

MEMORY BOOK is a collection of events experienced during World War II by the men who were in the Aviation Class of 43E. Many stories originated in the Association newsletter; other were given to the personally.

Remember Yesterday

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*REMEMBER
YESTERDAY*

WWII Memory Book

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Fred Alexander**

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WHERE WE CAME FROM – by KEN GROWE

Six thousand pilots went to war in May 1943, at that time this was the largest group of aviation cadets in the history of the U.S. Army Air Corps, when the Class 43-E pinned silver wings on their proud chests, climbed aboard the sparkling new inventory of a war-time America and carried the fight to foreign shores.

They were the product of three training commands scattered virtually across the southern United States in 1942-43, and embracing 120 flight schools. Those proud Aviation Cadets of the Class 43-E graduated on 24-25 May 1943 to man heavy four-engine bombers, fleet pursuits, and glistening transports in Air Forces already in combat around the world. Many others remained in the three training commands to equip thousands of other eager young pilots to take their places in squadron engaged in the global conflict.

It was not until May 1983, however, that 17 survivors of those Air Forces were summoned together by K. C. Growe and Len Borre of the Gulf Coast Training Command to meet in Indianapolis. Later, in 1987, Paul Murphy of the West Coast and Southeast Training Commands summoned his troops in Albuquerque. This was their first reunion to toast those early days of World War II. From those first meetings, invitations to biennial reunions of the two Associations were sent out, culminating in 50th Anniversary Reunions in May 1993 when several hundred Gulf Coast cadets and their wives met to dedicate a memorial bench at Randolph AFB. Meanwhile, Murphy assembled his group at Scottsdale, AZ to celebrate the silver anniversary of 43-E WD-SETC. The two groups continued to prosper until 20 May 1996, when Murphy and Harry C. “Heinie” Aderholt proposed to merge the three commands at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. At that time more than 200 cadets and their wives met on 20 June 1997 to dedicate a plaque in the Memorial Garden of the Wright-Patterson Air Force Museum. A quarterly newsletter, *Forty-Three Echo*, reported the activities of the newly merged 43-E Association and a 120-page *Forty-Three E Directory* listing 6,000 names and addresses along with graduating

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schools, was edited in 1999 by Glen Emerson, a former president of the Association.

The Class 43-E, United States Army Air Corps, provided seven general officers, scores of colonels, and other field-grade officers to the three conflicts in which the Air Force had been engaged since WWII. Many of them have staffed the 43-E Association in the years that followed and many career officers of 43-E have served in Air Forces in both the Korea and Vietnam conflicts, retiring after accumulating thousands of hours in various aircraft. Four fighter pilots of 43-E became aces, scoring heavily of enemy aircraft and at least five members received Silver Stars for gallantry in action.

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