various committees, with the Retiree Affairs Council and, for sixteen years, as an information desk volunteer at the Tyndall Air Force Base Hospital. Gene also belonged to several local civic organizations. As a strong supporter of education he assisted in the establishment of a scholarship foundation in his home town of Stanton with the Wymer G. Vogel Scholarship to the Stanton High School Graduate that furthers their education in either engineering or medicine.

Gene enjoyed life in Parker where the City Council presented a plague for his outstanding service to the community. In 1999 Gene wrote. "Retirement
boring? I've never been busier. I am thankful that my life is so full of love and laughter, of being there for my neighbors when they need a little help, of the joy of living, of the love and respect of my grandchildren, of good health and happiness, of fulfillment as an individual, the satisfaction of achievement and of knowing all is well in my world. I am complete."

Gene Vogel passed away July 5, 2004.

Books, Web Links and other information

National Museum of the US Air Force
https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/196275/martin-b-26g-marauder/

National Air and Space museum B-26 link
https://airandspace.si.edu/collection-objects/martin-b-26b-25-ma-marauder-flak-bait/nasm_A19600297000

Link to an article about the PIMA B-26 restoration:
https://vintageaviationnews.com/aviation-museum-news/martin-marauder-at-french-valley-airport-bound-for-pima.html

The B-26 in France https://utah-beach.com/en/museum/

MAPS B-26 https://mapsairmuseum.org/martin-b-26-marauder/

Fantasy of Flight
https://www.fantasyofflight.com/collection/aircraft/currently-not-showing-in-museum/wwii/1940-martin-b-26-marauder/

Aircraft Restoration Services
https://www.facebook.com/people/Aircraft-Restoration-Services/100063454128322/

The Martin Marauder by J.K. Havener

Martin B-26 Marauder by W. Wolf

Tour of Duty by K.J. Pekarek

All members in good standing, we encourage you to be proactive in choosing *your* Board of Directors. Each opening is for a four year term. Vote for up to 6 nominees by checking the box to the left of the name.

You can vote by mail by returning the below ballot to our mailing address. Or you can vote online at
https://b-26mhs.org/vote

BALLOT
Board of Directors

If you are a B-26 Marauder Historical current member in good standing, you are entitled to vote. We encourage you to be proactive in choosing *your* Board of Directors. Each opening is for a four year term. Vote for up to 6 nominees by checking the box to the left of the name.

☐ **Larry Thompson**

NAME (Print): _____ SIGNATURE: _____

All nominees have been nominated by the Nominating Committee. Ballots must be received by June 20, 2025

Please mail your ballots to:
MHS Elections, PO Box 26511, Tucson, AZ 85726 USA

B-26 Marauder Historical Society

3900 E Timrod St.
Tucson, AZ 85711

B-26 MARAUDER HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

2022

National sponsor: ☐ $1000 or more Sustaining : ☐ $250/year Supporting : ☐ $150/year Contributing : ☐ $100/year Annual: ☐ $65/year Active Military: ☐ $25/year

I am a: _____ B-26 veteran _____ other veteran _____ spouse of veteran _____ other family member _____ supporter of the B-26

Name _____Phone _____Email_____

Address _____Country _____

Bomb Group/Squadron _____Highest Service Rank: _____Job on the B-26:_____

Please accept my additional donation of $_____for use as needed.

Membership amount enclosed $_____

Total amount enclosed $_____

You will receive your Thunder copy electronically to the email address you provided! This helps MHS save cost on printing and postage! ***If you would like to have the Thunder mailed to you Instead, please check here*** ☐

CREW CODES
P = Pilot **GC** = Ground Crew
CP = Co Pilot **CC** = Crew Chief
G = Gunner **E** = Engineer
N =Navigator **M** = Mechanic
RO = Radio Operator **B** = Bombardier

Save a stamp and complete your MHS membership online! **B-26MHS.org/membership**